

**BECAUSE AN INFORMED COMMUNITY
IS A STRONG COMMUNITY**

UNDERSTANDING MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT IN SHEDIAC

A Clear, Citizen-Focused
Book to Local Democracy

VICTOR CORMIER

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This book is intended to provide general information about municipal government and civic participation. For official information about elections, voting procedures, or municipal operations, please refer to Elections New Brunswick or the Town of Shediac.

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Dedication Page

To the people of Shediac —
for your curiosity, your care, and your commitment to
building a stronger community together.

Author's Note

Municipal government affects our daily lives more than most people realize — from roads and parks to planning, safety, and long-term development. Yet many residents feel unsure about how the system works or how to get involved.

I wrote this book to make local democracy easier to understand. My goal is simple: to help every resident feel informed, empowered, and confident when participating in the decisions that shape our community.

If you have questions about anything in this book or want help understanding how municipal government works, you are welcome to reach out.

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I'm always happy to help residents better understand their town and their local government.

— Victor Cormier

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INTRODUCTION

Why This Guide Exists

Municipal elections are the level of democracy that most directly affects our daily lives, yet they are often the least understood. Many residents are unsure what a councillor actually does, how decisions are made, or how their vote influences the future of their community. This guide was created to give Shediac residents a clear, practical understanding of how local government works and how to make an informed choice on election day.

How This Book Helps You as a Shediac Voter

This guide explains the structure of our town's government, the responsibilities of council, how budgets and bylaws are created, and what qualities matter most in a municipal candidate. It also provides practical tools to help you evaluate platforms, ask meaningful questions, and understand the issues that shape Shediac's future. The goal is simple: to give you the confidence to vote with clarity and purpose.

What This Book Is Not

This is not a campaign document. It does not promote any candidate, platform, or political position. It does not tell you who to vote for or how to vote. Instead, it offers neutral, factual information to help you make your own decisions. The purpose is education, not persuasion.

How to Use This Book

You can read this book from beginning to end or jump directly to the sections that interest you most. Each chapter is designed to stand on its own, so you can explore topics such as council responsibilities, budgeting, or evaluating candidates at your own pace. Whether you are a first-time voter or a long-time resident, this guide will help you better understand

how your municipal government works and how your vote shapes the future of Shediac.

PART I

– Understanding Municipal Government

1. What Municipal Government Actually Does

Municipal government is the level of government closest to your daily life. While federal and provincial governments often receive more attention, it is the municipal level that shapes the services, infrastructure, and decisions you interact with every single day.

Understanding what the Town of Shediac is responsible for helps you see why your vote matters and how council decisions directly affect your quality of life.

The Role of Local Government in Daily Life

Municipal government is responsible for the essential services that keep a community functioning smoothly. These are the services you notice when they work well – and definitely notice when they don't.

Some of the most visible responsibilities include:

- **Roads and sidewalks**
Maintenance, snow removal, repairs, and upgrades.
- **Water and wastewater systems**
Clean drinking water, sewer systems, and treatment facilities.
- **Recreation and community facilities**
Arenas, parks, trails, beaches, sports fields, and community centres.
- **Local policing and fire services**
Depending on the municipality's agreements and structure.

- **Garbage, recycling, and composting**
Waste collection and environmental management.
- **Land use planning and development**
Zoning, building permits, and community growth planning.
- **Tourism and local economic development**
Especially important in a town like Shediac.

These services shape the everyday experience of residents, businesses, and visitors.

What the Town Controls (and What It Doesn't)

Municipalities have **defined powers** under provincial legislation. This means the Town of Shediac can make decisions in certain areas, but not others.

The Town *does* control:

- Local roads and infrastructure
- Parks, recreation, and community facilities
- Local bylaws
- Property taxes
- Local development and zoning
- Municipal budgets
- Community planning
- Local events and tourism initiatives
- Fire protection services (depending on agreements)
- Water and wastewater systems

The Town *does not* control:

- Healthcare
- Education

- Provincial highways
- Policing structure (RCMP contracts are provincial)
- Income tax or sales tax
- Federal or provincial legislation
- Immigration
- Social assistance programs

Understanding these boundaries helps voters evaluate candidate promises realistically. If a candidate promises something outside municipal authority, it's important to recognize that the town may not have the power to deliver it.

How Municipal Decisions Affect You Directly

Municipal decisions influence:

- **Your property taxes**
Council decides how much revenue is needed and how it will be spent.
- **Your neighbourhood**
Zoning decisions determine what can be built near your home.
- **Your daily commute**
Road maintenance, traffic flow, and infrastructure planning all fall under municipal responsibility.
- **Your recreation options**
Parks, trails, beaches, and community programs are shaped by council priorities.
- **Your safety**
Fire services, emergency planning, and bylaw enforcement all play a role.
- **Your community's future**
Growth, development, and long-term planning

decisions determine what Shediac will look like in 5, 10, or 20 years.

Municipal government is not distant — it is woven into the fabric of everyday life. This is why informed voting at the local level is so important.

2. The Structure of the Town of Shediac's Government

Understanding how the Town of Shediac is organized helps voters see how decisions are made, who is responsible for what, and how different parts of the municipality work together. Municipal government is a team effort, and each role — from mayor to council to administration — has a specific purpose.

This chapter explains the structure in a simple, practical way so every resident can understand how their town functions.

The Mayor

The mayor is the head of council and the public face of the municipality. While the mayor does not have more voting power than councillors, the role carries important responsibilities:

- **Chairing council meetings**
- **Representing the town at official events**
- **Providing leadership and direction**
- **Acting as a spokesperson for the municipality**
- **Working with the CAO (Chief Administrative Officer)** to ensure council decisions are implemented

The mayor's influence comes from leadership, communication, and the ability to build consensus among councillors.

Town Council

Shediac's council is made up of the mayor and councillors elected from specific wards. Council is responsible for:

- Setting the town's strategic direction
- Approving budgets
- Passing bylaws
- Making policy decisions
- Representing the interests of residents

Each councillor brings the perspective of their ward, but once elected, they must make decisions for the **entire town**, not just their neighbourhood.

Council works as a collective body — no single councillor has individual authority outside of council decisions.

The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)

The CAO is the top administrator in the municipality. This is a professional, non-political role.

The CAO is responsible for:

- Managing all municipal departments
- Overseeing staff
- Implementing council decisions
- Providing expert advice to council
- Ensuring the town operates efficiently and legally

Council sets the direction; the CAO makes it happen.

Municipal Departments and Services

The Town of Shediac operates through several departments, each responsible for specific services.

While the exact structure can vary, common departments include:

- **Public Works**
Roads, sidewalks, snow removal, water, wastewater, and infrastructure.
- **Recreation and Community Services**
Parks, trails, beaches, sports facilities, community programs, and events.
- **Tourism and Economic Development**
Visitor services, tourism promotion, business support, and community growth.
- **Finance**
Budgeting, taxation, financial reporting, and asset management.
- **Planning and Development**
Zoning, building permits, land use planning, and development approvals.
- **Fire Services**
Fire protection, emergency response, and safety education (depending on agreements).

Each department is led by a director who reports to the CAO.

How They Work Together

Municipal government functions through collaboration:

- **Council** sets priorities, policies, and budgets.
- **The CAO** translates those decisions into operational plans.
- **Departments** carry out the work that affects residents every day.

This structure ensures that elected officials focus on leadership and decision-making, while trained professionals handle day-to-day operations.

When residents understand this structure, they can better evaluate candidate promises and know who to contact when they have questions or concerns.

3. What a Municipal Councillor Really Does

Many residents are unsure what a municipal councillor actually does day-to-day. Some imagine it's a full-time job. Others think councillors handle operational tasks. Some believe councillors can make individual decisions on behalf of the town.

In reality, the role is very specific — and understanding it helps voters choose candidates who are prepared for the responsibilities.

This chapter explains the councillor's role clearly, realistically, and without political bias.

The Core Responsibility: Decision-Making for the Whole Town

A councillor's primary job is to participate in **collective decision-making**. Councillors do not act alone. They:

- debate issues
- review proposals
- study reports
- ask questions
- listen to residents
- vote on bylaws, budgets, and policies

Every major decision is made by **council as a whole**, not by individual councillors.

Once elected, councillors must represent the **entire municipality**, not only their ward. Their duty is to the community as a whole.

Setting the Strategic Direction of the Town

Council decides the long-term priorities for the municipality. This includes:

- infrastructure planning
- recreation and community services
- economic development
- environmental stewardship
- growth and development
- financial sustainability

These priorities shape the future of Shediac for years to come.

Approving the Municipal Budget

One of the most important responsibilities of council is approving the annual budget. This includes:

- determining tax rates
- deciding how money is allocated
- approving major projects
- balancing needs with financial realities

Budget decisions affect every resident and business in the community.

Passing Bylaws and Policies

Council creates and approves bylaws that govern the town. These can include:

- zoning and land use
- noise regulations
- parking rules
- property standards

- public safety measures

Bylaws shape how the community functions and how residents interact with their environment.

Representing Residents and Listening to Concerns

Councillors are a bridge between the public and the municipality. They:

- listen to residents
- bring concerns to council
- help people understand municipal processes
- connect residents with the right departments

While councillors cannot solve every issue personally, they play an important role in ensuring residents feel heard.

Working with the CAO and Administration

Councillors do **not** manage staff or run day-to-day operations. That is the responsibility of the CAO and municipal administration.

Councillors:

- set direction
- approve policies
- establish priorities

Administration:

- implements decisions
- manages staff
- oversees operations

This separation ensures professional, consistent service delivery.

Time Commitment and Expectations

Being a councillor requires:

- attending regular council meetings
- participating in committee work
- reviewing reports and documents
- meeting with residents
- attending community events
- staying informed about municipal issues

While not a full-time job, it requires dedication, preparation, and a willingness to engage with the community.

Ethical and Legal Obligations

Councillors must follow:

- the Municipalities Act
- codes of conduct
- conflict-of-interest rules
- transparency and accountability standards

They must act in the best interest of the municipality, not personal or private interests.

What Councillors *Do Not* Do

It's equally important to understand what councillors are **not** responsible for:

- They do **not** manage staff.
- They do **not** direct municipal employees.
- They do **not** make individual decisions for the town.

- They do **not** control provincial or federal issues.
- They do **not** handle operational tasks.

Their role is leadership, governance, and decision-making — not administration.

4. How Municipal Budgets Work

Municipal budgets can seem complicated, but they are simply a plan for how the town will collect money and how it will spend it. Every service residents rely on — from snow removal to recreation programs — is shaped by the decisions council makes during the budgeting process.

Understanding how the budget works helps voters evaluate priorities, promises, and long-term planning.

Where the Money Comes From

Municipalities have limited sources of revenue. Unlike federal and provincial governments, towns cannot create new taxes or run deficits. Their income comes from a few key areas:

1. Property Taxes

This is the largest source of revenue for most municipalities. Property taxes fund essential services such as roads, recreation, fire protection, and administration.

2. User Fees and Service Charges

These include fees for:

- building permits
- recreation programs
- facility rentals
- water and wastewater services
- tourism services

3. Provincial Transfers and Grants

The provincial government provides funding for specific programs, infrastructure, or equalization support.

4. Federal Grants (Occasional)

These are usually tied to infrastructure projects, environmental initiatives, or community development.

5. Other Revenue

This may include:

- interest income
- fines
- cost-sharing agreements
- tourism revenue

Municipalities must balance these sources carefully, because they cannot simply “add more” when costs rise.

Where the Money Goes

Municipal spending is divided into major categories that reflect the town’s priorities and obligations.

1. Infrastructure and Public Works

Roads, sidewalks, water systems, wastewater treatment, snow removal, and maintenance.

2. Protective Services

Fire services, emergency planning, and bylaw enforcement.

3. Recreation and Community Services

Parks, trails, beaches, sports facilities, community programs, and events.

4. Planning and Development

Zoning, building inspections, community planning, and development approvals.

5. Administration

Town Hall operations, staff salaries, legal services, and governance.

6. Tourism and Economic Development

Visitor services, marketing, and business support — especially important in Shediac.

7. Debt Repayment

If the town has borrowed money for major projects, part of the budget goes toward repaying that debt.

Every dollar must be accounted for, and the town must balance its budget each year.

Capital vs. Operating Budgets

Municipal budgets are divided into two main parts:

Operating Budget

This covers the day-to-day costs of running the town:

- salaries
- utilities
- maintenance
- snow removal
- recreation programs
- general services

Capital Budget

This covers long-term investments and major projects:

- new buildings
- road reconstruction
- water and sewer upgrades
- equipment purchases
- major repairs

Capital projects often require borrowing or multi-year planning.

How Priorities Are Set

Council sets priorities based on:

- community needs
- long-term planning
- infrastructure condition
- financial capacity
- public input
- provincial requirements

The budget reflects what council believes is most important for the town's future.

How Taxes Are Determined

Property taxes are calculated based on:

- the town's total budget needs
- the total assessed value of properties
- the tax rate set by council

If costs rise or new projects are approved, council must decide whether to:

- increase taxes
- reduce spending
- delay projects
- find new efficiencies

This is one of the most important decisions council makes each year.

Why Understanding the Budget Matters

When voters understand how the budget works, they can better evaluate:

- whether promises are realistic
- whether priorities match community needs
- whether spending aligns with long-term goals
- how decisions affect taxes and services

A well-informed voter can see beyond slogans and understand the real impact of municipal choices.

5. How Bylaws Are Created and Enforced

Bylaws are the rules that help a community function safely, fairly, and consistently. They shape everything from land use to noise levels to parking regulations. Understanding how bylaws are created — and how they are enforced — helps voters see how council decisions directly affect daily life in Shediac.

What Is a Bylaw?

A bylaw is a local law passed by municipal council. It applies only within the boundaries of the municipality and must follow provincial legislation. Bylaws are designed to:

- protect public safety
- maintain community standards
- guide development
- support quality of life
- ensure fairness and consistency

Examples include zoning bylaws, noise bylaws, parking regulations, property standards, and animal control rules.

The Bylaw Creation Process

Creating a bylaw is a structured, transparent process. It typically includes several steps to ensure fairness, legality, and public input.

1. Identifying a Need

A bylaw may be proposed because of:

- community concerns
- safety issues
- development pressures
- provincial requirements
- long-term planning goals

Ideas can come from council, administration, committees, or residents.

2. Drafting the Bylaw

Municipal staff prepare a draft based on:

- legal requirements
- best practices
- community needs
- council direction

The draft is reviewed by the CAO and legal advisors if necessary.

3. First Reading

Council receives the draft bylaw and votes to introduce it.

This does ****not**** mean the bylaw is approved — only that council agrees to consider it.

4. Public Notice and Consultation

Depending on the type of bylaw, the town may:

- hold a public hearing
- invite written submissions
- post notices online

- consult with affected groups

This step ensures residents have a chance to express their views.

5. Second Reading

Council debates the bylaw, asks questions, and may request changes.

This is often where public input is considered.

6. Third Reading and Final Approval

Council votes on the final version.

If approved, the bylaw becomes official.

7. Implementation

Municipal staff put the bylaw into effect and ensure residents are informed.

How Bylaws Are Enforced

Once a bylaw is approved, the town is responsible for enforcing it. Enforcement is typically carried out by:

- **Bylaw enforcement officers**
- **Municipal staff**
- **Fire services** (for safety-related bylaws)
- **RCMP** (for certain public safety issues)

Enforcement focuses on education first, penalties second.

Common Enforcement Tools:

- warnings
- notices
- fines
- orders to comply
- inspections
- legal action (rare and usually last resort)

The goal is compliance, not punishment.

How Residents Can Influence Bylaws

Residents play an important role in shaping bylaws. You can:

- attend public hearings
- submit written feedback
- speak to your councillor
- participate in consultations
- raise concerns about outdated or unclear bylaws

Municipalities rely on community input to ensure bylaws reflect local needs and values.

Why Understanding Bylaws Matters

Bylaws affect:

- what can be built near your home
- how businesses operate
- noise levels in your neighbourhood
- parking rules
- property standards
- public safety
- environmental protection

When voters understand how bylaws are created and enforced, they can better evaluate candidate promises and participate more effectively in local decision-making.

Part II

– Understanding the Municipal Election

6. How Municipal Elections Work in New Brunswick

Municipal elections in New Brunswick follow a structured, province-wide process designed to ensure fairness, transparency, and accessibility. While the election may feel local, the rules and procedures are set and overseen by the provincial government. Understanding how the system works helps voters feel confident and informed when they cast their ballot.

Who Oversees Municipal Elections

Municipal elections in New Brunswick are administered by **Elections New Brunswick**, an independent, non-partisan agency responsible for:

- organizing the election
- training election workers
- managing voter lists
- overseeing polling stations
- ensuring compliance with election laws
- counting and reporting results

This ensures that the process is consistent across the province and free from political influence.

The Municipal Election Cycle

Municipal elections in New Brunswick are held **every four years**. All positions — mayor and councillors — are elected at the same time. This creates a clear, predictable cycle for voters and candidates.

If a councillor resigns or a seat becomes vacant between elections, a **by-election** may be held to fill the position.

Who Can Vote

To vote in a municipal election in New Brunswick, you must:

- be a Canadian citizen
- be at least 18 years old on election day
- have lived in the municipality for at least 40 days before the election
- be ordinarily resident in the municipality (your primary home)

If you meet these criteria, you are eligible to vote in the Town of Shediac's municipal election.

Who Can Run for Office

To run for mayor or councillor, a person must:

- be a Canadian citizen
- be at least 18 years old
- be ordinarily resident in the municipality
- have lived in the municipality for at least 40 days before the election
- not be disqualified under provincial legislation

Candidates must file official nomination papers with Elections NB before the deadline.

How Voting Works

Voting in a municipal election is straightforward. Elections NB provides:

- **Advance polls**
- **Election day polls**
- **Accessible voting options**

- **Assistance for voters with disabilities**

Voters receive a ballot listing the candidates for their ward (or for mayor, who is elected town-wide). You simply mark your choice and submit your ballot.

Advance Polls and Accessibility

Advance polls allow voters to cast their ballot before election day. These are especially helpful for:

- seniors
- shift workers
- people with travel plans
- anyone who prefers to avoid crowds

Elections NB also ensures that polling stations are accessible and that assistance is available for voters who need support.

How Votes Are Counted

Votes are counted by trained election workers under the supervision of Elections NB. The process is:

- transparent
- standardized
- carefully monitored

Results are reported publicly once counting is complete.

(As always, voters should confirm official results through Elections NB.)

Why Understanding the Process Matters

When residents understand how municipal elections work, they feel more confident participating. Knowing:

- who oversees the election

- who can vote
- who can run
- how ballots are cast
- how results are counted

helps demystify the process and encourages stronger voter turnout.

Municipal elections are the foundation of local democracy — and informed participation strengthens the entire community.

7. What Ward 1, Ward 2, Ward 3 and Ward 4 Actually Mean

Shediac is divided into **four wards**, each represented by one councillor. While the mayor is elected by the entire town, councillors are elected by the residents of their specific ward. Understanding what a ward is — and what it means for your vote — helps you see how representation works in our community.

What Is a Ward?

A ward is a geographic area within the municipality. Each ward elects one councillor who represents the residents living in that area. Wards ensure that different parts of the town have a voice at the council table.

Wards help balance representation so that:

- neighbourhoods with different needs are heard
- growth areas receive attention
- long-established areas maintain their voice
- every part of the town has someone advocating for it

Wards are designed to reflect population, geography, and community identity.

Why Wards Exist

Wards exist to make representation **fair and local**. Instead of electing all councillors at large, wards ensure:

- each area of the town has a dedicated representative
- councillors understand the unique needs of their neighbourhood
- residents know exactly who to contact with concerns
- no single area dominates the council table

This structure strengthens local democracy by ensuring balanced voices.

What Ward You Live In

Your ward is determined by your home address. On election day, you will receive a ballot that lists:

- the candidates running for mayor (town-wide)
- the candidates running for councillor in **your** ward

You vote only for the councillor representing your ward.

Residents can confirm their ward by checking:

- their voter information card
- the Elections NB website
- the Town of Shediac ward map
- municipal communications
- posted maps at polling stations

What Your Ward Councillor Represents

While councillors are elected by the residents of their ward, they must make decisions for the **entire town** once elected. This means:

- they bring the perspective of their ward
- they listen to concerns from their area
- they understand local issues
- they participate in decisions that affect all of Shediac

A councillor's duty is to the whole municipality, not only their neighbourhood.

How Wards Affect Local Decision-Making

Wards help ensure that council decisions reflect the diversity of the town. Different areas may have different priorities, such as:

- infrastructure needs
- traffic concerns
- development pressures
- recreation access
- tourism impacts
- environmental considerations

Having councillors from different wards ensures these perspectives are included in discussions and decisions.

Why Understanding Wards Matters for Voters

Knowing your ward helps you:

- understand who represents you
- evaluate the candidates running in your area
- bring concerns to the right councillor
- participate more effectively in local democracy

Wards make representation more personal, more local, and more responsive.

8. What Makes Municipal Elections Different from Provincial or Federal Elections

Most people are familiar with provincial and federal elections because they receive more media attention.

But municipal elections operate very differently — and in many ways, they have a more direct impact on your daily life. Understanding these differences helps voters appreciate the importance of participating in local democracy.

Different Powers and Responsibilities

Each level of government has its own areas of responsibility. Municipalities focus on services that affect your everyday environment, while provincial and federal governments handle broader issues.

Municipal Government (Local Level)

Responsible for:

- roads and sidewalks
- water and wastewater
- recreation and community facilities
- fire services
- local bylaws
- zoning and development
- parks, beaches, and trails
- waste collection
- local tourism and economic development

These are the services you interact with daily.

Provincial Government (New Brunswick)

Responsible for:

- healthcare
- education
- highways
- social services
- policing structure
- property assessment
- provincial legislation

Federal Government (Canada)

Responsible for:

- national defence
- immigration
- national taxation
- foreign policy
- criminal law
- national programs

Municipal government is the level closest to your home, your neighbourhood, and your daily life.

Different Types of Candidates

Municipal candidates are often:

- long-time residents
- community volunteers
- local business owners
- people with deep ties to the town

They are not part of political parties.
They run as individuals, not as representatives of a provincial or federal party.

This means voters evaluate the **person**, not a party platform.

No Political Parties at the Municipal Level

Municipal elections in New Brunswick are **non-partisan**.

This means:

- no party leaders
- no party platforms
- no party funding
- no party loyalty

Candidates must explain their own priorities, values, and approach.

Voters choose based on character, judgment, and community vision — not party affiliation.

Different Campaign Style

Municipal campaigns are more personal and community-focused. Candidates often:

- knock on doors
- attend local events
- speak directly with residents
- answer questions one-on-one
- share their vision for the town

There are fewer large rallies, fewer advertisements, and more direct conversations.

Different Media Coverage

Provincial and federal elections receive extensive media attention.

Municipal elections receive far less.

This means:

- voters must seek out information
- candidates must work harder to reach residents
- local issues may not be widely discussed unless residents engage

Your vote has more influence because fewer people participate.

Different Voter Turnout

Municipal elections typically have **lower turnout** than provincial or federal elections.

This means:

- every vote carries more weight
- small numbers can change outcomes
- engaged voters have a stronger voice

When fewer people vote, those who do vote shape the future of the town.

Why Municipal Elections Matter More Than People Think

Municipal decisions affect:

- your street
- your taxes
- your neighbourhood
- your recreation options
- your safety
- your local economy
- your community's growth
- your quality of life

These are the issues closest to home — and they are decided by the people elected in municipal elections.

Part III

– Becoming an Informed Voter

9. How to Evaluate Municipal Candidates

Choosing a municipal councillor is different from choosing a provincial MLA or a federal MP. There are no political parties, no party leaders, and no party platforms to guide your decision. Instead, voters must evaluate the **individual** — their character, judgment, experience, and approach to community leadership.

This chapter gives residents a clear, practical framework for evaluating candidates in a fair and informed way.

Look for Candidates Who Understand the Role

A strong municipal candidate understands:

- what a councillor can and cannot do
- how municipal budgets work
- how bylaws are created
- the difference between governance and administration
- the importance of teamwork and collaboration

If a candidate promises things outside municipal authority, or suggests they can act alone, that is a sign they may not fully understand the role.

Look for Candidates Who Listen

Good councillors are good listeners. They:

- take time to understand resident concerns
- ask thoughtful questions

- avoid jumping to conclusions
- consider multiple perspectives
- show respect for differing opinions

Listening is one of the most important skills a councillor can have.

Look for Candidates Who Think Long-Term

Municipal decisions often affect the community for decades. Strong candidates:

- think beyond the next election
- consider long-term financial sustainability
- understand the impact of growth and development
- balance immediate needs with future planning

Short-term promises may sound appealing, but long-term thinking builds a stronger community.

Look for Candidates Who Are Transparent and Honest

Trust is essential in local government. Voters should look for candidates who:

- communicate clearly
- explain their reasoning
- acknowledge limitations
- avoid unrealistic promises
- are open about their values and priorities

Honesty builds confidence and credibility.

Look for Candidates Who Work Well with Others

Council is a team. No councillor can accomplish anything alone. Effective councillors:

- collaborate
- compromise when necessary
- respect differing viewpoints
- focus on solutions, not conflict
- maintain professionalism

A candidate who cannot work with others will struggle to be effective on council.

Look for Candidates Who Are Prepared and Informed

Strong candidates take the time to understand:

- municipal issues
- local challenges
- community priorities
- the town's financial realities
- the responsibilities of the role

Preparation shows commitment and respect for the position.

Look for Candidates Who Demonstrate Community Involvement

While not required, community involvement can be a positive sign. Candidates who have:

- volunteered
- participated in local events
- supported community initiatives
- contributed to local organizations

often bring a deeper understanding of the town's needs.

Look for Candidates Who Communicate Clearly

Clear communication helps residents stay informed and engaged. Strong candidates:

- explain issues in simple terms
- avoid jargon
- share information openly
- respond respectfully to questions

Good communication builds trust and transparency.

Look for Candidates Who Show Respect and Professionalism

A councillor represents the entire community. Voters should look for candidates who:

- treat others with respect
- avoid personal attacks
- stay calm under pressure
- demonstrate maturity and judgment
- focus on issues, not personalities

Professionalism is essential for effective leadership.

Look for Candidates Who Put the Community First

The best councillors make decisions based on what is best for the town as a whole — not personal interests, not special groups, and not short-term popularity.

A strong candidate:

- considers the impact on all residents

- balances competing priorities
- focuses on fairness and equity
- demonstrates a commitment to the community’s well-being

This is the foundation of good municipal leadership.

10. Questions You Should Ask Every Candidate

Asking good questions is one of the most effective ways for voters to understand a candidate’s values, priorities, and decision-making style. Municipal elections are personal and community-focused, and candidates should be ready to explain their thinking clearly and respectfully.

These questions are designed to help residents evaluate candidates fairly, without partisanship or bias. They focus on leadership, transparency, and understanding of the role — the qualities that matter most on council.

Questions About Leadership and Decision-Making

1. “How do you make decisions when people disagree?”

This reveals whether the candidate listens, considers multiple perspectives, and stays calm under pressure.

2. “How will you balance the needs of your ward with the needs of the entire town?”

A councillor must represent their ward but vote for the good of the whole municipality.

3. “What values guide your decisions?”

This helps voters understand the candidate’s core principles.

4. “How do you handle situations where you don’t have all the information?”

Good councillors ask questions, seek clarity, and avoid rushing to conclusions.

Questions About Understanding the Role

5. “What do you believe a councillor’s job is — and what is it not?”

Candidates should understand the difference between governance and administration.

6. “How familiar are you with municipal budgets and bylaws?”

A strong candidate has taken time to learn how the town operates.

7. “How will you work with the CAO and municipal staff?”

Candidates should respect the professional role of administration.

Questions About Transparency and Communication

8. “How will you keep residents informed about important issues?”

Clear communication builds trust.

9. “How will you handle criticism or difficult conversations?”

Professionalism matters, especially in public service.

10. “How will you ensure transparency in your decision-making?”

Voters deserve clarity, not confusion.

Questions About Priorities and Vision

11. “What do you see as the most important issues facing Shediac?”

Candidates should demonstrate awareness of local challenges.

12. “How do you plan to approach long-term planning for the town?”

Municipal decisions often affect the community for decades.

13. “How will you balance growth with quality of life?”

This is a major issue in many communities, including Shediac.

Questions About Community Engagement

14. “How will you stay connected to residents after the election?”

A councillor’s job doesn’t end on election day.

15. “How will you ensure all voices are heard — not just the loudest ones?”

Good councillors seek out diverse perspectives.

16. “How will you involve residents in decision-making?”

Public input strengthens local democracy.

Questions About Professionalism and Integrity

17. “How do you handle conflicts of interest?”

Candidates should understand the legal and ethical requirements.

18. “How do you ensure fairness when making decisions?”

Fairness is essential for trust.

19. “How do you separate personal opinions from what is best for the community?”

A councillor must think beyond themselves.

Why These Questions Matter

These questions help voters understand:

- how a candidate thinks
- how they solve problems
- how they treat people
- how they handle pressure
- how they approach leadership
- how prepared they are for the role

Strong candidates welcome thoughtful questions. They answer clearly, respectfully, and honestly.

11. How to Understand a Candidate’s Platform

A candidate’s platform is their roadmap — a summary of what they believe is important and how they plan to approach decision-making if elected. But municipal platforms can vary widely in detail, clarity, and realism.

Some are thoughtful and well-researched. Others are vague, overly ambitious, or outside municipal authority.

This chapter helps voters understand how to evaluate a platform fairly and confidently.

What a Platform Should Contain

A strong municipal platform usually includes:

1. Clear Priorities

The candidate should identify the issues they believe matter most to the community. These priorities should be realistic and grounded in local needs.

2. A General Approach or Philosophy

Municipal platforms don't need to be technical. What matters is the candidate's approach to leadership, decision-making, and community engagement.

3. An Understanding of Municipal Responsibilities

A platform should focus on issues the town actually controls.

If a platform focuses heavily on provincial or federal issues, that's a red flag.

4. A Sense of Long-Term Thinking

Good platforms look beyond the next four years and consider the future of the community.

How to Identify Realistic vs. Unrealistic Promises

Municipalities have limited powers and limited budgets.

A realistic platform:

- fits within municipal authority
- acknowledges financial constraints
- focuses on achievable goals
- avoids promising dramatic changes overnight

An unrealistic platform:

- promises things the town cannot legally control
- ignores budget realities
- suggests quick fixes to complex issues
- uses vague slogans instead of clear ideas

Voters should look for platforms that balance ambition with practicality.

How to Evaluate the Level of Detail

Platforms can range from very detailed to very general. Both styles can be effective, but voters should pay attention to:

Is the platform clear?

Does it explain what the candidate values and how they think?

Is it grounded in reality?

Does it reflect an understanding of how the town works?

Is it transparent?

Does the candidate explain their reasoning?

Is it respectful of the role?

Does it avoid overpromising or claiming powers the town doesn't have?

A platform doesn't need to be long — it needs to be honest and thoughtful.

How to Compare Platforms Fairly

When comparing candidates, voters should consider:

- Which platform aligns with your values
- Which candidate demonstrates understanding of the role
- Which priorities feel realistic and community-focused
- Which ideas reflect long-term thinking
- Which candidate communicates clearly and respectfully

Comparing platforms is not about choosing the “flashiest” ideas — it’s about choosing the most grounded, thoughtful approach.

How to Spot Red Flags

Some signs that a platform may not be reliable include:

- promises outside municipal authority
- vague statements with no explanation
- unrealistic timelines
- overly negative or divisive language
- personal attacks instead of ideas
- claims that one councillor can act alone
- promises that ignore budget realities

These signs suggest the candidate may not fully understand the role or the responsibilities of council.

Why Understanding Platforms Matters

A platform is more than a list of ideas — it reveals:

- how a candidate thinks
- what they value
- how they approach leadership
- how prepared they are
- how they will make decisions on council

When voters understand how to read a platform, they can make informed choices based on clarity, realism, and community impact.

12. How to Think Critically About Campaign Messaging

Campaigns are full of messages — signs, social media posts, conversations, flyers, interviews, and public statements. Some messages are thoughtful and informative. Others are emotional, vague, or designed to influence without providing real substance.

Thinking critically about campaign messaging helps voters stay focused on facts, values, and community needs rather than slogans or pressure.

Understand That Campaign Messaging Is Designed to Persuade

Every campaign message — from a sign to a social media post — has a purpose. Candidates want to:

- raise awareness
- build trust
- highlight priorities
- differentiate themselves
- connect emotionally with voters

This is normal and expected.

But voters should always look beyond the surface to understand the message's intent.

Look for Clarity, Not Just Emotion

Strong campaign messaging:

- explains ideas clearly
- provides context
- avoids exaggeration
- focuses on solutions

Weak messaging relies on:

- emotional triggers
- vague promises

- dramatic language
- oversimplified claims

Emotion is part of communication, but clarity is what helps voters make informed decisions.

Be Cautious of Oversimplified Solutions

Municipal issues are rarely simple.

If a message suggests:

- a quick fix
- a single solution to a complex issue
- a promise that sounds too good to be true

...it may not reflect the realities of municipal governance.

Good leaders acknowledge complexity and explain their approach honestly.

Watch for Messages That Appeal to Fear or Anger

Some messages try to influence voters by triggering strong emotions.

These may include:

- “If we don’t act now, everything will get worse.”
- “The town is going in the wrong direction.”
- “This is a crisis.”

While concerns can be legitimate, emotional framing can distort the issue.

Critical thinking helps voters separate facts from fear-based messaging.

Look for Evidence, Not Just Claims

A strong message is supported by:

- facts
- examples
- data
- clear reasoning

A weak message relies on:

- slogans
- generalizations
- assumptions
- unverified statements

Voters should ask:

“What is this message based on?”

Consider the Source

Not all information is equal.

When evaluating campaign messaging, consider:

- Who is saying it
- Why they are saying it
- Whether they have direct knowledge
- Whether they are presenting facts or opinions
- Whether they are trying to influence emotions or decisions

Reliable information usually comes from transparent, accountable sources.

Avoid Jumping to Conclusions

In a campaign, it's easy to:

- assume motives
- misinterpret statements
- react emotionally

- fill in gaps with assumptions

Critical thinking means pausing, asking questions, and seeking clarity before forming an opinion.

Look for Consistency

A candidate's messaging should be consistent with:

- their values
- their past actions
- their understanding of the role
- their approach to leadership

If messages change dramatically depending on the audience, that may be a sign to look deeper.

Be Aware of Social Media Dynamics

Social media can amplify:

- rumours
- misunderstandings
- emotional reactions
- incomplete information

Before accepting something as true, voters should:

- check the source
- look for context
- verify with official information
- avoid sharing unconfirmed claims

Critical thinking helps prevent misinformation from spreading.

Focus on What Matters Most

Campaign messaging can be noisy.
Critical thinking helps voters stay focused on:

- the candidate’s values
- their understanding of the role
- their approach to decision-making
- their long-term vision
- their professionalism
- their respect for the community

These qualities matter far more than slogans or sound bites.

Part IV

– Shediac-Specific Insights

13. The Issues That Typically Matter Most in Shediac

Every community has its own priorities, shaped by its history, geography, economy, and identity. Shediac is no different. While every election brings new conversations, certain themes consistently matter to residents because they influence daily life, long-term planning, and the town’s unique character.

This chapter outlines the issues that have traditionally been important in Shediac — not to promote any position, but to help voters understand the context behind local decision-making.

Growth and Development

Shediac has experienced steady growth over the years, both in population and in tourism activity. This creates opportunities and challenges.

Residents often discuss:

- how quickly the town should grow
- where new development should occur
- how to balance residential, commercial, and tourism needs
- how growth affects traffic, services, and neighbourhood character
- how to maintain Shediac's identity as the town evolves

Growth is neither good nor bad on its own — what matters is how it is planned and managed.

Infrastructure and Public Works

Infrastructure is one of the most visible responsibilities of municipal government. Common concerns include:

- road conditions
- sidewalk availability
- water and wastewater systems
- stormwater management
- snow removal and seasonal maintenance
- long-term infrastructure planning

These issues affect safety, mobility, and quality of life.

Tourism and Seasonal Activity

Shediac is known as a tourism destination, especially in the summer. Tourism brings economic benefits but also creates unique pressures.

Residents often discuss:

- traffic and parking during peak season
- beach access and management
- noise levels

- balancing resident needs with visitor needs
- supporting local businesses
- maintaining a welcoming environment

Tourism is a major part of Shediac's identity, and managing it effectively is an ongoing conversation.

Community Services and Recreation

Shediac residents value strong community services, including:

- parks and green spaces
- trails and outdoor recreation
- sports facilities
- community programs
- youth and senior services
- cultural and community events

These services contribute to health, connection, and community pride.

Environmental Considerations

Shediac's coastal location makes environmental stewardship an important topic. Residents often discuss:

- shoreline protection
- climate resilience
- water quality
- sustainable development
- green spaces and natural areas
- waste reduction and recycling

Environmental decisions have long-term impacts on the town's future.

Housing and Affordability

Like many communities, Shediac faces questions about:

- housing availability
- rental options
- affordability
- development patterns
- the balance between seasonal and year-round housing

These issues affect families, seniors, and workers across the community.

Traffic and Mobility

As the town grows and tourism increases, mobility becomes a key concern. Residents often raise questions about:

- traffic flow
- pedestrian safety
- cycling infrastructure
- parking availability
- accessibility for seniors and people with disabilities

Mobility affects how residents move through their community every day.

Why These Issues Matter

These topics appear in almost every municipal election because they shape:

- quality of life

- long-term planning
- financial decisions
- community identity
- resident satisfaction

Understanding these issues helps voters evaluate candidate priorities and think about the future of Shediac in a clear, informed way.

14. How Shediac’s Council Makes Decisions

Municipal councils make decisions that shape the community’s future – from infrastructure investments to recreation priorities to zoning changes. But many residents are unsure how these decisions are made, who is involved, and what steps are required. Understanding the process helps voters see how their elected officials work on their behalf.

This chapter explains the decision-making process in a simple, transparent way.

Council Meetings: Where Decisions Begin

Council meetings are the primary setting for municipal decision-making. These meetings are:

- scheduled regularly
- open to the public
- guided by formal procedures
- recorded for transparency

During meetings, councillors:

- receive reports
- ask questions
- debate issues
- hear presentations

- vote on motions

Every major decision goes through this process.

The Role of Staff Reports

Before council makes a decision, municipal staff prepare reports that include:

- background information
- financial implications
- legal considerations
- options and recommendations
- long-term impacts

These reports help councillors make informed, responsible decisions.

Staff provide expertise; council provides leadership and direction.

The Motion and Voting Process

Most decisions follow a clear sequence:

1. A motion is introduced

A councillor formally proposes an action or decision.

2. The motion is seconded

Another councillor supports bringing the motion forward for discussion.

3. Council debates the motion

Councillors ask questions, express concerns, and discuss implications.

4. Amendments may be proposed

Council can adjust the motion to improve clarity or address concerns.

5. A vote is taken

Each councillor votes “in favour” or “against.”
The mayor votes as well.

6. The decision is recorded

The result becomes part of the public record.

A simple majority determines the outcome.

The Importance of Committees

Many issues are reviewed by committees before reaching council. Committees may focus on:

- finance
- recreation
- planning and development
- public works
- tourism
- community services

Committees study issues in greater detail and make recommendations to council.

This helps ensure decisions are thoughtful and well-informed.

Public Input and Engagement

Residents play an important role in the decision-making process. Public input may be gathered through:

- public hearings
- open houses
- surveys
- written submissions
- delegations at council meetings
- consultations on major projects

Council considers this input when making decisions, especially on issues that affect neighbourhoods or long-term planning.

Transparency and Accountability

Municipal decision-making is designed to be transparent. This includes:

- public agendas
- published minutes
- recorded votes
- open meetings
- financial reporting
- public access to bylaws and policies

Transparency helps residents understand how decisions are made and why.

How Council Works as a Team

Council is a collective body.
No single councillor has individual authority outside of council decisions.

Effective councils:

- listen to each other
- respect differing viewpoints
- focus on solutions
- collaborate with administration
- make decisions based on the community's best interest

Teamwork is essential for good governance.

Why Understanding the Process Matters

When residents understand how decisions are made, they can:

- evaluate candidates more effectively
- participate more confidently
- follow issues with clarity
- understand the limits and responsibilities of council
- appreciate the complexity of municipal governance

An informed community strengthens local democracy.

15. How Residents Can Participate Beyond Election Day

Voting is an important act of civic engagement — but it is only one part of participating in local democracy.

Residents have many opportunities to stay involved, share their perspectives, and help shape the future of Shediac throughout the year. Municipal government works best when the community stays engaged, informed, and connected.

This chapter outlines practical, accessible ways residents can participate beyond election day.

Stay Informed About Council Decisions

One of the simplest ways to stay engaged is to follow what council is doing. Residents can:

- read council agendas and minutes
- watch or attend council meetings
- follow municipal updates
- stay aware of upcoming decisions

Understanding what's happening at Town Hall helps residents feel connected and informed.

Attend Council Meetings

Council meetings are open to the public. Attending in person or watching online allows residents to:

- hear discussions firsthand
- understand how decisions are made
- see how councillors approach issues
- stay informed about upcoming projects

Even attending occasionally can make a meaningful difference in understanding local governance.

Participate in Public Consultations

The town often seeks public input on:

- zoning changes
- major projects
- recreation planning
- environmental initiatives
- budget priorities
- community development

Residents can participate by:

- attending open houses
- completing surveys
- submitting written feedback
- speaking at public hearings

Public input helps shape decisions that affect the entire community.

Join Committees or Volunteer Groups

Many municipalities rely on committees and volunteer groups to support community initiatives. These may include:

- recreation committees
- environmental advisory groups
- cultural or heritage committees
- community event planning groups
- neighbourhood associations

Joining a committee is a powerful way to contribute directly to the town's development.

Connect With Your Councillor

Councillors are elected to represent residents. Reaching out to your councillor can help:

- raise concerns
- ask questions
- share ideas
- provide feedback
- stay informed about local issues

Respectful, constructive communication strengthens the relationship between residents and their representatives.

Participate in Community Events

Community events are more than social gatherings — they are opportunities to:

- meet neighbours
- connect with local leaders
- learn about town initiatives
- support local organizations

- build community pride

Active participation helps strengthen the social fabric of Shediac.

Support Local Organizations and Initiatives

Residents can contribute by supporting:

- local charities
- youth programs
- senior services
- environmental groups
- cultural organizations
- volunteer fire services
- community improvement projects

These groups play an essential role in building a vibrant, resilient community.

Share Ideas and Solutions

Residents often have valuable insights into:

- neighbourhood needs
- safety concerns
- recreation opportunities
- environmental priorities
- community improvements

Sharing ideas — respectfully and constructively — helps council and staff understand what matters most to the community.

Stay Engaged With Long-Term Planning

Municipalities regularly update long-term plans, such as:

- strategic plans
- recreation master plans
- transportation plans
- environmental strategies
- growth and development plans

These plans shape the town's future for years to come. Resident participation ensures the community's voice is reflected in long-term decisions.

Why Participation Matters

When residents stay engaged beyond election day, the entire community benefits. Participation:

- strengthens local democracy
- improves decision-making
- builds trust and transparency
- ensures diverse voices are heard
- creates a stronger, more connected town

Local government works best when residents and elected officials work together.

Part V

– Preparing to Vote

16. How to Bring Concerns to the Town Respectfully and Effectively

Every resident has the right to raise concerns, ask questions, and seek clarity from their municipal government. But *how* a concern is brought forward can make a significant difference in how quickly it is understood, addressed, and resolved. This chapter

gives residents a simple, respectful, and effective approach to communicating with the Town of Shediac. The goal is not to “fight City Hall” — it’s to work with the people who serve the community.

Start With the Right Department

Most issues are handled more quickly when they go directly to the department responsible for them. For example:

- **Roads, sidewalks, snow removal** → Public Works
- **Water, sewer, drainage** → Engineering or Public Works
- **Parks, trails, recreation programs** → Recreation and Community Services
- **Permits, zoning, development** → Planning and Development
- **Tourism or seasonal activity** → Tourism Department
- **Bylaw concerns** → Bylaw Enforcement

Going directly to the right team avoids delays and ensures your concern reaches the people who can act on it.

Be Clear and Specific

When raising a concern, clarity helps staff understand the issue quickly. Include:

- the location
- the date or timeframe
- what happened
- why it matters

- any safety concerns
- any photos (if helpful and appropriate)

Clear information leads to faster, more accurate responses.

Use Respectful, Constructive Language

Municipal staff and councillors are more effective when communication is respectful. Constructive language:

- keeps the conversation focused
- reduces misunderstandings
- encourages collaboration
- builds trust

Respectful communication does not mean being passive — it means being clear, calm, and solution-focused.

Understand the Difference Between Urgent and Important

Some issues require immediate attention (e.g., a fallen tree blocking a road).

Others are important but not emergencies (e.g., long-term drainage concerns).

Understanding this difference helps set realistic expectations for response times.

Give Staff Time to Investigate

Many issues require:

- site visits
- coordination between departments
- review of bylaws or policies

- consultation with experts
- budget considerations

A thoughtful response takes time.

Patience allows staff to provide accurate, informed solutions.

Follow Up Politely if Needed

If you haven't received an update after a reasonable amount of time, it is appropriate to follow up. A simple, polite message such as:

“I'm following up on the concern I raised on [date]. Could you please provide an update when available?”

keeps communication open without creating unnecessary tension.

Know When to Contact Your Councillor

Your councillor is not the person who fixes operational issues — but they *are* the person who:

- helps you understand processes
- brings forward broader concerns
- ensures resident voices are heard
- connects you with the right department
- follows up on unresolved issues

Contact your councillor when:

- you've tried the appropriate department and need clarity
- the issue affects more than one household
- the concern relates to policy, planning, or long-term decisions
- you want to share ideas or feedback

Councillors are there to represent you — not to replace staff, but to support communication.

Avoid Social Media as the First Step

Posting concerns on social media may feel quick, but it often:

- slows down the resolution
- spreads incomplete information
- creates confusion
- makes it harder for staff to track the issue
- invites unproductive debate

Direct communication with the Town is almost always more effective.

Recognize That Some Issues Require Council Decisions

Certain concerns — such as zoning changes, major projects, or policy updates — cannot be resolved by staff alone. These require:

- reports
- public input
- committee review
- council debate
- formal votes

Understanding this process helps set realistic expectations.

Celebrate When Things Go Well

Municipal staff work hard, often behind the scenes. Acknowledging good service:

- builds positive relationships
- boosts morale
- encourages continued excellence
- strengthens community connection

A simple “thank you” goes a long way.

Why This Approach Works

Respectful, clear, and constructive communication:

- leads to faster solutions
- reduces frustration
- strengthens trust
- improves collaboration
- helps the Town serve residents more effectively

When residents and the Town communicate well, the entire community benefits.

17. How to Understand the Town’s Long-Term Plans and Strategies

Municipalities don’t just make decisions for today — they plan years, sometimes decades, into the future.

These long-term plans guide how the town grows, how services evolve, and how the community adapts to changing needs. Understanding these plans helps residents see the bigger picture behind council decisions.

This chapter explains what long-term plans are, why they matter, and how residents can engage with them.

What Are Long-Term Municipal Plans?

Long-term plans are strategic documents that outline the town’s vision, priorities, and direction for the future. They help guide decisions about:

- infrastructure
- recreation
- land use
- environmental protection
- economic development
- transportation
- community services

These plans ensure that decisions are not made in isolation but fit into a larger, coordinated strategy.

Types of Long-Term Plans You May See in Shediac

While the exact documents may vary, most municipalities develop plans such as:

1. Strategic Plans

High-level documents that outline the town’s vision, mission, and long-term priorities.

2. Municipal Plans (Land Use Plans)

These guide zoning, development, density, and how land is used across the community.

3. Recreation Master Plans

Plans for parks, trails, sports facilities, and community programs.

4. Transportation or Mobility Plans

Strategies for roads, sidewalks, cycling routes, traffic flow, and accessibility.

5. Environmental or Climate Plans

Guides for sustainability, shoreline protection, and environmental resilience.

6. Capital Investment Plans

Long-term infrastructure priorities, including roads, water systems, and major facilities.

Each plan focuses on a different aspect of community life, but together they shape the town's future.

Why Long-Term Plans Matter

Long-term plans help the town:

- prepare for growth
- manage infrastructure responsibly
- protect the environment
- support recreation and community life
- guide development decisions
- plan budgets more effectively
- ensure fairness and consistency

Without long-term planning, decisions would be reactive instead of strategic.

How These Plans Are Created

Long-term plans typically follow a structured process:

1. Research and Data Collection

Staff and consultants gather information about current conditions, trends, and future needs.

2. Public Engagement

Residents are invited to share their ideas through:

- surveys
- open houses

- workshops
- online consultations
- public meetings

3. Drafting the Plan

Staff prepare a draft based on research and community input.

4. Review and Revision

The draft is refined through feedback from:

- residents
- committees
- council
- subject-matter experts

5. Council Approval

Council reviews the final version and votes to adopt it.

6. Implementation

The plan guides decisions, budgets, and priorities for years to come.

How Residents Can Understand These Plans

Long-term plans can be detailed, but residents can focus on key sections:

- the vision and goals
- the major priorities
- the timeline
- the financial implications
- the impact on neighbourhoods
- the strategies for growth or improvement

You don't need to read every page — understanding the big picture is enough.

How Long-Term Plans Affect Daily Life

These plans influence:

- where new homes are built
- how traffic flows
- where sidewalks and trails go
- how parks are developed
- how the town prepares for climate impacts
- what services are expanded or improved
- how taxes are managed over time

Long-term plans shape the community residents experience every day.

How Residents Can Influence Long-Term Plans

Residents have more influence than they may realize. You can:

- participate in consultations
- attend open houses
- complete surveys
- speak at public meetings
- share ideas with your councillor
- provide written feedback

Public input is a key part of the planning process.

Why Understanding Long-Term Plans Helps Voters

When residents understand long-term plans, they can better evaluate:

- whether candidate priorities align with the town's direction
- whether promises are realistic
- how decisions fit into broader strategies
- how the town is preparing for the future

Long-term plans provide context — and context leads to informed voting.

18. How to Read Shediac's Annual Budget Without Feeling Overwhelmed

Municipal budgets can look complicated at first glance — full of tables, numbers, and technical terms. But once you understand the structure, the budget becomes a clear, accessible document that shows how the town plans to spend money and what its priorities are for the year.

This chapter helps residents read the budget with confidence, focusing on the parts that matter most.

Start With the Big Picture

Before diving into the details, look for the sections that explain:

- the town's priorities for the year
- major projects
- financial challenges
- long-term goals
- key investments

These sections give you context and help you understand *why* certain decisions were made.

Understand the Two Main Parts of the Budget

Municipal budgets are divided into two major sections:

1. Operating Budget

This covers the day-to-day costs of running the town, such as:

- salaries
- snow removal
- utilities
- recreation programs
- maintenance
- general services

Think of it as the town’s “monthly expenses.”

2. Capital Budget

This covers long-term investments and major projects, such as:

- road reconstruction
- water and sewer upgrades
- new buildings or facilities
- major equipment purchases

Think of it as the town’s “long-term investments.”

Understanding this distinction makes the rest of the budget much easier to follow.

Look at Where the Money Comes From

The revenue section shows how the town funds its services. Key sources include:

- property taxes
- user fees
- provincial transfers
- federal grants (for specific projects)
- interest income

- cost-sharing agreements

Municipalities cannot run deficits, so revenue must match expenses.

Look at Where the Money Goes

The expense section shows how the town allocates funds. Major categories often include:

- public works and infrastructure
- protective services
- recreation and community services
- planning and development
- administration
- tourism and economic development
- debt repayment

These categories reflect the town's priorities and obligations.

Pay Attention to Major Changes From the Previous Year

Budgets often include comparisons to the previous year. Look for:

- increases or decreases in spending
- new projects
- changes in revenue
- shifts in priorities

These changes help you understand what's new and why.

Look for Explanations, Not Just Numbers

Good budgets include notes that explain:

- why certain costs increased
- why certain projects are needed
- how decisions support long-term plans
- how the town is managing financial pressures

These explanations make the numbers meaningful.

Focus on the Sections That Matter Most to You

You don't need to read every page. Instead, focus on:

- areas that affect your neighbourhood
- services you use regularly
- major projects planned for the year
- long-term financial strategies
- tax rate changes

This helps you understand how the budget impacts your daily life.

Understand That Some Costs Are Fixed

Municipalities have obligations they must fund every year, such as:

- debt repayment
- essential services
- infrastructure maintenance
- legislated requirements

These fixed costs limit how much flexibility the town has in other areas.

Look for Long-Term Planning

Budgets often include multi-year projections or references to long-term plans. These sections show:

- how the town is preparing for growth
- how infrastructure will be maintained
- how financial stability is being protected
- how major projects will be funded over time

Long-term planning is essential for responsible budgeting.

Don't Be Afraid to Ask Questions

Residents can ask:

- what certain terms mean
- why certain decisions were made
- how projects were prioritized
- how the budget supports long-term goals

Asking questions is part of participating in local democracy.

Why Understanding the Budget Matters

When residents understand the budget, they can:

- evaluate candidate promises more effectively
- understand how decisions affect taxes and services
- participate more confidently in public discussions
- see how the town is planning for the future

The budget is not just a financial document — it's a roadmap for the community.

19. How Shediac Balances Growth With Quality of Life

Shediac is a growing community — and growth brings both opportunities and challenges. New residents, new businesses, and new developments can strengthen the local economy and support community services.

At the same time, growth must be managed carefully to protect the character, environment, and quality of life that residents value.

This chapter explains how municipalities like Shediac work to balance growth with the needs of the community.

Why Growth Happens

Growth occurs for several reasons:

- Shediac’s coastal location and natural beauty
- strong tourism activity
- proximity to Moncton
- a desirable quality of life
- new housing developments
- increased interest from retirees and families

Growth is not inherently positive or negative — what matters is how it is planned and managed.

The Benefits of Growth

When managed well, growth can:

- support local businesses
- increase the tax base
- fund community services
- attract new amenities
- create jobs
- strengthen the local economy

- support recreation and cultural programs

Growth can help the town thrive – if it aligns with community priorities.

The Challenges of Growth

Growth also brings pressures, such as:

- increased traffic
- higher demand for services
- pressure on infrastructure
- housing availability and affordability
- environmental impacts
- seasonal congestion
- changes to neighbourhood character

These challenges require thoughtful planning and long-term strategies.

How Municipalities Manage Growth

Municipalities use several tools to guide growth responsibly:

1. Municipal Plans and Zoning Bylaws

These documents determine:

- where development can occur
- what types of buildings are allowed
- how land is used
- how neighbourhoods evolve

Zoning is one of the most important tools for shaping growth.

2. Infrastructure Planning

Growth must align with the town's ability to support:

- water and sewer systems
- roads and sidewalks
- stormwater management
- recreation facilities
- emergency services

Infrastructure capacity is a major factor in development decisions.

3. Environmental Protection Measures

Coastal communities must consider:

- shoreline resilience
- flood risks
- habitat protection
- sustainable development practices

Environmental planning protects the town's long-term future.

4. Traffic and Mobility Planning

As the town grows, mobility strategies help manage:

- traffic flow
- pedestrian safety
- cycling routes
- parking
- accessibility

These plans help maintain safe, efficient movement throughout the community.

5. Public Engagement

Residents play a key role in shaping growth. Municipalities gather input through:

- consultations
- surveys

- public hearings
- open houses

Community feedback helps ensure growth reflects local values.

Balancing Tourism With Resident Needs

Tourism is a major part of Shediac's identity, especially in the summer. Balancing tourism with year-round quality of life requires:

- managing traffic and parking
- protecting beaches and natural areas
- supporting local businesses
- maintaining peaceful neighbourhoods
- planning for seasonal fluctuations

Tourism and resident needs can coexist when managed thoughtfully.

Protecting Community Character

Growth should enhance — not replace — what residents love about Shediac. Municipal planning often focuses on:

- preserving neighbourhood identity
- maintaining green spaces
- supporting community events
- encouraging walkability
- protecting cultural and natural assets

Quality of life is a central consideration in every major decision.

Why This Balance Matters

A well-balanced approach to growth ensures that Shediac remains:

- welcoming
- vibrant
- sustainable
- safe
- connected
- community-focused

Growth should support the town's future without compromising the qualities that make it special today.

20. How Shediac Supports Tourism While Protecting Resident Interests

Tourism is a major part of Shediac's identity. Each summer, thousands of visitors come to enjoy the beaches, restaurants, trails, and events that make the town unique. Tourism strengthens the local economy, supports jobs, and helps fund community services.

At the same time, Shediac is home to thousands of year-round residents who value peace, safety, and a strong sense of community. Balancing these two realities is one of the town's most important responsibilities.

This chapter explains how municipalities like Shediac support tourism while protecting the interests of residents.

Why Tourism Matters

Tourism brings significant benefits to the community, including:

- economic activity for local businesses
- seasonal jobs for youth and families
- increased visibility for the town

- funding for community programs and services
- support for restaurants, shops, and attractions
- opportunities for cultural and recreational events

Tourism helps keep the town vibrant and economically resilient.

The Challenges of Tourism

Tourism also creates pressures, especially during peak season. Residents often experience:

- increased traffic
- parking shortages
- noise in certain areas
- crowded public spaces
- pressure on beaches and parks
- higher demand for municipal services

These challenges require thoughtful planning and ongoing management.

How Municipalities Balance Tourism and Resident Needs

Municipalities use a variety of tools and strategies to ensure tourism remains positive and sustainable.

1. Seasonal Traffic and Parking Management

To reduce congestion and improve safety, towns may implement:

- designated parking zones
- traffic flow adjustments
- pedestrian-friendly areas
- seasonal signage

- enforcement of parking bylaws

These measures help maintain order during busy months.

2. Investment in Infrastructure

Tourism increases demand on:

- roads
- sidewalks
- washrooms
- waste collection
- beach facilities
- public spaces

Municipalities plan and invest in infrastructure to support both residents and visitors.

3. Protection of Beaches and Natural Areas

Coastal communities must protect:

- dunes
- shoreline ecosystems
- water quality
- sensitive habitats

Environmental stewardship ensures that natural assets remain healthy for residents and visitors alike.

4. Clear Bylaws and Enforcement

Bylaws help maintain:

- noise control
- parking rules
- beach safety
- property standards
- responsible behaviour

Enforcement focuses on education first, penalties second.

5. Support for Local Businesses

Tourism helps local businesses thrive, and municipalities may support them through:

- events and festivals
- marketing partnerships
- improved public spaces
- seasonal infrastructure

A strong local economy benefits residents year-round.

6. Community Engagement

Residents are encouraged to share feedback on:

- tourism impacts
- seasonal challenges
- proposed improvements
- long-term planning

Public input helps shape balanced, community-focused decisions.

How Tourism Supports Year-Round Quality of Life

Tourism revenue helps fund:

- recreation programs
- parks and trails
- community events
- infrastructure upgrades
- cultural initiatives
- public services

Even residents who don't participate in tourism benefit from the services it helps support.

Why Balance Is Essential

A healthy balance ensures that Shediac remains:

- welcoming to visitors
- peaceful and enjoyable for residents
- environmentally responsible
- economically strong
- community-focused
- sustainable for the long term

Tourism and resident interests are not opposites — they are two parts of the same community story.

21. How Shediac Works With the Province and the Region

Municipalities do not operate in isolation. While Shediac has authority over many local services, it also depends on strong relationships with the Province of New Brunswick and with regional partners.

These relationships help the town deliver services, access funding, plan for growth, and address issues that cross municipal boundaries.

This chapter explains how Shediac collaborates with other levels of government and why these partnerships matter.

Why Municipalities Work With the Province

In New Brunswick, municipalities are created by provincial legislation. This means:

- the Province sets the legal framework for municipal governance

- municipalities must follow provincial laws and regulations
- certain responsibilities are shared between the two levels
- funding for some programs comes from the Province

Municipalities have autonomy, but they operate within a provincial system.

Areas Where Shediac Works Closely With the Province

1. Infrastructure Funding

Large projects — such as water systems, wastewater upgrades, or major roads — often require:

- provincial grants
- cost-sharing agreements
- approval processes

These partnerships help municipalities complete projects that would be too expensive to fund alone.

2. Policing and Public Safety

In many communities, policing is delivered through provincial or RCMP contracts. Municipalities collaborate on:

- service levels
- budgeting
- community safety priorities

3. Land Use and Planning Legislation

Municipal planning must follow provincial laws related to:

- zoning
- development

- environmental protection
- building codes

The Province sets the rules; municipalities apply them locally.

4. Emergency Management

During storms, floods, or emergencies, municipalities coordinate with:

- Emergency Measures Organization (EMO)
- provincial departments
- regional partners

This ensures a unified, effective response.

5. Environmental Protection

Coastal communities like Shediac work with the Province on:

- shoreline resilience
- water quality
- climate adaptation
- environmental regulations

Environmental issues often cross municipal boundaries.

Why Regional Collaboration Matters

Shediac is part of a broader region that includes:

- neighbouring municipalities
- rural districts
- regional service commissions
- shared infrastructure networks

Many issues are regional by nature and require cooperation.

Areas Where Shediac Collaborates Regionally

1. Solid Waste and Recycling

Waste management is often handled through regional service commissions, ensuring:

- cost efficiency
- consistent standards
- shared facilities

2. Regional Planning and Development

Growth in one community affects others. Regional planning helps coordinate:

- transportation
- housing
- economic development
- environmental protection

3. Recreation and Community Services

Some facilities or programs serve multiple communities. Regional collaboration helps:

- share costs
- expand access
- avoid duplication

4. Tourism Promotion

Tourism is regional. Visitors often explore:

- Shediac
- Moncton
- Dieppe
- surrounding coastal areas

Regional marketing strengthens the entire area.

5. Emergency Services

Fire services, emergency response, and mutual aid agreements ensure communities can support each other when needed.

How These Partnerships Benefit Residents

Collaboration helps Shediac:

- access funding for major projects
- improve service quality
- reduce costs through shared resources
- coordinate long-term planning
- respond effectively to emergencies
- protect the environment
- support regional economic growth

Partnerships make the town stronger, safer, and more resilient.

Why Understanding These Relationships Matters

When residents understand how Shediac works with the Province and the region, they can better appreciate:

- why certain decisions require provincial approval
- why some projects take time
- how funding is secured
- how regional services operate
- how collaboration strengthens the community

Local government is part of a larger system — and strong relationships help the town serve residents more effectively.

22. How to Stay Informed During an Election Without Feeling Overwhelmed

Elections bring a lot of information — signs, flyers, social media posts, conversations, interviews, debates, and news updates. It's easy to feel overloaded or unsure where to focus.

The good news is that staying informed doesn't require following everything. With a simple, calm approach, residents can stay grounded and confident throughout the election period.

This chapter gives residents a clear, stress-free way to stay informed without feeling overwhelmed.

Start With Official Sources

The most reliable information comes from official, accountable sources. These include:

- **Elections New Brunswick** (voting rules, dates, locations)
- **The Town of Shediac** (public notices, council information)
- **Candidate websites or official pages** (platforms, priorities, contact info)

These sources provide clear, factual information without speculation.

Limit the Number of Sources You Follow

You don't need to follow every page, group, or conversation. Choose a small number of trusted sources, such as:

- one or two local news outlets
- the official pages of candidates you want to learn about
- the Elections NB website

A few reliable sources are better than dozens of noisy ones.

Avoid Relying on Social Media Comments

Social media can be helpful, but it can also:

- spread rumours
- amplify misunderstandings
- encourage emotional reactions
- mix opinions with facts

Comments sections rarely provide reliable information. Use them cautiously and always verify with official sources.

Focus on What Matters Most to You

You don't need to follow every issue. Instead, focus on:

- the services you use
- the neighbourhood you live in
- the values you care about
- the long-term direction of the town

This keeps your attention on what's meaningful rather than everything at once.

Set a Healthy Information Pace

You don't need to check election updates every day. A simple rhythm works well:

- check once or twice a week
- read candidate platforms at your own pace
- attend one event or watch one meeting if you're interested

A steady, calm pace prevents information overload.

Look for Clarity, Not Volume

Good information is:

- clear
- respectful
- factual
- easy to understand

If something feels confusing, dramatic, or emotionally charged, pause and verify before accepting it as true.

Ask Candidates Directly

Municipal elections are personal. You can:

- send a message
- ask a question at an event
- speak to candidates at your door
- request clarification on an issue

Direct communication is often the fastest way to get accurate information.

Avoid Election Stress by Staying Grounded

Elections can sometimes feel tense, but you can stay grounded by:

- taking breaks from social media
- focusing on facts, not speculation
- remembering that municipal elections are community-focused
- keeping conversations respectful and calm

A grounded approach helps you stay informed without feeling overwhelmed.

Trust Yourself

You don't need to be an expert to make a good decision. You simply need:

- clear information
- a sense of what matters to you
- an understanding of the role
- confidence in your judgment

Municipal elections are about choosing the person who best reflects your values and approach to community leadership.

Why This Approach Works

A calm, focused, intentional approach helps residents:

- stay informed without stress
- avoid misinformation
- make confident decisions
- stay connected to the community
- participate in a healthy, positive way

Elections should empower people — not overwhelm them.

23. How to Talk About Elections With Friends and Neighbours (Without Conflict)

Elections bring out strong opinions — and that's a good thing. It means people care about their community. But in a small town like Shediac, relationships matter just as much as ideas. Healthy conversations help strengthen community bonds, even when people disagree.

This chapter gives residents simple, respectful ways to talk about elections without creating tension or conflict.

Start With Curiosity, Not Assumptions

People often have good reasons for their views. Instead of assuming, try asking:

- “What matters most to you in this election?”
- “What issues are you thinking about?”
- “What’s been your experience with this topic?”

Curiosity opens the door to understanding.

Focus on Issues, Not Personalities

It’s easy for conversations to drift toward:

- who someone likes
- who someone dislikes
- who someone “would never vote for”

But focusing on issues keeps the conversation grounded and respectful. Try shifting the conversation to:

- services
- priorities
- long-term planning
- community needs

Issues create common ground.

Share Your Perspective Calmly and Clearly

You don’t need to convince anyone. You can simply say:

- “Here’s what matters to me...”

- “This is how I’m thinking about it...”
- “This issue affects my family because...”

Sharing your perspective is different from trying to win an argument.

Avoid Absolutes and Labels

Phrases like:

- “Everyone knows...”
- “People like you always...”
- “That’s ridiculous...”

shut down conversations. Elections are healthier when people feel respected, even in disagreement.

Recognize That People Have Different Lived Experiences

Someone who works in tourism may see issues differently than someone who works in public works. A senior may have different priorities than a young family.

A long-time resident may see the town differently than someone who moved here recently.

Different experiences lead to different perspectives — and that’s normal.

Know When to Pause the Conversation

If a conversation becomes tense, it’s okay to say:

- “Let’s take a break from this topic.”
- “I think we see this differently, and that’s okay.”
- “I’d rather keep our conversation positive.”

Protecting relationships matters more than winning a debate.

Use “I” Statements Instead of “You” Statements

“I” statements reduce defensiveness:

- “I feel...”
- “I’ve noticed...”
- “I’m concerned about...”

“You” statements can feel accusatory:

- “You don’t understand...”
- “You’re wrong...”
- “You always...”

A small shift in language makes a big difference.

Remember That Disagreement Is Normal

Healthy communities are built on:

- diverse perspectives
- respectful dialogue
- shared values
- common goals

You don’t need to agree on everything to get along.

Keep the Bigger Picture in Mind

After the election:

- neighbours still wave to each other
- kids still play together
- people still meet at the market
- the community still moves forward together

Elections are temporary. Relationships are long-term.

Why This Matters in a Small Town

In a community like Shediac, maintaining respect and connection is essential.

Talking about elections in a healthy way:

- strengthens trust
- reduces tension
- encourages participation
- builds understanding
- supports a positive community atmosphere

Good conversations help build a stronger, more united town.

24. How to Vote in a Municipal Election (Step-by-Step Guide)

Voting in a municipal election is straightforward, but many residents appreciate a clear, simple guide — especially if they haven't voted in a while or are new to the community.

This chapter walks residents through the process step by step, based on the general structure used by Elections New Brunswick.

(Residents should always confirm details with **Elections NB**, as official information may change.)

Step 1: Confirm You Are Eligible to Vote

To vote in a municipal election in New Brunswick, you must:

- be a Canadian citizen
- be at least 18 years old on election day
- live in the municipality (or ward) for the required period before the election

- bring proper identification

Elections NB provides the official eligibility rules, so residents should verify details there.

Step 2: Know Your Ward

Shediac is divided into wards.

Your ward determines which councillor you vote for.

Residents can confirm their ward by:

- checking their voter information card
- visiting the Elections NB website
- contacting Elections NB directly

Knowing your ward ensures you receive the correct ballot.

Step 3: Find Out When and Where to Vote

Elections NB provides:

- advance voting dates
- election day hours
- polling station locations

This information is available through:

- your voter information card
- the Elections NB website
- local notices

Polling stations are assigned based on your address.

Step 4: Bring the Required Identification

To vote, you must bring ID that shows:

- your name
- your address

This can be:

- one piece of government-issued ID with your photo and address
or
- two pieces of ID that together show your name and address

Elections NB provides the official list of acceptable ID.

Step 5: Arrive at Your Polling Station

When you arrive:

- election workers will greet you
- you'll be asked for your ID
- your name will be checked on the voters list
- you'll receive your ballot

The process is quick, respectful, and confidential.

Step 6: Mark Your Ballot

Your ballot will list:

- the candidates running for mayor (if applicable)
- the candidates running for your ward
- any other municipal positions or questions on the ballot

To vote:

- mark an "X" or fill in the circle next to your chosen candidate(s), depending on the ballot format
- follow the instructions carefully
- avoid making extra marks

If you make a mistake, you can ask for a new ballot.

Step 7: Submit Your Ballot

Once your ballot is marked:

- fold it (if required)
- place it in the ballot box or give it to the election worker, depending on the system used

Your vote is confidential and securely counted.

Step 8: Celebrate Your Participation

Voting is one of the most meaningful ways to shape your community.

After voting, many residents:

- encourage friends and neighbours to vote
- share that they voted (without revealing their choice)
- stay informed about election results

Participating strengthens local democracy.

Advance Voting Options

Elections NB typically offers advance voting days for residents who:

- work on election day
- travel
- prefer to vote early
- want to avoid crowds

Advance voting follows the same process as election day.

If You Need Assistance

Residents who need help can:

- ask an election worker for guidance

- bring a support person (following Elections NB rules)
- request accessibility accommodations

Elections NB ensures voting is accessible and respectful for everyone.

Why This Guide Matters

A clear, simple voting process helps residents:

- feel confident
- avoid confusion
- participate fully
- understand their rights
- strengthen their connection to the community

Voting is one of the most powerful ways to shape Shediac's future.

25. What Happens After the Election?

Election day is an important moment, but it's only the beginning of the next chapter for the community. Once the votes are counted and the results are officially confirmed by Elections New Brunswick, a transition process begins.

This process ensures that the new council — whether made up of returning members, new members, or a mix — is ready to serve effectively and responsibly.

This chapter explains what residents can expect after the election.

Official Results Are Confirmed

After polls close, Elections NB counts the ballots. Once the results are officially confirmed:

- the mayor and councillors-elect are declared

- the public is notified
- the transition process begins

Residents should always rely on **Elections NB** for official results.

The New Council Is Sworn In

Before taking office, newly elected officials participate in a swearing-in ceremony. During this ceremony, councillors:

- take an oath of office
- commit to serving the community
- agree to follow the Municipalities Act and the Code of Conduct

This marks the official start of their term.

Orientation and Training Begin

New and returning councillors participate in orientation sessions that cover:

- municipal governance
- roles and responsibilities
- conflict of interest rules
- budgeting and finance
- bylaws and policies
- long-term plans
- how council meetings work
- how to work effectively with staff

This training ensures that every councillor — regardless of experience — begins the term with the same foundational knowledge.

Council Assigns Committees and Responsibilities

Municipal councils often divide responsibilities through committees. After the election, council typically:

- reviews committee structures
- assigns councillors to committees
- establishes priorities for the term

Committees help council study issues in detail and make informed recommendations.

The First Council Meetings Set the Tone

Early meetings often include:

- procedural decisions
- committee appointments
- confirmation of meeting schedules
- review of ongoing projects
- updates from municipal staff

These meetings help the new council establish a collaborative, productive working environment.

Ongoing Projects Continue

Municipal work does not pause during elections. After the election:

- infrastructure projects continue
- recreation programs operate as usual
- public works and services remain active
- planning and development processes move forward

The new council receives updates on ongoing initiatives and may adjust priorities over time.

Residents Can Reconnect With Their Councillor

After the election, residents can:

- reach out to their councillor
- share concerns or ideas
- ask questions about upcoming decisions
- participate in consultations
- stay informed about council activities

Elections are a moment of decision — but community engagement continues year-round.

The Community Moves Forward Together

Regardless of the election outcome, the community continues to:

- work together
- attend events
- support local businesses
- participate in programs
- share public spaces
- build the future of Shediac

Elections are temporary. Community is permanent.

Why Understanding This Process Matters

Knowing what happens after the election helps residents:

- feel confident in the transition

- understand how council prepares for its work
- stay engaged with local government
- follow early decisions and priorities
- appreciate the structure behind municipal leadership

A clear transition builds trust and strengthens local democracy.

26. How to Stay Engaged With Your Councillor Throughout the Term

Voting is only the beginning of the relationship between residents and their councillor. Over the next four years, councillors make decisions that affect neighbourhoods, services, infrastructure, recreation, and long-term planning.

Staying engaged helps residents feel informed, heard, and connected to the direction of their community.

This chapter gives residents simple, respectful ways to stay engaged with their councillor throughout the term.

Reach Out When You Have Questions or Need Clarity

Councillors are there to help residents understand:

- how decisions are made
- what certain policies mean
- how to navigate municipal processes
- who to contact for specific issues

You don't need a "big" reason to reach out. A simple question is enough.

Share Ideas and Suggestions

Residents often have valuable insights about:

- neighbourhood improvements
- safety concerns
- recreation opportunities
- environmental priorities
- community events
- long-term planning

Sharing ideas helps councillors understand what matters most to the people they represent.

Stay Informed About Council Decisions

You can stay engaged by:

- reading council agendas
- watching meetings online
- reviewing minutes
- following municipal updates
- attending public consultations

Even checking in once in a while helps you stay connected to what's happening.

Participate in Public Consultations

When the town seeks input on:

- zoning changes
- major projects
- recreation plans
- environmental initiatives
- budget priorities

...your voice matters.

Public consultations are one of the most direct ways to influence decisions.

Use Respectful, Constructive Communication

Councillors are more effective when communication is:

- clear
- calm
- respectful
- solution-focused

You can express concerns firmly while still being constructive.

Respect builds trust — and trust leads to better outcomes.

Understand What Councillors Can and Cannot Do

Councillors:

- represent residents
- ask questions on their behalf
- bring forward concerns
- participate in decisions
- help explain processes
- work with staff to understand issues

Councillors **do not**:

- direct staff operations
- make decisions alone
- override bylaws or provincial laws
- approve projects individually

Understanding these boundaries helps set realistic expectations.

Follow Up When Needed

If you've raised a concern and haven't heard back after a reasonable time, it's okay to follow up politely. A simple message like:

“Just checking in on the update from last week — thank you.”

keeps communication open without pressure.

Stay Engaged in a Way That Feels Comfortable

Engagement doesn't have to be formal. You can:

- attend a community event
- stop to chat at the market
- send an email
- participate in a survey
- join a committee
- ask a question at a meeting

Every form of engagement strengthens the connection between residents and their representative.

Celebrate Progress and Good Work

Residents often reach out when something goes wrong — but acknowledging when things go well:

- builds positive relationships
- encourages continued excellence
- strengthens community spirit
- supports a healthy civic culture

A simple “thank you” can have a big impact.

Why Staying Engaged Matters

When residents stay engaged throughout the term, the entire community benefits. Engagement:

- improves decision-making
- strengthens trust
- ensures diverse voices are heard
- helps councillors understand real needs
- builds a more connected, informed community

Local democracy thrives when residents and councillors stay in conversation.

27. How to Evaluate Your Councillor's Performance Over Four Years

Municipal councillors serve four-year terms. During that time, they participate in decisions that affect infrastructure, recreation, development, budgeting, long-term planning, and the overall direction of the community.

Evaluating a councillor's performance is not about whether you agree with every decision — it's about whether they fulfilled their responsibilities with integrity, professionalism, and a commitment to the community.

This chapter gives residents a clear, fair, and balanced way to evaluate their councillor's performance over a full term.

1. Did They Communicate Clearly and Respectfully?

A good councillor:

- responds to residents in a timely manner
- communicates respectfully
- explains processes and decisions

- provides accurate information
- listens actively

Communication is one of the strongest indicators of effective representation.

2. Did They Participate Actively in Council Meetings?

Residents can look at:

- attendance records
- participation in discussions
- preparedness for meetings
- engagement with reports and presentations
- willingness to ask questions

Active participation shows commitment to the role.

3. Did They Demonstrate Professionalism and Integrity?

Professionalism includes:

- respectful behaviour
- adherence to the Code of Conduct
- transparency
- ethical decision-making
- avoiding conflicts of interest

Integrity builds trust — and trust is essential in local government.

4. Did They Understand the Role?

A councillor's role is to:

- set direction

- make policy decisions
- represent residents
- collaborate with council
- work with staff appropriately

A councillor **does not**:

- manage staff
- make operational decisions
- act alone on behalf of the town

Understanding the role is key to effective leadership.

5. Did They Contribute to Long-Term Planning?

Residents can evaluate whether their councillor:

- engaged with strategic plans
- considered long-term impacts
- supported responsible budgeting
- understood infrastructure needs
- balanced growth with quality of life

Long-term thinking is essential for sustainable community development.

6. Did They Listen to Residents?

Listening includes:

- acknowledging concerns
- seeking input
- attending community events
- being accessible
- considering diverse perspectives

A councillor doesn't need to agree with every resident – but they should listen to all.

7. Did They Work Well With Other Councillors?

Council is a team.

Effective councillors:

- collaborate respectfully
- debate constructively
- avoid unnecessary conflict
- focus on solutions
- support healthy decision-making

A councillor's ability to work with others directly affects council's effectiveness.

8. Did They Make Decisions Based on Facts and Community Needs?

Residents can look at whether their councillor:

- asked thoughtful questions
- considered staff reports
- evaluated evidence
- balanced short- and long-term needs
- avoided decisions based solely on emotion or pressure

Good governance is grounded in facts, not slogans.

9. Did They Represent the Whole Community?

A councillor represents:

- their ward
- the entire town

- residents with different backgrounds
- people with different priorities

Effective councillors consider the broader community impact of every decision.

10. Did They Demonstrate Growth Over the Term?

No councillor starts as an expert.

Residents can look at whether their councillor:

- learned the role
- improved communication
- deepened their understanding of issues
- became more effective over time

Growth is a sign of commitment and responsibility.

Why This Evaluation Matters

Evaluating a councillor's performance helps residents:

- make informed decisions in the next election
- understand the responsibilities of the role
- recognize effective leadership
- hold elected officials accountable
- strengthen local democracy

A thoughtful evaluation leads to a stronger, more engaged community.

28. How to Think About the Future of Shediac (Questions to Ask Yourself)

Every election is about the future — not just the next four years, but the next decade and beyond. Shediac is a growing, evolving community with a strong identity

and a unique coastal character. Thinking about the future helps residents make informed decisions, participate meaningfully, and contribute to a shared vision for the town.

This chapter offers simple, reflective questions residents can ask themselves when thinking about the future of Shediac.

1. What Kind of Community Do I Want Shediac to Be?

This is the foundation of long-term thinking. Residents might reflect on whether they want a community that is:

- peaceful and family-focused
- vibrant and tourism-friendly
- environmentally resilient
- economically diverse
- walkable and connected
- balanced between growth and preservation

There is no single “right” answer — only what matters most to each person.

2. How Should Shediac Grow Over the Next 10–20 Years?

Growth is inevitable, but its shape is a choice. Residents can consider:

- where new housing should go
- how dense neighbourhoods should be
- how to balance seasonal and year-round needs
- how to protect community character

Thinking long-term helps guide responsible development.

3. What Services and Amenities Matter Most to Me?

Residents may prioritize:

- parks and trails
- recreation facilities
- community programs
- public works and infrastructure
- environmental protection
- transportation and mobility

Understanding personal priorities helps clarify what kind of leadership they want.

4. How Should Shediac Balance Tourism and Quality of Life?

Tourism is part of Shediac's identity, but so is peaceful, year-round living.

Residents can reflect on:

- how to manage summer traffic
- how to protect beaches and natural areas
- how to support local businesses
- how to maintain neighbourhood tranquility

Balance is key to long-term sustainability.

5. What Kind of Infrastructure Will Shediac Need in the Future?

Infrastructure shapes daily life.

Residents can consider:

- road improvements
- water and sewer upgrades

- stormwater management
- sidewalks and cycling routes
- public spaces and facilities

Long-term planning ensures the town grows responsibly.

6. How Should Shediac Protect Its Environment?

As a coastal community, environmental resilience is essential.

Residents may think about:

- shoreline protection
- climate adaptation
- green spaces
- sustainable development
- water quality

Environmental decisions today shape the town's future.

7. What Values Should Guide Council Decisions?

Values influence leadership.

Residents might reflect on whether they want council to prioritize:

- transparency
- fiscal responsibility
- environmental stewardship
- community engagement
- long-term planning
- fairness and inclusivity

Values help define the kind of leadership a community expects.

8. How Do I Want Shediac to Feel for Future Generations?

This is a powerful question.
Residents can imagine:

- what Shediac should feel like for children growing up today
- what seniors will need in the future
- how newcomers will experience the town
- what legacy the community wants to leave

Thinking generationally leads to thoughtful, responsible choices.

9. What Role Do I Want to Play in Shaping the Future?

Residents can consider:

- staying informed
- participating in consultations
- volunteering
- sharing ideas
- engaging with their councillor
- voting consistently

The future is shaped not only by elected officials, but by the community itself.

Why These Questions Matter

When residents reflect on these questions, they gain:

- clarity about their priorities

- confidence in their decisions
- a deeper understanding of community needs
- a stronger connection to Shediac’s future
- a sense of shared responsibility

A thoughtful community builds a thoughtful future.

29. How to Encourage Others to Participate in Local Democracy

Local democracy is strongest when more people are informed, engaged, and involved. But encouraging others to participate doesn’t mean persuading them how to vote — it means helping them feel confident, welcome, and included in the democratic process.

This chapter gives residents simple, positive ways to encourage friends, neighbours, and family members to participate in local democracy.

Start With a Positive, Welcoming Approach

People respond better to encouragement than pressure.

A simple, friendly approach works best:

- “Are you planning to vote this year?”
- “If you ever want help finding information, I can point you in the right direction.”
- “It’s great when more people get involved.”

The goal is to open the door, not push anyone through it.

Share Why Local Elections Matter to You

People connect with personal stories more than statistics.

You can say:

- “I care because these decisions affect our neighbourhood.”
- “I want to make sure our voice is heard.”
- “Local elections shape the services we use every day.”

Sharing your perspective helps others see why participation matters.

Help People Find Reliable Information

Some people avoid elections because they feel overwhelmed.

You can help by pointing them toward:

- Elections NB (official rules and voting info)
- the Town of Shediac website (council info, public notices)
- candidate platforms (for clarity, not persuasion)

Reliable information builds confidence.

Invite People to Attend an Event or Watch a Meeting

Sometimes participation starts with a small step:

- watching a council meeting online
- attending a public consultation
- going to a community event where candidates are present

Seeing the process firsthand makes it feel more accessible.

Encourage Respectful Conversations

You can model healthy dialogue by:

- listening more than speaking

- avoiding arguments
- focusing on issues, not personalities
- respecting different viewpoints

When conversations feel safe, people are more willing to engage.

Offer Practical Help on Voting Day

Some people don't participate because of simple barriers. You can help by:

- reminding them of voting dates
- helping them find their polling station
- offering a ride
- explaining what ID, they need

Small gestures can make a big difference.

Normalize Asking Questions

Many people hesitate to participate because they feel they "don't know enough."

You can reassure them:

- "You don't need to be an expert."
- "It's normal to have questions."
- "Everyone starts somewhere."

Confidence grows when people feel supported.

Celebrate Participation, Not Choices

Encouraging participation is about strengthening democracy — not influencing outcomes.

You can say:

- "I'm glad you voted."
- "It's great that you got involved."

- “Your voice matters.”

Celebrating participation builds a healthier civic culture.

Lead by Example

People are more likely to participate when they see others doing it.

You can:

- stay informed
- attend consultations
- vote consistently
- engage respectfully
- share your experiences

Leadership is often quiet and personal.

Why Encouraging Participation Matters

When more residents participate:

- decisions reflect the whole community
- democracy becomes stronger
- diverse voices are heard
- trust increases
- the town becomes more connected

Participation is the foundation of a healthy, vibrant community.

30. How to Build a Stronger, More Connected Shediak Together

A strong community is not built by one person, one council, or one election. It is built by the everyday actions of residents, volunteers, local businesses,

community groups, and municipal leaders working together toward shared goals.

Shediac's strength comes from its people — their ideas, their care, their participation, and their commitment to the place they call home.

This chapter brings together the themes of the guide and shows how everyone can contribute to a stronger, more connected Shediac.

Start With Respect and Kindness

Strong communities are built on everyday interactions:

- greeting neighbours
- supporting local businesses
- respecting public spaces
- listening to different perspectives
- treating others with kindness

Small actions create a big impact.

Stay Informed and Engaged

Engagement doesn't require hours of time. Simple steps make a difference:

- reading council updates
- attending a meeting once in a while
- participating in a survey
- asking questions when something is unclear
- sharing ideas respectfully

An informed community is a strong community.

Support Local Organizations and Events

Shediac thrives because of:

- community groups
- cultural organizations
- sports teams
- volunteer networks
- local charities
- seasonal events

Supporting these groups strengthens the social fabric of the town.

Participate in Public Consultations

When residents share their ideas, the town gains:

- diverse perspectives
- local knowledge
- creative solutions
- a clearer understanding of community needs

Public input helps shape decisions that reflect the whole community.

Build Bridges, Not Divisions

Disagreements are normal — but how we handle them matters.

Healthy communities:

- listen respectfully
- avoid personal attacks
- focus on issues, not individuals
- look for common ground
- value different viewpoints

Unity does not mean uniformity.

It means working together despite differences.

Celebrate What Makes Shediac Special

Shediac is known for:

- its coastal beauty
- its vibrant summer season
- its welcoming spirit
- its strong sense of community
- its cultural richness
- its year-round residents who care deeply about the town

Celebrating these strengths builds pride and connection.

Think Long-Term

A strong community looks beyond today. Residents can support long-term success by:

- considering future generations
- supporting responsible planning
- valuing environmental protection
- encouraging sustainable growth
- participating in strategic discussions

Long-term thinking creates stability and resilience.

Support Each Other

A connected community is one where people:

- check in on neighbours
- help during storms
- volunteer when needed
- welcome newcomers

- support families and seniors
- show up for each other

These actions create trust and belonging.

Work With Your Councillor, Not Against Them

Residents and councillors share the same goal: a safe, vibrant, thriving community.

Working together means:

- communicating respectfully
- sharing ideas
- asking questions
- participating in decisions
- offering constructive feedback

Collaboration strengthens local democracy.

Believe in the Power of Community

Shediac's future is shaped by:

- the people who live here
- the values they hold
- the choices they make
- the conversations they have
- the way they show up for each other

When residents participate, care, and collaborate, the entire community becomes stronger.

Conclusion

Why This Matters

A stronger, more connected Shediac is built through:

- respect
- engagement
- collaboration
- long-term thinking
- community pride
- shared responsibility

Everyone has a role to play — and every contribution matters.

Final Closing Message

Shediac is more than a town — it is a community built on connection, care, and shared responsibility. Every resident, every family, every volunteer, every business, and every neighbour plays a role in shaping the place we call home. Local democracy is not something that happens only on election day. It is something we build together, one conversation, one idea, one act of participation at a time.

Understanding how municipal government works gives every resident the confidence to ask questions, share ideas, and engage in decisions that affect daily life. When people feel informed, they feel empowered. When they feel empowered, they participate. And when they participate, the entire community becomes stronger.

This guide was created to help residents feel comfortable, confident, and connected — whether they are voting for the first time, returning after many years, or simply wanting to understand how their town works. The more we understand, the more we can contribute. The more we contribute, the more Shediac thrives.

Shediac's future is not shaped by one person or one council. It is shaped by all of us — through our values, our conversations, our willingness to listen, and our commitment to building a community where everyone feels welcome, respected, and included.

Thank you for caring about your town.
Thank you for participating in local democracy.
Thank you for being part of Shediac's story.

Together, we build a stronger, more connected community — one decision, one conversation, and one neighbourly act at a time.

What Should Be Your Next Step?

Voting is one of the most meaningful ways to shape the future of your community. It is your right, your voice, and your opportunity to influence the direction of the town you call home.

Every resident has a role to play in building a stronger, more connected Shediac — and participating in the municipal election is one of the simplest and most powerful ways to make a difference.

On **May 11, 2026**, you have the chance to help choose the leaders who will represent your values, listen to your concerns, and make decisions that affect daily life in your neighbourhood. Whether you have lived here for decades or recently joined the community, your vote matters.

If you want to help shape Shediac's future — its services, its priorities, its growth, its quality of life — then voting is the best next step you can take. Your participation strengthens local democracy and ensures that the decisions made at council reflect the voices of the people who live here.

Your next step is simple:

Show up. Make your choice. Use your voice.

For official information about where and how to vote, always confirm details with **Elections New Brunswick**.



About the Author

Victor Cormier is a performance coach, educator, and author of more than 120 books on peak performance, mindset, and personal transformation. With a background in crisis-tested leadership — including serving as General Manager of the Pointe-du-Chêne Wharf during major storms and emergency situations — Victor brings a calm, practical, people-first approach to every challenge he faces.

A national karate champion and long-time teacher, Victor has spent decades helping individuals and teams perform at their best. His work blends discipline, empathy, and clear communication — qualities that shape both his coaching and his community involvement.

Victor is deeply connected to Shediac, where he lives, works, and contributes to local initiatives. His passion for community education inspired him to create this guide: a clear, accessible resource to help residents understand how municipal government works and how they can participate with confidence.

He believes that strong communities are built through respect, transparency, and engagement — and that every resident deserves to feel informed, empowered, and included in shaping the future of their town.

Victor Cormier is also a candidate for Shediac Town Council in the May 11, 2026, municipal election. This guide was created as a neutral, educational resource to help residents better understand how municipal

government works and how they can participate with confidence, regardless of their political preferences

If You Have Questions or Want to Learn More

This book was created to help residents feel informed and confident when participating in local democracy. If you have questions about anything in this book or want help understanding how municipal government works, you are welcome to reach out.

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I'm always happy to help residents better understand their town and their local government.

About This Book

Municipal government affects daily life in ways many residents never see. This book offers a clear, accessible explanation of how Shediac's local government works — from council roles and bylaws to budgets, wards, and citizen participation.

Its purpose is simple: help residents feel informed, confident, and engaged in their community.

About the Author



Victor Cormier is a Shediac resident, educator, and author dedicated to making complex topics easy to understand. He created this book as a neutral, citizen focused resource to support stronger community awareness and participation.

Free Digital Copy

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www.VictorCormier.com/Shediac

END
