

Revisiting our *Shared Future*



“A strong, responsible Municipal Government that provides services and leadership through believing in our communities, facilitating growth and development while enhancing our quality of life and preserving the beauty of our surroundings.”

- St. Mary's 2026, A Ten Year Strategic Plan

Summary

On September 22nd, 2018, over 40 community members of the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's came together to discuss our shared future with three themes in mind:



Population

Economic Development

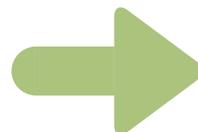
Public Engagement



We
identified...



**Our Current
Assets**



**Ideas and
Actions**

Population

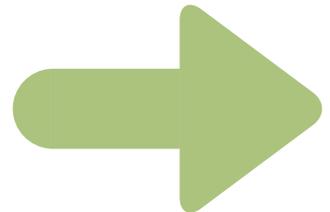
Why do people move here and stay here now?



- A great place to retire or start a family
- Close-knit community with opportunities to collaborate!
- Sense of community belonging
- Friendly, safe, and fun for our kids
- All the services in a small place (good hospital, good school)
- “Relaxed doesn’t mean boring”
- Opportunities to buy: land, homes, businesses

What changes are needed to make it more attractive for people to stay and come here?

- Increased awareness of all we have to offer
- Opportunities for youth: education, entertainment, enterprise
- Increased broadband connectivity
- Change "old ways" mentality
- Foster entrepreneurship: connect business owners, provide incentives to start a business, help promote businesses
- Long-term opportunities from short term business (i.e. gold mine; reinvest profits to have sustainable impact)
- Develop Winter tourism: trails, skiing, snow-shoeing
- Greater online presence: Community information needs to be more readily available and easily accessible
- Encourage St. Mary's to be a thriving place for the arts and trades: attract builders, artists, artisans



Economic Development

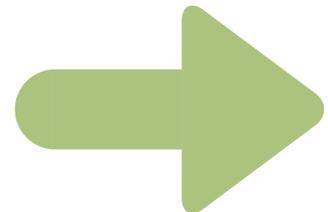
What are the district's economic development assets and advantages now?



- Natural beauty and ecotourism
- Seasonal living and working opportunities
- Inspiring place for craftspeople
- Beautiful towns: Sherbrooke, Port Bickerton, etc.
- Inexpensive land and properties
- Natural resources
- Amenities in rural setting: hospital, nursing homes, schools, etc.
- Community's central Nova Scotia location has the potential to be an economic hub

What action, policy, or change will increase economic development in the future?

- Online presence: blogs, new and updated websites, social media presence
- Connectivity: broadband, internet, cell phone coverage
- Sustainable energy opportunities: wind, solar, tidal
- Economic incentives to attract trades and crafts people
- Develop all networks and sectors: trails, entrepreneurs, restaurants, artists
- More signage and self-promotion in the district as well as bigger city centres like Sydney, Antigonish and Halifax



Public Engagement

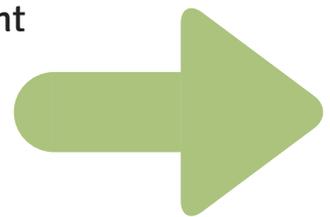
How do you get your municipal information now?



- Newsletter: extremely important for rural and senior population
- Facebook and other social media platforms
- Local bulletins: drug store, grocery store, post office etc.
- Councillors, word of mouth

What actions, policies, or changes would engage you better in municipal issues?

- Councillors/Warden to visit other areas of the municipality more often
- Community events and roundtables with Warden and Councillors
- When it comes to decision-making, find out what people want first
- Sherbrooke as a hub, host events there
- Question period: online and in-person
- Increased use of technology as an engagement tool
- Email newsletter re: events, updates, ways to get involved, new provincial programs, etc.
- Encourage an approachable municipal office
- Live calendar on website that shares updates as events, programs and opportunities arise



Aligning our conversations with the St. Mary's 2026 Strategic Plan

Goal 1

To Increase Population
of St. Mary's by 5% by
2021

- Change "old ways" mentality
- Market ourselves (increased online presence)
- Opportunities for youth
- Increase connectivity
- Places to rent

Goal 2

Increase Commercial
Assessment by 5% and
Reduce Unemployment
Rate by 2026

- Focus on trades and crafts people
- Marketing our current assets
- Capitalize on rural appeal
- Develop more visitor information
- Create chamber of commerce/
network of businesses

Strategy

Enhance community
engagement and
communication

- Increase online engagement
- Councillor/Warden visits to rural communities
- Longer question period at Council meetings
- Updated municipal calendar (online)
- Frequent email newsletter

What else did we hear?



Thank you!

