



**Subject:** *Uniacke Secondary Planning Strategy - Village Core Extension*  
**To:** CAO for Planning Advisory Committee, December 10, 2024  
**Date Prepared:** December 11, 2024  
**Related Motions:** PAC23(59), C23(383), PAC24(41) and C24(221)  
**Prepared by:** Debbie Uloth, Project Planner  
**Approved by:** John Woodford, Director of Planning and Development

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### Summary

As part of the Uniacke Secondary Planning Strategy, Council passed Motion C24(221) “...that staff explore expanding the Village Core in Mount Uniacke from Exit 3 to Uniacke Estates”. This report includes items for Planning Advisory Committee’s consideration.

### Financial Impact Statement

Planning staff has budgeted for the Uniacke Secondary Planning Strategy as part of the 2024/2025 Budget Cycle.

### Recommendation

Planning staff recommend not to extend the Village Core (VC) Zone.

### Recommended Motion

*Planning Advisory Committee recommends that Council:*

- *Do not extend the Village Core (VC) Zoning along Highway 1, Mount Uniacke.*

### Alternative Motion

*Planning Advisory Committee recommends that Council:*

- *Extend the Village Core (VC) Zone along Highway 1 from the current Village Core (VC) Zone to the areas identified on the proposed zoning map in the Uniacke Secondary Planning Strategy - Village Core Extension staff report.*

## Background

As part of the Uniacke Secondary Planning Strategy, Municipal Council has passed the following motion:

C24(221): *Moved that Council authorize staff to include the recommendations outlined in the Uniacke SPS Housing report in the draft Uniacke Secondary Planning Strategy Report, and that staff explore expanding the Village Core in Mount Uniacke from Exit 3 to Uniacke Estates.*

In response to the last portion of Council's motion, staff have prepared the following report outlining items for consideration when evaluating the possible extension of the Village Core (VC) Zone.

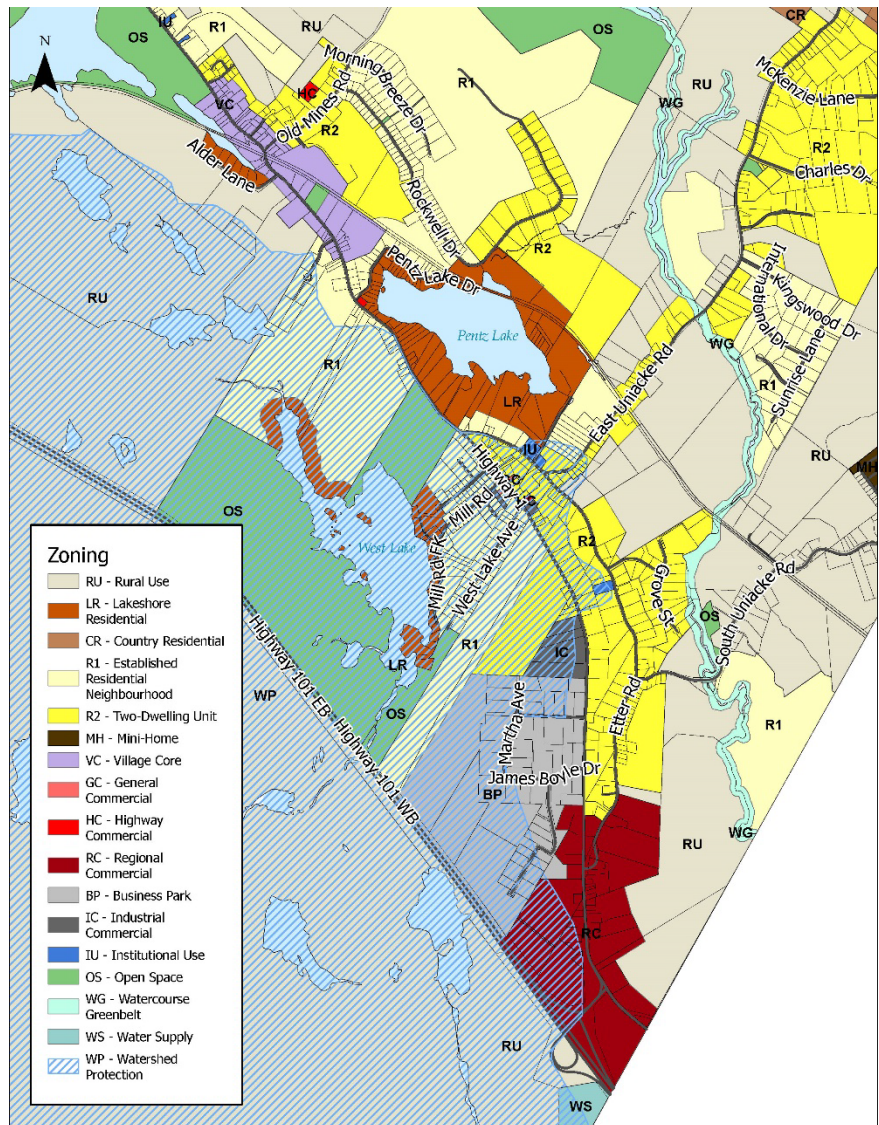
### CURRENT ZONING - HIGHWAY 1

A variety of different zones extend along Highway 1, in the area where Council would like to consider expanding the zoning to Village Core (VC) Zone. From the existing VC Zone to Exit 3 there are nine different zones, including:

- Regional Commercial (RC) Zone;
- Business Park (BP) Zone;
- Industrial Commercial (IC) Zone;
- Highway Commercial (HC) Zone;
- General Commercial (GC) Zone;
- Open Space (OS) Zone;
- Established Residential Neighbourhood (R1) Zone;
- Two Dwelling Unit Residential (R2) Zone; and
- Lakeshore Residential (LR) Zone.

Each of these zones allow for very specific land uses that may not be permitted in the VC Zone. In certain instances, some property owners may have already gone through a planning process to request that their property be zoned for their land use. Changing the zoning to VC may hinder any future development plans these property owners have.

In addition, any potential zone change could impact the operation of local businesses along Highway 1. Especially for those property owners with very intense commercial uses where the lands are already zoned Business Park (BP) Zone, Regional Commercial (RC) Zone, and Industrial Commercial (IC) Zone. Changing these zones to Village Core (VC) Zone would be considered downzoning because it reduces the type of land uses that can occur on the impacted properties.



Businesses located along Highway 1 that do not fit with the provisions of the Village Core (VC) Zone include, but are not limited to, the salvage yard, the self storage facility, Mobile Valve, autobody repair, and many more. The zoning for each of these businesses allows for these land uses continue in grow in their appropriate zone.

### ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

As part of staff’s review of Council’s motion, consultation with the Municipal Economic and Business Development staff has occurred. Economic and Business Development (EBD) staff provide support to entrepreneurial start-ups, small businesses, and businesses looking to grow in the Municipality.

EBD staff referred to the FBM Mainstreet Report completed for the Municipality in 2022, the report indicated that Village Core (VC) Zoning should not be too large because large areas of VC zoning would create sprawl and wouldn’t cluster businesses and services. The Village Core (VC) Zoned areas are meant to be dense commercial and mixed-use districts. From an economic development and real estate perspective, EBD staff does not support increasing the size of the Village Core (VC) Zone in Mount Uniacke.

### NON-CONFORMING USES

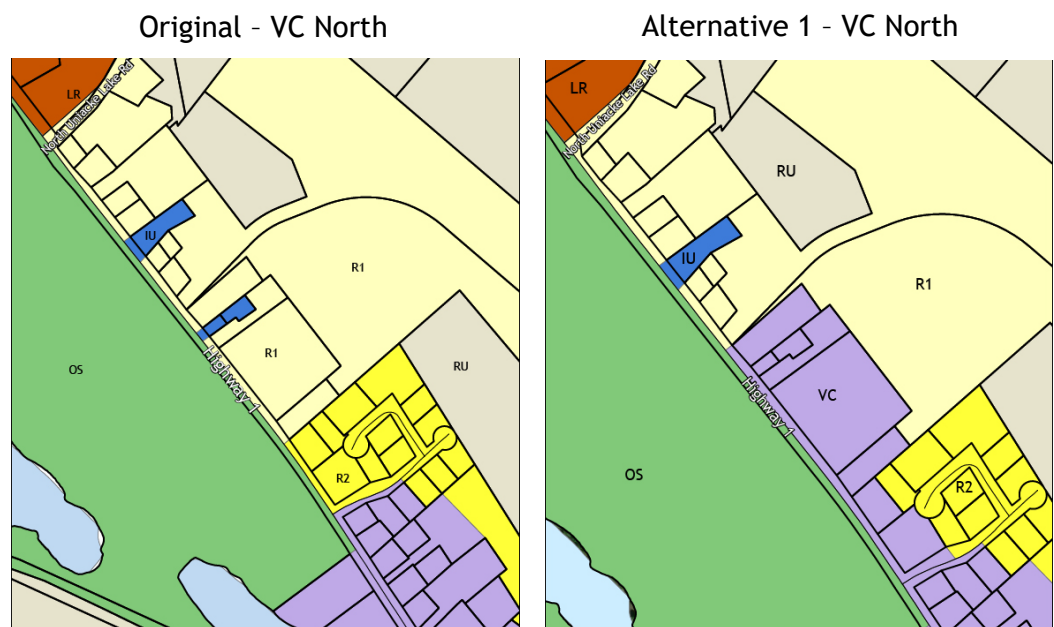
Expanding the Village Core (VC) Zone along Highway 1 to the interchange may not achieve Council’s desired effect. It creates a host of land use issues, including making the majority of existing land uses non-conforming. Non-conforming uses can limit what a property owner may do on their lands. The Village Core (VC) Zone is an excellent zone for allowing local commercial uses and for increasing density but it does not work well for intensive commercial uses or for lake shore residential uses. The Village Core (VC) Zone is not a catch-all zone.

A non-conforming land use or structure indicates an existing land use or structure that does not conform to the current zoning of a property. When the zone of a property is changed it may create issues where the property no longer conforms with the regulations for the new zone and can impact further expansions of the existing businesses both in terms of actual expansion of size of buildings but also in terms of expansions of the types of uses that some of the business owners may be planning. Sometimes, Council creates a non-conforming use on purpose to eliminate a certain use over time or sometimes conflicts can be created unintentionally when regulations are updated to meet best practices.

### PROPOSED VILLAGE CORE (VC) ZONE EXTENSION

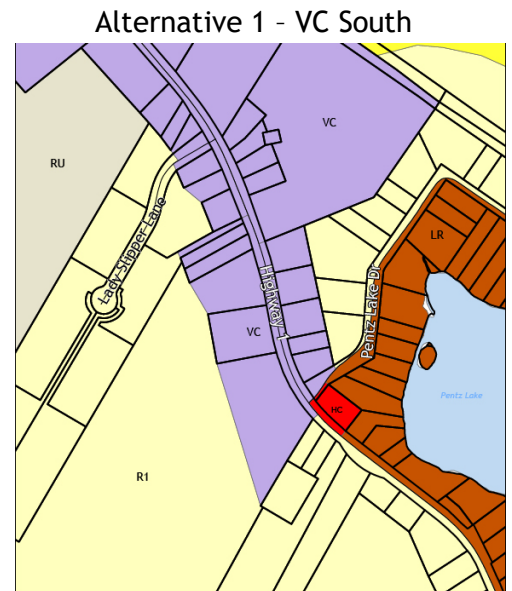
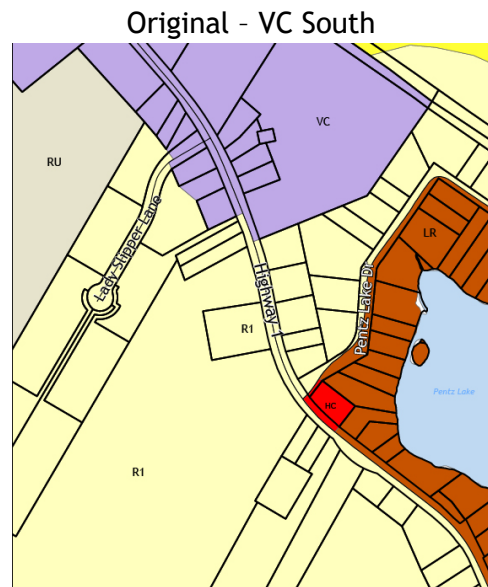
As an alternative to extending the Village Core (VC) Zone, from the existing VC Zone to the interchange, an option is to extend the Village Core (VC) Zone on either side of the current zone.

Combined, the VC Zone would be extended just over half a kilometre along Highway 1. Approximately, 8.5 additional hectares (21 acres) of land would be added to the existing zone. Maps showing the



extension along Highway 1 are shown to the left. The change would upzone the subject lands and allow the current property owners to develop their lands for local commercial uses or for multiple unit development.

If Council decides to move forward with rezoning the lands identified, residents will be notified as part of the East Hants Official Community Plan amendment process. The amendment process will include sending letters to the property owners, having a public information meeting regarding the proposed amendments, and holding a public hearing.



## CONCLUSION

Although extending the Village Core (VC) Zone from the existing VC Zone to the interchange is not recommended due to the potential of creating land use conflicts and downzoning existing properties, staff have provided an alternative that would increase the size of the zone. As shown on the proposed zoning maps, the increase in VC Zone size would allow additional properties on both the north and south end of the existing VC Zone to be upzoned from the current R2 Zoned lands to the VC Zone. Allowing for additional local commercial uses and the potential of multiple unit development.

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## Alternative

Below are the alternatives associated with Motion C24(221):

1. Extend the Village Core (VC) Zone on either side of the current zone, as shown on the proposed zoning maps.
2. Proceed with Council's original Motion and change the zoning of properties with frontage on Highway 1 from the existing Village Core (VC) Zone to the Highway 101 interchange to the Village Core (VC) Designation and Zone.
3. Do not extend the Village Core (VC) Zoning.

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## Attachments

Appendix A - Zoning Map Showing Highway 1

Appendix A - Zoning Map Highway 1

