



MUNICIPALITY OF THE DISTRICT OF LUNENBURG

REPORT TO: Committee of the Whole.
DATE: revised 6 February, following Committee of the Whole discussion.
RE: ICSP Progress Report - 2013-14.

ORIGIN

Council approved its **Integrated Community Sustainability Plan** on March 9th 2010. Adoption and implementation of an (approved) ICSP is a requirement of the [Municipal Funding Agreement](#), which provides for ongoing federal gas tax funding via the Province. (see MFA s.3.2.1 - *Municipal Responsibilities & Schedule 3 - Municipal Requirements*) Currently, the Municipality receives approximately \$1.3 million dollars per year through the transfer program.

Within the existing MODL [ICSP](#): it was identified that an annual Progress Report be compiled by staff, as a means to provide Council with an update on activities. The Annual Report was to be timed to coincide with budget review processes. The first Progress Report to Council was reviewed in December 2010. A second Report followed in February 2012. The Municipality was required to submit an official Report (#3) to Service Nova Scotia in late 2012. This is the fourth document put together by staff and reviewed by Council since the ICSP's adoption in spring 2010.

RECOMMENDATION

No Motion required. Report is for information purposes.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Facts considered pertinent in the ongoing implementation of the Municipality's ICSP:

1. Determination of Priorities.

The ICSP is Council's plan. Identified actions may look at involving the broader community, or working with senior government departments and/or other units in its implementation, but no external agents are bound to it.

Also: Council has historically used its ICSP as but one input tool / point of consideration when forming its Strategic Priorities Chart. The Priorities Chart remains the principal instrument used for the determination of Council's current objectives. Any related progress on ICSP -specific objectives occurs, therefore, only as the financial and human resource capacity of the Municipality is put towards such. In its subordinate capacity to Council's Priorities Chart, the ICSP acts as a secondary instrument in the Municipality's strategic planning (and budgeting) framework.

2. Affiliation with resources identified in the Municipal Funding Agreement.

Because of its genesis within the Municipal Funding Agreement, sustainability planning in NS municipalities is frequently linked with use of gas tax. This financial arrangement carries with it a dilemma, in that MFA funds can be used for certain sustainability -related projects, but not all proposed initiatives identified within a Municipality's ICSP are considered to be "gas tax eligible." As such, given the degree of commitment that is available through the MFA, this funding affiliation highlights the (comparatively) greater attention that has been put to the pursuit of certain infrastructure -related activities by municipal units, over other proposed sustainability initiatives.

BACKGROUND

The ICSP seeks to integrate long-term sustainability objectives within the Municipality’s operations, regulations, programs, and infrastructure projects. The 2010 MODL ICSP complies with the “four pillar” stand-alone template, as established by the Canada / NS Infrastructure Secretariat for municipal units to follow, where local municipalities did not want to integrate sustainability objectives within their municipal planning strategies.

Being Council’s plan, it is possible for the Municipality to amend the document. While recognizing that an ICSP is meant to serve as a strategic, long-term document, to function beyond an election cycle, Council may evidently wish to re-visit how the current list of ICSP Actions aligns with their own current objectives. There are, at present, no identified requirements being imposed by the Province for an ICSP Plan Review, but it may be anticipated that such an activity will be placed in a future funding agreement. Nor has any changes yet been identified as to the project eligibility conditions that are found within the (related) MFA - save for those additions associated with the Climate Change Action Plan, which references municipal initiatives concerned with climate change.

DISCUSSION

A review of any progress made in the first four years since MODL’s adoption of its ICSP would highlight that some of the initial actions listed in the 2010 document remain outstanding. Such an outcome is not unexpected. Staff would also note there has been a significant - if not an overwhelming - emphasis, placed towards two particular areas.

Capital improvement projects in central wastewater treatment and solid waste management far exceed any other form of “sustainable” municipal investment. It can be concluded that this Municipality has invested extensively in these two areas of traditional activity, to deliver improvements in sustainable infrastructure, so that such facilities are constructed (or are re-built) for the community’s benefit, to an acceptable, present-day standard. Conversely, the Municipality has invested to a lesser degree in initiatives outside of conventional service areas that it has historically provided, or in pursuit of projects that may be considered more socially transformative in intent.

One challenge for local government -led sustainability initiatives is the continued depopulation and relative economic decline of rural communities being coupled with senior governments’ expectations of what any sustainability funding should support. Related funding is explicitly supportive of centralizing infrastructure responses, which, in turn, inevitably supports the continued centralization of populations. (read: urbanization) Should rural municipalities be at all concerned with what infrastructure type is explicitly identified in senior government’s “sustainability” policy?

NS Community Counts	District of Lunenburg	Halifax Regional Municipality
Population, aged 0-39 <small>(in 1991, 2011)</small>	1991- 14,445 2011- 9,298 (est. loss of 5,145, or 35.6%)	1991-213,115 2011-195,555 (est. loss of 17,560, or 8.2%)
Labour Force <small>(identified by Industry, in 1991, 2011)</small>	1991-11,815 2011-12,736 (est. increase of 900 or 7.2%)	1991-182,300 2011-224,580 (est. increase of 42,000 or 18.8%)

Template for Review

In review of the 18 action items, staff has noted where initiatives have gone forward, and/or where there have been continued challenges, or little change, since the ICSP’s adoption. Where it may be considered relevant, staff has also provided estimates as to the total amount of gas tax resources expended by the Municipality, in relation to items. As with previous ICSP Progress Reports, a simplified “stoplight” scoring measure (red yellow, green) reflects staff’s assessment as to the related progress or integration of that particular sustainability objective with municipal services / programming / use of capital funds. In this year’s report, staff has highlighted each of the Action item statements found in the ICSP, as well as the proposed outcomes that were associated with the pursuit of that particular action.

Little to no progress.	Some progress.	Ongoing progress.
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1. Carry out appropriate energy efficiency measures and/or related changes to existing municipal operations.

Less airborne pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions generated from municipal facilities.
Economic savings with reduced corporate energy costs.

Following the completion of an Energy Management Plan in 2009 that highlighted proposed infrastructure changes to improve energy efficiency, particular upgrades were made to the administration building, the MARC facility, and at the Regional Recycling Centre. Most of the improvements were initiated in fiscal years 2010 and 2011. In 2013: electricity -related emissions data was brought forward (to March 2013), as part of activities associated with the completion of a Municipal Climate Change Adaptation Plan. There is, as yet, no ongoing monitoring or data-entry routine identified for the tracking and assessment of monthly energy use in municipal facilities.

2. Develop a strategy to reduce the number of wastewater systems not operating to standards.

The amount of inadequately treated wastewater entering local watersheds has been reduced.

Over the last nine years, the Municipality has focused extensively on construction (or re-development) of its central treatment systems in New Germany, Cookville, and (in 2013) Conquerall. These actions have looked to protect the LaHave River from the negative impacts of wastewater emanating from local development. Continued infrastructure improvements are expected to be pursued, so that these facilities continue to meet a treatment standard that is set by senior government. Upgrades were also completed at the Region's Lagoon, which provides the necessary "end-of-the-line" disposal services for all treatment facilities in the County, as well as handling private septic haulage.

The assessment of a possible central treatment extension to Garden Lots remains one project the Municipality has identified, but not carried out. Nor has municipal resources been put towards the long-standing concern of correcting malfunctioning private septic, or in gauging the number of developed properties currently without septic, despite the preponderance of private on-site systems being the dominant cultural norm. Council has repeatedly raised the issue of possible pollution from untreated private systems with NS Environment; but the Municipality is no more closer in knowing (quantitatively) the scope of such a problem. The Municipality has also advocated to Environment for a Point of Sales regulation to trigger any necessary upgrade/installation for such properties.

3. Provide financial support to community-based projects aimed at improving the conditions of local watersheds.

Coordination and support for local 'clean water' projects between citizens, community groups, and governments.

Budgeted grant support has been provided annually to Bluenose Coastal Action Foundation (BCAF), in support of the water quality monitoring program carried out for the LaHave River watershed. In 2013: \$11,500 was granted. Since the project was first initiated in 2009, BCAF has looked to work with agricultural landowners on improving riparian zone protection from related run-off. The Municipality has not identified any projects of its own, based on findings.

4. Increase the percentage of land holdings in the Municipality designated for environmental protection.

Public land has been set aside for non-development, low-impact purposes.

The Municipality has used its own revenue sources so as to acquire particular parcels that fit with its identified Open Space Plan priorities. Since 2010, acquisition has included both a number of coastal and inland properties. There have been no changes as yet in the amount of public land that is specifically protected under provincial legislation since 2010 (e.g. land identified under the Wilderness Protection Act) although the NS Natural Resources Parks & Protected Areas Plan highlights possible changes, expected to occur by 2015.

5. Support identified incentive programs targeting the protection or development of resource lands.

Targeted economic and employment growth strategies associated with local resource production.

One action proposed in the Municipality's 2010 Economic Development Strategy was the initiation of a program focused on the identification of under-used agricultural lands for re-development purposes. Presently, any resource development -related activities remains on a targeted basis, where municipal support from staff is provided to particular private interests as they might come forward with business initiatives, as opposed to the development of any municipal-wide program. The Municipality did invest in a 3-year Regional Climate Data Study conducted to capture data to assist in identifying agricultural marketing / opportunities.

6. Increase the production and delivery of local food promotional material within the local marketplace.

Residents better informed and supporting local food production.

Funding to support Local Food promotions was initially associated with marketing development activities of the local RDA. The LQRDA is no longer in existence, as of spring 2013. In 2013: as part of the Bridgewater Sustainability Festival, the Municipality did promote and support the organization of a "Close to Home" Local Food Event on the Saturday evening to mark the end of the Festival day.

7. Reduce the environmental impacts of planned development in the Municipality's identified growth centre.

New development in the planned growth centre incorporates 'smart growth' principles within its policy framework.

No changes have been made to the existing set of Osprey Village land use by-laws. The proposed Concept Plan (still under staff review) for Osprey was to identify and support commercial / residential mixed use style developments, which may be seen as one of the key components in smart growth principles.

8. Develop an Adaptation Measures Plan for communities likely impacted by erosion, sea level rise & storm surge.

Plan policy and emergency measures framework amended in response to identified adaptation measures.

Having initiated work on the project in 2012, the Municipality submitted its Climate Change Adaptation Plan to the Province. The 2013 Plan specifically proposes the Municipality work with its regional partners to undertake a number of improvements involving EMO operations during weather-related emergency events, as well as consider proposed policy change that would look to reduce potential future risks to residents and property located on the coast. Since 2009, the Municipality has also been involved with - and in 2012 and 2013 used its own funds - so as to pursue LIDAR mapping detailed elevation data, and associated research projects related to climate change issues and/or with assessing potential hazards of flooding. Availability of an enhanced mapping capacity through the Municipality's Planning Department has in turn allowed for REMO to begin using such sources for its own operational purposes.

9. Develop coastal management strategies concerned with public access, protection & impacts of development.

Local policy amended in response to identified citizen input, and aligned to work with new provincial strategies..

No changes have been made in local policy / programs specific to coastal access, or in coastal protection matters. Work on developing a province-wide "Coastal Policy," led by Fisheries, did not progress substantially in the last year. Any Municipal Coastal Management Strategy is influenced by the above noted data collection (LIDAR, Research), as it the first step and provides a critical foundation for any coastal strategy.

10. Establish an ongoing communications process with respective provincial and federal authorities on matters impacting local community development.

Shared recognition of the impacts of any changes to services on community development and local sustainability.
Effective decision-making by local and provincial governments through coordinated communications.

The standard methodology for municipal communications with any government counterparts remains focused on tackling single issues. For example, a committee was formed following the Oakhill Mill closure. Resulting from this has been the establishment of the Lunenburg / Queens Economic Action Team, consisting of municipal representatives, economic staff, provincial and federal departments (ACOA, NSBI, DNR, ERDT, InnovaCorp, Labour and Advanced Education) Other issues brought to the Province include school closures, and School Review process; Point of Sales regulations, and Highway 103 upgrades. In this respect, there are a number of ongoing working groups purposefully struck to deal with related community development issues. In 2013: one noted “joint organizational process” proceeded successfully, in that the transition of solid waste management responsibilities passed to a Joint Services Board (a partnership with neighbouring municipalities).

11. Decrease the continued contamination of the environment caused by unsightly premises & illegal dumping.

Reduced amounts of illegally dumped or hazardous materials found on private property.

In 2013: Municipal support for the Illegal Dumpsite Cleanup Program continued, albeit at a reduced figure. A recent voluntary-driven effort to clean-up a particular site, organized by a 12-year-old citizen, illustrated the difficulty that is being faced with this objective. The Municipality has also placed a greater emphasis towards its procedure for correcting the clean-up of unsightly premises, particularly where clean-ups cost the landowner less than \$1500.

In 2013: the Municipality also funded an Illegal Dumping Program which provided funds to property owners for cleanup of illegally dumped waste. Very recently: in January, MODL approved amendments to its Solid Waste Collection By-law, to strengthen its enforcement abilities and penalties for illegally dumped waste

12. Remove accessibility barriers in municipal facilities.

Accessibility integrated as a principle in all municipal facilities, and in delivery of municipal services.

While the two principal municipal facilities (Administration & MARC) are not inaccessible to affected segments of the population, accessibility concerns in serving the public can still be identified in both these locations.

13. Develop an active transportation plan. Deliver on identified AT priorities.

Infrastructure built to provide alternative mobility options for resident use.
Residents can choose to live healthier lives through the use of AT infrastructure.

The Municipality completed its initial Active Transportation Plan in 2011 and continued in 2013 to resource the Plan's implementation through use of gas tax funding, as well as through the coordination of successful project grants. To-date, municipal projects have largely concentrated on infrastructure located in Osprey Village. Additionally, through a partnership with NS Health and Wellness, the Municipality recently introduced a resource dedicated to the promotion of Active Living programs and services. In this respect, a public education component is focused on integrating the benefits of local AT infrastructure for residents. MODL has also provided ongoing assistance to local Trail Groups and most recently, funded a trail routing study that will move the Lahave River Trail one step closer to having a full trail connection between Bridgewater and New Germany.

14. Deliver regional public transportation services.

Reduced dependence on the use of private motor vehicles to access the Region's commercial and public services.

Following two years of purposeful inactivity, the Joint Transportation Committee was re-activated in spring 2013. The Committee's mandate is focused on the development of a second study, to follow from the 2010 Feasibility Study. It will assess service delivery options for partnering municipal units beyond the use of a fixed route model. Provincial representatives responsible for programming support for dial-a-ride services are included in JTC's discussions. By a 2010 motion, the Municipality places a portion of gas tax into reserves annually, for future transit considerations.

15. Increase the use of electronic communications to provide residents with greater access to, and information concerning, government. Make identified municipal services electronically accessible.

Residents can be informed on local government activities, and provided with effective electronic services.

The Municipality has undertaken a number of significant communications and services -related improvements over the past four years, including upgrades in its financial management system.

In 2013: upgrades and alterations were made to the Municipality's website. A Records Management System has been invested in and continues to be developed. MODL also recently implemented an E-Council system, which has enabled all Council members to be fully electronic and accessible via electronic means.

16. Establish a sustainability filter focused on identified energy costs, as an item in the Municipality's capital acquisition form and procurement policy.

Sustainable municipal purchasing, specifically targeting large capital projects.

Since the ICSP's adoption, the Municipality has participated in a provincial-wide committee struck to examine purchasing decision-making processes.

In 2013: amendments were adopted to the Municipal Administration Purchasing Policy (MDL-33). The Report initially included proposed changes, in alignment with provincial objectives, concerning "alternative practices" (local purchasing) which will be provided in a subsequent report to Council.

17. Determine the municipality's capacity to meet its own energy needs. Carry out energy generation measures.

Replacement of fossil fuel sources with local renewable energy sources.
Increased independence from external sources of energy.

The Municipality invested some measure of human resource during the ICSP development phase (and post-adoption) so as to undertake initial investigations as to how municipalities can be more involved in the development of COMFIT-eligible energy generation projects. (e.g. local wind) In the end, such investigations were for naught. A successful wind project has since been taken forward in 2013 by private enterprise, located on the Mullock Rd, working in consortium with another eligible stakeholder.

Starting in 2013: triggered in part by a local business's presentation to Council, there has been identified potential for further investigation by staff re: a program targeting individual homeowners switching to the use of solar. The intent would be to develop a loan program that can benefit residents choosing renewable energy installations for their own needs; the Municipality can re-coup its initial lending through tax collection.

18. Improve current infrastructure & operational capacities targeted at waste management, diversion and reduction.

Improved solid waste practices.

Second only to the amount of investment incurred by wastewater projects, the Municipality has invested a significant portion of its gas tax resources in the region's solid waste management facility. These investments have included the construction or renovation of specific buildings so as to assist in diverting different waste streams (e.g. a compost facility upgrade and a recyclable glass building) as well as meeting the costs associated with landfill closure.

In 2013: primary focus has remained on funding the costs inherent in landfill closure. Such costs were budgeted as being in excess of \$600,000. MODL also funds a Public Outreach Position who works with residents, business and community groups to improve diversion rates.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

As stated: there is a financial arrangement between the Municipality's ICSP and the use of gas tax resources. These resources have been available to the Municipality for capital projects since 2005. In the last nine years, an estimate as to where, specifically, MFA resources have been used, can be summarized:

Eligible Expenditure Categories	2005-10	2010-13	2013-14 (YTD)	Total
Central Wastewater	\$2,000,000	\$600,000	Y	More than \$3M
Solid Waste Management	\$700,000	\$1,600,000	Y	Approx. \$3M
Roadway Improvements	\$500,000	\$100,000	~	Approx. \$600K
Active Transportation	~	\$80,000	Y	Approx. \$200K
Public Transit	~	*a measure (\$50-75K) now placed in a Reserve		
Energy Systems	~	~	~	\$0
Capacity Building Activities (Planning, Research, Analysis)	\$90,000	\$5,000	Y	Approx. \$100K

STRATEGIC PLAN / POLICY RELEVANCE

The ICSP document functions as a secondary instrument in determining Council's set of Priorities, which are listed on the Municipality's Strategic Priorities Chart. With the completion of the Municipality's MCCAP in 2013, Council now has two documents for consideration, in the determination of identified initiatives resulting from the Municipal Funding Agreement. An updated version of the MFA is expected to be provided to municipal units in 2014.

WORK PROGRAM IMPLICATIONS

No new work specific to the existing ICSP document is anticipated at this time. Continued reporting on project's expenditures and identified progress, per requirements of the MFA, is already well-integrated in existing work plans.

COMMUNICATION CONSIDERATIONS

This Report, as with previous iterations, is available to the public. The Report is placed within the pertinent section of the Municipality's webpage regarding Sustainability, so that interested members of the public can be provided an update re: the Municipality's internal assessment on ICSP progress, as well as become better informed as to the degree of commitment this Municipality has placed towards initiatives associated with its Gas Tax investment.

CONCLUSION

Council and senior management may consider, during the annual business planning process, what resources are available, and, in some cases, where partnerships need be coordinated with other governments, communities, or residents, in order to see continued progress. As was plainly stated in the ICSP, success in implementation can be measured in two ways: [1] are actions being undertaken and [2] are they having any positive, measurable impact?