

Meeting Notes

New Minas Secondary Planning Strategy (SPS)
Working Group Draft Review
2022.01.20, 6:30pm to 9:00pm
Online (Zoom)

1. Opening

2. Project Update

- » Transportation Study is complete and will be discussed as later item on agenda
- » Today is intended to review the draft of the Secondary Plan
- » Next steps:
 - Edits arising from Working Group comments
 - Public engagement on draft
 - Edits to draft arising from engagement
 - Return to Working Group to present final draft and discuss any remaining policy questions
 - Formal adoption process
- » Engagement process for draft is currently undetermined due to current public health restrictions; UPLAND currently developing an engagement plan in response

3. Final Transportation Study

- » The Phase 2 Transportation Study uses the model developed in Phase 1
- » Looks at current challenges in the transportation network, impact of growth that is already expected, and impact of growth from the preferred development scenario for New Minas South
- » Includes 10 recommended improvements to the existing transportation network at an estimated cost of \$14.6 million (+ land costs, engineering, taxes, and inflation)
- » Includes a conceptual layout for collector road network in New Minas South, at an estimated cost of \$28.8 million (+ land costs, engineering, taxes, and inflation)
- » Includes specific recommendations for improving access management on Commercial Street, and broader policy suggestions for encouraging sharing of commercial driveways to reduce number of access points

- » UPLAND provided an overview of the draft Secondary Plan structure and content as outlined in the summary document circulated to the Working Group
- » Q: Would the policy requiring daylighting of stream under the County Fair Mall require the whole stream be daylighted? What about vehicular access, etc.?
 - A: Yes, as currently worded it may risk that interpretation. We will refine the wording.
- » Comment: it may be worth requiring sidewalks on **both** sides of new streets in New Minas
- » Question: Is the Ready Mix concrete plant still operating?
 - A: No.
- » Q: How does the flood area align with the property that is proposed to switch from industrial to residential zoning?
 - A: The Environmentally Sensitive Areas Overlay, which recognizes potential flood areas, runs along the back of the property, leaving most of it outside of the higher development restrictions that are present in flood potential areas.
- » Q: Is it realistic to require 75% of the property owners within a phase of New Minas South to come together to initiate a development agreement process? Is this standard elsewhere?
 - A: HRM has used this approach in West Bedford and Hammonds Plains area. It will indeed either require good cooperation, or one major party to buy up a large chunk of the land. Looking at the land ownership patterns in New Minas South, there is already a fair bit of consolidation.
- » Q: Would it be reasonable to go with a lower percentage? It would be a shame to see development impossible because the landowners can't get together to agree.
 - A: Ideally not. It's really important with New Minas South to think about infrastructure holistically, which does require people to collaborate. E.g. stormwater infrastructure that serves much of the area is going to end up on the lands lower down the hill, so there needs to be collaboration there. Worst case, if development is halted by disagreement among landowners then Council could considering amending the Plan to change the 75% requirement.
- » Q: If we go with this comprehensive approach to development, how will that affect people who just want to develop on one lot? What kind of burden will that put on them?
 - A: The idea is that the comprehensive approach would address the "skeleton" of the development, establishing services, etc. and then development of individual homes etc. would occur through a basic permit process.
- » Q: How is the 75% requirement calculated? Is it by the number of owners? Number of lots? Something else?
 - A: It would be calculated by land area. So you would need owners who represent 75% of the land area within a phase to come together to initiate the development agreement process.

4. Draft Overview

Draft Overview cont'd

- » Q: One of the development agreement consideration criteria is that “the Municipality and Village are not responsible for infrastructure development costs”. Do we want to be that specific and restrictive? What if there is an opportunity for the Municipality or Village to contribute and get a piece of infrastructure that would not otherwise be developed? An example is the sidewalk that was built with the Granite Drive Interchange.
 - Comment: Discussions are ongoing between Province and municipalities about responsibilities, so we should monitor the outcome of that; it may affect how we approach infrastructure.
 - A: Good point. This is something we will look at to see if we can word it so standard or core infrastructure is provided at no cost to Municipality and Village, but that those entities can choose to pay for enhancements where the opportunities arise.
- » Q: Who will be responsible for the parkland? Will the owners be expected to give it to the Municipality or Village?
 - A: Parkland would be public. Some of it would be acquired through the parkland dedication required during the subdivision process, and some of it could be proactively purchased by the Municipality.

5. Draft Review

- » The Working Group walked through the document page-by-page to make comments and suggestions on specific content.
- » Comment: On page 2 it states “the Secondary Plan supplements” the Municipal Planning Strategy. Is it not part of it?
 - Response: Correct. We will clarify that wording.
- » Comment: Sent suggestions for minor improvements to the Guiding Principles to UPLAND and Councillor Winsor.
 - Response: They were good suggestions and do not change intent, so if no one has any objections UPLAND can just make those changes [no objections].
- » Q: In early concepts we used terms “mixed use intensification” and “high density mixed use”. What did those mean and where are they in the draft now?
 - A: Yes, we used those broad terms to give a suggestion of what was intended in early concepts without having to put too much thought into the specifics. The “mixed use intensification” has evolved into the series of tweaks to the C1 Zone and to wellfield restrictions that now make it easier and more attractive to develop along Commercial Street and to include a residential component. The “higher density mixed use” evolved into the development agreement policies that we applied to the County Fair Mall.
- » Q: In terms of landscaping, is there any contemplation for native species plantings or for using plantings for stormwater management?
 - A: The stormwater component is already captured in the Municipality’s existing Municipal Planning Strategy, but we had not yet considered having requirements or guidance for native species plantings. It is something we will consider.

Draft Review cont'd

- » Q: Can you explain the “Urban Structure Map”. Is that zoning?
 - A: No, not exactly. New Minas South is intended to get developed through a development agreement process in which developers propose the layout and mix of uses they want to build. The Urban Structure Map indicates, broadly, the range of densities and uses that the Municipality might consider acceptable within different areas of New Minas South.
- » Q: The “High Density Mixed Use” on the Urban Structure Map - does that require something similar to Commercial Street, with commercial on the ground floor and residential above?
 - A: Not exactly. As written, it would not *require* a commercial component. Rather, both commercial and residential are permitted, with an encouragement to have both.
 - Comment: Staff is concerned about being too strong about *requiring* commercial, because if there is not enough demand it can discourage or prevent any development.
 - Comment: Concern about “leap-frog” development where a block of pure residential gets built and new commercial needs to be built on the other side, away from existing commercial.
 - Response: One of the intentions behind requiring comprehensive planning via development agreement is to look at the layout for a phase of New Minas South holistically and avoid that kind of outcome.
 - Comment: Recollection of previous discussion is that the intention to create a large area of land that could accommodate commercial, but still have flexibility if developers see a need for residential.
- » Q: What are the limitations within the zones permitted within the High Density Mixed Use urban structure? Can someone build a detached home?
 - Upon review, yes, some of those zones would allow things like detached homes. We will refine this because this is not likely the best use of this land.
- » Q: On the “Lower Density Residential” category within the urban structure, is there provision in there for medium density along higher-volume roads?
 - Yes. Early development concepts that we produced specifically showed areas for medium density, but now that we have the concept road layout from the Transportation Study we saw that there were more opportunities, and wanted to have more flexibility for developers to place medium density development where they think it would be appropriate. The policy guidance for the Lower Density Residential urban structure category enables consideration of medium density residential development in these areas.
- » Q: Do both the General Commercial and Highway Commercial categories include the ability to build a recreation facility?
 - A: Yes, they do. Actually, on review of the zoning in New Minas most of the zones that apply anywhere where a recreational facility would be appropriate do allow that type of use.
- » Q: Would the General Commercial category enable something like a Costco?
 - A: Yes. Something like that could also be considered in the High Density Mixed Use category.

Draft Review cont'd

- » Q: Is the language about “landowners coming together to present a vision for their lands” specific to New Minas South?
 - A: Yes, that's for New Minas South and is carried out through the policy about land owners representing 75% of the land.
- » Q: Policy 4.7.6(c) regarding the Village reviewing development agreement applications in relation to infrastructure - does this cause any issues for areas that are in the Growth Centre but not the Village?
 - A: No, this is specific to New Minas South. The intention is to allow the Village to do things like flag the need for a new water tower, and ensure the appropriate lands are set aside or acquired to meet those needs.
- » Comment: Six stories as a maximum height seems high for this community, we should make sure we highlight this and get feedback when we go out to public consultation.
- » Q: What about streetlights? Should we put anything in the By-law about them?
 - Comment: Yes, that does seem like an important consideration.
 - Comment: You can see the contrast in Coldbrook between neighbourhoods that have them and those that do not.
 - A: We will look into this as a policy consideration.
- » Comment: “Practicable” typo on page 12.
- » Comment: The approach to industrial land is good.
- » Comment: The consolidation of the two proposed regional parks at the south end of New Minas South into one large one is good.
- » Comment: Good to see proposed active transportation connections into the Elderkin Brook Ravine.
- » Q: Kings County just made policy changes that allow for solar panels in back yards, but it allows up to 20 feet, which seems high. Should we change that?
 - A: Staff position is that 20 feet is the standard for all accessory structures, so someone could build a garage of a similar height, and we should not treat them differently.
 - Clarification from Staff: The recent policy change did not actually change the permitted height or where solar panels are permitted; they have been permitted in back yards up to 20 feet in height since the 2019 adoption of the new planning documents. The recent changes were in regard to the maximum size (area) of the panels; the existing rules had a maximum size of 215 square feet but this was too small for most commercially-available systems, so this was increased.
- » Q: The zone standards table has a maximum front setback of 25 feet, but, for example, my house has a front setback of 50 feet. Will this cause problems?
 - A: The zone standards table attached to the draft Secondary Plan is specific to the General Commercial (C1) Zone, which is the primary zone for Commercial Street. We would not have maximum front setbacks in other zones.
- » Q: Does this cause issues for fire fighting? If an aerial truck is used is there room to get in and avoid power wires?
 - A: In addition to meeting the Land Use By-law, new construction also has to meet Fire Code, which takes into account fire fighting access.

6. Adjournment

- » Next step is to make any edits and then hold public engagement. This will include an online component, and then will need to figure out an in-person component that can align with public health restrictions.
- » Comment: Happy to see frequent reference in the draft to Guiding Principles and Key Directions.
- » Comment: Generally pleased with the document.
- » Comment: Will want to give some thought to how New Minas South connects to Forsythe Road South; there are some concerns within the neighbourhood
- » Chair Jim Winsor tendered his resignation as Chair and as a member of the Working Group

Related Topic List

Over the course of the Working Group meetings and discussions a number of topics related to development and community life in New Minas have arisen. Some of these topics will be addressed later in the secondary planning process as we get into finer details, while others are outside the scope of a secondary plan but are nonetheless important and may be suitable priorities for future work in New Minas. This list captures these items so that they are not forgotten at later stages of the project. It will be updated each meeting to add anything new that was discussed. Items that have now been discussed are ~~strikethrough~~, new additions are **bold**.

- Stormwater management
- ~~Recreational facilities~~
- ~~School facilities~~
- Vending
- Promoting New Minas
- ~~Source water protection~~
- Crosswalk safety
- Collector road
- ~~Underground power lines~~
- ~~Pedestrian connection across Highway 101~~
- Affordable housing
- **Forsythe Road South**