

Plan Review – Wind Energy Development

Planning Advisory Committee

September 17, 2026

Planning & Development Department



EAST HANTS

Introduction

- East Hants first introduced wind energy policies and regulations in 2008.
- Since then, there have been only minor changes to the provisions as part of previous Plan Reviews.
- There are currently three wind energy development sites in East Hants; all were approved under the current regulations without issue.
- In 2025, the provincial government mandated that all Nova Scotia municipalities update their wind energy provisions as per the Minimum Planning Requirement Regulations for wind turbine setbacks.
- As a result, Planning staff are recommending that the changes outlined in this background report be supported by Council so that they may be added to the East Hants Official Community Plan as part of the 2026/2027 Plan Review.

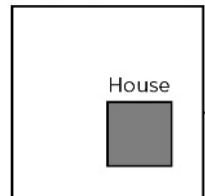
Research

- As part of the Minimum Planning Requirements Regulations for wind turbine setbacks, the province has established maximum allowable setbacks for wind turbines for Nova Scotia municipalities.
- Under the amended regulations, the setback for wind turbines cannot be more than four times the turbine height from an existing dwelling, unless a greater distance is required to ensure that sound levels do not exceed 40 decibels at the exterior of a dwelling and that shadow flicker on nearby residential dwellings does not exceed limits identified in the amendments.
- The amendments also remove the ability for a municipality to influence wind turbine placement based on visual impact on the landscape.

Research Continued

- Under the current regulations, setbacks for large scale wind turbines are measured from the property line, whereas the provincial regulations measure the height of a wind turbine from an existing dwelling unit.
- When East Hants initially created the wind energy regulations, Council decided that measurements would be from a property line to protect future property rights and to reduce land use conflicts.
- Regulations from the province only protect current dwelling unit owners.
- Based on the provincial regulations, a wind turbine could be located adjacent to multiple undeveloped lots.
- If the turbine is placed prior to the homes being constructed, new homes could be constructed closer than 4 times the height of the wind turbine, potentially causing land use conflicts between the two uses.
- The developable potential of the adjoining lot(s) may be reduced because of the proximity of the turbine to the undeveloped lot.

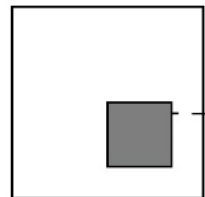
Property Boundary



House

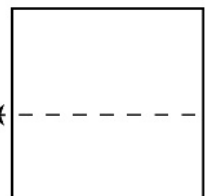
Current EH Setback = 4 x height of turbine from property line = 240 m

60 m
Wind Turbine



Provincial Regulations = 4 x height of turbine from existing dwelling = 240 m

60 m
Wind Turbine



Provincial Regulations = If no existing dwelling no setback is required

60 m
Wind Turbine





Proposed Amendments

- The staff report contains proposed amendments that are in keeping with the Minimum Planning Requirement Regulations.
- In addition to the change in setback requirements, the amendments also remove the ability for a municipality to influence wind turbine placement based on visual impact on the landscape.
- Staff are also proposing minor changes to the preamble to the Wind Energy Development section of the MPS. The proposed amendments do not change the section's intent but improve its introduction.

Alternatives

- As an alternative, if PAC wishes to have greater control over the location of large-scale wind turbines in East Hants, the Wind Energy Designation and Zone could be reinstated as an overlay designation and zone.
- The designation and zone could be applied to areas where existing wind energy developments are located, as well as areas where the Municipality would like to accommodate future wind energy development.
- This approach would be more restrictive than the current regulations.



Recommendation

- Recommend that the changes proposed as part of the Wind Energy Background Report dated September 17, 2026, be included in the updates to the East Hants Official Community Plan.

Recommended Motion

- ***Planning Advisory Committee recommends to Council that:***
 - ***the changes proposed as part of the Wind Energy Background Report dated September 17, 2026, be included in the updates to the East Hants Official Community Plan.***