

ECONOMIC INTEL. UNIT CASE STUDY SMALL TOWN HOCKEY TEAM'S BIG ECONOMIC IMPACT

The Challenge

Nestled in the heart of the Cape Breton Regional Municipality is the Cape Breton Eagles Hockey Club. Both the junior hockey team, and their home ice, Centre 200, are deeply embedded in the cultural and economic life of Unama'ki – Cape Breton.

The Eagles have played their home games at Centre 200 since 1997, and the venue continues to serve as the Island's premier events facility. However, while both the team and the venue are highly visible community assets, their broader economic and social contributions had not been fully quantified. The Cape Breton Partnership presented the prospect of two economic studies to examine the economic and community impact of the Cape Breton Eagles Hockey Club and Centre 200 on the Cape Breton Regional Municipality. The purpose was to better understand how the team and venue contribute to the local economy, support employment, attract spending, and strengthen community identity. The work also needed to capture the relationship between the Eagles and Centre 200, recognizing that each is economically reliant on the other's success. The Partnership turned to Turner Drake for advice.

Turner Drake's Approach

Turner Drake's Economic Intelligence Unit began the assignment by drafting an analytical framework and methodology to assess both the direct economic activity, and the broader contribution to the regional economy. The work included examining direct spending, estimating total economic output, and assessing employment impacts across Nova Scotia, Cape Breton, and the Cape Breton Regional Municipality.

To complement the economic analysis, Turner Drake also examined community impacts. This included assessing the Eagles' role as a local brand, their connection to youth sports and community events, and the extent to which residents view the team as part of Cape Breton's local culture. This was achieved through public surveys, business surveys, questionnaires to stakeholders, and business engagement sessions.

Winning Results

Turner Drake's studies provided the client with a clear, evidence-based picture of the economic and community value generated by the Eagles and Centre 200.

The results demonstrated that the Eagles and Centre 200 are more than entertainment assets. They contribute to the local economy, support employment, bring new spending into the region, and serve as important sources of community pride. By quantifying both the economic and community impacts, Turner Drake's analysis helped show how sport, events, infrastructure, and local identity work together to create value for the region.

