



Fact Sheet 4 Environment

The natural environment in the municipality is not only a significant part of the cultural identity, but it plays an important role in the ecological integrity and ecosystem services that make it a spectacular place to live and visit. These areas include beaches, wetlands, coastal habitats, nature reserves, among many others.

What We Heard

The environment was a major topic of discussion during the initial phase of engagement for Plan Antigonish County. The Municipality of the County of Antigonish is situated in a remarkably beautiful natural environment, and residents and community members are deeply connected to the landscape and environment.



When asked what the major issues respondents wanted to see the planning process address, the top responses were availability of drinking water, aging population, water quality of lakes and rivers, public shoreline access, availability of open space and recreation and coastal erosion.



There was particular concern around the effects of sedimentation from coastal development along the north shore near Ballantynes Cove. There is a desire to see more stringent restrictions to protect runoff and sedimentation to the ocean in this area, to protect the important fisheries that operate out of the Cove.



We also heard specific feedback around Lochaber Lake. There is significant concern around the impact that increased development is having on the water quality of the lake and the quality of life for residents in this community.



Other recurring themes that came up include preserving public access to trails and beaches protecting sensitive ecosystems and climate change adaptation.

For more information or to share your feedback on the draft documents, please visit www.planantigonish.ca or email the project team at hello@planantigonish.ca



**PLAN
ANTIGONISH
COUNTY**



What is Being Proposed

The proposed planning documents include policy support and regulations for the protection of the many natural assets present in the region.



Lakeshore Protection

Recognizing the impacts of human development on water quality and wildlife habitat, the proposed planning documents introduce the Lakeshore Zone to help mitigate the impacts of development on the surrounding environment. This zone takes a careful approach to development around lakes by introducing setbacks from the lake; limiting high-impact developments while permitting residential, recreational, and commercial uses; and requiring larger minimum lot sizes.



Wetland Protection

Wetlands provide or support a wide range of important ecological, social and economic functions and services in our watersheds that are beneficial to everyone. Wetlands from a provincial database have been mapped and assigned with the Conservation Zone to receive extra protection under the planning documents.



Coastal Protection

Coastal areas have historically been a popular and attractive place to develop, but they also pose a number of risks both to humans and the environment. With storm events intensifying and becoming more frequent, coupled with sea level rise, the development of coastal areas needs to be carefully considered. The Province passed the *Coastal Protection Act* in 2019 which provides legislation around coastal development. The Act has not yet been implemented through regulations, but it is expected to be in the near future, and is expected to include both a minimum vertical and horizontal setback from the coast for new development. The municipal planning documents will defer to the provincial regulations and will not draft separate regulations.



Water Source Protection

Municipal drinking water systems serve the communities of Lower South River, St. Andrews, and St. Josephs, as well as the areas immediately outside the Town of Antigonish. These sources of drinking water have been identified and protected by establishing the Source Water Protection Zone. This zone is explicitly meant for the protection of drinking water sources and limits permitted uses to ensure development of land does not impact these as future sources of drinking water.

