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Municipal Council Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, July 22, 2025 – 9:00 a.m.

MODL Council Chambers – 10 Allée Champlain Drive, Cookville

- 1. Call to Order**
 - 1.1 Mi'kma'ki Territorial Acknowledgement
- 2. Announcements, Acknowledgements, Recognition**
 - 2.1 Proclamation – Emancipation Day
- 3. Public Input (15 Minutes)**
- 4. Changes/Approval of Agenda (as circulated)**
- 5. Approval of Minutes - Council July 8, 2025**
- 6. Business Arising from Minutes**
- 7. Awarding of Tenders/RFPs**
 - 7.1 Award of RFP 2025-01-400 MARC Ballfield Backstops, Fencing & Dugout Adjustments 1-3
 - 7.2 Award of RFP 2025-01-401 Wastewater Treatment Options Study (2025) Conquerall Bank & New Germany 4-7
 - 7.3 Award of RFP 2025-01-403 Land Conservation Strategy..... 8-12
- 8. Presentations/Scheduled Times - Nil**
- 9. Consideration of Correspondence - Nil**
- 10. Recommendations from Committees & Boards**
 - 10.1 Finance Committee 12**
 - 10.1.1 First Reading - Repeal & Replace By-law 018 Building Code By-law 13-26
 - 10.1.2 Amendments to Policy 058 Fees re Building Fees 27-35
 - 10.1.3 Amendments to Policy 058 Fees re Credit Card Fees..... 36-45
- 11. Staff Reports**
 - 11.1 Recreation Parks & Tourism**
 - 11.1.1 Quality of Life Report..... 46-93

12. Mayor's/Deputy Mayor's/Councillors' Matters

12.1 LCLC Update

12.2 Deputy Mayor's Update

12.3 Mayor's Update

13. Added Items

14. In Camera - Nil

15. Adjournment

Council
Item 7.1
Date: July 22, 2025
Authorization: T. MacEwan



The Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

Request for Decision

Report to: Mayor and Council

Submitted by: Maria Butts, PMP, Project Manager

Date: July 22, 2025

Re: Award of RFP 2025-01-400 MARC Ballfield Backstops, Fencing and Dugout Adjustments

Recommendation

That Council authorize staff to award RFP 2025-01-400 MARC Ballfield Backstops, Fencing and Dugout Adjustments to Eastern Fence Erectors Limited in the amount of \$122,900.00, excluding HST.

Executive summary

N/A

Background

The MARC in Dayspring is classified as one of the Municipality's Regional Parks. The MARC has three (3) ballfields which have high levels of use and are an important feature of the park. Deficiencies to existing fencing and dugouts have been identified by staff. In addition, all three ballfields are only partially enclosed, which puts them at risk of being damaged due to misuse. The scope of work under this RFP will remedy these issues. Siteworks will include the installation of approximately 1000 ft of new fencing to enclose the ballfields, installation of service and user gates for field access, replacement of all three aged backstop fences, and dugout adjustments to ensure they are well positioned for best use for ball players.

Discussion

RFP 2025-01-400 was issued on June 26, 2025, and closed on July 10, 2025, at 2:00pm local time. Two (2) Proposals were received and accepted by the deadline. The received and accepted Proposals are summarized in the table below:

Proponent	Met All Submission Requirements	Total Price (excl. HST)
Eastern Fence	Yes	\$ 122,900.00
Maritime Fence	Yes	\$ 137,396.00

The RFP was evaluated by a staff committee using the parameters below:

Criteria/Element	
Technical Proposal	Value
Section 1 – Company Overview	15%
Section 2 – Experience and References	15%
Section 3 – Work Schedule	20%
Section 4 – Product Specifications and Installation Methods	20%
Cost Proposal	30%
Total	100%

As noted in the following table, of the two (2) Proposals submitted, Eastern fence Erectors Ltd. received the highest overall ranking and has been identified as the Proponent that will provide best value to the Municipality for the services identified in the RFP.

Proponent	Cost Proposal (excl HST)	Technical Score	Financial Score	Total Score	Overall Rank
Eastern Fence Erectors Ltd.	\$ 122,900.00	64	30	94	1
Maritime Fence	\$ 137,396.00	65	27	92	2

Strategic Focus

The backstop replacements, fencing upgrades and dugout adjustments for the MARC Ballfields aligns with Council’s Strategic Priority of Infrastructure Upgrades, Expansion, and Management.

Budget/Financial Implications

Allowance for the cost of this project has been included in the approved 2025-2026 Capital Budget with allocated funding of \$150,000.

Climate Change/sustainability

n/a

Inclusion Diversity Equity and Accessibility (IDEA@MODL)

n/a

Strategic Communications

n/a

Work plan

Supporting the delivery of Recreation Capital Projects is a component of the Engineering & Public Works Department's work plan.

Alternatives

Cancel the project and not proceed with the ballfield fencing replacements and upgrades.

Conclusion

Staff recommend awarding RFP 2025-01-400 to Eastern Fencing Erector's Ltd, the highest-ranking proponent. The scope of work under the RFP will see the replacement of aged infrastructure and upgrades to fencing and dugouts which will enhance players experience and improve the Municipality's ballfield facilities at the MARC in Dayspring.

Report Preparation	
Department	Engineering & Public Works
Report Prepared by	Maria Butts, PMP, Project Manager
Report Approved by	Project Management Committee
Date Reviewed by C.A.O.	

Council
Item 7.2
Date: July 22, 2025
Authorization: T. MacEwan



The Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

Request for Decision

Report to: Mayor and Council
Submitted by: Larry Feener, P.Eng., Senior Municipal Engineer
Date: July 22, 2025
Re: RFP 2025-01-401
2025 Wastewater Treatment Options Study
Conquerall Bank and New Germany

Recommendation

Council authorize staff to award RFP 2025-01-401 2025 Wastewater Treatment Options Study – Conquerall Bank and New Germany to exp Services Inc. for an amount of up to \$95,512.00, including a 15% contingency and net HST.

Executive Summary

The Municipality requested Proposals from engineering consultants from our Standing Offer list to study, explore, and evaluate alternate wastewater treatment technologies that could compliment or replace existing technologies for our Conquerall Bank and New Germany Wastewater Treatment Plants (WWTP's). The selected Consultant will assess existing technologies, evaluate emerging innovations, and provide recommendations for the most suitable technology for wastewater treatment for each of the two sites. The selected Consultant will determine the most appropriate financial model for each location, and provide recommendations on how MODL could move to a new financial model if one was deemed more appropriate.

Of the three Proposals received, exp Services Inc received the highest overall score and had the second lowest price of \$79,969.00 plus HST. The approved 2025/26 capital budget is \$125,000. Staff are seeking Councils approval to award the work to exp Services Inc.

Background

One of the primary objectives of the Study is to ensure MODL can provide cost-effective, self-sustaining wastewater treatment required to service existing and planned growth while meeting current and future Wastewater Regulations. The Study will also explore the feasibility of implementing other financial models, such as a user-pay model, and assess the potential impacts such a model would have on users. The findings will provide MODL with valuable insights and data, which will support informed decision-making and help guide future policy and service delivery strategies and will be used by MODL staff and Council to inform future and investment decisions. The Study aims to support the long-term sustainability, efficiency, and compliance of the wastewater treatment systems operated by MODL.

Discussion

The goal of this project is to identify and analyze the latest, most efficient wastewater treatment technologies and provide a clear, actionable plan for their implementation. The Study will include a thorough review of technologies from conventional to advanced treatment systems, with a focus on cost effectiveness; staffing requirements; environmental impact; regulatory compliance; and operational feasibility.

The Municipality is seeking the services of a qualified engineering firm to complete a detailed Study encompassing a comparative analysis of available treatment technologies, evaluation of technologies based on site specific needs (capacity, scalability, location, etc.). The Study will also include a cost-benefit analysis of the three (3) recommended technologies for each site, long term sustainability assessments (energy efficiency, environmental impacts, etc.), most appropriate financial model, recommendations, cost estimates, and other aspects mentioned within the RFP.

A Request for Proposal (RFP) was issued May 14, 2025 and closed June 20, 2025. The RFP requested Proposals from three qualified Consultants from our Standing Offer list to complete the Study.

The RFP requested Proponents provide the following deliverables as part of the Proposal:

- Review of Current Wastewater Treatment Systems
- Evaluation of Existing and Emerging Technologies
- Comparative Analysis
- Recommendations
- Cost and Feasibility Analysis
- Preliminary and Final Reports

Three (3) Proposals were received from CBCL Ltd., exp Services Inc, and Stantec before the closing date and time. Technical Proposals were evaluated by three MODL staff and were

based on the criteria outlined in the RFP, including Design Team Experience & Qualifications; Key Personnel assigned; Management of Services; and Approach and Methodology for a total available score of 80 percent. Financial Proposals were evaluated based on the lowest cost and had an available score of 20 points.

Results of the average scoring are shown in the table below:

Criteria/Element	Score Available	Score Achieved	Score Achieved	Score Achieved
Proposal Submitted By	NA	CBCL	exp	Stantec
Average Technical Score	80	68.7	72.7	64.3
Financial Score	20	20	17	13
TOTAL	100	88.7	89.7	77.3

Financial details were as follows:

Financial Proposal Submitted By	CBCL	exp	Stantec
Engineering Services to Complete the Study	\$68,709.00 (405 hrs)	\$79,969.00 (622 hrs)	\$109,043.00 (664 hrs)

Note: Prices exclusive of HST.

Strategic Focus

This project aligns with the Infrastructure Upgrades, Expansion, and Management (Planning and investing for Growth) 2025 Strategic Priority as determined by Council. This Study will provide valuable information in the planning of future upgrades/replacement of each facility. Significant upgrades are being planned for the Conquerall Bank facility in 2026/27 (caustic soda system improvements) and the New Germany facility in 2028/29 (plant refurbishment/replacement).

Budget/Financial Implications

The approved 2025/26 Capital Budget allocated \$125,000 for this study. The projected cost, including a 15% contingency and net HST, is \$95,512. The project is expected to be completed within budget.

MODLs Grant Coordinator applied to the Provincial Capital Assistance Program (PCAP) for 50% funding up to \$62,500 (50% of the approved \$125,000 budget).

Climate Change/Sustainability

Environmental Impact (energy consumption, carbon footprint, etc.) is one of the factors the Consultant will use in the comparative analysis portion of the work.

Inclusion Diversity Equity and Accessibility (IDEA@MODL)

N/A

Strategic Communications

Changes to MODL’s wastewater infrastructure will form part of future capital budget considerations and subject to the budgeting process allowing for public input.

Work Plan

The 2025 Wastewater Treatment Options Study is one of the 2025/26 approved capital projects and is part of the Departmental work plan.

Alternatives

Council could alter the scope of work and reissue the RFP or not proceed with the Study.

Conclusion

MODL received three Proposals to complete the Wastewater Treatment Options Study for Conquerall Bank and New Germany. Exp Services Inc. received the highest overall average score of 89.7 out of 100 possible points. Staff are recommending awarding the work to exp Services Inc. in the amount of \$95,512.00, including a 15% contingency and net HST.

Report Preparation	
Department	Engineering & Public Works
Report Prepared by	Larry Feener, P.Eng., Municipal Engineer
Report Approved by	Stephen W. Pace, MBA, P. Eng., Director
Date Reviewed by C.A.O.	

Council
Item 7.3
Date: July 22, 2025
Authorization: T. MacEwan



The Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

Request for Decision

Report to: Municipal Council
Submitted by: Evaluation Committee for Land Conservation Strategy RFP
Date: July 22, 2025
Re: Award of Land Conservation Strategy RFP #2025-01-403

Recommendation

That Municipal Council award the Request for Proposal #2025-01-403 Land Conservation Strategy to CBCL Limited for \$89,167.50 plus HST for the completion of the Land Conservation Strategy Project.

Executive summary

The Municipality of the District of Lunenburg (MODL) issued an RFP for developing a comprehensive Land Conservation Strategy to identify and strategically protect lands of high conservation value. The RFP was issued on June 12, 2025, and closed at 2:00 pm on July 8, 2025. A total of six proposals were received, with five submitted within the deadline. The sixth, from Nova Scotia Working Woodlands Trust, was received after the deadline and therefore rejected. Following careful evaluation, CBCL Limited emerged as the top-ranked proponent, offering the most robust and strategically comprehensive proposal.

Background

MODL seeks to develop a Land Conservation Strategy to evaluate municipal lands at the parcel level, identify high-value conservation areas, and strategically guide the conservation of up to 20% of municipal lands by 2030. The strategy will include GIS mapping tools, economic implementation plans, and policy instruments. Council adopted a Land Conservation Policy in early 2025, providing foundational values to guide this strategy. Developing the Land Conservation Strategy will significantly enhance MODL's ability to strategically achieve its land

conservation goals, identify priority areas, and build climate resilience. This strategy will form the backbone of MODL’s long-term approach to land protection and sustainability.

Discussion

The evaluation committee, comprised of three scoring MODL staff and two non-scoring Clean Foundation staff (Jeff Merrill, Director of Planning and Development Services; Abhimanyu Jain, Manager of Climate Change and Sustainability; Melissa Deveau, Planning Technician; Elliot Kachan, Climate Lead; and Liz Carr, Policy and Planning Specialist), reviewed five timely submissions:

Proponent	Cost Proposal (excl. HST)	Average Technical Score	Price Score	Total Score	Rank
CBCL	\$89,167.50	76	5.44	81.44	1
Global Conservation Solutions	\$48,500.00	68	10	78.00	2
Stantec	\$49,864.00	65	9.73	74.73	3
UPLAND Studios	\$49,805.00	63	9.74	72.74	4
Forward Creative + DesignPoint	\$49,785.00	60	9.74	69.74	5

CBCL Limited’s proposal stood out with a comprehensive methodology and a deep understanding of MODL’s conservation strategy requirements. Their work plan included robust GIS mapping integration, clearly defined strategic conservation mechanisms, and well-articulated implementation procedures. CBCL's proposal provided strong integration of ecological, social, and climate resilience values, setting clear pathways and tangible milestones to achieve the municipality’s conservation objectives. Their detailed and structured approach positioned them ahead of other proponents.

Global Conservation Solutions presented a strong proposal highlighting ecological assessment expertise, strategic conservation planning, and stakeholder engagement. However, their submission lacked the depth of GIS integration and clarity in operational implementation demonstrated by CBCL.

Stantec offered a diverse, experienced project team and a strong communications plan. However, their approach primarily restated the RFP requirements without sufficiently detailing a methodology specifically tailored to MODL’s rural context or adequately addressing critical social and equity components.

UPLAND Studios emphasized their previous experience with MODL, stakeholder engagement expertise, and strong project management practices. Despite these strengths, their proposal had limited GIS capabilities, focusing predominantly on planning rather than the technical and conservation-specific requirements of this project.

Forward Creative + DesignPoint provided local expertise and demonstrated experience with equitable community engagement. However, their joint proposal was fragmented, with Forward Creative handling community engagement and strategic elements and DesignPoint managing technical and GIS tasks. This separation raised concerns about potential coordination and efficiency.

CBCL's detailed and integrated approach clearly addressed MODL's comprehensive conservation objectives and community values, effectively differentiating their proposal from all others received.

Strategic Focus

This Land Conservation Strategy aligns closely with Council's strategic priorities of enhancing quality of life and advancing climate change action. Land conservation improves quality of life by preserving recreational spaces, supporting community well-being, and protecting critical ecosystems. Additionally, conserving land directly addresses climate resilience by safeguarding essential ecosystems and natural carbon storage.

Budget/Financial Implications

Council approved a budget of \$50,000 in the 2025-26 fiscal year for this project. Awarding the contract to CBCL Limited exceeds this budget by \$39,167.50 plus HST. Council may fund this additional amount from the Sustainability Reserve, should they choose to proceed.

Climate Change/sustainability

Land conservation directly contributes to climate resilience by protecting ecosystems critical for carbon storage, flood mitigation, and biodiversity preservation. This strategy directly supports MODL's climate objectives by securing critical natural assets for the future.

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA@MODL)

MODL's Land Conservation Policy emphasizes equity and inclusion, recognizing the need to prioritize equitable access to natural spaces and integrate the voices of historically marginalized groups, including Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotian communities. The strategy ensures equity considerations inform conservation prioritization and decision-making.

Strategic Communications

Stakeholder and community engagement are integral components of this project. Staff will coordinate communications efforts with the successful proponent to ensure transparency and meaningful involvement from community members and stakeholders.

Work plan

This project is accounted for in the Climate Change and Sustainability work plan. Staff will manage the contract and ensure successful integration of this strategy into ongoing municipal conservation efforts.

Alternatives

Council may alternatively award the contract to the second-ranked proponent, Global Conservation Solutions, or another proponent as deemed appropriate.

Conclusion

The Evaluation Committee recommends awarding the RFP #2025-01-403 Land Conservation Strategy to CBCL Limited, whose proposal offers the best overall value and most comprehensive strategic approach to achieving MODL's conservation objectives.

Report Preparation	
Department	Planning and Development Services
Report Prepared by	Abhimanyu Jain, Manager of Climate Change and Sustainability
Report Approved by	Jeff Merrill, Director
Date Reviewed by C.A.O.	

Council
Item 10.1
Date: July 22, 2025
Authorization: T. MacEwan



Memorandum

To: Her Worship, Mayor McLean-Wile and Councillors

From: Chairperson & Members of the Finance Committee

Date: July 22, 2025

Re: Recommendations of the Finance Committee

The Finance Committee, in session on Tuesday, July 8, 2025, made the following recommendation(s) to Council:

1. "that the Finance Committee recommends to Council that Municipal Council repeal and replace By-law 018 Building Code By-law, effective January 1, 2026, as presented, and conduct First Reading of the By-law on July 22, 2025".
2. "that the Finance Committee recommends to Council that Municipal Council approve the amendments to Policy 058 Fees to add Building Fees to Planning and Development Services Fees – Table 1, effective January 1, 2026, and hereby gives 7 days' notice of Council's intention to approve the amendments to Policy 058 Fees on July 22, 2025".
3. "that the Finance Committee recommends to Council that Municipal Council amend Policy 058 Fees to include a 1% processing fee for credit card payments and hereby gives 7 days' notice of Council's intention to approve the amendments to the Policy 058 on July 22, 2025"..

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman and Members
Finance Committee
/trb
Attachment

Council
Item 10.1.1
Date: July 22, 2025
Authorization: T. MacEwan



The Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

Report to Council

Report To: Municipal Council
Submitted By: Graham Hopkins, Inspection Services Manager
Date: July 22, 2025
Re: First Reading – Repeal and Replace, Building Code By-law, By-law 018

Finance Committee, in session on July 8, 2025, reviewed the proposed amendments to the Building Code By-law, and made a recommendation to Council to do First Reading.

The attached proposed amendments reflect the changes discussed and if Council wishes to proceed the following motion is required:

“that Municipal Council accepts the proposed amendments and conducts First Reading of the Building Code By-law, By-law 018, as presented, and gives notice of its intention to conduct Second Reading at the September 9, 2025, Council meeting”.

Report Preparation	
Department	Building Department
Report Prepared by	Angela Corkum, Regional Inspection Services Coordinator
Report Approved by	Graham Hopkins, Inspection Services Manager
Date Reviewed by C.A.O.	

Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

By-law Details	
Name	Building Code By-law
Number	018
Legislative Authority	NS Building Code Act and Regulation-Chapter 46 of the Revised Statutes of Nova Scotia, 1989
Effective Date	

Short Title

- 1 This By-law will be known as the “Building By-law”

Authority

- 2 (1) Section 172(1)(a) and (2)(e) of the **Municipal Government Act** empowers Municipalities to make by-laws respecting “the health, well-being, safety and protection of persons and “provide for a system of licenses, permits or approvals.”

(2) Section 7(1) of the **NS Building Code Act** enables the Council of the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg to make a By-law that is not inconsistent with the **NS Building Code Act** or **Regulations**.

Definitions

- 3 (1) Unless otherwise defined, definitions contained in the Building Code Act, and Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations, and Nova Scotia Building Code also apply to this Bylaw.

(2) In this By-law, the following means
 - (a) **Building Code Act** or **Act** means Chapter 46 of the Revised Statutes of Nova Scotia, 1989, the Building Code Act, as amended;
 - (b) **Building Official** means any person appointed to that position by the Council of the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg under Section 5 of the **Building Code Act**;
 - (c) **Municipality** means the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg; and
 - (d) **Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations** or **Regulations** refer to regulations made under Section 4 of the **Act**.

- (e) **Location Certificate** means a document certified by a Nova Scotia Land Surveyor confirming the location of a structure in relation to the lot boundaries.

Application

- 4 (1) This By-law applies to the entire Municipality.
- (2) In addition to the requirements and provisions set out in this By-law, all requirements and provisions of the **Act** and **Regulations** apply to the entire Municipality.

Required Permits

- 5 (1) A **Footing Permit** is required to ensure compliance with the municipal wide Land Use By-Law and Land Use By-laws for Secondary Plan Areas where front yard, side yard, rear yard and setback requirements are in place and when a building permit is also required. Or as outlined in Section 13
- (2) A **Building Permit** is required for all work that is within the scope of the **Regulations**, Article 6 and is not exempt from the requirements of the **Regulations**, Article 9
- (3) An **Occupancy Permit** is required:
- (a) to allow the initial occupancy of a building or part of the building;
 - (b) when the occupancy classification of a building or part of the building is changed;
 - (c) to allow partial demolition or alteration of a building;
- (4) A **Demolition Permit** is required for the demolition of a building, portion of a building or any material part of a building.

Application Requirements

- 6 (1) An application form must be completed in full before a footing permit, building permit, demolition permit, or occupancy permit may be issued.
- (2) All applicable fees, as established in Policy 058 Fees, must be paid in full before a footing permit, building permit, occupancy permit, or demolition permit may be issued.
- (3) Permit Fees paid under this By-law may be refunded if:
- (a) the owner of the project notifies the Building Official, in writing and within 6 months of the date of issue, that the project has not proceeded as far as the

excavation stage and will not be proceeding. In these cases, the Building Permit will also be revoked;

- (b) the Building Official is unable to issue the Building Permit for the application that was made and fees paid;
- (c) regardless of clauses a) and b) the administration fee portion of the application fee, as noted in Policy 058 Fees will be non-refundable;

(4) Every application for a permit must:

- (a) identify and describe in detail the work and occupancy to be covered by the permit that the application is made;
- (b) describe the land by including the Nova Scotia Land Information Management Service Parcel Identification Number (PID), or where this number does not exist, the assessment account number;
- (c) include plans and specifications as required by Section 2.3 of the National Building Code of Canada, which must include:
 - (i) building plans drawn to scale;
 - (ii) a site plan adequate to identify and locate the lot and determine distances of existing and proposed construction from lot lines, building separations and building locations and showing:
 - (A) the dimensions and total area of the lot;
 - (B) the location of the proposed and existing buildings on the lot and the relationship between the proposed building or structure and other buildings on the same or adjacent properties, indicating the distance from all property lines, the distances between buildings and the heights of buildings;
 - (C) the width, location and nature of any easement affecting the property;
 - (D) north point;
 - (E) scale to which the plan has been drawn;
 - (F) the name of public streets and / or private roads shown on the plan, and
 - (G) the civic address for the property and adjacent properties.
- (d) state the value of the proposed work based upon materials and labour;

- (e) state the name, addresses and telephone numbers of the owner, architect, professional engineer or other designer, constructor and any inspection or testing agency that has been engaged to monitor the work or part of the work;
- (f) describe any special building systems, materials and appliances;
- (g) be accompanied by an up-to-date plan of survey or location certificate prepared by a registered Nova Scotia Land Surveyor containing sufficient information regarding site and the location of the building in relation to the lot lines, where determined by the authority having jurisdiction as necessary to:
 - (i) establish before construction begins that the regulations of the Building Code Act related to the site and location of the building will be complied with;
 - (ii) verify that, upon completion of the work, all such regulations have been complied with; or
 - (iii) verify prior to construction beyond the footing stage that any yard requirements required by a Land Use By-law and which formed the basis for the issuance of a Development Permit, have been complied with.
- (h) such additional information as may be required by the authority having jurisdiction.

Withholding Permits

- 7 (1)** A Building Inspector must, if applicable, withhold a building permit until satisfied that the following permits have been issued:
- (a) a valid on-site sewage disposal permit issued by the Department of the Environment and Climate Change for the construction of a building requiring a new private on-site sewage disposal system;
 - (b) any permit required under the Public Highways Act;
 - (c) all approvals, with applicable fees paid in full, for the installation and hook-up of municipal sewer and water infrastructure;
 - (d) a heritage property permit/approval under the Municipality's Heritage Property By-law, or Heritage Property Act of Nova Scotia;
 - (e) a Development Permit under a Land Use By-law;

(2) A Building Official may withhold issuing a building permit until satisfied that all applicable requirements of the Municipality's By-law Respecting the Subdivision of Land have been complied with.

(3) A Building Official may withhold issuing a demolition permit until satisfied that the building is not subject to the provisions of a by-law passed under the Municipal Heritage Property By-law or Heritage Property Act.

Permission to Proceed in Part

8 The issuance of a partial building permit is subject to the restrictions and conditions as outlined in Article 1.4.1.11 of the **Regulations**.

Temporary Building Permits

9 The issuance of a temporary building permit is subject to the restrictions and conditions as outlined in Article 1.4.1.12 of the **Regulations**.

Conditional Building / Conditional Occupancy Permit

10 The issuance of a conditional building permit or a conditional occupancy permit is subject to the restrictions and conditions as outlined in Article 2.5.1.5 of the **Regulations**.

Location Certificates

11 (1) With the exception of section 11(2) of this By-law, a location certificate is required for all new structures and any new construction that alters the building envelope and must be approved by the Building Official and the Development Officer after the footings or monolithic slab has been poured to ensure the construction meets the requirements of the Land Use Bylaw and Building Code.

(2) Under the sole discretion of the Building Official, a location certificate may not be required for any additions to buildings or for accessory structures.

Expiry of Building Permits

12 (1) A Building Permit is valid for 1 year from the date of issue and may be renewed by making a renewal application to the Building Official and paying the administration portion of the Building Permit fee applicable to the Building Permit.

(2) The Building Official reserves the right to refuse a Building Permit renewal request.

(3) A Building Permit may be renewed 2 times.

(4) If no construction has commenced at the time of an expiry of a building permit a new development permit will be required.

(5) If an Occupancy Permit has not been issued prior to the end of the second, 1 year renewal period a new application must be made to complete the project. The new application must comply with and meet all the requirements of the **Act** and the **Regulations** and this Bylaw (Building Code Bylaw) at the time a new application is made.

Inspections

- 13 (1)** The Building Official must be notified a minimum of 2 business days in advance to inspect for compliance with this By-law, the **Act** and the **Regulations**, at the following stages:
- (a) All construction other than those described in clauses 13(1)(b) and (c)
 - i) footings in place;
 - ii) the site before starting backfilling of the laterally supported foundation, before a superstructure is placed on the foundation;
 - iii) the framing, roof and plumbing and mechanical;
 - iv) insulation and vapour barrier before wall framing is covered;
 - v) before occupancy.
 - (b) Mobile/Modular Homes conforming to 1.4.19 of the **Regulations**
 - i) footings in place;
 - ii) (A) in the case of a mobile home, the site preparation, foundation installation and anchorage in accordance with CSA CAN3-Z240.10.1-94 "Recommended Practice for Site Preparation, Foundation and Anchorage of Mobile Homes"; (B) in the case of a modular home site preparation and foundation.
 - (iii) installation and anchorage, and
 - (iv) before occupancy.
 - (c) Buildings constructed outside the scope of Part 9 of the National Building Code:
 - i) of the intent to undertake construction that will be inspected and will be reviewed as per the appropriate Letter of Undertaking;
 - ii) of the intent to cover construction that has been ordered to be inspected by the Building Official before covering;
 - iii) at intervals deemed necessary by the Building Official based on the complexity of the building, and
 - iv) when construction has been completed so that a final inspection can be made.
 - (d) For Demolition:

- i) at the commencement of the demolition work;
- ii) at such intervals as are deemed necessary – and noted on, or attached to the Demolition Permit, by the Building Official;
- iii) when demolition has been completed, and
- iv) when the demolition site has been covered over or reclaimed.

Coming Into Force Repeal

14 The Building By-law, as approved by Municipal Council on March 8, 2011, is hereby repealed and replaced with new By-law 018 effective January 1, 2026.

By-law Adoption	
Effective date of original by-law	March 18, 2011
Date of first reading	July 22, 2025
Date of advertisement of notice of intent to consider	
Date of second reading	
Date of advertisement of passage of by-law Effective date of the by-law unless otherwise specified in the text of this by-law.	
Date of mailing a certified copy of by-law to Minister	
Date of Ministerial Approval	
I certify that this By-law 018 Building Code By-law was repealed and replaced by Municipal Council and published as indicated above.	
Signature of Municipal Clerk	Date

Version	Amendment Description	Approval Date
Original	018 Building Code Bylaw	
Repealed and Replaced	Removed Schedule A - fees, added location certificate requirements, new expiry of permits section, updated to accessible format, and clear language revisions and renumbering.	

Finance Committee
Item #9.2.1
Date: July 8, 2025
Authorization: E. Wentzell



The Municipality of the District of Lunenburg Request for Decision

Report to: Finance Committee
Submitted by: Graham Hopkins, Inspection Services Manager
Date: July 8, 2025
Re: Bylaw 018 Building Code – Repeal and Replace

Recommendation
Staff recommend that Council repeal and replace By-law 018 Building Code, as presented, and conduct First Reading at the July 22, 2025 Council meeting.

Executive summary
n/a

Background
The last amendment to the Building Code By-Law was March 18, 2011.

The current Building Code Bylaw for the Municipality does not address the expiry of building permits, renewal of building permits, or revocation of building permits. These clauses are necessary for the implementation of our new building permit tracking system. As well, the requirement for Location Certificates for new residential construction is being added.

This amendment will also remove the Fees from the Building Code Bylaw and add them to Fees Policy 058 – Table 1

Discussion
When a building permit is issued, the applicant must demonstrate that the work they wish to undertake complies with The Building Code Act and Regulations, Zoning Controls, and Land Use Bylaws.

Building Code changes can affect how a building is constructed. Changes to Land Use Bylaws can affect permissible uses and/or property line setbacks. To avoid being impacted by changes to

July 8, 2025
Page 2 of 3

the Building Code, Development Bylaws, or Land Use Planning regulations—such as those related to cluster developments or coastal protection—permits may be applied for without any genuine intention to begin construction within a reasonable period.

Staff propose amending the Building Code Bylaw to include a one-year expiry for building permits. Two one-year renewal options would be available, with renewal fees limited to the administrative portion of the fee schedule. This change would align the building permit timeline with the one-year validity of a Development Permit, requiring property owners to reapply for a Development Permit if construction has not commenced within that period.

Most new residential construction in the Municipality is completed within a two-year time frame. The additional year would allow property owners a “buffer” of one year, for a three-year total project timeline. Work not completed after the third year would be subject to a new application, for only the work not completed under the original permit.

Under our regional building services agreement, this would align the Municipality with the Town of Bridgewater and the Town of Lunenburg’s building permit expiry timelines. The Region of Queens Building Bylaw does not address expiry dates, which we expect they will modify in upcoming bylaw amendments.

This amendment also adds the requirement of Location Certificates for all new structures and any new construction that alters the building envelope and shall be approved by the Building Official and the Development Officer after the footings or monolithic slab has been poured. This will ensure the construction meets the requirements of the Land Use Bylaw and Building Code. A location certificate may not be required, in the sole discretion of the Building Official, for additions to buildings or for the construction of a building that is accessory to a single unit dwelling, semi-detached dwelling or townhouse.

Occasionally, situations arise where the location of a structure is not within the property boundary or within the required setback. This can occur when a property boundary is not clear and often is not identified until after the structure is substantially completed. In this situation, there may be some perceived liability for the Municipality. The addition of location certificates to the building permit process ensures that structures are within the property boundaries and conform to setback requirements.

Further, this amendment will move all building-related permit fees to Fee Policy 058, in alignment with other Planning and Development Services Fees.

Strategic Focus
n/a

Budget/Financial Implications
No expected implications.

Climate Change/sustainability

n/a

Inclusion Diversity equity and Accessibility (IDEA@MODL)

n/a

Strategic Communications

This change would be clearly communicated to all new permit applicants, contractors and industry contacts. Relevant sections of the website would be updated to reflect this change, permit application forms would be updated, and building permits would include expiry dates. Further, the upcoming permit tracking system will include expiration of building permits, with reminders to applicants and a mechanism to renew online.

This change would become effective for any permits issued after January 1, 2026.

Work plan

No expected impacts on department resources.

Alternatives

Council can refuse the proposed changes.

Council can modify the length of the permit.

Conclusion

Staff recommend Council approve the changes to the Building Code bylaw to allow for expiry of building permits in one year, with two one year renewal terms.

Staff recommend moving the building permit fees from the Building Code Bylaw to the Fee Policy.

Report Preparation Department	Planning & Development
Report Prepared by	Graham Hopkins, Manager
Report Approved by	
Date Reviewed by C.A.O.	

Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

By-law Details	
Name	Building Code By-law
Number	018
Legislative Authority	NS Building Code Act and Regulation-Chapter 46 of the Revised Statutes of Nova Scotia, 1989s, Section 172(1)(a), 172(2)(e) of the Municipal Government Act
Effective Date	

Be it enacted by the Council of the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg, under the authority of the Nova Scotia Building Code Act, Chapter 46 of the Revised Statutes of Nova Scotia, 1989 and amendments thereto, as well as Regulations passed pursuant to the Building Code Act and any amendments thereto, as follows:

Short Title

1. This By-law will shall be known and cited as the is entitled the "Building Code By-law"

General Authority

- 2 (1) Section 172(1)(a) and (2)(e) of the Municipal Government Act empowers Municipalities to make by-laws respecting "the health, well-being, safety and protection of persons and "provide for a system of licenses, permits or approvals."
- (2) Section 7(1) of the NS Building Code Act enables the Council of the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg to make a By-law that is not inconsistent with the NS Building Code Act or Regulations.

Definitions

- 3 (1) Unless otherwise defined herein, definitions contained in the, NS Building Code Act, and NS Building Code Regulations also apply to this Bylaw. words in this By-law shall be interpreted according to definitions contained in the Building Code Act and the Regulations prescribed pursuant thereto.
- (2) In this By-law, the following means
 - (a) NS Building Code Act or Act means Chapter 46 of the Revised Statutes of Nova Scotia, 1989, the Building Code Act, as amended;
 - (b) Building Inspector Official means any person appointed to that position by the Council of the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg pursuant under to Section 5 of the Building Code Act;

Building Code
By-law 018
Page 2 of 6

- (c) Municipality means the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg; and
- (d) Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations or Regulations refer to regulations made pursuant to under Section 4 of the Building Code Act.
- (e) Location Certificate means a document certified by a Nova Scotia Land Surveyor confirming the location of a structure in relation to the lot boundaries.

Application

- 4 (1) This By-law shall apply to the entire Municipality.
- (2) In addition to the requirements and provisions set out in this By-law, all requirements and provisions of the Nova Scotia Building Code Act and Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations shall apply to the entire Municipality.

Required Permits

- 5 (1) A Footing Permit is required to ensure compliance with the municipal wide Land Use By-law and Land Use By-laws for Secondary Plan Areas in areas governed by a Land Use By-law of the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg in which where front yard, side yard, rear yard requirements and setback requirements are in place and for which when a building permit is also required. Or as outlined in Section 13.
- (2) A Building Permit is required for all work that is within the scope of the Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations, Article 6.2.1.1 and which is not exempt from the requirements of the Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations, pursuant to Article 9.1.2.1.2.
- (3) An Occupancy Permit is required:
 - a) to allow the initial occupancy of a building or part thereof of the building;
 - b) when the occupancy classification of a building or part thereof of the building is changed; or
 - c) to allow partial demolition or alteration of a building;
- (4) A Demolition Permit is required for the demolition of a building, portion of a building or any material part thereof of a building.

Application Requirements

- 6 (1) An application form must be completed in full before a footing permit, building permit, demolition permit, or occupancy permit may be issued.
- (2) All applicable fees, as established in Policy 058 Fees Schedule A of this By-law, must be paid in full before a footing permit, building permit, occupancy permit, or demolition permit may be issued.

- (3) Permit Fees paid pursuant to under this By-law may be refunded if:
- the owner of the project notifies the Building Inspector Official, in writing and within six (6) months of the date of issue, that the project has not proceeded as far as the excavation stage and will not be proceeding. In such these cases, the Building Permit will also be revoked;
 - the Building Inspector Official is unable to issue the Building Permit for which the application that was made and the fees paid;
 - Notwithstanding regardless of clauses a) and b) the administration fee portion of the application fee, as noted in Schedule A Policy 058 Fees, shall will be non-refundable;
- (4) Every application for a permit shall must:
- identify and describe in detail the work and occupancy to be covered by the permit for which that the application is made;
 - describe the land by including the Nova Scotia Land Information Management Service Parcel Identification Number (PID), or where this number does not exist, the assessment account number;
 - include plans and specifications as required by Section 2.3 of the National Building Code of Canada, which shall must include:
 - building plans drawn to scale;
 - a site plan adequate to identify and locate the lot and determine distances of existing and proposed construction from lot lines, building separations and building locations and showing:
 - the dimensions and total area of the lot;
 - the location of the proposed and existing buildings on the lot and the relationship between the proposed building or structure and other buildings on the same or adjacent properties, indicating the distance from all property lines, the distances between buildings and the heights of buildings;
 - the width, location and nature of any easement affecting the property;
 - north point;
 - scale to which the plan has been drawn;
 - the name of public streets and / or private roads shown on the plan, and
 - the civic address for the property and adjacent properties.
 - state the value of the proposed work based upon materials and labour;
 - state the name, addresses and telephone numbers of the owner, architect, professional engineer or other designer, constructor and any inspection or testing agency that has been engaged to monitor the work or part of the work;
 - describe any special building systems, materials and appliances;
 - be accompanied by an up-to-date plan of survey or location certificate prepared by a registered Nova Scotia Land Surveyor containing sufficient

- information regarding site and the location of the building in relation to the lot lines, where determined by the authority having jurisdiction as necessary to:
- establish before construction begins that the regulations of the Building Code Act related to the site and location of the building will be complied with;
 - verify that, upon completion of the work, all such regulations have been complied with; or
 - verify prior to construction beyond the footing stage that any yard requirements required by a Land Use By-law and which formed the basis for the issuance of a Development Permit, have been complied with.
- (h) such additional information as may be required by the authority having jurisdiction.

Withholding Certain Permits

- 7 (1) A Building Official Inspector shall must, if applicable, withhold a building permit until satisfied that the following permits have been issued:
- a valid on-site sewage disposal permit issued by the Department of the Environment and Climate Change for the construction of a building requiring a new private on-site sewage disposal system;
 - any permit required pursuant to under the Public Highways Act;
 - all approvals, with applicable fees paid in full, for the installation and hook-up of municipal sewer and water infrastructure;
 - a heritage property permit/approval pursuant to under the Municipality's Heritage Property By-law, or Heritage Property Act of Nova Scotia;
 - a Development Permit pursuant to under a Land Use By-law;
- (2) A Building Inspector Official may withhold issuing a building permit until satisfied that ~~any~~ all applicable requirements of the Municipality's By-law Respecting the Subdivision of Land have been complied with.
- (3) A Building Inspector Official may withhold issuing a demolition permit until satisfied that the building is not subject to the provisions of a by-law passed pursuant to under the Municipal Heritage Property By-law or Heritage Property Act.

Permission to Proceed in Part

- 8 The issuance of a partial building permit is subject to the restrictions and conditions as outlined in Article 1.4.1.11 of the Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations.

Temporary Building Permits

- 9 The issuance of a temporary building permit is subject to the restrictions and conditions as outlined in Article 1.4.1.12 of the Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations.

Conditional Building / Conditional Occupancy Permit

10 The issuance of a conditional building permit or a conditional occupancy permit is subject to the restrictions and conditions as outlined in Article 2.5.1.5 of the ~~Newa-Scotia-Building Code Regulations~~.

Location Certificates

11 With the exception of section 11(2) of this By-law, a location certificate is required for all new structures and any new construction that alters the building envelope and must be approved by the Building Official and the Development Officer after the footings or monolithic slab has been poured to ensure the construction meets the requirements of the Land Use Bylaw and Building Code.

(2) Under the sole discretion of the Building Official, a location certificate may not be required, for any additions to buildings; or for accessory structures.

Expiry of Building Permits

12 (1) A building permit is valid for 1 year from the date of issue and may be renewed by making a renewal application to the Building Official and paying the administration portion of the building permit fee applicable to the Building Permit.

(2) The Building Official reserves the right to refuse a Building Permit renewal request.

(3) A building permit may be renewed 2 times.

(4) If no construction has commenced at the time of an expiry of a building permit a new development permit will be required.

(5) If an occupancy permit has not been issued prior to the end of the second, 1 year renewal period a new application must be made to complete the project. The new application must comply with and meet all the requirements of the Act and the Regulations, Municipal Land Use By-law and this Bylaw (Building Code Bylaw) at the time a new application is made.

Required Inspections

13 (1) The Building ~~Inspector~~ Official ~~shall~~ must be notified a minimum of two (2) business days in advance to inspect for compliance with this By-law, the ~~Newa-Scotia-Building Code Act~~ and the ~~Newa-Scotia-Building Code Regulation~~, at the following stages:

- (a) All construction other than those described in clauses ~~5.1(b)~~ and ~~5.1(c)-13(1)(b)~~ and (c)
- i) footings in place;
 - ii) the site before ~~commencing~~ starting backfilling of the laterally supported foundation, before a superstructure is placed on the foundation;
 - iii) the framing, roof and plumbing and mechanical;
 - iv) insulation and vapour barrier before wall framing is covered;

v) before occupancy.

(b) Mobile/Modular Homes conforming to 1.4.19 of the ~~Newa-Scotia-Building Code~~

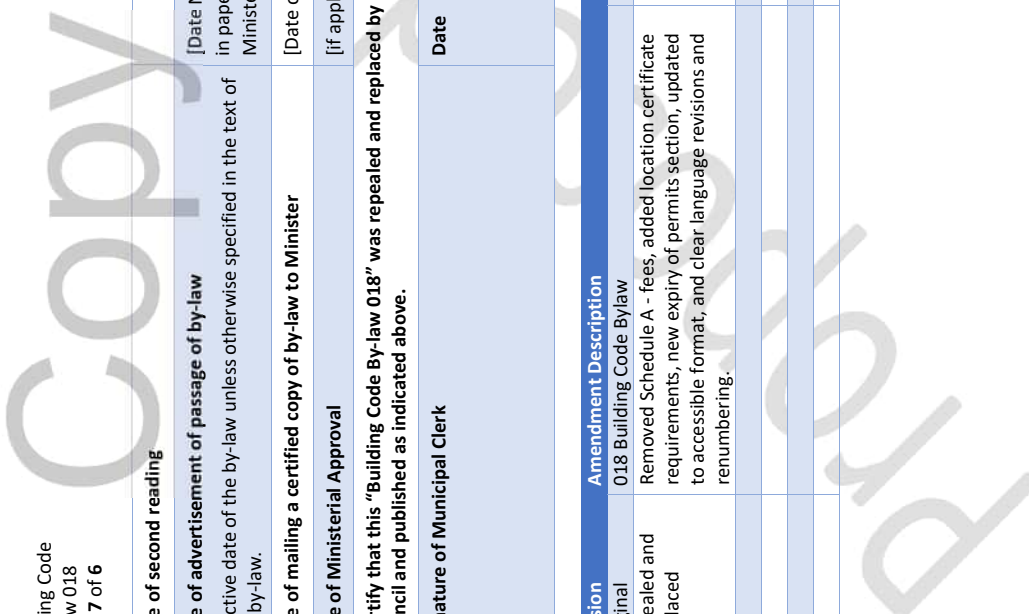
Regulations

- i) footings in place;
- ii) (A) in the case of a mobile home, the site preparation, foundation installation and anchorage in accordance with CSA CAN3-Z240.10.1-94 "Recommended Practice for Site Preparation, Foundation and Anchorage of Mobile Homes"; (B) in the case of a modular home site preparation and foundation.
 - (iii) installation and anchorage, and
 - (iv) before occupancy.
- (c) Buildings constructed outside the scope of Part 9 of the National Building Code:
 - i) of the intent to undertake construction that will be inspected and will be reviewed as per the appropriate Letter of Undertaking;
 - ii) of the intent to cover construction that has been ordered to be inspected by the Building ~~Inspector~~ Official before covering;
 - iii) at intervals deemed necessary by the Building ~~Inspector~~ Official based on the complexity of the building, and
 - iv) when construction has been completed so that a final inspection can be made. ~~and~~
- (d) For Demolition:
 - i) at the commencement of the demolition work;
 - ii) at such intervals as are deemed necessary – and noted on, or attached to the demolition permit, by the Building ~~Inspector~~ Official;
 - iii) when demolition has been completed, and
 - iv) when the demolition site has been covered over or reclaimed.

Coming Into Force Repeal

14 ~~This By-law shall have effect from and after April 3, 2006 and all other Building By-laws previously passed by the Municipality will be there upon repealed.~~ The Building Code By-law, as approved by Municipal Council on March 8, 2011, is hereby repealed and replaced with new By-law 018 effective January 1, 2026

By-law Adoption	
Effective date of original by-law	March 18, 2011
Date of first reading	
Date of advertisement of notice of intent to consider	[Date Notice appears in paper (2 dates)]



**Municipality of the District of Lunenburg
Schedule A**

Building Permit Fees [amended March 18, 2011]

Building Activity	Fee
Residential—New Construction—Group C	\$27.50 administration fee + \$0.10/square foot
Residential—Addition—Group C	\$27.50 administration fee + \$0.10/square foot
Residential—Renovations—Group C	\$27.50 administration fee + \$2.20 / \$1000-of value
Assembly—New Construction—Group A (Division 1-4)	\$44 administration fee + \$0.15/square foot
Assembly—Addition—Group A (Division 1-4)	\$44 administration fee + \$0.15/square foot
Assembly—Renovations—Group A (Division 1-4)	\$44 administration fee + \$3.30 / \$1000-value
Institutional—New Construction—Group B	\$44 administration fee + \$0.15/square foot
Institutional—Addition—Group B (Division 1&2)	\$44 administration fee + \$0.15/square foot
Institutional—Renovations—Group B (Division 1&2)	\$44 administration fee + \$3.30 / \$1000-value
Business and Personal Service—New Construction—Group D	\$44 administration fee + \$0.15/square foot
Business and Personal Service—Addition—Group D	\$44 administration fee + \$0.15/square foot
Business and Personal Service—Renovation—Group D	\$44 administration fee + \$3.30 / \$1000-value
Mercantile—New Construction—Group E	\$44 administration fee + \$0.15/square foot
Mercantile—Addition—Group E	\$44 administration fee + \$0.15/square foot
Mercantile—Renovation—Group E	\$44 administration fee + \$3.30 / \$1000-value
Industrial—New Construction—Group F (Division 1&2)	\$44 administration fee + \$0.15/square foot
Industrial—Addition—Group F (Division 1&2)	\$44 administration fee + \$0.15/square foot
Industrial—Renovation—Group F (Division 1&2)	\$44 administration fee + \$3.30 / \$1000-value
Farm—New, Addition, Renovation	\$22 administration fee + \$0.09 / square foot
Storage Buildings—New, Addition—Group F3	\$22 administration fee + \$0.66 / \$1000-value
Storage Buildings—Renovation—Group F3	\$16.50 administration fee + \$0.66 / \$1000-value
Decks—New, Addition	\$16.50 administration fee + \$0.03 / square foot
Decks—Renovation	\$16.50 administration fee + \$0.66 / \$1000-value
Demolition	\$22
Temporary structures (tents, air-supported structures, office trailers, etc.)	\$44.00 administration fee
Temporary change of use	\$44.00 administration fee
Non-profit organizations	Only the administration portion of the fee for the applicable building activity as noted above.
Additional Fee that applies to all construction that has commenced without a Building Permit	\$55

Note: Some building activities do not require a building permit. For a list of these activities please contact the Building Department. (amended effective August 19, 2009)

Date of second reading	[Date Notice appears in paper.] Note- NOT Ministerial approval.
Date of advertisement of passage of by-law	[Date of letter]
Date of mailing a certified copy of by-law to Minister	[if applicable]
Date of Ministerial Approval	
I certify that this "Building Code By-law 018" was repealed and replaced by Municipal Council and published as indicated above.	
Signature of Municipal Clerk	Date

Version	Amendment Description	Approval Date
Original	018 Building Code Bylaw	April 3, 2006
Repealed and Replaced	Removed Schedule A - fees, added location certificate requirements, new expiry of permits section, updated to accessible format, and clear language revisions and renumbering.	

Council
Item 10.1.2
Date: July 22, 2025
Authorization: T. MacEwan



The Municipality of the District of Lunenburg Information Report

Report To: Mayor & Councillors
Submitted By: April Whynot-Lohnes, Municipal Clerk
Date: July 22, 2025
Re: Amendments – Policy 058 Fees (Building Permit Fees)

The Finance Committee, in session on July 08, 2025, reviewed MODL Policy 058 and made a motion recommending that Council amend Policy 058 and gave seven days’ notice of Council’s intention to do so at its Council meeting on July 22, 2025.

The proposed amendments reflect proposed changes to the Building Code By-law as the schedule for fees in the By-law are recommended to be removed and added to the Fees Policy. In addition, the fees have been amended to reflect consistency with the partner units under the building shared service arrangement. It is noted that these fees will not be in effect until January 1, 2026.

Seven days’ notice is required to be given to Council before a policy is re-adopted/adopted, amended, or repealed. The Finance Committee meeting of July 08, 2025 was considered as Council’s notice.

If Council agrees with the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the following motion is required:

“that Municipal Council accept the recommendation of the Finance Committee and amend Policy 058 Fees, as presented.”

Report Preparation	
Department	Administration
Report Prepared by	April Whynot-Lohnes, Municipal Clerk
Report Approved by	
Date Reviewed by C.A.O.	

Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

Policy Details	
Name	Fees Policy
Number	058
Legislative Authority	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
Effective Date	

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

Services	Fees
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
*Building Permit Fee – all types of construction	\$0.72 / \$1000 construction value + \$30 administration fee
*Building Permit Renewal Fee	\$30.00 administration fee
*Demolition Permit	\$22.00
*Temporary Structures	\$30.00 administration fee
*Temporary Change of Use	\$30.00 administration fee
*Non -Profit Organizations	\$30.00 administration fee
*Additional Fee that applies to all construction commenced without a Building Permit	\$55.00

*effective date – January 1, 2026

Table 2 Recreation Services Fees

Services	Fees
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

Services	Fees
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
Credit Card Processing Fee	2%

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	July 8, 2025
Date of Council Approval	
Effective Date (if different from Approval Date)	
I certify that this Policy 058 Fees was amended by Municipal Council as indicated above.	
Signature of Municipal Clerk	Date

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 housings, and fax/photocopying fees from tables	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
V9	Add new ballfield fees to Table 2 and defined "charitable cause"; amend EV charging station fee to \$1.50.	March 26, 2024
	Annual Review by Council - Re-adopted	February 25, 2025
V10	Add credit card fee processing fee, effective immediately. Add Building related fees with an effective date of January 1, 2026 and new credit card processing fee	

Finance Committee
 Item #9.2.2
 Date: July 8, 2025
 Authorization: E. Wentzell



The Municipality of the District of Lunenburg Request for Decision

Report to: Finance Committee
Submitted by: Graham Hopkins, Inspection Services Manager
Date: July 8, 2025
Re: Fees Policy Update re Building Fees

Recommendation

Staff recommend that the Committee approve the changes to the Policy 058 Fees to add Building Fees to Planning and Development Services Fees - Table 1, and hereby gives 7 days' notice of Council's intention to amend on July 22, 2025.

Executive summary

n/a

Background

Proposed changes to the Building Code Bylaw will move the fees out of the Bylaw and into the Fees Policy. A change in the method of calculation is required with the implementation of the new e-Permitting Software.

Discussion

As part of the Building Code Bylaw Repeal and Replacement, building permit related fees will be removed from the Building Code Bylaw into Fees Policy 058. Staff recommend removing Appendix A from the current Building Code Bylaw and amending the Fees Policy to add Building Permit Fees to Table 1 – Fees for Planning and Development Services.

A change in the method of calculation is required with the introduction of a new e-Permitting system.

July 8, 2025
 Page 2 of 3

The fee structure will be amended and simplified to be calculated based on estimated cost of construction, rather than square footage.

Staff recommend a uniform rate of .72/\$1000 value of construction, plus an administrative fee of \$30.00. This will generate the same projected revenue as approved in the 2025-2026 Operating Budget.

In comparison, our neighboring municipal units charge \$1.10 / \$1000 (Municipality Of District of Chester), \$3.00 /\$1000 (Town Of Bridgewater), and \$2.00 / \$1000 (Town Of Lunenburg) exclusive of administration or other fees.

Strategic Focus

n/a

Budget/Financial Implications

If Council approves the uniform rate of .72/\$1000 of construction + \$30.00 administration fee, the expected revenue is anticipated to reflect the 2025/2026 projected revenue.

Climate Change/sustainability

n/a

Inclusion Diversity equity and Accessibility (IDEA@MODL)

n/a

Strategic Communications

This change would be clearly communicated to all new permit applicants, contractors and industry contacts. Relevant sections of the website would be updated to reflect this change, as well, permit application forms would be updated.

The new fee structure would be effective January 1, 2026.

Work plan

No anticipated impacts.

Alternatives

Council can direct staff to increase the building permit rate.

Council can direct staff to decrease the building permit rate.

Conclusion

Staff recommend Council approve the fee changes and approve the building permit fee to the uniform rate of 0.72/\$1000 of construction + \$30.00 administration fee.

Report Preparation Department	Building Department
Report Prepared by	Graham Hopkins, Inspection Services Manager
Report Approved by	
Date Reviewed by C.A.O.	

Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

Policy Details	
Name	Fees Policy
Number	058
Legislative Authority	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
Effective Date	February 25, 2025

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

Services	Fees
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
*Building Permit Fee – all types of construction	\$0.72 / \$1000 construction value + \$30 administration fee
*Building Permit Renewal Fee	\$30.00 administration fee
*Demolition Permit	\$22.00
*Temporary Structures	\$30.00 administration fee
*Temporary Change of Use	\$30.00 administration fee
*Non -Profit Organizations	\$30.00 administration fee
*Additional Fee that applies to all construction commenced without a Building Permit	\$55.00
*effective date – January 1, 2026	

Table 2 Recreation Services Fees

Services	Fees
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

Services	Fees
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
Credit Card Processing Fee	1%

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	Date
	February 25, 2025

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

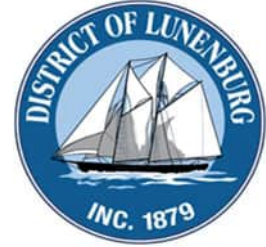
	Effective date for V3	April 1, 2019
V4	Clarity that the 5% administrative fee for Private Road Maintenance & Improvement Charge is not exempted	February 25, 2020
V5	Housekeeping, addition of fee for Electric Vehicle Charger Charging Station	September 14, 2021
V6	Remove MARC housings; and fax/photocopying fees from tables	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
V9	Add new ballfield fees to Table 2 and defined "charitable cause"; amend EV charging station fee to \$1.50.	March 26, 2024
	Annual Review by Council - Re-adopted	February 25, 2025
V10		

Council

Item 10.1.3

Date: July 22, 2025

Authorization: T. MacEwan



The Municipality of the District of Lunenburg Request for Decision

Report to: Municipal Council
Submitted by: Elana Wentzell, Director of Finance
Date: July 22, 2025
Re: Acceptance of Credit Card Payments & Fee Policy 058 Update

Discussion

At the July 8, 2025 Finance Committee Meeting, the Committee made the following motion:

“that the Finance Committee recommends to Council that Municipal Council amend Policy 058 Fees to include a 1% processing fee for credit card payments and hereby gives 7 days’ notice of Council’s intention to approve the amendments to the Policy 058 on July 22, 2025”.

Staff are now recommending that **the fee be changed to 2%** based on the following new information:

Staff were misinformed regarding the rates charged for credit card processing: Moneris charges a rate to process credit cards but this is in addition to the rates charged by individual credit cards companies. The amounts charged by credit card companies, called interchange rates, vary widely, depending on the type of card that is used. These rates are publicly available online and staff have done some additional research. Based on the type card used, the total cost to process most credit cards (VISA and Master Card) is between 1.6% and 2.25%; slightly higher if elite cards are used. American Express averages approximately 2.7%.

Staff feel that a 2% fee would capture the average costs of credit card processing. This fee can be revisited when budgets are prepared next year to ensure it is still appropriate and meets the goal of not adding these additional processing fees to the municipal budget.

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

Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

Policy Details	
Name	Fees Policy
Number	058
Legislative Authority	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
Effective Date	

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

Services	Fees
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
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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
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*effective date – January 1, 2026

Table 2 Recreation Services Fees

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Minor Sport ballfield rentals (18 & under)	Free of charge
Sawpit Floating Docks	\$125.00/season + HST

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Table 3 Administration and Finance Services Fees

Services	Fees
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
Credit Card Processing Fee	2%

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	July 8, 2025
Date of Council Approval	
Effective Date (if different from Approval Date)	
I certify that this Policy 058 Fees was amended by Municipal Council as indicated above.	
Signature of Municipal Clerk	Date

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
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V9	Add new ballfield fees to Table 2 and defined "charitable cause"; amend EV charging station fee to \$1.50.	March 26, 2024
	Annual Review by Council - Re-adopted	February 25, 2025
V10	Add credit card fee processing fee, effective immediately. Add Building related fees with an effective date of January 1, 2026 and new credit card processing fee	



Finance Committee
Item #9.1.2
Date: July 8, 2025
Authorization: E. Wentzell

The Municipality of the District of Lunenburg Request for Decision

Report to: Finance Committee
Submitted by: Elana Wentzell, Director of Finance
Date: July 8, 2025
Re: Acceptance of Credit Card Payments & Fee Policy 058 Update

Recommendation

The Finance Committee recommends that Municipal Council amend Policy 058, Fee Policy to include a 1% processing fee for credit card payments and hereby gives seven days' notice of Council's intention to amend on July 22, 2025.

Background

The Municipality offers several options to residents to pay for property taxes and municipal services. They include cash, debit, cheque, online/telephone banking and pre-authorized debit (TIPP). Historically, credit cards were not accepted due to the high fees associated with processing, however, many residents continue to ask for the option to pay with a credit card. With the implementation of the new Building e-permitting software, a credit card option has to be made available. Staff felt that if credit cards were accepted for building permits, then this payment option should be available for all municipal services including property tax payments.

Discussion

Many other municipal units accept credit card payments and use a 3rd party provider like Paymentus where the option is only available for payments made online. Staff believe that if we accept credit cards as a payment option, it should also be available at the counter and over the telephone.

Staff contacted our current debit card payment provider, Moneris, to explore this option. Not only can Moneris allow for counter and over-the-phone payments, it can also be integrated with the new TownSuite portal, streamlining online property tax payments. Staff have contacted Clariti (the building e-permit software provider) to ensure it can integrate with Moneris as well.

Because Moneris does charge an additional fee for processing a credit card, staff have also provided an update to Fee Policy 058 for consideration.

Strategic Focus

Adding credit card payments to the payment options for residents makes paying for municipal services and property taxes more accessible.

Budget/Financial Implications

There are some additional costs to set up new payment terminals, including a monthly rental fee and a transaction fee. The Municipality already absorbs the fees for the terminal rental and transaction fees for debit payments, the credit card option would add approximately \$700/year to that budget line item. Additionally, Moneris charges a 0.59% fee for processing credit cards. Staff recommend that a rate approximating this additional cost should be passed on to the customer. Staff performed a jurisdictional scan: other municipal units charge a convenience fee between 1.75% and 2.5%. Based on the additional cost of accepting credit cards, staff recommend that MODL charges a 1% fee to process them.

Climate Change/sustainability

N/A

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA@MODL)

N/A

Strategic Communications

The change will be advertised on our website, social media channels, municipal newsletters and if the payment option is set up in time, on the back of the final tax bills.

Work plan

This implementation can be accommodated with existing staff resources.

Alternatives

The new Building e-permitting software requires a credit card payment provider; Council could decide not to accept credit cards as a payment option for other municipal services. Another option is to absorb the costs of processing credit card payments and change no additional fees.

Conclusion

Staff believe that offering a credit card payment option to municipal residents would add to the level of service we provide; and charging a convenience fee would align with how other municipal units deal with credit card payments.

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

Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

Policy Details	
Name	Fees Policy
Number	058
Legislative Authority	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
Effective Date	February 25, 2025

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- 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

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Variance	\$79.00
Zoning Certificate	\$53.00

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Services	Fees
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Services	Fees
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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

Credit Card Processing Fee

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

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

Date

February 25, 2025

Version Amendment Description Approval Date

Original V1	Amendment Description	Approval Date
V2	Policy 058 fees Fees for development related applications – planning areas	January 11, 2011 May 10, 2011
V3	Allows for all fees, except those included in other by-laws in one policy, and fee increases	February 12, 2019
V4	Effective date for V3	April 1, 2019
V5	Clarity that the 5% administrative fee for Private Road Maintenance & Improvement Charge is not exempted	February 25, 2020
V6	Housekeeping, addition of fee for Electric Vehicle Charger Charging Station	September 14, 2021
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V8	Effective date of V6	April 1, 2022
V9	Add Sawpit Floating Dock fees to Table 2, Recreation	January 10, 2023
V10	Add Potable Water Supply Upgrade and Clean Energy Financing administration fees to Table 3.	July 25, 2023

V9	Add new ballfield fees to Table 2 and defined "charitable cause"; amend EV charging station fee to \$1.50.	March 26, 2024
V10	Annual Review by Council - Re-adopted	February 25, 2025

Proposed

Council
Item 11.1.1
Date: July 22, 2025
Authorization: T. MacEwan



The Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

Request for Decision

Report to: Council
Submitted by: Trudy Payne, Director of Recreation, Parks and Tourism
Date: July 22, 2025
Re: Quality of Life

Recommendation

Move that Council authorize staff to implement the Designing for Belonging training and the subsequent community of practice/network workshop using \$8,000 from the Recreation Department budget and \$35,000 in federal and provincial grants for a maximum budget of \$43,000.

Executive summary

Following the 2024 Municipal Elections, Council identified 5 strategic priorities including one on Quality of Life: Programs and services to maintain and improve affordability and quality of life for our residents. This report is intended to allow Council to hold an informed discussion on how quality of life issues are being addressed by municipal services currently and explores possible directions for council discussion on enhancements.

In a review of literature, research, and programs, staff have adopted a working definition of quality of life: an individual's perception of their position and comfort in the context of their material comfort, health, social connection and well-being. The report then examines supports offered by the municipality in improving quality of life using the Engage Nova Scotia wellbeing framework, including Education, Living standards, Healthy populations, Time use, Leisure and culture, Our environment, Democratic engagement, and Community vitality.

Following the overview of existing services, the report examines themes from literature, the current landscape in Lunenburg County, and the Recreation Department's extensive experience in community development. Some preliminary analysis for Council's consideration include:

- Lunenburg County community have much going on and are resilient; however, community work often happens in silos.
- Halls are vibrant and critical hubs for our communities.
- Volunteerism is changing and in decline and highly reliant on core, very active members.
- As our population becomes more diverse, we must help our community organizations remain welcoming, inclusive and accepting.
- Funding needs to be flexible and sustainable and simple to apply for.
- Community organizations benefit from networking navigation and coordination as well as grant funding.
- Increased collaboration will be critical as costs increase and volunteer capacity decreases.

Based on the research and analysis staff have developed some possible directions to stimulate Council's discussion, including:

- Working with Engage NS on their Quality of Life survey;
- Complete a community asset mapping process;
- Invest and expand on the Project Volunteer work MODL has underway;
- Establish a community group networking and/or working group to share learnings, resources and incubate new collaborative work;
- Investigate a more formal navigator service for volunteer groups in the Municipality; and/or
- Undertake a review and expansion of the community grant program.

Finally, through a previous grant application for a project which is not proceeding, MODL has \$43,000 available for an immediate project for connecting seniors in our communities. Staff are recommending using an experiential learning course developed by University of New Brunswick called Designing for Belonging to bring together and train community leaders, which would be followed by a facilitated community of practice to bring community members together, increase collaboration and deliver more inclusive and welcoming community facilities and programming.

Staff are seeking two outcomes from Council at this time: 1) An in-depth council discussion to guide a subsequent report on concrete actions related to quality-of-life work and 2) approval for the use of grant funds for the Designing for Belonging project.

Background

Introduction

During the strategic planning sessions held by the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg in 2024-2025 Council identified social isolation, eroding community fabric, and disconnected communities as prevalent issues. As a result, Council established two strategic priorities to help make improvement in these areas. They are:

1. **Quality of Life** – Programs and services to maintain and improve affordability and quality of life for our residents. The goal is to help address loneliness, reconnect with community, and improve social inclusion. It was recognized that providing recreation and culture opportunities and parks are venues that can be used to help address these issues. Also, encompassed in this strategic priority is to celebrate and preserve communities.
2. **Communication & Engagement:** this priority focuses on rebuilding a strong community fabric.

Staff were directed to bring back an options paper that could help make improvements in these areas and to recommend possible approaches for Council’s consideration.

Before presenting possible options, some key terms and definitions will be outlined, along with quality of life or well-being frameworks, and an overview of what is currently happening in the Municipality to help improve residents’ quality of life.

Definitions and Key Terms

- **Quality of Life**

World Health Organization (W.H.O.) – “an individual’s perception of their position in life in context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns”. ¹

Federal Government in its “Toward a Quality of Life Strategy for Canada”, April 19, 2021 - “the wealth and comfort of individuals based on both material and non-material factors that are important to people’s lives, such as health, social connections and material comfort”. ²

- **Social Inclusion**

¹ World Health Organization

² Toward a Quality of Life Strategy for Canada, April 19, 2021, Department of Finance Canada, p 6

Social inclusion is “the process by which efforts are made to ensure equal opportunities – that everyone, regardless of their background, can achieve their full potential in life. Such efforts include policies and actions that promote equal access to (public) services as well as enable citizen’s participation in the decision-making processes that affect their lives.”³

- **Loneliness**

BMC Public Health Review- “as an unpleasant feeling that people experience when they perceive their social relationships to be qualitatively or quantitatively inadequate” and further states “the quality, rather than the quantity, of social relationships plays a greater role in loneliness”.⁴

- **Social Isolation**

BMC Public Health Review - This same review quotes Nicholson Jr. who defines social isolation as - “a state in which the individual lacks a sense of belonging socially, lacks engagement with others, has a minimal number of social contacts, and they are deficient in fulfilling and quality relationships”.⁵

This does not mean necessarily that a person suffering from loneliness is socially isolated or that someone socially isolated is suffering from loneliness.

- **Wellbeing**

The Canadian Index of Wellbeing - “the presence of the highest possible quality of life in its full breadth of expression focused on but not necessarily exclusive to: good living standards, robust health, sustainable environment, vital communities, an educated populace, balanced time use, high levels of democratic participation, and access to and participation in leisure and culture”.⁶

- **Community Fabric**

The interconnected network of social relationships, institutions, and shared values that support a community’s ability to maintain ecological balance, economic viability, and social equity over time. It represents the collective strength and resilience derived from collaboration, mutual support, and a shared commitment to sustainable practices. This fabric is strengthened by

³ United Nations

⁴ BMC Public Health Review

⁵ BMC Public Health Review, p 2

⁶ The Canadian Index of Wellbeing

inclusive governance, diverse participation, and the preservation of cultural heritage, all contributing to a community's long-term well-being.⁷

International, National, Provincial and Municipal Well-Being Frameworks

“Covid 19 has demonstrated that what matters most to Canadians is not always easily measured or described in economic or financial terms. In addition to the health and safety of Canadians, the crisis has drawn attention to a range of quality of life issues such as mental health, family violence, access to green space, social connections, job security, access to childcare and the quality of long-term care. It has also highlighted longstanding inequalities, low-paid essential work, gender imbalances in caregiving responsibilities, and gaps in Canada's social safety net”.⁸ (page 4)

The United Kingdom, Scotland, Germany, Iceland, New Zealand and Canada have established Quality of Life or Well-Being Frameworks that measure social progress. While the domains, levels or categories and indicators outlined in each country's framework may not be exactly the same, there are many similarities across all the frameworks. Encompassed in each framework in some shape or form are domains that focus on: Education, Economics, Leisure and Culture, Communities, Health, Governance, Living Standards, Relationships and Social Connections, Human Rights and Equality and Time Use. Appendix A provides a snapshot of each country's framework.

The United Nations, which is an international organization founded in 1945, with a current membership of 193 member states, has established Sustainable Development Goals. There are seventeen goals that align well with the Quality of Life or Well-being Frameworks. Some of these goals include no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education and reduced inequalities to name a few. (To view all 17 goals, see Appendix B).

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development has created 'The OECD Better Life Index' which consists of eleven domains. Again, domains that align well with other countries and organizations Quality of Life or Well-being Frameworks. They state on their website that “there is more to life than the cold numbers of GDP and economic statistics.”⁹

Focusing on the Canadian Federal Government's “**Toward a Quality of Life Strategy**”, this document outlines a wellbeing framework in which they have established five domains:

⁷ Sustainability Directory

⁸ The Canadian Index of Wellbeing

⁹ www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org

prosperity, good governance, health, society and environment. The framework also includes subdomains, 84 indicators and **two cross-cutting lenses which are Fairness and Inclusion and Sustainability and Resilience.** Examples of some of the indicators within the framework are:

- access to high-speed internet,
- household wealth,
- employment,
- core housing needs,
- poverty,
- food insecurity,
- confidence in institutions,
- discrimination and unfair treatment,
- physical activity,
- participation in cultural, religious practices, recreation or sport,
- sense of belonging to local community,
- volunteering,
- satisfaction with personal relationships,
- loneliness,
- accessible environments,
- climate change adaptation,
- natural disasters and emergencies,
- active living environments,
- access to public transit,
- greenhouse gas emissions,
- waste management,
- and marine and coastal ecosystems

For a full listing please refer to the Infosheet: Quality of Life Framework for Canada attached in Appendix C.

The Canadian Well-Being Index (CIW) initiated by the Atkinson Foundation “recognized the need to create an independent and credible national voice to measure the economic, health, social, and environmental well-being of Canadians”.¹⁰ The CIW developed a Community Well-being survey in 2012 and has completed a number of surveys in several provinces, in communities and municipalities. They have produced index reports for Newfoundland and

¹⁰ Uwaterloo.ca/Canadian-index-wellbeing

Labrador, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Nova Scotia; and have also produced a series of regional portrait reports for several communities in Ontario and for Wood Buffalo, Alberta.

Engage Nova Scotia, which is a non-profit group in Nova Scotia, has developed a Wellbeing Framework which was created through their research partner, the Canadian Index of Wellbeing. The eight domains Engage NS uses are the ones established by the Canadian Wellbeing Index, which are:

1. Education
2. Living standards
3. Healthy populations
4. Time use
5. Leisure and culture
6. Our environment
7. Democratic engagement
8. Community vitality

In June 2018 Engage NS released the Nova Scotia Quality of Life Index and in 2019 undertook a survey in May and June. The survey consisted of 230 questions and over 12,000 Nova Scotians participated. The province was broken down into regions in which the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg falls within the Lunenburg/Queens Region. Of the over 12,000 respondents, 786 surveys were received from the Lunenburg/Queens region. They plan to repeat this survey in the fall of 2025 in which updated data will be available. The intent is to send each resident in Nova Scotia an invitation to participate in the survey through mail.

Although the domains used in the Federal Government's "Toward a Quality of Life Strategy for Canada" are not exactly the same as the domains used in the Engage NS Wellbeing Framework there is definitely alignment.

Current Situation (What is happening)

For this report, to help align what the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg and many other organizations are currently doing to help improve residents and communities' quality of life, within a quality of life framework, the domains outlined in the Engage NS Framework were used. Each domain will be described as outlined in the framework.

- 1. Education** – “Thriving societies encourage a thirst for knowledge at every stage of life. Education explores access to formal education, retraining and the opportunities to take courses of interest as well as traditional and cultural learnings”.¹¹

Although the Municipality plays very little role in formal education, courses of interest as well as cultural learnings are provided through recreation. Examples of such learning opportunities include:

- Cooking Classes
- Art Classes
- Food Handlers Courses
- Wilderness Survival
- Guided Plant Walks
- Basic Fire Lighting (for campfires)
- Red Cross Stay Safe Courses
- Babysitting Courses
- Canoeing/kayaking/skiing/snowshoeing
- Lifeguarding/Swim instructor training

A number of organizations within the Municipality also provide courses of interest as well as traditional and cultural learnings.

There are several formal education institutions in the District of Lunenburg:

- 6 Public Elementary Schools
- 3 P-9
- 2 High Schools
- 1 Private School

Additionally, there is the Nova Scotia Community College located in the Town of Bridgewater, and a number of businesses provide some of their own training that creates employment such as Dexter’s Construction. There are also organizations that support those looking for employment or requiring further training such as the Employment Solutions Society.

The Municipality worked extensively in helping to ensure residents have access to **high-speed internet** which would support the many children, youth and adult learners in the district. Access to high-speed internet also supports businesses and economic growth.

¹¹ www.engagenovascotia.ca/eight-domains-of-wellbeing

- 2. Living Standards** – “Adequate living standards are important to our overall wellbeing. Feeling in control of factors in our lives such as the type of work we do, our safety, and the ability to pay rent all contribute to quality of life”.¹²

The Municipality is not responsible for setting minimum wage or responsible for housing. In saying this the Municipality as an employer ensures at a minimum, they are paying a living wage to full-time employees. The Municipality has a targeted Property Tax Rebate program for residential property owners. This program helps lower-income households by providing property tax relief in the form of a rebate on the final tax bill.

The Municipality also has a Dry Wells Financing Program. Dry summers are becoming more frequent and as a result more residents are experiencing water issues. The Municipality has two programs that can be called on to help residents, the Dry Well Program where free water coupons for redemption at local retailers are provided to those experiencing dry wells and the Potable Water Supply Upgrade Lending Program, launched in 2023, to help residents permanently improve their potable water supply.

Providing public transit is not only great for the environment but certainly can improve individuals' quality of life, especially for those that do not have access to a vehicle. Lunenburg County Wheels, a door-to-door service, has expanded to provide services throughout the district and with grants provided by the Municipality has kept user fees down. The Municipality is also working with the Town of Bridgewater to provide a route to Wileville, Hebbville, and Osprey Village.

Six electric bikes are being purchased by the Municipality to be loaned in partnership with the Lunenburg County Lifestyle Centre and the South Shore Regional Library. The library's bookmobile will bring a bike to communities for loan just like they would a book making this program more accessible to residents. Lunenburg County Wheels also has a bike rack on their buses (funding provided by MODL) for those wanting to use their bike for part of the trip.

There are several organizations, agencies and businesses that support or advocate for those needing housing - South Shore Open Doors Society and the South Shore Housing Action Coalition are examples.

Food security is often an indicator of living standards. It is mainly through non-profit groups such as the local food banks, community cupboards/fridges and associations like We Feed Lunenburg that assist many residents in providing food to help meet their needs.

¹² www.engagenovascotia.ca/eight-domains-of-wellbeing

A number of groups also provide education around creating healthy meals on a budget or how to prepare healthy meals. One organization offered a course in making healthy meals using a crock pot. Participants prepared crock-pot meals and were able to take the meal and the crock pot home to encourage making healthy meals at home.

The YMCA has a Y Home delivery service providing free delivery of groceries to those 55+, those living with mobility issues and vulnerable adults. These deliveries are made by Y volunteers. With their program, YReach, they provide services for newcomers around school settlement, employment, education navigation and language services.

Lunenburg County VON also provides a meals-on-wheels service delivering hot meals to their clients.

St. Vincent de Paul Society helps those in need, with rent, food, electricity, and can even help with furniture – anything that supports people in their day-to-day lives. The Salvation Army also offers unprecedented support to society’s most vulnerable.

Agriculture

The Municipality has been working with the agriculture community with the goal of helping small scale farming grow which enhances food security, more local food for the citizens of the District which adds to the resiliency to the local food supply chain. Some of these initiatives undertaken include;

1. Evaluate a farmers’ market for Osprey Village
2. Feasibility study for a Food Hub for the District
3. Financially supporting the feasibility study for the expansion of the Bridgewater’s farmer’s market.
4. Agriculture Days - the annual agriculture days conference is a celebration of small scale farming and agriculture enterprises along the South Shore. It’s a collaboration between the District of Lunenburg, Municipality of Chester, Region of Queens, NS Department of Agriculture, Invest NS and South Shore Opportunities. The event blends together some of the best current thinking on agriculture topics with inspirational stories of success and development in the sector and how it could apply to the local agriculture community. This aligns with the goal of growing the agriculture sector through collaboration, subject matter experts, education and attraction of agriculture to the region.

3. Healthy Populations – “considers self-reported mental health and physical health. It looks at the quality of and access to healthcare services and the lifestyle behaviors of a population.”¹³

Again, healthcare is not a municipal responsibility, but some services and programs offered within the Municipality do contribute to healthy populations. The following are some of the strategies, programs and services offered:

- The Municipality employs an Active Living Coordinator responsible for implementing the Active Living Strategy and the Active Transportation Strategy. Some examples of initiatives by the Active Living Coordinator include:
 - Cycling for All Abilities program where a community member with physical limitations can use an accessible e-bike, cycled by a MODL staff trained pilot, around our trail system and accompanied by residents of a nursing home in another accessible e-bike.
 - Another example is partnering to bring walking programs to nursing homes and to bring residents out to municipal parks for walks.
- The Municipality are partners in the Community Hub which will see health care providers, other than physicians, working out of that space. The Municipality will be providing community space from the Hub.
- The Municipality partners with all municipal units in Lunenburg County hiring an Accessibility Coordinator and adopting an Accessibility Plan. Specific actions the District of Lunenburg have, are working on and plan to take form part of this Plan.
- The Municipality provides a variety of physical activity programs such as yoga classes, beach volleyball, drop-in sport programs, adaptive sport programs, and bicycle scavenger hunts to name a few throughout the year and throughout the Municipality.
- The Municipality provides a variety of mental health programs such as the Memory Café, community campfires, and beach yoga.
- The Municipality provides an Equipment Loan Program – such as skis, snowshoes, large board games, adaptive equipment, and a hippocamp.
- The Municipality offers an extensive park system, some providing for more passive recreation while others encouraging more physical activity such as softball, swimming and disc golf.
- The Municipality manages PRO Kids/PRO Fund Programs which financially support children and adults to participate in sport, recreation and cultural activities who otherwise would not be able to.

¹³ www.engagenovascotia.ca/eight-domains-of-wellbeing

- The Municipality is planning to develop a public art policy and to develop an Arts and Culture Strategy.
- The Municipality provides funding for the Lunenburg County Seniors' Safety Program. This program helps seniors live safely, securely and independently in their own homes. They provide a number of free services such as home visits, safety presentations, driving safety, and senior friendly programs.
- The VON "provide innovative, clinical, personal and social support to people who want the comfort and peace of mind of living in their own home and communities." ¹⁴ They offer a number of programs that help with social connections such as their Adult Day Program, dining programs, exercise and fall prevention classes, meals on wheels delivering hot meals to folks, volunteer visiting programs and transportation services.
- Public Health has recently initiated community conversations called "Thinking Beyond Band-aids. The initial conversations topics raised included housing, food, diversity and inclusion, income, violence prevention and safety, accessibility, mental health and addiction and social isolation are being raised which aligns with some of the domains and indicators outlined in the quality of life and well being indexes.

4. Time Use – "Feeling in control of our time is important to our quality of life. Time use asks us to consider how often we work and whether we have enough time to do the things we love".¹⁵

The Municipality offers a wide variety of programs for preschoolers to seniors and everyone in between. Programs need to fit in people's calendars, and it is recognized this can be a challenge for some. The Municipality provides free/low-cost recreation opportunities so people have access to quality programs and spaces in their leisure time.

The majority of the district's parks and trails enable people to reconnect with nature and participate in leisure activities such as walking, photography, geocaching, and swimming at a time that works for them.

Community groups also offer a wide variety of programs and services such as the South Shore Regional Library, the Lunenburg County YMCA, HB Studio Sports Centre, and the many community halls that offer programs or provide space for others to do so.

It is recognized the economic and employment trends which require people to work. Some may work two jobs due to economic circumstances beyond their control.

¹⁴ <https://von.ca>

¹⁵ www.engagenovascotia.ca/eight-domains-of-wellbeing

Individuals and families often create their own recreation activities that aid in supporting their mental, emotional and physical health. Some examples are sitting down to a good book, painting, pottery, or online gaming.

5. Leisure and Culture – “Access to opportunities for creative expression, physical activity and cultural learning encourage the full expression of a person and a community’s identity. It fosters a sense of belonging and allows participants to build relationships”.

The Municipality issues quarterly program brochures every year, and each season offers a variety of different program options. Many of these are free, or at very low cost, and cater for all demographics, offering a variety of activities to suit every interest. Participating in recreation programs have proven to be effective in meeting new people, engaging with friends and making new friends – essentially maintaining and building relationships. Examples of programs offered include:

- Seniors Corn boil
- Seniors Mussel Bake
- Family Fun Days
- Annual Easter Egg Hunt
- Memory Cafes
- Take the Roof Off Winter programs
- Winter Socials (board games, puzzles)
- Bus Trips
- Sensory-Friendly Family Swims

Again, there are several organizations that also provide leisure and culture opportunities such as the Lunenburg County Lifestyle Centre, South Shore Players, sport groups and businesses such as fitness centres.

6. Our Environment – “This domain focusses on our ability to enjoy our natural environment and our practices to support, and appreciate, the natural world. We rely on nature to support local livelihoods, as well as enrich our physical and spiritual wellbeing”.¹⁶

▪ **Parks & Trails**

The Municipality has an extensive park system with most owned and managed by the Municipality, some owned by the Municipality but managed and operated by non-profit groups, provincial day parks and parks owned and managed by non-profit groups. These parks provide

¹⁶ www.engagenovascotia.ca/eight-domains-of-wellbeing

many great water views, mountain bike trails, sport fields, trails, playgrounds and opportunities for swimming, boating, fishing, canoeing/kayaking, places to picnic, photography or just to relax and enjoy a good book. A number of accessibility upgrades have been made and continue to be made at MODL parks including accessible trails, vault washrooms, picnic areas, shaded areas, a Mobi-mat at Mushamush, an accessible canoe/kayak launch at Miller Point Peace Park, and more rest stops.

The Municipality is also very fortunate to have a number of dedicated volunteer trail groups who maintain and manage the rail-to-trail network within the Municipality.

- **Conservation**

The Municipality has partnered with non-profit organizations such as the Mahone Bay Island Conservation Association, the Nova Scotia Nature Trust and the Kingsburg Coastal Conservancy to protect and conserve properties such as islands and wetlands.

The Municipality recently approved a conservation policy and is working towards developing a conservation strategy.

- **Climate Change**

In 2019 the Municipality declared a climate emergency and developed the Local Climate Change Action Plan 2023 as part of its commitment to act on climate change. The plan is a 10-year strategic action plan that provides the guiding framework for the Municipality to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 and supports a climate-resilient, healthier and sustainable future.

The Municipality is part of the Clean Energy Financing Program which helps a municipality provide low interest financing to qualifying homeowners interested in undertaking clean energy upgrades. Once the upgrades are completed, the homeowner repays the municipality over time on their property tax bill.

- **Coastal Protection**

In 2024, Council passed second reading to amend its Municipal Planning Strategy and introduced a new municipal-wide Land Use By-Law that includes coastal protection regulations. The regulations aim to protect coastal development from the effects of climate change and to protect the coastline from human development by addressing concerns such as coastal erosion, flooding, and the preservation of sensitive ecosystems.

- **Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA)**

Last year the Municipality budgeted funds to undertake a hemlock tree inventory and assessment in municipally owned parks to determine whether the woolly adelgid bug exists. Funds have also been allocated this year.

- **Regional Emergency Measures Organization (REMO)**

The Municipality is a partner in the Regional Emergency Measures Organization. This organization assesses emergencies through an “all-hazard approach” of prevention and mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. A Regional Emergency Response Plan has been developed to guide actions and decisions during an emergency response.

- **Waste Management**

The Municipality of the District of Lunenburg is a partner in the Municipal Joint Services Board in which one of the services they provide to residents is waste management. Their mission is “to provide our stakeholders with the optimal environment and economic benefits associated with responsible waste management by ensuring the efficient operation of the Lunenburg Regional Community Recycling Centre, maximum diversion from landfill, courteous service to the public and by providing incentives and education services to encourage the community to reduce waste, reuse wherever possible, and recycle and compost correctly.”¹⁷

Recently the Municipality signed on to the Extended Producer Responsibility program which will see producers bear the costs and responsibility for products at the end of life creating a revenue stream for municipalities that can be used towards improving services for residents.

Council also approved covering the disposal costs of brush removal from residential properties to minimize wildfire risk.

- **LaHave River Straight Pipe Replacement Program**

LaHave River Straight Pipe Replacement Program implemented from 2017-2023 successfully removed discharge from 357 properties from flowing into the LaHave River within the boundaries of the Municipality’s Wastewater Management District. Removing raw effluent from the environment improves water quality, enabling residents to safely carry out secondary contact recreation activities such as canoeing, kayaking and fishing.

¹⁷ Communityrecycling.ca/about.us

▪ **Waste Water Treatment**

The Municipality has three wastewater treatment facilities: Cookville, Conquerall Bank and New Germany. The district also has a collection system in Hebbville that is discharged to the Town of Bridgewater's collection system where it gets treated.

Cookville has about 18 connections serving both residential and commercial developments, Conquerall Bank has about 33 connections serving mostly residential, and New Germany has about 264 connections serving both residential and commercial. Note: a connection can represent a number of users such as in an apartment building.

The upgrade to the Cookville Treatment Facility would see the expansion of the existing treatment processes to accommodate the higher anticipated flows due to increased development in the Cookville area.

▪ **Litter Clean-up**

Through Municipal Joint Services, the Municipality sponsors a litter clean-up grant program which supports community groups in their efforts to keep the municipality free of litter.

7. Democratic Engagement – “It’s important that community members are able to participate, debate, and advocate in ways they want. It is also where governments actively build trusting relationships, and shared responsibility with the communities they serve”.¹⁸

This election saw a 45.4% voter turnout, up from 43.9% in the 2020 election. Of the ten districts, eight had more than one candidate running and the mayoral race had two candidates.

Council has 15 minutes allocated before each Committee and Council meetings for public input. If questions are raised during public input Council has made a commitment to seek a response and to provide it publicly at one of these meetings to form part of the public record.

Council now holds one of the two council meetings a month during the evening to provide those who work during the day with the opportunity to attend council meetings.

Council meetings are streamed live via YouTube and are recorded for people to watch at a time that is convenient to them.

Presentations are also welcomed. Dates and allocated times just need to be booked in advance.

¹⁸ www.engagenovascotia.ca/eight-domains-of-wellbeing

Communication and Public Engagement

Council has identified communication and engagement as one of its strategic priorities, which has resulted in more public consultation happening for various projects. When residents expressed concerns about MODL 2040, the mandatory planning regulations that need to be in place as mandated by the province, weekly opportunities, some in person and other virtual public sessions, were offered to ensure ample opportunities for the public to provide their input and feedback. An estimated 850 residents attended these sessions providing vital input.

Effective communication and public engagement are crucial to strong local governance. This spring, the Municipality conducted a Communication and Public Engagement Survey to better understand how residents prefer to receive information and participate in municipal initiatives. The survey received 718 responses, providing valuable feedback on current practices and areas for improvement. Based on survey results, and considering print lead times, staff capacity, and available space, several recommendations have been identified to improve *Municipal Matters*, our primary print communication piece delivered to all MODL residents, that are expected to result in improved communication and public engagement.

1. Cover the Topics People Ask For — Especially Engagement, Housing, Jobs, and Environment

Why: These four topics dominated open-ended survey responses.

Addition: Develop a recurring editorial calendar:

- **Spring:** Community groups, economic development, employment programs
- **Summer:** Housing updates, recreation, tourism
- **Fall:** Environmental initiatives, volunteer highlights
- **Winter:** Council priorities, budget updates, public consultations

2. Include a Resident or Volunteer Spotlight in Every Issue

Why: Readers expressed a desire for more community storytelling and volunteer recognition.

Addition: Dedicate a 1/4 page profile in each issue to feature a resident, youth, community group, or volunteer, including a photo and a quote.

Additionally, we are investing in more print direct mail pieces, more radio and digital advertising, and exploring the development of a municipal app, all in effort to share MODL news more widely.

This Council has stated that communication, meaningful and respectful exchanges with residents and transparency are important to good governance and have taken steps to engage with residents.

8. Community Vitality – “Trust and close relationships with neighbors, family and friends strengthens the social fabric of communities. The way they feel about your community – sense of belonging contributes to your quality of life”.¹⁹

▪ **Recreation and Parks**

The recreation and parks programs and services play a significant role in community vitality. It is often through recreation, sports, culture, and events that people stay connected with friends and family or develop new relationships. Being socially connected can help people feel less lonely and less socially isolated. The Municipality plays a vital supportive role to our local Trail Associations. Support is provided financially through contributing funds for trail work and allocating staff personnel as the main support for their operations. Our Director of Recreation, Parks and Tourism also provides advice and guidance to our communities and organizations.

▪ **Anti-Racism and Diversity Coordinator**

The Municipality has partnered in hiring a Regional Anti-Racism and Diversity Coordinator. An anti-racism and anti-discrimination advisory committee has been formed to advise the respective administrations and elected bodies to advance, strengthen, support and unify the five municipal units in adopting and implementing anti-racism and anti-discrimination initiatives throughout Lunenburg County.

▪ **Volunteers**

With all eight domains non-profit community groups and volunteers play a significant role, but especially within the community vitality domain. Community halls, churches, parks, trails, service groups like the YMCA and Flourish provide programs and services that help to strengthen community vitality.

There are so many ways non-profit and community groups contribute to Quality of Life.

The Municipality recognizes the immense and vital role volunteers play in impacting positively the quality of life in communities. Understanding this, the Municipality supports volunteers directly in a number of ways.

¹⁹ www.engagenovascotia.ca/eight-domains-of-wellbeing

- Offers an extensive grant program- funding programs, annual operating costs, events and capital projects.
- Supports Volunteer Fire Departments through a grant program.
- Provides funding for generators for comfort centres to be established
- Funds a litter clean-up program.

Indirectly, staff support community groups through a variety of ways such as:

- Assisting them in seeking other funding opportunities outside of municipal funding
- Assisting with strategic planning
- Working with them through the joint stock's registration process
- Providing general guidance

The Municipality has also worked extensively with fire departments, providing support through the Fire Services Coordinator. A Fire Service *Recruitment and Retention Strategy* has been developed, leadership training offered, and a Training Strategy is currently under development.

▪ **Project Volunteer**

Project Volunteer is an inter-municipal initiative aiming to bring back the buzz of volunteering in Lunenburg and Queens Counties. Project Volunteer was launched last year in partnership with Lunenburg/Queens Recreation Directors/Coordinators Association and began with a survey which was open to local volunteer organizations. The survey results identified several challenges groups were commonly facing and determined areas where they needed training and support. To spread the word about volunteer groups in Lunenburg/Queens, and to help with their recruitment, Project Volunteer spotlights three organizations in the quarterly recreation program brochure and features them in municipal matters. In addition, an email list has also been created to share information and learning opportunities with volunteer groups. Based on information gathered from the survey a Volunteer Summit is being held November 8, 2025, at the Nova Scotia Community College, Bridgewater, offering several workshops on subjects where groups most need help. It is hoped that we will have 100 volunteers registered for this day of learning, sharing and connecting.

▪ **Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) at MODL**

MODL is committed to making our communities more inclusive, diverse, equitable, and accessible. IDEA at MODL reflects the commitment to advancing inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility of equity-deserving groups. The plan incorporates the principles of the *Accessibility for Nova Scotians Act*, the *Dismantling Racism and Hate Act*, *Count Us In: Nova Scotia's Action*

Plan in Response to the International Decade for People of African Descent, and the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Actions.

The IDEA at MODL Plan aims to advance an environment with a fundamental shared commitment to respectful engagement and human dignity.

▪ **Communities Making Connections - Examples**

There are a number of examples in the Municipality and in this province where individuals and community groups are making a difference in strengthening the social fabric of communities. Some examples are:

❖ **New Germany Community Café**

In New Germany the local Anglican Church started the Community Café which currently attracts between 60-80 people on average at the Church Hall every Thursday morning from 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. This idea started in 2018 with the local minister asking some folks what the church could be doing to bring people together. The idea of having coffee and muffins at the hall to have people gather was born. The first week they had four people, so they invited a few more. Over time, mainly through word of mouth, they have created a welcoming space for long-term residents and newcomers. They recognize because the community café is held in the morning most people coming are seniors, those retired and shift workers. They have created a children's play corner which is welcoming for parents with small children.

The Café has grown organically in that the hall does not need a sign-up sheet to see who is bringing food, it just arrives. Volunteers also just show up to help in the kitchen. McDonalds donates the coffee each week. They also have people who naturally greet and welcome people. Someone is not sitting long by themselves when a greeter engages with them. One thing they discovered was that people wanted name tags, so they ensure they have them for each person every week.

One year, Boxing Day fell on a Thursday, and they assumed the café wouldn't run that week—but people still wanted it, so they went ahead and held it, and it turned out to be a great success.

On occasion they have enabled groups to come and speak, such as the Souls Harbour Walk and the Education Centre on needs of local schools.

Other partnerships have grown due to this initiative. The 644 Revitalization Network has a community fridge/freezer at the back of the hall, which is stocked monthly with frozen meals for those in need.

The Café has demonstrated the need for people to connect and feel welcomed in their community.

❖ **Riverport – Food Vibes**

“Food Vibes’ vision is vibrant communities where intergenerational relationships thrive. There is a deep pool of gifts, skills, interest, and goodwill waiting to be released into every community.”²⁰

Their goal is to increase community involvement and encourage social innovation, one community at a time.

They host shared-food experiences to attract and engage people looking for quality connections and interactions in their community, people who are curious about sharing their time, talent, and resources to build a more vibrant place to live.

They also help community groups and local residents launch community projects. They can assist with process design, facilitation, volunteer management, administration, resources, evaluation and community research. They concentrate their support on the critical early development stages of community collaborations.

Some of our activity since July 2023 as outlined on their website

- A Pie Making Bee to learn and connect and share pies with the community.
- Co-convened a meeting of community groups in the area to begin building a collective vision and share resources.
- Recruited 32 new volunteers for community initiatives.
- Transformation of an upstairs room at the Riverport Community Center for multi-use eg. meetings, parents and tots.
- Informal breakfast thank you for community volunteers and those curious about contributing to the community.
- Recruited additional volunteers for the community’s annual Gold Rush Auction.
- Curated and host an Art Show for Kingsburg Coastal Conservancy.

²⁰ Foodvibescommunity.com

- Helped to clear out an upstairs room at the Community Centre to make room for the new office of the Kingsburg Coastal Conservancy.
- Hosted two Community Brunches.
- Database of interested community volunteers established

❖ **Front Street Oven – Wolfville, NS**

This group approached the Town of Wolfville Council who helped install a community oven in one of their parks. From May to October a group of volunteers host a pizza-making event every Thursday night where community members are encouraged to come with their pizza toppings (dough provided) and make and bake their pizza and enjoy food and company in the park. They have approximately 150 people attend each week.

❖ **Mahone Bay United – Mahone Bay, NS**

This non-profit organization began about seven years ago with the principle to make sure all kids can play soccer. They started out with about 15 kids registered and now they are up to about 350 members. With the support of volunteers and businesses they are able to make this an inclusive soccer club for anyone who loves soccer. There is no obligation to pay to play. Part of their goal is to make soccer culturally acceptable and financially accessible. Three years into the program they conducted an evaluation, and the top three responses were:

1. Participants reported having a sense of belonging with the club
2. The confidence of the youth had grown and not only with soccer but in many facets of their lives
3. Their skills in soccer got better

Founder Tim Merry expresses that soccer is a vehicle. They are a community organization through which they help build community and develop young people.

The model that the Mahone Bay United has created and nurtured over the past seven years is a model others look closely at, as the results of a happy and connected club are evident. As one parent stated, the club is all about loving what kids are doing (soccer), playing and being on the field with friends.

We know and recognize there are many more examples of community organizations doing great work, connecting communities and playing a vital role in contributing to the quality of life of residents and communities. These initiatives were highlighted to provide a snapshot of the great work already being done.

Analysis

Working in the field of recreation and community development a number of observations have been made that Council may find helpful when thinking about options or actions the Municipality could take to help improve the quality of life of individuals and communities in the district. They are:

- Organizations tend to work in silos which include governments, agencies, and non-profit groups. This can often result in duplication or not as effective use of resources.
- The further away from the 'urban core' communities and groups are more self-sufficient and independent. Neighbours tend to help neighbours. There is less reliance on government.
- Community groups do need funding support, but they also often need a helping hand to help navigate them through the system, and not only to help seek funding.
- A challenge, and not a sustainable model, is that most funding is capital in nature or project specific, with very little flexibility. Funding programs often reflect the funders' needs or criteria and not those of the organization or community. MODL is one of the few organizations that provide funding for day-to-day operations of a not-for-profit volunteer organization.
- Pilot projects can often set groups up for failure as ongoing funding is not available and expectations from individuals and communities are not met due to lack of funding.
- For every dollar invested in non-profit groups and volunteers often means groups can leverage more dollars, seeing a high return for the Municipality's investment. Investing in community organizations often pays dividends when it comes to social progress.
- We are all contributors to our community's quality of life. Each individual, community organization, business and all levels of government have a role to play. Not one of us can do it alone.
- We achieve better outcomes and results when we work with people and have engaged communities. Listening is an effective skill we need to develop and use more of.

- We need strong community organizations and volunteers – they are essential to quality of life.
- Volunteerism is changing and declining. We need to rethink volunteerism and how we engage people. Volunteers burn out is real. There are often a few people doing most of the volunteer work in communities.
- There is an increase in newcomers to the district who bring different cultures and traditions and expectations. We need to understand how to be more welcoming and accepting, and embrace the many talents and skills newcomers have to offer.
- COVID 19 really brought to light the importance of face-to-face interactions.
- COVID 19 really brought to light the importance of parks and open spaces and the need for people to connect with nature.
- Recreational activities, programs, events and parks play a significant role in bringing people together and contributing to quality of life.
- Know and stay connected with the movers and shakers in each community as they are the ones that truly make things happen.
- Non-profits spend a great deal of time chasing funding which distracts them from what they want and need to be doing.
- The downloading to municipalities and communities to provide programs and services has increased.
- Communities are resilient especially in the face of an emergency – communities tend to come together stronger during challenging times.
- Community halls/fire halls are community hubs and play a significant role in communities and in connecting people.
- At the end of the day, it comes down to relationship building and good communication – these are core to building strong communities.

Assumptions and Conclusions

Based on the framework used to explore the topic of quality of life and general insights provided some assumptions and conclusions can be made. They are:

- The Municipality has a number of assets that contribute to quality of life. Better understanding and knowing what these assets are could be beneficial in mapping out a plan of action.
- Community groups, community facilities and volunteers play a vital role in quality of life and investing in them is investing in communities.
- There needs to be more flexibility and sustainable funding available to community groups.
- We need to find ways to work better together and to use limited resources more effectively.
- We need specific quality of life data for the Municipality and need to better understand the data that is available to make decisions on where to spend resources.
- Community groups and volunteers need support in navigating the system.
- Relationship building and communication are the foundation in building strong communities.

Discussion

Part of the discussion is what actions would Council like to take to increase social connections, social inclusion and to build a stronger community fabric?

Some options for Council to consider are:

- 1) Undertake community asset mapping which is “a process of identifying and documenting the resources, skills, and strengths within a community to promote positive change and development. It's a strength-based approach that focuses on what a community has, rather than what it lacks. This process involves collecting information about people, organizations, physical spaces, and cultural elements that can be leveraged for community benefit.” (AI)
- 2) Invite Engage NS to make a presentation to Council on the data from the 2019 Quality of Life survey that is relevant to the Municipality to better understand the results and how this could inform future decisions. It is recognized that this data is pre COVID-19. Invite them back to present findings from the Fall 2025 survey they plan to undertake when the data is

available. This will help in understanding what if anything has changed since 2019 and where we may want to spend some efforts.

- 3) Promote the upcoming survey being conducted by Engage NS to encourage residents to provide feedback in hopes of receiving a good response rate from the district.
- 4) Establish a Quality of Life Working Group/Network seeking representation from a number of agencies. Those in the community who takes the Designing for Belonging training (if approved by Council and outlined later in this report) could be asked to be part of this committee as members would be coming with the same training and have experience working with MODL. This could build sustainability and a model for agencies working together and utilizing resources more effectively.
- 5) Offer a navigator service for groups and individuals.
- 6) Continue to invest in Project Volunteer spotlighting community groups and providing opportunities to connect and engage in learning.
- 7) Review the grant policy to make funding more flexible. An example is our program grant criteria could fund ongoing programs not just new ones or current ones that are adding a new element.
- 8) Increase the annual operating grant funding to further support the day-to-day operations of community groups, making them more sustainable and stronger.

Quality of Life Project – Federal and Provincial Funding Approved

The Municipality has been successful in receiving both Federal and Provincial Funding to deliver on a project that helps connect seniors in communities. These funds must be utilized by the end of March 2026. The original intent was to train staff and others using the Happy Communities Model; however, council made the decision not to proceed using this model.

The deliverables of this funding are:

1. To train staff and others in the community in methods that connect community members and communities, with a focus on senior connections.
2. To train, support and coach senior connectors.
3. To host a kickoff event
4. To host events in the community to implement knowledge and skills gained from the training. These events are to be fun and engaging.
5. Provide an app to help inform and connect community.

To meet these deliverables staff are recommending the following:

1. To train 16-20 staff, community leaders and service providers in Designing for Belonging (D4B - see attachment). This is an eight-week experiential course that will introduce participants to the foundational principles of designing for belonging, key elements of codesign, and relational approaches to addressing complexity within communities.

“D4B helps participants engage in community-driven and co-designed approaches, ensuring that individuals with lived experience have a voice in shaping solutions to the barriers they face. By creating spaces for shared decision-making, this training empowers participants to build more inclusive, welcoming environments that drive meaningful change.”

D4B is in partnership with the University of New Brunswick.

One of the outcomes in taking this course will be to assist course participants in developing an evaluation tool to measure the success of the events hosted to support social inclusion.

Taking this training will meet the deliverable of providing training to staff and community members that focus on connecting people in communities, with an emphasis on seniors, to help mitigate loneliness and social isolation.

The cost to enroll the 16-20 people in the Designing for Belonging Course is \$16,650, or \$832.50 per person which is an average cost for a university course.

2. After the completion of the course, further support could be provided by the facilitators/designers of the course. The aim of this community of practice/network workshop is to bring together municipal staff, community leaders and volunteers to strengthen belonging across MODL’s local services and programs. Importantly, this community of practice/network is intended to break down silos by fostering collaboration across departments, organizations, and sectors. This session would be held early in 2026.

This would meet the deliverable of supporting and coaching those trained in Designing for Belonging.

The cost for this community of practice/network workshop is \$14,250.

3. To host a kickoff event, and other events throughout from September 2025 to March 2026 using the Designing for Belonging model to bring communities together and to engage with communities, especially seniors. These events would be designed and lead by MODL staff and community partners.

This would meet the deliverables of hosting a kickoff event with those taking the training and hosting events to connect people using the principles of Designing for Belonging.

4. The Municipality is looking at investing in a Municipal app that will send out notifications to residents. When providing the events to connect community members, staff would use this app to promote and encourage people to attend.

Using the municipal app would meet the deliverable of providing an app that residents can use to stay connected.

In staff's opinion the Designing for Belonging Course and coaching support not only meets the deliverables of the federal and provincial funding partners within the timeframe outlined in the grants, but aligns well with building a skill set in staff and community members to design spaces where people feel they belong, hence providing opportunities for community members to make connections with others and connections to where they live. The Designing for Belonging Course has been designed based on extensive research conducted by professors and facilitators in partnership with the University of New Brunswick.

The total cost to engage with the Designing for Belonging Course and the community of practice/network workshop, which includes mileage, accommodations and course/workshop materials, is \$39,100 (HST inclusive). The Federal Funding total is \$25,000 and Provincial \$10,000. The Municipality also budgeted \$8,000 for a total budget of \$43,000. The remaining \$3,900 would be used for the kickoff event and the community connected events held from September to March.

Using the Designing for Belonging training and coaching support aligns well not only with the grant deliverables, but from a timing perspective as well. The deliverables for the grant funding must be completed by the end of March 2026. The course will be offered from September to November; the workshop in January 2026 and the events happening from September 2025 to March 2026. Universities are about educating and training students and participants in which a significant part of the deliverables are about training, coaching and building a skill set within the Municipality to build communities where people feel they belong.

In the Purchasing and Tendering 033 Policy it states under section 19.1 "In certain circumstances, described in this section, the Municipality may purchase goods or services without using one of the options set out above.

Section 19.1.18 outlines one of the certain circumstances which is "for procurement from a public body or a non-profit organization". The University of New Brunswick would be defined as a public body.

Strategic Focus

This is a direct response to Council's strategic priorities for Communication and Engagement and Quality of Life.

Budget/Financial Implications

If Council decides to proceed with Designing for Belonging there would be no impact to the budget as we have budgeted for this along with grants. Other work not currently planned for may have impacts to the budget, but this could be assessed once direction is provided by Council.

Climate Change/Sustainability

Climate action is deeply connected to quality of life - clean air, safe water, affordable energy, and access to nature all shape how people live and thrive. Through initiatives like public transit expansion, land conservation, tree planting, hemlock woolly adelgid treatments, clean energy upgrades, coastal protection, and water and food security programs, the Municipality is reducing climate risks, lowering household costs, and improving public health. These efforts are not standalone - they are tightly woven into Council's broader goals for quality of life and community connection. Whether it's ensuring access to water, enhancing mobility for residents without vehicles, or involving residents in local climate and stewardship initiatives, climate action helps reduce vulnerability while promoting equity, inclusion, and long-term livability for all.

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA@MODL)

See above.

Strategic Communications

This work is about boosting engagement. A communications plan will be developed once Council gives direction.

Work plan

Much work is ongoing, impacts on workplans can be assessed after Council provides direction.

Alternatives

The alternatives pertaining to the federal and provincial funding available if Council decides not to proceed with the Designing for Belong training and coaching support are:

1. Issue an RFP seeking organizations to provide training and coaching that would meet the funding partners' deliverables.
2. Return the grant funding.

Overall, this report addresses an array of options. Staff are seeking further direction from Council on what options to pursue. Council could also determine whether further work and information is required before making any decision. Direction would be needed on what further information would be required.

Conclusion

The Municipality has identified Quality of Life and Communication and Engagement as two of its strategic priorities. The topic of Quality of Life is complex as there are many indicators that help define an individual's and community's quality of life. There is a global movement on measuring social progress and not just economic growth. Everyone has a role in helping to contribute to quality of life. The intent of this report was to outline currently what is happening that contributes to the Municipality's quality of life and to begin thinking about what role the municipality can play, fitting in the mandate of a municipal government.

Report Preparation	
Department	Recreation, Parks and Tourism
Report Prepared by	Trudy Payne, Alex Dumaresq, Kelly Cunningham, Sandra Challis
Report Approved by	
Date Reviewed by C.A.O.	

APPENDIX A

There are several examples of international and national wellbeing frameworks. Below are examples of those frameworks.

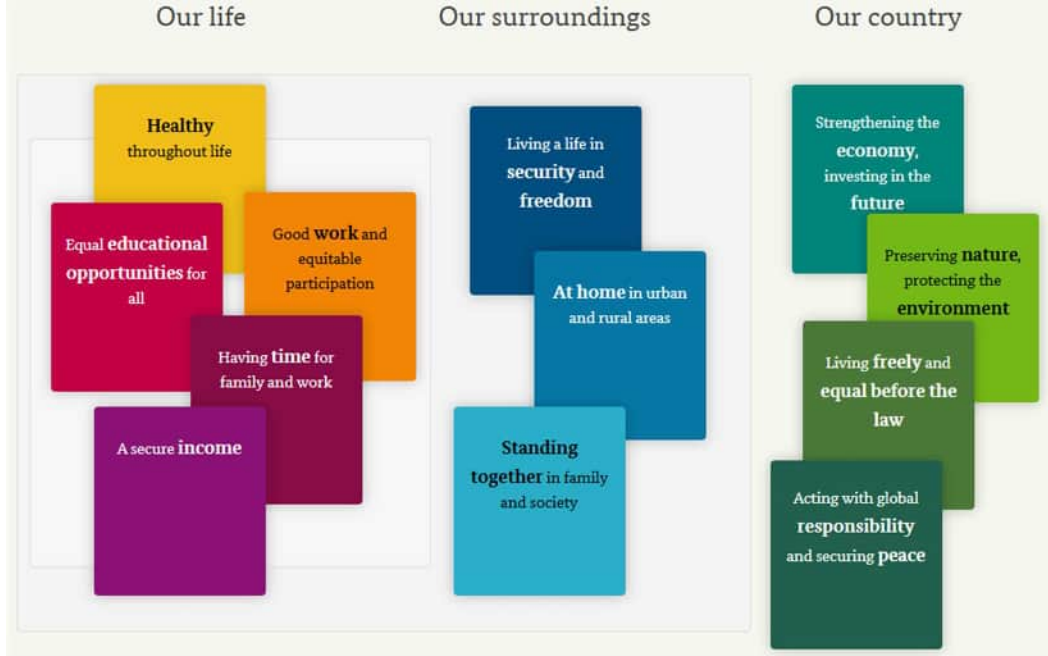
The Quality of Life Framework for Canada



Scottish Government's National Performance Framework



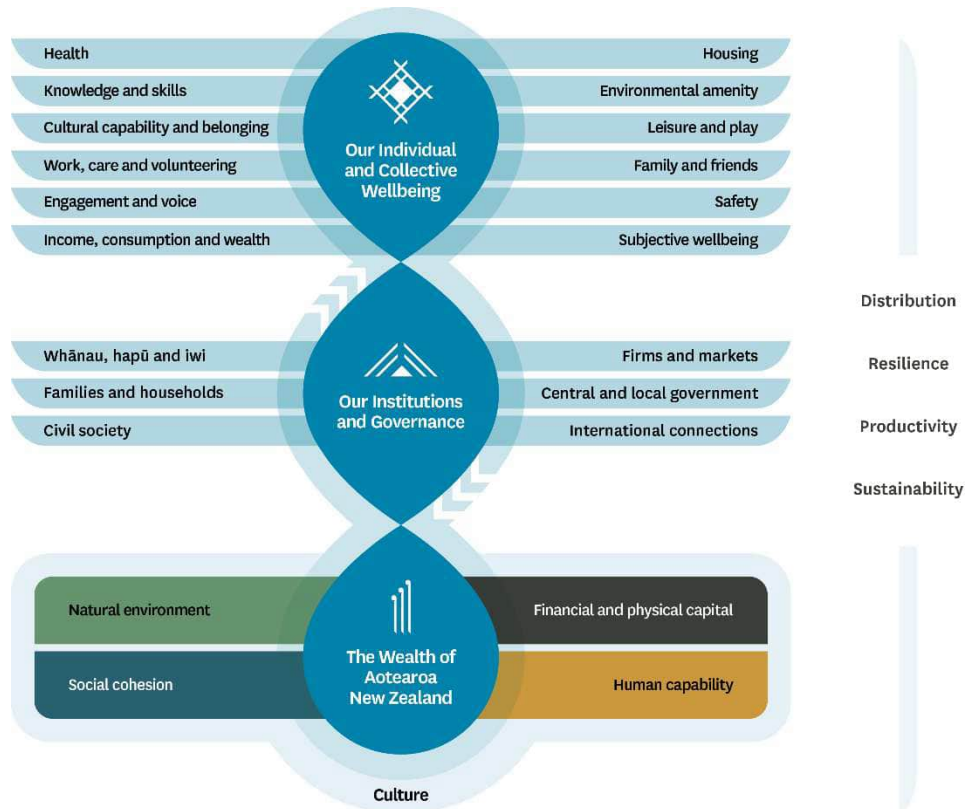
Wellbeing in Germany initiative



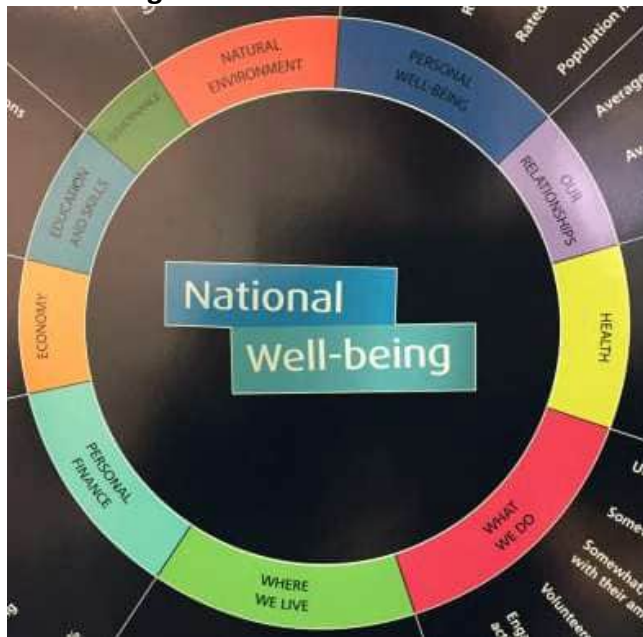
Wellbeing in Germany initiative in depth



New Zealand's Living Standards Framework



United Kingdom Measures of National Well-Being



Government of Iceland Indicators for Measuring Well-Being

SOCIETY		ENVIRONMENT	
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life expectancy • Healthy life years • Unmet need for healthcare • Mental health 	Air Quality and Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Particulate matter • Greenhouse gas emissions
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of education • Dropout from secondary school • Lifelong learning 	Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress in land reclamation • Protected areas
Social capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voter turnout • Social support • Formal volunteer activities • Trust in others • Trust in political system 	Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ratio of renewable energy in total energy consumption
Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling safe after dark • Crime victimization 	Waste and Recycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity of municipal solid waste • Recycling rate of municipal solid waste
Work-life balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long working hours • Working during unsocial hours • Multiple jobs 	ECONOMY	
		Economic conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GDP and economic growth • Inflation • Purchasing power • Household debt • Public sector, private sector and household dept
		Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment rate • Unemployment • Not in education, employment or training (NEET) • Job satisfaction
		Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing cost overburden • Quality of housing
		Incomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At risk of poverty • Persistent poverty • Material and social deprivation • Equality (Gini-index)

APPENDIX B

United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals

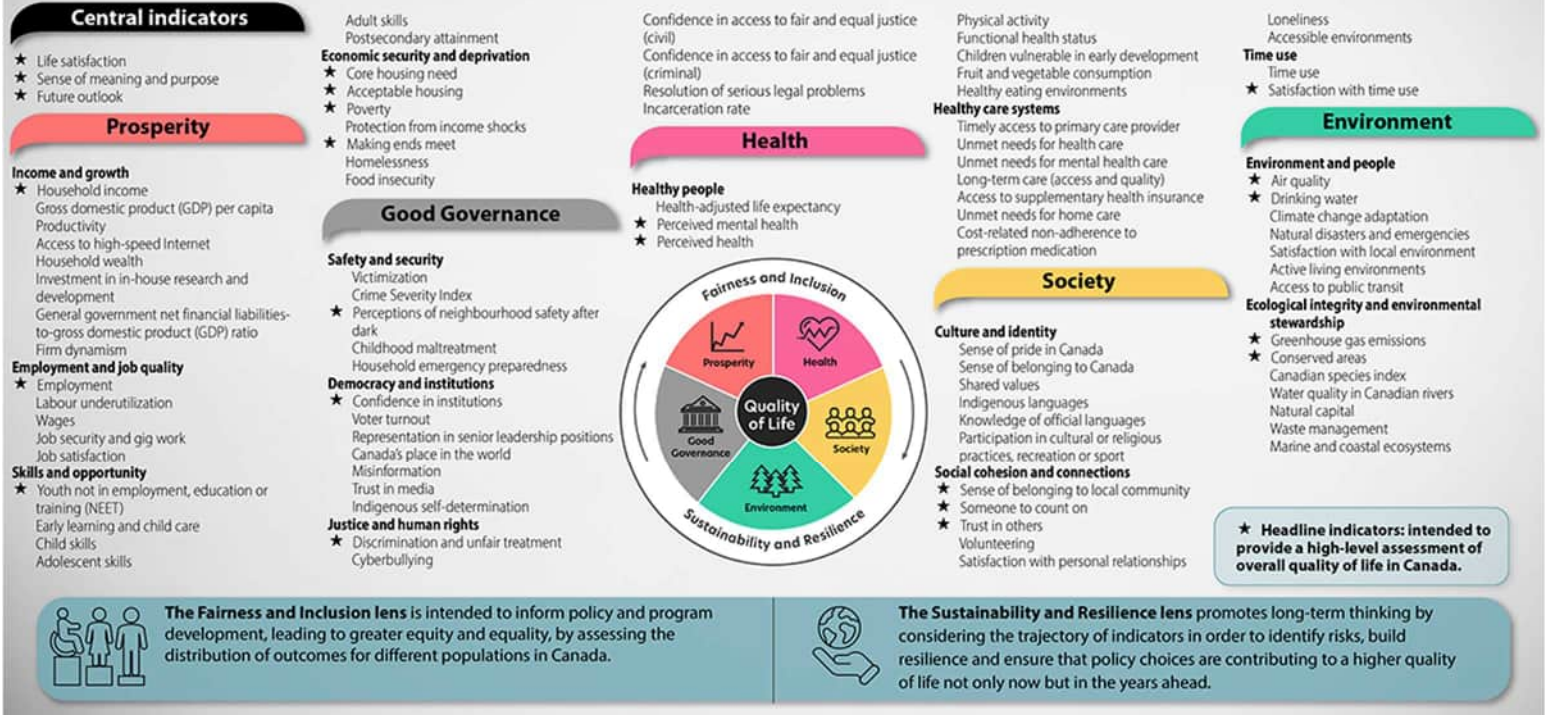


APPENDIX C

Quality of Life Framework for Canada

This infosheet shows the domains, subdomains, indicators and cross-cutting lenses of the Quality of Life Framework for Canada.

Infosheet: Quality of Life Framework for Canada



APPENDIX D

Engage Nova Scotia's eight domains of wellbeing framework.

The Eight Domains



Education	+
Living Standards	+
Healthy Populations	+
Time Use	+
Leisure and Culture	+
Our Environment	+
Democratic Engagement	+
Community Vitality	+

DESIGNING FOR BELONGING



DESIGNING FOR BELONGING (D4B)

What is D4B? An experiential and collaborative learning opportunity to ignite relational ways of designing and delivering sport, physical activity, recreation, and leisure provisions (i.e., programs, policies, resources, services, and events) that deepen the sense of belonging and dignified access in communities.

D4B is a nine-week experiential online course (nine two-hour virtual training modules with practical handouts/tools) that will introduce participants to the foundational principles of designing for belonging, key elements of codesign, and relational approaches to addressing complexity within communities.

D4B helps participants engage in community-driven and codesigned approaches, ensuring that individuals with lived experience have a voice in shaping solutions to the barriers they face. By creating spaces for shared decision-making, this training empowers participants to build more inclusive, welcoming environments that drive meaningful change.



Who created D4B? D4B was codesigned by the Reimagining Access to Sport, Recreation and Leisure (RASRL) team and the System Shifters, a collective of equity-owned individuals/groups and community SRL and allied community practitioners who sought to advocate for more inclusive and dignified accessible SRL services, resources, programs and policies by working in relational ways.

Who is D4B for? This training program prioritizes designing for belonging to tackle inequities that hinder participation in physical activity, recreation, sports, outdoor activities, and arts and culture-type settings. To support this effort, we seek community service providers who possess the capacity, courage, and commitment to connect with underserved residents (often referred to as equity-owned residents) as a part of this learning experience and are eager to apply the course material within their community contexts. We intend to enroll participants in the course who are directly responsible for designing and delivering



activities, programs, resources, policies, services, or events.

What will you learn in D4B? The goal of this training is to introduce and expand community service providers' understanding of relational welfare and participatory approaches and share ways that dignified access and belonging can be fostered in the SRL sector. There are three learning objectives:

- Learn the difference between transactional and relational approaches to SRL provisions.
- Learn how to apply best practices that nurture a sense of belonging and dignified access to SRL in their communities.
- Learn how to ethically include people with lived experience (i.e., equity-owed residents) throughout all phases of design, planning, implementation, and evaluation of SRL provisions.

Course participants are asked to have a community project (i.e., program, services, resource, etc.) in mind to which they want to apply the course material. Each module in the course is designed to build upon the last, deepening participants' understanding of engagement strategies and community-centred approaches. The following topics are covered in the course:

- Belonging basics
- Relational service design
- Relational engagement and mindset
- Ideation
- Co-creation and collaborative feedback
- Relational approaches to planning and promotion
- Welcoming and safer places and spaces
- Learning, evaluation and adapting

What will you gain from participating in D4B?

- A deeper understanding of designing for belonging in sport, recreation, and leisure settings.
- Practical strategies for engaging diverse communities and relational approaches to addressing barriers to participation.
- Insights into ideation, co-creation, and collaborative feedback as tools for program design and improvement.
- Tools, techniques, and resources for fostering relational engagement to create sustainable, inclusive change.
- Access to a community of practice for ongoing support.



What We Learned From the First Iteration of the D4B Training

Nine community practitioners from across different sectors (e.g., sport, recreation, local and regional government, community development, etc.) who support the design and delivery of SRL in communities participated in D4B.

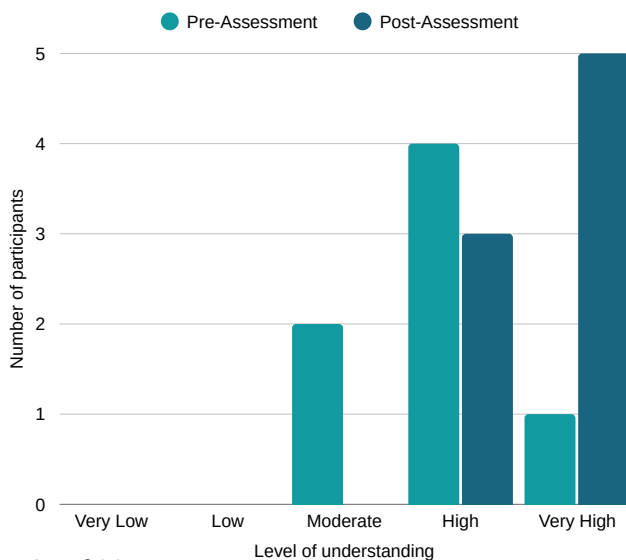
Each practitioner was selected to participate in the training because they had the capacity and commitment to connect with equity-owned residents throughout this learning experience and brought a provision (e.g., a program, policy, service, resource or event) they were working on to make more inclusive for these groups. Some provision examples include:

- Developing an EDI and anti-racism action plan for municipal facilities
- Working alongside equity-owned families to improve access to recreation opportunities
- Providing meaningful SRL programming for equity-owned groups in their communities (e.g., youth, older adults, newcomers, Indigenous peoples, individuals living with disabilities, and single parents)
- Fostering inclusivity at local, regional, and provincial SRL events for equity-owned groups

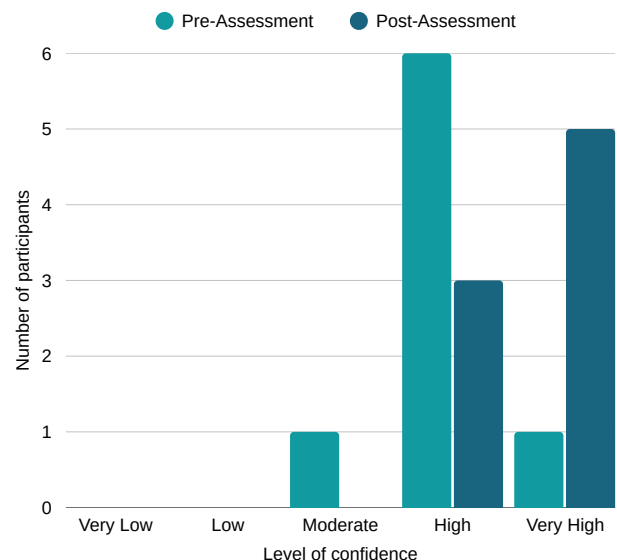
D4B Evaluation

We utilized training evaluation surveys and facilitated a focus group to determine if D4B increased community practitioners' current knowledge and skills in designing for belonging. The following charts—as shown below and on the next page—reveal that the practitioners' levels of understanding, awareness and ability in fostering sense of belonging and dignified access to SRL and implementing key codesign ideas and concepts in their SRL provisions increased after participating in the D4B training program.

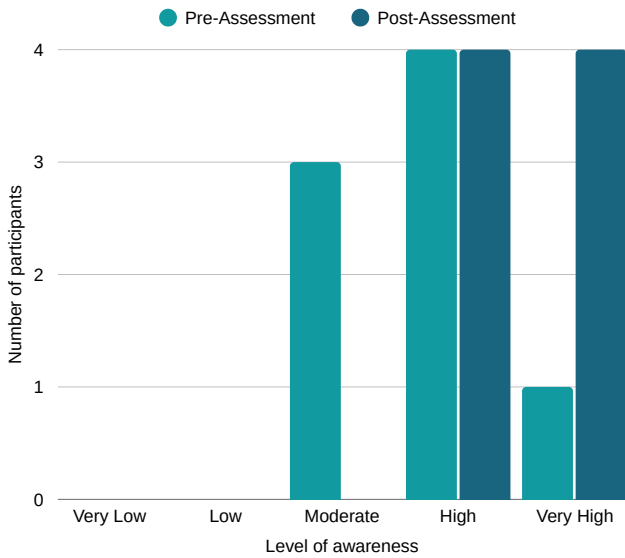
Understanding of what “belonging” means in the context of designing SRL provisions



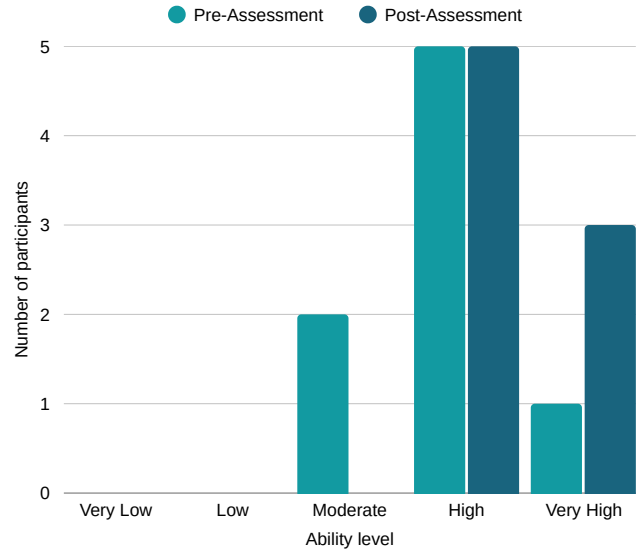
Confidence in skills and knowledge to contribute to an environment where others feel they belong



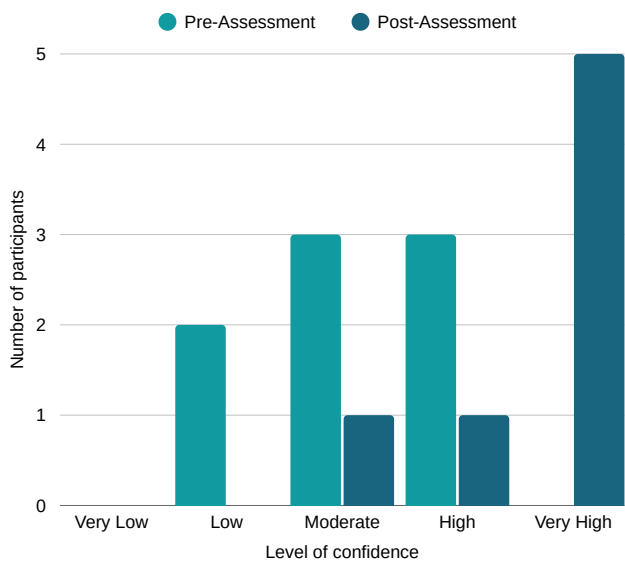
Awareness of the factors contributing to a sense of belonging in various SRL environments



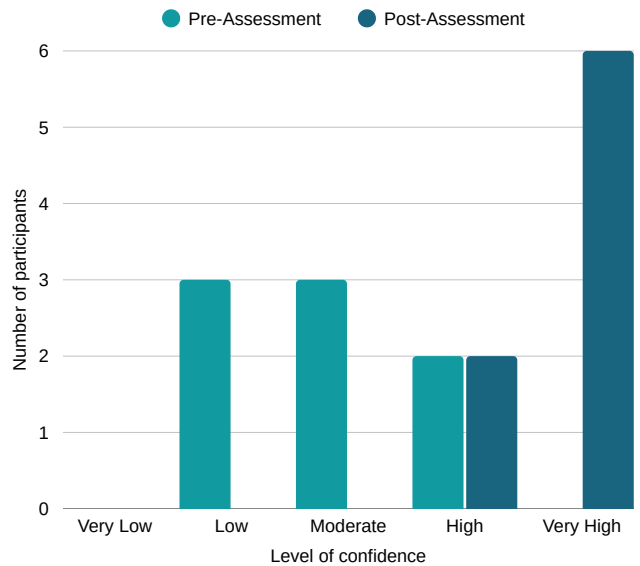
Ability to identify challenges that hinder belonging in community or social settings



Confidence in designing provisions that follow equity, diversity, and inclusion principles



Confidence in applying codesign principles to address issues related to belonging



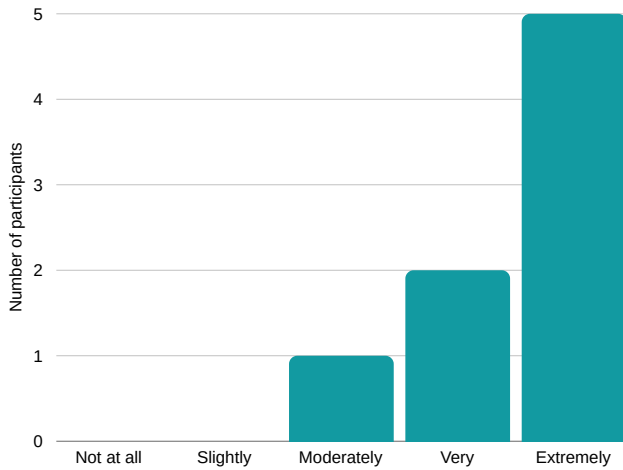
**“[D4B] was fantastic and will help me a lot going forward with creating programs, events, policies, etc. to be relational in their approaches and have community inform me of what they would like to see” —
Participating Community Practitioner**



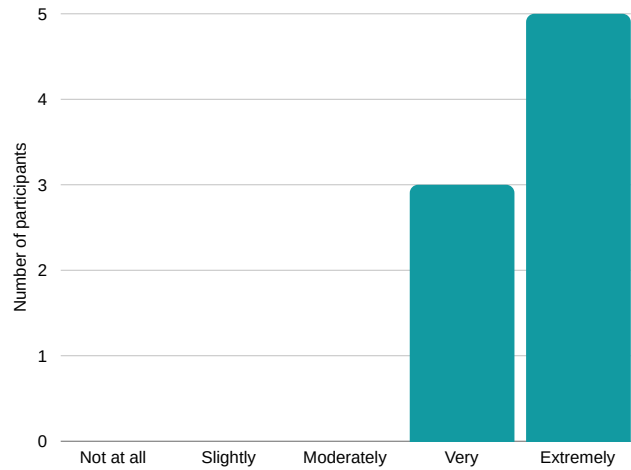
Our post-assessment survey for D4B also included module-specific questions. These queries were intended to uncover what the community practitioners learned from each sessions' content and their overall experience in the training program.

Module 1: Belonging Basics

Has the training supported your knowledge of the basic principles of othering versus belonging in SRL?

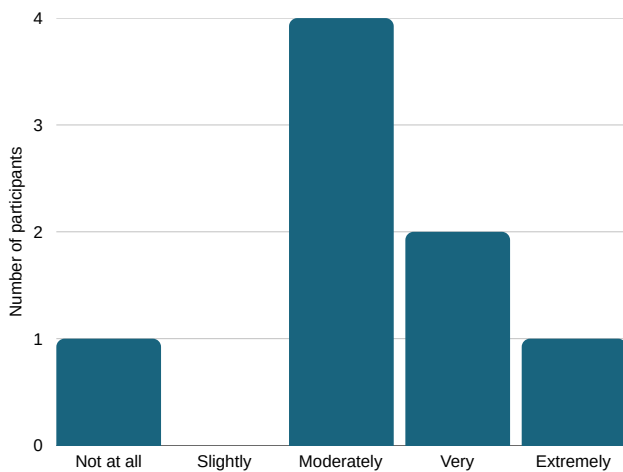


Has the training supported your knowledge and skills in identifying barriers to belonging within the SRL ecosystem?

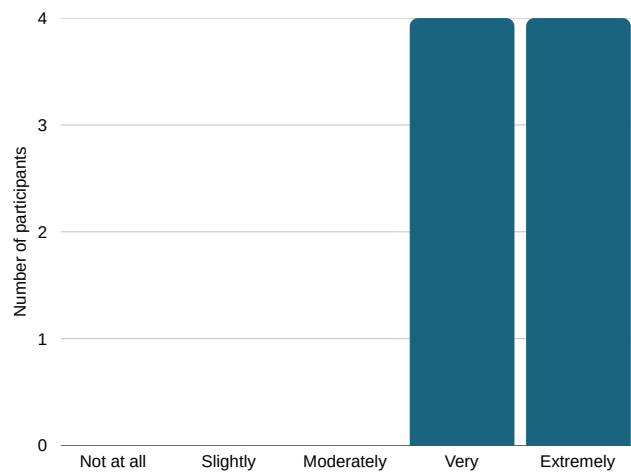


Module 2: Relational Engagement & Mindset

Before this training, how familiar were you with the difference between transactional and relational engagement?



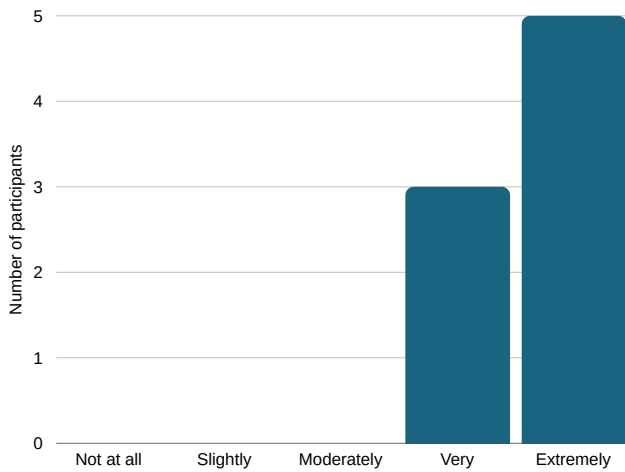
Has the training supported your knowledge and skills in applying relational and equitable approaches in SRL?



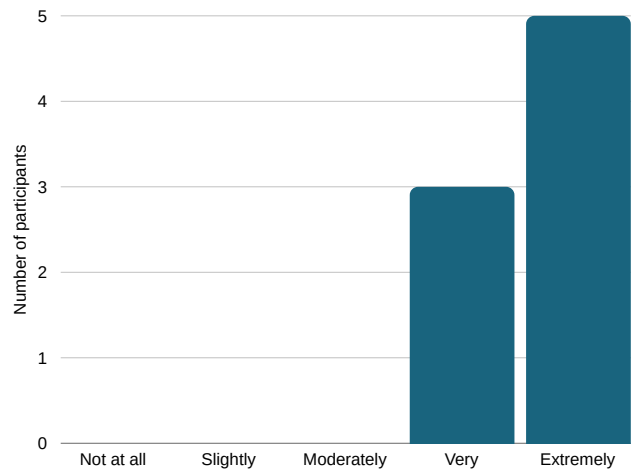
“The homework pushed me into conversations with my networks that I hadn’t had yet. These conversations were deeply insightful and I hope will make our [provision] better”
 — Participating Community Practitioner



Has the training supported your knowledge and skills in engaging in co-creation?

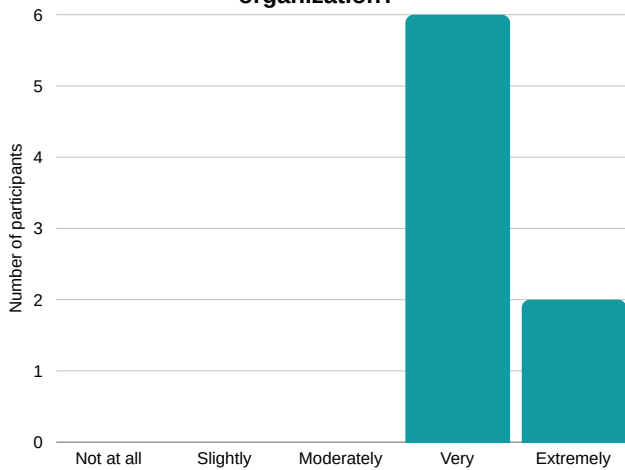


Has the training supported your knowledge and skills in addressing power dynamics in shared decision-making?

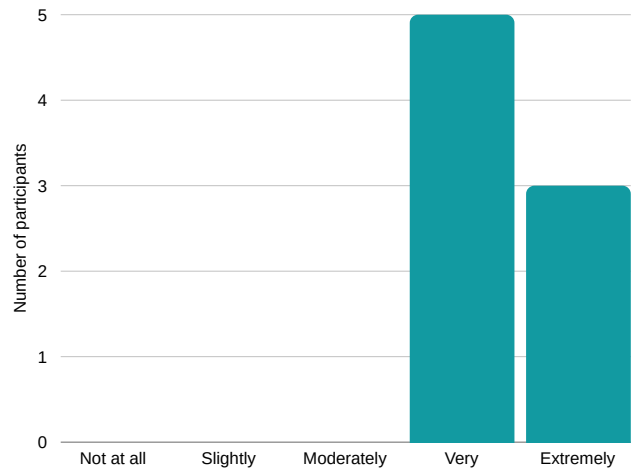


Module 3: Co-Creation & Collaborative Feedback

Since taking this training, to what extent do you feel prepared to apply co-creation and testing methods in your community or organization?



Has the training supported your knowledge and skills in analyzing and integrating feedback into your projects?

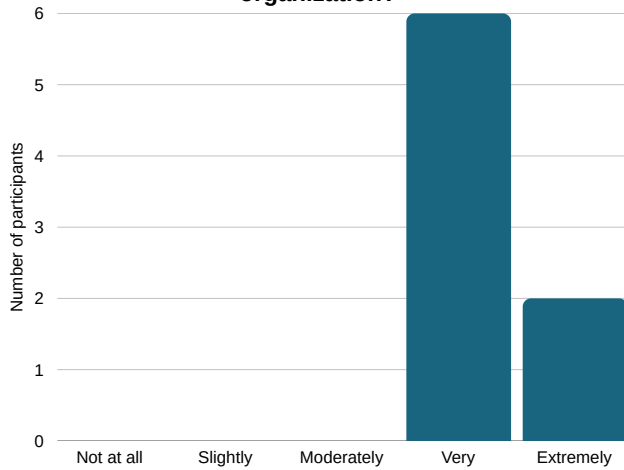


“Being able to bounce ideas off of like-minded individuals who are also working towards creating belonging with their project” — Participating Community Practitioner commenting on valuable insights gained through D4B

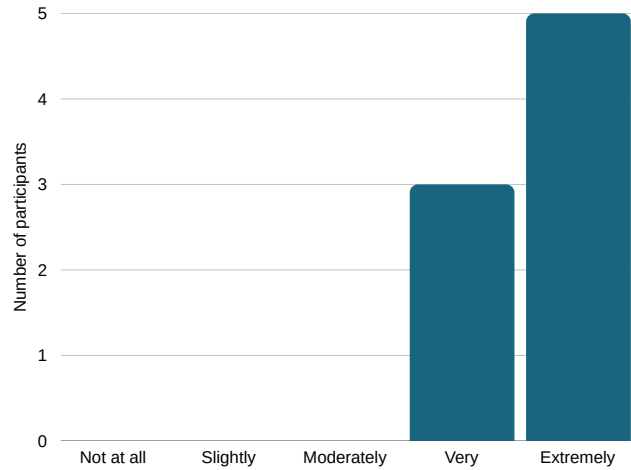


Module 4: Relational Approaches to Planning & Promotion

Has the training supported your knowledge and skills in forming diverse teams for relational work in your community or organization?



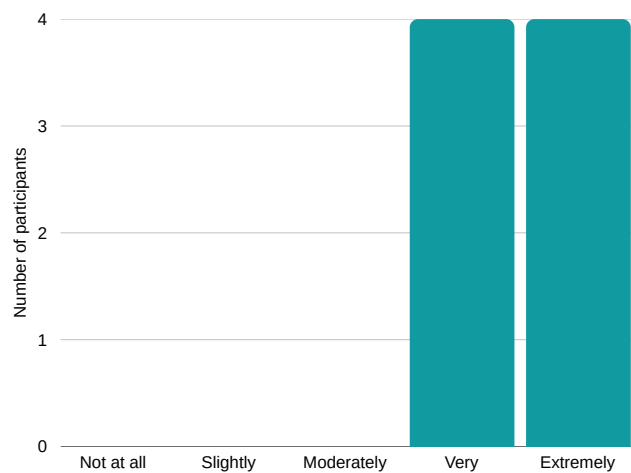
Has the training supported your knowledge and skills in engaging in long-term community participation?



Module 5: Creating Welcoming and Safer Places & Spaces

“I thought the conversation with others was the greatest gift. I learned not to only think of my project but also learned to see the system through an access and inclusion lens” — Participating Community Practitioner

Has the training supported your knowledge and skills in creating welcoming environments and safety in SRL spaces?



Module 6: Learning & Adapting



D4B Evaluation — Qualitative Results

A notable outcome was the recognition that relationship-building is essential to the learning process, reinforcing the value of relational training opportunities over transactional approaches like self-paced or self-directed learning. The interactive and collaborative nature of the training allowed participants to engage deeply, exchange perspectives, and apply concepts in real-time—demonstrating that meaningful learning happens through connection, dialogue, and shared experiences rather than in isolation. The D4B training fostered relationships within the cohort, creating a strong foundation for collaboration and shared learning. Participants emphasized the value of engaging with peers in similar roles, exchanging diverse experiences, and working on related projects. Exposure to different perspectives deepened their understanding and enriched discussions. A key highlight was the welcoming and supportive environment, which encouraged camaraderie and open conversations. Thoughtful facilitation—through pre-training communication, structured reflection activities, and hands-on collaboration—helped participants apply tools in real-time. Ultimately, active participation and engagement made the learning experience more impactful and meaningful.

A second important outcome of the training was the strong desire among providers to stay connected, reinforcing the need for an ongoing community of practice dedicated to designing for belonging in SRL. This emerging network presents an opportunity to sustain momentum, deepen collective learning and expand the impact of this work beyond individual organizations.



Lastly, participants emphasized the need to expand the reach of D4B beyond the training cohort, particularly by engaging decision-makers, regional sport and recreation consultants, and other allied groups. There is significant work to be done in raising awareness that the current system is not designed for everyone. Spreading this message requires a strategic approach—building a strong foundation of advocates who understand the barriers and have experience working with those that face the barriers. Additionally, it was suggested that municipalities and councils often believe they are accessible, but their engagement practices may unintentionally exclude certain groups. More training on relational approaches for different audiences (i.e., policymakers, boards and councils) could help bridge this gap. In sum, designing for belonging is a movement, and sustained effort will be needed to build momentum and drive meaningful change.

"There were numerous insights that I gained through this training. It reinforced to me that I need to find community connectors in my area and have them help me to see what programs, events, policies, etc. need to be implemented in our area. I know there are things that are missing, especially for equity-owed groups, but the key will be finding my community connectors to make that connection and get input directly from those equity-owed residents" — Participating Community Practitioner

