MUNICIPALITY OF THE DISTRICT OF SHELBURNE · COUNCIL

Connecting Western Nova Scotia to its natural market, for good

A briefing on the Eau Kin Corridor: the case, what it means for the Municipality, where it stands with government as of mid-November, and what I'm asking Council to do.

1 Why I'm here

MINUTES 0 – 2

Thank you, Warden, and members of Council, for the time this evening.

I'm here as a Shelburne resident, about a proposal I've been developing over the past several months: the Eau Kin Corridor, a year-round marine connection between Yarmouth and Boston for freight and passengers. It has now been put to every level of government, and councils across the southwest have begun to respond.

I want to explain what it is, why it matters to this Municipality in particular, where it stands today, and ask Council for one thing that costs the Municipality nothing.

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2 The problem we share

MINUTES 2 – 6

The CAT had a strong 2026 season: 44,032 passengers and 18,124 vehicles, up about ten per cent on 2025. On October 16 the Province signed an extension for 2027, May to October. That is good news, and I want to say so plainly.

But it is one more season. The service has run on short-term arrangements for years, and the Province spends roughly $21 million a year on it. Minister Tilley has said the work on a long-term future for the service continues. So a long-term decision is coming, and 2027 is the year it will be shaped.

A one-season horizon is not a service. It is a holding pattern. No carrier can plan around it. No developer will commit capital against it. No employer will build a year-round workforce on it.

1	0	20–25
SEASON AT A TIME	WINTER SAILINGS	YEARS NEEDED
the current planning horizon for the Yarmouth crossing	the link to New England closes every October	for a corridor to become bankable infrastructure

Think about what that means for a decision in our own community. A restaurant that might expand its kitchen won't. An inn that might hire year-round instead of seasonally won't. A buyer who might build cold storage near the terminal to serve Boston directly can't make the numbers work. And every community along the 101

and the 103, all of Shelburne County included, loses the value that a permanent connection would add to being on the route.

THE CAT IS NOT THE PROBLEM. THE INSTRUMENT IS.

This is not a criticism of the vessel, the operator or the people who run it. The issue is the instrument: a short-term arrangement that makes it impossible for anyone to plan around the service as if it were permanent. The Eau Kin Corridor addresses the instrument. It is a different route, on a different model, and the CAT or an equivalent keeps the link open while it is built.

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3 MINUTES 6 – 12

The proposal

The Eau Kin Corridor is a proposal for a year-round, Canadian-owned freight and passenger service between Yarmouth and Boston, under a 20-year self-sufficiency mandate, with 25 years preferred. It follows the Isle of Man model: government buys the vessel, an arm's-length operator runs it commercially, and there is no operating subsidy.

The ship would sail overnight, leaving at 9 PM and arriving at 7:30 AM local time, in both directions. Freight lands in time for the Boston Fish Pier's morning trading. Passengers arrive rested, in the middle of the city, without a 1,300-kilometre drive through two provinces and a state.

The name carries two meanings: *eau*, French for water, a nod to the Acadian shore the ship sails from, and *kin*, the families on both sides of this water. The route itself is not new. For roughly a century, into the 1950s, steamships carried people and freight between Yarmouth and Boston.

Marine freight for the fishery	Our fleet's main market is New England, and its product goes there by truck: through New Brunswick, across the Maine border, broker fees on every load, two-driver teams to Boston. The corridor replaces most of that. Load in Yarmouth, about an hour and a quarter from Shelburne, and the product reaches the Fish Pier for morning trading, cleared before it lands. A 22-foot container option lets smaller shippers in, not only the big ones. Fresh food comes north the same way, in sealed, temperature-controlled units.
Fishery tourism	Tourism and the fishery are often set against each other for waterfront space. I'd turn that around: the fishery *is* the tourism product. The working wharf and the catch-to-table story are what a Boston visitor on a year-round corridor would come to find, and they can't see anything like it near home.
The investment environment	A 20- to 25-year mandate is bankable. Developers can model the revenue. Accommodation operators can add rooms. Retailers can hire year-round. That reaches every community along the 101 and the 103.
Healthcare and professionals	Year-round connection to a major city is part of what a physician, specialist or skilled tradesperson weighs before accepting a posting. Boston's teaching hospitals a night's sail away changes that calculation. It won't solve recruitment alone, but it gives the region something new to offer.

Trades and skills	The proposal includes a Maritime Skills College, designed with NSCC: a sea-going apprenticeship with Red Seal pathways in marine operations, hospitality and culinary trades, trained aboard the ship. It is a proposal, contingent on the vessel, and it is built for people who live here.
Highways 101 and 103	Long-term certainty for the corridor is the strongest case yet for upgrading the roads that feed it. The two files reinforce each other.
Defence and emergency	A Canadian-owned ship of this size is the kind that can be taken up for national service, and it would carry a helicopter deck. Nova Scotia's only land link runs across the Chignecto Isthmus; a year-round sea route is a way out, and a way in, when roads close.

Autumn 2027 An independent study reports, before the Province's next long-term ferry decision.	**2027–2029** Keep the link open: the CAT or an equivalent on the current route.	**2030** Vessel One enters year-round service, once Boston's freight and vehicle arrangements are ready.	**Proof by use** Vessel Two only when the operating record proves the demand.

20–25 yr

A mandate, not a renewal

The Isle of Man bought its ferry company and signed a 25-year Strategic Sea Services Agreement with no operating subsidy. The Eau Kin Corridor proposes the same logic for Western Nova Scotia. The mandate does not fund a ferry. It creates the conditions under which investment happens.

MINUTES 12 – 15

4 What it means for the Municipality

Councils carry the costs and the consequences of how this region is connected. Here is how the corridor touches the things this Council deals with.

Roads. Seafood and goods moved by sea are heavy trucks taken off the roads we live with. And a long-term corridor is the strongest case yet for provincial and federal investment in the 103.

The tax base. A bankable, long-term connection is what lets property owners renovate, operators add rooms and businesses expand. That growth shows up in assessment, in this Municipality and along the whole route.

Doctors and professionals. Councils across Nova Scotia now spend time and money on physician recruitment. Year-round connection to Boston, and its teaching hospitals, is something new to offer a candidate weighing a posting here.

Young people and trades. Year-round jobs at sea and ashore, with a proposed training pathway built with NSCC, give young people a reason to stay, or to come home.

Emergency resilience. When the Chignecto Isthmus or a highway closes, a year-round ship is a route for supplies, people and emergency response. That matters to every municipal emergency plan in the southwest.

The fishery. Our harvesters, buyers and processors gain a faster, cheaper route to their main market, and the working waterfront becomes a visitor draw in every season, not only summer.

> *"This isn't a Yarmouth project that Shelburne watches from a distance. The fishery, the roads, the recruitment and the investment are ours too. A long-term corridor reaches every community along the 103."*

MINUTES 15 – 18

5 Where it stands

Here is where things stand as of this week. I've kept to what is on the record.

- **Province.** The Department of Public Works holds the file and has confirmed in writing that options for the ferry's future are being actively considered. The CAT is extended for 2027 only, and the Minister has said the work on a long-term future continues.
- **Federal.** ACOA met with me on October 8 and keeps a contact on the file. Minister Fraser, who is responsible for ACOA, wrote to me personally on October 21. Our MPs, Jessica Fancy and Chris d'Entremont, have been kept informed and asked to support a study.
- **Federal priorities.** The Atlantic Economic Panel's final report calls for priority trade corridors, smaller-port strategies, coordinated ferry services and logistics hubs, and seafood exports growing from $6.4 billion to $10 billion. The corridor is a ready Nova Scotia project that does what the panel describes.
- **Region.** Councils from Argyle to Shelburne County to Mahone Bay have responded with interest. The Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance is supportive. The Digby Area Tourism Association has asked to meet. Wasoqopa'q First Nation and KMK have been briefed, and NSFM has been informed. Chambers in Shelburne, Bridgewater and the Annapolis Valley have been briefed.

WHAT HAS CHANGED SINCE SEPTEMBER

The ask is sharper. The study should be independent, ideally led by ACOA with the Province and regional partners, and report by autumn 2027. It sets its own scope and cost, including whether the service needs one ship or two. The mandate is 20 years, with 25 preferred. And there is a realistic path: the current service keeps the link open until a purpose-built ship is ready around 2030.

6 MINUTES 18 – 21

The ask

I am not asking Council for money, and I'm not asking Council to endorse a vessel, an operator or a route plan. I'm asking for one thing.

A motion supporting an independent feasibility study

I'm asking Council to support an **independent feasibility study** of a year-round, Canadian-owned marine corridor between Yarmouth and Boston under a long-term self-sufficiency mandate, and to send that support in a letter to the **Minister of Public Works**, copied to **ACOA**, our MLA and our MP.

The study should report by autumn 2027, so the Province's next long-term ferry decision rests on evidence. It costs the Municipality nothing.

Why does a council's voice matter? Because ministers weigh where support comes from. A motion from a municipality on the 103, well beyond Yarmouth, shows this is a regional question and not a local ask.

> *Suggested motion: "That Council of the Municipality of the District of Shelburne support an independent feasibility study of a year-round, Canadian-owned marine corridor between Yarmouth and Boston under a long-term self-sufficiency mandate, ideally led by ACOA with the Province of Nova Scotia and regional partners and reporting by autumn 2027; and that the Warden write to the Minister of Public Works, with copies to ACOA, the MLA for Shelburne and the area's Member of Parliament, to convey that support."*

I'm happy to answer questions. The full proposal and working papers are available, and I've provided a one-page summary for each of you. Thank you for the time and the opportunity.

BRIEFING FOR COUNCIL · MUNICIPALITY OF THE DISTRICT OF SHELBURNE · PRESENTATION NOVEMBER 25, 2026

The corridor that changes what Western Nova Scotia can become

A Canadian-owned, year-round freight and passenger service between Yarmouth and Boston under a 20- to 25-year mandate. Not a ferry proposal: the infrastructure confidence that makes every other regional investment more viable, for the fishery, for healthcare, for trades, for roads, and for the people who stay.

The fishery argument

Shelburne County's fleet is among the most productive in Atlantic Canada: lobster, scallop, groundfish and halibut. Its main market is New England, and today its route is overland, about 1,300 km through New Brunswick and across the Maine border, with broker fees on every shipment and long-haul driver teams to Boston.

The corridor cuts most of that cost. Load in Yarmouth, about an hour and a quarter from Shelburne, sail at 9 PM, and the product reaches the Boston Fish Pier for morning trading, cleared before it lands, with no truck or driver crossing the border. Fresh food comes back north the same way, in sealed, temperature-controlled units.

And the fishery is the tourism product that does not yet exist at scale: the working wharf and the catch-to-table story. The fishery is the asset.

The investment environment

The CAT had a strong 2026 season and the Province has extended it for 2027. That is welcome, but it is one more season. No carrier, developer or employer can plan a decade ahead around a single season.

A 20- to 25-year mandate is a different instrument. It is bankable. Developers invest. Restaurants and accommodation operators expand. Retailers hire permanently. Professionals and tradespeople can choose rural Nova Scotia with Boston a night's sail away. That environment reaches every business along the 103 and the 101, not only in Yarmouth.

For councils it means something more: freight moved by sea is heavy-truck wear kept off the roads municipalities live with, and a stronger tax base along the route.

MARINE FREIGHT	HEALTHCARE	TRADES & SKILLS	HIGHWAY ACCESS	DEFENCE & EMERGENCY
Seafood at the Boston Fish Pier by morning; fresh food north overnight.	Year-round reach helps recruit and keep professionals across Western NS.	A proposed Maritime Skills College with NSCC: Red Seal pathways at sea.	Long-term certainty strengthens the case for Hwy 101 and 103 upgrades.	A vessel ready for national service, and a route out when roads close.

20–25 yr

A mandate, not a renewal

The Isle of Man model: government vessel purchase, arm's-length commercial operation and a 25-year Strategic Sea Services Agreement, with no operating subsidy. The Eau Kin Corridor proposes the same logic: a 20-year self-sufficiency mandate, 25 preferred, giving Western Nova Scotia the stable investment horizon it has never had.

Autumn 2027	2027–2029	2030	Proof by use
Independent study reports, before the Province's next ferry decision.	Keep the link open: the CAT or an equivalent until the new service is ready.	Vessel One, year-round: 9 PM departure, 7:30 AM arrival, both directions.	Vessel Two when the operating record proves the demand.

Where things stand · mid-November 2026

- **Province:** On October 16 the Province extended the CAT for 2027 only, and Minister Tilley has said work on a long-term future for the service continues. Public Works holds the file and has confirmed options are being actively considered. 2027 is the year to decide.
- **Federal:** ACOA met to discuss the proposal on October 8 and keeps a contact on the file; Minister Fraser wrote personally on October 21. MPs Jessica Fancy and Chris d'Entremont have been kept informed and asked to support a study.
- **Fits federal priorities:** the Atlantic Economic Panel, established by Minister Fraser under the ACOA Act, calls for priority trade corridors, smaller-port strategies, coordinated "ferry services, logistics hubs" and seafood exports growing from $6.4B to $10B (Final Report, Oct 2026, pp. 85–92, 163).
- **Region:** councils from Argyle to Shelburne County to Mahone Bay have responded with interest. The Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance is supportive, the Digby Area Tourism Association has asked to meet, Wasoqopa'q First Nation and KMK have been briefed, and NSFM has been informed. Chambers in Shelburne, Bridgewater and the Annapolis Valley have been briefed.

The ask: an independent feasibility study, ideally led by ACOA with the Province and regional partners, reporting by autumn 2027 so the next long-term ferry decision rests on evidence. The study sets its own scope and cost, including the one- or two-vessel question. A motion or letter from Council supporting that study, sent to the Minister of Public Works and copied to ACOA, our MLA and our MP, would add the municipal voice at the right moment. It costs the Municipality nothing.

"The region is not waiting for the right ferry operator. It is waiting for the right instrument: one that banks, that plans, that builds a workforce around. A long-term mandate is that instrument."

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