

Uniacke Secondary Planning Strategy

Planning Advisory Committee

Planning & Development

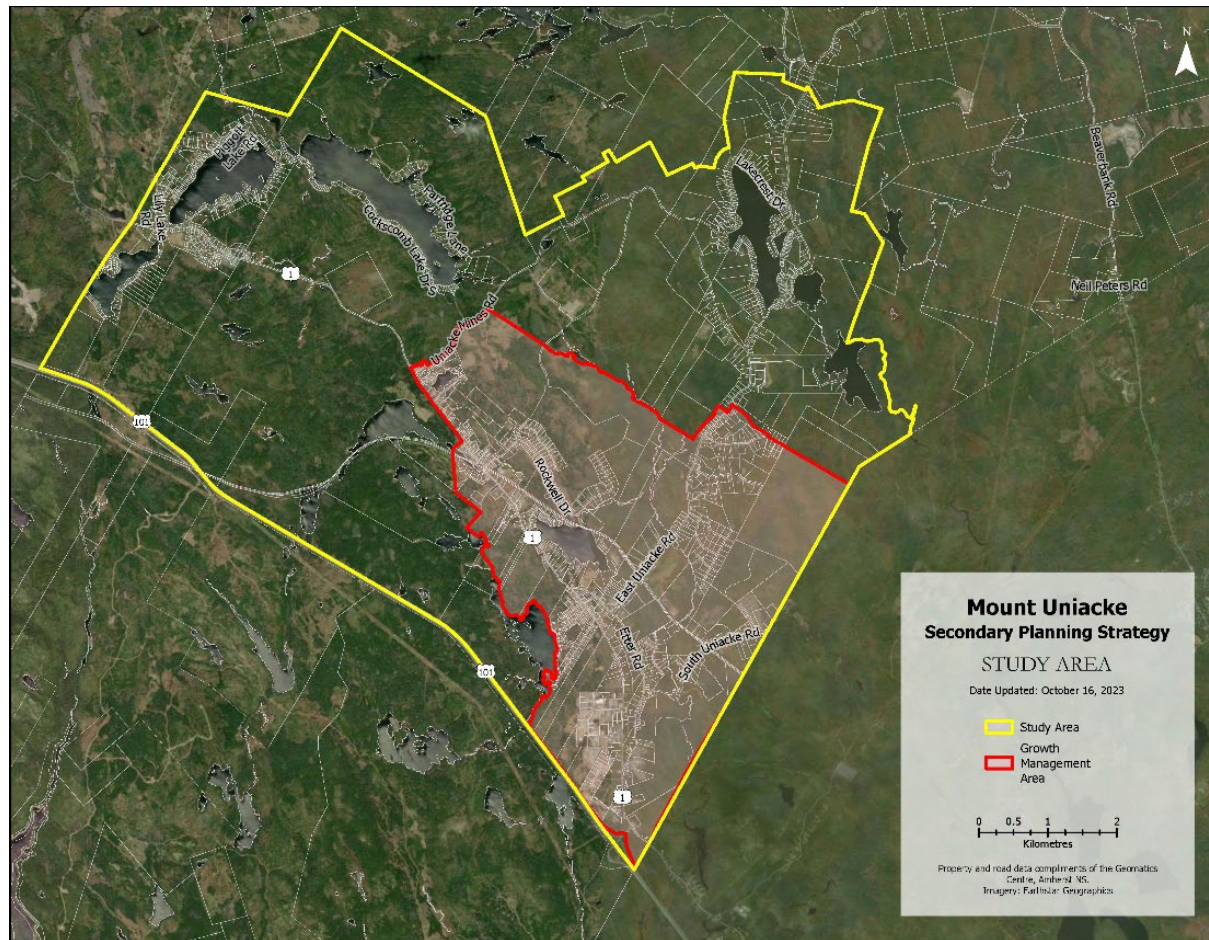
April 15, 2025



EAST HANTS

About the Uniacke Secondary Planning Strategy

- **Purpose:** The purpose of the Uniacke Secondary Planning Strategy (Uniacke SPS) is to provide a detailed policy framework for the regulation of development within the Uniacke SPS study area.





Demographics

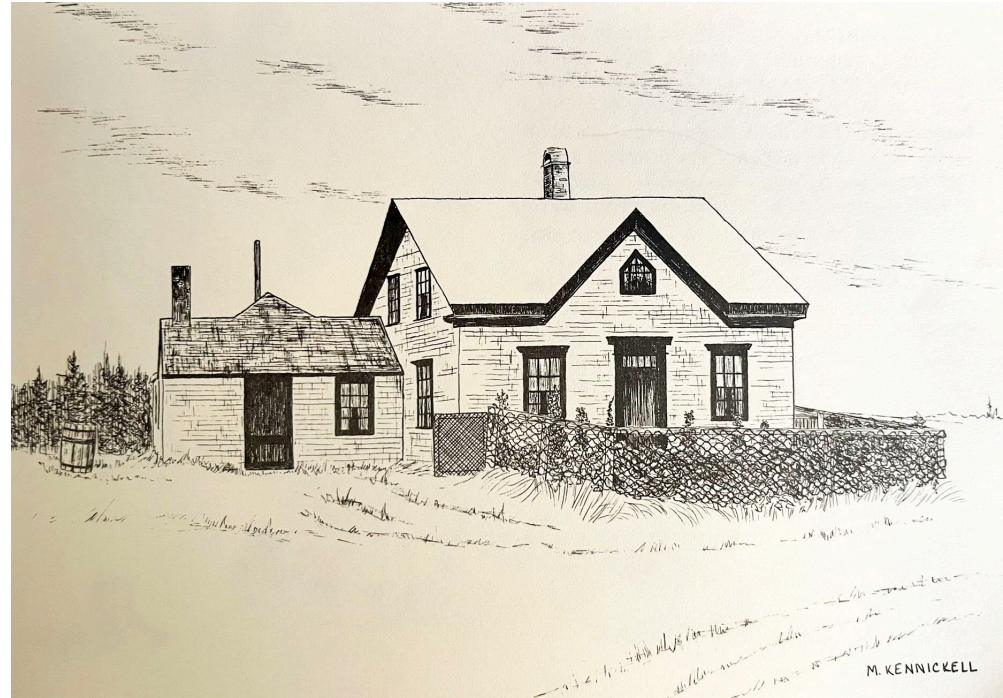
- The Uniacke SPS study area has an approximate population of 4,333 (2023 Business Analyst) residents in 1,830 households, equaling 2.4 persons per household.
- It is expected that the population in the study area will continue to grow based on historic growth rates. Population projections, based on historic Census trends, for the Uniacke/Rawdon ADA indicates the population is expected to grow by just over 3% every census period (5-year period).
- The median household income for 2023 was approximately \$93,012. Thirty-six percent of Mount Uniacke residents between the ages of 25 to 64 years of age have a secondary education.
- Residents in the Uniacke SPS study area tend to commute out of their community for work.

History

- In the late 1700's a rough road connected Halifax to Windsor. This road was known as the Great Western Road. The government of the day granted land to families who came and settled in the area. One of the settlers to build his summer home along the Great Western Road was Richard John Uniacke, who started construction on his home in 1813.
- In 1858 the railway cut through the region bringing a Dominion Atlantic railway station to Mount Uniacke and additional employment opportunities.
- In 1859 a hotel was built in the community. It was owned and run by many families over the years and was destroyed by fire in 1936.
- Gold was found in 1865. *“Within three years the mining industry was in full operation and an entire town had appeared”*. The town comprised of homes, hotels, stores, saloons, a school, and a community hall. When the Uniacke Gold Mines were at their peak, approximately 500 people lived in the Uniacke Gold District. By the 1930s, only a handful of residents remained. After the last mining company withdrew, the last families left the community. Some thirty families brought their homes from the Uniacke Gold Mines and transplanted them to other properties around Mount Uniacke.

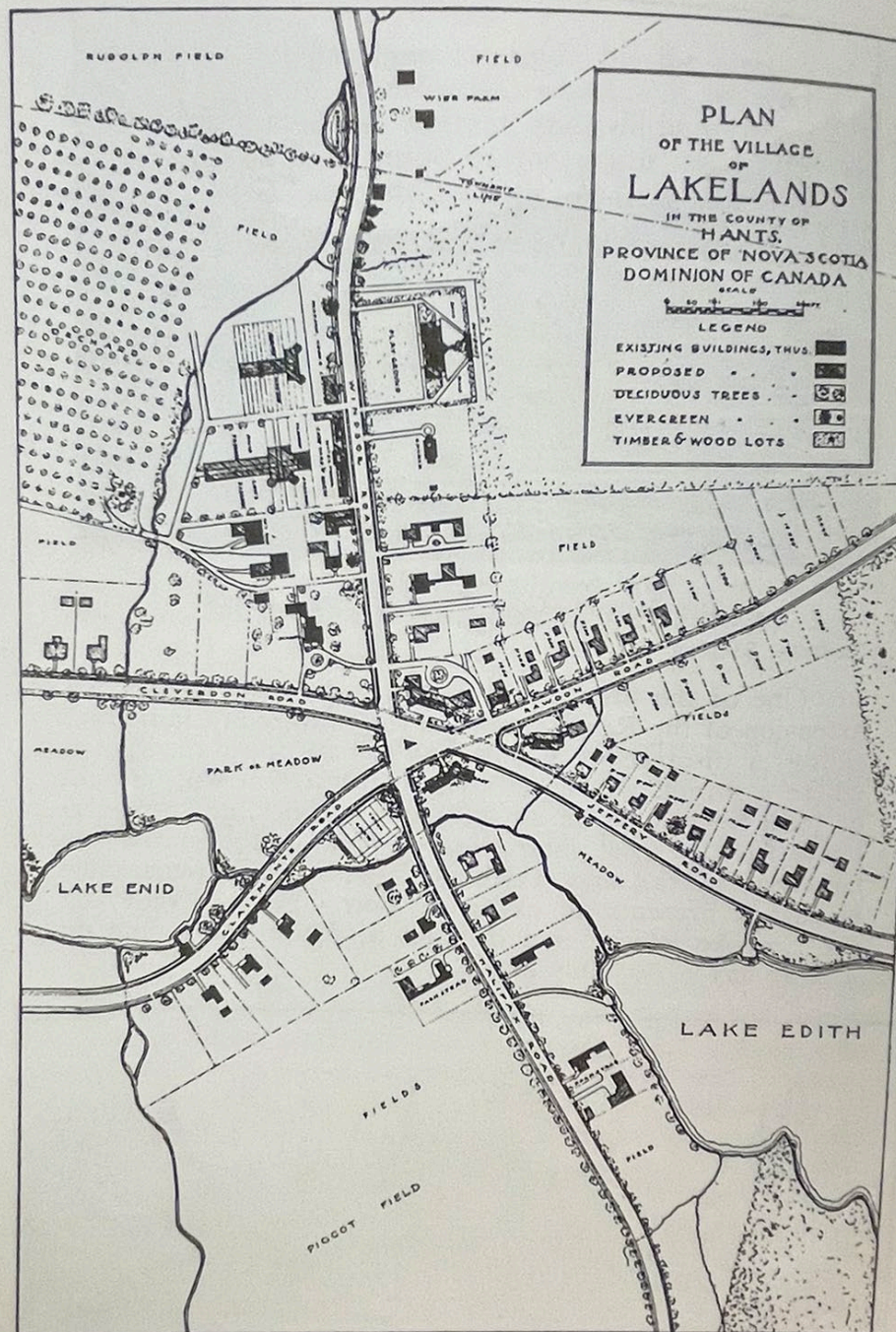
History

- Buildings in Mount Uniacke were not elaborate. One repeated feature in many of the early houses was a little dormer window, as shown on the drawing of the Pentz house, constructed before 1870.
- According to The Lakelands Development Company, Lakelands was home to one of the oldest and largest estates in Nova Scotia, being settled between 1764-68.
- Subsequently the land was purchased in 1908 by Mr. C. H. McClare for the purpose of developing Lakelands into a village.
- The village plan for Lakelands was developed similarly to the current East Hants Comprehensive Development Districts. A plan was created, which included elements such as a school, an inn, a hall and library, a railway station, houses, cottages, camps, and agricultural lands.



Pentz House –circa 1870





MAP OF THE VILLAGE OF LAKELANDS

History

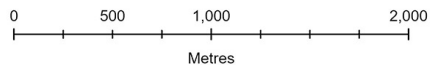
- In 1976, the first modern land use plan was adopted for the community of Mount Uniacke. The Uniacke District Municipal Development Plan was prepared by the Provincial Department of Municipal Affairs for the Municipality of East Hants.
- The 1976 Plan discussed the shallow and poor draining soils in the Uniacke area and identified septic tank problems as one of the reasons for the Plan.
- A Department of Environment Report at the time identified Uniacke Lake as a potential water supply for the area and indicated that Uniacke Lake, North Uniacke Lake, and Murphy Lake should be monitored to prevent pollution of the lakes. Comments from the Department of Environment also concluded that Little Indian, Deep, Fales and Fifteen Minute chain of lakes could potentially supply water to a population of 13,000 people in the Uniacke District.
- The objectives of the Uniacke District Municipal Development Plan were not dissimilar to the purpose of the current Uniacke SPS study, with the objectives of the 1976 Plan including:
 - Encouraging development to take place in the existing built-up areas in a planned way;
 - To discourage scattered or ribbon development;
 - Improve the feasibility of installing central services;
 - Improve the chances of acquiring better community facilities; and
 - Maintain the rural character through the remainder of the district.



Consultation

- As part of the Uniacke SPS process, East Hants engaged with the community to hear what was important to residents.
- The consultation included a resident survey where 470 responses were received, over 10% of the population in the study area responded to the survey.
- An open house and a public information meeting were held in the summer of 2024 to give residents an opportunity to comment on the direction of the plan.
 - The majority of residents who attended the public open house and information meeting were interested in recreational opportunities for the community. Residents expressed their wishes for a recreation facility and asked if there would be more opportunities for pickleball and other sports in the future.
 - Discussion around park development in Lakelands.
 - There was interest in the Uniacke SPS Groundwater Study and future development potential in the Uniacke SPS area.
 - Discussion regarding regulations on development around the Sackville River.
 - Discussion on proposed development for PID 4513627.
 - Questions about the timelines for this process.
- Survey results and feedback from the community members who attended the public information meeting were used to prepare background reports for the Uniacke SPS Study.
- Throughout the Uniacke SPS process, background topic papers have been posted on the Municipal website for review of interested community members.

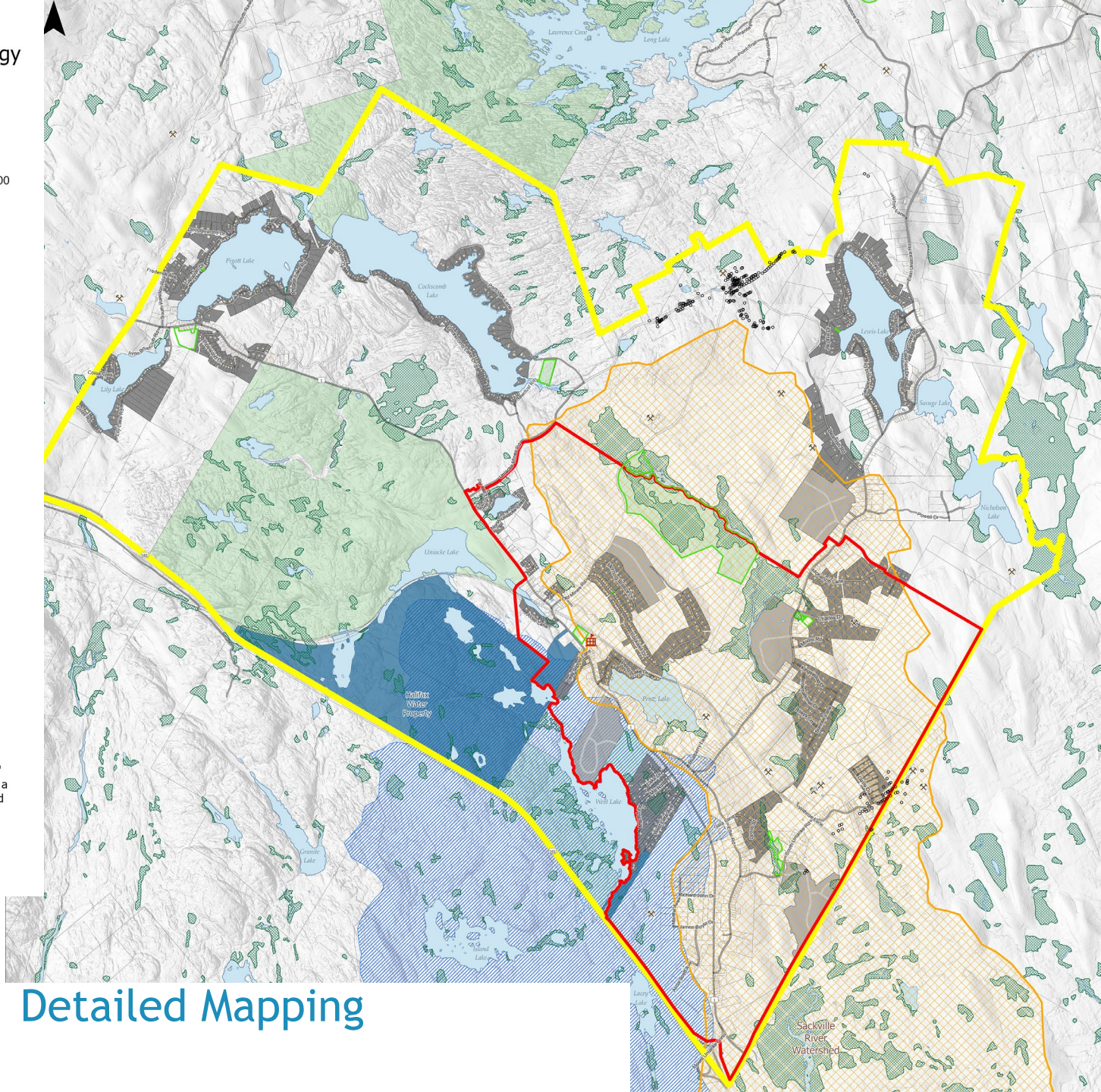
Land Use Suitability



- 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



macy

gatepark

Royal Canadian Legion Branch 165

Tracy's Esthetics

Uniacke District School

HOUSING

Image © 2024 Airbus

Google Earth



Housing

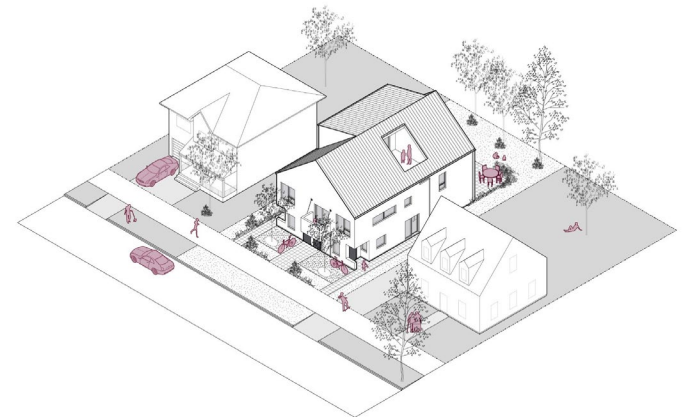
- The Uniacke area has traditionally had low-density housing with large lots to allow for on-site services.
- As part of the consultations, residents were asked what housing form they preferred in their community.
- Although single unit development was the preferred housing option, there was a selection of residents, who indicated that missing middle housing is required to support an aging population and to support younger community residents, who wish to start their lives close to home.
- A number of seniors responded to the survey and indicated that they were interested in housing that will allow them to age in place.

Housing

- To allow gentle density to occur a groundwater study was completed to determine the availability of potable water resources in the study area.
- The “Uniacke Secondary Planning Strategy Groundwater Study”, concluded that there is sufficient groundwater recharge within the Uniacke SPS study area to meet the needs of over 22,800 homes and 54,000 people.
- In the context of the Uniacke SPS, gentle density refers to the mixture of single unit dwellings, two-unit dwellings, townhouses, and small multiplexes with eight (8) dwelling units or less, in a neighbourhood. Council intends to enable the development of housing through the use of a new comprehensive development district.
- The new Mount Uniacke Comprehensive Development District (MUCDD) Designation and Zone could be requested by Developers with comprehensive proposals for new housing developments in the Mount Uniacke GMA.
- The new MUCDD Zone will allow for a variety of low to medium density residential development options; while ensuring that multiple unit lots are an appropriate size for well and septic systems.
- Allows Council to ensure development happens where appropriate connectivity to existing road networks can be achieved and increased density would be in close proximity to existing commercial, institutional, and recreational facilities.

Housing

- Missing middle housing and gentle density is also a priority of the federal government, and through CHMC the government is trying to increase the amount of missing middle housing being constructed in Canada by releasing housing plans for each region in Canada.
- These housing plans will comply with Building Code regulations for Nova Scotia when they are released.
- A site plan, septic system design, and well location will still have to be submitted by a developer who chooses to use one of the CHMC plans.

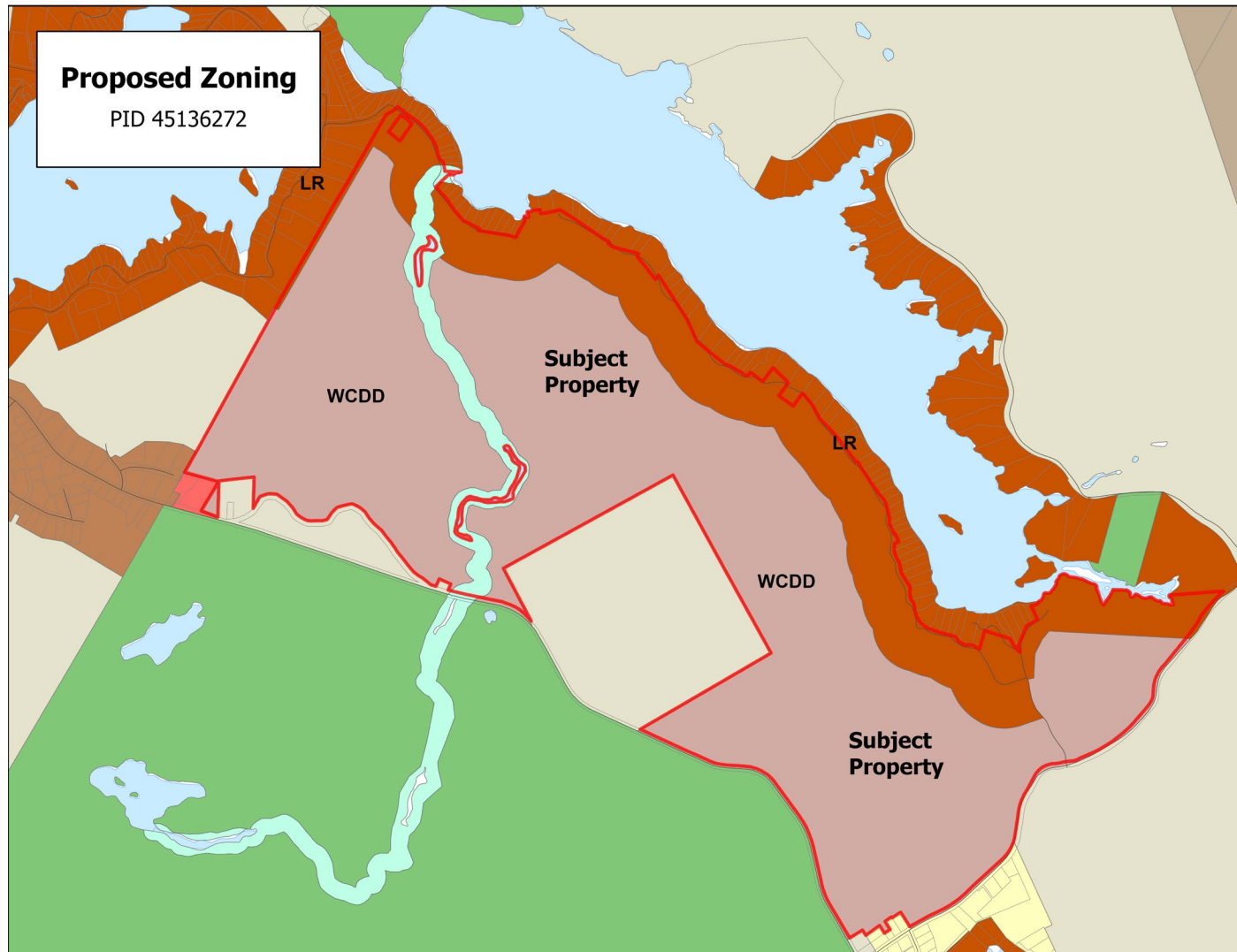




Housing -

- As part of the Uniacke SPS process, mapping amendments have been requested for 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.
- As part of the Development Agreement process the property owner/developer would have to prepare a plan acceptable to the Municipality of how the area would be serviced with water and wastewater.

Proposed LR and WCDD Zoning Map





COMMERCIAL



Commercial Development

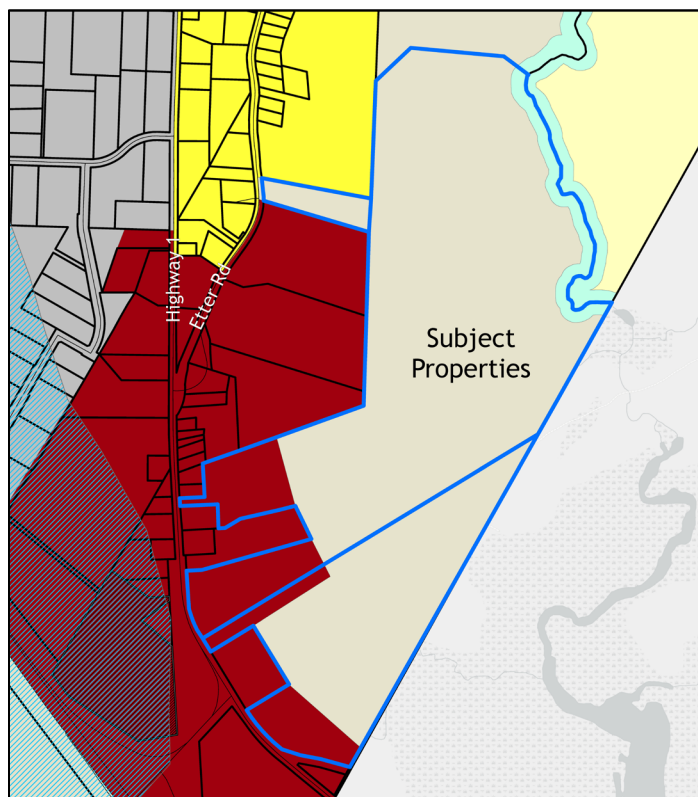
- Residents in the study area are satisfied with the businesses found in their community but would like to see increased amenities to service the community.
- Daycares, restaurants, and a grocery store were some of the local commercial uses identified through the consultation process.
- Existing zoning enables the commercial uses residents identified as important to them in the consultation process; however, East Hants cannot control market demand for the land.

Commercial Development

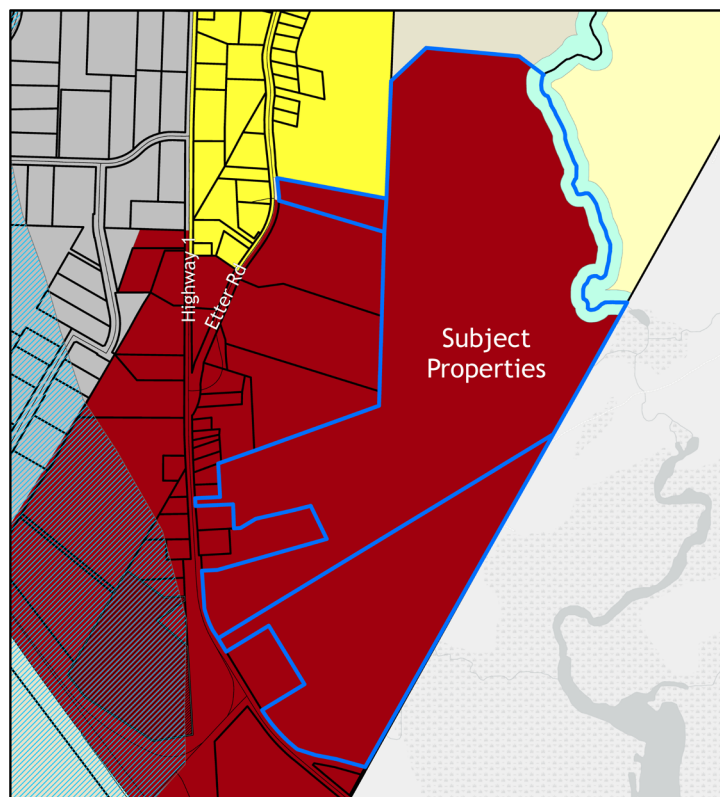
- The Uniacke Business Park is full and lands owned by the Municipality have been subdivided and sold.
- There are a limited number of properties in private ownership that are zoned Business Park (BP) that could be further developed and possibly subdivided to create smaller lots.
- Expansion of the Uniacke Business Park is difficult due to constraints, such as Highway 101, Highway 1, and the location of nearby residential development.
- An alternative to expanding the business park lands is to expand the Regional Commercial (RC) land use designation and zone on the north side of Highway 1.
- The Regional Commercial (RC) Zone enables the development of a wide range of large-scale commercial activities including warehousing, retailing of goods and services, food and beverage facilities, accommodation, entertainment facilities, office and business services, drive-thru restaurants, service stations, shopping malls, and other vehicle dependent uses within a concentrated area. The Regional Commercial (RC) Zone is already established on the north side of Highway 1.
- The proposal is to expand the zone to include an additional 86 hectares of land, allowing for additional development potential around the Mount Uniacke interchange with Highway 101.

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 Development

- East Hants Council has requested the creation of a new land use designation and zone that enables commercial development and medium density residential development along portions of Highway 1.
- Due to an existing variety of land uses and zones already along this portion of Highway 1 the new land use designation and zone is to be implemented as a new overlay zone, allowing the current zoning and land uses to continue.
- The new Mount Uniacke Mixed Use Centre Overlay (MU-MC) Designation and zone will permit uses similar to those in the Mixed Use Centre (MC) Zone enabled in parts of the Corridor.
- Land uses that are not permitted in the Watershed Protection Overlay (WP) Zone will not be permitted in the new MU-MC Overlay Zone.
- Land uses in the MU-MC Overlay Zone are to be permitted by site plan approval.

Commercial Development

Land uses proposed to be permitted in the new Mount Uniacke Mixed Use Centre Overlay (MU-MC) Zone regulations:

Underlying Zone Uses

Accommodations, Bed & Breakfast

Accommodations, General

Animal Hospitals & Veterinary Offices

Bank & Financial Institutions

Brewery, Distillery & Winery

Business Support Services & Printing

Commercial Club

Daycare, General

Daycare, Home-Based

Drinking Establishment open until 1 am

Dwelling, Multiplex (Small)

Dwelling, Townhouse (Cluster)

Educational Services

Funeral Services

Gambling Industries

Government Offices & Facilities

Health Care Services

Office & Professional Services

Personal Care Services

Recreation Facility, Indoor

Repair & Maintenance

Restaurant, Full & Limited Service

Restaurant, Take-Out

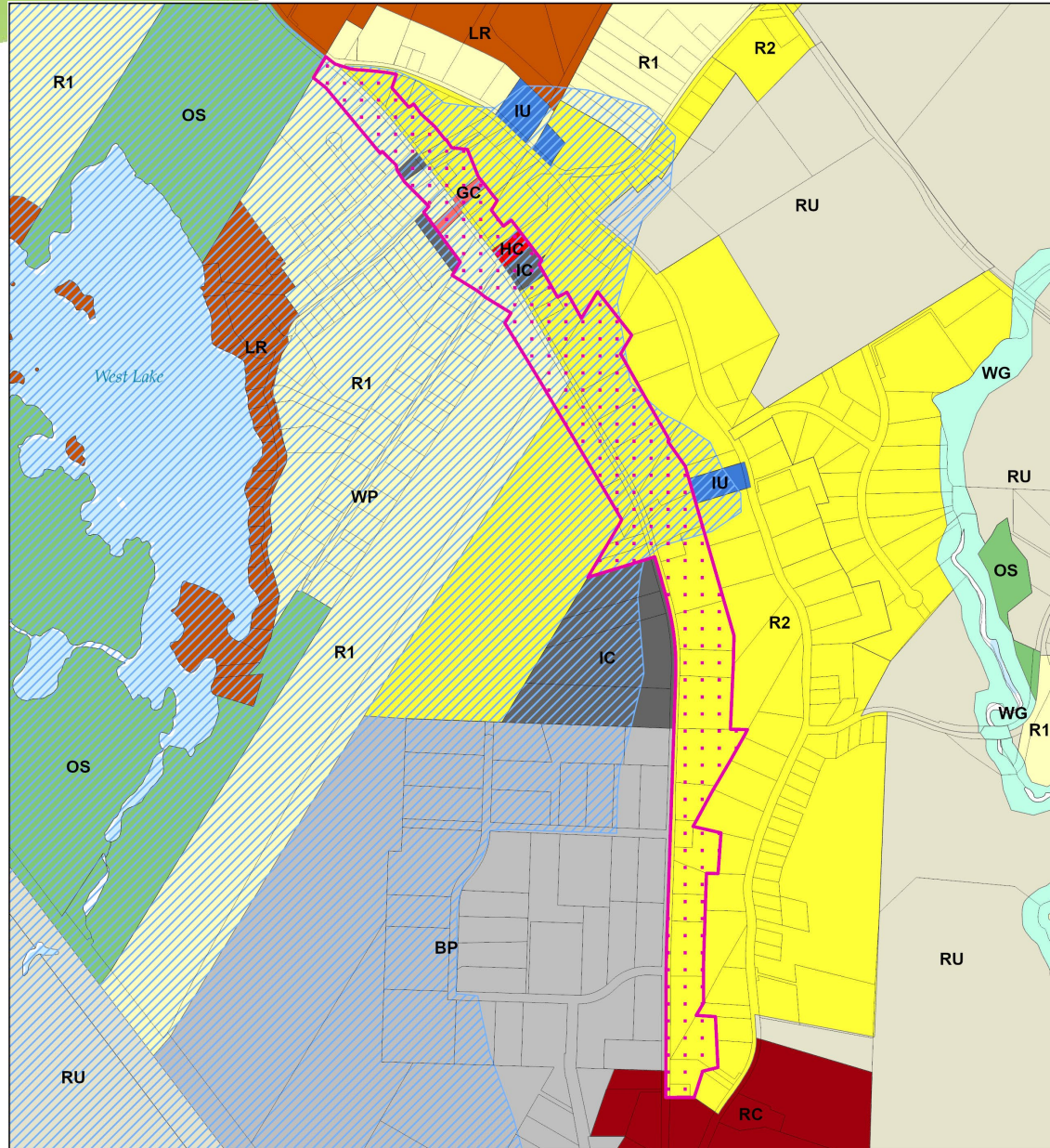
Retailers & Rental Services

Social Enterprise

Special Care (Residential Care Facility, Home for Special Care or Group Home)

Tradesperson & Craftsperson Businesses & Offices

Institutional (IU) Zone Uses



 **Proposed MU-MC Overlay Zone**

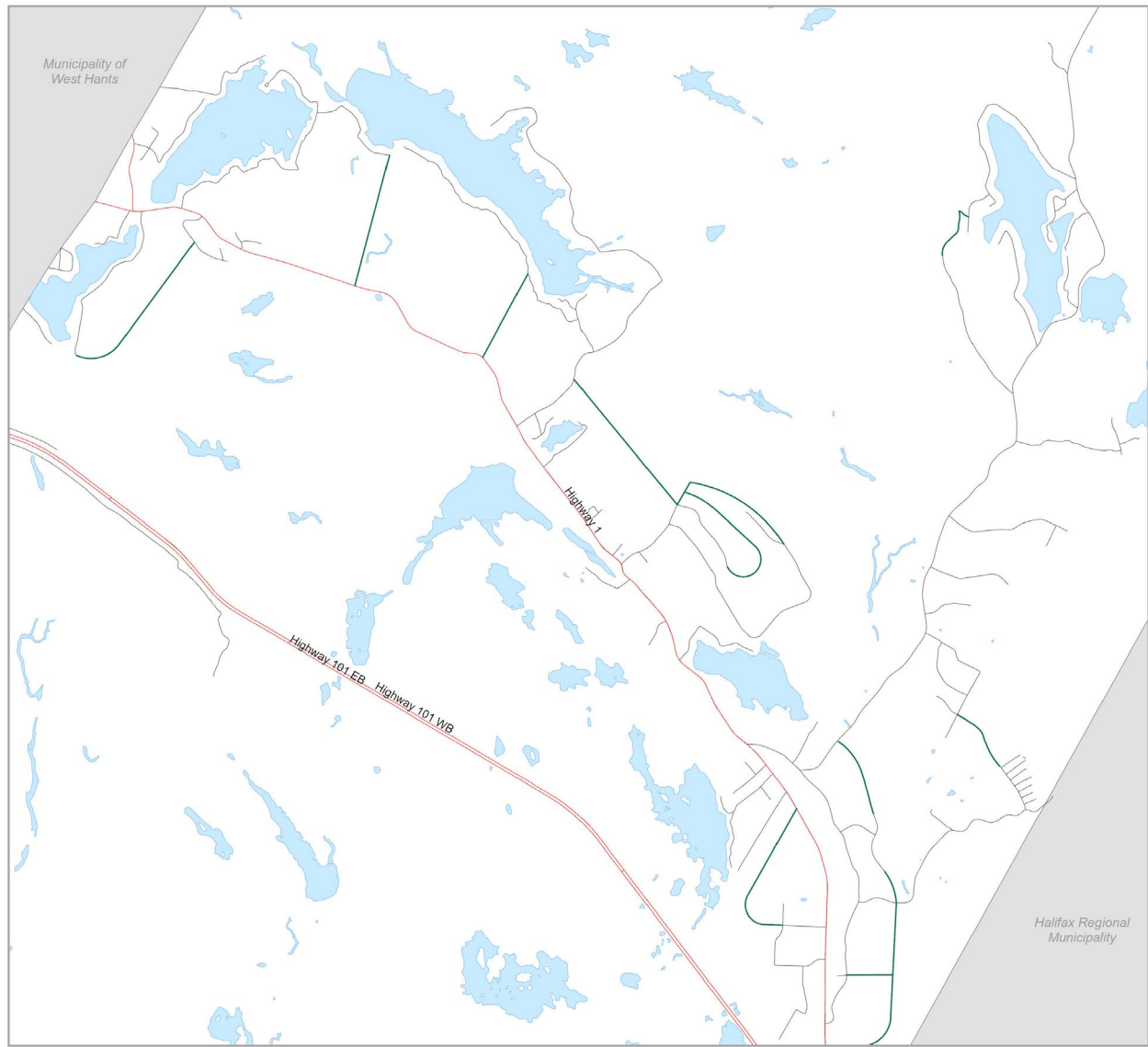
TRANSPORTATION

Transportation

- Public consultation for the Uniacke SPS, indicates that respondents are interested in a rapid transit bus connecting Mount Uniacke to either the Halifax Transit hub in Lower Sackville or connecting directly to downtown Halifax.
- According to the survey results, approximately 67% of respondents commute out of the study area for work.
- As the community continues to grow, there may be additional interest from residents on opportunities for transit.
- To recognize the importance of future transit to the community, a transit feasibility study for Mount Uniacke is proposed to be added to Section E3: Municipal Projects and Studies of the Municipal Planning Strategy.
- Further, a policy is proposed to be added to Section C1: Growth Management and Infrastructure of the Municipal Planning Strategy, supporting the future development of transit through Mount Uniacke.

Transportation

- Road connectivity is important to the safety and efficiency of vehicles and for reducing traffic congestion.
- Increased connectivity is good for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles.
- There are a variety of opportunities for increased connectivity in the study area.
- The opportunities for connectivity have been identified on the Required Future Transportation Connections Map for Mount Uniacke.
- The subject map is recommended to be attached as an Appendix to the Subdivision Bylaw.
- A Required Future Transportation Connection Map for the Corridor has previously been adopted.



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APPENDIX D

REQUIRED FUTURE TRANSPORTATION CONNECTON MAP 1



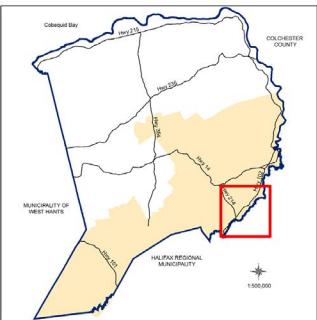
Road (Major / Minor Route)



Future Road Connections



1:26,000



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PARKS & TRAILS

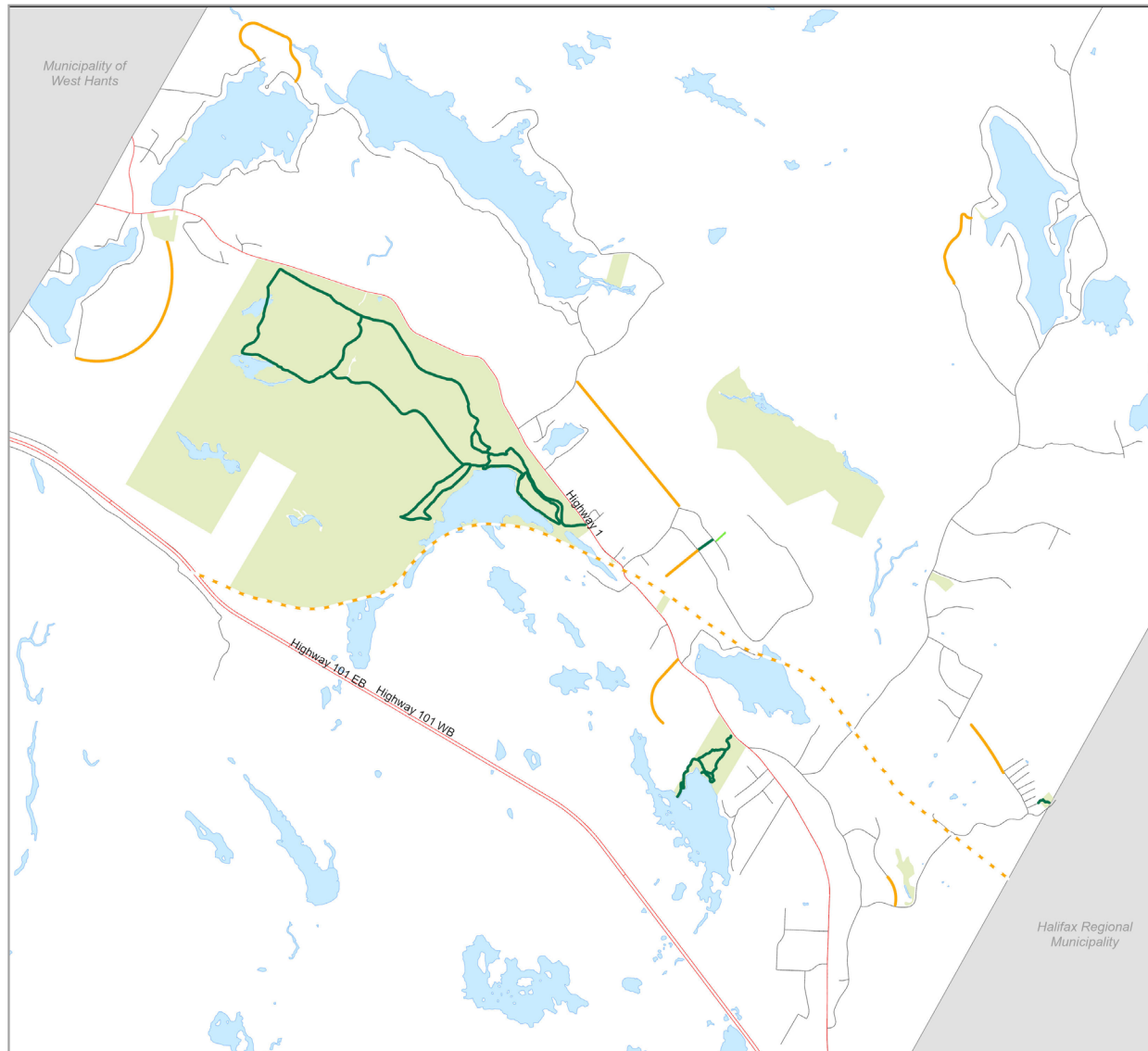
Parks and Open Space

- As part of the consultation process, Uniacke SPS area residents indicated that they enjoy and appreciate the parks and trails in the Uniacke area.
- Between the Municipality and the Provincial government, residents in the Uniacke SPS area have a solid supply of parks, trails, and open spaces to use for their enjoyment.
- Several large parcels of land within the study area are either in provincial ownership or the ownership of Halifax Water. Although these lands are not considered parklands, they do contribute to the rural feel of the community and enhance the community's natural assets.
- Through the consultation process, residents expressed their appreciation for the park and open space assets that are available in their community and they expressed interest in having those assets increased and improved.
- Five park related items mentioned most frequently in the Uniacke SPS survey results, include:



Parks & Open Space









1. **Walking trails and sidewalks:** Respondents mentioned that new walking trails and sidewalks could be constructed to connect neighbourhoods to local amenities. In keeping with the Mount Uniacke Recreation Strategy, a Required Future Pedestrian Connection Map for the Uniacke area is proposed. The Required Future Pedestrian Connection Map would be similar to the Corridor Pedestrian Connection Map. As land in Mount Uniacke is developed, the map will help guide the development of pedestrian walkways in the community.
2. **Recreation facility/gym:** Further investigation will take place as part of the Recreation Facilities Master Plan Study, which began in early 2025. PRC staff are aware of the desire for a recreation facility in the Uniacke area.
3. **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. Options for the creation of a beach park are dependent on future development in the community.
4. **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 will continue to support the local trail group in planning for the development of the rail line into a multi-use trail.
5. **Accessible walking trails and lake access:** Several respondents requested accessible trails that would accommodate seniors/wheelchairs/strollers. A few respondents requested that an accessible access to one of the lakes be created. PRC is aware of the desire for more accessible recreation assets and will monitor for opportunities.



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APPENDIX D

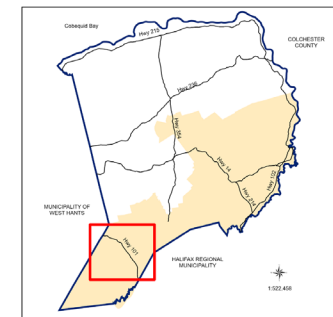
REQUIRED FUTURE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION MAP

-  Highway (Major Route)
-  Road (Minor Route)
-  Existing Walkway/Trail
-  Walkway/Trail Reserve
-  Existing Sidewalk
-  Required Pedestrian Connection
-  Potential Rail to Trail Connection
-  Parks



1:50,000

0 375 750 1,500 2,250 3,000 Metres



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ENVIRONMENT



Environment

- Protecting the community's natural assets was identified as a major theme throughout the Uniacke SPS consultation process.
- Residents value their access to open spaces and are passionate about their rural identity. Policies proposed as part of the Uniacke SPS, aim at protecting these natural assets while allowing for densification of the study area.
- Consultation took place with Halifax Water and the Sackville Rivers Association on environmental related concerns that the organizations may have.
- Staff have completed two presentations to Halifax Water and have had a meeting and received feedback from the Sackville Rivers Association.

Environment

- In order to strengthen the regulations regarding the environment, policies are proposed to be added to the Municipal Planning Strategy to require the following:
 - Boundaries for watercourse setbacks be added to plans of subdivision.
 - Policies to consider the retention of natural vegetation as part of rezonings and development agreements.
 - Add a future option for a wildlife corridor study to the MPS.
 - Council is already considering amendments to the Subdivision Bylaw to require stormwater water management plans for tentative subdivision approval in all regions of the Municipality.
 - Floodplain study for the headwaters of the Sackville River will be completed by the province over the next couple of years.



Conclusion

- In 1976 Uniacke residents expressed the importance of the rural nature of their community, including quiet open spaces, clean lakes, and trees; this hasn't changed.
- Residents of the Uniacke SPS study area are still expressing their love of nature and it continues to be identified as one of the reasons why residents move to the community.
- As Council plans for continued growth in the community, a recognition through planning policy of the importance of the natural environment should be recognized.
- Growth through moderate densification, in a comprehensive development format will allow future developers to supply the community with home options for seniors and those just starting their lives.
- Comprehensive planned development will enable Council to continue to evaluate the impact of development on parks and open spaces, Municipal services, and the effect on the natural environment.
- A feasibility study for the development of Municipal water and wastewater services will permit Council to make informed and balanced decisions about the financial impact of growth on the Municipality.

Conclusion

- Proposed policies outlined in this Uniacke SPS will need to be adopted in the East Hants Official Community Plan to enable the policies.
- The Uniacke SPS is meant to enable flexible development.
- The Citizen Engagement process identified in the Municipal Planning Strategy will be followed throughout the adoption process, including a public information meeting, letters to residents with zone changes, and a public hearing.
- If in the future, Council proceeds with implementing central services, it is recommended that planning policies and regulations are revisited to support densification while supporting the natural assets of the community.



Recommendation

- Recommend the adoption of the Uniacke Secondary Planning Strategy and authorize staff to incorporate the adoption of the Uniacke SPS into the 2026 Plan Review.

Recommended Motion

Planning Advisory Committee recommends that Council:

- ***Adopt the Uniacke Secondary Planning Strategy and authorize staff to incorporate the Uniacke SPS policies into the East Hants Official Community Plan as part of the 2026 Plan Review.***