



Municipality of the District of Argyle

Item: Clare & Argyle Acadian
Tourism Projects

Date: March 9, 2023

VISION

We see Argyle as home to a healthy and thriving rural population. Our municipality promotes and supports economic and social opportunities for the region and engages in the active expression of our unique Acadian heritage. We are a place of choice for rural living and are widely recognized for our warm hospitality and joie de vivre. Surrounded by fresh air and cool ocean breezes, we work and play in the great outdoors. People choose to live in Argyle because of our commitment to each other, to our community, and to our neighbors. Argyle is a place we are proud to call home.

Request:

Larry Peach, Tourism Manager, from the Municipality of Clare approached the Municipality of Argyle to partner on two Acadian tourism projects. The financial request is \$15,000 for each project for a total of \$30,000 that can be divided in the next two fiscal years.

Background Information:

In preparation of the Congres Mondial Acadian 2024 and focusing on building the tourism industry in our municipality, we have bundled two projects in partnership with the Municipality of Clare to leverage our success in getting funding from ACOA.

From the ACOA perspective these projects constitute a positive measure under the Official Language Act and is in keeping with the Government of Canada's commitment to supporting and enhancing the vitality of the official language minority communities.

The goals of the bundled **Clare & Argyle Acadian Tourism project** are:

- Strengthening Acadian product development and clustering through marketing and signage.
- Improving the event-hosting capacity and extending the tourism season.
- Improving accessibility and inclusion at all sites.
- Encouraging the development of enhanced and/or new private sector activity.
- Encouraging repeat visitation to recreational spaces for residents and local tourist attractions and experiences for visitors; some may be inspired by quality of life to relocate to Clare & Argyle.

Project #1 - Refresh the Acadian Sores Interpretive Panels



Established in 2008 by the Regional Development Authority, the Acadian Shores Interpretive Tour is a self-guided itinerary of 31 heritage sites that highlight the rich Acadian history and culture in SW Nova Scotia. 15 are in Clare, 15 are in Argyle, and Cape Forchu in Yarmouth County. Fifteen years later, the map-brochure remains popular with visitor information centres, encouraging visitors to take their time to explore historic sites, museums, churches, wharves, and hidden gems, often located off the beaten path. “Way finding signs” (see above photo) guide visitors to the sites, all with standardized, bilingual interpretive panels.

The Acadian Shores Interpretive Tour will be modernized by updating panels at existing sites and adding new ones to tell the rich Acadian story of SW Nova Scotia. The timing is ideal as the region will welcome an international audience during CMA 2024, and more importantly, for future long-term visitors.

The new Acadian Shores Interpretive Tour will embrace Technology by creating a mobile - responsive Website. In addition, QR codes will be added to all panels, encouraging visitors to explore the further resources. The new panels will also add a “**What to see and do**” section to support and promote local businesses and tourism experiences.

We are also planning to add 6 to 10 “Selfie Stands” at selected sites and incorporate QR codes to engage the younger residents, including students to better appreciate the Acadian Story of our region.

Project #2 - Creation of a strategic investment fund for Clare & Argyle Festivals events

The purpose of creating a strategic investment fund is to support events that will help develop a year-round tourism industry to strengthen communities by increasing higher yields and new revenues for the local service industry. This will be achieved by enhancing existing events and encouraging new festivals and events to **extend the shoulder season** into spring, fall and winter.

By creating bilingual marketing material and promoting regionally, it is expected more francophone residents from Clare and Argyle will attend more events in each others' communities. With the CMA 2024 on the horizon, now is the ideal time for arts and culture groups to develop and enhance events to compliment the CMA. Many of the CMA visitors will be staying in the region for weeks before and after the 10-day CMA and will be looking for things to see and do in the region.

Financial Request

Proposed Budget for Project #1

ACOA	\$150,000
Prov Government	\$20,000
Mun. of Clare	\$15,000
<u>Mun of Argyle</u>	<u>\$15,000</u>
Total	\$200,000

Proposed Budget for Project #2

ACOA	\$150,000
Prov Government	\$20,000
Mun. of Clare	\$15,000
<u>Mun of Argyle</u>	<u>\$15,000</u>
Total	\$200,000

Options

Option 1: Council approve the continuation of our partnership with the Municipality of Clare on these two projects with the financial contribution of \$15,000 per project for the next two fiscal years, for a total of \$30,000.

Option 2: Council denies the financial contribution towards the two projects.

Recommendation

Staff recommends option 1 as we have already partnered with the Municipality of Clare for the Congres Mondial Acadian 2024 (CMA). These projects promote and enhance our partnership by working on Acadian Tourism Initiatives together. These initiatives are expected to increase tourism in the municipality, thus increasing economic growth to the area.

Suggested Motion

Move that Council supports the partnership between the Municipality of Argyle and the Municipality of Clare for the Clare/Argyle Acadian Tourism Projects with a financial contribution of \$15,000 per project, for a total of \$30,000, divided amongst the next two fiscal years. (2023-2024, 2024-2025)