

This document was created using best practices in document accessibility. Should you need assistance reading or understanding this document, call 902-543-8181 or email [info@modl.ca](mailto:info@modl.ca).

## **Policy & Strategy Committee Meeting Agenda**

**Tuesday, February 18, 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 – January 21, 2025**

### **6. Business Arising from Minutes**

### **7. Presentations/Scheduled Times**

7.1 Be the Peace, Stacey Godsoe & Sue Bookchin ..... 10:15 a.m. 1-10

### **8. Referral from Council/Committee - Nil**

### **9. Staff Reports**

#### **9.1 Economic Development**

9.1.1 Osprey Village Beautification & Enhancement Plan - What We Heard..... 11-30

#### **9.2 Planning & Development**

9.2.1 Clean Foundation - Climate Change & Community Climate Capacity Program ..... 31-51  
Hayley Drapeau & Darby Haysom

9.2.2 MODL Policy 100 - Land Conservation Policy ..... 52-60

#### **9.3 Administration Development**

9.3.1 Accessibility Progress and Goals Report ..... 61-77

9.3.2 Strategic Priorities Engagement Report ..... 78-99

#### **9.4 Finance Department**

9.4.1 MODL Policy 058 – Fee Policy Review ..... 100-105

### **10. Mayor's/Deputy Mayor's/Councillors' Matters**

10.1 Report on FCM's Sustainable Communities Conference 2025 (Councillor DeLong)

**11. Added Items**

**12. In Camera**

12.1 Contract Negotiations under Section 22(2)(e) of the MGA

12.2 Contract Negotiations under Section 22(2)(e) of the MGA

**13. Adjournment**



Gender-Based Violence  
&  
Municipal Leadership

Sue Bookchin & Stacey Godsoe  
Be the Peace Institute

## Be the Peace Institute

- Who we are
- Mission, mandate, work & partnerships

# Taking Care

## GBV Backgrounder:

## What is GBV?

“GBV” - gender-based violence includes all forms of violence based on gender norms and unequal power dynamics, perpetrated against someone based on their gender, gender expression, gender identity, or perceived gender.

It includes intimate partner violence, domestic violence, family violence and sexual violence.

It takes many forms, including physical, economic, sexual, as well as emotional (psychological) abuse including coercive control.

## Who is impacted by GBV?

- GBV can happen to anyone but primarily affects women, girls & 2SLGBTQIA+ ppl
- Marginalized populations are at higher risk including rural women, girls gender non-binary
- Costs are high – human & economic
- We are ALL impacted

GBV is a major public safety issue and human rights violation.

## High Rates/ Low Reporting

- 7 cases of intimate partner homicide/femicide since October in NS
- NS higher rates than national average
- Highest self-reported and human trafficking
- Less than 2% are reported to police
- Many reasons for low reporting – distrust/harms justice system, lack of services, myths, fear, threats

# GBV Prevention: Municipal Leadership Opportunities

## Role of Municipal Councils:

- Links between mass casualty incidents & GBV
- Epidemic declarations, funding & action
- Need for 'whole of society', coordinated, multidisciplinary response
- Root causes of GBV are also the social determinants of health
- Rural areas have unique needs and high rates of GBV

Municipal units are well positioned as trusted local leaders and advocates with influence at all levels of govt.

## “GBA+” Lens:

- Intersectional Gender Based Analysis: “GBA+”
- Lens to look at how identities/social factors affect access to programs, policies, planning...
- Online modules through Women & Gender Equality Canada or provincially through NS Status of Women Office
- Can be applied to implementation of Strategic Priorities, funding, public awareness, partnerships, advocacy
  - Economic Development
  - Infrastructure
  - Quality of Life
  - Communication & Engagement
  - Strategic Lens

## GBV as an Epidemic:

- Declarations underscore urgency and prioritize funding and action
- MODL was first in NS!
- Ensure meaningful action

### ➤ **Recommendations:**

- Influence other units, Federations
- Take a regional approach
- Strategic action

## Economic Considerations:

- Rural areas – higher poverty
- Financial barriers to leaving violence
- Address income inequities, address GBV

### ➤ **Recommendations:**

- GBA+ of regional economy
- Support for small businesses
- Leadership on workplace training & safety
- Gender-informed workplaces

## Community Safety and Wellbeing:

- Public safety is everyone's responsibility, not just police
- A coordinated /whole of society approach inclusive of Municipal govts will have greater impact on ending GBV

### ➤ **Recommendations:**

- Community Safety & Wellbeing Leadership Council
- Safe spaces to report violence
- Training
- Libraries & community spaces
- Active transportation

## Transportation:

- Key to reducing isolation, connection to services, escape from violence
- Women as users
- Reducing barriers to transportation in rural areas
- Lunenburg County Wheels

### ➤ **Recommendations:**

- GBA+ lens on transportation
- Expand, lower barriers
- Training for drivers
- Shelter Movers

## Housing:

- Lack of safe, affordable housing is a barrier to leaving violence
- Shelter spaces also limited
- Sex for shelter/trafficking on the rise

### ➤ **Recommendations:**

- GBA+ Housing Strategy
- Inclusionary zoning
- Advocacy
- Engaging stakeholders/Housing Symposium

## Policing:

- Police culture and response can create barriers to reporting
- Missed 'red flags' - MCC
- Lack of training
- Role in crime prevention – partnerships & outreach

### ➤ **Recommendations:**

- MODL Police Advisory Board
- Training needed - implicit bias, IDing & responding to GBV, prevention, long term planning
- GBV expert seat at the table
- Partnerships with comm-based GBV/culturally informed agencies to focus on crime prevention

## Public Awareness & Advocacy:

- Strategic priority: improve/increase public communication
- Need for greater understanding of GBV

### ➤ Recommendations:

- Regional cooperation on raising public awareness
- GBV as an epidemic, GBV signs, services, engaging men
- Understanding gaps/needs for GBV services
- Advocacy for sustainable funding

## The Reports:

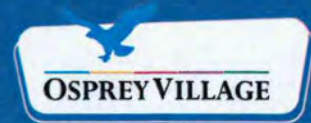


# Questions? Comments?

**Contact:**

**Sue Bookchin, BTPI**  
[sue@bethepeace.ca](mailto:sue@bethepeace.ca)

**Stacey Godsoe, BTPI**  
[stacey@bethepeace.ca](mailto:stacey@bethepeace.ca)



# OSPREY VILLAGE BEAUTIFICATION AND ENHANCEMENT PLAN

What We Heard - Initial  
Consultation  
February 2025



## WHO ARE WE?



### UPLAND PLANNING + DESIGN STUDIO



**Steffen Käubler**, Planner / Partner  
Team Lead



**Nathan MacLeod**, Senior Landscape Architect  
Project Manager



**Arnav Garg**  
Engagement Planner



**Jenny Yan**  
Landscape Technologist

## PROJECT ELEMENTS

OSPREY VILLAGE



Sidewalks and Active Transportation



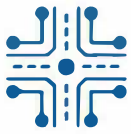
Street Furniture



Signage



Landscaping and Streetscaping



Vehicle Movement



Public Art



Accessibility



All Ages Design



## WHAT WE DID

OSPREY VILLAGE



**Community Open House** with **57** engaged community members

- Panels with examples and ideas
- Large table-top map for specific comments
- Voting on priority levels for project elements
- Discussion with project team members



**Online Survey** with **31** responses

- Hosted from December 17th, 2024 to January 21st, 2025



**Stakeholder Calls** with **9** local businesses, service providers and developers



## WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT VEHICLE MOVEMENT



### Reduce reliance on cars

- Improve pedestrian infrastructure
- Desire for public transit, especially to Bridgewater

### Make changes to roadway design

- Additional lanes
- Converting traffic lights into roundabouts
- Lower speed limits

### Improve parking lots

- Designated pick-up and drop-off zones for businesses
- Parking lots discourage walking short distances
- Traffic conflicts at parking lot entrances and exits



UPLAND  
PLANNING + DESIGN STUDIO

## WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT SIDEWALKS AND ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION



### Strong support for more sidewalks

- Car-centric character is uninviting
- Cannot walk even short distances
- Sidewalks would make the area feel more connected and cohesive

### Better crosswalks

- Desire for improvements such as flashing lights and better lighting
- Want to see new crosswalks added

### Cycling

- Some support for bicycle lanes

### Trails

- Existing trails seen as a valuable amenity



UPLAND  
PLANNING + DESIGN STUDIO

## WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT OTHER CONSIDERATIONS



- Strong desire for consistent architectural style
- Thoughtful community-oriented development
  - Affordable housing
  - Healthcare facilities
  - Grocery stores
  - Recreation facilities
  - Public washrooms
- Support for smaller businesses and more human-scaled development, neighbourhood feel
- Concern about capacity of water and sewer infrastructure
- Desire for more restaurants
- Few suggestions to improve branding and signage
- Some desire for the area to retain a rural character



## NEXT STEPS



An aerial photograph of a residential and commercial development, Osprey Village, with a blue color overlay. The image shows several multi-story apartment buildings, parking lots, and a winding road. The surrounding area is mostly green, suggesting a wooded or undeveloped area. The text is overlaid on the bottom half of the image.

Osprey Village Beautification and  
Enhancement Plan

# WHAT WE HEARD

DURING INITIAL CONSULTATION

February 2025

February 2025

This What We Heard Report was prepared by UPLAND Planning + Design Inc.

**UPLAND**

for the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg (MODL)



Photos are courtesy of UPLAND and MODL unless otherwise credited.

All rights reserved, 2025.

# Table of Contents

|          |   |          |
|----------|---|----------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>                          | <b>1</b> |
|          | About the Project.....                            | 1        |
| <b>2</b> | <b>WHAT WE DID.....</b>                           | <b>2</b> |
|          | Engagement Activities.....                        | 2        |
| <b>3</b> | <b>WHAT WE HEARD.....</b>                         | <b>5</b> |
|          | Key Takeaways .....                               | 5        |
|          | Vehicle Movement.....                             | 6        |
|          | Sidewalks and Active Transportation.....          | 8        |
|          | Landscaping, Streetscaping and Urban Design ..... | 10       |
|          | Accessibility and All Ages Design .....           | 11       |
|          | Street Furniture .....                            | 11       |
|          | Other Considerations.....                         | 12       |

# PART 1

## INTRODUCTION

### About the Project

Osprey Village is an important area in the District of Lunenburg, with many shops and businesses, including Walmart and Canadian Tire, and hundreds of new homes being built or planned. As the area grows and becomes more of a mix of homes, businesses, and community spaces, we want to create a plan to make it more beautiful, vibrant, and welcoming for everyone.

The Osprey Village Beautification and Enhancement Plan will give us a clear vision for improving the area. It will focus on making it easier and more enjoyable to walk, drive, and move around, while also improving accessibility for everyone.

This phase of the project was focused on learning from community members about how they currently perceive Osprey Village, including what they like and what they would like to see improved in the future. Residents and stakeholders were invited to provide feedback through various engagement activities. This report summarizes and analyzes that feedback, organized into key themes.

### How will this report be used?

The information presented in this report will guide the recommendations in the Plan, ensuring they reflect the community's needs and preferences. The final recommendations, along with engagement results and an analysis of the importance of this infrastructure, will be presented in the draft and final versions of the Enhancement and Beautification Plan.

# PART 2

# WHAT WE DID

## Engagement Activities

To ensure a diverse range of perspectives were heard, multiple methods of engagement were conducted. We held a community open house, reached out to key stakeholders such as businesses and local organizations for conversations, and hosted an online survey.

### Community Open House

On Monday, January 13th, 2025 the project team hosted an open house at the Best Western Plus Bridgewater Hotel and Convention Centre. The project team spoke to **57 community members** about the project and received their feedback about the area.

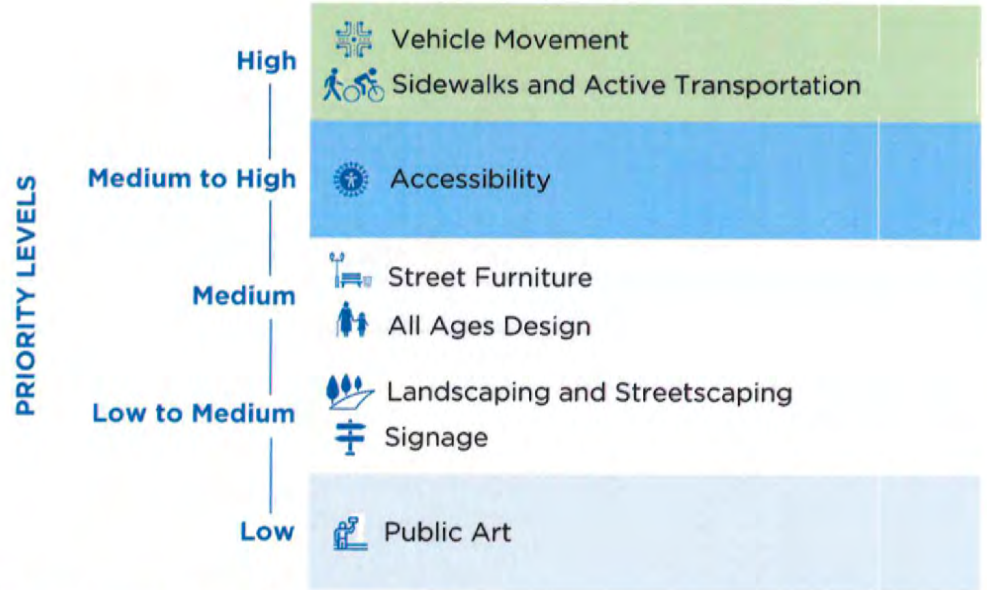


Participants were able to view panels that showed examples and ideas from other places in the US and Canada, share their comments for specific locations in Osprey Village over a large table-top map, and speak to project team members about their ideas and concerns.



Attendees of the Open House were also able to vote on their priority levels for the various project elements. The project elements they were asked to rank were sidewalks and active transportation, street furniture, signage, landscaping and streetscaping, vehicle movement, public art, accessibility, and all ages design.

A weighted average of all responses was taken to determine priority levels, as shown below.





## Stakeholder Calls

The project team had conversations with several key stakeholders including local businesses and organizations to inform them about the project, get initial input on the challenges in the study area, and hear feedback on the project. Most of the stakeholder feedback matched what we heard from other participants as well, and has been summarized into the themes we heard from all participants. Some key points raised specifically by stakeholders are included in the “Additional Considerations” section.

## Online Survey

An online survey was hosted from December 17th, 2024 to January 21st, 2025, receiving **31 responses**. The survey asked respondents to tell us about :

- What they like about Osprey Village currently;
- What they dislike and would like to see changed;
- What opportunities they felt there are in the area; and
- If there are any other developments or neighbourhoods that they think are good or bad examples for what Osprey Village could be.

# PART 3

## WHAT WE HEARD

### Key Takeaways

These key themes explore the overarching priorities of participants across all feedback received, and is followed by feedback organized by specific project elements.

#### Improve Active Transportation Infrastructure



Many participants felt that there is a need for better infrastructure in the area, particularly sidewalks, pedestrian pathways and trails, and traffic safety measures. Generally, participants felt that the area would feel more inviting if it was more walkable and accessible for residents and visitors by means other than cars.

#### Foster Community and Provide Recreational Amenities



There is a clear demand for recreational facilities such as playgrounds and sports facilities, parks, and community gathering spaces such as markets and public plazas. Residents would like to see more areas that allow for social interaction and recreational activities that cater to people of all ages.

#### Preserve Greenery and Create Green Spaces



Many participants emphasized the importance of preserving existing greenery and including green spaces in new developments, with many suggesting that trees and sustainable landscaping such as planting native species be incorporated into existing and future developments. Many felt that this would help make the area feel more inviting. Participants also suggested better connection to the river and existing trails in the area.

#### Create a One-Stop Destination



Participants highlighted that Osprey Village has a lot of potential to be a major one-stop destination in the region. Elements that would help bring this vision to life include promoting a good balance of local businesses, restaurants and essential services such as grocery stores and healthcare facilities. Participants also felt that a cohesive design and architectural style would help create a unique identity and sense of place.



## What We Heard About Vehicle Movement



### Infrastructure Improvements

- There are some concerns that the current road infrastructure is not equipped to handle an increase in residential and commercial development in the area.
- Many participants suggested that improvements to pedestrian infrastructure could help reduce reliance on cars and improve congestion.
- There is also a very strong desire for the establishment of public transit services, especially between Bridgewater and Osprey Village, for similar reasons.
- A few participants suggested adding additional lanes for car traffic on major roads, and converting signalized intersections into roundabouts.
- Participants also suggested lower speed limits on Highway 10 and Pine Grove Road.

### Parking Lots

- Many participants pointed out inefficiencies in the design of parking lots, particularly the Walmart parking lot, that lead to long lines of traffic formed by people looking for parking spaces or waiting to pick up passengers.



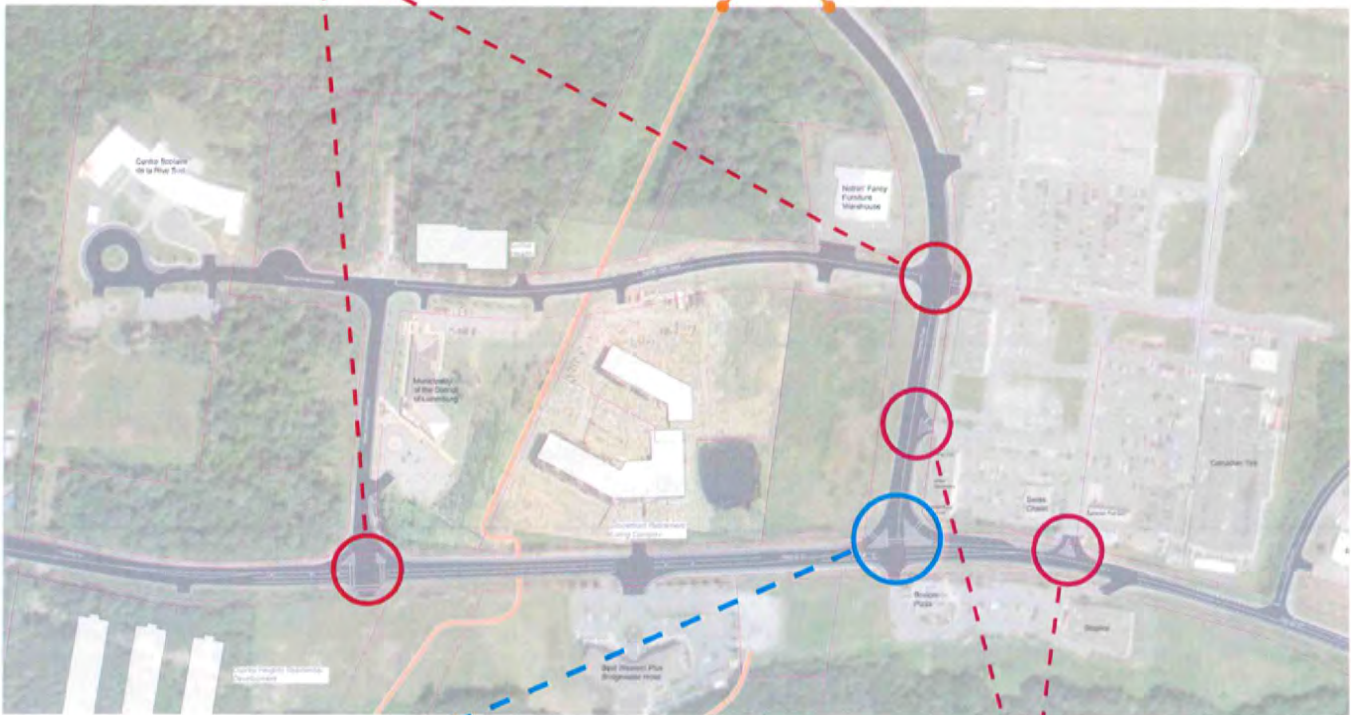
*Participants wanted to see traffic lights and crosswalks added to intersections such as this one at Pine Grove Rd. and Nathan Cirillo Rd.*

- Participants also felt that the layout of parking lots in the area discourages walking even short distances.
- Participants pointed out that many drivers make illegal turns at various parking lot entrances.
- Participants suggested that designated pick up and drop off zones for businesses would improve traffic flow and reduce line-ups.
- Some participants also suggested closing certain entrances and exits into parking lots, or wanted to see better physical infrastructure to control vehicles making turns.



There were many suggestions to add traffic lights at these intersections.

Participants noted some conflicts between recreational All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) and motorists where the Osprey Connector Trail meets Pine Grove Rd.



Many participants suggested changes to the intersection of Pine Grove Rd and Hwy 10, including:

- Converting the intersection into a roundabout.
- Adjustments to the traffic lights
- Better lighting

We heard about traffic conflicts at exits and entrances to parking lots, with suggestions to add traffic lights, change physical infrastructure to prevent illegal turns, or to remove these access points entirely.



## What We Heard About

# Sidewalks and Active Transportation



### Sidewalks and Car-centric Character

- We heard that the area feels too car-centric, and is unwelcoming due to expansive parking lots and the lack of sidewalks.
- Participants are strongly in support of more sidewalks being built throughout the area, to make walking safer, easier and more inviting. A key location where sidewalks are highly desired is along the Highway 10 overpass connecting to Bridgewater.
- Participants pointed out that the current design leads to a reliance on cars to travel even short distances.
- Participants felt that sidewalks and crosswalks connecting different destinations in the area, such as the school and the commercial areas, would help make Osprey Village feel more like a cohesive community and one-stop destination.

### Crosswalks

- There were calls to improve existing crosswalks and add new crosswalks in the area.
- Participants want to see better lighting at crosswalks to improve safety.

- A few participants also suggested adding flashing lights at crosswalks that are not controlled by traffic lights.

### Cycling Infrastructure

- While cycling infrastructure was not brought up often by participants, there was some support for the addition of dedicated bicycle lanes on roads to improve safety for cyclists.
- A few participants noted that as the area continues to grow, the importance of cycling as an alternative to driving will grow as well.

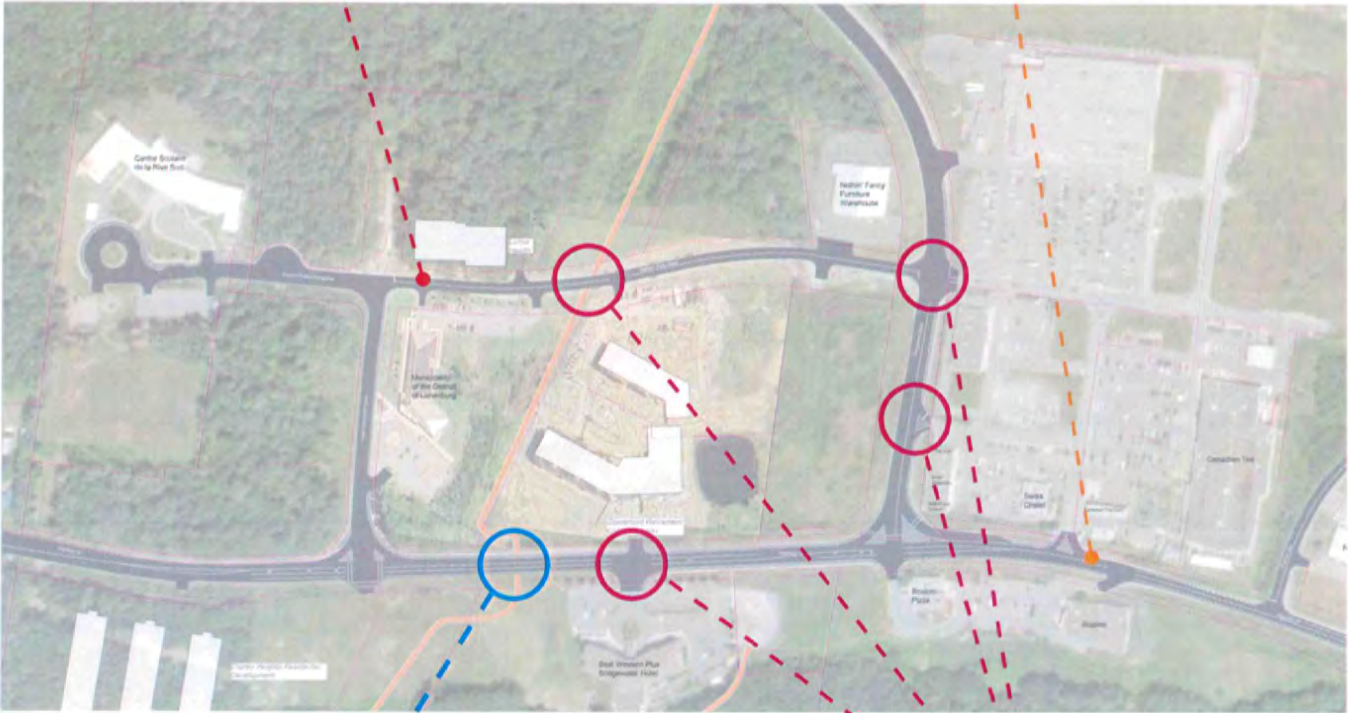
### Trails

- Participants were appreciative of the existing trails in the area, feeling that they provide excellent opportunities for recreation.
- There were suggestions to better connect trails with other areas in Osprey Village, and to add benches to the trails to create opportunities for passive recreation and provide a place to rest.



Sidewalks along Nathan Cirillo Rd connecting the school to other parts of Osprey Village are highly desired.

Highway 10 is also a key location where participants would like to see sidewalks added.



Participants felt that a flashing light is needed at the existing crosswalk here to improve pedestrian safety.

There were many suggestions to add crosswalks at these intersections to improve the walkability of the area.



## What We Heard About

# Landscaping, Streetscaping and Urban Design



- Many participants were critical of the current pavement-dominated environment in Osprey Village, which makes the area feel uninviting.
- There is a strong desire for the Osprey Village area to have more of a town centre or village feel.
- Opportunities for community to come together in public spaces such as playgrounds, recreational facilities, parks and plazas are highly desired.
- Ideas such as markets, community gardens, and outdoor venues for cultural programming and food trucks were also suggested.



- There is also a desire to preserve and incorporate the natural assets of the area, such as the pond near the Stonemont Complex and existing mature trees.
- Participants want to see better connections between developed areas and some of the natural assets nearby, such as the LaHave River and existing trails.
- Participants strongly suggested incorporating more greenery and landscaping to create a vibrant and welcoming atmosphere.
- Many participants felt that landscaping and comfortable and inviting sidewalks with streetscaping elements and trees for shade would contribute to a stronger sense of place.



*"We need greenery, trees, shrubs and seasonal colour, not a concrete world. This is the time to do it, as [Osprey Village] is growing."*

- Survey Respondent



## What We Heard About

# Accessibility and All Ages Design



- Many participants pointed out that the area lacks safe sidewalks, crosswalks and considerations for people with disabilities.
- Some participants also pointed out that improvements for physical accessibility such as ramps and wider sidewalks would also benefit families with children in strollers.
- The lack of public transit options was consistently highlighted as impacting people with accessibility needs who cannot or do not want to drive a car, especially seniors.



*The lack of crosswalks and poorly maintained ramps present a challenge for pedestrians and people with mobility issues.*

## What We Heard About

# Street Furniture



- Many participants felt that street furniture could help improve the character of the area, and felt that cohesive design choices should be made to align the area more with its name "Osprey Village", which suggests a small, community-oriented, village centre rather than a business park.
- Benches were specifically highlighted as an important need in the area, providing pedestrians, especially seniors and people with mobility issues, a place to rest and socialize.
- Street lights that emulate a traditional feel were also suggested.
- There were also a few requests for public trash cans along trails, especially to manage issues with dog waste.



## Other Considerations

- While many participants appreciate the availability of businesses and shopping destinations in the area currently, in general residents do not want to the existing form of development to continue, especially big box stores and large parking lots.
- There is a strong desire for consistent architectural styles in new development, as seen in other developments such as Dartmouth Crossing, in order to create a cohesive look emulating a traditional town centre.
- There is also a strong desire for thoughtful community-oriented development, with services such as affordable housing, healthcare facilities, grocery stores and opportunities for active recreation being a top priority for many participants. There was also support for public washrooms in the area.
- There is a lot of support for smaller local businesses such as coffee shops and personal services such as barbershops to develop in the area.
- Stakeholders who own land and are developers in the area are also in support of varied development styles that support more of a neighbourhood feel.
- However, stakeholders did not feel businesses could expand until there is more residential growth in the area. They were also worried about the capacity of municipal services (sewer and water).
- Participants indicated they would like to see more restaurants in the area, as well as a liquor store.
- There were a few suggestions to improve the branding of the area, with better signage and wayfinding to encourage people to visit.
- While public art was mentioned by a few participants, in general this was a low priority for participants.
- While participants are generally excited for further growth and development in Osprey Village, we also heard some participants express that they would like to see the area retain a rural character.



# Foundation Clean





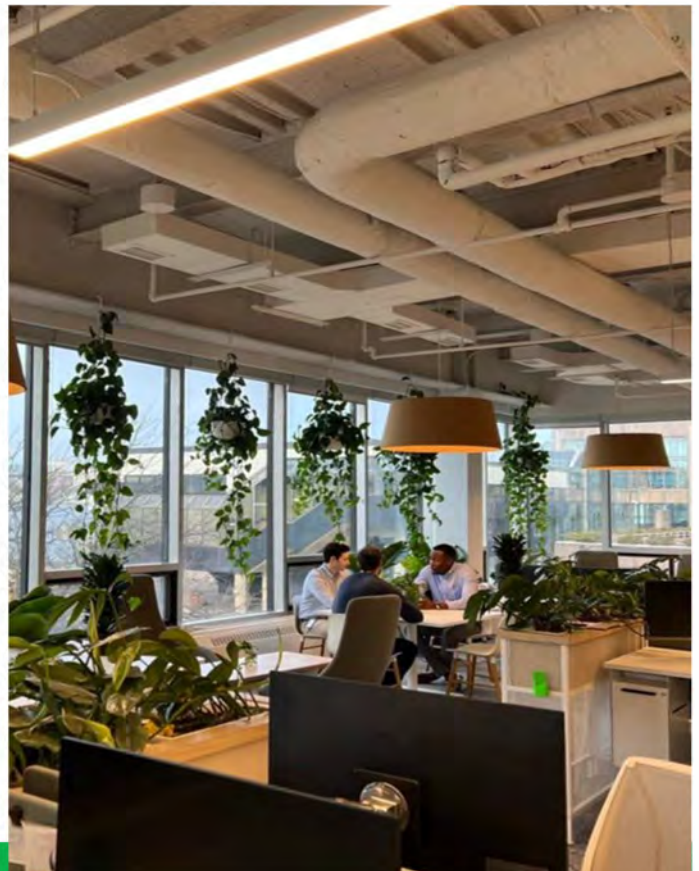
# Clean Foundation

## About us

**Clean Foundation is a climate change, program delivery non-profit.**

We are a Nova Scotia-based independent, non-governmental environmental charity that was started in 1988.

Clean Foundation brings specialized teams together to work on complex problems, delivering many climate action and capacity building projects and initiatives around Nova Scotia, PEI and the Atlantic region.



# Our Teams



Climate Action



Energy



Education and Engagement



Workforce Development



Coasts

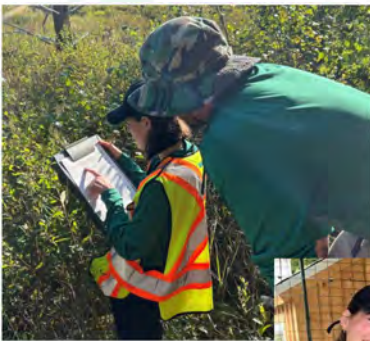


Transportation

# About Hayley

## Climate Lead

- Climate Lead for District of St. Mary's, District of Lunenburg & Town of Mahone Bay.
- Completed an interdisciplinary Master's of Science in Biology and Earth Sciences from the University of Alberta
- Research background in organic matter cycling and microbial ecology & healthy community design



# About Darby



## Assistant Climate Lead

- Undergraduate student at Dalhousie University studying Sustainability, International Development & Economics.
- Co-Op student – worked with the CCC team as a Climate Support Intern in summer 2024, now working as an ACL until September, 2025.
- Originally from Canmore, Alberta.
- Studied abroad in Ghana, West Africa conducting research on the impacts of climate change on agriculture and its subsequent effects on economic development in rural villages.

# Overview



The goal of today's presentation is to build foundational knowledge, highlight local risks and opportunities, and empower the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg to integrate climate-conscious decision-making into municipal business.



## Understanding Climate Change and Local Impacts

Understand how climate change effects the community, its implications for decision-makers, and the opportunities it creates



## Overview of Local Sustainability Initiatives

Overview of goals and on-going initiatives, such as the land conservation project

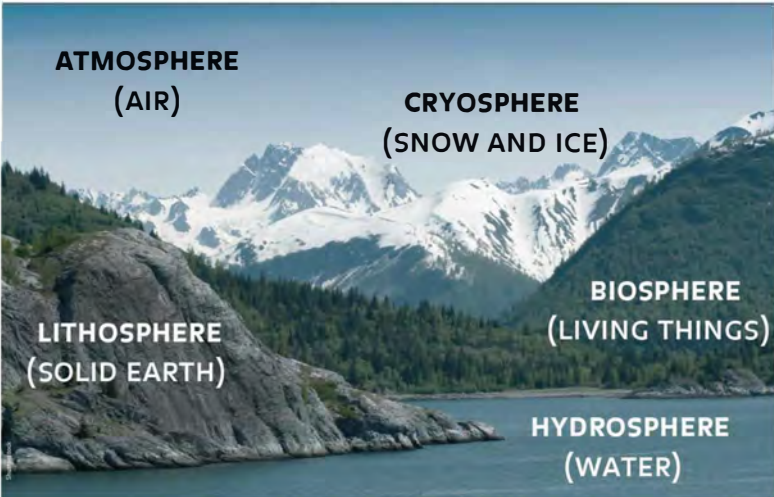


## Overview of Community Climate Capacity Program

Outline the programs support of community with dedicate staff, resources and expertise to ensure long-term sustainability.

# Understanding Climate Change

## Earth's Climate Systems



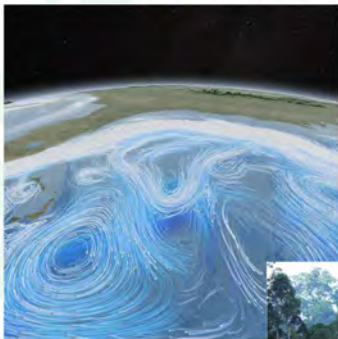
# Earth as a Complex Interrelated System

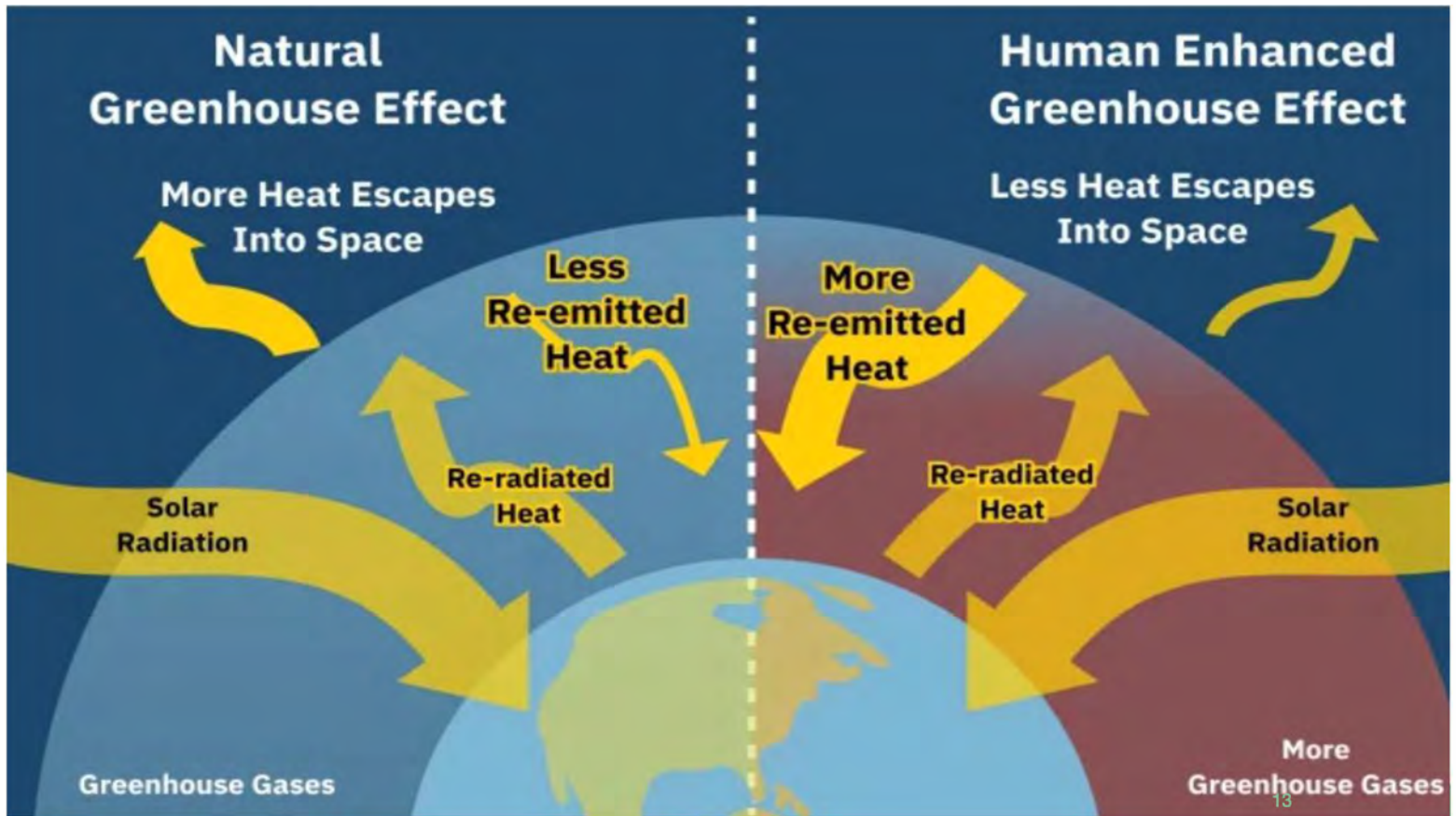



## Influencing Climate

### Primary influences of the climate:


- 1) Natural Factors (e.g., volcanic eruptions, ocean currents, Earth's orbit, solar variations).
- 2) Human Activities (e.g., burning fossil fuels, deforestation, large-scale food production).








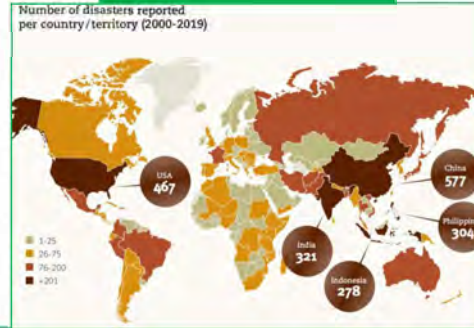
# Climate Change



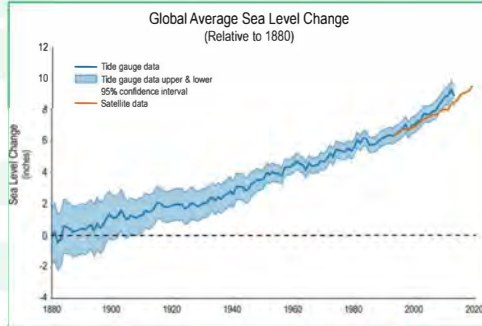
Climate Change refers to long-term shifts in temperature and weather patterns as well as the broader changes caused by global warming, including extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and shifting ecosystems.



# Evidence of Climate Change



"From 2000 to 2019, there were 7,348 major natural disasters around the world, killing 1.23 million people and resulting in \$2.97 trillion in global economic losses." United Nations Office for Disaster risk Reduction

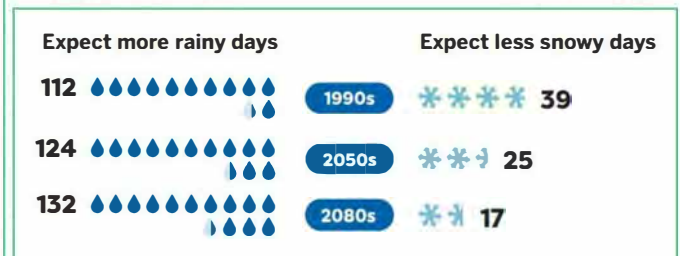
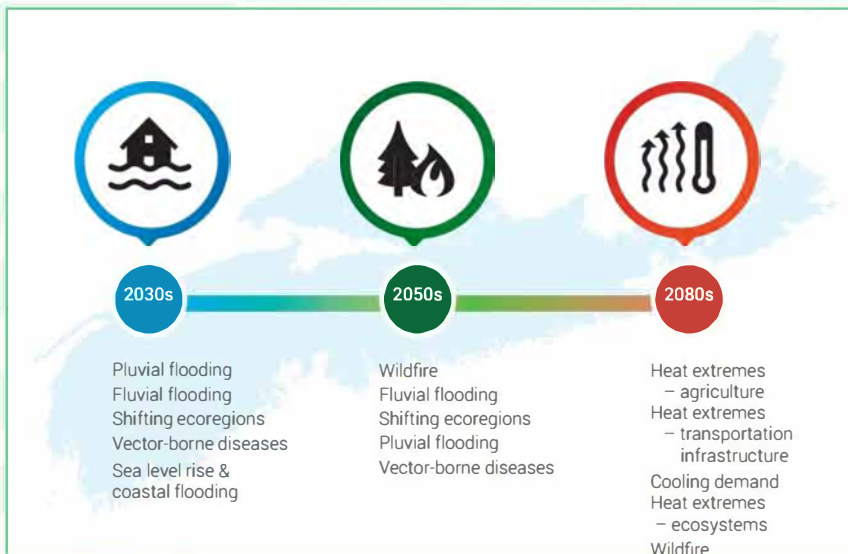


"On average, sea levels have risen about 23 centimeter (9.06 inches) since 1880; nearly half of that increase has occurred in the last 25 years." NOAA, National Centers for Environmental Information

**97-99% consensus**

From climate scientists agreeing that climate change is not only happening, but that human activity is the primary cause.

# Climate Impacts on Nova Scotia



Annual precipitation is projected to increase +10% by the end of the century (2100).

## Nova Scotia's Unique Vulnerability



**PROXIMITY TO  
THE OCEAN**



**CLIMATE-DEPENDENT  
ECONOMY**



**GLOBAL ISSUES,  
LOCAL IMPACT**

## Climate Impacts on Local Communities



## Costs of Inaction

## Benefits of Action

Increased spending on disaster recovery, infrastructure repairs, and emergency response.

Higher insurance premiums and reduced coverage.

Decreased property values in high-risk areas, reducing tax revenue.



Long-term savings through investments in resilience.

Reduced repair and maintenance costs from proactive infrastructure improvements.

Prevention of flooding and other disasters that drain local budgets.



### Cost of Inaction: 2023 Fires and Floods

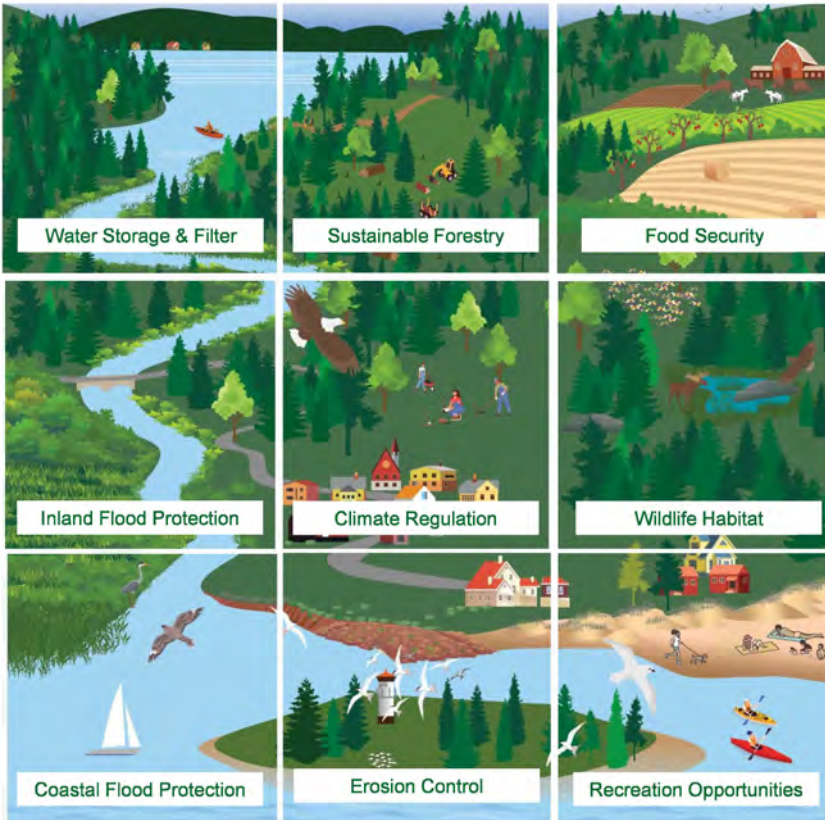
In 2023, Nova Scotia faced both devastating wildfires and severe flooding.

- **Tantallon Wildfires:** \$165M in insurance claims; 16,000 people evacuated
- **Flooding:** \$170M in insurance claims
- **Additional Costs:** Increased respiratory and cardiovascular issues, mental health impacts

### Municipal Liability

Municipal responsibility for flood risk remains unclear. However, municipalities could be held liable under common law for “failure to warn” residents about known risks.





**Benefits of Action:**  
Nature provide numerous benefits to communities by providing ecosystem services

## Case Study: Grindstone Creek

This project was conducted in **Ontario** and involved the cities of **Burlington and Hamilton**. This groundbreaking Natural Asset Management initiative aimed to identify and value natural assets like wetlands and forests for flood and stormwater management.

### **\$2 Billion in Cost Savings**

Provided \$2 million in stormwater management services, equivalent to the capital costs of engineered infrastructure.

### **High Return on Investment (ROI)**

Investing in natural infrastructure can yield a 4:1 ROI, offering substantial long-term savings.

### **\$34 Million Annual Service Value**

Generate \$34 Million/year in co-benefits, including recreation, soil retention, climate mitigation and biodiversity.

### **Cost Effectiveness of Natural Assets**

Swamps and Wetlands cost \$200-\$324 per m<sup>2</sup> for stormwater management with low capital & maintenance costs.



# Overview of Local Climate Actions

## Mitigation

### Reducing Climate Change Impacts

- ✓ Land use and mobility planning
- ✓ Energy efficient buildings
- ✓ Low-carbon public transport
- ✓ Resource efficient waste management
- ✓ Renewable energy sources

## Adaptation

### Adjusting to Climate Change Impacts

-  Disaster preparedness and response
-  Ecosystem restoration
-  Climate-resilient infrastructure
-  Water supply and local food security
-  Long-term sustainable planning and policy development

# Opportunities in Climate Action



### Funding and Grants:

- Access programs like the Green Municipal Fund and Climate Action Incentive Fund.
- Secure funding for adaptation (e.g., flood protection) and mitigation (e.g., renewable energy).
- Leverage grants to attract private and regional investments.



### Infrastructure Upgrades

- Use natural assets (wetlands, forests) to reduce risks and maintenance costs.
- Expand active transportation (cycling paths, walkways) for healthier, connected communities.
- Upgrades existing dry hydrants and installs new ones to enhance wildfire readiness.



### Economic Development

- Promote retrofitting for energy efficiency and local job creation.
- Invest in clean energy projects (solar, wind) to retain local revenue and attract investment.
- Boost Local Economy through creating local jobs
- Leverage public-private partnerships to co-finance resilience projects.

# Opportunities in Climate Action



## Well-Being & Resilience

- Support food security through local food production.
- Enhanced emergency preparedness for climate events (e.g., flooding, heat waves).
- Enhanced air quality, green spaces, and recreational opportunities.



## Communication & Engagement

- Work with schools and organizations to educate and involve youth.
- Targeted outreach to inform and engage residents and businesses.
- Highlight process and celebrate successes to inspire community participation.



## Leadership in Resilience

- Promote sustainable, thriving community by breaking silos and integrating climate action across municipal functions.

# Community Climate Capacity Program (CCC)

# Community Climate Capacity (CCC)



Clean Foundation

Provide **dedicated**  
staff resources and capacity

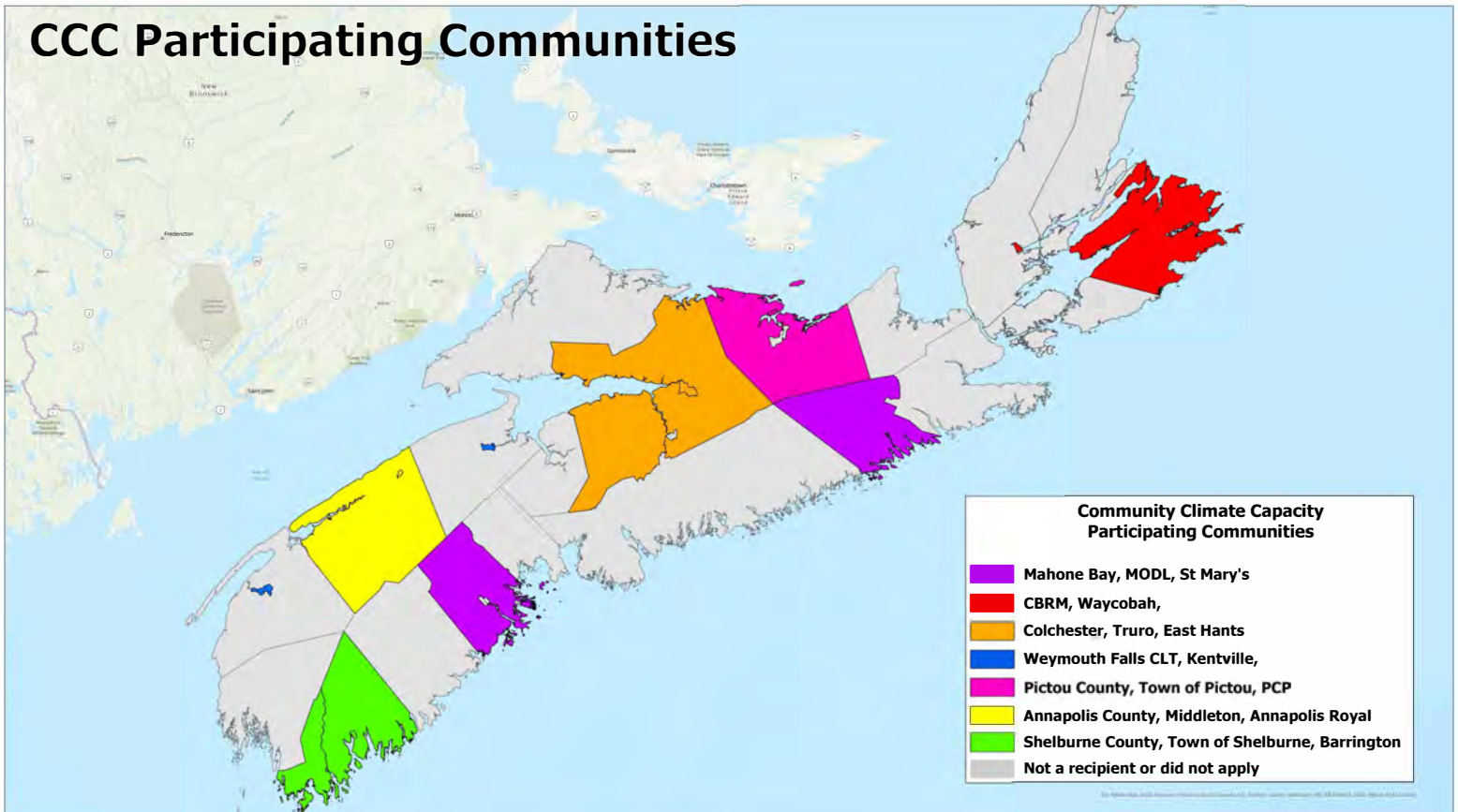


19 Participating Communities

The primary goal of CCC is to help communities:

- Identify climate risks;
- Assess opportunities; and
- Develop/implement climate adaptation and mitigation actions.

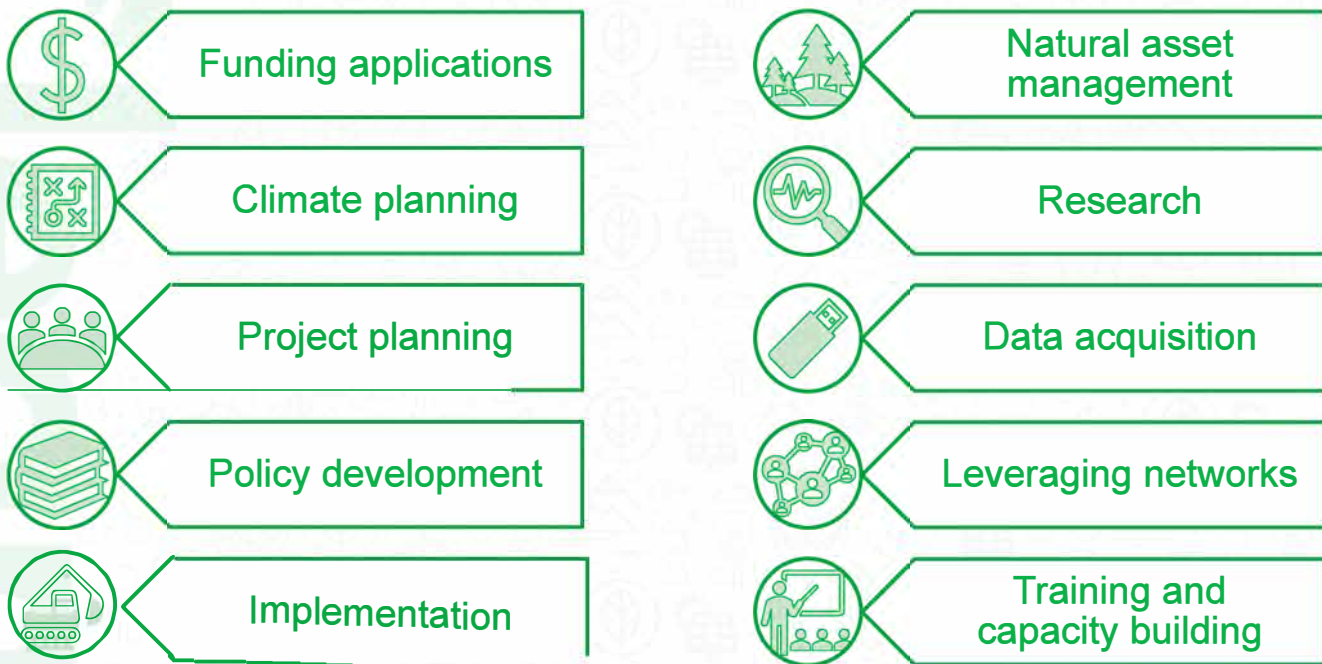
## CCC Participating Communities



# CCC Structure



# CCC Program Work



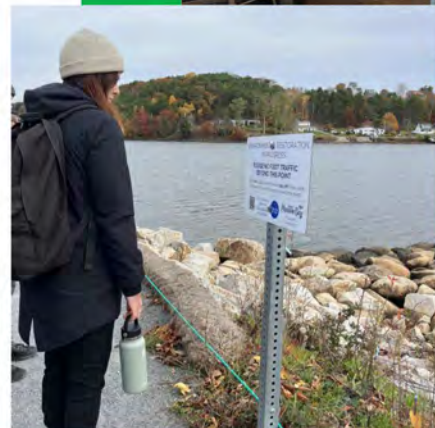
# Day in the life of a Climate Lead

- Supports or leads the development of climate-related policies and plans.
- Develops engagement plans, creates educational and outreach materials, and leads or supports community engagement initiatives.
- Coordinates with staff liaisons, other climate professionals, and the public to identify and develop collaborative project opportunities while fostering stronger relationships.
- Collaborates with team members to identify and develop climate projects, including defining scope of work, timelines, and budgets, and preparing funding applications for projects.



# Funding & Engagement Specialist

- **Community of Practice:** Designed to facilitate dynamic knowledge exchange and collaboration on climate action and resilience topics—e.g.: climate action plans and flood mitigation.
- **Information Sessions:** Expert-led sessions on climate change and climate action topics, featuring speakers from government and organizations to present valuable programs and resources.
- **Municipal Climate Learning Group:** Provides specialized guidance to Nova Scotian municipalities on climate action and sustainability.
- **Funding Applications:** Supports communities in applying for funding opportunities through providing resources, tools, best practices and one-on-one guidance to strengthen funding applications and improve success rates.



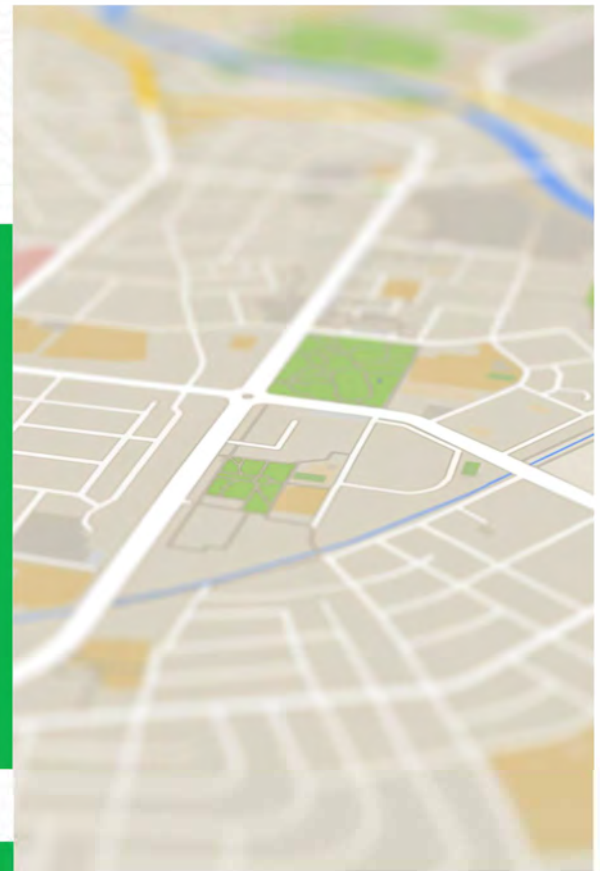


## Mitigation Specialist

- **Preliminary Solar Investigations:** Complete initial solar site investigations and refine scope for solar PV studies and assessment.
- **Procurement Support:** Prepare procurement documents for community retrofits, solar feasibility studies, and EV charger installation.
- **Net-Zero Communities Program:** Connect communities to QUEST Canada's Net-Zero Communities Accelerator program to develop Community Energy and Emissions Plans.
- **GHG Inventories:** Initiated corporate and community GHG inventories to support emissions tracking and reduction planning.
- **Education Sessions:** Deliver sessions for community staff on renewable energy generation, energy efficiency projects, and GHG reduction pathways.

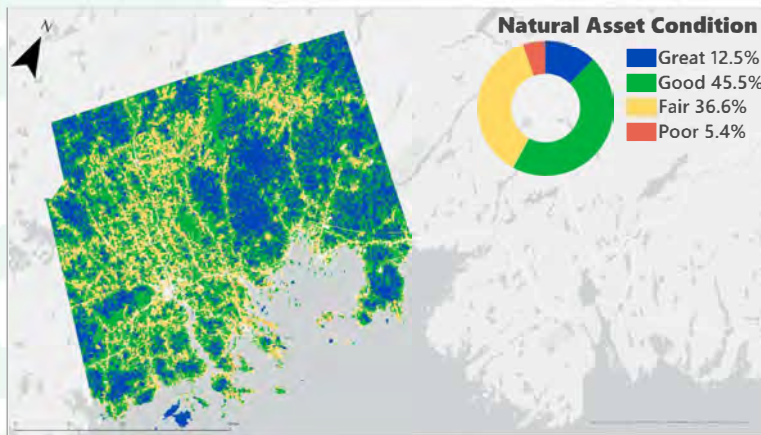
## Policy and Planning Specialist

- **Climate Change Action Plan Review:** Review CCAP's and provide tailored recommendations for improvement.
- **Community Mapping Support:** Assist with historical research to inform community mapping projects.
- **Policy Development:** Drafting of a policy, Land Conservation Policy
- **Draft By-Laws:** Prepared by-laws to support initiatives, such as the Pesticide By-Law to support progress toward achieving Bird Friendly City status.

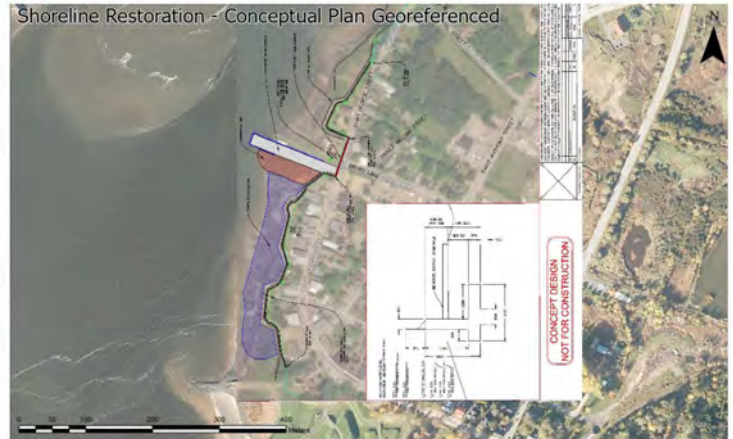


# GIS & Adaptation Specialist

## Natural Asset Inventories



## Adaptation Projects – Shoreline Restoration



# CCC Progress Highlights

### Community Visits:

Leads make regular community visits, averaging one to two per week.

### Applied through various funding streams including:

- Low Carbon Communities
- Local Leadership for Climate Adaptation
- Growing Canada Community Canopy

### Amount of Funds Applied For as of December 2024:

- Requested Total: \$2,513,487
- Projects Total: \$3,553,316
- Currently Awarded: \$540,000

### Municipal Climate Learning Group:

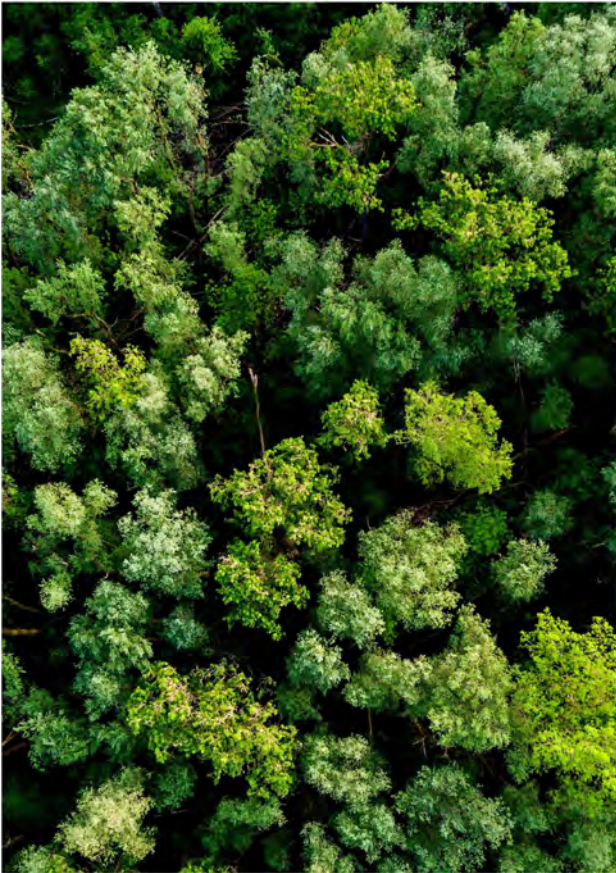
- Conducted four sessions, speaking with staff from eight different communities

### Onboard communities into the following programs:

- Net-Zero Communities Accelerator, Quest Canada
- Natural Asset Initiative Roadmap
- Climate-Resilient Coastal Communities Program
- Building to Net Zero Program, ICLEI Canada
- Bird Friendly Towns
- Partners for Climate Protection

### Community Education & Engagement:

- East Hants Directors Climate Workshop
- Colchester Inflow & Infiltration Workshop
- Kentville Pollinator Workshop
- Annapolis Valley Climate Fair
- Weymouth Falls Community Mapping Workshop



# Climate Lead Update

- ❑ **Land conservation policy** has been drafted.
- ❑ **Conservation value mapping** is in progress.
- ❑ **Preliminary economic analysis** of carbon sequestration of wetlands & forests has been completed.
- ❑ Natural Asset Inventory has been updated to **include ecosystem mapping layer**.
- ❑ **Leveraged funding opportunities** to advance climate work
- ❑ Relationship buildings and **collaboration with conservation organizations** is in progress.

# Our Award



### Strategic Alignment

The CCC program supports Council's priorities and addresses community needs through sustainability efforts.



### Informed Decision Making

The CCC team helps council in addressing key challenges through research, program development and tailored initiatives.



### Ongoing Support

The CCC team provides resource, expertise, and education to Council on local climate risks and economic opportunities.



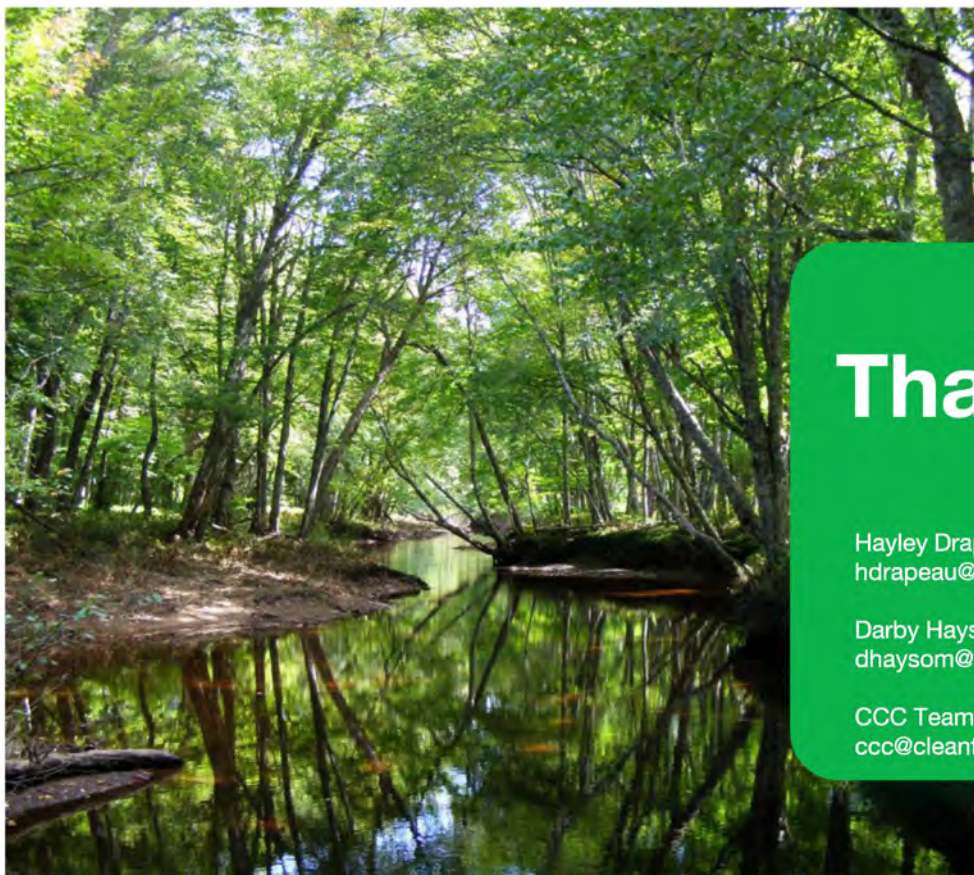
### Capacity Building

The team strengthens Council's ability to implement sustainable solutions to drive climate resilience.



# Join us at the **COMMUNITY CLIMATE CAPACITY SUMMIT**

March 5-6, 2025  
Sandman Signature  
Dartmouth Hotel & Suites



# Thank you!

## Questions?

Hayley Drapeau  
[hdrapeau@cleanfoundation.ca](mailto:hdrapeau@cleanfoundation.ca)

Darby Haysom  
[dhaysom@cleanfoundation.ca](mailto:dhaysom@cleanfoundation.ca)

CCC Team  
[ccc@cleanfoundation.ca](mailto:ccc@cleanfoundation.ca)



## The Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

### Request for Decision

**Report to:** Policy and Strategy Committee

**Submitted by:** Abhimanyu Jain, Manager of Climate Change and Sustainability  
Hayley Drapeau, Climate Lead, Community Climate Capacity Program

**Date:** February 18, 2025

**Re:** Policy 100 - Land Conservation Policy

---

#### Recommendation

That the Policy and Strategy Committee recommend to Municipal Council that Municipal Council adopt Policy 100 - Land Conservation Policy, as presented, and hereby give seven days' notice of its intention to adopt the policy on February 25, 2025.

#### Executive summary

The Land Conservation Policy establishes a structured, transparent, and consistent approach to evaluating and acquiring lands for conservation. Currently, there is no formal framework in place, resulting in piecemeal decision-making when assessing conservation priorities.

The policy provides clear assessment criteria, guiding principles, and defined processes for land conservation, ensuring that future decisions align with the Municipality's goals - particularly the target of conserving 20% of lands and watersheds by 2030, as outlined in the Local Climate Change Action Plan 2030. This framework will streamline conservation efforts, improve decision-making, and enhance environmental stewardship.

#### Discussion

Municipal Council directed staff to develop a Land Conservation Policy in response to ongoing challenges in assessing conservation land acquisitions. Proponents, such as land trusts and NGOs, frequently request municipal contributions toward land purchases. However, without

guiding principles, Council has struggled to determine appropriate funding amounts and project priorities.

Additionally, environmentally sensitive properties have, in some cases, been auctioned at tax sales, leading to ecological damage. In at least one instance, a newly acquired property was infilled, resulting in the loss of a portion of the pond’s sensitive habitat. This policy ensures that tax sale properties with high conservation value are reviewed before they are put up for auction or public tender, allowing the Municipality to take proactive steps to protect key environmental assets.

**Budget implications**

There are no direct budget implications in adopting the policy. However, for implementation, Council may withdraw funds from the Climate/Sustainability Reserve to support land conservation and acquisition requests as outlined in the policy’s framework.

**Strategic plan**

N/A

**Alternatives**

Council may direct staff to make changes to the policy as deemed appropriate.

**Conclusion**

Adopting the Land Conservation Policy will provide a structured and consistent approach to land conservation, ensuring that the Municipality’s decisions align with environmental, social, and climate resilience priorities. The policy addresses gaps in the current ad-hoc approach, strengthens conservation efforts, and enables better management of municipal land acquisitions, surplus land evaluations, and tax sale property reviews.

It is recommended that the Policy and Strategy Committee recommend that Municipal Council adopt Policy 100 - Land Conservation Policy as presented and give seven days’ notice of its intention to adopt the policy on February 25, 2025.

| <b>Report Preparation</b>      |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Department</b>              | Planning and Development Services  |
| <b>Report Prepared by</b>      | Abhimanyu Jain, Manager of Climate Change and Sustainability and Hayley Drapeau, Climate Lead, CCC Program |
| <b>Report Approved by</b>      | Jeff Merrill, Director   |
| <b>Date Reviewed by C.A.O.</b> |  |

## Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

| Policy Details               |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Name</b>                  | <b>Land Conservation Policy</b>              |
| <b>Number</b>                | 100  |
| <b>Legislative Authority</b> | Municipal Government Act s. 24, 50, 143, 144 |
| <b>Effective Date</b>        | February XX, 2025                            |

### Purpose

1. The Municipality's Land Conservation Policy aims to increase conserved land within its boundaries, foster connections between people and nature, enhance community resilience, and ensure responsible stewardship for future generations.

### Goal

2. To conserve 20% of land and watersheds within the Municipality by 2030, as outlined in the Local Climate Change Action Plan 2030. This includes municipally, provincially, and federally protected lands, as well as lands conserved by other organizations with legal mechanisms for perpetual protection.

### Overview

3. **The Land Conservation Policy outlines the Municipality's conservation values and assessment criteria.** It ensures municipal lands are evaluated for conservation before being declared surplus, requires staff to regularly review tax sale properties for alignment with conservation values prior to auction or public tender, and provides a framework for assessing external requests to conserve land or support conservation efforts within the Municipality.

### Definitions

4. (1) In this Policy
  - a) **Conservation Easement** means a legally binding agreement between a landowner and a conservation organization or government entity that restricts certain development and land use to align with conservation values. The landowner retains ownership but must adhere to the easement's terms, ensuring perpetual preservation of the land's natural, ecological, and cultural features.
  - b) **Conservation Land** means land permanently protected to preserve biodiversity, ecological integrity, and natural features. These areas are managed to safeguard ecosystems, wildlife habitats, and cultural values while supporting low-impact recreation, such as hiking and birdwatching, with minimal environmental

disturbance. Protection is provided through legal mechanisms, including conservation easements, partnerships with land trusts, or government designations, ensuring long-term stewardship for future generations.

- c) **Municipality** means the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg.
- d) **Proponent** means a proponent is an individual or organization, such as an NGO or land trust, requesting the Municipality to support the conservation of land within its boundaries.
- e) **Species at Risk** means species facing significant threats to survival, classified as endangered, threatened, or vulnerable under provincial or federal designations.
- f) **Stewardship** means responsible management, care, and monitoring of land to ensure its natural, ecological, and cultural values are preserved or enhanced over time.
- g) **Surplus Land** means land declared surplus by the Council and no longer required for municipal purposes.
- h) **Tax Sale** means the sale of property by public auction or tender to recover unpaid taxes.
- i) **Zoning** means the classification of land that regulates its use, development, and building standards within the Municipality

### Conservation Values

- 5. (1) **Protection of Biodiversity** - Conserving natural systems to support diverse species and maintain ecological balance. Key priorities include:
  - a) **Intact Natural Areas:** Preserving landscapes with minimal human disturbance to maintain their ecological integrity.
  - b) **Habitat Restoration:** Restoring degraded habitats to support species recovery and improve ecological resilience.
  - c) **Species at Risk:** Prioritizing conservation efforts for habitats that support at-risk species identified under provincial or federal designations.
  - d) **Critical Ecosystems and Richness:** Protecting ecosystems that are essential for biodiversity and support areas with high species diversity or ecological significance.
- (2) **Enhancing Resilience and Reducing Risks** - Conserving land to protect communities and ecosystems from environmental pressures and promote long-term sustainability. Key priorities include:

- a) Flood and Storm Protection: Preserving wetlands and coastal buffers to reduce the impacts of flooding, storm surges, and erosion.
- b) Temperature Regulation: Protecting forests and natural areas to moderate local temperatures, provide shade, and reduce the impacts of extreme heat.
- c) Wildlife Adaptation: Conserving connected landscapes and critical habitats that allow wildlife to move freely, find resources, and adjust to environmental changes.
- d) Water Security: Safeguarding wetlands and watersheds that ensure clean water and help prevent droughts.

(3) **Protecting Ecosystem Services** - Maintaining the natural processes that provide essential benefits to communities, wildlife, and the environment. Key priorities include:

- a) Pollination Support: Conserving habitats that support pollinators is essential for food production and ecosystem health.
- b) Carbon Capture: Protecting forests, wetlands, and grasslands that absorb and store carbon naturally.
- c) Soil and Erosion Control: Preserving landscapes that prevent soil degradation and maintain land stability.
- d) Air and Water Filtration: Protecting ecosystems that naturally clean air and filter water.

(4) **Social and Community Benefits** - Conservation of land that reduces hazard-related risks to communities (e.g., flooding, wildfire, extreme heat). Enhancing community well-being through equitable access to conserved lands and collaboration. Key priorities include:

- a) Low-Impact Recreation: Conserving lands that support activities like hiking and birdwatching while protecting natural ecosystems.
- b) Equity and Inclusion: Prioritizing conservation efforts that benefit equity-deserving groups, including Mi'kmaq communities and African Nova Scotians, and ensuring green spaces are distributed equitably across all communities in the Municipality.
- c) Collaborative Partnerships: Working with land trusts, NGOs, First Nations, and other stakeholders to conserve and steward land.
- d) Health and Well-being: Improving quality of life through access to natural spaces that support physical and mental health.

## Principles

6. (1) The Municipality is committed to treating all proponents with fairness and respect throughout the land acquisition process, ensuring transparent and equitable interactions during assessments and acquisitions. The Municipality strives to ensure the land conservation process is inclusive and accessible to all.

- (2) Situated on unceded Mi'kmaw territory, the Municipality prioritizes partnerships with Mi'kmaw communities, recognizing their sovereignty and essential role as stewards of the land.
- (3) The Municipality values the rich history of African Nova Scotian communities and prioritizes requests from these groups, honouring their deep and significant connections to the land.

## Land Conservation Mechanisms

### 7. (1) **Municipally Owned Lands**

- a) **Reallocation of Municipal Property:** The Municipality may designate existing municipal property to conservation land if it aligns with conservation values. The Municipality will evaluate properties for conservation potential before declaring them surplus, including their ability to protect natural areas, support wildlife, enhance resilience, and preserve ecosystem services.
- b) **Trading Land:** The Municipality may consider trading surplus land for property with higher conservation value.
- c) **Donations:** The Municipality may accept land donations, either in full or as a partial donation, for conservation purposes.
- d) **Purchase:** The Municipality may purchase land for conservation purposes. This includes:
  - (i) **Tax Sale Properties:** Staff will regularly review tax sale properties prior to auction or public tender to assess their alignment with conservation values. If deemed appropriate, the Municipality may bid on and acquire these properties to support conservation goals, as permitted under Sections 143 and 144 of the Municipal Government Act.
  - (ii) **Co-ownership and Joint Purchases:** The Municipality may collaborate with partners such as land trusts, NGOs, cultural institutions, or the Province to co-own or jointly purchase property for conservation purposes. In such arrangements, any party may hold the property title, depending on the terms of the agreement. The Municipality may contribute a portion of the total funds and work with the titleholder to ensure the land remains protected for conservation. Roles and responsibilities, including management and stewardship, will be clearly defined in a legal agreement between all parties to ensure effective protection and long-term conservation of the property.

### (2) **Externally Owned Conservation Lands**

- a) **Conservation Easements:** The Municipality may enter into conservation easements with private landowners to ensure long-term protection of ecologically significant areas.

- b) **Donation to Other Entities:** The Municipality may donate land it owns to other entities, such as NGOs or land trusts, for conservation purposes.
- c) **Support for External Conservation Efforts:** The Municipality may provide financial or other forms of support to entities seeking to acquire and conserve land within municipal boundaries.
- d) **Zoning for Conservation:** The Municipality may re-zone conserved areas, upon request by conservation entities, to formalize their status and apply appropriate land-use restrictions.

## **Land Conservation Process**

### **Initiation of Process**

8. (1) The Land Conservation Process can be initiated internally or externally. Externally, it begins when a proponent requests the Municipality to conserve or assist in conserving land within its boundaries along with submission of a completed application. Internally, it is initiated through the annual assessment of tax sale properties, or identification of high conservation value Municipal properties.

### **Preliminary Review and Report to Council**

- (2) Staff will review the proposed property and application (if applicable) to assess alignment with the Municipality's conservation values, stewardship capacity, and protection options, such as land purchase, designation, zoning, or other legal mechanisms. Based on this review, staff will prepare a report for Council outlining their findings and providing a preliminary recommendation on whether to proceed with the land acquisition or conservation process.

### **Council Decision**

- (3) The Council may choose to either decline further pursuit of the conservation request or direct staff to conduct a detailed site assessment before making a final decision.

### **Detailed Site Assessment**

- (4) If directed, staff will oversee a detailed site assessment and present their findings to Council to determine whether the Municipality will acquire the property. A detailed site assessment may include:
- a) Appraisal
  - b) Ecological site assessment
  - c) Financial review
  - d) Hazard assessment
  - e) Legal review
  - f) Protected area designation and zoning considerations
  - g) Public Engagement
  - h) Site visit
  - i) Species at risk assessment

- j) Stewardship considerations

### **Funding and Incentives for Land Conservation**

- 9. (1) The Municipality will support the Land Conservation Policy through strategic budgeting, external funding opportunities, and contributions from municipal resources, partnerships, and proponents, while recognizing that support may vary based on available resources and priorities.

### **Prioritization of Land Acquisition Proposals**

- (2) The Municipality may prioritize land acquisition proposals from proponents who:
  - a) Contribute matching funds or a portion of acquisition costs, determined on a case-by-case basis.
  - b) Contribute matching funds or a portion of the costs for required studies, such as ecological assessments, species-at-risk evaluations, environmental impact studies, climate adaptation assessments, or cultural heritage reviews.
  - c) Secure external funding, confirmed grants, or partnerships to help cover acquisition, required studies, or long-term management costs.

### **Tax Exemptions for Conservation Easements**

- (3) The Municipality encourages landowners with conservation easement agreements to explore tax exemption eligibility under the Nova Scotia Conservation Property Tax Exemption Act. Landowners should contact Nova Scotia Environment to determine if their property qualifies. These exemptions are subject to approval by the Minister of Environment.

### **Post-Acquisition Zoning Review**

- 10. After acquiring land, planning staff will evaluate the newly acquired property and recommend to the Council whether it requires rezoning under the Municipal-wide Planning Strategy and Land Use Bylaw or other protective measures. The Council will determine the most appropriate zoning or legal protections based on the property's conservation values.

### **Stewardship of Municipal Conservation Lands**

#### **Lands Managed with a Partner**

- 11. (1) The Municipality prioritizes acquiring conservation land where management responsibilities are shared with or handled by a partner. Partnering with organizations brings additional expertise and resources, ensuring effective and sustainable stewardship.

**Lands Managed by the Municipality**

(2) The Municipality may independently manage conservation lands if staff possess the required technical expertise and capacity to fulfill stewardship responsibilities.

**Long-term Protection of Conservation Lands**

(3) Conservation lands recognized under the Land Conservation Policy are protected in perpetuity, with restrictions remaining permanent and irrevocable. If the Municipality, a co-owner, or a land management partner is no longer able to manage the property, it may be transferred to another qualified entity. The receiving entity must uphold all existing restrictions and assume full conservation responsibilities.

**Review and Revision**

12. The Municipality will review the Land Conservation Policy every five (5) years to ensure it remains relevant, effective, and aligned with current conservation practices and community needs. Reviews of the Land Conservation Policy will include input from stakeholders, such as the public, landowners, and conservation partners, and will consider changes in environmental regulations, land management practices, and conservation science. Revisions will be made as needed to address new challenges and opportunities in land conservation and stewardship.

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

| <b>Version</b>     | <b>Amendment Description</b> | <b>Approval Date</b> |
|--------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Original V1</b> | Land Conservation Policy     |                      |
|                    |                              |                      |
|                    |                              |                      |



## The Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

### Report to Council

**Report To:** Policy & Strategy Committee  
**Submitted By:** Sarah Kucharski  
**Date:** February 18, 2025  
**Re:** Accessibility Progress and Goals Report

---

#### Legislative Requirement

The District's accessibility work has been undertaken to comply with the Accessibility Act of Nova Scotia, which mandates that all public sector bodies work towards an accessible province by 2030 by legislating the responsibility of municipalities to identify and address accessibility barriers.

#### Background

In 2021, an Accessibility Plan was developed by the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee, a joint committee of the Municipality of the District of Chester, Municipality of the District of Lunenburg, Town of Bridgewater, Town of Lunenburg, and Town of Mahone Bay.

The committee provided advice to the municipal councils in Lunenburg County on identifying, preventing, and eliminating barriers experienced by people with disabilities in municipal programs, services, initiatives and facilities, and worked with staff on the development and oversight of the plan.

The plan made commitments to overarching goals for improving accessibility in Lunenburg County. In coordination with this Accessibility Plan, individual municipal units created local Accessibility Action Plans. These Action Plans were developed using first voice feedback from the Committee's public engagement efforts, established best practices in accessibility, and feedback from residents and Council.

The plan is available for the public at [accessiblelunenburgcounty.ca](https://accessiblelunenburgcounty.ca), a joint website that acts as a central repository for information on the accessibility work being undertaken by the five units.

### **Quick Facts About Disability**

- The Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD) is published every five years by Statistics Canada, and is Canada's primary source of data on persons with disabilities.
- Nova Scotia's disability rate is 37.9%. That means 37.9% of Nova Scotians aged 15 and older report having one or more disabilities. Nova Scotia has the highest disability rate in the country.
- Among all Nova Scotians, age 15 years and older, pain-related disabilities are the most common type of disability in Nova Scotia (24.9%), followed by flexibility (16.7%), mobility (16.0%) and mental health-related (15.6%) disabilities. The prevalence of other types of disabilities is as follows: seeing (9.8%), hearing (9.2%), learning (8.5%), dexterity (7.8%), memory (6.4%), and developmental (1.8%) disabilities.
- Almost three quarters (73.9%) of Nova Scotians with disabilities experience accessibility barriers. The percentage increases with severity of disability. 91.1% of Nova Scotians who have very severe disabilities reported experiencing barriers, compared to 54.5% of Nova Scotians with mild disabilities.
- Nova Scotians with disabilities 15 years and older report experiencing barriers to accessing the built environment (58.6%), followed by barriers to communication (49.4%), barrier related to behaviour, misconceptions or assumptions (38.2%), and barriers using the internet (16.7%).

### **Accomplishments to Date**

Since 2020, the District has made significant strides in accessibility, improving the ways that all residents can more fully participate in community life. It began with the construction and opening of the new Municipal Services Building. The old building lacked wheelchair access at one of the customer service entrances or an elevator, and visitors with mobility challenges had no access to public washrooms. Today, our building features fully accessible doors, assisted hearing technology, bariatric seating, and more, welcoming everyone with fully accessible amenities and services under one roof.

The District also adopted a proactive approach by integrating an accessibility lens into the development of capital projects that proceed through the regular capital budgeting process. Accessibility audits for five park facilities uncovered barriers and opportunities for improvement, guiding thoughtful changes. For example, Mushamush Beach now features a Mobi-mat, providing all users of all ages and abilities easy access to the water. At Church Lake, visitors can enjoy accessible picnic tables, promoting inclusive outdoor recreation.

Digital accessibility has also been a priority. In 2020, the District's website, modl.ca, achieved 99% accessibility. Collaborating with the Association of Municipal Administrators' Municipal Website Venture and digital accessibility experts Access Changes Everything, the District ensured the site met Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) standards. The result is a platform where residents can access vital information with ease, regardless of ability.

Council operations have also embraced inclusivity. Committee and Council meetings are now livestreamed, enabling residents with mobility or transportation challenges to participate remotely. Council agendas include contact information for accessibility inquiries, and all reports, bylaws, and policies are prepared using accessible templates. Training in accessible social media practices has further enhanced the reach and inclusivity of District communications.

Inclusivity extends beyond infrastructure and digital spaces. Our expanded recreation programs cater to diverse abilities, reflecting our commitment. Advocacy and funding efforts have also transformed Senior Wheels into Lunenburg County Wheels, a dial-a-ride service now available across the entire municipality. This door-to-door service has become a lifeline for residents with mobility challenges, fostering independence and community connection. However, it is important to note that this service quickly became oversubscribed, and there is significant demand for further investment.

Each improvement reflects the District of Lunenburg's dedication to breaking down barriers and building a more inclusive community.

### **An Accessibility Lens**

The concept of an "accessibility lens" refers to an intentional approach that incorporates accessibility considerations into all aspects of decision-making. This perspective ensures that the needs of individuals with disabilities are proactively addressed, rather than treated as afterthoughts. In the District of Lunenburg, adopting this lens means that accessibility is a core element in both major capital spending plans and everyday operational decisions.

When planning and executing major capital projects, the District now routinely applies an accessibility lens. This approach ensures that new infrastructure and renovations meet or exceed accessibility standards. Beyond large-scale projects, the accessibility lens also influences daily operations within the District. Whether it's the design of a public event, the development of a new policy, or the provision of municipal services, accessibility considerations are integrated at every stage.

While the District must meet evolving standards introduced by the Province of Nova Scotia, the accessibility lens is not a one-time application or a static checklist, but a continuous commitment to improvement. As societal norms and technologies evolve, so too does our approach to accessibility. By fostering a culture that values inclusivity, and working

collaboratively with our other municipal unit partners, we ensure that all residents have equal opportunities to engage with and benefit from community resources. The lens concept has transformed how the District approaches development and service delivery, making accessibility an integral part of our vision for a more inclusive and equitable community.

We have prioritized equipping our staff with the skills and knowledge necessary to apply an accessibility lens in their work. To achieve this, selected employees have obtained Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification training, which provides them with the expertise to assess and enhance accessibility in built environments. Additionally, many employees have participated in accessible communication and event training, ensuring that our interactions and public events are inclusive for all community members. We have also partnered with specialized accessibility companies and leveraged provincial training initiatives to further deepen our understanding and commitment to accessibility.

Additionally, we work closely with the Regional Accessibility Coordinator and the Lunenburg County Accessibility Advisory Committee to review opportunities for capital projects and operational work.

### **Proposed Regional 2025 – 2026 Action Items**

#### **Specific to Accessibility Plan:**

- Collect and share information about the accessibility of municipal facilities and outdoor spaces using a standardized symbol system.
- Encourage awareness about accessibility and disability through participating in Access Awareness Week and the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities.
- Create an awareness plan to support our organizations to learn about and comply with the Built Environment Accessibility Standard when it is released.
- Ensure that emergency information from REMO is communicated using Plain Language.
- Schedule regular meetings between REMO staff and the Regional Accessibility Coordinator to support considering accessibility in emergency management.
- Seek opportunities to provide emergency preparedness information to persons with disabilities through digital and written materials and presentations.

#### **Proposed Joint Actions with Anti-Racism and Diversity Plan:**

- Create or adopt a guide to be used by staff that provides guidance on how to plan a meeting or event using equitable best practices, including accessibility.
- Provide support to community members who face barriers to participating in municipal meetings and events to enable engagement. This may mean providing support with transportation or other costs of participation.

- Develop a guide for staff and council members of municipal units on how to review and update policies, by-laws, procedures, and practices with an equitable best practices lens.
- Develop an Anti-Hate & Anti-Discrimination Policy to support regional municipal units for anti-hate and anti-discriminatory efforts until all policies are able to be reviewed with an equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility lens.
- Create a website dedicated to equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility work in Lunenburg County to create a consistent space for people to find information about accessibility in the region.
- Develop a safe space for municipal employees from equity deserving groups. This could be in the form of an affinity group or employee resource group where employees can explore shared experiences, barriers, and solutions.
- Create an opportunity for youth with disabilities to provide feedback to municipalities on accessibility matters.
- Assess Municipal/Town physical spaces for opportunities to display signs of inclusion and belonging.
- Review our governance processes related to equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility. This includes determining responsibilities for decision making, accountability and how we interact with other organizations doing similar work in the community.
- Create a community awareness plan outlining how to engage the community on equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.
- Collaborate regionally to learn more about what barriers people face related to transportation access as they move within, between, and beyond our municipalities.

Working towards equitable access in these priority areas will help to identify, prevent, and eliminate barriers for people with disabilities to participate fully in our communities.

### **District of Lunenburg 2025 – 2026 Action Items**

The following items have been identified as achievable action items for 2025 and 2026. They are primarily operational in nature, and do not require capital investment or additional resources beyond our current staff complement. These action items were developed in previous years and many overlap with the regional items noted above.

- Develop a process to record, manage and track accessibility issues in municipal spaces, programs, goods and services.
- Develop a procedure for regular employee accessibility training. Include in training tracking and new employee orientation.

- Create a Scent-Free policy and provide education to ensure employees, Councillors, and the public are aware of the policy.
- Update policies to allow the option for support persons to attend programming free of charge to accompany a participant requiring support.
- Add an accommodation request form to the recreation registration process.
- Include accessibility information in the Recreation Guide and on the website.
- Create/adopt a guide to be used by staff that provides guidance on how to plan a meeting or event using best practices in accessibility.
- Develop an Accommodation Request Form for the public attending Council, Committee, or Public Engagement meetings.
- All future reviews of municipal bylaws and internal policies, procedures, and practices use an accessibility lens and are coordinated with reviews with a focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion where possible.
- Revise Communications strategy to include accessible communications/formats and develop/update Standard Operating Procedures to reflect the commitment to providing accessible communications.
- Identify means to provide alternate formats for municipal communications such as Braille, ASL, large print, plain language, when requested by residents.
- Develop guidelines around plain language use at public meetings and events to increase accessibility.
- Include a statement in advertising for public meetings and events inviting conversations about accessibility accommodations.
- Implement consistent communication about accessibility of trails and outdoor spaces (e.g., signage, websites).
- Install visual fire alarms in municipal facilities.

### **Potential Accessibility Lens Applied to Future Capital Projects**

In the upcoming Budget, Council will consider capital projects, and many could be viewed with an Accessibility Lens, impacting the capital budget. This includes:

- Upgrades to trails at Miller Point. Project includes reducing slope of a trail to meet Rick Hansen standards, creating an accessible trail from outer parking lot to inner parking area in response to safety concerns raised through public consultation, and building an accessible canoe/kayak launch.
- Re-imagining the MARC and Wiles Lake Park. MODL's Parks Standards suggest that one Regional Park will be fully accessible. Our Regional Parks are River Ridge, MARC, and Wiles Lake. Currently, none of these three parks are currently fully accessible.

- Extend MARC Playground to add an accessible section to the updated MARC playground. Look at installing all rubberized surface on entire playground.
- Indian Falls Park Upgrades - the grassy flat area and look off as you enter the park to be made accessible by creating accessible pathways, accessible furnishings and installing an accessible vault toilet.
- Sawpit Wharf Park Engineering Plans - A concept plan was developed and approved by Council in 2024 that includes accessibility features.
- Hirtle’s Beach Washrooms - Staff have identified rot at the Hirtle’s Beach Washroom. Staff are recommending using the new vault designs to make these accessible vaults.
- Mush Vault Accessible Washrooms and Change Room. The design has been completed, construction costs will be outlined in the Budget.

### **Resourcing and Budget**

The implementation of the Regional Accessibility Plan and District’s Action Plan is integrated into the culture and processes of our organization, ensuring that accessibility becomes a fundamental aspect of how we operate.

To support this initiative, we have utilized existing resources, with minimal additional staffing commitments. Our contributions include a share of the Regional Accessibility Coordinator position, which is shared by the participating municipalities, and the designation of a local IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility) Lead, a role incorporated into an existing staff position. This approach has allowed us to advance our accessibility goals effectively while maintaining efficient use of our resources.

Accessibility upgrades, such as those listed above, are considered as part of new capital budget decisions during Council's budget deliberations. Additionally, we actively seek grant funding from other levels of government whenever possible to support and enhance our accessibility initiatives.

| <b>Report Preparation</b>      |                 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Department</b>              | Administration  |
| <b>Report Prepared by</b>      | Sarah Kucharski |
| <b>Report Approved by</b>      | Alex Dumaresq   |
| <b>Date Reviewed by C.A.O.</b> |                 |



**2022**

**Canadian Survey on Disability  
Nova Scotia Results**



# 2022

## Canadian Survey on Disability Nova Scotia Results

The Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate is pleased to provide a summary of currently available Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD) data for Nova Scotia.

The CSD is published every five years by Statistics Canada, and is Canada's primary source of data on persons with disabilities. It provides key demographic, economic, labour and educational data on a provincial/territorial and national level. The survey also provides important information on disability type and severity; use of assistive aids, devices and technologies; daily help received or required; use of various health-care therapies and services; requirements and unmet needs for accommodations, accessibility barriers; and the experience of being housebound, social isolation, food security, homelessness.

The target population of the survey is Canadians aged 15 and older who live in private dwellings and who report having a difficulty or long-term condition to the Activities of Daily Living question on the 2021 Census. The survey does not include persons living on a First Nations reserve, or those living in collective dwellings such as institutional residences or Canadian Armed Force bases.

For more information on the CSD, including a new [infographic](#) and [data visualization tool](#) please visit the [Statistics Canada website](#).

Please contact us at [accessibility@novascotia.ca](mailto:accessibility@novascotia.ca) if you have any questions.

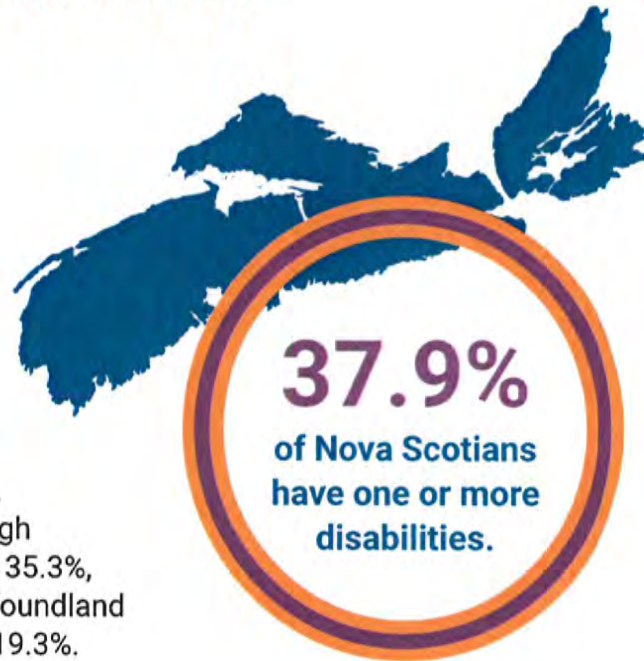
# Disability Rate in Nova Scotia

**Nova Scotia's disability rate is 37.9%.**

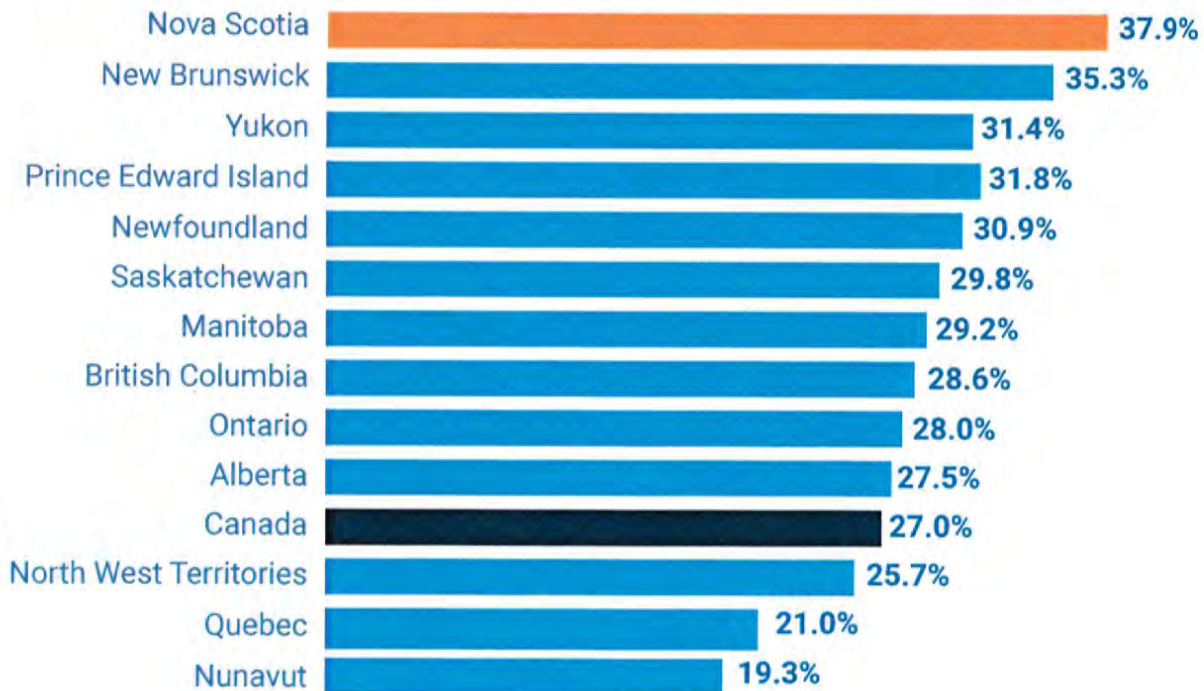
That means 37.9% of Nova Scotians aged 15 and older report having one or more disabilities.

Nova Scotia has the highest disability rate in the country.

The rate for Canada overall is 27%. That means the Nova Scotia rate is almost 11% higher than the national rate. The other Atlantic provinces also have high rates of disability with New Brunswick at 35.3%, Prince Edward Island at 31.8%, and Newfoundland at 30.9%. Quebec has the lowest rate at 19.3%.



**Figure 1:** Prevalence of disability in Canada, provinces and territories (%), CSD 2022



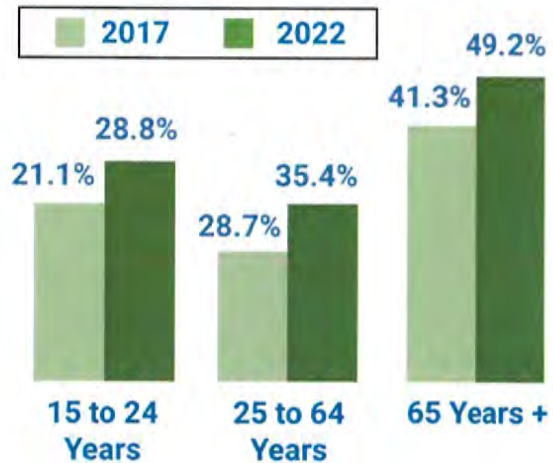
# Disability Rate and Age

**49.2% of Nova Scotians aged 65 and older report having one or more disabilities.**

Disability increases with age. This is an increase of 7.9 % from 2017.

In 2022, 35.4% of Nova Scotians 25 to 64 years of age, and 28.8% of youth (15 to 24 years) reported having one or more disabilities, compared to 28.7% and 21.1 % respectively in 2017.

**Figure 2: Prevalence of disability by age (%), all Nova Scotians, CSD 2022, 2017**



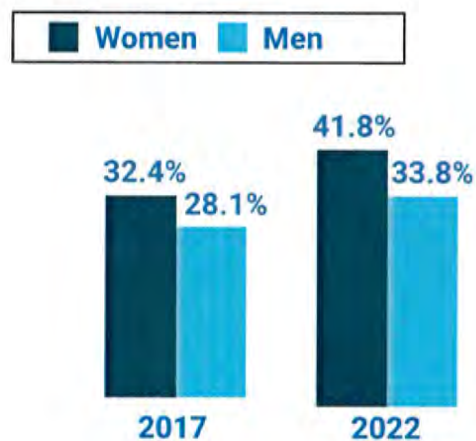
# Disability and Gender<sup>1</sup>

**More women than men in Nova Scotia, 15 years of age and older, have disabilities.**

Among all Nova Scotians, the disability rate for women is 41.8%, compared to men at 33.8%. In 2017, the disability rate was 33.8% for women and 28.1% for men.



**Figure 3: Prevalence of disability by gender (%), all Nova Scotians, CSD 2022, 2017**

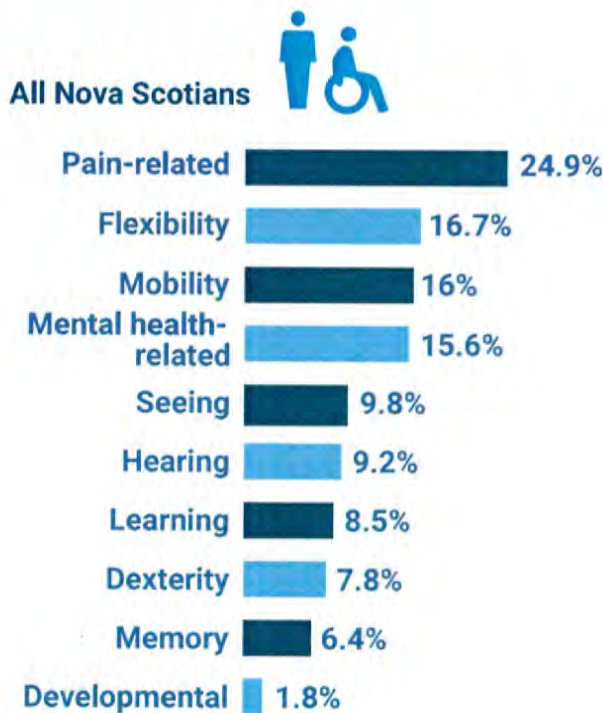


<sup>1</sup>The CSD data is only available for women and men gender categories at this time and does not include data on diverse genders.

# Disability Rate and Type of Disability

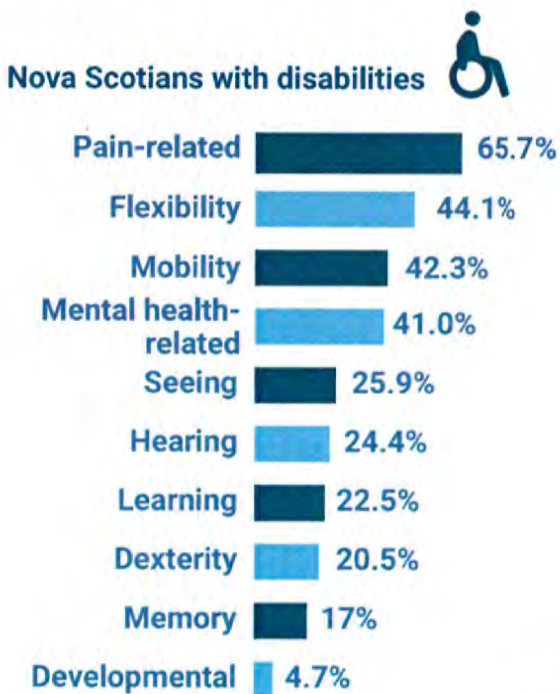
Among all Nova Scotians, age 15 years and older, pain-related disabilities are the most common type of disability in Nova Scotia (24.9%), followed by flexibility (16.7%), mobility (16.0%) and mental health-related (15.6%) disabilities. The prevalence of other types of disabilities is as follows: seeing (9.8%), hearing (9.2%), learning (8.5%), dexterity (7.8%), memory (6.4%), and developmental (1.8%) disabilities.

**Figure 4:** Prevalence of Disability by type (%), all Nova Scotians, CSD 2022



Among Nova Scotians with disabilities, age 15 years and older, 65.7% report a pain-related disability, followed by flexibility (44.1%), mobility (42.3%), and mental health-related (41.0%) disabilities. Other reported types of disabilities include seeing (25.9%), hearing (24.4%), learning (22.5%), dexterity (20.5%), memory (17.0%), and developmental (4.7%).<sup>2</sup>

**Figure 5:** Prevalence of disability by type (%), Nova Scotians with disabilities, CSD 2022

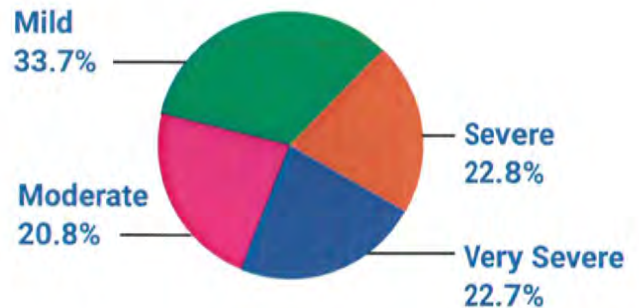


<sup>2</sup> Respondents could report multiple types of disabilities.

## Severity of Disability

Almost half of Nova Scotians with disabilities report their disability as severe or very severe, at 22.8% and 22.7% respectively. About a third (33.7%) report their disability as mild and 20.8% report their disability as moderate.

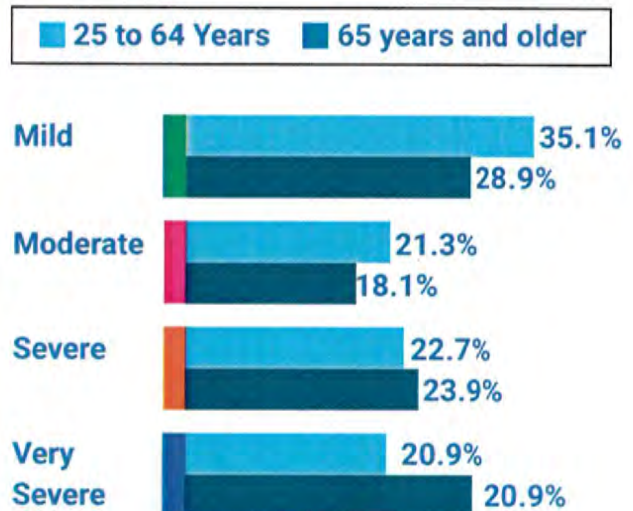
Figure 6: Severity of disability (%), Nova Scotians with disability, CSD 2022



## Severity of Disability and Age

**Severity of disability increases with age.** The majority of Nova Scotians with disability aged 25-64 years report having a mild to moderate disability (56.4% combined), whereas the majority of Nova Scotians aged 65 years and older report having a severe to very severe disability (43.6%).

Figure 7: Severity of disability by age (%), Nova Scotians with disability, CSD 2022



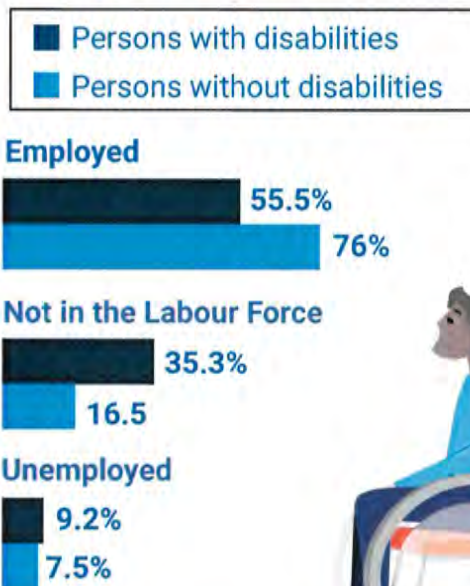
## Labour Force Participation

**Nova Scotians with disabilities have a lower rate of employment compared to those without a disability.** In 2022, 55.5% of people aged 25-64 years with disabilities were employed, compared to 76.0% of people without disabilities.

The unemployment rate (those looking for work and are not employed) of Nova Scotians with disabilities is slightly higher than those without disabilities (9.2% compared to 7.5%).

Another statistic related to labour force participation is the percentage of people who are not in the labour force: people not employed and not actively seeking employment. 35.3% of Nova Scotians with disabilities are not in the labour force, compared to 16.5% of Nova Scotians without disabilities.

**Figure 8: Labour force participation (%), Nova Scotians with and without disabilities, CSD 2022**



## Income

**Overall, people with disabilities have lower incomes than people without disabilities.** The median annual after-tax income for persons with disabilities aged 25-64 years is \$34,910, compared to \$42,000 for those without disabilities.

Income levels change depending on the severity of disability. People who have a mild disability earn slightly more (\$42,200) than the median annual after-tax income of people without disabilities (\$42,000).

**Figure 9: Median annual after-tax income, Nova Scotians with and without disabilities, CSD 2022**



People who have moderate disabilities earn \$36,810 in median annual after-tax income, about \$5,000 less than Nova Scotians without disabilities.

People who have severe disabilities earn \$30,060 in median annual after-tax income, about \$12,000 less than Nova Scotians without disabilities.

People who have very severe disabilities have a median annual after-tax income of about \$25,100, about \$17,000 less than Nova Scotians without disabilities.

This trend is consistent for men and women. Men without disabilities have a median annual after-tax income of about \$18,000 more than men with very severe disabilities.

**Figure 10:** Median annual after-tax income of people with and without disabilities by severity of disability, Nova Scotians, CSD 2022



Women without disabilities have a median annual income of about \$15,000 more than women with very severe disabilities.

A comparison of income levels between men and women with disabilities shows that, overall, women earn less than men: \$33,500 compared with \$37,370 respectively. This is consistent across mild, moderate and very severe categories of severity of disability, and largest for those with moderate disabilities where women have a median annual income of about \$15,000 less than men. However, women with severe disability earn more than men: \$30,910 compared to \$26,430 for men.

**Figure 11:** Median annual income for Nova Scotian women and men with disabilities by severity of disability, CSD 20223



<sup>3</sup>The CSD data is only available for women and men gender categories at this time and does not include data on diverse genders.

# Accessibility Barriers

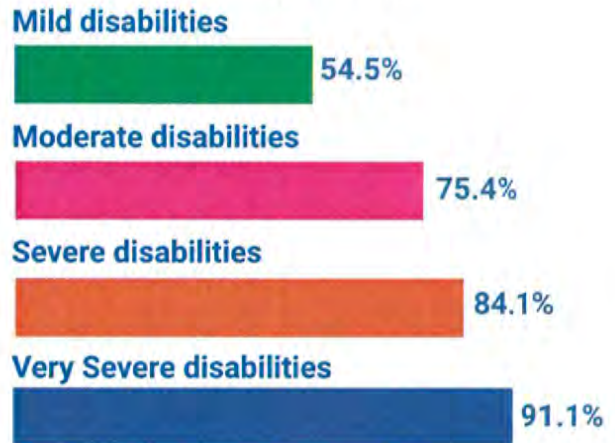
**Almost three quarters (73.9%) of Nova Scotians with disabilities experience accessibility barriers.**

The percentage increases with severity of disability. 91.1% of Nova Scotians who have very severe disabilities reported experiencing barriers, compared to 54.5% of Nova Scotians with mild disabilities.



**73.9%** of people with disabilities in Nova Scotia experience accessibility barriers.

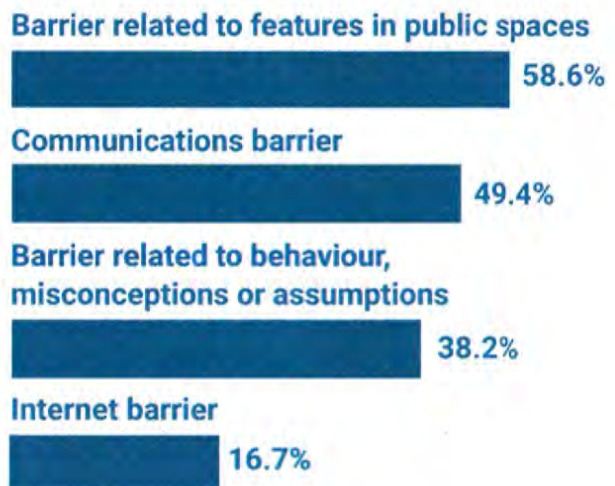
**Figure 12:** Accessibility barriers experienced by Nova Scotians with disabilities (%) by severity of disability, CSD 2022



## Types of Barriers

**Nova Scotians with disabilities 15 years and older report experiencing barriers to accessing the built environment (58.6%), followed by barriers to communication (49.4%), barrier related to behaviour, misconceptions or assumptions (38.2%), and barriers using the internet (16.7%).<sup>4</sup>**

**Figure 13:** Types of barriers experienced by Nova Scotians with disabilities (%), CSD 2022



<sup>4</sup> Respondents could report multiple types of disabilities, so percentages do not sum to 100%



**2022**  
Canadian Survey on Disability Nova Scotia Results





## Municipality of the District of Lunenburg Report to Council

**Report To:** Policy & Strategy Committee  
**Submitted By:** Alex Dumaresq, Deputy CAO  
**Date:** February 18, 2025  
**Re:** Engagement Report on Draft Strategic Priorities

---

### Proposed Motions

- 1) Move that Council adopt the amended strategic priorities as discussed at the Policy and Strategy Committee.

### Background

In preparation for the 2025-26 budget deliberations, Council is establishing a statement of strategic priorities. At the January Policy and Strategy Committee meeting, staff prepared a report on Council's proposed strategic priorities. The original report can be found on the municipal website: [https://modl.ca/index.php?option=com\\_docman&view=list&slug=2025-01-21&Itemid=693&layout=table](https://modl.ca/index.php?option=com_docman&view=list&slug=2025-01-21&Itemid=693&layout=table).

### Public Engagement Summary

Following the January PSC meeting an engagement page was established to summarize council's draft statements and solicit input from residents: [https://engage.modl.ca/budget2025?tool=forum\\_topic#tool\\_tab](https://engage.modl.ca/budget2025?tool=forum_topic#tool_tab). In addition, an in person open house was held on February 6, 2025. The engagement efforts yielded good participation:

- 1025 unique visits were made to the project page
- 108 residents downloaded documents, visited multiple pages on the microsite, or contributed a comment
- 40 residents attended open house.

An appendix at the conclusion of this report includes all comments received from residents. The remainder of this report summarizes the input and offers options for Council to consider.

## Analysis and Discussion

The quality of input received from residents was excellent. The comments were wide-ranging and thoughtful. The input provided an array of creative, analytical and helpful insights to inform municipal actions. The engagement information will be used in two ways: First, it will help inform Council's decision on finalizing the strategic priorities. Second, the verbatim comments will be provided directly to municipal staff working in these areas to preserve the richness of the qualitative input and inform future staff reports.

## Coding for Trends

To provide some information on trends in the qualitative data, staff categorized comments into themes and noted whether the comments were supportive or in opposition to the identified theme.

For example, a sticky note added to the Quality of Life board at the open house stated, "Events & recreational buildings for youth/teens". This comment was coded as supportive of enhancing connections because it shows a resident providing an example of a program/service they would like to see that matches the strategic direction to offer programming and initiatives that focus on addressing loneliness, reconnecting community.

Conversely, a comment was posted to the online forum for communications and engagement that read, in part, "Please do not spend taxpayer money to develop an app to better communicate with us. Tools aplenty exist, and government apps do not have a great track record." This comment was coded in the opposition column to reflect that comments were received speaking against at least one element of the draft content. Many of the comments were detailed and covered more than one topic. In these circumstances the comment was coded for each topic identified.

While imperfect, the coding system provides a short hand for identifying insight into what is on the minds of the engaged citizens. The most common topics of discussion related to regional economic development, infrastructure investments, and climate change. The table below shows a summary of the coding results.

| Topic                           | supportive | opposition |
|---------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Regional Economic Development   | 21         | 5          |
| Infrastructure Investments      | 17         | 7          |
| Climate Change Work             | 22         | n/a        |
| Enhancing Connections           | 19         | n/a        |
| Community Engagement            | 12         | 3          |
| Housing                         | 12         | n/a        |
| Proposed Lenses                 | 10         | 1          |
| Comprehensive Land-Use Planning | 10         | n/a        |
| Affordability/Tax Policy        | 8          | n/a        |
| Transit                         | 3          | 1          |

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Miscellaneous | 5 |
|---------------|---|

There is some caution and context required in interpreting the results in this way. First, judgment is required when creating quantitative results out of qualitative data. Care was taken to fairly characterize the statements, but it is ultimately a subjective process. Second, the engagement format did not limit, and in fact encouraged, multiple comments from the same participant, therefore the totals do not represent unique instances of different citizens providing input, merely the total number of times the comment was provided. Third, voluntary engagements do have the limitation of a self-selection bias, that is, the municipality is hearing from a subset of the citizenry who were motivated to engage. There is no statistically reliable way to extrapolate these results to the wider population of the municipality.

The true value of the data is in the quality of the commentary received. With this in mind a short summary of the comments in each theme is presented below before considering options.

### Regional Economic Development

A total of 26 statements were coded to regional economic development, 21 being affirmative, and 5 opposing specific elements or examples proposed.

- 7 comments supported working towards improved cell service
- 4 comments supported business retention and expansion efforts
- 4 comments supported regional cooperation
- 3 comments were supportive of work to connect small agricultural producers to larger markets and improving food security
- 2 comments references support for the tourism industry
- One comment requested more small business networking opportunities

One comment was received indicating concern that regional economic development work could prove costly without a clear payoff. 3 comments were provided opposing MODL pursuing a bio-economy development zone. One comment opposed the marketing levy's application to small operators.

### **Infrastructure Investments**

24 comments were received regarding infrastructure investments, with 17 of them being coded as supportive of Council's draft statements. The most common items cited were:

- Access to waterways (4);
- Access to Sherbrooke lake (3);
- Connectivity of Active Transportation routes (2); and
- Sidewalks in New Germany (2).

Other items noted in the comments were: a green space next to the collaborative health centre, invest in roads, water filling stations, and traffic improvements in Osprey Village.

### **Climate Change**

22 responses were received that indicated action on climate change was important. Of note, 7 comments explicitly noted that climate change action should be a priority not a lens, versus 2 comments supporting climate as a lens. 7 comments were also received noting the importance of climate resilient infrastructure and/or more broadly addressing climate change adaptation. Additional comments on climate noted general support for climate action, and including climate change action within the quality of life statement.

### **Enhancing Connections**

The theme of enhancing connections within the quality of life and communications priorities resonated with many commenters.

- 11 comments suggested additional programming and support for reconnecting community (e.g. youth/senior programming, family programming, community dinners)

- 4 comments suggested grant program expansion/adjustment (e.g. community facilities and programming, fire dept. capital and training, and favouring MODL-based over town applicants)
- 3 comments identified that the municipality is well positioned to be a facilitator as opposed to a deliverer of community connections.
- One comment suggested an improved community calendar on the municipal website
- One comment noted that signs prohibiting overnight parking and camping in parks is unwelcoming and unkind

## Engagement

12 comments were coded as supportive of the focus on communications and engagement. These comments indicated support for:

- Existing efforts at engagement (2)
- More opportunities for public input (2)
- Conversational as opposed to adversarial engagement opportunities (e.g. open house on general topics to stimulate discussion vs. a public hearing pitting one perspective against another)(2)
- Consultations held in more diverse locations in the District (2).
- Council in the community and evening meetings (1)
- More demonstration of how input influenced decisions (1)
- A municipal app (1)
- A quick link on the website home page for the next Tuesday's agenda (1)

There were also three comments noting concern with an element of the communications and engagement statements. Two comments opposed the concept of an app over value for money and demographics concerns. One comment opposed the municipal use of social media platforms which do not have guidelines in place to curtail hate speech.

## Housing

12 comments were received relating to housing, all of them supportive of municipal action. These comments focused on the need for affordable housing in the region, the need for municipal investment in infrastructure for housing and working with partners to create more housing units, and the need for the development of a strategy to guide municipal action.

## Lenses

11 comments were received regarding the proposed lenses for Council decision-making. Of these one was a general statement in support of the proposed lenses; 9 more specifically supported a lens for inclusion, diversity, equity and/or accessibility.

One comment opposed the proposed lenses generally, noting that they appeared to be an attempt to bind the new council to decisions of past councils.

Tabulation Note: Comments relating to climate change as a lens versus a priority are covered above. The comments in this section referred to all other non-climate input received about lenses.

### **Comprehensive Land-Use Planning**

10 comments were coded as supportive of land-use planning. These fell into two categories: expressing the need for managing coastal development/protection (3) and balanced management of growth (7), including commentary on the impact of increased density and traffic, protecting the rural character of communities, and managing the pace of growth. It is important to note that several of the comments did not in and of themselves reference land-use planning but directly address development controls and the need for managing growth.

### **Affordability/tax policy**

8 comments were made relating to tax policy and affordability. 6 of these comments related to no increase in residential tax, decreasing expenditures, or providing property tax relief. One suggested different indicators for a property tax rebate to improve public health, and one suggested growing the tax base to reduce pressure on existing tax accounts.

### **Public Transit**

3 comments were made supporting the expansion of public transportation options for MODL residents. One comment questioned fixed route transit in collaboration with the Town of Bridgewater, if the cost-sharing formula was not favourable to MODL.

### **Miscellaneous**

There were an additional 5 comments coded as miscellaneous, referring to infrastructure owned by other organizations, opposed to the LCLC, opposed to municipal borrowing, and encouraging the municipality to explore well-being economies.

## **Key takeaways and options**

### **Confirmation of direction**

Taken as a whole, staff believe that the public input validates Council's proposed direction. There appears to be general enthusiasm and support for the 4 strategic priority areas identified

by Council. In addition, the comments generally indicate support for the adoption of the proposed lenses.

However, the comments indicate that climate change remains a concern for the residents who engaged and there is some lively discussion over how to situate the municipal response to climate change. In addition, there are some themes that emerged that Council may wish to incorporate into the statements on the priority areas. Below are some options for Council to consider.

### **Recommended Revision 1 – Advocate for improved cell service**

Given the frequency of the comments received, Council may wish to include cell service as a separate bullet as opposed to a subordinate note within the commercial development line.

### **Recommended Revision 2 – Affordability**

In the drafting process there was some debate about the inclusion of the word affordability in the Quality-of-Life statement. At the January meeting of this Committee, it was decided to defer a decision on including affordability until after the engagement sessions. While the Municipality does have limited ability to impact overall affordability (e.g. municipal taxes represent an average of less than 3% of household income), it is clear that affordability is an important issue for residents and its inclusion is warranted amending the subheading for quality of life as follows: **Programs and services to maintain and improve affordability and quality of life for our residents.**

### **Recommended Revision 3 - Access to Waterways**

Several comments identified that a central focus in recreation infrastructure should be access to lakes, rivers and the ocean, and it is critically important that the municipality work to preserve public access to waterways. This theme has been identified in previous strategic work by Council including the Open Space Strategy and the Active Transportation strategy. Council may wish to reflect this important facet of recreation infrastructure by adding a phrase to this effect to the recreational assets item.

### **Option 4 – Social inclusion – Not Recommended**

At the January 2025 meeting of this Committee, there was discussion on the use of the term social inclusion in the strategic priority statements. As with affordability, the Committee deferred a decision on the term until after public engagement. An operational definition of social inclusion from social sciences research is: “the process of improving the terms of participation in society, particularly for people who are disadvantaged, through enhancing opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights” (Saran, Hunt, White & Kuper, 2021). It is clear that a range of initiatives in the draft priorities address social inclusion, for

example, community programming for seniors, public transit, and targeted property tax rebates. However, staff do not recommend adding the term to the priorities statement for accessibility purposes: the term is not commonly used in everyday language; adding terminology that requires an operational definition from research to be interpreted is unlikely to help communicate council's priorities to the general public. Should Council wish to add the term it could be added to the loneliness phrase, i.e.: Address loneliness, reconnect community and improve social inclusion.

### **Optional revision 5 - Climate Change Action**

Option A – Adjust climate change from a lens to a separate priority area. For example, a statement could read “Climate Change Action: Work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the changing climate”. Examples of projects would be from the climate change action plan such as focus on elements including corporate emission reduction, climate resilient infrastructure and food security initiatives.

Rationale: Climate Change remains a persistent global issue with direct local impacts. Resident input indicates it is still a concern in our community. Establishing it as a separate priority may help to communicate the importance of the issue to the public.

Option B – keep climate change as a lens.

Rationale: after declaring a climate emergency in 2019, Council developed a Climate Change Action Plan. Adopting climate change as a lens follows the continuum of an initiative beginning as a standalone strategic project and evolving into an embedded process that is factored into the various aspects of municipal operation. This change is happening organically, for example, Council created a Sustainability Committee to advise on the development of the action plan but determined that a committee was no longer required after the adoption of the plan.

### **Council's Revised Strategic Vision**

Based on the input provided through the engagement session the below text shows the potential revisions provided for Council to consider:

#### **Regional Economic Development**

##### **Support initiatives that focus on regional economic development**

- Commercial development (zoning, advocate for small business)
- Advocate for improved cell service
- Regional industrial park (investment for future tax benefit)
- Establish region economic development platforms

## 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, with a focus on access to waterways

## Quality of life

### Programs and services to maintain and improve affordability and quality of life for our residents

- Address loneliness, reconnect community, and improve social inclusion
- 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

## Climate Change Action

### Work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the changing climate

- Reduce the District's corporate emissions
- Invest in climate resilient infrastructure
- Create opportunities for more food security in the region

## 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

See options, outlined above

## Conclusion

Establishing strategic priorities is an important governance exercise. The district has now completed public engagement on the draft priorities statement and considered changes based

on those options. The statements that are approved by Council will provide helpful evaluative criteria as Council works through policy and governance questions. These statements will also be critical in guiding staff in preparing budget materials for the 2025-26 fiscal year.

| <b>Report Preparation</b>      |               |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Department</b>              |               |
| <b>Report Prepared by</b>      | Alex Dumaresq |
| <b>Report Approved by</b>      |               |
| <b>Date Reviewed by C.A.O.</b> |               |

## APPENDIX A – Comments received via public engagement open house and the engage.modl.ca forum

### Regional Economic Development

- I see these projects as ways to spend more & more tax payer dollars. In addition where is there real time benefits to the north eastern parts of MODL. To me its all about building up the golden circle ... 5 miles or 5 minutes from Bridgewater. There appears to be no end to generating ways to spend our property tax money.
- The marketing levy has gotten negative feedback. There was an assumption it would apply to hotels and motels and instead is applied across the board. People trying to generate some extra income by renting a cottage through the summer are now faced with a reporting burden and fines/leans against properties should they fail to report monthly. This is too onerous. The bio-economy development zone... sounds like it aligns very well with the Premier's new mission statement to extract all value from NS natural resources. New bio tech is always interesting, but the existence of one requires the production of the other. The concern becomes that in order to maintain those flashy new high tech products/processes, you need the continual feed provided by clearcutting. Sounds like something coming directly from Forestry NS.
- Do our forests have the capacity to sustain a large scale bio economy (pulp mill) project? Do we want Paper Excellence in our region after their track record in Pictou Harbour. How does this project align with climate or biodiversity loss crises? What level of pollution from the site, and degraded wood lands will this create and for whom? How has cell service still not been sorted out? It's been years and millions spent. Such a tired goal. Nothing on Tourism here, seems like a major draw.
- Missing from the Strategic Priorities altogether is any reference to climate change adaptation. As noted, coastal protection is an issue, but it is also only one aspect. Another is wildfire mitigation and prevention. These are going to have to be addressed through long-term inter-governmental planning and multi-phased implementation but planning and budgeting must start now. These initiatives are going to be a real drain on the tax base at all levels of government.
- There should be a budget item for implementation of Coastal Protection that was just off loaded by Tim and Tim to municipal units. There should be priority projects that align with it including acquisition of strategic coastal public access and maintenance of them. You need a gis analyst to staff the project for where and how the new development rules are applied. You might need better training for other staff on the ground for

building close to waters. The same is true for implementation and maybe exceeding the fairly vanilla climate action plan which could be bolder. Where is green procurement as a lens or sustainable energy strategy for all public buildings? Coastal protection could also be a lens for section 5. Equity is an obvious one but I assume that is in place.

- Agree, 100%. How are we going to implement our new municipal Coastal Protection legislation without continuing the focus of climate? We need education for real estate agents, contractors, homeowners re how the new coastal protection regulations apply. We need flood prevention assessment and planning, emergency preparedness for extreme weather and fire, etc. We also need to prioritize wetland and forest conservation and water source protection. In the face of climate change, the proposed strategic priorities do not address the most pressing issue of our time and which will/is impacting our County significantly.
- There are positive ideas here, though it feels a bit like a business class brainstorm. I am not sure this sounds like a #1 priority, esp bio tech (meaning biomass burning or what, not sure). This does sound like a lot of investment and infrastructure dev for unclear payoff.
- I like where you are headed with making our area attractive to new businesses and retaining the ones we already have. The more businesses invest... the more our community doesn't need to rely on tourism to survive. Grow our communities, and we grow our tax base... and hopefully bring taxes in our area down? I agree on that we must all contribute to taxes, however, I don't agree in the current climate we should be increasing the residential tax.
- The Osprey Village project contains a marshland ( feeding into the LaHave River) which MODL seems intent on destroying. When they purchased the property it had a wetland which was declared as an "Environmentally Sensitive Zone". MODL had it resurveyed and discovered that the wetland was larger than first thought. MODL then dumped the Environmentally Sensitive designation by creating a "Significant Watercourses "map. Look at their presentations now and the wetland is shown as an R3 zoning which means high density housing. WHAT NEXT - fill in the LaHave River for housing. There needs to be some respect for our environment ahead of the almighty dollar.
  - I agree with you. I have wondered why that has been allowed to happen. Wetlands may seem like wasted land, they are anything but.
  - I also wondered about this. Osprey seems to have been developed with a goal of using as much land as possible and to encourage as much driving as possible. The "enhancement" plan is an opportunity for leading-edge sustainable planning. Osprey \*could\* be a destination and part of reconnecting community. Right now it's a place to drive to, buy stuff, drive home.
- Leverage provincial and federal economic programs – Advocate for MODL's inclusion in programs such as the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) funding streams or

Nova Scotia Business Inc. (NSBI) initiatives. Develop a regional business retention and expansion strategy – Conduct targeted outreach to identify challenges and opportunities for local businesses. Address transportation barriers by supporting mobile markets or cooperative delivery systems for rural farmers (Maybe this is FoodHub?) Leverage regional partnerships to make the most of shared resources and avoid duplicating economic development efforts across small communities.

- Agree with others saying that climate change mitigation and adaptation should continue to be a priority for MODL. Listening to some council statements it seems like the existing Climate Action Plan is at risk of being quietly tossed aside and not implemented. If there is a push for MODL council to add climate change as a strategic priority now there is clear direction for council that climate change is an important consideration and a greater barrier to abandoning the climate action plan. MODL has a chance to be a leader in local-level climate mitigation and adaptation. We are on the right page with the existing coastal protection policies and by-laws and coastal action plan; lets keep moving in that direction.
- Climate justice absolutely needs to be a priority. The most important legacy of our times will be whether municipalities adequately decarbonize and adapt their communities to avoid the worst case climate scenarios by the end of the century. The livability of world that our children and grandchildren inherit depend on it, and history will judge us according to how well we do. Does this council want to be remembered as one where in a time when most action was needed, we didn't even bother to make climate change a priority?
- I'm very curious how you partner with TOB for a Regional Industrial Park, who funds it, which municipality is it in/who reaps the benefits? I oppose the Osprey Village Enhancement Plan, especially the leasing of space for the Lumia Health Centre. I don't understand why we would pay \$300,000 for a leasehold, then pay to develop the building, then pay for space to rent the building. I understand that we need medical care for all of the residents of MODL, but the reality is, New Germany was able to do it without the municipality subsidizing it (in fact they built it without any government funding whatsoever), and the extreme costs associated with this project aren't justified when there are alternative avenues to recruit healthcare providers to the area. If it means cutting our losses at the leasehold, so be it, I see no reason to lease space in that building.
- Support and promote local businesses
- Advocate for better cell service. Dayspring Pine Grove
- cell service Lr Br Rd to Hwy 10 very unpredictable & reliable
- Better cell service Middle LaHave
- better cell service
- cell & internet essential but also roads

- To create healthy, sustainable communities we need to prioritize health over profits. I encourage the Municipality to explore 'well-being economies' and 'solidarity' economies. We can have positive growth while promoting health
- More focus on attracting/supporting local less large corporations; prevent economic leakage as much as possible
- Good to see cooperation between town and county
- Small scale affordable housing business

## Infrastructure

- In order to enhance the quality of life in Osprey Village going forward, a serious effort must be made to connect with the existing public transit available in Bridgewater. Any future system must be on a cost shared basis that reflects the actual realities going forward. Basically MODL/Osprey Village needs access to public transit to not only transport the pending 700+ immediate residents of Osprey Village into Bridgewater, you need it to give easier access to the services in the "village" to the 9,000 + residents of Bridgewater. The only benefits for the town of Bridgewater currently would be enhancement of the quality of life to its residents providing easier access to the services in the "village". Also the prospect of an infusion of cash towards the operation and maintenance of the system. They would need to illustrate the future benefits to the Bridgewater business community of access to the planned and pending future population in and around the "village". Also, the potential to reduce the bottle neck that presently exists on Aberdeen Road & North Street. This will require tough negotiations and a great selling job illustrating the benefits going forward for both parties. MODL will need to anti-up some serious cost sharing initially to kick start any agreement.
- Collaborate, Create, Strengthen, Explore, Leverage .... wonderful words indeed. In 2016 MODL bought land at Sherbrooke Lake for development of a public park. Mayor Downe proudly announced at Council ..... we are on our way to Sherbrooke Lake. All Council members agreed with this action of Council. Then the new Mayor & the new Council threw the file in with the garbage on its way to the landfill. How are residents in the north eastern part of MODL where the Sherbrooke Lake saga has been playing out for the past 40 years to believe anything Council proclaims? Collaborate, Create, Strengthen, Explore, Leverage. Give me a break. I say prove these words by actions.
- There is an immediate lack of affordable housing options in the region. What are the aspects of expanded infrastructure presented here that will help to target that immediate need? I am concerned that the points only say "create a plan that identifies

needed infrastructure to support all types of housing", which seems two steps removed from providing practical assistance to families and individuals who are actively experiencing housing insecurity.

- This 2nd priority is stacked with items/ideas that are difficult to tease out. It's like some (half?) of them belong in the 1st economic/regional development priority, and others belong in a separate strategic priority -- a suggestion for the missing Priority: Protecting and Enhancing Natural Assets. Under this priority: parks and rec areas creation, water protection, coastal protection education and action, water agreement, parks project, regional investment in natural assets and rec opportunities (& tourism!) County-wide, programs to engage new Lunenburg County residents, especially immigrants, in funded recreation opps, encourage wetland protection with tax breaks for landowners who steward natural wetland, coastlines and intact forest on property, enhance and encourage active transportation, health and wellness by making outdoor recreation available to all residents and creating/ensuring public access to rivers, lakes, beaches.
  - Absolutely agree that there is a missing priority: environment, climate, sustainability. This has to be more than a "lens" if MODL is to reach its goal of net zero by 2050
- Develop a Rural Infrastructure Strategy: Identify and prioritize infrastructure needs across all communities to ensure equitable investment. Explore public-private partnerships for servicing expansion: Leverage partnerships with developers to extend water and sewer to designated growth areas while maintaining affordability. Expand Multi-Use Trails & Active Transportation Networks : Connect communities with better walking, biking, and ATV-friendly routes (I live just outside of Bridgewater and would love to cycle into town more often, but do not feel safe to do so along HWY 3) - Are there partnership options to increase this connectivity? Expand Climate Resilient Infrastructure Planning: Ensure water, wastewater, and transportation upgrades factor in climate adaptation, such as flood prevention and stormwater management. Expand Well Water Protection & Septic Support Programs Continue to support rural homeowners with well and septic maintenance programs to ensure safe drinking water.
- I don't necessarily agree with public transit connecting Town of Bridgewater to Cookville, but if you do, there needs to be an evaluation of what residents it's really helping. Folks in MODL live on the Cookville side near the industrial park. Is the ridership going to be primarily MODL residents, or will the majority be Town of Bridgewater residents? TOB should be paying for their percentage of benefit if this project is moving forward. There also should be an attempt to make it financially sustainable on its own, and if you're looking to grow public transit, I certainly hope it isn't just going to be along the 103 where folks can more easily access resources, do not forget folks in more rural areas shouldn't be subsidizing benefits that they aren't able to utilize themselves. I look at the failure of the LCLC, and the idea of partnering further with the Town of Bridgewater is incredibly concerning. If Council chooses to go this route for any projects

the costs need to be analyzed by benefit of percentage of residents in each municipality (not just a 50/50 split), clear financial expectations outlined, and there needs to be an escape clause. Development of Sherbrooke Lake Park is long overdue. I oppose the Osprey Village Enhancement Plan, especially the leasing of space for the Lumia Health Centre. I don't understand why we would pay \$300,000 for a leasehold, then pay to develop the building, then pay for space to rent the building. I understand that we need medical care for all of the residents of MODL, but the reality is, New Germany was able to do it without the municipality subsidizing it (in fact they built it without any government funding whatsoever), and the extreme costs associated with this project aren't justified when there are alternative avenues to recruit healthcare providers to the area. If it means cutting our losses at the leasehold, so be it, I see no reason to lease space in that building. I'm very curious how you partner with TOB for a Regional Industrial Park, who funds it, which municipality is it in/who reaps the benefits? -While you're looking at wastewater treatment upgrades, an attempt needs to be made to make the ones operating at a deficit more financially sound. Residents of the municipality shouldn't have to subsidize sewer systems they aren't using. Last year Council looked at the EV charging stations, and established a fee schedule that should make them cost neutral, but I'm fairly certain that there was no discussion as to whether or not that fee would also be enough to cover maintenance and repair/eventual replacement of those charging stations. I look at our EV charging station budgets, and they are not cheap. Folks who can't afford an EV shouldn't be subsidizing this in any way, not even the capital costs for these charging stations. It's time to let the LCLC go. Failing that, you should have the LCLC provide data that illustrates what percentage of residents from MODL vs TOB utilize the LCLC. My guess is MODL is paying 50% of the deficit while a much smaller percentage of our residents are utilizing it when compared to TOB. This information should be public, for transparency purposes. -The signs posted in the parks saying that parking overnight and camping are prohibited are TERRIBLE. This Council needs to endeavour to build public trust, and to be more kind as a whole. Those signs are incredibly unwelcoming, and uncalled for. I am certain you can find a better way forward.

- All infrastructure projects & community services should have built-in leeway for higher water levels, higher risk of fires, higher temperatures in summer. We need to be PROACTIVE, not reactive
- Need to consider traffic egress/flow commerce vs/w/ residential
- I'd like to see more investment or commitment to affordable housing and affordable housing
- Developments
- Affordable housing info/supports \$ to afford
- Slow down growth! Too much too fast; It's getting crowded; traffic is crazy and dangerous

- Affordable Housing Land & Supports
- Increase availability of affordable housing
  - Encourage or create incentives for non-profits to develop long-term affordable housing
  - Donate land for such developments
  - Offer grants based on number of units created
  - Provide building fund to provide access to immediate funding for start-ups, possibly on loan basis
  - Low interest loans give incentives to local home owners to develop apartments on their property suitable for renters or lower income individuals
- MODC & MODL move Sherbrooke access ahead -start <= basics

### Quality of life

- Expand Intergenerational & Social Connection Programs: Develop programs that connect seniors with youth through mentoring, storytelling, or skill-sharing initiatives. Host Community Gathering Events in Small Villages & Rural Areas: Support pop-up community dinners, storytelling nights, or cultural events to bring people together. Create a Rural Volunteer Match Program: Connect residents who want to volunteer with local non-profits, seniors in need, or community organizations - there's so much going on throughout the district that can be harnessed and MODL as a matchmaker for these groups rather than MODL taking on the programming Support local arts!
- If Council is unable or unwilling to add climate change/sustainability as an individual priority I believe it could fall under this strategic priority of Quality of Life. Climate change is likely the most important threat to communities' quality of life (QOL). MODL will not be maintaining or improving residents' QOL without addressing climate change/sustainability. MODL has an existing climate action plan lets see it implemented.
- Food Vibes sounds like an amazing project, and food security definitely needs to be a part of your priorities, but it shouldn't be isolated to Riverport. The 644 has a very similar project, and there should be funds to assist other communities in rolling out these types of projects as well. -Your Homeowner Clean Water and Energy Financing Program is ok, for those that are willing and able to take out a loan, but most folks aren't in that position. If you want to make an impact with water, you should have public access points for filling jugs throughout the municipality. Town of Bridgewater has offered a fill station at Shipyards Landing in the past, and there's no reason MODL couldn't do so year round, at various locations (perhaps pay to have fill stations set up at fire departments and pay for the estimated cost and maintenance of the equipment). I live without water at home, and fill jugs to bring home water for myself and my farm

animals. I drive from Hemford to BRIDGEWATER to get water on a regular basis (and of late it's been even more difficult with a torn rotator cuff). Whenever I go to the water fill location next to Andy's Tire there is always, no matter what time of day I go, a lineup year round. I also dump my black water tank at the Irving in Bridgewater, and I have seen folks queuing at the dump site to use the black water tank flushing hose to fill jugs to take home. Folks are DESPERATE, and I can only imagine what life is like for folks who struggle with this while also not having reliable transportation. Your Active Transportation Strategy NEEDS to include a real sidewalk on School Street in New Germany IMMEDIATELY. You can read my update on potential new school locations here and find additional information on the topic here and here. This street is dangerous for the students, and New Germany has waited long enough. If you can afford to spend money on sidewalks and beautification of Osprey Village, you can afford a sidewalk on School Street in New Germany. Regarding the Grants- I believe in order to prevent the insufficiencies experienced in the last fiscal year, there need to be changes made in advance of the budget meeting. I believe the grant policy needs to be changed, and the rubrics for eligibility needs to be updated to prioritize organizations that are within our municipality and those that provide financially accessible community opportunities, and also that budget needs to be increased. --The signs posted in the parks saying that parking overnight and camping are prohibited are TERRIBLE. This Council needs to endeavour to build public trust, and to be more kind as a whole. Those signs are incredibly unwelcoming, and uncalled for. I am certain you can find a better way forward. -Regarding funding for fire departments, there should be a larger budget for training, and it should be useable for more than just MODL provided training. Firefighters should be able to apply for training grants for relevant training where need is demonstrated. For example, if one of my departments needs more drivers/pump operators I should be able to apply for funding for the Fire School Pump Ops Course, not necessarily exclusively leadership training courses. What is the point in having lots of "leaders" if there is nobody to drive the truck? Priorities here are backwards. Also, MODL could use the CCBF grant monies for fire department capital projects. I believe that should be implemented immediately through a grant basis for departments demonstrating need.

- Clearly name equity and supporting diversity
- celebrate/preserve community [is] language use by hate group
- Celebrate/preserve communities is a dog whistle leaving equity community members felt unsafe. If the intent is to ensure wellbeing of rural communities say that. Be more explicit in community standing for equity and division. Make equity & inclusion part of strategic priorities and ensure your standing for legal protections of equity groups especially as hate groups fester/grow momentum in community.
- hate groups on rise in MODL
- Explicit language

- Property tax relief
- address loneliness
- does the county have a wellness call out
- reconnecting community – updates
- Reduce speed on Pine Grove Rd change the entering & exiting of Walmart
- Consider more opportunities to engage whole families in recreation and civics. (eg open gym spaces that are not age restricted - badminton, basketball, etc.)
- Up to date community calendar on web - not a fan updated clear ways to submit
- Stop yearly home property tax increases. Property yearly evals go up without good reason
- Organization to help co-habitation between neighbours to resolve conflict before it gets out of hand
- we want our area to be as it is. RURAL. Too much growth way too fast
- Events & recreational buildings for youth/teens
- Community conversations to identify trends versus advisory committee style participation
- More community events -community dinners? - community conversations
- Consider reviewing formula/indicators used to determine property tax rebates. Public Health could assist with this process/help with indicators
- Sidewalks in New Germany
- Property Tax
- Climate Change should be a major consideration
- Climate change should be a major consideration in all future development.
- Walmart shelves are empty food not enough! Noise in neighbourhood we moved for quiet
- standardizing parks is not essential - Basics-picnic table & portapotty @ sherbrooke access
- Re Property tax high due to paying taxes to provide services not used or needed by myself.
- Celebrate and preserve communities (be more specific in what this means)

## **Communication and Engagement**

- Please do not spend taxpayer money to develop an app to better communicate with us. Tools aplenty exist, and government apps do not have a great track record. This priority feels more like how to improve Council and Councillor effectiveness than municipal priority. We need housing, support for new immigrants, yes programs to reduce loneliness and enhance connection esp within the entire municipality. Outreach and

supports for elderly living at home. Programming for young people to have opportunity to do community work supported by funding

- While digital tools can enhance outreach, I don't think an app is the best fit for MODL (senior/rural). Instead, a localized alert system for essential information (emergencies, road closures, service disruptions, etc.) could provide direct and relevant updates without needing to regularly check an app. Public engagement should be more than just sharing information. It should give residents real ways to connect, participate, and see their input reflected in decisions. While advisory committees have their place, they can be formal, rigid, and not always accessible to a broad range of residents. A more flexible, inclusive public participation strategy would be lovely. After collecting public input, it would be cool to see closed feedback loops (you said, we did, here's why) that shows how feedback influenced Council decisions.
- Consultations need to be held in other communities in addition to Cookville.
- MODL: To have an update for the app. Also update Newsletter -we use the Bridgewater sites for both daily. The Post/Rent
- Doing quite well in this area -keep up the great work. Only comment would be to continue to prioritize accessibility
- Easier to find agendas weekly on Home page -Hyperlink next weeks meetings/agendas
- I am new to the province & the MODL the communications have been excellent since the election (I moved in summer 2024)
- Have public meetings for input. Don't make decisions without speaking to those who live there
- More public engagement events would be great.
- What are options for public participation vs. public engagement?
- community engagement directed @ equity and inclusion
- More community networking events for local & small businesses to socialize & promote with the public events
- Explicit on ensuring minimizing hate
- implement regular evening Council meetings, including in-community meetings

## Lens

- Love these strategic lenses in general! They seem to provide good framing for Council decision-making. However, I think sustainability/climate change should be a strategic priority rather than a strategic lens. I believe climate change as a priority can lead to different decisions than climate change as a strategic lens. For example, climate change

as a lens may lead to more minor green-washy climate actions like using "sustainable materials" for projects vs. climate change as a priority could consider the bigger picture like using flood and other hazard mapping for project placement etc.

- Strategic Lens for Evaluation - I see these are staff recommendations, several of which appear to be attempts to lock Council into the previous Council's plans; I believe the 5 year plan that Council put forward last year should almost entirely be scrapped. I would not agree to any priorities that force you to move forward on these. Council - please remember that you make the decisions (staff can only make recommendations), do not give them all of the power. A new Council was elected to ensure MODL takes a different direction, you will need to think for yourselves in order to get the municipality back on track. Do not borrow any money. There is no need for MODL to borrow, we should only take on projects within our means.
- Very important to use an equity lens/prioritize health and well-being
  - \*I like this also (re: above comment on using an equity lens)
- Adaptation for climate & housing
- We have concerns over how much land is being developed. Where will the wildlife go?
- Climate needs to be a municipal priority - not just a lens- we are in a climate crisis
- Make Climate & Environment a Priority
- be clear about what parts of sustainability -> enviro? -> accessibility? We are in a climate crisis
- I remain concerned about coastal protection including flood plains
  - 1) Ensuring our bldg setbacks, etc, address risk. We need to have a long-term outlook.
  - 2) Preserve, where possible, public access to the water. Not every access need be a developed park
- (a participant noted with a sticky note that they agree with the comment directly above).
- Equity & inclusion intersects with sustainability
- What are the priorities & values of council? Family first? Economic vs growth?
- \*A couple of things I'd like to see on the strategic plan
  - 1) green space, in building the community health centre adjacent to the MODL - please consider green space- do not make snap decision about utilizing that space for other things, we need a green space
  - 2) Where is Climate change noted on the plan??
  - 3) Low income housing not community services housing but affordable 1 & 2 bedroom housing \$600 or \$700 month rent/near amenities, services.
- \*Sustainability needs to include all facets of life.
- Bigger priority needs include long term transportation & infrastructure impacts. Minimize pavement.

- Communication and Public Engagement: How will it be communicated to residents? (But how will they be engaged too?)

## Major Projects

- Social Housing?
- Stop using platforms where hate festers "X" Twitter and rely on alternative comments website, email newsletter, app esp as community leaves platforms where hate festers
- 2x Daily run on #10 from NG to B'water to establish behavior relying on public transportation
- Public participation in housing strategies, ensuring communities don't change drastically
- Survey was done on water access - what happened to that? access to lakes, improve boat launch Wentzell Lake
- Housing Strategy - Need to prioritize this - would be best if it could be a regional plan.
  - (A second sticky was added by another resident noting agreement with the commenter)
- We like to keep our area RURAL we do NOT want to be a city! There is too much land being sold
- Need to do something about the Mill Brook Bridge on Pine Grove Rd. Too narrow & too dangerous
- The col-Heathcare Centre centre providing some Pro Bono services would be good.
- No comment

NOTE: an additional email was sent to council members from a resident regarding the strategic priorities engagement. It was forwarded to staff who compared it against comments submitted by that resident to the online forum and included any topics not already covered in the summary tabulation.



## Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

### Request for Decision

**Report to:** Policy & Strategy Committee

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

**Date:** February 18, 2025

**Re:** Policy 058 Fee Policy Review

---

#### Recommendation

It is recommended that the Policy & Strategy Committee recommend Municipal Council make no adjustments to the service fees in Policy 058.

#### Executive summary

The Fee Policy was developed to house all fees for municipal services in one document. Fees have been periodically increased, based on staff recommendations or Council direction. In 2019, Staff were directed to look at increasing fees on a 3-year cycle. In 2022, Council felt that 3 years might be too long to review the fees, however, no fee increases were made at that time. Based on the discussion in 2022, staff review fees annually and make recommendations to change individual fees based on jurisdictional scans or increased costs.

#### Discussion

The fees in Policy 058 represent 0.88% of municipal revenue (approximately \$350,000). Annual increases can be a barrier to residents who are already burdened with other cost-of-living expenses. The fees should represent a reasonable cost for the service and be consistent with other similar jurisdictions.

A copy of the policy is attached for information. Staff have reviewed the fees and are not recommending any changes at this time.

## Budget implications

If Council determines that rates should be adjusted, staff will adjust their department draft budgets accordingly.

## Conclusion

Staff recommend that no changes to the existing fees be made; staff will continue to annually monitor fees and make recommendations as required.

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

## Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

| Policy Details               |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Name</b>                  | Fees Policy  |
| <b>Number</b>                | 058  |
| <b>Legislative Authority</b> | Municipal Government Act, subsections 48(3), 132(2), 150(2), 206(4), clauses 49(1)(c), 211(1)(b), and subclause 172(2)(e)(i), Private Roads By-law, Section 12 |
| <b>Effective Date</b>        | March 26, 2024   |

### Title

- 1 This Policy is titled the Fees Policy.

### Administration

- 2 This Policy must be referenced in related By-laws concerning the service identified.

### Purpose

- 3 The Municipality must provide clarity to citizens as to the various fees it charges on the various government services.

### Fees

- 4
  - (1) The fees for Planning and Development Services are as set out in Table 1.
  - (2) The fees for Recreation Services are as set out in Table 2.
  - (3) The fees for Administration and Finance Services are as set out in Table 3.
  - (4) The fees for Engineering Services are as set out in Table 4.

### Exempted Organizations

- 5 Active non-profit organizations registered under the **Societies Act** are exempt from paying those fees identified under subsection 4(1) of this Policy, with the exception of the Private Road Maintenance & Improvement Administration Fee Rate.

**Table 1 Planning and Development Services Fees**

| <b>Services</b>  | <b>Fees</b>  |
|--|--|
| Amendments to a Planning Strategy or a Land Use By-law         | \$525.00 + advertising fee                                     |
| Development Agreement  | \$525.00 + advertising fee                                     |
| Development Permit   | \$26.00  |
| Fire Inspection  | \$210.00   |
| Map Book   | \$25.00  |
| Map Reproduction   | \$11.00 + \$0.55 per square feet                               |
| Planning documents   | \$11.00  |
| Private Road Maintenance & Improvement Administration Fee Rate | 5% of the total expenditures in the annual private road budget |
| Property Record Certificate                                    | \$58.00  |
| Subdivision, Final Plan (+ each lot after 2 lots)              | \$105.00 +\$26.00  |
| Variance   | \$79.00  |
| Zoning Certificate   | \$53.00  |

**Table 2 Recreation Services Fees**

| <b>Services</b>                               | <b>Fees</b>                               |
|---|---|
| Ballfields                                    | \$21.00 per hour + HST                    |
| Ballfield League                              | \$19.00 per hour + HST (if paid by May 1) |
| One-day ballfield tournament                  | \$135 per field per day + HST             |
| Two-day ballfield tournament                  | \$115 per field per day + HST             |
| Charitable cause one-day ballfield tournament | \$65 per field per day +HST               |
| Charitable cause two-day ballfield tournament | \$60 per field per day + HST              |
| Minor Sport ballfield rentals (18 & under)    | Free of charge                            |
| Sawpit Floating Docks                         | \$125.00/season + HST                     |

A "charitable cause" refers to either a charitable or non-profit organization, or to individuals who have experienced recent hardship.

**Table 3 Administration and Finance Services Fees**

| <b>Services</b>                                   | <b>Fees</b> |
|---|-------------|
| Dog Tag - Replacement                             | \$1.00      |
| NSF Cheques                                       | \$15.00     |
| Tax Certificate                                   | \$42.00     |
| Tax Sale Administration Fee                       | \$160.00    |
| Verbal Tax Information                            | \$11.00     |
| Potable Water Supply Upgrading Administration Fee | \$250.00    |
| Clean Energy Financing Administration Fee         | \$250.00    |

**Table 4 Engineering Services Fees**

| Services                          | Fees            |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Electric Vehicle Charging Station | \$1.50 per hour |
| Sewer Permit                      | \$120.00        |

| Policy Adoption   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| Date of Original Passage  | January 11, 2011       |
| Date of Notice of Intent to Amend   | March 19, 2024         |
| Date of Council Approval  | March 26, 2024         |
| Effective Date (if different from Approval Date)  | N/A                    |
| I certify that this Policy 058 Fees was amended by Municipal Council as indicated above.                          |                        |
| Signature of Municipal Clerk<br> | Date<br>March 26, 2024 |

| Version     | Amendment Description  | Approval Date      |
|-------------|--|--------------------|
| Original V1 | Policy 058 fees  | January 11, 2011   |
| V2          | Fees for development related applications – planning areas   | May 10, 2011       |
| V3          | Allows for all fees, except those included in other by-laws in one policy, and fee increases             | February 12, 2019  |
|             | Effective date for V3  | April 1, 2019      |
| V4          | Clarity that the 5% administrative fee for Private Road Maintenance & Improvement Charge is not exempted | February 25, 2020  |
| V5          | Housekeeping, addition of fee for Electric Vehicle Charger Charging Station                              | September 14, 2021 |
| V6          | Remove MARC housing, and fax/photocopying fees from Tables 2 and 3                                       | February 8, 2022   |
|             | Effective date of V6   | April 1, 2022      |
| V7          | Add Sawpit Floating Dock fees to Table 2, Recreation   | January 10, 2023   |
| V8          | Add Potable Water Supply Upgrade and Clean Energy Financing administration fees to Table 3.              | July 25, 2023      |

|           |  |                |
|-----------|--|----------------|
| <b>V9</b> | Add new ballfield fees to Table 2 and defined “charitable cause”; amend EV charging station fee to \$1.50. | March 26, 2024 |
|-----------|--|----------------|