

Uniacke Secondary Planning Strategy

Public Information Meeting

July 17, 2024



EAST HANTS

Tonight's Municipal Planning & Development Team



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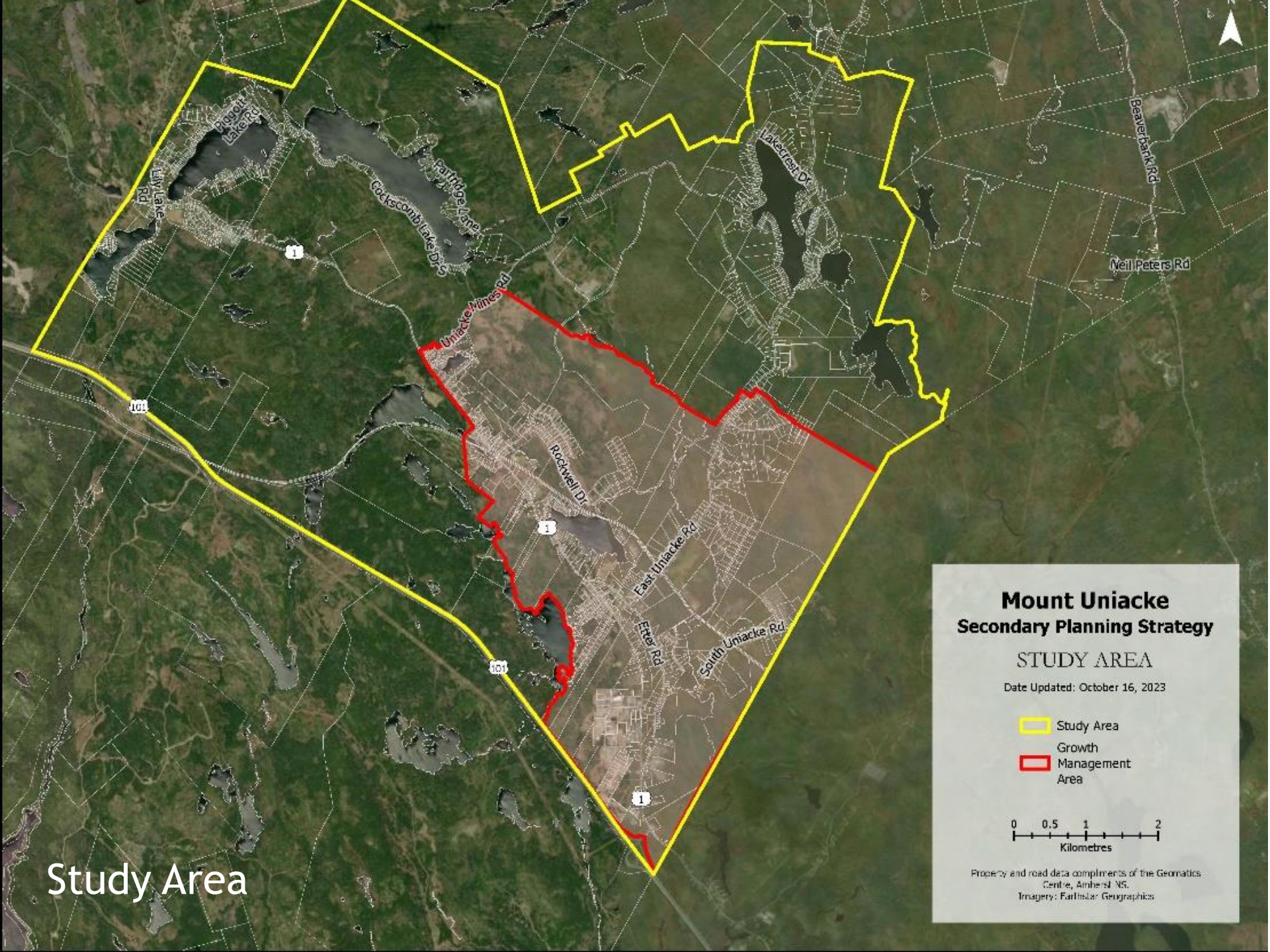


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Planning & Development
Technician



About the Uniacke Secondary Planning Strategy

- The Municipality is experiencing high levels of growth and in recent years interest from Developers has increased in the Uniacke area.
- East Hants Council has authorized staff to prepare a Secondary Planning Strategy for the Uniacke area.
- A Secondary Planning Strategy is part of the Official Community Plan that contains policies and land use regulations in a defined area of the Municipality where major changes are expected and desired.
- The Secondary Plan will help to establish a detailed planning framework, land uses, identifies transportation improvements, and considers issues surrounding on-site services such as potable water and wastewater disposal.



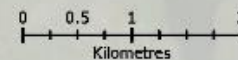
Study Area

Mount Uniacke Secondary Planning Strategy

STUDY AREA

Date Updated: October 16, 2023

- Study Area
- Growth Management Area

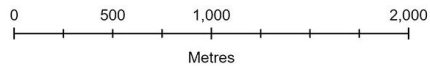


Property and road data compliments of the Geomatics
Centre, Amherst, NS.
Imagery: Earthstar Geographics

Goals and Objectives of the Secondary Planning Strategy

- The goal of the Secondary Plan is to ensure that new development will promote and support high-quality design, and establish an appropriate mix of new land uses and new development.
- It should also reinforce the need for a healthy, vibrant, complete, and sustainable community.
- The Secondary Plan's objectives are to build on the positive community aspects and to identify areas and methods of densification without detracting from the current community character.

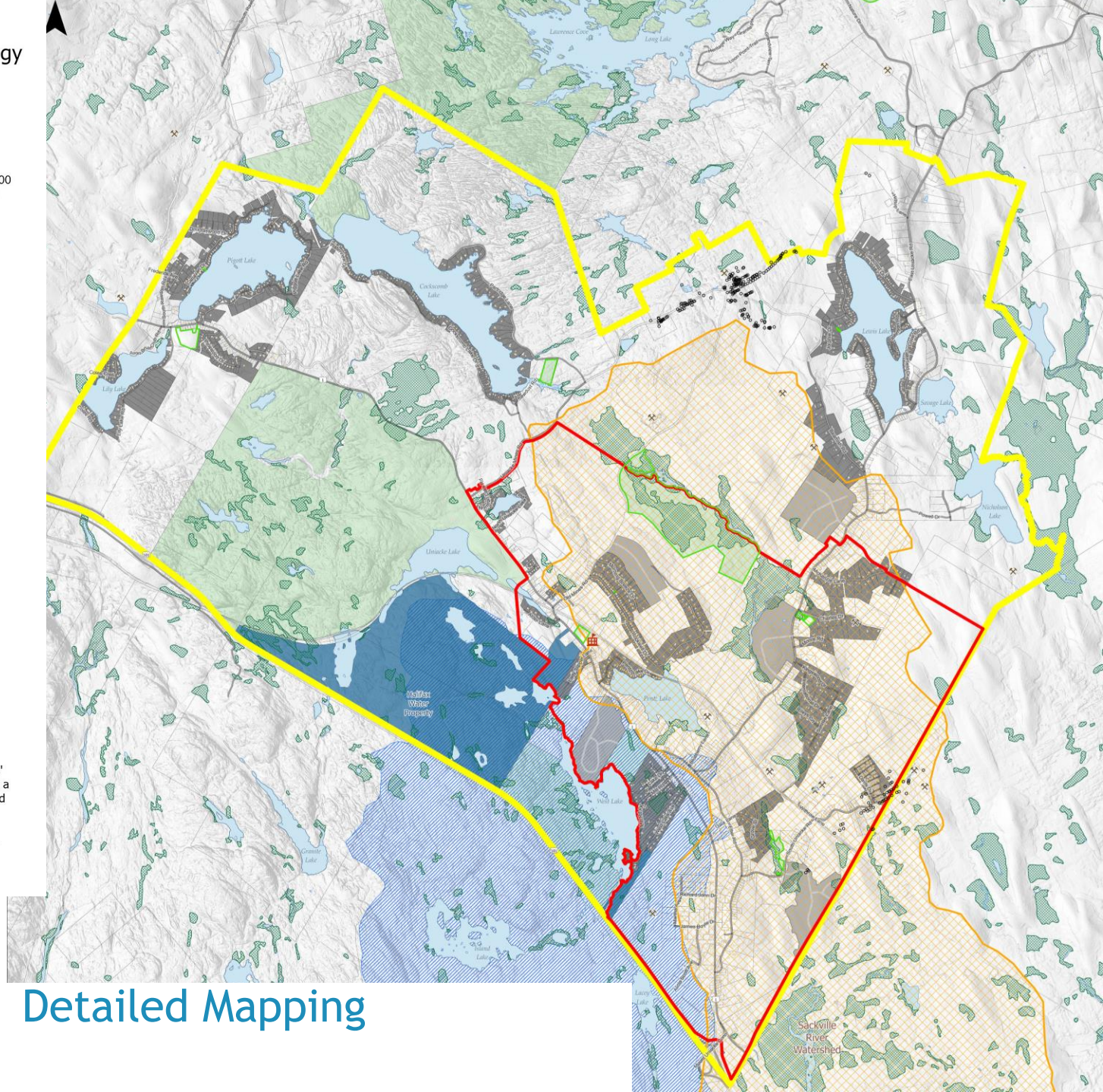
Land Use Suitability



- Abandoned Mine Opening
- ⌘ Pit / Quarry
- 🏫 School
- Watercourse
- 💧 Waterbody
- 🌿 Swamp
- 🔴 Mount Uniacke Growth Management Area
- 🟡 Mount Uniacke SPS Study Area
- 🟠 Sackville River Watershed
- 🟢 Open Space Dedication
- 🏠 Subdivision (Proposed)
- 🏠 Subdivision (Existing)
- 🌊 Halifax Water Property
- 🌿 OS - Open Space Zone

This map was produced by the Municipality of East Hants' Planning & Development Department and shall be used as a graphical representation only. It is not intended to be used as a survey plan or for legal descriptions.

Topographic data compliments of Service Nova Scotia & Municipal Relations.



Detailed Mapping

Community Engagement





macy

gatepark

Royal Canadian Legion Branch 165

Tracy's Esthetics

Uniacke District School

HOUSING

Image © 2024 Airbus

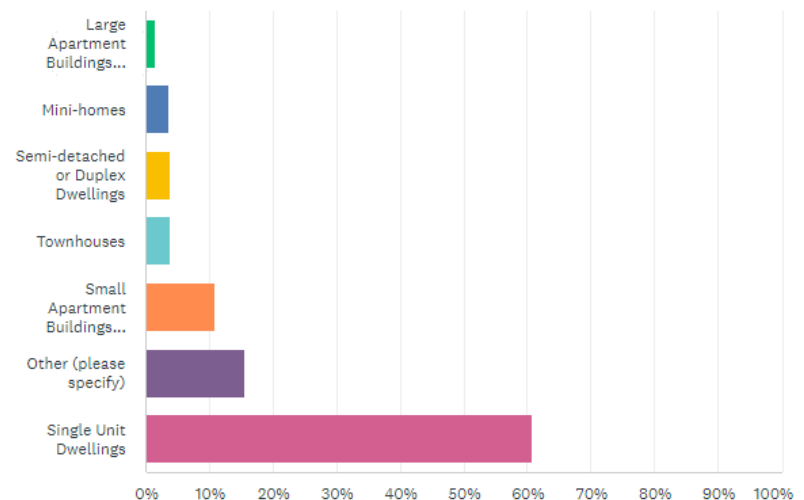
Google Earth

Housing - Survey Results

- Single unit dwelling homes are still the preferred housing form in the community.
- Small multiplexes were the second most preferred housing form with just over 10% of the respondents indicating that they preferred this style of housing.
- The least popular form of housing at 1.55% of the respondents are larger apartment buildings (24 units).
- Under the category 'other' many respondents indicated that they didn't want any new housing or indicated they would like single level senior housing.

What types of new housing would you like to see in the community?

Answered: 388 Skipped: 82



Housing - Current Zoning

- The majority of the residential properties in the Uniacke SPS study area are zoned either Established Residential Neighbourhood (R1), Two Dwelling Unit Residential (R2), or Lakeshore Residential (LR).
- There is a small amount of land zoned Country Residential (CR) and large areas of mostly undeveloped land zoned Rural Use (RU).
- Currently, the only area that permits multiple unit development as-of-right, through site plan approval, is the Village Core (VC) Zone.
- The VC Zone allows for the development of between 8 and 12 dwelling units with onsite services.
- Parkview Manor is the only building with more than two dwelling units in the VC Zone.

Housing - Current Zoning

- The majority of legally conforming single unit dwellings in the study area are permitted to have an accessory dwelling unit in accordance with the regulations.
- In the Rural Use (RU) Zone, property owners may apply for a development agreement to permit the construction of a maximum of eight dwelling units on a single lot.
- The other zone in the Uniacke SPS study area that permits a denser development pattern is the Mini-Home (MH) Zone.



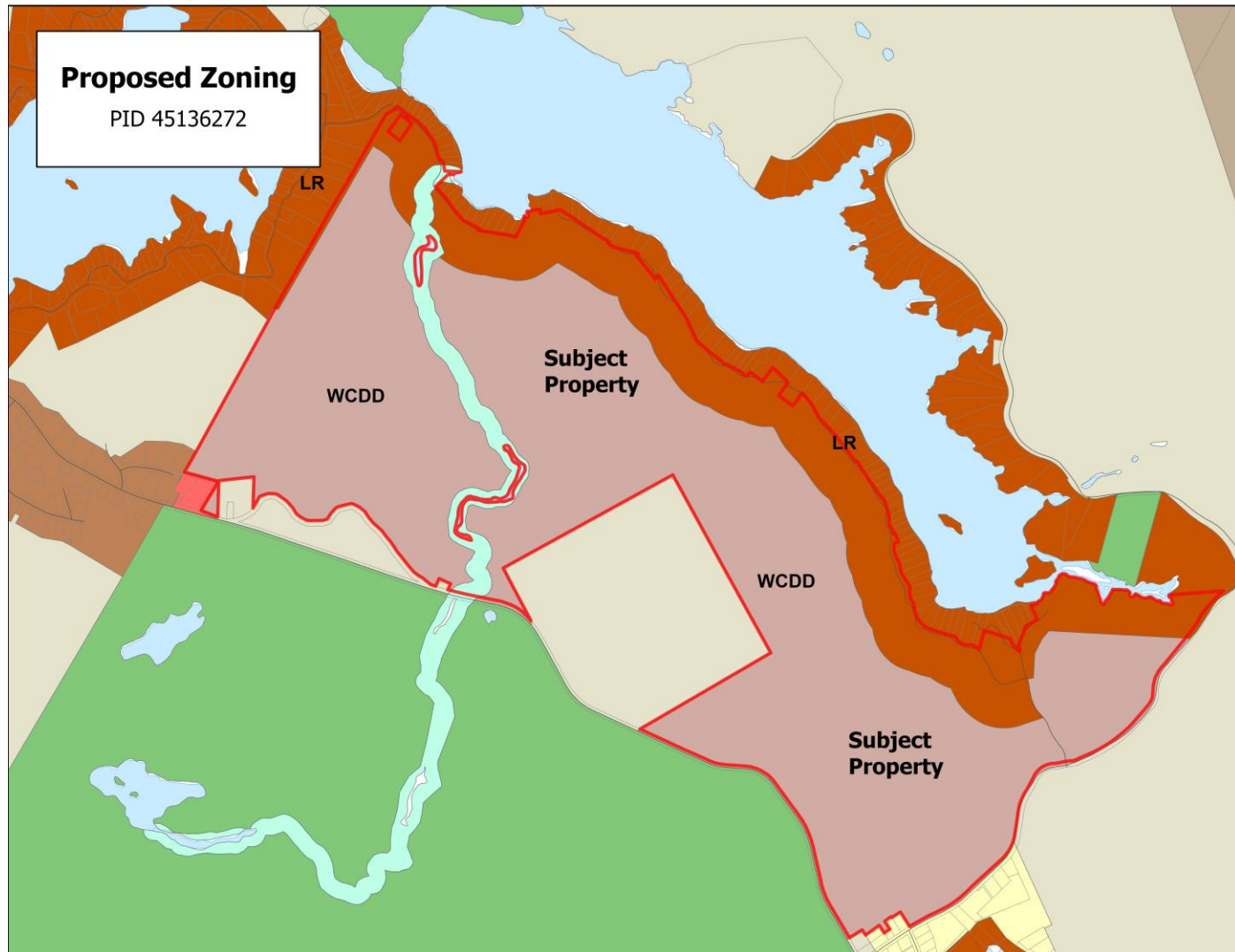
Housing - Proposed Zoning

- As per the feedback from the survey, staff are recommending gentle density options that would supply the aging population and young people with rental housing, while ensuring that the properties could be serviced with onsite services.
- Traditional neighbourhoods emphasize walkability within a compact and interconnected layout.
- Any new zoning to support gentle density options would have to ensure that lot sizes will be large enough to accommodate onsite services, parking, and amenity space.
- If at a future date, Municipal services are warranted in Mount Uniacke, Council could revisit zoning at that time.

Housing - Proposed Zoning

- As part of the Uniacke SPS process, mapping amendments have been requested for their land identified as PID 45136272, a comprehensive draft concept plan and project proposal have been prepared.
- The first request is to increase the depth of the Lakeshore Residential (LR) Designation and Zone along Cockscomb Lake Drive which would permit the subdivision of new lots on the east side of the road. New lots could only be subdivided once a second access to the area is provided.
- The second request is to redesignate and rezone the remaining lands to Walkable Comprehensive Development District (WCDD).
- The subject property is 363 hectares (nearly 900 acres).
- In the past, the WCDD Zone has only been applied to properties with an existing serviceable boundary.
- However, the property owner has prepared a development option that could provide a variety of housing forms if the property was serviced with central services.
- If the property didn't have central services only a limited number of lots could potentially be created.

Proposed LR and WCDD Zoning Map



Housing Recommendations

1. Recommend that a feasibility study for the installation of Municipal Services in Mount Uniacke should be added to the draft 2026/2027 Budget.
2. Recommend that the depth of the Lakeshore Residential (LR) Zone on the east side of Cockscomb Lake Drive be expanded by approximately 150 m.
3. Recommend that the portion of PID 45136272 currently designated and zoned Rural Use (RU) be redesignated and zoned to Walkable Comprehensive Development District (WCDD) and recommend that the policy statements in the MPS be updated to allow for the property to be designated and zoned WCDD.
4. Add a new category to the Townhouse (R2-T) Zone that would permit townhouse developments and small multiplexes with onsite services in Mount Uniacke. The final location and size of the zone will be based on the results of the hydrological study.



PARKS & TRAILS

Parks and Trails - Survey Results

1. **Accessible walking trails and beach access:** Several respondents requested accessible trails that would accommodate seniors/wheelchairs/strollers. PRC is aware of the desire for more accessible recreation assets and will monitor for opportunities, staff recommends adding a provision to the review of the Accessibility Plan indicating that staff will monitor for opportunities in the Mount Uniacke area.
2. **Recreation facility/gym:** Further investigation will take place as part of the Recreation Facilities Master Plan. PRC staff are aware of the desire for a recreation facility in the Uniacke area.
3. **Walking trails that make connections:** Some respondents mentioned new walking trails could be made that connect neighbourhoods to local amenities. In keeping with Recommendation 2.1 from the Mount Uniacke Recreation Strategy, staff recommends creating a Required Future Pedestrian Connection Map for the Uniacke area. As land in Mount Uniacke is developed, the map will help guide the development of pedestrian walkways in the community.



Survey Results - Parks and Trails

4. **Dog parks and off-leash dog trails:** Several respondents mentioned dog parks and off-leash dog trails as part of the survey responses. There is currently a dog park at the third ball field at the Uniacke Legion. PRC staff will continue to support community organizations interested in operating these facilities.
5. **Rails to trails:** The rail line that runs through Mount Uniacke is owned by Canadian National Railways and is not in municipal ownership. The Municipality continues to support the local trail group in planning for the development of the rail line into a multi-use trail.
6. **Bike parks and trails:** There are currently no municipally-owned parks that have pump tracks or mountain bike trails. There are trails in private ownership or on provincial land run by community groups in East Hants. PRC will continue to explore future opportunities.

Survey Results - Parks and Trails

7. **Splash pads:** Locating splash pads where there are no Municipal services takes extra planning and consideration. A community group would be required to operate the splash pad, similar to the Hants North Group at Findlay Park, as there are currently no staff based out of Mount Uniacke at a stand-alone location.
8. **Beach parks and access to lakes:** East Hants does not have a traditional public beach park anywhere in the Municipality. The Municipality has water access points that allow for non-motorized boat access, but none that encourage swimming. PRC staff are aware of the desire for beach access and will continue to monitor for opportunities. These options are dependent on future development in the community.
9. **Parks with sports fields:** The Mount Uniacke Recreation Strategy mentions under Recommendation 2.2 that the Municipality “*Identify and plan for the investments in improvements to existing outdoor facilities. In particular, promote discussions with CCRCE on feasibility of remediating drainage issues on Uniacke District School soccer field.*” Planning staff are not making further recommendations. In addition, Council has approved the development of a concept plan for the 14.3 acre parcel of Municipal open space land in Lakelands that may provide an opportunity for multiple recreational assets like a future sportsfield, pump track, etc.

Parks and Trails Recommendations

1. Add a provision to the East Hants Accessibility Plan requiring PRC to investigate opportunities to create accessible recreational assets in the Uniacke area.
2. Amend the Subdivision Bylaw by adding the draft Required Future Pedestrian Connection Map for the Uniacke Area to Appendix D of the Subdivision Bylaw.
3. Future study within the Lakelands concept plan to understand the potential recreational assets that could be located on the site that would align with both recreational needs and spatial arrangement.
4. Direct PRC staff to continue to look for opportunities to facilitate beach access.



COMMERCIAL

Commercial Lands - Current Zoning

- Village Core (VC) Zone - Mixed use zone - allows local commercial uses and multiple unit dwellings.
- Regional Commercial (RC) Zone - Allow for commercial uses that are more regional and auto-centric such as grocery stores, gas stations, strip malls, fast food restaurants, etc.
- Regional Commercial (RC) Zoned lands are located near the interchange for Highway 101 and Highway 1 and offer good connections to the Highway system.
- Business Park (BP) Zone - allows for a wide variety of commercial uses including industrial development.
- The existing business park is full there are only a few parcels of land left to be developed that are in private ownership.

Commercial Lands - Survey Results

- Daycares (home-based and general) were the most requested amenities identified in the survey.
- Home-based daycares can be located as a home-based business in every residential zone, in the Rural Use (RU) Zone, and in the Village Core (VC) Zone in the Uniacke area.
- Commercial daycare centres are permitted to be located in the Village Core (VC) Zone, Regional Commercial (RC) Zone, and Business Park (BP) Zone.
- Appropriately zoned land is available and a daycare can be located nearly anywhere within the Uniacke area.

Commercial Lands - Survey Results

- As part of the Uniacke Land Use Survey residents were asked what type of amenities they would like to see in their community.
- Respondents were happy with Eddy's Variety and Withrow's Farm Market but they would like to have a larger grocery store.
- The Regional Commercial (RC) Zone allows for a wide variety of commercial uses, including grocery stores and other retail uses.
- The Village Core (VC) Zone also permits smaller retail uses.
- Therefore, there is land that is appropriately zoned in the Mount Uniacke area to support a grocery store.



Commercial Lands - Survey Results

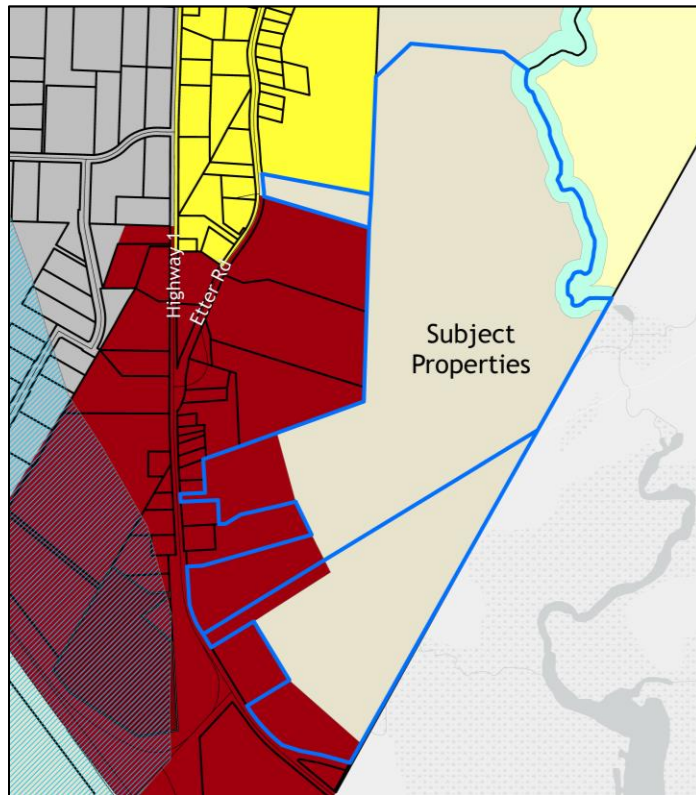
- Restaurants are another amenity that survey respondents would like to have additional options.
- Residents identified restaurant-related uses such as cafes, bakeries, and pubs as needed amenities for the community.
- All three of the commercial zones that staff have identified permit full and limited-service restaurants.
- Appropriately zoned land is available in the community.
- Respondents also indicated that they would rather have locally owned and operated business than large chain restaurants and take-out food locations, though the Municipality cannot issue permits based on ownership type or location.

Commercial Lands

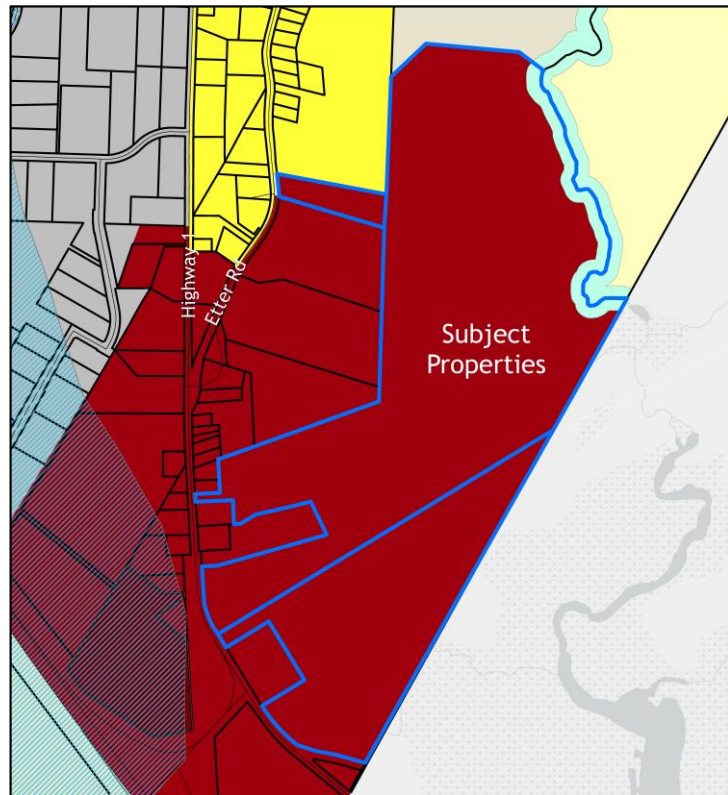
- Mount Uniacke and the surrounding area has land that is appropriately zoned for noted uses.
- However, East Hants cannot control market demand for the land or control if the businesses are locally driven or from outside Mount Uniacke or the province.
- Demand for commercial land will continue to be market driven and the commercial amenities identified by respondents in the Uniacke Land Use Survey will only be developed when the market is ready.

Commercial Lands - Recommendations

1. Extend the Regional Commercial (RC) Designation and Zone by changing the land use designation and zone of the PIDS shown on the map to the Regional Commercial (RC) Designation and Zone.



Current Zoning



Proposed Zoning

Commercial Lands - Recommendations

2. Create a Required Future Transportation Connections Map for Mount Uniacke and include the new map Under Appendix D of the Subdivision Bylaw.
3. On the new Mount Uniacke Required Future Transportation Connections Map add a road connection through the Regional Commercial (RC) Zone lands that could allow for the additional development opportunities.
4. Explore expanding the Village Core (VC) Zone in Mount Uniacke from Exit 3 to Uniacke Estate.



ENVIRONMENT

Environment - Survey Results

- Residents of Mount Uniacke appreciate the natural environment and the majority of respondents to the public survey indicated that it was one of the many reasons why they enjoyed living in the community.
- When asked if the protection of wetlands was important to them, 95% of respondents indicated 'yes' that it was important.
- Other questions regarding sustainability, though varying greatly, did show that respondents do have concerns with over-development and ensuring that the natural environment can handle an increase in population, and more demand for on-site services.
- Respondents also mentioned protecting the lakes and wetlands, building with green and/or local materials, using green technologies to reduce energy consumption, and having amenities and services in the community so there is a reduction in transportation and emissions.

Environment - Survey Results

- Many respondents indicated that when building new homes and businesses, tree cutting and the removal of natural vegetation should be limited and hard surfaces should be minimized.
- This concern was also echoed by the Sackville Rivers Association.
- In response, staff recommend adding a policy to the MPS that considers the retention of natural forest cover when considering rezoning and development agreement applications for residential development with onsite services.
- Adding such a policy to the MPS could apply to areas of on-site services in East Hants.



Environment

- As part of the Environmental review staff met with the Sackville Rivers Association and Halifax Water.
- Reviewed information that was collected as part of the 2023 Plan Update on wildlife corridors.
- Reviewed environmental policies that Halifax Regional Municipality is implementing as part of their Regional Plan Update.

Environment Recommendations

1. Adopt a policy that considers the retention of natural forest cover when considering new planning applications for residential development with onsite services to reduce the potential impact on waterways and wetlands and to preserve as much of the natural environment as possible.
2. Amend the Subdivision Bylaw to require that areas of non-disturbance, such as buffers from watercourses, be added to all tentative and final plans of subdivision.
3. Add a project under Section E3: Municipal Projects & Studies to complete a wildlife corridors design study to ensure that future development limits its impact on wildlife's ability to move to and from different parts of the Municipality and beyond.
4. Include a Floodplain study of the Sackville River in the 2025/2026 draft budget.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation - Survey Results

- Sidewalks were the most requested community improvement identified in the Uniacke SPS survey responses.
- It was mentioned in regards to safety, connectivity, trails, community improvement, and more.
- According to the survey results, approximately 67% of respondents commute out of the study area for work.
- Nearly 34% of survey respondents were around retirement age or greater.
- It is not surprising the respondents indicated that they were interested in having opportunities for transit connecting to HRM.

Transportation - Survey Results

- Other comments about commuting included ensuring that road networks were well maintained and cleared of snow.
- Many respondents commented about the intersection at Highway 1, the Irving, and Highway 101 interchange and concerns around safety.
- According to the RCMP, between 2020-2023, there were 10 accidents reported at that intersection.
- Planning staff have spoken to Nova Scotia Public Works about residents' safety concerns and they are aware of the safety issues; however, NSPW does not currently have plans for improvements at the intersection. That being said, NSPW did indicate that this intersection could be a potential candidate for improvements in a future year.
- Other transportation related comments included having another interchange to access Highway 101, reduced speeds, more police presence for rush-hour, better painted lines on the road, better winter maintenance, bike routes, and internet for residents who work at home.

Transportation - Recommendations

1. Recommend that a transit feasibility study for Mount Uniacke be added to Section E3: Municipal Projects and Studies of the Municipal Planning Strategy.
2. Recommend that a policy be added to Section C1: Growth Management and Infrastructure of the Municipal Planning Strategy supporting the future development of transit through Mount Uniacke.

Uniacke SPS - Next Steps

