

FINAL REPORT

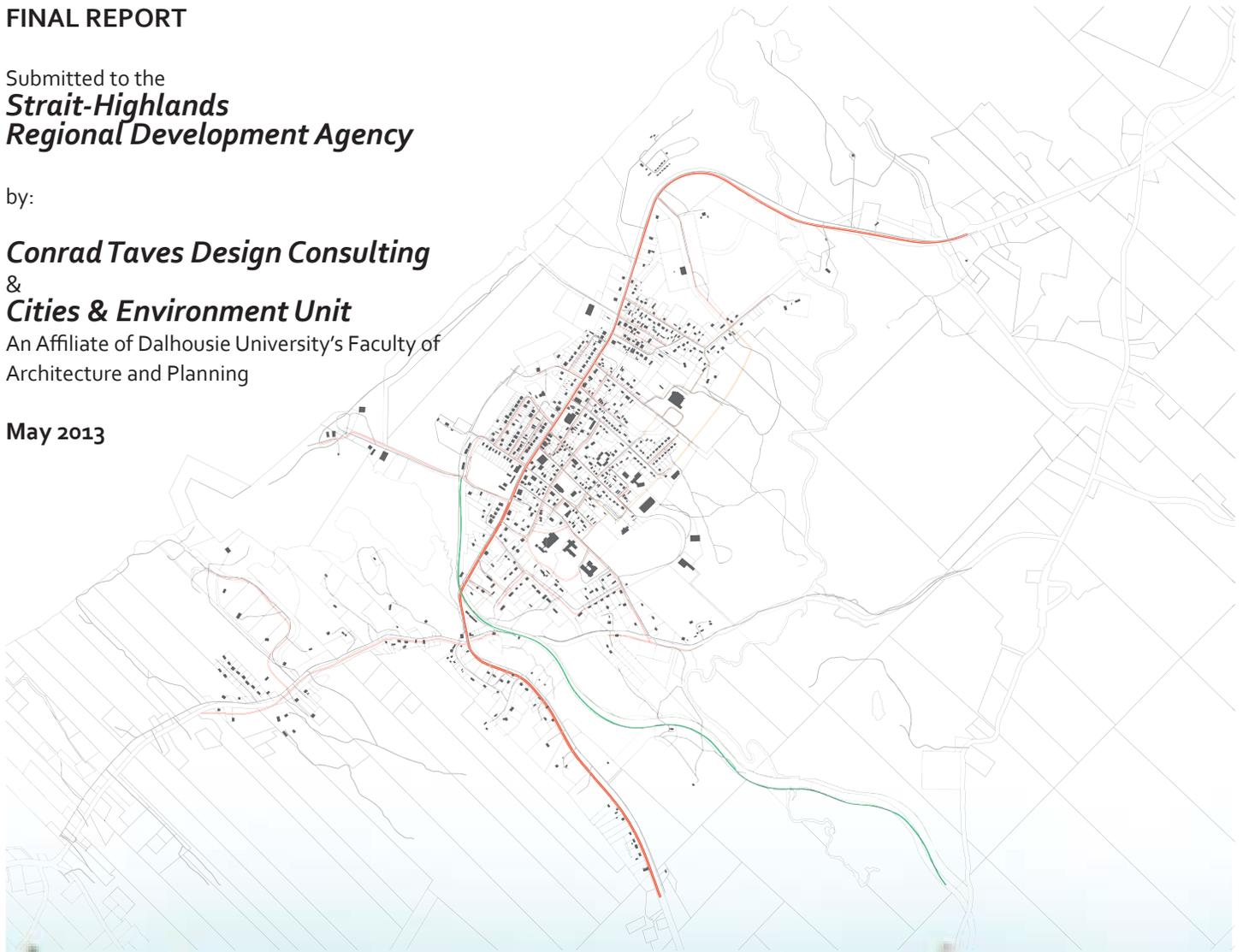
Submitted to the
***Strait-Highlands
Regional Development Agency***

by:

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&
Cities & Environment Unit***

An Affiliate of Dalhousie University's Faculty of
Architecture and Planning

May 2013



Conceptual Plan

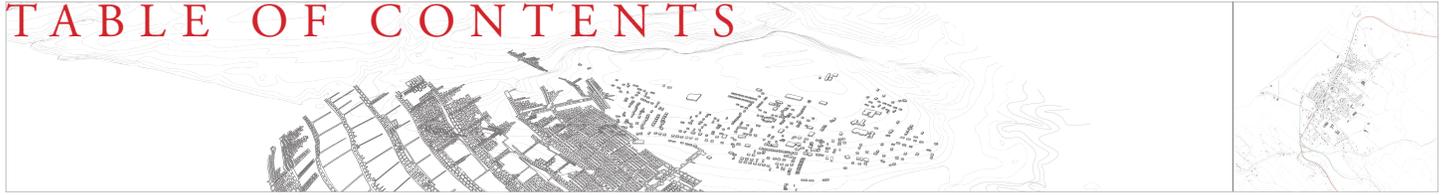
for the Community of **INVERNESS**



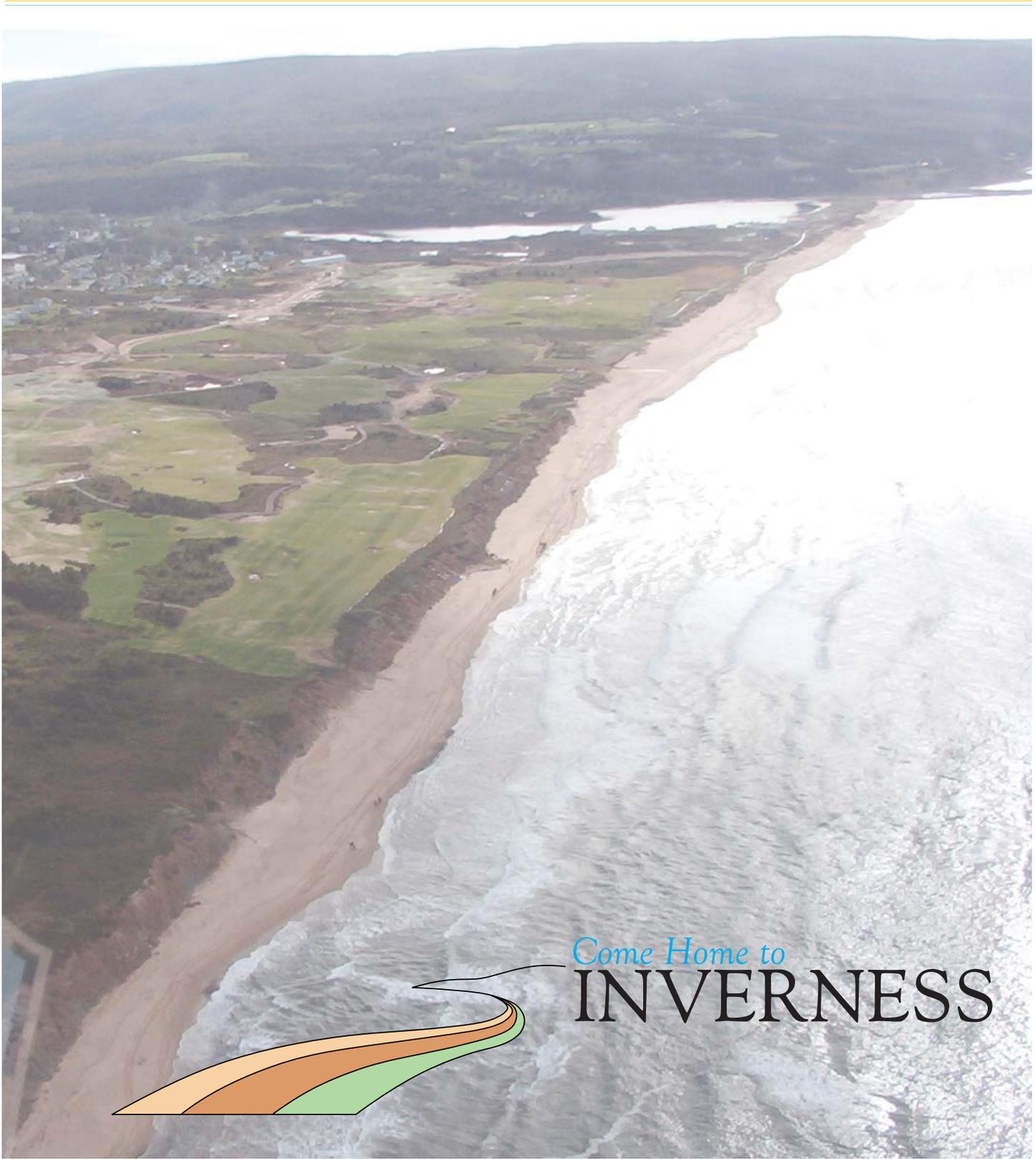


A hundred years of change: Inverness's waterfront a hundred years ago (above) and in 2010 (below)

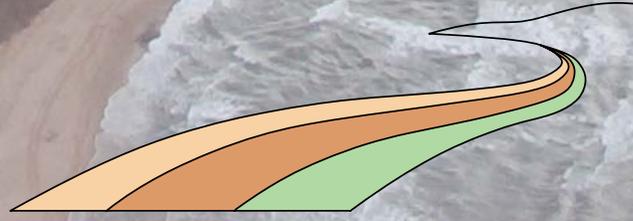
TABLE OF CONTENTS



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY / / / / / / / /	3
1. BACKGROUND/CONTEXT/ / / / / / / / /	7
[1.1] Introduction / / / / / / / / / / / / /	7
[1.2] Process / / / / / / / / / / / / /	8
[1.3] Context / / / / / / / / / / / / /	10
[1.4] Site Analysis / / / / / / / / / / / / /	15
2. DEVELOPMENT VISION / / / / / / / / /	19
[2.1] Big Ideas / / / / / / / / / / / / /	19
[2.2] Development Plan / / / / / / / / / / / / /	21
[2.3] Community Projects / / / / / / / / / / / / /	35
3. BRANDING & POSITIONING STRATEGY / / / / / / / / /	45
[3.1] Branding & Positioning / / / / / / / / / / / / /	45
[3.2] Online Media / / / / / / / / / / / / /	58
4. COMMUNITY DESIGN STANDARDS / / / / / / / / /	61
[4.1] General Design Guidelines/ / / / / / / / / / / / /	61
[4.2] Streetscapes Enhancements/ / / / / / / / / / / / /	62
[4.3] Facade Design Guidelines / / / / / / / / / / / / /	67
[4.4] Signage & Wayfinding / / / / / / / / / / / / /	81
5. IMPLEMENTATION / / / / / / / / / / / / /	85
[5.1] Estimated Capital Costs / / / / / / / / / / / / /	87
[5.2] Phasing Strategy/ / / / / / / / / / / / /	92
[5.3] Next Steps / / / / / / / / / / / / /	94
APPENDIX A / / / / / / / / / / / / /	95



Come Home to
INVERNESS





The *INVERNESS* Conceptual Plan (ICP)

PURPOSE OF DEVELOPING THE PLAN:

Facing potential growth after decades of decline, Inverness finds itself at the threshold of a major transition. As the village evolves, it is an opportune time to reflect on the challenges and opportunities ahead. The Inverness Conceptual Plan (ICP) serves to identify a clear, shared vision for Inverness's future and outline a series of steps and strategies to achieve it.

I. BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

The project team used a community-based planning approach to actively involve Inverness residents and enable them to take ownership of their future. Before commencing the community consultation process, the project team conducted its own preliminary assessment, identifying the following **Three Core Development Strategies** for Inverness:

1. Create an artery linking community assets.
2. Improve connections and access to the waterfront.
3. Strengthen Central Avenue* as the commercial spine.

II. DEVELOPMENT VISION

Developed out of discussion at the first community workshop, the following **5 Big Ideas** reflect the aspirations of community members, and guide the actions and projects outlined in the ICP.

1. Attract & Retain Families
2. Become an Energy Innovator
3. Rethink & Redefine Central Avenue
4. Celebrate & Promote Our History and Culture
5. Showcase Our Natural Environment

The **Development Plan** builds on Inverness's existing assets and potential to advance a shared vision for the future. The Three Core Development Strategies guided the following suggested interventions, which are illustrated by the *Comprehensive Development Map*:

1. **Create an artery linking community assets.**
 - a) **Roads and Infrastructure:** The ICP proposes developing a second transportation spine that will link key community spaces and open up new areas for future residential development.
 - b) **Residential Development:** By extending existing roads and making strategic property investments to connect Macleod Street to Celtic Drive, new frontage will be opened up for housing in northeast Inverness.

* Please note that throughout this document “Central Avenue” refers to the stretch of Highway 19 that runs within the community limits.

2. Improve connections and access to the waterfront.

- a) The Boardwalk and Lower Railway Commons: Developing the area around the juncture of Lower Railway Street and the Boardwalk will help promote the beach as a central asset of Inverness.
- b) Beach Infrastructure: Investing in attractive and strategic beach infrastructure will increase its appeal to visitors.

3. Strengthen Central Avenue as the commercial spine.

- a) Streetscapes Enhancement: See *Community Design Standards*.
- b) Facade Design Guidelines: See *Community Design Standards*.
- c) Gateways and Parking Areas: Using signage, landscaping, and lighting to highlight arrival in Inverness and offering parking at entrances and key trail connections will encourage pedestrian exploration of Inverness.

The *Strategic Development Map* defines both restrictions and opportunities for development, looking at Inverness in the context of three key components of a successful community:

Future Growth: A new residential development is proposed near Inverness Academy, connecting with the Arts Centre area, which is targeted as a site for cultural and energy-resource development. Further enhancement of Central Avenue is recommended, while tourism potential is identified in the area around Lower Railway Street.

Gathering: The hospital, Arts Centre, school, and Lower Railway Commons should be further enhanced as key community centres for gathering and programming.

Connectivity: The main circulation improvements proposed focus on (a) making Central Avenue more pedestrian and cyclist-friendly, (b) completing the street network on the east side of town, (c) strengthening the connection to the water, and (d) creating nature trails.

III. BRANDING/POSITIONING STRATEGY

Consultation with Invernessers revealed a desire to develop a forward-thinking brand that capitalizes on the community's leading asset: its beautiful waterfront. The branding concept therefore repositions Inverness as a recreation destination, promoting the various recreation opportunities in the area, and evoking the elegant, inviting appeal of a traditional seaside holiday destination.

IV. COMMUNITY DESIGN STANDARDS

The **General Design Guidelines** identify three key overarching goals for achieving the vision of Inverness as a dynamic, thriving, family-friendly seaside destination:

-
-
1. Attend to the visual character of Central Avenue.
 2. Reinforce the relationship between Central Avenue and the pedestrian.
 3. Reinforce the relationship between Central Avenue and the waterfront.

The following **Streetscape Enhancements** are recommended:

1. Central Avenue streetscape improvements (12 guidelines)
2. Central Avenue multi-use trail
3. Central information kiosk
4. Pocket parks
5. Street furniture
6. Consolidated parking

The **Facade Design Guidelines** support the *Community Design Standards*, establishing a classic, sophisticated aesthetic inspired by vintage holiday postcards to reinforce the seaside destination theme. Requirements are specified for ornamentation, colour, materials, entry/access, signage, landscaping, and lighting, with examples of improved facades for existing businesses provided.

The **Signage & Wayfinding Strategy** uses a hierarchy of signage (gateway, directional, wayfinding, interpretive, banners) to enhance the visitor experience of Inverness. The ICP maps out a preliminary *Signage Master Plan* and potential signage design, specifying a colour palette and materials preference to integrate signage with the *Branding/Positioning Strategy*, *General Design Guidelines*, *Streetscape Program*, and *Façade Design Guidelines*.

V. IMPLEMENTATION

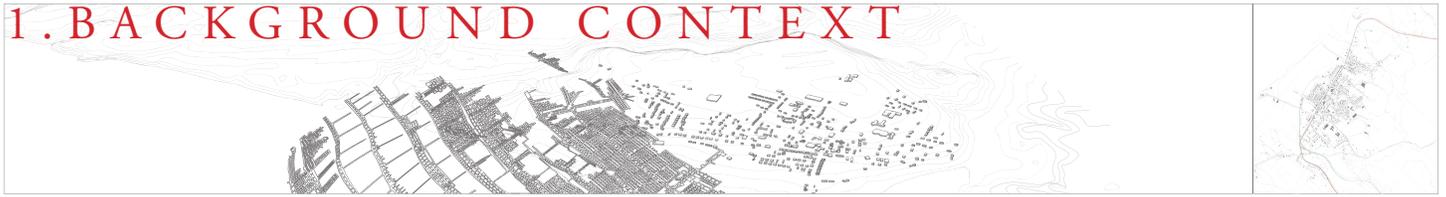
Ballpark **Costing Estimates** are provided to assist with more immediate project implementation and to prioritize future development plans (5-, 10-, and 20-year phases are outlined). This costing, coupled with a **Phasing Strategy**, enables the community to better focus their efforts. Because of the high demands during the next 5 years, the objective will be to balance the high costs of necessary infrastructure development with low-cost, high-visibility projects that help build the profile of the community.

The following steps are recommended for immediate implementation (next five years):

1. Streetscape Enhancements
2. Façade Program
3. Branding & Signage Interpretive Study
4. Support existing projects to success and build on them
5. Seek partnerships to share resources, knowledge and initiative feasibility studies



1. BACKGROUND CONTEXT



1.1 Introduction

Inverness is at a crossroads—a moment of transition between its past as a mining town and its future. It is the ideal time to come together and create a town plan, as Inverness faces numerous challenges and opportunities—an aging population, a struggling economy, an inspiring wave of local support for new community-building initiatives like the cooperative venture between the Inverness Cottage Workshop and the Early Years Centre, and the development of the Cabot Links golf course. The Inverness Conceptual Plan (ICP) process has provided occasion for many groups to come together and determine a vision for a more walkable, livable, and inviting place to live, work, and visit.

Numerous committees, local organizations, and projects are already at work confronting the challenges and opportunities before Inverness. The ICP provides an over-arching agenda to unite all these initiatives and

individuals together, so that we are working efficiently toward our common goals.

The ICP consists of three primary components: the Development Vision (long-term community objectives, accompanied by a strategy for implementation of specific projects and improvements), the Branding & Positioning Strategy (a visual and graphical expression of Inverness's identity), and Community Design Standards (overarching guidelines for development along Central Avenue). Together, the ICP is a tool to guide action on the ground, identifying Inverness's aspirations and providing a road map for achieving them.



1.2 Process

PROCESS

Four guiding principles informed our team's approach to developing the Inverness Conceptual Plan (ICP):

1. Honour the community's past.
2. Follow a community-based planning process.
3. Collaborate with existing community work.
4. Bring fresh ideas and insights to old problems.

PURPOSE

The objective of the ICP is to:

- Identify strategic priorities determined by the community
- Encourage the establishment and expansion of businesses within the community and enhances its ability to attract new business development
- Respect community values
- Support sustainable development

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Public consultation and involvement is critical to understanding current challenges and developing long-term goals and immediate actions. The following summaries describe

the major community engagement sessions that informed, shaped, and refined the ICP.

Community Workshop 1

The first workshop brought together a large number of community members to discuss Inverness's aspirations for the future. What would define Inverness as a unique community locally, provincially, and nationally? Community members reviewed displays of the project team's background research and then the project team presented the goals and scope of the ICP. Next, community members worked in small groups to discuss and debate Inverness's identity and future. The group discussions were the basis for the development of the Big Ideas that guided the project team in putting together the ICP.

Community Workshop 2

The second workshop provided an opportunity for the public to review the project team's preliminary work. Participants examined a series of panels designed by the project team, which depicted the Big Ideas and other components of the plan. Next, the project team outlined some possible projects and opportunities to advance each of the five Big Ideas. The team also presented preliminary ideas for the development of Central Avenue and gathered input on design guidelines. This feedback contributed to the final Development Plan.

Community Workshop 3

At the final workshop, community members were able to review the main components of the ICP and discuss plan implementation. Workshop attendants also considered the role different groups (IDA, county, community groups, Planning Commission) might play in future phases of the plan.

Steering Committee Consultation

The steering committee (which was made up of local residents, elected officials, local entrepreneurs, and staff from the development authority) helped the project team understand key issues and opportunities that needed to be integrated into the ICP. In addition, the Steering Committee provided important feedback and direction, helping to shape the community branding strategy and review the team’s interim work prior to the final community workshop.

Shown to the right is a simplified breakdown of how community engagement fits within the planning process.



1.3 Context

DEMOGRAPHICS:

Inverness is part of the Municipality of the County of Inverness, located on the western side of Cape Breton Island. Inverness County was incorporated in 1879; it is approximately 3,678 km² and is home to approximately 14,580 residents within 16 distinct communities. The County is divided into six Municipal Districts, which are each represented by an elected councillor.

Within Inverness County, the four Municipal Departments are Administration, Taxation, Public Works and Recreation. These departments are the primary municipal service providers. A key regional service provider is the Cape Breton Island Housing Authority, which services all communities in Cape Breton on behalf of the Nova Scotia Housing Development Corporation. Health services are under the authority of the Cape Breton District Health Authority. Economic Development in the region is an area that advanced regionally through initiatives and partnerships between Inverness, Port Hawkesbury and Richmond County, based on shared economic concerns, issues, trends and opportunities. Within the County of Inverness, Municipal Planning is the responsibility of the Eastern District Planning Commission (EDPC), which prepares and reviews the municipal plans, regulates land use, processes subdivision application, and completes building inspections.

The focus of the ICP is on the community of Inverness, situated on the west coast of Cape Breton and looking out on the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The area is delineated by the

boundaries from the intersection of Highway 19 and Scottsville Road (past Strathlorne Forest Nursery), the Broad Cove turn-off, and the Banks Road (up to Foot Cape Road, where the pavement ends). Inverness is located approximately 85 kilometres north of Port Hawkesbury on the Ceilidh Trail, just before the gateway to the world-famous Cabot Trail. The village is 3.5 kilometres in length and approximately 2.5 kilometres in width, with an area of roughly 8.75 kilometres.

The community is home to approximately 2,186 residents based on the 2011 census. Inverness has a rich history as a resource town—a hub for mining, fishing, and forestry. It began as a small fishing community before developing into a coal-mining town. The local economy is now mainly based on fishing and tourism, which has increased considerably with the launch of the new Cabot Links golf course developed on the former mining brown site. Cabot Links is also a resort, which features a 50-unit luxury boutique hotel. Inverness also functions as a regional service centre, highlighting recent renovations to the hospital and Inverary Manor, which are large contributors to the local economy.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

The Inverness Development Association (IDA)

The IDA is a non-profit community-based organization formed in 1968 with a mandate to work to improve the community of Inverness. Over the last 15 years, the IDA has been instrumental in laying the groundwork and creating the infrastructure necessary to facilitate Inverness's role as a tourist destination. In 1999, each of the 16 community development associations contributed to a broader plan for community development. A major outcome of the 1999 planning process was the creation of a municipal capital project fund and support of the IDA within the broader municipal planning framework. Over the last 15 years, the IDA has spearheaded many projects with the support and financial assistance of the Municipal, Provincial and Federal Governments to improve the quality of life for residents in the region.

Key projects include:

- Reclamation of the Former Coal Mine Sites
- Floating Dock & Wharf Upgrades
- Breakwater Construction
- Beach Canteen Construction
- Beach Canteen Erosion Protection & upgrades
- Kilometre-long Waterfront Boardwalk
- Visitor Information Centre
- Sidewalks
- Street Lamps
- Park Landscaping & Town Clock
- Tree Planting along Main Street
- Development of a Fitness Centre
- Trans Canada Trail
- Inverness County Centre for the Arts
- Attracting the Cabot Links development
- New boardwalk along Beach Road No. 1
- 50-car Parking Lot @ Waterfront

Community Groups

- Fire Department, First responders
- Inverness County Centre for the Arts
- Theatre Group
- Literary Network
- Cottage Workshop
- Miners Museum
- Inverness Playground Association
- Ladies Auxilliary
- Family Resource Centre
- Home Care
- C@P Network
- InRich Career Resource Centre
- Inverness Early Years Group
- Community Health Board
- Inverness Minor Ball Association
- Inverness Minor Hockey Association
- Trails Association
- Inverness Garden Club

Committees

- Shean Housing Cooperative
- Energy & Food Securities Committee
- Area Planning Advisory Committee



COMMUNITY STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES:

Land

Strengths

- Beach
- White poplar forests
- Estuary at the north end of beach
- Sunsets
- Wind energy potential
- Views of the coast

Challenges

- No north public access to the beach
- Lack of long-term plan for waterfront
- Shallow harbour, requires dredging for any future development
- Lengthy environmental review process for any dredging
- Contamination of estuary from previous industry

People

Strengths

- Unique history of town
- Arts Centre and local arts community
- Strong tie to Gaelic culture and Scottish heritage
- Ceilidhs, kitchen parties and card games
- Tradition of fishing
- Civically engaged residents
- High degree of volunteerism
- Local newspaper
- Strong family ties
- Early Years Centre redevelopment

Challenges

- Leadership and engagement in the new generation
- Lack of after-school programming and child care
- Cases of drug abuse and limited parental support
- Disconnect between community members, community groups and municipality

Settlement

Strengths

- Community gardens
- Benches, social gathering places
- Company Homes (distinct heritage assets)
- Walking community
- Access to swimming, walking, hiking
- Trans Canada Trail connects to Inverness
- Bike connectivity
- Infill potential
- Municipal land in close proximity to school
- Land around the Arts Centre—access to geothermal or old mine shafts
- Affordable Housing Group (Shean) developing new housing options

Challenges

- Need greater support from province in developing housing
- Funding needed to transform Central Avenue a more vibrant main street
- Dangerous to cross Central Avenue
- Negotiating with Dept. Natural Resources for land at the edge of the village for commercial/industrial uses
- School and community lack sufficient outdoor green space
- Lack of official pathways connecting to the school
- Cabot Links has blocked northern beach access due to liability issues, resulting in community controversy
- Some community members feel there has been inadequate public consultation on matters of community development
- Need to extend services to connect to new road development
- Extending the necessary services (sewer) along Maple Street extension to enable approximately 60 lots
- Limited road frontage for new housing subdivisions

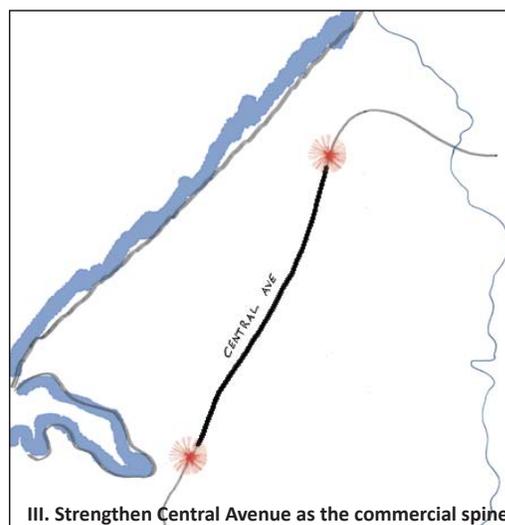
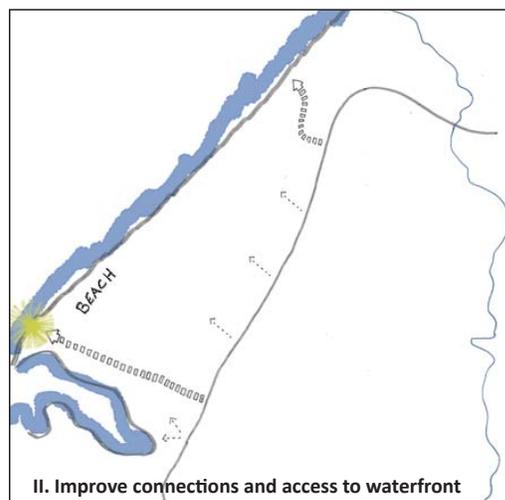
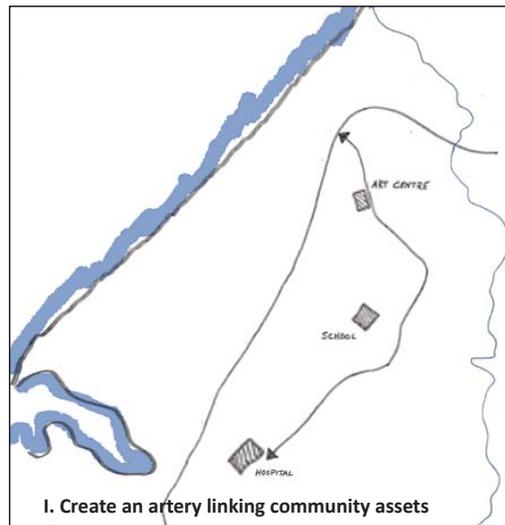
Economics

Strengths

- Service centre for county (school and hospital)
- Strong history of co-operatives
- Golf course making Inverness destination
- Potential for Ceilidh Trail as part of Cabot Trail marketing/experience
- Return from Aways (RFAs) are coming back to community with capital to invest
- Inverness is positioned to be a medical hub if it establishes itself as a venue for specialized surgeries (this would allow it to sustain and even expand its hospital services)
- Region has potential to be a place of research and innovation in medical practice, devices, etc., following the example of Halifax Biomedical
- Hospital contains unused operation room, which could be used to make Inverness the region's orthopedic surgical hub
- There is opportunity for waterfront development docks, marina and existing gas station
- Strathlorne Forest Nursery—possible source of food, trees, medicinal plants
- Race track is a unique tourism asset

Challenges

- Overcoming barriers to effectively communicating economic development initiatives
- Return From Aways (RFAs) need to know what the investment opportunities are
- Insufficient attention to pre-planning industrial courts/commercial courts
- Lack of year-round businesses
- How to finance preservation of Company Homes

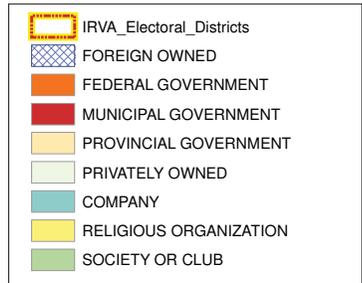
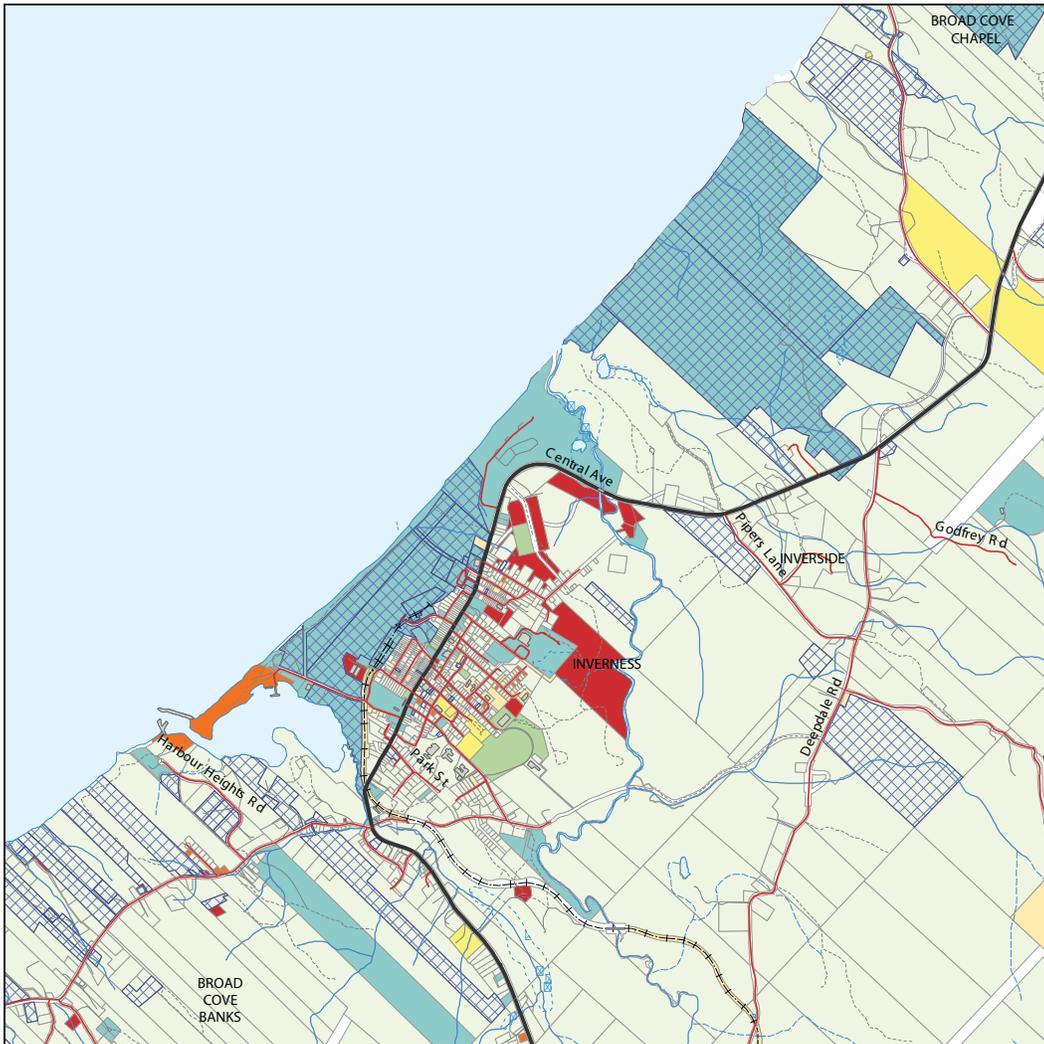


These three core Development Strategies were determined after preliminary Strengths and Challenges assessment

PROJECT SITE BOUNDARIES

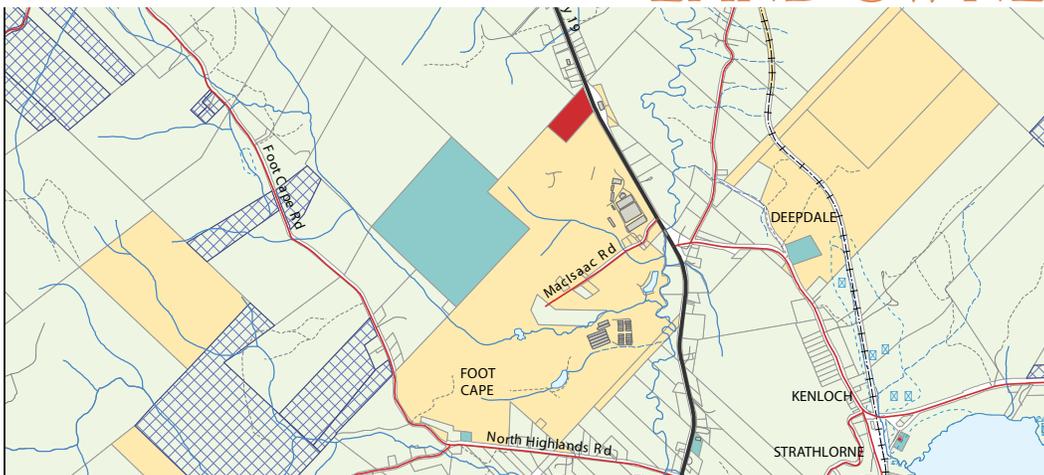


1.4 Site Analysis



Property Ownership Map
Town of Inverness, 2010
Eastern District Planning Commission

LAND OWNERSHIP



Company Homes / Red Rows

These homes are an important part of Inverness's history and heritage, as well as a challenge in terms of housing and Main Street beautification.

Main Street Beautification

Central Avenue currently requires functional and aesthetic improvements. With much room for infill development, there is a valuable opportunity for reinventing this major artery.

Lower Railway Street

This key area has great potential for commercial development, heritage and tourism

Beach Road #1

This route is a valuable asset in the goal of redefining Inverness as a recreation destination with a world-class beach. Re-imagined as a commercial corridor en route to the shorefront, it could be a substantial addition to the character of Inverness.



COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS



View to the sea at the intersection of Beach Road No. 1 & Lower Railway St.



Public Beach

The beach is a major Inverness attraction that needs to be better publicized.

Trails

Inverness boasts a large number of trails, both formal and informal. Of particular value is the Trans Canada Trail, which connects Lake Ainslie to the trail's termination point at Lower Railway Street.

Waterways

Broad Cove River connects to the north end of the beach by Macleod's Beach Village, runs through the Estuary and down to the Trans Canada Trail. This waterway is a beautiful artery running in behind Inverness and a potential connection to developments at the Maple Street extension and around Inverness Academy.

NATURAL LANDSCAPE CONNECTIONS & ASSETS



Broad Cove River Estuary

This site offers potential for development as a nature reserve, a tourist attraction, and a link between Central Avenue and the beach.

Inverness Arts Centre & Surrounds

This major cultural centre is currently isolated. It needs to be physically re-integrated into the community fold.

Lower Railway Street and Former Hoff Tavern Site

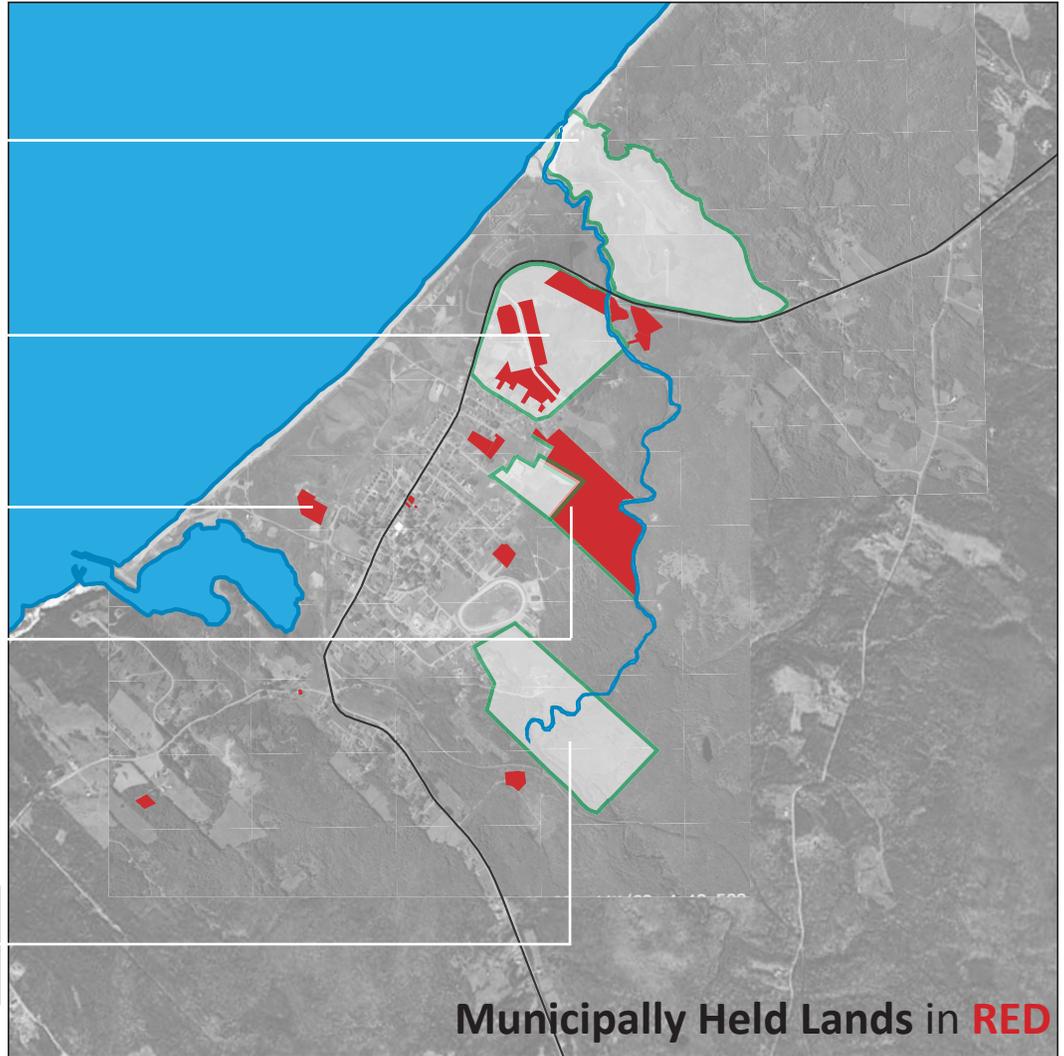
Development here could strengthen the town centre and provide a new commercial hub.

Inverness Education Centre & Surrounding Area

Active transportation pathways need to be created connecting targeted residential development to the school, ballfield, forest, arts centre, and playgrounds.

Maple Street Extension

This area offers potential for housing and multi-purpose development around the river.



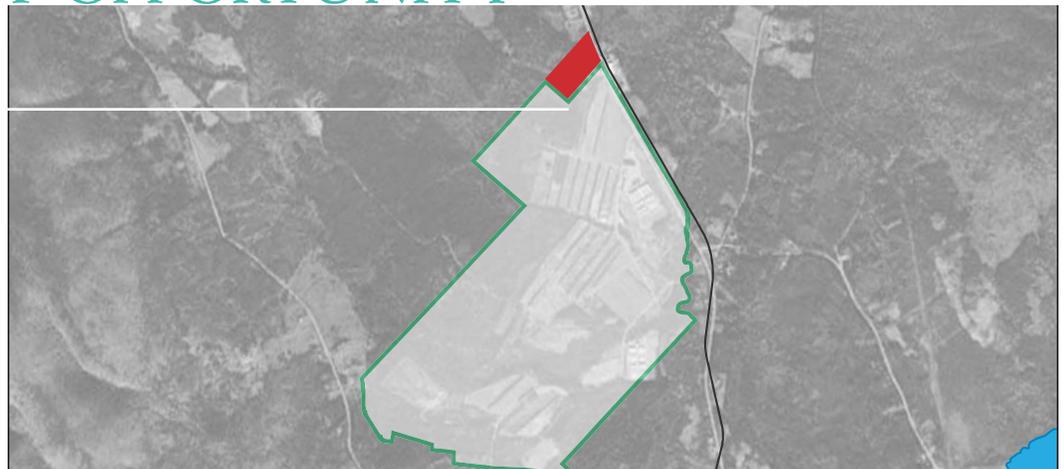
AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Strathlorne Forest Nursery

This resource could be developed into a commercial court industrial area with facilities for community pellet manufacturing and food security infrastructure.

Municipally Held Lands

The ICP should guide the use of municipal land to best serve the interests of the community.



2. DEVELOPMENT VISION



2.1 Big Ideas

Developed out of discussions at the first community workshop (January 16, 2013), the following Big Ideas reflect the aspirations of community members, and will guide actions and projects outlined in the Inverness Conceptual Plan.

1. ATTRACT & RETAIN FAMILIES

By taking advantage of existing assets and opportunities, Inverness could become one of the most desirable places in the Maritimes for families to live. Building on its role as the service centre of the county, Inverness must take action to position itself as a family-friendly community. Setting a target to recruit and retain young families will focus Inverness's efforts on expanding local employment and affordable housing opportunities, upgrading infrastructure and amenities, and developing itself as a regional and provincial hub for administrative, medical, and educational services.

2. BECOME AN ENERGY INNOVATOR

Communities around the world are exploring ways to reduce their reliance on imported energy. Inverness could become a national leader in geothermal and bio-mass energy production, distribution, and related training, which would make the town a more affordable, prosperous, and sustainable place to live.

3. RETHINK & REDEFINE CENTRAL AVENUE

Situated along the stunning coastal Ceilidh Trail, Central Avenue should reflect the unique character of Inverness and reinforce its important role as the commercial spine of the community. Transforming Central Avenue into a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented commercial corridor requires investment in gathering spaces for social interaction and in connections to the larger trail and path networks, linking residents and visitors to sites and amenities.

4. CELEBRATE & PROMOTE OUR HISTORY AND CULTURE

Opportunity for Inverness lies in drawing on its history and culture as a constant source of inspiration. Its mining history, Celtic roots, company homes, and thriving arts community, to name a few, will shape the community's future, setting Inverness apart from other towns.

5. SHOWCASE OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The natural beauty of Inverness is undeniable—its beach, ocean sunsets, rolling hills, views, and forests should be celebrated and made easily accessible with public spaces, look outs, trails and paths that allow people to be connected to nature and to each other.



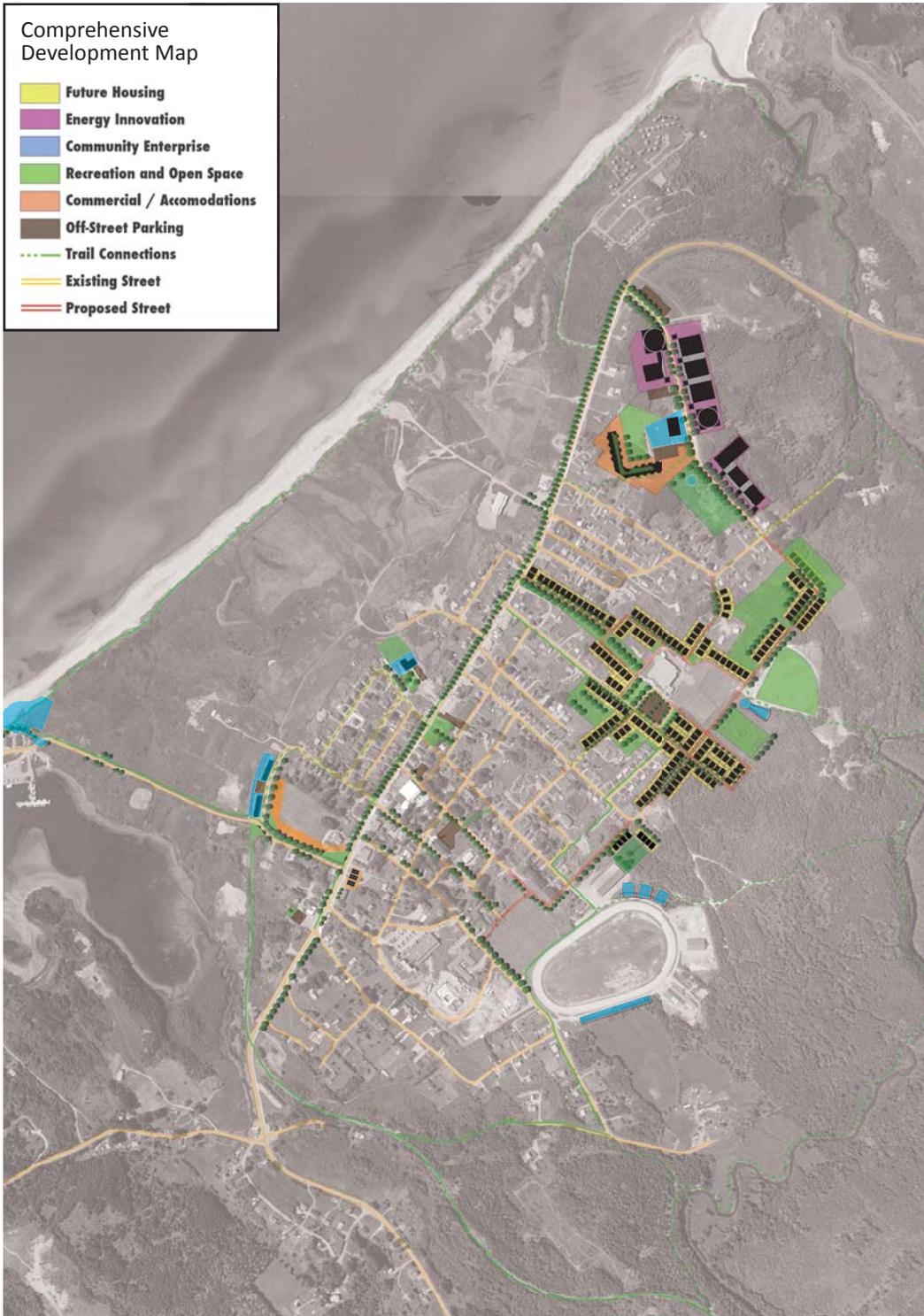
View of the accommodations at the Cabot Links golf course

The Cabot Links golf course and the Miners Annex, both initiated by the 1997 Inverness Development Plan, are shining examples of the power of community vision



2.2 Development Plan

A. COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT MAP



The Development Plan build on Inverness’s existing assets and potential—recreation, connection to the ocean and landscape, active transportation, a walkable main street, and centralized regional services and amenities—to advance a shared vision for the future. The three core Development Strategies (see page 9) guided the interventions outlined in the following pages. The Big Ideas (see page 15), meanwhile, inspired the selection of a series of community projects to consider in future phases of implementation.

Left: The Comprehensive Development Map highlights key areas of interest, identifying the projects and initiatives included in the Development Plan.





I. CREATE AN ARTERY LINKING COMMUNITY ASSETS

Roads and Infrastructure

Many important facilities (hospital, ice rink, race track, school, and Arts Centre) are situated in the east portion of the village, but

most facilities are only accessible from Central Avenue. The ICP proposes developing a second transportation spine that would link key community spaces and open up new areas for future residential development.



Comprehensive Development Map - Detail

- Future Housing
- Energy Innovation
- Community Enterprise
- Recreation and Open Space
- Commercial / Accomodations
- Off-Street Parking
- Trail Connections
- Existing Street
- Proposed Street

Residential Development

By extending existing roads and making strategic property investments to connect Macleod St. to Celtic Dr., new frontage will be opened up for housing in northeast Inverness. This new connected street network will also form a growth boundary for the next 15 years, reducing unnecessary infrastructure costs.

The areas surrounding the school will be transformed into a new residential neighbourhood with all the features of a healthy and active community. The connected street network will provide easy access to important community facilities, such as the school and Arts Centre.

Recreation areas will be developed along this new road connection, providing new playing fields and a recreation pavilion for hosting community events and youth programming. Other sites for community gathering will include new playgrounds, community gardens, linear parks and connections to the trail system that loops the community.

This new housing cluster will support the Big Idea of attracting and retaining families by creating a unique and exciting place to raise children.



Comprehensive Development Map - Detail

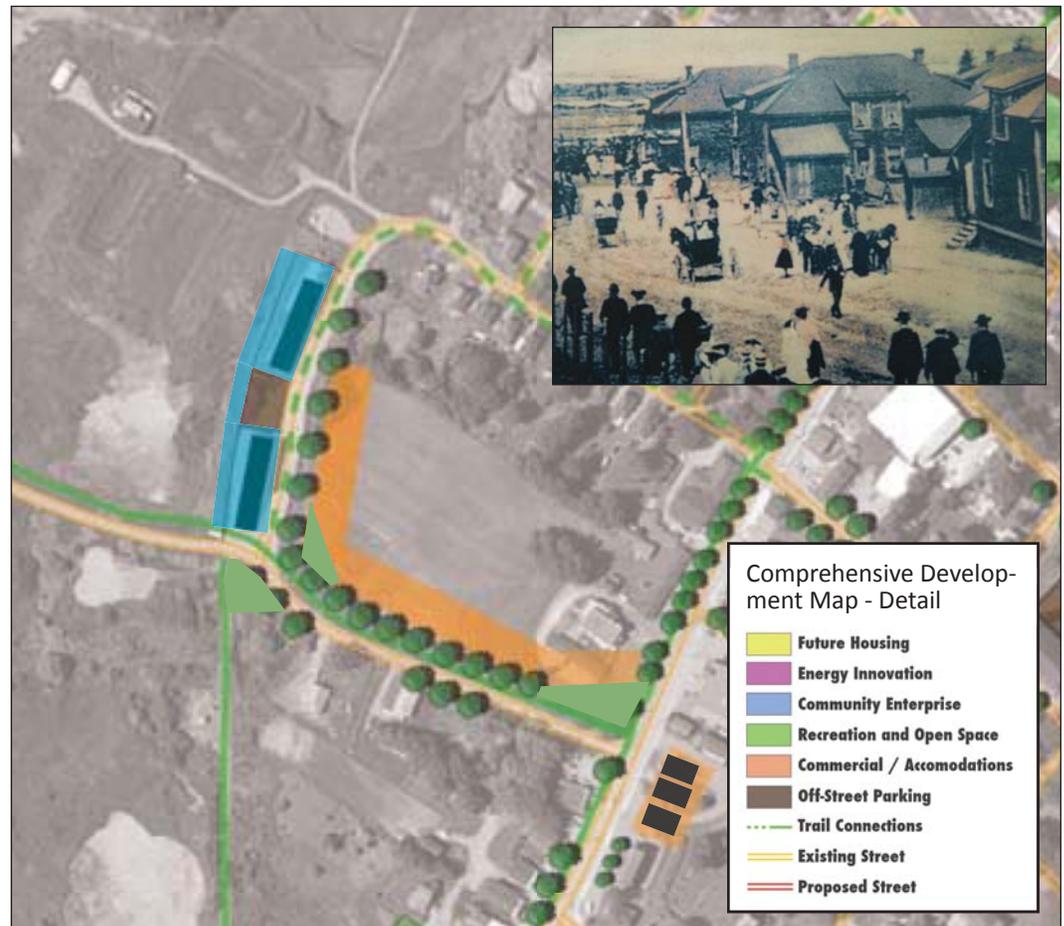
- Future Housing
- Energy Innovation
- Community Enterprise
- Recreation and Open Space
- Commercial / Accommodations
- Off-Street Parking
- Trail Connections
- Existing Street
- Proposed Street

II. IMPROVE CONNECTIONS AND ACCESS TO THE WATERFRONT

The Boardwalk & Lower Railway Commons

The beach in Inverness is undoubtedly the greatest natural asset of the town. But the town is somewhat disconnected from this asset now, and it is perhaps too hidden a gem for many tourists, who might drive right by without ever realizing the stunning, vast golden beach they've missed out on. The new boardwalk connecting Central Avenue to the beach presents an opportunity to reinforce this connection by creating a procession to the sea that will entice visitors and residents to explore this beautiful stretch.

A key hub for this procession is the intersection at Lower Railway Street. This area could be transformed into the "Lower Railway Commons," a site for major gatherings and events, with an outdoor deck area that showcases views and hosts musical performances. Summer markets could be held on the grounds, allowing local crafters, artisans, and farmers to sell their wares to passersby on their way to the beach. Developing the area around the old railway station would reinforce the area as the local start of the Trans Canada Trail and Provincial Bike Route (Blue Route), providing wayfinding maps, rest areas, picnic benches, and bike rental and storage. Food vendors could supplement the



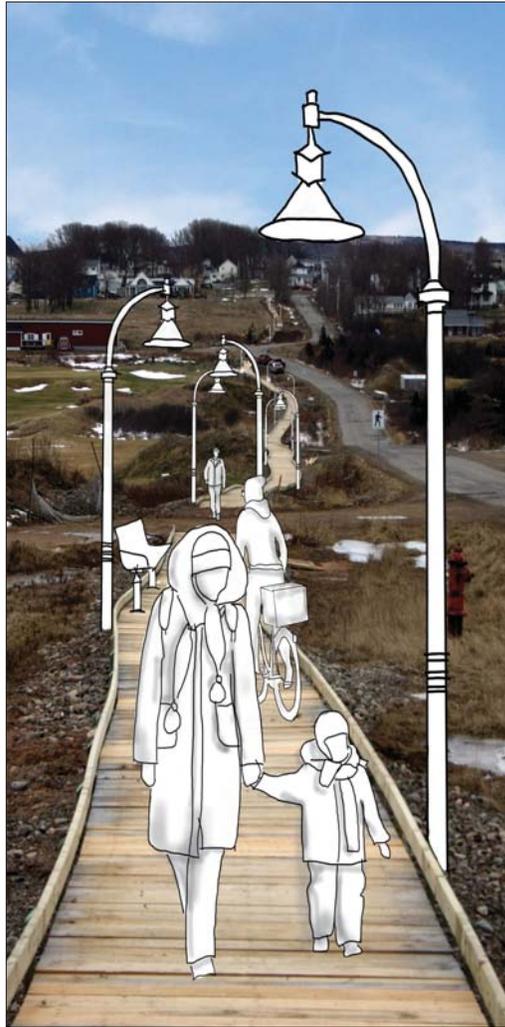
Inset: Locals celebrate on the Community Picnic Grounds at Lower Railway Street, 1904.

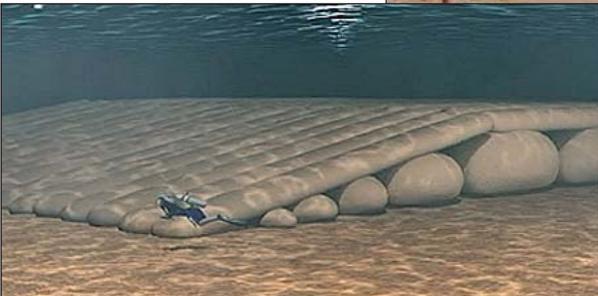
existing canteen, while other vendors rent or sell activity gear, such as kites, snorkelling equipment and flotation devices.

Shown to the right are images of the Beach Road boardwalk path in the daytime with overhead lamps and at night with low-level bollard lighting.

Beach Infrastructure

As people head toward the beach, additional seating will provide the opportunity to watch golfers at the nationally recognized Cabot Links golf course, and discreet lighting will enable activities to continue after sunset. At the beach, a dynamic floating dock structure could provide a place for residents and tourists to enjoy the sea and the sun; or, a Surf Reef could be installed to enable another range of water activities. A series of steps and cabanas will be located along the beach, providing lifeguard services and access to northern areas of the beach. All of this activity and development will contribute to showing tourists (and reminding residents) that they have arrived at a uniquely beautiful and vibrant, activity-rich and beloved community beach, the gateway to this spectacular coast.





Left inset, top and bottom: Example of Surf Reef infrastructure that has been employed to generate waves conducive to surfing activities

Right, top and bottom: Examples of beach infrastructure that could enhance the visitor experience, such as lookouts, shelters, wharves, and floating docks

III. STRENGTHEN CENTRAL AVENUE AS THE COMMERCIAL SPINE

Streetscapes Enhancement

See page 62.

Facade Design Guidelines

See page 67.

Gateways and Parking Areas

Entrances to the town and to the beach should be enhanced through landscaping, signage, and lighting. Using these elements to create a heightened sense of arrival along Central Avenue and at the beach will encourage residents and visitors to explore this vibrant community.

Signs at the north and south ends of Inverness will direct visitors to one of several rest areas /look-outs. These multi-purpose public spaces will be nicely landscaped, showcasing the views of the beach and outlining key attractions for visitors, while providing easy access to parking. Wayfinding maps and tourist kiosks will help people discover what Inverness has to offer before they park their car and explore the beach and town further by foot or bike.

These rest areas could connect with community trails or offer playgrounds and picnic benches where families can eat lunch while enjoying Inverness's breathtaking views.



B. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT MAP

The Strategic Development Map translates the Big Ideas into a strategy for coordinating land use, community investments and infrastructure to support the long-term goals of Inverness. It is a tool for residents, community groups, staff, and council to use to inform major siting decisions and guide development and projects in Inverness.

The Strategic Development Map defines both restrictions and opportunities for development, looking at Inverness in the context of three key components of a successful community:

Future Growth

Key opportunity areas for future growth are identified with a view to reinforcing the Big

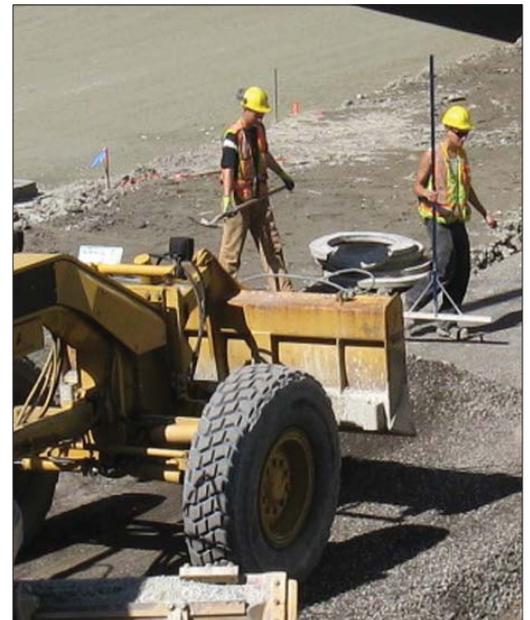
Ideas of Inverness. New infrastructure and development must be planned strategically.

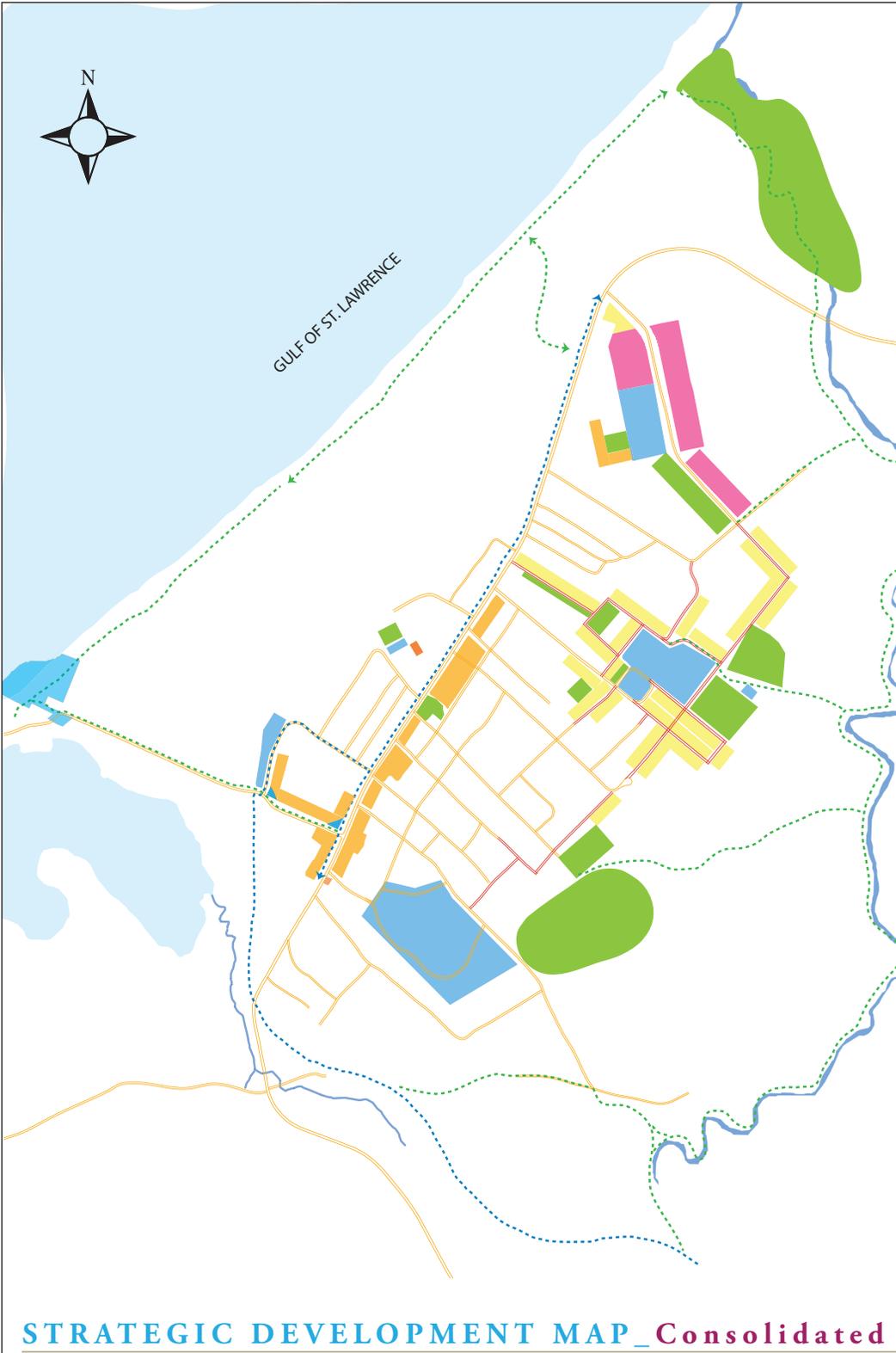
Gathering

The Strategic Development Map identifies new and existing community buildings, public institutions, open spaces and recreation areas, so that the community can work towards ensuring that these places are well connected and effectively serve as hubs of community activity.

Connectivity

Future road connections, trails, board walks and “active transportation” links have been planned and marked on the map to ensure important community buildings and spaces are connected and easily accessible to everyone.





- Future Housing**
- Energy Innovation**
- Community & Institutional**
- Commercial**
- Recreation & Open Space**
- Existing Road**
- Future Road**
- Blue Route**
- Boardwalk & Trail**

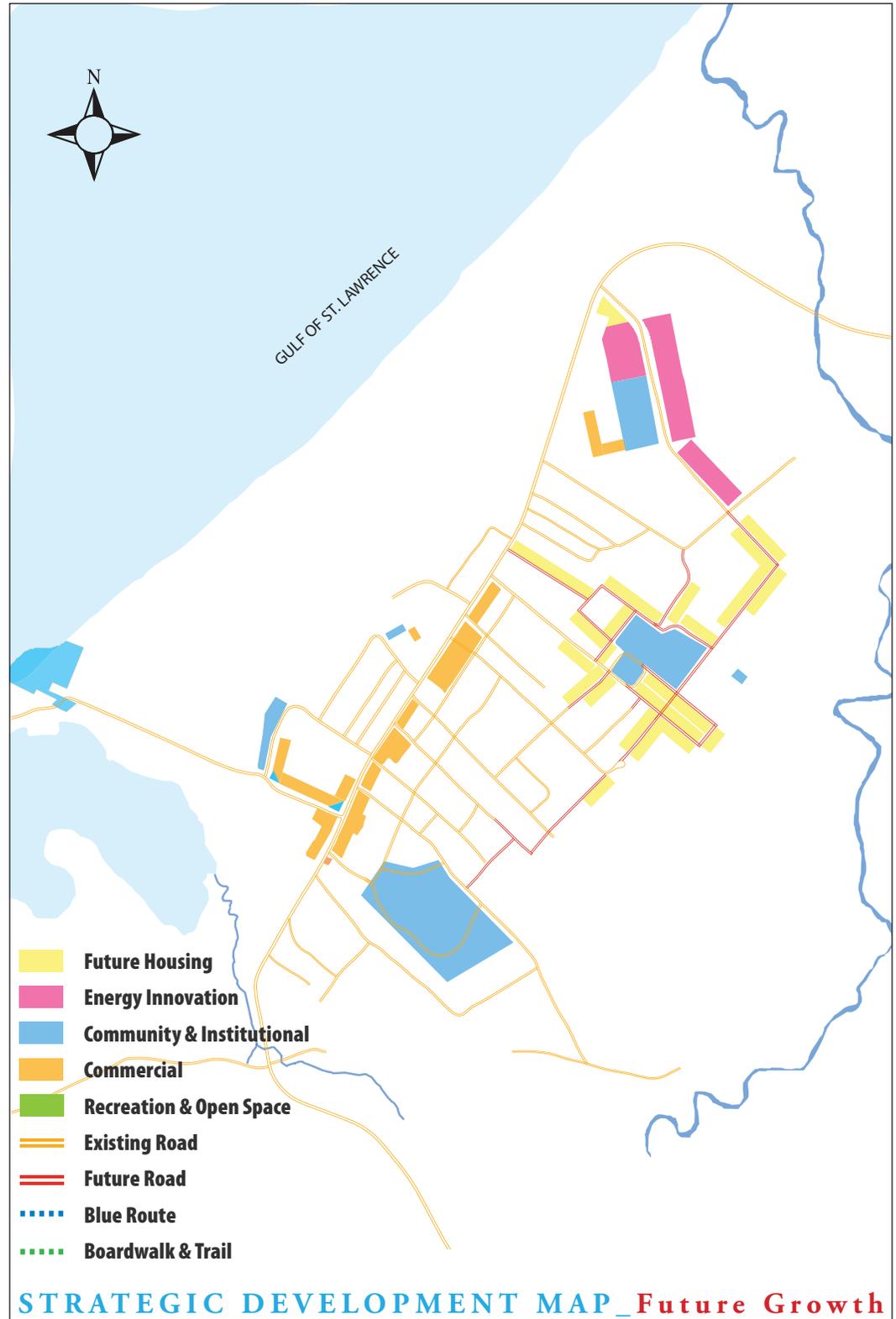
Consolidated map elements:
- future growth
- gathering
- connectivity

FUTURE GROWTH

The extension of infrastructure services such as roads, electricity, and water and sewer lines will be the most significant expenditure for future development. Our goals are to direct future development near existing infrastructure to minimize these costs and to plan roads that bisect larger properties in order to open up new frontage for housing.

The Strategic Development Map identifies a potential new transportation connection, which would connect the Arts Centre to the Hospital. This road would create the opportunity for a new neighbourhood around the school, an area that would be attractive to families due to its proximity to the school and future recreation areas and trail systems.

Lands adjacent to the Arts Centre could be developed as a research and innovation hub, exploring potential district heating connections to the former mine below. Development of further cultural facilities and initiatives (such as an amphitheatre or the Gaelic Forest) should also be encouraged near the Arts Centre, further reinforcing this area as the cultural hub of Inverness.





Commercial development will be concentrated on Central Avenue (transforming it into a thriving main street), and on Beach Road/Lower Railway Street (encouraging safer, more pedestrian-friendly commercial activity off busy Highway 19 and forging connections between the Early Years Centre, Miners Museum, Boardwalk and Trans Canada Trail).

GATHERING

Community gathering spaces and community buildings are the common ground shared by everyone who lives in or visits Inverness. Every Invernesser knows this is a walking town, where community members love to meet and chat as they are out and about. Community spaces increase such opportunities and reinforce Inverness's innate friendly, neighbourly charm. The hospital, Arts Centre, school, and Lower Railway Commons should be further enhanced as key community centres for gathering and programming,

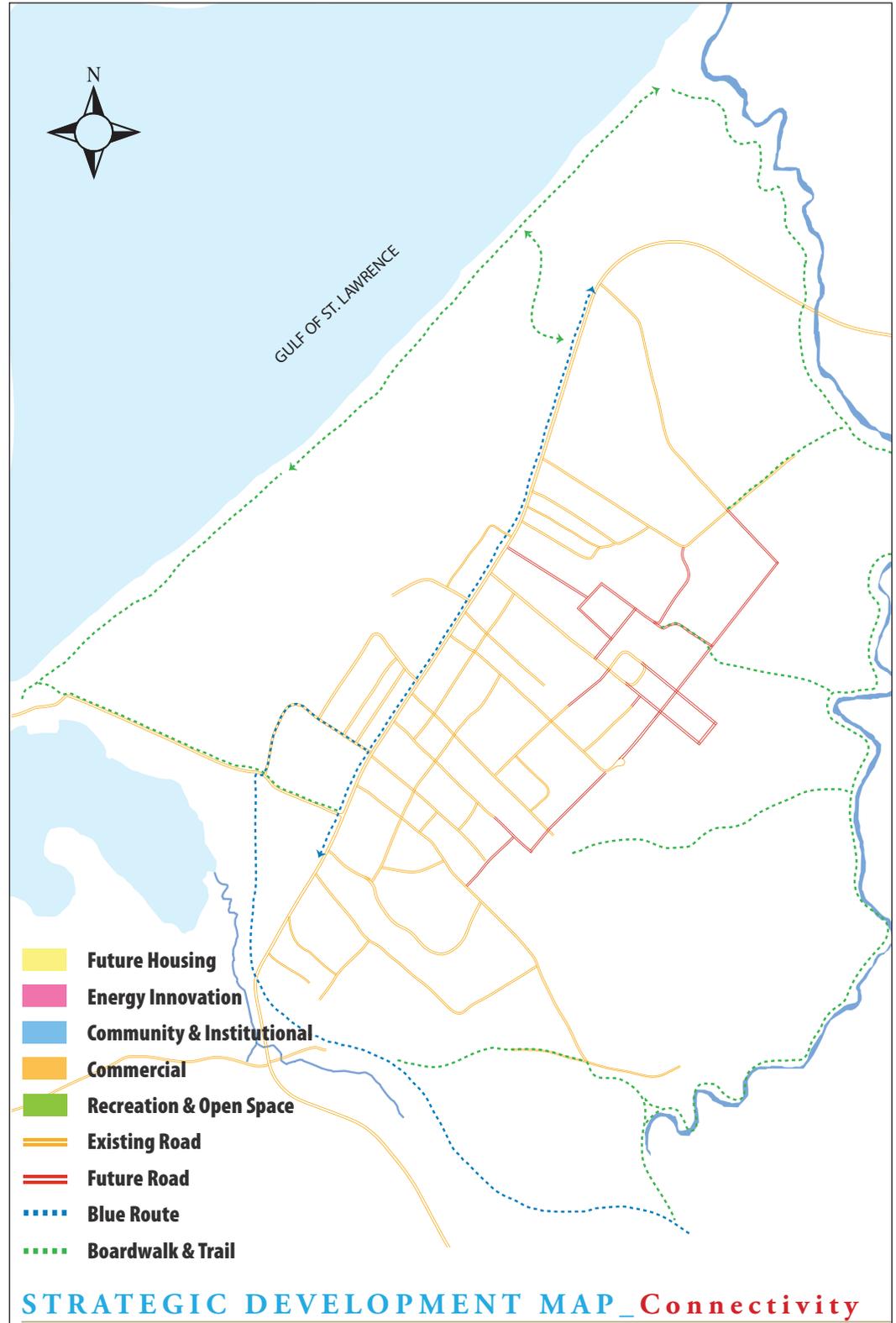
The gathering spaces indicated on the map include proposed and existing playing fields, pavilions, race track grounds, community gardens, linear parks and resting areas. It is critical that Inverness make

these spaces accessible for all age groups to promote a healthy and active Inverness.

CONNECTIVITY

The adjacent map shows existing and proposed streets, trails, and pathways. The main circulation improvements proposed focus on (1) making Central Avenue more pedestrian- and cyclist-friendly, (2) completing the street network on the east side of town, (3) strengthening the connection to the water, and (4) creating nature trails.

Improvements to Central Avenue include a multi-use pathway, improved pedestrian crossings, and a more continuous sidewalk. Suggested signage and plazas on Central Avenue will help announce the beach access points. A new road is proposed on the east side of town to facilitate residential development around the school and connect key community spaces, while trails linking the Gaelic Forest and running along the river improve connections to the natural environment.



2.3 Community Projects

Quite a number of potential projects were discussed over the course of this planning process, all of which are recorded in the meeting notes in the Appendix. Below is a list of the projects that we feel best serve the 5 Big Ideas, and which we have therefore incorporated into the 5-, 10- and 20-year Phasing Strategy within this Development Plan.

1. ATTRACT & RETAIN FAMILIES

(a) Affordable Housing Developments, Energy Retrofits and Restoration

The community has established the Shean Housing Co-operative to address the wide range of issues related to housing—both new and existing.

New Housing

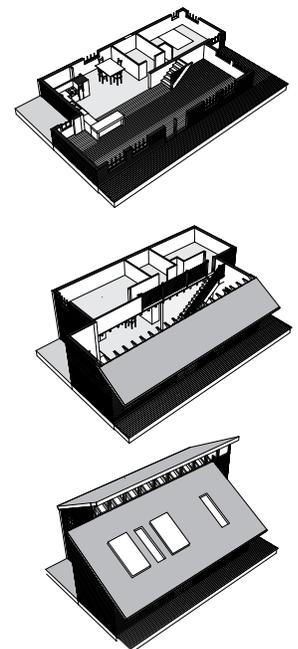
The Co-operative views the next five years as a major opportunity to bring high-quality housing stock to Inverness through a strategy that is locally based and integrated within the larger network of regional resources.

The first phase of this strategy will see the following developments:

- Seccession of a 1.7-acre plot of municipally owned land into the community’s trust, enabling the co-operative development of 8 houses to serve the demand identified by a needs-based study currently underway.
- Development of a strategy to guide future housing developments based on the

Below: Cut-away plan sections of a 1,200-sq-ft house prototype
Left: Vignette of housing development concept with focus on healthy families and diverse communities

Inset: Vignette of planned community spaces in housing development



example of this initial housing project. Following that process, successive phases will create additional residential developments for mixed demographics, such as downsizing seniors and young families seeking affordable, equity-based home ownership.

- Creation of sustainable design precedents that include a pellet-boiler district heating system and a tighter building envelope for greater energy efficiency and long term affordability.

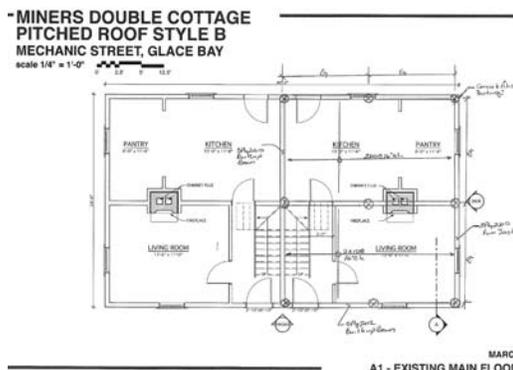
Retrofits

While new housing is integral to the future growth of Inverness, equally important is the improvement of its existing housing stock which, along with infill housing, works towards strengthening the town core. The REBlock® Energy Retrofit Program, currently underway in Inverness, provides consultation for homeowners, guiding them in retrofitting their houses for energy savings. Phase 1 is almost complete, which sees the development of a Deep Retrofit Roadmap (energy upgrades in logical and affordable phases) for 2 prototypical Inverness houses.

The end goal of this project is to develop a sustainable housing plan that includes new homes, existing homes, apartments, restored heritage homes and public housing. Part of that plan includes arranging for training of local firms and trades in air leakage control and basic insulation best practices, looking at options for creating investment pools for upgrades (e.g. CEDIF), and feasibility of alternative energy sources (biomass, solar thermal, PV). Inverness should continue to promote and encourage involvement with this program.

Restoration

In Glace Bay, to address the dilapidated state of their company homes, Cape Breton University developed local partnerships for the 50 Mechanic Street Restoration Project. The Company Homes in Inverness, and their state of disrepair, are an unresolved problem—they are both a blight and a respected part of Inverness history. Following Glace Bay's model, the community should seek similar opportunities for partnerships to enable the preservation of historic properties.



(b) Inverness Community Leadership Centre (ICLC)

The ICLC will help establish a central core within town, in line with Central Avenue Park and the Shean Co-op. The project, coordinated by a partnership between the Inverness Cottage Workshop and the Inverness Early Years Co-operative, will house the services offered by both partners. The centre will function as a community hub, a place of support for both parents and children of young families, and a model for sustainable development and community-led management.

The Inverness Cottage Workshop is a vocational agency for adults who have intellectual disabilities and/or mental health needs. It has operated for 30 years as a non-profit, charitable organization providing support to clients from across central Inverness County. Among its activities are:

ICW Business Activities: bakery, café, catering, used clothing, village market, business support services, recycling

ICW Individual Client Support Services: literacy training, community employment and contracts, community access, independent living & social skills training

The Inverness Early Years Co-op’s goal is to see that all children have an equitable start in their development. This goal will be well served by the universally accessible Early Years Centre, which will be open 6 days a week and coordinate services and programs to better support children’s health and developmental needs, while also providing support and education for parents.

2. BECOME AN ENERGY INNOVATOR

(a) Strathlorne Forest Nursery

The Strathlorne Forest Nursery, currently run by the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources, provides employment for approximately 25 seasonal workers, as of 2010. It is a multi-million dollar complex with the capacity to produce 10 million seedlings per year targeted for forest replanting purposes.

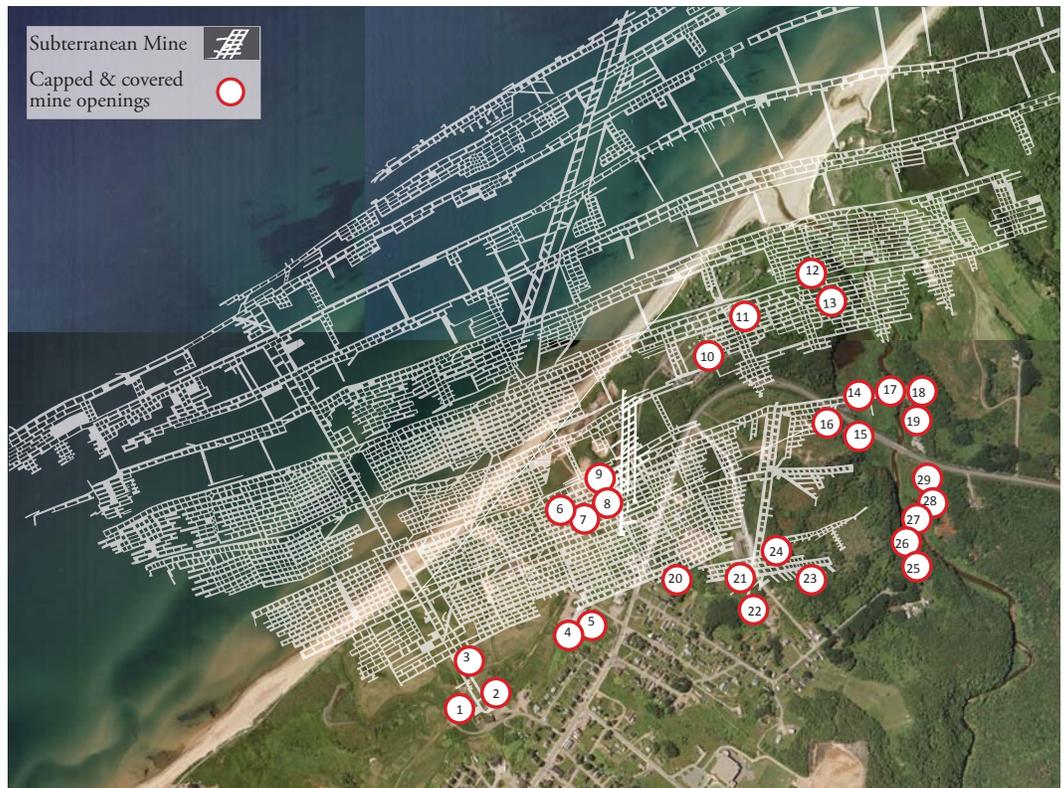


Left: Vignette at the entrance of the Early Years Centre, part of the proposed Inverness Community Leadership Centre

Given industry challenges, the Nursery has been downsizing and its future is uncertain. In April 2009, the Nursery was approved for over \$1 million in Community Development Trust funds to look at transitioning the operation; however, to date, this funding has not come to realization.

The community recognizes the Nursery complex as an important built asset that enables

opportunities for broader sustainability objectives. In November 2012, 45 participants attended a workshop to discuss the future of the Strathlorne Nursery. It was identified that the municipality required a coordinating body to organize and facilitate next steps, which are a Needs & Demand Study, and Feasibility Study. The newly established Energy & Food Securities Committee seeks to fill that role and oversee these next steps.



Top: Strathlorne Nursery, owned by Department of Natural Resources
Bottom: Map of the No. 1 mine tunnels beneath Inverness, and location of capped and covered former mine shaft openings

(b) Geothermal Energy Production

By developing a new community around energy and innovation, Inverness can ensure a long-term future of sustainable energy production. Imagine the potential for Inverness to become a leader in sustainable energy systems through the creation of an Eco-Industrial Park, where mine-water geothermal energy works with wind, solar and biomass production to meet or even exceed Inverness’s energy needs.

Using mine water as a source of energy is the first step towards realizing this bold vision. Geothermal energy stored by mine water can be used as a safe and ecological way to heat buildings, and could enable Inverness to transform the legacy of the coal mines from an environmental scar to a source of sustainable energy. Significant tracts of municipal land at the northern edge of the town sit above former mine workings. Tapping into these mines would allow a reuse of this

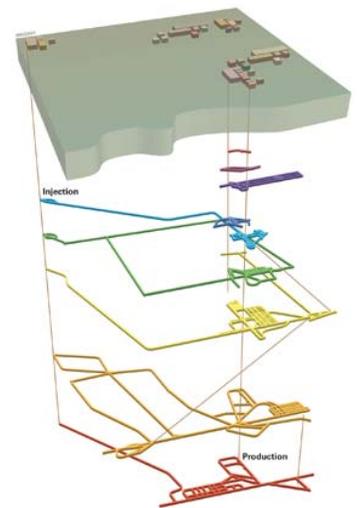
infrastructure, and create a marketable asset for the community in luring entrepreneurial investment.

Case Study: Springhill and Glace Bay, Nova Scotia

In Springhill, N.S., geothermal research began in 1985. Partnering with the Province of Nova Scotia, the town has developed one of the first Geothermal Industrial Parks in the world. Businesses and even the hockey rink are hooked into the geothermal system. The Marion Murray Community Centre has cut energy costs in half and reduced CO₂ emissions by 40%. Glace Bay’s BayPLEX arena also uses geothermal energy.

Case Study: Heerlen, Netherlands

Heerlen was a town in decline, in the heart of a Dutch coal-mining area. Seven European partners (including municipalities, as well as building-research institutes and housing associations, assisted by strong financial support from the EU) developed a geothermal power station using water from abandoned mines. Project partner Weller



Above: Diagram of underground minewater network system
 Left top and bottom: Heerlen, Netherlands
 Right top: BayPLEX, Glace Bay, N.S.
 Right bottom: Marion Murray Community Centre in Springhill, N.S.

housing association constructed 200 houses, shops, offices, a library and a supermarket, all of which contain heating and cooling systems designed to run on energy from the mine water.

Next Steps

Mine-water geothermal provides an opportunity for Inverness to take a leadership role in an emerging field. The cost of developing a mine-water geothermal plant and the time required to recoup the initial investment on the project varies. However, as the prices of oil and electricity continue to rise, the project payback will get better. This makes mine-water geothermal attractive as a potential sustainable energy source for Inverness. A feasibility study must be completed to assess geothermal potential in Inverness.

Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation (ECBC) and Cape Breton University’s Centre for Sustainable Energy & Environment have undergone a number of projects utilizing mine-water geothermal energy. Both organizations could partner in research and advise on further action, including feasibility studies. The town of Springhill could provide direction on working with the province in developing a Geothermal Industrial Park.

3. RETHINK & REDEFINE CENTRAL AVENUE

(a) Facade Program

See section 4: Community Design Standards.

(b) Streetscape Enhancements

See section 4: Community Design Standards.

(c) Community Greenscapes Initiative

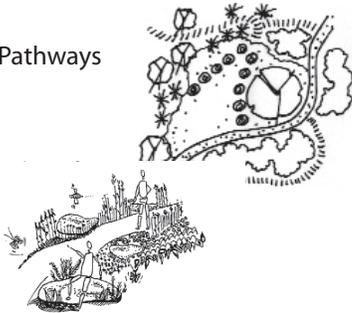
An already naturally low soil pH has traditionally made it hard to grow even grass in Inverness. Consequently, a culture of residential and public landscaping and gardening has been slow to develop.

Currently, the Inverness Garden Club places and maintains about 63 hanging baskets and around 50 half barrels of flowers every year from late June until October. It is proof the greening movement is underway and is well-positioned to unfold across the entire community along Central Avenue, as well as down residential streets and around cultural institutions.

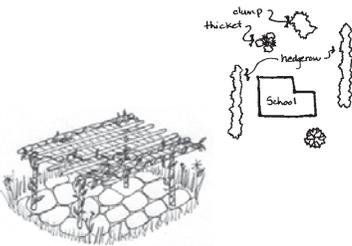
The principal of Inverness Academy has expressed a keen interest in developing programs—both in school and after school—to engage youth in landscaping the immediate

Below left: Diagrams of different types of gardening interventions
 Below right: View of Inverness Academy, in need of surrounding landscaping, gardening and playgrounds to warm up the environment

Pathways



Windbreaks/Shade Shelters



Container Gardening



Below left: 3 potential locations for the Gaelic Forest on municipal lands
 Top middle: Interpretive chart from Gaelic Forest in Salen, Scotland
 Bottom middle: Trail markers in Salen Gaelic Forest
 Below right: Big River Estuary is a significant wetland that is slowly recovering from over a century of pollution.

A similar project in Salen, Scotland, was developed to help children learn the Ogham, or Celtic tree alphabet, wherein each letter is associated with a tree or plant: A is *ailm* (elm), B is *beith* (birch), C is *coll* (hazel), D is *dair* (oak), E is *eadha* (aspen), F is *fearn* (alder), G is *gort* (ivy), H is *uath* (hawthorn), I is *iogh* (yew), L is *luis* (rowan), M is *muin* (vine), N is *nuin* (ash), O is *oir* (gorse), R is *ruis* (elder), S is *suil* (willow), T is *teine* (furze), and U is *ur* (heather). A line of poetry or community motto or other message can be thus spelled out by a series of trees in a row. Visitors walking along the path between trees would experience a very literal tour of the Gaelic language and Inverness history, while also enjoying a beautiful, landscaped stroll that ends with a lovely garden and outdoor sitting area heralding arrival at the Arts Centre.

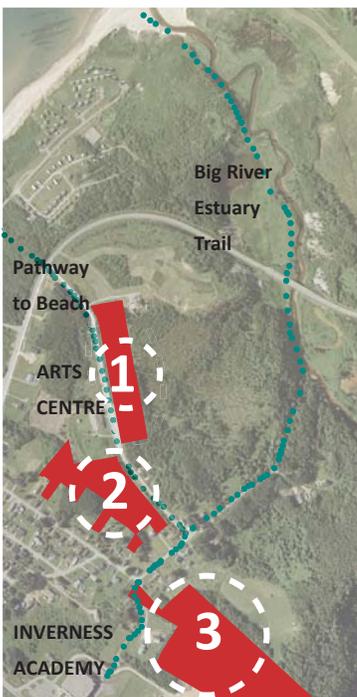
Current plans have been sited on municipal property near the Arts Centre which would benefit the community by integrating with the Development Plan in connecting local residents, the school and other nearby destinations and active transportation routes.

5. SHOWCASE OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

(a) Estuary Nature Reserve

The loss of Beach Road No. 2 has highlighted the need for the community to identify key points of access from Highway 19 to the waterfront. While the Big River Estuary wouldn't serve as a real beachfront access for vehicles, it could serve as a major component of the proposed Natural Trails network.

The Estuary is currently a large wetland that is naturally remediating after years of industrial exploitation. While an informal



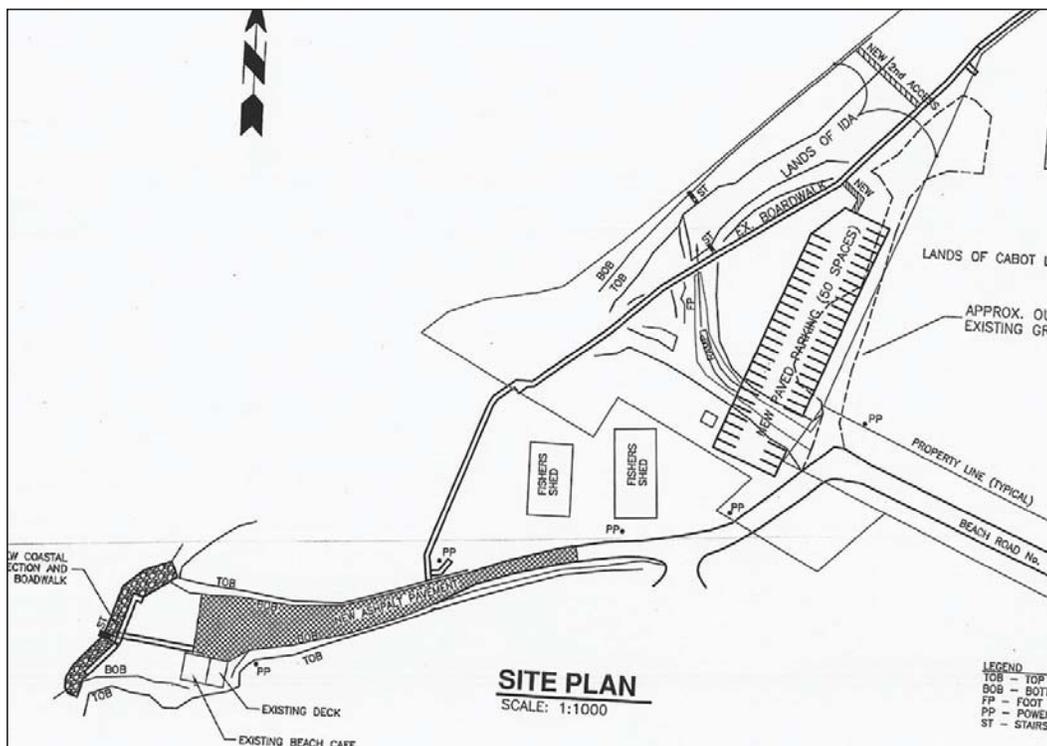
trail could be isolated in the short term, the community can approach the Ecology Action Centre—responsible for a number of climate-change coastal studies along Cape Breton shores—about conducting an assessment of the Big River Estuary to obtain a better idea of its condition and the feasibility/possible interventions required to secure its potential designation as a Nature Reserve.

(b) Waterfront Development

The Inverness waterfront has recently undergone redevelopment with the support of provincial funding, resulting in additional parking areas for beach goers and upgrades to the canteens, while Cabot Links has funded the development of a formal boardwalk pathway along Beach Road No.1. These upgrades are a great start to the important goal of developing this major corridor and reinforcing its connection with Central Avenue.

Additional parking provisions may be required in the future near the current development by the waterfront and potentially around Lower Railway Street, as traffic is observed in the coming tourist seasons. Such provisions will need to be incorporated incrementally into possible capital costs in the 5-, 10- and 20-year Phasing Strategies.

To help promote the beach as a major attraction, the community may wish to invest in more infrastructure to accommodate beach goers. Many beaches provide cabanas that offer shelter and storage for beach gear, outdoor showers for rinsing off, and additional outdoor structures, such as pavilions for gatherings. These amenities encourage longer beach stays and raise the community’s profile as a beach destination.



Left: Plan drawing of the proposed waterfront development on provincial land. The project, currently under development, includes new paving, a new parking area, beach access, and a boardwalk connecting to Central Avenue.

(c) Trails Development

To encourage “active transportation,” Inverness should incorporate its many nature trails into the larger plan. The Development Plan connects the Trans Canada Trail, town streets, Big River, Big River Estuary, and the waterfront, offering users a wide variety of surface landscapes that include beach, sidewalk, gravel, boardwalk, and dirt trails. An Active Transportation Working Group should be established immediately to oversee the development of a Trails Master Plan and conduct a feasibility study.



A host of different environments possible throughout an extensive Paths Network through town, parks, beaches, rivers, wetlands and forests—all possible in the landscape surrounding Inverness



3. BRANDING & POSITIONING STRATEGY

3.1 Branding & Positioning Strategy

WHY BRAND INVERNESS?

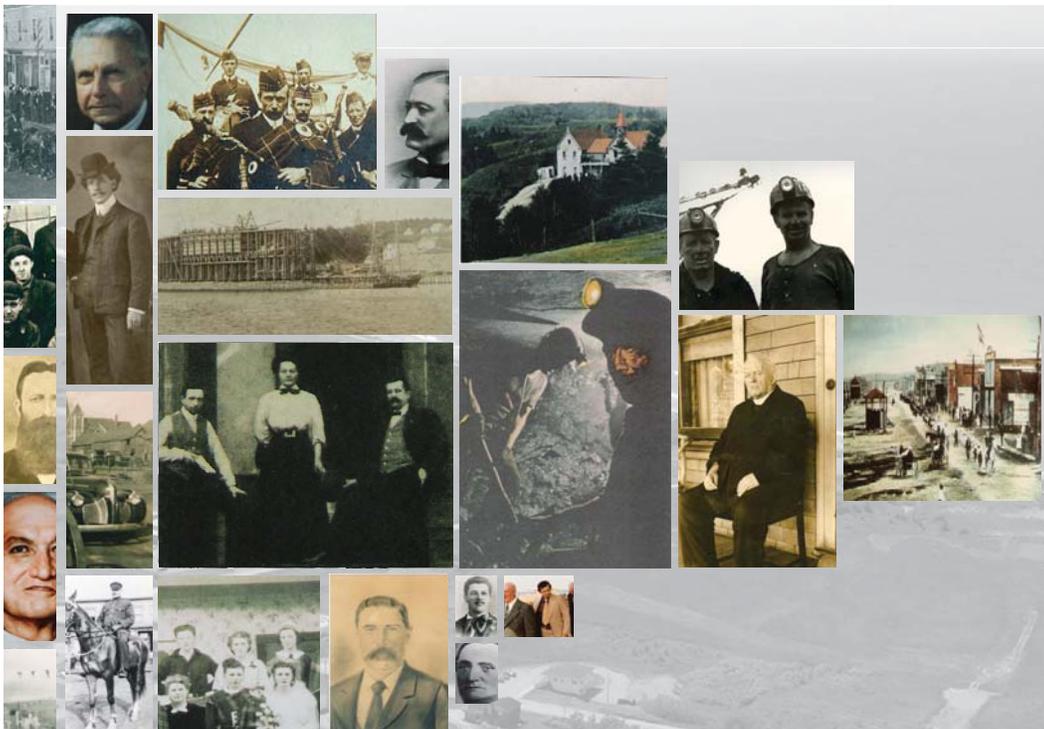
The Inverness “brand” should achieve two main objectives:

1. Communicate to visitors WHAT sets Inverness apart, and WHY they should visit, return or relocate there, and
2. Reflect back to residents their pride in Inverness as a home and their aspirations for the community in the next 10 to 20 years.

The term *brand* is a short-hand for the message we want to convey: a distilled explanation of what is unique and what is irresistible about Inverness.

Branding, in a sense, is an exercise in looking more closely at one’s community and realizing what is most important and most precious about it—and then, determining the most elegant and succinct way to communicate that insight, in a way that will inspire those who live here and attract those who don’t (yet).

In the largest sense, the end goal of this exercise is growth: growth in tourism and growth in local industry, business and population. This growth will ensure the preservation and prosperity of a community that has deep historical roots. The branding strategy described here will identify Inverness’s aspirations and provide the footing for subsequent steps toward realizing that vision.



BRANDING PROCESS

It is important to understand the development of the community brand as something that evolves—the Inverness Conceptual Plan is a part of that process. The scope of work in the Development Plan constitutes a strategic plan, identifying an overall strategy, with goals and objectives. Developing an action plan should be the immediate next step upon completion of the Inverness Conceptual Plan.

INVERNESS, DISTILLED:

Who we are...

It is important to note the qualities that distinguish Inverness from other Maritime towns, because it is precisely those qualities that will help shape the foundation of the community brand, and develop it into something **genuine**. The branding strategy should grow out of what Inverness is and can be—and not be imposed from the outside, in order to avoid fabricating an identity that does not faithfully, insightfully, and glowingly reflect this community. We want to communicate that this town is *worth exploring, worth investing in, worth moving to, and worth coming home to.*



“There’s something real about the people of Inverness.”



At the first Conceptual Plan community workshop, the participants were asked the question, “How do you know you are in Inverness?” The community’s responses, in addition to extensive background research and discussions, have been summarized by the following key points.

HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU ARE IN INVERNESS?

1. **Inverness is a place where everyone feels at home.** In the future, we hope more and more former Invernessers will find their way home, and we also hope more and more people from away will find their way to Inverness for the first time and experience that feeling many others have already had: that for the first time, they’ve come home.
2. **Inverness is a unique fusion of scrappy, independent spirit and an industrial history with artistic talent and a rich cultural heritage.** A salt of the earth place that is steeped in myth.
3. **Inverness is, above all things, a real place: nothing about Inverness is phony or contrived.** This is a forthright, heartfelt, honest, unpretentious, plain-speaking, upfront, unaffected, down to earth, proud community...
4. **Inverness has one of the most beautiful beaches in Nova Scotia**—a vast landscape of golden sand and rolling sea, where locals and visitors gather all summer long to lie in the sun, swim in the waves, indulge in a snack at the waterfront concession stand...or, now, play a round of golf!
5. **Inverness is an anchor of the Ceilidh Trail:** positioned just before the juncture with the Cabot Trail, the point of intersection of several highway routes, the former end of the railway line and now the beginning of the Trans Canada Trail.

The branding strategy draws inspiration from all these assets and attributes—the rolling green hills that have been lovingly restored, the stunning rural landscape with the ocean backdrop, the community with its Celtic heritage and warm social character—and integrates them with a sense of optimism, entrepreneurship and respect for the natural landscape.

Where we are going...

The golf course development has already taken a major step in transforming the community from a resource and primary-industry town to a recreation/tourism destination. How can Inverness’s brand capitalize on that success and extend it, creating new opportunities in town? And how can this seasonal draw become part of a strategy for attracting visitors to Inverness all year round?

In the first workshop, participants were asked the question, “What is the future of Inverness?” The community responses to this question were extensive and varied. Collating the feedback, the project team developed the **5 Big Ideas**, which distilled these responses into clear big-picture objectives for development in the next 10 to 20 years. (See Development Vision on page 19 and full list of responses in Appendix A.)

HOW DO YOU SEE INVERNESS IN THE FUTURE?

The 5 Big Ideas are:

- 1. Attract & Retain Families**
- 2. Become an Energy Innovator**
- 3. Rethink and Redefine Central Avenue**
- 4. Celebrate & Promote Our History and Culture**
- 5. Showcase the Natural Environment**

The 5 Big Ideas are expanded further in the Development Plan section, but also connect with the branding concept and process. The Inverness brand must tap into the vision of the **5 Big Ideas**, positioning itself as a **family-friendly, green, revitalized, culture-rich, eco-destination**.



“...[a town] holding itself together through the tenacity of being ‘home.’”

Frank McDonald,
Local Author



INVERNESS PAST:

The town of Inverness has a long, rich and storied history. It has always been a tightly knit community, even in the days when coal drew together workers and their families from all over the world. The hard-working, proud character of the town is expressed in images of the blackened faces of miners cheerfully returning from the pit and in company houses like the Red Rows, which against all odds have outlasted the short decades they were built to stand. Community has always been part of the lives of Invernessers, who've weathered the changes of two centuries with humour and heart.

The below image of Broad Cove depicts Inverness at a major transition point in its "brand," transforming from a fishing village into a mining town. Now, again, Inverness faces the aspirations of a new industry and a new era.

Act I - Fishing Village

Act II - Mining Town

Act III - Seaside Recreation Destination

How will we define and shape Inverness's next act?



Top row: Central Avenue, 1904;
94th Regiment Pipe Band, 1906;
Central Avenue, 1908. Photos
courtesy of Inverness Miners
Museum

Middle row: Company Houses today
Bottom: William Penn Hussey
Map of Broad Cove Coal Mines
(now Inverness), c. 1890s. Photo
courtesy of Inverness Miners
Museum

INVERNESS FUTURE:

Our branding strategy should not only articulate who we are and where we have come from, but also who we aspire to become. With the success of the Cabot Links golf course, Inverness faces an opportunity to redefine itself in the coming years as an exciting seaside destination—a historic coastal village with one of the most beautiful beaches in the Maritimes,

where visitors can enjoy any one of a number of recreational activities. Workshop participants have expressed a desire to embrace the change that's underway and build a brand that associates this community with engaging leisure activities like golf, bicycling, hiking, boating, swimming, crosscountry skiing and more.

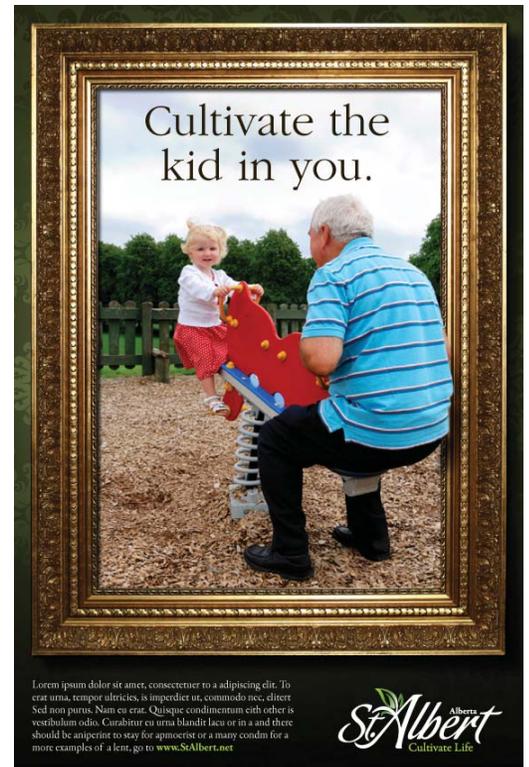
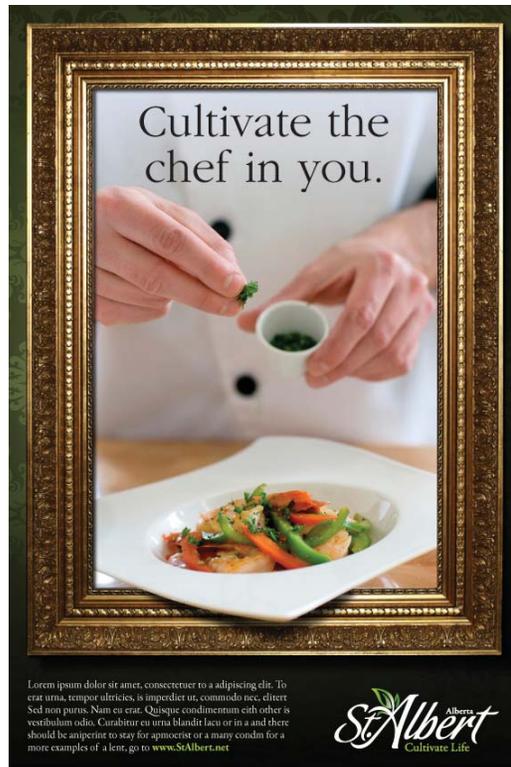
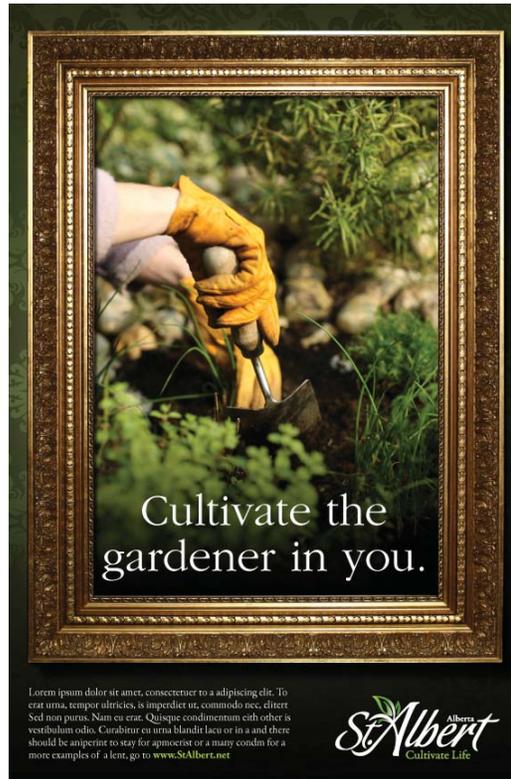


Top: View along beach-side boardwalk
Middle row: Images of local recreation and entertainment, such as snowmobiling, cycling, golfing and harness racing
Bottom Row: Images of examples to emulate in implementation of ICP

CASE STUDY:
St. Albert, AB

St. Albert sought to move beyond its limiting identity as a bedroom community by developing its brand around the idea of growth. Tapping into the town's historical agricultural roots, this effective strategy promotes a broad range of activities by using "cultivate" as the connecting verb.

Shown here are their advertisements and wayfinding signage, which convey the theme. Their website nicely subdivides activities and events by season, and their logo is simple but clear, capturing the essence of cultivating and fostering growth.





Chautauqua
The World's Learning Center New York

Welcome to Sailing Camp
EARNING YOUR SAILING BADGE
WAS NEVER THIS MUCH FUN

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Sed mauris enim, convallis venenatis, placerat sed, sodales eget, justo. Nam mi. Praesent hendrerit nunc a arcu. Cum sociis natoque penitibus et magnis dis parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus. Sed ipsum. Etiam ut elit. Quisque tempus ultricies justo. Donec vel justo feugiat tortor consequat nunc. Morbi diam. Nulla non eros. Vestibulum arcu sapien, ornare nec, porttitor vitae, blandit sit amet, mi.

I
NY

CASE STUDIES:

Chautauqua, NY

This community also used a broad approach to communicate its brand. By labelling itself “The World’s Learning Centre,” Chautauqua was able to include a diverse range of activities in its brand, identifying the community as a place to take workshops and training for many different interests.



H. G. Wells once famously noted that “Cycle tracks will abound in Utopia.” Just twenty minutes from downtown Edmonton you’ll find this very place. Featuring nearly 30 kilometers of gear grinding hills, scenic riverside trails, and flat-out pulse-pounding terrain. Welcome to Alberta’s biking utopia - Devon.

Devon ALBERTA
Enjoy the ride!

www.RideDevon.ab.ca

Bike Town Alberta



H. G. Wells once famously noted that “Cycle tracks will abound in Utopia.” Just twenty minutes from downtown Edmonton you’ll find this very place. Featuring nearly 30 kilometers of gear grinding hills, scenic riverside trails, and flat-out pulse-pounding terrain. Welcome to Alberta’s biking utopia - Devon.

Devon ALBERTA
Enjoy the ride!

www.RideDevon.ab.ca

Bike Town Alberta

Devon, AB

Devon, Alberta, conversely established a brand that appealed to a very specific target market, and then capitalized on that success to cross-promote other activities of similar energy and spirit. The cycling tourism market brought a boost to the local economy and created spin-off business for a number of other recreational sectors.



Chemainus, BC

Another example of a successful narrow-brand focus, Chemainus promotes itself as the mural town—which provides a clever medium for interpreting the history and culture of the community.

CASE STUDY:

Newfoundland & Labrador

Newfoundland & Labrador engage visitors through the use of stunning imagery to wow viewers and evoke a sentimental response. The ads also make appealing references to such cultural attributes as the local gift of gab, and highlight recreational experiences such as winter snowmobiling and ecotourism.

This branding serves a larger region than Inverness, but Inverness could also feed into a larger branding agenda by partnering with Destination Cape Breton. The landscape of Inverness and Cape Breton evoke a similar sense of awe that could enable promotion of the waterfront, positioning the Inverness beach as a flagship site in the Cape Breton tourism strategy.



WORDS/PHRASES:

The following quotations came out of discussions at the community workshop and other interactions with community members over the course of the project. They are shared here as a source of inspiration and could possibly inform the language used around the branding concept or in future advertising campaigns.

“Aspirational”

“Innovation”

“A recreation destination”

“Where Dreams Unfold”

“Imagine”

“Transformative”

“A Place of New Possibilities”

“Experience the Change”

“Bringing the World Home”

“All Things are Possible”

“It’s All Happening”

“A Community on the Move”

“Unearthing its Potential”

“It’s for Real”

“Pathways”

“Coming around a corner”

“Miracles Do Happen”

BRANDING STRATEGY:

Key Ideas

Participants at the second community workshop were presented with 3 possible images to connect to the Inverness brand.

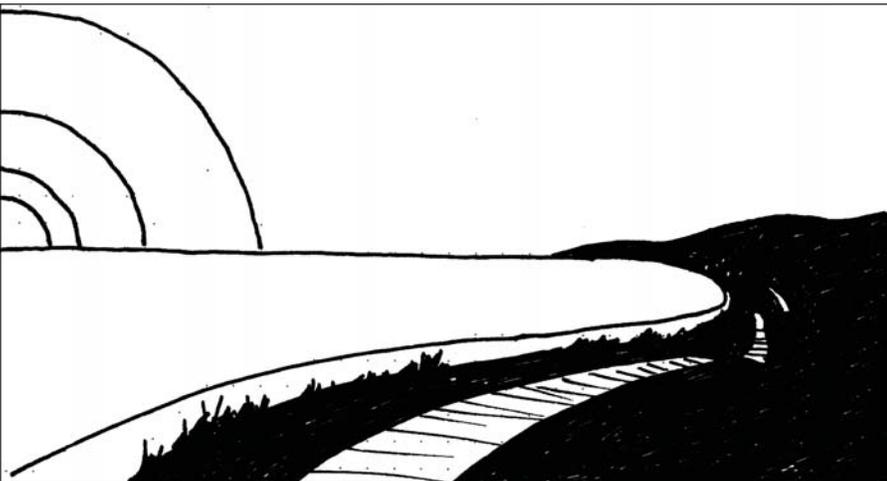
1. Inverness has one of the most *beautiful beaches* in the province—it is a point of pride for the community, and the boardwalk is a key image for that asset. The beach is a place where residents and visitors alike meet, greet, feel connected to the ocean and landscape, and are overlooked by Inverness's newest industry—golf! With its critical position on the Ceilidh Trail, Inverness is the heart of the sunset coast, and Cabot Links will continue to raise Inverness's profile as a recreation destination: the coastline image subtly evokes both these selling points, as well as, of course, the beach itself.

2. The word *home* is a powerful one; like a successful brand, it makes people feel something. The Inverness brand should get into their heads, should linger in their hearts. We want people not just to visit, but to stay. To come back. And to come home.

Evoking the nostalgic, sentimental pull of the idea of coming home may be one way to achieve that. Many things about Inverness—its warmth, neighbourliness, family values, traditional culture, community spirit—fulfill a sort of idealized image of home than some visitors may have never actually experienced before. That is why so many visitors and CFAs can remember the time they first arrived in Inverness having the thought that they had come home for the first time. And of course for those from Inverness, nowhere else will ever really feel like home in the same way, no matter where they go in the world. So it is important to remember that for many residents, visitors, and Return from Aways, Inverness's most powerful source of attraction is not as a destination but as a home.

3. The Tree of Life reflects Inverness's Celtic history and culture, while also creating an image for the interconnectedness between the *deep roots* of the past and the *blossoming of a vibrant future*. If the Gaelic Forest project is completed, this image will also nicely promote it as a hallmark attraction for Inverness.

1



2



3



BRANDING STRATEGY:

Inverness as a Recreation Destination

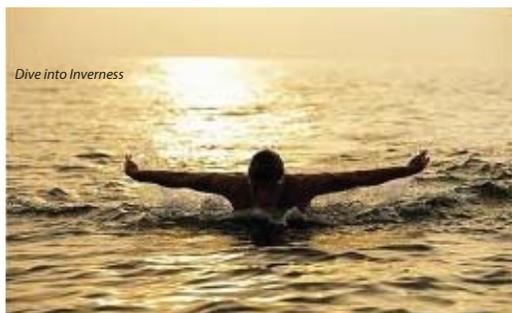
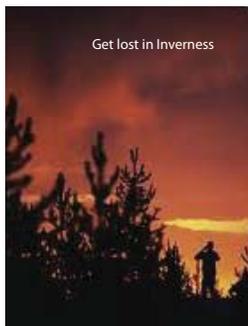
It is clear that the waterfront is a prized asset for Inverness that should be better promoted. The waterfront is an essential component of the shared vision of residents, businesses, and visitors, and therefore plays a pivotal role in defining and shaping the branding strategy for Inverness.

The challenge, however, is that the brand needs to do more than just tell potential visitors that Inverness has a beautiful beach. The brand needs to identify to visitors what there is to do and experience at that beach.

The series of images shown here depict the wide range of activities available at Inverness (note, these sample images are not photographed in Inverness), employing verb-centred imperative statements to create a sense of dynamism and foster excitement around

all the possibilities. The sunset silhouette has been chosen to implicitly associate Inverness with beautiful sunsets and to put the emphasis on the activity being shown rather than the surroundings, but this is only one possible approach. Such images could be consolidated into an advertising campaign, promoting all these activities and more (including recreation for other seasons), with a single slogan and logo drawing them together.

What logo and slogan can promote all of these potential activities?



The silouetted images shown here were selected to demonstrate the number of activities that are possible in Inverness—boating, hiking, swimming, beachcombing, golfing, cycling...

BRANDING STRATEGY:

Logos

The images shown below express the evolutionary process of developing a logo. The silhouette of the waterfront and pathway has been reduced to a simplified line drawing so that it can be incorporated more easily into various media types.

Each graphic demonstrates different degrees of literal representation of this distinctive shoreline. It is important to note that visitors will not decide to go to Inverness based on the recognizability of the shoreline in the logo. The logo simply communicates an idea, and a visual association for a particular community—here the combination of words and graphic communicate the idea of energy, the forward momentum of a community that is growing and revitalizing. (The graphic and slogans are interchangeable.)

The image to the far left below was presented at the second workshop and subsequently used as a starting point for developing the village logo. Next is the most abstract logo of the three, focusing on the linear gesture, landing with emphasis at the slogan. The logo at the

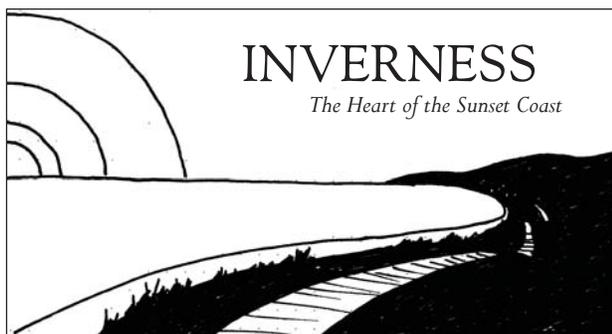
bottom left of the opposing page sketches in the shoreline, incorporating multi-coloured strips of colour (drawn from the vintage colour palette proposed in the Façade Design Guidelines) to reference the waterfront boardwalk. It also brings a stronger perspective to the graphic, emphasizing the idea of the journey towards and landing at Inverness. The last logo is a fusion of the previous two, accompanied by a more sentimental slogan.

Slogans

Slogans under consideration include those inspired by the idea of Inverness as a recreation destination, evoking a sense of activity and fun:

1. Inverness: Come out and play.

This slogan has a playful spirit about it, which is lively and appealing. It also suggests—but does not limit itself to—“playing” golf, Inverness’s flagship recreational activity. The play on words invites visitors from away to “come out” to Inverness, but also encourages both visitors and residents alike to “come outside,” to get active in the beautiful natural landscape of outdoors Inverness.



INVERNESS

Come out and play!

2. Inverness...at your leisure.

This slogan nicely conjures both the sense of a peaceful, laidback, “leisurely” way of life in Inverness—a perfect place to settle down and raise a family or retire or to simply unwind with a relaxing vacation—and the idea of leisure activities, helping to reinforce the idea of Inverness as a recreation destination. The emphasis on “your” invitingly suggests a place where visitors can make their experience their own, where there is something for everyone, and they have only to come here to discover whatever they are looking for.

3. Get out in Inverness.

This slogan variation plays on the contrasting terms “out” and “in,” evoking a dynamic world of outdoor activities available in Inverness with a teasing invitation.



Slogans evoking the idea of home also resonated with the community members consulted, and should be further considered in future stages of brand development and resolution:

4. Come home to Inverness.

This slogan slyly suggests with the directional preposition “to” that home is not a place where one returns but where one goes. “Coming home” in this context is a feeling. A feeling that can be had in Inverness, a place that will feel like home no matter where you are from. For those who grew up in Inverness and had to leave to live in other places, this message will have an extra resonance, calling them to come back to a place that now is flourishing and ready to be a home to them again.

5. Inverness: Welcome home.

This deceptively simple slogan still manages to convey the idea that Inverness is a home for everyone; even those arriving for the first time are being welcomed home. Like the above slogan, it also reinforces the appeal to those who literally are from Inverness who have left to pursue work or raise families in other regions, reminding them that Inverness remains their home and inviting them to stay.

6. Inverness: You are home.

Another variation on the theme of Inverness as a place that is intrinsically a home for all, this phrase reminds visitors and locals alike what defines where they are: At home, in Inverness.



3.2 Online Media

WEBSITE

Inverness needs an improved official website that visitors and locals can reference, enabling them to keep up to date on happenings in the community. A very simple front page with one image and one clear navigation bar, organizing local information, will greatly enhance the Inverness experience for visitors, improve the day-to-day lives of locals, and open up communication opportunities for businesses, especially in the hospitality sector.

ONLINE EXPOSURE

Smart Phone Technology

As a complement to the website, various interpretive kiosks in the area will have QR codes that connect to the history and culture or events pages to inform those with smartphones instantaneously while they are out and about the town.

QR codes connect interpretive signage to the internet for web-enabled cell phones and devices. Online information in the form of webpages, video, audio and photo libraries becomes instantly available to visitors right where they are standing. Guests snap photos of the QR code with a free application that runs on their phone or mobile device. QR codes are free to produce, so there are potentially limitless ways of engaging guests with information.

Sample Project

An intriguing Canadian project called Murmur might provide inspiration for an innovative way to engage local and visitor interaction and contribute to the “Inverness experience.” Murmur is based in a number of cities across the world, providing signs at key sites and intersections that display the Murmur logo (a lime-green ear) and a phone number and code. Participants dial the number and enter the code to indicate their loca-

Below: A sample QR code used by smart phones
Right: An online map of The Junction in Toronto depicting locations where pedestrians are able to record or hear personal history as part of a project called Murmur



tion and then can either record an account of something personal/historical about that location or listen to the accounts of others. It creates a compelling experience of the way places are shaped not only by their physical structures but also by the stories of the people who live in them. Inverness being a uniquely storied town, full of excellent storytellers, this might be a fun, wonderful way to engage community interest and deepen the experience of visitors from away.

Visit www.murmurtoronto.ca for more information about this project.

Online Animated Video

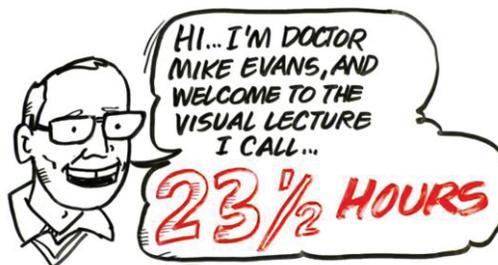
During the planning process, community members discussed ways to communicate what is happening in Inverness to a broader audience. Capturing the future vision in a clear, succinct way enables the community to better understand why/how things are developing the way they are.

Online video has enormous potential to communicate the story of Inverness—especially while it is at such a crucial point in its evolution, where residents all need to understand the larger picture of what is happening—while also communicating to visitors all the exciting developments that are unfolding.

Sample Project

Dr. Mike Evans, a family physician in Toronto, developed animated videos about health that have spread virally on the internet because they are both entertaining and instructive. Similar videos could be developed for Inverness to inform the community and promote to outsiders what is happening here, thus generating buzz about Inverness’s transformation.

For examples of Dr. Evans’s videos, visit www.youtube.com/user/DocMikeEvans



Left: Images from Dr. Mike Evans’s online instructional video “23 1/2 Hours”

Source for inspiration: A series of vintage postcard illustrations from seaside towns and beach resorts





4.1 General Design Guidelines

The objective of the General Design Guidelines is to transform the appearance of the town to attract visitors by outwardly reflecting its inner or innate assets.

The proposed vision for Inverness aspires to the inviting elegance of a traditional seaside village, inspired aesthetically by vintage holiday postcards (see section 4.3). This vision pays tribute to the community's past and evoke its future, as a timeless seaside community—a destination that will linger in its visitors' hearts and a home that will anchor its residents.

The project team has identified these key overarching goals for achieving that vision:

1. Attend to the visual character of Central Avenue.

Inverness should be responsive to the high expectations of visitors, while maintaining the town character desired by residents. Streetscape improvements, quality enhancements, and maintenance strategies will help Inverness meet visitor expectations, while also reinforcing community pride.

2. Reinforce the relationship between Central Avenue and the pedestrian.

These design guidelines seek to foster enhancements that encourage increased pedestrian traffic and activate street culture in Inverness.

3. Reinforce the relationship between Central Avenue and the waterfront.

Because there is a significant divide between the town and its waterfront, reinforcing the physical and visual connection is integral to the vision of the town.

The General Design Guidelines are intended to serve as a reference for community development to ensure that development is aesthetically and functionally consistent. Typical by-law provisions are often limited to land-use regulations, parking provisions, signage regulations and basic site regulations, such as setbacks. Design guidelines can be integrated into the local zoning by-law, providing additional direction to enhance how buildings, sites and streets contribute to a cohesive community and build a sense of place.

Consistent and well-developed design guidelines help promote the overall community vision. Big box stores on the main street, large setbacks and perimeter/front of lot parking are common practices that compromise the character and human scale of small towns. Design standards can influence these sorts of building- and site-related decisions and prevent long-term damage to the community fabric.

The General Design Guidelines include a combination of traditional and contemporary practices, prioritizing preservation where possible and incorporating innovative design elements.

The General Design Guidelines for Inverness address:

- Streetscape Enhancements
- Façade Design Guidelines
- Signage & Wayfinding Strategy

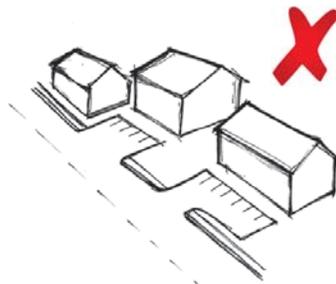
4.2 Streetscape Enhancements

CENTRAL AVENUE STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

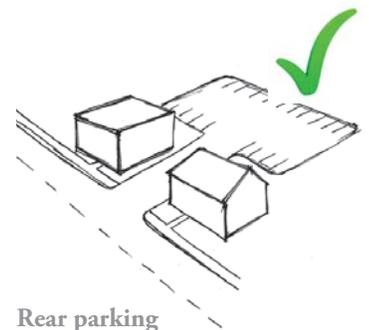
The built environment of Inverness has been shaped by a history of industry followed by typical twentieth-century development practices. Highway 19 acts as a thoroughfare for transportation, but also serves as the main street and heart of Inverness. It is now time to create a more pedestrian-focused streetscape that re-establishes Central Avenue as a vibrant main street and not just a provincial highway.

The following guidelines will help redefine Central Avenue as an attractive and vibrant main street:

1. Central Avenue curb lines should be as continuous as possible on both sides of the street to define the edge and provide continuous raised sidewalks. Driveways should not be permitted to front Central Avenue on corner lots.
2. Driveway entrances should not exceed 6 m.
3. Gas station entrances should be encouraged from local streets.
4. To further define the street edge on the water side (west) of Central Avenue, street trees should be included in the right-of-way.
5. No parking lots should be permitted between the building front and the street. Parking lots should be located to the side or



Front of lot parking



Rear parking

Example of Design Guidelines applied on Central Avenue



rear of buildings and should be consolidated and shared between businesses wherever possible.

6. Parallel on-street parking is encouraged on the east side of the street and should be defined by pavement markings.

7. To reduce on-street parking needs on the water side (west) of Central Avenue, and to enable greater pedestrian and active transportation opportunities, consolidated public parking lots should be provided in several locations off Central Avenue.

8. Public parking areas should be visible and easily accessible. They should include landscaping, public information kiosks and possible amenities such as look-offs and playgrounds where appropriate.

9. To maximize visual connections from the town to the waterfront, building heights on Central Avenue should be no more than 8 m.

10. Building fronts should provide the primary public access to businesses. Where setbacks more than 3 m or front-of-lot parking exist, landscaping and direct pedestrian pathways should be provided.

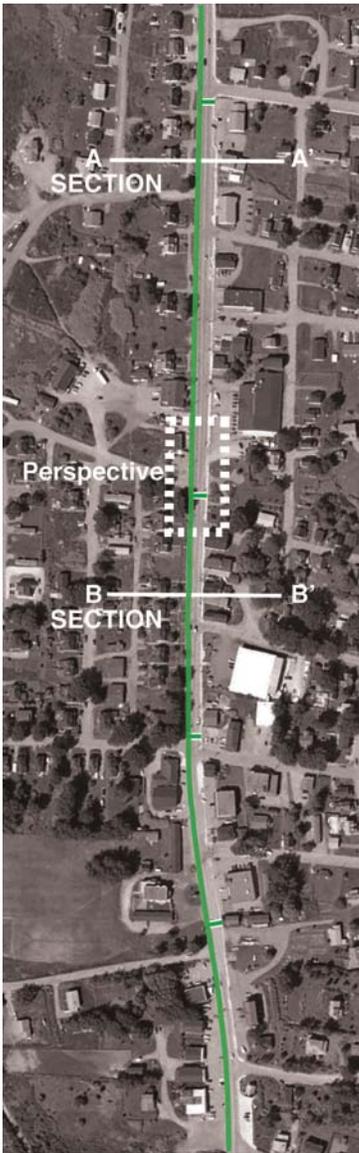
11. To create a continuous streetwall that is directly accessible to pedestrians, and that

animates the main street experience, primary buildings fronting the east side of Central Avenue should be located either at the front lot line or no farther back than the setback of an abutting building, to a maximum of 3 m.

12. Intersections should be defined with sidewalk bump-outs extending to the vehicle lane and at least 6 m in length. These should accommodate street signs, opportunities for benches.

Perspective of Central Avenue before and after streetscape improvements





Key map for Sections (below) and Perspective (previous page)

CENTRAL AVENUE MULTI-USE TRAIL

A big part of redefining Central Avenue is about making it a more people-friendly destination. A multi-use trail installed on the eastern side of the street will welcome pedestrians and cyclists to Central Avenue and play to the street’s natural advantages. The scenery of the golf course and ocean to the east, only occasionally interrupted by cross-streets and driveways, make this side of the street ideal for creating an unbroken pathway that invites people to walk, cycle or roll down Central Avenue in comfort and safety. This new active thoroughway will help Inverness impress cycle tourists and other visitors, while making the community better suited for residents to lead healthy and fun lifestyles.

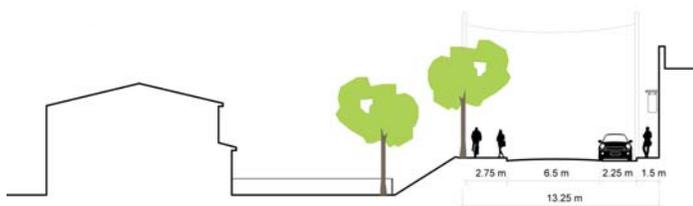
Building a safe and attractive multi-use trail on the water side of Central Avenue can best be accomplished by extending the curbed sidewalk into the roadway parking lane. This design creates a safe separation from vehicles. The proposed trail is designed for two-way traffic with enough room for pedestrians and cyclists to travel along it in both directions. A painted centre line separates northbound and southbound traffic. The trail would be open to all non-motorized traffic, including pedestrians, skateboarders, rollerbladers, and cyclists.

“Active Transportation” (any form of getting around without a motor vehicle, from walking and jogging to biking and roller blading) is encouraged by many provincial government initiatives, making the multi-use-trail project a great opportunity to seek out partners and funding.

If it proves unfeasible to locate a Blue Route along Central Avenue, alternative locations through Inverness may be explored.

A great deal of buzz has been generated around Bicycle Nova Scotia’s vision to create a province-wide bikeway network referred to as the “Blue Route.” With support for this initiative within government, in the near future Inverness could partner with the province by becoming one of the first to officially welcome the “Blue Route” to its town. In fact, Nova Scotia Moves, a provincial grant fund, has already been created to support such active and sustainable transportation projects. Although the first round of applications for Nova Scotia Moves has passed, Inverness should watch for a second proposal intake, and also for the forthcoming provincial sustainable transportation strategy to see what type of provincial support may be available to implement the project.

Section A



Section B



CENTRAL INFORMATION KIOSK

The town's central way-finding structure must be positioned strategically to be highly visible to incoming traffic and to be convenient and accessible by all forms of transportation.

While the current location of the Visitor Centre could be more central, its proximity to Beach Road No.1 and the waterfront and open lots on the waterside make it the most effective location for the Central Information Kiosk. Many visitors experience Inverness for the first time as they enter from this end of town, and developing the Visitor Centre area as a landmark could provide welcome beautification and increase tourism.

POCKET PARKS

Pocket parks can enhance the visual continuity of a street. They are often created on vacant building lots; small, irregular pieces of land; or as components of the public-space requirement for large building projects.

Pocket parks can be on public or private land. They provide greenery, a place to sit outdoors, and sometimes a children's playground. They may be created around a monument, historic marker or art project, and also provide a commercial advantage to adjacent businesses.

The map to the right identifies a number of proposed areas for potential pocket parks along Central Avenue. However, the design and location of these parks will require a more dedicated design/engineering study, and should be coupled with implementation of the proposed Blue Route.

STREET FURNITURE

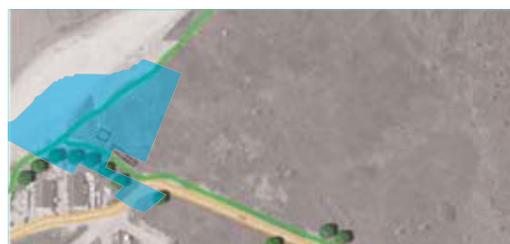
Benches, both formal (wooden) and informal (stone slabs, retaining walls, etc.) promote the congregation of people, and encourage active street life.

Seating should be spaced along Central Avenue, and within the sidewalk bump outs, pocket parks and congregation areas.

From top to bottom: Location for the proposed Central Information Kiosk; vignette of Gateway Parking area with proposed Central Information Kiosk

Right: Map of proposed pocket park locations





CONSOLIDATED PARKING

The proposed Blue Route will require a larger parking strategy for the main commercial strip of Inverness. The removal of parking from the west side of Central Avenue will necessitate creation of off-street parking, as per the proposed Community Design Standards. Consolidated parking relieves the congestion of Central Avenue, allowing for safer, more pedestrian focused activity. To work effectively, these lots require close proximity to Central Avenue, or adjacency to venues and locations attracting a large number of visitors.

Off-Street Parking Lots

The narrow lane of on-street parking spaces on the west side most often require confrontation with traffic to access businesses across the street. The creation of off-street parking would provide approximately 115 spaces to compensate for the estimated 100+ spaces lost, and enable the community to further develop key commercial and tourist areas, and implement crosswalks to safely navigate heavier summer traffic. Off-street parking has been proposed in the following locations:

1. Proposed Gateway Hub adjacent to the existing Visitors Centre (28 stalls)
2. Lot behind Coal Miners Cafe (31 stalls)
3. Proposed ICLC (former Hoff) (20 stalls)
4. Lot between Central Avenue Park and Co-op (36 stalls)

Overflow Parking

In addition to new off-street parking lots, there is ample overflow parking availability located around Stella Maris Church, the waterfront (for beach-related activities), and potentially surrounding the proposed Lower Railway Commons.

From top to bottom: Gateway Hub parking; ICLC parking and Central Avenue Park lot; lot behind Coal Miners Cafe and Stella Maris overflow parking; Potential overflow at Lower Railway Commons; Potential parking at Waterfront

4.3 Facade Design Guidelines

PROGRAM DETAILS

A number of communities in Cape Breton have benefitted in recent years from the **Facade Incentive Program** and **Streetscape Program**. The program facilitates cost-sharing for building improvements, and encourages and coordinates the beautification of main street. Participants also have noticed an increase in sales brought about by facade improvements.

The project is usually funded by a cost-sharing program between Enterprise Cape Breton and businesses, but funding details in Inverness's case will need to be determined, as will eligibility. In the past, participating property owners were eligible for a grant equal to 50% of the cost of facade improvements, up to a maximum (to be determined), for materials and labour. There is often a project cap, which is determined at the onset of the project.

The Inverness Conceptual Plan serves as a starting point for this initiative, to inform the community about its benefits and demonstrate with examples what the results can look like. Though the full design manual will be developed outside the mandate of this project, key recommendations and considerations are provided in the following pages.

MAIN OBJECTIVES OF THE FACADE INCENTIVE PROGRAM

These guidelines are designed to achieve the following objectives while also taking into consideration aesthetic, functional, economic, and environmental factors.

- (1) to improve the connection between Inverness businesses and consumers, and
- (2) to promote a sense of community pride and longevity, ensuring that visitors and residents alike are reminded, walking down Central Avenue, that this is a town with a long history and lasting, vibrant future.

Facade Theme

1

VISION

Our facade vision is understated, distinctive and elegant, aiming to avoid overly “cute” contrivances, which are not in keeping with Inverness’s unaffected, forthright character. We imagine the Inverness of the future as a simple, sophisticated seaside village, inspired by the warm, golden-toned nostalgia of vintage postcards of seaside holidays and also by the strength and dignity of this community. In these four pages, the three objectives for the General Design Guidelines have been applied to the facade theme.

OBJECTIVE #1

Attend to the Visual Character of Central Avenue

COLOUR SCHEME

With the vintage postcards as our inspiration, we have chosen a very classic facade colour scheme with painted wood (or wood composite) cladding in a single tertiary colour. That colour will be chosen from a palette of vintage gold-based hues that suggest sea and sky, grass and sand, wild roses and sunshine, creating a sense of warmth and soft radiance, like the sunset colours of Inverness’s coastline. The facades will generally be trimmed in white, to provide depth and draw attention to key building features, while still maintaining a clean, classic look. (Third colours will only be used in special cases, as the overall image being promoted is of a warm but sophisticated simplicity, a fresh take on a traditional seaside holiday destination.)





SIGNAGE

Offsetting the nostalgic colour palette will be modern, metal-cut letter signage in a classic serif font. The sturdy silver aluminum (or burnt sienna faux-rusted metal) lettering will evoke Inverness’s industrial history and the simplicity and hardiness of this proud, down-to-earth community. It will stand out strikingly against the soft, warm paint-colour palette. Wood signage is also acceptable, especially in perpendicular blade signs. Where possible, cast iron or silver metal brackets are preferred to support signage. Original signage (wherever possible to preserve or restore) should always be kept.

Aluminum Finishes



FONT

We’ve chosen Sorts Mill Goudy as the preferred signage font for Inverness; it is a simple classic serif font with a faint romantic flourish in the upper-case letters, nicely suggesting both modern elegance and holiday whimsy.



SORTS MILL GOUDY
 Sorts Mill Goudy
Sorts Mill Goudy
Goudy Old Style - Bold

ABCDEFGHIJKLM
 NOPQRSTUVWXYZ
 abcdefghijklmnop
 qrstuvwxyz
 0123456789

SIGN LETTERING COST COMPARISON CHART	PRICE RANGE		
	6 inch	12 inch	18 inch
* All prices based on Goudy Extra Bold Front, per letter			
	\$ 35	\$ 70	\$ 150
Aluminum (Satin)	\$ 35	\$ 70	\$150
Aluminum (Clear Anodized)	\$ 75	\$ 180	\$ 400
Plastic (to be avoided)	\$ 12	\$ 25	\$ 50

Facade Theme

2

We need to take every opportunity to let outsiders see what insiders know: Inverness is a bustling, welcoming, vivid, rich and active community.

Walking down Central Avenue, visitors should be enticed inside the various businesses by outward signs of what lies within. Façades can help open up businesses to walk-by customers by:

- (1) incorporating expansive glazing with provocative displays or views to let pedestrians glimpse the interior and
- (2) opening up the barrier between sidewalk and store, with patios, outdoor seating and even weather-resistant exterior displays of wares. Every storefront should be an advertisement of what's inside and an invitation to come experience it.

OBJECTIVE #2

Reinforce the Relationship between Central Avenue & the Pedestrian



Facade Theme

3

As it redefines its identity as a recreation destination, Inverness needs to re-establish its relationship to the waterfront, both physically and thematically. Physical interventions such as pathways and views, and thematic interventions such as colour palettes enable this bridge.

With the raised main street and open landscape of the golf course ensuring a spectacular view of the sea, Central Ave. has enormous potential to bring the atmosphere of the waterfront out to its commercial artery.

A uniform colour strategy that accentuates selected elements can create an attractive, aesthetically coherent street front, supporting Inverness's reinvention as a timeless seaside destination.



Reinforce the Relationship between Central Avenue & the Waterfront

OBJECTIVE #3



Facade Guidelines

ELEMENTS OF DESIGN:

Below is a summary list of the design recommendations for Facade Program participants:

Ornamentation

Encourage:

- Differentiation between lower commercial level and upper storeys
- Porch column brackets, mouldings, etc.

Avoid:

- Unvariegated, flat, featureless exteriors. Find details to highlight or ornament!

Colour

Encourage:

- Warm, gold-based tertiary hues, reflecting vintage ideal of a sophisticated seaside town, complemented by white trim for windows, mouldings, and cornices. Alternatively, natural, unpainted materials such as wood or stone, reflecting Inverness's natural landscape and resource-rich history, complemented by trim in warm, gold-based tertiary hues
- Third colour employed only to highlight signage or in exceptional cases (where a building requires a third colour for

logo reasons or to dress up an otherwise featureless façade)

Avoid:

- Monochromatic use of colour
- Dull, muddied, or “safe” colour tones such as browns or beiges

Materials

Encourage:

- Natural and traditional materials, such as wood, stone, metal, and brick, where not cost-prohibitive or environmentally detrimental (wood composites acceptable)
- Clapboard and shingle siding in the vernacular Maritime style
- Wrought iron—the combined beauty and strength of this material is an apt image for Inverness's industrial heritage and cultural legacy. We've chosen it as a thematic design element for Inverness, emphasizing a sense of visual continuity among different businesses. It will be predominantly used in signage, railings, etc.

Avoid:

- Vinyl and aluminum siding and other synthetic materials

Entry/Access

Inspired by the traditional architecture of Inverness (discussed on page 70), we recommend increasing facade transparency and creating opportunities for street-side lingering outside of businesses.

Encourage:

- Large store windows, reflecting historic design and enticing customers into store with attractive displays. The significantly increased energy efficiency of modern



Facade Guidelines

windows makes this measure less energy- and cost-prohibitive than in the past, and will create a relationship between activity inside and outside the business

- Front steps (while still including a ramp for accessibility), which give an appealing look to the exterior and also provide a place for customers and passersby to linger
- Seasonal outdoor seating/patios/benches where possible, to draw those walking or driving by into the life of the town. This will create the sense of a vital, active community and draw in customers
- Open exterior windows, when weather allows, to create a similar effect of transparency and connection between street life and businesses as outdoor seating

Avoid:

- Storefronts that give no or minimal sense of what's going on inside

Signage

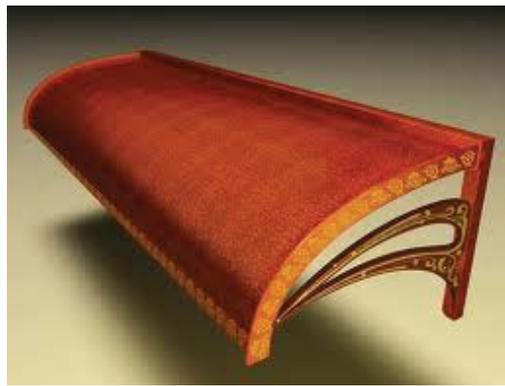
Encourage:

- Stencil-cut lettering in brushed aluminum to spell out names of businesses, as a point of continuity between businesses that complements the gentle colours of the streetscape with a sense of strength and character, alluding to Inverness's industrial roots
- Use of wrought iron (see note under Materials) to form or support perpendicular (blade) signage
- Use of wooden signage
- Preservation/restoration of original signage where possible
- Blade signage perpendicular to building front

- Visible signage indicating open/closed and hours of operation, as well as special events that might be taking place (if applicable)
- Awnings may be acceptable as long as they don't impede visibility of the interior. Consider a custom wood awning as a more elegant solution

Avoid:

- Interior-illuminated or neon signage
- Cheap-looking synthetic signage that creates a sense of temporariness or transience



Top: Example of a custom decorative awning.
Bottom: A range of options for awnings

Facade Guidelines

Landscaping

Encourage:

- Gardening and tree-planting, using native species
- Landscape elements that encourage people to linger, such as benches, patios, steps, porches

Avoid:

- Lawns without variegation of plant life
- Alien plant and tree species

Lighting

Exterior lighting is not only an effective way to showcase a business facade and its signage, providing a nice sense of depth, but also a means to infusing the nighttime streetscape with a sense of life and vitality.

Encourage:

- Soft, indirect lighting to provide depth to façades
- Gooseneck lighting where possible, recessed or uplighting to accentuate cladding texture
- Entry sidelights

Avoid:

- Over-illumination
- Cold, blue-toned hues of LED light



Below: Cost comparisons for facade renovations

MATERIAL	PRICE RANGE
Clapboard Siding - wood (per sq. ft.)	\$ 2.60-2.80
Clapboard Siding - composite (per sq. ft.)	\$ 2.00-2.50
Trim Board (Cape Cod and composite) (per lin. ft.)	\$ 4.05
Aluminum Storefront Window (6'x3') (per unit)	\$ 1500-2000 installed
Vinyl Window (66"x32") (per unit)	\$ 300
Wood Window (66"x32") (per unit)	Custom
Fiberglass Window (66"x32") (per sq. ft.)	\$ 700
Steel Insulated Pre-hung door (per unit)	\$ 300-500
Fiberglass Insulated Pre-hung Door (per unit)	\$ 750-1200
Wood Door (per unit)	\$ 1500+
Fabric Back-lit Awning (5'x5'x30' nose) (per lin. ft.)	\$ 500-600
Light fixture (angled reflective storefront "gooseneck") (per unit)	\$ 250-300

Facade Examples



COAL MINERS CAFE

This local favourite has a well-maintained facade with the advantage of being flush with the sidewalk and so well-positioned to engage pedestrians.

Opportunities:

Open up visibility to the interior. Consider alternative ramp locations to the side entrance to better exploit the street frontage. New glazing options include larger energy efficient windows, full height French doors or patio sliders with railing to create “indoor” patio. Use signage to serve as a “belt course” across mid section to break up exterior and differentiate upper and lower storeys. The single colour and white trim suggests a classic beach-front look, with accent colours confined to the signage, door and bench.



Facade Examples

CENTRAL SUPPLIES

The Big Box Store on main street offers challenges due to its large setback and the prominence of its parking. The relationship to the street is interrupted by the parking lot, which is entered from the side street, and the green space between the lot and the pedestrian acts as a buffer.

Opportunities:

More and bigger glazing for window display.

Apply red from the colour palette to body, employ horizontal trim to establish main-level datum and advertising “band.”

A front deck creates a welcoming entry to display seasonal merchandise and a place where customers cross paths and “shop talk.” A sunscreen cover will warm up the entrance, filter light, and offer a space to display gardening items, plants, etc.



Facade Examples



THE VILLAGE GRILL

This building possesses a small setback that fits two very tight parking spaces. The exterior colour is somewhat dull and the entry patio is not very functional for outdoor seating.

Opportunities:

Reclaim the connection with pedestrian life and install a generous patio. Taking advantage of the ocean view and position flush with the sidewalk, it could transform the image of the Village Grill and make it a go-to place on the main street.



The signage should distinguish the two parts of the business, making the entrances clear above the Village Grill side entry and above Reel Pizza.

The exterior cladding is painted in a facade-theme colour to liven the facade up and cast it alongside the other seaside-inspired building facades.



Facade Examples

RBC & FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE

This building is clad in three different materials, has an awning overhang in need of repair or removal, and windows and doors that need replacing. The brick and stone cladding compete too much with each other, and the building needs to establish a base to give it a sense of stability, anchoring it to the ground.

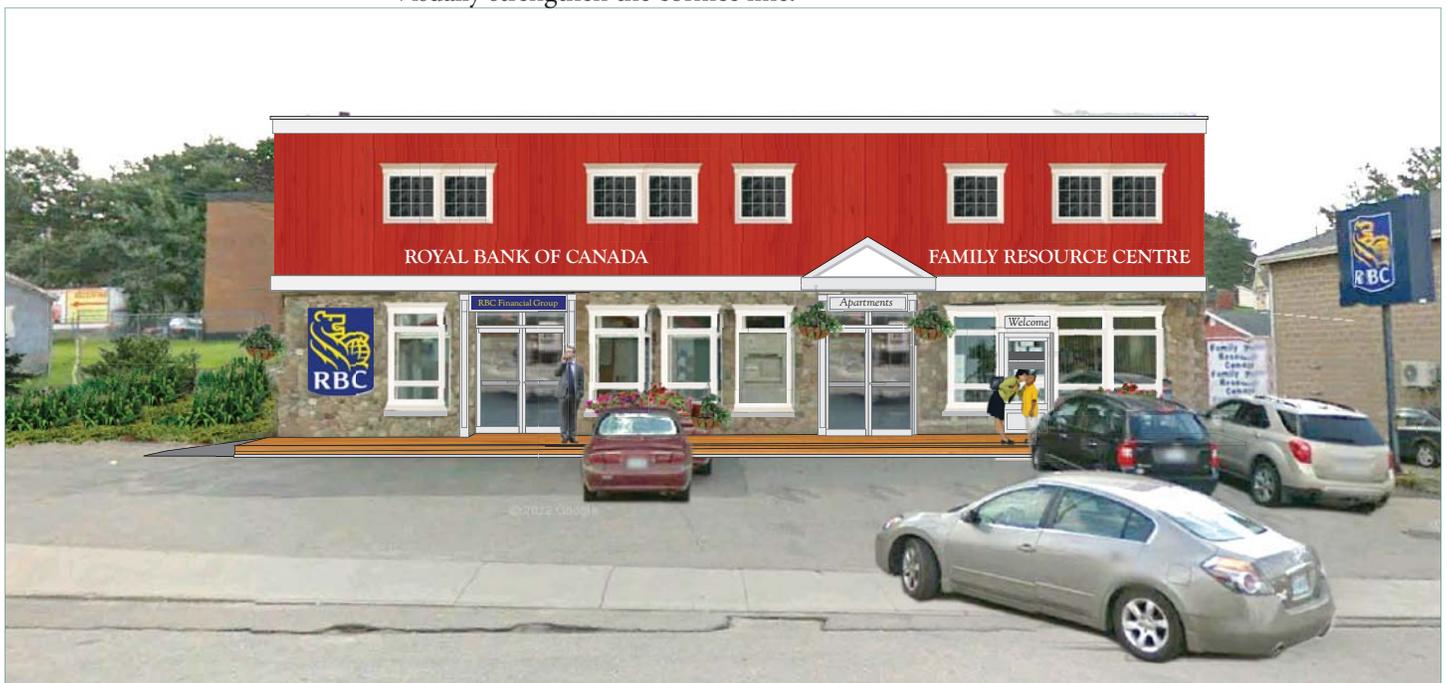
Opportunities:

Install a modest front landing to establish a building base and a more welcoming entry.

White trim and mullioned windows bring elegance to the stone cladding, and the apartment portico warm the residential entryway.

Upper and lower windows should be aligned wherever possible.

Visually strengthen the cornice line.



Facade Examples

REVITALIZED COMPANY HOMES



It is hard to discuss the revitalization of Central Avenue in Inverness without addressing the subject of the Company Homes. A very visible remnant of Inverness's mining past, their heritage value is compromised by the state of disrepair of many of these homes.

The project team has been asked to provide some examples of these homes, reimagined as commercial retrofits, and incorporated within the design standards and facade themes laid out in the Inverness Conceptual Plan.



This exercise provides an opportunity to envision how this colour scheme contributes to an overall aesthetic through an assemblage of buildings, and evokes the seaside village character.



Facade Examples

REVITALIZED COMPANY HOMES



Shown here are three examples of Company Homes remodeled in the seaside village colour scheme.

4.4 Signage & Wayfinding Strategy

The Signage & Wayfinding Strategy enables a fluid connection between pedestrian walkways, trails, and major routes and axes. Signage will highlight designated parking locations, direct visitors to parks & trails and local attractions like the Miners Museum, Inverness Academy, racetrack, beach, etc.

The hierarchy of signage is as follows:

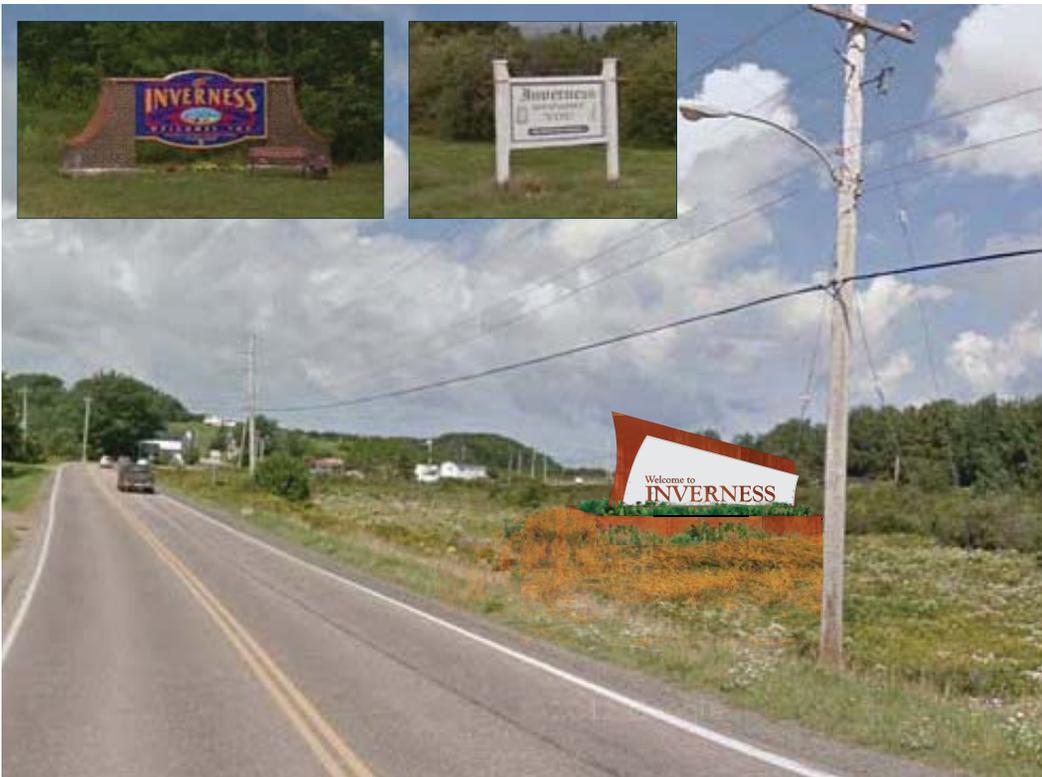
- Gateway Signage
- Directional Signage
- Wayfinding Sign & Event Kiosk
- Interpretive Panels
- Banners

The map on the next page shows where the Gateway Signage, Directional Signage, and Wayfinding Signs & Event Kiosks will be located. Interpretive Panels and Banners will

be situated at specific points to be determined when the Signage & Wayfinding plan is more fully developed.

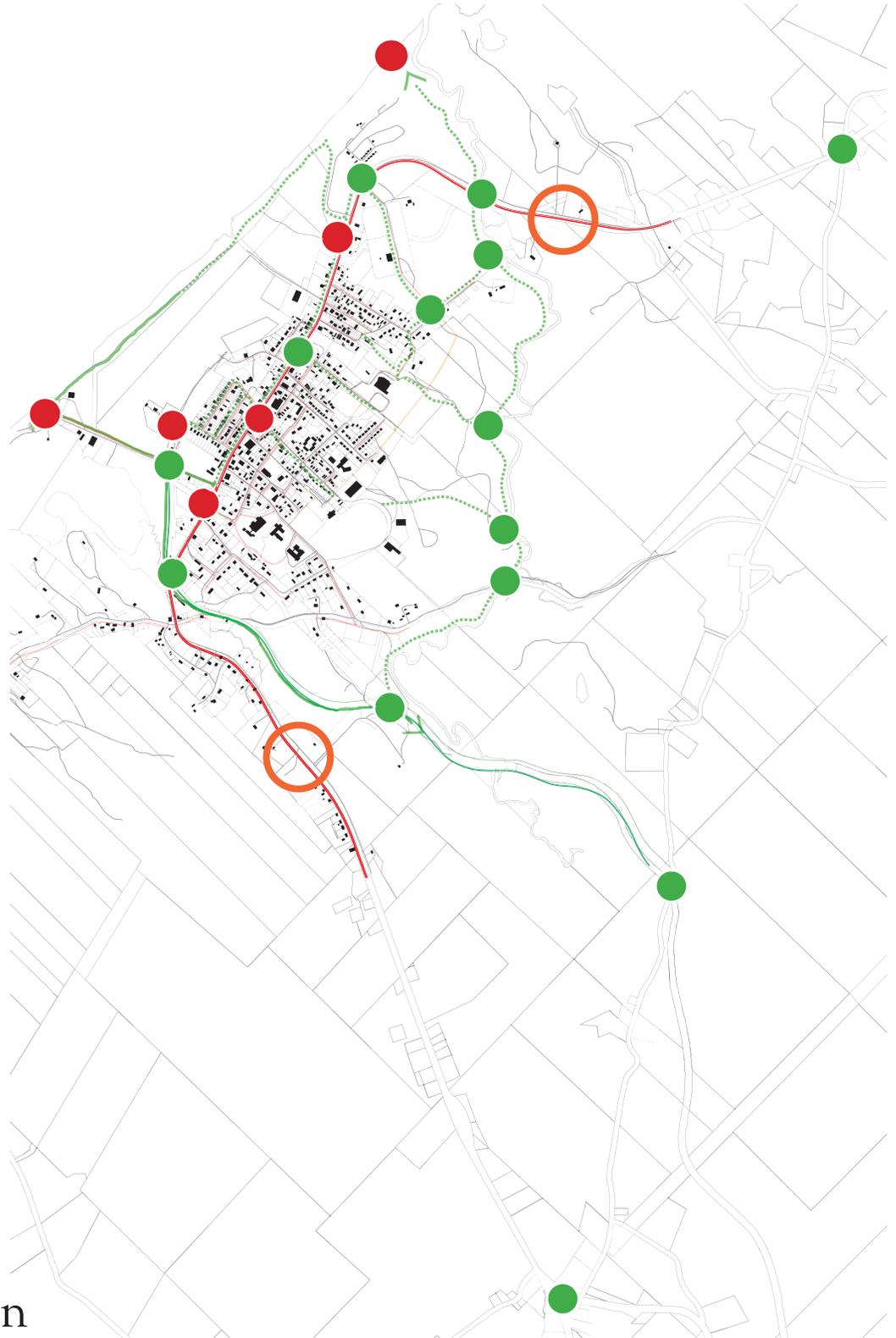
GATEWAY SIGNAGE

For Inverness, there are two primary gateways: at the north and south entries along Highway 19. Like the Visitor Centre, Gateways need to respond to visitors coming from both directions. Shown below is the current signage—the northern approach sign (left insert) has more presence than the northern approach sign (right insert), but both could be more impressive. In the larger image below is an example of a sign that would make a more dramatic marker of the entrance approach toward the town.



Left: Gateway Sign in CorTen steel with aluminum plate located on approach to town core
Inserts: Existing Gateway signs

- Directional
- Wayfinding & Event
- Gateway Marker
- Path Network



The design and material selection for this sample sign are inspired by the overall design strategy: its burnt sienna/silver hues coordinate with the colour palette discussed in the Facade Theme, while the curved form subtly evokes the seascape. The base and sculpted backdrop is made of CorTen Steel, while an aluminum-mounted plate with stamped-out letters prominently displays the words of welcome. The sign combines industrial inspiration with elegant, modern design innovation—CorTen steel is a very avant-garde material being using in contemporary landscape gardening. Consider taking advantage of the region’s artisan resources to commission this gateway signage project.

DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE

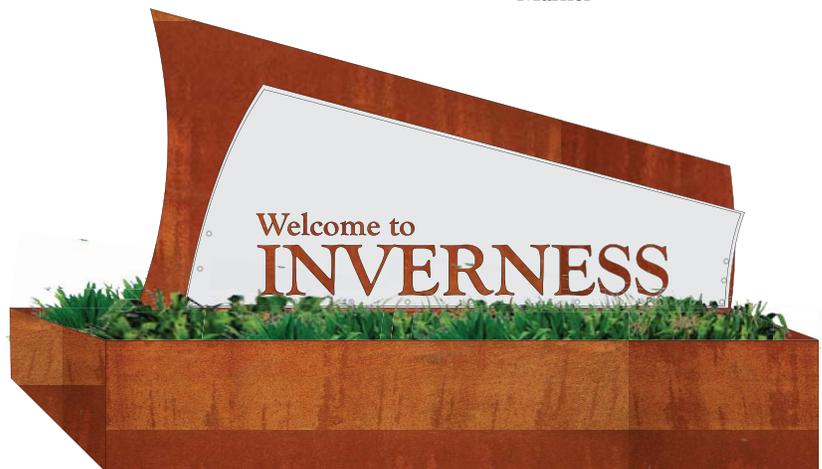
Directional signage should be organized by colour to fit within the signage hierarchy, and positioned at key traffic (pedestrian, cycling, vehicle) intersections to assist visitors in navigating throughout the town and reaching different destinations. It should be strategically placed for visibility appropriate to vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists. Along Central Avenue, consider placing signs on the newly installed lighting posts.

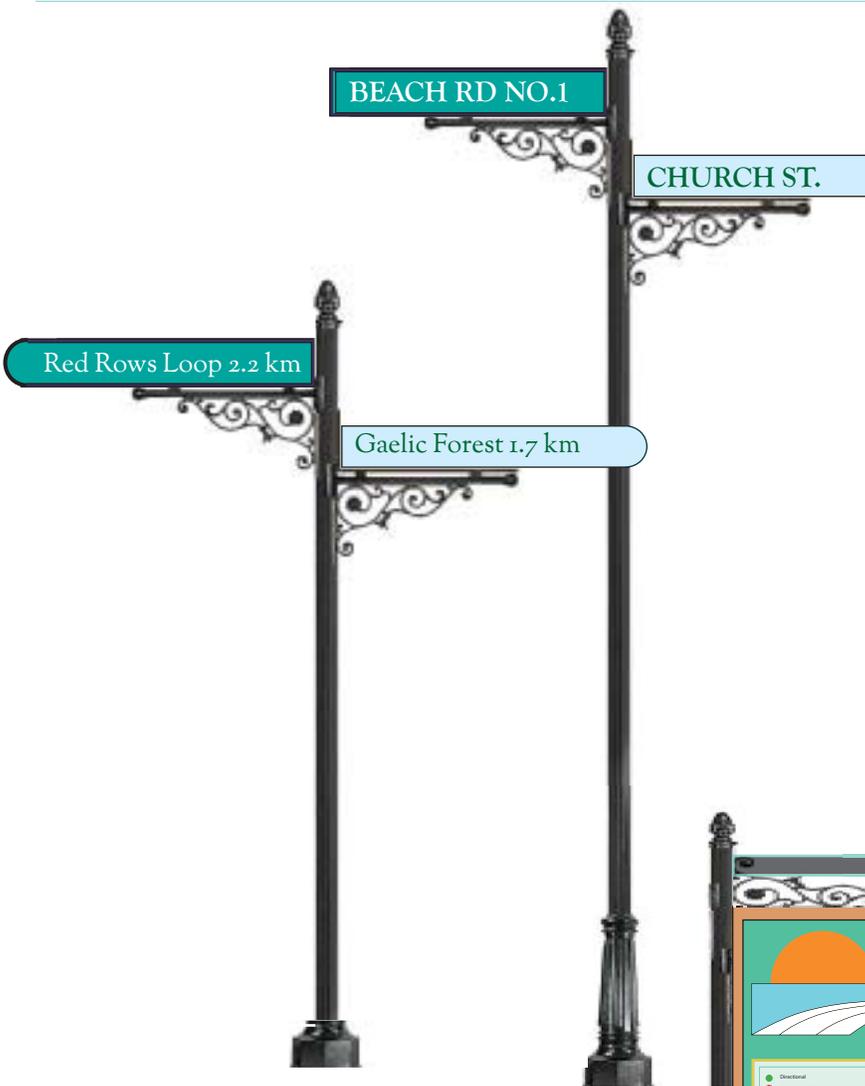
WAYFINDING & EVENT SIGNAGE

Inverness’s pedestrian way-finding structures should be positioned at key locations within the town core, in high-traffic areas and highly visible locations. They should fit thematically within the signage hierarchy to enable easy identification. The way-finding structure should include a community map, a business directory, a community events board, and a list of important town destinations.



Left: Event Banner
Middle: Directional Banner
Below: Sample Gateway Sign Marker





INTERPRETIVE PANELS

An interpretive program should be developed, coordinating with the trails and pathway strategy, to share details about the community's rich history and cultural heritage. When the Branding, Signage & Interpretive Strategy is developed, subsequent to this report, appropriate locations for these interpretive panels should be determined. QR codes (see page 58) should be implemented to further enhance this visitor tool.

- Top left: Trails directional/distance signs
- Top right: Street signs
- Bottom left: Wayfinding/Event sign
- Bottom right: Directional sign that can be applied in multiple applications



5. IMPLEMENTATION



The Inverness Conceptual Plan serves as a tool to facilitate decision-making as community members determine where best to devote their energy and financial resources. In planning its course over the long term, the community can now reference key priorities and objectives as well as a clear set of actions to respond to those demands, thus ensuring future developments align with the community's vision.

PRIORITIES

The Implementation Strategy guides decision-making in the coming years based on the following prioritizing factors:

1. **Visibility** - When locals and visitors are able to see the changes underway themselves, it builds momentum and increases support for the later stages of the plan.
2. **Funding** - It is practical to begin with areas where funding resources are more readily available.
3. **Cost** - We prioritize low-cost projects that can make an immediate impact.

4. **Economy** - Projects that generate commercial activity and spin-offs are especially valuable, as the economic boost will help finance later stages of development.

5. **Ease of Implementation** - Some projects may be already in a state of readiness (land secured, funding in place, etc.).

6. **Interconnections** - The success of many projects are dependant on specific conditions, and may benefit from co-operation with other working groups. For example, service infrastructure needs to be installed before commencing a residential development, or a greenscaping project might align well with the agenda of the Gaelic Forest project.

7. **Project Sequence** - Some projects require a sequence of stages, such as Needs & Demand, Feasibility, Design, Construction that can be planned in phases.

With these factors in mind, the Implementation Strategy seeks to outline a framework for actions in the short and long term.



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5.1 Estimated Capital Costs

The following cost estimates outline the anticipated expenses for implementing the civic improvements recommended in the Inverness Conceptual Plan. These include infrastructure to enable the proposed residential developments, the off-street parking, Main Street Enhancements, and Branding and Signage implementation.

The estimates are based on the standard and average cost of materials. The circumstances of specific project developments may result in significant variations from these estimates, so they are more suitable as a general measure for planning than for detailed budgeting. Additional estimates include service fees for design, engineering and construction management services, as well as a contin-

gency fund for unexpected costs. Note that inflation will increase project costs.

Many projects discussed in the Inverness Conceptual Plan have not been costed here. In these cases, the idea presented in the plan has not been developed in sufficient detail to estimate the quantity of materials required for construction, or the project will require further studies/investigation to investigate feasibility or determine the scope of the project. The Phasing Strategy outlines where these key projects fit in the timeline and identifies the actions required to bring these projects to a stage where cost estimates can be more accurately determined.



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CIVIC IMPROVEMENT COST ESTIMATES					
Item	Unit Cost	Quantity	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Streetscape Improvements (see note 1)					
Concrete Sidewalk bump-outs	\$ 2350 per 6X2 metre bump-out	14	\$ 32,900		
Street Trees	\$ 750	60	\$ 45,000		
Street Furniture (benches, bike racks, trash receptacles)	\$ 1000	42	\$ 42,000		
Parking lot paving (replacing on-street)	\$ 50 per square metre	2,050		\$ 102,500	
Completion of Hwy 19 (Central Ave) street lighting electrical	\$ 250	20	\$ 5,000		
		SUBTOTALS	\$ 124,900	\$ 102,000	
Facade Program					
Development Costs			\$ 600,000		
Program Administration & Management			\$ 100,000		
		SUBTOTALS	\$ 700,000		
Branding & Signage (see note 2)					
Branding, Signage & Interpretive Strategy	lump sum	1	\$ 25,000		
Gateway Signs	\$ 20,000	2	\$ 40,000		
Event/Information Kiosks	\$ 15,000	1	\$ 15,000		
Interpretive Panels	\$ 7,500	5	\$ 37,500		
Wayfinding (Trails/Streets)	\$ 200	36	\$ 7,200		
Directional Signs	\$ 1000	5	\$ 5,000		
Banners	\$ 150	30	\$ 4,500		
Mural	lump sum	1	\$ 20,000		
Website Development	lump sum	1	\$ 10,000		
		SUBTOTALS	\$ 164,200		
Proposed Street Developments (see note 3)					
Housing Cluster Residential Streets (see map pg 91)	Total Length	1830			
1- Serviced 2-Lane Residential Road	\$ 2300 per linear metre	238			\$ 547,400
2- Serviced 2-Lane Residential Road	\$ 2300 per linear metre	85			\$ 195,500
3- Serviced 2-Lane Residential Road	\$ 2300 per linear metre	117			\$ 269,100
4- Serviced 2-Lane Residential Road	\$ 2300 per linear metre	334		\$ 768,200	
5- Serviced 2-Lane Residential Road	\$ 2300 per linear metre	163		\$ 374,900	
6- Serviced 2-Lane Residential Road	\$ 2300 per linear metre	217		\$ 499,100	
8- Serviced 2-Lane Residential Road	\$ 2300 per linear metre	134			\$ 308,200
9- Serviced 2-Lane Residential Road	\$ 2300 per linear metre	542			\$1,246,600
Back Street Artery (MacIsaac - Hillcrest Ext. - MacLeod St.)	Total Length	1536			
7- Serviced 2-Lane Residential Road	\$ 2300 per linear metre	185	\$ 425,500		
10- Serviced 2-Lane Residential Road	\$ 2300 per linear metre	1034	\$ 2,378,200		
11- Serviced 2-Lane Residential Road	\$ 2300 per linear metre	157		\$ 361,100	
Street Trees	\$ 750	160	\$ 45,000	\$ 22,500	\$ 45,000
		SUBTOTALS	\$ 2,848,700	\$ 2,025,800	\$ 2,611,800

Central Avenue Multi-use Trail (Blue Route) (see note 4)					
Curb and gutter removal	\$ 30 per linear metre	430		\$ 12,900	
Sidewalk widening	\$ 300 per linear metre	430		\$ 129,000	
Asphalt path	\$ 200 per linear metre	1190		\$ 238,000	
		SUBTOTALS		\$ 379,900	
Public Space and Trails Development (see note 5)					
Trails Master Plan (design including contours, drainage, dimensions, materials, etc.)	lump sum ballpark	1	\$ 50,000		
Gaelic Forest (Construction Cost)	Ballpark Estimate			\$ 90,000	
Greenscaping (Approx. basic costs for topsoil, seed, perennials and shrubs)	\$ 50 / sq ft.	TBD			
Gravel Paths	\$ 20 / sq ft.	TBD			
Boardwalk	\$ 140 /sq. ft	TBD			
Concrete Pavers	\$ 80 / sq.ft	TBD			
Trees	\$750	60	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000
Pocket Parks			\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	
		SUBTOTALS	\$ 75,000	\$ 115,000	\$ 15,000
Waterfront Development (see note 6)					
Waterfront Development Study	lump sum		\$ 50,000		
Beach Rd boardwalk ground level bollard lighting	\$ 300	300	\$ 90,000		
Waterfront Development	ballpark allocation			\$ 3,000,000	\$ 5,000,000
		SUBTOTALS	\$ 140,000	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 5,000,000
SUBTOTAL OF ESTIMATED COST PER PHASE			\$ 4,052,800	\$ 5,622,700	\$ 7,626,800
Design, Engineering, Construction Management (15%)			\$ 607,920	\$ 843,405	\$ 1,144,020
Contingency (15%)			\$ 607,920	\$ 843,405	\$ 1,144,020
TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS			\$ 5,268,640	\$ 7,299,510	\$ 9,914,840

Additional notes to Costing Estimates

Note 1. Off-street parking lots are identified in Section 4: Streetscape Enhancements. These lots are ballpark estimates only and would need to be confirmed in a more detailed Design/Costing study.

Note 2. Prices are estimates and can vary significantly based on outcome of Civic Signage & Interpretive Strategy. Website prices could range anywhere from \$5,000- \$40,000 based on the style and complexity of the site. It would be up to the community to identify what features are really critical. The next step would then be to invite several design firms to submit proposals.

Note 3. The unit cost per linear metre are based on the recent subdivision developments in the Cape Breton region. These costs include standard 45' width paving, with curb and gutter, sewer and water. Costs do not include power, nor related surveying, planning and consultation costs. All streets assume sidewalk construction is limited to one side of the street, and included only where major pedestrian connections are necessary. The unit cost of sidewalk construction estimated at \$300/linear metre is included in the unit cost and can be added/subtracted accordingly.

Note 4. The Province is looking to partner with and support communities in the good work they are doing on the ground. It is offering grants of up to \$200,000 to support local initiatives that advance the following objectives:

- Drive less distance
- Move more actively and efficiently
- Use cleaner energy
- Access a wider range of sustainable transportation options
- Engage communities around sustainable transportation issues

Past projects that were supported by Nova Scotia Moves include:

1. Development of 3.1 km Active Transportation trail in New Minas providing supporting Capital costs (\$110,000)
2. CBRM received \$65,000 to support the design and capital costs of developing two key Active Transportation Corridors
3. Municipality of the District of Lunenburg received \$73,000 for the design and construction of a key AT route
4. A community group in the Eastern Shore received \$36,000 to develop a bicycle co-op

The design/engineering of the downtown streetscape along Central Avenue will determine the feasibility of a Blue Route in that location, or at alternative locations through town.

Note 5. Ballpark costing will vary greatly depending on the outcome of the Trails Master Plan. Greenscaping Initiatives could include planters and/or garden terraces along the ocean side of Central Avenue, as well as around the school, Inverary Manor, Arts District, Lower Railway and paths network. Gravel paths largely depend on the outcome of the Trails Master Plan, as would implementing sections of boardwalk. Concrete pavers are contingent on the approval and design of public spaces at Lower Railway, intersections along Beach Road No.1, the site of the proposed Inverness Community Leadership Centre and areas surrounding the Arts Centre.

Note 6. Waterfront developments will be detailed in the Waterfront Development Study; however, for the purposes of long range planning, dollars have been allocated within each phase. Development at Lower Railway would be included in "Waterfront Development," and designed in further detail to be costed out.



Street Length #	New Street Length (m)	Street Length #	New Street Length (m)
1.	238	7.	185
2.	85	8.	134
3.	117	9.	542
4.	334	10.	1034
5.	163	11.	157
6.	217		
Total length of proposed new streets		3206 linear metres	

Proposed roads as specified in Costing Chart. The map on the left and accompanying chart identifies a breakdown of road lengths.

5.2 Phasing Strategy

Without a better sense of the annual budget and potential funding partners, it is difficult to provide a detailed year-to-year phasing strategy. Changing federal, provincial and regional government strategies and funding opportunities may cause certain projects to be prioritized over others.

In this Phasing Strategy, the key projects discussed in the ICP are subdivided into three phases over a 20-year period. The strategy, which includes actions that are not within the phased cost estimates, follows a two-fold approach by (1) instigating the plan with highly visible and cost-efficient implementations to gain support and momentum for the ICP, and (2) focusing on aspects of infrastructure improvements/developments that will enable further implementations.

The following Phasing Strategy lists a hierarchy of developments that should be considered in the short, medium, and long term. Because of the rate of change happening in Inverness with the opening of Cabot Links, the first phase could require a higher degree

of expense and activity than later phases; it is unforeseen what funding opportunities lie ahead for Inverness, but there will be pressure to develop the town's infrastructure in support of these developments.

Phase 1 (year 0–5):

Because of the high demands during the next 5 years, the objective will be to balance the high costs of necessary infrastructure development with low-cost, high visibility projects such as the Façade Program, Streetscape Enhancements, website and wayfinding/signage strategy, which help build the profile of the community. Projects that are currently underway, such as the Shean Housing Cooperative affordable housing and the Inverness Community Learning Centre, should be shepherded to completion, and if potential funding comes through for preparation of residential lots near Maclean/Macleod streets, then infrastructure development will be needed.

The community should also work to mobilize into working groups/committees where not already established, and to undertake the necessary preliminary steps to secure outside funding and/or establish partnerships for:

- a) Trails and Natural Habitat – Take inventory; develop Trails Master Plan (including Feasibility Study and Business Plan).
- b) Energy & Food Security – Commence the following studies: Strathlorne Nursery (Needs & Demand); Local Utility & Network Distribution (Feasibility); Minewater Geothermal (Feasibility). The community should aggressively seek partnerships in research.

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c) Public Works & Area Advisory – Prepare an Infrastructure Master Plan to assess needs and required upgrades to the existing system in accordance with planned developments and associated costs. Funds must be secured in order to make these investments in preparation for future growth.

Phase 2 (years 6–10)

The second phase will build upon work done in Phase 1. Developments, both public and private, are enabled by initial investments in infrastructure, and the increased tax base can be re-invested into continued infrastructure improvements. The Infrastructure Master Plan (developed in Phase 1) will serve as a guide to determine where these improvements will be applied.

Preliminary work completing the Feasibility studies, and business plans will enable funding resources to invest in developing the Trails &

Natural Habitats network, Strathlorne Forest Nursery, Local Utility/Distribution Network, and pilot projects in Minewater and/or Geothermal Energy potential.

As the community experiences continued growth from its investments, it will undertake an assessment of the feasibility of further expansion of its waterfront facilities and Small Craft Harbour.

Phase 3 (years 11–20)

As the community grows, waterfront facilities should be expanded, including expansion of the Small Craft Harbour. Also, a local utility provider should be developed, incorporating minewater geothermal as part of its coordinated energy strategy.



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5.3 Next Steps



*Inverness
Development
Association*



In recent years local effort has been made to bridge the gap between the many groups and organizations within Inverness, which otherwise operate in relative isolation from one another. In implementing the ICP, it is important to ensure that the proper vehicles are in place to realize the vision that has been shaped by the community.

Phase 1 illustrates which projects within the ICP are prioritized. To realize these plans and begin the next steps towards implementation the following actions are to be taken:

FACILITATION:

1. Adopt the ICP.

By endorsing the ICP, the community gains a frame of reference for decision-making – one that is based on a vision obtained from community consensus through open consultation.

2. Process Facilitation

A key factor in realizing the vision of the ICP is ensuring the proper processes are in place to ensure that:

- a) there are ongoing reviews and revisions of the plan to reflect the social, cultural, environmental, and economic priorities of region (as articulated in the 2010 ICSP).
- b) such reviews and revisions of the ICP are part of an active process that is inclusive, open and transparent, and guided by professional facilitation to ensure actions are integrated (eg: housing that includes foot paths, parks, district heating systems)
- c) clarity is sustained between the municipality and community regarding the roles

and responsibilities in the development, maintenance and sustainability of new infrastructure.

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT:

3. Streetscape Enhancements

Pending funding, commission detailed design development of Streetscape Enhancements

4. Facade Program

Upon establishing funding and participation among local businesses, roll out the Facade program. Depending on program details, the Design Guidelines may require further refinement.

5. Branding & Signage

Commission a civic Branding & Signage strategy in continuation of the work begun in the this ICP. Further detailed development will be required for signage location, design, fabrication, and installation.

6. Support Existing Projects

Projects that are currently underway, such as the SHEAN housing project and ICLC, should be carried through and incorporated into design/site planning within the larger strategy of the ICP.

7. Seek Partnerships

Source funding and expertise through the continued creation of partnerships that will facilitate implementation of priority projects.



Workshop Meeting Responses

Inverness Conceptual Plan

Workshop 1

January 17, 2013

GROUP A

What is Inverness's Identity?

- Neighbourhoods – more than Halifax
- Historical
- End of Steel (Railhead)
- Heterogeneous community (melting pot) changing/segregating based on economic differences (i.e., income levels)
- Independent!!!
- Proud
- [sketch of “spider town”]

What is the future of Inverness?

- Street redone
- Avenue of trees down the centre of town
- New population
- Baddeckification?
- Community and development are one
- Use of mines for heat?
- Capitalize on the tree nursery (as a community project?) – food, trees, medicinal plants
- Keeping full service hospital
- Pathways development with Gaelic forest and linking to the Arts Centre
- Need industrial space, storage facility, INFRASTRUCTURE
- Trade/education centre – teach trades and certify trades for men and women
- Alternative to single season

How do you know you're in Inverness?

- You can see the ocean
- Company houses
- Sunsets and wind!
- Beaches

- Shoreline

People respond to visitors, like to talk about Inverness

GROUP B

What is Inverness's Identity?

- Coal mining town
- Beautiful beaches
- Close to Cabot Trail
- Race track
- Fishing
- Gaelic culture

What is its future?

- An attractive, sustainable community that will attract young families to come here to stay.
- Tourism, have a mascot
- Some sort of electronic sign to let the locals and tourists know what is happening and coming up
- More transparency with all economic development in Inverness
- District heating system – burn garbage to generate heat to heat buildings (currently paying \$1000/day to dump waste in Guysborough)

How do you know you're in Inverness?

- Company houses
- Ocean view
- Friendly people

GROUP C

What is Inverness's Identity?

- Local businesses
- Hockey, baseball
- Gold course, beach, race track

- People, family, friendly, safe, people care for each other
- Natural beauty
- Fishing town (can buy fresh lobsters from the wharf)
- Slow pace, laid back
- Tourism brings new energy and a mix of people
- Seasonal nature of the place
- Arts centre
- Company houses,
- Hub for services in County
- People walk for fitness and socializing, same time every day, boardwalk
- Bingo
- Cottage workshop & market
- Gaelic language
- Live music

How do you know you're in Inverness?

- Salt water/ocean, sunset, sounds
- Friendly "hello" from the people
- Main Street
- Tree nursery, Corner Hill, the pond, church

What is Inverness's Future?

- Fitness centre/community centre (banquet centre) for all ages and families
- Art Centre – more activities and events
- Library
- Ski hill
- Vibrant Main Street, local business, walkable town and strong economy
- Quality of life and access to services all year round
- Development that is true to history and identify, authentic, modest
- Self sufficiency/renewable energy
- Taking care of ourselves and each other

Final report back

How to get there...

- Strengthen what we have; build leadership through networking and mentoring

Where we are going...

- Building a sustainable and vibrant community that embraces change and growth while at the same time staying authentic – true to the history and culture.
- Create our own model (for change)

Group #1 Notes

Identity

- Past boom town – coal – museum
- Future destination for families
- Scenery / sunset , natural habitats
- Culture fishery and Scottish heritage
- Friendly welcoming and hard working
- Dogs walk themselves
- Views
- Everyone says hello
- Sunsets
- White poplar and silver maple
- Buckwheat
- Company houses

Future

- Destination for families and visitors and retirees
- Stable or increasing population
- Preservation of key buildings
- Promotion of business
- Safe clean living environment
- Thriving school and hospital

- Adventure tourism

Group #2

Identity

- Service centre
- Centre of Inverness County
- Walk in anyone's house
- Place to hang
- Hospital
- School
- Race track
- People greet each other
- Kind thoughtful people
- Civic engagement
- Generous
- Company houses
- Incredible view
- Open and inviting to other cultural

Future

- Celebrate music scene
- Amusement park
- Ferry to PEI
- Put land to use
- More families like Tanya and Frank attract 20 and retain 20
- Protect things we value and add to it
- Centre for orthopedic surgery
- More quality and affordable housing
- Services for elderly and retirees
- Best walking town in the province
- Best biking town in the world
- Trails that connect all over: TransCanada, Beach Access, Arts Centre
- Everyone has a special value in our community
- Kid friendly future
- Integrated local power for our community, affordable living

Group #3

- Identity
- Long beach
- Tired looking
- No signs
- Friendly people
- Welcoming churches
- Services for region
- Safe and caring community
- People love the magic
- Lots of culture

How do we know we are in Inverness?

- Music culture
- Beach and summer activities
- End of trans Canada trail
- Service centre: post office, race track, hospital
- Garden club on Main street (beautification)
- Newspaper
- New business
- New homes
- New golf course

Future

- An improved community
- Build on golf course
- Tourism driven
- More services
- Local retail think big
- Stabilize employment and grow it
- Move beyond seasonal
- Work with communities along route 19
- Must be attractive to families (affordable housing, education, child care)
- Right future manage sustainably

What identifies Inverness?

- Horses, farming, minining, Gaelic and Acadian culture
- Waterfront, beach, sports, Belgian
- Sunsets
- Gaelic forest
- Recovering coal-aholics
- Benches, social places
- Street scene
- Outdoors, trails, swimming
- Beautiful
- Scrappy
- Company houses
- We're just us
- Diverse eating scene
- Main street is where people congregate
- Sandy beaches/waterfront/boardwalk
- Culture: gaelic, ceilidhs, kitchen parties, card games, celtic
- Coal mining industry: railroad and company townhouses
- Fisheries
- Centrally located service centre for larger region
- Rough and dirty
- Hiking trails
- Neighbourly
- Local characters and pride
- Strong family values
- Religious
- Golf – Robins – moving forward
- Ideal retirement place
- Coal mining heritage
- Civic/national pride
- Fishing
- Multiculturalism
- Family ties
- Can't avoid tourism!!! Embrace it
- Cottage industries
- Cabot Clientele is our opportunity
- Recreation for us = tourism opportunity
- Don't isolate Cabot Links – integrate it
- Estuary/Waterfront/Green spaces – Combine objectives
- Ecocultural Tourism
- Need to complement Seasonal work
- Lobster dinners “trademark products”
- Create experiential meals (involvement in preparation)
- Family friendship
- Walking community, as lure to destination
- Bike connectivity
- Big Ideas can be about small things
- Business clusters off beaten path – in red rows, spider town, meeting places
- Central Parking/path connectivity
- GOLF
- Retirement Community
- Service industry
- Tourism – distillery, remote destination, seafood
- Cooperatives
- Eco-tourism: hiking, canoeing, kayaking, velo/bike rentals
- Ceilidh trail grouped into Cabot Trail marketing/experience
- Lots of tea
- Celebrating music and dance, theatre, storytelling
- Beach town: access from mainstreet
- Transitional work/leadership centre
- Green energy / geothermal
- Paved roads, drinkable water, new sewers
- Young family retention
- Local food, community gardens
- P-12 retention

What's Our Future?

- Theatre
- Updated technology and access for seniors
- Intergenerational knowledge sharing expansion of accommodations and affordability
- Key is investment \$\$\$ from new residents or people returning from away
- Building on existing assets as above and Cabot Links (attract people) by utilizing assets, keep people
- More stores /other businesses
- Waterfront development
- Attractions for children/families

How do you know you are in Inverness?

- It's a walking town
- It's very connected (people know your business/needs)
- Harbour and Ocean
- The Garden club
- The wind
- Town houses
- People say hello, car waves
- Respectful youth
- Family ties / kin
- Accent
- Nicknames for "townies"
- Hard workers
- They volunteer, helping hand attitude
- Who's your father? Know everyone, see everyone at the co-op
- Train station
- The beach
- Morning walks
- Cleanliness, clean air
- Racetrack
- Caring hospital
- Skilled workers
- Shooting the drag "over town"

- The gathering, Broad Cove
- Funerals, graduation, weddings
- The Oran
- Downside – lack of facilities/job etc.
- Upside – Culture and other facilities we do have such as hospital, manor, etc.

Big Ideas

- Connect Arts Centre to town (physically)
- Build a unique building/structure as a tourist attraction (Bilbao Effect at a reasonable scale)
- Community-shared tavern (CSR)
- We could be the "Glasgow" of North America – scrappy and cool/artsy, great bands, etc, mixing the working class with the arts
- Utilize historical buildings
- Building complex Museum/Annex/CWS – utilize for future business
- Company Houses – make part of walk-about for tourism
- Capitalize more on culture/arts/music
- Utilize existing assets i.e. raceway/existing business/way of life

Inverness Conceptual Plan

Focus Group Meeting
@Cabot Links

Friday, March 1, 2013
10am – 12

Attendance: Conrad Taves (Project Team), Karen Malcolm (SHRDA), Elizabeth, Vince McMaster (Steering Committee), Paul Smith (Steering Committee), Alex Ryan, Doug Cameron, Andrew Jones (EDPC), Jim Mustard (Municipality), Donalda MacDonald (Steering Committee), Martin McKinnon (SHC), Bernadette Campbell (Inverness Academy), Ben Cowan-Dewar (Cabot Links), Angie Walker (Area Advisory), Darlene McLellan

Agenda

1. Introductions (5 min)

2. Project Overview (10 min)

Conrad provided a progress report of the planning process thus far with regards to the Big Ideas, Branding/Positioning, and Key Projects, and placing this focus group within the context of that process.

3. Discussion on Branding / Positioning (30 min)

Feedback from the group:

- The elephant in the room is the golf course – what are we looking to highlight for this town, if not it's biggest newest asset?
- What is the goal of the brand?
- Need to change the emphasis from mining and towards golf/recreation.

- Reality of Inverness becoming a tourist destination
- What makes Inverness different? Beach/sunset not unique
- “Bringing the World Home” slogan for the county
- Marketing to two different entities – municipality and tourists. Two different strategies
- Need to market to tourists, because they are the potential future residents.
- Focus on tourism or community development? How can one brand cover both? Tourism need exposure [but brand should transcend tourism so there is longevity]
- Importance on language, more so than image that communicates the aspiration/moment
- Slogans, “Coming around a corner” or “place of new possibilities”, “Experience the Change”
- Reference Newfoundland's latest promotions very effective – our area is similar landscape, just more favourable climate
- “All things are possible”, “Miracles do happen”, “Where dreams unfold”, image of phoenix coming out of the ashes
- What will younger generations want from this town? Connection to the brand
- Inverness needs to send out banner to get youth to come here and settle – a WEBSITE
- Need to capture excitement of what is happening here
- There are meaningful exchanges taking place here and visitors can get a piece of that experience

4. Discussion on Key Projects (60 min)

a) What proposed project/s stood out for you?

Food production – where/how to develop this? Next steps?
Projects will need leadership to take things to next stage

There was a conference in November for local producers

b) Are there any projects you found missing and would like to propose?

Is tourism not missing as a BIG IDEA?
Not about creating a sector – too big, and no way to know how we will grow, best to make hospitable

Housing – there are immediate needs for seasonable accommodations – is there a medium to link renters/rentees

There needs to be infrastructure

Route 19 is terrible and no amenities

Education Sector – Training, satellite classes, NSCC,

- Training people here may keep them here

- Building around the hospital, to train research, nursing, etc.

- Learning traditional music to build culture, setting better standards

- School could incorporate traditional music into its formal curriculum

There is a cultural void in Inverness, no square dances – investment needed in these area

Arts centre can hold dances

c) Identify where you might see quick-starts to the plan

Racetrack needs better advertising/promotion – it's a unique event and its already happening. A great way to make immediate

impact by promoting that experience. Make it easy for people to find, easy to understand how to play, and promote it... “Beer and a Bet”

Businesses need to unite and strategically work towards keeping later hours and create a culture of going out – an “Open” mentality

Other discussions:

What do people look for when travelling

- Experience/Food/Shopping

5. Discussion on Streetscape & Façade Guidelines (15 min)

a) Outline Approach

Conrad will be picking a varied cross section of businesses to demonstrate possibilities of the façade program

i.e. Central/Co-op, RBC (private owned building), Coal Miners, Bruno's (sidewalk challenge), Firehall (not prioritized, TBD), Grant's vacant and could be anything...

b) Open Discussion

General agreement about process of selection, ensure that we explain it to people at workshop to ensure it is fair and no one is getting something done free



