SOUTHEAST REGIONAL SERVICE COMMISSION

2018 BUDGET PROPOSAL SUMMARY

TOWN OF RIVERVIEW
SEPTEMBER 2017

Mandated Services

			INCREASE
Solid Waste	2017 : $393,636	2018 : $395,228	Difference : $1,592
Region Collab	2017 : $10,419	2018 : $12,587	Difference : $2,168
	----------	---------	---------
Total	$404,055	$407,815	$3,760

* Optional Services *

Regional Destination Marketing Organization – Tourism

Option (1) – 1\8 cent per $100 assessment	2018 : $21,649
Option (2) – 50%\50%	(2018 : $10,824) (2019: 2018 + $10,824)
Option (3) – 33%\33%\33%	(2018: $7,216) (2019: 2018 + $7,216) (2020: 2019+ $7,216)
Option (4) – displace to 2019 budget	2018 : $0

SEE NEXT PAGE FOR DETAILS OF CONTRIBUTION AMOUNTS FOR EACH MUNICIPALITY.

RDMO ONLY OPTIONS FOR RDMO. REGIONAL DESTINATION MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES

1	CSRSE-Distribution des coûts-RDMO 2018 - / SERSC-Distribution of 2018 RDMO												
2	Communautés Sud Est / Southeast Communities	Assiette fiscale 2016 Tax Base	Assiette fiscale 2017 Tax Base	Différence % Difference 2016-2017	Population 2016	OPTION 1 100%-2018	Taux de taxation 2018 2018 Tax Rate	OPTION 2 50%-2018 50%-2019	Taux de taxation 2018 2018 Tax Rate	OPTION 3 33.33%-2018 33.33%-2019 33.33%-2020	Taux de taxation 2018 2018 Tax Rate	OPTION 4 On hold till 2019 Remis à 2019	Taux de taxation 2018 2018 Tax Rate
3	Municipalités / Municipalities:	ntributions des membres-2018/ 2018 Members Contribution :				$225,000		$112,500		$75,000		$0	
4	Moncton	$ 7,791,907,292	$ 8,081,924,600	3.72%	71,889	$ 95,707	$ 0.00118	$ 47,853	$ 0.00059	$ 31,902	$ 0.00039	$ -	$ -
5	Dieppe	$ 2,890,886,456	$ 2,989,354,185	3.41%	25,384	$ 34,641	$ 0.00116	$ 17,320	$ 0.00058	$ 11,547	$ 0.00039	$ -	$ -
6	Riverview	$ 1,476,259,400	$ 1,484,775,450	0.58%	19,667	$ 21,649	$ 0.00146	$ 10,824	$ 0.00073	$ 7,216	$ 0.00049	$ -	$ -
7	Subtotal / Sous total	$12,159,053,148	$12,556,054,235	3.27%	116,940	$ 151,996		$ 75,998		$ 50,665		$ -	
8	Salisbury	$ 165,827,950	$ 171,502,750	3.42%	2,284	$ 2,508	$ 0.00146	$ 1,254	$ 0.00073	$ 836	$ 0.00049	$ -	$ -
9	Petitcodiac	$ 91,243,900	$ 91,194,300	-0.05%	1,383	$ 1,440	$ 0.00158	$ 720	$ 0.00079	$ 480	$ 0.00053	$ -	$ -
10	Hillsborough	$ 82,135,050	$ 83,177,150	1.27%	1,277	$ 1,323	$ 0.00159	$ 662	$ 0.00080	$ 441	$ 0.00053	$ -	$ -
11	Riverside-Albert	$ 21,474,400	$ 21,943,950	2.19%	350	$ 357	$ 0.00163	$ 179	$ 0.00081	$ 119	$ 0.00054	$ -	$ -
12	Alma	$ 27,837,582	$ 27,550,150	-1.03%	213	$ 306	$ 0.00111	$ 153	$ 0.00056	$ 102	$ 0.00037	$ -	$ -
13	Shediac	$ 635,267,116	$ 655,048,850	3.11%	6,664	$ 8,284	$ 0.00126	$ 4,142	$ 0.00063	$ 2,761	$ 0.00042	$ -	$ -
14	Memramcook	$ 299,534,600	$ 305,013,052	1.83%	4,778	$ 4,912	$ 0.00161	$ 2,456	$ 0.00081	$ 1,637	$ 0.00054	$ -	$ -
15	Cap-Pelé	$ 190,519,100	$ 194,957,850	2.33%	2,425	$ 2,744	$ 0.00141	$ 1,372	$ 0.00070	$ 915	$ 0.00047	$ -	$ -
16	Beaubassin est	$ 609,880,650	$ 618,250,050	1.37%	6,376	$ 7,873	$ 0.00127	$ 3,937	$ 0.00064	$ 2,624	$ 0.00042	$ -	$ -
17	Sackville	$ 611,109,050	$ 629,240,300	2.97%	5,331	$ 7,284	$ 0.00116	$ 3,642	$ 0.00058	$ 2,428	$ 0.00039	$ -	$ -
18	Dorchester	$ 49,761,050	$ 58,151,800	16.86%	1,096	$ 1,053	$ 0.00181	$ 526	$ 0.00091	$ 351	$ 0.00060	$ -	$ -
19	Port Elgin	$ 23,257,650	$ 23,817,750	2.41%	408	$ 406	$ 0.00170	$ 203	$ 0.00085	$ 135	$ 0.00057	$ -	$ -
20	Subtotal / Sous total	$ 2,807,848,098	$ 2,879,847,952	2.56%	32,585	$ 38,489		$ 19,245		$ 12,830		$ -	
21	TOTAL Municipalities/Municipalités	$14,966,901,246	$15,435,902,187	3.13%	149,525	$ 190,486		$ 95,243		$ 63,495		$ -	
22	LSD / DSL:												
23	Alma	$ 6,241,250	$ 6,713,800	7.57%	5	$ 45	$ 0.00067	$ 23	$ 0.00034	$ 15	$ 0.00022	$ -	$ -
24	Baie-Verte (Centre & Outside)	$ 20,599,950	$ 20,409,050	-0.93%	316	$ 326	$ 0.00160	$ 163	$ 0.00080	$ 109	$ 0.00053	$ -	$ -
25	Bayfield	$ 1,638,300	$ 1,943,900	18.65%	34	$ 34	$ 0.00173	$ 17	$ 0.00086	$ 11	$ 0.00058	$ -	$ -
26	Botsford	$ 62,106,650	$ 63,503,000	2.25%	579	$ 761	$ 0.00120	$ 380	$ 0.00060	$ 254	$ 0.00040	$ -	$ -
27	Cape Tourmentine	$ 7,101,150	$ 7,466,350	5.14%	77	$ 95	$ 0.00127	$ 48	$ 0.00064	$ 32	$ 0.00042	$ -	$ -
28	Coverdale	$ 321,528,800	$ 329,504,350	2.48%	4,466	$ 4,868	$ 0.00148	$ 2,434	$ 0.00074	$ 1,623	$ 0.00049	$ -	$ -
29	Dorchester & Calhoun Road	$ 22,258,850	$ 22,373,400	0.51%	429	$ 410	$ 0.00183	$ 205	$ 0.00092	$ 137	$ 0.00061	$ -	$ -
30	Elgin	$ 10,421,500	$ 10,541,150	1.15%	203	$ 194	$ 0.00184	$ 97	$ 0.00092	$ 65	$ 0.00061	$ -	$ -
31	Harvey	$ 24,619,400	$ 24,787,350	0.68%	333	$ 364	$ 0.00147	$ 182	$ 0.00073	$ 121	$ 0.00049	$ -	$ -
32	Hillsborough	$ 76,313,100	$ 76,332,650	0.03%	1,308	$ 1,300	$ 0.00170	$ 650	$ 0.00085	$ 433	$ 0.00057	$ -	$ -
33	Hopewell	$ 32,783,500	$ 32,998,350	0.66%	647	$ 613	$ 0.00186	$ 307	$ 0.00093	$ 204	$ 0.00062	$ -	$ -
34	Moncton, Painsec Junction, Grter Lakeburn, I	$ 859,053,550	$ 887,999,950	3.37%	9,736	$ 11,672	$ 0.00131	$ 5,836	$ 0.00066	$ 3,891	$ 0.00044	$ -	$ -
35	Murray Corner	$ 64,179,400	$ 65,491,150	2.04%	368	$ 641	$ 0.00098	$ 320	$ 0.00049	$ 214	$ 0.00033	$ -	$ -
36	Parish of Elgin	$ 69,729,450	$ 69,971,900	0.35%	689	$ 871	$ 0.00124	$ 435	$ 0.00062	$ 290	$ 0.00041	$ -	$ -
37	Pointe de Bute	$ 26,821,550	$ 31,975,100	19.21%	571	$ 559	$ 0.00175	$ 280	$ 0.00087	$ 186	$ 0.00058	$ -	$ -
38	Pointe-du-Chêne	$ 164,026,700	$ 168,261,700	2.58%	716	$ 1,501	$ 0.00089	$ 751	$ 0.00045	$ 500	$ 0.00030	$ -	$ -
39	Sackville	$ 101,882,500	$ 105,139,400	3.20%	1,182	$ 1,400	$ 0.00133	$ 700	$ 0.00067	$ 467	$ 0.00044	$ -	$ -
40	Salisbury	$ 218,283,350	$ 228,047,350	4.47%	3,388	$ 3,556	$ 0.00156	$ 1,778	$ 0.00078	$ 1,185	$ 0.00052	$ -	$ -
41	Scoudouc	$ 97,755,550	$ 98,635,950	0.90%	1,084	$ 1,298	$ 0.00132	$ 649	$ 0.00066	$ 433	$ 0.00044	$ -	$ -
42	Scoudouc Road	$ 18,926,500	$ 19,246,950	1.69%	193	$ 242	$ 0.00126	$ 121	$ 0.00063	$ 81	$ 0.00042	$ -	$ -
43	Shediac	$ 29,479,850	$ 31,193,800	5.81%	935	$ 783	$ 0.00251	$ 392	$ 0.00126	$ 261	$ 0.00084	$ -	$ -
44	Shediac Bridge-Shediac River	$ 136,777,050	$ 143,054,850	4.59%	1,098	$ 1,584	$ 0.00111	$ 792	$ 0.00055	$ 528	$ 0.00037	$ -	$ -
45	Shediac Cape	$ 115,255,950	$ 117,917,350	2.31%	838	$ 1,264	$ 0.00107	$ 632	$ 0.00054	$ 421	$ 0.00036	$ -	$ -
46	Westmorland	$ 19,342,300	$ 19,298,300	-0.23%	21	$ 134	$ 0.00069	$ 67	$ 0.00035	$ 45	$ 0.00023	$ -	$ -
47	TOTAL LSD/DSL	$ 2,507,126,150	$ 2,582,807,100	3.02%	29,216	$ 34,514	$ 0.00134	$ 17,257	$ 0.00067	$ 11,505	$ 0.00045	$ -	$ -
48	GRAND TOTAL	$17,474,027,396	$18,018,709,287	3.12%	178,741	$ 225,000		$ 112,500		$ 75,000		$ -	

REGIONAL DESTINATION MARKETING ORGANIZATION

SUMMARY

SOUTHEAST REGIONAL SERVICE COMMISSION
SEPTEMBER 2017

1. Introduction

Following its 2016 strategic planning review, the Southeast Regional Service Commission Strategic Planning Committee recommended the establishment of a regional tourism initiative as its number #1 priority. In November of 2016, the SERSC Board agreed and gave its approval to the proposed Strategic Plan Amendment.

2. Review of existing situation in Southeastern NB

The SERSC region is presently served by a variety of tourism based organizations such as (1) municipal tourism departments (Moncton), (2) municipal staff partially attributed to the tourism file (Shediac, Sackville, etc.), (3) tourism operator organizations without staff (Albert County Tourism Association), or (4) with temporary contract staff (Côte Culturelle), (5) Chambers of Commerce, (6) Downtown Business Associations, and (7) sector specific organizations (hotels, etc.). With the exception of municipal tourism departments, most of these organizations are confronted with sustainable funding and critical mass issues.

They represent specific sub regions and often overlap with provincial and municipal tourism initiatives, etc. The 'Côte Culturelle' covers the Northumberland Strait area (Shediac, Cap-Pelé, etc.) including Sackville and Memramcook up to Kouchibouguac National Park, thus encompassing two RSC's (Southeast and Kent). These two RSC's have very different fiscal and human resources capacities and it becomes apparent when trying to secure equitable funding distribution for common initiatives.

In summary, Southeastern NB displays an array of tourism based groups or organizations, accessing funding in different ways but more importantly, not sharing a common approach to tourism development for the region.

3. Challenges

Numerous challenges appear at the horizon when taking a broad view of the situation:

- There seems to be a belief that only local groups can really address tourism initiatives;
- Hanging on to the status quo often comes from tourism operators believing that their main competition is their neighbor...... because there is a limited tourism pie. Growing the size of the pie should be the main issue.
- Having numerous organizations without due regard to a common vision and approach is hindering our area's tourism potential;
- The lack of a regional approach to tourism development ensures an absence of economies of scale capable of supporting increased tourism development initiatives;
- The status quo is difficult to budge because of organizational short-term vested interests;

- The effectiveness of these various groups has not been the subject of public debate, especially when public funding is involved;
- Organizations find it difficult to attract and retain highly skilled tourism staff due to the unstable nature of their funding structure (with the exception of municipal staff);
- Province of NB offers some leadership on the tourism development front but having to consider all of the Province and having limited resources, it targets small portions of the tourism market.
- This situation leaves Southeastern NB high and dry when it comes to other tourism segments present on our territory.
- When dealing with local organizations, the presence of unincorporated areas (LSD's) limits their ability to seek local sustainable tourism partnerships.

4.0 Other Jurisdictions

Other jurisdictions have demonstrated success on the tourism development front. What are their related frameworks and responsibilities of players involved in the tourism development process?

- **Quebec**
    - Provincial tourism strategy outside of Quebec: given to private non-profit group driven by the private sector in partnership with regional associations.
    - Regional Tourism Associations – created by legislation – 23 of them – funded by a 3.5% hotel levy.
    - Province adopted legislation on hotel levy but does not impose it – Regional Tourism Association must request the Province to impose it on their territory – all lodging (some exceptions) are included – Revenue Quebec collects the tax, keeps a small percentage for administration and returns the rest to the Regional Tourism Association where the tax was collected.

- **British Columbia**
    - Province created Destination British Columbia to take care of tourism development, management of marketing programs in key domestic and international markets;
    - Board of Directors – 9 members - private sector – max 4 from the tourism sector;
    - hotel levy abandoned and integrated in increased PST minimizing administrative costs;
    - Province divided in 6 Regional Destination Organizations;
    - Each is registered under the Societies Act and governed by a Board of Directors
    - RDO's are contracted by Destination BC to deliver a range of tourism programs in the regions.
    - Local tourism groups can solicit aid and support from Destination BC and the RDO.

- **Newfoundland & Labrador**
  - Province established provincial approach on tourism matters;
  - Province created five (5) Regional Destination Marketing Organizations covering the provincial territory;
  - Mandate: marketing, market readiness, destination management & industry engagement;
  - Funding: local, Province, ACOA, etc.
  - Board: comprised of tourism industry & government officials;
  - Local tourism groups work with their specific RDMO;
  - In January of 2015, ACOA offered more than $817,000 to four of the RDMO's (excluding St John's) to develop and implement three-year tourism development plans;
  - Newfoundland is contemplating a room levy approach for additional funding;

- **State of Oregon**
  - Approval of a State Tourism Plan
  - Legislated requirements for tourism
  - State created Travel Oregon
    - Semi-independent agency created by Legislature
    - Implements a biennial strategic marketing plan
    - Cooperates with organizations, etc. in implementing strategic plan
    - 9 members Board appointed by Governor
    - funded by a 1.8% transient lodging tax
    - 20% of tax to RDMO
    - 10% of tax to Competitive Grants Program
  - Oregon divided in 7 tourism regions and Regional Destination Marketing Organizations
  - Prepare & adopt a Regional Collaborative Tourism Plan
  - RDMO obtain 20% of tourism lodging tax to be used for plan development & programs
  - Local tourism groups and\or businesses use RDMO to leverage budgets, services and information.

- **Other jurisdictions examined**
  - Ontario
  - Australia
  - New Zealand
  - Nova Scotia
  - Prince Edward Island

5.0 Commonalities of jurisdictions with apparent tourism development success

- They have some type of Regional Tourism Organizations
  - Exceptions:
    - New Brunswick: lack of local governance on significant parts of its territory renders building sustainable fiscal partnerships locally, quite difficult;
    - Prince Edward Island: size is smaller than Southeastern NB and is managed as one big municipality.
- They have some type of hotel room levy or transfer of funds from state or province to regional tourism groups
- RDMO's act as significant economic tourism catalysts for their regions
- RDMO's push back the status quo and seek to adapt to changing social and economic environments and economies of scale.

6.0 What's a Regional Destination Marketing Organization (RDMO)

RDMO: is the coordinated management of all the elements that make up a destination (attractions, access, marketing, human resources, image & pricing). It takes a strategic approach to link-up very separate entities for the better management of the destination (World Tourism Organization, 2016)

7.0 Why a Regional Destination Marketing Organization?

In 2009, the Ontario government completed the Tourism Competitiveness Study. In its review of Ontario's tourism industry, the study found that:

- **Many different organizations are involved in marketing at the regional level, reducing the efficiency of marketing resources and effectiveness of any single Destination Marketing Organization.**

- **Most Ontario Destination Marketing Organizations focus on marketing, not on management/development of regions as tourism destinations.**

- **Organizations involved in destination marketing and management need to come together as an industry to have better success.**

- **The size and diversity of the province dictate the need for a regional approach to tourism marketing (within an overall provincial strategy).**

As a result, the study recommended **the creation of tourism regions led by one regional organization in each, to make Ontario's tourism industry stronger and more competitive.**

Regional Tourism Organizations **provide regional leadership and support a more coordinated and collaborative approach that maximizes resources, encourages strategic planning and investment, and results in stronger marketing with better reach.**

Wang & Xiang (2007) further outlined three direct reasons for RDMO's:

- Strategy: permits a better way to look at market expansion and product development.
- Transaction costs: creates economy of scale and greater efficiency.
- Organizational learning: enables expansion of capabilities and broadens knowledge base.

8.0 What is tourism segmentation?

- Process through which potential customers with similar needs and characteristics are grouped together so that a tourism organization can apply marketing strategies for the selected market segment efficiently.
    - Because
        - travel market is too large to reach efficiently
        - travel market is to diverse to communicate
        - breaking up the market will make it easier to manage

- Two main competing systems in Canada
    - CTC – Canadian Tourism Commission – majority of provinces have adopted the CTC EQ (Explorer Quotient) system including New Brunswick – the EQ system proposes 9 market segments.
    - TNS – The Province of Ontario used this system following their major studies undertaken in 2009. This system proposes 12 market segments.

9.0 What is New Brunswick doing?

New Brunswick has decided to focus its attention and resources on two (2) of the nine (9) CTC tourism segments. These two segments are present all over New Brunswick which justifies putting their provincial tourism investments in these markets.

- Authentic Experiencers:
    - Upscale, middle-aged families living in suburban and second-tier cities. New Brunswick may appeal because of a variety of land and water based activities. Core market – Ontario primarily Greater Toronto market – Brand names and prestigious products appeal to this group and they are tech-savvy.

- Gentle No Hassle Travelers:
  - Middle aged family enjoying above average incomes, living in suburban homes. Outdoor oriented group often looking to demonstrate their social status while keeping price in mind. They travel closer to home and find New Brunswick appealing because it is family oriented and offers major events and winter sports. Broadcast and online are their mediums of choice. Core market – Province of Quebec suburban markets – more price sensitive – enjoy amusement parks, zoos and adventure sports – venture out in their RV and often choose to stay at campsites.

10.0 What does this do for Southeastern NB and what about the other 7 segments?

- Southeast NB has a very diverse offering of tourism infrastructure and activities in all 9 CTC tourism segments.
- A review of our region's potential in the other 7 non-provincial designated segments is required.
- Existing area organizations have limited scope relative to overall tourism development.
- There is no existing regional accountable governance based tourism structure in our region, capable of bringing all tourism players to the same table

11.0 Establishing a RDMO in our region – Destination SENB

Following discussions, the SERSC Board asked staff for a proposal aimed at establishing a regional tourism organization for Southeastern New Brunswick. It is important to note that the following elements are for discussion purposes:

- RDMO should be industry driven. This ensures that tourism based discussions occur with knowledgeable individuals and puts some distance from undue political influence.
- RDMO recommends approach, strategies and implementation to SERSC Board for a final go ahead.
- At the onset, RDMO would undertake
  - regional assessment of tourism assets
  - organizations
  - human resources
  - regional tourism knowledge base.
- RDMO would
  - Identify potential underdeveloped or unidentified tourism assets. Findings would be examined in keeping with tourism segmentation.
  - Regional Tourism Collaboration Strategy would be undertaken for our region. Such a strategy would address:
    - Assets

        - tourism segments
        - brands
        - marketing strategies
        - human resource needs
        - digital platforms, etc.
        - direct measurable actions to meet present and future evolving tourism needs.
- RDMO would be responsible for:
    - implementing a Regional Collaboration Tourism Strategy.

- Funding would take two forms:
    - **Stable yearly funding of RDMO from SERSC** – this ensures that competent staff can be recruited and embark on building the organization with a long-term view. A contribution of 1\8 of a cent per $100 of assessment would be requested from all communities in the region. This would ensure basic staffing (1.5 staff) and cover administrative costs (per diems for Board members, meeting rooms, etc.) and possibly some leverage funding
    - **Governmental & private sector funding** – RDMO would approach the federal and provincial governments as well as private sector partners for research, marketing and implementation of plans. It is expected that the RDMO would leverage $2 to $4 per each dollar invested by the RDMO.

12.0 Structure and funding options

- RDMO Board – created as arm's length organization
    - should have 12 members (more or less)
        - 4 from SERSC Board (one from each region)
        - 5 from business community
        - 2 members from tourism organizations
        - 1 professional in tourism development
        -
- Four options for SERSC funding
    - Option 1 - 2018 - $225,000 (1\8 cent per $100 assessment)
    - Option 2 – 2018 - $112,500 (six months operation – 1\16 cent)
    - - 2019 – additional $112,500
    - Option 3 – 2018 - $75,000 (three months operation – 1\26 cent)
    - - 2019 – additional $75,000
    - - 2020 – additional $75,000 (fully operational)
    - Option 4 – move RDMO to 2019 - $225,000
    - A work plan would be established in keeping with the option chosen

- **Specific funding per option and communities is attached in annex.**

Tax freeze looming over regional service commission budget talks

SHANE MAGEE
TIMES & TRANSCRIPT

Municipal leaders in Southeast New Brunswick expressed doubt about taking on the expense of a regional tourism marketing organization since the impact of property tax assessment changes on their budgets remains murky.

Several mayors of small municipalities wavered on whether the spending should be included in the proposed Southeast Regional Service Commission 2018 budget. It includes options to set up a regional tourism program, asset management system and a group to plan a regional trail system.

The commission brings 15 municipal leaders and four local service district representatives to one table and manages garbage and regional planning, and now is exploring other services.

Gerard Belliveau, executive director of the commission, said the tourism program would include a staff component and forming a board of about a dozen people from the tourism industry, the municipalities and others. The group would design a regional tourism strategy.

There's no fixed plan for what they could decide to do. The early stages are about bringing together people from a "fractured" local tourism industry at one table to determine what they can do to boost visits and visitor experience.

"You want the people from these industries to sit down with the elected officials and determine what needs to be done," Belliveau said.

However, as the financial impact of the province's botched property tax assessment process continues, mayors hesitated to add more spending to their budgets. Assessed values for properties are used to calculate how much a person will pay in taxes, which then fund municipal operations.

"That's a hard sell," said Dorchester Mayor Jerome Bear of the village potentially forking over $1,053 next year as part of a $225,000 plan to launch a destination marketing organization. Moncton Mayor Dawn Arnold pointed out the city would foot about 43 per cent of the bill and it would likely require cutting costs from elsewhere in its budget.

"We're having the same issue for the outlook," said Sackville Mayor John Higham. He said the town faces a three per cent increase in staff costs after finishing labour negotiations, has faced a 10 to 12 per cent increase in RCMP costs, and capital costs are rising. The town doesn't plan to increase its tax rate to cover those rising costs, he said.

"It's going to be tough for us to go ahead [with the tourism plan]," Higham said at the service commission meeting Aug. 29. "It's just a difficult year. I spoke

problem, but we do at the moment."

The commission members voted last year to explore the tourism promotion organization.

Shediac Mayor Jacques LeBlanc launched a plea to forge ahead.

"It's never going to be an opportune time. It's always tough," LeBlanc said, adding he believes it is time for the region to come together on projects like the proposed tourism plan.

LeBlanc proposed they vote on a motion to confirm support for the tourism organization, which was unanimously approved.

Belliveau said everyone is aware municipalities are facing a financial pinch this year.

"Some of these municipalities are going to have a negative assessment growth," he said.

The tourism program spending could be phased in, he said, to reduce the initial burden on municipalities.

The idea isn't to replace tourism promotion already carried out by the provincial government. It would focus on the southeastern region.

"Their job is a provincial basis," he said of the New Brunswick tourism department. As for finances, the plan would be for commission money to finance back-office costs while additional money would be secured for its actual work. He suggested that for every dollar the commission spends on the tourism program, its staff and board members would go out to secure and additional $2 to $3 from other sources, like the tourism industry, provincial and federal governments. The discussion came as the commission considered a draft of its $19.8 million operations and capital budget for 2018. The budget has gone to the municipalities to review and approve, and is expected to be considered by the commission for final approval later this year.

The proposed budget also allocates $15,000 for a regional trail council that would begin implementing a plan to establish a trail network crossing the region.

"One of the objectives is to create an integrated trail system going all the way from Alma to Tantramar," Belliveau said.

The commission has completed a recreation plan that identified gaps in existing trail networks. The council would bring together biologists, historians and trail enthusiasts to plan how to fill those gaps and which segments are priorities. After that, an implementation strategy could lead to an expanded trail network. The commission includes Moncton, Dieppe, Riverview, Shediac, Salisbury, Alma, Dorchester, Hillsborough, Sackville, Petitcodiac, Port Elgin, Riverside-Albert, the Beaubassin-East rural community, Cap-Pele and surrounding local service