

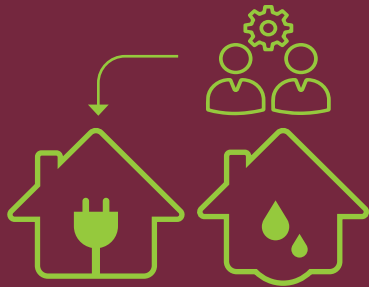
# Water, Electricity and Energy Leadership

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ANTIGONISH

Our Community

**Both the County and Town operate utilities. How would these services be impacted by a possible consolidation?**



## **Guiding Principle(s)**

1. Take a regional approach to municipal services
4. Continue fair taxation and user pay approaches
7. Enhance environmental sustainability

## Water in Town and County

In Nova Scotia, water supply and distribution systems are carefully regulated by both the Nova Scotia Department of Environment and the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board (UARB). The Town has a water utility that draws its supply from the James River watershed and is distributed to Town Residents and some County users. There are approximately 1,600 connections to the Town's water utility.

The County water utility provides water in the fringe area surrounding the Town, and to Lower South River, St. Andrews and St. Josephs. In 2020 the County amalgamated all of its water systems into one utility and harmonized rates for all 1,640 water utility customers.

Both the Town and County water utilities regularly review their operations and rates

to ensure they are current and appropriate. Water utility rates are approved by the UARB after a periodic rate study and review process.

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Although there may be opportunities in the future to combine the two existing water services, initially the utilities, their environmental permits and UARB rate orders would remain unchanged. In a consolidated municipality, there would not be any additional demand on one utility or the other to supply water to existing customers.

## Electricity in the Town

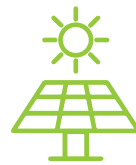
Town residents and businesses also have their own electrical utility, regulated through the UARB. The utility purchases electricity from Nova Scotia Power (NSP), and the approved rate structure is tied closely to changes the NSP rate structure. The administration, maintenance and operation of the utility is integrated with the Town organization, in the same way as the water utility.

While there are opportunities to achieve efficiencies and share knowledge in a larger municipal unit, the Antigonish Electrical Utility and its rate structure would have to be treated as a regulated operation to benefit its existing subscribers.

## Renewable Energy Leadership

Both the Town and County have demonstrated real leadership in addressing climate change and alternate energy, and this leadership should be recognized and advanced in any possible municipal consolidation process.

The County has installed a total of 97kWh in solar PV, starting with a roof mounted system (25kWh) in 2016 and a ground mounted (72kWh) solar array in June 2021. Both have long term agreements with NSP. The County recently completed a Low Carbon Community feasibility study to explore new energy initiatives with Paqtnkek Mi'kmaw Nation (PMN) and will continue to plan next steps together, building on our Anku'kamkewey Peace and Friendship Accord signed on May 5, 2018. Currently the County and PMN are installing EV chargers in partnership with the Town. In 2021, the County approved a five-year Energy Management Plan that looks at efficiency, renewables and partnership as important components of responding to climate change and providing long term energy options.



The Town is also demonstrating concrete leadership in the development of alternate energy and reducing the community's carbon footprint, through the Alternative Resource Energy Authority (AREA), a partnership between the towns of Antigonish, Berwick and Mahone Bay. The revenues, expenses, assets and liabilities are shared between the AREA's municipal

partners based on the share of the power generated. AREA has future plans for more initiatives, including the installation of automotive EV Chargers and a community solar gardens.



AREA provides significant financial, economic and environmental benefits, which would be maintained in a potential consolidation.

**Summary:** The Town and County provide important municipal services through long established and regulated utilities, for water and electricity. These services would be included in a possible consolidation, but they have unique regulatory and ownership characteristics that would have to be recognized in any merger process. In addition, there are significant leadership responses to climate change/alternate energy issues in both municipalities that would require special consideration to grow the opportunities that will exist with a larger organization and protect assets and revenues that have been created by each municipal unit and its citizens.