

# Official Plan & Land Use Bylaw

Public Engagement  
Session #2

January 25, 2022

SJ Murphy Planning & Consulting  
Wade | Underhay



Rural Municipality of West River



**OVERVIEW**

- Introductions
- Timeline & Process
- Work to Date
- What We've Heard
- Developing the Plan & Bylaw
- Next Steps

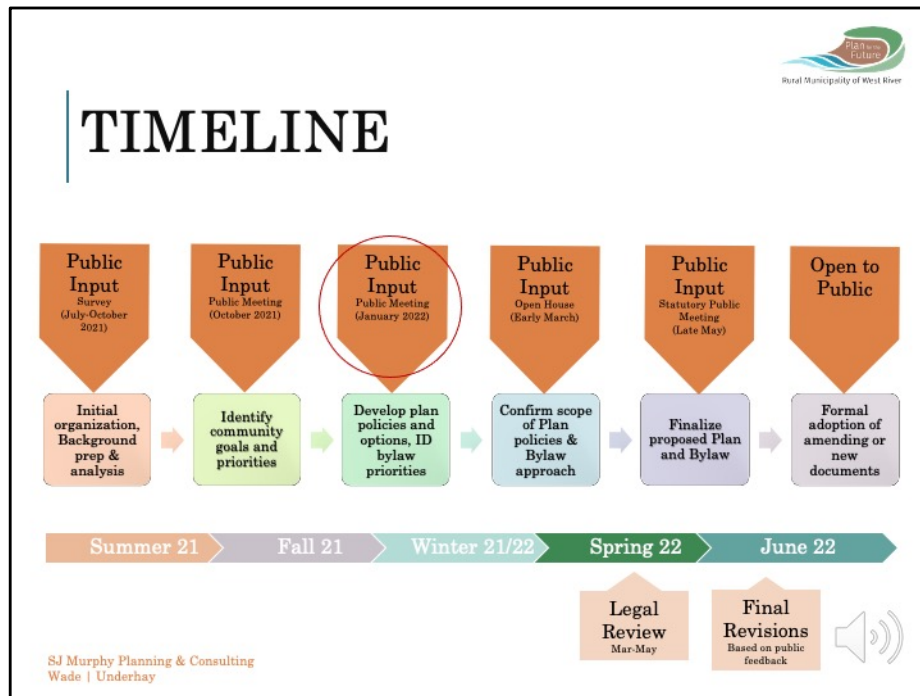
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Plan with Culture  
Rural Municipality of West River

Hi everyone! I'm Samantha Murphy and, along with Mitch Underhay and Tracey Wade, we form the consulting team for the development of the first Official Plan and Land Use Bylaw for the Rural Municipality of West River, speaking to you today from the traditional and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq First Nations in Abegweit, Prince Edward Island.

This is a pre-recorded version of the background presentation that will form part of the public engagement session on January 25th. While we had hoped to be in person, with the current situation and public health recommendations, this on-line process is our best option at this time. We will be providing lots of time for you to share your thoughts and concerns and we'll explain this as we go.

This presentation will give you an overview of the timeline and process, the work completed to date and what we heard during public consultation last fall. I will then go over the process of developing an Official Plan and Land Use by-law for the community and outline next steps.



As you can see by the timeline, we are seeking public input as we begin to develop plan policies and identify bylaw priorities. There is a very quick turnaround for this process as we have obligations to conduct the legal review between March and May. Of course, there will be a formalized time for public input in late spring in the form of a public meeting – hopefully that will be in person.

## COMPLETED ACTIVITIES

| Type   | Date                 | Format                                  |
|--|----------------------|---|
| 1. Community Survey (130+ responses)   | July-October         | Online                                  |
| 2. Public Session #1 – data and issue gathering  | October 13, 21       | Public Meeting                          |
| 3. Stakeholder & Rightsholder Engagement:<br><b>Mtgs:</b> L'Nuey, Provincial Planning, Watershed<br><b>Outreach:</b> Provincial Depts (Environment, Climate Change, Public Safety, Tourism, Heritage, Agriculture), Parks Canada<br><b>Invitations:</b> Fed of Ag, Fishermen's Association, TIAPEI | July 21 – January 22 | Emails, phone calls, in person meetings |
| 4. Reports: Background, What We Heard, Issues & Opportunities  | December 21          | Drafts Submitted to PB                  |



There has been a lot of work being done in the background and significant effort put into developing innovative ways to engage with the public, given the ongoing public safety concerns around the pandemic. Many of you would have participated in an on-line survey over the summer and early fall. We held our first public session in October with over 60 participants attending and several viewing the livestream. The consulting team also met with a number of stakeholder and rightsholder groups as noted in the table, and we are hoping to meet with a few more.

Our team also submitted three documents to the municipality's planning board based on our research and feedback from the community so far.


# PLANNING TOOLS

## Official Plan

Statements of  
policy about  
residential,  
commercial,  
industrial,  
environment,  
coastal, heritage

***WHAT we want  
to accomplish***

- Background on the municipality (where we've been)
- Current trends and needs (where we are today)
- Future Vision and Goals (what we want to be in 15 years)
- Policies and Actions\*
- (General) Future Land Use Map (what goes where (broadly) over time\*)

\*Legally binding 

So just as a reminder, the main planning tools we have to use are the Official Plan, Land Use By-law, and Zoning map. The Official Plan contains statements about what the municipality wants to accomplish. It includes a number of things as listed in the slide, but the key (and legally binding) aspects are the policies and actions around themes of residential, commercial, industrial, environmental, coastal and heritage issues. The Official Plan also includes a Future Land Use Map which generally shows where development and land use priorities lay within the municipality.

# PLANNING TOOLS

## Land Use Bylaw Zoning Map

**Regulations**  
about lot sizes,  
setbacks,  
permitted uses,  
etc.)

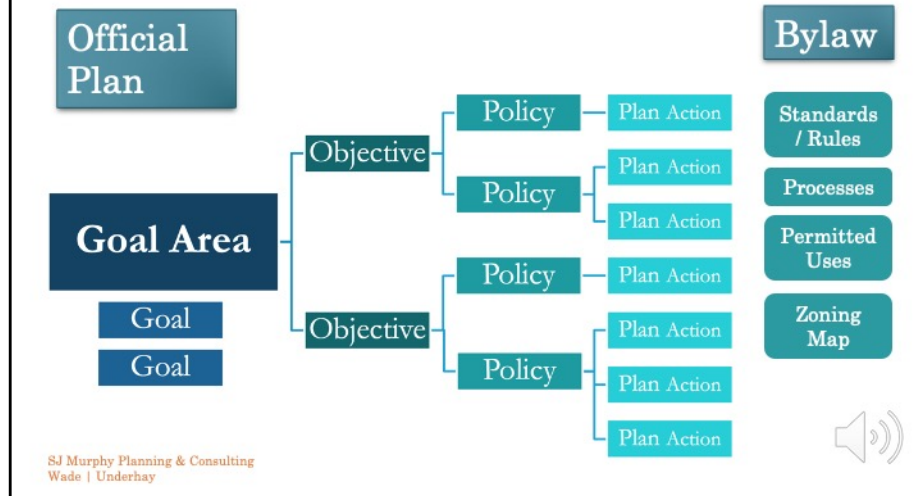
**HOW to  
accomplish it**

- Non-conforming use standards – existing (legal) uses may continue
- Standards for subdivisions, development, and changes in use
- Process requirements (permits, variances, subdivision approval, changes in zoning, plan and bylaw amendments.
- Standards that apply to all properties
- Zone-specific permitted uses and standards
- Zoning Map (what goes where over time)



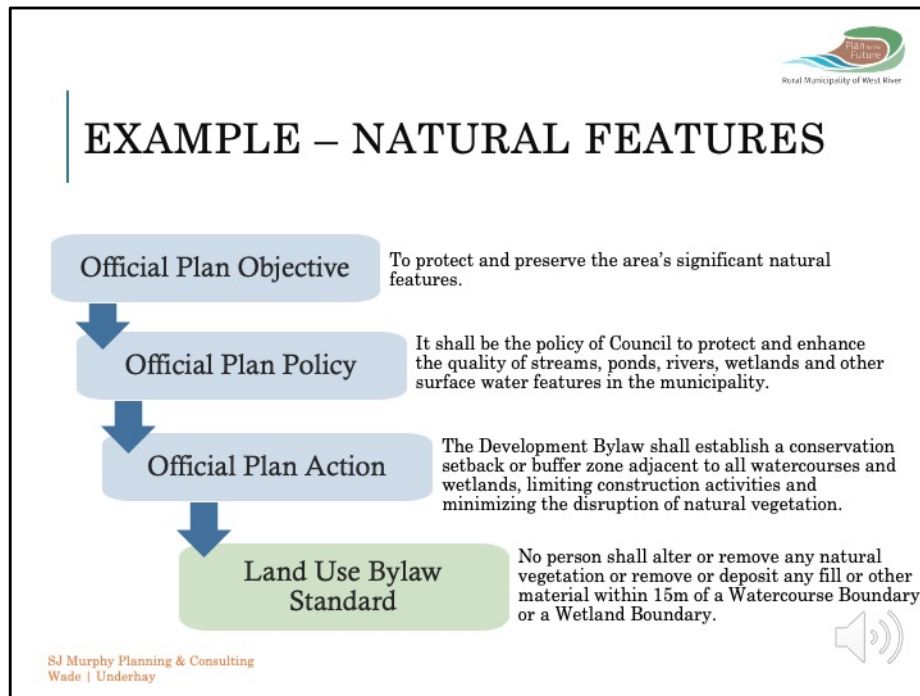
The Land Use Bylaw outlines how the municipality will make those goals and actions happen through regulation. It is a set of regulations that covers non-conforming uses, subdivision and development, and processes for applying for and issuing development permits. The Land Use Bylaw also sets standards that apply to all properties (lot sizes, set backs, etc.), establishes zone-specific uses and standards, and includes the Zoning Map.

# PLANNING COMPONENTS



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The graphic in this slide shows how those broad municipal goals and objectives are translated into various policies. Plan actions detail how the policies will be implemented. And then the Land Use By-law includes the nitty-gritty on the rules and processes. Importantly, the Official Plan dictates what can be covered in the Land Use Bylaw and how.



Let's use an example to explain these concepts more clearly.

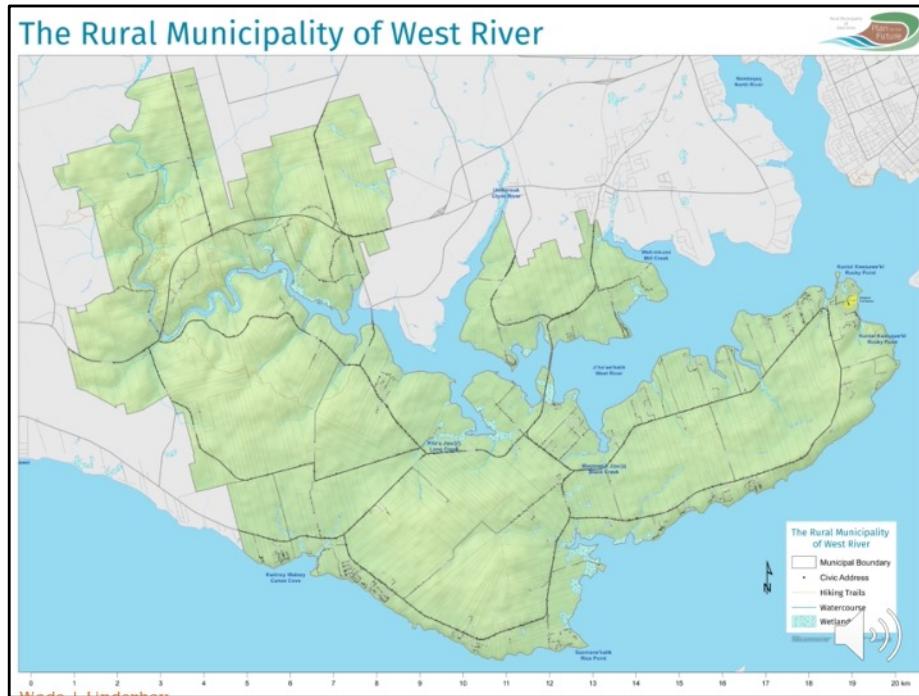
So let's say that one of the municipality's main objectives is to protect and preserve significant natural features.

The policy then explains what it is that Council wants to achieve (in this case, protecting and enhancing the quality of various surface water features in the municipality).


From there, the Action is to direct that the Land Use Bylaw establish setbacks or buffer zones adjacent to watercourses.

But to understand exactly what those setbacks or buffers are, the Land Use Bylaw standards explains it: No altering or removing of vegetation or adding fill within 15m (approximately 50 ft) of a delineated watercourse or wetland.





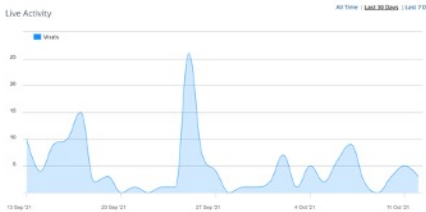
Here is the Rural Municipality of West River’s boundaries. At this point, it is basically a blank slate when it comes to land use planning. This map depicts property boundaries, hiking trails, watercourses and wetlands.

  
Rural Municipality of West River

# PROJECT WEBSITE

- planrmwr.ca
- New and ongoing ways to provide feedback
- Registration is no longer required
- Discussion questions now posted

Live Activity



### A New Municipality

After several years of engagement, study, discussion, and negotiation, the members of West River Council are pleased to announce a new plan through the amalgamation of the Rural Municipality of West River, Rural Municipality of West River Council, and the Rural Municipality of West River Council. This new plan will be implemented in 2022. The plan will be implemented in 2022. The plan will be implemented in 2022.

**Important Links**

[Rural Municipality of West River Homepage](#)

[Rural Municipality of West River Council](#)

**Featured Projects**

**What makes a place?**

Click here to see the video about the project.

**Community Engagement**

Click here to see the video about the project.

**Tell us your Stories!**

Click here to see the video about the project.

Again, the goal of this project is to take that “blank slate” of the municipality and create land use policy and zoning. Public input and feedback are critical to doing this right. Participation by the community helps build a better plan.

Now, there are no guarantees that everyone will agree with everything in the new plan – as you may recall from our first public session – but it is about balancing the needs and interests of the community.

In that vein, we developed a project website which contains lots of information related to the process and findings thus far. We did have a registration page that was required for members of the community to access the information. This registration info is never made public, but would allow the team to track data on how many people were reading and participating in polls and where they were from. That being said, we recognize that the registration process may be a significant deterrent in participating. As such, we have removed the sign in so anyone can use the site without signing in.

Finally, if you want to respond to questions and follow a conversation on the key topics, please join in on the website at planRMWR.ca

## WHAT WE HEARD

### You value:

- Rural-ness of the municipality
- Supporting local
- Water security

### Community members wanted to see:

- Rural (not urban) approaches to deal with development pressures
- Support for home-based businesses and local economy solutions
- Real responses to environmental challenges



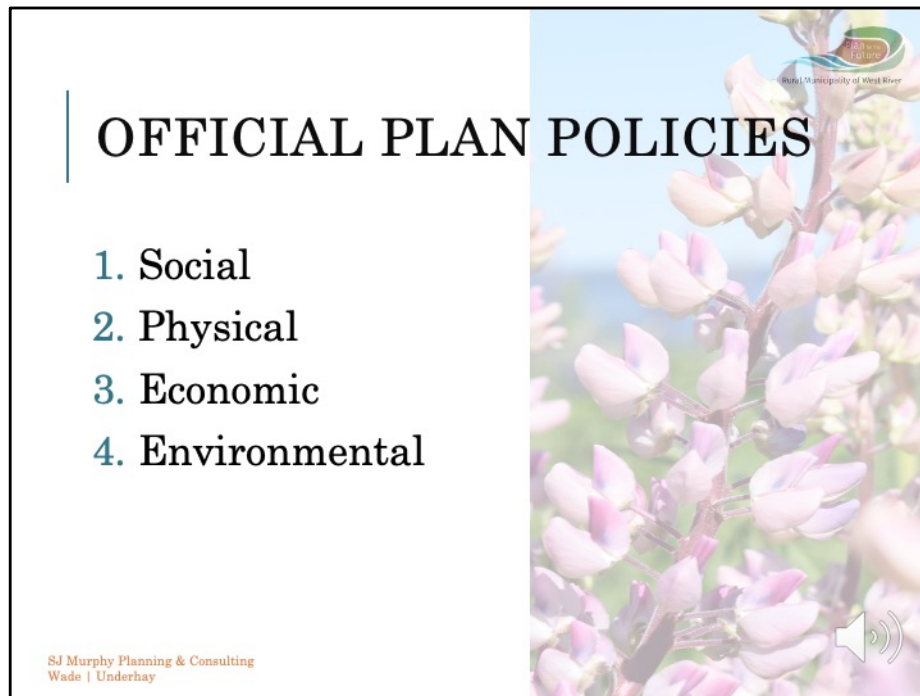
Beginning last summer, the project team sought input from the public in various ways - polls and questions on the website, public surveys, stakeholder meetings, etc. We took all that feedback and presented the Planning Board with a report on What We Heard. While there was lots of information gathered, here we'll just present some of the highlights.

- 1) One of the most repeated values is that the "RURAL" qualities of the community continue – farming landscapes, quality of life, flexibility in opportunities, and connection to nature were all part of the community being "rural."
- 2) Another main value is SUPPORTING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY by using local services (where they exist), making use of local amenities (trails, parks, beaches), and buying local products from neighbours.
- 3) PROTECTING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT is another key priority for the community including drinking water sources, flood mitigation and erosion, and salmon spawning areas.

In terms of what community members wanted to see:

- 1) There was a strong sentiment that the plan and by-law needed to have a rural lens and not be as controlling as more urban planning documents

- 2) Support for flexible economic development like home based businesses was important
- 3) That real solutions to environmental challenges be considered.

A presentation slide titled "OFFICIAL PLAN POLICIES" with a list of four themes: 1. Social, 2. Physical, 3. Economic, and 4. Environmental. The slide features a background image of pink flowers and a logo for the Rural Municipality of West River. A speaker icon is visible in the bottom right corner of the slide frame.

**OFFICIAL PLAN POLICIES**

- 1. Social**
- 2. Physical**
- 3. Economic**
- 4. Environmental**

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Rural Municipality of West River

In PEI, Official Plans include policies based on four major themes: social, physical, economic and environmental. Each municipality has a unique context for setting these policies.

## SOCIAL

- More than 90% of housing is single detached dwellings
- Significant development pressures over recent decade in region.
- Heritage sites and locations scattered throughout the municipality.
- Many recreation amenities (provincial and municipal parks, trails and beaches)

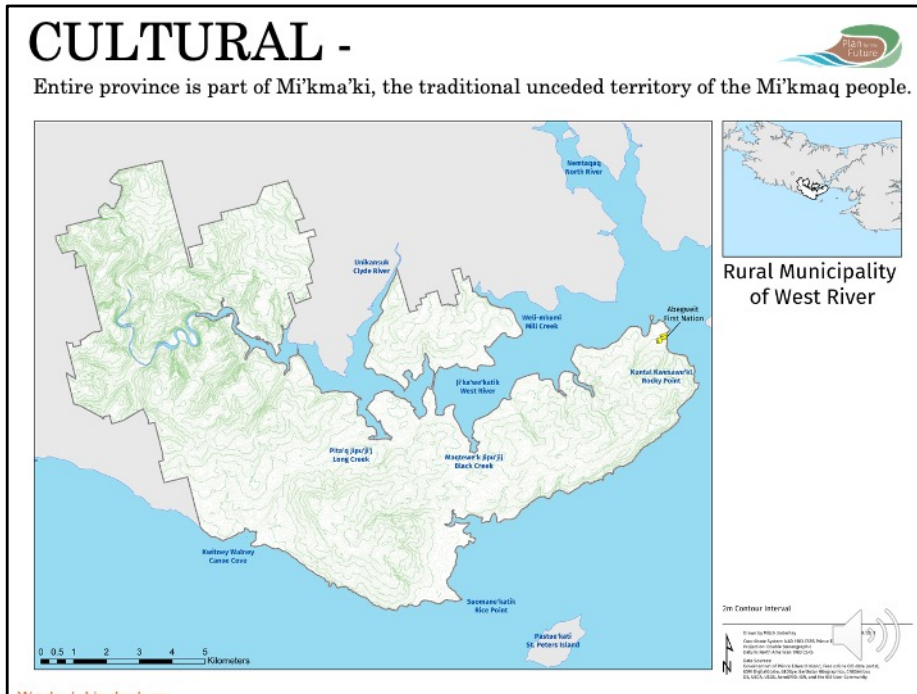
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West / Underbay

In the Rural Municipality of West River, we know that:

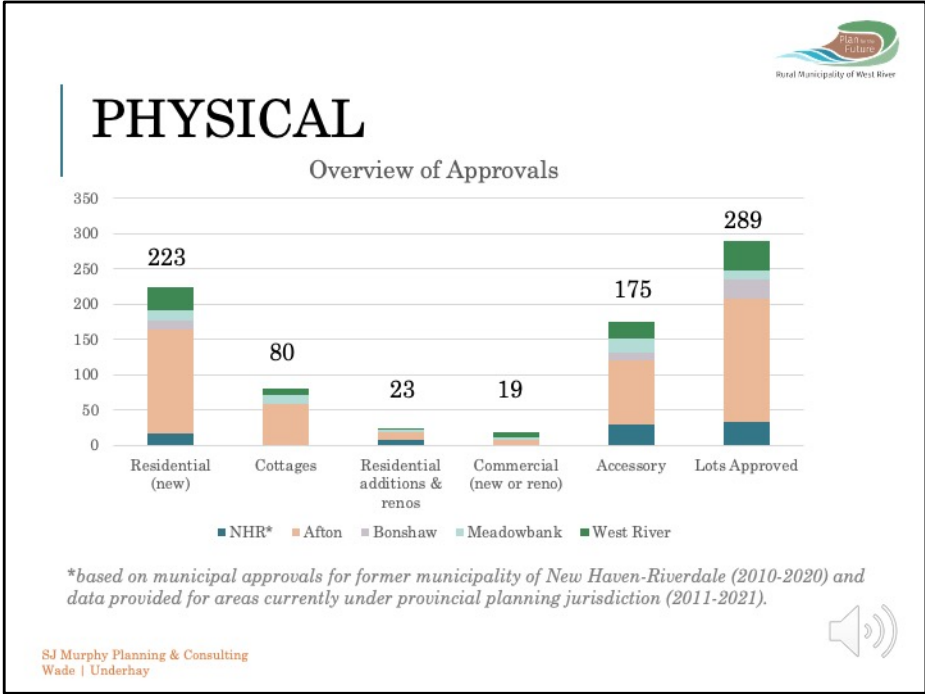
- More than 90% of the housing in the community is made up of single detached dwellings
- There has been significant development pressure in the recent decade (we'll talk more about this in the Physical section)
- Heritage and culture are important concepts for the community.
- Recreational amenities are VERY important for community members

# CULTURAL -

Entire province is part of Mi'kma'ki, the traditional unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

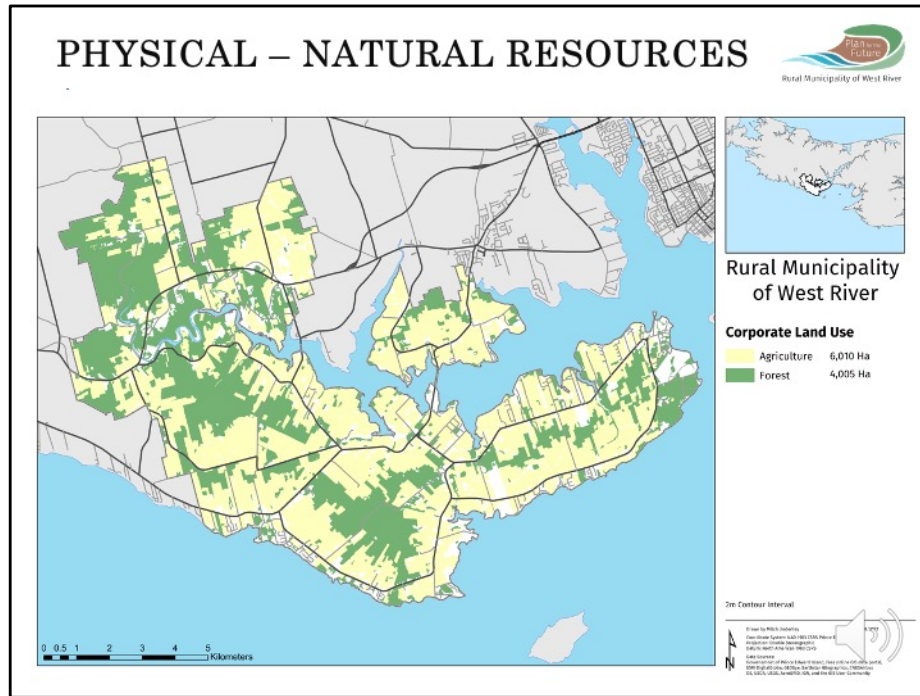


One of the most significant cultural features of the community is that the rural municipality, like all other lands in Prince Edward Island is part of Mi'kma'ki, the traditional unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people. As you can see in this slide, traditional Mi'kmaq names have been identified for many places throughout the municipality.

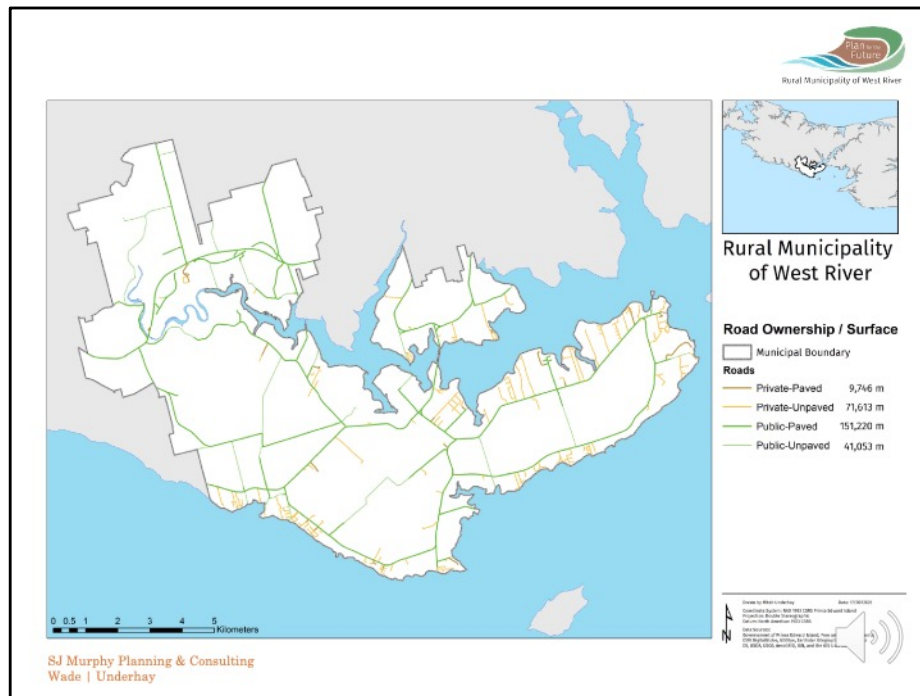


When we look at Physical issues in the municipality, this slide shows how many lots have been approved and how many new houses have been built since 2010-11. There are only estimated to be just over 1700 residences in the municipality as a whole, so these numbers indicate a very high development rate in the last 10 years (an increase in housing stock of 12%). It appears that development in the former community of Afton has seen the most significant growth.





We also look at the existing land use distribution in the community. This map is a bit outdated but it depicts the forest and agricultural land use in the community to 2010.



Another consideration is the status of road ownership within the municipal boundary. As this map shows, private roads make up almost 80 kilometres of road surface, the bulk of that is unpaved and likely undermaintained.

## ECONOMY

- Main industries are agriculture, fisheries and resource-related
- 77% of the local labour force commutes to city centres
- Little info available on number of home-based businesses.
- Tourism makes up a smaller portion of the local economy than in other parts of the province.
- Tourism uses include attractions, agri-tourism, seasonal residences as well as campgrounds and short-term rentals.

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In developing an Official Plan we also need to consider the components of the local economy.

While agriculture and forestry make up the bulk of the land base, the number of people making a living in these industries in the community is quite small, as the vast majority of the local labour force commutes to city centres for work.

The project team found very little information on home-based businesses, but acknowledges that they are a vital part of the current and future economy. Tourism has its own niche in the municipality, but it is not nearly as significant as it is in other areas of the province.



# CLIMATE RESILIENCY

| Change in Climate                             | 1976-2005<br>recorded<br>average | 2051-2080<br>projections* | Change |
|---|----------------------------------|---------------------------|--------|
| Mean Annual Temperature<br>(degrees Celsius)  | 6.1C                             | 10.3C                     | +4.2   |
| Mean temperature (spring)                     | 3.4C                             | 7.2C                      | +3.8   |
| Mean temperature (summer)                     | 17.6C                            | 21.7C                     | +4.1   |
| Mean temperature (fall)                       | 8.9C                             | 10.8C                     | +1.9   |
| Mean temperature (winter)                     | -5.5C                            | -0.9C                     | +4.7   |
| Number of Very hot days<br>(+30C)             | 1.1                              | 21.1                      | +19.9  |
| Number of tropical nights<br>(daily temp>20C) | 1.0                              | 23.3                      | +22.4  |
| Last day of spring frost                      | May 7                            | March 25                  |        |
| Number of winter days (-15C)                  | 21.8                             | 2.3                       | -19.5  |

Comparison of recorded climate averages and future climate projections for Charlottetown Region  
\*projections are based on a high emissions scenario, also known as RCP8.5

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As highlighted by public engagement, we know that being climate resilient will be key to a strong future for the municipality.

Being resilient means being proactive in developing adaptation and mitigation strategies to deal with climate change projections.

The projections identified above are ‘worst case’ projections for 2080 and illustrate an increase in the number of very hot days and “tropical” nights increasing by 20 times compared to the historical average.

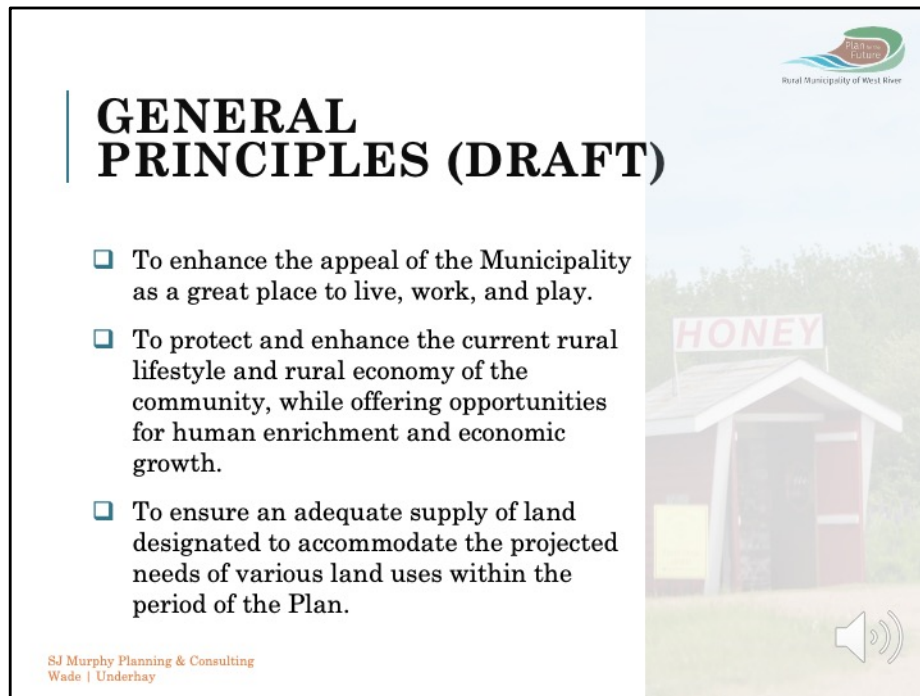
On the other hand, the number of winter days is dropping by a factor of 10 and the last spring frost is projected to happen 6 weeks earlier. Understanding the implications of such projections will be very important for the municipality moving forward.

## COMMUNITY VISION

The Rural Municipality of West River of 2037 is a rural environment supporting farming, fishing, and recreational activities, with beautiful vistas in all directions, built by our community working together.



The municipal council has developed and approved a vision statement, which we have drawn upon to create this Community Vision statement, to guide decisions related to land use policy.




**GENERAL PRINCIPLES (DRAFT)**

- ❑ To enhance the appeal of the Municipality as a great place to live, work, and play.
- ❑ To protect and enhance the current rural lifestyle and rural economy of the community, while offering opportunities for human enrichment and economic growth.
- ❑ To ensure an adequate supply of land designated to accommodate the projected needs of various land uses within the period of the Plan.

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Plan the Future  
Rural Municipality of West River

**HONEY**



The vision for the community 15 years down the road is described through a series of objectives.

Here are proposed general principles (*see slides*):

**ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES (DRAFT)**

- ❑ Protect existing natural resource industries (farming, fishing, forestry).
- ❑ To expand local economic opportunities while limiting large scale non-resource commercial and industrial development.
- ❑ To support energy independence.

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Plan  
Future  
Rural Municipality of West River

HONEY

The Official Plan contains objectives based on the four main themes: the economy, social priorities, physical priorities, the environment.

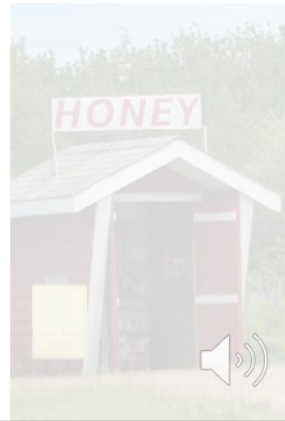
Here are three draft economic objectives (*see slides*)



## ECONOMIC DISCUSSION

- ❑ What is the best way to protect resource uses (e.g., agriculture and fishing) in the municipality?
- ❑ Where should household or industrial-scale renewable energy generators be permitted?
  - ❑ Ground-mounted solar
  - ❑ Wind turbines
- ❑ If tourism is a critical piece of the economy, what are the priorities for enhancing it, while protecting the community from overdevelopment?

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As we think about how those objectives get translated into policy and standards, we have identified several questions for the community.

(See slide)

**SOCIAL OBJECTIVES  
(DRAFT)**

- ❑ To meet the housing needs of residents.
- ❑ To be a safe and resilient community.
- ❑ To meet the health and recreational needs of the community.
- ❑ To be a welcoming community known for its focus on equity and inclusion.

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Plan  
Future  
Rural Municipality of West River

Based on what we've heard, proposed social objectives could include:

(See slide)


  
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# SOCIAL DISCUSSION

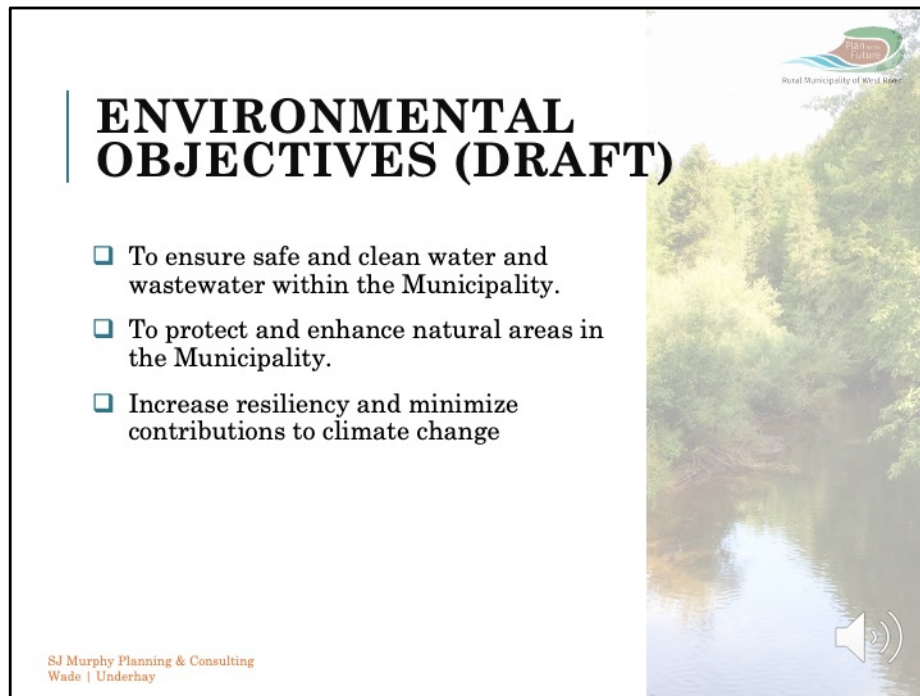
- What are the recreational priorities in the municipality? Are they being met?



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One of the bigger questions to consider, given the recent amalgamation, is:  
what are the recreational priorities of the municipality, and are they being met?




**ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES (DRAFT)**

- ❑ To ensure safe and clean water and wastewater within the Municipality.
- ❑ To protect and enhance natural areas in the Municipality.
- ❑ Increase resiliency and minimize contributions to climate change

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Plan  
Future  
Rural Municipality of West Block

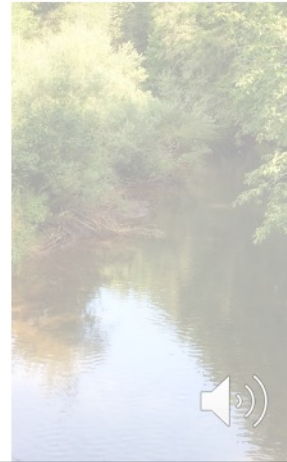


The high-level environmental objectives are:

(See slide)

## ENVIRONMENTAL DISCUSSION

- ❑ Where should expanded environmental buffers be introduced and enforced?
- ❑ Flooding and erosion are serious threats to the community. How much should be left up to the individual property owner when building?
- ❑ What are the primary drinking water concerns in the community?



And the questions that come up is:

(See slide)

**PHYSICAL OBJECTIVES  
(DRAFT)**


- ❑ Minimize land use conflicts, balancing individual and shared interests
- ❑ Rural character (built and natural landscape) is protected
- ❑ Safe, well-maintained and sustainable infrastructure

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Plan  
Build  
Grow  
Rural Municipality of West River



The Physical objectives include:

(See slide)



# PHYSICAL DISCUSSION

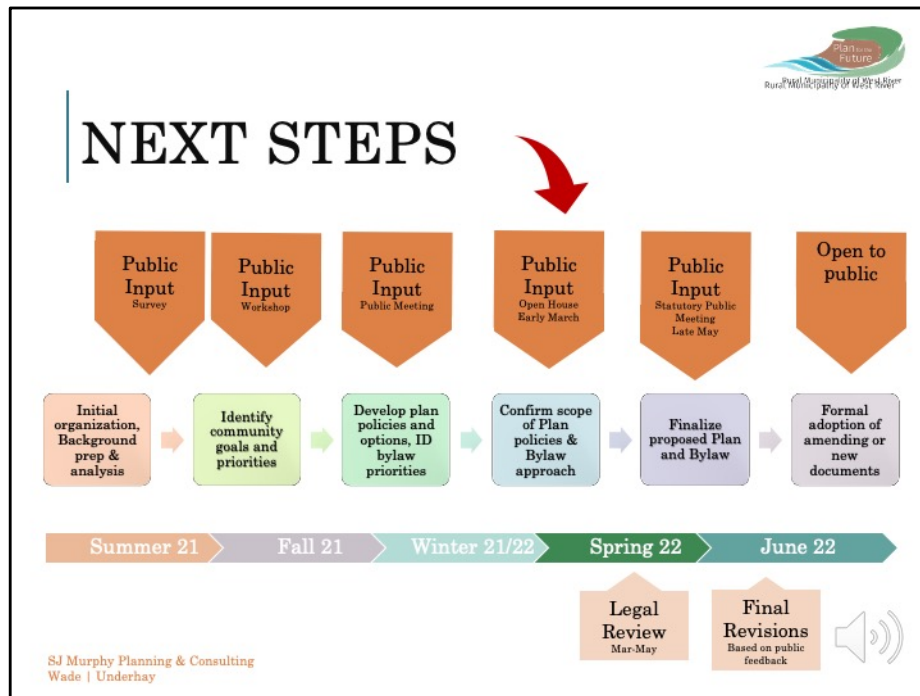
- ❑ Rural areas often have a mix of uses (residential, agriculture, commercial, etc.) in the same area. How much of a mix is appropriate in the Rural Municipality?
- ❑ Development pressure will continue to grow in the municipality. How should the Council control it so the rural quality of life is maintained?



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And the questions related to the physical characteristics of the municipality are:

(see slide)



In terms of next steps, the live public session for this presentation takes place on January 25th at 7pm.

Following that, the consulting team will take what we've heard and we will prepare draft documents.

These documents, and more importantly the goals, objectives, policies, and standards they contain, will be shared with the public in early March.



## MORE FEEDBACK

Comments or questions following meeting:  
Until February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022 in writing, by email,  
by phone.

Discussion boards for each topic on project  
website



In the meantime, more information and discussion will be supported through the project website through discussion boards for each topic.

If you wish to have a copy of the questions raised in this presentation, for more information, or to reach out to someone by phone, please contact the municipal office.

Comments or questions following the public session will be accepted until February 2nd and can be submitted in writing, by email, or by phone.

## LINKS

Project website: [planRMWR.ca](http://planRMWR.ca)

Email: [planrmwr@westriverpe.ca](mailto:planrmwr@westriverpe.ca)

Twitter: [@plan\\_river](https://twitter.com/plan_river)

Instagram: [@planwestriver](https://www.instagram.com/planwestriver)

Facebook: [facebook.com/planwestriver](https://facebook.com/planwestriver)

Municipal Office: 902-675-7000



As you can see here, there are multiple ways to engage in the discussion - through the project website, by email, or follow along on through our social media accounts. You can also reach the municipal office by phone.

We invite you to follow along at our live session starting at 7pm on Tuesday, January 25th. The session will be livestreamed on Facebook, or you can register to receive a link to view the session on Zoom.



Thank you for your time - we look forward to hearing from you.