

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	1
Key Themes	1
Electrical Utility: Progress, Priorities, and Preparing for the Future	1
Organizational Capacity: From Staffing to Sustainable Performance	2
Governance and Planning: Turning Vision into Action	3
Infrastructure and Asset Management: Planning for Long-Term Sustainability	3
Communications and Engagement: Building Trust and Moving to the Next Level.....	4
Emerging Priority: Strategic Economic Development Planning	5

Executive Summary

In its first year, Council has focused on strengthening the foundations of municipal governance and administration, aligning its work with recognized best practices in municipal management. This has included advancing core processes, improving organizational capacity, and initiating key investments in infrastructure, planning, and communications. These efforts are already yielding early wins – building momentum, improving internal effectiveness, and strengthening trust with the community.

As Council enters its second year, it recognizes that important foundational work remains. Continued attention to asset management, governance frameworks, organizational development, and long-term financial planning will be essential to ensure the Town is well positioned for the future and able to avoid unexpected pressures on residents and future councils.

At the same time, the progress made to date creates space to begin advancing more aspirational, achievable priorities. In particular, Council is positioned to take meaningful steps forward in modernizing the Town’s electrical utility, responding to housing needs, and supporting the thoughtful growth and development of the community as a whole.

This balanced approach, continuing to strengthen core foundations while initiating forward-looking planning, will enable Council to responsibly unlock Lunenburg’s full potential and position the community for long-term success.

Key Themes

Electrical Utility: Progress, Priorities, and Preparing for the Future

In reflecting on the Town’s electrical utility, Council recognized both the meaningful progress achieved and the work still ahead. Important strides have been made: ownership has been clarified; multi-year capital investment is budgeted and underway; important service benchmarking is complete; and momentum is building. Maintaining this focus will be essential.

In the near term, priority projects such as Green Street and the planned substation upgrade are critical due to the lead time required for planning and materials orders. At the same time, interim solutions will be needed to address immediate system pressures, including strengthening connections to key areas like Salt Meadows and Blue Rocks.

Council also acknowledged the importance of beginning discussions around renewable energy. However, there was a shared understanding that the current grid must first be upgraded before it can support significant renewable integration. Securing ACOA funding through our partnership in the Maritime Municipal Electrical Utility Association to support grid improvements and the development of an electrification plan is an important step

we've already accomplished. Further supporting actions, including renewal of the service agreement with Nova Scotia Power and improving governance and management of the utility, will be essential. In the interim, additional technical support for the CAO will help ensure current investments deliver strong value.

Next Steps

- ☒ Develop and approve a phased electrical utility capital implementation plan identifying timelines, procurement requirements, and funding sources for priority projects such as Green Street and the substation upgrade.
- ☐ Initiate short-term engineering and operational solutions to address immediate grid capacity pressures in high-demand areas including Salt Meadows and Blue Rocks.
- ☐ Renew and modernize the service agreement with Nova Scotia Power to improve operational clarity, service coordination, and long-term system planning.
- ☐ Advance renewable energy readiness by completing the electrification planning work supported through ACOA funding
- ☐ Establishing governance improvements for utility oversight and management.

Organizational Capacity: From Staffing to Sustainable Performance

Council emphasized that building a strong organization goes beyond recruitment. While success in filling key roles has been encouraging, attention must now shift toward retaining staff, developing talent, and improving overall productivity.

This points to the need for a comprehensive Organizational Development Plan – one that prioritizes staff growth, supports retention, and builds a culture focused on people and not just positions. Encouragingly, recent efforts such as new hires, lunch-and-learn sessions, and more frequent staff engagement are already contributing to a stronger workplace environment.

The next phase will be about deepening this progress: supporting staff to succeed, strengthening teamwork, and focusing on productivity and results, not simply increasing headcount. The Organizational Development Plan will need to keep these primary goals in focus.

Next Steps

- ☐ Develop a comprehensive Organizational Development Plan focused on staff retention, leadership development, succession planning, and workplace culture.
- ☐ Introduce annual staff development and performance planning processes that align employee goals with Council's strategic priorities and organizational objectives.
- ☐ Expand internal engagement initiatives, including regular staff forums, cross-department collaboration opportunities, and professional development programming.

- Conduct a workflow and productivity review across departments to identify efficiencies, clarify roles, and ensure resources are aligned with operational priorities.

Governance and Planning: Turning Vision into Action

Council identified governance documents and processes as an area requiring greater clarity, consistency, and effectiveness. Key tools, including the Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS), Land Use By-Law (LUB), and Heritage By-Law, must better support Council in translating community vision into tangible outcomes.

Work is already underway, with updates to the MPS and LUB initiated and a review of the Heritage By-Law identified. At the same time, there is a need for improved understanding of how these processes function. Strengthening internal communication, clarifying procedures, and improving awareness of relationships with partners such as Parks Canada and UNESCO will be important steps.

Council also noted the importance of clearly positioning the Comprehensive Community Plan as an important guiding resource rather than a legislative document, helping to align expectations and improve decision-making.

Finally, Council has adopted a multi-year approach to monitoring and improving governance processes. Council and senior staff will participate in quarterly check-ins and annual refreshers on governance best practices to ensure decision making remains transparent and effective and in the best interest of the community.

Next Steps

- ☐ Establish a coordinated workplan and timeline for the review and update of the Municipal Planning Strategy, Land Use By-Law, and Heritage By-Law.
- ☐ Develop internal governance process guides and orientation materials to improve clarity around decision-making procedures, roles, and partner relationships.
- Implement quarterly governance review sessions and annual governance best-practice workshops for Council and senior staff.

Infrastructure and Asset Management: Planning for Long-Term Sustainability

A recurring theme throughout the session was the need for strong, long-term planning to support Lunenburg's infrastructure and financial sustainability. Council recognized that foundational work is still required to fully understand infrastructure needs and ensure assets are maintained and replaced in a timely, cost-effective manner.

Advancing asset management planning will be a key next step, including investing in capital planning tools and upgrading to digital mapping systems. These efforts will support

better decision-making and reduce the risk of unexpected financial pressures on future councils and residents.

Housing affordability was also identified as a critical component of long-term sustainability. Council highlighted the importance of responding to the Housing Needs Assessment, examining how internal processes affect affordability, and exploring partnerships with external organizations to develop innovative solutions.

Across all areas, there was a strong emphasis on best practices, proactive planning, and the careful use of reserves to prepare for future investment needs.

Next Steps

- ☐ Prepare a long-term asset management roadmap that identifies infrastructure replacement priorities, lifecycle costs, and reserve funding requirements.
- ☐ Procure and implement digital asset management and GIS mapping tools to support data-driven infrastructure planning and maintenance tracking.
- ☐ Begin work on a coordinated housing action response informed by the Housing Needs Assessment, including process improvements and partnership opportunities to support affordability.

Communications and Engagement: Building Trust and Moving to the Next Level

Council acknowledged that recent investments in communications are yielding positive results. Trust is growing, and there is an increasing sense of connection between Council, staff, and the community.

The next step is to bring greater structure and intentionality to this work. Developing a formal communications plan and supporting policies, including for social media, will help guide future efforts. At the same time, early steps toward a more strategic and consistent approach to public engagement will ensure that community input is effectively integrated into decision-making.

By building on this strong foundation, the Town can continue to strengthen relationships with residents and enhance confidence in its work.

Next Steps

- ☐ Develop and adopt a corporate communications and public engagement strategy that establishes clear objectives, audiences, and communication channels.
- ☒ Create supporting communications policies, including social media guidelines and public information protocols.
- ☐ Expand proactive community outreach initiatives, including regular updates, public information sessions, and improved digital communications tools.

Emerging Priority: Strategic Economic Development Planning

As Council continues to advance its core governance, infrastructure, and organizational priorities, an important emerging focus is the need to begin shaping a long-term vision for the Town's socio-economic future. While foundational work remains the immediate priority, there is a clear opportunity to start early conversations about a strategic development plan that reflects Lunenburg's unique character, strengths, and potential.

This initial phase is not about launching a full strategy, but rather about setting the stage, including identifying key questions, engaging early with stakeholders, and building a shared understanding of where the community wants to go. Thoughtful economic development planning will require alignment with ongoing work in areas such as infrastructure, housing, land use planning, and heritage preservation. Beginning these discussions now will ensure that future decisions are informed by a coherent and forward-looking vision.

Council anticipates that the majority of this work will take place in years three and four of its term, when the necessary foundational elements are more firmly in place. By starting the conversation this year, the Town can approach that future work with greater clarity, stronger community input, and a solid base from which to develop a strategic, achievable, and locally grounded economic development plan.

Next Steps

- ☐ Initiate a preliminary economic development scoping exercise to identify key community priorities, opportunities, and long-term growth considerations.
- ☐ Convene early stakeholder discussions with business leaders, community organizations, tourism partners, and regional agencies to inform future planning work.