



## The Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

### Report to Council

**Report To:** Mayor & Municipal Council  
**Submitted By:** Tom MacEwan, CAO  
**Date:** March 25, 2025  
**Re:** Municipal Planning Strategy & Land Use By-law

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#### Recommendation

Council directs Planning Staff to prepare a second draft of the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law that is less restrictive and closer in line to the mandatory minimum planning requirements outlined in the **Municipal Government Act**.

#### Mandatory Municipal Planning

In the fall of 2018, the Provincial Government introduced changes to the **Municipal Government Act (MGA)** which made planning mandatory for all land within the boundaries of the Municipality. As a result of these amendments, municipalities are required to have comprehensive planning documents for all parts of the Municipality.

At the time of the amendments to the **MGA** (2018), approximately 14 rural municipal units (including HRM and CBRM) had what was considered comprehensive land-use planning; that is, an MPS that covers the entire geographic area of the municipality and addresses all major topics concerning development and is reasonably consistent with the Statements of Provincial Interest.

In addition, there were approximately 10 rural municipalities that had what was referred to as limited scope land-use planning; which means having an MPS that only dealt with one or a few specific land-use issues and did not address all Statements of Provincial Interest.

In 2018, there was only 1 rural municipality that did not have an MPS for its geographic area and which did not address the Statements of Provincial Interest on a municipal wide basis.

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That lone municipality was MODL. See attached map.

Today, while there are local planned areas such as Block House, Hebbville, Hemford Forest, Oakland, Osprey Village, Princes Inlet & Area, and Riverport & District, MODL still does not have comprehensive planning documents for all parts of the Municipality.

### **MODL 2040, Coastal Protection & Cluster Development**

Our municipal-wide comprehensive planning project is called MODL2040, and we have been progressively working on land use planning over the last several years.

The Project was launched in 2020 and it was planned as a multi-year campaign which would eventually see the creation, adoption and implementation of a municipal-wide Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law.

While we have made some progress on MODL2040, in 2023, there was a shift in focus from the municipal-wide planning project to coastal protection land use planning and cluster developments.

In 2023 and 2024, our planning resources were focused on engaging with residents on the issue of coastal protection and developing our coastal protection regulations which were adopted by Council on June 18, 2024.

In 2024 and into 2025, we have been continuing to work on the Cluster Development Land Use Regulations which have yet to receive 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading.

With the Coastal Protection Regulations in place and with the Cluster Development Bylaw nearly set for 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading, our focus has returned to the mandatory municipal wide planning project.

### **Draft Municipal Planning Strategy & Land Use By-law**

On or about March 13, 2025 (two weeks before the scheduled Planning Advisory Committee Meeting where the documents would be reviewed with the Committee), the draft Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law were released to the public.

Our intention was to release the documents to the public well in advance of the meeting to ensure that people had ample time to review the documents. We then planned to present the documents (at a high level) at the Planning Advisory Committee and, with direction from the Planning Advisory Committee, engage in a detailed and thorough schedule of community engagement (which was planned to last for several months).

### **Public Response**

The public has made it abundantly clear that they have serious concerns with the documents as currently drafted.

An overwhelming majority of comments expressed great concern over possible restrictions to small scale agricultural and hobby farms. There were also general concerns that the draft documents go well beyond minimum planning and are too restrictive.

**MODL Response**

We heard the concerns (and the anger and upset) expressed by residents and, in discussions with the Mayor, it was decided that this matter would be added to the Council Agenda on March 25, 2025, and that a Staff Report and Recommendation would be presented recommending that Council directs Planning Staff to prepare a second draft of the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law that is less restrictive and closer in line to the mandatory minimum planning requirements outlined in the **Municipal Government Act**.

When the revised, less restrictive documents are ready for public review, we will share this news widely and release our plan for community engagement.

Report Preparation	
Department	Administration
Report Prepared by	Tom MacEwan, CAO
Report Approved by	
Date Reviewed by C.A.O.	

# Municipal Comprehensive Land-Use Planning 2018

