



# Arts, Wellness and Heritage Community Site (AWHCS) for Portugal Cove-St. Philip's

A Vision for Our Future

Created by:  
PCSP Arts, Wellness & Heritage  
Community Site (AWHCS)  
Board of Directors  
06 March 2024

AWH Community Site Project PCSP

**PCSP** AWH Board of Directors  
arts / wellness / heritage



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## PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

This document is designed as a standalone general briefing about the Portugal Cove-St. Philip's (PCSP) Arts, Wellness and Heritage Community Site Inc. (AWHCS). Its purpose is to provide an overview of the history of the site, its procurement, and the development of the community site for the benefit for our community of PCSP and its citizens.

### Part 1 Introduction

## BACKGROUND FOR SECURING THE PROPERTY

### WHY

When the Holy Rosary RC Church Property was listed for sale by the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of St. John's, as directed by the courts, the PCSP Chamber of Commerce discussed whether this was an opportunity for the Chamber to do some positive community building and further the cause for Arts, Wellness and Heritage. After speaking with several community groups, and specifically the Parish, to determine if there was an independent group or a church group that was going to attempt to acquire the property, the response was 'no'.

### HOW

The Chamber then formed a committee to explore the possibility of acquiring this property for the benefit of the community. Since the AWH Committee was formed in February 2022, we agreed on certain core values:

- a. to be forthright;
- b. to be honourable;
- c. to be ethical;
- d. to act in fairness to the survivors during the acquisition process; and
- e. to be professional.

Under these guiding principles, we had the property professionally assessed and offered exactly what the estimated value of the property was. A detailed business plan was formulated and we approached the CBDC who were very supportive of our plan. In June 2023 we were successful in acquiring a majority of the property.

### WHO

Upon successful acquisition of the property, the AWH Property Acquisition Committee was dissolved, and a steering committee was formed to make recommendations for the structure and to form a Board of Directors to manage what we envision as a centre for Arts, Wellness and Heritage (AWH) in our community. This Board is now in place and operating. The Official Incorporated name is Arts-Wellness-Heritage Community Site – PCSP Inc. operating as AWHCS

## **AWHCS Board Members:**

Michael Pretty, President  
Michael Murray, Board Member  
Erin Gallant, Board Member  
Michelle Jones, Board Member  
Andrew Neary, Board Member  
Marlene Creates, Board Member  
Robert Stapleton, Board Member  
Vessela Brakalova, Board Member  
Joanne Jacobs, Board Member  
Doug Neary, Board Member  
Chris Dowden, Board Member

## **HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE AND SITE POTENTIAL**

There have been records of European visitors in Portugal Cove from the 1500s. Although no evidence of Indigenous settlement has yet come to light, there were undoubtedly visitors here well before 1500. Portugal Cove is the oldest English community in Conception Bay. Settlement as we know it started in the 1600s. We are a community rich in history and heritage. Since 1833 when Reverend Troy built the first RC church in the Cove, the RC community has been integral to our development into the wonderful place where we live today. In 1915 Father Ashley started replacing the first church with the building that exists today. Two local carpenters, Thomas White (one of the original settling families) and Patrick Hynes, built the church with volunteer labour from the community. Over one-third of the community was RC at the time. The church has withstood 109 years, despite weather and fire.

## Part 2 Goals and Vision

### INTRODUCTION

A Chamber of Commerce does not normally own land and the PCSP Chamber of Commerce does not intend to retain ownership of this special site, but rather it will facilitate the AWHCS becoming leased tenants and then officially becoming the owners. AWHCS will act as a separate, incorporated entity with a Board of Directors, a set of bylaws, as well as a functioning charity.

This site of outstanding beauty offers immense potential for our community to showcase the Arts, facilitate Wellness, and honour our Heritage; hence the concept and inception of the Portugal Cove-St. Philip's Arts, Wellness and Heritage Community Site. The economic impact of the site extends to expanding tourism and business development, creating job and volunteer opportunities with benefits for all of the citizens of Portugal Cove-St. Philip's.

This multi-faceted, multi-generational site will greatly enhance our community. The inclusion and engagement of the residents of PCSP in identifying the needs for the development of this site is paramount. Everyone will be given the opportunity to have input in how we develop this special place so everyone can experience a benefit. With this in mind, we share our guidelines and vision.

Our guidelines to achieve our goals include:

- a. Adherence to our core values,
- b. Being administratively and financially responsible/prudent,
- c. Transparency in all our decisions,
- d. Inclusion of the whole community,
- e. Environmental stewardship of the site,
- f. Respect for the neighbours,
- g. Respect for the site and surrounding area.

## A SPECIAL NOTE ON WELLNESS

Wellness encompasses physical, spiritual, emotional, and mental wellbeing/health. It has been proven time and time again that enjoying the wonders and beauty of nature plays an important part in overall positive wellness and health. Incorporating access for all mobilities and abilities in the development of the site will be an overriding principle. We intend to develop the outdoor aspect of this site to its fullest potential.

We see the Arts, Wellness and Heritage Community Site (AWHCS) as a multi-generational and multi-use facility for the Arts and Wellness of our community, while preserving our history and Heritage.

The PCSP Heritage Committee sees this as a place to properly store and display many of the unique artifacts the town has: a place to honour the veterans of our community with a display that is open to the public; an all-inclusive and accessible trail system that highlights our heritage through vantage points and story boards; displays of traditional skills (metal-working, net-mending, pot-making, etc.); a series of gardens where youth can learn from seniors how to grow and tend gardens, with the food used in the food bank. A safe place for all to gather.

The Heritage of the place and the spirit of these community traditions can be continued for the betterment of all the citizens of Portugal Cove-St. Philip's with the acquisition and repurposing of the site hall and land. Wouldn't it be "just grand" to have the entire community over for a "Cove Sunday" some October, in the near future! — a tradition since the early 1800s.

## THE ARTS, WELLNESS AND HERITAGE COMMUNITY SITE VISION STATEMENT

A multi-generational and multi-use facility open to all individuals and diverse groups that will respect and acknowledge the historical and cultural significance of the site. We see this community site as a leader in environmental stewardship with three main focus points for the use of the property:

### ~ Arts and Culture related Space and Objectives

AWHCS would become the first dedicated cultural centre in the community. This space would serve as a venue for displaying, performing, and creating all forms of artistic expression, as well as a location for training workshops and professional development.

### ~ Wellness and Mindfulness related Space and Objectives

This property would provide a safe space to enrich the health, wellness, and mindfulness of residents. It will provide opportunities for residents across all demographics to expand and grow existing wellness initiatives within our community in a safe and accepting facility. In addition, an outreach centre could be housed here providing computer access for people who need assistance and support in today's digital world.

## ~ Heritage related Space and Objectives

This property is an important part of the heritage of our town and region, and has been designated as a community heritage site. The Centre would house a museum to display artifacts, cultural and historical documents, and be a Portugal Cove-St. Philip's memory bank, all acting as a repository for local history and a vehicle for conserving the heritage of our community. The displays will be coupled with heritage fairs and activities to rekindle the age-old and trusted crafts and skills of the past, passed on from the senior generation to the newer ones.

The 10+ acres of land would be developed to meet community needs for all mobility capabilities. Community activities for all seasons such as trails, gardens, mountain bike routes, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing and perhaps a sliding hill. With the addition of a promised 10+ acre plot of land, this will be a significant place for our citizens, indeed.

Environmental Stewardship will be key in all we do.

## Part 3 The Site

### SITE ACQUISITION

The site purchase includes 2 buildings and approximately 10 acres of land. It does not include the church or any cemetery.

House: Civic Address: 3 RC Church Drive, Portugal Cove-St. Philip's.  
Two-storey house with attached office and garage and unfinished basement built in the 1950s and renovated in the 1990s. Due to the history of the house, it is slated for demolition. We plan to record and preserve any artifacts of historical significance.

Hall: Civic Address: 3A RC Church Drive, Portugal Cove-St. Philip's.  
One-storey building with a kitchen and bathrooms built in the 1950s require renovations





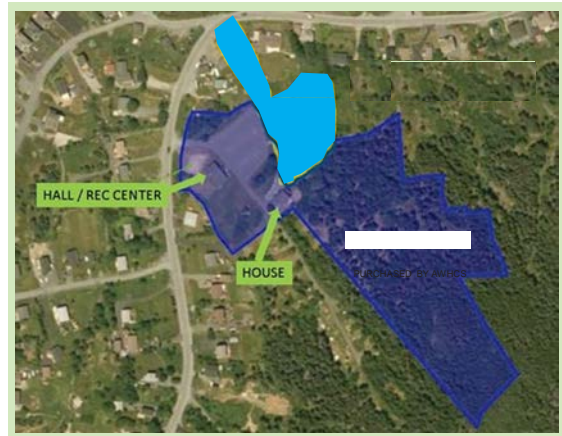
Land: 10+ Acres

Large, paved parking lot  
gently sloping with small open  
areas and remnants of an old trail

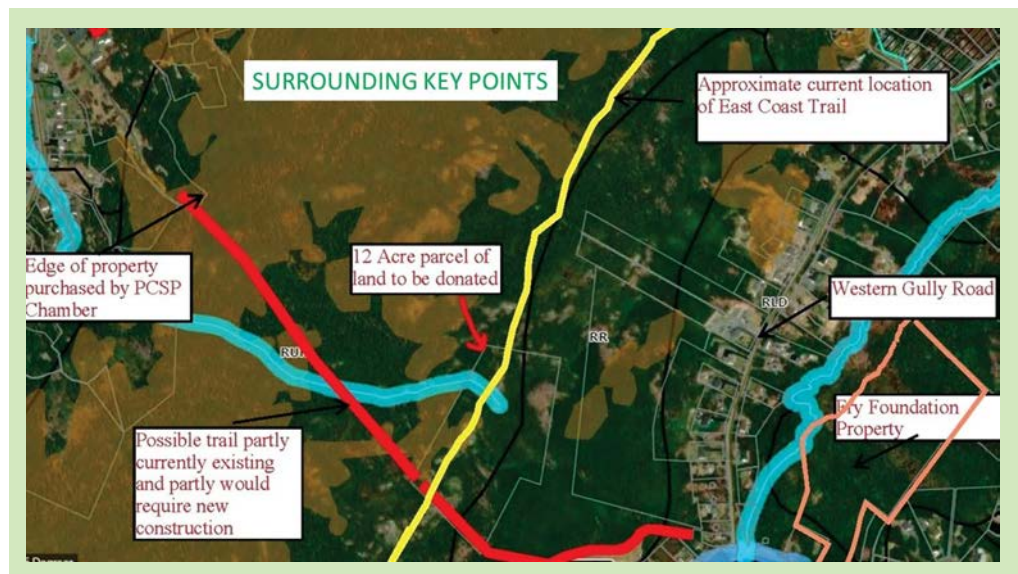


PURCHASED BY AWHCS

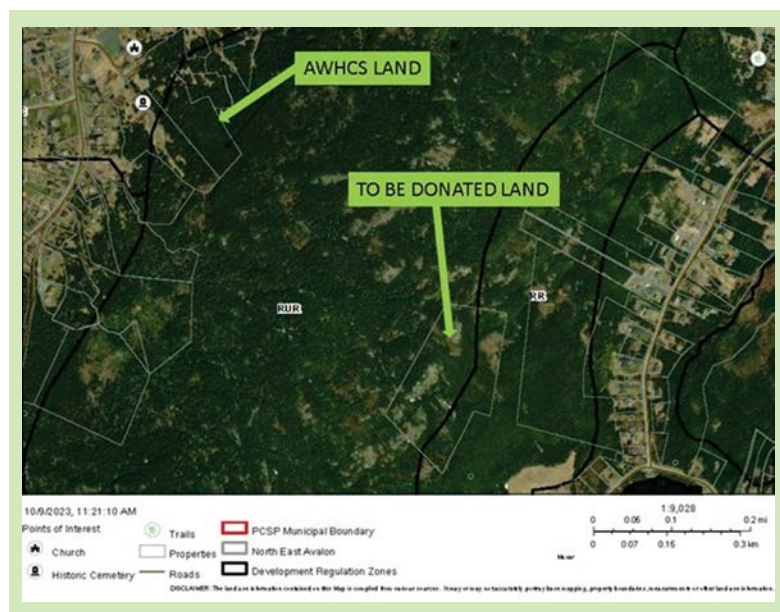
PURCHASED BY OTHERS



A look at what is  
in close  
proximity  
to the AWHCS  
purchase



A clearer look  
at what is  
close by



## COLLEGE OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC (CNA) ENGAGEMENT

The AWHCS Board of Directors met with members of the CNA School of Business Strategic Planning Program and teamed up with three students who developed a Strategic Project Plan (SPP) for the AWHCS project. This project represented 25 percent of their term grade for which they received an A+ mark. The plan is comprised of a 3-year implementation and start-up for the site within 6 months, concentrating primarily on the Hall for immediate development and revenue generation. The report includes information on situational analysis, challenges, key findings, SWOT, avoidable pitfalls, and a means to measure our success, as well as sources for other funding programs.



### COMPARING CRITERIA

Several similar community projects in various stages of development were assessed and the research realized 14 possible activities. The overriding key point of success is the cooperation and support of all facets of the community, especially the various levels of government. The diagram to the left compares the 14 activities to Fit within Vision and Return On Investment (ROI) at the High and Low levels.

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE: A MULTI YEAR PROJECT

We have established phases and allotted generous timelines in order to be able to raise and source the funds needed for this project. If funds become available more quickly, then this can proceed more quickly.

## POTENTIAL USES FOR THE HALL



**Note:** The Centre and Hall will generate employment opportunities for summer students and offers a place where high school students can complete their volunteer hours without going to St John's. Additionally, it will be an opportunity for seniors to volunteer for the betterment of their community.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

AWH will be conducting an extensive outreach program to our community to determine what services and facilities they would like to see. The proposal presented herein is just a starting point from information we have gleaned to date by partnering with other groups who have similar interests.

Community engagement will be very important. It is evident that we need multiple ways to allow people to provide their thoughts, opinions, and suggestions. We intend to engage in the following methods:

- Traditional town hall type meetings,
- On-line surveys,
- Email submissions,
- Meet with specific community groups, individual businesses and, if needed, individuals.
- Suggestion boxes placed in various locations in the community.

It is important to note there are many more opportunities to refine the plans and we are a group of well-intended individuals who are 100% volunteers, who are open to suggestions and simply want the best for our community and residents.

## DEVELOPMENT PHASES OF THE TRAIL SYSTEM

**1 TO 3  
YEARS**

### DESCRIPTION OF AWHCS TRAIL SYSTEM PHASE 1 USING LAND WE CURRENTLY OWN

all-mobility inclusive  
multi-purpose explorer  
trail

walk and/or bike  
(on a separate trail)  
all type of bikes

winter snowshoeing  
cross country skiing

Along this series of loops you will find various stopping points to explore such things as:

Garden beds – both raised for wheelchair accessibility and on the ground. People would be assigned these beds to grow crops and at year's end we could hold a competition.

A mini forge where there are regular operational hours for youth to learn the art of metal-working and making trinkets to be sold at the PCSP Heritage shop.

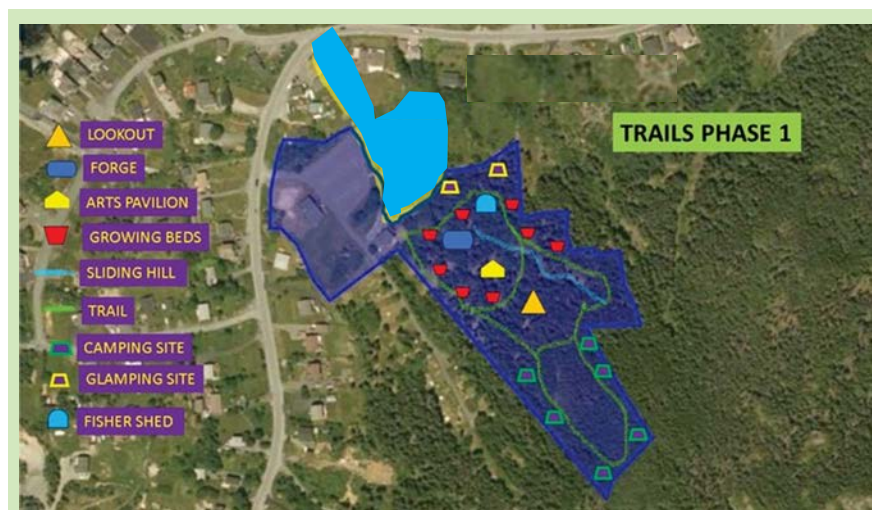
A multi-use pavilion where musicians and artists could gather and perform or hold classes, story-time for readings, a small central fireplace, etc.

A station that has regular hours where lobster pots and fishing nets are mended or created. A small traditional fishing shed would house materials.

In the middle of the loop area (off to the side) a lookout with a view of Portugal Cove and Conception Bay, and story boards describing our history and natural environment.

Camping sites are an option.

Glamping or sites which people with mobility challenges can use



**3 TO 5  
YEARS**

## DESCRIPTION OF AWHCS TRAIL SYSTEM PHASE 2 OBTAINING USE OF ADJACENT CROWN LAND

A place where people can walk, hike, and/or mountain bike on a separate trail. In winter, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.

Along this series of loops you will find various stages to explore things such as:  
Rustic artist dwellings with studio space where local or visiting artists could stay for a few days.

These would be eco-friendly with solar power, eco-toilets and processed rainwater.  
These would be sited to view the magnificence of our harbour and the Tickle.

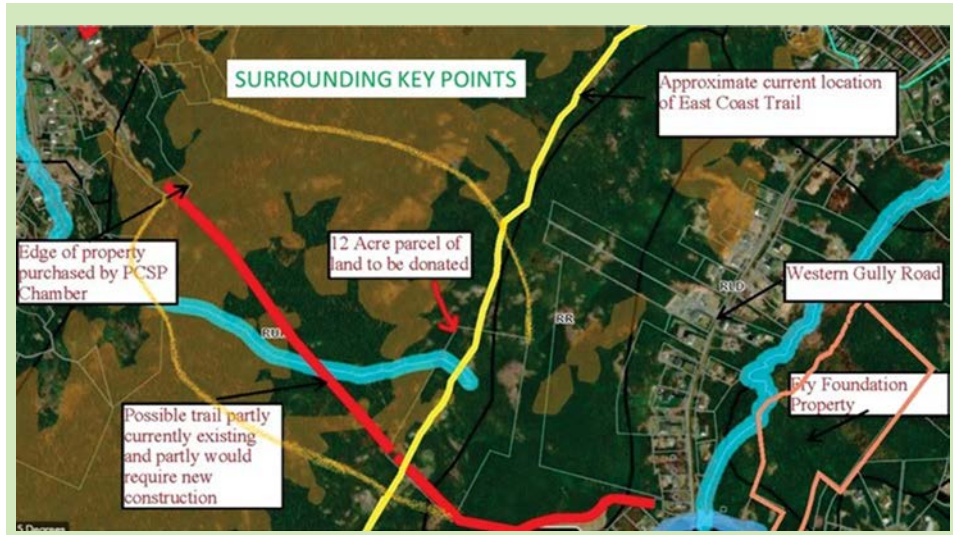
A cleared central area would be used as a sliding hill in the winter and gardens in the summer.  
The trees cleared would be used to build the trails, garden beds, and dwellings.

All unused wood would be used to create chips for trails and beds.



**5 TO 10**  
YEARS

### DESCRIPTION OF AWHCS TRAIL SYSTEM PHASE 3 USE OF 12 ACRES TO BE DONATED TO AWHCS



### STRATEGIC PLAN – Vision statement in the Town's Strategic Plan (Page 3)

***Portugal Cove-St. Philip's offers a vibrant heritage with safe and inclusive neighborhoods for residents of all means and abilities, while preserving our rural character. The health and wellness of our residents and sustaining our natural environment are core values, ensuring that families, youth and seniors can thrive.***

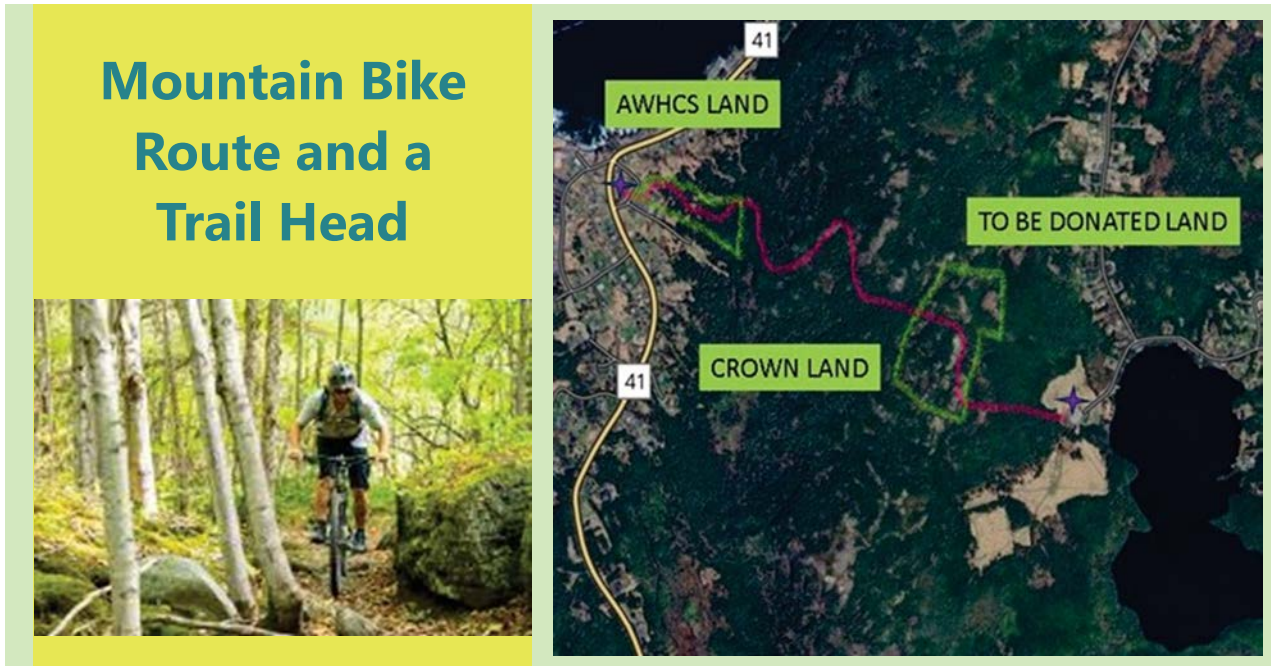
This closely matches AWHCS's Vision Statement in reviewing both the Town's Strategic Plan and AWH's plans for the AWHCS property. We can very quickly see both plans are very well aligned and support each other.



All five of these action plan areas again align with the AWH group's plans for the AWH site. The AWH site can and should be utilized to assist in realizing and carrying out the five strategic action plan items identified in the Town's strategic plan. AWHCS supports the Town's strategic plan.

## TRAILS PLAN

Our Trails concept would be to link into the Town's Trail Plan and the East Coast Trail, and work with the Avalon Mountain Bike Association.



## TOURISM PLAN

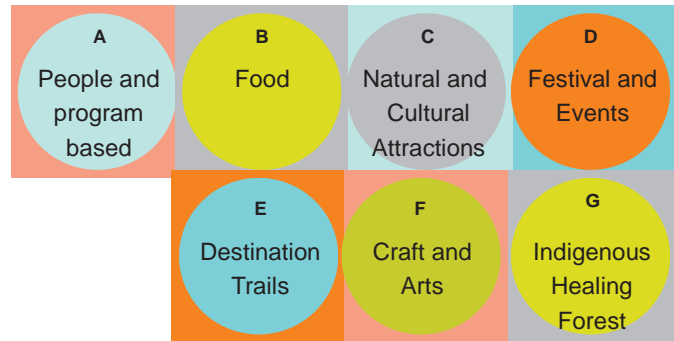
The Town's Tourism Plan was developed in 2019. It was a joint project between the Town of PCSP, the PCSP Chamber of Commerce, and the province's Department of Tourism.

Throughout the planning process it was quickly realized that there was tremendous untapped tourism-related economic development potential in PCSP.

It is very evident that the Town's Tourism Plan, the public consultations, and the planning sessions informed the vision and priorities of the AWH Committee's plan for the site

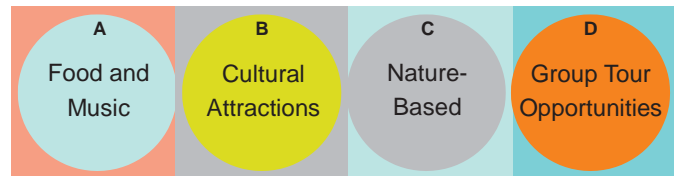
The following are a few excerpts from the PCSP Tourism Plan that can and will relate directly to the AWHCS:

Page 4  
 Provincial Tourism Product Development  
 Priorities which match AWHCS's  
 plan and priorities.



**The AWHCS's current and future plans match 6 out of 8 of the province's top priorities, including the 2026 plan.**

Page 5  
 Northeast Avalon  
 Destination Development  
 Priorities



**The AWHCS's current and future plans match 4 out of 5 of the Northeast Avalon Destination Development top priorities.**

Page 9  
 The plan indicates the following  
 solutions to the challenge:  
 These experiences and how  
 they are promoted will have to:



**The AWH group and site are very well suited to accept and resolve these challenges.**

Page 10  
 The stated goal of PCSP Tourism Plan is...



This goal aligns perfectly with the AWHCS's goals, both figuratively and literally.

There are tremendous economic and cultural benefits for our community, region, and the province in utilizing the AWH site to promote tourism and expand opportunities for residents to experience the benefits of increased opportunities for employment, personal development, recreational activities and other beneficial outcomes.



## AWHCS MEETS THE NEEDS OF OUR TOWN AND ITS CITIZENS

Essentially, the facility and property will be a place to showcase, to teach, to learn, to help, to remember. It will be an inclusive, regenerating space showcasing arts, wellness, and heritage initiatives for residents and tourists alike.

The need for such a facility and property has been identified in our community and it aligns very well with many of the initiatives ongoing in our community and with the Tourism Plan that was developed specifically for our community.

To conclude and to put it simply, every page of the Town's Tourism Plan provides justification for utilizing the AWHCS to realize the Town's tourism potential and to realize the economic development benefits that come from tapping into that potential.

## OUR CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS / GOALS / ACTION PLAN: IMMEDIATE

TIMELINE	ITEM	PROS	CONS
Next 3 months	Make Hall Rentable	There is an immediate need for the space	The more delays the less effective Year 2024 will be, revenues may be down
Next 12 months	Facilitate removal of the house	The house has a lot of bad history and this step will be a leap forward in the healing process	Extra revenue may be lost
	Develop a near and far plan	We currently have a project with College of the North Atlantic (CAN) Business school	
	Source Funding Options		
	Become Incorporated		
	Become a Charity		
	Seek Major Sponsor(s)		
	Extensive community Engagement		
	Seek Grant Monies		

## Plan for the next 6 months (from the received date of funding of \$150k)



### Short-term Timeline

- Month One
  - Understanding Funding (Seed/Selling)
  - Beginning of Renovation
  - First Consultations with Public
- Month Two
  - Continuing Renovation
  - Consultations with Public
  - Deciding on Classes
- Month Three
  - Continuing Renovation
  - Start of the Hall Hiring Process
  - Grant Research

### Timeline Continued

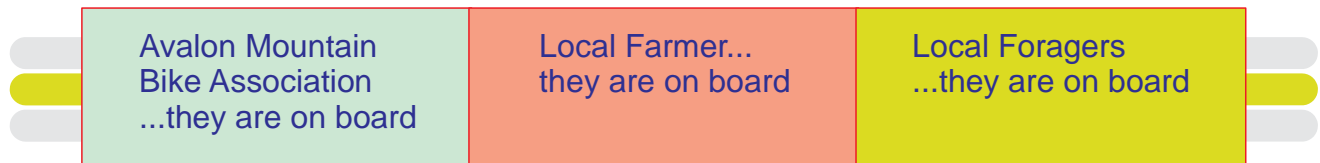
- Month Four
  - Advertising Services
  - Continuing/Concluding Renovation
  - Opening Kickoff (May 24)
- Month Five
  - Continuing/Concluding Renovation
  - Opening Kickoff (Start of Summer)
  - Or
  - Understanding Rate of Usage
- Month Six
  - Last Estimation for Concluding Renovation
  - Opening Kickoff (Canada Day)
  - Or
  - Understanding Rate of Usage

## PHASE 1 TO PHASE 3: OUR CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS / GOALS / ACTION PLAN

TIMELINE	ITEM
1 - 3 years	Establish Trail Phase 1 Seek Crown Land Use Become a Trail Head for Mountain Bike Users Seek Partnerships Seek Grant Monies
3 - 5 years	Establish Trail Phase 2 Begin RFP on Main Building for AWH Centre
6 - 8 years	Establish Trail Phase 3
8 - 10 years	Finalize AWH Centre

### Part 4 Avenues of Funding and Partners

We have spoken with:



We have reached out or are going to reach out to:

\*\* Initial discussions have resulted in positive support.



## Fund Multipliers

When funding or resources are being supplied for projects such as this, the question often asked is can and are the effects of this funding being multiplied by accessing funding or resources from other entities, funding partners or resources suppliers. The simple and short answer is yes, it has been done, it will continue to be done, and it is done all the time, and we have a plan.

1. One multiplying factor that is often overlooked is volunteer time and resources, already during the procurement and planning stages the project has benefited from a tremendous amount of free time and resources selflessly expended by volunteers. These volunteers are determined, engaged and ready to ensure the next phases and steps are accomplished. It is extremely difficult to put a dollar value on such dedication and selflessness, but we are certain any well-informed unbiased review would certainly place a high value on it and consider it key to the success of projects similar to this one.
2. Philanthropy, again a factor that is tremendously valuable and yet often overlooked. During the procurement stage of the project many donations were provided that supported the purchase of the property. All indications from individuals and business in the region were that once a solid plan is developed and additional funding partners were accessed there will be additional support provided. Our group continues to research and seek out private and public entities that provide donations to projects such as this. It is important to note that we have started the process of becoming a registered charitable organization and therefore meeting a critical requirement of many private funding entities.
3. Federal and Provincial sources, during the initiation stage of this project, many discussions were had with both provincial and federal officials. All discussions were very positive and supportive in nature. It is important to note that both levels of government regularly partner with community groups and other levels of government in positive social enterprise projects such as this project to accomplish the goals and complete projects very similar to the AWHCS project plan. It is our intention to access any and all funding available from both federal and provincial sources to ensure the project is completed and made available for use by present and future generations of PCSP residents and visitors.

It is extremely difficult sometimes to measure the effects of supplied funding when you start projects that are essentially not for profit, multi-generational and basically are very similar to parks and other community type spaces. Perhaps a way to look at this project would be similar to visualizing Bowering Park in St. John's, Margaret Bowater Park in Corner Brook and other great public parks and public use type spaces across the country. How do you measure the tremendous value these spaces and facilities have brought and continue to bring to countless generations of people who have received the beneficial effects of the beautiful, available and accessible spaces to access, utilize and enjoy.

## **A Note on the Sale of a Portion of Land to the Town.**

In the initial 16-page detailed proposal to the town in November 2023, we gave 2 options:

**OPTION A:** The town provides us the seed money as a partnership to get us through the first year so we could concentrate on provincial and federal funding options and get the site up and running, in part to enable the site to be self-sufficient.

**Option B:** The town purchase part of the land as a way to secure their investment, if Option A met with resistance.

### ***Special comments to this note:***

1. This was followed up by a 4-page executive summary in November 2023.
2. This was followed up by a 2-page email in February 2024 that laid out Options A and B and asked what the status was since the budget allotted the funds. The email also attached the 2 previous docs that contained Options A and B.

## **Part 5 Summary and Conclusions**

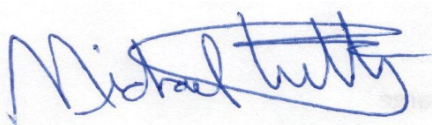
### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

The project supports three main development plans of the town and, to significant degrees, regional and provincial plans. It will meet genuine and immediate needs in our community and has the potential to improve the fabric of our community. It will also create senior and youth partnerships and create much needed jobs and summer employment for students in their own community.

This plan will help develop tourism in Portugal Cove-St. Philip's while at the same time boost the economics and the well-being of our residents as we generate interest in our community, its Arts, Wellness and Heritage.

We look forward to engaging the entire community in public discussions to determine what they would like and need this center to provide and offer.

Submitted on behalf of the Arts, Wellness and Heritage Community Site Board of Directors,



Michael Pretty  
President