

WHAT WE HEARD REPORT
NOVEMBER 28, 2021

WATERFRONT
MASTER PLAN

UPLAND



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

-

This page intentionally left blank.



1. COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

1.1 WHAT WE DID

The Waterfront Master Plan for the Town of Pictou is intended to provide a strategic vision and concept that will guide the development of Pictou's Waterfront. The master plan will look to improve the overall design, layout, and function of the waterfront, all the while ensuring it continues to reflect the goals, aspirations, and values of Pictonians. Undertaken during the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Planning Team deployed a variety of online and in-person consultation tools and strategies to collect the ideas, insights, and opinions of residents, businesses owners, and other stakeholders and community members about the future of the waterfront.

The Town created a web page on its website to share details about the project, engagement opportunities, and key dates and milestones. The Town also shared project information and engagement opportunities on its Facebook page.

The Project Team collected feedback from residents, community members, and other stakeholders through the following methods:

- an online Interactive Map;
- online small-group resident discussions;
- local and regional stakeholder focus groups and interviews; and
- waterfront pop-ups, walking tours, and intercept surveying.

The Waterfront Master Plan project officially launched on August 17, 2021, with a press release to the community. The press release outlined the purpose of the project and how residents could stay involved. It also represented the official launch of the Interactive Map.

The Interactive Map allowed community members to provide location-specific comments on a map of the project area. The map prompted users to highlight what community members love about Pictou's waterfront, what improvements are needed, and what opportunities exist in the future. The Interactive Map was open for comment between August 17 and September 24, 2021.

The Planning Team also facilitated online group discussions with residents in Pictou. The small-group resident discussions were pre-scheduled and required resident registration. The dates and times for the resident discussions were posted on the project's web page.

The Planning Team also facilitated focus groups and interviews with local and regional business owners, organizations, and stakeholders in September 2021.

In addition to the online methods discussed above, the Planning Team facilitated multiple engagements on the waterfront itself. On September 1 and September 8, 2021, the Planning Team facilitated pop-ups to capture the thoughts of people using the waterfront during the evening. The pop-ups coincided with the Town's "Summer Musical Showcase," which showcased local musical artists who performed on the Market Wharf. Additionally, the Planning Team conducted two walking tours - one with interested participants, and another with employees from Pictou Landing First Nation - and intercept surveying to capture the thoughts of residents and visitors of the town.

The input that was collected during this phase of engagement has been summarized in this Chapter. The results and subsequent discussion will inform the vision, guiding principles, and overall concept for the Pictou Waterfront Master Plan.

1.2 WHO WAS INVOLVED



Summer Musical Showcase

Over 300 engagement interactions took place during the initial phase of engagement. This included:

- 197 comments on the Interactive Map;
- six resident small-group discussions with 15 people;
- 11 local and regional stakeholder interviews and focus groups with 15 people; and
- about 100 participants during the waterfront engagements.

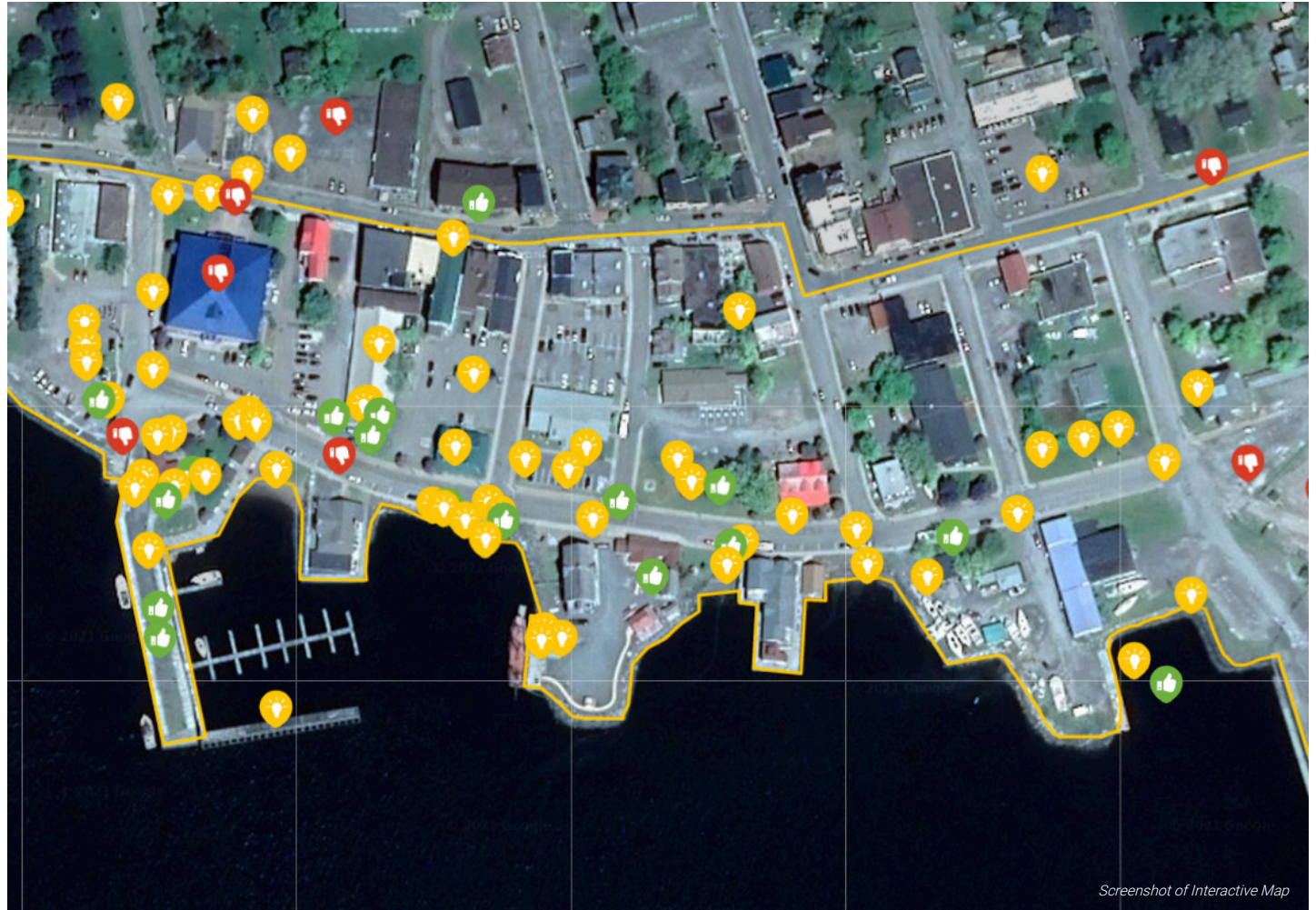
The feedback collected from the engagement has been divided into four sections:

- Interactive Map results;
- small-group resident discussion;
- local and regional stakeholder focus groups and discussions; and
- waterfront engagement feedback.

1.3 INTERACTIVE MAP RESULTS

The Interactive Map gave residents and community members within and outside of the Town of Pictou the opportunity to leave location-specific comments on a map of Pictou's waterfront. Participants could also like, dislike, or reply to comments left on the map. In total, participants left 197 unique comments on the Interactive Map.

The Planning Team reviewed, analyzed, and categorized each comment left on the Interactive Map based on recurring themes throughout all comments left on the map. Some comments were categorized into more than one theme, but, for the purpose of the following section, they will only be discussed under a single theme.



Screenshot of Interactive Map



The architecture and form in Pictou was frequently cited on the Interactive map

ACCESSIBILITY

Respondents left six comments regarding accessibility along the waterfront. Respondents support efforts to ensure the waterfront and downtown are inclusive spaces that are accessible to anyone. Respondents suggested a fully accessible boardwalk, additional sidewalks, additional accessible parking spaces, and accessible trails to help make the waterfront a more accessible, welcoming space.

ARCHITECTURE AND FORM

There were nine comments left on the Interactive Map about the architecture and urban form on Pictou's waterfront and in the downtown. Respondents felt one of the core strengths of the waterfront and downtown is the architectural variety, including building style and colour. Respondents felt future buildings and development should complement the existing style and form of architecture. The CN Rail Station and the Northumberland Fisheries Museum were noted as architecturally prominent buildings on the waterfront. Finally, two respondents commented on the need to bury power lines in the downtown and on the waterfront to accentuate the architecture in the town.

ARTS AND CULTURE

Respondents left 36 comments on the Interactive Map about arts and culture. Several respondents suggested that additional musical events and concerts, craft fairs, and public art would enhance the downtown and waterfront through an artistic and cultural lens. Respondents also commented on the opportunities associated with leveraging the existing artistic community to promote locally made goods through experiential enterprises such as maker-spaces and interactive studios for crafts-people.

Many respondents also felt the revitalization of the waterfront and downtown represented an opportunity to broaden the cultural identity of the town beyond the "Birthplace of New Scotland." Respondents felt the waterfront should include interpretive elements developed by Indigenous communities to heighten the presence of Indigenous people and communities along the waterfront.

HERITAGE AND HISTORY

Twenty-eight respondents left comments on the Interactive Map regarding the Town of Pictou's heritage and history. Respondents overwhelmingly feel that the future of the waterfront must be based on a more holistic interpretation of the town's history and heritage. Many comments were left on the Interactive Map which highlighted the need to ensure Indigenous history and culture are integrated into the future of the waterfront and there is a desire to see a stronger relationship between the Town, community, and the Pictou Landing First Nation. Respondents also feel connections need to be enhanced between the residents and community members of the Town of Pictou with Indigenous people in the surrounding areas.

With a significant history, many respondents would like to see more spaces, places, and interpretive elements on the waterfront that help residents and visitors learn about the past. Respondents suggested historical plaques and monuments could help improve and expand the understanding of Pictou's history.

HOUSING

Two comments were left on the Interactive Map regarding housing. Respondents feel there are opportunities for housing development along the waterfront to promote a lively waterfront and to diversify current housing options available in the town. One respondent suggested developing houseboat-style housing that could be rented as a revenue-generation tool for the community.

MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT

There were 27 comments left on the Interactive Map focusing on the maintenance and management of the waterfront and downtown. Many respondents suggested additional efforts are needed in the town to ensure the waterfront and the downtown are adequately maintained, including removing dying trees, improving the quality of the ball diamond, garbage collection, increasing the number of pet waste bag dispensers, improving the appearance of parking lots and buildings, and moving and improving flower beds.

Respondents would also like to see additional bylaw enforcement in Pictou, particularly for noise, unsightly properties, and animal control.

PLACEMAKING AND PROGRAMMING

Fifty-eight comments were left on the Interactive Map about placemaking and programming along the waterfront and in the downtown. Respondents commented how they feel the waterfront and downtown can become the premier destination for residents and visitors by improving how the area looks and functions.

Many respondents suggested the need for increased places to rest, sit, and gather along the waterfront. This would allow more people, including families with young children and seniors, to enjoy their time on the waterfront. Generally, respondents want to see implementations that people can interact with and that would make the waterfront a more enjoyable space, such as:

- a farmers' market established at the CN Rail Station;
- an amphitheatre for musical, artistic, and cultural events;
- a play area for children;
- more landscaping, including trees and plantings;
- community gardens and plazas;
- outdoor gym equipment;
- picture 'cut-outs' and other interactive features;
- mobile vending opportunities;
- re-purposing the ball field to a multi-functional green space; and

- a place for fishing and to rent fishing equipment.

In addition to physical changes along the waterfront, respondents felt there are opportunities to leverage the human capital in the town and region to facilitate more festivals and events. Events and festivals that celebrate the town's and region's historical and industrial culture represent opportunities for the town and community based on the feedback on the Interactive Map.

Finally, respondents felt it is important that the waterfront and downtown can be used year-round, including during the winter and during 'bad' weather days. Ensuring infrastructure and implementations can be used year-round was important to respondents.

PEDESTRIAN AND BIKE INFRASTRUCTURE

There were 30 comments left on the Interactive Map about pedestrian and bike infrastructure. Generally, respondents would like to see the number and quality of opportunities for active transportation (any form of human-powered transportation) increased. Many respondents commented on the need for a continuous boardwalk along the waterfront which would draw more people to use the area.

Many respondents commented on the opportunities that would come from improving and extending the Jitney Trail. Respondents stated they would like to see improved amenities to enhance user experience along the trail, such as washrooms and benches, while some respondents commented on the need for increased maintenance. To improve the use of the trail, some respondents also commented that they would like to see the Jitney Trail extended through the town to the CN Rail Station.

There were diverging opinions among respondents about whether ATVs/snowmobiles should be permitted in the town. Some respondents felt there is an economic opportunity to be had by allowing these vehicles in the town; however, other respondents are concerned it will take away from the overall quality and enjoyment of the waterfront, downtown, and the Jitney Trail.

In addition to the Jitney Trail, respondents would like to see more amenities in the downtown for pedestrians and cyclists. Water fountains, benches, wayfinding signage, bike lanes, and interpretive signage were all mentioned by respondents on the Interactive Map.



Many respondents would like to see a boardwalk around the entire waterfront

SERVICES AND AMENITIES

Respondents left nearly 70 comments on the Interactive Map about services and amenities they would like to see on the waterfront. Generally, respondents would like a greater variety of businesses and shops available, including restaurants and cafes, in the downtown and along the waterfront, especially to buy locally made goods. Respondents also commented on how they would like to see businesses have longer hours.

In addition to the general comments above, respondents also left specific comments on the map about the services and amenities they would like to see along the waterfront and in the downtown. These included:

- kayaking or boat rentals and storage;
- a dog park;
- a cruise ship welcome centre;
- electrical vehicle charging stations;
- lockers for boaters and trail users;
- more boating or sailing opportunities;
- a shuttle service between the McCulloch House Museum and the waterfront;
- a farmers' market;
- a brewery or distillery; and
- opportunities to showcase young entrepreneurs.

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

There were 22 comments left on the Interactive Map that focused on traffic management and the movement of automobiles through the downtown and along the waterfront.

There were diverging opinions as to whether downtown streets should be closed to automobiles. Many respondents supported this initiative, but others were concerned that this could cause traffic problems to spill over into surrounding areas. Respondents also disagreed about the need for additional parking. Some respondents feel too much space is dedicated to parking while others feel that there is not enough parking, especially when there are events on the waterfront.

In addition to the suggestions above, respondents commented on the need for:

- continuing Caladh Avenue in front of the CN Rail Station and ball diamond;
- improving the signage on the waterfront for traffic and parking;
- developing a seasonal transit service;
- allowing automobile parking on only one side of the street and creating a bike lane in its place; and
- making some streets one-way instead of two-way.

WATERFRONT ACCESS

Respondents left 28 comments regarding access to the waterfront on the Interactive Map. Generally, respondents expressed their desire to see more opportunities to physically interact with the water such as swimming or boating.

Many respondents stated they would like to see a beach or swimming area established in Pictou, as it would allow people, especially families with young children and seniors, to have beach access without needing to leave the town. Other respondents would like to see opportunities for boating and kayaking developed. Several respondents highlighted the value a kayak rental facility would bring to Pictou.

For Pictou to play a more significant role in regional boating and yachting, one respondent commented that access through the causeway to the inner harbour was necessary.

1.4 SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION RESULTS

Six resident small group discussions were held to allow residents to share their feedback about the existing waterfront and their hopes for the future. Eighteen residents participated and the contents of these discussions have been analyzed and grouped thematically.

PICTOU REINVENTED

Throughout all six discussions, residents commented that Pictou felt like it was in the midst of a reinvention. Many talked about this new chapter in Pictou's history as "post-industrial" with a focus on hope, reconciliation, sustainability and creativity. Residents noted that Pictou will be undoubtedly shaped by its past, but should not be defined by it.

Residents discussed how that change is manifesting on the waterfront, with particular excitement around the new deCoste Centre and Public Library development. They felt that the current waterfront has excellent "bones" but is disjunctive and lacks cohesion.

Residents are keen to see the waterfront develop as a vibrant part of their community. They want to see empty storefronts filled and existing spaces given new life. Residents would specifically like to see the Fisheries Museum revitalized and more access to the area around the Hector Heritage Quay, allowing people to walk around the boat and see it up close. There is also a strong desire to see more businesses operating year-round and with longer opening hours, creating a dynamic space into the evening hours.

MOVING AROUND

Transportation and the flow of vehicle, cycling and pedestrian traffic were common topics in all discussions.

The Jitney Trail was mentioned in every discussion and there was a strong desire to see it extended along the waterfront, either through widened sidewalks/pathways or the addition of a bike lane. Some residents would like to see this extension of the Jitney go all the way to the Yacht Club and find a way to showcase the "working waterfront" aspect of the space, as is done in other communities, such as Halifax. Residents also want to see the Jitney Trail closed to all motorized vehicles.

Residents want to see better connections established between the downtown core and the waterfront, with corridors that invite the flow of pedestrian traffic between the two spaces. They would also like to see better signage to direct visitors around the Town's core and feel this is currently lacking.

For visitors, residents suggested offering bike rentals and interpretive walking tours, focusing tourism offerings on experiences, rather than material goods.

WATER ACCESS

Residents stressed the importance of improving water access in Pictou. They would like to see a downtown beach or a waterfront pool (like they have in Chester), where residents can swim and enjoy the sun, without needing a car to get there.

They also talked about access to the water via boat, and mentioned bygone ferries that used to transport people to locations around the harbour, such as the ferry to Pictou Landing First Nation. There is an interest from residents in seeing these kinds of options explored, as it would better connect the communities around the harbour (and beyond) and provide greater accessibility for those without vehicles.

Access to kayak rentals was also discussed and though insurance and liability were likely to be considerable, there was strong support for this initiative.

AMENITIES & SERVICES

Across all discussions, residents would like to see more amenities on the waterfront. A top priority is ensuring Wifi access for residents and visitors using the space.

It was noted that the downtown core of Pictou is a food desert, with no shops that sell fresh produce and grocery items (aside from the limited selections at the pharmacies). Residents would like to see this change, either by establishing a small grocer in the downtown core, or by creating a farmer's market that could serve the needs of residents and visitors. The CN Rail Station was suggested by many as a possible venue for this type of development.

There was also the desire to see a greater diversity of restaurants within the study area. Recent developments on the waterfront have been a welcomed addition, but residents feel there is a need for more options. An ice cream kiosk that stays open until at least 9pm was high on the priority list for many discussion participants, as well as a coffee kiosk.

In addition to food vendors, residents see the potential for more kiosk-style vendors on the waterfront selling locally made goods and promoting experiences, like the popular boat tours. Residents mentioned

that having kiosk space available for local artisans and particularly Indigenous artists/businesses should be a priority. Local business owners are keen to see these kiosks developed (either by the Town or by private ventures) as soon as possible, and preferably in time for the 2022 tourist season.

In multiple discussions, the lack of play structures on the waterfront for children was mentioned. Many residents feel this is a missed opportunity, as providing spaces and programming for children means that a greater number of visitors would spend more time in the community. Having spaces that cater to younger children, as well as older ones, are vital for creating a waterfront space that welcomes all ages. The current waterfront is seen to be lacking in experiences for younger children. It was noted that insurance for these types of structures can be expensive, and that this should be a consideration when deciding on the types of structures possible.

Overall, residents felt that the approach to amenities on the waterfront needed to be viewed from an all ages and abilities lens, ensuring a welcoming and inclusive environment for all residents and visitors.

HISTORY

Residents in all discussions spoke of the need for better, more inclusive historical interpretation. They felt that Indigenous history was not featured prominently enough and deserved greater attention moving forward. Residents felt it was very important for Pictou Landing First Nation to be heavily involved in the development of historical interpretation in the future, to ensure the story is representative of all of the local residents, not just settlers.

The role of Pictou in World War II was also considered lacking in current interpretive displays on the waterfront.

Residents would like to see Pictou's history more cohesively represented on the waterfront, as it currently feels disjointed. Some suggestions included the production of a "Pictou Waterfront Walk" map or online application that would take visitors through the history of the community while they walk along the waterfront.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Resident discussions covered many topics and generated many ideas, as well as some concerns.

Multiple residents raised the issue of noise pollution within the project focus area. Noise from factory uses within the Town's core are a major concern for residents and both their experience of their community, as well as the experience of visitors. Residents would like to see factory uses moved to more industrial parts of the Town, and have the core focused on commercial and residential uses.

While factory noise was a topic of concern for many residents, others felt that the lack of noise, and in this instance, music, on the waterfront, was something that could be improved. Many residents felt that the waterfront was too quiet and could benefit from music, particularly around the marina, during certain hours of the day. If music were to be played, residents preferred that it reflect the local music scene and feature artists from the area when possible.

1.5 REGIONAL AND LOCAL STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSION RESULTS

The Project Team facilitated online focus groups and interviews with a diverse range of organizations and stakeholders in Pictou and the greater Pictou area in September 2021. Interviews and focus groups were held with organizations and stakeholders, including:

- Pictou Advocate Printing & Publishing
- Pictou New Horizons Senior's Club
- Hector Quay Visitors Marina
- United Way of Pictou County
- Pictou County Trail Association
- Town of Pictou Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Pictou Marina
- FK Warren
- Balodis Trucking
- Pictou Marine Terminals
- Pictou County Regional Enterprise Network
- Destination Eastern and Northumberland Shores
- McCulloch House Museum and Genealogy Centre
- Pictou Antigonish Regional Library

The results from the regional and local stakeholders were analyzed and grouped into themes. The themes are discussed on the following pages.

HARBOUR POTENTIAL

Stakeholders see potential in Pictou's waterfront, especially from a marine perspective and the opportunities that exist for marine-based experiences. As one respondent commented, many residents and visitors "just want to go out on the water."

Throughout the consultation, local and regional stakeholders highlighted the many natural assets in the region that can be capitalized on—including warm ocean waters, beaches, and parks and trails. Despite a relatively short boating season in Nova Scotia (mid-May to mid-October), stakeholders felt Pictou has some of the best boating conditions across the province. In comparison to other boating hubs, the town does not receive as much fog as other harbours and there are not a lot of big waves, making Pictou an ideal location for boating. One respondent did note that during lobster season, lobster trap buoys can create obstacles for boaters.

Feedback from stakeholders, however, suggested that amenities are missing from the Pictou and waterfront for boaters. Services such as fuel and sewage dumping services are not publicly available on the Pictou waterfront, and respondents felt this may be limiting the potential of Pictou as a port of call for recreational boaters.

As Pictou grows as a recreational boating destination, respondents felt a balance must be struck between prioritizing marine users and waterfront users. One respondent suggested that recreational boaters use boating berths as "floating cottages" and expect a certain level of privacy which can conflict with waterfront users' desire to be close to the water. Another respondent noted, the Town should find a balance between providing comprehensive marine services and leaving it to private industry to meet the demand of boaters so as not to impact the viability of some businesses. Another respondent suggested there is potential to create links between existing harbours such as the New Glasgow Marina and the Pictou Landing First Nations boat launch.

From a commercial marine perspective, respondents noticed a decrease in the number of commercial ships entering the harbour since the closure of the pulp mill which has impacted the viability of some waterfront assets. There is a sense among some stakeholders that there is the potential for more cruise ships and luxury boating in Pictou but work is needed to ensure cruise lines, boat owners, and logistics companies that the service requirements for larger ships are available in Pictou. This includes services such as wharf/pier security, berths large enough

to accommodate these ships, and any other services to meet Federal/Provincial requirements for boating.

Stakeholders acknowledge there are unique challenges to marine economic development, especially as it relates to overlapping jurisdictions (municipal, provincial, and federal) and logistical and financial challenges. For example, many stakeholders see the potential for kayak and boat rentals on the waterfront; however commercial insurance for kayak rentals can be a deterrent to this type of business.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to the marine-based opportunities in Pictou, stakeholders felt there are additional commercial and development opportunities on the waterfront and in the downtown which could catalyze future growth in the town and region. Based on the feedback from stakeholders, Pictou has many of the prerequisites for success—attractive architecture and built form, institutional assets (e.g., Hector Quay, CN Rail Station, and the deCoste Performing Arts Centre), waterfront infrastructure (e.g., piers and wharves), and a dedicated, creative community. However, respondents felt that commercial growth in Pictou must happen organically and not based on speculative economic trends.

As opportunities arise in Pictou, a balance must be struck between services that cater to visitors and those that cater to residents. Respondents felt the waterfront must be a place that not only attracts visitors but is a place that residents want to spend their time.

As the waterfront currently exists, respondents felt there are gaps in services, branding, and marketing which means Pictou isn't realizing its full potential. One respondent noted that the waterfront and downtown must be planned in a way that

creates a seamless experience for users and to take advantage of the underutilized lots in the downtown—"there must be a reason for people to walk up Water Street" one respondent commented.

Some respondents felt there are not enough services for people who visit the waterfront, including for both residents and visitors. One respondent commented that their first instinct was to send visitors to places outside of the town rather than recommending places within Pictou. Overall, there was a strong sentiment that the town needs to develop high-quality experiences and services that are appealing to residents and visitors. Stakeholders also felt how the town and waterfront are marketed could be improved. Creating an overall branding strategy and working to improve waterfront experiences would help the Town become more "market-ready."

Lastly, stakeholders made specific suggestions for opportunities that exist in the downtown and on the waterfront. These included:

- kiosks on the waterfront to allow the sale of locally-made goods;
- creating an indoor community space on the waterfront for organizations to utilize;
- maker-spaces and artist spaces;

- using buildings and spaces more creatively, such as the CN Rail Station; and
- bike rentals or kayak rentals.

WATERFRONT EXPERIENCE

Closely related to the commercial development of services on the waterfront, stakeholders commented that there are opportunities to improve the overall waterfront experience.

Many respondents were supportive of efforts to increase interactions with the water itself, including swimming. There is currently a small beach on the waterfront, but one respondent noted that its current location is not ideal as it is close to the marina which has electricity near the water and boat traffic which can create hazards for swimmers. Despite the desire to see swimming in the harbour, many respondents commented that it could be a hard sell to the community because untreated sewage used to be disposed of in the harbour.

In addition to swimming, respondents suggested the following activities or implementations would improve user experience on the waterfront:

- creating a space for children to play. Currently, the waterfront lacks a designated area for children;
- adding more places along the waterfront for people to appreciate it. This could include seating areas and places for residents, including families;
- hiring security in the evenings. There

have been instances where the police have been needed to be called for disturbances;

- ensuring public art and interactive art becomes part of the waterfront;
- making the shipyard a more attractive space;
- increasing the landscaping on the waterfront to create beautiful spaces; and
- programming more musical and festival events.

Many respondents felt there is huge potential and need for additional experiences along the waterfront, especially those which are interactive and engaging. Respondents commented that many of the existing experiences along the waterfront, such as the Ship Hector Interpretive Centre and Fisheries Museum, are not a draw for locals. Respondents felt greater focus and attention needs to be paid to creating high-quality experiences for residents and visitors to ensure year-round waterfront usage. To that end, the development of the new library is seen as having huge potential of becoming a community hub and anchor and will be extremely valuable in drawing locals and visitors to the waterfront.

Respondents would like to see more of an emphasis placed on the historical and cultural interpretation of the waterfront.

Starting with the region's Indigenous history, respondents commented that more needs to be done to develop cultural connections between the Town and Indigenous communities, including the Pictou Landing First Nation. As one respondent commented, the Town and region have an extensive history and story, but the story is not told very well. Nevertheless, respondents feel historical and cultural interpretation must be done in a collaborative and culturally appropriate way.

MOVEMENT AND TRANSPORTATION

Movement to, from, and throughout Pictou was a significant theme that emerged from the local and regional stakeholder conversations. Respondents commented that better fluidity is needed between the entrance of the town (the rotary) to the waterfront. Another respondent commented that the roads need to be safer for children and seniors so that they can comfortably use the waterfront and downtown spaces.

The movement of people must be viewed through an accessibility lens according to many stakeholders. There are physical barriers such as missing curb-cuts and uneven surfaces that create challenges for many people. Stakeholders also felt that the redevelopment of the waterfront must consider the needs of all people with disabilities—including hearing and visual impairments and intellectual disabilities.

Once on the waterfront, respondents felt that better fluidity and cohesion were needed between attractions and destinations. Many respondents felt a comprehensive boardwalk and sidewalk system would help to move people along the waterfront. Respondents also felt a boardwalk and sidewalk system would help to attract people to the waterfront and help locals and visitors interact with

Pictou Harbour. Another respondent felt the waterfront and downtown could be spatially connected through a consistent brand or theme which could include public art.

While respondents acknowledged that parking is a necessary asset, they felt the layout and siting of some parking lots take away from the general feel of the waterfront. These respondents felt that some of the prime locations on the waterfront are occupied by parking lots and could become more productive assets. Conversely, some respondents felt that more parking was needed on the waterfront.

Several respondents noted the significance of the Jitney Trail and the benefit it brings to the town and the community. One respondent hoped to see the trail formalized through the town and connected with the CN Rail Station, while another noted that the waterfront and downtown core of Pictou is an ideal place for active transportation. As a way to promote active transportation, one respondent suggested the creation of an incentive program for people who arrive at the waterfront other than by car.

The use of ATVs on the Jitney Trail was a common theme throughout the stakeholder

conversations. Some stakeholders feel that ATVs and snowmobiles should be kept out of the town and off the trails, while others see the potential economic benefit that allowing such uses would bring to the town.

COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION

Many participants spoke about the potential of the waterfront from a collaboration and coordination perspective. Respondents acknowledged the Town was taking the right steps in bringing Provincial and Federal stakeholders to the table, but felt a more coordinated approach to waterfront management and development would be beneficial to all users and stakeholders. Many respondents also felt the development of the waterfront must include the voices and perspectives of Indigenous community members.

Local and regional stakeholders felt there needs to be more of an effort for stakeholders to work together to solve common problems in Pictou. Some of the issues of concern included:

- a labour shortage, especially for people working in the service industry;
- cooperation between lot owners in the downtown to ensure a seamless waterfront experience;
- collaboration among businesses to ensure businesses stay open longer; and
- creating synergies between businesses and institutions to enable mutually beneficial relationships.

Some respondents felt the Town needs to take on more of a leadership role in businesses development and collaboration to catalyze and spark growth opportunities. One respondent suggested the Town could help "get more people into the same room" while another respondent wanted to see the Town actively engage surrounding towns and municipalities to ensure the region can grow together and capitalize on common opportunities.

1.6 WATERFRONT ENGAGEMENT RESULTS

The Project Team visited the waterfront on two occasions—on September 1 and September 8, 2021—and conducted a series of engagements including pop-ups, waterfront walking tours, and intercept surveying. Residents of Pictou Landing First Nation were invited for a waterfront walk with the project team to discuss their thoughts on the existing waterfront, and opportunities for the future.

The waterfront engagement was intended to capture the thoughts, opinions, and ideas of people as they visited and moved throughout the waterfront and downtown. The Planning Team engaged with approximately 100 people over the course of these engagements.

The feedback collected from the waterfront engagements was received and analyzed, and it has been categorized into a series of themes. The themes are discussed on the following pages.



Waterfront Pop-up

SITE IMPROVEMENTS

The primary theme to emerge from the waterfront engagements was feedback related to physical site improvements on Pictou's waterfront. The improvements focused on creating spaces and places that residents and visitors can enjoy throughout the year.

Specific site improvements referenced by respondents included:

- pedestrian lighting along the waterfront to improve visibility at night;
- publicly available wifi;
- more public washrooms;
- water bottle fill stations;
- additional opportunities to see entertainment (music, theatre, etc.);
- play equipment for children;
- landscaping, green spaces, and incorporating gardening and edible landscapes in the waterfront;
- creating a "Town Square";
- multi-functional and adaptable seating and gathering spaces such as an amphitheatre and movable seating;
- removing loose gravel and physical barriers to ensure the waterfront is fully accessible; and
- a water feature such as a fountain or splash pad.

In addition to the suggestions above which focus on public spaces, respondents would also like to see more commercial opportunities on the waterfront and efforts from the Town to incentive entrepreneurship. Respondents felt the town could be a four-season destination and that there are opportunities for additional food vendors, cafes, and artist spaces in Pictou. Other respondents would like to see kiosks and other pop-up infrastructure that entrepreneurs could use to establish their business. Pictou Landing First Nation community members felt that there could be opportunities to promote Indigenous art and craft through the sale of goods on the waterfront, but would require additional efforts between the Town and the community to ensure Indigenous artists and crafters feel comfortable in that space.

CONNECTION WITH THE WATER

Respondents would like to see the future of the waterfront based on access to the water. For respondents, access to the water included visual access to the water—from a boardwalk for example—and being able to physically interact with the water in Pictou Harbour.

Respondents overwhelmingly want to see opportunities for swimming in the harbour introduced through the Waterfront Master Plan. As one respondent noted, however, "as long as there are signs up that shellfish aren't safe to eat, I won't be swimming."

Additionally, a longer boardwalk along the shoreline, the opening up of piers to the public, and boat tours—including on the Ship Hector—would all be great opportunities to improve the community's connection with the water, based on the feedback.

MOVEMENT

Respondents felt expanding and improving the boardwalk and sidewalk system would make the waterfront a more enjoyable space for anyone. Respondents specifically asked for the boardwalk to be extended to the 'private' areas of the waterfront such as around the Ship Hector site. Nevertheless, respondents felt the future of the waterfront should be viewed from an accessibility lens to ensure it is a fully accessible space. In addition to sidewalks and boardwalks, respondents also supported bike lanes and connections to the Jitney Trail as part of the Waterfront Master Plan.

Parking was often cited as a concern on the waterfront, especially with the closure of Water Street due to construction. Parking can also be a challenge during events and festivals according to respondents. Respondents also felt the existing parking lots are in poor conditions—potholes and uneven surfaces create accessibility challenges for some residents and visitors.

Respondents also suggested:

- allowing golf carts on the waterfront;
- developing a bike rental program;
- creating connections between the McCulloch House and waterfront; and
- facilitating kayak or boat rentals.

CULTURAL AND HISTORIC INTERPRETATION

As a culturally and historically rich town and region, respondents suggested the waterfront needed to include additional features that provide waterfront users with a greater breadth and depth of historical information. There was strong support for ensuring Mi'kmaq history and culture are integrated into the waterfront, through historical interpretations, such as interpretive panels, and public and other features that showcase Mi'kmaq culture. There was a sense among respondents that the waterfront does not do an adequate job showcasing the town's entire history which could impact how Indigenous community members feel on the waterfront—if they choose to visit the waterfront at all. Community members from Pictou Landing First Nation suggested providing interpretive panels in English and in Mi'kmaq could help create a more inclusive space.

Respondents also commented how they would like to see more features that pay homage to the town's and region's marine and industrial history. Respondents suggested the use of QR codes, public art, and festivals as three ways to help tell the story of Pictou and the waterfront.

WATERFRONT MANAGEMENT

Respondents understood and acknowledged the complexities in planning and developing a waterfront. Generally, respondents were supportive of increased efforts by the Town to work with local and regional stakeholders, Indigenous communities, and surrounding communities and municipalities to ensure a successful future for the waterfront. Respondents also commented that a cohesive, targeted marketing strategy was needed for the Town.

Other comments and suggestions left by respondents regarding the management of the waterfront included:

- connecting waterfront events with regional events;
- coordinating events on the waterfront with other institutions;
- ensuring there is an ongoing dialogue between the Town and residents and visitors to understand what they want and need;
- renaming the Hector Quay Visitors Marina as it can be confused with the Hector Heritage Quay; and
- purchasing property and working with property owners to ensure the vision of the waterfront can be fully realized.



Waterfront Pop-up

1.7 DISCUSSION

The feedback for the initial phase of engagement for the Pictou Waterfront Master Plan was collected through a variety of online and in-person methods. The Planning Team sought to find what people loved about the waterfront and where opportunities exist for the future. From the input, it is clear that residents, community members, and stakeholders hold the waterfront and downtown in high regard but acknowledge that unlocking the full potential of the waterfront will require a collective effort.

For the full potential of the waterfront to be realized, property owners, residents, stakeholders and businesses must work together to create high-quality public spaces and experiences for waterfront users. The physical manifestation of the waterfront must reflect a cohesive vision for the future. It must be a public space that people choose to spend their time—an extension of one's own home. The waterfront must also reinforce and reestablish the Town's and community's ties to the water.

Residents and other stakeholders see immense land- and marine-based potential for the waterfront. Many respondents see the future of the waterfront as a place of convergence—for ideas, commerce, and most of all, people. Despite physical

gaps in the waterfront's built form, the inherent characteristics and history of the waterfront can provide a catalyst to spark new growth in Pictou. The 'institutional knowledge' from the Town's long-standing industrial and marine history positions Pictou to leverage the potential of the harbour and to continue the tradition of Pictou as an ideal location for marine uses.

Creating a cohesive waterfront also relies on ensuring movement to, from, and within the waterfront is intuitive, logical, and accessible for all, regardless of age or ability. The future of Pictou's waterfront must find a balance between automobile users, pedestrians, and other modes of transportation. It must leverage existing assets, like the Jitney Trail while forging new opportunities to ensure a well-connected waterfront.

Like many waterfronts across Nova Scotia and Atlantic Canada, the community sees an opportunity to draw more visitors to the Town which could potentially have significant economic spin-offs; however, there was also an appreciation that the needs of tourists and visitors must be balanced with the needs of Pictonians—that the waterfront must first and foremost be a place for Town of Pictou residents to want to spend their time. The Waterfront Master Plan comes at a time of economic

transition in the Town and County and can serve as the blueprint and foundation to spearhead new growth.

While the economic significance of the pulp mill cannot be understated, respondents overwhelmingly felt the future success of the waterfront depends on the mill not coming back into operation. Many felt the mill has been holding back the potential of the waterfront.

There is also an understanding that the waterfront is more than the physical space it takes up. Pictou and its waterfront is located in a significant area to the Mi'kmaq and the future of the waterfront must better represent that significance. The future of the waterfront and downtown must be based on a shared understanding of the past and building, and in some cases, re-building, relationships, particularly with Indigenous communities. The waterfront must be an inclusive space where everyone can envisage themselves.

And, finally, just as many see opportunities for the waterfront to be reinvented and rejuvenated, many feel a fresh approach to economic development, marketing, and waterfront management would also be beneficial to Pictou. Collaboration among businesses, community members, Indigenous communities, and surrounding

towns and municipalities will create a cohesive approach to solving common problems but benefiting from common opportunities.



UPLAND