



# Key Issue Summary - Economic Development

Public Engagement Support document

Municipality of Annapolis County

February/March 2025



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## Introduction

C+D Community Design, a local consulting firm, was brought on by the County of Annapolis to help the East End Planning Area Advisory Committee review their Secondary Planning Strategy (SPS) and the related Land Use Bylaw (LUB).

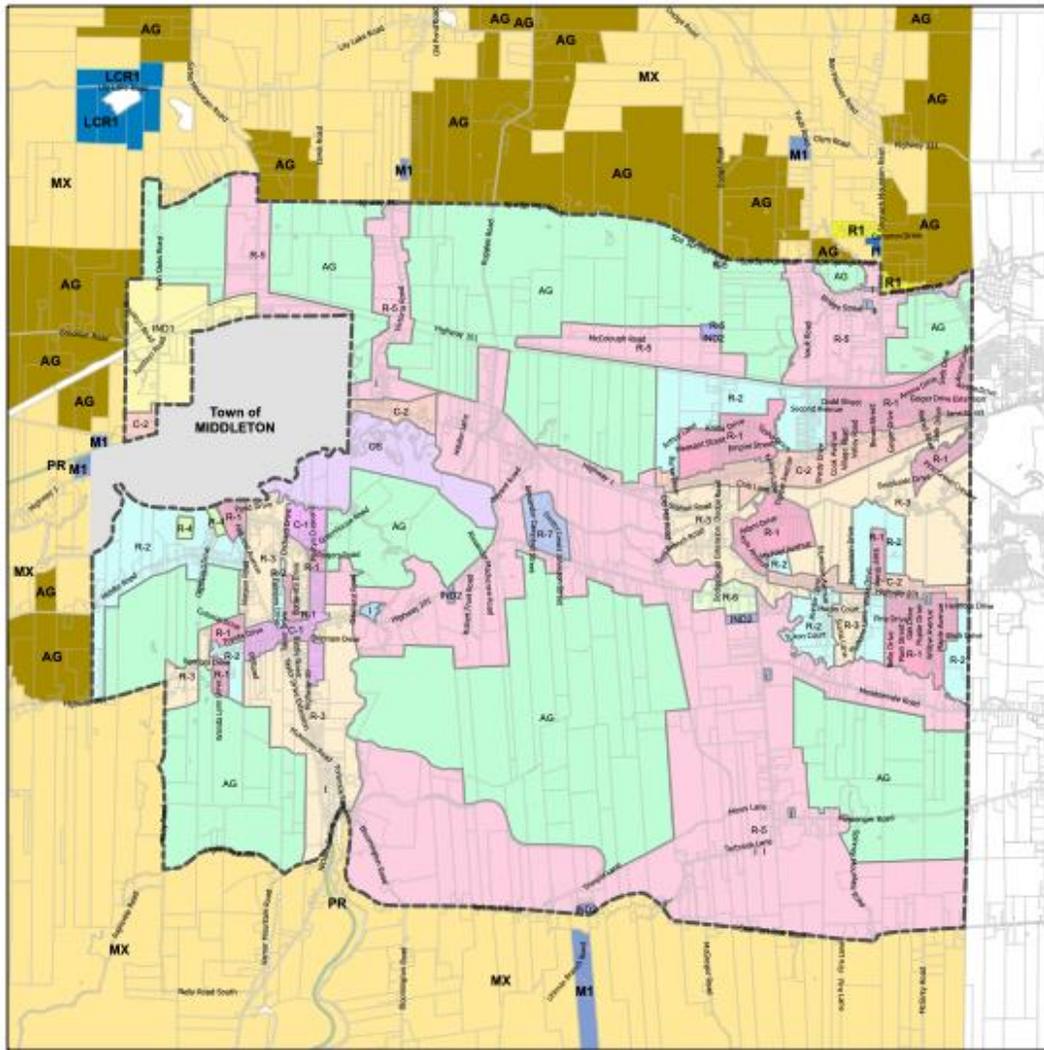
Our company has partnered with the East End Advisory Committee to conduct a thorough background study of the area. This involves reviewing the latest County Municipal Planning Strategy, new Provincial guidance on planning policies, and land use best practices tailored for rural regions.

Additionally, we have collaborated with the Committee to create a public engagement plan, ensuring that everyone has a voice in shaping the future of development in our community.

We are currently in the process of drafting new policies based on the valuable insights we've received from the East End Advisory Committee. [As part of this effort, we are reaching out to the community to gather feedback through surveys and conversations.](#) Your input is essential in crafting regulations that truly reflect the needs of our community.

Your voice matters in this process! Feedback collected from focus groups, town halls, pop-up events, and online surveys will directly influence our new visionary strategy for the community. [What you say truly counts!](#)

This summary report is a result of the discussions and direction received from the East End Advisory Committee on Economic Development.



**MPS & SPS Zones**

East End Planning Area



**Legend**

- East End Planning Area Boundary
- Property Data July 2024

Please see zoning legends on following page.



COUNTY OF ANNAPOLIS  
NATURALLY BUILT

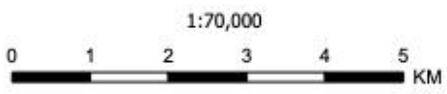


Figure 1 Existing Zoning in East End Area

## Background

The East End Planning Strategy, made in 2012, focused on local values and needs. The population grew slightly to 3,049 in 2021, mostly in areas with water and sewer services. Rural areas remain less crowded.

C+D Community Design, a local consulting firm, was engaged by the County of Annapolis to assist the East End Planning Area Advisory Committee in reviewing their Secondary Planning Strategy (SPS) and the corresponding Land Use Bylaw (LUB). Our company has partnered with the East End Advisory Committee to undertake a comprehensive background study of the area. This study includes analyzing the latest County Municipal Planning Strategy, incorporating new Provincial guidance on planning policies, and considering land use best practices appropriate for rural regions.

Furthermore, we have collaborated with the Committee to develop a public engagement plan to ensure that all community members can contribute to shaping the future of development in our area. Currently, we are in the process of drafting new policies informed by the valuable insights gathered from the East End Advisory Committee.

As part of this initiative, we are reaching out to the community to collect feedback via surveys and conversations, as your input is crucial for developing regulations that accurately reflect our community's needs. Your voice is vital in this process! Feedback obtained from focus groups, town halls, pop-up events, and online surveys will directly impact our new visionary strategy for the community. What you say truly matters!

This summary report presents the discussions and guidance received from the East End Advisory Committee on Economic Development. of documents providing guidance on how to plan for housing in Nova Scotia, including the removal of discriminatory housing policies, permitting innovative land holding structures, manufactured homes and the new required registration of short-term rentals (Air BnB, Vrbo and Booking.com). The East End is responding by prioritizing affordable, diverse housing alongside farmland preservation and protecting water sources. Through the Municipal Planning, Strategy, the Council has placed emphasis on support for local jobs and a stronger economy while preparing for future infrastructure needs. The East End Advisory Committee has provided similar direction, looking to create more development and investment opportunities within the community.

The East End Planning Area has aimed for steady economic growth since 2012, adding six new businesses and three industrial operations in the last two years (Table 1). The East End Advisory Committee will be making recommendation to Council on how their new planning documents could encourage the types of development the community prefers.

A study with CBCL highlighted areas for future services, focusing on dense housing and larger business developments. The strategy prioritizes well-planned growth near interchanges and infill development in the areas surrounding larger communities. East End includes lands surrounding the Town of Middleton

and extends east to borders the Villages of Greenwood and Kingston. Shared infrastructure with nearby communities will require coordination for planning. The current intention is to balance new developments with services and costs while protecting farmland.

Lands around Lily Lake are being added to the planning area and the County will protect its water supply. The region's Class 4 soils, important but hard to farm, need conservation to prevent erosion and maintain productivity. Managing these lands effectively is essential for the farming sector.

## **Context**

The East End Area Advisory Committee (AAC) reviewed research and suggestions about water quality, housing, farming, and economic growth. They developed new ideas and requested policies to balance development while protecting farmland, water, and natural resources.

The Committee has decided to involve the community in discussions about Housing, Watercourse Buffers (known as Setbacks), Agriculture, and Economic Development. Updates, like this one, will be shared as references for the public survey and upcoming Open Houses.

Community feedback will guide the AAC in creating policies and land-use rules to present to the Council of the County of Annapolis for adoption. There will be more opportunities for public participation in the next step of this process.

## **Economic Development Public Input**

Economic growth in the East End Planning Area is crucial for creating jobs and boosting the local economy. Increasingly, people are moving from city centers to rural areas, where they can work from home and enjoy a lower cost of living. This trend has led to an influx of new residents with diverse needs. However, this influx has also driven up housing costs in rural communities like the East End, as housing stock is purchased and inflation raises prices, potentially pricing existing residents out of the market.

Additionally, Nova Scotia has experienced a series of natural disasters, particularly forest fires, which have left many residents without homes. The wait times and costs associated with constructing new homes have become exorbitant. Many displaced individuals are purchasing land in more affordable areas but are unable to build within a reasonable timeline.

The County of Annapolis's Council Planning Strategy aims to balance rural charm with new development. They advocate for mixed-use zoning, which combines homes, businesses, and industries in the same areas to support economic growth. The strategy also includes innovative large-scale development at highway interchanges. Furthermore, it emphasizes the importance of protecting water sources, creating local jobs, and supporting industries such as tourism and farming.

While balancing economic development with environmental protection is essential, it presents significant challenges. Growth brings jobs and additional income to local communities, but it must be pursued sustainably to avoid long-term harm.

- **Efficient Communities:** Design communities that use resources wisely, reduce waste, and limit environmental damage using tools like stormwater management and clear development rules.
- **Mixed-Use:** Combine homes, businesses, institutions and light Industries in the same areas with thoughtful planning to accommodate and anticipate new residents and their needs.
- **Sustainable Industries:** Support eco-friendly industries around agricultural soils like food processing, machinery repair, and solar energy farms to strengthen farming and improve community outcomes.

### Open-Land Projects

Outdoor-focused monetary ventures, often called Open-Land Uses, can significantly boost economic development in sensitive environmental areas. Open-Land encompasses uses established in areas that are undeveloped, whether forested or cleared. These activities typically require minimal infrastructure and can be easily removed with little environmental impact.

Some ventures may need more extensive infrastructure, while specific regulations will outline where such projects can be established.

The East End AAC is seeking public input on the types of activities and the optimal locations for these businesses.

### Solar Farm Projects

Renewable energy projects can create economic opportunities by selling energy and offsetting costs with locally produced and distributed energy, such as microgrids on industrial sites. This includes small-scale accessory panels designed to provide energy for primary uses on the property, including agriculture, industry, and homes.

A solar farm, which is a large collection of solar panels functioning as its own main use, represents light industrial development. This type of project is typically passive, causing minimal disruption to the local area. Solar farms can be installed on platforms, buildings, or ground locations.

The East End AAC is seeking feedback from residents regarding support for these projects in the community and suggestions on the best locations for their implementation.

### Heavy Industrial Areas

Heavy industrial areas are characterized by large businesses that require spacious buildings and substantial energy resources, often consuming significant amounts of water and may involve hazardous materials, impacting the environment. Currently, there are no activities in the East End that qualify as

heavy industry, although there is an [existing industrial zone](#). Typical activities found in heavy industrial areas include heavy machinery and automobile manufacturing, metal production, petroleum refining, and waste management facilities. Depending on the size and scale of these developments, developers may be willing to pay for extended services to support the business, benefiting the Municipality as nearby sites would also receive enhanced services. However, due to their nature, such developments can, without proper regulations, lead to environmental repercussions that may be unacceptable in areas with Class 2, 3, and 4 agricultural soils, where many residents rely on on-site well and septic systems.

The East End AAC is eager to hear from residents and businesses regarding the potential establishment of a heavy industrial area to foster future economic development.



### Public Survey Questions

Public engagement is a crucial element of the planning process. The East End Planning Advisory Committee cannot recommend the adoption of final documents to the Planning Advisory or Council without justifying the proposed policies through research and public feedback. Recognizing the need for further dialogue, the East End Advisory Committee has asked the Community Design Engagement Coordinator to engage with the public on specific topics related to economic development.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SURVEY QUESTIONS

### *Open-Land Projects*

1. What activities do you think are okay to do on open land in the East End area?
  - a. Farming and Nature Tours
  - b. Horseback Riding
  - c. Mountain Bike Parks
  - d. Adventure Parks
  - e. Campgrounds
  - f. RV Parks
  - g. Sports Stadiums
  - h. Rock-Climbing or Bouldering Areas
  - i. Shooting Sports (like Archery, Axe throwing, Gun ranges)
  - j. Racing (with horses or vehicles)
  - k. Drive-In Movie Theatres
  - l. Glamping and Nature Retreats with accessory buildings
  - m. Multi-Use Trails (e.g. ATV, Harvest Moon)
  - n. Other
2. How do you feel about building extra structures (like storage, info centers, or stadiums) for open-land projects?
3. Do you think that places like Campgrounds, RV Parks, or Sports Stadiums are good for the community?
4. Which areas in the East End do you think are the best for open-land projects?
  - a. Brooklyn Road (from Town of Middleton to the 101 Highway access)
  - b. Junction Road (North Side of the Road)
  - c. South Side of Twin Oaks Road
  - d. Parts of Gates Mtn Road
  - e. South side of Spa Springs Road
  - f. Wilmot
  - g. Melvern Square
  - h. Nictaux
  - i. Nictaux Falls
  - j. Torbrook
  - k. Torbrook Mines
  - l. Meadowvale
  - m. South Farmington
  - n. All of the above
  - o. None of the above
5. Do you think there should be rules for some types of open-land projects?
  - a. If yes, please explain which projects should have rules and why.
6. How important do you think businesses, such as drive-in movie theatres, glamping, and nature retreats, are for making East End a nicer place?

### **Solar Farm Development**

1. How do you feel about building scale solar farms in the East End?
2. Where do you think solar farms should be allowed?
  - a. Industrial areas
  - b. Mixed use areas
  - c. Agricultural areas
  - d. Commercial areas
  - e. None of the above
  - f. All of the above
3. Please share any comments about solar farms.

### **Heavy Industrial Areas**

1. Do you believe the East End needs to have a Heavy Industrial zone?
2. Please share your thoughts on heavy industrial areas in the East End.