

North Shore
Community
Development
Association



STRATEGIC PLAN

FEBRUARY 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mission

The North Shore Community Development Association (NSCDA) works to strengthen the economic viability of the North Shore while protecting and enhancing the natural, social, and cultural qualities that define life in its small rural communities.

Vision

The North Shore is a vibrant place where small businesses thrive year-round, public and community spaces are activated, and community members are connected and cared for, while the protection of natural systems is prioritized and the small town charm remains.

Values



Working
Together



Sustainable
Community
Growth



Economic
Development +
Entrepreneurship



Natural
Environment



Small Town
Character

Action Areas

Over the next 5 years, the NSCDA will work towards achieving goals in four action areas:

1.

Governance + Sustainability

- 1.1 Grow internal capacity
- 1.2 Strengthen internal governance systems
- 1.3 Build strategic partnerships

2.

Communication + Connections

- 2.1 Develop and communicate a Brand, Identity and Mission
- 2.2 Strengthen connections across local businesses, community organizations, and the wider community

3.

Community Activation + Shared Spaces

- 3.1 Strengthen community coordination and shared civic life
- 3.2 Support community-led events and initiatives
- 3.3 Support the functionality and activation of shared community spaces

4.

Incubation, Training + Support

- 4.1 Support access to training, resources and supports
- 4.2 Support early-stage business ideas through incubation
- 4.3 Support and facilitate networking

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INTRODUCTION

Incorporated in 1994 in response to the community's concern about its future as a small rural community, the North Shore Community Development Association (NSCDA) operated for its first 7 years through funding provided by the Colchester Regional Development Agency (CoRDA). The NSCDA functioned as a local community development agency serving rural North Colchester County—pursuing initiatives such as purchasing and renovating a building on Main Street to support small businesses and provide space for meetings, training and continuing education.

In the early 2000s, the NSCDA's operating model shifted significantly when stable operating funding ended. While this reduced the organization's ability to sustain full-time staffing, the NSCDA continued to play an important community role. Accomplishments from this time include training and skills development, community communications, tourism and public realm initiatives, and support for local organizations. This activity was made possible through strong partnerships with regional organizations and government departments, and the NSCDA building continued to serve as an important space for meetings, training, and community-based initiatives.

Today, the NSCDA continues to operate and manage the Tatamagouche Business Centre on Main Street, which hosts a mix of retail and offices. This strategic plan marks a new chapter in the history of the NSCDA, as we realign with our original mission and readjust to fit with the North Shore of today.

Mission

The NSCDA works to strengthen the economic viability of the North Shore while protecting and enhancing the natural, social, and cultural qualities that define life in its small rural communities.

VISION

Our vision for the North Shore is that it is a vibrant place where small businesses thrive year-round, public and community spaces are activated, and community members are connected and cared for, while the protection of natural systems is prioritized and the small town charm remains.

Values

Values define an organization's identity. These values represent what is important to us, and will be used to help guide decision-making and priority-setting over the next 5 years and beyond.



Working Together

The strength of the North Shore has always laid in coming together to help in times of need. We value collaboration, coordination, and a shared spirit of helping one another across the North Shore.



Sustainable Community Growth

We value growth that strengthens community life and services while remaining sustainable and aligned with local priorities.



Economic Development + Entrepreneurship

We value a year-round local economy where small businesses can thrive, create employment, and strengthen what makes the North Shore special.



Natural Environment

We value stewardship of land and water, protecting the natural spaces and working landscapes that sustain life on the North Shore.



Small Town Character

The small towns on the North Shore have a charm that should be protected and grown. We value vibrant main streets, local pride, and preservation of the places and stories that define our communities.

ACTION AREAS

The action areas were identified based on what we heard from engagements with community and stakeholders, and what we learned through board workshops about the NSCDA's desired mission, vision, values, goals and dreams.

There are four action areas, and each action area features 2-3 goals. Each goal has some accompanying actions. The intention is to reach these goals over a 5-year timeline.

Many initiatives in this plan support multiple action areas, and implementation will be phased and sequenced to align with organizational capacity. Successful implementation will be highly contingent on the NSCDA establishing paid coordination capacity over the course of the plan.



Governance + Sustainability

Strengthening the NSCDA's internal capacity, governance systems, and partnerships to ensure the organization is sustainable, accountable and positioned to lead implementation of this plan.

Communications + Connections

Rebuilding visibility, strengthening communication, and creating opportunities for connection across businesses, community organizations, and partners on the North Shore.

Community Activation + Shared Spaces

Supporting collaboration, reducing barriers, and helping activate shared spaces and community-led initiatives that contribute to civic life and economic prosperity.

Incubation, Training + Support

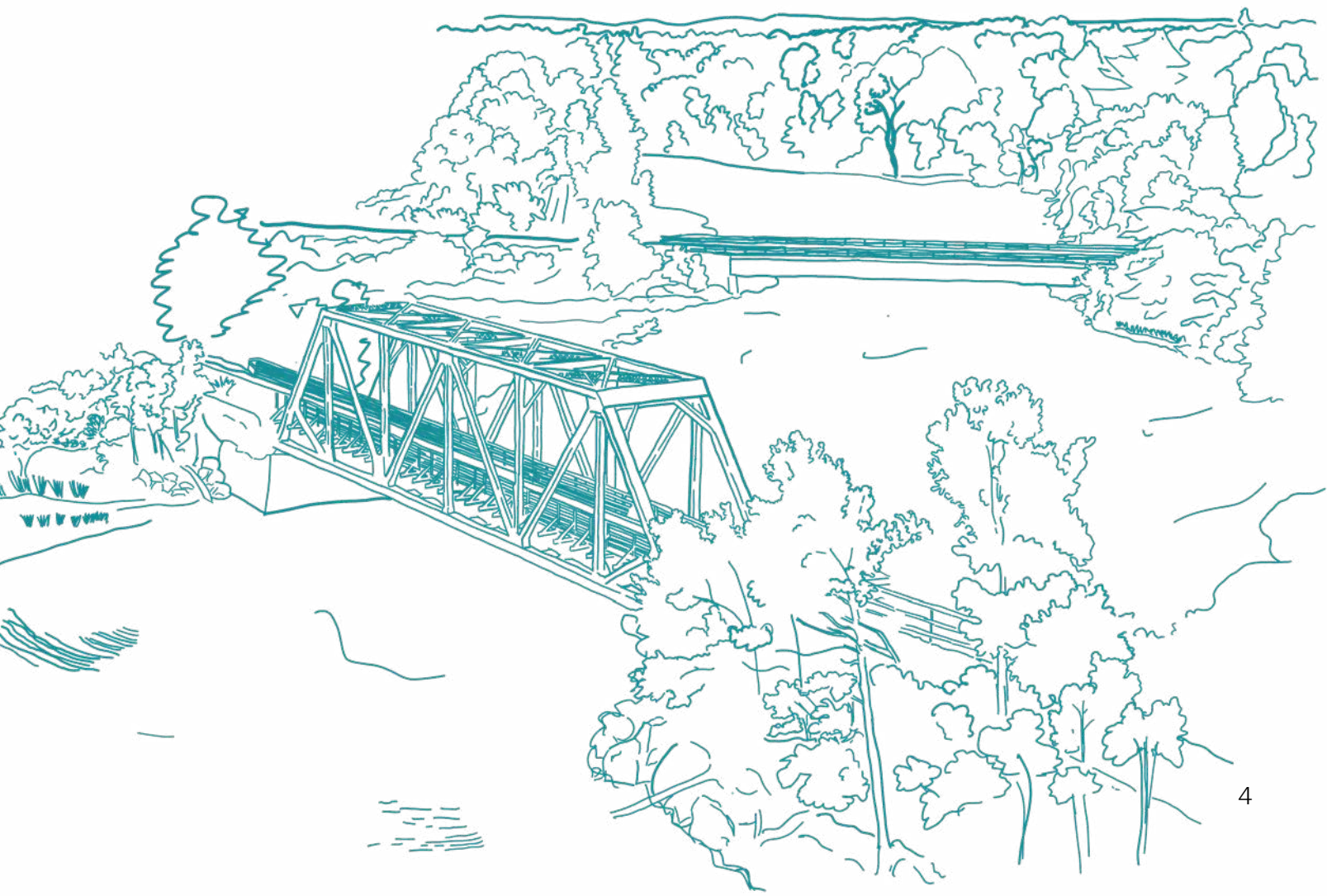
Coordinating access to training, resources, and supports for businesses, organizations, volunteers, and youth to strengthen local capacity and year-round economic resilience.

1.

GOVERNANCE +
SUSTAINABILITY

This Action Area is focused on continuing the work initiated through the strategic planning process to re-establish an identity and purpose for the NSCDA. Resources—human and financial, are the biggest barriers to the NSCDA increasing their activity.

Building internal capacity and establishing strategic partnerships will allow the NSCDA to create a strong, sustainable foundation for future action. Partnerships with education institutions and youth are a long-term investment in community leadership, workforce development, and economic vitality on the North Shore.



Goals

1. Grow internal capacity

- 1.1 Establish a staffing approach to support implementation of the Strategic Plan
- 1.2 Recruit board members strategically
- 1.3 Develop a sustainable funding/financial strategy
- 1.4 Pursue governance training/capacity building for board members
- 1.5 Explore long-term options to improve accessibility within NSCDA-managed facilities

2. Strengthen internal governance systems

- 2.1 Establish a governance and reporting framework to oversee implementation of the Strategic Plan
- 2.2 Engage in succession planning to prepare for Board turnover and role hand-off
- 2.3 Develop and implement a file and data management strategy

3. Build strategic partnerships

- 3.1 With community organizations within and across County lines
- 3.2 With education institutions and youth in community
- 3.3 With local and regional government
- 3.4 With relevant provincial departments

GOVERNANCE +
SUSTAINABILITY

1.



COMMUNICATIONS + CONNECTIONS

At an organizational level, communication is something the NSCDA needs to strengthen. Many in the community don't know about the NSCDA or understand its role, largely due to its dormancy in recent years. Creating and communicating a strong brand identity will help the NSCDA rebuild visibility, strengthen trust, and support implementation of this strategic plan.

Beyond the organization itself, communication plays an important role in shaping how the North Shore connects across communities. While each community has its own character, they share a broader North Shore identity—one that is often expressed and promoted through tourism. The Sunrise Trail, regional attractions, and local businesses all contribute to a shared story that connects communities and is marketed collectively to visitors.

This action area focuses on strengthening how the NSCDA communicates with key audiences—including community members, businesses, partners, and governments—while creating opportunities for stronger connection and collaboration across the North Shore.

Goals

1. Develop and communicate an NSCDA Brand, Identity and Vision

- 1.1 Build a strong brand identity for the NSCDA
- 1.2 Create an online presence (e.g., website)
- 1.3 Promote and communicate the Strategic Plan

2. Strengthen connections across local businesses, community organizations, and the wider community

- 2.1 Host community gatherings (e.g., annual general meeting)
- 2.2 Develop communication channels for reaching key audiences
- 2.3 Work with government and business to strengthen and support tourism and marketing for the North Shore

COMMUNICATIONS +
CONNECTIONS

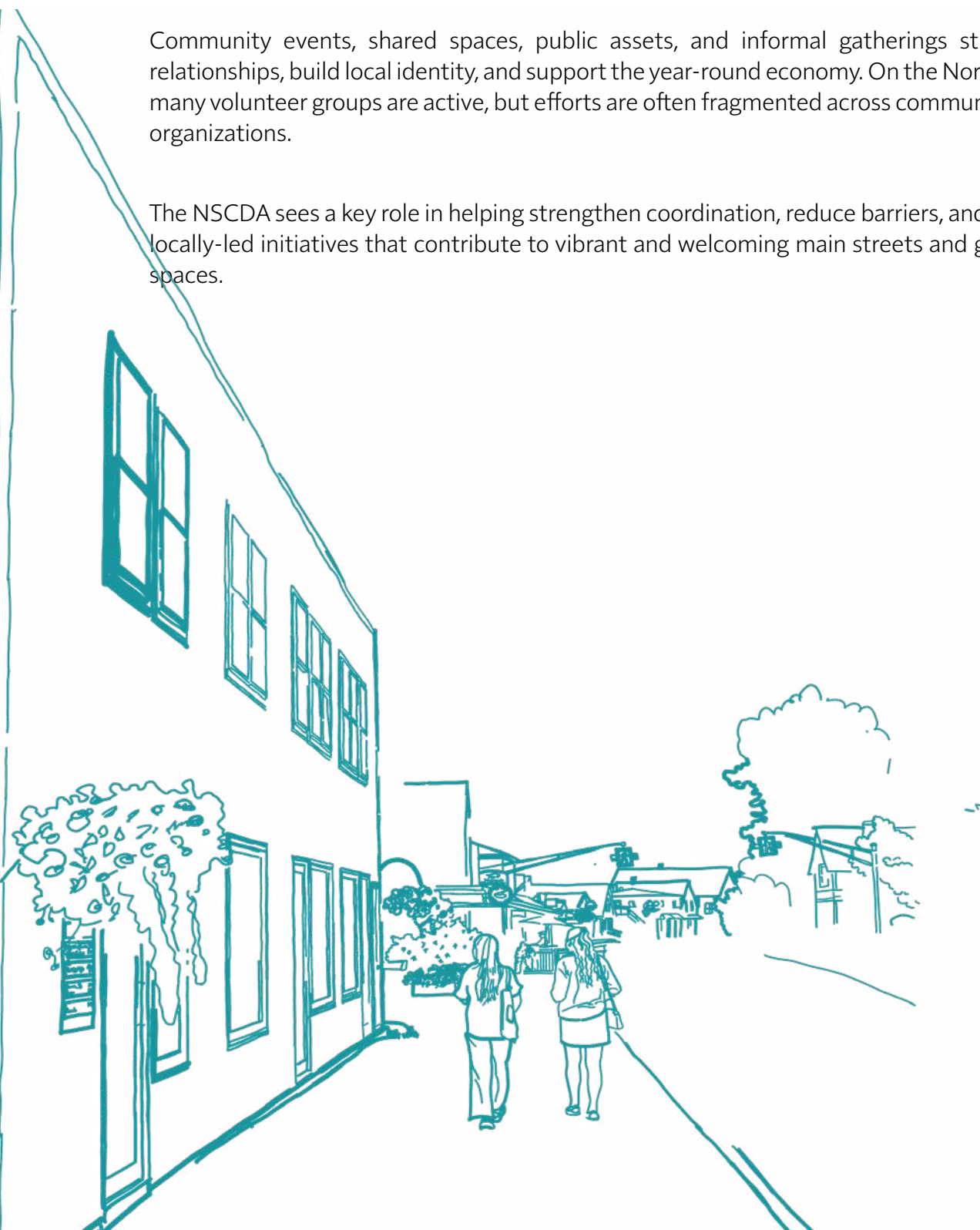
2.

3.

COMMUNITY ACTIVATION + SHARED SPACES

Community events, shared spaces, public assets, and informal gatherings strengthen relationships, build local identity, and support the year-round economy. On the North Shore, many volunteer groups are active, but efforts are often fragmented across communities and organizations.

The NSCDA sees a key role in helping strengthen coordination, reduce barriers, and support locally-led initiatives that contribute to vibrant and welcoming main streets and gathering spaces.



Goals

1. Strengthen community coordination and shared civic life

- 1.1 Convene local organizations to share plans, reduce duplication, and align efforts across communities
- 1.2 Encourage collaboration with surrounding and nearby community-led initiatives
- 1.3 Support community-led ideas that encourage year-round participation

2. Support community-led events and initiatives

- 2.1 Explore ways to reduce barriers for community-led events (e.g., insurance access)
- 2.2 Identify small, practical supports that make events easier to deliver (e.g., shared equipment, marketing and communications)

3. Support the functionality and activation of shared community spaces

- 3.1 Support collaboration with local community groups, municipalities, and provincial partners to improve access, connectivity, and awareness of key spaces
- 3.2 Build on NSCDA's history of catalyzing community assets like Creamery Square by exploring opportunities to incubate and transition new shared-space projects in partnership with local groups and governments
- 3.3 Promote the importance of youth-friendly recreation and gathering spaces

COMMUNITY ACTIVATION
+ SHARED SPACES

3.

4.

INCUBATION, TRAINING + SUPPORT

Training and capacity-building were central to the NSCDA's work in its earlier years, and engagement confirmed there is still a strong need for practical supports across the North Shore today (see [Appendix A](#) for a summary of training and support needs identified through engagement). Local businesses, community organizations, and volunteer-led groups identified challenges related to governance, funding, communications, seasonal planning, and access to training. Youth also expressed a need for clearer pathways to employment skills and opportunities in the region.

In this action area, the NSCDA sees its role as a local connector and intermediary—helping coordinate access to training, resources, and administrative supports through partnerships with regional agencies, education institutions, and governments. While the NSCDA does not aim to deliver all programming directly, it can help strengthen local capacity by convening partners, supporting locally-led initiatives, and facilitating access to the tools and training needed for a resilient year-round community.



Goals

1. Support access to training, resources and supports

- 1.1 Support access to small business training through regional partnerships
- 1.2 Connect youth and other community members to employment training
- 1.3 Support access to administrative support for other organizations

2. Support early-stage business ideas through incubation

- 2.1 Act as local intermediary to support/facilitate incubation initiatives in partnership with regional economic development
- 2.2 Incentivize business ideas that address needs/gaps on North Shore
- 2.3 Explore feasibility of providing low cost incubation space

3. Support and facilitate networking

- 3.1 Strengthen connections between youth and business/employment opportunities
- 3.2 Create space and opportunities for businesses and organizations to come together

INCUBATION, TRAINING +
SUPPORT



THE PROCESS

Reinvigorating the NSCDA required a two-part approach:

1. capacity-building with the board through facilitated, hands-on workshops
2. Community outreach and relationship-building to re-establish the NSCDA's presence and reconnect with local partners

Community engagement included conversations with community, youth, local businesses and organizations. These sessions supported background research and informed the vision and action areas within this plan.

Board workshops focused on strengthening governance capacity and advancing the strategic framework—including context-setting, vision and values development, action area refinement, and implementation planning.

We sincerely appreciate the time, knowledge, and enthusiasm shared by everyone who contributed to this process.

Dreaming + Visioning

"In 5 years, the NSCDA is known by community and businesses as a driving force in community growth"

- NSCDA board member

December 2025 board workshop on vision + values

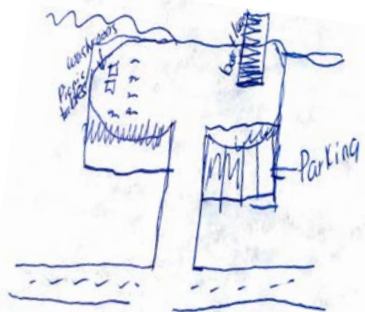
20+

meetings with local businesses + organizations



October 2025 ▲ community pop-up at trivia

+2 points for pitching a project that enhances a public access point along the shoreline ▼



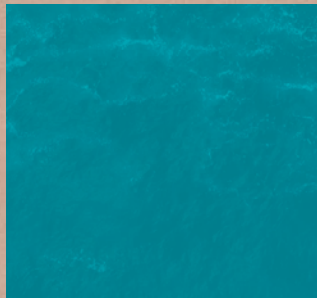
▲ October 2025 youth session with high school students

Youth dream about what they'd like to see on the North Shore and turn it into a proposal



▲ October 2025 stakeholder meeting with the North Shore Archives Society

Joan and Bill see a market for heritage-based tourism that provides youth employment



OSO
planning
+ design



APPENDIX A.

Training + Support Needs Identified through Engagement

Engagement identified a consistent need for practical training and capacity-building supports to strengthen small businesses, community organizations, and volunteer-led groups across the North Shore. Stakeholders emphasized that improved access to training, shared tools, and coordination support would help organizations operate more sustainably and collaborate more effectively.

The most frequently raised priorities included:

- non-profit governance training
- grant readiness and grant writing
- communications and marketing support

These engagement findings reinforce the NSCDA's role as a community partner that can help coordinate access to training and supports through regional and provincial partnerships.

Table 1. Training and Support Needs by Priority

Need	Priority	Examples
Non-profit governance + board training		• Board governance fundamentals, • non-profit operations, • templates and onboarding supports
Grant readiness (finding grants + grant writing)		• Identifying funding opportunities, • grant writing skills, • building sustainable annual funding
Communications + marketing training		• Social media training, • Business marketing supports, • Tourism-facing communications
First Aid training		• Community-based certification opportunities, • Employability supports
Food Handler certification		• Regular offerings to support food businesses and compliance
Shoulder-season business planning		• Training to support year-round viability and prepare for seasonal slowdowns
Shared business identity + collaboration		• North Shore brand alignment, collaboration among businesses
Volunteer recruitment supports		• Volunteer fairs, • Committee development, • Sustaining local capacity
Shared tools and resource libraries		• Governance templates, shared spaces directory, "how-to" guides
Tourism Nova Scotia navigation support		• Programs + offerings • Meet + greets