Planning Advisory Committee Meeting

July 10, 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, June 12, 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. **Staff introduction to Housing Accelerator Fund Action Plan Implementation Framework – Package 3. (10 minutes)**
    b. **Introduction to Draft Non-Market Housing Strategy. (20 minutes)**

c. **Presentation from Consultant at Happy Cities on Package 3 and draft recommendations. (1 hour 10 minutes)**

5. **Round Table (10 minutes)**
6. **Comments from the Chair/additional discussion (10 minutes)**

7. **Next Meeting**
   a. September 11, 2025 6:30-8:30 PM.

8. **Adjournment**

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

ABSENT WITH REGRETS

ALSO ATTENDING
- Director of Planning & Development, Devin Lake
- Senior Planner, Mark Fredericks
- Community Planner, Lindsay Slade
- Tristan Cleveland, Consultant at Happy Cities
- Rob LeBlanc, Consultant at Fathom Studios

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC
Sean Gadon,
Barb Aikman

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 May 2025 BE APPROVED AS CIRCULATED.** **CARRIED**
3. Public Input	• Sean Gadon, member of the Non-Market Housing Working Group commended Staff on a collaborative approach with the Housing Accelerator Fund Action Plan Implementation Framework.

Agenda Item	Discussion and Decisions
	• No additional speakers.
4. New Business: **a. Introduction to Housing Accelerator Fund Action Plan Implementation Framework – Package 2**	Director Lake outlined process and timelines for HAF Action Plan. Main components under consideration: • Low density (R1, R2) — allowing additional residential units. • Main Street and C1 — consideration to expand commercial area, to increase height and commercial opportunities. • Parking — reducing parking requirements to improve housing viability, consideration to create new parking lot and/or implement paid parking in certain areas. • Non-Market Housing — policy and incentives for developing co-op, non-profit and public housing.
b. Presentation from Consultant at Happy Cities on What We Heard during engagement on Housing Accelerator Fund progress	**Public Engagement Summary - Presented by Tristan Cleveland (Happy Cities)** • 163 people responded to the survey. • 4 Open Houses were held with approximately 100 attendees. • 13 stakeholder interviews were held. • Renters, students, and people struggling to find affordable housing were well represented in the survey. **Heritage Preservation Discussion** Engagement showed there was strong support for protecting specific heritage properties. • Some supported maximum lot width to avoid large block-like structures. Committee discussion: • Comments stressed retaining character while allowing reasonable growth. • The role for the Design Review Committee is an important consideration for this work. • Openness to newer building materials is an important consideration alongside design guidelines. • The committee expressed general agreement for character and view planes as a key consideration alongside heritage designation. • More information around heritage controls is needed.

Agenda Item	Discussion and Decisions

Downtown Commercial Zone and Height

Engagement showed varying perspectives on whether to allow 4 or 6 stories.

Committee discussion:

- Committee members supported a mix of building height maximums from 3-6 stories.
  - Increased building height attracts investment
  - Increased building height detracts from character
- Density bonusing may only be viable if the policy requires non-market housing, otherwise it can create division in the community.
- View planes are a key consideration for future policy.

General Commercial (C1, C2) and Residential Conversion

- There was extensive discussion about simplifying the zones or using overlays to retain character on specific areas.
- Committee requested a map showing both C-1 and C-2.

Parking

Engagement showed opposition to reducing parking without viable alternatives.

- Majority of survey respondents supported a large, centrally located parking area to absorb future pressure.
- There was an openness to variable pricing in high-demand areas.

Committee discussion:

- Committee feedback was mixed with some supporting the dykeland parking concept with further iterations, some suggesting parking on the periphery of town to encourage active and public transportation use.

Non-Market Housing and Cluster Housing

- Engagement showed strong community support for allowing small clusters of houses on large lots.
- There were numerous comments emphasizing retaining character while adding gentle density.

Student Housing

- Engagement supported developing specialized accommodations for students, young families, and seniors.
- There were strong calls to consider co-op and non-profit models alongside market rental.

Agenda Item	Discussion and Decisions
	Design Review and Implementation Committee Discussion • The role of the Design Review Committee is expected to become more important under the new framework. • There were questions about adding view planes and character controls into policy and overlays. **Final Notes and Next Steps** • The committee will be presented a more refined package in July, reflecting this feedback along with recommendations. • Staff will check in with Council in July following the PAC meeting. • September PAC will see updates to the Student Housing and Non-Market Strategy work. • Draft amendments (Municipal Planning Strategy, Land Use Bylaws) are expected for October/November 2025. • Public engagement will continue through this process. • Final changes and legislative adoption process to occur in winter 2025/2026.
c. Introduction to Draft Non-Market Housing Strategy	The Committee did not reach this agenda item - it will appear on the July agenda.
5. Round Table	
6. Next Meeting **a. June 12, 2025**	July 10, 2025 – 6:30-8:30pm.
7. Adjournment	June 12, 8:45 p.m.

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

Housing Accelerator Fund

Action Plan

Implementation Framework

wolfville

A collaborative effort.

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Investment for Success

1

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 3 includes recommendations for implementing each of the Housing Accelerator Fund Action Plan items. The Action Plan strives to enable housing development, reform parking requirements, support student housing and non-market housing. Package 3 is intended to support the Planning Advisory Committee's recommendation on various action items and follows several months of workshops, presentations, reporting and analysis.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 3 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.

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.

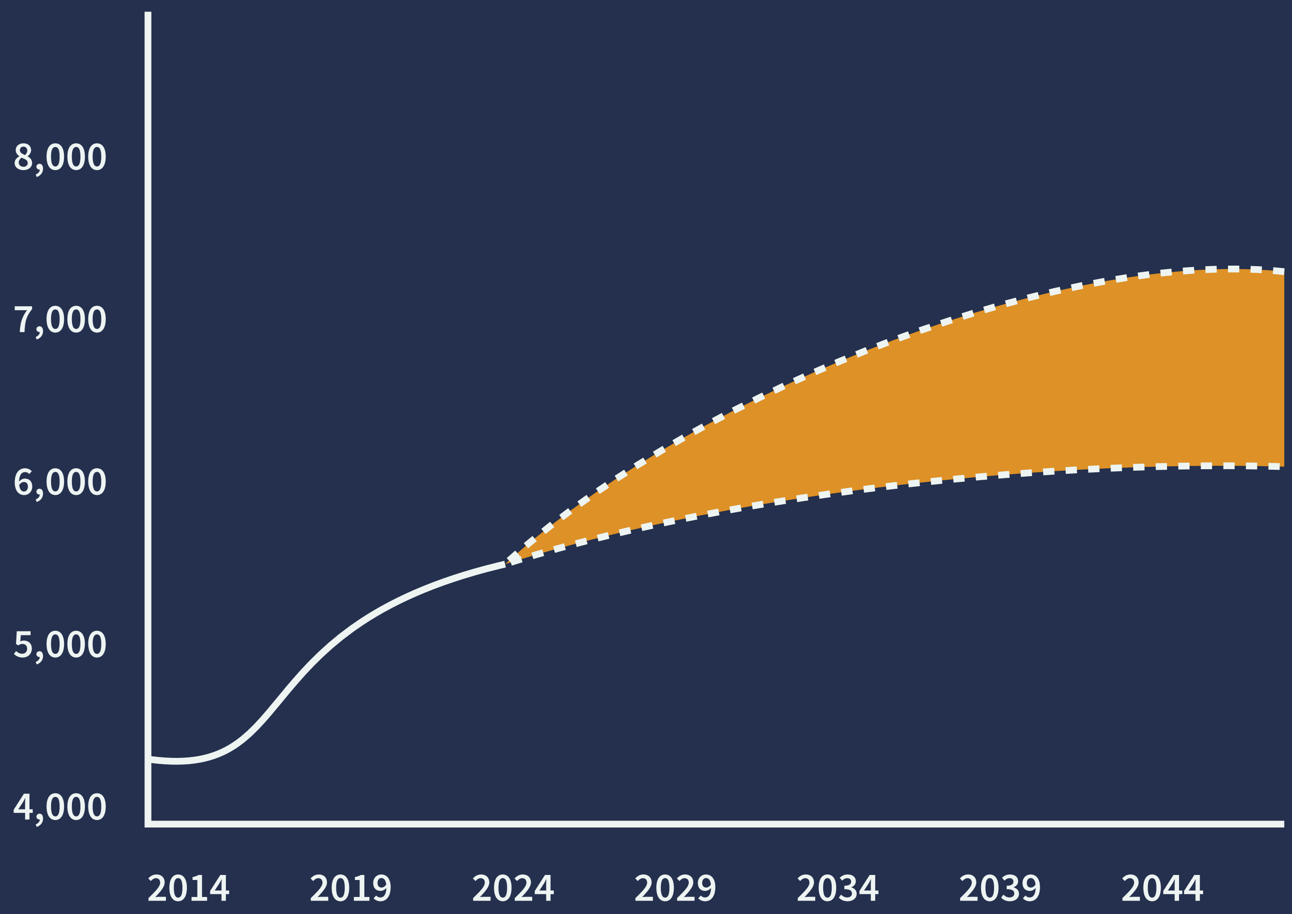
There is a current housing gap of 520 units in Wolfville. This gap increases to 820 units by 2034. The current average rate of construction in Wolfville is 25 new dwelling units per year. This rate underscores the need for systemic and transformational change in the Town's planning documents to enable 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

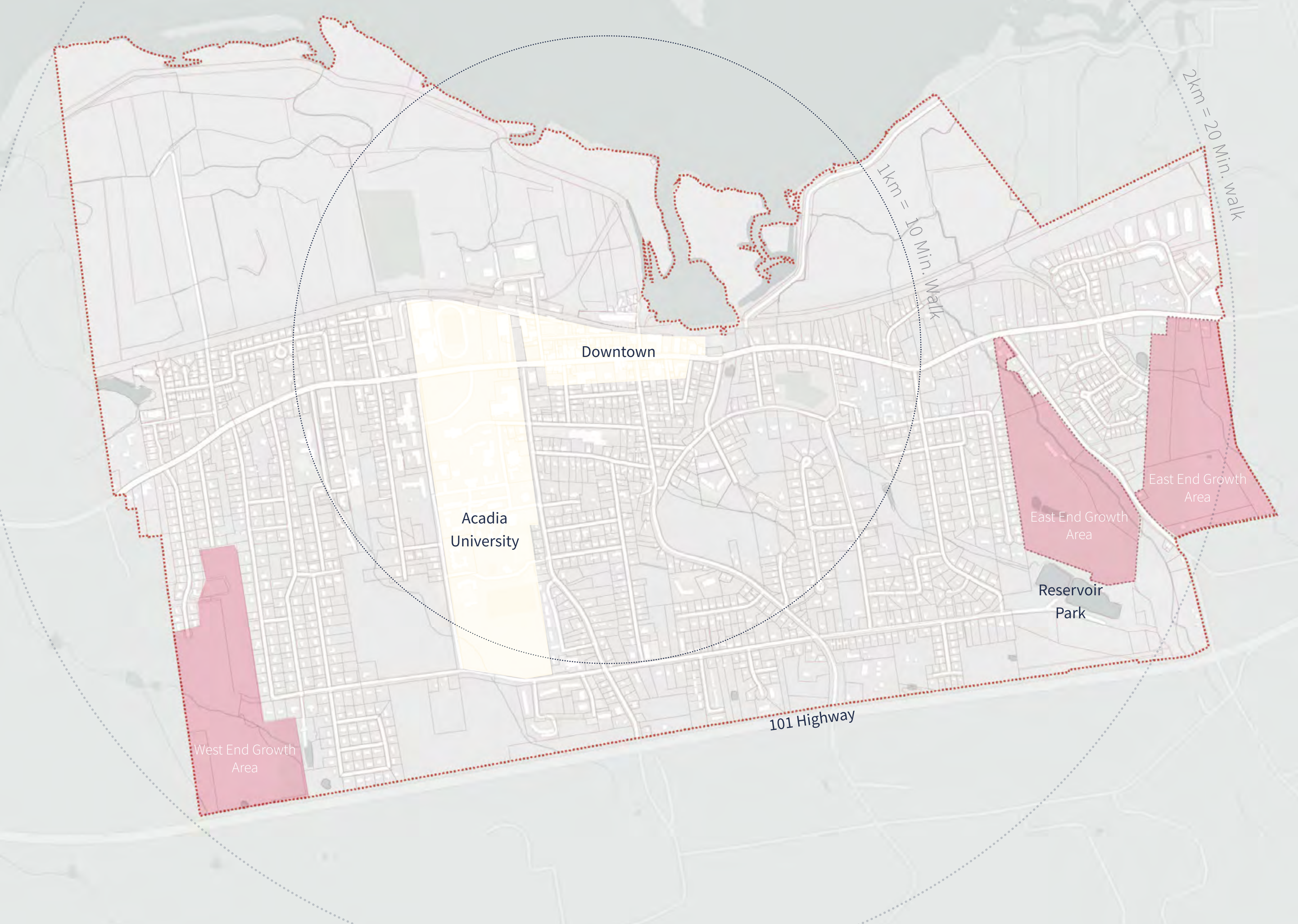


Fig.1 — Town Context Map

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

- A Draft Non-Market Housing Strategy is in Chapter 4. This strategy will 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 is informed by the Housing Needs Assessment, Non-Market Housing Working Group and Community Profile.
- Key aspects of this work 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 work on this Action Plan item will be available in the fall.**

- 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.

More Housing
Secondary Planning Strategy for Acadia University's South-East Campus
Mixed housing models
Identifying opportunities for housing near Crowell Tower
Coordinate parking management with Town
Expedite Missing Middle Housing Applications
Reduced Parking Requirements
Review Town Planning Documents
Appropriate zoning that supports more housing
Parks Plan and Quality of Life
Secondary Planning Strategy for lands along the rail line
Non-Market Housing Grant Program
Leveraging Town-owned Land for Non-Market Housing
Non-Market Housing Working Group
Affordable and Non-Market Housing Strategy

1.4 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.

1.5 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.

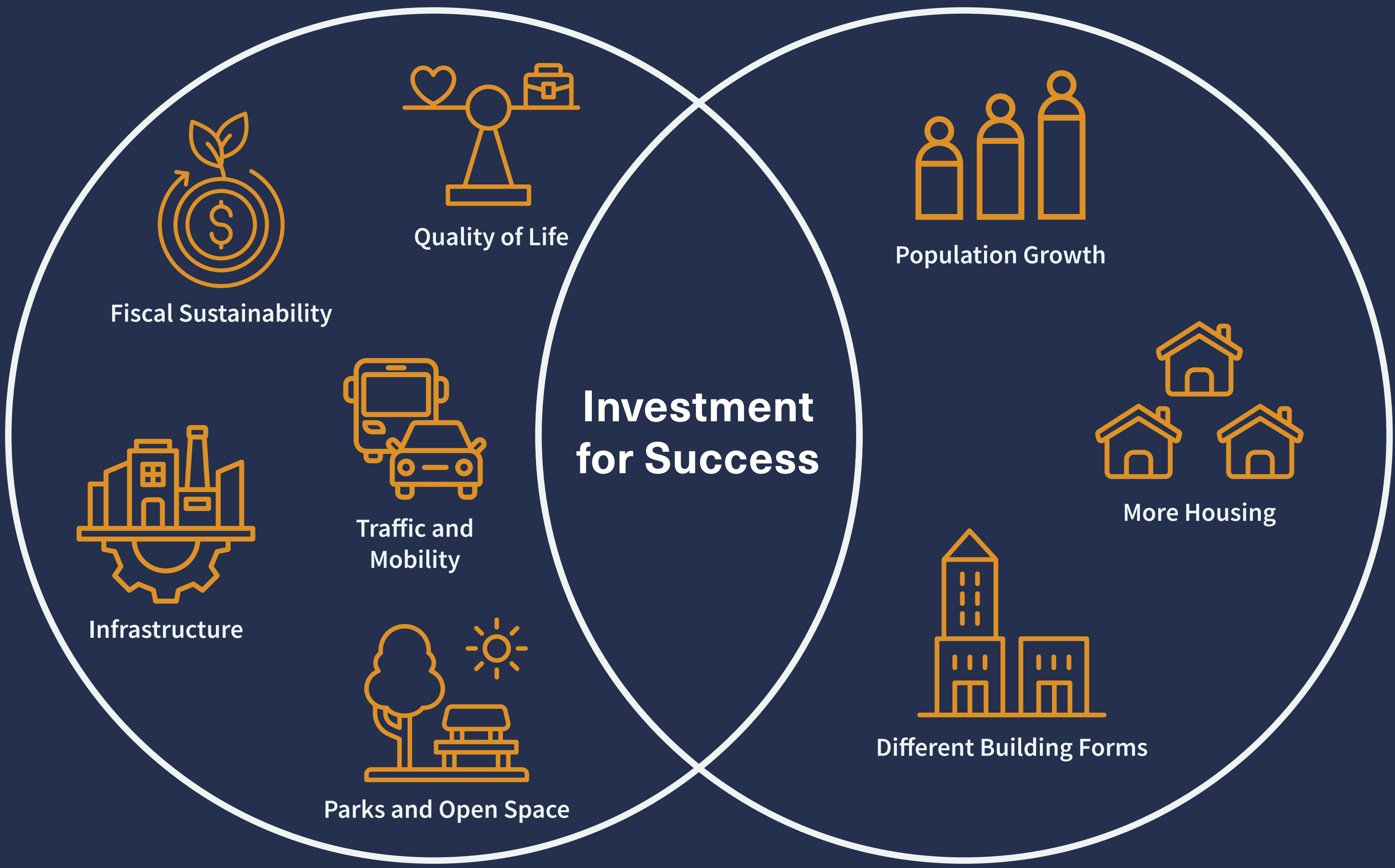
At the same time, the Town's ability to fund infrastructure, services, and amenities is directly tied to the amount and type of development that occurs. With more than three-quarters of municipal revenue coming from property taxes, increasing housing supply—and in particular, medium- and higher-density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

1.6 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.


Quality of Life
Fiscal Sustainability
Traffic and Mobility
Infrastructure
Parks and Open Space
Investment for Success
Population Growth
More Housing
Different Building Forms

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) reviewed 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.

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, including work with Acadia University on campus-related zoning and student housing.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Highland Ave – potential for 240 units

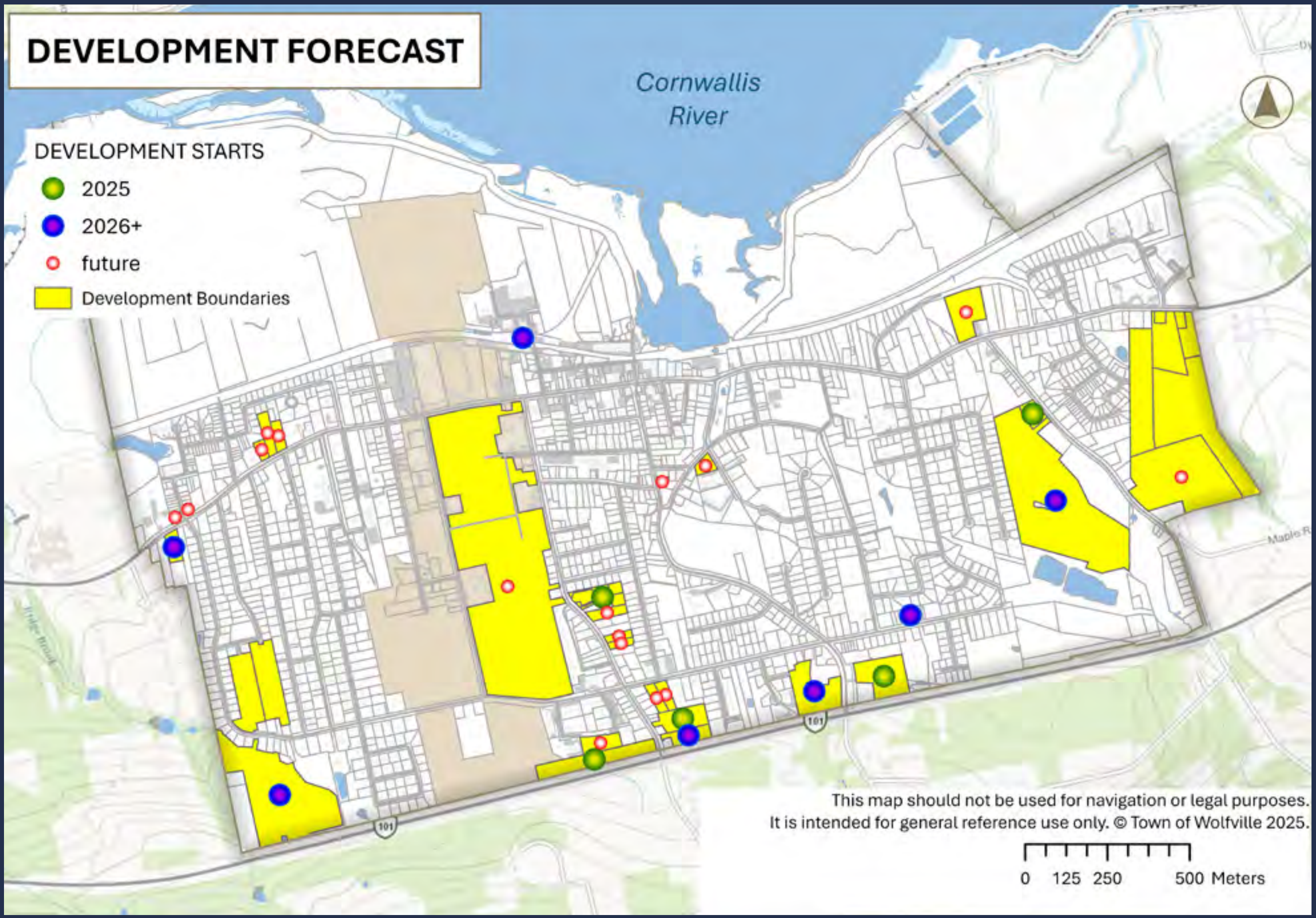
A 2024 rezoning application enabled a multi phase project on two large parcels at the top of Highland Avenue. The first of the two buildings has been submitted for approval and is currently under review. A sidewalk extension, park connections and other community benefits were part of the rezoning approval.

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.

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.



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:

1.10 Jurisdictional Scan

A look at other municipalities in Nova Scotia participating in the Housing Accelerator Fund

Various municipalities in the province are participating in the Housing Accelerator Fund and have adopted Action Plans similar to Wolfville's. Some of these municipalities have already adopted and are now implementing their actions plans, while others are still in process.

In addition to those participating in HAF, there are many municipalities in the province such as the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg and the Municipality of the County of Richmond who have not been accepted into the HAF program who are still adopting similar changes to their planning documents in recognition of high housing needs and prohibitive planning regulations.

This jurisdictional scan provides a high-level overview of the changes that other municipalities in Nova Scotia are adopting to provide added context for Wolfville's action plan.

1. Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM)

HRM has successfully implemented its full HAF Action Plan, including:

- **Four Units Per Lot:** HRM has adopted the ability to build up to four dwelling units on a single lot within municipal service boundaries, encouraging more housing options. Eight units per lot has also been approved for most residential areas in the urban core.
- **Affordable Housing Programs:** Affordable Housing Grant Program was expanded under the HAF, providing support for non-profit and charitable organizations in developing, repairing and acquiring affordable housing.
- **Planning and Design Enhancements:** Hiring of a municipal architect to guide housing design, especially in suburban areas, ensuring integration with heritage districts and transportation plans.
- **Reduced Parking Minimums:** Reduced for all residential buildings, including multi-unit dwellings and shelters, to 1 parking space per 3 residential units. More parking is permitted to be built, but it is not required if the minimum required parking will meet the needs of the building's residents.
- **Heritage Districts:** The HRM has created and expanded heritage districts to preserve historic areas while allowing for new housing developments.
- **Taller Buildings:** Allows for taller buildings in various areas.

2. Municipality of the County of Kings

Kings has implemented the following action plan initiatives:

- **Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs):** Planning documents have been amended to permit ADUs in all Growth Centres.
- **Pre-approved building plans:** have been adopted to streamline development of ADUs.
- **Density Increases:** Amendments to the Land Use By-law were approved by Council to permit the development of Grouped Dwellings within the R2 Zone. Further amendments were approved to increase the permitted number of units per dwelling within the R3 zone from 8 to 12 units and increase the permitted number of units per dwelling within the R4 zone from 16 to no limit.
- **Alternative Housing Promotion:** Encouraging modular, manufactured, and pre-fabricated housing as cost-effective alternatives.
- **Permit Process Improvements:** Upgrading permit software to streamline issuance and inspections.
- **Non-Profit Partnerships:** Exploring tax exemptions or incentives to encourage non-profit organizations to develop affordable housing.

3. West Hants Regional Municipality

Key initiatives:

- **Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs):** Allow detached secondary suites as accessory to single and two-unit dwellings in all zones.

- **Density:** Adopted 4 units as-of-right in R-1 (low density) zone, 6 units-as-of-right in R-2 (medium density) zone and 12 units as-of-right in)high density) R-3 zone.
- **Affordable Housing:** Adopt bonus zoning for affordable housing units, identify surplus land for the purpose of affordable housing development.
- **Parking Requirements:** Reduce parking requirements within serviced areas.

4. Town of Yarmouth

Key initiatives:

- **Surplus Lands Program:** Collaborate with non-profit housing providers to utilize surplus town land to support affordable, inclusive, equitable and diverse communities.
- **Zoning and Bylaw Amendments:** Implementing as-of-right permissions for various housing types, reducing reliance on development agreements, large minimum lot size requirements and adjusting parking requirements.
- **Priority Approvals Stream:** Optimizing and prioritizing the housing development approval process to reduce delays.
- **Reduce or Eliminate Parking Requirements:** Reduce or eliminate requirements for infill development.

5. Municipality of Shelburne

Key initiatives:

- **Surplus Lands Program:** Identify and utilize surplus municipal lands to support affordable housing development.
- **Community Improvement Plan:** Enhancing policies and programs to encourage housing growth and community revitalization.
- **Pre-Approved Housing Design Catalogue:** Offer a selection of pre-approved housing designs to expedite construction.
- **Housing Incentives Program:** Introduce financial and policy incentives to stimulate residential development.

6. Municipality of Chester

Key initiatives:

- **Higher Density Development Strategy:** Enable missing middle housing types.
- **Surplus Lands:** Plan for municipally-owned land for the development of affordable housing as-of-right.
- **Marketing Campaign for Development:** To drive more investment from developers..
- **Affordable Housing:** Explore incentives for developers and non-profits that will encourage the creation of affordable/attainable housing.

Notable changes adopted in other local municipalities:

- **Town of Antigonish:** Up-to 4 units in Residential Neighbourhood Zone and funding to improve bus service to better connect housing and public transit.
- **Victoria County:** Up to 3 units per lot in both Residential Centre (R-1) and Hamlet Residential (HR) zones.
- **Municipality of the District of Guysborough:** Up to 4 units across the board
- **Municipality of the County of Richmond:** Up to 4 units across the board (rural and town centre).
- **Town of Yarmouth:** 2 units in Low Density Residential (R-1), up to 8 units in Medium Density Residential (R-2) zone.
- **Municipality of the District of Lunenburg:** Up to 5 units across all residential zones.
- The Towns of **Mahone Bay** and **Bridgewater** were accepted into the second round of Housing Accelerator Fund in 2024. Both of these towns are now in process to implement their action plans, containing initiatives to leverage surplus land for affordable housing, issue grant funds for affordable housing, reduce parking requirements, increase density in certain zones, a waive development fees.

2

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.

Dramatically 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 sme 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.

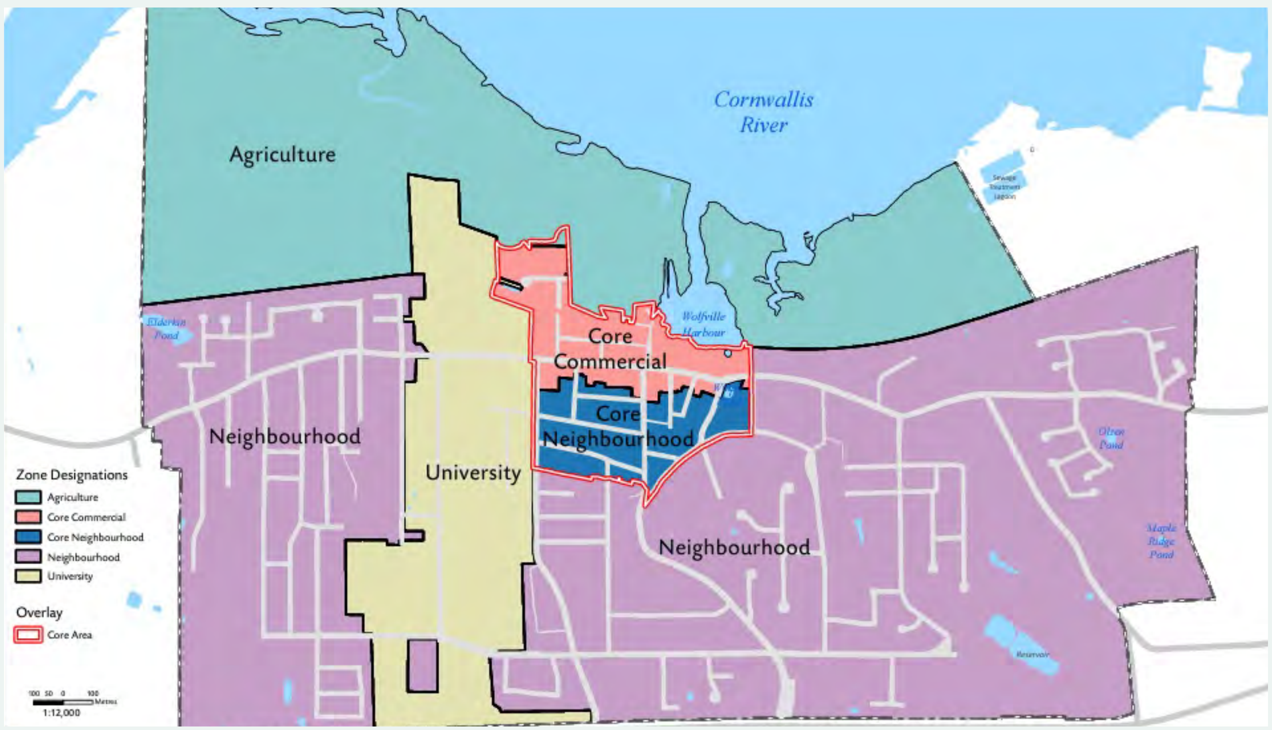
Generally the intent of the generalized land use map is to protect the uses within these designations from uses that may not be compatible.

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.



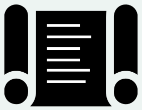
For more complex projects, there is the “site plan approval” and “development agreement” pathways. For these pathways, the submission requirements are more onerous, the approval timelines are longer and there is the potential for appeals. The site plan approval process provides good certainty to developers 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.

C-1

Uses	Commercial uses	
	multi-unit above the first floors or >15m from the streetline	
	offices	
	clinics	
	nursing homes	
	educational facilities	
yard	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	185m2
	Coverage	100%

Fig.2 — Existing Zoning Conditions for C-1

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 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.

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.

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.

Recommendvations

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

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.

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.

Recommendations:

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.

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.

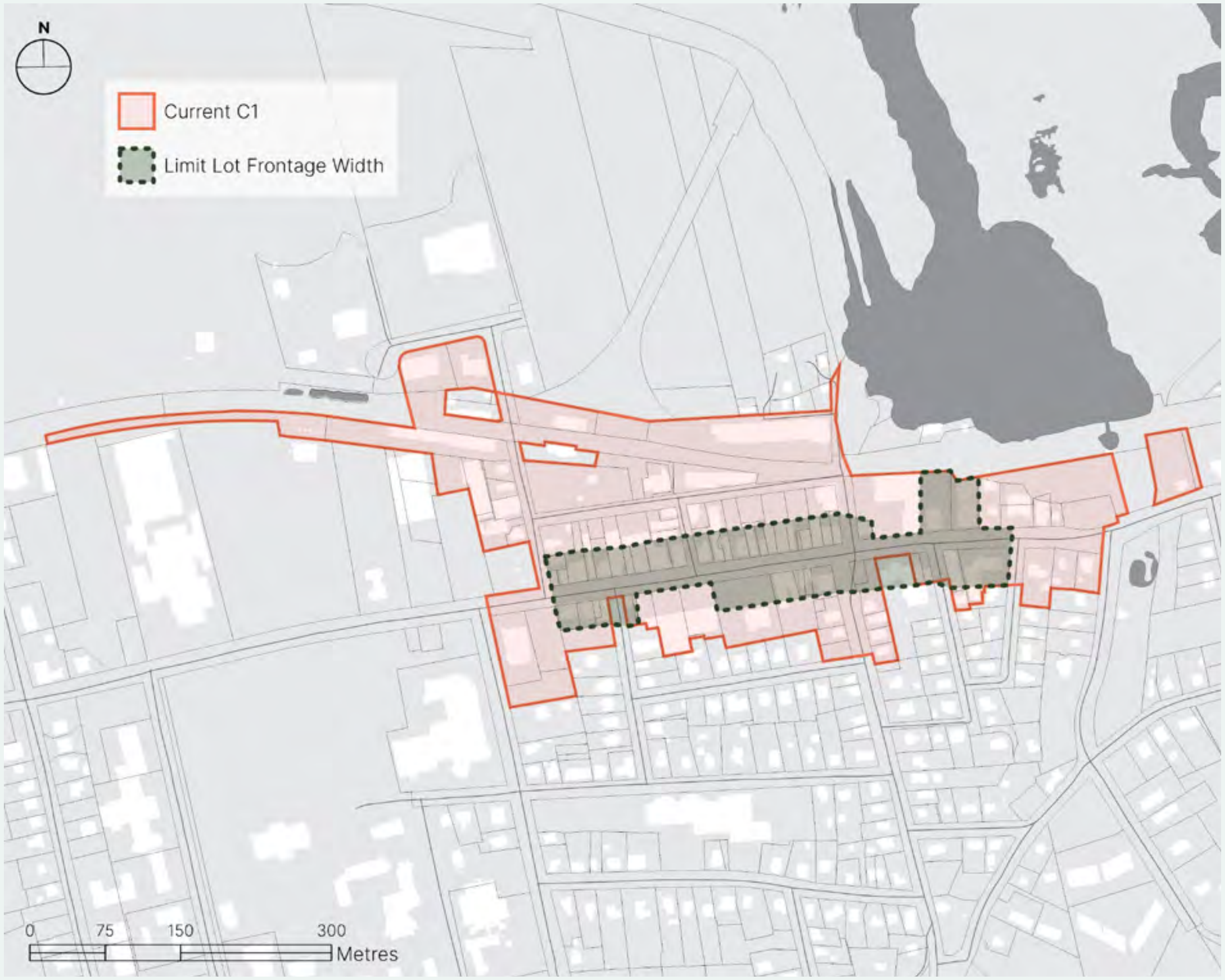
Action 1: Limit maximum lot frontage

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.

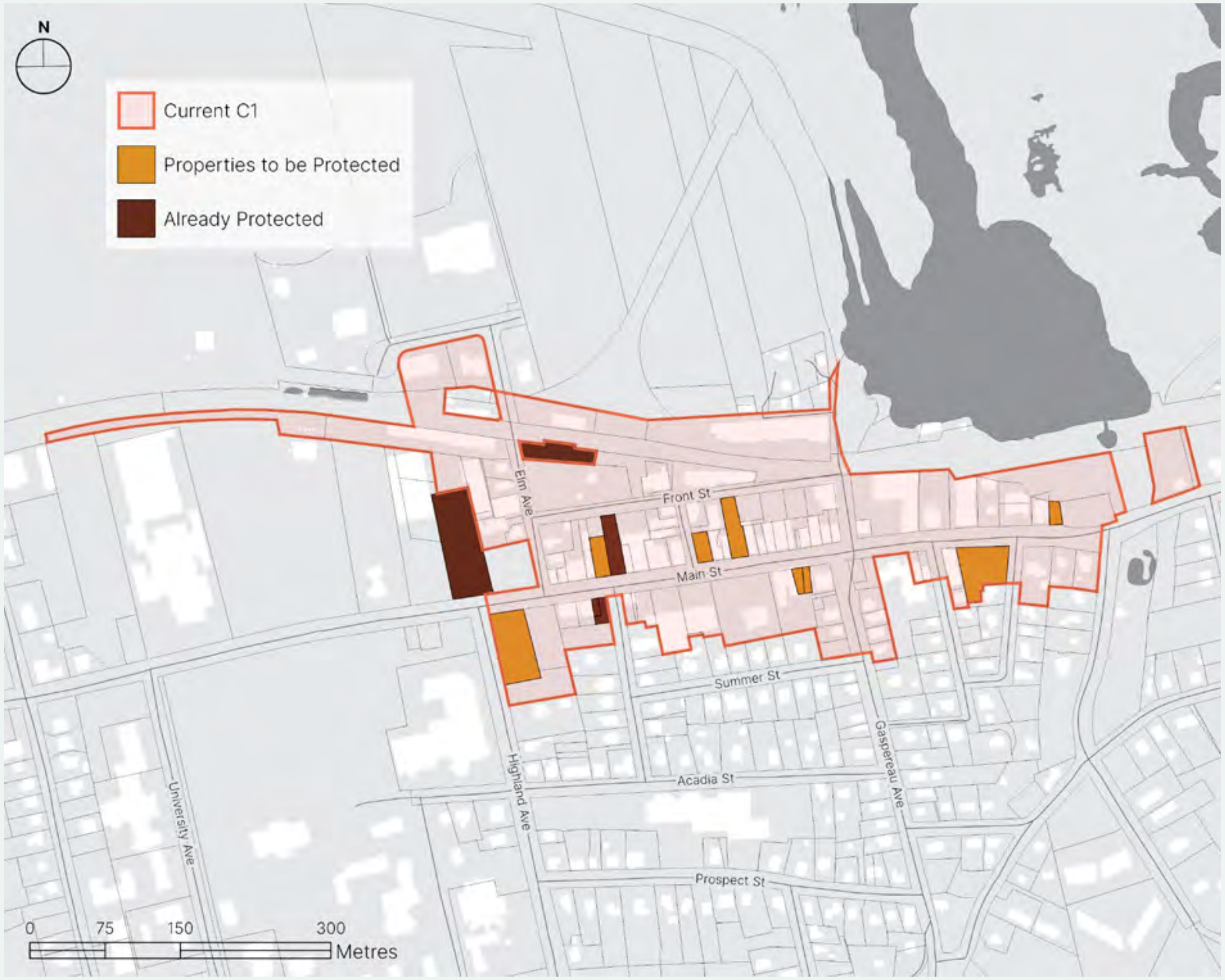
A revised building code may therefore accelerate the pace of redevelopment on small lots. Historically, buildings on small lots are rebuilt and repurposed at a faster rate than large buildings, leading to streets with greater diversity from various time periods.

> "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.

Recommendation:

Identify areas of Main Street where narrow buildings help create a vibrant street. (See proposed outline on the map).

Ensure built form requirements for these lotsarticulate 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. 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.	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.

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 r C-2 zone, giving these properties more rights than what may be possible in the cirrent 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:

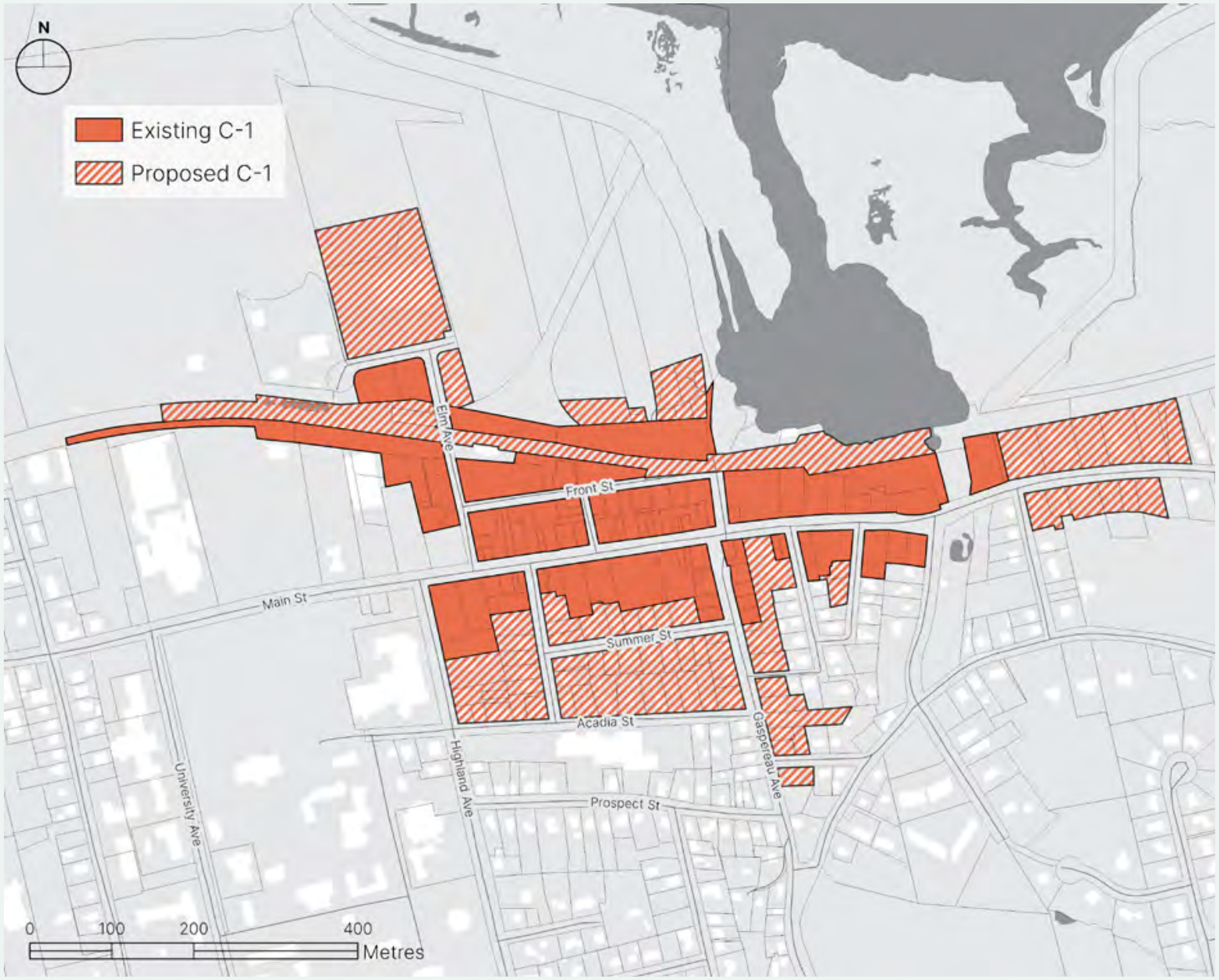
- This area is already zoned C-2. Rezoning it as C-1 would allow Main Street's street life and vibrancy to slowly extend eastward. Development here could also help bring life to Willow Park, which some stakeholders call the downtown's gateway.
- Seaview Ave., Locust Ave., and Starr St all start and terminate 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 permoitted 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.
- Enncourage 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-1

Uses	Commercial uses	
	multi-unit above the first floors or >15m from the streetline	
	offices	
	clinics	
	nursing homes	
	educational facilities	
yard	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	185m2
	Coverage	100%

C-2

Uses	Neighbourhod 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.

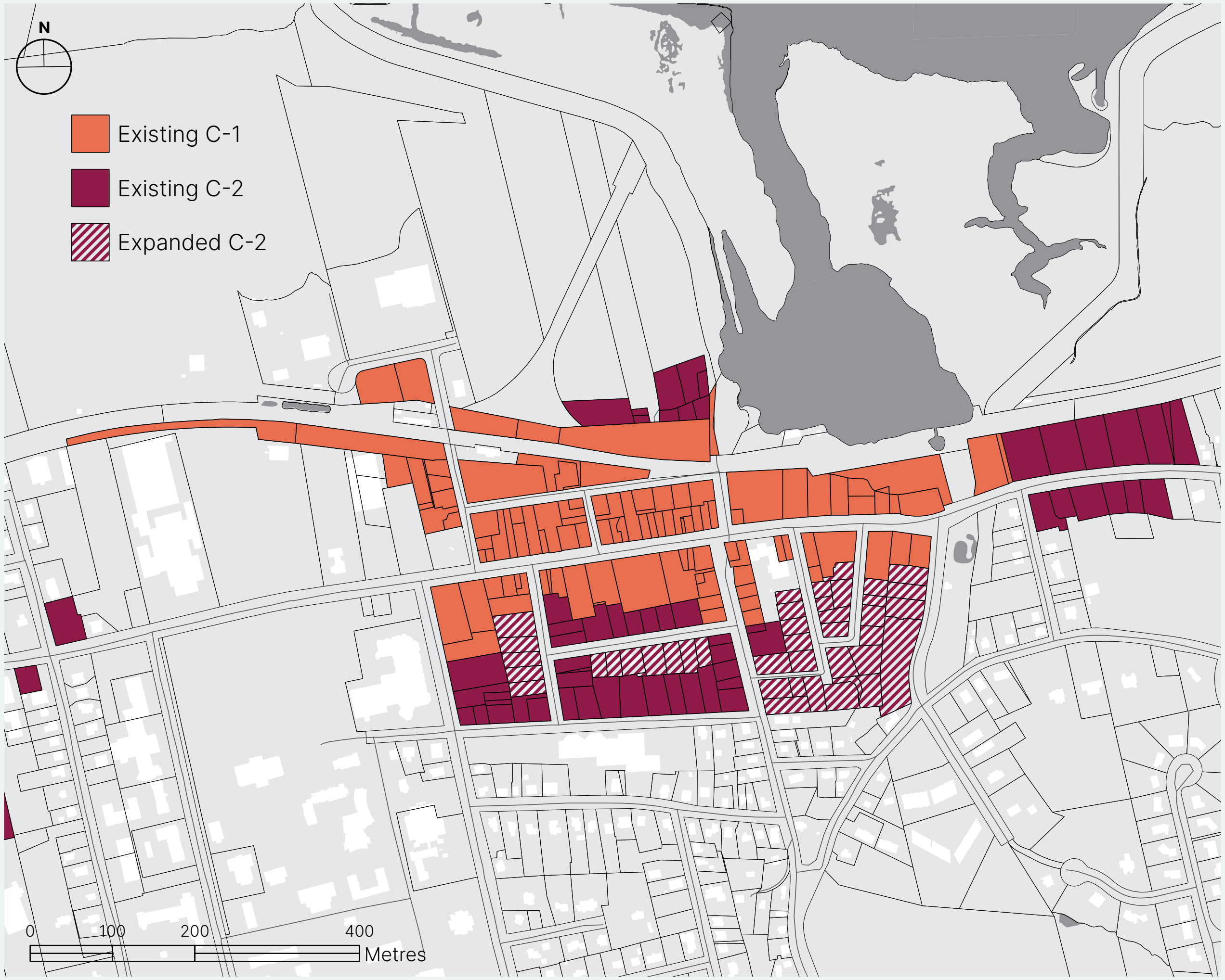
One idea is to eliminate the C-2 zone and replace it with the R3 or new RL zone, but enabling commercial uses in this area with an overlay 'commercial schedule' that could apply to multiple residential zones around town. A commercial schedule allows commercial groundfloor uses to be consider in several other areas of the Town irrispective 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, hoever, 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.

	Proposed under new Neighbourhood Commercial Overlay	Currently allowed under C-2 (for comparison)
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
Flexibility. Enabling neighbourhood commercial with an overlay allows residents to request commercial in their neighbourhood without this changing building design rules. 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.	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.

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 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
Targeted Benefits. The policy would enable a limited number of short-term rentals while also encouraging the adaptive reuse of existing buildings.	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.

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:

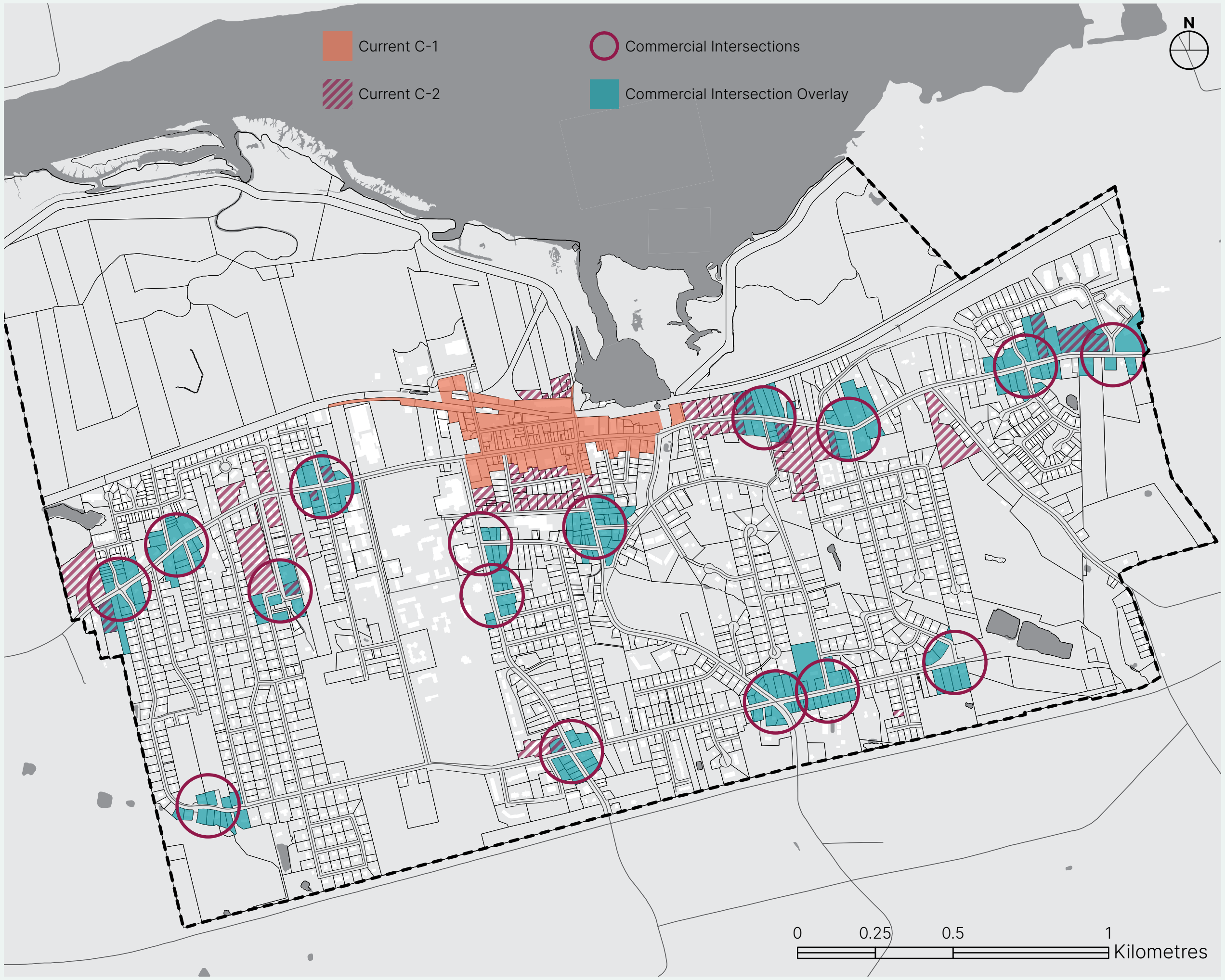
- Fill in gaps in the commercial area. Enabling shops on both sides of the street will help this area become a commercial destination. It will also help justify adding sidewalks on both sides of these streets.
- Expand the Neighbourhood Commercial Overlay eastward to include Seaview Ave., Locust Ave., 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



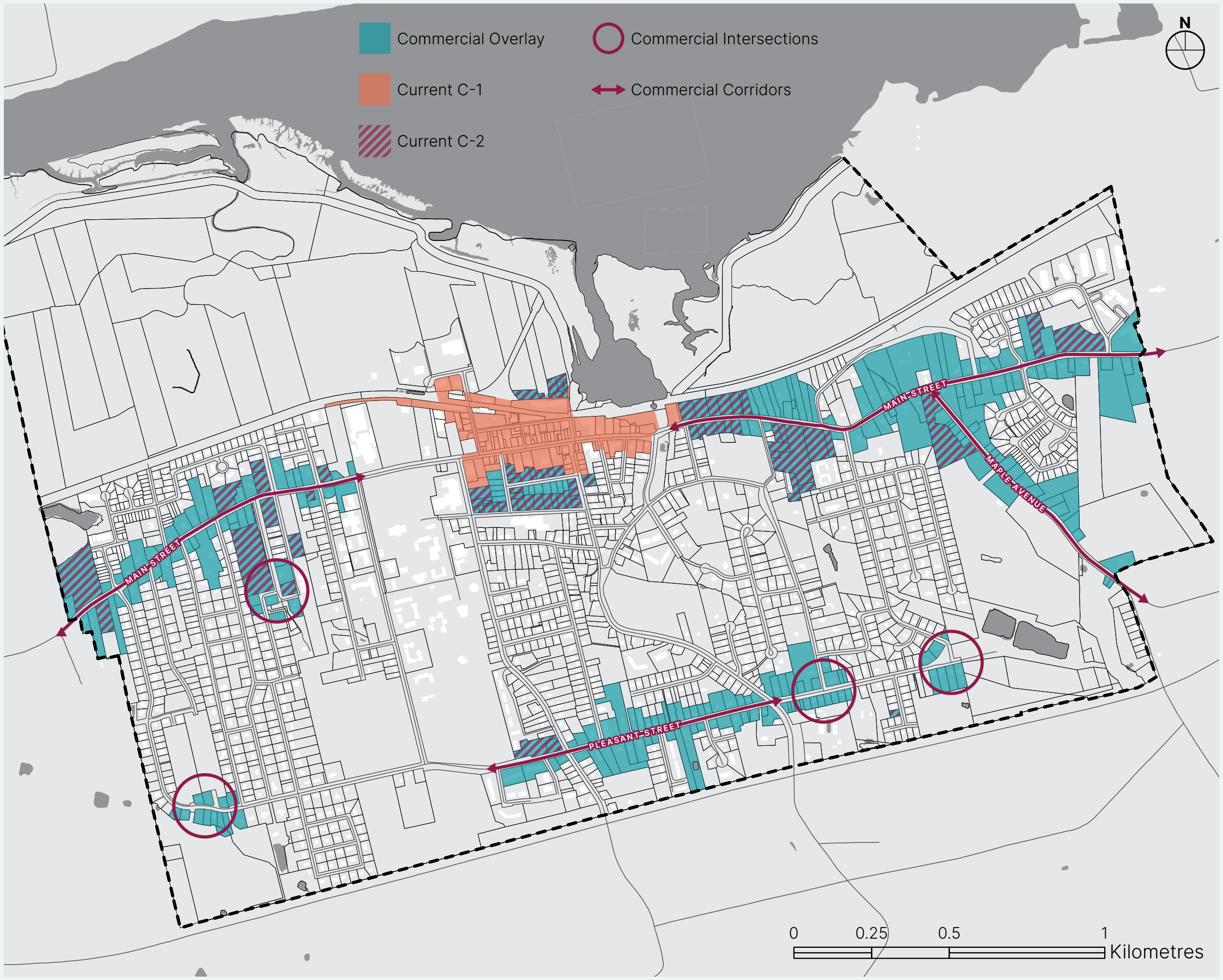
would continue to not allow commercial uses.

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.

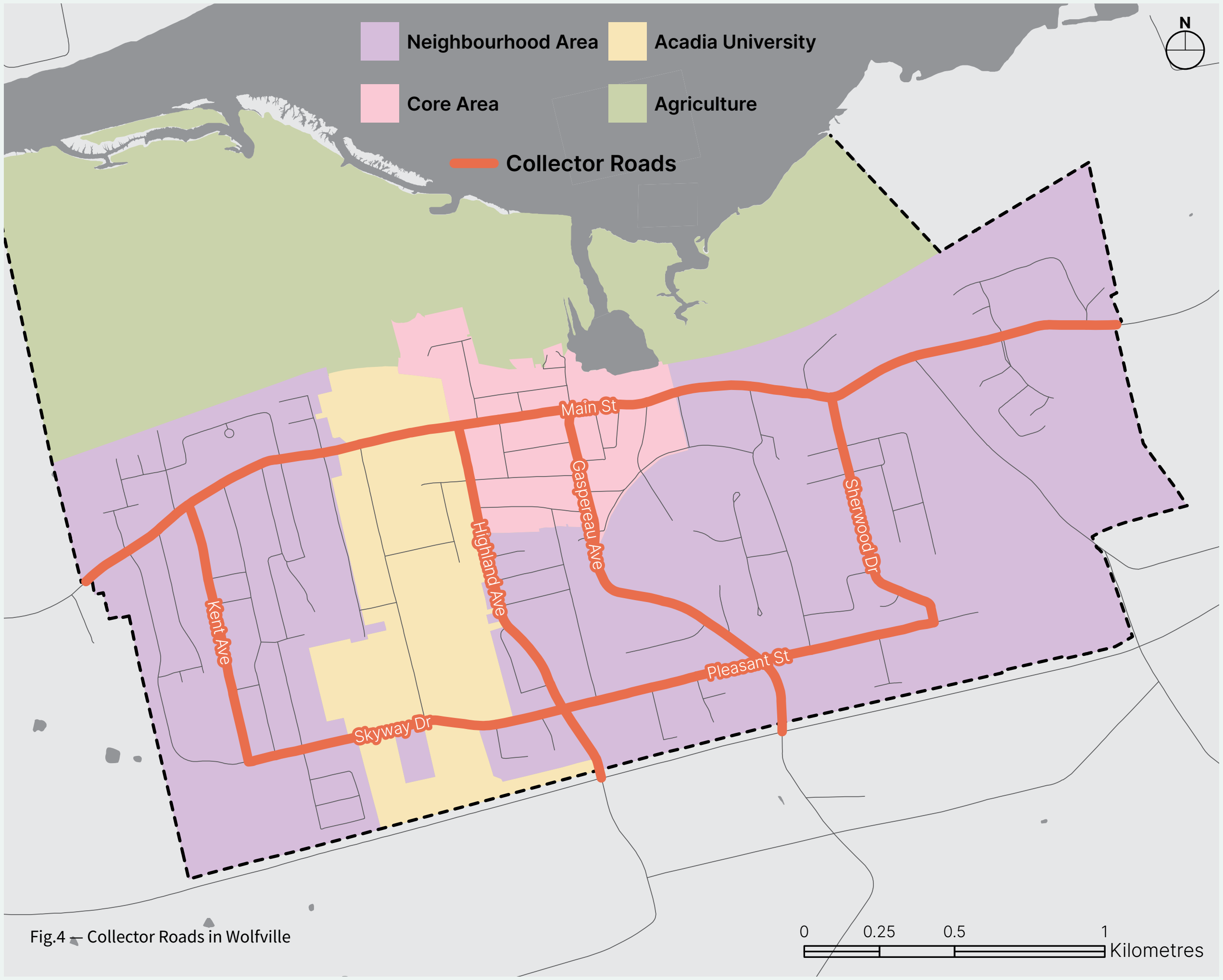


Fig.4 — Collector Roads in Wolfville

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.

Trade-offs and Tensions

Key Issues: gentle density and low density areas, parking, dealing with larger properties, clear approvals process and expectations management (+what else?+) (Let's name them and introduce – we don't have to solve in this one)

	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.

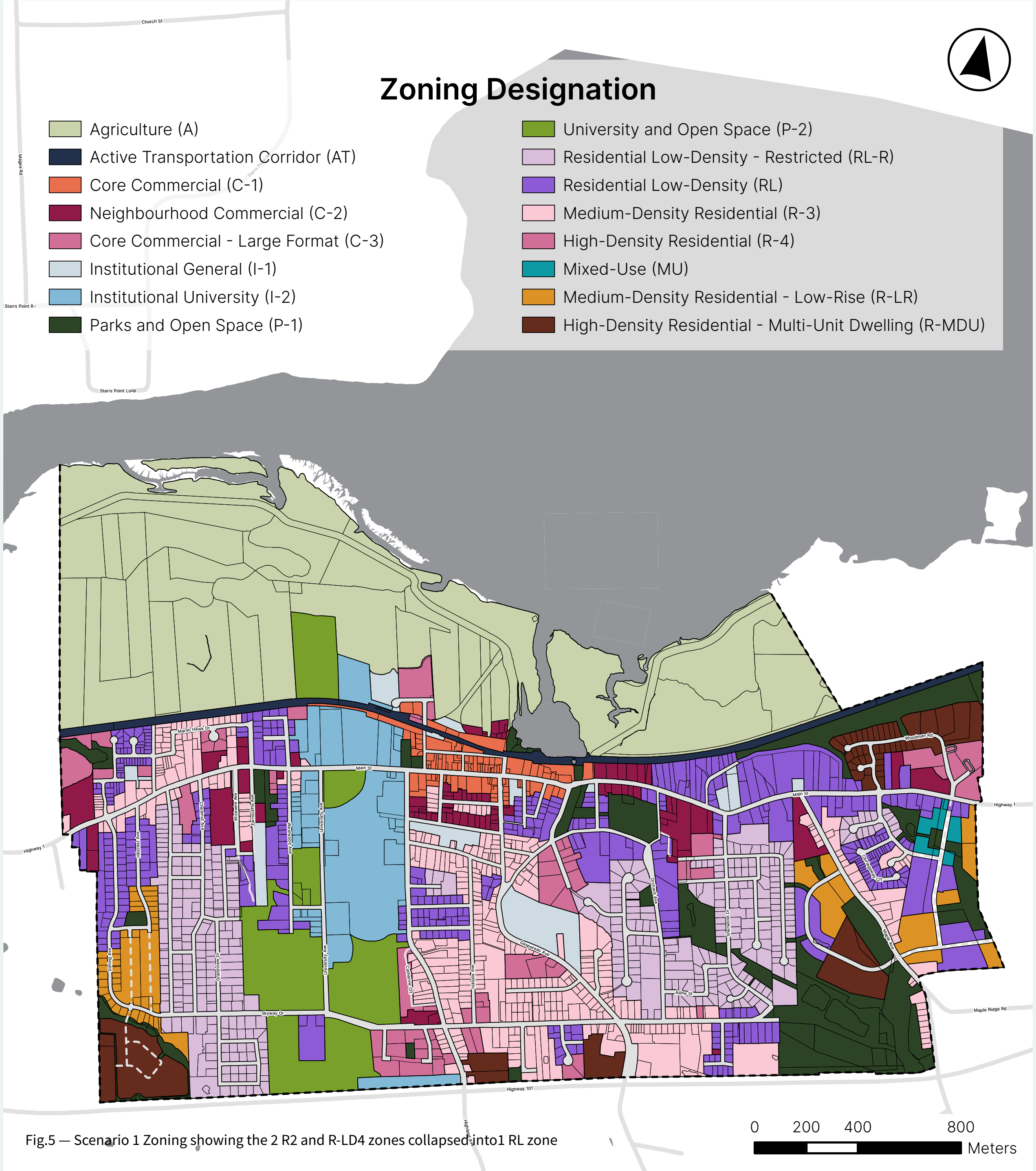


Fig.5 — Scenario 1 Zoning showing the 2 R2 and R-LD4 zones collapsed into1 RL zone

Fig.6 — 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

Fig.7 — 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.

Fig.8 — 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			
Existing	Site Plan				3-8 units	18 upa	50 units	120 units	
Existing	Dev. Agreement				16 upa	24 upa	+ 5 upa	+ 5 upa	120 units
Proposed	As-of-Right	4 units			8 units				
Proposed	Site Plan	8 units			60 units			120 units	
Proposed	Dev. Agreement				80 units			150 units	

Approval Process:

P = Permitted as-of-right,

PC = Permitted with Conditions (refer to general conditions)

SP = Site Plan Approval

DA = Development Agreement

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

Fig.10 — Scenario 2 Zoning showing the 8 zones collapsed into 3 new zones

RL Zone

Existing Zoning

R1

Uses	Single unit	
	Accessory Building	
	Home Occupation	
yard	Height	3-storeys
	Frontage	18m
	Front Setback	6m min
	Side Yard	3m one side, 2m other
	rear yard	4m
	Flankage Setback	4m min
	Lot Area	560 min
	Coverage	40% max, 50% hard surface

R2

Uses	Single unit	
	Two unit dwelling	
	Accessory Building	
	Home Occupation	
yard	Height	3-storeys
	Frontage	12m single or duplex, 9m semi
	Front Setback	4.5m min
	Side Yard	2m
	rear yard	4m
	Flankage Setback	4m min
	Lot Area	372m2 single, 280m2 semi
	Coverage	40% max, 50% hard surface

R-LD4

Uses	Single unit	
	Two unit dwelling	
	3 & 4 Unit	
	Cluster	
	Accessory Building	
	Home Occupation	
yard	Height	3-storeys
	Frontage	10m single & duplex, 11m semi, 7m TH, 12m multi
	Front Setback	4m min
	Side Yard	1.5m, 0 for TH
	Rear yard	4m
	Flankage Setback	4m min
	Lot Area	330m2 single & duplex, 396m2 semi, 231m2 TH
	Coverage	50% max, 60% hard surface

Proposed Zoning

New RL (combines R1, R2, R-LD4)

Uses	Single unit	
	4 Unit (8 unit by SP)	
	Cluster	
	Accessory Building	
	Home Occupation	
yard	Height	3-storeys
	Frontage	10m single & duplex, 11m semi, 6m TH, 12m multi
	Front Setback	4m min
	Side Yard	1.5m, 0 for TH
	Rear yard	4m
	Flankage Setback	4m min
	Lot Area	300m2 single & duplex, 280m2 semi, 180m2 TH, Multi 100m2 per unit
	Coverage	50% max, 60% hard surface

RM Zone

Existing Zoning

R3

Uses	Single unit	
	Two unit dwelling	
	Townhome	
	8 units by SP, 16 UPA by DA	
	Accessory Building	
	Home Occupation	
yard	Height	3-storeys
	Frontage	11m single, 12m duplex, 9m semi, 6m TH, 12m multi
	Front Setback	4.5m min
	Side Yard	2m, 0m TH
	Rear yard	4m
	Flankage Setback	4m min
	Lot Area	300m2 single, 280m2 semi, 372m2 duplex, 137m2 TH, Multi 100m2 per unit
	Coverage	40% max, 50% hard surface

R-LR

Uses	3 & 4 Unit	
	Townhouse	
	50 multi by SP,+ 5upa by DA	
	Cluster	
	Accessory Building	
	Ground Floor Commercial	
yard		4-storeys
	Frontage	6m TH, 12m multi, flag lots 6m
	Front Setback	8m min, 4m with garage
	Side Yard	1.5m, 0 for TH
	Rear yard	4m
	Flankage Setback	4m min
	Lot Area	330m2 single & duplex, 396m2 semi, 231m2 TH
	Coverage	50% max, 60% hard surface

R4

Uses	Single unit	
	Two unit dwelling	
	Townhome	
	18 UPA by SP, 24 upa by DA	
	Accessory Building	
	Home Occupation	
yard	Height	3-storeys, 4th storey stepback by DA
	Frontage	11m single, 12m duplex, 9m semi, 6m TH, 12m multi
	Front Setback	4.5m min
	Side Yard	2m, 0m TH
	Rear yard	4m
	Flankage Setback	4m min
	Lot Area	300m2 single, 280m2 semi, 372m2 duplex, 137m2 TH, Multi 100m2 per unit
	Coverage	40% max, 50% hard surface

Proposed Zoning

RM (replaces R3, R4 and R-LR)

Uses	8 Unit as of right, 60 units by SP, 80 units by DA	
	Townhouse	
	Multi	
	Cluster	
	Accessory Building	
	Ground Floor Commercial permitted	
yard	height	4-storeys
	Frontage	11m single, 12m duplex, 9m semi, 6m TH, 12m multi
	Front Setback	8m min, 4m with garage
	Side Yard	1.5m, 0 for TH
	Rear yard	4m
	Flankage Setback	4m min
	Lot Area	330m2 single & duplex, 396m2 semi, 231m2 TH, Multi 50m2 per unit
	Coverage	60% max, 70% hard surface

RH Zone

Existing Zoning

R-MDU

Uses	120 units by SP, + 5 upa by DA	
	Commercial by SP or DA	
	Home Occupation	
yard	Height	6-storeys
	Frontage	18m, flaglot 6m
	Front Setback	4.5m min
	Side Yard	6m
	Rear yard	6m
	Flankage Setback	4m min
	Lot Area	1500 m2
	amenity	5m2 per unit
	Coverage	80%

R-MU

Uses	Commercial by DA	
	120 units by DA, + 5 upa by DA	
	Accessory Building	
	Ground Floor Commercial	
yard	Height	4-storeys
	Frontage	18m
	Front Setback	0m min
	Side Yard	0m min
	Rear yard	6m
	Flankage Setback	0m min
	Lot Area	1500 m2
	amenity	5m2 per unit
	Coverage	0

Proposed Zoning

RH (replaces R-MDU, R-MU)

Uses	120 units by SP, 150 units by DA	
	Commercial in at least 50% of groundfloor	
	Accessory Building	
	Ground Floor Commercial permitted	
yard	Height	6-storeys
	Frontage	18m, flaglot 6m
	Front Setback	0 min, 6m max
	Side Yard	0m when bordering RH, 6m otherwise
	Rear yard	6m
	Flankage Setback	0m when bordering RH, 6m otherwise
	Lot Area	1500 m2
	amenity	5m2 per unit
	Coverage	80%

Fig.11 — 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.

Fig.12 — 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	8 units				120 units			
	Dev. Agreement	16 upa				150 units			

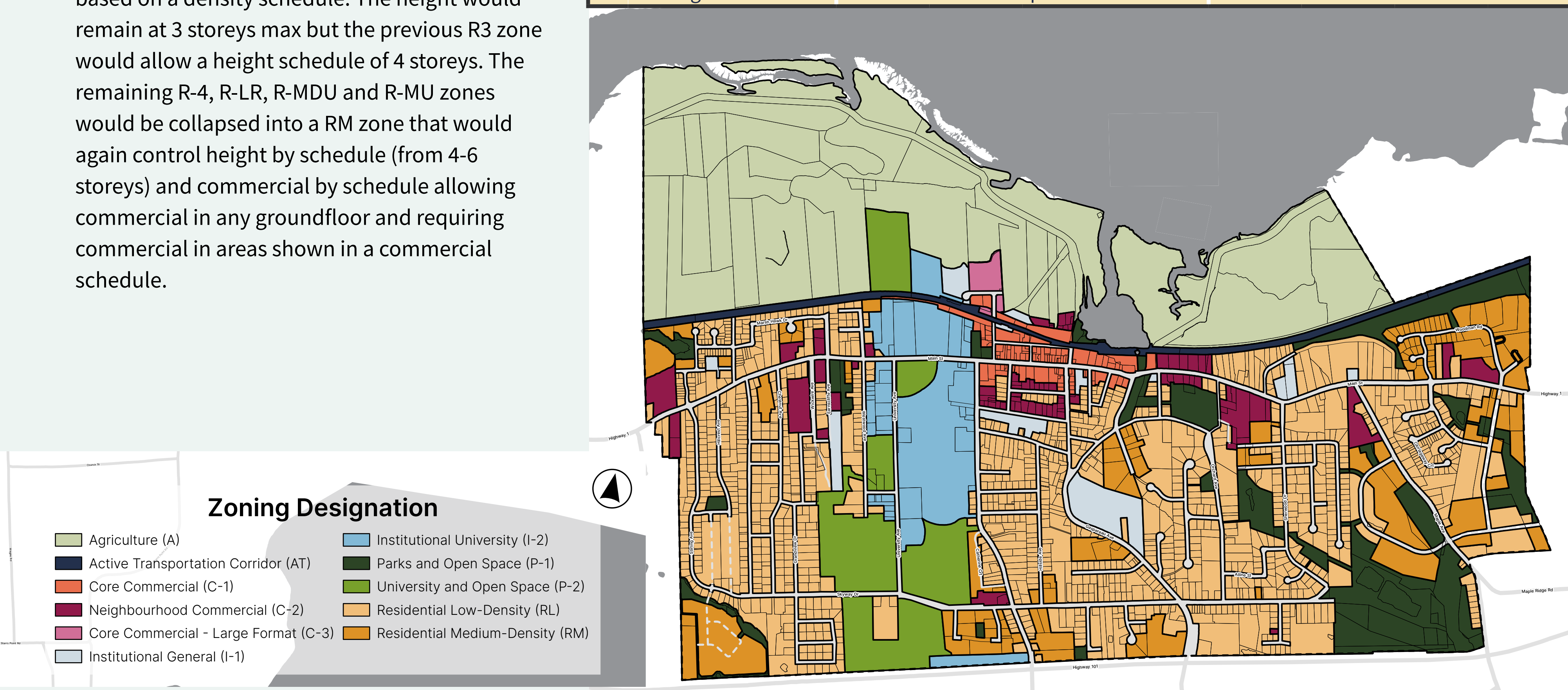


Fig.13 — Scenario 2 Zoning showing the 8 zones collapsed into 3 zones

Approval Process:

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

Fig.14 — 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

Fig.15 — Scenario 3 Zoning showing the 8 zones collapsed into 2 new zones

RL Zone

Existing Zoning

R1

Uses	Single unit	
	Accessory Building	
	Home Occupation	
yard	Height	3-storeys
	Frontage	18m
	Front Setback	6m min
	Side Yard	3m one side, 2m other
	rear yard	4m
	Flankage Setback	4m min
	Lot Area	560 min
	Coverage	40% max, 50% hard surface

R2

Uses	Single unit	
	Two unit dwelling	
	Accessory Building	
	Home Occupation	
yard	Height	3-storeys
	Frontage	12m single or duplex, 9m semi
	Front Setback	4.5m min
	Side Yard	2m
	rear yard	4m
	Flankage Setback	4m min
	Lot Area	372m2 single, 280m2 semi
	Coverage	40% max, 50% hard surface

R-LD4

Uses	Single unit	
	Two unit dwelling	
	3 & 4 Unit	
	Cluster	
	Accessory Building	
	Home Occupation	
yard	Height	3-storeys
	Frontage	10m single & duplex, 11m semi, 7m TH, 12m multi
	Front Setback	4m min
	Side Yard	1.5m, 0 for TH
	Rear yard	4m
	Flankage Setback	4m min
	Lot Area	330m2 single & duplex, 396m2 semi, 231m2 TH
	Coverage	50% max, 60% hard surface

R3

Uses	Single unit	
	Two unit dwelling	
	Townhome	
	8 units by SP, 16 UPA by DA	
	Accessory Building	
	Home Occupation	
yard	Height	3-storeys
	Frontage	11m single, 12m duplex, 9m semi, 6m TH, 12m multi
	Front Setback	4.5m min
	Side Yard	2m, 0m TH
	Rear yard	4m
	Flankage Setback	4m min
	Lot Area	300m2 single, 280m2 semi, 372m2 duplex, 137m2 TH, Multi 100m2 per unit
	Coverage	40% max, 50% hard surface

Proposed Zoning

New RL (combines R1, R2, R-LD4, R3)

Uses	2 units as of right	
	8 unit by SP	
	16 UPA by DA	
	Cluster	
	Accessory Building	
	Home Occupation	
yard	Height	3-storeys, 4 by schedule
	Frontage	10m single & duplex, 8m semi, 6m TH, 12m multi
	Front Setback	4m min
	Side Yard	1.5m, 0 for TH
	Rear yard	4m
	Flankage Setback	4m min
	Lot Area	300m2 single & duplex, 280m2 semi, 180m2 TH, Multi 100m2 per unit
	Coverage	50% max, 60% hard surface

RM Zone

Existing Zoning

R-LR

Uses	3 & 4 Unit	
	Townhouse	
	50 multi by SP,+ 5upa by DA	
	Cluster	
	Accessory Building	
	Ground Floor Commercial	
yard		4-storeys
	Frontage	6m TH, 12m multi, flag lots 6m
	Front Setback	8m min, 4m with garage
	Side Yard	1.5m, 0 for TH
	Rear yard	4m
	Flankage Setback	4m min
	Lot Area	330m2 single & duplex, 396m2 semi, 231m2 TH
	Coverage	50% max, 60% hard surface

R4

Uses	Single unit	
	Two unit dwelling	
	Townhome	
	18 UPA by SP, 24 upa by DA	
	Accessory Building	
	Home Occupation	
yard	Height	3-storeys, 4th storey stepback by DA
	Frontage	11m single, 12m duplex, 9m semi, 6m TH, 12m multi
	Front Setback	4.5m min
	Side Yard	2m, 0m TH
	Rear yard	4m
	Flankage Setback	4m min
	Lot Area	300m2 single, 280m2 semi, 372m2 duplex, 137m2 TH, Multi 100m2 per unit
	Coverage	40% max, 50% hard surface

R-MDU

Uses	120 units by SP, + 5 upa by DA	
	Commercial by SP or DA	
	Home Occupation	
yard	Height	6-storeys
	Frontage	18m, flaglot 6m
	Front Setback	4.5m min
	Side Yard	6m
	Rear yard	6m
	Flankage Setback	4m min
	Lot Area	1500 m2
	amenity	5m2 per unit
	Coverage	80%

R-MU

Uses	Commercial by DA	
	120 units by DA, + 5 upa by DA	
	Accessory Building	
	Ground Floor Commercial	
yard	Height	4-storeys
	Frontage	18m
	Front Setback	0m min
	Side Yard	0m min
	Rear yard	6m
	Flankage Setback	0m min
	Lot Area	1500 m2
	amenity	5m2 per unit
	Coverage	0

Proposed Zoning

RM (replaces R-LR, R4, R-MDU, R-MU)

Uses	50 units as of right	
	120 units by SP, 150 units by DA	
	Commercial permitted, required by schedule	
	Accessory Building	
	Ground Floor Commercial permitted	
yard	Height	4-storeys, or by schedule
	Frontage	18m, flaglot 6m
	Front Setback	2 min, max setback by schedule
	Side Yard	0m when bordering RM, 6m otherwise
	Rear yard	6m
	Flankage Setback	0m when bordering RM, 6m otherwise
	Lot Area min	1500 m2
	Amenity	5m2 per unit
	Coverage	60% with surface parking, 80% if no less than 50% parking is underground

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.

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, exosting 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.

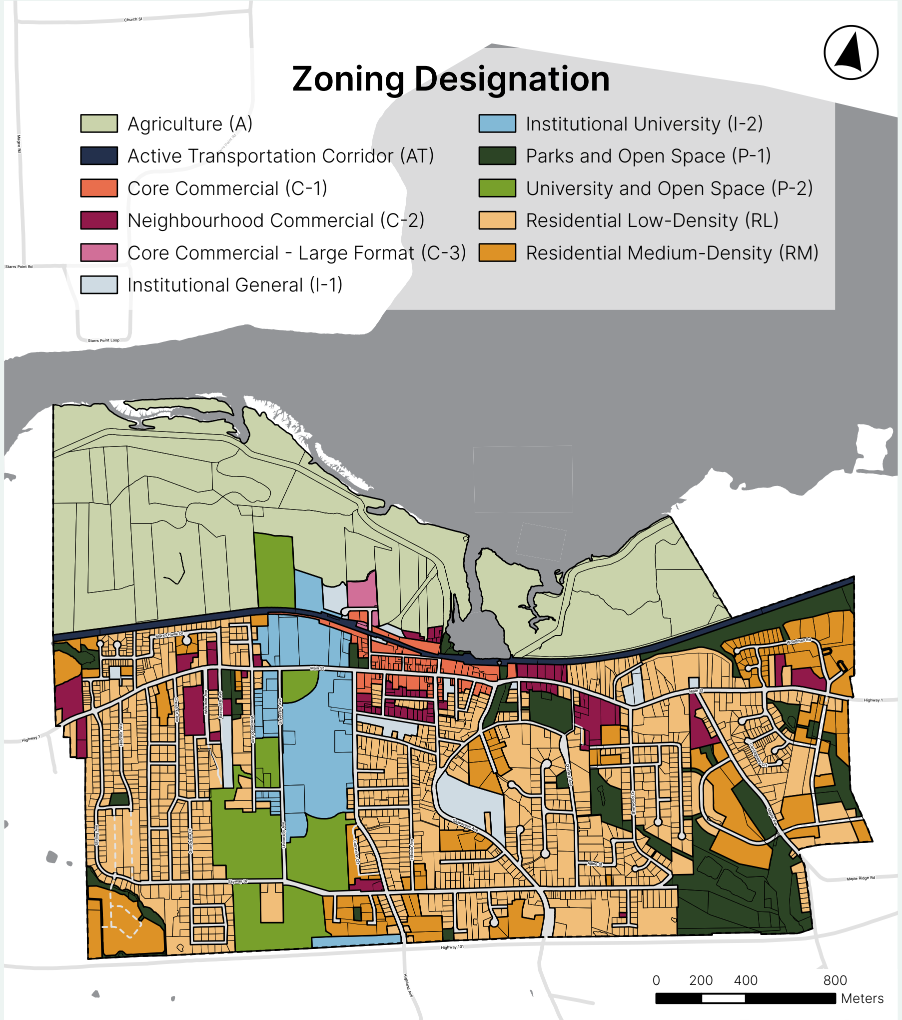


Fig.16 — Scenario 3 Zoning showing the 8 zones collapsed into 2 new zones

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 hastle of subdivision.

Fig.17 — Typical R1 lot dimensions in Wolfville

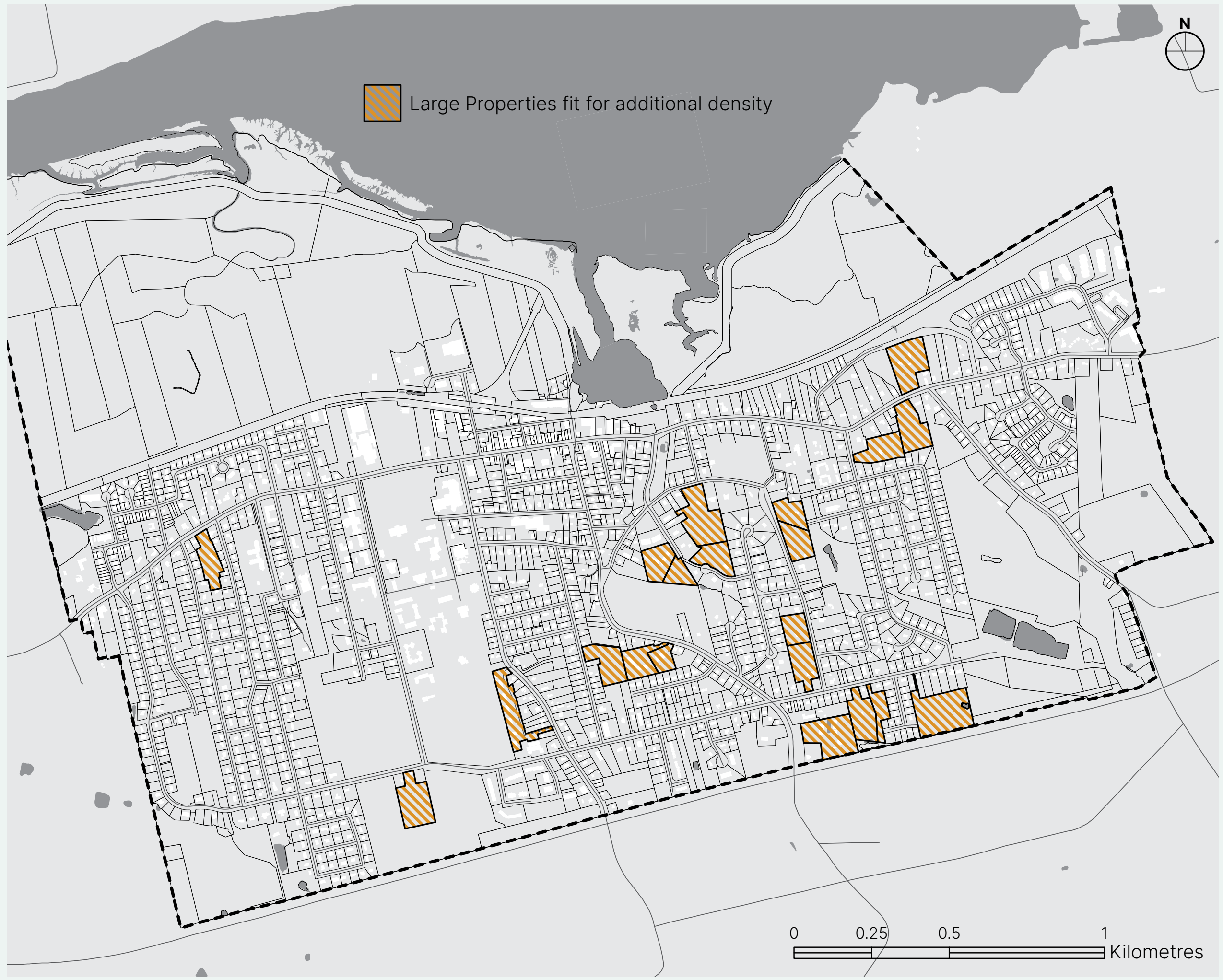
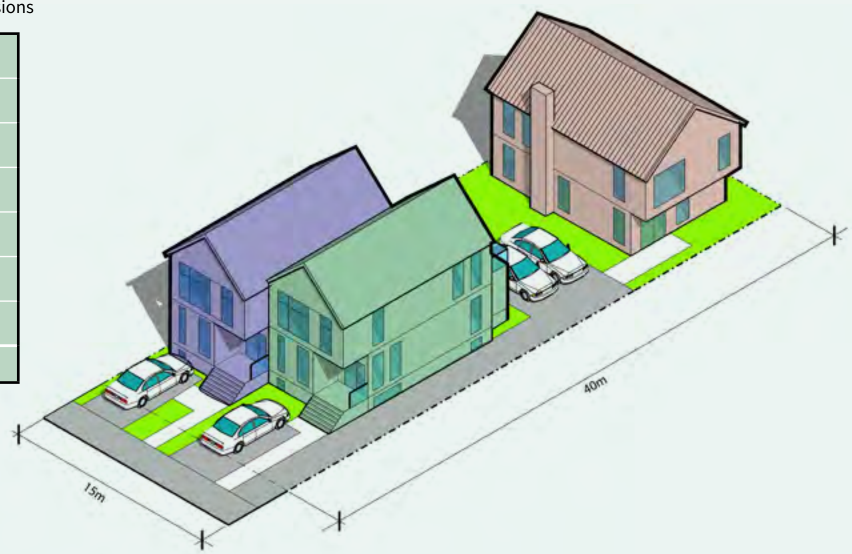


Fig.19 — Typical R1 Zone Dimensions

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.18 — 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.

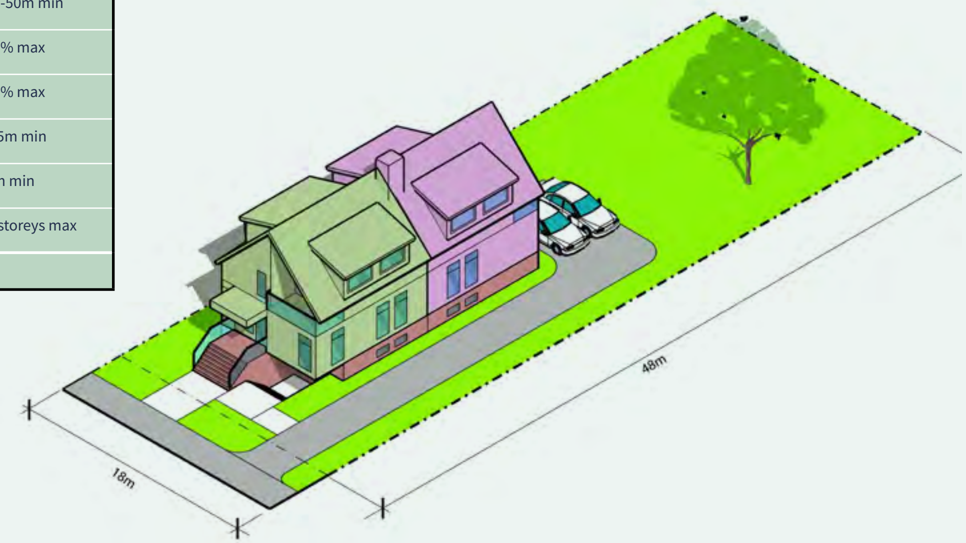
R1 Narrow Lot (4 unit)

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.20 — 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**



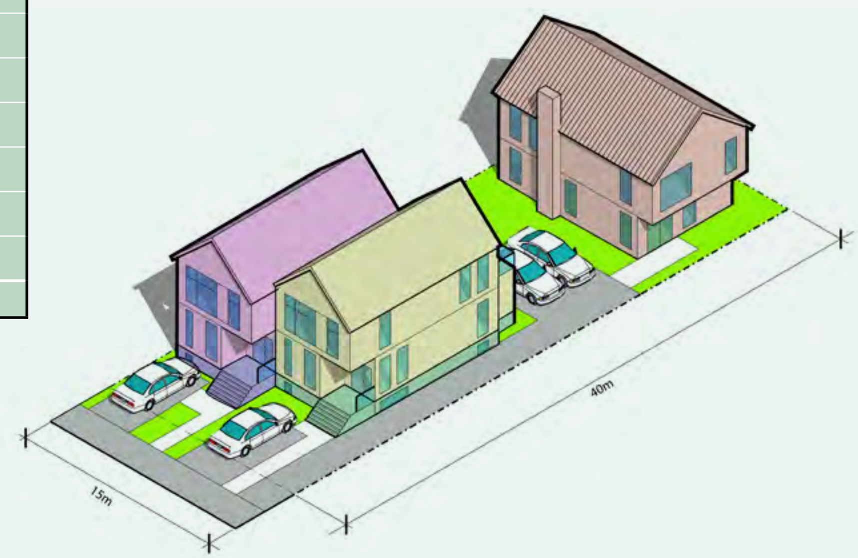
R1 Narrow Lot (5 unit)

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.

Fig.21 — 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	1.5mmin
Rear Yard	4m min
Height	3-storeys max
Units	**5**



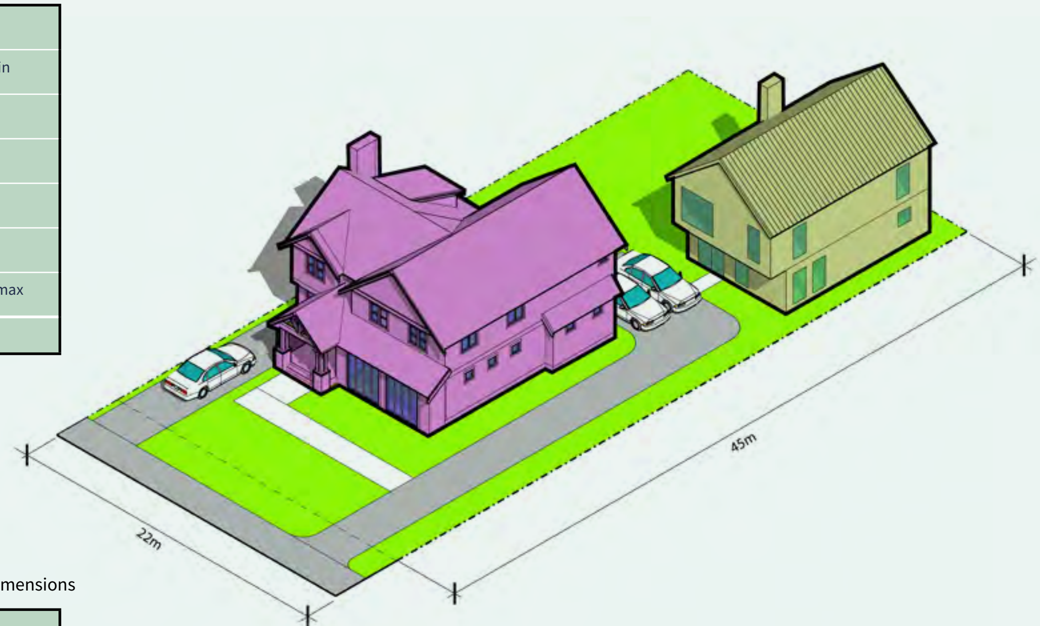
R1 Lot (2 unit)

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.

Fig.22 — 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**



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.23 — 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.24 — 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.25 — 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 per year 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 jeapardizing 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 an dincremental, 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 dont exist, while also addressing the housing shortages.

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

3

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 cant 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 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 Towns 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.

> 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

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.

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.

TABLE 3.1 Land use coverage

	Core Area		Acadia	
% Land Area	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

	Core Area		Acadia	
# of Parking Spaces	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%

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 26 and 27 show 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 26 and 27 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.

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.

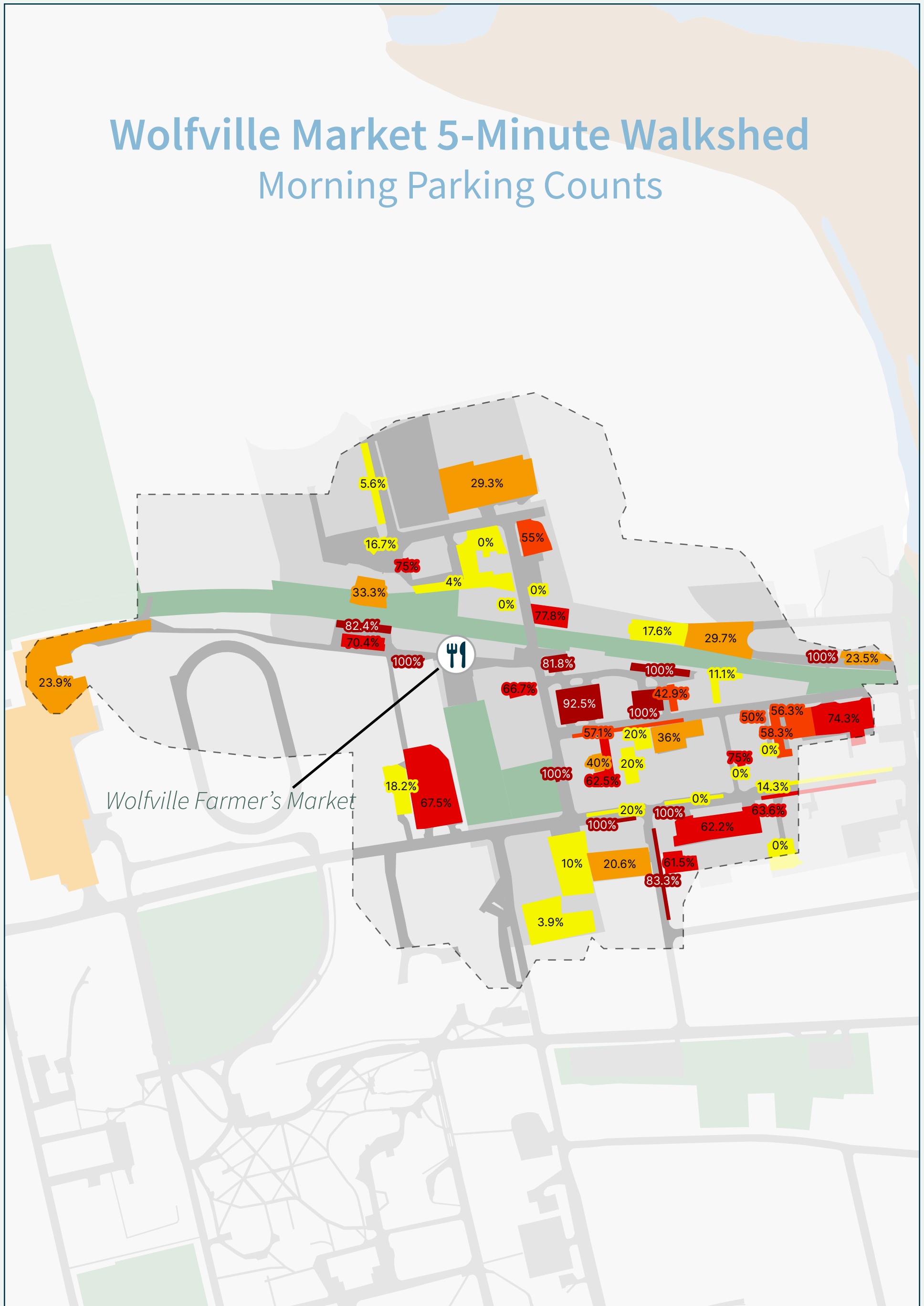


Fig.26 — Morning Parking Counts within 5-minutes of the Market

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.

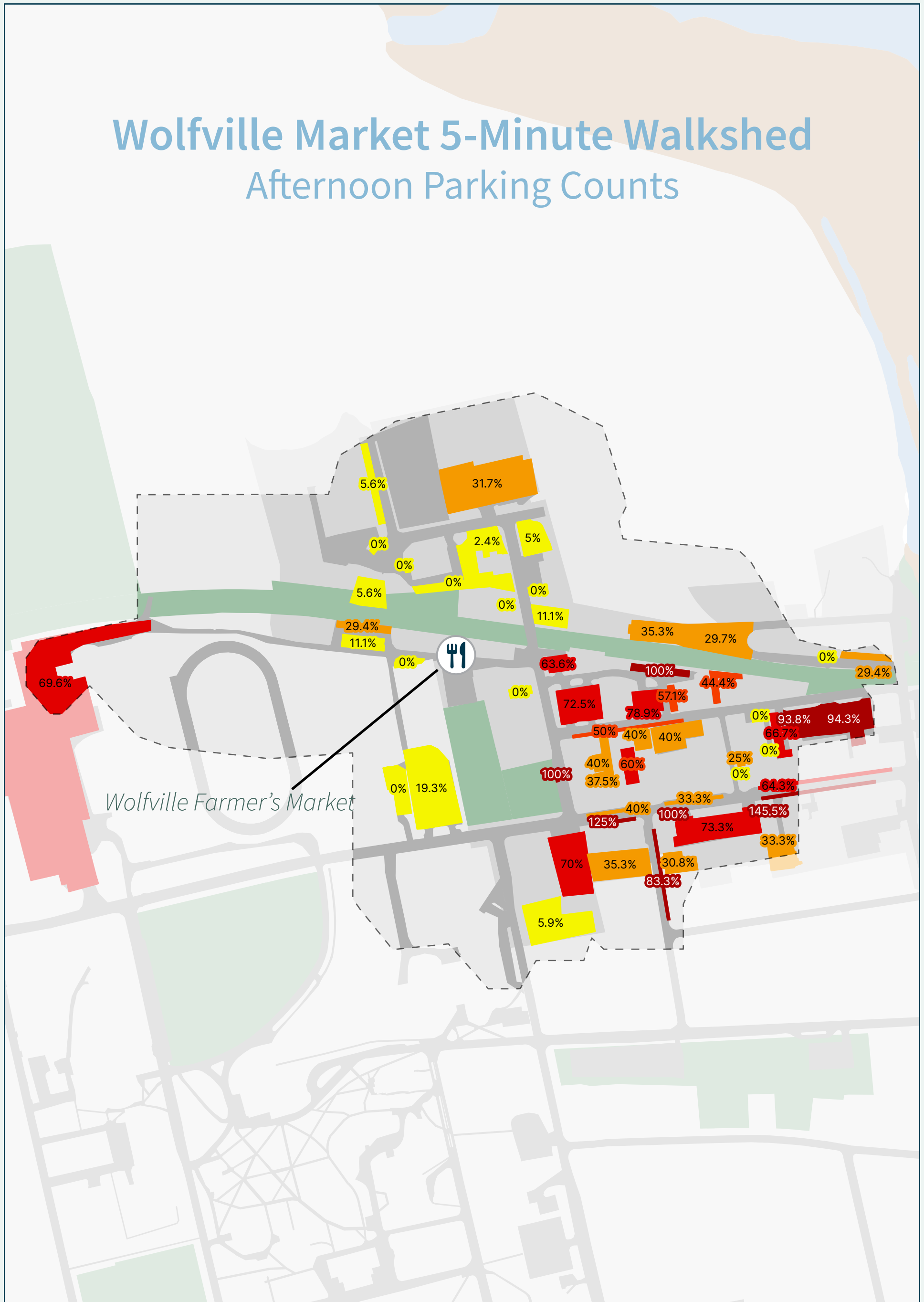


Fig.27 — Afternoon Parking Counts within 5-minutes of the Market

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.

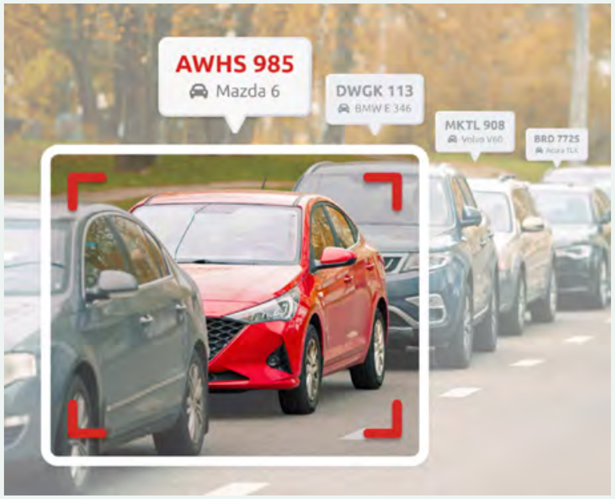


Fig.29 — License Plate recognition (LPR) technology

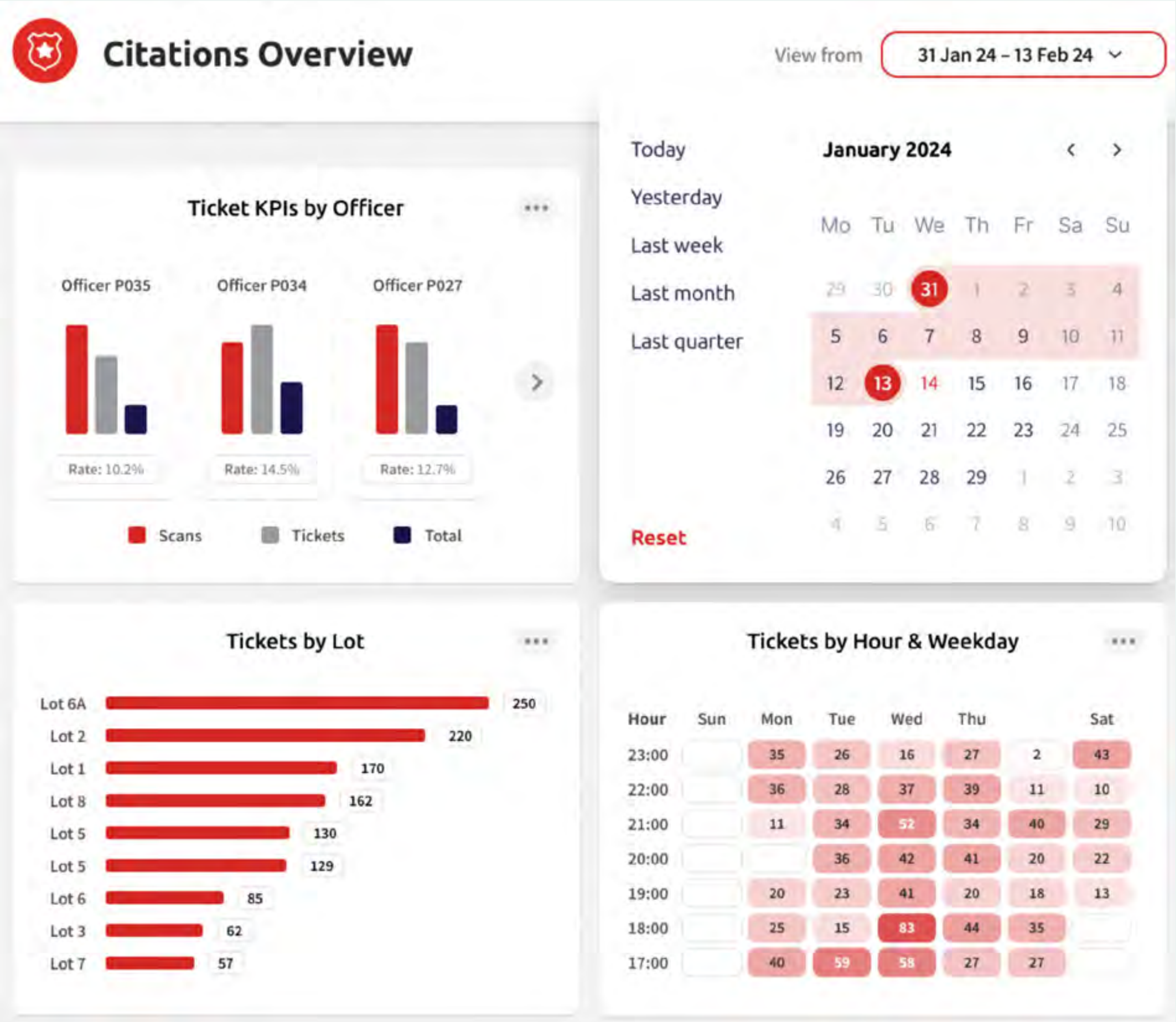


Fig.28 — Hotspot Parking Compliance and Enforcement software

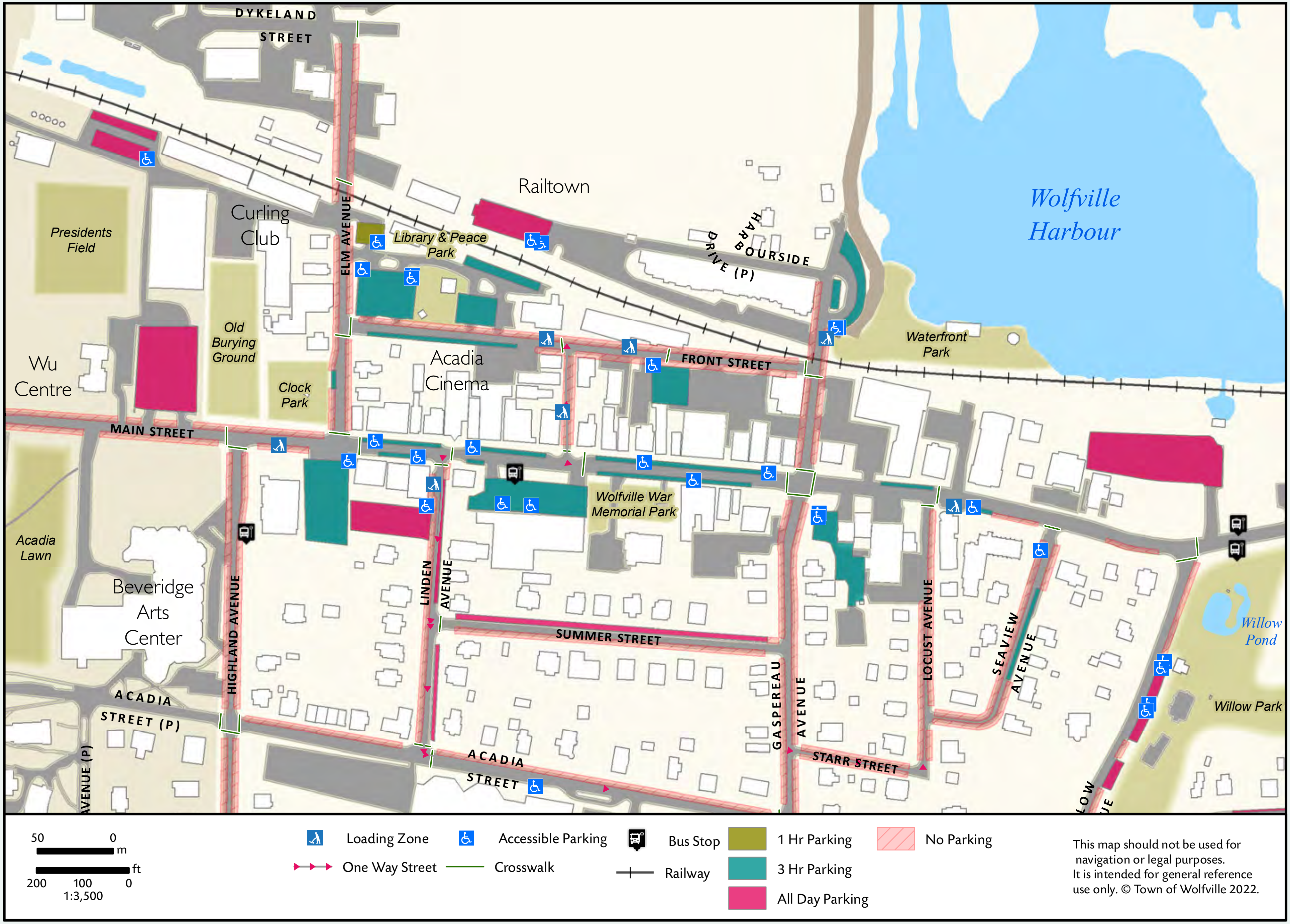


Fig.30 — Existing Parking Time Limit Map

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.

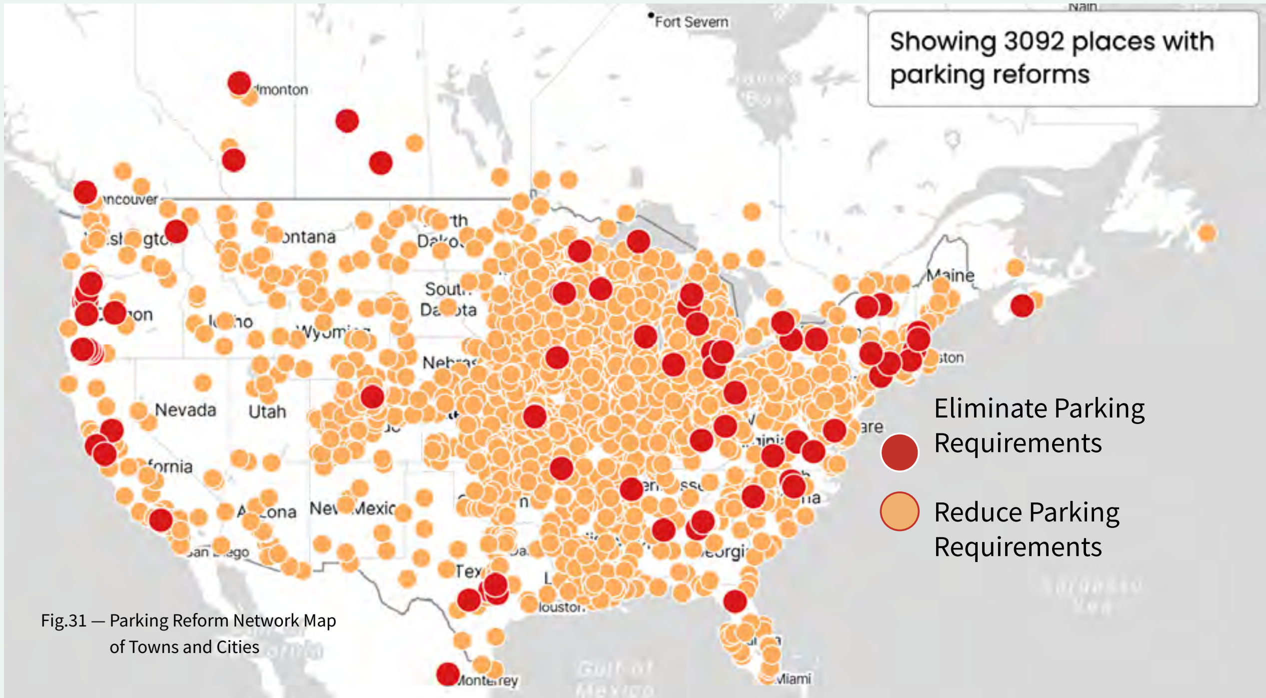


Fig.31 — Parking Reform Network Map of Towns and Cities

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 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.

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.	

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 3.4 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.

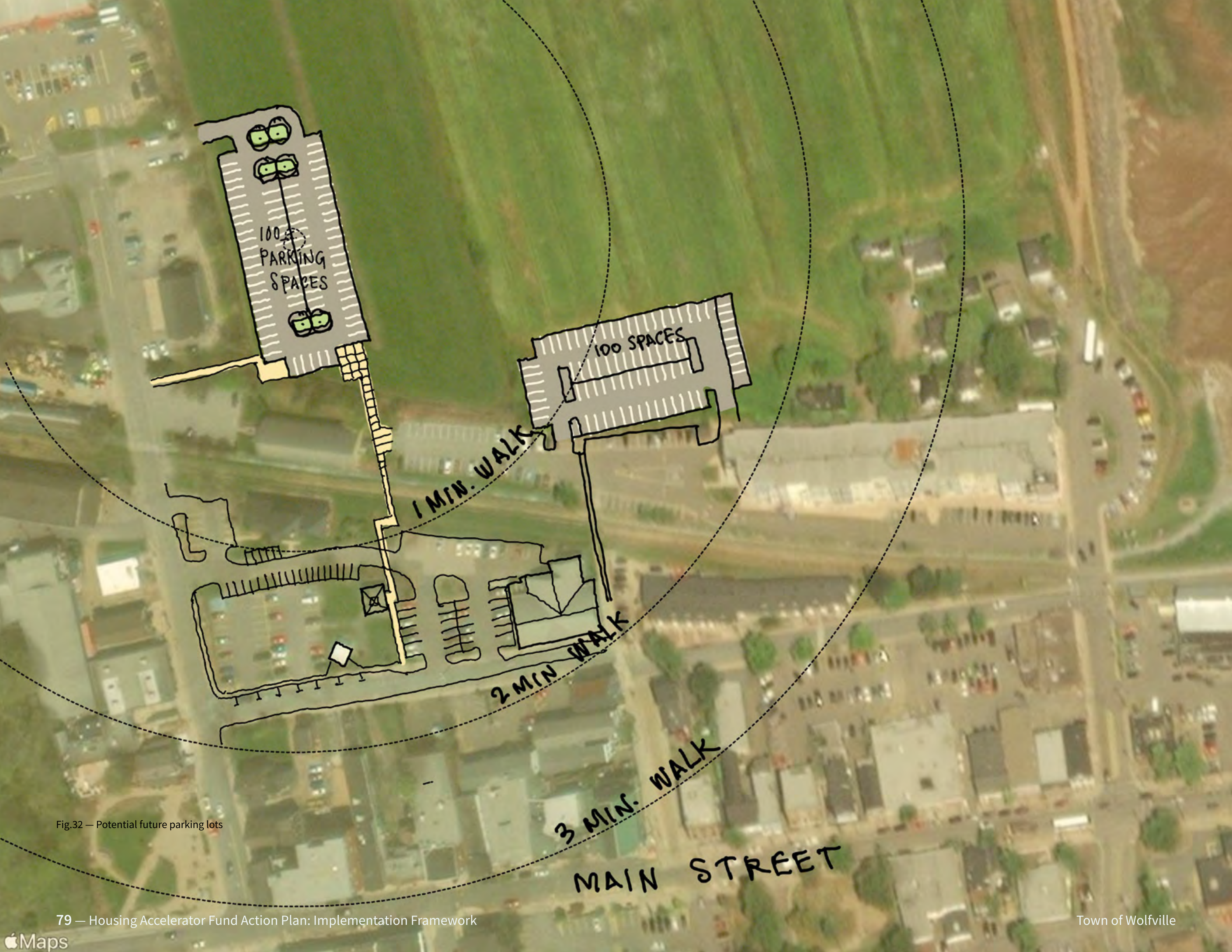


Fig.32 — Potential future parking lots

4

Action 3: Non-Market Housing

4.1 Introduction

This Strategy is part of the Town's Housing Accelerator Fund Action Plan. It is complimentary to the Municipal Planning Document Review and provides a focus on identifying opportunities to encourage, enable, and retain non-market housing in Wolfville.

Definition: Non-market housing refers to housing that is owned and operated by the public sector, non-profit sector, and the co-operative housing sector. While there are differences among the operations of each of these housing types and their strategies for who they choose to live in their housing units, their mandates are largely the same; to provide permanent, affordable housing options.

- **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 where some units are market rate and some are at or below (affordable). Includes Transitional and Supportive housing which typically offers on-site or coordinated services for residents with specific needs (e.g., mental health, addictions, seniors, or people with disabilities). Example: L'Arche Homefires.
- **Co-operative Housing:** Residents collectively own and manage the housing. Costs are shared, and affordability is maintained through cooperative governance. Example: Tideways and Evangeline Court Co-ops.

This non-market housing strategy does not include the affordable housing that is provided in mixed-income rental supply projects developed by the private, for-profit sector, even though they may be supported by government funding programs. While these developments may include units with lower rents, they often have a time limit associated with the duration of the affordable rates and eventually become market-rate rentals. For these reasons, private sector affordable dwellings are excluded from this Strategy's definition of non-market housing.

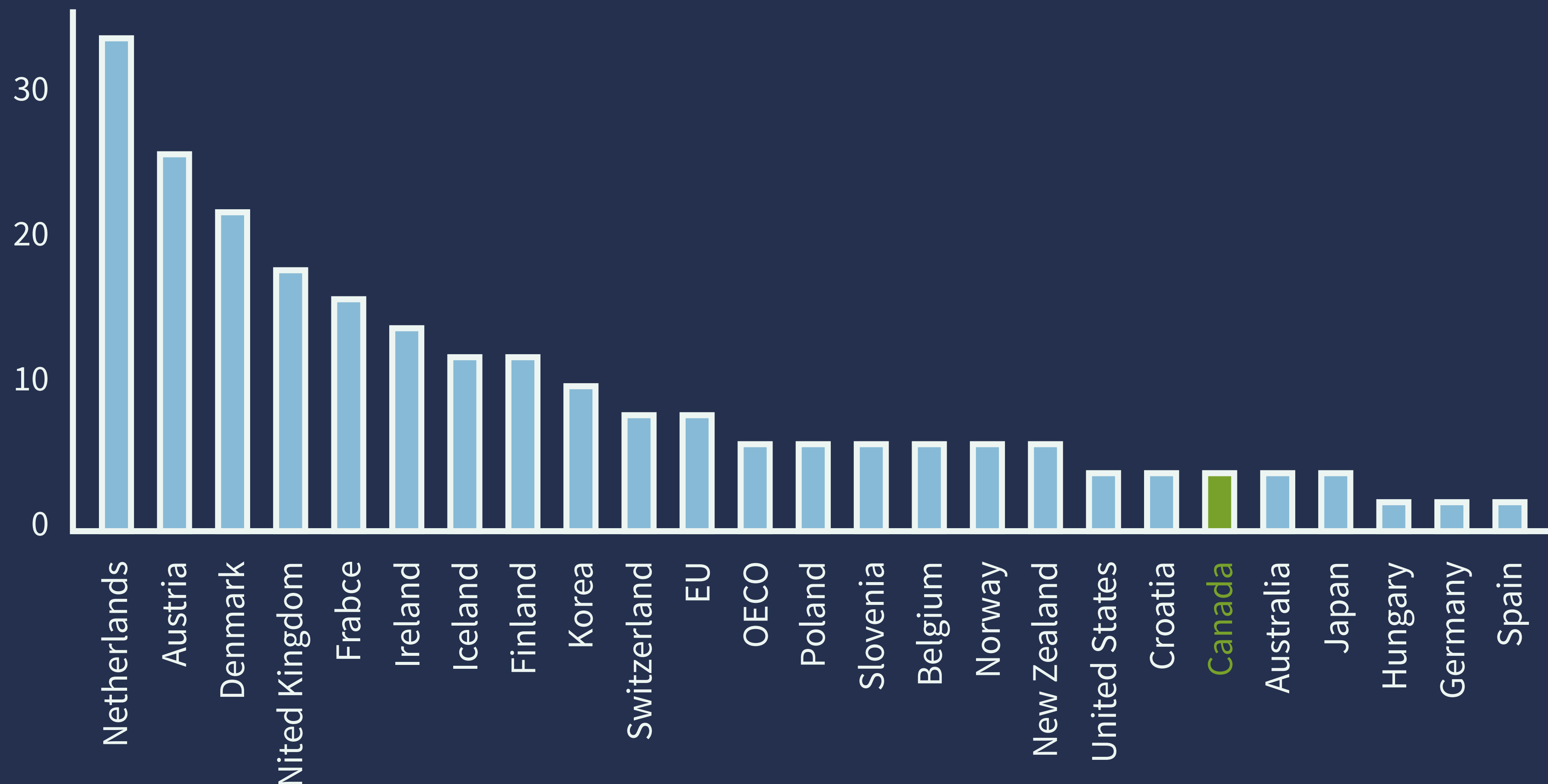
The non-market housing sector in Canada and the province is lagging behind the growth of the market housing sector. The decline in non-market housing over the last thirty years has been largely due to the withdrawal of federal, provincial and municipal non-market housing funding programs. As shown on the graph below, only 3.5% of housing in Canada is non-market, compared to European countries like the Netherlands, Austria and Denmark, where more than 20% of housing stock is non-market.

Nova Scotia has seen little investment in the non-market sector over the past three decades. At the same time, some of the non-market housing units have been sold to private developers or demolished, without being replaced at the same rate. In recent years, however, the Government of Nova Scotia has sought to invest in the non-market housing sector. In 2023, the Province announced plans to build 222 new non-market units in municipalities across the province, and in 2025, announced further investment for 242 more public housing units, totaling $136.5 million, the largest investment on record.

Likewise, the Federal Government launched the **National Housing Strategy** in 2017, demonstrating a national focus on increasing housing supply and tackling affordability issues. Through the Strategy the Federal Government offers a menu of affordable non-market funding programs and mixed-income market supply financing programs, including the Housing Accelerator Fund, Affordable Housing Fund, Co-operative Housing Development Program, Federal Lands Initiative, the Rapid Housing Initiative and more.

Meanwhile, the introduction of the Housing Accelerator Fund in 2023 underscored the need to speed up the development of both market and non-market housing sectors by reducing barriers to housing development.

Percentage of total housing stock



Source: OECD Affordable Housing Database

Existing Non-Market Housing in Wolfville

There are a minimum of 174 units of non-market housing in Wolfville (7%) of all households (2024). With the exception of the 11 units on Hillside Ave, there has been little to no growth of non-market housing in decades. Pictures of some of the existing units are shown below.

Tideways Co-op:

Evangeline Court Co-op:

Nova Scotia Provincial Housing Agency, Dale Street:

Nova Scotia Provincial Housing Agency, Woodland Ave:

Student Housing Nova Scotia, Hillside:

Potential Projects:

The Province has engaged residents of the Provincially owned units regarding a potential pilot project to expand housing options on those sites. No further information is available at this time.

Non-Market Working Group

As part of the Housing Accelerator Fund Action Plan, the Town has committed to creating a Non-Market Housing Working Group to support the development of this Strategy, the land bank disposal process and grant fund. Membership of the Working Group is comprised of those with non-market housing development experience, housing policy development, economic expertise, housing advocacy, and homelessness advocacy. The Working Group has provided input to this Strategy and will continue to vet the strategy to ensure the outcomes achieve a high level of value for non-market housing retention, acquisition and development.

4.2 Draft Non-Market Housing Strategy

Vision and Goals

The Town aims to foster a diverse, resilient and inclusive community by enhancing the non-market housing sector. This includes supporting co-operative housing, non-profit and public housing organizations in retaining and building permanent affordable housing options for low- and moderate-income residents of Wolfville.

Vision:

The Town of Wolfville is a vibrant and inclusive community where affordable housing is abundant and integrated, enabling all residents to thrive without the fear of housing precarity, rising rent prices or prejudice. Our commitment is to encourage and support diverse and sustainable housing options that meet the needs of individuals and families from all walks of life. By fostering a supportive environment that prioritizes the well-being and stability of tenants and homeowners alike, we aim to cultivate a sense of belonging and security, ensuring that everyone can contribute to and benefit from the rich cultural, social, and economic fabric of our town.

Goals:

- To maintain an inventory of non-market housing units in Town.
- To support the retention of the existing non-market housing units in Town by exploring financial incentives to encourage the retention of existing units as well as capacity within the sector to manage oversight and navigate additional funding sources.
- To encourage the expansion of the non-market housing sector in the Town and the percentage of non-market housing in our overall supply by providing targeted support.
- To encourage the retention of naturally occurring affordable housing units by networking with non-market housing providers and providing financial support for the acquisition of affordable housing when private owners are looking to sell their properties.
- To improve housing stability and security for all tenants in Wolfville by reducing barriers to growth in the supply of non-market housing.
- Work with the University to consider non-market housing on University owned land.

4.3 Actions

To support the development of Non-Market Housing in Wolfville, the Town should seek to adopt policies that reduce barriers to the development of new housing.

Amendments to the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law

Adopting policy in the Town's Planning Documents is important for guiding Council's decision-making process. Policies should remove, to a reasonable degree, regulations that restrict or complicate the development of non-market housing.

Expedite Development Applications and Approvals

Fast-track application processes and approvals for non-market housing developments by permitting non-market housing development through site plan or as-of-right processes. Expedite processes by prioritizing non-market housing applications to reduce project timelines and uncertainty.

Land Bank Disposal Process

Establish a disposal process for Town Owned Land to provide a fair and transparent process for the disposal of surplus Town land to eligible non-market housing providers for the development of non-market housing. (Procedure to be included with a future version pending Council feedback)

Such a Land Bank Disposal Policy should contain an inventory of Town-Owned Land, process for disposal for non-market housing development, and evaluation of applicants. The Policy would identify and reserve Town-owned land for non-market affordable housing development, ensuring that co-operatives, non-profits and the Province have access to suitable sites.

The Policy should indicate a minimum number of dwelling units per lot or acre, and a minimum number or percentage of family sized units per site to ensure the highest yield is achieved, and that housing on these lands addresses the housing needs in Wolfville.

Background information (see attachment for map and site analysis):

Of all parcels of Town-owned land, six parcels have been deemed suitable for residential or mixed-use development (Attachment A). Consultants at Zzap Architecture and Planning have performed preliminary analysis of these parcels of land for residential development. See attached locations of Town owned parcels (Attachment B).

Creating a new overlay zone or providing the Town's Development Officer with the authority to vary aspects of the Land Use Bylaw that may be prohibitive to the non-market housing sector, including parking requirements, hard surface requirements, maximum number of dwelling units and building height requirements that do not cause negative impacts to surrounding properties would create the flexibility to ensure that the greatest yield of units is achieved, while reducing barriers and increasing feasibility for non-market housing providers.

Sample recommendations:

- On land provided through the Town-owned Land Disposal Policy, remove parking requirements.
- Where non-market housing is owned and operated by the public sector, the non-profit sector, and the co-operative housing sector, any permissions that would be required to go through a Development Agreement are permitted to go through Site Plan Approval.

Municipal Support

- The Town should continue to act as champions for non-market housing in the province and country and continue to strive for social equity across the housing continuum.
- Provide technical assistance and capacity-building resources for non-profit organizations and housing co-operatives to enhance their operational capabilities.
- Adopt policies through the ongoing Plan Review to encourage non-market housing.
- Consider housing pilot projects.

Funding and Resources:

To support the development, retention and acquisition of Non-Market Housing in Wolfville, the Town should seek to adopt policies to provide financial assistance to the non-market housing sector.

Through the Housing Accelerator Fund Agreement, Council has agreed to implement a Non-Market Housing Grant Program. A grant program to support the development, retention, and/or acquisition of non-market housing in Town will support the fulfillment of this HAF initiative. Part of this program is the land suitability analysis we are undertaking on Town owned land and a portion of the HAF funds will be set aside for project support.

Subject to Council direction, further financial incentives could include:

Property Tax Relief Programs

Property tax relief programs for new non-market housing developments (could include a percent reduction in perpetuity, a phased assessment over 10 years, etc).

Consider issuing a grant of equal value to the Deed Transfer Tax to reduce barriers for acquisitions.

Examples:

- **Halifax Regional Municipality:** 50% reduction in property taxes for eligible non-profits that offer affordable housing.
- **Cape Breton Regional Municipality:** Diminishing Property Tax Adjustment on all new properties containing 4 or more affordable dwelling units for up to 10 years.
- **Victoria, BC:** 100% property tax exemption for a 10-year period for new multi-unit apartment construction to encourage the development of affordable dwelling units for moderate and low-income households.
- **Nanaimo, BC:** Property Tax relief for eligible non-profits including those offering non-market and affordable housing. Tax exemptions span 1-year with renewal applications required annually. Exemptions range from 50-100% depending on the percentage of total services or programs benefiting residents of the city.

Waiving of Development Application Fees

Waiving fees for development applications can help to reduce the cost of developing non-market housing. Fees as of Policy No. 140-015 (Municipal Fees):

- Development Agreement $2,000.00
- Rezoning: $2,000.00
- Site Plan Approval: $150.00
- Development Permit: $50.00
- Subdivision: $100.00

Example:

- **Halifax Regional Municipality:** Construction Fee Waiver applicable to registered non-profits and charitable housing organizations. Includes fees for construction permits, subdivision applications, discretionary approvals and variance applications.

4.4 Collaboration and Partnerships

Engage Stakeholders

Continue to collaborate with community members, co-operative housing organizations, non-profits, and other stakeholders to co-create housing solutions. Explore building further capacity to support the non-market housing sector.

Example: Continue with working group, Staff or funding for capacity.

Work Collaboratively with the Province

Historically, the Province played a significant role in non-market housing and operating programs to improve housing affordability. Currently, there are 68 units (104 bedrooms) of provincially owned, subsidized housing in Wolfville. The current wait time to gain access to one of the housing units in Kings County is estimated at 1.9 years (https://nspha.ca/about-nspha/facts-and-figures), though the branch overseeing the units in Wolfville (Western Regional Housing Authority) has stated the waitlist for the units in Wolfville are between 2-5 years, with more than 200 families on the waitlist for fewer than 10 family units.

The Town should work with the Province to better understand housing needs and demand in Wolfville and the region to influence policy and project objectives that meet needs. Likewise, the Town should work with the Province to understand how to best retain and expand the existing provincial housing units and whether there are opportunities to expand this sector in Town.

Example: Support the expansion of Provincial units off Sherwood Drive.

Work Collaboratively with Acadia University

The Subway parking lot, lands beside Highway 101 off Highland and President's field are Acadia University owned opportunities we are currently exploring for the inclusion of non-market housing. Other opportunities (Tower area) can also be explored in the medium-long-term and will ideally be zoned appropriately with the Housing Accelerator Fund process.

Fulfill Agreement with Federal Government

The Town has signed an agreement with the Federal government under the Housing Accelerator Fund to create systemic and transformational change in municipal planning documents to address barriers to housing development. The Town should continue working to implement the initiatives indicated in the Housing Accelerator Fund agreement/Action Plan with the federal government to enable more housing and seek and support future partnerships with the federal government to fast-track municipal approvals and expedite building processes.

4.5 Community Outreach and Education

Awareness Campaigns

Develop educational programs to inform the community about the benefits of non-market housing.

4.6 Implementation

Timeline for Implementation

The Non-Market Housing Strategy is to be completed as part of the Housing Accelerator Fund agreement, by October, 2025. Implementation of the strategy, such as adopting the grant program and any related land use bylaw amendments, to occur by March 2026.

4.7 Monitoring and Evaluation

Regular Reporting

Conduct reviews of the non-market housing strategy on an annual or as-needed basis, allowing for adjustments based on community feedback and changing circumstances. Update the non-market housing inventory to quickly identify growth or loss of units in this sector.

This strategy will ensure that the municipality actively supports the non-market housing sector, thereby creating a more equitable housing landscape for all residents.

4.8 Town-Owned Land Site Analysis and Municipal Land Bank

As part of its commitment under the Housing Accelerator Fund, the Town is establishing a Municipal Land Bank to manage surplus or underutilized municipally owned land. The primary objective is to enable the provision of land at a low or nominal cost to eligible non-market housing providers, thereby supporting the growth of this sector and contributing to improved housing affordability in Wolfville. This analysis was completed to understand what could be achieved on these lands within the zoning regulations contained in the current Planning Documents and to support the ongoing review of these documents. The analyses shown here are for exploratory purposes only, no decisions on the land bank have been made at this time.

What is a Municipal Land Bank?

A municipal land bank is a strategic tool used by municipalities to hold vacant or surplus public land for future development or repurposing. Rather than selling properties to the highest bidder, land banks allow municipalities to dispose of land in a manner aligned with community priorities—such as the development of non-market housing. This approach ensures that public land is used to achieve long-term community goals rather than short-term financial returns.

Site Selection and Analysis

To identify Town-owned properties with potential for non-market housing, six parcels of land were selected for preliminary review. The Town engaged Zzap Architecture and Planning to conduct a highest and best use analysis on these sites. This analysis applied either the existing zoning regulations or another zoning category to each parcel to estimate the number of residential units that could be reasonably accommodated while meeting current land use bylaw requirements, including parking, lot coverage, and building height.

The results of this analysis will help guide the ongoing review of the Town's planning documents by highlighting zoning options that may be better aligned with non-market housing development objectives. Recommended zoning categories and site plans for each parcel are included in the sections below.

Key Findings and Feedback

Zzap's analysis identified parking requirements, lot coverage limits, and building height restrictions as the most significant constraints to increasing housing density on the selected sites. Following the consultant's work, the Non-Market Housing Working Group was engaged to assess the suitability of these sites and provide insight into the practical needs of non-market housing providers.

Key feedback from the Working Group included:

- A need for increased lot coverage allowances and building height permissions;
- A reduction or greater flexibility in parking requirements, particularly where current standards exceed what is feasible under surface coverage limits;
- Support for up to six storeys as-of-right or via site plan approval, specifically for non-market housing projects, to improve feasibility and maximize the use of scarce municipal land.

In particular, downtown sites—such as those at Front and Elm Avenue and behind the Independent grocery store—were identified as the most desirable due to their proximity to shops, services, public transit, and established higher-density development patterns. The site analyses shown for these locations include different concepts for how they could be developed, though further analysis is required.

Considerations for Feasibility

The Working Group emphasized that many non-market housing providers require a minimum number of units in close geographic proximity to ensure operational viability. Increasing the number of permitted units per parcel therefore directly improves the appeal and feasibility of these sites for non-market housing development.

Strategic Value of this Work

This initiative is considered a form of financial incentive for the non-market housing sector. It not only identifies publicly owned sites that may otherwise remain unused or underutilized, but also provides early-stage planning analysis, reducing the time and financial burden on non-profit providers.

Further site-specific analysis may be needed to assess other development constraints such as topography or infrastructure limitations. However, this work forms an important first step in aligning municipal land use planning with the Town's housing affordability and equity goals.

Link to Zzap analysis (coming soon)

5

Action 4: Acadia University Housing

5.1 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 Subway Parking Lot, Presdient's field and lands adjacent Highway 101 have been discussed as focus areas. The area around the Tower residence (off of Highland Avenue) has also been discussed as a focus area for medium-long term 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 processchange that can provide housing, facility and revenue opportunities.

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.

6

Community Profile Summary

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.

6.1 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.

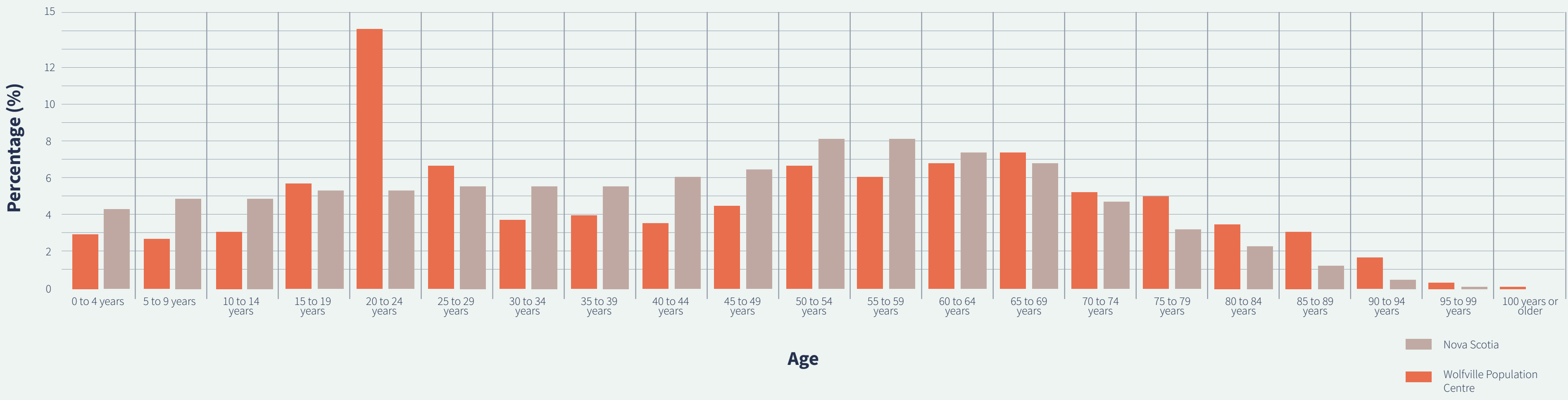


Fig.33 — 2016 population pyramid

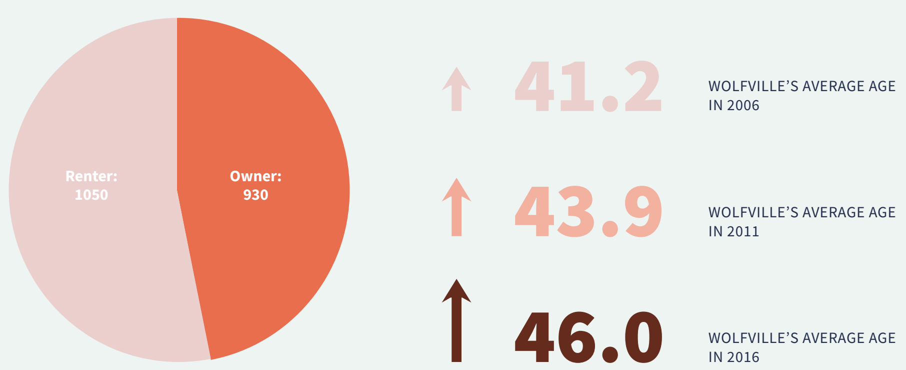


Fig.34 — Wolfville Census Statistics

6.2 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.

6.3 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.

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.

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.

6.4 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.

6.5 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.

6.6 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-Marker Housing Working Group.

6.7 The Role of Acadia University

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.

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.

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.

7

Recommendations

7.1 Project Timeline

Stakeholder Interviews

February & March 2025

Action Plan Package 1

Downtown & Neighbourhoods Scenarios

May 2025

Public Open Houses & Survey

May 2025

Action Plan Package 2 & 3

Recommendations + sections on Acadia & non-market housing

June & July, 2025

Town Council Direction

July 2025

Action Plan Package 4

Draft bylaw and plan updates

Early Autumn, 2025

Public Engagement

Autumn 2025

Final Package

Final recommendations

June & July 2025

Town Council Decision

Late 2025

The project team has also received direction from the Planning Advisory Committee monthly since January 2025.

7.2 Recommendations

The Planning Advisory Committee and Council may choose to accept all the recommendations suggested here, may choose to accept some but not others, or may request adjustments. If recommendations are accepted, further analysis will be conducted before Council will vote on the final recommendation later in the year. No decision at this stage is final.

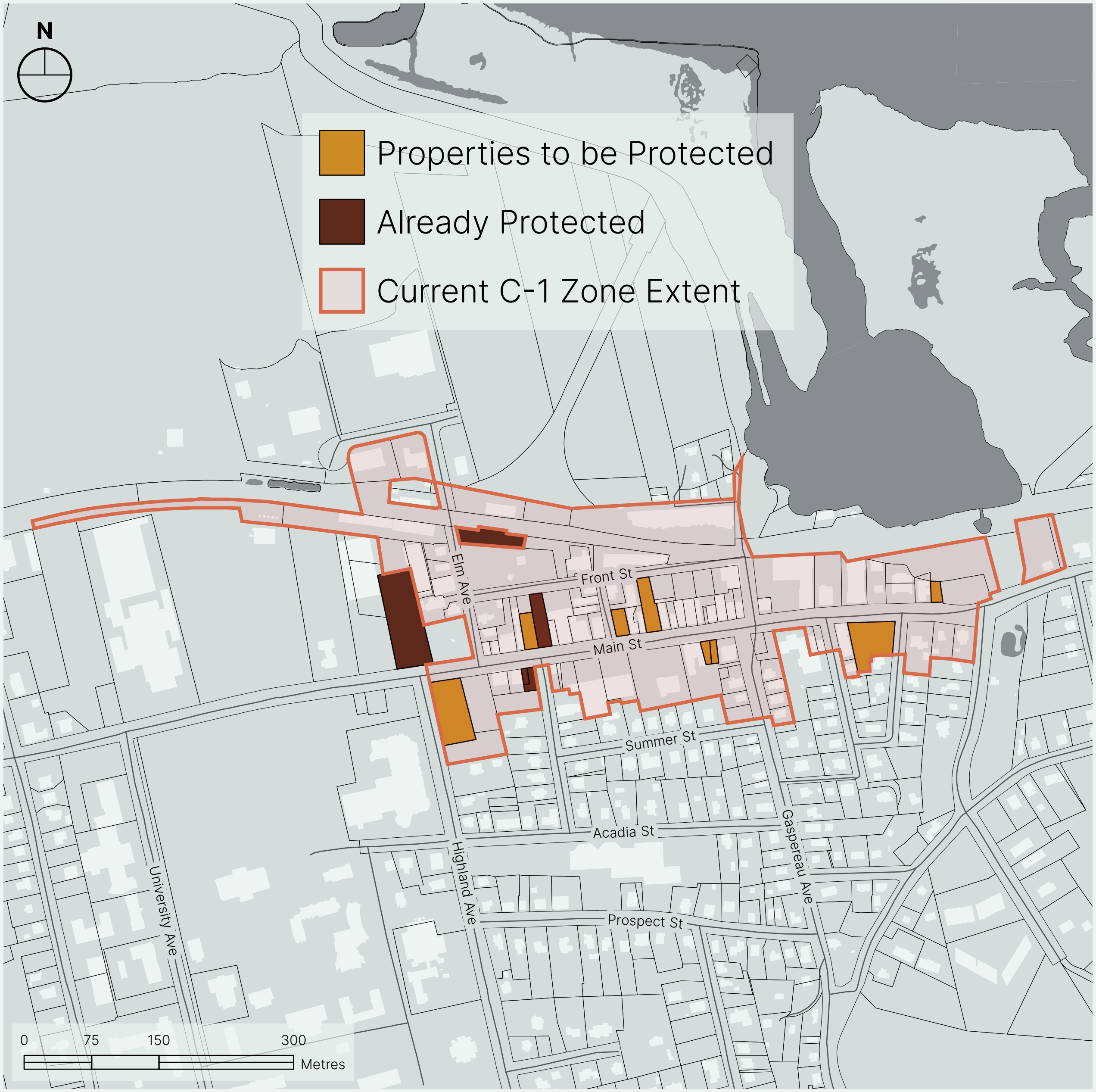
The following recommendations integrate a broad range of inputs:

- Public feedback from open houses, the survey, and stakeholder interviews.
- Planning Advisory Committee Feedback.
- Housing Accelerator Fund commitments.
- The technical analysis contained in this report.

This chapter is informed by the previous 2 packages, PAC feedback and public engagement. It provides recommendations for each of the HAF Action Plan items based on professional planning advise, best practice, public feedback, Planning Advisory Committee input and technical studies. This chapter includes recommendations that the project team believes respond to the core goals expressed in feedback, that would be technically feasible, and that would meet the Town's long-term needs for compact, affordable growth while nurturing what makes Wolfville, Wolfville.

7.3 PAC Feedback on Heritage Protection

- Focus on protecting highest-priority buildings
- Prioritize character protections otherwise
- Do not be overly restrictive with max lot-width requirements
- Protect views



Heritage Protections

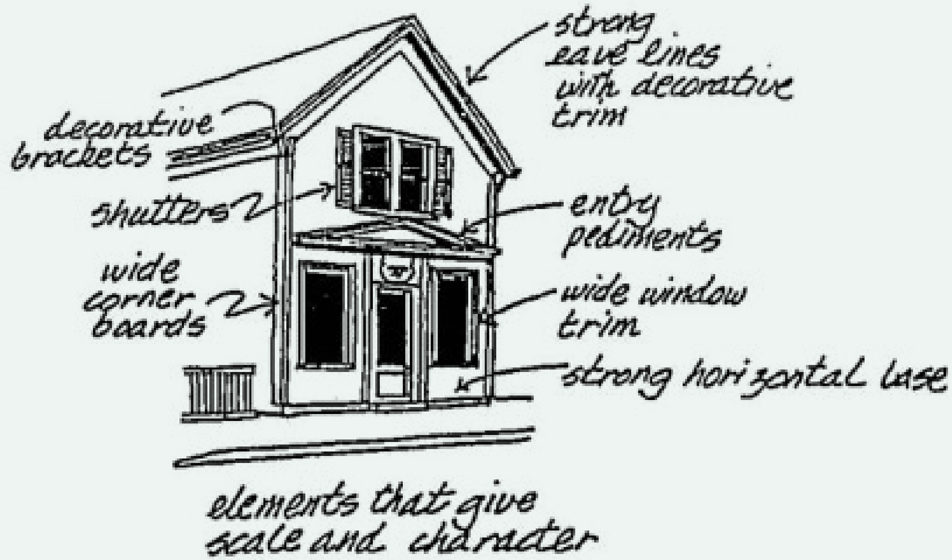
Recommendation 1: Identify the highest-value buildings for heritage protection. Protect them by:

- Reducing height limits on these buildings to two storeys
- Allowing owners to apply for more height through a development agreement process that would preserve heritage elements, such as facades
- Encouraging owners to register as municipal or provincial heritage sites

Heritage Protections: Character Protections

Recommendation 2: Use design requirements to preserve key components of the Main Street's character:

- Set a maximum width in the Land-Use Bylaw for commercial spaces, to maintain the street's historic visual diversity
- Review the Design Guidelines and approval process for opportunities to strengthen character protections



Heritage Protections: Maximum Lot Width

Recommendation 3: Continue reviewing legal feasibility of setting a maximum width for lots.

If this goes forward, maximum lot widths will be relatively permissive (e.g. ~100ft), preventing only very large projects that could greatly homogenize the street.

Heritage Protections: View Corridors

Recommendation 4: Protected view corridors will be established:

1. From the northwest corner of Harbourview and Main Street looking at Blomidon
2. At Central Ave looking at farmland

View corridors will be protected via Design Guidelines to ensure flexibility.

7.4 PAC Feedback on Downtown Growth

- Extend downtown zoning (C-1), but not to Locust and Seaview
- Do not establish excessively restrictive rules for growth in these new areas, but do encourage larger front yards than exist downtown
- Five- and six-storey height limits are too high for Main Street and Front Street
- Public benefit negotiations can be divisive

HAF requirement: "Amend bylaw to increase building height maximums in core area to encourage low-carbon, dense and affordable developments."

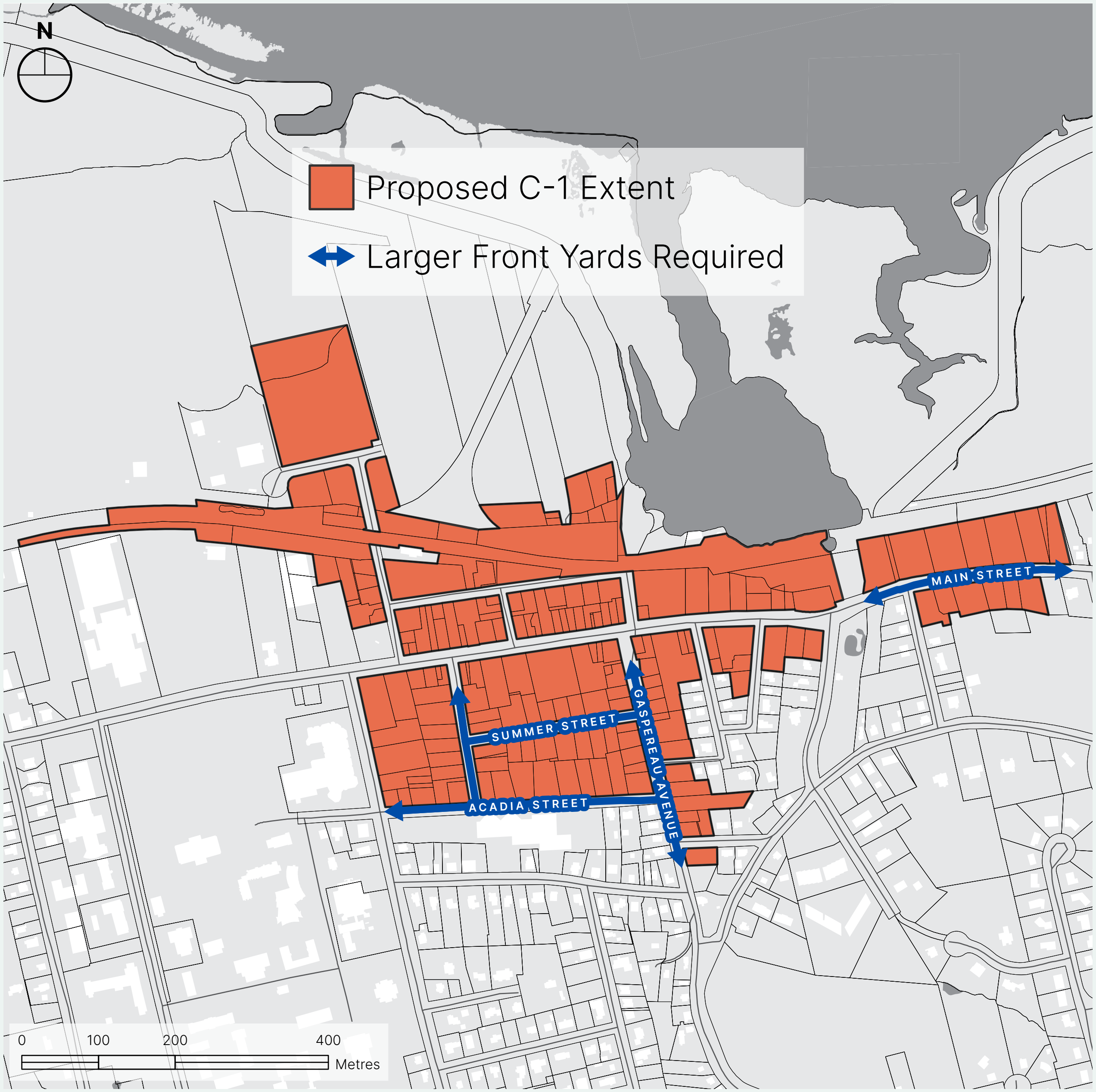
Downtown Growth

Recommendation 1: Extend the downtown zone (C-1):

- East along Main St
- Southward, to encompass Summer St, Linden Ave, Acadia St, and Gaspereau Ave (to Winter St)
- Northward to encompass properties behind Railtown
- To include the lands along the rail corridor

Downtown Growth: Extra Front Yard Setback Areas

Recommendation 2: Require larger front-yard setbacks in new C-1 areas south and east (in green) so that new buildings line up with existing homes.



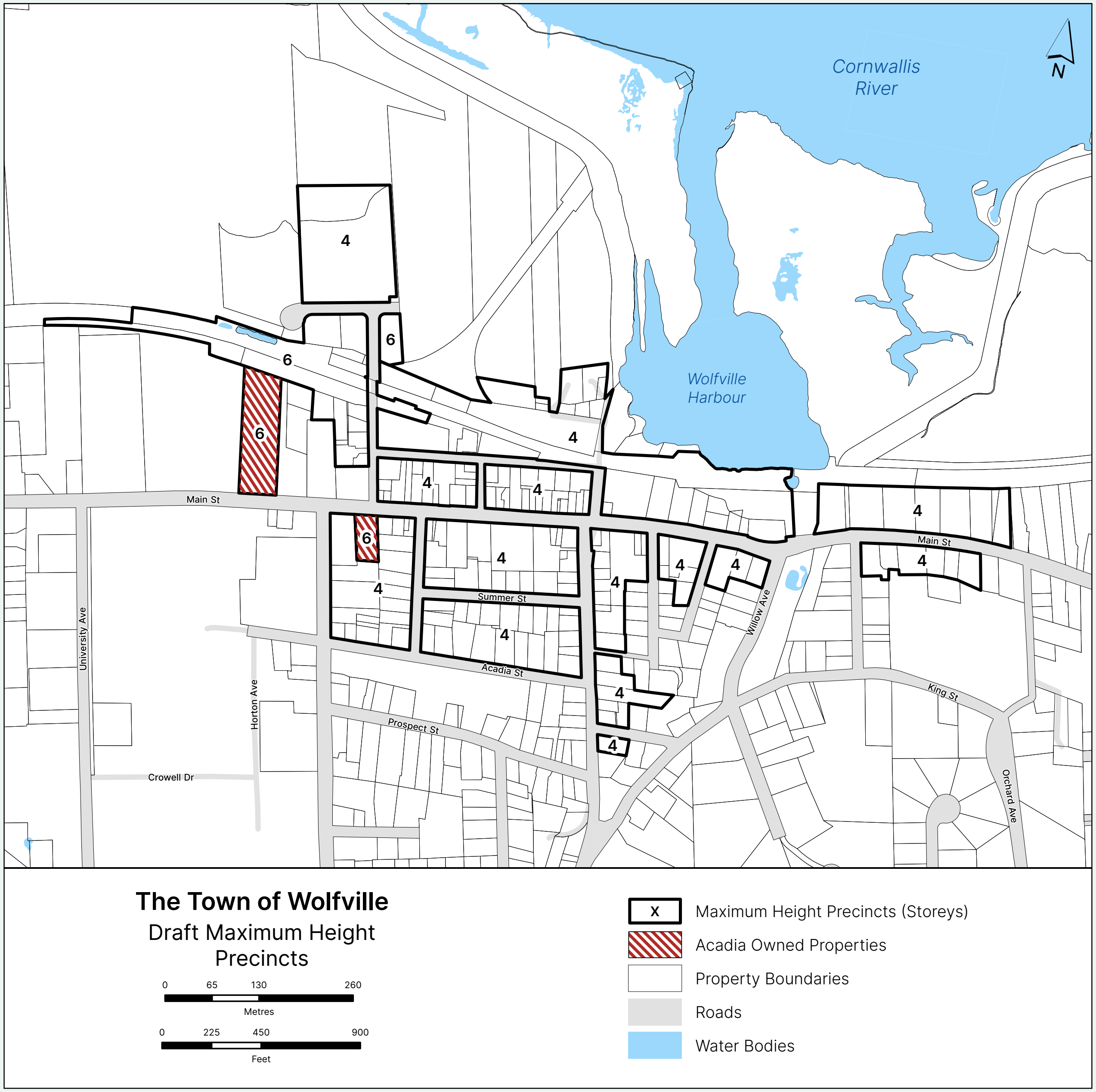
Downtown Growth: Height Limits

Recommendation 3: Set a maximum four-storey height limit in C-1.

Recommendation 4: Allow four-storey projects with site plan approval, not a development agreement, and achieve any desired public benefits through clear requirements, not a negotiation.

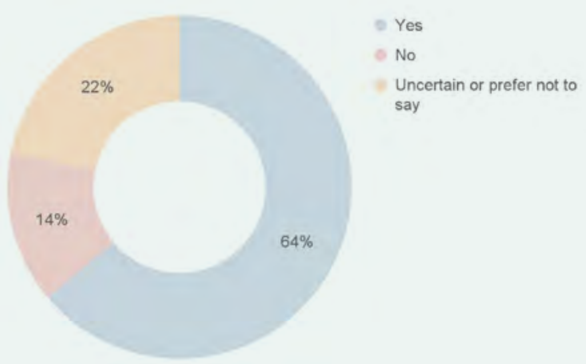
Recommendation 5: Allow six storeys by development agreement in two contexts:

- Areas marked purple (which are less visible in most of downtown)
- Projects that include a major non-market housing component



7.5 PAC Feedback on Parking

- Support for creating a new public parking lot
- Adjust its design to avoid impacting the view from Central Ave
- Focus on making the parking lot narrow and green
- Support for reducing parking requirements



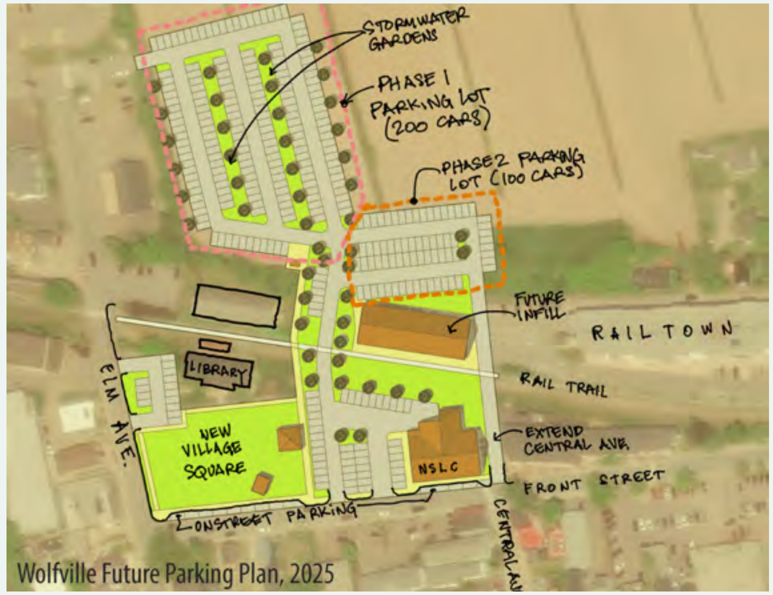
New Public Parking

Recommendation 1: Conduct a land swap between existing farmland (circle 1) and Town-owned land north of Home Hardware (circle 2). Create new parking in circle 1 and new farmland in circle 2.

New Public Parking

Recommendation 2: Design the new parking to be long and narrow, and aim to make it less visible from Central Ave.

Note: The concept sketch opposite expresses early ideas. There are many options for how to lay this out during the detailed planning phase.



Repurpose Front Street Parking

Recommendation 3: Repurpose publicly owned parking on Front St. for:

- Non-market housing with ground-floor commercial space
- Public outdoor space

Growth Incentives

Recommendation 4: Use financial incentives to encourage property owners to redevelop parking lots and other opportunity sites.

Specifically, reduce commercial property taxes for the first year after development, and slowly phase in property taxes over 10 years, using Bill 177.

Paid Parking

Recommendation 5: Implement paid parking downtown and on surrounding streets. Consider solutions to provide an efficient, appropriate price and to encourage turnover, such as variable-price parking (which changes in response to demand).

Recommendation 6: Offer free parking on the new public parking lot with:

- Prominent wayfinding to this parking lot.
- An excellent pedestrian path from this parking lot to Main Street.

Downtown Improvement Fund

Recommendation 7: Use funds from paid parking for a Downtown Improvement Fund and establish a program for yearly placemaking investments using this fund, collaborating with local businesses and residents.

Parking Management

Recommendation 8: Manage Town parking with the following strategies:

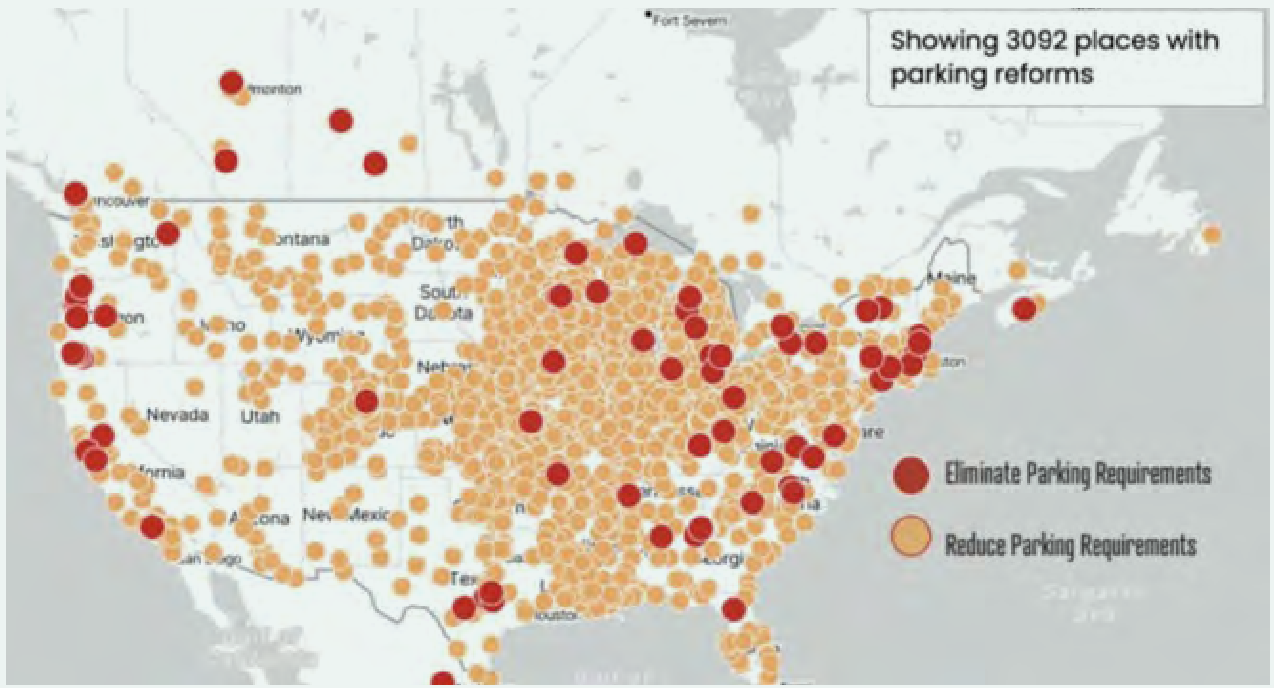
- Establish parking enforcement
- Collaborate with Acadia University to align pricing and parking strategy
- Explore options to manage parking impacts on residential streets, such as permit parking

Parking Requirements

Recommendation 9: Eliminate parking requirements for new buildings and businesses.

Explanation: Eliminating parking requirements will have the same impact as reducing them: Most developers will still provide parking. Eliminating requirements is preferred because:

- It is administratively much simpler, compared to providing exemptions for projects with carshare or other mitigating factors, or creating area-specific rules.
- Developers are better positioned than the Town to predict how much parking a specific project will need.
- Simpler rules encourage greater investment.

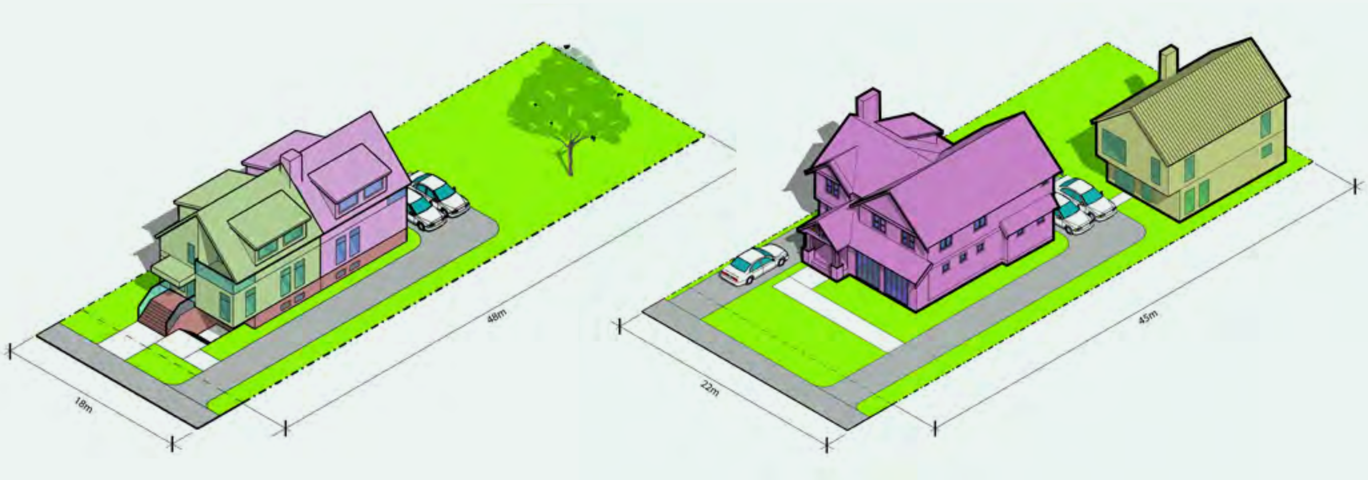


7.6 PAC Feedback on Neighbourhood Zoning

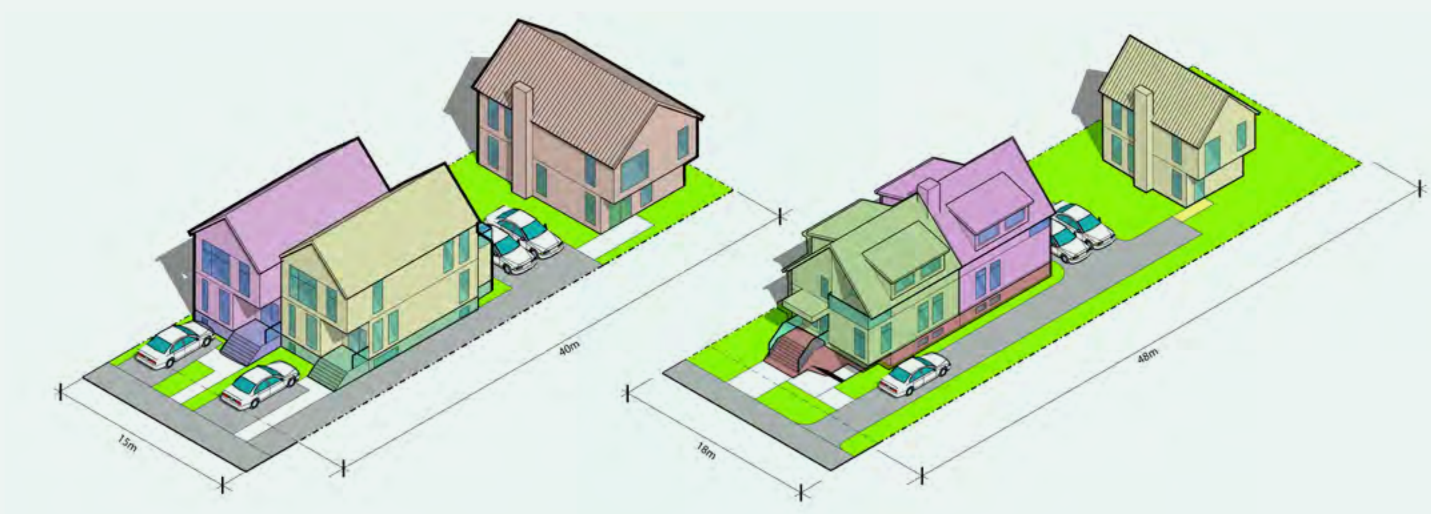
- Maintain R-1 Restricted zoning, but do allow two units in this zone
- Ensure backyard suites are smaller than the main unit
- Keep things simple by not using too many overlays
- No objections to medium and high-density residential zones

HAF requirement: "amend R1 to a zone that permits more than 1 unit as-of-right to a max of 4. Amend approval processes for as-of-right, site plan and DAs to streamline process for missing middle housing. Rezone strategic properties to ensure maximum yield in key locations. Identify areas near campus suitable for multi-unit dwellings and zone accordingly.

Residential Low Density (RL) - Restricted



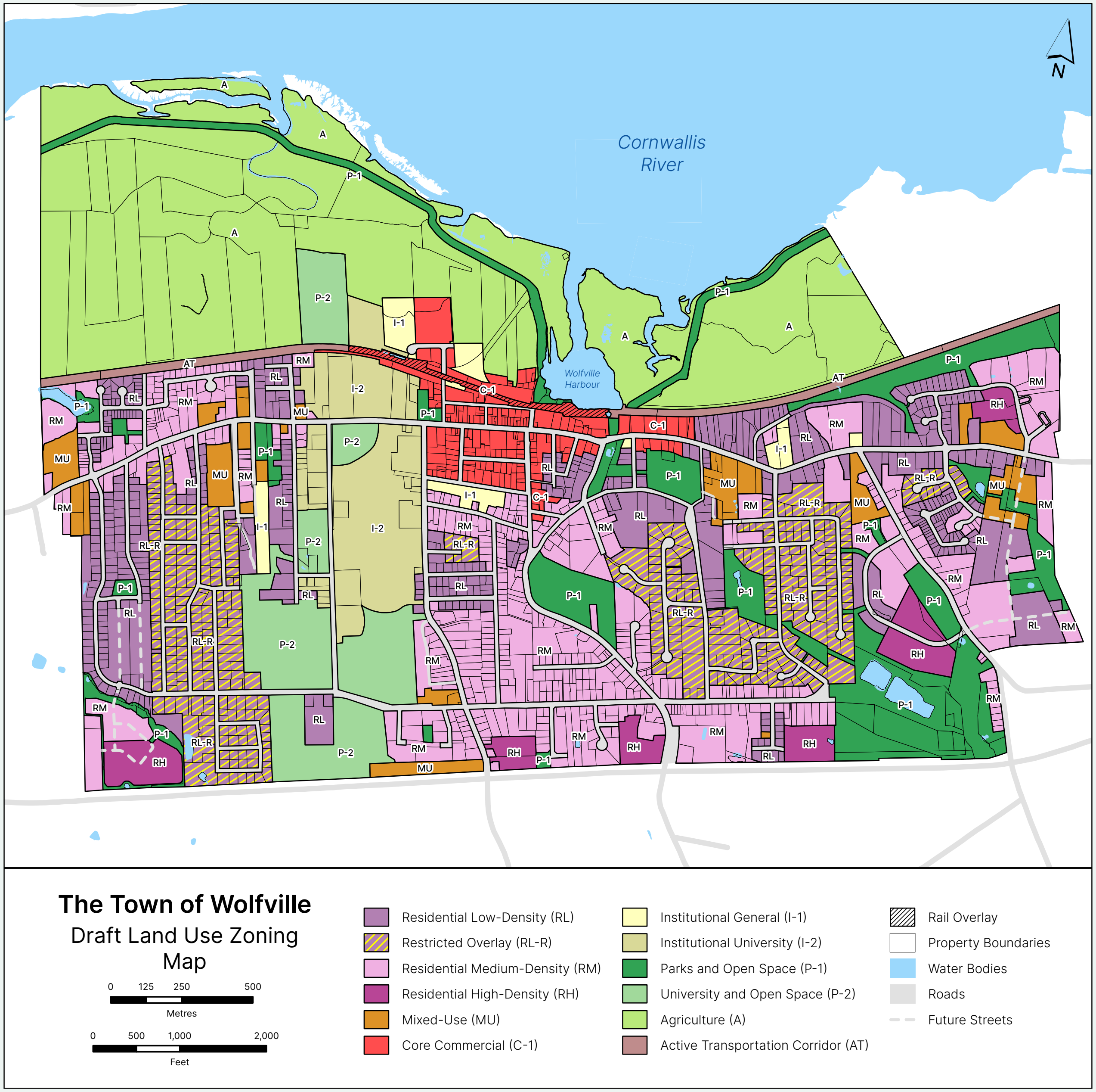
Residential Low Density (RL)



Neighbourhood Zoning

Recommendation 1: Simplify residential zones to three categories:

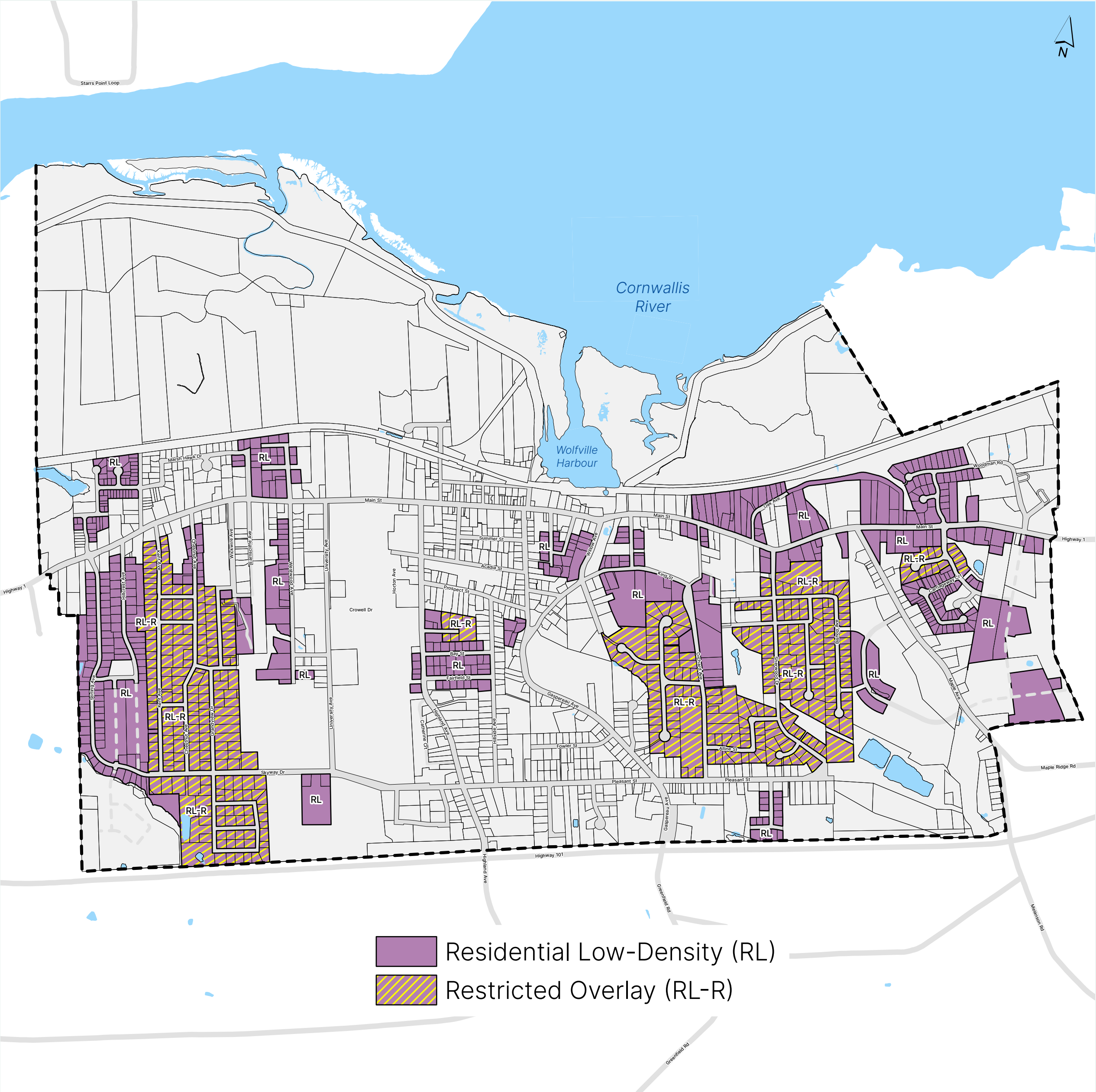
- Residential Low-Density
- Residential Medium-Density
- Residential High-Density



Neighbourhood Zoning

Recommendation 2: Create a "Residential Restricted" overlay for areas currently zoned R-1 Restricted. It reduces the number of units allowed from 4 to 2, but has no other effect.

Note: All properties currently in R-1 Restricted are now in the new Restricted Overlay.

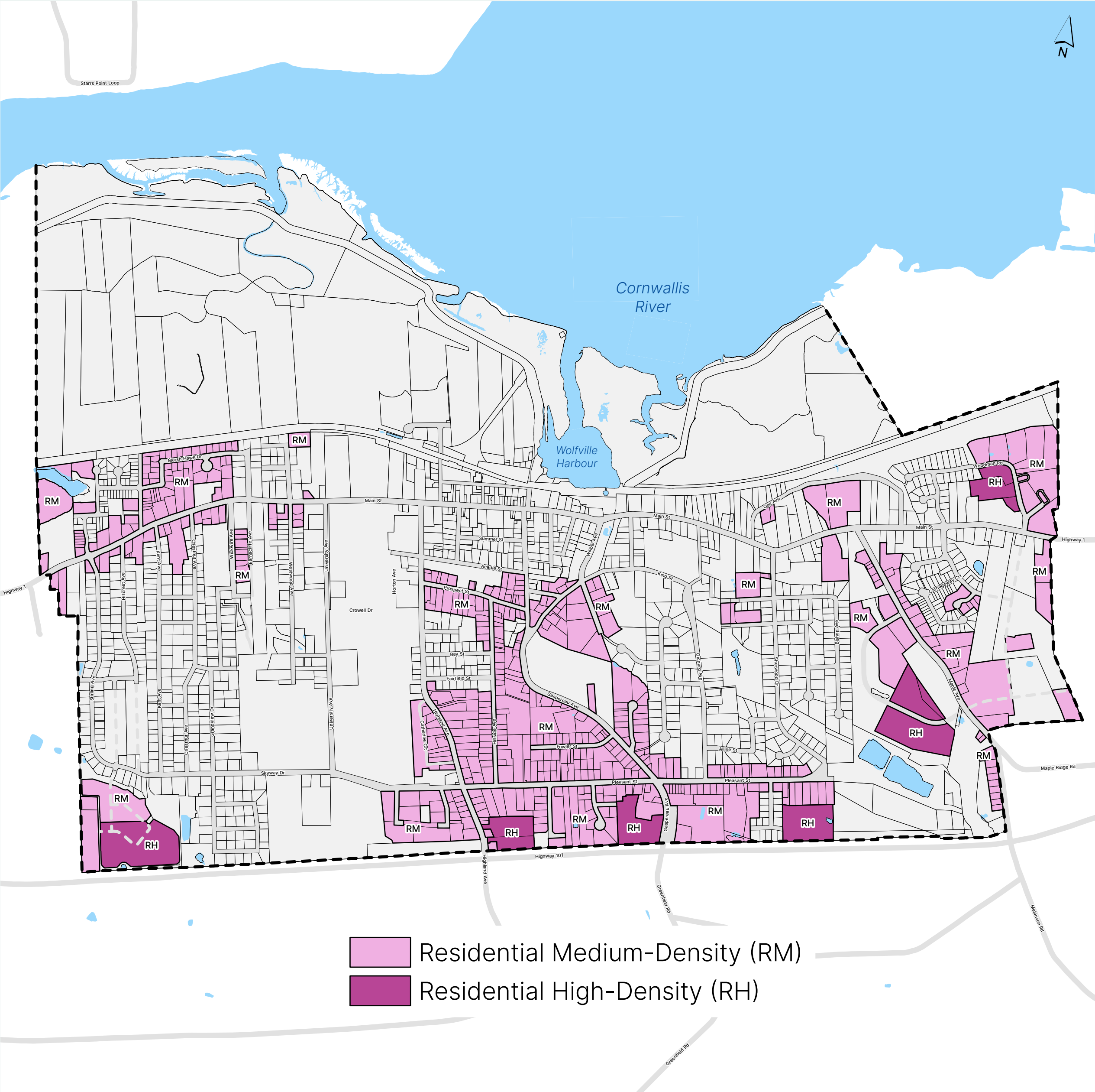


Medium- and High-Density Residential

Recommendation 3: Combine R3, R4, and R-LR into a single new Residential Medium-Density Zone.

Recommendation 4: Create a few Residential High-Density areas on large properties along the edge of Town limits to encourage growth where it will have limited impact on existing residential areas.

Recommendation 5: Explore strategies to encourage courtyard housing on large lots.



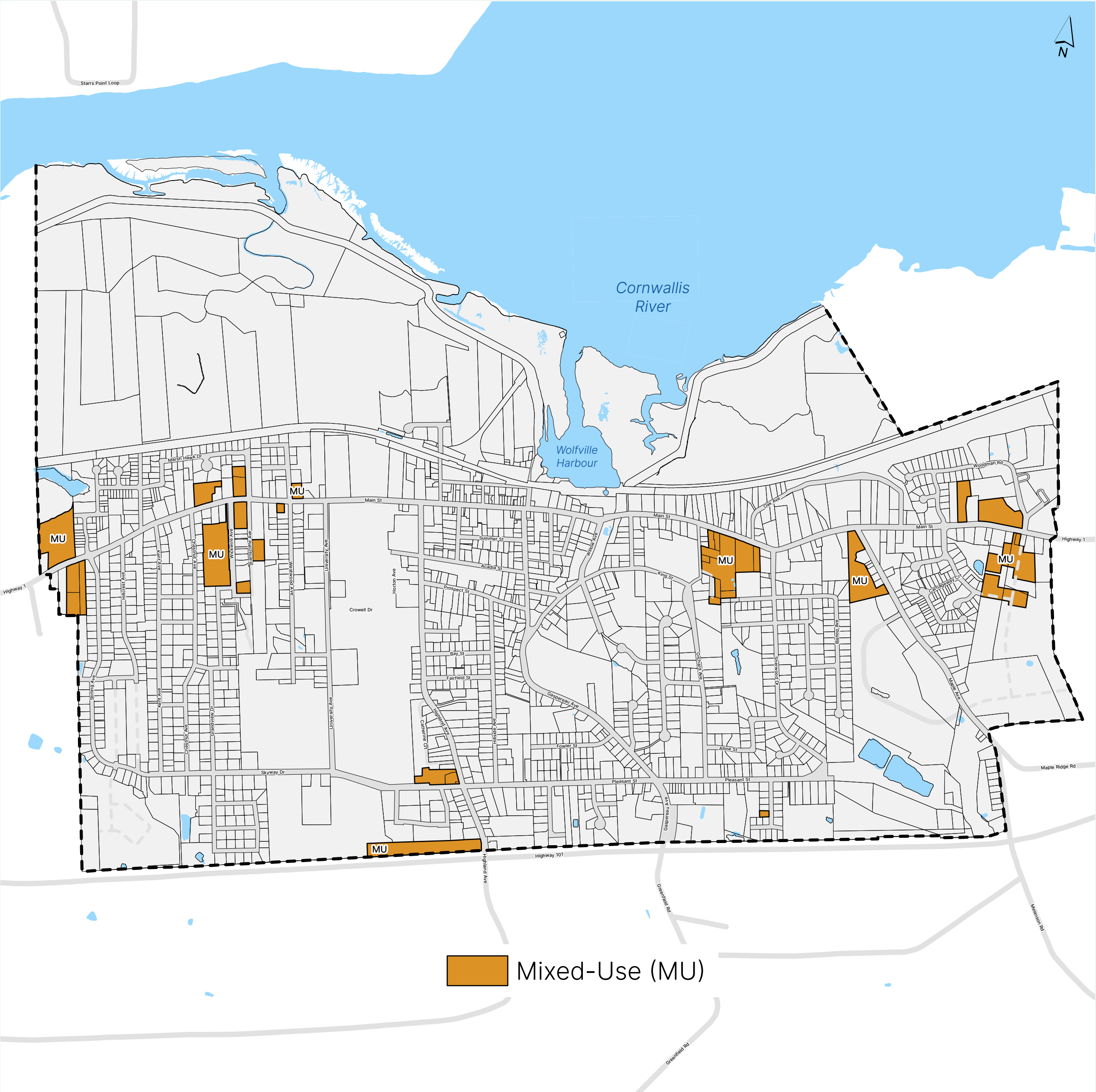
Neighbourhood Zoning

Recommendation 6: Update the number of units allowed in each zone as indicated in the chart.

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

Mixed-Use Zone

Recommendation 6: Replace all C-2 areas (outside downtown) with the Mixed-Use Zone, and consider adjustments to the zone to enable smaller-scale development.

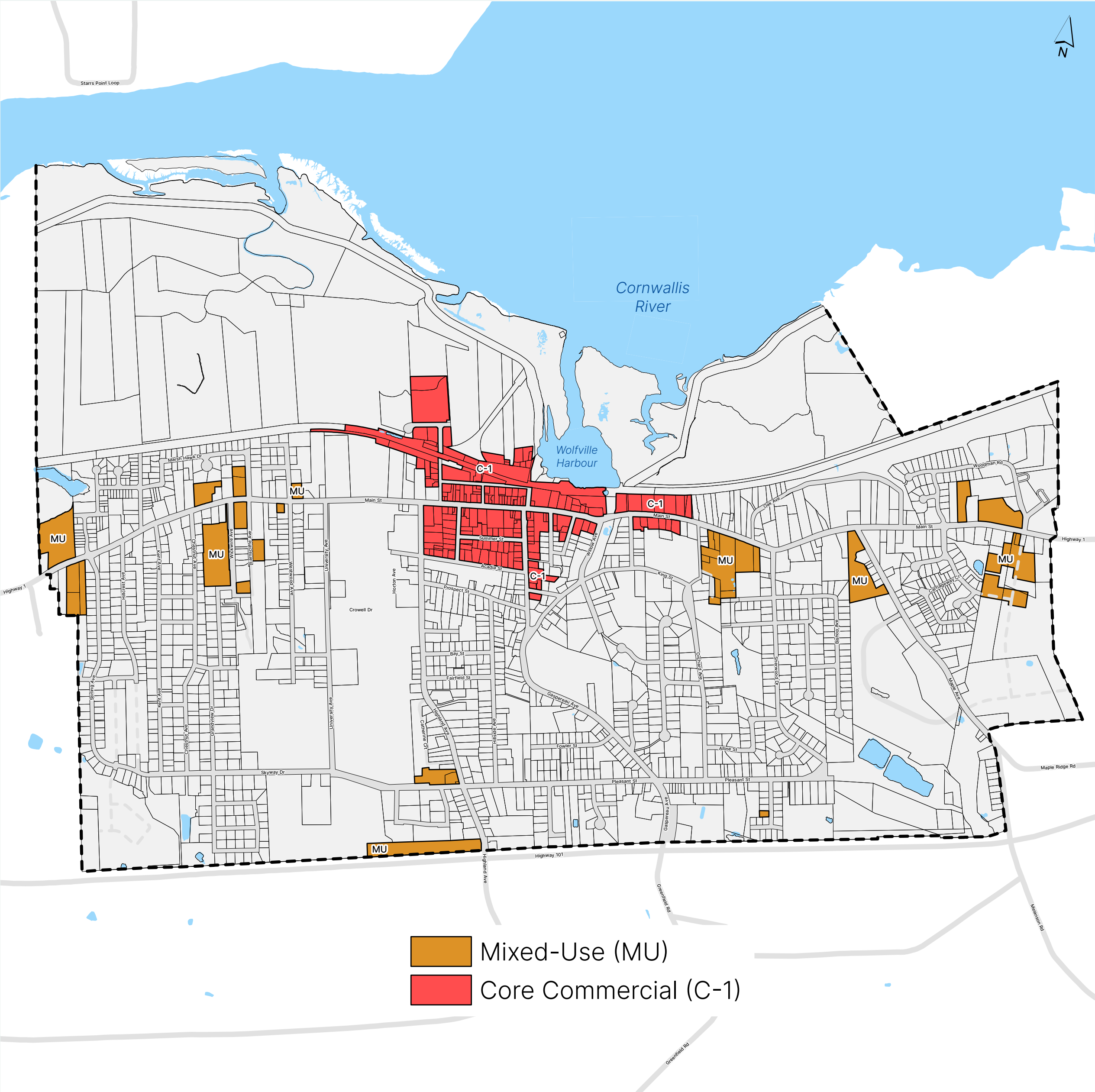


Mixed-Use Zone

Recommendation 8: Enable full-time short-term rental units in the newly expanded Core-Commercial (C-1) and Mixed-Use (MU) zones.

Recommendation 7: Allow short-term rental rooms (subject to restrictions) in all areas, so long as they:

- Are in homes where the main occupant lives full time
- Are not full units



8

Investment for Success

8.1 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.

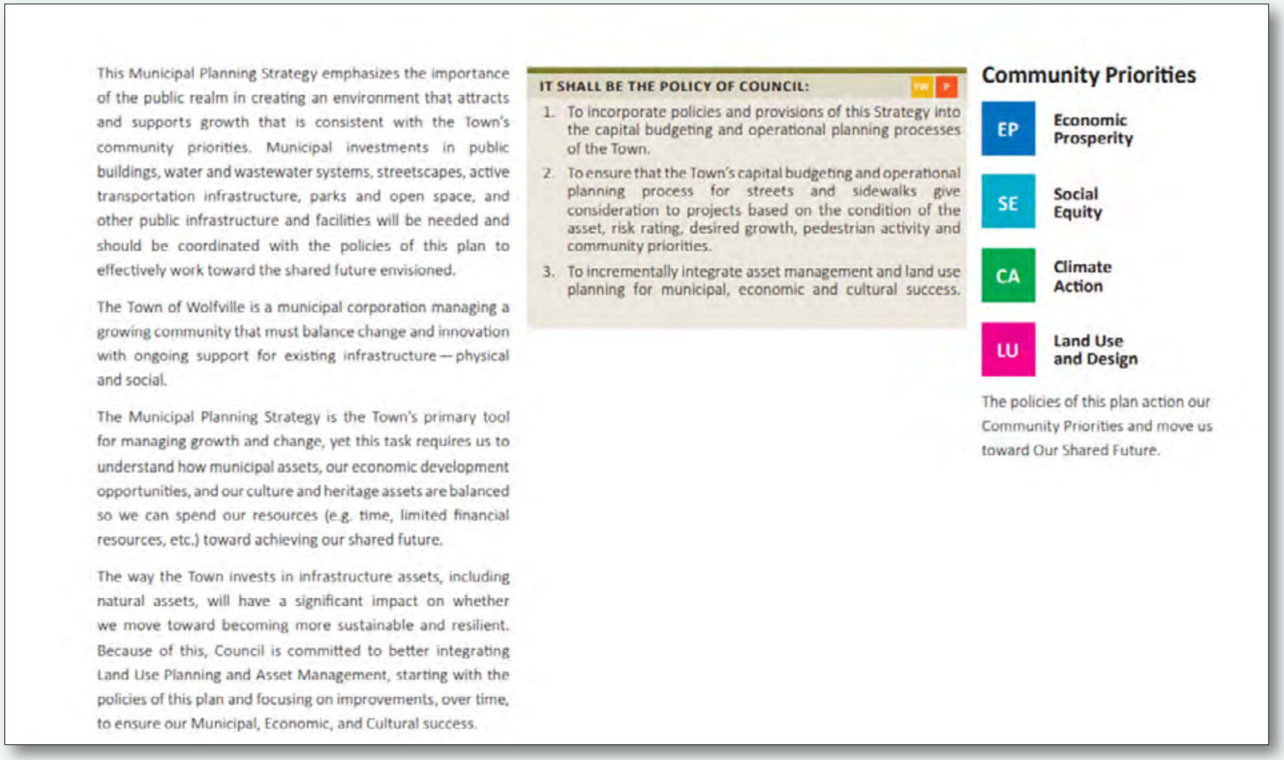
8.2 Invesment for Success - MPS

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 our Community Priorities and move us toward Our Shared Future.

8.3 Invesment for Success - MPS

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 initiates 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 rezoning to any zone for registered heritage property, as outlined in the Land Use Bylaw
6. To use the Nova Scotia Heritage Property Act to preserve 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% consistant 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 or approvals.

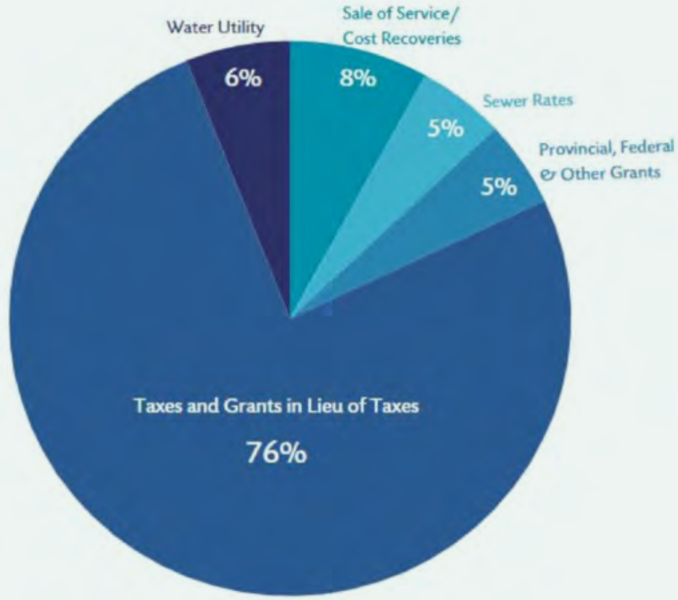
The 2019 commerical vacancy rate in the Town of Wolfville was approximately 2%

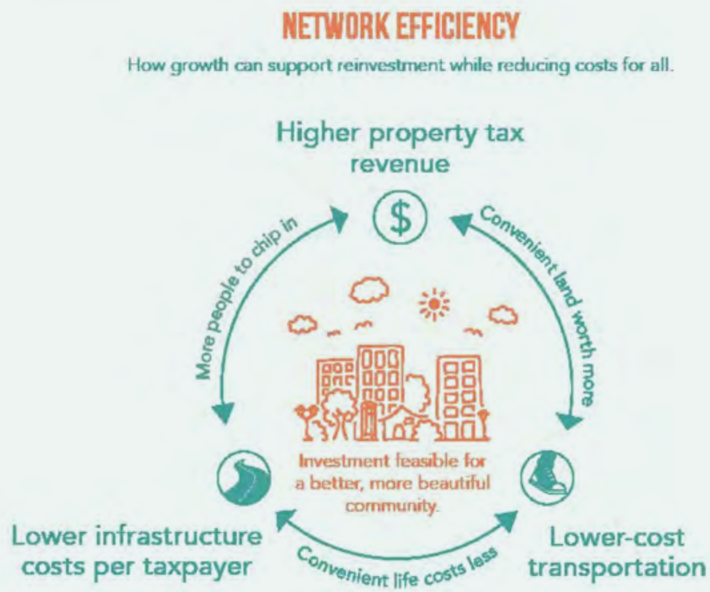
8.4 Fiscal Sustainability

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

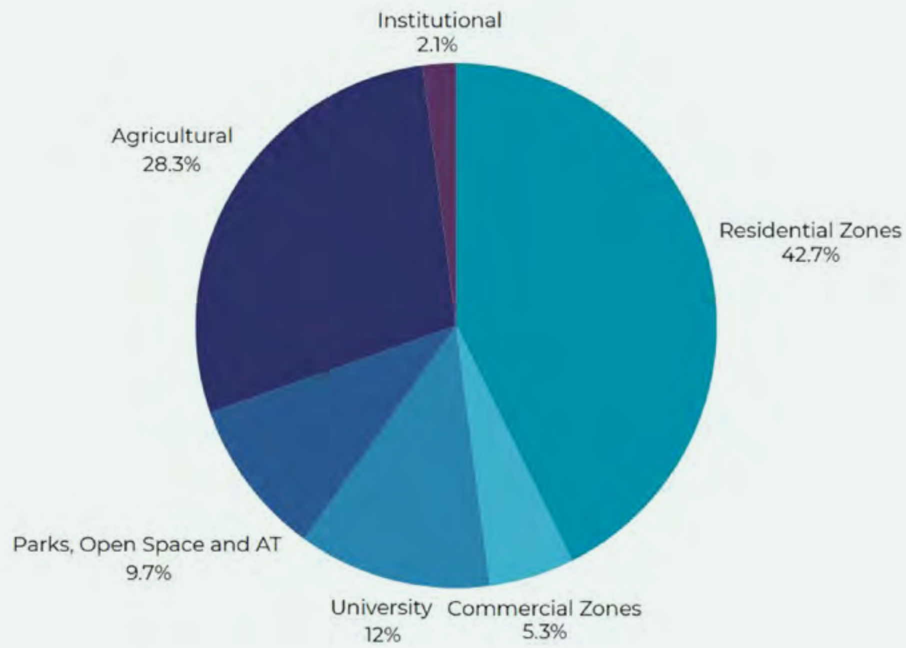
These are the Town's two main sources of revenue.

2024-2025 Tax Rates:

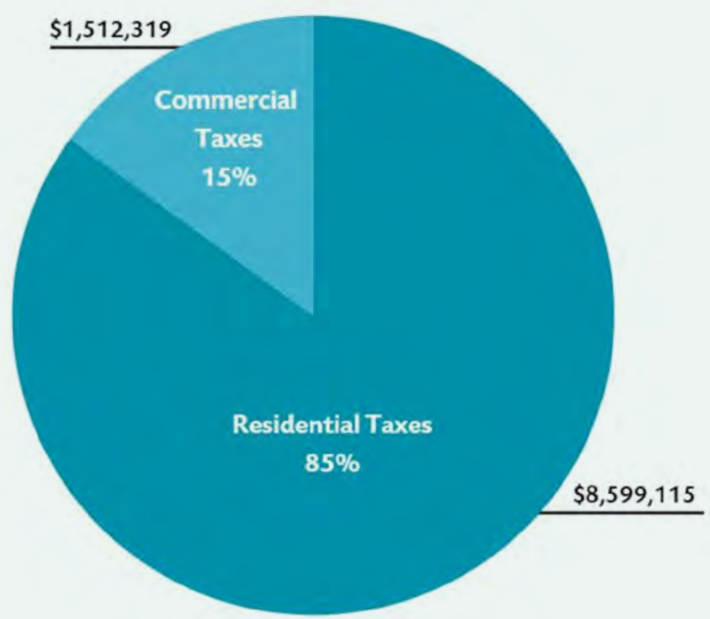
- Residential: $1.4655 per $100 assessment ($8,599,115)
- Commercial: $3.5655 per $100 assessment ($1,512,319)

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)erate less than $10 per year.



Tax Collected 2024-2025



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.

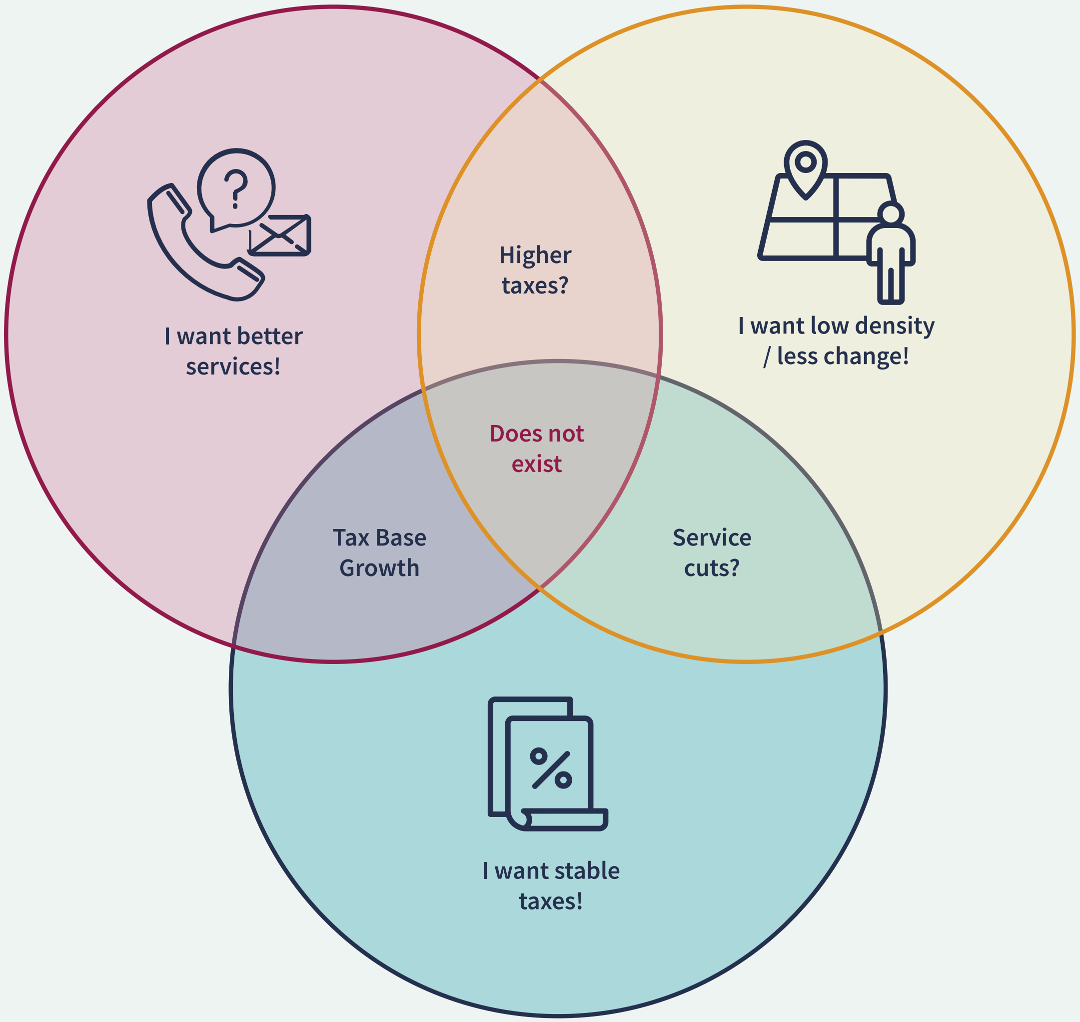
Average tax revenue per square metre for properties in various zones. (Only includes properties with buildings).

8.5 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.



8.6 Asset Management

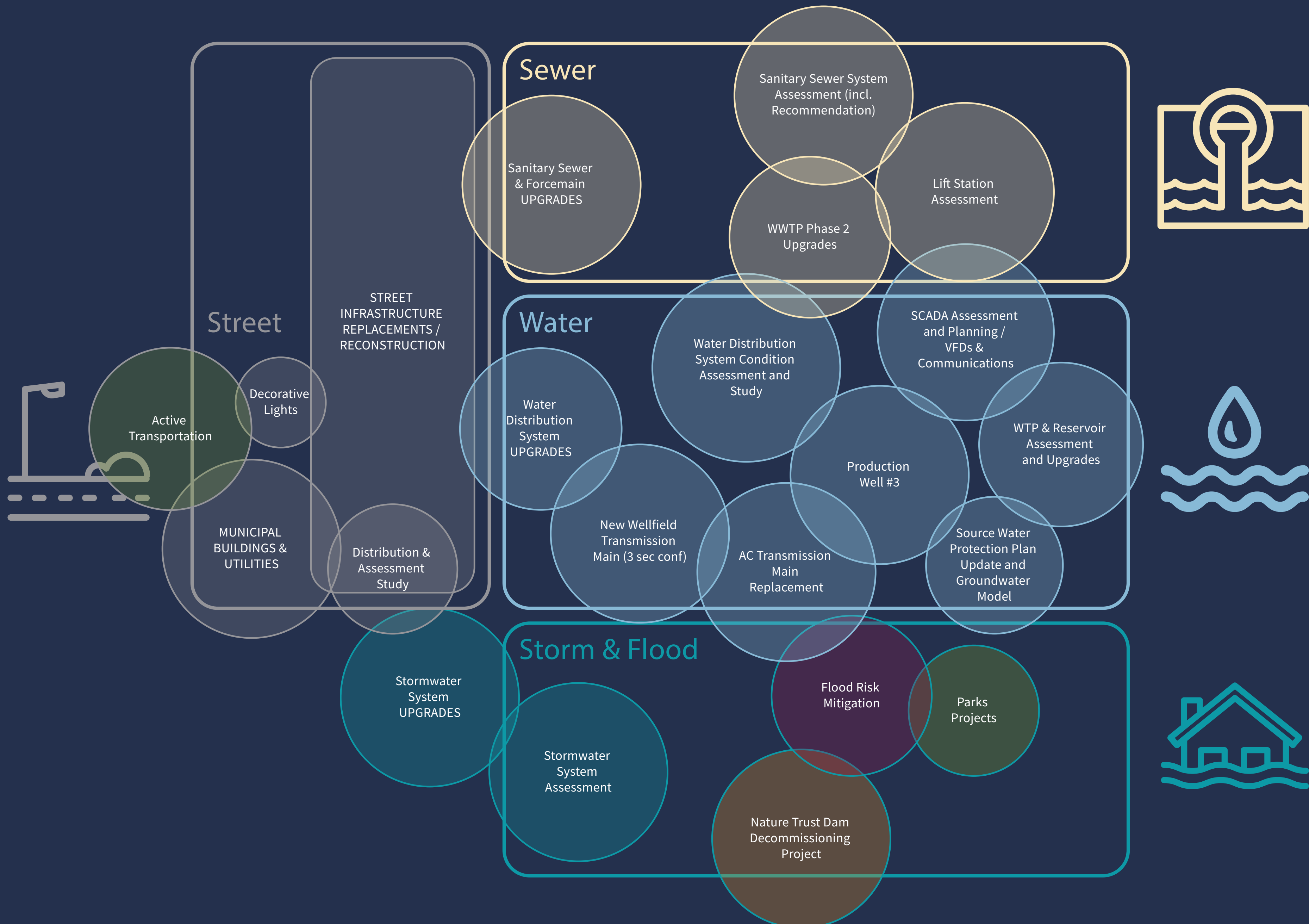
The Town completed an initial asset management Plan in 2018. Since that time some work has progressed to formalize the program but additional efforts are required.

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.


Town of Wolfville Asset Management Plan

Town of Wolfville, NS



Sewer
Sanitary Sewer & Forcemain UPGRADES
Sanitary Sewer System Assessment (incl. Recommendation)
Lift Station Assessment
WWTP Phase 2 Upgrades
Street
STREET INFRASTRUCTURE REPLACEMENTS / RECONSTRUCTION
Active Transportation
Decorative Lights
MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS & UTILITIES
Distribution & Assessment Study
Water
Water Distribution System UPGRADES
Water Distribution System Condition Assessment and Study
SCADA Assessment and Planning / VFDs & Communications
WTP & Reservoir Assessment and Upgrades
Production Well #3
New Wellfield Transmission Main (3 sec conf)
AC Transmission Main Replacement
Source Water Protection Plan Update and Groundwater Model
Storm & Flood
Stormwater System UPGRADES
Stormwater System Assessment
Flood Risk Mitigation
Parks Projects
Nature Trust Dam Decommissioning Project

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.

8.7 Asset Management

Wolfville currently has:

34km
of asphalt roadway

34km
of stormwater pipes

A water treatment plant and storage reservoir

25km
of asphalt and concrete sidewalk

43km
of sanitary sewer mains

34
vehicles and pieces of equipment used to provide public works services

71 acres
of recreation space, including 17 parks with various open spaces, playgrounds, and a splash pad

6
sanitary sewer lift stations that pump sewage to the wastewater treatment plant

11
parking lots

16km
of trails including the nature preserve

2
municipal wells that produce the Town’s drinking water

7
buildings and facilities

55km
of water main pipes

A wastewater treatment plant

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.

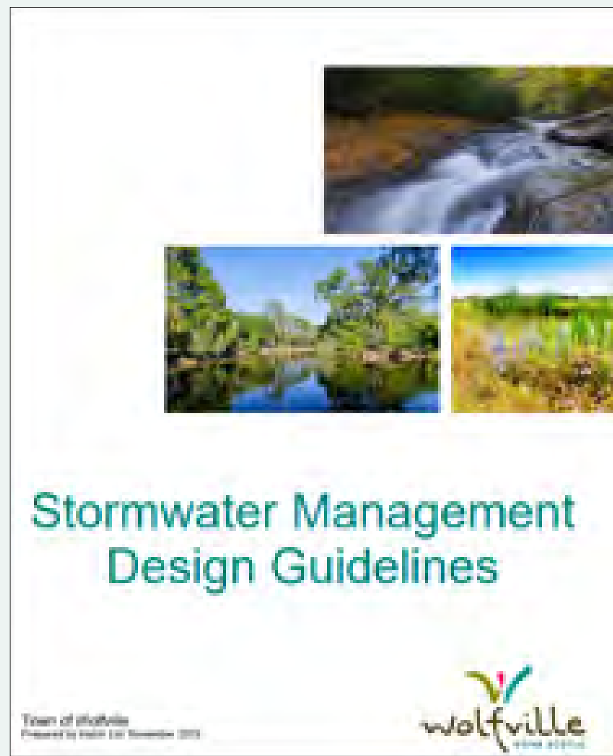
8.8 Stormwater Management Infrastructure Overview

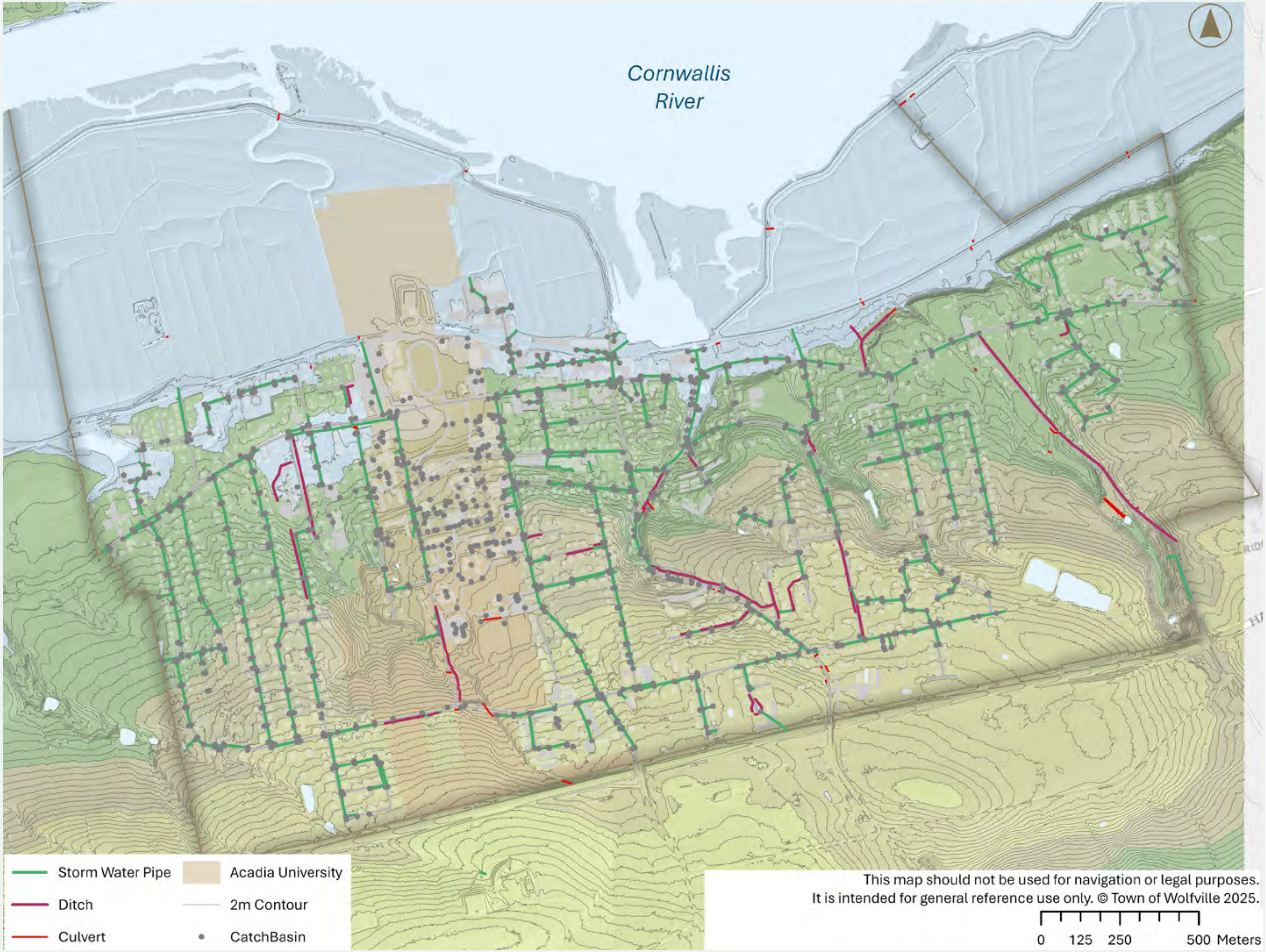
The Town manages 43 km of underground stormwater pipe; over 1000 catch basins; 50+ culverts and over 4 km of open ditch. Approximately 6km of the network was installed pre 1970.

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





This map should not be used for navigation or legal purposes.
It is intended for general reference use only.

8.9 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.

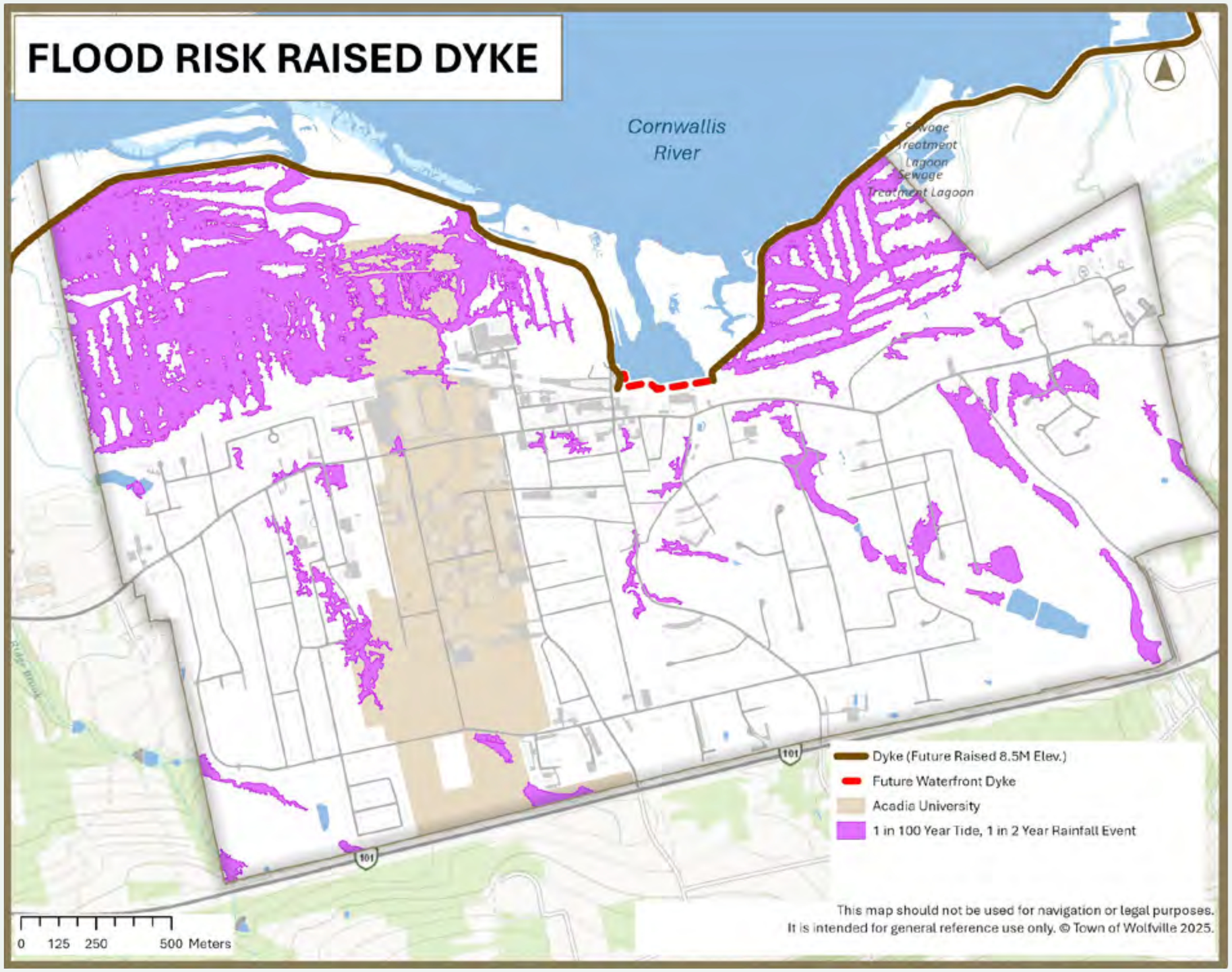
There is a combination of practical interventions (e.g. conveyance, storage, low impact development, etc) to mitigate impacts – this is what the outcomes of the modeling and ongoing work will point to.

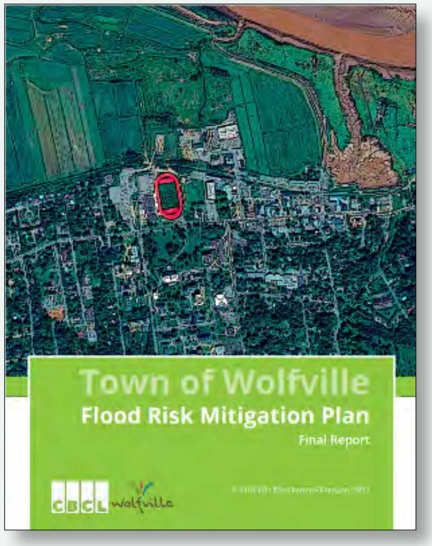
8.10 Tidal Flood Risk

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.



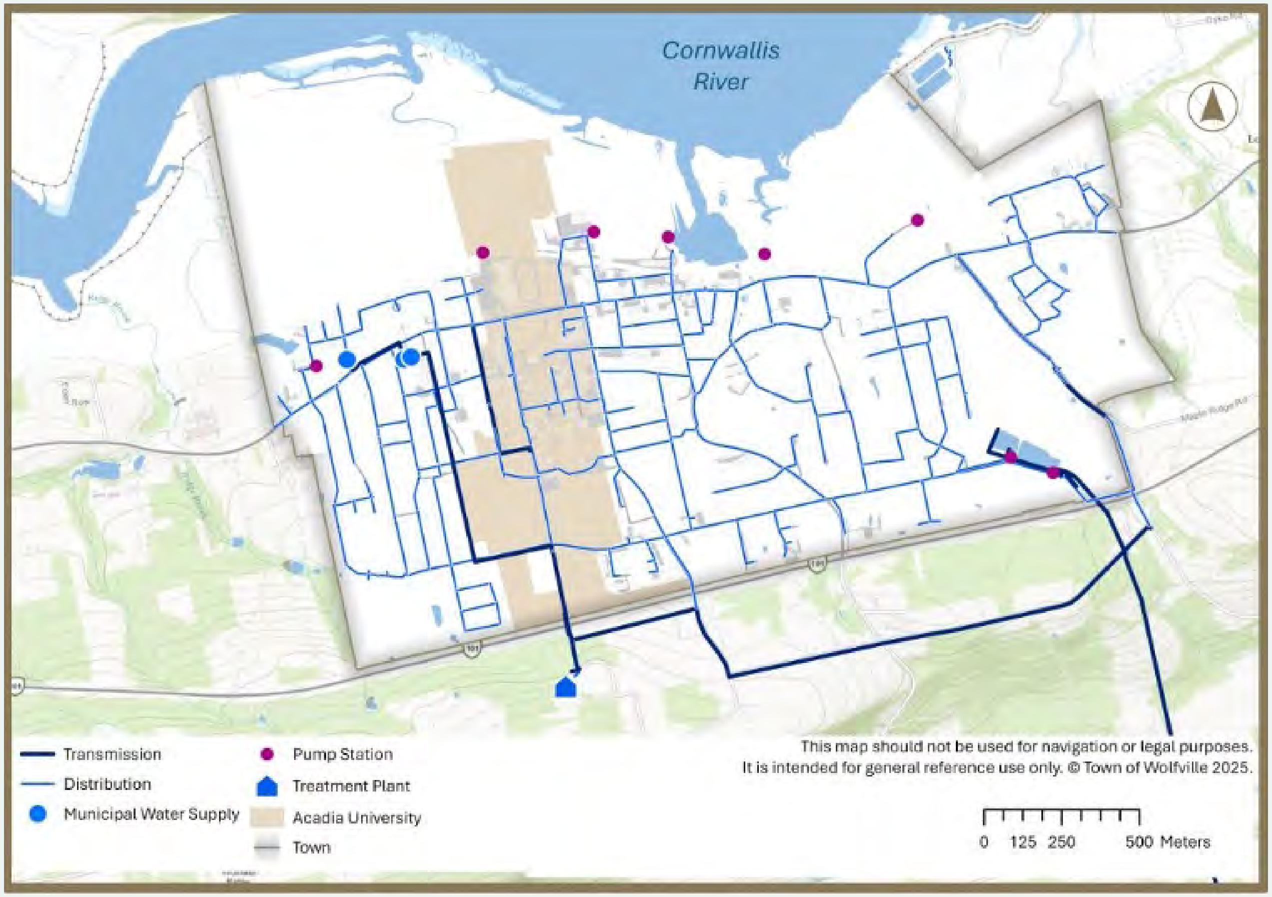


8.11 Water System (Water Utility)

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:

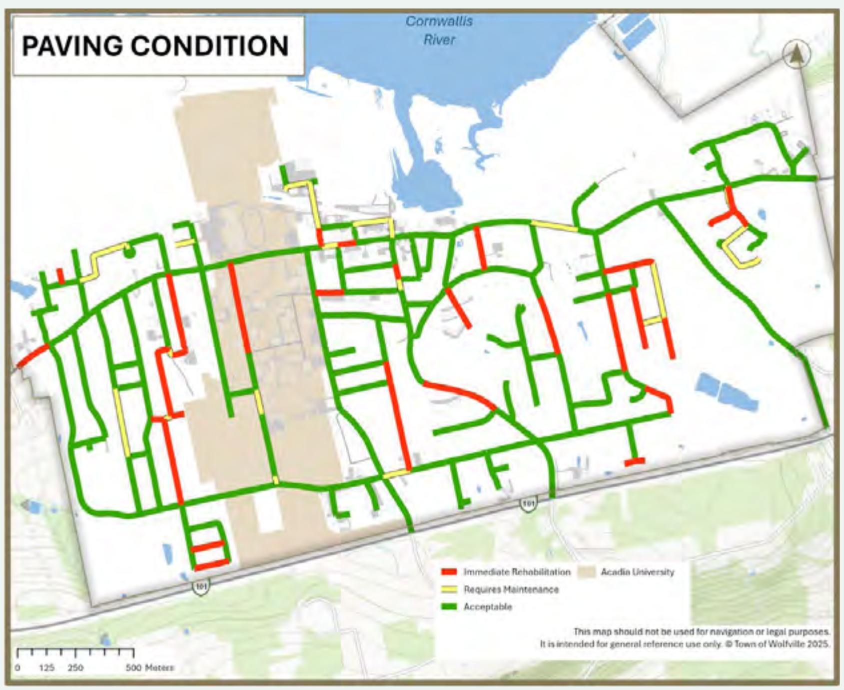
- Advance third production well project to be completed within 2 years
- Finish new transmission main projects (Skyway to WTP and Wellfield to Westwood, both ongoing) within 1 year, and begin design and implementation of asbestos cement transmission line replacement to be completed within 3-5 years.
- 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 t 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.

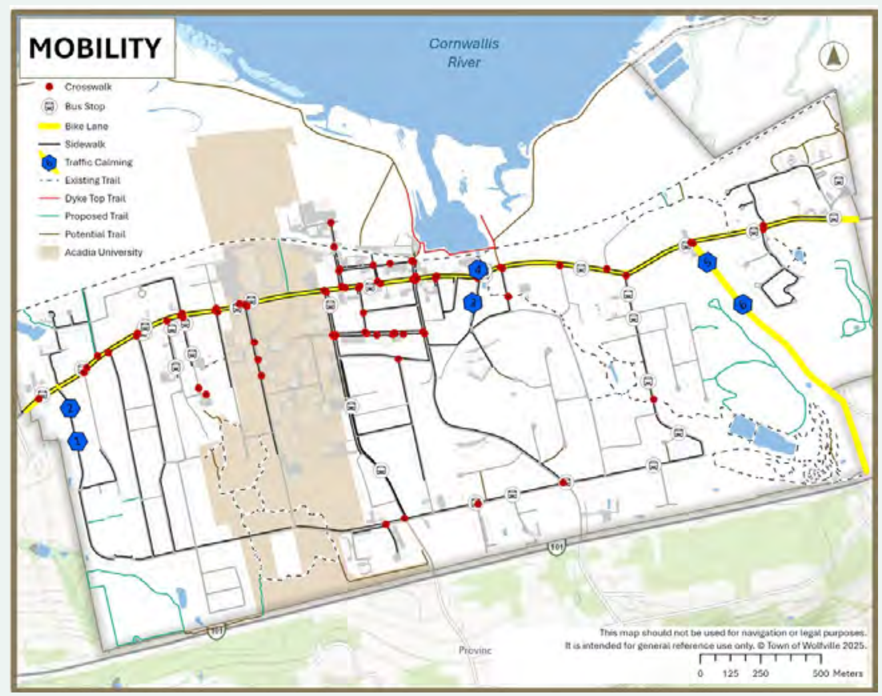


8.12 Streets and Sidewalks

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.





8.13 Traffic Management

The Town is a drive through location for tourists and locals with highway 1 being congested during busy periods of the year (30-60days/year maximum). The corridor between Gaspereau AVenue and University Avenue is being looked at for long term capital improvements (lights, roudabouts, 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.

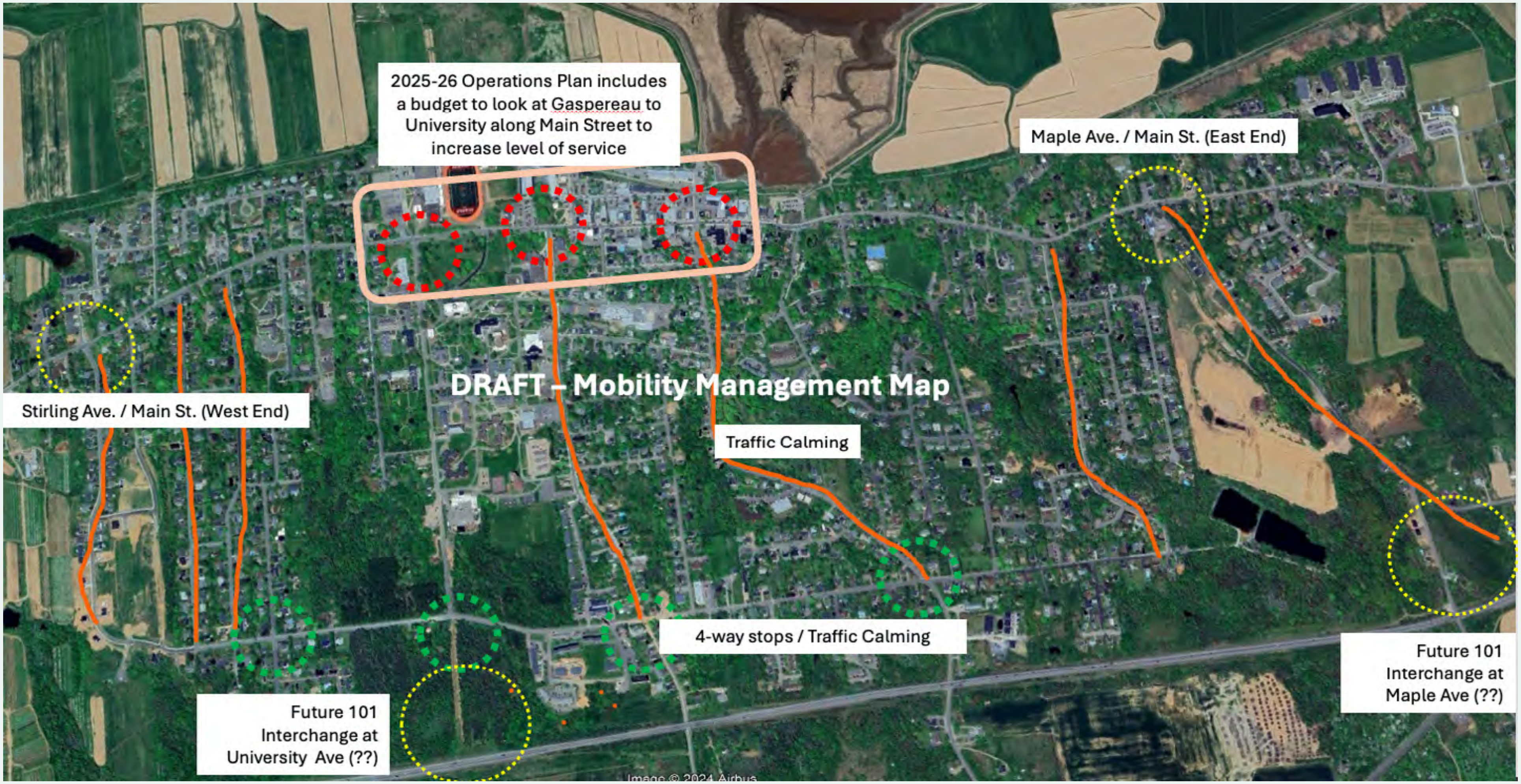
8.14 Traffic Management – MPS

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

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



8.16 Parks and Recreation

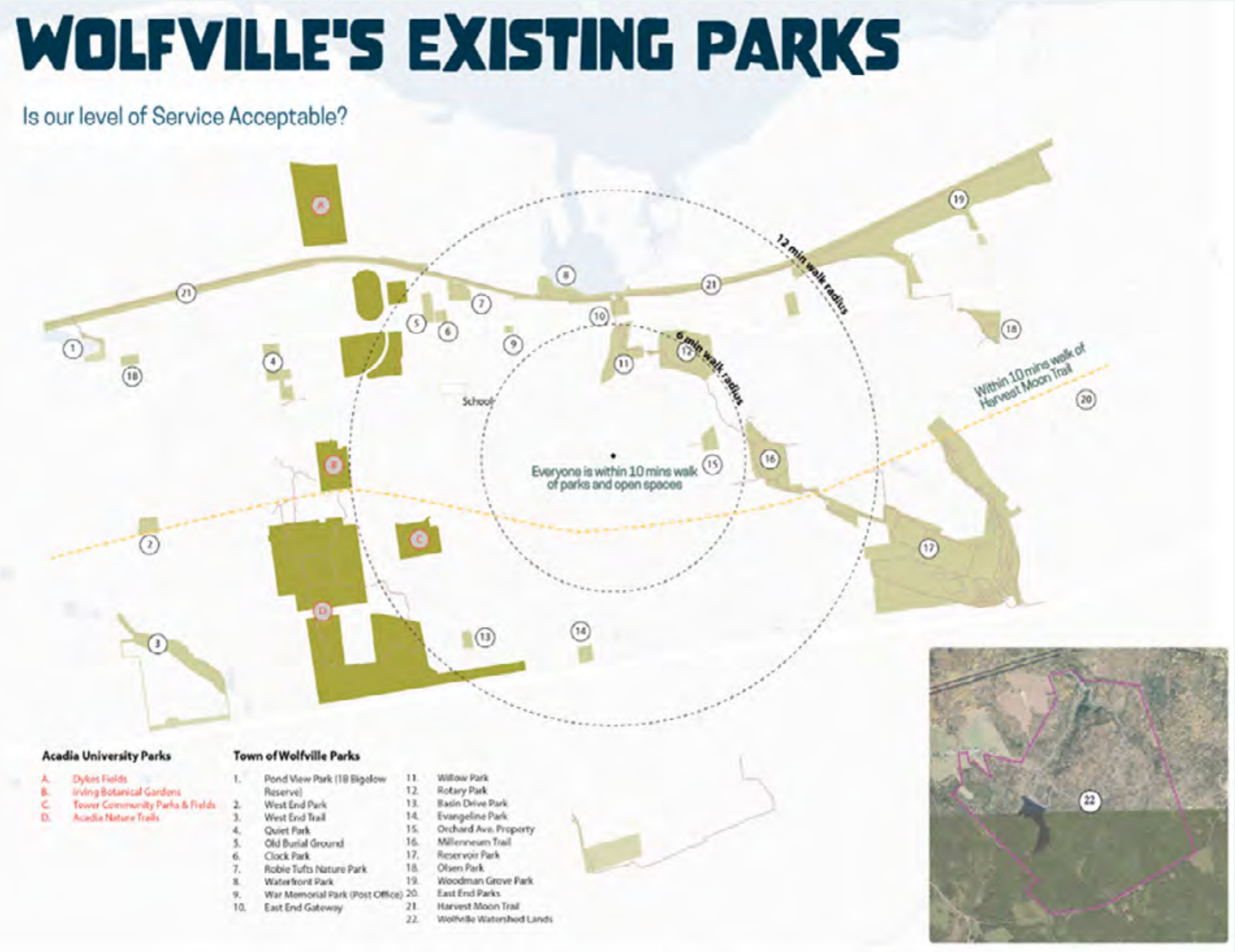
The Town manages 724 acres of Parks and Open Space and offerings a variety of recreation programming. Acadia also has significant Parks Space on campus.

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).



8.17 Placemaking

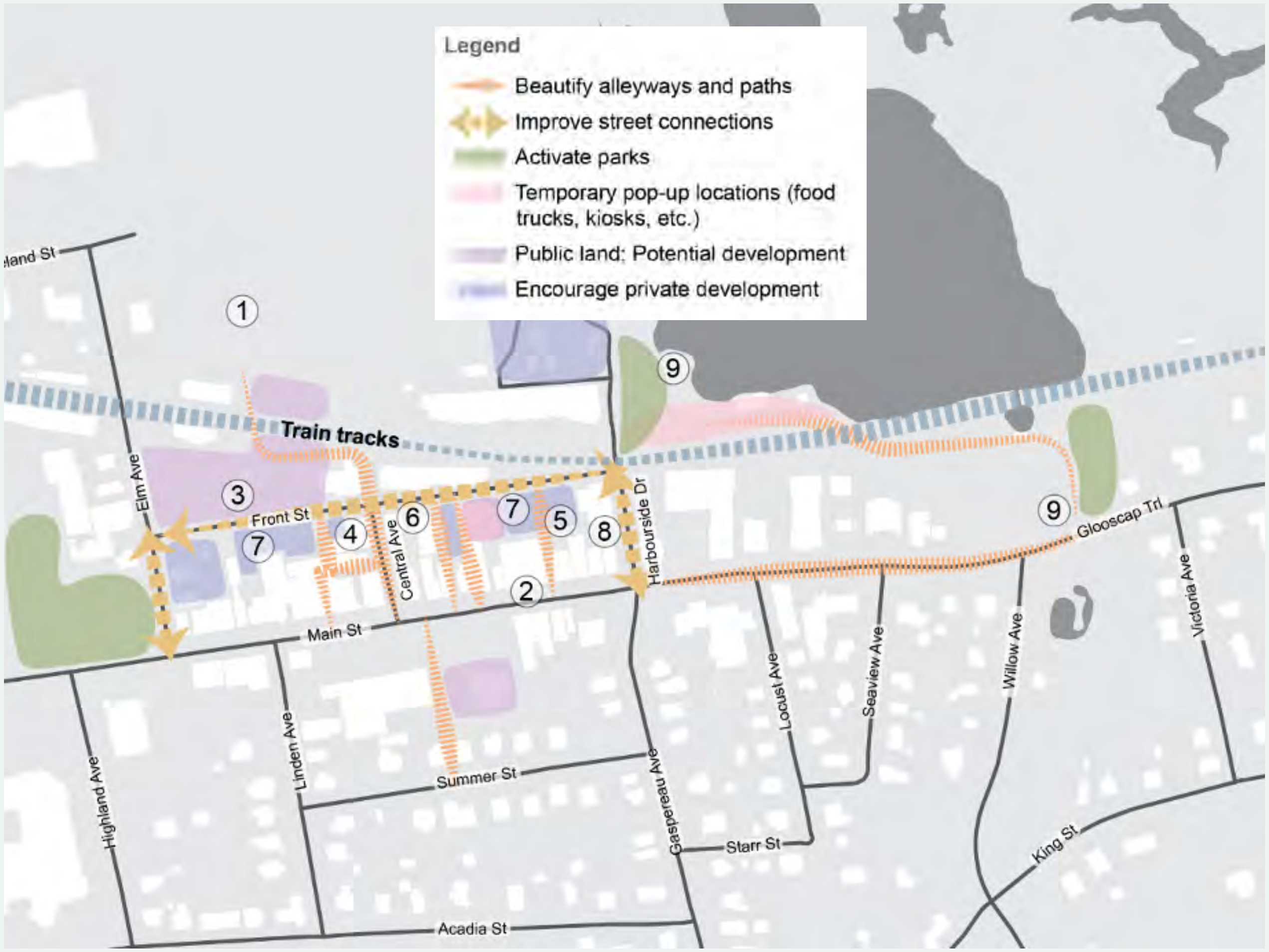
Small investments can have a major impact on vibrancy. Games, flower boxes, benches, painted sidewalks, murals, and dining decks can all help bring people to downtown Wolfville, and keep them longer. These investments can help bring customers to businesses more consistently throughout the year. They 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.

8.18 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.

Housing Accelerator Fund Action Plan

Implementation Framework

Recommendations

wolfville

ACADIA UNIVERSITY

NATIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY

CMHC SCHL

Happy Cities

Fathom

TURNER DRAKE & PARTNERS LTD.

zzap

Project Timeline

Stakeholder Interviews
February & March 2025

Action Plan Package 1
Downtown & Neighbourhoods Scenarios
May 2025

Public Open Houses & Survey
May 2025

Action Plan Package 2 & 3
Recommendations + sections on Acadia & non-market housing
June & July, 2025

Town Council Direction
July 2025

Action Plan Package 4
Draft bylaw and plan updates
Early Autumn, 2025

Public Engagement
Autumn 2025

Final Package
Final recommendations
June & July 2025

Town Council Decision
Late 2025

The project team has also received direction from the Planning Advisory Committee monthly since January 2025.

Recommendations

The following recommendations integrate a broad range of inputs:

- Public feedback from open houses, the survey, and stakeholder interviews.
- Planning Advisory Committee Feedback.
- Housing Accelerator Fund commitments.
- The technical analysis contained in this report.

The project team sought solutions that would respond to the core goals expressed in feedback, that would be technically feasible, and that would meet the Town’s long-term housing needs.

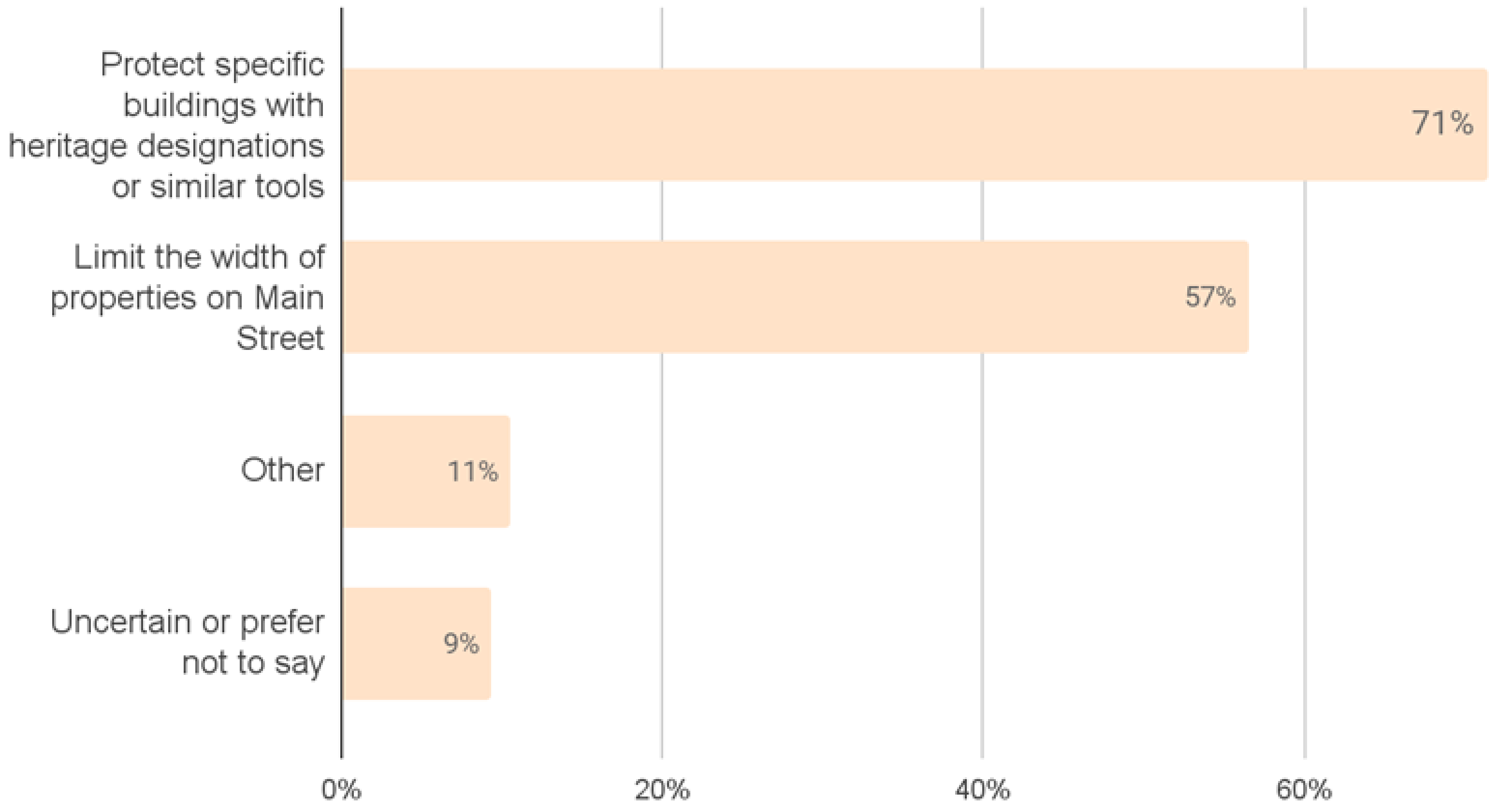
The Planning Advisory Committee and Council may choose to accept some or all of the recommendations suggested here, or may request adjustments. Further analysis will be conducted before Council will vote on the final recommendation later in the year. No decision at this stage is final


Heritage
Photo by Fathom

Survey Results

PAC Feedback on Heritage Protection:

- Focus on protecting highest-priority buildings
- Prioritize character protections otherwise
- Do not be overly restrictive with max lot-width requirements
- Protect views

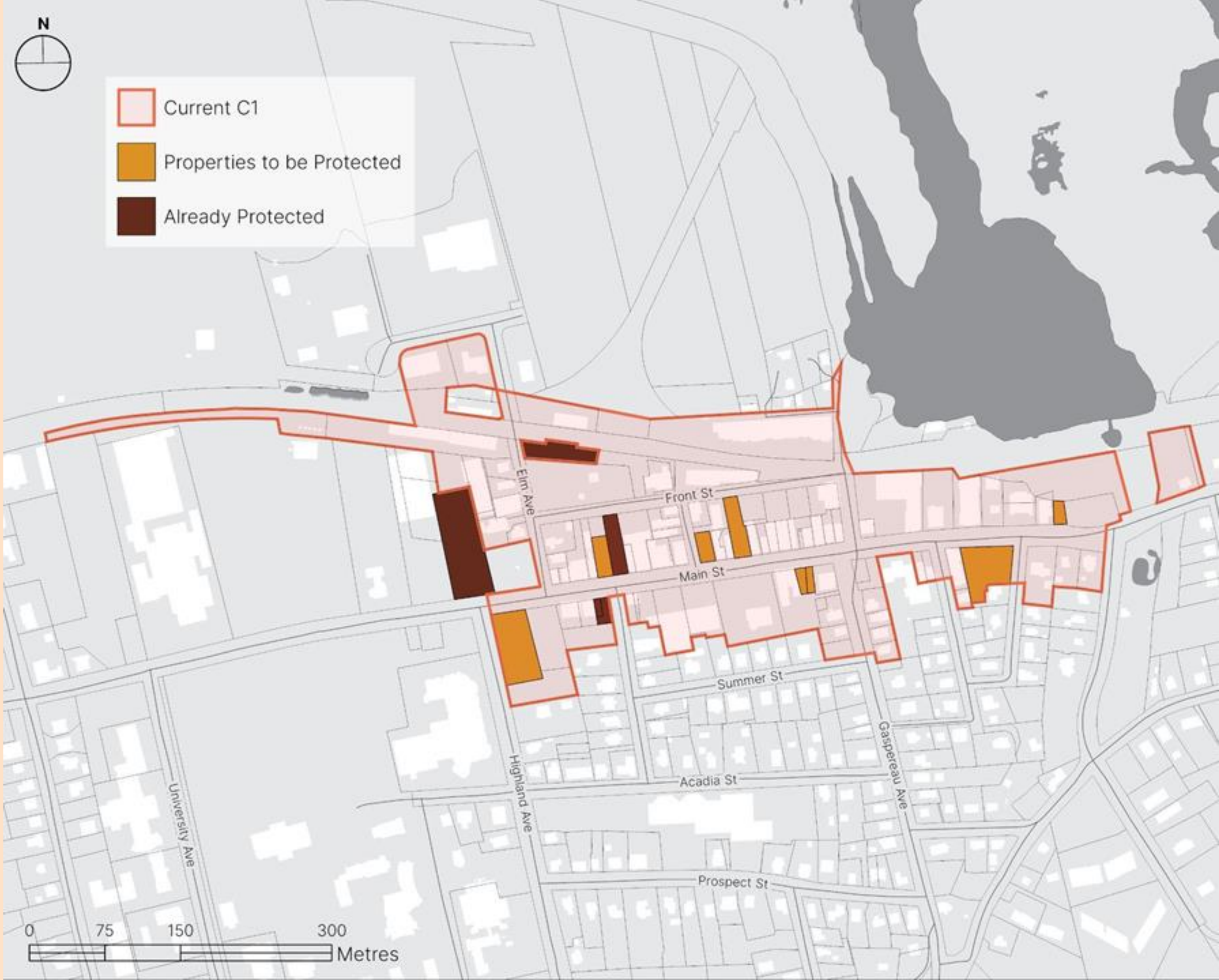


Question: “Which of the following strategies do you support? Select all that apply:”

Heritage Protections

Recommendation 1: Identify a the highest-value buildings for heritage protection. Protect them by:

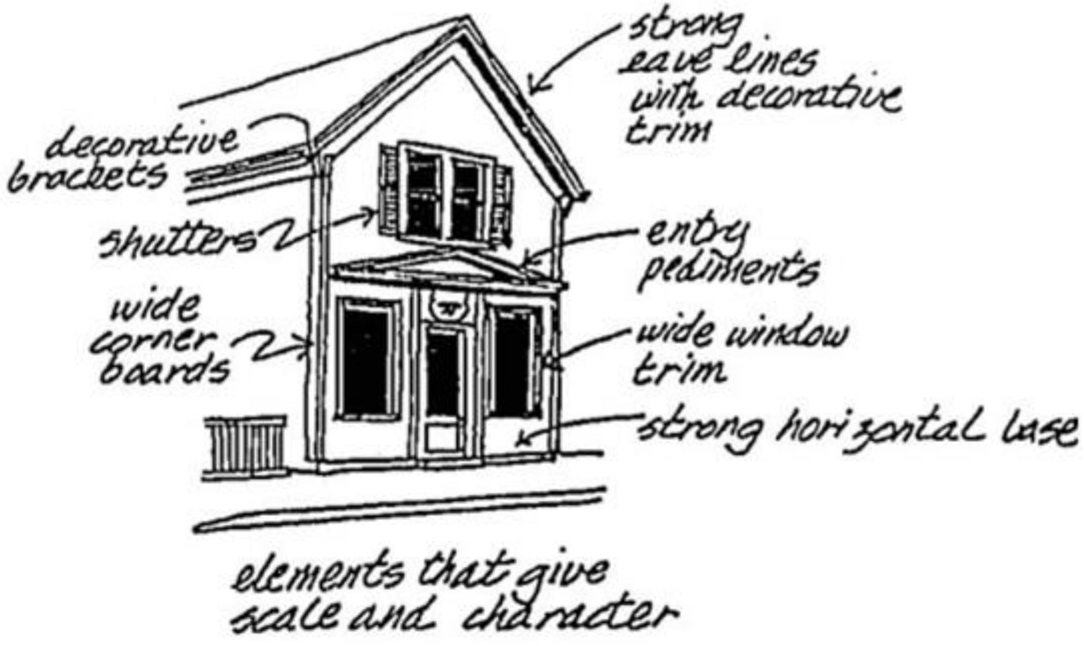
- Reducing height limits on these buildings to two storeys
- Allowing owners to apply for more height through a development agreement process that would preserve heritage elements, such as facades
- Encouraging owners to register properties



Character Protections

Recommendation 2: Use design requirements to preserve key components of the Main Street's character:

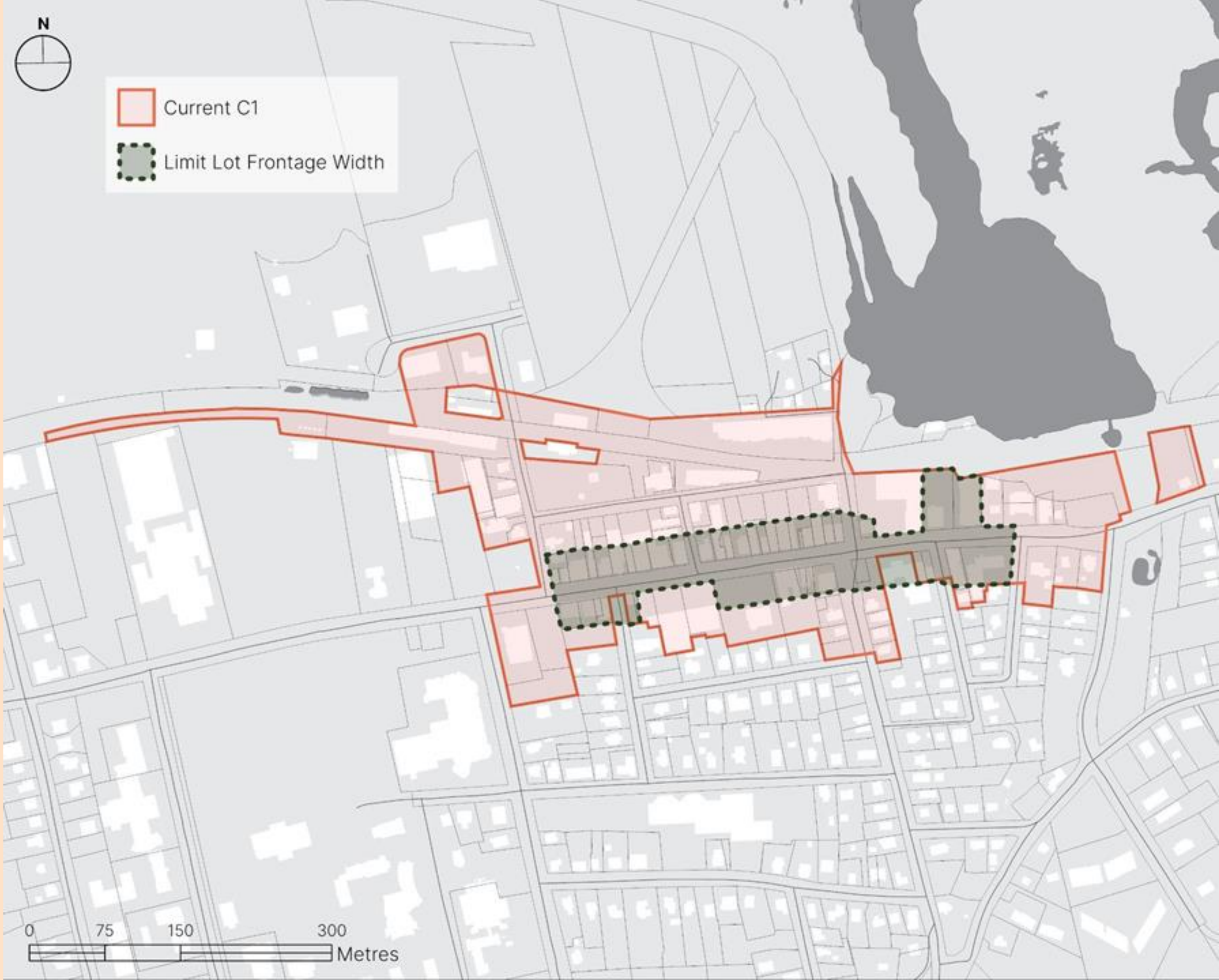
- Set a maximum width in the Land-Use Bylaw for commercial spaces, to maintain the street's historic visual diversity
- Review the Design Guidelines and approval process for opportunities to strengthen character protections



Maximum Lot Width

Recommendation 3: Continue reviewing legal feasibility of setting a maximum width for lots.

If this goes forward, maximum lot widths will be relatively permissive (e.g. ~100ft), preventing only very large projects that could greatly homogenize the street.



View Corridors

Recommendation 4:
Protected view corridors will be established:

1. From the northwest corner of Harbourview and Main Street looking at Blomidon

View Corridors

Recommendation 4:
Protected view corridors will be established:

1. From the northwest corner of Harbourview and Main Street looking at Blomidon
2. At Central Ave looking at farmland

View corridors will be protected via Design Guidelines to ensure flexibility.

Photo by Tristan Cleveland

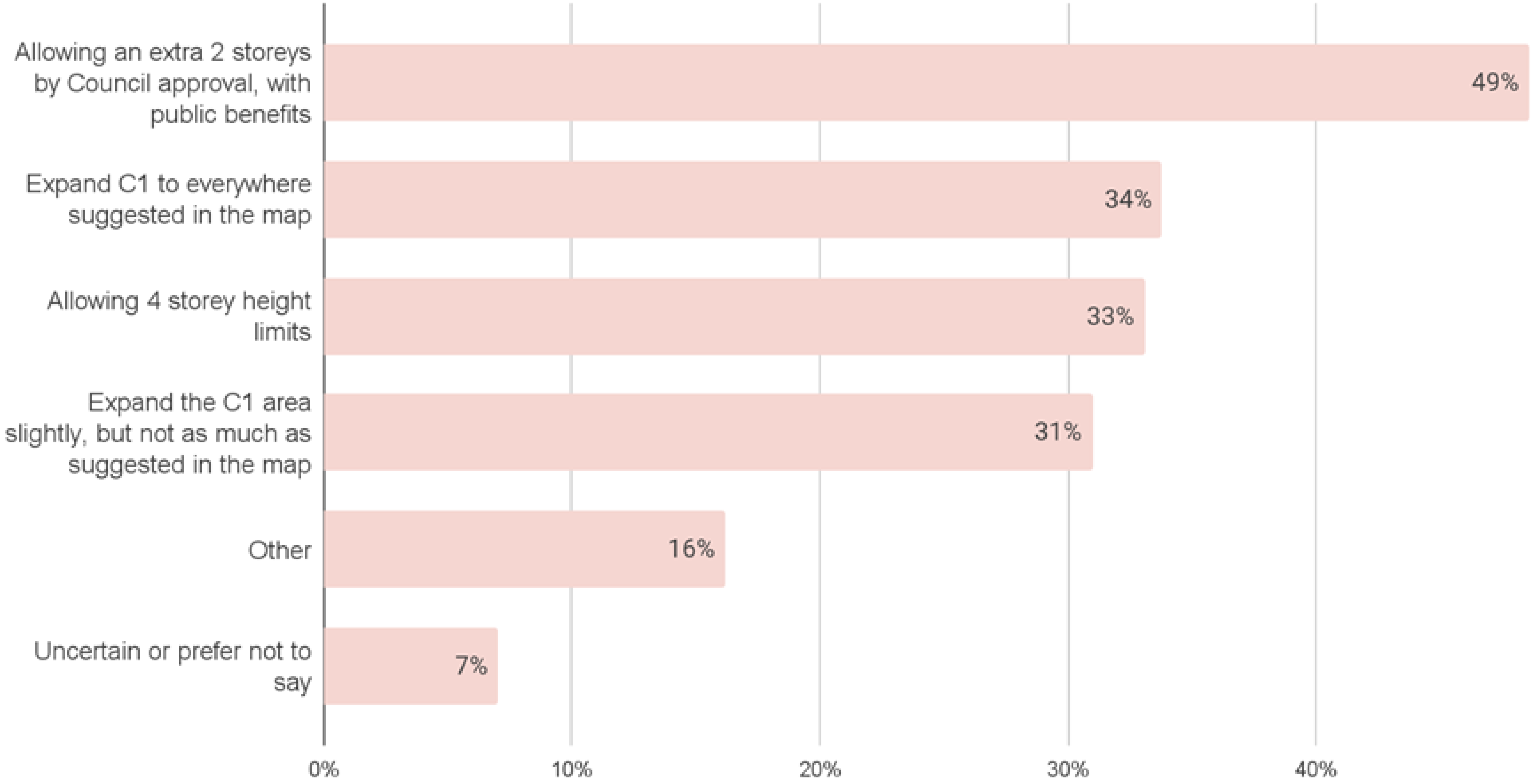
Downtown

Photo by Fathom

PAC Feedback on Downtown Growth

- Extend downtown zoning (C-1), but not to Locust and Seaview
- Do not establish excessively restrictive rules for growth in these new areas, but do encourage larger front yards than exist downtown
- Five- and six-storey height limits are too high for Main Street and Front Street
- Public benefit negotiations can be divisive

***HAF requirement**: “Amend bylaw to increase building height maximums in core area to encourage low-cardon, dense and affordable developments.”*



Question: “Which strategies would you support in Downtown Wolfville for meeting the Housing Accelerator Fund commitments to enabling more growth? Select all that apply:”

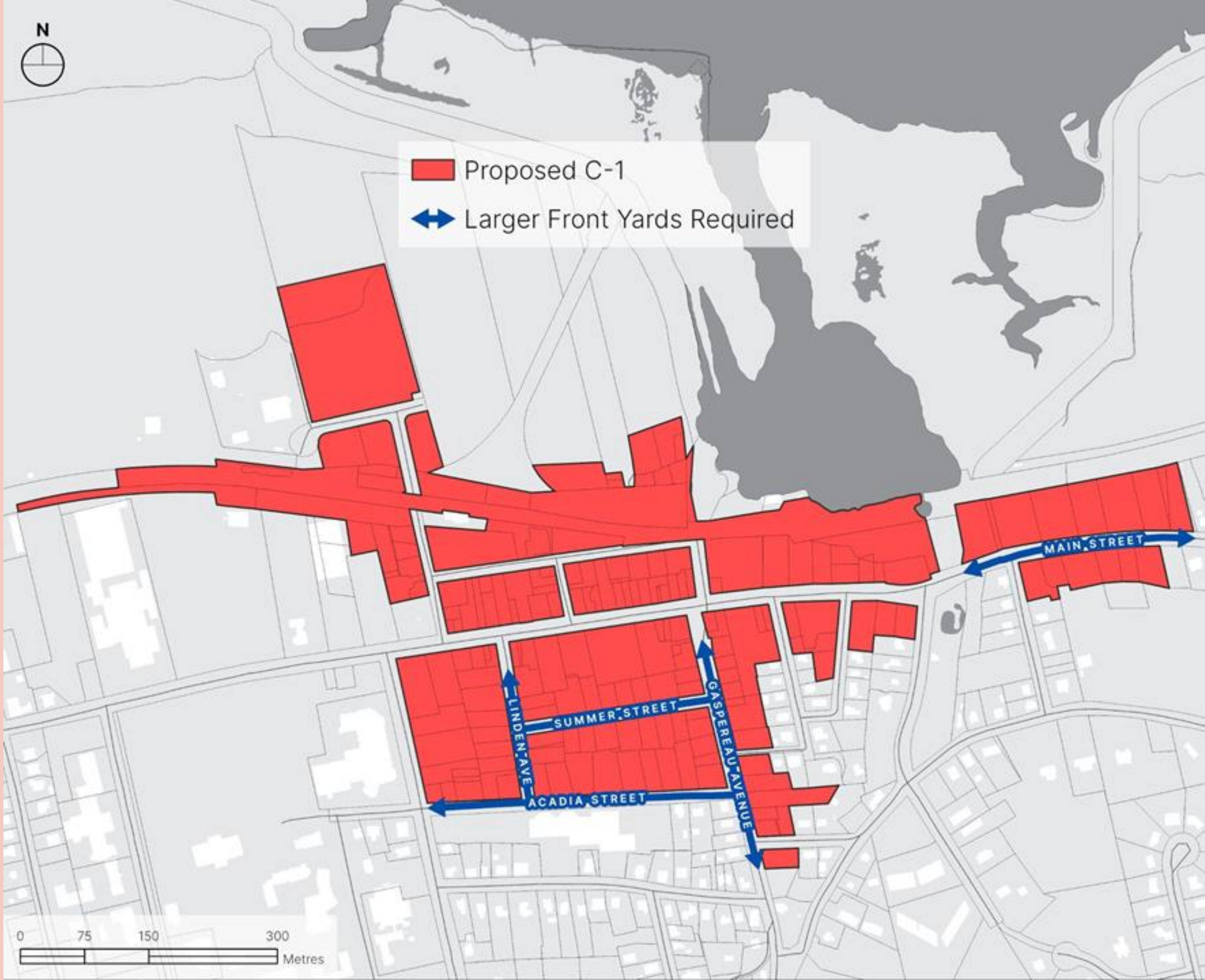
Downtown Growth

Recommendation 1: Extend the downtown zone (C-1):

- East along Main St
- Southward, to encompass Summer St, Linden Ave, Acadia St, and Gaspereau Ave (to Winter St)
- Northward to encompass properties behind Railtown
- To include the lands along the rail corridor

Extra Front Yard Setback Areas

Recommendation 2:
Require larger front-yard setbacks in new C-1 areas south and east (in green) so that new buildings line up with existing homes.



Height Limits

Recommendation 3: Set a maximum four-storey height limit in C-1.

Recommendation 4: Allow four-storey projects with site plan approval, not a development agreement, and achieve any desired public benefits through clear requirements, not a negotiation.

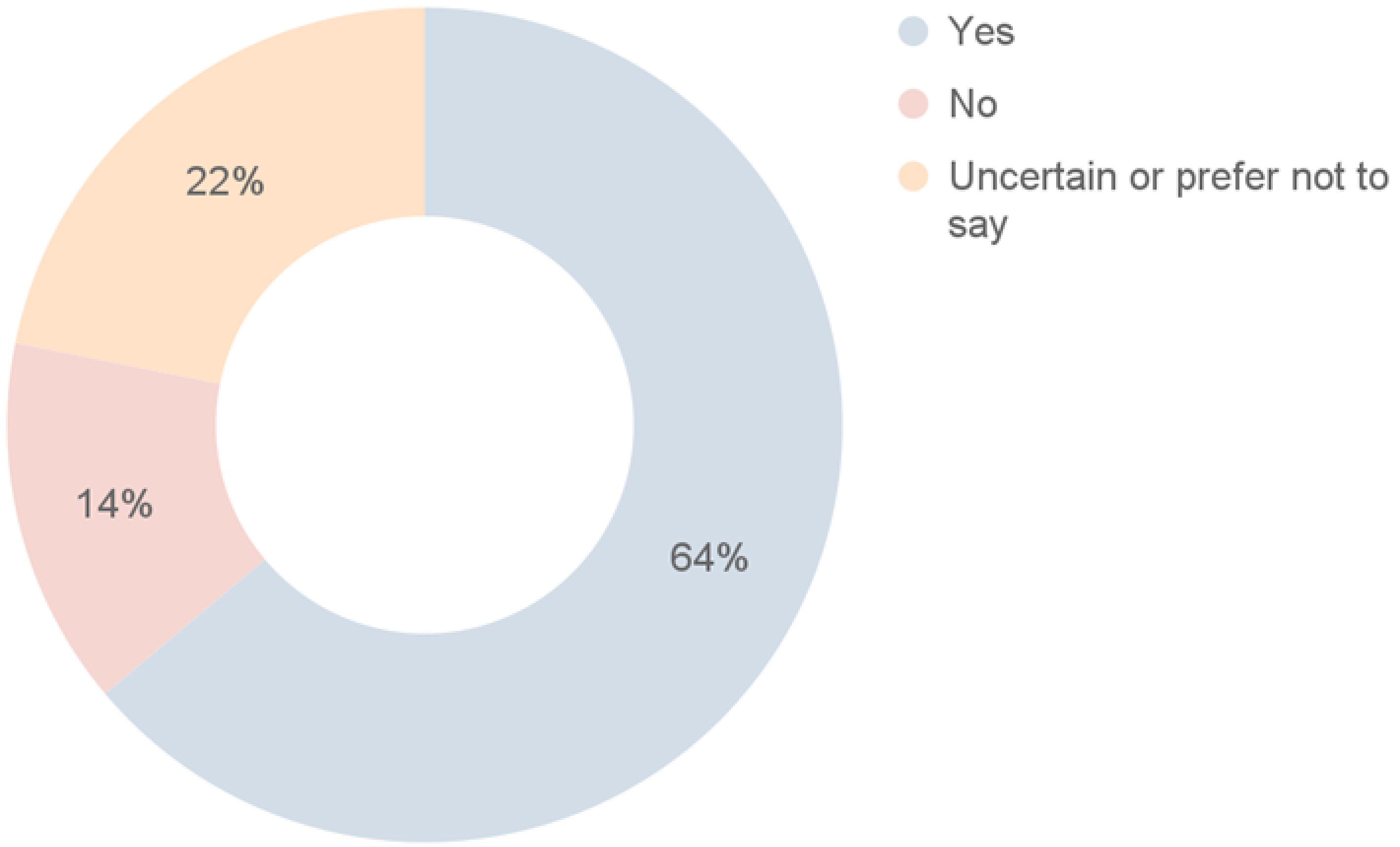
Recommendation 5: Allow six storeys by development agreement in two contexts:

- Areas marked purple (which are less visible in most of downtown)
- Projects that include a major non-market housing component


Parking
Photo by Happy Cities

PAC Feedback on Parking

- Support for creating a new public parking lot
- Adjust its design to avoid impacting the view from Central Ave
- Focus on making the parking lot narrow and green
- Support for reducing parking requirements



Survey results for the question: “Do you support the proposed location for parking, if a greater amount of farmland would be created north of Home Hardware?”

New Public Parking

Recommendation 1:
Conduct a land swap between existing farmland (circle 1) and Town-owned land north of Home Hardware (circle 2). Create new parking in circle 1 and new farmland in circle 2.

New Public Parking

Recommendation 2. Design the new parking to be long and narrow, and aim to make it less visible from Central Ave.

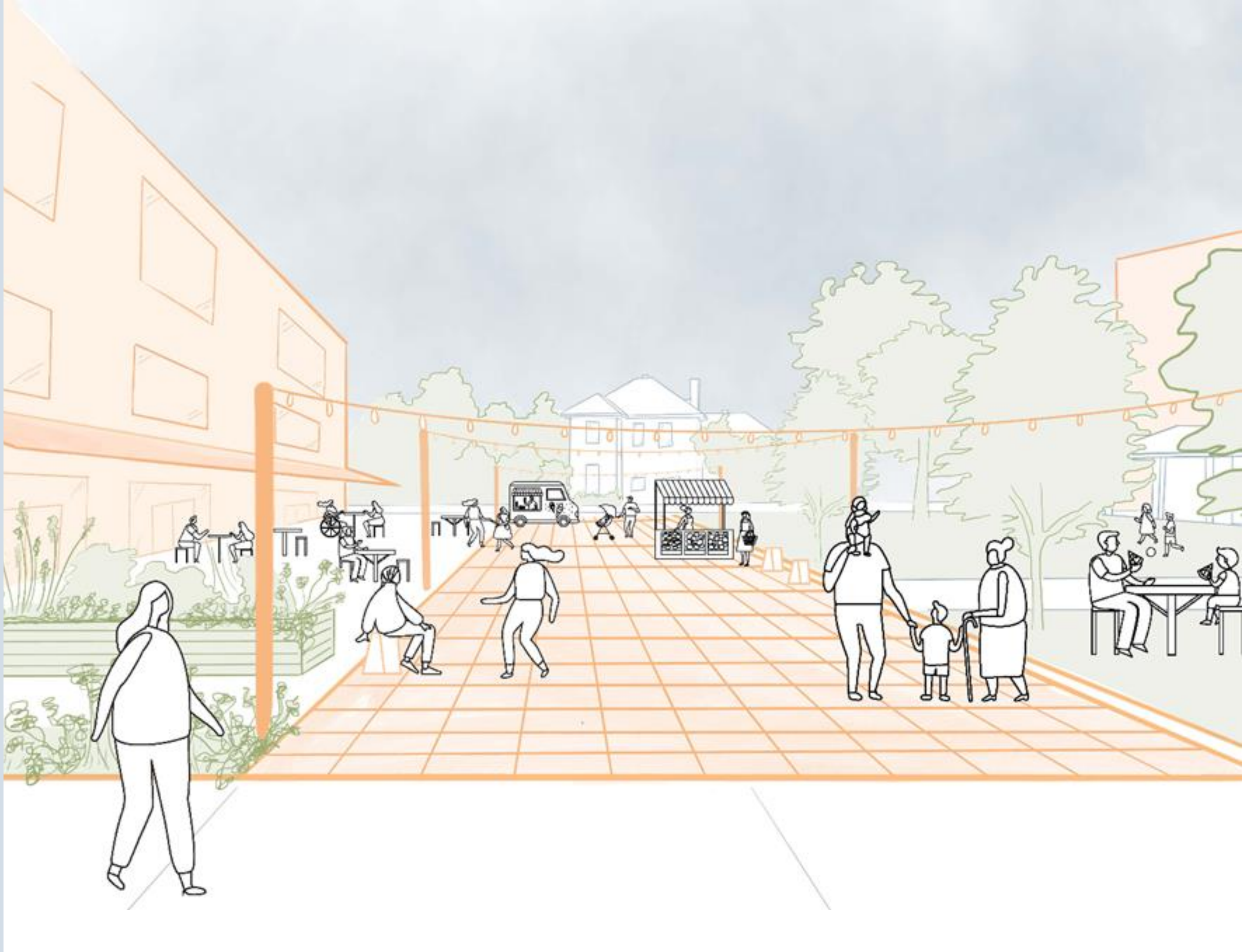
***Note**: The concept sketch opposite expresses early ideas. There are many options for how to lay this out during the detailed planning phase.*

Early Concept Sketch

Repurpose Front Street Parking

Recommendation 3: Repurpose publicly owned parking on Front St. for:

- Non-market housing with ground-floor commercial space
- Public outdoor space



Concept image for buildings and park in front of library, Happy Cities

Growth Incentives

Recommendation 4: Use financial incentives to encourage property owners to redevelop parking lots and other opportunity sites.

Specifically, reduce commercial property taxes for the first year after development, and slowly phase in property taxes over 10 years, using Bill 177.

Paid Parking

Recommendation 5: Implement paid parking downtown and on surrounding streets. Consider solutions to provide an efficient, appropriate price and to encourage turnover, such as variable-price parking (which changes in response to demand).

Recommendation 6: Offer free parking on the new public parking lot with:

- Prominent wayfinding to this parking lot.
- An excellent pedestrian path from this parking lot to Main Street.

Photo by Happy Cities

Downtown Improvement Fund

Recommendation 7: Use funds from paid parking for a Downtown Improvement Fund and establish a program for yearly placemaking investments using this fund, collaborating with local businesses and residents.

Sketch of Central Ave., Happy Cities

Parking Management

Recommendation 8: Manage Town parking with the following strategies:

- Establish parking enforcement
- Collaborate with Acadia University to align pricing and parking strategy
- Explore options to manage parking impacts on residential streets, such as permit parking

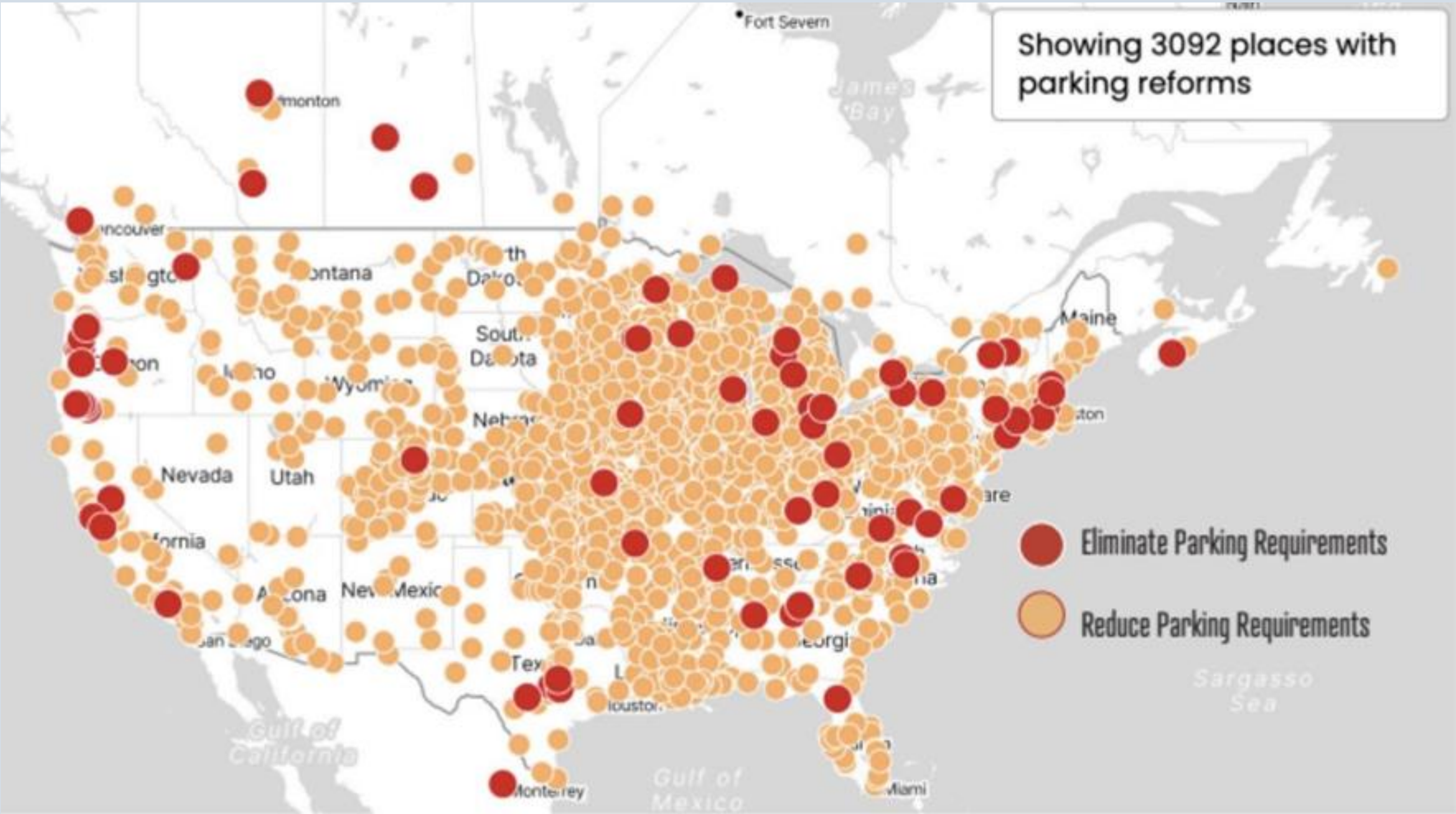
Photo by Happy Cities

Parking Requirements

Recommendation 9: Eliminate parking requirements for new buildings and businesses.

Explanation: *Eliminating parking requirements will have the same impact as reducing them: Most developers will still provide parking. Eliminating requirements is preferred because:*

- *It is administratively much simpler, compared to providing exemptions for projects with carshare or other mitigating factors, or creating area-specific rules.*
- *Developers are better positioned than the Town to predict how much parking a specific project will need.*
- *Simpler rules encourage greater investment.*



Parking Reform Network

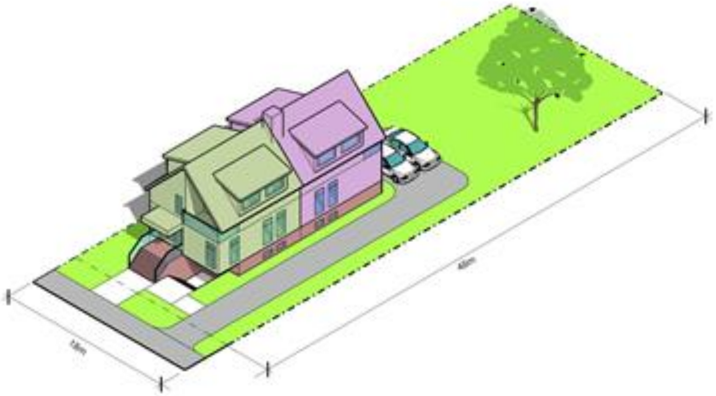
Neighbourhoods

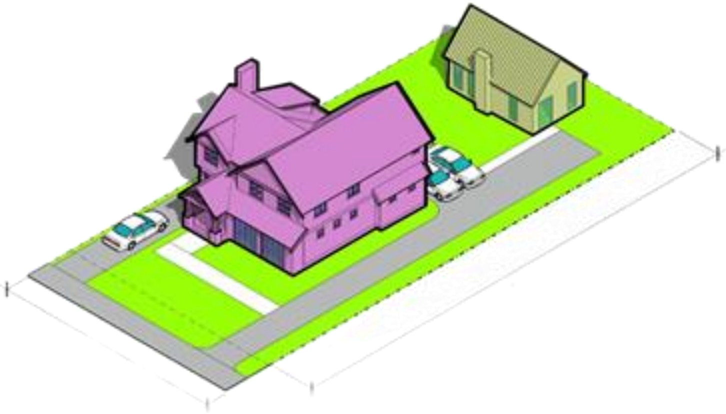
PAC Feedback on Neighbourhood Zoning

- Maintain R-1 Restricted zoning, but do allow two units in this zone
- Ensure backyard suites are smaller than the main unit
- Keep things simple by not using too many overlays
- No objections to medium and high-density residential zones

***HAF requirement**: “amend R1 to a zone that permits more than 1 unit as-of-right to a max of 4. Amend approval processes for as-of-right, site plan and DAs to streamline process for missing middle housing. Rezone strategic properties to ensure maximum yield in key locations. Identify areas near campus suitable for multi-unit dwellings and zone accordingly.”*

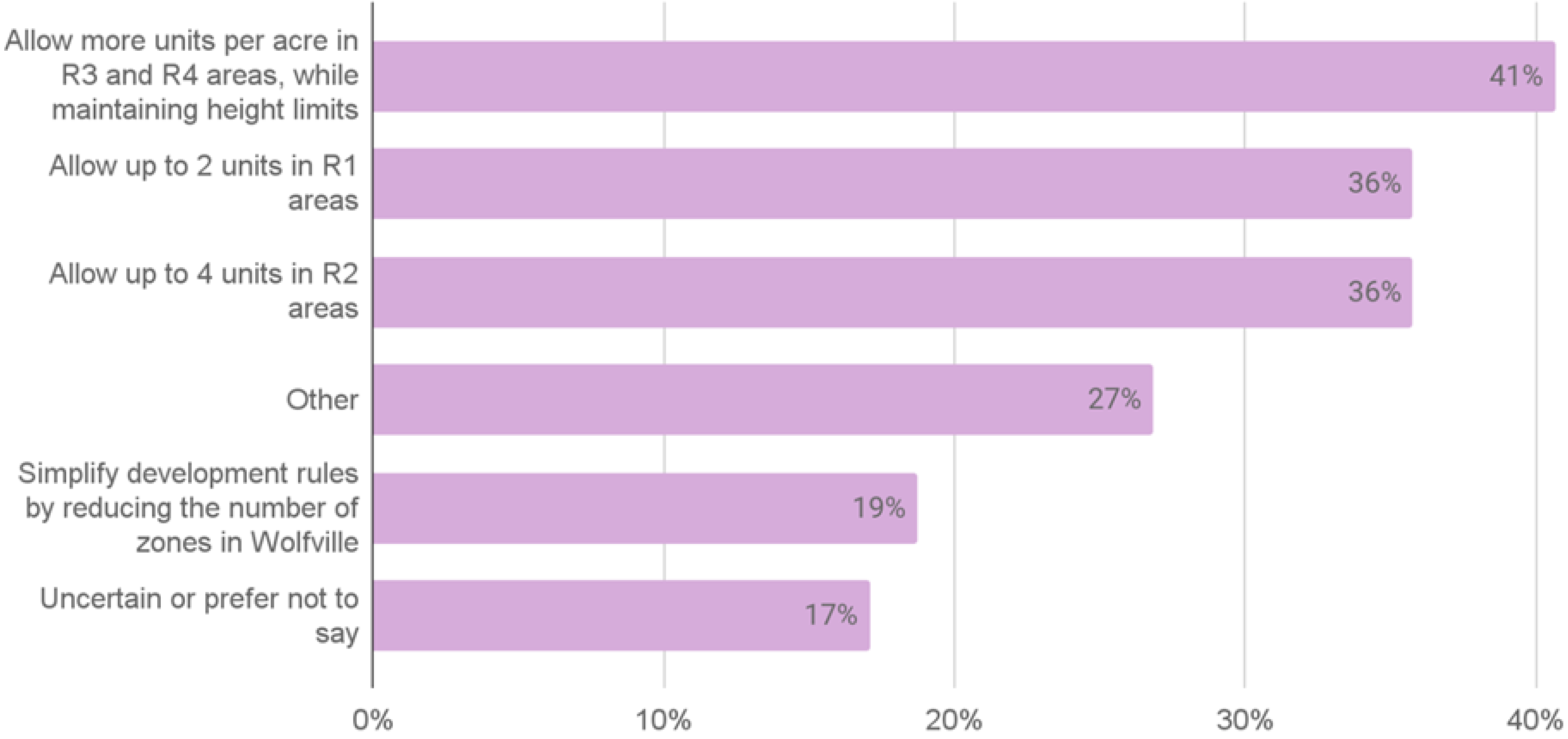
Residential Low Density (RL) - Restricted





Residential Low Density (RL)

Neighbourhood Growth

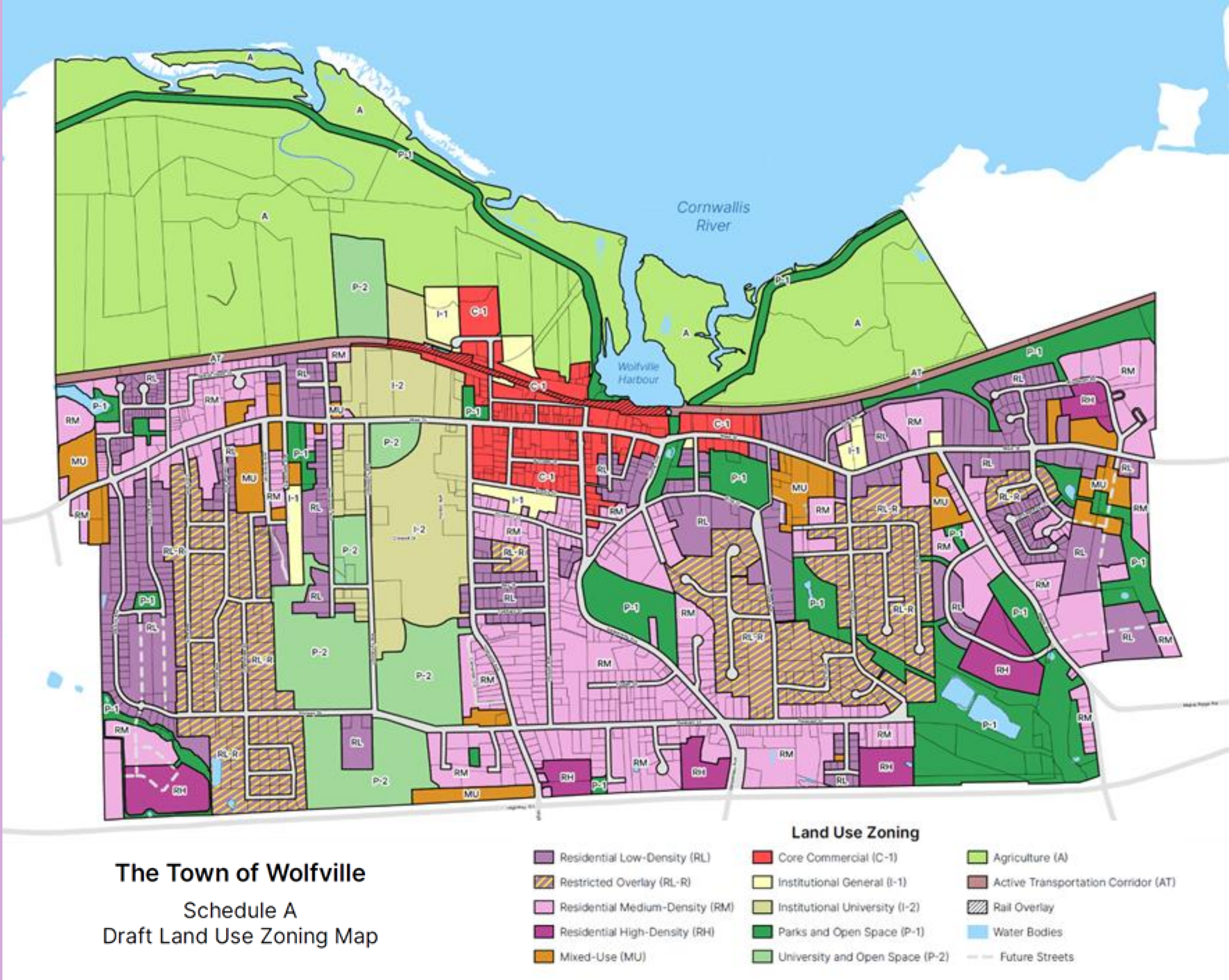


Question: “Which of the following strategies do you support to enable more growth in residential areas in Wolfville to meet the Town’s Housing Accelerator Fund commitments? Select all that apply:”

Neighbourhood Zoning

Recommendation 1: Simplify residential zones to three categories:

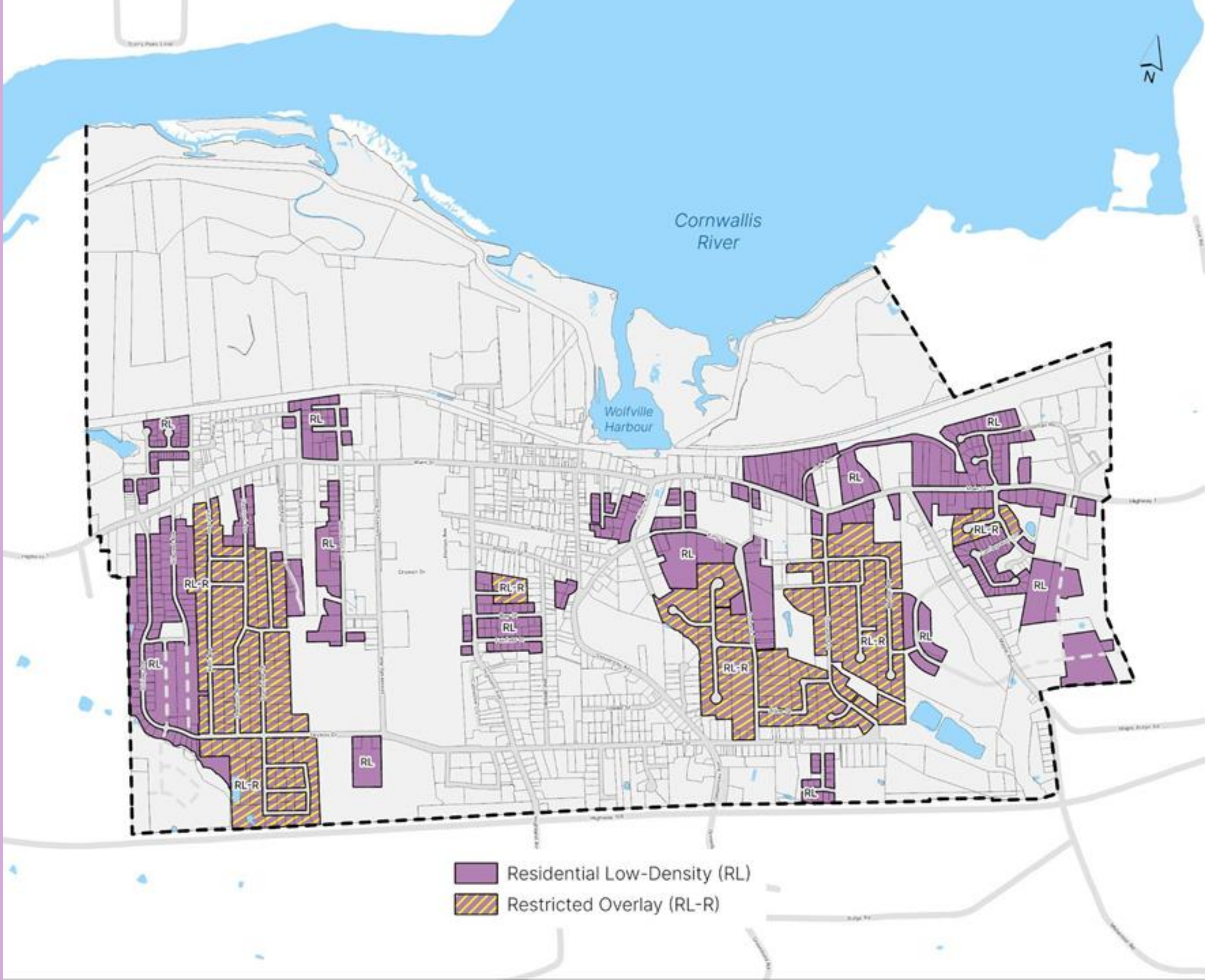
- Residential Low-Density
- Residential Medium-Density
- Residential High-Density



Neighbourhood Zoning

Recommendation 2: Create a "Residential Restricted" overlay for areas currently zoned R-1 Restricted. It reduces the number of units allowed from 4 to 2, but has no other effect.

***Note:** All properties currently in R-1 Restricted are now in the new Restricted Overlay.*



Medium- and High-Density Residential

Recommendation 3: Combine R3, R4, and R-LR into a single new Residential Medium-Density Zone.

Recommendation 4: Create a few Residential High-Density areas on large properties along the edge of Town limits to encourage growth where it will have limited impact on existing residential areas.

Recommendation 5: Explore strategies to encourage courtyard housing on large lots.

Neighbourhood Zoning

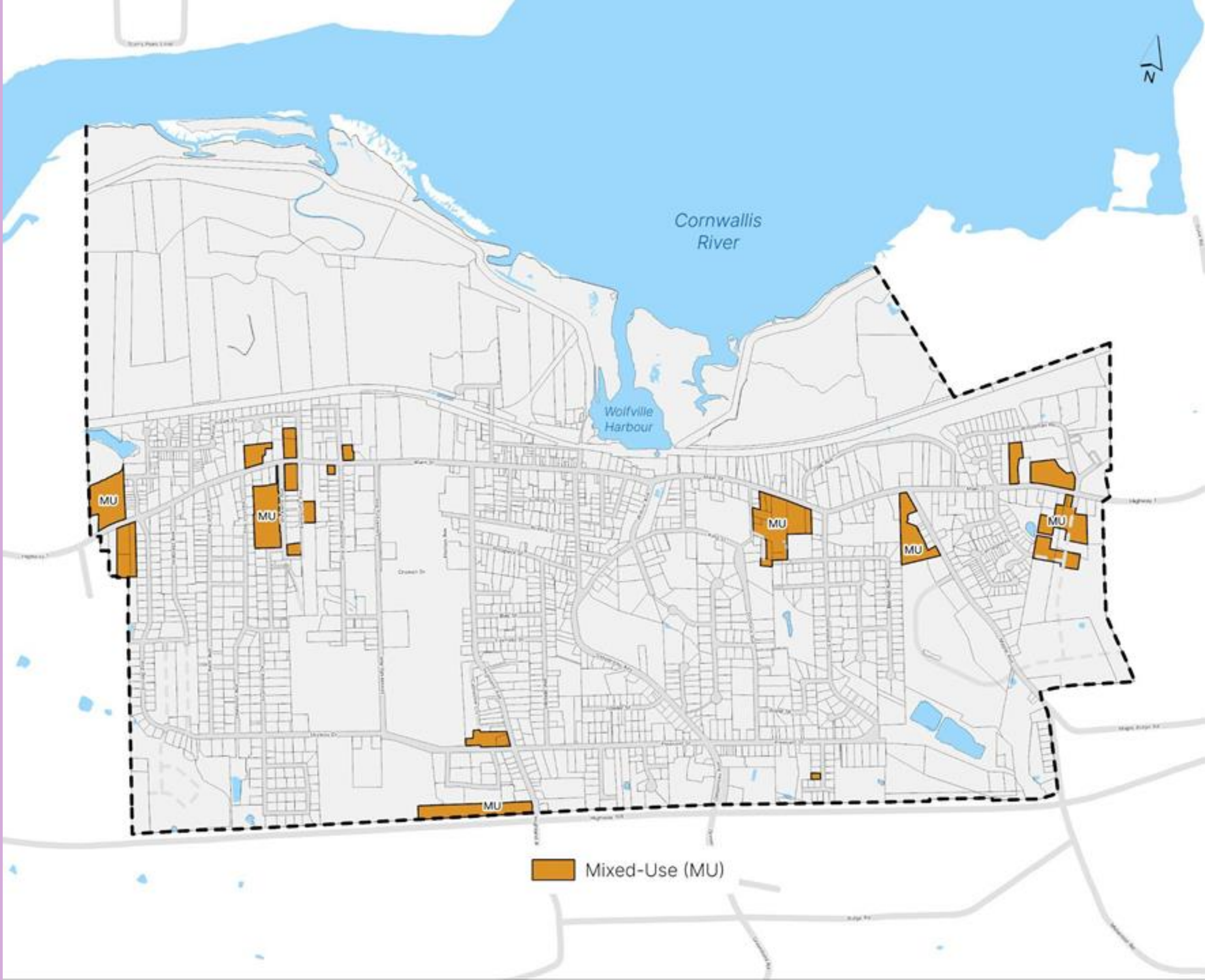
Recommendation 6: Update the number of units allowed in each zone as indicated in the chart.

	Existing Zones	R1	R-LD4	R2	R3	R4	R-LR	R-MDU
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

	Proposed Zones	RL-R	RL	RM	RH
	Combined into:	R1	R-LD4, R2	R3, R4, R-LR	R-MDU
Proposed	As-of-Right	2 units	4 units	8 units	
	Site Plan		8 units	60 units	120 units
	Dev. Agreement			80 units	150 units

Mixed-Use Zone

Recommendation 6: Replace all C-2 areas (outside downtown) with the Mixed-Use Zone, and consider adjustments to the zone to enable smaller-scale development.

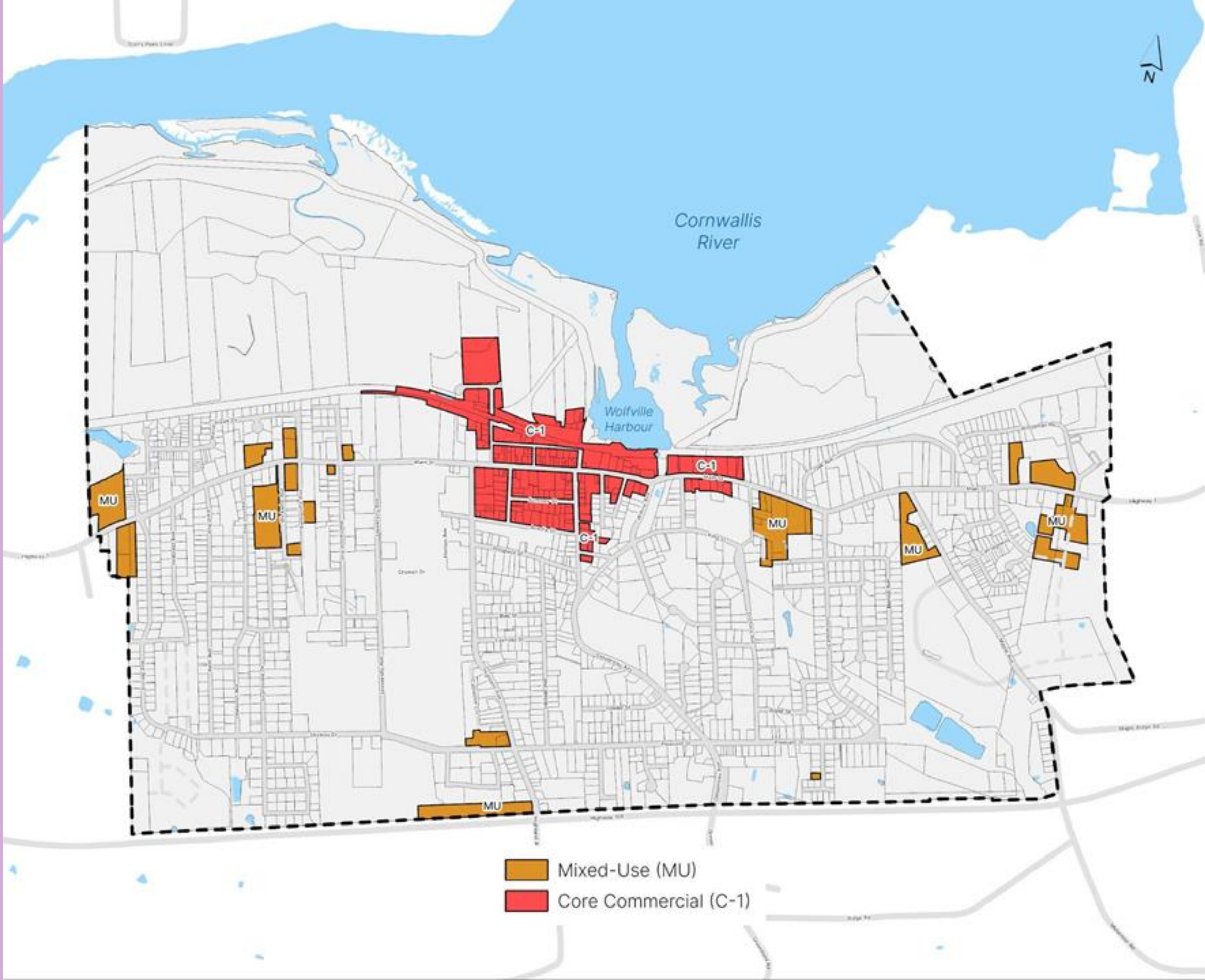


Short-Term Rentals

Recommendation 8: Enable full-time short-term rental units in the newly expanded Core-Commercial (C-1) and Mixed-Use (MU) zones.

Recommendation 7: Allow short-term rental rooms (subject to restrictions) in all areas, so long as they:

- Are in homes where the main occupant lives full time
- Are not full units



Next Steps

The project team will next present these recommendations to Town Council. If Council supports the recommendations, the project team will develop detailed proposed amendments to planning documents and the Land-Use Bylaw. The project team will then hold another round of public engagement in the Fall to solicit feedback on the proposed changes. The goal is to seek Council approval on these changes by the end of 2025.

Photo by Happy Cities