



Planning Advisory Committee Meeting

June 10, 2021

4:00 p.m.

Virtual – Via Zoom/Teams

Council Chambers

359 Main Street

Agenda

Call to Order

1. Approval of Agenda

2. Approval of Minutes

- a. Planning Advisory Committee Meeting, May 6, 2021

3. Public Input / Question Period

PLEASE NOTE:

- Public Participation is limited to 30 minutes
- Each Person is limited to 3 minutes and may return to speak once, for 1 minute, if time permits within the total 30-minute period
- Questions or comments are to be directed to the Chair
- Comments and questions that relate to personnel, current or potential litigation issues, or planning issues for which a public hearing has already occurred, but no decision has been made by Council, will not be answered.

4. New Business:

- a. Selection of Vice Chair of Planning Advisory Committee



5. Continued Business and Updates

- a. Housing Report and Discussion
 - i. Report attached. It is suggested the Committee use this and the next meeting to discuss and formulate any recommendations.
 - ii. There will be a Staff presentation to support attached report.

- b. Vision New Minas
 - i. Staff are asking the PAC to take a look at planning work that is ongoing for the expansion of New Minas. See [here](#). 'Vision New Minas'. It is suggested this only be introduced at this meeting and members have until the next meeting to digest the material and form any opinions they may have.
 - ii. The end goal would be to consider whether the Town provide some form of official feedback on this.

- c. Climate Plan and Ongoing work
 - i. See Environmental Sustainability Committee material for update [here](#). See Agenda item 4a.
 - ii. Staff will provide a short presentation to summarize.

- d. Active Transportation Planning Update
 - i. AT/Mobility Work update (see [here](#) for Information Report that went to Council at Committee of the Whole June 1)

- e. East End Comprehensive Development Districts
 - i. Staff took an update directly to Council on the CDD lands in the East End and developing a process to move forward with master planning these 2 areas. A report can be found [here](#). See item 6a.
 - ii. Staff can provide a brief update at the meeting on this item.

6. Round Table



7. Next Meeting

- a. July 8, 2021 – 4:00 p.m.

8. Adjournment

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Title: Wolfville Housing Discussion

Date: 2021-06-10

Department: Planning & Development



SUMMARY

Planning Advisory Committee - Housing Discussion

Staff have been working to develop a report focused on housing issues in Wolfville. The intent of this report is to:

1. Highlight current housing issues in the Town, and
2. Update the PAC and Council on actions that can 'move the needle' on our existing housing situation.

At the last PAC meeting, Staff committed to producing a report to expand upon the ten options presented to improve housing affordability within the Town. Given the recent release from the Nova Scotia Housing Commission, and the complexity of this issue, Staff would suggest the information in this report can be discussed over 2 meetings – June and July. Additional information or expansion on information in this report can be brought to the July meeting.

The intent is that the discussions at our meetings from May until July should form the basis of housing recommendations from the Planning Advisory Committee to Council.

Where should our focus be?

Changing the conversation

- Reframe mixed housing as economic development
- Use inclusionary language in communications
- Acknowledge that housing is for everyone

Infill and Missing Middle Housing

- R-1- make amendments to permit mixed housing in all residential zones
- Stay the course on the missing middle housing that is encouraged (and being proposed) through our new planning documents in other zones

Partners and Openness

- Advocate for and conduct a regional housing assessment
- Better support non-profit/co-op housing partners
- Stay tuned-in to how the NS Housing Commission recommendations may impact the Municipal role in housing

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CDD Lands

- Look to achieve some level of affordable housing (see the 'Equity' section in the Land Use By-law's Sustainability Checklist) with the planning of the East End CDD lands
- Enable and encourage missing middle in the West End Lands and Woodman's Grove

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1) LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The Town has clear control over land use in the Town, provided through the *Municipal Government Act*. The recommendations from the NS Housing Commission point to further authority for municipalities (or other measures) being important to improve the NS housing situation.

2) STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That PAC consider the information from previous discussion and in this report – over 2 meetings – and provide a recommendation to Council to improve Wolfville’s Housing affordability.

3) REFERENCES

- Town of Wolfville [Municipal Planning Strategy](#)
- Resources and presentations from the ongoing Housing discussions with PAC can be found in this [shared folder](#) (this report builds on the previous discussions and presentations)
- Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Commission Report: [Charting a New Course for Affordable Housing in Nova Scotia](#)
- Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives: [Keys to a Housing Secure Future for all Nova Scotians](#)

4) PURPOSE OF REPORT

At our last Planning Advisory Committee meeting, Staff committed to producing a report that would expand on the ten options presented to improve housing affordability within the Town (see [here](#) for that presentation). Given the recent release of the Nova Scotia Housing Commission’s report and recommendations, and the complexity of this issue, Staff would suggest the information in this report can be discussed over the June and July meetings of the PAC. The overall intent is that discussions at our meetings from May until July should form the basis of recommendations to Council that will strive to improve our housing situation.

5) DISCUSSION

The Town of Wolfville Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) identifies housing affordability as a major issue for current and potential residents. Recent circumstances in our Province have amplified the issue. The goal of this report is to highlight opportunities the Town has to improve housing affordability in the Town and discuss with PAC and Council. This report will indicate what measures the Town has already taken, identify gaps in policy, as well as further actions the Town can take now and ask the Planning

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Advisory Committee (and Council) what options they are comfortable pursuing. Housing presentations, reports and discussion have been brought to the Planning Advisory Committee at the April 8th and May 6th, 2021 meetings and this report expands on the issues raised during those discussions.

Recent Reports on Nova Scotia's Housing Situation

2021 Nova Scotia [Affordable Housing Commission Report](#) Findings:

The Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Commission has recently set out 17 recommendations based on engagement from more than 2,000 stakeholders and members of the public to improve housing affordability and access in Nova Scotia. The report emphasizes that housing is a human right and a strategic sector - that it is a “driver of, and a condition for, social equity, healthy communities, and economic prosperity”. The report also acknowledges that the gap between demand for and supply of affordable housing is widening. The goal of the report is to “make affordable housing more available and to protect existing stock – to ultimately ensure every Nova Scotian has a safe and affordable place to call home.”

Some of the key takeaways include:

- The need for housing data at the community level
- Constrained rental markets in rural communities
- Weak and fragmented community housing sector
- Risk-averse culture within government
- Lack of shared accountability for housing outcomes across levels of government

Some of the key recommendations from the [Report](#) include:

- **Recognize housing as a right and a key strategic sector for economic development, health, and social equity.** A lack of strategic visioning for housing has led us into a housing crisis. Due to this lack of leadership, employers struggle to expand or attract workers and entrepreneurs, residents and communities are limited in sustained opportunities.
- **Reduce regulatory and non-cost barriers of new development.** Local governments can positively impact rental rates by maintaining a regulatory environment conducive to the development of affordable and diverse range of housing types. Municipalities need to complete a review of development processes to streamline applications and requirements as quickly as possible, and adopt measures to require that secondary suites and shared housing be permitted in all residential zones.
- **Expand housing options that meet the needs of seniors and vulnerable Nova Scotians.** There is compelling evidence that single-family zoning has contributed to urban sprawl and car reliance, worsened affordability by restricting density, and prevented inclusion by keeping low-income households out of higher income neighborhoods. The report

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- recommends amending legislation to require that secondary suites and shared housing be permitted in all residential zones in Nova Scotia, to ensure that no by-law, covenant, or agreement prevents or prohibits the development of rooming houses, tiny homes, secondary suites, backyard suites, laneway houses, and other low cost housing models.
- **Enhance renter protections, equitable access, and better functioning conditions for rental housing.** Review Residential Tenancies Act to examine opportunities to improve renter protection and strengthen landlord-tenant relations.
 - **Address the specific needs of rural and non-urban communities.** These communities face shortages of affordable housing exacerbated by low incomes, diversifying and changing populations, conversion of permanent rental housing into short-term rentals, and a lack of municipal infrastructure to attract investment. Development in these areas is plagued by NIMBY-ism – we need to manage local opposition to improve community support for local projects, and ensure residents are given more information on affordable housing projects planned for their communities. Municipalities should promote more flexible local planning and building types for rental housing and prioritize areas with existing infrastructure. Establish a network of community supporters to help build trust with citizens and develop a NIMBY strategy.
 - **Empower municipalities to become key partners in affordable housing.** Municipalities are the closest to the need of affordable housing but have limited tools or resources to be an effective partner in affordable housing. While municipalities can partner with the community housing sector, they do not have legislative authority to provide incentives to private developers to create affordable housing. Municipalities do not have clear guidance regarding their full potential to influence housing. Communities need local housing data to understand their needs and act.

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives: [Keys to a Housing Secure Future for all Nova Scotians](#)

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives has also recently released a report that contains 95 recommendations to address the affordable housing and homelessness crises in Nova Scotia. These recommendations underscore many of the findings from the Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Commission report and provide more detail on holistic issues that affect housing and homelessness in Nova Scotia. A video on this report can be found [here](#).

Overview of the Housing Affordability Issue in Wolfville

Wolfville is “seriously unaffordable”. In Canada, housing is considered affordable if shelter costs account for less than 30% of a household's before-tax income. In 2016, 45% of renter households, and 14.1% of homeowner households in Wolfville were spending more than 30% of their household income on

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shelter costs. Additionally, the "Shelter Consumption Affordability Ratio" (SCAR), which measures the proportion of income that households spend on shelter-related needs (including transportation, utilities and maintenance) after paying for other necessities such as food, health care and childcare, indicates that Nova Scotia households devote more of their income (46 cents of each dollar left over after paying for necessities to shelter costs) than in any other province in Canada. Furthermore, a macro assessment of housing affordability known as the "median multiple", which is the median household income divided by the average price of a home, indicates that Wolfville's housing market is "seriously unaffordable". We also know that Wolfville has a higher percentage (17-30%) of low-income residents than the provincial average (9-16%). Low-income residents are likely experiencing challenges related to one or more of the following: dwelling quality, food quality, transportation options, difficulty saving money for the future, or spending savings on monthly living costs, in fact, 54.3% of those living in subsidized housing in Wolfville are spending more than 30% of their income on shelter costs.

Increasing density within the Town not only provides the opportunity for more affordable housing, but supports sustainability goals by conserving natural areas, reducing municipal costs and reducing travel costs for residents who live and work in the Town. The Town's MPS suggests that infilling using existing services and also the large tracks of vacant land (with a commitment to mixed compact neighborhoods) present opportunities to better utilize the Town's residential lands and meet our housing needs. The MPS looks to diversifying residential land uses by providing opportunity for 'missing middle' housing forms, innovative housing, a focus on affordability, and home-based business.

There are many other factors and considerations that contribute to where we find ourselves. Our tourism success has led to more interest in short-term rentals/tourist accommodation impacting our housing supply and it is safe to say – change is needed in our Province and PAC may want to consider recommendations to Council that would contribute to Wolfville doing their part.

What we do not know: We do not yet know the full impacts of COVID-19 on affordability in Wolfville as the housing market in Nova Scotia has seen an unprecedented volume of people moving to the Province over the past year, resulting in decreased vacancy in the rental market and inflated prices in the housing market. The effects of in-migration to Nova Scotia due to the COVID-19 pandemic is not yet known, though average residential prices in the Annapolis Valley have increased by 36.7% to \$256,888 (source [here](#)) demonstrating that the region is becoming less affordable as housing is being rapidly bought up.

Staff Recommend: The Town is well positioned to make an impact on the affordability of housing as it has control over several factors that contribute to affordability including:

- permitted land uses,
- layout and configuration of new lots,
- secondary planning processes,

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- size of additions permitted,
- the ability to have multiple units per lot, and
- the area that must be available for parking or open space.
- removing barriers to the development of specific housing types (permit missing middle housing and ADUs in R-1 zones), or
- by increasing barriers to the development of certain housing types (removing R-1 zoning or prohibiting new development of large single-family homes on large lots).

Staff feel that the PAC and Council can take action on Wolfville’s housing issue by working to address the following 3 areas of recommendation: **Changing the conversation, providing infill and missing middle housing, and strengthening partnerships and openness.**

1. Change the Conversation

In order to increase supply of affordable housing and reduce community resistance, the conversation around housing in Wolfville needs to change to become more inclusive and reflect a future where all residents have quality, affordable housing. This section outlines suggestions on how this change can be achieved. This section discusses the need for using inclusionary language in communications and planning and promoting affordable housing as economic development.

A) Use inclusionary language in communications and planning

Through the plan review, some of the challenges in this area have hopefully been designed out of the process but our planning documents are still very new and untested. Terminology such as ‘community character’ often prevents new or innovative development. While it is important to maintain satisfaction of existing residents, these concerns often dictate what type of housing, and by default what type of earner, is prioritized in development. This is demonstrated in the Town through exclusionary zoning practices, such as R-1 zoning. In these zones, only development of single detached homes on large lot sizes are permitted – this format of housing in a Town context in 2021, given our challenges in this province, is exclusionary.

Allowing mixed housing such as accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in all zones, provides an opportunity to increase housing stock in a manner that is sympathetic to the existing neighborhood, while providing benefits to the community including the opportunity to earn additional income, provide low-income housing, and increase density necessary to support economic development.

Addressing these issues may be improved by highlighting and communicating the benefits of Smart Growth. Smart Growth encourages densification in strategic areas such as existing neighborhoods and commercial zones. By densifying strategic areas, commercial areas are reinvigorated with more local

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shoppers, and residents have a greater range of housing options to choose from, improving household cost of living and reducing time spent commuting. Developing within existing communities is beneficial because it takes advantage of existing investments such as roads, water pipes, and other infrastructure while strengthening local tax bases and protecting open space by reducing sprawl – important for the protection of agricultural land in our region. Smart Growth principals encourage municipal leaders to change policy to encourage development within existing neighborhoods (see [here](#) for more on Smart Growth). Understanding the benefits of strategic densification can help to communicate why inclusive planning policies provide better outcomes and opportunities for all residents. The tables below highlight a few of the benefits associated with Smart Growth.

Table 13 Smart Growth Benefits and Costs

	Internal (To Smart Growth Residents)	External (To Other People)
Benefits	Increased accessibility, which reduces travel time and money costs, and increases affordability. Improved mobility options, which increases non-drivers' independence and economic opportunity, and reduces drivers' chauffeuring burdens. More affordable housing options (townhouses, apartments, accessory units, etc.). Increased economic resilience. Increased traffic safety. Improved fitness and health.	Open space preservation (farm and natural lands). Reduced public infrastructure and service costs (roads, utilities, emergency and transit services, etc.). Reduced congestion and crash risk imposed on other people. Reduced healthcare and disability costs. Increased local economic productivity and development. Reduced overall crime rates. Reduced fuel consumption and pollution emissions.
Costs	Higher unit land prices (dollars per acre). Less private greenspace (lawns and gardens). Less privacy. Increased local social problems (poverty and crime). More exposure to some pollutants.	Increases in some infrastructure costs such as curbs and sidewalk. More local traffic and parking congestion.

Smart Growth provides various benefits and costs, including some that are internal (borne by the Smart Growth residents) and some that are external (borne by other people). These vary depending on specific conditions.



Table 11 How Smart Growth Can Increase Economic Productivity

Smart Growth Impact	Effects on Economic Productivity and Development
Reduced per capita land consumption	Increased agricultural productivity. Open space preservation supports tourism industry (e.g., preserving parks and shorelines)
Public infrastructure and service efficiencies	Government and utility cost savings
Reduced transportation expenditures	Shifts expenditures from vehicles and fuel to more locally produced goods, increasing regional employment and productivity
More livable communities	Attracts residents, jobs and visitors, increasing business activity
Improved mobility for non-drivers	Improves economic opportunity for disadvantaged residents, and increases the pool of potential employees for businesses
Reduced crashes and improved public health	Reduced crash damages, and reduced medical and disability costs

Smart Growth tends to increase economic productivity in several ways.

How does the PAC think we can change the conversation around affordable housing in Wolfville?

B) Promote mixed housing as economic development

According to the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association, increasing the availability of good quality, affordable housing provides the following benefits:

- Positive health and education outcomes by lowering household stress, enabling the purchase of nutritious food, and supporting family stability.
- Improves children’s likelihood of academic achievement and the completion of post-secondary education.
- Reduce government expenditures on high-cost programs. A strong correlation exists between neighbourhoods with poor quality housing and lower health outcomes. Lower health outcomes result in increased use of the health care system, particularly costly emergency services.
- Neighbourhood concentrations of poverty and unemployment can also lead to high rates of drug use and criminal activity, resulting in increased policing and correctional services costs. At the same time, unstable and unaffordable housing can result in high costs for homelessness services.

Additionally, as renters move from unaffordable to affordable housing, more of their income becomes available to spend on goods and services, and because low-income households typically spend money

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primarily within their community, they can help stimulate the local economy and spur job creation. (Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association)

Furthermore, Wolfville is known for, and prides itself on its retail, food, wine, and tourism, and needs to ensure that the people who work at these places can afford to live here. There are many examples of how tourism and retail workers in many vibrant communities have been pushed out due to high costs of living and the rise of short-term rentals cutting into the rental market. Not only does this cause issues for the renters, but local shops and restaurants end up in trouble when local workers are forced to move elsewhere and hiring becomes a challenge.

What has the Town done:

Wolfville's MPS acknowledges that similar to other cities in Canada, Wolfville faces challenges around economic growth, accessibility, affordability and equity.

MPS policy:

It shall be the policy of Council:

- To work toward all people in our community having equal access to decent livelihood and quality standard of living including equal access to: a. Buildings, b. Infrastructure and Public Spaces, c. Information and Communications, d. Employment, e. Delivery of Goods and Services and Transportation.
- To create the conditions for a diverse and resilient local economy.
- To help business succeed through supportive policies and simplified procedures, including timely responses or approvals.
- To enable economic development opportunities in both the 'Neighbourhood' and 'Core Neighbourhood' Designations (see Future Land Use Map) in an effort to diversify our local economy, encourage entrepreneurship, reduce people's reliance on the automobile, and contribute to housing affordability.

Staff Recommends:

- PAC members to act as champions of affordable housing in the Town.
- Incorporate inclusive language in all communications, by using words like 'everybody', 'welcoming' and 'together' when discussing housing and community, rather than 'existing character' or other exclusionary terms.
- The Town to invite speakers to discuss programs such as housing first projects to help improve community, staff and Council education on housing initiatives and see the benefits of mixed housing communities.
- The Town can emphasize that development results in more jobs, new residents, and more money being spent locally, which leads to better services, stores and recreation opportunities for everyone.

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- Educating residents of the Town on current housing challenges
- The Town works with non-profit housing providers to increase stock of affordable housing options, encourage more missing middle and rental units in all zones.
- Monitor and be willing to further restrict how short-term rentals are permitted within the Town.

2. Missing Middle Housing, Infill and ADUs

Missing Middle Housing is a term for a range of house-scale buildings with multiple units that are compatible in scale and form with detached single-family homes such as duplexes, rowhouses and semi-detached houses. These housing forms are needed for attracting new homeowners and renters to the Town with entry-level budgets.

The 2016 housing stock in Wolfville demonstrates the missing middle housing problem:

- 45% of dwellings are apartments
- 41% are single detached homes
- 4.8% are row houses
- **4.6% are duplexes**
- **4.6% are semi-detached houses**

Core Concept: Housing Choice

The Council recognizes that:

- Providing a variety of housing options allows residents to choose a dwelling that suits their lifestyle.
- A variety of dwelling unit types and sizes can improve affordability.
- Better social sustainability can be achieved within mixed neighbourhoods.
- Housing choice can improve population attraction, retention, and aging in place.

These numbers demonstrate the “missing middle” issue in Wolfville given that together, these housing types comprise only 14% of Wolfville’s dwelling units. According to Daniel Parolek, author of Missing Middle Housing, beyond the ability of missing middle housing to fit seamlessly in with existing residential neighborhoods due to the house-scale design of duplexes, rowhouses, small apartments and semi-detached houses (figure 3), missing middle housing provides an opportunity to support walkable neighborhoods, local retail, and public transportation options through densification. The square footage of these units is also appropriate for the trend towards smaller family households. Housing choice is identified as a core concept in Wolfville’s MPS and Council recognizes that housing variety allows residents to choose a dwelling that suites their lifestyle,

improves affordability, enhances social sustainability, and can improve population attraction, retention and aging in place.

Wolfville currently faces low rental vacancy rates of 0.9% (2014), and 2.9% (2015) indicated by CMHC. Our current vacancy rate is likely close to 0. These low vacancy rates contribute to high rents for

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low quality units and contribute to issues with absentee landlords. Missing middle housing provides an opportunity to fill the gap in housing and ensure more residents have the opportunity to live and work in Wolfville. Within the Town, 12% of workers are employed in accommodation and food service, with another 8% employed in retail and administration sectors. In order to ensure people employed in these sectors can continue to live within Wolfville, appropriate housing options must be available. Beyond addressing existing housing issues, population forecasts indicate a potential annual increase of 74 people per year (or 36 dwellings) in Wolfville. However, population growth is constricted by the number and quality of housing units available.



(Figure 3. Missing middle housing fills the gap between single family homes and mid-rise apartment buildings).

Infill and Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) development are two such ways to densify existing neighborhoods and commercial areas where there is unused or underused space available and where infrastructure such as water and sewer are in place. These developments reduce the need to build in non-developed areas and the cost associated with extending services. At present the MPS permits infill development in all residential zones except R-1 and the Land Use Bylaw 3.3.3 provides guidance on design considerations to ensure any infill development that occurs minimizes shade, shadow, and overlook onto adjacent properties, and that infill development is sustainable and durable while providing livable spaces for optimum daylight, ventilation, access to ground level private open space and functional, efficient interiors and ultimately that infill development maintains a scale of development that is compatible with the existing neighboring context.

Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are small dwellings built on the same property or within the same structure as an existing dwelling. ADUs, commonly referred to as granny or garden suites, can take the form of secondary suites or backyard suites (figure 1). At present, ADUs are permitted as of right in all zones except for R-1. Extending ADUs as of right to all residential zones can help to increase housing stock in a manner that is sympathetic to the existing surrounding architecture (figure 2).

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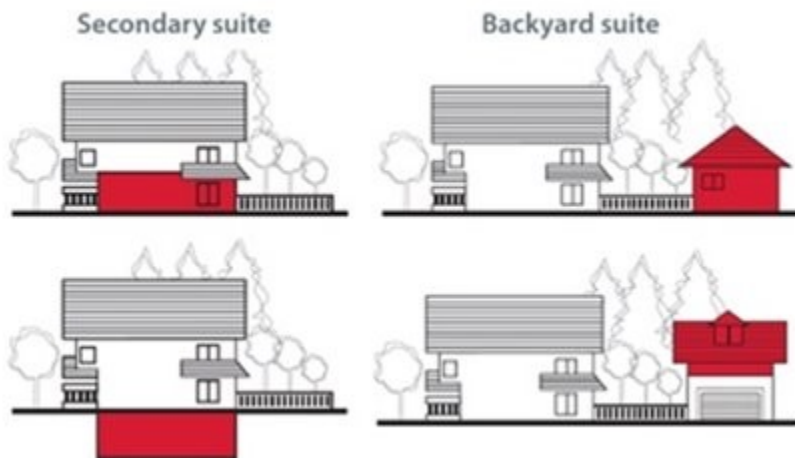
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Benefits of ADUs:

- Homeowners can earn additional income through rent.
- Provides more in-Town options to age in place.
- Provides options for affordable housing.
- Increases range of housing options available.
- Can blend seamlessly into existing neighborhood.
- Homeowners eligible for forgivable loans to rent ADU as affordable housing.
- Provides entry-level market housing for first time buyers.

What has the Town done: Our new planning documents encourage missing middle housing in certain zones and ADUs are permitted in all residential zones except for R-1.



(Figure 1. Example of secondary suites and backyard suites).

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(Figure 2. ADU blending in with existing architecture and neighborhood. Source: <https://accessorydwellings.org/what-adus-are-and-why-people-build-them/>).

What the Town can do for Infill, Missing Middle and ADUs:

- Rezone R-1 to R-2 to permit more development and mixed housing as of right in all zones.
- Stay the course on infill development in other zones – our planning documents encourage this.
- Provide better information on infill development and encourage this form of development.
- Permit ADUs as of right in all residential zones.
 - Streamline the development process.
 - Notify homeowners of financial incentives to developing ADUs including the forgivable loans available when renting them as affordable housing.

A) How 'Aging in Place' is impacted by missing middle, infill, ADU development

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What we know: Missing Middle, ADU and infill housing all provide opportunities for Wolfville to become an age-friendly community where residents can continue to live later in life. The majority of seniors in the Town wish to remain here as they age. The ability to age in place, however, is largely reliant on the physical and social infrastructure at their residence and put in place by the Town. Currently, the need for accessible and affordable housing options to age in place are not being met by the limited range of market-housing options available in the Town, as there are few housing choices available on the continuum between independent living (traditional housing) and fully assisted care, such as ground oriented apartments. Alarming, Wolfville faces a declining workforce, with the portion of people in the workforce projected to drop from 55% in 2016, to just 25% by 2036. As such, the Town not only needs to attract younger families, but needs to consider options for providing housing for retirees and seniors who wish to stay in Wolfville.

Wolfville's MPS strives to promote communities that are compact, sustainable and inherently supportive of age-friendly communities. Age friendly communities is one of the Core Concepts of social equity stated in the Wolfville MPS.

B) How Moving Away from Exclusionary Zoning (R-1) Creates Opportunity

Exclusionary zoning, such as R-1 zoning in Wolfville, permits a limited range of development. Within the Town, R-1 zones permit single detached homes on large lots. Within R-1 zones, buildings other than single detached family homes are not permitted as of right. At present, re-zoning is not permitted in R-1 zones, making densification in these areas not possible. Due to the small land area of the Town and a high demand to live here, development must consider how exclusionary zoning constricts the Town's ability to grow and attract new residents and young families.

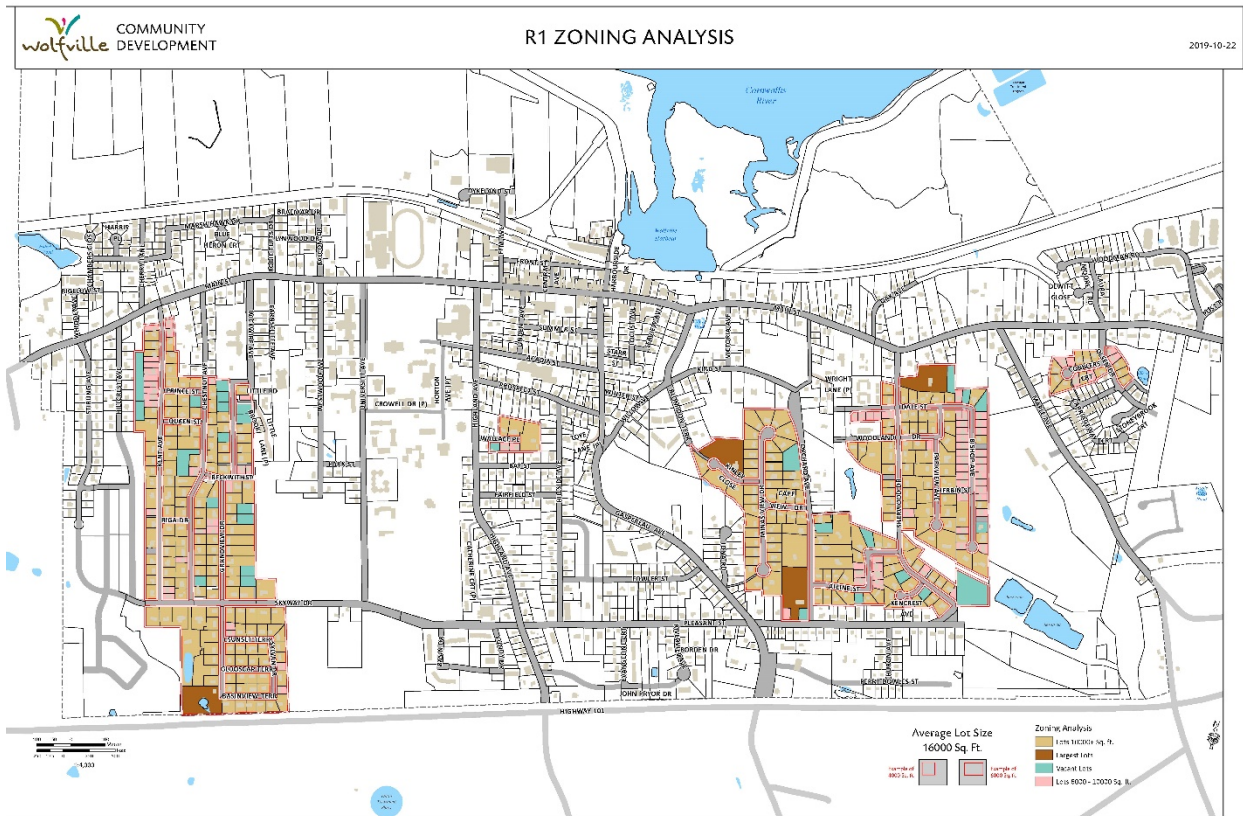
The analysis map below shows this zone highlighted and lots that are 6,000-10,000 square feet in area in pink, lots larger than 10,000 square feet in tan, with the largest lots in brown and vacant lots in blue. The R-1 zoning map shows approximately 410 lots that are a minimum of 6,000 square feet in area, suggesting that there is ample opportunity to develop secondary dwelling units on several existing lots with minimal effort as these lots are already serviced.

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In Wolfville, the average housing size and family size run disproportionate to one another. While the average household size is two persons, single family homes in Wolfville are the largest in Nova Scotia second only to Annapolis Royal. While large family homes may be appropriate for large households, Wolfville’s population is aging, with the 2016 median age of residents at 45 years, and approximately 1/3 of residents 65 years of age or older. This is significant because it means the Town’s workforce is shrinking and that we need to attract and retain inter-provincial and international immigrants to the area to renew the labour force. Furthermore, the 2016 median income of Wolfville residents with full-time employment was \$38,784, below the provincial median of \$47,665, with median household incomes also below the provincial median. Provided that Wolfville’s residents earn less than the provincial average, we must consider how exclusionary zoning may be pricing out residents who cannot afford to live in the Town and what the effects of housing choices are on retaining students.

Finally, exclusionary zoning may also have negative climate impacts as it promotes long car commutes by pricing out workers from living near their jobs in the Town. This may be especially true for those employed in retail and tourism sectors. Additionally, 31% of greenhouse gas emissions in the Town come from residential buildings and households. While the Town is seeking to promote residents to make energy efficiency upgrades to their homes through the Switch program, these emissions can also

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be reduced by providing more opportunities for housing options with less square footage and multi-unit dwellings in walkable locations.

Staff Recommend:

- Encourage and streamline the process for ADU development to allow seniors the opportunity to remain in their homes as they age or to move into an ADU within the Town.
- Encourage more mixed housing communities that allow a range of housing options including ground-oriented apartments and missing middle housing.

3) WORKING BETTER WITH OUR PARTNERS

The Wolfville MPS includes the “Statements of Regional Interest” that came out of the King’s 2050 process. “Settlement” was one of these statements; however, no meaningful action has been taken to assess how this aspirational statement is best realized. Clearly housing is a regional issue and this report emphasizes the importance of conducting regular regional housing assessments, regular dialogue with our partners, to better understand the Town and Region’s needs.

STATEMENTS OF REGIONAL INTEREST:

Four broad issues are addressed through four Statements of Regional Interest. These include:



Settlement

To ensure an effective, efficient, equitable and focused pattern of development that will support planned residential growth in response to the needs of the public.

- **Conduct Regular Regional Needs Assessments**

Conducting regular regional needs assessments would allow the Town to monitor populations over time in order to have a better understanding of our housing needs.

Census data is outdated, currently we are referring to data from the 2016 census, and CMHC’s data does not cover Wolfville. A lack of data creates barriers to decision making and funding access for both the municipality and private and non-profit developers. A process for regular data collection is needed so the Town can monitor populations over time to have a better understanding of local housing needs.

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A recent service-based count that looked at identifying the number of individuals 16 years and older in West Hants, Kings County and Annapolis County found that there are at least 148 people experiencing or at risk of homelessness in Kings County, 10 of whom lived in Wolfville. These numbers only account for people over the age of 16, who were accessing a participating service provider during the month of October and are not representative of the full homelessness issue in the Annapolis Valley. These numbers serve as a basis for further investigation to better understanding the housing needs in the Town and Region.

- **Working with non-profit housing providers to increase availability of subsidized housing.**

Subsidized housing in Wolfville is administered through the Western Region Housing Authority of housing Nova Scotia, demonstrating a willingness to work with non-profit housing providers and increase subsidized housing stock within the Town. Non-market housing units, however, represent just 4-5% of the total number of private dwellings in the Town, and those hoping to live in subsidized housing are faced with a wait time of 1-3 years.

- **Role of Acadia University and their substantial land holdings.**

The University is a very important partner in providing adequate and appropriate housing for our residents. There seems to be interest from the University to look at their role and should form part of any strategy moving forward.

Staff Recommends:

- Bring together other municipalities to conduct a regional housing needs assessment and ensure a program is developed to ensure the assessments are done regularly. This process could mirror what is being done in municipalities and regional districts in British Columbia where housing needs reports are conducted every five years (www.gov.bc.ca).
- The Town invites non-profit housing providers to discuss their goals for affordable housing in the Town to better understand their goals and how we can support them.
- Monitor how Government responds to Housing Commission Report and use tools that may be provided to Municipalities.
- Work closely with Acadia on housing plans – focus on shared success.

- **Comprehensive Development District (CDD) Lands**

The Town has large tracks of land either being completed, in-progress, or moving toward a master plan (e.g. east end). The Developers of these areas are our partners. Our new planning documents provide a

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framework for Developers to respond to through our Land Use By-law. In areas already under development or nearly completed, encouraging missing middle housing is important. An Excerpt from the Land Use By-law's Sustainability Checklist is provided below.

4. EQUITY

Neighbourhood design, provisions, and unit affordability account for individuals and households of various sizes and income levels. Where possible infrastructure and building practices will accommodate accessible building practices. Mixed housing types are available throughout the neighbourhood and take into consideration the Town of Wolfville's unique demographics and community culture.

Education Opportunities	Score	Description
Increase community opportunities for training, education and recreational activities?		
Does the project provide enhanced waste		

Mixed Housing Types	Score	Description
Does the project include rental housing units?		
Does the site include an array of housing forms relevant to the Town's needs? If yes, please list relevant forms, approximate numbers, and target population.		

Affordable Housing Supply	Score	Description
Does the project include rental housing units?		
Does the site include an array of housing forms relevant to the Town's needs? If yes, please list relevant forms, approximate numbers, and target population.		

Mixed Housing Types	Score	Description
Include provisioning for affordable housing units? If yes, please address the following points: - Percentage and number of units anticipated - Affordability time-frame guarantee (in years) - How will affordability be determined? - Anticipated price range of units (note different housing tenures)?		

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Accessible Design and Built Form	Score	Description
Does the project incorporate features to enhance adaptability and accessibility within the proposed design standard for people with disabilities (i.e. wider door openings, reinforced walls in bathrooms for future installations, ground-oriented entrances)?		
Does the project and development account for the potential of repurposing units in the future (i.e. residential to commercial or home-occupancy)?		

Prioritize Active Shared Spaces	Score	Description
Does the development incorporate spaces for people of all different physical abilities?		
Are there public amenities (water fountains, washrooms, leisure infrastructure) provided in the development?		
Are residents, community stakeholders, and end-user groups involved in the planning and design process??		

Summary	Score	Description
Please calculate your final score and convey any final remarks, concerns, or additional information that you do not believe is addressed in the Checklist criteria, that you believe are an asset of pertinence to the proposed site design.		