

An aerial photograph of a coastal town, likely in a northern region, showing a cluster of houses and roads nestled among green forests. The town is situated on a peninsula that juts into a large body of water. In the distance, more landmasses and small islands are visible under a clear blue sky. A vibrant rainbow arches across the upper portion of the image, centered in the sky.

# Your Tomorrow Starts Today

A Talk on Municipal Sustainability

CONFERENCE TRADE SHOW AGM 2024

# CHARTING THE COURSE

7-9, GANDER, N.L.

Music



CONFERENCE TRADE SHOW AGM 2024  
**CHARTING THE COURSE**  
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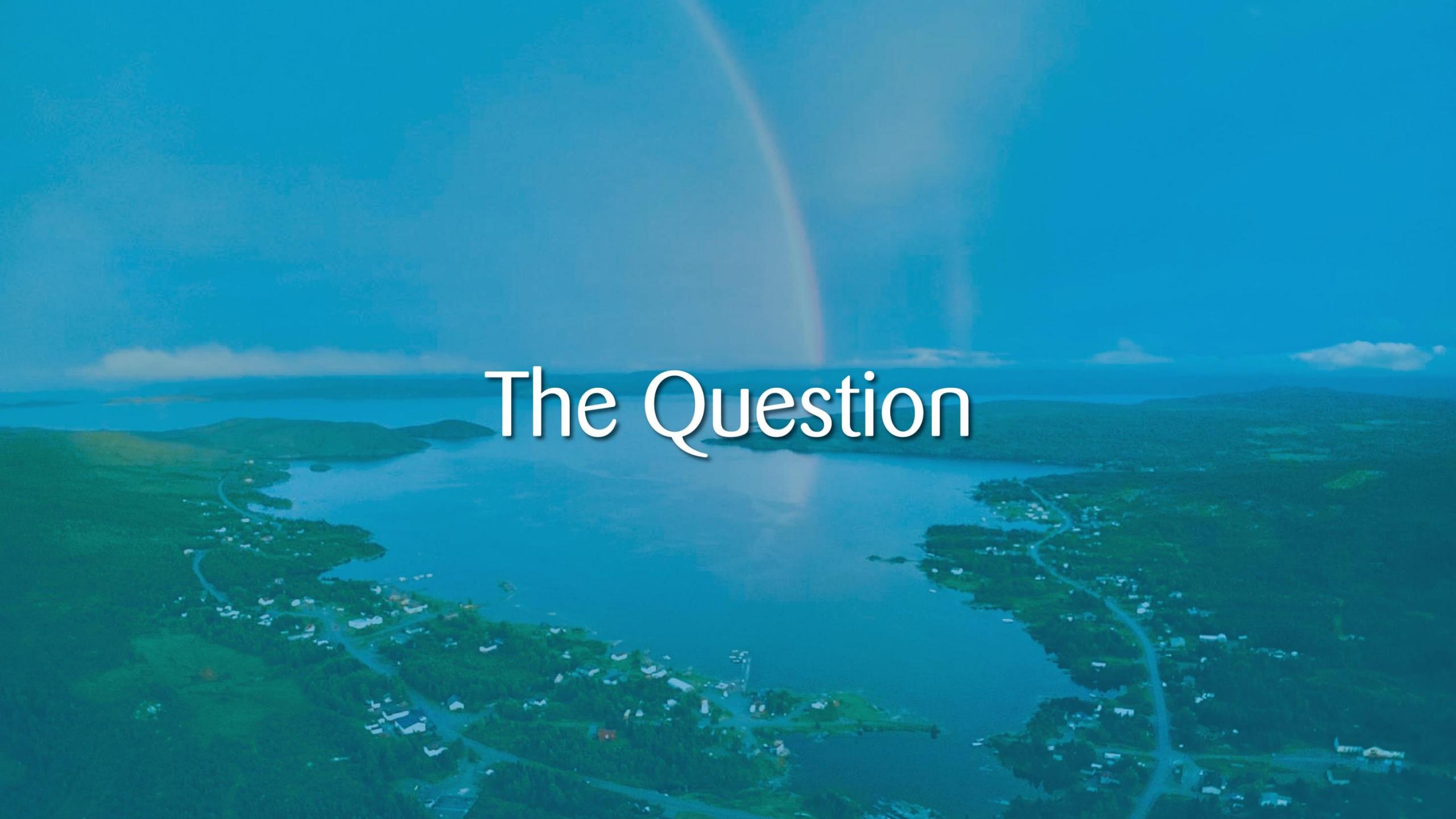
# The Sequel



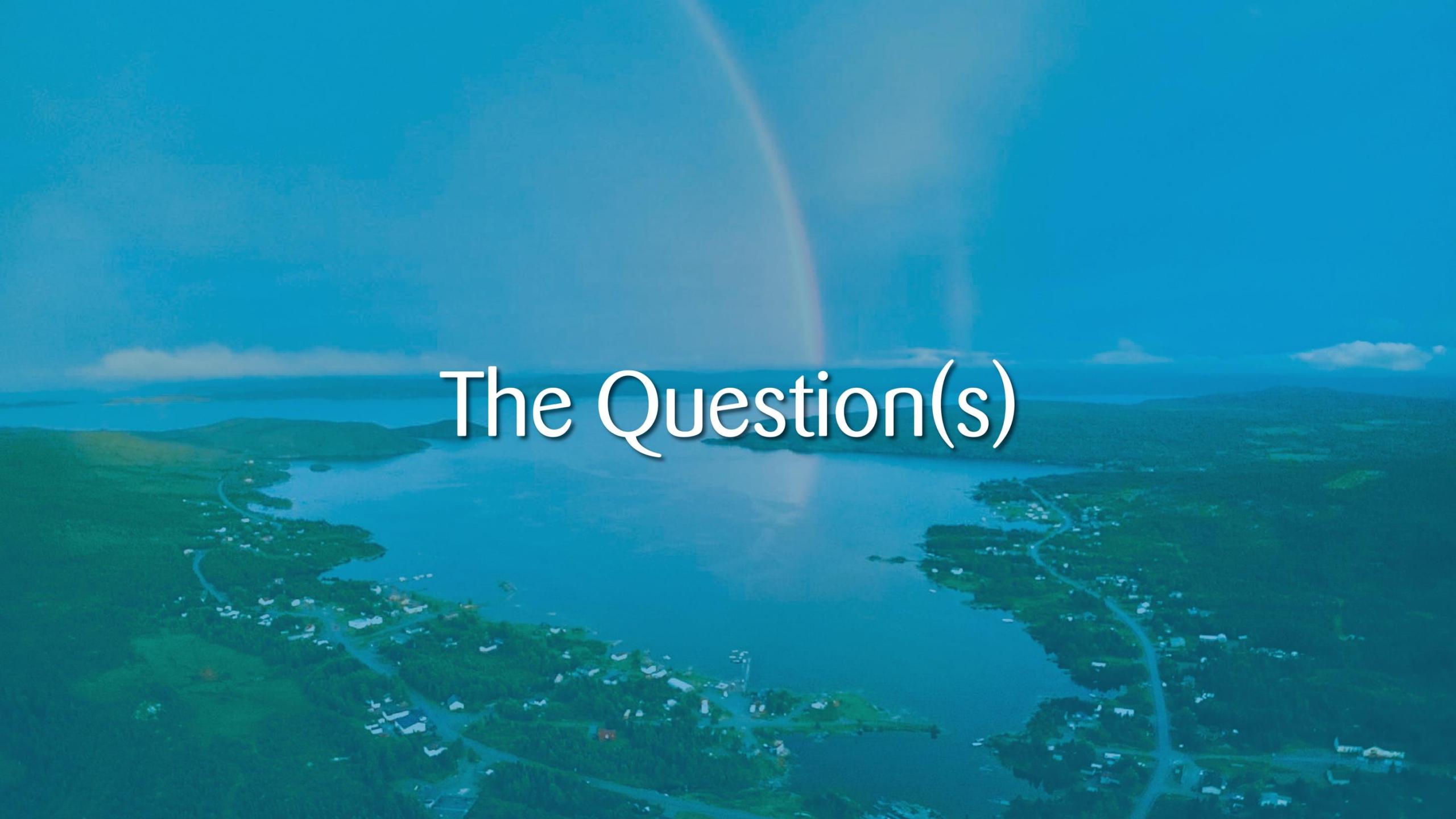
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# The Sequel with less Majumder



A wide-angle aerial photograph of a coastal town, likely in Northern Canada. The town is built along a large, deep blue bay with several smaller inlets and islands. The surrounding land is a mix of dark green forest and lighter green fields. A bright, multi-colored rainbow arches across the sky from the upper left towards the center. The sky is a clear, pale blue with a few wispy white clouds.

# The Question

A wide-angle aerial photograph of a coastal town, likely in Northern Canada. The town is built along a large, deep blue bay with several smaller inlets and islands. The land is covered in dense green forests, with clusters of white buildings and roads. In the upper center of the image, a vibrant rainbow arches across the sky, its colors reflected in the water below. The horizon shows distant hills and a bright, clear sky.

# The Question(s)

An aerial photograph of a coastal town, likely Bar Harbor, Maine. The town is built on a peninsula with several small islands and inlets. The water is a deep blue, and the town is surrounded by green forests. A bright rainbow is visible in the upper left corner of the image, extending from the top center towards the left.

Where will my town be  
in 20 years?

An aerial photograph of a coastal town, likely Bar Harbor, Maine. The town is built on a peninsula with several small islands and inlets. The water is a deep blue, and the town is surrounded by green forests. A bright rainbow is visible in the upper left corner of the image, extending from the top center towards the left.

Where will my town be  
in 10 years?

An aerial photograph of a coastal town, likely Bar Harbor, Maine. The town is built on a peninsula with several small islands and inlets. The water is a deep blue, and the town is surrounded by green forested hills. A bright rainbow is visible in the upper left portion of the image, arching from the horizon towards the top center.

Where will my town be  
in 5 years?

A wide-angle aerial photograph of a coastal town, likely in a northern region. The town is built on a peninsula with several small islands and inlets. The water is a deep, clear blue. The town itself is a mix of white and grey buildings, with a network of roads and green trees. In the upper right corner of the image, a bright rainbow arches across the sky, its colors vivid against the blue. The sky is otherwise clear and blue.

Caring about your community  
means caring about its future.

An aerial photograph of a coastal town, likely in Northern Canada, showing a network of roads, houses, and a large body of water. In the upper portion of the image, a vibrant rainbow arches across a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The town is nestled among green hills and forests.

Sustainability.

A wide-angle photograph of a natural landscape. In the foreground, a calm lake with a slight greenish tint stretches across the frame. On the right side, a shoreline is visible where a small, colorful boat (orange and green) is docked. The middle ground is dominated by a range of mountains covered in dense, dark green forests. The sky above is a clear, pale blue. The overall scene is peaceful and suggests a remote, natural environment.

# Barriers to Sustainability

# Barriers to Sustainability

## Defeatist Attitudes

When people believe “nothing’s going to change” or “we’ve tried that before,” it kills momentum. Hopelessness spreads quickly and makes it harder to rally community support or take risks on new ideas.

# Barriers to Sustainability

## Lack of Willingness

Sometimes the barrier isn't resources or ability—it's simply the unwillingness to change or try. Whether it's due to burnout, fear of backlash, or just plain stubbornness, this hesitation slows everything down.

# Barriers to Sustainability

## Lack of Vision

**Sustainability requires long-term thinking, but many councils are stuck in survival mode—putting out fires instead of planning for the future. Without a shared vision, progress is scattered and short-lived.**

# Barriers to Sustainability

## **Limited Capacity & Staff**

**Most towns operate with a skeleton crew. One person might wear five hats, leaving no time for strategic planning, grant writing, or new project development—let alone sustainability work.**

# Barriers to Sustainability

## Financial Constraints

When budgets are tight—and they usually are—essential services eat up every dollar. There's often no leftover funding for things like climate adaptation, green infrastructure, or community engagement.

# Barriers to Sustainability

## **Burnout and Turnover in Leadership**

In small towns, leadership roles often fall to the same dedicated few—and they're exhausted. Constant demands, limited support, and community pressure lead to burnout, while high turnover disrupts continuity. When leaders are always starting from scratch, it's hard to build lasting progress or momentum.

# Barriers to Sustainability

## Aging Infrastructure

Water systems, roads, and buildings are crumbling in many rural communities. These pressing needs pull attention and funding away from innovation and sustainability planning.

# Barriers to Sustainability

## Volunteer Shortages

Without volunteers, community events, fire departments, committees, and even local councils start to fall apart. But in many places, the same few people are doing everything—and they're burning out.

# Barriers to Sustainability

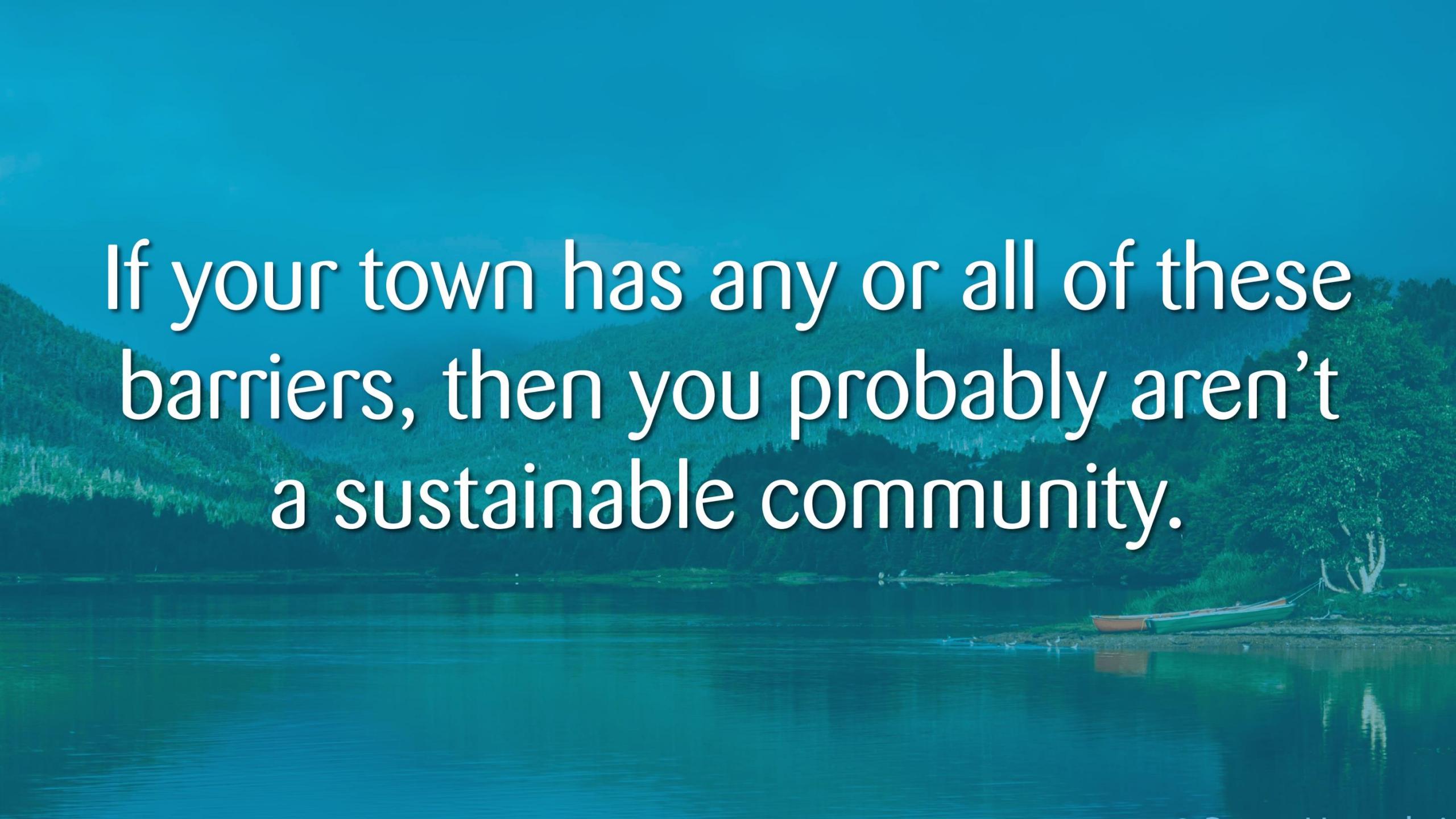
## Resistance to Change

The phrase “that’s not how we do it here” can stop good ideas in their tracks. Deep-rooted habits and fear of the unknown often stand in the way of progress, even when change is clearly needed.

# Barriers to Sustainability

## Lack of Collaboration

Municipalities often work in silos. Without stronger partnerships—between towns, with nonprofits, or with the province—it's harder to share resources, scale ideas, or take on bigger challenges together.

A scenic view of a lake with a forested shoreline. In the foreground, a small boat is docked on the right side. The water is calm, reflecting the surrounding greenery. The background features a dense forest of evergreen trees. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

If your town has any or all of these barriers, then you probably aren't a sustainable community.

A wide-angle photograph of a natural landscape. In the foreground, a calm lake with a slight greenish tint stretches across the frame. On the right side, a shoreline is visible with a small, colorful boat (orange and green) tied up to a wooden post. The middle ground is dominated by a range of mountains covered in dense, dark green forests. The sky above is a clear, pale blue. The overall scene is peaceful and suggests a remote, natural environment.

So, what do we do?

# Keys to Sustainability

A photograph of a large white boat docked at a wooden pier in a harbor. The boat is a multi-level fishing vessel with various equipment and structures. The pier is made of dark wood and extends into the water. The water is calm, reflecting the boat and the surrounding environment. In the background, there are large, light-colored, rocky hills or mountains. On the right side of the image, there are some green trees and a small, white, rectangular building. The overall scene is a natural, coastal environment.

# Keys to Sustainability

## **Empower Local Leaders**

**Build capacity, avoid burnout, and foster fresh leadership.**

**Sustainable communities don't happen without people willing to step up. That means investing in leadership training, creating smoother onboarding for new councillors, and offering meaningful support to avoid burnout. Empowering local champions—especially youth—helps keep ideas moving and ensures knowledge doesn't leave when someone steps down.**

# Keys to Sustainability

## Empower Local Leaders

**Build capacity, avoid burnout, and foster fresh leadership.**

- Start a Youth Council or invite high school students to shadow council meetings.
- Host a Leadership Night with current and former councillors sharing their experience and advice.
- Invite guest speakers on governance, finance, and climate planning.
- Offer honorariums or recognition for key volunteer roles to reduce burnout and validate contributions.
- Use mentorship pairings between long-serving councillors and new or potential leaders.

# Keys to Sustainability

## **Plan With Vision, Not Just Reaction**

**Look beyond tomorrow's to-do list and imagine 10 years from now.**

**Rural municipalities often operate in crisis mode—fixing pipes, filling positions, and chasing deadlines. But sustainability requires long-term planning rooted in community values and realistic goals. Visioning exercises, integrated planning, and citizen engagement can shift councils from reactive to proactive.**

# Keys to Sustainability

## Plan With Vision, Not Just Reaction

Look beyond tomorrow's to-do list and imagine 10 years from now.

- Hold a Community Visioning Session to hear what residents want for the future.
- Create a 10-Year Municipal Sustainability Plan with goals tied to housing, environment, and economy.
- Integrate climate risk assessments into capital works and infrastructure planning.
- Dedicate one council meeting every quarter to strategic and long-term planning, not just operations.

# Keys to Sustainability

## **Collaborate to Do More With Less**

**Break down silos and build stronger networks.**

No town should have to go it alone. Shared services, regional planning, and inter-municipal partnerships make sustainability more achievable—especially when resources are tight. Collaboration also makes it easier to access funding and implement bigger, more impactful projects.

# Keys to Sustainability

## Collaborate to Do More With Less

**Break down silos and build stronger networks.**

- Form a shared services agreement with neighbouring towns (e.g., snow clearing, waste management).
- Create a regional housing task force to identify shared needs and access joint funding.
- Partner with local NGOs or businesses on grant applications or community events.
- Rotate regional planning workshops hosted by different municipalities.

# Keys to Sustainability

## **Reimagine Participation**

**Get more people involved by making it easier, meaningful, and fun.**

**Get more people involved by making it easier, meaningful, and fun. Volunteer fatigue and low civic engagement are real. But people want to help—they just need a reason, a role, and the right environment. Think beyond traditional meetings: host community meals, pop-up workshops, or creative projects that reflect local culture and needs.**

# Keys to Sustainability

## Reimagine Participation

Get more people involved by making it easier, meaningful, and fun.

- Replace one council meeting a year with a “Community Ideas Night”—food, music, and open mic-style discussions.
- Set up a community engagement booth at town events to gather input on key issues.
- Create a rotating “Community Spotlight” to highlight local volunteers and groups on social media or newsletters.

# Keys to Sustainability

## Build for Resilience

**Invest in infrastructure and systems that can weather the storm.**

**From climate events to economic downturns, small towns face big vulnerabilities. Resilient communities plan ahead—investing in renewable energy, food systems, accessible housing, and infrastructure that works today and tomorrow. Sustainability isn't a luxury—it's a shield for the future.**

# Keys to Sustainability

## Build for Resilience

**Invest in infrastructure and systems that can weather the storm.**

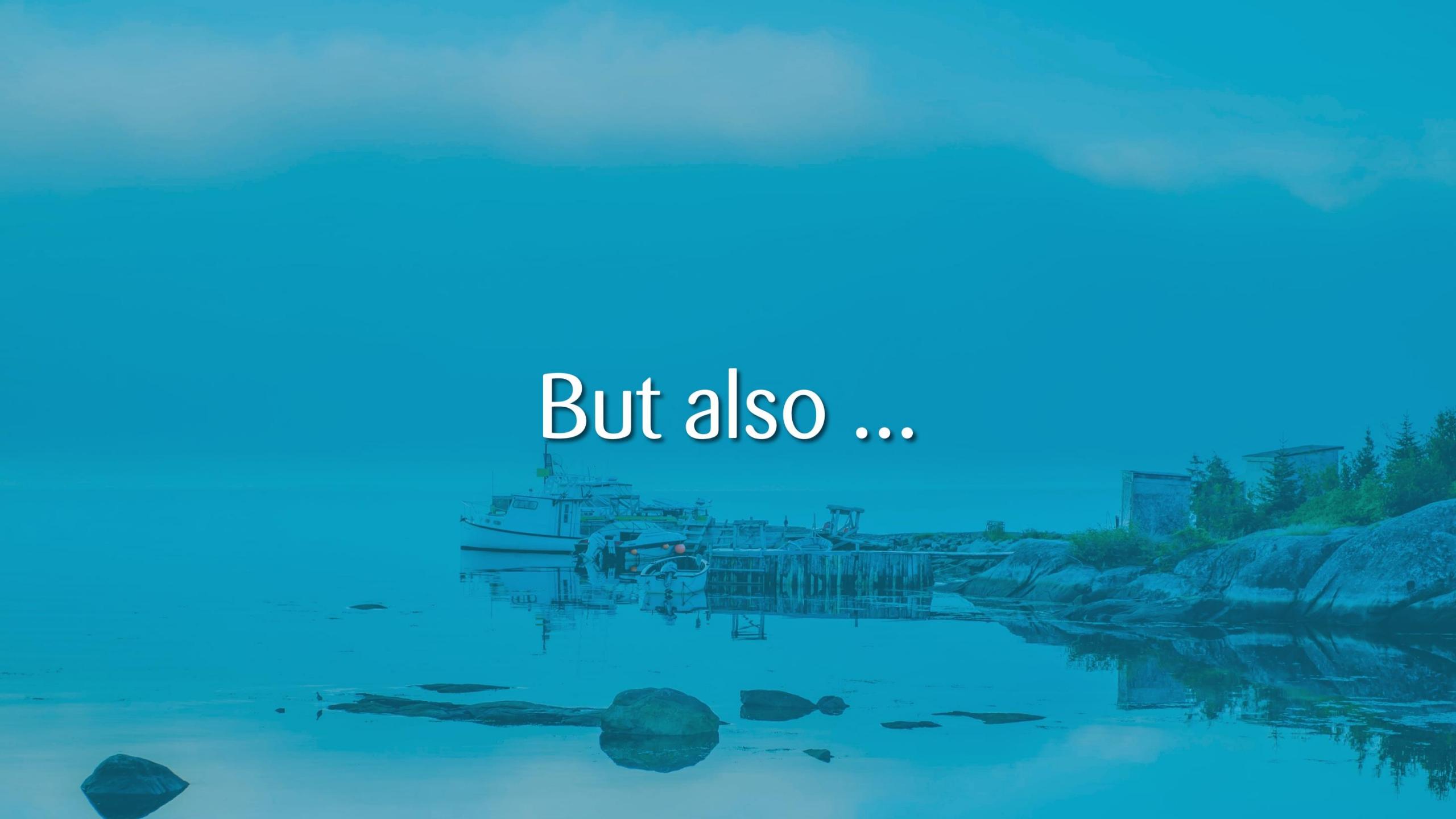
- Apply for funding to install energy-efficient streetlights or heat pump upgrades in town buildings.
- Support the development of community gardens or greenhouses to improve food security.
- Work with a planner to prioritize infrastructure repairs based on climate risks (e.g., flooding, erosion).
- Include emergency preparedness and backup power plans for critical infrastructure.

Wow. That sounds hard.



A photograph of a white boat docked at a rocky shore. The boat is reflected in the calm water. In the background, there is a small, light-colored building and some greenery. The sky is overcast with grey clouds.

Anything worth doing always is.

A photograph of a harbor scene. In the foreground, there are several large, dark, irregular stones on a sandy beach. In the middle ground, a white boat with a green stripe and some equipment on deck is docked at a wooden pier. The pier extends into the water, which is calm and reflects the sky. In the background, there are large, light-colored, rocky hills. On the right side, there are some industrial buildings and trees. The sky is a clear, pale blue.

But also ...

A photograph of a harbor scene. In the center, a white boat with a green stripe is docked at a wooden pier. The pier extends from a rocky shore into the water. The water is calm, reflecting the boats and the sky. In the background, there are more boats and a small building on the shore. The sky is filled with large, white, billowing clouds.

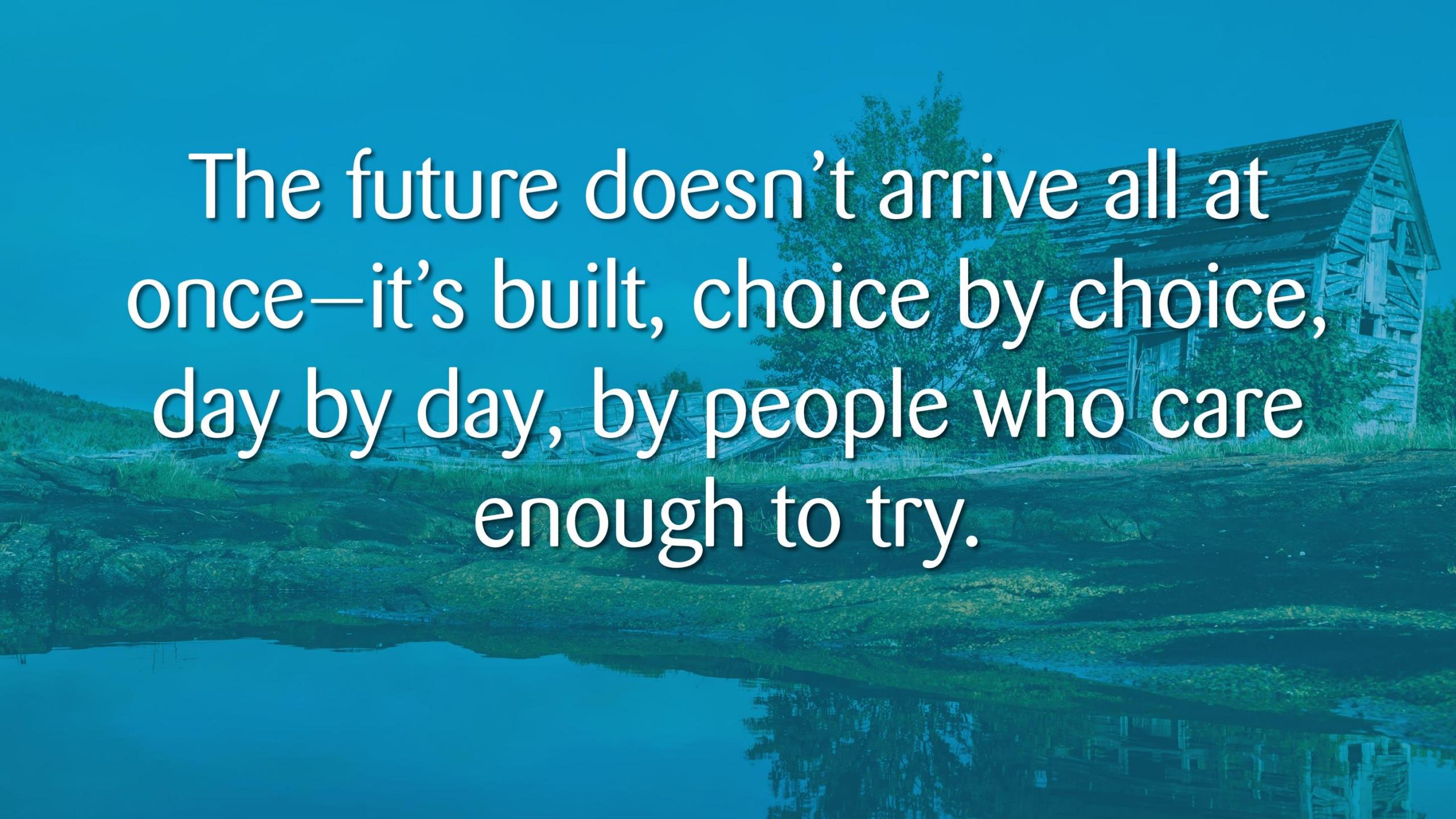
We're here to help.

- A municipal sustainability initiative for Newfoundland and Labrador
- Five Streams: Climate Action, Food Security, Heritage & Arts, Environmental Stewardship, Healthy Built Environments
- Helping municipalities build vibrant, resilient futures
- Webinars, resources, and support for innovation and growth



A photograph of a dilapidated wooden cabin on a rocky shore. The cabin is in a state of disrepair, with missing shingles and broken windows. It sits on a grassy, rocky bank next to a calm, dark lake. The sky is overcast and blue. The overall atmosphere is one of decay and stillness.

This is about changing mindsets.

A photograph of a dilapidated wooden cabin in a forest, with a body of water in the foreground.

The future doesn't arrive all at once—it's built, choice by choice, day by day, by people who care enough to try.

A photograph of a dilapidated wooden building and a boat reflected in a body of water. The building is a weathered wooden structure with a partially collapsed roof, situated in a grassy, overgrown area. In the foreground, a wooden boat is partially buried in the ground. The water in the foreground reflects the building and the boat. The overall scene has a somber, abandoned feel.

# The Question



What am I doing to shape my town's tomorrow?

A photograph of a dilapidated wooden cabin on a grassy hillside with a lake in the foreground. The cabin is in a state of disrepair, with missing shingles and broken windows. The surrounding area is overgrown with trees and bushes. The water in the foreground is calm, reflecting the sky and the hillside.

It starts today.