



# Integrated Municipal Sustainability Plan

Vision and Goals



prepared by

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for



November 10, 2021

## Contents

1	A Vision for Corner Brook .....	4
1.1	Relationship to Current Plan .....	5
1.2	Opportunities and Strengths .....	6
1.3	Challenges and Threats.....	7
1.4	Vision 2032.....	8
2	Goals .....	10
2.1	Formation of Goals .....	11
2.2	Land Use Planning Goals.....	12
2.3	Infrastructure Goals.....	12
2.4	Environmental Goals.....	13
2.5	Socio-Cultural and Economic Goals ..	13
3	Big Moves for Corner Brook .....	14
3.1	The Big Moves.....	15
3.2	A Green City.....	16
3.3	A City for All .....	16
3.4	A Strategic City .....	17

# 1 A Vision for Corner Brook



## 1.1 Relationship to Current Plan

In 2012, the City of Corner Brook underwent a comprehensive land use planning and engagement process to develop what is the existing Integrated Municipal Sustainability Plan (IMSP) and Development Regulations. This present and ongoing review is an opportunity to update existing land use planning, environmental, socio-cultural, and economic policy and recommendations, while also creating new policies and recommendations for the city as it prepares for the next decade. Despite being developed almost a decade ago, many of the fundamental objectives of the policies, recommendations, and the Vision still hold true today.

To develop a Vision for the city the opportunities and challenges facing the city were identified. From the opportunities and challenges identified, and based on the initial phase of engagement for *Corner Brook: Planning Together*, a Vision was established, carrying forward many elements of the existing Vision that are still relevant and applicable to the city today.

A Vision establishes the long-term aspirations and ambitions of the city. The Vision helps to answer the question “What do we want to be and why?” As an aspirational statement that is founded upon the input of the community, as well as the opportunities and challenges facing Corner Brook, the Vision provides a framework and benchmark for all decisions made in the city, irrespective of changes in the City’s leadership, management, or plans.

## 1.2 Opportunities and Strengths

Corner Brook has an abundance of strengths and opportunities as the City plans for the next decade:

- » Corner Brook, situated at the mouth of the Humber River where it meets the Humber Arm, is located within an extraordinarily beautiful and rich natural environment that is characterized by rugged terrain and dramatic topography.
- » Residents of Corner Brook have a strong sense of community and pride for the city in which they live.
- » The historic commercial areas of Broadway and West Street have undergone significant renewal over the last decade and, along with the heritage community of Townsite, are relatively intact and offer a distinctive character for Corner Brook.
- » There are numerous sites within Corner Brook, including in the downtown, that currently, or over the life of this Plan, present opportunities for redevelopment and intensification.
- » Growth associated with key institutions including the Wellington Street Sports Complex, the Civic Centre, hospitals, and the Arts and Culture Centre present opportunities to intensify similar and complementary development.
- » Corner Brook has a strong collection of high-quality outdoor recreation and leisure spaces including a comprehensive trail and green space network.
- » Memorial University, Academy Canada, and the College of the North Atlantic are significant local, regional, and international draws for students, and present opportunities to attract and retain young people and families and to synergize efforts for innovation and sustainability in Corner Brook.
- » An evolving port presents an opportunity to create places where the public has access to the coastal edge while also accommodating the steadfast and long-standing industrial areas along the shore.
- » The city has a diversity of established and emerging economic drivers that include industrial uses, government services, health-related services, post-secondary academic institutions, tourism and outdoor recreation, and retail services with a strong regional and ever-growing international draw.
- » There is a strong, and expanding environmental sustainability and stewardship ethic in the city, which presents an opportunity to intertwine environmental, economic, and socio-cultural sustainability efforts.

### 1.3 Challenges and Threats

Challenges that may threaten Corner Brook's ability to become a sustainable city are:

- » Hilly topography, steep slopes, and lack of level terrain limit the number of sites appropriate for development. It also forms barriers to access different parts of the city, isolates key assets, and creates accessibility challenges.
- » Residential development in Corner Brook has predominantly taken the form of lower density housing forms, primarily single- and semi-detached dwellings, that is spread out over a wide area. This development pattern combined with Corner Brook's topography has led to an inefficient transportation system that prioritizes the use of private automobiles. This has also limited the diversity of housing options that are available in the city.
- » Development patterns in Corner Brook, which are generally characterized by upland urban expansion, has resulted in sprawling infrastructure costs and a scenario where development along the perimeter of the city places additional pressure on the older and ageing municipal service infrastructure in the central parts of the city which were not designed to accommodate the current level of urban expansion.
- » The city lacks a wastewater treatment facility which results in disposal of untreated sewage in the Harbour.
- » Corner Brook receives a large amount of precipitation, particularly snow in the winter, which needs to be considered in development.
- » The ever-worsening situation regarding climate change may have profound impacts on the city. The topography and siting of Corner Brook as a hilly, forested, and coastal city may exacerbate current challenges such as sea level rise and inland flooding while potentially creating new threats. Corner Brook's relative isolation from major urban centres makes the city susceptible to indirect impacts of climate change.
- » Expansive surface parking in many areas of the city has resulted in an inefficient use of developable land.
- » Key economic areas of the city, such as Broadway, Main Street, and West Street, are interrupted by gaps in the streetscape and commercial vacancies.
- » The Mill and the Port, while valued and critical economic drivers, face uncertain futures and also create spatial and visual barriers to the waterfront.
- » Declining and ageing population and outmigration of youth and young adults continue to challenge Corner Brook's ability to plan for growth and sustainability.

## 1.4 Vision 2032

The following Vision has been drafted for the 2022-2032 Integrated Municipal Sustainability Plan:

**The City of Corner Brook will maintain and strengthen its position as Western Newfoundland's economic and cultural centre, offering a diverse range of services, employment opportunities, housing options, and a high quality of life for anyone who chooses to live or work in the city. The natural environment is celebrated and respected and the City and community will actively protect the air, water, and land encouraging a healthy ecosystem within and beyond Corner Brook. Corner Brook will be one of Newfoundland and Labrador's leading municipalities for responding to the climate crisis and will be a model for sustainability, innovation, and life-long learning. Development will be systematic and intentional and will contribute positively to the community's vitality, character, heritage, and will foster an active and healthy community.**



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# 2 Goals



## 2.1 Formation of Goals

Just as the Vision from the existing IMSP was evaluated for its current relevance and applicability to Corner Brook today, so too were the set of goals in the existing IMSP. Goals represent long-term results the community wants to achieve that are typically broad in scope.

The role and influence of the IMSP extends beyond land use planning and can establish goals, policies, and recommendations for socio-cultural and economic initiatives. However, unlike land use planning goals and policies, there is not a prescribed regulatory tool to implement goals, policies, and regulations for socio-cultural and economic initiatives. Land use planning goals and policies can be implemented through the Development Regulations, but no such tools exist for other initiatives. As such, the following language is used with regard to the goals in the IMSP:

- » Where “**Support**” is used, Council has limited ability to achieve the goal through the Development Regulations.
- » Where “**Promote**” is used, Council has some ability to achieve the goal through the Development Regulations.
- » Where “**Ensure**” is used, Council has direct control to achieve the goal through the Development Regulations.

## 2.2 Land Use Planning Goals

1. Ensure clear and transparent land use policy, regulations, and processes.
2. Ensure sustainable land management by promoting compact development, mixed use development, and limiting urban expansion.
3. Promote a diversity of long-term housing options across the city for current and future residents and for people all ages, incomes, and physical abilities.
4. Promote educational, institutional, and recreational facilities as the hubs within the city's built environment.
5. Promote an attractive, compact, and accessible downtown that leverages Corner Brook's history, topography, and people, and promote a high quality public realm in the built environment.
6. Ensure current open space and recreation assets are protected for the long-term enjoyment and use by the community and promote greater active transportation and passive recreation options for the city.
7. Support improved access to, and enjoyment of a clean, vibrant, and accessible waterfront.
8. Promote land use development patterns that reduce and eliminate land use conflicts.

## 2.3 Infrastructure Goals

1. Promote development that makes full and best use of existing water, stormwater, sewer, and emergency services to enhance the affordability and efficiency of infrastructure.
2. Support the development of resilient infrastructure that considers the long-term environmental and economic sustainability of Corner Brook and the interdependencies of infrastructure networks.
3. Support and maintain a safe and efficient transportation system that provides for all modes of travel, all ages and abilities, and supports the patterns of land use and development.
4. Promote, develop, and maintain an interconnected system of trails and open spaces throughout the city.
5. Support the development and improvement of physical connections and movement corridors between key destinations and focal areas in the city.
6. Support initiatives to reduce the city's energy needs and promote the incorporation of renewable energy sources into development.

## 2.4 Environmental Goals

1. Ensure the protection of natural significant and sensitive environments to support a healthy ecosystem within and beyond the city.
2. Promote development that is sensitive to and in harmony with the natural environment and works to enhance awareness and stewardship of the natural environment.
3. Promote stormwater management practices that enhance and protect existing watercourses and natural systems in the city.
4. Promote climate change mitigation and resilience efforts while ensuring development considers and adapts to the impacts of climate change.
5. Promote an interconnected network of publicly available trails, open spaces, and watercourses.
6. Ensure development considers topography so as to promote safe and efficient development.
7. Support waste reduction initiatives and programming and support local waste recycling and reuse efforts.

## 2.5 Socio-Cultural and Economic Goals

1. Support Corner Brook as a four-season tourism hub featuring adventure, nature, and outdoor activities augmented by diverse cultural, educational, heritage, and artistic opportunities.
2. Support efforts and opportunities to celebrate Corner Brook's local and regional history.
3. Support opportunities for employment in emerging sectors such as adventure and eco-tourism, environmental resource management, and technology.
4. Support a strong, well-trained, well-educated and diverse workforce marked by competitive wages, access to educational and skill development, and matched to market opportunities.
5. Promote active volunteerism, citizen engagement and involvement in community development.
6. Support efforts to ensure accessibility to facilities for people of all ages, abilities, and socially and economically disadvantaged citizens.

# 3 Big Moves for Corner Brook



### 3.1 The Big Moves

The Big Moves are the three concepts that will transform the future of Corner Brook as the city grows and develops over the next decade and beyond. The Big Moves are based upon the Vision and its implications for Corner Brook and the Goals for the city, and represent the desired changes to the built environment in Corner Brook. The Big Moves will require a collective effort of all residents and community members of Corner Brook and should inspire the City and community in its decision-making and long-range planning.

The three Big Moves for Corner Brook are:

- » A Green City
- » A City for All
- » A Strategic City

### 3.2 A Green City

As a *Green City*, Corner Brook will prioritize growing and developing in harmony with the natural environment. This not only includes preserving and protecting natural environments and landscapes from development, but celebrating and respecting the rugged topography of the city. Development on steep slopes or in areas that pose a threat to human life and infrastructure will not be permitted.

Respecting the environment also includes adapting to and mitigating climate change and building resilience into the community. The City will look to capitalize on opportunities to reduce the need and use of private automobiles in Corner Brook through compact and multi-functional forms of development. Green spaces, including parks and plazas, will be protected and contribute to efforts to minimize the city's footprint on the environment.

### 3.3 A City for All

Corner Brook is and will continue to strive to be a *City for All*. As one of our most basic forms of human need, housing diversity will be encouraged and promoted throughout the city so that anyone who wants to live in Corner Brook can choose to do so. A diversity of housing options in key areas that leverage existing assets will support active modes of transportation.

Integrating decisions about housing, transportation, and the city's existing assets, including its green spaces and parks, will enable residents to better meet their needs where they live. The city will strive to promote neighborhoods where the basic needs of all residents can be met in their community.



### 3.4 A Strategic City

Topographic, environmental, and infrastructure barriers mean that as a *Strategic City*, Corner Brook has to find a balance for how and where growth and development should happen. Gaps in the urban fabric, including vacant storefronts, empty lots, and surface parking lots, provide opportunities to capitalize on underutilized sites. Infill development in key areas will help rebuild core areas of Corner Brook, including the downtown.

Strategic thinking will also focus growth and development in areas and on streets with the greatest potential—O’Connell Drive, Main Street/Herald Avenue, Griffen Drive, Riverside Drive, and Humber Road are but some examples of areas that are ready to capitalize on future growth. Through a strategic lens, the city will look to capitalize on the waterfront and the commercial, residential, industrial, and public space benefits that are possible.

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