

# Torbay Economic Strategic Roadmap

Phase 3 Report:  
Implementation Work Plan and Funding

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# TRACT

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

The Town of Torbay has undertaken to develop an Economic Strategic Roadmap.

The objective of the Roadmap is to play a key role in Torbay’s community development, revitalization and future economic development by creating a sustainable roadmap for continued growth that complements the Towns current progressive and proactive strategic strides.

**Tract Consulting Inc.** with the Centre for Innovative and Entrepreneurial Leadership (CIEL) has been engaged to assist the Town with preparation of the Roadmap. Based upon the Strategic Plan for the Town and the work highlighted in the RFP, Tract is undertaking preparation of the Economic Strategic Roadmap for the Town of Torbay by addressing the dual pillars of Business Development and Town Development.

Tract has undertaken the Project in three phases as shown in Figure 1:

Figure 1: Project Methodology



This **Phase 3** report builds on the findings from the research and consultation undertaken in Phase 1, the Development Framework (model) prepared in Phase 2 and presents the Implementation Work Plan for the Strategic Economic Roadmap.

## 2. DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The Development Framework for the Torbay Strategic Economic Roadmap was presented to the Development Committee of the Town Council at its meeting on Thursday, November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

### 2.1. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT VISION

A vision statement describes what Economic Development is aspiring to create. Building an economy on local entrepreneurship and supporting local business growth will require embracing processes and procedures that fuel innovation. Economic development in Torbay cannot be done in isolation; it requires partnerships with multiple stakeholders and public/private investment.

#### **Economic Vision Statement:**

*“To focus entrepreneurial energy on developing a thriving and sustainable economy in Torbay by leveraging the economic base of residents in the Town, surrounding communities and visitors.”*

Achieving the economic vision will result in enhanced services in the Town, diverse and prosperous employment opportunities and increased tax revenue to support Town development.

### 2.2. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

The following Economic Development Objectives are proposed for Torbay:

- Enhance Torbay’s receptivity to entrepreneurship and business development.
- Increase the size and diversity of the Torbay Business Sector.
- Strive for balanced development, which is sustainable, environmentally friendly and maximizes local employment and benefits.
- Maintain Torbay’s community character and quality of life – the characteristics that define the Town.

### 2.3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

#### **Strategy 1:** *Build the economy from within*

The findings from the research and analysis in Phase 1 indicate clearly that economic development in Torbay will of necessity be built from within. That is, the emergence of a “silver bullet” industrial development initiative which would transform Torbay’s economy is highly unlikely to occur.

Rather, Torbay’s most promising path for economic development is to shape Torbay into a more complete Town by providing opportunities for residents to spend a larger portion of their income at businesses located in Torbay.

**Strategy 2: *Proactive approach to economic development***

Successful economic development in the Town of Torbay will be accomplished through hard work, creativity, and investment. The Town will need to adopt a nurturing approach to entrepreneurship and business development across all levels of its operations. The Town will need to explore opportunities for partnerships with both the private and public sectors related to economic development. The Town will also need, after due consideration, to take major decisions which have the potential to make a “sea change” in future town and business development.

**Strategy 3: *Nurture a growing, sustainable and financially secure population base***

There is a need to ensure that Torbay has a growing, sustainable and financially strong population base. To accomplish this the Town must continue to be attractive to new residents, particularly young families. It must also be responsive and provide options to existing residents as their life circumstances change. This means that the Town will need to effectively promote itself, to provide desired services and infrastructure and ensure that appropriate housing options are available.

**Strategy 4: *Optimum utilization of the land base***

Both economic development and town development/sustainability is directly linked to long term decisions which are made related to land use and development. Land is a limited resource, and it is important to ensure that the very best decisions are made both to achieve development objectives and to maintain the essential Town character. With regard to residential development, decisions need to reflect projections of future needs and demands for housing; with regard to employment generating land, decisions need to provide opportunities for business development and success; and, finally decisions need to ensure that there is provision made for future needs and demands for Town infrastructure, services, parks and green spaces. Economic efficient use of the land base for targeted housing needs, to achieve success with employment generating opportunities, and to provide for required infrastructure, services and green space will entail a merging of municipal land use planning and community economic development.

**Strategy 5: *Use location to advantage***

The proximity of Torbay to the City of St. John’s has been a major factor in the lack of development of the Town business sector. It is time to view this situation as an opportunity rather than an obstacle. Torbay can utilize its position as a unique, scenic, rural community in close proximity to the City to develop businesses and experiences which entice both tourism and commercial development from within the Northeast Avalon Region. A second part of this strategy is regional cooperation with the other municipalities in the urban core related to promoting and developing the region for the common good of all.

## 2.4. CONSTRAINT - FOUNDATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Currently the Town water and wastewater/sewer systems service only 1/3 of residents primarily in the central area of the town. The current water supply is close to its limit and there is no easily available additional supply. The current town wastewater/sewer system needs to be upgraded to meet environmental standards. Both of these foundational infrastructure issues were identified in the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan as the primary Long-Term Strategic Issues and a plan was put in place and is being implemented:

- Water Supply – It has been determined that no additional capacity on Windsor Lake or the Regional Water System exists, and the limits of the existing North Pond water supply has been determined. Work is ongoing related to exploration of Great Pond as a viable water supply and efforts to secure funding are continuing.
- Wastewater Treatment – A Best Available Technologies (BAT) Study for wastewater treatment has been completed.

The Town water supply and town wastewater/sewage treatment are foundational infrastructure issues which place limits and additional complexity on economic development in Torbay.

## 2.5. INITIATIVES

Seven Roadmap initiatives are proposed to achieve the Economic Development vision and objectives of the Town of Torbay. These initiatives each address one or more of the economic development strategies which have been outlined.

### 1. Economic Development Planning

- Incorporate the Town’s economic development vision and objectives into Municipal plans, policies and development regulations.
  - The Town’s economic development vision, objectives and strategies need to be prominently reflected in the Municipal Plan and the companion Development Regulations and be operationalized in the administration of the Municipal Plan.
  - Action strategies should be clearly defined to implement the economic development concepts/policies and clearly articulating the Town’s requirements, expectations, general approval timeframe and potential costs for land and building development.
  - Provide clarity to developers and investors to the extent possible.

### 2. Town Centre

- Proactively plan and develop a “Town Centre” for Torbay.
  - Research and consultations during this project, have led to the conclusion that a Town Centre, even without the Wellness Centre, would be a major force in Town Development making Torbay a better place to live, work and play.
  - There will have to be a re-thinking of the function and the design for the Town Centre.



- There will need to be a new plan for the Town Centre focusing on filling the gaps in the business sector, freeing up more space in the Town Centre for new unique enterprises and allowing more space for greening and leisure activities.

### **3. Employment Generating Lands**

- Designation and phased development of industrial and commercial land
  - There is no indication that there would be excess demand for industrial/commercial land in the Northeast Avalon Region to drive the investment by the Town of Torbay in a Business Park.
  - Two action items related to employment generating lands are recommended:
    - Identify and design a small light industrial area for a phased development geared to always having 2-3 lots ready for occupancy. The greatest potential for this phased development is provided by lands behind the Town Depot (approximately 140 ha) which require rezoning to 'Commercial' or 'Light Industrial' before development can take place.
    - Prepare an inventory and prospectus for infill and other locations of employment generating lands.

### **4. Housing Strategy**

- Prepare and implement a housing strategy with particular attention to the future needs of seniors.
  - The housing strategy would include the large-lot single family developments which have proven to be so attractive and have fueled Torbay's growth.
  - It will also look to create opportunities for well planned residential densities, and for more varied and affordable housing choices throughout the community.
  - Intensification of the land base through increased density will be managed by expanded attention to neighbourhood fit, and site, landscaping, building design guidelines and requirements.
  - Particular attention will be paid to the needs of seniors who will become a more important economic force in the Town.

### **5. Business Vitality Program**

- Implement a proactive business vitality program.
  - The Town will develop and implement a series of proactive measures to support existing businesses and to encourage entrepreneurship and business development.
  - There is a need to revitalize and relaunch a proactive business vitality program:
    - Initiatives to instill a nurturing approach to entrepreneurship and business development across all levels of Town operations;
    - Initiatives directed to targeting key businesses;
    - Initiatives to promote entrepreneurship and new business start-up;
    - Initiatives to nurture existing businesses; and,
    - Review of potential taxation initiatives to balance business development and town revenue.

## **6. Community Vitality Program**

- Ensure enhancement and continuity of placemaking and community vitality initiatives.
  - The Town is doing a lot of things correctly related to placemaking and community vitality. The focus of this initiative will be to put these initiatives in the context of achieving higher level goals in making the town a great place to live, work and play.
  - Similar to the previous program, there will need to be a mechanism to ensure program is continually being improved through an annual community vitality report card which will identify program enhancements and report on key indicators.

## **7. Promote, Promote, Promote**

- Build and launch a multi-layered promotion program for Torbay.
  - A multi-layered (and multi-year) promotion program will used to raise the profile of Torbay and to assist economic development by bringing messages directly to key groups at specific times matched to implementation of the Roadmap.
    - Towards Town residents to build on their evident pride of place;
    - Distinguish Torbay as a unique Town with culture and historical roots where rural living can be enjoyed minutes from urban amenities;
    - Promote the opportunity for developers and businesses to launch projects in Torbay;
    - Promote the Town Centre as a prime undeveloped area to establish a business;
    - Promote Torbay's family friendly living environment to young families; and
    - Promote Town amenities for seniors and for other potential residents attracted to those housing options.

# 3. IMPLEMENTATION WORKPLAN

In the Development Framework, seven initiatives were identified to achieve the economic development vision and objectives of the Town of Torbay. This Implementation Work Plan will address how these initiatives can be implemented, what will be the estimated budget requirements and where external funding might be available to offset some of this cost.

In order to facilitate implementation planning, the initiatives have been organized into three programs: A/ Land Use Planning; B/ Capacity Development; and C/ Promotion and Support. The structure of these three programs is illustrated in the following diagram. Note that the phased development of a Light Industrial Park is shown separately from the general Employment Generating Lands initiative.

## THREE PROGRAM APPROACH



## 3.1. LAND USE PLANNING PROGRAM

### 3.1.1. Program Overview

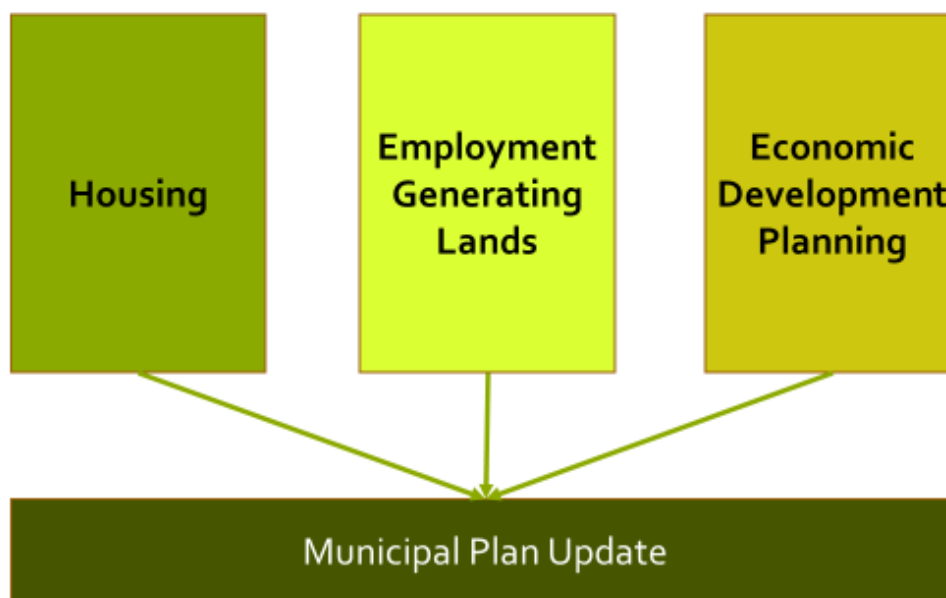
Both sustainable land use planning and economic development must be intrinsically linked to achieve optimum land use, building and business development. The Municipal Plan and the companion Development Regulations represent the primary municipal conduit to define how the Town will manage land use change within the short term of the next 5 to 10 years, and over the longer-term future. For Torbay to achieve economic success, a merging of land use planning policies, requirements and priorities with community economic considerations will chart that roadway.

The Land Use Planning Program will be comprised of three initiatives:

- 1/ **Housing** – Preparation and implementation of a revised housing strategy direction, with particular attention to the future housing needs of seniors.
- 2/ **Employment Generating Lands** - Designation and phased development, where fiscally viable, of serviced and non-serviced industrial and commercial lands, refinement of permitted uses and zone categories, and creation of flexible site development approaches.
- 3/ **Economic Development Planning** - Incorporating the Town’s economic development vision, objectives, strategies and initiatives (along with the Housing and Employment Generating Lands strategies) into the Town’s Municipal Plan policies and within provisions of the Development Regulations.

The structure of the Program is shown in the following diagram:

### PROGRAM A: LAND USE PLANNING



### 3.1.2. Work Components

The following summary represents a listing of the indicative and essential work components which will need to be undertaken to implement the Land Use Planning Program:

#### Housing Strategy

- Consider a new sustainable planning framework of balancing environmental, economic and social needs for land use planning goals, objectives, policies and regulations;
- Be guided by the land use planning edicts of sustainability, complete communities, smart growth and economic efficient use of the land base;
- Conduct in partnership with provincial environment representatives and other similar environmental organizations, an inventory assessment of sensitive environmental lands that should not be subject to land use development, and map same. In this manner, certainty is provided to the community, to Council, to the Province, to developers and to potential investors which lands are deemed to be not only non-developable, but also to identify the developable land base of the community;
- Undertake a strategic and comprehensive literature review of housing Best Practices and residential development lessons learned from similarly sized Towns as Torbay;
- Focus on serviced urban density opportunities for residential growth and development but additionally pursue housing innovation through accessory residential opportunities within rural locations;
- Create a new tiered approach to housing density based upon a minimum/maximum number of residential dwelling units per acre of developable land area, as related to single unit residential, and to low, medium and higher density zone categories;
- Identify the right fit for housing options of accessory residential carriage houses, backyard cottage and granny suites; infill residential housing opportunities for 325 square meter (3500 square feet) compact lot front porch design single unit housing forms; and, an approach for low/medium and higher density maximum three story condominium buildings, well designed prominent front facade townhouses and highly designed and landscaped apartment development sites;
- Analyze the land base through GIS and site visit evaluations, especially along transportation corridors, for opportunities of mid to longer term individual and cluster mixed use residential/commercial development sites;
- Consider opportunities for a focused definition approach for permitted uses of each zone within the Development Regulations, and identify only zone uses that add to the balanced sustainable direction of the Town, including economic and employment generating uses;
- Adjust management of home-based business as a result of the pandemic, and encourage such office based and similar home occupation activities through identification of such permitted businesses in varied residential zone categories, and pursue a decrease in allowing home businesses as discretionary uses;
- Revise development control standards and conditions of use for building site coverage, development setbacks, building height, parking space requirements, parking access and egress, landscaping and signage to encourage a form based zoning approach of providing more building innovation, siting flexibility and utility of the land opportunities with

developers to achieve building design, increased assessed property values, additional types and forms of residential floorspace and expanded local housing opportunities;

- Establish general design guidelines for inclusion within the revised Municipal Plan for housing to achieve livable, vibrant residential neighbourhoods.

### **Employment Generating Land Strategy**

- Conduct detailed evaluation of designated and zoned commercial and industrial lands;
- Inventory potential new land and building development sites for additional designation opportunities;
- Review Best Practices for the intensive use of industrial land;
- List priority retail, office, personal service and tourism businesses that are desired;
- Adjust the permitted uses/ create new commercial, mixed use and employment zones;
- Develop new conditions of use and development standards for commercial et al zones; and,
- Prepare general design guidelines for commercial and employment generating building and site developments.

### **Municipal Plan Update**

- Identify, prepare and organize the steps required for the process to revise and update the Municipal Plan and Development Regulations;
- Follow the legislative process of the NL Urban and Rural Planning Act to prepare and approve a Municipal Plan and Development Regulations;
- Facilitate the merging of economic development goals with Municipal planning objectives;
- Acknowledge the sustainability principles of a community environmental, economic and social balance as guiding lights for the Plan update;
- Consider a sustainable development checklist as a means to evaluate land and building development application proposals;
- Consider the plausibility of establishing sustainable targets such as increasing the number of building permits for multi-unit residential homes, expanding the number of home-based business by 30%, or increasing the number of annual business licenses;
- Pursue increased density and planning innovation opportunities in building and site development in unison with adherence to building, landscaping and site design benchmarks;
- Establish new planning policies to guide development within the residential, commercial, employment generating, rural, resource, public and cultural land use sectors, and develop a substantially revised and supportive zoning regime to the planning policies to achieve sustainable economic and community objectives;
- Introduce policies to support the Town Centre development, to encourage mixed use developments, and to provide for development performance-based zoning opportunities;
- Prepare policies to influence tourism development and expansion within the community;
- Accentuate land use planning considerations of the pedestrian, of alternative mobility, of public spaces, of shade rest areas and bench locations, of community history and sense of place, and of longer-term transit expansion opportunities;

- Introduce short term land use planning goals and longer-term community planning needs;
- Include a long-range planning information map as an attachment to the Municipal Plan to identify the Town’s land use planning desires for that timeframe beyond the limited mandated Provincial ten-year planning horizon;
- Recognize the economic, employment and residential changes as a result of the pandemic and the capital infrastructure, asset management, coastal and environmental challenges of climate change;
- Determine formats for the new Municipal Plan and Development Regulations documents, that are more user friendly and more understandable to the reader, by incorporating photos, diagrams and building siting sketches to illustrate planning objectives and requirements; through reliance upon a strong Interpretation section to define planning terms and uses; and, by use of a numeric reference system for zoning provisions to minimize repetition of planning terminology;
- Realize opportunities to provide clarity and efficiencies within the planning process for property owners, investors and the development community;
- Embrace opportunities to engage and hear from local residents, businesses and developers in the Plan update process;
- Prepare new Vision Statement that captures the sustainable planning intent of the community, and the merging of land use planning with economic development;
- Commence a comprehensive background research report and planning recommendation approach for each of the varied land use sectors;
- Utilize the findings and recommendations of the background housing et al reports to prepare the Draft Municipal Plan document;
- Share the Draft Plan widely with the community and with Council, and upon direction and revisions, prepare the Draft Development Regulations to support the Plan Policies;
- Circulate the Final Draft Municipal Plan and Development Regulations for further community comment; and,
- Commence the Municipal Plan adoption and approval processes.

### **3.1.3. Action Plan**

To start on the pathway to strengthen local community economic development through the Municipal Plan Update process, the Town could initiate research and planning (primarily in-house) activities during 2021, engage planning expertise early in 2022 to prepare the Draft Municipal Plan and Development Regulations, and target completion of the updated Municipal Plan et al by mid to late 2023.

The key elements of this Action Plan are proposed as follows:

**a. Establish an Internal Municipal Planning Project Action Team and Advisory Committees**

Form a Municipal Planning Team of Departmental representatives from Planning, Economic Development, Infrastructure and Public Works, Parks and Recreation, and the Fire Department, and chaired by the Town's Director of Planning and Development.

The Project Action Team would identify and review local planning issues and needs, and proposed new sustainable planning policies, through a logistical lens of evaluating the impact to municipal operations and administration. Planning Department members are to be instrumental in guiding the Plan preparation process, including undertaking the indicative preliminary work components outlined within Section 3.1.2, as well as to prepare (with external planning expertise as required) the varied Background Research Reports.

The Project Action Team should consider forming two advisory committees:

i) Community Advisory Committee

The Community Advisory Committee would be comprised of local champions and community representatives. Its role would be: to assist in the preparation of the Terms of Reference for the Plan update; to review and comment upon Background Research Reports and draft policies and zoning regulations; to assist in the e-version and varied community outreach public participation processes of the Plan Update; and, to make recommendations to Council on the Draft copies of the updated Municipal Plan and Development Regulations. The Community Advisory Committee would become the primary community face of the Plan Update project.

ii) Technical Advisory Committee

The Technical Advisory Committee would be comprised of representatives from varied provincial departments such as Highways, Environment, NL Power, Emergency Services including police, and other regional organizations. Its role would be to assist in the review of proposed planning policies and to provide external technical comments to the proposed policy and regulatory content and sustainable direction of the Draft Municipal Plan and Development Regulations.

**b. Research**

Initial activities of the Action Team Planning Department staff would be to coordinate the Plan Update and preparation process, establish the working Committees, and undertake varied background information research to facilitate the Plan update process. This work would be principally undertaken internally and would include those items captured as Work Components within Section 3.1.2, as well as additional planning needs identified by Planning staff.



The following Research Papers, prepared as part of the Roadmap Project, will be used as the starting point for the research activities:

- Issue Paper #1: Town Plan, Policies and Development Regulations.
- Issue Paper #2: Potential Strategies to Encourage Mixed-use Development.
- Issue Paper #3: Availability of Commercial/ Industrial Land.

To augment the preliminary research, the Plan Update process is to also include the preparation of a suggested six Background Research Reports, noted as follows:

- Population and Demographics (to identify who are we planning for, to identify population projections for the community, and to thereby determine how many new residential dwelling units and how much land will be required to support future population demand);
- Environmental Footprint (to identify, map and designate lands that are deemed to be environmentally sensitive, culturally and historically valuable, important to retain for scenic views, prone to coastal erosion, or hazardous, and thereby non-developable. Remaining lands provide certainty as being viewed as developable lands);
- Building Livable Residential Neighbourhoods (to explore a revised housing approach for Torbay that addresses more optimum utility of the developable land base, to provide for varied forms and types of residential infill and higher density housing to accommodate the changing demands for seniors and new residents);
- Commercial and Employment Generating Lands (to accentuate economic and business development options and opportunities for the Town, including mixed use developments and tourism growth and expansion);
- Rural Lands and Resource Developments (to define the preferred land use activities and management policies for non-serviced rural land areas);
- Local Quality of Life, Public Services and Infrastructure (to address soft and hard infrastructure requirements for public spaces and institutional uses; for parks and recreation requirements, deficiencies and future amenities; and for potential phased land development areas dependent upon servicing extensions and upgrades).

Through research and report preparation of the cited six land use areas, the baseline will be established to generate varied land use policy recommendations for inclusion within the Draft Municipal Plan.

**c. Planning**

The Economic Development context for the Town has been completed as part of the Roadmap Project. Based upon the Town's economic vision and objectives, the Action Team will develop overarching strategies and policies for expanding housing choices in the Town, for commercial developments, for employment generating land uses, for mixed uses, for home-based businesses, for tourism and for the Town Centre.

These strategies and policies will be incorporated into the Municipal Plan Update, with the central theme of advancing sustainable growth and development in a manner that has economic benefits for the community.

**d. Mechanics of Municipal Plan Update**

Torbay has a legislated requirement to update its Municipal Plan in 2022. The overarching goal of approaching the revised Municipal Plan in accordance with sustainable values and in achieving economic growth through land use planning and development, will require extensive staff involvement in background research, community conversations and Council support, and external land use planning insight, to pull the concepts and planning recommendations together within the Draft Municipal Plan and Development Regulations documents. In other words, this work will be substantially more complex than a typical Municipal Plan update. As a result, specific expertise, additional effort and additional budget funding will be required.

Operationally, while the Municipal Plan Update project would be administered and coordinated by the Planning and Development Department, it is suggested that a Municipal Planning Consultant with knowledge and experience in economic development and in preparation of sustainable community plans would be required to actually lead, undertake and prepare the Draft and Final Municipal Plan and Development Regulations, and all companion land use and zoning maps. The use of external expertise would also be beneficial, in an advisory role, during preparation of the six Background Research Reports and their related planning policy recommendations.

Forecasting the Plan update work to be done over two years 2022 to 2023 also allows Council to spread the cost of the Plan update over two budget years.

**e. Implementation of the Plan**

Implementation would be based upon pragmatic, achievable and affordable action strategies that flow from the revised policy and procedures outlined in the Municipal Plan. A separate implementation section would be prepared for the Municipal Plan.

The importance of the implementation process resides with turning planning policy statements into action initiatives. This is accomplished for each Municipal Plan policy by assigning priority order as to when each policy is to be addressed (i.e., Immediate Priority for Year 1 after Council adoption of the Plan, Important Priority for Years 2 to 5, and Ongoing Priority for 6 to 10 years).

The Implementation discussion would additionally identify who and how the varied actions will be undertaken and completed, and at what cost.

**f. Oversight**

To maintain the energy and continuity of the Municipal Plan process, it may be advantageous for the Town to continue to evaluate and monitor issues arising from the policy direction of the new Municipal Plan and companion economic development efforts through a newly formed Planning/Economic Development Committee of Council.

Members may include both municipal representation from planning and economic development, and two Council persons, and a minimum of five individuals of business,

residential development, community organization, environmental management and residential neighbourhood backgrounds.

Monitoring tasks may include meeting agenda discussion items, internal assessments by the Planning and Development Department, an ongoing survey of industry/community issues and assessing community progress towards attainment of the established sustainable benchmarks and target objectives of the Plan for residential permits, home based occupations and annual business licenses.

### 3.1.4. Timeline and Cost

The program would be initiated in the first quarter of 2021 with the formation of an Action Team. The necessary research and planning to design the housing and employment generating lands strategies would be undertaken in 2021 and the first half of 2022. In the latter half of 2022 and 2023, these strategies along with the economic development vision and goals arising from the Roadmap Project would be incorporated into the Torbay Municipal Plan.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>Form Action Committee</b>	<b>1st Quarter, 2021</b>	<b>Existing Budgets</b>
<b>Research</b>	<b>1st and 2nd Quarters 2021</b>	<b>Existing Budgets</b>
<b>Planning</b>	<b>3rd Quarter, 2021 to 2nd Quarter 2022</b>	<b>\$15,000 for Municipal Planning Expert Retainer</b>
<b>Municipal Plan Update</b>	<b>3rd Quarter, 2022 to 2nd Quarter 2023</b>	<b>\$35,000 incremental funding in addition to the estimated \$50,000 standard cost of Municipal Plan Update</b>
<b>Implementation</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>	<b>Existing Budgets</b>
<b>Oversight</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>	<b>Existing Budgets</b>

### 3.1.5. Funding Sources

There are no targeted programs available from federal or provincial sources to assist communities to develop or update Municipal Plans. These are considered normal municipal responsibilities to be addressed within the municipality’s General Revenue including using Gas Tax funding.

Similarly, generic municipal “land use planning “is not eligible for funding under federal or provincial Community Development Programming.

Notwithstanding the above, there are aspects of the Land Use Planning Program which will specifically relate to enhancing community sustainability. These aspects of the Program may be eligible for funding from the Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan. This funding is provided

through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and grants are available up to 50% of eligible costs to a maximum of \$175,000.

## 3.2. CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

### 3.2.1. Overview

The Town of Torbay will act through the Capacity Development Program to address two major infrastructure gaps in its capacity to attract new business enterprises and enhance its economic viability.

Development of the **Town Centre** will be a key element in business development by providing a central locus for commercial retail, service and accommodation enterprises along with potential recreation and cultural services. It will be a demand generator both for town residents and for visitors.

Development of the **Light Industrial Park** will facilitate the establishment of commercial/industrial enterprises in the Town by providing a location which has been designated, designed and serviced to meet their needs and where they can mobilize for construction and occupancy without delay.

### 3.2.2. Town Centre

#### 3.2.2.1. Overview

The concept to develop a Town Centre for Torbay was proposed in 2009 as part of the Heritage Master Plan. The concept focused upon construction of a Wellness Centre with commercial and social enterprises developed in conjunction with this cornerstone development. Subsequently an architectural design concept and development plan was completed in 2014 and lands analysis completed in 2018. Ultimately, there was a decision to locate the Wellness Centre at an alternate site in the Town and the Town Centre was not developed.



Research and consultations during this project, have led to the conclusion that a Town Centre, even without the Wellness Centre, would be a major force in Town Development making Torbay a better place to live, work and play. It would provide a focal point for social events and shopping for both residents and visitors, enhance community cohesion and enhance Town walkability. A Town Centre will be a key element in business development for the Town by providing a focus for an increased inventory of retail, entertainment, accommodations and other commercial enterprises currently

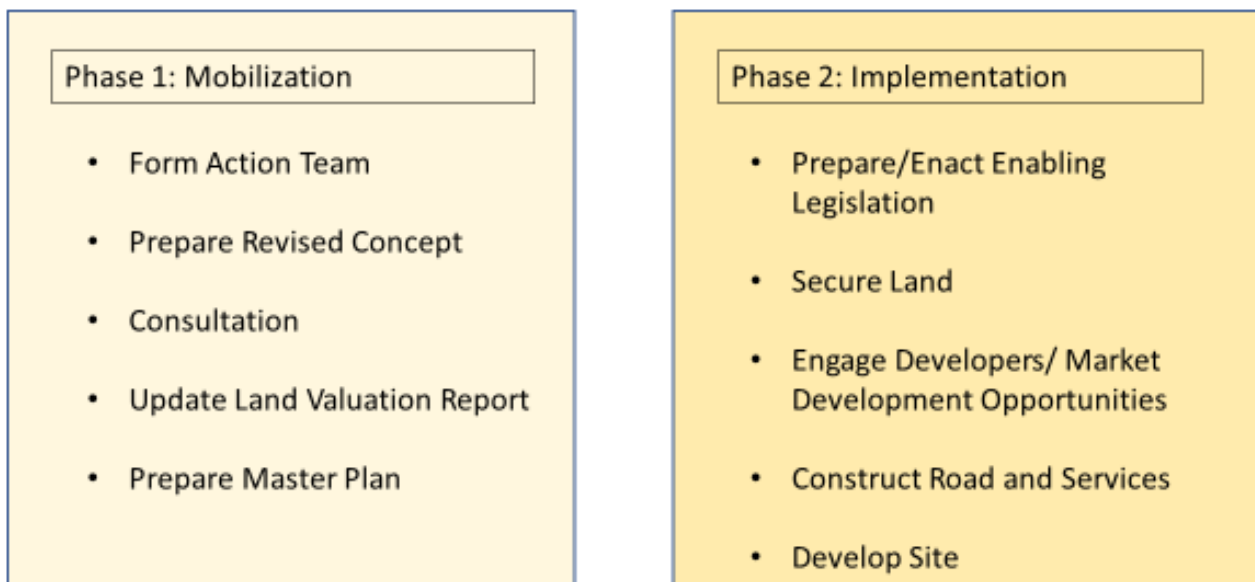
lacking in Torbay resulting in an increase in spending in Town by both residents and visitors. It would develop into the heart and soul of the community. The Town Centre would also become Torbay's signature demand generator and the cornerstone for development of its tourism sector.

### 3.2.2.2. Action Plan

The Town Centre concept has been discussed and studied in Torbay for over a decade. There have been three substantive background studies completed and there is wide consensus that the Town needs a focal point both for community and commercial development. However, this is offset by a recognition that there are some real risks in undertaking such a bold venture and a growing feeling that the inertia associated with the project will not be overcome.

This Action Plan, illustrated below, describes a pathway which can be followed to make the Town Centre a reality. It builds on the work completed in studies to date and provides a mechanism for the Town to determine the balance between risk, speed of development and control over the project that it wishes to have.

## Town Centre – Action Plan



The key elements of this Action Plan are proposed as follows:

### **PHASE 1: MOBILIZATION**

#### **a. Establish a Town Centre Project Action Team**

Form a Town Centre Project Action Team chaired by the Mayor or Deputy Mayor and including at least two other members of Council along with senior staff support.

Formation of the Town Centre Project Action Team will send a signal that Council believes in the concept and is serious about making it a reality. The role of the Action Team would be to oversee the development process and identify and assess options at key points where decisions of Council will be required.

The Action Team will likely need technical assistance in addition to that available on its own staff and should consider retaining an external expert to attend meeting and provide expert input.

#### **b. Prepare a Revised Concept for the Town Centre**

A new concept document for the Town Centre will need to be prepared. It would be based upon the re-conceptualization of the Town Centre to focus on current opportunities – versus the original concept which used the construction of the Wellness Centre as the cornerstone.

Following is a preliminary profile of enterprises and facilities which have been identified during the Roadmap process for consideration to be included in this new concept:

- A Craft Brewery.
- A Boutique Hotel.
- A high-end restaurant.
- Coffee shop/bistro.
- Crafts sales shops.
- A spa.
- A theatre and performance space.
- Office space to support small business, community groups and a business incubator.
- A new branded East Coast Trail – Torbay Amherst Park as a gateway hub to the East Coast Trail.
- Highly designed condo/apartments, rentals and/or townhouse development focused on seniors.

The new concept document would outline the major elements of the Town Centre, the economic and placemaking benefits of the project and the action plan to make it a reality.

#### **a. Consultation**

The new concept document would be used as the basis of consultations to relaunch the Town Centre idea with residents and help build consensus regarding the way forward. The consultation process would be undertaken through established mechanisms used by the Town.

**b. Update Land Valuation**

Altus Group completed a valuation report on the Town Centre area lands in April 2018. In this Report Altus did a detailed review of the land in the designated area, defined the lots which would be required for the development and undertook a market valuation of each property.

Given that almost two years have passed and that there has been considerable volatility in the economy due to the pandemic and the downturn in the oil sector, it would be prudent to update the land valuation.

**c. Prepare a Master Plan**

The new concept for the Town Centre would be further defined in a Master Plan for the site. This Master Plan would identify the various aspects of the development and would include the overall design, roads and services and general architectural guidelines.

The work completed in the Architectural Guidelines Report prepared in 2014 by Woodford Sheppard Architecture Ltd and CBCL Limited would be utilized to the extent possible for the new concept.

The Master Plan would also include an estimate of return on investment to inform potential developers.

*The goal in defining architectural guidelines is to encourage development in the new Town Centre that is: • Consistent in quality, • Consistent in aesthetics, • Respectful of the community, and • A general enhancement to the Town and its natural surroundings.*

**PHASE 2: IMPLEMENTATION**

**a. Prepare/Enact Enabling Legislation**

The requirements for the enabling legislation would be determined based upon the new concept but would be similar to those outlined in the CBCL report.

*“As the area is to become the Town Centre of Torbay, it is envisaged that development will be of an urban, not suburban, nature. Therefore, multi-storeyed buildings are encouraged. As an urban street, the main street should have the buildings placed up close to the property lines along the street and should provide a more or less continuous street wall. The road should have curb and gutter and provide sidewalks on both sides.*

*Within the Town Centre, it is recommended that mixed use development be allowed enabling retail, commercial and multi-unit residential. Potentially obnoxious uses such as gas stations, automobile repair shops, and industrial uses emitting odors and noise should be avoided. The number of discretionary uses should be minimized. While the zoning should be as flexible as possible, specific design guidelines should be established that dictate the location of the buildings in relation to the street line, the location of parking, the quality of finishes, and other factors that the Town considers important to the look and feel of the area.*

*The zoning of the area should set out clear rules that will enable development that meets those rules to be “as-of-right”, i.e., allowing development that meets the rules to proceed*



*with a minimum of additional regulation. These clear rules that allow as-of-right development will provide certainty to potential developers making the area more attractive to them.”*

This work should be done in conjunction with the Municipal Plan Update.

**b. Secure Land**

The Altus Report identified twelve parcels of land located in the Town Centre area. Two of these parcels are already owned by the Town and the others by ten private land owners.

It is essential that the Town secure the land in the area in order to proceed with planning for development of the Town Centre. This is a key decision point for the Town and two alternatives, described below, have been identified for consideration.

**i) Establish a Common Development Group with Existing Landowners;**

This idea was recommended in the 2014 CBCL Report as follows:

*“the Town work with landowners in the area to get them to organize under one developer. While this is not strictly necessary for development in the area to proceed, it has a number of advantages. It could:*

- *assist with the rationalization of property parcels;*
- *facilitate a more consistent approach to development;*
- *allow property owners to realize common interests and maximize returns; and*
- *enable a more appropriate phasing of the development.*

*Many of the private property owners in the area have demonstrated a strong interest in developing their properties and appear to be willing to work with others to get good development to occur in the area. This approach, where a variety of landowners come together under one lead developer has been used in many other jurisdictions across Canada. As a landowner in the area, the Town could be a strong participant in such a group and as the regulator of development, could use its influence to achieve certain design and planning objectives through negotiations within the group. As an example, the Town is preparing a prospectus as part of this project and could work with the development group to ensure that this presents the opportunity in the best light possible. The Town could also use the development and sharing of this prospectus as another demonstration of its commitment to the success of the venture. The Town could also work with the group to enable appropriate variances that would advance the project, while still protecting public interest and safety.”*

Under this alternative, The Town would share both control of the development and the risks/returns from the development with the existing land owners.



**ii) Town Option/Purchase Land and Lead Development**

Under this alternative, the Town would move to obtain options to purchase or to complete purchase of the various lots of land and assemble the full area for development.

The conclusion of Altus Group in 2018 was, subject to a range of assumptions and limiting conditions, that *“the current market value range of the fee simple of the subject properties, effective April 1, 2018, is \$1,566,000 to \$2,078,000.”* If the land parcels owned by the Town are excluded then the private land in the area was valued approximately \$1.1 to \$1.5 million at that time.

Under this alternative, the Town would have complete control regarding the development and would be in position to maximize returns from its success but would take on the initial expense of acquiring the land. The land would be a saleable asset so it would be reasonable to assume that the purchase cost could be recovered if the development did not proceed.

**c. Engage Developers/Market Development Opportunities**

The Master Plan would be the basis for a campaign to attract entrepreneurs to invest in development at the Town Centre. Two options to consider for development would be i) request bids from the development community for each of the various aspects (parcels) of the development, or ii) package the development and invite 2-3 developers to bid on the entire amount.

**d. Construct Road and Services**

The initial property development would be construction of the road and services for the site. This work would be undertaken by the Town and would be a major selling point for the development. Costs would be recovered in the future through tax revenue and service fees.

For the original concept, CBCL estimated that it would cost \$2.8 million to construct the road and services (including signs, street furniture, lights and undergrounding of power). Design and construction contingencies added an additional \$1.2 million to the cost estimate for a total of \$4 million.

**e. Develop Site**

The final step would be the development of the site by private developers for business enterprises and by the Town for the anticipated public spaces/facilities.

**3.2.2.3. Timeline and Cost**

The Town Centre project program would be initiated in the first quarter of 2021 with the formation of an Action Team and it is recommended that efforts be made to conclude the Mobilization Phase of the project in 2021. The cost of the Mobilization Phase is estimated to be about \$100,000 with the highest cost related to preparation of a Project Master Plan.

Under this scenario, the Town would be at a major decision point regarding whether to proceed with the Town Centre project by the beginning of 2022. If the Town decides to proceed then the key Action items and preliminary cost implications are noted in the Table.

	Action	Timeline	Cost
Phase 1: Mobilization	Form Action Committee	1st Quarter, 2021 and Ongoing	Existing Budgets plus \$10,000 in 2021 for Development Planning Expert Retainer
	Prepare Revised Concept	1st Quarter 2021	\$7,500 incremental funding
	Consultation	2nd Quarter 2021	Existing Budgets
	Update Land Valuation Report	2nd Quarter 2021	\$3,500 incremental funding
	Prepare Master Plan	3rd and 4th Quarters, 2021	\$75,000 incremental funding
Phase 2: Implementation	Prepare/Enact Enabling Legislation	1st - 4th Quarters, 2022	\$10,000 incremental funding in addition to funds for Municipal Plan Update
	Secure Land	1st and 2nd Quarters 2022	Investment will depend upon revised Land Valuation and whether Town decides to purchase land. Investment could be in range of \$1.5 million.
	Engage Developers/Market Development Opportunities	1st Quarter 2022 and ongoing	Existing Budgets and \$20,000 in 2022 for Development Planning Expert Retainer
	Construct Road and Services	2nd and 3rd Quarters 2023	Potential cost of up to \$4 million
	Develop Site	3rd Quarter 2023 and ongoing	Developer Projects

**3.2.3. Funding Sources**

**Community Economic Development (CED) Programming**

It is likely that development of the Torbay Town Centre would be eligible for community development program funding to support i) plan development/delineation, and ii) physical construction.

In order to access this funding, support the Town would have to illustrate in its application that the project meets key criteria as noted below:

- Have the support and buy-in of the town’s business community.
- Identify economic benefits that would go beyond the businesses in the Town Centre.
- Include more than products and services targeting the resident market.
- Be a unique (and hopefully iconic) attraction to the town and the region.

CED program funding for the Town Centre would focus on those aspects of the project that would facilitate the site as a destination for visitors to the town or the region. That is, attributes that would enhance the attractiveness of the Centre to individual or group visitation or make it suitable to events that would generate visitation.

Normal program levels for approved projects approximate 50% of eligible costs from federal sources and 25 -40% from provincial government programs. Levels vary based on the desirability of the project, which is usually assessed in terms of measurable long term economic benefits resulting from its implementation.

Funding from CED programs would not consider costs associated with (1) land purchase, (2) retail sector, or (3) real estate activities.

### **Multi-government Infrastructure Programs**

It is expected that the Federal and Provincial governments will develop programs in 2021 to rebuild the economy in a post-COVID era. The criteria and budgets may be sufficiently flexible to consider the Town Centre project.

In the past projects which support economic growth have been considered eligible under various Federal/Provincial municipal infrastructure programs. However, while projects such as the Town Centre may be eligible, they have been ranked lower in priority than those that address basic community infrastructure needs notably safe drinking water and wastewater treatment – both of which are major priorities for the Town of Torbay.

### **3.2.4. Light Industrial Park**

#### **3.2.4.1. Overview**

Communities throughout North America and the world have engaged in the development of Industrial and Business Parks. The motivation for these initiatives includes:

- Facilitate economic development: Business wants to locate in a community and the availability of appropriate serviced land enables their location.
- Efficient land use planning: Creating a distinct area for business and industrial development and growth which is separate from residential and recreational use can be desirable for all users.
- Promote Economic Development: The availability of properly zoned, efficiently serviced, reasonably priced, accessible land can be used to promote the Town as a destination for business development.

In 2011, the Town of Torbay developed an ambitious concept to develop a major Business/Industrial Park on a 350-acre site adjacent to the northern boundary of St. John's Airport. This concept went through various planning stages, but it was not implemented due to problems which were identified at the site related to contamination of groundwater.

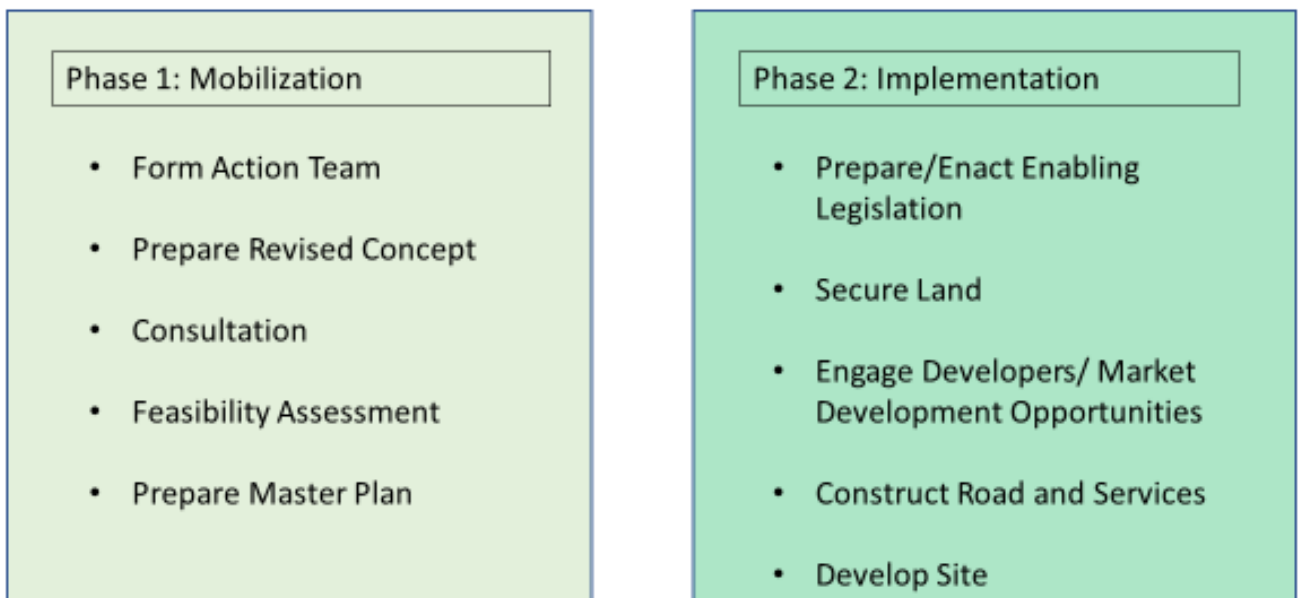
The 2011 concept had been developed based upon the strong demand for commercial and industrial land largely due to the growth of the petroleum sector, which fueled growth in the supply and service sectors as well as retail and consumer service business. This circumstance resulted in several significant commercial and multi-use developments throughout the Northeast Avalon region. Notable areas of growth included Stavanger Drive, Kenmount Road Extension, and Galway. Investments in many of these developments had been completed or committed before the decline in oil prices resulting from over supply on world markets impacted the global industry. Currently, there remains a considerable availability of industrial land in the Northeast Avalon region.

### 3.2.4.2. Action Plan

The conclusion from research undertaken during the RoadMap Project is that: i) in the near/medium term, there is no indication that there would be excess demand for industrial/commercial land in the Northeast Avalon Region to drive the investment by the Town of Torbay in a Business Park; ii) the opportunity for such development would need to be driven by local Torbay centered demand; and iii) a new site would need to be identified.

The Action Plan, illustrated below, to make the Light Industrial Park a reality is very similar in format to that proposed for the Town Centre. However, the actual work in each of the tasks differs considerably due to the smaller scale envisaged for the Project. It is also expected that much of the work can be undertaken by Town staff.

## Light Industrial Park–Action Plan



The key elements of this Action Plan are proposed as follows:

## **PHASE 1: MOBILIZATION**

### **a. Establish a Light Industrial Park Project Action Team**

Form a Light Industrial Park Project Action Team chaired by a Council Member from Economic Development and Tourism Standing Committee along with senior staff support Planning, Economic Development and Infrastructure and Public Works. Members of the Torbay business sector would be a great resource for this project and representation should be included either on the Action Team or through an active Advisory Committee.

The role of the Action Team would be to oversee the development process and identify and assess options at key points where decisions of Council will be required.

### **b. Prepare a Revised Concept for the Light Industrial Park**

A concept document for the Light Industrial Park will need to be prepared. The re-conceptualization of the Light Industrial Park is drastically different from the original Business Park concept in scale, development model and location.

The preliminary concept for the new Light Industrial Park for Torbay which was identified by the Town in the RoadMap Project had the following key features:

- Establish a small light industrial area in the Town;
- Develop the site on a phased basis geared to always having 2-3 lots ready for occupancy;
- Focus development efforts on an approximately 100-acre site located on the Torbay Bypass Road adjacent to the Municipal Depot;
- Design the Light Industrial Park with approximately 50 one-acre building lots;
- Service the site by well and septic systems.

### **c. Consultation**

The new concept document would be used as the basis of consultations to introduce the Light Industrial Park idea with residents and the business sector and help build consensus regarding the way forward. The consultation process would be undertaken through established mechanisms used by the Town.

### **d. Feasibility Assessment**

Given the difficulties experienced with the original Business Park Concept, it is essential that a Feasibility Assessment be prepared for the proposed Light Industrial Park. This Feasibility Assessment would include a site assessment and a financial assessment. The site assessment would define site parameters including the location and size of the development, the environmental setting, land use zoning, road access, land ownership and existing services towards documenting development opportunities and constraints. The financial assessment would look at capital cost projections, financing, potential revenue, return on investment and sensitivity.

If the Feasibility Assessment does identify major issues with the site or with the financial viability, then the Action Team would need to determine whether to redirect or terminate the Project.

**e. Prepare a Master Plan**

If the Feasibility assessment is positive, then a Master Plan for the Light Industrial Park would be prepared. This Master Plan would identify the various aspects of the development and would include the overall design, roads and services and general architectural guidelines.

**PHASE 2: IMPLEMENTATION**

Once the Master Plan is prepared then the steps to develop the Light Industrial Park are similar to that followed for the Town Centre:

- Prepare/Enact Enabling Legislation.
- Secure Land.
- Engage Developers/Market Development Opportunities.
- Construct Road and Services.
- Develop Site.

At the present time there is not sufficient information available to provide details related to this work nor estimate associated costs.

**3.2.4.3. Timeline and Cost**

It is proposed that the Mobilization Phase of the Light Industrial Park Project program be initiated in the third quarter of 2021. This would separate the project from the initial activities related to the Town Centre and avoid staff overload as well as any mixed messaging. Accordingly, it is suggested that the Action Team be formed in the third quarter of 2021 with consultations occurring in fall 2021.

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>Phase 1: Mobilization</b>	<b>Form Action Committee</b>	<b>3rd Quarter, 2021 and Ongoing</b>	<b>Existing Budgets</b>
	<b>Prepare Revised Concept</b>	<b>3rd Quarter 2021</b>	<b>\$3,500 incremental funding</b>
	<b>Consultation</b>	<b>4th Quarter 2021</b>	<b>Existing Budgets</b>
	<b>Feasibility Assessment</b>	<b>1st Quarter 2022</b>	<b>\$60,000 incremental funding</b>
	<b>Prepare Master Plan</b>	<b>3rd and 4th Quarters, 2022</b>	<b>\$40,000 incremental funding</b>

### 3.2.5. Funding Sources

It does not appear that current Community Economic Development funding programs would support development of a Light Industrial Park in Torbay.

Government economic development funding programs have limited the eligibility of initiatives that target the development of commercial land to those cases where a strategic industry either needs the development or where the development can provide opportunity for the growth of secondary or supply sector businesses. (Examples include the mining sector in Labrador West and the aquaculture sector on the Burin Peninsula).

## 3.3. PROMOTION AND SUPPORT PROGRAM

### 3.3.1. Overview

The Town of Torbay will undertake a proactive approach to economic development. Externally, efforts will be directed towards enhancing the profile of “beautiful” Torbay and specifically towards promoting business opportunities to established businesses and new entrepreneurs and towards promoting Torbay’s family friendly living environment to young families along with its amenities for seniors and for other potential residents.

The Promotion and Support Program will be comprised of three initiatives:

- 1/ **Promote, Promote, Promote** – Multi-layered (and multi-year) promotion to raise the profile of Torbay and to assist economic development by bringing messages directly to key groups at specific times matched to implementation of the Roadmap;
- 2/ **Business Vitality** - A series of proactive measures to support existing businesses and to encourage entrepreneurship and business development;
- 3/ **Community Vitality** – Ensuring continuous improvements towards making Torbay a great place to live, work and play.

The structure of the Program is shown in the following diagram:

### PROGRAM C: PROMOTION AND SUPPORT



### 3.3.2. Program Oversight

The scope of the Promotion and Support Program range across the responsibility areas of three organizational units within the Torbay Municipal Office –Economic Development and Tourism Office; Communications Office; and Community Services and Recreation Department.

It is proposed to establish a Promotion and Support Action Team, chaired by the Town’s CAO (or Deputy Clerk) and including Director of Community Services and Recreation along with the Economic Development and Tourism Officer and the Communications Coordinator. The role of this Action Team will be to ensure efficient and effective implementation of the Promotion and Support Program. This will include integrating new activities with ongoing initiatives and coordinating across organizational lines.

### 3.3.3. Promote, Promote, Promote Initiative

#### 3.3.3.1. Overview

Since being launched in 2010, the “Beautiful Torbay” brand has become a well-established presence in the Town. It has been used by the Town as it has developed a variety of communications and promotion instruments across a range of activity areas.

Some of the notable communications and promotion activities which are current and/or ongoing include:

- Community Profile (2018)
- Promotional Video (2015/16)
- Community Calendar (Quarterly - latest Winter/Spring 2021)
- Northeast Avalon Times (monthly ‘back page’ information article)
- Web Based (Resident)
  - “e-services” Portal
  - “My Torbay” Portal (news, information, major events eg. Budget 2021)
  - Torbay Talks Newsletter (weekly)
- Web Based (Business)
  - Business Directory
  - Shop Torbay
  - Business Resources Portal
- Web Based (Visitor)
  - General Information
  - History
  - Trails
- Surveys (ongoing initiative to inform stakeholders and garner input on issues)



This “**Promote, Promote, Promote**” initiative will be a multi-layered (and multi-year) promotion initiative which will utilize the “Beautiful Torbay” brand and augment existing communications and promotions activities. It will be used to raise the profile of Torbay and to assist economic development by bringing messages directly to key groups at specific times matched to implementation of the Roadmap.

The layers of the promotion program would include:

- A component directed towards current Town residents to build on their evident pride of place and to promote Torbay living;
- A component celebrating the successes of current Torbay businesses;
- A component directed towards potential new residents to distinguish Torbay as a unique Town with culture and historical roots where rural living can be enjoyed minutes from urban amenities and a Town for all stages of life;
- A component directed towards potential new businesses promoting the opportunity for developers and businesses to launch projects in Torbay and promoting the new Town Centre as a prime undeveloped area to establish a business;
- A component welcoming and providing information to visitors.

### 3.3.3.2. Action Plan

The Action Plan has been developed towards aligning the key messages for specific target groups so that there is a consistent promotional message in all communication from Town. The Action Plan would be overseen by the Action Team with the Communications Coordinator as the primary resource person.

Target	Action	Additional Components/ Actions
<b>General</b>	Ensuring that Town website, Facebook pages and other resources are up-to-date and reflect the pride of place initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renew Website and update information.</li> <li>• Update Town profile (digital/paper).</li> <li>• Update Town Map.</li> </ul>
<b>Current Residents</b>	Continue to build on Residents’ evident pride of place through promotion of culture and heritage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use History House as a community focal point for keeping alive the stories of Torbay.</li> <li>• Engage residents in storytelling through storytelling festival and/or contests.</li> <li>• Use the stories of Torbay as vehicles of promotion, engaging local and regional media.</li> <li>• Celebrate the wide range of events, programs and facilities available in the Town.</li> </ul>
	Continue to promote the events, programs and facilities available in Torbay.	
<b>Current Businesses</b>	Celebrate the successes of Torbay businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing profiling of businesses.</li> <li>• Promotion of business awards and other successes.</li> </ul>

Target	Action	Additional Components/ Actions
<b>Potential New Residents</b>	General messaging will distinguish Torbay as a unique Town with culture and historical roots where rural living can be enjoyed minutes from urban amenities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New section on website dedicated to potential new residents.</li> <li>• Photos and videos on website and social media that reflect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Unique living opportunity in Torbay.</li> <li>○ The family friendly living environment.</li> <li>○ The living options and senior friendly amenities for seniors</li> <li>○ The beauty, culture and doorstep access to nature for millennials and other groups.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	As the Town addresses challenges to maintain a balance of young families in its population, messaging would promote Torbay's family-friendly living environment to young families.	
	As Town efforts to ensure diversified housing options are actioned, messaging will promote Town amenities for seniors and for other potential residents attracted to those housing options.	
<b>Potential New Businesses</b>	A general component with messaging focused on the opportunity for developers and businesses to launch projects in Torbay.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New section on website dedicated to potential new businesses with links to key town information and messaging.</li> <li>• Development of promotional materials for website to promote Torbay as good investment opportunity.</li> <li>• Development of promotional material for developers, new entrepreneurs and established businesses specifically related to the Town Centre.</li> </ul>
	As the Town launches its efforts to establish the new Town Centre messaging would be directed at developers, new entrepreneurs and established businesses to promote the Town Centre as a prime undeveloped area to establish a business.	
<b>Visitors</b>	Welcoming and providing great experiences for visitors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure website and other materials welcome visitors and provide culture, history and nature information on Torbay.</li> <li>• Provide information on “what to see and do” in Torbay.</li> </ul>

### 3.3.4. Business Vitality Initiative

#### 3.3.4.1. Overview

Some years ago, the Town developed a “Invest Torbay” program with a range of activities which were designed support existing businesses and to attract new enterprises. The program has not been fully developed and some of the documentation particularly information on the Town website is quite dated.

There is a need to revitalize and relaunch a proactive business vitality program to support existing businesses and to encourage entrepreneurship and business development. This would include:

- Initiatives to instill a nurturing approach to entrepreneurship and business development across all levels of Town operations;
- Initiatives directed to targeting key businesses;
- Initiatives to promote entrepreneurship and new business start-up; and,
- Initiatives to nurture existing businesses.

Creating a business-friendly community comes down to 3 things:

1. **Opportunities** – The ability of the community to recognize, take action, and follow through on available opportunities.
2. **Attitudes** – The mindset that fosters the development of businesses and innovative community solutions.
3. **Networks** - The ability of citizens to connect with each other and with outside markets.

The following chart lays out Torbay-specific short-term and long-term possible strategies for the development and enhancement of creating an entrepreneur-friendly community.

Opportunities	Attitudes	Networks
The ability of the community to recognize, take action, and follow through on available opportunities.	The mindset that fosters the development of businesses and innovative community solutions.	The ability of citizens to connect with each other and with outside markets.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>RECRUIT KEY BUSINESSES</b> - Recruitment program for top business priorities - e.g., 1) hardware store, 2) sit-down restaurant, 3) craft brewery, 4) café/ coffee shop, and 5) hotel/ boutique hotel</li> <li>2. <b>TOWN CENTRE PLANS</b> – Integrate business recruitment with plans to have a town centre as a focal point for business development and business interaction. Ensure business participation and engagement. Also see Town Centre section in this report.</li> <li>3. <b>OPPORTUNITY IDENTIFICATION SESSIONS</b> – arrange opportunity identification session with businesses and community every second year to identify what is needed by community (what services do we need? What are the economic opportunities that exist?)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. <b>BUILDING BRIDGES</b> – Engagement of businesses through onsite visitation and discussion by Town officials and councillors.</li> <li>5. <b>DETERMINE NEEDS OF BUSINESSES</b> - Engagement of businesses through online survey to determine changing needs through COVID-19 and longer-term needs (could use Business Retention &amp; Expansion or mini-Business Vitality Index [BVI] questions as benchmarks).</li> <li>6. <b>THINK LOCAL FIRST</b> – Continue and expand the campaign that encourages local buying and loyalty, and an entrepreneurial culture. The online market should be expanded to reflect services in addition to products.</li> <li>7. <b>CREATE CULTURE</b> - Continue and enhance profile of the Torbay Business awards. Add categories of “most innovative” and “most entrepreneurial organization” to reinforce culture.</li> <li>8. <b>YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP</b> – Continue and enhance the youth entrepreneurship programming, expanding from one school through Dragon’s Den type of activities.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. <b>DATABASE DEVELOPMENT</b> – Enhance the Town’s databases related to the Torbay Business Sector and to emerging opportunities.</li> <li>10. <b>ONLINE RESOURCES</b> – Ensure online resources for businesses are relevant and up to date on website.</li> <li>11. <b>A ROBUST BUSINESS ASSOCIATION</b> - Recruit both home-based and regular businesses members to create a robust business association to assist in identifying sector needs, development of sector, and communication with local government. Consider partnering with Portugal Cove – St. Philips to build regional alliances and harness regional resources.</li> <li>12. <b>FORUMS FOR LEARNING and NETWORKING</b> - Creation and promotion of quarterly business forums to demonstrate commitment to business friendliness (e.g., Pivoting Your Business in Time of COVID-19; Best Business Practices in Times of COVID-19, etc.)</li> <li>13. <b>ASSIST BUSINESS IN EXPANDING TECHNOLOGY/ E-COMMERCE ADOPTION</b> – Assistance is more necessary than ever for many businesses who cannot adapt to having an on-line presence, adopting e-commerce, embracing technology, etc.</li> </ol>

### 3.3.4.2. Business Vitality Action Plan

The following chart lists priority strategic actions required to implement priority business vitality actions. The Economic Development and Tourism Officer will lead these activities with input from an Action Team as required.

Action	Rationale	Additional Components/ Actions
<p>1. Recruit Key Businesses</p>	<p>There are many unfilled business niches in Torbay. They are unlikely to be filled accidentally. There is a much greater likelihood of a successful recruitment of key businesses with a strategic approach developed and executed.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prioritize and finalize Torbay’s business needs (no more than five key businesses listed as needed through TRACT public engagement process) - 1) hardware store, 2) sit-down restaurant, 3) craft brewery, 4) café/ coffee shop, and 5) hotel/ boutique hotel.</li> <li>2. Develop short prospectus for businesses (1-2 pages listing need, current demographics, contact info of individual within Torbay to speak to or connect with, etc.)</li> <li>3. Decide whether there will be any special status – e.g. short-term municipal tax relief – for interested individuals.</li> <li>4. Create easy-to-follow transparent process for interested individuals wishing to start (or relocate) with key info like potential tax breaks, locations, demographics.</li> <li>5. Develop and execute press release and promotional materials to get maximum media attention for initiative in St. John’s and beyond.</li> <li>6. Ensure Town website, Facebook page is updated with this.</li> <li>7. Encourage residents to share postings.</li> <li>8. Targeted recruitment – e.g. hardware store – connect one-on-one with Home Hardware head office.</li> <li>9. Work one-on-one through recruitment process shepherding proponents through local regulations.</li> </ol>
<p>2. Determine Needs of Businesses / Business Retention &amp; Expansion (ongoing)</p>	<p>Business-friendly municipalities have their finger on the pulse of the business community through a variety of communication mechanisms. This is a critical ingredient of a business-friendly approach.</p> <p>A scaled-down Business Retention &amp; Expansion (BR&amp;E - <a href="https://brei.org/">https://brei.org/</a> or <a href="https://www.gov.nl.ca/iet/regional-economic-development-division/business-retention-and-expansion/">https://www.gov.nl.ca/iet/regional-economic-development-division/business-retention-and-expansion/</a>) program could be employed. Essentially, BR&amp;E programs ask businesses what the impediments or accelerants of success are, through a business association and/or volunteers (who conduct interviews and respond to needs). In the absence of these, a simple check-in with one business per month conducted by the Economic</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop comprehensive database by combining Torbay business license holders and consulting with Torbay Business Network (NOTE: some home-based business might be flying under the radar, not registered with the Town. It might be prudent to offer a one-time tax amnesty to identify these, with the view that a stronger, connected business sector is of greater benefit to the health of the Town.)</li> <li>2. Establish time each year to engage businesses through Survey Monkey survey, virtual focus groups and one-on-one interviews identifying issues.</li> <li>3. Use questions from the mini Business Vitality Initiative to create a benchmark to compare to.</li> <li>4. Check in around the issues of how the town can be best working with business, recruitment, retention, shop local, and changing needs whenever opportunity arises (e.g. in consultation around town centre and other key infrastructure projects).</li> <li>5. Create programs, initiatives and policies to reflect the changing needs of business community, acknowledging them as a critical partner.</li> </ol>

Action	Rationale	Additional Components/ Actions
	Development and Tourism Officer would be a simple starting point.	
3. Think Local First	The current Shop Local program is focused on goods. A more comprehensive program would encourage residents and other businesses to not only purchase services in Torbay first, but also to think local. Resident loyalty to businesses also encourages new businesses to start/ relocate to Torbay. Think Local First is seen to be more important than ever during Covid. Here is a list of Buy Local Campaign ideas: <a href="https://www.pinterest.ca/theamiba/buy-local-campaign-ideas/?autologin=true&amp;lp=true">https://www.pinterest.ca/theamiba/buy-local-campaign-ideas/?autologin=true&amp;lp=true</a>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Think-Local First multi-media marketing campaign.</li> <li>2. Social media driven, business-focused campaign, supplemented with traditional media marketing and a collateral poster/point of sale materials that mirrors the successful 'Open for Business' and "Keep us Open for Business" posters for increased visual impact and support.</li> <li>3. Create support in the form of a very visible Think Local First community challenge.</li> <li>4. Celebrate that locals have done an excellent job of "buying local" during COVID.</li> <li>5. Engage to determine need and then support existing or develop, launch &amp; aggressively market a Torbay &amp; Area online directory to facilitate buying local online.</li> </ol>
4. A Robust Business Association	<p>A robust business association allows for businesses to learn from one another, provide necessary advocacy, identify and often provide effective training, encourage joint marketing, and provide important information to local government. Business associations can provide networking, directory, communication (online or printed newsletter), events, training sessions, webinars and other critical services and functions.</p> <p>If not, enough energy exists within Torbay to create the association, regional alliances with Portugal Cove - St. Philips, or other neighbors, should be considered.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Become familiar with best practices of a business association - <a href="https://www.cipe.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/BA-for-the-21st-Century-2016.pdf">https://www.cipe.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/BA-for-the-21st-Century-2016.pdf</a>.</li> <li>2. Engage with the existing Torbay Business Network to determine how to maximize its reach and influence.</li> <li>3. Determine whether this Network has the potential to become a Chamber of Commerce or robust business association.</li> <li>4. Take active role in building and nurturing association with goal for association to be more independent in future (the municipality wants to be a partner in this, versus driving it).</li> <li>5. Build membership base.</li> <li>6. Create/ purchase business management database.</li> <li>7. Create programming that fits needs of business community (see Goal 3).</li> <li>8. Evaluate.</li> <li>9. Create programming that evolves with evolving needs of business, business community and community.</li> </ol>
5. Forums for Learning and Networking	Creation and promotion of quarterly business forums to demonstrate commitment to business friendliness (e.g. Pivoting Your Business in Time of Covid; Best Business Practices in Times of Covid, etc.)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work with CBDC, Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador, ACOA and Department of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation at connecting businesses with existing forums (both on-line and in-person).</li> <li>2. Work with same agencies to determine whether Torbay can be site of in-person forums to align with its commitment in being business-friendly community.</li> <li>3. Be proactive in developing content that will assist in businesses pivoting during Covid.</li> <li>4. Continue to research best forums and workshops that align with changing business needs.</li> <li>5. Promote forums.</li> <li>6. Use forums as a place to further develop relationships with businesses and cement Torbay's reputation as being business friendly.</li> <li>7. Continue to foster connection, networks and a community of businesses.</li> </ol>

Action	Rationale	Additional Components/ Actions
6. Assist Business in Expanding Technology/ E-commerce Adoption	The businesses that have been hardest hit in Covid are those that have not been able to create an on-line presence or adopt technology.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work with business community to develop strategy on checking in on e-commerce adoption and technology.</li> <li>2. Work with CBDC, Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador, ACOA and Department of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation at connecting local businesses with existing forums (online or in person).</li> <li>3. Establish a list of priority sectors and businesses to reach out to.</li> <li>4. Identify possible technology-savvy local ambassadors who might assist for free or for minimal compensation (also explore if assistance available from agencies listed above).</li> <li>5. Post success stories (local media and social media) on successful local and regional pivoting.</li> <li>6. Recruit volunteers from among growing number of digital workers in area to assist non-technology-savvy businesses.</li> <li>7. Act to connect affected businesses with workshops and one-on-one assistance to strengthen digital literacy (beginning with simplest concepts).</li> </ol>

**3.3.5. Community Vitality Initiative**

**3.3.5.1. Overview**

The Town is doing a lot of things correctly related to placemaking and community vitality. The focus of this initiative will be to ensure enhancement and continuity of placemaking and community vitality activities towards ensuring that Torbay is a great place to live, work and play.

All efforts should be made towards ensuring all messages and programs work towards the message of Torbay as a unique destination and a great place to live, work and play ([www.imaginekootenay.com](http://www.imaginekootenay.com) is a successful example where this has been achieved). Roger Brooks, the pre-eminent tourism consultant in North America for small towns, suggests that the best tourism strategy is ensuring that the town is most livable for its residents.

There needs to be a mechanism to ensure the town is continually being improved through an annual community vitality report card. A yearly survey would assist the community in identifying issues and reporting on those things the community does well, doesn't do well and still needs to do. The report card would also be a way of publicly charting progress and enhancing accountability and transparency.

### 3.3.5.2. Action Program

The Action Plan is proposed as follows:

Action	Additional Components/ Actions
Ensure the town is continually being improved through an annual community vitality report card. A yearly survey would assist the community in identifying issues and reporting on those things the community does well, doesn't do well and still needs to do.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research indicators that the community would like to use (this could be a subset of the Community Vitality Initiative [100 questions] or repeating the Survey Monkey citizen survey conducted by the Town as part of this study).</li> <li>• Administer the survey annually (or at most every two years).</li> <li>• Offer a variety of methods for input to supplement the online survey (e.g. community forum, focus groups or key stakeholder interviews).</li> <li>• Use results to inform policy and programming.</li> </ul>

### 3.3.6. Timeline and Cost

	Action	Timeline	Cost
	Form Action Committee	1st Quarter, 2021 and Ongoing	Existing Budgets
Promote	General (Website update/profile/map)	2021 and 2025	2021 Budget includes \$8,000 to update Website and \$5,000 to update Profile. Similar updates should be undertaken every four years.
	Current Residents	2021 and Ongoing	Existing Budgets provide funding to support communication and promotion of the Town with current residents. The 2021 Budget also provides \$50,000 for start up costs related to the History House.
	Current Businesses	2021 and Ongoing	2021 Budget includes \$4,000 to support the Business Awards.
	Potential New Residents	2022	\$5,000 for development of a new section of the Website dedicated to new residents.



	Action	Timeline	Cost
	Potential New Businesses	2021	Utilize \$10,000 funding assigned for Economic Development Marketing in the 2021 Budget for website enhancement and promotional materials directed towards developers and potential new businesses.
	Visitors	2021	Utilize \$4,000 of 2021 funding approved for Tourism to enhance website and provide digital/print versions of 'what to do and see in Torbay'.
Business Vitality	Recruit Key Businesses	2021 and ongoing	Utilize \$10,000 incremental funding for each of 2021 – 23 to implement the business recruitment program.
	Needs of Businesses/Retention and Expansion	2021 and ongoing	Use existing Budget in 2021 to develop database and establish new survey tool. Invest \$10,000 in subsequent years to a Business Retention and Expansion Program.
	Think Local	2022 and ongoing	\$20,000 in 2022 to design and implement a Think Local program with ongoing funding of \$5,000 per year.
	Business Association	2022 and ongoing	\$25,000 in 2022 to support development of a robust Business Association with \$5,000 investment in subsequent years.
	Learning Forums and Networking	2023 and ongoing	\$10,000 in 2023 and subsequent years to support ongoing fora and networking activities in Torbay.
	Technology and e-commerce	2023 and ongoing	\$10,000 in 2023 and subsequent years to support technology and e-commerce initiatives.
Community Vitality	Community Vitality Report Card	2021 and ongoing	\$5,000 in 2021 to develop the survey tool



### **3.3.7. Funding Sources**

A number of elements of the Promotion and Support Program may be structured such that they may be eligible for program funding. Those components which target the business sector and hold potential for business growth are more likely to be supported financially. A first step for the Action Committee should be to target specific funding programs, work with funding agencies and utilize directed funding in the Town Budget to lever additional funding.

#### **Promotion**

Activities which target the external, extra-Provincial business community and investors may be considered for funding. These would usually be a component of broader investment attraction initiative, and would preferably be part of a “regional”, multi community program. Efforts to update the Town’s website and promotional material focused on external investment might fall within such initiatives. The Northeast Avalon Investor Receptor Network is an example of this approach.

An exception to this approach is the CanExport Community Investment Program, which is administered by the Department of Global Affairs in Ottawa with regional input. This is a niche program with a limited budget (<\$75,000 for NL). It can provide direct support to communities for planning costs, marketing and promotional material costs, relevant employee training, and travel to meet prospects. Individual communities in Newfoundland and Labrador have availed of this program.

Besides financial support, the Government of Canada, through “Invest in Canada” can provide advice to communities to assist in making them “investment ready”. This includes the preparation of appropriate information that would be of interest to potential international investors. This community-based data would be provided to Investment Officers in Canadian Embassies worldwide for distribution to interested international investors.

The Atlantic Site Certification Program is a federal/provincial initiative which evaluates sites suitable to industrial development. For a nominal fee (\$500) they will confirm that individual privately or publicly owned sites which meet the criteria for selection are “certified” as ready for development.

#### **Business Vitality**

There are various funding programs which support aspects of Business Vitality. These programs include ACOA’s Business Development Program and the NL Department Of Industry Energy and Technology’s Regional Development Fund initiative.

In particular, the Town of Torbay might pursue programs which are designed to facilitate cooperation and support initiatives which can enhance skills and information flow across the business community. Preference is given to those which target strategic sectors; however, generic activities may also be considered where a need or opportunity can be identified.

Accordingly, an initiative by the Town of Torbay to organize its business community would need to demonstrate the following:

- There is a “critical mass” of businesspeople in the community which might benefit from enhanced cooperation,
- There is a significant level of interest from the business community who are willing to contribute to the costs of the organization,
- A suite of activities is identified which is relevant to business growth and is not duplicated by existing organizations or programs,
- An argument can be made with respect to the appropriateness of a community-specific approach,
- Economic benefits anticipated from the development of the initiative can be identified.

Such a funding application could include a request for funding to support initial organization and communications costs, as well as direct costs of activities designed to generate interest and provide value to the business community. The latter activities could include key elements described in the Business Vitality Action Plan such as database development, sector surveys and learning activities that support technology adoption and e-commerce.

An approach that was structured as a partnership between local business leaders and the Town of Torbay might be most effective. This could be enhanced even further by inclusion of neighbouring Towns.

Normal program levels for approved projects approximate 50% of eligible costs from federal sources and 25 -40% from provincial government programs. Levels vary based on the desirability of the project, which is usually assessed in terms of measurable long term economic benefits resulting from its implementation.