

Plan Review Topics – Hants North

Planning Advisory Committee

February 17, 2026

Planning and Development Department



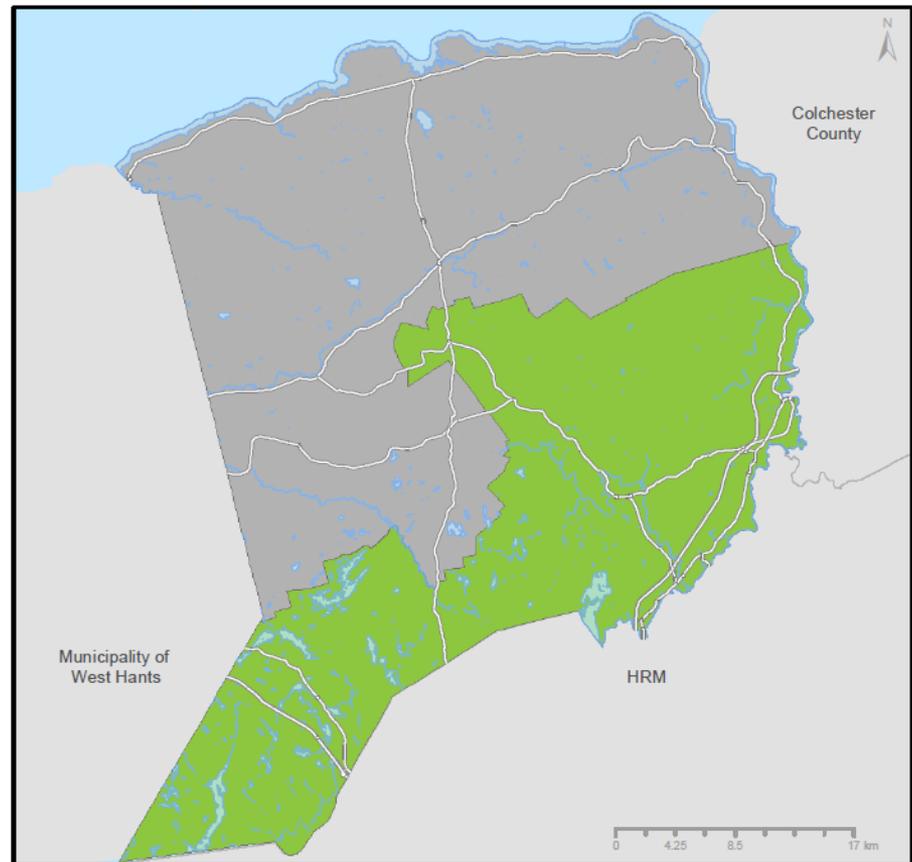
EAST HANTS

Background

- Through Motion C26(21) Council directed that Staff prepare a brief report to outline topics to be discussed during the plan review with the public in the Hants North region.
- In 2023 an update to the East Hants Official Community Plan was completed.
- This update was primarily required to meet the Provincial requirement to bring planning to all parts of East Hants.

Background

- Previously the area of Hants North shown below in grey had no zoning or associated regulations:
- Given that this project concluded just three years ago, some councillors have expressed reservations about revisiting controversial issues so soon.



Discussion

- The following issues were contentious when planning was discussed with the communities in Hants North:
- **Agricultural Land Protection**
- The Statement of Provincial Interest regarding Agricultural lands requires municipalities to make provisions to protect valuable farmland from development when they prepare plans.
- As a result, a draft plan was prepared that would have protected the most productive farmland in East Hants along the Noel Shore.
- However, due to pushback from some landowners, Council decided to apply a general rural zone, Rural Use - North (RU-2) to these agricultural lands.
- This zone does not prevent development on valuable agricultural land.

Discussion

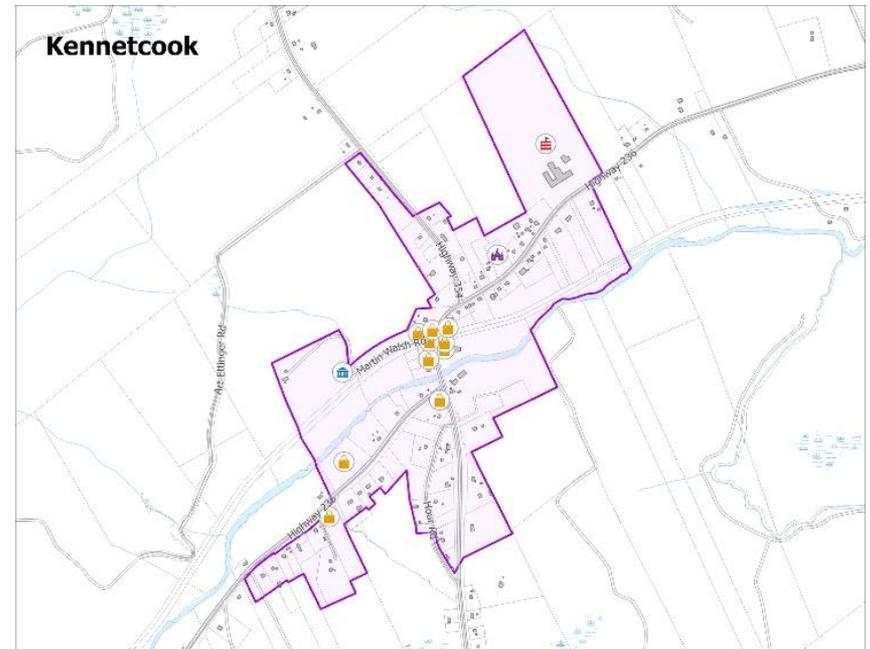
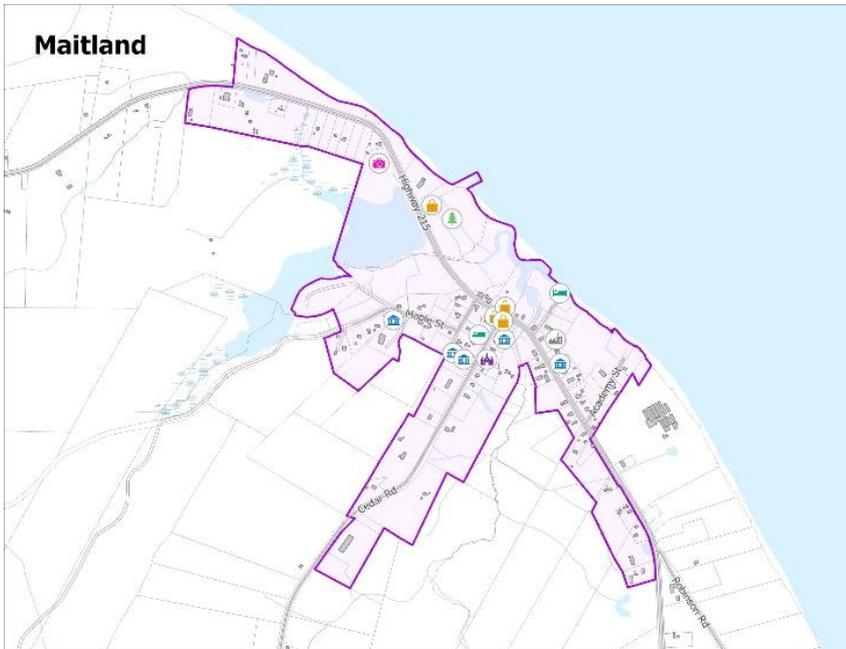
- **Coastal Zone Management**
- As part of the 2023 project, Council funded a coastal vulnerability study which quantified the high rate of erosion along the Noel Shore and areas subject to coastal flooding.
- This study was used as the basis to develop regulations to prevent new development in areas subject to erosion and flooding.
- These regulations were also left out of the final draft as Council received some pushback from residents and at the time the Province indicated that there would be provincial regulations coming to regulate coastal development. The Province has since declined to implement regulations and are instead providing resources to municipalities to develop regulations at the local level.

Discussion

- **Rural Settlement (RS) Designation and Zone**
- In the draft planning documents a specific designation and zone was created to prevent potential nuisance land uses within five settlements: Kennetcook, Upper Rawdon, Noel, Walton and Maitland.
- The Rural Settlement (RS) Designation and Zone was intended to enable a wide range of land uses while protecting these communities from more intrusive rural and resource uses such as salvage yards, lumber mills and Intensive livestock operations.
- In the end, Council decided to apply the RU-2 Zone to these communities.

Discussion

- Rural Settlement (RS) Designation and Zone



Options

1. Enable an open discussion at public meetings in Hants North regarding:
 - Agricultural Land Protection
 - Coastal Zone Management; and
 - Settlement Zoning

Following the first round of consultation Council would then be in a position to provide direction to staff regarding the preparation of appropriate policies and regulations based on the discussion.

2. Direct staff to not reintroduce these three topics or to include any related regulations in draft planning documents; and direct staff to only discuss errors, omissions and housekeeping amendments to the RU-2 Designation and Zone at meetings in Hants North.

Recommendation

Enable an open discussion at public meetings in Hants North regarding:

- Agricultural Land Protection
- Coastal Zone Management; and
- Settlement Zoning

Recommended Motion

The Planning Advisory Committee recommends to Council that Council enable an open discussion at public meetings in Hants North regarding:

- Agricultural Land Protection
- Coastal Zone Management; and
- Settlement Zoning

Alternative Motion

The Planning Advisory Committee recommends to Council that Council direct staff to not reintroduce agricultural land protection, coastal zone management and settlement zoning within Hants North or to include any related regulations in draft planning documents; and direct staff to only discuss errors, omissions and housekeeping amendments to the RU-2 Designation and Zone at meetings in Hants North.