Discover Cow Head

Landscape as Catalyst for Tourism Growth in Rural Newfoundland
Acknowledgements

Special thanks to the residents who attended the public open house to share their vision for tourism in Cow Head.

Cow Head Economic Development Committee
Rhoda Reardon  (Co-Chair)
Deputy Mayor Sonya Lewis  (Co-Chair)
Councillor Troy Patey
Councillor Sean Thistle
Denise White
Colleen Kennedy
Veronica Bavis
Paul D’Leyre
Cynthia Nicolle
Paul Taylor
Mark Tenney

Town of Cow Head
Mayor Rufus Payne
Councillor Bruce Payne
Councillor Garland Hutchings
Councillor Curtis Hutchings
Terri-Lynn Payne

Town of St. Paul’s
Monica Pittman

Town of Parson’s Pond
Mayor Brenda Biggin
Blanche Thom

Parks Canada
Rob Hingston
Margie Wilkes
Holly Lightfoot
Jake Burton

Tourism-Based Stakeholders
Arch Caines  (Beautification Committee)
Glenda Reid Bavis  (Conservation & Heritage Committee)
Deanna Hutchings  (Special Events Committee)
Denise Dotterer  (Theatre NL)
Nora Shears  (Theatre NL/ St. Mary’s Anglican Church)
Adrian Payne  (War Memorial Committee)
Steven House  (Shallow Bay Motel)

Consulting Team
Matthew Milne  Project Lead & Landscape Architect
Lydia Lewycky  Senior Planner & Landscape Architect
Tom Wright  Environmental Designer
Rachel Filkowski  Landscape Architect
Victoria FitzGerald  Landscape Architectural Intern

Contents

1 Introduction ........................................................................... 4
2 Tourism Context .................................................................. 7
  2.1 / Understanding the Tourism Market .............................. 8
  2.2 / Tourism Opportunities .................................................. 10
  2.3 / Tourism Challenges ...................................................... 14
3 Community Engagement ..................................................... 18
4 Discover Cow Head ............................................................. 27
  4.1 / Project Vision & Guiding Principles .............................. 28
  4.2 / Laying the Groundwork .................................................. 30
  4.3 / Improving First Impressions ......................................... 38
  4.4 / Defining the Town Centre .............................................. 50
  4.5 / Celebrating the Head Peninsula ..................................... 55
  4.6 / Preserving the Dunes ..................................................... 62
  4.7 / Telling the Stories .......................................................... 69
  4.8 / Active Transportation ................................................... 72
5 Implementing the Plan .......................................................... 80
  5.1 / Costing Information Notes ............................................. 81
  5.2 / Project Partners & Roles ............................................... 82
  5.3 / Potential Funding Sources .......................................... 85
Originally known as Cap de Pointe, named in the 1500s by French explorer Jacques Cartier, and later as Tête de Vache, inspired by a nearby rock formation that resembled a cow’s head, the community of Cow Head is located on the picturesque Great Northern Peninsula on Newfoundland’s west coast. Like many rural communities in the province, residents of Cow Head have traditionally depended upon the area’s natural resources to survive. This has varied over time and has included fishing and trade in the early 1800s, oil extraction in the late 1800s to early 1900s, and logging in the early to mid 1950s. By the 1960s, the community had grown to become a small town and incorporated as a municipality in 1964.

The 1970s brought about significant change not just for Cow Head but for the region, with the establishment of Gros Morne National Park, the second largest national park in Atlantic Canada. The creation of the Park resulted in a new industry for the area - tourism. This represented a shift away from the resource-based economy that many communities in the region had depended upon for so long.

Tourism today, especially within the context of a national park, is about providing high-quality experiences centered around the unique qualities of place. Contemporary travelers are seeking destinations that are authentic, true to place, and provide rich and lasting cultural experiences. Parks Canada, the stewards of Gros Morne National Park, recognizes this as suggested by their 2019 Management Plan which states: “A visit to Gros Morne National Park is full of opportunities to enjoy meaningful connections to the natural wonders of a spectacular landscape and the cultural treasures of traditional Newfoundland communities.”

The Province of Newfoundland and Labrador echoes this sentiment in their 2017-2020 Provincial Tourism Product Development Plan: “Visitors in Newfoundland and Labrador do not simply want to see the sights. They value deep engagement with locals, as well as gaining an understanding of the character of the people and places they visit.”

Within this context, Cow Head has everything it needs to excel as a travel destination. Many authentic, world-class experiences are right on the doorstep: the Dunes at Shallow Bay Beach, a stunning stretch of pristine sandy dunes containing an ecological treasure trove of rare flora and fauna; the Head Peninsula, a stunning, windswept landscape rich with one-of-a-kind geological and archaeological artifacts; the Lighthouse and Point of the Head Trails, which traverse the scenic Head and provide access to a remote lighthouse and stunning ocean views; and the Dr. Henry N. Payne Museum and Craft Shop, which proudly showcases Cow Head’s rich cultural heritage in a traditional 20th century wood frame building designated as one of Canada’s Historic Places. These many unique cultural and natural attractions give Cow Head a distinct competitive advantage in the destination tourism landscape, especially among travelers seeking off-the-beaten-path, authentic experiences.

Despite this however, the Town has recognized that tourism growth in the community has been slow. The many assets that Cow Head has right on its doorstep...
remain untapped, representing significant lost opportunity for the small town. And with the Nurse Myra Bennett Centre for the Performing Arts scheduled to open in 2020, visitation to the small town is only expected to increase. The Town wishes to improve its position to capture this audience and there is a need for further development to provide the services and amenities that contemporary tourists expect and to improve the visitor experience of the community as a whole.

As such, the Town of Cow Head has established the Cow Head Economic Development (CHED) committee, who are leading an ambitious planning process that is aimed at better understanding and leveraging its tourism assets. The process envisioned will occur over multiple phases, with this report representing the first phase - information gathering and feasibility testing. This initial stage will lay the necessary foundational work for future projects aimed squarely at improving the visitor experience, encouraging longer stays, and stimulating tourism-based economic activity. It is presented in several sections:

Section 1 - Introduction
Background information, summary of the project, and overview of the report.

Section 2 - Tourism Context
A review of current tourism data to understand the market as well as a summary of tourism opportunities and challenges for Cow Head.

Section 3 - Community Engagement
A summary of feedback received through several meetings with stakeholder groups and residents.

Section 4 - Discover Cow Head
Development of overall project vision and guiding principles as well as recommended strategies and priority projects for growing tourism in Cow Head.

Section 5 - Implementing the Plan
A summary of the next steps required to fully realize and implement the proposed recommendations.
Discover Cow Head

Provincial Tourism Trends - According to the Provincial Department of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation, tourism in Newfoundland and Labrador contributes $1 billion dollars annually to the economy. The Province’s 2017-2020 Tourism Product Development Plan set an aggressive goal of growing that contribution to $1.6 billion by this year. Recently, however, the tourism market in the province has experienced a slight decrease year-over-year, from 553,121 non-resident visitors in 2017 to 533,507 in 2018 to 434,614 as of October 2019. This has been attributed to post Canada 150 fatigue, rising fuel prices and transportation costs, concerns over consumer debt and rising interest rates, and a generally weaker national economy. Visitation to Canada from the US and other international markets also slowed during this period. At a local level, this trend is reflected by box office activity from the Gros Morne Theatre Festival as well as Parks Canada visitor data, both of which experienced similar declines from 2017 to 2019.

Visitor Profile - According to the Province’s 2016 exit survey of non-resident visitors, travellers to Newfoundland and Labrador came from across Canada with the majority coming from Ontario (30%) and the Maritimes (26%). 14% travel internationally from outside the country. The majority (34%) of those travelling were doing so for vacation and, on average, spent approximately 10.8 nights and $2,095 in the province during their stay. 30% as couples, and 10% with other family members. 77% of Canadian visitors and 72-78% of international travellers to the province were over the age of 45. The top things to see and do were reported to be walking, hiking, enjoying local food, wildlife viewing, and exploring communities.

Regional Tourism Context - Cow Head is an enclave community located within Gros Morne National Park. As such, it is important to recognize that one of the most significant tourism drivers for the town is its appeal as part of the larger Gros Morne experience. Located nearby and within a short driving distance are several other popular attractions including:

- Western Brook Pond
- The Arches Provincial Park
- Shallow Bay Beach and Campground
- Lobster Cove Head Lighthouse
- Gros Morne Mountain
- Broom Point Fishing Premises

New Tourism Trends for 2020 - Travellers today are keenly aware of the ongoing climate crisis and the implications that travel can have on sustainability and carbon emissions. As a result, they and are seeking ways of reducing their collective footprints when travelling. Activities such as walking, hiking and cycling are on the rise as these are often considered low carbon, low cost alternatives to more traditional vehicles and have the added benefit of providing a more experiential method of travel. In fact, the UK’s leading cycling vacation specialist reported a 140% increase in the number of cycle trip bookings between 2014 and 2018.1

Wellness vacations are also on the rise. Considered travel associated with the pursuit of maintaining or enhancing one’s health and wellbeing, this type of travel is often associated with personal transformation, improving the body and mind, and reconnecting with nature. According to the Global Wellness Institute, wellness tourism is one of the fastest-growing global tourism segments. In 2017, wellness tourism contributed $241.7 billion to the North American tourism industry, with growth projections indicating this will rise to $311.3 billion by 2022.2

Travel and adventure is not a new trend but one that will continue to grow in 2020 and beyond according to Allied Market Research. There has been a recent shift toward experiencing more remote, off-the-beaten path locations that provide travellers with opportunities for physical activity, cultural immersion and access to nature. Factors driving this market segment include a desire to avoid crowds and high prices as well as to experience people and places that are unique.3

3 Allied Market Research. Adventure Tourism Market Outlook-2026.alliedmarketresearch.com/adventure-tourism-market
The Head Peninsula - One of the most unique, character-defining features of Cow Head is the Head Peninsula. A culturally, ecologically, and historically significant landscape, the Head epitomizes a natural Newfoundland experience. It truly has everything one could hope for: prehistoric geology, old growth forest, colourful cottages, a working port, windswept tuckamore, dramatic coastline, a cast iron lighthouse, panoramic views of Cow Head and the Long Range Mountains beyond, to name but a few. From a tourism perspective, the Head holds incredible potential as a tourism asset for Cow Head.

However, further development may be desired on the Head to enhance the visitor experience. The opportunity exists to improve public access and wayfinding, and leverage synergies between the working port and tourism. Development of this nature should be done respectfully and sustainably, to reduce impacts on the sensitive features that make the Head special.

2.2 / Tourism Opportunities
The Theatre - For over 25 years, Cow Head has been the home of the Gros Morne Theatre Festival. Under the guidance of Theatre Newfoundland Labrador (TNL), the Festival has grown to become a significant attraction that is now recognized nationally and internationally for retelling the stories of rural Newfoundland living. From May to September each year, TNL hosts a full season that includes 6 to 8 plays, 6 days a week, to sellout crowds from across Canada and beyond. Over 12,000 visitors descend upon the small community of Cow Head each season to take in the performances representing a significant tourism driver for the area.

A catalyst for this project has been the eagerly anticipated opening of the new Nurse Myra Bennett Centre for the Performing Arts in 2020. This state-of-the-art venue will increase capacity by approximately 45%. Perhaps the single-most significant driver of tourism for Cow Head, the community must be ready to respond to this influx of people by providing a world-class visitor experience and infrastructure that contemporary tourists have come to expect.
The Dunes - The picturesque sands of Shallow Bay Beach attract visitors wanting to experience the vastness of the landscape and partake in passive activities such as birdwatching, sunbathing, swimming, strolling, and watching the waves. A portion of the dunes is owned by the Town and may represent a unique tourism development opportunity.

Similar to the Head, the dunes also represents an environmentally-sensitive area and development here must carefully balance ecological needs with those of the tourist to avoid having negative impacts. Dunes perform many important ecological functions, such as wind and wave protection, and can serve as habitat for surprisingly complex ecosystems. The Cow Head dunes for instance are home to several species of beachgrass and migratory shorebirds, several of which are protected under the Species at Risk and Migratory Birds Convention Acts.

The Stories - The stories of Cow Head are varied, rich, and unique. The sombre tale of the 1809 double axe-murders; the seasonal resettlement from the Head (Summerside) to the mainland (Winterside); the lighthouse constructed of cast iron and exposed rivets, atypical for the era; the internationally-renowned, 500 million year old geology of the Head Peninsula. These are but a few of the captivating tales that Cow Head has to share. These stories represent a significant tourism opportunity as they provide the deep connection and cultural experiences that tourists are seeking.

Community Events - There is a profound sense of community in Cow Head. Residents and business owners selflessly volunteer their time on many committees that are responsible for the planning of community events and initiatives. Perhaps the town’s signature event is the Cow Head Lobster Festival which is now in its 41st season. Featuring lobster dinners, music, craft demonstrations, a fireworks display, and much more, this festival brings people together and provides an opportunity to showcase the town through programming that attracts people and drives tourism growth. There is also an opportunity to embrace current events happening elsewhere in the Park, such as Trails, Tales and Tunes (May) and Fall Fest (September), which would further extend the tourism season within the town.
2.3 / Tourism Challenges

Wayfinding and Signage - Existing wayfinding signage on Highway 430 is provided by tourism-oriented directional signage (TODS) which is mandated by the Province for wayfinding along all provincially-owned highways. There is a small pulloff area near the Main Street intersection which contains signage for the town, the Viking Trail, and the Gros Morne Theatre. Once a visitor takes the Main Street turnoff toward Cow Head, they are greeted with a town welcome sign. While these signs are effective, they lack a visual connection and some of the structures are in poor condition with loose shingles or chipping paint. One structure was falling and temporarily supported. This creates a poor first impression.

Once one arrives in Cow Head, signage is provided for some amenities, such as hiking trails on the Head, but not all. That which is provided is not visually connected to other town signage and requires drivers to pull over, often without space to do so, get out of their vehicle, and walk up to the signage to understand where they need to go. This is not ideal and can be frustrating for a visitor.

Public Realm Tourism Infrastructure - Public infrastructure plays an important role in the visitor experience of a place. Visitors are often unfamiliar with the new areas in which they’re travelling and can be quick to form a first impression. This is especially true of Cow Head, as Parks Canada tourism data suggests most people (+/- 85%) visiting the Gros Morne area are doing so for the first time. A thoughtful, well-prescribed, and high-quality public realm will create a welcoming first impression and a comfortable environment in which people will want to linger. Amenities like sidewalks, landscaping, and regular places to sit are a must.
Development Controls - Cow Head's existing planning documents - the Municipal Plan and Development Regulations - were created in 1987 at a time when the Provincial Department of Municipal Affairs was creating these documents for small municipalities. The plans created in this era were generally based on a template (like a one-size-fits-all solution) that, 33 years later, no longer address the needs or realities of the community. What does this mean? These documents are the primary planning tools that council has to determine the nature of development, and how and where it should occur within Cow Head. Without the clarity or guidance that these documents provide, the Town is at risk of development or other uses occurring that it may not desire or could significantly detract from the community’s character.
Engagement is critical to create a shared understanding of the project goals as well as to inform decision-making during the planning process. Members of the consulting team traveled to Cow Head from December 10 - 12, 2019 to gather feedback from several stakeholder groups identified by the CHED Committee. This section summarizes the information collected during those sessions.

Town Council & CHED Committee Meeting
On the evening of December 10th, members of the Town Council and the CHED Committee met with the consulting team. The purpose of this meeting was to reconfirm the project vision and to brainstorm ideas for tourism development in Cow Head. Following is a summary of the discussion:

- Current tourism market is seniors (55+), however would like to better target millennials.
- Theatre is a big tourism attraction; the new theatre opens in June of 2020 and the community is hopeful tourism numbers will only increase.
- Would like to better understand how to capture tourists once they’re here.
- There are many interesting stories to tell in Cow Head: Winterside/Summerside, the Axe Murders, the Mail Trail.
- Town Centre area needs better definition; thought to include everything from the War Memorial to J & J B & B.
- The Town Centre should be a hub of activity with things to do and places for tourists to get oriented and learn about the area, possibly a kiosk or small information centre.
- The Head itself has much to offer including unique geology, archaeology, history, a working harbour, and beautiful trails.
- There is a general concern that there is no current means of controlling development on the Head and a worry that inappropriate development may jeopardize the character of the area.
- There are areas on the Head that require beautification and may be detracting from the visitor’s first impression; the Town has made past efforts to support community clean-up.
- The Dunes may present a unique tourism development opportunity for the Town; if so, how can it be developed without harming this unique and sensitive area?
- The Town is interested in exploring options for the Dunes that provide a sustainable tax base.
- Environment and climate change are important considerations for any proposed projects in this plan; proposed projects must be sustainable in the long-term.
- Assets such as Broom Point, Shallow Bay Beach, and trails in St. Paul’s and Parson’s Pond may present opportunities for regional tourism development.
- There may be an opportunity to piggyback on the success of popular community events such as the Lobster Festival, Gros Morne Fall Fest, or Trails, Tales and Tunes.
Tourism-Based Focus Group

On December 11th, members of the consulting team hosted a small focus group meeting. Invitations were sent to several tourism-based committees, businesses and organizations in the community. Representation from the following groups attended the meeting:

- Beautification Committee
- Special Events Committee
- Conservation and Heritage Committee
- War Memorial Committee
- CHED Committee
- Department of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation
- Theatre Newfoundland Labrador
- St. Mary’s Anglican Church
- Parks Canada
- Shallow Bay Motel
- Gros Morne Co-operating Association

The purpose of this meeting was to gain an understanding of the opportunities and challenges currently being faced by tourism operators in the area as well as to brainstorm new ideas for tourism development in Cow Head. Following is a summary of the discussion:

- There is tremendous potential for growth in Cow Head. Vision is to see the town grow at a reasonable rate, but not become so commercialized that we jeopardize that which makes Cow Head special.
- Businesses of an appropriate scale such as artist’s studios, eateries, coffee shops should be encouraged to come here.
- Consider how we may attract young families and entrepreneurs to Cow Head.
- A positive sense of arrival and first impression of the community is very important.
- Better signage would improve wayfinding and contribute to a visitor’s first impression of the community.
- There is currently nothing to entertain children in Cow Head. More activities oriented toward young families should be considered. It was noted that a playground is being planned.
- The Town Centre area was thought to include everything from the War Memorial to Shallow Bay Motel. This area should be promoted to entice new tourism-related businesses to the town.
- Better network coverage is needed not just in Cow Head, but in the entire region. This is especially important if millennials are the target audience.
- Special events such as Lobster Festival and Trails, Tales and Tunes present opportunities to promote the community’s tourism services.
- Find ways to package these events to attract tourists and keep them here longer; make Cow Head a destination.
- The port represents a tremendous opportunity. The chance to see a working vessel, speak with local fisherpeople, and eat fresh seafood would be a unique tourism experience.
- Cow Head is a theatre town; it makes us unique from other communities in the area and we should embrace that.
- Regional projects should be explored and encouraged; people are coming to region (Gros Morne) and it’s important to consider tourism as a regional activity.
- Tell the stories that make Cow Head unique. There’s a lot of history here.
- Winter tourism has not traditionally been a significant market; however opportunities may exist.
- There is a strong sense of support and cooperation among tourism operators in the area.
- Additional projects that could be considered to enhance tourism include: kayak rentals, kitesurfing, bicycle rentals, public art, storyboards.

There’s something magic about the Head. It’s captivating.

CHED Committee Member

CHED Committee Member

To grow tourism here, we need to focus on the younger generation.
Public Open House
On the evening of December 11th, members of the consulting team and the CHED Committee hosted a public open house at the Town Hall. The purpose of this meeting was to introduce the project and collect resident input on tourism development in the community. The event was an informal drop-in session with several interactive displays used to gain feedback. Fifteen members of the public attended the meeting. Following is a summary of the feedback received:

» The trails on the Head are well used.
» How can we capture the visitors that are coming to Shallow Bay Campground?
» The amphitheatre on the Head is not programmed or well used.
» The geology on the Head is very unique.
» Where is the Town Centre?
» Cleanup is required around the port on the Head.
» There is Crown Land on the Head.
» Better signage is needed throughout the community.
» More recycling bins are needed.
» People are coming to town to visit the theatre.
» Explore opportunities to access the waterfront from the Town Centre.
» More interpretive opportunities to tell our stories.
» Consider family activities events such as picnics or a playground.
» Establish the Old Mail Road as a regional trail.
» Look for opportunities to link Cow Head to other communities in the Park.
» Improve safety for pedestrians in the Town Centre.
» Better network coverage is needed.
» Encourage entrepreneurs to setup in Cow Head; we need more gift shops.
» Shallow Bay Campground needs better water and sewer services.
» Town beautification is needed to enhance first impressions.
» There are discrepancies between land use zoning on the Head and the current land uses.
» Other ideas for tourism-related attractions included: skiing, paintball, ATV trails, kayaking, windsurfing, a petting farm, frisbee golf.
Meeting with Representatives of St. Paul’s & Parson’s Pond

Members of the consulting team met with representatives of the neighbouring Towns of St. Paul’s and Parson’s Pond on December 12th. The discussion at this meeting focused on tourism priorities and potential future projects to identify synergies with initiatives in Cow Head. Following is a summary of the discussion:

- There is a 14-kilometre heritage trail linking Cow Head to Broom Point through St. Paul’s that was a collaboration between the communities.
- This trail permits hiking, bicycling, ATVs and snowmobiles.
- Parson’s Pond has an established network of trails that links important community destinations such as Three Mile Rock, Inner Pond and Devil’s Bite.
- Parson’s Pond has a section of the Old Mail Road that has never been developed due to harsh exposure.
- The Heritage Trail through St. Paul’s has signage but generally none of the other municipal trails in the area contain adequate signage.
- Signage should be in both official languages.
- There is a positive spirit of collaboration between the communities and they would be open to continuing to work together on future initiatives.
- There is an 18-hole golf course in St. Paul’s that could become an attraction for the area.
- A new RV park and campground is currently also being planned. Fall camping is on the rise.
- There is an abundance of seals in the St. Paul’s area which presents a unique tourism development opportunity (boat tour, etc.)
- Parson’s Pond has a recreation complex, Peace Garden and Community Garden which may represent tourism opportunities.
- Network coverage is poor in this area of the Park which is negatively affecting tourism.
- Employing locals in the tourism industry should be a priority to keep people in the area.
- There was a boat tour operator in St Paul’s who relocated to Norris Point. The opportunity is there for another entrepreneur.

Meeting with Parks Canada

Members of the consulting team met with representatives of Parks Canada to discuss their tourism priorities and potential future projects in Gros Morne National Park (GNPN). Following is a summary of the discussion:

- The Dunes is a very dynamic landscape. It is extremely sensitive, susceptible to harm and provides many valuable ecosystem services.
- The Dunes and Stearin and Beltdowns Islands are home to several species of nesting shorebirds such as piping plover, eider ducks, terns, cormorants. Some species are protected under the Species at Risk Act.
- Development on the Dunes should be limited; that which is allowed should aim to tread lightly. Contain pedestrian travel through elevated boardwalks, fencing, and corralling to designated areas.
- Expectations need to be managed with respect to the Dunes. Promoting it as an attraction may have adverse effects if people are encouraged to explore.
- The Town should focus on something completely unique that is not currently offered in GNPN for the Town-owned portion of the Dunes; perhaps something such as an elevated lookout tower.
- Shallow Bay Campground receives up to 10,000 visitors annually.
- Most visitors use the beach itself as a walking trail.
- Shallow Bay Campground receives up to 10,000 visitors annually.
- Most visitors use the beach itself as a walking trail.
- Parks Canada, through a third party, may expand its offerings at Shallow Bay Campground to include kitesurfing and loungers on the beach.
- The Point of the Head trail is one of the best trails in the region.
- If visitor numbers on the Point of the Head trail increases, it should be hardened to avoid severe deterioration of the walking surface and its amenities.
- Parks Canada is generally supportive of active transportation and are currently exploring more multi-use trails within GNPN.
- Cycling would be easy here as it is relatively flat. Western Brook Pond allows cycling so there is potential for a connection.
- Parks Canada is generally not supportive of motorized vehicles on trails as it is not within their current mandate.
- ATV’s are not permitted on roads or trails managed by Parks Canada.
- Parks Canada would not support connecting trails that permit ATV use to their trails.
- The Cow Head Lighthouse on the Head is uncommon construction for the era: cast iron riveted on the outside was not the norm in NL or Canada.
The geology on the Head is extremely unique and is somewhat renowned in paleontology circles.

Winter tourism in Cow Head is limited due to unreliable snow cover, high winds and rain.

Parks Canada is interested in expanding its winter tourism product but needs support from local business community (restaurants, accommodations, attractions, etc.)

Parks Canada will in the near future issue business licenses for anyone wanting to do business in GMNP.

They are seeing a trend of more young entrepreneurs without family connections in the area moving in to start businesses.

Visitors to GMNP are planning up to five months ahead of their trip. Events and tourism-related activities need to be planned accordingly to be successful.

Tourism should be considered at a regional level. Could Cow Head serve as a regional service centre? There are numerous other offerings within a one hour drive (Arches Provincial Park, Table Head Ecological Reserve).

The Summerside-Winterside migration qualifies as a National Historic Event under the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. The Town may want to pursue designation and recognition signage to promote it as significant tourism draw. There are currently very few of these sites in the country.

Tourism should be considered at a regional level. Could Cow Head serve as a regional service centre? There are numerous other offerings within a one hour drive (Arches Provincial Park, Table Head Ecological Reserve).

The Dunes is a beautiful yet sensitive landscape. 10 footsteps can do significant harm.
First impressions count. When visitors arrive in Cow Head for the first time, they should feel a positive sense of arrival as well as a sense of excitement at the possibilities to come. This will set the tone for the rest of their stay. Recommendations of this plan will strive to improve first impressions of the community to ensure a positive arrival sequence is achieved.

While Cow Head is undoubtedly rich with authentic tourism experiences, several of these experiences require a trip off the beaten path and may not be clear to a visitor unfamiliar with the area. To inspire in visitors the confidence to explore, this plan will make several recommendations aimed at simplifying wayfinding and navigation through the community.

The stunning natural landscapes of Cow Head are second-to-none and contribute significantly to the community’s overall character. Within the setting of a national park, they also represent a major tourism attraction. Recommendations of this plan will aim to preserve, protect, and enhance the natural and cultural landscapes and ecosystems of Cow Head.

For newcomers to Cow Head, it is important to have a logical, clearly delineated core to act as a landing zone. This is where visitors can stop, get oriented, and plan the next leg of their trip. This core will serve as the community hub with spokes reaching out to other nearby destinations in the community.

Contemporary tourists expect a certain level of comfort and convenience when traveling. The recommendations of this plan will suggest physical site and infrastructure improvements aimed at improving traveler comfort, convenience, and overall experience. In turn, this will encourage longer stays and improve immersion.

There are many incredible stories in Cow Head which form the basis of a rich cultural narrative. It is precisely these unique local tales - of people and place - that visitors crave when traveling to new places. Recommendations of this plan will aim to celebrate this cultural richness by highlighting these stories.

In Cow Head, families of all ages live and prosper in a community that respects and protects its roots and unique environment while enjoying a sustainable future built around our world class theatre and a diversified tourism industry.
4.2 / Laying the Groundwork

A Planning Primer

Planning is the practice of managing change. Community planning is about managing the community’s interests by determining a vision or a desired long term outcome, examining shared goals and objectives, and identifying the strategies that will achieve those goals through measurable results consistent with the vision.

Communities are comprised of two types of interests - individual interests and common interests. Individual interests are singular concerns related to one’s property such as a home or business and the desire to keep and maintain the individual property. Community interests relate to broader aspects of a community’s foundation based on environmental, economic and social values. Collectively these values are considered the common good.

The common good applies to the physical complex of community infrastructure such as streets, water and sewer systems, road networks and transportation, open space, environmental matters and the quality of public and private developments in the community. Governing and maintaining the common good is the responsibility of our elected officials – council, and its staff. Council’s task involves balancing residents’ needs – individual interests, with those that affect the community as a whole – the common good – in a rational and fair manner. It is a challenging task and sometimes not everyone is happy with the result.

The manner in which activities related to individual and common interests find their way to the proper location on the ground is determined by the Municipal Plan – which is a land use management plan and the accompanying Development Regulations.

The policies and proposals contained within the Municipal Plan are the tools that regulate land use planning in municipalities. Together with the zoning provisions contained within the Development Regulations, these tools are used by councils and residents to plan how economic and social activities will occupy the land within an environmental framework.

The Need to Plan

We often look at our community and think, “I like the way they are now,” and, “I don’t want things to change.” A municipal plan is not meant to interfere with the way things are. It’s meant to preserve and protect the things we love about our community. When there is no plan, it’s easy for the way things are to be changed, and not always for the better of the community. There are many good reasons for planning a community: it maintains our quality of life, protects our interests, achieves community goals, and creates a balanced community.

As humans, we plan everyday of our lives: what we eat, our vacations, our families, and our retirement. We plan in order to reduce conflicts; to have a sense of well-being in our lives. Community planning helps protect the things we love most about where live, work and play. The desired outcome is the best possible development for the physical, social, economic and environmental fabric of the community. Planning protects our quality of life, preserves the common good and achieves the community’s goals.

The Principles of Planning Legislation

In Newfoundland and Labrador the Urban and Rural Planning Act 2000, is the enabling legislation that allows municipalities to govern land use and development within their planning area boundary. The Act enables municipalities to create a Municipal Plan and Development Regulation within the scope of prescribed criteria defined by the Act. The Act prescribes the contents of these planning documents, as described in sections below. The principles of policy, proposal and provision are the foundation for these governance documents.

These principles complete a hierarchy of related concepts. The foundation of the Municipal Plan is based on general goal-oriented policies and action-oriented proposals, while the Development Regulations are based goal-oriented provisions. The hierarchy of these concepts is meant to be clear and concise, where one principle supports another.

Understanding the meaning and intent of these principles is crucial to building council’s knowledge and use of the documents. These principles are defined as follows (from Black’s Law Dictionary, 11th Ed., 2010):

Policy is defined as the general principles by which a government is guided in its management of public affairs. These principles are of fundamental interest to municipal councils and the community as a whole. Under the legislation, the premise is that a person should not be allowed to do anything that would tend to injure the public interest or common good.

Thus, at the local level, a policy could be stated as an overall goal of council for the growth, development and planning of the community. A goal is not highly detailed, but rather more visionary in nature. However, a policy is binding on the municipality and supersedes a proposal and zoning provision. Simply stated a policy may be considered as “I don’t want things to change.”

Proposition is defined as a thing proposed for consideration or acceptance. At the local level, a proposition is the interim step between the policy and provision. It may be an action or a project that council proposes to take in order to achieve a specific policy. For example, council may create a policy outlining its tourism goals for the community. A corresponding proposal would see the creation and adoption of a tourism plan that would achieve council’s goal.

A proposal is not binding on the municipality or the Minister. However, no development can be considered that contravenes a policy or proposal. Simply stated, if the policy is defined as the right things to do, the proposal may be defined as “how do we do the right things.”

Provision is defined as a condition or stipulation upon whose compliance a legal or formal document’s validity or application may depend. At the local level, provisions refer to zoning requirements of the Development Regulations. Provisions describe zones in detail and prescribe purposes for which land, buildings and structures in any zone may be used. Provisions regulate zones through standards. Furthermore, they may designate
specific uses of land, buildings and structures as being subject to special terms and conditions. A provision is the end point of the hierarchy and is derived from the policies and proposals. Simply stated, if the policy is the right things to do, and the proposal is how we do the right things, then the provision is defined as the tools to do the right things.

Local Governance

In Labrador and Labrador the Urban and Rural Planning Act 2000, enables municipalities to create, implement and administer a Municipal Plan, Generalized Future Land Use Map, Development Regulations, and a Land Use Zoning Map.

These planning tools enable council to manage and control land use and development; control watersheds that are the source of the municipal water supply; and control the amenities of the municipality that are within the municipal planning area. With the input and support of the community council and residents are able to plan how and where it should occur.

The Municipal Plan and Development Regulations

The Municipal Plan is the land use management plan for the community. It provides the basis for the Development Regulations and proceedings to a Public Hearing of Opinions after which the documents are finalized and resubmitted to the Minister for gazetting and formal registration.

A Municipal Plan and Development Regulations (and the associated maps) are legal documents and as laws, they are binding upon municipal council and individuals undertaking a development in the planning area governed by a plan and regulations.

The Act specifies the contents of the Municipal Plan, Development Regulations and maps, including setting out those matters that are compulsory and those over which council has discretion. It stipulates that the plan and development regulations and any amendments must be certified by a member of the Canadian Institute of Planners. The Act also describes mandatory public consultation(s) and review of the documents by the Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment for consistency with provincial policies and standards. With Ministerial approval, council adopts the Municipal Plan and Development Regulations and proceeds to a Public Hearing of Opinions after which the documents are finalized and resubmitted to the Minister for gazetting and formal registration. Required Maps

The Generalized Future Land Use Map (GFLUM) designates land according to general categories of land use as set out in the policies and proposals of the Municipal Plan. These policies and proposals set out the land uses permitted in the community. Some examples of land use designations are Residential, Commercial, Industrial, and Conservation. Small communities generally require only a few land use designations as existing uses may be limited. In larger communities more designations are needed due to a greater number of land uses. The GFLUM provides the basis for the Land Use Zoning Map or LUXM.

The Land Use Zoning Map, in conjunction with the Development Regulations, illustrates the specific zones for each category of land use. For example, the Residential land use may be divided into several land use zones such as: Residential Low Density, Residential High Density, Medium Density, Residential High Density, Rural Residential, and others. The zoning provisions and specific regulations for each land use zone are described in the Development Regulations. Small communities generally do not require the delineation of land uses into a number of zones. Thus a land use designation and a land use zone might be exactly the same, however the Development Regulations will nonetheless describe the specific provisions and development

Purpose of the Municipal Plan and Development Regulations

These planning documents allow council to govern growth or change for the town for a ten year period, after which they must be reviewed and updated. They enable council to determine the nature of development, and how and where it should occur. However, each document has a specific purpose and role pertaining to the use of land and development.

The Municipal Plan is the land use management plan for the community. It provides the basis for the Development Regulations, and outlines the procedures and practices regarding variances and non-conforming uses. Finally, it also describes how the plan will be implemented including the requirements for amendments. These components are mandatory according to the Urban and Rural Planning Act 2000.

However, the Act also gives council discretion to include other topics in the municipal plan such as:

- The physical, economic and social environment
- Transportation and street network(s)
- Creation of comprehensive development areas
- Public works programs
- Protection, use and development of environmentally sensitive lands
- Storm water and erosion control
- Protection, use and development of natural resources and prevention of development with negative environmental impacts
- Excavation, filling-in or reclamation of land
- The completion of environmental studies prior to allowing specific developments
- Stipulating the height and siting of developments
- The use and conservation of energy
- Diversification of the economy
- Backlot development
- Housing and facilities for seniors
- Other matters that council deems necessary

This category gives council some creative leeway to identify lands or areas that council deems special or sensitive and to protect them where it is in the interest of the community or the common good.

Required Maps

The Generalized Future Land Use Map (GFLUM) designates land according to general categories of land use as set out in the policies and proposals of the Municipal Plan. These policies and proposals set out the land uses permitted in the community.
regulations that apply to each zone.
For small communities, the EFLUM and the 
LZUM may look exactly the same but have different titles.

The Development Regulations provide provisions and regulations specific to each land use zone. The Development Regulations define the permitted, prohibited and discretionary uses of land in each land use zone. The Act also gives council the authority to include the following regulations in support of land use zoning:

- Requirements for residential lots and access to residential lots
- Development of subdivisions and the requirements for subdivisions
- Implementation of development permits, including applications, fees, approvals, conditions applicable to permits, length of time for which permits are valid, the conditions applicable to permits, length of time for which permits are valid, the
discretion and variance powers available to council with respect to the issuance of a permit
- Financial guarantees of applicants with respect to a proposed development
- Appeals and enforcement of permits

The Act describes the implementation of the Municipal Plan and Development Regulations and their amendments. The Act ensures that public consultation and the process of adoption, Ministerial review, public hearing and objections and government review for registration are equally applied to the planning documents and maps.

The Current Planning Context in Cow Head
The planning documents for Cow Head were created in 1987 at a time when the Department of Municipal Affairs was creating these documents for small municipalities without the resources to do undertake the task. The plans created in this era, were generally based on a template – like a one-size-fits-all solution that 33 years later, no longer addresses the needs or realities of the community.

These existing documents predate the current Urban and Rural Planning Act which was enacted in 2000. Thus, the documents are profoundly out of date and are not in compliance with the Act. The documents do not contain the Ministerial Regulations 3/10. Various provisions regarding non-conforming use, appeals, and variances are not reflected in the documents. Therefore, council is not able to properly apply these concepts when reviewing development applications and potentially residents may not aware of, or confused about their land use rights, such as their right to appeal and the process to follow.

Municipal Plan and Development Regulations amendments have also not been consolidated into the original documents or associated maps which causes confusion with respect to the purpose and number of zones, and the intent of various permitted and discretionary uses. The result is an inconsistency in the adherence to the Municipal Plan and Development Regulations. For example the permitted uses described by the Municipal Plan for the two recreational zones: Recreational Open Space and Open Space are more liberal than those outlined in the Development Regulations making these zones almost identical. Neither zone allows seasonal residential uses, however a few remote cottages are found along the Head Peninsula shoreline in the Open Space zone.

Likewise, the amphitheatre and the day use area on the Head Peninsula are located in the Mining Working zone which does not allow this recreational use. Currently, quarrying and removal of aggregate are permitted uses in the Mining Working zone, creating incompatible land uses. During the consultation sessions, we heard that previous councils have attempted to curtail this practice, however, there is no indication that this land use zone was amended. Thus, until the zone is amended mineral extraction can continue with possible adverse impacts on the recreation uses. However, the 2007 amendment did state that Mineral Working sites shall be rehabilitated by the operator to standards set by the Department of Natural Resources, Minerals Lands Branch and Town Council in order to allow compatible future use of the site.

The 2007 amendment also re-designated and rezoned the coastal dune lands from Rural Resource to Residential in order to accommodate a housing subdivision which is not permitted in rural areas. Use of these lands within the town has been made more difficult for subsequent councils and staff, and residents. For these reasons a full Municipal Plan Review is recommended.

A New Municipal Plan
The Town should undertake a review of their Municipal Plan and Development Regulations to prepare new documents that are in compliance with existing legislation.

Once it is adopted by Council, enacted by the Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment (through advertisement in the Newfoundland and Labrador Gazette), it becomes a legal document and is binding on Council or individuals wishing to undertake a development in the community.

Further Considerations within a New Municipal Plan
Tourism Development Plan - The Municipal Plan gives council the ability to manage land uses and development on the Head Peninsula, the Town Centre, the Dunes, and other areas.

The planning tools in their present form are cumbersome, difficult to navigate and will not facilitate the efficient implementation of tourism related projects. Amending the
 occulted by this Tourism Development Plan. Complete the Tourism Development Plan and ensure it is formally adopted by Council to solidify the link between this document and the Municipal Plan.

Town Centre - Create a new Town Centre land use designation and zone in the Municipal Plan and Development Regulations. Outline the permitted uses, specifying the appropriate zoning provisions and development regulations. Amend adjacent land use designations/zones to avoid conflicting land uses.

The Head Peninsula - The Head Peninsula requires extensive review of existing land uses, land use zones and permitted uses. Currently, some existing land uses do not conform to the zoning and permitted land uses allowed by the Municipal Plan and Development Regulations. Determine which uses are not allowed and how to integrate them. Make them legal non-conforming, or amend the zones and permitted uses.

Examine the Mineral Working designation zone and determine whether it is a provincial government interest. Amend or change this zone and allowed uses to permit recreational open space uses so that the amphitheatre and day use areas can be enhanced as a recreational and tourism attraction.

Examine the area of the wharf, ownership and jurisdiction. Determine amendments required to allow summer tourism activities in this area. Activities that involve food service may require the creation and implementation of a Vending By-law under the Municipalities Act in order to allow and regulate this use.

The Dunes - Amend the land use and zone to Conservation to protect the dunes but allow safe passage via boardwalks to allow tourists to enjoy this sensitive natural area and the spectacular views. Seek input and advice from Parks Canada staff.

Trails - Ensure that areas identified for potential new trails, and redeveloped or upgrading of existing trails have the appropriate land use designation/zone and development regulations to allow this recreational use. Ensure that the Municipal Plan and Development Regulations allow recreational open space uses and in particular trails, in the appropriate land use zones.

Summary of Recommendations for Section 4.2 - Laying the Groundwork

Undertake a Municipal Plan Review

Next Steps

Develop a RFP for review of the Municipal Plan and Development Regulations to prepare new documents that are in compliance with existing legislation.

Approximate Budget

$30,000 - $35,000 + HST (professional fees)

Parties Responsible for Implementation

Town of Cow Head, CHED

Guiding Principles Achieved

Potential Project Partners

Department of Municipal Affairs & Environment (Gas Tax Fund)
Consultant (professional planner)
Gros Morne Co-op Association (possible synergy with proposed regional plan)
First impressions matter, often setting the tone for the rest of a visitor’s experience of a place. A strong first impression will result in a better visitor experience, while a poor first impression can result in negative biases that may cause a visitor to pass by without even stopping the car.

How is a positive first impression achieved? Project for Public Spaces suggests that whether a space is comfortable and presents itself well - that is, it portrays a good image - is key to its success. In the eyes of a visitor, a community must appear to be safe, walkable, attractive, and sittable to create a welcoming first impression. Following are several strategies the Town may consider to improve first impressions.

**Town Branding** - Branding refers to the marketing practice of promoting an asset using a unique, recognizable visual cue such as a logo or typeface. A successful brand conveys character and personality and clearly communicates to an end user the special qualities of the item being branded. Brands are typically applied across multiple platforms, materials, and messaging, and when used effectively, become an essential part of its identity. Branding can be applied to almost anything: a company, a product, a person, and yes, even a municipality.

The Town should consider creating a distinct, eye-catching and well-articulated brand that will highlight Cow Head’s unique and differentiating characteristics. This new town brand can then be incorporated into the town’s public spaces - on signage, barriers, site furnishings, or lighting - to help tie together otherwise disparate objects and provide a sense of unity to the townscape. This will strengthen the overall sense of place and allow Cow Head to stand above other communities in the travel destination landscape.

Successful town brands can turn any community into an attractive destination. However developing a successful brand requires careful consideration. The Town must clearly understand its reason for branding, its audience, and, perhaps most importantly, the unique characteristics of the community that it wants to showcase.

What imagery comes to mind when one thinks about Cow Head? Is it the colourful clapboard siding of the cottages on the Head? Or perhaps it’s the handcrafted wooden fish that adorn the museum? Maybe the iconic silhouette of the new theatre?

What are the things that make Cow Head different from other nearby communities?

What is it that gives Cow Head its sense of place?

These are the types of questions that must be considered.

Branding a municipality is not a simple or straightforward task however, when done successfully, a town brand will set a community apart, help inspire curiosity among travellers, attract and retain businesses, and instill a shared sense of civic pride in residents.

The Town of Torbay is a community of approximately 7,000 residents on the Avalon Peninsula. In 2009, the Town decided to create a new municipal identity. They drew inspiration from the elements that they felt made Torbay special and set it apart from other communities in the area.

Leveraging the community’s strong English and Irish heritage, the “Torbay” font was designed as a Gaelic typeface to represent the insular script commonly used in 16th to 18th century Irish writing. Inspiration was also taken from the community’s seaside location, as represented by the logo’s abstract wave and seagull elements. A soft pastel colour palette was used to set the brand apart and provide a town identity.

Today, the Town of Torbay continues to use its brand throughout the community. The blues and oranges have become synonymous with Torbay, providing a strong visual identifier. The brand has won several awards and can be seen proudly displayed throughout the community on municipal documents, vehicles, buildings, and signage.
Discover Cow Head

Townscape Beautification - Garbage, debris, and other eyesores like abandoned vehicles or decaying buildings can significantly detract from a visitor’s overall first impression of a place. While the Town has the ability to control what happens on public land, private property is a different story. Yet visitors do not typically differentiate public from private properties, allowing both to inform their impression of a place, so the Town must consider taking a holistic approach to beautification.

Under the Municipalities Act, the Town has the ability to create a set of by-laws to address property conditions. However, doing so would require resources for enforcement of those by-laws that the Town may not currently have available.

Alternatively, the Town could consider taking a community engagement, rather than a punitive, approach. For example, the Town could consider offering complimentary bulk garbage collection at designated times throughout the year to deter residents from storing large items on their properties.

Adopt-a-Space programs have been effective in other municipalities to assist with maintenance while also engaging residents. These programs consist of a partnership between the municipality and an organization that oversees a public space, including routine maintenance tasks such as removing litter. The municipality typically supplies materials such as garbage bags, orientation, safety gear, and coordinates disposal, while the volunteers provide the labour. In acknowledgment of the volunteers, a sign is usually erected in the public space displaying the organization’s logo.

Another effective strategy has been hosting a community event such as a cleanup day or community challenge. Unlike Adopt-a-Space programs which represent a recurring partnership, these are one-time events that happen on a scheduled date and time. Often, these days will overlap with other significant events such as Earth Day or the week leading up to the Lobster Festival. The municipality typically provides an ambassador(s) to lead small groups, performing maintenance tasks such as removing litter or painting.

Another effective beautification tool would be the establishment of a Property Improvement Program to encourage private owners to improve the appearance of their properties.

These types of programs typically offer grants or subsidies that incentivize property maintenance and improvements. Reimbursement is usually a percentage of the total costs to a maximum per project, as determined by Council. Should the town wish to implement an improvement program, it is recommended that the Town set a maximum project budget for the fiscal year, then adjust the following year based on success and demand of the program.

Eligible costs would be at Council’s discretion, but could include general landscaping improvements such as repair of fences or walls, installation of site furniture, installing trees, shrubs or flowers, and paving / repair of parking areas. Building improvements could also be included such as siding, roof, window and door repair or replacement, especially for facades that face Main Street.

Upgrades through an improvement program can significantly improve first impressions.
The Town of Yarmouth is located on the Bay of Fundy in southwestern Nova Scotia. The town has had a rich English and French history that has resulted in a built environment that some have referred to as “the most exuberant example of Victorian style houses in the Maritimes.” Recognizing the significance of the built environment to Yarmouth’s overall character, and having learned lessons through buildings lost to fire and demolition, the Municipality sought ways of preserving the quality of the buildings that remained.

Launched in 2014, the Facade Improvement Program is intended to provide support for owners in the historic downtown core wanting to upgrade their properties. Through a grant from the Municipality, property owners can access up to $5,000 in funding for improvements and upgrades that aim to improve elements such as lighting, signage, awnings, siding, windows, and doors. Funding can also be used for acquiring professional architectural or engineering services if required. Priority is given to those projects with frontages facing the main streets of the downtown core to ensure the upgrades contribute to an integrated, high-quality public realm.

Now in its sixth year, the Municipality continues to support the Facade Improvement Program. To date, they have approved 79 applications totalling over $280,000 in funding which, when matched by business and property owners, has resulted in over $1.3 million of upgrades. The Facade Improvement Program has resulted in a high-quality public realm in Yarmouth’s downtown that is attractive to both residents and visitors. It has also resulted in tangible economic benefits such as growing the number of businesses downtown, increased customer traffic, and higher property assessment values.

Wayfinding and Signage - A wayfinding system is much more than simply a series of signs placed strategically throughout a community. It should be visually appealing, legible, consistent, and most importantly, facilitate movement through the community in a clear and intuitive manner. A successful wayfinding system provides an inclusive and welcoming first impression by helping visitors orient themselves, draw a mental map of a place, and easily navigate to their desired destination. It gives users the confidence to wander and truly experience all that a community has to offer. When tied together with a strong community brand, it becomes an essential piece of the placemaking puzzle, creating a sense of cohesion, connectivity, and civic pride.

The illustrations on the following page represent a conceptual family of wayfinding signage for Cow Head. The designs presented reflect proven wayfinding principles of simplicity, clarity, and consistency, and are intended to be eye-catching, economical, and complementary of a unified brand. Prior to implementing any signage, it is recommended that the Town undertake a wayfinding signage strategy.

If detailed information indicating sign materials, dimensions, construction details, content suggestions, and sign placement is required, it is recommended that the Town undertake a wayfinding signage strategy.
When the Town branding is complete, use the logo on signage.

Use elements in the signage design that reflect the Town’s character.

Use consistent fonts & colours to visually connect signage.

Use landscape to anchor the signs.

Community Welcome Sign

Directional Sign

Route Marker

Information Kiosk

Trail Marker
Highway 430 Rest Area Upgrades - There is a small roadside rest area on Highway 430 just before reaching the Main Street intersection that leads to Cow Head. The rest area consists of a large asphalt paved area, a Viking Trail information kiosk, and two signs (one for Cow Head and another for the Gros Morne Theatre Festival), as shown in the photo below.

While rest areas provide much needed places for weary travellers to stretch their legs, they are also great opportunities to let visitors know of nearby attractions and amenities, enticing them to take a detour to explore the area. Due to its location prior to the Cow Head turnoff, this rest area in particular represents a tremendous opportunity to pique the interest of passersby and entice them to venture into the town to see all that it has to offer.

Currently however, the rest area does not achieve this sense of wonder or enticement. The large expanse of asphalt is not welcoming or inviting and does not provide basic pedestrian amenities such as sidewalks, seating, waste bins, or opportunities to get out of the car. The Cow Head sign touches on many of the attractions within the community (nature, culture, comfort), however it does little to excite the user or to explain the unique and differentiating things about Cow Head. Interpretive panels in this location could provide teasers to whet the visitor’s appetite for exploration, such as the Axe Murder story or the spectacular trails of the Head, encouraging them to take the detour to town to experience more. An information panel or map is an excellent tool for notifying visitors of nearby amenities, but the current map at the rest area is focused on the Viking Trail and does not specifically identify any of the attractions in Cow Head. If anything, this map seems to encourage visitors to keep driving north, with little incentive provided to detour into Cow Head.

This rest area represents an opportunity to improve Cow Head’s presence on the highway and entice visitors to take the Main Street turnoff. However, it is not the only place along Highway 430 where such opportunity exists. There is a gas bar to the south and other highway rest areas to the north before Parson’s Pond. It may be more prudent or practical for the Town to focus investment in these existing locations, rather than taking on the responsibility of upgrading its own rest area. Partnerships would likely be required in these cases.

The impetus for this recommendation is that the Town should consider improving its presence along Highway 430. As noted, there are a number of opportunities that the Town may consider to accomplish this objective.
Wayfinding & Signage Strategy

Next Steps
Develop a RFP to complete a town-wide wayfinding signage strategy which includes a unified family of signs and incorporates the Town brand.

Approximate Budget: $13,000 - $15,000 + HST (professional fees)

Parties Responsible for Implementation: Town of Cow Head, CHED

Guiding Principles Achieved

1 2 3 4 5 6

Potential Project Partners
TCI, ACOA (funding)
DTW, Service NL (permitting)
Consultant (professional landscape architect)

Highway 430 Rest Area Upgrades

Next Steps
Rest area upgrades to provide a positive first impression, and entice visitors to detour into town. Develop a RFP for a detailed site plan.

Approximate Budget: $90,000 - 105,000 + HST (construction estimate)

Parties Responsible for Implementation: Town of Cow Head, CHED

Guiding Principles Achieved

1 2 3 4 5 6

Potential Project Partners
TCI, ACOA, Municipal Affairs & Environment (funding)
Consultant (professional engineer or landscape architect)
4.4 / Defining the Town Centre

The Urban Land Institute (ULI) defines a town centre as follows:

“A town center is an enduring, walkable, and integrated open-air, mixed-use development that is organized around a clearly identifiable and energized public realm where citizens can gather and strengthen their community bonds. It is anchored by retail, dining, and leisure uses. At least one other type of development is included in a town center, such as offices, hospitality, civic, and cultural uses. Over time, a town center should evolve into the densest, most compact, and most diverse part of a community, with strong connections to its surroundings.”

When stakeholders were asked where they thought Cow Head’s town centre was located, responses varied regarding how far the town centre area reached into the community. However, most were in agreement that the actual centre - that is, the ULI put, is the most diverse part of the community with the strongest connections to the waterfront and surrounding areas. The town centre as it exists today, the Shallow Bay Motel. From a tourism perspective, it is advantageous that a logical town centre exists. When visitors arrive at a new destination, they are seeking a place to stop, get oriented, and learn about other things to see and do in the area. Often, it is the town centre that serves this purpose. However there are several opportunities that the Town may consider to further strengthen its town centre to increase tourism and improve the overall visitor experience.

Strengthen the Town Centre with Visual Cues - Generally, the town centre area includes spaces such as streets, sidewalks, open spaces, walkways, and buildings. The details within this area should be thoughtful and prescribed, as they contribute to a welcoming and attractive environment in which people will want to linger. The elements within the town centre should include amenities that improve visitor comfort, safety, and convenience, such as information kiosks, site furniture, wayfinding signage, sidewalks, landscaping, and rest stops. These elements should complement one another to ensure continuity and to act as a visual cue to visitors that they are in a special part of town. Incorporating the town brand (once developed) is another great way to tie these elements and spaces together.

Lighting is another excellent amenity to consider as it improves safety, extends the usage period of an area, and provides a sense of warmth and ambiance to a public space. However, a word of caution, lighting is quite often the most costly item to consider in a streetscaping plan. Aside from initial installation costs, there are also ongoing maintenance costs to budget for and consider. It is therefore recommended that if the Town chooses to consider installing additional lighting, that it should be used sparingly, perhaps only in areas where the highest amount of pedestrian activity can be anticipated such as around the theatre. This would be prudent and ensure the greatest impact is achieved.

The elements that make up the town centre serve important functions and, when considered holistically on a town-wide scale, their importance cannot be understated. A well-designed and comfortable town centre area creates a cohesive, welcoming, and lasting impression which will lead to a more positive visitor experience and memory of place. The beauty of such public realm investment is that the improvements are generally appeal not only to tourists, but to residents as well.

Explore Alternative Uses for the Warehouse Theatre - When the Nurse Myra Bennett Centre for the Performing Arts opens later this year, it will become the new home of the Gros Morne Theatre Festival. The Warehouse Theatre, the festival’s current home, may present a unique tourism opportunity for the town. This facility, in whole or in part, could be re-imagined as a key tourism attraction, the first touchpoint for visitors. The building’s frontage right on the street along with its prominent signage grabs the attention of passersby on Main Street, making it a natural draw. Further, its location directly in the middle of the perceived town centre makes it a logical place for an amenity of this nature. It is surrounded by ample surface parking and features strong connections to other popular attractions such as the new theatre, town hall, and the Shallow Bay Motel.

This re-purposed building could stand to become a hub for travellers featuring visitor information and public restrooms. It could also act as an incubator for local entrepreneurs and provide opportunities to open small, tourism-related businesses. Examples may include bike rentals, tour guides, selling arts and crafts, and food and drink vendors. It should be noted that this building is currently privately owned and the Town will need to form a partnership with the current owners to undertake this recommendation.

Waterfront Access from the Town Centre – Access to the waterfront from within the Town Centre area can only be achieved by following the 15.0-metre buffer zone that is required by the Province, leaving little room for new public infrastructure such as walkways, trails, or lookouts. In several locations, there is a grade change that presents a further challenge to development as well as public accessibility. There are several existing public spaces provided off Main Street that provide a view of the water, perhaps the most prominent being the Prayer and Meditation Platform located beside the Anglican Church. These should be maintained and connected to Main Street to improve visitor access from the Town Centre.

Further opportunities may exist to strengthen the connection between Main Street and the waterfront, however their potential to serve as significant tourism attraction is limited. A better opportunity to provide visitor access to the waterfront exists at other locations in Cow Head, such as the Dunes (with careful consideration as indicated in Section 4.6 of this report) and the Head Peninsula. As key tourism destinations for the town, further investment in infrastructure such as trails or boardwalks in these areas would likely be more successful in growing tourism for the Town in the short-term.
A re-purposed Warehouse Theatre could become a visitor’s centre or tourism-related business incubator located directly in the heart of the town.

Visual cues such as landscaping, sidewalks, pedestrian rest areas, banners, and fencing tell visitors they’ve entered the Town Centre.
Summary of Recommendations for Section 4.4 - Develop the Town Centre

Re-purpose the Warehouse Theatre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Next Steps</th>
<th>Approximate Budget</th>
<th>Parties Responsible for Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consider uses for the Warehouse Theatre including an information centre or business incubator. Develop a RFP to assess suitability for reuse and programming.</td>
<td>$15,000 + HST (professional fees)</td>
<td>Town of Cow Head, CHED, Private Owner (Shallow Bay Motel)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Guiding Principles Achieved

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

Potential Project Partners

TCII, ACOA, Municipal Affairs & Environment (funding) Consultant (professional engineer or architect) Theatre NL

4.5 / Celebrating the Head Peninsula

The Head Peninsula is the crowning jewel of the Cow Head tourism experience. This sentiment was unanimous during community engagement activities. Parks Canada staff noted that the Point of the Head Trail was one of the best in Gros Morne National Park, providing visitors with access to unspoiled landscape and coastal scenery that was second-to-none.

There are however several other initiatives that the Town may explore on the Head to further grow tourism and enhance the overall visitor experience.

The Working Port as an Asset - The Head is the home of Cow Head Harbour, an active working port on the peninsula’s northeast side. Significant investment has recently been made to the port’s infrastructure including armourstone shoreline protection and a large gravel parking/laydown area.

As a working port, priority is given to supporting the local fishing industry. However, the port itself represents a tourism opportunity as well. The port provides access to scenic waterfront views. The ability for a visitor to get close to the water, watch the activity of an active fishery, and speak with local fisherpersons is a truly unique cultural experience for many and has incredible tourism value.

To capitalize on this opportunity, the Town may wish to introduce additional tourism infrastructure in this area. A small waterfront boardwalk could be installed to provide safe pedestrian access to the water’s edge. Small kiosks modelled after fishing stages can provide a unique venue for artists, craftspeople, and fisherpersons to sell their wares. The Town could even schedule recurring events, such as night markets, to coincide with performances at the theatre or to fall during community celebrations such as Canada Day or the Lobster Festival. Other popular events happening within the Park may also be considered, such as Trails, Tales and Tunes and Fall Fest.

The Town will need to work closely with the Harbour Authority as it will be important to strike a balance between the needs of the tourist and those who rely upon the port for their livelihoods.

Hardening the Trails - There are several trails on the Head Peninsula that are truly wondrous, rewarding walkers and hikers with incredible coastal views and access to a rich and varied landscape.

The trails are well-maintained with infrastructure such as stairs, rails, and lookouts constructed of heavy timber that is in good condition. Trail surfacing varies throughout from well-developed sections with compacted gravel to more informal worn paths through grassy fields. Root protrusions occur in some of the informal areas forming minor tripping hazards. Signage is generally good with wayfinding markers and interpretive panels provided to describe the unique vegetation, geology, and other features. However, several side trails were unsigned which led to some confusion, dead ends, and resulted in unnecessary backtracking.

Should the Town decide to increase...
Brightly-coloured kiosks host craftspersons, artists, and other vendors creating a unique waterfront market venue.

promotion of these trails, or build upon the trails to lengthen the reach of the Head’s trail network, it can be expected that usage will increase. This would be a good thing, meaning more visitors will visit the community to take in the Head’s impressive trail experience. However, this additional use may lead to unforeseen maintenance concerns as wear and tear increases.

It is recommended that a set of minimum standards be used for trail development on the Head moving forward. This will reduce maintenance requirements and ensure trails are more sustainable for the Town in the long term. Trails should be constructed of compacted granular material and should be 1.0 to 1.5-metres wide. When combined with vegetation management at the edges, this forms a comfortable corridor that provides ample daylight and an improved sense of security for trail users. It is recommended that all new trails be constructed to this standard. Wayfinding should be provided at all possible decision points with the introduction of trail markers. Signage should complement the design of the Town’s overall signage system.

Day Use Area Upgrades – There is a small day use area on the Head which contains a parking area for the nearby trails, interpretive panels, picnic tables, colourful washrooms, and an outdoor amphitheatre. During consultations, it was identified that this venue is currently underused and there had even been previous consideration given to removing it completely.

The location of this area on the Head is ideal for serving its purpose as a trailhead. It has simple and direct access once one crosses the isthmus onto the peninsula and provides a large, well-graded gravel area suitable for parking. The access road itself is in poor condition and should be upgraded to improve visitor access. The washrooms appear to be in good condition and their colourful facades have become Instagram-worthy backdrops for many visitors. Given there are no other publicly accessible washroom facilities on the Head, this is an important amenity.

The amphitheatre is a considerable piece of infrastructure and appears to be constructed of heavy timber in good condition but for some peeling paint. It is nestled into a natural...
clearing among mature trees providing a degree of protection from the elements. Its eastward orientation toward the water provides an incredible natural setting for outdoor performances. Should the Town wish to better utilize this venue, it may consider investing in further infrastructure improvements to enhance the tourism experience. Tree planting could be considered to provide a gentle buffer to the parking area when facing it seated in the amphitheatre. Currently, the washrooms and amphitheatre do not contain walkways and require users to walk across the landscape for access. Walkways here would improve accessibility and first impressions of this area. Overhead protection, such as a canopy or trellis, for the amphitheatre itself would prolong use during periods of wet weather and provide a better microclimate for patrons. During stakeholder engagement, it was noted that sound quality can be a challenge as it can be difficult for spectators to hear performers on stage. An electrical connection nearby would allow for the use of a PA or speaker system, reducing this issue. However, upgrades of this nature are not insignificant undertakings. The Town should consider seeking a partnership with an organization that is willing to commit to using the performance space prior to investing significant funds. Local stakeholders such as Theatre NL would be an ideal candidate for this sort of partnership.

Each summer, the Perchance Theatre becomes the venue for theatrical performances of classical Shakespearean plays such as A Midsummer Night’s Dream, The Merchant of Venice, and The Tempest, among others. Constructed in 2010 as part of the Cupids 400 celebrations, the theatre was modelled after Shakespeare’s Globe theatre in London.

The Perchance Theatre produces and presents up to 60 performances each year during the June to August peak tourism season. The unique open air venue is unlike any other in the province and provides a captivating theatre experience for visitors from around the world.

The Perchance Theatre has continued to see an upward trend in growth in the past five seasons. In a 2018 visitor survey, 92% of patrons were repeat visitors and 99% reported they would return again. 100% of visitors polled suggested they would recommend the Theatre to others.
### Summary of Recommendations for Section 4.5 - Celebrating the Head Peninsula

#### Waterfront Boardwalk & Market

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Next Steps</th>
<th>Approximate Budget</th>
<th>Parties Responsible for Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop a waterfront boardwalk and market as a community and tourism attraction that provides kiosks for local artisans, vendors, and craftspeople.</td>
<td>$215,000 + HST (construction estimate)</td>
<td>Town of Cow Head, CHED, Cow Head Harbour Authority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Guiding Principles Achieved**

1.  
2.  
3.  
4.  
5.  
6.  

**Potential Project Partners**

| TCII, ACOA, Municipal Affairs & Environment (funding) | Local artists, craftspeople, fisherpersons | Special Events Committee |

#### Hardening the Trails on the Head

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Next Steps</th>
<th>Approximate Budget</th>
<th>Parties Responsible for Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upgrade trails on the Head to a minimum standard to reduce maintenance and increase durability in light of increased usage.</td>
<td>$105,000 + HST (construction estimate)</td>
<td>Town of Cow Head, CHED</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Guiding Principles Achieved**

1.  
2.  
3.  
4.  
5.  
6.  

**Potential Project Partners**

| TCII, ACOA, Municipal Affairs & Environment (funding) |

#### The Head Day Use Area Upgrades

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Next Steps</th>
<th>Approximate Budget</th>
<th>Parties Responsible for Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day use area upgrades to provide a positive first impression and increase usage of the area. Develop a RFP for a detailed site plan.</td>
<td>$95,000 + HST (construction estimate)</td>
<td>Town of Cow Head, CHED</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Guiding Principles Achieved**

1.  
2.  
3.  
4.  
5.  
6.  

**Potential Project Partners**

| TCII, ACOA, Municipal Affairs & Environment (funding) | Consultant (professional engineer or landscape architect) | Theatre NL (amphitheatre programming) |

| Local artists, craftspeople, fisherpersons | Special Events Committee |

| TCII, ACOA, Municipal Affairs & Environment (funding) | Parks Canada (advisors) |
Understanding Sand Dunes

A sand dune is a mound, hill or ridge of sand that has been deposited by the action of water or winds. The sand is composed of minerals that have been eroded from rocks, picked up by water or winds, and then re-deposited elsewhere. Typically, the sand is deposited behind an object that is a barrier to the movement of air currents, which causes the wind to slow down. Over many millions of years, the windblown sand is trapped against the force of gravity, and falls to the ground. If there is a suitable source of sand, deposition continues and sand dunes form a natural barrier between the coastline and inland areas.

Preserving the Dunes

Once deposited to the ground, unconsolidated sand tends to be moved about and shifted by the winds. Dunes migrate in the direction of the prevailing winds, with sand being picked up at the windward side of the dune, and then deposited at the leeward side. Due to this migration, sand dunes are constantly changing in form and location. Because of the mechanical instability of their surface, young dunes initially provide precarious habitats for the establishment of vegetation. As plants grow in numbers, they form a barrier to the continuing movement of sand. Over many years, the dunes stabilize, and vegetation begins to develop. Once dune plants establish a foothold on a dune, the progressively developing dune ecosystem establishes a natural barrier against the force of gravity, and falls to the ground. If there is a suitable source of sand, deposition continues and sand dunes form a natural barrier between the coastline and inland areas.

The Town-Owned Dunes

Within the last decade a small parcel of crown land that is part of the greater coastal dune ecosystem of Gros Morne National Park at Shallow Bay, was deeded to Town Council. This parcel of land was originally zoned Rural Resource which restricted residential development. In 2007, an amendment was made to the Municipal Plan and Development Regulations and this parcel of land was rezoned Residential in order to accommodate a residential subdivision. As stated in this amendment, such development must be serviced by a publicly owned and maintained road and serviced by municipal water and sewer systems. The shoreline of this natural area remains zoned as Environmental Protection.

Coastal sand dune systems are highly vulnerable to disturbance by pedestrians, motor vehicles and construction. Even mundane activities such as walking can have negative consequences on the dune environment. These activities can compact the sand and vegetation which dies when its roots are crushed causing erosion. Without the stabilizing vegetation, the sand is blown away and dunes disappear. This can leave the shoreline more vulnerable to erosion from storm surges. Sand dunes serve an important purpose by protecting coastal land and water from high energy storms, wind, waves and inland flooding.

The Case for Preserving the Dunes

The sand dunes formation is a sensitive ecosystem that is shared by both Parks Canada and the Town. Within the National Park at Shallow Bay, the dunes are protected as they provide habitat for several plant and animal species such as Piping Plover seabirds, an endangered species in Canada under Schedule 1 of the Species at Risk Act under the federal Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Provincial legislation also protects the Piping Plover as an endangered species through Provincial legislation also protects the Piping Plover seabirds, an endangered species in Canada under Schedule 1 of the Species at Risk Act under the federal Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Coastal sand dune systems are highly vulnerable to disturbance by pedestrians, motor vehicles and construction. Even mundane activities such as walking can have negative consequences on the dune environment. These activities can compact the sand and vegetation which dies when its roots are crushed causing erosion. Without the stabilizing vegetation, the sand is blown away and dunes disappear. This can leave the shoreline more vulnerable to erosion from storm surges. Sand dunes serve an important purpose by protecting coastal land and water from high energy storms, wind, waves and inland flooding.

Conclusions

The sand dunes formation is a sensitive ecosystem that is shared by both Parks Canada and the Town. Within the National Park at Shallow Bay, the dunes are protected as they provide habitat for several plant and animal species such as Piping Plover seabirds, an endangered species in Canada under Schedule 1 of the Species at Risk Act under the federal Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Provincial legislation also protects the Piping Plover as an endangered species through Provincial legislation also protects the Piping Plover seabirds, an endangered species in Canada under Schedule 1 of the Species at Risk Act under the federal Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Coastal sand dune systems are highly vulnerable to disturbance by pedestrians, motor vehicles and construction. Even mundane activities such as walking can have negative consequences on the dune environment. These activities can compact the sand and vegetation which dies when its roots are crushed causing erosion. Without the stabilizing vegetation, the sand is blown away and dunes disappear. This can leave the shoreline more vulnerable to erosion from storm surges. Sand dunes serve an important purpose by protecting coastal land and water from high energy storms, wind, waves and inland flooding.

The Dunes as a Tourism Product

For these reasons, intensive development on the dunes, such as housing, should be prohibited. Given the province’s recent experiences with storm surges, sea level rise and the predicted severity and intensity of future weather patterns due to climate change, one must pause to consider if development of this nature would be the best use of this land. Eventually, severe storms will cause damage to homes and structures, the municipal water and sewer system, road infrastructure, and may cause flooding inland. Future liability in these cases should be carefully considered by Council.

So how does the Town better utilize this unique landscape as a tourist asset?

Many of the qualities and characteristics described here, such as the rare flora and fauna in the area or the dynamic, shifting sands, lend themselves to a nature-based, ecotourism experience and strongly align with Parks Canada’s mandate of providing an educational, conservation-based tourism experience, therefore capitalizing on the
tourism audience that is already in the area. With a few light interventions to improve and control access, the Cow Head dunes stand to become a tremendous tourism experience for the Town. A careful approach to development that balances tourism needs with the dune’s sensitive natural features is required. An elevated wooden boardwalk system would provide an appropriate solution. This system would sit above the landscape, minimizing impacts from construction activities on the sensitive ecosystems below. The boardwalk would allow visitors to explore and experience the Dunes and its rich and diverse ecosystem, yet protect their integrity by controlling where people go and how they get there. Railings may be considered along the boardwalk to provide even further access control.

Given the dramatic nature of the Dunes landscape, the Town may also consider erecting a showcase piece of architecture such as a lookout platform. The scale of this platform should be carefully considered so that it sits lightly in the landscape and does not detract from the overall experience. If carefully designed in such a manner, it would be like nothing else found in Gros Morne National Park and would stand to become a signature attraction for the town. Imagine a traveller’s itinerary including Gros Morne Mountain, Western Brook Pond, and the Dunes Lookout. This platform would offer a panoramic view of the dramatic coastal landscape as well as an opportunity to participate in activities such as birdwatching, an activity that 55% of Canadian visitors and 66% of international travelers reported participating in when visiting the province.

A Final Consideration

As noted above, it is the spectacular character and beauty of the Dunes landscape that provides its tourism value. However, part of the reason that the Town purchased the Dunes land was to unlock the economic potential of such a unique landscape, and a preservation-based approach as recommended may not meet the Town’s objectives. Perhaps another option the Town may consider, that could potentially fulfill both preservation and economic objectives, would be selling the land to Parks Canada. As the stewards of Gros Morne National Park, and owners of the Dunes land north of Cow Head, such an investment may make sense for both parties.
Located on the Northumberland Strait of New Brunswick, near the community of Bouctouche, 12-kilometres of sand dunes (the longest in New Brunswick) provide habitat for a variety of marine and aquatic plants and animals, including many migratory and nesting shorebirds.

This rich and diverse landscape is unlike any other in the province. In an effort to create awareness of, protect, and preserve this important ecosystem, and to provide educational and ecotourism opportunities, the JD Irving Ltd. company developed an interpretive centre and over two-kilometres of winding boardwalk.

The interpretive centre provides public tours, exhibits, and education on the dunes ecosystem; while the boardwalk allows visitors to observe the fauna crossing the dunes without endangering the precious, fragile habitats. The project has been a tremendous success, serving over 5.5 million visitors since its opening in 1992, and proudly being displayed in Tourism New Brunswick promotional materials.

Spearheaded by local entrepreneur, Zita Cobb, and her foundation, Shorefast, there has been a movement to breathe new life into the rural fishing communities of Fogo Island through sustainable tourism. Using art and architecture as the medium, the intention was to draw attention to the spectacular landscape and culture of the province, inspiring people to visit this remote part of the world.

Part of the larger overall project (which started in 2009 and includes an award-winning hotel), the four artist’s studios are scattered across Fogo’s landscape, their primary purpose being to support an artists-in-residency program. The studios, however, have become popular attractions for tourists from all walks of life and are now considered iconic examples of contemporary architecture. Each of the studios starkly contrasts, yet sits gently in, the landscape and utilizes local materials and construction methods wherever possible. Today, they are an example of how a thoughtful and carefully designed structure can become a catalyst for sustainable tourism and renewal.
There is no shortage of captivating stories and tales in Cow Head. From the eeriness of the double axe-murders, to the seasonal resettlement between the Head and the mainland, to the very origin of the name “Cow Head,” these stories provide the very foundation of the community’s identity. Indeed one cannot help but become captivated listening to a local excitedly retelling these tales. These are the unique cultural connections that tourists are seeking when they visit the province. There are several opportunities that the Town may wish to pursue to further leverage these stories to grow tourism.

4.7 / Telling the Stories

Develop an Interpretive Plan - While many of Cow Head’s incredible stories are told in the community through signage or interpretive panels, this is not the case for all. Several stories were only made evident to the consulting team by speaking with local stakeholders, performing online research, and even by accident. For example, the presence of pre-historic peoples such as the Maritime Archaic Indians on the Head Peninsula was not immediately evident on the Head, and was only discovered by reading one small, easily-missed panel in the museum. An interpretive display on the Head near where evidence has been found would be a more impactful and experiential way of telling this interesting story. Perhaps such a development could be linked to the existing trail system on the Head, further strengthening another tourism asset.

The stories that have been told throughout the community have mostly been done through interpretive displays. These displays vary, from the well-developed interpretive panels on the Point of the Head Trail, to the smaller panels on the Town’s welcome sign, to the simple printed pages at the axe murder site on Corner Road. While these are effective in that they contain appropriate content, they are inconsistent and visually disconnected. Similar to signage, interpretive panels are generally more effective when they are designed to complement one another as part of a larger family. This enriches the visitor’s experience.

The Town might consider undertaking an interpretive plan which will identify the Town’s specific interpretive goals, the stories that should be told, and build a cohesive and structured vision for telling those stories in an engaging way. This will result in a positive and meaningful visitor experience. Parks Canada has successfully undertaken interpretive plans in the past (including Lobster Cove Head Lighthouse) and could likely share their experiences and process with the Town.

As a first step and precursor to a larger interpretive plan, the Town may also consider availing of Heritage NL’s “People, Places & Culture” program. This program is designed to assist communities in identifying their cultural assets and considering ways to protect and develop them. It is based on a recognition that heritage/cultural assets are some of the strongest elements that a community has to: define its unique character; create new economic opportunities; and; enhance the quality of life for residents and instill local pride. More information as well as an application can be found online.

https://heritagefoundation.ca/programs/ppc/
Pursue National Designation - Parks Canada, through the Historic Sites and Monuments Board, offers several types of designations for structures, places, and events that hold significant heritage or historic value. Cow Head has several amenities that may qualify for national designation through this program.

The yearly migration of residents from Summerside on the Head to Winterside on the mainland is a unique story. Early settlers of Cow Head lived and fished at Summerside during the fishing season, then moved to Winterside for shelter and supplies during the winter months. This migration might be eligible for designation as a National Historic Event. There are currently few of these Events designated in the country.

The lighthouse on the Head Peninsula may also warrant designation as a National Heritage Lighthouse. Constructed in 1909 and operational for 70 years, the lighthouse’s unique cast iron construction with exposed external rivets was atypical of lighthouses built during the era. In 2002, the Town invested in restoring the degraded lighthouse ensuring that it remains an attraction for years to come.

Council may wish to pursue these designations as tourism attractions for the town. The application process is outlined on Parks Canada’s website which includes the criteria and guidelines, components of a nomination, and the application process. The application requires preliminary research, documentation, maps, sketches and photos, and landowners’ approvals if applicable. The application is submitted for review by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board.

Council may wish to pursue these designations as tourism attractions for the town. The application process is outlined on Parks Canada’s website which includes the criteria and guidelines, components of a nomination, and the application process. The application requires preliminary research, documentation, maps, sketches and photos, and landowners’ approvals if applicable. The application is submitted for review by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board.

If successful, the application results in national designation which is celebrated by the installation of a plaque. Parks Canada also carries out the ministerial decisions following the Board’s recommendations by organizing plaque unveiling ceremonies, installing and maintaining the commemorative plaques.


Summary of Recommendations
for Section 4.7 - Telling the Stories

Interpretive Plan

Next Steps
Develop a RFP for a town-wide plan to identify interpretive goals, the stories that should be told, and the vision for telling those stories.

Approximate Budget
$12,000 - $14,000 + HST (professional fees)

Potential Project Partners
Parks Canada (advisors)
Dr. Henry N. Payne Museum staff
Consultant (interpretive planner)

Parties Responsible for Implementation
Town of Cow Head, CHED

Guiding Principles Achieved
1 2 3 5 6

National Designation

Next Steps
Nominate significant eligible events or structures in Cow Head under the national program of historical commemoration for designation.

Approximate Budget
None for application phase

Potential Project Partners
Parks Canada (advisors)
Conservation and Heritage Committee

Parties Responsible for Implementation
Town of Cow Head, CHED

Guiding Principles Achieved
1 2 3 5 6
4.8 / Active Transportation

Active transportation (AT) refers to any method of human-powered transport including snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, paddling, running, rollerblading, walking and cycling. AT has gained tremendous popularity due to the many proven health, economic, social, and environmental benefits that it provides. There has also been a growing demand in the tourism sector for increased AT options as travelers are seeking healthier, more experiential methods of travel.

As such, it would make perfect sense that the Town would want to provide more opportunities for improving AT, particularly walking and cycling, which are two of the most popular forms of AT. Cow Head’s relatively flat grade coupled with its stunning scenery would make it an ideal destination for tourists seeking AT options when traveling.

The Context for AT - AT within the Gros Morne region is generally still in its infancy. When consulting with Parks Canada, it was noted that they are supportive of AT, however do not currently have an extensive AT network of their own. Cycling is permitted on several of their trails, including nearby Western Brook Pond and the Old Mail Road near Shallow Bay Campground, but there is currently little public infrastructure such as on-street bike lanes or pedestrian sidewalks within the Park.

Opportunities Within the Town - Due to the relative infancy of AT within Gros Morne, the Town would be best served to invest in its own AT infrastructure first, rather than attempt to expand the regional network. While investment in AT at a regional level, particularly in destination trails, has been shown to increase tourism, such an undertaking would require support from neighbouring municipalities and Parks Canada. Recent feedback from Parks Canada has suggested that their current focus will be on maintaining their existing trail system rather than building new, so the appetite for further regional trail development may not be practical at this time.

Within the Town, however, there are opportunities to invest in infrastructure to expand the local AT network. A benefit of such investment is that it would serve the residents and visitors of Cow Head first and foremost. When deciding where to invest in new infrastructure, it is important to prioritize those projects that will provide safe, enjoyable and convenient ways to move throughout Cow Head, as well as strong connections to existing destinations within the community that people want to access.

The following map illustrates the current tourism-related destinations within Cow Head. From a tourism development perspective, the AT system should aim to serve these destinations first. Given the scale and walkability of the Town, it is recommended that sidewalks be installed to achieve this. Sidewalks provide a clearly defined and safe path of travel for pedestrians and significantly reduce potential vehicle conflicts, especially compared to walking on the road shoulder. Sidewalks also improve a visitor’s perception of how their needs are being met and contribute to creating a welcoming, inclusive community.

As Cow Head currently has no sections of sidewalk installed, consideration of cost should be given. It can be costly to construct sidewalks across an entire municipality. It is therefore recommended that the Town limit sidewalks to the areas where they would be most beneficial and impactful, such as along Main Street. Widened or paved road shoulders can be utilized in conjunction with sidewalks to close gaps in the AT system and provide connectivity to destinations further away from Main Street. Over time, these shoulders can be converted to sidewalks as resources allow. New sidewalks on Main Street should avoid the south side as it contains ditches needed to control runoff and drainage. However, an opportunity exists on the north side as a generous gravel shoulder exists which would facilitate sidewalk installation with minimal disruption to Main Street traffic and adjacent properties. Sidewalk installation on this side of Main Street should maintain a minimum width of 1.2 to 1.5-metres as shown in the following illustration to provide comfortable space for two people to walk side-by-side. Installation should be prioritized in the Town Centre area and expand incrementally to connect other local tourism destinations. This reinforces a hub-and-spoke model centred around the theatre/Shallow Bay Motel hub and provides the Town with flexibility for a phased approach to occur over time as resources allow.

Cycling - The width of the existing gravel shoulder on the north side of Main Street is generous in many places and may be wide enough to allow installation of both a sidewalk as well as a one-way dedicated cycling lane. However, the Town should consider prioritizing its AT needs to make the most of its budget. Investment in a sidewalk on the north side of Main Street as previously described is strongly recommended as the basis for the Town’s AT network. Is it also important for the Town to increase cycling in Cow Head? Should this be a priority given the lack of other AT infrastructure currently in Gros Morne? Will an investment in dedicated cycling lanes bear fruit through increased tourism? These are questions the Town should consider.
Perhaps the installation of shared cycling lanes would represent a more feasible option. Shared lanes, as the name implies, are shared, on-street lanes for use by both vehicles and cyclists. There is no physical separation between the two users. They are usually delineated by a simple pavement marking, one metre from the edge of the road, in the shape of a bicycle and sometimes with a message such as “Share the Road.” Main Street would be an ideal candidate for this type of cycling infrastructure due to its relatively low traffic volume. The Town may also consider posting speed limits to further improve safety for all users. Implementation of these shared lanes could be treated as a pilot project for Cow Head and if successful in increasing cycling in the community, the Town can revisit the need for dedicated cycling lanes in the future.

Additional AT Infrastructure - As part of the AT system, signage should be considered as well. Pedestrians or cyclists venturing into the community on foot, particularly visitors unfamiliar with the area, require clear and intuitive wayfinding to identify attractions and easily navigate through the community to get to their desired destination. Signage in these circumstances should be pedestrian-oriented similar to the Route and/or Trail Markers illustrated in the conceptual signage family. All signage should relate to one another as part of a complementary signage family, as previously discussed in Section 4.3. Should the Town decide to undertake a Wayfinding Signage Strategy, this signage should be included in the scope of work.

Another important consideration for the AT network is road crossings. All pedestrian routes inevitably connect with roads. These intersections represent one of the biggest potential areas of conflict for any AT network. It is here that vehicular and pedestrian conflict is at its greatest, and when pedestrians are most likely to feel unsafe or uncomfortable due to the risk of being struck by a vehicle. It becomes very important that attention is paid in these instances to ensure pedestrian safety and driver awareness are both considered.

Crosswalks are an essential planning tool in these cases. As a rule of thumb, pedestrians should be able to safely traverse all road crossings. Crosswalks should be provided and clearly marked with signage and pavement markings so that it is intuitive for the pedestrian and visible for the driver. Given that sidewalks are only proposed for the north side of Main Street, this is of particular importance for Cow Head as pedestrians will need to cross to reach popular attractions on the south side of the street such as the theatre, Town Hall, or Clover Farm Market. The following maps illustrate ideal locations for crosswalks.
Summary of Recommendations for Section 4.8 - Active Transportation

Install Sidewalk in Town Centre Area

Next Steps:
Construct sidewalks to define the Town Centre and provide safe pedestrian access to key destinations within the community for residents and visitors.

Guiding Principles Achieved:

Approximate Budget: $220,000 - $235,000 + HST (construction estimate)
Parties Responsible for Implementation: Town of Cow Head, CHED

Potential Project Partners:
TCI, ACOA, Municipal Affairs & Environment (funding)
Section 5
Implementing the Plan

5.1 Costing Information Notes

- Cost estimates are considered Class ‘D’ meaning they are based on an initial functional program and broad concept approach only. They should be considered order of magnitude only (+/-30% accuracy).
- Costing is based on experience on similar projects and professional judgment only. Limited site information (such as subsurface conditions, geotechnical, underground infrastructure locations) were available at the time of costing. Costing should be used for general guidance only and cannot be guaranteed as to accuracy.
- Costing does not include HST.
- Costing represents construction cost only which includes supply and installation of components identified. Phasing the work (multiple tenders) will increase construction costs.
- Certain disbursements may increase costs, such as travel, printing, courier, etc.
- The cost for topographic surveying and geotechnical investigations (if required) is not included.
- Costs will likely change as more information becomes available. A refined cost estimate should be completed during detailed design when components are more clearly defined.
- Costs are provided for the year 2020 and should be escalated at a rate of 2-3% each year to account for inflation and market conditions.
- Savings may be realized if portions of the work are completed using the Town’s own forces, community groups, or other partners.
5.2 / Project Partners & Roles

As the Town moves toward implementing the recommendations outlined in this plan, it will become clear that partners are needed. The Town has finite resources to implement the recommendations of this study and project partners represent an opportunity to leverage additional resources. Further, several projects described in this plan will benefit not only the Town, but other government agencies and NGOs as well.

There is also a need to consider the realities of land ownership and long-term maintenance. In some cases, the projects proposed will require assets that the Town does not currently own. The waterfront market kiosks on the Head, for example, may require access over private lands owned by the Harbour Authority. Partnerships in these cases are imperative to the project’s success.

In some cases, the projects proposed will require assets that the Town does not currently own. The waterfront market kiosks on the Head, for example, may require access over private lands owned by the Harbour Authority. Partnerships in these cases are imperative to the project’s success.

Capital costs are another significant factor that affect implementation. While the Town has been the party responsible for initiating this study (via the CHED Committee), they may not necessarily be responsible for covering all project costs. In fact, many municipalities do not have the financial resources to do so. This is where funding agencies and grant programs at both the Provincial and Federal level can make a difference.

Clearly, it is in everyone's interest to develop Cow Head as an attractive, welcoming community, and that responsibility should be shared among stakeholders. The following outlines proposed roles of important stakeholders and potential project partners in the Cow Head area:

Cow Head / CHED Committee
- Undertake the remaining phases of this Tourism Development Plan
- Set priorities for project implementation
- Allocate budget each year to advance the initiatives of this plan
- Become the champion for implementing the recommendations of this plan; consider making this part of the role of a current Town staff or CHED Committee member or introducing a new position such as Economic Development Officer

Where possible, delegate tasks associated with implementation to the Town’s committees
- Support community groups, NGOs, local businesses, and other partners wishing to implement aspects of this plan
- Liaise with other levels of government as needed
- Secure land agreements for priority projects that require property not currently owned by the Town
- Apply for funding or undertake fundraising initiatives, consider striking a sub-committee to lead this task
- Provide staff expertise for project implementation
- The CHED Committee is fortunate to have representatives from the Department of TCII and ACOA; leverage this expertise to determine how best to engage these governmental departments as project partners
- Promote the importance of the initiatives of this plan to the residents of Cow Head

Engage residents on a regular basis to provide updates, prioritize projects, and to create project support. Throughout the planning process, it was evident that a strong sense of pride and passion for the community exists among residents of Cow Head. The success of this plan will only be possible with the participation and involvement of these community members.

Government of NL

The Department of Transportation and Works (DTW) will be responsible for any work that falls along a Provincial owned highway, such as Route 430. This includes modifications such as signage and other work within the right-of-way. The Town will need to work with DTW on any initiatives that fall within their mandate, such as upgrading the roadside rest area near Main Street.

The Department of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation (TCII) is the lead for the economic, culture, and innovation agenda of the Provincial Government. Their goal is to create a vibrant, diverse and sustainable economy, with productive, prosperous and culturally-rich communities and regions, making Newfoundland and Labrador a business and tourism “destination of choice”. Many of the initiatives outlined in this plan overlap with the TCII’s vision for the province. The CHED Committee should discuss with its TCII representatives to determine the exact role the department can play in supporting the Town’s Tourism Development Plan. This may include outreach, capacity building, economic support, or strategic planning.

The Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment (MAE) assists municipalities in meeting their infrastructure needs and help provide the financial and administrative tools to support development of community capacity, regional cooperation, and sound governance. The Town must work closely with MAE for any work that will occur in or around a body of water as permits are required. MAE may also be able to provide funding assistance through the Gas Tax Fund.

Service NL provides accessible, responsive services in the areas of public health and safety, environmental protection, occupational health and safety, consumer protection, and in the preservation of vital events and commercial transactions. The Town must work with Service NL for aspects of project implementation that involve highway signage or accessibility.

Federal Government

The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) works to create opportunities for economic growth in Atlantic Canada by working with diverse communities to develop and diversify local economies and by championing the strengths of Atlantic Canada. Traditionally, ACOA has supported many initiatives in the province that promote tourism and economic growth and development. Many of the projects described in this plan align with their mandate and may qualify for funding.
Infrastructure Canada provides long-term support to help Canadians benefit from world-class, modern public infrastructure and makes investments, builds partnerships, develops policies, delivers programs, and fosters knowledge about public infrastructure in Canada. They provide funding for projects that increase the potential for innovation & economic, improve the environment and support stronger, safer communities. Many of the initiatives proposed in this plan may qualify.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is the federal lead for safeguarding Canada’s waters and managing its fisheries, oceans and freshwater resources. The Cow Head Harbour participates in the DFO’s Small Craft Harbours program, which aims to provide commercial fish harvesters and other harbour users with safe and accessible facilities. DFO will be interested in working with the Town on any proposed work around the harbour and waterfront areas.

As the stewards of Gros Morne National Park, Parks Canada represents a significant potential partner for the Town. Their mandate is the protection and preservation of Gros Morne’s natural and cultural resources for the enjoyment and appreciation of present and future generations. One of the key strategies of the 2019 Gros Morne National Park Management Plan was improving the overall visitor experience. This objective strongly aligns with the goals and recommendations of this plan. As such, the Town should meet with Parks Canada’s local representatives to seek synergies and identify opportunities to share resources toward implementing mutually beneficial projects.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) Many of the priority projects identified by this plan would benefit local organizations as well as the Town. These stakeholders may have interest in assisting the Town with aspects of the implementation of these projects. The Town should consider reaching out to these stakeholders to discuss opportunities to work together.

Theatre Newfoundland Labrador
Gros Morne Institute for Sustainable Tourism (GISTS)
Go Western Newfoundland (Western DMO)
Cow Head Harbour Authority
St. Mary’s Anglican Church
Local Business Owners (Shallow Bay Motel, Clover Farm Market, B&B operators)
Gros Morne Co-operating Association (GMCA) - The GMCA is currently seeking federal funding to undertake a regional tourism development plan. If approved, this plan will engage all enclave communities of the Park and aims to provide municipalities with “professional resources to identify and develop specific tangible projects to address gaps in the tourism infrastructure and products in the area.” Many of the tourism initiatives recommended by this plan would seemingly align with the objectives of this larger regional project, including the Municipal Plan update. The CHED Committee is fortunate to have the Executive Director of the GMCA as a member; it is recommended that CHED and the Town continue to work with the GMCA to avail of assistance within their proposed regional tourism plan for help in achieving its own tourism goals.

assistance. The CHED Committee should rely upon their ACOA representatives to determine the best method of engaging ACOA as a project partner.

Section 5 | Implementing the Plan

assistance. The CHED Committee should rely upon their ACOA representatives to determine the best method of engaging ACOA as a project partner.
5.3 / Potential Funding Sources

**Gas Tax Fund** (Municipal Affairs & Environment)

Under the Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment, the Town of Cow Head is eligible for gas tax funding. Gas tax funding can be used for the following categories of projects: infrastructure projects including water and sewer and treatment systems, local roads and bridges and upgrades, and recreation facilities such as structures, parks, playgrounds and trails. Also eligible but not well known, Council can use this fund to complete a Municipal Plan Review including the Development Regulations and mapping.

1-877-729-4303
deaveparnell@gov.nl.ca

**Innovative Communities Fund** (ACOA)

The Innovative Communities Fund (ICF) invests in strategic projects that build the economies of Atlantic Canada’s communities. Working in partnership with Atlantic communities and stakeholders, ICF builds on the strengths of communities and provides the tools needed to identify opportunities available for their sustainable economic growth. ICF focuses on investments that lead to long-term employment and economic capacity building in rural communities. Urban initiatives that stimulate the competitiveness and vitality of rural communities may be considered on a selective basis.


**Municipal Capital Works Funding** (Municipal Affairs & Environment)

The Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment supports the development of municipal infrastructure throughout the province through cost shared funding agreements that may include Municipal, Provincial, and Federal funding. In order to adequately and fairly fund these projects, applications are called on a yearly basis. Capital works encompasses a wide range of municipal infrastructure necessary to build on the long-term economic growth of communities, to deliver strong municipal services and meet infrastructure needs. Typical projects may include water and wastewater treatment, roads, and recreational facilities.

https://www.mae.gov.nl.ca/capital_works/index.html

**Regional Economic Development Fund** (Tourism, Culture, Industry & Innovation)

Through the Department of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation (TCII), community and regional organizations may qualify to receive non-repayable contributions for projects aimed at supporting economic development, innovation and capacity building in all regions of the province. The Regional Development Fund is comprised of two components: the Regional Development Program and Community Capacity Building. Financial assistance is in the form of a non-repayable contribution to a maximum of 25% of total eligible costs.

1-877-729-4303
deaveparnell@gov.nl.ca

**Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program** (Municipal Affairs & Environment)

Through the Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment, the Town of Cow Head is eligible for gas tax funding.

1-877-729-4303
deaveparnell@gov.nl.ca

**Green Municipal Fund** (Federation of Canadian Municipalities)

The Green Municipal Fund is a leader in driving local green innovation across the country. Through a unique mix of training, resources and funding, they help design and implement sustainability initiatives from water conservation to green transportation to energy efficiency. Since 2000, they have financed more than 1,310 municipal sustainability initiatives. Offers grants for municipal environmental projects. Loans are also available to municipalities at competitive rates, and most recipients receive an additional grant of up to 15 percent of their loan amount. Municipal partners may apply for competitive, long-term financing.


There are two funding streams under this program that might be applicable to Cow Head: Green Infrastructure (Adaptation, Resilience and Disaster Mitigation) and Community, Culture and Recreation. The specific projects are similar to those of the MCW fund. However, application criteria are more stringent where an environmental impact assessment may be required in addition to the climate change lens study as pre-approval prior to the application submission. Further investigation of this fund by the municipality is warranted to understand and access the best funding options.

1-709-637-2401
crhispower@gov.nl.ca

**Municipal Capital Works Funding** (Municipal Affairs & Environment)

The Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment supports the development of municipal infrastructure throughout the province through cost shared funding agreements that may include Municipal, Provincial, and Federal funding. In order to adequately and fairly fund these projects, applications are called on a yearly basis. Capital works encompasses a wide range of municipal infrastructure necessary to build on the long-term economic growth of communities, to deliver strong municipal services and meet infrastructure needs. Typical projects may include water and wastewater treatment, roads, and recreational facilities.

https://www.mae.gov.nl.ca/capital_works/index.html

The Green Municipal Fund is a leader in driving local green innovation across the country. Through a unique mix of training, resources and funding, they help design and implement sustainability initiatives from water conservation to green transportation to energy efficiency. Since 2000, they have financed more than 1,310 municipal sustainability initiatives. Offers grants for municipal environmental projects. Loans are also available to municipalities at competitive rates, and most recipients receive an additional grant of up to 15 percent of their loan amount. Municipal partners may apply for competitive, long-term financing.

https://fcm.ca/en/funding