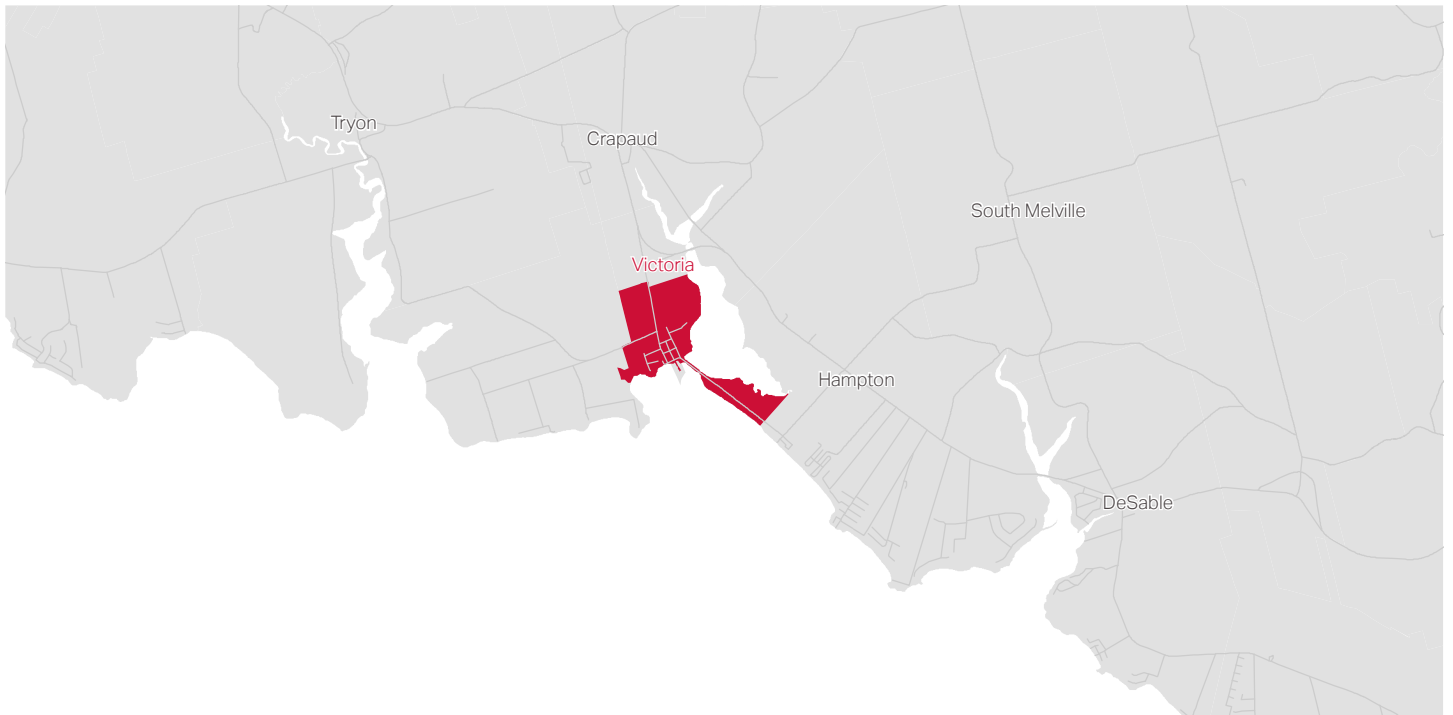




BACKGROUND ANALYSIS
2019.10.30

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Context

Setting

The Rural Municipality of Victoria is located on the south shore of Prince Edward Island, halfway between Charlottetown and Summerside. Victoria's borders enclose 1.46 square kilometres of land. The core of the municipality is made up of a historic grid of four blocks defined by three east-west streets and three north-south streets.

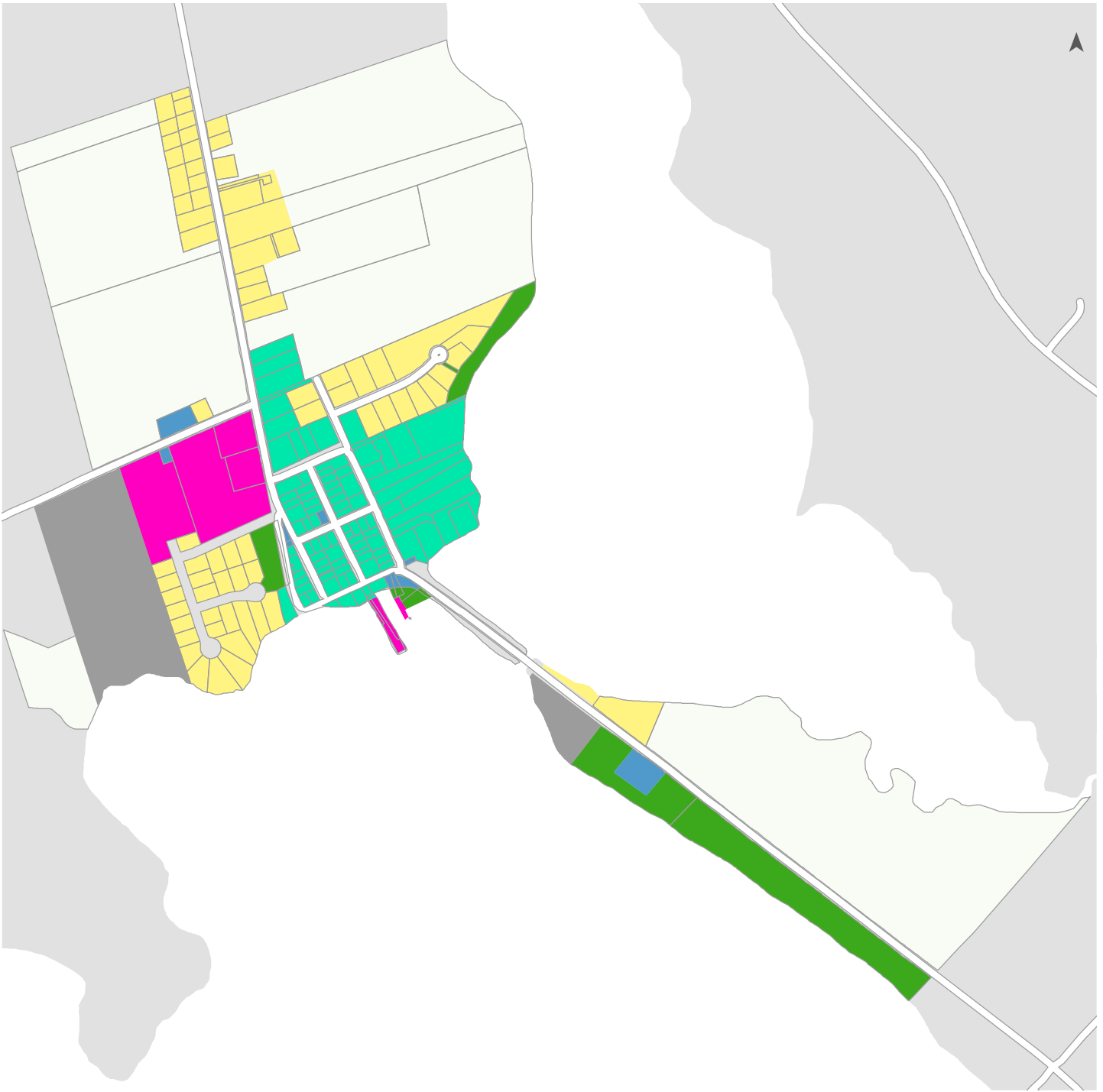
Victoria is blessed by an attractive natural setting. The northern and western borders of the community feature the red soils and active agriculture for which PEI is so well known. To the south is a beautiful view of the Northumberland Strait. The picturesque Westmoreland River forms the municipality's eastern border.

As a small, residential community Victoria relies on the larger region for a number of amenities. While Victoria once had more local amenities (including a three-storey general store and deliveries for milk and groceries), current commercial development largely targets the tourist population, and many shops close in the off-season.








Within the immediate region, Crapaud and Hampton are a short, five-minute drive from Victoria. To the north, Crapaud provides the nearest everyday necessities. These include a pharmacy, health clinic, dental office, public library, bank, general store, hair salon, café, and other services. The South Shore Villa in Crapaud is also the nearest seniors' facility with 24-hour nursing support. To the east of Victoria's Causeway bridge, Hampton has several tourist accommodations as well as an automotive repair shop.

Summerside and Charlottetown are the nearest urban centres on the Island. Victoria's RCMP detachment is in Summerside. Charlottetown offers all the shopping, dining, and employment opportunities of a capital city. While a few small independent grocers and general stores dot the south shore around Victoria, the nearest major grocery stores and other large retailers are in Summerside and Charlottetown.





Zoning

Agriculture	A	
Commercial	C	
Central Core	CC	
Light Industrial	M	
Recreation and Public Open Space	O	
Public Services and Institutional	PSI	
Single Family Residential	R1	

Community Structure


In Prince Edward Island, the *Municipal Government Act* provides jurisdictional powers for municipalities to govern within their boundaries. This Act, as well as the *Planning Act*, permit Municipal Council to make decisions about the day-to-day operations of the Rural Municipality of Victoria, as well as regulate land use. Through the current Zoning & Subdivision Control (Development) Bylaw, the Municipality has divided land into eight zones. These control how the land is used within the municipality. The current zones are illustrated on the map on page 6.


Development in Victoria is most dense in the central core, where the average lot size is 1,360 square metres (1/3 of an acre). Over the years this four-block grid has been extended to accommodate new development. Newer residential development in the Single Family Residential Zone has larger lot sizes, with an average of 2,300 square metres (just over 1/2 an acre).

The Public Services and Institutional Zone is spread throughout the community and includes the Old Schoolhouse and the Victoria Community Centre, among other facilities. The Causeway, at the south-east extent of the community, houses a mix of open space, agricultural uses, light industrial, and a single residence.



Unused and Underutilized Properties

Unused or Underutilized 

Victoria Properties 

An important component of planning for the future is reviewing whether the community has appropriately-zoned lands to accommodate expected and/or desired growth.

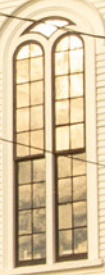
The map on page 8 identifies properties that, as of 2019, are unused or are underutilized in relation to their current zoning. This represents 41 acres (12% of the municipality's area). Owners of some of these properties have indicated plans for development in the near future.

Of those unused or underutilized lots, 40 are currently zoned Central Core or Single Family and have existing frontage on a road. Many of these lots have easy access to sewer, central water, or both. These are lots that prioritize and would permit residential development without the need for any rezoning, but are currently vacant or used for secondary purposes (e.g. as an extended yard for an adjacent lot). This land is well-situated to accommodate residential growth. Full residential development of these lots would represent approximately 65% growth in the size of the residential community in Victoria.

Many of these undeveloped lots are properties included in the Dunrovin Estates and Dunrovin Shores subdivisions, as well as several large lots in the east of the central core. These areas have existing services (roads, water, and sometimes sewer), which are currently not used to their intended capacity. Development in these areas should be prioritized over other areas because it does not come with incremental costs in terms of infrastructure extensions.

Beyond those areas, the Agricultural and Commercial Zones do allow residential uses, though their priority is for other purposes. These lands comprise over 200 acres of Victoria's total land and provide an important "land bank". If the current dedicated residential lands reach capacity faster than expected, the Municipality has the ability to rezone these lands—either on a case-by-case basis or through future plan reviews—to prioritize residential growth.

This analysis indicates there is ample available land in both the near and long term to accommodate residential growth within the community.



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Cultural Heritage

The Mi'kmaq have lived on Prince Edward Island or Epekwitk (resting on the waves) for at least 10,000 years, predating any other known settlement. European explorers arrived on the Island in the 18th century. The settlers annexed the Island to Nova Scotia in 1758 under British control, then divided the unceded land into 67 townships and parceled it off in a European lottery.

Colonizers arrived in Victoria in the early-1800s, settling in the area once they noticed the harbour's great potential. Lawyer James Bardin Palmer founded the community now known as the Rural Municipality of Victoria in 1819. In the 1860s, Bardin Palmer's son laid out the street grid that can still be seen today.

In 1871, three wharves were built to accommodate the emerging shipbuilding and lumber industries. This became the third largest port on the Island, soon trading with other East Coast ports as well as Europe and the West Indies. Exports included produce, potatoes, and eggs, shipped by schooner.

By the 1890s, the depletion of Victoria's forests led to the collapse of these industries. The development of rail around this time rendered the harbour somewhat obsolete for its initial purpose, though it was soon reinvented as a fishing port. Throughout the 1900s, fishing and farming sustained much of the community. Tourism began to grow as an industry following wharf improvements and the use and promotion of heritage structures for other uses, such as the Victoria Community Centre by the not-for-profit Victoria Playhouse Inc.

The growth of tourism led to the conversion of some residential properties to tourism-focused commercial uses; today, the central core is a unique mix of homes and small commercial businesses.

The wharves remain a valued part of this community and the local economy. Fishing, pleasure boating, and commercial businesses such as restaurants have taken over as the wharves' main uses.

Victoria was incorporated as a Village in 1951. The community was initially governed by three council members but expanded to five in 1998. Fire protection and street lighting were the first essential services to be provided by the new municipal government. Many shops moved to nearby Crapaud when the Trans-Canada Highway bypassed the community in the 1950s, allowing Victoria to remain the quiet seaside community it is today.

Many of the community's historic buildings remain standing, including a variety of Victorian homes, farmhouses, and barns. Notable structures include the Leards Range Lighthouse, the Victoria Community Centre, Island Chocolates (which occupies the old General Store), the Old Schoolhouse (now the Municipal office and community space), and the Grand Victorian wedding venue (in what was once the local church). While most of these structures have been carefully maintained and renovated over the years, some homes and barns have gone vacant or abandoned and are in need of repair.



Demographics

**Due to the small population size, some of this census data may be unreliable, and some has been rounded or omitted to protect residents' privacy. The following numbers are reflective of the private dwellings occupied by full-time residents, and likely do not accurately represent the community's seasonal population. Where possible, we have supplemented census data with local knowledge.*

Population

According to the 2016 Census, Victoria's official population of full-time residents was 74, a 29% decline since 2011. The 2009 Official Plan further illustrates this trend, showing that the full-time population has been decreasing steadily since 2001.

Census data is based on primary place of residence. In other words, the Census does not capture seasonal residents or part-time residents who identify a different location as their primary residence. However, looking at dwellings, Victoria had (in 2016) 64 private dwellings. Only 36 of these were occupied by full-time residents. Since Victoria does not have a post-secondary school (students are a common type of part-time residents), we can infer that many of the 28 dwellings not occupied by full-time residents host seasonal residents who swell the community's population in the summer months.

The Census indicates the majority of the population in Victoria is over 50, and there are no full-time residents between the ages of 20 and 39. Victoria's median age is 55.5. Children under 15 make up under 7% of the population, while seniors (65+) make up 33%.

Anecdotally, residents in Victoria have observed a recent surge in the number of people moving to the community. One long-time resident reported the following for the years 2009 to 2019:

	Households	Residents
Gain	21	61
Loss	7	13
Net Total	+14	+48

Since the 2016 Census reports a decline in the full-time population, these data suggest that much of this growth has happened in recent years. Importantly, the net gain includes eight households with children.

Many of the new households consist of people aged 55 and older. Residents note that Victoria's charm and strong sense of community are attractive qualities for retirees, and many seniors are actively moving to Victoria for retirement.

In addition to the full-time growth, approximately 7 households of 18 seasonal residents moved in between 2009 and 2019, including 2 families with children.

Housing and Economics

The 2016 Census indicates the following full-time household compositions:

One person	10
Two people	15
Three or more people	5

*numbers are likely rounded to the nearest 5 due to small sizes

In 2015, the median household income before-tax was \$51,328, lower than the median of \$63,770 within Queens County.

Of the households in Victoria, 60% still have a mortgage on their home. The average value of dwellings was \$179,075 in 2016, again lower than the county average of \$227,784. However, values appear to be increasing since the Census, with two homes listed for just under \$250,000 and one home listed for \$850,000 in 2019.



Economy & Employment

Despite its small size, Victoria has a diversity of economic activities within its borders.

Tourism

The 2014 Official Plan indicates that tourism has been growing steadily since the 1990s, with some conversion of residential properties to tourism and bed & breakfast uses.

Commercial Business

The municipality is home to several home-based cultural businesses including fine art, craft, and culinary establishments. There is also a boutique wedding and events centre and a theatre. Additionally, Victoria is home to stand-alone commercial establishments on the wharves, including restaurants and gift shops.

Industrial Workforce

The Elanco facility is located west of the central core, comprised of both research and development as well as a laboratory and office space. Elanco is a bioscience company that focuses on vaccines and drug development for the aquaculture industry. They currently employ over 30 people at their Victoria location, most of whom commute from elsewhere.

Fishing and Aquaculture

Halibut PEI is a halibut nursery founded in Victoria in 2008, now spread between this location and one in Woods Harbour, Nova Scotia.

Victoria is located at the boundary of the Spring and Fall lobster fishing seasons, so this industry is active between April and October. A working fishing wharf contributes to the industry and identity of this community.

Agriculture

While agriculture was once a larger industry in the community, it still takes up almost half the land in the municipality. The current operations offer mixed crops including potatoes, hay and grain, as well as a dairy operation. This farmland surrounds the community, forming a valued cultural landscape.

Due to the aging population, the workforce in Victoria is down 44% in the last decade. With 25 members of the workforce, many workers employed in the municipality commute from elsewhere. Resident occupations are evenly split between professional, scientific and technical services; educational services; and arts, entertainment and recreation.



Community Facilities

Victoria has a significant number of public and open spaces, many of them possessing important heritage value. Some of Victoria's heritage buildings have been converted to new uses, such as the Victoria Community Centre, the Old Schoolhouse, and the Leards Range Lighthouse. The new use of these facilities allows them to be appreciated by residents and visitors alike, supplying needed amenities that improve the quality of life for the local community.

Victoria Community Centre

The Victoria Community Centre was built in 1912, and designated a federal Historic Place in 2007. In 1981, residents voted to encourage the production of live theatre in the community hall. It is now run by a not-for-profit organization, with 37 seasons of theatre and performance under its belt. This facility runs as the Victoria Playhouse theatre during the summer.

The Old Schoolhouse

Opened in 1873, the two-room schoolhouse served as the local school for 100 years before closing in 1973. Following the closure this space was used for a variety of uses, including local kindergarten classes. In 2017, the Municipality began renovations that would restore the building and create dedicated office and meeting space for municipal and other community functions.

Waterfront

The waterfront features a boardwalk with beach access as well as a waterfront park and picnic space right in the central core of the community. Additions include a newly designed parking lot and public washrooms, as well as a seawall constructed in 2019. The Victoria Businesses Association runs a welcome centre in the space shared with By the Sea Kayaking.

Leards Range Lighthouse

Once one of the Island's biggest seaports, Victoria provided a link to the mainland with ships historically making the three-hour journey to and from Pictou, Nova Scotia. This lighthouse has been managed seasonally by the not-for-profit Victoria Seaport Museum since 1990. In 2010, the Federal Government declared 970 lighthouses and beacons surplus, including the Leards Range Lighthouse. The community subsequently put together a business plan and assumed ownership of the facility. This lighthouse is unique on the Island for its possession of two range lights.

Victoria Park

Victoria Provincial Park is a waterfront property accessed via the Causeway. A fenced in area leased by the Municipality contains three beaches, a picnic area, and a playground.

The community also has a post office (located within a local gift shop) and volunteer fire department. There are two additional public open spaces in Dunrovin Estates and Dunrovin Shores subdivisions. Residents of Victoria attend Englewood School in Crapaud which serves grades 1 through 9 and Bluefield High School in North Wiltshire.



Aerial Photo (2016)

Civic Address Point



Development Trends

Industrial

Industrial development in Victoria is currently focused in two facilities: Elanco on the western edge of the community, and Halibut PEI on the Causeway. Both of these businesses are recent additions to the community. The facilities in which these businesses are located pre-date their operations; however, both companies invested in expanding their facilities. In October of 2019 Elanco announced they were selling their facility; the outcome and ultimate impacts of this are currently undetermined.

Commercial

Commercial development in Victoria has occurred primarily in three locations: the wharves, the central core, and the commercially-zoned lands at the southwest corner of Victoria Road and Nelson Street.

There has been substantial commercial development on the local wharves since the 1980s. Today, the larger of the two wharves houses two restaurants and several tourist shops.

Within the central core, the development pattern in recent decades has been focused on the tourism industry; many residences in the core now have businesses operating out of them during the summer and shoulder seasons. At the very north extent of the central core, a former church was converted to a boutique wedding and event space.

The commercially-zoned lands host the renewed Victoria Cottages; however, there is still a large area of undeveloped land to accommodate future commercial growth.

One recent development trend throughout the world is the proliferation of short-term rentals (homes or cottages rented as tourism accommodations). While such activity has always occurred, newer digital platforms such as Airbnb and VBRO have raised the profile of such operations. This trend extends to Victoria, and some homeowners are interested in renting their homes for short-term stays during the summer, raising concerns about a loss of housing and an increase in seasonal residency.




Residential

Housing in Victoria is made up almost exclusively of owner-occupied, single-detached homes. The majority of housing was built before 1961, though some construction occurred in the 1960s and 70s and two new residential subdivisions have been developed within the last decade.

To the east of Russell Street, Dunrovin Estates is a partially developed subdivision overlooking the Westmoreland River, with central watermains servicing the properties. On the other side of Victoria, Dunrovin Shores is a more recent subdivision with a variety of lots for sale, also partially developed. The waterfront lots are located west of Nelson Street and offer central water and sewage. Both of these subdivisions have been slow to develop, with a large number of lots still available, listed for up to \$99,000.



Servicing

- Water Line 
- Sewer Line 
- Septic Tank 

Infrastructure

Road Network

Victoria has two direct access roads to the Trans Canada Highway: Route 116 (which runs from Victoria Road to the Causeway) and Nelson Street. A third access point is provided through Tryon. Victoria's street network is completely owned by the Province. The Province provides road maintenance, snow clearing, and stormwater management through the Department of Transportation and Public Works.

Although the community has no sidewalks, Victoria's compact centre and dense street grid are very walkable. There is a noticeable increase in car and foot traffic, as well as cycling, during the tourism season. However, the general tourism-oriented nature of most services in the community means residents are typically dependent on cars to access day-to-day services, driving to nearby communities for shopping or appointments.

The heritage streetscapes of the central core are a key contributor to the character of the community. However, the narrow roads and lack of parking do force cars to park on the grass outside businesses and homes, and in the summer this creates congestion and safety hazards.

Water

Central water first came to Victoria in 1988, drawn from a well field located on Victoria Road. The system runs east down Victoria Road to Nelson Street, and south through the central core, spanning a wider scope than central sewer. Water mains serve properties as far west

as Wanda Street, in the Dunrovin Shores development, and as far east as Lyman Street, into Dunrovin Estates. Central water is designed to avoid contamination from on-site septic tanks, and is well suited for the central core's small lot sizes. Other properties (such as Elanco) use private wells.

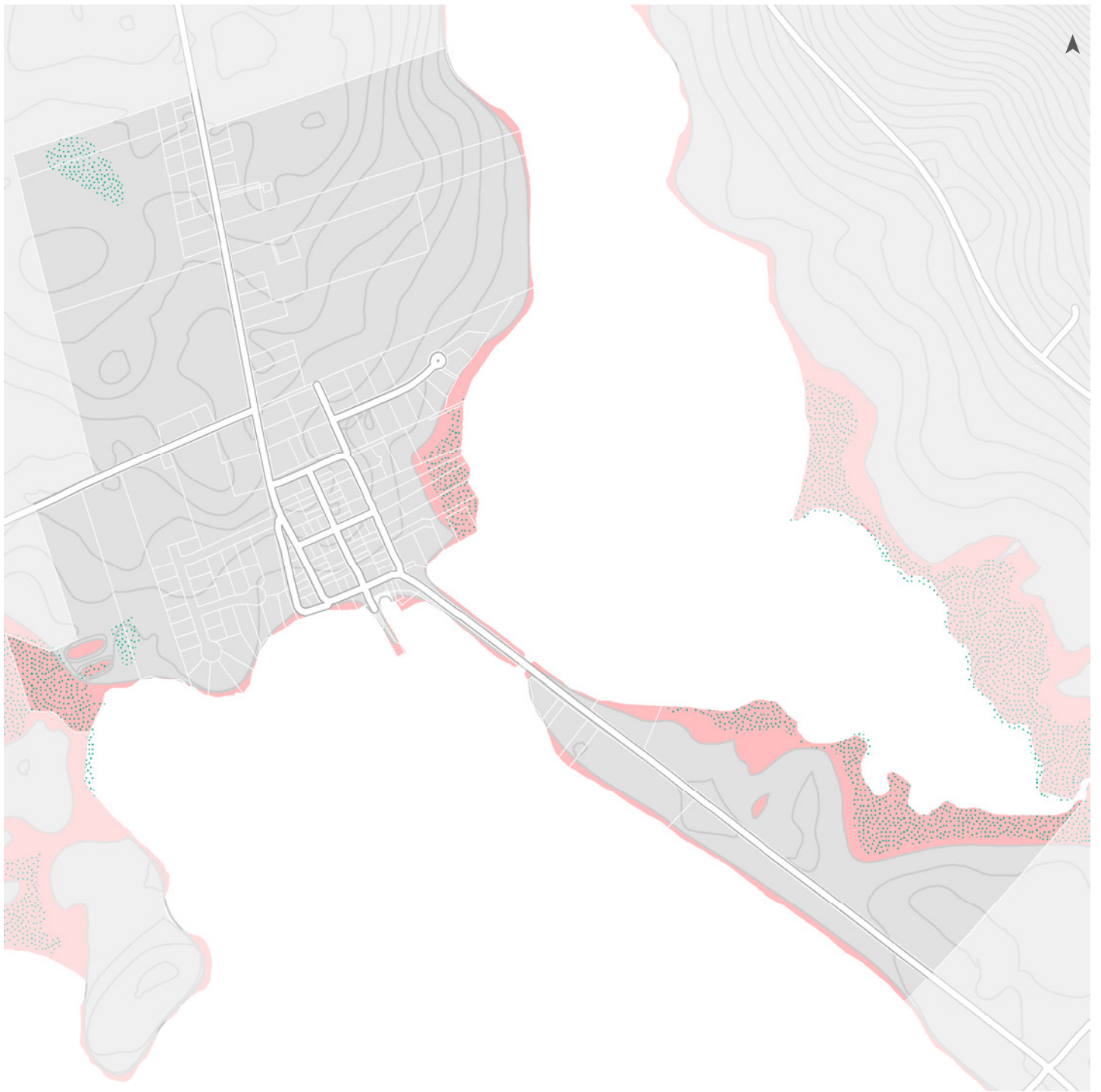
Sewer

Central sewer was developed in 2008, now forming a system that runs throughout the central core. The force main follows west along Victoria Road to the treatment site, outside the municipal boundaries. Two lengths of force mains and two lengths of gravity mains service the community, running as far west as Wanda Street and as far east as Russell Street.

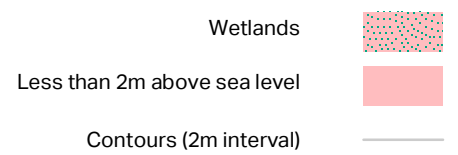
Victoria's Servicing Standards indicate that additional proposed connections outside the central core are looked at on a case-by-case basis before it is decided whether to connect them to the central sewer. Remaining properties within the community are served by on-site septic systems, either using an effluent gravity septic tank or an effluent pressure septic tank.

Fire & Policing

Victoria provides its own fire protection through a local volunteer Fire Department, operating out of the Fire Hall. It houses two pumper trucks and an emergency response truck. The nearby Crapaud Fire Department provides additional aid as needed. Policing services are provided by the RCMP through its Summerside Detachment, about 30 minutes away.



Flood Risk



Environment & Sea Level Rise

The natural environment, and particularly the coast, is a key part of the community identity in Victoria. The harbour and the river that feeds into it hold cultural heritage value and continue to support key economic industries in the community. Farmland frames the community, creating the picturesque “postcard village” boasted by Tourism PEI.

Sea level rise projections for Victoria indicate the sea level could rise between 1 and 1.48 metres by the year 2100. On page 22, the flood risk for Victoria shows wetlands and areas lower than 2 metres above sea level. These locations will be particularly vulnerable to sea level rise, and land use planning should take this flood risk into consideration. Of particular concern will be areas where the road is low-lying and could be at risk from storm surge. This includes areas along the Causeway bridge and south towards Nelson Street and Rovis Beach Lane.

One effect of climate change will be additional coastal erosion, the rate of which could increase with sea level rise and the frequency of powerful storms. Victoria’s Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment (2012) shows the shoreline of Victoria Park has eroded about 35 feet in the ten years between 2002 and 2011. Sea level rise and sedimentation has also shifted and narrowed the channel over the years, altering Victoria’s waterfront.

Storms have exacerbated these impacts, and one resident cited in Victoria’s Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment recalls her home flooding several times.

Long-time residents have noticed an increase in the frequency and intensity of storms, as well as shifts in the local climate. With warmer winters and less sea ice, Victoria’s coastline has little protection from wave action and continues to erode.

Another impact of climate change will be its effect on the community’s water supply. Victoria, like the rest of the province, gets its drinking supply from groundwater, whether through the municipal system or private wells. As sea levels rise, water moves higher into the water table through the process of intrusion. This could decrease the amount of potable water. While Victoria’s public water supply has not yet faced any major issues, the potential of climate change to affect this resource should be monitored.

Stormwater management and drainage have been an ongoing concern in Victoria. The impacts of new development and climate change have increased surface water flow in some areas. Roadways in Victoria have been expanded over the years, and the lack of ditching provides additional challenges in regards to stormwater management.

As a response to these concerns, the current Official Plan identifies goals relating to climate change mitigation. The Plan aims to protect ground water and surface water resources, maintain natural areas and water bodies by avoiding contamination, and encouraging sustainable agricultural practices. Supporting the health and abundance of Victoria’s natural resources will continue to be a crucial component of land use planning in the future.

UPLAND

