



TOWN OF  
**Mahone Bay**

2025-2029

# Strategic Plan

Our Future is Bright



# Message from Mayor and Council



L to R: Councillor Joseph Feeney, Chief Administrative Officer Dylan Heide, Councillor Bryan Palfreyman, Councillor Rebecca Twanow, Deputy Mayor Colin Kingsmill, Mayor Suzanne Lohnes-Croft, Councillor Penny Carver, Councillor Kelly Wilson

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As your elected Council, one of our first priorities was to develop a Strategic Plan to guide the Town of Mahone Bay through this Council term and beyond. This plan is the result of thoughtful collaboration between Council, staff, and community members. It reflects our shared values and our commitment to making decisions that support a thriving, resilient, and welcoming community.

The 2025–2029 Strategic Plan builds on the strong foundation laid by past Councils, while positioning Mahone Bay to meet future challenges with confidence and care. It sets clear priorities across five strategic pillars and outlines actionable goals to support sustainable growth, responsible governance, and community well-being.

# Executive Summary

The 2025–2029 Strategic Plan outlines Mahone Bay Town Council’s vision and priorities for the next four years, focusing on building a resilient, connected, and sustainable community. Developed early in Council’s term, this living document will guide decisions while remaining flexible to evolving needs.

Grounded in our mission to provide high-quality municipal services with transparency and community engagement, the plan reflects core values of connectedness, stewardship, inclusion, integrity, safety, and responsible leadership.

The plan is organized into five strategic pillars:

**Community and Partner Engagement** – Strengthen relationships with residents, organizations, and regional partners to improve communication, trust, and collaboration.

**Responsible Financial Stewardship** – Increase transparency and long-term planning to ensure efficient use of resources and financial sustainability.

**Future-Ready Infrastructure** – Modernize aging systems and invest in smart, resilient infrastructure to support growth and climate adaptation.

**Planned Services and Managed Growth** – Align development and services with community needs while preserving Mahone Bay’s unique character.

**Resilience and Adaptability** – Integrate climate risk, sustainability, and emergency preparedness into municipal operations and planning.

Each pillar includes specific goals and actions to guide progress and accountability. This plan is a roadmap to ensure Mahone Bay remains a vibrant, livable community—today and for future generations.

# Guiding Principles

## Our Vision

Mahone Bay is a welcoming and dynamic community that cherishes its rich heritage, nurtures meaningful connections between people and place, encourages creativity, and promotes active living. We are adaptable to the evolving needs of our residents while enhancing our natural environment for future generations.

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## Our Mission

Our Mission is to provide high-quality municipal services with a balanced approach that respects both efficiency and the realities of governance. Through responsible decision-making, clear communication, and community engagement, we work to support a thriving and resilient Mahone Bay.

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## Core Values

Our Core Values are deeply ingrained principles that guide Town Council and staff in the timely and collaborative delivery of services, ensuring support for an optimal quality of life in our community.

- Community Connectedness
  - Environmental Stewardship
  - Fairness and Belonging
  - Integrity and Civic Pride
  - Public Safety and Security
  - Responsible Leadership
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Community Orchard, School Street

# Strategic Pillars

**We aim to balance economic prosperity with environmental and community well-being, ensuring Mahone Bay remains vibrant and livable in the present and the future.**

I. Community and Partner Engagement

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II. Responsible Financial Stewardship

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III. Future-Ready Infrastructure

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IV. Planned Services and Managed Growth

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V. Resilience and Adaptability

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Mahone Bay, Main Street in Winter

# Pillar 1: Community and Partner Engagement



Jubilee Park, Pond Street

A thriving Town is built on strong relationships—with residents, local organizations, businesses, and regional partners.

This pillar focuses on fostering meaningful engagement, enhancing transparency, and creating collaborative opportunities that reflect the diverse voices within our community.

By strengthening these connections, we aim to build trust, encourage civic participation, and ensure that decision-making is informed, inclusive, and responsive to local needs.

# Goal 1.1

Increase access to Town information and decision-making.

## Strategic Actions

Action		Progress
<b>1.1a</b>	Establish communications committee	Complete
<b>1.1b</b>	Develop communications strategy	Ongoing
<b>1.1c</b>	Increase communications capacity by establishing new staff position	Complete
<b>1.1d</b>	Develop a ' Behind the Scenes in Local Government' series to educate residents on Town operations, including budgeting, decision-making, and service delivery	Not yet begun
<b>1.1e</b>	Develop proactive communications to minimize disruptions to businesses during major infrastructure projects	Ongoing

# Goal 1.2

Strengthen and sustain strategic community partnerships to amplify connections and collaboration

## Strategic Actions

Action		Progress
<b>1.2a</b>	Establish regular stakeholder meetings with community partners to collaboratively identify, engage, and implement initiatives that enhance tourism, community engagement, and economic development.	Ongoing
<b>1.2b</b>	Review and update Town policies and practices related to financial support for community groups with the goal of enhancing and expanding opportunities for support.	Not yet begun
<b>1.2c</b>	Support, promote, and celebrate community-led activities and initiatives using Town communication channels, including exploring the development of a live community calendar with community organizations to book and check events.	Ongoing
<b>1.2d</b>	Partner with local organizations to celebrate and protect Mahone Bay's built heritage and natural beauty.	Ongoing

# Goal 1.3

Invest resources in intermunicipal and First Nations relationships

## Strategic Actions

Action	Progress
<b>1.3a</b> Publicly celebrate and increase intermunicipal and First Nations relationships in the community to foster awareness and appreciation of collaboration.	Ongoing
<b>1.3b</b> Identify new shared services opportunities via the Municipal Joint Services Board.	Not yet begun
<b>1.3c</b> Engage with the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg to explore the potential for shared infrastructure projects at town boundaries.	Ongoing
<b>1.3d</b> Strengthen collaboration with Riverport Electric Light Commission (RELC), AREA (Alternative Resource Energy Authority), and the new Maritime Municipal Electrical Utility Alliance (MMEUA).	Ongoing
<b>1.3e</b> Collaborate with the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) to advocate for legislative changes	Ongoing

# Goal 1.4

Foster a welcoming and inclusive community

## Strategic Actions

Action		Progress
<b>1.4a</b>	Work with Anti-Racism and Diversity Coordinator and the Accessibility Coordinators to ensure meaningful consultation on matters impacting equity-deserving groups and accessibility.	Ongoing
<b>1.4b</b>	Engage in activities to encourage youth participation in civic discussions and create opportunities for their voices to be heard.	Not yet begun
<b>1.4c</b>	Develop a “Welcome to Mahone Bay” initiative to support new resident integration.	Ongoing



Aquatic Garden, Clairmont Street

# Pillar 2: Responsible Financial Stewardship



Sound financial management is the foundation of a sustainable and resilient Town.

This pillar emphasizes transparency, accountability, and long-term planning in how we manage public funds.

By making strategic investments, optimizing resources, and maintaining fiscal discipline, we ensure the Town can meet current needs while securing a stable future for generations to come.

# Goal 2.1

Enhance financial forecasting and transparency

## Strategic Actions

Action		Progress
<b>2.1a</b>	Build analysis regarding non-strategic operating expense growth alignment with Consumer Price Index (CPI) into the annual budget process.	Not yet begun
<b>2.1b</b>	Adopt long-term financial forecasting tools.	Not yet begun
<b>2.1c</b>	Evaluate and implement best practices for financial reporting and forecasting to ensure long-term fiscal sustainability.	Not yet begun
<b>2.1d</b>	Provide public budget breakdowns and spending reports in a simplified, easy-to-read format.	Not yet begun
<b>2.1e</b>	Explore opportunities to increase public participation in the annual budget process.	Not yet begun

# Goal 2.1

Enhance financial forecasting and transparency

## Strategic Actions

	Action	Progress
2.1f	Incorporate climate risks into financial planning and budget analysis.	Ongoing
2.1g	Develop communication materials to increase public understanding of financial constraints, including the Capped Assessment Program (CAP) and its impact on municipal finances.	Not yet begun
2.1h	Broaden the Public's understanding of the costs/benefits of operating the Town's electrical utility.	Not yet begun
2.1i	Assess internal capacity and develop processes to optimize grant tracking, external funding applications, and reporting. Include summaries of grant funding received in public financial reports to enhance transparency and accountability.	Ongoing

# Goal 2.2

Modernize and improve financial services

## Strategic Actions

	Action	Progress
<b>2.2a</b>	Conduct comprehensive review of financial policies and practices.	Ongoing
<b>2.2b</b>	Explore and implement improved accounting software to improve financial tracking, reporting, and decision-making.	Ongoing
<b>2.2c</b>	Develop user-friendly financial tools for the public to increase transparency and access to financial data.	Not yet begun
<b>2.2d</b>	Evaluate restructuring the income-tested property tax rebate to include offsets for infrastructure charges.	Not yet begun

# Goal 2.3

Increase non-tax revenue streams by leveraging Town assets.

## Strategic Actions

Action	Progress
<b>2.3a</b> Develop a strategy to optimize marina and harbour assets.	Not yet begun
<b>2.3b</b> Consider implementation of a Marketing Levy to generate tourism-supporting revenue.	Not yet begun
<b>2.3c</b> Solicit donations to support public infrastructure projects.	Ongoing
<b>2.3d</b> Evaluate electrical generation opportunities with potential return on investment.	Not yet begun
<b>2.3e</b> Explore opportunities to increase utility sales.	Ongoing



Mahone Bay Civic Marina, Main Street

# Pillar 3: Future-Ready Infrastructure



EV Charging Station,  
Various locations

Modern, resilient infrastructure is essential to support a growing and evolving community.

This pillar focuses on investing in sustainable, adaptable, and efficient infrastructure that meets today's needs while anticipating tomorrow's challenges.

By prioritizing smart design, climate resilience, and innovation, we are building the foundation for a connected, accessible, and future-ready Town.

# Goal 3.1

Modernize, expand and replace ageing utility infrastructure to ensure reliable, future-ready services.

## Strategic Actions

Action	Progress
<b>3.1a</b> Develop and implement a phased plan to replace ageing utility infrastructure, including water, sewer, and electrical systems, using asset management data to prioritize investments.	Not yet begun
<b>3.1b</b> Reduce water loss and improve water service quality.	Ongoing
<b>3.1c</b> Reduce stormwater infiltration into wastewater system and improve wastewater system resilience.	Ongoing
<b>3.1d</b> Expand utility systems capacity to support new development and explore opportunities to modernize utility infrastructure.	Ongoing



Town Upgrades, Edgewater and Main Streets

# Goal 3.2

Develop a comprehensive asset management strategy.

## Strategic Actions

Action	Progress
<b>3.2a</b> Finalize Asset Management program to assess the current state of infrastructure and prioritize investment needs.	Ongoing
<b>3.2b</b> Create detailed asset management plans for each class to guide the repair, upkeep, and replacement of Town infrastructure.	Ongoing
<b>3.2c</b> Leverage infrastructure projects to include enhancement of the Town's aesthetic and natural appeal.	Ongoing

# Goal 3.3

Improve mobility and accessibility through strategic infrastructure investments that prioritize pedestrian safety, accessibility, and activity.

## Strategic Actions

Action	Progress
<b>3.3a</b> Prioritize pedestrian safety by improving and expanding sidewalks, standardizing crosswalks, and enhancing crosswalk signage.	Ongoing
<b>3.3b</b> Develop and implement an Active Transportation Plan to increase non-vehicle transportation options and promote active living.	Not yet begun
<b>3.3c</b> Implement the Lunenburg County Accessibility Plan to enhance mobility and accessibility for all residents.	Ongoing
<b>3.3d</b> Manage, assist, and develop the Town's recreational facilities for all ages in partnership with community groups and organizations.	Ongoing
<b>3.3e</b> Develop and implement solutions to address current and future parking challenges through creative, sustainable, parking solutions.	Ongoing



Accessible Picnic Table in Community Orchard, School Street

# Pillar 4: Planned Services and Managed Growth



Thoughtful planning ensures that municipal services keep pace with community needs and that growth happens in a sustainable, balanced way.

This pillar focuses on aligning development with infrastructure capacity, preserving community character, and delivering high-quality services.

By managing growth strategically, we support livability, economic opportunity, and long-term sustainability for all residents.

# Goal 4.1

Improve the efficiency of housing and development permitting processes to encourage housing starts and support sustainable growth.

## Strategic Actions

	Action	Progress
<b>4.1a</b>	Develop and implement housing and development permitting goals and strategies and fulfil the requirements of the Housing Accelerator Fund Contribution Agreement.	Ongoing
<b>4.1b</b>	Conduct an evaluation of planning services for opportunities to improve capacity and effectiveness	Ongoing

# Goal 4.2

Expand the tax base through strategic redevelopment and business growth.

## Strategic Actions

Action	Progress
<b>4.2a</b> Encourage property redevelopment and business growth while maintaining the Town's small-town heritage character.	Ongoing
<b>4.2b</b> Explore opportunities to encourage the use of underutilized property	Not yet begun
<b>4.2c</b> Explore business property tax incentives for new commercial investments	Not yet begun
<b>4.2d</b> Explore options to encourage targeting housing redevelopment that supports right-sizing for residents, ensuring housing availability meets the needs of changing demographics and market demands.	Ongoing
<b>4.2e</b> Explore new mechanisms for proactive engagement with businesses and economic stakeholders.	Ongoing

# Goal 4.3

Leverage heritage assets to increase economic value and tourism potential.

## Strategic Actions

Action	Progress
<b>4.3a</b> Evaluate developing a Streetscape Plan to preserve and enhance the Town’s built heritage, ensuring its continues appeal as a key tourism attraction.	Not yet begun
<b>4.3b</b> Develop communications and incentives to encourage property owners to participate in the Municipal Property Registration program, supporting the preservation of the Town’s built heritage.	Not yet begun
<b>4.3c</b> Consider collaborating with relevant community organizations and businesses to create and implement a comprehensive Heritage Promotion Strategy.	Not yet begun



Heritage Property, Edgewater Street

# Goal 4.4

Strengthen public safety and resilience through community collaboration.

## Strategic Actions

Action	Progress
<b>4.4a</b> Evaluate the RCMP contract to ensure service levels align with community needs and contractual commitments.	Ongoing
<b>4.4b</b> Encourage and provide support for the Mahone Bay & District Fire Department’s professional development, training, recruitment, and retention efforts.	Ongoing
<b>4.4c</b> Strengthen emergency preparedness and community resilience by fostering collaborative approaches that align governance and community capabilities.	Ongoing



Heritage Property, Edgewater Street

# Pillar 5: Resilience and Adaptability



As climate change continues to impact our environment, the Town must be prepared to respond, recover, and adapt.

This pillar emphasizes building resilience to environmental, social, and economic disruptions through proactive planning, sustainable practices, and community preparedness.

By integrating climate action into municipal decision-making, we strengthen our ability to protect people, infrastructure, and ecosystems - today and into the future.

# Goal 5.1

Create municipal plans and mechanisms for adaptability and resilience.

## Strategic Actions

Action		Progress
<b>5.1a</b>	Integrate natural assets into the Town's Asset Management Program.	Ongoing
<b>5.1b</b>	Develop and consider implementing targeted actions to reduce exposure in priority areas, eg. wildfire exposure, storm surge risk, etc.	Ongoing
<b>5.1c</b>	Consider and develop, where feasible, nature-based infrastructure solutions for Town integrating nature-source capacities to enhance infrastructure outcomes with attention paid to the Town utilities.	Not yet begun
<b>5.1d</b>	Complete the development and implementation of the Urban Forest Management Plan.	Ongoing

# Goal 5.2

Advance community capacity for climate specific adaptation and resilience

## Strategic Actions

Action	Progress
<b>5.2a</b> Update climate hazard assessments and risk mapping for extreme weather events, flooding, and fire risk, and integrate findings into the Town's Asset Management Program to guide infrastructure investments and long-term resilience planning.	Ongoing
<b>5.2b</b> Regularly review and update all climate and adaptation and mitigation efforts to ensure alignment with evolving best practices, new data, and changing environmental conditions.	Ongoing
<b>5.2c</b> Integrate climate hazard assessments and risk mapping into development planning processes to ensure new growth is aligned with climate adaptation and resilience goals.	Not yet begun

# Goal 5.2

Advance community capacity for climate specific adaptation and resilience

## Strategic Actions

	Action	Progress
<b>5.2d</b>	Explore developing and implementing a Resilient Community Plan.	Not yet begun
<b>5.2e</b>	Explore opportunities to collaborate with community groups and municipalities on projects and initiatives to improve food security and food accessibility.	Not yet begun
<b>5.2f</b>	Explore opportunities to collaborate with neighbouring municipalities and First Nations on initiatives such as shoreline and water quality protection	Not yet begun





Mayor Suzanne Lohnes-Croft and CAO Dylan Heide

**Contact us  
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inquiries**



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