



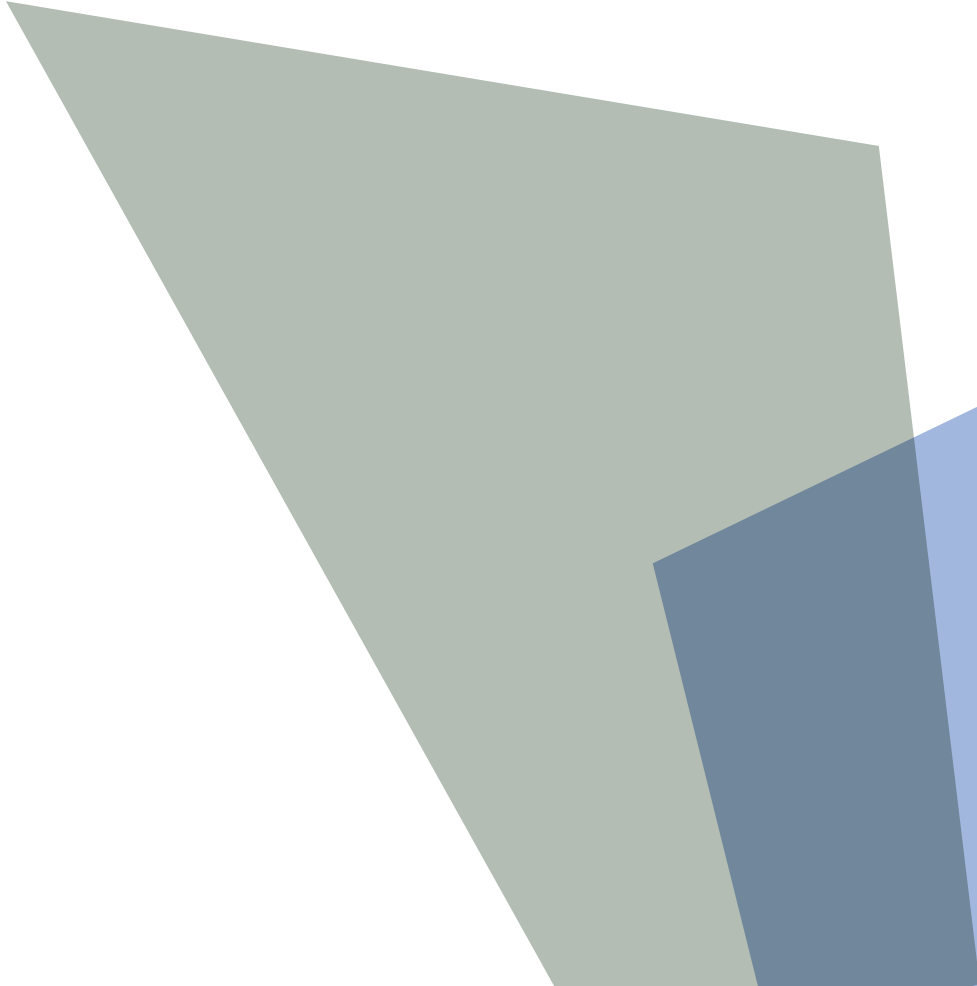
What We Heard

Updated Report

August 2021

UPLAND





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This report was prepared by
UPLAND Planning and Design.

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Section 1: Introduction



1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Engagement Context

Vision New Minas is a project to develop a secondary plan for the Growth Centre of New Minas, in the Municipality of the County of Kings. This includes both the existing areas of New Minas, as well as almost 1,000 acres south of Highway 101, often known as “New Minas South” or the “Expansion Lands”. More information is available on the project website at www.visionnewminas.ca

The project officially began in February of 2020. Shortly thereafter, Nova Scotia was affected by the global COVID-19 pandemic, which almost entirely shut down any sort of travel and in-person gatherings for a number of months. People all over the world were forced to adapt their normal ways of doing business, and Vision New Minas was no different. The project continued, with a much heavier focus on on-line and distanced engagement.

This report is a summary of the engagement methods and resulting public feedback since the project publicly launched in November of 2020.

1.1.2 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 seven citizen members. 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
- » Wade Tibbo

The group has held ten meetings since August, 2020.

Section 2: Formative Engagement



2.1 Formative Engagement Methods

2.1.1 Introduction

Formative engagement for Vision New Minas occurred from the public launch in November of 2020 until April of 2021. This phase of engagement focused on bigger-picture thinking for the future of New Minas, such as residents' vision for the future and the aspects of New Minas that they value or find challenging.

The project team used a variety of methods to engage with the public and stakeholder groups over the formative engagement:

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

2.1.2 Advertising and Webpage

The project team established a webpage (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") advertised 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.

2.1.3 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.

2.1.4 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).

2.1.5 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.

2.1.6 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 2021.08.03 the project team has spoken to 24 stakeholders and continues to follow up with stakeholders who have not yet responded. The full list of interviewees is in Appendix B.

2.1.7 Written Submissions

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

2.1.8 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.

2.2 Results Summary

The results of the formative 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

2.2.1 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.

2.2.2 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

2.3 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 formative 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.

2.3.1 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.

The project team used Statistics Canada 2016 Census data 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.

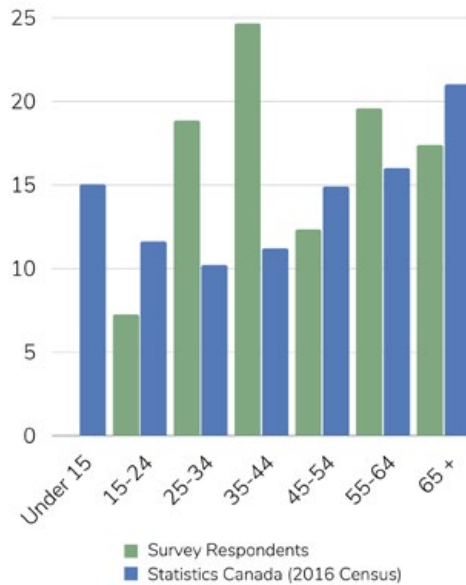


Figure 1. Age distribution of survey respondents compared to Statistics Canada 2016 Census.

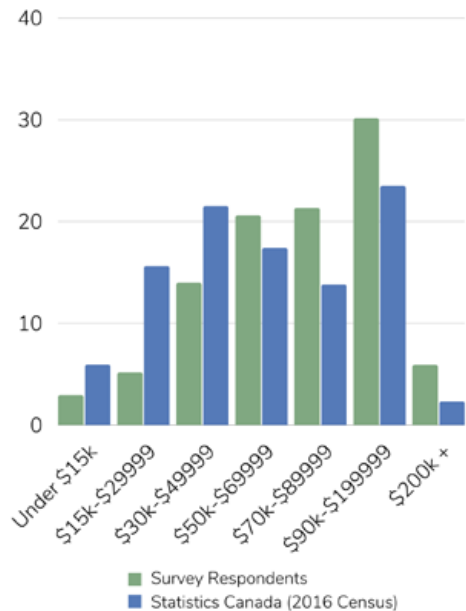


Figure 2. Household income distribution of survey respondents compared to Statistics Canada 2016 Census.

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.

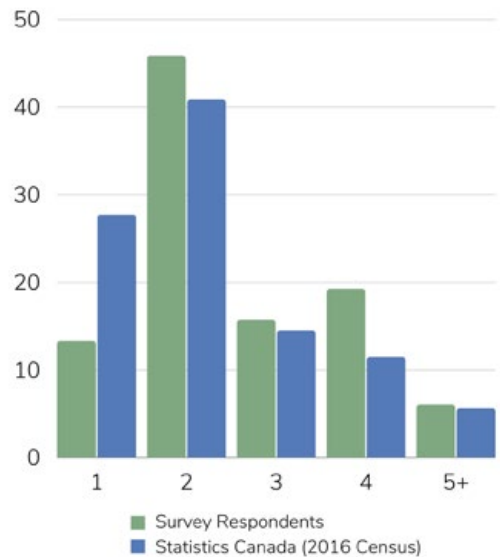


Figure 3. Household size of survey respondents compared to Statistics Canada 2016 Census.

2.3.2 Survey Results & Discussion

What did the community say about housing?

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).

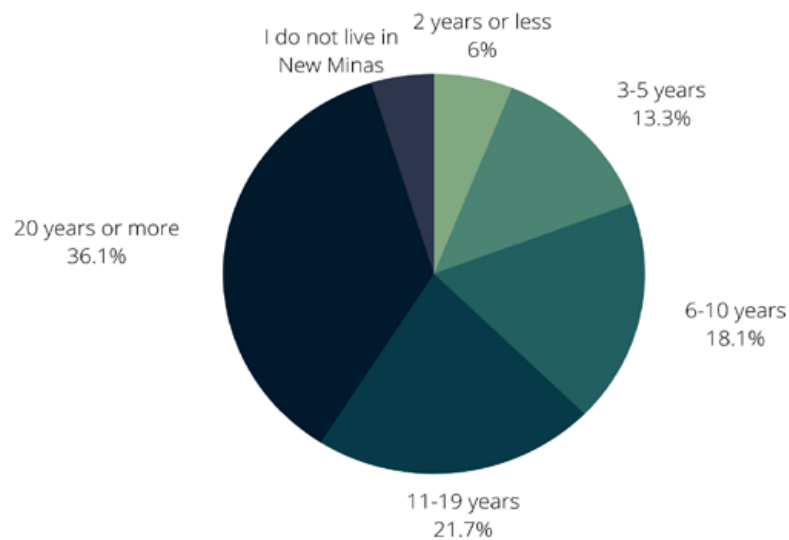


Figure 4. Housing survey responses when asked how long residents have lived in New Minas (Q8, Housing Survey).

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.

Table 1: Respondents' preferred approaches to increase housing availability or affordability over the next 20 years (Q9, Housing Survey).

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).

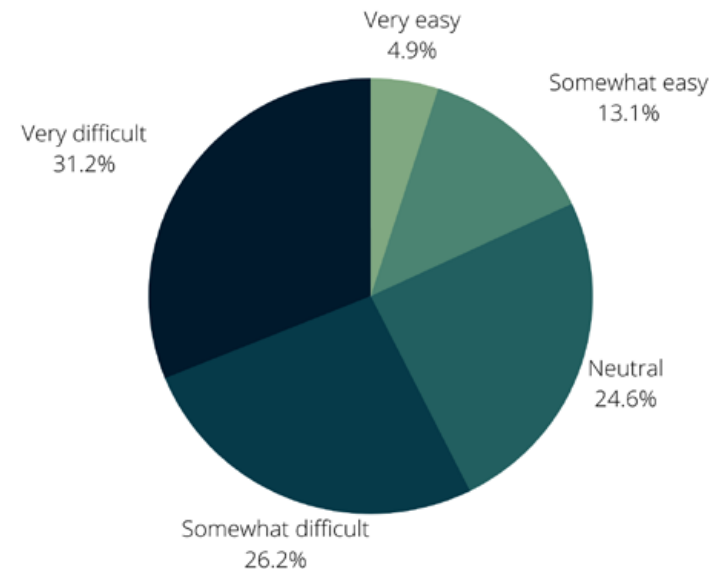


Figure 5. Housing survey responses when asked how easy or difficult is it to find housing in New Minas (Q8, Housing Survey).

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.

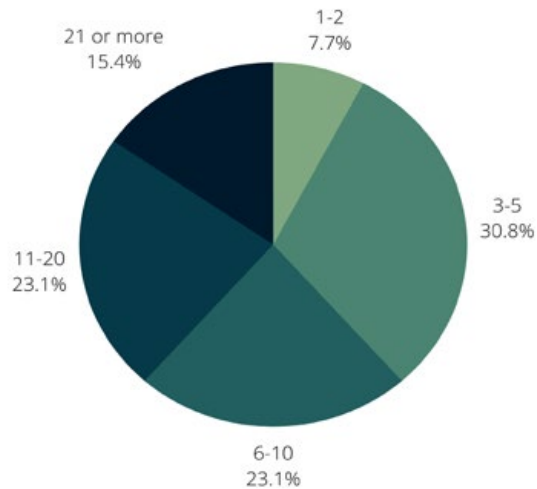


Figure 6. Survey responses when asked number of people employed at their business (Q2, Business Survey).

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.

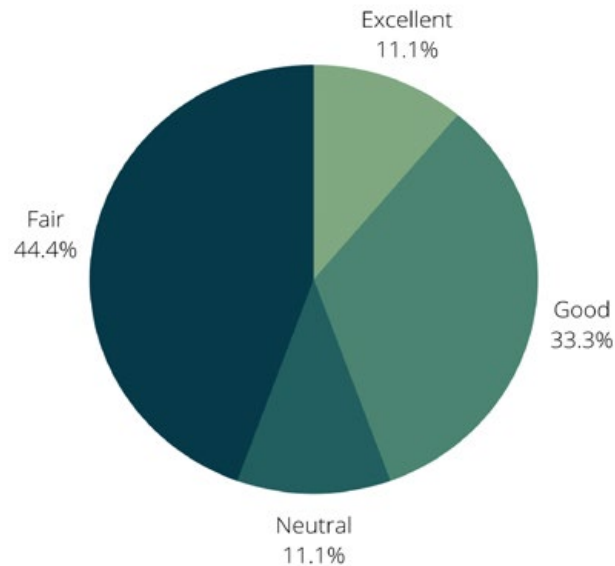


Figure 7. What is your general impression of New Minas as a place to do business? (Q26, Business Survey).

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.

Table 4: Major strengths on which to build
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.

Table 5: Major challenges that need to be addressed
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.

2.4 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 2021.08.03 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 discussions by topic.

2.4.1 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

2.4.2 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.

2.4.3 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.

2.4.4 Housing

Stakeholder comments on housing noted the overall shortage of available housing options in New Minas. In particular, stakeholders working with homelessness emphasized the crisis situation in regards to the availability of affordable housing options. While stakeholders recognized that many of these challenges are beyond the scope of a secondary plan, they did suggest that the secondary plan could help improve housing affordability and diversity by enabling more housing development at all sizes. One specific recommendation was to enable accessory dwellings (backyard suites, etc.) within New Minas.

2.4.5 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.

2.4.6 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”.

2.4.7 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 2021.08.03), 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.

Section 3: Concept Engagement



3.1 Concept Engagement

3.1.1 Introduction

Following the formative engagements, the project team worked with the Working Group to develop a series of draft “Guiding Principles” and “Key Directions” – broad values about how New Minas (including New Minas South) should develop in the future, and how the community should serve its residents and visitors.

The project team also worked with the Working Group to create three high-level, “preliminary development concepts” to explore various ways in which New Minas could be developed in terms of land use, density, and preservation of open space. These preliminary concepts acted as a tangible point of discussion for the engagement that followed. The preliminary concepts are outlined in detail in the, “Summary and Scenarios Report”.

The project team then took the draft Guiding Principles and preliminary development concepts out to the public for review and feedback. This was conducted via an in-person public workshop on July 7, 2021 and via an online version of the workshop open from July 8th to July 30th, 2021. The workshop included background information on the project and technical studies, a video and questionnaire regarding the draft Guiding Principles, and a presentation and discussion on the preliminary development concepts.

The in-person workshop was attended by 24 members of the public.

The project team also continued to receive written submissions, which are attached to this report in Appendix F.

3.1.2 Guiding Principles Results

The concept engagement activities provided participants with a list of the draft Guiding Principles and Key Directions, with an invitation to highlight those that they felt were most important, and to suggest any that were missing.

In general, participants were very supportive of the Guiding Principles as drafted, with most Key Directions seen as a priority or as important by the majority of participants. A total of 29 Guiding Principle worksheets were completed between the in-person and online workshops. The following summarizes the results for each Guiding Principle. Full comments are available in Appendix D.

The level of importance that participants placed on each Key Direction will not necessarily lead to the exclusion or modification of lower-ranked Key Directions; rather, they will be used as points of data when the Working Group is finalizing the Guiding Principles. Responsible planning often requires considering and elevating topics that are not seen as overly important by the general public, in order to support equity within the community.

Table 6: Priorities for “A Place for People” [n = 29]
1. Provide a variety of trails, parks, and other recreational opportunities to meet a diverse range of interests [20]
2. Create an interconnected and walkable transportation network that conveniently links people to the services they want and need [19]
3. Enable diverse housing options that cater to a variety of household sizes and compositions, life stages, physical needs, and economic needs [17]
4. Establish standards that require buildings and sites to be attractive and comfortable at a human scale [17]
5. Create public spaces that are beautiful and inviting [16]
6. Build new infrastructure to be barrier-free, and retrofit existing infrastructures where barriers to accessibility exist [14]

A Place for People

Table 6 ranks the key directions by the number of times they were identified as important to respondents. Respondents were able to identify as many priorities as they wished. Written comments are in Appendix D.

Interestingly, while trails and parks ranked highest as a Key Direction, the majority of the written comments related to housing and the need to provide more housing, affordable housing, and housing suitable to seniors. Many comments suggested support for higher-density forms of housing, while a handful questioned whether growing New Minas is sustainable or even desirable.

Green Living

Table 7 ranks the key directions by the number of times they were identified as important to respondents. Respondents were able to identify as many priorities as they wished. Written comments are in Appendix D.

Overall there was strong support for principles of green living within New Minas, in particular those related to leaving sensitive areas in their natural state. A number of written comments emphasized the importance of making space for nature and avoiding creating a burden on the landscape. A few people highlighted the potential conflict of using solar strategies at the same time as providing tree-lined streetscapes.

Table 7: Priorities for “Green Living” [n = 29]	
1.	Conserve wetlands and water bodies to preserve water quality, natural hydrology, habitat, and biodiversity [20]
2.	Leave steep slopes in a natural, vegetated state to minimize erosion, protect habitat, and reduce stress on natural water systems [19]
3.	Facilitate optimum conditions for the use of passive and active solar strategies [18]
4.	Provide tree-lined streetscapes [17]
5.	Reduce stormwater runoff volumes [17]
6.	Facilitate and encourage transportation alternatives to the private automobile [17]
7.	Provide ample opportunities for residents to connect with nature [15]

Table 8: Priorities for “A Regional Destination...” [n = 29]

1. Encourage reinvestment and redevelopment along Commercial Street to improve safety, provide comfort to users, beautify the street, and highlight Commercial Street as the heart of New Minas [19]
2. Encourage users of Highway 101 and the Harvest Moon Trail to stop and spend time in New Minas [16]
3. Continue to support New Minas’ role as a regional destination for shopping at a variety of scales [16]
4. Provide recreational facilities and supporting amenities that draw users from throughout the region [14]

A Regional Destination with a Strong Business Community

Table 8 ranks the key directions by the number of times they were identified as important to respondents. Respondents were able to identify as many priorities as they wished. Written comments are in Appendix D.

Participants put a heavy emphasis on Commercial Street in both the Key Directions and in the written comments. In particular, participants generally show a desire to develop a more distinct identity for Commercial Street and to focus on more diverse options, such as a more local businesses, tourism-oriented businesses, and a hotel.

Thoughtful Development and Sustainable Services

Table 9 ranks the key directions by the number of times they were identified as important to respondents. Respondents were able to identify as many priorities as they wished. Written comments are in Appendix D.

Compared to other Guiding Principles, the Key Directions for Thoughtful Development and Sustainable Services appear to be less important in the minds of participants. However, this Guiding Principle garnered a number of diverse written comments. Three questioned the need for expanding south of Highway 101; two relate to the need for an additional east-west connection to relieve traffic burdens; and others related to climate change, planning for change, the cost of infrastructure and who pays for that, and a feeling that the Key Directions are generic in nature.

Table 9: Priorities for “Thoughtful Development...” [n = 29]	
1.	Establish a road network that minimizes the burden on local streets [16]
2.	Plan development to take advantage of natural assets, such as views [15]
3.	Efficiently utilize existing infrastructure to make the most of existing investments [15]
4.	Develop new areas in a manner that minimizes the need for new infrastructure [14]
5.	Develop a phasing plan that will make development practical and infrastructure investments logical [12]
6.	Ensure the cost burden of new infrastructure is not placed on existing communities [11]
7.	Devise a development framework that enables growth over time and can respond to market demand [9]

3.1.3 Preliminary Concepts Results

The project team presented the preliminary development concepts to participants. This was followed by facilitated discussions of the concepts to explore the strengths and weaknesses of each concept and the aspects that could be combined or improved when choosing a preferred direction. Participants were also given worksheets on which to provide comments on the concepts. Full versions of the written comments are in Appendix E.

Discussions on the concepts were thoughtful and productive, and covered a number of topics.

Residential Uses

Housing was the number one topic in the discussions, with every discussion group touching on the need for more housing and more diversity in housing. The tone of the discussion was consistently towards encouraging higher densities of housing, and moving away from a model of predominantly single-unit housing. This included the potential for “infill” residential development within existing areas of New Minas. Participants emphasized the need for housing affordability, as well as housing targeted at specific demographics, such as seniors. One point of debate was whether or not it is appropriate to have residential development near to Highway 101.

Commercial Development

Consistent within the discussions was the desire to revitalize Commercial Street, and to reposition it as a more pedestrian-friendly, attractive area. However, there was a fair bit of debate about how New Minas South fits into the picture. A number of participants were very concerned that any extensive commercial development south of Highway 101 would undercut Commercial Street. In contrast, other participants were worried that Commercial

Street could not accommodate desired anchor tenants, such as Costco, and that the scenarios as presented may not even have enough commercial land. A common suggestion was that commercial and residential uses should be better integrated to make it easier to access services. A few participants worried that the concepts as presented gave the best views to commercial uses instead of residential uses that would benefit from views.

Amenities

Some of the discussion focused on community amenities. Included within this was a suggestion that the development scenarios will need to consider the need for schools with the size of the population that the new development could accommodate. Participants also emphasized the need for green space, and were generally in agreement with the open space suggestions as presented in the development concepts. Other amenities that came up in discussion were the need for attractive landscaping and the desire for a health and wellness centre.

Connectivity

Connectivity was another consistent theme in discussions. Some participants were worried that the areas north and south of Highway 101 would be too divided by the highway, and that specific efforts would be needed to knit them together, both physically (e.g. pedestrian connections) and from the perspective of a shared community identity. Additionally, participants emphasized the need for good pedestrian connections throughout the community and the need to ensure green spaces are well-connected as a network. Finally, there were specific suggestions of ensuring functional connections into the Kentville Ravine and the Harvest Moon Trail.

Environment

While less prevalent than in other forms of engagement, the environment did come up as a topic in some of the discussion groups. In particular, some participants questioned the need for new development and suggested that a fourth scenario would not develop south of Highway 101. Other environmental topics included the need to plan for climate change, the opportunity to set a good example of environmentally-responsible development through the form of development and building standards in New Minas, and the need to conserve natural environments - particularly the ravines.

Other

Other topics and suggestions came up through discussion, including:

- Wondering whether there is enough water capacity and if new wells would be needed
- The need to think about where industrial lands should go in the future
- The need to create rules that balance the benefit to the community with ease for developers
- Suggesting having centralized parking with shuttles

Appendix



Appendix A

Survey Written Responses

Housing Survey Q13: Do you have any other comments or concerns about housing that you would like to share?
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 asthetically 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 accessable 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 visionso 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 venders
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
- Town of Wolfville - Devin Lake
- Portal Youth - Kelly McGregor
- Annapolis Valley Trails Coalition - Beth Pattillo and Rick Jacques

Appendix C

Formative Engagement 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 built-up 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 Vision 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.

Appendix D

Draft Guiding Principles Comments

A Place for People

Barrier free is important
I like emphasis on housing options - and strongly suggest that housing should include "affordable housing", rental properties
need more affordable, comfortable, spacious apartments for older adults 55+ - so they can remain active in their housing - not concerned with upkeep
"diverse housing options - no low density Since urban sprawl is difficult to reverse after the fact, if the municipality could encourage standards for lower income or senior buildings, if NM could design high quality, high design standard, buildings that utilize spaces more efficiently & environmentally friendly."
focus less on low density detached single dwellings. It is not good environmentally or to manage a housing crisis or for ensuring there is affordable housing
"340 houses in the next 10 years is not enough. There is a housing crisis and we need to do more sooner. We do need more property for development of housing but increasing density of what already exists is the quickest and most ecological choice. we need all residential zones to be minimum of R2 to allow for attached and detached secondary suites. We need large developers to commit to a portion of all housing to be affordable and accessible. New housing neighbourhoods should not be single family dwellings only. Get more housing in by having 4 plexes and 5 plexes and condo buildings. Allow build-ings to have more stories
Focus less on low density detached single dwellings. it is not good environmentally or to manage a housing crisis or for ensuring there is affordable housing"
All are important but the question remains of how sustainable are all these tactics? Has anyone asked the community if it wishes to become larger?
Focus on who works in this village. Many earn 13 to 20/hr. Not focus on only family housing. Utilize under performing assets for housing that is walkable to work
"creating public spaces that are beautiful and inviting should already be considered policy.
Please be cautious not to ""limit growth!"" Allow growth to happen. ""Less government may be better""
"All of these are important and key to a healthy community. Providing a community where people can move around walking or by bicycle is essential to having a ""community feel"". Right now people less affectionately refer to us as ""New Mindless"". the shopping strip is a big reason for that. Our gems like Lockhart Ryan Park are well hidden"
"1 - enable diverse housing options 2 - create public spaces 3 - variety of trails, parks 4 - attractive and comfortable - as in Dartmouth Crossing for human scale shopping example"
"- housing for people with disabilities - in need of supportive housing is important - housing for seniors is also important"

do you look for proposals for each phase

“variety of trails, parks point - priority on the children to walk to school

‘Create an interconnected and walkable transportation network that conveniently links people to the “schools” they want and need’

‘create public spaces that are beautiful and inviting’... and natural and does not harm the environment

‘Establish standards that require buildings and sites to be attractive and comfortable at a human scale’... and environmentally friendly (i.e. renewable energy)”

We need to find ways to interact with each other. Small events or gatherings. Used to be able to see people at the mall chatting. Events like the Lions Club Breakfast have disappeared (well before Covid). That was a great way for community members to get to know one another. The ideas you have listed are really great but don't forget the people you are making a place for.

An example for future developments that are environmental friendly and yet provide housing for all. A “Place for People” that is a long term enhancement to New Minas for the future. Balance!

I would challenge the assumption that ‘more’ is both desirable and inevitable. There is no explicit discussion of carrying capacity or carbon costs in the characterization of New Minas as a ‘population growth centre’. There are significant environmental issues at play right now (locally, regionally and globally) that might influence demographic and economic patterns and outcomes.

Green Living

<p>“tree-lined streetscapes and use of passive and active solar may be a conflict</p>
<p>Transportation - hard to provide transportation alternatives to the automobile other than buses like King's transit</p>
<p>Need to ensure we give to our nature environment/protect it and not just see it as a resource to be used/taken advantage of</p>
<p>New Minas has a serious litter issue from drive-thru fast food restaurants.</p>
<p>“There should be a higher priority placed on building footprint. #people/sqft</p>
<p>Please remember that animals & trees need a home too</p>
<p>critical for “future-proofing” the community</p>
<p>“Reduce stormwater runoff” - ridiculous throw away</p>
<p>“Provide ample opportunities for residents to connect with nature” - should already be policy</p>
<p>“Provide tree-lined streetscapes” - no</p>
<p>Solar can happen without government planning, and if you do, don't add tress. The two do not mix</p>
<p>“Reduce stormwater runoff volumes” - natural options as opposed to</p>
<p>Design communities around natural features (land, water) to create unique “community feel”. Orient communities to better take advantage of solar. Ex. ensure yards or common areas face south to promote gardening</p>
<p>top 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">1 - transportation alternatives2 - leave steep slopes3 - conserve wetlands and water bodies
<p>how do you develop without creating burden</p>

“Transportation alternatives” - i.e. bicycle lanes, walk to school

“Reduce stormwater” - less pavement, more vegetation, re wild spaces

‘Conserve wetlands and water bodies to “embrace/restore to unpolluted state”’

make a zone called “environmentally in south facing roofs minimum size lawn

No more cutting down trees for development. Encourage redevelopment of existing space plus decreases our footprint. Rewild space as per UN recommendations

Why not engage People ... do you see a theme in my remarks?... ask them to help plant a few flowers from their gardens along the walkways or paths or in their local park. Community spirit is soooooo needed.

New Minas is a commercial / business area...develop it as such!

An example of great development for all.

A Regional Destination with a Strong business Community

Need to primarily support local business vs corporate
very important that development along Commercial street focus for local businesses be given priority. Local produced businesses - using the space that Crombie properties sits on
regional destination (mall future?) redevelopment along commercial street - no more box stores needed - need local businesses/ highlight commercial street as the heart of New Minas: round-about mow and flows Harvest Moon Trail: access from trail into subdivision, access into main village from trace
regional destination - develop current downtown area first
Recreation should be more available too many communities and should be available too low income and diverse needs communities. If you need to drive to get a recreation activity - you have excluded many in the community.
we need a hotel
regional destination point is to vague - make zoning very open and loose stop and spend time in New Minas point - this will happen by default
We need to move away from the low-skill, poor employee model of Big Box stores (Walmart). Those provide poor low-paying jobs, suck money out of the community, kill community character, destroy local business and promote New Minas only as a quick-stop for shopping.
top 4 1 - draw users from throughout the region 2 - regional destination 3 - stop and spend time 4 - redevelopment along commercial street/highlight commercial street"
how do you plan to encourage redevelopment - tax breaks are faulty - cost - share
Need to encourage businesses more. That poor mall. Why be building more ... stores when we can't keep anything there?
Again this is engaging people...."
The longstanding linear nature of New Minas development places a major constraint on its future. "Drawing users from throughout the region" simply impoverishes the neighbouring communities. Without an agreed regional plan, you risk becoming another Bayers Lake or Dartmouth Crossing style wasteland.
Development of New Minas as a tourist destination not just a shopping hub of strip malls
I realize that New Minas has become a shopping hub. But I would challenge the assumption that promotion of increasing consumption is not only seen as positive but also absolutely essential. Increasing consumption is simply not a sustainable model. To be frank, to many in the Annapolis Valley, New Minas has become somewhat of a regional caricature of unbridled commercial development - were you to bring someone from away blindfolded into the heart of the village, remove the blindfold, and they might easily think they'd landed anywhere in an unregulated commercial landscape across Canada or the USA. There's nothing to suggest that they're in a unique Valley community! It would be wonderful to eliminate that sense of plastic uniformity.

Thoughtful Development and Sustainable Services

Petition (now) Ottawa to invest in connector road all the way from exit 12 (Highbury Rd.) through to Granite Drive.
Properly use the existing areas so we fully use the unused areas that exists north of Hwy 101
I strongly encourage and emphasize the development of New Minas proper without expansion into the South section of 101 - (wishful property annexation thinking)
minimize the burden on local streets - in the past, waited decades for New Minas connector - new exit 115 now open to Hwy 101 road
<p>"take advantage of natural assets" - without stress on nature</p> <p>"minimize need for new infrastructure" - also prioritize development of previous infrastructure first</p> <p>Plan for contingencies eg. unexpected changes due to world economics, health, populations, infrastructure demands, environmental aspects.</p> <p>Encourage community bonding - more coffee shops & educational interest developments</p>
Find these generic concepts
Climate change? River rise?
<p>"Top two:</p> <p>1 - take advantage of natural assets</p> <p>2 - growth over time"</p>
Great to have a good plan for commercial, recreation, and housing and be peared thoughtfully so they are visually appealing but also easily accessed - recreation to housing. Commercial at a reasonable distance and industrial - storage, luckily on the perimeter where it doesn't need to be accessed frequently
at what cost - who pays?
<p>"take advantage of natural assets" to preserve natural assets - wildspace, animals, birds</p> <p>'Devise a development framework that enables growth over time and can respond to market demand'... while reducing our footprint ie. build up, not out, build denser.</p> <p>Re-connect wild spaces for free movement of animals throughout province. No ""islands"" of forest"</p>
We need a secondary road system to get us from one end of New Minas to the other. When Commercial Street is at it's busiest we need another way around. Not saying this has to be a great big build but could we look at another way around?
There are major infrastructure challenges which must be faced. There is a legacy of earlier uncontrolled ribbon development and it will be a tremendous challenge to come to reasonable balance between "old New Minas" and the potential "new New Minas"
Wonderful questions. It shows that the development planners have a great vision

Appendix E

Preliminary Development Concepts Comments

Concept 1 - Primarily Low-density Residential

“What are the pros and cons of this concept? What changes would you make?”

low density residential, I don't think matches the value of "a place for people" single unit dwellings are a high income commodity and doesn't meet the needs of middle or low income earners
The question must be - why is the emphasis so completely on developing lands south of the 101? While such a discussion may be a component of Vision New Minas it seems to have become the sole point of discussion. High density or low density in this area doesn't address the huge effect this will have on the entire ecosystem and community. The question must be: do we really need (not want) to develop that wilderness?
"- opens up new land that is not farmland - otherwise, farmland will be taken over"
"- move some commercial back from highway - protect views coming off highway - great space for recreation area"
keep commercial off the highway, lets go back to existing commercial area redevelopment
Why commercial space away from current commercial strip? Won't that encourage major retailers to relocate
This option should not be an option. It goes against what the world needs to do to address climate change

Concept 2 - Higher Density at Eastern End

“What are the pros and cons of this concept? What changes would you make?”

“- the sweet spot?
-love the idea that Steffen mentioned - cluster housing - how do we support that?”

We definitely need higher density to allow for more attainable housing and better for the environment. I agree that we need to consider schools and community gathering spaces.

- opens up more rental accomodation for lower income people

“maybe have higher density closer to the highway and keep single residential away from highway

I think this would be a good # of residents and density to allow for growth”

Concept 3 - Mixed-use Residential/Commercial

“What are the pros and cons of this concept? What changes would you make?”

- reminds me of the land use on the other side of Bayers lake in Halifax :(
Mixing commercial and residential is best for walkability and filling the need for housing. Makes sense to allow residential building without going through a development agreement. We need to protect green spaces we have and use what we have better - I higher density mixed use commercial/residential meets that.
“- offers some services to those living in the area - provides additional commercial space”

Anything Else You Would Like to Add?

-”- discussion about low income housing might be a bit moot - with current building costs, government subsidy money might be needed to get rental prices down - societal issue - can't easily be changed - I agree that affordable housing, or lack of it, is an issue - just not sure that this development plan can handle that topic”
In a time of climate change we seem focused on replicating traditional neighbourhoods & parking lots for drive-in businesses. My comment applies for all 3 concepts
pedestrian cross over the highway
“Option 4 - no development south of highway. infill in New Minas Only. As per the climate emergency we and out children face. commercial st. redevelopment. More parking lots behind commercial buildings”
“Highbury Gardens Rv Park pays Village taxes and is apparently within the village but is not included in any of the drafts. What is the benefit now or in the future for this ongoing expense?”

Appendix F

Concept Engagement Written Submissions

First I am impressed with the grand vistas afforded at Exit 11A and I feel any planning strategy must preserve this as a people friendly space. If this is indeed to be a commercial space to me development must take maximum advantage of lingering and enjoyment potential of all of this location: My suggestions would be as follows: 1 park and picnic developments that support a nearby business development rather on the pattern and scale of the Dartmouth Crossing main-street feel with green space and medians for limited parking but certainly walking friendly. 2 A health and wellness center for the valley windows open to the north taking maximum advantage for aquatics, fitness facilities, facility services rooms such as mental health, physiotherapy and convention facilities others like hockey arena and Gym spaces, physiotherapy, can be to the south. 3 A major development of a green charging Station where people will want to stop linger and shop. 4 Eco tourism development hub including hotels coffee shops, ravine trails... In Short, a shopping destination with a people friendliness paradigm to build on New Minas strength with new horizons and vision in marketing more reasons to leave Halifax for the day... Second. I feel impressed that there is not enough commercial space for both the walkable retail and large box development of commercial space beyond the walking main street small people friendly scale space. Along with this I am NOT in favour of the isolated commercial space designated to the far-west at Exit 12. I regard this as thoughtless reckless abandon regarding the housing development potential in this area above 101 at this location. (Usually land like tis is assigned to apartment /condo development as along Bi-HI connector into HFX.) Third Finally with environmental concerns in mind: 1 In all development should be included environmental mitigation for hard surface runoff-storm sewer absorption and natural filtration rather than discharge into ravines. I commend you for the likes of the run-off mitigation in the new Irving development at Exit 12 and the plans to preserve the ravines of the area. (Thoughtless high volume discharge into ravines would surely destroy the timeless balance developed in these beautiful natural ravines.) This further Highlights more commercial space to be included in the development. Both commercial and residential development of the area above 101 will need space for runoff water reabsorption due to these developments. This is a a resource to be treasured preserved with thoughtful access development and enjoyed by those fortunate to live in New Minas-A Good Place to Live- our second strength.

Hello Vision New Minas Team,

I live on Old Farm Lane in New Minas and would like to express my concern over the asphalt plant that is very close to our street. It cannot be seen, but you can't miss the smell. There are days in the summer that you can't enjoy the outside for the lack of fresh air. I realize this is a land use issue, so I wanted to express my concern and add it to any others you may have heard. Hopefully, somewhere in your planning, there is a place to figure out how to address this stinky/unhealthy problem.

But following up on the planning meeting for New Minas. I thought their core principles were basically generic. They were so incipit to be motherhood issues. I didn't see boldness. We are in a time of climate change and crises and I didn't hear anything about new-style neighbourhoods. New style neighbourhoods could be a return to old style neighbourhoods before we got into subdivisions. No concepts around passive energy creation or capturing waste water for other uses, like irrigation.

I was disappointed that six-storey apartments are allowed. Yes, I know the world has taller buildings, but there is an anonymity to apartment blocks. The strength of the Valley is the sense of community. I find that people living in apartment blocks have less sense of ownership in the property, so never bend down to pick up a piece of trash. That's a function for the paid help to do. The other issue I have with higher buildings is around fire fighting. We rely on volunteer departments. Is it fair to them to place this extra burden and extra risk on volunteers?

Then we come to what is affordable. Most of my career I have believed "affordable housing" was for single parents, people on assistance and low-income seniors. Three years ago I learned that it covers anyone earning less than \$60,000. New Minas is a service centre. The bulk of jobs here are in retail, service and hospitality. These are hourly workers earning between \$12.95 - \$20/hour. So for a 40-hour week they get \$520 - \$800. Multiply that and they basically can only afford \$676 - \$1025 for monthly rent/mortgage payment. But we're talking rent, because where do they get the down payment to buy? Another factor with changing climate are work days lost to storms. I checked with a school house consulting firm. Our school closings have risen in the last decade from 7.5 to 14 days. If retailers mirror that that's a loss of 112 paid hours for employees, which further reduces their annual incomes by \$1,456 - \$2,240/year, dropping affordable rents to \$638 - \$969. I think the average income in Nova Scotia is around \$31,000 which means a top rent of \$775. No one is building apartments or converting buildings for that mount of rent. The new apartments by Oak Grove in Kentville start at \$1,700 for a two-bedroom. They charge for parking, heat pump and storage unit so the actual amount due each month is \$2,000. A friend moved from a two-bedroom unit in a sandpit near VRH. She was paying \$1,400. The landlord upped the rent to \$2,050. My friend moved into the building by the golf course. Her rent is around \$1,535 + \$35 for her cat. Woodman's Grove rents are rising. New tenants face rental rises of 50% over what the previous tenant paid. Before the pandemic Woodman's Grove received \$8.2 million from the feds to provide affordable housing for mid-income people. My rent has risen by 28%. My landlord wanted 120% and plans to use next year to reach that. I am looking for another place to live.

A lot of people with no business background make a lot of business decisions. Their only background is theoretical not real. We have to build housing for those who work here or we stunt growth. In the two years prior to the pandemic, South Shore tourism has 125 jobs they couldn't fill because there were no accommodations for staff. So jobs went unfilled and businesses couldn't grow and expand because their current staff complement couldn't do any more work. Yet there was consumer demand which couldn't be fulfilled.

I mentioned in the meeting that a friend of mine worked for a trust run by the Home Office in London. Their function was to find affordable housing for "essential workers": fireman, police, nurses, civil servants and doctors. Young doctors fresh from medical school have such debt that they couldn't afford London rents or to buy housing. Twice in the 20 years I have been in Whistler when their housing shortage was news. There's lots of space for the rich, but not for the people who serve and service them. You have young men living in vans in parking lots, running space heaters to try to stay warm in winter. One story was of 33 people sharing a three-bedroom house! One woman told CBC she paid \$800/month to rent half a bed and didn't know who else shared that bed!! Just before the pandemic, there was an article about a young man from Middleton who was working in Banff. He had work. He had an income, but no place to stay. He tented, he slept in his car, he couch surfed.

We need to rethink how we use space. There's a small lot by Fritz's which has been for sale for ages. Why not stick half a dozen container homes, basically bed sits there, for young retail workers. The old education centre on the Highbury Road is vacant. Built a small motor-court like cluster there. Small one bedrooms with some shared outdoor space and people could walk to work, for groceries, entertainment and amenities. Why not borrow the Tideways idea and bring it to New Minas? Tideways have bachelor apartments for \$380/month and two-bedrooms for \$718/month, utilities included. It's a cooperative so tenants buy a \$300 share and contribute to labour if they can: cleaning a walk, gardening, mowing grass, working in their library, cleaning halls. The County Fair mall could have either a cluster of apartments added to it or a small service hotel. That's larger bedrooms for road warriors. They have desk space and wifi. For food they could buy prepared meals from Sobeys or walk to Boston Pizza or Swiss Chalet. If that were built on top of the vacant stores on the backside of the mall there would be little disruption to current tenants, it would refresh the building, bring in a new captive customer base and perhaps give cause for businesses to occupy the open spaces. Part of the roof could be for a leisure centre, communal garden (if apartment) or gardens and patio.

I think we need solutions which encourage year-round walking to services and amenities. If we are creating more parking lots and I think that is a failure, we should look to Vancouver. Ten or so years ago Walmart wanted to open a huge new store. Locals objected and Walmart came up with solutions to make their building more acceptable. Like a parking lot which was permeable so rain water could seep through it. They also collected roof rain water for irrigation. If the village is to create a new neighbourhood, why not seek funding to make it a model for the country and break away from the traditional ideas of subdivisions and neighbourhoods?

Thanks for consulting with us. These are my priorities. I'd like for the new development to be:

Walkable (grocery stores, a pharmacy, doctor & dental offices within walking distance, a footpath connecting the development to Commercial Street, walking trails away from the main street)

Safe (traffic calming on inner streets, think about how you can situate houses and apartments so that it's easy to see children playing) Natural (leave mature trees in place, car charging stations near the falls)

Affordable (small scale, mixed-use buildings, shared housing with communal spaces like larger kitchens and dining areas, assisted living)

Sociable (a place for community events, music, food trucks & the seafood guy, pop-up retail & markets, picnic space near the falls, BBQ pits, a place for recreation -- pickle ball courts? a water park for hot summers?)

A place for families (space set aside for a future school & childcare, a good, safe place for playing close to walking trails)

Accessible (curb cuts & walk lights for people who are visually impaired -- I don't know of any in New Minas right now)

Visible (how will travelers know this community from the highway? How can people recognize the area like they do with the Mastown Market & its giant lighthouse? Could you name the community for the falls?)

A place for local business to thrive (prioritize locally-owned and small businesses, NO big box stores or car dealerships in this area aside from grocery stores, is it possible to locate a community development office here? is it possible to partner with the community college to offer classes here? Can the Noodle Guy locate his shipping container restaurant here?)

Good afternoon,

We have reviewed the proposed scenarios and prefer scenario #1 with some modifications. If the goal is to have easier access to Commercial Street, then the high density housing and commercial space should be located on the north end of the proposed New Minas South development. This would facilitate active transportation and public transportation options and lesser costs. The east, south and west areas of the proposed development must be single family homes or green spaces to allow for minimal impacts on the local residents who have property in this rural area. Similarly, we agree that protecting some green spaces is important in the planned development.

We also have significant concerns about connecting to Forsythe Rd South in White Rock. The older plans that were published have a "road" from the highway to White Rock Road which makes much more sense for a connector road from the roundabout to the south end, arriving on a safer road that is able to support higher traffic (i.e. White Rock Road).

In addition to our own concerns with how a road closely bordering our residential lot will impact our quality of life and property value, which we have already noted previously, we have numerous other concerns. Forsythe Rd South is a residential road and already has 2 connecting side residential roads (Pine Street and Busch Lane) and another residential side road being developed. Forsythe Road South has a very steep hill and is very twisty with speed limits of 25 km/h and 30 km/h suggested on these bends. This is not an easy road in winter and in fact, the road is typically never plowed until mid-day on snow days when school buses are not running or on weekends. The road runs on the edge of a cliff that has either no guard rail or one that is damaged and would be highly ineffective in an accident. Sightlines for entering the road can be challenging. Additionally, there are numerous families with young children and a very busy community that uses the road for walking and cycling. The shoulders are narrow, often washed out with heavy rain and overgrown with trees, weeds, etc. There are no sidewalks. There are numerous motorcycles and ATVs that use the roadway daily, often at high speeds. With this in mind we don't feel Forsyth Road South is safe for increased traffic flow. The better alternative is connecting to White Rock Road.



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