



“What We Heard” Continuation Report:

Windsor Public Engagement

1.0 Introduction

In 2016, the Municipality of the District of West Hants Council and the Planning and Development Department initiated the process of reviewing the Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS), Land Use By-law (LUB) and Subdivision By-law (referred to as “planning documents”) for the Municipality of West Hants and the community of Hantsport. The review ensures the planning documents evolve and respond to the current environmental, social, and economic climate, and meet the current needs of the residents of the Municipality. The *Public Participation Program Policy* seeks to include public consultation at different stages throughout the process.

In April 2020, the Municipality of the District of West Hants and Town of Windsor consolidated to form West Hants Regional Municipality. Planning and Development Department staff included the Windsor planning documents in the review at that time, however, could not hold any public engagement sessions due to the COVID-19 pandemic and public health restrictions.

Planning and Development Department staff made public consultation a priority during the Plan Review. A “What We Heard” report was created to document the 14 public engagement sessions and 2 youth engagement sessions that took place across West Hants between 2018-2019. The purpose of this continuation report is to document the comments that were received at the Windsor Plan Review meeting on September 22, 2022. This “What We Heard” document was created to ensure that the public comments have been heard and recorded. This report and findings will be presented to the Planning and Heritage Advisory Committee (PAC/HAC) during the Plan Review process before the revised planning documents are drafted for consideration by the public, PAC/HAC and Council.

2.0 Background

All the areas of the Municipality are planned. The Town of Hantsport dissolved into the Municipality of West Hants in 2015, but the community of Hantsport still has its own planning documents. The Town of Windsor consolidated with the Municipality of West Hants in 2020, but the community of Windsor and the former Municipality of West Hants still have their own planning documents. This Plan Review includes the Hantsport, Windsor and West Hants planning documents.

Policy 16.1.2 of the Windsor MPS states that the planning documents should be reviewed every eight (8) years. The last review of the Windsor planning documents was conducted in 2005.

A plan review is a chance to review the current planning documents and make changes where necessary. The review is not intended to create completely new documents; it is an opportunity to review what currently works and what needs to be improved. Even if the MPS or LUB is amended or updated it does not mean that if land is being used for a purpose no longer permitted that purpose would become illegal, however it would restrict anyone wanting to develop that use as a new use in the area. For example: if someone has operated a farm on their property for the last 50+ years which is permitted under the current planning documents, and then the planning documents are amended to prohibit new farms in that area, the current farm is still permitted to operate as a non-conforming use – often referred to as “grandfathered”. However, any new farms would not be permitted.

3.0 Methods

The *Public Participation Program Policy* states that “Council resolves to seek the views of the public and encourage public participation regarding any comprehensive review by developing and implementing a public engagement plan to inform the public and receive comments from the public. The contents are at the discretion of Council but may involve committees, meetings, open houses, surveys, questionnaires, and publications.” Public participation is important because the planning documents guide how the Municipality will make decisions on new development, land use, and infrastructure over the next 20 years. The feedback helps the Planning and Development Department learn what works and what could be done better to achieve the goals of our communities.

The Windsor public meeting was held on September 22, 2022, from 6-8 p.m. at the Windsor Community Centre. The meeting was advertised through posters at local businesses and facilities (Table 1), on the West Hants website and social media pages on September 6, and through invitations to both Councillors and PAC/HAC members.

Table 1: List of Locations with Plan Review Posters

Atlantic Superstore	Windsor Legion	Atlantic Tavern
Petro Canada (Wentworth Rd.)	Windsor Community Centre	Lisa’s Family Restaurant
West Hants Sports Complex	Vapers Attic	Walkers Restaurant
Lawtons Drugs	Gerrish and Gray Café	Dollarama
Kent Building Supplies	Mermaid Theatre	CIBC (Windsor Mall & Gerrish St. locations)
Sobeys	Spitfire Alehouse	Carnival Candy
Canada Post Office	King Street & Morison Drive Municipal Offices	Tim Hortons (downtown)
Schoolhouse Brewery	Windsor Mall	Scotiabank

The meeting was organized to include a short introductory presentation, followed by two group activities which included describing the community of Windsor and outlining what residents wanted Windsor to be known for in 20+ years. The larger group then split up into topic area discussions on residential and mixed-use developments, commercial and industrial use, and agriculture and community use policies. The group discussions were led by questions that staff had created prior to the meeting based on policies in the Windsor Municipal Planning Strategy. Meetings concluded with residents providing their final thoughts through exit surveys.

4.0 “What We Heard”

A total of 38 residents attended the meeting to discuss Windsor planning documents. When asked to describe Windsor the respondents used words such as: friendly and warm, rich in history and culture, quiet, traditional, growing, construction, agriculture, and the lack of a lake. When asked what they would like this area to be known for in 20+ years the respondents used descriptions such as: a small-

town feel with a sense of community, welcoming with increased diversity, opportunities for affordable housing and local businesses, a tourist destination, a strong walkable downtown, with a functioning health care system.

In the discussions on residential developments, the participants noted that there was not enough housing (rental or ownership) in Windsor. They also stated that most of the housing is in car dependent areas which makes it difficult for residents to access services since there is no transit system. Some in the group thought there should be smaller scale housing for seniors, other were comfortable with more variety including medium density (4 units) housing. When asked their opinion on mixed-use developments (i.e., commercial uses on the ground floor of an apartment building) there was consensus that mixed-use developments may be more appropriate downtown and not within established neighbourhoods (i.e., areas that have been almost entirely zoned for low density residential uses). The discussion group also suggested that walkability and connectivity, sustainability, accessibility and streetscaping should be a requirement to be able to consider mixed-use development by development agreement.

In the commercial and industry discussions it was noted that the commercial areas of Windsor are vibrant and inviting, but there is still work to do with certain areas including Gerrish Street, the Windsor Mall and the NSPI property on Water Street. Participants also noted that they would not like to see historic buildings demolished for new commercial expansion, and that commercial businesses should be thinking about the audience they are catering for, especially with the expansion of the Crossing development. Advertising for businesses in Windsor was seen as of vital importance to bring people into the area and showcase what Windsor has to offer. Transportation to the shopping areas was seen as a barrier for some residents unable to get groceries and access services including employment. Participants also discussed the need for an anchor industry (50-100 employees) that would bring a new audience of people to Windsor, others commented that there needs to be more housing here first.

The agriculture discussion groups identified important agricultural land in the community and the importance of those areas including local food security, greenspaces, and flood control. The participants discussed the importance of protecting agriculture for future generations. The majority of participants were also in favour of household livestock including the keeping of chickens, except roosters.

The group discussing community uses identified where there is significant green space in the community and where there could be future connections. It was noted that there should be more community space provided as the community grows and that new developments should provide sufficient space for public art and useable parkland.

Only 14 surveys were completed by the 38 people that attended the meeting. The responses are provided in the appendices.

5.0 Appendix

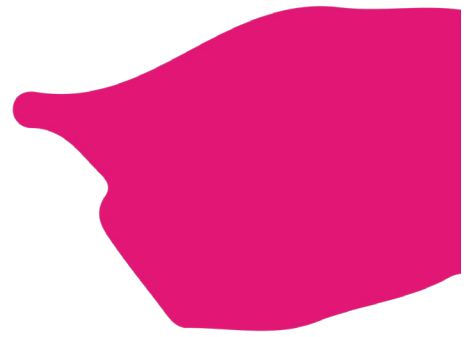
Windsor
September 22, 2022
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.



Describe Windsor

- Agriculture
- Affordable
- Annapolis Valley
- At risk of wasting its potential
- Big enough
- Central
- Changing (2)
- Cliquey
- Complex rules and regulations
- Construction
- Cute
- Derelict facades downtown
- Derelict homes
- Dusty
- Dynamic
- Dill farm
- Economic divergence
- Economically depressed
- Exhibition
- Flood risk
- Friendly / Warm (6)
- Garlic
- Good location
- Good snow management
- Growing (2)
- Heart of West Hants
- Historically significant
- Irrelevant boundary
- Lack of affordable housing
- Lack of community events
- Lack of nature
- Needs more communication and promoting (2)

- Needs traffic lights
- No Lake (4)
- Noisy
- Opportunity and revitalization
- Outdated
- Overdeveloped infrastructure
- Overregulated
- Peaceful
- Pollution
- Potential
- Pumpkins
- Quiet (3)
- Rich in history and culture (3)
- River
- Segregated
- Site of nationally important political and cultural events
- Small town feel (2)
- Social
- Traditional (2)
- Unaccountable landlords
- Vitality



In 20+ years from now what do you hope this area is known for?

- Accessible walking trails (2)
- Affordable housing (3)
- Better than Wolfville
- Bike lanes
- Birthplace of Hockey Museum
- Connection of trails (2)
- Downtown as a destination
- Environmental sustainability
- Friendly
- Food producing
- Functioning healthcare (3)
- Gyms
- Increased diversity (4)
- Increased homeownership
- Joining of cultures

- Lake frontage development (2)
- Less conflict
- Local entrepreneurship (2)
- Managed flower beds
- Marshland and flooding protection
- Medium density
- Modern businesses
- More amenities
- More business variety (2)
- Multicultural support
- No monopolies on business
- Opportunities to thrive in community
- Opportunity for local jobs
- Optimistic
- Parks
- Peaceful
- Positive
- Promote larger business community
- Protected nature
- Recognition for Truth and Reconciliation
- Reduced poverty
- Revitalized
- Senior care
- Sense of community (3)
- Simple municipal bureaucracy
- Small town feel (6)
- Splash pad
- Strong downtown
- Tidal bore or marshland attraction
- Tourist destination (6)
- Urban agriculture
- Vibrant (2)
- Vibrant downtown (2)
- Walkability (3)
- Welcoming new families (2)



Residential

Q: When you compare Windsor to other areas in the Municipality, Annapolis Valley and the Province, what forms of housing are unique to Windsor?

- Historic Victorian Homes
- Fringe Farmhouses
- Not a variety of unique housing styles

Q: Is the current housing stock meeting the needs of residents? If not, what is missing?

- Not enough rental or purchasable (although lots of new development, i.e., The Crossing)
- Car dependent
- Need for landlord accountability (Unsightly premises)
- No transit system between housing and amenities/services (except dial-a-ride)
- Want smaller scaled single-unit housing for seniors (bungalow style, small lot)
- More focus on eco-friendly
- More accessible
- Need more medium density (4ish units)
- Need more variety
- Need more affordable housing units
 - “Affordable” could be based on census income breakdowns

Q: How many residential units do you consider to be a 'multi-unit'? Do you think more multi-unit buildings should be allowed in Windsor?

- Wide range of perception for multi-units: 2+, 3+, 2-4, 4-6, 8+, 8-10 units
- General view that there is a lack of medium density units (4ish units)
- Preference for not allowing medium density as-of-right in established neighbourhoods
- How a multi-unit is constructed is important (what it looks like i.e., architecture)
 - A medium density building (4ish units) could be constructed to look like a single unit dwelling

Mixed-Use

Q: How do you feel about mixed-use development (i.e., allowing residential and commercial uses in the same building)?

- Generally, in favour
- Preferred in downtown, not established neighbourhoods
- Opportunity to enhance small town feel

Q: What commercial uses should be permitted in a mixed-use building?

- Restaurants are important
- Should depend on location (downtown allow for more commercial uses vs. in residential areas allowing less intensive uses)

Q: Is there particular criteria that should be used when considering multi-unit/mixed-use development by development agreement?

- Requirements for walkability and connectivity (AT Plan)
- Sustainability
- Universal design and accessibility
- Streetscaping

Q: How many stories of residential uses should be permitted in a mixed-use building?

- Should be depended on location (downtown allow for more commercial uses vs. in residential areas allowing less commercial)

Commercial & Industry

Q: What do you think of the downtown Commercial areas? What do you go downtown for?

- Food and drink
- Post office
- Bank
- Convenient
- For a date night
- Coffee shop and bakery
- But not for overall shopping
- Only go downtown occasionally
- Shopping patterns have changed; there's now more big box stores; since COVID people are also online shopping a lot more and looking for an experience if they do go into a store
- Don't know if it sustainable having a variety or multiple of the same type of store; would love more specialty types of restaurants (i.e., a sushi place, an Indian restaurant, etc.)
- People coming from elsewhere for our dining, etc. (Tatums has a niche market for brides)
- Some people in the group go downtown to eat out and get services (i.e., chiropractor) and support local as there is a good variety in Windsor
- One person stated they choose to go into Windsor instead of Sackville (as they are about equal distance to each place) just to support local for shops and services
- Variety would be nice but there's only so much space in Windsor
- Signage in downtown isn't big enough to direct new people to where everything is; need community signage
- Parking – not enough – need one large parking area (not on Ft. Edward)
- Not enough people know what Windsor has to offer – needs advertising (Ardoise Community Hall has a newsletter that they send by mail to people in their area)

Q: What about the rest of the Commercial areas in Windsor (i.e., along Wentworth Road)? What do you travel there for?

- Go for grocery, liquor store, hardware store, Tim Hortons,
- People like the variety in those areas
- They drive to the shops and do not have any issue finding parking
- People need transportation in Windsor to get to those stores – the Taxi service is terrible, dial-a-ride is a door-to-door service but is expensive; we used to have Kings Transit; Community Health Board discussions re: new smaller service provided by Kings Transit
- Hiring can be an issue due to lack of transportation to businesses; someone knows of one business that rents a van to get their employees there

Q: Do we have enough, too much or too little land for Commercial uses in Windsor?

- Not much space to expand downtown
- Wentworth Road / Cole Drive area for box stores but people need transportation there
- Existing commercial does not seem excessively busy so expansion may not be necessary
- Room for growth
- Commercial diversity in downtown core however concerned about removing heritage buildings to do so; don't want them taken away; not at the cost of what we like about Windsor for commercial; we could spread the downtown core outward instead
- In the past bigger businesses tried to come to Windsor but were not permitted
- What do we want? Not a Walmart; more variety promotion and support; more parking downtown; look to other small towns for their experience (i.e., Tatamagouche train track accommodations)
- Move NSPI from downtown to the Industrial park – they are taking up prime land downtown; could do a land exchange
- Need aesthetic requirements of businesses (i.e., some of the exterior appearance of businesses look like they are falling down) – it doesn't attract people
- Township board has a grant program for exterior repairs however their money pot is small
- Some think regulations are needed through the Municipality to enforce aesthetic standards
- Mural project to attract new people and enhance heritage topics in Windsor
- Need database for businesses to understand what grants are available in the community
- Most commercial buildings rented by locals from people who never come to Windsor and don't see how run down the building actually looks – how do we upgrade those?
- Windsor seems to be changing – new life, inspirational however still a lot in opposition – we need to find a balance
- Residential or commercial is pretty cheap in Windsor at the moment – need to respect current businesses and don't necessarily want big money coming in to gentrify the neighbourhood
- Don't rely on social media to advertise the businesses, still need paper to go out
- Huge expansion of the Crossing coming – need to support that development and have commercial appeal to seniors as they are the largest population

General Discussion on Commercial & Industry

- Industrial – focus on creative small businesses / need to attract a medium size industry – need an anchor business (100-150 employees) – we have Biovectra however there is nowhere for their employees to live in Windsor
- Commercial boundary needs to be changed – don't want all businesses to move outside of downtown
- Commercial starting to change downtown
- Need to fix buildings – so difficult and resources – risk to Gerrish St businesses due to high turnover and landlords not fixing buildings; no one wants to invest there and the Accessibility Act regs will come in soon
- Promotion of businesses needed – Garlic Fest was a huge hit
- WH as a whole easy to work with in permitting process, business friendly, and less expensive process for rezoning or development agreement applications than other municipalities
- Population drives control (not similar to the UK)
- Growth downtown; need a destination for people to stop into places (furniture store); outsiders don't know enough about Windsor
- Core – become a knowledge hub; or life sciences and healthy living community (hospital, BioVectra, specialty stores, cedar wellness centre, ski hill) – hub for economic development
- Need to create our niche using what we already have
- Outdoor recreation facility – need walking, biking, etc. area
- Need: Trails and open space; destination of downtown; housing (affordable); existing community uses (school, hospitals, etc.)
- Bring in bigger businesses to attract residents however they can't find housing here
- Need diversity here; how do we encourage people to come here and how do we support them? (housing, etc.)
- Maintenance of older homes not the best for all ages and some people don't want the hassle of moving into old homes
- New housing all geared towards older people
- We don't want to become the commuter shed or retirement community of HRM; we need younger people and families too
- Need attractions and things to do
- Although positive things are happening downtown (most liquor based businesses though) there is a lot of turnover downtown and some businesses moving further out (Spoke and Note moved to Falmouth)
- Need more offices and shops as it's hard to find an office space to rent
- Even though people working from home more still need to bring office space to the core
- New commercial space expensive to build – nowhere in Windsor for 4-5 employees; most businesses have to settle for a space that doesn't suit them
- Windsor mall needs to go – it is uninviting and people seeing that from the highway are not attracted to come into Windsor; so much potential there – “crown jewel property”; built in the

60s as the “commercial destination” of Windsor but never took off; it is now a barrier to downtown and it’s no longer much of a mall; there used to be a two storey bank of NS there which was much more grand, it was ripped down for the mall; the mall was never built to expand

- Enough demand for commercial and financial commercial services which more are needed

Agriculture

Q: What agricultural operations are you aware of in Windsor?

- Windsor boundary does not make sense and should be removed
- Identified important agricultural lands: around/behind Subway on Wentworth Road, Irving lands, cattle fields across Wentworth/Payzant Drive
- Windsor has direct access to agricultural lands and should be known for agriculture, not exactly in the former town but on the periphery
- Along Wentworth Gateway not pleasant, bleak; should be more walkable and shoppable

Q: What benefits are there to having agricultural uses in Windsor?

- Windsor is home to the longest-running, oldest/continuously used farmlands in North America—identity to the community
- Protecting existing agricultural uses is important—local food security, greenspaces, flood control etc.
- Soils are extremely fertile and often do not require further fertilization
- Brings benefits from tourism opportunities and associated commercial enterprises such as wineries, breweries and distilleries
- High level of benefits from food security and help bridge the high costs of food and food imports

Q: What do you think about urban agriculture uses in Windsor (i.e., household livestock)?

- All in favour for household livestock
- Urban agriculture uses acceptable—such as chickens or animals, smaller than a goat. No roosters or goats
- Questions raised from an individual regarding possible soil contamination from urban farms/vegetables—should the # of vegetable plants be limited?

Q: Is agricultural land in Windsor adequately protected?

- Serviced areas should have most density to preserve growth/sprawl
- More agricultural land in Windsor is favoured
- Farmland not adequately protected and should be protected even more

- Lots of agricultural land has been removed and continues to be removed—Garlands Crossing, Irving lands

Q: How can the Municipality support agricultural uses?

- Consensus for more greenspaces; losing/diminishing a lot of existing agricultural land in Garlands Crossing
- Concern over erosion coming down the hill from Irving lands behind the Super 8
- Need to contain growth/sprawl and density
- Victory garden concepts
- Protection of existing trees and greenspaces should be incorporated into new developments

Q: Should existing agricultural operations be allowed to expand in the future? (On the same lot, more lots?)

- Irving lands should be agricultural and residential
- Growth will require additional parks in agriculture/dykeland areas and should be protected to existing agriculture

Community Use

Q: Is there adequate space for community uses?

- Town boundary does not make sense
- Consensus of no, there is not enough community spaces (*group #1*)
- Industrial Park should have a park space for its expansive views of the river and surrounding scenery
- Adequate amount of community spaces yes, but should be more, and especially as the community grows (*group #2*)

Q: What are your favourite community use spaces or parks? What makes them great? What can be improved?

- Waterfront walk—excellent for walking, views, beautiful, well-kept, some vandalism prone to area
- Need playground spaces and more recreation infrastructure along waterfront
- Fort Edward—great loop for walking, significant for its views and history
- Connections to/from Fort Edward needs a real strategy to improve connectivity
- Haliburton House—excellent, fantastic opportunities; also favoured for its disk golf and old apple orchard
- Tregothic Trail—beautiful escape to nature, makes urban surroundings look “crummy”; snow shoveling an issue for winter accessibility
- Connectivity of trails to downtown and other communities an issue

Q: Are there any parks, open spaces, or landscapes that you find significant in Windsor?

- Victoria Park—especially when the farmers market is on-site
- View planes of surroundings from Fort Edward and Industrial Park are significant

Q: Are you aware of the programs and facilities provided by WHRM? Do you regularly participate? Why or why not?

- Some no and some yes, and not enough connections for biking within Windsor

Q: Do you think there are enough green spaces in Windsor? If not, where would you like to see more? Are there any types of recreation uses missing in Windsor?

- Former tourist bureau area along Colonial Road needs much more (large potential) and former tourist bureau on Upper Water Street
- Need connectivity of greenspaces along the waterfront/downtown, to greenspace at former tourist bureau area along Colonial Road/Nesbitt Street, and to greenspace area at Wentworth Road behind Subway/PetroCan (Shell Environmental Park area)
- Need another dog park—brings people together and does not have to be big/take up a lot of space
- Need more public/community garden spaces
- Open spaces provide massive health benefits
- Healthy community is extremely important, open spaces for mental/physical health benefits
- Open spaces draw more people to the community
- Can be branded as a “healthy town”—also promoted by businesses such as BioMedica and BioVectra

Q: For new developments, do you think sufficient parkland is provided?

- Increasing pressure on density and need for urban open spaces
- 1% of buildings with large footprints (apartments, multi-units, municipal buildings etc.) should be dedicated to providing public art
- Should be more parkland dedication with new developments—“once land is gone, it’s gone”
- Parkland dedication should be more and access to parkland important
- Parkland dedication for subdivisions and for developments of multi-units (development agreements?) from Toronto and Vancouver are positive examples and should be incorporated as well

Exit Survey

Please select the statement(s) that best describe you:

I live in Windsor	I work in Windsor	I live outside of Windsor but within West Hants Regional Municipality	Other
8	6	5	1

How did you hear about this event?	What did you enjoy most about this event?	What would make this event better?	Any additional comments?
Family	Talking to actual professionals, making the town work and interested	Noise control, task lighting, better time management	More focus on environment, ecology, energy efficient solutions
Online	Lively discussion, novel ideas	Larger attendance (but this was very good)	
PAC / Housing Coalition / Facebook	Meeting other residents	Reigning in single issue folks	
Friend	Opportunity to give input and opinions	Better advertised	
PAC / HAC	Discussion on agriculture		
Jim Ivey	Interaction	More sessions	
Social Media	Discussion with differing viewpoints	More time, maybe better crowd control (through pointed specific questions and yes/no topics maybe)	Thanks!
Posters	Interaction	More communication re: purpose	More opportunity to discuss specific developments and their impact on existing properties "NIMBY" opportunities
	The discussions, very fulfilling	Good question - more time	
Word of mouth	Hearing different opinions and perspectives	More attendees	
Facebook	Prompting questions to guide conversation	More information ahead of time so we can arrive informed	I think the Town could do a better job of communicating (e.g., newsletter) so people can both hear about things like this event and

			easily read the notes after. More surveys to get a pulse would also help (once newsletter audience grows) so that meetings can be more productive vs. simply informational
Sara emailed me	Talking as a resident	Mics	
Stefan from Geldert House	Hearing other people's opinions and diversity of thought	More people of all ages	
Online	Broad ideas, subjects	Separate 3 tables, hearing terrible	Integration within West Hants; move to one overall planning document ASAP

Email Received following Meeting

To: Sara Poirier

cc: Alex Dunphy and Chris Burns

From: Resident

Date: September 26, 2022

Four things came up in the discussion that need to be highlighted.

1. Public washrooms are needed throughout the Windsor area for visitors, parents and kids to access.
2. Retail development on Gerrish and Water streets needs to be expanded to encourage tourist visits and resident convenience. An art gallery, ice cream shop, tourism oriented sales of clothing and souvenirs, specialty food items, hiking/camping/excursion gear, small specialty stores (Christmas, candles, fudge, craft and art supplies) and take out sandwich shop.
3. Move the municipal employees back downtown. The mall or that prov building at King and Water would work. The daily spending and traffic through downtown would add life and excitement and wealth to the area rather than automobile oriented access in an industrial area.
4. There needs to be concerted effort to address all types of affordable/accessible rental and owned housing. I have 20 years of experience in community development in this subject area and would love to serve Windsor if possible.