

ECONOMIC INTEL. UNIT CASE STUDY REVENUE REPRESENTATION

The Challenge

Property taxes are the single largest source of revenue for municipalities. To ensure the long-term sustainability of municipal finances it is critical to understand exactly where this revenue is coming from.

There is an immense value to be gained in evaluating which areas and land uses are more productive, and what development patterns are lagging behind (looking at you, single-family neighbourhoods). As a part of higher-order planning and zoning reforms, the Town of Wolfville retained Turner Drake's Economic Intelligence Unit for a highly-specialised spatial analysis of the Town's property tax base, and an economic assessment of their zoning and land use framework.

Turner Drake's Approach

Our Economic Intelligence Unit is lucky to have talented brains that can interpret and transform raw data into useable and impactful products for our clients. Through a rigorous analytical research process that combined provincial property assessment records with spatial property data, we gathered information on all properties applicable to the study area. In order to provide the most accurate and reliable figures for the Town, the analysis focused solely on residential and commercial properties.

We then employed a standardised, multiple-criteria analysis that calculated the cumulative property tax levy for each property under the purview of the Town. The numbers alone are insufficient without a reliable means to interpret the results; these figures were normalised on a per unit of land basis (for each parcel). This enabled an efficient and statistically reliable comparison of properties across a myriad of land uses, locations, and typologies.

Our analysis lined the unitised and cumulative property tax levies for each parcel with the Town's zoning information; this provided the Client with an invaluable resource when evaluating the benefit of future zoning and land use changes. Our final deliverables gave the Client a deeper understanding of which areas actually help keep the lights on (or in this case, the water running), and which areas needed more support.

Winning Results

Our final deliverables to the Town included professional-grade 3D visualisation models that gave a clear picture property tax revenue density and efficiency, along with customized spatial data files, the results of our work in Excel datasets, and a formalized report. Our research helped inform key aspects of updates to their Municipal Planning Strategy, and provided the Town with usable insight that went beyond a traditional consulting report.

