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Policy & Strategy Committee Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, January 21, 2025 – 9:00 a.m.

MODL Council Chambers, 10 Allée Champlain Drive Cookville NS

1. Call to Order

1.1. Mi'kma'ki Territorial Acknowledgement

2. Announcements, Acknowledgements, Recognition

3. Public Input (15 Minutes)

4. Changes/Approval of Agenda (as circulated)

5. Approval of Minutes – November 19, 2024

6. Business Arising from Minutes - Nil

7. Presentations/Scheduled Times

7.1 South Shore Public Libraries, Ashley Nunn-Smith, CEO & Chief Libraries 9:15 a.m. 1-17

8. Referral from Council - Nil

9. Staff Reports

9.1 Administration Department

9.1.1 Draft Strategic Priorities 18-29

9.1.2 Communication & Public Engagement Options 30-41

9.1.3 New MODL Policy 102 – Audit Committee 42-50

9.1.4 Repeal & Replace Policy 003 “Council Members’ Remuneration, Benefits & Expenses” 51-57

9.1.5 Amend & Re-Adopt Policy 077 “Gifts and Hospitality” 58-65

9.2 Finance Development

9.2.1 MODL Policy 049 - Property Tax Rebate for 2025-26 66-70

9.3 Recreation Department

9.3.1 South Shore Pickleball Club Request 71-77

9.4 Planning & Development

9.4.1 Cluster Development Regulations 78-87

10. Mayor’s/Deputy Mayor’s/Councillors’ Matters - Nil

11. Added Items

12. In Camera - Nil

13. Adjournment



Community Highlights

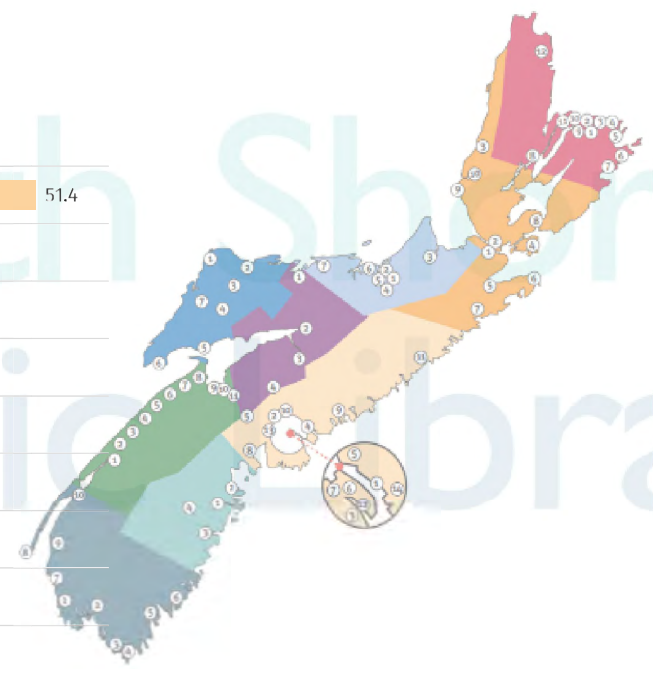
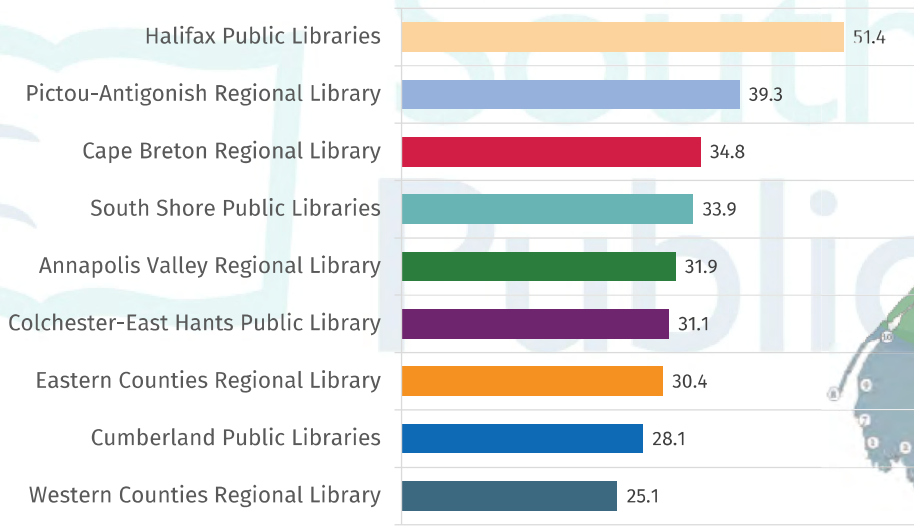
Municipality of the District of Lunenburg Council

January 21, 2025

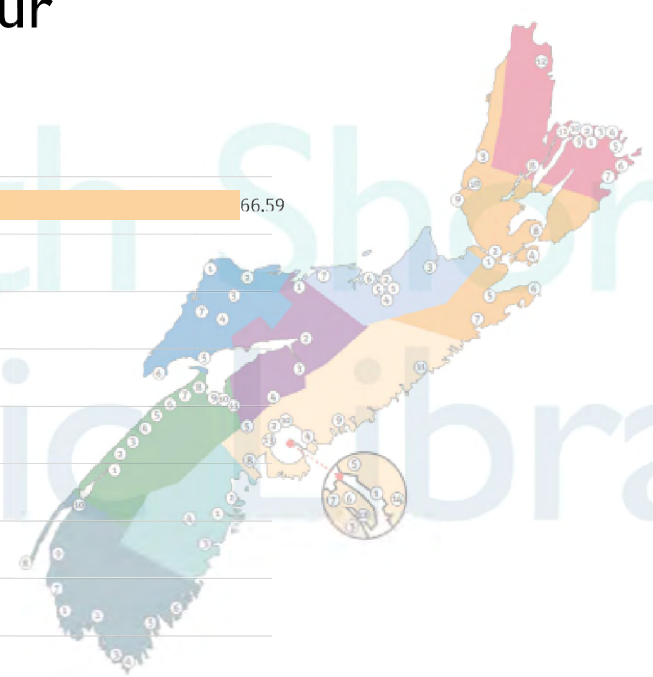
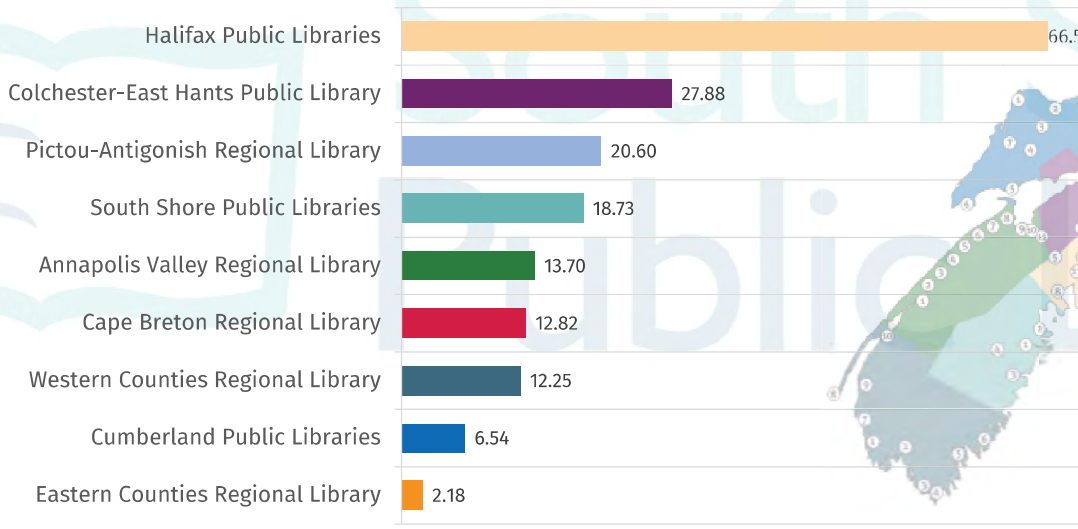
SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE



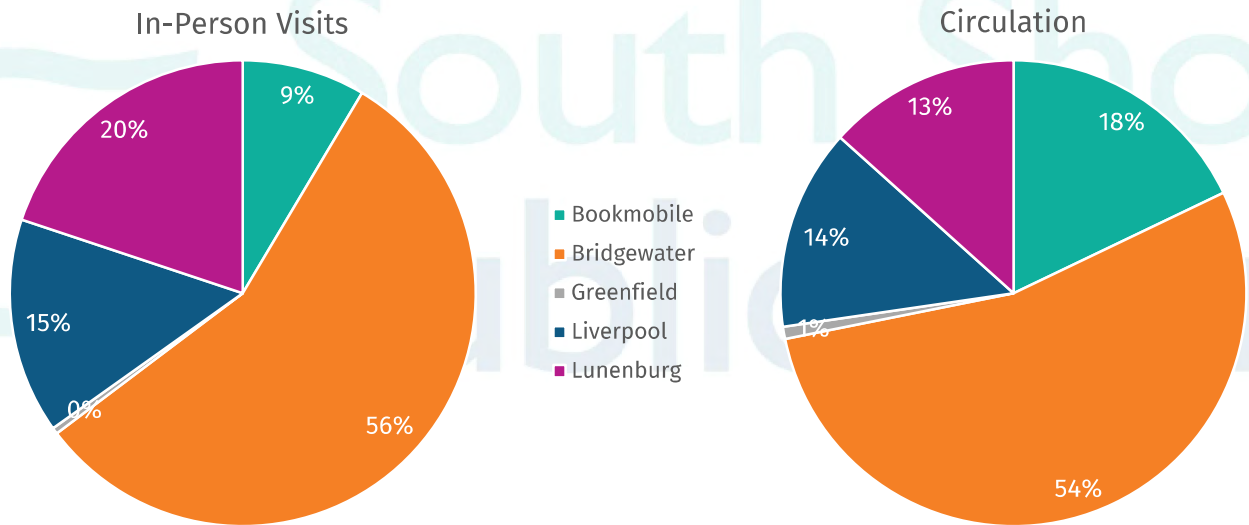
Weekly Open Hours per Location (2023-2024)



In-Person Visits per Open Hour (2023-2024)



Branch Comparison (2023-2024)



Core & Innovative Library Service

Supporting Family Literacy

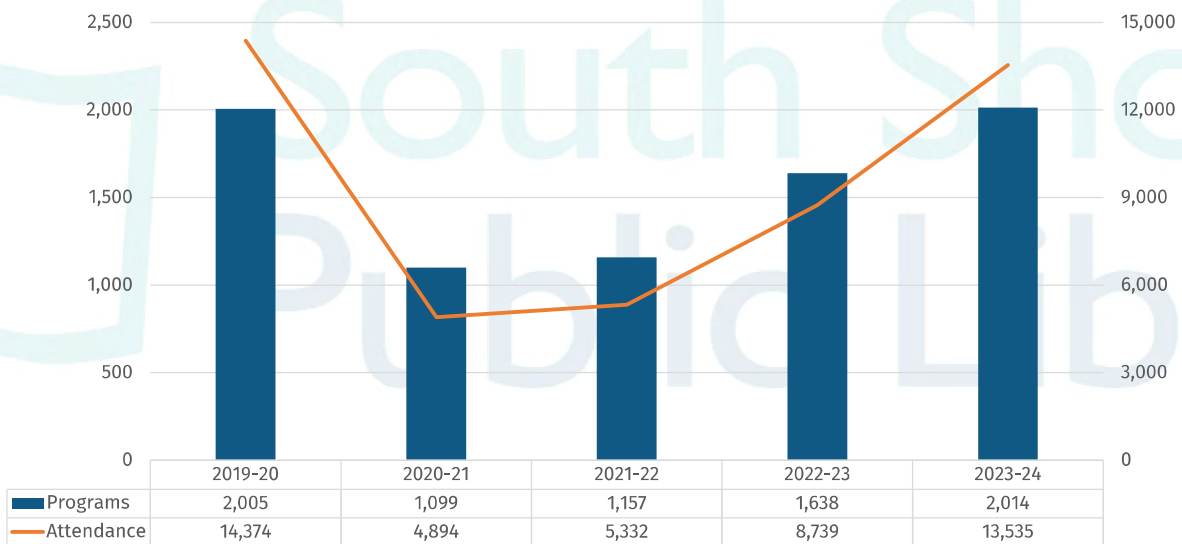
- Board books, picture books, toys and games
- Reading together as a family contributes to early literacy
- Sets kids up for success in school and beyond



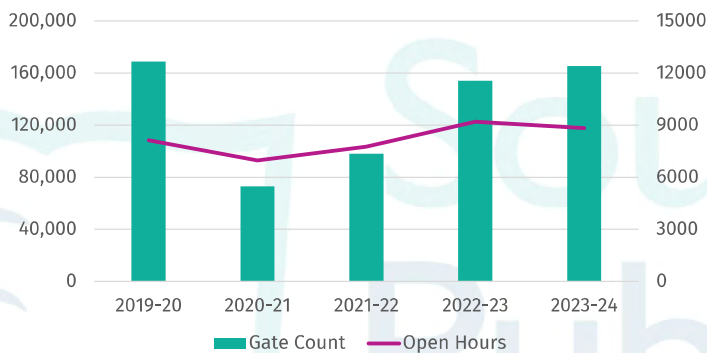
Imagination & Play



Program Attendance (5-year trend)



Study & Work Space



- With the rise of remote work, many rely on the library as a neutral “third place”
- Safe, weather-controlled space with no cost of entry
- Wifi connections and computer terminal use address the digital divide

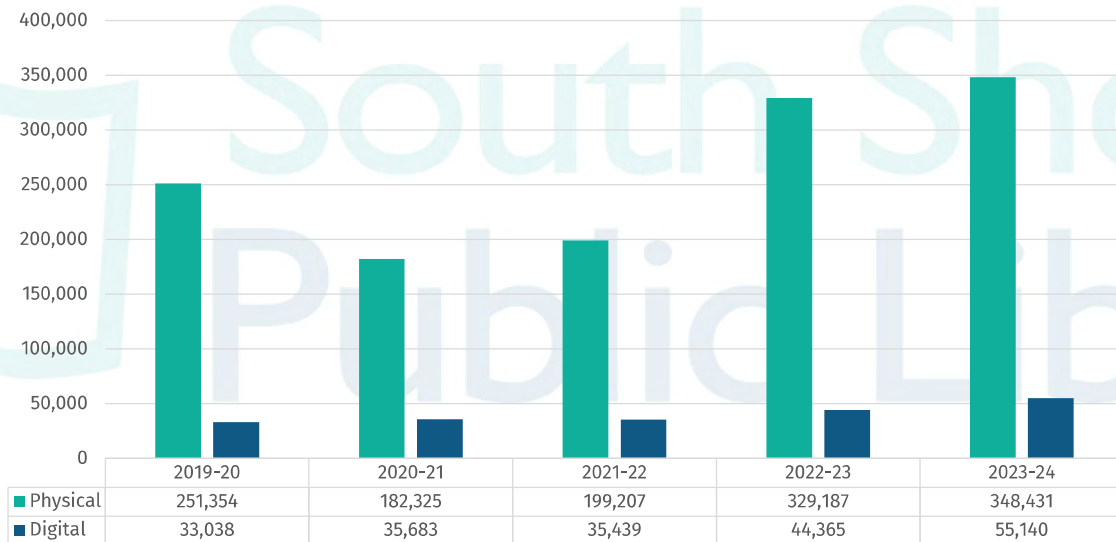


Same Page

- Same Page launched in January 2022
- Consortia catalogue of 8 regional NS library systems
- 1,000,000+ items to borrow
- Increase of nearly **13x** more material shipping between regions
 - Pre-Same Page, 37,210 outgoing items passed between the regions (5-year average, 2015-2020)
 - In 2023, this reached more than *half a million items* (500,729) an increase of 1245% in just three years

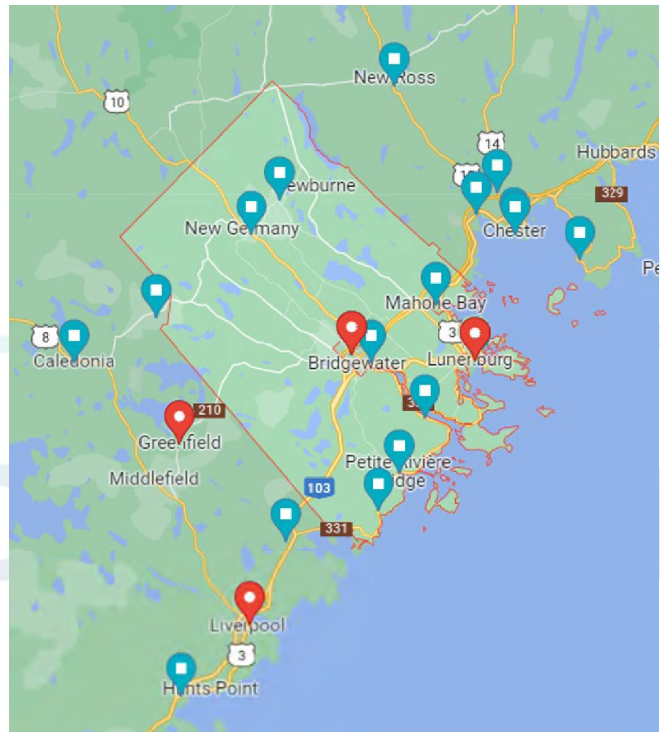


Physical & Digital Borrowing (5-year trend)



Bookmobile

- New bookmobile launched 2021
- 8 weekly stops and 10 tri-weekly stops
- MODL stops: Barss Corner, New Germany, Broad Cove, Petite Rivière, and Pentz
- In-person visits and circulation remain high, as does public sentiment
- Operational vehicle costs are expensive, yet lower than operating a similar number of brick-and-mortar locations



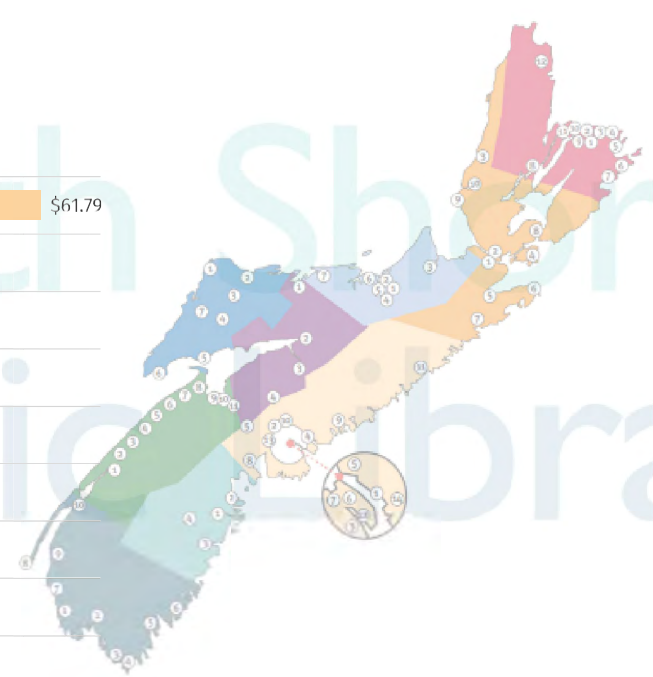
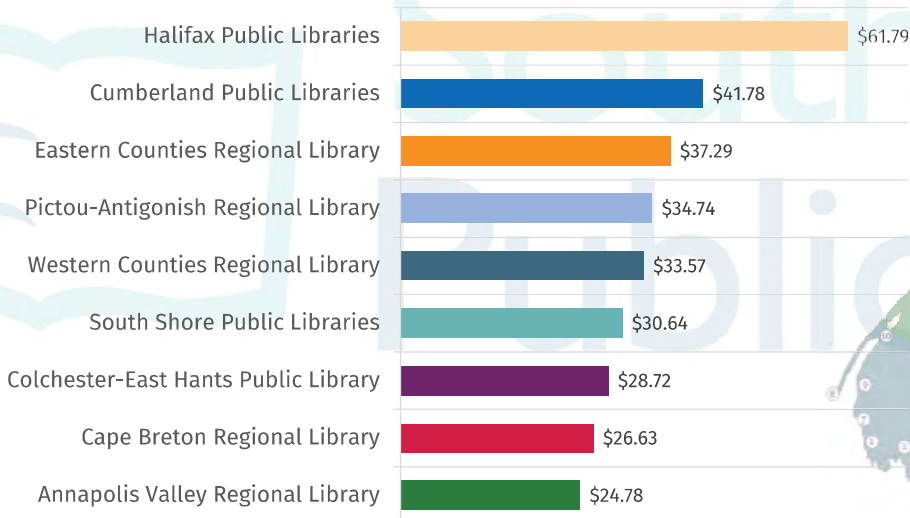
COVID-19 Rapid Test Distribution

- Over 2 million tests distributed
- Vaccine Appointment Booking assistance, Maple Virtual Health
- ALA award-winning *Caring Calls*

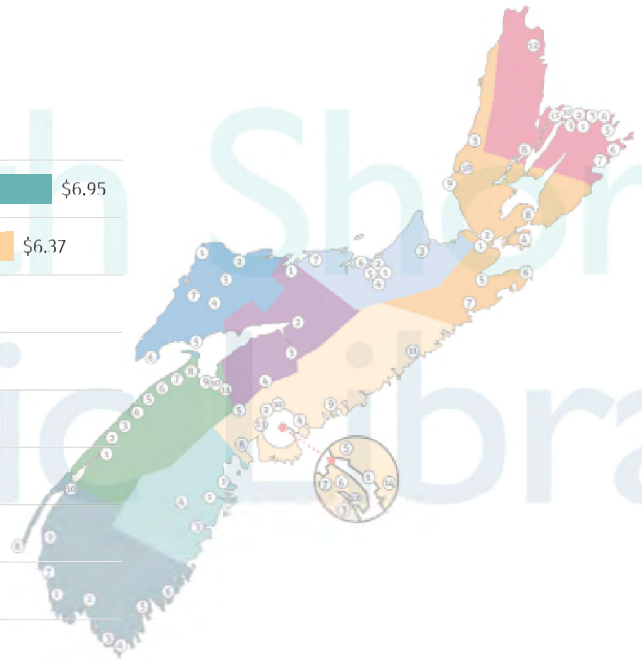
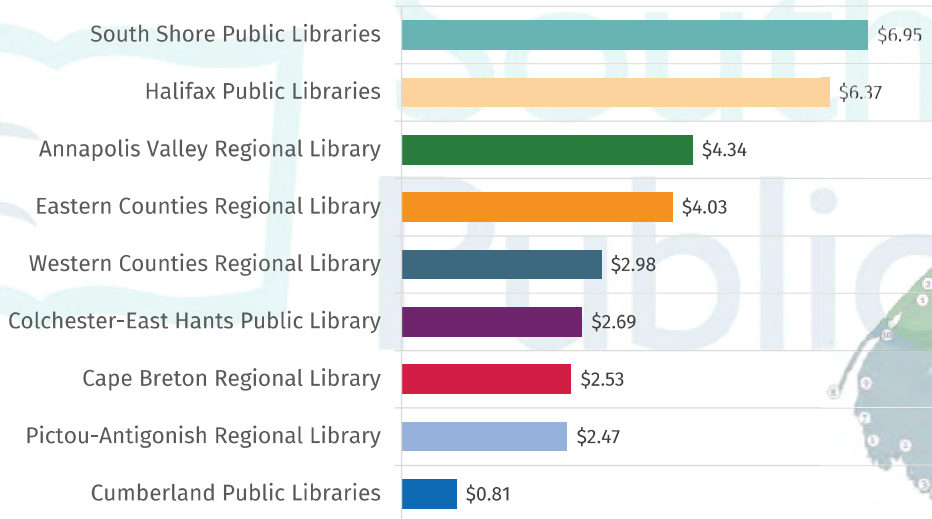


Library Expenditure

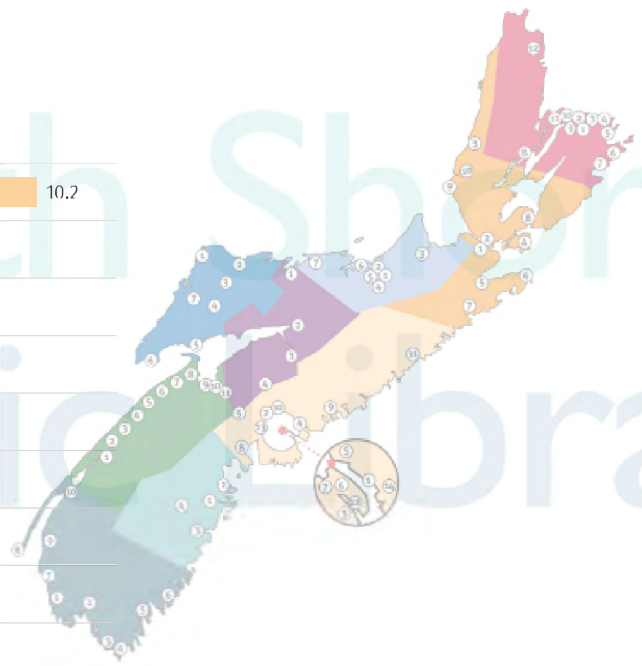
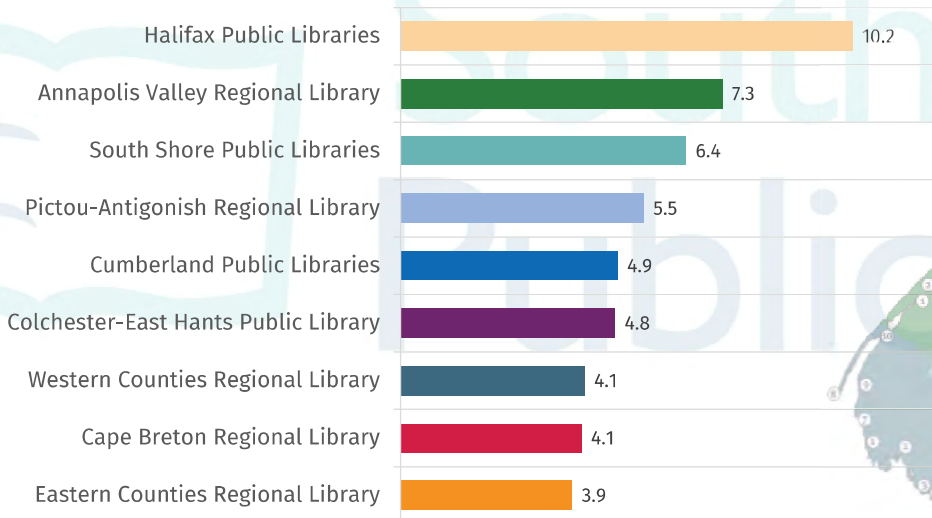
Per Capita Expenditure (2023-2024)



Collection Spending per Capita (2023-2024)



Annual Borrowing per Capita (2023-2024)



2024 Highlights

Active, Healthy Living

- Test drive an e-bike or snowshoes
- Get active, get outdoors
- Learn new skills



Pride Programming

- Our biggest year yet!
- SSPL Bookmobile in Pride Parade
- *Reading with Royalty* at 3 branches, including the first ever in Queens County
- Music with Mandy, Drag Q&A, Rebecca Rose author reading



Truth & Reconciliation

- Our T&R event on September 28 had more than 80 in attendance
- We unveiled our new Pjila'si welcome signs by local Mi'qmaq artist Jessica Jerome, featuring traditional place names of our two counties
- We showed the short film *Makit's Doll* and led children in making rag dolls
- Shared on our social media by a parent:

"Thank you for this, it was so well done! I keep hearing horror stories and learning so much about how my culture felt so entitled that they took children from their families so they could be basically brainwashed and changed! We've been talking a lot about truth and reconciliation day at home and my daughter has learned some things about it in her pre-primary class. Tonight my almost 4 year old took the doll she made to bed. She told me "the lady in the movie went to a school like Phylis where they cut her hair and took her orange shirt. The lady in the movie was sad because they took away her doll. She made one to play with and hid it so they didn't take it away from her. I am going to keep my doll safe." Your presentation certainly made an impression on my little girl!"



Food Literacy

- Hands-on cooking demonstrations
- No registration fees:
 - Removes barriers
 - Provides free food
- Sharing Indigenous traditions and culture



Lunenburg Lit Fest

- 9th annual festival, Nov 7-9, 2024
- Brings international bestselling and local authors together
- Intimate setting enables meaningful audience engagement



Marketing Audit

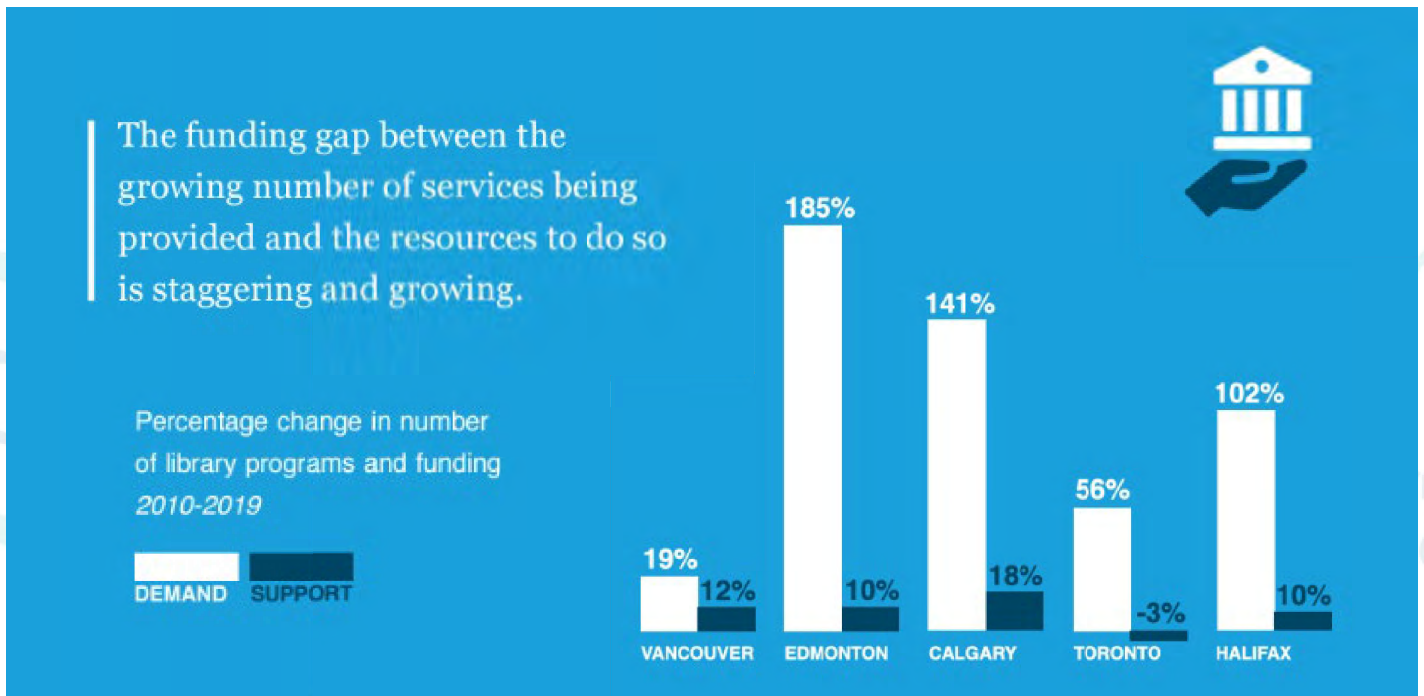
- Library Development Fund grant (through CCTH)
- Contracted *Shortstop Marketing* to engage the public and staff on brand, public perception, barriers to use
- Overwhelming positive sentiment, particularly in areas of:
 - Helpful staff
 - Bookmobile
 - Community & inclusion
- Obstacles & barriers include:
 - Expanded hours
 - More quiet space & seating
 - More programs
 - Upgraded technology
 - Health & social service supports



What's Next for SSPL

Library Funding Formula

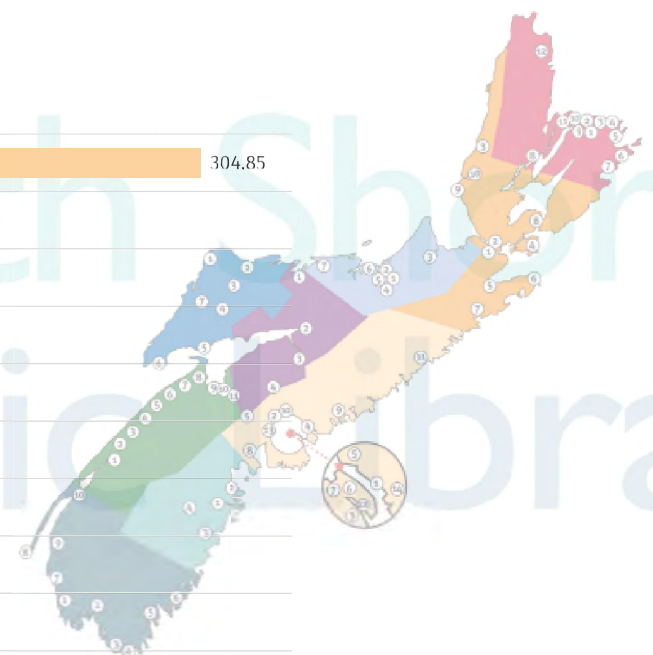
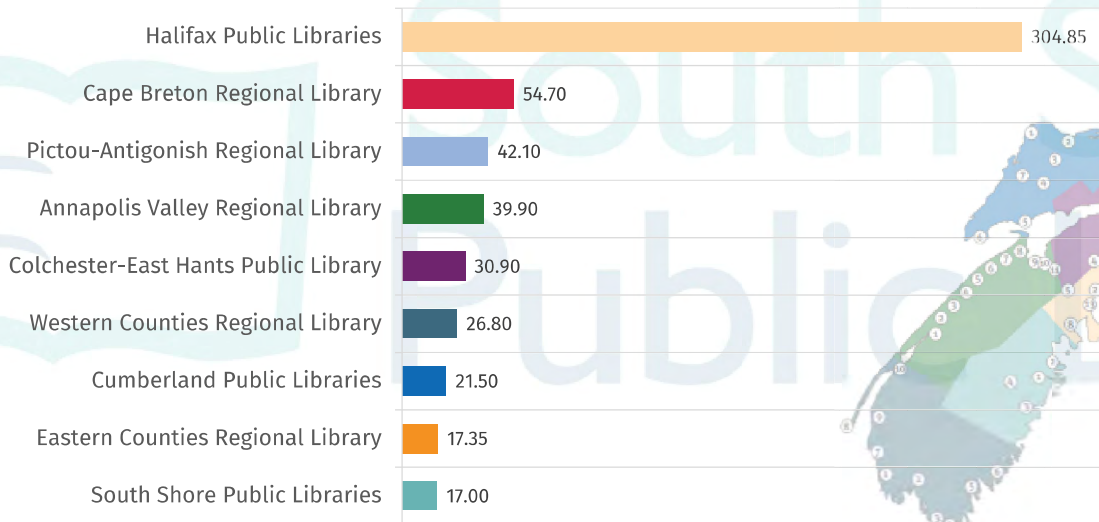
- Governed by the Nova Scotia *Libraries Act. R.S., c. 254, s.1.*
- There was no funding formula in place for 17 years with small and sporadic increases from 2003 to 2009. For ten years, between 2010 and 2021, there were no increases
- Public libraries continue to evolve and expand – physical material borrowing continues to grow, yet the public also turns to libraries for tech help, free programs, health & social services
- Rising inflation, cost-of-living, and operational costs result in challenges maintaining core services, let alone growth
- Library Funding Review Committee recommendations currently before provincial government



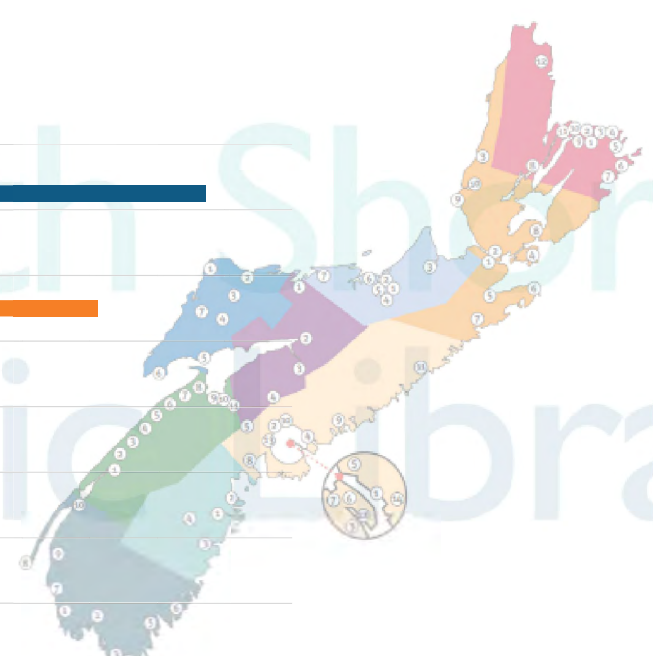
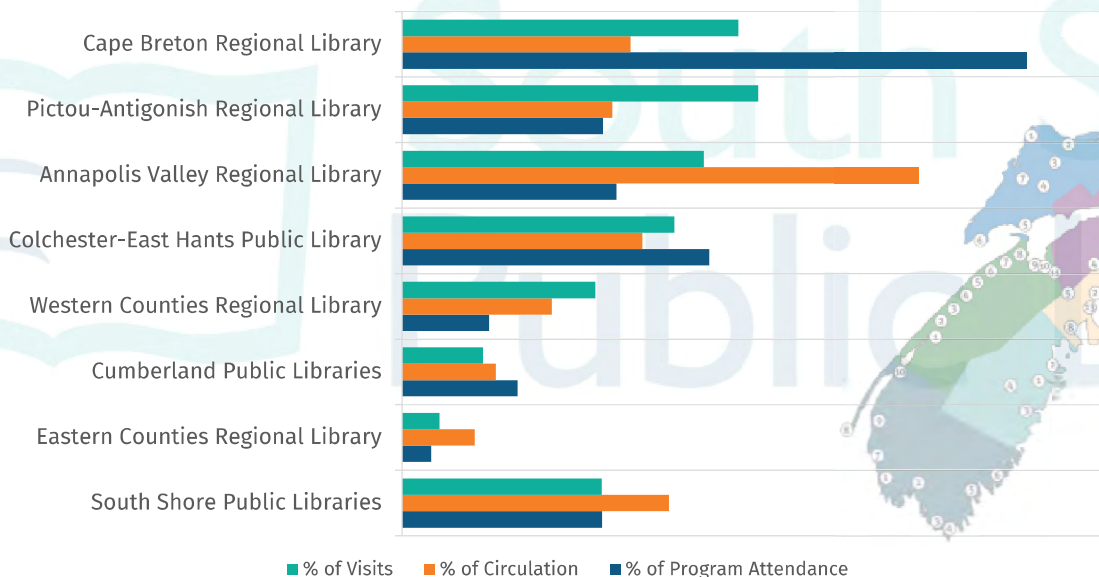
Source: *Overdue: The Case for Canada's Public Libraries* (2023). Canadian Urban Institute
https://canurb.org/wp-content/uploads/CUI_Overdue_report_10.04.23.pdf



Total Staff (FTE)



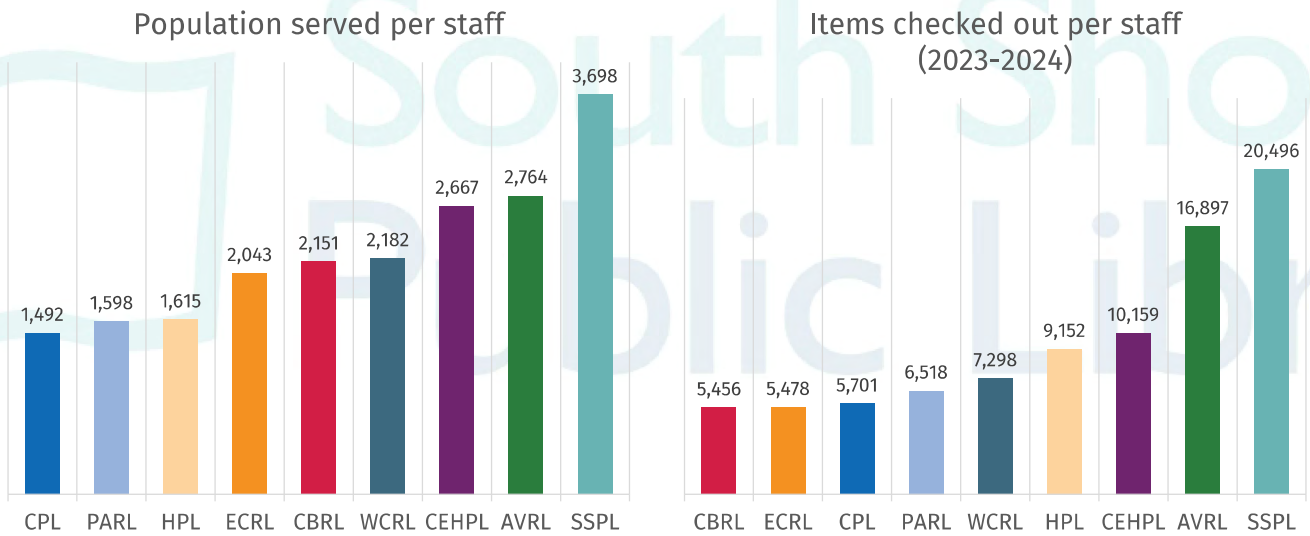
Key Performance Indicators



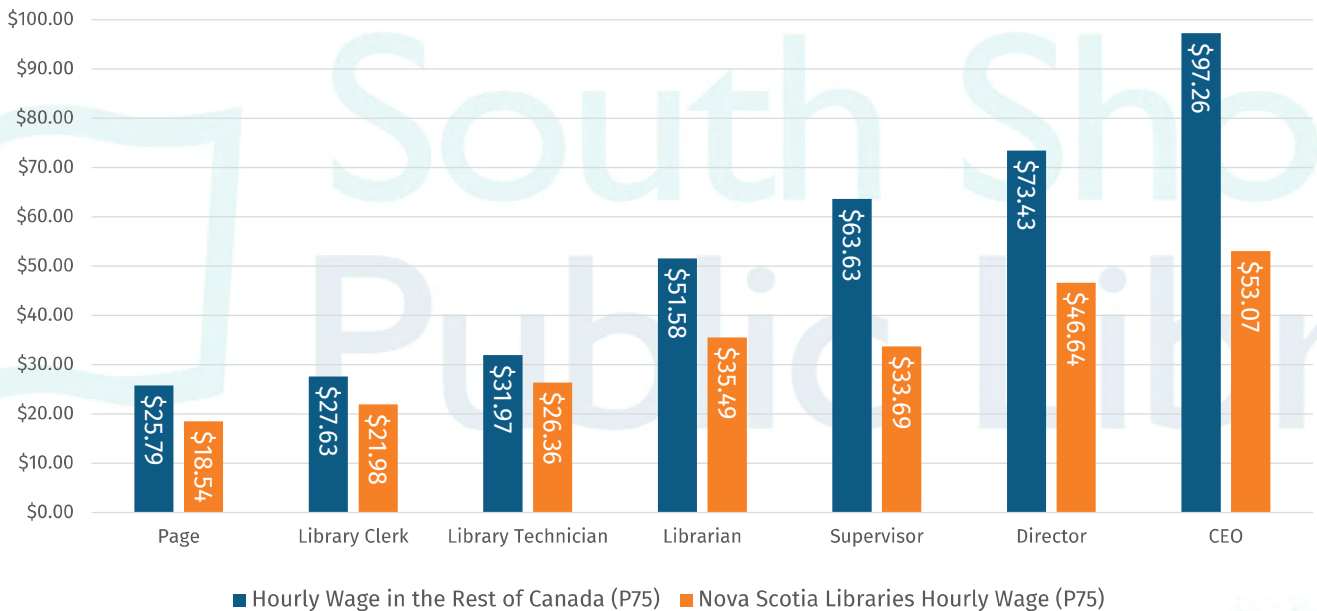
■ % of Visits ■ % of Circulation ■ % of Program Attendance



Staff Ratios



Library Staff Salary Benchmarking



Source: Labour Market Analysis: Job Benchmarking of NS Libraries (June 2024) prepared by Essential HR for the Library Funding Review Committee

Public & Academic Market Comparators

Position	Location	Hourly	SSPL Comparator	Hourly	%
Clerk	Service NS	\$26.19	Clerk	\$21.47	22%
Technician	NSCC	\$26.61	Technician	\$23.45	13%
Admin Assistant	Town of Bridgewater	\$31.16	Technician	\$23.45	33%
Facility Coordinator	MODL	\$40.90	Coordinator	\$25.10	63%
Teacher	Nova Scotia	\$46.09	Librarian	\$34.33	34%
Manager	Province of NS	\$62.16	Manager	\$42.43	47%
Supervisor	Academic libraries	\$76.58	Supervisor	\$25.10	205%
Director	Academic libraries	\$93.57	Manager	\$42.43	121%



Summary

- South Shore Public Libraries continue to serve as the heart of our communities, celebrating Reading, Discovery, Learning, and Sharing
- Our level of public trust is very high
- Our circulation, in-person visits, and program attendance continue to rise year-over-year
- Every \$1 invested in public libraries translates to \$6 in health, wellness, economic, and social capital
- The public expects our services to grow, with requests for expanded hours, more physical space, updated technology
- More staff would mean more technology help, more programs, more health & social supports
- Our staff wages lag the market and our turnover is high, as staff can “no longer afford” to work for the library
- The NS Library Funding formula is currently before government





Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

Report to Council

Report To: Policy & Strategy Committee
Submitted By: Alex Dumaresq, Deputy CAO
Date: January 21, 2025
Re: Draft Strategic Priorities

Proposed Motions

- 1) Move that Council adopt, in draft form, the Strategic Priorities as presented;
- 2) Move that Council adopt the following lenses for evaluating projects and proposals in 2025/26:
 - a. Strategic Alignment
 - b. Financial/budget
 - c. Climate Change & Sustainability
 - d. Equity, Inclusion, Diversity and Accessibility
 - e. Strategic Communications;And
- 3) Direct staff to proceed with a public engagement event to gather feedback on the draft priorities and launch the 2025/26 Municipal Budget Engagement work.

Executive summary

In preparation for the 2025-26 budget deliberations, Council must establish strategic priorities to guide the municipality's work. Informed by the recent election campaign, staff have prepared this draft report for Council's consideration. If adopted, these priorities would form the template for the budget work of the municipality and act as a decision-making guide through the year.

Background

The primary responsibility of a council is to provide good government for their communities; the Municipal Government Act provides very broad authorities for Council to govern in a way that responds to the present and future issues facing the municipality. Given the wide range of possible authorities and initiatives Council could undertake, it is imperative that Councils adopt high level strategic documents guiding their decision-making and give clear direction to staff.

Existing Vision

Before embarking on the comprehensive land-use planning project (MODL 2040), Municipal Council undertook a visioning exercise and subsequently adopted the following statements:

Vision

The breathtaking, natural beauty of the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg is home to thriving communities with unique cultural identities. Growth centres support our diversified economies, driven by our residents' passion for the place they call home.

With our strong economy, we can live, work and raise families here. We are a destination for visitors, attracted to our vibrant parks, beaches, and hiking trails. As leaders in sustainability, we passionately protect our natural environment.

Mission

We are:

- Responsible financial managers
- Strategic planners
- Sustainable community builders
- Collaborative engagers
- Values

Values

- Thriving Communities: We encourage meaningful connections.
- Act with Integrity: We are accountable and strive to provide exceptional leadership within our municipality.
- Respect and Kindness: We value the uniqueness and diversity of our communities, welcoming everyone with respect and kindness.
- Equity and Inclusion: We take action to change and grow to be a truly diverse, equitable, and inclusive municipality.
- Ready for Action!: We are innovators, economic leaders, and collaborative partners.

Within these high-level strategic statements, Council also regularly reviews and adopts strategic priorities, establishing project areas for the short and medium term which they have determined will have the best impact for achieving the vision for the municipality. Most recently Council had adopted four strategic priority areas for the 2023-2025 period:



The infographic features the District of Lunenburg logo in the top left corner, which includes a ship and the text 'DISTRICT OF LUNENBURG INC. 1879'. The main title 'MODL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2023-2025' is centered at the top. Below the title are four vertical panels, each with an icon, a title, and a descriptive paragraph.

- OSPREY VILLAGE GROWTH CENTRE**: Accompanied by an icon of a hand holding a bar chart with an upward arrow. The text states: 'MODL is kickstarting over 500 new residential units in the area, including agreements for affordable housing. In partnering with Lumia Health, we will also develop a Community Hub and collaborative health centre. Water and wastewater infrastructure upgrade projects will ensure the support of this area's commercial growth.'
- RE-CREATE! PARKS**: Accompanied by an icon of a tree and a park bench. The text states: 'A multi-year investment is planned to provide significant upgrades to existing parks and recreation facilities. Community engagement will help guide redevelopments as well as audits of the existing parks to identify accessibility needs and maintenance recommendations.'
- CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN**: Accompanied by an icon of a globe with a thermometer. The text states: 'The Municipality will continue to build on the progress made to address carbon emissions, with a goal to reach net-zero emissions by 2050. This includes plans to address local food security, home efficiency, achieving net-zero emissions for municipal facilities and fleet, creation of public and electric transportation options, and supporting the development of green renewable energy.'
- MODL 2040 MUNICIPAL PLANNING STRATEGY**: Accompanied by an icon of a document with a pencil. The text states: 'The Municipality will develop a comprehensive Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law to meet the province's regulations requiring land-use planning across all municipalities. This is a major policy, and public engagement effort which will be a critical tool in guiding development in our communities moving forward.'

Following the Municipal elections in October of 2024, a new cycle of strategic priority setting is required in advance of the 2025-26 budget process.

Council's Strategic Vision

Preparing draft priority areas for 2025

In December of 2024, Council met with a facilitator to develop key themes and high-level priorities. The summary results for the 4 areas of strategic focus are presented below:

Regional Economic Development

Support initiatives that focus on regional economic development

- Commercial development (cell service, zoning, advocate for small business)
- Regional industrial park (investment for future tax benefit)
- Establish a Region Economic Network (REN; a new version of regional economic planning, development and connection)

Infrastructure Upgrades, Expansion, and Management

Planning and investing for growth

- Collaborate regionally to expand infrastructure that supports growth
- Create a plan that identifies needed infrastructure to support all types of housing
- Strengthen recreational assets to support our growing diverse communities

Quality of life

Programs and services to maintain and improve the quality of life of our residents

- Address loneliness/ reconnecting community
- Recreation, parks & programs
- Celebrating & preserving communities

Communication & Engagement

Building a strong community fabric

- Improve and increase public communication
- Improve and increase public engagement
- Focus on rebuilding community fabric

Discussion

General

After a preliminary review of the Strategic priority areas, staff have two revisions to offer for Council's consideration. First, Council has spoken several times about affordability; the topic was raised during the planning sessions but isn't explicit in the statements. Staff recommend inserting the words "and affordability" into the quality of life statement after the word life resulting in the following "Programs and services to maintain and improve quality of life and affordability for our residents."

Second, a minor revision to the statement referencing a Regional Economic Network (REN) should be considered. Some of our partners may not wish to create a REN and/or provincial models for economic development organizations may change. Staff recommend revising the wording to replace the sub-statement with “Collaborate with partners on regional economic development platforms.”

With these minor adjustments, the proposed statements of priorities can effectively guide Council decision-making and operational work of the Municipality. The above statements are helpful for staff in preparing options for budget; they identify particular projects that are of interest to Council and explain the motivation behind initiatives. The statements will also help clarify for Council whether future project proposal that come before them are well aligned to the municipality’s goals and strategic direction. Finally, the statements can also help identify what existing projects, programs and services align well with Council’s desire to move in new directions.

Below is some preliminary work identifying new and existing projects that align with each of the identified priority areas. It is important to note that not all of these projects will be feasible to be completed within Council’s mandate given the time, staffing and financial resources of the municipalities. Choices will have to be made through the budget deliberation process to identify which projects best align and are most compelling to be completed in 2025-26.

Major Projects with High Strategic Alignment

Several projects which are currently underway align well with all 4 of the draft strategic priorities identified by Council, and should remain high priorities for the upcoming budget:

- Comprehensive Land-Use Planning (MODL 2040)
 - Land use planning requires the careful management of growth to maintain the fabric and natural environment of existing communities, preserve and maximize the investment of tax dollars in infrastructure, and create conditions for sustainable economic growth.
- Public Transit
 - Through the expansion of point-to-point service now offered by Lunenburg County Wheels, MODL has provided core funding to provide some basic transportation needs and has begun to examine the creation of a fixed route transit system to reliably connect our communities. Access to reliable transportation through public transit is an important regional service investment that can combat loneliness and disconnection for some of our most vulnerable residents.

- **Housing Strategy**
 - As part of the Housing Accelerator Fund application, MODL has planned to undertake a housing strategy. Given the scarcity of available affordable housing, this work aligns all four areas of priority identified by Council and will be of utmost importance for the Council term. While this project is only planned and has not begun to date, it will be critical in guiding the municipality's upcoming work.
- **Extension of Core Municipal Infrastructure in and Around Growth Centres in the Region**
 - The capacity to increase the supply of residential units relies in large part on access to central municipal services, which are required to create higher density housing.
 - The municipality has a number of opportunities to work collaboratively with neighbouring municipalities on the improvement and expansion of water and wastewater infrastructure that will permit the creation of more housing in communities such as Blockhouse, Dayspring, Hebbville, Pine Grove.
- **Investments in Recreation Infrastructure**
 - Through the Re-Create Parks Project and various strategic documents including the Open Space Strategic Plan, previous Councils have made investments in our parks and trails network. While the connection to building strong community fabric and quality of life is self-evident, these investments in infrastructure also help attract economic opportunities. By providing high quality recreational opportunities and protecting access to our shared natural assets, we create a vibrant space that helps attract people and business to our area.
- **The Collaborative Healthcare Centre**
 - The centre capitalizes on the central services provided by Osprey Village and is itself an investment in the health care infrastructure for our region;
 - Healthcare, while not a municipal responsibility is critical to the quality of life of residents and the Collaborative Healthcare Centre Project leverages partnerships to improve the network of services and providers available in the region;
 - The municipally managed space including a farmer's market, commercial kitchen and community space will contribute to commercial development and support community fabric.

Mandatory projects

Some other projects have significant implications for one or more of the proposed priority areas, and have progressed to a point where it would be costly and counter-productive for the municipality to cancel or significantly modify the project including:

- **Cookville Wastewater and Wastewater Upgrades:**

- These projects will provide needed additional infrastructure for the commercial and high-density residential development taking place in Osprey Village. The work is a collaborative investment in infrastructure, failure to complete the projects would result in the loss of millions in federal/provincial funding and would stifle the new housing planned for the area.
- Mandatory Minimum Planning
 - While covered in greater detail above (MODL 2040), The province has mandated that all municipalities must implement mandatory minimum planning covering the entire geography of the municipality.
- Former Centre School Site Remediation
 - This major capital project is legislatively required by the Provincial Department of the Environment. Staff are working to prepare options for Council on remediation approaches and intend to develop grant applications to defray at minimum 50% of the total project costs.

Existing and Potential Projects by Strategic Area

In the following section staff have grouped existing services and projects under the proposed strategic priority areas. This approach is taken to illustrate where municipal efforts and resources are currently dedicated and explore where new initiatives may be required. Please note that projects may align with more than one category but have been placed in the category that, in staff's opinion, most directly relates to the core of the project or service.

Regional Economic Development

New Projects identified by Council

- Establishing Regional Economic platforms/partnerships
- Explore collaboration on a regional industrial park
- Expand advocacy on improving cell service

Existing projects

- E-permitting for Building services
- Food hub project
- Bio-economy Development Opportunity Zone initiative (bringing large scale/advanced tech forestry sector into the region)
- Marketing Levy
- Food Hub & Agriculture Marketing Plan
- Osprey Village Enhancement Plan
- Business retention, promotion and expansion (i.e. for existing business here in the region)

Infrastructure Upgrades, Expansion, and Management

New projects identified by Council

- Further work required uses the parks standards document to identify priorities for recreational infrastructure investments.
 - Note: Staff suggest that a good approach could be to refresh the Open Space Strategy
- Explore partnering with Bridgewater on a regional industrial park
- Leveraging partnerships to improve cell coverage

Existing projects

- Re-create Parks Project
- Wayfinding Project
- Osprey Village Enhancement Plan
- Wastewater Treatment Investments
- Water Tower & Master Water Agreement

Quality of Life

New projects identified by Council

- Programming and initiatives that focus on addressing loneliness, reconnecting community, and celebrating & preserving existing communities

Existing projects

- Extensive Municipal Grant programs for community facilities and services
- Good neighbour project (contingent on funding)
- Food vibes project
- Fire Services Training Strategy
- Active Living & Active Transportation Strategy
- Recreation guide & Programming
- Hemlock Wolly Adelgid treatment program
- Homeowner Clean Energy & Water financing programs
- Property tax rebate - targeted relief
- Pro Kids & Pro Fund

Communication & Engagement

New & existing projects

- See separate report on the January 2025 agenda for the Policy and Strategy Committee.

Other new Initiatives and Constraints

The Municipality currently provides a broad range of programs and services to our residents and communities. There are also a series of special projects, strategic plans focusing on a range of topics and infrastructure investments that are currently in various stages of completion. Several new projects have been identified through the strategic planning discussion. Furthermore, Council has planned a special meeting to discuss Recreation infrastructure investments, which will be critical in informing the preparation of the 2025/26 capital budget.

While all of these projects have merit, Council does not have infinite resources and time to complete them. Staff will be preparing capital and operating budget plans and options based on the following sources:

- 1) Existing programs, services, and initiatives;
- 2) New projects identified in this report;
- 3) The recreation projects that will be addressed at the upcoming special meeting of Council; and
- 4) The options listed in the upcoming communications & engagement report.

If Councillor members have other projects they wish to have considered for this upcoming fiscal year, they must be identified and brought forward through one of the above avenues in order to provide time for research and options to be prepared by staff.

Please note, this does not constrain Council from exploring issues at the committee level during the upcoming budget year and considering other budget initiatives in years two through four of the term. Staff expect that Council will conduct at least one more strategic planning initiative during the course of the term, and the process can be more in depth given that the time constraints of a fall election will not limit the municipality's planning and engagement period before budget deliberations begin.

Climate Change Action

The Local Climate Change Action Plan for the municipality was previously highlighted as a strategic priority for Council. The action plan is now prepared and outlines actions to be taken in the areas of emission reductions, food security, home energy efficiency, public transportation, green energy development, and adaptation measures. The proposed priority areas presented for 2025/26 include key projects noted in the plan (e.g. public transit) and the implementation of the plan is taken up across department workplans and budgets. However, the statements do not explicitly prioritize climate change.

After reviewing the draft statements with the strategic priorities for 2023-25, staff considered 3 possible approaches. First, Council could add a fifth statement to explicitly address climate

change. This is not recommended as Council's visioning work did not yield the same result. Second, Council could choose to eliminate the Local Climate Change Action Plan. This option is also not recommended as many of the projects are closely aligned with the priorities of regional economic development, investment in infrastructure and improving quality of life. Third, Council could adopt climate change and sustainability as a lens through which projects and decisions are evaluated, so that Council has the opportunity to consider the environmental impact of decisions it makes. This option is recommended by staff as it would respect the input of citizens as interpreted by Council through the election process, and the strategic priority areas articulated in Council's visioning exercise.

Lenses for Evaluation – 2024-2028

The Municipality currently has some standard lenses which are routinely applied to the larger decisions brought forward to Council. The lenses provide a framework for staff to identify considerations for Council that relate to the issue. Currently the Municipality employs two formal lenses: Alignment with strategic plans and budget implications. In addition, Legislative changes from the province have resulted in staff making progress in applying an accessibility and inclusion lenses to capital projects prior to preparing budget recommendations. As noted above, applying a climate/sustainability lens would assist in embedding sustainability considerations in Council's decision making. Finally, this Council has made a pronounced effort to improve public communication and engagement, adding a communications lens would assist in ensuring engagement and communication considerations were raised before a final decision is made.

Staff recommend that Council adopt the following lenses evaluating larger decisions:

- Strategic Focus: How does the initiative align with Council's established strategic priorities?
- Finances/budget: what impact does the initiative have on the 5-year financial plan, is it accounted for in the approved operating/capital budget?
- Sustainability/Climate Change: Does the initiative align with MODL's Climate Action plan?
- IDEA@MODL: What considerations are there for Council on our legislated and ethical requirement to becoming a more inclusive and equitable municipality?
- Strategic Communications: What considerations for communications and/or public engagement are there for Council to consider?

It should be noted that the level of analysis is scalable - for smaller decisions several of the categories may not be applicable. As the importance and impact of the decision increases, greater levels of information and analysis will be required.

Public Engagement on Strategic Priorities and The Budget Process

Council Members brought a highly informed perspective of community input as a result of campaign activities. This rich resident information informed Council's draft strategic priorities.

Once Council finalizes a draft set of strategic priorities, staff recommend holding a public meeting and establishing an Engage.modl project page to solicit input on the draft priorities. The intention is to share the statements with the community and to solicit feedback through a short survey on whether residents agree with the statements and feel they will serve as good decision-making guides.

This meeting could also serve as a launching pad for public information and engagement on the budget process. While the schedule is not finalized to date staff are proposing the following elements for public engagement on the budget process:

- An Engage.modl page providing a single access point for reports, information and a vehicle for input on the municipal budget process;
- All budget presentations to take place at meetings of the Finance Committee or Council (to ensure maximum information available to residents via, agendas, in person attendance, livestreaming and/or recordings); and
- A modified public input process for the budget:
 - Staff will provide presentations on budget material
 - Council will then pause to allow for expanded public input on the content (similar to a public hearing for a planning decision)
 - Council will then deliberate on the staff content and public input

Budget Implications

The intention of the strategic priorities is to drive the creation and approval of the 2025-26 budget. The proposed engagement elements of the work are included in the 2024-25 administration department budget.

Alternatives

The proposed process includes public engagement to review the draft priorities. Following public input Council could choose to modify the content of the priorities.

Council also retains authority to retain the existing project buckets as stated or embark on a more extensive long-range strategic planning process. If a more detailed long-range planning process is undertaken, some form of direction to staff is required to inform the preparation of draft budget plans.

Conclusion

Establishing strategic priorities is an important governance exercise. Council has identified four areas of focus, namely Regional Economic Development, Infrastructure, quality of life, and Public Engagement. The statements prepared by Council will provide helpful evaluative criteria as Council works through policy and governance questions. These statement will also be critical in guiding staff in preparing budget materials for the 2025-26 fiscal year.

Report Preparation	
Department	
Report Prepared by	Alex Dumaresq
Report Approved by	
Date Reviewed by C.A.O.	



Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

Report to Council

Report To: Policy & Strategy Committee
Submitted By: Sarah Kucharski, Manager, Corporate Services & Communications
Date: January 21, 2025
Re: Communication and Public Engagement Options Report

Recommended Motion

Move that the Policy and Strategy Committee direct staff to prepare a revised Strategic Public Engagement & Communications Plan based on the discussion today for the Committee's consideration.

Move that the Policy and Strategy Committee recommends that Council pass a resolution to set a meeting time of 6pm for the Council meeting regularly held on the second Tuesday of the month, beginning April 8, 2025.

Executive Summary

This options report outlines current public engagement and communication practices within the District of Lunenburg, provides insights into existing activities, and presents recommendations for enhancing these efforts. Specifically, it explores options to expand communication and public engagement through new activities and enhanced communication tactics.

Background

Public Engagement

Public engagement is a process that brings people together to address issues of common importance, and to solve shared problems. Robust public engagement programs can help governments collaborate more closely with citizens and ensures public input informs decision-making. Municipalities have a legal and ethical obligation to do this work. Part XX of the Municipal Government Act (MGA) states the purpose of an open and transparent government is to

- “(i) facilitate informed public participation in policy formulation,
- (ii) ensure fairness in government decision-making, and
- (iii) permit the airing and reconciliation of divergent views;” (s. 462(b))

In contrast to the aspirational language of the legislation, global trends show increasingly divided communities, and polarization and mis/disinformation has made public discourse and engagement more challenging for local government. Level of trust in government are low. If Council wishes to contribute to the rebuilding of strong community fabric in a post-covid environment, a robust and evidence-based public engagement and communications approach will be critical. Research indicates that governments with effective public engagement processes develop plans, strategies, programs and policies to better meet the needs of their residents and key stakeholders. In turn, this results in increased citizen satisfaction.

The District has adopted a Strategic communications plan which establishes the Municipality’s approach to communications and public engagement (https://modl.ca/index.php?option=com_docman&view=download&alias=4685-strategic-communications-plan-2017-2020&category_slug=miscellaneous&Itemid=102). The plan is focused on three goals: to encourage a well-informed community; to develop an engaged community that participates in the Public Participation process; and to improve the quality of staff and Council communication skills and tools.

An important distinction to understand in the strategic communications approach is communication versus engagement. The District only uses public engagement in initiatives when decision points exist. If no decision points exist (e.g. a decision has already been made on the issue by Council; or Council does not have the authority to make a decision on a matter), then the communications goal is to inform citizens. In those cases, a communications plan, rather than an engagement plan, is required. For example, our Tax Installment Prepayment program is an operational initiative that requires communication each year, not engagement. Our Low-Income Tax Rebate also requires communication each year. However, if Council wanted the public’s thoughts on changing either program, they could initiate a public engagement campaign to include the public in the decision-making process of revising the program.

The decision to conduct public engagement is currently made by the CAO (Chief Administrative Officer) or Directors. Council can also direct staff to engage the public. Regardless of who initiates it, public engagement is appropriate only when the public can influence the decision.

This report will explore the existing public engagement activities completed by the District including project specific work and approaches for including citizens in formal council processes. Then the report will discuss options for expanding the public engagement

opportunities. The following section will explore existing communications work and options for expanding communication efforts. The report concludes with some analysis of level of effort and financial implications of the expansion of communications and public engagement initiatives.

Existing Engagement Activities

Pop Ups

Pop ups generally happen at established events, where we might have a booth, table, or just signage, and have casual conversations with residents about specific topics. This can be a tool for engagement, or communication, or both. We have held pop ups at park entrances, the LCLC, weekly farmers markets, farm market stores, the Home & Garden Show, and beaches.

Projects: MODL2040, Coastal Protection, Food Security, Re-Create Parks, LaHave River Straight Pipe Project

Drop Ins

Drop in events feature staff and/or Council set up in a location to have open discussion about specific topics or general questions. This can be a tool for engagement, or communication, or both. We have held drop ins at pizza places, coffee shops, Newcomers Fairs, and at the LCLC. When possible, we run a tab at the venue and ask attendees to “have lunch” on us.

Projects: Internet Connectivity

Open Houses

These events are designed for residents to drop by at their convenience, with staff or consultants ready to answer questions. Interactive elements, like maps or comment boards, are often used. We typically hold 1-2 open houses per initiative.

Projects: Fancy Lake, LaHave River Straight Pipe Project

Information Sessions

These structured events typically begin with a presentation followed by a Q&A. These sessions may include facilitated group discussions and are sometimes mandated by the Municipal Government Act (MGA). This can also be a tool for communication after a decision has been made. We typically hold 1-2 in person information sessions, and one virtual session, per initiative.

Projects: Fancy Lake, Solar Garden, Cape LaHave Island, Active Transportation, Coastal Regulations, Cluster Development, Sawpit Wharf Park, Flood Risk

Piggybacking

This involves attending events hosted by other organizations to engage with attendees. It’s a low-cost, high-reach strategy that helps expand outreach without hosting a standalone event.

Staff might attend an event hosted by our Recreation team, like the Seniors Corn Boil, to share information about a program and hand out a survey. Having a booth at an event like the Home and Garden Show or Sustainability Conference is an example of piggybacking.

Projects: Lyme Disease, Firefighter Recruitment and Retention, MODL2040, Internet, Climate Action Plan

Workshops

Workshops are hands-on approaches to public engagement and may involve a learning piece as well as co-development element. We typically hold 1 workshop per initiative.

Projects: Firefighter Recruitment and Retention, Road Standards Bylaw, Community Hub Feasibility, Climate Action Plan

Stakeholder Interviews

These are generally small group or one-on-one conversations with individuals or special interest groups. Stakeholder interviews offer direct, in-depth conversations with key community members, such as business owners in a specific area, or residents most affected by a proposal in their area. These one-on-one or small group discussions allow staff to gather nuanced insights that may not be captured through other methods.

Projects: Coastal Regulations, Cluster Development, Cape LaHave Island, Solar Garden, MODL2040, Marketing Levy, Food Security, Sawpit Wharf Park, Community Hub Feasibility, Climate Action Plan

Door-to-Door

During election years, Councillors go door-to-door to talk to residents, and bring their feedback to staff, which informs the new Council's priority setting. Additionally, during the Internet Connectivity Project staff went door-to-door to talk to residents about their internet speed, and during the LaHave River Straight Pipe Project, staff went door to door to talk to residents about their septic systems.

Projects: Internet Connectivity, LaHave River Straight Pipe Project

Advisory Committees

These are used to provide residents with the opportunity to become more deeply informed on an issue and provide a regular place to discuss and debate issues and make recommendations to Council.

Projects: Accessibility Advisory Committee, Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination Committee, Sawpit Wharf, Miller Point Peace Park, Indian Path Commons, Church Lake Advisory Committee, Sherbrooke Lake Advisory Committee, Police Advisory Board, Fire and Emergency Services Board, Planning Advisory Committee

Online Tools

Our online engagement platform, *Engage.modl.ca*, offers surveys, forums, and interactive maps to engage residents in real-time. This tool has been instrumental in collecting feedback on projects since 2020.

Options for Improved Public Engagement

- Establish a standard criteria for when the municipality will embark on public engagement, resulting in a standardized increase the number of projects that include a public engagement element. Examples of possible criteria include:
 - Public feedback can shape the design or development of the project.
 - The project involves a budget expenditure above a certain threshold.
 - It has a high impact or risk on a local area, or specific user group(s) of a service or facility.
 - Public support is essential for the project's success.

Note: The CAO and Council would continue to retain discretion to add a public engagement element to a project even if the criteria were not met.

- Expand the diversity of engagement activities for each project (e.g., incorporating pop-ups, stakeholder interviews, online platforms, and in-person events like Council in the Community).
- Hold multiple events per project (e.g., 4-5 open houses instead of just one or two).
- Experiment with innovative engagement activities, as noted below.

Innovative Engagement Activities

Virtual Engagement Room

Virtual engagement rooms allow online participants to explore project details at their own pace. It allows community to take a virtual walk around and explore information about a project, including videos, reports, timelines, interactive maps, live Ask a Staff member features, and more. A Virtual Engagement Room can be comprised of multiple rooms, such as a “lobby” where citizens can learn about municipal government and existing projects, and a Consultation room, where they can learn about a specific active public engagement process. This could increase engagement with residents who are unable or unwilling to attend in-person events.

View examples here: <https://caportal.com.au/kilara/wilan-wind-farm> or <https://caportal.com.au/melair/virtual>

Councillor Drop-In Sessions

These informal meetings allow Councillors to meet residents in casual settings, listen to feedback, and build relationships. Regular sessions can help Councillors remain visible and

approachable, using a rotating schedule approach to resource the sessions.

Example: Clearwater County's Weekly Drop-Ins

Lunch with the Mayor

This concept offers residents a chance to have an informal meal with the Mayor, fostering open and honest conversation. A lottery system for seat selection ensures fairness.

Example: Municipality of Den Helder

Large-Scale Interactive Public Installations

Using fun, hands-on activities (e.g., a board game that teaches urban planning), residents can engage in complex issues in a non-confrontational way. This approach encourages learning and discussion.

Example: Smart Density's Human-Sized Board Game

'Host Your Own' Engagement Packages

Residents or community organizations can be empowered to host engagement events with their trusted and existing networks, with support from the municipality. This method allows for diverse voices and more localized input.

Example: Abbotsford's Culture Strategy

Legislative Public Engagement and Communication

In addition to project specific engagement strategies, Council has a set of procedures and methods to increase interest and engagement in Council's meetings and decisions. As a standard component of all Council, Finance Committee and Policy and Strategy Committee meetings has the following processes in place to encourage transparency and participation:

- Agendas are posted at least four days before the meeting
- Meetings are open to the public (excepting items discussed in a closed, or in camera, session as per the MGA)
- Council has begun livestreaming these meetings so that residents can follow in real time remotely or access audio and video recordings following the meeting
- The use of public hearings is legislated and regulated by the MGA.
- Public hearings where residents can formally provide written or verbal comments on a decision are held in accordance with the MGA (e.g. in advance of amending a land-use bylaw, or creating a development agreement).
- Any member of the public in attendance is welcomed to speak during the public input portion of the agenda.
- Members of the public may book a presentation time to give Council a formal presentation (two presentation slots per meeting).

There are also some other tools that council has used in the past to increase interest and engagement in the business of Council.

Council in the Community

These are Council meetings held offsite in a community centre, and the agenda is generally carefully selected to have topics of importance to the specific community. These cost \$5,000 each for the AV services, food, hall rental, and mileage as they require an outside AV contractor to provide audio visual and streaming equipment. We have held three of these meetings (Conquerall Bank, New Germany, Tancook Island) and they were well attended and received positive feedback from community.

Evening Council Meetings

Council meetings have been regularly scheduled for evening times in the past. In general attendance at council is driven by interest in a particular meeting as opposed to the time of the meeting. However, regularly scheduling a council meeting in the evening could make attendance easier for citizens with daytime work schedules.

Section 3.12 of Council policy MODL 001- Council procedures permits Council to set meeting times by resolution of Council. There is a small cost and staffing impact to shifting one meeting a month to the evening. Based on average council meeting times the impact would be in the range of \$10,000 per year of overtime/lieu time for eligible employees.

Public Communication

When decision points exist, public engagement is essential. However, if the decision has already been made, communication becomes the priority.

Existing Communication Activities

We use a variety of activities to inform residents, listed below. These efforts ensure residents stay informed about key projects and initiatives.

- Municipal Matters (mailed to all residents quarterly)
- Monthly email newsletter (District of Lunenburg Digest)
- Front page of modl.ca
- Facebook posts
- Facebook ads
- Videos
- Pop ups
- Information sessions (i.e. grant workshop, Industry Coastal regulation breakfast)
- Piggybacking
- Hosted community events (i.e. REMO Day, Ag Day)

- Recreation Guide (mailed to all residents)
- Monthly Mayor’s article in the South Shore Breaker
- Engage.modl.ca content and project follower direct emails
- Print newspaper ads
- Handouts (brochures, postcards)
- Specialty newsletters (i.e. annual Fire Service recruitment newsletter)
- Radio ads
- News releases to media (resulting in editorial coverage)
- Direct bulk mail
- Direct addressed mail to targeted addresses
- Message on the tax bill

Options for Improved Communications

- Increase the number of projects and issues we proactively communicate about.
- Increase the frequency of communication about projects.
- Increase the use of bulk mail or targeted direct mail to inform residents of projects, initiatives, or consultation opportunities.
- Increase the advertising spend to broaden the reach of the communication efforts.
- Explore innovative communication activities.

Innovative Communication Activities

District of Lunenburg App

Creating a mobile phone app for the District of Lunenburg could improve communication, accessibility, and service delivery. Push notifications would keep residents informed about emergencies and updates, and public engagement opportunities. The app could promote local events, boost tourism, and support local businesses.

A simple app similar to what the Town of Bridgewater offers for residents would require a minimal investment of time and resources. This app is basically a “skin” over the existing town website—most of the links within the app take you to a page on the Town website.

A more robust app, with features like push notifications, an event calendar, and other static features would cost roughly \$40,000-\$50,000 to develop, with annual maintenance and service costs. This would be similar to apps offered by the [City of Brandon](#), [City of Chilliwack](#), or the [City of Barrie](#).

A gold standard version of an app that could potentially integrate with our municipal software to allow tax bill viewing, permit applications and progress tracking, reporting concerns with roads or waste pickup, and integrate with Connect 2 Rec. This scale of project requires a

prohibitively high upfront and ongoing investment and would be well above \$500,000 due to the requirement of reliable integration of several separate software systems. In addition, there would be ongoing annual maintenance and service costs. More precise cost and development time is not currently available as the challenges of integrating multiple software systems into a reliable user interface is highly variable and very labour intensive. As TownSuite does not currently offer app integration, this integration may not be even possible without the expense of changing the municipality's financial software (which is in and of itself a costly project that would involve major commitment of staff time to scope, procure, and collaborate on the implementation).

In all cases, the District would be required to follow standard procurement regulations and select a Canadian vendor to meet Canadian privacy legislation.

Improved Community Storytelling

Incorporating storytelling elements such as personal anecdotes and real-life examples can make messages more relatable and memorable. More in-depth content creation could be employed in Municipal Matters, along with a page count increase, to bring stories to life for residents and make the content more engaging. Staff could improve the use of visual imagery, including video, to make our online graphics more vibrant and engaging.

Set up Information Centres

Establishing information centres at the Lunenburg County Lifestyle Centre (LCLC) and one or two other locations throughout the District would provide a dedicated space for staff to post posters, Municipal Matters newsletters, program brochures, and share information about events and initiatives, helping to keep residents informed about key municipal activities and decisions.

Increased Use of Pop Ups, Information Sessions, and Piggybacking

Staff could look for more opportunities to hold information sessions, speak at other community group events or District of Lunenburg recreation events, or pop up at community events, Farmers Markets, and busy locations to share topic specific information or answer questions about municipal services.

Resource and Budget Implications

The Communications function in the District consists of one FTE, the Manager, Corporate Services and Communications, with limited support from Recreation and Planning staff, and one Mount Saint Vincent University summer co-op student.

The Manager, Corporate Services and Communications role is also responsible for managing the front desk team (4 FTEs and 2 temporary part time), MODL's IDEA commitment (0.2 FTE) while Ella Gindi is on maternity leave, internal communications and internal and external events (managing the employee Intranet, Pride parade organization, flag raisings, etc.) and other strategic initiatives.

The Communications function also includes moderating and responding to Facebook comments, which involves researching and coordinating answers to resident questions posted on the platform, ensuring appropriate tone and content in responses, and monitoring and removing comments that contravene our page rules, which state that "inappropriate, abusive, discriminatory, offensive or unlawful comments are prohibited and will be removed."

Significant current expenses in the Communications Budget include:

- \$30,000 to print and mail Municipal Matters, 4x a year, 8-16 pages per issue, to 12,000 households
- \$28,000 for software licenses - engage.modl.ca, Paradigm Reach (IDEA), MIC (internal coms)
- \$26,000 for advertising, communication, and graphic design
 - \$3,000 to mail an unaddressed brochure or postcard to all residents
 - \$7,000 to mail an unaddressed letter in envelope to all residents
 - \$13,000 to mail a personalised addressed letter in envelope to all residents
- \$8,000 - \$20,000 for public engagement event costs and advertising (depending on how many large initiatives are planned)
- \$13,000 for Lyme Disease awareness
- \$12,000 for the Fire Service newsletter and recruitment radio ads

The Communications function currently operates at full capacity and cannot increase service levels or introduce additional communications or public engagement activities without additional resources. Expanding or diversifying these efforts would require careful consideration of the following:

Staffing

Hiring one additional Communications FTE would enable the Municipality to expand content creation efforts to share more municipal news and community stories, and undertake new initiatives, such as increased public engagement activities and innovative projects like app development and management, virtual engagement rooms or large-scale public installations.

Advertising

Increasing the frequency and reach of current methods would require additional funding for advertising. For instance, expanding social media campaigns, print ads, or direct mail initiatives would necessitate higher expenditures.

Tools

Adoption of innovative engagement methods, such as virtual engagement rooms, interactive installations, or app development will require investment in specialized software.

Event Costs

Expanding in-person engagement activities, such as hosting more open houses per initiative or Councillor drop-in sessions, would increase venue, catering, and logistics costs.

Consulting and Contract Services

Engaging external experts or consultants to design and implement specialized public engagement initiatives, such as app development, workshops, or advisory committee facilitation, would increase costs.

Conclusion

Expanding and diversifying public engagement strategies will enhance community involvement in municipal decision-making. By allocating resources to expanding current initiatives and adopting new methods, the District of Lunenburg can create more inclusive opportunities for residents to engage with their local government.

Investing in improved communication will ensure that residents are informed about key projects, initiatives, and decisions, through tactics that resonate with residents.

Upon direction from Policy and Strategy Committee, staff will prepare a revised Strategic Public Engagement & Communications Plan based on the discussion today for the Committee's consideration.

To move forward with selected opportunities outlined in this report, Council should consider prioritizing investments in staffing and budget allocations through their upcoming budget deliberations to ensure the Communications Department is adequately resourced.

Report Preparation	
Department	Administration
Report Prepared by	Sarah Kucharski

Report Approved by	Alex Dumaresq
Date Reviewed by C.A.O.	



The Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

Request for Decision

Report to: Policy and Strategy Committee

Submitted by: Elana Wentzell and April Whynot-Lohnes

Date: January 21, 2025

Re: NEW Policy 102 Audit Committee

Recommendation

“that the Policy and Strategy Committee recommends to Municipal Council that Municipal Council adopt new Policy 102, Audit Committee as presented and hereby gives seven days’ notice of Council’s intention to adopt on January 28, 2025.”

Executive summary

The Financial Reporting and Account Manual (FRAM) is a regulation prescribed pursuant to Sections 451 and 520 of the Municipal Government Act (MGA) as the system for accounting to be used by municipalities and villages in the Province of Nova Scotia. Also, the FRAM prescribes the minimum requirements for expense and hospitality policies that each municipality and village must have as well as requirements for the audit committee policy or terms of reference. These policies must be re-adopted or amended by Municipal Council by January 31 immediately following a regular election as per the MGA section 23 (7).

Discussion

When the FRAM legislation was introduced in 2017 requiring all Municipalities to have separate Audit Committees, the District of Lunenburg already had an Audit Committee comprised of all council members. At that time, it was determined that updating the Committee Terms of Reference could satisfy the requirements of the legislation without

writing a new policy. However, staff believe that changing the Terms of reference to a Council policy provides more public transparency of the committee's responsibility.

Required Policy Content – Municipalities and villages' audit committee policy must:

- (a) define the purpose and role of the audit committee and the audit committee's purpose, responsibilities and functions must comply with Section 5(3)(b) and 5(3)(e);
- (b) outline the composition of the audit committee and the audit committee composition must comply with Section 5(3)(c);
- (c) identify membership terms for independent members;
- (d) establish meeting requirements and quorum, and the meeting requirements must comply with Section 5(3)(d);
- (e) require terms of reference or engagement terms for every audit or special purpose engagement;
- (f) outline the required training for audit committee members;
- (g) the required audit committee training must comply with Section 5(3)(c)(v); and
- (h) outline reporting requirements.

The attached Audit Committee Policy meets the minimum requirements.

Budget implications

There are no budget implications for this change.

Strategic plan

N/A

Work plan

N/A

Alternatives

Council can choose to continue with the terms of reference format and adopt with or without amendments;

Conclusion

Staff recommend that Council adopt the new Audit Committee policy as presented as the committee is now comprised of full council participation.

Report Preparation	
Department	Finance and Administration
Report Prepared by	Elana Wentzell and April Whynot-Lohnes
Report Approved by	
Date Reviewed by C.A.O.	

Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

Policy Details	
Name	Audit Committee
Number	102
Legislative Authority	MGA s.44, FRAM Regulations s. 4 and 5
Effective Date	

Purpose

- 1 The Audit Committee's mandate is to oversee all audit matters and receive the annual external audit report, thereby assisting Council in meeting its responsibilities by ensuring the adequacy and effectiveness of financial reporting, risk management and internal controls ~~as per~~ according to Section 44 of the **Municipal Government Act (MGA)** and the **Financial Reporting and Accounting Manual (FRAM)**.

Definitions

- 2 a) **Financially literate** means the member has the ability to read and understand a set of financial statements which present a breadth and level of complexity of accounting issues that are generally comparable to the breadth and level of complexity of the issues reasonably that can be expected to be raised by a municipal or village financial statement.

Audit

- 3 (1) The Committee acts as an advisory body carrying out critical review functions on behalf of council and ~~shall~~ must:
 - a) Recommend the appointment of an external auditor to conduct an annual financial audit of ~~MODL~~ municipal financial statements.
 - b) Discuss with the external auditor any correspondence between management and the audit firm on alternative interpretations or presentations of municipal financial information.
 - c) Review matters arising out of the audit ~~as that~~ may appear to require further investigation.
 - d) Other matters as referred to by the Committee by Council and to fulfill legislative functions as specified in Sections 4 and 5 of the FRAM Legislation.

Committee Membership, Terms & Procedures

- 4 (1) Membership of the Committee ~~shall will~~ consist of the whole of Council and ~~up to two members~~ a minimum of one person from the public and who is not ~~who are not a member of Council or~~ an employee of the Municipality. The Municipality ~~shall will~~

advertise to recruit the member(s) from the public at least once every six months until the position is filled. Recruitment to fill a position will be undertaken at the expiration of each term. ~~The member-at-large must be financially literate. The member(s) should possess a financial background, accounting designation and experience in financial reporting and auditing.~~

(2) All applications for the member-at-large position(s) ~~meeting the minimum~~ who meet the financial literacy requirement will be reviewed by the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee will recommend appointment(s) to Council and Council will have final approval.

(3) At-large members ~~shall~~ will be appointed for three-year terms or until such time as their successor(s) is appointed. If two member-at-large appointments are approved, the initial appointment of at-large members ~~shall~~ will be for a one two-year term and one three-year term. Any member may re-offer for a second three-year term when their term expires, however, the member will have to reapply through the recruitment process. ~~undertaken for that position.~~

(4) The Committee ~~shall~~ will annually select a Chair and Vice Chair by secret ballot at ~~their November meeting~~ the first meeting of the fiscal year. The sitting Chair and Vice-Chair may re-offer for the same position.

(5) The Committee ~~shall~~ will meet a minimum of two times in each fiscal year at the call of the Chair. Once to meet with the Auditor and once to review the results of the audit ~~or whenever circumstances demand such a meeting.~~

(6) The Committee ~~shall~~ will follow the meeting procedures outlined in ~~MDL-001 Proceedings of Council Procedures~~; except where specifically noted otherwise in these terms of reference.

Responsibilities and Functions

5 The functions of a municipal audit committee can be categorized as follows:

Financial Reporting Function – Responsibilities Related to ~~the~~ Financial Reporting

(1) The Committee ~~shall~~ will:

- a) review the audited annual financial statements in depth with management and the external Auditor; if satisfied that they present fairly the financial position and results of operations, recommend their acceptance to Council;

- b) review with management any changes in accounting principles and practices followed by municipalities;
- c) review any significant variance in comparison to prior year and/or budget;
- d) review and discuss the financial condition indicators.

External Audit Function – Responsibilities Related to the Work of the Auditor

- (2) The Committee ~~shall~~ will:
- a) discuss the extent, timing and completion of the audit including the level of materiality to be used;
 - b) review estimated and final audit fee;
 - c) discuss whether the terms of the letter of engagement were met;
 - d) recommend to Council the change of the municipal auditor if management questions the competence of the incumbent auditor and the Committee confirms the view; the recommendation to appoint a new auditor would follow an adequate inquiry into the auditor's competence and reputation;
 - e) review the problems and restrictions encountered by the auditor and degree of cooperation received; and
 - f) promote cooperation between the management and the auditor.

Accounting System and Internal Controls Function – Responsibilities Related to Internal Controls.

- (3) The Committee ~~shall~~ will:
- a) obtain and review the management and internal control letter addressed to Council;
 - b) discuss with the auditor, the annual evaluation of the internal control systems related to the financial reporting and the recommendations for improvements of accounting procedures and internal controls related to the financial reporting, together with management's response;
 - c) discuss management's response to the recommendations and adequacy of management's action plan;

- d) obtain reasonable assurance that the municipality has implemented appropriate systems of internal controls: over the financial reporting and that these systems are operating effectively;
- e) obtain assurance the Municipality is in compliance with its policies and procedures and that these systems are operating effectively; and
- f) identify, monitor, mitigate and report significant financial or operational risk exposures and that these systems are operating effectively; and
- g) receive and review any internal reports relating to accounting procedures and internal controls.

Risk Management Function – Responsibilities Related to Risk Management

- (4) The Committee ~~shall~~ will:
 - a) understand the risks of the Municipality;
 - b) review the Municipality’s risk management controls and policies;
 - c) obtain reasonable assurance that management’s systems to eliminate or manage the risks are effective; and
 - d) receive reports on the management of financial risks.

Alleged Wrong-Doing Function – Responsibilities Related to Questionable Activities

- (5) The Committee ~~shall~~ will:
 - a) enquire fully into any activities or transactions that may be illegal, questionable or unethical, and into the Municipality's control procedures to ensure that such activities are being guarded against;
 - ~~b) ensure management has implemented a policy and/or process to review and respond to complaints or allegations of wrong-doing or questionable acts by elected officials, or municipal employees; and~~
 - ~~c) review and advise Council members with respect to complaints or allegations of wrong-doing.~~

Statutory and Regulatory Compliance Function and Other Responsibilities

- (6) The Committee ~~shall~~ will:

- a) review the municipality's compliance with statutory and regulatory obligations within the Committee's area of responsibility (for example reporting compliance);
- b) review the overall reasonableness of expenses of the Clerk/CAO and of Council members. Specifically; review the summary of remuneration and expenses schedule for reportable individuals for reasonableness;
- c) review the annual summary hospitality expense note; and
- d) review adequacy of staffing in relation to both number and competence for accounting and financial responsibilities.

Staff Support

6 The Director of Finance will act as the primary Municipal Contact for the Committee.

Training

- 7 (1) All committee members ~~shall~~ will participate in a regular training program which will include, at minimum:
- a) an introduction and overview of the functions, authority, and role of the audit committee at the beginning of every council term;
 - b) training on interpreting financial documents and identifying fraud at least once per council term;
 - c) ongoing training on topic-specific issues that arise or may arise in the activities of the committee; and,
 - d) any training prescribed by the department of Municipal Affairs
- (2) Notwithstanding the training program, it is acknowledged that committee members will continue to require expert advice from outside advisors where appropriate.

Review of Policy

- 8 (1) The municipality must by January 31 immediately following a regular election review the audit committee policy as stated in Section 5(3)(a)(iii) of the FRAM legislation, and
- a) re-adopt the existing policy; or

- b) adopt an amended policy.

Policy Adoption	
Date of Original Passage	
Date of Notice of Intent to Amend/Repeal/Consider	
Date of Council Approval	
Date of Effective Date (if different from approval date)	
I certify that this Policy 102 was adopted by Municipal Council as indicated above.	
Signature of Municipal Clerk	Date

Version	Amendment Description	Approval Date
Original V1	Previously Terms of Reference Audit Standing Committee #006	March 7, 2018
V2	Amended	April 9, 2019
V3	Legislative Review – Re-adopted	January 26, 2021
V4	Amended to add reference for the FRAM legislation, definition of financial literacy, updated to accessible format, clear language and created as NEW policy	DATE



The Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

Request for Decision

Report to: Policy and Strategy Committee

Submitted by: Elana Wentzell and April Whynot-Lohnes

Date: January 21, 2025

Re: Repeal & Replace, Policy 003 "Council Members' Remuneration, Benefits & Expenses"

Recommendation

“that the Policy and Strategy Committee recommends to Municipal Council that Municipal Council repeal and replace Policy 003, Council Members' Remuneration, Benefits & Expenses as presented and hereby gives seven days’ notice of Council’s intention to repeal and replace on January 28, 2025.”

Executive summary

Subsection 23(3) of the Municipal Government Act (MGA) requires that each municipality must adopt an expense policy and a hospitality policy. Subsection 23(7) requires that by January 31st immediately following a regular election, the council must review the expense and hospitality policies and, by motion, either re-adopt the policies or amend the policies.

Discussion

As stated in Section 23(3) of the MGA, Council re-adopted Policy 003 Council Members' Remuneration and Expenses on January 26, 2021 and subsequently amended it in May 2021 to include health, dental and pension benefits. The requirements of subsection 23(4) of the MGA which requires each council to have an expense policy that (a) prohibits the municipality from reimbursing expense claims for alcohol purchases by an individual; (b) identifies the persons who have signing authority to authorize the reimbursement of an expense; (c) where applicable, sets out rules respecting the use of corporate credit cards; (d) applies to every reportable individual in the municipality; and (e) complies with the regulations.

Staff have updated the policy to the accessible format and made every effort to use clear language. The additions to the policy was to add a policy statement and scope, notation of annual adjustment and reporting criteria (s. (3)), consolidation of sections for expenses as one section, removed reference to MDL 51 policy as this policy is not relevant to council as it is the employee personal policy, added receipts and successful completion for reimbursement (s. 10 (1)a, (2)e), removed reference of CAO expense approval process as the policy is a council policy.

The current policy meets the requirements of the Municipal Government Act. The Policy is before Council for review. If Council is satisfied with the redrafting of the Policy, a motion to repeal and replace the Policy is required. If Council wants to make changes to the Policy, direction can be given to staff to make further changes.

Budget implications

There are no budget implications for this change.

Strategic plan

N/A

Work plan

N/A

Alternatives

Council can make further amendments to the policy to reflect Council’s discussion.

Conclusion

The Municipal Government Act requires the Municipality to review the expense policy after each Municipal Election.

Report Preparation	
Department	Finance and Administration
Report Prepared by	Elana Wentzell and April Whynot-Lohnes
Report Approved by	
Date Reviewed by C.A.O.	

Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

Policy Details	
Name	Council Members' Remuneration, Benefits and Expenses
Number	003
Legislative Authority	Municipal Government Act, Section 23(1)(d) & 23(3)
Effective Date	

Policy Statement

- 1 The Municipality of the District of Lunenburg ("the Municipality") will provide fair remuneration for work and contributions of members of Council and recognizes the importance of adequate remuneration for members of Council that reflects the duties and responsibilities of these individuals.

Scope

- 2 This Policy applies to all members of Council (Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and Councillors).

Remuneration

- 3 Remuneration will be adjusted annually based on the Provincial Consumer Price Index as determined by Statistics Canada as of December 31 of each year, over December 31 of the previous year. In the event that the Consumer Price Index is negative, there will not be a cost-of-living adjustment. The Chief Administrative Officer will conduct a review of council remuneration and report to council after an election or as directed by council.

Mayor – MGA Section 23(1)(d)(i)

- (1) The annual remuneration to be paid to the Mayor ~~shall~~ must be as approved by motion of Council.

Deputy Mayor – MGA Section 23(1)(d)(ii)

- (2) The annual remuneration to be paid to the Deputy Mayor ~~shall~~ must be as approved by motion of Council.

Councillors – MGA Section 23(1)(d)(iii)

- (3) The annual remuneration to be paid to Councillors ~~shall~~ must be as approved by motion of Council.

Benefits

Health and Dental Insurance Benefits

- 4 (1) Health and dental insurance is mandatory for all elected officials (Mayor and Councillors) who meet the criteria of eligibility. Coverage under the Plan is pursuant to the relevant terms and provisions of the Plan.

(2) The Municipality ~~shall~~ will pay 50.75% of the premium and the remaining 49.25% ~~shall~~ will be deducted from the elected official's salary.

Retirement and Pension Plan

- 5 (1) Effective March 1, 2020, the Municipality became a participant in the Nova Scotia Public Service Superannuation Plan ("PSSP") as an employer.

- (2) Effective June 1, 2021, all new and current elected officials ~~(Mayor and Councillors)~~ shall must participate in the PSSP in accordance with the eligibility and other rules of the PSSP.

Travel and Expenses while on Municipal Business

Annual Budget

- 6 Council shall will establish an annual travel and expense budget for each Council Member elected official, including the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. This amount shall will be established based on best practice upon experience and available budget. Each elected official member of Council, including the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, shall will be accountable for the usage of this funding and make travel and expense decisions based upon their individual budget available budget.

Eligible Travel and Expenses

- 7 (1) ~~Councillors, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor~~ Elected officials who utilize their personal vehicles on travel assignments, which shall will include:
- (a) travel to attendance at a meeting of the Council or a Committee or Board of Council or a Committee or Board in which an appointment of a Councillor, Mayor or Deputy Mayor has been made by Council;
 - (b) travel for council business outside of their District, but within Lunenburg County;
 - (c) travel and expenses for council business outside of Lunenburg County but within Nova Scotia as approved by the Mayor; or,
 - (d) travel and expenses for council business outside of Nova Scotia, as approved by the Council.

Non-Local Travel

- 8 (1) If travel to an event involves choice between vehicle travel and air or some other form of travel, the ~~Councillor~~ elected officials will be reimbursed for the lowest cost option, regardless of the option they have used.
- (2) All forms of transportation will be economy class.
- (3) If an elected official, for their own convenience, travels by an indirect route or interrupts travel by the most economical route, the elected official shall will bear any extra expense involved. Reimbursement for such travel shall will be for only that part of the expense as would have been necessary in order to travel.

Mileage Rate

- 9 The rate per kilometer as a travelling allowance for all elected officials shall will be approved at the rate stipulated from time to time by the Province of Nova Scotia as the maximum kilometrage rate for its employees.

~~Expenses — MGA, Section 23(3)~~

~~Annual Expense Budget~~

- ~~10 Council shall establish an annual Expense Budget for each Council Member, including the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. This amount shall be established based upon past experience and available budget. Each member of Council shall be accountable for the usage of this funding and make expense decisions based upon their individual budget available.~~

~~Eligible Expenses Eligible for Reimbursement~~

- 10 (1) ~~Council members, including the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, Elected officials, are entitled to reimbursement of expenses incurred which are incidental to the discharge of their duties, which shall will include:~~
- ~~(a) attending Council or a Committee or Board of Council meeting or other Council business within Lunenburg County;~~
 - ~~(b) council business outside Lunenburg County but within Nova Scotia as approved by the Mayor;~~
 - ~~(c) council business outside of the Province of Nova Scotia as approved by Council.~~
- (1) Expenses eligible for reimbursement include:
- (a) meals with itemized receipts must support all claims;
 - (b) accommodations for business outside of the Municipality;
 - (c) registration fees for conferences, seminars or courses, which are incidental to or facilitate the discharge of a Council member's duties or Council business.
- (2) Seminars, courses and conferences shall must meet the following criteria in order for reimbursement of expenses associated with the same:
- (a) request must be made in writing to Council. The ~~Councillor, Mayor or Deputy Mayor~~ elected official must provide a written brief outlining the benefits of the course, conference or seminar;
 - (b) the course, conference or seminar must be related to Municipal Government;
 - (c) the course must be completed prior to the next Municipal Election date;
 - (d) budget funds must be sufficient to cover the costs of training; and
 - (e) successful completion of any training/courses.
- (3) Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) and Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) conferences or seminars are eligible for reimbursement.
- (4) Councillors who are required to attend more than one meeting a day at a meeting site and choose not to travel from the meeting site to their place of residence in between meetings are eligible for a meal reimbursement. For greater clarity clarification, lunch time meals (noon) on for Council, Finance and Policy and Strategy Committee meetings days are not eligible for reimbursement.
- (5) ~~The Mayor, Deputy Mayor or Councillor~~ Elected officials whose eligible expenses are expensed on one individual corporate credit card must not be claimed by the Council member separately but will be expensed to their individual account.

Ineligible Expenses

- 11 (1) The following expenses are not eligible for reimbursement:
- (a) personal expenses including, but not limited to, movies, other entertainment, personal calls, personal products, travel cost not related to the event, alcoholic beverages and recreational drugs;
 - (b) expenses for a spouse/partner.

Expense Claim Procedure

- 12 ~~Expenses shall be reimbursed in accordance with the Personnel Policy, Policy MDL 51, including claim forms and limits. For further clarification, Expenses incurred and submitted for payment by elected officials the Mayor, Deputy Mayor or a Councillor shall will be authorized for payment by the Chief Administrative Officer. Expenses incurred and submitted by the Chief Administrative Officer shall be authorized for payment by the Mayor or Deputy Mayor in the Mayor's absence.~~

Other Expenses

- 13 ~~The Mayor and Deputy Mayor shall Elected officials will be provided with a Municipally owned mobile device and laptop during their term as Mayor and/or Deputy Mayor. The Municipality will absorb the capital and operating expense of these mobile devices. If the Mayor or Deputy Mayor chooses to have a personal mobile device and use it for municipal purposes, the Municipality will reimburse them an amount equivalent to the rate the Municipality would incur if the mobile device were municipally owned.~~

Reporting of Expenses

- 14 (1) An expense report, which includes remuneration for ~~elected officials the Mayor, Deputy and Councillors~~, and expenses incurred ~~by the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, a Councillor and the Chief Administrative Officer~~ must be prepared within 90 days of the end of each fiscal quarter and ~~shall~~ must be posted on the Municipal website quarterly.
- (2) An annual summary report of expenses must be filed with the Minister of Municipal Affairs by September 30th of each year.

Review of Policy

- 15 Council ~~shall~~ will review this policy by January 31st immediately following a regular election held under the Municipal Elections Act and make a motion to re-adopt the policy or amend the policy.

Repeal and Replace

- 16 Policy 003, approved on May 10, 2011, and amended May 13, 2008, is hereby repealed and replaced with new Policy 011.

Policy Adoption	
Date of Original Passage	
Date of Notice of Intent to Repeal	
Date of Council Approval	
Date of Effective Date (if different from approval date)	
I certify that this Policy 003 was adopted by Municipal Council as indicated above.	
Signature of Municipal Clerk	Date

Version	Amendment Description	Approval Date
Original V1	Council Members' Remuneration, Benefits & Expenses	May 10, 2011
V2	Amended to meet new MGA requirements by removing 1/3 tax free allowance, adding recreational drugs to in eligible expenses, update committee name under 3.2.	Oct 23, 2018
V3	Re-adopted as per MGA requirement after an election	Jan 26, 2021
V4	Amended to allow for health and dental benefits and inclusion in the retirement pension plan.	May 25, 2021
V5	Repealed and Replaced, accessible format and clear language, addition of policy statement and scope, annual adjustment and reporting, consolidation of sections for expenses, removed reference to MDL 51 policy, added receipts and successful completion for reimbursement, removed reference of CAO expense approval,	Jan 28, 2025



The Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

Request for Decision

Report to: Policy and Strategy Committee

Submitted by: Elana Wentzell and April Whynot-Lohnes

Date: January 21, 2025

Re: Amend and Re-adopt, Policy 077 "Gifts and Hospitality"

Recommendation

“that the Policy and Strategy Committee recommends to Municipal Council that Municipal Council amend and readopt Policy 077, Gifts and Hospitality as presented and hereby gives seven days’ notice of Council’s intention to amend and readopt on January 28, 2025.”

Executive summary

Subsection 23(3) of the Municipal Government Act (MGA) requires that each municipality must adopt an expense policy and a hospitality policy. Subsection 23(7) requires that by January 31st immediately following a regular election, the council must review the expense and hospitality policies and, by motion, either re-adopt the policies or amend and readopt the policies.

Discussion

Subsection 23(5) requires that a hospitality policy must: a) establish the expenditures, including an alcohol purchase, that may be a hospitality expense; b) establish the approval process for authorizing hospitality expenses; c) establish the scope and applicability of the policy; and d) comply with the regulations.

Subsection 23(6) specifies that an expense may only be reimbursed if that expense is authorized pursuant to the expense policy or the hospitality policy. The question of giving and receiving gifts had been discussed in the past, so Council included gifts in the policy for clarity.

The Policy outlines the definitions of gifts and hospitality, the purpose of the policy, the application of who the policy applies, policy directives, accountabilities, monitoring, reporting of expenses and review criterion of the policy.

No hospitality expenses were claimed for the reporting period of April 1, 2024, to date.

Staff have updated the policy to the accessible format and made every effort to use clear language. The revisions to the policy include the addition of room/venue for clarification under the allowable expenses, a new clause that clarifies that employee only events do not fall under this policy, and that itemized receipts are required for reimbursement.

The current policy meets the requirements of the Municipal Government Act. The Policy is before Council for review. If Council is satisfied with the amendments of the Policy, a motion to amend and readopt is required. If Council wants to make changes to the Policy, direction can be given to staff to make further changes.

Budget implications

There are no budget implications for this change.

Strategic plan

N/A

Work plan

N/A

Alternatives

Council can make further amendments to the policy to reflect Council's discussion.

Conclusion

The Municipal Government Act requires the Municipality to review the Gifts and Hospitality policy after each Municipal Election.

Report Preparation	
Department	Finance and Administration
Report Prepared by	Elana Wentzell and April Whynot-Lohnes
Report Approved by	
Date Reviewed by C.A.O.	

Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

Policy Details	
Name	Gifts and Hospitality
Number	077
Legislative Authority	MGA s. 23(3) and 408AA
Effective Date	

Preamble

- 1 The Municipality of the District of Lunenburg (~~MODL~~) recognizes that gifts and hospitality-related activities are, at times, appropriate and legitimate expenses supporting the effective conduct of municipal business. The offering of gifts and hospitality will be done in such a manner to reflect the prudent stewardship of public funds and should be a reasonable expense based on the circumstances.

Definitions

- 2 For the purpose of this Policy:
 - (a) **Gifts** means items to be given ~~on behalf of MODL~~ to both individuals and groups from outside the organization. Gifts should be appropriate and reflect the communities, culture and heritage of ~~MODL~~ the Municipality and be readily identifiable as being from the Municipality ~~MODL~~. This can include items such as craft items, locally produced alcohol beverages and other items as per ~~the~~ OP-022 Municipal Gifts & Promotional Items ~~Operational Policy~~. ~~MODL~~ The municipality will purchase and manage a stock of items to be used as Municipal gifts and promotional purposes.
 - (b) **Hospitality** means expenses incurred while hosting/entertaining individuals from outside of the municipality ~~government and for municipal purposes that support the effective conducting of~~ municipal business including receptions, ceremonies, conferences, business meetings, performances or other group events.
 - (c) **Allowable expenses** may include meals, non-alcoholic beverages, ~~room/venue rental~~ or other event-related items.

Purpose

- 3
 - (1) To provide direction and guidance to ~~Council and~~ the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) or designate with respect to the appropriate expenditure of hospitality expenses that support ~~MODL's~~ the Municipality's objectives.
 - (2) To ensure gifts and hospitality are offered in an accountable, economical and consistent manner in the facilitation of government business and/or for reasons of diplomacy, protocol, recognition, business development or promotional advocacy.
 - (3) To provide guidelines for the distribution of items to be used as municipal gifts and for promotional purposes.
 - (4) To ensure taxpayers' dollars are used prudently and responsibly with a focus on accountability and transparency.

Application

- 4 (1) This policy applies to Council members and staff who incur approved hospitality expenses while conducting government business or giving of a gift on behalf of MODL Municipal business.
- (2) This policy is not to be used when expensing costs associated with Municipal employee ONLY events. (ie: retirement functions, staff appreciation events).

Policy Directives

Offering of Gifts and Hospitality

- 5 (1) Gifts are most often given by the Mayor, a Councillor or a senior staff member, however, any staff member can submit a request for an item. The procedure for requesting a gift and the guidelines to be used when selecting an appropriate gift are outlined in OP-022 Municipal Gifts and Promotional Items ~~Operational Procedure~~.
- (2) Hospitality may be offered under the following circumstances ~~in accordance with this Policy~~:
 - (a) hosting dignitaries;
 - (b) engaging in official public matters with representatives from other governments;
 - (c) hosting business, industry/labour leaders or other community leaders;
 - (d) sponsoring conferences;
 - (e) hosting ceremonies/recognition events; or
 - (f) other official functions, as approved by the Council or the CAO or designate.

Acceptance of Gifts, Hospitality and Other Benefits

- 6 (1) No Council member or municipal employee shall show favouritism or bias toward any vendor, contractor, or others doing business with MODL and shall not accept any gifts, hospitality or other benefits that may have a real, apparent or potential influence on their objectivity in carrying out their official duties and responsibilities or that may place them under obligation to the donor.
- (2) The acceptance of gifts, hospitality and other benefits is permissible if they are infrequent and of minimal value, within the normal standards of courtesy or protocol, arise out of activities or events related to their official duties, and do not compromise or appear to compromise their integrity or the integrity of MODL.
- (3) Gifts, tokens of hospitality or other benefits that are accepted shall be declared in a register kept indicating the gift, date and the name of the recipient and donor. This register will be maintained by the Clerk's office.

Authorization

- 7 (1) All hospitality events require prior authorization (see Appendix "A"). ~~by Council or the CAO or their designate and require that a "Request and Approval to Incur Hospitality Expenses" Form be completed and submitted to the CAO or designate for approval.~~

Any request for prior authorization for hospitality events requires the following detail:

- (a) rationale/purpose of event;

- (b) estimated numbers of attendees and their respective affiliations; and
 - (c) estimated itemized costs including gratuities and supplementary expenses.
- (2) In authorizing the hospitality event, the request should be reviewed in consideration of the value and benefit of the proposed event in relation to its cost.
- (3) A copy of the signed prior authorization must accompany the claim for reimbursement.
- (4) In instances where a hospitality event has been held without prior approval, claims for reimbursement must provide the details outlined above and ~~also~~ include a document outlining the reasons prior approval was not possible. **The claim for reimbursement must contain itemized receipts.**

Business Meetings

- 9 (1) Under this Policy, the Mayor, CAO, Deputy CAO and Director of ~~Tourism and Infrastructure~~ **Business Economic Development** will have the authority to expend funds in a municipally beneficial prudent manner; and, from time to time, other Department Managers approved by the CAO or designate and ~~the Deputy Mayor or a Councillor~~ as approved by Council.

Serving of Alcohol and Cannabis Products

- 10 (1) No alcoholic beverages or cannabis products will be provided at municipal hospitality events.

Accountabilities

- 11 (1) Mayor and Councillors are responsible for:
- (a) overseeing hospitality-related expenses for the CAO or designate, hospitality expenses that are approved by the CAO or designate, and approving hospitality events that Council sees as warranted under this Policy;
 - (b) ensuring compliance with the requirements established by this Policy with respect to hospitality expenses;
 - (c) consistent application of this Policy.
- (2) CAO or designate is responsible for:
- (a) Using discretion to make decisions and choices with some degree of flexibility while maintaining compliance with this Policy. When exercising discretion, the following factors must be considered:
 - i) Ensuring all appropriate hospitality events and related expenses that are initiated or incurred by a Department Manager are approved.
 - ii) Approving appropriate requests and claims for hospitality-related expenses for Department Managers and in instances where the actual cost of the hospitality event exceeds the estimated cost.
 - (b) When a situation arises and discretion needs to be exercised, the CAO or designate should consider whether the request is:
 - i) able to stand up to scrutiny by auditors and members of the public;
 - ii) properly explained and documented;
 - iii) fair and equitable;
 - iv) reasonable; and

- v) appropriate
- (3) Employees are responsible for acting in accordance with this Policy.
- (4) The Finance Department is responsible for:
 - (a) providing advice and assistance to Council, CAO or designate regarding the application of this Policy;
 - (b) monitoring hospitality expenses for appropriate usage and consistency with Policy directives; and
 - (c) processing hospitality-related claims.

Claims for Reimbursement of Hospitality Expenses

- 11 (1) Claims for reimbursement of hospitality expenses must be submitted on the form provided and ~~shall~~ must be signed by the claimant.
- (2) Hospitality expense claims must include the following:
- (a) A copy of the signed prior authorization form for the hospitality event for which the expense was incurred; and,
 - (b) A detailed itemized receipt for the expense.
- (3) In instances where prior approval of the hospitality event was not possible, the expense claim must provide the information requested on the Request and Approval to Incur Hospitality Expenses Form and an explanation of why prior approval was not possible.
- (4) If no receipt is available for a hospitality expense, a written attestation signed by the claimant must be submitted to explain why the receipt is unavailable, and a description itemizing and confirming the expense must be provided. Debit or credit card transaction records are not acceptable as receipts.
- (5) Hospitality expenses incurred by one individual on behalf of another must be attributed to the individual for who those expenses were incurred.
- (6) No hospitality expense claim ~~shall~~ will be paid unless the claim is approved for payment by the ~~CAO or their designate~~ signing authority. Before approving an expense claim, the ~~CAO or their designate~~ signing authority must ensure that:
- (a) The claim is consistent with this Policy;
 - (b) The expenses claimed were necessarily incurred in the performance of municipal business;
 - (c) Appropriate receipts are provided to support the claim, and that the claim documentation is appropriately filed; and,
 - (d) The expenses claimed have appropriate justification.
- (7) In considering a hospitality expense claim for payment, the ~~CAO or their designate~~ signing authority may request additional explanations, documentation or justification from the claimant, and may refuse to approve any claim or expense that did not have prior authorization and that the ~~CAO or their designate~~ signing authority decides is unreasonable or not in compliance with this Policy.
- (8) The use of petty cash to pay a hospitality expense claim is prohibited.

Monitoring

- 12 The Finance Department ~~shall~~ will monitor the effectiveness and consistent application of this Policy including coordinating periodic reviews of hospitality expenses to ensure compliance. The CAO or designate ~~shall~~ will provide documentation deemed necessary to conduct any reviews of this Policy.

Reporting of Expenses

Gift Expenses

- 13 Gift expenses are tracked through the budget process.

Hospitality Expenses

- 14 In accordance with Section 65A of the **Municipal Government Act**, Hospitality Expense Reports must be completed within 90 days of the end of each fiscal quarter and ~~shall~~ must be posted on the Municipal Website quarterly and an annual summary report of expenses must be filed with the Minister of Municipal Affairs by September 30 of each year.

Review Requirements

- 15 (1) The Municipality's Audit Committee ~~shall~~ must review the hospitality annual summary report by October 31 of each year.
- (2) Council ~~shall~~ will review this Policy by January 31 immediately following a regular election held under the **Municipal Elections Act** and make a motion to re-adopt or amend the Policy.

Policy Adoption	
Date of Original Passage	
Date of Notice of Intent to Amend/Repeal/Consider	
Date of Council Approval	
Date of Effective Date (if different from approval date)	
I certify that this Policy XXX was adopted by Municipal Council as indicated above.	
Signature of Municipal Clerk	Date

Version	Amendment Description	Approval Date
Original V1	Gifts & Hospitality	June 25, 2029
V2	Re-adopted	Jan 26, 2021
V3	Amended, Accessible formatting and clear language, addition of room/venue under allowable expenses, new clause 4(2)	

	clarification on employee only events, and 7(4) itemized receipt requirements.	



The Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

Request for Decision

Report to: Policy & Strategy Committee

Submitted by: Elana Wentzell, CPA, CMA, Director of Finance

Date: 2025-01-21

Re: Policy 49 – Property Tax Rebate for 2025-26

Recommendation

It is recommended that the following changes to the Property Tax Rebate Policy be included in the 2025-26 Draft Operating Budget for Council consideration:

- Households with income under \$30,750 a maximum rebate of up to \$680
- Households with income between \$30,751 to \$45,000 a maximum rebate of up to \$475
- Households with income between \$45,001 to \$60,000 a maximum rebate of up to \$270.

Executive summary

The Property Tax Rebate Program is one of the ways that Council supports low-income homeowners by granting a property tax rebate based on household income. In fiscal 2024-25 Council made significant changes to the policy's household income thresholds and rebate amounts and increased the budget to equal a \$0.02 reduction on the general tax rate. This targeted tax relief strategy is a best practice where rebates can be distributed to those who need it the most. Property taxes represent approximately 4% of taxable income for the average homeowner earning \$30,750 (based on 2024 income tax rates).

In 2024-25 the average taxable assessment value per residential dwelling was \$211,042. A \$0.02 rate reduction would have equaled \$42.20/year to the average homeowner.

The property tax rebates had far greater impact to low-income homeowners:

Rebate Amount	Average Taxable Assessed Value	Property tax reduction based on \$0.02	Tax Rate reduction required to equal rebate amount
\$250	\$196,420	\$39.28	\$0.127
\$450	\$180,741	\$36.15	\$0.249
\$650	\$156,173	\$31.23	\$0.416

A comparison of last year and current-year rebates awarded is shown in the table below. Based on the rebates awarded to date and past experience of late applications received in the final quarter of a fiscal year, it appears there is room in the existing budget to make some adjustments to both the income thresholds and rebate amounts.

2023-24 (last fiscal)		2024-25 (current fiscal)	
Household income	Maximum rebate	Household income	Maximum rebate
Under \$25,699	\$570	Under \$28,560	\$650
\$25,700 - \$32,099	\$285	\$28,561 - \$39,984	\$450
\$32,100 - \$40,700	\$115	\$39,985 - \$51,840	\$250
Budget*	\$213,400	Budget*	\$763,400
Actual**	\$257,694	Actual to Dec 31**	\$522,704
* Overage approved by Council. Revised budget \$264,740. **Qualifying Applicants: 734		* Budget equal to \$0.02 on the general tax rate. **Qualifying Applicants: 1,161	

Discussion

The current policy mandates that annual CPI adjustments are made to both the income thresholds and rebate amounts. The 2024 NS CPI is likely to be 2.5%.

Staff have done some statistical analysis of the current year property tax rebate applications to inform the recommendations for enhancements to the policy in addition to the required CPI increase.

As of December 31, 2024, staff have processed 1,161 qualifying applications. The District had 15,389 assessed dwelling units in 2024, which means that 7.5% of homeowners have received a rebate.

Of the 1,161 applications received to date, 1,052 were processed as a credit on the final tax bill.

Staff are aware that for some applicants, the requirement to pay the interim tax bill to avoid overdue interest charges is onerous. Overdue interest charges are legislated by the MGA, and Council has set the rate by Policy at 10%. Once interest is charged, it forms part of the tax bill, and staff are not authorized to remove it (MGA Section 111 (3)). However, staff have analyzed the interest effect on the applicants to date and are recommending that an amount be added

to each rebate category in the next fiscal year to cover interest charges between the interim and final tax billing due dates.

Rebate Amounts	Applicants	Average Tax Bill	Estimated interest on overdue interim tax bills	<i>Proposed addition to each category for interest charges</i>
\$250	305	\$1,591	\$13.26	\$13
\$450	356	\$1,464	\$12.20	\$12
\$650	500	\$1,265	\$10.54	\$11

The revised rebate amounts based on expected CPI and an interest allowance is outlined as follows:

Rebate Amounts	Add 2.5% NS CPI	Add Interest allowance	<i>Proposed Rebate Amounts (rounded up)</i>
\$250	\$256	\$13	\$270
\$450	\$461	\$12	\$475
\$650	\$666	\$11	\$680

The income thresholds were also analyzed. Staff identified that a tweak in the household income ranges could provide substantial benefit to those homeowners near the thresholds.

Household income	Rebate Amount	Income breakdown	Number of Applicants
Under \$28,560	Up to \$650	\$0 - \$10,000	44
		\$10,001 - \$20,000	101
		\$20,001 - \$28,560	355
\$28,561 - \$39,984	Up to \$450	\$28,561 - \$30,000	39
		\$30,001 - \$35,000	128
		\$35,001 - \$39,984	189
\$39,985 - \$51,840	Up to \$250	\$39,985 - \$45,000	156
		\$45,001 - \$51,840	149

If the upper thresholds were moved in the \$250 and \$450 categories to \$30,000 and \$45,000 respectively, 195 homeowners would have received \$200 more in rebates.

Staff are also aware that the upper limit of \$51,840 is low when considering what constitutes a living wage in the current economic climate. Staff believe that this could be increased to \$60,000.

Current Income Thresholds	Add CPI	Proposed Thresholds
Under \$28,560	\$29,274	Under \$30,750
\$29,561 – \$39,984	\$29,275 - \$40,983	\$30,751 - \$45,000
\$39,985 - \$51,840	\$40,984 - \$53,136	\$45,001 - \$60,000

Budget implications

In fiscal 2024-25 staff made some conservative assumptions on how the increased upper income limit would affect the number of applications. Because there is more room in the existing budget than anticipated, staff believe the budget could remain unchanged for 2025-26 leaving room for 473 new applicants with incomes up to \$60,000. The 2021 census shows there are 940 households with incomes between \$50,000 - \$59,999. The budget would allow for roughly half of those homeowners to apply. This should be sufficient based on our current experience. The 2021 census shows that there are 3,930 households with income under \$50,000 in MODL, roughly 30% of those households have made application to this program. This 3,930 figure includes rental properties, but there is no data available to extrapolate how many rentals are in this income category.

Proposed Rebate amount	Estimated number of applicants based 2024-25 & new income threshold	Estimated Cost 2025-26
\$270	612	\$165,452
\$475	473	\$224,793
\$680	539	\$366,655
	Allowance for 4 th Quarter	\$ 6,500
TOTAL BUDGET 2025-26		\$763,400

Strategic plan

Council's Proposed Strategic Plan looks to address affordability for residents. The property tax rebate is a good fit to target those homeowners who need tax relief the most.

Work plan

Applications for the property tax rebate are mailed to all qualifying applicants from the prior year and any organizations that deal with those who may be low income. As well, the updated information will be posted on the Municipal webpage, social media accounts, in upcoming newsletters and printed on the back of the interim tax bill.

Alternatives

The household income thresholds and rebate amounts could remain unchanged or staff could be directed to make further revisions.

Conclusion

The revisions align with Council's Proposed Strategic Plan and can be accommodated without increasing the existing budget.

Report Preparation	
Department	Finance
Report Prepared by	Elana Wentzell
Report Approved by	
Date Reviewed by C.A.O.	



Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

Request for Decision

Report to: Policy and Strategy Committee

Submitted by: Trudy Payne, Director of Recreation, Parks, & Tourism

Date: January 21, 2025

Re: South Shore Pickleball Club Request

Recommendation

That the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg authorize staff to draft a 5-year management agreement with the South Shore Pickleball Club for the purposes of establishing six outdoor pickleball courts on PID 60413234, part of the Municipal Recreation Activity Complex (MARC), and that the agreement be brought to Council for final approval.

Executive summary

On December 10, 2024, Jared Uhlman with the South Shore Pickleball Club made a presentation to Council about what pickleball is, why it has become so popular, the benefits of pickleball, and why the need for courts in this area. Part of the presentation included a proposed site for 6 outdoor courts. The proposed site, PID 60413234, is land that forms part of the Municipal Activity and Recreation Complex, better known as the MARC, located on Leary Fraser Road in Dayspring (map attached). The request was that Municipal Council consider entering into a management agreement with the Club enabling them to build and maintain 6 pickle ball courts on municipal property.

A management agreement as defined in our Parks & Open Space Standards & Guidelines document refers to a legal agreement between the Municipality and an Association for the development, maintenance and operation of municipally owned land.

Also, part of the request is to allocate the funds currently set in a municipal reserve fund (\$800,000) for pickleball courts to be used towards the construction of the courts.

Background

The discussion of constructing pickleball courts in the Municipality has been ongoing since 2021 when the first presentation was made by the South Shore Pickle Ball Club at a Policy and Strategy Committee meeting on April 20, 2021.

Municipal Council in the 2022/2023 approved \$500,000 in the capital budget for an Active Living Park to be constructed in Osprey Village with pickle ball courts to be constructed in phase one. Phase one included the design and building of 6 outdoor regulation size pickleball courts with lighting approved for tournament play and an accessible washroom. The courts would be available for use by the public. The funds allocated in the budget over 5 years was \$900,000 with \$100,000 coming from Canada Community Building Fund (CCBF), \$460,000 from Communities, Culture, Heritage and Tourism and the Pickleball Club, \$240,000 from MODL's general operating reserves and \$100,000 from other contributions.

In the 2023-2024 the capital budget included \$1,140,000 over the five-year capital plan for the Active Living Park in Osprey Village with the intent of constructing the 6 outdoor pickleball courts first and other amenities to be determined through community consultation. The funding allocation in this budget allocated \$690,000 to come from CCBF, \$330,000 from general operating reserves, \$10,000 from grants and \$110,000 from other contributions. \$800,000 was allocated in the 2023-2024 budget specifically for pickleball courts. The intent at this time was to still construct the courts in Osprey Village and engineers and designers were engaged to develop plans. The province later expressed interest in the land earmarked for the pickleball courts and then acquired the property.

With the land allocated for the pickleball courts acquired by the province in Osprey Village Council looked at other location options and at the July 25, 2023, Council meeting the following motion was made:

"That Municipal Council select PID 60161940, adjacent to the soccer fields in Centre, Lunenburg County, as the location for the new pickleball courts."

Staff continued to engage with designers and engineers to finalize a tender package to construct 6 pickleball courts in Centre.

Two companies submitted tenders to construct the courts. One bid came in at 1.45 million; the other at 1.8 million. The bids were significantly over the \$800,000 budget. At the March 12, 2024, Council meeting, the following motion was made:

"That Municipal Council does not award Tender # 2023-05-004 Centre Pickleball Courts."

Council made this decision due to the tender prices being significantly over budget.

In a press release issued March 13, 2024, the Mayor at that time stated "We will be meeting with representatives of the Pickleball Community to explore options and funding partners that would enable us to move forward with an outdoor pickleball facility in the Municipality and I will be recommending that an \$800,000 operating reserve be set up so that funds are available

for the project when needed.” Council did make the decision to put the \$800,000 into an operating reserve for pickleball courts.

The Mayor and staff met with the pickleball club and from that meeting it was determined that the South Shore Pickleball Club would undertake the project and look for possible site locations. Staff’s understanding is that the Club looked at a few sites and determined the location at the MARC to be the best site. The reasons why the Club feels this is a great location were outlined in their PowerPoint that was presented at the December 10, 2024, Council meeting. This property is owned by the Municipality and hence why the request was made for Council to consider entering into a management agreement with the Club.

Discussion

The discussion before the Policy and Strategy Committee is whether to enter into a management agreement with the South Shore Pickle Ball Club which would see the property identified as PID 60413234 be the location for 6 pickle ball courts. Part of the discussion also involves how much, if any, of the pickleball reserves would be available to be used to help construct the courts.

The property identified by the Club is also used by the Lunenburg County Mountain Bike Club, who have a management agreement in place with the Municipality, building, maintaining and operating a number of mountain bike trails. The property identified by the Pickleball Club does currently provides the mountain bike club access to the mountain bike trails when doing construction or maintenance work. It would be important to ensure an access point was maintained for the mountain bike club. The South Shore Pickleball Club is aware of this.

The advantage to the Municipality to have the Club construct and manage the courts is that it would not take staff resources to manage the project and then manage and operate the courts. Depending on the decision made by Council, it could cost the Municipality less than the \$800,000 in reserves to have courts constructed. The Municipality could choose to only provide a portion of the funds to aid in the construction of the courts. The Club would also be responsible for the annual operating costs and future capital costs. The Club may have better success in accessing other funding partners and could also raise funds.

The risk to the Municipality in entering into a management agreement is that if the Club ever decided they no longer wanted to manage the courts and they decided to withdraw from the management agreement, the courts would be the Municipality’s facility in which they would need to make a decision on what to do with them – keep them open and maintain and operate them ourselves, close the courts, re-purpose the courts or have them removed. The possibility of including in the management agreement a decommissioning plan of the courts was raised by a Councillor. This could be incorporated. There is still a risk that if for some reason the club could no longer manage and operate the courts, they may also be in a position that they would

not have the resources to decommission the courts, if that is what the Municipality wanted at that time.

The presenter indicated the courts would be self-sufficient once they are built by charging membership fees and hosting tournaments. Tournaments would be the main source of income enabling the Club to manage the courts. Members would have gated access to the courts and if they were not in use they would be locked. If the gates were not locked the Club fears, there would be vandalism

During the presentation on December 10, 2024, a number of questions were posed and comments made to the Club. There were concerns raised that the courts would not be available to the public only to members and perhaps some people could not afford the membership fee. The presenter indicated the membership fees would be affordable and that they could offer regular free days to include non-members. The number of these could be worked out in the management agreement. The Municipality also has PRO Kids and PRO Funds which could help pay membership fees for those who otherwise could not afford to be a member.

The question of cost was raised as well. At this time the Club was unable to provide an estimated cost. Members of the Club have met on site with a pickleball builder and are currently waiting on the estimate. It is staffs' recommendation to not make a decision concerning the pickleball reserve fund until an estimated cost has been provided.

The Club has raised \$10,000 towards the courts but it was recommended they stop raising funds at the time as the Municipality was looking at constructing the courts. The presenter indicated the Club would resume fundraising once a firm location was selected. Having a site is necessary to apply for funding and helpful when fund raising.

The question of where future capital costs would come from was posed. The presenter indicated that they may need to resurface the courts once every ten years and holding a few tournaments would raise the funds required.

Comments were also made about looking at making the courts more multi-use, to conduct some try it days to show more people the sport, to address the decommissioning of the courts if interest declines in the management agreement, and desire was expressed to see more funds coming from the Club towards the construction of the courts.

The presenter emphasized the biggest issue the Club is facing is that there is no place to play. The number of people wanting to play is growing but it can only grow so much without facilities. Currently gyms are being used and often they are hard to access as pickleball is competing with other users.

Budget implications

The budget implications will depend on the decision made by Council.

Strategic plan

The Vision of the Municipality is “The breathtaking, natural beauty of the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg is home to thriving communities with unique cultural identities. Growth centres support our diversified economies, driven by our residents’ passion for the place they call home.

With our strong economy, we can live, work and raise families here. We are a destination for visitors, attracted to our vibrant parks, beaches, and hiking trails. As leaders in sustainability, we passionately protect our natural environment.” Parks do make places better places to live and helps attracts visitors to our Municipality.

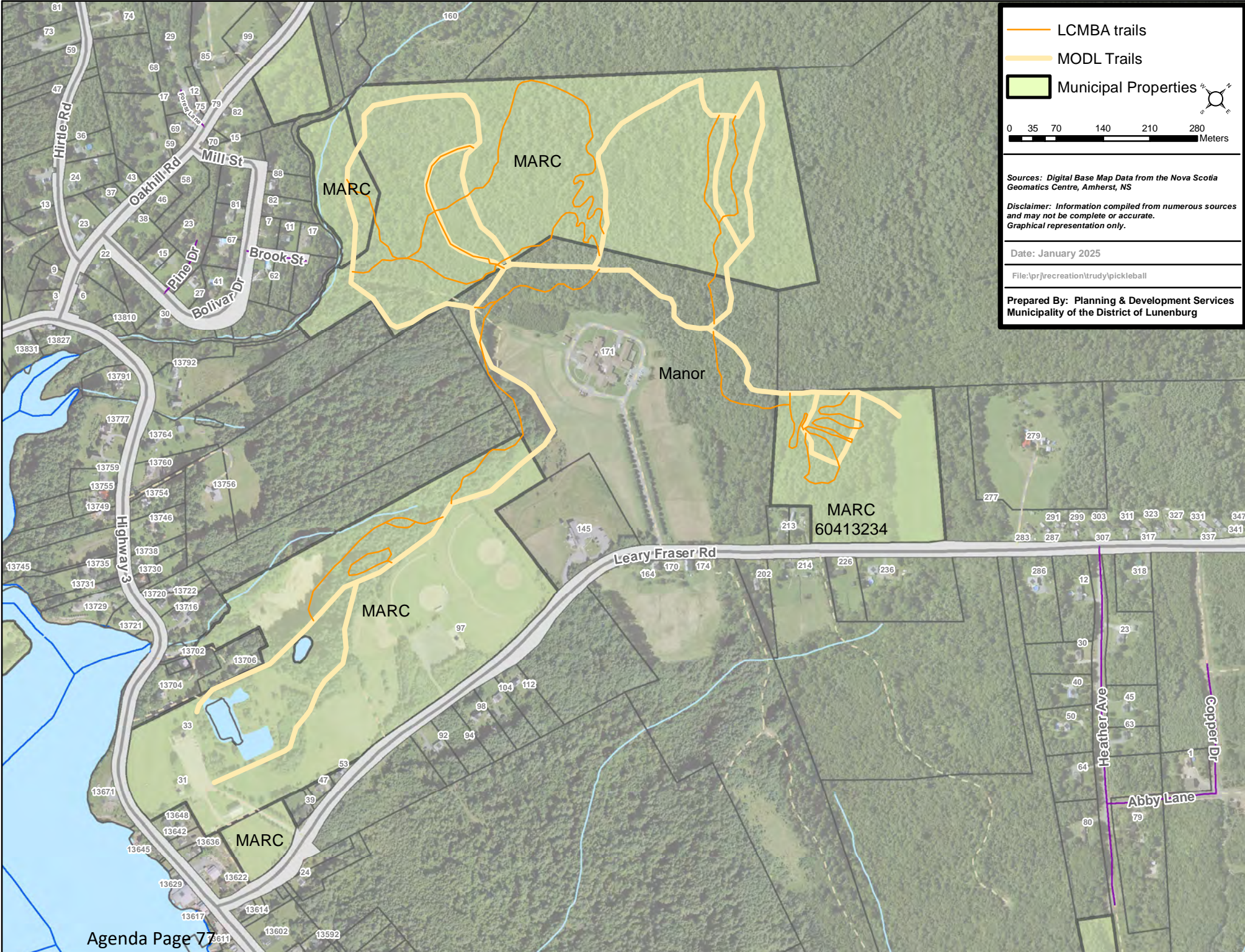
Alternatives

1. To not enter into a management agreement with the South Shore Pickleball Club and provide any funds towards the establishment of outdoor pickleball courts.
2. To ask the Club to look for other locations before making a decision.
3. To enter in a management agreement but not provide any funding.
4. To provide a level of funding but not enter into a management agreement.
5. To construct, own and manage MODL’s own outdoor pickleball courts. This would involve the Municipality determining a location, developing designs and engineered plans for the site, issuing a tender, awarding a tender and managing the tender. Once constructed it would require staff resources to manage.

Conclusion

Establishing outdoor pickleball courts was included in the 2022-2023 and the 2023-2024 capital budgets with the intent of the Municipality owning and operating the courts. The first location selected at Osprey Village was acquired by the province and the second location at Centre the tenders that were received were well over budget and thus, Council made the decision not to proceed. In discussion with the South Shore Pickleball Club, it was determined the path moving forward would see the Club spearheading the project. The Club has identified a piece of land at the MARC as an ideal location for the courts and has requested funding to assist with the construction of the courts. A partnership with the South Shore Pickleball Club would see courts constructed. The management of the courts would be looked after by the Club, which would lessen the need for staff resources to be directed at the construction and management of the courts. Also, the annual operating costs and future capital costs would be the Club’s responsibility. Until an estimated cost is provided to construct the courts it would be staff’s recommendation for Council to delay any decision concerning the request to use the \$800,000, or a portion of, in a reserve the Municipality has established towards the construction of pickleball courts.

Report Preparation	
Department	Recreation, Parks, & Tourism
Report Prepared by	Trudy Payne, Director of Recreation, Parks & Tourism
Report Approved by	
Date Reviewed by C.A.O.	



— LCMBA trails
— MODL Trails
 Municipal Properties

0 35 70 140 210 280
 Meters

Sources: Digital Base Map Data from the Nova Scotia Geomatics Centre, Amherst, NS
 Disclaimer: Information compiled from numerous sources and may not be complete or accurate. Graphical representation only.
 Date: January 2025
 File: \prj\recreation\trudy\pickleball
 Prepared By: Planning & Development Services
 Municipality of the District of Lunenburg



Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

Report to PSC

Report To: Policy and Strategy Committee

Submitted By: Jacob Macpherson, Planner 1

Date: 2025-01-21

Re: Cluster Development Regulations – Request for Direction

Recommendation

“That PSC recommend to Council to direct staff to Incorporate the Cluster Development regulations into the MODL2040 project.”

Executive Summary

Regulations have previously been drafted to regulate residential developments where multiple residential structures are located on the same lot, referred to as cluster development. Staff are recommending that the cluster development regulations be incorporated into the MODL2040 municipal-wide planning project as it will allow the public engagement and implementation of the regulations to be done simultaneously. By presenting the regulations simultaneously — Council, staff, and residents can assess the regulations together as one holistic package. As a result of this engagement and deliberation, the cluster development regulations could be altered to better align with the other regulations of the new municipal-wide plan.

Background

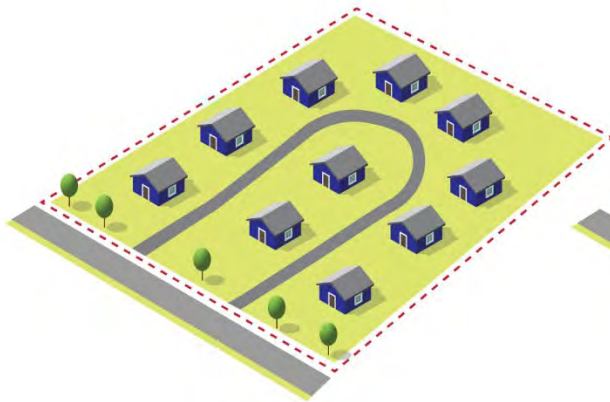
What is a cluster development?

Cluster developments are a type of residential development where several detached and/or multiple-unit dwellings are located on the same property. The objective of the cluster

development regulations is to ensure that new cluster development projects follow standards that are appropriate to the size, configuration, and location of the proposed development through a development agreement approval process.

On the ground, these developments can look and feel the same as a traditional subdivision, with individual houses located along an internal road. However, due to the lack of property lines within the development, they can also look different, with clusters of homes or other structures located close together on one portion of the property, while the remainder of the property is left in a natural state.

Cluster Development



Subdivision



Ownership Styles

Ownership structures of cluster developments can vary. Some developments may be owned and maintained by a single individual or entity that rents out the units to tenants. In this case, the units and all associated infrastructure such as roads, parks, and wastewater facilities are maintained by the owner of the property.

Another ownership structure is through a condominium corporation in the form of a bare land condominium. A bare land condominium development typically involves individual dwellings located on individual “units” of land that are owned and maintained by individual owners, in the same manner that a condo unit in a large building is owned. However, associated infrastructure such as roads, parks, or wastewater facilities is typically owned and maintained collectively by all the owners of the units within the development through the condominium corporation. Similarly, these aspects of the development are comparable to the parts of a condominium building that are collectively owned and maintained such as the lobby or hallways.

Importance of Regulating Cluster Developments

When developments are proposed in MODL, the land use controls that allow the Municipality to ensure certain standards are met are only triggered when land is subdivided. For example, when land is subdivided, the Municipality can evaluate the proposal to ensure it meets any requirements on environmental impacts or infrastructure standards. However, because cluster developments do not involve the subdivision of land, there is currently no way for the Municipality to ensure that these developments meet the same requirements. This initiative is aimed at putting regulations in place that consider the adequacy of the site in terms of road access, servicing capacity, and environmental impact.

Origin

Staff began drafting the cluster development regulations after the initial public engagement period in July of 2023. A number of revisions and additions to the regulations were made throughout the process in consultation with residents, the Planning Advisory Committee, and legal experts including the use of the development agreement approvals process, the criteria for defining a cluster development, and the development standards set out by the development agreement process.

The proposed cluster development regulations passed the First Reading stage on July 30, 2024. As set out in section 246 (4) of the Municipal Government Act, the passing of First Reading put the regulations into effect for a temporary period of 150 days and, because this timeframe expired before the regulations were fully approved, the cluster development regulations have become inactive as of December 27, 2024.

Next Steps

If Council follows staff's recommendation, staff will incorporate the implementation of the cluster development regulations into the MODL2040 project. Council and residents will then be provided with additional opportunities to consider the regulations as part of the overall engagement and discussion of the MODL2040 project.

The amendments for the cluster development regulations as they were presented at the original First Reading can be found in Appendix A and B.

Alternatives

Proceed to First Reading

This alternative involves proceeding to First Reading using the regulations as they were presented to Council most recently instead of incorporating cluster development regulations into the MODL2040 project. This alternative is appropriate if Council wishes to establish planning standards for this kind of development more immediately and or as a separate process from the MODL2040 project. Pursuing the process on a separate timeline from the MODL2040 project could cause public engagement events to overlap, which would require additional staff time. If the cluster development regulations are completed before MODL2040 is implemented, the cluster development regulations could also require additional adjustment to better conform with the new regulations.

To be approved, the project would then proceed to First Reading again on a date set by Council. This would re-initiate the temporary 150 day period where the regulations will be in effect. To fully establish the regulations, the approval of First Reading would need to be followed by a Public Hearing and Second Reading.

Appendix A – Land Use By-law Content

Within Section 2. Definitions, a definition for cluster development is added after ‘Building Footprint’

Cluster Development means six (6) or more Dwelling Units contained in two or more Dwellings on a single Lot that is partly or entirely un-serviced by centralized water and sewer, including new phases or units in a phased-development condominium with six (6) or more Dwelling Units overall. A Recreational Vehicle Parking Site is not considered a Cluster Development.

A new section after 4.12 Sensitive Coastal Ecosystems is added called **4.13 Cluster Developments**. This section directs Cluster Development applications to be approved by development agreement and directs applicants to the Municipal Planning Strategy.

4.13 Cluster Developments

Cluster Developments are permitted in all areas of the Municipality, except in cases where more stringent policies apply in Secondary Plan Areas. No development permit will be issued for any Cluster Development except in accordance with a development agreement approved under the policies in the Municipal Planning Strategy, including, but not limited to those in Sections 5 and 6.

Appendix B – Municipal Planning Strategy Content

New sections are added after Section 5. Municipal-Wide Land Use Policies called **5.1 Cluster Developments, 5.2 Cluster Developments by Development Agreement, and 5.3 Non-Conforming Allowances for Phased and Bare Land Condominiums**. These sections outline policies directly related to Cluster Development.

5.1 Cluster Developments

Cluster developments are a type of residential development where several detached and/or multiple-unit dwellings are located on the same property. In response to concerns over the absence of development standards for this kind of development, Council has introduced a process by which cluster development proposals to develop or expand projects, including through new or additional phases, are able to be approved through a development agreement process. The following general policies apply to this kind of development:

- 5.1.1** Council will review cluster development regulations every five years and update them in accordance with best practices for development regulations.
- 5.1.2** Council will permit cluster developments in all areas of the Municipality unless stricter policies are contained in a Secondary Planning Strategy or associated Land Use By-law.

Conservation design development is a style of cluster development designed to conserve open space in rural areas and protect environmental features. The basic principle of the design is to locate homes on the portion of the site best suited for development while retaining the remainder of the site as open space. While conservation design is not being directly evaluated as part of the development agreement process, Council wishes to promote conservation design as one possible way of meeting environmental and servicing standards.

- 5.1.3** It will be a policy of Council to promote and encourage conservation design style cluster development.

5.2 Cluster Developments by Development Agreement

The evaluative criteria of the development agreement process provides Council the flexibility to uphold development standards that are appropriate to the size, configuration, and location of the proposed development.

- 5.2.1** Council will consider cluster development applications through the development agreement process.

5.3 Non-Conforming Allowances for Phased and Bare Land Condominiums

A non-conforming use, sometimes called a grandfathered use, is a status given to a land use that pre-dates a regulation to allow its continuation under certain restrictions. Considering that work may have already begun on unregistered phased-development and bare land condominium units, relying on their unregulated status before the enactment of these planning documents, a future date has been designated for grandfathering. This non-conforming status allows a reasonable period for completing the necessary work to register units that were underway when the notice of intent to adopt these planning documents was published.

- 5.3.1** As outlined in the Municipal-Wide Land Use By-law section on Non-Conforming Uses, it will be a policy of Council that, for cluster developments

being developed as bare land condominiums or phased land condominiums, all units that have been accepted for registration by the Registrar of Condominiums as evidenced by their being registered at the appropriate Land Registration office established under the Land Registration Act by December 31, 2025, will be recognized by Council as non-conforming.

Section 6. Implementation is added under Section 5.11 Coastal Wetland Protection Policies. The section details the Development Agreement process.

6. Implementation

6.1 Development Agreements

A development agreement is a binding legal agreement between the Municipality and a property owner that can address specific details regarding the design and use of a proposed development.

6.1.1 Council will consider entering into a new development agreement where such an agreement is enabled by policies elsewhere in this Plan. Where Council approves a development agreement, the development agreement will:

- (a)** Specify the development, expansion, alteration, or change permitted;
- (b)** Specify the conditions under which the development may occur; and
- (c)** Set terms by which Council may amend or by which Council or the Chief Administrative Officer may terminate and discharge the agreement.

6.1.2 Council will not approve or amend a development agreement unless Council is satisfied the proposed agreement is consistent with the enabling policy and the general criteria set out in Policy 6.3.

6.2 Content of a Development Agreement

6.2.1 Council may specify conditions in the Development Agreement to meet the enabling and general criteria outlined in Policy 6.3. These conditions may include but are not limited to controls regarding:

- (a)** Adequacy of street networks, site access, and emergency evacuation;

- (b) Adequacy of services such as water and sewer;
- (c) Access of emergency vehicles;
- (d) Stormwater management;
- (e) Grading and erosion control;
- (f) The phasing of a development;
- (g) Time limits for the initiation and/or completion of development;
- (h) Availability of a safe water supply;
- (i) The suitability of the site in relation to environmental impact; and
- (j) All other matters enabled in Section 227 of the Municipal Government Act.

6.3 General Evaluation Criteria of a Development Agreement

6.3.1 Council will not approve a development agreement unless Council is satisfied the proposal:

- (a) Is consistent with the intent of this Municipal Planning Strategy;
- (b) Does not conflict with any Municipal or Provincial programs, bylaws, or regulations in effect in the Municipality;
- (c) Is not premature or inappropriate due to:
 - (i) Impacts on existing drinking water supplies, both private and public;
 - (ii) The adequacy of central water and sewage services or, where such services are not available, the suitability of the site to accommodate on-site water and sewage services;
 - (iii) The creation of excessive traffic hazards or congestion on road, cycling, and pedestrian networks within, adjacent to, or leading to the proposal;
 - (iv) The adequacy of fire protection services and equipment;
 - (v) Impacts on known habitat for species at risk;

- (vi) The potential to create flooding or serious drainage issues, including within the proposal site and in nearby areas; and
- (vii) The suitability of the site in terms of grades, soil and geological conditions, the location of watercourses and wetlands, and proximity to utility rights-of-way.

6.4 Specific Evaluation Criteria of a Development Agreement

6.4.1 Council may require, in addition to any other required information, any or all the following information, prepared by an appropriate qualified professional at the applicant's cost, and at a level sufficiently detailed to determine whether the criteria for adopting a development agreement have been met.

- (a) A detailed plot plan showing features such as, but not limited to:
 - (i) The layout of the site and associated wastewater systems in accordance with Nova Scotia Environment's on-site sewage technical guidelines;
 - (ii) Location and dimensions of existing and proposed road, bicycle, and pedestrian networks;
 - (iii) The location of dedicated green space, including open space and amenities;
- (b) A hydrogeological assessment in accordance with the guidelines set out in Nova Scotia Environment's groundwater assessment standards;
- (c) An environmental impact study identifying the potential impact and recommended mitigation measure for wetlands, natural habitats, or species at risk;
- (d) Access for emergency vehicles; and
- (e) Any other matters enabled in Section 227 of the Municipal Government Act.

Report Preparation	
Department	Planning & Development Services
Report Prepared by	Jacob Macpherson, Planner I
Report Approved by	Reid Shepherd, Manager of Planning, MCIP, LPP
Date Reviewed by C.A.O.	