Two community-led co-operative housing projects proposed in Lunenburg County



MBCLC and Solterre Design partnership at proposed project site on Brook Street, Lunenburg, NS. Photo by Verónica Gutiérrez

MAHONE BAY and LUNENBURG, N.S., November 3, 2026. The South Shore's small towns are changing. As retirees, workers, and young families move to the region, both newcomers and long-time residents are finding it harder to secure stable, affordable housing. Mahone Bay Community Land Co-operative (MBCLC) is responding with non-profit co-operative housing: non-market homes governed by the people who live in them. MBCLC is advancing two co-operative housing developments in Mahone Bay and Lunenburg—the first of their kind for these towns—with more than 80 homes in total.

Why co-op housing works. Housing co-operatives are non-profit associations where residents democratically govern their homes and manage housing on a cost-recovery basis. Housing charges cover mortgage payments, operating expenses, and reserves for future needs. As mortgages are paid down, co-operatives can keep housing charges stable and deepen

affordability over time, rather than tracking rising market rents. Members elect a board, shape decisions about their homes and community, and enjoy secure, long-term tenure. This model gives residents a meaningful voice in their housing while creating opportunities for people of different ages, backgrounds, incomes, and household types to put down roots, raise families, age in place, build lasting connections, and establish a stable foundation for their lives. In turn, residents contribute to their communities' and towns' well-being. "Co-operative housing fills the need for stable housing with reasonable costs on the South Shore to help individuals and families live in the communities where they work," said Dean Waterfield, Chair of MBCLC.

A co-operative housing portfolio for Lunenburg County. MBCLC and Solterre Design have assembled an experienced design team to advance two co-operative housing projects in collaboration with government, sector, and charitable partners. Both projects are grounded in member and community leadership and a shared commitment to affordability, accessibility, and environmental sustainability.

Hawthorn & Kinburn, Mahone Bay. A proposed development of more than 40 homes on a portion of vacant, town-owned land at the corner of Hawthorn Road and Kinburn Street, within walking distance of downtown. Member and community input has helped shape the project from the outset, with workshops informing the preliminary site plan, density, unit mix, and shared amenities. The Town of Mahone Bay has agreed to convey the land to MBCLC for $1, subject to acceptance of a feasibility study currently underway.



Proposed project site at the corner of Hawthorn Road and Kinburn Street, Mahone Bay, NS. Photo by Verónica Gutiérrez

Falkland & Brook, Lunenburg. A proposed as-of-right development of approximately 44 homes on Brook Street, adjacent to the working waterfront. A Letter of Intent sets the stage for MBCLC to purchase the land for development from its current owner, Solterre Inc. The development is planned to offer studio to three-bedroom homes, above-standard energy performance and accessibility, with the unit mix and shared amenities developed with member and community input. Construction is targeted to start in 2027, subject to project approvals and capital funding.



Proposed project site on Brook Street, Lunenburg, NS. Photo by Verónica Gutiérrez

Stronger together. Advancing two projects through a shared design partnership allows MBCLC to build organizational capacity, draw on specialized expertise, strengthen funding applications, and extend the co-operative housing model across Lunenburg County. "*Planning and workshop efforts collaborating with the MBCLC has been inspiring! We are like-minded in our sustainable approach with similar affordability, accessibility and community-minded goals to develop long-term housing,*" said Jennifer Corson, Sr. Architect at Solterre Design Inc.

Get involved. MBCLC welcomes new members who want to live in the proposed housing or contribute as community supporters. Membership inquiries can be sent to mbclc@protonmail.com.

About MBCLC. The Mahone Bay Community Land Co-operative is a member-led, non-profit co-operative working to provide secure, healthy, permanently affordable co-operative homes in Lunenburg County.

About Solterre. Solterre Design Inc. is an Atlantic Canadian architecture firm specializing in sustainable design. Learn more at www.solterre.com.

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