



# Background Summary

Public Engagement Support Documents

Municipality of the County of Annapolis

February/March 2025



## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Background .....	3
Key Reasons for the Update .....	3
Future Planning for the East End: Growth and Sustainability.....	5
Key challenges .....	7
Guiding Principles for the New Plan Review .....	8
Key Issues and Policy Direction .....	9

## Introduction

C+D Community Design is a local consulting company hired to review the County of Annapolis Secondary Planning Strategy (SPS) and Land Use Bylaw (LUB) for the East End Planning Area. This work includes:

1. Checking the Strategy against the Annapolis County Municipal Planning Strategy (MSP) to be sure the plans match.
2. Keeping important and unique policies from the current Strategy.
3. Making sure the plan meets all provincial rules, with new directives since the last review.
4. Researching land use planning best practices to update policies.
5. **Asking the community for input to reflect their community development needs for today and in the future.**

C+D has provided a report to outline needed changes, key policy themes and community engagement plans. This series of public information reports is a key piece of the engagement.

## Background

The East End has changed a lot since the 2012 planning strategy was made, including the Municipal Government Act, the Provincial legislation that requires Municipalities to adopt planning documents. The East End is part of the County of Annapolis, which introduced its first Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use Bylaw in 1997 to reflect community values.

The original plan was shaped with input from local citizens on the East End Advisory Committee, who worked with a planner to create it. This document has now been reviewed and used as a base for updating the current policies.

The East End Advisory Committee is a group of citizen volunteers and Councillors guiding the review of the Secondary Planning Strategy. They will take the public's feedback and use the data to create land use regulations that support and enhance the community's vision.

## Key Reasons for the Update

The main reason for this review is that it is necessary. The Nova Scotia Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing requires regular updates to planning documents. The Director of Planning for this department will assess the final Strategy and the accompanying Land Use By-Law approved by Council for the East End to determine if it meets provincial requirements.

Recently, the County of Annapolis reviewed its Municipal Planning Strategy, which included many updates and significant public input. This new resource supports the East End Advisory Committee and C+D Community Design. While the East End Strategy is a separate document, some parts of the Municipal Planning Strategy are highly relevant and should be taken into account.

### ***Demographic Changes***

- East End's population reached 3,049 in 2021, up 100 people since 2016.
- Since 2016, the East End has seen several changes, leading to expected moderate growth in the area.
- More people live in areas with services like water & sewer; fewer people live rurally.
- The increase of remote jobs has many people moving to rural areas in search of affordable housing and rural lifestyles.

### ***Housing Challenges***

- Housing shortages across Nova Scotia, particularly in the Annapolis Valley, need long-term planning to support affordable and diverse housing options.
- Homelessness is hard to measure in the region. However, the Province has recognized the Valley as an area in need. There are very few shelter options available. Many people resort to couch surfing or living in tents and recreational vehicles.
- Housing demand is increasing due to economic shifts, newcomers moving from cities, and rising living costs.
- Current zoning primarily permits low-density housing, making it difficult to construct multi-unit homes, which may worsen the housing shortage.
  - From 2022 to 2024, a total of 143 development permits were issued:
    - 29 for single-family homes
    - 6 for multi-family homes
    - 41 for home extensions
    - 41 for additional residential units. <sup>2</sup>

### ***Economic & Infrastructure Challenges***

- Rising construction costs caused by inflation are making homes and infrastructure more expensive. Traditional housing, like single-family homes and townhouses, is costly to build and maintain.
- Short-term rental properties are reducing housing options, leading to the introduction of the Short-Term Rental Registration Act by the Province of Nova Scotia.
- Plans are being made to expand municipal services to support high-density housing and commercial growth in specific areas.
- Aging infrastructure also needs updates to handle future development.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>

### ***Environmental Considerations & Land Use***

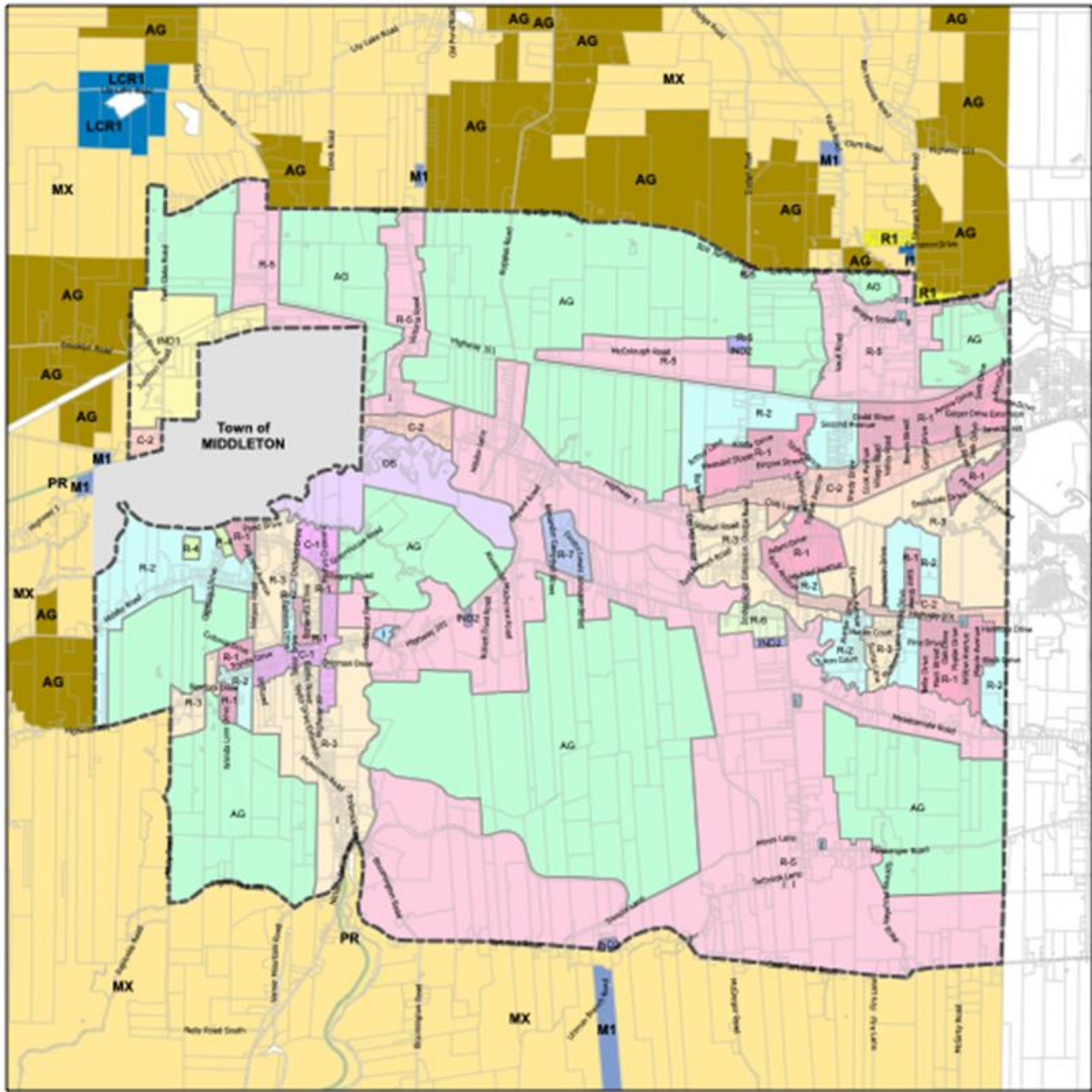
- The warming climate, more storms, and increased stormwater runoff are causing problems such as soil loss, greater runoff in municipal systems, and damage from flooding.
- It is important to protect Class 4 agricultural soils to support sustainable farming and avoid harming the land. Agriculture is a key planning principle for the Provincial Government and must be included in all planning documents.
- The County of Annapolis has decided to add Lily Lake to the East End Planning Area, which will need additional water protection policies.

Council wants to create more types of housing, boost the economy by developing large areas near highway interchanges, and protect good farmland. These goals aim to ensure that future generations can live, work, and enjoy life in our community. As more people move here, we will need a variety of housing options and more job opportunities.

### **Future Planning for the East End: Growth and Sustainability**

Council has been working with contractor CBCL to review where services could be expanded in the East End. These plans will help guide future growth in the area. The focus will be on building high-density housing and supporting bigger businesses and industries in certain areas.

The East End Advisory Committee believes that some Class 4 Soils are less suitable than others. They want to broaden the list of allowed uses in the agriculture zone to include more supportive and complementary activities that boost economic growth and opportunities. We are seeking opinions on whether some agricultural land should be rezoned, if the agricultural zone should be less strict, and how to identify which lands are less viable. A focus group will be held with local farmers to help answer these important questions.

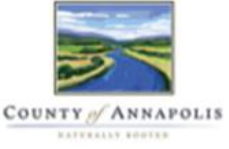
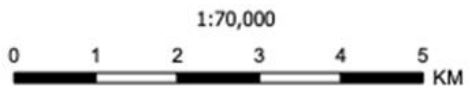


**MPS & SPS Zones**  
East End Planning Area

**Legend**

- East End Planning Area Boundary
- Property Data July 2024

Please see zoning legends on following page.



**FIGURE 1 CURRENT EAST END ZONING MAP**

### ***Post-Pandemic: Housing, Inflation & Climate***

The COVID-19 pandemic has transformed daily life, affecting how people shop, communicate, and interact. Combined with rising inflation and climate change, these shifts have created new challenges for communities across Nova Scotia, including The East End Planning Area.

### **Key challenges**

#### ***Rising Costs & Housing Shortages***

- Inflation has made building materials more expensive, delaying new developments.
- A shortage of qualified builders has led to long wait times for traditional housing.
- In some situations, the short-term rental boom has removed possible housing options from the market, making it harder for residents to find homes.

#### ***Environmental Pressures***

- More storms and bad building practices have caused water runoff and soil erosion, threatening infrastructure.
- Food and basic needs are getting more expensive, so sustainable farming and resource management are important. More people are growing their own food to save money and be self-sufficient.

The East End Advisory Committee believes in balancing development with environmental protection since current development impacts the community's future, including soil and water quality. They want new environmental policies but prefer them to be limited to avoid extra costs for local businesses and developers. This is a topic we want to engage with.

#### ***Government Action: Short-Term Rental Registration Act***

- The Short-Term Rental Registration Act started on September 30, 2024, but the government is allowing municipalities time to adjust as needed. This law requires all short-term rentals (Airbnb, Vrbo and Booking.com) to show proof that they are permitted in their area. A local Development Officer must fill out a form. Therefore, it is important to consider short-term rentals in all planning
- *The East End Advisory Committee believes short-term rentals don't reduce valuable housing and should be allowed wherever homes are permitted. We seek public feedback to support this view.*

## Guiding Principles for the New Plan Review

While working with the East End Advisory Committee and reviewing the Annapolis County Municipal Planning Strategy, new provincial regulations, and our research on planning best practices, we have created some guiding principles for this review.

### ***Simplified & Inclusive Planning***

- Maintain East End Planning Area's charm and allow flexibility and growth.
- Reduce unnecessary restrictions that hinder economic progress.
- Mixed-use development will be prioritized over rigid separation of land uses.
- Keep zoning simple and readable, using updated graphics and clear language.

### ***Smart Housing Policies***

- Support higher-density and infill housing development in already dense areas surrounded by nearby serviced communities with planned or existing municipal services.
- Consider allowing two homes or secondary suites on single-family properties to adapt to changing family needs.
- Encourage larger and different types of housing developments in mixed-use areas near the highway.

### ***Strengthening the Local Economy***

- Promote non-traditional businesses (breweries, cannabis processing, and tourism-related services) to diversify the economy.
- Promote tourism by developing both indoor and outdoor recreation businesses in mixed-use areas, along with agricultural tourism in farming zones.
- Support food trucks and street vendors in small spaces next to other businesses to help startups and offer more options.
- Allow multiple businesses on a single lot to increase land use efficiency.

### ***Sustainable Growth & Infrastructure***

- Align with the Annapolis County Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS).
- Target already serviced areas and large tracts of land near the highway for new development.



## Key Issues and Policy Direction

You can now find more public reports on the [County of Annapolis website](#). Each report highlights key areas needing policy changes. We hope you're interested and engaged! Please choose the topics that catch your eye and see the direction your Advisory Committee is taking.

- [Diverse Housing](#)
- [Water Quality](#)
- [Economic Development](#)

Join us in shaping our future! [Click here](#) to share your valuable feedback through our online survey. Your voice matters, and we truly appreciate your insights!