

ATTENDING

Mayor Mike Trinacty, Chair
Deputy Mayor Adam Lutz
Councillor Derrick Jamieson
Councillor Ty Walsh
Councillor Johanna Kwakernaak
Councillor Justin Serino
Councillor Chris Goddard
Jen Boyd, Chief Administrative Officer
Krista Longmire, Executive Assistant
Chrystal Fuller, BCP & C

ALSO ATTENDING

42 Members of the Public

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 pm

2. PUBLIC HEARING

a. Opening Remarks

Mayor Trinacty welcomed everyone and reviewed the agenda and guidelines for the Public Hearing.

b. Review of the MPS/LUB Documents

Chrystal Fuller highlighted that the MPS/LUB review process began in 2022 with several public engagement sessions and analysis of key planning issues such as housing, infrastructure, climate resilience, and community development. In the spring of 2025, following a Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) workshop, public participation session and input from Council, two areas would be zoned Restricted Residential. The RR zoning includes - Area A (Orchard and Gravenstein) and Area B (Veterans and Bezanson Drives). This RR zone allows single-unit dwellings plus one accessory dwelling unit (ADU), and would prohibit upzoning through development agreements, and limit short-term rentals to the main dwelling—measures designed to preserve neighborhood character while gently increasing housing density.

The plan emphasizes “gentle densification” to address the “Missing Middle” housing gap, align housing supply with changing demographics, and better utilize existing infrastructure. Additional updates include mandatory hydrogeological studies for high-density proposals, enhanced site-plan criteria for multiplexes near RR zones, and refined alignment with Strategic Planning Initiatives (SPI). Key policies retained

from earlier drafts support mixed-use and commercial development, walkable street design, reduced parking requirements, and readiness for EV and renewable energy infrastructure. The plan also includes policies for greenfield growth and limited agricultural infill development on Willow Avenue.

c. Public Input

Robert Stewart, 251 Commercial Street

- Commercial Street designation – reference to the MPS 4.37/4.40
- Boarding house or Shared housing definition – no clear understanding or restrictions in place

Dave Logie, 174 Maple Avenue

- Felt Council went against their rules, allowing debate on public comments

Neil Mattson, 54 Gravenstein Drive

- Clarification on Restricted Residential (RR) zone areas

Sheila Stewart, 251 Commercial Street

- Lots of regulations and not much on vision for the future
- Concerns about the home businesses and not in the Commercial district, which would generate additional commercial tax revenue
- Concerns about short-term rentals in the Town

Elizabeth Walker, 153 Main Street

- Clarification on the Willow Avenue and future development
- Concerns about the water table and flooding in that area

Stephen Bates, 319 Veterans Drive

- Sent concerns via a written submission
- Concerns regarding public safety with increased density

Dave Herbin, 8 Thomas Street

- The Fire Department has a very integrated fire suppression strategy in place. The Town is very well served and protected

Jackie Shields, 270 Main Street

- Map showing the Cornwallis River – the names of the brooks are not accurate

Beeta Lees, 304 Veterans Drive

- Wondering how the concerns via the written submissions will be addressed

- Concerns about the implications of property taxes in the proposed Restricted Residential zone

Mary McBurney, 310 Veterans Drive

- Concerned about climate change and if the aquifer in Berwick is adequate
- Will the wastewater treatment plant handle increased development

Pam Lutz, 109 Paisley Avenue

- Concerns with the traffic congestion with increased development

Maggie Welin, 316 Veterans Drive

- Clarification on the number of units that were previously mentioned regarding what the wastewater treatment plant can adequately handle

Ian Blenkarn, 321 Veterans Drive

- Clarification on the funding for the sewage treatment plant upgrades and if there would be any impact on residential taxes

d. Written Submissions (attached)

1. Stephen Bates, 319 Veterans Drive
2. Beata Lees, 304 Veterans Drive
3. Allan Lees, 304 Veterans Drive
4. Margie Welin, 316 Veterans Drive

9. ADJOURNMENT

THE PUBLIC HEARING ADJOURNED AT 7:50 PM

Approved by Town Council

As recorded by Krista Longmire, Executive Assistant

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Planning](#)
Subject: Municipal Planning strategy and LUB review
Date: Saturday, June 28, 2025 11:52:19 AM

Good morning,

We received the notice of the public hearing for 7 July before the second reading and I am hoping to attend although I may not be available. I appreciate how well the Town has improved the communication with its residents as I was able to attend and discuss this planning strategy since the first review.

Please accept the below questions for the discussion on 7 July in case I am unable to attend in person as I have many of the same concerns with this new planning strategy as the last one. I find the updated planning strategy and LUB is much improved however the background studies, infrastructure improvements and community safety portions are still relevant.

Having reviewed the provided documents on the Town council website and compared them with other Annapolis Valley communities available planning products I have a few questions;

- In the ground water study it states in conclusion - “Scoping calculations do, however, suggest that there is substantial pressure on existing groundwater resources, and that development could reach a critical threshold. The regional aquifer is highly permeable and well-interconnected; this condition helps to sustain the large concentration of private wells by distributing drawdown throughout the Town and surrounding area. But this condition could also lead to widespread problems in the event of an unexpected change in water quality or drawdown of the aquifer” With the above statement and the already approved expansion and increased housing density within the Berwick aquifer, how is further expanding housing density, expanding short term rentals and accessory dwelling units going to be safely managed to protect the residents water supply?
- There has been much media coverage and residents of New minas are very unhappy with the waste water management in their community, the smell in New minas has become a regular problem. Understanding New Minas waste water treatment center likely has several issues to address, one aspect for the residents has been the housing density increase and an increase in residents. Is there an updated wastewater study, my concern is from past experiences where the volume of people in dwelling is more than what the wastewater can manage. Anecdotal, since we moved to Berwick we have heard numerous times that the waste water treatment for Berwick is an area of concern. Increasing wastewater production through accessory dwellings, short term rentals, etc has the potential to create problems for the residents, if not addressed prior to the increase of population.
- I see nothing on the Town website that explains the resident safety concerns that were raised during the last planning strategy sequence (2024). My main question is about

policing and who will enforce the LUB, or address problems when there are issues arising. Increased population does bring an increase in challenges. Overall, my concern is how the community staff and supporting agencies are going to monitor and enforce these changes, we already have seen some vandalism, and non adherence to by laws. The limited staff we have can not be expected to manage an expansion of the areas to monitor and enforce by laws within.

- The concerns raised by residents reference property values and the fact many of us in the R1 zones have invested much of our life savings into the properties with an expectation that our property values will hold with choosing to build/purchase in an R1 zone

Some specific questions in respects to the LUB/Planning strategy

- Why is Berwick shifting away from R1/R2 designations, from all the community products I could find only Wolfville mentioned residential restricted although they also designate it as R1? What are the advantages and disadvantages of changing the well known designations name? I do not understand the reason to use RR as a designation.
- Short-term rentals, description on what is permitted is not precise. “Short-term rentals shall not be permitted in accessory dwellings or accessory buildings, except for Accessory Dwelling Units” . What is the difference between accessory dwellings and accessory dwelling units? Post review of other community LUB’s, the R1 which I assume is what is meant to be renamed as RR, does not allow short term rentals. I would like to know specifics of why to allow short term rentals in RR(R1). Having seen the positives and negatives of short term rentals in other communities, I would like to know how the town is going to police the short term rentals and ensure they do not negatively impact the community.
- A quick search online will give numerous examples of communities that are further restricting ABnB or short rentals due to the negative impacts they have seen on neighbors. Further there is new legislation in NS that outlines the rules and requirements to operate a short term rental. For instance - A secondary or backyard suite is considered to be a commercial short-term rental in The Short Term Rentals Act. This in principle means that a backyard detached suite would not fit in a R1 zone if used as a short term rental.
- Next the explanation of accessory dwellings, detached suites and outbuildings is vague, from my interpretation it seems that as long as your property is large enough you can have a detached suite and 3 additional detached structures (garages/sheds)?
- Other than provincial pressure to increase housing density and opportunities, has there been numerous requests from residents in R1 to expand dwelling units on their properties? I would like to know what other than provincial pressures is driving the push to allow the housing density portions of current R1 areas especially as reports have shown that population growth in NS has slowed significantly and potentially even reversed? Within the town council meeting minutes I could not find many requests. I

have followed requests for land use hearings however all the ones I have seen to discuss are outside of the current R1 areas. Is this a regular request that needs to be adjusted for? I understand that the process to deviate from the LUB is at times arduous however is it a normal problem within R1 areas?

- Circling back to the RR vs R1 designation, a few of my neighbors have also discussed the renaming with realtors. All have found that RR is not a zoning description recognized by them, they use the R1, R2, etc. How is Berwick going to address this? R1 is still a goal and searched for residential zone for people looking to build or purchase a home. Further, the realtor has told me that property values have fallen in areas where short term rentals and group homes have become allowed in R1 zones. This was a significant point raised by the residents at last year's planning strategy public hearings. I see nothing in the new strategy that suggests this would not occur.

During the public hearing in the fall of 2024, the overwhelming feeling from residents was the rezoning from R1 was not acceptable. From my review of this planning strategy, the rezoning is still happening just under a different name that allows an easier adjustment to what is approved to be built in the current R1 zones. I do not understand the problem with maintaining R1 zoning and the current LUB for that zone other than the Town council procedures for deviations, building permits etc. I would suggest the change should be to streamline the admin process vs adjusting zoning.

I understand the CAP and provincial oversight of appraisals which then impact the tax revenue within small communities. I further understand the delicate balance that town council must use because of the CAP when looking at tax revenue. Currently, new R1 tax payers are a large portion of the tax revenue (as per Berwick budget planning meets earlier this FY). Has this been discussed in relation to the property value drop that will come with the rezoning of R1?

I am wondering how I can get answers to the above if unable to attend the public hearing.

Thank you

Stephen Bates
319 Veterans Dr
Berwick, NS

Residential Zoning Comments on Updated Strategy Review

Does this review improve what we have as residents from a residential view?

- It seems an administrative tidying up of Berwick zoning and a glossing over of future dealings.
- There is still no defined or realistic strategy for flexible zones, no clearer permit standards for future development, or defined, transparent/clear terms for developers and trades.
- Doesn't address town's infrastructure needs such as estimates of sewage, power, road maintenance for proposed development areas and proposed continued growth.
- Doesn't integrate residential growth developments with green spaces, recreation, commercial.
- Not designed to be user friendly to anyone. Confusing, restrictive & alienating to anyone outside of town of Berwick(rest of world...) Need to keep standard terms for clarity.

What is the purpose of renaming of residential areas? No clear vision

- Renaming (#s to letters) from previous submission doesn't resolve concerns.
- R: with standards similar to old R 2, is an internal renaming just for our small town. This novel lettering isn't used in other valley residential zoning maps on-line.
- R Restricted is a reactive, knee jerk response to appease 2 vocal homeowner groups that organized a collective displeasure with the initial proposal of deleting all R1 single unit.
- Will individual owners of single units in R, wanting to insure home value, be offered an R1 designation as well? I am sure there may be other concerned homeowners.
- Perception of loss of vibrant, diverse residential areas. Berwick being demoted to a uniform lower standard R with 2 isolated blocks called RR, and current multi-units as RMD, RG.
- Optics of segregation (Restricted) is a negative in any vibrant community. A bad look.
- Detrimental for anyone looking to Berwick as a friendly welcoming community to invest in.
- All this does is further alienate developers and new home builders.

Measurement tools? Tax revenues. Commercial, residential, institutional comprise 64% of revenue. Most of residential Berwick is zoned now at R1 with pockets of R2, R3.

- *How to determine what changes make sense for Berwick other than conforming with current provincial government whims? Expansion issues are now constant news in other valley towns.*
- *How does this strategy impact or improve town? How will this help Berwick meet stated goals?*
- *Will changing most of Berwick residential to R cost the town with increased costs for infrastructure maintenance as higher densities are developed in R. Will this rezoning to R lower overall property tax revenue, as majority in proposed R zone are single unit R1 now?*
- *Property taxes: Will proposed R R -single unit- taxes remain equivalent to taxes of those single units in the proposed R designation? Both are currently zoned R1 re property information.*

Other options: Evolve and adapt strategies for the community vs easing of administrative duties.

- Let those moving to Berwick have a broad choice of neighbourhoods to live and build in.
- Avoid a one size fits all rezoning with an R. Flexibility to date has allowed diversity in growth.
- Keep diversity! vs exclusivity or uniformity.
- Design and future proof residential zones with purpose, connectivity, ease of living.
- Talk with developers, businesses, owners to improve town admin hurdles, help them advocate issues beyond town's scope.
- Facilitate investment in commercial and recreation Ex: incentivise new or expanding businesses or activities, reduce admin barriers. Developments would increase foot traffic for commerce,

recreation, further promote the livability to a wider audience and make it a more desirable place, versus just more R housing.

30 June 2025, Beata Lees

Comments on current proposal:

There is no clear vision in your proposal how to handle an increase in the population of Berwick in the future or deal with current deficiencies.

Need an organized structured framework that would take into account diversification and inclusion of all types of residential accommodations, green spaces, connectivity and commercial growth.

This within the infrastructure we currently have and what we will need down the road.

You are playing here with property values, major investments for home owners, families, retirees, businesses, developers and...the list goes on.

The presentations were not given, in my opinion, in a concise, coherent manner with reliable statistics.

You cannot alter what past administrators and what current administrators have allowed to date with a stroke of a pen.

The present has to be incorporated gradually into the new vision, but not allowed to continue to proliferate as is.

You need a completely new vision plan that Berwick can grow into over time with stated changes that will occur with growth so that people are aware.

This without penalizing any current stakeholders but also encourage new developments for a wide variety of commercial and residential developments.

Large tracts of land in the town are undeveloped, basically due to small "p" politics in Berwick.

Relevant landowners are using these properties as collateral for other ventures elsewhere.

They need to be encouraged to develop in Berwick by making it more attractive for them to do so versus trying to create zoning options for granny suites.

30 June 2025
Allan Lees

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Planning](#)
Subject: Berwick Zoning
Date: Monday, June 23, 2025 6:22:29 PM

Thank you for inviting residents to the April 23 planning meeting. I have a few questions and concerns.

Questions

1. The RR (Residential Restricted) zone is not listed as a zone in the Land Use Bylaw section 3.1.. Is the intention for this 'zone' to be a subsection of the R2 zone?
2. My understanding is the new RR zone is allowing for an accessory unit within the main unit as well as a detached unit. The current R1 zone only allows for single dwellings so will adding a separate dwelling unit and an Accessory Dwelling Unit - Detached transfer the RR zone to the R2 zone?
3. This statement from the LUB Draft is confusing. "Short-term rentals shall not be permitted in accessory dwellings or accessory buildings, except for Accessory Dwelling Units – Detached Suites" Can you clarify where short term rentals will be allowed...in main dwelling accessory unit or the Accessory Dwelling-Detached or both?
4. When we broke into groups in the April meeting I asked the planner if other municipalities were using the RR zone designation. She told me she wasn't aware of what the other areas were using but did know that most municipalities were doing away with the old R1 zone. I reviewed the LUBs in The Kings Municipality and other areas in the province and have only found a reference to Low Density Residential -Restricted in Wolfville but they have further designated that zone as R1 and do not allow short term rentals, Accessory Dwellings-Detached in this zone. Most other municipalities, if not all, are continuing to use R1 from what I could find. Will Berwick be the only location using this designation in the Kings Municipality and/or province?
5. The following statement is copied from the LUB. The maximum number of accessory structures, excluding Accessory Dwelling Unit – Detached Suites, permitted in any Residential Zone shall not exceed three (3). Does this mean each lot in any zone can have a main dwelling, Accessory Dwelling Unit-Detached and 3 other structures providing it is large enough?
6. The draft zoning map has between 100 and 125 lots in the RR zone. How many requests have you received from these residents to build accessory units or Backyard Suites or open group homes?
7. I tried to find answers to some of these questions in the PAC meeting minutes but

minutes for meetings past March are not on the website and at that time the PAC was referring to R1 and R2.

Concerns

1. I had a recent discussion with a real estate agent in another Nova Scotia community who had never heard of the RR zone. Since R1 is a recognized real estate zone why are we creating a new one which will not be recognized? If we are the only community without any R1 homes how can we hope to attract buyers who are looking for a home in a R1 zone? If other communities are attracting buyers and we aren't, our property values will decrease and the tax revenue for the town will also decrease. This was an issue when we submitted concerns in the fall of 2024.
2. In my discussion with the agent I also asked about the effect of having a group or a small option home in the neighbourhood. She said a group home was built in a R1 community near her and the other nearby home values plummeted.
3. As was stated in a submission of concerns in the fall of 2024 many of us have put a great deal of our life savings into our homes and are very concerned about how these proposed zoning changes will impact our property values. The planner told us increased density would mean increased property values but the concerns with having short term rentals, group homes, numerous outbuildings on neighbouring properties far outweigh the benefits. Increased density usually comes with increased crime and this is especially concerning in a community which does not have its own police force.
4. While the current council may approve this change to RR from R1 a future council could quickly look at the RR zone and determine that since it has small options homes, Short Term rentals and Accessory Dwelling-Detached Suites it should be considered R2.
5. In Nova Scotia The Short Term Rentals Act effective September 30, 2024 defines short term as a period of 28 days or less and total of 150 days or less per year. A secondary or backyard suite is considered to be a commercial short-term rental in The Short Term Rentals Act. Would the property then not have to be zoned as commercial? Are you putting commercial zoning in RR?
6. In Nova Scotia The Short Term Rentals Act and The Secondary and Backyard Suite Incentive Program both have significant requirements and regulations in the initial setup and ongoing. Does the town have capacity within existing staff to monitor these guidelines to ensure residents are following all restrictions?
7. There were a significant number of residents at the PAC meeting in the fall of 2024 to voice our concerns regarding the move of R1 to R2. It appears that what has happened is a proposal to add some previous R2 options to the R1 zone but

rename it RR and then rename R2 to R. It sounds lovely but the result is the same. You have in essence made our R1 zone equal to the R2 zone and I expect if there is a request to build duplexes/triplexes etc. on vacant lots in our area it will be approved. I understand the desire to increase density but if the majority of the residents do not want to add secondary/backyard suites or group homes why is the PAC not listening to our concerns and retaining the existing R1 designation so we can protect the property value of our homes? Why is it so difficult to retain the R1 designation? It appears we are the only community having this issue and it is really concerning that the town is not listening to the residents.

Margie Welin
902-848-6631