



Municipality of the District of Lunenburg Report to Council

Report To: Policy & Strategy Committee
Submitted By: Alex Dumaresq, Deputy CAO
Date: February 18, 2025
Re: Engagement Report on Draft Strategic Priorities

Proposed Motions

- 1) Move that Council adopt the amended strategic priorities as discussed at the Policy and Strategy Committee.

Background

In preparation for the 2025-26 budget deliberations, Council is establishing a statement of strategic priorities. At the January Policy and Strategy Committee meeting, staff prepared a report on Council's proposed strategic priorities. The original report can be found on the municipal website: https://modl.ca/index.php?option=com_docman&view=list&slug=2025-01-21&Itemid=693&layout=table.

Public Engagement Summary

Following the January PSC meeting an engagement page was established to summarize council's draft statements and solicit input from residents: https://engage.modl.ca/budget2025?tool=forum_topic#tool_tab. In addition, an in person open house was held on February 6, 2025. The engagement efforts yielded good participation:

- 1025 unique visits were made to the project page
- 108 residents downloaded documents, visited multiple pages on the microsite, or contributed a comment
- 40 residents attended open house.

An appendix at the conclusion of this report includes all comments received from residents. The remainder of this report summarizes the input and offers options for Council to consider.

Analysis and Discussion

The quality of input received from residents was excellent. The comments were wide-ranging and thoughtful. The input provided an array of creative, analytical and helpful insights to inform municipal actions. The engagement information will be used in two ways: First, it will help inform Council’s decision on finalizing the strategic priorities. Second, the verbatim comments will be provided directly to municipal staff working in these areas to preserve the richness of the qualitative input and inform future staff reports.

Coding for Trends

To provide some information on trends in the qualitative data, staff categorized comments into themes and noted whether the comments were supportive or in opposition to the identified theme.

For example, a sticky note added to the Quality of Life board at the open house stated, “Events & recreational buildings for youth/teens”. This comment was coded as supportive of enhancing connections because it shows a resident providing an example of a program/service they would like to see that matches the strategic direction to offer programming and initiatives that focus on addressing loneliness, reconnecting community.

Conversely, a comment was posted to the online forum for communications and engagement that read, in part, “Please do not spend taxpayer money to develop an app to better communicate with us. Tools aplenty exist, and government apps do not have a great track record.” This comment was coded in the opposition column to reflect that comments were received speaking against at least one element of the draft content. Many of the comments were detailed and covered more than one topic. In these circumstances the comment was coded for each topic identified.

While imperfect, the coding system provides a short hand for identifying insight into what is on the minds of the engaged citizens. The most common topics of discussion related to regional economic development, infrastructure investments, and climate change. The table below shows a summary of the coding results.

| Topic | supportive | opposition |
|---------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Regional Economic Development | 21 | 5 |
| Infrastructure Investments | 17 | 7 |
| Climate Change Work | 22 | n/a |
| Enhancing Connections | 19 | n/a |
| Community Engagement | 12 | 3 |
| Housing | 12 | n/a |
| Proposed Lenses | 10 | 1 |
| Comprehensive Land-Use Planning | 10 | n/a |
| Affordability/Tax Policy | 8 | n/a |
| Transit | 3 | 1 |

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Miscellaneous | 5 |
|---------------|---|

There is some caution and context required in interpreting the results in this way. First, judgment is required when creating quantitative results out of qualitative data. Care was taken to fairly characterize the statements, but it is ultimately a subjective process. Second, the engagement format did not limit, and in fact encouraged, multiple comments from the same participant, therefore the totals do not represent unique instances of different citizens providing input, merely the total number of times the comment was provided. Third, voluntary engagements do have the limitation of a self-selection bias, that is, the municipality is hearing from a subset of the citizenry who were motivated to engage. There is no statistically reliable way to extrapolate these results to the wider population of the municipality.

The true value of the data is in the quality of the commentary received. With this in mind a short summary of the comments in each theme is presented below before considering options.

Regional Economic Development

A total of 26 statements were coded to regional economic development, 21 being affirmative, and 5 opposing specific elements or examples proposed.

- 7 comments supported working towards improved cell service
- 4 comments supported business retention and expansion efforts
- 4 comments supported regional cooperation
- 3 comments were supportive of work to connect small agricultural producers to larger markets and improving food security
- 2 comments references support for the tourism industry
- One comment requested more small business networking opportunities

One comment was received indicating concern that regional economic development work could prove costly without a clear payoff. 3 comments were provided opposing MODL pursuing a bio-economy development zone. One comment opposed the marketing levy's application to small operators.

Infrastructure Investments

24 comments were received regarding infrastructure investments, with 17 of them being coded as supportive of Council's draft statements. The most common items cited were:

- Access to waterways (4);
- Access to Sherbrooke lake (3);
- Connectivity of Active Transportation routes (2); and
- Sidewalks in New Germany (2).

Other items noted in the comments were: a green space next to the collaborative health centre, invest in roads, water filling stations, and traffic improvements in Osprey Village.

Climate Change

22 responses were received that indicated action on climate change was important. Of note, 7 comments explicitly noted that climate change action should be a priority not a lens, versus 2 comments supporting climate as a lens. 7 comments were also received noting the importance of climate resilient infrastructure and/or more broadly addressing climate change adaptation. Additional comments on climate noted general support for climate action, and including climate change action within the quality of life statement.

Enhancing Connections

The theme of enhancing connections within the quality of life and communications priorities resonated with many commenters.

- 11 comments suggested additional programming and support for reconnecting community (e.g. youth/senior programming, family programming, community dinners)

- 4 comments suggested grant program expansion/adjustment (e.g. community facilities and programming, fire dept. capital and training, and favouring MODL-based over town applicants)
- 3 comments identified that the municipality is well positioned to be a facilitator as opposed to a deliverer of community connections.
- One comment suggested an improved community calendar on the municipal website
- One comment noted that signs prohibiting overnight parking and camping in parks is unwelcoming and unkind

Engagement

12 comments were coded as supportive of the focus on communications and engagement. These comments indicated support for:

- Existing efforts at engagement (2)
- More opportunities for public input (2)
- Conversational as opposed to adversarial engagement opportunities (e.g. open house on general topics to stimulate discussion vs. a public hearing pitting one perspective against another)(2)
- Consultations held in more diverse locations in the District (2).
- Council in the community and evening meetings (1)
- More demonstration of how input influenced decisions (1)
- A municipal app (1)
- A quick link on the website home page for the next Tuesday's agenda (1)

There were also three comments noting concern with an element of the communications and engagement statements. Two comments opposed the concept of an app over value for money and demographics concerns. One comment opposed the municipal use of social media platforms which do not have guidelines in place to curtail hate speech.

Housing

12 comments were received relating to housing, all of them supportive of municipal action. These comments focused on the need for affordable housing in the region, the need for municipal investment in infrastructure for housing and working with partners to create more housing units, and the need for the development of a strategy to guide municipal action.

Lenses

11 comments were received regarding the proposed lenses for Council decision-making. Of these one was a general statement in support of the proposed lenses; 9 more specifically supported a lens for inclusion, diversity, equity and/or accessibility.

One comment opposed the proposed lenses generally, noting that they appeared to be an attempt to bind the new council to decisions of past councils.

Tabulation Note: Comments relating to climate change as a lens versus a priority are covered above. The comments in this section referred to all other non-climate input received about lenses.

Comprehensive Land-Use Planning

10 comments were coded as supportive of land-use planning. These fell into two categories: expressing the need for managing coastal development/protection (3) and balanced management of growth (7), including commentary on the impact of increased density and traffic, protecting the rural character of communities, and managing the pace of growth. It is important to note that several of the comments did not in and of themselves reference land-use planning but directly address development controls and the need for managing growth.

Affordability/tax policy

8 comments were made relating to tax policy and affordability. 6 of these comments related to no increase in residential tax, decreasing expenditures, or providing property tax relief. One suggested different indicators for a property tax rebate to improve public health, and one suggested growing the tax base to reduce pressure on existing tax accounts.

Public Transit

3 comments were made supporting the expansion of public transportation options for MODL residents. One comment questioned fixed route transit in collaboration with the Town of Bridgewater, if the cost-sharing formula was not favourable to MODL.

Miscellaneous

There were an additional 5 comments coded as miscellaneous, referring to infrastructure owned by other organizations, opposed to the LCLC, opposed to municipal borrowing, and encouraging the municipality to explore well-being economies.

Key takeaways and options

Confirmation of direction

Taken as a whole, staff believe that the public input validates Council's proposed direction. There appears to be general enthusiasm and support for the 4 strategic priority areas identified

by Council. In addition, the comments generally indicate support for the adoption of the proposed lenses.

However, the comments indicate that climate change remains a concern for the residents who engaged and there is some lively discussion over how to situate the municipal response to climate change. In addition, there are some themes that emerged that Council may wish to incorporate into the statements on the priority areas. Below are some options for Council to consider.

Recommended Revision 1 – Advocate for improved cell service

Given the frequency of the comments received, Council may wish to include cell service as a separate bullet as opposed to a subordinate note within the commercial development line.

Recommended Revision 2 – Affordability

In the drafting process there was some debate about the inclusion of the word affordability in the Quality-of-Life statement. At the January meeting of this Committee, it was decided to defer a decision on including affordability until after the engagement sessions. While the Municipality does have limited ability to impact overall affordability (e.g. municipal taxes represent an average of less than 3% of household income), it is clear that affordability is an important issue for residents and its inclusion is warranted amending the subheading for quality of life as follows: **Programs and services to maintain and improve affordability and quality of life for our residents.**

Recommended Revision 3 - Access to Waterways

Several comments identified that a central focus in recreation infrastructure should be access to lakes, rivers and the ocean, and it is critically important that the municipality work to preserve public access to waterways. This theme has been identified in previous strategic work by Council including the Open Space Strategy and the Active Transportation strategy. Council may wish to reflect this important facet of recreation infrastructure by adding a phrase to this effect to the recreational assets item.

Option 4 – Social inclusion – Not Recommended

At the January 2025 meeting of this Committee, there was discussion on the use of the term social inclusion in the strategic priority statements. As with affordability, the Committee deferred a decision on the term until after public engagement. An operational definition of social inclusion from social sciences research is: “the process of improving the terms of participation in society, particularly for people who are disadvantaged, through enhancing opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights” (Saran, Hunt, White & Kuper, 2021). It is clear that a range of initiatives in the draft priorities address social inclusion, for

example, community programming for seniors, public transit, and targeted property tax rebates. However, staff do not recommend adding the term to the priorities statement for accessibility purposes: the term is not commonly used in everyday language; adding terminology that requires an operational definition from research to be interpreted is unlikely to help communicate council's priorities to the general public. Should Council wish to add the term it could be added to the loneliness phrase, i.e.: Address loneliness, reconnect community and improve social inclusion.

Optional revision 5 - Climate Change Action

Option A – Adjust climate change from a lens to a separate priority area. For example, a statement could read “Climate Change Action: Work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the changing climate”. Examples of projects would be from the climate change action plan such as focus on elements including corporate emission reduction, climate resilient infrastructure and food security initiatives.

Rationale: Climate Change remains a persistent global issue with direct local impacts. Resident input indicates it is still a concern in our community. Establishing it as a separate priority may help to communicate the importance of the issue to the public.

Option B – keep climate change as a lens.

Rationale: after declaring a climate emergency in 2019, Council developed a Climate Change Action Plan. Adopting climate change as a lens follows the continuum of an initiative beginning as a standalone strategic project and evolving into an embedded process that is factored into the various aspects of municipal operation. This change is happening organically, for example, Council created a Sustainability Committee to advise on the development of the action plan but determined that a committee was no longer required after the adoption of the plan.

Council's Revised Strategic Vision

Based on the input provided through the engagement session the below text shows the potential revisions provided for Council to consider:

Regional Economic Development

Support initiatives that focus on regional economic development

- Commercial development (zoning, advocate for small business)
- Advocate for improved cell service
- Regional industrial park (investment for future tax benefit)
- Establish region economic development platforms

Infrastructure Upgrades, Expansion, and Management

Planning and investing for growth

- Collaborate regionally to expand infrastructure that supports growth
- Create a plan that identifies needed infrastructure to support all types of housing
- Strengthen recreational assets to support our growing diverse communities, with a focus on access to waterways

Quality of life

Programs and services to maintain and improve affordability and quality of life for our residents

- Address loneliness, reconnect community, and improve social inclusion
- Recreation, parks & programs
- Celebrating & preserving communities

Communication & Engagement

Building a strong community fabric

- Improve and increase public communication
- Improve and increase public engagement
- Focus on rebuilding community fabric

Climate Change Action

Work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the changing climate

- Reduce the District's corporate emissions
- Invest in climate resilient infrastructure
- Create opportunities for more food security in the region

Budget Implications

The intention of the strategic priorities is to drive the creation and approval of the 2025-26 budget. The proposed engagement elements of the work are included in the 2024-25 administration department budget.

Alternatives

See options, outlined above

Conclusion

Establishing strategic priorities is an important governance exercise. The district has now completed public engagement on the draft priorities statement and considered changes based

on those options. The statements that are approved by Council will provide helpful evaluative criteria as Council works through policy and governance questions. These statements will also be critical in guiding staff in preparing budget materials for the 2025-26 fiscal year.

| Report Preparation | |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Department | |
| Report Prepared by | Alex Dumaresq |
| Report Approved by | |
| Date Reviewed by C.A.O. | |

APPENDIX A – Comments received via public engagement open house and the engage.modl.ca forum

Regional Economic Development

- I see these projects as ways to spend more & more tax payer dollars. In addition where is there real time benefits to the north eastern parts of MODL. To me its all about building up the golden circle ... 5 miles or 5 minutes from Bridgewater. There appears to be no end to generating ways to spend our property tax money.
- The marketing levy has gotten negative feedback. There was an assumption it would apply to hotels and motels and instead is applied across the board. People trying to generate some extra income by renting a cottage through the summer are now faced with a reporting burden and fines/leans against properties should they fail to report monthly. This is too onerous. The bio-economy development zone... sounds like it aligns very well with the Premier's new mission statement to extract all value from NS natural resources. New bio tech is always interesting, but the existence of one requires the production of the other. The concern becomes that in order to maintain those flashy new high tech products/processes, you need the continual feed provided by clearcutting. Sounds like something coming directly from Forestry NS.
- Do our forests have the capacity to sustain a large scale bio economy (pulp mill) project? Do we want Paper Excellence in our region after their track record in Pictou Harbour. How does this project align with climate or biodiversity loss crises? What level of pollution from the site, and degraded wood lands will this create and for whom? How has cell service still not been sorted out? It's been years and millions spent. Such a tired goal. Nothing on Tourism here, seems like a major draw.
- Missing from the Strategic Priorities altogether is any reference to climate change adaptation. As noted, coastal protection is an issue, but it is also only one aspect. Another is wildfire mitigation and prevention. These are going to have to be addressed through long-term inter-governmental planning and multi-phased implementation but planning and budgeting must start now. These initiatives are going to be a real drain on the tax base at all levels of government.
- There should be a budget item for implementation of Coastal Protection that was just off loaded by Tim and Tim to municipal units. There should be priority projects that align with it including acquisition of strategic coastal public access and maintenance of them. You need a gis analyst to staff the project for where and how the new development rules are applied. You might need better training for other staff on the ground for

building close to waters. The same is true for implementation and maybe exceeding the fairly vanilla climate action plan which could be bolder. Where is green procurement as a lens or sustainable energy strategy for all public buildings? Coastal protection could also be a lens for section 5. Equity is an obvious one but I assume that is in place.

- Agree, 100%. How are we going to implement our new municipal Coastal Protection legislation without continuing the focus of climate? We need education for real estate agents, contractors, homeowners re how the new coastal protection regulations apply. We need flood prevention assessment and planning, emergency preparedness for extreme weather and fire, etc. We also need to prioritize wetland and forest conservation and water source protection. In the face of climate change, the proposed strategic priorities do not address the most pressing issue of our time and which will/is impacting our County significantly.
- There are positive ideas here, though it feels a bit like a business class brainstorm. I am not sure this sounds like a #1 priority, esp bio tech (meaning biomass burning or what, not sure). This does sound like a lot of investment and infrastructure dev for unclear payoff.
- I like where you are headed with making our area attractive to new businesses and retaining the ones we already have. The more businesses invest... the more our community doesn't need to rely on tourism to survive. Grow our communities, and we grow our tax base... and hopefully bring taxes in our area down? I agree on that we must all contribute to taxes, however, I don't agree in the current climate we should be increasing the residential tax.
- The Osprey Village project contains a marshland (feeding into the LaHave River) which MODL seems intent on destroying. When they purchased the property it had a wetland which was declared as an "Environmentally Sensitive Zone". MODL had it resurveyed and discovered that the wetland was larger than first thought. MODL then dumped the Environmentally Sensitive designation by creating a "Significant Watercourses "map. Look at their presentations now and the wetland is shown as an R3 zoning which means high density housing. WHAT NEXT - fill in the LaHave River for housing. There needs to be some respect for our environment ahead of the almighty dollar.
 - I agree with you. I have wondered why that has been allowed to happen. Wetlands may seem like wasted land, they are anything but.
 - I also wondered about this. Osprey seems to have been developed with a goal of using as much land as possible and to encourage as much driving as possible. The "enhancement" plan is an opportunity for leading-edge sustainable planning. Osprey *could* be a destination and part of reconnecting community. Right now it's a place to drive to, buy stuff, drive home.
- Leverage provincial and federal economic programs – Advocate for MODL's inclusion in programs such as the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) funding streams or

Nova Scotia Business Inc. (NSBI) initiatives. Develop a regional business retention and expansion strategy – Conduct targeted outreach to identify challenges and opportunities for local businesses. Address transportation barriers by supporting mobile markets or cooperative delivery systems for rural farmers (Maybe this is FoodHub?) Leverage regional partnerships to make the most of shared resources and avoid duplicating economic development efforts across small communities.

- Agree with others saying that climate change mitigation and adaptation should continue to be a priority for MODL. Listening to some council statements it seems like the existing Climate Action Plan is at risk of being quietly tossed aside and not implemented. If there is a push for MODL council to add climate change as a strategic priority now there is clear direction for council that climate change is an important consideration and a greater barrier to abandoning the climate action plan. MODL has a chance to be a leader in local-level climate mitigation and adaptation. We are on the right page with the existing coastal protection policies and by-laws and coastal action plan; lets keep moving in that direction.
- Climate justice absolutely needs to be a priority. The most important legacy of our times will be whether municipalities adequately decarbonize and adapt their communities to avoid the worst case climate scenarios by the end of the century. The livability of world that our children and grandchildren inherit depend on it, and history will judge us according to how well we do. Does this council want to be remembered as one where in a time when most action was needed, we didn't even bother to make climate change a priority?
- I'm very curious how you partner with TOB for a Regional Industrial Park, who funds it, which municipality is it in/who reaps the benefits? I oppose the Osprey Village Enhancement Plan, especially the leasing of space for the Lumia Health Centre. I don't understand why we would pay \$300,000 for a leasehold, then pay to develop the building, then pay for space to rent the building. I understand that we need medical care for all of the residents of MODL, but the reality is, New Germany was able to do it without the municipality subsidizing it (in fact they built it without any government funding whatsoever), and the extreme costs associated with this project aren't justified when there are alternative avenues to recruit healthcare providers to the area. If it means cutting our losses at the leasehold, so be it, I see no reason to lease space in that building.
- Support and promote local businesses
- Advocate for better cell service. Dayspring Pine Grove
- cell service Lr Br Rd to Hwy 10 very unpredictable & reliable
- Better cell service Middle LaHave
- better cell service
- cell & internet essential but also roads

- To create healthy, sustainable communities we need to prioritize health over profits. I encourage the Municipality to explore 'well-being economies' and 'solidarity' economies. We can have positive growth while promoting health
- More focus on attracting/supporting local less large corporations; prevent economic leakage as much as possible
- Good to see cooperation between town and county
- Small scale affordable housing business

Infrastructure

- In order to enhance the quality of life in Osprey Village going forward, a serious effort must be made to connect with the existing public transit available in Bridgewater. Any future system must be on a cost shared basis that reflects the actual realities going forward. Basically MODL/Osprey Village needs access to public transit to not only transport the pending 700+ immediate residents of Osprey Village into Bridgewater, you need it to give easier access to the services in the "village" to the 9,000 + residents of Bridgewater. The only benefits for the town of Bridgewater currently would be enhancement of the quality of life to its residents providing easier access to the services in the "village". Also the prospect of an infusion of cash towards the operation and maintenance of the system. They would need to illustrate the future benefits to the Bridgewater business community of access to the planned and pending future population in and around the "village". Also, the potential to reduce the bottle neck that presently exists on Aberdeen Road & North Street. This will require tough negotiations and a great selling job illustrating the benefits going forward for both parties. MODL will need to anti-up some serious cost sharing initially to kick start any agreement.
- Collaborate, Create, Strengthen, Explore, Leverage wonderful words indeed. In 2016 MODL bought land at Sherbrooke Lake for development of a public park. Mayor Downe proudly announced at Council we are on our way to Sherbrooke Lake. All Council members agreed with this action of Council. Then the new Mayor & the new Council threw the file in with the garbage on its way to the landfill. How are residents in the north eastern part of MODL where the Sherbrooke Lake saga has been playing out for the past 40 years to believe anything Council proclaims? Collaborate, Create, Strengthen, Explore, Leverage. Give me a break. I say prove these words by actions.
- There is an immediate lack of affordable housing options in the region. What are the aspects of expanded infrastructure presented here that will help to target that immediate need? I am concerned that the points only say "create a plan that identifies

needed infrastructure to support all types of housing", which seems two steps removed from providing practical assistance to families and individuals who are actively experiencing housing insecurity.

- This 2nd priority is stacked with items/ideas that are difficult to tease out. It's like some (half?) of them belong in the 1st economic/regional development priority, and others belong in a separate strategic priority -- a suggestion for the missing Priority: Protecting and Enhancing Natural Assets. Under this priority: parks and rec areas creation, water protection, coastal protection education and action, water agreement, parks project, regional investment in natural assets and rec opportunities (& tourism!) County-wide, programs to engage new Lunenburg County residents, especially immigrants, in funded recreation opps, encourage wetland protection with tax breaks for landowners who steward natural wetland, coastlines and intact forest on property, enhance and encourage active transportation, health and wellness by making outdoor recreation available to all residents and creating/ensuring public access to rivers, lakes, beaches.
 - Absolutely agree that there is a missing priority: environment, climate, sustainability. This has to be more than a "lens" if MODL is to reach its goal of net zero by 2050
- Develop a Rural Infrastructure Strategy: Identify and prioritize infrastructure needs across all communities to ensure equitable investment. Explore public-private partnerships for servicing expansion: Leverage partnerships with developers to extend water and sewer to designated growth areas while maintaining affordability. Expand Multi-Use Trails & Active Transportation Networks : Connect communities with better walking, biking, and ATV-friendly routes (I live just outside of Bridgewater and would love to cycle into town more often, but do not feel safe to do so along HWY 3) - Are there partnership options to increase this connectivity? Expand Climate Resilient Infrastructure Planning: Ensure water, wastewater, and transportation upgrades factor in climate adaptation, such as flood prevention and stormwater management. Expand Well Water Protection & Septic Support Programs Continue to support rural homeowners with well and septic maintenance programs to ensure safe drinking water.
- I don't necessarily agree with public transit connecting Town of Bridgewater to Cookville, but if you do, there needs to be an evaluation of what residents it's really helping. Folks in MODL live on the Cookville side near the industrial park. Is the ridership going to be primarily MODL residents, or will the majority be Town of Bridgewater residents? TOB should be paying for their percentage of benefit if this project is moving forward. There also should be an attempt to make it financially sustainable on its own, and if you're looking to grow public transit, I certainly hope it isn't just going to be along the 103 where folks can more easily access resources, do not forget folks in more rural areas shouldn't be subsidizing benefits that they aren't able to utilize themselves. I look at the failure of the LCLC, and the idea of partnering further with the Town of Bridgewater is incredibly concerning. If Council chooses to go this route for any projects

the costs need to be analyzed by benefit of percentage of residents in each municipality (not just a 50/50 split), clear financial expectations outlined, and there needs to be an escape clause. Development of Sherbrooke Lake Park is long overdue. I oppose the Osprey Village Enhancement Plan, especially the leasing of space for the Lumia Health Centre. I don't understand why we would pay \$300,000 for a leasehold, then pay to develop the building, then pay for space to rent the building. I understand that we need medical care for all of the residents of MODL, but the reality is, New Germany was able to do it without the municipality subsidizing it (in fact they built it without any government funding whatsoever), and the extreme costs associated with this project aren't justified when there are alternative avenues to recruit healthcare providers to the area. If it means cutting our losses at the leasehold, so be it, I see no reason to lease space in that building. I'm very curious how you partner with TOB for a Regional Industrial Park, who funds it, which municipality is it in/who reaps the benefits? -While you're looking at wastewater treatment upgrades, an attempt needs to be made to make the ones operating at a deficit more financially sound. Residents of the municipality shouldn't have to subsidize sewer systems they aren't using. Last year Council looked at the EV charging stations, and established a fee schedule that should make them cost neutral, but I'm fairly certain that there was no discussion as to whether or not that fee would also be enough to cover maintenance and repair/eventual replacement of those charging stations. I look at our EV charging station budgets, and they are not cheap. Folks who can't afford an EV shouldn't be subsidizing this in any way, not even the capital costs for these charging stations. It's time to let the LCLC go. Failing that, you should have the LCLC provide data that illustrates what percentage of residents from MODL vs TOB utilize the LCLC. My guess is MODL is paying 50% of the deficit while a much smaller percentage of our residents are utilizing it when compared to TOB. This information should be public, for transparency purposes. -The signs posted in the parks saying that parking overnight and camping are prohibited are TERRIBLE. This Council needs to endeavour to build public trust, and to be more kind as a whole. Those signs are incredibly unwelcoming, and uncalled for. I am certain you can find a better way forward.

- All infrastructure projects & community services should have built-in leeway for higher water levels, higher risk of fires, higher temperatures in summer. We need to be PROACTIVE, not reactive
- Need to consider traffic egress/flow commerce vs/w/ residential
- I'd like to see more investment or commitment to affordable housing and affordable housing
- Developments
- Affordable housing info/supports \$ to afford
- Slow down growth! Too much too fast; It's getting crowded; traffic is crazy and dangerous

- Affordable Housing Land & Supports
- Increase availability of affordable housing
 - Encourage or create incentives for non-profits to develop long-term affordable housing
 - Donate land for such developments
 - Offer grants based on number of units created
 - Provide building fund to provide access to immediate funding for start-ups, possibly on loan basis
 - Low interest loans give incentives to local home owners to develop apartments on their property suitable for renters or lower income individuals
- MODC & MODL move Sherbrooke access ahead -start <= basics

Quality of life

- Expand Intergenerational & Social Connection Programs: Develop programs that connect seniors with youth through mentoring, storytelling, or skill-sharing initiatives. Host Community Gathering Events in Small Villages & Rural Areas: Support pop-up community dinners, storytelling nights, or cultural events to bring people together. Create a Rural Volunteer Match Program: Connect residents who want to volunteer with local non-profits, seniors in need, or community organizations - there's so much going on throughout the district that can be harnessed and MODL as a matchmaker for these groups rather than MODL taking on the programming Support local arts!
- If Council is unable or unwilling to add climate change/sustainability as an individual priority I believe it could fall under this strategic priority of Quality of Life. Climate change is likely the most important threat to communities' quality of life (QOL). MODL will not be maintaining or improving residents' QOL without addressing climate change/sustainability. MODL has an existing climate action plan lets see it implemented.
- Food Vibes sounds like an amazing project, and food security definitely needs to be a part of your priorities, but it shouldn't be isolated to Riverport. The 644 has a very similar project, and there should be funds to assist other communities in rolling out these types of projects as well. -Your Homeowner Clean Water and Energy Financing Program is ok, for those that are willing and able to take out a loan, but most folks aren't in that position. If you want to make an impact with water, you should have public access points for filling jugs throughout the municipality. Town of Bridgewater has offered a fill station at Shipyards Landing in the past, and there's no reason MODL couldn't do so year round, at various locations (perhaps pay to have fill stations set up at fire departments and pay for the estimated cost and maintenance of the equipment). I live without water at home, and fill jugs to bring home water for myself and my farm

animals. I drive from Hemford to BRIDGEWATER to get water on a regular basis (and of late it's been even more difficult with a torn rotator cuff). Whenever I go to the water fill location next to Andy's Tire there is always, no matter what time of day I go, a lineup year round. I also dump my black water tank at the Irving in Bridgewater, and I have seen folks queuing at the dump site to use the black water tank flushing hose to fill jugs to take home. Folks are DESPERATE, and I can only imagine what life is like for folks who struggle with this while also not having reliable transportation. Your Active Transportation Strategy NEEDS to include a real sidewalk on School Street in New Germany IMMEDIATELY. You can read my update on potential new school locations here and find additional information on the topic here and here. This street is dangerous for the students, and New Germany has waited long enough. If you can afford to spend money on sidewalks and beautification of Osprey Village, you can afford a sidewalk on School Street in New Germany. Regarding the Grants- I believe in order to prevent the insufficiencies experienced in the last fiscal year, there need to be changes made in advance of the budget meeting. I believe the grant policy needs to be changed, and the rubrics for eligibility needs to be updated to prioritize organizations that are within our municipality and those that provide financially accessible community opportunities, and also that budget needs to be increased. --The signs posted in the parks saying that parking overnight and camping are prohibited are TERRIBLE. This Council needs to endeavour to build public trust, and to be more kind as a whole. Those signs are incredibly unwelcoming, and uncalled for. I am certain you can find a better way forward. -Regarding funding for fire departments, there should be a larger budget for training, and it should be useable for more than just MODL provided training. Firefighters should be able to apply for training grants for relevant training where need is demonstrated. For example, if one of my departments needs more drivers/pump operators I should be able to apply for funding for the Fire School Pump Ops Course, not necessarily exclusively leadership training courses. What is the point in having lots of "leaders" if there is nobody to drive the truck? Priorities here are backwards. Also, MODL could use the CCBF grant monies for fire department capital projects. I believe that should be implemented immediately through a grant basis for departments demonstrating need.

- Clearly name equity and supporting diversity
- celebrate/preserve community [is] language use by hate group
- Celebrate/preserve communities is a dog whistle leaving equity community members felt unsafe. If the intent is to ensure wellbeing of rural communities say that. Be more explicit in community standing for equity and division. Make equity & inclusion part of strategic priorities and ensure your standing for legal protections of equity groups especially as hate groups fester/grow momentum in community.
- hate groups on rise in MODL
- Explicit language

- Property tax relief
- address loneliness
- does the county have a wellness call out
- reconnecting community – updates
- Reduce speed on Pine Grove Rd change the entering & exiting of Walmart
- Consider more opportunities to engage whole families in recreation and civics. (eg open gym spaces that are not age restricted - badminton, basketball, etc.)
- Up to date community calendar on web - not a fan updated clear ways to submit
- Stop yearly home property tax increases. Property yearly evals go up without good reason
- Organization to help co-habitation between neighbours to resolve conflict before it gets out of hand
- we want our area to be as it is. RURAL. Too much growth way too fast
- Events & recreational buildings for youth/teens
- Community conversations to identify trends versus advisory committee style participation
- More community events -community dinners? - community conversations
- Consider reviewing formula/indicators used to determine property tax rebates. Public Health could assist with this process/help with indicators
- Sidewalks in New Germany
- Property Tax
- Climate Change should be a major consideration
- Climate change should be a major consideration in all future development.
- Walmart shelves are empty food not enough! Noise in neighbourhood we moved for quiet
- standardizing parks is not essential - Basics-picnic table & portapotty @ sherbrooke access
- Re Property tax high due to paying taxes to provide services not used or needed by myself.
- Celebrate and preserve communities (be more specific in what this means)

Communication and Engagement

- Please do not spend taxpayer money to develop an app to better communicate with us. Tools aplenty exist, and government apps do not have a great track record. This priority feels more like how to improve Council and Councillor effectiveness than municipal priority. We need housing, support for new immigrants, yes programs to reduce loneliness and enhance connection esp within the entire municipality. Outreach and

supports for elderly living at home. Programming for young people to have opportunity to do community work supported by funding

- While digital tools can enhance outreach, I don't think an app is the best fit for MODL (senior/rural). Instead, a localized alert system for essential information (emergencies, road closures, service disruptions, etc.) could provide direct and relevant updates without needing to regularly check an app. Public engagement should be more than just sharing information. It should give residents real ways to connect, participate, and see their input reflected in decisions. While advisory committees have their place, they can be formal, rigid, and not always accessible to a broad range of residents. A more flexible, inclusive public participation strategy would be lovely. After collecting public input, it would be cool to see closed feedback loops (you said, we did, here's why) that shows how feedback influenced Council decisions.
- Consultations need to be held in other communities in addition to Cookville.
- MODL: To have an update for the app. Also update Newsletter -we use the Bridgewater sites for both daily. The Post/Rent
- Doing quite well in this area -keep up the great work. Only comment would be to continue to prioritize accessibility
- Easier to find agendas weekly on Home page -Hyperlink next weeks meetings/agendas
- I am new to the province & the MODL the communications have been excellent since the election (I moved in summer 2024)
- Have public meetings for input. Don't make decisions without speaking to those who live there
- More public engagement events would be great.
- What are options for public participation vs. public engagement?
- community engagement directed @ equity and inclusion
- More community networking events for local & small businesses to socialize & promote with the public events
- Explicit on ensuring minimizing hate
- implement regular evening Council meetings, including in-community meetings

Lens

- Love these strategic lenses in general! They seem to provide good framing for Council decision-making. However, I think sustainability/climate change should be a strategic priority rather than a strategic lens. I believe climate change as a priority can lead to different decisions than climate change as a strategic lens. For example, climate change

as a lens may lead to more minor green-washy climate actions like using "sustainable materials" for projects vs. climate change as a priority could consider the bigger picture like using flood and other hazard mapping for project placement etc.

- Strategic Lens for Evaluation - I see these are staff recommendations, several of which appear to be attempts to lock Council into the previous Council's plans; I believe the 5 year plan that Council put forward last year should almost entirely be scrapped. I would not agree to any priorities that force you to move forward on these. Council - please remember that you make the decisions (staff can only make recommendations), do not give them all of the power. A new Council was elected to ensure MODL takes a different direction, you will need to think for yourselves in order to get the municipality back on track. Do not borrow any money. There is no need for MODL to borrow, we should only take on projects within our means.
- Very important to use an equity lens/prioritize health and well-being
 - *I like this also (re: above comment on using an equity lens)
- Adaptation for climate & housing
- We have concerns over how much land is being developed. Where will the wildlife go?
- Climate needs to be a municipal priority - not just a lens- we are in a climate crisis
- Make Climate & Environment a Priority
- be clear about what parts of sustainability -> enviro? -> accessibility? We are in a climate crisis
- I remain concerned about coastal protection including flood plains
 - 1) Ensuring our bldg setbacks, etc, address risk. We need to have a long-term outlook.
 - 2) Preserve, where possible, public access to the water. Not every access need be a developed park
- (a participant noted with a sticky note that they agree with the comment directly above).
- Equity & inclusion intersects with sustainability
- What are the priorities & values of council? Family first? Economic vs growth?
- *A couple of things I'd like to see on the strategic plan
 - 1) green space, in building the community health centre adjacent to the MODL - please consider green space- do not make snap decision about utilizing that space for other things, we need a green space
 - 2) Where is Climate change noted on the plan??
 - 3) Low income housing not community services housing but affordable 1 & 2 bedroom housing \$600 or \$700 month rent/near amenities, services.
- *Sustainability needs to include all facets of life.
- Bigger priority needs include long term transportation & infrastructure impacts. Minimize pavement.

- Communication and Public Engagement: How will it be communicated to residents? (But how will they be engaged too?)

Major Projects

- Social Housing?
- Stop using platforms where hate festers "X" Twitter and rely on alternative comments website, email newsletter, app esp as community leaves platforms where hate festers
- 2x Daily run on #10 from NG to B'water to establish behavior relying on public transportation
- Public participation in housing strategies, ensuring communities don't change drastically
- Survey was done on water access - what happened to that? access to lakes, improve boat launch Wentzell Lake
- Housing Strategy - Need to prioritize this - would be best if it could be a regional plan.
 - (A second sticky was added by another resident noting agreement with the commenter)
- We like to keep our area RURAL we do NOT want to be a city! There is too much land being sold
- Need to do something about the Mill Brook Bridge on Pine Grove Rd. Too narrow & too dangerous
- The col-Heathcare Centre centre providing some Pro Bono services would be good.
- No comment

NOTE: an additional email was sent to council members from a resident regarding the strategic priorities engagement. It was forwarded to staff who compared it against comments submitted by that resident to the online forum and included any topics not already covered in the summary tabulation.