

Briefing note to Riverview Town Council on the development of Statements of Public Interest
From: Kirk Brewer, Planner, RPP, MCIP

The modernization of the *Community Planning Act* in 2017 and subsequent amendments to the *Act* as part of the Local Government Reform process have enabled several new planning tools, including bonus zoning, inclusionary zoning, and statements of public interest, among others.

The *Act* already mandates that Rural and Municipal Plans must account for certain policy areas, including residential development, commercial development, conservation of the physical environment, etc. However, it does not provide any direction as to the content of those policies and leaves it to the local government's discretion, which creates an uneven playing field for development across the province.

Statements of Public Interest are a planning tool used in many provinces to create an overarching policy direction that all plans in the province must follow to ensure consistent planning across all jurisdictions. The statements identify priorities deemed to be in the public interest and set an additional framework for development.

These statements can be prescriptive ("must" and "shall" language) and/or aspirational ("should" and "promote" language), depending on the legislation. Following a jurisdictional scan across all provinces with SPIs in effect, the Government of New Brunswick has determined it is in the provincial interest at this time to take a more aspirational approach in the following policy areas:

- **Settlement patterns** (efficient land use and avoiding sprawl)
- **Agriculture**
- **Climate Change**
- **Flood Hazard and Hazard Areas; and**
- **Natural Resources**

The goal is to ensure plans address these five policy areas. However, not all policy areas will apply equally to all local governments or their plans (ie. natural resources are not a major point of concern in Riverview). Planning staff has reviewed the proposed statements of public interest and is satisfied that Riverview's planning documents already exceed the vision and goals laid out in the proposed regulation. No immediate action is required to adapt to the incoming regulation.



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