



TOWN OF HARBOUR GRACE

# LET YOURSELF IN 2032

---

Strategic Plan Update



# I. INFRASTRUCTURE & ECONOMIC GROWTH

## Highlights

- completing Harvey Street Phase V (water, sewer, and street upgrades)
- relocating the LeMarchant Street sanitary storm sewer to facilitate public wharf upgrades on Water Street
- funding and beginning construction on the Heritage District Development Plan Phase I
- funding and developing the detailed designs for the Heritage District Development Plan Phase II (Historic Laneways Walk)
- redesigning the municipality's website and business directory
- crafting an effective communications strategy that platforms the municipality's branding strategy, "Let Yourself In"

## Summary

Several major infrastructure projects have been completed over the past three years. **Finishing Harvey Street Phase V**—which included sewer, water, and street upgrading—significantly improved access to the community through its main throughfare, Route 70. The deterioration of Harvey Street reduced traffic flows, negatively impacting businesses along this stretch of road. Improving this infrastructure has increased access to the community for visitors, eased commutes for residents, enhanced pedestrian experiences and accessibility, and increased community pride.

Similarly, **relocating the LeMarchant Street sanitary storm sewer**—a necessary upgrade—enabled the **new Small Craft Harbours Wharf on Water Street**, a \$6.2 million dollar project, to proceed. The latter project provides long-term economic benefits to the community and spinoffs for businesses in the community's centre.

Another **downtown revitalization** project took a step forward as the municipality, in partnership with the Harbour Grace Board of Culture, Innovation and Business Inc (HGCIB), leveraged funding from the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), the Department of Industry, Energy and Technology (IET), and Heritage NL to complete the **detailed designs for the Heritage District Development Plan Phase II (Historic Laneways Walk)**. For Phase I of this plan, the Town has received \$665K in funding from ACOA and IET, with **construction starting in August 2025** and concluding later this fall.

Furthermore, the installation of an **upgraded lift station in Riverhead** will support the medium-term goal of delivering **water and sewer services to Harbour Grace South**, with construction set for this project in 2025-26. LeMarchant Street water and sewer upgrades also occurred in 2024-25.

Utilizing the Community Business Development Corporation's (CBDC) Consultant Advisory Services program, the Town **upgraded its municipal website** in 2023, which continues to improve communication with residents, highlight attractions for visitors, and platform businesses through a **new business directory**. With the help of resident photos and online tools, our branding initiative, "Let Yourself In," features on new signage, social media posts, merchandise, brochures, site installations, etc. These initiatives have further solidified a recognizable identity for the community. The **installation of the physical "Gates of Harbour Grace"** at the *Spirit of Harbour Grace* Municipal Park, with the landmark *SS Kyle* in the background, provides a memorable photo

# I. INFRASTRUCTRE & ECONOMIC GROWTH

opportunity for visitors and establishes a unique sense of place.

Though not included in the original strategic plan, the municipality has aimed to improve both accessibility and inclusivity. In 2024, the Town adopted its first five-year **Accessibility Plan**, which outlines broad goals about inclusiveness. With funding from the Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs (MPA), the Town installed a concrete **accessibility ramp**, **electronic door opener**, and **handrails** at the **Volunteer Fire Brigade's Social Building**. The Town further renovated the male and female washrooms at this site to meet building accessibility standards in the fall and winter of 2024-25. Similarly, Otterbury Schoolhouse, Municipal Heritage Site, added an accessible washroom extension, and the Town recently constructed an **accessibility ramp and deck** with funding from the Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills' Job Creation Partnership Program (JCP).



## II. SOCIAL & CULTURAL HEALTH

### *Highlights*

- providing seniors programming and volunteer opportunities
- creating a seniors-run multipurpose space for community use
- renewing and promoting our Municipal Heritage Site register
- hosting memorable community events for residents and visitors
- revitalizing recreational assets for residents

### *Summary*

Under Social and Cultural Health, the strategic plan identified a broad goal regarding seniors' living, that is, "to activate the resourcefulness and skills of Harbour Grace's seniors through unique programming and community development opportunities." To this end, the municipality, along with the volunteer community, started Harbour Grace's first seniors' group, **Earhart's 50+ Club**, whose mandate is to provide recreation and socialization opportunities for its membership and the wider community. Some of these recreation activities include weekly Happy Feet walks, paint nights, technology information sessions, yoga, social events on the civic calendar, line dancing nights, etc. As part of the engagement strategy, the community's seniors identified a **multipurpose hub** as a need, with the former Otterbury Schoolhouse targeted as an ideal location. To revitalize this space, the building required several upgrades, namely an accessible washroom, energy-efficient heat source, insulation, and kitchenette. With funding from the New Horizons for Seniors Program (\$25K), the Age-Friendly NL Communities Program (\$6K), and the JCP program (\$15K and associated participant costs), the Town completed these renovations during the fall, winter, and spring of 2023-24. The **Schoolhouse now provides a multipurpose programming space** for Earhart's 50+ Club and a meeting area for committees (e.g., Civic Events, HGCIB, Regatta committee, etc.).

As part of a strategy to renew and promote Harbour Grace's municipal heritage, the municipality drafted new bylaws to guide its **Municipal Heritage Site Designation program**. The Town further added two new sites to its existing inventory: the Collis/Parsons Building and the Harbour Grace Airstrip. As part of this renewal, buildings on the register received new interpretive plaques, and the Town hopes to adaptively reuse the Parsons/Collis Building (now a Registered Heritage Structure with Heritage NL).

Our volunteer committees have continued their excellent work, **crafting memorable community events and tackling meaningful development projects**. Come Home Year (2022) and the Pirates to Pilots Festival (2023, 2024, and 2025) were great successes, and the HGCIB has an exciting project in the works centred on the legacy of the SS *Kyle* shipwreck. The municipality aims to further strengthen its partnerships with committees in Harbour Grace.

The Town continues to **revitalize its recreational assets** for residents. In the fall of 2022, the **Aero Tennis Club's clubhouse** received an interior and exterior renovation with funding from the JCP program. The courts have had some minor crack repairs with funding from Active NL, and the Town is exploring options to renew the entire playing surface. The Moriarty Park Revitalization project remains on the radar, and the baseball diamond at this site is presently undergoing a renovation with funding from Active NL. Other site upgrades include **new soccer and basketball nets for St. Francis Field**.



## II. SOCIAL & CULTURAL HEALTH



SENIORS-RUN MULTIPURPOSE SPACE



SENIORS PROGRAMMING



MUNICIPAL HERITAGE



COMMUNITY EVENTS



RECREATION FACILITY UPGRADES





# III. ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

## Highlights

- establishing a Municipal Conservation Plan
- developing a Trails Master Plan
- planning and designing an upcoming walking trail at Bannerman River

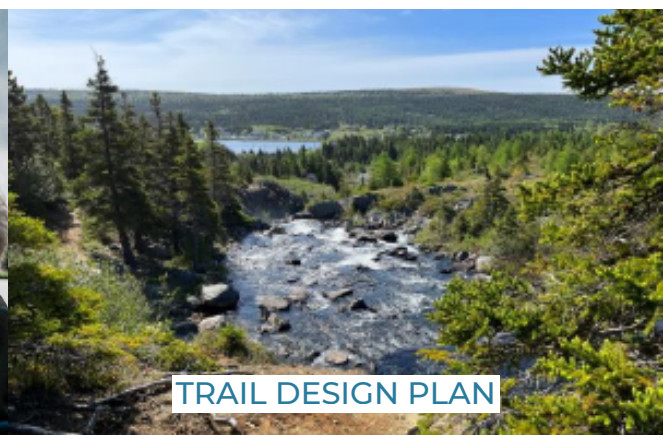
## Summary

The Environmental Stewardship strategy area has focused on the protection, promotion, and preservation of Harbour Grace's ecologically sensitive wildlife habitats. The impulse of this goal first centred on the preservation and promotion of the estuary—that is, where Bannerman River drains into the mouth of the harbour, near the boardwalk—a small area encompassing roughly 10 hectares of habitat. However, after engaging the Stewardship Association of Municipalities (SAM), the municipality expanded this initiative to encompass the Pirate's Path Coastal Area and Bannerman Lake, bringing the **total area conserved to 155.5 hectares of habitat**. The stewardship agreement provides a mechanism for the Town to protect these ecologically sensitive regions for future generations and communicates our stewardship ethic to the wider world. Since signing the stewardship agreement, the Town has **worked in partnership with SAM and other environmental organizations** (e.g., Birds Canada, the Nature Conservancy of Canada) to develop new interpretive signage and brochures, install nest boxes, host citizen science information sessions, and design a geocache challenge in the area. Furthermore, this strong relationship with SAM has led to other opportunities—for example, our selection as a pilot community for the CoastReach system, a citizen science initiative which uses submitted photographs to track coastal erosion. These installations are located at the estuary and Pirate's Path Coastal Area.

Another goal was the creation of a **Trails Master Plan** for Harbour Grace. The Town hired a student intern to help develop this inventory in 2022. Following the completion of this inventory, with funding from Active NL, the Town hired a professional landscape architect, Green Leaf Resources, to **map and design a new trail for Bannerman River**. Crown Lands recently approved an application based on this design, and the Town will seek funding opportunities to complete this work in the coming months. This trail will be linear and roughly upgrade the desire path currently in existence at the swimming site ("The Dam"), connecting visitors at the *Spirit of Harbour Grace* Municipal Park with another nearby locale in our community.



HABITAT CONSERVATION



TRAIL DESIGN PLAN

## IV. GOVERNANCE & ENGAGEMENT

### Highlights

- improving communication with residents through a community email list
- constructing a community bulletin board
- reintroducing and redesigning the municipality's seasonal newsletter, *The Heart of the Harbour*
- hosting regular business roundtable meetings
- publishing the *Business of the Week* newsletter
- increasing Council meeting accessibility with virtual tools

### Summary

The Town has also made strides to further its Governance and Engagement strategy. In tandem with the website upgrades mentioned previously (see Infrastructure & Economic Growth), communication with residents has improved through the following mediums:

- community email list
- roundtable meetings
- community bulletin board
- seasonal newsletter

The **newsletter** has garnered much positive feedback. The distribution plan has made the document accessible, logistically manageable, and affordable for the municipality; presently, distribution is online (i.e., website, social media, email list), print (i.e., available for pickup at local business hubs and the Town Hall), and audio (i.e., a separate extension on the municipality's phone line).

Our *Business of the Week* newsletter features periodically and has received positive feedback from the community. The Town has also hosted regular roundtable sessions with the business community to communicate happenings, share ideas, and voice concerns.

Furthermore, the Owl 3 Meeting Tool allows regular public Council meetings to happen both in-person and virtually, meaning that the high audience numbers and citizen engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic could continue when Council shifted back to an in-person meeting format.

Importantly, a **community engagement session** spurred the creation of the strategic plan in 2021. This spirit of engagement has continued after the production of the plan, with the Town hosting business and citizen engagement sessions in December 2022 and March 2023 with partners the Harris Centre and CBDC. As an outcome of the latter session, the Town has partnered with CBDC to host a regional opportunities roadshow in the Conception Bay North and Trinity Bay South areas, the first of which was held in Harbour Grace in June 2023.

## V. REGIONAL COLLABORATION

### *Highlights*

- helping revitalize the Joint Councils of Conception Bay North
- participating in a joint funding venture for a regional Municipal Enforcement Officer
- working to develop a mechanism for regional collaboration, in partnership with the Town of Carbonear

### *Summary*

Under the leadership of members of Council, the Town helped reinvigorate the Joint Councils of Conception Bay North, which had lost some direction in recent years. Regular meetings are back on the table, and the Town aims to be a strong partner at the membership level.

With funding from the province, the Town entered into a financial partnership with some neighbouring municipalities—Bay Roberts, North River, and Spaniards Bay—to hire a **Municipal Enforcement Officer for the region**. The success of this pilot project demonstrates the benefits of collaborating regionally to tackle shared needs.

In the winter of 2025, the Town partnered with another neighbouring municipality, the Town of Carbonear, to lead a regional initiative that aimed to identify a collaborative mechanism for better communication across municipalities in Conception Bay North. Chris Patterson and Bojan Furst, of Civic Matters NL, led these sessions in the region, and one outcome was the development of a board of the trade for the region.