What is land use planning?
Land use policies and plans are tools we can use to make sure that Islanders can continue to develop land and meet today’s needs, but do so without threatening our children’s ability to meet their needs. We can establish a comprehensive framework to guide development.

Why is this needed?
Comprehensive land use planning is the foundation for protecting our environment, economic development, efficient service delivery and quality of life – it is a way to make choices about the future. Provincial land use policies help to protect the broad public interest of all Islanders and will guide development in municipalities and in areas under provincial control.

What is the current situation on PEI?
Today, there are no comprehensive land use policies that apply to all of PEI. The current framework consists of thirty-two official plans on 10% of the Island and a patchwork of rules for the remaining 90%. These rules are not connected to a provincial policy because there is none. This was identified as a pressing need by the Report of the Commission on Land and Local Governance, the latest report to recommend comprehensive land use planning.

“All Islanders concerned about the future need to question what our guardianship of the province’s environment and resources will provide for those who come after us, if we do nothing to change our current direction. We need to question what irreplaceable assets are being lost forever because a comprehensive land use plan is not in place for the entire island...

Our land, our water, our natural areas, our viewscapes, and our architectural heritage, both inside and outside municipalities, will not look after themselves. If we do not provide responsible stewardship now, we run the risk of losing them as we know them, forever...

We cannot afford to maintain the status quo in a world that is changing all around us...\(^1\)

By creating provincial land use policies to guide how land is used, we are making a long-term commitment to preserve the quality of life in Island communities. Land use policy sets priorities for land to be preserved or developed to enhance our communities and rural areas.

Who is working on this?
The provincial government established the Task Force on Land Use Policy, recommended by the Commission on Land and Local Governance. The purpose of the Task Force is to develop detailed recommendations for provincial land use policies and their implementation in a comprehensive land use planning framework, guided by the Commissioner’s report and input from the public.

Who are the members of the Task Force on Land Use Policy?
John Handrahan, Tignish (Chair), Janice Harper, Charlottetown, Carol Horne, Charlottetown, Paul Gallant, Souris West, Marvyn Webster, Kelvin Grove. The Task Force members were appointed in August 2012.

What has the Task Force done?
The Task Force on Land Use Policy has prepared draft provincial land use policies for public discussion and feedback before making recommendations to the provincial government. This draft is intended to provide an example of what could be included in provincial land use policies and to encourage dialogue on how best to implement the policies. We are fortunate to live in a place where we still have choices about how we want the future to look.
Our Vision

We recognize and value the importance of the land and the water - our Island’s natural resources, and the heritage we have inherited in our landscape, watersheds and communities.

Responsible stewardship of the Island’s resources provides benefits to Islanders and ensures our Island is healthy and sustainable for future generations.

Effective planning and decisions about land use will help us change our approach to the Island’s sustainability, enhance the well-being of Islanders and offer certainty and transparency in decisions about the environment and investment.
**Statements of Provincial Interest**

Statements of Provincial Interest guide the development and implementation of policies that provide direction and a comprehensive, integrated and coordinated approach to land use planning, consistent with sustainable development principles. These statements are intended to guide municipal planning authorities and government departments in making decisions about land use.
Our drinking water is one of our most valuable public resources - the basis of all life, food, communities and industry. It is therefore in the Provincial Interest to protect the quality and quantity of the Island’s water and ensure it is healthy and sustainable for future generations.

**Goal 1: Protect the quality and quantity of our water**

**OBJECTIVES:**

A. Protect drinking water at source;
   
i. Prevent contamination of groundwater from all sources, through well head protection measures and other land use controls; restrict development that contaminates water; consider non-point source pollutants;

   ii. Implement best practices for storm water management in new development; maintain pre-development hydrological conditions, minimize land disturbance, preserve and use natural drainage systems, avoid erosion;
iii. Ensure that wastewater is appropriately stored, treated and managed and does not degrade water quality;

iv. Identify high nitrate areas, where national standards for safe drinking water and healthy aquatic systems have been compromised, and implement appropriate corrective actions (ex: increased tree cover, controls over subdivision development, wetland restoration, require nutrient management/accounting, consider alternative septic systems, designate watershed areas where the use of soil additives is curtailed or eliminated);

B. Ensure a safe and adequate supply of water;

i. Planning should be done on a watershed or regional basis; incorporating watershed management plans when available;

ii. Policy and development proposals are required to demonstrate they will not affect the quality or quantity of the recharge of groundwater and surface water systems considering such factors as ground water withdrawals, waste water disposal, stream water recharge, and adequate surface water levels; conduct hydro-geological assessments before lots are approved;

iii. Ensure natural recharge areas are maintained (storm water management, design without ditch infilling, natural swales for infiltration).
Our agricultural land nourishes us and is a major economic driver of our economy. The future of agriculture rests in the top few centimeters of soil. Island soils require careful nurturing to provide their optimum economic and social return. It is therefore in the Provincial Interest to stabilize the agricultural land base, and offer certainty to farmers in land use decisions.

Goal 2: Protect prime agricultural land

OBJECTIVES:

A. Protect agricultural land by regulating the subdivision and development of prime agricultural land;
   
i. Identify agricultural land classes that are not normally open to further development or subdivision. Define prime farmland considering soil type, slope, topography, surface drainage, natural features, surrounding uses, access to utilities and services;

   ii. Restrict residential subdivision on agricultural land;

   iii. Acknowledge possible need for secondary housing for persons engaged in the economic activity of the farming enterprise (parents, children, workers);

B. Protect agricultural operations by minimizing potential land use conflicts;
   
i. Require minimum separation buffers to be maintained by any development adjacent to agricultural lands;

   ii. Offer certainty to farmers in land use decisions by protecting agricultural operations from encroachment by other land uses, and nuisance complaints;

C. Protect agricultural operations by maintaining the option to expand or diversify farms and allowing for the development of related industries (ex: windmills, agri-tourism, farm markets, cheese making), while also respecting compatibility with existing and future land use and infrastructure planning;
   
i. Support activities that achieve greater food independence;

D. Regulate intensive agricultural operations by siting them with care for existing land uses, and preventing environmental contamination (ex: large hog, dairy, poultry, bee, greenhouses, other intensive farm operations);
E. Prevent soil erosion (keep soil on the fields);
   i. Regulate soil management practices necessary to meet soil conservation goals and standards in fields near streams and wetlands;
   ii. Ensure adequate crop rotation;
   iii. Watershed drainage boundaries do not follow property boundaries, so cooperation with neighbouring landowners or field consolidation may be required to allow erosion control structures (berms, grassed waterways, strip cropping).
Our landscape has been shaped by people working the land and reflects our traditions and culture. The working landscape of our rural regions is a unique feature of our heritage and shapes our culture. It is therefore in the Provincial Interest to identify and protect significant viewscapes and the rural character of PEI.

**Goal 3: Preserve the working rural landscape – natural, agricultural and visual rural character**

**OBJECTIVES:**

A. Preserve and enhance rural land uses that are environmentally compatible with the Island’s natural resources in order to maintain opportunities to enjoy the traditional occupations, economic diversity, and scenic resources associated with rural lands;
   i. Identify the best use of land and allow for land use to change over time;
   ii. Restrict development of residential subdivisions in rural areas and near incorporated municipalities;

B. Protect the rural character of the province;
   i. Development appropriate to the rural character and sited as to not negatively affect the local areas; establish siting guidelines;
   ii. Development of industry or commercial operations that serve or reinforce the rural area should be encouraged to be located in sites appropriate for the rural areas (e.g. fertilizer plant);

C. Protect the visual quality, sense of place and prominent views of cultural landscapes and open spaces;
   i. Identify and protect cultural landscapes, rural and coastal landscapes which are important for community identity, public enjoyment and have economic value for tourism;
   ii. Incorporate visual aspects in minimum development standards (e.g.: traditional roof lines);
   iii. Ensure public access and enjoyment of cultural landscapes.
Our natural areas and waterways provide the ecological base for long term sustainability. It is therefore in the Provincial Interest to identify and protect areas of ecological significance.

Goal 4: Preserve natural areas and heritage resources to ensure they are healthy and sustainable for future generations

OBJECTIVES:

A. Identify and protect natural areas, wildlife management areas, archeological and heritage resources in order to conserve and protect them from incompatible land uses;
   i. Identify and protect archaeologically significant sites and diverse cultural heritage sites;
   ii. Reduce the amount of land consumed, fragmented and made unproductive for wildlife habitat;

B. Protect environmentally sensitive features, including beaches, dunes, coastal marshes, wetlands, offshore islands and other coastal ecosystems;
   i. Restrict all development in these areas;
   ii. Ensure full compliance with the existing buffer zone and grass headland requirements found in the Watercourse and Wetland Protection Regulations;
C. **Recognize the cumulative impact of human activity and do not exceed the carrying capacity of watersheds and natural ecosystems;**
   i. Policy and development proposals must not allow water removal to occur at rates that exceed the capacity of the ecosystem; consider the cumulative impact of development on an entire watershed; limit water extraction and consumption activities that deplete drinking water sources. (When a new subdivision is developed, the impact of those dwellings on existing drinking water and sewage collection and disposal systems must be considered);
   
   ii. Protect fishing and aquaculture resources and activities from development that could contaminate water (minimize the off-site movement of any contaminant that may affect the health and viability of waterways, coastal ecosystems and the near shore fishery; prevent soil erosion and stream siltation);
   
   iii. Development in or near watercourses and riparian buffer zones must be regulated; require undisturbed buffers along watercourses to minimize the effects of erosion, protect shorelines and maintain recreational and habitat value;
   
   iv. Identify and protect greenbelts adjacent to rivers and streams (beyond minimum buffer zones);

D. **Preserve and enhance the availability of open space that provides wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities, and protects the region’s natural resources and character.**
Our productive resource land (not currently being farmed) is also a finite resource. Using our land in one way can exclude other uses forever. Decisions must be made carefully, based on scientific evidence and with consideration for our future. It is therefore in the Provincial Interest to protect land for resource production.

Goal 5: Protect land for resource production

OBJECTIVES:

A. Preserve and enhance rural land uses that are environmentally compatible with the Island’s natural resources in order to maintain opportunities to enjoy traditional occupations, economic diversity, and scenic resources associated with rural lands;
   i. Identify the best current use of land and allow for land use to change over time;
   ii. Restrict development of residential subdivisions in rural areas and near incorporated municipalities;

B. Minimise adverse impacts on the land by using land efficiently and protecting sensitive resources, e.g. forest land, well head protection areas, significant landscape, wind farms;

C. Promote ecological integrity through the sustainable management of renewable resources;
   i. Enhance the quality and diversity of forests to provide a full range of ecological, social and economic benefits;
   ii. Encourage land owners to establish forest management plans;

D. Reduce the potential for land use conflicts with resource-related uses by protecting prime resource lands and resource-related industry activities;
   i. Ensure the development of non resource-related uses is efficient and orderly and does not negatively impact resource-related uses;
   ii. Ensure that existing and future recreational use is appropriately managed and accessible to the public.
Our coastline defines the Island and requires special consideration due to erosion, development pressure and vulnerability to the effects of climate change. It is therefore in the Provincial Interest to protect and manage coastal areas to safeguard their environmental, economic, historic and aesthetic values and to protect public safety.

Goal 6: Protect coastal areas and coastal industries

OBJECTIVES:

A. Regulate development in the coastal area in order to minimize incompatible land uses;
   i. Protect fishing and aquaculture resources and activities from development that could contaminate water or reduce water quality or quantity;
   ii. Protect heritage resources and working harbours in the coastal area from incompatible development;
   iii. Allow for coastal industry, commercial and recreational uses, and respect traditional shore access;

B. Develop and implement a coastal zone management policy for the entire province;
   i. Preserve, enhance and where appropriate, expand public access to the shore;
   ii. Maintain the environmental buffering capacity of coastal areas to mitigate the effects of climate change;
   iii. Regulate development in the coastal area, including restricted or no development, setbacks, buffer zones, plan for flooding and storm surges;
   iv. Prohibit development that has the potential to increase shoreline erosion;
   v. Continue to regulate fortification of eroding shorelines by artificial means, recognizing the need to protect critical infrastructure.
Our communities are centers of cultural and economic activity. They reflect our heritage, and support people. Our community spirit holds the promise for a prosperous future. It is therefore in the provincial interest to encourage healthy, vibrant and sustainable communities.

Goal 7: Encourage healthy, vibrant and sustainable communities

OBJECTIVES:

A. Make development decisions predictable and fair;
   i. Ensure citizen and stakeholder participation in development decisions;
   ii. Ensure predictable land use policies and local control -where there is capacity and interest;

B. Minimize risks to people, property and infrastructure from natural and man-made hazards;
   i. From hazards and nuisances related to flooding, erosion or bank instability; map and zone land that is located in flood risk areas (including areas subject to coastal inundation, wetlands, etc) to ensure only appropriate development occurs and development is prohibited in flood risk areas;
   ii. Minimize land use conflicts by ensuring land uses and developments are compatible;
C. **Locate development away from areas that must be protected for ecological, historical, economic or other reasons;**
   i. Develop design criteria to integrate new development with existing settlement and natural environment;
   ii. Integrate environmental considerations in decision-making; energy conservation;
   iii. Include agricultural reserve zones where appropriate;

D. **Promote distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place;**
   i. Identify and protect historical districts and places of historical importance;
   ii. Protect and enhance built and natural heritage by encouraging conservation, preservation and sustained use of heritage buildings and sites; (ex: take advantage of existing community assets, green space, parks; include mixed land uses and a range of housing options; support walking and cycling; include rehabilitation and use of historic buildings and natural areas);

E. **Encourage clustered settlement patterns to maintain viable, cost effective municipalities and promote sustainable development;**
   i. Use planning tools and/or development incentives to discourage urban and suburban sprawl;
   ii. Establish one minimum development standard for all subdivisions; residential and cottage treated the same;
   iii. Plan development to occur to increase infilling and density, before developing new areas;
   iv. Locate development in areas that are, adequately supported by infrastructure
   v. Encourage appropriate development of brownfield sites;
   vi. Maximize existing investments in municipal services;
   vii. Ensure that the full costs of infrastructure (environmental, social and economic) are incorporated into the costs of all development;
   viii. Cost of infrastructure provided for new development must be borne equitably by the beneficiaries, and cost sharing should be determined in advance.
F. Protect private property investments, public infrastructure and the health and safety of individuals. Balance economic growth with the desire for increased public open space, recreation, residential and other interests;

   i. Restrict development in areas that are inappropriate such as wetlands, flood plains, coastal erosion or storm surge areas, and unstable, hazardous or contaminated sites;

   ii. Identify and protect industrial and commercial areas with strategic infrastructure links;

   iii. Develop measures to mitigate community impacts from industrial/commercial operations (large scale industrial, commercial, gravel pits, wharves, waste disposal sites, energy production, sewage treatment); maintain buffer.
Our Infrastructure is a necessary underpinning of a modern vibrant economy. We must plan for affordable services with limited impact on the environment wherever possible. It is therefore in the provincial interest to promote the efficient use of existing infrastructure.

Goal 8: Integrate land use and infrastructure planning

OBJECTIVES:

A. Optimize existing services before expanding or developing new infrastructure;
   i. Make efficient use of municipal water supply systems and wastewater disposal systems;
   ii. Include sustainable land use patterns and innovative development practices; ex: cluster development, greater density, reduced environmental footprint;
   iii. Use planning tools and/or development incentives to discourage urban and suburban sprawl;
   iv. Consider demographic forecasts when planning public infrastructure (roads, schools, arenas);

B. Ensure the full costs of infrastructure (environmental, social and economic) are incorporated into the costs of all development;
   i. Cost of infrastructure provided for new development must be borne equitably by the beneficiaries, and cost sharing should be determined in advance, ex: cost of improvements to the provincial highway system are the responsibility of the developer, unless otherwise agreed;

C. Ensure that land use planning and associated decisions preserve the efficiency and safety of the transportation system;
   i. Development design must consider public transit users, cyclists, pedestrians and the mobility challenged; to reduce reliance on cars, official plans should promote walk-able and transit supportive communities;
   ii. Maintain restricted access on major routes; development should be directed to areas that have an intersection and internal roads in place;
   iii. Development proposals must include traffic and safety implications, access and upgrade needs;
   iv. Restrict strip development (row of lots each with highway frontage and access).
Can I have input?

Yes. Public input and dialogue are important for a successful land use planning process. Deciding the future of land use on Prince Edward Island is the shared responsibility of all Islanders. Land is the foundation of our environment, economy and quality of life. Water quality, public safety, agriculture, recreation, tourism, wildlife, forestry and coastal resources all depend on the land and the choices we make.

Islanders are responsible for the land and the changes taking place. The Task Force on Land Use Policy wants to hear from Islanders about their vision for a sustainable PEI and future land use. The Task Force will use your input and ideas to develop provincial land use policies and make recommendations to the provincial government.

We invite you to participate in this important work.

You can provide your views in the following ways:
1. Plan to attend public meetings to be held across Prince Edward Island in the coming months.
2. Follow this work at the website: gov.pe.ca/landandlocalgovernance
3. Submit feedback online
4. Submit feedback by email to: landuse@gov.pe.ca
5. By mail to:

   Task Force on Land Use Policy
   Department of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs
   PO Box 2000 Charlottetown, PE C1A 7N8