

9a. Summary of Recommendations and Responses to 2022 Sustainability Study - at November 2023

#	Recommendation, or Option to Consider	Response so far (as at 10 Nov 2023)	Status	Next steps
1.1	<p>Old Schoolhouse (1) Retain asset to continue to use Old Schoolhouse for municipal offices</p>		Complete	
1.2	<p>Old Schoolhouse (2) Pursue revenue opportunities for public meeting space: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertise and create awareness of availability of space including through membership in Meetings & Conventions PEI • Review rental rates; remove discounts and no charge rentals </p>	<p>Staff have already: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved visibility and description on municipal website: https://www.rm.victoria.com/hall-rental - Improved visibility on GoogleMaps - Contacted Meetings & Conventions PEI to inquire about listing (costs \$250) </p>	Partial progress	<p>We still need to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review & update rental rates. This has been on the list of actions to complete since March, but has never made it to the top of the priority list. Needs to account for a weekly bookings, and hourly rentals. - Meet with Meetings & Conventions PEI and decide on benefits of listing. <p>We have much more availability than demand for the hall - it is rare for a double-booking to occur. Increasing demand with advertising would be a worthy project.</p> </p>
2	<p>Community Hall (1) Divest of asset (2) Sell the Community Hall to Victoria Playhouse Inc.</p>	<p>Staff have already: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - discussed with staff and board of the Victoria Playhouse, and encouraged them to make an offer to the municipality for a shift in rent or ownership arrangements. - looked into funding options for the major upgrades and repairs needed (roof, energy efficiency): grant applications to arts and heritage (Canada Cultural Spaces Fund), and the Green Municipal Fund, are all possible (on a rolling basis), but have not been able to be prioritized due to lack of administrative capacity. We've also heard that the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund is over-subscribed and is unlikely to release any new funds until 2025. - completed emergency repairs to the roof in summer of 2023. - applied and recieved funding for an upgrade to the heating system. - arranged for an energy audit to be conducted, which generated recommendations for action. </p>	Partial progress	<p>We understand that the Playhouse does not currently have a strong financial situation, and is unlikely to bring forward a proposal to take over ownership of the building.</p> <p>Staff hear many comments on the value of the Playhouse to the community.</p>
3.1	<p>Leard's Lighthouse (1) Retain the Lighthouse</p>		Complete	

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3.2	<p>Leard's Lighthouse (2) Identify a third-party to operate as a museum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a fair and equitable opportunity for all interested parties to operate the lighthouse as a museum within the municipality by issuing an RFP. • Any agreement for the operation of the lighthouse should provide clarity on the collection and use of donations, financial responsibility for exhibit development and repairs and maintenance of the facility. 	<p>Done, but with the variation that the RFP allows the lighthouse to be operated for any purpose, not only as a museum. The criteria for assessment of the RFP do include the contribution to community life.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	
3.3	<p>Leard's Lighthouse (3) Apply for grants to support maintenance and upkeep</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and apply for grants to support the maintenance and upkeep. 	<p>Some, limited research has occurred on this front - our understanding is that heritage grants provided through the province will provide up to 25% of the costs of maintenance and upkeep, and the municipality would be required to contribute the remaining 75%.</p> <p>This being out of range in the 2023 budget, no further investigation nor grant applications have occurred.</p>	<p>Needs attention</p>	<p>Further research may turn up other grant opportunities we are unaware of, and which are worth pursuing.</p>
4	<p>Welcome Centre, Washrooms and Heritage Park (1) Divest the Welcome Centre facility through a sale</p>	<p>This was addressed, albeit in a different way than recommended</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The VBA paid fair market rent for their use of the Welcome Centre this year, for the first time - An RFP has been issued for use of the Welcome Centre next year 	<p>Good progress</p>	<p>Selling this asset would be administratively complicated, because of the municipal water & sewer assets on the property.</p> <p>Additionally, the municipal seasonal staffer who keeps the public washrooms open all summer works on many different aspects of upkeep around the property.</p> <p>Staff recommend that Paid Parking on the municipal parking lot would be a very worthwhile exercise to pursue as a capital project in the coming years.</p>

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5	<p>Victoria Park (Causeway) (1) Return asset to Province</p>	<p>Much discussion has been had about Victoria Park this year. We are yet to receive a formal application from Amar about their desired expansion of their facility. Our understanding is that they are in discussions with the Dept of Transportation and Infrastructure. Regardless of that discussion:</p> <p>Because we received a \$5000 beach grant in spring, we were able to employ Allan Marshall in May to bring the washrooms up to a usable (but not pretty) standard, to re-paint the picnic tables, and re-build the stairs.</p> <p>Because we recieved a \$3000 donation, we were able to pay for lawnmowing of the park.</p> <p>Both of these actions received strong positive feedback from residents and visitors.</p> <p>Additional costs were incurred by the municipality to operate the park, beyond the donations received, particularly related to a necessary plumbing repair.</p> <p>The municipality requested a transfer of ownership, or a renewed long-term lease, from the Province. We are yet to recieve a response from the department of Transportation & Infrastructure.</p> <p>We have confirmed that we are currently in an 'overhold' position on the lease, meaning that as long as neither the province nor the municipality want to change the arrangement, Victoria is still responsible for it's operation as a day-use park. If we decide not to maintain it, the lease contract states that the province intends to demolish the washroom block.</p>	<p>Needs attention</p>	<p>The cost of operating the park annually are modest, but the near-term capital costs required are significant.</p> <p>Any transfer of ownership from the province to the municipality should come with a significant infrastructure grant, to enable us to protect the property from the rapid erosion it currently experiences, with appropriate coastal engineering. Judging by the cost of the Souris Causeway intertidal reefs (\$115,000), and comparing the size of that project to the size required This would be a project costing perhaps \$500,000.</p> <p>Additional capital investment would be required in either repairing the existing washrooms block, or (worthy of consideration given the current block's location and the rate of erosion, and it's generally poor state of repair) replacing it with a smaller and more modern structure.</p> <p>The possibility of promoting use part of the park as an event venue (for music festivals) or as a municipally-run overnight campground, is a possibility that the municipality could consider. However, these options would increase administrative burden for a municipality that is already over-burdened.</p> <p>A desirable alternative to consider, resulting in less administrative burden to the municipality for the same effect, would be to persuade the province to re-take operation of the land, including updating the washrooms, engaging in shoreline protection, and potentially establishing a provincially-run campground or event space. In this scenario, the municipality would retain Development Permit approval over the site.</p>
6.1	<p>Municipal Administration (1) Explore the opportunity for a CAO to be shared with another community, as this opens the door for strong candidates looking for full time work</p>	<p>In the opinion of the current CAO, this idea is a non-starter and an unreasonable request to make of a CAO for Victoria: it would increase the number of 'balls in the air' for a single person who already holds too many for just Victoria alone. A role operating in this way would have significant stress levels, even if the role were full-time, and would result in negligble efficiency or performance gains for Victoria.</p> <p>The examples we see shared services works usually involves one of the municipalities having no buildings, no official planning, no water & sewer responsibilities, an outsourced fire department, and not having significant capital projects.</p>	<p>Needs attention</p>	<p>In the opinion of the CAO, what would lead to increased efficiency is true amalgamation with other communities, and/or expansion of municipal borders to support Victoria having better revenue.</p> <p>This would allow:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CAO to report to a single Council - Financial savings in terms of bookkeeping resources and auditing on a single set of (larger) accounts. - An additional professional to be brought on (for example as a Deputy CAO or a project-management lead) to take significant projects off the CAO's desk.

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6.2	Municipal Administration (2) Contract for Development Officer and Bylaw Enforcement Officer on an as needed basis	<p>This is already how we operate with a Development Officer.</p> <p>We do not have the budget to employ a Bylaw Enforcement Officer, nor do we have our bylaws set up to enable enforcement/issuing of tickets.</p>	<p>Partial progress</p>	<p>More research is needed on the role of a bylaw enforcement officer, and how it would benefit Victoria. Currently, the CAO communicates with people who are breaching bylaws (e.g. the Development Bylaw, the Code of Conduct or Procedural Bylaws), and educates them about the content of the bylaw, to encourage compliance.</p> <p>When needed, a lawyer can be engaged to request compliance with the Development Bylaw.</p>
7	Maintain the Victoria Fire Department	<p>This year, we have followed the recommendation to the best of our ability, and made progress on improving trust between the municipality and the department, as well as drafting a Fire Services Bylaw which defines respective roles and responsibilities. We have heard from Kensington and are continuing to reach out to others, to learn how we can do better.</p>	<p>Needs attention</p>	<p>Further action is required to be confident that we are meeting the municipal responsibility of 'maintaining' the Department at the high level of service required. As CAO of Kensington Geoff Baker said in a presentation in Victoria: <i>"Public safety is paramount: it must be delivered at high-quality, or you don't deliver it at all, and contract out to professionals. Dedicated volunteers are still volunteers."</i></p> <p>Further financial analysis, and communication with the Fire Department Executive is needed, as the municipality does not currently have an accurate picture of the annual cost of operating the department, going forward, nor a capital investment plan.</p> <p>A Fire Dept Reserve Fund should be established once that level of transparency and capital planning exists.</p>

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8	<p>Consider Restructuring or Dissolving the municipality Four options were presented, for consideration.</p> <p>1) South Shore - including Victoria, Crapaud, and unincorporated areas between West River & Borden.</p> <p>2) Victoria and Crapaud Fire Districts</p> <p>3) PEI Electoral District 19 (Borden-Kinkora): Includes 5 municipalities, and unincorporated areas from the Wilmot Valley to Kelly's Cross.</p> <p>4) Consolidation of Victoria and Crapaud: Includes only the existing incorporated areas of Victoria and Crapaud and no unincorporated areas</p> <p>The Study recommended that IF there is a decision explore restructuring, that a Steering Committee be established with representation from each interested incorporated municipality, and from unincorporated areas.</p> <p>5) Dissolution - Requires a plan for winding up municipal assets and liabilities. All remaining property and assets are transferred to the Government of PEI.</p>	<p>There has been discussion about options and a process to move forward at the last 3 Council meetings. No decisions have yet been taken.</p> <p>The Sustainability Study stated that once Victoria (and any other communities involved) decide to go a certain route, a 6 month formal process to initiate restructuring would commence.</p>	Needs attention	<p>There may be other restructuring options that are worthy for the municipality to consider.</p> <p>A multi-rated municipality would likely be necessary in any of these scenarios (ie, a Zone where residents pay higher tax, being close to more municipal services, and a Zone where people pay a much lower tax, being further away).</p> <p>The MRSB contract, and the Capital Budget for this year, included a further \$5500 available for developing an Implementation Plan. The shape of this implementation plan, and direction from Council to those consultants, still needs to be determined.</p>
9	<p>Consider use of a Property (right of way to sewer building) (1) Sell 10.8 acres of land at 966 Victoria Road (one time revenue – no future revenue stream) OR (2) Annex 10.8 acres of land and develop commercially or residentially for future property tax revenues</p>	<p>No action. We have received an expression of interest before Feb 2023, but this was never followed up on by the municipality, and the person expressing interest also did not follow up.</p>	Needs attention	<p>Consider putting the property up for sale.</p>
10	<p>Consider a Tourism Levy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often an accommodation levy – limited accommodations in Victoria • In some areas a tourism fee is applied to restaurants and ranges from 3% - 6% • Has received negative publicity in Niagara Falls (Marketplace story) • Cities of Charlottetown and Summerside both charge a Tourism Accommodation Levy – 3% of price – hotels, B&Bs, Inns, Airbnb, VRBO 	<p>Has been discussed in Planning Board and Council but No Action to date, due to limited administrative capacity.</p>	Needs attention	

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11	<p>Consider a Capital Improvement Fee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A \$2 fee is charged on each ticket purchased in the Homburg Theatre and The Mack and Studio Theatres at Confederation Centre Based on an assumption that an estimated 5,000+ tickets might be sold at Victoria Playhouse annually this would generate \$10,000 per season 	No Action to date, due to limited administrative capacity.	Needs attention	
12	<p>Consider charging for Parking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 available spots in municipal parking lots Set fee at \$2.00 per hr. Assuming each spot is utilized for 3 hours a day for 3 months of the year; potential revenue of \$16,000 <p>Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake uses Honk Mobile Metered parking Gated parking entrance and exit 	No Action to date, due to limited administrative capacity.	Needs attention	
13	<p>Consider charging for Washrooms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charging a small fee for the public washrooms would assist in covering some of the cost for supplies, cleaning, and water/sewer From June to September; assuming 120 days of operation; a minimum of 40 uses per day, a small charge of \$0.25 per use could generate \$1,200 	No Action to date, due to limited administrative capacity.	Needs attention	
14	<p>Consider raising Property tax</p>	Commercial taxes in Victoria were raised 10% in the 2023-24 Financial Year.	Needs attention	<p>Increases in residential taxes are generally opposed by residents, understandably.</p> <p>Comparable tax rates can be found here.</p> <p>Victoria's residential tax rates are lower than Crapaud, Summerside and Charlottetown.</p> <p>Changes are considered at budget time.</p>