

# Zone Descriptions (DRAFT)

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### **Rural General Zone (RG)**

The RG Zone applies to areas of low-density development, areas that support resource-based land uses such as forestry and agriculture, and areas that are undeveloped. This zone coincides with the mixed development pattern that has traditionally occurred along major roads and highways, and is limited to lands that has not been identified as possessing significant agricultural potential. The RG Zone permits a range of uses including limited residential, commercial, and industrial land uses. Residential developments with more than three dwelling units and bed and breakfast uses with six or more units may be considered by development agreement.

### **Rural Commercial Zone (RC)**

The RC Zone applies in instances where commercial businesses are necessary in the rural, unserved areas. With the vast number of small communities and regional attractions, commercial uses such as accommodations, automobile service stations, or restaurants are necessary outside of the “hub” communities of the municipality. There is also a need for commercial uses that directly serve the rural and resource uses on the surrounding lands. The RC Zone promotes a range of commercial services and amenities meant for local residents, as well as residential, recreational, institutional, and rural and resource uses, and those uses that cater to the travelling public. It will be applied to existing commercial businesses within the Rural Designation.

### **Rural Industrial Zone (RM)**

The term “industrial” encompasses a wide variety of uses—from warehousing and wholesaling to manufacturing, assembling, fabrication, or processing uses. Because of the availability of large lots and with low population densities, rural areas are often suited for industrial uses. These areas can more easily accommodate potential nuisances such as commercial truck traffic, manufacturing noise, and large shipping and storage areas. Industrial uses in rural areas are also important components of supporting resource-based industries, by providing the necessary processing facilities for raw materials. The RM Zone accommodates a range of industrial uses and limited commercial uses in the rural areas of the municipality including, but not limited to scrapyards, solid waste facilities, and industrial uses with large footprints. It will be initially applied to existing industrial uses within the Rural Designation.

### **Agriculture Potential Zone (AP)**

Municipalities in Nova Scotia are, by way of the *Municipal Government Act*, required to identify and protect high-value agricultural soils, defined as Class 2, Class 3, and actively-farmed Class 4 soils as identified by the Canada Land Inventory (Nova Scotia has no Class 1 soils). However, good soils are not always a good indication of agricultural activity or potential. Poor climate or difficult terrain can make otherwise fertile soils unsuitable for farming, while some crops (such as blueberries) thrive on very poor soils.

While most of the agricultural activity in the municipality is currently taking place on some of the best agricultural lands available, urban development has also occurred on some of these lands, contributing to the fragmentation of lands with agricultural potential. The AP Zone is intended to ensure active agricultural lands and lands with agricultural potential are protected for the long-term benefit of residents by prioritizing agricultural development on good agricultural soils as well as in well-established agricultural areas even if they are not located on good agricultural soils. The AP zone permits agricultural and forestry uses; a limited range of residential, recreational, and community uses; and commercial uses that provide agricultural-adjacent experiences, such as craft beverage producers and farmers' markets. Residential developments with more than six lots fronting onto a private road are prohibited in order to prevent the fragmentation of agricultural and forestry lands; however, developments with between four and 12 dwelling units may be considered by development agreement.

### **Highway Commercial Zone (HWY)**

As a highly visited area of the province, the land along highways, and, in particular, at highway exits and interchanges can be excellent locations for commercial businesses that benefit from easy access to the highway system. These areas are often highly visible and integrated into the broader transportation network, meaning they can accommodate a range of uses that serve the travelling public. As such, the HWY Zone will be applied at major highway intersections to accommodate uses that cater to the travelling public, or uses that depend on direct access to the highway system.

### **Institutional Zone (I)**

Larger institutional and community uses such as schools, hospitals, fire halls, Municipal Offices, and municipal recreation centres all serve a specific role in the ongoing function of the municipality and the day-to-day lives of residents and community members. I Zone is intended to support the ongoing function of these uses and to enable their future development. The zone accommodates a wide range of community and institutional uses, and permits residential uses with three or fewer dwelling units. Residential developments with four to 12 dwelling units may be considered by development agreement.

### **Hamlet Residential Zone (HR)**

Hamlets are small, well-defined communities that serve as local centres or community hubs for the surrounding area. These communities are often located next to tourism destinations, popular outdoor recreation opportunities (like beaches), or commercial and resource-based industries (like forestry, fishing, and agriculture). As a result, The HR Zone is intended to support existing residential areas within the hamlets, while also considering the potential need for other approaches to housing. The HR Zone permits low- and medium-density residential uses, as well as complementary community facilities, such as schools and places of worship. Residential uses with four to six dwelling units are permitted by site plan approval, and residential developments with more than six dwelling units and bed and breakfast uses with six or more units may be considered by development agreement.

### **Hamlet Core Zone (HC)**

Hamlets are the service centres for surrounding areas, and as such may host a range of commercial establishments, community-based services, and activities related to tourism and resource industries. The HC Zone is intended to encourage the establishment or continuation of a community core that offers a higher concentration of services and housing options. However, the size and location of this core varies from community to community, and the extent of the HC Zone is intended to be appropriate to the specific character of each hamlet.

The HC Zone permits low- and medium-density residential uses, a range of community services, smaller commercial operations appropriate to the semi-rural nature of hamlets, tourism-related businesses, and lower-impact activities related to resource industries. Kennels are permitted subject to additional requirements intended to minimize potential land use conflicts. Residential developments with seven or more dwelling units, drive through uses, and automobile sales are permitted by site plan approval.

### **Main Street Zone (MS)**

Historically, much of the community life in rural centres has revolved around the main streets of settlements. These main streets have transformed over time, but still play a vital role in community life to this day. Main streets give communities their visual identity and invite residents to socialize with their neighbours, especially if there are parks or plazas located nearby. Main streets are also highly suitable for affordable residential units as they are typically the least car-dependent places in rural areas. It is therefore important to preserve and promote these main street environments as pleasant and inviting places for people to come to and spend time.

The MS Zone is intended to establish and promote a “main street” character with a traditional look and rhythm of architectural form, while also being flexible so as to promote infill development. The zone permits pedestrian-oriented commercial uses, mid-density residential uses in mixed-use properties, as well as community-type uses. New commercial developments within the MS Zone are encouraged to be developed in a mixed-use fashion, with residential units being located on upper stories or at the rear of properties. Residential uses over 12 dwelling units are permitted by site plan approval.

### **General Centre Zone (GC)**

Communities in Eastern District are vibrant and eclectic, and often areas where a variety of commercial and residential property types occur within proximity of each other become part of the community’s central character. Such walkable, mixed areas offer opportunities for new businesses to settle and for the economy to grow, and can be suitable locations for multi-unit dwellings, or grouped dwellings on individual lots.

The GC Zone permits low- to mid-density residential uses, and is flexible to permit infill development and commercial uses up to a reasonable threshold of intensity. Automobile-oriented commercial uses, drive-through uses, and residential developments between seven and 12 units are permitted by site plan approval, while residential developments with more than 12 dwelling units require a development agreement.

### **Residential Centre Zone (R)**

Some areas within serviced centres have, over time, become neighbourhoods of primarily residential character. These areas maintain a relatively compact but lower-density form of development where clusters of housing have emerged. In these areas, the range of permitted land uses needs to be narrowed down to prevent land use conflicts.

The R Zone accommodates existing development forms in these areas, while also promoting infill development and encouraging the development of compact, walkable neighbourhoods on currently-undeveloped lands. The R Zone permits residential development up to three units per lot, and a narrow range of commercial and community uses which fit seamlessly into a residential environment. Larger residential developments, while needed by the housing market, can have adverse impacts on a neighbourhood if they are poorly designed. Consequently, residential developments with four to six units are permitted by site plan approval, while residential developments with more than six dwelling units or bed and breakfast establishments with six or more units require a development agreement.

### **Light Industrial Centre Zone (MI)**

Industrial developments such as light manufacturing and warehouses are sources of employment and economic activity in Eastern District, and are generally welcome additions to our communities. However, many of the resulting land uses are too disruptive to be mixed into the general community fabric. The MI Zone is focused on small- to medium-sized lots which can accommodate a large number of light industrial businesses in a relatively small area. This includes light manufacturing and assembly, production facilities, service and maintenance shops, automobile sales, large retail establishments, recycling depots, storage, warehousing, and similar uses. Drive-through restaurants are permitted in the Light Industrial Centre Zone by site plan approval, while potentially noisy or odorous are restricted by special buffering requirements from non-industrial developments.

### **Conservation Zone (C)**

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

In order to minimize potential disturbances to environmentally or culturally sensitive and significant areas, permitted land uses and development in the C Zone are limited to low-impact recreational uses and uses dedicated to the scientific or cultural study of the conservation areas.

### **Source Water Protection Zone (WP)**

The WP Zone is established in order to ensure a source of clean drinking water into the future by protecting and preserving existing municipal water supplies. This zone limits development and land uses to those that will not jeopardize the long-term use of these areas as sources of drinking water. The boundaries of the WP Zone cannot be adjusted without an amendment to the Municipal Planning Strategy, except when the adjustment is in compliance with the boundaries identified in a source water protection plan.

### **Comprehensive Development District Zone (CDD)**

In some instances, planning cannot be effectively applied on a property-by-property basis, but instead requires a holistic approach for the redevelopment of an entire section of a community. These situations typically occur when large, abandoned properties are redeveloped, or when undeveloped land is being proposed for development. Such key sites require a close review of how the site can integrate into the community in terms of land uses, transportation links, and public places.

Development within the RCD Zone is only permitted by development agreement. Any development must include a mix of land uses appropriate to the location of the site, including a variety of residential types and densities, and a mix of commercial and community uses, while existing and proposed transportation networks on and around the site must provide for a cohesive, grid-like network of local and collector streets and active transportation infrastructure.

Development within the RCD Zone must also be phased appropriately, given the nature of land uses and infrastructure on the site.

### **Parks and Open Space Zone (PO)**

Parks and open space uses are often appropriate in many land-use zones, and they can simply adopt the same land-use zone as the surrounding lands. However, in some instances, Council may wish to formally designate lands for parks and open space uses to clearly communicate the long-term intention of those lands. The PO Zone is intended to preserve land for parks and open space uses, and is designed to be flexible to accommodate a wide range of recreational uses.

### **Lakeshore Zone (RL)**

Lakes are a prominent feature of the landscape in Eastern District, and vital to the natural landscape and cultural identity of residents and community members. Lakes are also popular destinations for recreational development for seasonal properties and accommodations. To accommodate recreational development and associated septic systems, large areas of land must be cleared and graded, threatening the quality of these areas and the integrity of the integrity of the plants and animal species that rely on lakes for their habitat.

In order to protect these valued resources, the RL Zone establishes a careful approach to development around lakes, including establishing setbacks from the lake, permitting limited residential and accommodation uses, including, but not limited to, single dwellings and bed and breakfasts, and requiring larger minimum lot sizes. The RL Zone will be applied to lakes with existing development, or those that have the potential for development, such as lakes that are close to existing roads or population centres.

### **Commercial Recreation Zone (CR)**

Recreational pursuits are not only important in the daily lives of residents and community members, but they are increasingly becoming an integral part of the local economy in the municipality. Places like movie theatres, bowling alleys, and bingo halls are well-loved spaces in the communities, while golf courses, outdoor adventure businesses, and other outdoor commercial recreational assets cater to local use and use from visitors from across Nova Scotia and beyond.

The CR Zone permits a range of both indoor and outdoor commercial recreational uses. Campgrounds and RV parks are permitted by Site Plan Approval, while outdoor car racing tracks, outdoor animal racing tracks, and shooting ranges, may be considered by development agreement on lots equal to or greater than 10,000 square metres.

### **Fishing Zone (RF)**

With its hundreds of kilometres of both coastline and many inland water bodies and watercourses, the economy in Eastern District, unsurprisingly, has developed partly around the fishery and marine-related uses. There are several existing small-craft harbours that provide harbourage from many local fishers, while inland marine-related uses, such as aquaculture, are also present. Often, these uses also include areas for manufacturing and processing related to marine uses, thus requiring a unique framework for land use planning. The RF Zone is established to ensure small craft harbours and their associated uses and other inland marine uses are protected. This zone permits a range of marine and fishing uses, including processing, manufacturing, and commercial and institutional uses directly related to fishing uses.