




MUNICIPAL PLANNING STRATEGY
EAST HANTS OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN
BYLAW P-400



EAST HANTS



The Municipality of East Hants recognizes the input members of the Plan Review Citizens Panel devoted to the development of the Official Community Plan:

Brad Hodgins
Linda Graham
Jo Ann Fewer
Eli Chiasson

Stacey Ingraham
Pam MacInnis
Michael Gaudet
Blair Oickle

The Municipality would also like to recognize the many stakeholders and residents who shared their thoughts and aspirations for our Municipality through the process of developing this Plan.

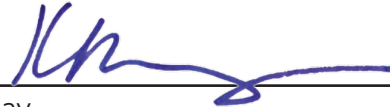
Repeal

The Municipal Planning Strategy of the District of East Hants, approved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and effective on the 21st day of September, 2016 and amendments thereto, is hereby repealed and this Bylaw substituted therefore.

Certification

I, Kim Ramsay, Chief Administrative Officer and Municipal Clerk of the Municipality of the District of East Hants, do hereby certify that the following is a true copy of the Municipality of the District of East Hants' Municipal Planning Strategy which was duly passed by Council of the Municipality of the District of East Hants at a meeting held on the 27 day of July, A.D., 2023.

DATED at Elmsdale, Nova Scotia, this 27th day of July, A.D., 2023.



Kim Ramsay
Chief Administrative Officer & Municipal Clerk

Preface

Municipalities in Nova Scotia create Municipal Planning Strategies to provide a cohesive vision for the future of the community, as well as a policy framework for land use and development control.

The *Municipal Government Act* provides Council with the power to make statements of policy with respect to a broad range of activities including future development, land use, public lands, transportation, municipal services, municipal development, coordination of public programs, and any other matters related to the physical, social or economic development of the Municipality.

East Hants has developed an Official Community Plan divided into three parts consisting of a Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS), Land Use Bylaw (LUB), and Subdivision Bylaw (SUB).

The Municipal Planning Strategy for East Hants is the policy framework which Council uses to guide and control development, land use, and other matters of interest to the Council within the terms of the *Municipal Government Act*. The Land Use Bylaw and the Subdivision Bylaw are the companion documents to this Municipal Planning Strategy and are the primary implementation mechanisms by which Council will carry out the intent of the Municipal Planning Strategy.

Council initiated a review of its Official Community Plan documents in 2013. Those documents were originally approved in 2000, and in the words of that Plan, were an effort to 'create a Community Plan that made every attempt to be proactive, long-term, and visionary in its approach.' Many of the projects and studies proposed in that Plan have since been undertaken by the Municipality, however conditions proposed in that document have since changed significantly.

Since the last Plan was adopted, interest in multiple unit dwellings, and apartment style living has grown as the population in East Hants ages. Resident's desire to combine their place of living with home-based business, or live in mixed use communities has also grown. The 2000 plan focused on separating potential land use conflicts. This plan has taken a different approach by providing visionary statements, policies and regulations which grant increased flexibility towards developing in a manner complimentary to East Hants' community character.

A primary example of this is in how the Municipality treats commercial uses in this plan. The newest iteration of the Official Community Plan has significantly decreased the amount of single-use commercial zoning and has instead adopted a number of mixed use zones permitting a medium density of commercial and residential development.

This Plan lays the foundation for directing and focusing how the Municipality develops, grows, and evolves over the next twenty years. That being said, technology and development pressures change over time, and this Plan is anticipated to be in existence for approximately a decade before significant revisions are required.

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PART A

Introduction

SECTION A1

Plan Overview

The Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) is critical to a municipality's long-term strategic direction, and it is essential to managing future growth and development. The Municipal Planning Strategy, as the first piece of the Municipality's Official Community Plan, provides a comprehensive policy framework to guide the physical, environmental, economic, social and cultural development of the Municipality.

Community Purpose

The last Official Community Plan was written in 2000, and its last major review took place in 2006. Amendments and edits to the Plan took place until 2015. As more edits, and new forms of development previously unfamiliar to East Hants were proposed, it became clear that the Community Plan needed to be comprehensively reviewed and revised to address these issues, and provide a clear direction for the development of East Hants' future.

This Plan emphasizes the Municipality's need to encourage tourism, commercial development and neighbourhood amenities and connectivity. Compared to the last plan, there is a new emphasis on reducing red tape: this plan reduces the segregation of land uses and reliance on lengthy planning approval processes such as development agreements. To implement this successfully, this plan regulates the form of development in many areas with the aim of achieving:

- a small town community character in urban communities;
- home-based commercial activities that blend well into the rural setting;
- increased neighbourhood, regional, road

and active transportation connectivity.

This plan strives to provide guidance on what residents of East Hants have expressed they want for their community, as expressed in the Plan Direction. This plan provides the framework for a more fiscally, environmentally and socially sustainable Municipality as East Hants continues to develop.

This Plan proposes a number of Municipal projects, which have been developed from consultant recommendations, unfulfilled projects from the previous plan, public members, staff, Council, and the Citizen's Panel who reviewed and commented on this Plan.

Legal Purpose

The Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) is the primary policy document for Council providing guidance for decisions on land use and development matters within the Municipality of East Hants. The MPS serves as a reference for residents, in particular those engaged in development, but also, for anyone wanting a more thorough understanding of the policies of Municipal government.

The East Hants Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) is enabled under the Nova Scotia *Municipal Government Act*. Furthermore, the Statements of Provincial Interest provide guidance on a complex series of land use and development issues, crucial to safe, self-reliant and sustainable municipalities. The MPS provides direction on all other planning documents that are developed and amended subject to this plan, such as the Municipality's Land Use Bylaw and Subdivision Bylaw.

Mission & Vision

This Municipal Planning Strategy seeks to

fulfill of the existing vision statements and key strategies set out in the Municipality's 2013 Strategic Plan:

Vision

East Hants is a vibrant, diverse, growing municipality attractive to residents and visitors because of our unique:

- Blend of urban and rural residential settings
- History
- Commercial activities
- Active healthy lifestyle
- Programs and services
- Beautiful landscapes
- Cultures and values
- Recreation opportunities
- Affordable housing
- Volunteers

These strengths, combined with sustainable economic development, a skilled work force, strong agriculture and tourism sectors, productive working relationships, and open government processes, ensure we are recognized as a leading municipality in Nova Scotia.

Key Strategies

Infrastructure Sustainability

- Provide robust fixed infrastructure that satisfies the needs of a growing community

Governance

- Build a governance model that represents and is suitable to the needs of the various communities of interest

Communication & Engagement

- Strengthen our stakeholder relationships through effective and ongoing communications

Community Planning and Development

- Foster viable and vibrant communities

Transportation

- Improve the efficient movement of goods and people that positively impacts quality of life and economic opportunity

Sustainability

- Incorporate the principles of sustainability in municipal operations management

Economic Development

- Facilitate the growth of the commercial assessment base

Plan Integration

Since the previous Official Plan's creation in 2000, the Municipality has added a number of accessory plans, strategies and studies. These documents provide a deeper understanding of the issues and needs of the community. The documents which have been completed and integrated into this plan include:

- The 2013 Municipal Strategic Plan
- Economic Development Strategy
- Long lake-Herbert River Study
- Cockscomb Lake Study
- Integrated Community Sustainability Plan
- Village Cores Plan
- An Active Transportation Strategy for the South Corridor
- Municipal Climate Change Action Plan
- Trunk 2 Route 214 Corridor Traffic Study
- Floodplain Mapping Study
- Active Transportation Needs Assessment
- Sewer Capacity Study
- Growth Management Area/ Growth Reserve Area Review
- Open Space Strategy
- Changes to the Maitland Heritage Conservation District Study
- Municipality of East Hants [Transit] Corridor Feasibility Study

How to Read this Plan

This plan is divided into six parts (A-E), which are divided into a number of sections.

Each section begins with a brief statement

of the topic context, section linkages to the community priorities, and broad approach articulated through the objectives and policy statements that follow. Targets are included in some core sections, with a comprehensive set of targets to be included in the implementation strategy in Part E.

Part A: Introduction sets the context for the plan, including its purpose and scope; identifies the general vision and goals of the plan; and explains the Municipal Planning Strategy's role compared to other Municipal plans.

Part B: Citizen Engagement establishes the municipal-wide plan policies for land use planning public participation and engagement.

Part C: Regional Plan establishes the plan goals for the Municipality as a whole. Plan policies in this part are targeted towards the Municipality's planned area, with additional detail given regarding the Municipality's rural areas. This part has ten sections: Growth Management & Infrastructure, Healthy Public Realm, Urban Design & Community Character, Transportation & Subdivision, Parks, Open Space & Public Facilities, Residential Development Economic Development, Rural Residential, Environment, Rural & Agricultural Lands and Tourism & Heritage.

Each section begins with a brief statement of the topic context, section linkages to the community priorities, and broad approach articulated through the objectives and policy statements that follow. Targets are included in some core sections, with a comprehensive set of targets to be included in the implementation strategy in Part E.

Part D: Realizing the Plan defines the policies respecting plan administration, Municipal projects, and policies that define the processes for amending the MPS, the Land Use Bylaw, and policies that pertain to entering into site plan approval agreements, and development agreements. A framework for ongoing performance monitoring of the Plan is also presented in this Part.

Appendices include the Agricultural Impact Study, Street Classification Map and Generalized Future Land Use Maps.

This document signifies a significant departure from the Municipality's earlier plans. The most important distinction between this document and its predecessors is a focus on community character areas within the Municipality. Less emphasis is placed on the separation of land uses within this document, and greater emphasis is placed on the importance of ensuring that the vision for a neighbourhood's urban form is realized.

Maps and graphics are included throughout this document and are crucial tools to illustrate and set out land use policy. In this MPS an effort has been made to incorporate mapping within the flow of the document as much as possible to avoid the need to consult an appendix. This change is intended to make the document more user friendly. The Generalized Future Land Use Map are still found at the back of the MPS as appendices, and these maps are a crucial, legal part of this document.

Plan Coordination

The Municipal Planning Strategy is a long-term plan for how East Hants will grow and develop over time to achieve the Municipality's Vision, realized through this Plan's Community Priorities, Goals and Policies.

This Plan recognizes that the Municipality of East Hants cannot achieve the goals and policies of this plan alone. It will require the commitment of many citizens, businesses, partners and stakeholders. However, as a bylaw and policy framework for the Municipality, the Plan must define the Municipality's commitment and role in achieving the policies.

The Municipality can take three different types of actions:

- Directly provide programs and services;
- Require actions from others through regulations and bylaws; or

- Foster others to meet policy outcomes through incentives and support.

The policies have been structured so that their language will indicate the expected role of the Municipality in achieving the goals of the Plan.

FIGURE 1
IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK



A.2 Plan Direction

The Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) is critical to a municipality's long-term strategic direction, and it is essential to managing future growth and development. The Municipal Planning Strategy, as the first piece of the Municipality's Official Community Plan, provides a comprehensive policy framework to guide the physical, environmental, economic, social and cultural development of the Municipality.

East Hants is a thriving mix of communities defined by the tides, and rural way of life.

East Hants' unique urban areas reflect our rural setting though attractive, pedestrian-friendly, village centres.

Neighbourhoods and the economy support opportunities for comfortable, healthy lifestyles for residents of any age. People are proud to live, learn, work, shop, and play in East Hants. Visitors are excited by East Hants because it is clean, friendly, and naturally beautiful.

Community Priorities

During the Plan Review process, eight Community Priorities emerged based on resident feedback that provide direction for the goals and policies contained in this Plan:

1 Develop parks, open space and recreation facilities in a Municipal and regional network.

East Hants has a beautiful natural setting, with a diverse number of community centres. Every community centre will not be able to provide all types of recreational services, and future facility development should try to help address both local and regional needs. East Hants is also central to Nova Scotia, and has the potential to be a regional provincial gateway.

The Municipality's support for new open spaces will only continue to grow through open space dedication. Open spaces should be designed and programmed to serve local needs by connecting between communities, especially village core areas. Where possible, regional active transportation and open space connections will connect East Hants to neighbouring areas.



2 Support well designed, pedestrian friendly small town centres.

East Hants has a number of village cores: Mount Uniacke, Kennetcook, Maitland, Shubenacadie, Enfield, Elmsdale, Milford, and Lantz. Lantz is expected to grow significantly with future development. While the intensity will vary between each village core based on demand: the desired development form throughout the village core areas is a small town, urban character.

The intent of this plan is to place an emphasis on the proper form of development in the Municipality's urban centres through regulatory and non-regulatory guidelines.



3 Foster economic development, creative entrepreneurship, and home-based commerce.

A vibrant and diverse economy is essential for residents to prosper and for East Hants to grow in a sustainable manner.

The commercial potential of the Municipality needs to be encouraged for residents to be able to live, work, shop and play in East Hants. Home-based businesses and entrepreneurship should be encouraged in the Municipality with Municipal guidance and assistance.

The Municipality has a number of agricultural producers that should be supported. Productive agricultural land should be protected from non-agricultural development so that agriculture has places to remain viable.



4 Develop healthy transportation networks including walking and cycling.

East Hants is an area that primarily relies on the automobile to get around, and this reliance is placing traffic stress upon the Municipality's key transportation corridors. In order to accommodate future development, existing roads will need to be upgraded.

Key to any community which successfully promotes outdoor activity, are opportunities for safe methods of active transportation. Areas for walking and cycling should lead from connected residential areas to activity areas like parks and shopping areas.

In the future, the Municipality may also consider developing transit for expanded transportation options to complement active transportation.



5 Develop in a manner which is compact, environmentally and fiscally sustainable.

Compact development means development that uses land efficiently through intensive site, and regional design. Compact design, by definition is less land intensive (and more sustainable) than low-density development.

Environmentally sustainable design can be achieved by on-site stormwater management techniques, energy-efficient design, and retaining important natural areas such as wetlands, waterways, setbacks from eroding shorelines and flood storage areas.

Fiscally sustainable development is growth that can 'pay it's own way' via property taxes for capital and ongoing costs. Compact and infill development is fiscally more sustainable per unit than low density, greenfield development.



6

Mix compatible land uses and buildings, and provide transitions between different areas of density.

Mixing land uses: commercial, residential, recreational, educational, and institutional helps create areas with a strong sense of place. Mixed use areas have greater housing variety and density; reduced distances between home, work, and shopping; and are the most pedestrian and bicycle-friendly environments. Mixed use areas tend to be the densest areas in neighbourhoods.

For neighbourhoods close to mixed use areas, development pressure can try to push development into their area. Planning for density transitions can help indicate where density should go, and create clear, but gradual separations between low density residential neighbourhoods, and denser community centres.



7

Protect & provide opportunities to enjoy East Hants' natural beauty and rural character.

East Hants is naturally beautiful. Residents and visitors should have opportunities to enjoy East Hants' rural character expressed in our: farmlands, woodlands, clean air and water, undeveloped open spaces, natural river and shorelines, outdoor recreation opportunities, agricultural products, artisanal products, and small villages.

Fundamental to providing future opportunities to protect and enjoy East Hants' rural character is ensuring that agricultural lands within the Municipality are protected.



8

Allow a range of housing options appropriate to each neighbourhoods' form and intensity.

The Municipality needs many forms of ownership and rental accommodations to provide a variety of housing needs and affordability options to meet changing demographics.

Essential to providing for the needs of all East Hants residents is providing a diverse array of housing types. The most diversity should be available in areas with the most services: commercial and public amenities, Municipal water and wastewater services, schools, and public transit.

As much as possible, the community character of existing residential areas needs to be respected: the scale and magnitude of development will not occur uniformly across East Hants.



A.3 Plan Coordination

Other policies, standards and Bylaws of immediate relevance to the effective implementation of the Official Community Plan include:

East Hants Socio-Economic Study

The Municipality has been completing socioeconomic studies of the Municipality since 1999. New studies are completed as new Statistics Canada information is released.

The Municipal Strategic Plan

East Hants' 2013 Strategic Plan outlines what steps are required for our community to be ready for all the opportunities our future holds.

Our strategic priorities focus on the economy, the environment, municipal infrastructure,

public engagement and governance. This document has set out the vision for the Municipality, values for the Municipality, and organizational values for municipal operations which are reflected in this document.

East Hants Economic Development Plan

Completed in 2015, the Economic Development Plan guides future local economic planning and policy for East Hants over the next five years.

Most impactful to this plan, the Economic Development Plan calls for providing an ample supply of affordable housing,

Municipal Standards

This document lays out the municipal standards for water, wastewater and storm sewer construction as well as street and sidewalk construction.

Parks & Active Transportation Master Plan

This document is to be completed in 2016, and is the management and development plan for a system-based parks & active transportation strategy for the Municipality.

This document will likely have implications on comprehensive development district policies in this document, as well as the municipality's position on accepting open space contributions as part of the subdivision process.

Supporting Municipal Bylaws

Other Municipal Bylaws support the policy direction of the Municipal Planning Strategy.

These Bylaws include:

- Lot Grading and Drainage Bylaw
- Infrastructure Charges Bylaw
- Local Improvement Charges Bylaw
- Building Bylaw
- Community Standards Bylaw

Policy	Amendment Date	Description