

Lunenburg Waterfront Strategic Plan

**Findings from the Stakeholder
and Community Consultations
and Next Steps, May 4, 2026**

 **LUNENBURG WATERFRONT ASSOCIATION INC.** 

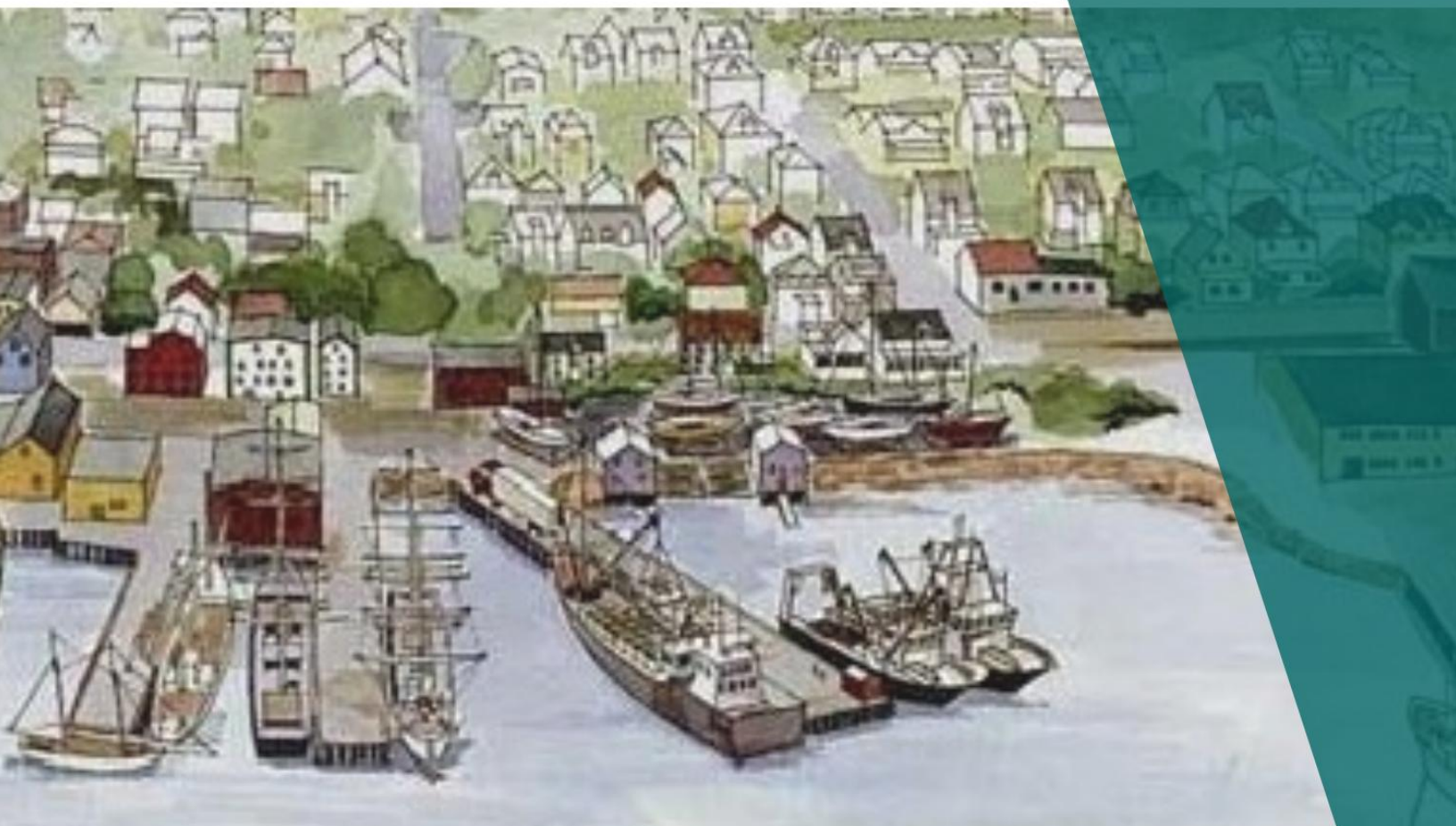




Table of CONTENTS

Executive Summary	1
1. Introduction	4
1.1 Purpose of the Strategic Plan.....	4
1.2 Purpose of this Report	4
1.3 Methodology and Sources.....	4
2. Vision Statement	5
2.1 Where the Vision Comes From.....	5
2.2 Testing of the Draft Vision at the Sessions	5
2.3 Findings From the Research.....	6
3. Key Issues and Challenges	8
3.1 Condition of Wharves (68%)	9
3.2 Building Upgrades and Occupancy (49%)	9
3.3 Harbour Protection and Climate Change (25%)	11
3.4 Interface Between Waterfront and Tourism (20%)	12
3.5 Harbour Water Quality and Sewage (20%)	13
3.6 Marina Infrastructure, Floating Docks, and Mooring Capacity (17%)	14
4. Strategic Priorities	16
4.1 Thriving Waterfront Businesses (73%).....	16
4.2 A Whole-of-Harbour Approach (52%)	19
4.3 A Strong Foundation (48%).....	21
4.4 A Resilient, Protected Harbour (16%).....	22
4.5 Improved Access to the Waterfront (6%)	24
5. Next Steps	26
5.1 Structure of the Strategic Plan.....	26
5.2 The Path Forward.....	26



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report synthesizes the findings from a multi-stream engagement process (35 key informant interviews and surveys of over 80 community members, 11 operators, and LWAI Board members) and two public sessions held on April 14 and 15, 2026 with more than 90 participants. It provides direction to the LWAI Board on three questions: what should be the vision for the waterfront, what are the key issues and challenges it faces, and what strategic priorities should the plan address.

Vision

The 2004 founding vision was strongly reaffirmed across every stream. At the public sessions, 88% of participants endorsed a thriving, year-round working waterfront as the core of the vision tested:

Lunenburg's waterfront will be a thriving, year-round working waterfront — anchored in heritage and authenticity, enhanced by the marine industry, diversified across ocean-related sectors, and welcoming to businesses, residents, and visitors alike. It will be managed collaboratively, invested in strategically, and accountable to the community it serves.

Key Issues and Challenges

Six issues were tested in two polls (a re-vote followed facilitated discussion). They are presented below in order of weighted importance across the two polls:

- **Condition of wharves (68%).** The Picton Castle Wharf (provincial / Build NS) and the Railway Wharf (federal / DFO Small Craft Harbours) are in critical condition. The private sector cannot fund this; multi-level government investment is essential.
- **Building upgrades and occupancy (49%).** The Zwicker Building, Mill Building, Big Boat Shed, and Picton Castle Building are all under-utilized or in need of repair. Short leases and re-bid practices on expiring leases discourage tenant investment.
- **Harbour protection and climate change (25%).** Coastal erosion, intensifying storms, and rising sea levels are already affecting the harbour. A breakwater would protect from southeast swells and is also a precondition for marine tourism growth.
- **Interface between waterfront and tourism (20%).** Tourism is a major economic driver but creates pressures (peak-season congestion, parking, housing). The working waterfront is the tourism product, and the priority is extending the season rather than adding peak-season volume.
- **Harbour water quality and sewage (20%).** Sewage overflow during heavy rain and unregulated vessel discharge undermine the harbour's credibility as a marine tourism destination.
- **Marina infrastructure and mooring capacity (17%).** Lunenburg lacks a full-service marina; the mooring field needs active management. The Mahone Bay model was repeatedly cited.

Strategic Priorities

Participants were asked which two priorities should receive the most attention in the first year of the plan. One priority stood out, and two were closely grouped behind it:

- **Thriving Waterfront Businesses (73%).** Support existing operators to retain and grow across marine industrial services, marine tourism, ocean technology and research, education, and film. The standout first-year priority by a wide margin.
- **A Whole-of-Harbour Approach (52%).** Manage the harbour as a single integrated system across federal, provincial, municipal, Build NS, and private interests. Structured engagement with Build NS is an immediate priority.
- **A Strong Foundation (48%).** Secure multi-level government investment to repair wharves, activate buildings, and ease the barriers to private investment.
- **A Resilient, Protected Harbour (16%).** Protect the harbour from climate and water quality threats, including a breakwater (federal initiative) and improved sewage treatment.
- **Improved Access to the Waterfront (6%).** Improve marina amenities, wayfinding, parking, and managed mooring — balanced against protecting working-waterfront operations.

Next Steps

The remaining work proceeds in five phases, leading to presentation of the strategic plan at the LWAI Annual Meeting in June 2026:

- **Phase 1 — Strategic planning session (May 2026).** Conducted with the LWAI Board in May.
- **Phase 2 — Develop the draft plan (May-June 2026).** Translate the confirmed vision and priorities into a draft strategic plan with a specific action agenda.
- **Phase 3 — Community feedback (June 2026).** Share the draft with the community and integrate input.
- **Phase 4 — Refine and present (June 2026).** Present the strategic plan at the LWAI Annual Meeting.
- **Phase 5 — Implementation framework (post-presentation).** Develop the accountability framework and provide recommendations on the LWAI and on implementation.

Overview of the Preliminary Vision, Issues and Challenges, Strategic Priorities and Potential Actions

VISION

Lunenburg's waterfront will be a thriving, year-round working waterfront — anchored in heritage and authenticity, enhanced by the marine industry, diversified across ocean-related sectors, and welcoming to businesses, residents, and visitors alike. It will be managed collaboratively, invested in strategically, and accountable to the community it serves.

KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

% selecting each as a major issue in the public sessions

Condition of Wharves	Building Upgrades & Occupancy	Harbour Protection & Climate	Waterfront-Tourism Interface	Water Quality & Sewage	Marina & Mooring
68%	49%	25%	20%	20%	17%
❖ Gateways to the world ❖ <u>Picton</u> Castle (provincial) ❖ Railway Wharf (federal) ❖ Need for public funding	❖ Vacancies in Zwicker and Mill Buildings ❖ Big Boat Shed underutilized ❖ Picton Castle Building ❖ Short leases discourage investment	❖ Coastal erosion ❖ Storm surge & sea-level rise ❖ Breakwater under discussion	❖ Working waterfront IS the product ❖ Desire to increase access without disrupting marine ❖ Cruise traffic growing ❖ Parking & housing pressure	❖ Sewage overflow in heavy rain ❖ Unregulated vessel discharge ❖ Brand & marine tourism risk	❖ Full-service marina gaps ❖ Mooring field unmanaged ❖ Berthing capacity tight

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND EXAMPLES OF POTENTIAL ACTIONS

% selecting each as a first-year priority, with examples of potential actions

Thriving Waterfront Businesses	Whole-of-Harbour Approach	A Strong Foundation	A Resilient, Protected Harbour	Improved Access to the Waterfront
73%	52%	48%	16%	6%
❖ Focus on BRE ❖ Dedicated economic development ❖ Lease-term reform with Build NS ❖ Marine services marketing ❖ Pursue defence, ocean-tech, film	❖ Water, seabed, shorelines, buildings, and sightlines ❖ Increased coordination & cooperation with key stakeholders (BNS, federal and local governments, waterfront businesses and ongoing initiatives)	❖ Prioritized capital investment plan ❖ Federal funding — Railway Wharf ❖ Provincial funding — <u>Picton</u> Castle ❖ Easing barriers to private sector investment ❖ Accessing funding options (e.g. programs, hotel tax / BIA)	❖ Floating breakwater pilot ❖ Federal breakwater (long term) ❖ Sewage treatment & pump-out ❖ Climate-adaptation design standards	❖ Wayfinding & interpretive signage ❖ Defined pedestrian route ❖ Managed mooring field pilot ❖ Shuttle & parking strategy

Source: Qatalyst Research Group | LWAI Strategic Plan engagement, April 2026 | Percentages reflect public-session polling (60–63 respondents per poll across two evenings)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The Lunenburg Waterfront Association Inc. (LWAI) engaged Qatalyst Research Group to develop a strategic plan for the Lunenburg waterfront. The plan is focused on the waterfront itself including its assets, its economy, and its future. The LWAI is the convenor of the process and a likely implementer of many of its recommendations.

The plan is intended to provide a clear, actionable roadmap for the next five years, with a directional vision for the next ten to twenty years. The last master plan for the waterfront expired in 2023, and much has changed since it was developed including the transition from Develop Nova Scotia to Build Nova Scotia, for whom the previous plan was developed.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

This report synthesizes what we have heard through the engagement to date and provides direction to the LWAI Board on three questions:

- What should be the vision for the waterfront?
- What are the key issues and challenges it faces?
- What strategic priorities should the plan address, and what kinds of actions might sit under each?

1.3 METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES

The findings summarized in this report draw on five streams of engagement and research.

Source	Respondents / Participants
Community Survey	83 respondents
Key Informant Interviews	35 respondents (33 detailed interview transcripts)
Operators Survey	11 respondents
LWAI Board Survey	7 respondents
Public Sessions (April 14–15, 2026)	90+ participants across two evenings

At each of the two public sessions, participants responded to four Mentimeter polls covering physical waterfront issues, elements of the draft vision statement, and first-year strategic priorities. Those poll results are presented throughout this report alongside relevant findings from the surveys and interviews.

2. VISION STATEMENT

2.1 WHERE THE VISION COMES FROM

When the LWAI was founded in 2004 in response to Clearwater Fine Foods' planned divestiture of its Lunenburg properties, the community coalesced around a clear set of principles for the waterfront's future: a strong working waterfront, protection of heritage character and UNESCO status, mixed-use development centred on marine and ocean-related industries, public access and community benefit, and cooperative relationships with all levels of government. That founding vision has guided two decades of waterfront planning. A central question in this engagement was whether the founding vision still holds and, if so, what it should mean for the next five to twenty years.

2.2 TESTING OF THE DRAFT VISION AT THE SESSIONS

Drawing on the earlier research, a draft vision was presented at the public sessions describing the waterfront as:

Lunenburg's waterfront will be a thriving, year-round working waterfront — anchored in heritage and authenticity, enhanced by the marine industry, diversified across ocean-related sectors, and welcoming to businesses, residents, and visitors alike. It will be managed collaboratively, invested in strategically, and accountable to the community it serves.

When asked which elements of the draft resonated most strongly with them, 88% of participants across both evenings identified a thriving, year-round working waterfront. It was the only element selected by a majority. This is the strongest and most stable result of any poll across the two sessions. The second most commonly selected priority (by 29%) is a waterfront that is managed collaboratively and accountable to the community, which likely has implications for how the plan will be implemented.

**Which elements of the draft vision statement
resonate most strongly with you? (Select up to two)**

Choice	Night 1		Night 2		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Thriving, year-round working waterfront	21	84%	28	90%	49	88%
Managed collaboratively and accountable to the community	7	28%	9	29%	16	29%
Anchored in the marine industry	8	32%	5	16%	13	23%
Welcoming to businesses, residents, and visitors alike	8	32%	4	13%	12	21%
Enriched by heritage and authenticity	4	16%	7	23%	11	20%
Diversified across ocean-related sectors	1	4%	9	29%	10	18%
Respondents	25	100%	31	100%	56	100%

2.3 FINDINGS FROM THE RESEARCH

The feedback received regarding a vision generally supports continuation of the 2004 founding vision, with the following observations:

- **The working waterfront is the anchor of the vision across every stream.** 48 of 83 community survey respondents (58%), 27 of 33 key informants (82%), 9 of 11 operators, and 5 of 7 Board members cited a strong working waterfront as the defining element. Multiple respondents framed this as an economic strategy rather than nostalgia: the working waterfront is the tourism product, and it is what differentiates Lunenburg from places like Mahone Bay. Captain Moreland's recounting of the LWAI's 2005 founding underscored that the working-waterfront model was arrived at through careful analysis of alternatives (yacht stop, condo-oriented development, tourism-only), not through sentiment.
- **Stakeholders stressed the importance of strong governance of the waterfront and accountability,** particularly as the focus expands from an historical focus on infrastructure in the central harbour to a broader focus within a whole-of-harbour approach.
- **Anchored in the marine industry is implicit in a working waterfront.** When those interviewed or surveyed commented on the working waterfront, they generally are referring to the marine-related businesses working in that area.
- **The area should be welcoming to residents and visitors alike, but with some limits.** As will be discussed in a later section, there is tension between a working waterfront and

openness to visitors on that waterfront. Access is supported by only to the extent that it does not interfere with the operations of those working along the waterfront.

- **Heritage and authenticity are widely endorsed but with a clear caveat.** Forty-two community respondents (51%), 15 key informants and 7 of 11 operators affirmed heritage protection. However, multiple respondents explicitly cautioned against turning the waterfront into "a museum," "a movie set," or "Disneyland." The working waterfront is the heritage. It needs to be a working waterfront, not a representation of what was once a working waterfront.
- **The greatest difference between the two evenings was diversified across ocean-related sectors (4% Night 1, 29% Night 2).** A contributing factor was likely a discussion, in the second session, that the impact of the Clearwater divestiture was heightened by the waterfront heavy dependence on a specific sector at the time (scallops).

3. KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

The first two polls on both evenings asked participants to identify the two major issues or challenges facing the physical waterfront. Poll 2 was a re-vote after facilitated discussion, which enabled us to see how the priorities shifted as participants engaged with each other. At 68%, the condition of wharves was the dominant concern in both the pre and post polls.

Poll 1 (Pre-discussion): Specifically with respect to the physical waterfront, what are the two major issues or challenges to be addressed?

Choice	Night 1		Night 2		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Condition of wharves	16	62%	25	74%	41	68%
Building upgrades and occupancy	10	38%	14	41%	24	40%
Marina infrastructure, floating docks and mooring capacity	8	31%	5	15%	13	22%
Harbour protection and climate change	5	19%	11	32%	16	27%
Interface between Waterfront + Tourism	7	27%	7	21%	14	23%
Harbour water quality & sewage	6	23%	5	15%	11	18%
Respondents	26	100%	34	100%	60	100%

Poll 2 (Post-discussion) — With respect to the physical waterfront, what are the two major issues or challenges to be addressed?

Choice	Night 1		Night 2		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Condition of wharves	18	62%	23	74%	41	68%
Building upgrades and occupancy	18	62%	17	55%	35	58%
Marina infrastructure, floating docks and mooring capacity	3	10%	4	13%	7	12%
Harbour protection and climate change	5	17%	9	29%	14	23%
Interface between Waterfront + Tourism	7	24%	3	10%	10	17%
Harbour water quality & sewage	5	17%	8	26%	13	22%
Respondents	29	100%	31	100%	60	100%

The results from the session and research are discussed below. The sections below walk through each issue in order of weighted importance, drawing on what was said at the sessions together with the findings from the surveys and interviews.

3.1 CONDITION OF WHARVES (68%)

The wharves are the physical backbone of the working waterfront. The issue was selected by 68% of respondents in both Poll 1 and Poll 2. In the supporting research, infrastructure investment was the #1 priority in every survey (community 4.52, KI 4.63, operators 4.63, Board 4.9). Twenty-eight of 33 key informants (85%) named wharf repairs as their top investment priority, as did 7 of 11 operators (64%) and all 7 Board members. The discussion at both sessions emphasized that the private sector cannot fund wharf infrastructure alone, and that multi-level government funding will be essential.

- **Two main wharves are in critical condition: the Railway Wharf and the Picton Castle Wharf.** The two wharves will require parallel but distinct funding pathways because of the different jurisdictions involved.
 - Managed by Fisheries and Oceans Canada's Small Craft Harbours, the Railway Wharf was considered critical for commercial fishing operations. It is a timber pile structure, approximately 85 metres long and 14 metres wide, and has been load-restricted since an assessment in 2021. A replacement plan and design exist, and the environmental assessment was completed in 2024 (determining that the project is unlikely to cause significant adverse environmental effects). The wharf is now awaiting federal funding to proceed.
 - The Picton Castle Wharf is a provincial asset, owned by Build Nova Scotia. It is in critical condition, to the point that the Barque Picton Castle, the wharf's namesake tall ship, has relocated to Adams & Knickle. Build Nova Scotia has completed an evaluation of the wharf, and funding is planned.
- **High Liner wharves also require restoration.** The High Liner site wharves, east of the core waterfront at the edge of the inner harbour, were flagged in the research as additional assets requiring attention.
- **The private sector cannot fund wharf infrastructure on its own.** Wharf repair and replacement costs are well beyond what individual operators can absorb, and the assets serve the whole working waterfront rather than any single business.

3.2 BUILDING UPGRADES AND OCCUPANCY (49%)

Several of the core waterfront buildings have been underutilized or sat empty for extended periods. The issue rose sharply between the two polls (from 40% to 58%) which represented the largest upward shift of any issue after the discussion. In the other research, building rehabilitation was named as an investment priority by 22 community survey respondents, 14 key informants, 5 of

7 Board members, and 4 of 11 operators. Participants at the sessions connected empty buildings directly to Build Nova Scotia's perceived shift from an economic development mandate to a narrower property management role.

- **Investment in waterfront buildings is often substantial.** Marine-oriented tenants often require specialized renovations, reinforced floors for equipment, utility upgrades, climate control for materials, accessibility, and fire safety. A new tenant moving into a waterfront building typically faces costs that take years to recoup, which makes the terms of occupancy a critical factor in decisions to invest.
- **Short commercial leases and the requirement to re-bid on expiring leases discourage tenant investment.** Build Nova Scotia leases were raised directly at the sessions. Tony Chaplik's furniture-making story illustrated the issue: a 10-year lease expiring, approximately \$35,000 already invested in the space, and a three-month re-bid window with no certainty of continuation. The leasing model as it currently operates can put an established business at risk at each renewal and undermines the willingness of any operator to invest ahead.
- **The Zwicker Building remains a prominent vacant or underused asset.** The Zwicker & Co. Wharf and Warehouse is a three-storey, 12,000-square-foot wood-frame structure with elements dating to the late 1800s. The provincial government invested \$1.6 million in ground-floor renovations (marine-visitation facilities, washrooms, marina office, event space) and the federal government added \$600,000 through ACOA. Build Nova Scotia issued a Business Development Opportunity process in July 2025 seeking long-term tenants. A new tenant will fill the main floor. The upper floors remain vacant. Some stakeholders envisioned the building as a potential HUB of the waterfront, co-locating the LWAI, the Board of Trade, and year-round tenants.
- **The Mill & Engine Shop building is also a priority.** The Lunenburg Foundry / Mill & Engine Shop at 4 Burma Road ceased operations in 2021 and was purchased by the province in 2023. Build Nova Scotia has publicly acknowledged the site's importance and issued a Request for Information in March 2025 to inform a future Business Development Opportunity. The site remains without an active tenant.
- **The Picton Castle Building requires repair.** The mixed-use commercial building at 174 Bluenose Drive has been flagged in the research as needing repair (noted as a fire hazard). It currently houses the Picton Castle Ship & Boat Chandlery, the Nova Scotia SeaSchool, Ironbound Rigging, and related operations, and has been integral to the Picton Castle's shore operations.
- **The Big Boat Shed is under-utilized.** Built in the 1930s as part of the Smith & Rhuland Shipyard complex, the Big Boat Shed received approximately \$1.7 million in investment from Tourism Nova Scotia, Develop Nova Scotia, and ACOA, including a new concrete floor, slipway, structural reinforcement, and a glass-walled viewing gallery. It is leased to

Westergard Boatyard for wooden vessel construction, with additional potential for public programming and traditional boatbuilding education that has not been fully realized.

- **The Scotia Trawler Storeroom site represents a potential redevelopment opportunity.** The Scotia Trawler Storeroom was destroyed by fire in 2013. Insurance proceeds may still be available to support construction of a new facility, and redevelopment of the site could attract new marine-dependent businesses to a prime location between the Clearwater Fleet Operations Centre and the Shipyard.
- **The perceived shift in Build Nova Scotia's mandate is a cross-cutting concern.** The transition from Develop Nova Scotia to Build Nova Scotia has been accompanied by a perception that the organization has moved from an economic development mandate to a narrower property management role, with decisions driven more by revenue or operational efficiency than by community or working-waterfront outcomes. Public ownership of waterfront assets still has support across the research (on a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is a high priority, community provided an average rating of 4.2, key informants 3.7, operators 3.6, and the Board 3.8); however, acknowledged some challenges in relying on Build Nova Scotia to make investments and effectively manage the properties for the benefit of the waterfront.

3.3 HARBOUR PROTECTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE (25%)

Harbour protection and climate change drew notably stronger support on Night 2 (e.g. 32% in Poll 1) than Night 1 (19% in Poll 1). There is a growing awareness of climate risk amongst the stakeholders; 8 community respondents and 10 key informants raised it independently (no question prompted climate issues).

- **Climate change is already affecting the harbour.** Stakeholders cited rising sea levels, increasing storm intensity and frequency, and coastal erosion along the shoreline. The Bluenose Golf Course was raised specifically as facing multi-million dollar erosion repairs, and the Fisheries Museum cited rising infrastructure costs linked to climate change as an operating constraint. Wharf infrastructure itself will need to be designed for expected sea-level rise and storm surge intensities, not historical norms.
- **A breakwater or safe harbour would protect from southeast swells and unlock new opportunities.** Ten key informants advocated for a breakwater. Two options have been discussed: a full federal breakwater (extending from the golf course area and requiring federal infrastructure funding; one person estimated that cost at \$20 million or more) and a lower-cost floating breakwater (estimated by another at approximately \$150,000) as a near-term step. Beyond climate protection, a protected harbour is a precondition for marine tourism growth; a breakwater would make Lunenburg viable as a destination for yachts and larger vessels that currently avoid the open-southeast exposure.

- **Coastal protection needs to be expedited to cover the entire Lunenburg Harbour.** Stakeholders identified the Coastal Protection Act as an important provincial instrument for shoreline management. After the Act was abandoned in 2024, it was replaced by a non-legislated 'Coastal Action Plan' under which municipalities are encouraged to draft their own land-use bylaws using provincial templates. Coordination across the Town, MODL, and the provincial government would be required.
- **Provincial climate adaptation funding may be available.** Provincial funding programs for climate adaptation have been flagged as a potential source for shoreline protection, wharf hardening, and other resilience investments. Pursuing these programs will require the waterfront plan to frame its infrastructure investments with climate adaptation as an explicit co-benefit, not as a separate line of work.

3.4 INTERFACE BETWEEN WATERFRONT AND TOURISM (20%)

Twenty-three percent of attendees in Poll 1 and 17% in Poll 2 identified the interface between the waterfront and tourism as a key issue. There is a notable perception gap in the supporting research: on average, community survey stakeholders rated marine-tourism integration a priority (3.8 on the scale of 1 to 5), while key informants rated it a low priority (2.3) with 63% rating it 1 (no priority at all). A recurring key informant view is that the integration "happens organically"; the working waterfront is the tourism product, so the question is less about integration and more about protecting waterfront operations from tourism while improving the visitor experience.

- **Tourism is a major economic driver and visitor volumes are rising.** In 2019, approximately 415,000 people visited Lunenburg by land, and 176 vessels visited the Lunenburg marina. Tourism supports restaurants, retail, accommodations, tours, and related businesses, and is an important part of the town's economic base.
- **Rising tourism volumes also create real pressures.** Stakeholders flagged the impacts of peak-season tourism on the community: congestion in the summer months, parking shortages, housing pressures (including short-term rental effects on long-term housing), and the concentration of activity in a short seasonal window. High housing costs make it difficult for employers to attract workers. Several operators noted that peak-season volume is already at or near maximum capacity; the priority is extending the season, not adding more summer visitors.
- **Cruise line traffic is increasing and raises infrastructure questions.** Lunenburg currently receives 11 cruise calls per year, with Princess Line adding 9 additional calls. Accommodating this traffic without disrupting working-waterfront operations will require investment in berthing, passenger handling, and wayfinding. The Fisheries Museum currently serves as a cruise terminal, and capacity questions are emerging as volumes grow.

- **There is general agreement that the working waterfront is the tourism product.** This is one of the strongest cross-cutting findings in the research. Visitors come to Lunenburg precisely because the waterfront is active and authentic. Any tourism strategy needs to protect and showcase working-waterfront operations rather than compete with them. The waterfront must remain accessible to visitors, but access cannot come at the expense of the businesses that make it worth visiting.
- **There are practical opportunities to improve the interface.** Stakeholders identified several concrete and relatively inexpensive improvements: a continuous waterfront boardwalk or pedestrian route (raised by 5 of 11 operators), improved wayfinding and signage to businesses on Lincoln Street and beyond (which are "invisible" to waterfront visitors today), and interpretive signage about marine activities and the history of the area. Parking was the single most-cited issue in the community survey (12 mentions, unprompted), with calls for an off-waterfront shuttle system and pedestrian zones.
- **The working waterfront has to be protected.** Stakeholders were explicit that tourism infrastructure cannot block access routes used by operators, cannot constrain heavy-equipment movements, and cannot compete for space that working operators need. Any public-access improvements must be planned in coordination with operators to avoid disrupting ongoing operations.
- **Year-round activity emerged as a strong related theme.** Ten community stakeholders raised year-round operation independently, along with approximately 20 key informants, 6 of 11 operators, and 4 of 7 Board members. In terms of tourism itself, extending into shoulder and winter seasons through events, festivals, and programming is seen as more valuable than adding more peak-season volume.

3.5 HARBOUR WATER QUALITY AND SEWAGE (20%)

Eighteen percent of attendees in Poll 1 and 22% in Poll 2 identified harbour water quality as a major issue. In the community survey, 9 stakeholders (11%) raised sewage, harbour pollution, eelgrass protection, and harbour cleanup independently, with no question prompting the topic. Four to 5 key informants raised water quality independently, describing the harbour in strongly negative terms. There was comparatively little discussion of sewage at the public sessions despite its prominence in the research. Where it was raised, it was consistently linked to the credibility of the marine tourism vision.

- **Water quality directly affects the community's brand and credibility.** The periodic discharges of raw sewage makes it difficult for the community to credibly market itself as a destination for yachts, super yachts, or marine tourism more broadly. The investment case for marine tourism, and the 10–15 year brand-building effort it requires, depends on the harbour being, and being seen to be, clean. This is a reputational risk as much as an environmental one.

- **Sewage overflow during heavy rain is a principal challenge.** The town's sewage system overflows into the harbour during heavy rainstorms. The outfall pipe location, treatment capacity, and rainwater infiltration into the sewage system have all been identified as contributing factors. Resolving this is a municipal utilities project that will extend beyond the waterfront plan but needs to be pursued in coordination with it.
- **Vessel discharge into the harbour is a second challenge. A lack of** pump-out infrastructure and limited regulation of vessel discharge contributed to vessel sewage being discharged into the harbour. Addressing this may require both infrastructure (pump-out facilities at the marina) and regulation (vessel discharge rules and enforcement).

3.6 MARINA INFRASTRUCTURE, FLOATING DOCKS, AND MOORING CAPACITY (17%)

The percentage of session participants identified marina infrastructure as a priority dropped sharply from 22% in Poll 1 to 12% in Poll 2, as other priorities rose in relative weight. In the research, marina and boating services emerged as a theme in the community survey (8 mentions, unprompted). The mooring field was one of the strongest emergent themes in the key informant interviews (8–10 stakeholders).

- **Marina development was a priority in the previous waterfront plan.** Develop Nova Scotia's 2019–2023 Master Plan for Lunenburg's Working Waterfront identified the development of a best-in-class recreational marina for transient boaters as one of its ten goals.
- **A full-service marina was not completed, though elements have been put in place.** The Zwicker Building's ground-floor renovation delivered a marina office, washrooms, showers, and laundry for visiting boaters. A boat launch is in place, and fuel is available. Gaps remain — notably full sewage pump-out service and the broader range of services that a full-service transient marina would offer. Stakeholders consistently framed these gaps as unfinished business from the previous plan rather than new needs.
- **Opinions vary as to whether the mooring field needs active management.** The mooring field was described by some in the interviews as "the wild west." It currently operates on a first-come-first-served basis with federal mooring registration but no active day-to-day management. The Mahone Bay managed mooring model, approximately \$125 per mooring per year, was repeatedly cited as a practical reference point. This is also a socially sensitive issue: the mooring field is used primarily by lobster fishermen for vessel storage, and any reorganization will have to navigate competing interests among lobster fishermen, recreational boaters, and transient vessels.
- **Berthing capacity is a constraint at peak times.** The mooring field is reported to be at full capacity, and dinghy dock capacity is insufficient in peak season. Berthing constraints affect both the community's working fleet and its ability to host visiting vessels.

- **Marina services and mooring infrastructure are a prerequisite for the marine tourism opportunity.** The marine tourism and yachting opportunity identified across the research (approximately 16 key informants flagged it as the major growth opportunity, with Belfast, Bar Harbor, and Portland ME as models) is contingent on this infrastructure being in place.

4. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The final poll on both evenings asked participants which strategic priorities should receive the most attention in the first year of the plan. A Thriving Waterfront Businesses was the standout first-year priority at 73% on both nights, followed by A Whole-of-Harbour Approach (52%) and A Strong Foundation — infrastructure investment (48%). A Resilient, Protected Harbour (16%) and Improved Access to the Waterfront (6%) registered at lower levels.

Which two strategic priorities do you believe should receive the most attention in the first year of the plan?

Choice	Night 1		Night 2		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Thriving Waterfront Businesses	22	73%	24	73%	46	73%
A Whole-of-Harbour Approach	17	57%	16	48%	33	52%
A Strong Foundation (infrastructure investment)	13	43%	17	52%	30	48%
A Resilient, Protected Harbour	5	17%	5	15%	10	16%
Improved Access to the Waterfront	2	7%	2	6%	4	6%
Respondents	30	100%	33	100%	63	100%

The sections below walk through each priority in order of rated importance, closing with a few examples of potential actions the Board could consider featuring in the plan.

4.1 THRIVING WATERFRONT BUSINESSES (73%)

What's Involved

This priority focuses on supporting the operators, already on the waterfront, so they can maintain and expand operations across marine industrial services, boat building and repair, ocean technology and research, emerging sectors such as defence and film, and tourism-facing businesses. Research indicates that 75%-80% of all economic growth in Canada comes from existing businesses with a community, 15% comes from new businesses arriving, and the remainder of the growth comes from business start-up.

The working waterfront is what makes Lunenburg economically viable, culturally distinctive, and a tourism destination. Operators view the five-year outlook as positive (91%) but face real barriers in costs, permitting, skilled workers, and space. Tourism is heavily dependent on the summer season;

by providing more year-round employment, sustaining and growing the marine industry is the clearest lever for reducing seasonal dependence.

Findings from the sessions and research

Thriving Waterfront Businesses was the standout first-year priority at 73% on both nights. Discussion at the sessions emphasized that existing operators need help with the cost of operations, access to skilled workers, capital for expansion, and navigating government processes. Participants recognized the integrated marine industry value chain as one of Lunenburg's competitive advantages. Selected findings from the research include:

- **Balance "retain and grow" with targeted attraction.** Key informants reframed the business-attraction question from "attract" to "retain and grow". While both can be important, the highest priority is to support existing operators in expanding rather than chase new businesses from outside.
- **The integrated value chain is a competitive advantage.** Contracts placed with any one shipyard or boat-building operator generate downstream revenue across rigging, electrical, machining, supply, and specialist services. Customers come to Lunenburg because the full range of services is available within a compact waterfront. Protecting and strengthening this cluster, rather than diluting it with non-marine uses, is central to the priority.
- **Operators are optimistic but the outlook is conditional.** 91% of operators rated their 5-year economic outlook positive (55% very positive, 36% somewhat positive). Optimism is driven by the growing reputation of Lunenburg, the potential for growth in sections such as defence contracts (e.g. ABCO), yacht and marine services, film, and marine tourism, and prospects regarding repairs to the wharf infrastructure.
- **Lease issues are a structural impediment to investment.** Short commercial leases and the requirement to re-bid on expiring leases (as discussed in Chapter 3) undermine operators' willingness to make the investments the waterfront needs. Longer-term leases, first-refusal rights on renewal, and more predictable re-bid windows would reduce the risk operators face and unlock private investment.
- **Multi-level government investment is essential.** The three-legged stool — federal, provincial, and local government partnership — is the funding model consistently described across the research. The private sector cannot carry the capital cost of waterfront infrastructure on its own. A hotel/accommodation tax and a Business Improvement Area were both raised as potential supplementary revenue sources.
- **Operators face multiple constraints beyond infrastructure.** Top operator constraints are cost of operations (3.6 out of 5), development processes and permitting (3.4), the need for further infrastructure development (3.3), and access to skilled workers (3.3). Housing affordability and availability, the limited economic development capability in the region, and aspects of regulation and zoning were also flagged. Some of these, notably housing and

cost of living, extend beyond the waterfront but materially affect its ability to attract and retain workers.

- **Multiple growth segments were identified in the research. For example, when asked about growth segments, key informants identified** marine industrial services (25 stakeholders), marine tourism and yachting (16, conditional on infrastructure being in place), ocean technology and research (10, including electric and autonomous vessels, offshore wind supply chain, and defence spin-offs with the Big Boat Shed/Dalhousie partnership as a reference model) and education and skills, particularly marine trades training, and film (7).

Potential actions

The following provides some examples of the range of actions that could be considered to help support thriving waterfront businesses:

- **Establish a dedicated economic development capacity for the waterfront.** Confirmed as needed across the research. A funding source and host organization would need to be determined in the next phase of work.
- **Develop a marine services directory and a waterfront destination marketing plan.** Led by whoever takes on the economic development function, in partnership with the Town, Tourism Nova Scotia, and operators.
- **Pursue defence and Coast Guard contract opportunities.** In partnership with ABCO Industries, the Lunenburg Shipyard, and other operators positioned for federal contracts.
- **Advance ocean technology and research partnerships.** Build on the Big Boat Shed / Dalhousie model; engage COVE, federal defence programs, and offshore wind supply chain opportunities.
- **Develop a marine trades training initiative.** In partnership with NSCC, area high schools, the Fisheries Museum, and existing boat-building operators.
- **Extend the tourism shoulder and winter seasons.** Town-led programming, festivals, and events with a marine theme. .
- **Review and strengthen marine industrial zoning.** Town of Lunenburg and MODL, with input from the LWAI and waterfront operators into the current zoning review.
- **Advocate for lease terms that support operator investment.** Longer terms, first-refusal rights, and predictable re-bid windows; LWAI-led engagement with Build Nova Scotia.
- **Protect year-round operators from seasonal pop-up competition.** Policy question for the Town and Build Nova Scotia, supported by operator advocacy.

4.2 A WHOLE-OF-HARBOUR APPROACH (52%)

What's involved

A whole-of-harbour approach managing the harbour as a single integrated system, including water, seabed, shorelines, buildings, and sightlines. It would require coordination across all levels of government, both municipalities, Build Nova Scotia, and private operators. The scope of the plan would extend beyond the former Clearwater properties to encompass the entire harbour, from the lighthouse to the golf course (e.g. including federal waters, the MODL shoreline, and assets such as the Bluenose Golf Course lands at Kaulbach Head). The whole-of-harbour approach would be an evolution of the LWAI's historical focus on the central harbour; it responds to concerns that piecemeal decisions (e.g. on wastewater outfalls, individual wharf projects, or marine-service closures) could cumulatively undermine the working-waterfront vision even as headline investments proceed.

Findings from the sessions and research

A Whole-of-Harbour Approach was the #2 first-year priority at 52%, with consistent support on both evenings. It was also the #2 consensus priority across every research stream including the community survey (4.4), interviews KI (4.2), operators survey (3.8), and the Board (5.0). Session participants raised the Town's current zoning review as a concrete example: the Town is reviewing zoning now, the LWAI has not been engaged, and waterfront businesses appear not to have been represented or asked for input.

- **A broad cross-section of stakeholders needs to be at the table.** A whole-of-harbour approach requires active coordination across Build Nova Scotia, the federal government (DFO Small Craft Harbours, Transport Canada, federal defence), the Town of Lunenburg, the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg, and private operators. Each has assets, jurisdictions, and responsibilities that intersect, but no single body currently has the mandate or capacity to coordinate across all of them.
- **The current model produces fragmented decision-making and idle assets.** Waterfront assets, wastewater outfalls, wharf repair timelines, mooring field management, and leasing decisions have all been cited as examples where the absence of coordination has delayed action or produced outcomes inconsistent with the working-waterfront vision.
- **A coordinated approach gives Lunenburg a stronger, unified voice for investment.** Accessing federal and provincial investment has been an ongoing challenge, in part because the waterfront presents to funders as a fragmented set of projects rather than an integrated program. A coordinated approach would allow Lunenburg to speak with a single voice on infrastructure, climate resilience, economic development, and marine tourism — increasing the chances that investment requests align with federal and provincial priorities.

- **The plan must align with adjacent initiatives already underway.** Several parallel processes intersect with the waterfront plan: the Town's current zoning review, the Town's forthcoming Sustainable Tourism Plan, the Regional Economic Development Strategy, the Coastal Protection Act, and federal priorities around harbour infrastructure and defence. Aligning the waterfront plan with these — rather than duplicating them — will reduce fatigue and increase implementation speed.
- **Water lots and harbour bottom management need to be clarified.** Water lots are parcels of submerged land seaward of the ordinary high water mark. They can be Crown-owned, leased, or (more rarely) privately owned. The fragmented status of water lots and the potential for development that could affect heritage character, and view planes were both raised as concerns in the research. Clarifying water lot management is a natural fit for a whole-of-harbour governance approach.
- **ABCO Industries' plans are an example of the coordination required.** ABCO Industries is a long-established waterfront metal fabrication and boatbuilding company. Founded in 1947 and acquired by the Huskison family in 2018, it designs and builds marine-grade aluminum vessels for the Canadian Coast Guard, the Royal Canadian Navy, and commercial operators, and uncrewed surface vessels in partnership with XOCEAN. It owns land buildings and water lots adjacent to its property. ABCO's growth plans (including taller buildings and larger slipways for defence contracts) illustrate how major private investment decisions intersect with waterfront zoning, harbour management, and infrastructure and may benefit from a coordinated approach across levels of government.

Potential actions

The following provides some examples of the range of actions that could be considered:

- **Structured engagement with Build Nova Scotia.** Re-establishing regular scheduled communication rather than ad hoc contact.
- **Formal coordination with the Town of Lunenburg and MODL on shared waterfront issues.** A standing working arrangement might be led jointly by the LWAI and the two municipalities.
- **Provide input into the Town's current zoning review,** particularly on marine industrial protections. LWAI-led, in partnership with waterfront operators.
- **Engage federal departments on harbour infrastructure and funding priorities.** DFO Small Craft Harbours, Transport Canada, and federal defence.
- **Align the waterfront plan with the Town's Sustainable Tourism Plan and the Regional Economic Development Strategy.** Joint responsibility with the Town and the regional economic development body.

- **Explore Parks Canada involvement given the UNESCO designation.** Citadel Hill and Louisbourg as potential models.
- **Clarify water lot management.** Fragmented ownership and unclear responsibility flagged as a gap. Requires federal, provincial, and local coordination.

4.3 A STRONG FOUNDATION (48%)

What's involved

Multi-level government investment is needed to repair and upgrade the wharves, buildings, and marine facilities that are the physical basis of the working waterfront. The priority covers needed investment in core infrastructure such as the Picton Castle Wharf, building, and Railway Wharf, leasing the Zwicker Building and Mill Building, and reducing constraints to private investment on the waterfront (longer leases, investment-ready properties, clearer processes).

Findings from the sessions and research

A Strong Foundation was the #3 first-year priority at 48%, nearly tied with Whole-of-Harbour. Infrastructure investment was the #1 priority in every survey: community survey (4.5), interviews (4.6), operators (4.6), and Board (4.9). Wharf repairs were named as the top investment priority by 28 of 33 KI, 7 of 11 operators, and all 7 Board members. Participants at the sessions were specific about the two most urgent wharves and their funding pathways: the Railway Wharf (federal) and the Picton Castle Wharf (provincial/Build NS). The discussion made clear that the private sector cannot fund this alone, and that alignment with federal priorities — productivity, ocean technology, defence — is a way to improve the chances of unlocking funding.

- **Significant investment is needed to restore the core physical infrastructure.** The capital required is beyond the private sector.
- **While under consideration, there continues to be uncertainty regarding the potential timing of any future federal and provincial infrastructure funding for the wharfs.** Access to funding for infrastructure was rated a major constraint by Board members (average 5.0). Board members noted 20 years of limited federal engagement despite multiple attempts. The Build NS relationship has added complexity on the provincial side since the transition from Develop NS. Aligning requests with federal priorities around productivity, ocean technology, and defence is seen as an important way to improve funding success rates.
- **Investment must support the waterfront as a working centre while preserving heritage character.** Infrastructure investments need to be designed with heritage requirements in mind and in a way that keeps the waterfront's appearance and character consistent with its UNESCO designation. This is an additional constraint, not a substitute for

functionality; wharves still need to carry commercial fishing loads and support marine industrial operations.

- **Easing the barriers to private investment is part of the foundation.** Infrastructure alone is not sufficient to deliver a thriving waterfront. Longer leases, investment-ready properties, and clearer processes (permitting, approvals) would reduce the effective cost of private investment and unlock the operator-led growth identified under Priority 1.

Potential actions

The following provides some examples of the range of actions that could be considered:

- **Pursue federal and provincial funding.** Develop a prioritized capital investment plan covering the Picton Castle Wharf, Railway Wharf, Mill Building, and other key assets with cost estimates, timelines, and funding pathways. Align infrastructure requests with federal priorities around productivity, ocean technology, and defence to improve funding success rates.
- **Work with Build Nova Scotia on attracting appropriate tenants.** Engage with Build Nova Scotia on the Business Development Opportunity processes for opportunities, particularly the upper-floor activation for the Zwicker Building and the Mill Building.
- **Explore a Business Improvement Area (BIA).**
- **Advocate for improved Build Nova Scotia leasing practices.** Longer terms, first-refusal rights, and predictable re-bid windows will help to retain existing businesses and reduce the disincentive to operator investment.

4.4 A RESILIENT, PROTECTED HARBOUR (16%)

What's involved

The objective is to protect the physical harbour from climate change, erosion, storm surges, and water quality issues, so that it remains safe, functional, and attractive for the decades ahead. Climate resilience is increasingly understood as a precondition for the working waterfront and the marine tourism opportunity, not as a separate environmental concern.

Findings from the sessions and research

A Resilient, Protected Harbour was selected by 16% as a first-year priority, lower than its 25% weighted share in the issues polls. The pattern may suggest participants see climate resilience as an important issue, but more of a medium-term priority than first-year work. In the research,

climate resilience emerged as a strong theme raised by 8 community members and 10 key informants. Ten key informants also advocated specifically for a breakwater.

- **Climate change is already affecting the harbour.** Erosion is damaging shoreline infrastructure (the Bluenose Golf Course is facing multi-million dollar repairs), storm surges are increasing, and rising sea levels threaten wharves and buildings.
- **Water quality is undermining the harbour's potential and appeal.** Sewage overflow during heavy rainstorms, and vessel sewage discharging directly into the water, affect the credibility of the marine tourism vision.
- **A breakwater or safe harbour would protect from southeast swells and open new opportunities.** Two options have been discussed: a full federal breakwater and a lower-cost floating breakwater as a near-term step. A protected harbour would support both climate resilience and the marine tourism opportunity.
- **Sewage treatment and vessel discharge both need to be addressed.** Resolving sewage overflow requires a municipal utilities investment (outfall pipe relocation, treatment capacity, rainwater infiltration). Addressing vessel discharge requires pump-out infrastructure at the marina and harbour-wide coordination on discharge rules across Transport Canada, DFO, and the Town.
- **Advance coastal protection for Lunenburg Harbour.** The provincial Coastal Protection Act (passed 2019, abandoned 2024) was replaced by a non-legislated 'Coastal Action Plan' under which municipalities are encouraged to draft their own land-use bylaws using provincial templates. It will require coordination with the Town and MODL.
- **Climate resilience is a precondition for economic development, not a separate priority.** Framing climate adaptation as a precondition rather than an add-on changes the investment calculus: infrastructure investments under Priority 3 should incorporate climate-adaptation design standards as a matter of course, and provincial climate adaptation funding becomes accessible for waterfront projects that frame themselves accordingly.

Potential actions

- **Champion a federal safe harbour / breakwater initiative as a long-term project.** The federal government would have to take the lead. An option in the near-term is to pilot a floating breakwater as an affordable near-term step.
- **Advance coastal protection for the Lunenburg Harbour.** The Coastal Protection Act (passed in 2019 but later scrapped in 2024) was a Nova Scotia law designed to protect the province's 13,000 kilometres of coastline by regulating development in vulnerable areas. While it was intended to create a unified provincial standard, the government of Nova Scotia ultimately abandoned its implementation in February 2024, opting instead for a non-

legislated "Coastal Action Plan". Municipalities are now encouraged to draft their own land-use bylaws using templates provided by the province.

- **Advocate for municipal sewage treatment improvements and the outfall pipe upgrade.**
- **Install vessel sewage pump-out infrastructure and advocate for discharge regulation.**
- **Engage provincial climate adaptation funding programs**
- **Incorporate climate-adaptation design standards into all infrastructure investment decisions.**

4.5 IMPROVED ACCESS TO THE WATERFRONT (6%)

What's involved

Improving public access, marina amenities, wayfinding, and the management of competing uses so the waterfront works better for visitors, recreational boaters, cruise passengers, residents, and operators alike. The priority is lower ranked as first-year work, but it covers a set of concrete and relatively inexpensive improvements that would deliver visible impact. Improving access must be done in balance with protecting the working waterfront.

Findings from the sessions and research

While participants acknowledged the issues (wayfinding, cruise traffic, parking, mooring field), improved access received only 6% as a first-year priority. This was the lowest ranked of the five potential priorities. In the research, marina and boating services were cited by 8 community respondents, 5 of 11 operators called for a continuous boardwalk, and parking was the single most-cited respondent-raised issue in the community survey (12 mentions). The mooring field was one of the strongest emergent themes in the KI interviews (8–10 respondents).

- **There is broad but not deep support for improved access, with differing perspectives on what it looks like.** The consistent underlying sentiment is that access should be for everyone: residents, day visitors, cruise passengers, recreational boaters, and transient yachts. Improving access is a public good. Views diverge on specific mechanisms, particularly around parking, pedestrian zones, and how much physical change the waterfront should absorb.
- **Key areas are wayfinding, parking, the mooring field, cruise traffic, and marine tourism.** These are the specific operational issues raised consistently across the research and sessions. Each has its own operating characteristics and stakeholder set, and each could be addressed on its own timeline.

- **Improving access must balance with protecting the working waterfront.** Access improvements cannot block routes used by operators, interfere with heavy-equipment movements, or compete for space that working operators need. All improvements need to be planned in coordination with operators.
- **Public access encompasses multiple constituencies.** Residents, visitors, recreational boaters, and cruise passengers all use the waterfront, and their needs differ. A strategy that works for one group can crowd out another. Balancing their interests while protecting the working-waterfront operators, is the core design challenge.
- **Wayfinding and heritage interpretation appear to be low-hanging fruit.** Continuous pedestrian routes, wayfinding signage, and interpretive signage about marine activities and harbour history were raised consistently as practical and relatively inexpensive improvements.
- **Cruise traffic is growing and raises capacity questions.** The addition of 9 Princess Line calls to the existing 11 calls per year creates both opportunity and pressure. Capacity for berthing, passenger handling, and wayfinding needs to grow with the traffic, while protecting regular waterfront operations.
- **Marine recreational boaters are an under-recognized tourism segment.** Visiting yachts, sailors, and recreational boaters already contribute to the tourism economy but are not marketed to as a distinct segment.

Potential actions

The following provides some examples of the range of actions that could be considered:

- **Consider developing a managed mooring field pilot.** Mahone Bay model as the reference point.
- **Develop a shuttle and parking management strategy.** That could involve an off-waterfront lot, multiple drop-off points, a permit system, and modernized meters.
- **Develop wayfinding and signage improvements** including interpretive signage about marine activities, businesses, and the history of the area.
- **More formally define the pedestrian route.** Planning and permitting in coordination with operators to avoid disrupting working-waterfront operations.
- **Identify and market to marine recreation visitors as a distinct tourism segment.** Tourism Nova Scotia and the Town, in coordination with the waterfront's marine services operators.

5. NEXT STEPS

This report has set out direction on the vision, the key issues and challenges, and the strategic priorities for the Lunenburg waterfront. The next phase of work translates that direction into the strategic plan itself, with implementation guidance to follow. The remainder of this chapter proposes a structure for the strategic plan, the sequence of work between now and presentation of the final plan at the LWAI Annual Meeting in June 2026.

5.1 STRUCTURE OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The strategic plan will be built around the following components, to be confirmed with the LWAI in the meeting this week:

- **Vision and mission.** A refined vision for the waterfront (building on Chapter 2 of this report) and a clear mission statement to guide stewardship over the planning horizon.
- **Strategic priorities.** The priorities confirmed at the planning session in May, with a short rationale for each.
- **Action plan.** For each priority, a set of specific actions with leads, partners, sequencing, and dependencies, with year-one actions distinguished from longer-horizon work. It will propose federal, provincial, local, and supplementary funding pathways.
- **Accountability framework.** Indicators of progress, baselines, reporting cadence, and review mechanism (developed after the plan is finalized).
- **Recommendations on governance, leadership, and implementation.** Addressing the organizational question deliberately deferred from this report, including LWAI structure, dedicated staff capacity, and the coordination model needed to deliver the plan.

5.2 THE PATH FORWARD

The remaining work is organized in five phases, leading to presentation of the strategic plan at the LWAI Annual Meeting in June 2026.

Phase 1 — Strategic Planning session (May 2026)

- Strategic planning session with the LWAI Board in May to refine and confirm the vision, strategic priorities, and the actions to be incorporated.

Phase 2 — Develop draft plan (May–June 2026)

- Translate the confirmed vision and priorities into a draft strategic plan structured as set out in 5.1.
- Conduct further research as required to specify actions, partners, costs, and sequencing.

Phase 3 — Community feedback (June 2026)

- Share the draft plan with the community and solicit feedback through a mechanism to be agreed at the meeting this week.
- Review and integrate input.

Phase 4 — Refine and present (June 2026)

- Refine the plan in light of community feedback.
- Present the strategic plan at the LWAI Annual Meeting in June 2026.

Phase 5 — Implementation framework (post-presentation)

- Develop the accountability framework — indicators, baselines, reporting schedule, and review cadence.
- Provide recommendations on the organizational and governance structure best suited to deliver the plan, and on the implementation arrangements (leadership, staff capacity, funding model). These pick up the "How" question deliberately deferred from this report.