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Special Municipal Council Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, December 9, 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. Changes/Approval of Agenda (as circulated)
- 3 Staff Reports
- 3.1 Planning Services
- 3.1.1 Public Input re Municipal Wide Planning
- 3.1.2 Municipal Wide Planning Options Report (continued)..... 1-19
4. Adjournment

Special Council
Item 3.1.2
December 9, 2025
Authorization: T. MacEwan



The Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

Direction Report

Report to: Finance Committee

Submitted by: Planning Staff

Date: December 2, 2025

Re: Municipal-Wide Land Use Planning – Council Direction Report #2

Introduction

In 2018, the Province of Nova Scotia passed legislation requiring all municipalities to adopt comprehensive planning documents that apply to all lands within their jurisdiction. In response, the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg (MODL) launched a project to create a unified Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) and Land Use By-law (LUB) for the entire Municipality. These new documents will extend planning to all areas of the municipality, providing a consistent framework to guide future growth and development.

As outlined in the Municipal Government Act (MGA), the MPS and LUB must meet the requirements of the [Statements of Provincial Interest](#) which include Drinking Water, Flood Risk, Agricultural Land, Infrastructure, and Housing. The documents must also meet provincial [Minimum Planning Requirements](#) that include policies and regulations to address several different land uses (residential, commercial, etc.), as well as other aspects such as mapping, review periods and contextual information. In addition, the provincial regulations outline several topics that are considered discretionary content such as environmental protection, heritage preservation and transportation.

Public engagement began in 2020, with subsequent rounds in 2025 focused on reviewing a first draft of the proposed documents. Input collected through surveys, workshops, and stakeholder meetings informed the What We Heard Report (WWHR) 2025, which summarized community priorities and concerns.

This second Council Direction Report provides an overview of land use designation and zoning. Each section includes an overview of the topic and policy direction options for Council's consideration.

This report covers the following topics:

- Environmentally Protected Areas
- Built-up Areas
- Future Uses

In the coming weeks, one additional Council workshop will also be held, discussing other topics that focus on other land-use related issues.

The purpose of these reports is to support informed decision-making by identifying where policy adjustments may be warranted before preparing Draft 2 of the MPS and LUB. Staff have outlined several options for each topic from which Council may provide direction to guide the preparation of Draft 2. The anticipated release of Draft 2 is in February 2026. This will be followed by a final round of public information sessions prior to adoption and submission to the province for final approval.

At the last [Council meeting](#), which took place on November 25, 2025, Council provided preliminary direction on several rural and agricultural matters. Council directed staff against creating categories for livestock and placing limitations on livestock operations, including backyard agriculture. Additionally, Council discussed possible setback distances for new residential development near existing agricultural uses, with further refinement required for Draft 2. Council also emphasized the importance of protecting agricultural land and reviewed options for limiting subdivision activity within agricultural zones. Initial direction was provided on the seasonal habitation of RVs and home-based businesses. However, Council's direction to regulate home-based businesses in specific residential zones to a minimal extent is dependent on the outcome of the workshop on December 2nd. If Council chooses to not establish residential-only zones in the workshop on December 2nd, the regulations around home-based businesses would not apply.

Several topics originally planned for the November 25th workshop were not touched on but will be discussed at the next Council workshop on December 2nd. These include campgrounds and RV parks, inland watercourses, and wetlands.

The Rural General Zone is expected to be the most straightforward zone to implement. Much of MODL's rural land base remains undeveloped or used for traditional resource-based activities,

and Council has indicated a desire to maintain minimal regulation in these areas to preserve rural character and flexibility. As such, the Rural General Zone requires less detailed discussion than the more targeted environmental and lakeshore-related zones, which require specific policy direction from Council. Other zones could layer on additional regulations depending on the direction of Council and how Council would like to meet the Statements of Provincial Interest.

The following sections of this report present the key decision points, policy options, and staff recommendations needed to guide the development of Draft 2.

Feedback

Throughout a series of public engagement activities conducted over the Spring and Summer of 2025, staff received a significant amount of feedback about the general provisions proposed in the first draft of the Municipal-wide Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law. As discussed with Council on November 25, residents had strong reactions to the provisions on livestock operations, home-based businesses, and the habitation of RVs, among other topics. Some residents shared opinions about the zoning framework of Draft 1, but this aspect of the project did not receive nearly as much attention as the general provisions. However, zoning is an important component of land use planning, and some of the general provisions interact with, and depend on the zoning framework that is established. The connection between a residential-only zone and home-based businesses is a prime example of this overlap.

Some stakeholders and residents provided feedback about specific zones contained in Draft 1. These comments are reflected in the sections below. While many commented on the planning approach more generally, some residents shared concerns about the number of proposed zones and how zones impact property values and uses. Others expressed support for zoning and emphasized the importance of protecting communities and providing a sense of predictability. Similarly, many residents noted that the Municipality should not apply a blanket approach to land use planning in MODL. Zones are one tool that can help appreciate and maintain the unique aspects of different communities.

Topic: Environmentally Protected Areas

Overview

MODL contains a wide range of ecologically important landscapes, including lakes, rivers, wetlands, forests, and coastal areas. These natural features support biodiversity, help maintain water quality, and contribute to the overall health and well-being of communities. As development continues across the Municipality, Council may wish to consider whether

additional land use tools are needed to protect sensitive natural areas and guide growth in a sustainable way.

This section seeks Council direction on several potential environmental protection tools, including:

- **A potential zone for lakefront areas**, which could help manage development pressures around lakes and support the long-term health of lake ecosystems;
- **Potential protected watershed zoning**, which could help safeguard drinking-water sources and manage land uses within watershed boundaries to be consistent with the Statement of Provincial Interest on Drinking Water;
- **A potential watershed overlay**, offering broader, flexible protection across natural watershed areas; and
- **A potential Conservation Zone**, which could recognize lands already protected by governments or conservation organizations and limit activities to low-impact or conservation-related uses. This zone could apply to both public lands and privately owned lands subject to environmental protection.

At this stage, staff are seeking Council's direction on these potential environmental protection approaches. Council's decision will determine which regulations are included, adjusted, or not pursued at all, and this direction will inform the policy and regulatory frameworks brought forward in Draft 2.

Potential Policy Direction: Inland Waterfront Areas

A Lakeshore Residential Zone is a potential zoning tool that could help manage development pressures around MODL's inland lakes. MODL has over 135 lakes that provide important ecological functions and support recreational, seasonal, and permanent residential uses. Naturally vegetated lakefront areas help maintain water quality, stabilize shorelines, and reduce erosion and flooding risks. As development pressures increase, disturbance of these shoreline areas can lead to greater runoff, erosion, and long-term impacts on lake health and surrounding properties.

A Lakeshore Residential Zone would introduce more restrictive development standards in sensitive lakefront areas, such as larger lots, greater setbacks, limits on vegetation removal, and fewer permitted uses than in other residential zones. These measures aim to protect lake ecosystems and manage development impacts. This section seeks Council direction on whether such a zone should be pursued, modified, or removed from consideration.

Options

Council could direct staff to:

1. **No Lakeshore Residential Zone.** Development around lakes would instead be managed through consistent inland watercourse protections such as setbacks and/or natural vegetation requirements applied to all lakes and rivers, provided that Council decides to include those protections. (Minimum planning)
2. **Apply the Lakeshore Zone to selected lakes only.** This option could apply the Lakeshore Zone to some, but not all, of the 69 lakes targeting lakes with the highest development pressure or environmental sensitivity. Further analysis would be required and cannot be completed within the current project timeline.
3. **Establish a Lakeshore Residential Zone.** If Council selects this option, the Lakeshore Residential Zone could apply to 69 lakes identified as experiencing development pressure or located near transportation routes or population centres. Under this option, the zone could include:
 - **Applicability:** Applied to 69 lakes where additional environmental safeguards may help manage development impacts.
 - **Development Standards:** The zone could require larger lots and greater development setbacks than those permitted in the Rural Zone, helping to maintain low-density development, reduce environmental impacts, ensure appropriate separation from lakefront features, and support the protection of naturally vegetated shoreline areas.
 - **Permitted Uses:** The zone would primarily permit low-density residential uses, limited recreational uses, and select community-oriented uses appropriate for lakefront environments. Development would occur on larger lots with greater frontage requirements than in other residential zones to help protect lake health and maintain natural character. More intensive or commercial uses would generally be limited or not permitted, recognizing the sensitivity of lakefront environments.

Staff recommend that Council proceed with **Option 3**, establishing a Lakeshore Residential Zone for the identified 69 lakes. These lakes were originally selected due to their existing or anticipated development pressure, proximity to transportation routes, and location near established or emerging communities. In the absence of municipality-wide inland watercourse regulations, a lakeshore-specific zone would provide a structured mechanism to guide development in these higher-pressure areas and help manage land use in a consistent and predictable manner.

Potential Policy Direction: Protected Watershed Areas

A safe supply of drinking water is a basic requirement for all Nova Scotians. The Municipality encompasses three provincially designated Protected Water Areas, which provide clean and reliable drinking water to Bridgewater, Lunenburg, and Mahone Bay, as well as to MODL residents including Osprey Village. Because these drinking-water sources originate entirely within MODL, the Municipality plays a key role in protecting their long-term health and availability. As climate change brings more frequent droughts, lower lake levels, dry wells, and added stress on water systems, safeguarding watershed lands is becoming increasingly important. Strong land-use protections can help safeguard long-term drinking-water quality for MODL and the surrounding towns.

The Protected Water Areas include:

- **Hebb, Milipsigate, and Minamkeak Lakes** (serving Bridgewater and nearby communities, including Osprey Village)
- **Dares Lake** (serving Lunenburg)
- **Oakland Lake** (serving Mahone Bay)

Within these provincially designated Protected Water Areas, provincial regulations govern activities such as boating, fishing, swimming, animal grazing, forestry operations, and other water-related actions. Complementing this, the *Environment Act* mandates that municipalities regulate land use, determining where development is appropriate, and what types of development may proceed to ensure drinking-water protection.

Significant portions of the broader natural watershed lie outside the provincially regulated areas and currently have no municipal land-use controls. Land use in these unregulated areas such as agriculture, residential development, or land alteration can directly influence water quality and long-term drinking-water security.

Under the Statement of Provincial Interest (SPI) on Drinking Water, municipalities must protect drinking-water supplies through measures such as restricting high-risk land uses, balancing density and lot creation with water-quality risks, establishing setbacks from watercourses, and applying erosion and land-alteration controls. The SPI also recognizes that smaller watersheds may require more stringent protection than larger ones due to their limited ability to absorb cumulative impacts.

In light of MODL's obligations under the Statement of Provincial Interest, the growing effects of drought, and the region's dependence on these lakes for safe drinking water, Council direction is required to determine how watershed protection regulations will be integrated into Draft 2.

Feedback

Many residents commented on the importance of protecting drinking-water sources and the watersheds that supply them. Feedback included concerns about development near lakes and rivers, loss of natural vegetation, and risks of runoff or contamination. Some supported stronger protection such as setbacks or limits on new development while others cautioned against applying uniform restrictions to all properties.

Environmental organizations emphasized the need for strong, science-based watershed protection, including setbacks and controls on higher-risk land uses. They noted that gaps in existing land-use regulation can leave water sources vulnerable and encouraged MODL to align with best practices.

Council discussed the limitations of existing provincial watershed boundaries and the distinction between provincial activity regulations and municipal land-use responsibilities. Members also noted low public awareness of watershed boundaries and considered how setbacks, agricultural practices, and grazing requirements could be implemented and enforced. Council emphasized protecting drinking-water sources while ensuring regulations remain practical and understandable for residents.

Options

Council could direct staff to:

1. **Establish Two Watershed Zones Only (no overlay).** Council may direct staff to establish two watershed zones without creating a watershed overlay. Under this approach:
 - A high-protection watershed zone would apply to:
 - The smaller Protected Water Areas (e.g., Dares Lake and Oakland Lake), and
 - Privately owned lands within the larger Protected Water Area (Hebb, Milipsigate and Minamkeak Lakes) where heightened protection is appropriate.
 - An intermediate-protection watershed zone would apply to the remaining portions of the larger watershed systems (e.g., Hebb, Milipsigate, and Minamkeak Lakes), allowing development to occur in a manner that does not compromise water quality.
 - This tiered structure is consistent with the Statement of Provincial Interest regarding Drinking Water, which directs municipalities to consider watershed size, vulnerability, and appropriate land-use controls. Regulations would focus on the provincially regulated Protected Water Area boundaries, with land-use controls scaled to each watershed's sensitivity and capacity. This option provides a graduated level of protection while maintaining a simpler regulatory framework than Option 2,

though it does not extend additional protection to the broader natural watershed outside the provincial boundaries.

- 2. Establish Two Watershed Zones + a Watershed Overlay.** Council may direct staff to create a tiered watershed zoning system that includes two distinct watershed zones.
 - The two zones would:
 - Apply a higher level of protection to smaller or more vulnerable watersheds.
 - Apply an intermediate level of protection to larger watershed systems with different land-use contexts.
 - Reflect the Statement of Provincial Interest on Drinking Water, which encourages regulations that consider watershed size, sensitivity, and appropriate land-use controls.
 - A Watershed Overlay could also be established to:
 - Apply additional environmental requirements such as livestock fencing setbacks or runoff-management measures outside the prescribed protection water areas.
 - Extend protection to the broader natural watershed, including areas outside provincially regulated boundaries.
 - Provide safeguards beyond the minimum SPI requirements.
 - This approach creates a graduated regulatory framework that allows regulations to be calibrated to different watershed conditions and addresses water-quality impacts both within and outside the designated Protected Water Areas.

- 3. Establish One Watershed Zone (consistent with Region of Queens).** Council may direct staff to create a single Watershed Zone that applies uniformly to all Protected Water Areas, regardless of watershed size or sensitivity. (Minimum planning)
 - This approach would be consistent with the Region of Queens model, where only Municipal Water Treatment Facilities are permitted as-of-right, and all other land uses are restricted.
 - A single zone would offer consistent regulations across all watershed areas and would be straightforward to map and administer. This option provides a clear and uniform framework, though it may offer less flexibility for addressing the differing contexts of larger and smaller watershed areas.

Staff recommend that Council move forward with a two-zone watershed protection approach (**Option 1**) for Draft 2. This approach establishes a high-protection watershed zone for the smaller and more vulnerable Protected Water Areas as well as privately owned land within the larger Protected Water Areas and an intermediate-protection zone for the remaining portions

of the larger watershed systems. This structure allows development to continue in select areas without compromising water quality, while ensuring stronger safeguards where the risk to drinking-water sources is greatest.

A two-zone approach is consistent with the Statement of Provincial Interest on Drinking Water, reflects differences in watershed size and sensitivity, and provides a clear, defensible regulatory framework without introducing the broader implications of a watershed overlay. It balances environmental protection, clarity for landowners, and practical implementation as MODL prepares Draft 2.

Potential Policy Direction: Conservation Zone

MODL contains a variety of ecologically sensitive landscapes such as wetlands, forests, and shorelines that support biodiversity, reduce flooding and erosion, and contribute to long-term environmental health. A Conservation Zone could be used to protect these areas by limiting permitted uses to low-impact activities such as passive recreation, research, and education.

This zone would primarily apply to publicly owned conservation lands, lands owned by environmental organizations, and privately owned lands subject to provincial protection tools such as the Beaches Act (e.g., areas like Cherry Hill). Conservation efforts could also be supported through mapping sensitive features, maintaining natural vegetation, and encouraging voluntary tools such as conservation easements.

Staff are seeking Council's direction on whether and how a Conservation Zone and related conservation tools should be incorporated into Draft 2.

Options

Council could direct staff to:

- 1. Do not Establish a Conservation Zone.** Council may direct staff not to include a Conservation Zone in Draft 2. Under this approach, conservation-related objectives would continue to be supported through other tools (e.g., setbacks, mapping, education, and voluntary stewardship mechanisms), without adding a dedicated zone to the Land Use By-law. (Minimum planning)
- 2. Establish a Conservation Zone.** Council may direct staff to create a Conservation Zone that recognizes lands already set aside for environmental protection by various levels of government or conservation organizations. This zone would limit activities to low-impact or conservation-related uses and could apply to both public lands and privately owned lands that are subject to environmental protections, such as those regulated under the Beaches Act or held by land trusts.

- Based on current mapping, the Conservation Zone would apply to approximately 96 properties, including 72 publicly owned parcels and 22 privately owned parcels. Of the privately owned parcels, 8 have civic addresses.

Staff recommend that Council proceed with **Option 2** and establish a Conservation Zone. Creating this zone would provide a consistent mechanism for recognizing lands already protected by various levels of government and conservation organizations and would ensure that these areas are limited to low-impact or conservation-related uses. Establishing a Conservation Zone would also support MODL's broader environmental objectives by reinforcing stewardship efforts and providing clear, transparent protection for both public and privately owned conservation lands in Draft 2.

Topic: Built-up Areas

Villages/Hamlets

Overview

Although MODL is largely characterized by its rural landscapes, the municipality has many established communities that contribute to its rich cultural and historic identity. Several village-like communities (or hamlets) act as local service hubs and provide residents with a range of amenities. These settlements typically include a central main street area that contains a mix of land uses including local businesses, community uses, emergency service facilities, and even some industrial uses. These core areas are often surrounded by defined, less mixed-use residential neighbourhoods.

These areas are key locations for future growth and are likely places for the expansion of public services. They offer important social and community spaces in a rural setting, and their unique character contributes to MODL's historic identity. Examples of this settlement type include New Germany, Petite Riviere, Lahave, and Broad Cove.

The Municipal Government Act (MGA) states that a municipal planning strategy must contain statements of policy regarding residential uses, commercial and industrial uses, institutional uses, recreational facilities and public open spaces, and resource uses. While it is not specified how these land uses should be managed, built-up areas usually contain a mix of these land uses, therefore, planning considerations may need to account for the built-up areas to some extent.

Feedback

We received limited resident feedback on the hamlet zoning approach. A few residents specifically mentioned support for the Hamlet Residential Zone, saying it would encourage a

safer environment by limiting certain types of conflicting land uses. Some questioned the grandfathering clause, wondering how it would apply to the hamlet areas. While another comment noted that New Germany is distinct from other communities, suggesting that future zoning should reflect these differences.

Potential Policy Direction: Villages/Hamlets

Well-defined villages or hamlets typically include a centre or main street area that contains a mixture of land uses, surrounded by a less mixed residential area. To accommodate this land use pattern, a zoning approach could include having separate zones for these distinct areas that permit appropriate land uses. For instance, the central area could be designated as a Hamlet Centre Zone that permits a range of commercial, industrial, community, and institutional uses. While the adjacent residential area could be designated as a Hamlet Residential Zone that permits fewer uses, aiming to limit land use conflicts. The following options are intended to seek Council direction on whether the villages/hamlets of MODL should be zoned differently from the rural areas, and if so, to what extent.

Options

Council could direct staff:

- 1. To have no additional controls for defined villages and to treat them the same as the rural areas.** The zone that is applied to the rural areas would also be applied to the villages. In this case, there would be no ability to limit certain land uses within villages. (Minimum planning)
- 2. To have additional controls that apply to defined villages, but do not distinguish between the centre and the residential areas.** This option would combine the two Hamlet zones into a single zone that applies to the entire community. While this approach would not distinguish between the central area and the surrounding residential area, it would help to set the community apart from rural areas and allow for more tailored land use controls. This option could also involve limiting the number of communities designated as villages or hamlets, ensuring that some communities are subject to specific land use controls while others are zoned the same as the rural areas.
- 3. To establish distinct controls for the village centre and the surrounding residential area.** This option would involve having two separate zones, each with a unique set of provisions. The centre area of the community could be zoned to accommodate a mix of uses, including commercial and industrial activities, while the surrounding residential area could be zoned to accommodate residential uses and limits other types of uses to reduce land use conflicts.

Staff recommend **Option 2** - To create a single zone that applies to some of the communities in MODL. This approach would help to differentiate the villages or hamlets from the rural areas with unique land use regulations that are tailored towards established and growing communities. To further simplify the approach, Staff also suggest limiting the number of villages or hamlets included in the zone to the most identifiable and established communities, such as New Germany, Lahave, and Petite Riviere.

Rural Subdivisions

Overview

MODL has several compact, primarily residential neighbourhoods that consist of a higher-density development pattern compared to the surrounding rural areas. These residential settlements typically consist of compact single-unit homes, can include an internal road or shared driveway, and are often the result of a subdivision development. Examples of this settlement pattern include the subdivisions in Pine Grove, Conquerall Bank, and Lower Branch.

Residential uses tend to be the predominant land use in these areas, which makes these places more susceptible to land uses conflicts with incompatible activities. Although home-based businesses are relatively common in these neighbourhoods, land use conflicts can still arise if the operation is not suitable for the context of the residential subdivision.

Most land in MODL is unserved by municipal water, therefore rural developments are often served by a dug or drilled well. Groundwater supply issues have been rising over the past few years, which, when combined with increased development, puts added pressure on water resources. Existing residents close to new developments can be negatively impacted when multiple new wells are drilled to accommodate new homes. To help address this issue, certain planning processes such as rezoning can allow for additional oversight at the beginning stages of a development as Council can request water studies to confirm adequate groundwater. A similar approach to development is already in place for cluster developments.

Feedback

Feedback from the developers' stakeholder event suggested that triggering a rezoning process for new rural residential subdivisions is generally a reasonable approach for attaining the appropriate water studies. However, some cautioned about the related costs for these studies and the additional time that may be added to the rezoning process if such studies are a requirement.

Potential Policy Direction: Rural Residential Subdivisions

Rural subdivisions within MODL contain primarily compact residential land uses, which increase the likelihood for land use conflicts from incompatible land uses. To address this, an approach could include the creation of a distinct zone, such as a Rural Residential Zone, that is applied to rural residential subdivisions and is distinct from the rural areas. This approach would enable tailored land use regulations that fit a denser primarily residential context. For example, a Rural Residential Zone could restrict certain commercial or industrial activities, such as auto repair shops, salvage yards, and excavation operations. Additionally, a dedicated Rural Residential Zone for rural subdivisions would provide a framework to regulate home-based businesses.

Given the potential implications around groundwater that can occur when residential subdivisions are developed in rural areas, a Rural Residential Zone would enable an approvals process to help address such issues. With this approach, proposed subdivision developments would need to undergo a rezoning that would create a public process and include hydrogeological studies to ensure that the development is suitably located with enough groundwater resources to support it.

Another consideration is the possible expansion of the Rural Residential Zone should the Lakeshore Residential Zone and the Hamlet Residential Zone be removed. This may require additional residential subdivisions or neighbourhoods to be added to the Rural Residential Zone to account for the loss of other residential zones. However, expansion of this zone would involve additional analysis which may not be feasible within the current project timeframe.

Options

Council could direct staff:

- 1. To have no additional controls for rural subdivisions and to treat them the same as the rural areas.** This option would mean that the rural zone is also applied to rural residential subdivisions. With this approach, there would be no ability to limit certain land uses or regulate home-based businesses within these residential subdivisions. There would be no public process for large-scale developments and water studies couldn't be required. (Minimum planning)
- 2. To have additional controls that apply to rural subdivisions and to require residential subdivisions of 6 or more lots to go through a rezoning process.** This would involve establishing a zone for rural residential subdivisions that permit certain land uses to minimize land use conflicts. It would also involve requiring residential subdivisions with 6 or more lots to be rezoned. The rezoning process would provide Council with

additional oversight and allow for certain technical documents such as hydrogeological studies to be requested to ensure the adequacy of water resources.

Staff recommend **Option 2** - To have additional controls that apply to rural subdivisions and to require new residential subdivision developments of 6 or more lots to undergo rezoning. This approach would allow for tailored land use controls for both existing and new rural residential subdivisions, setting them apart from the rural areas. Having additional controls would help to address land use conflicts by restricting certain land uses that are incompatible within a residential subdivision. This zoning approach would also provide a framework that supports the regulation of home-based businesses within some residential areas, which was indicated as a decided direction by Council at the November 25th workshop.

As groundwater is a factor for new residential development, this option would also ensure that assessments, such as hydrogeological studies, can be attained throughout the approvals process. This process is a key component if Council wants to consider groundwater as a factor for new developments.

Osprey Village, Cookville

Overview

There is a Provincial Statement of Interest Regarding Infrastructure. The goal of this Statement is to make efficient use of municipal water supply and municipal wastewater disposal systems. The basis for this Statement is that unplanned and uncoordinated development increases the demand for costly conventional infrastructure. The province suggests the following measures to address this statement:

- encouraging maximum use of existing infrastructure by enabling infill development on vacant land and higher density development;
- discouraging development from leapfrogging over areas served by municipal infrastructure to unserved areas;
- directing community growth that will require the extension of infrastructure to areas where serving costs will be minimized. The use of practical alternatives to conventional wastewater disposal systems should be considered;
- identifying known environmental and health problems related to inadequate infrastructure and setting out short and long-term policies to address the problems including how they will be financed.

Osprey Village is a centre for economic development and services for the region. Much of the area is already subject to the Osprey Village Secondary Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law. However, there are parts of Cookville that are serviced that do not fall within the Osprey Village Plan Area. Centralized services are expensive to maintain, requiring a substantial portion of the municipal budget. Therefore, it would be beneficial to direct denser developments to the unplanned parts of Cookville that have access to centralized sewer and water services or could feasibly connect to those services over time.

This could be achieved through the creation of a zone, such as a Mixed Use Serviced Zone. This Zone could prioritize high-density, mixed-use development and require new development to connect to central services. A Mixed Use Serviced Zone could permit a variety of land uses including large scale commercial, residential, and institutional uses. It could establish minimum density requirements for residential developments to ensure the creation of walkable, complete communities and the efficient use of municipal services. New, large format commercial development could be regulated through the site plan approval process or another level of municipal oversight.

Feedback

Meetings with stakeholders in the housing, development, and real estate sector over the Summer of 2025 suggested that there was interest in directing growth to certain areas in MODL. Stakeholders mentioned the importance of a diversity of housing options, stating that affordable and accessible housing options should be close to amenities. Some real estate agents noted that regulations would be helpful for predictability.

Public feedback also highlighted that residents want to see strategic planning of large-scale infrastructure, more housing, and sustainable transportation options – all of which are made easier with density. Residents called for thoughtfully planned communities, ensuring that large-scale commercial uses are suitable for a given area.

Potential Policy Direction: Osprey Village/Cookville

Options

Council could direct staff to:

- 1. Apply a General Rural Zone to the unplanned parts of Cookville, enabling almost any type of development in the area.** This option may not align with the Provincial Statement of Interest regarding the efficient and cost-effective use of municipal infrastructure as it would allow low-density developments to occur on serviced land. (Minimum planning)

2. **Establish a Mixed Use Serviced Zone to encourage density near serviced areas of the Municipality in Cookville, permitting new large format commercial development as-of-right.** This option would restrict 1–2-unit dwellings in the area but permit most other uses.

3. **Establish a Mixed Use Serviced Zone to encourage density in the serviced areas of the Municipality in Cookville, requiring new large format commercial development to meet comprehensive site plan requirements.** This option would promote density around Cookville, restricting 1-to-2-unit dwellings in the area and promoting mixed use development. Large format commercial development would be subject to a set of requirements outlined by the site plan approval process including layout and design (e.g., vehicular access), circulation, landscaping, and stormwater management.

Staff recommend **Option 3**. Option 3 best aligns with the Statement of Provincial Interest regarding Infrastructure. It also ensures that large format commercial development incorporates site features such as landscaping and pedestrian walkways. Including these components in the site plan approval process in addition to layout and design and stormwater management would fit with the findings from the public engagement conducted over Spring and Summer 2025. While there was little desire for regulation in rural areas, some residents wanted thoughtful planning of growth areas and wanted commercial uses that would align with the character of the community they fall within. When asked about planning and economic development, one resident said “The Municipality should ensure commercial developments are appropriate to the area in which they want to operate. Taking into account neighbors rights to the enjoyment of their property”. Another said “Carefully and thoughtfully. Streetscapes, neighbourhoods, heritage, appropriately selected”.

Topic: Future Uses

Overview

Given that industrial and large-scale commercial uses can generate conflict with surrounding land uses, it is important to have regulatory tools that make space for these activities. While Council could permit a range of industrial and large-scale commercial uses within zones that also permit residential development, there may be value in creating separate “future use” zones that reserve land exclusively for future industrial or large-scale commercial activities such as salvage yards or solid waste disposal facilities. “Future use” zones could be applied to existing parcels of land that are deemed optimal for such a use or left undesignated until needed. In the latter approach, the zone would be applied when a proposal for such a use

comes forward. The latter option is the more efficient and practical of the two as it is quite difficult to accurately identify all the land that is suitable to designate such a specific zone. Draft 1 of the proposed Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law identified several potential “future use” zones to address several different uses:

Commercial Recreation Zone (CR)

A Commercial Recreation Zone could be established to permit large-scale tourist accommodations (including those with 12 or more units).

General Commercial Zone (C)

A General Commercial Zone could be established to permit a variety of businesses – commercial land uses, small-scale industrial uses, certain natural resource related and accessory residential uses.

Light Industrial Zone (LI)

A Light Industrial Zone could be established to regulate light industrial uses and other non-hazardous or non-obnoxious uses. The zone could require additional setbacks and buffers for industrial type uses. Light industrial uses with less than 1000m² of gross floor area (GFA) could be permitted as of right, whereas light industrial uses with a gross floor area greater than 1000m² could be permitted by site plan approval. Within this Zone, accessory residential uses and accessory commercial uses could be permitted.

Heavy Industrial Zone (HI)

A Heavy Industrial Zone could accommodate existing and future high-impact industrial developments – permitting a range of heavy industrial land uses, other types of high-impact land uses, and accessory commercial uses. Additional buffering and setback requirements could be established for industrial uses adjacent to non-industrial uses and watercourses. Although heavy industrial uses can be permitted in a rural zone, a separate zone could allow for a more concentrated area of heavy industrial uses.

Fisheries and Marine Zone (FM)

A Fisheries and Marine Zone could be established to permit the industrial component of fisheries and marine operations, such as boat and building repair shops and/or fish processing facilities. In Draft 1, this zone was proposed to accommodate such uses throughout the rural and hamlet areas of MODL. These uses would be subject to additional buffering and setback

requirements when adjacent to non-industrial uses. This is like the approach taken by the Region of Queen's Municipality.

Comprehensive Development District Zones (CDD)

A Comprehensive Development District Zone could be applied to a community that is undeveloped or set to be redeveloped to help establish thriving communities in serviced areas. This would limit development in the community until it can be comprehensively designed and developed, requiring a closer review of aspects such as municipal servicing, mixture of land uses, transportation links, and public space. Development in a Comprehensive Development District Zone could be permitted only by development agreement. This type of zone may be helpful for large land parcels around the perimeter of the Town of Bridgewater.

Potential Policy Direction: Future Use Zones

Options

Council could direct staff to:

- 1. Not establish any future use zones and regulate specific industrial or large-scale commercial uses by site plan approval.** With this option, industrial and commercial uses would be permitted in a rural zone. Certain industrial and large-scale commercial uses could be permitted by site plan approval, providing a development officer with control over aspects like lighting, signage, egress, parking, and more. (Minimum planning)
- 2. Not establish any future use zones and regulate specific industrial or large-scale commercial uses by site plan approval and development agreement.** For example, a light industrial use could be permitted by site plan approval, whereas a heavy industrial use could be permitted by development agreement.
- 3. Establish a comprehensive suite of future use zones.** This option would establish a list of future use zones like that described in the overview of this section, except for the Commercial Recreation Zone. The Commercial Recreation Zone would not be necessary because it was not included as a recommendation to accommodate campgrounds and RV parks in the report for the November 25 workshop with Council, despite being originally proposed in Draft 1.

Staff recommend **Option 2**. Option 2 allows for a scaled approach to regulating uses that have high potential to create land use conflicts, such as manufacturing and aggregate mining operations. By using both the site plan approval mechanism and the development agreement

mechanism, Option 2 ensures that lighter industrial uses are reviewed by staff, but that heavier uses require Council approval and a public hearing.

If Council wishes to adjust Option 2, Council could decide to remove the site plan approval component, permitting a light industrial use as-of-right in a rural zone, and a heavy industrial use by development agreement.

If Council opts for Option 3, it is worth noting that Council can establish future use zones and permit certain industrial and/or large-scale commercial uses in rural zones through site plan approval or development agreement. However, allowing a specific use only through a future use zone may contradict Section 220(3) of the Municipal Government Act, which states: "A land-use by-law may regulate or prohibit development, but development may not be totally prohibited, unless prohibition is permitted pursuant to this Part".

By only allowing a use through a future use zone, there is an implicit prohibition on that use until the rezoning process is complete.

Report Preparation	
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