



2025

COUNCIL END OF TERM PROGRESS REPORT

A Message from Gander Town Council

“We approached each decision this term with a goal: to make Gander better for the people who call it home. The progress we’ve made in housing, healthcare, infrastructure, recreation, and inclusion reflects Council’s vision, and the ideas and energy of our entire community. None of it would have been possible without your trust, your input, and your commitment to Gander’s future.

Thank you for walking this path with us.”

*Mayor Percy Farwell,
Deputy Mayor Bettina Ford,
Councillor Sheldon Handcock,
Councillor Wilson Hoffe,
Councillor Tara Pollett,
Councillor Marcie White, and
Councillor Pat Woodford*





140

committee
meetings



65

council
meetings



4

budgets



970

motions
passed

HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

This term, Council focused on housing solutions and land use planning to meet evolving community needs and support future growth.

Key Achievements:

- Launched the Build Up Gander initiative to encourage residential construction and attract investment
- Completed a Housing Needs Assessment to guide future development
- Secured \$4.35 million through the Federal Housing Accelerator Fund
- Developed a Housing Incentive Program, approving 13 applications to date, representing 59 new housing units
- Completed a Labour Market Assessment to better understand local workforce needs and support housing growth
- Partnered on the “New Beginnings” Project at 59 Elizabeth Drive with Housing and Homelessness Hub
- Advanced infill development and supported cluster housing projects to diversify housing types
- Expanded commercial land development opportunities for local investment



HEALTHCARE & WELLBEING

With healthcare access top-of-mind for residents, Council actively advocated for the return of services, enhanced system coordination, and initiatives to support recruitment.

Key Achievements:

- Worked alongside residents and community partners to advocate for the reinstatement of the Obstetrics Unit at James Paton Memorial Regional Health Centre, successfully achieving its return
- Celebrated the milestone of 100+ births since OB/Midwifery services returned
- Developed a Healthcare Recruitment & Retention Plan with a \$38,000 investment
- Strengthened the working relationship with NL Health Services
- Leased 59 Elizabeth Drive to the Family Care Team as a temporary location during construction of their new facility
- Hosted physician social events to support recruitment and retention efforts



INFRASTRUCTURE & TRANSPORTATION

Council made important infrastructure investments to help Gander grow safely and provide better transportation, recreation, and services.

Key Achievements:

- Commissioned the new Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Began pumphouse upgrades to improve potable water efficiency, reliability, and capacity
- Introduced Gander's first roundabout at Cooper Boulevard and Memorial Drive
- Launched a Highway Transportation Assessment in partnership with Harbourside Consultants
- Launched a Transit Study to assess public transportation needs, with work now underway
- Completed major upgrades to Sullivan Avenue
- Installed a new playground on Briggs Street for family-friendly play
- Completed planning and design for a second roundabout at Cooper Boulevard and Briggs Street, with construction about to begin



COMMUNITY SAFETY

By investing in training, modern equipment, and strong partnerships, Council advanced its commitment to a safe and resilient community.

Key Achievements:

- Strengthened partnerships with key organizations to enhance community wellness and support services
- Acquired a new fire truck (Pumper 1) to replace aging equipment, a major upgrade in both capacity and technology.
- Replaced the full set of Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) for Gander Fire Rescue
- Donated the outgoing SCBA units to neighboring communities, helping to strengthen regional emergency response capabilities
- Supported advanced training initiatives, including attendance at national training conferences and hosting the Fire Training School in Gander
- Enhanced local enforcement capacity with the addition of a new Municipal Enforcement Officer and patrol vehicle
- Introduced an annual \$1,500 scholarship for a junior firefighter pursuing post-secondary education



RECREATION & COMMUNITY LIFE

Creating spaces where people connect, celebrate, and stay active was a key focus this term.

Key Achievements:

- Officially opened the new \$6.7M soccer and track & field facility, a regional recreation and event hub
- Served as Host Community for the 2024 NL Winter Games, welcoming athletes and visitors
- Launched a pilot project for year-round access at Cobb's Pond Rotary Park
- Created a Community Partnership Seed Fund to support local initiatives and engagement
- Launched the Event and Active Living Expansion Project, to be funded in part by the tourism accommodation levy and capital reserves
- Served as Host Community for the 2025 Special Olympics NL Summer Games
- Budgeted for and began work on a Tourism Strategy to guide future destination marketing and visitor experiences



FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY

Council strengthened Gander's financial position through careful planning, cost control, and revenue innovation.

Key Achievements:

- Approved a five-part Fiscal Sustainability Strategy to guide long-term financial planning
- Introduced a more equitable business tax classification system in 2022, aligning rates with other municipalities and generating additional revenue while keeping most changes modest
- Ended 2024 with a \$1.95M surplus through cost control and efficient service delivery
- Introduced a tourism accommodation tax, with revenue dedicated to the planned Event and Active Living Facility
- Split surplus: 50% to 2025 capital projects, 50% to Capital Reserve Fund
- Launched new budget consultation tools to engage residents, organizations, and businesses



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATIONS

Council strengthened connections with residents and partners by expanding communication tools and opportunities for input.

Key Achievements:

- Increased engagement with non-profits and groups to identify emerging needs and opportunities
- Launched a new website with improved navigation
- Increased outreach events, including open houses and town halls, to connect with residents
- Celebrated 100 years since women gained the right to vote in Newfoundland and Labrador by hosting a special commemorative event
- Launched the Town's new text notification system to deliver timely alerts directly to residents' phones
- Invested in a refreshed and consistent visual identity, with a new logo and visual elements to be unveiled soon
- Activated the Town's LinkedIn account to reach a broader professional audience
- Launched a Digital Government initiative to improve online service delivery and internal systems
- Launched a Project Status Dashboard on the Town's website, allowing residents to track the progress of initiatives and capital projects in real time



DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

Council prioritized inclusivity and diversity, building stronger relationships with underrepresented groups and fostering a welcoming community.

Key Achievements:

- Adopted an Accessibility Plan to guide improvements in infrastructure, programs, and services
- Installed accessible playground matting and equipment at Cobb's Pond Rotary Park and introduced a sloped entrance point for the boardwalk near Airport Boulevard.
- Just recently, launched a call for Expressions of Interest to establish a formal Accessibility Committee, helping ensure that lived experiences inform decision-making
- Installed the Pride Highway Sign as a symbol of support for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, highlighting diversity and showing that everyone is welcome in Gander
- Adopted a Municipal Diversity Calendar to recognize and honour cultural and heritage observances throughout the year
- Sponsored and supported local Pride Month events
- Attended and participated in various cultural events
- Prioritized inclusivity and diversity in decision-making, programs, and events, strengthening connections with equity-deserving groups





THANK YOU

“Thank you for your trust, your feedback, and your continued pride in our town.

It has been our privilege to serve Gander and to work alongside you on initiatives that strengthen our community and support its future.

We are proud of what has been achieved this term. Together, we’ve made meaningful progress, and Gander’s next chapter is looking bright and full of possibility.”

*Mayor Percy Farwell, Deputy Mayor Bettina Ford,
and Councillors Sheldon Handcock, Wilson Hoffe,
Tara Pollett, Marcie White, and Pat Woodford*