



**Report of the Clerk
2021-2025 Strategic Plan Annual Review
Hearing
March 24, 2022**

Purpose:

The purpose of this hearing is to receive verbal and written submissions regarding the first annual review of the Town of Mahone Bay 2021-2025 Strategic Plan Review.

Background:

At the January 27, 2022 regular Council meeting, Council approved a Strategic Plan Review Public Engagement Plan, which included an online survey, opportunity to submit comments, and a Hearing to receive comments from the public on the Strategic Plan for the consideration of Council during the 2022 annual review of the Town of Mahone Bay 2021-2025 Strategic Plan.

A full report on the Public Engagement Plan will be received at the March 24, 2022 regular meeting of Council.

Notification:

Public Hearing: Progress Bulletin March 9th and 16th
Town website, Town Facebook page,
Notice posted at the Post Office, and Town Hall
Mayor's Newsletter March 2021
Notification via CodeRED to those who have subscribed to
the *Community Notices from the Town* and *Messages from
Town Council* notification lists.

Submissions Received:

6 comments were received prior to the hearing.

Comments were forwarded to Council on March 23rd from the Mahone Bay Tourism and Chamber of Commerce, the Mahone Bay Founders' Society, PAC member Bryan Palfreyman, Mackenzie Fraser, and Karen Pinsent.

Comments from Tom Webb were forwarded to Council mid-day on March 24, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,
Maureen Hughes
Town Clerk & Deputy CAO



To: The Mayor and Members of the Town Council, Mahone Bay
From: The Board of the Mahone Bay Tourism and Chamber of Commerce
Re: Review of the Town Strategic Plan 2021-25

“God (or the Devil) is in the Details”

-Mies Van der Rohe/Gustave Flaubert

We are pleased to submit some comments about the proposed Strategic Plan.

The Board of Directors of the Chamber had an opportunity to examine your document, but we have not had time to engage the wider membership. Nevertheless, we will post this response on our website and provide further commentary as plan details unfold.

Members of the Board support and endorse the vision, core values and overall priorities cited in the Plan, that is, priorities related to Sustainable Municipal Services, Equitable and Inclusive Growth and Environmental Leadership.

It is easy enough to subscribe to statements of broad intent but another matter altogether to effectively execute them over time and at the level of contestable everyday life. In this respect, we wonder if the assumption about 10% population increase for our Town over the Plan period is understated for several reasons, not the least of which is the twinning of Highway 103 which will significantly shorten the commuting time to Halifax. Has sufficient weight been given to the many positive attractions of small-Town living and the growing possibilities of working from home which COVID helped to highlight? It would be useful to know the basis of this population growth forecast. Also, diversity of population does not happen spontaneously, especially in Atlantic Canada where diversity numbers are low. In order to attract a diverse population special measure must be taken. The Plan is silent on what these measures might be.

One of the key building blocks of diversity is affordable housing. The Plan has a goal of 25% of the stock to be added over the planning period is to be affordable housing. Presumably, there will be some definition of the term “affordable” as we move into detailed planning.

The Chamber has a special interest in affordable housing. As we move from high level statements of intent to practical implementation there will be some themes to be pursued.

1. We should examine how current land use policies and by-laws may restrict further housing development. It is our view that the amount of low-density land-use in the Town is wasteful, and steps can be taken to find innovative alternatives for new development. We need to think ahead now to a time when easy to develop land is used up and we turn to higher density uses for existing properties.
2. An increase in the number of rental housings may require a review of current by-laws restricting the number of these units allowed on some properties and the use limitations on conversion of out-buildings.
3. Conversion of long-term rental or owner-occupied properties to unlicensed short term accommodation such as Air B&B, potentially removes affordable housing units from the available stock of housing. On the other hand, the lack of overnight accommodation in the Town encourages visitors to move on to Lunenburg for the night instead of staying here. How are these two aims to be reconciled?
4. There are many areas of the National Building Code where interpretation is possible and desirable without compromising health and safety. That is why different applications governing similar developments exist throughout the province. An overly rigid and costly interpretation of the Code in a location can defeat the objective of affordability by unnecessarily adding cost. Citizens should be encouraged to bring forward examples where this is happening in order to determine whether Code requirements are too rigid in some circumstance because of issues of interpretation.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to participate in this process. We look forward to working with you on implementation of this Plan.

Respectfully submitted,

George Anderson
Chair
MBTCC



Mahone Bay Founders Society

Mahone Bay Museum
578 Main Street
PO Box 583, Mahone Bay
Nova Scotia
B0J 2E0
902-624-6263

Town Council Town of Mahone Bay
March 21, 2022

Dear Council members,

As the Mahone Bay Founders Society representing the Mahone Bay Museum we are pleased to have an opportunity to advocate for the preservation of built heritage in the Town of Mahone. In response to the Town Council's invitation, (Lighthouse page 5 March 16, 2022), here are our comments for the annual review of their 2021-2025 Strategic Plan.

Regarding 2021-2025 Strategic Plan
Strategic Plan Progress Report

Strategic Plan Progress Report includes the following

“Create and support enabling environment for equitable and inclusive growth in the community including investment in core infrastructure and services .

2.1 Support Housing Supply to Meet the Needs of Growing Community Support population growth with an increased number of dwelling units by implementing a Town Housing Strategy that fosters housing affordability, reduces the number of households in core housing need, and preserves our built heritage. “

With our interest in the built heritage of Mahone Bay, the society asks the town to do more to recognize built heritage in the Town's Strategic Plan in a meaningful way and beyond what currently exists. The museum's concerns relate to a specific area of “old town” and is not intended to influence the town's more general strategy on affordable housing.

This is something the museum has advocated for in the past. It should take the form of a Municipal Heritage Conservation District in the historic core town area, and increase it by including streets beyond Main Street. While preservation is of considerable importance from a historical perspective, it is also central to the attraction of the town as a tourist destination and an essential part of our economy.

In recent years, Covid period excepting, the number of visitors to the museum has increased significantly (7433 in 2019) with great interest being shown for town history and architecture.

Other towns, particularly The Towns of Lunenburg and Wolfville have strengthened land-use by-laws to insure protection of their culture and heritage. Lunenburg established the Old Town Conservation District and also has a 40 year Comprehensive Community Plan with a commitment to maintaining historical accuracy of buildings. It is important for Mahone Bay to similarly move to actively protect its valuable historic area against inappropriate development and repurposing.

Sincerely

Kody Dagley, Doug Snyder, Randy Sherman, Norrie Peel, John Regan, MacKenzie Frazer, Anne Palfreyman, Kenneth Paulsen.
Board of Directors Mahone Bay Founders Society

Maureen Hughes

From: Bryan Palfreyman [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, March 19, 2022 3:34 PM
To: Garth Sturtevant; Glenn Patscha; John Biebesheimer [REDACTED]
Katherine McCarron; Maureen Hughes
Subject: Re: Strategic Plan Review

CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender.

Thank you Mo, much appreciated.

I believe that I did respond to the survey as a resident but not as a public member of the PAC.

In my latter capacity, I have the following thoughts on the existing strategic plan - some of which you will have heard before.

Since the the land use by law review is subject to the strategic plan, as I read the document, it is important to get the plan framework right.

Section 2 deals with equitable and inclusive growth and subsection 2.1 refers to housing supply and ends with the need for the preservation of built heritage.

I presume that the strategic plan's references to a 10% increase in diversity and increased density flow from this objective.

I have no idea how Council can possibly control diversity, especially by numbers. Additionally I have seen no evidence that diversity is a problem in the town, although this objective regrettably suggests that there is one. The exception might be the financial capacity to own property which is a national issue not easily solvable by a municipal council.

Perhaps the thought is that increased density would alleviate the problem, although land cost is a small part of building costs. Density might be possible in some areas of the town, especially if unserviced land is gradually serviced. This is indeed an opportunity to have many more houses in a given area than would be the case were it to be developed unserviced. Costs of servicing are surely recoverable over time.

However, allowing increased density in the historic district of the town would seem completely at odds with the objective of preserving built heritage. The latter is crucial to Mahone Bay's position as a national tourist destination and its economy is dependent on this. Appearances matter.

Other towns have recognized this, for example Lunenburg and Wolfville. It's time for Mahone Bay to create its own historic area not subject to density development and flexible rules governing land use. It's in the town's best interests.

In other areas the strategic plan covers necessary administrative efficiencies and aspirational environmental goals some of which are already being implemented.

More lightly covered is waterfront protection which is conditioned on contributory financing from other levels of government. More effort is needed to obtain such financing. Forecasts of sea level rises are that they will happen sooner rather than later and more extreme weather events are evident.

It's not much use having low cost energy and ev car charging stations if we are underwater. The town knows what the flood areas are. The potential cost of inaction is enormous. Insurance companies are refusing coverage in flood plains and federal bail outs are increasingly subject to relocating flooded properties, which would be the end of Mahone Bay as we know it.

Another important town asset, the harbour, is also not controlled. Again inaction is blamed on other levels of government but town persistence appears missing. I am personally aware that this is possible.

Lastly, (you will be glad to hear), the downtown granite blocked banks of Ernst brook have been in a collapsed and collapsing state for years and do not reflect well on the town. I don't know where responsibility lies but, at the least, some effort is needed to repair the banks before a disaster results.

I look forward to seeing what others have to say.

Regards

Bryan

18, 2022 at 5:07 PM Maureen Hughes <Maureen.Hughes@townofmahonebay.ca> wrote:

Good afternoon,

This message is being forwarded to you as a public member of a Town of Mahone Bay committee.

If you have not yet taken the opportunity to submit comments to the Strategic Plan Review via the online survey that ran throughout February and part of March, this is a reminder that Council is requesting public feedback before conducting their first annual review of the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan. A hearing will be held on March 24th at 6:30pm via the Town's YouTube Channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWIIRlgVqIPM-QZqe4oZHUA> and members of the public are welcome to submit comments in writing or by appearing before the Hearing.

If you would like to submit comments to the Hearing, please contact me directly to either submit comments in writing or to make arrangements to speak at the hearing.

The Strategic Plan and the Progress Report on the first eight months is available on the Town website at <https://www.townofmahonebay.ca/strategic-plan-review.html>

Maureen Hughes

Subject: FW: Input: Mahone Bay strategic Plan Review.

From: MacKenzie Fraser [REDACTED] >
Sent: Wednesday, March 23, 2022 12:52 PM
To: Town of Mahone Bay Clerk <clerk@townofmahonebay.ca>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Input: Mahone Bay strategic Plan Review.

CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender.

Please consider the following written message for discussion when reviewing the town's strategic plan.

Development is inevitable. Nova scotia's population is growing and more and more people are discovering the beautiful south shore and it's scenic communities for travel, home and business. The town should welcome this new development with open arms but air on the side of caution when approving new developments. The existing heritage structures should be preserved and any new buildings or adaptive reuse should have to meet certain criteria. With a town such as Mahone Bay it is important that this progress doesn't infringing on the existing "atmosphere" and scenic street scapes. It would be a shame of Mahone Bay were to loose this through development for the sake of progress, it is just something you simply cannot get back once it is lost. The dilemma becomes how do you move forward, how can there be new development, retrofits. After speaking with a close friend who works as a heritage consultant she gave me me a brief run down on one of her current projects. She is currently working with the town of Chester and planner to put together a handbook with design and material guidelines for all new development within the town. This will help ensure that the whole town retains its aesthetic appeal and continuity while still allowing new buildings.

In her words.

"making guidelines to encourage new development while safeguarding the character of the town - we are working with the town (planner) and no developers are involved."

The town of Mahon Bay should take the same strategy in allowing new development and progress while maintaining the current atmosphere and historic allure that brings so many new people here.

MacKenzie
Jane's Road, Oakland

Maureen Hughes

From: Town of Mahone Bay Clerk
Sent: Wednesday, March 23, 2022 3:28 PM
To: Maureen Hughes
Subject: FW: Strategic Plan - Public Feedback for March 24 Council Hearing

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 23, 2022 2:29 PM
To: Town of Mahone Bay Clerk <clerk@townofmahonebay.ca>
Subject: Strategic Plan - Public Feedback for March 24 Council Hearing

CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender.

Regarding the upcoming Council Hearing requesting public feedback for review of the Strategic Plan, these comments concern the importance of preserving an historic district for the town of Mahone Bay, which is a key consideration in our development planning.

Through carefully considered development, Council has the opportunity to protect the unique built heritage that strengthens our economy as a tourism destination and provides a highly liveable home for its residents.

There are many examples of other municipalities where development choices with leadership to protect unique qualities have created a positive impact.

The needs for development in Mahone Bay can be met and maintain the sense of place and unique characteristics of our town.

This is not to say that an historic district would remain static. With vision and careful choices over time, relevance and interest can thrive.

The essence of the district can continue to serve residents and visitors with renown characteristic appeal.

-Karen Pinsent, Resident, 74 Pleasant Street,
Mahone Bay

Key Measurable Results to achieve by 2025 are:

1.10% population increase with diversity in age, ethnicity and income.

2. Increased supply of affordable housing (costing less than 30% of Mahone Bay's median household income) to 25% of total housing units.

3. 50% replacement of the Town's core water, wastewater, and storm water infrastructure on Main Street. **Is the plan to upgrade to what the perceived needs would be with climate change allowing for significantly more very severe storms? Will we build storm sewers that we will need to replace in 2035?**

4. 80% of the power for the Town's electric utility comes from renewable sources.

1. Sustainable Municipal Services

1.1. Improve Performance of Town-Owned Utilities

Reduce water loss, increase flow capacity, reduce service disruptions, and increase demand.

Strategic Actions:

- Undertake strategic water, wastewater & electrical rate studies and adjust rates as appropriate
- Implement initiatives to increase demand (grow customer base and transition away from fossil fuels)
- Complete water and wastewater system diagnostics
- Strategically replace/upgrade utility infrastructure

Will we be guided by climate change updated storm strength predictions especially in terms of rain events?

Constraints include ratepayers' ability to pay, borrowing capacity, and external funding opportunities.

Do we need to press for additional revenue sources?

1.2. Implement Asset Management Planning

Establish and maintain service standards with public input on Town services and rates.

Strategic Actions:

- Develop 10-year asset management plans for each asset class:
 - Electrical generation & distribution system;
 - Water treatment & distribution system;
 - Wastewater collection & treatment system;
 - Stormwater drainage systems; **Is looking at 2032 good enough?**
 - Buildings and facilities including those leased by the Town to third-parties; **What weather event impacts will there be on buildings due to predicted wind velocities re repair and insurance?**
 - Transportation systems including streets and sidewalks; Public transit? **Do we need a three or four municipality public transit agency like AREA but with a local focus? Have there been any contacts with Bridgewater, MODL and Lunenburg?**
 - Recreational facilities, trails, green spaces and cemeteries;
 - Equipment & Vehicles including Fire Department; and
 - Natural infrastructure

Constraints include staff capacity and external funding opportunities.

1.3. Improve Accessibility of Public Infrastructure

Establish new and replacement infrastructure to current accessibility standards, increase usage of Town facilities / public spaces, and improve ongoing public engagement.

One way to ease constraints might be set up organizations fueled by citizen investments like a Land Trust in which people could invest savings at a reasonable return to do things like acquire land for lease to not-for-profit affordable housing projects. It would also engage citizens.

Strategic Actions:

- Develop and implement Accessibility Operational Plan (as per approved Lunenburg County Accessibility Plan)
- Strategically improve transportation infrastructure to support healthy living. **Not sure what that means.**

Constraints include staff capacity, external funding opportunities, and roll-out of new legislation / regulations.

2. Equitable & Inclusive Growth

2.1 Support Housing Supply to Meet the Needs of Growing Community

Support population growth with an increased number of dwelling units by implementing a Town Housing Strategy that fosters housing affordability, reduces the number of households in core housing need, and preserves our built heritage.

Strategic Actions:

- Complete Plan Mahone Bay MPS/Land Use By-Law review/update process and align results with Strategic Plan
- Develop and implement Housing Strategy with affordability as its focus **Will that include how to foster and nurture not-for-profit housing and identify a catalyst role for the Town?**

Constraints include federal, provincial and community partners, market forces, staff capacity, and residential tax burden.

2.2 Provide Equitable Services to Support Growth

Dedicate ourselves to the continued improvement of services and responsiveness.

Strategic Actions:

- Review service levels and align with residents' ability to pay **List of services? Any new services planned or possible?**
- Explore shared services and partnerships for efficient service delivery while connecting with community passion and interest
- Establish inclusive strategies for provision of municipal services
- Strategically expand existing infrastructure to support planned growth and development

Constraints include residential tax burden and community expectations.

2.3 Governance to Meet Expectations of our Growing Community

Engage the community and govern consistently with Council's values.

Strategic Actions:

- Align staff capacity, capital and operating plans with strategic plan
- Update policies and by-laws to support effective governance and strategic plan implementation
- Prioritize public engagement processes supporting strategic plan implementation
- Regularly review progress and continually improve strategic plan for effective implementation

Constraints include staff capacity, external funding opportunities, and community expectations.

3. Environmental Leadership

3.1 Reduce Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Focus on renewable energy supply with a reduction in emissions by sector guided by ongoing public/customer feedback.

Strategic Actions:

- Implement community Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Reduction Action Plan
- Expand home heating program
- Expand electric vehicle charging infrastructure
- Invest in renewable energy generation (e.g., community solar garden)
- Support regional initiatives that contribute to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions

Is there no possible way to encourage solar installation on every suitable roof in a way that benefits both the Town and our citizens? What if our municipal utility did the installation, maintenance and the home owner got a rate reduction? Surely this is not beyond our ingenuity?

Constraints include external funding opportunities, public buy-in, and ratepayers' ability to pay.

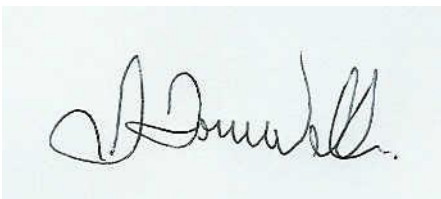
3.2 Adapt Community Infrastructure to Climate Change

Protect our shorelines against sea level rise and address flooding.

Strategic Actions:

- Develop and implement policies and by-laws supporting adaptation measures on private property
- Invest in strategic infrastructure (shoreline and storm water management)

Constraints include external funding opportunities, staff capacity, roll-out of new legislation, and property owner buy-in.



232 Main Street, Mahone Bay