

# Public Consultation Summary:

## The Development of a Coastal Policy in the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

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# Agenda

1. Consultation process
2. Survey results
3. Themes from written comments
4. Alternatives proposed
5. Coastal policy in NS
6. Final thoughts

# 1. Consultation Process

# Open House Sessions

## ➤ Five open-house sessions held across the Municipality

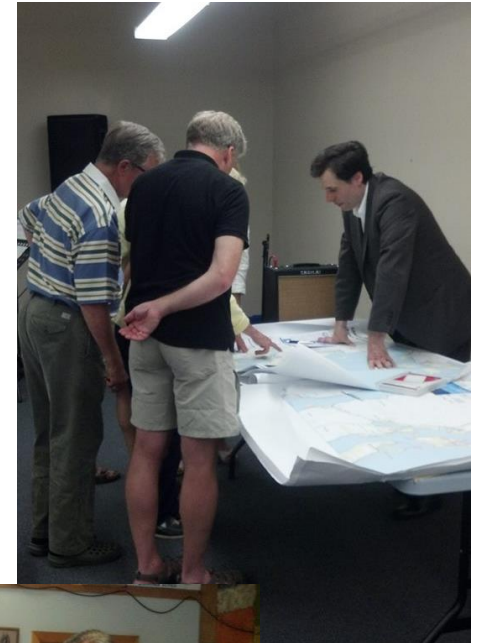
- Petite Riviere Fire Hall (June 16)
- Riverport Community Centre (June 18)
- St. Barnabas Church (Blue Rocks) (June 25)
- Mahone Bay Centre (July 9)
- Big Tancook Island (August 6)

## ➤ Sessions were widely publicized

## ➤ Short presentation

## ➤ Map stations



## ➤ 215 attendees



# Feedback

- Survey
- Opportunity for written comments
- In total, 112 feedback forms
  - Riverport (25)
  - Petite Riviere (25)
  - Blue Rocks (9)
  - Mahone Bay (8)
  - Remainder submitted via drop-off, or by email
- 4 feedback forms were submitted to Planning after analysis was completed

**Coastal Policy  
Feedback Form**

Thank you for taking the time to respond to the following questions.

The intent is to collect input from residents, and provide Municipal Council with feedback. All respondents should feel free to add whatever additional comment they wish on this issue.

Surveys can be sent electronically (email: [planning@modl.ca](mailto:planning@modl.ca)) or mailed to:  
Planning Services, Municipality of the District of Lunenburg, 210 Aberdeen Road, Bridgewater NS, B4V 4G8.

**Section 1: Coastal Hazards: What You Have Experienced or Witnessed.**

**\*The word "AFFECT" can be a matter of perspective. In this case: to note where citizens consider erosion and flooding events have influenced their behaviour, so that they needed to respond in some capacity.**

(1) Is erosion currently affecting your own property? Yes / No / Not sure

(2) Do you think erosion affects other properties in your community? Yes / No / Not sure

(3) Is coastal flooding currently affecting your own property? Yes / No / Not sure

(4) Do you think coastal flooding affects other properties in your community? Yes / No / Not sure

(5) Have any structures on your own property been damaged by coastal hazards? Yes / No

If yes, what caused the damage? (Check all that apply)

☐ Erosion

☐ Coastal flooding

☐ Storm surge

☐ Other (Describe) \_\_\_\_\_

(6) Have you relocated any structures on your property because of coastal hazards? Yes / No

# General Comments

- In general, support for the development of a coastal policy was identified during the open house sessions
- Comments (both positive and negative) heard at the open house sessions were reiterated in written comments via the feedback form
- Some citizens particularly noted their concern with the proposed introduction of new regulations

## 2. Survey Results

# Erosion and Flooding

- Is erosion currently affecting your property, or other properties in your community?
  - Affecting their property (46%)
  - Affecting other properties in their community (86%)
  
- Is coastal flooding currently affecting your property, or other properties in your community?
  - Affecting their property (22%)
  - Affecting other properties in their community (77%)
  
- Certain coastal areas are identified as being more susceptible to erosion and flooding



# Coastal Hazard Impacts

- Have any structures on your property been damaged by coastal hazards?
  - Yes (27%)
- What are the main causes of damage?
  - Storm surge (79%)
  - Erosion (35%)
  - Coastal flooding (21%)
  - Other (24%)
- Seven respondents have had to relocate structures on their property
- Residents are *already* feeling impacts

# Thoughts on Climate Change

- Respondents are all generally aware of climate change and its potential impacts on the coast
  - Climate change is impacting the coast now (77%)
  - Unsure (18%)
  
- In a “50 year” timeframe, respondents are more certain there will be impacts on the coast in their community
  - Climate change will impact the coast in 50 years (87%)
  - Unsure (12%)

# Preparedness

- Most of the respondents are currently carrying out at least one method to prepare for climate change impacts
- 1. “Hard” shoreline approaches
  - Boulders and seawalls (22%)
  - Other shoreline protection measures (8%)
- 2. “Soft” shoreline approaches
  - Planting vegetation (29%)
  - Building design (15%)
  - Dune protection (4%)
  - Other (41%): Vegetation preservation, use of logs and/or old christmas trees, compostable material, rock filled lobster traps, raised building, jacked shed

# Municipal Involvement

- Should municipalities identify and restrict development from the risks associated with climate hazards?
  - Based on current or future impacts?
  - It is not the role or responsibility of the government (13%)
  
- Governments should identify risks associated with climate hazards but not *restrict* development

# Costs

## ➤ Who should be involved with covering the costs resulting from coastal hazards?

- Affected landowners (87%)
- Government (63%)
- Insurance companies (51%)

## ➤ A shared cost

- Affected landowners (private infrastructure)
- Government (public infrastructure)
- Insurance (Unforeseen circumstances)

# The Need for a Coastal Policy

- Is there a need to develop a coastal policy in the Municipality?
  - Yes (83%)
  - No (5%)
  - Unsure (12%)
- Strong agreement among respondents that there is a need for a coastal policy
- Respondents who said there is no need for a coastal policy lived in areas where planning is not currently taking place
- What do respondents want the coastal policy to look like?

# Policy Options

# Options for a Coastal Policy

- What would respondents like to see included in a coastal policy?
  - Provision of guidelines and/or best practices to coastal development (87%)
  - Information on coastal hazards, and areas most susceptible (84%)
  - Vegetation retention requirement (82%)
  - Horizontal and vertical setback requirement (77%)
  - Building design regulations (69%)
  - Exemptions for certain types of development (65%)
  - Exemptions if suitability of site is proven (34%)
- BOTH information provision and regulatory components
- Hesitant about the allowance of exemptions



## 3. Public Comments

# Written Comments

- Respondents were encouraged to write down any concerns, comments or questions
- Eight general themes were identified:
  1. Impact on property value
  2. Cost to taxpayers
  3. Provision of information
  4. Creation of a too “soft” policy
  5. Creation of a too “hard” policy
  6. Public access
  7. Municipal capacity and/or priority
  8. Province-wide policy

# 1. Impact on Property Value

- Respondents are concerned that a policy would lower coastal property values
  - “Will it lower the assessed value of affected properties?”
  - “Concerned that the value of existing structures could be affected by policies set for new buildings.”
  - “These sorts of rule changes are prone to result in uneven treatment for neighboring properties, or unexpected rendering of valuable waterfront properties into worthless holdings because of the inability to build or sell for development.”

## 2. Cost to Tax Payers

- Respondents are concerned over an increase in taxes, in order to cover costs in high risk areas
  - “Are taxpayers at risk because permits have been issued for a building in risky locations (i.e., house in Rose Bay tidal pool)?”
  
- Respondents are concerned over an increase in taxes, due to additional administrative costs
  - “Additional costs to tax payers associated with administration and policing of land use changes.”

# 3. Education

- Respondents want information provided to coastal property owners, developers, and real estate agents
  - “Coastal properties always have risks, perspective purchases should be aware of this.”
  - “How will real estate companies be “encouraged” to inform new property purchases? New people should not be left “underwater”.
  - “Provision of information on coastal hazards, and provision of guidelines should have been in place immediately after MoDL received the Dalhousie report. The papers are possibly right, is MoDL being transparent? Staff and council have a responsibility to disseminate the data.”

## 4. Policy too “soft”

- Respondents are concerned about allowing exemptions
  - “Exemptions from a setback for certain types of development should not apply to environmentally sensitive areas.”
  - “Exemptions from setback made in only exceptional cases.”
- Respondents are concerned about the robustness of a policy
  - “2.5 m is too low. We should be considering 50 yr or even 100 yr expected level.”
  - “That it would not be robust enough to really address the issue and would have no vertical or horizontal setback requirements or ones that are insufficient with too many exemptions.”

# 5. Policy too “hard”

➤ Respondents are concerned that the policy will be too restrictive

- “Municipalities should advise and support only...NOT restrict development.”
- “Too strict guidelines, no flexibility.”
- “Setbacks are insufficient: must consider substrate (e.g., sand vs. bedrock). A simple requirement for such setbacks is naïve.”

## 6. Public Access

- Respondents want regulations and restrictions in coastal areas in order to protect public coastal access
  - “Structures being built on shoreline resulting in restrictions of access to shoreline.”



A residence built along the shoreline near Hwy 332



# 7. Municipal Capacity and/or Priority

- Respondents are concerned about the municipalities capability to enforce such a policy
  - “No enforcement of policy put in place.”
  - “Zoning should be enforced. Abandon the ineffective response that allowed the building of a house on the flood plain at Sand Dollar Beach.”
  
- Some respondents are concerned that this policy is not high on the agenda.



Development at Sand Dollar Beach

# 8. Provincial-wide Policy

- Respondents want more coordinated, comprehensive land-use planning throughout the *entire* province
  - “Coordination with province wide policy. Urge province to adopt uniform policy with municipalities input. “
  - “There should be a provincial policy, but congratulations on starting the process.”
  - “Creating a policy for MoDL that differs in any way from Chester or HRM, or any other inch of NS coastline will be inequitable: the tides impact the coastline without regard for municipal boundaries.”

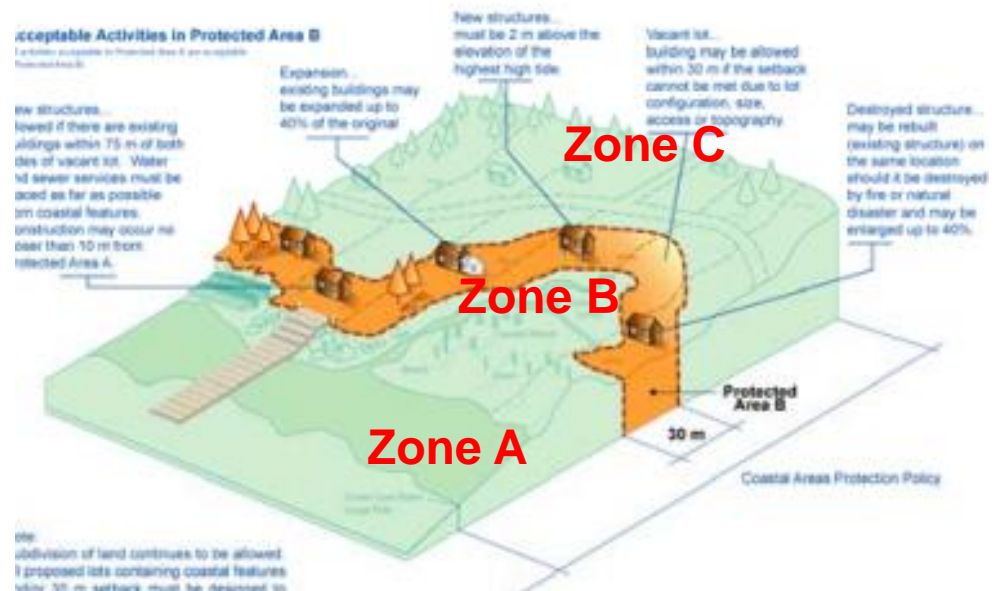
## 4. Other Alternatives Identified

# Alternative Options

➤ Some respondents did suggest the establishment of “zones”

- “Have gradation e.g., closer to water means no construction, mid zone for limited types of construction, further zone for less limited or onerous construction.”

- For example:  
New Brunswick Coastal Areas  
Protection Policy



# Alternative Options

- Other Respondents suggested a policy where coastal property owners would sign a “waiver”
  - “Waivers releasing government from liability, or expecting public money to compensate property owner for storm/flood damage.”
  - “Any standards must clearly state that they are minimum, and that no warranty or disaster assistance is implied by virtue of compliance.”
- For example: Development of properties next to the Minas Basin in Municipality of the County of Kings



*(Photo courtesy of Brenda Tate)*

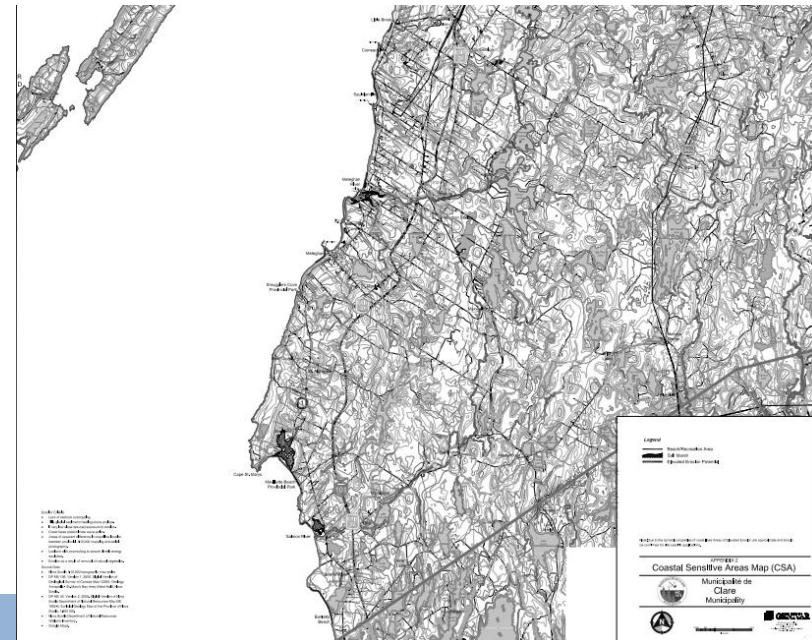
## 5. Coastal Policy in NS municipalities

# Coastal Policy in NS

- The province has been slow to develop any provincial-wide policy
- Municipalities are now making use of their powers under the MGA in order to establish policy regarding coastal development
- The majority of Municipalities in NS have established some form of policy (Appendix A)

# Municipality of Clare

- Section 4.6: A setback of 20.1 m is established from the most sensitive areas of the coast
- “Sensitive areas” include:
  - Beaches
  - Dunes
  - Salt marshes
  - Areas with high erosion potential
- A “Coastal Sensitive Area” map indicates which areas are subject to the restrictions





# Municipality of the County of Cumberland

- Section 3.13: A setback of 30.5 m established along all coastlines, wetlands and areas prone to flooding due to high tides or storm surges
- Residences must be located at least 2.5 m above the ordinary high water mark
- Setback may be reduced *only if* no main building could be located on the lot

## 6. Final Thoughts.

# Final thoughts

- Creation of a coastal setback policy based on ecological significance and sensitivity to sea-level rise and coastal erosion
  - Includes areas such as beaches, dunes, salt marshes, areas prone to erosion and low-lying areas
- Policy should be municipal wide



Eroding bank,  
Heckman's Island

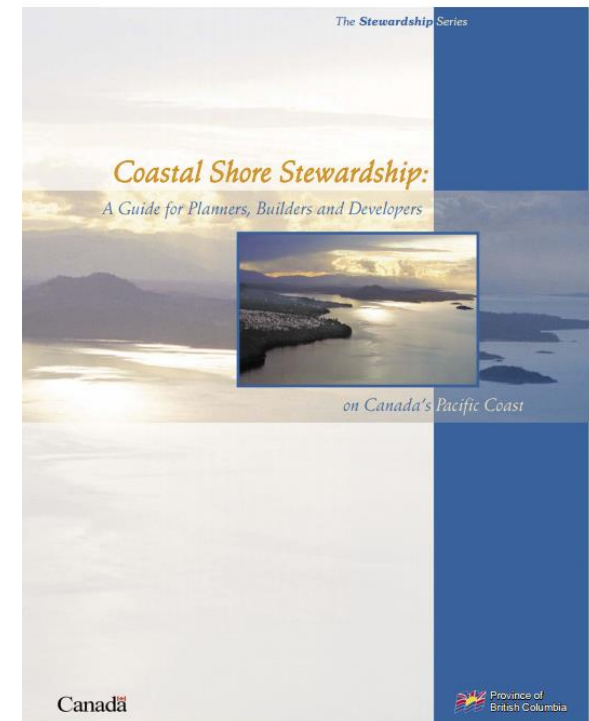
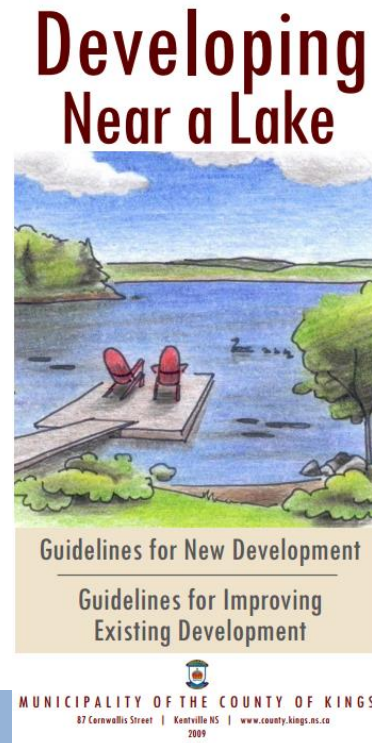


Sand Dollar Beach,  
Rosebay



Salt Marsh,  
Garden Lots

- Encourage the province to move forward with a province-wide coastal policy
- Provide information on relevant coastal issues and on good coastal stewardship practices
  - Coastal property owners
  - Prospective buyers
  - Real estate agents
  - General public



Thank you.