

*Uniacke Secondary Planning Strategy:  
Public Survey Results*

Planning Advisory Committee  
April 16, 2024

Planning and Development



**EAST HANTS**

## Background

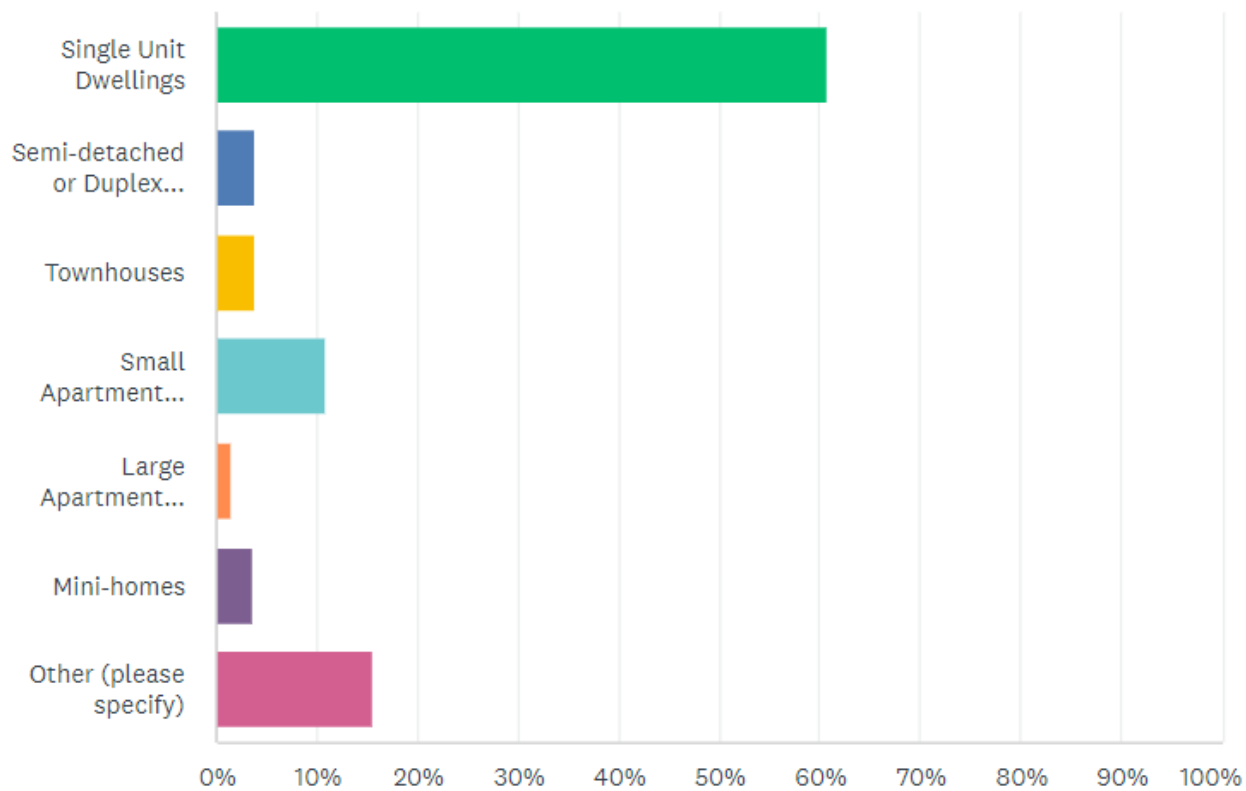
- As part of the Uniacke Secondary Planning Strategy, a community online survey was undertaken for one-month from January 23 to February 23, 2024.
- Over 10% of the population in the study area responded to the survey, which is considered a good response rate according to SurveyMonkey.
- The majority of the 470 residents who responded to the Survey were from the community of Mount Uniacke.
- Several residents responded from outside of the study area or did not indicate their location.
- The age of respondents ranged from 18 to over 65 years and represented a good age range of residents.

## What do residents like about living in their community?

- Many residents indicated that they liked living in their community for the following reasons:
  - Quiet
  - Peaceful
  - Country living
  - The people - a sense of community
  - Close to amenities in Halifax and Sackville
  - Nature, woods, and trails.
  - Privacy
- Details of the survey responses can be found attached as Appendix A to the staff report.

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

Answered: 388 Skipped: 82



## Housing

- It is not surprising that the majority of residents who responded to the survey want to see single-unit dwellings to be the dominant form of housing.
- The Uniacke area has traditionally had low-density housing with large lots to allow for on-site services.
- There are residents in the area who recognize that alternative forms of housing are required, 40% of respondents selected an alternative form of housing other than single-unit dwelling.
- Approximately, 11% indicated that they would like to see small apartment buildings, up to a maximum of 8 units, and another 15% of the respondents indicated “other” form of housing, which based on the comments, was either senior housing, mixture of all housing types, or no new housing.

## Housing

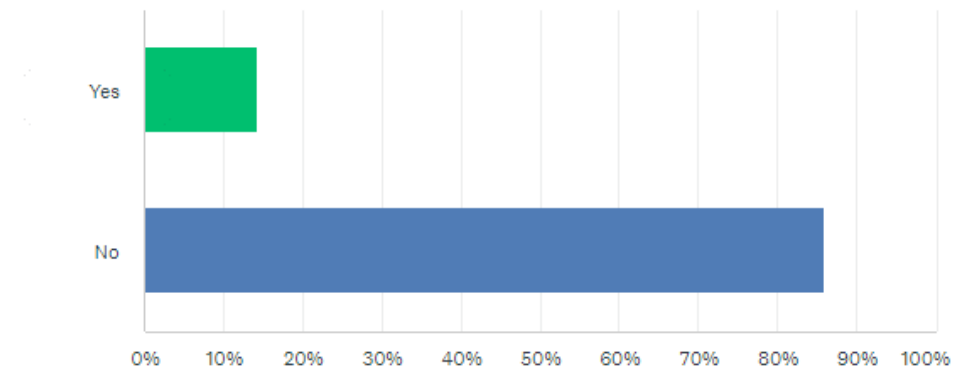
- Respondents also indicated that affordable housing is required especially for young adults and seniors.
- As respondents age they would like to be able to stay in their community, this means being able to find smaller homes or one level homes.
- Some respondents mentioned more compact housing like smaller apartments and townhouses where community connections can be established and the natural environment is protected.

## Transportation

- 86% of respondents can not walk to amenities in their community.
- If there are new opportunities for walking, residents would like them to connect to the school, the skate park, to local parks and waterways, to businesses in the business park.
- Sidewalks and biking trails were identified as being required along Highway 1.

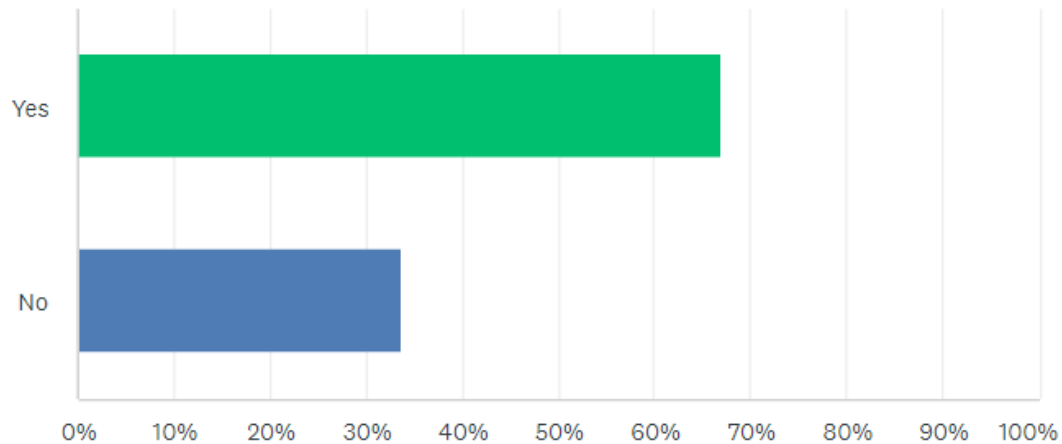
Are you able to walk to amenities in your community?

Answered: 336 Skipped: 134



## Do you commute out of your community for work?

Answered: 317 Skipped: 153



- 67% of respondents indicated that they commuted out of their community for work.
- Respondents identified items that could improve their commute such as improvements to the Highway 101 and Highway 1 interchange, improvements to the roads in general (potholes, snow clearing).
- A transit stop linking Mount Uniacke to either Sackville or Halifax was also noted.



## Amenities and Services

- Respondents indicated that they were happy with the amenities that they did have such as Eddy's and Withrows.
- Respondents identified a wide range of new amenities and services they would like to have in their community. Below are the top items that were mentioned:
  - Daycare
  - Recreation Facility
  - Large Grocery Store
  - Gym
  - A high school - so kids don't have to be bussed to West Hants.
  - Sidewalks
  - Doctors and other health services
  - Larger library
- Some respondents were happy with what is available in the Uniacke area and didn't want more - especially if taxes were going to increase.
- Some respondents want to make sure that big chains wouldn't put local business out of business.

## Parks, Trails, and Recreation

- Respondents are very happy with the trails and parks already found in the Uniacke area. Suggestions were made for improvements or for new options:
  - Building an accessible trail for a wheelchair and trails that are flat for seniors.
  - Off-leash walking trails and parks for dogs.
  - Different types of trails for different uses such as bikes, horses, and all terrain vehicles.
  - A beach park with access for all.
  - Would like to see a sidewalk along Highway 1.
  - Mountain biking park/trails.
  - Recreation facility - (pool, rink, sports courts, gyms, etc.)
  - Outdoor fields and courts for things like pickle ball.
  - Old rail line to a rails to trails model.

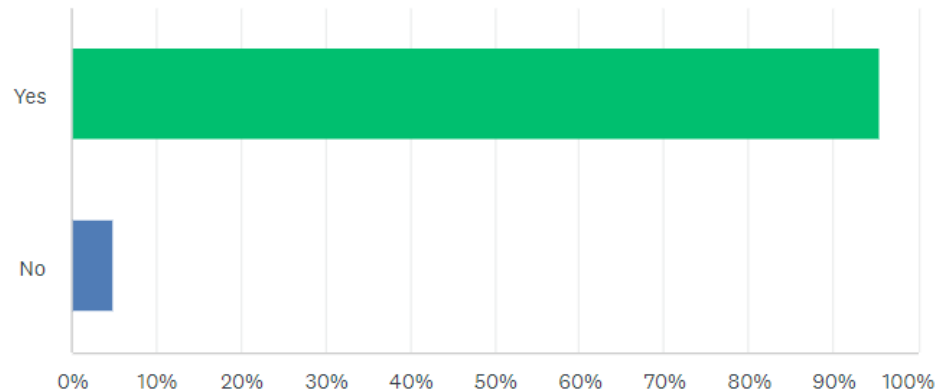
## Sustainability

- Sustainability can mean many things and responses from the survey reflected this.
- For some, sustainability meant fiscal sustainability. Making sure that taxes didn't go up and that the Municipality is fiscally responsible.
- For others, a sustainable community is a community with sufficient services to serve the community.
- For others, sustainability is the protection of ecological, human, and economic health and vitality.
- Others pointed to reducing emissions and using green technologies.
- Responses to the sustainability questions were very different and all of the responses should be reviewed.

## Sustainability

Do you feel that it is important to protect wetlands and waterways?

Answered: 331 Skipped: 139



- 95% of respondents indicated that it was important to protect the existing wetlands.
- Respondents throughout the survey indicated that the natural environment was important to them and the protection of waterways, forests, and public green spaces should be considered in planning for the area.

## Imagining Mount Uniacke

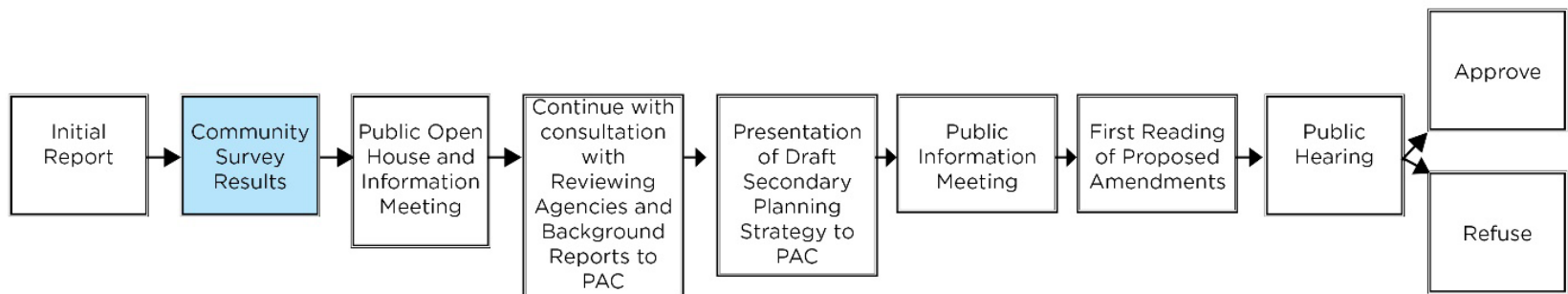
- Participants were asked to identify their favourite communities in NS. Most respondents selected traditional towns such as Wolfville and Tatamagouche. Several residents indicated that Mount Uniacke was their favourite community.
- When asked what they liked about these communities' respondents identified the following:
  - Places where amenities and services are within the community.
  - Sidewalks, trails, parks, and other recreational opportunities within the centre of the community.
  - Have street trees and do a good job landscaping their community.
  - Walkable, social, and public spaces.
  - They have opportunities (housing, jobs, services).
  - Small town feel - able to walk everywhere.
  - They have cafes, restaurants, gyms, etc.

## Design Features

- Survey participants identified design features they would like to have added to their neighbourhood. They included:
  - Nice signs and flower boxes.
  - Sidewalks and street lights.
  - Landscaping
  - Bike lanes
  - Creating a town Centre
  - Well maintained buildings
  - Greenspaces
  - Recreation amenities
- Not all residents wanted to see design features added to their community. They moved there for the rural feel and lack of amenities and wanted the community to stay that way.

## Community Engagement

- Now that the Uniacke Survey is complete, staff will make the results of the survey available to the public on our Municipal website.
- Staff also recommend that a community open house and public information meeting be held in Mount Uniacke to discuss the results of the survey, to discuss some of the recommendations coming forward from the background papers, and to seek input from the community.
- Additional community engagement will take place before the adoption of the Uniacke Secondary Planning Strategy.



## Conclusion

- Planning staff feel that the Uniacke Land Use Survey was successful in capturing how residents feel their community should grow and they have identified items to help in that growth.
- In general, Uniacke residents enjoy their community, love their access to nature and the existing parks and trails, and support their local businesses.
- They are not interested in having access to the community's natural assets diminished and would like the Municipality to take into consideration investing in new trails, recreational options, and beach parks.
- They would like to have land use regulations that respect that natural environment and encourage sustainable development.
- Planning staff will use the results of the survey to support the development of the Uniacke Secondary Plan.



## Recommendation

- Accept the staff report and authorize staff to hold an open house and public information meeting in Mount Uniacke.

## Recommended Motion

*Planning Advisory Committee recommends that Council:*

- *Accept the Uniacke Secondary Planning Strategy Survey Results report; and*
- *Authorize staff to hold an open house and public information meeting in the community of Mount Uniacke.*