



# What We Heard

## Preliminary Report

March 2021

**UPLAND**





What We Heard  
Preliminary Report  
March 2021

All rights reserved, 2021.

This report was prepared by  
UPLAND Planning and Design.

# Section 1: Community Engagement

---



# Contents

- 1.1 What We Did
- 1.2 Executive Summary
  - 1.2.1 Major Themes
  - 1.2.2 Secondary Themes
- 1.3 Survey Results
  - 1.3.1 Survey Demographics
  - 1.3.2 Survey Results & Discussion
- 1.4 Stakeholder Results
- Appendix

PHOTO OF ENGAGEMENT TO BE ADDED  
ONCE IN-PERSON IS POSSIBLE

**N.b.: This report is a preliminary report that covers engagement efforts to 2021.03.08. It will be updated as additional project engagement activities occur.**

## 1.1 What We Did

The project team used a variety of methods to engage with the public and stakeholder groups over the past four months:

- » Working Group
- » Advertising and webpage
- » Online public launch
- » Surveys (Housing, Business and Vision Surveys)
- » Social Pinpoint
- » Stakeholder interviews
- » Technical study engagements
- » Written submissions

### 1.1.1 Working Group

The orderly implementation of the New Minas Secondary Plan Project (“Vision New Minas”) is guided by the Working Group. From an engagement perspective, this group helped develop the Engagement Strategy, identified potential stakeholders, promoted the project in the community, and helped encourage community members to provide feedback. The Working Group will review the results of the engagement efforts and use these results to inform policy direction for the Secondary Plan.

The Working Group is made up of two members of Council, three Village Commissioners, and six citizen members. A seventh citizen position is currently vacant. The members of the Working Group are:

- » Jim Winsor (Chair)
- » Emily Lutz
- » Dave Chaulk
- » Mary Munroe
- » James Redmond
- » Michelle Coleman
- » Temma Frecker
- » John Owen
- » Mark Redmond
- » Jaison Sandhu
- » John Sutcliffe

The group has held six meetings since August, 2020.

### 1.1.2 Advertising and Webpage

The project team established a webpage ([www.visionnewminas.ca](http://www.visionnewminas.ca)) to act as the central hub for project information and materials.

The overall project was advertised with a postcard delivered to every residential address in New Minas. The Municipality of the County of Kings (“Municipality”) advertises individual project events on their municipal Facebook page. Both the Municipality and Village include project information on their websites.

The project team also keeps an email list and notifies interested people of project events via this list.

### 1.1.3 Online Public Launch

The project team hosted a public project launch on November 17, 2020. This event occurred online, on Zoom, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The project team gave a presentation on the project and then hosted a question-and-answer session. A recording of the presentation and a summary of the Q&A discussion are available on the project webpage for people who were unable to attend.

### 1.1.4 Surveys

The project team created three online surveys and made them available to the public from November, 2020 to January, 2021: one focused on housing (“Housing Survey”), one for business owners (“Business Survey”) and a third that looked at the overarching vision for New Minas moving forward (“Vision Survey”). These surveys received 83, 13 and 141 respondents respectively. A fourth survey, focused on Urban Design and Active Transportation, was conducted by the sub-consultant conducting the associated technical study (see below).

### 1.1.5 Social Pinpoint

Social Pinpoint is an online engagement platform that allows users to place “pins” on a map of their community to identify opportunities and challenges in a given area. The three categories for comment were: Commercial Uses, Housing, and Active Transportation & Open Space – complementing the feedback obtained through the surveys with georeferenced (map based) commentary.

### 1.1.6 Stakeholder Interviews

Within New Minas there are a number of stakeholders who have topic-specific input or would be specifically affected by various aspects of the Secondary Plan. These include local community groups, social service providers, environmental groups, Village staff, neighbouring municipalities, municipal and provincial departments, business owners, and landowners in the expansion lands south of

Highway 101. The project team reached out to these stakeholders and hosted one-on-one or small group conversations over the phone or online video conferencing. As of 2021.03.08 the project team has spoken to 21 stakeholders and continues to follow up with stakeholders who have not yet responded. The full list of interviewees is in Appendix B.

### 1.1.7 Written Submissions

In addition to the structured engagement avenues the project team has accepted written and emailed submissions throughout the duration of the project. These are attached as Appendix C.

### 1.1.8 Technical Study Engagements

The Vision New Minas project is being supported by three technical studies covering Market Demand, Urban Design and Active Transportation, and Transportation. As part of these studies the consultants interviewed stakeholders relevant to their study subject areas. Additionally, the team for the Urban Design and Active Transportation study conducted an online survey and a series of online workshops. A summary of this survey and workshop results is available as a separate document.



# 1.2 Results Summary

The results of these engagement methods have been grouped into themes. Major themes were mentioned frequently by a range of people, in a variety of contexts, and across methods. Secondary themes garnered fewer mentions and had narrower range of contexts than major themes, but were still recurring.

The findings from these engagement methods are crucial information for the development of the New Minas Secondary Plan. Public input is particularly useful for:

- » Setting guiding principles, values and objectives
- » Understanding the needs of vulnerable or under-served groups
- » Determining priorities
- » Identifying new, creative opportunities

## 1.2.1 Major Themes

### Affordability

Across all engagement methods, affordability was the most widely discussed issue for New Minas. Affordable housing options, both from an ownership and rental perspective, were consistently mentioned. Over half of all respondents to the Housing Survey observed that housing was either somewhat difficult or very difficult to find, with many citing a lack of housing options suitable to their needs.

Business owners also flagged affordability as a major issue, many citing high property taxes, expensive utilities and high purchase cost/rent as barriers for maintaining or growing their businesses.

### Active Transportation & Open Space

Many respondents focused on active transportation and “greening” the streets as a major theme. Across all engagement methods, respondents were eager to see New Minas become a more walkable, bikeable community. Many pointed to the current design of Commercial Street as a major issue, from both a traffic and safety perspective. They also feel the current design makes for an unpleasant walking experience, which deters people from walking, contributing to ongoing traffic challenges.

Lack of sidewalks in subdivisions, as well as a lack of connectivity between neighbourhoods, were also brought up as challenges that residents would like to see addressed.

Residents overwhelmingly cited active transportation infrastructure and street beautification as an opportunity for the community and made the following suggestions:

- » Linking a new active transportation network within New Minas with existing trails in the area, like the Harvest Moon Trail
- » Creating picnic areas and trails in the undeveloped area south of the 101
- » Creating safe, walkable routes for children to access schools
- » More bicycle parking
- » More trees and green spaces to break up the paved areas along Commercial Street
- » More native vegetation (less grass)
- » Green corridors
- » Sidewalk connectivity

### **Accessibility & Inclusion**

Relating strongly to the theme of active transportation, many respondents described a lack of accessibility in the built environment and acknowledged a desire to make improvements to meet the needs of community members with disabilities and older adults. With 6% of respondents to the Visioning Survey self-identifying as a person with a disability, and residents over the age of 65 making up over a fifth of the local population, this is a considerable proportion of the population.

This was also a major theme that emerged in the Housing Survey with respondents expressing a need for more accessible housing options for people with disabilities and elderly residents, including single-level dwellings or ground level accessible housing units.

### **Redevelopment/Using Existing Commercial Space**

Another major theme that emerged was a desire among residents to see redevelopment of existing vacant commercial spaces. Many residents mentioned the vacancy rates in the mall as an issue, and expressed a desire to see these spaces occupied with local small businesses. There was also an emphasis on small business development as opposed to an influx of big box stores (with the exception of a Costco – which was mentioned often throughout the surveys as highly desired). Respondents of the Visioning Survey identified the presence of local businesses in New Minas as the greatest strength on which to build the future of the community. The abundant availability of parking and the presence of larger regional businesses also ranked highly as strengths that could be built upon.

In addition to commercial redevelopment, residential infill development was also noted as an opportunity to be explored.

## 1.2.2 Secondary Themes

### Traffic & Roads

Traffic and roads emerged as a secondary theme with many respondents noting that traffic on Commercial Street is often quite heavy and flow is sometimes slow. It was also noted that side roads, namely Crescent Drive, are receiving higher traffic volumes as people try to avoid Commercial Street, resulting in potential safety issues for pedestrians and cyclists.

Poor road conditions in subdivisions was also mentioned by multiple residents as an issue that they feel needs to be addressed.

### Building Regulation

Another secondary theme that emerged was building regulations, and the effects that they may have on community development. Some thoughts and suggestions included:

- » Increased residential planning in some areas to control development and design
- » Fewer duplexes, more condo/townhouse options
- » More high-density residential development
- » Better diversity of housing options to accommodate working class families
- » Limits on expansion – fill in existing space first
- » Allow secondary suites in all single-family neighbourhoods, provided infrastructure capacity is there
- » More accessible housing units near/within commercial areas
- » Incentives to renovate existing properties in more established areas
- » Current rules and regulations are becoming too onerous for builders

## Communication & Clarity

Communication emerged as another secondary theme throughout engagement. Respondents consistently described experiencing unclear communication from local government. A lack of clear understanding of planning regulations, particularly as they relate to commercial developments, was noted throughout the Business Survey, as well as the Vision Survey. Suggestions included:

- » More educational resources on the Village and Municipality's websites to help business owners to understand rules and regulations
- » Regular updates released to the public to ensure regular communication with the business community from both the Village and the Municipality
- » Better by-law enforcement

## Recreation

The final secondary theme that emerged throughout the public engagement process was recreation. Strongly tied to active transportation, respondents made the following suggestions to improve recreation opportunities in New Minas:

- » Turf soccer field
- » Community or regional recreation facilities, especially a swimming pool
- » Easy access to outdoor recreation (trails, etc.)
- » More localized play areas for children
- » Connectivity among recreation facilities
- » Community garden plots
- » An off-leash dog park
- » Options for cheap recreational activities (i.e. \$2 drop-in swimming, gym, etc.)
- » A "Makerspace" for local crafters/artists

## 1.3 Survey Results

### How to interpret statistics and tables

*Statistics and tables used in the following section are derived from the surveys distributed to the community. Where results and statistics are provided their sources are also noted. Because respondents had the option to skip questions, the number of survey responses vary for each question. For some survey questions, respondents could make multiple selections meaning results may total more than 100%. Where statistics are not provided, statements are used to express the community's general sentiment regarding a particular topic or theme.*

During the initial engagement phase for the New Minas Secondary Plan, there were three surveys released to the public over the course of three months (November 2020 to January 2021): a Housing Survey, a Business Survey and a Vision Survey. These surveys had 83, 13 and 141 respondents, respectively.

### 1.3.1 Survey Demographics

With any survey for the general population, the goal is for the results to accurately represent the population. Samples should represent the demographic characteristics of a population with regards to age distribution, occupation, household size, and income. If a sample is not a true representation of the population, actions can be taken to engage with underrepresented cohorts, and/or results can be weighted to more accurately depict the 'true' population in a community. Statistics Canada 2016 Census data was used as a comparative measure to the Housing and Vision survey results to understand how the survey sample compares to the community's profile. Demographic information was not collected for the Business Survey because the targeted nature of this survey inherently prevents population-representative results.

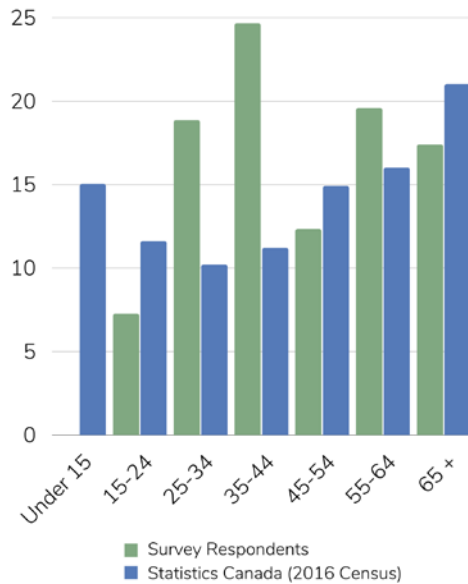


Figure 1. Age distribution of survey respondents compared to Statistics Canada 2016 Census.

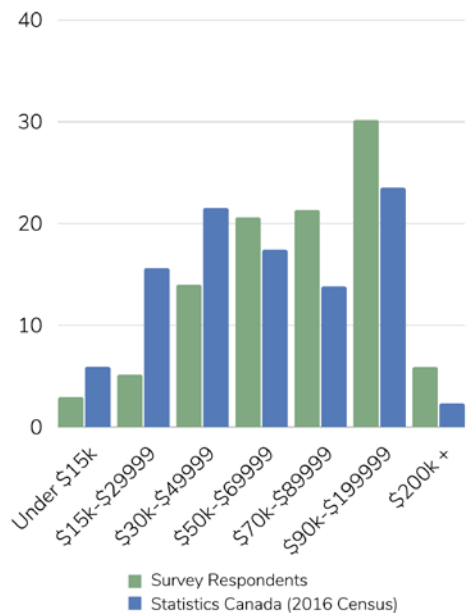


Figure 2. Household income distribution of survey respondents compared to Statistics Canada 2016 Census.

#### Age Distribution

Examining the results of the Vision and Housing surveys there was an over representation of residents aged 25-34 and 35-44 (Figure 1). Based on Statistics Canada data, residents aged 25-44 make up 21.4% of the area's population; however, 43.5% of survey respondents were from this cohort. Youth under 15 were not represented in the survey results, and respondents aged 15-24 were under represented, highlighting cohorts where further engagement should be considered.

#### Income

A comparison of income information from Statistics Canada and the information collected through the Housing and Vision Surveys indicates survey responses were disproportionately collected from households with an annual before-tax income of \$50,000 and above, with those making between \$90,000 and \$199,999 making up over 30% of survey respondents (Figure 2). Those with incomes between \$15,000 and \$29,999 were the most under represented, making up 15.6% of the population, but only 5.2% of survey respondents.

## Household Composition

According to Statistics Canada census information, the average household size in Kings County is 2.3 people. Housing Survey respondents had an average household size of 2.6 people. Housing Survey respondents living in households alone were the most under represented cohort, at only 13.3%, while Statistics Canada data shows 27.7% of King's County residents live alone (Figure 3). The most over represented cohort in the survey were households made up of 4 individuals. They made up 19.2% of respondents, but are only 11.5% of the total population. Households of 5 individuals or more were within 1% of the measured Statistics Canada value.

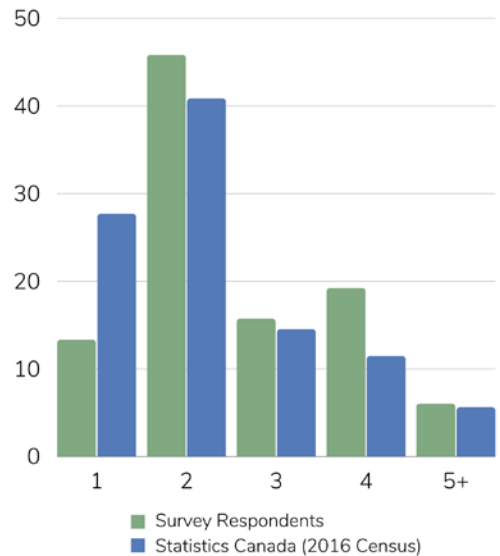


Figure 3. Household size of survey respondents compared to Statistics Canada 2016 Census.

### 1.3.1 Survey Results & Discussion

#### What did the community say about housing?

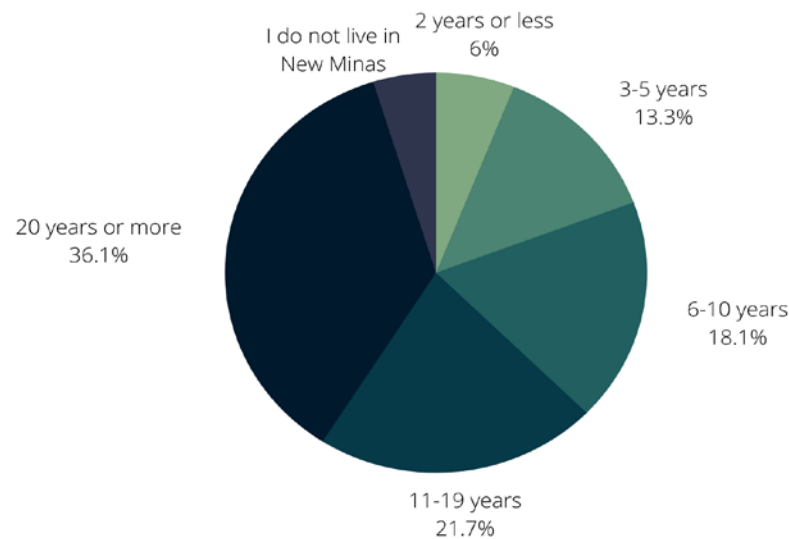


Figure 4. Housing survey responses when asked how long residents have lived in New Minas (Q8, Housing Survey).

The Housing Survey respondents were overwhelmingly long-time residents of New Minas, with residents who have lived in the area for over 20 years being the highest cohort of respondents at 36.1% (Figure 4). Over three quarters of all survey respondents have lived in New Minas for longer than 5 years and only 6% of those surveyed have lived in village for less than 2 years. The majority (66%) were also full-time home owners, while 26.5% of respondents were full-time renters (the rest were seasonal or not local residents).

The overarching themes throughout the Housing Survey related to housing options and affordability. 31.7% of survey respondents said rent is both unaffordable (over 30% of their household income) and the same proportion said that there is a lack of rental options in the community. Other themes that emerged, as previously discussed, related to a lack of housing that suits the needs of older adults, people with physical disabilities and those without access to a vehicle. Many residents desired housing options that were within walking distance of shops and services, noting this type of housing is currently lacking (as is the infrastructure to support it).

For homeowners, the primary issues identified were difficulties relating to affordability, such as properties in need of major maintenance or repairs (21.7%), difficulty paying property taxes (20%) and difficulty making payments for services or utilities (18.3%). Much like renters, homeowners (16.7% of them) are also finding it challenging to access shops and services in the community without a vehicle. They would also like to see more options in housing stock, particularly smaller housing options and ground-level entry for those with mobility challenges and aging residents.



<b>Table 1: Respondents' preferred approaches to increase housing availability or affordability over the next 20 years (Q9, Housing Survey).</b>
1. Energy efficiency upgrades
2. Physically accessible homes
3. Alternative housing forms (co-housing clusters, multi-unit, lot infill, tiny homes)
4. Increased density in some existing neighbourhoods
5. Alternative ownership and/or tenure models (co-operative, community land trust, rent-to-own)
6. Housing for 1-person households
7. Adaptive reuse or conversions of large homes, churches and halls
8. Dormitory housing for seasonal employees

When polled about the difficulty of finding housing in New Minas (Figure 5), 31.2% of respondents said it was “very difficult” and 26.2% said “somewhat difficult”. A quarter of respondents were neutral on the subject and only 4.9% said it was “very easy”. When asked about their preferred approaches to increase housing availability or affordability over the next 20 years, energy efficiency upgrades, physically accessible homes and alternative housing forms (like co-housing clusters, multi-unit, lot infill, and tiny homes) were the top three choices (Table 1).

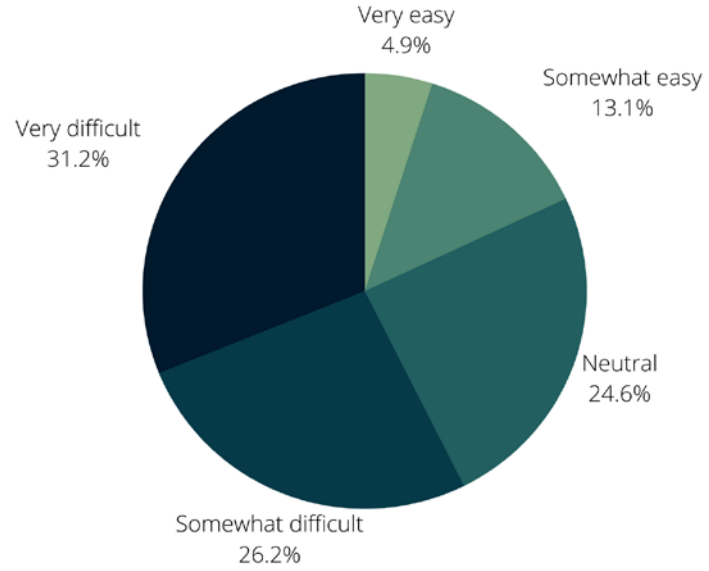


Figure 5. Housing survey responses when asked how easy or difficult is it to find housing in New Minas (Q8, Housing Survey).

## What did we hear from business owners?

Respondents from the Business Survey represented retail (30.8%), accommodation and food services (30.8%), agriculture (7.7%), entertainment and recreation (7.7%), professional services (7.7%), education (7.7%), and industrial supply (7.7%) business owners in New Minas. Most were small business owners, with a staff of between 3 and 20 people (Figure 6) in their employment and operating year-round. One seasonal business owner also participated in the survey. 84.6% of respondents have been in business in New Minas for 10 years or longer, with the remaining respondents in operation for 4-9 years. There were no respondents from new businesses.

Most respondents cited visibility and access to suppliers and/or customers as the primary factors that made them choose their current facilities, though affordability, appropriate zoning and road access were also major contributing factors (Table 2). All respondents but one were planning to remain in the same location in the next 5 years, though some were hoping to expand in the same location (30%) or renovate their existing space (10%). Only one respondent was planning to relocate in favour of a larger location.

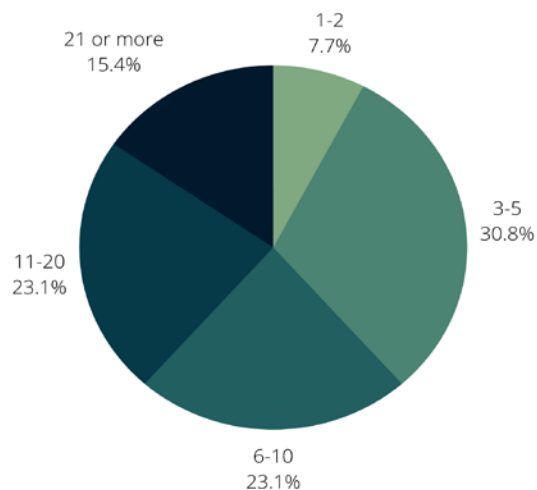


Figure 6. Survey responses when asked number of people employed at their business (Q2, Business Survey).

Table 2: Respondents' primary factors for choosing their current facilities
1. Visibility
2. Access to suppliers and/or customers
3. Appropriate zoning
4. Rent or purchase cost
5. Size
6. Road access and traffic management
7. Access to transportation
8. Building condition
9. Availability of land
10. Loading and unloading areas
11. Access to utilities
12. Property taxes

When asked about the limitations with their current facilities, the theme of affordability was the most discussed topic amongst respondents. Property taxes, energy consumption, and rent or purchase cost were at the top of the list, with road access and traffic management also cited as major limitations. One respondent mentioned the vacancy rate in the mall as an issue, while others said zoning, access to utilities, availability of land, and access to loading/unloading areas as a barrier for their business. Access to functioning internet was mentioned throughout the survey results as a limiting factor for businesses in New Minas.

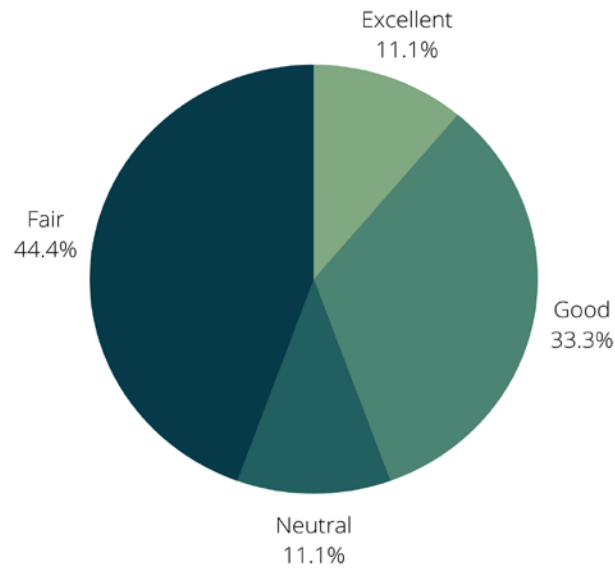


Figure 7. What is your general impression of New Minas as a place to do business? (Q26, Business Survey).

Most business owners felt that there was an appropriate amount of parking spaces for their business properties (77.8%) with the remaining respondents saying there are too few parking spaces. Bicycle parking was deemed appropriate by half of respondents, a quarter did not know the bicycle parking availability for their business, and the remaining respondents said there was too few parking spaces for cyclists, or none at all.

Business owners who responded to the survey were split when asked what was their general impression of New Minas as a place to do business (Figure 7). A few themes emerged from the survey results. One, a lack of knowledge and understanding about municipal policy and planning regulations relating to commercial land use, the amount of serviced land, and the availability of properly sized parcels of land for their business within New Minas. Many also felt a lack of communication from the Village and Municipality is an issue they would like to see addressed, or more clarity on where to obtain information. The confusion over rules and regulations means that some respondents feel that there are different rules for different people, or that by-laws are being selectively enforced.

*“I’m hoping to see New Minas as more my home and less a shopping centre”  
- Survey Respondent*

Table 3: Priorities for Secondary Plan
1. Business & economic development
2. Improvements to sidewalks, trails and cycling routes
3. Maximizing use of existing developed areas
4. Climate change mitigation
5. Enabling housing options
6. Development & protection of open spaces
7. Guidelines for the design & aesthetics of the built environment
8. Enabling new land for development
9. Other infrastructure improvements

### What did we hear about residents’ vision for New Minas?

All the different major themes were prominent throughout the Vision Survey. In addition to those themes, business and economic development were also important to respondents, topping the list of priorities for the secondary plan, closely followed by improvements to active transportation infrastructure and maximizing the use of existing developed areas (Table 3).

Respondents of the Vision Survey feel that New Minas needs to focus on creating a better, more cohesive feeling of community, a “people place” as one respondent described it. Currently, most respondents feel that the focus on large scale commercial development is hurting the character of the community, making the pedestrian and cyclist experience unpleasant and dangerous, and fragmenting the landscape. There is a desire to see the community become “more than just a shopping centre”. There is strong interest in maximizing existing commercial spaces through redevelopment efforts and exploring creative solutions to this issue before expanding into undeveloped adjacent lands that could instead provide open, green spaces.

The results of the Vision Survey demonstrated a genuine sentiment of care among respondents for those experiencing challenges in housing, transportation and accessibility. Many respondents who self-identified as financially secure advocated for affordable housing and better housing options for low-income residents and referred to the challenges they see for older adults and those with disabilities in New Minas.

<b>Table 4: Major strengths on which to build</b>
1. Presence of small local businesses
2. Availability of parking
3. Presence of large regional businesses
4. Availability of open space and recreation
5. The sense of community
6. Quality of road networks
7. The diversity of available housing options
8. Economic diversity
9. Quality of sidewalks, trails and cycling routes
10. Availability of commercial land
11. Effects of climate change
12. The community's aging population
13. Availability of industrial land

Respondents identified the business community in New Minas as a “major strength on which to build”, with the presence of small local businesses garnering the top spot from survey respondents (Table 4). The third most popular response for major strengths on which to build was the presence of large regional businesses, demonstrating the community’s interest in a diversified commercial landscape that supports both smaller, local shops and services, as well as the large retailers.

Availability of commercial land, availability of industrial land and the economic diversity of New Minas were cited as the top three minor strengths on which to build, as well, reiterating the message that the community sees the business community as one of its greatest assets.

<b>Table 5: Major challenges that need to be addressed</b>
1. The diversity of available housing options
2. The community's aging population
3. Effects of climate change
4. Quality of road networks
5. The sense of community
6. Economic diversity
7. Presence of small local businesses
8. Quality of sidewalks, trails and cycling routes
9. Availability of open space and recreation
10. Availability of commercial land
11. Presence of large regional businesses
12. Availability of industrial land
13. Availability of parking

In addition to strengths, the Vision Survey also looked at the major challenges that residents would like to see addressed through the secondary planning strategy (Table 5). The diversity of available housing options was identified as the top challenge for respondents, followed closely by the community's aging population. As mentioned throughout the report, these two issues are intrinsically linked and residents are eager to see more accessible and affordable housing options for New Minas.

Other major challenges coincided with major and secondary themes discussed in section 1.2 and included the effects of climate change, the quality of the road networks and the overall sense of community in New Minas.

The last two questions of the Vision Survey asked respondents to:

1. Describe their vision for New Minas in three words or less (Figure 8)
2. Share any additional thoughts about their vision for New Minas (Appendix A)



Figure 8: Word cloud generated by responses to Q9 of the Vision Survey. Respondents had the opportunity to respond up to three times, which is why some words occur multiple times. Word size is based on number of occurrences in the responses.

# 1.4 Stakeholder Results

Within New Minas there are a number of stakeholders who have topic-specific information or would be specifically affected by various aspects of the Secondary Plan. These include local community groups, social service providers, environmental groups, Village staff, neighbouring municipalities, municipal and provincial departments, business owners, and landowners in the expansion lands south of Highway 101. The project team reached out to these stakeholders and hosted one-on-one or small group conversations over the phone or online video conferencing. As of 2021.03.08 the project team had spoken to 21 stakeholders and continues to follow up with stakeholders who have not yet responded. The full list of interviewees is in Appendix B.

Because stakeholders are identified based on their relationship to specific topics, the outcome of these discussions is typically focused around these specific topics, which vary widely from stakeholder to stakeholder. This section summarizes the stakeholder discussions by topic.

## Community Services

Stakeholder feedback around community services focused on the objectives of making New Minas more inclusive. This included:

- The need for public facilities to be barrier-free (accessible), including specific recommendations related to improving existing facilities like the Louis Millett Centre
- Planning for an aging population
- Targeting efforts for youth engagement
- Diversity in housing options
- Considering different demographics in facilities planning
- Involving community members in decisions that affect their neighbourhood

## Recreation

Stakeholders from various backgrounds identified recreation as important for maintaining and improving the attractiveness of New Minas. Stakeholders identified existing trails and parks as valuable assets, but noted that there is still room for improvement in signage and other amenities (e.g. lighting and benches). Stakeholders also identified connectivity challenges, and emphasized that efforts should be made to create a completed network allowing users to easily move from one recreation opportunity to another.

From a facilities perspective, stakeholders noted a lack of indoor recreation opportunities in the region, particularly a pool. However, there were divergent opinions among stakeholders on whether any efforts to address this deficiency should be done on a regional scale in one large facility, or in smaller, local facilities. Those favouring a single regional facility noted the opportunity present in New Minas to locate a facility near one of the interchanges.

Some stakeholders were excited about the recreation potential of the lands south of Highway 101, and in particular the opportunity to plan for a cohesive and connected recreation system. Specific needs that stakeholders identified focused on naturalized, “passive” spaces such as trails and woodlands.

## Environment

Stakeholder comments related to the environment had a strong focus on water, and the importance of assessing the impact of development on watersheds, with the knowledge that land south of Highway 101 drains through the existing areas of New Minas and into the Cornwallis River.

Discussions with more specificity typically focused around the Kentville Ravine (Elderkin Brook) and the value that the ravine provides from both an environmental and recreational point-of-view. There was a concern among stakeholders that development south of Highway 101 or north of the Kent building could negatively impact the sensitive ravine.



## Development

Stakeholders in the development industry were generally positive about New Minas. They see strong residential demand, particularly in the seniors-oriented segment. However, the development community noted that it is difficult at the moment to find enough skilled trades to meet demand. There was also a general sentiment that developable residential land is currently in short supply in New Minas. The development community provided a number specific recommendations, including:

- Reducing parking requirements
- Reviewing wellfield requirements for multi-unit buildings
- Reviewing ground-floor commercial requirements along Commercial Street because of challenges on deep lots
- Allowing for six-story construction to align with new building code

There was also a recognition that New Minas is part of a wider market that includes Kentville and Wolfville, and that planning efforts should be considerate of these communities.

## Businesses

Stakeholder comments related to business identified the dominant role that New Minas plays as the commercial centre of the Valley. Stakeholders were positive about recent investments in New Minas (particularly the Granite Drive interchange). Business stakeholders identified a feeling that municipal approvals processes for new businesses are too slow or confusing. There was also concern about the impact of wellfields on the types of development permitted.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been challenging for the business community, but stakeholders identified opportunities that may be present as people who can work from anywhere (“digital nomads”) move to the Valley in the coming months and years.

Business stakeholders were excited about the Secondary Plan process and the idea of having an overall plan for New Minas, but there was apprehension about creating unserviced development south of Highway 101. There was also a fairly strong sentiment among owners of existing businesses on Commercial Street that efforts should be made to fill vacancies before expanding commercial uses across the highway.

Business stakeholders identified a need for beautification, convention space, and investments in “walkability”.

## Expansion Landowners

The land within the Growth Centre of New Minas south of Highway 101 is held by 19 separate landowners, although of these 19 one is the Province, one is Nova Scotia Power, and some are related entities (different companies with similar ownership). Given the importance of the “expansion lands” to the Secondary Plan, the project team reached out to these landowners to better understand any plans that should be considered in the Secondary Plan.

Of the nine landowners reached (as of 2021.03.08), none identified specific plans for development. Rather, there was a general expectation that development of some type would be enabled through the Secondary Plan, with a focus on commercial services for the travelling public (gas, convenience, accommodations) near to the highway interchanges. Landowners did not generally expect to undertake development themselves, and instead would look to sell land to developers.

# Appendix

---



# Appendix A

## Survey Written Responses

<b>Housing Survey Q13: Do you have any other comments or concerns about housing that you would like to share?</b>
new minas should expand further then already projected in the Canaan heights area
Working with the income challenged leads me to be especially concerned about our availability of safe rental housing that is affordable including accessible housing - there are so many single seniors who cannot afford to live with rent costs like they are ~ wait lists are long and availability is competitive...
rule & regulations for builders are becoming too onerous
expansion on south side
Retrofitting older homes for energy efficiency is important. Designing new builds to be aesthetically pleasing and desirable. Update the trailer parks
Over development of duplex's vs single detached homes and lack of green space downtown,
There needs to be way more housing for poor people
I have 2 small dogs it's very hard to find low cost housing or any housing with pets
Accessible affordable housing can be created easily please contact [redacted]
More recreational options. More green space above 101
Cost of rental units and increases, ground level living units, safety precautions
Need more houses
We need more affordable places for rent in new minas and landlords who care about their units and their tenants. The place I live in needs such done but the landlord does not seem to care.
Affordable
Rates are way too high for rental and places that you can afford are run down and run by people who don't care. My current place was supposed to be smoke free, we have smoke billowing into our bath-room every night from the downstairs neighbors and we have small children.
too many areas are trashy and need to be cleaned up. too many quarries
Rent is too damn high to be able to afford to pay utilities and necessities to have any kind of quality of life with dignity.
Affordable rent
Rent is too high
There needs to be much more affordable housing, that is decent!
All municipalities need to consider diverse housing options to accommodate working class families and individuals who require moderate sized and priced rental and ownership housing solutions, most easily achieve via higher densities of units per acre and Development agreement based communities allowing small lot frontages for cluster style ownership developments.
The property tax, the amount owed, and the actual taxes for any specific period of time are never clear. Resolving this should be a priority. Also, while low income housing isn't an issue that directly impacts me and my family, there are a lot of people in our community who cannot afford suitable housing.
No more expansion of New Minas. Fill in existing spaces
More housing like minors landing would be essential for a move to more attractive and accessible housing
ground oriented infill, allow secondary suites in all single family neighbourhoods provided infrastructure capacity is there, integration of accessible housing units near/within commercial areas
Incentives to renovate would be welcome to spruce up some older areas

**Business Survey Q16: Please provide a reason for your level of satisfaction (follow up from Q15: How satisfied are you with the municipal policy and regulations in New Minas as they apply to your business?)**

I don't know how to access information

Tourism taken for granted.

There isn't that much (any) communication from the Village.

high taxes!!! Little to no engagement from village with business

bi laws not being enforced

**Business Survey Q27: Please explain in three sentences or less, your general impression of New Minas as a place to do business.**

Taxes on the lower side mean it is not punitive to own property.

Limited places to expand

Need better stores

There is a good variety of retail stores.

poor traffic flow

Curbside appeal is lacking

boxy and not friendly

different rules depends on the person

**Business Survey Q28: Please provide any other thoughts or comments you would like to share about doing business in New Minas.**

I would like to see the Village support small business rather than Box stores.

We should have lighting regulations so any new light being installed should be done so in a way to reduce light pollution at night.

I would also like something done about the sewer smell coming from the waste treatment plant.

I would like to see something done with fast traffic trying to beat traffic by cutting down Crescent Drive from Commercial St.

Business work hard. Business pay taxes. To let other vendors on property shouldn't be allowed. Create more traffic issues etc. Signage depends on who you are.

## Vision Survey Q10: Do you have any other thoughts about your vision for New Minas that you would like to share?

Protect areas where development would cause land usage to be too crowded

We have inviting park opportunities that can be upgraded to encourage broader activity levels for all ages. New Minas would be the ideal location for a comprehensive recreation centre as is being proposed. We have a rich history cultural development of our heritage is begging attention. City and out of province folks are looking to buy homes here and we need to position ourselves to grow our residential base with neighbourhood connectedness. Our sidewalks are narrow and uneven posing a challenge for our wheeled folks and pedestrians so accessibility for active transportation needs to be a priority. Beautification/streetscaping is seen by residents and businesses alike as a priority - investment in further developing a comprehensive plan should be married to featuring our heritage in support of community identity and tourist attractions!

From both a "historical" and "futuristic" approach, I would like to see a video of New Minas (Commercial Street, and all side streets), taken each year (or two) to show changes in landscape and business changes.

keep up the good work

Less commercial restaurants, more local businesses, affordable housing.

Let young people into leadership to incorporate the wisdom of the leaders with a fresh vision.

My entire life I've witnessed more people and businesses leaving New Minas than coming to it. We have so much unused commercial space that I would like to see used before we destroy more natural habitat

Consider options for transit to HRM for commuters as well as improving transit within Kings County. Having the transit close due to weather the day before a storm this year, considering storms change so quickly, was insane and only one example of unreliable transit for the community.

New Minas needs something for poor people to do in their spare time. Vancouver has all kinds of community centers with 2 dollar drop in. With pools and gyms available NS has very little.

It needs to continue to attract more retail and restaurant chains AND be more accessible for persons with disabilities. New codes for ALL public washrooms need to be private washrooms, non gender specific.

Include an off leash dog park

Need another East/West motor vehicle corridor, or improve our existing ones to ease traffic.

Start making this equal, get some black faces included in making these plans.

Look at our history in the Valley. Now have a chance to improve our existing resources. Have a chance to expand our green footprint if we look at parting up with some Neighbours.

Develop pride in our community by engaging the residents

Growth that will help New Minas

Learn from other urban developments and maintain green space and reduce blacktop.

To grow into a desired shopping area

A more visually pleasing, walkable, green shopping experience. A green corridor.

Continue to improve roads.

This survey was very confusing and not explained well as to what you were asking or looking for.

Create a community identity for us that live here as something other than just a congested shopping strip.

the mall is a disgrace. lower rent or get new ownership that is willing to rent out spaces to businesses that want to expand to new minas. annoying to go all the way to the city for good store

New Minas is our go to spot for our main shops and it is useful that there are a few larger chains here, but I would love to see more smaller chains or local shops in the future. More eco minded businesses as well. However I love that it does offer a lot of variety, so more of the same in the future and driven by community needs. Guiltily, I would love a Starbucks one day, but the rest I can go to Halifax for.

New Minas is our go to spot for our main shops and it is useful that there are a few larger chains here, but I would love to see more smaller chains or local shops in the future. More eco minded businesses as well. However I love that it does offer a lot of variety, so more of the same in the future and driven by community needs. Guiltily, I would love a Starbucks one day, but the rest I can go to Halifax for.
More emphasis needs to be placed on pedestrians in New Minas. The main "strip" is not a safe place for children, seniors, or caregivers.
internet for all
I'd like to find ways for all citizens to participate in our community, to live and to thrive. This means finding additional reasonable housing options for low income families.
A good place to live is an accessible community for some regarding trails and recreation for others a walking community for necessities both need continued attention and development
Mixed use development, commercial and green space
Merge with Kentville
Don't buy the hype on wind power and solar. Installed capacity is not same as output as with other forms of energy production. Work with a vision on energy in our future which scales up, not little token gestures that cost too much and drive up electricity rates.
To be seen as a "People Place" as well as the shopping center of the Valley
Such potential here with the opportunity to attract visitors and residents. Just needs a vision ....so this isa welcome exercise
I am relatively new to New Minas and Nova Scotia. I'm hoping to see New Minas as more my home and less a shopping centre.
New Minas south should offer a new style of commercial/multi unit residential community style living. Somewhere where individuals can live, work and enjoy the area by walking, driving or by way of public transit.
The city motto needs to be changed from "New Minas - a good place to live" to New Minas - a Fabulous Place to Live" or "A Great Place to Live". 'A good place to live' sounds like we're being generous or trying to be kind about it. Let us be generous in saying that it's an 'amazing place to live' so we can have something positive to grow into!
Multiple, localized play areas for kids and a community swimming pool would be great. Also sidewalks that dont end in the middle of the street
New minas is a centre for shopping. Is that what we want our community to be? I'd like to see a community where we can walk to get groceries. I'd like to be able to bike safely on roads. I can't now. I'd like to see a better integration of commercial and residential areas. I'd like smaller scale development.
New Minas is a destination for shopping. We can work harder to make it one for living and visiting. Make it a place that you want to walk around, that you want to come to for fun or to be inspired for future design. Make it accessible. Make it navigable safely by foot and bike. Make it a leader in community renewable energy and climate adaptation. Make it a place that makes inhabitants proud and visitors inspired.
Stop damaging the environment
No vendors
I hope we acknowledge the natural landscape and biodiversity that both exists and has been lost in how New Minas has developed. Further degradation should not be an option and we should be working to rehabilitate certain natural environments in conjunction with the development that has taken place and may be considered moving forward. It would be great to see small and medium sized businesses take a more prominent role in the Village. Also important to me is more mixed use development and walkability, using the principles that the community is safe for people to access and navigate on their own from ages 8-80. Currently the maze of parking lots and lack of pedestrian infrastructure makes it a nightmare to travel through with children. There is so much potential and this is a very exciting project.
I would like to see landlords held accountable publicly. I'd love to see small businesses get the opportunity to showcase their goods on a rotating basis in a space that is under-utilized, such as inside the County Fair Mall. Bus stops should have tactile bumps to indicate where they are for the visually impaired.

# Appendix B

## Stakeholder Interviewees

- Annapolis Valley Chamber of Commerce - Judy Rafuse
- Valley Regional Enterprise Network - Richelle Brown Reddin and Brennan Fitzgerald
- Kaleidoscope New Minas - Donna Randell
- New Minas Parks and Recreation - John Ansara
- Town of Kentville - Bev Gentleman
- Kentville Recreation - Rachel Beddingfield
- Plaza REIT - Dylan Ryan
- Pro REIT - Mark O'Brien
- Crombie REIT - Angela Cormier
- Phil Jordon
- Ken Barrett
- Sam Kadray
- NSTIR
- Parsons Investments Ltd. - Scott Hearn
- Gerald and Pauline Cudmore
- Henriette Hetteema
- Cankor Holdings / Falcon Enterprises / Paramount Hotels - Jeff Wallace
- Penelope Irish
- Peter Milne
- Flower Cart Group / New Minas Business Association - Jeff Kelly
- Kentville Business Park - Lindsay Young

# Appendix C

## Written Submissions

It would be great to see better signage around the round about area. You really have to dump things down for people and have better signs for what lanes you need to be in. I did a example and sent it to the dept. of transpiration when the round about went in but never heard a thing back. Also nice new signs for all the subdivisions would be eye catching and installing speed bumps in all subdivisions to slow people down. Speed is an issue everywhere. If the village could offer an incentive to move into, and fix up older house in New Minas instead of new housing that would also be great.

Hi,does anyone drive thru New Minas?Money was spent on motion sensors on each set of lights.When they finally paved commercial st., with not everyone on the same page?Square cuts for round covers (scotia bank,west side Charlie's and other spots)Sewer cover pot holes KFC and Superstore.All cause the ones responsible wouldn't answer his phone.When it was time for New Minas water to install the risers on the covers.I know the same stuff went down.When the paving blitz was happening.Look at Highland Ave.,5/10.Back to the street lights.The lights that make me say,come on!! Are:

Canadian Tire on a timer

Petro can are sometimes on a timer

Dairy Queen are sometimes on a timer

Maybe there needs to be some looking at making the traffic flow make sense.Would make New Minas feel better.Scares people away. New Minas is where I live Have a wonderful year!!!

New Minas is more than a linear hardscape floating between the natural landscapes of the Cornwallis River corridor, the Elderkin Brook forest and ravine, the Deep Hollow road ravine and the South Mountain forests and their northbound brooks.

So why does this Vision statement pertain (one exception "protection of sensitive habitat" which is out of context) to furthering a development that is counter to environmental sustainability?

What happens when stars get too dense? When the proportion of hardscape in watersheds increases beyond 10%...or worse? Or when people grow tired of the same "development" and good deals and take their businesses and families to towns that plan as if the natural environment mattered for itself and for human well-being? Black hole formation is hard to witness, usually the astronomers see them already formed. The more interesting process is seeing a reversal such as the naturalization of a hardscape landscape, the daylighting of its brooks, the opportunistic conversion of an urban waste space to a green area for families, or the protection of ecologically sensitive areas by maintaining a forest buffer to the east of Elderkin Brook. As we push these real developments, we find that we rediscover the Cornwallis River--the Jijuwuktuk--and see it come back to health for fishing and boating.

I trust that the New Minas Vision process will be opened up to its entire community and a wider Valley community in charrette (<https://www.epa.gov/international-cooperation/public-participation-guide-charrettes>) sessions so that development is seen as a process that develops the community's true well-being. We have witnessed much "development" and also the losses in lifestyle and ecological areas and functions that accompanied that. Real landscape planning is difficult but what we need.



I can't say that I am overly impressed with the Market Demand document. Page 63 has a mention of the lack of visibility from the "Trans Canada Highway" versus Commercial Street and this suggests that it was a "cut and paste" job from something prepared for Truro or elsewhere and not a unique document!

See paragraph below:

"Locational: The industrial land in New Minas is located in the northern portion of the Village. In contrast, the Trans Canada Highway (Highway 101) runs along the southern boundary of the built-up area of New Minas. Thus, access between the Village's industrial areas and the highway requires passing through the builtup commercial area, potentially including traversing Commercial Street and usually requiring passing residential areas. We note, too, that Commercial Street, the main thoroughfare in New Minas, and the centre of the retail hub of the Valley, at times suffers from heavy traffic congestion, further exacerbating the issues of accessibility to the industrial lands of the Village. There is no visibility to the industrial areas from either the Trans Canada Highway or Commercial Street. Thus, from the perspective of the aforementioned demand attributes for industrial land, that of New Minas is poorly located, given it has neither ease of access nor visibility/exposure."

The "Environmental Constraints" illustrated in Figure 6.3 are superficial, difficult to see and visualize on the landscape.

I've spoken with some people I know regarding the Vison New Minas Project and received interesting feedback. While none that I know of have completed the surveys, I've collected individual comments/concerns that arose during our conversations. Some of the themes are familiar but worth restating as they come from New Minas residents.

- There is a desire to see development/redevelopment of various lands on Commercial Street that are vacant, unsightly or being used for inappropriate purposes. The same can be said of some other areas within the Village.
- There is a desire to see development of well designed integrated residential/commercial spaces particularly in the "downtown" Commercial Street core (apts, condos, small retail businesses).
- There is a desire to see more storefronts, businesses and residential structures on Commercial St with parking lots behind, not in front. This was brought up regarding any possible redevelopment of the County Fair property, among other areas. The new apartment buildings near Eaves Hollow in Kentville (Miner's Landing) were cited as a good example of a substantial development that looks attractive from the street.
- As [name] mentioned at a recent meeting, the present configuration of power poles and attached lines, particularly along Commercial Street, is an unsightly eyesore. Some people would support a long-term, phased project for underground wiring.
- Connecting heretofore separated areas of New Minas was seen as a desirable project. It would help ease the traffic on Commercial Street and encourage other means of transportation as well (walking, cycling etc). In this regard, it was also mentioned that enhancing possibilities of children being able to safely walk to school (New Minas Elementary and EMS) might be an attractive feature to those wanting to purchase homes in the area.
- Regarding the area south of 101, it was strongly felt that preservation of the ecology and natural habitat in that area was extremely important.
- Preservation of the watershed was regarded as vital.
- It was felt that the area south of 101 would lend itself to creation of a natural park with widely accessible year round trails, all with a view to educating on environmental issues and providing an opportunity for healthy outdoor recreation for local residents.

Given an aging population, it was felt that future development of housing/retail spaces and public transportation should be closely linked. Mobility was seen as a key to selecting a place to live.

It was felt that a long term planning project needs to take a wide range of issues into account and a consultation with stakeholders (Business, professionals, commercial, agriculture, etc) should be undertaken. Some believe that New Minas should strive to go well beyond its reputation as a place to shop and become much better known as a "great" place to live.

The above is a rolled up summary of points offered re the Secondary Planning Project. I hope I'm sending this to the correct email address. If not, I would appreciate it being relayed to the correct spot. Thanks.



UPL▲ND