



**Recommendations from
Special Committee of the Whole Meeting
March 19, 2025**

Draft 2025-2029 Strategic Plan

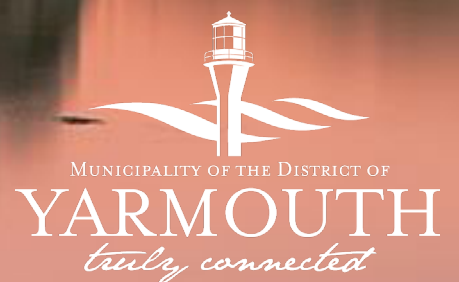
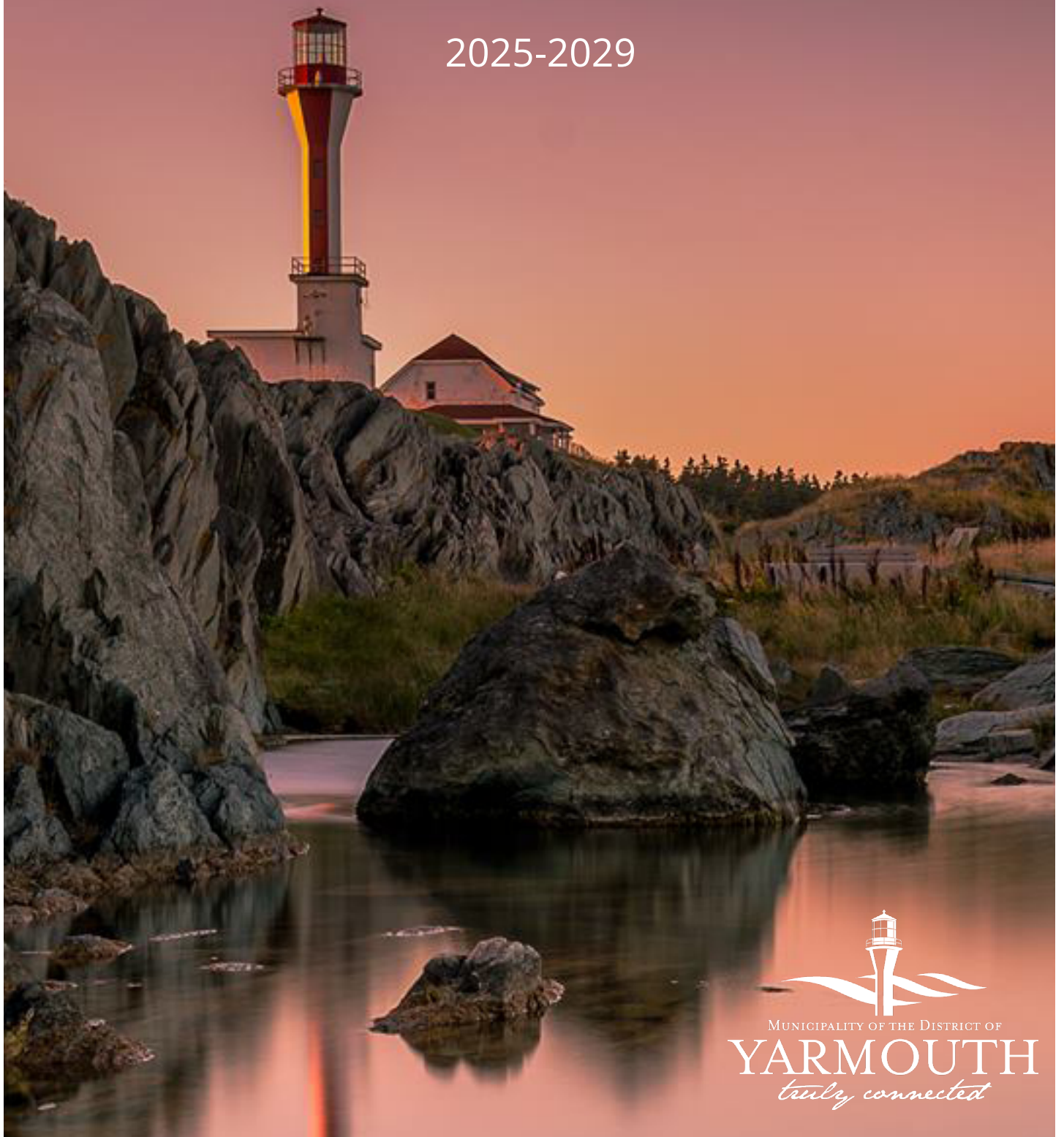
It was moved by Deputy Warden Trevor Cunningham, seconded by Councillor Trevor Perry to recommend to Regular Council that the 2025-2029 Strategic Plan for the Municipality of the District of Yarmouth be approved as amended.

Motion carried.

Municipality of the District of Yarmouth

Strategic Plan

2025-2029



Letter from Warden Cunningham

To the residents of the Municipality of the District of Yarmouth,

In my role as Warden of the Municipality of the District of Yarmouth, I am very pleased to have participated with my fellow Councillors in this strategic planning exercise.

Mapping a forward path through this plan and working from it has been a tradition for our municipality, one that has worked well in addressing the challenges and opportunities we collectively face.

Developed on behalf of all residents, the timing of this plan is important.

Reflecting what Councillors heard from our residents during the recent 2024 election campaign and the unprecedented nature of the economic and community effects of the Covid-19 global pandemic, we wanted to advance this planning process early in the mandate of this Council.

This plan is the result.

I am grateful to Councillors and our staff team for their diligence and thoughtful input in preparing this plan.

The importance of local government in providing timely and responsive services to our citizens has been underscored by the turbulence of the past several years. But we are also looking ahead over the next four years to a future which offers both significant opportunities, as well as accelerating challenges.

Building on what has been achieved through the last strategic plan, our focus will be on skillfully managing key opportunities, as well as the challenges that may come. We will be laser focused on delivering on the things that fall squarely in the municipal mandate, while ensuring that we have the capacity to deal with the unforeseen changes in the municipal operating environment due to the unprecedented provincial, national and global political uncertainty.

Our overall objective is to enhance our economy, and the quality of life that we collectively enjoy within our municipality. We do so in the full recognition of the challenges that our residents and their families face at this time.

This is our focus and our commitment to all citizens of the Municipality of the District of Yarmouth and the spirit of the plan which follows.

Sincerely,

John Cunningham
WARDEN



Letter from CAO Victoria Brooks

In service to Council and, ultimately, the residents of the Municipality of the District of Yarmouth (MODY), I am proud of the Municipal staff team - Team MODY - specifically their commitment to a culture of intentionality, accountability and responsiveness to our citizens - their communities and their aspirations.

As we have been able to show over the past plan period, this is a team that can pivot quickly and adapt to an ever-changing context.

In closing out our earlier strategic plan and participating in the creation of this new plan to guide us to 2029, we have, for the next four years, an actionable blueprint which addresses the complex issues and opportunities MODY faces.

Recognizing the value of citizen engagement, it is also a plan which centrally focuses on collaboration as an essential 21st Century tool to effectively address, within the municipal mandate, complex issues communities and regions are facing.

These include issues such as public safety, emergency readiness, active-healthy living, economic development, population growth, climate change, affordable and attainable housing, shared regional assets and inclusive growth.

As a plan that is both inspiring and critical to our municipality's future success, Team MODY, with sleeves rolled up, is ready to vigorously press ahead.

Sincerely,

Victoria Brooks
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER





Preamble

The timing of the renewal of the Municipality of the District of Yarmouth's (MODY) 2025-2029 strategic plan is opportune.

Coming so close to the recent municipal election, for Councillors, what they heard from residents and businesses in the District during the election campaign was fresh in their minds. Thoughtfully, distilling these insights, ideas and issues from residents has been a central focus of the renewal of the corporate strategic plan.

These inputs were prominent throughout the planning process and are reflected in the plan that follows.

As the level of government closest to the people, there are always significant expectations on Municipal Councils and leadership. Managing these means:

- **Focusing on areas that fall clearly within the municipal mandate and recognition of where other levels of government have responsibility, and**
- **Being intentional in having a laser focus on areas within this mandate that are important to ratepayers and strategic for the District, now and for future generations.**

For Councillors and the professional staff that support them, interpreting these ideas and putting the issues and concerns that ratepayers have identified front and center were guiding principles in forming the pillars and associated activities underpinning this plan.

Another prominent issue in plan renewal is the matter of affordability, considering the pressures that families, businesses, and organizations are facing at this time. Setting priorities is, ultimately, about making choices; cost pressures on rate payers has been a key consideration in the development of this plan.

The timing of the plan is significant on other levels. Concurrent with its development, much has changed, and much more is expected to change.

The provincial government has a renewed mandate as a result of a recent election. A federal election is scheduled for 2025. These events may lead to policy changes which can have significant impacts at the municipal level.

Internationally, there are challenging factors that are likely to impact the entire country, including our District, and which may affect overall economic circumstances. There is significant economic and political global uncertainty directly affecting people and businesses who call MODY, which is part of an export-oriented economy, home.

Beyond these issues, there are an array of other current and evolving matters that are causing disruption, and which need to be proactively managed. These include:

- **Climate change adaptation and addressing the associated impacts including those arising from extreme weather events**
- **Creating greater capacity for emergency management, including**



having reserve surge capacity when unexpected events dictate the need

- **The impact of rapidly evolving technologies, like AI, which create both significant opportunities, as well as challenges**
- **Addressing demographic and associated challenges such as housing and skill shortages, among others**

Arguably, it is difficult to plan for these things and to know precisely what the on the ground needs may be.

Hence, flexibility will be important, and for purposes of the strategic plan that follows, it means that its active management and constant

review and updating is going to be a central focus through its implementation.

This is decidedly not a plan to be put on a shelf. Its proactive management and periodic updating will be necessary. That is why we have included a section in the plan related to monitoring and measurement.

As with other plans, the key priorities and yearly objectives associated with this plan will be converted to our proprietary Action Register system, from which Council works, and which is updated quarterly and consolidated annually.

It is through this innovation that Council seeks to establish a culture of intentionality around plan implementation and ongoing management.

Notable Achievements in the Previous Strategic Plan

- Phase II Nova West Regional Business Park Design and Tender
- Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-Law Updated
- Cape Forchu Sea Level Rise Study (50% complete)
- Housing & Municipal Infrastructure Needs Assessment (90% complete)
- Public Security Planning
- Active Transportation Master Plan 85% complete)
- Regional collaboration in expanding the Mariner's Centre



Planning Context

To ensure plan continuity, in bridging from one strategic plan to a new planning period, it is important to take stock both of what is left to complete from the previous plan and, also, how the experience of the previous plan can help inform the next plan.

For MODY, the previous strategic plan period was very productive with the majority of key objectives fully completed.

Major initiatives that are underway, but not yet complete, include accessibility renovations, final design and tender for Phase II of the Nova West Regional Business Park, an in-depth Housing & Municipal Infrastructure Needs Assessment and implementation activities related to the Active Transportation Master Plan. These will continue under the new plan and be completed early in the new mandate .

The previous strategic plan covered the period when the world was gripped by the global pandemic.

Like every other organization, in a matter of days, MODY had to transform its operations.

We did that successfully; however, much was learned that is relevant to the new planning period and which we have reflectively taken into our deliberations on framing a new strategic plan.

Lessons learned included:

- **The importance of digital transformation in service delivery**
- **The value of innovation in supporting our residents, our staff team and Council itself**
- **The centrality of collaboration – with other municipalities, with other levels of government, with health authorities and community institutions**
- **The need for an unwavering focus on emergency response and being mindful of ensuring the municipality has the capacity to respond seamlessly to emergencies when the chips are down**

Looking forward under the new strategic plan and considering the extensive range of potential



disruptions - whether geo-political, climate related, economic or technological - that could occur, the watchwords in this plan are flexibility, adaptability and responsiveness.

That is why we've taken a principles-based approach in the design of the 2025 - 2029 strategic plan. Key aspects of this approach include:

- **Putting the needs of residents in the forefront whether related to infrastructure improvement plans, transportation, accessibility to recreation and innovation in service delivery**
- **Paying attention to governance and continuous improvement**
- **Vigilance around monitoring and measurement in anticipating and responding, in real time, to emerging opportunities, threats and challenges**
- **Staying in the municipal jurisdictional lane, focused on our mandated responsibilities and continuing to highly value resident input**
- **A focus on optimizing collaboration with other municipalities (Yarmouth Port, Yarmouth Airport, Mariner Centre, Solid Waste Park, and clean energy projects) to aggregate capacity and cost efficiency**
- **Putting emergency planning as an overarching priority while building and reserving capacity to optimize response to our residents**
- **Carefully maintaining knowledge and alignment with the efforts of other levels of government in instances where these can benefit our residents**
- **Working with partners to support economic development, sector diversification, ongoing risk assessment of existing sectors and leveraging new opportunities on behalf of MODY residents**
- **Doing our part to support the development of new economic opportunities, build self-sufficiency and promote social cohesion**

Mission

MODY serves its residents by providing flexible and responsive services through effective, efficient, and ethical stewardship of the resources and assets entrusted to us by our citizens.

Vision

To support and grow prosperous, resilient, and welcoming communities

Values

Accountability to taxpayers
Collaboration as a pathway
forward
Respect
Integrity
Openness
Reliance on best
information
Health

Pillars

Economy
Governance
People
Stewardship

This Plan



This strategic plan (2025 – 2029) sets out our highest priorities and focuses on the work the new Council and the staff team will do to:

- **Earn and sustain the trust and confidence of our citizens**
- **Continue to improve infrastructure and optimize shared assets with adjoining municipalities and other levels of government on behalf of all MODY citizens, and**
- **Support continued economic development and diversification**
- **Leveraging lessons learned in the previous plan period, this plan is guided by a Vision, Mission and Value set designed to effectively respond to the complex times in which we collectively find ourselves**

In considering key strategic directions and accompanying priorities, the Council was laser focused on ensuring that they were filtered against resident expectations, good governance and alignment with the municipal role and mandate. These include:

- **Responsiveness to ‘what’s heard on the doorstep’ from MODY residents**
- **Continuity with the previous strategic plan**
- **Anticipatory of and responsive to known opportunities, challenges and risks**
- **Considering the uncertainties that may impact the future and working to build capacity to facilitate effective and timely response**

- **Urgency and importance**
- **Timing**

Plan development also included a PESTLE-R analysis – an analytic tool which takes into account six external factors that can affect an organization including political, economic, social, technological, legal, environmental and regulatory.

Following this in-depth process, this Plan identifies four key strategic directions, each underpinned by strategic priorities and key objectives.

Considering the extent of present uncertainties and potential disruptions, a hallmark of this strategic plan is the importance of strong vigilance in monitoring outcomes and being ready to pivot when required. In this way, the plan needs to be ‘living document’, one which is consistently referred to and used in the implementation and management of strategic priorities. That is why MODY uses a format which enshrines these strategic directions into an ‘Action Register’ which tracks progress against the plan on a quarterly basis. This results in regular reporting to Council and ensures that the plan:

- **Is consistently monitored and adjusted where and when required, and**
- **Remains firmly focused on the key priorities while addressing any challenges along the way**

Combined, these elements focus the Municipality’s leadership and guide staff on how their work fits into these strategic priorities. In this way, the plan operates within a strong accountability framework.



Economy

Working with our partners to support economic development, diversification and sustainable economic growth

Priorities

- Nova West Regional Business Park
- Compliance with Accessibility Legislation and Regulations in the Built Environment
- Municipal Collaboration (South West NS and Yarmouth County)
- Municipal Infrastructure
- Tourism Development
- Supporting MODY Interests

Actions

Year 1

- Nova West Regional Business Park - Phase II construction.
- Conduct an economic development gap analysis.
- Begin collaboration with WREN to amplify aligned regional priorities.
- Secure funding for key infrastructure projects (e.g., road paving and tourism assets).

Year 2

- Review of Municipal Government Act for program authority; look at improving, adding or expanding to incentivize commercial growth.
- Evaluate Phase I wayfinding tourism signage; engage with YASTA to determine gaps/priorities for Phase II.
- Develop legislative proposals to support private sector growth.
- Expand partnerships with SW NS municipalities (Oceans 11).

Year 3

- Assess and report on economic impact from implemented initiatives.
- Initiate second-phase funding for infrastructure improvements.

Year 4

- Review and adjust economic strategies based on regional performance metrics.
- Explore new funding sources for economic diversification projects.

People

Maintaining a steadfast focus on the community's greatest asset
– its people

Priorities

Recreation Infrastructure
 Accessibility and Inclusion
 Community Development
 Wayfinding
 Business Success
 Emergency Planning

Actions

Year 1

- Complete the Active Transportation Plan.
- Recreation Intermunicipal collaboration – garner community feedback to inform up-coming negotiations.
- Implementation of activities related to Accessibility and Inclusion plans.
- Enhance emergency preparedness protocols.

Year 2

- Begin implementation of AT Master Plan as directed by Council.
- Review and determine if Heritage Incentive Rebate program to be renewed.
- Implementation of activities related to Accessibility and Inclusion plans.
- Build on hamlets place-making projects i.e. wayfinding signage Phase II
- Enhance emergency preparedness protocols.

Year 3

- Evaluate effectiveness of new recreation initiatives.
- Renew funding for community hall revitalization projects.
- Implementation of activities related to Accessibility and Inclusion plans.
- Enhance emergency preparedness protocols.

Year 4

- Expand placemaking projects to additional communities.
- Review of the results of activities related to Accessibility and Inclusion Plans.
- Implement findings from emergency preparedness evaluations.
- Enhance emergency preparedness protocols.

Governance

Advancing a proactive and broad-based agenda respecting governance

<i>Priorities</i>
Regional Collaboration (Tri-Counties and Yarmouth County) Proactive Legislative Agenda Study Mayor vs. Warden System Openness and Reporting Public Engagement Financial Governance (Sustainability) Committee Terms of Reference Review Digital Transformation
<i>Actions</i>
Year 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimize inter-municipal collaboration. • Launch a feasibility study on transitioning to a mayoral system. • Implement the 2024-29 quarterly public action register. • Review the terms of reference for advisory committees on accessibility and inclusion. • Abbreviated review of the 'Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) and Land Use By-Law (LUB).
Year 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a proactive legislative agenda. • Begin development of financial sustainability policies (total number and type of policies TBD). • Initiate digital transformation of council operations. • Abbreviated review of the Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) and Land Use By-Law (LUB).
Year 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streamline governance models based on IMA review findings (as agreement reviews come online). • Develop and implement a proactive legislative agenda (including addressing financial policies). • Evaluate public engagement strategies and make adjustments as needed.
Year 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a proactive legislative agenda. • Conduct a governance impact assessment and report to Council. • Finalize policies for financial sustainability and reserve management.

Stewardship

Taking the best care of the assets we've been entrusted with by the residents of MODY by focusing on continuous improvement in effective asset management

<i>Priorities</i>
Asset Management Informed Decision-Making Adaptability Financial Health Emergency Preparedness Openness and Reporting Digital Transformation
<i>Actions</i>
Year 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further implement an asset management framework and reporting. • Expand investments in Regional Emergency Management initiatives. • Improve capacity to secure external funding for Council initiatives. • Build on public reporting and communication.
Year 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan the implementation of recommendations from the Housing and Infrastructure Study. • Conduct a financial risk assessment and align spending with priorities. • Review and update policies on asset utilization.
Year 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot innovative funding models for inter-municipal projects. • Evaluate transparency measures and adjust communication strategies.
Year 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify new opportunities for leveraging municipal assets. • Publish a comprehensive review of diligence measures.

Monitoring and Measurement of the 2025-2029 MODY Strategic Plan

Considering both the opportunities and challenges ahead, the imperative of monitoring and measuring the results of plan implementation has never been more important.

The MODY Council and staff team bring an expansive toolkit to this process.

First, the Council is committed to following the plan. Further, individual departments at the staff level, within MODY, align their operational plans with the Strategic Plan.

All MODY staff are issued a 'pocket-plan' – an abbreviated document that makes sure the plan, and its importance, remains front and center for the entire team.

To gauge progress, MODY uses a format which enshrines these strategic directions into an 'Action Register' which the Council uses to track progress against the plan on a quarterly

basis. This results in regular reporting to Council through the monthly CAO report to Council.

Further, over the life-cycle of this strategic plan, as circumstances dictate, regular reviews are undertaken – always annually and more frequently if required. This vigilance enables plan course corrections in real time.

Tracking and sharing our progress in the implementation of the Plan are essential elements of a transparent and accountable organization and are central to Council's service commitment to the communities we represent.



[Contact Us](#)

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