

Accessible Washroom Program



Background

- Originated through Nova Scotia Tourism Icons Program
 - \$300,000 invested by the Province in Cabot Trail Washrooms (Inverness and VC)
 - \$150,000 per county
- Inverness and Victoria County created an aligned brand for the Washrooms / Comfort Stations.
- Victoria County Council approved the project as a partnership with local community Groups or businesses.
(we are not in the business of washrooms)
- Through an expression of interest process, potential locations and partners were identified.
- A washroom committee evaluated and selected all expressions of interest.
(Committees included: Staff, Council, Resident, NS Public Works)

Partnership Requests for Participation

- Signed MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) outlining roles and responsibilities. (Insurance, Maintenance etc)
- Common Comfort Station Signage plan – provided by Municipality
- Goal is to provide 24-7 coverage year round. Accepted expressions of interest were based partially on the intent to be open to meet the program goals.
- Where possible, provide accessible washroom options and built to meet accessibility challenges
- Ongoing consideration for operational funding support for supplies and cleaning when proven need exists.
(Not for profit vs. Private Business)

Current Comfort Stations in Operation

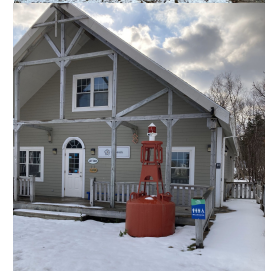
Baddeck Area Business and Tourism Association (BABTA) (District 3)



Gaelic College (District 4)



North Highlands Community Museum (NHCM) (District 8)



Bay St. Lawrence Community Centre (BSLCC) (District 8)



Bitsy Bean Café (District 6)



Victoria County Comfort Stations

(Currently Operating)

| NAME | DISTRICT | * DATE OPENED | YEARS OPEN | FUNDS RECEIVED |
|-----------------|------------|------------------|------------|----------------|
| BABTA | District 3 | 2019 | 4.5 years | \$113,000 |
| Gaelic College | District 4 | 2020 | 3.5 years | \$67,000 |
| NHCM | District 8 | Summer 2021 | 2.5 years | \$35,000 |
| BSLCC | District 8 | 2022 | 1.5 years | \$25,000 |
| Bitsy Bean Café | District 6 | Sept. 2023 | 0.5 years | \$60,000 |

Total

\$300,000

What hours are available to the public?

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Gaelic College: | 24 hours a day/ 365 days a year |
| BABTA: | 24 hours a day / 365 days a year |
| BSLCC: | 24 hours a day / 365 days a year |
| NHCM: | 9:00 am – 7:00 pm / 7 days a week (Open early June to end of October) |
| Bitsy Bean: | 9:00 am - 3:00 pm / 6 days a week * (Weather Permitting / when business is open) |

Why did you originally want to partner on this program?

- Gaelic College:** Need for washrooms on Cabot Trail; washrooms in building are not wheelchair accessible
- BABTA:** Important community offering
- BSLCC:** Need for washrooms and potable water
- NHCM:** To improve washrooms, make them wheelchair accessible, and address water supply issues
- Bitsy Bean:** Due to a lack of washroom facilities in community

Has the program met your expectations?

Gaelic College: Financial support appreciated

BABTA: Yes

BSLCC: Somewhat; (need more services like showers and laundromat)

NHCM: Happy to have public washrooms; grateful to the county for support

Bitsy Bean: Unfortunately, no

Share the benefits of this program

Gaelic College:

1. Washrooms available to the public (both visitors and locals)
2. Accessible washroom
3. Better customer service for the overall brand of the Cabot Trail

BABTA:

Provides visitors and residents with a quality piece of infrastructure

BSLCC:

Able to provide what is needed in our community

(Continued)

Share the benefits of this program

NHCM:

1. Stabilized water supply
2. Improved washroom accessibility
3. Local businesses are very happy to have public washrooms
4. Increases our visitation somewhat – hard to give a measure of this

Bitsy Bean:

1. People have a place to use the washroom in Ingonish.
2. Contributed to local economy by spending locally
3. Provided local contractors with work

Share the top 3 challenges of this program

Gaelic College:

1. Yearly cost
2. Damage and security
3. Parking lot area and snow removal

BABTA:

1. Financially funding the cleaning
2. Cost of supplies it requires
3. Security

(Continued)

Share the top 3 challenges of this program

BSLCC:

1. Breakdowns
2. Cleaning costs
3. Cost of supplies for cleaning

NHCM:

1. No major challenges to report
2. Some technical problems with automatic doors and dryers have been resolved
3. Increase in costs for supplies and cleaning but reimbursed by county grant

(Continued)

Share the top 3 challenges of this program

Bitsy Bean:

1. Poor project communication
(Building Inspection / Funding Consultation)
2. Exceeded the expected budget
3. Incurring additional expenses - insurance increase, pumping fee, heating costs, as well as daily maintenance of the washroom facilities.

Questions from Operators

Question from the College:

We are interested to know how many such washroom buildings are in Victoria County and how many days per year/hours per day they are made available to the public. Please note we have no plan, at the present time, to change from having our washrooms available to the public 24 hours per day/7 days per week /year-round.

Question from Bitsy Bean Cafe:

I am looking forward to council hearing the experiences/impacts this has had for other participants as well. Will you provide a report to all the participants once discussed with council, in return for our time and investment in this project?

Next Steps

- Finalization of last washroom placement
- Completion of Road and Comfort Station Signage installations
- Promotion of locations through tourism marketing materials and maps
- Review and evaluate current operational projects for program goals

Thank you – Questions?