



# Master Development Plan and Green Energy Hub Engagement Program

## What Was Said Final Report

Submitted by:  
**Violet Consulting**

In Collaboration with:  
**Hutchinson Creative**





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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Belledune Port Authority is in the final stages of developing a new Master Development Plan (MDP), a business development and land-planning document with a 30-year time horizon.

**As a regional economic leader and a publicly owned resource, it is important that the BPA understands what New Brunswickers, particularly those residing in the north of the province, care most about in considering future development.**

The Port recognizes that its strength is based on strong relationships with clients, tenants, suppliers, local communities, and Indigenous rights holders. This is why the BPA launched a formal engagement effort in Spring 2022 to gather values-based feedback that will inform its decision-making process regarding future development. This engagement occurred between April and June 2022, with the support of Violet Consulting, Narrative Research and Hutchinson Creative.

A variety of engagement opportunities were made available to suit varying levels of knowledge and interest in the Port. These opportunities included: in-person and online presentations, facilitated workshops, an online survey, public opinion research carried out by telephone, key stakeholder interviews, meetings, phone calls and email correspondence.

The engagement began with broad information sharing and invitations to ensure New Brunswickers were aware of the BPA's planning process, offering opportunities to learn more and share their thoughts in both official languages of English and French. The BPA made extensive use of its own digital and social media channels, local community and Indigenous partners and paid digital advertising to create awareness and generate participation. In addition, local and provincial media coverage supported efforts to inform and include residents in the process.

The BPA places great importance on its relationship with local Indigenous communities. In 2018, the BPA signed a Relationship, Engagement and Consultation Protocol with Oinpegitoig First Nation (Pabineau), Ugpi'ganjig First Nation (Eel River Bar) and their designated consultative body Mi'ganwe'l Tplu'taqnn (MTI), which represents eight Mi'gmaq communities in New Brunswick. This historic agreement sets out the terms of respectful and inclusive relationship building, consultation and accommodation and proponent engagement with the Mi'gmaq First Nations. For this reason, special care was taken to include and invite these communities to meaningfully engage on the MDP process on their own terms and timelines.

Also, given the Port's location on the Bay of Chaleur, extra effort was made to inform and invite residents of the Restigouche, Chaleur, and Acadian Peninsula regions of New Brunswick to share their views.

## SUMMARY OF AWARENESS AND PARTICIPATION

- **More than 3500 New Brunswickers were aware of the Port's MDP planning process**
  - Based on website traffic and social media interactions
- **More than 350 New Brunswickers directly engaged online**
  - Based on survey responses
- **More than 100 New Brunswickers directly engaged in person**
  - New Brunswickers who attended stakeholder workshops, presentations, meetings, tours and sessions by request

## KEY FINDINGS

Most of the feedback came from working New Brunswickers living in the Chaleur and Restigouche regions.

**Overall, participants indicated their highest priorities related to the Port are growth, job creation and regional economic development, closely followed by the environment.**

Related to the environment, participants said the development of sustainable, green industries and renewable energy sources are high priorities, along with the continued cleanup and decommissioning of previous tenant sites at the Port and protection of coastal areas.

Across all inputs, whether provided in person or online, participants shared a desire to see the BPA continue operating with expanded facilities, new product lines and infrastructure improvements. Participants also shared their confidence in the Port's leadership and its ability to attract new, environmentally friendly business and become a global leader in the green shipping industry.

Many participants want to see NB Power's coal fired Belledune Generating Station continue operating in some fashion beyond the government of Canada's 2030 deadline to stop making electricity from coal.

We also heard a strong desire for continued communication and ongoing engagement with business stakeholders, community members and Indigenous rights holders as the BPA moves forward with implementing its Master Development Plan.

## METHODOLOGY

Formal engagement on the Master Development Plan was carried out during a seven-week period spanning April-June 2022 although information-sharing, meetings, presentations, and some key interviews took place starting in December 2021. The engagement process design was a collaborative effort between the Port's Master Development Plan project team and Violet Consulting.

**It was determined that a values-based approach would provide the BPA with the most useful form of public input.**

The BPA particularly wanted to understand what is most important to the public, stakeholders and rights holders related to environmental protection, potential renewable energy projects and green industry, land use planning and the Port's role as a regional economic leader.

As mentioned, specific efforts were made to engage with the Mi'gmaq communities to understand their concerns and interests in the Port's plans. These efforts will continue.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods provided insight into public, stakeholder, and rights holder values and how they should be prioritized.

The results presented in this report are based on the input provided by hundreds of New Brunswickers who chose to participate in the process, via in-person meetings or online in the language of their choice. In some cases, we have combined the data to discover common themes and priorities. In the case of our online survey, English and French results are presented separately to reflect the nuanced differences among priorities in these language communities.



## GOAL

The goal of this engagement effort was to **gather values-based feedback** from key stakeholders, the public and Indigenous rights holders to inform and influence BPA's master development plan and Green Energy Hub concept.

## OBJECTIVES

The strategy was developed in support of the following objectives:

### Achieve awareness and understanding

about the Master Development Plan process and opportunities to provide input.

### Provide feedback opportunities

for the members of the public, highly engaged and knowledgeable stakeholders, and Indigenous rights holders.

### Host a values-based conversation

about the future of the Port of Belledune that allows participants to contribute based on their own perspective, experience and what is most important to them.

## PARAMETERS OF ENGAGEMENT

The BPA agreed that through this process, participants could influence the following:

- Common values and shared priorities would inform the BPA's future decisions
- Process and techniques for future community engagement

# ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

## PROCESS

1

### Invite

- Provide MDP information via Port-owned channels (website, social media, newsletter)
- Paid media (digital)
- In the community (partner organizations, meetings, presentations)
- Partners, suppliers & tenants
- Employees
- Earned media

2

### Inform and Engage

- **Online:**
  - MDP Survey
  - Email
- **In person:**
  - Presentations
  - Meetings
  - Stakeholder workshops
  - Indigenous rights holder workshop
  - Engagement by request

3

### Reporting



## COMMUNICATIONS AND INVITATION EFFORTS

To ensure the public, stakeholders and Indigenous rights holders were informed and included in the MDP process, all available channels were used to build awareness and understanding and invite participation.

## HOW INFORMATION WAS SHARED

- NB Standing Committee on Climate Change and Environmental Leadership
- Senior team presentations to stakeholder and Indigenous rights holder groups
- [www.portofbelledune.ca](http://www.portofbelledune.ca)
- Twitter
- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- Instagram
- Media coverage
- Advertising
- BPA newsletter
- President and CEO communications

## SOCIAL MEDIA SNAPSHOT

**101**  
total posts



## MEDIA COVERAGE SNAPSHOT

NB journalists provided essential reporting on the BPA's efforts to gather input on its Master Development Plan. During the launch period, CEO Denis Caron provided interviews with all major media outlets in English and French, for print, broadcast (radio and television) and digital platforms. In addition, provincial and local newspapers ran a commentary piece from the Port at the conclusion of the engagement. The tone of the coverage was neutral to positive.

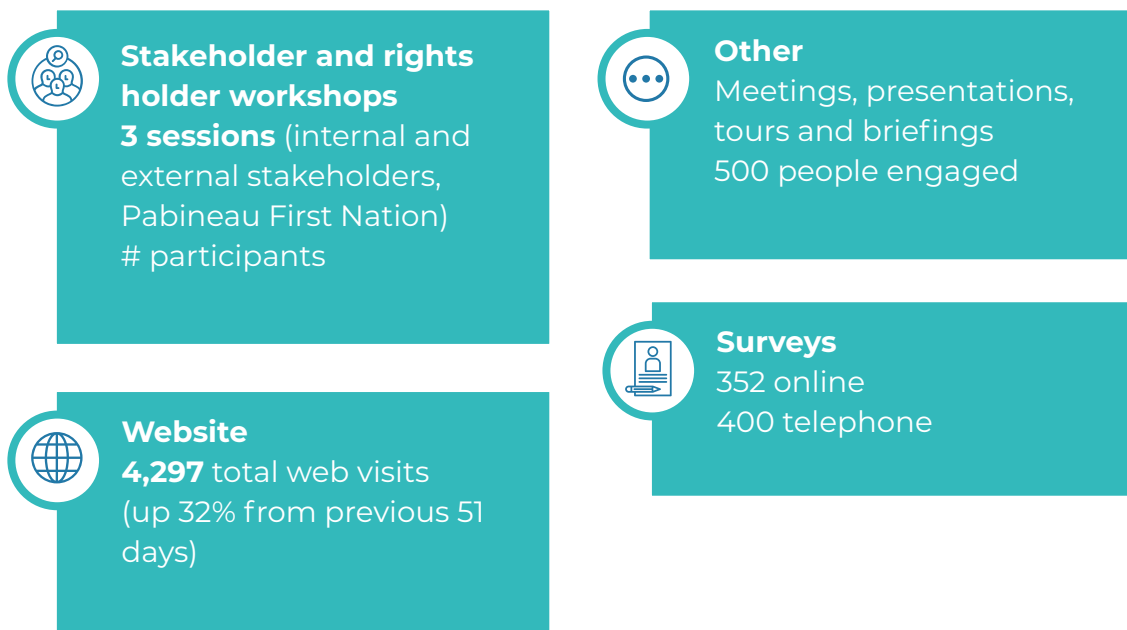


## ENGAGEMENT RESULTS

**The following engagement opportunities were provided to New Brunswickers:**

- Narrative Research Public Opinion Survey (April 2022)
- Stakeholder and rights holder workshops (May 2022)
- BPA online survey (April 25-June 10 2022)

## SUMMARY OF PARTICIPATION



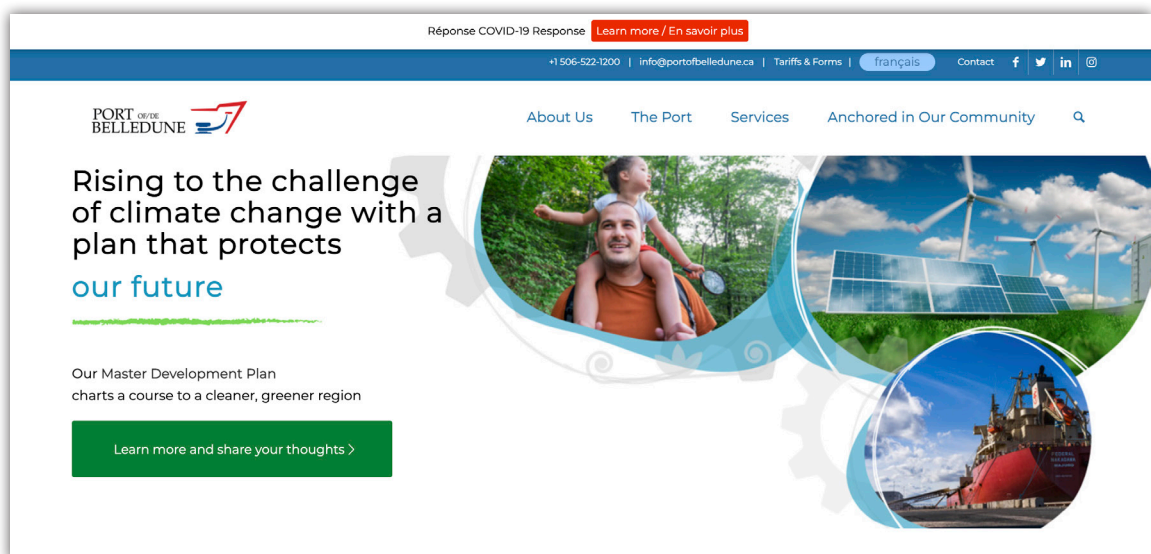
## PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH

In March 2022, Narrative Research included several questions regarding the Port of Belledune in its Atlantic Quarterly Survey to determine the level of awareness and knowledge about port activities within New Brunswick. This was important to determine a tailored approach to engagement and ensure information was offered at an appropriate level. This was a random telephone survey of 400 adult New Brunswickers in English and French. The survey results indicated a high level of unfamiliarity among provincial

residents about the Port and its core business, especially in Southern New Brunswick. Northern residents were more familiar with the Port's role as a transportation hub and demonstrated knowledge about its cargo business and role as an economic contributor to the region. In addition, more northern residents expressed confidence about the Port's ability to transition to a new and sustainable business model.

## PORT OF BELLEDUNE WEBSITE, SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN AND ONLINE SURVEY

**A key means of gathering public feedback was an online survey linked prominently from the Belledune Port Authority's website and promoted on owned and partner social media channels.**



The website included refreshed content about the planning process and the MDP, including a summary document produced in collaboration with Hatch Consulting that provided essential context and potential business outcomes for the Port.

The refreshed website was launched concurrently with the online survey on **April 25, 2022**. The survey closed on **June 10, 2022**.

Starting on **May 1**, the BPA boosted the survey with paid posts on social media channels to strengthen awareness and encourage a higher participation rate.

The survey was offered in English and French and captured geographic and demographic information, including age range and employment status.

## CAMPAIGN RESULTS

### Analytics

Campaign Total Engagement between **April 25 - June 10, 2022** (Seven weeks)

### Website traffic

**4,297**

total web visits

**70%**

of were new visitors

**1796**

home page visits

**358**

MDP landing page

### Social Media

**169,562**

Total impressions

**3,875**

Post clicks

**4.43%**

Engagement rate

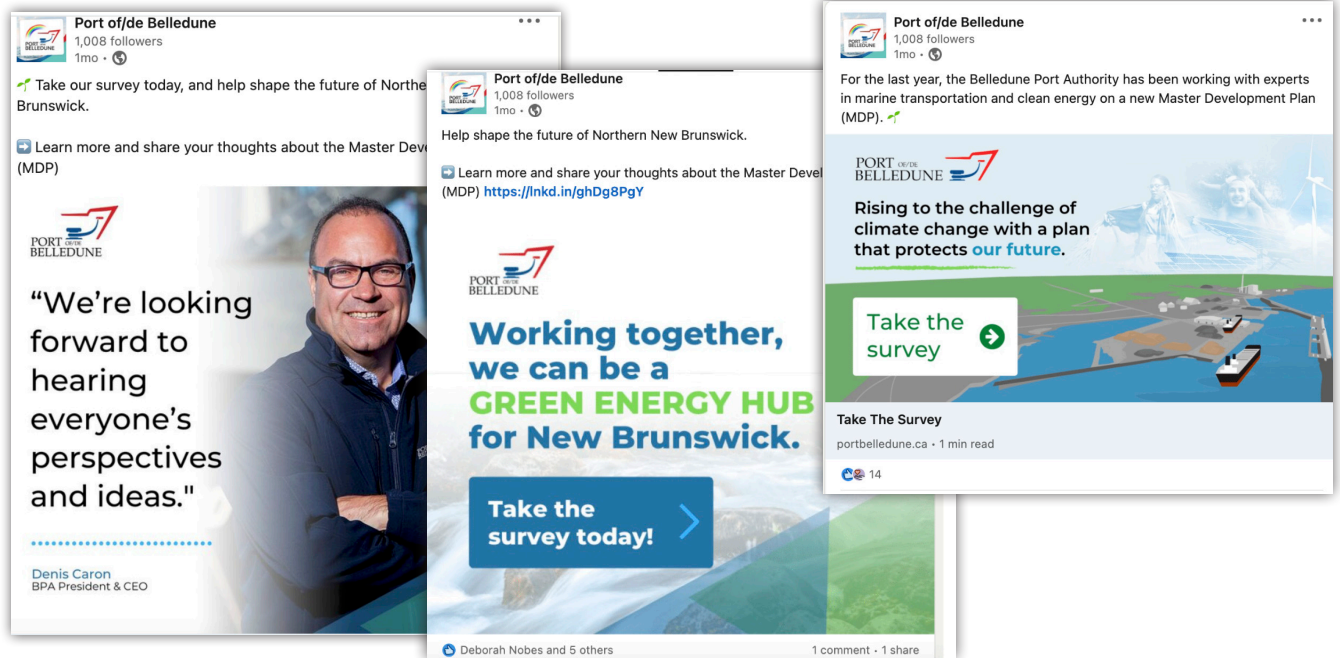
**3,875**

Post clicks

BETWEEN **3.5%** AND **6%** =

HIGH ENGAGEMENT RATE ENGAGEMENT RATE (PROMOREPUBLIC.COM)

## Best-performing social media posts

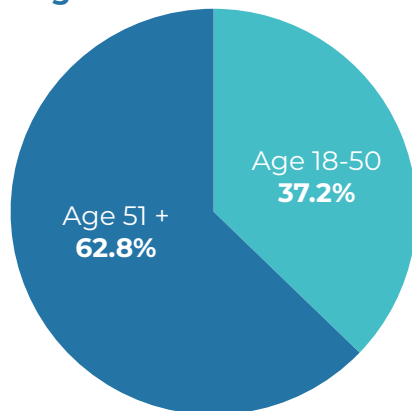


## Online Survey Response

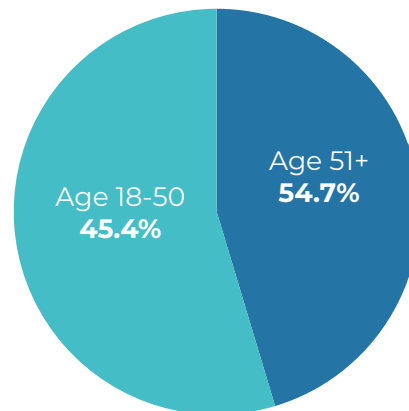
### Profile of Respondents

## Q1: What is your age range?

### English



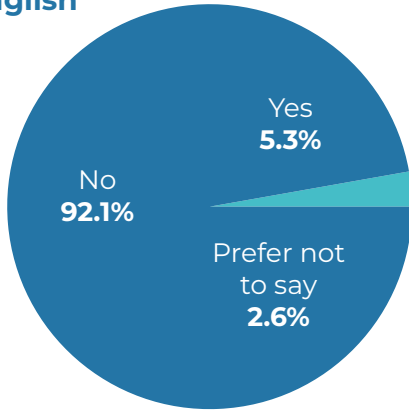
### French



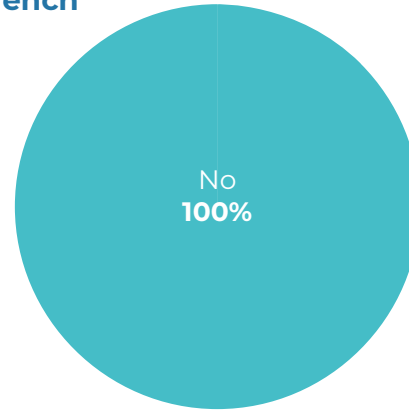


## Q2: Do you identify as Indigenous?

English

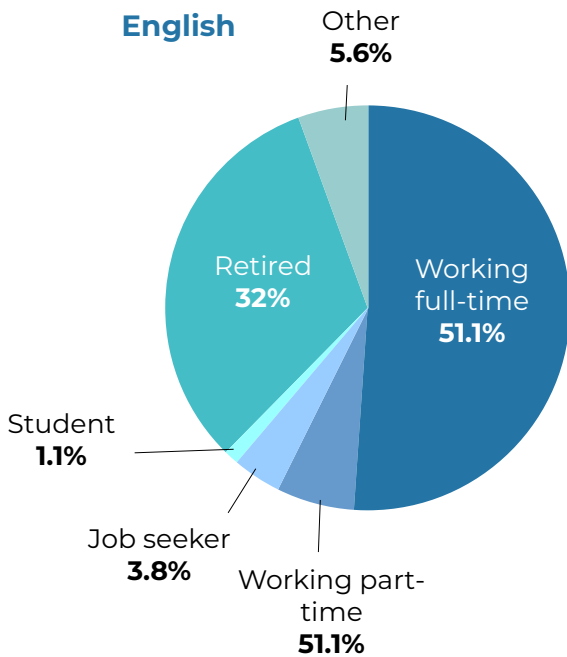


French

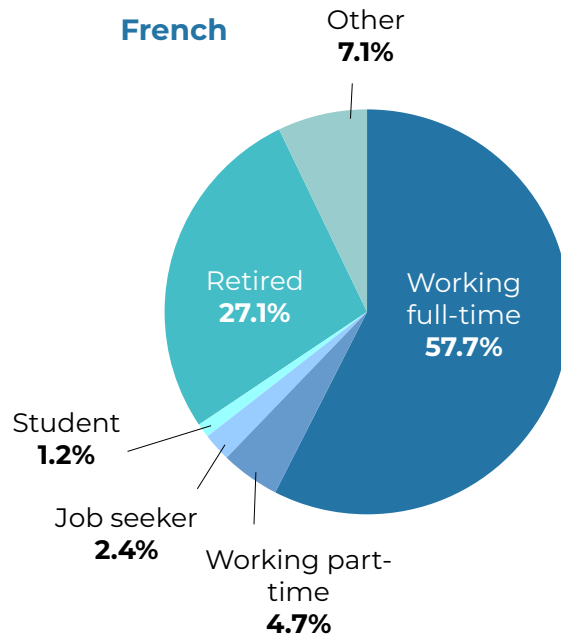


## Q3: Which of the following best describes your employment status?

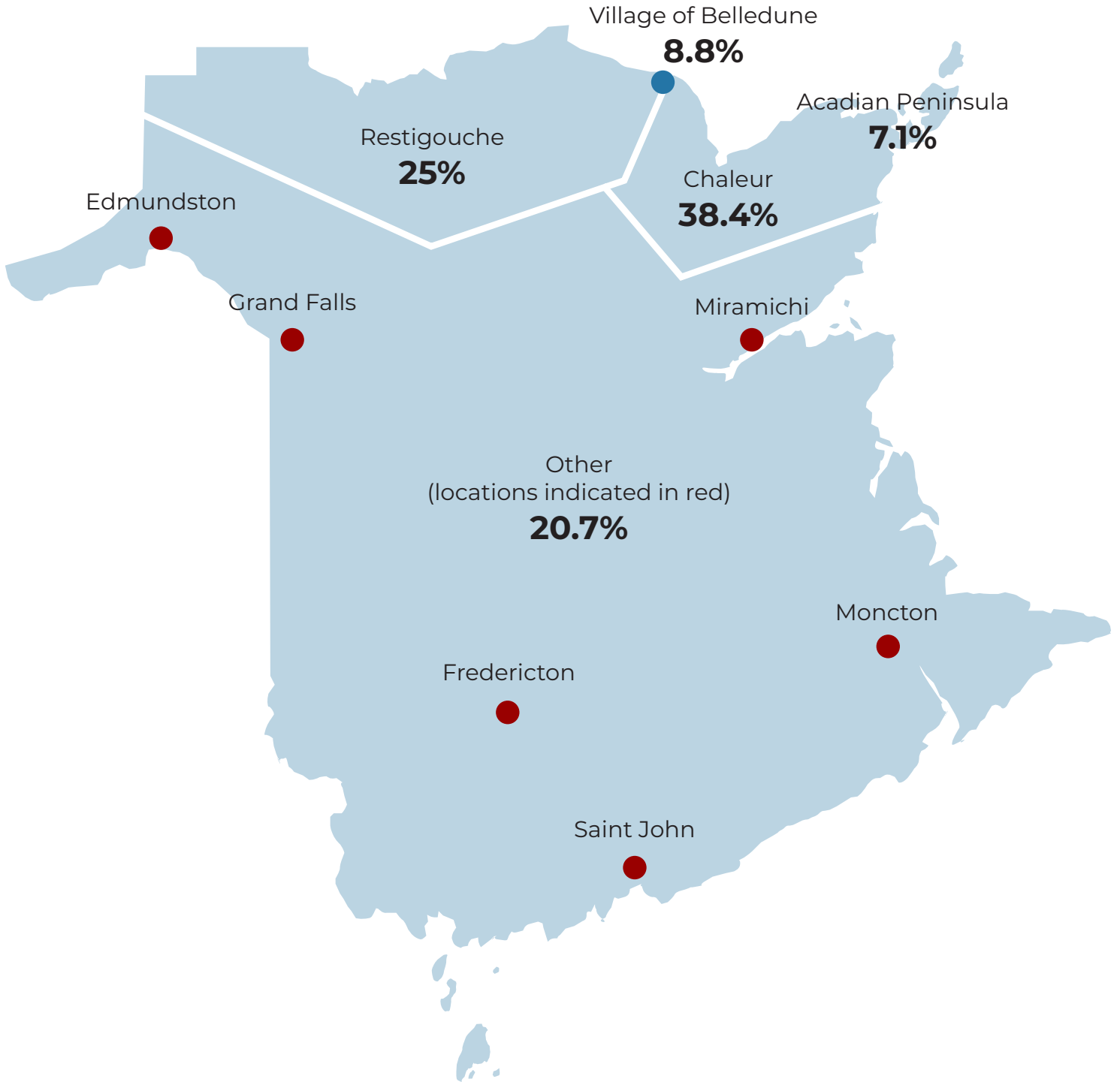
English



French



### Q3: Where do you currently reside?



## WHAT NEW BRUNSWICKERS SAID

**Local employment and expansion of existing activities with development of 'green' industry and renewable energy are most important**



When English survey respondents were asked to rank what is most important to them related to the future of the Port of Belledune, local jobs and the expansion of existing activities with new sustainable industries were determined to be the most important, followed by business growth related to marine-based shipping and receiving and environmental cleanup and coastal protection.

French survey respondents were consistent with the above priorities, placing slightly higher importance on developing the regional economy over environmental matters.

### English

(Ranked most to least important from 1-6, displayed as weighted average)



### French

(Ranked most to least important from 1-6, displayed as weighted average)



## CLEANUP/DECOMMISSIONING ACTIVITIES, EMISSIONS AND ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT ARE OF GREATEST CONCERN

Survey respondents were asked to rank their level of concern about activities at the Port that interact with the environment on a scale from 'not at all concerned' to 'extremely concerned.' Both French and English respondents were very consistent in their ranking of activities that cause the greatest concern. For English respondents, cleanup and decommissioning activities were ranked most concerning, followed closely by emissions and environmental footprint, with the safety of goods travelling to and from the Port ranked third. For French respondents, emissions and environmental footprint were ranked most concerning, followed by cleanup and decommissioning activities and the safety of goods travelling.

### English

Activity	Not concerned/ slightly	Moderately/ very/extremely concerned
<b>Cleanup and decommissioning</b>	22.3%	77.7 %
<b>Emissions and environmental footprint</b>	35.7	64.3
<b>Safety of goods travelling to and from the Port</b>	41.1	58.9
<b>Noise – underwater or on land</b>	55.7	44.3
<b>Water use as part of Port operations</b>	57.2	42.8
<b>Increased vessel traffic</b>	57.4	42.6
<b>Vehicle traffic to and from Port property</b>	67.9	32.1

## French results (86 responses)

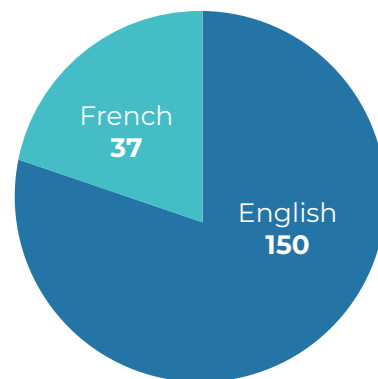
Activity	Not concerned/ slightly	Moderately/ very/extremely concerned
Emissions and environmental footprint	32.9 %	67.1 %
Cleanup and decommissioning	35.3	64.7
Increased vessel traffic	48.5	51.5
Safety of goods travelling to and from the Port	51.2	48.8
Water use as part of Port operations	51.2	48.8
Noise – underwater or on land	55.7	44.3
Vehicle traffic travelling to and from Port property	70.2	29.8

## OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE THEMES

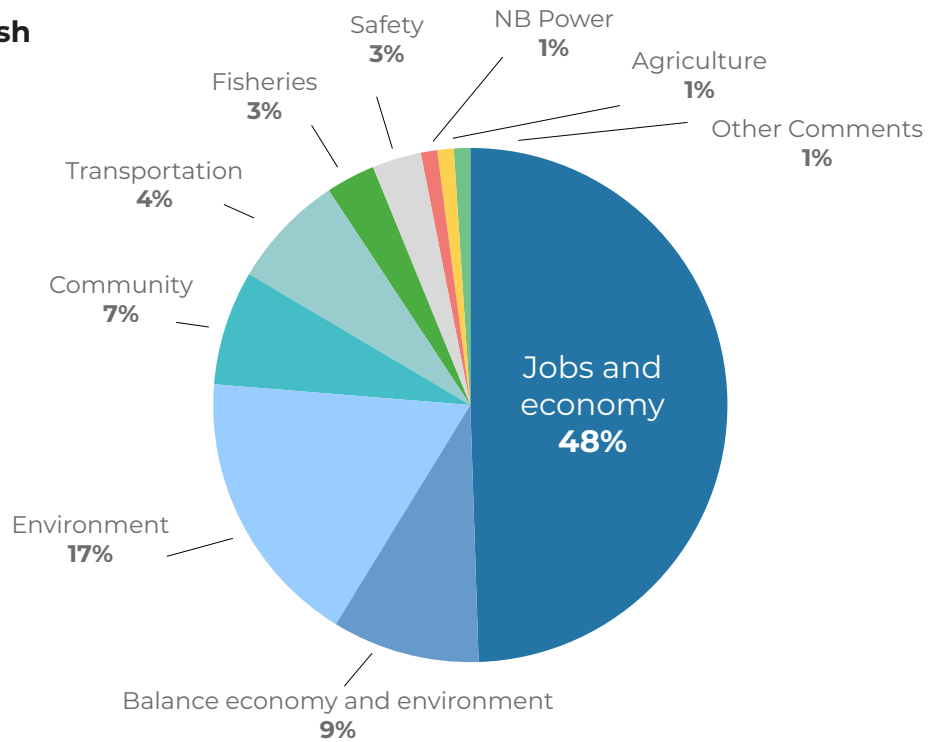
At the end of the survey, respondents were asked the following question: **What else should the Belledune Port Authority know about what's more important to you?**

187 respondents offered additional comments (150 English, 37 French) with the topic of local job creation and regional economic development mentioned most frequently, followed by the need for sustainable development that balances the economy and the environment. Commenters also expressed general concerns about protecting the environment, including birds and fish, from potential contaminants related to marine industry.

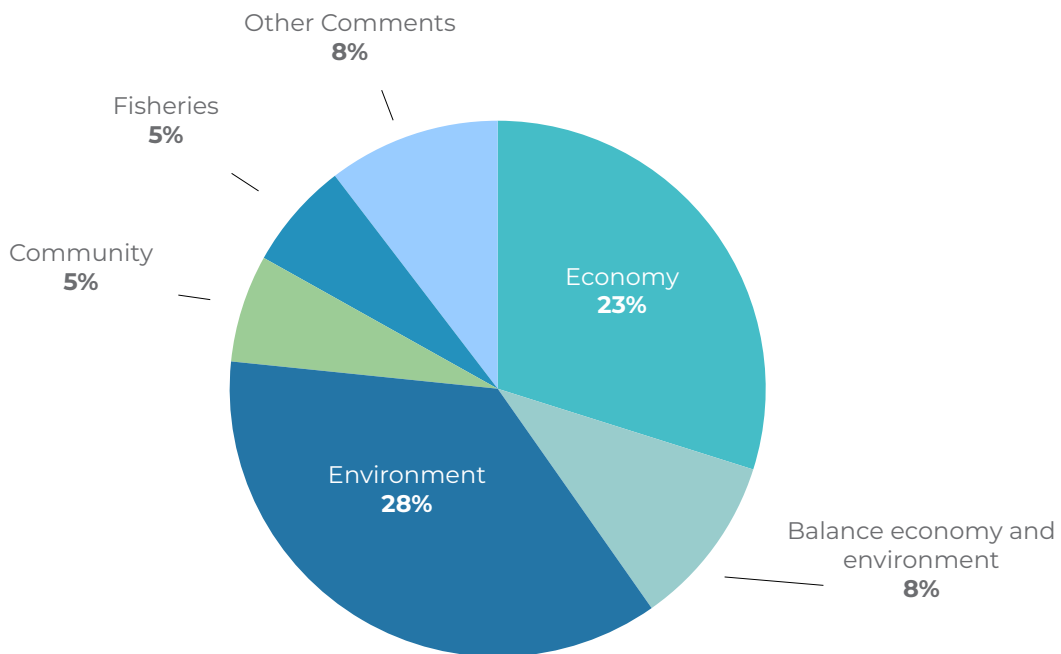
Other comments highlighted a desire to allow the local community greater access to the port, both for recreation and employment purposes, and to keep community members informed of port activities.

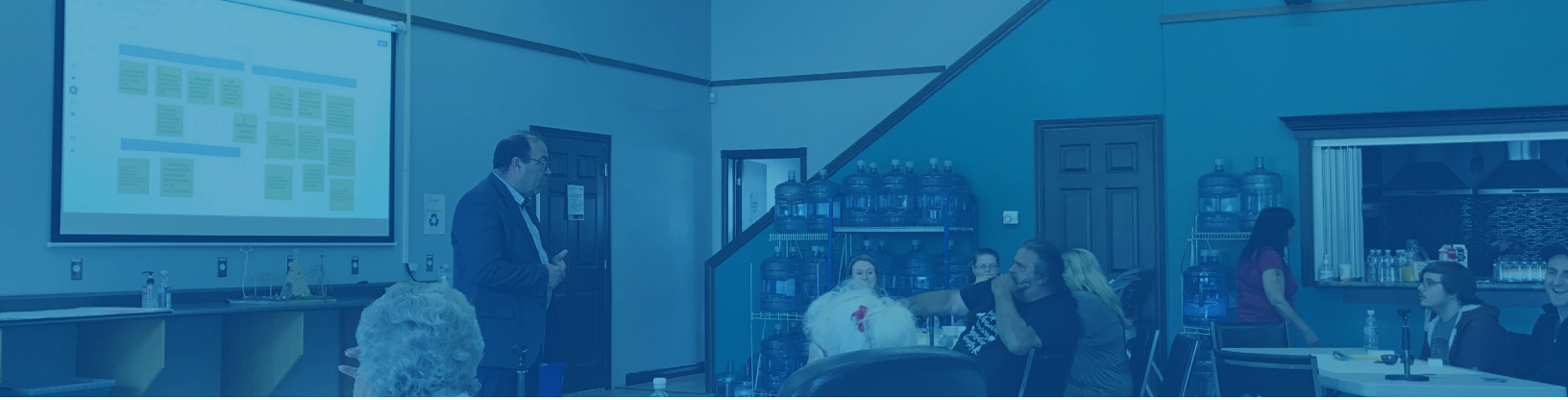


## English



## French





## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT WORKSHOPS

Two sessions were held in May 2022 to provide those with a vested interest in the Port's future an in-person opportunity to hear directly about the Master Development Plan from BPA leadership, engage in deeper conversations and provide more detailed feedback. The first session included external stakeholders, including community leaders, organizations and individuals. The second session included internal stakeholders, particularly focused on tenants and clients of the Port.

For both sessions, the BPA and Hatch Consulting provided a combined 45-minute presentation and participants were led through a facilitated conversation that drew responses to two key questions. Each in-person session drew between 15-20 participants.

### Question 1

**What is most important as we consider this plan and this vision?**

### Question 2

**Imagine it is 2030. What do you hope we will have achieved?**

## WHAT NEW BRUNSWICKERS SAID

### Session 1 – External Stakeholders

Community members strongly agreed on key priorities in response to both questions, identifying consistent themes through their written and verbal comments.

## THEMES AND PRIORITIES



Continued communications and engagement efforts are required for community members and Indigenous rights holder to understand and support future development

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Sustainable economic development is crucial for the North

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A solution must be found to allow NB Power's Belledune Generating Station to continue operating beyond 2030

### Other specific comments included the following:

- Communications, engagement, and public education should begin early and continue as development occurs and new projects begin
- Social acceptability is required for projects to succeed
- A desire for green hydrogen to be produced in Belledune
- The BPA should lead the way in developing international markets for sustainable industry in New Brunswick
- Wealth generated at the Port should be distributed through the region
- The BPA should achieve international market growth and bring specialized employment opportunities home
- Alternative energy sources should be explored
- The port should share timelines and milestones for progress



## Session 2- Internal stakeholders

Key themes and priorities surfaced among clients, tenants, and industry stakeholders through discussion of the questions. Participants were aligned in their comments, which focused on business development and expanding capacity at the Port.

### THEMES AND PRIORITIES



Continued investments in infrastructure to allow for more and different types of cargo and greener operations



Consider opportunities for green fuel storage and distribution



The Port should position itself as a leader in green industry and meet the global demand for green shipping

#### Other specific comments included the following:

- Improve transportation infrastructure (rail, road, air) to bring more products to Belledune
- Be 'the' gateway for green shipping for a variety of products 'Belledune can own this brand'
- Increase liquid bulk handling, be a refuelling hub
- Make infrastructure improvements to support automation and green operations at the Port
- Diversify cargo handling capacity by expanding the laydown area

## Indigenous rights holder workshop

Community workshops were offered to signatories of the BPA's protocol agreement to ensure specific engagement with Indigenous rights holders. Pabineau First Nation welcomed the BPA team to their community hall for a hybrid virtual/in-person session that was advertised on social media channels. Approximately 15 people participated in the session and provided feedback.

Following the BPA/Hatch presentation, a robust discussion took place about Mi'gmaq rights and the BPA's authority to plan future development on port property. BPA leadership restated the terms of its protocol agreement with the group, including a commitment to early, meaningful engagement, consultation and if necessary, accommodation resulting from development at the Port with the potential to impact Indigenous rights. Following that discussion, the two questions were considered, and key themes and priorities emerged from the discussion.

## THEMES AND PRIORITIES



Economic prosperity needs to include Indigenous rights holders

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Environmental stewardship and cultural inclusion must be part of the decision-making process

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Indigenous rights holders want to be actively involved in Port development decisions

### **Other specific comments included:**

- BPA must consider how benefits of new development can reach 'the grassroots' to ensure wealth is shared
- Employment and training opportunities for First Nation members are needed
- Consider a royalty system for Pabineau members for existing and emerging opportunities
- Clean up the port and make environmental considerations part of the planning
- Keep industry accountable for cleanup and storage of contaminated equipment
- Include Indigenous community in the process – make information accessible, transparent
- Develop green spaces in communities that help explain green industry – for example a walking trail for elders with educational installations

## **MEETINGS, TOURS, AND PRESENTATIONS**

As part of the MDP process, BPA leadership attempted to meaningfully engage all interested individuals, advocacy groups, stakeholder organizations and community leaders to share information and gather feedback.

Between December 2021 and June 2022, BPA and the extended project team participated in activities beyond the scope of the formal engagement process, including briefing sessions, presentations, industry conferences, in person meetings and media interviews. In addition, the Port has provided regular tours to groups and individuals.

## CONCLUSION

The Port wishes to thank all individuals and organizations that took the time to learn about its business planning process and share their hopes, concerns, and ideas. Members of the public, key stakeholders and rights holders shared varying yet consistent priorities regarding the need for sustainable business development that benefits the region, continued engagement and inclusion and protection for the environment and coastal areas. These themes will inform the Port's decision-making process regarding the Master Development plan and Green Energy Hub concept.

## REPORT CREDITS

### ABOUT VIOLET CONSULTING INC.

Violet Consulting offers strategic communications and public engagement services to public and private sector clients throughout Atlantic Canada.

CEO and project lead Deborah Nobes brings a depth of experience from 30 years in senior leadership roles in journalism, corporate communications and stakeholder engagement. She adheres to the principles for engagement practice set by the International Association for Public Participation. A natural facilitator, she helps organizations build trusting relationships and rally diverse perspectives to achieve shared goals.

For this project, Violet Consulting partnered with Françoise Roy, President, Solva Stratégie + Leadership. With more than 30 years of experience in private, not-for-profit, and governmental sectors, Roy brings strategic thinking and broad communication skills to her clients while delivering strategies that give organizations the confidence to lead and earn the lasting trust of their stakeholders.

### ABOUT HUTCHINSON CREATIVE

Hutchinson Creative is a full-service marketing agency based in Dalhousie, New Brunswick, with special expertise in digital engagement. With more than a decade of experience working with corporate clients and Indigenous communities in northern New Brunswick, CEO Rick Hutchinson knows how to build authentic and compelling content that connects with diverse audiences across digital platforms.