



Planning Advisory Committee Meeting

May 15, 2025

6:30 p.m.

Hybrid - In-person (Council Chambers) and Teams

Agenda

Call to Order

1. Approval of Agenda

2. Approval of Minutes

- a. Planning Advisory Committee Meeting, April 10, 2025

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. Presentation from Consultant on the Housing Accelerator Fund Action Plan Implementation Framework
- b. Update on upcoming community engagement



5. Round Table

6. Next Meeting

a. June 12, 2025 6:30-8:30 PM.

7. Adjournment

ATTENDING

- Mayor Jodi MacKay, Chair
- Councillor Wendy Elliot
- Deputy Mayor Jennifer Ingham
- Councillor van Niekerk
- Beverly Boyd
- Michael Martin
- Alan Howell
- Jason Hall
- Caroline Whitby

ABSENT WITH REGRETS

ALSO ATTENDING

- Director of Planning & Development, Devin Lake
- Senior Planner, Mark Fredericks
- Community Planner, Lindsay Slade
- Andrew Scanlan Dickie of Turner Drake and Partners
- Jigme Choerab of Turner Drake and Partners

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

CALL TO ORDER

Chair, Mayor MacKay, called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

Agenda Item	Discussion and Decisions
1. Approval of Agenda	IT WAS REGULARLY MOVED AND SECONDED THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED AS CIRCULATED CARRIED
2. Approval of Minutes	IT WAS REGULARLY MOVED AND SECONDED THAT THE MINUTES OF THE PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF March 2025 BE APPROVED AS CIRCULATED. CARRIED
3. Public Input	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No public input

Agenda Item

Discussion and Decisions

4. New Business:

**Introduction of
Community Profile
and Staff updates
on Housing
Accelerator File and
related community
consultation
schedule**

- Staff provided updates on the Housing Accelerator Fund, community engagement schedule and introduced the Community Profile work.
Key discussion points:
- Concerns over vague or undefined terms such as “gentle density.”
- Desire to balance growth while keeping a familiar look and feel in Wolfville.
- Clarification that the growth management framework is intended to be a guiding document, and not overly prescriptive.
- Emphasis on using accessible, plain language to improve public understanding and engagement.
- Staff encouraged committee members to provide further feedback via email.

**a. Presentation on
Community
Profile from
Turner Drake and
Partners with
discussion period**

- Turner Drake & Partners presented their updated Community Profile and Housing Needs Assessment for the Town of Wolfville.
Key points from the presentation included:
- Current demographic and housing trends.
- Population growth projections and anticipated housing demand.
- Gaps in the existing housing supply, particularly in affordability and diversity of housing types.
- Recommendations to address housing shortages and align future development with community needs.

5. Round Table

- PAC members asked questions and discussed implications for the Growth Management Framework and Plan Review.

6. Next Meeting

a. May 15, 2025

May 15, 2025 – 6:30-8:30pm.

7. Adjournment

April 10, 8:30 p.m.

Agenda Item

Discussion and Decisions

Approved at the ***, 2025 Planning Advisory Committee Meeting.
As recorded by Lindsay Slade, Community Planner, Town of Wolfville.**

DRAFT



Housing Accelerator Fund Action Plan

Implementation Framework

Package 1 — May 2025

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Appendix 1

Chapter 01

Housing Accelerator Fund Context



1.1 What is this document and what should I take away from it?

This Implementation Framework supports the Town's Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) Action Plan. It's meant to guide future decisions about growth, development, and housing in Wolfville. While it offers background, analysis, and options, it does not include final policies or decisions.

The document is designed to be clear and open, bringing together data, maps, and policy context to highlight key issues and opportunities. It serves as both a reference and a starting point for discussions with Council, stakeholders, and the community.

Package 1 covers two main Action Plan items: reviewing planning documents to support housing development and reforming parking requirements to enable housing development. Package 2, coming in summer 2025, will focus on action plans for non-market housing and student housing.

Please keep the following in mind while reviewing this document:

- **For Information Only:** This Framework provides background and analysis. It's not a policy document and doesn't set new land use directions.

- **Not a Decision-Making Tool:** No decisions are being made through this document. This is intended to guide and support eventual decision making.
- **Linked to HAF:** The Town must carry out the Housing Accelerator Fund Action Plan. This document explores different ways to do that. The Action Plan is outlined below and more information is available on Wolfville Blooms.
- **Work in Progress:** The Framework will change over time, shaped by feedback from Council, committees and engagement with the community.
- **Big Picture Approach:** This document considers multiple perspectives—land use capacity, infrastructure readiness, environmental constraints, and community needs—to support informed decision-making in the future.

The draft includes feedback from stakeholders including landowners, the Wolfville Business Development Corporation (WBDC), Acadia University, Wolfville Town Councillors, Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) members, and more.

Further engagement will be completed as this work progresses.

Take time to digest and consider the information presented. A lot of information is shared here that will be developed and refined with future iterations as the Town conducts more engagement and gets direction from PAC and Council. This work is complex. Consider some of the key issues you want to talk about and think about things you support, have more questions about, what parts you don't support or need more information on.

Package 1 should support your ability to select zoning scenarios for the Neighbourhood Zones, ideas for improving the Downtown, options for amending the parking requirements and any "sticky issues" with these proposed changes. These directions will help to inform the eventual review of the Municipal Planning Documents as part of the Town's HAF agreement.

There are certain commitments in the HAF Action Plan that this work is responding to. They will be indicated throughout the document. Additional work on other aspects including non-market housing, student housing and parking will be available soon.

1.2 What do we Need this Implementation Plan for?

Responding to Housing Needs, Shaping Our Future

We invite you to explore this Framework and help shape a future where Wolfville both meets our Housing Accelerator Fund Action Plan, targets, and grows in ways that reflect who we are and what we value.

Wolfville's current population is estimated at 5,562, a 28% increase from the year 2016, when the population was 4,195. While global events (COVID-19 Pandemic) contributed to a higher population growth than usual during this period, population is expected to continue growing, though at a slower rate.

Population Projections from Turner Drake and Partners indicate that under any population projection scenario, Wolfville's population will continue to grow in the foreseeable future. The chart below illustrates that Wolfville's population could grow under 3 scenarios:

- Low: 5,853 people by 2044
- Average: 6,099 by 2044
- High: 6,323 by 2044

In any scenario, the population will continue to increase. This increase, compounded by an existing housing supply shortage, underscores the need for the Town to enable more housing development to accommodate potential new residents who want to live here as well as for those who already live here and will require new housing options as they enter different phases of their lives.

There is a current housing gap of 520 units in Wolfville. This gap increases to 820 units by 2034. The current average rate of construction in Wolfville is 25 new dwelling units per year. This rate underscores the need for systemic and transformational change in the Town's planning documents to enable housing construction with quicker approval processes and fewer barriers. Despite a significant amount of planning having occurred in most areas of Town, development takes time to execute. Most of the development forthcoming will not make significant strides towards meeting the housing supply needed. Changes to enable the development of alternative housing like missing middle forms will be a critical step in alleviating the housing crisis.

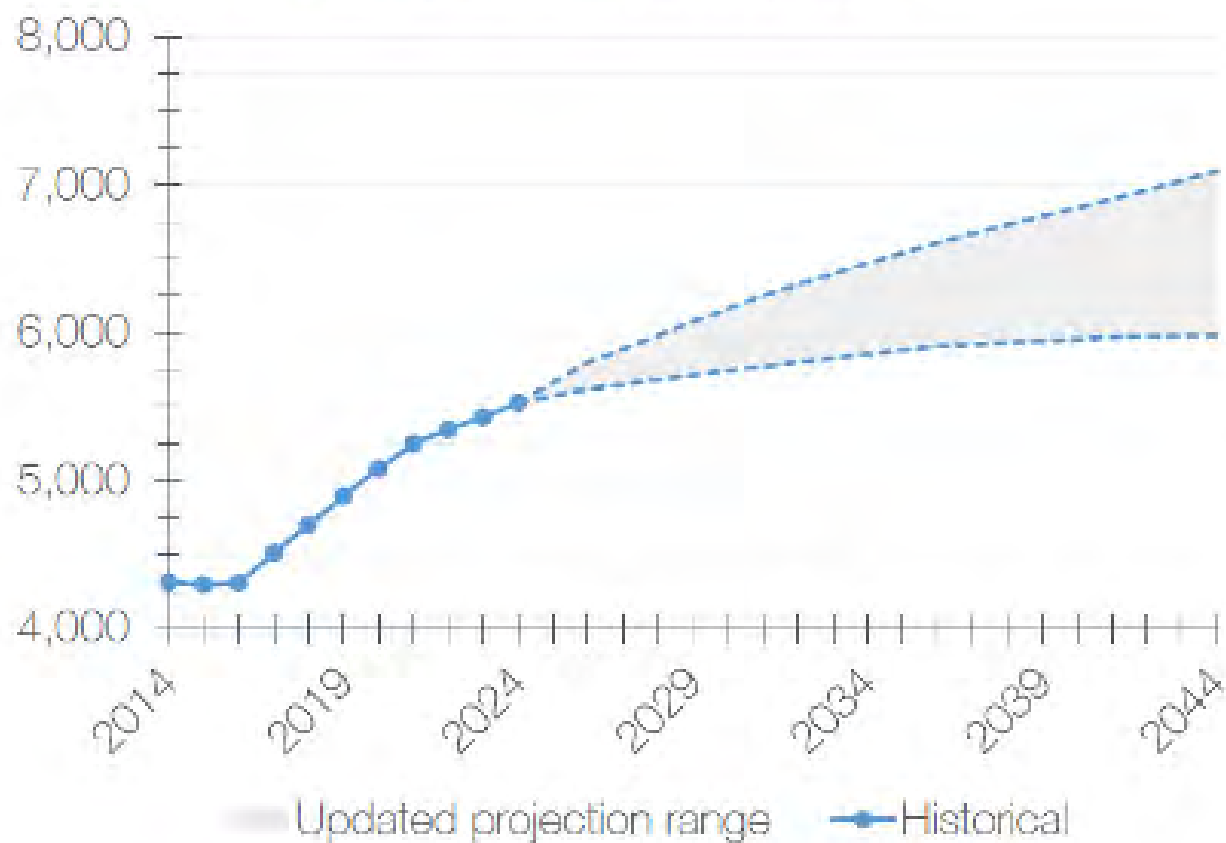
A key factor leading to slow construction rates is the financial realities faced by the development sector. High building material costs, labour shortages, interest rates and challenging building sites can make it difficult for developers to execute projects. By reducing barriers including parking requirements, unit per lot or acre allowances and building height in certain

areas we can better enable financially feasible development options to allow the sector to better respond to the current and future housing needs. It is important to note that many property owners are not interested in development themselves, or on their property, so uptake will be incremental and distributed. By casting a wider net to encourage small-scale development, and gentle density options will provide a better chance at alleviating the housing need.

The Town of Wolfville, like many communities across Nova Scotia and Canada, is experiencing a period of change. A growing population, an increasing demand for housing, and shifting demographics create both new opportunities and complex challenges. As we plan for the future, we are guided by a central question: how can we enable thoughtful growth that meets the needs of our residents—both current and future—while preserving what makes Wolfville a special place to live and visit.

This Implementation framework sets out the Town's approach to answering that question. It is grounded in data, shaped by community input, and designed to respond to real and pressing housing needs, while balancing growth with fiscal, environmental, and social sustainability.

Population projection, Wolfville, 2014 to 2044



Source: Statistics Canada

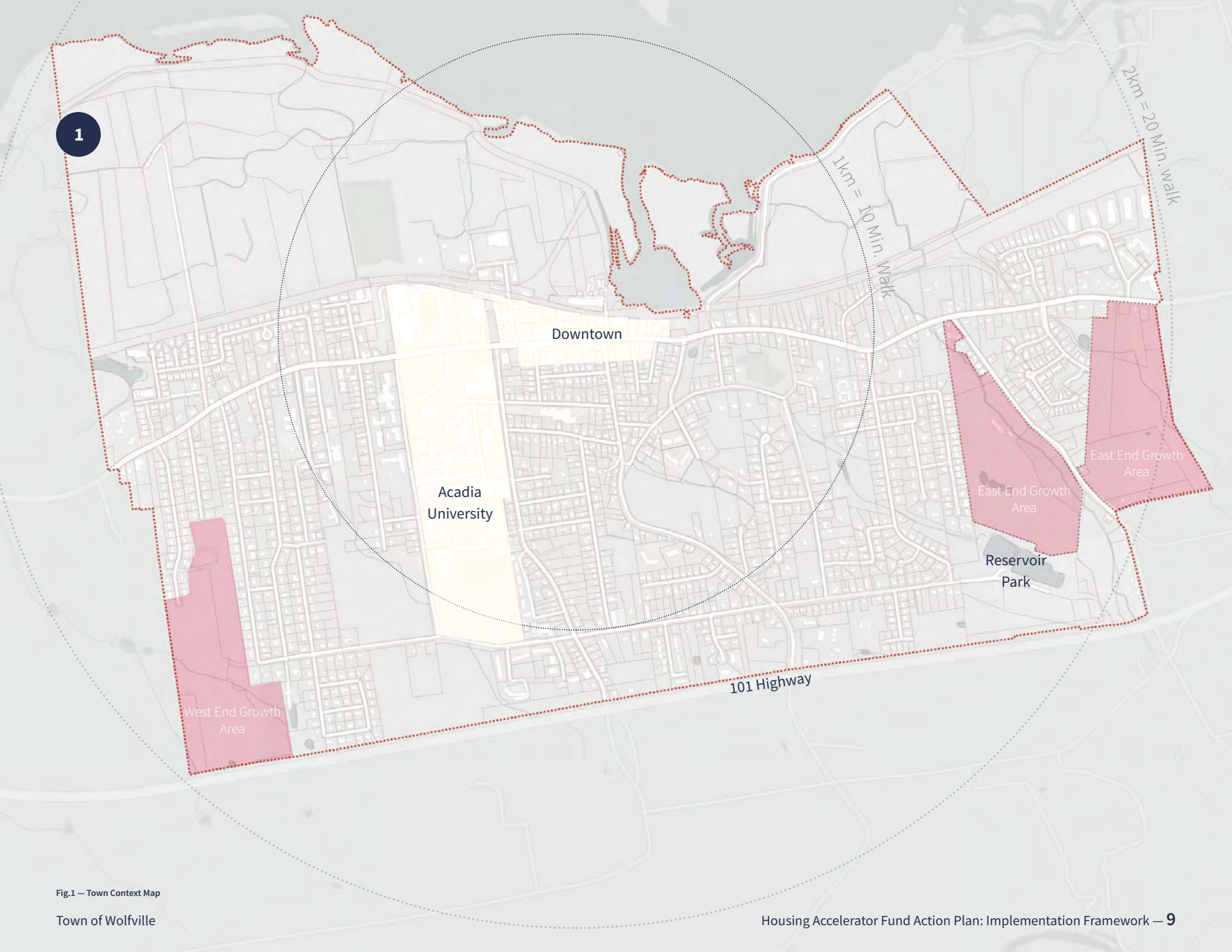


Fig.1 — Town Context Map

1.3 The Housing Accelerator Fund and Our Action Plan

Municipalities like Wolfville are being called upon by the federal government to take bold, systemic action to help alleviate the national housing crisis. The Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF), launched by the Government of Canada, is a direct response to this call. It challenges municipalities to reduce barriers to housing development through land use reform, streamlined planning processes, and enabling a broader mix of housing types and tenures.

Wolfville has stepped up to this challenge.

Through our Housing Accelerator Fund Action Plan, Wolfville is committing to a range of strategies that address the urgency of housing need and the longer-term goal of managing growth in a sustainable, inclusive way. These actions are designed to enable systemic and transformational change.

Wolfville's Action Plan includes initiatives to streamline housing development:

1. Chapter 2: Reviewing and updating municipal planning documents to align with housing priorities to allow a wider mix of housing types in more areas of Town by simplifying planning processes and accelerating approvals. With changing population projections and housing needs across all demographics, updates to the Planning Documents will improve process for approving needed housing units through a gentle density approach. This review includes:

- Amend the Land Use Bylaw and zoning map / regulations to reduce barriers to the development of needed housing by permitting more housing types as-of-right or by site plan approval. This includes replacing the Low Density Residential (R-1) Restricted zone with a zone that permits more housing types.
- Enabling gentle density through support for missing middle housing, like duplexes, townhomes, and small apartment buildings. Options for reducing barriers to these housing types are explored through the Zoning Scenarios. Options that enable a

range of greater land use are presented for consideration.

- Expediting housing applications and waiving development fees to support housing development.
- Conducting a Secondary Planning Process for the rail corridor lands to enable more development potential on lands within the downtown, while preserving the Harvest Moon trail system.

2. Reviewing parking requirements to support housing viability, especially in walkable, serviced areas and the downtown. Minimum parking requirements can create a hindrance to commercial and residential development.

- Complete a parking study to understand potential paths forward to reducing parking requirements in key areas.
- Amend requirements for parking in strategic areas in an effort to reduce the cost burden of minimum parking standards as required

in the current Land Use Bylaw, and opening more opportunities for commercial development in the downtown.

3. Encouraging and protecting non-market housing. More information on this Action Plan Item will be included in Package 2.

Non-market housing includes co-operative housing, housing run by non-profit organizations focused on affordable housing, or provincial owned and subsidized housing. These types of housing offer permanently affordable housing options for low- and moderate-income households.

- A Non-Market Housing Strategy will be created to support the retention of existing units, acquisition of housing by the non-market sector, and encourage the development of more non-market dwelling units. This Strategy will be informed by the Housing Needs Assessment, Non-Market Housing Working Group and Community Profile.
- Key aspects of this work will include a Land Bank of Town owned land to be considered for non-market housing use, a Non-Market Grant program to provide financial support to non-market housing providers, and highest and best use analysis for town owned lands for the use of non-market housing to support with pre-development costs.

4. Partnering with Acadia University to explore student housing solutions that relieve pressure on the broader rental market and provide students with safe, suitable housing options.

More information on this Action Plan Item will be included in Package 2.

- Complete a Secondary Planning Strategy for the Town and Acadia University to identify and enable opportunities for residential development on the south-east campus (the lands near Crowell Tower).

This Action Plan is not only a response to federal direction—it is a local commitment to building a stronger, more resilient Wolfville. It reflects an understanding that housing is not just a private issue, but a public one: key to economic vitality, climate resilience, and social well-being.



1.5 Housing Accelerator Fund Unit Targets

In addition to the Action Plan, the Town has also committed to a housing target. This is a commitment to issue building permits for 120 new dwelling units over the HAF timeframe (end of 2026). Of these 120 units, 110 must be Missing Middle housing, and 20 must be affordable. As of April 2025, the Town has issued 81 permits. These have been for 4 single family homes and 77 missing middle dwelling units. Four of these include affordable housing.

Note: The majority (60) of these reported units are from a single multi-unit development. It is important to note that the approval process for this development was long, required significant staff hours, and carried a level of uncertainty as it went through a Development Agreement process. While there have been further planning applications received for higher density development in Town since this development was approved, it is uncertain how many development applications will lead to construction and occupancy. Many development applications are not followed through. By enabling the types of development that the community and Council want to see in Town more broadly, the likelihood that the Town will continue to issue development permits and reach our HAF targets increases. Without these changes, it is unlikely. This is true for both larger developments, as well as smaller, gentle density development.

1.4 Why Growth is Necessary

Wolfville's population grew by 21% between 2016 and 2021—an unprecedented rate of change that reflects broader trends across the province. This period of growth coincides with an unprecedented increase in rental and real estate values leading to a wide-spread housing and homelessness crisis. In response, the Town has committed to enabling the construction of a minimum of 120 new housing units by 2026 through the Housing Accelerator Fund. This commitment reflects a small percentage (14.6%) of overall units needed, based on a 2024 housing needs assessment from Turner Drake and Partners. This recent assessment indicates that 820 new dwelling units are needed by 2034 to meet the need. This number, though high, is down from a previous target of 1,705 units, highlighting how external factors—like federal immigration policy—continue to shape local housing needs.

Despite revised projections, the urgency remains. The cost of housing is rising, construction is lagging, and a significant share of Wolfville's residents—especially renters—are experiencing housing insecurity. Nearly 30% of households are spending more than 30% of their income on housing, and many are unable to find homes that meet their needs.

At the same time, the Town's ability to fund

infrastructure, services, and amenities is directly tied to the amount and type of development that occurs. With more than three-quarters of municipal revenue coming from property taxes, increasing housing supply—and in particular, medium- and higher-density forms—can help the Town maintain its infrastructure and provide better services for everyone..

Growth Without Losing What Makes Wolfville Special

Growth brings with it understandable concerns. Residents worry about losing the small-town charm, increasing traffic, or changing the feeling of their neighbourhoods. These concerns are valid—and they’re central to our approach.

Rather than resisting change, we are choosing to shape it. That means planning for “gentle density”—missing middle housing like duplexes, townhomes, and low-rise apartments that fit within existing neighbourhoods. It means designing multi-unit developments that contribute to public space, protect natural assets, and support walkability. And it means prioritizing public interest—what benefits the whole community—over any one individual opinion.

We recognize that growth, if poorly managed, can erode the very qualities that draw people here, but when done well, growth can help reinforce them. It can bring new life to our downtown, support local businesses, enhance parks and public spaces, and ensure the next generations can find a home in the community they love. Chapter 2 explores different scenarios for approaching growth in our neighbourhood and commercial areas. Consider how these scenarios best meet the needs of the overall community.



1.7 Where we are today:

Since launching its commitment to the federal Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) and associated Action Plan in February 2024, the Town of Wolfville has made significant progress toward enabling more responsive and inclusive housing development. Early steps included orientation with the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC), and initial rezonings to support multi-unit housing. The Town hired a Senior Planner, developed public education tools, initiated a parking study, started a Non-Market Housing Working Group, and began procurement for consulting support on the upcoming plan review.

In 2025, staff began working with consultants at Fathom Studio and Happy Cities to explore growth scenarios and options for implementing the HAF, supported by workshops with the PAC on neighbourhood zoning, commercial expansion, and downtown planning. Updated background materials, including a revised community profile, housing needs assessment, and population projections, have been prepared to support the next phase of work.

Additional work includes a parking study, informed in part by engagement with Acadia and the WBDC, and placemaking projects—in partnership with Happy Cities—focused on the Library and Front Street area, Waterfront Park, and potentially downtown alleys.

1.8 What happens next?

In spring 2025, Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) will review the scenarios and ideas described in this document (Package 1) for downtown and neighbourhood areas, followed by community engagement sessions. By early summer, PAC will recommend preferred scenarios and ideas, and identify key issues. This process will lead to Council discussion and direction on growth and related matters—such as parking—by late summer 2025. A similar process will follow in early Summer 2025 to explore municipal planning document review ideas for non-market and student housing for Package 2.

These decisions will inform the drafting of updated planning documents (Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law), throughout summer and fall, alongside further public engagement to share Council’s direction.

Council will consider these planning amendments in late 2025 or early 2026, including work with Acadia University on campus-related zoning and student housing. A Non-Market Housing Strategy is also in development, with an initial draft expected this summer and further refinement in the fall.

1.9 Current Realities

Note that as you read through this document, most of the Town is already planned and developed. The areas of Town where changes are being explored include the Downtown and Neighbourhood zones. Staff are looking to gauge where subtle changes can be made to the planning process to enable the types of land uses that meet the needs of Wolfville. These needs are informed by community feedback, population projections, the community profile and the housing needs assessment.

These potential changes will be informed by the analysis presented in this document and future iterations, including the level of infrastructure investment the Town is making and planning for. The overarching purpose of the Action Plan is not to change the fabric of Wolfville, but to improve planning approval processes by simplifying the Zoning Map and building on the award-winning planning the Town has done in the past.

There are a number of projects that have been approved or are under construction:



234 Main Street – 10 units

This 10-unit residential project was approved in 2023 through a development agreement process. The three-storey building is expected to include an accessible barrier free building with elevator to all floors and several amenities including shared gardens, music and art rooms for it's residents.



292 Main Street – 60 units + commercial

This 10-unit residential project was approved in 2023 through a development agreement process. The three-storey building is expected to include an accessible barrier free building with elevator to all floors and several amenities including shared gardens, music and art rooms for it's residents.



36 Woodman Road – 72 units

The last of 6 multi unit building in the Woodman's Grove neighbourhood built by PolyCorp is nearing completion and is expected to open in the summer of 2025. This net zero project includes 60 affordable housing units with a partnership through CMHC.



Highland Ave – potential for 240 units

A 2024 rezoning application enabled a multi phase project on two large parcels at the top of Highland Avenue. The first of the two buildings has been submitted for approval and is currently under review. A sidewalk extension, park connections and other community benefits were part of the rezoning approval.



Gaspereau Ave – potential for 360 units

A 2024 rezoning application enabled a project with PolyCorp on a 4+ acre property at the top of Gaspereau Ave. A sidewalk extension, trail building and other community benefits were part of the rezoning approval. Planning and design for this site are underway and the first phase of construction may begin in 2025.



West End (Stirling Ave) development area

The West End development area underwent significant planning in the 2000's – 2010's with development agreements. This area continues to develop with single to 4-unit buildings with the south portion shown below to accommodate mixed density and multi-unit buildings. This area has the potential to add a few hundred residential units and will include a loop trail surrounding the entire block through the ravine, and along the western farmland which is being built in advance of the buildings, during the summer of 2025.



East End (Maple Ave) development area

The East End development area underwent significant planning with new development regulations that were incorporated into the Town's planning documents in 2023. This planning effort covered approximately 86 acres of land including the Kenny Lands and Maple Ridge Lands, located on either side of Maple Avenue located in Wolfville's east end.

These lands represent an opportunity for significant community growth and the possibility of adding hundreds of new housing units and upwards of 2,000 new residents to the Town, at full build out. This planning process involved creating a Secondary Planning Strategy that outlines policies and zoning regulations. This strategy addresses housing, commercial, mixed-use, and open space needs, ensuring that infrastructure developments align with the community's goals. The process identified significant public park land dedications, watercourse protection, pedestrian connections to existing neighborhoods and new trails.

The first building in this new development area is under construction on the corner of Maple Avenue and Kenny Crescent. This 48-unit building will be 4-storeys with underground and surface parking, a native species riparian area planted along the stream and shared amenity space inside the building.

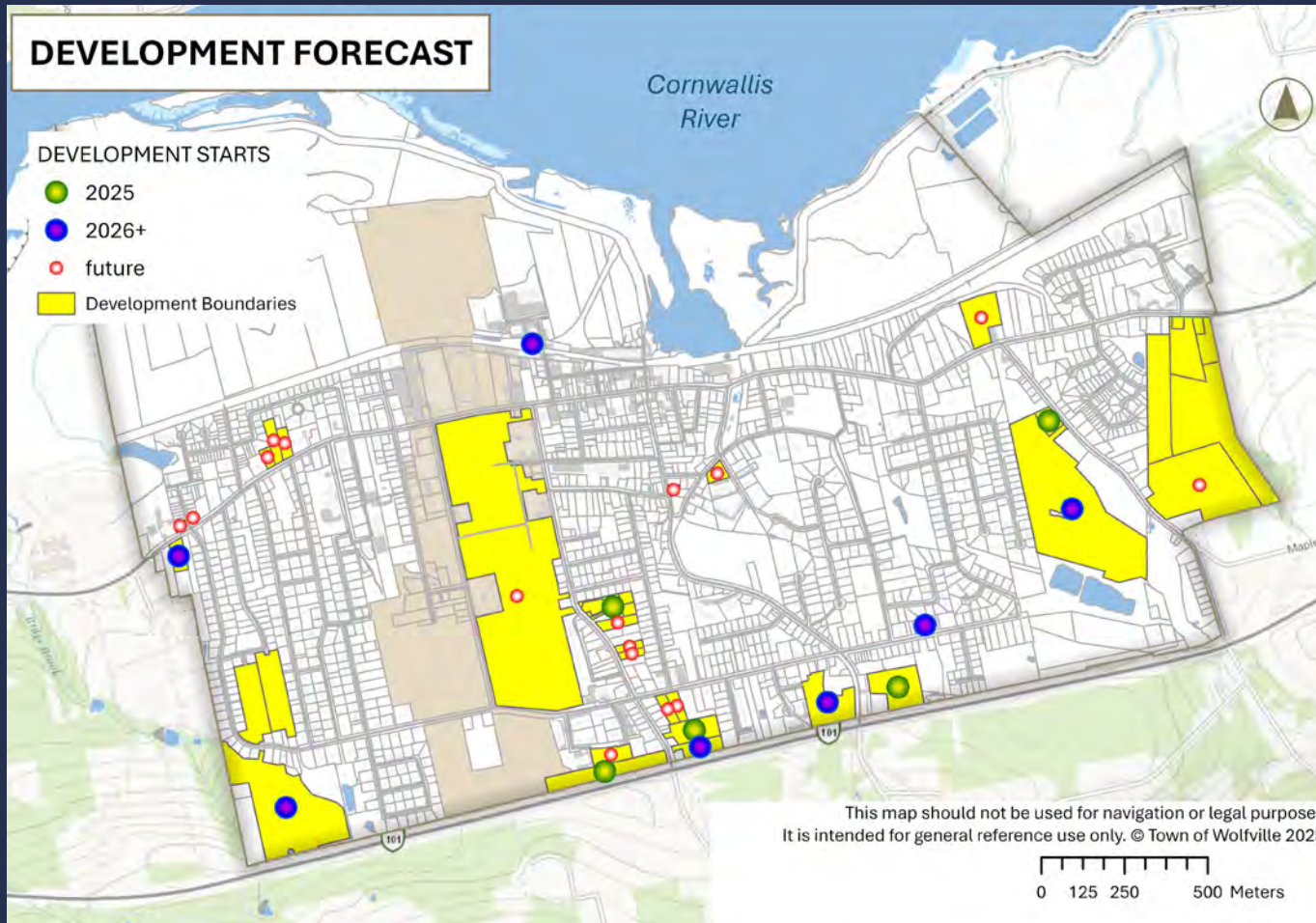


Acadia University (southeast campus)

The south east portion of Acadia's campus has significant potential to accommodate and re-develop existing parking lots, and other open spaces to add extra university buildings or partnerships for market or non-market housing. Part of the Housing Accelerator program includes a secondary plan focused on this portion of the campus to ensure they are investment ready and to further develop concepts for these lands. The Campus Master Plan considers this area, and other opportunity sites with the red building footprints shown here:

Conclusion

Over the past decade, Wolfville has demonstrated a proactive approach to development, balancing growth with sustainability and community well-being. Through strategic planning and infrastructure investments, the town has positioned itself to support successful growth committed to fostering a vibrant, inclusive, and resilient community.



Chapter 02

Action 1: Plan Review



The previous chapter identified that there is ample capacity for additional growth in the Town without compromising its rural small town character and without placing undue stresses on the Town's resources. Additional housing will create additional revenue for the Town that can be used to improve services, improve the Town's parks and recreation offerings, create improved mobility options for residents, and fulfill the Town's commitment to provide new housing to lessen the housing crisis. At the same time, new residents will improve the quality and breadth of retail experiences and make new businesses more viable.

2.1 Scenario Planning

Towns can grow in a number of ways, but two distinct approaches stand out: gentle density increases and more traditional forms of dense development or new greenfield development.

Gentle Density

Gentle density refers to modest, small-scale increases in housing that blend seamlessly into existing neighbourhoods. Instead of larger apartment buildings or major redevelopment projects, gentle density introduces housing types like duplexes, triplexes, townhouses, detached back yard housing (ADU's) and small apartment buildings—often called the “missing middle.” These housing forms are typically low-rise and fit within the scale and character of established residential areas. Growth through gentle density is incremental and often occurs lot-by-lot or block-by-block, allowing towns to gradually evolve without disrupting their overall feel or structure.

One of the most common tools of gentle density is infill development, where empty lots or oversized parcels are used to build new homes within existing neighbourhoods, rather than expanding outward into undeveloped land. This reduces suburban sprawl while making better use of infrastructure already in place. Another key strategy is the addition of accessory dwelling units (ADUs), such as basement suites, garden suites, or over-garage apartments, which increase the number of units on a single property without requiring major changes to the streetscape. In some cases, gentle density also includes small-scale mixed-use buildings—like corner stores or cafés within walking distance of homes—that add local vibrancy and help build more walkable, connected communities. This approach also allows individual land owners to build new business by acting as mini-developers on their own lots. While many home owners, may not have the resources or will to invest in new forms of housing, changes to zoning that allow these gentle infills can diversify the economy for home owners.

New Greenfield Development

In contrast, denser forms of development are more centralized and often involve large-scale projects. These can include mid- and high-rise apartment buildings, master-planned communities, or major redevelopment of underused areas such as shopping malls or industrial zones. Traditional density typically concentrates growth in designated downtown centers or transit corridors, where infrastructure can be scaled up to support it. These projects can quickly add a large number of housing units and are often driven by larger private developers. While this type of growth can be efficient and impactful, especially on greenfield sites like the East End or west end plan areas or on underutilized, under-performing sites like a shopping mall or old school sites, it also tends to visibly change the character of a community.

ramatically change the look and feel of a place, which can lead to community resistance or displacement of long-standing residents.

The Two Approaches

The key difference between the two approaches lies in scale, speed, and impact. Gentle density allows a town to grow organically, maintaining its identity and charm while increasing housing supply. It's often more affordable for small-scale builders and homeowners, and tends to face less public opposition. Traditional dense development, on the other hand, can deliver a significant amount of housing more quickly but usually requires substantial planning, investment, and infrastructure upgrades.

For small towns, especially those with strong historical character or community cohesion like Wolfville, gentle density is often the more appealing path—supporting growth without losing the essence of what makes the place special. This also allows existing residents to build new businesses like rental housing on the same lot that they live on. The combination of these two approaches are suitable for Wolfville.

The Town's last major Municipal Plan and Zoning Bylaw update was in September of 2020, but the documents undergo regular administrative updates regularly as needed. In order to enable the requirements of the HAF as outlined in this report, the documents would need to be amended to adopt specific changes. These changes would have to be vetted by the community, the Planning Advisory Committee and eventually council. The changes have to be adopted through First Reading, Public hearing and a final Second Reading at council.

Town's role

The Town is tasked with determining the best way to achieve the HAF goals of increasing housing and reducing wait times for approvals. This Growth Management report addresses the potential for growth, the possible impediments, the regulatory restrictions and the solutions for overcoming the challenges.

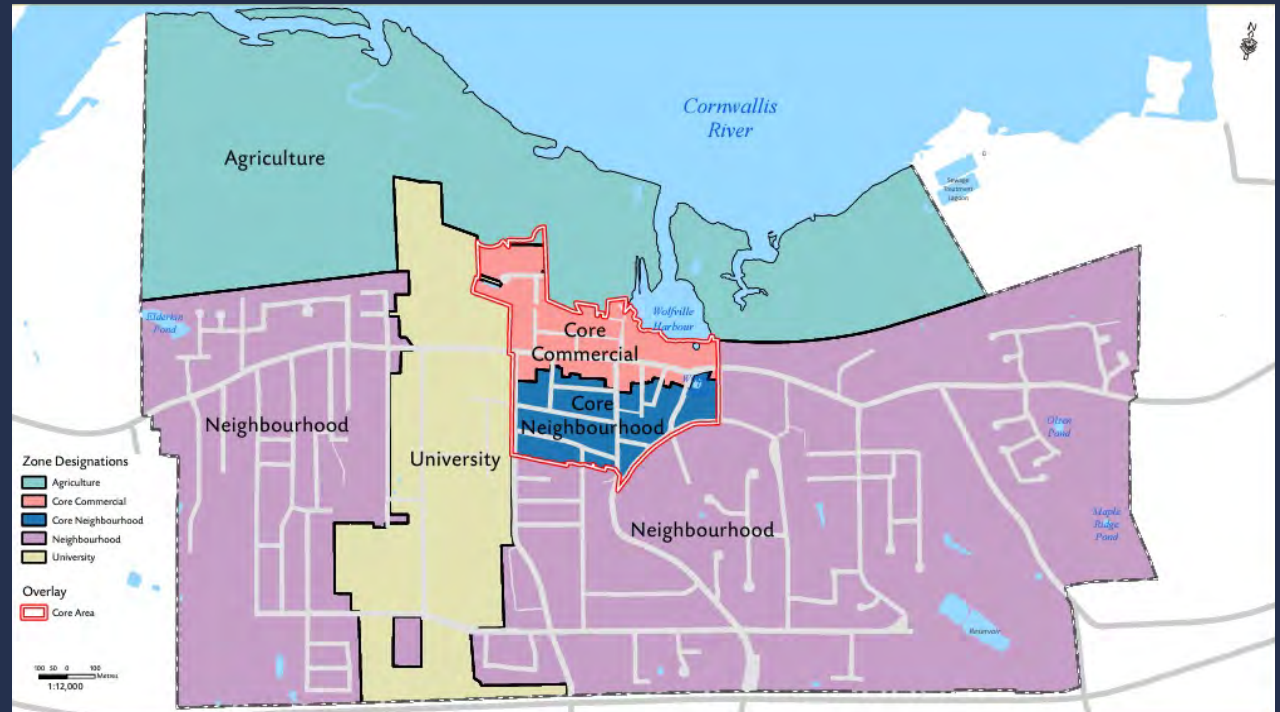
2.2 Structure of the Town

The Town can be broken down into 4 generalized future land use categories including:

- **Neighbourhoods.** These include a variety of different forms of residential development from low density to higher density, and also including supporting uses like schools, parks, neighbourhood commercial uses, home based businesses, churches, etc. Both the east end and west end are some of the only remaining undeveloped greenfield land within the town boundary.
- **Downtown (Core Commercial and Core Neighbourhood).** This includes the commercial core of Wolfville including Main Street and Front Street, as well as the transition neighbourhood to the south which provides a mix of residential and commercial uses. Encouraging more housing in the downtown provides many benefits to the Town, residents and the businesses in downtown.
- **Acadia University.** Includes all the University owned lands which includes educational facilities, student housing, campus recreational facilities, offices and management facilities, and future land banked lands.

- **Agricultural Land.** Includes much of the agricultural land protected behind the old Acadian dykes of the Cornwallis River. The province intends to increase the Dyke height by another 1-1.5m to account for sea level rise. These areas are used for passive and active recreation, agriculture, and floodplain reserves. It is possible that some of the agricultural land near downtown could be added to expand the downtown in the future.

Generally the intent of the generalized land use map is to protect the uses within these designations from uses that may not be compatible.



2.3 Recent Planning & Approval Processes

The Approval processes in Wolfville

There are 4 approval pathways in Wolfville which range from simple and fast, to more complex and more time-consuming depending on the nature and complexity of the project.

For simple projects, there is the “permitted” and “permitted with conditions” pathways. These pathways are handled at the staff level with no input from the public, PAC, or council. Approvals can be secured in a matter of weeks so long as the zoning requirements and conditions are met.

For more complex projects, there is the “site plan approval” and “development agreement” pathways. For these pathways, the submission requirements are more onerous, the approval timelines are longer and there is the potential for appeals. The site plan approval process provides good certainty to developers that if the conditions are met, the approval can be secured. The Development Agreement pathway is the most onerous and uncertain pathway as it involves a negotiated process that often includes the public, PAC, design review committee (in some cases) and council approval. The outcomes of this process are uncertain, and it can often take a year or more to navigate, requiring negotiations

throughout the process which may lead to several rounds of design changes. This process is also the most time-consuming for staff, council and PAC.

The approval processes are the most important changes that council can consider during this HAF work. Most will be familiar with an as of right and DA process, but through this process we are introducing more as of right (permitted and permitted with conditions) while still having uses permitted by Site Plan Approval (SP). The use of time-consuming and divisive Development Agreements will be limited to extraordinary circumstances.

Simple Projects

Permitted (P)

Fig. 2.1 Permitted Approval Process



1. Full Application is submitted

2. Staff Review. Development officer must indicate to the applicant if application is complete within 14 days.



3. If Application Meets Zoning Requirements, the application is APPROVED.



4. If Application Does Not Meet Zoning Requirements, the application is DENIED.
The applicant has 7 days to appeal

E.g. Single detached homes, semis, duplex's, townhomes, additions, etc.

Permitted with Conditions (PC)

Fig. 2.2 Permitted with Conditions Approval Process



1. Pre-application consultation (guidance documents given, forms, etc)

2. Full Application is submitted. Development officer must indicate to the applicant if application is complete within 14 days.

3. Staff Review and negotiate conditions with applicant. Items negotiated as set out in the planning documents.



4. If Application Meets Zoning Requirements, the application is APPROVED.



4. If Application Does Not Meet Zoning Requirements, the application is DENIED.
The applicant has 7 days to appeal

E.g. backyard suites, secondary suites, garden clusters, etc.

More Complex Projects

Site Plan Approval (SP)

Fig. 2.2 Site Plan Approval Process



1. Pre-application consultation (guidance documents given, forms, etc)

2. Full Site plan Application (Section 2.10) is submitted. Development officer must indicate to the applicant if application is complete within 14 days.

3. Staff Review and negotiate a site plan with applicant. Items negotiated as set out in the planning documents.



4. If Application Meets Zoning Requirements, the application is APPROVED.

Approval notification is posted to properties within 30m.,
14-day Appeal period is observed,
Approval is registered on property.



5. If Application does not meet Zoning Requirements:
Design Review Committee may be asked to review the specific requirement against the Design Guidelines for approval; or
The proposal may require a Development Agreement process; or
The application may be denied
The applicant has 7 days to appeal

E.g. multi-unit developments, university developments, commercial developments,

Development Agreement (DA)

Fig. 2.3 Development Agreement Process



1. Pre-application consultation (guidance documents given, forms, etc)

2. Full Application (Section 2.10) is submitted with notification as per the Town's public participation program policy.

3. Public Information Meeting

4. Design Review (If Necessary)

5. PAC Report & Review

6. Committee of the Whole

7. Public Hearing



8. If DA is Supported, the application is APPROVED subject to appeal period.



9. If DA is not supported:
The application is denied

E.g. master planned developments, developments that require more major variances, etc.

Submission Requirements

The following submissions are required for each of the 4 different approval pathways

Permitted Checklist

- ☒ Development Permit & Fee
- ☒ Building Permit & Fee
- ☒ Any additional material Development Officer or building official may require

Permitted with Conditions Checklist

- ☒ Development Permit & Fee
- ☒ Building Permit & Fee
- ☒ Site/Landscape/Grading Plan
- ☒ Architectural/building Plans
- ☒ Any additional material Development Officer or building official may require

Site Plan & Development Agreement Checklist

- ☒ Application Form
- ☒ Application Fee
- ☒ Topographic Survey
- ☒ Site/Grading/Landscape Plan
- ☒ Stormwater Management Plan
- ☒ Architectural Plans
- ☒ Civil Servicing Schematic
- ☒ Traffic Statement (if required)
- ☒ Any additional material Development Officer or building official may require

2.4 Downtown C-1 Zone Ideas

The downtown area consists of 2 zones including the C-1 and C-2 zones. The C-1 zone is the “Core Commercial” zone which permits a wide range of commercial and residential mixed use developments. Rezoning is not permitted in the C-1 zone. The C-2 zone is the “neighbourhood commercial” zone which permits a mix of small scale commercial uses, mixed uses, and residential uses. C-2 can be rezoned to C-1 through a PAC and council process.

As part of the proposed HAF amendments, this section explores a series of ideas for potentially enabling more growth in the downtown areas, weighing various trade-offs, such as simplicity, preservation, and effectiveness at attracting growth.

Fig.2 — Existing Zoning Conditions for C-1

C-1

Uses	Commercial uses	
	multi-unit above the first floors or >15m from the streetline	
	offices	
	clinics	
	nursing homes	
yard	educational facilities	
	Height	3-storeys, 4 by DA
	Frontage	8m
	Front Setback	0-4m
	Side Yard	0m, 3m abutting res or park
	Rear yard	0m, 3m abutting res or park
	Lot Area	185m ²
	Coverage	100%



Downtown Growth Idea 1: Increase height

Idea 1 makes very few changes to the zoning map for the downtown area. Instead, this scenario focuses on updating zoning policy to allow more growth through increased height.

Action 1: Increase as-of-right height limits from 3 to 4 storeys in C1

A core commitment of the housing accelerator fund program is to enable more housing in Wolfville. Enabling slightly more height as-of-right would both add more residential units per building, and encourage development by making it more profitable. The current zoning allows 4 storeys by Development Agreement. This idea could either remove the DA pathway in favour of as-of-right, or it could consider 5-storeys by DA. The idea could also require a stepback at the 4th storey to minimize its visibility at the sidewalk level.

The downtown area is the most valuable place to enable more height:

- » **Revenue.** Already, downtown produces x% of Wolfville's tax revenue.
- » **Year-round business.** A larger downtown population will help keep businesses open year-round, providing more customers in the off-season.
- » **Commercial space needs.** Entrepreneurs often cannot find space in Wolfville's downtown, meaning fewer businesses open, according to the Wolfville Business Development Corporation. Wolfville

Stakeholder feedback

Stakeholders were divided on whether to support or discourage taller buildings in Wolfville. Those who supported it emphasized Wolfville's lack of commercial and office space, and the need to create more local customers for businesses. Those who opposed it emphasized Wolfville's historic character. Some positioned three stories as the maximum they would support.

- » therefore loses the tax revenue and vibrancy these businesses would have generated.
- » **Office space needs.** There is also a lack of office space downtown, such as for lawyers, dentists, accountants, and similar services.

With good design, four stories should not feel substantially taller than three stories, but it can have much greater economic impact on the downtown. Whether a building feels tall depends substantially on design, so this issue can be mitigated with stepback updates to the bylaw.

Since many of the buildings in the downtown are 2 and 3 storeys, the additional storey of height might make it financially feasible to redevelop some of the under-performing properties in the downtown. For instance, it is usually not feasible to rebuild a 2-storey building and replace it with a 3-storey building. There is simply not enough financial gain for a land owner to make this change.

Trade Offs

Pros	Cons
Growth. Four stories is a cost-effective development height for the Wolfville context, and will likely therefore help attract growth. 4-storeys is currently permitted through a DA.	Height. Some residents feel that three stories is the maximum appropriate height for Wolfville. 4-storeys requires an elevator.

Action 2: Allow up to 6 stories by development agreement, if affordable housing is provided

The Accelerator Fund agreement states that Wolfville will examine the use of Inclusionary Zoning, in which zoning requires some units to be affordable. Wolfville already requires affordable housing in any four-story building in C-1. If Wolfville raises the as-of-right height limit to four stories, affordable housing, or some other tangible public benefit, could be required for any building up to six stories tall through a DA.

Recommended Zoning Change

We recommend updating height limits in C-1 as follows:

- » from 3-storeys to 4-storeys as-of-right.
- includes a 3m stepback at the 4th storey
- Up to 6 storeys by development agreement with consideration for:
 - » The additional storeys above 4 would need to include affordable housing or some other tangible public benefit important to the community.
 - » High quality urban design standards
 - » 100% groundfloor commercial use
 - » stepback increases to 4.5m from 3m
 - » Building width (frontage on street) no wider than it is tall.

Downtown Growth Idea 2: Encourage Growth in Key Areas

Idea 2 identifies strategic locations to incentivize development, where new buildings would help achieve the following goals:

- » Fill in “missing teeth” on Main Street (i.e., parking lots or underused land).
- » Extend Main Street’s vibrancy Westwards.
- » Help Front Street become a more vibrant, desirable destination that feels like a cohesive part of the downtown.

Action 1: Offer incentives for redevelopment

It can be difficult to convince landowners to take the risk to redevelop a property, especially if an existing parking lot or building generates revenue. Incentives may be necessary.

Bill 177 is provincial legislation that enables municipalities to reduce short-term tax costs for new development in specific areas. It works by slowly phasing in taxes for new commercial buildings over a ten-year period. This means projects will pay little tax in their first years of existence, enabling more time to find commercial tenants and stabilize cashflow. In this way, the municipality can encourage new projects that might

otherwise not be viable — which creates more tax revenue in the long term.

Recommendations

Encourage redevelopment in these parcels with the following policy tools:

- » Enable 6 story height limits as-of-right.
- » Phase in commercial property tax increases over the next 10 years for any new development on these parcels. (See Bubble: Bill 177).



Trade Offs

Recommendations:

Pros	Cons
Growth incentives. The Bill gives Wolfville tools it can use to encourage growth in strategic places.	Administrative Cost. The scenario requires setting up new tools, such as an incentive program under Bill 177.
Foregone taxes. The town may collect less taxes on some properties, if developers would have built there in any case.	New taxes. If the policy can attract growth, it can generate new tax revenue that would otherwise not exist.

» Initiate planning and consultation to build mixed-use projects with affordable housing on strategic public lands in Wolfville.

» Initiate a discussion with Canada Post about the potential to redevelop its land.

Action 2: Plan the redevelopment of public land

Wolfville owns land on Front Street, which offers opportunities to build affordable housing near jobs, and to create a better streetscape along Front Street. Parking solutions will be needed, however, before Wolfville can fully redevelop parking lots. (See Section x).

The post office sits behind a beautiful park, but the building itself is aging and is out of character with the street. A new building here could better frame the park. The post office could stay on the ground floor.

Downtown Growth Idea 3: Limit lot consolidation on portions of Main Street

Main Street's historic character is a major attraction for tourists. There is a risk that if the plan enables high-density development in the downtown without providing stronger protections for Main Street, the street's unique buildings could be replaced with generic, modern buildings, erasing much of its value as a destination.

Action 1: Limit lot consolidation

A key feature of Main Street's historic character is its narrow facades. Someone walking the street walks past a new building roughly once every 10 seconds, creating a sense of diversity. There are currently 40 buildings on the street between Seaview Ave. and Elm Ave. If these buildings were replaced with typical modern buildings — often 70 metres long or longer — there could be as few as twelve buildings.

- » **PAC Feedback:** PAC members expressed appreciation for Main Street's organic, "funky" and "organic" character, full of buildings with a variety of "different colours" that are "unique to Wolfville." Preserving small lots would enable new construction while preserving this diverse, organic character.

One way to protect this fine-grain character is to limit the maximum lot frontage of new lots on Main Street. Limiting the width of lot frontages accomplishes the following:

- » It prevents developers from replacing multiple buildings with a single, wider building.
- » It protects the visual diversity of the street without needing to protect individual buildings.
- » Limiting lot sizes will likely slow the rate of



- » redevelopment in Main Street’s most historic areas, and help to direct growth to where it is most needed, such as underdeveloped parking lots and vacant land.

Action 2: Building code revisions

It is currently difficult to redevelop small lots in Canada because the building code requires two stairways for any building over two stories. Efforts are currently underway to amend the building code to require only one stairway for buildings under six or eight stories, which is already standard practice in countries such as Australia and Germany. If this amendment

passes, it will be much easier for developers to redevelop small lots without needing to consolidate lots.

A revised building code may therefore accelerate the pace of redevelopment on small lots. Historically, buildings on small lots are rebuilt and repurposed at a faster rate than large buildings, leading to streets with greater diversity from various time periods.

Recommendation:

Identify areas of Main Street where narrow

“The smaller the scale of the physical environment, the more continuous and imperceptible the change. And the larger the scale, the slower—and more radical—the pace of change.”

- Anne Vernez Moudon, *Built for Change: Neighborhood Architecture in San Francisco*.



buildings help create a vibrant street. (See proposed outline on the map).

Ensure built form requirements for these lots articulate the buildings with a low width to height ratio..

Trade Offs

Pros	Cons
Small-lot protection. Scenario 3a preserves the Main Street’s fine-grain character and visual diversity.	Discourages growth. Under current building codes, the policy would likely reduce the pace of redevelopment on Main Street. If this preserves old properties that are in poor condition, it could have a negative impact on the value of the street.
Direct growth. The policy would nudge development towards underused land, rather than existing Main Street buildings.	
Low administrative costs. The new rules would not be difficult to administer.	

Downtown Growth Idea #3b: Protect Historic Facades

Alternatively, Wolfville can protect the specific building facades on Main Street that contribute the most value to its historic character. This approach seeks to more narrowly target protections for the specific assets that residents and visitors value.

We propose three options for protecting specific facades.

Action 1: Reduce the height on important heritage buildings

Using a height schedule, the Town can pinpoint key architectural assets to set their height limit to match existing conditions. Without the additional height, many developers would be discouraged from redeveloping them.

Action 2: Allow heritage DA’s or transfer of development rights on important heritage properties

Heritage DA’s allow developers special development rights in return for preserving and restoring heritage facades. In some cases, the new development can be built attaching to the heritage building’s facade. In other cases, the additional development rights of preserving and restoring a heritage asset can be transfered to another property within the C-1 or C-2 zone, giving these properties more rights than what may be possible in the current zone. The property would have to be designated as a registered heritage building or a heritage district to permit these special considerations.

Downtown Growth Idea 4: Expand C-1 Area

Expanding Main Street zoning eastward would provide more land for housing, commercial space, and offices. We propose two areas for potential expansion:

- » This area is already zoned C-2. Rezoning it as C-1 would allow Main Street’s street life and vibrancy to slowly extend eastward. Development here could also help bring life to Willow Park, which some stakeholders call the downtown’s gateway.
- » Seaview Ave., Locust Ave., and Starr St all start and terminate within the Core Area Boundary. Rezoning this area for C-1 therefore enables the downtown’s growth without encroaching on other residential neighbourhoods. It would also provide space for businesses that are desirable downtown, but which do not need to be on Main Street itself, such as bike mechanics.
- » The challenge is that some existing residential uses would be non-conforming since residential uses are not permitted on the ground-floor except >15m from the streetline.

Considerations

Enabling C-1 in these areas does not imply they will be developed soon, or that they will be fully redeveloped for the foreseeable future. Wolfville only attracts a limited amount of new construction per year. Change is therefore likely to proceed at an incremental pace.

Trade Offs

Pros	Cons
Flexibility. Expanding C-1 offers developers more options to find properties that suit their needs, which can potentially encourage development.	Dissipating growth. It is valuable to concentrate growth in the core area of Main Street to create a critical mass of street life. Extending C1 risks spreading growth outwards, potentially reducing its impact. Some uses will be non-conforming



2.5 Neighbourhood Commercial C-2 Zone Ideas

The PAC expressed the following goals for neighbourhood commercial zone:

- Walkability. Enable residents to walk to local shops, so that they do not need to travel downtown for daily errands.
- Mixed commercial vibe. Create streets where some buildings have cafes, galleries, and other shops on the ground floor, while other homes can be purely residential.
- Adaptive reuse. Encourage owners to repurpose existing buildings to create businesses to create an eclectic mix of shops that highlight the diversity of the town’s homes.

- Keep the detached residential character of the neighbourhood but encourage new groundfloor commercial uses or upper storey office uses as needed.
- encourage onstreet parking on one or both sides of the street to reduce the need for large parking lots on properties.
- Encourage sidewalks and streetscape amenities on both sides of the street in this zone.
- Many homes in this zone have large lots with large sideyards or large backyards. Enable more than one unit in this zone as either ADU’s or multi-unit redevelopment of existing buildings.

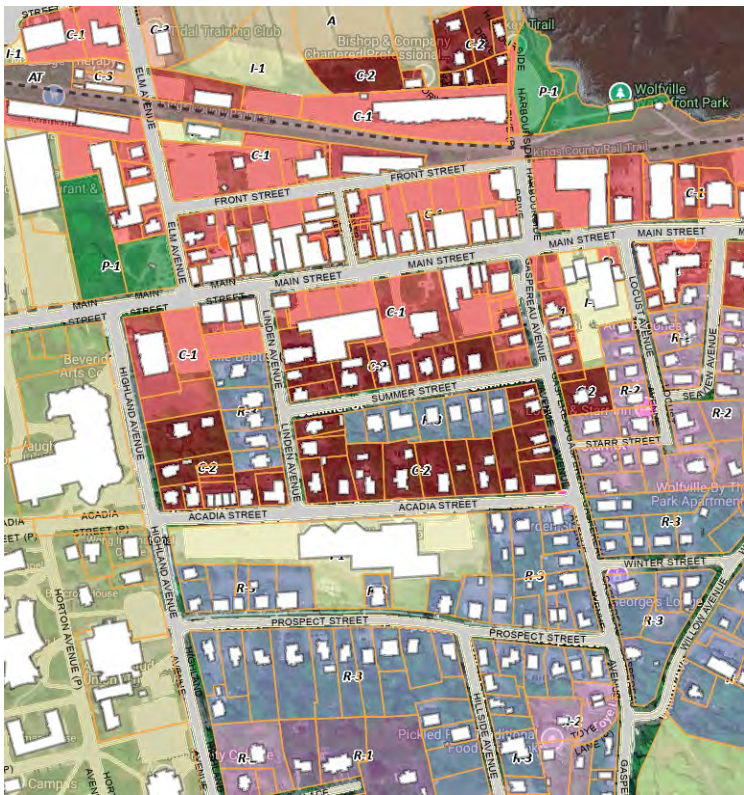


Fig.3 — Existing Zoning Conditions for C-2

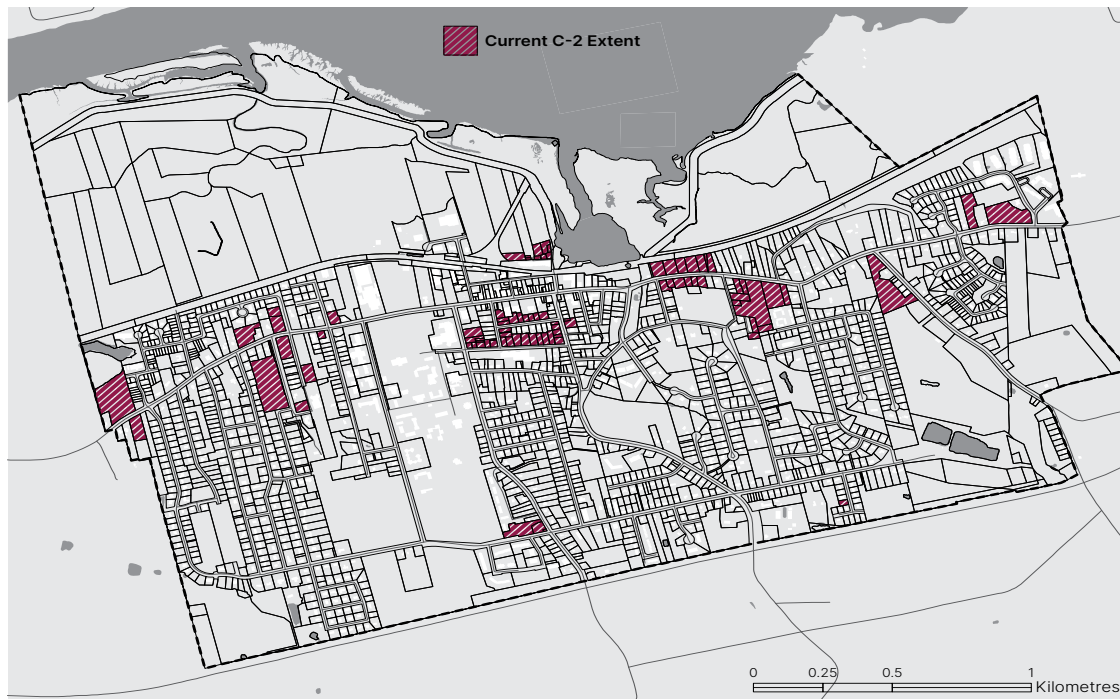
C-2		
Uses	Neighbourhood Commercial uses	
	multi-unit above the first floors	
	offices	
	single units, 2-unit, 3-unit	
	8 unit by site plan	
	16 UPA by DA	
yard	Height	3-storeys,
	Frontage	single - 11., semi-9m, TH-6m, multi-12m
	Front Setback	4.5m
	Side Yard	2m
	Rear yard	4m
	Lot Area	300m2 single & duplex, 280m2 semi, 137m2 TH, Multi 100m2 per unit
	Coverage	100%

Neighbourhood Commercial Idea 1: Create a Commercial Overlay and rezone C-2 to a medium density residential zone.

One idea is to eliminate the C-2 zone and replace it with the R3 or new RL zone, but enabling commercial uses in this area with an overlay 'commercial schedule' that could apply to multiple residential zones around town. A commercial schedule allows commercial groundfloor uses to be consider in several other areas of the Town irrespective of the underlying zone. The zoning bylaw could include a height schedule, a % groundfloor commercial schedule, street setback schedules, etc.

Alternatively, Wolfville could just update the C-2 zone to more closely align with some of the new proposed residential zones in the next section, while allowing commercial groundfloors or office type uses. This alternate approach, however, does not consolidate or simplify the number of zones in the town.

The overlay aims to encourage commercial uses in these areas by enabling most of them as-of-right. Site-plan approval is proposed for uses that have the potential for greater impacts on parking or noise.



	Proposed under new Neighbourhood Commercial Overlay	Currently allowed under C-2 (for comparison)
As of right	Residential Uses, Existing Uses, Art Galleries, Bakeries, Cafes, Catering, Daycares, Craft Workshops, Farm Markets, Hostels, Inns, Laundromats, Neighbourhood retail (less than 200m2), Offices and Professional Services, Restaurants, Personal Service, Place of Assembly, Studios.	Art Galleries, Existing Uses, Studios, Residential Uses.
Conditional	Short term rentals	Short term rentals, catering
Site-plan approval	Craft Beverage, Financial Institutions, Lounges, Institutional Uses, Nano-breweries, Nursing Homes, Medical Clinics, Tasting Rooms, Taxi Stands, Vet Clinics.	Hostels, Inns, Daycare, Commercial Schools, Bakeries, Nano-brewery, Neighbourhood cafe, Tasting rooms, Craft workshop, Farm markets, Financial Institutions, Institutional uses, Laundromats, Medical Clinics, , Nursing homes, Offices and Professional Services

Trade Offs

Pros	Cons
<p>Flexibility. Enabling neighbourhood commercial with an overlay allows residents to request commercial in their neighbourhood without this changing building design rules.</p> <p>Addressing space needs. Enabling a wider variety of land uses will allow entrepreneurs to find space for their businesses, such as Offices and Professional Services.</p>	<p>Externalities. Some of these business types are more likely to attract visitors, which could impact parking usage and the number of people visiting the street. It may be valuable to consider measures to mitigate impacts, such as residential parking permits.</p>

incentive for owners to reinvest in existing buildings.

- » It ensures that new short-term rentals bring additional benefits to the neighbourhood, in the form of ground-floor commercial spaces.

Trade Offs

Pros	Cons
<p>Targeted Benefits. The policy would enable a limited number of short-term rentals while also encouraging the adaptive reuse of existing buildings.</p>	<p>Complexity. The policy may fail to attract investment in new short-term rentals due to the cost of adding commercial to the ground floor of existing buildings, or other unforeseen challenges.</p>

Action 1: Short-Term Rentals and Encouraging Re-Use

Planning advisory committee members requested policies that would help encourage entrepreneurs to reuse existing buildings for new businesses. We propose to use short-term rentals as an incentive, as follows:

- » Only allow full-time short-term rentals in buildings that existed before January 1, 2025 and that add a commercial or office use on the ground floor.

This incentive has the following benefits:

- » It enables more full-time short-term rentals in Wolfville while placing limits on the number of homes likely to be converted.
- » It uses short-term rentals as a financial



Action 2: Expand Downtown Neighbourhood Commercial area

The C2 area that bookends the north and south side of the C-1 Downtown zone has two major strengths:

- » Streets like Summer and Linden offer a quiet atmosphere, free of regional traffic. If shops and cafes were added to the street, it could support a relaxed vibrancy, distinct from the bustle and activity of Main Street.
- » Acadia, Linden, and Summer are major walking routes for students between Acadia University and Main Street. Shops and cafes could therefore take advantage of this existing street life.

To take advantage of these strengths, we propose two changes:

- » Fill in gaps in the commercial area. Enabling shops on both sides of the street will help this area become a commercial destination. It will also help justify adding sidewalks on both sides of these streets.
- » Expand the Neighbourhood Commercial Overlay eastward to include Seaview Ave., Locust Ave., and Starr St (unless these streets are included in C1. See Downtown Scenario 4). These streets terminate in the downtown area, suggesting they are appropriate

places to enable commercial uses. Like Summer Street, they are quiet streets offering a refuge from regional traffic.

Trade Offs

Pros	Cons
Quiet vibrancy. The updated Neighbourhood Commercial Overlay will enable more commercial uses near downtown.	Change. If the overlay is extended to the east, it could attract more visitors to these streets.

Action 3: Apply the Neighbourhood

Commercial Overlay to key Intersections

Intersections are a logical place to locate commercial uses because they offer the greatest proximity to nearby homes. There are a number of prominent intersections throughout Wolfville that are well-positioned to offer local shops and services to residents (pictured). This approach allows commercial buildings in a relatively small number of places, while the majority of areas would continue to not allow commercial uses.



Trade Offs

Pros	Cons
Limiting change. Limiting commercial to prominent intersections would lead to relatively less change for the majority of neighbourhoods.	Limited flexibility. Only allowing commercial in limited places reduces the likelihood that there will be a match between an entrepreneur's needs and available locations, potentially reducing investment.
Targeted commercial. Allowing commercial only in specific places could help create small nodes of commercial activity.	

Action 4: Apply the Neighbourhood Overlay to Collectors + Key Intersections

Enabling commercial along any collector road would provide more flexibility for entrepreneurs looking for a location that fits their business model, and that is close to their target customer base.

Consideration

Some stakeholders felt it was inappropriate to enable

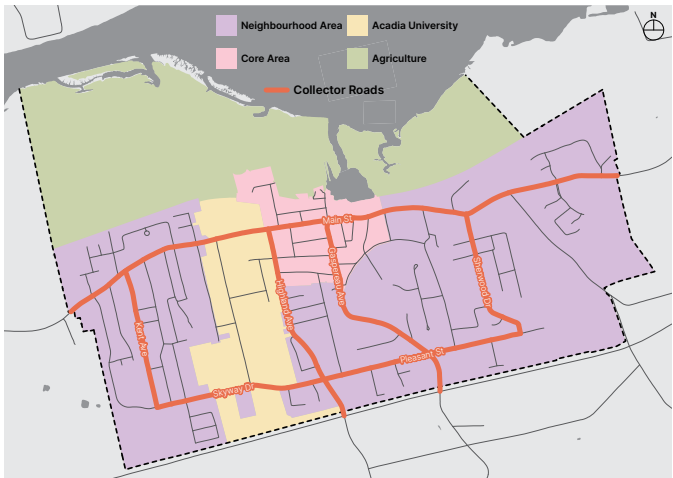
commercial along some collectors, including those identified in the dotted line, because they felt shops were unlikely to open there.

It is important to clarify that the goal of such an overlay is not to encourage commercial along the full length of these corridors. The goal, rather, is to provide flexibility for entrepreneurs looking for space. From this perspective, one approach to deciding where to allow commercial is to enable it everywhere except those specific places where there is a reason not to. There is only limited demand for commercial space in Wolfville, and only a small number of businesses are likely to open in any Neighbourhood Commercial Space.

Trade Offs

Pros	Cons
Flexibility. Enabling commercial in a broader set of areas increases the likelihood that entrepreneurs will find a match between an entrepreneur's needs and available locations.	Conflicts. Allowing commercial in more areas could lead to more potential conflicts between commercial space and homes, such as noise.

Fig.4 – Collector Roads in Wolfville



2.6 Neighbourhood Residential Scenarios

The Town of Wolfville currently has 4 relatively low density zones including the R1, R2, R3 and R-LD4 zones which only allow 1 unit per lot on the R1 and R2 lots but provide a range of housing types including single detached, semi, duplex, townhome/stacked townhome, and up to 8 unit multi's. The medium density zones includes another 4 zones namely R-4, R-MDU, R-LR, and RMU zones which allow for larger multi-unit buildings exceeding 8 units.

The original intent of such granular zoning for residential uses was to separate each housing type from each other and from other forms of 'dense' housing like multis. The low density nature of Wolfville is part of the Town's charm and character, however, modern plans often include a wide mix of low density housing types within a neighbourhood rather than a monoculture of housing types with streets that all look the same. These mixed neighbourhoods provide a wider

range of socioeconomic and age diversity within communities.

In 2023, the federal government released the *Housing Accelerator Fund* (HAF) to increase housing supply in Canada in response to the growing housing crisis, which has doubled housing prices over the last decade and made home ownership unattainable for many Canadians. While there are many factors contributing to the crisis, the lack of housing supply is the driving factor. Wolfville has adopted the HAF challenge to increase supply by removing barriers to construction and promoting a more diverse range housing options that include rentals and home ownership.

Many municipalities, urban and rural, have changed their zoning to accommodate more than one unit on R1, and R2 lots. The Town of Middleton recently changed their residential zoning to allow up to 6 units as of right in their low density zone. Other communities have collapsed their R1, R2, and even R3 zones into a single R1 zone that allows up to 4 or 8 units on a single lot.

In order to meet the Town's HAF commitments, the Town is exploring 3 potential scenarios to grow residential units and streamline the approval process. These zoning rationalization options are described below.

Main Residential Zones

Sparingly Used Zones

Residential Uses	R-1	R-2	R-LD4	R-3	R-LR	R-4	R-MDU	R-MU	CDD	C-2
Additions	P	PC	P	PC	P	PC	P	SP	P	PC
Accessory Dwelling Unit – Detached		PC	PC	PC	PC	PC				PC
Dwelling, Single	P	P	P	P						P
Dwelling, Two Unit		P	P	P	P	P				P
Dwelling, Townhouse (max 3 units)			P	P	P	P				P
Dwelling, Multi-Unit- Low (max 4 units)			P		P					
Dwelling, Multi-Unit- Small (3- 8 units)				SP		SP				SP
Dwelling, Multi-unit - Large (max of 16 units per acre)				DA		SP				DA
Dwelling, Multi-unit (max of 18 units per acre)						SP				
Dwelling, Multi-unit (19 to 24 units per acre)						DA				
Dwelling, Multi-Unit (max 50 units)					SP		SP	DA		
Dwelling, Multi-Unit (max 120 units)							SP	DA		
Additional Density (+5 units per acre) see section 8.3			DA		DA		DA	DA		
Cluster Housing		DA	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP			SP
Existing Uses	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Home Based Business (Arts and Crafts Workshop, Catering Establishments, Daycares up to 7 children/ persons, Online/Digital Sales, Offices, Personal Service Shop, Studios, Short Term Rentals max of 3 rental rooms) < 80 sqm		PC	PC	PC	PC	PC	PC	PC		PC
Home Occupation – Restricted (<50 sqm)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		P
Innovative Housing		DA	DA	DA	DA	DA	DA	DA		DA
Parks and Playgrounds, Public Washrooms, Community Gardens, & Historic Sites	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P

Scenario 1 - Slight zoning changes to meet HAF

The first option is to make small, targeted changes to the existing zones to allow for slightly more units than may be currently permitted. For instance, the R1 zone, rather than permitting 1 unit plus a detached ADU, could permit 2 units plus an ADU (3 units). This would allow a basement to be converted to a unit. Similarly, the other zones could provide for slightly more units than may be allowable today. R2 could allow for a 4 unit instead of 2 unit, etc. By slightly increasing the units allowable, without changing the other zone parameters (frontage, coverage, etc), it may be possible to allow slightly more

units than permitted in the existing zones. Without changing any of the other zone parameters though, the existing site restrictions may limit the number of units built in each zone anyway. The R-LD4 zone is a new zone created for the East End Secondary Plan that has not been used yet, so this option proposes to combine the R2 and R-LD4 zones into one new RL (residential Low Density) zone.

Without streamlining the number of zones or the lot requirements, the granular nature of the zoning will likely not reduce the permitting times, and in many cases, may not lead to many additional units.

FIGURE 1.1 Scenario 1 Zoning showing the 2 R2 and R-LD4 zones collapsed into 1 RL zone

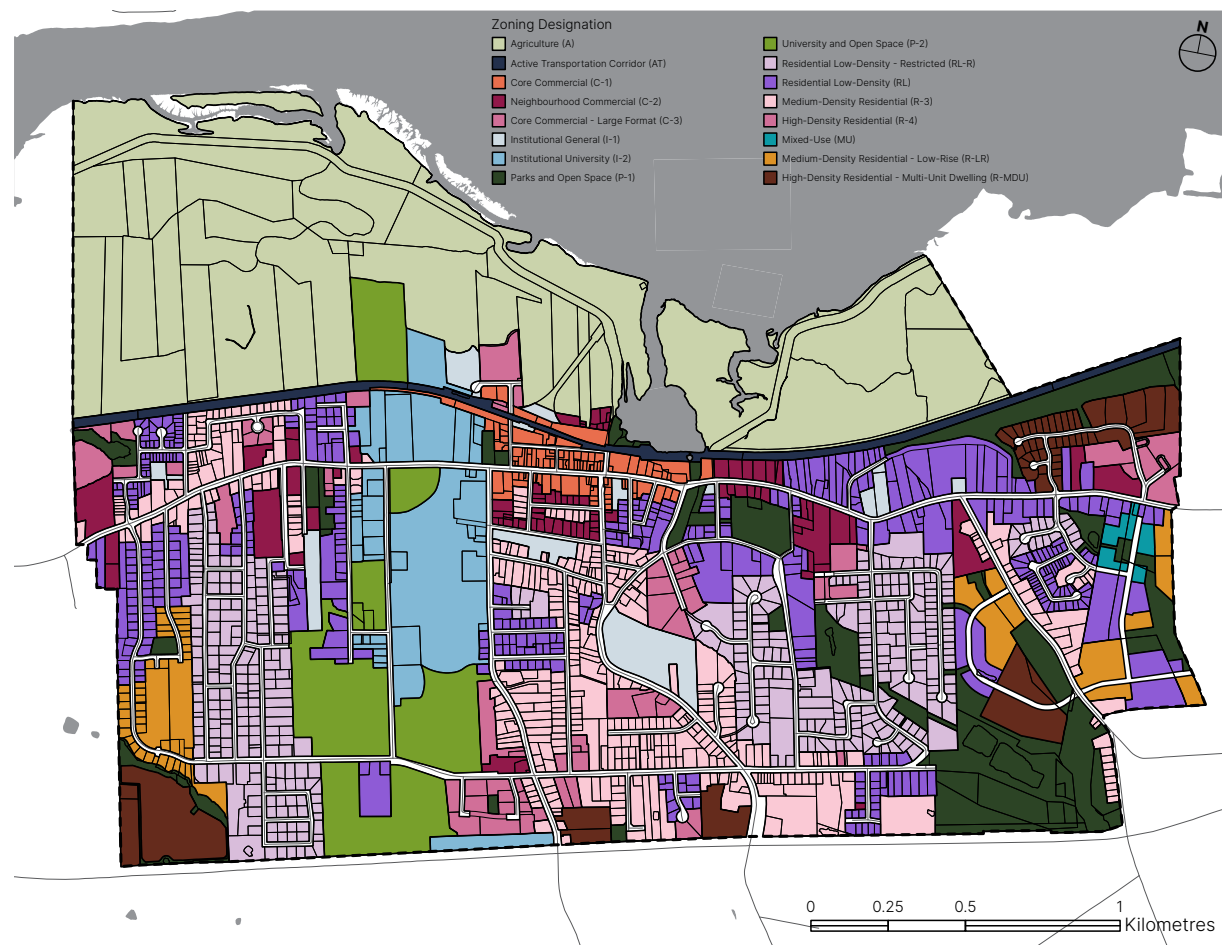


FIGURE 1.2 Scenario 1 Zoning showing existing and proposed number of units

Zones		R1	R2	R-LD4	R3	R4	R-LR	R-MDU	R-MU
Combined into:									
Proposed Zones		RL Restricted	RL		R3	R4	R-LR	R-MDU	R-MU
Existing	As-of-Right	1 unit	2 units	4 unit	1-2 units	2 units			
	Site Plan				3-8 units	18 upa	50 units	120 units	
	Dev. Agreement				16 upa	24 upa	+ 5 upa	+ 5 upa	120 units
Proposed	As-of-Right	2 units	4 units		2-4 units	2 units			
	Site Plan				16 units	32 upa	60 units	120 units	120 units
	Dev. Agreement				32 upa	48 upa	+ 5 upa	+ 5 upa	150 units

FIGURE 1.3 Scenario 1 Neighbourhood Land Use Table update

Residential Uses	RL
Additions	P
Accessory Dwelling – Detached	PC
Dwelling, Single	P
Dwelling, Two Unit	P
Dwelling, Townhouse (max 8 units)	SP
Dwelling, Multi-unit (max 8 units)	SP
Dwelling, Multi-unit (max 60 units)	
Dwelling, Multi-unit (max 80 units)	
Dwelling, Multi-unit (max 120 units)	
Dwelling, Multi-unit (max 150 units)	
Cluster Housing	SP

APPROVAL PROCESS:
P = Permitted as-of-right,
PC = Permitted with Conditions (refer to general conditions)
SP = Site Plan Approval
DA = Development Agreement

Scenario 2 - Consolidate zones into low, medium and high density residential

The goal of scenario 2 would be to consolidate and simplify some of the residential zones from 8 zones down to 3 zones reflecting low, medium and higher density residential. On top of the zone consolidation, we would streamline the uses in the new zone and modify the yard requirements to be slightly more lenient without changing building height. The R1, R-LD4 and R2 zones would be combined into a new RL (res low density) zone. The R3, R4 and R-LR would be collapsed into a new RM (medium density) zone. The R-MDU and R-MU zones would be collapsed into a new RH (high density) zone. commercial would be permitted in the RM zone, and commercial would be required for at least 50% of the floor area in the RH zone. As noted previously, the C-2 zone could also be replaced with the RL zone with the use of commercial schedules.

APPROVAL PROCESS:

P = Permitted as-of-right,

PC = Permitted with Conditions (refer to general conditions)

SP = Site Plan Approval

DA = Development Agreement

FIGURE 1.4 Scenario 2 Zoning showing existing and proposed number of units

Existing Zones		R1	R-LD4	R2	R3	R4	R-LR	R-MDU	R-MU
Combined into:									
Proposed Zones		RL			RM			RH	
Existing	As-of-Right	1 unit	1 unit	2 units	1-2 units	2 units			
	Site Plan				3-8 units	18 upa	50 units	120 units	
	Dev. Agreement				16 upa	24 upa	+ 5 upa	+ 5 upa	120 units
Proposed	As-of-Right	4 units			8 units				
	Site Plan	8 units			60 units			120 units	
	Dev. Agreement				80 units			150 units	

Residential Uses	RL	RM	RH
Additions	P	P	P
Accessory Dwelling – Detached	PC	PC	PC
Dwelling, Single	P		
Dwelling, Two Unit	P		
Dwelling, Townhouse (max 8 units)	SP	P	P
Dwelling, Multi-unit (max 8 units)	SP	P	P
Dwelling, Multi-unit (max 60 units)		SP	P
Dwelling, Multi-unit (max 80 units)		DA	SP
Dwelling, Multi-unit (max 120 units)			SP
Dwelling, Multi-unit (max 150 units)			DA
Cluster Housing	SP	SP	SP

FIGURE 1.6 Scenario 2 Zoning showing the 8 zones collapsed into 3 new zones

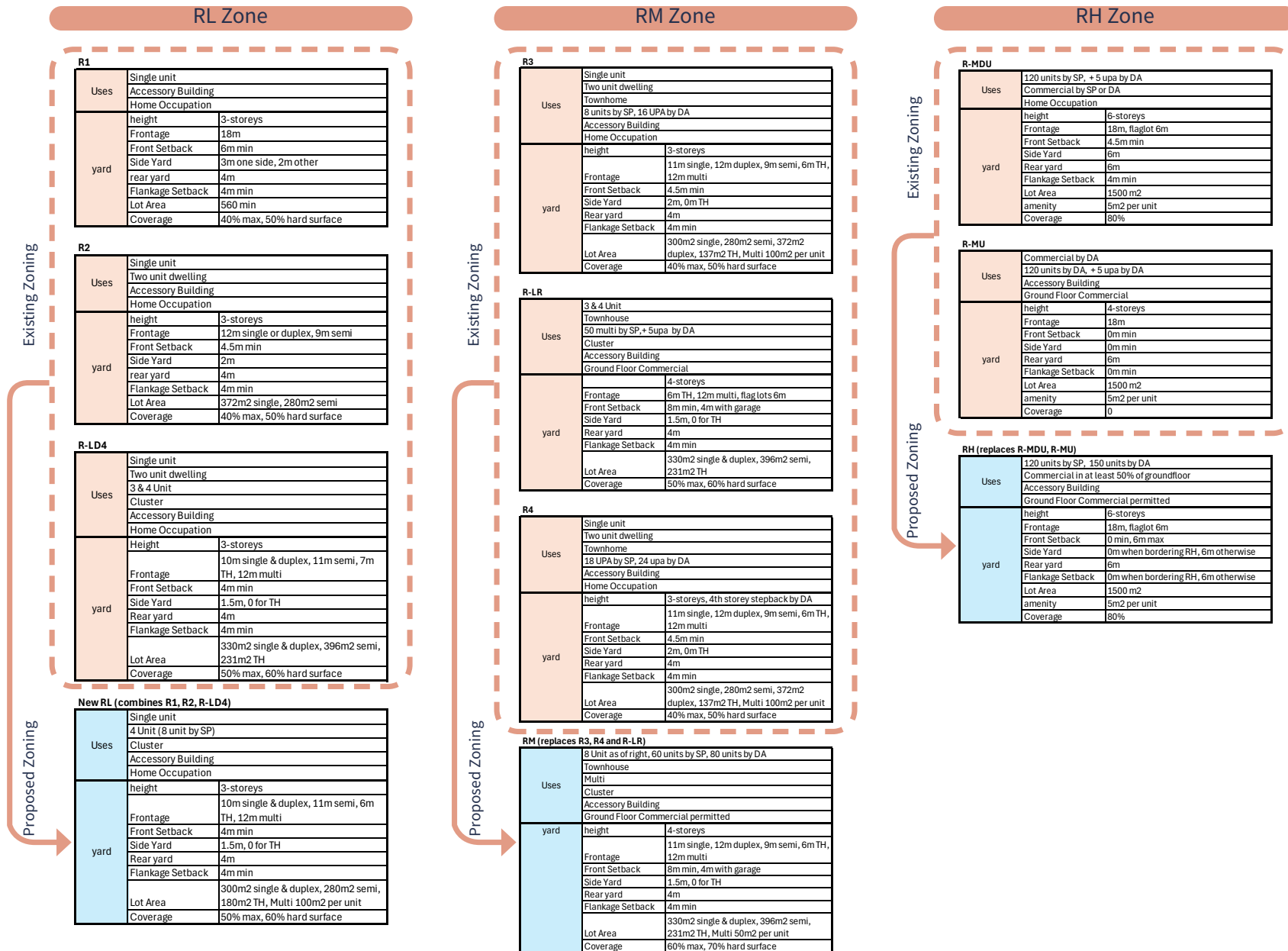


FIGURE 1.7 Scenario 2 Zoning changes

Scenario 3 - Consolidate Zones into Two Categories

Scenario 3 would consolidate and simplifying even more than scenario 2 by collapsing 8 zones into 2 zones and using height and commercial schedules to control height and commercial requirements. In this scenario, the R1, R2, R3 and R-LD4 zones into a new single RL zone that allows a wide range of housing types up to 4 units on a single lot as of right and up to 16 upa by SP based on a density schedule. The height would remain at 3 storeys max but the previous R3 zone would allow a height schedule of 4 storeys. The remaining R-4, R-LR, R-MDU and R-MU zones would be collapsed into a RM zone that would again control height by schedule (from 4-6 storeys) and commercial by schedule allowing commercial in any groundfloor and requiring commercial in areas shown in a commercial schedule.

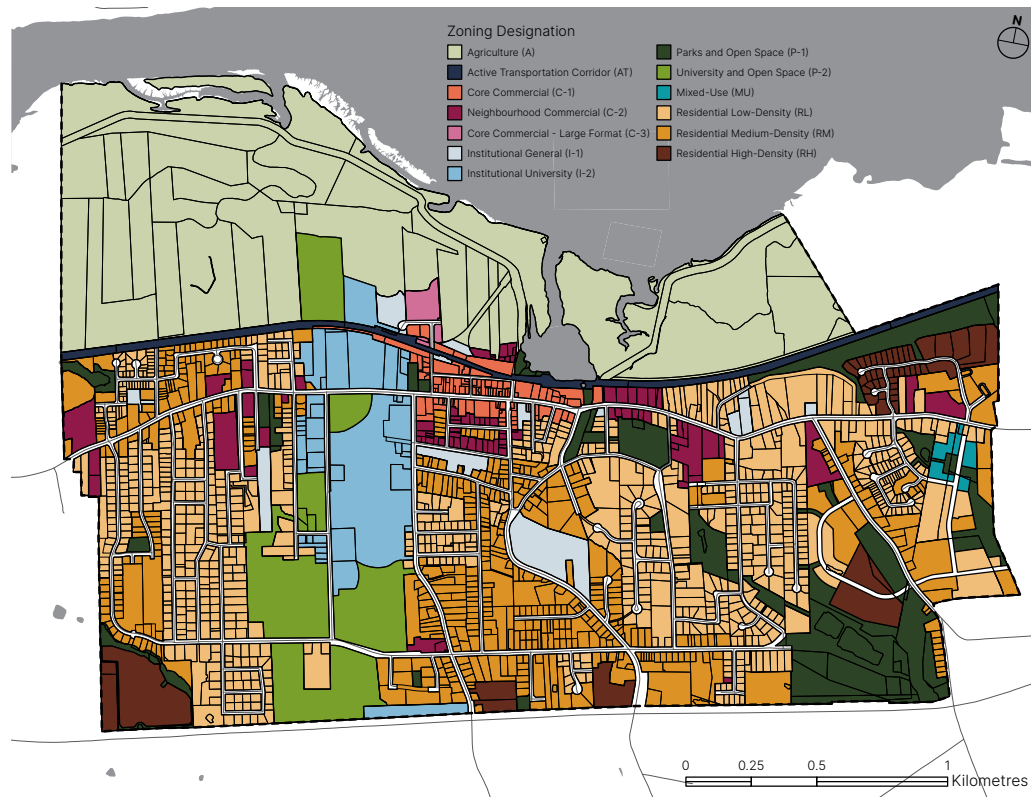


FIGURE 1.9 Scenario 2 Zoning showing the 8 zones collapsed into 3 zones

FIGURE 1.8 Scenario 3 Zoning showing existing and proposed number of units

Existing Zones		R1	R-LD4	R2	R3	R4	R-LR	R-MDU	R-MU
Combined into:									
Proposed Zones		RL				RM			
Existing	As-of-Right	1 unit	1 unit	2 units	1-2 units	2 units			
	Site Plan				3-8 units	18 upa	50 units	120 units	
	Dev. Agreement				16 upa	24 upa	+ 5 upa	+ 5 upa	120 units
Proposed	As-of-Right	4 units				8 units			
	Site Plan	by schedule up to 16 upa				120 units			
	Dev. Agreement					150 units			

APPROVAL PROCESS:

P = Permitted as-of-right,

PC = Permitted with Conditions (refer to general conditions)

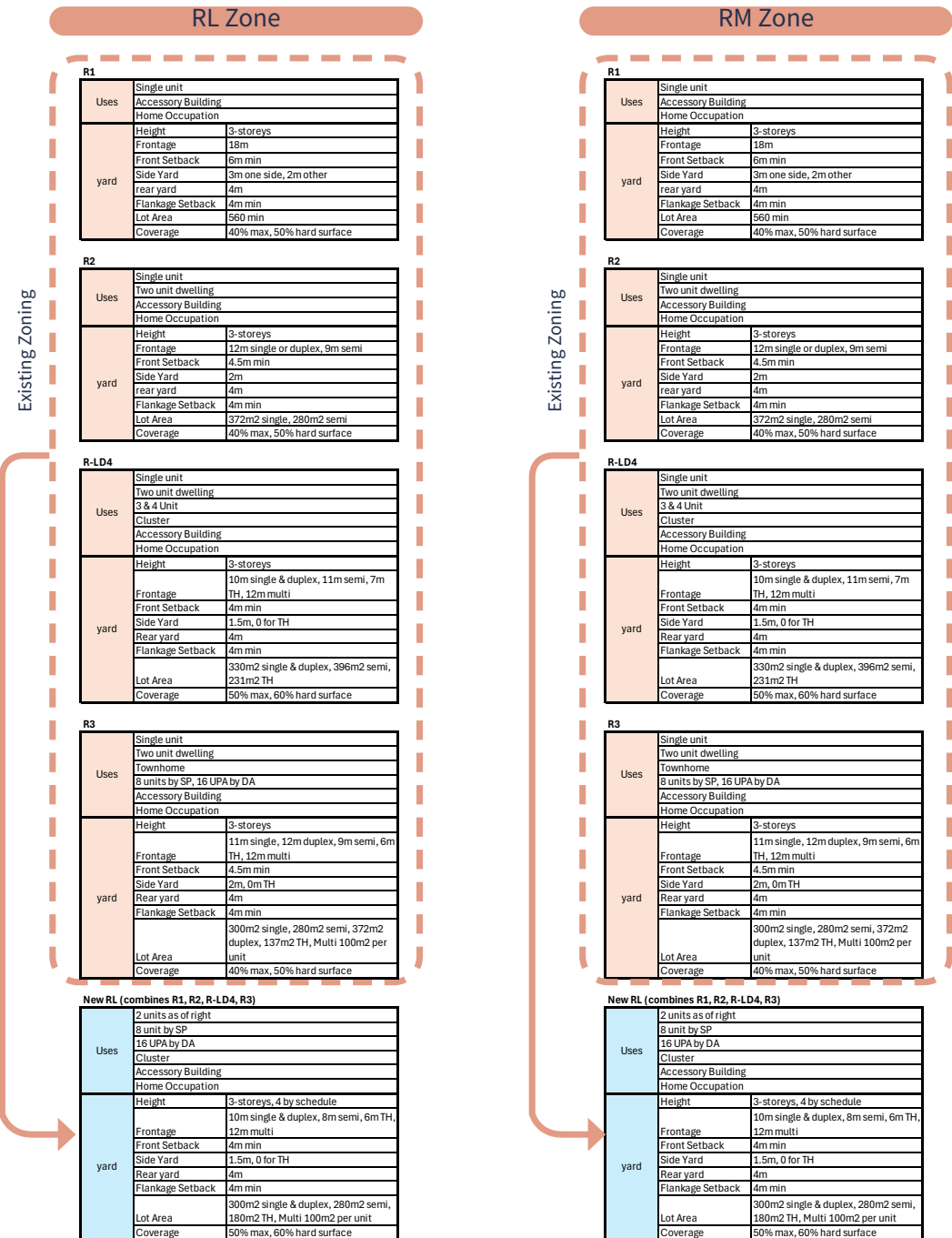
SP = Site Plan Approval

DA = Development Agreement

FIGURE 1.10 Scenario 3 Neighbourhood Land Use Table

Residential Uses	RL	RM
Additions	P	P
Accessory Dwelling – Detached	PC	PC
Dwelling, Single	P	
Dwelling, Two Unit	P	
Dwelling (max 4 units)	P	
Dwelling (max 8 units)		P
Dwelling, Multi-unit (to 16 UPA by schedule)	SP	
Dwelling, Multi-unit (max 120 units)		SP
Dwelling, Multi-unit (max 150 units)		DA
Cluster Housing	SP	SP

FIGURE 1.11 Scenario 3 Zoning showing the 8 zones collapsed into 2 new zones



Wolfville 'Missing Middle' Opportunities

Missing middle housing refers to a range of multi-unit housing types that bridge the gap between single-family homes and large apartment complexes. In the context of R1-zoned lots—traditionally reserved for single-family homes—this approach involves gently increasing density by integrating additional units such as duplexes, triplexes, or fourplexes within the existing lot. These additions are designed to blend seamlessly

into established neighborhoods, preserving the character and scale of the area while providing more diverse and affordable housing options. This type of infill development helps meet growing housing demand without requiring extensive new infrastructure or sprawling suburban expansion.

One increasingly popular strategy within the missing middle framework is the construction

of backyard accessory dwelling units (ADUs). These small, self-contained homes—often referred to as garden suites, laneway houses, or carriage homes—can be built behind the primary residence, offering an efficient way to add rental or multi-generational living space. Backyard ADUs provide flexibility for homeowners, allowing them to generate rental income or accommodate family members while making better use of underutilized land. Together, these additions support walkable, vibrant communities with greater housing diversity, all while maintaining the human scale that defines many traditional neighborhoods.

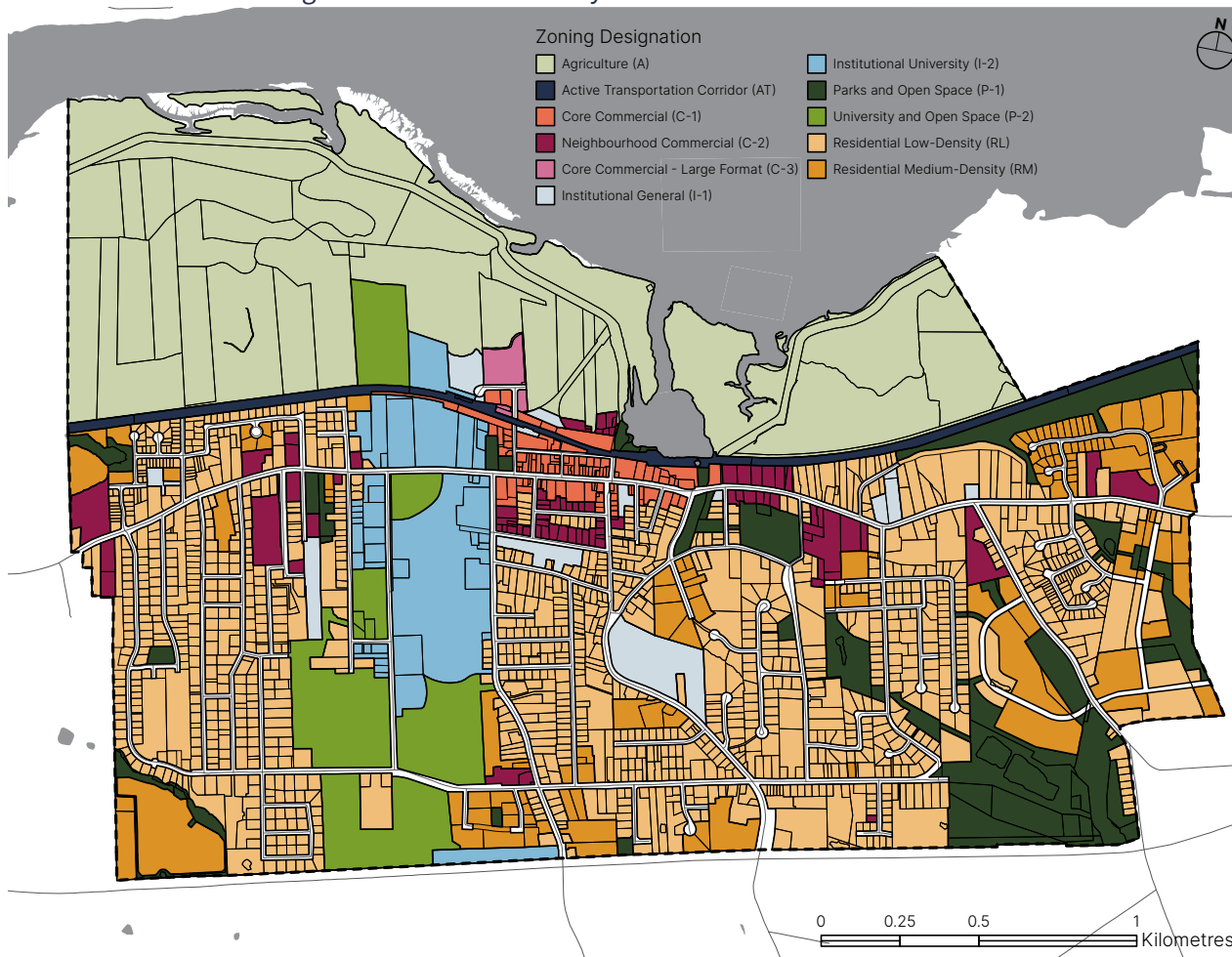


FIGURE 1.12 Scenario 3 Zoning showing the 8 zones collapsed into 2 new zones

Wolfville's Existing Lot fabric

Over 30% of Wolfville's area is zoned as R1 and R2 excluding the Agricultural zoned land that cannot be developed. This land offers substantial opportunities for missing middle gentle density infilling. In some cases, existing homes can be converted easily into 2 or 3 unit apartments without changing the character of the neighbourhood. Adding an ADU to the backyard provides additional opportunities for growth.

The smaller lots in the town range from 20m frontage x 35m depth (1/4 acre). These lots are deep enough for a small ADU and could, in many cases, add a basement unit for those houses that have basements.

The intermediate sized lots range from 32m frontage x 40m depth (1/3 acre). This sized lot easily can be adapted for 3-4 units.

The larger lots range from +58m x +90m deep (1.25 acres) and there are many lots that are much larger. These lots can easily accommodate upwards of 6-8 units with some small additions and backyard ADU's or clusters. If the R1 and R2 zoning were relaxed slightly, the Town could add hundreds of additional units without changing the community character at all.

Wolfville's Large Lots

There are a wide range of large lots (>1.5 acres) in the town, mostly associated with older lots created before the Town had sewer and water services. Sewer and water permits much smaller lots than well and septic systems require. These large lots have the potential for subdividing, but with the new proposed multi-unit zoning changes, additional units could be easily added with the cost and hassle of subdivision.

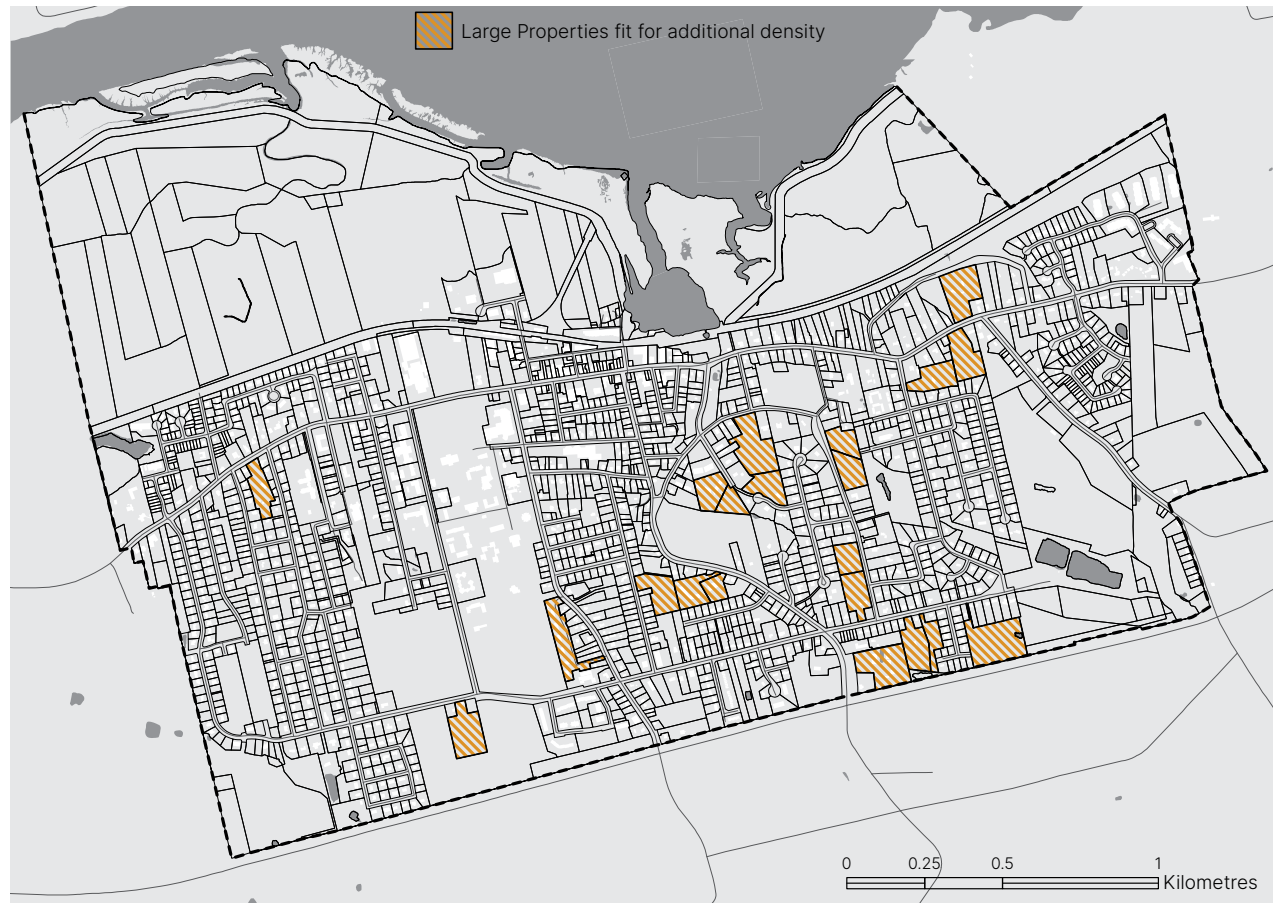
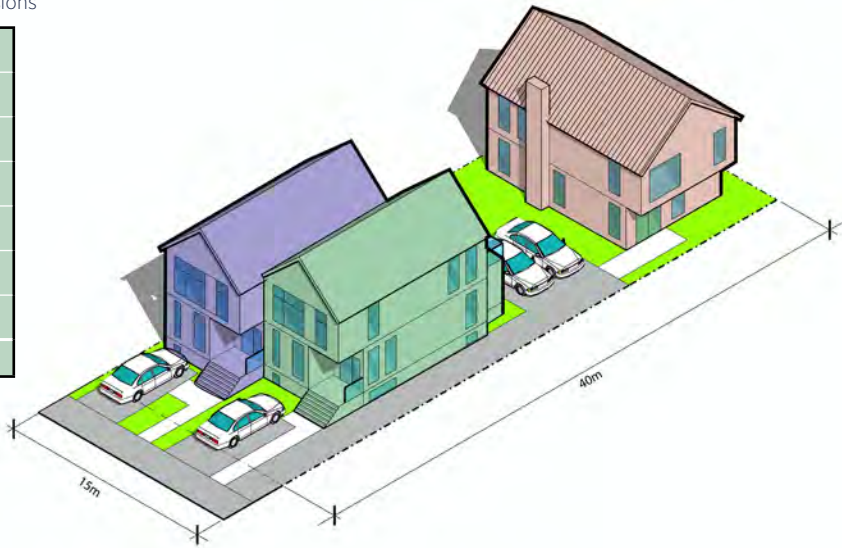


FIGURE 1.13 Typical R1 lot dimensions in Wolfville



Fig.6 – Typical R1 Zone Dimensions

Frontage	16-20m min
Lot Depth	40-50m min
Coverage	50% max
% Hardscape	60% max
Side Yard	1.5m min
Rear Yard	4m min
Height	3-storeys max
Units	3



R1 Narrow Lot (3 unit)

There are many ways to convert a relatively narrow lot into 3 units so long as the minimum lot dimensions are 15-20m. This could include an ADU in the rear (which could have a garage on the groundfloor with a 2 bedroom unit above), and a house conversion to accommodate 2 units as a duplex.

Lots often need to be between 40-50m minimum deep in order to accommodate this many units with an ADU while still meeting the coverage requirements of the R1 zone.

Fig.5 – Typical R1 Zone Dimensions

Frontage	16-20m min
Lot Depth	40-50m min
Coverage	50% max
% Hardscape	60% max
Side Yard	1.5mmin
Rear Yard	4m min
Height	3-storeys max
Units	3



R1 Narrow Lot (3 unit)

There are many ways to convert a relatively narrow lot into 3 units so long as the minimum lot dimensions are 18-20m. This could include an ADU in the rear (which could have a garage on the groundfloor with a 2 bedroom unit above), and a house conversion to accommodate 2 units if the basement can be converted to a unit.

Lots often need to be between 40-50m minimum deep in order to accommodate this many units with an ADU while still meeting the coverage requirements.

R1 Narrow Lot (4 unit)

Lots as narrow as 18-20m can often support a conversion of upwards of 4 units on the lot. This could include an ADU in the rear (which could have a garage on the groundfloor with a 2 bedroom unit above), and a house conversion to accommodate upwards of 3 units if the basement can be converted to a unit.

Lots often need to be between 40-50m minimum deep in order to accommodate this many units while still meeting the coverage requirements.

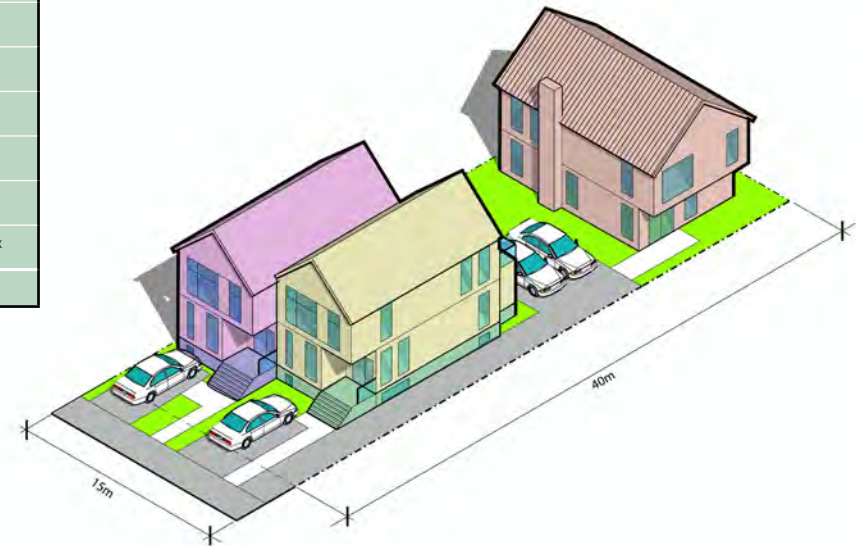
Fig.7 – Typical R1 Zone Dimensions

Frontage	18-20m min
Lot Depth	40-50m min
Coverage	50% max
% Hardscape	60% max
Side Yard	1.5m min
Rear Yard	4m min
Height	3-storeys max
Units	3



Fig.8 – Typical R1 Zone Dimensions in Density Schedule Area

Frontage	15-20m min
Lot Depth	40-50m min
Coverage	60% max
% Hardscape	70% max
Side Yard	1.5m min
Rear Yard	4m min
Height	3-storeys max
Units	5



R1 Narrow Lot (5 unit)

Lots as narrow as 15-20m can often support a conversion of upwards of 5 units on the lot. This could include an ADU in the rear (which could have a garage on the groundfloor with a 2 bedroom unit above), and a house conversion to accommodate upwards of 2 units in the basement and 2 units above.

Lots often need to be between 40-50m minimum deep in order to accommodate this many units while still meeting the coverage requirements. This size lot is the minimum required to support this many lots. Over 4 units in the R1 zone would require that the lot be located within the additional density schedule area. This schedule allows additional lot coverage and greater hardscape percentage.

R1 Lot (2 unit)

On lots that have a relatively large back yard (20x20m), many lots can support an ADU unit consisting of one or two units. A 2 unit ADU can be supported as long as the unit count does not exceed 4 units. In this example, the existing single detached home stays as one unit with one ADU unit added in the rear. The ADU must meet the zone requirements for setbacks and floor plate no larger than 60% of the existing home’s plate size.

Lots often need to be between 40-50m minimum deep in order to accommodate an ADU while still meeting the coverage requirements. A smaller ADU may be allowed on a smaller lot if the existing home front yard setback is below 6m.

R1 Lot (6 unit)

On lots that are deep (>50m) and with a frontage of greater than 32m, many lots can support up to 6 stacked townhouse units. This could include an addition on to an existing home in the rear or potentially the side. The lot would have to be located within the extra density schedule area to exceed 4 units. The ADU must meet the zone requirements for setbacks and floor plate no larger than 60% of the existing home’s plate size. This schedule allows additional lot coverage and greater hardscape percentage. There may be an opportunity for up to 8 units in this format assuming smaller unit sizes of 50-60m2.

Fig.9 – Typical R1 Zone Dimensions

Frontage	20m min
Lot Depth	40-50m min
Coverage	50% max
% Hardscape	60% max
Side Yard	1.5m min
Rear Yard	4m min
Height	3-storeys max
Units	2-3

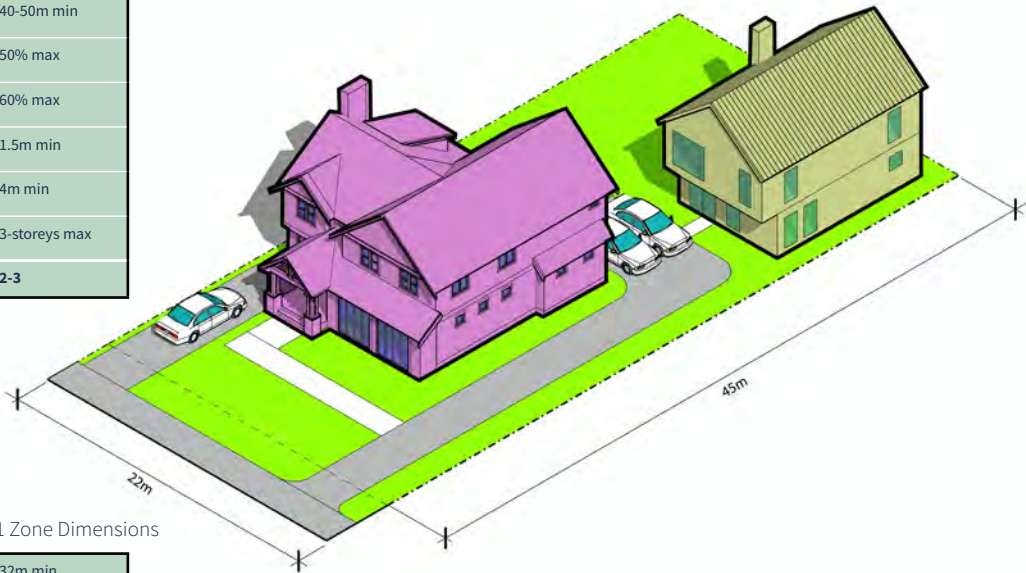


Fig.10 – Typical R1 Zone Dimensions

Frontage	32m min
Lot Depth	50m min
Coverage	60% max
% Hardscape	70% max
Side Yard	1.5m min
Rear Yard	4m min
Height	3-storeys max
Units	4-8



R1 Wide Lot (5-8 unit cluster)

On relatively large lots (50x60m min) where there is ample extra yard area, There may be an opportunity to do a cluster style development creating up to 7 independant ADU units plus the existing home. Cluster developments need to follow the open space and parking requirements of a cluster which includes a dedicated shared open space and a localized parking lot that can either be located in the front yard, side yard or rear yard depending on the lot configuration. These type of developments must be located in the extra desnity schedule area.

Fig.11 – Typical R1 Zone Dimensions

Frontage	48m min
Lot Depth	65m min
Coverage	60% max
% Hardscape	70% max
Side Yard	1.5m min
Rear Yard	4m min
Height	3-storeys max
Units	5-8



R1 Wide Lot (5-8 unit cluster)

On intermediate sized lots (33x40m min) where an existing house is located on one side of the lot, there may be room to add some townhomes, semi, duplex or an ADU without having to subdivide. These type of developments must be located in the extra desnity schedule area.

Fig.12 – Typical R1 Zone Dimensions

Frontage	32m min
Lot Depth	40m min
Coverage	50% max
% Hardscape	60% max
Side Yard	1.5m min
Rear Yard	4m min
Height	3-storeys max
Units	5-8



These zoning amendments will not create a rush of change in the community

On average, Wolfville builds less than 25 units per year, and most of these are new builds on new lots. To meet the housing demand, the Town estimates that between 100-150 units will be needed over the next 10 years. Most of these new units will come from new greenfield developments in the east end and west end which allows for upwards of 1,000 multi-units. The remaining 1/3 of the needed units (30-50 units per year) could come from gentle density from the zoning changes proposed in this report. All tolled, the proposed zoning changes should address the housing needs without changing the small-town character of the Town and without jeopardizing sewer and water services or increasing stormwater runoff.

It would be highly unlikely that a home owner would tear down an R1 home (average value of say \$600k) to build a new 3 or 4 unit building. Instead, most of the changes will be slow and incremental, giving home owners the opportunity to create some additional rental units in the basement or rear of an existing home. This also provides residents some additional economic development opportunities that today don't exist, while also addressing the housing shortages.



Jamie Bamfield Missing Middle Housing Vancouver, examples of new infill between existing homes on larger lots



Chapter 03

Action #2: Parking Review



3.1 The Link between Parking and Housing

The West End Secondary planning area has some additional growth potential, and the recently completed East End Secondary Plan could also accommodate some of the much needed growth, but beyond these areas, the Town needs to explore what options exist to satisfy the missing middle housing needed to address a diverse growing community in Wolfville.

Downtown and the Acadia Campus offer some significant opportunities for residential growth, however, some of the outdated planning policies relating to parking minimums are a significant impediment to new housing.

The connection between parking and housing is a critical aspect of urban planning that directly impacts housing affordability, density, and the overall design of neighbourhoods. The cost of housing is directly linked to parking in a lot of cases. Cities and Towns like Wolfville employ

“parking minimums” in their land use bylaws that require developers to include a certain number of parking spaces for each housing unit, commercial or office use. Outdated parking standards often require parking lots for uses like restaurants, that often exceed the footprint of the building, resulting in many ‘missing teeth’ in our downtowns, or worse yet, new businesses can’t launch because they can’t meet the parking minimums in the bylaw. Providing the needed parking, especially in urban areas, can be very expensive, sometimes ranging from \$35,000 to \$50,000 per space for underground parking and upwards of \$5-6,000 per surface space excluding land costs. The cost of providing parking is usually passed on to renters or buyers in the form of higher rents or home prices, making housing less affordable. In coastal towns like Wolfville, the continued threat of sea level rise and the impacts of parking lots on flooding also creates concerns for stormwater management.

Parking spaces, whether in lots, on streets or in structures, consume valuable land that could otherwise be used for more housing units or community spaces. This is especially significant in dense downtown areas where land is scarce and expensive. Parking minimums often lead to lower housing density because land that could be used to build more units is instead used to meet the parking mandates. This results in fewer housing units being built, exacerbating housing shortages. Parking minimums also encourage car ownership and car-centric urban design, resulting in less walkable neighbourhoods as space is allocated more to vehicles than to pedestrians or cyclists. Parking requirements can also contribute to urban sprawl, as it encourages the development of housing farther away from city centers where land is cheaper.

By reducing or eliminating parking minimums, developers can lower the cost of constructing

new housing, which can result in more affordable housing options for residents, and new business opportunities for new businesses. This approach is increasingly seen as a way to create more sustainable, affordable, and livable towns and cities.

This chapter reviews the current parking conditions on the university and within the downtown, as well as zoning minimum parking requirements and recommends some fundamental changes to increase housing affordability and accessibility. At the same time, this study recommends a number of parking reforms to improve the character of the downtown, to create opportunities for new businesses and new housing, to reduce congestion associated with parking, to encourage other forms of transportation and to better manage the supply of parking in downtown and on the university.

The Study Area

While this study primarily examines the Town Core and Acadia University, the proposed zoning changes could impact development within the whole town. It will most certainly impact future

east end and west end secondary planning areas.

A secondary goal of this chapter is to improve transit, active transportation and walkability. The town also hopes to launch a microtransit pilot project in the near future and encourage more housing in the downtown and on the Acadia campus. These programs could all help reduce the reliance on the automobile and the demand on parking. Cities that prioritize pedestrian-friendly environments and invest in robust public transit systems benefit from decreased car dependency and improved air quality. Residents in these communities have greater access to transportation choices, enhancing mobility and reducing overall transportation costs. Moreover, reallocating space from parking to green spaces or community facilities can enhance neighbourhood aesthetics and quality of life, contributing to a more vibrant urban fabric. This chapter explores a wide range of options for the town and university.

Balancing the Need

Parking remains a critical component of the downtown businesses in Wolfville and for the operation of Acadia University. A 2015 Town

Parking drives up the cost of development and puts the burden on tenants who purchase or rent housing in these developments. Most zoning codes and practices require generous parking supply, and tenants are forced to pay for parking regardless of if they are using it. This reduces housing affordability which has a disproportionate effect on lower-income households.

-“Parking Requirement Impacts on Housing Affordability”, Urbanism Next

Parking survey revealed that almost 40% of the 236 respondents felt that parking was an obstacle to visiting downtown, and that 1/3 of the respondents took 5 minutes or more to find parking. A 2018 parking survey found that the average parking spot occupancy in the Town Core was at 76%. In 2021, Acadia University turned to Hotspot for 90 of their paid parking spots (the remainder are by permit). The combination of permit only and paid parking on the university is likely impacting the availability of the Town's free downtown parking spaces.

This study undertook comprehensive parking counts of downtown and the university in August and September of 2024 to confirm if there are parking problems and what solutions might exist to address the concerns. The findings and outcomes of that work is explored in chapter 3 of this study.

3.2 **Parking Studies: What, Why, and Where?**

In North America, particularly in the United States, there are an estimated three to eight parking spaces per person. This wide range includes on-street parking, parking lots, residential garages, and commercial parking spaces. This high ratio of parking spaces to people is a result of the car-centric infrastructure and planning in many North American cities, where parking availability has been prioritized to accommodate widespread vehicle use. The number varies depending on factors like urban density, zoning laws, and the size of commercial areas.

Although we typically imagine cars in movement, the average personal vehicle is parked for close to 23 hours per day. Parking locations include private areas like driveways, but also many public areas such as the sides of streets, surface parking lots, and commercial parking structures. Excluding driveways for single-detached dwellings, surface parking accounts for approximately 10% of all land area in the Downtown Core of Wolfville and

more than 22% of the surface area of the Town's commercial centre. Unsurprisingly, it follows that anything that takes up this much physical space for a significant amount of time must have a significant cost associated with it.

Historically, the public has expected that parking should be abundant and free at most destinations. This is partially the result of cities and towns being willing to subsidize the high cost of parking to accommodate drivers. Today, there is much more emphasis on trying to optimize the parking supply and price while also better using revenue generating from parking.

At the same time, the dominance of the car seems to be waning as public opinion towards auto-dependency shifts and the cost of owning a vehicle continues to increase. Cities and residents alike are begin to realize that in many ways, car-dependency and an excess of parking acts as a barrier to quality of life improvements relating to walkability, employment, the environment, and especially housing.

One of the best ways to understand the impact that parking has on a municipality is to perform a parking study. While they vary in methodology



and content, The primary objective of conducting parking studies is to gather comprehensive data that informs planning and policy decisions. By analyzing parking demand and behaviour, municipalities can identify underutilized or overburdened areas, leading to more efficient allocation of resources. Moreover, understanding the factors influencing parking demand—such as land use, demographics, and economic activities—enables authorities to tailor parking management strategies effectively. From mitigating traffic and idling to promoting housing development, the insights gained from parking studies play a crucial role in shaping urban mobility frameworks.

Parking studies typically involve a multifaceted approach to data collection. This includes surveys to capture resident opinions, vehicle counts to gauge demand at different times of day and on various days of the week, and occupancy assessments to determine utilization rates of parking facilities. Technologies such as automated counters, drones, and mobile applications are increasingly employed to gather real-time data, providing accurate and detailed insights into parking patterns. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are utilized to map parking supply and demand spatially, facilitating visual

representations that aid in decision-making. Analysis of collected data involves statistical methods to forecast future demand, assess the impact of policy interventions, and evaluate the effectiveness of existing parking infrastructure.

3.3 Wolfville Parking Analysis

Historically, the public has expected that parking should be abundant and free at most destinations (high supply, low cost). Today, there is much more emphasis on trying to optimize the parking supply and price. The introduction of the mobile phone and new smart parking technologies allows parking to be managed intelligently, reducing the supply, to create new opportunities for housing and businesses and unlocking the pent up potential of land in our downtowns and on our campuses.

The affordability crisis has significantly impacted vehicle ownership and use, particularly as the costs of living, housing, and basic necessities rise while wages stagnate for many. For individuals and families facing financial strain, owning

and maintaining a vehicle becomes more challenging. Upfront costs like purchasing a car, as well as ongoing expenses such as insurance, maintenance, fuel, and registration fees, become harder to manage, leading some people to forgo vehicle ownership entirely. This is especially true for lower-income households, where a car can represent a significant portion of their income.

As vehicle ownership becomes less attainable, many people are turning to alternative forms of transportation. Public transit, ride-sharing services, and biking are increasingly being used by those who cannot afford the costs associated with owning a car. In regions with more limited transit options, like Wolfville, a lack of vehicle access can severely limit mobility, making it harder to access employment, education, and essential services, deepening economic inequality.

The affordability crisis also influences how people use vehicles. Those who continue to own cars may drive less frequently to save on fuel and maintenance costs. This can result in changes to commuting habits, with some opting for carpooling or telecommuting when possible. It may also lead to the postponement of necessary vehicle repairs, which can increase safety risks.

Additionally, the financial pressure may push consumers toward cheaper, less fuel-efficient vehicles, contributing to higher long-term costs due to greater fuel consumption and increased emissions.

On a broader societal level, the decline in vehicle ownership among certain demographics can lead to reduced car sales, particularly for new cars, affecting the auto industry. It also underscores the importance of creating more affordable and sustainable transportation options, such as improving public transit systems, supporting electric vehicle adoption, and developing infrastructure for non-car modes of transportation. The affordability crisis highlights the need for policies that address the rising costs of vehicle ownership and that offer viable alternatives for those priced out of car ownership. The town is actively pursuing implementation of its AT plan, and is hopeful that a microtransit strategy will improve transit options for residents within the town. Improvements in ridesharing technologies like Uber and Lyft provide new options for transit as well. Add the impending autonomous driving vehicles shift to the mix, and the future of transportation and parking becomes a very dynamic.

3.4 Existing Parking Conditions

Supply

While statistics vary widely on the amount of space dedicated to parking in downtown areas, values such as 25-50% of total land area are frequently cited. We look at two different areas for comparison:

- 1) Downtown Wolfville – and,
- 2) The University which sits on the western fringe of the downtown.

Table 3.1 shows the overall land use dedicated to off-street parking, buildings, roadways and other land areas.

Breaking down parking a bit further in each of the two areas, Table 3.2 shows the different types of parking present in each area.

The downtown has all free parking for a total of 605 spaces made up of **X** off-street parking and **X** on-street parking spaces. Most of the off-street parking spaces are privately owned except for the town owned Robie Tufts parking lot and the

Wolfville Market lot which is leased by the Town from the university.

Demand and Utilization

Parking demand is high during the weekday work periods, but many lots and on-street spaces are empty during the weekends and evenings. The total volume of traffic entering the downtown core during the weekday peak hours of traffic is in the range of 4000 – 5000 vehicles. A significant portion of this traffic will require a parking spot, though it is also assumed that there are some delivery, pick-up/drop-off, and through trips that will not require a parking spot. If all vehicles required a parking spot, it suggests that only 70 percent of the parking spaces would be used.

In reviewing aerial video images/videos of parking spaces in the study area during a typical weekday peak hour, it again suggests that many parking areas are underutilized. Figure 56 shows the estimated utilization of the various parking areas throughout the downtown. Based on the observations, there appears to be no shortage of parking spaces when looking at the downtown overall. It was noted that areas immediately adjacent to the major employment centers are well used, though parking areas in relatively close proximity are still frequently underutilized.

TABLE 3.1 Land use coverage

% Land Area	Core Area		Acadia	
	m²	% of Total	m²	% of Total
Parking Areas	44,770	10.9%	41,593	6.2%
Building Footprints	59,595	14.5%	53,555	8.0%
Public Road Right-of-Way	77,665	18.9%	33,355	5.0%
Other Land	227,939	55.6%	541,920	80.8%
TOTAL AREA	409,970	100.0%	670,423	100.0%



TABLE 3.2 Parking Breakdown

# of Parking Spaces	Core Area		Acadia	
	Spaces	% of Total	Spaces	% of Total
Off-Street Lots				
On-Street Parking				
1-Hour				
3-Hour				
All Day				
TOTAL SPACES	1,520	100.0%	1,500	100.0%

Parking Counts

A series of parking counts were conducted in Wolfville during the late summer and early fall of 2024. Parking counts were performed using drone imaging technology which scanned the core of the Town and sections of Acadia University to produce high-quality aerial images. The drone flights were performed during a morning session and afternoon session on each scanning day to ensure that traffic patterns within individual days could be monitored and assessed.

Scanning days were selected to capture a variety of sources of trip generation; scanning days were spread across both weekdays and weekends to capture employment- or recreation-based activities while other flights were also performed before and after the return of Acadia University students for the fall semester to monitor the influx in new vehicles. Certain events, like the Wolfville Farmers Market or Acadia move-in day, were also targeted with dedicated scanning days to capture event-based traffic and parking.

Once the images has been captured and processed using a photogrammetry software, the images were then analyzed with an object detection deep learning model produced by Esri. This tool, available for use within ArcGIS Pro, analyzes aerial imagery and detects the presence of vehicles. The tool then creates a polygon around each vehicle, allowing for accurate parking counts for the analysis.

Parking counts produced by the deep learning model were manually checked for accuracy before being analyzed further within ArcGIS Pro. The vehicle polygons were overlaid on existing parking lot data from the Town to determine counts and occupancy rates for each. The existing data was updated prior to the analysis by using the high quality aerial imagery in order to assure that the parking inventory data was accurate for each lot.

Limitations

A number of limitations exist within this method of vehicle detection that lead to a small margin of error. Some vehicles may have been missed by both the detection model and the manual check if they are obstructed by foliage or in movement while the photos were taken. Other vehicles in movement may have been counted twice since they were moving alongside the drone during scanning and consequently, appear more than once in the imagery. Vehicles outside of the typical size range for passenger vehicles (E.g., busses, motorcycles) may also have been missed by the software. Although present, these limitations only affect a small fraction of the vehicles observed and do not change the findings substantially.

Once vehicle parking counts and occupancy rates were established, data was visualized and analyzed in ArcGIS Pro as well as Excel to identify patterns and themes across the two primary study areas.

Results

Within the observed parking areas at Acadia University and the Core area, there are a total of 945 and 1,520 spaces respectfully. It should be noted that although almost the entirety of the core area was scanned, some parts of the Acadia Campus were left out of the assessment. Namely, the Cutten House parking lot and University Avenue parking areas were omitted from the study. Smaller street parking areas on campus were also left out. This is due to the limitations of the drone flights and the ability to only cover so much territory in a single flight. The remaining lots on Highland Avenue and Main Street belonging to Acadia were all scanned, comprising the majority of Acadia's parking inventory.

Together, the observed parking areas on Acadia's campus and in the Core Area could

accommodate a total of 2,455 vehicles. The majority of these parking spaces (935) fell within the Institutional Category, belonging to Acadia university. Nearly a third of the spaces are located in private parking belonging to businesses and residential dwellings. The remaining 703 spaces consist of the publicly-owned parking lots and on-street parking areas within Wolfville.

On average, the entire study area had an occupancy of 42.3%, leaving approximately 1,417 parking spaces open. This average is consistent across both the core area (42.6% average occupancy) and the Acadia campus (42.3% average occupancy), but rises slightly when looking at the public-only lots (51.2% average occupancy). Across the entire study period, the NSLC parking lot on Front Street was the busiest with an average occupancy of 84.3%. Similarly, the Wheelock Dining Hall parking lot on Highland Avenue was the busiest on the Acadia campus with an average occupancy of 83.7%. These figures point to an existing abundance of parking within Wolfville.

However, there is more nuance to the



conversation on parking outside of general trends. While average occupancies paint a clear picture of the top-down perspective of parking in the Town, the day-to-day reality for many individuals in Wolfville may not necessarily reflect the fact that 42% of spaces are free on average.

The parking count analysis showed that the availability of parking within Wolfville varies considerably depending on time of day, week, and year while also being heavily influenced by events. For example, the Wolfville Farmer's Market takes place every Saturday morning year round from 8:30am - 1:00pm. The parking counts performed on September 14th captured the parking generated by this event in and around the market.

Figures BLANK and BLANK shows the 5-minute walkshed around the farmer's market. Within this walkshed, 956 parking spaces can be found. On the morning of September 14th, 415 of these spaces were full, resulting in an occupancy rate of 43.5%. While this occupancy rate is already elevated compared to the average for the rest of the

core area during the same period, the high demand for parking becomes more apparent when examining the public lots.

54.4% of the 388 public parking spaces within the 5-minute market walkshed were occupied during the morning scanning session. This figure is substantially higher than the 37.7% average occupancy seen throughout the rest of the core, pointing to the impact that event-based traffic can have on parking availability.

The figures from the market day also reveal notable trends about the shifts from morning to afternoon. It can be clearly observed in Figures BLANK and BLANK that following the closure of the market, parking occupancy around the facility dropped significantly with most lots on or around Elm Avenue falling close to 0%. At the same time, occupancy rates in the rest of the walkshed increased in the afternoon as businesses opened and other events took place.

The general trend observed across the scanning days was a notable increase in occupancy rates during the afternoon sessions. On the market scanning day, for

example, occupied parking spaces across the entire study area rose from 948 in the morning to 1,187 in the afternoon, a growth rate of over 25%. However, within the localized market walkshed, occupancy rates fell slightly from the morning to the afternoon, pointing again to the impact that popular events can have on parking demand.

The demand for parking also varied depending on the type of parking. While afternoon counts generally increased by ~25% across all lot types, the growth rate for solely public lots exceeded 50% on some scanning days. This is paired with the aforementioned elevated rates of occupancy across public lots. This result is unsurprising as the free public lots in Wolfville do not carry the risk of penalty that some private parking lots may impose on individuals who are not customers. The public parking lots in Wolfville also have clear signage whereas some of the private lots lack any indication of ownership or permissibility for parking. This wayfinding component helps direct drivers to public lots when searching for a place to park.

Wolfville Market 5-Minute Walkshed Morning Parking Counts

This map illustrates the morning parking counts for the Wolfville Market 5-Minute Walkshed. The walkshed is outlined with a dashed line and includes a central parking icon. The map shows various parking lots, each with a color-coded percentage indicating the count. The colors used are yellow, orange, and red. The text 'Wolfville Farmer's Market' is written in a cursive font near the center of the walkshed. The map also shows surrounding streets and green spaces.

Lot Color	Parking Count (%)
Yellow	5.6%, 16.7%, 33.3%, 4%, 0%, 17.6%, 29.7%, 11.1%, 0%, 0%, 3.9%, 10%, 20.6%, 88.3%
Orange	23.9%, 29.3%, 75%, 82.4%, 70.4%, 100%, 81.8%, 42.9%, 50%, 56.3%, 58.3%, 14.3%, 0%
Red	55%, 0%, 0%, 77.8%, 100%, 66.7%, 92.5%, 57.1%, 40%, 62.5%, 100%, 20%, 100%, 61.5%, 62.2%, 63.6%, 74.3%, 0%

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Wolfville Market 5-Minute Walkshed Afternoon Parking Counts

This map displays the 5-minute walkshed around the Wolfville Farmer's Market, indicated by a dashed line. The market location is marked with a fork and knife icon. Various street segments are color-coded and labeled with their respective afternoon parking counts as percentages. The counts range from 0% to 145.5%.

Street Segment	Parking Count (%)
Segment 1 (Red)	69.6%
Segment 2 (Yellow)	5.6%
Segment 3 (Orange)	31.7%
Segment 4 (Yellow)	2.4%
Segment 5 (Yellow)	5%
Segment 6 (Yellow)	0%
Segment 7 (Yellow)	0%
Segment 8 (Yellow)	0%
Segment 9 (Yellow)	0%
Segment 10 (Yellow)	11.1%
Segment 11 (Orange)	35.3%
Segment 12 (Orange)	29.7%
Segment 13 (Orange)	0%
Segment 14 (Orange)	29.4%
Segment 15 (Yellow)	0%
Segment 16 (Yellow)	11.1%
Segment 17 (Yellow)	0%
Segment 18 (Yellow)	0%
Segment 19 (Yellow)	19.3%
Segment 20 (Yellow)	0%
Segment 21 (Red)	63.6%
Segment 22 (Red)	72.5%
Segment 23 (Red)	50%
Segment 24 (Red)	40%
Segment 25 (Red)	100%
Segment 26 (Red)	37.5%
Segment 27 (Red)	60%
Segment 28 (Red)	40%
Segment 29 (Red)	57.1%
Segment 30 (Red)	78.9%
Segment 31 (Red)	100%
Segment 32 (Red)	44.4%
Segment 33 (Red)	0%
Segment 34 (Red)	93.8%
Segment 35 (Red)	94.3%
Segment 36 (Red)	66.7%
Segment 37 (Red)	0%
Segment 38 (Red)	64.3%
Segment 39 (Red)	145.5%
Segment 40 (Red)	73.3%
Segment 41 (Red)	33.3%
Segment 42 (Orange)	33.3%
Segment 43 (Orange)	30.8%
Segment 44 (Orange)	63.3%
Segment 45 (Orange)	35.3%
Segment 46 (Orange)	125%
Segment 47 (Orange)	70%
Segment 48 (Yellow)	5.9%

Town of Wolfville

3.5 Parking Enforcement

The Town and university operate their own separate enforcement divisions as described below.

The Town

The Town of Wolfville has one full-time and one part-time (20 hours per week) parking enforcement officers. They are tasked with overseeing monitoring and ticketing for the town's public streets and parking lots including the all-day, 3 hour time-limit, the 1-hour time limit (library), and the 20 minute (Acadia Street) lots and streets (see Fig 18). On top of the time limits, they must also enforce the winter parking ban (Dec 1 - March 31, from midnight to 6am, and 1hr before a snowfall event to 1 hour after a snowfall event). The RCMP occasionally tickets for winter ban infractions but most ticketing is done by the town.

Ticketing is currently done manually by chalking tires, entering offences through carbon copy

tickets, and on a GIS tracking app. The approach is very time intensive. Tickets are passed on to the town administrator for mailing out and after 60 days, uncollected tickets are passed on to the Kentville Court for a summons. There has only been one parking dispute in 3 years, so it is rare that the officer has to attend court dates.

New parking enforcement technologies that should be explored and adopted in the town include a Mobile Licence Plate Recognition (LPR) to enable automatic licence plate recognition from the Town vehicle. This system includes a camera-mounted compliance device that automatically identifies the parking status of parked vehicles without chalking. Information collected by the LPR vehicles can alert the Compliance Officer of a parking violations.

The Hotspot App also offers a dedicated enforcement software solution which includes an LPR scanner, ticket management, custom parking management and ticketing metrics.

Acadia University

Acadia manages about 1500 permitted parking spaces and 90 paid public parking spaces (~1600

spaces) for its 4500 students and 240 full-time staff, resulting in a parking ratio of about 0.33 spaces per person. The university brings in about \$140k per year for its \$160 parking permit so that's about 875 permits per year being sold, or 1.7 spaces per permit. The university believes there is no shortage of parking on the campus but there are sometimes complaints about the distribution of parking relative to academic buildings. The athletic parking lot is rarely full. The university also offers Wolfville residents a \$50/yr parking pass for the athletics buildings to access its facilities.

The 90 paid public parking spaces are coin metered but are also hotspot enabled. The revenue from the spaces in 2023 was about \$30k. The metered parking was installed in 2019 and at the beginning about 5% of the revenue came from Hotspot vs 95% from coins. In the last year, about 60% of all payments have come from Hotspot vs 40% from coins, with year over year increases in app paid parking. With many cities in Atlantic Canada adopting Hotspot, it has become a popular and easy to use platform which is expected to increase in adoption to other cities and smaller towns like Wolfville.

Parking is enforced on weekdays only from 8am-6pm. There is one dedicated parking enforcement officer who spends 75% of their time solely on parking enforcement but the shift staff are all trained on parking enforcement as well. The university uses a hand held license plate reader provided by Hotspot, which does automatic ticketing and ticket printing. A similar system would be ideal for the Town. Tickets are managed privately by the university and overdue tickets are not sent to court so there is little recourse for recapture. However, students and staff tickets can be recouped from wages or tuition, it is harder for non-local tickets to be recouped. The university will boot a car for more than 3 offences. There are no winter parking restrictions as there is in the town.

The total revenue from parking is about \$200k per year but that likely does not cover the expenses of enforcement wages, property taxes and maintenance (snow removal, asphalt patching, line painting, etc). The university has no current plans to raise rates, and there is no immediate need to expand parking. Many universities are moving to remove roads and parking from the centre of the campus and to relocate to the fringe

making the campus more walkable. The campus landscape plan makes that suggestion but to date there has been a slow conversation of roads into public walkways with the most recent being the Horton Avenue conversion.

Figure 15 — License Plate recognition (LPR) technology

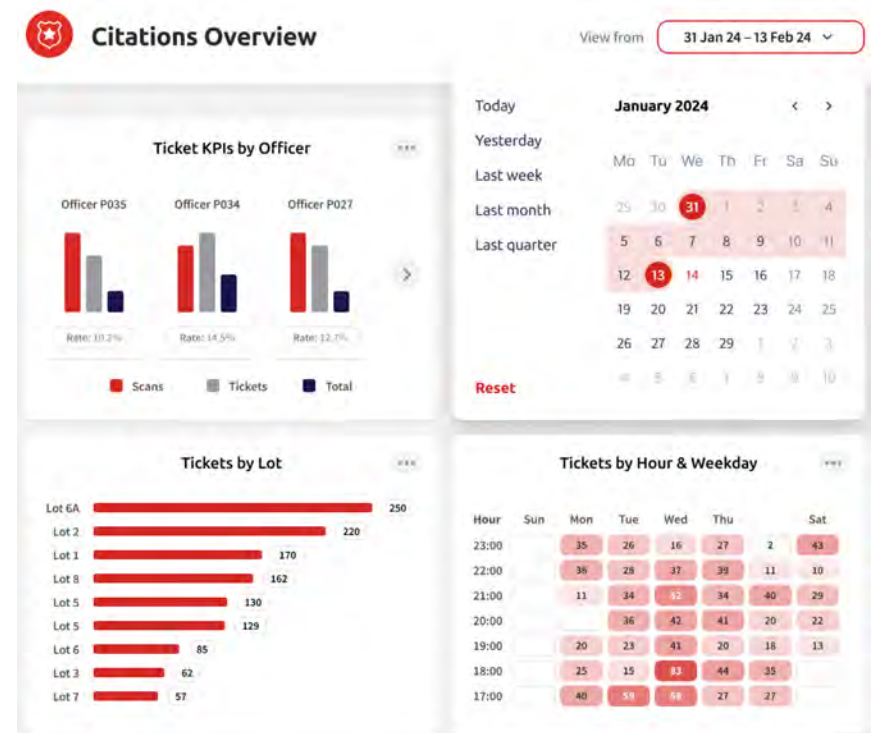
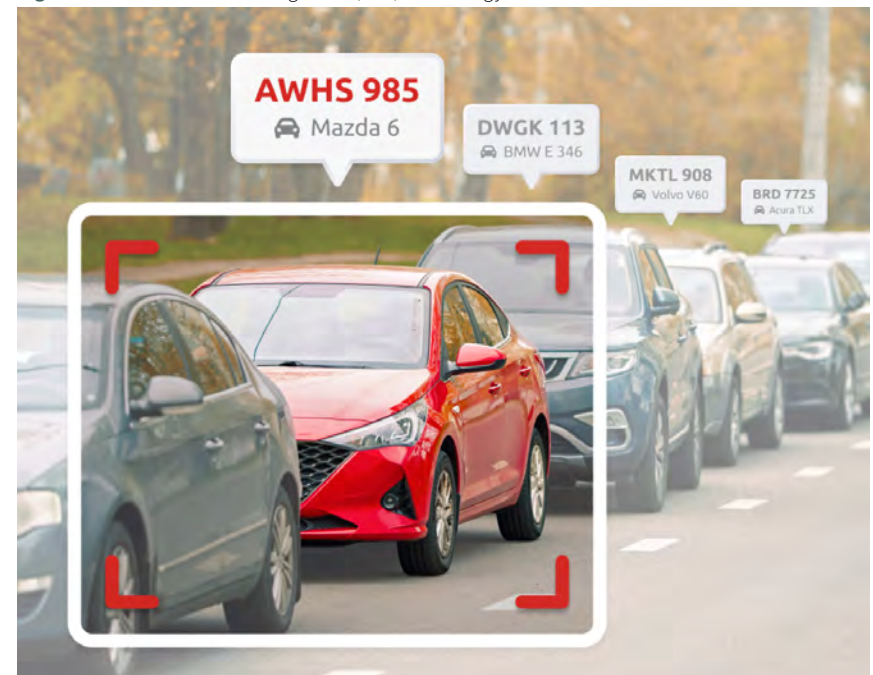
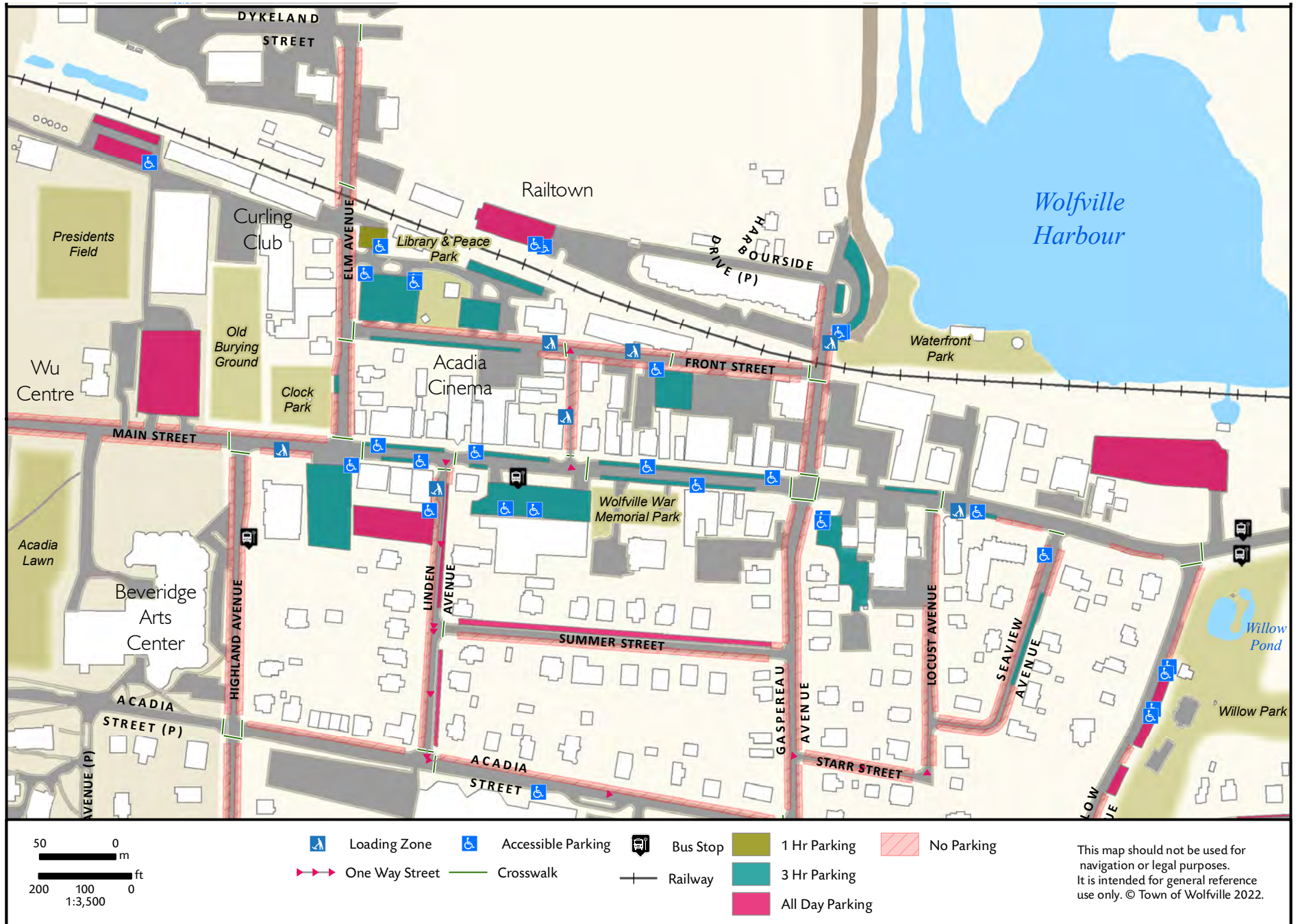


Figure 16 — Hotspot Parking Compliance and Enforcement software

Figure 17 — Existing Parking Time Limit Map



3.6 What are Parking Minimums?

Parking minimums are the minimum parking requirements set out in a zoning bylaw that must be met to permit a certain land use. For instance in Wolfville, a commercial use with no fixed seating (like a store or shop) requires 1 parking space for every 10m² of total floor area. So a small 200m² shoe store would require 20 parking spaces. The average parking space and drive aisle to access that stall occupy about 30-33m² per stall, so that means that a 200m² store requires three times more parking area (600m²) than the store floor area. If that 200m² building footprint included 3 storeys of commercial uses, it would necessitate 60 parking spaces or over half an acre of parking (100 parking spaces take up about 1 acre of land), and almost 10 times more parking than the footprint of the building.

This is why in areas like New Minas, or other commercial town centres, there is often 3-5 times more parking than there are building footprints, often destroying the small town charm that makes towns like Wolfville, Baddeck, and Chester so unique. Excessive parking requirements not only destroy the small town character, but they can

also prevent businesses from establishing in the first place. Some bylaws require 1 parking space per table in a restaurant, so a small 10 table bistros cant operate without 10 parking spaces. The small lot fabric in Wolfville prevents the addition of new parking spaces, or on through-lots (like the lots that front on both Main Street and Front Street), the rear frontage is filled with parking instead of encouraging new housing or new businesses to operate.

Many towns have dealt with these challenges by allowing for ‘cash in lieu’, meaning that the businesses must pay the Town for the parking spaces that cannot be met. The logic is that the money can be used to build municipal parking nearby, though this is not always the case as the money is not earmarked for parking improvements. Wolfville has an \$8,000 per stall policy which is dedicated to a Parking Reserve Fund to fund streetscape and parking upgrades in the Core Area.

An alternate train of thought being promoted by those towns and cities who are reducing or

eliminating parking minimums, is that if these parking lots can be developed as new buildings, the additional tax revenue from the higher assessed value could be used to fund these same parking and streetscape improvements. This idea also suggests that the Town should give consideration to permitting more than one building on a lot in the downtown.

What are the problems with excessive parking requirements?

There are a wide range of limitations and problems associated with excessive parking requirements in zoning bylaws. These can be particularly pronounced in small towns like Wolfville and include;

Environmental Impacts

- » More parking spaces mean more cars, leading to higher greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution, and stormwater runoff. Paved surfaces can also contribute to the urban heat island

effect, where cities become significantly warmer than surrounding areas.

- » In flood prone areas like Wolfville, large parking lots contribute to additional flooding as a result of impermeable surfaces.
- » Large parking lots take up space that could otherwise be used for parks, community gardens, new buildings or other green areas that help mitigate urban environmental issues.
- » Requiring large amounts of parking encourages the development of car-dependent areas, spreading cities out over larger areas. This leads to more land being consumed, less efficient infrastructure, and longer commutes.

Economic Costs

- » Developers are often required to provide a minimum number of parking spaces, which can significantly increase the cost of construction. These costs are usually passed on to consumers, making housing and goods more expensive.
- » Land dedicated to parking is not

generating as much economic value as it could be if used for businesses, housing, or other productive purposes.

Impact on Urban Design

- » Excessive parking requirements can lead to large parking lots and wide streets, making neighbourhoods less walkable and less accessible to pedestrians and cyclists.
- » Parking requirements often result in ‘missing teeth’ on the street to accommodate the needed parking between buildings. These gaps in the street reduce walkability and the urban character of the street.
- » Large areas devoted to parking can lead to monotonous, unattractive urban environments that lack the vibrant, mixed-use spaces that make cities lively and engaging.
- » On through-lots streets like between Man Street and Front Street, the rear yard lots are used for parking instead of potential building sites, reducing the urban character of this street

- » If this parking is permitted between the building and the street (like Shoppers Drug Mart), the walking experience is severely degraded and the urban character is that of a strip mall or a parking lot surrounding a commercial building.
- » Large parking lots in the centre of town occupy land that, in some cases, may be better suited to parks like the Robie Tufts area.

Social Inequity

- » High parking requirements favour car owners, disadvantaging those who cannot afford a car or choose not to own one. This can lead to reduced access to jobs, services, and amenities for low-income residents. This can be pronounced in university towns like Wolfville where many students don’t own cars.
- » In some cases, the space required for parking can lead to the displacement of residents or businesses, particularly in dense urban areas.

Traffic Congestion

- » By making it easier to drive and park, excessive parking can lead to more cars on the road, increasing traffic congestion, especially during peak times.
- » Free parking leads to parking spaces that don't 'turn-over' frequently resulting in significant traffic associated with more people 'cruising' for parking spaces and generating additional traffic.

Reduced Incentive for Public Transit

- » When ample free parking is available, people are less likely to use public transit, reducing the viability of public transportation systems and making it harder to justify investments in transit infrastructure.

Overall, excessive parking requirements can have widespread negative impacts, shaping urban environments in ways that prioritize cars over people, efficiency, and sustainability. Reducing or eliminating these requirements is often seen as a key step in promoting more sustainable and equitable urban development.

Where do Minimums Come From?

Highly elaborate parking minimums have been developed since the dawn of zoning which came at about the same time as automobiles. Most planning bylaws have dedicated parking general requirement sections that outline the parking requirements for every different potential land use.

The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), which was founded in 1930, developed a ITE Parking Generation Manual to help planners and developers establish parking requirements for their developments. However, many agree that the ITE has created more problems, particularly when it comes to parking, due to its recommended parking minimum requirements which did not consider other forms of transportation like transit, biking or people living in downtowns. Many of the standards assumed that downtowns were commercial only and that everyone drove to downtown.

Like many engineering standards, these parking manual standards were adopted by towns and safety factors were applied to further bloat the requirements. Some of the most beloved

downtowns in North America could not be recreated today due to these bloated parking requirements which in many cases require more area for parking than the building footprint that the parking serves. Take downtown New Minas or Sydney as an example, where the urban character is totally defined by parking. In Halifax, parking minimums were eliminated in the downtown back in 2011, and the change was very likely instrumental in the large scale construction boom that happened along with the introduction of form-based codes when the changes came into force.

3.7 Parking Reforms

Many cities and towns across the Canada and the US are undertaking major parking reforms moving away from parking minimums, or even instituting new parking maximums to restrict parking and encourage other forms of transportation like transit.

For example, Spokane, Washington, recently passed reforms that make off-street parking optional for all housing within a half-mile of transit stops. This move is designed to reduce housing costs and encourage the development of more housing units without the burden of unnecessary parking spaces. Similar reforms have been implemented in cities like Buffalo, which saw significant development gains after eliminating parking minimums in 2017.

In smaller cities and towns, there is also evidence that eliminating parking minimums can spur economic growth. Fayetteville, Arkansas, and Sandpoint, Idaho, are examples where reduced parking requirements have enabled the redevelopment of vacant or underused properties, leading to increased tax revenues and vibrant new

businesses and new community spaces.

These trends highlight a growing recognition that flexible parking policies can lead to more sustainable and affordable urban development.

Parking Minimums vs Actuals

For many of the jurisdictions that reduced or eliminated their parking requirements,

it did translate into a parking shortfall that compromised business operations. On the contrary, most developers and the banks that underwrite projects, have their own formula for parking requirements that often exceed the minimum municipal requirement. For instance, suburban projects in HRM that have poor transit service, developers will still require more than one parking spots per unit in order get bank financing. But attitudes are shifting as developers

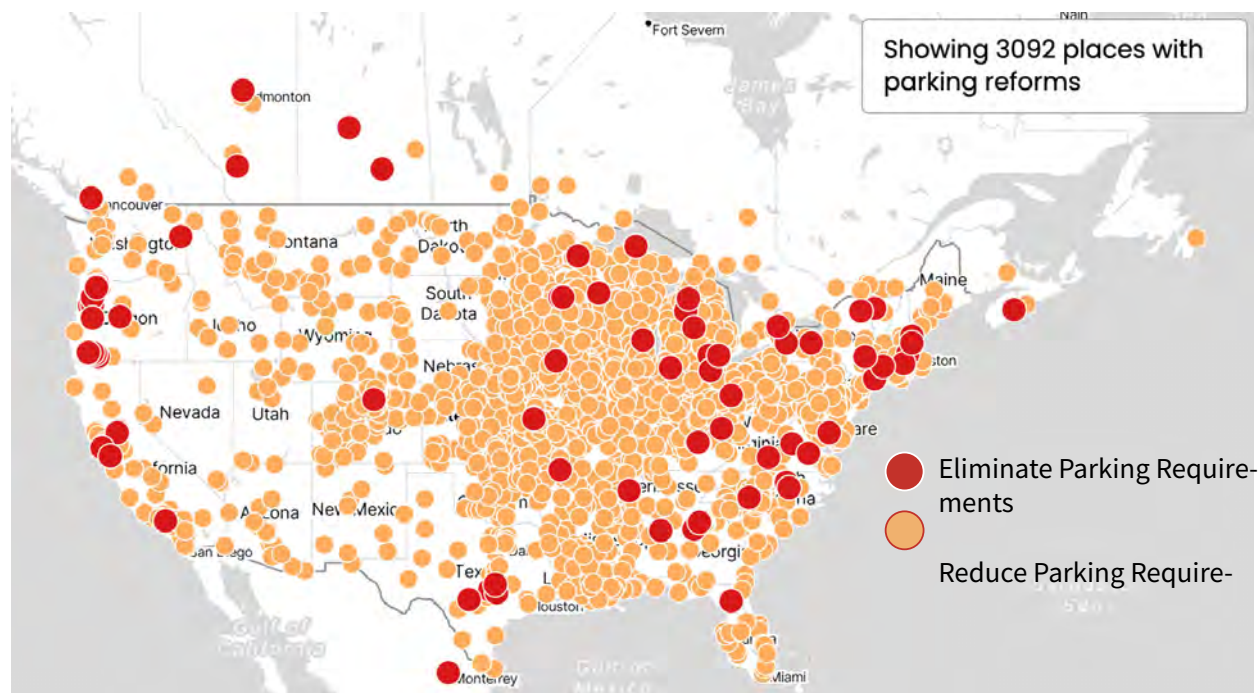


Figure 18 — Parking Reform Network Map of Towns and Cities

strive to create more affordable housing options. Decoupling parking from housing is an important step in addressing the missing middle housing needs.

Developers can still build as much or as little parking as they think will be required to make their development economically viable, however, for businesses or housing that do not need excessive parking, they are not forced to build parking to meet a municipal standard. This allows business operators and residential developers more flexibility in undertaking new developments to improve the feasibility of the development without having to be governed by strict municipal standards. From the Town's perspective, it may have to pay a little more for enforcement and for new on and off-street parking, but the new businesses and new residential units will pay additional taxes that most often pay for any additional costs.

Adjusting the parking minimums down in the bylaw, doesn't always translate into reduced parking when developments are built. It just provides developers with more options, and the benefits accrue to the municipality either way. It may also mean that the Town needs more

enforcement to ensure that residents are not parking on neighbouring streets or in public parking lots.

What happens when parking requirements are removed or reduced?

Reducing or removing parking requirements usually come with some opposition from residents and businesses who want to have plentiful and abundant parking close-by. While some of these concerns may be founded, the positive impacts of reducing parking minimums usually far outweigh the negatives and this is why many towns and cities are reducing or removing the parking requirements from parts of their zoning bylaws.

The [Parking Reform Network](#), has tracked over 3092 communities that have undertaken parking reforms over the last 8 years with some reducing their parking requirements, and others eliminating all parking requirements (see Fig #). The group found that 20% of the cities or towns have reduced or eliminated their parking minimums, mostly in their Central Business Districts, Heritage Districts or Main Street areas. Most of the parking reforms have started in commercial districts, with residential parking changes following as a close second. Some communities have shifted from

parking minimums to parking maximums, which restrict the amount of parking permitted rather than requiring a minimum amount of parking.

Opponents of eliminating or reducing parking requirements often cite the following concerns:

Parking Shortages

There is often a perception that reducing parking requirements will reduce the amount of available parking. Parking reforms don't usually lead to a reduction in parking spots right away, but may over time as parking spaces get redeveloped into new uses if the Town is not actively increasing the on-street or off-street public parking supply. Introducing more public parking can address the potential future shortfall; balancing the supply from less private parking to more public parking.

Some fear that reducing the parking supply can drive up the cost of parking, making it more expensive for those who rely on driving, particularly in areas where public transit options are limited. For downtowns that have ample free parking like Wolfville, phasing-in paid parking may eventually be needed to reduce any future parking shortfalls. The intent of paid parking is reduce the

tendency to park all day without consequence in specific geographic areas.

Impact on Local Businesses

Businesses that need their private parking supply, will preserve their parking even if the parking requirements are reduced. Businesses that don't need as much parking as the bylaw requires could potentially reduce their private parking to expand or redevelop their businesses.

As businesses shift to more abundant localized public parking, the location, availability and cost of public parking could impact businesses depending on their location and access to parking.

Increased Illegal Parking

Opponents of reducing parking minimums worry that reducing the parking supply could lead to more illegal parking behaviours, such as double parking or parking in restricted areas, further disrupting traffic flow. This can be overcome with additional public parking and improved monitoring and policing to better regulate illegal behaviours.

Equity Concerns

Low-income residents who cannot afford increased parking costs or who live in areas with poor public transit options may be disproportionately affected by a paid parking strategy. A corollary is that residents without cars are no longer forced to pay for the subsidized cost of parking that they do not use.

Some fear that more localized parking could make it more difficult for people with disabilities to find convenient, accessible parking, if it is not designed into the program from the start. Ensuring an adequate distribution of accessible parking spaces must be part of the strategy for reducing parking minimums.

Potential for Neighbourhood Conflicts

In residential areas, reduced parking requirements for new developments can lead to conflicts between existing residents and newcomers over limited parking. Again, enforcement must be part of the strategy when reducing parking minimums.

Opponents of parking reforms worry that reducing parking requirements in downtown may increase parking in adjacent residential neighbourhoods,

creating tensions and parking shortages there. Again, parking enforcement is usually needed as well as other mechanisms like local parking passes to reduce impacts on adjoining neighbourhoods.

Transition Challenges

Reducing parking requirements might require a cultural shift in how people think about transportation and car ownership, which can take time and face resistance.

Opponents worry that the transition period could be challenging, with short-term disruptions in parking availability and increased tension among residents and businesses. Again, parking reductions are not usually part of parking reforms as the supply is usually balanced.

Many of these parking reform concerns can be addressed by (1) maintaining or enhancing the parking supply by providing more on and off-street public parking to balance any loss of private parking, (2) improving parking enforcement, (3) introducing paid parking in busy localized areas to ensure higher turn-over of the best parking, (4) improving other forms of transportation like AT, public transit, car sharing, etc.

Canadian Parking Reforms

Many Canadian cities and even some small towns have reformed their parking requirements to eliminate or drastically reduce their parking requirements to encourage more housing and improve business opportunities in their downtowns. The following examples illustrate the new approach:

Lunenburg, NS

In September, 2021, the Town of Lunenburg's adopted its new Land Use Bylaw and Subdivision Bylaw, remove all minimum parking requirements. The Town replaced automobile parking with required bicycle parking spaces depending on the use. The Town has also set EV parking requirements for future structured parking at a rate of no less than 50% parking require Level 1 (120 volt) charging and 10% Level 2 (220 volt) charging.

Halifax, NS

Halifax's released its Centre Plan in 2019, drastically reducing the parking requirements in most of the zones and eliminating parking requirements in its downtown zones. In 2024, as part of the its Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) zoning updates, the municipality

removed all parking requirements for all residential uses, and set new lot coverage maximums for parking in residential zones with no more than 30% of the front yard for parking uses.

Moncton, NB

Moncton removed its parking requirements in its Downtown Zone in a recent update of its Zoning Bylaw.

Ottawa, ON

Ottawa has removed its parking requirements in the city center and eliminated its residential parking requirements for buildings less than 4 stories. The remaining parking requirements were reduced as part of its most recent bylaw updates.

Elliot Lake, ON

This town of about 11,000 people removed its parking requirements in the C1 Central Commercial Zone, except for apartment dwellings. Existing buildings in all other zones in the Town are also exempt from parking, so long as the floor area is not increased.

Dryden, ON

This small town of about 7,000 residents removed its parking requirements in the Downtown Commercial (CD) Zone, for any commercial uses which are less than 900 square metres in gross leaseable area.

Merritt, BC

This small town of about 7,000 people removed its parking requirements for food and drinking establishments in city center. A Parking in lieu program was introduced that allows developers in the city center zone to pay fees to the city to enable them to build without parking spaces for other uses.

These are just a few examples of towns and cities who have undertaken parking reforms with great success, leading to an increase in housing and businesses in downtown areas.

3.8 Rethinking Wolfville’s Parking Minimums

Wolfville is not immune to the ‘overzoning’ of parking in its downtown core and for much of its residential zones. As mentioned previously, a restaurant with no fixed seating must provide 1 parking space per 10m² of floor area. So even a small 100m² bagel shop would be required to supply 10 parking spaces or \$80,000 cash-in-lieu. At the same time, 3-bedroom apartment units are penalized by requiring 1.25 spaces per unit plus an additional half space for each 3-bedroom unit.

Following the latest parking reform trends and to encourage additional housing in Wolfville, the town is considering the following table showing existing requirements:

TABLE 3.3 Residential Parking Requirements

Type of Use	Existing Minimum Parking Requirement	TBD
Single-detached, Semi-detached, Duplex	1.25 parking spaces for each dwelling unit plus ½ space for each bedroom in excess of 3 bedrooms per dwelling unit.	
Townhouse and Multi-Unit Dwellings (three units or more)	1 space for each dwelling unit plus ½ space for each bedroom in excess of 3 bedroom in a dwelling unit in the Core Area 1.25 spaces for each dwelling unit plus ½ space for each bedroom in excess of 3 bedroom in a dwelling unit outside the Core Area	
Short Term Rentals	0.5 parking space per rental unit.	
Single Room Occupancies	1 parking space plus 1 parking space per rental room in excess of 3 rooms	
Home Based Business	1 parking space	
Any use not specified above	1 parking space per 30 square metres of total floor area.	

TABLE 3.4 Commercial Parking Requirements

Type of Use	Existing Minimum Parking Requirement	Proposed Parking Requirement
Clubs, Educational Facilities, Places of Assembly, Places of Entertainment, Places of Worship, Restaurants, Sports Facilities, Churches, church halls, auditoria, university academic, research and administration buildings, restaurants, theatres, arenas, halls, stadia, private clubs and other places of assembly.	Fixed seats: 1 parking space per 5 seats, or 3 metres of bench space. No fixed seats: one parking space per 10 square metres of total floor area.	
Day-Care Facilities	1 parking space per 50 square metres of total floor area.	
Curling Rinks and similar facilities	1 parking space for each 2 persons in the designed capacity of the establishment (designed capacity shall mean 6 persons per bowling lane and 8 persons curling per sheet). In other parts of the building, additional parking spaces shall be provided in accordance with the requirements set out in the Bylaw for the use to which the other parts of the building may be used.	
Accommodations	1 parking space per suite or rental unit plus requirements for restaurants or other facilities contained therein	
Warehouses, transport terminals and general industrial uses.	1 parking space per 50 square metres of total floor area.	
Any use not specified above.	1 parking space per 30 square metres of total floor area.	

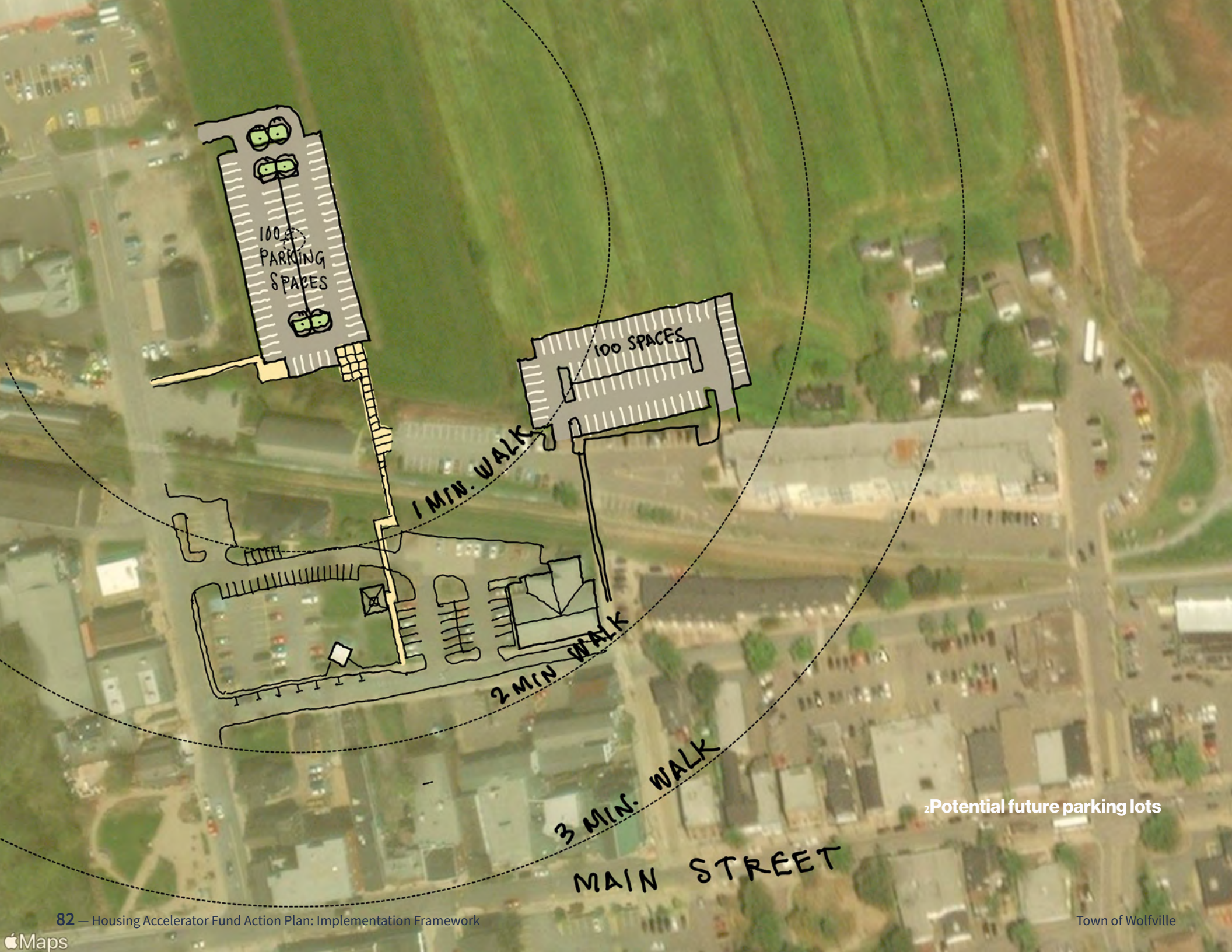
TABLE 3.5 Institutional and Public Use Parking Requirements

Type of Use	Existing Minimum Parking Requirement	TBD
Hospitals and nursing homes	1 parking space for each 2 beds or each 40 square metres of total floor area, whichever is the greater.	
Elementary schools	1.5 parking spaces for each teaching classroom.	
High schools	4 parking spaces for each teaching classroom.	
University or school residential buildings.	1 parking space for every 5 beds.	
Medical Clinics or Health Clinics	1 parking space per every 18 square metres of total floor area.	
Residential Care Facility	1 parking space plus ½ space for each guest bedroom	
Parks	No requirement	
Any use not specified above	1 parking space per 30 square metres of total floor area.	

Next Steps following Parking Reform

With the potential slow reduction in private parking in the downtown as a result of the new reduced parking requirements, the town and university will need to:

1. Consider implementing a paid 'variable-priced' parking management system in the coming years.
2. Improve parking security and management to reduce the chance for overflow parking to surrounding streets and between the university and downtown
3. Identify new areas for future public parking lots both on the University and in the Downtown. These could be on-street or off-street.
4. Reduce or remove parking requirements in the zoning bylaw, particularly as it relates to downtown zoning.
5. Ensure the money collected from any parking meters is reinvested directly into the downtown to implement new placemaking initiatives.





Chapter 04

ACTION 3: Non-Market Housing



What is Non-Market Housing?

Non-market housing refers to residential units that are not provided through the private, for-profit housing market. Instead, they are owned and operated by public, non-profit, or co-operative entities. Often the mandate of these organizations is to offer affordable and stable housing for individuals and families who may be unable to afford market-rate housing.

Key Types of Non-Market Housing

- **Public Housing:** Owned and managed by government agencies such as the Nova Scotia Provincial Housing Agency. Rents for these units are geared to income (e.g., 30% of household income).
- **Non-Profit Housing:** Owned and operated by non-profit organizations. May include mixed-income models with some units at market rates to support affordability.
- **Co-operative Housing:** Residents collectively own and manage the housing. Costs are shared, and affordability is maintained through cooperative governance.

Additional Chapter 4 content will come in Package 2, an introduction is provided here.

- **Transitional and Supportive Housing:** Offers on-site or coordinated services for residents with specific needs (e.g., mental health, addictions, seniors, or people with disabilities).

Non-Market Housing in Wolfville

There are a total of 169 non-market housing units in Wolfville (7% of all dwelling units in Town).

- 68 public housing units
- 90 co-op housing units
- 11 non-profit housing units

All of these housing units have lengthy waitlists. The provincial units alone have waitlists exceeding 200 people. These waitlists are an indication of the affordability issues locally and the pressing need for more non-market housing options.

Through the Housing Accelerator Fund Action Plan, Wolfville has committed to encouraging and incentivizing growth in the non-market housing sector. The municipal tool to support non-market housing is the forthcoming **Non-Market Housing Strategy**.

Non-Market Housing Strategy

The Town of Wolfville is developing a Non-Market Housing Strategy with input from a dedicated Non-Market **Housing Working Group**. This group includes local residents, housing providers, advocates, and individuals with lived experience. Together, they are identifying strategies to support the acquisition, development, and long-term retention of non-market housing in Wolfville.

Initial focus areas include:

- Financial incentives to encourage non-market housing
- Removing regulatory barriers in planning documents
- Identifying opportunities for the use of Town-owned land for housing

A draft of the Strategy will be released in Summer 2025.

How Does Non-Market Housing Differ from Affordable Housing?

While both aim to improve housing affordability, the key difference lies in the provider's mission and the duration of affordability:

- **Non-market housing** is typically operated by organizations with a long-term or permanent commitment to affordability, regardless of changes in the real estate market.
- **Affordable housing**, as defined by CMHC's financing programs, may be provided by private developers but is only required to remain affordable for 10–25 years, depending on the program.

Affordability under these programs may involve:

- **Rent-geared-to-income**
- **Rents no higher than 30% of the area's median household income**
- **Rents below 80% of median market rent**

By contrast, **non-market housing providers**—such as public, co-op, and non-profit groups—are focused on **long-term affordability** and may prioritize populations often underserved by the market, including seniors, people with disabilities, and racialized or marginalized groups.

The Strategy will be a tool to strengthen this sector in Wolfville, creating more opportunities for safe, suitable housing that more people can afford.

ACTION 4:

Acadia University Housing



5.2 Acadia

The Town and University are still finalizing the best use of our Housing Accelerator Fund process to support on-campus changes. Student housing that is not on-campus is implicated by all of the zoning updates – people in the University community (Staff, Students, etc) live throughout the town in all of our neighbourhoods.

Part of the Town's Housing Action Plan is working with Acadia University to enable more housing choices in the Town. The area around the Tower residence (off of Highland Avenue) has also been discussed as a focus area for our work with the University – where a vision for a future mixed neighbourhood could be contemplated. Parking is also a key part of working with the University and they have been engaged in our analysis and options.

Intended outcomes, through a forthcoming process

- We will engage the University Community – as per direction from the University's leadership
- We will build on the work that is ongoing and the recent SCION report
- We will recommend changes to inform zoning in the Land Use By-law (what can be built where – development rights) and things to

consider when an update to their campus master plan happens

- We hope to provide an opportunity for Revenue Generation by creating an investment-ready area – will highlight trade-offs and tensions
- We hope to create an opportunity for private sector partnership
- We hope to create an opportunity for additional amenities and facilities (for Community and University)
- We hope to create an opportunity to provide a significant amount of mixed housing
- Subject to further Acadia discussions. We hope to complement the projects the University is currently focused on while highlighting impactful medium-long term change that can provide housing, facility and revenue opportunities.

NOTE: THIS SECTION WILL BE UPDATED IN FUTURE HAF IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK PACKAGES.



Town Planning Documents Review + Growth Management Framework	Affordable and Non-Market Housing Strategy	Secondary Planning Strategy for Acadia's South-East Campus
Simplify processes and work within our capacity to expedite more housing being built.	Non-market housing working group	Mixed housing models
Reduce parking requirements	Non-market housing grant program	Identifying opportunities for housing near Crowell Tower
Appropriate zoning that supports more housing	Leveraging Town-owned land for non-market housing	Coordinate parking management with Town
Growth Management framework/understanding of key areas (infrastructure, parks, mobility/traffic, fiscal) to support changes		

SCION Report – key takeaway is around control / working with investors and revenue. Can build on this work...

Intended outcomes, through a forthcoming process

We will engage the University Community – as per direction from University

This will inform zoning changes in the Land Use By-law (what can be built where – development rights)

We will provide an opportunity for Revenue Generation by creating an investment-ready area – will highlight trade-offs and tensions

We will create an opportunity for private sector partnership

We will create an opportunity for additional amenities and facilities (for Community and University)

We will create an opportunity to provide a significant amount of mixed housing Subject to further Acadia discussions.

(This is a medium-long term initiative)



Town of Wolfville + Acadia University Housing Accelerator Fund



Chapter 06

Community Profile Summary

2.7 **See appendix X**



The Town of Wolfville has experienced dynamic demographic, economic, and social changes over the past two decades. As the community continues to evolve, understanding who lives here, what they do, and what their future needs are is essential to guiding sustainable growth and ensuring that housing, infrastructure, and services remain aligned with community demand. This chapter presents a comprehensive profile of the Town's demographics, population projections, economic conditions, education levels, and housing needs, offering a foundation for long-term planning.

6.3 Population Growth and Provincial Context

Wolfville has grown significantly over the last twenty years, outpacing provincial averages. According to the 2021 Census, the Town's population reached 5,247—up 20.5% from 2016 (4,195 residents). By 2024, population estimates place the town at approximately 5,526 residents, representing an overall growth of 45.2% since 2004. This equates to an average annual growth rate of 1.9%. Nova Scotia's annual average growth rate is 1.2% over the same period.

This growth trajectory reversed a brief population decline observed between 2011 and 2016, during which the Town lost 89 residents (a decrease of 1.9%). That decline coincided with broader trends in Atlantic Canada, where out-migration of younger workers—many heading to Western provinces like Alberta—contributed to regional depopulation.

Relative to similar towns—Amherst, Bridgewater, Kentville, Antigonish, Berwick, and Sackville (NB)—Wolfville leads in both annual growth rate and total growth over the last two decades.

Remarkably, even Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), the province's largest urban centre, experienced slower growth (1.4% annually and 31.9% overall). Wolfville's ability to sustain strong population growth highlights its growing appeal as a residential and academic community.

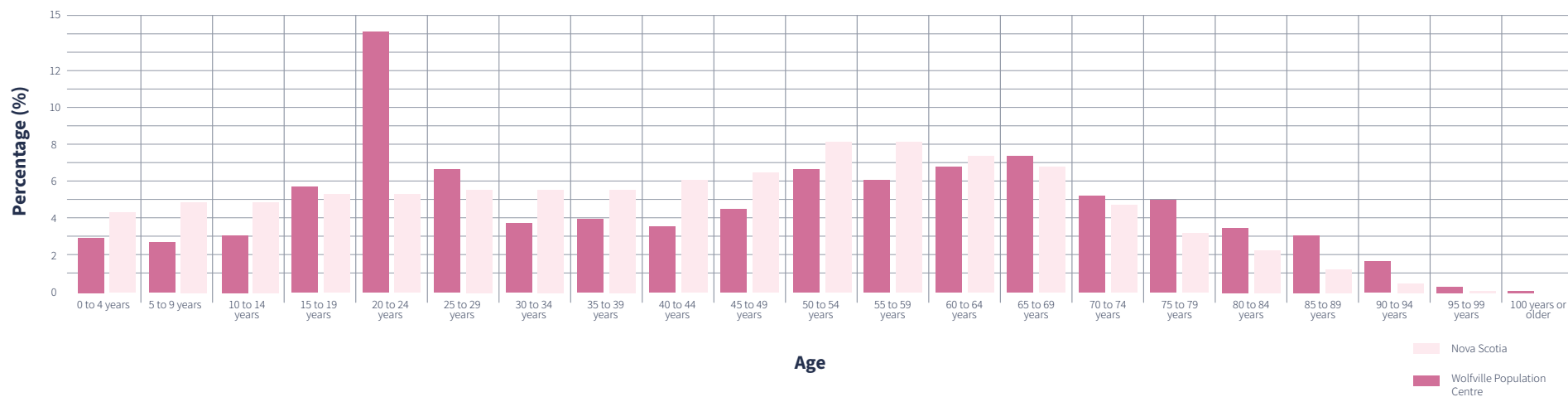


Fig.19 — 2016 population pyramid

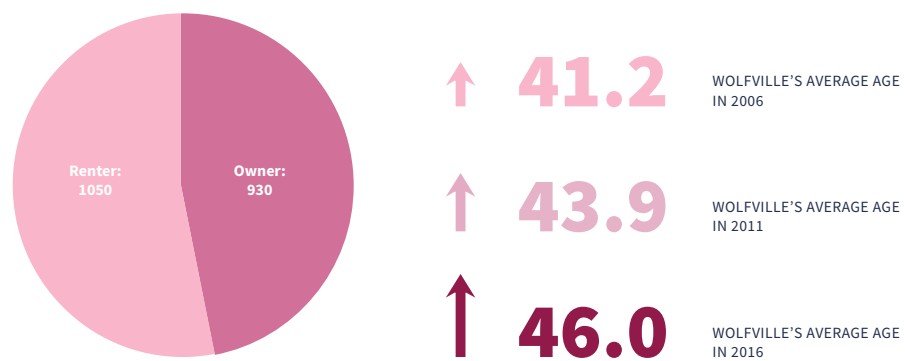


Fig.20 — Wolfville Census Statistics

6.4 Population and Housing Projections

Despite high population growth recently, population projections suggest that Wolfville's population will grow slowly over the next two decades, reaching 5,900 by 2044. Most of this growth will be in the 65+ age group, which is expected to increase by over 400 individuals by 2034. Conversely, the population share of children and younger adults is projected to decline slightly despite recent growth in the share of this age group in the town's overall population.

This slower projected growth reflects:

- **Declining birth rates:** Nova Scotia's fertility rate was 1.05 child per woman in 2023, well below the replacement level of 2.1.
- **Immigration policy changes:** New federal caps on study permits and permanent residents may limit population inflows to smaller centres.
- **Student trends:** While Acadia University continues to attract out-of-province and international students, enrollment has not returned to pre-2008 levels, and many students leave after graduation due to limited employment opportunities.

This demographic shift has clear implications for housing. The Town must plan for a growing senior population and find ways to attract younger families. Seniors often seek smaller, accessible homes, while younger families and students need affordable rental housing. Housing policy will need to reflect this changing demand.

Between 2021 and 2044, demand for one- and two-bedroom units is expected to grow significantly, rising from 67% of all demand to 79%. Meanwhile, demand for three-bedroom and larger homes will decline from 34% to just 21%. Demand is also shifting toward apartment-style housing and away from single-detached homes. This suggests that new construction should be focused on missing middle forms, rather than single-family homes.

To address the need for housing for seniors and to attract young families, the Action Plan seeks to enable a minimum of 2 units in all residential zones. One example of how this can support both demographics is to provide the opportunity for empty nesters to relocate to an accessory dwelling unit, while freeing up their family sized homes for young families.

6.5 Housing Needs and Gaps

Wolfville’s current housing stock does not fully align with its demographic profile. Most dwellings are apartments (51.6%) or single-detached homes (35.0%), with very few “missing middle” options like townhouses or duplexes. Wolfville has an aging population that is not being replenished by young families. As of 2021, nearly half (40%) of dwelling units in Town are large family, 3+ bedroom homes, despite only 20% of households having three or more people living in them. This tells us that while housing pressures are mounting for first time buyers and young families, a lot of people are also living in housing that exceeds their needs in the current supply. This mismatch may also contribute to affordability issues for seniors on fixed incomes facing the rising cost of living in larger homes. Demand for 3+ bedroom homes has been declining in recent years and is expected to continue to decline (Turner Drake & Partners). The greatest demand is for housing with 0-1 bedrooms and 2-bedrooms.

Housing affordability is a growing concern. Nearly 30% of households spend more than 30% of their income on housing, and 7.9% are in core housing need. Among renters, 40.1% are in unaffordable

housing, and 11.6% are in core need.

Demand is especially high for smaller, affordable units. As of 2024, the town needs an estimated 565 additional housing units, with demand rising to 820 by 2034. This includes significant needs at below-market and deeply affordable levels, particularly for students, retirees, and single-person households.

The Town has committed to creating a Non-Market Housing Strategy to enable more development and retention of non-market housing stock, as well as financial incentives such as the Land Bank and Grant Program to encourage growth in this sector.

Meeting the Housing Accelerator Fund Targets

Through the Housing Accelerator Fund, the Town has committed to issuing development permits for 120 dwelling units by the end of 2026. 110 of these units must be missing middle, and 20 must be affordable. Wolfville’s current construction rate—about 27 units per year—will not meet future demand of 820 by 2034 (Turner Drake & Partners). To close the projected housing gap, the Town would need approximately 82 units built annually over the next decade. The current rate of 27 units per year would lead to a gap of 550 units by 2034.

6.6 Demographics and Migration Patterns

Wolfville is home to a uniquely diverse mix of residents—including students, retirees, young professionals, and newcomers from across Canada and around the world. As the Town grows, its social and economic composition is also shifting.

Age Profile and Household Composition

The current population is becoming younger overall. Between 2016 and 2021, the median age dropped from 47.4 to 41.6 years. The proportion of seniors (65+) declined slightly to 26.3%, while working-age residents now comprise 65.5% of the population. There has been a notable increase in the 20–34 age cohort, suggesting that Wolfville is attracting younger residents, particularly remote workers and students who are staying beyond graduation.

Diversity and Immigration

Wolfville is home to a more diverse population than many towns of its size in Nova Scotia. In 2021, 12% of residents identified as visible minorities, a higher proportion than the provincial average (7.6%). The largest groups include Black (31%), South Asian (26.7%), and Chinese (18.1%) residents. Other visible minority groups in Wolfville include Arab, Southeast Asian, Latin American, West Asian, and Japanese individuals.

The Town also has a higher proportion of immigrants (11.0%), and non-permanent residents (7.8%) compared to provincial averages (7.5% and 2.3%, respectively). These include individuals on work and study permits, many of whom are associated with Acadia University. Roughly 25% of immigrants in Wolfville arrived between 2011 and 2021, contributing significantly to population growth and cultural diversity.

Notably, 1,175 residents in 2021 had moved from other parts of Nova Scotia, primarily Halifax, and 660 moved in from other provinces, particularly Ontario and Alberta. These migration patterns underscore the Town's attractiveness to both interprovincial and intraprovincial migrants.

The Town has committed to creating a Non-Market Housing Strategy to enable more development and retention of non-market housing stock, as well as financial incentives such as the Land Bank and Grant Program to encourage growth in this sector.

6.7 Education

Wolfville is one of the most highly educated communities in the province. As of the 2021 Census:

- 66% of residents have completed post-secondary education
- 46% have a bachelor's degree or higher (more than double the provincial average)
- Only 4% are trained in trades or apprenticeship programs

Over 61% of residents aged 15 and over have completed post-secondary education, and 42.8% have at least a bachelor's degree—nearly double the provincial average (24.3%). Despite this, many residents are underemployed or employed in part-time or seasonal work. This is due in part to the number of students who are actively enrolled in university, as well as the high number of retirees residing in Wolfville.

Elementary education is provided through Wolfville Elementary School, which currently serves approximately 360 students. Enrollment trends are stable, though long-term vitality will depend on the Town's ability to attract young families amidst an aging population and low birthrates.

Enabling more housing types in neighbourhood zones that young families can afford is one tool to ensure the long-term viability of Wolfville Elementary School amid declining birthrates and a low number of young families in Town.

6.8 Economic Profile and Labour Force

Income and Labour Force Participation

Wolfville's median household income is \$54,400—below the provincial average of \$57,600. An estimated 20.2% of residents live on low incomes, and the labour force participation rate is also lower than provincial norms, partly due to the large student and retiree populations. Just over half of working-age residents are actively engaged in the workforce, with many employed part-time or seasonally.

Median income for full-time workers was \$54,400—slightly below the provincial average. However, incomes are influenced by the large number of students and retirees. About 18.7% of residents were living in poverty according to the Market Basket Measure, with the highest poverty rate among 18–24 year-olds (50%). Wolfville has a mix of those earning high and low incomes, suggesting that a range of housing types are needed.

Nearly 30% of households are spending more than 30% of their income on housing, indicating significant affordability stress. This has implications for both housing policy and municipal service provision, and underscores the need for new non-market and mid-range housing options.

Wolfville's economy is closely tied to the education, tourism, and service sectors. According to the 2021 Census, educational services accounted for 19.6% of the local labour force—unsurprising given the presence of Acadia. Other prominent sectors include accommodation and food services (13.9%), health care and social assistance (13.3%), and retail (11.9%).

Labour force participation in 2021 was 58.5%, with an unemployment rate of 18.7%—higher than the provincial average of 12.7%, likely due to the pandemic when many workers were unable to work. Many workers in Wolfville are self-employed (12.5%), reflecting the town's entrepreneurial spirit and flexible work culture.

Ensuring that there are housing options available for those employed in these sectors is key to strengthening the economic vitality and workforce in Wolfville. Affordable opportunities are critical for sustaining all of these sectors.

The HAF Action Plan aims to improve affordability in Town by identifying opportunities to retain existing non-market housing as well as develop more units by working with housing providers in the sector and creating a Non-Market Housing Strategy with support from the Non-Market Housing Working Group.

6.9 The Role of Acadia University

The HAF Action Plan aims to encourage more missing middle and non-market housing in Town which is particularly valuable to those earning moderate to low incomes. Ensuring there is housing available for a range of incomes is critical to sustaining the workforce.

Exploring zoning changes to the downtown and commercial areas could encourage more commercial development, growing economic activity in Town and providing more opportunity for local business and entrepreneurs.

Acadia University is a major social and economic driver in Wolfville. With more than 4,000 students enrolled annually, including 540 international students in 2023–24, the university's population represents approximately 36.5% of the Town's population in 2024. At its peak in 2004, international and out-of-province students comprised 76% of the Town's population. While that proportion has declined—largely due to population growth and changes in immigration and education trends—students remain a central component of the Town's identity and economy.

Interprovincial enrolment has declined since the early 2000s, likely due to national economic shifts, increased competition from larger urban universities, and changing youth employment patterns. Meanwhile, international student numbers have rebounded somewhat post-pandemic but remain below their historical highs.

Given recent changes to federal immigration and study permit policies, Acadia University is likely to face continued pressure in international recruitment. This has implications for the university's finances and, by extension, for the Town's economy, labour force, housing market, and population dynamics.

To support opportunities to provide safe and suitable housing for Acadia University students, through the HAF, the Town has committed to creating a Student Housing Strategy to alleviate some of the housing pressures faced by Acadia students. This is being done through a Secondary Planning Strategy to identify on-campus housing opportunities near Crowell Tower (South East Campus). Further zoning changes in Town also provide opportunities for more suitable student housing options such as missing middle housing and accessory dwelling units.

Chapter 07

Investment for Success



7.1 Introduction and Town Budgets

A central goal of this action plan is to strengthen the Town's financial position. If well-managed, growth can enable Wolfville to afford infrastructure upgrades, protect against floods, and provide amenities to improve local quality of life.

The Town's annual operations plan and budget process includes a multi-year capital investment plan. The current Council approved a number of projects in the 2025-26 Operations Plan and Capital Plan with the goal of managing our infrastructure responsibly into the future.

A core component of this work is asset management. This means the town will actively update a database of its assets and upcoming maintenance for each. This approach ensures the Town understands its financial position, and is able to make informed decisions about how to invest and grow.

The Town's operations plan and budget process will include:

- Asset management
- Strategic planning
- Revenue management
- A facilities needs assessment
- Various plans to make improvements in Streets, Sidewalks, Wastewater, Water, Stormwater, etc.

To enable more housing and development in the Town – we need to have the infrastructure to support it. This snapshot of where we are in 2025 should show the Town is already in a good position to support growth and is making key investments to further this goal. It is important to show Council, the Community and Stakeholders where we are with different systems (today), what work is to come (short-term) and actions and ideas to inform future investments (medium, long-term).

The Town has been planning for growth and key investments in Wastewater Treatment and our Water system are underway. Our wastewater and Water systems are critical, essential services. Through our current plan review and growth management process – ongoing assessments will inform Municipal Planning Strategy and Zoning decisions based on infrastructure realities.

Modernization of our asset management is also ongoing. Current staff have put a large emphasis on this and we are on a path to better understanding the individual systems, their components and how they overlap. Some are very complex and require consulting support and modeling to ensure appropriate solutions are being planned and recommended.

7.2 Investment for Success - MPS

Part 3 of the Town's current Municipal Planning Strategy is entitled "Investment for Success."

It is meant to set the stage for key investments and an approach (Asset Management) to support growth and change in the Town while preserving and enhancing the aspects of the Town that make Wolfville the place people already adore.

This plan review – as part of the Housing Accelerator Fund work – will look to update this section and add more strategic direction on setting the Town up to better "invest for success."

The Town is currently working to better integrate Asset Management with our Capital Budget and Operations Planning process. This will take time but is an important step to ensuring the long-term sustainability of the Town.



This Municipal Planning Strategy emphasizes the importance of the public realm in creating an environment that attracts and supports growth that is consistent with the Town's community priorities. Municipal investments in public buildings, water and wastewater systems, streetscapes, active transportation infrastructure, parks and open space, and other public infrastructure and facilities will be needed and should be coordinated with the policies of this plan to effectively work toward the shared future envisioned.

The Town of Wolfville is a municipal corporation managing a growing community that must balance change and innovation with ongoing support for existing infrastructure—physical and social.

The Municipal Planning Strategy is the Town's primary tool for managing growth and change, yet this task requires us to understand how municipal assets, our economic development opportunities, and our culture and heritage assets are balanced so we can spend our resources (e.g. time, limited financial resources, etc.) toward achieving our shared future.

The way the Town invests in infrastructure assets, including natural assets, will have a significant impact on whether we move toward becoming more sustainable and resilient. Because of this, Council is committed to better integrating Land Use Planning and Asset Management, starting with the policies of this plan and focusing on improvements, over time, to ensure our Municipal, Economic, and Cultural success.

IT SHALL BE THE POLICY OF COUNCIL:

1. To incorporate policies and provisions of this Strategy into the capital budgeting and operational planning processes of the town.
2. To ensure that the Town's capital budgeting and operational planning process for streets and sidewalks give consideration to projects based on the condition of the asset, risk rating, desired growth, pedestrian activity and community priorities.
3. To incrementally integrate asset management and land use planning for municipal, economic and cultural success.

Community Priorities

EP	Economic Prosperity
SE	Social Equity
CA	Climate Action
LU	Land Use and Design

The policies of this plan action on our Community Priorities and move us toward Our Shared Future.

Part 3.2 of the Town's current Municipal Planning Strategy (shown here) discusses and outlines Council adopted policies that support Culture, Heritage and Economic Development.

This section is in need of an update and a fresh strategic perspective led by Council.

The Town has been successful in receiving investment from other levels of Government – both the Provincial and Federal Levels.

Currently the Town is currently working with funding for our Wastewater Treatment Facility upgrades; the construction of a 3rd production well; the construction of an Active Transportation network and now working to improve the conditions for housing construction in the Town through the Housing Accelerator Fund.

A Key part of being able to access funding from other levels of government is to be “investment ready” with plans and projections for what is needed to bring necessary infrastructure and services to our residents.

The Town will spend approximately \$55-60 million over 10 years to fund Capital Projects. This is supplemented by our Water Utility and Grant opportunities

The economic potential of the municipality needs to be encouraged for residents to be able to live, work, shop and play locally and affordably. Supporting resident initiatives in cultural and small business activities enable Wolfville to adapt to a changing world with economic success. Strategic public investments, supportive partnerships with business, other orders of government, and institutions, and other incentives can act as catalysts for further economic growth and job creation while supporting local cultural activities.

Planning for culture incentivises opportunities for creative-economic activity, increases access and exposure to culture, and preserves and celebrates built and living heritage. Empowering individuals and organizations, and supporting those initiatives is key to fostering the culture and heritage of Wolfville. Residents and visitors bring value and contribute significantly to our rich and evolving cultural fabric through the creation of events, art, restoration of heritage, as patrons, by registering heritage properties, and many other methods.

Individuals are key to economic diversification and supporting culture. One of the best ways to support individuals is to develop the Town of Wolfville as a destination for visitors, new residents and talented workers by investing in high quality education, commercial areas, accessible public infrastructure and cultural activities within the municipality.

IT SHALL BE THE POLICY OF COUNCIL

1. 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.
2. To create the conditions for a diverse and resilient local economy.
3. To preserve and enhance places, sites, structures, streetscapes, archaeological resources, cultural landscapes and practices which reflect the town's diverse evolution, built heritage and culture in partnership with local organizations.
4. To enable local jobs, expand commercial opportunities, think regionally, be "open for business" and lead by example.
5. To consider permitting for any work for registered heritage property, as outlined in the Land Use Bylaw.
6. To use the Nova Scotia Heritage Property Act to recognize our built heritage and advocate for the strengthening of the Act over time.
7. To strive to maintain a commercial vacancy rate of 7-10% consistent with Provincial and National averages.
8. To ensure that commercial uses are designed to be compatible with surrounding land uses, including consideration of built heritage and the impacts of land use on neighbourhood character.
9. To ensure goods are produced and consumed locally using environmentally responsible practices, where possible.
10. To help business succeed through supportive policies and simplified procedures, including timely responses of approvals.

The 2019 commercial vacancy rate in the Town of Wolfville was approximately 2%.

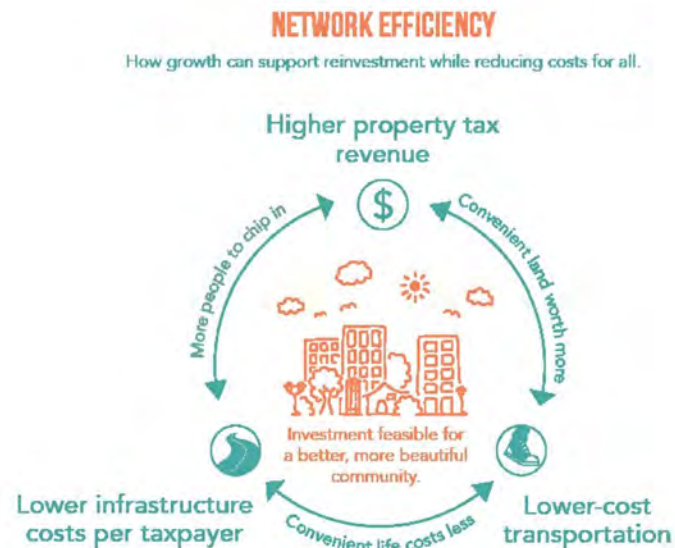
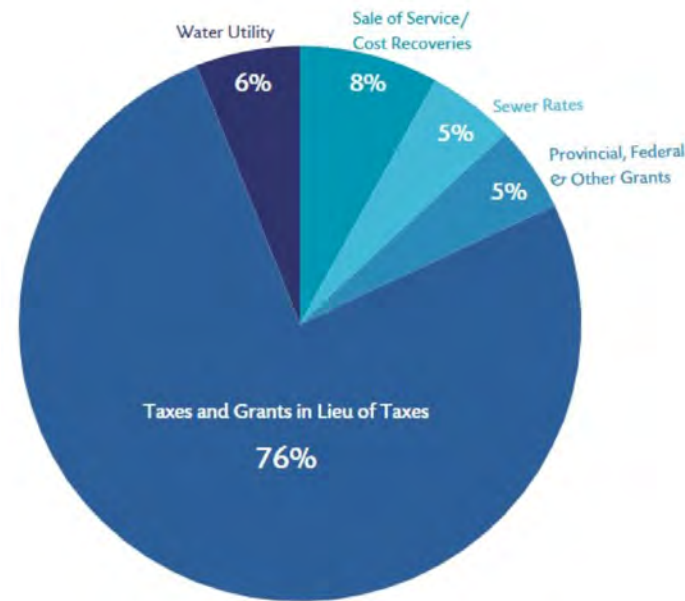


7.3 Fiscal Sustainability

The majority of Town budget comes from property taxes.

- » High residential tax burden + many are capped
- » Increasing individual property taxes is unpalatable
- » Level of service expectations are very high
- » Limited revenue generation opportunities
- » This is actually 87% with Water and Sewer that service properties

A responsible growth and investment strategy allows us to explore how we can increase the Town budget to support current and future residents.



Land Use Breakdown

- » Majority of Town is zoned for residential use
- » Small amount of commercially zoned land

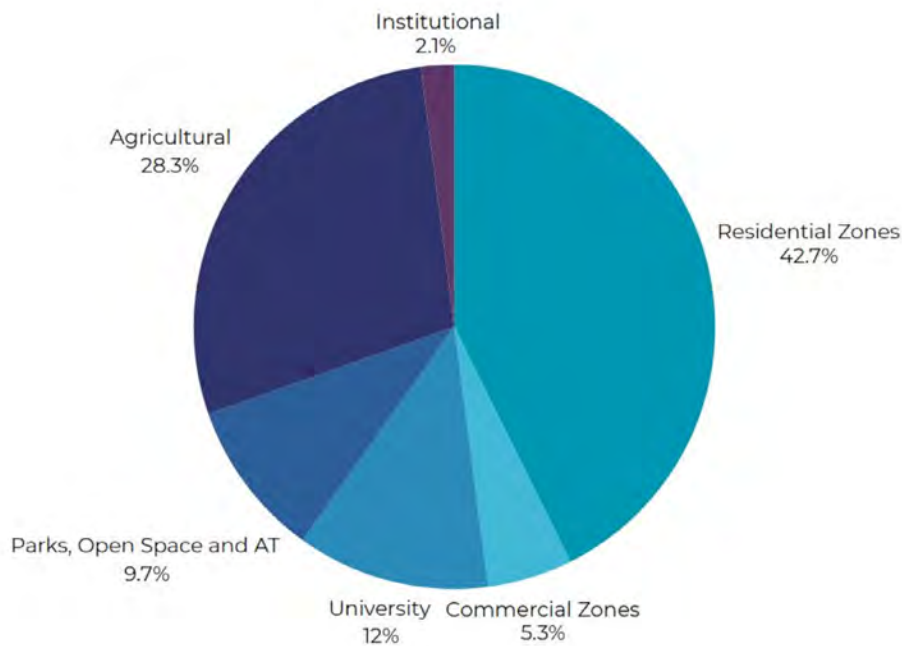
These are the Town's two main sources of revenue.

2024-2025 Tax Rates:

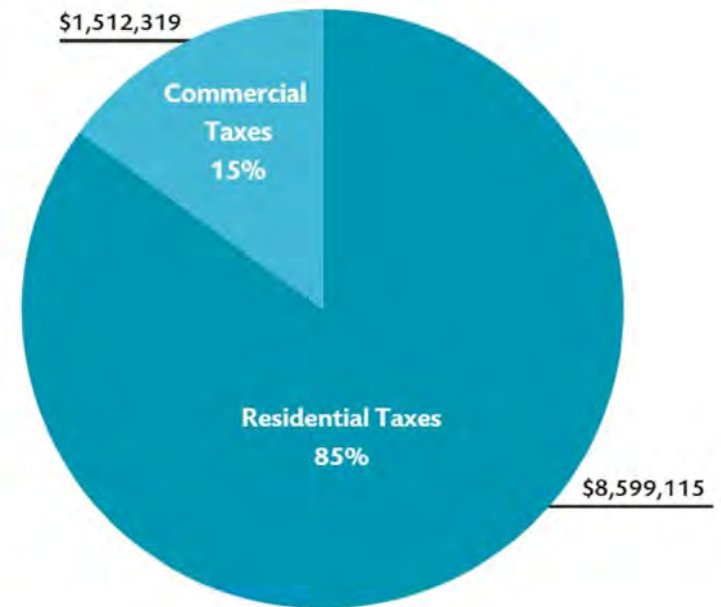
- » Residential: \$1.4655 per \$100 assessment (\$8,599,115)
- » Commercial: \$3.5655 per \$100 assessment (\$1,512,319)

Commercial land makes up a small amount of land in Town:

- » Total land area: 608 hectares
- » Total Commercially zoned land: 32 hectares (5% of all land)
- » Total residentially zoned land (excluding C2): 259 hectares (42% of all land)



Tax collected 2024-2025



7.4 Fiscal Sustainability

This map shows the tax revenue generated per square metre by each property in Wolfville. The map highlights the value of the Downtown to the Town's finances. Downtown properties generate up to \$125 per square metre per year, whereas the majority of properties elsewhere generate less than \$10 per year.

The downtown constitutes only 1.5% of Wolfville's land area, but it generates 14% of the town's property tax revenue (excluding cash-in-lieu from Acadia University and other special cases). The C1, C2, CDD, and R4 zones all generate more tax revenue than their share of the urban area.

Downtown growth could have a substantial impact on Town revenues. Consider the potential impact if the empty land on the south side of Front Street (roughly 0.4 hectares) were developed.

Downtown properties (the C1 zone) generate an average of \$28 per square metre if they have buildings, and \$9 if they do not. This suggests that if the south side of Front Street were developed, it would generate \$75,000 in new revenue per year, or up to \$400,000 if these buildings earned as much as the downtown's most valuable properties.

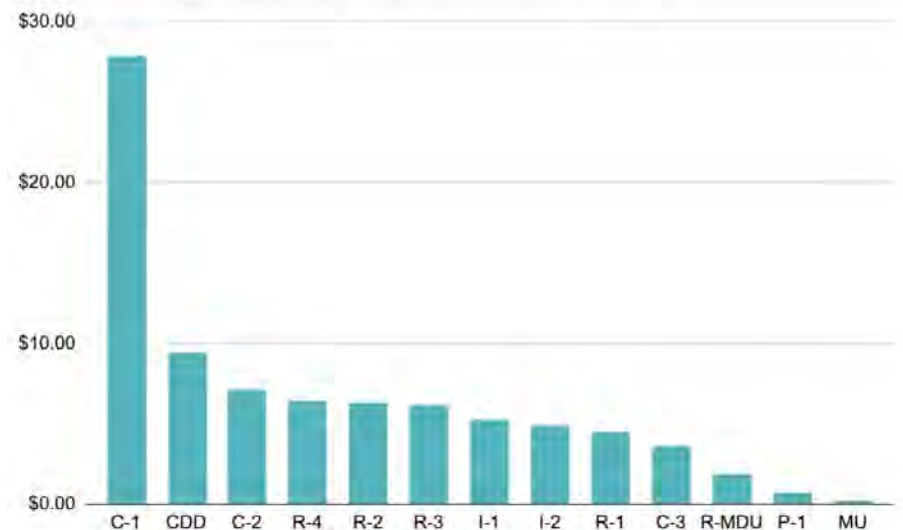
Full Tax Value analysis included in Appendix.

TOWN OF WOLFVILLE – TAX REVENUE PER UNIT OF LAND (\$/M.²) – 3D VISUALIZATION (NORTHWARD VIEW)



Source: Turner Drake & Partners Ltd., Town of Wolfville, and the Province of NS | Basemap sourced through ESRI ArcPro v3.4.3.

Average tax revenue per square metre for properties in various zones. (Only includes properties with buildings).

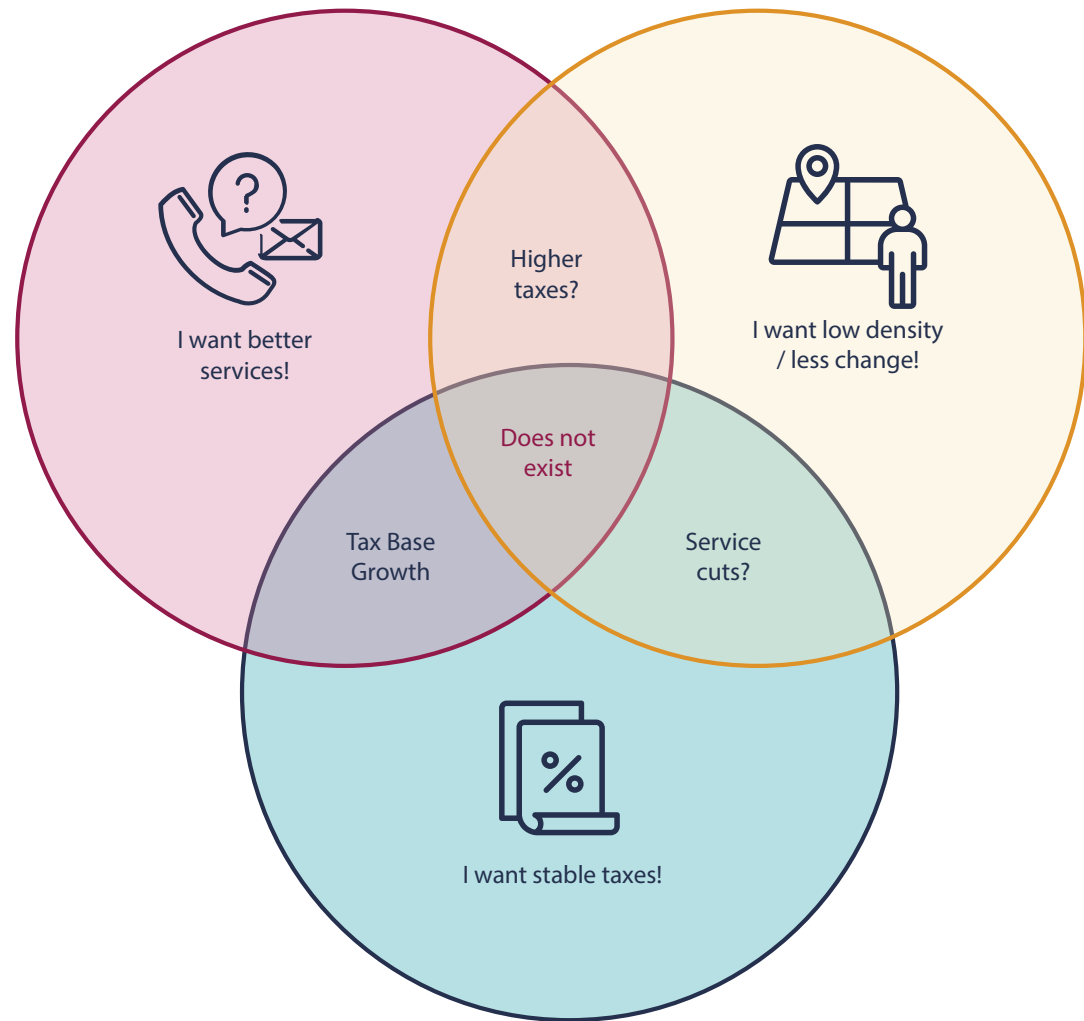


7.5 Tensions in fiscal management

Change is hard.

The Venn Diagram shown here is a simplified example of some of the tensions the Town faces in managing growth and change – while balancing a high quality of life and reliable service delivery.

Working toward better decision making tools is essential.

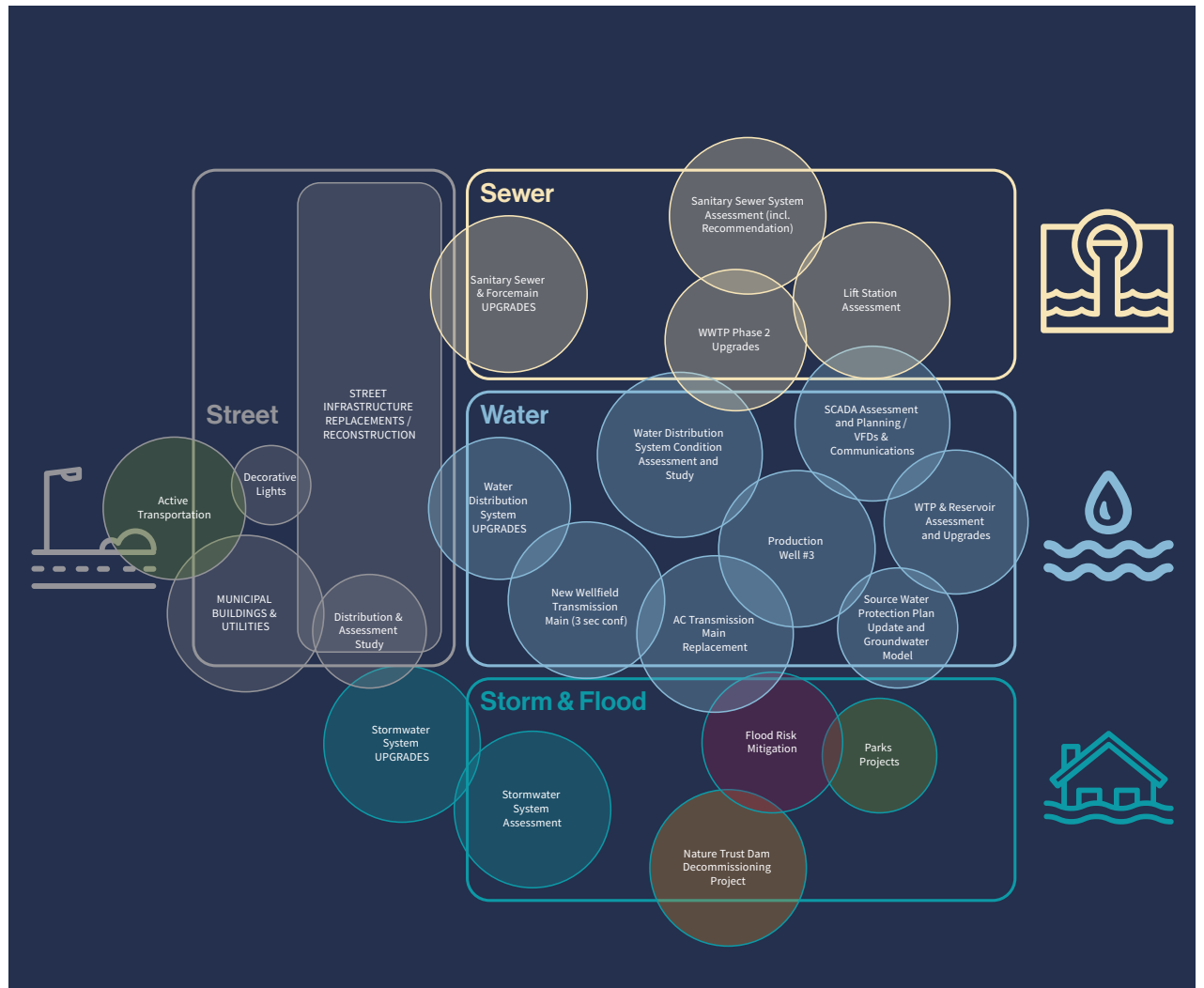


7.6 Asset Management

The Town completed an initial asset management Plan in 2018. Since that time some work has progressed to formalize the program but additional efforts are required.

An integrated Asset Management system with accurate and timely data will enable staff and Council to make better decisions about maintaining, replacing and repairing infrastructure while weighing financial capacity against competing priorities.

Our 2025-26 Operations Plan includes a focus on this work. The graphic included here shows a summary of where we are in 2025-26 and our current focus, in all major areas.



Part 3.1 of the Town's current Municipal Planning Strategy (shown here) includes a section on Asset Management. This will be further updated during this Plan Review.

Furthering our Asset Management work – including a Policy – is a priority for the current Town Council.

The Town of Wolfville currently operates two distinct sets of asset inventories. One is the Water Utility, composed of water facilities (water treatment facility, wells, and a concrete reservoir), water mains, and equipment. The other is the General Fund, composed of land improvements, buildings and structures, equipment, IT infrastructure, traffic lights and poles, sewer systems, sewer plants, sidewalks, streets and curbs, and vehicles and heavy equipment. These assets are not funded for long term sustainability which will directly affect resident's quality of life in the event of a failure. It is critical to work towards ensuring these assets are maintained and fully funded for the future.

IT SHALL BE THE POLICY OF COUNCIL:

1. To adopt an Asset Management Policy to confirm the Town's commitment to ensuring the sustainable delivery of services.



7.7 Asset Management

Wolfville currently has:

- 34 km of asphalt roadway;
- 25 km of asphalt and concrete sidewalk;
- 71 acres of recreation space, including 17 parks with various open spaces, playgrounds, and a splash pad;
- 16 km of trails including the nature preserve
- 55 km of water main pipes;
- 34 km of stormwater pipes;
- 43 km of sanitary sewer mains;
- 6 sanitary sewer lift stations that pump sewage to the wastewater treatment plant;
- 2 municipal wells that produce the Town's drinking water;
- A wastewater treatment plant;
- A water treatment plant and storage reservoir;
- 34 vehicles and pieces of equipment used to provide public works services;
- 11 parking lots; and
- 7 buildings and facilities.

That is a total of nearly 200 km of critical linear assets (roads, pipes, walkways, etc.) of varying age, material, and condition, 15 structures that provide essential public services, and over 100 acres of Town-owned property to be maintained year round.

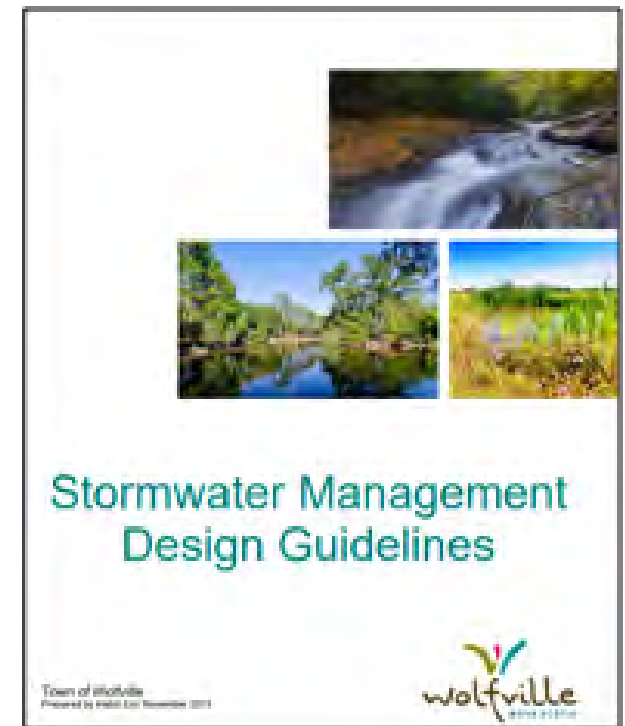
7.8 Stormwater Management Infrastructure Overview

The Town manages 43 km of underground stormwater pipe; over 1000 catch basins; 50+ culverts and over 4 km of open ditch. Approximately 6km of the network was installed pre 1970.

Ongoing Stormwater Management Initiatives include:

- Finish the ongoing Stormwater System Assessment and Improvements study and prioritize recommended upgrades for the remainder of 2025-26 FY with the current year budget (\$275,000). \$800, 000 is currently budgeted for 2026-27 FY and additional investments in future years will be identified. Some reprioritization of street projects may be warranted depending on the nature of findings. This work will update our Geographic Information System with survey data from and improve our evolving asset management database.
- Coordinate improvements with (tidal) flood risk and 2021 plan
- Update the current Stormwater Management Guidelines and incorporate into new Municipal Specifications (another ongoing initiative). Assessment work may provide crucial capacity information that requires more restrictive practices than simply matching pre/post water flows.

Existing 2019 Stormwater Management Design Guidelines

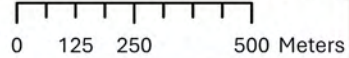


Cornwallis
River



- Storm Water Pipe
- Ditch
- Culvert
- Acadia University
- 2m Contour
- CatchBasin

This map should not be used for navigation or legal purposes.
It is intended for general reference use only. © Town of Wolfville 2025.



7.9 Stormwater Management

A key part of the work on managing large storm and rain events will be public education, managing expectations and the use of Emergency Management in some circumstances. There will be a level of service discussion happening with this work on how much investment we want to make and how Council want to have our system perform. Typically in Town's our size with the age of existing infrastructure – the level of service would be the ability to manage a roughly 5-year storm event (not a 1 in 200 year storm like we have seen in recent past). The Town does not have the financial capacity to design and build for these events. There is not an economically feasible / viable “solution” to this problem.

There is a combination of practical interventions (e.g. conveyance, storage, low impact development, etc) to mitigate impacts – this is what the outcomes of the modeling and ongoing work will point to.

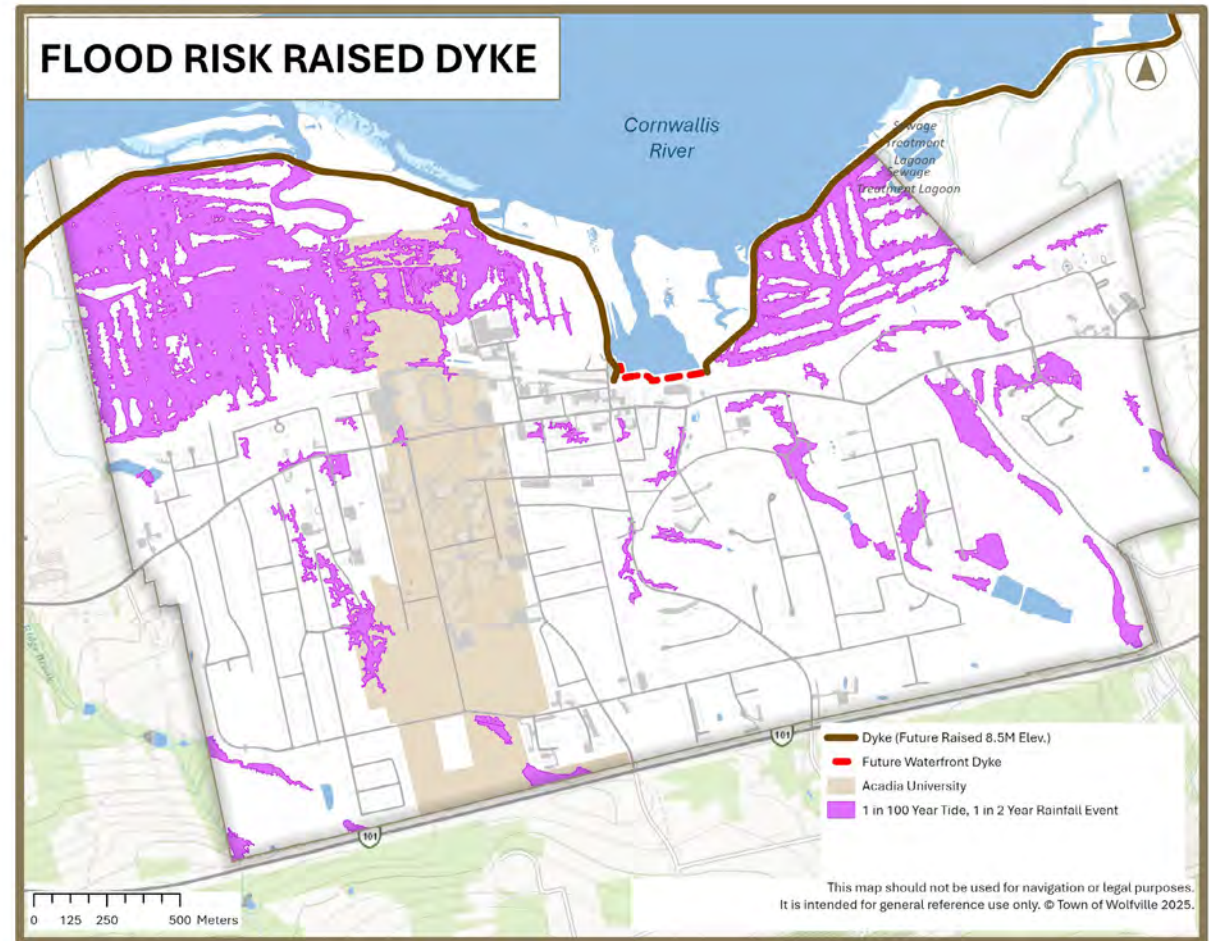
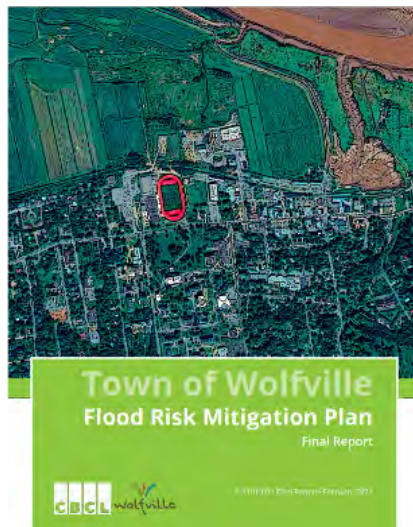


7.10 Tidal Flood Risk

The Town completed a flood risk mitigation plan in 2021.

With the Province topping the dykes on both sides of the Town (Bishop Beckwith Marsh Body to the West and Grand Pre Marsh Body to the East) - Staff are working with consultants on the design of our waterfront – shown with a dashed red line to match the elevations of the dyke walls. This work is a priority for both the Province and the Town and working should begin by 2026-27.

The Stormwater management modeling we are working on will also allow us to make targeted investments to mitigate inland flooding when the tide is high and stormwater cannot be discharged into the Minas Basin.

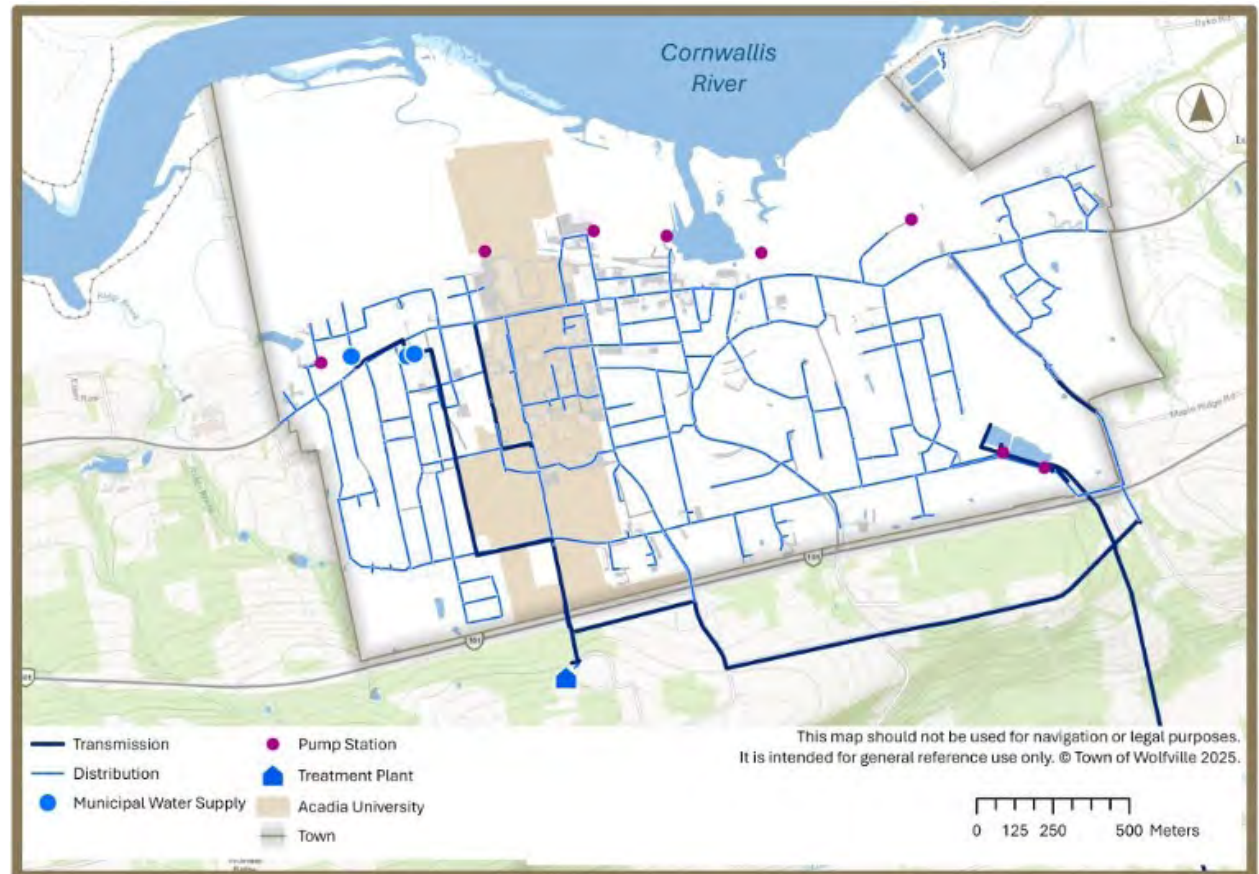


7.11 Water System (Water Utility)

The Town manages 56 km of underground water distribution line; 15km of transmission line (with more to be added); 220 hydrants; 1606 water meters; over 640 valves. Approximately 16km of the network was installed pre 1970.

Ongoing Water Utility projects include:

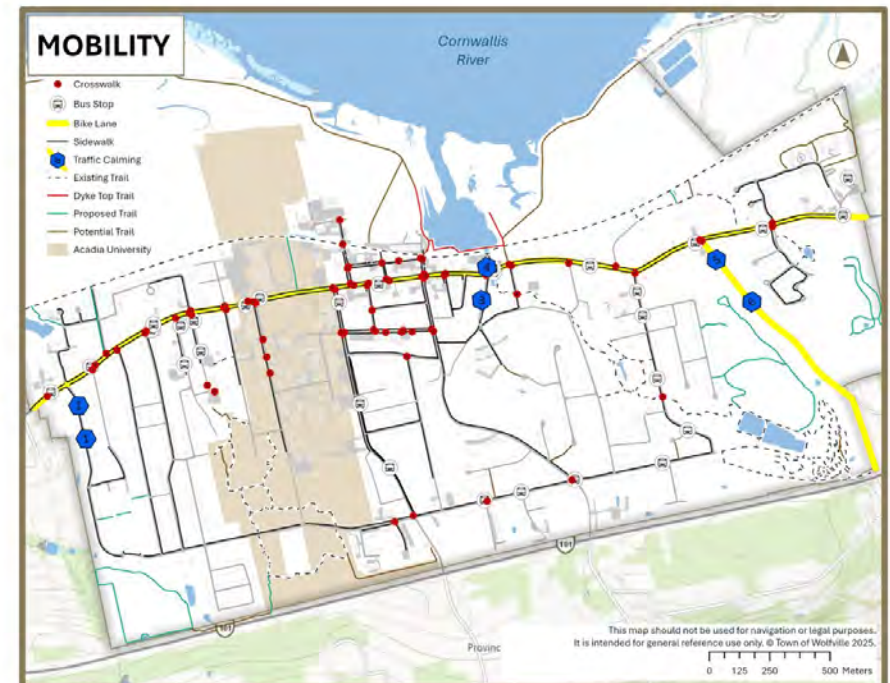
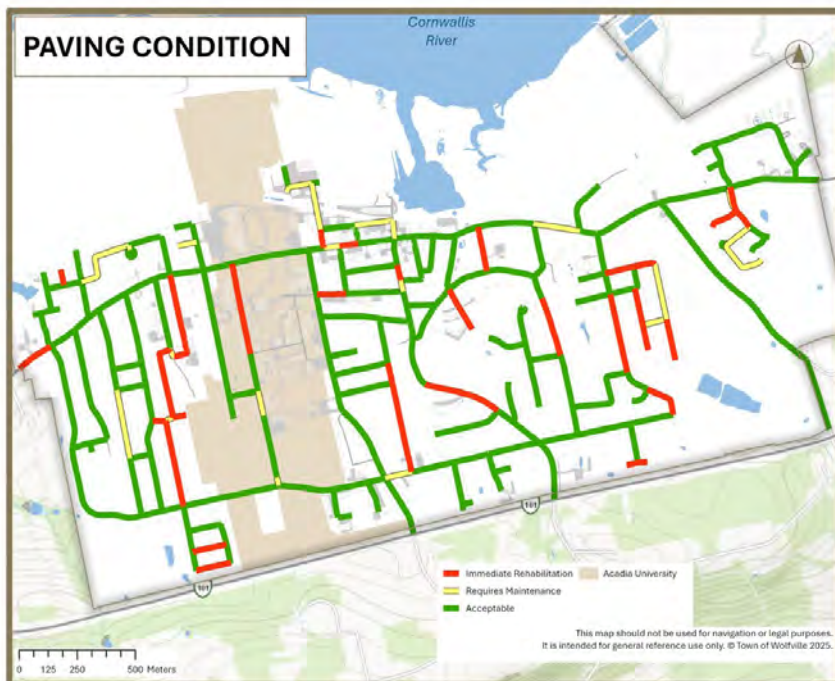
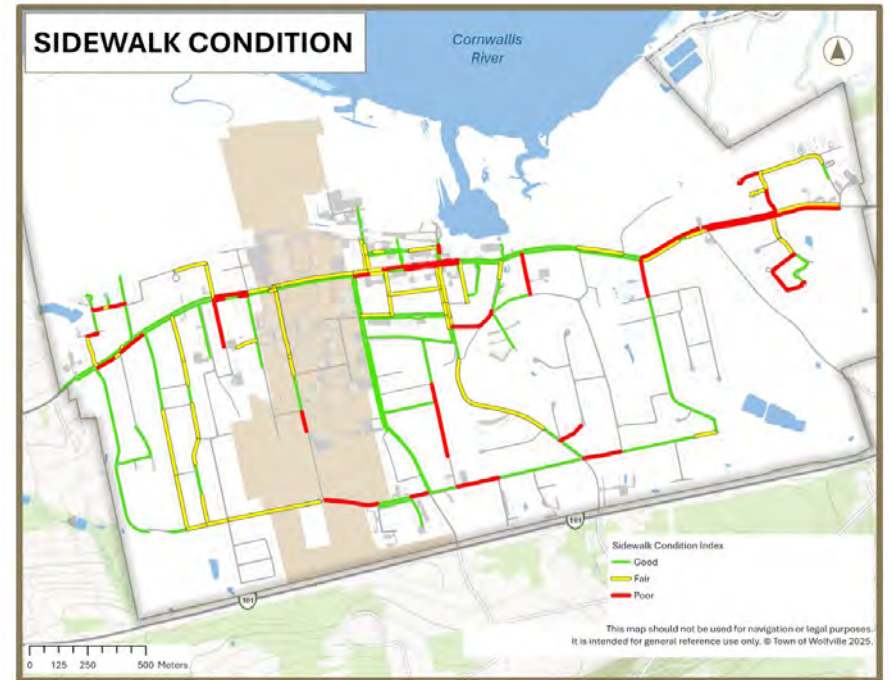
- Advance third production well project to be completed within 2 years
- Finish new transmission main projects (Skyway to WTP and Wellfield to Westwood, both ongoing) within 1 year, and begin design and implementation of asbestos cement transmission line replacement to be completed within 3-5 years.
- Upgrade the Town's Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition System (SCADA) to ensure real-time monitoring reliability for our operators.
- Finalize modeling of the water system and provide recommendations to help the Town prioritize water distribution investments in multi-year capital planning. An upgraded distribution line across the entirety of Skyway and Pleasant (east-west) along with upgrades to Maple Avenue are known priorities.



7.12 Streets and Sidewalks

The Town manages 34 kms of Streets (asphalt roadway); over 25km of sidewalk; over 16km of trails; 75 crosswalks; and almost 6km of bike lane. These numbers will continue to increase.

The Town currently keeps a paving condition and sidewalk condition index and is working to improve our repair, maintenance and replacement programs.



7.13 Traffic Management

The Town is a drive through location for tourists and locals with highway 1 being congested during busy periods of the year (30-60 days/year maximum). The corridor between Gaspereau Avenue and University Avenue is being looked at for long term capital improvements (lights, roundabouts, etc) to improve the level of service. At the same time, immediate improvements during busy times are being considered as well.

The Town is looking to better local transit options by better looking at the feasibility of microtransit to supplement the regional options – Kings Transit and Kings PtP.

The Town is also investing in an Active Transportation network to make it easier for people to roll and stroll through town. This includes traffic calming on various streets, raised crossings and improved space for pedestrians and cyclists.

As part of the planning for proposed developments (Woodman's Grove, East End, West End) there have been numerous traffic studies conducted. Recommendations to intersections are recommended to areas around these projects as they are built out.

In the longer-term – the Town should be considering if a highway interchange would ever be desirable. This would only be practical at either Maple Avenue or University Avenue.

7.14 Traffic Management – MPS

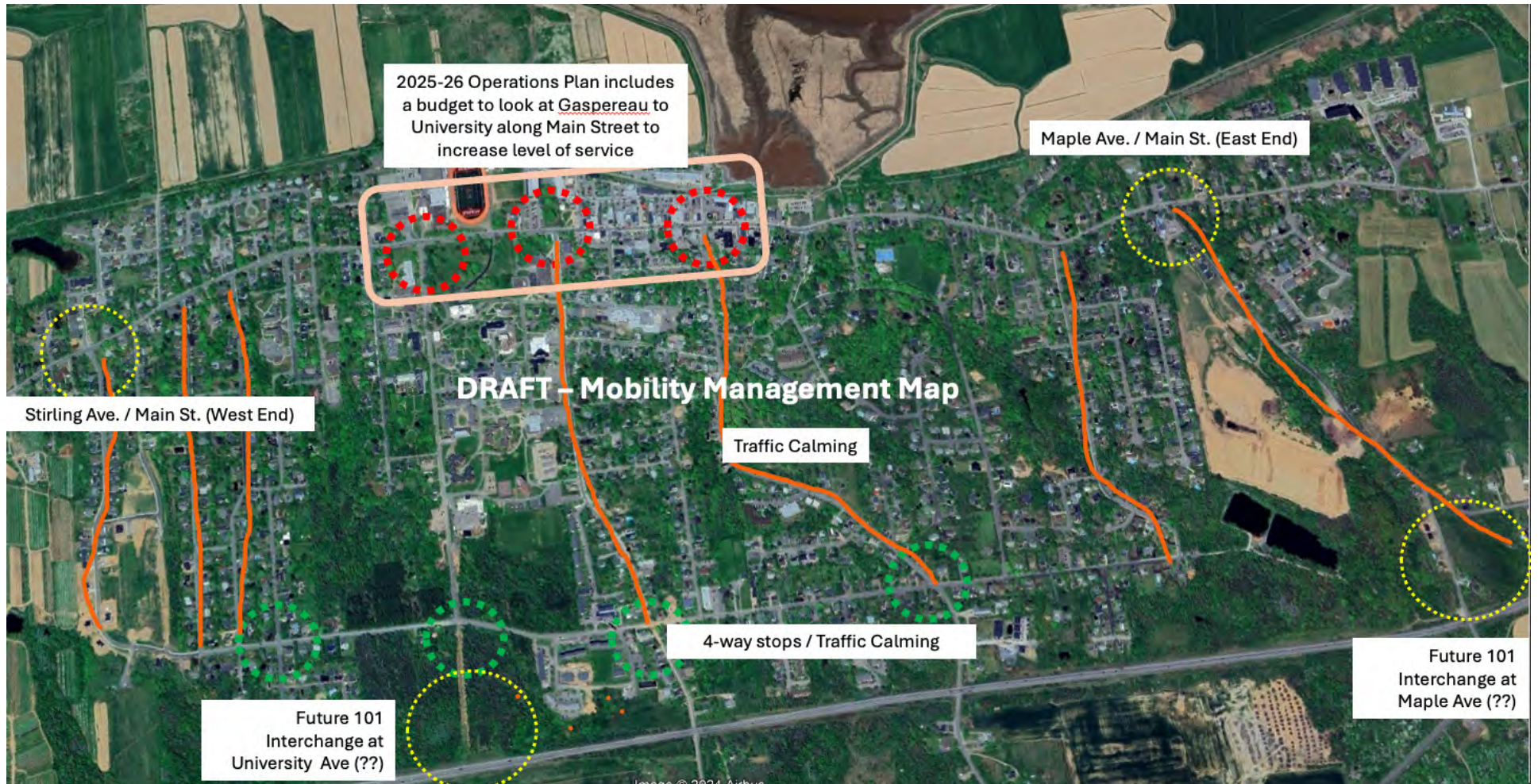
Part 5 of the Town's current Municipal Planning Strategy outlines policy support for increasing Mobility Options.

Council may want to update this section as part of this review so clear, strategic direction can guide decision making. Currently, Policy 5.0(2) speaks to the following priorities:

2. To support sustainable transportation, reduce our reliance on fossil fuels, and promote health by striving to prioritize infrastructure development, in the following order of infrastructure;
 - 2.1. active transportation (walking, biking)
 - 2.2. public transportation options
 - 2.3. other shared mobility options
 - 2.4. private electric vehicles
 - 2.5. private fossil-fuel vehicles



Comprehensive Mobility Management – Cars, Transit, Walking and Active Transport ++



7.16 Parks and Recreation

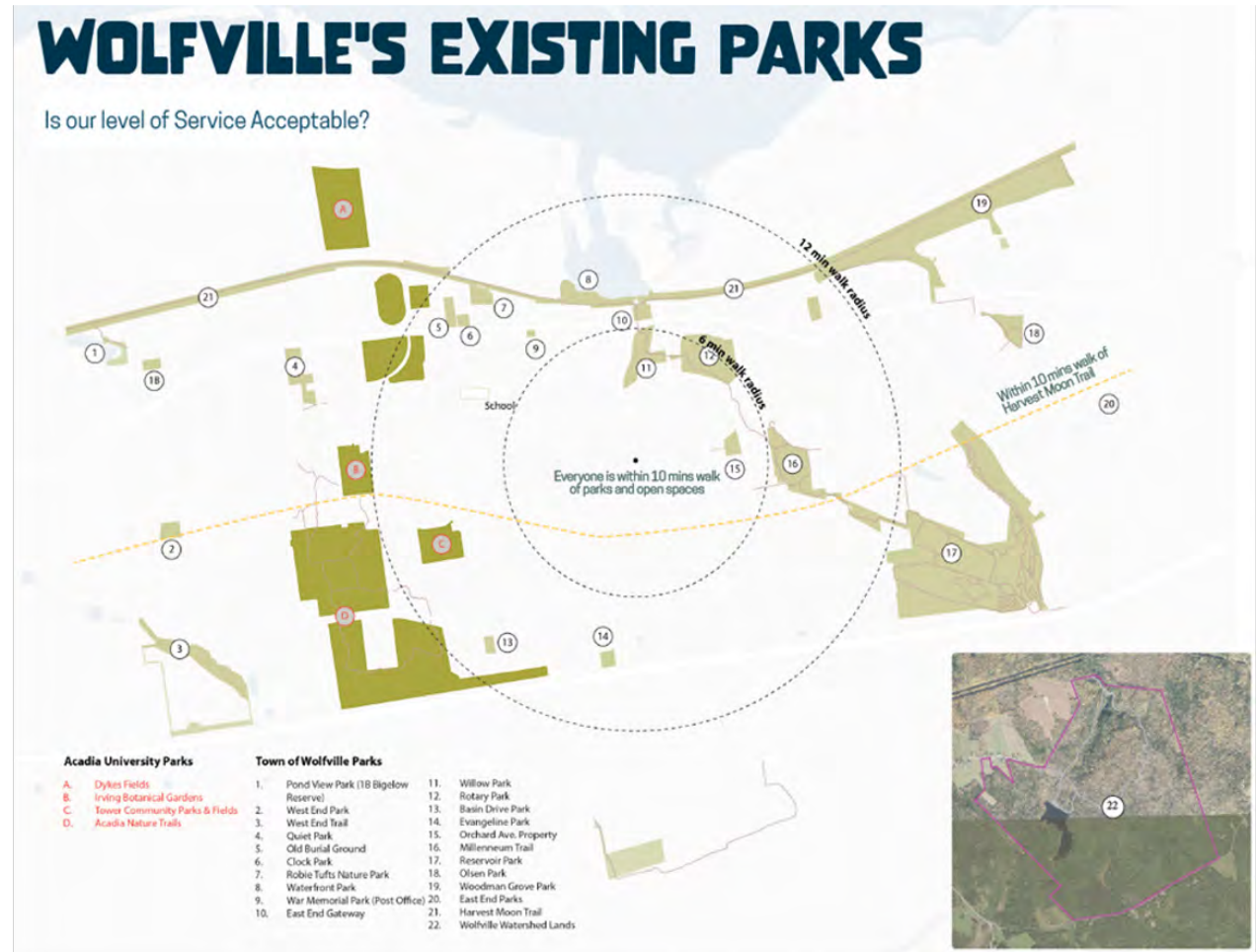
The Town manages 724 acres of Parks and Open Space and offerings a variety of recreation programming. Acadia also has significant Parks Space on campus.

A Parks and Recreation services review is currently underway.

This was a priority in the 2025-26 Operations Plan.

More information will come to Council on this process separate from this Plan Review.

Some changes should be contemplated to the Municipal Planning Strategy Policies (Part 6 of the existing MPS).



7.17 Placemaking

Small investments can have a major impact on vibrancy. Games, flower boxes, benches, painted sidewalks, murals, and dining decks can all help bring people to downtown Wolfville, and keep them longer. These investments can help bring customers to businesses more consistently throughout the year. They can also attract the kind of development that Wolfville wants in strategic places, such as on Front Street or elsewhere downtown.

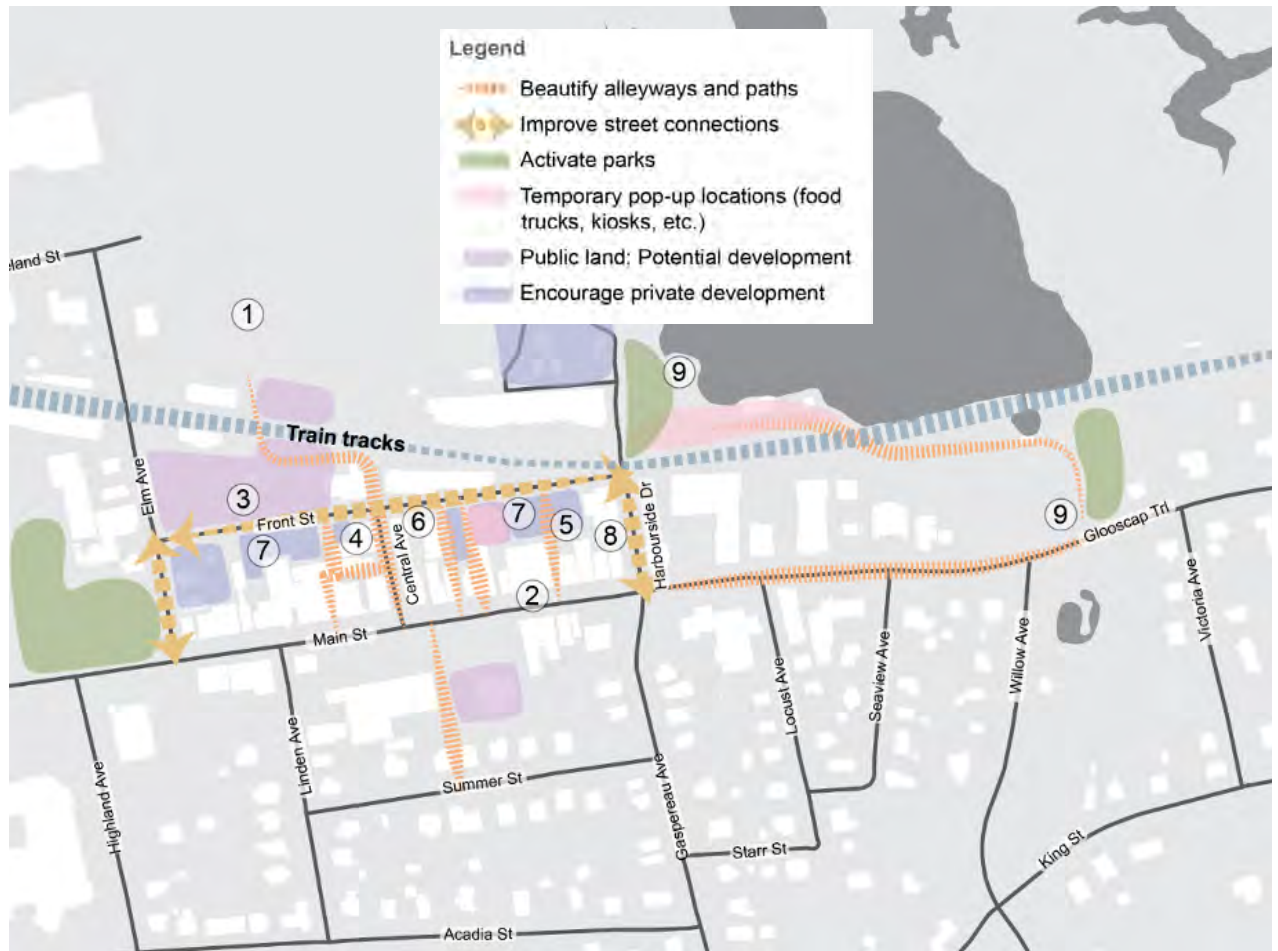
The concept image below illustrates how it might be possible to make Harbourside Drive more inviting (at the intersection with Main Street).



In this concept, a traffic lane is moved into the median, creating space for a pocket park where people can sit, eat, and gather. Flower boxes also help create a buffer for pedestrians on the sidewalk and traffic. The investments help draw people down to-and-from the Waterfront and the Kings County Rail Trail.

Vibrancy was a major priority identified by the Wolfville's Planning Advisory Committee, during early consultation on this Action Plan. They recommended the following investments (among others):

1. Transform alleyways into fun, attractive places, to better connect with Front and Summer Streets.
2. Make Front Street more inviting, so that it feels like it is part of the downtown.
3. Make the waterfront a more enticing destination, offering a variety of activities to attract people.
4. Create a stronger connection between Willow Park and the waterfront to offer a stronger gateway to Main Street.
5. Invest in Elm Street and Harbourside Drive to better draw people to the Farmers' Market, Front Street, and the Waterfront.



The following concept image illustrates how investments in Central Avenue could better invite pedestrians to Front Street. Such investments could help promote Front Street as a desirable location for new development.

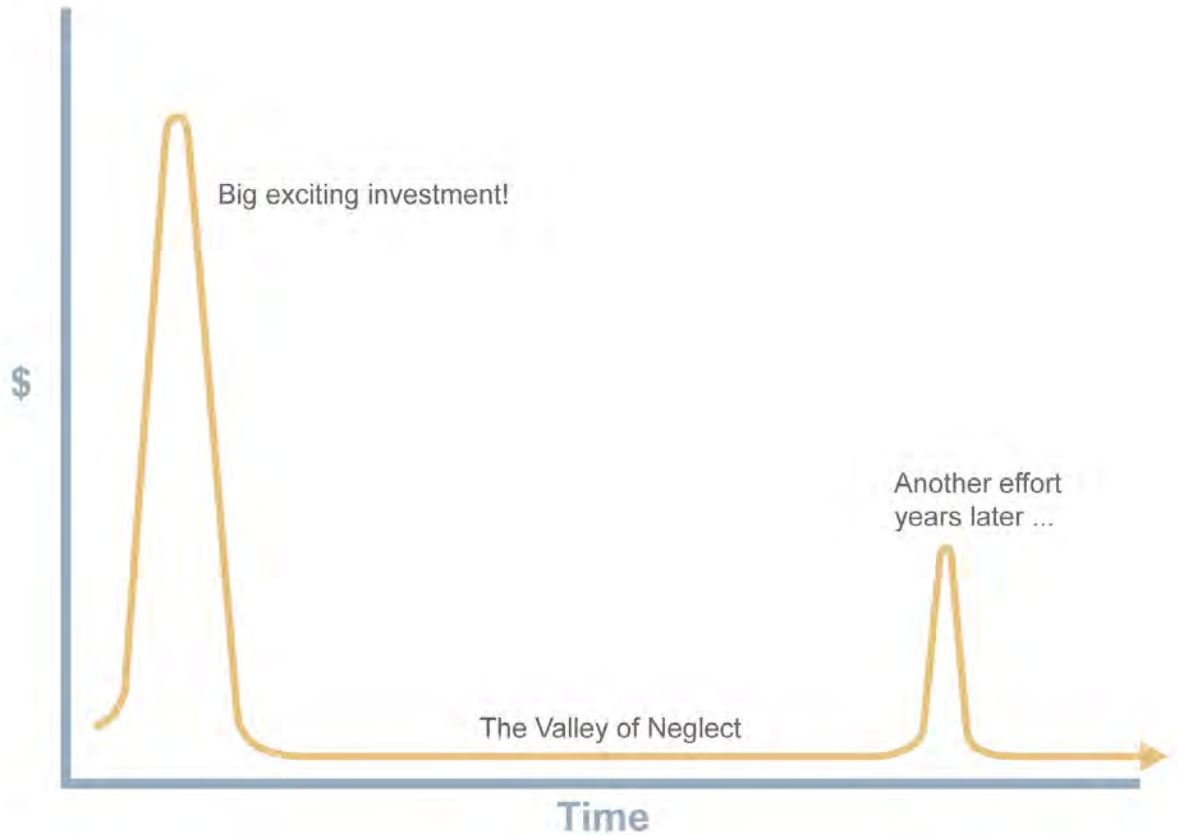


Concept image of potential investments in Central Avenue, including a painted street, a mural, a patio, flower boxes, seating spaces, bunting, and bike racks.

7.18 Low-cost, consistent improvements

When municipalities invest in streets or public spaces, they often do so in one-time, major investments. Between these big investments, streets and parks often receive few improvements, sometimes for decades. This problem is called the “Valley of Neglect.” A consequence is that places begin to feel tired and worn for lack of ongoing investment.

This Growth Action Plan proposes a different approach: establish a budget for yearly, small-scale investments. In this approach, Wolfville will work closely with local businesses and residents every year to identify small improvements for the downtown area, such as the games, garden boxes, and dining decks described above. In this approach, downtown will consistently become a more colourful, inviting place, offering a greater diversity of activities than any single plan could offer.



Appendices

2.8 Appendix 1

4.1 PAC & Interview findings

On February 20th, the design team presented potential options for growth in Downtown Wolfville to the Planning Advisory Committee. The Committee also identified top-priority challenges and goals to achieve in the Downtown. These can be summarized as follows:

PAC goals:

- **Housing.** Meet Wolfville’s housing needs and fulfill its Housing Accelerator Fund commitments.
- **Character.** Maintain Main Street’s fine-grain, organic character.
- **Cohesiveness.** Fill in the downtown’s “missing teeth” — such as parking lots and underused land — with new development, especially on Front Street.
- **Vibrancy.** Invest in placemaking to draw people to underused areas of downtown, such as Front Street and the waterfront.
- **Growth.** Meet the downtown’s need for housing, retail, and office space by expanding west and north.

- **Walkability.** Provide more commercial space in strategic nodes in Wolfville’s neighbourhoods, within walking distance of homes.
- **Efficiency.** Make best use of the town’s available land.
- **Connection with nature.** Strengthen view corridors of farmland and the waterfront, and maintain greenery throughout the downtown.

Vibrancy

A major theme in PAC feedback was to bring more vibrancy throughout the downtown area through development and placemaking. The map below summarizes these requests.

Strategies

This chapter offers a range of strategies to achieve these goals. It is divided into three sections, each of which offers a variety of strategies or scenarios for PAC feedback:

1. Interventions to promote vibrancy and attract growth.
2. Policies to enable and guide growth downtown.
3. Policies to provide commercial destinations in residential areas.