

Proposed Amendments to the Land Use and Subdivision By-laws Regarding Phased Development, Cul-de-sac Standards, and R3/R4 Lot Frontage Standards

Staff Report TOK202549

Meeting Date: September 8, 2025
Department: Planning and Development
Strategic Priority: Housing and Planning

FOR RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council:

give First Reading to the staff-led amendments to the Land Use By-law and Subdivision By-law respecting phased development, cul-de-sac standards, and Medium Density Residential (R3) Zone & High Density Residential (R4) Zone frontage requirements and direct Staff to schedule a Public Hearing in accordance with the Municipal Government Act.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present the Council Advisory Committee with the first set of staff-led amendments to the Town's Land Use By-law (LUB) and Subdivision By-law (SB). These initial amendments are aimed at permitting and regulating more complex development forms, including phased subdivisions and medium/high-density housing.

Future amendments will be brought forward as a second staff report, focusing on subdivision agreements and other detailed implementation tools.

Specifically, this first set of amendments relates to:

- Phased subdivision approvals tied to infrastructure and connectivity,
- Cul-de-sac standards (temporary, permanent, and legacy), and
- Road frontage requirements in the Medium Density Residential (R3) and High Density Residential (R4) zones.

These amendments have been identified by staff as priority updates that should be adopted ahead of the comprehensive Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS), LUB, and SB Review, to provide clarity for current and pending applications.

BACKGROUND

In administering the Town's LUB and SB, Planning staff identified several recurring issues:

- Subdivision Phasing – Applications for multi-phase subdivisions lack clear policy guidance, creating uncertainty.
- Road Approvals – Existing policies did not distinguish clearly between temporary extensions, permanent designs, and legacy streets.

The current maximum length of cul-de-sac is 152.40 metres (500 feet) from an intersection to the turning circle, unless there exists an all-weather emergency connection of 4.57 metres (15 feet) wide to a street, in which case the length of the cul-de-sac shall not exceed 228.6 metres (750 feet).

- R3 and R4 Frontage Requirements – The existing standard of 100 ft (30.48 m) is disproportionately high for medium- and high-density zones, limiting development options.

Staff reviewed best practices in Nova Scotia municipalities, assessed servicing and asset management impacts, and evaluated consistency with the Municipal Planning Strategy and Statements of Provincial Interest (SPIs) on Housing and Infrastructure.

Because development applications continue to arise under current rules, staff determined that interim amendments were warranted now rather than waiting for the full plan review.

DISCUSSION

A. Phased Development

Phased development is a planning approach in which a larger subdivision or project is built out in stages over time, rather than all at once. This method allows infrastructure—such as roads, water, and sewer systems—to be constructed in manageable sections, while ensuring that each phase functions as a complete and connected neighbourhood. It provides flexibility for developers to respond to market demand, helps municipalities manage servicing and growth more efficiently, and ensures that future phases integrate properly with existing streets, utilities, and community design.

In these proposed amendments, Staff is looking to:

- Introduce clear thresholds for subdivision approvals: a maximum road length and a maximum dwelling-unit count per phase, whichever is more stringent.
- Require financial securities to ensure completion of future road connections.
- Ensure logical sequencing of infrastructure, avoiding over-extension.
- Require temporary turnarounds where a road extension is planned; must provide safe interim turnaround.

B. Road Standards

Within a phased development approach, road standards play a critical role in ensuring that each stage of construction results in safe, functional, and connected transportation networks. By applying consistent standards for road widths, intersections, cul-de-sac lengths, and connectivity requirements, municipalities can guarantee that interim phases are serviceable and that future phases can integrate seamlessly. These standards help balance immediate access and emergency response needs with long-term goals for walkability, transit readiness, and efficient servicing.

Staff is proposing the following amendments with regards to road standards which include incentives for providing greater connectivity:

- Permanent Cul-de-sacs:
 - For the development of new permanent cul-de-sacs, maximum length 100 m (328 ft),
 - or 150 m (492 ft) where a multi-use pathway is located at the cul-de-sac head that connects to another street,
 - or 200 m (656 ft) where an all-weather emergency connection of 4.6 metres (15 feet) wide connects to a street.
 - To a maximum of 60 units.
- Legacy Dead End Roads: (e.g. Spring Garden Rd., Parkview Rd., Henry St./Braeside Dr.) For existing overextended dead-end roads, new development capped by unit count of 60 units, unless additional connectivity is provided.

C. Medium Density Residential (R3) and High Density Residential (R4) Zone Lot Frontage Requirements

In medium and high-density zones, reducing lot frontage requirements allows for a more efficient use of serviced land while supporting compact, walkable neighbourhood design. In addition, facilitating flag lot development can accommodate higher densities in a way that retains the appearance of the street frontage, since new dwellings are located to the rear of existing lots and accessed by narrow driveways. This approach can lower infrastructure and servicing costs, encourage more attainable housing options, and align with broader growth-management goals.

- Current: R3 50ft/single unit; 60ft/3-4 units; 100ft/5-8 units
R4 50ft/single unit; 60ft/3-4 units; 100ft/5+ units
 - Proposed: R3 → 50 ft (15.24 m); R4 → 50 ft (15.24 m).
 - Lot areas unchanged.
 - Supports compact, walkable neighbourhoods and aligns with housing supply goals.
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PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING (PPM) – FEEDBACK

A Public Participation Meeting was held on August 21, 2025 to provide residents with the opportunity to comment on the proposed planning amendments. The meeting included a staff presentation outlining the purpose of the amendments, the relevant policy context, and the anticipated impacts on development patterns. The following key questions emerged from the session:

Key Questions:

Q: Do the amendments reduce or extend cul-de-sac regulations?

A: Both a maximum length and unit cap would now apply, whichever is stricter.

Q: What if a property on an existing cul-de-sac is rezoned?

A: Unit caps still apply, even with rezoning. Applies to ADUs as well.

Q: Who has access to emergency access gates?

A: Likely a master key system for all emergency providers, protocol to be established.

POLICY ALIGNMENT

The proposed amendments are consistent with:

- MPS – Chapter 4 General Land Use and Development
 - Objective 1 – To facilitate the efficient growth and development of the town
- SPI: Infrastructure – Efficient servicing and fiscal responsibility.
- SPI: Housing – Enabling compact and diverse housing supply.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

The full text of the proposed by-law amendments is included in:

- Appendix A – Land Use By-law Amendments
- Appendix B – Subdivision By-law Amendments

OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1. Recommend amendments as drafted (recommended).
2. Recommend amendments with revisions.
3. Decline to proceed.

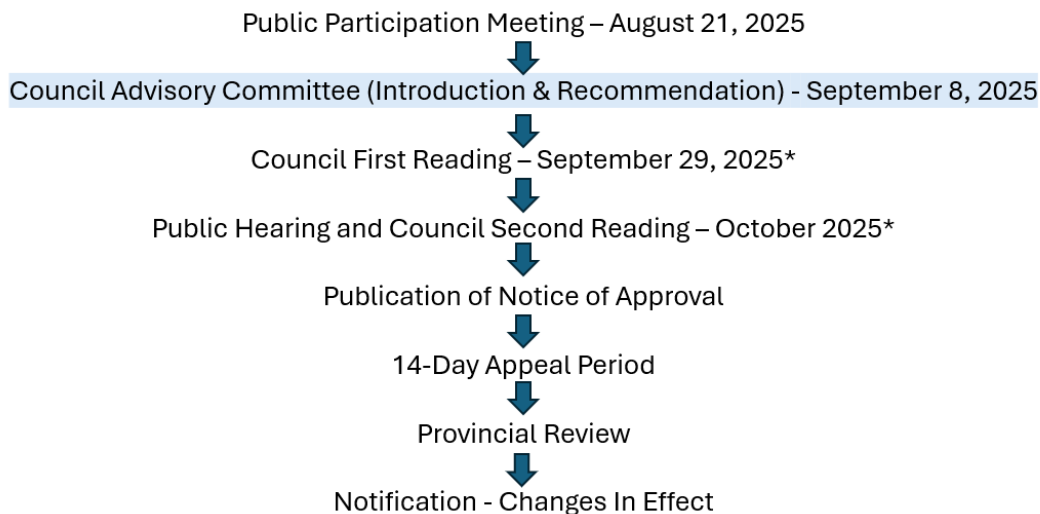
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No direct costs to the Town. Developers post securities and construct phased infrastructure. Reduced risk of over-servicing yields long-term savings.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council give First Reading to the staff-led amendments to the Land Use By-law and Subdivision By-law respecting phased development, cul-de-sac standards, and Medium Density Residential (R3) and High Density Residential (R4) zone lot frontage requirements and direct Staff to schedule a Public Hearing in accordance with the Municipal Government Act.

NEXT STEPS



Respectfully submitted,

Darren Shupe, Director of Planning and Development
Town of Kentville

Attachments:

- Appendix A – Land Use By-law Amendments
- Appendix B – Subdivision By-law Amendments

Recommendation for Amendments to LUB and SB
September 8, 2025, Staff Report TOK202549

Appendix A – Draft Land Use By-law (LUB) Amendments

1. General Provisions (New Section)

Proposed Text:

Section 4.1.33 Roads

- a) Temporary turnarounds shall be required where a road is planned for future extension in order to provide complete connectivity, as per the approved tentative subdivision plan.
- b) Permanent cul-de-sacs shall not exceed a maximum length 100 m (328 ft), or 150 m (492 ft) where a multi-use pathway is located at the cul-de-sac head that connects to another street, or 200 m (656 ft) where an all-weather emergency connection of 4.6 m (15 ft) wide connects to a street and shall serve no more than 60 dwelling units.
- c) Development on existing overextended roads shall be limited by a maximum unit threshold of 60 units unless connectivity is provided through an approved tentative plan of subdivision.

Intent:

- Clarifies three scenarios: temporary turnarounds, permanent cul-de-sacs, legacy overextended roads.
- Introduces 100 m default, 150 m with walkway incentive, and 200 m with an emergency exit incentive.
- Caps all cul-de-sacs at 60 units.
- Limits legacy overextended roads to a unit threshold of 60 unless connectivity provided.

2. Minimum Lot Frontage (Amended Section 5.4.4 and Section 5.5.3)

Proposed Text:

Section 5.4.4

Medium Density Residential (R3) Zone Minimum Lot Frontage:

- Multi-unit Dwelling (three to four units) 15.24 m (50 ft)
- Multi-unit Dwelling (five to eight units) 15.24 m (50 ft)

Section 5.5.3

High Density Residential (R4) Zone Minimum Lot Frontage:

- Multi-unit Dwelling (three to four units) 15.24 m (50 ft)
- Multi-unit Dwelling (five+ units) 15.24 m (50 ft)

(All other minimum lot area requirements remain unchanged.)

Intent:

- Reduces excessive 100 ft frontage standard in medium/high-density zones.
- Aligns with SPIs and supports infill.
- Maintains lot area minimums to balance scale and form.

Appendix B – Draft Subdivision By-law (SB) Amendments

1. Phased Subdivision Approvals

Proposed Text: (new section)

Section 8.21 Phased Subdivision Approvals

- a) Subdivision approvals may be granted in phases where full build-out, including lots, roads, and infrastructure, is intended, based on the approved Tentative Plan of Subdivision.
- b) Where full road connectivity cannot be achieved within a phase, no temporary road termination shall:
 - i. serve more than 60 dwelling units, or
 - ii. exceed 150 metres in length.
- c) Notwithstanding Section 8.21(b), a temporary road termination may serve more than sixty (60) dwelling units or exceed one hundred and fifty (150) metres in length, provided that the developer supplies a secondary means of emergency access. Such access shall be in the form of either:
 - a public street; or
 - an all-weather emergency connection designed to accommodate fire apparatus, to the satisfaction of the Town Engineer.
 - i. Where such access is provided, no temporary road termination shall:
 - 1. Serve more than one hundred and twenty (120) dwelling units; or
 - 2. Exceed three hundred (300) metres in length.
 - ii. Developers shall post securities acceptable to the Town to ensure the construction of future road connections and services. These securities shall form part of the subdivision agreement.
 - iii. Where a roadway is approved to terminate temporarily as part of a phased subdivision, the Town may require the developer to provide financial securities, in a form and amount acceptable to the Town, to guarantee the completion of the permanent road connection in accordance with the approved tentative plan of subdivision.

- iv. Such securities shall remain in place until:
 - 1. the roadway is extended and fully constructed to Town standards in a subsequent phase; or
 - 2. alternative arrangements satisfactory to the Town are made to ensure permanent connectivity.
 - v. The amount of the securities shall be sufficient to cover the estimated cost of removing the temporary turnaround and completing the permanent road extension, as determined by the Town Engineer.
 - vi. Release of securities shall occur only upon written confirmation from the Town Engineer that the permanent road connection has been completed to the Town's satisfaction.
- d) Where a temporary turnaround is proposed, the future road corridor must be shown on the final subdivision plan and noted in the approval conditions.

Intent:

- Sets numeric thresholds for phasing (length and unit count) when full connectivity cannot be provided.
- Requires securities to protect the Town.
- Mandates clear identification of future connections on plans.

2. Temporary Turnarounds (Amended Section – General Provisions)

Proposed Text: (replaces current text)

Section 8.8 Temporary Turnarounds

- a) Temporary turnarounds shall be constructed to a standard acceptable to the Town Engineer and shall permit safe turnaround of emergency and service vehicles.
- b) Where a temporary turnaround serves more than 60 dwelling units (up to 120 units total) or exceeds 150 metres in length (up to 300 m total), the developer shall provide a secondary means of emergency access. Such access may be in the form of a public street or an all-weather emergency connection (definition below) designed to accommodate fire apparatus, to the satisfaction of the Town Engineer.
- c) Where an emergency access gate is required, a protocol for use shall be established by the Town in consultation with emergency service providers.

Permanent Cul-de-sac

- a) Permanent cul-de-sacs shall not exceed 100 metres (328 ft) in length, or 150 metres (492 ft) where a walkway is located at the end of the cul-de-sac that connects to another street, or 200 m (656 ft) where an all-weather emergency connection of 4.6 metres (15 feet) wide connects to a street or and shall serve no more than 60 dwelling units.
- b) Development on existing overextended roads exceeding these standards shall be capped by unit thresholds.

Intent:

- Ensures temporary turnarounds are built to engineering standards.
- Applies 100 m default; 150 m with walkway incentive; 200 m with emergency exit incentive to permanent cul-de-sacs.
- Caps new permanent cul-de-sacs at 60 units for safety and servicing efficiency.
- Provides clear rules for legacy overextended roads.
- Introduces new emergency access gate protocol requirement.

Addition to Municipal Road Specifications 2.15

All-Weather Emergency Connection means a secondary access route intended for use by fire, police, ambulance, and other emergency vehicles in the event the primary street access is obstructed. Such connections shall:

1. Be constructed of an all-weather surface (e.g., compacted gravel, asphalt millings, concrete, or pavement) capable of supporting the imposed loads of fire and service apparatus;
2. Have a minimum clear width of 6.0 metres (20 ft), exclusive of shoulders, and a vertical clearance of not less than 4.6 metres (15 ft);
3. Provide a continuous, unobstructed path from the subdivision to a public street or equivalent access point;
4. Be designed to accommodate turning radii of emergency vehicles;
5. Remain free of barriers such as fences, gates, or landscaping unless such barriers are approved breakaway, lockbox, or electronically controlled gates acceptable to the Town Engineer; and
6. Be maintained in a condition that ensures year-round accessibility, including during snow, ice, or other adverse weather conditions.