

Plan It Colchester Presentation to Council

The following is a copy of the Power Point overheads of an updating report by Uplands Studio presented to Colchester Council at their committee meeting on November 14, 2024. The final plan is to be completed in early 2025 as mandated to all municipalities by the Province of Nova Scotia. A list of the upcoming public open houses / engagement sessions will continue until November 28, 2024 are listed at the end of this article.

What is Plan It Colchester?

Much of the Municipality is unplanned and has grown organically. Population increase creates pressure for development; Opportunity for residents to have a say in where and how their communities grow and develop. Plan it Colchester is a Requirement of the Provincial Government and Bill 58 - Minimum Planning Standards

What is Land Use Planning?

Planning is a collaborative process used to help citizens, business owners, and civic leaders envision a common future for their community.

Fundamentally, planning provides a framework to guide how land is used, how and where growth and development happens, and how and where buildings are built.

What is Land Use Planning?

If you don't know where you're going, you might end up someplace else" - Yogi Berra

If we don't plan our communities, someone else will.

How Do We Plan?

Municipal Government Act (MGA)

"...a municipal planning strategy must contain... statements of policy with respect to...housing..."

Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS)

The Municipality of Colchester values and wants to enable a diversity of housing options in the municipality"

Land Use Bylaw (LUB)

A range of zones that permit detached housing, multi-unit dwellings, accessory dwellings, modular housing, etc.

How Do We Plan?

Municipal Government Act (MGA)

Things We Can Regulate (but don't have to): Lot standards, building placement, Building size, The uses permitted on land; Signage, The location of services and The processes required for different types of development. Accessory buildings and structures, Outdoor storage, Street accesses, Parking requirements, Landscaping, Topsoil removal and Development in areas of environmental sensitivity or where hazards are present

How Do We Plan?

Municipal Government Act (MGA)

Things we can not regulate: Resource activities; lands below ordinary high water mark; people, motor vehicles, trees except in development.

How Will This Impact Me?

These new documents will pertain to all new development after the documents are approved by council.

Everything that is currently in operation (legally!) within the Municipality will stay the same and be permitted to continue as usual, even if it doesn't conform to the regulations in the new Land Use Bylaw - protected under the MGA as a nonconforming use



Draft Plan: Housing

What We Heard

The province has experienced rapid growth since 2021, and housing needs are changing quickly. From public feedback received during the initial engagement phase, access to affordable housing was one of the top priorities addressed.

Young people, low-income individuals and seniors are disproportionately affected.

What is Being Proposed

- Enable "accessory dwelling units" in zones that permit single-unit dwellings
- Reduced lot size requirements for residential zones
- Policy limitations on expansion of R-1 Zone
- Treat supportive housing the same as dwellings of a similar size
- Up to eight units on a lot in the R-3 zone by site plan approval (i.e. without a development agreement)
- Roll in Land Lease Development Bylaw

Draft Plan: Agriculture

What We Heard

We heard concerns around limiting the flexibility farmers have with what they can do with their land. Some have expressed plans to sell lots to developers (or to develop themselves) and they are concerned that the new planning regulations could impact their plans, and their retirement savings. It is important to give farmers the flexibility to benefit financially from their land if they choose to subdivide and/or sell.

What is Being Proposed

Planning documents do not regulate farming activities; New Agriculture Potential (AP) Zone - Agricultural soils, with exceptions; Similar range of uses as Rural General, minus some intensive uses; Limits on private road subdivision Recognition of, and clear permission for, agritourism uses and agriculture-related industry; Farmers' markets recognized as a distinct use and widely permitted; Policy for consideration of agricultural soils in rezoning and development agreements; Continue small-scale chicken provisions; Intensive livestock uses in Rural General, Agriculture Potential, and Rural Industrial and New "moderate livestock" category.

Draft Plan: Environment

What We Heard

Residents in coastal areas feel particularly vulnerable to climate change effects such as erosion and flooding and would like to see better protection of these areas as well as education on how to mitigate them. Residents value the natural environment in Colchester.

What is Being Proposed

Clear recognition of solar panels and EV chargers; Wind turbine provisions rolled in, but **unchanged**; Flood zones/overlays updated to reflect 2016 CBCL study; Collaboration for protecting water sources of Tatamagouche, Debert, and Stewiacke (Truro is fully within Town); Requirement for storm water management plans on large developments; Watercourse buffer; Coastal buffer; Coastal elevation and New Shoreline Zone.

Draft Plan: Recreation & Tourism

What We Heard

There are many beautiful trails and parks in Colchester County, and residents speak highly of them. Although there is ample space to recreate outdoors, residents feel there is a need for more recreation programming and facilities such as swimming pools and gymnasiums. Some residents feel that there should be more support for tourism in the area by increasing the availability of short-term rentals, improving public spaces, and investing in local employment opportunities.

What is Being Proposed

Accommodations in rural and commercial zones; Parks and Open Space (P-1) Zone to recognize public parks; New Commercial Recreation (P-2) Zone for things like golf courses; Campgrounds by site plan approval; New outdoor shooting ranges and racetracks by development agreement; Widely permit trails, parks, and open space uses and Policy support for active transportation infrastructure.

Draft Plan: Other

What is Being Proposed

New Airport Zone; New Mi'kmaw Land Zone; New(ish) Main Street Zone; Continue Village Heritage Area, with specific provisions; Cohesive approach across municipality and New layout.

Project Timeline

Draft Engagement Period - November and December, 2024
Engagement Activities: Public Open Houses, Online Map; Fact Sheets; Feedback Form; Stakeholder Follow-up; Informal Provincial Review and Neighbouring Municipalities.

Draft Engagement Period

Tuesday, November 19th at 6:30pm - Economy Recreation Centre (West Entrance); **Wednesday, November 20th at 6:30pm** - Knox United Church Hall in Brookfield; **Thursday, November 21st at 6:30pm** - H. Douglas Boyce Village Hall in Bible Hill; **Tuesday, November 26th at 6:30pm** - The Grace Arts Centre Theatre in Tatamagouche; **Wednesday, November 27th at 6:30pm** - Debert Legion Branch 106 and **Thursday, November 28th at 6:30pm** - Old Barns United Church.

Questions/Comments?

Want to get in touch directly? Ryan MacLean, Engagement Manager, consultation@uplandstudio.ca, (902) 423-0649

Colchester's Community Development Department Report

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lotted in a few CCRC schools. The Municipality receives a grant from CCRC to help run programs in Bible Hill, Stewiacke, East Hants, Truro, Brookfield, Hilden, and Onslow.

Volunteers are the heart of our communities, and the Municipality of Colchester recognizes the hard work and dedication of the many volunteers that help make our communities thrive. Deserving volunteers are encouraged to be nominated which could be individuals, groups, youth, families and businesses. Applications are available online people are encouraged to submit nominees in the new year. Follow the municipal website for

updates.

- The 19th Annual Cobequid Trail Run was held on August 25 with 357 runners from all over participating. The course record in the half marathon was smashed with a time of 1 hour 7 minutes. Next year will be the 20th year for the Cobequid Trail Run.
- The deadline for the Non-Profit Insurance Grants was on October 25, 2024. An information item will be going to Council for review.
- Annual Grant letters have gone out to all those organizations that receive annual funding to submit financial and program information to the County. The deadline for Non-Profit Grants will be on January 31, 2025.

- A much-needed replacement of the floor at the North Shore Arena has been completed with financial assistance from the Municipality of Colchester, Province of Nova Scotia and community fundraising.

Parks and Trails

During the winter and spring months, field staff continued forest-related work at various sites, including on-going wind-storm cleanup and Hurricane Fiona clean-up efforts paused during the summer and fall as Recreation field staff attended to other projects and maintenance duties.

Winter and spring improvements also included training courses, snow clearing from park and trailhead parking lots, and preparing for maintenance

work and several improvement projects planned for the 2024 season.

Cobequid Trail

- Cobequid Bay Lookoff - Contractors placed erosion protection at the 10' diameter culvert and installed a new fence on the north side of the trail in September.
- Old Barns - A contractor completed repairs to the Mill Brook bridge (near Shore Road) abutments and installed new railings; these repairs were recommended in a 2022 bridge inspections report.
- Staff installed two new trail benches in Old Barns and replaced all wooden waste bins with new, animal-proof steel bins.

Stewiacke River Park

- The design-build tender for a

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