



Town of Amherst
Public Hearing
Agenda

Date: **Wednesday, July 8, 2026**
Time: **5:00 pm**
Location: **Council Chambers, Town Hall**

Pages

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT

"I would like to acknowledge that our gathering today is taking place in Mi'kma'ki (MEEG-MA-GEE), the traditional, unceded and ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaw people. I would also like to acknowledge that Nova Scotia has another unique people, the people of African descent whose legacy and contributions date back over 400 years predating confederation of this land. We are all treaty people."

3. 1 Albion Street Development Agreement

3.1 Presentation

1 - 20

3.1.1 Written Submissions

21 - 41

3.2 Council Questions / Comments

3.3 Public Questions / Comments

4. Adjournment



DOMINION PUBLIC BUILDING
ERECTED 19

Amherst

NOVA SCOTIA

Public Hearing

July 8, 2026

Development Agreement to Permit the Construction of One 24-Unit and One 12-Unit Apartment Building on 1 Albion Street.

Disclaimer

This application is not the Town's proposal. It is a property owner's right to make an application for a development agreement. No approval or decisions have been made.

Development Agreement

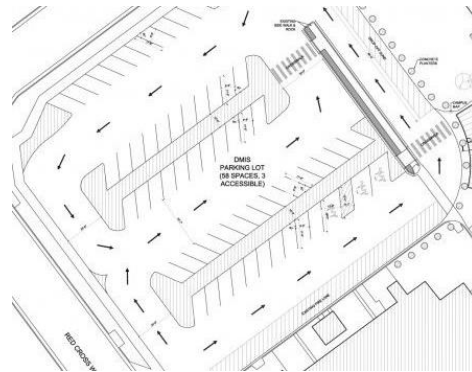
What is a Development Agreement (DA)?

A development agreement is a **legally binding contract between a property owner and the Town that stipulates standards, design requirements, terms, and conditions** to which the property owner must adhere.

Aspects of a development that may be addressed in a development agreement include:



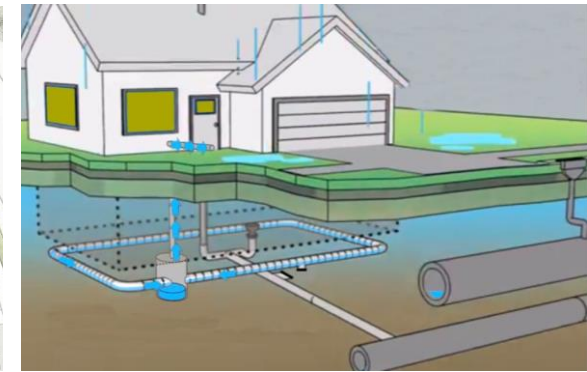
Architectural Design



Parking



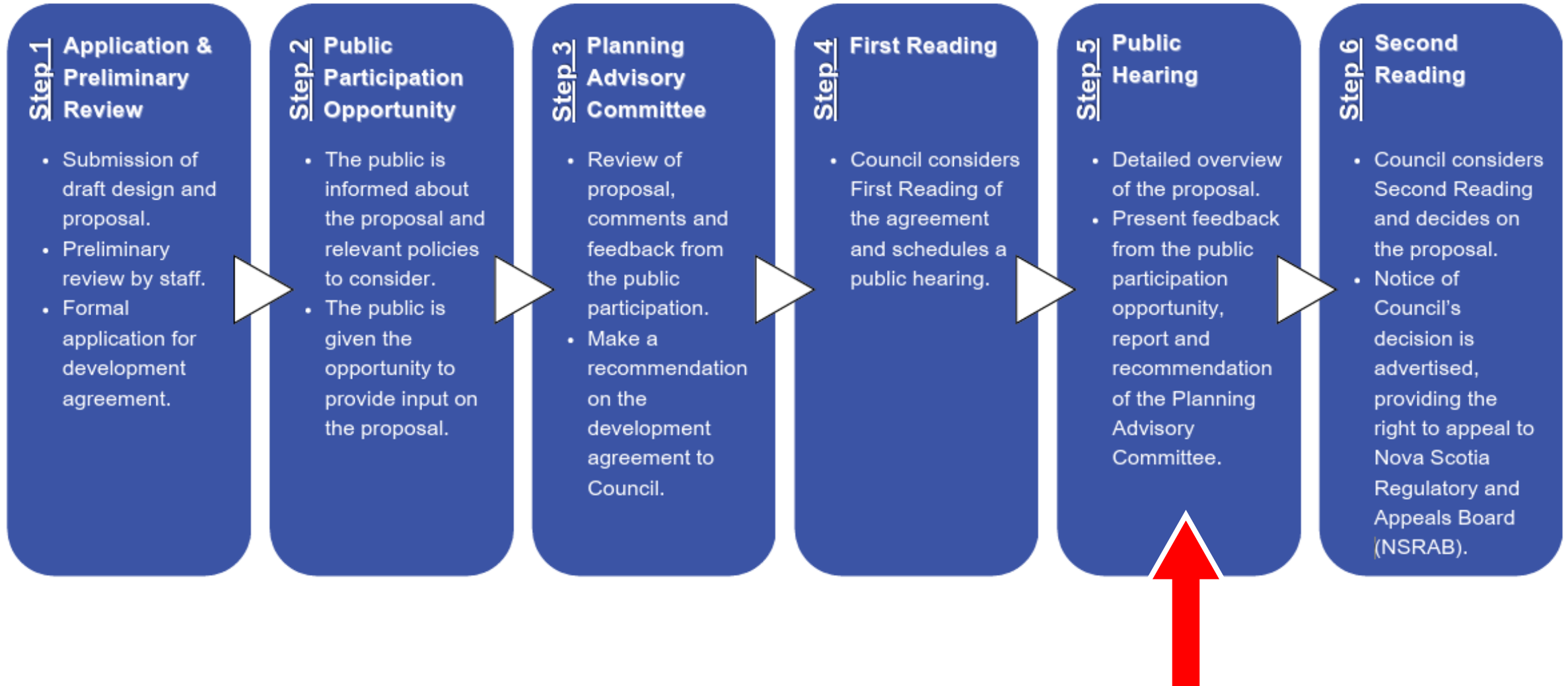
Landscaping



Drainage

A development agreement may also influence the use, of fencing and other similar site features to ensure the matter is addressed adequately, stipulate how the project should be phased, enforce certain special requirements, and require the developer to make contribution towards funding public infrastructure.

Development Agreement Process



Application Details

Applicant/ Owner: YMCA Association of Cumberland

Location: 1 Albion Street (PID: 25009432)

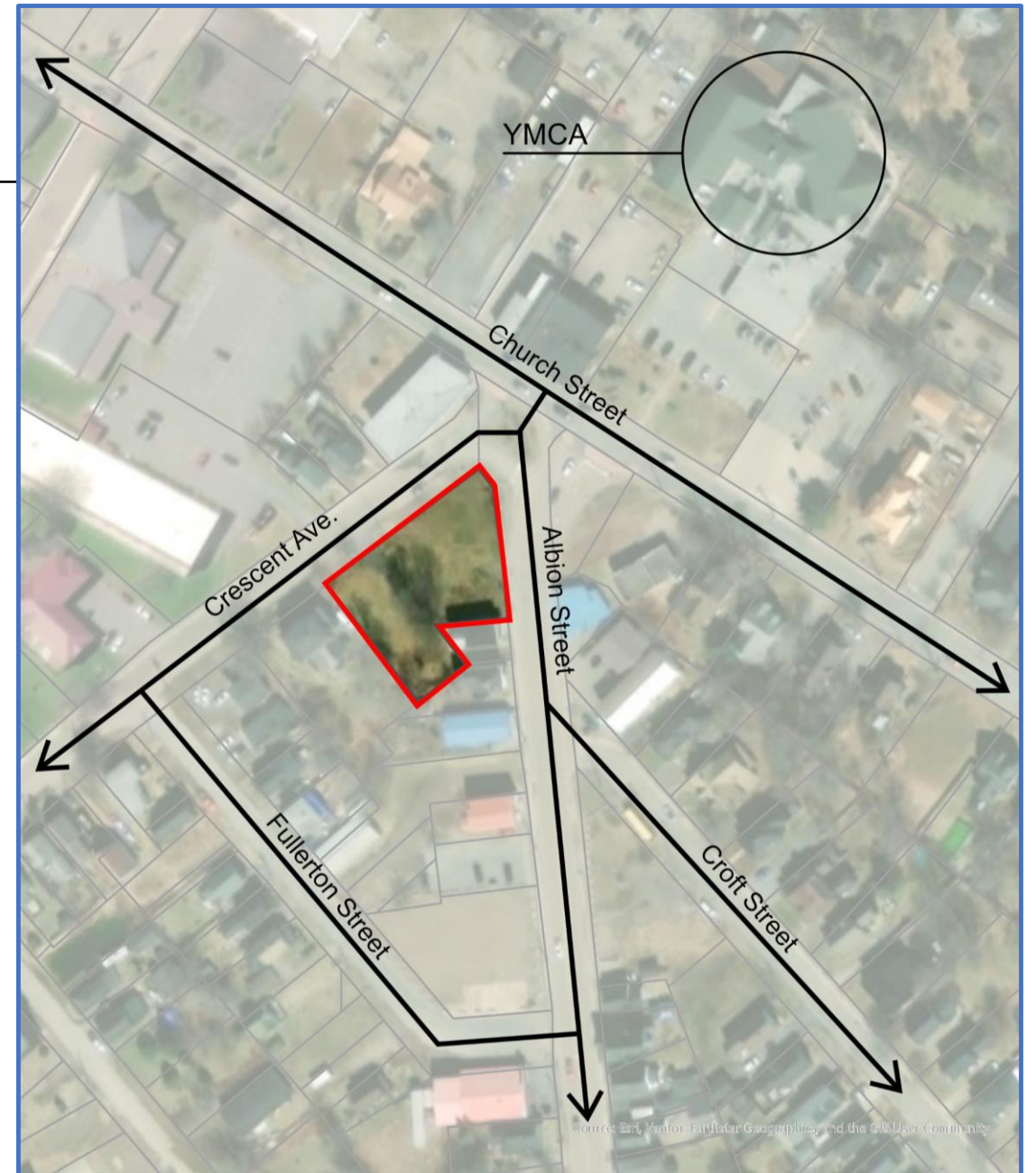
Lot Size: 18,350 sqft

Current Zoning: Downtown Commercial

Current Land Use: Vacant Land

Summary of Proposal: To develop 2 multi-unit apartment buildings

- One 24-Unit Building
- One 12-Unit Building



Parking and Amenity Space

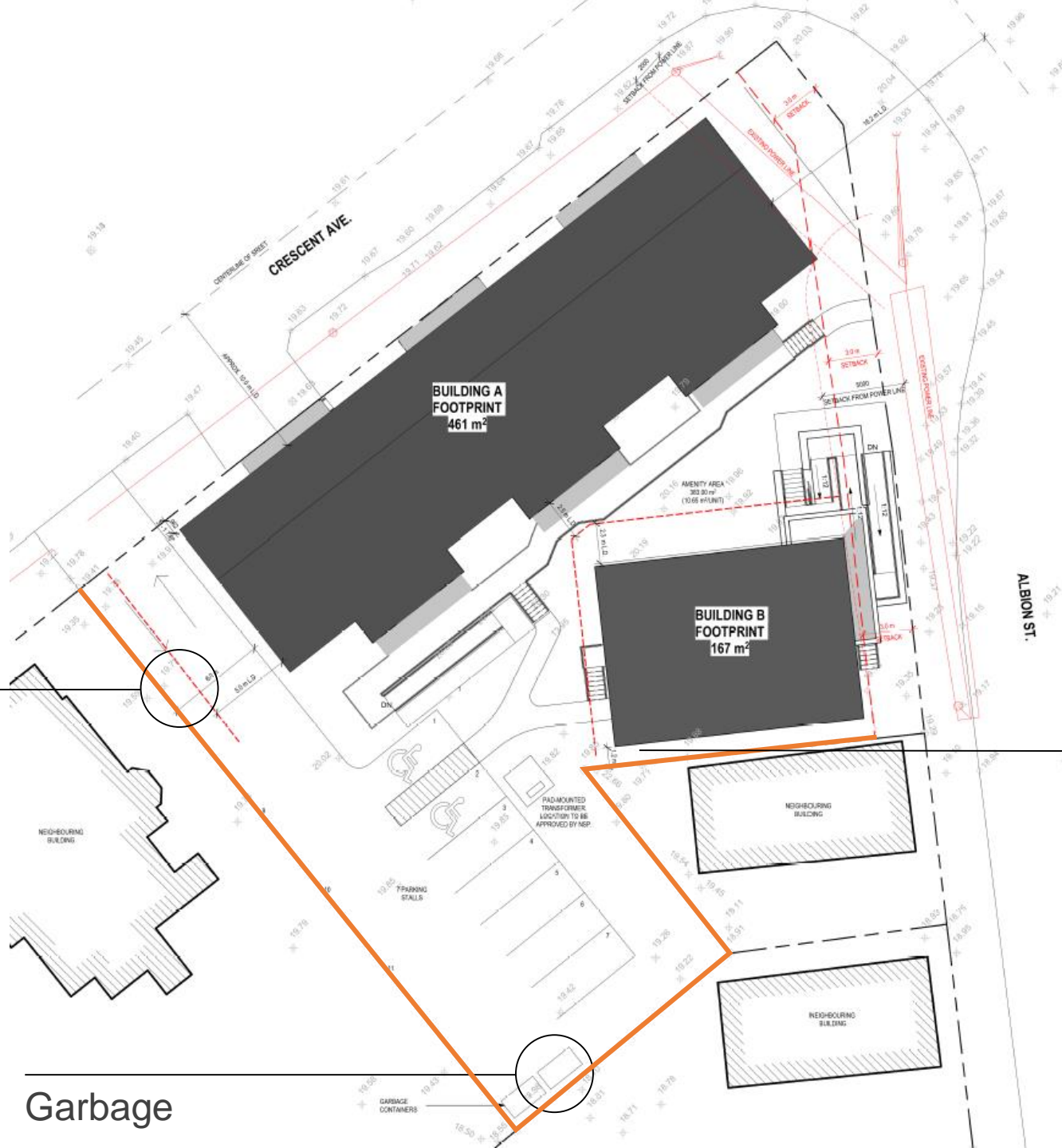
Parking

- Meets current Land Use Bylaw parking requirements
- 7 on-site spaces plus 10 YMCA winter spaces addresses projected demand
- Street parking available outside winter restrictions
- Estimated parking demand expected for fewer than 50% of units
- Two public parking lots managed by the town located adjacent to the YMCA and behind the Amherst Theatre.

Recreation and Amenity Space

- Onsite greenspaces will be available for resident use.
- The Y offers indoor recreation.
- Some of the outdoor spaces nearby include:
 - Church Street Multi-Sport – 0.2 km
 - Victoria Square – 0.4 km
 - Ernie Lane Playground – 0.6 km
 - Currie Park – 0.4 km
 - Christie, LL Fields, Rotary Playground, Centennial Park – 0.5 km

Site Plan



6m wide entrance

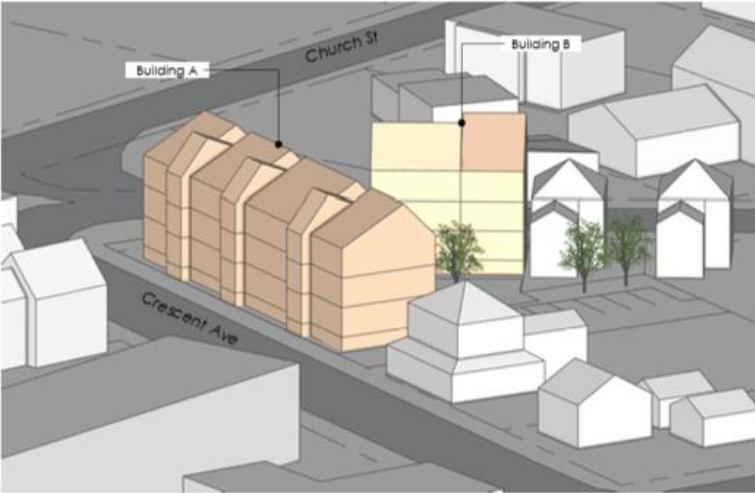
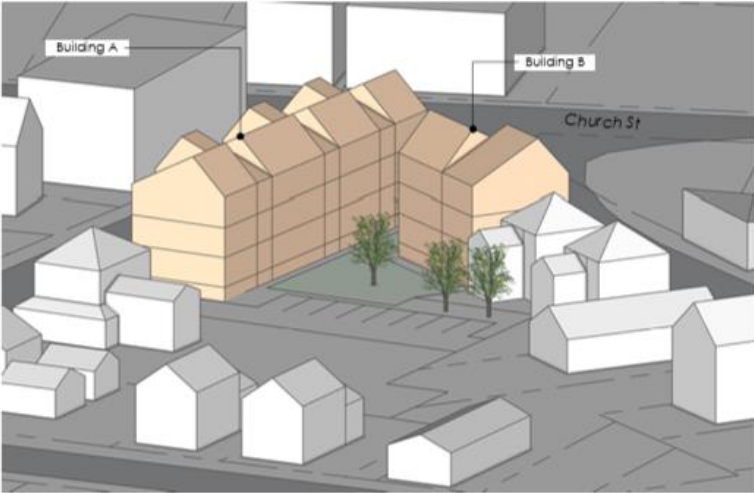
1.2m setback

Garbage





Elevations



Relevant Planning Policies

Council's decision regarding whether or not to enter into a development agreement must be in accordance with the general intent of Municipal Planning Strategy policies. There are several policies in the strategy that are relevant to this application. This is a summary of the most relevant policies:

Downtown Zone: Policy 4-35 permits a wide mix of commercial and residential uses in the Downtown Zone. Policy 4-38 allows ground-floor residential by development agreement, but only if the development does not detract from the commercial character of the streetscape.

Housing Diversity and Affordability: Policy 5-1 directs Council to promote diverse housing types and densities through the Strategy and Land Use Bylaw. Policies 5-2 and 5-3 support increasing affordable housing by partnering with government and other organizations, and by investments in land and infrastructure.

Supportive Housing: Policy 5-7 lets Council approve development agreements for supportive housing if Council is satisfied that the site is on an arterial street, the building's architecture, bulk, and height are complementary (though not identical) to the varied surrounding built form, and parking and stormwater management are addressed.

Amenity Space: Policy 5.73 requires adequate onsite amenity space.

Parking: Policy 5-57 exempts properties in the Downtown Commercial Zone from the minimum parking requirements to promote compact, pedestrian-oriented development in Amherst's historic downtown.

General Requirements: Policy 6-24 requires that a development agreement must comply with Planning Strategy policies and provincial / federal regulations. It must also be ensured that the proposal is not premature given factors like municipal costs, water/sewer capacity, traffic, fire protection, school/community facility capacity, pollution, flooding/drainage, and site suitability (soils, watercourses, utility rights-of-way).

Development Applications

All current and past applications along with status updates can be found at:

<https://www.amherst.ca/development-applications.html>

Relevant Planning Policies

5.4.2 Downtown Zone

Policy 4-35: Council shall, through the Land Use Bylaw, permit a range of commercial uses, including but not limited to, banks, restaurants, licensed establishments, offices, accommodations, clinics, and shops within the Downtown Zone. Multi-unit dwellings shall be permitted within commercial buildings, and stand-alone multi-unit buildings shall be permitted, subject to provisions within the Land Use Bylaw. Light manufacturing uses shall also be permitted.

Policy 4-38: Council shall consider, in the Downtown Zone, applications for ground floor residential uses by development agreement. In considering such proposals, Council shall ensure:

- a. the residential use does not abut Church, Victoria and Havelock Streets;
- b. that such a conversion will not detract from the commercial character of the surrounding streetscape; the proposal is consistent with the provisions in the Land Use Bylaw for residential uses In the Downtown Zone; and
- c. the proposal complies with the general development agreement policies of Section 6.6 of this Plan.

Relevant Planning Policies

5.2.1 Housing Diversity and Affordability

Policy 5-1: Council shall, through the policies of this Plan, and through the Land Use Bylaw, promote a variety of housing types and densities across the Town of Amherst.

Policy 5-2: Council shall continue to work with senior levels of Government, as well as, not-for-profit and for-profit partners to increase the amount of affordable housing.

Policy 5-3: Council may make Investments in land and Infrastructure to support the creation of more housing.

Staff Note:

- The proposal is directly supported by these policies.

Relevant Planning Policies

5.2.3 Supportive Housing

Policy 5-7: Council shall consider entering into a development agreement for proposals for supportive housing and nursing homes with more than twelve beds or units in any zone that permits residential uses. Council shall only enter into such a development agreement if Council is satisfied:

- a. the proposal is situated along an arterial or collector street, or vehicular traffic from the development to the nearest arterial or collector street can be effectively managed;
- b. the architectural design of the building, including, but not limited to, building material and orientation; the location, orientation, and size of windows and doors; and the roof pitch and material is complementary and compatible with—but not necessarily the same as—surrounding land uses;
- c. the bulk and massing of the building is complementary to and compatible with—but not necessarily the same as—neighbouring properties;
- d. the proposal is appropriately integrated into the built form of the existing neighbourhood through the use of setbacks and stepbacks;
- e. parking areas are planned and landscaped so as not to create adverse effects on neighbouring properties;
- f. stormwater runoff from impervious areas is appropriately managed and unlikely to cause disturbance on neighbouring properties or the natural environment; and
- g. the proposal complies with the general development agreement policies of Section 6.6 of this Plan.

Staff Note:

- Located on an arterial Street.
- Architecture, bulk and height are complimentary, but not the same as, highly variable built form of the surrounding area
- Parking is planned and a stormwater management is accounted for in the agreement.

Relevant Planning Policies

5.6.2 Amenity Space in Multi Unit Dwellings

Policy 5-73: In consideration of a proposal that includes residential development enabled by development agreement, Council shall ensure adequate amenity space is provided on-site for use by residents.

5.5.3 Automobile Parking

Policy 5-57: Council shall, through the Land Use Bylaw, exempt properties within the Downtown Commercial Zone from the minimum parking requirements within the Land Use Bylaw to promote compact, pedestrian-oriented development in Amherst's historic downtown.

Staff Note:

- Some outdoor amenity space is provided on site. Significant indoor and outdoor amenity spaces exist nearby.
- Parking requirements are exempt in the Downtown Zone. This development exceeds this by 7 spaces onsite, with additional options nearby.

Relevant Planning Policies

6.6.1 Development Agreement – General Requirements

Policy 6-22: A development agreement that has been approved by Council shall:

- a. specify the development, expansion, alteration, or change permitted;
- b. specify the conditions under which the development may, or may not, occur;
- c. set terms and conditions by which Council may amend or terminate and discharge the agreement.

Policy 6-23: Council may specify conditions in the development agreement to bring the proposal into alignment with the enabling policy and general criteria set out in Section 6.7. Such conditions may include, but are not limited to:

- a. servicing;
- b. the type, location, and orientation of structures;
- c. the architectural design of structures, including, but not limited to, bulk, scale, height, roof shape, building and cladding materials, and the shape and size and placement of doors and windows;
- d. the provision of open space and amenities;
- e. the type, size, and location of signage;
- f. the type and orientation of exterior lighting;
- g. management of solid waste, including, but not limited to, compost and recycling;
- h. pedestrian, bicycle, public transit, and vehicular circulation;
- i. connections to existing or planned pedestrian, bicycle, public transit, and vehicular networks;

Relevant Planning Policies

6.6.1 Development Agreement

Policy 6-23: ...

- j. the location and number of bicycle and vehicular parking and loading spaces;
- k. access for emergency vehicles;
- l. the location and type of landscaping, including fences and other forms of screening;
- m. stormwater management, grading and erosion control;
- n. the emission of noise, odour, light, liquids, gases, and dust;
- o. the type of materials stored on site;
- p. the type of materials sold on site;
- q. hours of operation;
- r. the phasing of development;
- s. financial bonding for the construction and maintenance of components of the development, including, but not limited to, roads and landscaping;
- t. mitigation measures for construction impacts;
- u. time limits for the initiation and completion of development; and
- v. all other matters enabled in Section 227 of the Municipal Government Act.

Relevant Planning Policies

6.7 General Criteria

Policy 6-24: Council may not amend the Land Use Bylaw or enter into a development agreement unless Council is satisfied the proposal:

- a. is consistent with the intent of this Municipal Planning Strategy;
- b. does not conflict with any law or regulation of the Provincial or Federal Governments;
- c. is not premature or inappropriate due to:
 - i. the ability of the Town to absorb public costs related to the proposal;
 - ii. impacts on existing drinking water supplies, both private and public;
 - iii. the adequacy of central water and sewage services or, where such services are not available, the suitability of the site to accommodate on-site water and sewage services;
 - iv. the creation of excessive traffic hazards or congestion on road, cycling, and pedestrian networks within, adjacent to, and leading to the site;
 - v. the adequacy of fire protection services and equipment;
 - vi. the adequacy and proximity of schools and other community facilities;
 - vii. the creation of a new, or worsening of a known, pollution problem in the area, including, but not limited to, soil erosion and siltation of watercourses;
 - viii. its impact on nearby watercourses or wetlands;
 - ix. site-specific climate change risks, such as threats of flooding;
 - x. the potential to create flooding or serious drainage issues, including within the site and in nearby areas;
 - xi. the suitability of the site in terms of grades, soil and geological conditions, the location of watercourses and wetlands, and proximity to utility rights-of-way.

Relevant Planning Policies

6.7 General Criteria – Information required if needed

Policy 6-25: Council may, in addition to any other required information, require any or all of the following information prepared by an appropriate qualified professional, at the applicant's cost, and at a level sufficiently detailed to evaluate whether the criteria for amending the Land Use Bylaw or entering into a development agreement have been met:

- a. a detailed site plan showing features such as, but not limited to:
 - i. topography;
 - ii. location and dimensions of existing and proposed property and unit lines;
 - iii. location of zoning boundaries;
 - iv. use, location, and dimensions of existing and proposed structures;
 - v. existing and proposed watercourses and wetlands;
 - vi. location and dimensions of existing and proposed road, bicycle, and pedestrian networks;
 - vii. location and dimensions of driveways, parking lots, and parking spaces;
 - viii. type and amount of site clearing required, if any;
 - ix. location of buffers;
 - x. location and dimensions of existing and proposed parks and recreation lands, whether public or private;
 - xi. location of utilities;
 - xii. development densities;
- b. elevation drawings of existing and proposed structures including, but not limited to, dimensions and exterior materials;
- c. a site grading plan;
- d. a landscaping plan;
- e. a drainage and stormwater management plan;
- f. a traffic impact assessment that evaluates the ability of existing road, bicycle, and pedestrian networks to accommodate traffic generated by the proposed development;
- g. a geotechnical study;
- h. a shadow study;

①

July 6
RP

On MAR 17 / 2026 a notice in my mail box regarding #1 Albion Street as I lived within 60 meters. Said 24 unit and 12 unit. I discovered in those 2 weeks that a bylaw got drafted on Oct 7 / 2025 amended on Mar 17 / 2026 to allow a build like this to not need parking. I also noticed that there is a bylaw saying you must provide a turnaround area in the space as to not back out onto street. I noted issues that stood out. To build on the busiest intersection in Amherst Church / Albion. 3 stop signs no street lights. I said I nearly get hit 4 times a day trying to cross the street. Day or night. At night there are no lights very dark. I mentioned the town police sitting on Crescent Ave for years + years watching and chasing traffic violators. I had concerns with the garbage the parking spaces that were 11 spots now down to 7. 3 handicap now down to 2 handicap spots. I had concerns with snow removal issues. Concerns with 1, 2, + 3 bedrooms and children being on the site with no green space. I now feel children should not be on this site at all as children are vulnerable & need to be protected. These children need to not be around harm reduction mental issue with drug addictions. This 12 unit build sounds much the same as Cornerstone. wrap around support, office space, funding waiting one. I found a news article relating to Cornerstone Mar 14 2024. I read this article to be for Amherst people. There are people there I never saw before. The town of Amherst doesn't have public transit system. A study was done deemed to expensive. We have no grocery stores downtown.

July 6
RP

Other concerns were the noise & impact this type of build would have in the area. There is a heritage building on 96 Church Street a very close distance from this proposed build. The height of this build is higher than what is currently built in this area 2 1/2 we have now this build is called 3 1/2 (4) story. The foot print of land coverage for these builds takes up nearly all the land. Its close proximity will tower over existing homes, creating privacy and plunging us in a shadow in early morning / afternoon. It will not allow enough adequate buffering due to bulk & height density to big. I know plans got changed but because it looks good on paper doesn't mean its the right fit for this area. Why I ask do the Cumberland Ymca board of directors even want to get into Real Estate builds like this now. Builds of this kind should be on the outskirts of Cambest example Industrial park, Marshview drive, Rotary Centennial park 10 Elmwood Drive, West Amherst marsh area, Pennylane area a large field empty there.

We need to protect the adults living in harm reduction, supportive mental health drug addiction as these adults needs are to be placed in quiet / peaceful surroundings as noise may be harmful to these people. There are support vehicles out and about, CCTV Bus Service, taxi's, Northern Health zone transportation. Its probably easier for a framed councillor to go see them on site as not to cause any disruptions. These adults need quiet + peacefulness to even attempt to heal. Excessive noise causes significant Disruption all distress agitation, sleep deprivation &

old soccer field
Church Street

take you

authorize
voices
per
Lappan

(3)

July 6
RP

and physical health complications, I have concerns with placing these harm reduction people on the street. They are darting into busy streets in traffic narrowly getting hit. Vehicles brakes screeching. These valuable adults need to be protected. As do the people of Amherst. Pedestrians need to feel safe, comfortable not be screamed at or have to walk over people to get into the bank machines downtown. We (I) shouldn't have to witness lewd, indecent sexual acts. Behavior problems. Needles hanging out of atoms. Our churches, Cenotaph, homes/properties, Restaurants, business having to clean up blood in bathrooms from shooting up, stealing from businesses. This town needs to protect everyone. You elected (D) mayors, Mayor, Councillors took an oath to serve and protect us Citizens + the town to the best of your ability. I applaud Councillors Charlie,

Terry + Duwaye for not once but twice not seconding the motion made to pass this build on April 7 + June 1 in the town planning committee meetings. Paul Diamond was the only person on both these dates who made the motion to try to pass this build.

During the planning committee meeting on April 7 Ron the Chair described this as a awkward area.

He asked and had concerns with the 12 unit asking if that building was needed as it would free up space for parking & provide some green space. In this meeting much discussed sidewalks around the building Chestnut Ave. On June 1 Andrew said

Sidewalk would cost \$10,000. Parking issues. I feel parking needs to be on site as per if the Ymca decided to sell this now they don't have any parking

become a S-R-O-T-S

Councillor Ripley wasn't going to second this as he himself has to move his business out of the downtown area due to garbage, OD's, break-ins. Councillor MacMannan could understand the neighbours concerns as he himself had issues with the Red house on the corner of Wollington / Church. His house does have parking spaces. I do recall Councillor MacMannan being very vocal about the Church on the corner of Church / Wollington when it was converted into a makeshift homeless shelter.

Paul Diamond said parking spaces are like a refrigerator they are always going to get filled up. Duwaye said there needs to be parking as the people living there would be expected to go to work & need a vehicle. Paul Diamond said the people expected to be living there are mainly pedestrians as they are not working people & not requiring a parking spot. And Paul Diamond is correct as the Ymca said that 80% of the 24 unit would be for 0-50% income people. Paul Diamond said studies were done that showed street parking will help slow down vehicles. As I mentioned on March 30th lots of speeding vehicles dangerous. Hal Davidson thanked me Diamond for giving him some insight and something to think about. Getting back to this so second on April 7th. This meeting didn't end there. It became debated to allow the Ymca to come back with a different concept & to get rid of the 12 unit building. Hal Davidson made a motion to allow to have the Ymca a chance to come back with a new plan.

Natalie Leblance read this back to the Committee

On June 1 this being the second planning committee meeting. The Ymca didn't change the build site still have 2 Building 12 + 24 they said 10 parking spots can be free d up at the Ymca & they were going to ask the Church for parking. They said they could park vehicles behind the paramount theatre (we giggled at that) 2 blocks away. During this meeting Andrew Fisher mentioned the 30,000 the town & council gave to the Ymca to help with this build. Andrew also said some of this would be for homeless. Councillor Ripley said he wanted to say yes but doesn't like what's going on downtown. And Jerry said he himself is having parking issues on his own street and can't second this. Charlie unsure what he said as he was masked. But he didn't second this. After having no seconder Ron Wilson chair said ok were done here lets go home. I turned to Jim Prince who was sitting next to me and said what does that mean (he said we lost meaning they). That's when things get very uncomfortable. Some board members were upset and said aloud you told us we could build there you said we didn't need any parking. Jason Macdonald asked Ron to stay and if he could explain why they didn't get approved. Ron said sometimes you can check all the boxes with a build and still not get approved. I did read the town retains the right to refuse to enter into any agreement for any development in any location, for any reason. It's also at the sole discretion of Council what is the best interest of the Town of Amherst,

July 6 pp

more debating started happening talks of appeals, lawyer fees \$3000 other builders wanting to build here only to get refused. Ron (Chair) said this bylaw change was too close to this build. We all left there very confused as I didn't know what a no seconders meant for sure. Somehow it got debated and was now decided to take this to a Council vote. Nic Furlong posted online about this meeting as he was sitting next to Jim Price his version was close but not quite the same. So I went online to see what happens in the town of Amherst Planning Committee meeting when you don't have a seconder. It states the motion dies immediately (fails) Ruled out of Order. Under New Scotia Parliamentary procedures typically governed by Bowring's Rules of Order. It states a motion must be moved and seconded before it can be debated or voted. I started on March 30th this has been causing me to be anxious, scared, losing sleep. And since the homicide on April 13 it became much worse.

Stabbing, O.D's, vandalism, the garbage everywhere, open drug use, sexually lewd behavior, the fighting the yelling and screaming laying all over everywhere. These vulnerable adults were displaying erratic behavior and darting into the busy streets its all too much. They need to be placed in quiet, calming environments that work both for them + citizens.

I contacted CBC with my concerns and Luke Ettinger wanted to speak to me. I wrote a letter to the town on April 27²⁰¹⁶ Regarding my fears & concerns unanswered (Re Read) my letter.

7

July 8th RP

As to the proposed build on Mar 30th undated letter
it shows 24 + 12 with 12 unit being studio's +
office space

24
unit

- 8 1-bedrooms
- 14 2-bedrooms
- 9 2-bedrooms
- 3 3-bedrooms

for Supported housing
if funding comes in (Homeless)

April Shows 6 Studio

- 14 1 bedrooms
- 12 2 bedrooms
- 4 3 bedrooms

April Shows 16th

- 34 1 bedrooms
- 16 2 bedrooms

July 8th undated letter shows a 36 unit
which is true?

Now regarding this 30,000 that the town and Councillors
gave the YMCA to help secure the funding back
in Oct 15/2025 (Read the letter) this wasn't disclosed
till June 1/2026. So now you councillors have to
vote yes or no. where as you already showed your
support for this build. How do you remain
bipartisan impartial & not show favoritism?
I suggested you put it to a Referendum
(plebiscite) where this build will have a huge
impact on our town. I would ask the town if
anyone else wanted to build on this busy intersection
& Street would you allow them? The Rule of Law
should apply to everyone not just those with influence
or power. I ask everyone of you in this room if
this build was going to be in your neighbour hood
how you would feel. Put yourself in my shoes
don't be a NIMBY.

(Read attached)

Thonda Reedy

(1)

Community Safety

April 27
2026

"Giving Notice to the town"

This letter is regarding the state of the downtown, including the side streets off of the main streets of Victoria, Church & Albion. Stop building, Renovating and placing low income (non working people that don't require a vehicle) group homes, homeless shelters, Supportive housing, affordable housing, social housing, assisted living, transitional/ Bridge housing, alternative housing, SRO's Residential Care / Supervised apartments in our downtown. This once beautiful Victorian town is a mess. Lifelong tax paying citizens shouldn't have to feel unsafe. The breakins, homicide, overdoses, drug dealers, needles being injected needles laying around, stabbings, busting windows out, vandalism.

ReP 28/

continuing saying
"Giving Notice to the town"

② 2
April
2008

garbage being Rummaged through
thrown about, public urination,
B.J's being given, masturbation, street
people hanging around laying around
on the sidewalks & streets, We have

The town of
Amherst (we) must keep these young people safe,
Daycares & youth centers downtown

The town of Amherst must keep us (adults)
all safe as well, I'm unsure how
the chain of command works at the
town hall, who told the planners
to build #10 Prince Arthur Street, and
(Cornerstone)
then have council vote on this.

The town Recently bought land in
industrial park. Build up these places
Please clean up what was once
our beautiful Downtown Victorian town
Regards Rhonda Perry



YMCA of Cumberland
40 Bow 552 42 Centre St
Amherst, NS B5N 4A1
P: (902) 661-0117
E: info@cumberlandymca.ca
W: ymca@cumberland.ca

October 15th, 2025

To the staff of the Town of Amherst,

We at the YMCA of Cumberland are writing to request support in our affordable housing development at 1 Albion St., in downtown Amherst. We have exhausted available predevelopment funding through multiple sources and require a Class B construction budget to apply for the necessary construction funds through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the Province of Nova Scotia.

We need \$130,000 to move forward with our development but are asking for financial support in the amount of \$50,000 from the Town of Amherst. We are also continuing to explore other funding opportunities.

We understand the competing strategic priorities of the Town of Amherst but are acutely aware of the housing market shortage and hope that the Town of Amherst and Council would be willing to support our work towards developing 36 affordable and mixed market apartments. We are aware that the Town of Amherst was a recipient of the Housing Accelerator Fund and hope that this request would qualify for the use of some of those funds.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this request and for all the continued support we receive.

Aiden Kivisto
Manager of Community Development
YMCA of Cumberland
(902) 669-0005
aiden.kivisto@cumberlandymca.ca

cc: Trine Clarke, CEO
cc: Terry Farrell, Board Chair





News release

New Community Housing Hub, Emergency Shelter in Cumberland County

14 March 2024 | 11:09 AM

Community Services (to December 2024)

Municipal Affairs and Housing (to November 2024)

Supportive Housing

Homelessness Supports



A new community housing hub in Amherst will help people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. (Contributed)

Vulnerable Nova Scotians experiencing or at risk of homelessness will now have more housing support in

Amherst.

A new community housing hub opened today, March 14, with six affordable housing units, including accessible units. The project also includes office and community space that will transition into a 10-bed overnight emergency shelter.

"We want to ensure that people experiencing homelessness have the help they need to advance to permanent housing," said Brendan Maguire, Minister of Community Services. "The people of Amherst will now have a place where they can receive supports, an option for emergency sheltering and connections to other community partners."

Community Services is providing the Cumberland Homelessness and Housing Support Association with more than \$910,000 in annual operating costs for staffing, wraparound services and supportive programming, as well as intensive case management services. Funding also supports the emergency shelter, allowing the permanent shelter to provide two meals a day, 365 days a year. The project is also receiving more than \$560,000 from the Affordable Housing Development program through Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Quotes:

"We're pleased to help community partners like the Cumberland Homelessness and Housing Support Association bring more affordable and supportive housing solutions to Nova Scotians. An innovative solution like the community housing hub is another example of the bold action we're taking to increase affordability and create more housing, faster."

— *John Lohr, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing*

"We hope that the opening of the 10 Prince Arthur St. location will change the way we perceive homelessness in

Cumberland County. With a permanent shelter, community resource hub and supportive housing model all under one roof, we will be able to provide the wraparound supports – mental health and addictions, public health, VON, NS Works, CAN-U (Cumberland Adult Network for Upgrading), Legal Aid, YMCA, the food bank, restorative justice, Maggie's Place, the Cumberland Library, The Sexual Health Centre, and In the Works social enterprise network) needed in order to best meet the needs of people experiencing housing insecurity in our community."

— Ashley Legere, Executive Director, Cumberland Homelessness and Housing Support Association

Quick Facts:

- this location brings the total number of shelter beds in the province to 558
- with these units, there are currently 685 supportive housing units across the province, with 520 created since fall 2021

Additional Resources:

News release – The Bridge Integrated Services Shelter Extended:

<https://news.novascotia.ca/en/2024/03/07/bridge-integrated-services-shelter-extended>

News release – Additional Shelter Space in Truro:

<https://news.novascotia.ca/en/2024/02/09/additional-shelter-space-truro>

News release – More Supports for People Experiencing Homelessness: <https://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20231207001>

News release – Emergency Winter Shelter Opening in HRM:

<https://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20231103001>

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A man jumped out, levelled a weapon and fired one shot': Killing adds to Amherst's struggles with homelessness, drug use

Victim identified, eyewitness speaks in Amherst shooting death

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Caution tape blocks off the scene where a man was shot in downtown Amherst on Monday. The man was taken to hospital, where he was pronounced deceased. He was 41. Photo by Aaron Beswick /The Chronicle Herald

First came the sound of someone jumping a fence and running by his window Monday at about 6:50 p.m.

“I thought, ‘Alright, what’s going on now?’” said the man, who did not want to be named due to safety concerns.

He stood up and went to the window that looks out onto Prince Arthur Street in downtown Amherst. A dark-coloured SUV came to a quick stop outside.

“The passenger door opened, a man jumped out, levelled a weapon and fired one shot,” said the witness.

“He jumped back in the vehicle and they drove away. Then there was a great ruckus out front of the shelter. It seemed like a while before the sirens came.”

From his angle, he couldn’t see the victim.

Police response

According to a written statement from the Amherst Police Department, a 41-year-old man was walking down the street when a Subaru pulled up behind him. The man was shot in the back as he attempted to run away.

The victim was declared dead at hospital shortly after.

While police have not publicly identified the victim, community members said it was Christopher Leggett. According to an obituary posted Tuesday afternoon by the Jones Family Funeral Centre, Leggett was a father of one.



Christopher Leggett, 41, has been identified as the victim of an April 13 shooting in Amherst.

“Though his life was taken far too soon by a senseless act of violence, his family and friends choose to remember the man he truly was: a person with a profoundly big heart and a spirit that resonated with everyone who took the time to know him,” reads the obituary.

“Known by many, he had a unique way of touching the lives of those he encountered, leaving behind memories that his friends and community will carry forward. While he may have appeared one way to the world, those close to him knew the depth of his kindness and the sincerity of his character.”

No one has been arrested in relation to the shooting.

“Police do not have any reason to believe there is an additional risk to the public at this time and believe that those involved were known to each other,” reads the statement.

“Police considered the use of the Alert Ready System, but the incident did not meet the criteria at the time.”

Law enforcement, including the RCMP forensic identification unit and the Truro Police criminal investigation division, are “in the early stages of the investigation,” according to the statement.

Concerns from neighbours

For neighbours and nearby business owners, the shooting sharpens the concern around what’s perceived as a growing problem of drug use, homelessness and violence in the border town.

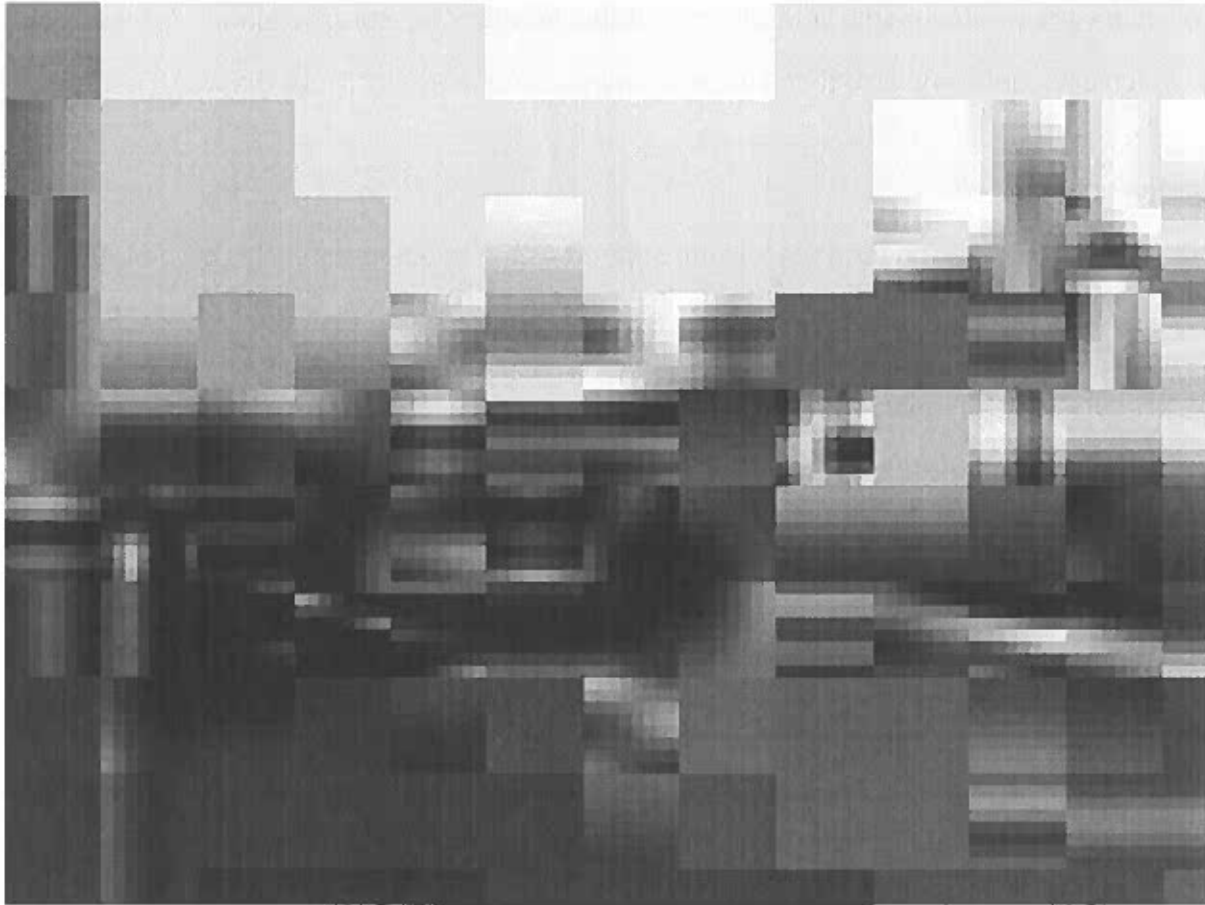
“There’s a lot of meth around here and it’s been getting worse,” said Daniel O’Brien, who lives in an apartment beside the shooting site.

“We get people coming through from Moncton and Truro, I don’t know why they come here, but there’s a lot of drug use.”

Police have not stated that the shooting had anything to do with drugs, and Leggett was not a resident of the homeless shelter at the time of his death.

Other neighbours who didn’t want their names used told The Chronicle Herald about frequently finding people injecting drugs on their properties, smoking meth, fighting and screaming at all hours.

Rising homelessness



Caution tape blocks off the scene where a man was shot in downtown Amherst on Monday. The man was taken to hospital, where he was pronounced deceased. Photo by Aaron Beswick /The Chronicle Herald

Homelessness grew, or at least became more visible, through the early 2020s after a fire at a rooming house in the downtown and several evictions. At one point, there was a large encampment on the Tantramar Marsh near the town.

The Cumberland Homelessness and Housing Support Association was founded in 2018 to assist the growing homeless population. It had multiple temporary locations around town before opening a permanent facility on Prince Arthur Street in 2024 that includes 10 emergency beds and six supportive housing units.

“That shelter keeps order,” a resident who didn’t want his name used told The Chronicle Herald on Tuesday as he and others gathered outside the Red Cross.

“It keeps a system for people who need it. It’s structure. We’re like a big family over there, so this affects all of us.”

The man described Leggett as “a really good friend.”

“We had a rocky relationship sometimes, but that is what it is,” said the man.

To which a woman, who also didn’t want her name used, added: “That’s the way it is with family.”

Business impacted

Cumberland Homelessness and Housing Support Association operates this community housing hub located on 10 Prince Arthur St.

As residents of the shelter tried to find new places, Donna Gogan was preparing the Portlander Jamaican Restaurant to open next to a murder scene.

When she opened in 2022, it had an established clientele from a previous business in the building and attracted customers from throughout the town.

“When they were planning to put the shelter next door, town staff came and sat down with me. My takeaway was that it would be affordable housing; there’d be security and good lighting. They assured me it would be good for my business,” said Gogan.

“It has been the complete opposite of what I was told.”

She said her restaurant has been vandalized, her children’s bikes stolen from an adjacent shed, bloodied victims of fights have come in during business hours and there are frequent loud or violent quarrels outside.

“I have good customers who won’t come now because they are intimidated by the situation next door,” said Gogan.

“I’m glad to see the effort to help people who are in need but it cannot be at the expense of the community. This is the consequence of decisions being made without input.”

‘If shelters disappear, homelessness does not’

Cumberland Homelessness and Housing Support Association executive director Ashley Legere said Tuesday that the shelter seeks to be a good neighbour.

“If shelters disappear, homelessness does not,” said Legere.

“It becomes more invisible and the costs are borne (by a wider group).”

She said the association has helped 37 people get into addictions treatment and over 50 find market-based supportive housing over recent years.

On Tuesday morning, forensics officers placed small yellow pylon evidence markers behind the police tape that blocked access to the shelter. And Amherst talked about how not just to help but how to live with residents struggling with homelessness and drug use.

The man who witnessed the shooting told The Chronicle Herald that most shelter residents “are OK.”

“There’s not usually much trouble with overt violence,” said the man.

“There’s regularly people fighting and obscenities. There are acts of humour and kindness, too. It is a community.”