

Plan Review: What We Heard

Planning Advisory Committee

July 21, 2026

Planning and Development Department



EAST HANTS



Introduction

- Community consultation is a crucial piece of developing land use planning policies.
- Consultation builds knowledge and awareness among residents and interest holder groups.
- East Hants has sought active engagement from East Hants residents and property owners through visioning meetings, surveys, and interest holder meetings.
- Community engagement will continue throughout the planning process through community meetings, social media posts, and direct engagement with property owners whose property may be considered for a land use designation and zone change.

Statistics

179

People Attended the
Visioning Meetings

586

Residents Responded to
the Plan Review Survey

262

Residents Responded
to the Visual Preference
Survey

4,575

Written Survey
Comments were Read
and Summarized



Other Input

- Internal Department Meetings.
- Developer Interest Holder Meeting
- Meeting with NSPW.
- Meeting with Agricultural Advisory Committee (future).

Visioning Meetings

- Six Community Visioning Meetings were held across East Hants to allow residents to share their ideas and priorities for the future of East Hants.
- Meetings were held in the communities of Rawdon, Mount Uniacke, Milford, Maitland, Walton, and Enfield.
- Over 179 residents and developers attended the meetings and provided their input into the planning process.
- Topics discussed at the meetings ranged from specific planning related ideas to a wider general discussion on community priorities and improvements.
- Many topics and suggestions moved beyond what can be achieved through land use planning and regulation.

Big Ideas - Visioning

Protect Rural Communities:

- Residents in all areas of East Hants would like to protect the rural nature of their community.
- Would like to focus on traditional building styles in Milford, Shubenacadie, Maitland, and Walton, to maintain their community feeling.
- Corridor feeling like Sackville; would prefer old Bedford.

Improved Built Environment:

- North and South Corridor residents feel that new development is poor in quality.
- Residents do not like the modern building architecture, they prefer traditional architectural styles.
- Sidewalks should be upgraded to concrete.
- Beautification of the Corridor needs to take place.
- Essentially, residents want better place-making regulations.

Improve Housing Choices & Affordability

- More single level housing should be constructed for seniors.
- More options for seniors in rural communities and Mount Uniacke.
- Small dwelling units for more affordable rental rates.
- Programs to help residents with housing affordability.

Creation of Walkable & Connected Communities:

- Residents in the northern Corridor would like an active transportation route to connect with the southern Corridor.
- Rural communities would like wider roads and shoulders to permit walking if sidewalks are not feasible.
- Sidewalk requested in Mount Uniacke in Village Core area.

Infrastructure Availability:

- Residents concerned that there is not enough potable water to service new development.
- Residents concerned that there is not enough sewer capacity to service new development.
- Concerns regarding road capacity- residents feel that traffic is bad.
- Residents identified a lack of gas stations in rural areas as a concern.

Apartment Building Development

- Generally there is disagreement among residents where denser development should take place.
- Many residents don't want it in their community but are okay with it another community.
- Some residents don't want apartment buildings located along Highway 2.
- Concerns about the height of buildings.
- Buildings that the community like: small brick apartments on Highway 2, Aroma Maya Building, and new blue apartment building on Highway 214.

Increase Open Space & Recreational Amenities: :

- Residents in the Corridor indicated that they wanted more small parks and green spaces.
- All residents identified the Nine Mile River Trails as a fantastic asset that they thought should be replicated in other areas of East Hants.
- More parks in new developments.
- Increase water access points (rivers, lakes, ocean).
- Recreation facility in Mount Uniacke.

Drought, Flooding, & Fires

- Residents worried about drought conditions and access to potable water resources, wondered about a second bulk water station.
- Residents feel that secondary accesses should be provided to neighbourhoods with one access.
- Concerns regarding rural development and dry hydrant access and availability of emergency services.

Public Transit & Active Transportation

- Corridor residents would like transit through the North and South Corridor and connection to the airport.
- Mount Uniacke and Lakelands residents would like a transit connection to Sackville or Halifax.
- Residents in Walton and Maitland would like to have ride options available for seniors to access services and shopping.
- Improved active transportation routes in the Corridor.

Protection of Natural Assets:

- Protection of waterways is important
- Protection of farmland for future generations and food security is critical.
- Protection of wetlands and sensitive habitats for ecological purposes.
- Concerns around septic systems going into lakes, rivers, and the Bay of Fundy.



Visual Preference Survey

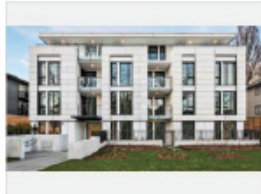
- A visual preference survey is a tool used to gauge public opinion on community design by asking participants to rate images of streetscapes, architecture, landscaping, and land-use scenarios. It allows participants to visualize community design elements and to consider how they may appear in their community.
- A visual preference survey is just one of the many tools used to help East staff and Council understand how the public would like the community to develop.

Question 1

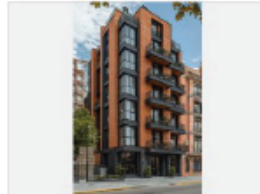
Select one or more photos of apartment building styles that you feel should be constructed in East Hants.



Contemporary Suburban Design



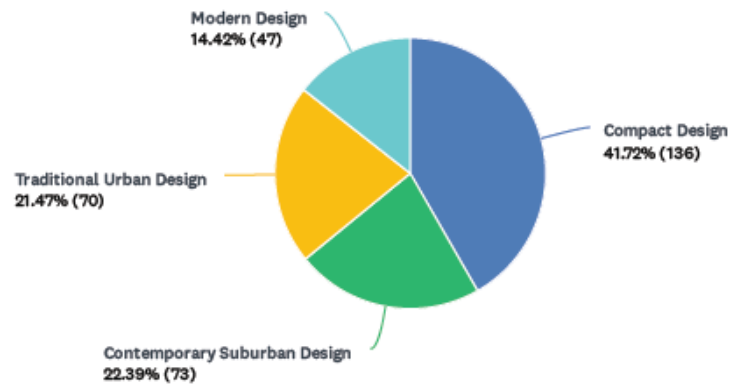
Compact Design



Traditional Urban Design



Modern Design



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
 Compact Design	57.38%	136
 Contemporary Suburban Design	30.80%	73
 Traditional Urban Design	29.54%	70
 Modern Design	19.83%	47
Total		326

Multiple responses were enabled.



EAST HANTS

Question 2

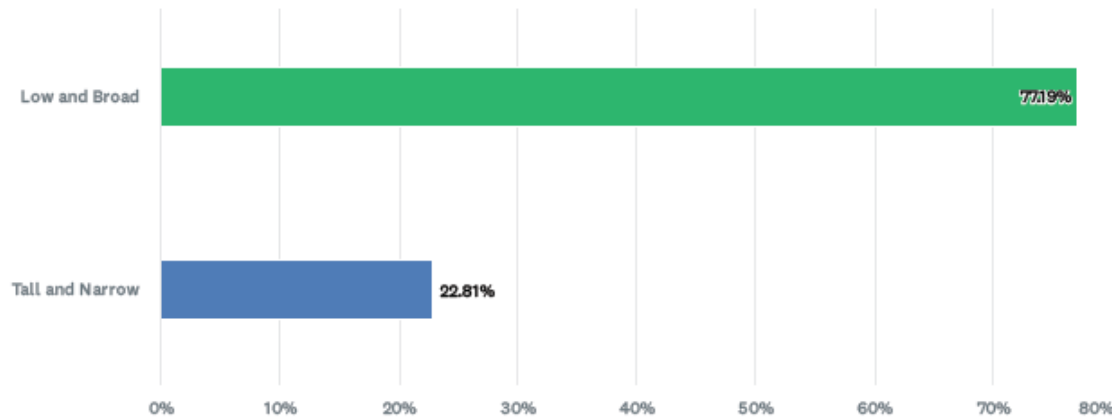
Do you prefer a low and broad apartment building or a tall and narrow apartment building?



Low and Broad



Tall and Narrow



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Low and Broad	77.19%	176
● Tall and Narrow	22.81%	52
Total		228

Question 3&4

Please select the type of common amenity space that you feel is appropriate.



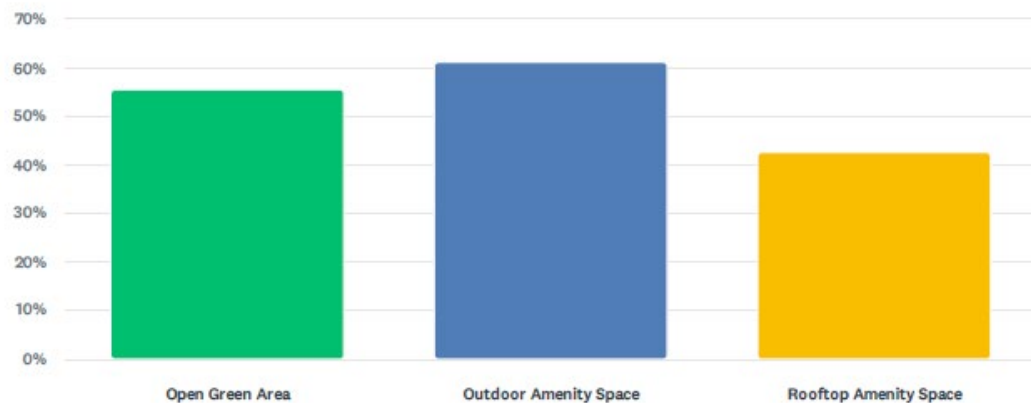
Open Green Area



Outdoor Amenity Space



Rooftop Amenity Space



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Open Green Area	55.70%	132
● Outdoor Amenity Space	61.18%	145
● Rooftop Amenity Space	42.62%	101
Total		378

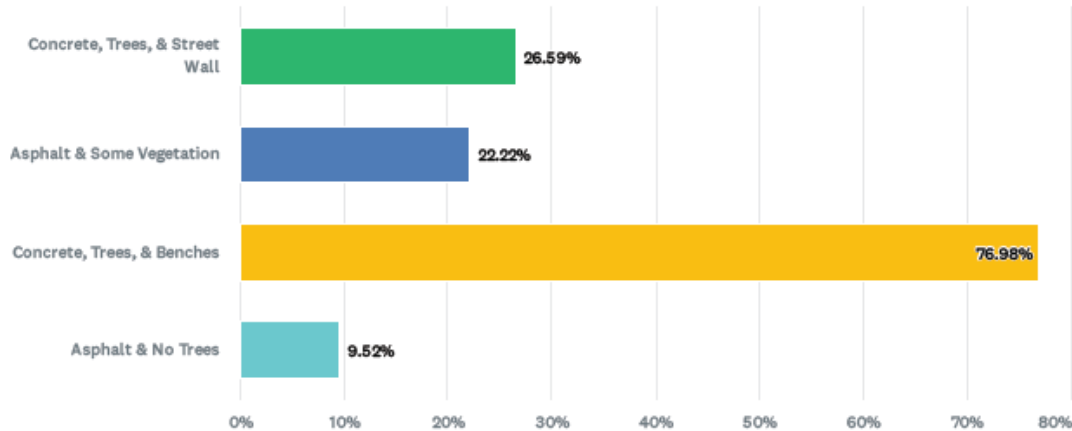
Multiple responses were enabled.



EAST HANTS

Question 5

Select the streets where you would prefer to walk.



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
Concrete, Trees, & Street Wall	26.59%	67
Asphalt & Some Vegetation	22.22%	56
Concrete, Trees, & Benches	76.98%	194
Asphalt & No Trees	9.52%	24

Multiple responses were enabled.

Question 6

Select the types of townhouse development you would like to live in.

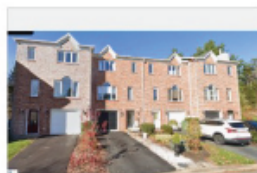
Stacked Townhouse: means a building divided vertically and horizontally into 3 or more dwelling units and multiple townhouse dwelling units are situated on a single lot.

On-Street Townhouse: means a townhouse where each dwelling unit is located on a separate lot and has frontage on a public street.

Cluster Townhouse: means a townhouse where the building may be located on a private driveway and multiple townhouse dwelling units are situated on a single lot.



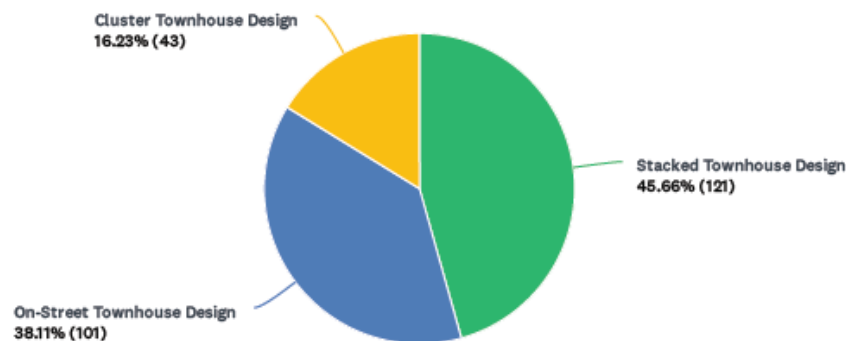
Stacked Townhouse
Design



On-Street Townhouse
Design



Cluster Townhouse Design



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
 Stacked Townhouse Design	51.93%	121
 On-Street Townhouse Design	43.35%	101
 Cluster Townhouse Design	18.45%	43
Total		265



Question 7

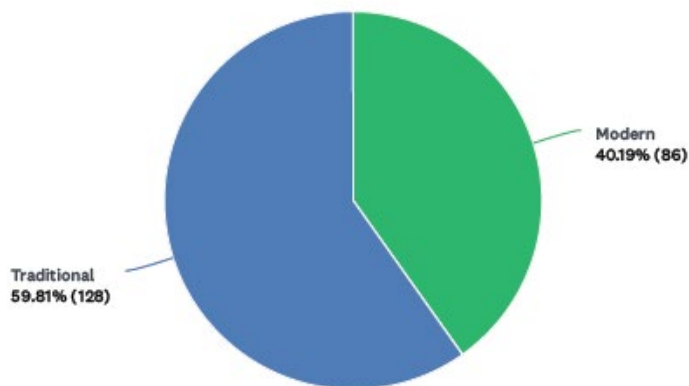
Select the townhouse design you prefer.



Modern



Traditional



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Modern	40.19%	86
● Traditional	59.81%	128
Total		214



Question 8

How should parking be allocated for two cars?



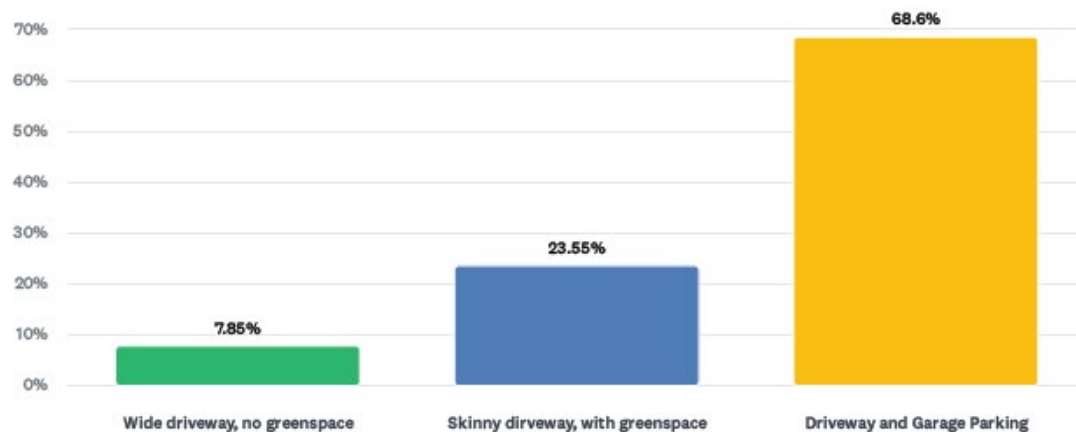
Wide driveway, no greenspace



Skinny driveway, with greenspace



Driveway and Garage Parking



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Wide driveway, no greenspace	7.85%	19
● Skinny driveway, with greenspace	23.55%	57
● Driveway and Garage Parking	68.60%	166
Total		242



Question 9

Select the parks that you would like to visit most?



Beach Park



Garden Park



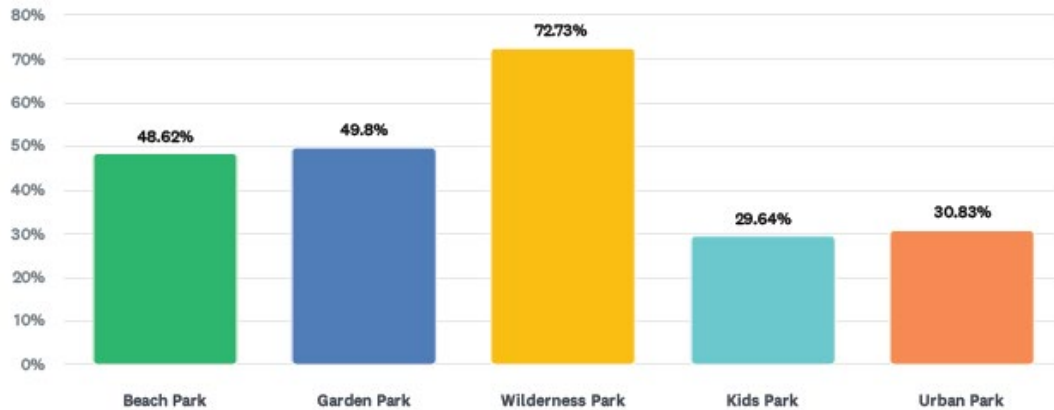
Wilderness Park



Kids Park



Urban Park



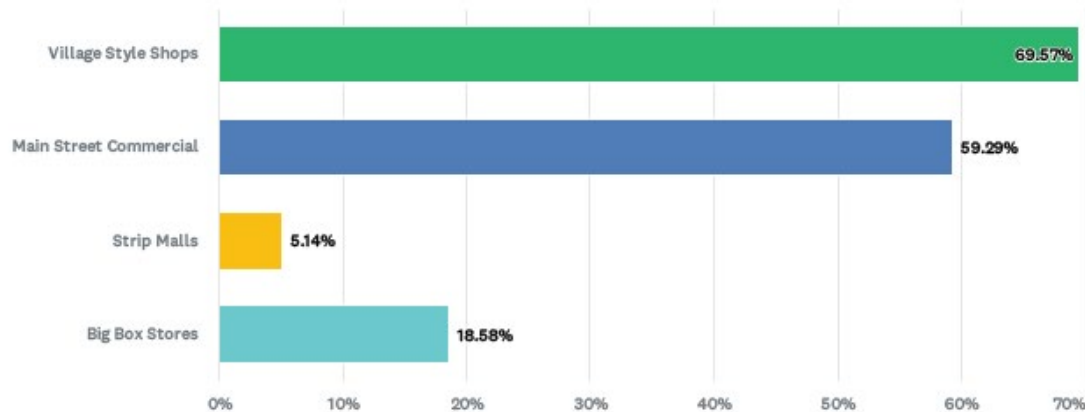
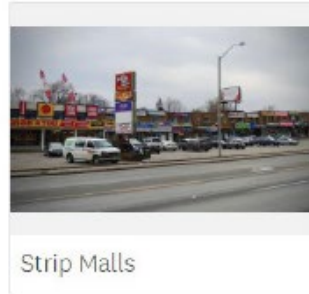
Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
 Beach Park	48.62%	123
 Garden Park	49.80%	126
 Wilderness Park	72.73%	184
 Kids Park	29.64%	75
 Urban Park	30.83%	78
Total		586

Multiple responses were enabled.



Question 10

Select the types of commercial development you prefer.



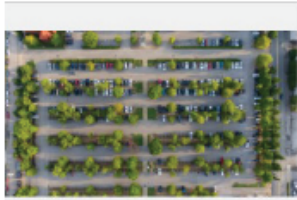
Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
 Village Style Shops	69.57%	176
 Main Street Commercial	59.29%	150
 Strip Malls	5.14%	13
 Big Box Stores	18.58%	47
Total		386

Multiple responses were enabled.

Question 11

Select each style of parking lot design that you prefer for East Hants.

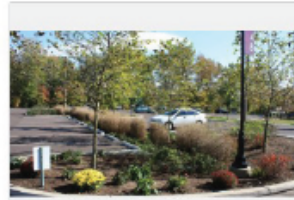
*Rain garden means a shallow, landscaped depression planted with native vegetation designed to capture, filter, and absorb stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces.



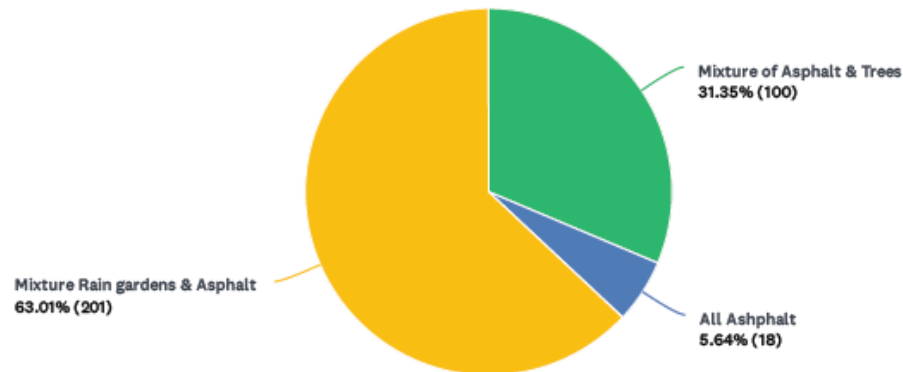
Mixture of Asphalt & Trees



All Asphalt



Mixture Rain gardens & Asphalt



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Mixture of Asphalt & Trees	39.37%	100
● All Asphalt	7.09%	18
● Mixture Rain gardens & Asphalt	79.13%	201
Total		319

Multiple responses were enabled.



Question 12

Please provide any additional comments you have about apartment,
townhouse, parking, and park design

KEY CONCERNS

Opposition to further apartment and townhouse development, with several respondents stating there is already too much growth and they want restrictions to future growth.

Protection of green space, trees, and natural features, several respondents requested landscaping, gardens, and open space to be incorporated into new developments.

Desire for community gathering spaces that encourage social interaction, similar to squares in Europe and also walking paths and networks.

More cohesive community planning, with comments indicating the design of the community needs to be cohesive and that the current development pattern looks slapped together.

Concerns about the survey process, including residents indicating there was no option to not select an apartment style and that it is too late to change the built environment.

Improved building design and aesthetics, including preferences for developments that blend into the community, several residents mentioned the small brick apartments in Elmsdale.

Preservation of rural identity, several concerns raised that the community is becoming too urban and that it is becoming Sackville. Respondents want to maintain rural feel.





Plan Review Survey

- An online Community Survey was available to East Hants residents from April 1 to June 8.
- The survey provided residents with an opportunity to share their knowledge, aspirations, and perspectives on the future growth and development of their community.

A total of 586 residents completed the survey.

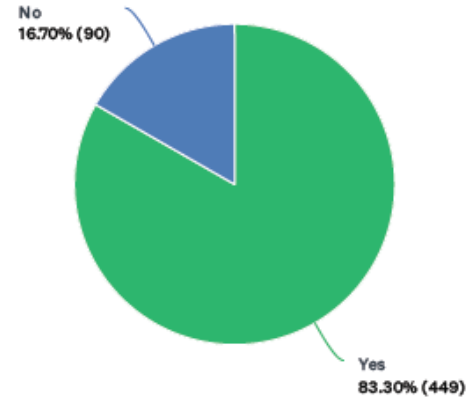
- The results will help identify land-use priorities and assess the significance of land-use issues affecting the community.

Question 4

Are you happy living in East Hants?

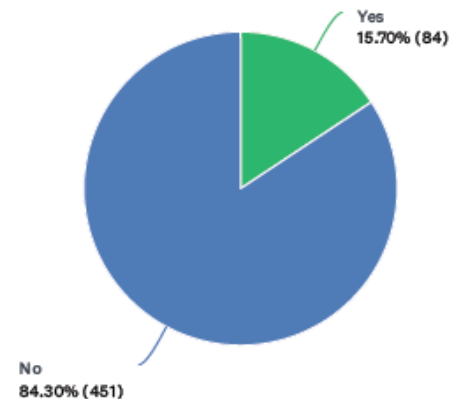
Plan Review Survey - Results

- There were 586 responses to the East Hants Plan Review Survey.
- Enfield had 34% of all responses.
- Age ranges for the survey varied, with respondents between 35 and 44 years of age accounting for nearly 24% of all responses.
- Just over 67% of all respondents have lived in East Hants for more than 10 years, with only approximately 2% of respondents being in the community for less than 2 years.
- Although 84% of respondents enjoy living in East Hants, 44% of respondents would not recommend the municipality to a friend or family member.
- How respondents feel about the overall design and layout of the community was also low, with East Hants getting an average rating of 2.75 out of 5 stars.



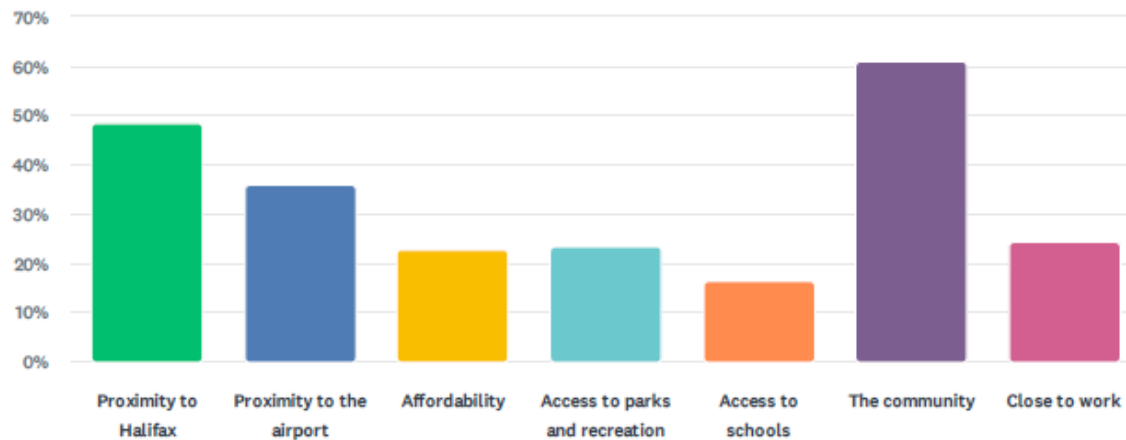
Question 5

Do you plan to move from East Hants to another Municipality in the next 5 years?



Question 6

What do you enjoy most about living in East Hants?



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
Proximity to Halifax	48.54%	249
Proximity to the airport	36.06%	185
Affordability	22.81%	117
Access to parks and recreation	23.59%	121
Access to schools	16.37%	84
The community	61.21%	314
Close to work	24.37%	125
Total		1195

Multiple responses were enabled.

Plan Review Survey – Results

- Many of the questions had over 500 comment responses.
- A summary of these responses can be found in the What We Heard Report.
- This presentation only includes a small snapshot of the comments.

The majority of responses to Question 13 reflected residents' intrinsic values rather than aspects of the built environment. The most frequently cited response was an appreciation for the quiet and peaceful nature of their neighbourhood.

NEIGHBOURHOOD LIKES

• **Quiet and peaceful**, over 100 respondents stated that they enjoyed the quiet and peacefulness of their neighbourhood.

• **Sense of Community**, over 50 respondents indicated that they like the sense of community in their neighbourhood.

• **Rural, country feel**, several respondents indicated that they like the rural charm of their neighbourhood and enjoyed the country feel.

• **Natural Environment**, several respondents indicated that they like their proximity to nature.

• **Friendly neighbours/ community**, several respondents that they had friendly neighbours and that their overall community was friendly.

• **Access to lakes and rivers**, a small number of respondents indicated that they liked living on a lake or river or having access to a lake or river.

• **Small town feel**, some respondents like the small town feel, where most amenities are a short drive away and live close to all the amenities they need.

• **Nothing**, there is a small handful of respondents who indicated that they did not like anything about their neighbourhood.

NEW POLICIES & REGULATIONS

Prioritize green space in new development, several respondents indicated that green space should be required with all new apartment buildings.

Residential density & height restrictions, several respondents indicated that stricter regulations on apartment density and height should be implemented.

Increase mix-use development, some respondents indicated that more mixed-use development regulations should be added.

Stricter aesthetic regulations, some respondents would like regulations for better design developments and regulations that maintain community character.

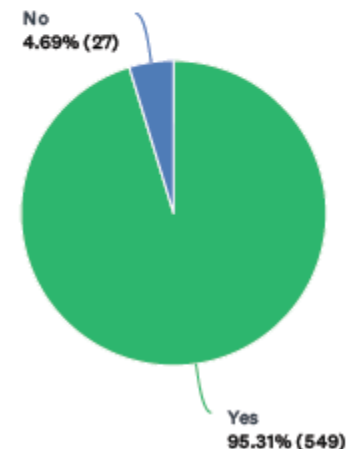
Prioritize habitat and wildlife protection, respondents want to protect natural ecosystems and wildlife corridors, including the protection of lakes, rivers, tree protection, and protection of wildlife habitat.

Developer accountability rules, some respondents felt that East Hants should ensure that Developers are held more accountable to development agreement and site plan approval requirements. Also, held more accountable for providing water.

Require more parks and public spaces, several respondents indicated that would like to see regulations on the creation of more parks and public opens spaces, including accessible public spaces.

Agricultural land protection, several respondents indicated that agriculture land should be protected for food production and new agriculture activities should be encouraged.

Do you feel the protection of agricultural land is Important?





Interest Holder Meeting

- On April 21, 2026, Planning staff met with members of the East Hants development community—including developers, surveyors, planning consultants, and other industry representatives—to discuss the 2026/2027 Plan Review.
- Interest holder engagement is an important component of the land use planning process, providing valuable insight into the needs and perspectives of the development community.
- This input helps inform the development of land use policies and regulations that balance community interests with the viability and success of proposed development projects.
- Notes from the interest holder engagement session have been incorporated into the What We Heard Report

Feedback

Many of the interest holders who attended the meeting expressed interest in the information presented and found it valuable. There were relatively few questions or comments from attendees. Several participants also took the opportunity to review the approved development maps, which identify the locations of approved developments that have not yet been completed.

- Avoid exurban and un-serviced development like Hammonds Plains and increase density in the Corridor, where Municipal services are available.
- Work with Nova Scotia Public Works to create a new Highway connector in the Lakelands areas.
- Director discussed Building Permit timelines.



- There were questions and discussions about transit. Developers are interested in seeing transit come to East Hants. Municipal staff provided an update.
- The higher the density of people in the Corridor the larger the tax base to help pay for the transit service.



- Questions about site plan approval and why letters are mailed to neighbours after site plan approval has been granted by the Development Officer.
- Add the ability to do urban bare land condo developments and multiple apartment buildings on a lot by site plan approval.





What's Next?





Recommendation

- This report is for information purposes