

Fact Sheet 3

Agriculture



Planning documents in Nova Scotia are required to outline an approach for preserving agricultural land. The preservation of agricultural land is important to the future of Nova Scotians. It helps to ensure local food security and the continued development of a viable and sustainable agriculture and food industry close to home.

The information on this Fact Sheet comes from the Background Report and the What We Heard Report. To view these documents, [please click here.](#)

What We Heard

We heard concerns around limiting the flexibility farmers have with what they can do with their land. Some have expressed plans to sell lots to developers (or to develop themselves) and they are concerned that the new planning regulations could impact their plans, and their retirement savings. It is important to give farmers the flexibility to benefit financially from their land if they choose to subdivide and/or sell.

*“In 10 years, I want Colchester to be a place where families are still free to **grow their own food, raise and butcher livestock on-farm, and market and sell their products independently without unnecessary and prohibitive bylaws that limit livestock/poultry husbandry.**”*

-Colchester resident

Rural Colchester has an economy unique from Truro, with a **greater share of the region’s jobs in agriculture, construction, manufacturing, transportation and warehousing**

What is Being Proposed

- ▶ Agriculture Potential Zone
- ▶ Policies to protect and preserve farmland

Approximately **30,000 hectares** in Colchester are farmed, amounting to **13%** of the provincial total



Proposed Changes to the Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) and Land Use Bylaw (LUB)

The **MPS** is the primary planning document for the Municipality, it establishes the vision, goals, and policies for growth and development in the near future.

The **LUB** is the companion document to the MPS, and puts the vision, goals, and policies into action through specific regulations that have to do with development activities, such as zoning.

Creation of a New “Agriculture Potential Zone”

MPS Policy 4-19: Council shall, through the Land Use Bylaw, establish the Agriculture Potential Zone (AP). This land-use zone is intended to prioritize agricultural development on good agricultural soils as well as in well-established agricultural areas even if they are not located on good agricultural soils.

As one of the hubs for agriculture in Atlantic Canada, farmland and the potential for that land should be preserved and protected. However, it is also important to avoid over-regulating farmers.

The Agriculture Potential Zone is intended to communicate to people that they live in an area where there is a high chance of agriculture occurring. It allows similar uses as the Rural General Zone, except for restrictions on some intensive commercial uses (e.g. auto dealerships) and limitations on the scale of private road subdivisions.

This zone is proposed to be applied to Class 2, Class 3, and active Class 4 soils in the municipality as identified in the Canada Land Inventory, as well as well-established agricultural areas that are not located on good soils. Exceptions are made where such application would conflict with the existing provision of municipal services, where existing development patterns have significantly limited the potential for commercial agriculture, or where areas of good soils are under one hectare in size.

Wider Support for Agriculture in Other Areas

- ▶ Agricultural-related industries are proposed to be permitted in several other zones, including the Rural Industrial (RM) and Rural General (RG) Zones.
- ▶ Farmers’ markets and agritourism are proposed to be permitted to take place in many zones across the municipality.
- ▶ The draft LUB enables the direct sale of farm, seafood and forestry products without a development permit.
- ▶ The drafts recognize and provide clear permission for farm worker housing accessory to a farm.
- ▶ The drafts propose the creation of a new “moderate livestock” use to recognize small-scale livestock operations (smaller than 50 square metres in gross floor area) and permit them more widely.

