

# **2019 Your Government, Your Ideas Engagement Report**

## **Introduction**

Staff organized six Your Government, Your Ideas meetings that were held across the Municipality in October and November of 2019. This report provides a summary of the community engagement process and results.

## **Engagement approach**

The engagement strategy was designed to involve the public in the municipal decision-making process. The Municipality sought resident input to inform Council's strategic priority setting. The Municipality held six evening meetings at various fire halls and recreation centres in the community. At each of the meetings, attendees heard a short presentation from the Mayor followed by a Q&A session. After a short break, attendees split into small groups to discuss what they felt the Municipality's strategic priorities should be.

## **Advertising and costs**

The Municipality distributed a media release, placed advertisements in local newspapers and radio, gave posters to Councillors for distribution, added content to the modl.ca website, paid for Facebook advertising, and placed a notice in the most recent issue of Municipal Matters. To hold and advertise the series of events cost roughly \$8,000, plus staff time.

## **Engagement results**

2019 attendance: 73 (plus 174 online)

2018 attendance: 61 (plus 29 online)

2017 attendance: 70 (plus 17 online)

Seventy-three members of the public attended the events. Big Tancook (21), Lunenburg (7), Newcombville (8), West Dublin (16), Blockhouse (9), Barss Corner (12). A further 174 people completed an online survey asked them to identify their preference for the Municipality's strategic priorities or suggest their own.

## **Going forward**

Each year, the number of residents responding to the survey online has increased, with this year's number of respondents increasing dramatically. However, a limitation of using a survey-specific tool like Survey Monkey is that it doesn't allow for residents not attending the in-person meetings to have the opportunity to see the entire presentation available to meeting attendees.

As more and more municipalities, even rural ones, move to adopt online engagement platforms, staff plan to review online engagement platforms for the next budget year. This would not replace in person meetings, but supplement them. Though we know internet access can be a challenge for many in our community, there are still thousands of residents who do have access to the internet who want to engage with their Council online. Specialised engagement platforms offer the opportunity to give residents one place to find facts, project timelines, important documents and conduct surveys, polls and use ideation tools. Hundreds of municipalities across Canada are now using online engagement platforms.

## **Key themes**

A number of key themes were identified through the table discussions, online survey, and Q&A sessions. Specific table notes, comment form feedback and survey results are included in the appendix.

### **Internet**

Improving access to high speed Internet continues to be the primary concern for residents. They want better access to stay connected with the world, and to improve their ability to participate in work from home opportunities.

### **Roads**

Residents feel strongly about the condition of the roads in their communities. Concerns raised were primarily about provincial roads.

### **Climate Change**

Issues surrounding climate change were prominent in the discussions. Many residents want to see the Municipality be a leader in climate change action and create regulations to protect the coastline.

### **Lyme Disease**

The bait station program was well understood. Residents believe MODL should continue to pressure the Health Authority to improve diagnosis tools.

### **Doctor Recruitment**

The problem of doctor recruitment was discussed at nearly every meeting. Residents predominately want MODL to advocate for better pay for doctors from the province.

## **Appendix A: Table Notes**

### **Big Tancook Island**

- Assess generator situation
- Seawall damage – we'll work with the province
- NTIR promises to come and doesn't
- Internet, new project questions.
- Road clearing and maintenance, not acceptable
- Lyme Disease, questions about the bait station project
- Accessibility for businesses. Too expensive to upgrade.
- Ocean break, erosion of shore, wharf damage

### **Lunenburg**

- Blue Rocks – can MODL extend bow hunting season to reduce deer population?
- The Point & the Pond need armour rock.
- Internet – concerns around 5G technology.

- Health care – needs more money. Doctor recruitment.
- MODL should check on building inspections.
- Public roads are not maintained – don't force restrictions on private road owners until public roads meet standards.
- Lyme Disease - bait stations – 12-14 deer waiting for it to be filled. It's working! Diagnosis for humans is still slow.
- Seat belts on buses are needed.

## **Newcombville**

- Internet – questions about projects and towers.
- Questions about specific roads – all provincial.
- Recreation infrastructure – River Ridge Common is great. Trail connectivity at Best Western/town
- Bird noises/Noise Bylaw at Haskap Berry Farm. Staff have talked to owner.
- Doctor recruitment, what can MODL do?
- Lyme Disease – questions about the project.

## **West Dublin**

- More access to the coast. MODL should have fought harder in Kingsburg. MODL should advocate for freedom to roam legislation with the province.
- Climate change – please pursue wind and solar farms. MODL should be producing green energy (wind). Reduce dependence on oil/coal.
- New building should have solar. Needs political leadership.
- Land use planning bylaw – ensure public input.
- Internet – fundamental to economic development.
- Rural doctor recruitment. Support community efforts, focus on quality of life. Use existing buildings for walk in clinics.
- Keep schools open.
- Recreation infrastructure, active transportation should be supported as much as possible.
- Roads – Old Voglers Cove Road (provincial). Mount Pleasant to Huey Lake Road, needs road lines, can't tell where you are in the fog. Chip sealed with no lines. Damaged road conditions. Artie's Pound need armour rock.
- Broad Cove Beach – community association put in a porta potty. Who owns the property adjacent to the beach?
- Food production, local and grow your own. Self sufficiency. Education for youth. Petite School is an example.
- Financial situation – tax assessment issues. Errors on tax bills. Non-residents increase on taxes.
- Dump truck issues in Mount Pleasant
- Lyme Disease – issues with medical community still not accepting that this is an issue.
- LCLC new management

## **Blockhouse**

- Coastal flooding – need of resources/information, engineering, preventative maintenance, road erosion, province - coastal protection legislation.
- MODL declared climate emergency – committee could be a source to gather research re: coastal flooding.

- Waste Management – can construction materials be put out with garbage pick up under new contract?
- Sherbrooke Lake Park – want to see priority given. Design is done – start working on it.
- Lyme Disease Conference - is it open to anyone?
- Accommodations – AirBnBs taking over. Province recognizes that there is a problem. Competing with industry.
- Fire Recruitment/Retention – need younger members. Article by Peter Simpson in Canadian Firefighters Magazine re: Dayspring Fire. Potential Workers Compensation for firefighters (provincial).
- Fire Service in general - too many departments, understand the need for more firefighters, but there are too many departments and the fire rate is too high. Should be forced to amalgamate and provide more equitable taxation and equitable service.
- Municipal amalgamation – why are there so many Councillors and duplication of service for such a small county population. Should be amalgamated, MODL should lead and advocate for this issue.
- Stop duplicating services in the municipalities – work together on services.
- Audited financial statements might be too costly, but there should be more oversight.
- Flood mitigation – coastal flooding. Expand straight pipe program.
- Rural Internet.
- Roads – MODL should contribute to upgrading provincial roads if MODL has placed a park at the end of a provincial road.
- Stiffer penalties needed for littering.
- Municipal taxpayers shouldn't fund programming that competes with private business, and absolutely not things like shopping trips outside of the Municipality. Why are taxpayers subsidizing taking money away from local businesses?
- Invest more in recreation infrastructure, keep what we have well maintained, then allow private business to use the infrastructure and provide subsidies to low income families.
- LCLC – Electric vehicle parking should also be wheelchair accessible parking. Needs enforcement.

## **Barss Corner**

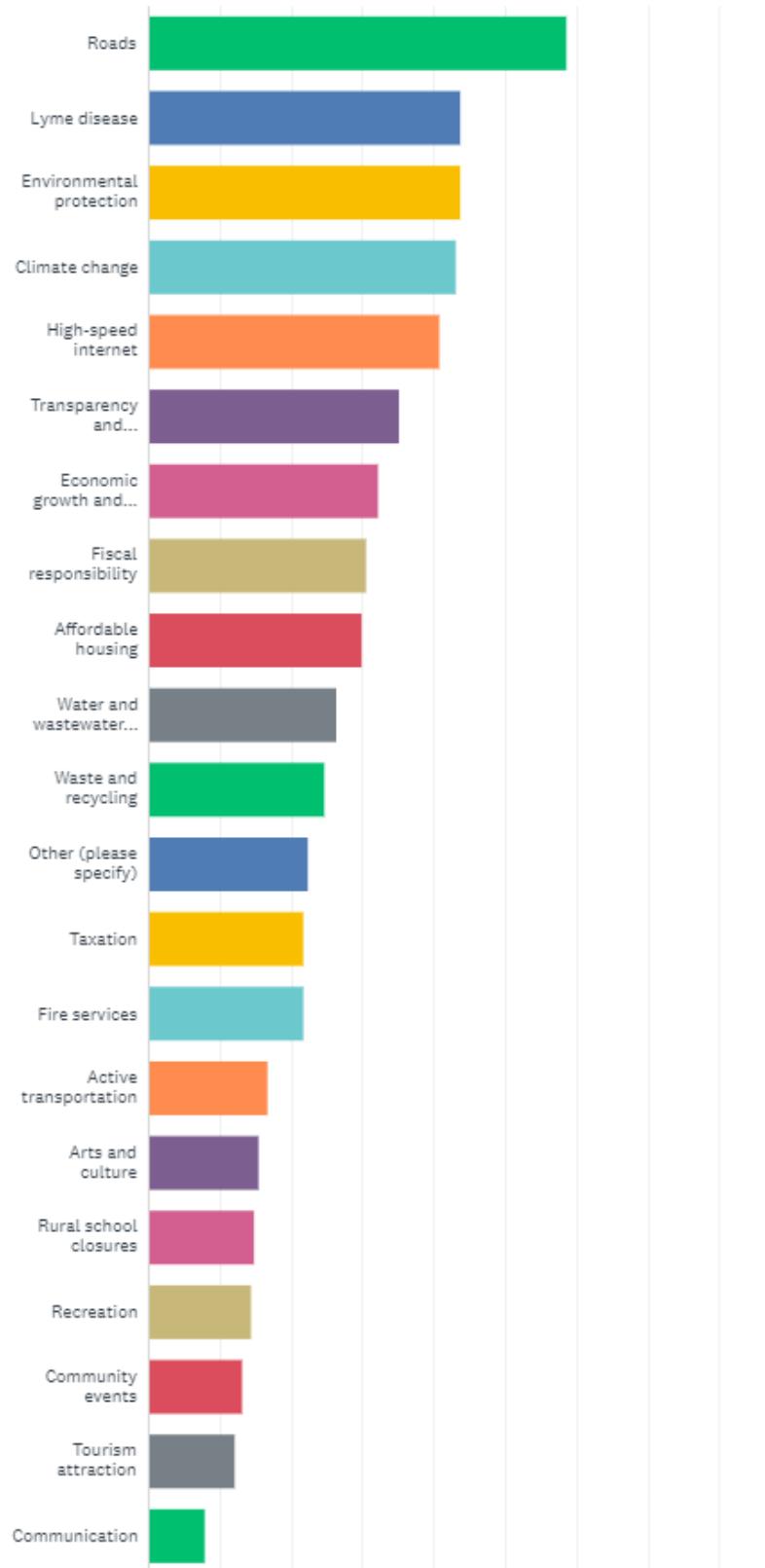
- Progress at Sherbrooke. Will be developed, but takes time.
- Annual debt servicing – million dollar range. 1 cent = 271,000. 4 cents = million to satisfy annual debt servicing. Mun debt free 2021. Can residents expect 4 cent reduction after debt requirement. Still need to replenish reserves.
- Recreation – more programming north of the 103. Would River Ridge Common start hosting programs? Swimming lessons – Lake Williams? Last two years hard to get swimming instructors. Looking at recreation and regionalizing – bigger picture. Don't want to lose sr. socials, and other outreach programs. Council feels very important. Programming grants available to see if there's interest for programs.
- Northern pulp closure.
- 1700's ross brook is eisener brook.
- Speed for high speed internet – download
- New building
- Garbage collection – what does it cost per year. Very expensive.
- Advertise about illegal dumping. In fall when people leave cabins – drive down back roads to pits and throw out garbage. Hoping regular pick up of bulky items will relieve. Have a dedicated person at waste site to investigate illegal dumping.

- LIDAR testing. Lahave river watershed – adamant no. do all Lunenburg county – very beneficial and happy to see done all over.
- Climate crisis – differing opinions. Climate has been changing. Proposal for actions toward climate change – keep land in natural state. Now selling lake shore, river frontage, no setback, fertilize lawns – getting green algae – Sherbrooke has it. Improper sewer systems. Site water testing – not acceptable sites. Have one by proposed public access – not much happen there. All subdivisions – where green algae coming from. MODL measuring to see if our site is causing issue. Why not test where subdivisions are? There is independent testing, but we are going through BCAF – these are sites that were recommended. Are we going to continue with LIDAR testing – continue selling lake shore with no set back. provincial gov is implementing mandatory planning – see what they are looking at. There will be coastal setbacks – it is coming. What it will be and whether it will be prov or mun rules. Don't have that info yet. Know it is coming. Did LIDAR for that reason. Sherbrooke lake – west site – wall to wall cottages. No visible cottages on east side/northern side. Different subdivisions, different regs. Those right on lake are causing issues. Folks from Sherbrooke lake – passionate about protecting quality of water. Lack of setbacks were brought up then. Took trips up lake – number of new developments – natural growth chopped off. Boathouses are built on waters edge. Concern for water quality. Caribou lake – excavator dug out shore line – put in wall and boat launch – in spring everything ran into lake – loom in water – environment – concern re who is authorizing. Does happen on other lakes as well. Some areas residents police residents. Some call environment. Have to replenish damage done. Need to protect the lakes. Environment is an issue – need to have consistency for rules.
- School street in new Germany – need shoulder – trees go in road – kid have to walk in road. Unsafe when kids are coming and going to/from school or lunch time. Lots of buses and kids walking on road.
- Bushes/trees – transportation should be doing – put those complaints in. call through 1-800 number and get ticket number so tracked. Get fire department involved to say safety issue – get them to send letter or RCMP. Have Police Advisory Board. Signage (speed ex). Board sends through to RCMP and get done. Who is obligated to use paved shoulder. Are pedestrians obligated to use. See point in paying for but want to see enforcement to stay on shoulder. we promote through AT to get people to stay on the shoulder. TIR has ability to use their 33 foot right of way.
- Roads, high speed internet, bigger provincial problems – mill. Originally proposed first nations wasn't acceptable. New proposal should be better. Dealing with many partners. Concern – people who own mill, means nothing to them. Need to have some leniency or will lose that too. Effluent was on crown land – they were supposed to look after – but now making mills problem. On provincial agenda for many years.
- FF volunteers – call several departments at once. Doesn't need fire department. Only need the one rescue unit. Call 911 depends on type of emergency – chest pain, shortness of breath – higher degree of needing attention – will send FD, other cases don't. local fire department can decide whether they respond or not. If participate and call referred to scotia business – no response from scotia – then go to next department. Does fire department get money. Car accident – 2 ambulance and three fire trucks – dispatch ambulance based on info received. Sometimes don't have enough info, or lack of info. Better to send and not need it than not have it and need it.
- Stop taking on provincial and federal responsibilities with municipal tax dollars.
- Assessment cap removed – what will replace those dollars? Municipal tax dollars should be income based not property value based. Doesn't accommodate for ability to pay.
- Unsightly properties – doesn't seem fair that the inspector will drive by properties just as bad or worse than the one being complained about, but won't make anyone else clean up because there's no complaint. Should require more than one complaint.

## **Appendix B: Online Survey Results**

Completed by 174 residents.

**Please select your top 6 priorities for the Municipality.**



Other:

- My highest priority isn't listed: MORE DOCTORS!!! None of the other stuff matters if you don't have your health! Please push the province to get more doctors. And to pay them better. NS doctors are the worst paid in the country!
- Regulations on Air B&B
- Regulating Air B&B Attracting more physicians to our municipality
- Tancock Island Ferry
- Help for the families and seniors that are in need.
- Fiscal responsibility
- Taxation --sewage costs- high fire taxes- all good reasons for moving elsewhere. A Municipal building is another high cost- no one with a right mind believes that it is not going to cost taxpayers any thing. That is a fairy tale.
- Taxation and management of private rentals - it's not fair that fixed roof accommodation providers who play by rules - pay commercial taxes/ commercial electrical rates/ fees/ water monitoring costs etc..... and the municipality does not regulate or tax these properties - which are operating as a business
- Bylaws to protect homeowners against the type of businesses that are built next to them
- Health, i.e doctors
- Almost all of the above, I can't pick only six. They all need urgent attention. A daily bus link from Liverpool to Chester and to New Germany/ active transportation
- School breakfast programs
- Access to medical services, e.g. family doctors.
- Doctors
- Healthcare including doctor shortage. Seniors housing....including nursing homes.
- Attracting Doctors
- Great work on the "Answer the Call" program. I do question why we have so many volunteer fire departments in this region. Love the volunteers and their hard work but I think there are too many departments within such a small region. I believe you as the municipal government need to address this fact.
- Preserve King Street as a shopping and business district, rather than a residential area. Try to bring more merchants back to King Street. Perhaps some free downtown parking could be offered, like it used to be.
- Sustainability
- Healthcare - closed walk in clinics, ambulance delays, lack of Mfr's in fire services, lots of drs retiring soon, etc.
- Please, please consider Lyme as a priority. It has devastated so many families and children are getting severely effected. Either by getting Lyme or if their parents get Lyme.
- Bringing new businesses to the area.
- We have too many fire departments in this area. I like the volunteers but the modl model is wrong
- Health Care, lobby and fight for reduction and elimination of rules, regulations, and unfair fees and taxation of Doctors
- Childcare, healthcare
- Rails to Trails.....up graded and improved to accommodate tourists....little spurs just for walkers like at the Rivers Edge... Payment to Volunteer Fire Fighters....they are expected to do way too much

for free. More windmills... Clean up the LaHave River Straighten our road in Union Square where many accidents happen ....very tight curve.... Stop clear cutting! We have so many beautiful spots and tourism is so important here Offer grants to young people to get in to farming. Stop Big Corporations from setting up big AquAculture sites

- If we are in a Climate emergency we should be reducing store hours, that have stores open seven days and nights a week that burn fossil fuels. Lights too contribute to climate change, just like plastics. The municipality needs to lobby the province to take action on this.  
<http://saveoursundays.blogspot.com/2019/10/climate-change-sunday-shopping.html> . We need to treat people like people, then we might actually care about our planet.
- Public transportation - i.e. a bus system.
- Food security for rural, low-income individuals & families.
- Medical care- family doctors and shorter wait times at emergency
- Commuter service to Halifax
- Bringing doctors to Lunenburg county
- Having the Trail safe.....in Cookville we have to ride a long side of the road due to one home owner who has claimed the ditch as his own personal business property. You allow this to continue and set precedence....please hear the people and stand up to the bully.....
- Amalgamation of the towns and municipality would be a major contribution to more economic prosperity from expense consolidation and associated reduction while also supporting a more integrated and focussed approach to the things which make us grow. ie.Tourism, Investment, etc
- Agriculture
- Consistent development bylaws across the municipality: These need to take into consideration environmental issues including emissions, noise, & other types of factors which can affect residents' health & enjoyment of their property. New businesses near existing homes should be subject to consultation with residents to address any potential issues.
- Encourage people who live in rural areas to turn out their lights at night for the sake of very important night pollinators and creatures. Encourage discontinuing street lights in small rural communities. Consider advantages to being a relatively dark space as a tourist and new residents attraction. Encourage people who move to rural communities to embrace the country and to not essentially clear cut their properties. Encourage ideas such as having a vegetable garden and other activities that embrace country living instead of land scarring like a city lot.
- I would like to see a discussion by our Municipal Councillors regarding open pen salmon farming and the current “eyeballing of our pristine waters” by domestic and foreign companies.
- Please let us know if oakridge lane with lines running from West clifford will receive high speed Internet with the new lines through bakers settlement

## If you had to select one priority for the Municipality – what would it be? Open-ended.

- Transparency by senior officials in their other paid for positions, that may be a conflict of interest
- Doctors
- More doctors!!
- Natural Environment Climate change
- Lyme disease
- Economic growth

- roads; but these surveys are not really useful if I have to pick a top priority
- Environment
- Changing zoning bylaws which allow livestock in residential areas. At present it is a free for all!
- Addressing the climate crisis and meeting IPCC guidelines for green house gas emissions.
- Roads
- Eradication of ticks and Lyme prevention
- Roads
- Maximize interest in the area via a clear communication and publicity strategy.
- Keeping the unesco designation, which requires new buildings to comply with present historical guidelines; a working harbour with no infill; no large scale or high cost housing developments directly on the harbour and extending the historical area to include the whole of the harbour (including shoreline of golf course) and not just pockets, as it does presently. There should be no carte blanche exemptions to the historical guidelines. There should be encouragement to work within the guidelines, and the guideline committee should be a collaborative part of the process.
- Affordable housing
- Accountability
- Affordable Housing
- Fiscal responsibility
- Roads
- Waste and recycling
- Snow clearing -hiring sub contractors for side roads and hwy for main roads so roads are clear first thing in the morning. As in many other provinces
- Jobs
- Climate change preparedness and economic development; they're very connected.
- Climate change
- Preventing the wasted spending on the new highway exit that is being built in Bridgewater.
- Internet
- Better jobs above min. Wage
- Roads
- Lime disease
- Number 1-- why on earth would a municipality spend millions on a park to entertain a few people?It is a big waste of someone's else money.
- Lyme disease
- roads
- Economic Growth and Investment
- Roads
- Economic growth
- transportation
- Bylaws to protect home owners
- Recreation
- Transparency and accountability
- Lyme disease and roads
- Water and waste management
- Climate change

- Aging infrastructure including old pipes washing into the Lahave river followed by having quality roads to drive and walk on in town bringing these services up to a modern standard would increase how visitors see our small town
- Health Care
- Climate change
- Affordable housing
- communication
- High speed internet
- Roads
- Help more with families. I can't get no help with my home. I been living here and supporting this town. I get nothing in return. Bring down the cost it has on the limit for help. I'm not rich. And I get told to go to another province where it's better.
- Roads
- Access to medical care
- Doctors
- Roads
- High speed internet
- Fiscal responsibility
- Doctor shortage.
- Infrastructure updates in order to attract more business and people in general.
- Doctors
- Fiscal responsible budgets. I like that we are building a new municipal building with no mortgage. Shows we got smart people running the show.
- Wastewater management
- Environmental protection
- High Speed Internet
- Lyme disease is making people very sick, doctors have to be asked for a test and the tests are often false, we need better tests and a prevention.
- high speed internet
- Roads
- Helping people make their homes more energy efficient. It would help the environment and help people to cut their costs.
- Fiscal responsibility
- Environmental protection
- Emergency Services,
- protecting the environment
- High speed internet
- Attract employment (industrial)
- Taxation
- Water mgmt
- High speed internet to everyone. Not just the mayor in Bakers Settlement
- Roads
- Environmental
- Improved transparency in government

- Sustainability
- Healthcare
- Fire service
- Lyme disease
- Employment Opportunities
- Internet. This was promised a decade ago and those of us in the very rural areas have seen half assed solutions that are comparable to dial up, but for more \$\$.
- Competent management of projects.
- Affordable housing
- Economic Growth
- Economic growth
- Clean it up
- Wise utilization of my tax dollars.
- Transparency and accountability
- Climate crisis adaptation
- Climate change
- Environmental Protection
- Lyme disease
- Attracting & investing in progressive & innovative environmentally responsible business. For instance, reinvesting in a local, responsible waste management program. Transportation alternatives, innovative affordable housing, tax breaks for small business operations under \$500,000.
- Addressing and being VERY proactive about the climate emergency.

## **Appendix C: Feedback Forms**

**Do you have any additional comment about the Municipality's strategic priorities that you'd like to note here?**

- Excellent work and it is obvious that MODL has put a lot of work not developing these very important strategic priorities. Thank you.
- Provincial bylaws need public input!
- Roads (Blue Rocks)

**What did you like most about this event?**

- Very good
- Freedom of civilized discussion
- Good discussion on priorities
- Subjects that I am already dealing with
- Informed provided
- Community participation
- Learning more about the important work that is being done in our municipality
- Presentation and open format
- It was very informative. I learned a lot about Council's priorities and about how it works

- The discussion on Lyme disease
- Had a chance to state views
- Answer all the questions that were asked

**How could we have improved this event?**

- No improvement needed
- Not much I think it went well
- I don't think you can it was very well thought out and simple to understand
- Not sure at the moment, my first time
- Possibly more notification? Attendance was lower than I expected