



Event One

Report

January 31st, 2018

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## Introduction

### *Share your voice, shape our town.*

On January 31st 2018 around 140 community members came together in the first of two events to begin the Engage Antigonish initiative.

### Purpose

In partnership with the Town of Antigonish, Engage Nova Scotia has committed to designing and delivering two citizen engagement events. These gatherings will support the development of citizen-led priorities for the 2018+ Strategic Plan/Framework, and shape collective community objectives for the future. Throughout this project Engage and the Town of Antigonish will work as learning partners to achieve the following goals:

#### Primary:

- Surfacing Citizen Priorities
- Informing the development of a Strategic Plan/Framework

#### Secondary:

- Activating Citizens towards greater community collaboration and cohesion

### Approach

Prior to the event Engage Nova Scotia and the Town of Antigonish worked with an Outreach Team comprised of local leaders who brought with them a diverse network to spread the word and inform the process. The first event was designed to take the temperature around ideas, perspectives identified by the community. The second event on April 5th will allow the citizens and the Town to explore the highest priorities and identify next steps collaboratively.



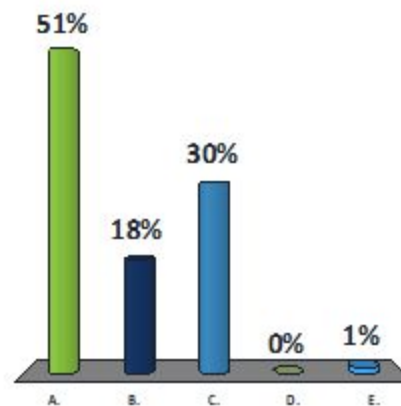
## Audience Response System Voting Results

The gathering started off with an opportunity for everyone to participate in a poll that allowed them to anonymously share their thoughts and feelings on a number of themes. The following are the results from the session.



I live in

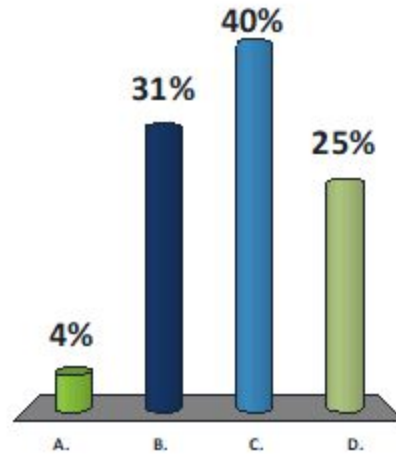
- A. The Town of Antigonish
- B. The Perimeter of Town
- C. Rural part of Antigonish County
- D. On Campus
- E. Elsewhere





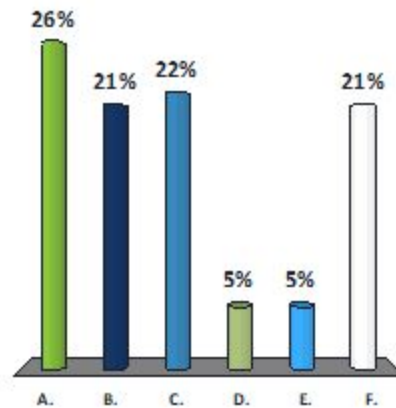
## You're only as old as you feel

- A. A youth (15-34)
- B. Not as young as I used to be (35-50)
- C. Prime of my life (51-65)
- D. Wise (65-over)



## Outside of family, work or school, how do you spend most of your free time?

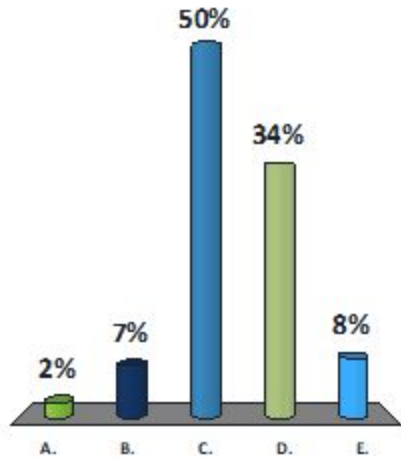
- A. Community groups
- B. Arts and culture events
- C. Sports
- D. Farmers' Market
- E. I don't have free time
- F. Other





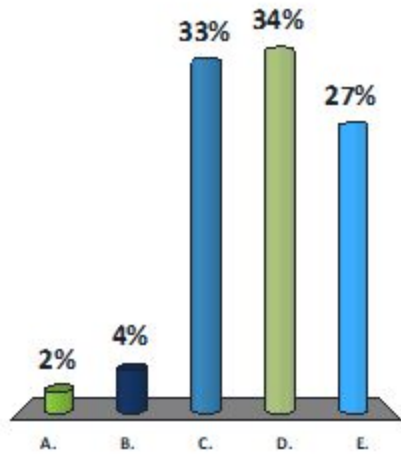
Our community is in need of

- A. 1- No change
- B. 2
- C. 3 - Moderate change
- D. 4
- E. 5 - Big change



Personally, I feel that I have a bright future in Antigonish

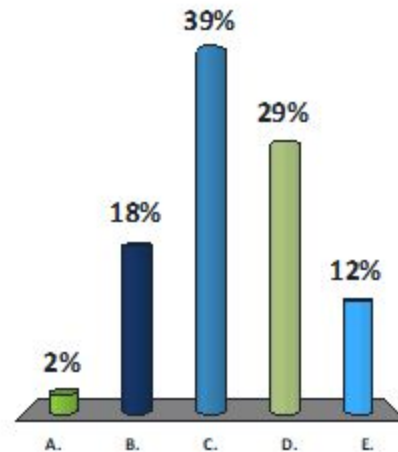
- A. 1 - Not very bright
- B. 2
- C. 3
- D. 4
- E. 5 - Very bright





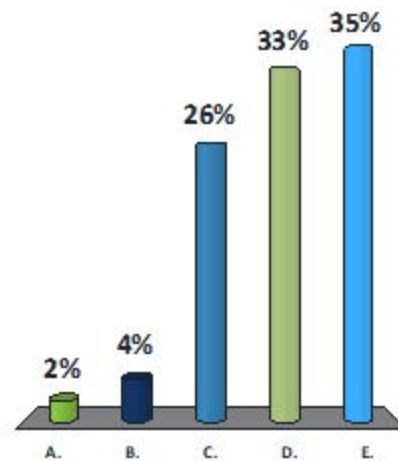
The Town of Antigonish is inclusive of diverse people and perspectives

- A. 1 - Disagree
- B. 2
- C. 3
- D. 4
- E. 5 - Agree



Are you **willing** to change your thoughts and behaviours for the good of Antigonish?

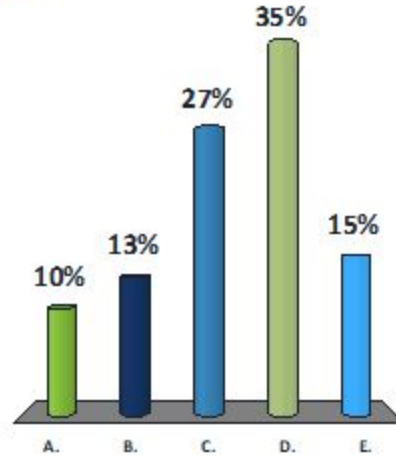
- A. 1 - No
- B. 2
- C. 3
- D. 4
- E. 5 - Yes





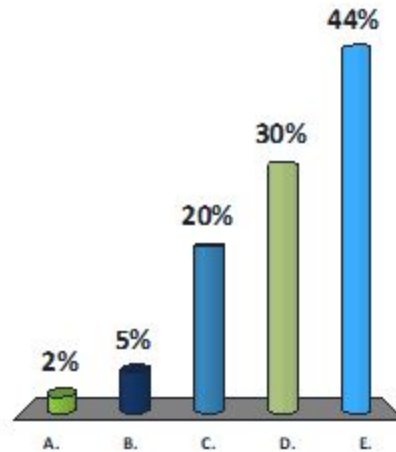
Do you believe you are well **informed** about our economic, social, cultural and environmental challenges?

- A. 1 - No
- B. 2
- C. 3
- D. 4
- E. 5 - Yes



Do you feel **able** to be a part of the solutions to our town's challenges?

- A. 1 - No
- B. 2
- C. 3
- D. 4
- E. 5 - Yes

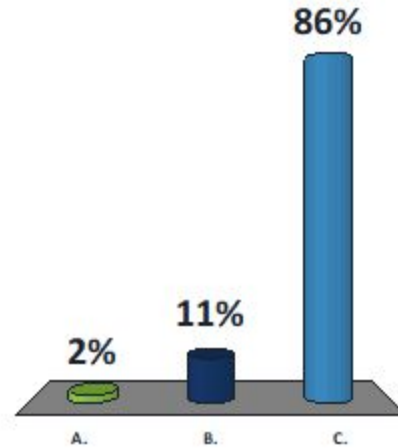






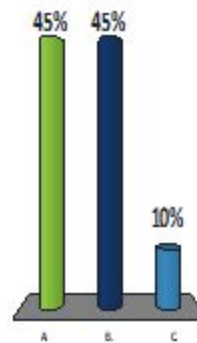
Municipalities are responsible for which of the following areas?

- A. Immigration
- B. Public Education
- C. Water



Which level of government is MOST responsible for addressing poverty?

- A. Federal
- B. Provincial
- C. Municipal



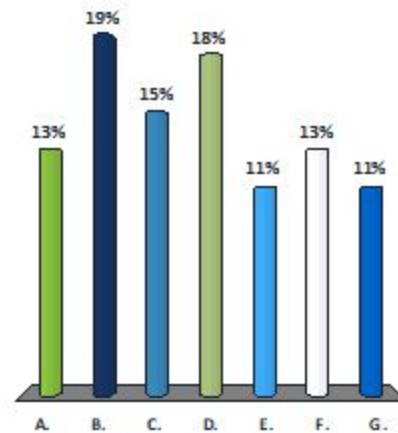
## Collective Perspective Compiled Voting Results

The following results are from the closing session of the evening where participants ranked the topics/themes that they felt were most important. Votes were ranked and weighted based on their first, second and third vote. These results will help inform the design of Engage Antigonish 2, and the Town of Antigonish Strategic Plan.



What is most important to me? (pick up to 3)

- A. Town beautification, urban forest and accessibility
- B. Outdoor activity & accessibility
- C. Sustainable Housing needs
- D. Arts & Culture Infrastructure
- E. Making the town Bike friendly/Transit & Mobility
- F. Mental Health
- G. Climate Change



What is most important to me? (pick up to 3)

- A. Senior-friendly
- B. Youth retention
- C. Promoting town as a region (National Special Olympics 2018)
- D. Providing services & spaces for marginalized youth
- E. Attract new businesses
- F. Support people with disabilities to be entrepreneurial
- G. Town, county, St FX relationships

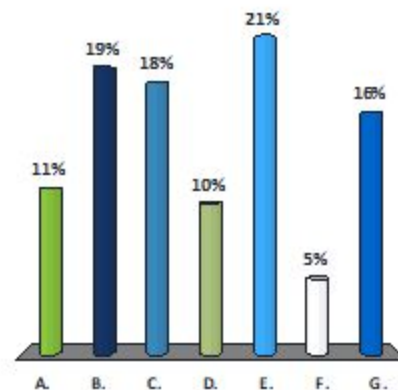


Table		1ST		2ND		3RD			Final Placing
1	Town beautification, urban forest and accessibility	14	140	14	98	10	40	278	9
2	Outdoor activity & accessibility	25	250	16	112	15	60	422	3
3	Sustainable Housing needs	18	180	15	105	10	40	325	7
4	Arts & Culture Infrastructure	24	240	14	98	16	64	402	5
5	Making the town Bike friendly/Transit & Mobility	9	90	15	105	15	60	255	11
6	Mental Health	14	140	13	91	14	56	287	8
7	Climate Change	12	120	15	105	7	28	253	12
8	Senior-friendly	14	140	12	84	9	36	260	10
9	Youth retention	23	230	22	154	12	48	432	2
10	Promoting town as a region (National Special Olympics 2018)	26	260	15	105	10	40	405	4
11	Providing services & spaces for marginalized youth	11	110	14	98	3	12	220	13
12	Attract new businesses	22	220	26	182	20	80	482	1
13	Support people with disabilities to be entrepreneurial	5	50	5	35	9	36	121	14
14	Town, county, St FX relationships	17	170	15	105	26	104	379	6
	Most points overall		Most points in choice						
	2nd most points overall		2nd most points in choice						
	3rd most points overall		3rd most points in choice						

## Table Conversation Capture

After the Audience Response Technology was used, we invited anyone who wanted to start a conversation about their ideas and perspectives to call a topic by answering “*How can we work on \_\_\_\_\_ together?*” The following reflects the topics and conversations held at each table around the following topics:

1. What are the key insights?
2. What are the possibilities?
3. Who could you be involved?
4. What are your unanswered questions?

## Town Beautification and Urban Forest

### Key insights

- Garbage and Litter
  - Litter in the town is a large issue (broken glass, bottles, fast food etc.)
  - there is a lack of cleaning
  - lack of signage to encourage clean up
  - give the sense that it is everyone's responsibility
- **The Three Rivers** (West River, Brierly, Wrights)  
The three rivers play a major part of our community
  - could have a clean walkway to promote the river
- There are currently no regulations for residents filling up the rivers with debris from their properties from their properties only bylaws
- Main street flower boxes
  - partnership with CACL
- Merchants of James St. have done their own work

### What are the possibilities?

- Town campaign with the James St. Merchants
- Ban plastic bags
- Town cleanup 3 to 4 times a year
- More awareness campaigns to change behaviour
- A beautification committee
- Employ youth
- A community school cleanup

#### **The Three Rivers**

- There should be a flood plan with regulations not to build on certain properties
- Development of a trail system

### Who could be involved?

- Citizen driven meetings
- Community volunteers
- Private businesses/ companies
- Town Council
- Ongoing planning phase by town
- Advertisement and media coverage
- Contract w/ CACL (dedicated to this work)
- Invite students to be involved
- Hire a full time coordinator

### Unanswered questions

- Urban Forest:- concern to enhance the trees we have and plant trees on their property. The Town needs to have an urban forest plan. How is the Town going to address parking in the Town vs. Green area?
- How do we get around Piper's pub? We need cooperation by the pub ... still in discussion
- How do we improve snow removal on Mainstreet?

## Outdoor Activity and Accessibility

### Key insights

- Keppoch has been a good improvement to the culture of outdoor and its health benefits
- Lots of people walking dogs but need more guidelines about dogs on leashes
- There are many connections between outdoor activities and overall/mental health
- We have an aging population who have mobility issues, but enjoying the outdoors is still important
- There needs to be youth considerations, they are safe at the library but they need places play free\*
- Teens and tweens are lacking non-organized sports
- Parental/ family role modeling
- Barriers to enjoying outdoor activities is cars and money

### What are the possibilities?

1. A group that drives
2. A group that promotes
  - A "Biking" culture in town, get a repair kit at the library for bikes
  - Create an intentional outdoor rink
  - A walking trail at Brierly Brook
  - Accessibility for people living with mental illness
  - Incorporate photography

- Create a trail around town that is a walk/bike combo
- More free skates
- Challenger baseball space expansion
- \*Transport to Keppoch\*
- Promote the landing in Winter
- Parking lot at Fairmont in Winter
- Accessibility should be 100% happening to regional fields
- dog park
- Local leaders
- Transport to different areas (including rural)
- Advertising trails by promoting on website, trails maps, and a rating system.
- Inner town walking trails

### Who could be involved?

- Bike shop (Matthew)
- Highlandconnect.ca
- Country parent (good for locals)
- Rec- a Town and County combined approach
- StFX rec school reps
- Arenas (free skates)
- Keppoch
- Accessibility (towns/schools)
- Town (help with the awareness of rec opportunities)
- Town Planners

### Unanswered questions

- Winter maintenance of trails/parking @ outdoor sites (is that the town or county)
- Are there any off leash areas for dogs?
- Why do we still not have a skate park?
- Are there any community groups driving outdoor activities?

## Sustainable Housing Needs

### Key insights

- There is a lack of subsidized housing units → should there be a committee on council?
- Housing for seniors is expensive and there is a lack of options
- Housing is key or survival and many are on the brink
- Average % of renters spend 30% of their income on housing
- Quality of life is compromised
- Affordable energy costs (town has own utility)
- Voice of citizen to participate and plan RTE
- State of housing v. poor
- Slum and absentee landlords adds to depression

### What are the possibilities?

- Build on the success to build on with the Town and Council
- More co-operative housing
- An electricity fund
- A capital fund with revenue streams in collaboration with town and citizens
- New bylaws/policies to support
- Make use of solar energy program
- Consider other models
  - co-housing
  - Shared spaces
  - tiny homes
  - Rehab/ Reno old homes
- Reduced tax rates and more tax credits/incentives
- Start a social finance community fund
- Investing in crowdsourcing and social enterprise

### Who could be involved?

- Town Council
- Other government involvement (Provincial, Federal CMHC)
- Chamber of Commerce
- Credit Unions

### Unanswered questions

- Where is there funding for housing?
- Why don't we have a higher level of collaboration

## Arts & Culture Infrastructure

### Key insights

- Arts and culture groups of which there are many working in isolation
- Culture is a pillar of sustainability and perceived as necessary to sustain this community
- There has been exponential growth in the sector in the past 15-20 years
- Used by many groups including seniors/ people living with disabilities/ youth
- It is a huge economic opportunity
- There's no reason to separate out a recreation lense
- Recognize the multi-cultural history of Town Acadian - Gaelic - Mi'kmaq

### What are the possibilities?

- Multi-functional Arts Centre (Physical Infrastructure)
- Human Resource Capacity to coordinate various needs

- Creating a brand with representation of all groups
- Festivals
- Make Antigonish a centre for Arts and Culture in our Region

#### Who should be involved?

- Municipalities Antigonish Town and County
- StFX
- Arts Groups
- Artists

#### Unanswered questions

- Can we look at best practices for other areas?
- How do we work together while we wait?
- How do we get buy in?

## Making the Town Bike friendly/Transit & Improved Mobility

#### Key insights

- Active Transportation plan does exist and has been endorsed by the Town and County
- We need more focus on 'non motorized' mode of transportation like bike lanes
- Infrastructure is important (maintenance of roads and sidewalks)
- We need more access to transit on weekends
- Ask the town and County to release the Transport plan and ask for input and action

#### What are the possibilities?

- Bike stalls in front of building to leave bikes
- Encourage using biking a transportation means rather than recreation
- Look at the Netherlands infrastructure where there are separate bike and car roads. You can avoid hills so that more people will bike and be safer
- Would pedestradize downtown (like European cities) so that the town is a people space
- Specific bike paths to locations
- Accessibility bussing on maine and church
- Implement a car share program, it's cheaper than a car rental cooperative (volume may be a challenge, 3 cars to start)
- Main street Town Hall turned into a town square (no vehicles). It can condition people to think communally.
- Campaign to get everyone to try to use the transit system at least once
- Have transit work with biking (how do you get to Keppoch if you don't have a car)
- Have a bike clinic and giveaway as a spring event

#### Who could be involved?

- REA and the Active Transport Project



- Service Learning
- Accessibility Committee
- Schools
- Town Council
- RCMP (traffic control)
- Town planners /County planners
- Car Share, 'Jack' knows the guy in Halifax (Derek)

#### Unanswered questions

- How to discourage jaywalking?
- Where is the plan on active transportation?

## Mental Health

#### Key Insights

- There is a lot of stigma
- "Mental Health is a bad word"
- Mental health is directly linked to social determinants of health like employment
- We need to view that mental health is a part of life
- "The fear of being judged is real"
- Community supports are necessary
- Antigonish already has a lot to offer those who are suffering with mental health
- Shouldn't separate mind and body from a health perspective

#### What are the possibilities?

- Education about the differences and different people and the impact on our community
- Mental Health workshops
- Link with universities is important
- Community based programming and training
- An emergency response team
- Walk in mental health clinic (similar to PEI and New Glasgow)
- Connection between mental health and diet/physical health etc.
- Mental health connector!

#### Who could be involved?

- Community groups
- Provincial health
- Schools
- Youth
- First Nations

## Climate Change

### Key insights

- The conversation is mostly about energy consumption
- Town owned utility is a unique asset
- Spring thaw is a flood threat
- Town does not depend on smokestack industries

### What are the possibilities?

- Think green on all assets of the town and conduct energy audits
- Divest investments from fossil fuels
- Renewable energy alternatives
- Lead by example and work with all levels of government
- Smart grids
- Battery Storage
- Heat pump financing
- Move toward a more carbon neutral town

### Who could be involved?

- Antigonish Community Energy Society
- StFX

### Unanswered questions

- We have three converging rivers through town. What is the flood mitigation strategy?

## Senior-friendly Antigonish

### Key Insights

- Seniors must be seen as an asset, they are a hidden treasure and they have a lot of wisdom!
- We already have a lot of supports and great structures to learn from (CAACL, L'Arche)
- More of a need to understand what we believe seniors need vs. what they actually want.
- Connection matters

### What are the possibilities

- Make Antigonish a 'go to' place for seniors
- Jobs for seniors -Some seniors want to work but they need motivation. A&W and Walmart have
- Seniors who work for them and they are a fantastic addition
- Better accessibility on sidewalks that encourage those who use wheelchairs

- Senior and youth mentoring opportunities to improve connection and cross generational learning
- Business opportunities for seniors
- Transportation
- A seniors seminar for services
- Student/ Senior living

### Who could be involved?

- High School and StFX for mentorship possibilities
- Volunteer opportunities
- Recreation

## Youth Retention

### Key insights

- There's three main groups. Teens (need space and mentors) → Young Adults (need jobs) → University
- We need to keep students after Jobs and work to find out what they value
- Young people to run businesses
- We have a lot of non youth speaking about how to retain youth\*
- How do you get youth together? How do you hear their voice?... you need to make them feel like they belong. Not everyone's into sports
- This needs to be seen as a place for young people to live
- \*There is a bad attitude toward youth.
- To get them here they would need to come in a group and be invited individually
- Youth leaderships opportunities including clubs, organizations and community boards that give a voice.
- There's no jobs here
- We need to keep university students after they graduate
- Transit is a large deterrent as well as the cost of activities
- If a young person isn't going to work in university or the hospital, what else do we have here?
- Support Entrepreneurship and buying local
- Networking groups/ Incubators
- Meet youth where they are (Schools, tall and small etc.)

### What are the possibilities?

- Art/Culture centre building on library or a YMCA
  - will attract young families
  - Intergenerational
  - Bring everyone together and build a more inclusive community
  - Online component

- A youth mentorship program (chefs, sports, trade) look at Chicago and NSCC
- An elected youth council to work w/ Town Council w/ influence, not tokenism
- Someone should actually be on town council, county too.
- Integrate education into community
- Skatepark? (May be a drinking spot)
- Youth and Seniors mentoring ( a two way relationship)
- Visit NSCC explore trades, job shadow.
- Create an entrepreneurship climate for young people

### Who could be involved?

- University/Campus/Students
- Schools/Admin
- County
- Business mentorship for young people
- Business incubators “Launch Pad”

### Unanswered Questions

- How would you know if its a youthful town?
- How do we create something youth will be proud of?
- How do we make youth invested in the community?
- How to leverage community support (for peace by chocolate) for our own kids? Help them get on their feet?
- What needs to be in place for young ppl to come back as young adults (w/ families)
- How can we provide what young people value like Quality of Life?

## Promoting the Town as a Region

### Key Insights

- What is the area we are defining?
- Requires collaboration
- Needs to attract bus tours on the way to Cape Breton
- Used to be a ‘Welcome Wagon’ approach welcoming newcomers
- It’s hard to break into the community as a newcomer
- We have natural advantages of location that we should use

#### Coordinate and Communicate

- Sport tourism is growing i.e Special Olympics
- Promote as a great place to live to drive people to the area
- There’s so much to do. The town can get hands on showcases and promoting the area
- There’s always a lot going on at StFX
- \*Should be part of a strategic plan and have paid projects to promote continuity

## What are the possibilities?

- Have more events that draw people to the Town
- Better signage and packaging
- Support local businesses
- Good videos for beaches and attractions for surrounding areas
- Better signage that includes First Nations
- Take advantage of surrounding areas
- How do we get individual groups to work together to create a cohesive impression
- Create an internship to gather information and best practices of communication
- Use the events calendar better, Fill it more often and promote it
- Year Round Visitor Information Centre
- Empower community members to promote

## Who could get involved?

- Joint Town and County Councils
- Tourism agencies
- Chamber of Commerce
- Businesses and Mall
- Coady Institution
- The Arts and Culture Community

## Unanswered questions

- What is the how?
- How do you turn these good ideas into action?
- What is the scope of the 'region'?

## Providing Services & Spaces for Marginalized Youth

### Key Insights

#### **Build Respect and focus on inclusion**

- youth programs need to be mixed/integrated and inclusive services and programs
- There is a huge unmet need and we need to hear the youth voice first hand
- Need for diverse services for youth  
→ the library provides a space but not enough to meet their needs
- Kids are bored
- There has been lots of work with the skatepark but lots of frustration with the town
- There are a lot of programs for seniors like friendship corner but not the same youth focus
- Engage, respected and fed youth become healthy adults and leaders in their community
- Attitudes toward youth and towards diversity must change

### What are the possibilities?

- Skatepark
- YMCA
- Nutritional services
- Access to youth oriented, inclusive and accessible spaces
- Provide services outside of the school system

### Who could be involved

- The Women's Centre
- The Town
- Community Programming (Kids First)
- Learn from Glace Bay (Bay it forward) and Guysborough
- Service Learning

### Unanswered questions

- How to address fear of behaviour problems
- How to bridge town/county access gap?
- How to address socio-economic divide?
- How to deal w/ discrimination against youth?
- How to fight stigma against youth activities like skateboarding?

## Attracting New Business

### Key Insights

- We need more businesses and encouragement to shop local
- It's hard to find customers
- Intermediate incubation business
- We need to sustain businesses we already have
- There's no one to buy businesses from retirees, need better succession planning
- There needs to be more shopping downtown to keep people shopping
- There's a lack of internet connection in the rural area
- Need a startup business community
- Mainstreet is important to maintain a vibrant community
- \*everything is connected to youth retention (affordable housing, mentorship)
- Maintaining the character of the town is important
- Maintaining business is different from growing the population

### What are the possibilities?

- Green economy
- Festivals and music, weekend hockey tournaments
- Bring in more specialized dental and healthcare

- Incubator properties
- A vigorous campaign to shop local\*\*
- Better network to know what is in the community
- A 'Discover Antigonish' campaign with StFX

### Unanswered Questions

- Who do small businesses serve?
- What direction do we want to go? Maintaining businesses or growing businesses

## Supporting People with Disabilities to be Entrepreneurial

### Key Insights

- Healthy, active mind, keeping people occupied is good for the whole community
- Need a community where all can contribute to the best of their abilities

### What are the Possibilities

- Access to capital to get started
- Meeting with people who have similar interests and experience
- Creating stronger networks in local community with existing businesses and potential entrepreneurs
- Sharing business models/ knowledge on how to compete
- Trade show to showcase ideas/businesses
- Help in identifying niche opportunities
- Needs assessment to identify opportunities

### Who could be Involved?

- XEDC
- CACL Workshop
- Local Businesses
- NS Works
- Community College
- Non-profit agencies/ Gov't
- Agencies who many have funding
- University-Business Students

## Town, County, St FX relationships

### Key Insights

- We need to clarify how to best support people living on the fringe of Town and County re serving and supports.
- "the topsoil is thick". Resources below
- We spend a lot of time focussing on what doesn't work, not what does
- There is an assumption that the Town and County don't work well together
- No flow between Town and University
- Feels siloed
- Used to have a Town and Gown Committee that worked
- When living on the Fringe it is hard to feel counted, make connections or be heard

### What are the possibilities

- A highways sign that thanks people who came to university, Mi'kmaq, English, French
- Committee day
- Use storytelling
- A joint meeting is a solid place to start ( two per year)
- Explore the idea of a regional government
- Casket feature "What's New at StFX"
- Town should introduce themselves to students, host an event
- Connect with COADY
- Need more concrete activities that show collaboration together
- Skate Park could show important collaboration opportunity
- BBQ

### Who Could be involved?

- Representative from Council
- President of the Students Union, of the University and the Mayor
- Students, StFX staff, Town and County staff

### Unanswered Questions?

- Is there anyone for Town and Council at the University Welcome Day?



## The Parking Lot

The Parking Lots was a physical space on the walls where participants had the opportunity to include any thoughts, ideas, or perspectives that were not reflected in table conversations.

- There should be a buy local policy for town functions. Not corporations or franchises
- There needs to be more litter baskets around town and someone to empty them regularly
- Street Cleaners
- Renewable Energy is a very unique opportunity for the Town of Antigonish to support infrastructure
- Skate Park and Youth Centre
- A good skatepark for skaters, bikes and scooter
- Youth Entrepreneurship Incubator (develop businesses locally and for global markets)
- Services for sexual assault victims need to be supported and funded by a full partnership of Town and County staff
- Bigger permanent farmers market
- 3 full lanes marked by Columbus Field Road
- Money is not the only answer to answer to end poverty \*Education is a big part\*
- We have the best library ever!
- Youth weekends at the Keppoch
- Could the Town of Antigonish serve as an umbrella for volunteer organizations?
- Promote co-operatives! (i.e when businesses close reopen as a co-op!)
- Protect our 3 beautiful rivers!
- Appoint a “clean” commissioner who needs to address signage about waste and media awareness. Every “litter bit helps”. Encourage everyone to take part/ pride in cleaning the town
- Earth Day Community Garbage pickup
- Green Spaces! → Get rid of fencing along arena/ farmers market
- Trail accessibility to connect community areas
- Arts and Culture Center as a central gathering place for youth Artists. This also addresses the need for youth having activities to do. It would create a common place for people of all ages and abilities to come together
- Get going on new Farmers Market Now!
- Beautification. The summary had no mention of signage or billboards. The community is unsightly and it needs regulation.
- Encourage support of a discovery based + arts based education, young families would flock here!
- Clean and beautiful town.
  - More public art- more ‘organic’ and not solely 8x 12 ‘murals’
  - development of small, shaded, pleasant, gathering spaces, in a shaded garden on old

site of St Ninian

→ Sculptural garden

→ Return the benches, build artistic/ creative bike stands and shaded benches

- Accessibility legislation has passed provincially
  - Antigonish is a town of older buildings that are not accessible
  - What is the Town's plan to support business/groups to meet the accessibility legislation
- The credit Union parking lot would make a beautiful open air park with raised beds and it would be accessible
- Create incentives for commercial properties owners to let arts group make cultural use of empty spaces
- Car-free Sundays on Mainstreet
- Antigonish Town and County is friendly on the outside but not genuinely welcome to outsiders
- For next time, we might engage/invite directly university and community leaders involved in bridging the divide