

## **Town of Berwick Council Meeting**

March 11, 2025

Town of Berwick Council Chambers

6:30 pm

### **AGENDA**

#### **1. Call to Order**

#### **2. Approval of the Agenda**

#### **3. Approval of the Minutes**

- a. Council Minutes, February 11, 2025
- b. Public Hearing Minutes, February 13, 2025
- c. Special Council Meeting, February 13, 2025
- d. Special Council Meeting, February 27, 2025

#### **4. Review of Action Items**

#### **5. New Business**

- a. First Reading – 106 Orchard Street rezoning
- b. RFD007-2025 – Accessibility and Equity Plan 2025
- c. Statement of Provincial Interest (SPI) - Housing and Infrastructure
- d. 2025-26 Budget Direction
  - i. Survey and Public Information Feedback

#### **6. Correspondence**

- a. NSFM Update- Bill 24
- b. Letter to Premier Houston re: Repealing the Uranium Exploration & Mining Prohibition Act
- c. Letter from Honourable John Lohr re: Minimum Planning Regulations
- d. BIG - Basic Income Guarantee Invitation

#### **7. Mayor's Report**

#### **8. In-Camera**

#### **9. Adjournment**

Meeting Date	Action Item	Status
2024-12-10	Reach out to other municipalities to understand how they are assessing the Code of Conduct criteria for establishing the sanctions	Not Started
2024-12-10	Electricity Regulations, educational materials to provide to Council on the Council SharePoint site.	Not Started
2024-12-10	Appoint an independent investigator into the Code of Conduct.	In-Progress
2024-12-10	Schedule CAP to present to Council	Completed
2024-12-10	Survey what/if other municipalities are doing to respond to the ban the use of NDAs, related to sexual violence cases, for every business, institution or organization that receives Municipal funding or recognition.	In-Progress
2025-01-14	Reserves for IMSA organizations? Is the Interim IMSA work going to provide direction/opinion on this?	Not Started
2025-01-14	Number of fines written by RCMP and how does it get directed to Town of Berwick revenue	In-Progress
2025-01-14	Planning Fee review and determine whether changes to the MPS will change our planning services fees, whether a staff person makes sense and look at similar size MU for comparison on changes to MPS vs. costs	In-Progress
2025-01-14	Is there revenue from VCFN that is returned to the owner parties?	Not Started
2025-01-14	Flush out the costs for parks and bylaw to present to the public for feedback and look at contract, sharing of service with other municipalities and contract for audit resources.	In-Progress
2025-02-03	Explore a community calendar to share community events and what is going on in the gym?	In-Progress
2025-02-11	Review Snow Removal Policy prior to next winter plowing season with input from Accessibility and Active Transportation.	Not Started
2025-02-11	Bring back Order on Property 109 Marster Avenue in a timeline manner that allows staff to fully assess the issues and allow the property owner to meet the order	In-Progress
2025-02-11	Prepare a letter to the province re Highway 101 sign, what happened and request assistance.	In-Progress
2025-02-25	Prepare Council Resolution for Factorydale Turbine GMF Application	Completed

**Town of Berwick**  
*Report to Municipal Council*  
**Agenda Item**

Subject: Planning Advisory Committee Recommendation for First Reading Regarding amending the LUB to rezone PID 55237994 – 106 Orchard Street from R1 to R2

From: Ning Liang, Development Officer

Date: 2025-03-06

---

The Planning Advisory Committee reviewed the staff report dated March 04, 2025, regarding a Land Use Bylaw amendment application by Jacob Seyforth to rezone 106 Orchard Street (PID 55237994) from R1 to R2.

The applicant wants to convert the basement to create another dwelling unit in the single-unit residential building on the property. This conversion will make the building a two-unit dwelling and thus requires rezoning the property to R2. The applicant plans to use both dwelling units for rental.

The Planning Advisory Committee made the following recommendation for Council to give a First Reading about the application for further discussion and actions:

**THAT**

Council give First Reading to amend the LUB for rezoning 106 Orchard Street (PID 55237994) from Residential Single Unit (R1) to Residential Two Unit (R2).

**Draft Motion of Council**

That Council give First Reading to amend the Land Use Bylaw for rezoning 106 Orchard Street (PID55237994) from Residential Single Unit (R1) to Residential Two Unit (R2) and forward the application to a Public Hearing.

# REQUEST FOR DECISION

## RFD007-2025: Approval of Accessibility Plan



---

**To:** Town Council  
**From:** Recreation Coordinator and Active Living Coordinator  
**Date:** March 11, 2025  
**Subject:** Approval of Accessibility Plan

### **References/Attachments**

- Accessibility Plan

### **Legislation**

[Act Respecting Accessibility in Nova Scotia \(2017 c.2 s.39\)](#)

[Dismantling Racism and Hate Act \(2022 c.3 s.9\)](#)

### **Recommendation**

That Council approve and support the Accessibility Plan as presented, for the years 2025-2028.

### **Background**

The Town of Berwick's first Accessibility Plan was adopted by Council in 2022, aligning with provincial requirements to create a more accessible and inclusive community. Under provincial legislation, accessibility plans must be reviewed and updated every three years to ensure they remain relevant and responsive to municipalities.

The updated Accessibility Plan has been shaped by community feedback and reflects new legislative requirements, including the mandate for municipal governments to develop anti-racism and anti-hate initiatives. To create a comprehensive and effective approach, this plan integrates both accessibility and anti-racism considerations into a single, cohesive document.

The updated Accessibility Plan has been peer-reviewed, reviewed by the Accessibility Advisory Committee, and received feedback from the Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia (AMANS) and the Province of Nova Scotia. The plan was presented to Council via Committee of the Whole on February 25, 2025, ensuring transparency and the opportunity for discussion before seeking final approval. The attached plan reflects this review and feedback process.

### **Financial Implications**

The action items and workplan outlined in the Accessibility Plan do have financial implications; however, these costs have been accounted for in this year's and previous years' budgets. As a result, there are no new expenditures associated with the approval of this plan. Staff will continue to seek grant opportunities to help offset costs and support implementation.

**REQUEST FOR DECISION**  
**RFD007-2025: Approval of**  
**Accessibility Plan**



---

**Priority Alignment**

<b>Check Applicable</b>	<b>Strategic Priority Area</b>	<b>Comments</b>
X	Economic	
X	Environmental	
X	Social	
X	Cultural	

**Alternatives**

Council may propose amendments to the plan as presented

**Community Engagement/Communication**

Once approved by Council, the plan will be made publicly available on our website.

**CAO Comments**

I support staff's recommendation.

CAO Initials:   JB  

Target Decision Date:   March 11, 2025

# Statements of Provincial Interest (SPI) Housing and Infrastructure

CHRISTINA LOVITT, PROVINCIAL DIRECTOR OF PLANNING

SAIRA SMITH, SENIOR PLANNER

PAUL BEESLEY, SENIOR POLICY ANALYST

# Agenda

- Introductions
- SPI Overview
  - Housing Jurisdiction Scan – Other P/Ts and municipal level
  - Infrastructure – Other P/Ts and Municipal
- Potential Consideration Housing and Infrastructure SPIs
- Online Survey Walk Through

# Planning for the Public Good



- Five SPIs (1999) define provincial interests. Sixth developed in 2013 to support Nova Centre:
  - Drinking Water, Flood Risk Areas, Infrastructure, Agricultural Land, Housing
- SPIs work together, no one SPI takes precedence.
- Provincial activities shall be reasonably consistent.
- Purpose is to protect the common public interest; not to restrict or regulate development.

# Planning for the Public Good

- SPI are one tool to address issues and express the province's interest in development. Other examples are
  - legislation
  - guidelines
  - investment
  - taxation policy
  - programs
- The MGA provides for the adoption of additional SPIs in the future, should the province believe doing so to be in the public's best interest.
- Minimum Planning Requirements ensure that the SPI are applied across the entire province.





# Housing

## Goal

To provide housing opportunities for all Nova Scotians.

## Basis

Adequate shelter is a fundamental requirement

## Application

All communities.

## Provisions

Planning documents must address affordable housing, special-needs housing and rental accommodations by identifying needs and including solutions to address needs.

A range of housing types can be encouraged by allowing higher densities, smaller lot sizes and reducing yard requirements.

Group homes (small option homes) that appear like a dwelling need to be permitted in all areas that allow dwellings.

Manufactured homes must be permitted.



# Infrastructure

## Goal

To efficiently use municipal water supply and wastewater.

## Basis

Encourage development in serviced areas to avoid costly infrastructure expansions and make the most of existing systems.

## Application

All communities.

## Provisions

Planning documents must promote the efficient use of existing infrastructure and reduce the need for new services in unserved areas.

Enable infill development on vacant lots, consider higher densities in serviced areas, permit expansion of services in locations that are most cost efficient.

Identify known problems related to existing infrastructure and plan to address those issues.

Enable alternative wastewater disposal systems when problems arise. Discourage installing municipal water systems without municipal wastewater disposal.

**What aspects of the current SPIs do you think work well for your municipality?**

**If you could change one thing in either the housing or infrastructure SPI, what would you change?**

# Jurisdiction Scan

# SPI Jurisdiction Scan Housing

## Saskatchewan

- **Identify existing and future residential needs** of the community along the entire housing continuum
- “housing continuum” means the range of types of housing in a community and includes shelters, supportive or transitional housing, cooperative housing, rental properties and various other properties regardless of ownership or market characteristics.

## Ontario

- Must **meet projected requirements of current and future residents** by having land available for 15 years of growth and 3 years of servicing capacity

# SPI Jurisdiction Scan Housing

## Quebec

- Regional Municipalities must do a housing needs assessment (6 months) and **set targets** (3 years) by type of residential unit.

## New Brunswick

- Requires policies that promote a range of housing options such as size, type, density and design throughout communities and support the provision of **affordable housing**

## British Columbia

- Does not have an SPI but has a Housing Supply Act and Regulations, which enables the Provincial government to set community growth targets.

# Municipal Scan

## City of Hamilton

Table B.3.2.2 – Housing Targets – Rental (OPA,167)

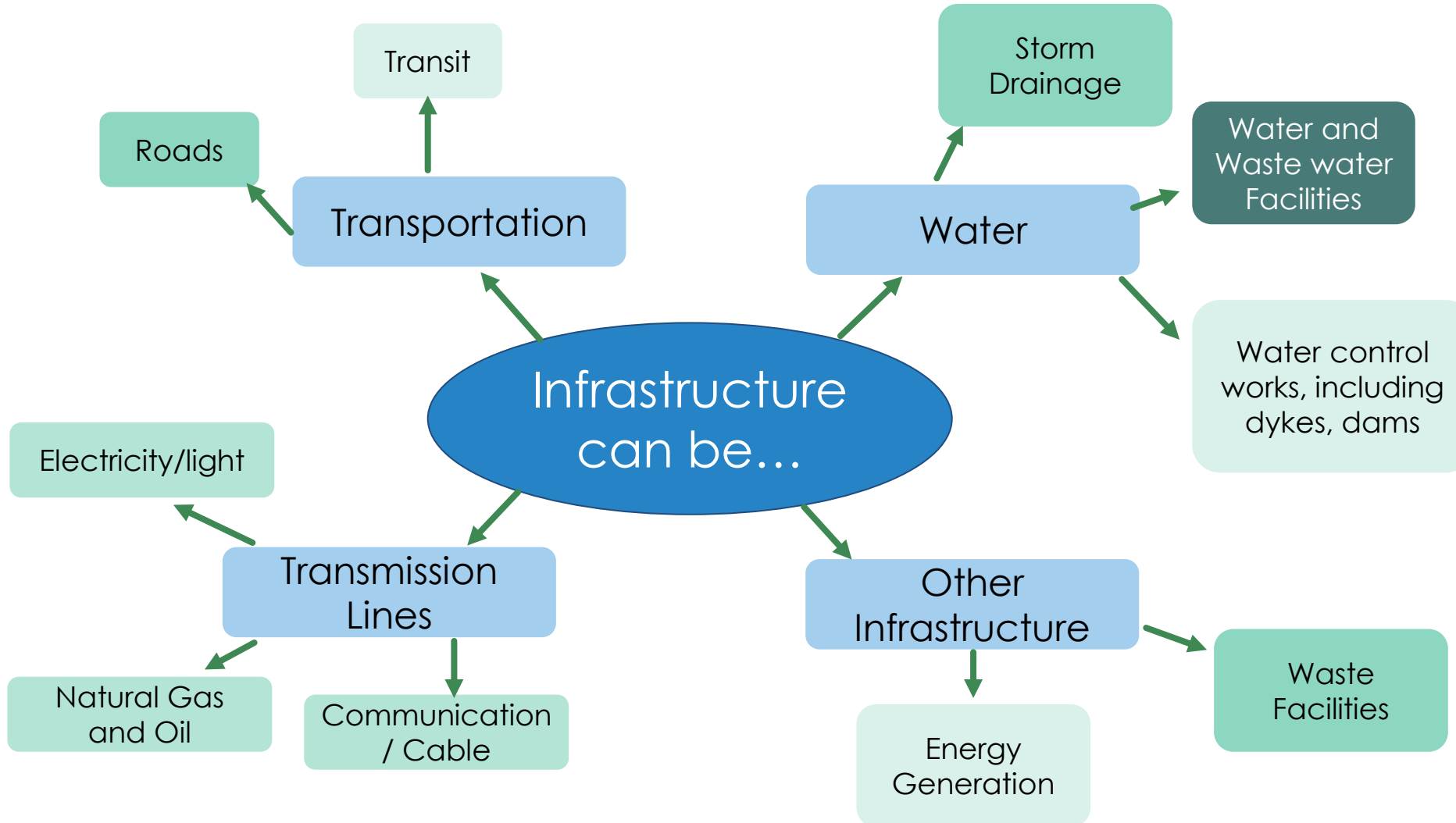
Target Type	Target # of Units Annually	% of Total Annual Target by Tenure	Product to Achieve Target	Methods to Achieve Target
New Rental Housing (market rate )	396	40%	New rental housing, both primary and secondary market (rented condos, second dwelling units)	Primary rental housing development, conversion to rental residential, secondary rental market (rented condos, second dwelling units)
New Rental Housing Affordable to Moderate Income Households (includes housing with supports)	198	20%	New rental housing, both primary and secondary market (rented condos, second dwelling units) between average market rent and 20% below average market rent	Same as above but requires capital assistance program (e.g. COAHP) and/or other assistance to lower development cost, as well as support services
New Rental Housing Affordable to Low Income Households (includes housing with supports)	396	40%	New primary rental housing, more than 20% below average market rent	Same as above but requires rent-geared-to-income housing assistance (e.g. rent supplement, housing allowance), as well as support services
Total New Rental	990	100%		

# SPI Jurisdiction Scan Infrastructure

Infrastructure SPI common themes:

- Consider the cumulative effects of development and growth on local and regional public works capacity
- Consider the true costs of development and infrastructure; complete a cost-benefit analysis and/or infrastructure plan in conjunction with adoption of a new or amendment to an existing municipal planning strategy.
- Ensure that development is compatible with existing and planned transportation infrastructure
- Incorporate climate change, hazard/emergency planning when considering the location of subdivisions, transportation infrastructure and public works

# SPI Jurisdiction Scan Infrastructure



Number of Jurisdictions that consider this infrastructure/ public works

1

2

3

4

# Municipal Jurisdiction Scan Infrastructure

## City of Charlottetown, PEI

- Identify infrastructure projects directly in their MPS

## Town of Stephenville, NFL

- Bring provincial documents/guides related to infrastructure to the municipal level through the MPS

## City of Kelowna, BC

- Develop infrastructure charges based on population and development projections found within their MPS

## City of Ottawa, ON

- Develop an infrastructure plan that uses projections to anticipated need and identify specific infrastructure projects

# Potential Considerations Housing SPI

# Decision Framework

To answer the question could an Statement of Provincial Interest help achieve our outcome?

## Provincial Priorities

- Is it a province-wide consideration?
- Is it a government priority?

## Municipal Jurisdiction

- Does existing legislation, regulation, or policy allow for municipalities to influence outcomes related to it?

## Public Good

- Will regulating it protect future generations from reduced opportunities or increased hardship?

## Relation to Land Use

- Is it a physical subject that can be linked to a specific location?



# Housing SPI Modernization

17

- The current SPI refers to addressing affordable housing, special-needs housing and rental accommodations by identifying needs and including solutions to address needs.
- The statement leaves it open to municipalities to define affordable and special needs
- Municipalities often struggle to define special needs housing, as data is limited; various equity groups are often not represented in long-range planning
- There is a need to modernize the language and clarify terms:
  - group homes are now referred to as small option homes
  - special-needs is not considered an appropriate term
  - manufactured housing has become a wide range of options
- Guidance materials will be developed to provide more information on how to implement these changes



# Addressing Housing Needs

## Approach 1 - Planning for general needs

Small changes to the existing SPI similar to the Saskatchewan statement, where all needs on the spectrum need to be identified

General direction can be given on how this can be shown and what actions could be taken

Leaves flexibility for municipalities to determine how to implement it but could be difficult to apply consistently

Example: Identify and address housing needs for all current and projected future residents of the Municipality on the housing spectrum.

## Approach 2 - Specific expectations to address needs

Setting specific goals, timelines, expectations similar to the Ontario approach

Consistent data would need to be available

Would not leave a lot of flexibility for municipalities.

Example: All municipalities must ensure they can demonstrate enough land is appropriately zoned to address the current housing shortage within five (5) years and the projected housing shortage within 10 years, as shown in the housing needs assessments.



# Housing Targets

- Targets can be used to measure if a policy has been successful
- Policy is one tool to achieve targets, funding and education can also help
- Many factors outside of the Municipality's control can impact if a target is reached particularly for special-needs and affordable housing where partnerships are involved
- Targets for certain kinds of units
  - Halton Regional Plan (ON) 65% of new housing units be townhouses or multi-storey buildings annually up to 2031, increased to 75% after 2031
  - Guelph Official Plan (ON) 30% of residential development affordable housing
    - 25% affordable ownership units
    - 1% affordable primary rental units
    - 4% affordable purpose-built secondary rental units (secondary suites)

Out of the potential considerations presented,  
which are you the most excited about?  
which do you have concerns about?

## Potential Considerations



Modernizing the housing SPI



Addressing housing needs



Housing Targets

# Potential Considerations Infrastructure SPI



# What is Infrastructure?

Open the definition of infrastructure:

- Transportation infrastructure such as roads, active transportation, electric vehicle charging could be included
- Many municipalities are already considering stormwater and requiring drainage plans as this is enabled in the MGA. Could this be strengthened by including stormwater in the statement and encouraging natural management techniques?



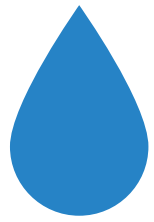
# Alternative Disposal Systems

Current SPI: *Where on-site disposal systems are **experiencing problems**, alternatives to the provision of conventional wastewater disposal systems should be considered. These include the replacement or repair of malfunctioning on-site systems, the use of cluster systems and establishing wastewater management districts.*

Ontario Provincial Policy:

Municipal sewage services and municipal water services are the preferred options which include both centralized servicing systems and decentralized servicing systems.

Frontenac County, Ontario: approved MPS policies in 2023 which would require each MPS in the county to identify areas where communal services would be required. They have created a utility, Municipal Service Corporation, to operate the systems.



# Groundwater Assessment

Some municipalities are considering groundwater assessments.

A Level 1 assessment for development of smaller areas/lots with likely low risk of issues. Would roughly cost up to \$10K, depending on site specifics.

A Level 2 assessment is for development in areas with identified higher risk of water problems (identified from Level 1) and more than 25 lots. It roughly costs anywhere between \$50-100K.



# Infrastructure plans

- What could a plan do?
  - determine the financial resources (costs)
  - capacity
  - identify specific infrastructure projects
  - Provide opportunities for equity groups to be involved in identifying needs

**Do you have infrastructure plans for your municipality?**



Population projections, areas of anticipated growth, and climate change considerations identified in the MPS, and other municipal plans, would inform this work.



Growth projections may need to be extended past the MPS timeline as infrastructure investments are intended for longer than a typical plan horizon.



Municipalities can work cooperatively with adjacent municipalities to identify projects for shared services.



# Conflict Resolution

- Intermunicipal solutions is included in the SPI but could there be conflicts over share systems?
  - There are examples of these issues occurring in other municipalities, most recently two municipalities in Ontario are currently in a lawsuit over allowing sewer and water connections along a commercial corridor as the previous agreement expired in 2019 (Township of Adelaide Metcalfe and Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc)
  - BC has legislation that includes several specific options to address conflicts
  - Alberta, Saskatchewan, and New Brunswick either encourage or require inter-municipal agreements/plans which if adopted require municipalities to determine a conflict resolution strategy
  - Alberta offers \$15,000 cost-share grants for mediation, a Municipal Collaboration Advisor at Municipal Affairs, and a list of mediators for municipalities

Out of the potential considerations presented,

which are you the most excited about?  
which do you have concerns about?

Potential Considerations



Expanding  
Infrastructure



Alternative  
Disposal Systems



Ground Water  
Assessments



Infrastructure  
Plans



Conflict  
Resolution

### Question 3 - Housing

3. How important do you think the following are **for** modernizing the SPI?

	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
Group homes changed to small option homes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing more direction on what manufactured housing includes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Removing special-needs and creating a more inclusive approach for housing needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Question 4 - Housing

4. Do you have a suggestion on how the housing SPI could be modernized?

### Question 5 - Housing

5. Which approach to housing needs do you prefer?

-- None --

-- None --

Approach 1: Planning for general needs, referring to the housing spectrum and ensuring different types of housing are permitted

Approach 2: Specific expectations to address needs such as demonstrating enough land and infrastructure is available within a certain timeline

Neither

A combination of both

### Question 6 - Housing

6. Please elaborate on why you picked the option you chose for question 5.

### Question 7 - Housing

7. Do you think municipal housing targets would be an effective tool for achieving housing needs for the communities you work with?

-- None --

-- None --

Yes, they would be an effective tool

No, they would not be effective

Unsure

Back

Next

### Question 8 - Housing

8. Please elaborate on why you picked the option you chose for question 7.

### Question 9 - Housing

9. Are you aware of the Fire Smart program and wildfire assessments for residential developments?

-- None --

-- None --

No, I do not know what these are

Limited knowledge of these programs/initiatives

I know about these programs/initiatives

**Question 10 - Housing**

10. Has your municipality considered incorporating elements of the Fire Smart program/ or other measures to reduce wildfire risk to housing (such as vegetation management, subdivision layout, and fire-resistant building materials) into your land use planning requirements?

-- None --  
-- None --  
We have added some requirements in our land use planning and/or subdivision requirements  
We are currently considered it/are researching the topic  
We have considered it but have not made changes to planning or subdivision documents  
The topic has not been raised for review

Back Next

**Question 11 - Infrastructure**

11. Do you think it would be beneficial to expand the infrastructure statement to include transportation and stormwater?

-- None --  
-- None --  
Yes, it would be beneficial to include both  
I think it would be beneficial to add only transportation  
I think it would be beneficial to add only stormwater  
No, it would not be beneficial to add either  
Unsure

Back Next

**Question 12 - Infrastructure**

12. Please elaborate on why you picked the option you chose for question 9.

**Question 13 - Infrastructure**

13. Would you like to see municipal alternative waste disposal systems supported in the SPI to develop in unserved areas?

-- None --  
-- None --  
Yes  
No  
Unsure

Back Next

**Question 14 - Infrastructure**

14. Have you considered adopting the provincial groundwater assessment guidelines in your municipality?

-- None --

15. If you have not adopted the provincial groundwater assessment guidelines in your municipality, why not?

-- None --  
Yes, we have considered it and adopted them  
Yes, we have considered it but decided not to adopt them  
No, we have not considered it, but I am aware of them  
I was not aware we had a groundwater assessment guideline

**Question 15 - Infrastructure**

16. In your last land use planning/study was infrastructure planning included?

-- None --

17. If yes, **what services** were included in your infrastructure plan?

- Potable Water
- Wastewater
- Stormwater
- Transportation
- Transit
- Parks and Recreation
- Facilities
- Other, please specify

18. If yes, which of the following informed your infrastructure plan?

- Municipal Planning Strategy
- Master Plan(s)
- Servicing Plan(s)
- Asset Management Plan(s)
- Climate Change Action Plan
- Growth Management Plan/Strategy
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Other, please specify

**Question 16 - Infrastructure**

19. What infrastructure information do you wish you had when doing land use plan/study? (select all that apply)

- Current capacity of your systems
- The financial costs to enable growth
- Infrastructure projects that are needed to accommodate growth
- Other, please specify

**Question 17 - Infrastructure**

20. Would you like to see guidance or requirements in the SPI to address potential conflict with shared services?

-- None --

-- None --

Yes, guidance would be helpful

Yes, requirements would be helpful

No, I do not think guidance or requirements would be helpful

Unsure, if guidance or requirements would be helpful

Back

Next

**Question 18 - General Questions**

21. How do you think accessibility could be incorporated into land use planning, particularly related to housing and infrastructure?

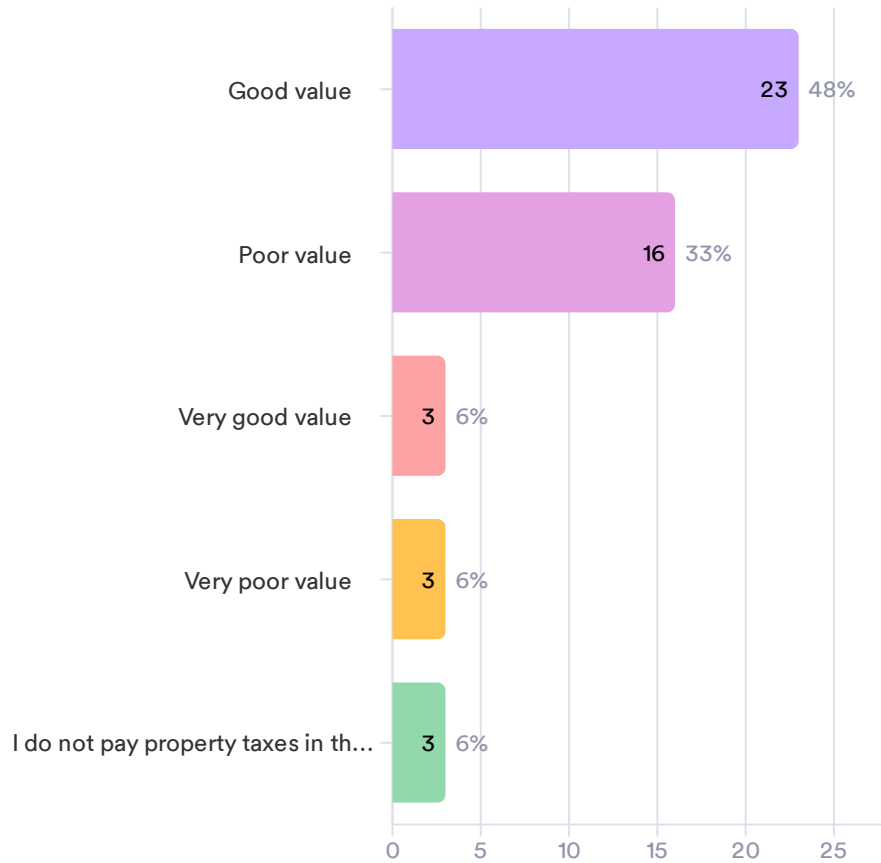
22. Do you have any additional comments/suggestions for either the housing or infrastructure SPIs?

# Budget Survey Results

Summary of Responses

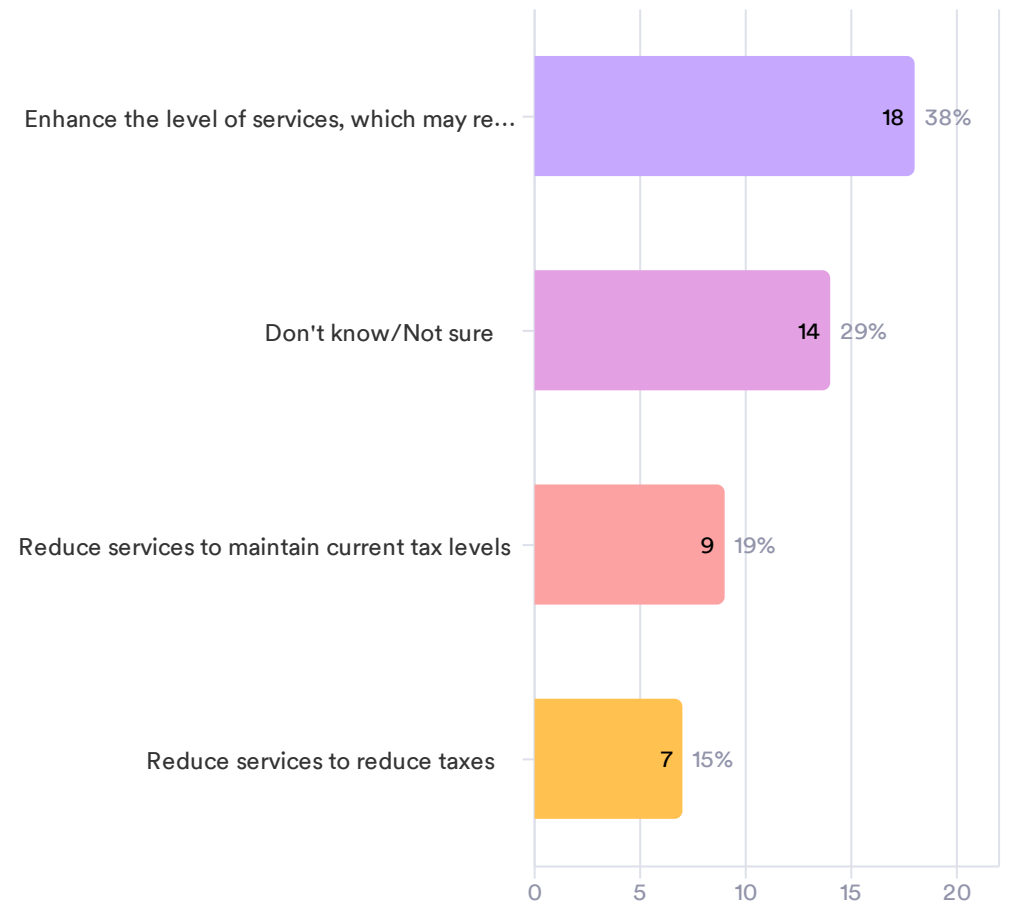
Overall, how would you rate the value you receive for the property tax you pay?

48 Responses



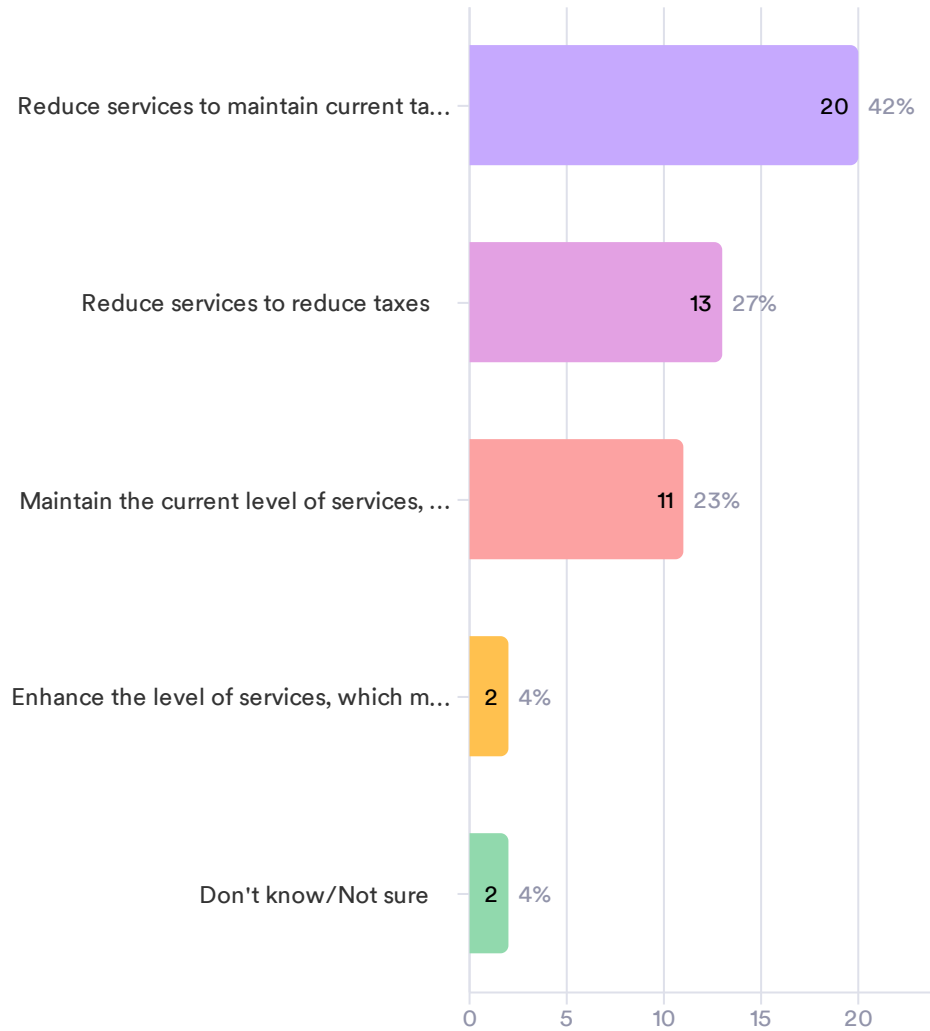
Public Works

48 Responses



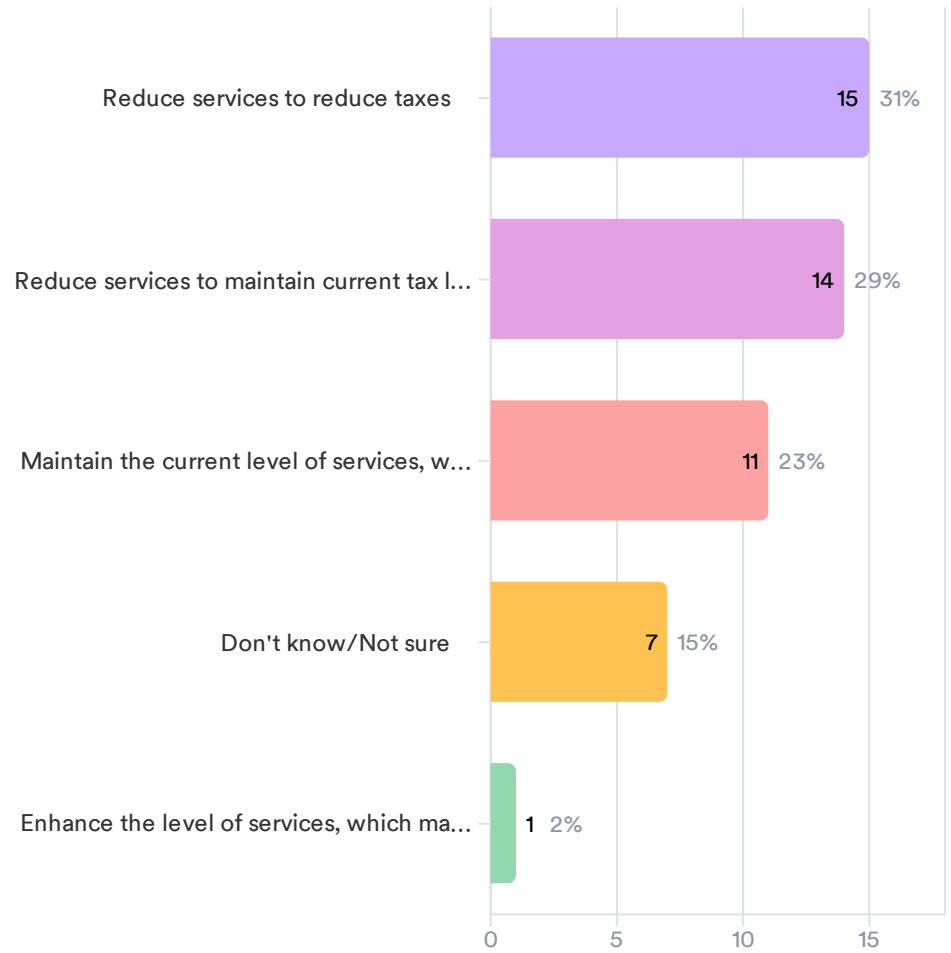
## Community Development & Recreation

48 Responses



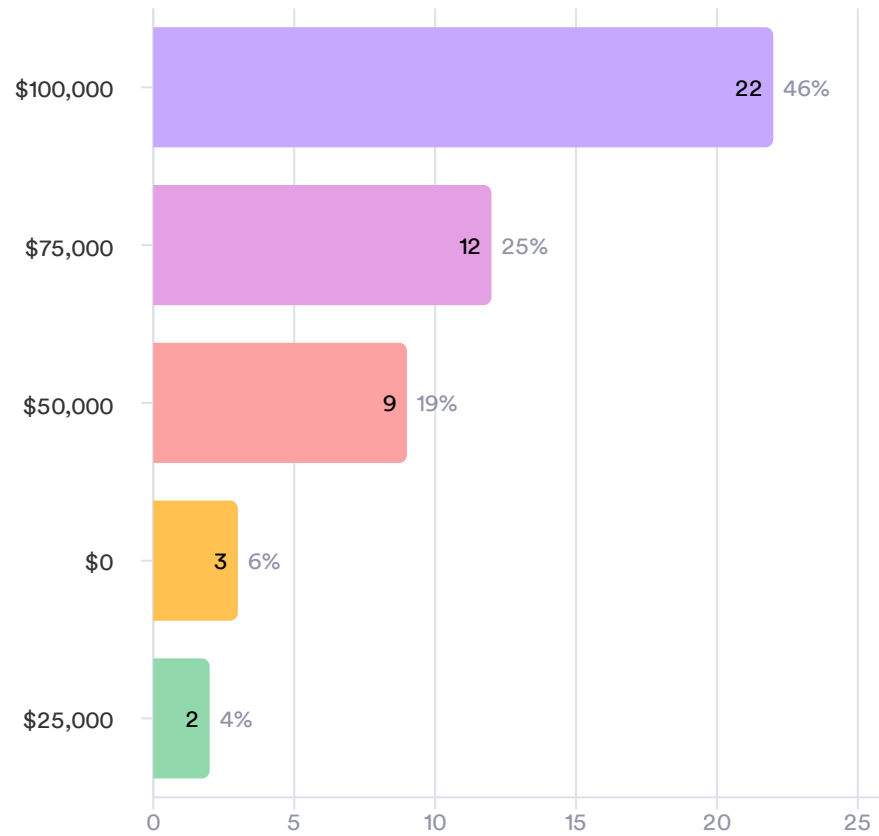
## General Government & Administration

48 Responses



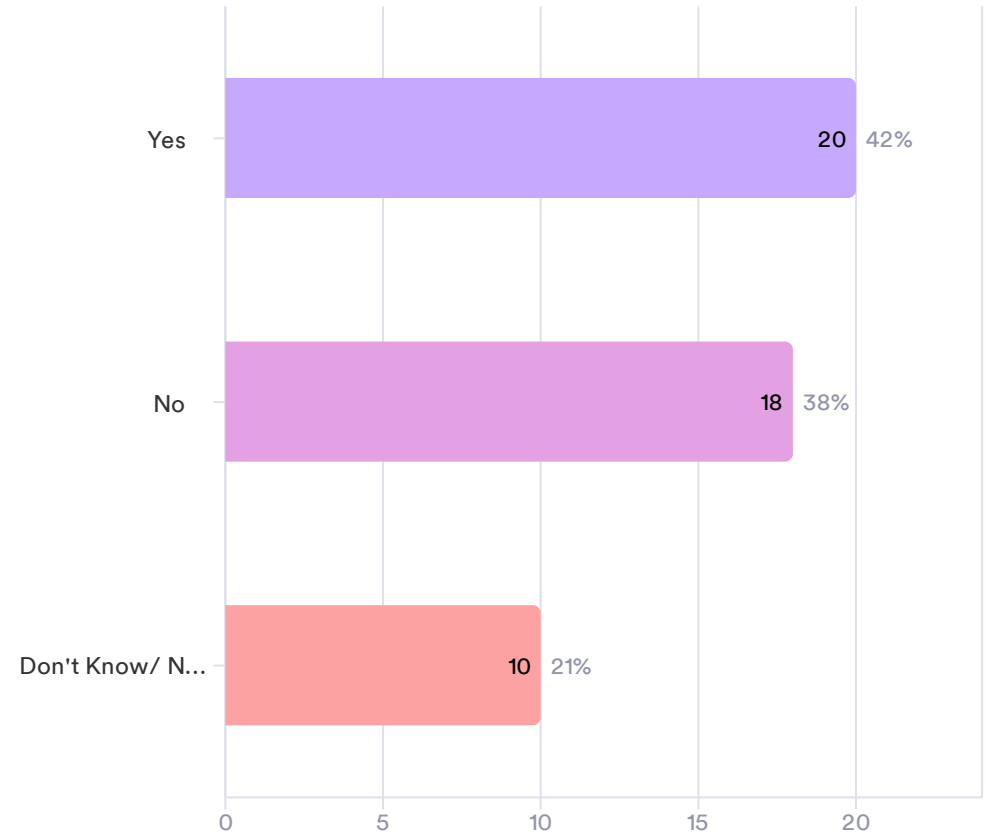
Paying for future capital infrastructure such as roads and sewer needs requires money in reserves to help pay for these projects.

48 Responses



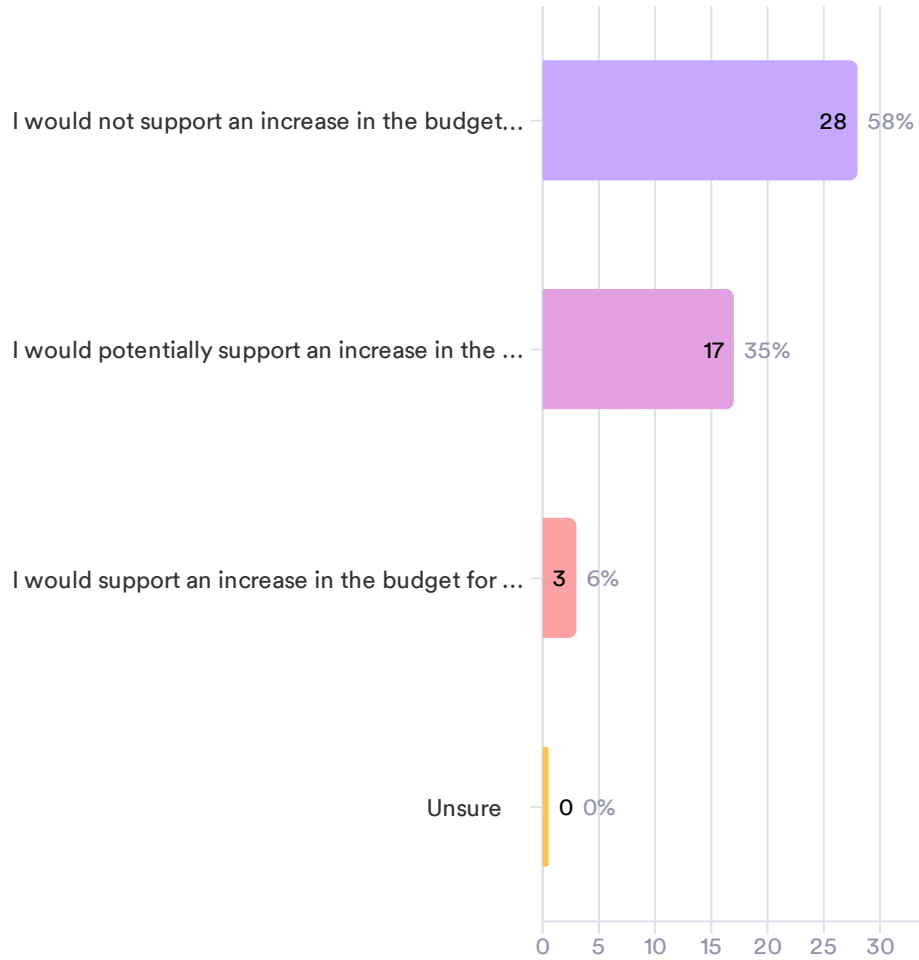
Would you support a tax increase if the new revenue was directed to reserves to pay for future capital infrastructure such as roads, sidewalks and sewer?

48 Responses



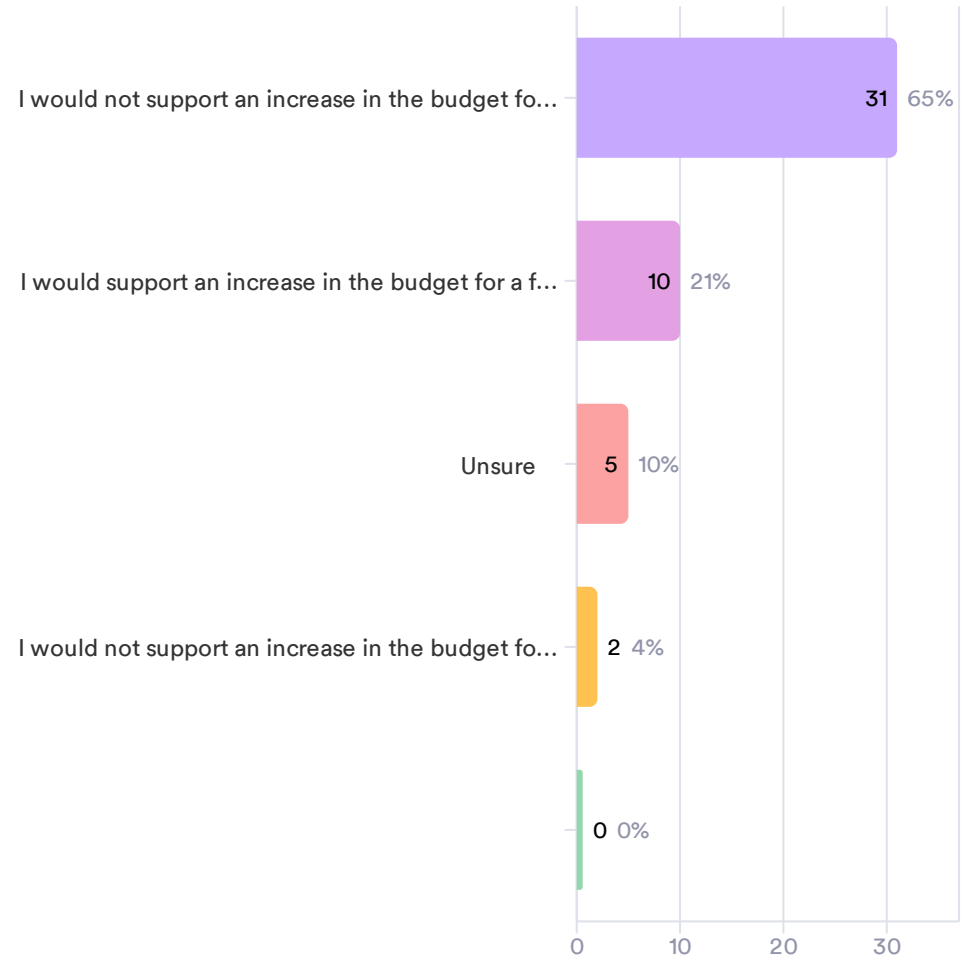
## Bylaw and Bylaw Enforcement

48 Responses



## Parks and Outdoor Spaces

48 Responses



## Services in order of preference

48 responses

1	Sewer and wastewater
2	Roads and sidewalks
3	Stormwater management
4	Fire & police services
5	Economic Development
6	Planning & Development
7	Parks & outdoor spaces
8	Building a green and sustainable community
9	Recreation and programming
10	By-law/bylaw enforcement
11	Diversity, equity & inclusion

# Summary of Comments

48 responses

## Public Works

- Sewer & Stormwater management is an essential service that needs to be maintained
- Sidewalks & Roads – haven't been maintained for several years and are vital for all visitors and residents. More paving, less patching
- Quality of services and overall beauty and accessibility is slowly crumbling
- Public works department is an invaluable resource but seems disproportionate to the size of the municipality.
- A number of tasks and services that are "nice to have" but Berwick could do without (ie leaf pickup)
- Be smarter with resources & unnecessary spending
- Taxes are too high, too much administration
- Property assessment services to review their process – may lead to a more fair and equitable system
- Happy with the public works department

## Community Development

- More transparency on where the money is being spent
- Berwick Fitness Centre is a luxury being subsidized by residents for the benefit of a few
- Donation box at playground and special events to offset costs
- Engage volunteers to accomplish community development & recreation goals
- More marketing to encourage new businesses
- Cut back on Special/social events
- Recreation is an integral part of living in Berwick

## General Government

- More transparency
- Limit attendance at conferences to reduce costs
- Reduce the office hours to the public
- Better marketing of the Town to increase business
- Better planning and researching for future success
- Too many town employees
- 50% reduction in the yearly stipend provided to the mayor and town councilors

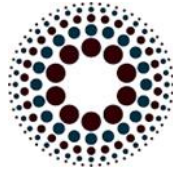
### **Additional Comments**

- Taxes are too high
- Alternative transportation
- Missed opportunity for not implementing a municipal water system
- Bylaw enforcement brings an unwelcome and unnecessary level of scrutiny
- Review of the CAP program
- An increase of 5% above last year's inflation rate won't fly very high in this town.
- The tax burden is not distributed evenly or fairly - a 2-tiered system
- Not benefiting from the solar panels as much as predicted
- Quality of services is great, however, taxes are too high
- Amalgamation with other town and county services needs to be considered.
- Voyent alert is a good tool to communicate effectively, and it is not being used well
- Would only support tax increases to enhance the infrastructure and safety of the town.

# Feedback from Public Information Meeting

## February 27, 2025

TOPIC	INPUT/CONCERN
Transportation	Use community expertise for studies
Solar Garden	Public "access" to solar generation
RCMP	High budget No visibility Cost comparison to other police services/service level Response time Ensure RCMP have finger on the pulse Copy of service agreement with RCMP and Province
Budget/Tax Rate	When was the last time taxes were increased How much is a healthy reserve fund Zero increase equals zero sense Assumptions made in budget - market increasing for beyond CPI 2%
Education	No control
Bylaw	No added FTE Organizational chart on website
Adminstration	Paper pushers An increase in staffing levels?
VCFN	Is there a revenue opportunity? Status quo system for while
Fitness Centre	Concern over deficit year after year
Comms	Hard to find information Do not over use text alert



NOVA SCOTIA  
FEDERATION OF  
MUNICIPALITIES

---

1809 Barrington Street Suite #1304 Halifax NS B3J 3K8 Tel: (902) 423-8331 E-mail: [info@nsfm.ca](mailto:info@nsfm.ca)

---

**Delivered via email**

March 4, 2025

**RE: Pending Legislation**

Dear Members,

I am writing to thank you for your participation in our Mayors, Wardens, & CAOs meeting, held on February 26. Your engagement during the meeting has helped shape our messaging and advocacy efforts as we continue to engage with the Province on Bills introduced in this sitting of the legislature, in particular, Bill 24, *Temporary Access to Land Act and Joint Regional Transportation Agency Act (amended)*.

Since our member meeting, NSFM has remained very active bringing your concerns directly to the Province. CEO, Juanita Spencer, and I have had several productive meetings with provincial officials, including Minister Lohr and Minister Tilley. We remain optimistic that our message has been heard and are hopeful that changes will be made to the legislation as presented. As we learn more, and are able to share, we will send updates to our members.

I also want to thank those of you who have forwarded letters of support for NSFM's work and invite others to forward us your support in writing, if possible. It is critical that we demonstrate a strong, united municipal voice as we advocate for change to this legislation.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at [info@nsfm.ca](mailto:info@nsfm.ca).

Sincerely,

Pam Mood  
President  
Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities



February 19, 2025

The Honorable Tim Houston,  
Premier of Nova Scotia  
7th Floor, One Government Place  
1700 Granville Street  
Halifax, NS B3J 1X5

[premier@novascotia.ca](mailto:premier@novascotia.ca)

**RE: Repealing the Uranium Exploration and Mining Prohibition Act and amendments to permit hydraulic fracturing of natural gas in Nova Scotia**

Dear Premier Houston,

We are writing on behalf of the Nova Scotia committee of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE) to express our deep concerns regarding your plans to remove bans on hydraulic fracturing (fracking) for natural gas and uranium mining exploration and research. As physicians and healthcare providers, we feel it is our duty to bring to your attention the latest medical evidence of the health harms associated with these extractive industries.

CAPE is a non-partisan, physician-led organization with over 36,000 supporters across the country. It plays a unique role at the intersection of health and the environment, bringing a credible, evidence-based perspective delivered by the trusted voices of doctors, other health professionals, and researchers to support community and planetary health and enhance equity. CAPE Nova Scotia represents more than 100 physicians and other healthcare providers across the province.

We understand the economic challenges facing Nova Scotia, including US tariffs and uncertainty around federal funding. We are also acutely aware of the high rates of poverty in our province and how this profoundly affects the communities we serve. However, we strongly believe that pursuing resource extraction activities that contribute to significant health and environmental harms is not the solution to these challenges.

The medical evidence on the health impacts of unconventional oil and gas development, including fracking, is clear and growing. Recent studies have found strong correlations between proximity to fracking sites and:

- Increased rates of preterm births, low birth weight, and congenital defects



- Higher incidences of childhood asthma and leukemia
- Increased hospitalizations for cardiovascular and respiratory diseases
- Higher overall mortality rates and reduced life expectancy

For example, a 2022 study in *Environmental Health Perspectives* found that children living near fracking sites had 2-3 times higher odds of developing acute lymphoblastic leukemia. Another study in *JAMA Pediatrics* showed significantly increased risks of spontaneous preterm birth and low birth weight for pregnancies within 10 km of fracking wells.

Many of the chemicals used in fracking are known carcinogens, endocrine disruptors, or have other toxic effects. Groundwater contamination from fracking chemicals can persist for decades, impacting drinking water supplies and soils, and, in turn, adversely affecting human health.

Uranium mining poses its own set of health hazards, related to radiation exposure from radioactive materials released into air and water, and elevated levels of toxic metals. Historical evidence from uranium mining regions shows dramatically increased rates of lung cancer and other respiratory diseases among miners and nearby residents. While modern safety practices have improved, workers and those living in nearby communities face increased health risks from radon gas, radioactive dust, and potential water contamination.

The long-term environmental impacts of uranium mining is equally concerning. It leaves a toxic legacy of radioactive waste with a half-life of tens of thousands of years. Eighty-five percent of the radioactivity in the uranium ore is left behind as tailings, including many radioactive poisons – such as radium, polonium, and radioactive lead-210 – that are far more toxic than uranium itself. These uranium mining and milling wastes will constitute an everlasting health hazard and will have to be monitored and managed in perpetuity at public expense. The Church Rock uranium tailings spill in New Mexico, which released 94 million gallons of such radioactive waste, remains largely unremediated more than 40 years later. A power outage at a uranium mine in Elliot Lake, Ontario, resulted in the spill of two million litres of contaminated water from a tailings site.

We are also deeply concerned about plans to expand fossil fuel extraction and consumption in the province, at a time when we urgently need to transition away from fossil fuels. Building pipelines and other new fossil fuel infrastructure would only exacerbate the root cause of the severe flooding, monster wildfires, and heatwaves we are experiencing in Nova Scotia. The medical journal *The Lancet* has identified climate change as the greatest global health threat of the 21st century. As healthcare providers, we are already seeing the health effects of climate change in our communities.

The health impacts of fracking, uranium mining—and more broadly, climate change—disproportionately affect Indigenous and African Nova Scotian communities and vulnerable populations, including children, pregnant women, the elderly, disabled people, and



people with pre-existing conditions or biological susceptibilities. Rural and low-income communities also often bear a heavy burden of environmental contamination and health effects. These factors position this as a matter of social, racial, economic and environmental justice. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the UN declaration on the right to a healthy environment, and Canada's *National Strategy Respecting Environmental Racism and Environmental Justice Act* should guide decision-making.

We recognize the need for economic development and healthcare funding. However, the boom-and-bust cycle of fossil fuel resource extraction and uranium mining offers only short-term gains at the expense of long-term public health and environmental costs. Instead, we encourage focusing on sustainable industries like clean renewable energy projects, which create more jobs per dollar invested than fossil fuels, while protecting our air, water, and climate. Such projects will need to be undertaken with community consultation and support, and at a scale that does not harm the local environment.

Nova Scotia has some of the most ambitious climate targets in North America. Expanding fossil fuel infrastructure would be a major step backwards and incompatible with our climate goals. Moreover, repealing laws that protect against the development of fracking and uranium mining would undermine the province's commitment to improve health care for all Nova Scotians.

Therefore, we respectfully call on your government to:

1. Maintain and strengthen existing restrictions on fracking, uranium mining, and other high-risk resource extraction activities
2. Invest in community-supported clean renewable energy and green infrastructure as a path to sustainable economic growth
3. Require comprehensive health impact assessments for any proposed resource extraction projects
4. Prioritize protection of drinking water sources and ecologically sensitive areas
5. Respect UNDRIP; engage in meaningful consultation with Mi'kmaw communities and ensure there is free, prior, and informed consent for any activities impacting Mi'kmaw territory.
6. Engage in meaningful consultation with rural communities, and work collaboratively with them to find shared solutions.
7. Respect the UN Declaration on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment

We recognize the immense challenges you face as Premier during these difficult times. The pressures of US tariffs, healthcare funding gaps, and the need to ensure prosperity for all Nova Scotians are significant burdens to bear. However, we must be careful not to trade one crisis for another. The health of our communities and the natural environment that sustains us are



essential foundations for any lasting economic solution. By maintaining our commitment to environmental protection while pursuing sustainable economic development, Nova Scotia can lead the way on innovative solutions that preserve the health, environmental, and economic legacy we wish to leave for future generations.

Sincerely,

Laurette Geldenhuys, MBBCH FFPATH MMED FRCPC MAEd  
on behalf of CAPE Nova Scotia

c.c. Claudia Chender, Leader of the Opposition  
Derek Mombourquette, Leader of the Liberal Party



March 3, 2025

**Submission by Dr. Nancy Covington** to the Standing Committee on Public Bills concerning Bill 6: An Act Respecting Agriculture, Energy and Natural Resources

Good morning, honourable members of the Legislature. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I am Dr. Nancy Covington, a retired family physician, a grandmother, and a member of the Nova Scotia committee of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE NS).

I was involved in the work that led to Nova Scotia's 2009 ban on uranium mining and exploration. This ban grew out of the long-standing moratorium, and was the result of extensive research and public engagement. In the end, it garnered support from all political parties, the medical society, and many citizen groups.

Shortly after this, mining companies started exploring for uranium near Sept-Îles in Quebec. When petitions to halt the exploration were ignored, 23 doctors in the community publicly announced that they were prepared to resign en masse and leave town if the project moved forward. They stated that the threat to their water supply posed too much risk to their families and communities. With 23 doctors representing a third of the area's total physicians, their stance had significant weight. As a result, in 2013, Quebec imposed a moratorium on uranium mining, becoming the third province to take this step, following British Columbia and Nova Scotia.

It's disheartening that today, Nova Scotia's ban on uranium mining is being challenged. However, I welcome the opportunity to refresh our thinking on this critical issue.

Even the act of exploring for uranium with boreholes can release radon. Radon is a radioactive gas arising from uranium underground. Radon has a half life of 3.8 days. As it decays, it emits radioactive particles which, if inhaled or ingested, can damage our DNA and other cellular components, potentially leading to cancer. Radon and its eight decay products are all classified as carcinogens.

The decay chain continues with each new radioactive product, having the potential to attach itself by electrostatic charge to dust particles. These can get blown around, washed away into ponds or wells, or settle on vegetation and crops. Of interest, one of the elements in this decay chain is Polonium 210, which was the substance slipped into a teacup that killed Litvinenko by radiation poisoning in 2006. (Litvinenko was a double agent spy in the UK). Only 10 micrograms of Polonium was needed to kill him; his body was so radioactive it had to be buried in a lead coffin.

Uranium mining is typically done through open-pit or underground methods, and occasionally by leaching. In Saskatchewan, uranium concentrations are high—up to 20%—so the mining is often carried out by robots due to the extreme danger to workers. While no leaching has been done in Saskatchewan so far, it has been used in Wyoming, where it resulted in major contamination of an aquifer. More commonly, uranium is found in lower concentrations, which requires crushing the rock to extract the ore, leaving piles of radioactively contaminated rock exposed to the weather. Tailing ponds created to contain the waste do breach, as happened in Elliot Lake.

Milling of the ore is usually done on site to reduce transportation costs. The resulting yellowcake is transported to Blind River (top of Lake Huron) for refining, and then sent to a “Conversion Facility” in Port Hope (Cameco) where it is made into uranium hexafluoride and some pellets made for Bruce Power. Every step in the process risks more scatter of the radioactive laden dust particles.

Most mining has historically taken place in remote, sparsely populated areas such as northern Saskatchewan. One study showed that lichens close to uranium mining sites are sufficiently contaminated by radioactivity that caribou that eat the lichens become contaminated, thus entering the food chain. This study calculated the additional risks of cancer for people eating different amounts of this traditional meat. Other studies show fish in the area have heavy metal concentrations. Watersheds near mines in both Saskatchewan and Ontario remain contaminated.

Saskatchewan is 12 times as large as Nova Scotia with approximately the same size population. Most Saskatchewanians live in the south and mines are in the north. Nova Scotia is the second most densely populated province in Canada with 40% of people dependent on wells. This means that a uranium mine anywhere in Nova Scotia would affect most of us – as would uranium exploration.

After the mine is closed, the tailings site with radioactive remnants and other toxic heavy metals would require monitoring for an indefinite period of time. The responsibility and cost of this care would be the province’s. Another long-term cost would be health care costs for delayed onset cancers.

Radon gas is the second leading cause of lung cancer after smoking and is why measuring radon in our basements is advised and remedial action recommended over a certain level.

Many of our buildings, including schools, have readings above this level, which is why an industry has developed in the province to help homeowners do remediation.

Uranium is used for either nuclear power or nuclear weapons. A minuscule amount ends up as radioisotopes for medical use. Most medical isotopes can be made in a cyclotron without using radioactive material. Large nuclear power plants like Bruce Power are not needed to make these tiny amounts.

The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission regulates the mining industry. Of note, permissible levels of radon in Canada – that is, what the industry is allowed to release into the environment – are twice as high as many other countries and twice as high as what the World Health Organization recommends.

Permissible levels are derived from data from survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. These levels are based on “Reference Man,” ignoring the fact that low level ionizing radiation causes disproportionate harm to women and children.

The bottom line is that even with newer mining techniques, uranium mining and exploration will negatively affect our health and the environment in much of Nova Scotia for a long time. This will further strain the health care system and increase costs.

Lastly, after uranium is used in a nuclear power plant, it’s transformed into waste that is much more radioactive than the original uranium. It’s so radioactive, in fact, that it has to be kept out of the biosphere for hundreds of thousands of years. Nobody in the world has figured out how. This toxic legacy will haunt future generations.

On behalf of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, I respectfully call upon the government to maintain Nova Scotia’s uranium mining ban.

**For our health and for the environment, leave uranium in the ground.**

**Nancy Covington, MD, BSc Physics**  
**on behalf of Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment Nova Scotia**  
[n.i.covington@icloud.com](mailto:n.i.covington@icloud.com)

Recommended resources

[https://www.pembina.org/reports/ClearingAir\\_UraniumMining.pdf](https://www.pembina.org/reports/ClearingAir_UraniumMining.pdf)

<https://www.ippnwcanada.ca/medical-isotopes>

For more information, contact:

Tynette Deveaux, Atlantic Regional Coordinator, CAPE  
[tynette@cape.ca](mailto:tynette@cape.ca), 902-719-9083



**Municipal Affairs  
Office of the Minister**

---

PO Box 216, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada B3J 2M4 • Telephone 902 424-5550 Fax 902 424-0581 • [novascotia.ca](http://novascotia.ca)

---

March 7, 2025

Dear Mayors and Wardens:

I am writing to inform you that the Minimum Planning Regulations under Section 214 of the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) and Section 229 of the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter* (HRMC) have been amended to implement a maximum setback for commercial wind turbines.

The new regulations will require that the maximum distance between a commercial wind turbine and a dwelling cannot be more than either four times the height of the turbine, or the distance needed to keep noise levels below 40 decibels outside the home and limit shadow flicker to no more than 30 minutes a day or 30 hours a year.

Additionally, the amendments stipulate that visual impact or aesthetic appearance of a wind turbine development is not a matter Council can consider prior to approval.

The Government of Nova Scotia is committed to reaching 80% renewables by 2030. These regulatory amendments will support this goal by providing consistent standards across Nova Scotia's municipalities, making it easier for wind energy projects to move forward, while also protecting residents from negative impacts from wind development projects such as noise and shadows.

You can find the updated Minimum Planning Regulations using the following links:

- *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*  
<https://novascotia.ca/just/regulations/rxaa-l.htm#hrmcmpr>
- *Municipal Government Act*  
<https://novascotia.ca/just/regulations/rxam-z.htm#mgampr>

I have also included a Question-and-Answer document that provides further information about the updated regulations.

I want to thank you for taking the time to participate in the online survey from earlier this summer. Your feedback was invaluable throughout the regulation development process.

Sincerely,

Honourable John A. Lohr  
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

c: Juanita Spencer, NSFM  
Chief Administrative Officers

# Wind Turbine Setbacks

## Summary of Changes

The Department of Municipal Affairs is making amendments to the Minimum Planning Requirements Regulations under Section 214 of the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) and Section 229 of the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter* (HRMC) to implement a provincial standard for wind turbine setbacks.

The new regulations will require that the maximum distance between a commercial wind turbine and a dwelling cannot be more than either four times the height of the turbine or the distance needed to keep noise levels below 40 decibels outside the home and limit shadow flicker to no more than 30 minutes a day or 30 hours a year.

Additionally, the amendments stipulate that visual impact or aesthetic appearance of a wind turbine development is not a matter Council can consider prior to approval.

Nova Scotia is committed to reaching 80% renewables by 2030. These changes support this goal by providing consistent standards across Nova Scotia's municipalities, making it easier for wind energy projects to move forward while protecting residents from negative impacts from wind development projects such as noise and shadows.

## FAQ

### Q: What are the benefits of Wind Energy in Nova Scotia

Wind energy does not result in emissions that cause the health problems associated with fossil fuels, such as sulfur dioxide, nitrous oxide, mercury, or the environmental problems that come from carbon dioxide - one of the greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change. Every megawatt of wind energy can reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by as much as 2,500 tonnes per year—enough clean energy to power 350–400 Nova Scotian homes.

Wind energy does not use up natural resources. Capturing and transforming the energy of wind into the energy of electricity is infinitely renewable.

Nova Scotia has legislated goals in the *Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act* (PDF) to get off coal and have 80% of electricity generated with renewables by 2030 – and to reach net zero by 2050. [Learn more here.](#)

### Q: Should residents be concerned about the resulting noise and light flicker of Wind Turbines? What about concerns with the turbines causing illness?

It's important to remember that potential wind farms over 2 megawatts must undergo an environmental assessment which requires companies to identify the benefits of their project, its potential impacts on the environment and human health, and their plans to mitigate impacts. Projects must also obtain other required authorizations, permits and permissions from various levels of government before being built. There is no scientific evidence to support the belief that wind turbines cause illnesses.

The proposed regulatory changes will ensure municipalities have consistent standards regarding wind turbine setback distances that will ensure that residents will not be impacted by noise and light flicker.

**Q: What about the threat to migratory birds that turbines present?**

Wind turbines are attributable to less bird deaths than cats and tall buildings. Consideration of potential impacts to migratory birds as a result of a wind turbine project are included within the Government of Nova Scotia's environmental assessment process. Companies must ensure that they comply with federal migratory bird legislation.

**Q: Why is the Nova Scotia Government Making this change?**

Wind turbines do create noise and may not be appropriate for all locations. The Government of Nova Scotia is making this change to ensure that wind projects are properly developed and managed consistently across all municipalities.

**Q: How would distance required for sound and shadow flicker be established?**

Distance for sound and shadow flicker is based on project specific factors. The provincial Environmental Assessment process considers these factors prior to granting approval of commercial Wind Turbine projects (at least 2MW). A municipality may decide to incorporate the *Minimum Planning Requirements Regulations* about setbacks from wind turbines to dwellings, as written, into their Planning Documents for ease of implementation.

**Q: How does a municipality determine if their existing requirements are consistent with the proposed maximums?**

We understand that many municipalities who regulate wind turbines, have policies or bylaws including a distance setback (i.e., Kms). These policies or bylaws may be contrary to the *Minimum Planning Requirements Regulations* amendments. The Provincial Planners supporting your region and the NRR contact provided can help you consider how your existing requirements relate to the amendments to the *Minimum Planning Requirements Regulations*. You should also seek advice from your solicitor should you have questions regarding the regulations.

**Q: Will there be a deadline for when municipalities that have existing wind requirements should be consistent with the new requirements?**

There is no specific deadline set. It is expected that municipalities bring their setback requirements in line with the newly amended *Minimum Planning Requirements Regulations* as soon as reasonably possible.

**From:** Jim Morton <jimmortonrsw@gmail.com>  
**Date:** March 8, 2025 at 12:00:23 PM AST  
**To:** Jim Morton <jimmortonrsw@gmail.com>  
**Subject:** Learn about Basic Income Guarantee in Berwick

This is a note to let you know that a wonderful opportunity to learn about **BIG - Basic Income Guarantee** - is just around the corner.

A poster describing the BIG event is attached.

Here are the facts of the Big Income Guarantee event:

**When:** Saturday, April 5th at 2:30 pm

**Where:** Berwick Lions Hall - at the Apple Dome/Kings Mutual Century Centre, Berwick

**Cost:** Free

**Opportunity:** A chance to learn, ask questions, and discuss.

Mark your calendars now! Plan to attend! Please share with those who might be interested!

Look forward to seeing you in Berwick on April 5th,

Jim

**Jim Morton**  
**902-670-4287**

*I have taught you that the sky in all its zones is mortal.... Let me now re-emphasize the extreme looseness of the structure of all objects. MICHAEL ONDAATJE*



IT'S TIME TO GO

**BIG**

## BASIC INCOME GUARANTEE

A BASIC INCOME GUARANTEE IS **A CASH TOP-UP**

It's a no-strings-attached payout from government to see to it that no one is held back because they do not have the money they need to meet their basic needs, participate in society and live with dignity.

A HUMAN  
PICTURE



JOIN US FOR A SHOWING OF A *HUMAN PICTURE*  
—A SHORT VIDEO ON THE B.I.G. PILOT PROGRAM IN ONTARIO —  
WITH DISCUSSION TO FOLLOW

**COME JOIN US!**

**SAT. APRIL 5 / 2:30 - 4:00 PM**  
**BERWICK LIONS HALL**

HOSTED BY: BASIC INCOME NOVA SCOTIA / KINGS WEST COMMUNITY HEALTH BOARD / ANNAPOLIS VALLEY COMMUNITY FOOD COUNCIL / TOWN OF BERWICK  
FOR MORE INFO CONTACT: GREG HUBBERT / [gyhubb54@gmail.com](mailto:gyhubb54@gmail.com) / 538-9181

# MAYOR'S REPORT

FROM \_\_\_\_\_ TO \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Feb 25	COTW	Regular meeting
Feb 26	AREA Board meeting	Regular meeting
Feb 27	Budget Info Session	Public info sharing
Feb 28	Mayor Corkum	Info on the County pool project
Mar 3	Valley Waste and Kings Transit Audit Committees	Review audit process for 2025
Mar 4	BEC	Regular meeting
Mar 4	PAC	Review Orchard St rezoning
Mar 5	Meeting AREA GM	GM contract and Other
Mar 5	Meeting with Jen	Review the upcoming agenda
Mar 10	Valley Waste Investment Committee	Review investment status and changes
March 11	Council	Regular meeting
Mar 12	BEC	AREA planning input