

# An Economic Development Strategy



for the  
**Municipality of the  
District of Chester**

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**Submitted by**



The Municipality of the District of Chester  
Economic Development Strategy

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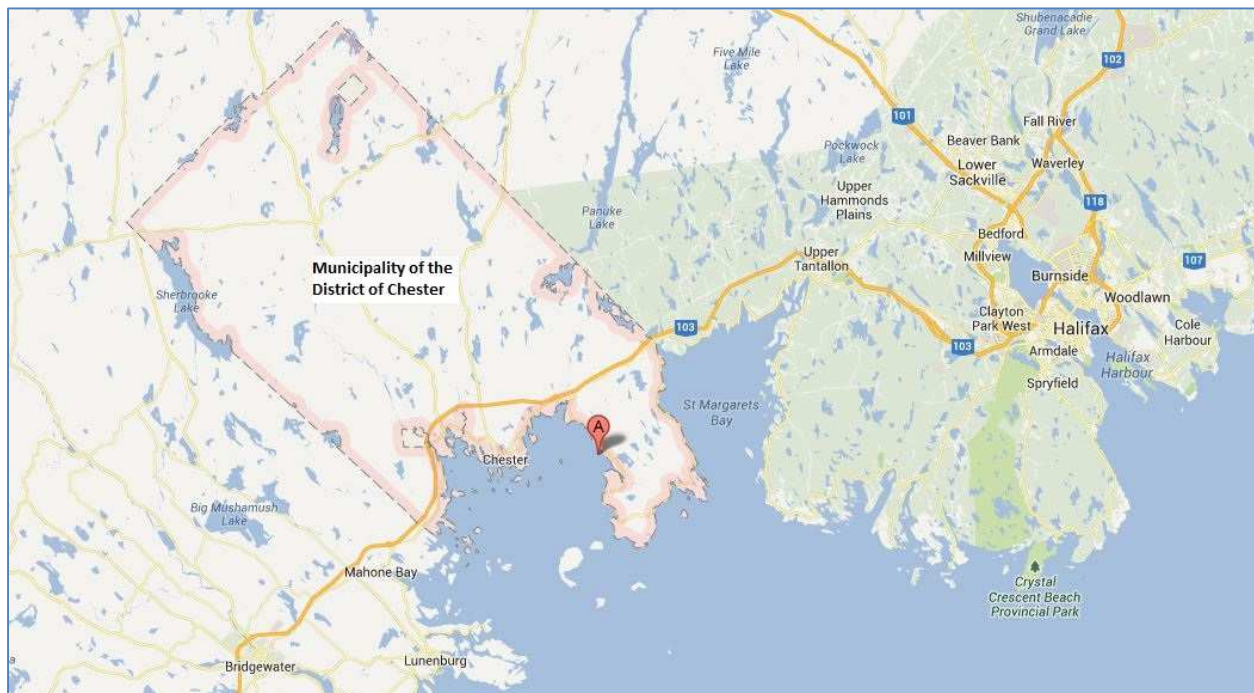
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## 1 Introduction

The Municipality of the District of Chester (MODC) is currently at a unique point in time. Not only are Regional Enterprise Networks being established, but the MODC is poised to begin implementing their first Economic Development Strategy.

With respect to strategic development, this positions the MODC in a unique way that allows them to

effectively lay out their road map for the future. The Municipality of the District of Chester is a fully serviced community located along the south shore of Nova Scotia. Strategically positioned midway between the Halifax Regional Municipality and the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg, this geographically diverse rural community is home to approximately 11,000 permanent residents. Comprised of several urban and rural communities, as well as boasting



much sought after natural environments and landscapes, such as ocean and lakeside waterfront, tracks of farmland and forested areas, the MODC also offers a complete inventory of community infrastructure, amenities and services.

In terms of economic strengths, the MODC is supported by traditional industries such as fishing, manufacturing, forestry, and value-added processing and it has very strong competitive advantages to support growing sectors such as arts, culture and heritage, tourism, film and multi-media. Although the average age of the MODC's residents is slightly older than the provincial average, it is home to a well-balanced workforce that is strong both locally as well as in its commuting workers. This demonstrates that residents are willing to find employment both in and around the MODC.

Currently, the MODC is at an exciting crossroads. Regarding strategic development, the MODC is very aware of the opportunities that this situation presents and, as such, has made "Promote conditions conducive to fostering economic prosperity" one of their corporate strategic goals. Being in a very opportune position, the MODC is now able to lay out the direction that they wish to take to become more investment ready, business friendly and economically diverse.

This Economic Development Strategy is a 5 to 10 year road map that provides the MODC with the strategic directions and actions required to provide for a much stronger economic component in the MODC Council Strategic Plan. In addition, the strategic actions will provide the MODC Council with answers to questions concerning economic development and tourism partnership development and support.

*As the policy framework, this Strategy will lay out the actions required for the MODC to become more economically sustainable. Once the Strategy is approved by the MODC, an Implementation Plan will be prepared. The Implementation Plan will be an internal document to be used by the MODC in preparing their annual Economic Development work plan and will identify who will be responsible to lead and support specific actions, the estimated amount of investment required to implement the action, the performance measures as well as the timeline for delivery.*

## 2 Statistical Overview

The following statistical overview has been prepared to provide a snapshot of the current situation of the MODC. More detailed data and analysis can be found in the Situation Analysis.

At a glance, it can be observed that the MODC is slowly declining in population and has an older population on average than the province of Nova Scotia. This can be expected since the Province has an older population than Canada.

There are fewer movers within the community than the provincial averages, which may indicate a stable resident base. The MODC also shows a good mix of industries both by occupation and by industry which can help buffer industry downturns. The participation rate is increasing, indicating there are more people entering the labour force, yet unemployment is also increasing, indicating more people within the labour pool are looking for work. The average income in the MODC is slightly higher than Nova Scotia, while the median income is lower. This is compounded by the housing market which indicates a much higher average dwelling value - \$334,224 versus the Provincial average of \$239, 834.

Please note that every effort has been made to use the most current data available. There are three major sources of information for this document:

- The 2006 Census from Statistics Canada;
- The 2011 Census from Statistics Canada; and
- Superdemographics 2012 from Manifold Data Mining Inc.

There are certain pieces of data that were collected in the 2006 Census that were either not collected in the 2011 Census or the information was not released. Superdemographics 2012 are statistical projections that use the Census data as their point of reference. Wherever possible, the most recent data was used.

# Geographic:

Nova Scotia

The Municipality of the District of Chester is located at the approximate coordinates of 44.54 North and 64.24 West

Total Census Provincial population:

921,727

Municipality of the District of Chester

Total Census municipal population:

10,599



55% of residents work in the MODC



45% of residents commute outside the MODC

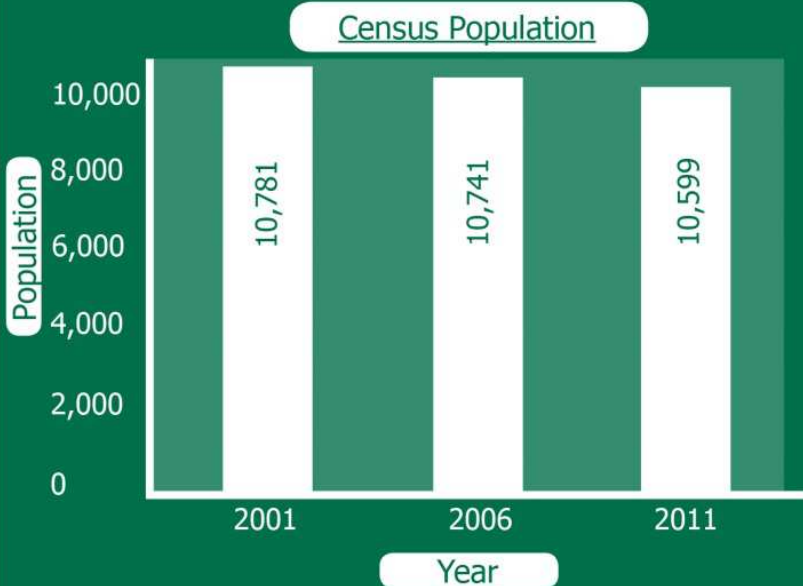


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# Demographic:

MODC has an older population than the province. Residents of the MODC are less likely to have moved within the last year or the last 5 years than the province. Over 93% of residents speak English only.



 -1.7%

**49** Median Age

Nova Scotia median age is 43

Average value of dwelling  
\$334,224



Provincial average is \$239,834



Residents that had moved within the previous year



Residents that had moved within the previous 5 years

50.1% 49.9%



Population by Gender



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# Labour Force:



The largest field of study for post-secondary education by percentage is architecture, engineering and related technologies; larger than that of Nova Scotia. In 2012, the participation and unemployment rates have increased. Employment has decreased.



## Key Sectors by Industry



## Key Sectors by Occupation



## 3 SWOT Analysis

The following analysis was undertaken through a detailed and thorough review of several strategic documents provided by the MODC, as well as in-depth consultations with political, community and business leaders within the MODC including support staff from the former RDA, the Nova Scotia Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, as well as Nova Scotia Business Inc. The comments and information provided in this analysis are not listed in any specific order of priority or importance.

### 3.1 Strengths

#### 3.1.1 General Observations

- Excellent strategic location to attract investment opportunities:
  - Close to Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), Lunenburg and the “Valley” – both in terms of travel time and actual kms
  - Close to the major activity within the Province, but yet far enough away to offer a quaint relaxing atmosphere
  - Highway 103 runs east/west through the District
- The people that call the MODC home, including a progressive/proactive and risk taking Municipal Council and staff
- The MODC is a fully serviced community offering a complete inventory of infrastructure, amenities and services
- Employment data shows strengths and assets in traditional industries such as fishing, manufacturing, forestry, some value-added processing
- Strong competitive advantages in arts, culture and heritage, tourism, film and multi-media
- Although still unclear exactly what is for sale or ready for development, the MODC does contain a large supply of land that could be ready for development (residential, commercial and industrial)
- Several natural and built tourism assets
- Rich in arts, culture and heritage assets
- High speed broadband internet is available through the communities and in parts of rural MODC
- Some niche agriculture (grapes/vineyard, fruits, berries, vegetables, Christmas trees, maple syrup, etc.)

#### 3.1.2 Kaizer Meadow

- A proven world class solid waste facility and environmental management centre
- An abundance of land for industrial development
- Serviced with power and ample sewer capacity
- Not located near any conflicting land-uses
- Although some distance from the Highway 103, the facility is located close to Highway 14 which connects to Highway 103

- Excellent website – very informative – excellent video to demonstrate Kaizer Meadow innovative technologies
- Very informative social media and public relations campaign (as indicated through the website)
- The MODC is being very proactive by installing wind turbine at Kaizer Meadow

### 3.1.3 MODC Economic Development Model

- Main players include:
  - Nova Scotia Business Inc.
  - Regional Enterprise Networks (REN2)
  - Municipality of the District of Chester (MODC)
- Top-down model or approach to investment attraction works well if all players understand their roles and provide the required support and investment
- The MODC model is not broken, but will need more direct input and participation from the MODC and REN2

### 3.1.4 MODC Tourism Model

- Main players include:
  - Nova Scotia Tourism Agency (NSTA)
  - Destination South West Nova Association (DSWNA)
  - Bluenose Coast
  - Municipality of the District of Chester (MODC)
  - Chester Municipal Chamber of Commerce (as a delivery agent)
- Top-down model or approach to marketing of Tourism sector within Nova Scotia.
- Appropriate structure if all the partners have clear guidance in terms of their roles and responsibilities and as long as all partners fulfill their roles

### 3.1.5 Land-Use Bylaw - General Rural Zoning

- Fairly open in terms of permitting a very wide array of land uses outside of the Chester Village Area
- Almost all uses are permitted residential, commercial, institutional and industrial (some uses may require a development agreement or other assessment before development is permitted) within the General Rural Zone
- Allows for a very accommodating approach to planning and development

### 3.1.6 “Why Here” Web Portal

- Provides a very good framework for a regional web portal
- Includes amazing testimonials
- Good locational mapping
- Identifies main attraction targets – investors, tourists, residents
- Provides links and take-off points to each municipal partner

## 3.2 Weaknesses

- The MODC does not currently have an Economic Development program or dedicated Economic Development staff
- Lack of Memorandums of Understanding (MOU's) or Agreements with Economic Development service providers – who is providing economic development services for the MODC, what services are being provided and what are the results being achieved?
- No designated industrial/employment land or buildings – there is no set location to situate a new business. Can create difficulties when trying to respond to an interested investment inquiry or communications and marketing material aimed at attracting investment.
- The MODC has a webpage that caters to residential needs, but no material or information pertaining to economic or business development – no economic development website
- Current MODC website does not contain any contact information for Economic Development
- No natural gas in the MODC
- Minimal municipal government exposure to local and regional employers – no actual visitation or consistent communication with local businesses
- No promotional, investment attraction material such as Quick Facts, Community Profile, or Investment Response Template or other economic development marketing materials
- Limited marketing material pertaining to investment sectors
- Economic activity will more naturally occur along Highway 103, along the Atlantic coastline and closer to the HRM – this may be perceived as an inequality by some in the MODC

### 3.2.1 Kaizer Meadow

- Kaizer Meadows is not located along a major highway (103) – approximately 18kms north of the 103. This adds transportation costs to tenants and prospective investors
- The “Eco Park” branding is very limiting in terms of the target audience/market industries
- “Green Business” is often a term that is synonymous with a “Sustainable Business”
- “Green Businesses” normally fall into two main categories:
  - companies that have assessed and improved their internal processes to be more environmentally responsible (the company could be manufacturing any type of product as it is the process that makes them “Green”) and
  - companies that make a greener or more sustainable version of an existing product or service. Again could be any product, just a greener version.
- For a “Green Business” location normally does not matter. What is important is that they fit into one of the above two categories.
- Not convinced that Green Businesses are really Kaizer Meadow’s most appropriate target market/end user

- Kaizer Meadows may need to focus on a niche heavy industrial users or at a minimum a broader general industrial target audience
- Currently there appears to be limited land use and built development standards at the Eco Park
- Very limited exposure/marketing material generated for Kaizer Meadow

### 3.2.2 MODC Economic Development Model

- REN2 is just being formed and some confusion over the role of the REN2
- No regional economic strategy to support the function of the REN2
- Appears to be an “*us vs. them*” mentality with respect to economic development – this is changing to a “*we’re all in this together*” approach. This is something that needs to be understood from an individual District level to the MODC level to the REN level to the Provincial level.
- The MODC needs to be more investment ready in order to support the investment attraction activities of the NSBI and REN2

### 3.2.3 MODC Tourism Model

- No long term Tourism Strategy for the MODC or the South Shore region
- Appears to be limited dedicated resources or support for Tourism product development at the local or regional level
- Bluenose Coast, although acting on behalf of municipal partners along the South Shore, does not have a sustainable funding model in place
- Lack of MOU’s or service level agreements make it difficult to track actions and actual success

### 3.2.4 Land-Use Bylaw - General Rural Zoning

- General Rural Zoning Bylaw is very accommodating to almost any new development but not specifically structured toward attracting commercial or industrial development
- Current zoning does not help to reduce the risk for an investor or offer any assurances that conflicting uses will not interfere with commercial or industrial operations
- A regulated environment helps to lower the risk for developers/investors so that they are more assured that their investment will be protected
- Without a specific or defined location, it will be very difficult to market industrial development and investment opportunities in the MODC
- Need to be very strategic when siting industrial/employment land
- Industrial development does not happen by chance but instead happens by design – the design is the strategic development of industrial/employment land

### 3.2.5 “Why Here” Web Portal

- “Why Here” web portal is not easily found on a websearch when using terms such as:
  - Invest in Chester Nova Scotia
  - Invest in the South Shore Nova Scotia
  - Invest in Lunenburg Nova Scotia (4<sup>th</sup> hit on a Google search)

- Invest in Queens County Nova Scotia (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> hits, but not to the “Why Here” home page)
- “Why Here” only comes up as the number 1 hit when “Queens and Lunenburg” are Google searched specifically
- Currently there appears to be no or very limited connection between “Why Here” and the MODC webpage. There are physical links from “Why Here” to the MODC webpage, but the MODC website does not contain the required information to support the link (i.e. economic development or investment attraction information)
- Also some confusion over the MODC webpage and the Chamber of Commerce webpage

### 3.3 Opportunities

- Establish an MODC Economic Development program and hire an Economic Development Officer to deliver the program and continue with business outreach
- Specific economic development strategic functions should include:
  - Industrial land development – infrastructure development – undertake an industrial/commercial land inventory to understand supply before looking to creating newly served land
  - Policy development (i.e. updating of the Municipal Planning Strategy and Zoning By-law to include employment land designations and revisions to the General Rural zoning provisions)
  - Ensure up-to-date stats and data
  - Business community outreach
  - Development of MODC as a product to present to investors (i.e. Stats, land, buildings, etc.)
  - Marketing, branding and website development
  - Festival development and coordination
  - Tourism product development
  - Alignment with the REN2 and NSBI efforts
  - Coordination and alignment of Arts, Culture and Heritage efforts
  - Investment readiness preparation
  - Community infrastructure development (water, sewer, roads, etc.)
  - Quick Facts, Community Profile, Investment Response Template, etc.
- Identify partner responsibilities, create MOU’s or service provider agreements (including deliverables) to ensure value for money
- Employment data and analysis indicates industrial sectors to focus include Manufacturing, Tourism, Niche Agriculture, Value Added Processing (Fish, Forestry, Local Foods), Arts, Culture & Heritage, Film and Multi-media

#### 3.3.1 Kaizer Meadow

- Work to add new businesses and industries that would take advantage of the resources offered at Kaizer Meadows by expanding the brand of Kaizer Meadow to include both those that desire to be “Green Businesses” as well as more traditional industrial sectors such as manufacturing and processing.

- Incorporate Kaizer Meadow into all investment attraction marketing and MODC's value proposition as an ideal location for industrial investment
- Continue to develop the Kaizer Meadow Eco Park by implementing design standards and upgrading the Park's infrastructure (i.e. roadways, signage, landscaping, etc.)
- Prepare an Eco Park prospectus that includes:
  - Size of the parcels available for sale
  - Cost per acre of land
  - Permitted uses within the Eco Park
  - All services and amenities available within the Eco Park
  - The vision of the Eco Park
  - Main point of contact for the Eco Park

### 3.3.2 MODC Economic Development Model

- Model is in the process of being realigned
- The REN2 should focus on being a proactive regional partner in seeking out investment opportunities into the REN2 region
- The MODC to become more investment ready in order to support the investment attraction activities of the NSBI and REN2

### 3.3.3 MODC Tourism Model

- Develop a long term Tourism Strategy for the MODC or the South Shore region
- Create and enforce MOU's with all service providers
- To allow for a more sustainable funding model and to secure funds from the Province of Nova Scotia, absorb the functions of the Bluenose Coast into the REN2

### 3.3.4 General Rural Zoning

- To offer a more risk free investment environment and to allow for the development of specific/strategic industrial and commercial areas, define commercial and industrial land use designations in the MODC Municipal Planning Strategy as well as commercial and industrial zones in MODC Land-Use Bylaw

### 3.3.5 "Why Here" web portal

- Work with NSBI to establish a link from their home page to "Why Here"
- Improve the Search Engine Optimization (SEO) of "Why Here". SEO is the process of impacting the visibility of a website through search engine sites (Google, Yahoo, Ask, etc.). The higher the ranking, the greater ease for people to find your websites.
- Tags (or metadata) are a way of providing behind the scenes information to describe or define your website. Why Here should be tagged with terms like Nova Scotia, Chester, Lunenburg, Bridgewater, Canada, business, economic development, etc. so that searching for those terms also leads to the Why Here website.
- Ensure all connections to partner websites are active and that all partner websites contain the required information the user will be requesting (i.e. the MODC needs to develop an Economic Development page or separate website)

## 4 The MODC Economic Development Strategy

The Municipality of the District of Chester has spent considerable time and effort creating and refining their sustainability efforts and initiatives. One of the MODC main pillars of sustainability is the MODC economy. Taking direction from the MODC Council Strategic Plan, the MODC Economic Development Strategy focuses on promoting conditions conducive to fostering economic prosperity.

To ensure the MODC economy is well positioned within the community's strategic efforts, the following goals, objectives and actions have been carefully created through a detailed review of the previous work and strategic documents prepared by the MODC as well as in-depth consultations with political, community and business leaders.

The Strategic Goals for the MODC include:

1. Become a Partner in Economic Development
2. Become Investment Ready – Back to Basics
3. Be Open for Business
4. *Live, Work and Play* - Become the South Shore Community that Stands Out
5. Focus on Growing the MODC's Economic Sectors
6. Keep Working Hard to Become a Known Tourism Destination.

### 4.1 Strategic Goals

The Municipality of the District of Chester prides itself on having good relationships with numerous community and regional partners. As the MODC moves forward with implementation of this Economic Development Strategy, it is critical that these partners are recognized and relationships are formalized. This will help launch collaborative action where the right partners can be brought together on a project by project basis to complete the actions proposed in this Strategy.

In terms of the implementation of the MODC Economic Development Strategy, it is crucial that an Implementation Committee (comprised of members of Council, staff and economic development supporters and advocates) be organized to advance the actions identified below. This Implementation Committee will continually monitor progress and ensure the "right" people are part of the process by seeking out community leaders.



#### 4.1.1 Become a Partner in Economic Development

***Objective: The Municipality of the District of Chester will invest in a dedicated Economic Development program and continue to work with local and regional stakeholders to ensure the MODC is fully engaged as a committed partner in Economic Development. The main goal of the MODC Economic Development program is to promote conditions conducive to fostering economic prosperity.***

Economic development success will require dedicated long-term support and efforts to ensure the MODC is taking full advantage of those opportunities to strengthen and diversify its local and regional economy. The MODC is already working within a collaborative partnership environment and that will need to continue going forward with economic development efforts.



#### ***Actions***

The following actions, promoted by the Municipality and supported by the local business community as well as the MODC's partners in economic development, will support this objective:

- To ensure long-term success, provide dedicated long-term support for an MODC economic development program that includes adequate sustainable resources for staffing, projects and on-going operational support.
- Hire an Economic Development Officer to implement and coordinate the MODC Economic Development Strategy.
- Implement and update the 2013 Economic Strategy in conjunction with the MODC Council Strategic Plan.
- Create an annual economic development report card that identifies economic development activities, successes and the status of the Economic Development Strategy implementation.
- Continue to work with partners to shape the Regional Enterprise Network 2 (REN2). Ideally the function of the REN2 could include activities on behalf of partner communities such as:
  - Being the proactive regional investment attraction lead for the REN2 partner communities when developing new investment website, marketing and branding, investment lead protocol, tracking investment leads, training and educating REN2 partners on investment readiness requirements
  - Being the main liaison with Nova Scotia Business Inc.
  - Working with partner communities to establish a set of investment readiness minimum standards for each REN2 partner
  - Leading regional tourism marketing and product development efforts.

#### 4.1.2 Become Investment Ready – Back to Basics

***Objective: The Municipality will work with the local business community, local land owners and partners in economic development to ensure the MODC has all the tools and infrastructure required to retain and attract local investment opportunities.***

The MODC is strategically located along the south shore in a region with high growth potential. To capitalize on this potential, it is critical that the MODC is prepared to both attract investment and economic development activity, while at the same time have the required community assets and infrastructure needed to support economic growth and sustainability.



#### ***MODC's Industrial Land Supply***

Currently, the MODC has an abundant supply of vacant land that potentially could be developed. With respect to the creation/siting of industrial or employment land, there are two main issues affecting the MODC:

- The General Rural Zoning provisions and the lack of defined industrial and commercial zoning restrictions
- Kaizer Meadow "Eco Park".

#### ***General Rural Zoning Provisions***

Most developments in the MODC are governed by the General Rural Zoning provisions in the MODC Land Use Bylaw. These provisions are fairly lax in terms of permitted uses within the General Rural Zones – essentially there are no restrictions or separation of uses within the General Rural Zone other than a development requiring to comply with some defined set back and development size requirements as well as requiring a development permit. Although this approach to land use and development appears to be very progressive and development friendly, it does create three main concerns for investors:

1. It is very difficult to develop or market a specific industrial/employment park if other uses such as residential, institutional, recreational, etc. are permitted.
2. Does not help to reduce the risk for an investor or offer any assurances that conflicting uses will not interfere with commercial or industrial operations.
3. It will be challenging to direct desired industrial development to a specific strategic location if industrial uses are permitted throughout the entire MODC.

When the MODC considers strategically locating new industrial land, the MODC Land Use Bylaw should also be revised to remove industrial or employment uses from the General Rural Zoning provisions and a new industrial zone created.

### *Kaizer Meadow "Eco Park"*

Kaizer Meadow is currently being positioned as an "Eco Park" looking to attract "Green Businesses". With large tracks of land available and co-located with the Kaizer Meadow Solid Waste Management Facility and Environment Centre, there are opportunities for very targeted industrial development. It would help to promote the further development of Kaizer Meadows if the brand was expanded to include both those businesses that desire to be "Green Businesses" as well as more traditional industrial sectors such as manufacturing and processing.



### *Actions*

The following actions, promoted by the Municipality and sustained through local and regional partnerships in economic development, will support this objective:

- Create an industrial and employment land/building inventory to track available buildings and properties. The inventory should include location, size of land/buildings, permitted uses, owner's name and contact information, prices, terms of any sale or leasing agreement (if applicable). Inventory must be kept up-to-date and should be made available both in hard copy and online.
- Work with the Nova Scotia Business Inc. to get a sense of the investment inquiries they have historically received and their investment requirements.
- Prepare a business case (if there are demonstrated or obvious gaps in the inventory in terms of available land or buildings) examining opportunities to provide additional buildings and serviced employment lands – privately or publically owned – for investment attraction purposes. The business case should include:
  - Supply and demand analysis of MODC and regional industrial and employment land
  - An analysis to identify the ideal strategic location(s) of commercial and industrial zones (both rural and urban). Location criteria to include:
    - Proximity to HRM
    - Distance and access to Highway 103
    - Availability of/proximity to services (ie. water, sewer, power, telecommunications and labour force)
    - Availability and marketability of land
    - Size of parcel(s)
  - Details on all processes and activities that must be completed to develop industrial and employment lands within the MODC

- A detailed implementation plan and schedule of activities to be completed using estimated approval times
- Cost estimates and estimated cash flow requirements for new land development
- Lists and action plans for all regulatory approvals and compliance matters by which the MODC or land owner must address and comply with
- Recommendations for servicing options and/or phasing.
- Conduct a complete review of the Municipality of the District of Chester Municipal Planning Strategy and accompanying Land Use Bylaw. In terms of industrial and employment land development, utilize the results of the industrial and employment land business case to identify the most ideal strategic location of commercial and industrial zones (both rural and urban). Include new zones for industrial and employment park location and development, while at the same time limiting as-of-right industrial and commercial uses in the General Rural zoning.
- Update home-based business provisions and by-laws to foster entrepreneurship and allow for appropriate businesses uses within residential units.
- Update statistics and data for the MODC focusing on current year data/estimates and MODC labour shed.
- Prepare a MODC Value Proposition report and package that would include:
  - Community Profile
  - Target Sector Analysis
  - Needs Gap/Competitive Analysis.
- Prepare a templated proposal for responding to investment inquiries.
- Complete and implement a marketing and communication strategy that should include:
  - An economic development brand for the MODC
  - A website specific to MODC economic development – linked and/or branded with the REN2 website
  - Marketing collateral including a Community Profile and Quick Facts to be made available online, in digital and hard copy formats
  - A social media campaign.
- Establish an investment inquiry protocol to ensure all inquiries and opportunities are responded to effectively and efficiently.
- Continually ensure municipal infrastructure is strategically located to take advantage of new economic development/investment opportunities (ie. water, sewer, roads, etc.).
- Rebrand the Kaizer Meadow “Eco Park” as an opportunity for both “Green Businesses” as well as more traditional industries such as manufacturing and processing.
- Continue creating a marketing program for Kaizer Meadow and ensure Kaizer Meadow is included in all investment attraction related marketing material.

### 4.1.3 Be Open for Business

**Objective: The Municipality will work with the local business community and partners in economic development to ensure the MODC becomes a place where existing businesses thrive and new business are welcomed and given the best opportunity to succeed.**

The MODC is home to a strong and diverse business community. Ranging from large and small employers to traditional and emerging economic sectors, the MODC has a wide array of businesses, each with different needs and requirements. It is essential that the MODC work to understand the needs of their business community and to ensure new/potential businesses are welcomed and supported by the MODC.



#### Actions

The following action, undertaken by the Municipality and assisted by local business community, will support this objective:

- Establish an MODC point of contact for all business inquires. The role of this point person is to shepherd all business related inquires and developments through any required MODC approvals processes and to help resolve any issues that may arise.
- Provide investment readiness training for all MODC staff and political leaders. It is critical that front line staff (those directly handling investment inquires), as well as the MODC political and business leaders, understand the investment inquiry and response process and the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in this process.
- Develop and update an MODC business directory.
- Work with the local business community to determine better ways to serve MODC businesses and industries. Connect with the MODC business community by undertaking:
  - An on-going business visitation program
  - A business retention and expansion program customized specifically for the MODC.
- Implement any recommendations arising from the business visitation and BR&E programs.
- Partner with the Chamber of Commerce and other business groups to conduct an annual MODC business awards and recognition program that would include businesses from the entire MODC.



#### 4.1.4 Live, Work and Play - Become the South Shore Community that Stands Out

***Objective: The Municipality of the District of Chester understands that building a well-planned, well maintained and attractive community will attract people to live, work and play in the community. The MODC will work hard with their community and economic development partners to create the community that stands out among other South Shore communities.***

The MODC has the political willingness, the dedicated staff and the community desire to become the most sought after community along the south shore. By implementing strategic efforts such MODC Council Strategic Plan – including this Economic Development Strategy – the MODC will not only become a community that residents will choose as a desired location, but it will also retain and attract commercial and industrial investment.

Now is the opportune time for the MODC to demonstrate that they are a community leader along the south shore and to stand out as the best location to "work, live and play".

#### ***Actions***

**It is imperative that Councillors work together for the betterment of the MODC as a whole community. It is also critical that the MODC be prepared to continue demonstrating economic development leadership within the regional economic context. In the current investment environment, partnerships are the key to success.**



The following community actions, undertaken by the Municipality, will support this objective:

- Continue working to implement the Council's Strategic Plan. It is imperative that economic development be well balanced with community development efforts.
- Be very strategic and conduct a complete review of the Municipality of the District of Chester Municipal Planning Strategy and accompanying Land Use Bylaws.
- Implement the use of Smart Growth principles in all new policies, projects and developments as part of an effort to attract both residents, professionals, a strong work force, employers and tourists/visitors. When completing the update of the MODC Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use Bylaw consider the use of Smart Growth principles where Smart Growth is defined as:

- *a commitment to sound resource management – protection of natural features and management of natural resources such that their long term sustainability is guaranteed*
  - *directing urban development towards existing communities with the majority of development being located in fully serviced, compact, efficient communities with a broad mix of land uses*
  - *diverse, balanced growth which is integrated into existing design with linkages between the new and the old, a focus on pedestrian travel, shopping, working, street layout, open spaces, mix of housing stock and support for existing institutional and commercial services; and*
  - *maintaining and enhancing distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place through design.*<sup>1</sup>
- Undertake a long range financial management plan.
  - Undertake an asset management plan where any future infrastructure funding decisions will be informed from the asset management plan.
  - As a part of the MODC marketing and communication strategy, include residential attraction as a target audience.



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<sup>1</sup> North Grenville Community Strategic Plan, McSweeney & Associates, June 2013

#### 4.1.5 Focus on Promoting and Growing the MODC Economic Sectors

***Objective: The Municipality will work with existing businesses and industrial sector partners to assist in promotion of select sectors in order to grow, strengthen and expand the MODC's business community.***



A strong business community will help to foster and grow a more diverse and resilient business community - as success breeds success. The MODC can build off the community's strengths to market and promote both the existing businesses in the MODC as well as opportunities to invest in the MODC. Building a stronger economy and strengthening local businesses will help move the MODC closer to community sustainability.

Moving forward, it will be imperative that the MODC rethink how existing traditional industries are being supported and promoted. Instead of trying to foster business growth and development through existing traditional market sectors (i.e. fishing, forestry and agriculture), it will be more beneficial to look at how value can be added to the resources and products being generated through tradition industries. This rethink will help not only support traditional industries, but also grow and stimulate new emerging industrial and business opportunities.

As one example of moving away from traditional industry development and more toward value-added sectors, the MODC has demonstrated strengths in niche agriculture. To help grow this sector there may be value-added opportunities such as promoting and expanding the MODC local and/or slow foods movement, promoting the consumption of local foods, promoting and branding MODC locally grown products and identifying opportunities for value-added processing. This is only one example of how value can be added to the products generated by a traditional industrial sector.



### *Actions*

Through the development of the MODC Situational Analysis and the MODC Consultation Report, the following industrial sectors have been identified as strengths within the MODC:

- Traditional Industrial Sectors:
  - *Fishing*
  - *Manufacturing*
  - *Forestry*
- Emerging Industrial Sectors:
  - *Tourism*
  - *Niche Agriculture*
  - *Value Added Processing (Fish, Forestry, Local Foods)*
  - *Professional Services and Knowledge-based Economy*
  - *Arts, Culture & Heritage*
  - *Film and Multi-media.*



The following actions promoted by the Municipality and supported by the MODC business community will support this objective:

- As part of the MODC marketing strategy, develop marketing, promotional and feature sheets to attract investments in the emerging industrial sectors.
- Rebrand and promote Kaizer Meadows as an industrial/business park with unique attributes such as high-tech landfill, recycling facilities, and onsite water treatment.

#### 4.1.6 Keep Working Hard to Become a Known Tourism Destination

***Objective: The Municipality will work with its partners in tourism to become a more recognizable tourism destination by focusing on tourism infrastructure development, product development and marketing.***



The MODC has a very solid offering of both natural and built tourism assets. Coupled with the existing coastlines, picturesque vistas, rural countryside, restaurants, accommodations, events, festivals, historical, cultural, and artistic offerings, the MODC has the attractions to entice tourists – locally and abroad. Continued work needs to focus on ensuring the MODC has the right infrastructure in place to stimulate tourism product development and proper marketing of the MODC as a tourism destination.

#### ***Actions***

The following actions, promoted by the Municipality and supported by local tourism partners, will support this objective:

- Continue to work closely with partners to develop the mandate of the REN2 and consider rolling the existing functions of the Bluenose Coast into the REN2. The goal is to create a sustainable framework to continue 'soft' product and experience development, partnership building and marketing. In addition, moving regional tourism functions to the REN2, will allow for additional leverage of funds from the Province to support tourism functions.
- Work with local and regional partners to undertake a regional tourism strategy in order to continue the marketing and development of the REN2 and MODC's tourism sector. The strategy should identify the REN2 and MODC's primary roles. With respect to the MODC, tourism support should include:
  - Funding support
  - Support for specific tourism-related projects, e.g. signage
  - 'Hard' product development, such as infrastructure (e.g. trails, beautification).
- Be more definitive and structured through agreements with service providers by establishing clear framework for roles, responsibilities and expectations with providers of tourism support.
- Assist potential investors and developers with specific tourism projects and encourage tourism investment within the MODC – be open for business.
- Continue with the development of the Arts, Culture and Heritage asset inventory and map. Use this background information as a basis for the Cultural-Heritage strategic plan. Ensure the actions and strategies are in line with the objectives of the Tourism Strategic Plan.



