

**Municipality of the District of Lunenburg
Open Space Workshop
October 7, 2013**



**Staff Report
By Trudy Payne, Director of Recreation Services**

Municipality of the District of Lunenburg – Open Space Workshop – October 7, 2013

Introduction

The Municipality of the District of Lunenburg (MODL) has invested and continues to invest in parks and open space. In 2002/2003 an Open Space Strategic Plan (OSSP) was developed after extensive public consultation and adopted by Council. This Plan outlined twenty-six open space priorities and provided staff and Council direction over the next six years. In 2009 the OSSP was reviewed by staff and Council and after a very extensive prioritizing process an updated set of twenty-one open space priorities were developed and adopted by Council in February 2010. (Appendix A)

In the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan adopted by Council in March 2010 one of the eighteen actions identified was to develop an Active Transportation (AT) Plan. The Municipality moved forward on this action in 2010, hiring a consulting firm to develop an AT Plan. Again, several public consultation methods were used to ensure public input into the Plan. In May 2011 Council received the Plan. On December 16, 2011 Council held a session to further identify active transportation initiatives and to prioritize them to help guide Council and staff for the next several years.

As a result of the OSSP, the AT Plan, and the number of opportunities that have presented themselves over the last couple of years concerning open space, staff were directed to review what MODL currently owns and what developments are potentially on the horizon concerning parks, open space and active transportation. Staff was also tasked with developing a five year operating and capital cost projection based on current operations and potential projects. After consultation with Council, a five year operating and capital plan was developed providing direction concerning open space, parks and active transportation.

On October 7, 2013, an open space workshop was held with Council to re-visit the priorities in the Open Space Strategic Plan, and the open space priorities the Municipality had established, to ensure this was the direction the Municipality wanted to take concerning open space.

What does MODL Own, Operate and Manage for Parks and Open Space? What is on the Horizon?

MODL currently owns 239 parcels which include roads, common lands and municipal open space properties. The open space parcels range in size from one acre properties to 150 acres. For the purposes of this report, the focus will be on the seven open space properties owned, operated and managed by MODL, the three properties owned by MODL but managed by not for profit organizations, the upcoming open space projects, the next priorities and the recommended active transportation initiatives.

MODL currently owns, operates and manages seven parks. These parks include Sand Dollar Beach in Rosebay (District 2), Hirtles Beach located in the Kingsburg Area (District 2), Mush-A-Mush Beach in Sweetland (District 5), Saw Pit Wharf in Garden Lots (District 1), Miller Point Peace Park in Dayspring (District 3), Indian Falls in Newburne (District 6) and the Municipal Activity Recreation Complex in Dayspring (District 3).

Municipality of the District of Lunenburg – Open Space Workshop – October 7, 2013

The Municipality also owns three open space properties in which they have entered into management agreements with non-profit groups. These properties include Voglers Cove Seaside Park managed by the United Communities Marine Park Association (District 12), open space on Charlie Lane managed by the Pinegrove Outdoor Play Association (District 5) and the community park at Molega Lake managed by the Chelsea Baptist Church (District 8). The partnership the Municipality has established with these non-profit groups does utilize staff time to ensure the management agreements are being fulfilled and to support the volunteers of these non-profit groups in meeting their goals and objectives.

October 2013 Open Space Priorities

At the workshop held with Council on October 7, 2013 the “now” priorities were reconfirmed. The “now” priorities include:

- 1) Land negotiations (Wileville); District 8.
- 2) Working with the River Ridge Common group to develop the 115 acres of open space located in New Germany; District 7.
- 3) Community consultation concerning Fire Brook Falls – open space property located on Smith Road; District 9.
- 4) Develop a stop Point at Indian Point primarily for walkers/bikers; District 4.
- 5) Land acquired on Big Tancook for a day park; District 1.
- 6) Possible divesture of a Provincial Open Space; District 2.
- 7) Possible land donation in Petite Riviere for a community park; District 12.
- 8) Possible Boat Launch – Oakland; District 4.
- 9) Development of open space adjacent Church Lake; District 6.
- 10) Acquisition of Rose Bay Wharf; District 2.

Municipality of the District of Lunenburg – Open Space Workshop – October 7, 2013

Staff were directed to focus their time and energy and to budget for financial resources to help accomplish these “now” priorities over the next three to four years.

“Now” Priorities	Scope of work	Time Line	Estimated Costs
*Land Negotiations – Wileville	To provide swimming, boat access, picnic park and parking.	Staff will dedicate time on this project over the next three to four years to acquire and develop the property. (probably longer)	Land negotiations are taking place. If successful a concept plan will need to be developed. Initial costs, \$150,000. These funds will come from the open space reserves. This does not include development costs which funds from open space reserves will be utilized as well as seeking funding from partners.
*Property in New Germany referred to as MARC North in the Open Space Strategic Plan and now known as River Ridge Common.	Scope of work to be determined. Concept could include trails, sleighing hills, picnic area on this 115 acres. Idea is to enter into a management agreement with a non-profit community group to develop, manage and operate this open space. A Recreation Department staff resource has been working with the River Ridge Common Association who normally meets monthly. This project will be ongoing and will utilize staff and financial resources.	Staff will continue to work with the non-profit group over the next four years (probably longer)	\$50,000 from open space reserves and leveraging funds from other partners.

Municipality of the District of Lunenburg – Open Space Workshop – October 7, 2013

“Now” Priorities	Scope of work	Time Line	Estimated Costs
*Fire Brook Falls	Scope of work to be determined. Concept could include a passive day park with trails. The priority at this time is to consult with the community to determine whether there is a community interest and/or a community group willing to invest time in the planning, developing, operating and managing of this open space. The initial consultation will take staff time to prepare for the public meeting and to communicate this meeting out to the public. If there is an interest Council will need to determine if the development of this open space is a priority over the next 3 – 4 years which will utilize staff time and financial resources.	Depending on what comes from the public consultation will help determine the time required of staff. If the community expresses interest staff will need to spend time working with a non-profit group to help develop the property. The public consultation meeting will be completed by March 2014.	\$500 from open space reserves.
*Stop Point at Indian Point	MODL does own a small parcel of public open space in Indian Point. Staff have been directed to scope out a concept for a stop point primarily for walkers/bikers. This concept can be completed by the end of the 2013/2014 fiscal year. Funds and human resources will need to be included in either the 2014/2015 or 2015/2016 fiscal year.	This project is estimated to be completed by the Fall of 2014. Continued maintenance will be required.	Concept to be developed. Estimated costs at \$8,000 from open space reserves.

Municipality of the District of Lunenburg – Open Space Workshop – October 7, 2013

“Now” Priorities	Scope of work	Time Line	Estimated Costs
*Land acquired on Big Tancook Island	Concept is a day park managed by a non-profit community group. A Recreation Staff person has been assigned to work with a non-profit group to develop a concept plan, and to provide support to acquire funds needed and advice on how to move forward with this project.	This project will involve staff working with a non-profit group to develop a concept for this open space property and working with them to secure funds for development. This could be a three year project.	Concept still needs to be developed. Some funds from open space reserves with other funds being sought from funding partners.
*Possible divesture of a Provincial open space from the Province of Nova Scotia in District 2.	Concept is not to develop, to leave in its natural state. Currently working with the Province. There will be some financial resources required and staff time to continue conversation with the Province.	This project should be completed by Summer 2014.	Estimated cost \$3,000 from open space reserves
Possible donation of land in Petite Riviere for a community day park	The intent is for the Municipality to take ownership of a piece of property in Petite Riviere for the purposes of a community park. A management agreement would be entered into with the community park group to develop, manage and operate the park. A staff person has been assigned to work with this group to develop a management agreement, help secure funds and to provide advice on moving forward with this project.	Staff are currently working with a non-profit group to help the group secure funds and to oversee the development of this park. This project will involve extensive staff time until the Fall of 2014. Staff will continue to meet with the group as needed to provide support to the group.	\$30,000 from MODL from the operating budget with other funds being sought from funding partners.

Municipality of the District of Lunenburg – Open Space Workshop – October 7, 2013

“Now” Priorities	Scope of work	Time Line	Estimated Costs
*Possible Boat Launch - Oakland	A site is being looked at to determine whether it would be suitable for a boat launch in Oakland. Staff time is being utilized to determine its suitability and if so, to enter into negotiations with the land owner.	Depending on the results of negotiations this project could take until 2015/2016 to complete.	Cost unknown. If land is not acquired will be no cost. If acquired a concept plan will need to be developed with costing. Anticipate using some funds from open space reserves and leveraging funds from other funding partners.
*Church Lake Open Space	Direction has been provided to staff to have a concept plan developed which would include a 3 – 6 vehicle parking lot, a boat launch (for small boats) and a walking trail. Council has not made a final decision on whether this open space will be managed and operated by the Municipality or by a community group. Staff time will be required to have the concept plan completed and to implement the plan. This project will also involve financial resources. This could be a one to two year project.	The concept plan is scheduled for the 2013/2014 fiscal year. Development could take an additional one to two years.	Concept Plan needs to be developed with costing included. The estimated costs for the plan are \$15,000. Funds from the open space reserves may be required to develop the plan and for development.

Municipality of the District of Lunenburg – Open Space Workshop – October 7, 2013

“Now” Priorities	Scope of work	Time Line	Estimated Costs
*Acquisition of Rosebay Wharf	The intent is to acquire the Rose Bay Wharf from the Federal Government who has agreed to do the necessary repairs before divesting it to the Municipality. The Municipality is working with a non-profit group to develop a management agreement which would see the non-profit group manage and operate the wharf. A staff person has been assigned to work with this group to assist them in becoming an incorporated group, develop a management agreement and to provide support and advice on this project. The divestiture of the wharf is anticipated by Summer 2014.	The divestiture of the wharf should be completed by Summer 2014. Staff will continue to work with the non-profit group to provide support to the community group.	No costs anticipated. Federal Government to bring wharf up to standard before divestiture takes place.

Of these ten projects, nine have been identified as part of the twenty one priorities outlined in the OSSP. These are indicated by an * beside them. Six of these ten priorities are on-going and will continue to require staff time to ensure are carried out over the next three to four years. The availability of financial resources will also be required over the next three to four years from the open space reserves which will help determine how many open space projects can be completed in that time frame.

Recreation staff also provide support to the United Communities Marine Park, the Pinegrove Outdoor Play Association, the Chelsea United Baptist Church, the Miller Point Peace Park Committee and the Saw Pit Wharf Advisory Committee.

The remaining priorities in the Open Space Strategic Plan and other projects on the horizon were provided to Council to prioritize to be included as part of “next” priorities. Councillors were also asked to list potential priorities that were not included in the Open Space Strategic Plan or on the horizon list.

Municipality of the District of Lunenburg – Open Space Workshop – October 7, 2013

The following is the list of Open Space, On the Horizon and other potential projects. Each Councillor was provided the opportunity to rank these potential projects and used the ranking system of 8 -1, which meant giving a project 8 points, in their view was a high “next” priority and 1 point being a lower priority.

Project/Priority	Ranking
*Sherbrooke Lake Access	64 points
*Bachman’s Beach - Access	43 points
Masons Beach	39 points
Identify Open Space as MODL owned (posting signs)	35 points
Private property adjacent Miller Point Peace Park	24 points
Jarvis property/DNR Land adjacent the MARC	22 points
Westhavers Beach	21 points
*Indian Falls Trail Development	20 points
Common Lands – Lunenburg – PID 60405088	19 points
*Nature Corridor, Shingle, Smith, Rocky, Seven Mile, Lakes and Watercourses	16 points
*Saw Pit Wharf Switchback Trail	14 points
Road Reserve – Whales Lake	13 points
*Conversion of LRCRC Landfill	11 points
*Broad Cove Beach Access (establishing ownership)	9 points
Little Duck Island	9 points
*Little Bluff Access	8 points
*Pernette Lake Access and parking	2 points
LaHave Rive Access (West)	1 point
Access to Hirtle Lake (from the East)	1 point

Municipality of the District of Lunenburg – Open Space Workshop – October 7, 2013

Project/Priority	Ranking
Beck's Lake - Access	0 points
DOT Boat Launch site West Dublin	0 points
*Wallace Lake - Access	0 points
*Molega Lake	0 points
*Back Cornwall Trail	0 points

Twelve of these twenty-four next priorities are identified in the 2010 Open Space Strategic Plan and are identified by the *. The intent of prioritizing these potential projects was to help direct staff and Council on where to focus time, energy and resources if the opportunity became available to take on another project. Depending on the Recreation Department's ability to incorporate more than the "now" ten priorities in the work plan, staff would know which priority should be focused on.

Municipality of the District of Lunenburg – Open Space Workshop – October 7, 2013

As of March 2013 the open space reserves (combination of operating and capital reserves) has \$243,483. The following are anticipated revenues and costs over the next four years.

Year	Current Balance for Open Space Reserves	Open Space Expenditures for the “now” priorities	Open Space Revenues	Net
2012/2013	\$243,483 (estimate)			\$243,483 (estimate)
2013/2017	\$243,483	<p>\$266,500</p> <p>Wileville land negotiations - \$150,000;</p> <p>River Ridge Common - \$50,000;</p> <p>Fire Brook Falls Consultation - \$500;</p> <p>Stop Point Indian Point - \$8,000;</p> <p>Open Space Divesture – District 2- \$3,000;</p> <p>Church Lake Concept Plan - \$15,000;</p> <p>Recreation Equipment - \$40,000</p> <p>(keep in mind all capital costs not included as scope of work not yet determined and the \$30,000 for Petite Riviere Community Park is coming from the operating budget)</p>	<p>\$280,000 (combination of MODL contributing \$60,000 from the operating budget (\$180,000); and revenue anticipated from land developers through the sub-division by-law (\$100,000)</p>	\$256,983

Municipality of the District of Lunenburg – Open Space Workshop – October 7, 2013

After four years with the projected costs to come from the open space reserves there would be an estimate of \$256,983 remaining in open space reserves. However, it must be kept in mind that some projects did not have estimated costs as the scope of work has not been determined as yet. It is good practice to have a base amount of at least \$150,000 in the open space reserves in case an opportunity presents itself or funds are required for emergency situations. If all projects move forward that were identified in the “now” priorities, the “next” priorities may be able to have some staff time dedicated but financial resources will be limited for any type of development.

There was discussion around the fact that the Municipality needs to get a sense of the open space the District owns or is owned by the Province or the Federal Government. Maps have been created which outline the public open space for each District. These maps will need to be updated for each district with a listing and description of the property. The question also came up as to whether the Municipality should be acquiring public open space properties and entering into management agreements with non-profit groups to operate and manage them; or should the Municipality help community groups acquire the land. Also, at the previous open space workshop one of the actions items included creating an open space divestiture plan for the Municipality. Although this did not get ranked in the priority list it is an action that will need to be incorporated in the Recreation Department’s work plan.

Active Transportation Plan Priorities and Implementation

At the end of the Open Space Workshop on October 7, 2013 the Active Transportation (AT) priorities were reviewed that were agreed upon at a December 16, 2011 AT workshop with Council. At this workshop no changes were made to this priority list. The actions identified fell under two headings:

- 1) Infrastructure**
- 2) Education, Program, Policy and Advocacy**

The following chart lists the top six **AT Infrastructure** priorities from that day and estimated cost of each to implement. These AT priorities are where staff has been focusing time and resources.

AT Infrastructure Project	Estimated Cost
Sidewalk from Osprey Village to Irving (North Street) – District 5	\$520,000 (Gas Tax)
Osprey Village/Pinegrove Connector Trail (completed) – now named the Arthur Young Trail	\$66,000 (Gas Tax, Health and Wellness Grant, Private Business contribution, Off High Vehicle Fund)

Municipality of the District of Lunenburg – Open Space Workshop – October 7, 2013

AT Infrastructure Project	Estimated Cost
*Sidewalk/crosswalk – French School – District 5 (Under construction – soon to be completed)	\$200,000 (Gas Tax, On the Move Provincial Grant)
Complete link from Bridgewater to New Germany (Include Wentzell Lake to Bridgewater Link) – District 5 & 7 (The LaHave River Trail Association is partnering with the District of Lunenburg to have the route plan completed by 2014)	\$45,000 (Gas Tax, Health and Wellness Grant, On the Move Provincial Grant, volunteer time)
Sidewalk Wileville to Bridgewater – District 8	\$500,000 (Gas tax)
Hebville/Conquerall Connector – Bull Run Trail	\$92,000 (Open Space Reserves, other funding partners)

The following chart depicts the top ten **Education, Program, Policy and Advocacy Priorities** for the next five years and the cost and staff time required for implementation as projected by the consultant.

Project	Estimated cost and/or staff time
MPS and land use by-law amendments	30 hours
Pass a community Active Transportation Policy	10 hours
Work with ERDT, NSTIR, and the Tourism Industry Assoc. Of NS	16 hours annually
Identify priority locations for road improvements (ie paved shoulders) and obtain commitments from NSTIR for implementation	8 hours a year
Support programs like Michelin Bike Rodeos, Triathlon Club's Kids of Steel	10 hours + \$2500 annually
Support the development of a mountain bike club	80 hours of staff time initially

Municipality of the District of Lunenburg – Open Space Workshop – October 7, 2013

Project	Estimated cost and/or staff time
“Share the Road” program	40 hours + \$2500 annually
Continue the operation of the AT Steering Committee	16 hours annually
Work with NSHW and the Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre	16 hours annually
Promote the use of the AT Self-Assessment Questionnaire	40 hours annually

The philosophy of MODL has been in the community, by the community, for the community. It is evident that this philosophy is being carried out by the number of community group partnerships that will need to take place to deliver on the ten “now” priorities identified.

Through public consultation it is evident that residents do support parks, open space and active transportation. The real challenge is in balancing the needs/wants with resources MODL can afford to provide.