



# Town of Souris

2024 Official Plan

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Preface

The first Official Plan for the Town of Souris was prepared in 1993. Prior to that date development was controlled under a development bylaw passed under the Town Act in 1980. This document represents the results of the 2022-2023 review of the Souris Official Plan and together with any Appendices or Amendments constitutes the Official Plan for the Town of Souris, hereinafter referred to as the 'Town.' This process was led by Registered Professional Planners under SJ Murphy Planning & Consulting.

## 1.2. Purpose

The Official Plan for the Town is a formalized statement of Goals, Objectives, Policies and Plan Actions approved by Town Council concerning the nature, extent and pattern of land use and development within the Town until the year 2038.

The Town's Goals as set out in the Official Plan indicate overall policy direction while the Objectives and Policies deal with specific topics and issues. Plan Actions are statements indicating specific initiatives or directions which will be undertaken to implement the Official Plan's Policies and Objectives.

The Official Plan guides the physical, social and economic development of the Town. It provides the policy framework for the Town of Souris's Land Use Bylaw, hereinafter referred to as the 'Bylaw', and policy direction for Council's actions in relation to: economic development initiatives; public works; social programs; municipal services; environmental standards; and fiscal management.

## 1.3. Planning Area

The Official Plan covers all the geographic area contained within the legal boundaries of the Town. Although the Official Plan formally addresses only those matters which arise within the Town's legal boundaries, consideration has also been given to the Town's relationship with neighbouring municipalities, adjacent rural areas, the region and the province as a whole.

## 1.4. Legal Enablement

The Town derives the majority of its powers from the *Municipal Government Act* and the *Planning Act*. The *Municipal Government Act* which took effect on December 23, 2017, requires the Town to provide "municipal planning services, including an official plan and bylaws," and enables other bylaws and/or implement programs and strategies to help implement other aspects of the Official Plan. The *Planning Act* empowers Council to appoint a Planning Board, adopt an Official Plan, and, subsequently, to adopt implementing land use and development control bylaws.

The *Municipalities Act* empowers Council to make other bylaws and/or implement programs and strategies to help implement other aspects of the Official Plan.

## **1.5. Official Plan Review**

An Official Plan is intended to be a dynamic planning tool and should be subject to periodic review and/or amendment. The Official Plan will therefore be monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure its compatibility with changing circumstances. A formal, more comprehensive review shall be undertaken every five years, with the next review due in 2038.

## **1.6. Plan Contents**

The *Planning Act*, R.S.P.E.I., 1988, Cap P-8, requires that an Official Plan include:

- a statement of economic, physical, social and environmental objectives;
- a statement of policies for future land use, management and development, expressed with reference to a specified period not exceeding fifteen years; and
- proposals for its implementation, administration and the periodic review of the extent to which the objectives are achieved.

This document contains six parts:

1. Introduction – deals with the purpose, scope and legal enablement for the Official Plan
2. The Town of Souris Today - summarizes the background studies and provides a description of the physical, social and economic characteristics of the Town and provides a framework for economic development.
3. Future Development Goals - provides a broad summary of how the Town desires to see its development unfold in the future
4. Objectives, Policies and Plan Actions - forms the core of the document, stating objectives, policies and intended actions for specific topics
5. Future Land Use Map – identifies spatial development goals for the Town, and
6. Implementation - sets out the process for administering and implementing the Official Plan and Land Use Bylaw.

# 2. THE TOWN OF SOURIS TODAY

## 2.1. Historical Background

Souris is part of Mi'kma'ki, the traditional, unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people for more than 12,000 years. The Mi'kmaq have been closely associated to Souris as they continued to use and gather in the area well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Various waves of European settlers, starting with Acadians in the early 1700s and, following the Acadian expulsion, Scottish, English and Irish immigrants began arriving in 1772 into the 1800s. Agriculture and shipbuilding were mainstays of the local economy with as many as 1324 people living in the region in 1861.

## 2.2. Existing Land Use

Souris boasts a significant industrial land base, reflecting the significance of the port and the community's strong ties to primary sectors, particularly in relation to industrial food production where employment in this sector exceeds 34% compared to all other occupations.

Commercial activity is located along the main street and has expanded to include summer tourism activities along the new boardwalk.

Housing types are mixed with just over half being single-unit dwellings and the remainder a mix of higher density structures from duplexes, low rise apartments. Mobile homes are an issue in the town particularly in relation to the park adjacent to the school. Almost 60% of the housing stock in the Town was built prior to 1980.

The Town's role as a cultural and social centre is also reflected in the institutional and public sector buildings located throughout the municipality. As well, recreational facilities are abundant with both indoor and outdoor assets available in all seasons with programs catering to all age groups.

## 2.3. Demographic Analysis

The Town of Souris is home to 1079 residents (2021 Census), an increase in population of 2.5% from 2016. This is a notable increase compared to the loss of 10.2% of the population between 2011 and 2016. Further, the population is slowly aging where, in the last ten years, the median age rose from 47 to 51 years. The Souris Background Report provides a detailed examination of demographic trends. Importantly, population growth projections prepared in 2023 based on provincial data projects Souris' population to grow by 74% by 2041 by at least 800 people.



## **2.4. Development Trends**

Only 2% of the Town's dwelling units were built between 2016 and 2021, including a number of townhouse dwellings. While approximately 170 permits were issued over that period, the majority were for accessory buildings and in the commercial, industrial, and institutional category, although those latter included business permits. The cost of servicing land for new residential subdivisions and the limited footprint of the Town, along with an aging population, are likely factors in the pace of growth. Housing requirements to meet the demand for projected population growth are 384-478 new units by 2041 which translates to 19-24 units each year. According to the 2021 Census, Souris' housing stock grew by only 0.8 units a year since 2016.

## **2.5. Municipal Services/Infrastructure**

### ***Sewage Treatment***

The Town of Souris has two separate sewage treatment facilities. One serves the needs of the Souris Food Park and the other serves the needs of the balance of the Town. The municipal treatment system received significant upgrades in 1996 and 2021. Most of the properties within the Town of Souris are served by sanitary sewer services. The Town's sewage collection system is somewhat complex due to the elevated location of the treatment plant and the Town's terrain, as well as the threats posed by coastal erosion.

### ***Municipal Water***

It is anticipated that all new development within town limits (residential, commercial, institutional, and industrial) are connected to the town water system. Following the establishment of the Souris Food Park, the town now has four wells, the largest of which was established to support the elevated water consumption requirements of the food processing plants. The older three wells are currently idle and the Town is looking to decommission one. The central water distribution system was installed in the 1960s.

### ***Stormwater Management***

While most streets in the town do not have storm sewers, stormwater runs from the highest points of the town to the shoreline via three main storm systems, all of which are separated from the sewer systems.

### ***Fire Protection***

The town has a volunteer fire department which also provides services to the outlying rural areas. A new fire hall is being considered to accommodate modern equipment and training facilities.

### ***Police Protection***

The town receives its police protection from the R.C.M.P. under the Provincial Policing Contract. The Souris detachment is located in the town and includes 7 full time members.

## 2.6. Transportation

### *Vehicular*

As a town, Souris is responsible for the ownership and maintenance of all roads within the municipality, with the exception of designated Provincial roads or highways which are deemed to play a regional transportation role.

### *Marine*

One of the key components of Souris' transportation infrastructure is the Town port. The Port of Souris is open for shipping and kept free of ice year-round. There are four wharfs, an active fishery, the ferry terminal for the Magdalen Islands Ferry, and a developing marina complex.

### *Pedestrian*

Souris has an excellent pedestrian system including 4.9 km of town-owned (and maintained) sidewalks, and 1 km of boardwalk, the MacPhee Avenue Trail, as well as a section of the Confederation Trail. The sidewalk system connects most areas of the Town and most major pedestrian destinations.

## 2.7. Institutional and Community Facilities

Souris has a wide range of institutional facilities, including four heritage church buildings (one of which is now used as a mixed-use commercial building), one regional school; an early learning and child care centre; a community hospital; public library, Regional Services Centre, and municipal administration building on Main Street.

## 2.8. Parks and Recreation

Souris boasts a wealth of recreational facilities for the community including:

- Eastern Kings Sportsplex
- Eastern Kings Fitness Centre Incorporated
- Jerry McCormack Memorial Complex
- Gymnasiums and fields at the School
- Connolly Park
- Centennial Park
- Gerald Clinton Ball Field
- Souris Racetrack
- Souris Skate Park and Outdoor Courts
- CN Park
- Gateway Park
- Silver Threads Club
- Confederation Trail

## **2.9. Economic Development**

### *The Local Economy*

Souris is primarily a service centre, serving the needs of a large rural economic region which is dominated by agriculture and fishing. The Town's port facilities and its industrial base are highly dependent on these two resource sectors. Retail and tourism play smaller but growing roles in the local economy and the growth potential of tourism is promising.

### *Industrial Activity*

The Town of Souris has a strong industrial base which is closely tied to the region's primary sectors: agriculture and fishing. Industrial lands are adequate, well serviced and well located. The original Industrial Park at the eastern end of Town has capacity to accommodate additional light manufacturing and service businesses. The new Souris Food Park is already home to several large plants and can accommodate additional growth in this sector.

The creation of the Souris Harbour Authority in the 2000's after federal divestiture has facilitated the long-term economic viability of the port. The wharf and storage sheds are in excellent condition and the Harbour Authority operates a range of associated operations, from cold storage facilities, leasing of space, and dry boat storage.

## **2.10. Environmental Protection**

The Town is a coastal community, much of which is vulnerable to erosion, and some of which is facing a growing risk of coastal flooding over time.

### *Climate Resiliency*

The effects of climate change are being increasingly felt and will continue to impact the Town in a variety of ways. Projections for 2080 show warming temperature trends, with an expected increase in the average temperature of more than 4C in the Town. The number of days above 30C will increase dramatically and the last spring frost is projected to move to four weeks (25 days) earlier than in was in 2005 by 2080.

Flood and Erosion Risk maps illustrate current flood and erosion hazard areas along the coast as well as under climate change projections by 2100 due to sea level rise. Climate change may also impact the Town's groundwater supply as a result of saltwater intrusion or drought. As well, property-level stormwater management will be needed to deal with increased precipitation and extreme weather events as a result of climate change.

## **Climate Change Mitigation**

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### ***Energy***

Increased 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. There is a need to balance the need for, and facilitation of, renewable energy options and climate change mitigation against the potential resistance to changing technology and their impacts on the landscape in the community.

### ***Transportation***

The Town remains heavily dependent on fossil-fuel powered vehicles for transportation. Directing new residential development to more compact subdivisions and increasing connections between residential developments and the core serviced area would reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Promoting more flexibility in working from home allows for the reduction in vehicular travel. A relatively new provincial rural transit system operated by T3/Transit PEI offers new, albeit limited, access to public transportation, which may help to offset some single-occupancy vehicle travel.

### ***Carbon Sequestration***

The promotion of reforestation and afforestation efforts acts as carbon sinks and promotes ecological health within the watershed offers additional options for mitigation.

## **Climate Change Adaptation**

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### ***Coastal and Overland Flooding***

Adapting to threats of coastal flooding due to climate impacts means it is critical for the Town to regulate how new development in at-risk areas is undertaken.

### ***Stormwater Management***

The more frequent intense precipitation events associated with climate change will likely 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.

# 3. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

## 3.1. Introduction

In seeking to enhance the overall appeal of Souris as a place to live, visit and operate a business and to generally improve the quality of life in the Town, this Plan will provide a framework for future municipal planning and development that supports and encourages positive development in the Town. The goals presented in this section are broad statements indicating the overall shared vision of the Town Council, residents and property owners in terms of the future evolution and development of the Town and provide the framework and general direction for subsequent, including more detailed statements which follow.

## 3.2. Future Development Concept

The Town of Souris faces a number of significant hurdles to re-establishing its former economic vitality and its appeal as a residential community and Council has prioritized enabling more housing development. These hurdles are not insurmountable but success will require effective local leadership and planning and capitalizing on the Town's (and the region's) unique strengths which include the region's rich cultural traditions, its skilled and motivated labour force, the strong rural economy, the ice-free harbour and port facilities, the area's extraordinary natural beauty, and the pride and commitment of its residents. While some challenges will require the continued support of the two senior levels of government, the impetus for development must come from within and Council must provide strong leadership.

The Future Development Concept reflected in this Official Plan sees the Town of Souris continue to rebuild and diversify its economy, employment, and assessment base. The Town's vital service centre role will be maintained and enhanced. The downtown core will receive special attention and efforts will be targeted at restoring its historic vitality. Food processing and other value-added and diversified manufacturing enterprises will continue to be a focus to strengthen industrial employment opportunities.

The future of the port will be protected and the expansion of tourism accommodation, attractions and services encouraged, while access to appropriate, accessible, and affordable housing will be a priority within the Town. Co-operation and collaboration with our rural neighbours will continue to be a focus, building on a history of inter-dependence. In short:

*Souris is a resilient community with quality services and natural assets and a vibrant and connected economy, where a high quality of life exists for residents of all ages to live, work, and play.*

## 3.3. Goals

### Social

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- To provide a range of housing options to meet various socio-economic needs
- To create a safe and resilient community
- To foster social interaction and healthy lifestyles for all residents of the Town

### Economic

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- To develop a strong local economy
- To attract and support value-added and light industries
- To protect the long-term viability of the Town's resource sector
- To build a local green economy

### Physical

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- To maximize efficiency and minimize potential conflicts in the development and use of land
- To ensure high quality municipal infrastructure
- To build placemaking into land-use decisions

### Environmental

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- To protect the quality and supply of groundwater and surface water resources in and adjacent to the Town.
- To protect and enhance the health of the natural environment in the Town.
- To increase the Town's climate change resiliency and minimize contributions to climate change.

# 4. OBJECTIVES, POLICIES AND PLAN ACTIONS

## 4.1. Introduction

This Part represents the policy core of the Official Plan. Within the broad policy framework laid down by the previous part, the following objectives provide more precise statements which address specific issues and concerns within the Town.

Policies and plan actions outline the proposed course of action to achieve the performance targets described in the objectives. Policies indicate with some precision the approach the Town will take in pursuing its objectives. Plan actions are concrete measures which implement that approach.

## 4.2. Social Objectives and Policies

### Housing

While the 2021 Census saw a reversal of previous population decline, it will be difficult to truly assess long term trends outside of temporary shifts resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic until the next census is conducted in 2026. Meanwhile, the Town's aging population continues to present challenges for the maintenance of a population sufficient to maintain service levels and community vitality. Further, the lack of available housing of all types currently limits its ability to retain residents and promote population growth which is expected to increase significantly in the coming years. While housing availability is a substantial stressor across the province, the availability of serviced land for development within the Town, as well as variety of housing forms, are additional factors for Souris, a fact recognized during community outreach actions for the Official Plan review and in local media. The prioritization of policies that support additional and varied housing will be of critical importance in ensuring that the needs of residents and businesses can be met.

Efforts must continue to include a focus on improving the quality of the current housing stock and promoting higher residential development standards, without inappropriately impeding the ability of the community to address core housing needs.

#### *Objectives:*

1. To encourage the development of a mix of housing stock in the community to meet the needs of residents at any age and any income level.
2. To actively promote the Town as a residential location.
3. To encourage a broad range of cost-effective residential development opportunities in the Town.

## ***Housing Policies:***

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### **Policy SOC-1: Designation and Zoning**

It shall be the policy of Council to designate and zone sufficient residential land to accommodate the projected and potential housing needs of the Town during the period of the Official Plan.

#### ***Plan Actions:***

- a) Council shall establish residential designations and residential zoning shall be in conformance with the Future Land Use Map.
- b) The Bylaw shall zone sufficient residential land to meet the current and anticipated needs of the Town and establish development standards for low, medium, and higher density residential development.
- c) The Bylaw shall establish three residential zones – Low Density Residential (R1), Medium Density Residential (R2) and Mixed Density Residential (R3).
- d) The integration of housing options shall be encouraged, while using strategies such as landscaping buffers to minimize conflicts between residential and other uses.
- e) The Bylaw shall establish standards and criteria supporting clustered housing developments enabling more than one residential building on a single parcel.

### **Policy SOC-2: Special Residential Uses**

It shall now be the policy of Council to support and encourage special residential uses and supportive housing such as group homes, dormitories, rooming houses, and community care facilities, nursing homes, and senior citizen homes within the Town. Those uses will be identified as shared housing and will be directed to higher density residential areas as a special permit use and, in the case of shared housing with special care such as community care, nursing homes and senior citizen homes, to the Public Service and Institutional Zone as a permitted use.

#### ***Plan Actions***

- a) The Bylaw shall establish ‘shared housing’ and ‘shared housing with special care’ as categories of use and shall distinguish them from both short-term rentals, B&Bs, and other tourism establishments, and from multi-unit residential developments.
- b) The Bylaw shall include ‘shared housing’ as a category of residential use, based on uses that contains 4 or more bedrooms, that meet one or more of the following: (i) that are rented for remuneration as separate rooms for residential accommodation; or (ii) that are operated by a non-profit organization or a registered Canadian charitable organization that provides support services to the occupants of the shared housing use.
- c) The Bylaw shall further include ‘shared housing with special care’ as a subcategory of ‘shared housing’ use that is designed to provide a level of care to residents with cognitive, physical or behavioural limitations, including options for individual dwelling units for occupants; ‘shared housing with special care’ uses must meet the definition of ‘shared housing’ use.
- d) The Bylaw shall include shared housing with special care as a permitted use in the Public Service and Institutional (PSI) Zone and shared housing as a permitted use in the Mixed Density Residential (R3) Zone.



- e) The Bylaw shall include shared housing with special care as a special permit use, subject to consideration of their impacts on surrounding land uses, traffic generation and fire safety, in the Medium Density Residential (R2) Zone.

### Policy SOC-3: Accessory Apartments

It shall now be the policy of Council to permit accessory apartments through the establishment of a secondary suite within single-detached dwellings or a garden suite in a structure accessory to a single-detached dwelling, where residential uses are permitted.

#### Plan Actions:

- a) The Bylaw shall permit one secondary suite in any single-detached dwelling, or a garden suite in a structure accessory to a single-detached dwelling, in any zone.
- b) The Bylaw shall establish standards for accessory apartments including but not limited to size and changes to the exterior appearance of the residence, and addressing location, servicing, buffering, parking requirements and other matters.

### Policy SOC-4: Housing Forms

It shall now be the policy of Council promote the development of a range of housing forms and densities in order to meet the housing needs of residents of different ages, stages, abilities and incomes, while ensuring the compatibility of dwelling types with permanent neighbourhoods. This will be accomplished by establishing criteria for the locations in which certain types of prefabricated homes and the standards for their placement to promote the sensitive integration of different housing forms that balance affordability with compatibility with adjoining residential uses.

#### Plan Actions:

- a) Modern “mini-homes” shall be permitted under the Bylaw but only when they are affixed to a foundation and are CSA-approved.
- b) Tiny homes shall be included as a residential type of use permitted within clustered housing developments or as a form of housing to accommodate farm labourers in the Agricultural zone.
- c) The Bylaw shall include prefabricated modular houses and mini-homes as types of single-detached dwellings.
- d) Older style mobile homes (transportable on their own wheeled chassis) which have a unique style and character shall be restricted to the existing mini-home court adjacent to the school.
- e) The existing mini-home court shall be continued as an existing approved use under the new R3 Zone. The site shall continue to be monitored and the owners required to maintain their units in an appropriate manner. When units become dilapidated, Council shall take action to encourage their removal.
- f) No further mini-home courts shall be permitted in the Town except as clustered housing in any zone where clustered housing is a permitted or special permit use.
- g) The Bylaw shall establish minimum requirements for the provision of accessible dwelling units in larger multi-unit buildings.

## Policy SOC-5: Housing Development and Promotion

It shall be the policy of Council to work with the private sector and government agencies to actively promote Souris as a residential development opportunity. Council shall aggressively pursue opportunities to develop existing Town-owned land and to partner with other landowners and developers to facilitate residential development.

### Plan Actions:

- a) The Council may designate surplus Town-owned land for residential development where appropriate.
- b) Council shall work with local employers and developers to identify opportunities for serviced residential developments.
- c) Council shall seek to identify opportunities for partnering with private sector developers and not-for-profit community organizations for the creation of new housing options.
- d) Council shall pursue all opportunities for funding and cost-sharing support to encourage and develop new housing in the Town.

## Safe & Resilient Community

The Town of Souris directly supplies or contracts for the provision of a range of municipal services, including collection and treatment of sanitary waste, central water supply, fire services, and police protection. The Town has joint responsibility with the Province for stormwater management and emergency measures.

In general, the Town's municipal services and infrastructure are in good condition and able to meet demands with a high level of service. Recent upgrades have been made to some infrastructure, although some systems, such as stormwater and utility lines, are increasingly vulnerable to a changing climate.

### *Objectives:*

1. To provide cost effective emergency and first responder services
2. To plan and prepare for human and natural disasters, including through risk reduction

### Community Safety Policies:

## Policy SOC-6: Protective Services

It shall be the policy of Council to maintain the current arrangement of utilizing the services of the R.C.M.P., under the provisions of the Provincial Policing Contract and to continue to provide municipal and regional fire services through the Souris Fire Department.

### Plan Actions:

- a) Council shall continue to contract additional police protection through the Province's contract with the R.C.M.P.
- b) Council shall work closely with the R.C.M.P. to monitor security issues in the Town and to ensure adequate levels of policing.

- c) Council shall continue to provide fire protection to the town and surrounding fire district through the municipally-owned Souris Fire Department and to supply funding necessary to maintain equipment, facilities and training at high levels.

## Policy SOC-7: Emergency Management Planning

It shall be the policy of Council to ensure that the municipality's Emergency Measures Program, including an EMO Plan and bylaw, is maintained, updated, and exercised in accordance with the *Municipal Government Act*.

### Plan Actions:

- a) Council shall continue to maintain, update, and revise the Town's Emergency Measures Plan and bylaw and maintain the overall EMO Program as required under the *Municipal Government Act* and the *Emergency Measures Act*.
- b) Council shall work with other municipalities in the region to identify opportunities for the coordination of emergency preparedness and response efforts.
- c) Council and the Emergency Management Coordinating Committee shall take into consideration the increasing impacts of climate change in identifying hazards and potential emergency shelter needs, including the potential use of emergency shelters as cooling shelters.
- d) Council and the Emergency Management Coordinating Committee shall identify areas at risk of coastal flooding ahead of anticipated storm surge events to assess the ability of emergency responders to gain access.
- e) The Bylaw will include future emergency hazard considerations in the design and development standards for new subdivisions and development projects.

## Social Interaction and Healthy Lifestyles

Souris has an impressive array of recreational facilities and programs and the community is serviced by a range of organized sports programs, as well as additional activities for youth. The Town is fortunate to be extremely well supplied with institutional facilities including schools, churches, a hospital, nursing home, government service centre, police detachment, fire hall, town hall and library. While there may be some opportunity for the development of additional facilities, particularly if the recent trend of population growth can be maintained, the Town's major challenge will be to ensure the continued health of the current institutional facilities in the Town.

Priorities include the continued development of programming for youth and young families and integrating physical activity into everyday activities by continuing to build on existing active transportation infrastructure.

### **Objectives:**

1. To maintain and expand recreation programs and facilities in the Town.
2. To encourage social engagement that is supportive and inclusive.
3. To support the development of the Town in a way that contributes to overall affordability.

4. To promote youth retention and the recruitment of young families to the Town.
5. To protect and enhance current institutional facilities and public services in the Town and encourage additional services over time.

## Recreation Policies

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### Policy SOC-8: Recreation Programming and Facilities

It shall be the policy of Council to provide recreation programs and sports and recreation facilities that meet the needs of residents.

#### Plan Actions:

- a) Open spaces and properties used for parkland or recreational uses shall be designated as Parks and Open Space on the Future Land Use Map and zoned as Open Space (OS) in the Land Use Bylaw.
- b) Council shall support and encourage efforts to promote recreation programs.
- c) Council shall promote the Town as a venue for organized sports and recreation tournaments and events.
- d) Council shall encourage and provide recreational activities and programs that stimulate the mind as well as the body.
- e) Council shall routinely inspect and maintain sports and recreation facilities owned by the Town and upgrade facilities as budgets permit, based on an assessment of need and demand.

### Policy SOC-1: Active Play Areas

It shall be the policy of Council to provide improved active play areas throughout the Town, within easy and safe access of all residential neighbourhoods.

#### Plan Actions:

- a) Council shall identify opportunities for new and expanded facilities such as dog parks, taking advantage where possible of town-owned lands.
- b) Council shall integrate active transportation into open space and recreation infrastructure development to facilitate accessibility and functionality.
- c) The Bylaw shall include uses ancillary to recreation uses, such as commercial shops along the boardwalk as permitted uses,
- d) The Bylaw shall establish requirements and criteria for the dedication of parkland or cash-in-lieu of parkland, or a combination thereof, in new subdivisions.
- e) Council shall prioritize the inclusion of shading in the design and development of any public spaces to provide opportunities for cooling with the anticipated rise in temperatures associated with climate change.

### Policy SOC-1: Regional Collaboration

It shall be the policy of Council to work with the residents and community organizations and establish effective working relationships with other sport and recreational groups in the Eastern Kings Region, collaborating with neighbouring municipalities and communities in the broader region to take advantage of shared opportunities.

**Plan Actions:**

- a) Council shall seek opportunities to collaborate with surrounding municipalities and communities to meet the recreation needs of residents and develop the critical mass and ensure economies of scale in the development and operating of facilities and programs.
- b) Council shall work with community boards and organizations in its efforts to promote regional facilities as a venue for tournaments and events.

**Social Engagement Policies**

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**Policy SOC-2: Inclusion and Accessibility**

It shall be the policy of Council to use recreation and community programs and facilities to develop an inclusive and engaging community, meeting the needs of all residents regardless of age, income, or ability.

**Plan Actions:**

- a) Council shall identify opportunities to foster and encourage volunteer participation in all aspects of the delivery of recreation programs.
- b) Council shall include principles of building community in the development of events and programming.
- c) Council shall support and promote seniors' programs and support efforts to expand seniors' programming.
- d) Programs and facilities shall be assessed with regards to their level of accessibility to residents of all needs and abilities.

**Policy SOC-3: Affordable Community**

It shall be the policy of Council to consider the impacts of council decisions, spending, and policies on community affordability.

**Plan Actions:**

- a) Council shall assess municipal decisions regarding capital investments and programming with the goal of assessing the impact of such decisions on user fees, tax rates, and utility fees.
- b) Council shall strive to develop programs and facilities that are inclusive, affordable, accessible and offer a full range of options.

**Policy SOC-4: Youth Retention**

It shall be the policy of Council to focus special attention on the needs of local youth and young families.

**Plan Actions:**

- a) Council shall develop and support programming that supports youth activities and provides opportunities for young families to foster active lifestyles and social development within the town.

## Institutional Policies

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### Policy SOC-5: Institutional Designation and Zoning

It shall be the policy of Council to identify and protect established institutional facilities from the encroachment of conflicting land uses and to designate additional institutional lands in response to demand while promoting the integration of institutional activities into the community fabric where appropriate.

#### Plan Actions:

- a) Existing institutional uses shall be designated as institutional and zoned under the Bylaw as Public Service and Institutional (PSI).
- b) The Bylaw shall establish development standards for institutional uses.
- c) The Bylaw may include institutional uses as special permit uses in other zones.

### Policy SOC-6: Institutional Development

It shall be the policy of Council to support the long-term viability of local institutional facilities and encourage upgrading and expansion.

#### Plan Actions:

- a) Council shall support and encourage efforts to maintain or upgrade existing institutional facilities in the Town.
- b) Council shall support efforts to locate additional institutional facilities in the Town and to expand current facilities.

## 4.3. Economic Objectives and Policies

### Strong Local Economy

Positioning Souris as a vibrant regional and provincial destination that is able to meet the needs of its residents of all ages, and those of young families in particular, is linked to services and the availability of housing. Souris' two major challenges over the past few decades – the decline in population and the decline of the commercial core area – are closely linked. Concerted efforts have taken place over recent years to upgrade the appearance and level of commercial activity in the older commercial core, while local festivals and events have also worked to create a draw to the community.

With the ferry, the area's natural beauty, and the interest in ecotourism, the Town is also particularly well positioned to capitalize on the rapid growth of tourism in the eastern region of the province. This will require aggressive leadership from Council, local development groups and the local business community. Services and amenities that function as a draw for travellers are also key features that increase the livability and quality of life for residents, particularly in relation to active transportation linkages, wayfinding, and other features relating to the creation of a strong sense of place. In turn, tourism has the potential to contribute significantly to reinvigorating the historic downtown area and support services for residents and create spaces that encourage

residents and visitors alike to linger.

**Objectives:**

1. To expand retail, service, and business opportunities in the Town, including in the core area
2. To strengthen and expand local and regional tourism opportunities

**Commercial Policies**

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**Policy EC-1: Designation and Zoning**

It shall be the policy of Council to develop appropriate commercial designations and to use zoning to direct commercial activity into the two primary established commercial areas of the Town.

**Plan Actions:**

- a) The Future Land Use Map shall identify and designate commercial areas in the Town.
- b) The Bylaw shall zone commercial land as General Commercial (C1) in conformance with the Future Land Use Map.
- c) The Bylaw shall establish permitted uses, and development standards for the General Commercial zone.

**Policy EC-2: Downtown Core**

It shall be the policy of Council to continue to stimulate and support efforts to upgrade and reinvigorate the downtown core area, in particular with regards to the ongoing physical upgrading and economic renewal of the Town’s historic main street commercial district as appropriate overtime.

**Plan Action:**

- a) Council shall continue to work with affected landowners and businesses, local development groups and the senior levels of government to identify opportunities to enhance the core area, with an emphasis on the development of new anchor facilities, parking, streetscape and infrastructure improvements, maintenance and upgrading of building facades.

**Policy EC-3: Retail & Service Sectors**

It shall be the policy of Council to pursue new retail and service activity within the Town and to work with the current business community to support and strengthen existing businesses.

**Plan Actions:**

- a) Council shall maintain a close relationship with local business operators and pursue opportunities to support and encourage local business.
- b) Council shall work with local development groups and the business community to identify and pursue opportunities for joint promotion of the Town and local businesses and attractions. Target markets would include local residents, residents within the Town’s established trade area, and tourists.
- c) Council shall work with local development groups, federal and provincial agencies to actively encourage entrepreneurial activity in the Town and foster the launching of new local businesses.

## Policy EC-4: Home-Based Businesses

It shall now be the policy of Council to permit a range of home-based businesses to promote life-work flexibility.

### Plan Actions:

- a) The Bylaw shall permit the establishment of a range of home-based businesses in all single-detached residences, and where appropriate, other types of dwellings.
- b) The Bylaw shall establish standards for home-based businesses to limit potential residential conflicts such as noise, hours of operation, square footage, number of employees, parking, signage, physical changes to the structure, outside storage and other factors which may represent an impediment to the safety, convenience or enjoyment of neighbouring residents.

## Policy EC-5: Tourism Opportunities

It shall be the policy of Council to promote the Town as a tourism destination by targeting development efforts toward strengthening local and regional tourism infrastructure, attractions, services, accommodations and related business and employment opportunities.

### Plan Actions:

- a) Council shall develop a local Tourism Development Strategy, based on promoting the Town's unique culture and history and the region's significant natural features.
- b) Council shall support efforts by local service clubs, church groups, and other organizations to develop and promote local activities such as festivals, craft fairs, garden parties, heritage days, fishing and boating regattas, nature walks, and lobster suppers.
- c) Council shall continue to facilitate the development and promotion of the Confederation Trail and the development of facilities at the entry to the Town and the terminus adjacent to the Wharf aimed at promoting the Town and its facilities, including information kiosks and rest areas.
- d) Council shall work with local interest groups and the Province to create activities and venues to better interpret and promote the Town's rich history and cultural traditions to visitors.
- e) Council shall pursue and support development opportunities for the Souris wharf, such as increased ferry services or recreational/tourism activities.

## Industrial Centre

Souris' wharf remains a viable and active shipping and fishing facility with excellent docks, warehousing, access routes which still have some room for growth. While recreational uses of the wharf are currently being promoted, this should be done in a manner which does not jeopardize traditional commercial and industrial uses.

Additional industrial lands should not be required for the period of the Official Plan, but Council must work with current industrial users and the two senior levels of government to ensure that Souris continues to be promoted as an excellent location for industry and shipping and that current industrial facilities remain well managed.



## **Objectives:**

1. To continue to promote Souris as an industrial location
2. To effectively manage present industrial areas in the Town
3. To protect the long-term economic viability of the Souris Port as key infrastructure for industrial activities.

## **Industrial Policies**

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### **Policy EC-6: Designation and Zoning**

It shall be the policy of Council to direct future industrial development to established industrial areas and to minimize land use conflicts between industrial development and other land uses.

#### **Plan Actions:**

- a) The Future Land Use Map shall identify and designate areas for industrial uses.
- b) The Bylaw shall zone the three established industrial areas as Industrial (M1).
- c) The Bylaw shall establish development standards and list permitted uses for all industrial development.
- d) No further land shall be zoned for industrial development without an amendment to the Official Plan and careful consideration of any potential land use or transportation conflicts.

### **Policy EC-7: Industrial Developments**

It shall be the policy of Council to identify measures to minimize land use conflicts between industrial development and other land uses.

#### **Plan Actions:**

- a) The Bylaw shall establish development standards, including requirements for landscaping, to minimize the impacts of a growing industrial sector on adjacent non-industrial land uses.

### **Policy EC-8: Industrial Promotion**

It shall be the policy of Council to work closely with the Province to promote the Town as a prospective location for new industrial development and to support the expansion of existing industrial operations.

#### **Plan Actions:**

- a) Council shall encourage and support prospecting efforts by the Province to attract new industrial development to the Town, with a particular emphasis placed on food processing firms and operations to facilitate the creation of high-quality, year-round employment.
- b) Council shall continue to work the Souris Harbour Authority to promote the on-going success of the port, shipping facilities, and other associated operations.

## **Viable Resource Sector**

While the Town's ties to the surrounding agricultural community are very strong, there is a minimal amount of land within the boundaries of the Town remaining in agricultural production. The one significant block of agricultural land within the Town also represents

one of the best potential locations to accommodate future residential growth, notwithstanding section which are within the Town's wellfield. This juxtaposition puts the Town in the position of seeking to balance support for existing agricultural operations and the broader agricultural community with the longer-term residential needs of residents. Supporting local fishing activities will also remain a strong priority, recognizing the significant economic impact that fishing provides to the community and the region.

**Objectives:**

1. To continue to foster a strong relationship between the Town and its agricultural service area.
2. To protect the long-term economic viability of fishing activities in the Town

**Resource Use Policies**

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**Policy EC-9: Supporting Agriculture**

It shall be the policy of Council to support the agricultural community within and adjacent to the town.

**Plan Actions:**

- a) The Town will support the continued presence of the local Farmer's Market.
- b) The Town will support the development of agricultural-related uses on lands designated for Industrial and Commercial uses as the service hub for the Eastern Kings region.

**Policy EC-10: Changes in Agricultural Designation and Zoning**

It shall now be the policy of Council to designate land currently in agricultural production as Residential on the Future Land Use Map to signal the long-term vision of the Town to eventually convert this land to residential use in response to future market demands and resident needs, while protecting existing resources uses as permitted uses.

**Plan Actions:**

- a) Any significant blocks of undeveloped land in the Town which remain in viable agricultural production shall be designated as Residential on the Future Land Use Map.
- b) The Bylaw shall zone as Agricultural (A1) those large blocks of land which are currently in agricultural use to support existing uses as permitted uses.
- c) At such time as agricultural production and uses cease, the re-zoning and transition of these lands to residential use in conformity with the Future Land Use Map shall be encouraged in response to new residential development proposals in order to increase housing options for current and future residents.

**Policy EC-11: Livestock Activities**

It shall be the policy of Council to limit or preclude the keeping and raising of livestock and the keeping and raising of other animals for profit which could pose a nuisance to adjacent property owners.

**Plan Actions:**

- a) The Bylaw shall establish regulations controlling the keeping and raising of livestock within the Town.

**Policy EC-12: Souris Wharf**

It shall be the policy of Council to support the fishing sector, particularly as it pertains to activities at the port.

**Plan Action:**

- a) Council shall continue to actively encourage fishing and value-added activities at the Souris Wharf.

**Policy EC-13: Excavation Pits**

It shall be the policy of Council to enable excavation pits as a special permit use in appropriate areas of land zoned for Industrial uses.

**Plan Actions:**

- a) The Bylaw shall include excavation pits as a special permit use in the M1 Zone.
- b) Authority for the regulation of excavation pits shall remain with the Province.

**Local Green Economy**

Energy independence strategies can achieve several outcomes, reducing carbon footprints while enabling options for residents and property owners to reduce costs and explore alternate technologies. Regulating wind energy facilities, solar energy and other energy infrastructure will be important for balancing the protection of community character with the reduction of the Town's climate footprint.

**Objectives:**

- 1. To encourage energy conservation and the use of alternate and renewable energy sources.

**Energy Independence Policies**

**Policy EC-14: Renewable Energy Systems**

It shall be the policy of Council to support the use of renewable energy generation systems aimed toward enabling economic benefit for the community and individual residents, and to support the incorporation of alternative energy technologies and infrastructure for both the direct benefits to citizens and the avoidance or reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

**Plan Actions:**

- a) The Bylaw shall permit and establish standards for roof-mounted and ground-mounted solar systems.
- b) Council shall work with all levels of government to encourage residents to consider renewable energy sources in new and existing development.
- c) Council shall explore options for promoting the incorporation of renewable energy systems, such as charging infrastructure, into new developments.

- d) The Bylaw shall permit wind turbines of a maximum capacity of up to 100 kw as a permitted use in the Industrial zone and as an accessory use in the Agriculture Zone. Wind turbines of a capacity between 100 kW and 1 MW shall be included a site-specific amendment use in the Industrial Zone, and the Bylaw shall establish standards regulating the size and placement of wind turbines.
- e) Council shall support the development of new energy facilities in the Industrial Zone where it has been determined that any potential environmental and nuisance impacts can be mitigated.

### Policy EC-15: Energy Efficiency

It shall be the policy of Council to build energy efficiency into the development of any future municipal buildings and infrastructure, and to encourage energy efficiency features in private development.

#### Plan Actions:

- a) Council shall work with other levels of government, community organizations, and developers to promote the adoption of energy efficiency standards and measures.

## 4.4. Physical Objectives and Policies

### Managing Land Uses

Giving the limited footprint of the Town and in light of the priorities associated with active transportation and meeting the significant housing needs of the community, as well as the value expressed by the community regarding quality public spaces, ensuring the efficient use of land will be increasingly important over time. This efficiency will be dependent upon promoting a mix of uses and densities, building active transportation options into new development projects and infrastructure upgrades, and ensuring development standards meet the current priorities of the community.

#### *Objectives:*

1. To minimize land use conflicts through zoning and development standards
2. To promote the efficient use of land

### General Land Use Policies

#### Policy PHY-1: Lot Design and Servicing

It shall be the policy of Council to ensure that land is zoned and developed with foresight given the limited footprint of the municipality, the importance of the long-term sustainability of infrastructure, and the changing needs of residents over time.

#### Plan Action

- a) The Bylaw shall establish lot size and layout requirements that will maximize the efficient use of land over time.
- b) Density and mixed uses that are consistent with or are an enhancement of the traditional concentration of uses in the core shall be promoted, particularly adjacent to Main Street.

## Policy PHY-2: Development Standards

It shall be the policy of Council to establish development standards relating to density, building type, lot sizes, setbacks, amenity areas, parking, buffering and other matters to enhance the health, safety and convenience of residents and the general public.

### Plan Actions:

- a) The Bylaw shall establish development standards relating to lot sizes, setbacks, servicing, amenity areas and open space, parking, building height, buffering and other related matters.
- b) The Bylaw shall establish criteria and standards for temporary uses to manage the nature, timing, and impact of such uses.

## Infrastructure

Town responsibility for many of the roads is expected to continue and emphasis will remain on ensuring maintaining a high standard of road condition and upgrades where needed and as funding is available. Storm drainage is likely to continue to be a priority for the foreseeable future as increased rain events will intensify. Engagement with the Province regarding the maintenance of provincially-owned roads will also continue.

Active transportation, including sidewalk networks, the Confederation Trail, and multi-use systems offer a strategic opportunity to enhance quality of life (including economic and health-related) of residents, reduce the local carbon footprint by promoting non-vehicular means of commuting and travelling, and build tourism-related infrastructure. Ongoing maintenance and expansion of these, whether by the Town or other levels of government or organizations, will be key, and the identification of additional support facilities and linkages to promote local usage and the attraction of visitors will be a long-term process.

Municipal utility infrastructure upgrades have undertaken in recent years and also remain key to ensuring the long-term health of the town, the region, and the environment.

### *Objectives:*

1. To ensure an adequate supply of serviced land to accommodate the projected needs of various land uses within the Town for the period of the Official Plan.
2. To identify and pursue short and long-term enhancements of the Town's active transportation and vehicular systems.
3. To manage stormwater run-off in a safe and cost-effective manner.

## Infrastructure Policies

### Policy PHY-3: Serviced Land

It shall be the policy of Council to maintain and upgrade the Town's infrastructure, particularly the utility systems, as needed to ensure that serviced land is supported over the Official Plan period.

**Plan Action:**

- a) Council shall ensure asset management practices are in place to build on recent work undertaken to expand the water and sewer systems.

**Policy PHY-4: Streets**

It shall be the policy of Council to work closely with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure or successor departments to ensure that the key routes leading to the Town and provincially-controlled streets within the Town are maintained at the highest possible levels. Council shall also ensure that town-owned streets are maintained at a standard which adequately reflects their role and level of use.

**Plan Actions:**

- a) Council shall continue to engage with the Province regarding the condition of provincial roads within the Town and key connecting routes to the Town.
- b) Council shall maintain all Town-owned streets to the highest level possible within local budgetary constraints, with the highest priority being placed on streets with highest projected traffic volumes.
- c) Council shall pursue opportunities to assemble land adjacent to intersections along Main Street where there is a need (and potential) to correct unsafe intersection angles, as budgets permit.

**Policy PHY-5: Pedestrian Circulation**

It shall be the policy of Council to develop and maintain a pedestrian circulation system in the Town which provides safe pedestrian linkages throughout the Town and between all major destinations.

**Plan Actions:**

- a) Council shall establish a long-term plan for sidewalk construction and maintenance, together with a long-term capital budget.
- b) Priority shall be placed on major traffic routes, particularly where they connect to major pedestrian destinations such as schools, places of worship, shopping areas and parks or playgrounds.

**Policy PHY-6: Active Transportation**

It shall be the policy of Council to integrate the principles of active transportation into Town actions and decision-making in order to develop a strong, inter-connected active transportation system over time.

**Plan Action:**

- a) Council shall work with residents, business owners, landowners, and other interested parties to identify options to expand the existing system and develop linkages over time.

## Policy PHY-7: Stormwater Management

It shall be the policy of Council to work closely with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure to ensure that stormwater run-off is managed in a manner which is cost-effective and environmentally sensitive, and which minimizes risks to public health, safety and private property.

### Plan Actions:

- a) Council may develop an overall Stormwater Management Plan for the Town.
- b) The Bylaw shall establish requirements for drainage plans and/or stormwater management plans for new subdivisions and developments, to supplement any standards imposed by the Province.
- c) The Town will work with the Province to ensure that stormwater systems are properly installed and maintained in the Town.
- d) Council shall, wherever possible, protect and enhance the existing surface water drainage systems in the Town, and upgrade its capacity to handle stormwater run-off.
- e) Any assessment of proposed physical changes or infilling of any stream, wetland or water course shall include, in addition to all appropriate environmental protection considerations, a detailed assessment of any stormwater run-off implications.

## Placemaking

The Town of Souris has a rich culture and history tied to its Scottish and Acadian roots and the Town's strong mercantile and maritime traditions. Fortunately, the Town retains a significant portion of its historic commercial core and a thriving industrial and commercial waterfront which provide opportunities to both meet the needs of residents and attract tourists and interpret the Town's history. Given the success of program-related heritage protection, the focus of the Official Plan will shift away from regulation and build more of a focus on programs, collaboration and supporting the efforts of the community to preserve and enhance significant buildings.

### *Objectives:*

1. To encourage the maintenance of a high standard of physical appearance for all properties in the Town which stress safety, efficiency, aesthetic appeal, land use compatibility and fostering of a healthy lifestyle.
2. To identify, preserve and enhance buildings and streetscapes which have historic or architectural significance.

### Placemaking Policies

## Policy PHY-8: Signage

It shall be the policy of Council to continue to regulate signage in the Town in a manner that is keeping with the spirit and intent of the Highway Signage Act.

### Plan Action:

- a) The Bylaw shall include standards for signage.

## Policy PHY-9: Placemaking

It shall be the policy of Council to adopt zoning and development standards that contribute to a strong sense of place, building on the Town's history.

### Plan Actions:

- a) The Town shall encourage property owners and developers to maintain and develop properties in ways that recognize and reinforce the integrity of the town and the core in particular as a regional service centre.
- b) The Bylaw shall establish standards consistent with a small urban centre that reinforce a built fabric and mix of uses associated with vibrant towns and villages.

## Policy PHY-10: Heritage Preservation

It shall be the policy of Council to identify important heritage places, structures and streetscapes in the Town, and support the adaptive re-use and maintenance of such heritage structures.

### Plan Actions:

- a) Council shall encourage the preservation and upgrading of significant heritage structures and places, working with property owners where appropriate.
- b) Council shall work with property owners to find alternatives to the demolition of heritage structures.
- c) Council shall support initiatives to ensure the long-term sustainability and preservation of heritage structures through changes in use.

## 4.5. Environmental Objectives and Policies

### Clean Environment

The Town is fully dependent upon ground water resources for domestic and industrial water supplies. It is therefore critical that the Town work with the Department of the Environment to protect this invaluable resource from depletion or contamination.

A healthy environment is also critical not only to the health and well-being of our residents and the flora and fauna of the area, but is also as an economic resource. The appeal of Souris and the entire Eastern Kings Region as both a tourism destination and as a place to call home is strongly based on the area's natural beauty. Natural features, surface water systems, vegetation and habitat areas must all be managed with great care.

Souris benefits greatly from its coastal location but it is also highly exposed to erosion, particularly along its cliffs, resulting from sea level rise and storm-related flooding. Given the close proximity of a number of residences, as well as significant road and utility infrastructure, to these rapidly eroding cliffs, the Town must soon develop a strategy for addressing this significant environmental risk.



## **Objectives:**

1. To provide high quality domestic water supply for all residents, property owners and businesses in the Town
2. To implement buffering and erosion control standards and strategies
3. To provide efficient and cost-effective central wastewater collection and treatment services within the Town
4. To provide general environmental protection in relation to air and noise pollution
5. To participate in the management and enhancement of significant regional habitat and natural systems including the Souris River

## **Environmental Policies**

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### **Policy ENV-1: Ground Water**

It shall be the policy of Council to work with the Province to protect both the quantity and quality of ground water resources in the Town.

#### **Plan Actions:**

- a) New land uses which would pose a serious risk for ground water contamination such as chemical plants or underground storage depots shall be strictly regulated in the Town.
- b) Council shall work with the Province to identify and control potential point sources of pollution such as underground gasoline or fuel oil tanks, chemical storage, refuse or dump sites and abandoned wells.
- c) Development permit applications shall be required to identify any chemical storage areas or underground petroleum storage.
- d) Council shall encourage the maintenance and protection of features which contribute to ground water re-charge such as wetlands, stormwater retention areas, trees and other dense vegetation. Council shall seek to identify and protect major aquifer re-charge areas both within and outside the Town.
- e) Council will identify literature on water conservation, safe disposal of household and business hazardous wastes and other information pertaining to the protection of the water supply and make it available to residents and property owners.
- f) The Bylaw shall establish requirements for an expanded 60-metre buffer on town-owned land adjacent to watercourses and wetlands and Council shall work with local environmental groups and property owners to identify other measures to promote enhanced environmental protection on privately-owned land.

### **Policy ENV-2: Central Sewage Collection and Treatment**

It shall be the policy of Council to provide high-quality, cost-effective wastewater collection and treatment services for the present and future built-up areas of the Town.

#### **Plan Actions:**

- a) The Bylaw shall require that new subdivisions and development be connected to the municipal water and sewer system at the developer's expense.

- b) Where immediate connection to the municipal water and sewer system is not feasible, the Bylaw shall permit the future connection to be addressed through a development agreement or subdivision agreement, as appropriate.

### Policy ENV-3: Central Water Supply

It shall be the policy of Council to continue to supply adequate, high quality, fire-rated central water supply services to all users in the Town.

#### Plan Actions:

- a) Council will continue to operate and protect the Town's current well fields in the most efficient manner.
- b) The Bylaw shall establish standards related to development within the designated wellfields in order to protect the Town's water supply over the long term.
- c) Council shall identify appropriate actions to enhance the security of the Town's water supply and implement them in a timely manner.

### Policy ENV-4: Surface Water

It shall be the policy of Council to protect and enhance the quality of streams, ponds, wetlands and rivers within the Town and to work with our neighbours and other levels of government to protect and upgrade the other major surface water systems such as the Souris River.

#### Plan Actions:

- a) The Bylaw shall establish a conservation setback or buffer area adjacent to all streams, drainage courses, ponds and wetlands limiting construction activities and protecting vegetation from encroachment by structures and land use activities and shall apply an overlay zone to these areas, to be called the Environmental Reserve (Overlay) (ER) Zone.
- b) The Bylaw shall require construction activities adjacent to streams or wetlands to implement erosion control measures.
- c) The Bylaw shall restrict any infilling or alteration of surface drainage features without the issuance of a development permit and performance of an environmental assessment and the issuance of a stream alteration permit where required by Provincial regulations.

### Policy ENV-5: Air Quality

It shall be the policy of Council to promote tree planting and preservation.

#### Plan Actions:

- a) Council shall identify opportunities to plant trees and preserve existing stands of trees, particularly on Town-owned land and along rights-of-way.

### Policy ENV-6: Habitat Areas

It shall be the policy of Council to work with the Department of Environment and local watershed and environmental organizations to identify significant habitat areas and other sensitive natural areas in the Town, to restrict development in and adjacent to these areas, and to encourage the implementation of management plans and to work with the Province and our neighbours to jointly protect significant habitat areas in the region.

**Plan Actions:**

- a) Council shall work with Provincial environmental officials to identify significant habitat areas in the Town.
- b) Council shall limit development in and adjacent to these areas.
- c) Council shall encourage public ownership of sensitive natural areas in the Town and, where appropriate, encourage the development of management plans.

## Climate Change Resiliency

Being resilient to climate change means considering changing climate in all municipal decision-making. Using a climate change lens is vital in land use decisions and promotes decisions and actions that will help mitigate climate impacts such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing carbon sequestration, while building long-term adaptation standards into day-to-day design and regulation standards.

***Objectives***

- 1. To minimize the effects of coastal erosion and flooding where possible
- 2. To limit the climate impacts of transportation activities
- 3. To promote using mitigation measures in land development to reduce climate impacts
- 4. To integrate climate change considerations into decisions on municipal policies, programs, and facilities, and in relation to applications for subdivision and development

## Climate Change Policies

### Policy ENV-7: Coastal Properties

It shall now be the policy of Council to adopt special policies addressing the unique nature of the coastal areas in the Town, particularly addressing sensitive coastal dune systems, beaches, and coastal erosion.

**Plan Actions:**

- a) All areas subject to current or projected flood and erosion risk shall be identified in Schedule B.
- b) The Environmental Risk (Overlay) Zone in the Bylaw shall include provisions to protect the Town’s sensitive coastal environment and limit risks to public health and safety and potential damage to property related to coastal flooding and erosion.
- c) The Bylaw shall require a provincial coastal hazard assessment prior to the review of a development or subdivision application on any coastal property.
- d) The Bylaw shall establish vertical and horizontal setbacks between new developments and eroding shorelines to provide sufficient distance to ensure that the adverse effects of erosion or flooding do not endanger the development over its lifetime.

- e) Council shall continue to work with the Province to protect roads and critical infrastructure in the Town from coastal erosion and to develop contingency plans and, where appropriate, remedial actions to address the long-term effects of coastal erosion on the Town and its property owners.

### Policy ENV-8: Subdivision Design and Sustainable Practices

It shall be the policy of Council to support new development that promotes sustainable practices and climate change resiliency, including the utilization of energy efficiency, renewable energy sources, groundwater protection, reduced water consumption, and stormwater management for the purpose of groundwater recharge. It shall further be the policy of Council to encourage compact development design to reduce dependence on non-renewable forms of energy and dependence on vehicular travel.

#### Plan Actions:

- a) Council shall encourage subdivisions with compact designs and sensitive forms of infill and densification of existing dwelling lots in order encourage developments that are walkable and suitable for active transportation.
- b) Council shall consider transportation options when reviewing subdivision applications to reduce the distance required for travel by gas-powered vehicles and encourage subdivision and road network designs that reduce energy use, support alternative transportation modes, and enhance public safety such as sidewalks, park and ride facilities, charging stations, and crosswalks.
- c) The Bylaw may establish criteria for reporting on energy efficiency or other sustainable practices in the development application process to facilitate the tracking and promoting of such practices.
- d) The Bylaw may establish standards and criteria for development and construction practices that support climate change mitigation and adaptation, including such things as permeable surfaces, subdivision design, the protection of forest cover, and natural infrastructure.

### Policy ENV-4: Climate Change Decisions

It shall now be a policy of Council to review policy, program and capital decisions using a climate change lens to ensure that decisions are being made that adapt the community to future climate change impacts of sea level rise, extreme weather and increasing temperatures.

#### Plan Actions:

- a) Council shall establish a climate-resilient decision tree with which to process actions on municipal infrastructure and facilities.
- b) Council may investigate the broad range of impacts of climate change on the community, including but not limited to, health, food security, and air quality and identify areas in which the Town may act.

# 5. FUTURE LAND USE MAP

The Future Land Use Map is a generalized conceptual representation of the direction Council envisions land use patterns taking over the next fifteen years. It signals expected long-term uses but does not have place limits on current land uses in the Town. Instead, the Future Land Use Map lays the foundation and establishes the direction for the Zoning Map in the Bylaw, which is much more precise in terms of boundaries of specific zones within the broader land use designation categories. The Zoning Map must conform to the policies of the Official Plan and the Future Land Use Map laid out in Appendix A, except where otherwise specified in policy in this Official Plan.

The Future Land Use Map will contain the following land use designations, which shall lay the framework for land use zones under the Bylaw:

Land Use Designation	Zone	Zone Symbol
Residential	Low Density Residential	R1
	Medium Density Residential	R2
	Mixed Density Residential	R3
Agricultural	Agricultural	A1
Commercial	General Commercial	C1
Industrial	Industrial	M1
Parks and Open Space	Open Space	OS
Institutional	Public Service and Institutional	PSI

The Bylaw shall also include the following overlays not included in the Future Land Use Map but indicated in Schedule B – Protected Areas:

Zone	Overlays	Symbol
Underlying zone	Environmental Reserve (Overlay)	ER
	Wellfield Protection Area A	A
	Wellfield Protection Area B	B
	Wellfield Protection Area C	C

In formulating the Future Land Use Map, Council has applied the following criteria:

- land use conflicts shall be minimized
- commercial development shall be directed to the two established commercial areas
- industrial development shall be directed to locate in the Souris Food Park, the Town's industrial park and adjacent to the Wharf.
- higher density residential developments shall generally be located in close proximity to commercial areas or adjacent to major traffic routes
- established residential areas shall be maintained as residential over time
- residential "infilling" shall be encouraged
- new peripheral residential development shall be encouraged adjacent to existing residential areas
- existing agricultural lands shall be considered lands for future residential uses
- all other relevant policies and principles included in this Plan.

Council may, on application, amend the Official Plan's generalized Future Land Use Map and the Bylaw's Zoning Map to designate additional land for specific uses, subject to Plan policies outlined in Part 4.

# 6. IMPLEMENTATION

## 6.1. Administration

Administration of this Plan is the responsibility of Council. Council shall, however, seek the input of the Planning Board, and where appropriate, other committees, on matters pertaining to the Official Plan and its implementation. The primary implementation tool for the Official Plan is the Land Use Bylaw. Aspects of the Official Plan may also be implemented through other municipal bylaws and regulations, Council's operating policies and procedures, the municipal financial plan and other appropriate Council actions. Council may also delegate aspects of the implementation of this Plan or the Bylaw to a Development Officer appointed by Council.

## 6.2. Implementing Bylaw

Concurrently with the adoption of this Official Plan, Council shall adopt an updated Bylaw to conform with the policies and provisions of this Official Plan, in accordance with the provisions of the *Planning Act*. The new bylaw shall be titled the Town of Souris Land Use Bylaw, Bylaw 2024-01. Both documents take effect upon approval by the minister responsible for the *Planning Act*.

The Bylaw shall set out specific land use zones, permitted uses for each zone, standards and procedures for development and land use, and standards and procedures for the subdivision and consolidation of land in the Town. The Bylaw may also provide for "special permit" uses, representing uses that are not permitted as-of-right but which may be appropriate on certain properties within a zone, subject to established criteria and processes for evaluating such special permits.

### Approval of Development or Change of Use

The Bylaw shall set out processes and requirements for:

- any person undertaking any development or change of use of land or premises to apply for a development permit, including any exceptions;
- the processing and making of decisions by Council or the development officer of such applications based on the provisions of the Bylaw and this Plan;
- the identification and inclusion of such conditions as Council deems appropriate to development permits and subdivision approvals to ensure conformance with this Official Plan and the Bylaw;
- the submission of a construction plan for the development, including such details as construction phasing, stockpiling of soil, screening or fencing, erosion or run-off control measures, heavy truck access, and any other item that could present a nuisance or hazard during construction;

- the submission of a site plan, footing plan, stormwater management or drainage plan, and/or landscape plan to assist the Development Officer or Council in determining if the proposed development meets the requirements set out in the Bylaw; and
- requirements for approved permits to be displayed at the site.

The receipt of a development permit does not excuse the applicant from complying with any Provincial or Federal laws in force, relating to matters such as the National Building Code, fire protection, health and safety, sewage disposal, signage, plumbing and electrical installations, and others. The Town will liaise with Provincial officials during the application review process as appropriate.

The Bylaw may also require submission of a Construction Plan for the development outlining such details as construction phasing, stockpiling of soil, screening or fencing, erosion or run-off control measures, heavy truck access, hours of operation and any other item which could present a nuisance or hazard during construction.

### ***Subdivision and Development Agreements***

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The Bylaw shall allow Council to, at its discretion, require the developer of a subdivision or a development to enter into a Development or Subdivision Agreement. This agreement shall contain all conditions attached to the development permit or subdivision approval, including financial performance bonds, which are deemed necessary by Council to ensure conformance with the provisions of the Bylaw and this Plan, and will be legally binding on both parties.

### ***Variances***

---

The Bylaw shall establish procedures for the granting of variances to the provisions of the Bylaw in circumstances where a proposed development may not be able to meet the requirements of the Town's Bylaw where, owing to conditions peculiar to the property and not the result of the action of the applicant, a literal enforcement of the zoning requirement would result in unnecessary and undue hardship, and where the general intent of this Official Plan is upheld and such variance will not be contrary to the public interest.

## **6.3. Budgeting**

While the Bylaw, as well as bylaws passed under the *Municipal Government Act*, is the primary tool for controlling and directing private sector development activities in the Town, the municipal financial plan is the key policy tool for directing the activities of Council. As such, the budget is a key implementation tool for the policies laid out in this Official Plan and, to the extent practicable, the budget should conform with the policies of this Official Plan.



## ***Budget Policies***

---

Council has established the following fiscal policies as a framework to guide decisions on municipal revenues and expenditures:

- The Bylaw shall include a schedule of fees for applications under the Official Plan and Bylaw, and Council may amend the schedule from time to time by resolution in accordance with section 135 of the *Municipal Government Act*.
- Council shall pursue a “user pay” approach for programs and services where appropriate, while accounting for socio-economic inequities.
- Council shall continue the arrangement with the Province to have the National Building Code and building permits administered provincially until such time as Council determines it is in the interest of the Town to administer the National Building Code directly.
- Council shall pursue all available options for cost-sharing and maximize assistance from other levels of government.
- Council shall consider establishing reserve funds to cover the professional and legal expenses relating to the administration, enforcement, and review of this Official Plan and the Bylaw over time, and set aside funds on an annual basis where municipal revenues permit.

## ***Capital Priorities***

---

While other capital projects may arise over the life of the Official Plan, the following items have emerged from the Official Plan deliberations as current priorities:

### ***Treatment Plant Facility***

- alternative energy source

### ***Water Supply***

- exterior resurfacing of water tank

### ***Fire Hall***

- construction of new fire hall
- new ladder truck

### ***Recreation Facilities***

- upgrades, or replacement if necessary) of Sportsplex

## **6.4. Review**

Council shall, on a regular basis, review its activities in terms of the successful implementation of this Plan and shall undertake a review of the Official Plan and Bylaw in accordance with the provisions of the *Planning Act*.

## 6.5. Amendments

Council may amend the Official Plan and Bylaw as circumstances change in the Town or in response to requests from the public, in accordance with all processes, requirements and criteria of the *Planning Act*, this Official Plan, and the Bylaw.

## 6.6. Posting of Decisions

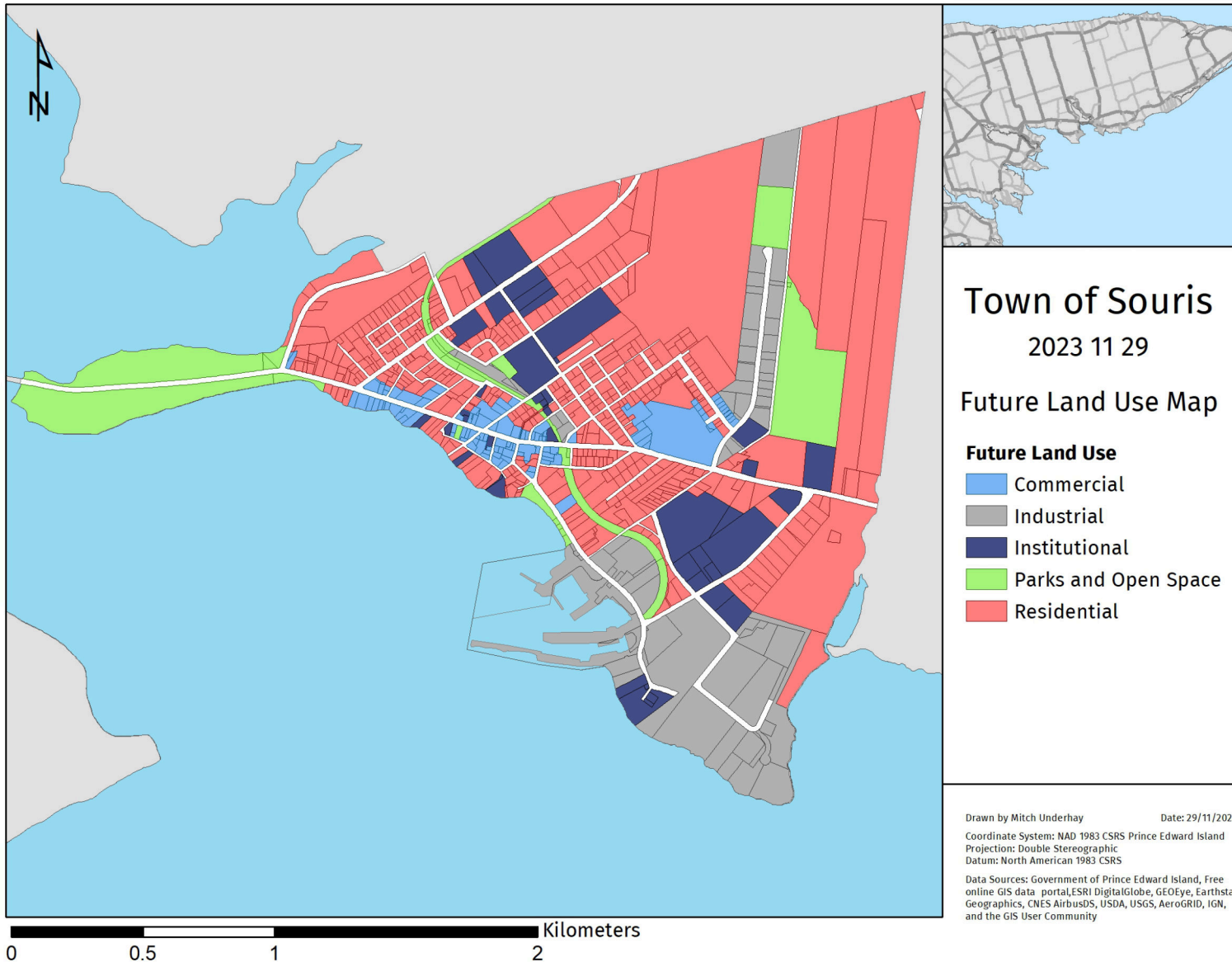
The Development Officer shall post all decisions made in respect of an application under the Bylaw for:

- a development permit;
- an occupancy permit, in relation to a matter under the *Planning Act*, regulations made pursuant to the *Planning Act*, or the Bylaw;
- a preliminary or final approval of a subdivision;
- an amendment to a bylaw, including an amendment to the zoning map established in the Bylaw or an amendment to the text of the Bylaw; or
- any other decision for which notice is required under the *Planning Act*, in accordance with the requirements of section 23.1 of the *Planning Act*.

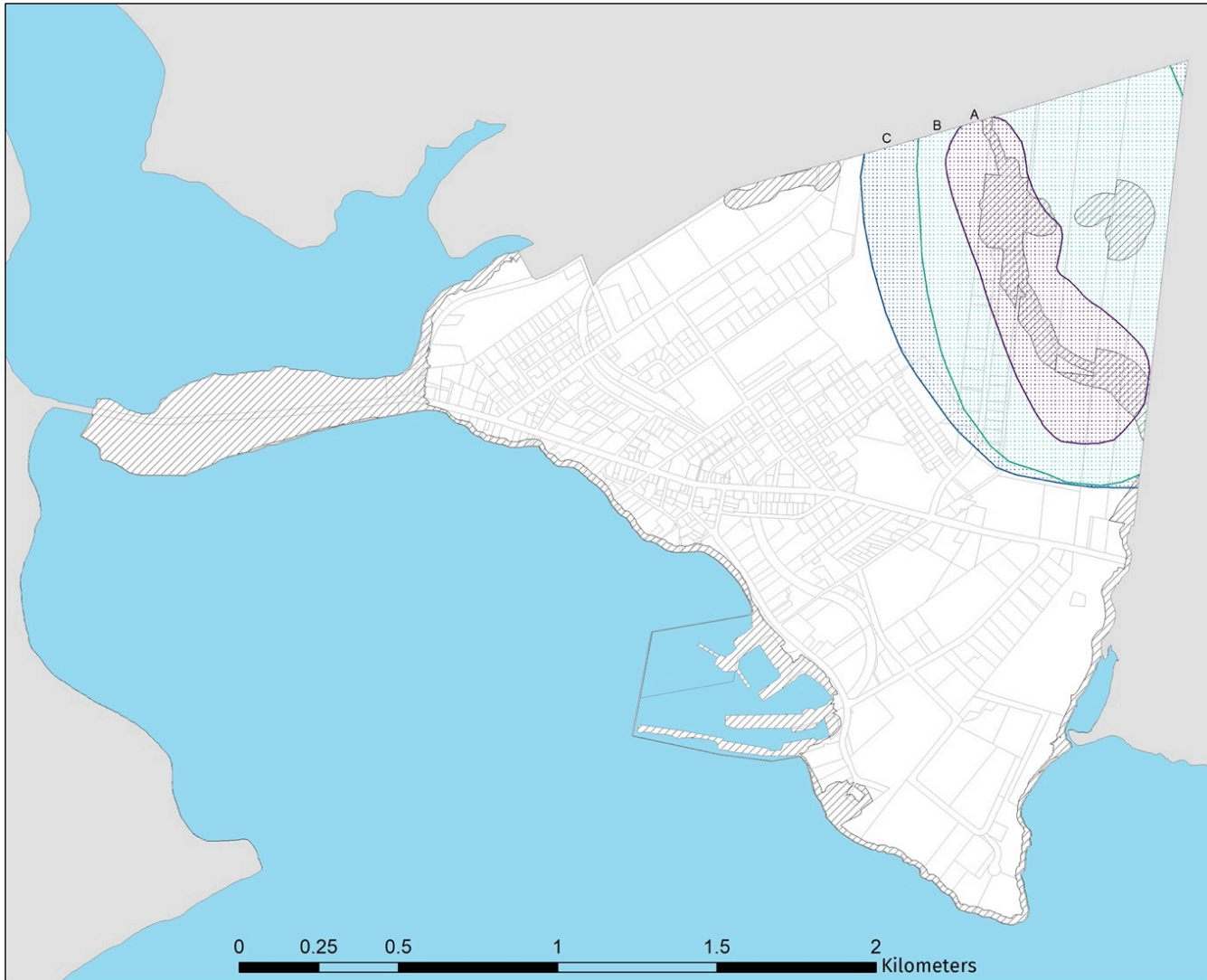
## 6.7. Appeal Procedure

All appeal procedures shall be undertaken in accordance with Part V of the *Planning Act*.

# Schedule A: Future Land Use Map



# Schedule B: Protected Areas



## Town of Souris

### Protected Areas

#### Overlays

-  Environmental Reserve Overlay
-  Wellfield Protection A
-  Wellfield Protection B
-  Wellfield Protection C

Drawn by Mitch Underhay, SJ Murphy Planning and Consulting Date: 03/05/2023  
Coordinate System: NAD 1983 CSRS Prince Edward Island  
Projection: Double Stereographic  
Datum: North American 1983 CSRS  
Data Sources:  
Government of Prince Edward Island, Property Data as of June 1, 2022, online  
GIS data portal, ESRI DigitalGlobe, GEOEye, Earthstar GEOgraphics,  
CNESAirbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

# Schedule C: Background Study and Community Profile



# 2022-23 Official Plan Review

SJ Murphy Planning & Consulting  
Wade | Underhay

Town of Souris

## Background Study and Community Profile

Prepared by: SJ Murphy Planning and Consulting

July 2023



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# 1. CONTEXT

## 1.1. Introduction

This report outline the current social, economic and environmental realities of the Town of Souris (the 'Town') and lays the groundwork for the Town's updated Official Plan and Bylaw.

## 1.2. Location

The Town is located at the eastern end of Prince Edward Island in Kings County. It has a total land area of 3.8 square kilometers. The Town is 81 kilometers from the Provincial Capital, Charlottetown, and 137 kilometers from the Confederation Bridge. The Wood Islands ferry terminal, connecting to Nova Scotia, is 69 kilometers to the south.

Souris is situated on a prominent point of land overlooking Colville Bay to the southwest. The Town is bounded by the Bay and the Northumberland Strait to the south, the Souris River to the west and Norris Creek to the east.

The terrain is gently sloping from the highest point of land in the northern portion of the Town at approximately 38 meters falling to sea level at the Souris River. Along the balance of the shore there are prominent cliffs which increase in height as you travel to the east.

The Town has a population density of 299/km<sup>2</sup>. This relatively high population density translates into an urban settlement pattern with a population base large enough to support a range of services including municipal water and sewer to all residents, as well as sidewalks, parks, and fire protection services. Souris' coastline along Colville Bay and the Northumberland Straight offers opportunities to both protect and build on the beauty of the local area, while also suggesting a need to respond to exposure to the impacts of climate change, a fact reflected in the frequent need to consider climate change impacts in relation to the shoreline and western entrance to the town.

## 1.3. Mi'kmaq 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.

Archaeological evidence uncovered in 1984 suggests that Indigenous people knew the Souris area as long ago as 10,600 years evidenced by an Inuit tool found in North Lake in 1983. Approximately 6000 years ago, the Mi'kmaq began to frequent the eastern shores of the island.

"Souris has always had a close association with Micmac Indians. Long before the settlers came, Micmacs had an encampment at the head of Souris River very close to where John Macgowan later built his home. It is a beautiful spot on high ground overlooking the river and bay. Here they hunted, fished

and dug clams on the tidal flats at the mouth of the river.”<sup>1</sup>

In 1856, it was recognized in historic documents that while the majority of Mi’kmaq people on the island used Lennox Island as a permanent base, the remainder were scattered in small family groupings throughout the island in places such as Souris.<sup>2</sup> Regular Mi’kmaq use of the area continued into the 20<sup>th</sup> century where, “there was an Indian encampment by a spring near the Y in the road north of St. Mary’s Roman Catholic Church.”<sup>3</sup>

All of Mi’kma’ki is covered under Peace and Friendship Treaties. While these treaties were entered into, 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.

## 1.4. Settler History

Souris is the French word for mouse. According to local historian Adele Townshend, the name is generally believed to refer to the plagues of mice that devastated early inhabitants’ crops. “The story is told that a French vessel passing by the bay in the early 1700’s was forced to cut through the waves of drowned mice and so gave the name to the area. The 1744 map of Sieur de la Roque names the bay, Havre a la Souris.”<sup>4</sup> The first European settlers were several Acadian families who arrived in 1740 but left shortly after the fall of Louisbourg with the expulsion of the Acadians by the British in 1758. In 1764, while surveying the Island, Samuel Holland called the area Colville Bay. Other names have included Grand Haven, New Bristol and Red Cliffs. In 1765, the British government divided Prince Edward Island into 67 lots, with Souris being part of Lot 45. The first owners of Lot 45 were William Burt, MP and John Callendar. They were not successful in meeting the original terms of settlement (which required 100 people settled within ten years). As late as 1797, “there was not one settler resident in all of Lot 45.”<sup>5</sup>

Scottish settlers came to the area as early as 1772, with English and Irish settlers following in 1810. As referenced in the title of Adele Townshend’s community history “Ten Farms become a Town,” the area which was to become Souris was made up of ten farm lots with shorefront, cleared land for cultivation, and inland stands of timber. John Knight, Souris’ founder, laid the foundation for the town when he acquired a small wharf and built a breakwater. This marked the beginning of Souris as a commercial port.

Souris’ early economy was founded on agriculture and shipbuilding. The shipbuilding industry reached

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<sup>1</sup> Adele Townshend, *Ten Farms Become a Town: A History of Souris, 1700-1920*. Compiled from the Leard Papers (Town of Souris, 1986)

<sup>2</sup> Pellissier, R., “The Native People of Prince Edward Island,” in (Ed.) Harry Baglole, *Exploring Island History: A Guide to the Historical Resources of PEI*, Belfast, PEI: Ragweed Press (1977), p.21

<sup>3</sup> Townshend, 1986

<sup>4</sup> Townshend, 1986

<sup>5</sup> Stewart, John, *An Account of Prince Edward Island in the Gulph of St. Lawrence, North America*, England: W. Winchester and Son (1806).

its peak during the 1860's. During this time there were 200-300 people employed in various shipyards on the Souris River. In 1863 one hundred ships were built in Souris and sold in England. As a port town it also became a centre for commerce for the residence who made a living farming or fishing. Many Acadians began to return to the area and, according to the 1861 Census, there were 1324 people living on Lot 45. The construction of the railway to Souris in 1870 was another major milestone for the Town. Souris was officially incorporated as a Town in 1910, but it was only in 1967 that the town's name was formally changed from "Souris East" to "Souris."

### 1.5. Local Governance

The Town of Souris is governed by an elected Mayor and six Councillors for a four-year term.

## 2. SOCIAL

### 2.1. Population<sup>6</sup>

The Town of Souris is home to 1,079 residents (2021 Census), an increase in population of 2.5% from 2016. This is a notable increase compared to the loss of 10.2% of the population between 2011 and 2016 but the population is still well below the 2006 population of 1,232 (see Figure 1). Population decline has been the main trend in Souris in the last several decades. Indeed, the population has declined in each of the last 12 census counts, excepting one bump in the mid-70s and the other being in 2021. The latest bump is reflective of an unprecedented province-wide (and even Maritime-wide) rate of growth as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and flexible workplace arrangements in the new economy.

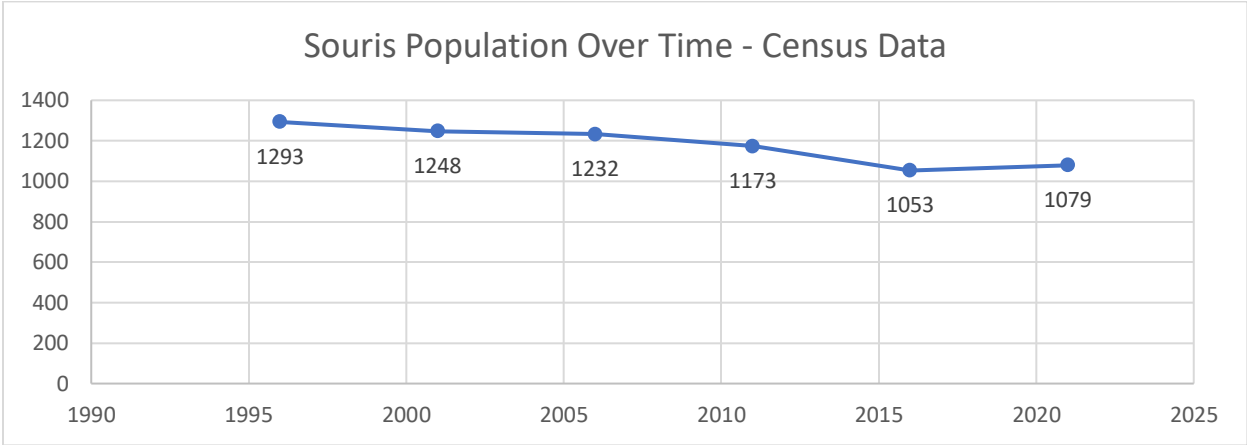
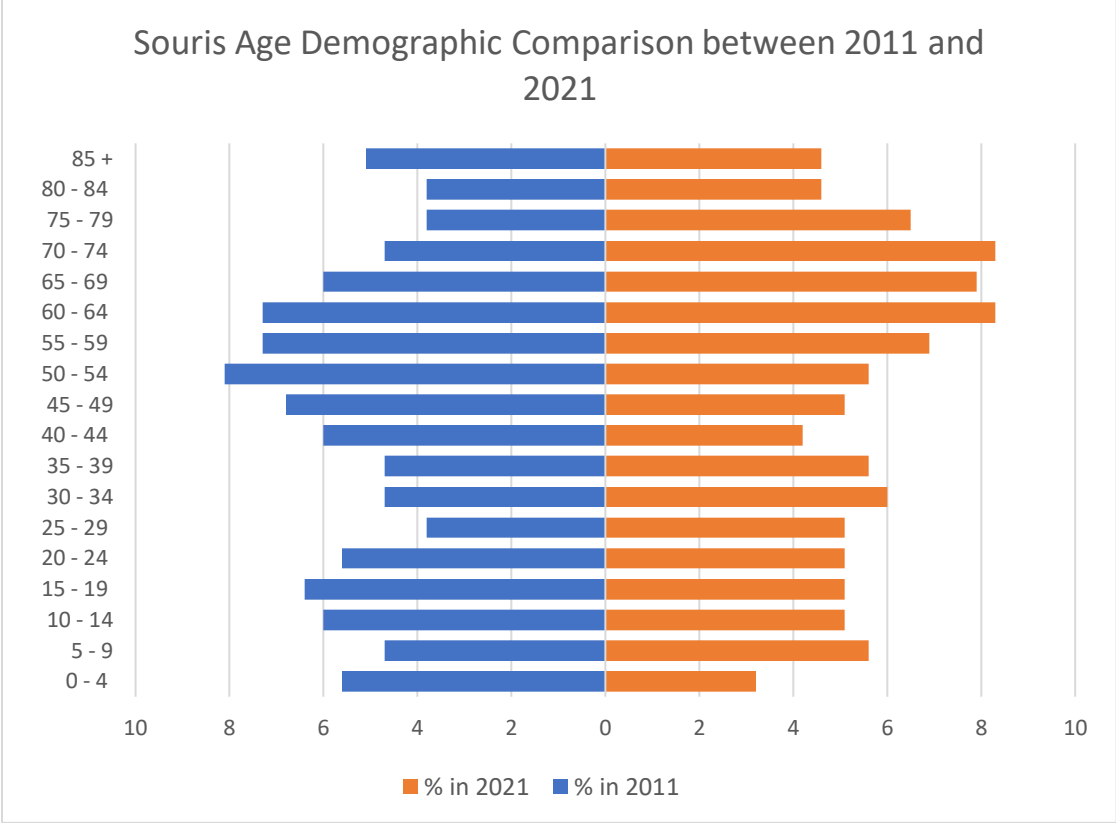


Figure 1: Souris Population over time based on Census data

<sup>6</sup> The majority of the statistics provided in this report come from the 2016 Census unless otherwise indicated. Newest data derived from Statistics Canada. 2022. (e.g. Table 1). Census Profile. 2021 Census. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed May 9, 2022)

As illustrated in Figure 2, the population is slowly aging where, in the last ten years, the median age increased from 47 to 51 years, while the Province’s overall median age increased from 43 to 44 years. Souris’ portion of the Kings County population has been also slowly shrinking over time, down from 6.7% of the population in 1996 to 5.9% of the population in 2021.

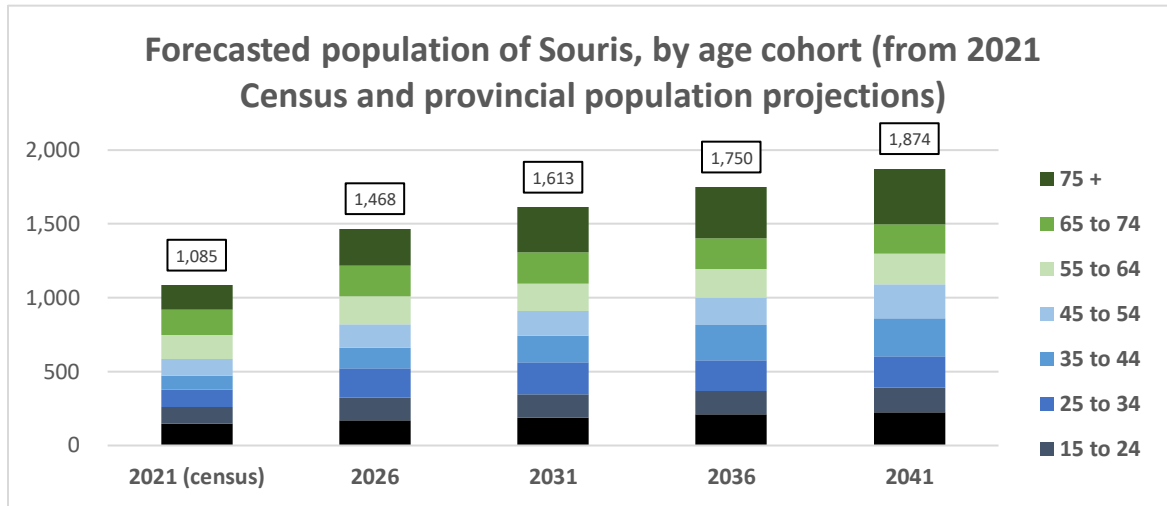
Figure 2: Comparison of Age distribution in Souris from 2011 and 2021



This burgeoning seniors’ population will place ever increasing demands on the community to supply specialized health and social/recreational programming. Seniors’ housing, long term care facilities, meals on wheels and mobility assistance will all likely face increasing pressures and pose challenges for Town Council, community groups and the community at large.

A population forecast undertaken in July 2023 indicates that between 2021 and 2041, Souris’ population is expected to grow by at least 800 people, resulting in a net increase in 380 new households. Figure 3 illustrates the forecasted population by age cohort based on provincial population projections.

Figure 3: Population projection by age cohort in Souris



## 2.2. Cultural Diversity

The vast majority of residents currently living in the municipality are Canadian citizens. There are virtually no immigrants who have recently settled in the municipality and more than 90% of the population characterizes themselves as third generation or more. Similarly, only a very small number of people identify as a visible minority as the bulk of the population has ethnic origins from the British Isles or western Europe.

## 2.3. Education

Table 1: Comparison of the Highest Level of Schooling (2021)

Highest level of schooling 15 years +	Souris	Souris West	Souris Fire District	Kings	PEI
Less than high school	31%	4%	20%	21%	16%
high school or equivalent	32%	27%	31%	31%	28%
Post-secondary diploma, degree or certificate	37%	69%	49%	48%	56%

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 lower-than-average education level as 31% of the population 15 years and older does not have a high school diploma, compared to 16% provincially. There has been a shift towards higher education levels, however, in the last five years.

## 2.4. Health

As primary service centre for the Eastern Kings region, Souris is home to a community hospital with 17 beds and a private physicians’ clinic. The long-term care needs of seniors are served by Bayview Lodge, a community care facility and Colville Manor, a long-term care facility. Souris also has two pharmacies, three Registered Massage Therapy clinics and various holistic practices. The needs of seniors are serviced by the Colville Manor long-term care facility. Seniors and adults in need of assisted care can rely on the Bayview Lodge and Woodland Home community care facilities. Souris is also home to the MacIntyre House which has serviced the needs of men with developmental disabilities for more than 40 years and has recently approved plans for a new building which will service the needs of females.

## 2.5. Income

Overall, total average individual incomes were 21% percent lower in the municipality compared to the provincial average. Disparities in income among males and females were less pronounced between the municipality and province with income of males being approximately 3.1% higher than that of females in the municipality compared to 2.2% higher provincially.

Table 2: Comparison of Total Average Income and Median Household Income (2020)

	Town of Souris			Province		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Average total income in 2020	\$32,400	\$33,000	\$32,000	\$40,040	\$40,480	\$39,600
Median household income	\$47,200			\$73,500		

When it comes to household income, the municipality’s median was 30% lower than the provincial median. Not only are the income levels in the Town lower than provincial numbers, they are also notably lower than in the surrounding areas, which have higher income levels than the provincial average.

Table 3: Prevalence of Low Income (based on the Low-Income Measure after tax) (2021 Census, %)

Town of Souris – 2021 Census			Province		
Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
25.6	22.4	28.4	13.8	12.8	14.7

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

## 2.6. Heritage, Culture, and Recreation

### 2.6.1. Heritage and Culture

As noted in the early historical context above, the land on which the Town was established was an area frequently used by the Mi'kmaq people. Mi'kmaq place names, which had gone unused in recent centuries, are being reintroduced in the region to confirm the role the region played in human society prior to and at the time of colonial settlement. Both Souris and Colville Bay were known by the Mi'kmaq as *Sqoljwe'katik* which means "Frog's place."

There are four provincially-designated historic sites within the municipality. These sites include: the Souris Historic Lighthouse; the Matthew and McLean Heritage Building, Souris Town Hall, and McLean House Inn. Five other properties are registered, including the Dr. Gus MacDonald House, Leard's Store, Matthew House, Leard House, and St Mary's Roman Catholic Church. Of these, at least one building has experienced significant maintenance challenges and is facing demolition at the time of the 2022-23 plan review.

### 2.6.2. Recreation and Parks

The importance of recreational facilities and programs in the life of a community should not be underestimated. For communities like Souris, which provide a central service role for a large rural service area, recreation and recreational infrastructure play a particularly significant role. Given the capital and operating costs of many recreational facilities, they can often only be supplied on a regional basis. Recreational programs not only contribute to the social, physical and mental health of the community, they can also significantly compliment economic activities and can in fact represent a productive element of the local economy (as well demonstrated by the City of Summerside and other municipalities).

Facilities in the Town include:

- **Gateway Park and Boardwalk** – the boardwalk is a relatively new development at the western entrance to the town just off the causeway. It boasts a one-kilometre wooden boardwalk, public washrooms, a playground and small water park, along with seven seasonal shops and food enterprises.
- **Confederation Trail** - Walkers in the town also have use of the Confederation Trail, which bisects the town from Chappel Street to the harbour. The trail also connects to the main east-west trail further to the north. Originally railroad tracks, the trails are open to walkers three months a year and leased to snowmobiles for the winter months.
- **Eastern Kings Sportsplex** - a town owned building operated by a Board of Directors. The Sportsplex includes the Eastern Kings Fitness Center Incorporated, Eastern Kings Lanes, an arena, a canteen and a large rentable community space with full kitchen and licensed bar. The arena is made into an artificial ice rink for the fall and winter supporting hockey, ringette, curling and skating. In the spring and summer it is used for various indoor sports as well as community events such as the Eastern Kings Exhibition, the SRS Graduation/Prom, community dinners and dances. The Sportsplex is a warming center for the town EMO system and plan.

- **Eastern Kings Fitness Center Incorporated** – operated by a Board of Directors, the fitness center includes various cardio machines and strengthening equipment as well as free weights and occasional fitness classes.
- **Eastern Kings Lanes** – a 5 pin bowling alley that remains in use for a small group of seniors and community members but is very run down and quite unreliable.
- **Jerry McCormack Memorial Complex** - located directly to the rear of the Eastern Kings Sportsplex, this complex includes a regulation sized soccer field and a large dirt ball field.
- **Souris Regional School** - located on Longworth Street in the western end of town, it is a K-12 public school in the English School Board. The grounds offer a variety of recreational facilities such as two playgrounds, 2 soccer fields, a gaga ball pit, and basketball nets on a parking lot. The schools gymnasiums are routinely used by school teams and community clubs/groups.
- **Skateboard Park & Basketball Court** – located south of the school, the skateboard park and basketball court are fenced and accessible and lighted for evening use.
- **CN Park** - a passive municipal adjacent to the Confederation Trail. It has a large gazebo stage and is home to many special events such as music in the park and Canada Day celebrations
- **Connolly Park** - a passive municipal park adjacent to the Silver Threads Senior Club, Souris Show Hall and the Town Hall. It has a gazebo and many gardens as well as the town notice board and main flag pole.
- **Centennial Park** - a passive municipal park located on the shore adjacent to Breakwater Street. The park offers a dramatic view of the harbour. In addition to seating areas, the park also includes a monument to fishermen who have lost their lives at sea.
- **Gerald Clinton Ballfield** - located off Lea Crane Avenue this is a smaller ball field with a fine gravel infield.
- **Silver Threads Club** - a privately owned and operated building on Main Street, operated by a Board of Directors The club hosts a number of activities for seniors such as Ceilidhs, games as well as education, fitness and health programs.
- **Souris Racetrack** - located to the rear of the Sportsplex, originally a harness racing facility but no longer in use. The area is now primarily used for the Eastern Kings Exhibition horse events, Tug-of-War and community fundraisers such as the Lions Club Cow Patty Bingo. Recently, space in this area has been assigned to a local ATV Club in the process of mapping trails and establishing themselves.

### 3. PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

#### 3.1. Housing

Residential development is a much less predominant land use in the town than it is in more suburban communities. Most residential development is located in very close proximity to the core area. Vacant



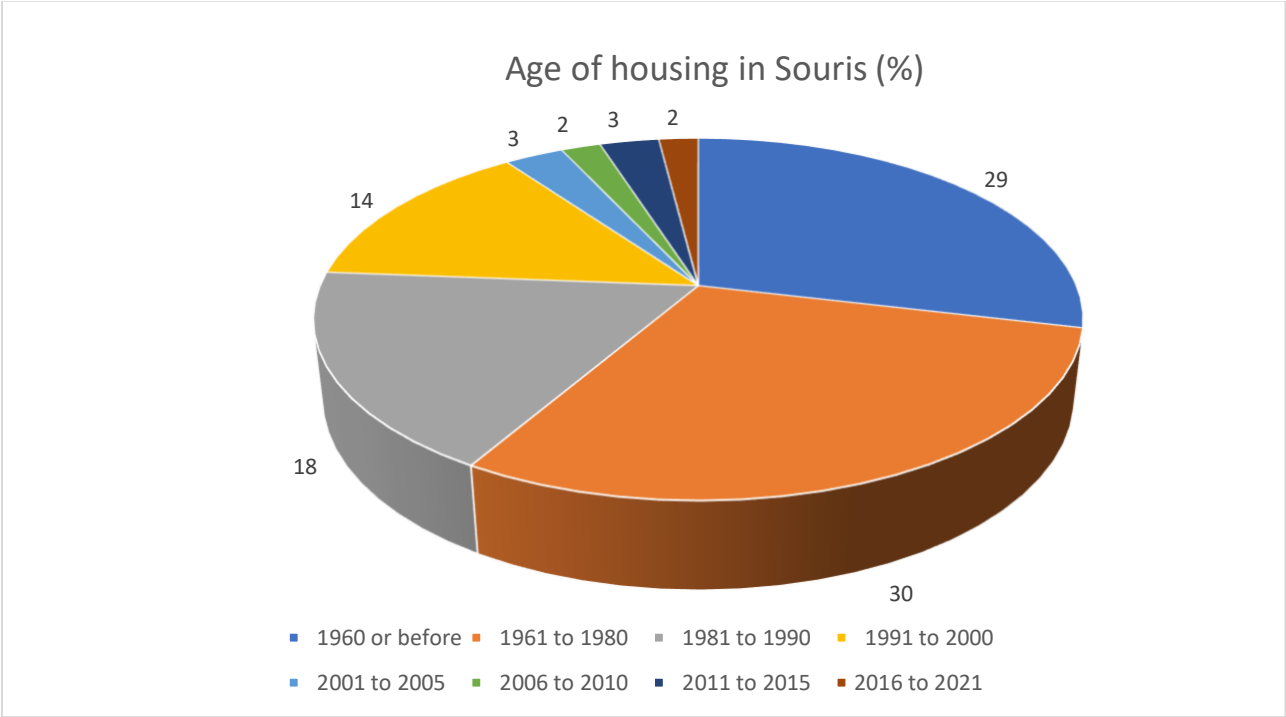
residential lots are extremely hard to find and newer residential subdivisions on the outskirts of town are almost non-existent. In recent years, most newer housing has tended to locate outside of town limits.

The housing stock in the town is in generally good condition but there are a significant number of substandard units. Older mobile homes are scattered throughout the town and there is one small mobile home park adjacent to Souris Regional High School on Longworth Street which poses a serious concern for the community. The town also has a significant number of assisted housing units including numerous seniors’ units and a smaller number of public housing units.

According to Statistics Canada, there were 533 private dwellings in the Town of Souris in 2021, 90% (480) of which were occupied by full-time residents.<sup>7</sup> There is a mix of housing types in the town, with 54% being single detached, 8% are semi-detached, 5% are row houses, 22% are apartment units, and 8% are movable dwellings. Based on Census data, almost 40% (43% in 2016) of private dwellings are 1-2 bedroom, 45% have 3 bedrooms (up from 37% in 2016), and a further 15% have 4 bedrooms or more.

An estimate of vacant lots under 2 acres suggests there could be upwards of 140 lots that could be developed, although their availability for housing development could be restricted by a range of factors, such as availability for purchase, other uses on the site, site suitability, zoning, and mapping errors.<sup>8</sup>

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



<sup>7</sup> 2021 Census.

<sup>8</sup> Estimate is based on lots of 2 acres or less with a non-commercial assessment but no residential assessment.

As illustrated in Figure 4 above, almost 60% of housing in the Town was constructed prior to 1980. A further 31% was constructed the following two decades, although only 6% indicated that their housing needed major repairs. The remaining housing stock has been built since 2001. 45% of all households in 2021 were made up of one person, with an additional 31% being 2-person households. The average household size was 2 people, compared to 2.3 provincially.

According to the 2021 Census, 57% of houses are owned (down from 61% in 2016), while 43% are rented. The average value of a dwelling was \$20,6000. In term of affordability (the amount of household income spent on shelter), the average monthly cost was \$680 for owned dwellings and \$616 for rented dwellings in the municipality compared to the provincial average of \$1031 owned and \$996/month for rented dwellings. Further, 7% of owner households and 10% of tenant households are spending more than 30% of income on shelter costs and 9% are counted as being in core housing need, which indicates a lack of affordability for those households. 55% of tenant households were in subsidized housing.

In the 2023 Report “Understanding Housing Needs in the Town of Souris,” it was estimated that the town’s housing stock will need to grow by 19 net new units each year to keep up with population growth projections and demand. However, according to the 2021 Census, Souris’ housing stock only grew by 0.8 net new units a year since 2016. The report found that, “the current rate of housing stock growth is far below what is required to keep up with the town’s growing population.”<sup>9</sup> Further, it is estimated that Souris will need to increase its housing stock by 384 net new units over 20 years to keep up with population growth. If the Town wished to meet provincial benchmarks for growth planning to ensure that access to housing is available for all age cohorts, the new housing stock increase will need to be 478 units over 20 years.

Should the Town fail to reach these housing start goals, it could lead to more suppressed household formation whereby individuals (especially young adults) continue to delay starting an independent household due to lack of attainable housing options, having significant economic, demographic and political ramifications for the Town. According to the report:

To mitigate the suppression of households, adequate housing supply is needed. However, unlocking new supply requires consideration of issues pertaining to sustainability, labour constraints, local governance, and land use policy.

To *maintain* affordability, Souris should aim to increase its housing stock by 19 net new units each year so that the household formation rate observed in 2021 continues over the coming decade. But to *improve* affordability, the town should set an annual target of 24 net new units per year or more so that household formation increases among historically suppressed cohorts (e.g., young adults). This will make the town far more affordable and attractive to younger residents, especially those looking to start a family in a community that is receptive to their shelter needs.

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<sup>9</sup> Pelletier, Matthew. “Report: Understanding Housing Needs in the Town of Souris” prepared for SJ Murphy Consulting July 21, 2023.

### 3.2. Development Activity

While the economy of the Maritime Provinces generally declined after Confederation, Souris maintained a reasonably strong local economy during the first half of the 20th century, as a harbour and rural service centre. With the relatively rapid rural depopulation of the 1960's and 1970's (and the resultant growth of urban centres such as Charlottetown) the local economy started to fall into decline.

As with many rural centres in the Atlantic region, the relatively untapped bounty of the offshore fishery was seen to be one possible solution. In 1958 the Usen Fisheries plant opened. At its peak the plant hired over 300 people, 250 in the plant and 50 on the 5 offshore trawlers. As offshore fish stocks declined many fish plants also started to decline. Usen's future was strengthened, however, when Georgetown Seafoods closed and its fleet of trawlers and valuable redfish quota were allocated to Usen. With this redfish quota and a fleet of new trawlers purchased in the late 1980's, Usen's future looked promising. This all came to a sudden and tragic end however on September 21, 1993 when the plant burned to the ground.

At this point Souris' economy was already struggling with declining retail activity and the closure of the railway in the mid 1980's. For several years after the Usen fire, there was a significant impact on the local economy due to the loss of jobs and resultant loss of disposable income, an impact which remains visible today. In recent years the Provincial and Federal governments have started to address the local employment crisis through the development of the Souris Food Park and its two anchor tenants, Agri-West and Polar Foods.

Development activity within the municipality since 2015 is shown in the Table below:

Table 4: Permits issued 2015 – 2021. Source: municipal permit reports to Government of PEI Dept of Finance

<i>Development Permits (2015-2021)</i>	<i>Number of permits</i>
<i>New dwellings (mini home, replacement, new single detached)</i>	20
<i>Multi-unit residential</i>	3
<i>Addition or renovation</i>	12
<i>Accessory building (including barns)</i>	77
<i>Commercial/industrial/institutional (incl. business permits)</i>	25
<i>Structures (e.g., fence)</i>	20
<i>total</i>	171

### 3.3. Transportation

#### 3.3.1. Vehicular Transportation

Souris is located on a major Provincial arterial highway, Route 2, which connects the eastern and western ends of the province. This highway also forms part of the “Kings Byway” scenic drive. During the summer months, regular traffic combined with that for the Magdalen Islands ferry terminal results in relatively high tourist traffic.

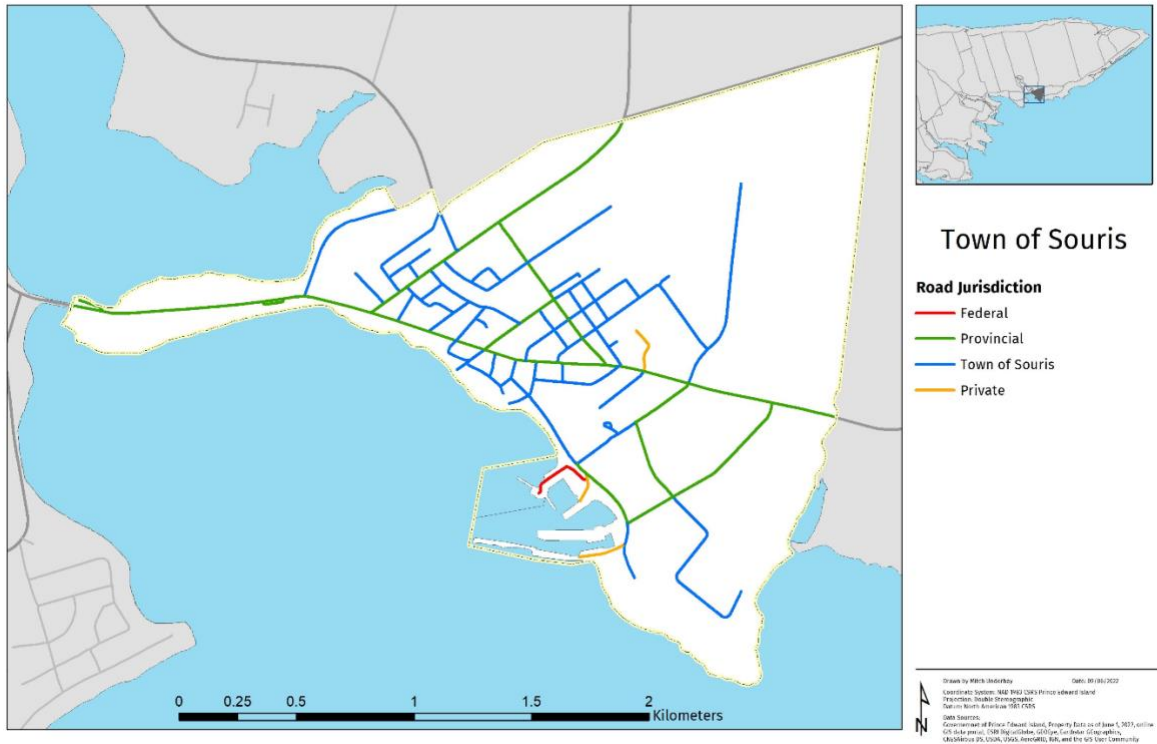
Table 5: Number of metres and ownership of roads in Souris

<i>Road Jurisdiction</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>
<i>Town of Souris</i>	16,799
<i>Province</i>	11,339
<i>Private</i>	768
<i>Federal</i>	406

As a town, Souris is responsible for the ownership and maintenance of all roads within the municipality with the exception of “designated” Provincial roads or highways which are deemed to play a regional transportation role. These designated streets include Main Street (Route 2), Chapel Street, Longworth Ave, Church Ave, MacPhee Avenue, Green St, and a portion of Knight’s Ave (see Figure 5).

The rebuilding of Main Street in recent years addressed many of the previous road design and quality concerns, although some issues still remain with ferry traffic using residential or smaller streets (Parkside & Belle in particular) to access Main St in lieu of the designated MacPhee Avenue.

Figure 5: Souris Road Jurisdiction



The most significant transportation concern affecting the town continues to be the causeway on Route 2 at the western approach to the town. With the growing population of the Souris Beach Gateway Park, the causeway continues to yield concerns, although a planned turning lane at the entrance to the park for westbound traffic. Over the years, the causeway has experienced weather-related challenges, including significant rates of erosion, damage to large sections of the roadway, as well as the destruction of much of the dune system protecting the Souris Beach Park facility. These experiences prompted a bridge upgrade and the piloting of a natural barrier reef, to great success to date. While the Province has directed attention to the long-term protection for this critical transportation link, various other parts of the Town’s infrastructure remains vulnerable to flooding and other climate-related events.

### 3.3.2. Marine Transport

The Souris Port is a major multi-use facility. Throughout its recent history, it has served the inshore fishery (primarily lobsters), a mid-shore fleet, a fish processing plant and associated offshore fleet, an inter-provincial ferry service, international shipping, short term freight storage and a recreational marina complex. The port is also equipped with a slipway and travel-lift, installed originally to service the mid-shore fleet.

The Port of Souris is open for shipping and kept free of ice year-round. There are four wharfs, an active fishery, the ferry terminal for the Magdalen Islands Ferry, and a developing marina complex.

The approach channel is 100 m wide and 6.7 m in depth and the Port is protected by a 567 m breakwater.

### 3.3.3. Active Transportation

Souris has more than 4.9 km of town-owned (and maintained) sidewalks, and 1 km of boardwalk at the Souris Beach Gateway Park, as well as a 0.58 km active transportation trail running alongside MacPhee Ave. between Main St. and Green St. A 2.2 km portion of the Confederation Trail, 0.53 km of that being along the municipal boundary, is also located within the Town. The sidewalk system connects most areas of the Town and most major pedestrian destinations. The Town also has maintenance equipment and staff and is able to maintain the system at a reasonably high level throughout the year. In order to maintain the current high level of service, however, routine upgrading will be required on an ongoing basis. Expansion of the system should be undertaken as budgets permit but should be based on a long-term active transportation plan.

The section of the Confederation Trail within the Town is in good condition and offers an excellent resource for recreational walkers, joggers and hikers. While the use of the Trail over the winter months is dedicated to snowmobilers, walkers still appear to have been able to maintain some access. This does represent a potential safety concern, however, and if pedestrian volumes increase, this conflict may have to be addressed (at least within the boundaries of the Town). The Trail also has a connection to the Elmira main trail, offering opportunities for local users and a considerable tourism opportunity in the future.

## 3.4. Infrastructure and Services

### 3.4.1. Municipal Sewer System

The Town of Souris has two separate sewage treatment facilities. One serves the needs of the Souris Food Park and the other serves the needs of the residents and other businesses in the Town.

When the Souris Food Park was established, it was determined that given the relatively high levels of water consumption by food processing operations that a dedicated sewage treatment system was required. Accordingly, the Park installed its own SBR (sequential batch reactor) plant and its own outfall. This plant remains owned and operated by the Provincial Government and it is assumed that all future tenants of the Park will also be served by this facility.

The balance of the Town is served by a treatment lagoon located in the southern portion of the Town adjacent to Colville Bay. The treatment system has adequate capacity to accommodate many years of growth at current or even expanded growth rates.

The concrete sewer mains which make up the majority of the collection system were installed in 1962. The treatment plant was originally installed in 1979. Some of these gravity sewer lines are situated near the coastline and are at increased risk of damage from erosion (see Figure 6 and Section 5.4.2 below).

Figure 6: Town of Souris sewer lines



### 3.4.2. Municipal Water System

Prior to the establishment of the Souris Food Park, the Town had three separate well sites, none of which had particularly strong flow characteristics. One well is located on Longworth Street with a peak production of 175 gallons/minute. Another is located on Union Avenue (near the water tower) with a peak production of 225 gallons/minute and the third is in the Souris Industrial Park with a peak production of 125 gallons/minute.

Given the elevated water consumption of food processing operations, the Food Park had to establish a new well field. This is located adjacent to the Industrial Park and to the north of the former racetrack. It contains 3 wells each with a peak production of 385 gallons/minute and a fourth well with capacity of 250 gallons/minute. These four wells are also connected to a new diesel electric generator which ensures water supply even during a power outage.

In total, these new wells far exceed the total demand of both the Food Park and the Town. In fact, all 4 wells are seldom operated together. Given these new wells, the former 3 smaller wells are currently idle. In the future it is likely that one or more of these smaller wells will be decommissioned.

### 3.4.3. Storm Water Management

Stormwater run-off in the town generally flows from the highest point in north of Longworth and Union St. to the south, toward the shoreline. Most of the streets in the town do not have storm sewers. The three main storm water systems in the town are: 1) in the west a new storm sewer is located on Chappel Street which connects to a storm sewer on Main Street which runs westward to the beginning of the causeway; 2) a second system starts at Colville Street and runs southward along Parkside Avenue to the harbour; and 3) a new system starts on Main Street to the east of the Main Street Mall and runs eastward to Norris Creek. All stormwater is managed and kept separate from the municipal sewer system.

The Main Street storm sewer system was upgraded as part of the Main St rebuild. The Province maintains the storm water on Main Street, Chapel, Longworth, Knights, and MacPhee in Souris as they are provincial streets. Other storm water plans within the Town are dealt with on a per property/development basis.

### 3.4.4. Municipal Services

**Fire** – Souris has a municipal volunteer fire department, with approximate 30 members. The Souris Fire Department also provides services to a rural fire district including an area from Red Point to East Baltic and extending north to Naufrage. Plans are underway to replace the existing fire hall on Main Street with a new facility at a location at the corner of MacPhee Ave and Hope St. Land was purchased for this purpose in 2022 and the goal is to make the transition within 3-5 years. The department has an excellent shared response relationship with the Eastern Kings Department, St. Peter’s and Central Kings.

**Ambulance** – The town is serviced by an Island EMS ambulance base, located on Main Street not far from the current Fire Hall.

**Policing** – The Town of Souris receives its police protection from the R.C.M.P. under the Provincial Policing Contract. The Souris detachment, constructed on Main St at the eastern end of the Town in 2011, includes 7 full time members, part of the RCMP Kings District. Crime statistics in the Town are quite low and the town is generally felt to have no major policing or security issues.

**Solid Waste** - The Provincial Government has taken over this responsibility and uses a centralized solid waste management system.

### 3.4.5. Community Buildings and Institutions

Souris is extremely well supplied with institutional and heritage facilities. Perhaps the most prominent from an architectural perspective is St. Mary’s Catholic Church. Constructed in 1901 by Island architect William Critchlow Harris Jr. of Island sandstone and rebuilt in 1930 after a major fire, this church is a commanding landmark and a key physical and cultural cornerstone of the community. Equally important from a social perspective are the Town’s two other churches, St. Alban’s Anglican and Lighthouse Baptist Church.

Souris is also the site of Souris Regional School serving grades k to 12, while the French school, École la Belle Cloche, is located just outside the Town in Rollo Bay. Souris is served by one private pre-school facility, able to accommodate 58 children, although the longer term sustainability of pre-schools in the



region has been a concern lately. Previous post-secondary programming at the Souris Holland College Centre is no longer available but the College is committed to offering courses when necessary; space for those courses will be secured on an as needed basis.

Provincial Government programs and services are available through the Access PEI site at the Johnny Ross Young Regional Services Centre. Municipal administration services are located in the Town Hall on Main Street, together with the Town library and the Council Chambers. A stand-alone post office is also located on Main St.

## 4. ECONOMY

The decline in economic activity downtown led to visible physical deterioration, particularly in some of the more prominent heritage structures. The Matthew & MacLean Building was purchased by the town in the late 2000s and a community organization secured financing to commence restoration of the property. The main floor houses the Visitor Information Center as anchor tenant as well as a bustling Café and Historium. There is one other rental space on the main floor and two on the second. Other Main Street activity includes new and evolving services including various health and wellness clinics/studios, an electric tattoo parlour, a real estate office, gas stations, fast-food chains (coffee & pizza), financial institutions, a liquor store and a range of professional services in the growing second floor office suites of the Main Street Mall.

Other businesses and services are located on side streets just off Main St, adding to local commercial options. While it has moved from Main Street to the former St. James Unit Church on Hebrew St, the Artisans on Main shop has supported local artists and makers for many years.

The town core offers unique potential for tourism, service activities and specialty retailing. The future health of the downtown will be dependent, however, on continued efforts by municipal and provincial governments to encourage continuous physical upgrading and the development of new anchor activities, support for new operations such as restaurants and shops, and amenities for residents.

Another significant economic feature in the Town has been the establishment of the private not-for-profit Souris Harbour Authority following the federal divestiture of the port in 2006, which has brought many benefits to the Town and the surrounding area. The Authority manages the lighthouse and gift shop, Souris Harbour Industries, ECS Cold Storage, and a range of activities on the harbour proper.

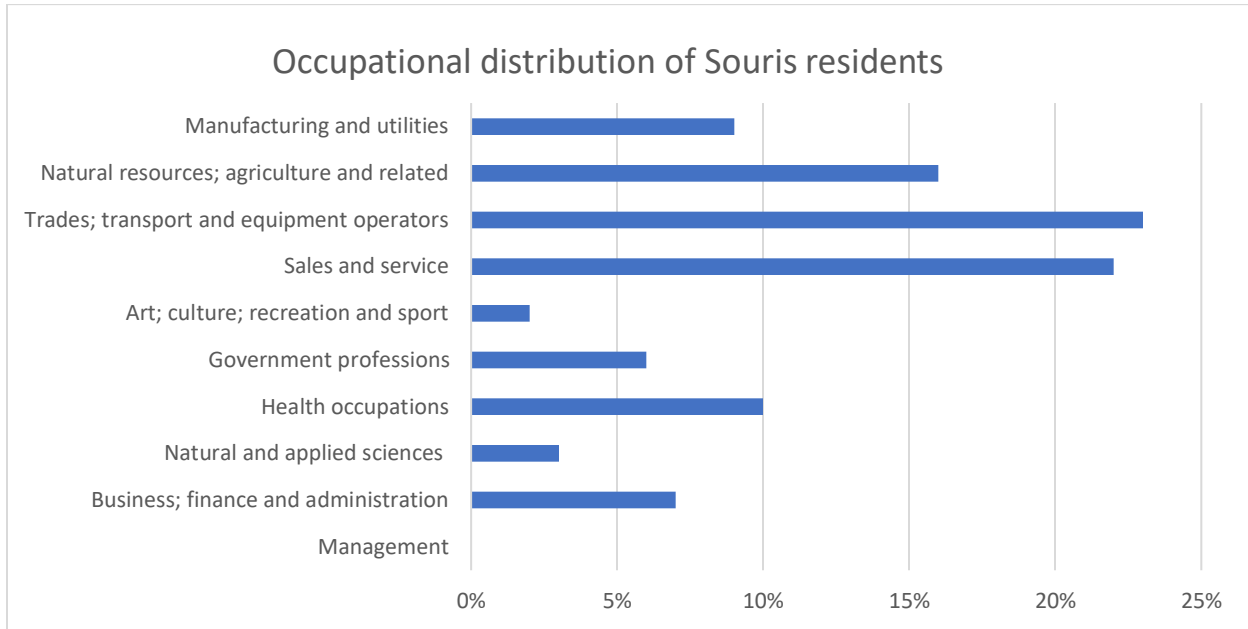
### 4.1. Labour force and industry characteristics

#### 4.1.1. Occupational Characteristics

Below, Figure 7 outlines the occupational characteristics of town residents. Trades, Transport & Equipment Operators 23%, Sales & Service at 23%, and Natural Resources, Agriculture & Related Production at 16% are the top three occupations of municipal residents, making up more than 62% of the occupations overall. According to the 2021 Census, 85% of municipal residents are employed by someone else while 15% are self-employed, which compares to the provincial rates of 87% employed

and 13% self-employed.

Figure 7: Occupations of Residents (2021)



Of the total working age population, 53% worked and of those 30% worked full-time and 70% worked part year/part-time. Provincially, 67% of the population worked and of those 50% worked full-time and 50% worked part year and/or part-time.

#### 4.1.2. Industry Composition

While its trade area likely exceeds the boundaries of the Census Subdivision of Souris, the 2021 Census figures for agricultural production in Souris (see Table 6) are indicative of the level of economic activity generated by this sector. Within the Town itself, there is only one farm and it is expected that farmland in the town will transition to more urban uses over time.

Table 6: Farm Activity, Souris, PE

	Souris	Provincial Total
Total number of farms	45	1,195
Total area of farms		
Acres	34,193	504,647
Hectares	13,837	204,234
Total farm capital	\$147 million	\$2.880 billion
Operating revenues	\$42.4 million	\$682.1 million
<b>Total farm expenses</b>	<b>\$30.5 million</b>	<b>\$561.6 million</b>

Source: Agricultural Profile of the Atlantic Provinces, Statistics Canada Agricultural Division, Census 2021.

Fish landing figures for Souris are also available on an annual basis. Table 5 provides a summary of the value of fishing landings in the Province for 2020. With Souris being one of three main seaports in PEI, the financial contribution of the fisheries industry is clearly evident as is the predominance of the seafood industry.

*Table 7: Value of 2020 Landings in Thousands of Dollars, PEI*

Groundfish		Pelagic & Estuarial		Shellfish	
<b>Halibut</b>	797	Herring	1948	Clams / Quahaug	1087
		Mackerel	2976	Oyster	783
		Tuna, Bluefin	1449	Sea Scallop	713
		Alewives (Gaspereau)	106	Lobster	153,047
		Eel	226	Crab Queen	24,629
		Silversides	406	Crab, Other	1048
		Smelts	47		
<b>Groundfish Total</b>	\$801	<b>Pel. &amp; Est. Total</b>	\$7158	<b>Shellfish Total</b>	\$181,334

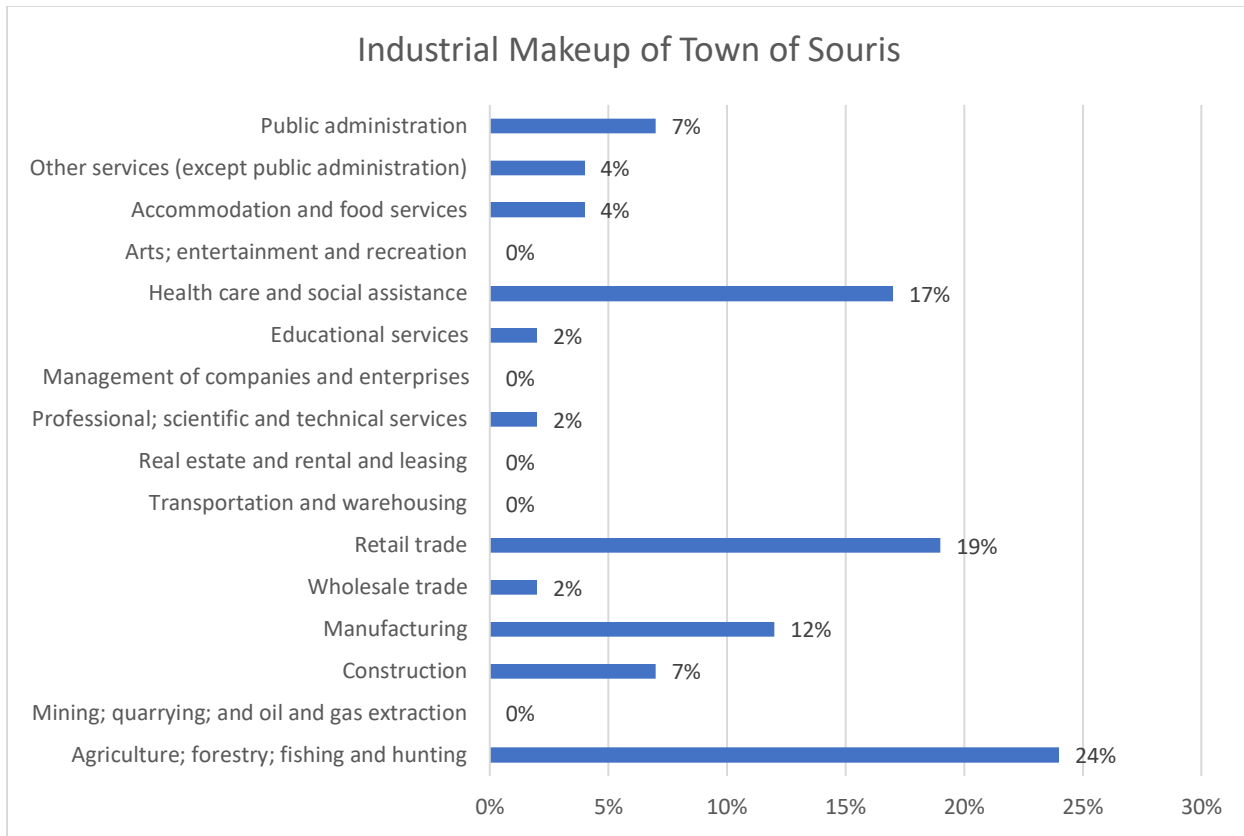
Source: Department of Fisheries and Oceans, DFO Statistics<sup>10</sup>

Fishing plays a major role in the local economy. The deep-water port has enabled the town to develop onshore processing centres for aquaculture and agriculture, such as Agrawest Foods Ltd., and Eastern Cold Storage. Tourism is also an important component of the local economy. Coastal cottage development, coastal accommodation rentals and pristine beaches provide the backdrop. Souris is also the gateway to the Magdalen Islands, giving the port at the Souris Harbour an important interprovincial link. Farming, particularly potato and dairy, also contribute to the local economy.

Figure 8 outlines the range industry that is represented by residents in the municipality. Not surprisingly, agriculture and fishing make up the largest share of industrial employment for the municipality.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/stats/commercial/land-debarq/sea-maritimes/s2020pv-eng.htm>

Figure 8: Industry characteristics in the Municipality (2021)



#### 4.1.3. Commuting to Work

As illustrated in Table 8, more than 75% of the workforce work locally and almost 2/3 have very short commutes.

Table 8: Comparison of time spent commuting to work by percentage of employed labour force (2021 Census)

Commute duration	Municipality	Province
Less than 15 minutes	64%	46%
15-29 minutes	28%	34%
30-44 minutes	4%	12%
45+ minutes	6%	8%

#### 4.1.4. 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.

## 4.2. Commercial Activity

### 4.2.1. General Commercial

Commercial activity is centred in two locations, the historic downtown core area on Main Street and the newer and rapidly expanding peripheral retail development at the Main Street Mall at the eastern end of town. Like many other communities, Souris has seen a movement of newer and larger retail facilities to the periphery of town where land costs are somewhat lower and parking can be more easily accommodated, with the notable exception of the relocation of the pharmacy to a new building at the corner of Main and Belle Ave.

Retailing and service activity showed significant decline in the 1970's and 80's. This was largely as a result of the impact of rural (and local) population decline and a trend toward centralization of retail activity in the larger centres such as Charlottetown. While the growth of large-scale retail and service facilities in Charlottetown has shown dramatic recent growth, there has also been somewhat of a resurgence in niche retailing in rural centres at some distance from Charlottetown.

While “high order” infrequently purchased goods and services have continued to be centralized, “low order” daily needs such as food, medical supplies and hardware supplies are showing expansion in communities like Souris which are somewhat remote from the larger urban centres.

As also noted earlier, the two major new tenants at the Souris Food Park have had significant local employment impacts. Unfortunately, based on the availability of housing for employees at the Food Park, this employment is still highly seasonal at present. Once the impact of the new ownership at the Agra West Plant is fully felt, it is hoped that employment levels will become much more consistent and hopefully increase. Considerable capacity remains to accommodate additional value-added industries or other light manufacturing concerns at the Food Park.

Commercially assessed properties were valued at \$18,795,300 in 2021, while non-commercial properties were valued at \$44,715,618.

### 4.2.2. Tourism

Tourism development, while still highly seasonal in terms of economic activity and employment, has shown dramatic growth both provincially and in Kings County over the last 20 years. According to Tourism PEI<sup>11</sup>, tourism on the island increased significantly in the years leading up to the pandemic.

The accommodation sector also reported year over year increases in overnight stays for both fixed room and campground accommodations leading up to 2020. As well, the number of visitors to PEI from 2005 to 2019 was increasing at 3.3% with over 1.6 million visitors coming to the island in 2019. As a result, provincial tourism revenues went from \$342.3 million in 2005 to \$486.5 million in 2019.

*Table 9: Island Tourism numbers 2009-2019*

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.tourismpei.com/industry/research/tourism-indicator-dashboards>

<i>Traffic Source</i>	<i>2009 – 2019 (Oct-April)</i>	<i>2009-2019 (May to Sept)</i>
<i>Air</i>	+12% to +50%	+41% to +57%
<i>Bridge</i>	+19% to +27%	+17% to +25%
<i>Ferry</i>	Off season	-7% to +14%

With a continued aggressive marketing campaign in the Kings County area and with the Greenwich National Park, as well as other tourism initiatives, it is possible that Kings County’s share of the provincial tourism industry can continue to expand. The Souris area can capitalize on this growth but only through continued local product development and promotion efforts.

Information from the Province’s Department of Tourism for 2022 indicates that there are 25 tourism attractions within the Town of various types. Five cottage operations include 27 cottage units (including the Shanty Stay units), while there are 3 licensed vacation rentals and 1 B&B. This, in addition 5 cottage units, 1 trailer/hostel rental, and a 16-unit motel in Souris West just beyond the Town’s boundaries, provides a reasonable number of accommodation options in the immediate area.

## 5. ENVIRONMENT

### 5.1. Natural Resources

A coastal town, there are many watercourses and wetlands in the region. Significant work has been undertaken with the Souris & Area Branch of the PEI Wildlife Association, largely in the Souris River area, although the Norris Creek watershed and Norris Pond are also significant natural features in the area. The primary sensitive species is a piping plover and the Souris Causeway has been identified as a critical habitat.

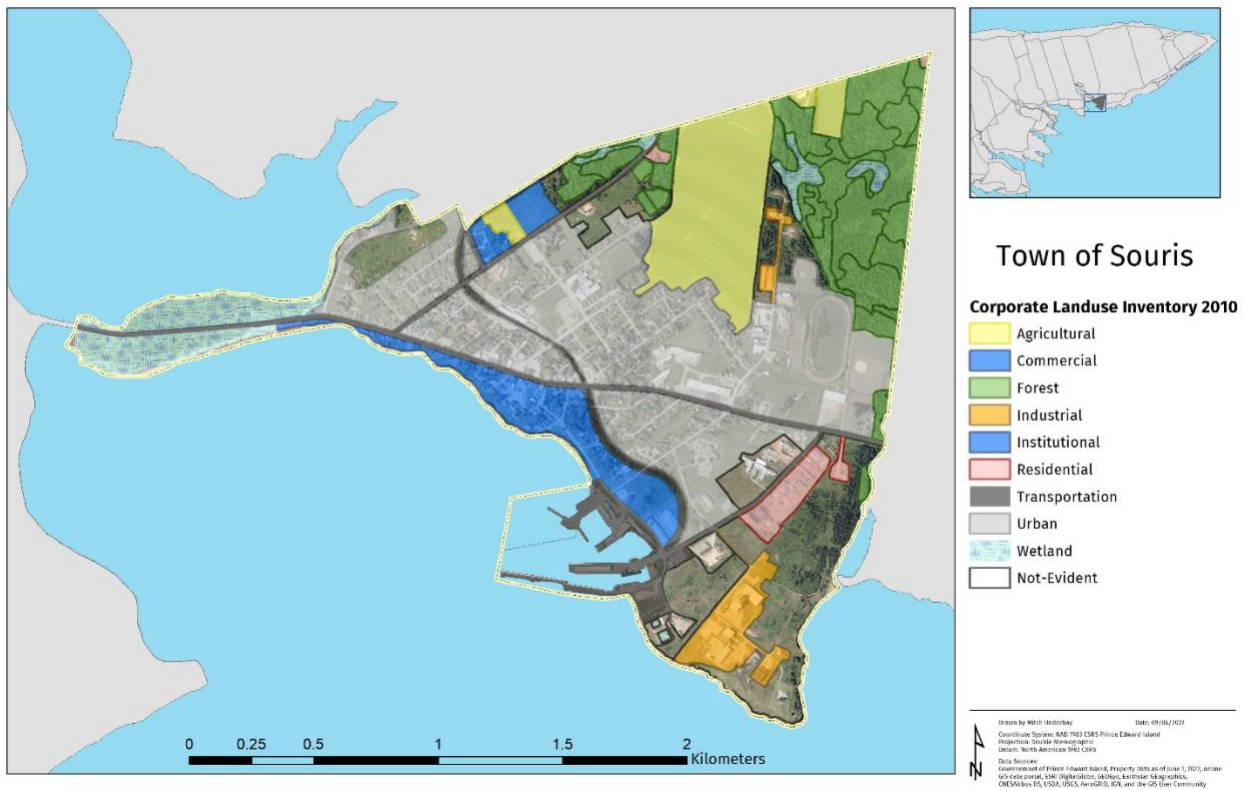
#### 5.1.1. Corporate Land Use Inventory (2010)

Table 10 illustrates the land use inventory (2010) of the municipality and mapped in Figure 9.

Table 10: Land Use in Souris (2010)

<i>Use</i>	<i>Sq Metres</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>% of land base</i>
<i>Agricultural</i>	355192	87.8	9.9%
<i>Commercial</i>	203863	50.4	5.7%
<i>Forest</i>	474196	117.2	13.2%
<i>Industrial</i>	113975	28.2	3.2%
<i>Institutional</i>	25315	6.3	0.7%
<i>Non - Evident</i>	597573	147.7	16.6%
<i>Residential</i>	64416	15.9	1.8%
<i>Transportation</i>	284609	70.3	7.9%
<i>Urban</i>	1246305	308.0	34.7%
<i>Wetland</i>	226474	56.0	6.3%

Figure 9: Corporate Land Use Inventory Map of Souris (2010)



## 5.2. Energy

Electricity is provided to the municipality by Maritime Electric. One turbine, classified at a mid-size system, provides electricity to one of the Port Authority’s buildings. 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 used by the Municipality as a standard within its planning documents. There are no such similar regulations related to solar energy systems currently.

## 5.3. Farmland and Food Security

### 5.3.1. Farmland

As noted in Table 6, almost 10% of the town’s land base is currently agriculture, although there is only one active farm within the Town’s boundaries.

### 5.3.2. 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. With local access to a supermarket and seasonal farmers market, food security has not been flagged as a concern.

## 5.4. Climate resiliency

### 5.4.1. 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 11: Comparison of recorded climate averages and future climate projections for Souris Region<sup>12</sup>

<i>Change in Climate</i>	<i>1976-2005 recorded average</i>	<i>2051-2080 projections*</i>	<i>Change</i>
<i>Mean Annual Temperature (degrees Celsius)</i>	5.9	10.0	+4.1
<i>Mean temperature (spring)</i>	2.6	6.5	+3.8
<i>Mean temperature (summer)</i>	16.9	21.0	+4.1
<i>Mean temperature (fall)</i>	8.9	12.8	+3.8
<i>Mean temperature (winter)</i>	-5.0	-0.5	+4.5
<i>Number of Very hot days (+30C)</i>	0.9	15.1	+14.2
<i>Number of tropical nights (daily temp&gt;20C)</i>	0.7	21.2	+20.4
<i>Last day of spring frost</i>	May 8	April 14	-24.8 days
<i>Number of winter days (-15C)</i>	17.1	1.4	-15.6

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

Table 11 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

<sup>12</sup> Data taken from the Climate Atlas of Canada. [https://climateatlas.ca/map/canada/plus30\\_2030\\_85#lat=46.76&lng=-62.31&z=6&grid50k=011L08](https://climateatlas.ca/map/canada/plus30_2030_85#lat=46.76&lng=-62.31&z=6&grid50k=011L08)

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.

**5.4.2. Flood and Erosion Risk**

High level digital elevation modelling enables 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) allows 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. Table 12 and Figures 9-12 illustrate areas at risk in the municipality.

*Table 12: Sea level rise scenarios for Souris<sup>13</sup>*

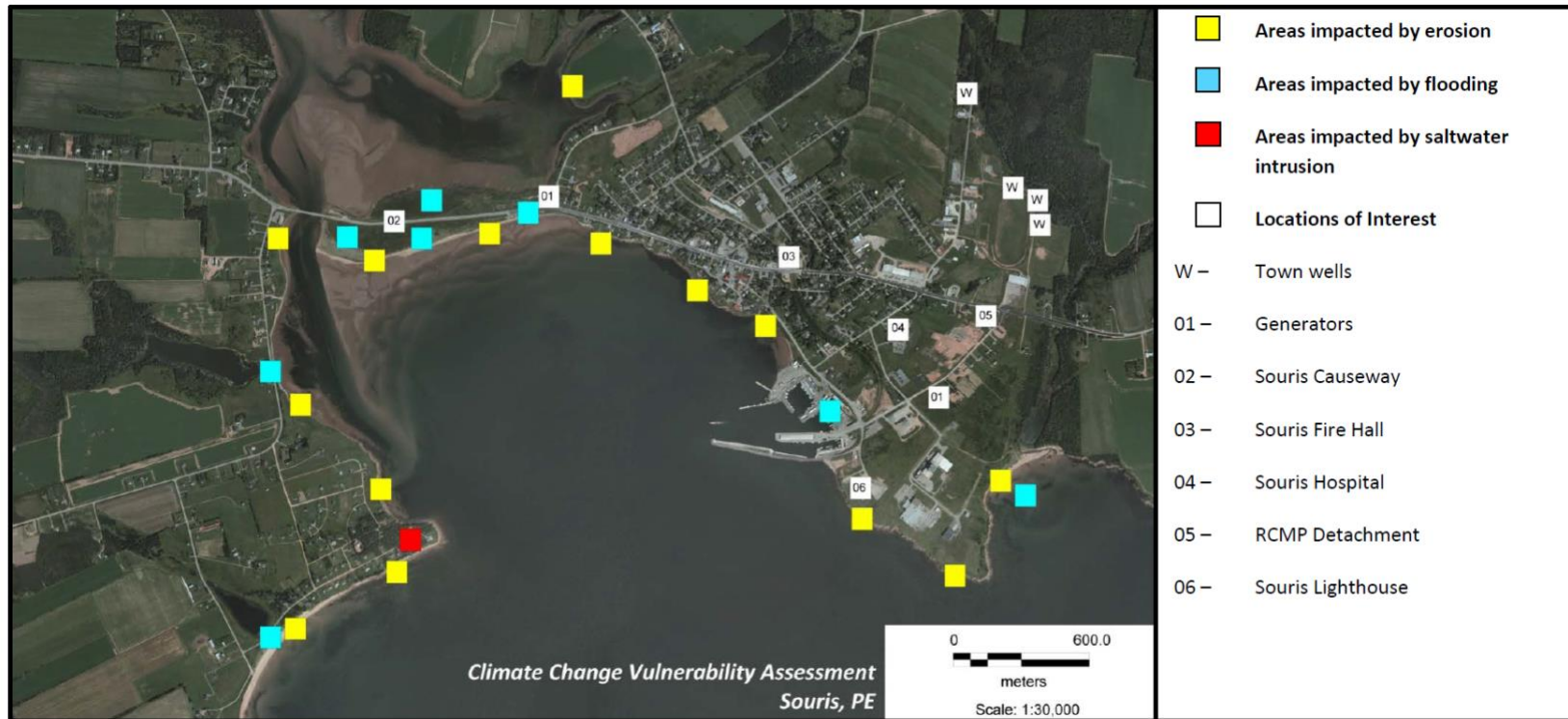
<i>Year</i>	<i>Total Sea Level Rise (cm)</i>
2025	16 +/- 3
2055	45 +/- 15
2085	86 +/- 36
2100	110 +/- 48

<sup>13</sup> Canadian Hydrographic Services site: North Lake Harbour (as cited in the Coastal Vulnerability Study for Souris)



### 5.4.3. Environmental Mapping

Figure 10: Areas impacted by storms, erosion, flooding and saltwater intrusion as identified by residents of Souris and Souris West.<sup>14</sup>



<sup>14</sup> This and following maps in Figure 13, prepared for the 2012 Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment for Souris and Souris West, PEI, NRCan project.

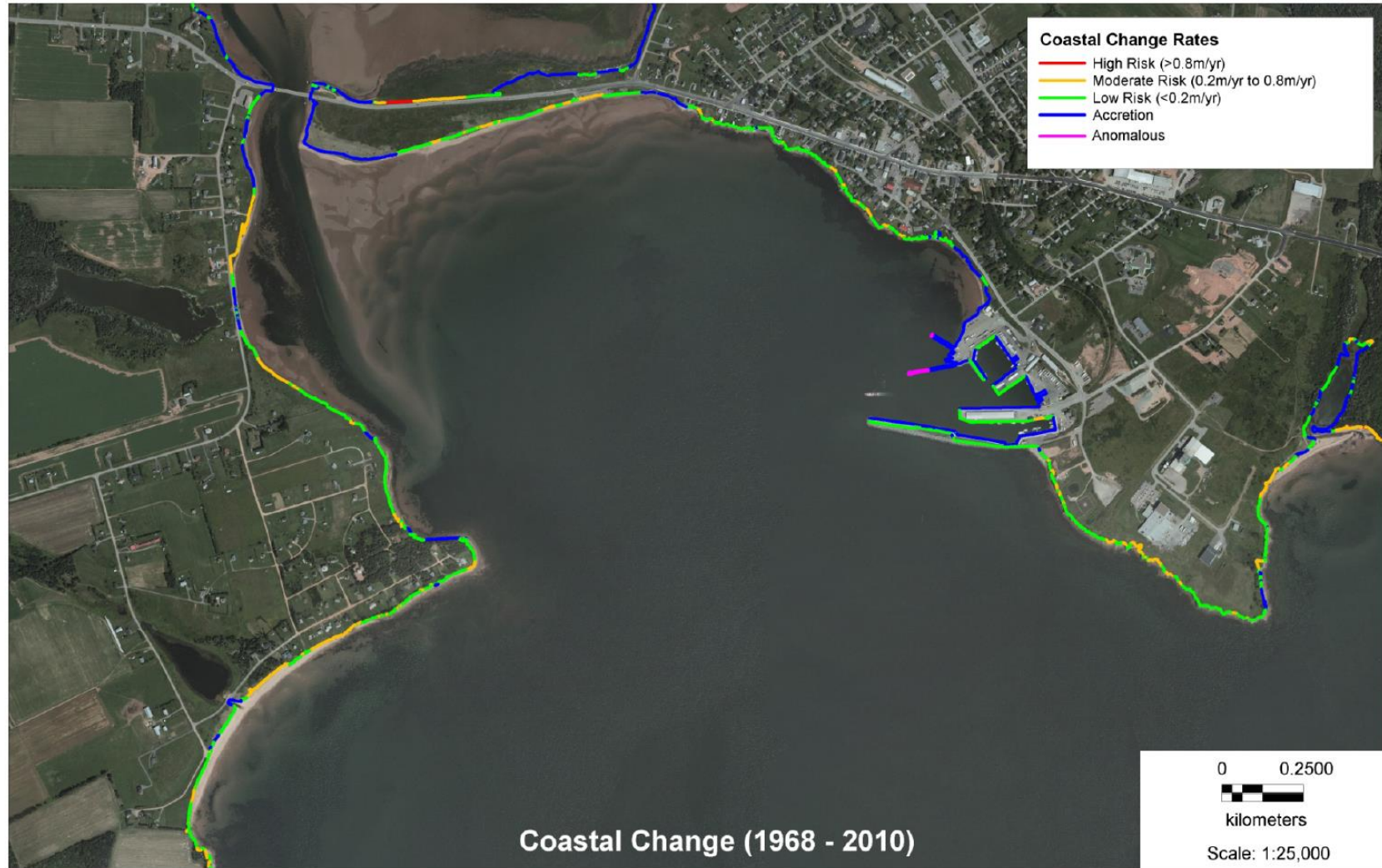


Figure 11: Coastal Change in the Souris Area, 1968-2010

Figure 12: Climate change flood risk scenarios for Souris in 2100

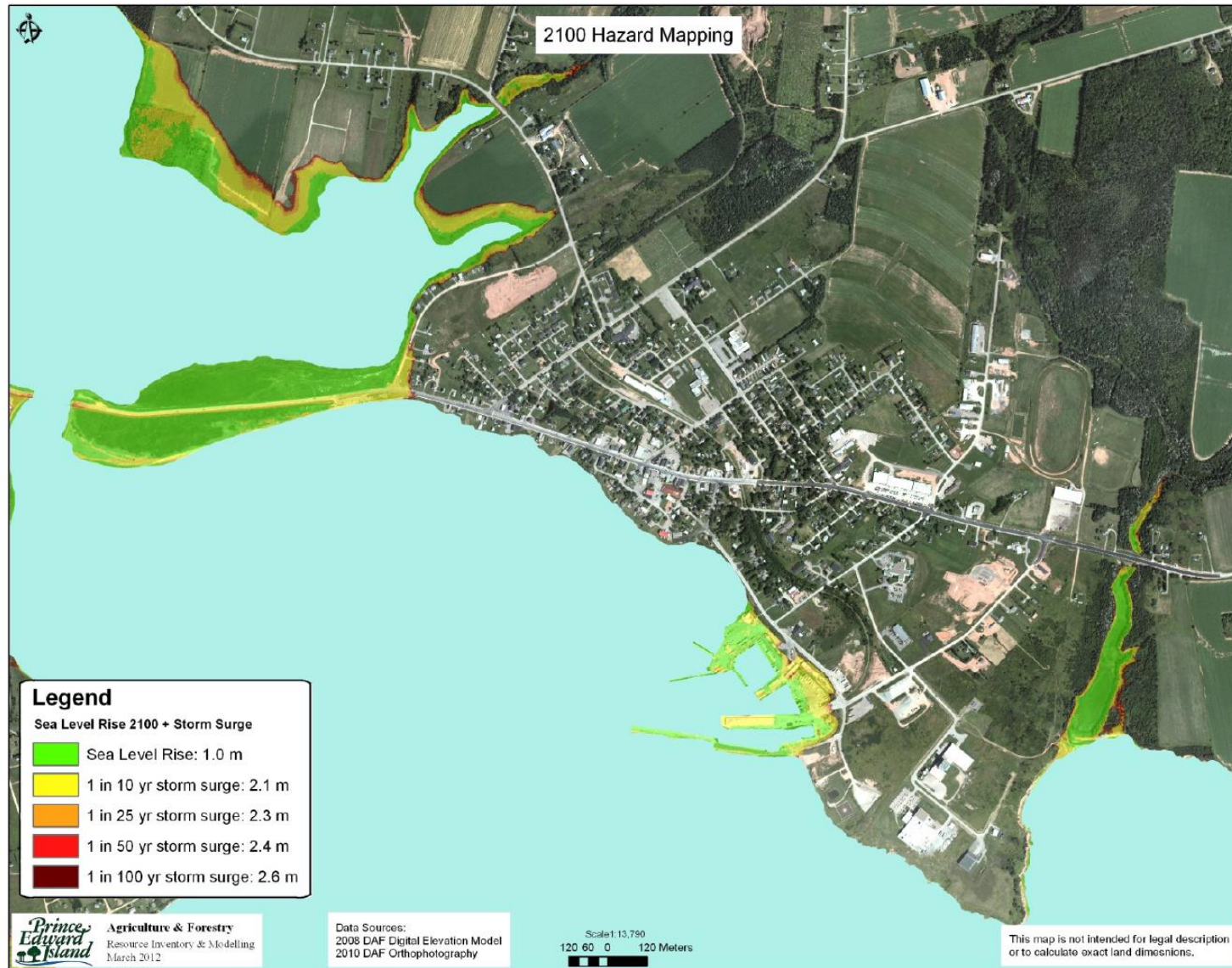
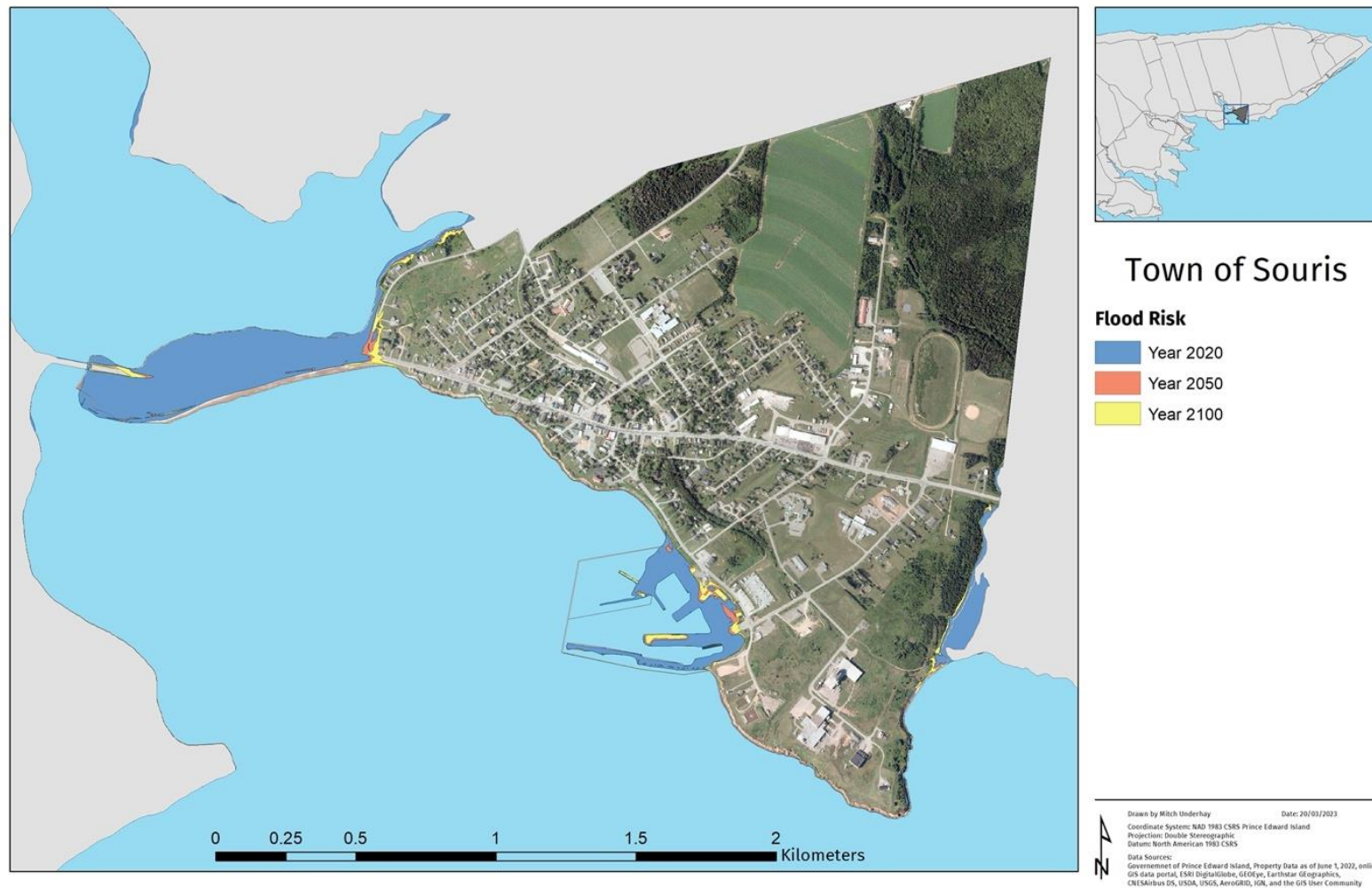


Figure 13: Areas at Risk Mapping



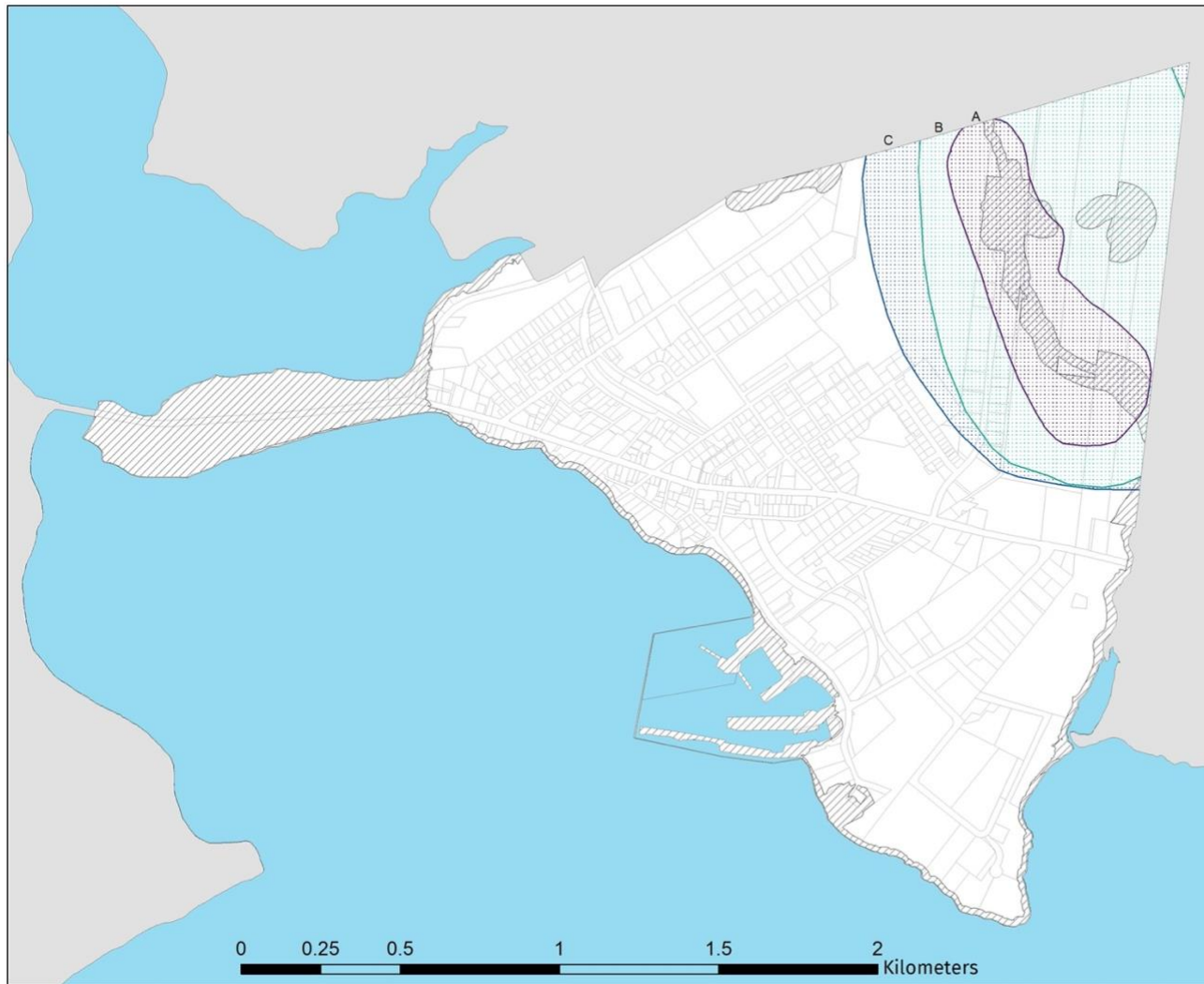


## Town of Souris

### Coastal Erosion

- High Risk
- Moderate Risk
- Low Risk
- Accretion

Drawn by Mitch Underhay Date: 21/02/2023  
 Coordinate System: NAD 1983 CSRS Prince Edward Island  
 Projection: Double Stereographic  
 Datum: North American 1983 CSRS  
 Data Sources:  
 Government of Prince Edward Island, Property Data as of June 1, 2022, online  
 GIS data portal, ESRI DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics,  
 CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community



## Town of Souris

### Protected Areas

#### Overlays

-  Environmental Reserve Overlay
-  Wellfield Protection A
-  Wellfield Protection B
-  Wellfield Protection C

Drawn by Mitch Underhay, SJ Murphy Planning and Consulting      Date: 03/05/2023  
 Coordinate System: NAD 1983 CSRS Prince Edward Island  
 Projection: Double Stereographic  
 Datum: North American 1983 CSRS  
 Data Sources:  
 Government of Prince Edward Island, Property Data as of June 1, 2022, online  
 GIS data portal, ESRI DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics,  
 CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community





Figure 14 – based on June 2022 property data, indicating parcels without a civic address between 9,000 square feet and 2 acres. Note: indicated properties may include developed properties with more than one associated ‘parcels’ and other mapping irregularities and should not be taken as a definitive inventory of parcels capable of being developed. Other limiting factors could include availability of servicing, access, or zoning.

## Schedule 1

### Understanding housing needs in the Town of Souris

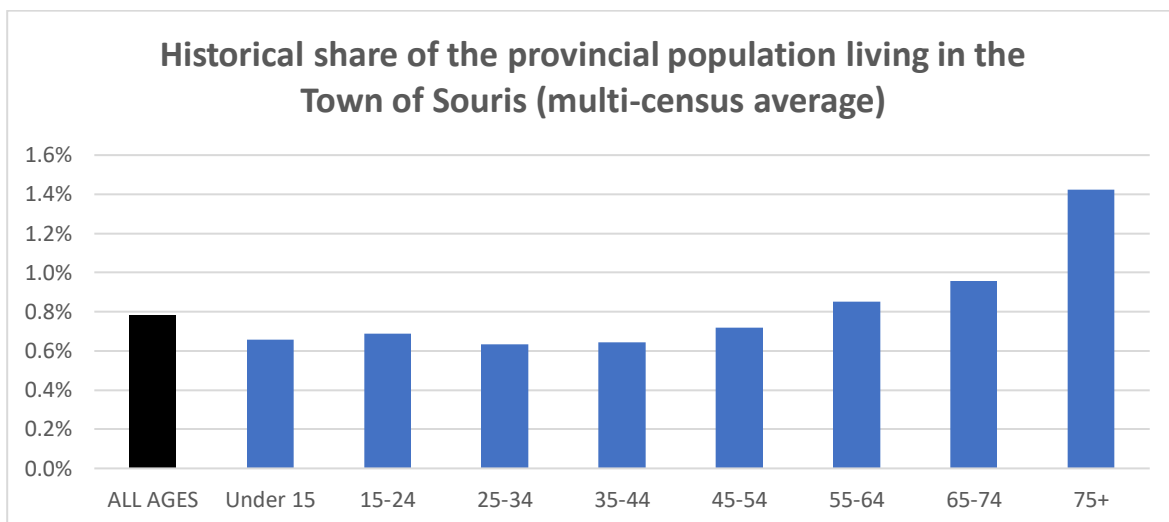
M. Pelletier, July 2023

#### Summary

- Between 2021 and 2041, Souris' population is expected to grow by around **800 persons** at a minimum. This will result in a net increase of over 380 new households.
- Souris generally has higher rates of household formation than the rest of the province, but it is significantly lower for some age cohorts. For example, the household formation rate among 15 to 24 year-olds is 0%, suggesting that the impact of housing shortages is most acute among younger residents.
- This means that the town's housing stock will have to grow by **19 net new units each year** to ensure that household formation rates do not fall further among the rest of the population. For the town to obtain formation rates that match or exceed those of the rest of PEI, the housing stock will have to grow by at least **24 net new units annually**.
- According to the 2021 Census, Souris' housing stock grew by only 0.8 net new units a year since 2016. **The current rate of housing stock growth is far below what is required to keep up with the town's growing population.**
- If housing supply continues to fall behind population growth, household formation will become even more suppressed. This could result in a declining population of children, young families, and skilled workers on whom the town depends.

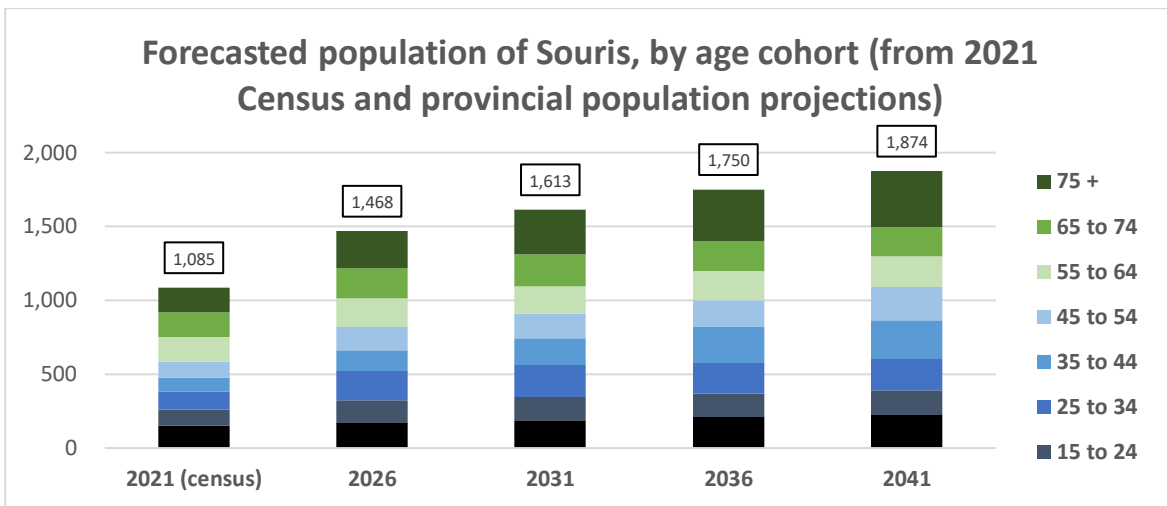
#### Population assumptions

PEI's population is expected to grow by 43% between 2021 and 2041. Across each age cohort, around 0.8% of the province's population has been situated in the Town of Souris for the past four censuses. However, the share of the provincial population in Souris is generally higher among older cohorts.



From: Appendix I

If these proportions of the provincial population are assumed to remain constant relative to the PEI Government’s 2041 forecasted population growth, then **Souris’ population will reach nearly 1,900 people in the next 20 years.**



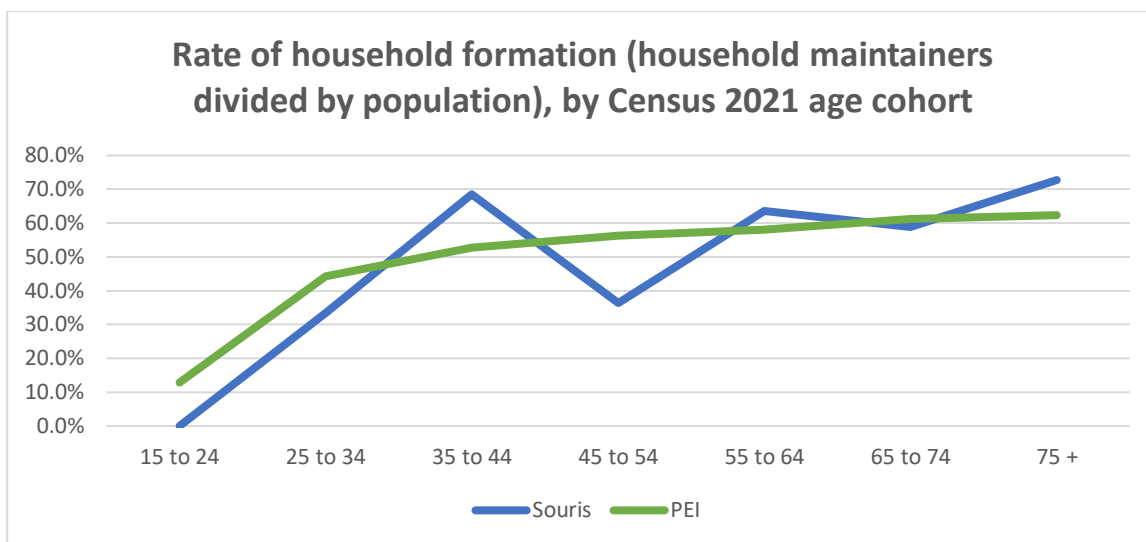
From: Appendix I

A recent CBC PEI piece notes that the provincial government’s new population forecast has already [significantly undercounted](#) the Island’s population for 2023. The Town of Souris also grew by [almost 6% last year](#) (faster than the rest of PEI). As a result, the figures in this report should be interpreted as **conservative estimates** of Souris’ growth.

### Household formation assumptions

To predict how this population growth will translate into housing demand, we must first determine how household formation changes between age cohorts. The **rate of household formation** is calculated by dividing the number of primary household maintainers (formerly referred to as heads of households) by the number of residents aged 15 and up. Data for both of these variables can be found through the 2021 Census of Population.

Souris has a higher overall rate of household formation (50.3%) than the rest of PEI (49.4%), suggesting it is comparatively easy for the town’s residents to form their own independent households. However, the rate varies significantly across different age cohorts.



From: Appendix II

To calculate the number of households expected to be situated in Souris in 2041, the forecasted amount of residents must be multiplied by the corresponding rates of household formation from the 2021 Census of Population. The delta between the 2041 and 2021 amounts represents the net change in housing stock required in the town over a 20-year period. For the most accurate estimates, it is recommended that these calculations be conducted across age cohorts rather than in a single lump sum count.

**Table 1:** Forecasted number of new households in Souris, based on *current rates* of household formation (from Appendix II)

Age cohort	2021 Census population	2021 households by age of maintainer	2021 household formation rate (Maintainers divided by Population)	Forecasted 2041 population (derived from PEI Government)	2041 households (forecast x 2021 formation rate)	Delta (2041 households minus 2021 households)
15-24	110	0	0.0%	168	0	0
25-34	120	40	33.3%	210	70	30
35-44	95	65	68.4%	260	178	113
45-54	110	40	36.4%	226	82	42
55-64	165	105	63.6%	208	132	27
65-74	170	100	58.8%	201	118	18
75+	165	90	72.7%	376	273	153
					<b>20-year total:</b>	<b>384</b>

It is estimated that Souris will need to increase its housing stock by 384 net new units over 20 years just to keep up with population growth. However, the town has low rates of household formation among some age cohorts, such as a rate of 0% for 15 to 24 year-olds and a rate of 33.3% for 25 to 34 year-olds. For age cohorts with household formation rates lower than those of the rest of the province, the town should consider using the provincial rate as a benchmark within growth planning (i.e., the best-case scenario rate). This can ensure that access to housing is not suppressed among residents, especially younger members of the working age

population, while maintaining rates for cohorts whose access is higher than the provincial average. To meet the higher target, Souris' housing stock will need to increase by 478 units over 20 years.

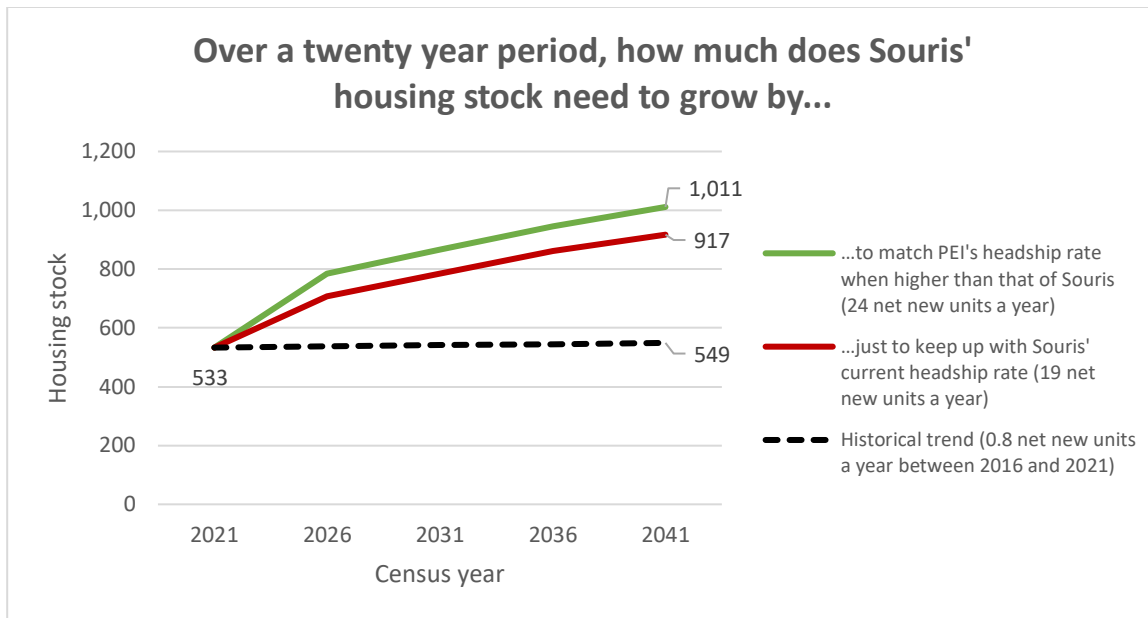
**Table 2:** Forecasted number of new households in Souris, based on *best-case rates* of household formation (from Appendix II)

Age cohort	2021 households by age of maintainer	Best option of the current and provincial formation rates	Forecasted 2041 population (derived from PEI Government)	2041 households (forecast x 201 province-wide formation rate)	Delta (2041 households minus 2021 households)
15-24	110	12.9%	168	22	22
25-34	120	44.2%	210	93	53
35-44	95	68.4%	260	178	113
45-54	110	56.2%	226	127	87
55-64	165	63.6%	208	132	27
65-74	170	61.3%	201	123	23
75+	165	72.7%	376	273	153
				<b>20-year total:</b>	<b>478</b>

Considering the range of these two totals as annual construction objectives, Souris should be increasing its housing stock by 19 net new units per year to keep up with growth, and 24 or more per year to improve overall affordability. Between the 2016 and 2021 censuses, the total number of private dwellings in Souris grew from 529 units to 533 (an annual rate of 0.8 net new units). If this rate of housing stock growth is to hold over the coming years, Souris will likely build 18 to 23 fewer units than needed on an annual basis.

### Policy implications

Souris currently has more dwellings per capita than the rest of PEI, but signs of shortages are beginning to emerge. The town also has one of the highest shares of renter households on the Island, and as such would be impacted by the province's low rental vacancy rate of 0.9%. In February, [the Guardian](#) reported that "no market rentals were available" to the predominantly senior tenants of a Souris apartment looking for alternatives following a notice of eviction. This eviction was [later overturned](#), but it highlighted the impact of both the town's growing housing shortage and the need to find accommodations for workers and seniors alike. The gap between Souris' housing needs and projected housing stock growth is expected to widen unless homebuilding keeps up with demand.



From: Appendix III

The exacerbation of this crisis will lead to more **suppressed household formation** - a phenomenon whereby individuals (especially young adults) continue to delay starting an independent household due to a lack of attainable housing options. Suppressed household formation could have significant economic, demographic, and political ramifications for Souris. For example:

- Aspiring homeowners forego buying homes due to a shortage of affordable options for purchase. They instead reside with roommates or continue to live with their parents. Young adult couples may end up delaying the formation of their own families, which could pose long-term demographic issues for both Souris and the rest of PEI.
- Tenants and low-income families are crowded out from renter markets as higher income households compete with incumbents for scarce rental options. Souris' median household income is among the lowest in the province – a lack of new supply could continue to make competition over rentals a highly visible issue.
- Souris loses its appeal to newcomers due to chronic housing shortages, and skilled workers become more likely to move to more affordable jurisdictions. This results in increased outmigration to other parts of PEI or beyond.

To mitigate the suppression of households, adequate housing supply is needed. However, unlocking new supply requires consideration of issues pertaining to sustainability, labour constraints, local governance, and land use policy.

To *maintain* affordability, Souris should aim to increase its housing stock by 19 net new units each year so that the household formation rate observed in 2021 continues over the coming decade. But to *improve* affordability, the town should set an annual target of 24 net new units per year or more so that household formation increases among historically suppressed cohorts (e.g., young adults). This will make the town far more affordable and attractive to younger residents, especially those looking to start a family in a community that is receptive to their shelter needs.

## Appendix I: PEI and Souris population estimates

### Prince Edward Island 2026-2041 population estimate

Age Cohort	2026	2031	2036	2041
Under 15	26,223	28,932	32,239	34,269
15-24	21,856	22,685	22,935	24,415
25-34	31,345	34,191	32,359	33,101
35-44	22,068	27,863	37,682	40,358
45-54	21,770	23,336	25,737	31,489
55-64	22,561	21,957	22,875	24,464
65-74	21,332	22,247	21,523	21,039
75+	17,689	21,315	24,380	26,418
<b>Total</b>	<b>184,844</b>	<b>202,526</b>	<b>219,730</b>	<b>235,553</b>

From: [Government of Prince Edward Island](#)

### Souris 2021-2041 population estimate

Age Cohort	Historical share of PEI's population (last four censuses)	2021	2026	2031	2036	2041
Under 15	0.7%	150	172	190	212	225
15-24	0.7%	110	151	156	158	168
25-34	0.6%	120	199	217	205	210
35-44	0.6%	95	142	179	243	260
45-54	0.7%	110	156	168	185	226
55-64	0.8%	165	192	187	194	208
65-74	1.0%	170	204	213	206	201
75+	1.4%	165	252	303	347	376
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>1,085</b>	<b>1,468</b>	<b>1,613</b>	<b>1,750</b>	<b>1,874</b>

**Note:** 2021 population is derived from the 2021 Census, while 2026-2041 figures are derived by multiplying PEI's forecasted population by each age cohort's corresponding historical share of the provincial population situated in Souris (from the town's [2006](#), [2011](#), [2016](#), and [2021](#) census profiles)

**Appendix II:** Forecasted number of new households in Souris, based on the *current, province-wide, and best-case* rates of household formation.

*Souris' current household formation rate*

Age cohort	2021 Census population	2021 households by age of maintainer	2021 household formation rate (Maintainers divided by Population)	Forecasted 2041 population (derived from PEI Government)	2041 households (forecast x 2021 formation rate)	Delta (2041 households minus 2021 households)
15-24	110	0	0.0%	168	0	0
25-34	120	40	33.3%	210	70	30
35-44	95	65	68.4%	260	178	113
45-54	110	40	36.4%	226	82	42
55-64	165	105	63.6%	208	132	27
65-74	170	100	58.8%	201	118	18
75+	165	90	72.7%	376	273	153
<b>20-year total:</b>						<b>384</b>

*Province wide formation rate*

Age cohort	2021 households by age of maintainer	2021 province-wide household formation rate	Forecasted 2041 population (derived from PEI Government)	2041 households (forecast x 201 province-wide formation rate)	Delta (2041 households minus 2021 households)
15-24	110	12.9%	168	22	7
25-34	120	44.2%	210	93	40
35-44	95	52.7%	260	137	87
45-54	110	56.2%	226	127	65
55-64	165	58.1%	208	121	25
65-74	170	61.3%	201	123	19
75+	165	62.4%	376	234	131
<b>20-year total:</b>					<b>375</b>

*Best-case formation rate*

Age cohort	2021 households by age of maintainer	Best option of the current and provincial formation rates	Forecasted 2041 population (derived from PEI Government)	2041 households (forecast x 201 province-wide formation rate)	Delta (2041 households minus 2021 households)
15-24	110	12.9%	168	22	22
25-34	120	44.2%	210	93	53
35-44	95	68.4%	260	178	113
45-54	110	56.2%	226	127	87
55-64	165	63.6%	208	132	27
65-74	170	61.3%	201	123	23
75+	165	72.7%	376	273	153
<b>20-year total:</b>					<b>478</b>

**Note:** Maintainer and household formation data were derived from the [2021 Census of Population](#), while population projections were derived from Appendix I.





**Appendix III:** Forecasted growth of housing stock, by household formation scenario and actual projections

<b>Year</b>	<b>Based on the 2021 provincial rate of household formation</b>	<b>Based on 2021 municipal rate of household formation</b>	<b>Historical trend (3 net new units per year between 2016 and 2021)</b>
2021	402	402	402
2026	544	519	417
2031	604	575	432
2036	659	623	447
2041	703	668	462
<b>Delta (2041 households minus 2021 households)</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Net new units per year</b>	<i>15.1</i>	<i>13.4</i>	3

Note: 2021 private dwelling total and historical trend both derived from Souris' [2016](#) and [2021](#) census profiles. All other figures based on calculations from Appendix II.