



About the Communities: Waycobah First Nation and Inverness County

NOVA SCOTIA

FCM First Nations-Municipal Community Infrastructure Partnership Program

The Mi'kmaq community of Waycobah First Nation and Inverness County are neighbouring communities in Nova Scotia. Prior to CIPP, these two communities had previously worked together on shared services. However their sewer agreement had been expired since 1986. In their application to CIPP, the communities expressed interest in renewing their joint sewer and water agreement. The decision to participate in the program came after the communities and Pitu'paq (a group dedicated to preserving the Bras d'Or watershed) were discussing options to work together in order to upgrade the sewage treatment plant situated on the Bras d'Or Lakes.

The Chief of Waycobah First Nation and the Warden of Inverness County had a good working relationship, yet the two councils had not formally met. They were previously lacking a reason or an ability to come together, but CIPP provided a process that allowed the communities to create a team and participate together. One participant shared, "For too long we haven't found a way to get together, so this was our chance and we are now building on that relationship that has been formed."

One community participant mentioned that CIPP seemed to be "a good opportunity to tie in capacity building by bringing people together in the County in a facilitated way." The communities had a strong desire to form partnerships with each other, to make formal introductions, identify areas for collaboration, and discuss existing and potential shared services. They expressed a strong desire to move forward together in their joint work and continue the momentum of their initial CIPP meeting.

FCM would like to thank:

Jim Mustard, Councillor, Inverness County

Paul Schwartz, Technical Advisory Committee, Support to Pitu'paq

Reg Hurst, CEO, Waycobah First Nation

for participating in interviews to assist in the preparation of this case study.

FCM would also like to thank the following community champions for their leadership in this work.

Joe O'Connor, CAO, Inverness County

Jim Mustard, Councillor, Inverness County

Garett Beaton, Director of Public Works, Inverness County

Annie Daisley, Councillor, Waycobah First Nation

Reg Hurst, CEO, Waycobah First Nation

Donald Davis, CFO, Waycobah First Nation

Bobby Gould, Councillor, Waycobah First Nations



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Highlights of the Process

Prior to the launch workshop Waycobah First Nation hosted a networking breakfast to welcome their new partners. Participants who attended the launch workshop shared their work objectives, including:

- **To build a better partnership to help each other for the long run;**
- **To build a better working relationship on both the technical and human side;**
- **To build a framework to move forward for infrastructure and economic development;**
- **To learn how things work off reserve to teach our people and vice versa.**

The first CIPP workshop was attended by the councils of both communities, the Chief, Warden, Band Manager, and lead city staff. The workshop focused on relationship-building and an exploration of each other's understanding of their partner community. One participant noted that "it was a good opportunity to explore our governance models and the responsibilities around that, it was eye opening."

The CIPP facilitation team adapted their process for the first workshop to facilitate a conversation between the two communities. The dialogue focused on areas that the partners could work together on mutually beneficial service agreements as well as issues that impact both communities. The workshop was a

good opportunity for the two communities to brainstorm areas for future collaboration and to build a relationship.

Significant work was done on the service agreement outside of the workshops. A technical steering committee with representatives from both communities and members of Pitu'paq worked toward developing the draft agreements to take back to the large group for review. When the group reconvened for a second workshop, they reviewed the draft Sewage Infrastructure Maintenance MOU and spoke about different ideas for economic development for the future. They collectively looked at next steps for designing the sewage treatment plant and spoke in detail about each other's responsibilities moving forward.



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Results

Many important outcomes emerged from the CIPP process. The communities of Waycobah and Inverness County signed a cooperation agreement as well as a Sewage Infrastructure Maintenance MOU. Participants spoke about how CIPP “opened a big door in terms of the relationship and friendships; we now have a good partnership.” One of the objectives mentioned at the beginning of the program was to “meet regularly to discuss what we could do together.” The communities are achieving this as they are now meeting every two weeks to plan the Engage Inverness County Conference that is being hosted collaboratively by the two communities. These meetings will help grow the relationship in the communities outside of the elected field. It was stated that the collaborative and inclusive planning process for the conference is one of the most powerful results of the CIPP work, noting that this was the first time Waycobah was consulted on the objectives and hosting of the event. Other important outcomes of the Waycobah First Nation and Inverness County partnership included the communication and integration of the councils who can now work together; and being able to move forward on the treatment plant upgrade with both parties happy and engaged.

One unexpected outcome of this partnership was the newfound understanding of each other’s communities, a participant stated, “I now have a deeper appreciation for the Chief and Council of Waycobah. There are a lot of things they are expected to do, much different

from the expectations for the municipal council.” Another outcome was the relationship. One workshop participant shared, “We now greet each other when we see one another in public. It has gone a long way, especially since the two communities are side by side.”

Community partners were satisfied with the CIPP process and their progress on the joint service agreements. The support provided to the communities from the CIPP team helped the partnership build local capacity and work together to continue to carry this work forward. They are now exploring ways to learn from their experience with CIPP and work on other developments, such as tourism and economic development, with support from a team of trained staff facilitators from each community.

Lessons learned

The communities learned many lessons throughout the process of working together to develop their joint service agreements. One participant highlighted the importance of rural communities working together with the municipalities to create economic development

opportunities, as they do not have the same opportunities as urban centres. Another participant noted that the technical steering committee helped to bring different groups to the table and agree to move forward. Other lessons included:

Working together as one unit across different boundaries can be very successful for everybody.

There are a lot of assumptions made when people don’t talk to each other, once they start talking and seeing each other as human beings they are able to freely express what they feel in an open and trusting situation.

You have to create an environment that the relationships can be explored and create a friendship in a real authentic way.

The two communities were committed to the process but noted that they achieved what they did so efficiently due to the facilitation, “You may have all the individuals there but you are not a team until you have someone, a coach, to bring you together.”



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The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) acknowledges the financial support of the Government of Canada through Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC).

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