

Municipality of the District
of Lunenburg's
Strategic Plan Review

dated
December 1, 2009
completed by Stantec
and approved by
Municipal Council
April 13, 2010

**MUNICIPALITY OF THE DISTRICT
OF LUNENBURG STRATEGIC
PLAN REVIEW**

*Prepared in consultation with the
Council and staff of the Municipality of
the District of Lunenburg*



Stantec

Approved by
Municipal Council
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document presents the outcome of a comprehensive review of the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg's (MODL) 2005 Strategic Plan, primarily summarizing the conclusions reached during a two day Strategic Planning Workshop organized under the headline, "Are We on the Same Page" held November 30- December 1, 2009. The intent of the process leading to and concluding with this Workshop was to engage MODL Council, Chief Administrative Officer and Senior Staff to assess and as determined, adjust the Strategic Plan and its Implementation which last received cursory review in 2008. This was deemed timely in light of the autumn 2008 Municipal election which saw five new Council members including the Mayor being added to Council (more than a 40% change). Council and the CAO resolved that it was important that the Strategic and Implementation Plans be updated to properly align with the current Council's priorities. As a result municipal staff would receive clear direction on priorities and expectations, Council and staff roles and accountability could be clarified, and an ongoing process for managing and adjusting priorities and expectations put in place. This was necessary in light of ever increasing workloads and diminished municipal capacity (Council, staff and budgetary). It was expected that a parallel benefit of the intended process would be enhanced understanding and team building within Council and between Council and staff.

In sum, the objectives of the planning process were to:

- Adjust priorities and objectives within the Strategic and Implementation Plans
- Improve political/administrative relations;
- Enhance decision making tools and processes;
- Ensure day-to-day role clarity; and
- Identifying organizational effectiveness mechanisms that will accelerate performance.

The following report presents the revised Strategic and Implementation Plans which emerged from the planning process. The planning workshop was designed to facilitate the identification of shared values and success indicators, examine the political/administrative interface, understand and apply the principle of a 'Capacity Box' – making choices with limited resources, identify and rank potential areas of focus or action and utilize a 'solution seeking model' and priority setting criteria to determine priority strategic goals and priorities. Feedback received from participants at the conclusion of the workshop indicated satisfaction among the participants that their work together also contributed substantially to realizing a strong sense of common understanding, purpose, collegiality and the structure for ongoing Council-Staff communication and progress respecting appropriate roles and capacity.

The Strategic and Implementation Plans are encapsulated in two closely related, concise documents, the MODL Strategic Priorities Chart and Strategic Priority Work Program. These are well established mechanisms to set and monitor priority objectives, accountabilities and timelines pertaining to both Council and Staff. It's also linked to a template to ensure continual organizational capacity and a process to monitor, adjust and celebrate strategic priorities entitled Priority Setting Guidelines (Appendix 2).

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Existing Strategic Plan

MODL's existing Strategic Plan was developed on the basis of workshops with municipal staff and Council between June and October 2005 facilitated by dmA Consulting. The Strategic Plan was reviewed through additional workshops involving staff and Council between December 2007 and March 2008. The Strategic Plan now in place was approved by Council in July 2008.

Consultations yielded the lists of valued community features and characteristics in need of change compiled in **Table 1**. In sum, the lists suggest that staff and Council members are very aware of the physical beauty of their natural and human-made environment, and are strongly committed to enhancing local services. To accomplish this, however, they are equally aware of the need to streamline and modernize municipal operations, and to overcome the inherent conservatism of many district residents.

The plan emphasizes community, services, and planning. It seeks improvement in protection of the environment, promotion of heritage, and the extension of planning to all aspects of municipal operations, as reflected in its Vision Statement:

We are a community of communities, each with a unique history representing a diversity of cultural backgrounds and a mix of suburban and rural opportunities. We enjoy healthy lifestyles rooted in unrestricted access to the natural beauty of our region's coastline, lakes and forests, a pristine environment and high quality community services. Our caring and tolerant communities supported by a strong volunteer base provide a rich mosaic of services to enhance the quality of life in our region offering a lifelong home. We are a progressive community with a sustainable, diversified economy incorporating both traditional resource based activities and a spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship that capitalizes on new economic opportunities. Our success is built on a strong work ethic and productive working relationships with our community and regional partners. We are a vital economic and service centre for the region.

The Mission that the Municipality set for itself pursuant to this Vision is stated as follows:

The Municipality will maximize opportunities for social and economic development while retaining an attractive, sustainable and secure environment for the enjoyment of residents and visitors. Through responsible and professional leadership and in partnership with others, the Municipality will strive to improve the quality of life for all residents living and working in the larger community.

Table 1.1 Valued Community Features and Characteristics in Need of Change, MODL Strategic Plan, 2005

Valued Features of the MODL Community	Characteristics of the MODL Community to be Changed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Environment</i> – environmental quality, access to open space and outdoor recreation • <i>Location and Setting</i> – balanced development that preserves the rural and natural setting while allowing for sustainable growth. Public access to waterways, trails, and open space • <i>The People and the Community</i> – a strong sense of community where residents are tolerant, caring, and engaged in the life of the community. A safe and welcoming community with a mix of age groups. A place where young families can make a home • <i>Community and Social Services</i> – superior educational facilities, libraries, community halls, fire departments, and museums • <i>Heritage and History</i> – a sense of our history and heritage and cultural resources that link the community to its past. Continued support for museums, cultural organizations, and other heritage resources in the community • <i>Economy and Labour Force</i> – the community work ethic – a dedicated and efficient labour force valued by current and potential employers. • <i>Municipal Administration and Finance</i> – staff resources and commitment to leadership and continuous learning and improvement • <i>Infrastructure</i> – continued improvement to services to support the social and economic development of the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Environment</i> – improved efforts to protect the environment, particularly given the growth of the area • <i>Location and Setting</i> – a regional perspective, cooperation, and coordination with neighbouring municipalities, and regional authorities to take full advantage of regional economic and other joint initiatives. • <i>The People and the Community</i> – greater tolerance for change. A proactive approach to the future that actively searches for opportunities. Confidence to take risks without fear of failure. A healthier community with facilities and services to promote healthy lifestyles. • <i>Community and Social Services</i> – expanded health and wellness services to attract investment and growth. Improved job training and education facilities to support a changing employment base. • <i>Heritage and History</i> – greater support for community history and museums • <i>Economy and Labour Force</i> – greater diversity and more sustainable long-term economic base. Expanded literacy – a more skilled labour force. • <i>Municipal Administration and Finance</i> – updated, current policies and procedures and new approaches to doing business. Less red tape and less bureaucratic constraints (at both the municipal and provincial level[s]), particularly for small business development. A review of exiting policies and procedures to ensure the Municipality fully supports the initiatives in the Strategic Plan. An improved relationship or a new approach for dealing with the Province to ensure regulations, fiancés, and investments at the Provincial level support local objectives and interests. • <i>Municipal Planning, Communication and Decision Making</i> – a willingness to adopt planning in all aspects of municipal administration. New attitudes towards planning, development controls and regulation – both at Council and in the community. A proactive approach to change and a comprehensive strategy for long term community development. Greater attention to consistent policies • <i>Infrastructure</i> – improvements to Municipal and Provincial infrastructure that fully supports the economic and social development of the community.

Source: Municipality of the District of Lunenburg Strategic Plan, October 2005 (Revised July 2005), pp. 4-5.

Although the municipality has an older population and has seen its total numbers decrease in recent years, it regards itself as “growing” and growth as being in need of management. It also regards itself as being in need of growth to provide employment opportunities that can stem the outflow of youth. Strategic objectives include a commitment to economic planning and to sustainability. They also seek to streamline municipal operations to ensure “effectiveness and efficiency.”

1.2 Project Description

In July 2009, the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg (MODL) issued a request for Expressions of Interest (EOI) for the provision of planning services for a comprehensive review of the Municipality's Strategic Plan, and for guidance regarding the development of a revised Plan and Implementation Plan. Following the 2008 Municipal Election which resulted in the election of five new Council members (41.6% of Council including the new position of Mayor), and extensive Community consultation, the need arose to align the pre-existing Strategic Plan with the new Council/s priorities. Stantec Consulting Limited in association with Gordon A. McIntosh of the Local Government Leadership (LGL) Institute of Victoria, BC, responded to the EOI and was selected to undertake the review and revisions.

The approach outlined in our proposal and undertaken for this assignment was centred on workshops with municipal staff and Council like the previous strategic planning exercise. It differed in that it was developed around Gordon McIntosh's highly regarded workshop, *'Are We on the Same Page'*, which has been offered in more than 900 sessions involving 100,000 elected officials and staff leadership groups across Canada and internationally. The approach provides a framework for Councils and administrations to work at developing and maintaining a shared strategic focus to ensure that all participants are on the same page going forward together on strategic initiatives. The guideline objective of this process is 'to help elected officials and staff to make a leadership difference in local government.' The well established approach employs a concise process to build team alignment while dedicated to a number of priority objectives:

- Improving **political/administrative relations**;
- Enhancing the **decision making** tools and processes;
- Ensuring day-to-day **role clarity**; and
- Identifying organizational effectiveness mechanisms that will accelerate **performance**.

The team building process focuses on facilitating the identification of shared values and success indicators. Preliminary sections of the process include: 'the political/administrative interface'; the 'Capacity Box' – making choices with limited resources; the 'solution seeking model' – solving problems for sustainable decisions; and the application of 'three-fold logic – ground, path and fruition' to thorny challenges.

The workshop sessions were conducted by Mr. McIntosh and Marty Janowitz of Stantec over a two-day period from November 30 to December 1, 2009. The sessions were held at Osprey Ridge Golf Course on the outskirts of Bridgewater in the Municipal District. These workshops were characterized by a strong sense of shared commitment and engagement as reflected in the patterns of attendance and participation. There was 100 percent attendance throughout the workshop by all members of MODL

Council. The Mayor attended all sessions with the exception of part of the last session given a prior commitment to fly to Ottawa for government related activities. All senior staff of the municipality also attended all sessions. Mayor, Council and staff worked energetically and collaboratively throughout the event with all attendees actively engaged and contributing. The workshop was marked by a consistent sense of common purpose, collegiality and cooperation. As the sessions unfolded the atmosphere of teamwork and mutual support was well established. At the concluding debrief, all attendees pointed to a shared sense of accomplishment and commitment to continuing this pattern of collaborative and disciplined evaluation, planning and decision-making.

1.3 Leading Issues

Since the approval of the current Strategic Plan, MODL Council has seen significant turnover with a first-time municipal representative in the newly created position of Mayor (Don Downe) and four new Councillors (Wade Carver, District 6; Basil Oickle, District 1; Frank Fawson, District 3; Eric Hustvedt, District 12) elected in 2008 to a Council that has historically been very stable. Municipal staff consulted early in the current assignment indicated that they have enjoyed a good relationship with the new Council but that the Municipality faces serious challenges. Group and individual interviews with municipal staff and interested Council members identified the following leading issues:

- *Demographic Challenges* – Like most areas of rural Nova Scotia, Lunenburg District has lost population, particularly youth leaving for education and job opportunities in larger centres. As a result local population is aging even more rapidly than the general trend in Canada leading to fewer families and a reduction in the energy of the local population.
- *Escalating Property Values* – Notwithstanding the absence of local population growth, Lunenburg has been subject to substantial development pressure from individuals attracted by the scenic character of the area and the availability of waterfrontage. As a result, prices have risen, creating property tax pressures for long-time residents. Removal of the Capped Assessment Program is of concern to Municipal Council. The CAP provides predictability for residents, as well as CAP's MODL contributions for Mandatory Services (provincial services such as education). Mandatory Services are calculated and paid by a formula based upon uniform assessment.
- *Osprey Village Development* – The Municipality has invested \$20 million in development of the Osprey Village lands north of Bridgewater. Although a substantial portion of the property has been successfully developed with "Big Box" commercial uses, municipal staff and Council members are concerned with the large debt incurred, a load that the Municipality continues to carry.
- *Solid Waste Management* – The Lunenburg Regional Community Recycling Centre requires costly upgrades to meet new Province of Nova Scotia standards. Additionally, at the present time the partnership between the participating municipalities is unstable, leading to further uncertainty about the reliable sources of funding as well as the operational requirements on an ongoing basis. Public perception and support for the Centre has deteriorated in light of increasing costs and the growing opinion that the facility is not run efficiently
- *Open Space Requirements* – Although 20 per cent of the District is Crown land, it is concentrated in the relatively isolated northwest corner of the District. The Open Space Strategic Plan prepared

in 2002 identifies 26 land parcels for potential acquisition by the Municipality but purchase is challenging with high local property values.

- *Recreation Centre* – Local municipal units and community members have worked for many years on the development of the Lunenburg County Lifestyle Centre, which is desired both as an amenity for existing residents and as an attractor for potential in-migrants. The current Class D estimate sets the anticipated cost at \$32 million.
- *Fire Services* – The Municipality has 26 fire brigades within its boundaries. Some citizens have expressed concerns with escalating costs but there are also concerns with staffing in the face of declining volunteerism and the importance of Fire Halls as community centres across the District.
- *Regional Governance* – Councillors and municipal staff members cited the need for cooperation with other municipal units and, particularly, with the Towns of Bridgewater and Lunenburg. Some have suggested municipal amalgamation may be worthy of consideration.

More generally, staff and Council members recognize that desirable objectives such as the upgrading of solid waste operations, construction of the Lifestyle Centre, and acquisition of public lands require trade-offs especially in the context of the substantial debt load that MODL carries as a result of its investment in Osprey Village. Osprey Village has brought development to the MODL, generating jobs and increasing the municipal tax base; however, revenues through sale of land and municipal taxes are still far short of the required investment. One contact indicated that assessment by MODL's Director of Finance suggested that the project would be unlikely to break even before 2032.

2.0 STRATEGIC PLAN

2.1 Vision

VISION STATEMENT

We are a community of communities each with a unique history representing a diversity of cultural backgrounds and a mix of suburban and rural opportunities. We enjoy healthy lifestyles rooted in unrestricted access to the natural beauty of our region's coastline, lakes and forests, a pristine environment and high quality community services.

Our caring and tolerant communities, supported by a strong volunteer base, provide a rich mosaic of services to enhance the quality of life in our region offering a lifelong home.

We are a progressive community with a sustainable, diversified economy incorporating both traditional resource based activities and a spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship that capitalizes on new economic opportunities. Our success is built on a strong work ethic and productive working relationships with our community and regional partners. We are a vital economic and service centre for the region.

2.2 Mission

The Municipality will maximize opportunities for social and economic development while retaining an attractive, sustainable and secure environment for the enjoyment of residents and visitors. Through responsible and professional leadership and in partnership with others, the Municipality will strive to improve the quality of life for all residents living and working in the larger community.

2.3 Goals

The 2005 Municipal Strategic Plan identified a series of Goals and Objectives. The Goals were contained within the framework of six Topics: The Economy, Planning and Managing Growth, Community Services, Municipal Infrastructure, Municipal Administration and Municipal Finance. There was a single overarching Goal associated with each Topic. Pursuant to interviews with members of Council and Senior Municipal Staff and the two-day Council-Senior Staff Workshop in the period November – December 2009, it was not deemed necessary to adjust the six Goals. As originally drafted they still express and encompass the general range of Council's intentions. It was concluded however that there was a need to update and revise the Objectives which in essence comprise and describe Strategic Priorities for action within these six frameworks and their associated general goals. The original six Topics and their associated Goals remain:

The Economy

The Municipality's traditional economic activities will evolve and prosper while new opportunities for diversified sustainable growth are pursued. A strong and diversified economy will support a superior quality of life for all residents and is necessary to provide the youth with opportunities to prosper in our community.

Goal 1 Prepare a long-range economic development strategy which establishes an effective structure and approach to facilitate economic development that promotes entrepreneurship within the Municipality; supports and strengthens the local tourism industry; and fosters the planned development of Osprey Village as an economic and employment centre of the region.

Planning and Managing Growth

The Municipality is one of the fastest growing regions of the Province and this growth must be planned and managed to protect the value features of the community while enjoying the benefits of development. A planned approach to growth is required to support the other Goals and Objectives in the Strategic Plan.

Goal 2 Establish a planning framework to support sustainable growth that is consistent with the Municipality's long-range plans and financial resources and the needs of all residents.

Community Services

The quality of life in the community is directly associated with the community services that support a healthy, fulfilling and productive lifestyle. Quality recreation, education and health services are critical components of our Vision of the future.

Goal 3 Through direct delivery and advocacy, ensure a broad range of community services is available to meet the community's needs and to attract and retain residents.

Municipal Infrastructure

The municipal infrastructure will be developed to support the objectives in the Strategic Plan.

Goal 4 Consistent with the available resources, develop municipal infrastructure to support sustainable growth while protecting the environment.

Municipal Administration

Implementation of the Strategic Plan and efficient delivery of services rest with the municipal administration and steps will be taken to enable staff to perform these responsibilities. A progressive and forward-looking strategy for the Municipality cannot succeed without a progressive and forward-looking administration.

Goal 5 Create an environment that facilitates the delivery of municipal services in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

Municipal Finance

The foundation for all of the initiatives in the Strategic Plan will be a solid financial strategy that is consistently updated to reflect required expenditure and available resources.

Goal 6 Ensure that municipal finances are well managed, transparent in reporting and the required resources are available to support municipal initiatives in a sustainable manner.

2.4 Objectives (Strategic Priorities)

2.4.1 Strategic Objectives Development Process

The approach taken to the review and development of Objectives was closely integrated into the overall strategic planning workshop process which recast Objectives as Strategic Priorities, reflecting the dynamic nature of the relationship between planning and implementation. The workshop also developed the Implementation Strategy recast as Operational Strategies – including the mechanisms to monitor, manage and adjust them over time. This process included a number of sequential stages:

- **Vision Check-up.** Designed to answer the question 'how are we doing', the 'check up' process constitutes a scan and review of the high level vision for the community. This process identified the following high level Focus Areas – Infrastructure, Community Services, Community Development, Organizational Effectiveness and Governance. While not identical to the Goals outlined in the 2005 Strategic Plan, they are substantially consistent with them and neither abandon or add substantive aspects. Within each of these topics, the workshop participants identified indicators of 'success' and with those outcomes in mind, quickly graded each to gauge those that were already working well towards success and those areas that required attention.
- **Strategic Issues and Opportunities Identification.** This step sought to identify the most significant issues and opportunities facing the region and organization. Drawing from and in some instances augmenting the indicators of success, workshop participants developed a long list of potential issues and opportunities – prospective topics for further discussion towards consideration as strategic priorities for action. With nearly 100 items listed, participants recognized that the list far exceeded the municipality's capacity for focused action. It was therefore necessary to hone this list down to a substantially shorter group of topics for discussion. Utilizing a simple 'voting' process, the Council and Staff participants collectively generated and then verified a short list of 18 topics for additional discussion. While not every item on this list was of co-equal significance to Council or staff participants, it was collectively agreed that this list encompassed the range of items most important to advance the objectives within the higher level Focus Areas.

- **Applying a Solution Seeking Model to Develop a Draft Priority Work Program.** This process comprised the most substantial time allocation within the workshop. Participants discussed each strategic topic to understand its status, key desired outcomes and develop options for action. This stage analyzed each potential Strategic Priority using a consistent analytic framework –
 - Define Strategic Topic – including known facts, available information, background and key questions to be answered.
 - Identify Desired Outcomes – including prerequisites, benefits and key results that would define success.
 - Develop Response Options – Focusing on short term priorities and longer term directions to achieve key results, discuss and select preferred options.
 - Establish an Action Plan – Looking at ‘who, when and how’ including sequencing, responsibilities, leadership and timing; and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating progress.
 - Collate Work Program Summary – The final stage collated the key components of the various Work Sheets into a summary highlighting the priority actions, completion dates and primary person responsible.

- **Applying Priority Setting Criteria to Differentiate Priorities and Accountabilities** – It was agreed that given MODL capacity (human and material resources) the group of Strategic Priorities contained within the Work Program could not all be simultaneously advanced with the same degree of attention or urgency. A realistic Strategic Priorities Work Program would therefore, require the determination of relative priorities for both Council-led and operational strategies. Participants completed an exercise to differentiate between those strategic priorities deemed Important and those deemed both Important and Urgent. Clarity was also achieved regarding whether primary responsibility for action was held directly by Council or by operational staff.

- **Confirm Council Priorities and Operational Strategies.** – The Short Term Priorities Chart is a single page tool that summarizes Council and Staff priorities, time expectations and accountability within the Work Program. It frames priorities in the context of organizational capacity and reflects purposeful choices within an ongoing process to monitor, adjust and celebrate strategic priorities for Council, CAO and staff. The Strategic Priorities Chart highlights Council Priorities, those of most immediate import (‘Now’ items) and important but secondary items (‘Next’ items) as well as a similar listing of prioritized Operational Strategies to be undertaken by the CAO and staff. The Chart also included a section entitled ‘Organizational Excellence’, a short list of key short-term Council-CAO objectives targeting the features of an ongoing collaborative strategic management framework between Council and staff – Strategic Plan, Priority Setting Guidelines, Strategic Priorities Chart and Council Policy Reviews.

2.4.2 Refined or Refocused Objectives (Strategic Priorities)

Rather than replace the 2005 Strategic Plan the intent of the current process was to update and if necessary adjust the Objectives outlined within the Plan. Following the conclusion of the December 2009

Strategic Planning Workshop it was concluded that such an approach would indeed be satisfactory. The agreed upon list of revised Objectives (Strategic Priorities) included fourteen items.

TOPICS AND CURRENT STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. **Economic Development** – Complete the Economic Development Strategy.
2. **Waste Management** – Conclude negotiations with municipal partners and confirm the ongoing Waste Management Strategy.
3. **Leisure (Lifestyle) Centre** – Make key decisions resulting in agreed project components, cost sharing formula and 'go forward' plan.
4. **Regional Fire Services** – Achieve A long term Fire Services Strategy
5. **Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP)** – Ensure consistency between the approved ICSP and the Strategic Plan.
6. **Service Capacity** – Determine necessary Service Policies. Design and conduct a Capacity, Operations and Service Review.
7. **Regional Cooperation** – Advance inter-municipal relationships leading to improved approaches to optimize cooperation and efficiency; summarize agreed approaches between Municipal partners in a Protocol accepted by all parties.
8. **Transit** – The engaged municipalities undertake a Detailed Routing Analysis of an option which leads to an agreed approach and go forward steps between them.
9. **Active Transportation** – Develop an Active Transportation Master Plan. Address short-term requirement for walkways to Osprey Village.
10. **Affordable Housing** – Determine MODL's role (Council or others) and appropriate practical actions.
11. **Municipal Building** – Address short term options for staff space strategies. Develop longer term options for the Municipal Building and the associated facilities plan.
12. **Arts and Culture Policy** – Define MODL's role and subsequently, appropriate policies and actions.
13. **User Fees** – Develop a coherent policy framework for MODL's application of user fees. Make decisions on current issues bearing on user fees.
14. **Exit 12 Development** – Develop a Prospectus, Marketing Plan and as beneficial, partnerships and/or contract relationships leading to development and sale of properties in accord with municipal objectives.

In addition to these specific Strategic Priorities there was particular consideration given to the role of public communication and engagement within MODL. It was concluded that public participation in a variety of modes is an essential characteristic in virtually every initiative, policy and decision making process. It was therefore decided that public engagement should not be considered a 'stand alone' Strategic Priority but rather should be a basic element in everything undertaken. Indeed, the precedent for this approach has been set during the term of the current Council as exemplified in the series of 6 Business Community Meetings, 13 Community Meetings, and 9 Integrated Community Sustainability Plan meetings held since the 2008 election. Council firmly believes that public consultation contributes necessary transparency and accountability to public affair, adds value to all decision making processes, and by improving knowledge, awareness and understanding among the public on key municipal issues will lead to improved relations between the citizenry and municipal government. Therefore it should be understood that whether or not a public engagement process is overtly specified within the action plans for the various Strategic Priorities it will be considered as a foundation element.

2.4.3 Strategic Priority Work Program

This section briefly summarizes the discussion and conclusions reached by Council and staff with regard to each Topic and Strategic Priority. These are summarized in the Strategic Priority Work Program Summary (Appendix 1)

1. **Economic Development** – Complete the Economic Development Strategy.

Context

As called for in the 2005 Strategic Plan, the preparation of an Economic Development Strategy (EDS) proceeded during 2009 under the direction of Dave .Waters Economic Development Officer. This has included a variety of engagement mechanisms with business and community stakeholders. Most recently, a Situational Scan and Analysis was completed that update and identified a number of potential priority objectives. The strategic process is being overseen by an active Economic Development Focus Group and an Economic Advisory Committee and Advisory Board (EDAB).

Key Questions

1. What are the priorities among many options on the table for economic development? The list of options is still lengthy and beyond the practical ability and resources available to implement simultaneously. It is also important to select the small number of key areas of focus that will truly differentiate this region and become the lynchpins in a successful economic development process.
2. Who should participate in planning, consultation and implementation? Although there has already been a fairly substantive consultation process it is now important to determine which key stakeholders should be invited to participate in a more fulsome way in this final stage of the strategic planning process. This is important for two reasons – to ensure that the group of collaborators is representative of key informants and potential partners; and to build alignment and 'buy in' around strategic choices and directions.

Desired Outcomes

When this Strategic Priority is implemented and completed:

- The EDS will present a meaningful, workable plan. Focused on sectors and measures that will give traction to economic development progress it will be realistic, implementable in the context of available human, material and partnership resources.
- Key stakeholders will be engaged in the process (as described above).
- The Plan will focus on clear targets that will serve to both concentrate efforts and provide the basis to monitor success.
- The EDS will be implemented in the context of an effective governance structure so that staff and partners have the steady reference point of clearly delineated oversight and decision making structures.
- Measurable benchmarks will assist in monitoring progress and if necessary provide the 'early warning system' that will cue the responsible staff and governance to required adjustments.
- A plan structured in the ways described will provide the Director and other staff or volunteers with clear focus, so that priorities and expectations are outlined overtly.
- In the context of constrained resources a focused, targeted and benchmarked plan will provide the basis for accountability in the expenditure and management of resources.
- Such an EDS will provide the foundation for MODL to initiate or respond to opportunities for partnerships of every type – with other parallel or orders of government, business and community sectors.

Options and Actions

Three options for action on the EDS were identified:

- Staff leading the initiative but drawing upon the select resources of an external facilitator or consultant. This would be possible given expertise held by the Director and other MODL staff, but recognizing the benefits of augmenting the EDS through modest application of external expertise (Preferred).
- Completed entirely in-house by municipal staff.
- Contracted to an external consultant.

A series of actions were outlined targeting completion by June 2010 (Accountabilities are summarized in the Work Program):

- Set aside of adequate resources in the 2010 municipal budget (December 2009).
- Development of Terms of Reference for external consultancy and work plan (January 2010).
- RFP and selection of consultant (February).
- Identification of Strategic Topics for focus within the EDS and check in with Council regarding these areas of focus (March).
- Stakeholder engagement and input (March).
- Design and undertaking a Stakeholder Forum to gather input and both gauge and build alignment with the draft EDS (April).
- Refining action plans (consultant and staff) subsequent to Stakeholder Forum and other inputs (May).

- Presenting an EDS for Council consideration and approval in June 2010 June).
- 2. **Waste Management** – Conclude negotiations with municipal partners and confirm the ongoing Waste Management Strategy.

Context

Waste Management continues to be a thorny issue for MODL. The current collaborative waste management regime was structured between MODL and which at its inception more than 15 years ago was generally deemed progressive and representative of best practices to achieve maximum waste diversion and composting. Today the system would be considered somewhat 'dated' and more recent advances have led to more efficient comparable programs and systems. Solid waste disposal is run through the Lunenburg Regional Community Recycling Centre (LRCRC) which when built in 1994 was Canada's first integrated solid waste management facility. It is jointly owned between MODL, and the Towns of Mahone Bay, Bridgewater and Lunenburg and overseen by a Waste Management Committee representing these 4 municipal owners. Its operations are managed by MODL. The landfill disposal site is at Kaizer Meadows within the Municipality of the District of Chester and is operated in partnership with that municipality.

The current operating agreement between the Municipal partners is expiring in 2011. By March 31, 2010 the four Municipal Council's must determine if they are going to extend their participation in the collaborative system and then the members will need to negotiate a new ownership and operating agreement. A number of challenges are facing this system.

- The location of the LRCRC has led to operational difficulties and ongoing technical challenges. It's proximity to a nearby lake requires application of costly mitigation measures.
- The waste management system costs approximately \$4 million per annum to operate with costs rising steadily.
- A capital deficit (for upgrades and maintenance) is projected at \$7million over the next five years.

Two consulting studies are being undertaken to address aspects of the system – Waste Management Operations and Organics diversion and processing.

Key Questions

1. Which municipal units will stay in the waste management agreement and system? This is the priority question which must be answered by MODL and its partners by the end of March 2010. The overall future including the organizational framework, scale, costs and management of the ongoing system will flow from this decision.
2. Is the municipal partnership stable and sustainable? Closely related to #1 above, this question looks beyond the immediate March 31 decisions to a longer view of the prospects for the ongoing municipal collaboration in this arena.
3. How can the environmental risks associated with the system and particularly the LRCRC 's landfill be mitigated? Can they be mitigated at an affordable cost to MODL and to the partners?

4. How can the risks associated with the present and future system (financial, environmental, performance etc.) be addressed satisfactorily.
5. Are there new revenue generating opportunities associated with a next generation or reformulated waste management regime?

Desired Outcomes

When this Strategic Priority is implemented and completed:

- The primary and overriding outcome will be a new Waste Management Strategy for MODL. Such strategy will reflect the situation with regard to other municipal partners and MODL's best cost effective approach to meeting its waste diversion and management responsibilities.
- The go-forward strategy will achieve a high degree of community acceptance in all its key elements – cost, reliability, user-efficiency and environmental performance.
- In the future the waste management program and systems will be better able to be upgraded or changed to be capable of realizing improved operational efficiencies and at costs comparable to equivalent progressive systems.
- Confidence and trust among the municipal partners will be improved in support of fair and collegial decision-making, and effective collaborative management.
- Community pride in the regional waste management system and its components will be restored. Whereas originally the system was perceived to be an attractive community asset, in recent years the difficulties and cost increases have eroded community support and the ability to refer positively to this dimension of municipal characteristics.
- With regard to the LRCRC landfill, persistent citizen complaints and performance shortfalls regarding odours will be reliably addressed to achieve acceptable levels.
- Misinformation regarding the actual facts associated with waste management has exacerbated community unhappiness with the current state of affairs. Therefore, broad public awareness of current status and steps underway to improve performance will be a priority.
- The next generation program will achieve a responsible balance between fiscal cost and environmental performance.
- The choices before Council will be presented accompanied by full cost analysis of strategic options so that defensible decisions are made in due consideration of this aspect.

No options were identified regarding the short term decision making process. The key elements of this process will be finalization and review of the Operational Review Report, confirmation by MODL and other participating municipalities as to whether they will renew participation in the collaborative agreement, and completion and review of the Organics Study

A series of short term actions were outlined, targeting pivotal decisions regarding the future of the waste management regime by the end of March 2010:

- The draft Operational Review Report will be completed and reviewed by the Director of Engineering and Public Works (January 2010).
- A technical review of the performance of the Compost Facility (February 2010).

- A Joint Council briefing on the Waste Management Assessment Report led by the Director (February 2010)
 - MODL Council will receive more detailed briefing and recommendations from the Director and consider its position regarding renewed participation in the system (February 2010).
 - Subsequently MODL will instigate or participate in a negotiation process with the CEOs and CAOs of the participating municipalities (March 2010).
 - Various Councils' resolutions should be received (March 2010).
 - Negotiation of a new framework (March 31, 2010).
3. **Leisure (Lifestyle) Centre** – Make key decisions resulting in agreed project components, cost sharing formula and 'go forward' plan.

Context

The Lunenburg County Lifestyle Centre will be a year-round sport, recreational and cultural facility serving and co-owned by MODL and the Town of Bridgewater. The project as currently proposed involves the construction of two NHL regulation-sized ice pads with fixed seating for 1800 spectators. The facility will also include a walking track on the upper concourse area, an aquatic centre with sport training, leisure and therapeutic pool, a public library and other multipurpose spaces, including administrative offices, community and cultural spaces and areas capable of hosting meetings, high tech training sessions, exercise classes, senior citizens activities and other functions.

Funding has been approved by the Federal government (\$10.35 million) and the Province of Nova Scotia (\$10 million) against a projected cost of \$31.5 million to be shared by the two municipalities and hopefully accessing significant private sector and citizen fundraising.

The Province of Nova Scotia has previously announced a contribution of \$10 million to this initiative. The balance of approximately \$12 million is to be provided by the Town of Bridgewater, the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg and other partners. Total project costs are estimated at \$31.5 million but projections currently being updated and due in March 2010 could push prospective costs substantively higher and well beyond the ability of the municipalities, funders and fundraisers to accommodate. This may require a fresh review of the project with an eye to reducing program elements and the associated costs.

4. Regional Fire Services – Achieve A long term Fire Services Strategy

Context

There are 27 fire departments active within MODL including approximately 600 volunteers. They are largely funded by local area rates augmented by local fundraising and an annual contribution by MODL. In 2009 MODL contributed \$157,000 into fire services. There is no overarching fire services master plan. Public concern has been growing about escalating area rates. Especially those associated with the fire departments are strong advocates of maintaining the local departments and fire halls pointing not only to the benefits of a widely distributed fire department presence but the value that is created from the

longstanding role these halls and volunteers have played in enhancing community cohesion. On the other side, some citizens are increasingly questioning the efficiency both economic and in terms of fire service that is the result of duplicated services and multiplied needs for equipment and support.

Key Questions

1. How can a new Fire Service Strategy be designed that simultaneously optimizes service while valuing volunteers and the benefits of local community cohesion? A key challenge is to evolve a fire system that provides most effective and responsive service across a large region with limited, distributed population, avoiding unnecessary duplication of equipment and facilities. This is further challenged given the longstanding positive role small fire departments and fire halls play in rural communities.
2. How can MODL and fire services address rising costs?
3. How can we achieve a consistent level of fire services?

Desired Outcomes

When this Strategic Priority is implemented and completed:

- There will be a new regional Fire Services Strategy. This is a topic with some contentious disagreements both among the fire departments and between fire departments and MODL.
- There will be effective fire service within MODL, in terms of equipment, personnel, responsiveness and training?
- In accord with the new Fire Services Strategy there will be predominant buy in by fire service units.
- There will be a positive public understanding and perception of the outcomes largely promoted by communication from both MODL and fire service units.
- Inconsistencies in the level of preparedness and efficiency within MODL fire service units will be identified, analysed and addressed.
- The assessment of current operations, cost and cost effectiveness, and service delivery will be accurately and fairly assessed.

Options and Actions

Three options for action were identified:

- Undertake a participatory process engaging broad involvement of fire service units, MODL and other citizen stakeholders. This would increase the likelihood of a transparent and credible process respected by both the fire service units and the citizenry at large (Preferred).
- The development of a MODL generated strategy or solution was deemed inappropriate and unlikely to succeed, especially given the likelihood that such an approach would be resisted by the various fire service units.
- It was also agreed that an approach generated solely by the fire service units and their designees would not be acceptable in that the issues bear on a range of municipal concerns and the solution must reflect both the perspectives of the fire services and the best interests of the citizens of MODL at large.

A series of action steps were outlined targeting an accepted Strategy and Action Plan by the end of May 2010:

- A regional meeting of the Lunenburg Regional Fire Services Association will be held where the intent is to share perspectives, update information and agree on a planning process among the stakeholders (December 2009).
 - A process both for the strategic planning process and the associated communications would be agreed upon by fire service units and MODL Council (January 2010).
 - Council will set aside adequate resources to undertake the necessary processes (February).
 - An appropriate consultant will be retained and report to the LRFS and the Fire Services Committee to advance the strategic process and prepare for an LRFS Forum (May 2010).
 - An LRFS Forum will be hosted in order to engage key stakeholders in the planning process and seek consensus or at least clarity on views underlying a Fire Services Strategy (March).
 - A draft Strategy will be presented to the MODL Council for preliminary review (April).
 - Broader public consultation for input on the draft Strategy will be undertaken by the consultant (May).
 - An action plan at the heart of a Fire Services Strategy will be reviewed and confirmed by Council (May).
5. **Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP)** – Ensure consistency between the approved ICSP and the Strategic Plan.

Context

In accord with provincial requirements a draft Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP) was submitted to the provincial government in the autumn of 2009. This was a necessary step in order to qualify to funding through federal infrastructure programs supported by the federal Gas Tax. This plan addresses the core components specified by the province and bearing on a range of environmental, social and cultural dimensions of the municipal strategy. The draft plan can be adjusted through March of 2010. There was some concern that the ICSP, developed independently of the municipality's Strategic Plan will in some ways be inconsistent or not synchronized. In the context of this strategic review it is important that the ICSP is considered and integrated into the ongoing priorities and decision-making process.

Key Questions

There is a single question associated with this Strategic Priority.

1. Is the ICSP consistent with the Strategic Plan? This is particularly relevant in that the ICSP has identified a series of objectives to be undertaken and resourced by MODL. It is imperative that these objectives are reconciled and integrated into MODL overarching strategies so that constrained resources can be applied within one coordinated framework.

Desired Outcomes

When this Strategic Priority is implemented and completed:

- There will be consistency between MODL's Strategic Plan and the municipal ICSP with any inconsistencies addressed by Council and changes reflected in adjustments to one or both documents.
- The final form of the ICSP will continue to reflect community aspirations and be consistent with the primary outcomes of the public consultation program undertaken as part of the ICSP process.
- The integration of the ICSP and Strategic Plan will result in a clear set of priorities consistent with the objectives of each.
- The priorities that are contained within the ICSP will be realistic in context of municipal finances, implementation resources and the citizens' goals and vision as developed in the ICSP process.

Options and Actions

While it does not appear that there are incompatible elements within the MODL Strategic Plan and ICSP the objectives and priorities of the ICSP will need to be integrated into the broader Strategic Priorities Work Program which considers the overall resource and management capacity of the municipality. This may require adjustments to some of the ICSP's Action Plan timelines. . This will be finalized as the process unfolds. A preliminary review was conducted of the ICSP's Action Plan components and items of highest priority were incorporated into Strategic Priorities Chart and Work Program. In sum, the 18 proposed Action Plan Items were categorized into four implementation streams:

- Operational: Items that are operational in nature and therefore that have been brought into ongoing MODL staff operations towards their implementation;
- 'Now' Priority: Items that were deemed of high priority and/or which require early implementation steps, and therefore were included in the Priorities Chart and current Work Plan;
- "Next": Items that have intended implementation starting in 2010 or 2011 but are not immediate Priorities
- 'Later': Items that will be tracked by staff and brought forward for Council review and action at the appropriate time and in consideration of municipal capacity.

An annotated summary of this categorization is as follows for the ICSP Action Items:

1. Inventory municipal energy use. Operational.
2. Develop a strategy to reduce the number of wastewater systems not operating to standards: Now Priority (Included in Engineering Priorities).
3. Provide financial support to community-based projects aimed at improving the conditions of local watersheds: Operational.
4. Increase the percentage of land holdings in the Municipality designated for environmental protection: Next (Proposed adjustment to be in progress by 2011).
5. Support identified incentive programs targeting the protection and/or development of resource lands: Later (2011 or later, per MODL Economic Development Strategy).

6. Increase the production and delivery of local food producers promotional material within the local market place: Next (Will require further Council review and validation in 2010).
7. Reduce the environmental impacts of planned development in the identified growth centre of the Municipality (Osprey Village): Per other decisions, no longer included as an Action Item.
8. Develop an Adaptation Measures Plan for local communities most likely impacted by erosion, sea level rise and storm surges: Next (Planning Department initiating 3 year process in accord with Regional Adaptation Collaboration. Items will be brought forward to Council as necessary).
9. Develop coastal management strategies concerned with public access, protection, and the impacts of development: Later (Per staff review and subsequent plan this item will be scheduled for implementation at a later date).
10. Establish an ongoing communications process with respective provincial authorities on matters pertaining to local community development (social services, infrastructure): Later (Staff will advance strategic framework, provisionally scheduled for completion in 2012).
11. Decrease the continued contamination of the local environment caused by unsightly premises and illegal dumping activities: Operational.
12. Remove physical accessibility barriers in municipal facilities: Operational.
13. Develop an active transportation plan that covers all communities in Lunenburg District. Implement or amend policies in local planning strategies to support AT Plan principles: Next (Incorporated into Strategic Priorities Chart and Work Program).
14. Deliver regional public transportation services: Next (Incorporated into Strategic Priorities Chart and Work Program).
15. Increase the use of electronic communications to provide residents with greater access to information concerning municipal government affairs: Later (Per future staff review and recommendations).
16. Establish a sustainability filter focused on identified energy costs, as a mandatory line in the Municipality's capital acquisition form and related procurement policies: Later (Per future staff review and recommendations).
17. Determine the municipality's capacity to meet its own energy needs: Next (Expression of Interest to undertake a public consultation on applicability of wind energy to municipal facilities is underway. Council review and decision will be undertaken in 2010).
18. Improve current infrastructure and operational capacities targeted at waste management, diversion and reduction: Now Priority (Incorporated into Council Priorities and Work Program)

A series of action steps were outlined that are consistent with the requirement that the Draft ICSP is finalized by March 2010:

- Complete a comparative evaluation of the ICSP and the Strategic Plan (January 2010).
- The highlights and conclusions reached in this evaluation will be presented to Council. Any items that require reconciliation in one or both documents will be highlighted. Council will discuss and direct staff with regard to any required changes (February).
- The ICSP will be adjusted as necessary (March).

6. **Service Capacity** – Determine necessary Service Policies. Design and conduct a Capacity and Service Review.

Context

The completion of a Service Capacity Review is part of the CAO's performance plan. While there is general satisfaction with the delivery of services to date, it is recognized that over time the match between services offered and desired may diverge. In addition, the delivery of municipal government services continues to become more multifaceted in response to the evolution of many social elements, economic constraints and changing expectations. New technologies, systems and programs add complexity even as resources become stretched. MODL has determined that this is the time for a fresh evaluation of service capacity and delivery towards their optimization.

Key Questions

There is one key question.

1. Is the current pattern of organization and activity delivery best value for money? It is important to ensure that limited staff resources are applied to deliver all required services in the most cost and time efficient manner.

Desired Outcomes

When this Strategic Priority is implemented and completed:

- The recommendations within the Service Capacity Review will focus on the ability to ensure value for money.
- The Review will define areas requiring the development and approval of newly defined Service Policies. These will clarify both obligations and expectations regarding delivery of services within the municipality.
- The Review will identify service gaps.
- The recommendations will assist MODL to avoid duplication of services between municipal departments or other governmental or private agencies.
- The Review will help to nurture continuous innovation in approaches, systems, practices and technologies.
- The Review will assist staff to explore new delivery of service alternatives.
- It will provide concrete means to optimize staff capacity.
- It will point to adjustments to service targets, useful both for performance measurement and management.
- Overall, in light of the findings of the Review MODL will be better able to adjust those services not deemed satisfactory or not being delivered with acceptable efficiency; or to trim or expand the service delivery package to meet current needs.

Options and Actions

Two options for action were identified:

- It was decided to undertake an overarching review rather than a more limited targeted approach. It was agreed that the full scope of municipal services were worthy of attention.
- It is possible to utilize at least two predominant methodologies for this type of initiative, a Capacity Review or an External Audit. It was decided to undertake the former which will focus on the linkages between resource and human capacity against the backdrop of strategic priorities and client expectations.

A series of action steps were outlined targeting completion by September 2010:

- The CAO will present terms of Reference for the Service Capacity Review (January 2010).
 - Contained within the Terms of reference will be recommendations that frame a scope and process, said process to be implemented through the spring of 2010 (May).
 - Any Service Policy or other matters changing the boundaries or MODL services identified through the Service Capacity Review will be brought for consideration by Council (June).
 - Adjustments to MODL services will be fast tracked with most targeted changes rapidly implemented (September).
7. **Regional Cooperation** – Advance inter-municipal relationships leading to improved approaches to optimize cooperation and efficiency; summarize agreed approaches between Municipal partners in a Protocol accepted by all parties.

Context

Issues bearing on regional cooperation are not unique to MODL and its neighbours. This continues to be one of the most significant municipal issues across the country, which has become even more prominent in the context of ICSPs which inherently call for integrative and collaborative programs respecting bio-regional and practical systems boundaries (e.g. waste management, water sheds etc.) rather than longstanding political boundaries. In the MODL context there is a history of examples where regional collaboration has been undertaken, such as is currently the case in waste management and towards the future Lifestyle Centre. That said, the ongoing patterns of inter-municipal relationship have not always been collaborative and in some cases communication and cooperation have not been exemplary contributing to occasional disconnects, disagreements and inefficiencies. In the past few years there has been at least one step forward, the institution of regular regional meetings between the four proximate CEOs and CAOs. This has improved sharing of information and early identification and airing of issues. Improving the pattern and results of regional collaboration is a primary element in the current MODL Mayor's agenda and has been endorsed by his Council colleagues.

Key Questions

1. What is the best approach to optimize cooperation and efficiency? The history of inter-municipal relations within the MODL boundaries has been variable and inconsistent and results have been mixed.
2. Is amalgamation of two or more units a preferred option? It is recognized that this is a complex topic with a range of viewpoints and challenges – politically, institutionally, structurally and culturally among others. Nonetheless, some Councillors believe that this option offers potential benefits and should be explored carefully to assess the balance between difficulties and benefits.

Desired Outcomes

When this Strategic Priority is implemented and completed:

- One or more formalized protocols will be negotiated between the municipal partners agreeing to best practices, procedures and actions.
- The participating municipalities will improve harmonious relations.
- Any opportunities for additional or refined shared services will be identified.
- Joint strategic actions will be determined and activated.
- Collaborative initiatives will be advanced that can improve services for citizens in all municipalities.
- With regard to some issues this approach will strengthen and coordinate regional advocacy on behalf of mutually beneficial outcomes – portraying and strengthening a single regional voice.
- The exploration of amalgamation will clarify the case and either advance or dissuade participants based on a more knowledgeable, substantive analysis.

Options and Actions

Three options for action were identified:

- Developing an agreed protocol for inter-municipal relations (Preferred).
- The expansion of shared services was considered to be useful as one element in an evolving process.
- Alternatively, it would be possible to continue to address specific topics on a case by case basis while putting additional effort into identifying such cases early in their evolution.

A series of actions were outlined to advance this Strategic Priority, in 2010 with the most concerted effort in the last quarter of the year:

- Design and conduct a facilitated inter-municipal Council on regional collaboration (September 2010).
- Pursuant to conclusions reached at the workshop, engage all the regional Mayors on a process or preliminary agreement on a collaborative protocol for communication, discussion, negotiation and coordinated actions (October).
- Reach an approved protocol accepted by all participating municipal Councils (November).

- An action plan following from the protocol and/or other agreements will be agreed and implemented by the various CAOs (December).
8. **Transit** – The engaged municipalities undertake an Options Analysis which leads to an agreed approach and go forward steps between them.

Context

There is no public transit within MODL although this has been an interest for a number of years and various citizens and organizations have raised the topic as a worthwhile community benefit. Given the size and population densities within MODL it is recognized that there may be few feasible options, but all potential options are likely to require participation of one or more of the towns within the municipality. In order to ascertain the viability of public transit within MODL a Feasibility Report was commissioned and due by the end of 2009. In addition to the logistical issues and sustainability of any program, there is only limited municipal funding available to seed any initiative.

Key Questions

1. Is there an approach wherein MODL could instigate or participate in a public transit initiative that all 4 municipal units would agree to? As indicated, any useful option would focus on transit for people traveling from rural areas into the towns.

Desired Outcomes

When this Strategic Priority is implemented and completed:

- An Routing and Governance Analysis will be completed on a preferred model- Research and assessment of the need, resources and potential options that can be the basis for feasible programs. To that end, key first step - a Feasibility Analysis was completed in December 2009, which looked at transit options.
- If there appears to be one or more feasible options, the participating municipal units will come to consensus on a workable multi-party agreement.
- The cost details of all options will be developed and analysed to a reasonable degree of confidence.
- An analysis of likely ridership will be completed. This is central to determining the viability and benefit of any transit option, in the context of cost-benefit analysis.

Options and Actions

Two options for action were identified -

- Two or more of the municipal units from the outset would agree to work together towards an Options Analysis and ultimately a shared program (Preferred).
- MODL could undertake the analysis alone. If there seemed to be a feasible initiative, then MODL could solicit participation of partners.

A series of action steps were outlined towards 2012 implementation:

- Based upon the Feasibility Analysis completed in December 2009, and which looked at transit options, it is now possible to undertake a more substantive analysis of preferred models (considering aspects such as need, routing, costs, governance and action plan steps). Communicate with CAOs of all the municipal units to solicit an agreement to explore these transit options through the issuance of a collaborative RFP for an Routing and Governance Analysis, with the intent to achieve agreement of all Councils (March 2010).
 - Develop and issue an RFP for the detailed Routing and Governance Analysis (April).
 - Pursuant to the selection of the consultant and completion of the Analysis, bring potentially feasible options and proposed cost structures forward to all Councils (November).
 - Pursuant to Councils' agreement develop an implementation plan for initiation of services (2012).
9. **Active Transportation** – Develop an Active Transportation Master Plan. Address short-term requirement for walkways to Osprey Village.

Context

This is a timely area for action since greater numbers of citizens have been voicing interest and it is in accord with current lifestyle interests and the health benefits are linked to other MODL goals. There are however a number of challenges. Sidewalks and road shoulders in a number of parts of MODL are inadequate. There are some relevant and important community assets, particularly some current trails and there are a number of active trail groups. There was a recent report presented by Ecology Action Centre on the needs and opportunities associated with active transportation.

Key Question

1. What are the true costs (capital and operating) of various levels of investment in active transportation infrastructure? There are many options regarding the nature and extent of infrastructure.

Desired Outcomes

When this Strategic Priority is implemented and completed:

- Short term – Given prospective interest in active transportation walkways linking to the Osprey development at Exit 12, a Warrant Analysis will be completed to determine if sidewalks are warranted and feasible.
- Longer term, there will be an Active Transportation Master Plan.
- The Master Plan will present an overall conceptual plan, identify options and delineate various potential choices considering life cycle costs, staged implementation (including key initial actions to address short term needs) and defined roles for MODL and private sector developers.

Options and Actions

Three options for action were identified:

- Assess the need and feasibility of Osprey Village sidewalks immediately and prior to developing a comprehensive plan. Participants felt that the decision to undertake improvements related to Osprey should be determined prior to completion of the overall plan (Preferred).
- Alternatively, action on Osprey Village could wait until the Active Transportation Master Plan is devised and approved.
- Develop a broad conceptual Active Transportation Master Plan rather than a comprehensive, detailed plan. This was recommended in light of constrained resources for both planning and implementation (Also preferred).

A series of action steps were outlined targeting October 2010 completion for the preliminary phase of the initiative:

- Osprey Village – Undertake a Warrant Analysis (January 2010).
- Develop Terms of Reference for a conceptual Active Transportation Master Plan (February).
- Release an RFP for a consultant to develop the Plan (April).
- Select a consultant and complete a Plan to present to Council (October).

10. **Affordable Housing** – Determine MODL's role (Council or others) and appropriate practical actions.

Context

There is a substantial need to pay attention to the deficiencies in affordable housing within MODL. Poverty is apparent especially in some rural areas. If anything it appears that the problem has worsened in recent years as property taxes have risen, housing stock has aged and deteriorated in light of inadequate repairs and maintenance, and some of the longstanding means of providing livelihoods in rural areas have deteriorated. Council believes that they and citizens have a social and civic responsibility to pay attention and look for ways to alleviate the problem consistent with the means and jurisdiction available. For example, last year the implementation of a Compassion Tax benefited approximately 1000 people but was far from adequate to address issues of poverty.

Key Questions

1. What can Council and MODL do to contribute to resolving this challenge? There are limits in resources and questions about the appropriate role and jurisdictional authority.
2. What is the community need? Although the clear impression is that there is a substantial need there is little verified information to quantify the size and scope of the need.

Desired Outcomes

When this Strategic Priority is implemented and completed:

- MODL will determine its' most appropriate and doable role and be poised to initiate actions.
- Council will educate itself.
- The real needs will be identified.
- Best practices will be reviewed, assessed and understood.
- Constraints will be identified.
- The appropriate advocacy role for municipal government will be understood.

Options and Actions

Three options for action were identified:

- The lead could be taken by the Lunenburg-Queens Housing Authority.
- An external consultant could be engaged.
- Initial research could be undertaken in house and then decisions would be made regarding partners and external advisors (Preferred).

A series of action steps were outlined targeting April 2010 completion:

- MODL staff (led by Planning Director) will assemble existing information (March 2010).
- The Mayor will contact the region's MLA and discuss possible cooperation and roles (March).
- The scope of potential actions and activities will be researched (March).
- The Provincial Department of Community Services will be contacted to discuss possible working relationships (February).
- Options for action will be brought back to Council for discussion and decision (April).

11. **Municipal Building** – Address short term options for staff space strategies. Develop longer term options for the Municipal Building and the associated facilities plan.

Context

Current facilities to house municipal staff and operations are inadequate for present or future needs. A study is underway to look at short term options to acquire additional municipal office space. A municipal working group exists and has been considering options and is also tasked with actions to identify space alternatives. There are currently 42 staff in the municipal office and an adjacent adjunct facility.

Key Questions

1. What are the short to long term options to ensure adequate municipal building space? Although a number of ideas have surfaced there is no consensus on best options and directions.

Desired Outcomes

When this Strategic Priority is implemented and completed:

- A short term space strategy will be developed, accepted and acted on.
- Short to long term action options will be examined.
- Public support for the preferred options will be gained through timely and positive communications and the optics of the option within the community will be positively managed.
- A cost efficient facility option will consider a number of alternatives including:
 - Trailer(s)
 - Satellite location
 - Increased telecommuting
 - Rental of auxiliary space
 - Renovation of other existing municipal spaces to serve administrative purposes
- A workable capital plan will be developed.
- A conceptual plan to address either a new municipal building or other long term options will be decided upon.

Options and Actions

Four complementary components in an action approach were identified:

- A short term staff space strategy will be quickly resolved.
- A longer term facilities plan will be developed.
- Consideration will be given to either a MODL owned solution or potentially a private sector partnership.
- Purchase, building or leasing will all be considered.

A series of action steps were outlined targeting September 2010 completion:

- Short term options for office space will be identified by the Director of Engineering (early December 2009).
- Options will be reviewed by AFG (December).
- Short term options will be recommended to Council (January 2010).
- Initiatives to communicate and cultivate positive public awareness of the proposed solution will be undertaken (February).
- The budget will provide direction as to the preferred long term approach (March).
- Long term options including a new Municipal Building or other alternatives will be developed and presented to Council (September).

12. Arts and Culture Policy – Define MODL's role and subsequently, appropriate policies and actions.

Context

The idea to develop a community Performing Arts Centre is only the latest arts and culture related initiative to arise within MODL. The prospect could be advanced with the support and potentially the contribution of MODL, but the lack of a policy framework that would guide the municipality's involvement in arts and culture activities is an obstacle. In addition, the prospective Centre is held back by the lack of a primary champion. Here again, there is potential for the municipality to step forward if it ascertains there is a case to proceed and its appropriate role can be determined.

Key Questions

1. Is an initiative such as development of a Performing Arts Centre within the appropriate functions of MODL? There is no policy and therefore no guideline for MODL to consider such a project. Some would argue that this type of initiative should properly reside wholly within the private and/or not for profit sectors. Others believe that such an initiative would benefit from or might not otherwise be possible except for the active leadership and/or participation of the municipality. If so however, there are diverse views as to what type of role would be appropriate – leadership, funding, guidance etc.
2. Is there a genuine need or just a desire from some stakeholders in the development of a Performing Arts Centre?
3. Is there public support?
4. What would a Performing Arts Centre cost? What would its best scope and scale be? Is it feasible?
5. Could this be an economic development opportunity and if so, how should it integrate and be prioritized within the broader EDS?

Desired Outcomes

When this Strategic Priority is implemented and completed:

- A definition of MODL's role will be determined particularly in the context of broader policy regarding arts and culture initiatives:
 - Direct involvement?
 - As a catalyst?
 - A laissez faire relationship – hands off while relying on private and not for profit sector leadership.
- Stakeholders will be involved informing and providing input into the decision making process.
- Regional capacity will be enhanced to undertake projects of this scale and complexity.
- Community needs will be assessed as the basis for decision making.

Options and Actions

Three options for action were identified:

- Develop a MODL policy regarding participation in projects such as this in the arts and culture sphere as a precursor to decisions regarding a Performing Arts Centre (Preferred).
- Continue the status quo approach of addressing such issues in an ad hoc manner.

A series of action steps were outlined targeting July 2010 completion:

- Undertake research on applicable options for MODL involvement (April 2010).
- Report to Council on the range and scope of options (May).
- Council gives policy direction (June)
- A formalized policy regarding both Arts and Culture facilities and programs is presented and approved by Council (July).

13. **User Fees** – Develop a coherent policy framework for MODL's application of user fees. Make decisions on current issues bearing on user fees.

Context

The topic of user fees has arisen as a topic of growing concern and timeliness. Rising waste tipping fees have raised public attention and concern both around this specific issue and in so far as it highlights a broader set of issues regarding user fees. Across Canada, the appropriate application of user fees has become a prominent and controversial issue as municipalities struggle to manage the costs of various municipal services, give citizens financial cues towards desired actions (reduction in use of some services and resource conservation) and implement an equitable basis for cost distribution. There is currently no policy bearing on the applicability and scope of user fees within MODL.

Key Questions

1. What is the appropriate MODL approach both generally and with regard to specific types of user fee-based mechanisms? In the absence of a policy framework and guidance each issue that considers the appropriate application of user fees is being considered in isolation.

Desired Outcomes

When this Strategic Priority is implemented and completed:

- A coherent policy framework regarding user fees will be developed.
- The process leading to the policy framework will be participatory, engaging public and private interests in a constructive discussion and analysis of the topic, leading to both a coherent policy and a substantial degree of public and stakeholder understanding and support for the framework's principles.

- Decisions will be made (or able to be made) on a number of current and emerging user fee issues such as:
 - Waste tipping fees
 - False alarms
 - Sewer hook-ups
 - Fire hydrants
 - Infrastructure improvements
- The philosophy that will underlie future decisions were explored, vetted and approved by Council within the policy framework.
- Targeted actions to address emerging user fee issues were implemented.
- Costing formulas (as possible) and general principles that should be applied to costing formulas were developed.
- Implementation options regarding current user fees topics were outlined.

Options and Actions

Three options for action were identified:

- A targeted approach to user fees in the context of developing a broader Policy Framework is undertaken. (Preferred).
- The Policy Framework establishes a philosophical basis for resolving user fee issues (Also preferred).
- A comprehensive review of all issues where user fees are or may be applicable is undertaken (not deemed practical at this time but intended later in the year).

A series of action steps were outlined targeting December 2010 completion:

- 2010 Budget – Proposals bearing on short term issues currently on the Council agenda (Exemption to Tipping Fees, Sewer Rates and Hydrant Charges) are considered and resolved if possible even prior to establishment of an overarching Policy Framework (January 2010).
- Towards an overarching Policy Framework a matrix of user fee issues is developed (September).
- A comprehensive analysis of current user fee topics is completed (October).
- A proposed Policy Framework is presented to Council (November).
- The 2011 Budget proposal includes recommendations arising from application of the Policy Framework to issues otherwise before Council (December).

14. **Exit 12 Development** – Develop a Prospectus, Marketing Plan and as beneficial, partnerships and/or contract relationships leading to development and sale of properties in accord with municipal objectives

Context

The Exit 12 Development has been an important and recurring issue before Council for a number of years. The capital, development and operating costs associated with the Exit 12 Development continue to have serious implications and effects on MODL's prosperity, fiscal health and strategies. Only a few

parcels within the 140 acres under MODL control have been sold. A Planning Strategy and Land Use By-Law provisions have framed the approaches to development. It is important to accelerate progress on the Development to relieve MODL of its financial burden and realize the intended benefits of the initiative. Development has been largely stalled in light of current economic conditions and the inability to put in place an aggressive, purposeful partnership or agreement with consultants, developers or consultants.

Key Questions

1. How can progress on the completion of Exit 12 Development be energized towards completion?
2. How can others (prospective owners, developers, marketers) be interested in development?
3. What is the best strategy to sell the marketed lots?
4. What is MODL prepared to do to accelerate progress?

Desired Outcomes

When this Strategic Priority is implemented and completed:

- There will be a Marketing Plan that makes a higher and faster degree of progress towards completing the development reasonable.
- A Prospectus will be completed that presents a compelling case to potential developers and marketers.
- Potential benefits arising from the Development to prospective developers, owners and MODL will be articulated.
- There will be defined MODL actions and contributions.
- Potential developers will be identified. An agreement with the preferred developer will be in process.

Options and Actions

Three approaches to action were identified:

- Selling MODL's interest in the Exit 12 Development to a qualified 3rd party developer that is capable of delivering results (Preferred but not likely).
- Developing a partnership with a qualified developer (Likely).
- Continuing with MODL as the direct developer.

A series of action steps were outlined targeting April 2010 completion:

- The Regional Development Authority is requested to assist with advancing the initiative (December 2009).
- Council allocates resources to undertake the next steps in the development process – particularly to complete the process of finding a development partner (February 2010).
- Work collaboratively with the RDA to complete a Prospectus for potential partners (January).
- The Prospectus including an Expression of Interest from prospective partners is completed (March).
- Expression of Interest is released and active marketing to identify the most appropriate partner is initiated (April).

3.0 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Implementation Plan consists of the Strategic Priorities Chart and Work Program that follows. This is a summary of the 14 Strategic Priorities and includes the Problem Definitions (Facts and Key Questions), Desired Outcomes (Key Results that define Success), and the Options and Actions (to achieve the Key Results). It also identifies the member of Staff holding responsibility to advance or achieve all deliverables per time expectations. This Work Program is linked to Priority Setting Guidelines (Appendix 2) which is a tool to guide Council, the CAO and staff to monitor and review progress; refine, adjust or change priorities (both highest current and other important priorities) for both Council Priorities and CAO/Staff (Operational Strategies).

This approach to implementation takes particular note of the practical requirement for balancing competing demands with limited resources. This is visualized as the municipal 'capacity box'. The essence of this approach is to focus on and monitor a small number of strategic priorities ('Now' priorities) which are deemed of significance in terms of both importance and urgency. Each of these priorities is tied to specific expectations, timelines, milestones and accountabilities. In the case of Council Priorities, this list is typically restricted to six items. A second list of six to eight Priorities (Next) is tracked as active but secondary Priorities – important but less urgent, or slower to advance in terms of time for completion. A similar mechanism is utilized for CAO and Staff Operational Strategies, generally composed of a menu of current strategic initiatives assigned to each senior staff member. Each strategic list generally contains three highest priority and two second priority items.

The Priority Setting Guidelines are the template for Strategic Implementation. It focuses on enabling the Council, CAO and management to regularly set, monitor and adjust short term priorities. A priority is a definitive action-oriented project or task that has a start and end date versus a broader, longer term goal/objective and ongoing, day-to-day activity or function.

The importance of priority setting as part of the strategic or work program planning processes is premised on the understanding that organizations have limited capacity to pursue multiple goals, objectives or projects. Their virtual 'capacity box' is not readily visible but it has limitations or boundaries determined by:

- **Policy** – procedures that define mandate and roles
- **Financial** – net fiscal resources available
- **Culture** - norms that delineate acceptable behaviours
- **Risk** – tolerance for organizational image and legal exposure
- **Work Program** – day-to-day activities and strategic projects
- **Human** – available staff and competency levels

These 'capacity box' elements are impacted by dynamic internal and external factors including:

- **Funding** – available funding beyond day-today operations

- **Scrutiny** – level of visibility for organizational actions
- **Demands** – diverse requests from clients and the public
- **Environment** – external conditions that impact the organization
- **Support** - legitimacy and trust among stakeholders
- **Atmosphere** – degree of internal stress and cooperation

The process of priority setting involves evaluating the merits of multiple priority candidates given an accurate assessment of the organization's 'capacity box' to handle only a few. Each priority candidate is considered strategically important, but some require more urgent attention than other choices given a limited capacity. Priority setting involves three steps:

1. **Conduct Reality Check** - How achievable is it to determine required resources for success and its feasibility as a priority candidate?
2. **Determine Urgency** - What makes this candidate require more immediate attention than others for action in the short term?
3. **Decide Whose Priority** - Who needs to deal with this priority candidate to ensure role clarity and workload capacity?

The Priority Setting Guidelines are primarily designed for the use of Council and management. Each step is described in terms of purpose, process and an example of the product. Hints are also provided for sustaining attention to an overall priority setting system.

This approach to Strategic Implementation Planning has been successfully applied in many municipalities across Canada. In this context the MODL Strategic Plan is properly understood to frame central values and direction (Vision and Mission), and then to identify both the overarching Goals and current specific Strategic Priorities within those Goals. The Implementation Plan however is not viewed as a static document but rather a continually evolving management framework that monitors progress, identifies and evaluates new or emerging needs and options and then provides an ongoing mechanism to update or change Strategic Priorities in service of delivering on the Goals within the Strategic Plan.

APPENDIX 1

MODL Strategic Priority Work Program

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES CHART

Date: December 1, 2009

COUNCIL PRIORITIES (Council/CAO)	
<p>NOW</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY: Completion 2. WASTE MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT: LRCRC Review 3. LEISURE CENTRE: Components 4. REGIONAL FIRE SERVICES MEETING: Proposal 5. ICSP: Approval <p>NEXT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EXIT 12 DEVELOPMENT • AFFORDABLE HOUSING • ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN • ARTS AND CULTURE POLICY • MUNICIPAL BUILDING OPTIONS. • REGIONAL COOPERATION PROTOCOL • TRANSIT OPTIONS ANALYSIS 	<p>May March April December March</p>
ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE (Council/CAO)	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strategic Plan Completion 2. Priority Setting Guidelines - Adopt 3. Strategic Priorities Chart: First Quarter Update 4. Council Policy Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User Fee Philosophy • Service Capacity Review 	<p>February February March January</p>
OPERATIONAL STRATEGIES (CAO/Staff)	
<p style="text-align: center;">CAO (Tammy Wilson)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. LEISURE (LIFESTYLE) CENTRE: components - April 2. WASTE MANAGEMENT Agreement- Mar. 3. EXIT 12: Prospectus - May <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REGIONAL CO-OP PROTOCOL- Sept • Service Capacity Review Proposal 	<p style="text-align: center;">ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (Dave Waters)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY- May 2. CES Lease – December 3. Tourism Projects – March <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ED Website • County Jail initiative
<p style="text-align: center;">PLANNING (Jeff Merrill)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ICSP Approval - March 2. Survey Results - January 3. MF Application - January <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AAC Representatives Policy • Planning Area Policy 	<p style="text-align: center;">Finance (Gordon Pettipas)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. User Fee Jan & Oct 2. PSAB 3150 Report - March 3. Accounting Software - March <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog License Options • Tax Payment Options
<p style="text-align: center;">ADMINISTRATION (April Whynot-Lohnes)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. REGIONAL FIRE SERVICES- Review- December 2. Records Man. Strategy – December 10 3. Council Policy Review- January <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tancook Isle Survey • Fire Alarm Bylaw Education 	<p style="text-align: center;">RECREATION (Trudy Payne)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Open Space Plan Update -January 2. Online Registration Software (Active Net) - January 3. ARTS & CULTURE POLICY- March <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION MP • Website
<p style="text-align: center;">ENGINEERING (Pierre Breau)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Waste Management Site Review 2. Wastewater - Septic Lagoon - April 3. Landfill Closure - April <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MUNICIPAL BUILDING OPTIONS • Treatment Plant Tender 	<p style="text-align: center;">ICSP (Tammy Wilson)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ICSP APPROVAL- March <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Protection Land Holdings • Adaptation Measures Plan • Meeting Energy Needs • Local Food Producers

Bold Capital = Council Now priorities; **Capitals** = Council Next items; & **Bold lower case**= Organizational Excellence

APPENDIX 2

MODL Priority Setting Guidelines

M.D. of LUNENBURG POLICY MANUAL

December 2009

Name: **PRIORITY SETTING GUIDELINES**

Approval: **Council**

Date:

This guideline focuses on enabling the Council, CAO and management to regularly set, monitor and adjust short term priorities. A priority is a definitive action-oriented project or task that has a start and end date versus a broader, longer term goal/objective and ongoing, day-to-day activity or function.

The importance of priority setting as part of the strategic or work program planning processes is premised on the understanding that organizations have limited capacity to pursue multiple goals, objectives or projects. Their virtual 'capacity box' is not readily visible but it has limitations or boundaries determined by:

- **Policy** – procedures that define mandate and roles
- **Financial** – net fiscal resources available
- **Culture** - norms that delineate acceptable behaviours
- **Risk** – tolerance for organizational image and legal exposure
- **Work Program** – day-to-day activities and strategic projects
- **Human** – available staff and competency levels

These 'capacity box' elements are impacted by dynamic internal and external factors:

- **Funding** – available funding beyond day-today operations
- **Scrutiny** – level of visibility for organizational actions
- **Demands** – diverse requests from clients and the public
- **Environment** – external conditions that impact the organization
- **Support** - legitimacy and trust among stakeholders
- **Atmosphere** – degree of internal stress and cooperation

The process of priority setting involves evaluating the merits of multiple priority candidates given an accurate assessment of the organization's 'capacity box' to handle only a few. Each priority candidate is considered strategically important, but some require more urgent attention than other choices given a limited capacity. Priority setting involves three steps:

1. **Conduct Reality Check** - How achievable is it to determine required resources for success and its feasibility as a priority candidate?
2. **Determine Urgency** - What makes this candidate require more immediate attention than others for action in the short term?
3. **Decide Whose Priority** - Who needs to deal with this priority candidate to ensure role clarity and workload capacity?

This guideline is primarily designed for the use of Council and management. Each step is described in terms of purpose, process and an example of the product. Hints are also provided for sustaining attention to an overall priority setting system.

1. CONDUCT A REALITY CHECK – Suitable Priority

PURPOSE – To determine requirements for a priority candidate to be implemented and its suitability for consideration as a viable priority candidate in the priority setting process.

PROCESS

1. Review the 'Reality Checklist' (Attachment 1) to add, delete and modify criteria to assess the likelihood of successful implementation. Select 10 reality check criteria.
2. Discuss and establish key words to distinguish a low, medium and high score (1, 2 and 3) rating for each reality check criteria.
3. List candidates in the left hand column of a *Priority Setting Worksheet* (Attach.2)
4. Assess each candidate using all criteria and scores of 1, 2 or 3 (no decimals like 1.5) and place the total score in the right hand column.
5. If an item does not score very high, there are three choices to be made:
 - a. Do not consider it any further as is not feasible at this time
 - b. Change its action plan to address deficiencies (improve its score)
 - c. Continue to consider it knowing its implementation constraints
6. Proceed to the next priority setting step with viable priority candidates.

PRODUCT

In this illustration, the local government might not advance the Young Offenders Act Change at this time.

PRIORITY SETTING CHART - Reality Check

CANDIDATE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total	Notes
1. Economic Development Strategy	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	1	1	3	20	Medium
2. Land Use Plan Review	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	28	High
3. Water System Upgrade	2	1	3	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	18	Medium
4. <i>Young Offenders Act Change</i>	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	13	Low
5. Multi-use facility	2	2	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	16	Medium
6. Staff Succession Plan	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	30	High

HINTS

- Remember, you are not selecting priorities; but determining eligibility.
- Low is 10 to 16, medium 17 to 23 and high 24 to 30 (using 10 criteria).
- Ensure that everyone agrees with the criteria and measures at the start.
- You require detailed action plans to conduct an accurate assessment, otherwise ratings will be based on perception not facts
- The priority criteria presented uses numbers as means to differentiate among candidates. Some criteria scores can be weighted if they are more important.
- The scoring process is an attempt to use rational and objective thinking to determine priorities. But scores are a means, not an end and should be used to generate discussion and agreement on choices.
- In the initial stage of establishing a priority setting process, use numerous candidates, including exiting priorities so the exercise captures the depth of all issues facing the organization

2. DETERMINE URGENCY – Short Term Priority

PURPOSE – To determine which candidates require immediate attention based on the notion that urgent or reactive imperatives must be dealt with before an organization can work on more important or proactive items.

PROCESS

1. Review the '*Urgency Criteria List*' (Attachment 3) to add, delete and modify criteria to assess which items require immediate attention. Select 10 'Urgency' criteria.
3. Discuss and establish key words to distinguish a low, medium and high score (1, 2 and 3) rating for each 'Urgency' criteria.
4. List candidates in the left hand column of a *Priority Setting Worksheet* (Attach. 2). Assess each candidate using all criteria and scores of 1, 2 or 3 and place the total score in the right hand column.
5. Review each item's score total - urgent (24 to 30), very important (17 to 23) and important (10 to 16) and discuss to confirm its reality check status.
6. Determine which three of the urgent priorities should be worked on now; if there are more than three then some will go to the 'next' status. If there are less than three, select additional items from the 'very important' candidates.
7. Proceed to step 3 with items classified as:
 - Now – to be worked on immediately or in the short term
 - Next – to be considered when some of the 'now' items are removed
 - Later - to be addressed in the longer term

PRODUCT

In this illustration, the local government would focus on 2 'now' items' that scored high on the urgency criteria and if its capacity permitted, it could move 'next' items into the 'now' box.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY CHART - Urgency

NOW
1. Economic Development Strategy 2. Water System Upgrade 3.
NEXT
1. Staff Succession Plan 2. Land Use Bylaw Review 3.
LATER
1. Multi-use Facility 2. 3.

HINTS

- Items scored 21 to 25 are border line items in that they can be either urgent or important based on group discussion and agreement.
- The ideal condition is to have no or few 'urgent' or reactive items so the organization can work on 'important' or proactive matters.

3. DECIDE WHOSE PRIORITY – Work Program Assignment

PURPOSE - To assign responsibility for the priority according to its requirements and appropriate authority for implementation.

PROCESS

1. Review the 'Whose' Criteria List (Attachment 4) to add, delete and modify criteria to assess who should implement the priority. Select 10 'Whose' criteria.
3. Discuss and establish key words to distinguish a low, medium and high score (1, 2 and 3) rating for each 'Whose' criteria.
4. List candidates in the left hand column of a *Priority Setting Worksheet*. Assess each candidate using all criteria and scores of 1, 2 or 3 and place the total score in the right hand column.
5. Discuss each item based on the total score to determine its status as Strategic (24 to 30) or Operational (10 to 16) with items scored between 17 and 23 being assigned to either status based on further discussion.
6. Complete the *Strategic Priorities Chart* (attachment 5) using all the candidates to classify them as:
 - Council Priorities require the attention of the political attention
 - Operational Strategies can be dealt with by staff

PRODUCT

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES CHART

NOW	
COUNCIL PRIORITIES	OPERATIONAL STRATEGIES
1. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (Jim) 2. WATER SYSTEM UPGRADE – Decision (Joe) 3. LAND USE BYLAW – Vision (Donna)	1. Staff Succession Plan (Dave) 2. Union Contract Negotiations (Jim) 3. Fees & Charges Review (Bob)
NEXT	
1. MULTI-USE FACILITY – Feasibility (Joe) 2. REGIONAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT (Jim) 3. DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION (Donna)	1. Sewer System Phase 2 Completion (Joe) 2. Sport field Renovations (Dave) 3. Developer Cost Charges Review (Bob)
LATER	
1. INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITIES (Joe) 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.

HINTS

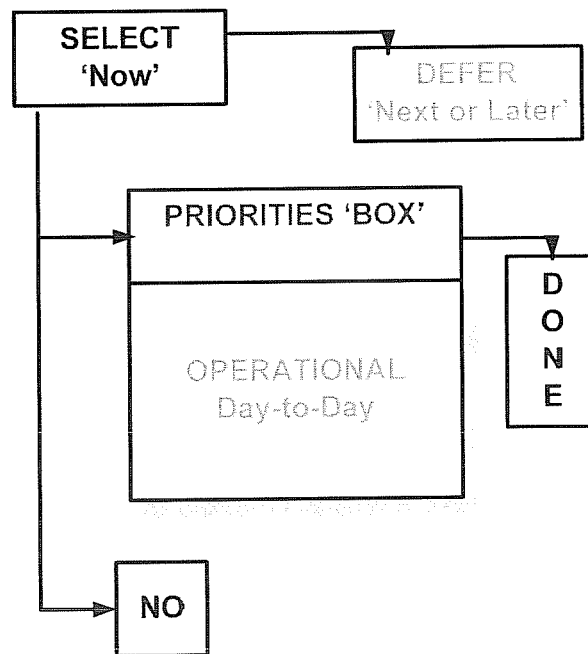
- This step focuses on what level in the organization must deal with the item; assessing workload comes later when the chart is completed.
- .Avoid "its everyone's responsibility"; pick a specific lead person

4. ONGOING PROCESS - MANAGING PRIORITIES

The essential notion of priority setting is the determination of how many items can be placed in the 'box' (see Display below). This requires an assessment of how big the box is with day-to-day operations and how urgent an item (s) is to either:

- Select the item as a 'now' priority for attention inside
- Defer attention as a 'next 'or 'later' item outside the box
- Say to No to an item as ineligible to be considered for the box

MANAGING THE PRIORITIES BOX



Often, strategic planning documents are not used regularly and quickly become out of date. The key to effectively managing priorities is to recognize that they should change:

- **Emerging candidates** because of changing external and internal influences must be compared against existing priorities through a continuous 'select' function in managing the priorities box. Existing 'now' priorities may move to 'next' status.
- **Completed 'now' items** are 'done' or incorporated into day-to-day operations making way for 'next' items or new candidates. Don't forget to celebrate accomplishments to reinforce the utility of the priority setting system.
- **New Information** about an existing priority may make it less urgent or irrelevant thereby deferring its status to 'next' or 'later' (or even 'No'). Likewise, internal capacity issues may impact how many priorities can be addressed.

If there is insufficient room in the box to deal with strategic priorities then the organization should review its operations or day-to-day activities with a view to increasing organizational efficiency and effectiveness to make some room in the 'box' for strategic priorities.

Some hints for the ongoing management of strategic priorities include:

- Actively use and update the one page Strategic Priorities Chart as part of every decision making meeting. Place it as the last page of every meeting agenda. *The visibility of the 'Chart' serves as a constant reminder of the strategic priorities.*
- Requests for Decision or Staff Reports for major decisions should refer to impact of the pending decision on the Strategic Priorities. *The reference to strategic priorities causes decision makers to consider the implications for all decisions.*
- Conduct a Strategic Priorities update every three months with decision makers to report on progress, celebrate result and make changes. *The Strategic Priorities Chart is a visual means to assess individual work loads and adjustments can be made by changing their day-to-day functions, obtaining additional help or deferring the priority*
- Conduct a Strategic Priorities Review semi-annually by assessing the organization's capacity and re-evaluating strategic priorities. *A 'now' priority (prior to the budget process or otherwise) without assigned resources should be moved to next or later status*
- The Strategic Priorities Chart can be subdivided into smaller boxes to reflect the operational strategies of different functions or Departments of the organization. *The inclusion of Departments enables staff to relate to the strategic priority process and for Council to oversee operational strategies.*
- The priority setting process is suitable as the final stage of a strategic planning process to "translate plans into action".
- A new priority candidate can be introduced at any time. It should be referred to staff to collect relevant information and as appropriate a strategic discussion by Council at a Committee of the Whole Meeting. *A Committee of the Whole meeting offers an informal to discuss the priority candidate.*

REALITY CHECKLIST (Long List)

CRITERIA / Notes	SUCCESS INDICATORS		
	1.) VERY LIKELY	2.) Somewhat LIKELY	3. NOT LIKELY
1. Current Legislative Ease	Yes	Maybe	No
2. Current Policy Consistency	Yes	Maybe	No
3. Existing Contractual Ease	Yes	Maybe	No
4. Political of Managerial Will	High	Neutral	Uncertain
5. Internal Willingness to Act	High	Medium	Low
6. Expected Savings to be Realized	High	Medium	None
7. Expected Efficiency to be Realized	Likely	Maybe	Not Likely
8. Timeframe for Results	Reasonable	Challenging	Unrealistic
9. Success Likelihood	High	Medium	Uncertain
10. Current External Support	High	Average	Low
11. Available Fiscal Resources	Confirmed	Available	Difficult
12. Leverage Other Resources	Yes	Maybe	Uncertain/No
13. Ongoing Sustainability	Likely	Maybe	Uncertain/No
14. Available Resources	Yes	Somewhat	No
15. Existing Expertise	In-house	Available	Uncertain/No
16. Likely Consequences / Risk	None	Low / Uncertain	Negative
17. Partnership Potential	Ready	Maybe	Uncertain/No
18. _____			
19. _____			
20. _____			
21. _____			
22. _____			
23. _____			

URGENCY CRITERIA LIST

CRITERIA	URGENCY INDICATORS		
	1.) Urgent	2.) Not as Urgent	3.) Important
1. IMPERATIVE - Requirement to act	Legislation / Regulation		No Legislation or Guideline
2. LIABILITY - Risk exposure	Legal /Fiscal Liability		Organizational Inconvenience
3. SAFETY – Imminent vs. potential threat	Imminent Threat		Possible Damage
4. FINANCIAL - Magnitude of cost	Extraordinary Impact		Manageable Impact
5. VISIBILITY - Implications to organization	Negatively Charged		Neutral or None
6. BENEFIT - Who will receive outcomes?	Most People		Few People
7. COMMUNITY NEED - Who's asking?	Public At Large		Minority Interest
8. TIMELINESS - Opportunity alignment	Unique Event		Frequent Occurrence
9. STRATEGIC - Linkage to established goals	Critical Prerequisite		Useful
10. OBLIGATION - Commitment to others	Contractual Agreement		Casual Arrangement
11. LEADERSHIP - External expectations	High Requirement		Low Expectations
12. TIMELINE - Imposed Timeframe	Deadline		None or Self Imposed
13. _____			
14. _____			
15. _____			
16. _____			
17. _____			

'WHOSE' CRITERIA LIST

CRITERIA	WHOSE INDICATORS	
	1.) Strategic	2.) Uncertain
1. POLICY	New or Change	Procedure or Implementation
2. FINANCIAL	New of Change in Budget	Approved in Budget
3. EXTERNAL LINKAGE	Decision Maker Level	Staff Level
4. CORPORATE IMAGE	Agency Integrity	Service Quality
5. SERVICE LEVELS	New or Terminate	Service Standards
6. STRATEGIC DIRECTION	New or Change	Implementation
7. PERSONNEL	Senior Staff Performance	Staff or Program Performance
8. LEGISLATION	Ignore or Seek to Change	Interpretation
9. SENSITIVITY	High Visibility	Low Visibility
10. OBLIGATION	New or Change in Contract	Permissible
11. _____		
12. _____		
13. _____		

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES CHART

NOW	
COUNCIL PRIORITIES	OPERATIONAL STRATEGIES
1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
NEXT	
1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
LATER	
1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.

APPENDIX 3

MODL Organizational Success Guidelines

Municipal District of Lunenburg

ORGANIZATIONAL SUCCESS DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

PURPOSE

These guidelines focus on enabling the Chief Administrative officer (CAO) and Council to regularly review organizational and governance effectiveness. This assessment process is guided by positive success indicators to avoid a focusing negatively on past events. Success indicators, effectiveness factors, questions and procedures to guide organizational discussions are based on four core functions of a local government.

1. Strategic Direction – the overall roadmap that guides organizational activities
2. Policy Choices – decisions that allocate resources and organizational effort
3. Service Delivery – provision of programs and services to the public
4. System Coordination – requirements for organizational effectiveness and efficiency

CORE GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONS

POLITICAL			
STRATEGIC	<p>Strategic DIRECTION</p> <p>Vision for Future Organizational Mission Shared Values Long Term Goals Specific Objectives</p> <p>The <u>PUBLIC</u></p>	<p>Policy CHOICES</p> <p>Legislative Compliance Budget Allocations Policy Decisions Contract Commitments Short Term Priorities</p>	POLICY
MANAGERIAL	<p>Systems COORDINATION</p> <p>Personnel Practices Information Systems Financial Accountability Resource Deployment</p>	<p>Service DELIVERY</p> <p>Action Plans Production Systems Resource Schedules Delivery Strategies</p> <p>The <u>CLIENT</u></p>	TECHNICAL
ADMINISTRATIVE			

1

SUCCESS INDICATORS

Key success indicators are intended to describe the ideal state of:

- **Governance Effectiveness** – political aspects that involve elected officials
- **Organizational Effectiveness** – the administrative realm involving management and staff

Success indicators provide a framework to identify *'what is working well'*. This type of positive discussion encourages celebration of effort and results. It is also a reminder of the strengths and assets that the organization should reinforce and retain.

Success indicators also help to identify *'areas for attention'*. Critical analysis can identify concerns and gaps identifying where the organization is falling short of its desired benchmarks. It is important that an issue be discussed to clarify perspectives and facts before moving forward.

Key questions to guide organizational and governance discussions include:

Strategic Direction

- Do we have clear strategic direction?
- Is the direction consistently pursued by council and administration?
- Do we measure and celebrate progress and results?

Policy Choices

- Does the decision-making process work well?
- Do we have good information to make decisions?
- Do we make good policy and ensure it is implemented?

Service Delivery

- Are service expectations realistic given our organizational capacity?
- Are people satisfied with the quality of services that we provide?
- Do we provide services in the most efficient manner?

Systems Coordination

- Do we have a positive and productive work environment?
- Is there a high degree of performance and fiscal accountability?
- Do we maximize internal and external communication efforts?

2

EFFECTIVENESS FACTORS

Success achievement is influenced by *internal factors* that relate to the competence and behaviours of people involved in the organization as well as its systems and processes. The internal human and technical elements must be aligned to achieve internal stability.

External influences also affect success. Societal and community trends along with public and stakeholder demands place pressures on the organization. To be effective, the organization must align its directions with the strategic imperatives of its environment.

EFFECTIVENESS FACTORS

EXTERNAL ALIGNMENT

	<p>ENVIRONMENTAL Conditions</p> <p>Societal Trends Best Practices Other Agencies</p>	<p>SYSTEM Components</p> <p>Reliable Systems Clear Processes Adequate Resources</p>	
<p>EXTERNAL INFLUENCES</p>	<p>COMMUNITY Needs</p> <p>Public Expectations Stakeholder Demands Available Resources</p>	<p>HUMAN Elements</p> <p>Required Competencies Appropriate Behaviours Focused Effort</p>	<p>INTERNAL FACTORS</p>

LOCAL ALIGNMENT

Explorative Questions

Questions to explore the impact of effectiveness factors on organization or governance success include:

Environmental Conditions

- What are the significant external influences that impact our organization?
- How is our success impacted by other agencies?
- Are there some best practices that would enhance our success?

Community Needs

- What are the prevailing public expectations of the organization?
- How do we sort wants from needs among stakeholders?
- What resources are available in the community that can be mobilized?

System Components

- Do our systems and processes help us to achieve success?
- Are the various sub-systems linked and integrated?
- Can we improve the allocation and use of available resources?

Human Elements

- Are there behaviours that detract from our ability to achieve success?
- Do we have the skills required to respond to issues and opportunities?
- Can we improve employee, council or service performance?

3

GOVERNANCE SUCCESS DISCUSSION

Ideally, *Success Indicators* are adopted **by council** following each election. Should there be a change in council membership or CAO, council may wish to review and update their success indicators.

The *Organizational Success Discussion* should be done in closed session meeting as it involves the performance of staff requiring protection of their privacy. The Chief Elected Official (CEO) chairs the discussion upon consent of council to enter into 'closed session' (also known as in-camera) in accordance with enabling legislation. The CEO is expected to refer any discussion that is not appropriate for closed session to a regular meeting of council.

The *Organizational Success Discussion* should be regularly scheduled and include the CAO who call follow up on matters raised.

The discussions should reflect a two-way dialogue about how administration is impacting the governance functions of the political realm and likewise, how political activities affect staff activities in the administrative realm.

The CAO can also use the *Success Indicators* **with staff** to assess how the organization is doing and to improve organizational effectiveness.

The *Success Indicators* can be incorporated into staff performance plans to entrench expectation for organization effectiveness at all levels of the organization.

ORGANIZATIONAL (CAO) SUCCESS INDICATORS

1. Adherence to defined political and administrative **roles and responsibilities**.

2. Efforts to develop and achieve **strategic directions**.

3. Ability to develop a smooth transition of **plans into action**.

4. Attention to monitor and recognize **organizational and staff performance**.

5. Facilitation of a positive and productive **organizational environment**.

6. Accountability for the efficient use of **organizational resources**.

7. Ensure complete information and discussion to arrive at **good decisions**.

8. Consistency of attention to **internal and external communication**.

9. Respect for **diverse opinions**.

10. State of organizational stability while addressing **changing conditions and issues**.

11. Evaluation of the satisfaction levels and efficiency of **service delivery**.

12. Maintenance of external **relations and partnerships**.

13. Honour the principles of **transparent processes and serving the public interest**.