

P25-04 PIM PowerPoint Recording - Transcript

0:01

This is a recording of a presentation originally given at a public information meeting on Tuesday, June 16th, 2026.

0:09

This is the beginning of a planning project to review municipal policies and regulations related to the development of housing in the Municipality of the County of Kings.

0:19

My name is Laura Moser and I'm the manager of Planning Services.

0:24

Whenever we do a project like this, the first question we receive is why are we even doing this?

0:30

While COVID did not create the housing crisis, many of the issues with the provisions of adequate and appropriate housing were highlighted through the trends of the COVID 29 COVID-19 pandemic, including rent control issues, loss of employment, an increase in interprovincial migration for which Nova Scotia disproportionately experienced, and finally, an opportunities to work from home which created new and different demands for housing.

0:57

During this time period, there were demographic shifts that occurred. As 2026 is the census year, we do not yet have a complete picture of the trends that developed during that time period, but we are starting to see the shifts that likely increase between 21 and 26 in the 2021 census data.

1:17

Between 2016 and 2021, the municipality saw an overall increase in population of 2.2%, which was a change in the trend that saw population decreases in the previous three censuses.

1:31

There has also been a shift during this time period in household composition in the municipality, with an overall 11% increase in the proportion of single person households and a decrease in larger households of three or four persons. The persons per dwelling, however, remained relatively consistent at 2.3 persons per household. Shifts in demographics can often increase or change demands for housing and shift the types of housing that are needed

2:01

or desired by the population. For example, an increase in loan person households can create increased demands for apartment units or other small scale units.

2:16

In response to the housing crisis, the federal government, in partnership with the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, or CMHC, launched the Housing Accelerator Fund to incentivize the development of increased housing that is affordable, diverse and climate resilient.

2:33

The Municipality of the County of Kings was successful in securing \$5.9 million as part of the Housing Accelerator Fund and earlier this year additional funds were made available and through an additional application, the municipality was able to secure

2:49

an additional \$595,000. Initiatives associated with this program need to be complete or well in progress by 2027.

2:59

Emphasis is intended to be on intensifying existing sewer serviced areas as opposed to extending infrastructure into new areas of the municipality.

3:09

There are also specific requirements associated with the Housing Accelerator Fund, with the most important expectation being that all residential lots will accommodate a minimum of four residential units

3:22

in all residential zones. For reference, a residential unit is defined by being a separate living space containing, at a minimum, a kitchen, a washroom and a bedroom.

3:35

To fulfill our Housing Accelerator Fund requirement, the municipality has completed several initiatives to date.

3:42

In October of 2023, accessory dwellings were enabled within all residential zones in the municipality.

3:49

An accessory dwelling is a self-contained residential unit located on the lot that already has a house on it.

3:56

At that same time, municipal council approved amendments to the planning documents permitting grouped dwellings in the residential one and two unit or R2 zone. Grouped dwellings is the development of two or more dwellings containing one or two units each on a single property.

4:14

Previously, only one house was permitted to be developed in the R2 zone.

4:20

In February of 2024, amendments were adopted adjusting the number of units permitted in an apartment buildings in the residential mixed density or R3 zone and the residential multi unit or R4 zone. In the R3 zone, the limit went from 8 to 12 units in each apartment building and in the R4

4:37

four zone, previously only 16 units were permitted per building and that restriction has now been removed.

4:45

In 2025, the municipality was successful in meeting the requirement of four units per lot in all zones by adopting amendments permitting

4:54

in the residential one unit or R1 zone permissions for two secondary suites within the main dwelling along with the main unit for a total of 3 units, plus an accessory dwelling for a total of 4 units on the lot. For clarity, all other residential zones already permitted

5:11

up to or more than 4 units per lot.

5:24

Through this project, staff are seeking to draft amendments that simplify regulations related to residential development, clarify the purpose of each zone and where it is applied, and provides them flexibility in the permitted build forms enabled to accommodate the number of permitted uses. For example, currently the residential one unit or R1 zone is somewhat unclear at this time since the name implies only one unit is permitted to be developed when in actuality 4 units are permitted.

5:53

Staff are also looking to enable the optimization of vacant and underutilized lots in appropriate ways within existing neighborhoods as well as along transportation routes in appropriate locations.

6:09

I'd now like to go over our process for this project. Our first step is the public information meeting for which this presentation is part of. Our next step would involve staff taking feedback away and working on proposed amendments over the summer. We would then present these at a future open house in the fall and online in a similar format as this presentation.

6:31

A report would then be drafted and presented along with the amendments to the Planning Advisory Committee.

6:36

Planning Advisory Committee would then host a public participation in advance of making a recommendation to Council.

6:42

At that point, the approval process would begin with first reading by Council, a public hearing and then second reading.

6:49

As it is likely that this project will involve amendments to the municipal planning strategy, there would

be no opportunity for public appeal, but rather the amendments would go to the provincial Department of Municipal Affairs for review and ultimate approval.

7:04

The arrows on the screen indicate opportunities for public participation or feedback. So to summarize, tonight the public information meeting, or rather last night the public information meeting, or through other avenues, Staff are happy to receive public feedback again. We would have a second meeting in the fall which the public would be invited to and would be able to submit feedback

7:31

at the public participation meeting in advance of planning advisory committees recommendation to council. There would be an opportunity for public comment and as well at the public hearing in advance of Council adoption.

7:44

This presentation is meant to be reviewed in conjunction with other materials available on the municipal website, including presentation boards that were available for review at the public information meeting and these contain a lot of supporting information.

8:01

This project involves land within growth centres. The municipality contains 12 growth centres which were identified in 1979.

8:09

Growth centres occupy 3% of the land mass of the municipality but accommodate 48% of the population.

8:17

This is consistent with Council's intention that most non rural development is meant to be directed to growth centres, including most residential, commercial and industrial development, but also community, recreation and educational uses.

8:32

Growth centres are generally defined by the presence of central sanitary sewer servicing, but can also include central water services, active transportation corridors in the forms of trails or sidewalks, community recreation and educational facilities, as well as institutional uses.

8:50

Growth centres also generally have a diversity of housing options as well as commercial and industrial uses. Within

8:58

this is a map of the municipality that shows the locations of growth centres in Orange.

9:04

They consist of Kingston, Greenwood, Elsword, Waterville, Cambridge, Coldbrook, Centreville, N Kentville, New Minus, Port Williams, Canning, Enhanced Border. We can see through this map that the areas are quite small in relation to the rest of the municipality which is classified as rural.

9:24

These are the current gross centre zones that permit residential uses we sell. We see in these zones the R1R2R3R4 and R5 are across the top of the first table on your left, and the C1C2 and C3 zones are across the top of the table on the right.

9:43

Underneath each of these zone headings, we see highlighted the list of uses that are permitted.

9:51

We see that in the R1 zone, the list of permitted uses is relatively limited in the form of 1 unit dwellings and secondary suites. Accessory dwellings again are permitted in all residential zones in the municipality.

10:07

As we move to the right along the R2R3 and R4 zone, we see an increased number of permitted uses with a wider variety of residential built forms.

10:18

Similarly, in the commercial zones, in our general commercial or C1 zone and our central business or C2 zone, we see limited numbers of residential permissions, these being residential units in commercial buildings and are located above, behind or below the commercial unit.

10:38

Within the C3 or the mixed commercial residential zone, we see a broad variety of residential uses that are permitted.

10:49

In terms of understanding the principles that will guide staff in drafting proposed amendments, it's important to understand the policy direction of the Municipal Planning Strategy and what Council is looking to achieve when considering development in the municipality.

11:04

The Municipal Planning strategy directs us to pursue the development of complete communities, which are communities that are where the vast majority of daily needs can be fulfilled and are characterized by a mix of housing and non residential amenities in close proximity to encourage reduced number and reduce distances of car trips and promote active living.

11:26

Complete communities aim to accommodate all individuals at all ages and stages of life and income levels and abilities.

11:38

A change in demographics often means different housing needs, so there needs to be an adjustment potentially when demographics change.

11:47

As previously discussed, one such shift has been seen in the municipality in the significant

increase in households consisting of just one person, which can change the type of housing that is in demand.

11:59

Overregulation of build form can result in barriers to housing solutions that seek to address shifts in demographics, such as aging in place or the provision of housing for aging or young family members on existing lots.

12:15

All income levels except for the ultra rich now struggle to secure appropriate housing that they can afford, including those positions that are so important to our communities like nurses, teachers and other professionals.

12:30

With regard to infrastructure, the MPs or Municipal Planning Strategy directs us to encourage the development of cost effective and efficient sewer and water infrastructure.

12:39

In providing this, there are several considerations. Life cycle planning, which considers the age of infrastructure as well as the appropriate size that would enable some growth within communities without being oversized and as a result, inefficient.

12:54

Unexpected repairs Infrastructure planning needs to account for the potential unexpected repairs, which are

13:02

expected to increase with the increase of extreme weather events due to climate change.

13:07

Finally, operating expenses need to be kept low to ensure that there are resources to pay for repairs and ultimate replacement at the end of infrastructure lifespan.

13:17

So how do we make sure that these considerations are adequately addressed?

13:22

The main way this is done is through optimizing infrastructure by ensuring that infrastructure is sized appropriately and by aligning zoning and development within utility capacities.

13:34

This could include increasing densities along main transportation corridors since this is often the location of larger trunk, sewer and water lines

13:42

that can accommodate larger flow.

13:45

It also means encouraging the development of missing middle housing, which is considered small scale housing forms that can help to intensify our existing neighborhoods without major disruption.

13:58

The municipal planning documents also focused consistently on agricultural protection as this is a significant agricultural area in the province. This is related consideration for residential development since any expansion of growth centres to accommodate more housing would ultimately be on to land identified for farming.

14:19

In order to preserve to preserve our agricultural land, it is imperative that we use land efficiency efficiently within our growth centres.

14:27

We often hear that there's no more landing growth centres to accommodate housing, but that's simply not the case when looking at the numbers.

14:34

Our residential zones permit between 21 and 24 units per acre, but our eyes built densities in our lowest density zones is less than 3 units per acre, indicating that there are significant amounts of land within growth centres that can be better utilized in providing housing.

14:51

Growing inward by optimizing our existing infrastructure as preferred over growing outward, which would result in expanding servicing infrastructure, increasing costs and result in a loss of critical farmland.

15:05

With regards to this project, in terms of managing expectations, this is not a decision making project on a specific development or proposal.

15:15

The decisions associated with this project will help guide future development decisions and permissions. Amendments made to the planning to the municipal planning documents must respect the statements of provincial interest, particularly those related to housing, infrastructure and agriculture. The presentation boards available for review on the municipal website contain information related to these statements.

15:39

All planning documents in the Province of Nova Scotia and amendments to those documents must be reasonably consistent with the statement of Provincial interest and if they are not reasonably consistent in the eyes of the Minister of Municipal Affairs, that individual can amend the municipalities documents documents to ensure consistency.

15:59

Finally, as previously mentioned, the Housing Accelerator Fund

16:04

requires that there be certain initiatives that the municipality achieves. As a result, staff will not consider amendments that are inconsistent with these requirements since funds may be revoked if they were to be adopted.

16:25

Our next steps in this process is to take the feedback received through this initial stage and over the summer prepare the proposed amendment.

16:33

These are planned to be presented at a follow up open house in the fall and the typical notifications will follow on our municipal website and Facebook page.

16:43

After staff um

16:46

bring the amendments forward to the public in the open House, the proposal will be taken to Planning Advisory Committee and then the approval process will start.

16:59

As a reminder, this is the step by step process of this project and the arrow is on the screen indicate opportunities for public participation and

17:09

there are other ways to participate in this project. Please feel free to reach out to any member of planning staff either by e-mail at planning@countyofkings.ca or by calling our main phone line at 902-690-6152 and just ask to speak to a planner.

17:25

We also have an online survey that is open and ready for responses and information on how to access it, as well as all of the materials presented to the public at our open house. And this video recording is available on our municipal website at www.countydockings.ca/planning under Project P25-04.

17:51

This concludes our presentation. Thank you very much for listening and we look forward to hearing from you soon. Thanks very much and have a great summer.