



## Rural Municipality of West River

### **Background Study and Community Profile**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the background research and analysis conducted in the development of the draft official plan and land use bylaw.

The following outlines the social, economic, physical, and environmental characteristics of the municipality, factors which lay the groundwork for the municipality's first Official Plan and Land Use Bylaw.

## 2. CONTEXT

### 2.1. Location

The Rural Municipality of West River (referred to as “the municipality” hereafter) is situated on the southern shore of Prince Edward Island in Queen’s County. It is composed of the five former rural municipalities of Afton, Bonshaw, Meadow Bank, New Haven-Riverdale, and West River and is nestled between the Town of Cornwall to the east and the Argyle Shore region to the west. The municipality is roughly 120 km<sup>2</sup> (29,611 acres) in area. The topography is gently rolling and is bisected by the TransCanada highway. The geography is dominated by the West River running southwest through the municipality which is further bounded by waters of Hillsborough Bay to the east and the Northumberland Strait to the south.

### 2.2. Early History

Prince Edward Island is known as Epekwitk and is part of Mi’kma’ki, the traditional, unceded territory of the Mi’kmaq people for more than 12,000 years. The entire province, along with Nova Scotia, eastern New Brunswick, the Gaspé peninsula and southern Newfoundland comprise Mi’kma’ki where oral tradition and historic record point to seasonal use and habitation of the region. Rocky Point is the smallest of three reserve parcels of the Abegweit First Nation at 4.78 hectares in area and is situated at the eastern point of the municipality. This parcel was added to reserve in 1913 and has been part of a long-recognized Indigenous settlement by the Mi’kmaq people. Indeed, the area between Rocky Point and Port La Joie (Charlottetown) was regularly used as a trading-post between the Mi’kmaq and French settlers in the early 1700s and missionaries came to work among the Mi’kmaq who lived along the shores, hunted in the woods and fished in the streams surrounding the port.<sup>1</sup> This area was also a summer gathering place for the Mi’kmaq people where, in 1732, it was recorded that as per annual custom up to 250 “Indians assembled at Fort la Joye to receive their presents from the king of France.”<sup>2</sup> Further, the main travel route from the south to north shore of the island began at Rocky Point from where the Mi’kmaq canoed up the Hillsborough River and then portaged and then paddled to Tracadie

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<sup>1</sup> Mary Brehaut (ed.), *Historic Highlights: Prince Edward Island* (Charlottetown: Prince Edward Island Historical Society, 1955), 116

<sup>2</sup> Helen Jean Champion, *Over on the Island* (Toronto, The Ryerson Press, 1939), 49

Bay.<sup>3</sup> Mi'kmaq place names exist throughout the municipality and newly-established Ward names have Mi'kmaq equivalents:

Ward 1 – Ringwood is known as *Maqtewe'k Jipu'jij*

Ward 2 – Elliot River is *Ji'ka'we'katik*

Ward 3 – Southside is *Pita'q Jipu'jij*

Ward 4 – Straitview is *Kwitney Walney*

Ward 5 – Stragartney is *Maqtew'k Kwesawei*

Ward 6 – The Hill is *Unikansuk*

All of Mi'kma'ki is covered under Peace and Friendship Treaties. While these treaties were entered into, it should be remembered that the Mi'kmaq were never conquered and never surrendered, gave up or ceded their land. Mi'kma'ki is still Mi'kmaq territory, and the Peace and Friendship Treaties serve as a foundation for the relationship of the Mi'kmaq and all citizens of the region.

### 2.3. Settler History

European explorers arrived on the Island in the 18th century, annexing it to Nova Scotia in 1758 under British control, and dividing the unceded land into 67 townships, soon parceled off in a European lottery. British colonizers settled on the Island after Samuel Holland's survey in 1765. Following this, the Island was separated from Nova Scotia.

Steep settler population increases across the Island reduced Mi'kmaq access to traditional land and resources, as colonizers created settlements and farms on traditional Indigenous territory.

In 1767, the colonial government divided the island into 67 lots. The Rural Municipality of West River is composed of Lot 65, the majority of Lot 30, and small southerly portions of Lots 31 and 32. The area was sparsely populated by colonists, primarily from Scotland, until the early 1800s. Shipyards, lumber mills and agriculture became the mainstay of the local economy. However, in the period between the 1960s and 1980s housing stock doubled as people began building homes in the region surrounding the City of Charlottetown.<sup>4</sup> Since that time, housing stock has continued to grow with the most significant growth in the years 2001-2010. Most of this residential development has taken place on lands that were once used for agriculture, creating ribbon development along the existing roads of the municipality.

### 2.4. Local Governance

On September 1, 2020, the five rural municipalities of Afton, Bonshaw, Meadow Bank, New Haven-Riverdale, and West River amalgamated to form the new Rural Municipality of West River. The new

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<sup>3</sup> Francis Bolger (ed), *Canada's Smallest Province: A History of P.E.I.* (Charlottetown, 1973 Centennial Commission, 1973)

<sup>4</sup> 2016 Census, Statistics Canada, Community profile.

municipality is “a community of communities connected by the West River and its watershed.”<sup>5</sup> The municipality was formed by the desire of the majority of its residents to respect rural quality of life, protect the unique identity of each community, and build a future together. The former municipality of New Haven-Riverdale has an existing Official Plan and zoning regulation while the remainder of the municipality has no land use regulation at this time. Council sees a new Official Plan and Development By-law as a critical step in the growth of the new rural municipality.

## Governance History

<b>Legislation in effect at time of incorporation</b>					
Rural Municipality of West River – 2020					<i>Municipal Government Act - 2017</i>
All community improvement committees (CICs) become municipalities in the category of ‘Community.’					<i>Municipalities Act - 1983</i>
Afton CIC – 1974	Bonshaw CIC - 1977	Meadowbank CIC – 1974	New Haven- Riverdale CIC – 1974	West River CIC – 1974	<i>Community Improvement Act – 1968 (section 65)</i>
Cumberland  Fairview  New Dominion  Nine Mile Creek  Rocky Point	Bonshaw	Meadowbank	Churchill  New Haven  Riverdale  Strathgartney	Canoe Cove  Long Creek  New Argyle  St. Catherines	School Districts originally created to collect fees for, and oversee, local schools

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.westriverpe.ca/restructuring/vision-statement>





much of the pressures in the capital area would result in spill-over suburban growth in the West River area.

The average age of the population is 41.6 years, virtually identical to the provincial average of 42.7 years. Children (0-14 years) make up 19% of the population in the municipality compared to only 16% provincially. Working age individuals (15-64 years) make up 65.2% of the population which is very close to the provincial average of 64.7%. And seniors make up just under 15.7% of the population compared to provincial average of 19.4%. These trends indicate that the municipality is attracting families with young children, but that once these children become young adults, they leave the area.

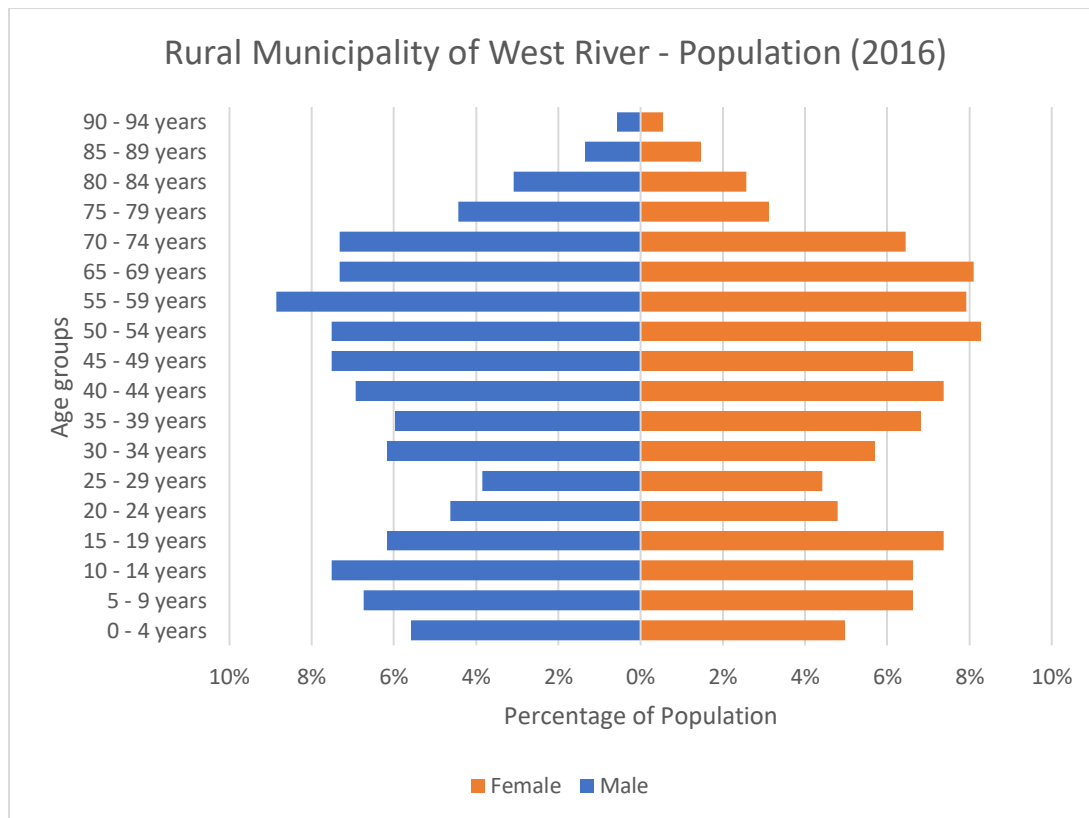


Figure 2: Population Pyramid for the Rural Municipality of West River

Assuming the growth remains consistent with the last census period estimate, the population by 2037 could reach be upwards of 3800 - 4500 residents – the higher number based on a less likely 10% rate of growth. That would represent somewhere in the region of 646-1346 more residents over the next 15 years, with around 1000 additional residents as a mid-range estimate. As Charlottetown, Cornwall, and Stratford update their policies for growth, it may happen that spill-over growth population pressures into West River may be reduced, although high prices and low vacancy rates and the resulting acute affordability challenges in the past few years suggest that continued growth in the municipality is a reasonable expectation.



The average household size is 2.6 people compared to the provincial average of 2.3 people per household. In the municipality, 12.5% of households are headed by a single parent; 72% of those are female-led. For 88.2% of households are couple-led, with 48.5% of those including children.

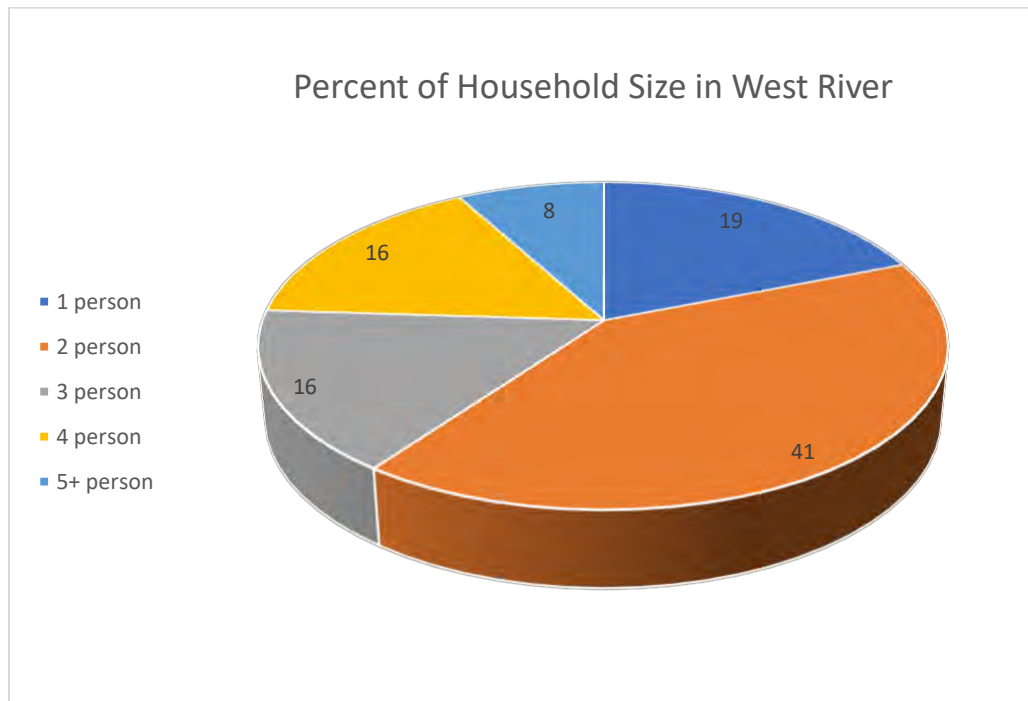


Figure 3: Percent of Households by Number of Members of Household (2016)

### 3.2. Cultural Diversity

The vast majority of residents currently living in the municipality are Canadian citizens. Immigrants who have settled in the municipality are from the United States, Europe (the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Russia, the Ukraine, the United Kingdom), Nigeria and China. A small portion of the community identifies as Aboriginal (First Nations and Métis). Only a very small number of people identify as a visible minority as the vast majority of the population has ethnic origins from the British Isles or western Europe.

### 3.3. Education

Higher education is often associated with higher household incomes which has an impact on development and housing composition, employment flexibility, transportation preferences and desired services. The municipality has a higher-than-average education level compared to the province as 60% of the population 15 years and older has some kind of post-secondary education (college diploma, university degree, or other certification).

Table 1: Comparison of the Highest Level of Schooling (2016)

Highest level of schooling	15 years +	Municipality	Province
Less than high school		17.0%	19.2%
high school or equivalent		23.0%	27.2%
Post-secondary diploma, degree or certificate		60.0%	53.7%

### 3.4. Income

Table 2: Comparison of Total Average Individual Income and Median Household Income (2015)

	Municipality			Province		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Average total income of individuals	\$34 812	\$39 514	\$29 952	\$31 744	\$36 021	\$28 065
Median household income	\$74 149			\$61 163		

Overall, total average individual incomes were nine percent higher in the municipality compared to the provincial average. Disparities in income among males and females were similar between the municipality and province with income of males being approximately 25% higher than that of females. When it comes to household income, the municipality's median was 18% higher than the provincial median.

Table 3: Prevalence of Low Income (based on the Low-Income Measure after tax) (2015)

	Municipality			Province		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
0-17 years (%)	13.8	15.5	16.3	21.7	21.5	22
18-64 years (%)	9.1	8.8	10.3	14.4	13.5	15.3
65 years + (%)	14.5	13.35	15.65	19.8	16.2	22.9

The prevalence of low-income individuals as a proportion of total population is markedly lower for all age groups and both sexes within the municipality, compared to provincial rates. This coincides with higher education levels and higher incomes for both individuals and households in the municipality.

### 3.5. Housing

According to Statistics Canada, there are over 1700 private dwellings in what is now the Rural Municipality of West River. According to municipal records, 86% (2831) of all properties (residential and

commercial) are owned by full-time residents, compared to 14% (462) owned by non-residents.<sup>7</sup> In terms of types of housing, the municipality is predominantly single detached at 93% of all dwellings. Approximately 5.5% are movable dwellings and 1.3% are semi-detached. Fully half of all private dwellings are 3 bedrooms, and a further 32% are 4 bedrooms or more. 93% of houses are owned while only 7% are rented which diverges from a 70-30 split provincially.

The estimated\* pre-amalgamation population figures were as follows:

- Rural Municipality of Afton, 1,291 (estimate) – estimated 790 dwellings
- Rural Municipality of Bonshaw, 187 (estimate) – estimated 76 dwellings
- Rural Municipality of Meadowbank, 355 (Census data) – 200 dwellings
- Rural Municipality of New Haven-Riverdale, 520 (estimate) – estimated 199 dwellings
- Rural Municipality of West River, 801 (estimate) – estimated 473 dwellings

*\*estimates are GIS-derived and should be replaced with Census data once available.*

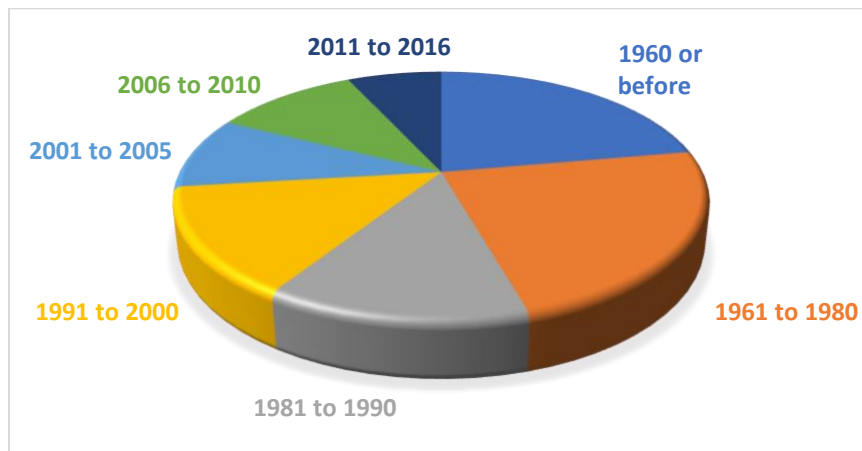


Figure 4: Year of Construction of Housing in Municipality (2016)

As illustrated in Figure 4 above, approximately 45% of housing in the municipality was constructed prior to 1980. A further 27% was constructed the following two decades. The remaining 28% of housing stock has been built since 2001 with builds averaging 35 new dwellings per year.

According to the 2016 Census, the average value of a dwelling (based on tax rates) was \$233 967. In term of affordability (the amount of household income spent on shelter), the average monthly cost was \$921 in the municipality compared to the provincial average of \$932/month. Further, 12% of households are spending more than 30% of income on shelter costs which indicates a lack of affordability for those households.

Based on estimated 2016 population figures, population density in the Municipality ranges from 38.21/people per square kilometer in the Meadowbank area to 13.36 persons/sq km in the Bonshaw

<sup>7</sup> Data based on the Control Report provided by RMWR CAO dated July 12 2021.

area, with a municipal average density of 26.37 person/sq km. Comparing this with the Town of Cornwall, which had a 2016 density of 189.7 person/sq km, the interest of area residents in retaining a rural character becomes evident.

### 3.6. Heritage, Culture, and Recreation

#### Heritage and Culture

As noted in the early historical context above, the land on which the municipality sits is an area frequently used by the Mi'kmaq people. Mi'kmaq place names which have generally gone unused in recent centuries, are being reintroduced in the region as a way to confirm the role the region played in human society prior to and at the time of colonial settlement (figure 5).



Figure 5: Mi'kmaq place-names

There are five sites designated as National Historic Sites and National Historic Event locations by the federal government within the municipality. These sites include:

1. Skmaqn-Port-la-Joye-Fort-Amherst National Historic Site (1720-1770) at Rocky Point;
2. Deportation of the Inhabitants of Ile-Saint-Jean National Historic Event (1755-62) at Rocky Point;
3. Survey of Prince Edward Island National Historic Event (1764-1766) at Holland Cove;





approximately 5.8 kilometres in length as well as a playground. The Municipality is also a member of Communities 13 Inc., which is the not-for-profit organisation that runs the APM Centre in Cornwall.

**National Sites** – The Skmaqñ–Port-la-Joye–Fort Amherst National Historic Site is located at the southern tip of the municipality, looking across at the Charlottetown waterfront, featuring a generous number of trails, a self-guided Parks Canada interpretive centre and more.

The municipality also is home to several golf courses including: Strathgartney Highlands Golf, Glen Afton Golf Course, and the Countryview Golf Club, as well as a disc golf course. Camp Seggie, a private children’s camp, is also situated on the southern tip of Rice Point.

### 3.7. Institutional Facilities

Community buildings are scattered throughout the municipality and include seven faith-based organizations, and the former Canoe Cove school. Other community facilities include the Afton Hall, the Kingston Legion, and the Bonshaw Community Centre, as well as several small recreation and park sites.

Specifically, the municipality hosts a Montessori Academy private school, a number of churches (Long Creek Baptist Church, Bonshaw Baptist Church, Nine Mile Creek Presbyterian Church, and Canoe Cove Presbyterian Church), as well as two church camps at Canoe Cove Christian Camp and Camp Seggie.

Given the average age of residents in the community, both the needs of an aging population as well as the services and amenities that would attract younger residents are important.

	Type	Name, Location
Municipally Operated	Community Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Afton Community Centre</li> <li>Bonshaw Community Centre</li> </ul>
Federally Operated	Post Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bonshaw Hall</li> </ul>
	National Historic Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Skmaqñ–Port-la-Joye–Fort Amherst National Historic Site</li> <li>Blockhouse Lighthouse (ownership transferring)</li> </ul>
Community Operated	Halls and Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bonshaw Hall</li> <li>Kingston Legion – private, can function as an EMO warming centre</li> <li>St. Catherines Hall, Canoe Cove School, Long Creek Hall, Ringwood Hall</li> </ul>
	Women’s Institutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bonshaw WI</li> <li>Canoe Cove WI</li> <li>Long Creek WI</li> <li>Meadow Bank WI</li> <li>Rice Point WI</li> <li>St Catherines WI</li> </ul>

## 4. PHYSICAL

### 4.1. Development Activity

#### Residential

As is common in rural municipalities, the majority of housing in this community is owner-occupied at 87% (compared with 70% provincially). The remaining tenant housing appears to be solely farm housing, excluded from further census analysis due to the difficulty in distinguishing shelter costs from farm costs. In this small housing market, there are no condo or bachelor apartments, as well as no two-bedroom units. Although there are fewer large households when compared to the province, there are higher proportions of larger units, which may indicate a gap in housing supply or potentially a preference for larger dwellings.

The community's housing stock is almost exclusively made up of single-detached homes, and many of the residential areas in the municipality are interspersed with seasonal homes and cottages. With the recent trend towards finished and winterized cottages, it is almost impossible to tell the difference between seasonal and permanent residences and seeking to regulate them as two distinct types of uses is unlikely to be productive.

#### Vacant Lots

A high-level review of the municipality's land mass suggests that there is sufficient land to meet the various development goals of the municipality for at least the first 5-10 years of the plan period, assuming a continued growth rate of 5%. An analysis of properties in the municipality indicates that there are more than 2200 parcels of less than two acres in size. A conservative analysis would suggest that there are at least 650 vacant lots, likely more. Depending on zoning, and recognizing that many of those vacant parcels may be owned by individuals or families uninterested in developing them for year-round use, there is a reasonable supply of vacant land potentially suitable for residential uses for at least the next five years.

One challenge across PEI relating to the development of existing approved lots is compliance with today's standards for on-site services. An estimated 10% of the assumed vacant approved lots in the municipality are below the minimum lot sizes for category 1 (best draining) lots with one dwelling unit (25,000 square feet). Should any of those approved lots prove to be assessed as having category 2-5 soils, based on the criteria in the *Planning Act* Province-Wide Minimum Development Standards Regulations, there is a risk of on-site water and sewage treatment contaminations. Additionally, an estimated 3% of vacant parcels are less than 10,000 square feet in area, making them very problematic for development with on-site services. Many of these lots are further impacted by the effects of erosion and future flood risk, making them challenging to develop.

In addition, there is a small number of lots in older legacy subdivisions that are not serviced by any form of passable right-of-way. Many of the undersized lots are in those legacy subdivisions and represent subdivisions on paper only.

In PEI, municipal planning authorities track their own development activity. As such, a separate data set is available for the former Rural Municipality of New Haven-Riverdale. Table 4 summarizes development activity in that jurisdiction from 2010 to 2020 (prior to amalgamation).

Table 4: New Haven-Riverdale Permits issued 2010 - Sept. 2020:

Building Permits	Number	Subdivisions	Number
New dwellings (single unit)	17	Consolidations	12
Addition or renovation	8	New lot creation	34
Accessory building (including barns)	29	Highway severances	18
Structures (e.g., fence)	2		
<b>total</b>	<b>56</b>		

Table 5 summarizes provincial data for *approved development activity* for the areas of what is now the Rural Municipality of West River that are currently under provincial planning jurisdiction, based on information provided by the Province. There may be additional applications before the Province being considered, but these numbers have not been included in the summary.

Table 5: Development Activity – Unincorporated Areas (2011 – Sept. 2021):

	Residential (new)	Residential (reno/addition)	Commercial (new or reno)	Accessory buildings	Cottage (new or reno)	Number of Approved Lots
Afton	147	11	7	92	58	174
Bonshaw	13	0	1	10	0	26
Meadowbank	14	3	3	20	14	13
West River	32	1	8	24	8	42
<i>totals</i>	<i>202</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>146</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>255</i>

The tables above illustrate that more than 250 new residential structures have been constructed in the past 10 years. That is an increase of almost 20% in housing stock in the municipal area since 2010. Further, 80 cottages have been built or renovated in that time period, most of them on private, unmaintained roads. With almost 300 new lots created in that same time period, it is obvious that there are significant development pressures being experienced in this formerly rural area.

The expansion of residential land uses implies a need to ensure proper servicing, minimizing of land use conflicts, and protect the rural qualities of the area, while meeting the needs of residents.

PEI and Queens County have been experiencing a significant contraction of the housing supply in relation to population growth, and that coupled with traditional higher property assessments within the municipality, suggests the need to consider the needs and rights of local residents to safe, adequate, and affordable housing.

While seasonal residents form a valued segment of the Rural Municipality of West River's population, seasonal residential dwellings throughout the province are increasingly being winterized and converted to year-round use or built in such a way as to make the nature of the use undistinguishable between seasonal and year-round residential. Although in some cases seasonal property owners seek to develop with fewer restrictions given their shorter duration of stay, enforcing the seasonality of uses is incredibly difficult and intermittent durations of stay do not remove requirements to ensure appropriate standards to ensure the protection of public and environmental health and safety. It will become important, therefore, to ensure that standards are applied to residential subdivisions and developments that are suitable and appropriate to both year-round and seasonal uses.

While housing options were not flagged as a significant factor by survey respondents, many islanders are facing housing choice and affordability challenges throughout the region and it is anticipated that future growth in the region will spill over to the Municipality. Combined with demographic changes, flexible housing options are needed, where possible within the constraints presented by the lack of central water or sewer services.

Given the increased interest across the province for vacant land condominiums and options for clustered or tiny home developments, additional provisions are also appropriate to support clustered housing featuring multiple detached or semi-detached dwellings on single parcels. While such forms of clustered housing meet the needs of certain groups looking to share maintenance and services or offering more rental choice, ensuring that such developments are appropriately sited, serviced, and designed to ensure that all public and environmental health and safety considerations are met remains important.

## 4.2. Cornwall Regional Special Planning Area

The municipality is partially located within the Cornwall Region Special Planning Area (SPA), established under section 63 of the *Planning Act* Subdivision and Development Regulations.

The SPA, also sometimes referred to as the Buffer, along with three other similar special planning areas, was developed around 1995 in part to protect newly amalgamation municipalities from undue servicing pressures from beyond their boundaries and to direct urban style development and settlement patterns to areas with central services, while protecting agricultural and resources land uses. The Cornwall Region Special Planning Area is depicted on Map 8 of Appendix A in the Subdivision and Development Regulations. The specific objectives outlined in subsection 63(3) are:

- a) *to minimize the extent to which unserviced residential, commercial and industrial development may occur;*
- b) *to sustain the rural community by limiting future urban or suburban residential development and non-resource commercial and industrial development in order to minimize the loss of primary industry lands to non-resource land uses; and*
- c) *to minimize the potential for conflicts between resource uses and urban residential, commercial and industrial uses.*

The Cornwall SPA includes the Meadowbank and New Haven-Riverdale portions of the Municipality. Municipal planning authorities located within an SPA must ensure that their planning documents are consistent with the SPA regulations (*Planning Act*, section 8.1) and under subsection 2(2) of the regulations, where a special planning area includes a municipality or part thereof with an official plan and bylaws, no council may issue a permit unless the proposed development complies with the regulations established for that SPA – the SPAs are, in effect, the only part of those particular regulations that apply to municipal planning authorities.



Figure 7: Cornwall Region Special Planning Area

Under subsection 63(10) of the Planning Act Subdivision and Development Regulations, municipalities with official plans may elect to take a different approach to meeting the three SPA objectives rather than implementing the standards set out in the remainder of section 63. This alternate approach is subject to the municipality following all required processes and meeting all standards under section 7 of the Planning Act, permitting no more than 5 unserviced residential lots from any parcel existing on July 9, 1994, and meeting reporting requirements.

The subsection (10) exemption provides the municipality with some flexibility to address the principles and objectives behind the SPA, which in many cases align with the community values relating to rural character and vibrant agricultural sector. The policies and approaches in this official plan and the standards set out in the Development Bylaw are designed to take advantage of this approach permitted under subsection (10). The new official plan and land use bylaw will need to reflect the SPA objectives at minimum, for the areas affected.



## 4.3. Infrastructure and Services

### Transportation Infrastructure

Significant portion of the road system in West River is privately owned and not built to any identified construction or maintenance standard. The remaining road network is largely in the arterial and collector class of roads, which constrains safe future development. with implications on the ability and appropriateness for the accommodation of future development.

While the Rural Municipality of West River does not own or have direct responsibility ownership or maintenance for any of the public or private roads in the Planning Area, the implementation and administration of the Official Plan and Bylaw will have impacts on provincial transportation planning and the Municipality has primary responsibility for the development of any pedestrian circulation systems. Given the critical relationship between land use and traffic generation, it is imperative that Council work closely with the Department of Transportation and Public Works to ensure that safe and efficient transportation facilities are provided to service the needs of the Municipality, and that land use patterns and development standards do not undermine the efficiency or safety of the transportation network.

Access to the roads system must be controlled to maximize safety and efficiency. Council will engage with the Province to identify annual road maintenance requirements and significant safety, design and drainage problems in the Municipality (and outside the area on major approach routes). Council must also plan for the promotion of increasing pedestrian flows within the municipality, particularly as concerns were raised about pedestrian and cycling safety during the development of this Official Plan.

Given the impact of transportation options on the affordability and accessibility of the area for local residents, Council may engage with the Capital Region municipalities and the Province regarding the T3 transit system, the expansion of the fledgling rural transit initiative, and connection to active transportation networks. Healthy lifestyle changes, combined with significantly expanded trails networks, are impacting preferred recreational activities for both residents and visitors, creating increased demand for landscaped trail systems for both hiking and biking.

The Rural Municipality of West River will work to promote alternative modes of transportation wherever possible. Higher density development in the identified core 'nodes' over time could further promote development patterns more conducive to active transportation options.

As is common for a rural community, transportation within the municipality is structured around the use of private automobiles. All public roads in the municipality are provincially owned. The Rural Municipality of West River's role is largely limited to working with the Provincial department responsible for transportation to identify priorities for street construction, upgrading, and maintenance.

**Public Roads** – all public roads in the municipality are owned and maintained by the Province of Prince Edward Island. Public paved roads total approximately 151.2 kilometres in length, while unpaved public roads account for 71.6 kilometres.

**Private Roads** – paved private roads total approximately 9.7 kilometres while private unpaved roads make up more than 41 kilometres in roads within the municipality. Figure 8 illustrates the road types by surface and ownership.

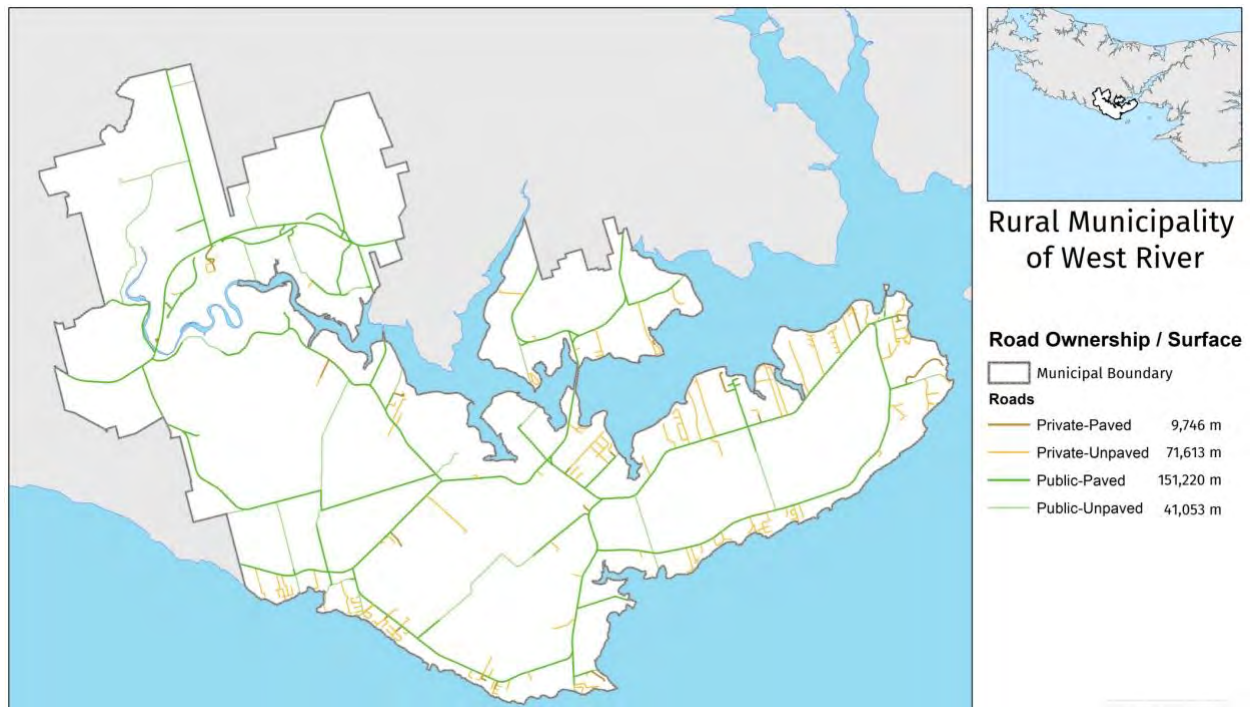


Figure 8: Road ownership by surface type on Municipality

The majority of local subdivisions are serviced by private roads, both paved and unpaved. Private roads have, in most cases, been developed without any design or construction standards, intended primarily for seasonal use, and their maintenance is managed between the property owners abutting them. Private roads have been permitted under provincial development regulations. With the movement towards vacant or bare land condominiums and with the prevalence of tourism operations with multiple campsites and cottages, standards for internal drives providing for circulation between buildings and sites within a parcel is a growing issue, given safety and access requirements both generally, in poor weather, and during emergency situations. Standards for private roads within municipal planning authorities are the responsibility of the municipality to establish, although National Fire Prevention Association codes and engineering standards from the Transportation Association of Canada, or even provincial requirements for roads servicing 6-20 lots, could be used as guides.

**Sidewalks**— There are no sidewalks in the municipality at this time. Pedestrian traffic must use the roads or established trails.

### Planning and Other Municipal Services

**Planning** - The municipality continues to be served by a small staff complement. Development control is managed through a contract development officer, Planning Board, and Council for the area currently covered by the New Haven-Riverdale Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw. The municipality will manage land use through the Official Plan and Land Use Bylaw, processing development permit and subdivision applications internally. One significant change to development control generally in PEI has been the provincial adoption of the National Building Code; the municipality has entered into the agreement with

the Province to have the National Building Code and building permit applications administered provincially. Development and subdivision applications remain municipal responsibilities.

**Blackfly eradication** – the primary service offered by the municipality, other than land use planning in New Haven-Riverdale, is the black fly spraying program.

### Emergency Response

**Fire** – North River Fire & Rescue is a volunteer fire department located in the neighbouring Town of Cornwall. It is a privately owned and operated fire department with 30 members that provides emergency fire service 30 communities in Queen’s County by independent contract, including to the municipality.

**Ambulance** – This is a provincial service with the closest ambulance bay being located in Sherwood.

**Policing** – This again is a provincial service and the municipality is served by the RCMP. The closest detachment is located at the Maypoint Detachment at the western end of Charlottetown.

### Community Buildings and Institutions

There are no medical or health services located within municipal boundaries. The closest walk-in clinics are located in Charlottetown and Crapaud. Some health services, including two pharmacies, a medical clinic, tow dental clinics, and two physiotherapy clinics are available in Cornwall. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital is the closest hospital and the closest Island EMS ambulance base is located on the Sherwood Road in Charlottetown.

Community buildings are scattered throughout the municipality and include seven faith-based organizations, and the former Canoe Cove school. Other community facilities include the Afton Hall, the Kingston Legion, and the Bonshaw Community Centre, as well as several small recreation and park sites.

Specifically, the municipality hosts a Montessori Academy private school, four churches (Long Creek Baptist Church, Bonshaw Baptist Church, Nine Mile Creek Presbyterian Church, and Canoe Cove Presbyterian Church) as well as two church camps at Canoe Cove Christian Camp and Camp Seggie.

## 4.4. Drinking Water

The municipality does not have a central water system. Most property owners are reliant on individual wells for water supply.

There are 15 shared private water systems in the municipality, mostly associated with campgrounds and cottage developments

There are no ground water wells restricted areas in the municipality. Only one site was listed on the provincial contaminated site list, which is likely a retired gas station or other use with underground petroleum storage, which is located on PID 218743 in the Bonshaw area.

One municipal wellfield, the Town of Cornwall’s Meadowbank wellfield, crosses the municipal boundary into West River. All three capture zones (250 days, 5 years, and 25 years) fall partly into West River, with associated wellfield protection considerations for land use in the areas.

## 4.5. Waste Water

The municipality does not have a municipal sewer system and as such, all developed properties have on-site septic systems. These types of systems are approved at the time of installation and it is difficult to maintain any record of upgrades or maintenance if they fail. While the municipality is not responsible for approving systems, the ability of specific areas to accommodate on-site systems at the time of development is something that has to be taken into consideration by the municipality. One consideration for many municipalities is establishing standards and procedures for previously-approved properties that are under-sized for conventional septic systems.

The only central wastewater system in the area is operated by the green Acres Trailer Park.

## 4.6. Solid Waste

As with the rest of the province, all homes and businesses within the municipality are provided solid waste services by Island Waste Management Corporation.

## 4.7. Energy

Electricity is provided to the municipality by the PEI Energy Corporation. This province-wide system owns and operates wind farms and transmission facilities that connect the province to the Maritime Electric grid. In terms of establishing renewable energy within the municipality, the province's Subdivision and Development Regulation sets minimal standards for wind turbine height and setbacks from roads and buildings, which could be adopted by the Municipality. There are no such similar regulations related to solar energy systems currently.

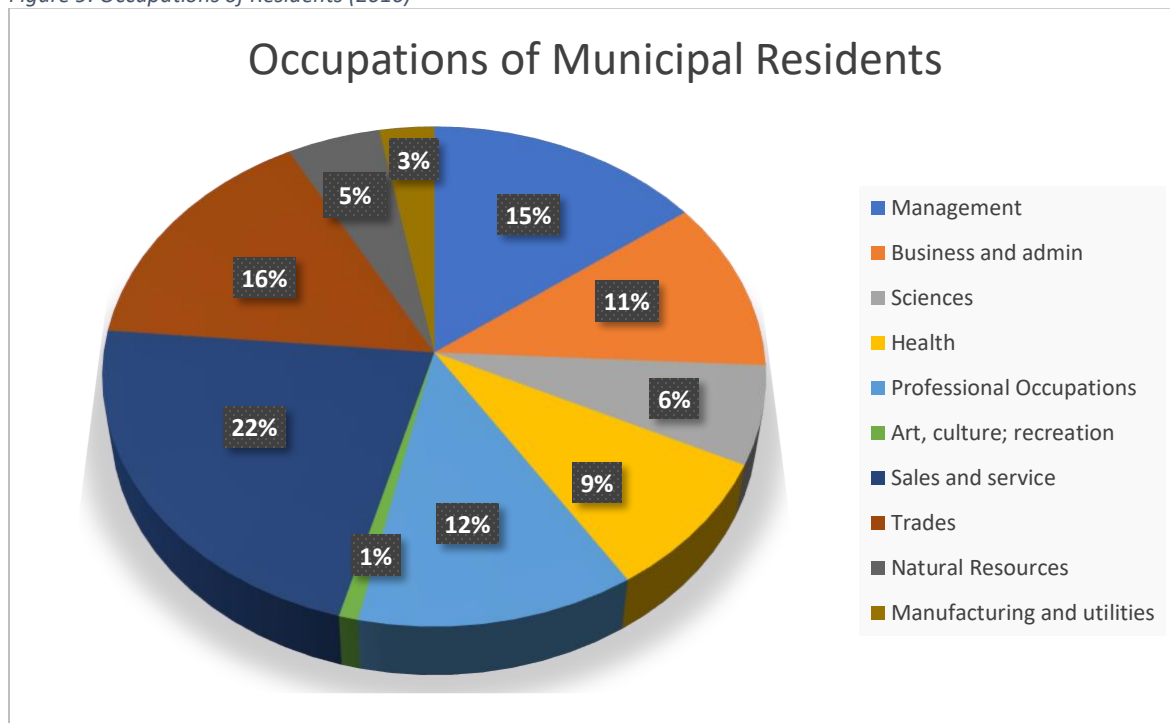
## 5. ECONOMY

### 5.1. Labour force and industry characteristics

#### Occupational Characteristics

Below, Figure 9 outlines the occupational characteristics of municipal residents.

Figure 9: Occupations of Residents (2016)



Sales and service at 22%, trades at 16%, and management (15%) are the top three occupations of municipal residents, making up over 50% of the occupations overall. Professional occupations (12%), business and administration (11%), and health positions (9%) follow closely. Further, according to the 2016 Census, 87% of municipal residents are employed by someone else while 13% are self-employed, which compares to the provincial rates of 89% employed and 11% self-employed.

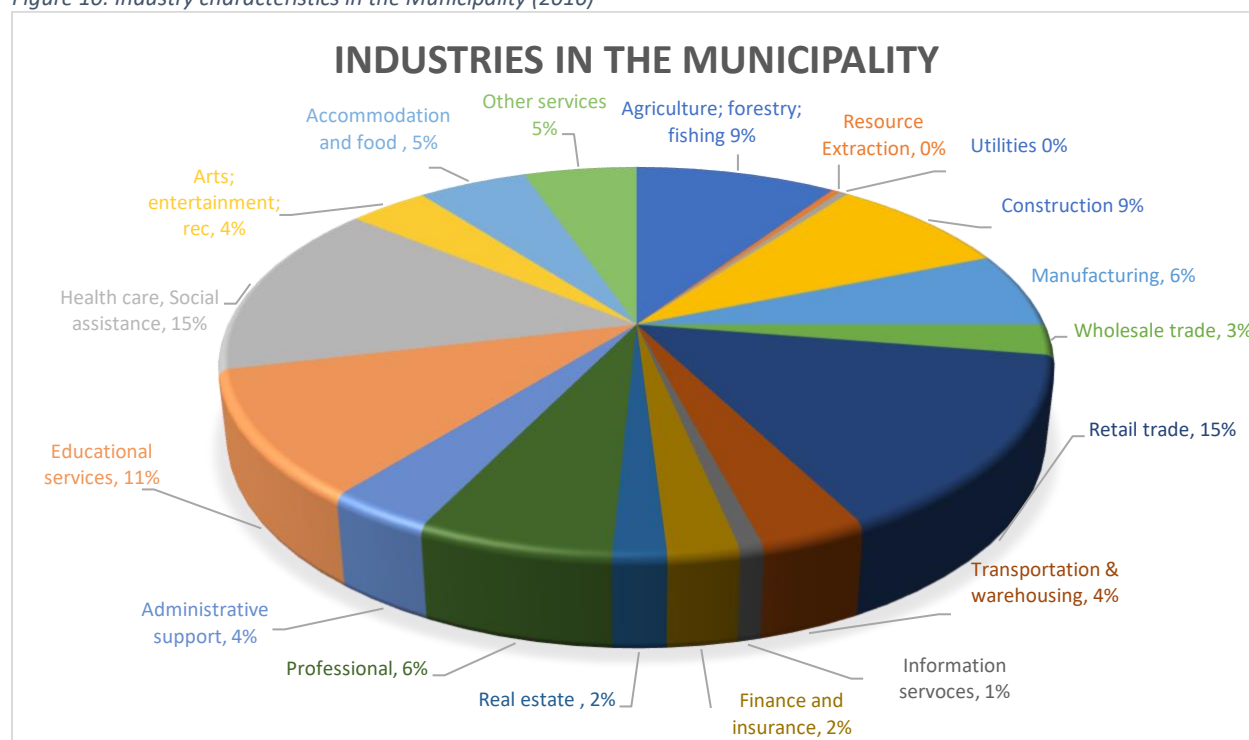
Of the total working age population, 77% worked and of those 52% worked full-time and 48% worked part year/part-time. Provincially, 71% of the population worked and of those 47% worked full-time and 53% worked part year and/or part-time.



## Industry Composition

Figure 10 outlines the wide breadth of industry that is represented by residents in the municipality.

Figure 10: Industry characteristics in the Municipality (2016)



While Figure 10 illustrates a broad range of industries, the reality is that many of these industries do not exist within the municipality itself. It would appear that a large majority of people commute to larger centres such as Cornwall or Charlottetown.

## Commuting to Work

As illustrated in Table 6, more than three-quarters of residents who work commute more than 15 minutes to their place of work, likely to Charlottetown or possibly Summerside. Given the long commute time, it is unsurprising that 91% people drive to work, with 5% carpooling with someone else and only 2% are able to walk to work.

Table 6: Comparison of time spent commuting to work by percentage of employed labour force

Commute duration	Municipality	Province
Less than 15 minutes	16%	46%
15-29 minutes	55%	35%
30-44 minutes	22%	11%
45+ minutes	8%	8%

With the on-going pandemic and shifting economic recovery, coupled with a transition to more remote work, anticipating the shape and lasting impact of COVID-19 over the coming years presents an interesting challenge for policymakers.

### Labour Force Participation

The participation rate in the workforce in municipality is approximately 66.5%. The employment for male workers is 61.8% compared to 58.9% for female workers. These numbers are comparable to the provincial participation and employment rates.

## 5.2. Agriculture

Agricultural activities form the basis for the landscape and the local economy. Some small conflicts have been identified with people in the community who may not necessarily understand that farming comes with sounds and smells, but it is generally recognized that resource uses form an integral part of the community fabric. Important principles identified included education on farm practices and the importance of having long term access to farmland. Farming participants did not note a significant pressure to sell but did reference that there is less land available for farming over time.

Agriculture is one of the primary industries of the municipality with more than 5000 hectares being actively farmed (see Figure 11 below). According to the Canada Land Inventory, the soil capability for agriculture in the municipality is quite high and ranges from 2F to 3T. Class 2 includes soils that have moderate limitations that restrict the range of crops or require moderate conservation practices. The limitations on these soils are described by the “F” code as having “low natural fertility.” Class 3 soils are those that have moderately severe limitations that restrict the range of crops or require special conservation practices. The types of limitations identified by the “T” code refer to “adverse relief because of steepness or pattern of slopes.”

There are 52.5 km<sup>2</sup> of bona fide farmland in the municipality on 490 parcels. The expanse of farmland is what gives the community its sense or rural identity.

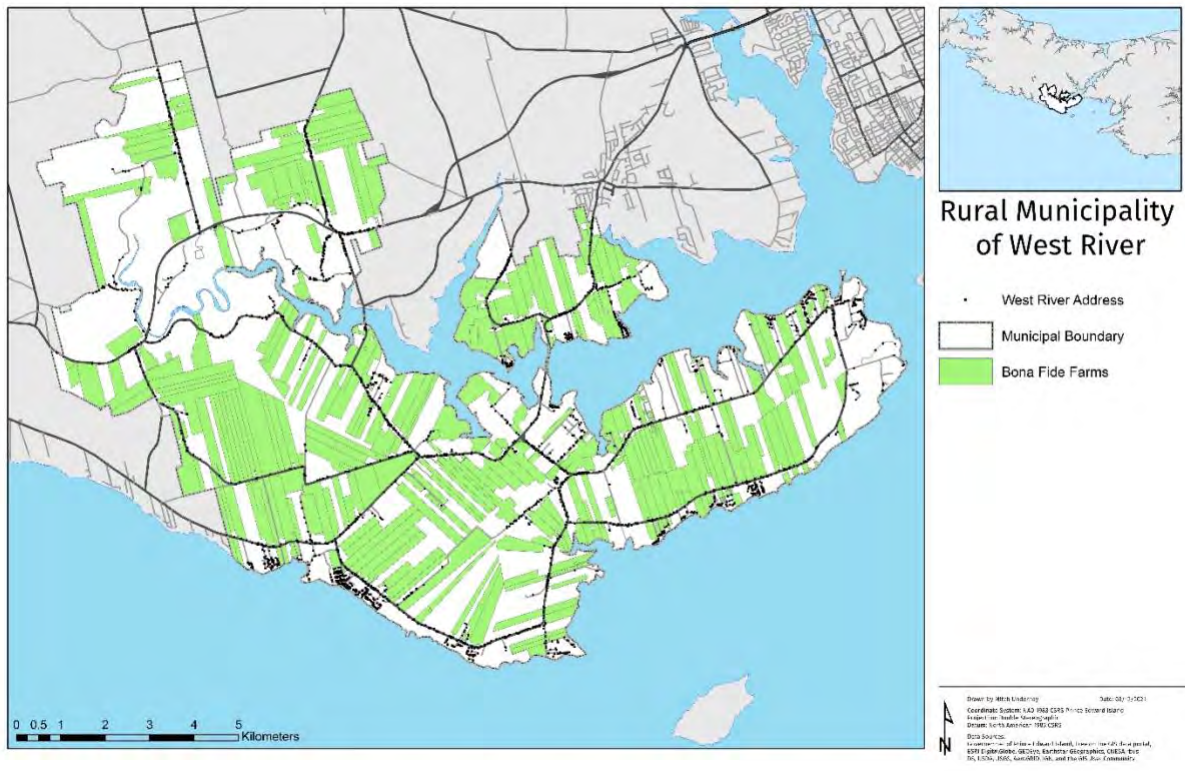


Figure 11: Bona Fide farm properties, 2021

Farmland is a valued asset in the Rural Municipality of West River due to its importance as a feature of the landscape, as well as a key industry. Agricultural activities remain of significant importance to the community and protecting the viability of the industry remains critically important. While the existing farm operations are in fact responsible for much of the character of the landscape so valued by locals, seasonal residents, and visitors alike, the potential long-term implications of transitions to non-resource uses came up as a concern during the development of this Plan.

The viability of farm operations can be protected to a certain degree by limiting the encroachment of other uses, largely by restricting the subdivision and development of prime agricultural lands to ensuring that farmland remains attractive to farm operations and reducing the potential for land use conflicts with non-resource uses. This is frequently done through policies limiting the transition to other uses and recognizing and protecting farm practices, supplemented by restricting the number of lots that can be severed from parcels in areas designated for rural or agricultural uses. SPA impacts, policies in other municipalities.

The question of how much to permit the transition of land current in agricultural use to non-resources uses is, at its roots, is a matter of determining to what degree active agricultural activities should be maintained in the community in the long term, given that land removed from agricultural uses and developed is lost to resource uses more or less permanently. This decision is one that is ideally made at a policy level rather than on a case-by-case basis as farm owners apply to subdivide or have their properties rezoned for other uses, balancing the need to preserve agricultural lands in the long term with the desire of farmers seeking to leave the industry and extract other economic benefits from their

property. Factors often include the ability to sell to other farm operators, frequently in comparison to the anticipated value of the land if sold for other uses, as well as the tradition of viewing the development of farmland as the primary retirement plan for farm operators or as a source of future lots for children. These considerations sometimes sit in contrast to concerns from other current or prospective farmers about the ability to acquire productive land to establish or expand farm operations.

Given the importance of the rural feel of the landscape in the municipality, the public has raised concerns about how best to protect the traditional character of the landscape. Solutions include development approaches such as enabling conservation subdivisions (more densely clustered developments that preserve the balance of the property, often with shared servicing) or the purchase of development rights in order to limit the visual impact of transitioning away from resource uses. While conservation subdivisions can be enabled through bylaws, the purchasing of development rights, particularly with public funds, is a topic that will involve and require more extended public discussion over time.

### 5.3. Commercial Activity

#### General Commercial

Much of the commercial activity in the municipality centres around agriculture and farming. There are several agriculture-related businesses such as the Island Lavender Distillery, Canoe Cove Honey, Deep Roots Distillery, Matos Winery and Distillery, Hobby farm, as well as several farm gate sales outlets. Along with the wharf, there are fisheries-related businesses such as Bait Master's Inc. and Rodney's Oyster depot.

Other commercial businesses in the municipality are assessed at 3,143,700, while the total for assessment value for farms is \$50,952,600. According to the tax assessments, there are 20 commercial properties in Afton, 8 in Bonshaw, 5 in Meadowbank, 7 in New Haven-Riverdale and 9 in the former West River (Figure 12). These include a general store and gas station, hair salons, crafters, limited retail, a boarding kennel, dog agility training, furniture maker, masonry, and construction-related businesses. The majority of these commercial enterprises are home-based operations as there is no central business district in any of the former community centres.

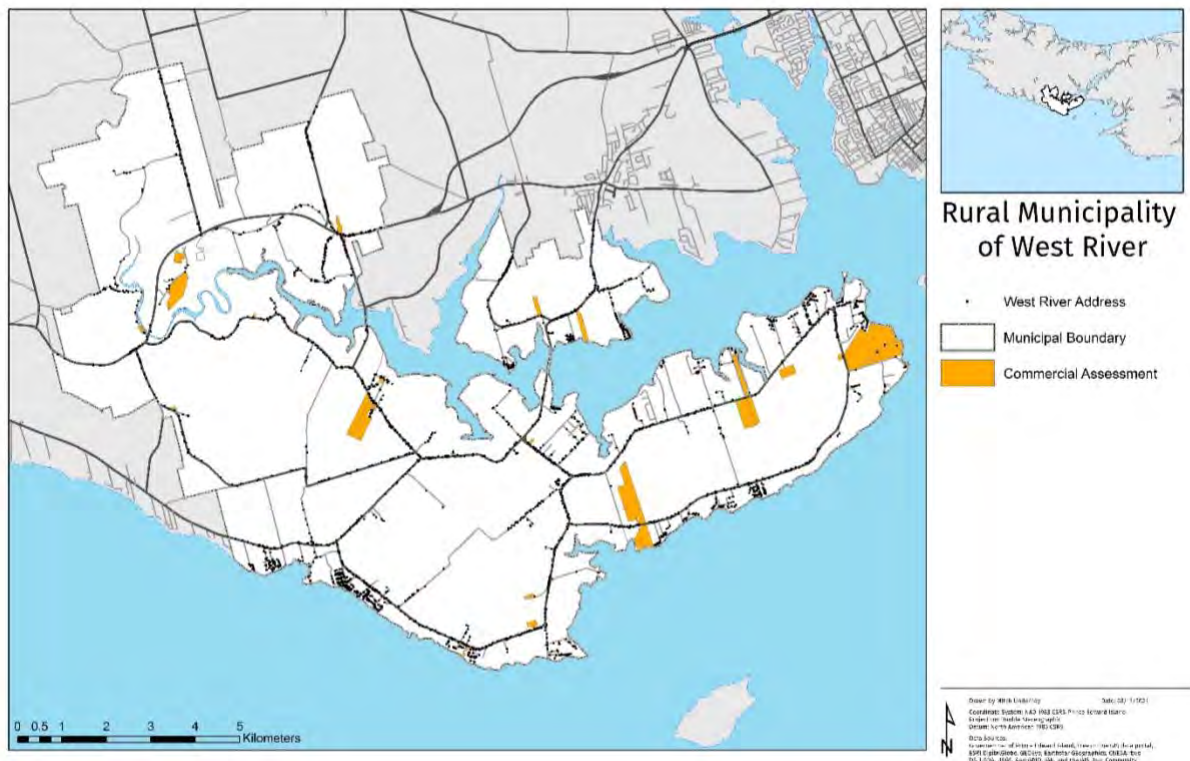


Figure 12: Properties with significant commercial assessments as assigned by the provincial Taxation division

## Tourism

The municipality is situated in the province’s “Red Sands Shore” tourism area, an area famous for its red sand beaches. Popular recreation areas that attract tourists to the municipality include Cove Head and Bonshaw Hills Provincial Park. There are also roadside produce stands, scenic vistas, a working wharf, as well as new and developing commercial businesses that cater to travellers from both on and off island such as the Island Lavender Distillery and Deep Roots (cider) Distillery.

### Tourist accommodations

According to Tourism PEI, there are a total of eleven (11) licensed tourism accommodations in West River including one campground with 15 units and 10 “fixed roof” licenses with a total of 13 units.<sup>8</sup> In a scan of short-term rentals listings, there are four sites available through VRBO and eight listings through Air BNB in the municipality.

<sup>8</sup> Source: Tourism PEI, Integrated Tourism Services, 2021



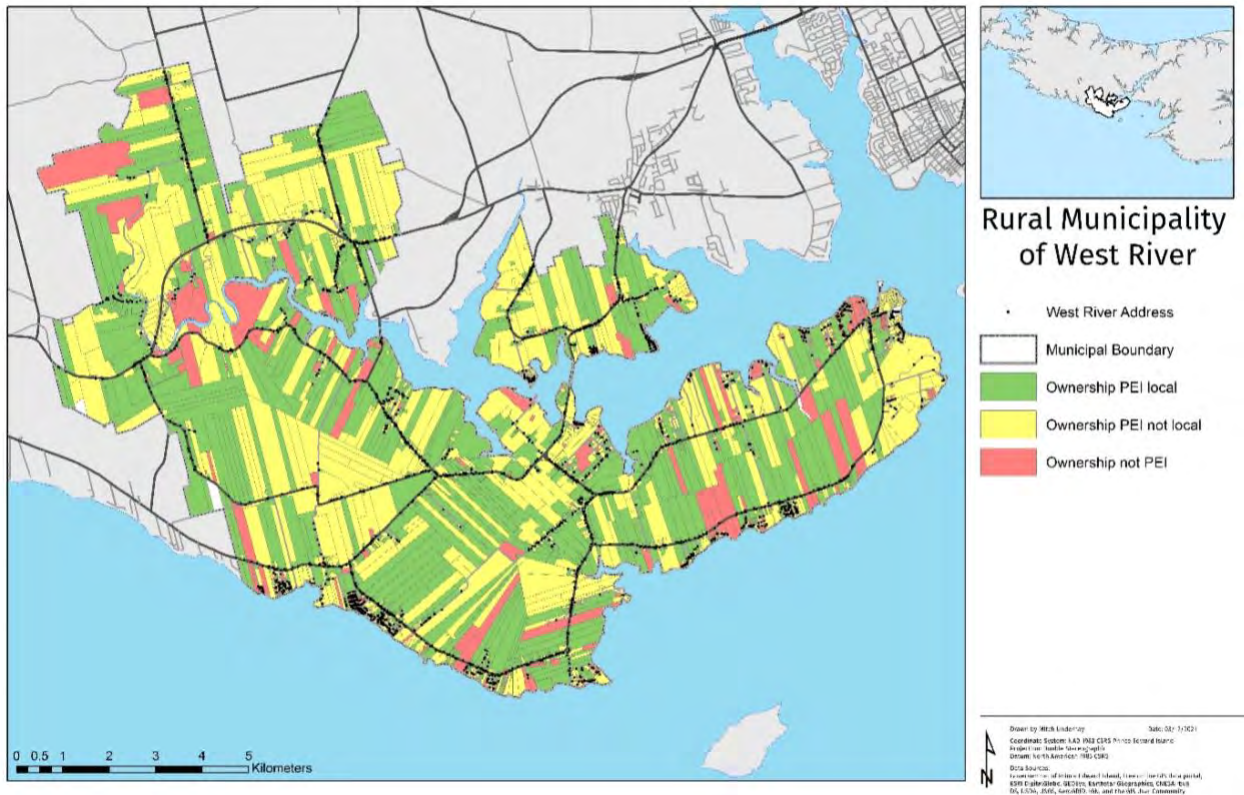


Figure 13: Property Ownership by Residency

## Seasonal residents

As noted in Section 2.6, 14% of the dwellings in the municipality are owned by seasonal residents, or people whose primary residence is outside of the municipality. The analysis of development trends in tables 4 & 5 show that more than 80 cottages were built or renovated in the last 10 years, presumably along the shoreline.

## 6. ENVIRONMENT

The landscape and natural areas are highly valued by the community – community members feel future planning must balance public access to the coast with environmental protections. Some residents are worried about the density of aquaculture industry in the area and want to see regular testing for surrounding marine areas. The community hopes to be involved and engaged in government monitoring relating to the human and climate impacts on their land.

### 6.1. Natural resources

## Forests

The municipality hosts a variety of topography from coastal cliffs to rolling farmland and forests inland. Approximately 4000 hectares of land within the municipality is currently forested and features an old







Figure 15: Hydrology for the Rural Municipality of West River

## Species at Risk

The West River is an important salmon spawning area, particularly in the Bonshaw Hills Provincial Park area and further north, with supportive measures in place along Howells Brook. This area covers the bulk of habitat currently being used by Atlantic salmon on the West River and contains sections of some of the best salmon habitat on PEI. Atlantic salmon is listed as a species of special concern and is considered an indicator species (canary in the coal mine) for habitat quality. Increased protections would provide support for sensitive habitat that is utilized by many important aquatic species (Atlantic salmon), as well as forest-dwelling species (Canada Warbler and Olive-sided Flycatcher). In 2020, a total of 102 Atlantic salmon redds were counted along the West River and of the 102 there were 85 along the identified area (83%; Figure 16). That makes up a significant portion of the spawning populations of Atlantic salmon on the West River which translates into the bulk of the juvenile population.

This area is particularly sensitive to adjoining land use activities and there are concerns that a 15-meter buffer zone does not adequately protect sensitive riparian habitats as in certain situations it does not even reach the top of sloped banks. Expanded protections



would help ensure the stressors that threaten salmon populations are mitigated while providing a healthy habitat that provides greater resilience against a changing climate.

The riparian area that follows this 9.75 km of river contains many sections with mature trees and is considered old-growth. These areas are becoming rarer on PEI as deforestation continues along with the expansion of agricultural operations. The Riverdale “Horseshoe” is a good example of an area that can be protected and turned into a wilderness area, like the Morell River Greenbelt. The Morell River greenbelt was established to protect the Morell River and is a prime example of the benefits of establishing a 60-meter buffer zone. Even if the 60-meter buffer zone does not go ahead, this Riverdale Horseshoe area should be considered for future protection or land acquisition by the government due to its significant ecological importance. A 60-meter buffer zone is well underway in this area since the establishment of the Bonshaw Hills Provincial Park already has a large portion of land protected.

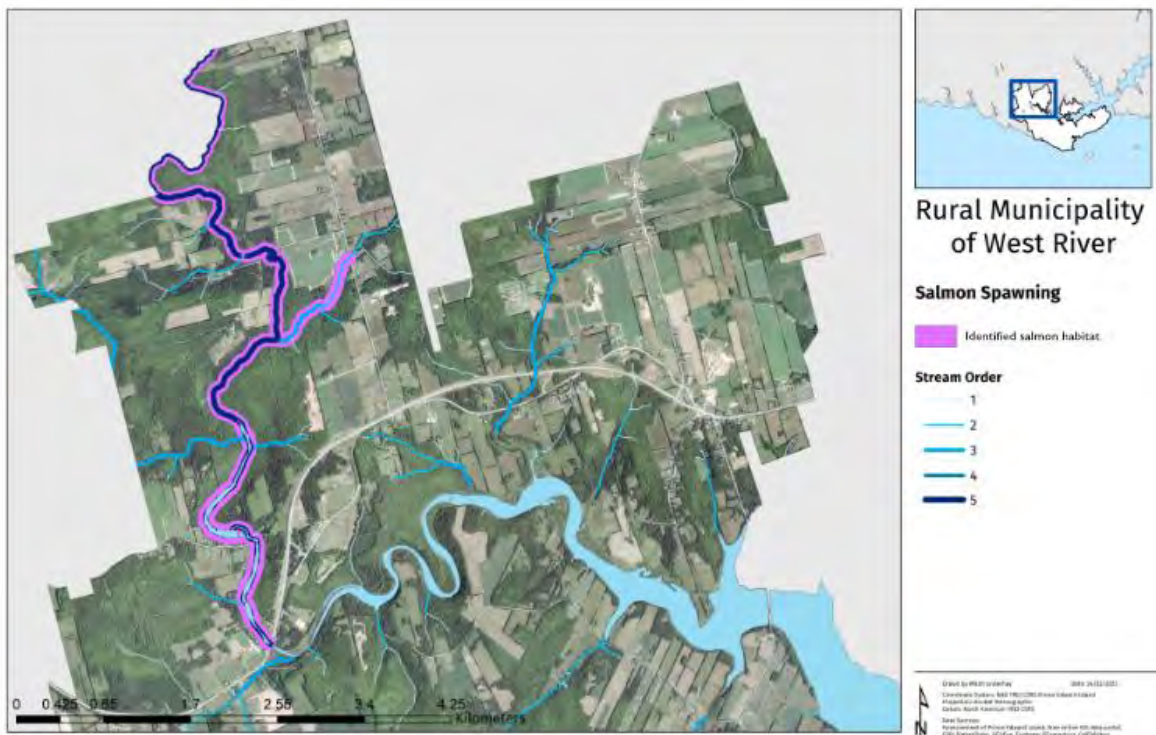


Figure 16: Identified sensitive salmon spawning area (source: Central Queens Branch of the PEI Wildlife Federation)

## 6.2. Food Security

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization suggests that “Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.” One of the common requirements of a community that has food security is a stable local food production base.

Gass’ General Store is a full service grocery store regularly used by area residents. Another grocery store is located in Cornwall, while Clows Red and White in North Wiltshire provides the necessities as a corner store in addition to the seasonal farm stands common in this primarily agricultural community.

## 6.3. Climate resiliency

### Climate Projections

Climate change is happening and will continue to impact the municipality (as it will the rest of the world) in a variety of ways. Key climate change indicators and projections help us understand what changes can be expected in the future. The following projections are from the Climate Atlas of Canada for the region of Charlottetown which includes the municipality.

*Table 7: Comparison of recorded climate averages and future climate projections for Charlottetown Region*

Change in Climate	1976-2005 recorded average	2051-2080 projections*	Change
Mean Annual Temperature (degrees Celsius)	6.1C	10.3C	+4.2
Mean temperature (spring)	3.4C	7.2C	+3.8
Mean temperature (summer)	17.6C	21.7C	+4.1
Mean temperature (fall)	8.9C	10.8C	+1.9
Mean temperature (winter)	-5.5C	-0.9C	+4.7
Number of Very hot days (+30C)	1.1	21.1	+19.9
Number of tropical nights (daily temp>20C)	1.0	23.3	+22.4
Last day of spring frost	May 7	March 25	
Number of winter days (-15C)	21.8	2.3	-19.5

\*projections are based on a high emissions scenario, also known as RCP8.5

Table 7 illustrates that the temperatures will be getting warmer, with an expected increase of the annual temperature of more than 4 degrees Celsius by 2080 (the world is aiming for maintaining a 1.5C increase from baseline levels in the 2015 Paris Accord). The biggest increases are seen in the number of very hot days (days above 30C) in the area jumping from one per year in the recorded average pre-2005 to almost 20 days per year by 2080. Tropical nights also jump significantly from one night a year in the previous average to more than 22 nights per year by 2080. The last day of spring frost also moves from early May back to the end of March, which may have implications for both agriculture (longer growing season), but also invasive pests and allergens affecting both crops and people.

### Flood and Erosion Risk

High level digital elevation modelling will enable planners and Council to see accurate elevations and projected sea level rise levels over various time periods. Elevation data combined with projected increases in storm surge events (a climate change impact resulting from increasing numbers and intensity of storm events) will allow the Council to see the areas of the municipality most at risk for flood events. Proactive decision-making by increasing setbacks or creating elevation requirements for new structures may be considered by Council.



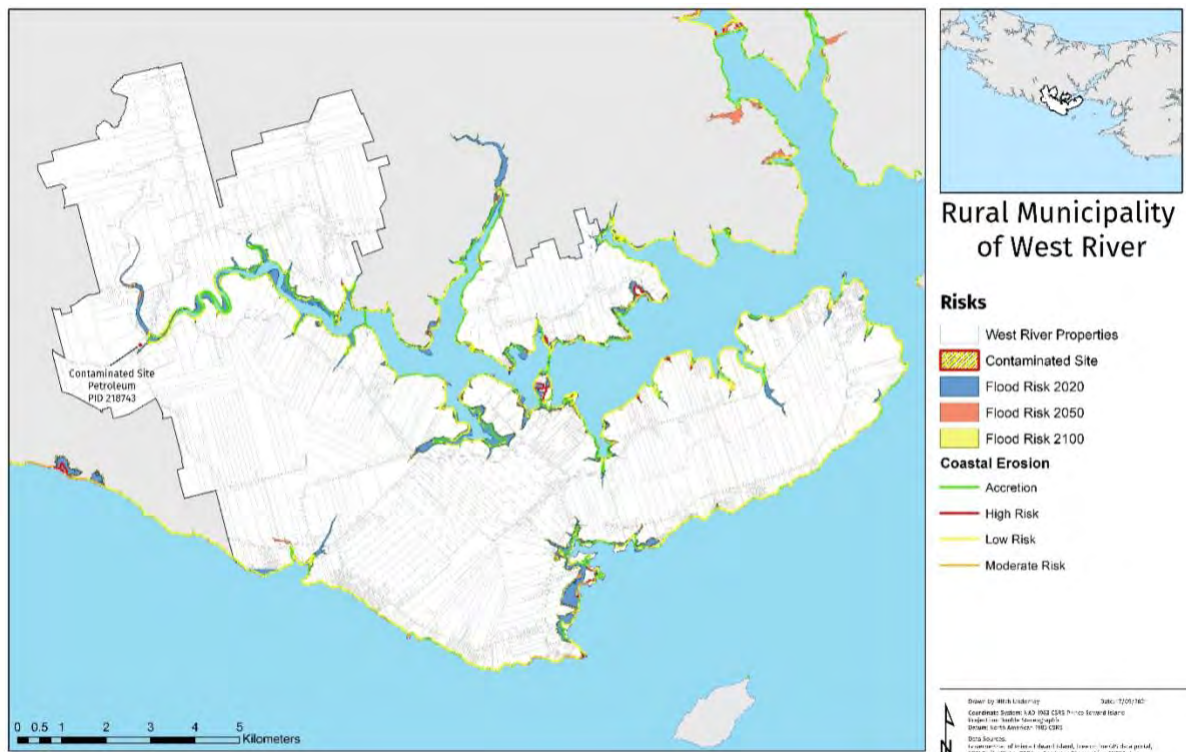


Figure 17: Flood and Erosion Risk in the Rural Municipality of West River

As outlined in Figure 17, the entire coastal boundary of the municipality is at risk for flood and erosion.

Flood risk and exposure to extreme events continues to be a significant and growing issue in the community. Sea level rise projections for Charlottetown indicate that, based on the current levels of carbon dioxide emissions, sea levels could rise between 100 and 120 cm by 2100. With new and more sensitive data coming available, vertical setbacks related to flood plains and elevation become increasingly important, limiting the placement of structures below a certain elevation. Current guidance is to base vertical set-backs on the projected 2100 flood plain as identified in data released by the provincial government in the fall of 2021, in addition to the traditional horizontal watercourse and wetland buffer setbacks, annual erosion rates, and building setbacks. Critical infrastructure should be held to an even higher standard, and it will be important for the municipality to continue to update standards over time as new information becomes available.

As sea levels rise and the frequency of powerful storms increases, the rate at which shorelines erode could increase. An assessment of the projected 2100 flood plain identified by the Province suggests that more than 450 properties are currently affected to some degree or another by the 2100 flood plain beyond the minimum 15m watercourse and wetland buffer. While some of those affected parcels are large enough to be only minimally impacted by this flood plain threshold, an estimated 150 or more properties could have their buildable area reduced to less than 15,000 sq. ft, which might impact the siting of buildings and on-site services.



A second impact of sea level rise and climate change will be the impact on the municipality's groundwater supply. The community, like the rest of the province, derives its drinking water from groundwater. As sea levels rise, salty sea water moves higher into the water table through a process called intrusion, which could decrease the amount of potable water. Additionally, warmer temperatures in the summer months that coincide with peak tourism season could drain groundwater aquifers. Reduced groundwater supply could also negatively impact agricultural productivity as irrigation water supply is decreased. Maintaining the health and abundance of groundwater in the municipality will be vital moving into the future.

More intense precipitation events will impact infrastructure and agriculture, while heat stress and droughts will impact people and agricultural activities; extreme weather events (post-tropical storms and hurricanes) have and will require focused emergency management planning and the designation of community shelters; and climate impacts on biodiversity will influence tree stands and habitat within the Rural Municipality of West River.

Long term considerations for climate change adaptation for municipal infrastructure may include cooling shelters and other shade features in any expansion or development of community facilities and any municipal infrastructure, the promotion of more dense development, and adaptation in the design and placement of municipal infrastructure. Likewise, proper stormwater management will assist in slowing or retaining runoff during extreme events, which in turn will protect waterways and infrastructure.

## Climate Change Mitigation

### *Energy*

The province-wide adoption of the National Building Code in 2020 promises to improve the standards for new construction. Although the municipality has the option to adopt enhanced or more stringent energy efficiency requirements, this would place an added administrative, inspection, and enforcement responsibility on the municipality and the municipality has opted to enter into an agreement with the Government of Prince Edward Island for provincial administration of the building code. As building energy-efficiency advances, however, the municipality may wish to consider mechanisms to encourage additional energy efficiency features in new buildings or renovations, which could be tracked through development permit applications or incentivized or promoted through programs and partnerships with other levels of government.

In particular, there has been a growth in demand for renewable energy generation over the last 5 years across the province, a trend that will likely continue. Meeting the demand for new renewable energy may occur at different scales, from single-detached dwellings, multi-unit dwellings, or larger commercial applications. These systems may also include energy storage systems of varying scales. It is becoming increasingly important to balance the need for, and facilitation of, renewable energy options and climate change mitigation against the potential concerns regarding and resistance to changing technology and their impacts on the landscape in the community.

The Rural Municipality of West River has the ability to influence and support shifts in energy types and technologies, including in the areas of fuel switching, wind and solar energy, and other renewables. In its own infrastructure, the Rural Municipality of West River has even more direct control over the energy

efficiency of system and use of renewable forms of energy. The development of a community energy plan would offer another opportunity to explore and solidify these approaches.

### *Transportation*

Given the nature of the community and the fact that most residents drive outside the community for work and shopping, the Rural Municipality of West River remains heavily dependent on fossil-fuel powered vehicles for transportation. Directing new residential development to more compact subdivisions rather than spreading it out along major roadways and increasing connections between residential developments and the core serviced area would reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions somewhat, although local employment opportunities would be needed to shift dramatically from the existing travel patterns to have a truly significant impact. As the COVID-19 experience has demonstrated, however, working from home is an option for many types of work, provided that the regulatory structure is set up to support this. Promoting more flexibility in working from home allows for the reduction in vehicular travel, a significant factor in GHG emissions in Prince Edward Island.

The Rural Municipality of West River does not currently have a specific approach identified for public charging infrastructure.

### *Carbon Sequestration*

The significant amount of agricultural land and rural nature of the municipality, as well as an estimated 33% forest cover based on the 2010 provincial corporate land use inventory, carbon sequestration opportunities represent another mitigation opportunity for consideration. The promotion of reforestation and afforestation efforts through the local watershed groups and in other appropriate areas, both to act as carbon sinks as well as to promote ecological health within the watershed, offers additional options for mitigation.

### *Climate Change Adaptation*

As with mitigation approaches, the Rural Municipality of West River has a role to play in consideration climate change adaptation in its land use policies, as well as in its emergency management planning.

### *Coastal and Overland Flooding*

As noted above, Rural Municipality of West River's shoreline will experience increased risk of flooding due to storm surge events over time, along with sea-level rise and accelerated rates of erosion due to climate change. The risks posed here include, among other things, the potential for emergency access challenges during extreme events and significant damage to public and private property. These potential hazards suggest that on-going flood risk evaluation will be an important part of the assessment of subdivision and development applications and the placement of critical infrastructure. The Province continues to build its climate change data and provides the data and coastal hazard and flood risk assessments as needed.

Given the changes to flood risk projections over time, both as patterns shift and as new information becomes available, it will be critical for the Rural Municipality of West River to continue to update its policies and development standards as they pertain to those projects as often as new data becomes available.

### *Stormwater Management*

Climate change is expected to result in more frequent intense precipitation events, which may impact existing properties and infrastructure, as well as new development. New development projects should address stormwater management by integrating future climate considerations into subdivision design, stormwater management, and other infrastructure and asset management. The protection of natural infrastructure in relation to subdivision developments and infrastructure design will enhance and direct overland flow. Sound stormwater management will also increase the protection of private landowners and residents from the sometimes-catastrophic impacts of flood damage, particularly as residential developments are developed over time.

## 7. VISION FOR THE FUTURE

The community members prioritize the rural character of the landscape and those in resource industries that protect it, the rural-ness of the municipality, supporting local, and ensuring water security.

Throughout the public engagement, members of the public stressed the importance of rural (not urban) approaches to deal with development pressures, support for home-based businesses and local economy solutions, and real responses to environmental challenges.

Community members do not want to lose the rural charm and value flexibility, choice, and enhanced supports for residents and environmental protection. Many recognize that new development standards must be balanced with flexibility and accessibility, especially in light of significant housing affordability challenges province-wide and changing building materials and maintenance considerations.

Land use planning provides municipalities and their citizens to prioritize areas for development and restrict development in other areas. In rural communities, the focus when directing development is typically in order to minimize the sprawling form of ribbon development that has been so prevalent for the past 60 or more years and that leads to fragmentation of farmland and other resource lands. With the absence of central water and sewage treatment, additional pressures existing to ensure that development levels are appropriate to a rural landscape with on-site services.

Development may also be restricted in areas that are valued for unique natural features, for alternative purposes not easily reconciled with development (e.g., agricultural lands and water supply watersheds), and where development may be unsafe (e.g., floodplains, coastal lands, and steeply sloped lands).

Given commercial services and employment options in Charlottetown and Cornwall, the primary growth and land use needs are to ensure an adequate supply of safe housing and services for residents and other members of the public, opportunities for modest local employment or income opportunities, the continued support for primary resource industries, and environmental protection.

Residential options, in particular, will remain important to ensure both housing options that are accessible to young families and those that will support seniors as they seek to age in place.

Protecting the rural character will also require a cautious and considered approach to requests to develop existing resource lands. Larger lot requirements in the areas designated for resource or rural

uses will maintain a dispersed development pattern, except where clustering is used to preserve open space.

Pulling these principles together and drawing on the vision statement adopted by Council in 2021, the following vision for the Rural Municipality of West River of 2037 would guide the municipality's planning approach:

***The Rural Municipality of West River is a rural environment supporting farming, fishing, and recreational activities, with beautiful vistas in all directions, built by our community working together.***

## Appendix A – Heritage Designations

<i>Community &amp; Location</i>	<i>Name of Property</i>	<i>Details</i>	<i>Date of Construction</i>	<i>Level of Recognition / Designation</i>	<i>Date of Registration/ Designation</i>	<i>Class</i>
<i>Bonshaw Green Road</i>	West River Petroglyph Site		ca 1879	Designated	2015-03-04	General
<i>Bonshaw 9 Green Road</i>	Bonshaw Hall	Bonshaw Presbyterian Church	1864- 1867	Registered	27 Nov 2013	General
<i>Bonshaw Trans-Canada Highway</i>	Bonshaw Pioneer Cemetery		1865	Registered	10 Nov 2008	General
<i>Bonshaw 238 Strathgartney Road</i>	Strathgartney Homestead**	Robert Bruce Stewart Homestead	1861- 1876	Registered	2001-09-07	General
<i>Bonshaw No civic address assigned (might be considered to be in Churchill rather than Bonshaw)</i>	Strathgartney Homestead Cemetery		1871	Registered	2008-11-10	General
<i>Bonshaw Trans-Canada Highway</i>	**Strathgartney Homestead National Historic Site - recognized	Reminder of land tenure system that	1861- 1876	Designated; plaque removed	1997-09-22	General

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	by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada <a href="https://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/page_nhs_eng.aspx?id=1792">https://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/page_nhs_eng.aspx?id=1792</a>	dominated political and social life on the Island for over a century				
<i>Meadowbank 112 Point Farm Lane West River</i>	Hyde House		ca. 1875	Registered	2018-12-11	General
<i>1066 Canoe Cove Rd., Rte. 19A, West River</i>	Canoe Cove School		1850	Registered	2003-06-25	General
<i>2352 Rte. 19, Cumberland</i>	Murphy House		ca. 1879	Registered	17-Nov-11	General
<i>West River 3961 Rte. 19, Cumberland</i>	St. Martin of Tours RC Church		1865- 1868	Registered	26-Mar-10	General
<i>West River 285 Blockhouse Road, Rocky Point</i>	Blockhouse Lighthouse*		1876	Designated	03-Oct-12	General
<i>West River Hache Gallant Lane, Rocky Point</i>	Warren Cove Front Range Lighthouse		1907	Registered	12-Jul-12	General



<i>Community &amp; Location</i>	<i>Name of Property</i>	<i>Details</i>	<i>Date of Construction</i>	<i>Level of Recognition / Designation</i>	<i>Date of Registration/ Designation</i>	<i>Class</i>
West River 907 St. Catherines Road, St. Catherines	McEachern Family Plot		1837- 1904	Registered	2009-02-02	General
West River 3040 West River Road, Rte. 9, St. Catherines	Shaw House, Strathnairn Farm		1921	Registered	2021-07-19	General
Rocky Point 191 Hache Gallant Drive, Rocky Point	Skmaq-Port-la-Joye-Fort Amherst National Historic Site of Canada		1720- 1770	Designated	1958-05-27	Designations (National Historic Sites and National Historic Events) under federal Historic Sites and Monuments Act:
Rocky Point 112 Hache Gallant Drive, Rocky Point	Deportation of the Inhabitants of Ile-Saint- Jean National Historic Event	Largest of all the deportations that occurred between 1755 and 1762, it marks a tragic moment in Canadian history	1755- 1762	Designated; plaqued	2011-07-19	Designations (National Historic Sites and National Historic Events) under federal Historic Sites and Monuments Act:
Rocky Point Rte. 9, Holland Cove	Survey of Prince Edward Island National Historic Event	Survey of Prince Edward Island and coastal waters by Captain Samuel	1764- 1766	Designated; plaqued	1932-05-30	Designations (National Historic Sites and National Historic Events) under federal

<i>Community &amp; Location</i>	<i>Name of Property</i>	<i>Details</i>	<i>Date of Construction</i>	<i>Level of Recognition / Designation</i>	<i>Date of Registration/ Designation</i>	<i>Class</i>
		Holland, 1764-1766				Historic Sites and Monuments Act:
<i>Rocky Point 191 Hache Gallant Drive, Rocky Point</i>	18th Century Mi'kmaw-French Alliance National Historic Event	An example of how formal relationships were negotiated and cultural understandings were accommodated in France's North American empire	1699-1758	Designated; plaqued	2014-07-07	Designations (National Historic Sites and National Historic Events) under federal Historic Sites and Monuments Act:
<i>Rocky Point Blockhouse Point</i>	*Light Tower and Dwelling	(Designated as a Recognized Federal Heritage Building under Treasury Board Policy on Management of Real Property)	1876	Designated	1991-09-05	Designations (National Historic Sites and National Historic Events) under federal Historic Sites and Monuments Act:

*Source: Government of Prince Edward Island*