

# WHAT WE HEARD REPORT



Municipality of  
**Shelburne**



May 2024



# What We Heard Report

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# What We Heard Report

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The ultimate goal of any public engagement process is to include the public in decision-making. The Municipality of the District of Shelburne is updating its Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) and the associated Land Use By-law (LUB) to comply with the Province's Minimum Planning Regulations. The last review of the LUB was completed in September 2015 so it is time for a refresh and update. The Municipality is engaging the public to ensure the involvement of residents and stakeholders in the plan review process so that those who may be affected by or interested in an issue or decision may have direct input into the policies and regulations that will shape their future.

Broad public engagement involved open houses, submissions, and a survey. Those who were not able to attend the three open houses were given the opportunity to participate via an online survey that was available on the Municipality's website. If responses were not submitted to the survey online, the Municipality forwarded copies of the completed surveys so that these responses were included. Key informant interviews were carried out. The purpose of these interviews was to speak with a range of individuals whose backgrounds enhance the understanding of the Municipality's challenges and potential opportunities. Key informants were community leaders, experts, and individuals with unique perspectives.

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## 2 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

### 2.1 OPEN HOUSES

Three open houses were held at the end of 2023. Approximately 46 members of the public attended the open houses. Open House Schedule

The three Open Houses were held at:

- *Municipality of the District of Shelburne Government Building*  
*November 22, 2023 from 5 - 7 pm*
- *Sable River Community Hall*  
*November 23, 2023 from 11 am – 1 pm*
- *Gunning Cove Community Hall*  
*December 4, 2023 from 5 – 7 pm*

#### *ATMOSPHERE*

Neutral to positive. Most participants were apprehensive at first and were expecting a presentation, but gradually understood the format and provided feedback as the sessions progressed.

#### *FORMAT*

Open House with two poster boards, five maps, and a table with current LUB and MPS.

#### *SUMMARY OF EVENTS*

Although advertised and laid out as an Open House, attendees were expecting a presentation at all three events. As the format was explained, attendees better understood the process and started to provide comments or discuss among themselves. Some directly asked to be set aside to have a face-to-face discussion. Most, if not all, attendees left satisfied. The open houses were a friendly and respectful environment.

The major themes of the events revolved around the environment and the implementation of regulations. For the environment, this primarily includes wind

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turbines and protecting natural assets (e.g., watersheds, parks, and coastal lines). For regulations, this includes adopting relative and realistic regulations and setbacks, and ensuring the process is well structured throughout

## 2.1.1 MAJOR THEMES

### INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

- *Keep industrial development in current locations.*
- *Concerns that new regulations will impact the lobster industry.*

### TRAFFIC

- *Increase of truck transportation on local roads increasing noise and danger.*

### ENVIRONMENT

- *The Provincial Park Act needs to be implemented for permanent protection.*
- *Prioritize development with renewable energy and practices.*
- *Base the plan review on the impacts of climate change (storms, fires, floods, etc..).*
- *Need to protect the watershed areas.*

### WIND FARMS

- *There was a large support for wind farms, but not with the current regulations and proposed areas*

### PROVINCIAL AND FEDERAL JURISDICTION

- *Provincial and Federal laws are not being enforced and the plan review needs language to address this (i.e., boulders in the dunes on Louis Head Beach).*
- *There were questions surrounding why the plan review was required and where the provincial requirements came from.*

### REGULATIONS

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- *Setbacks and restrictions are required for future development.*
- *Coastal protection by-laws need to be enforced to sustainably develop future homes and industrial buildings, while protecting the environment.*
- *Concern was expressed regarding the Municipality's ability to adhere to the Coastal Protection Act regulations. (Note: in February 2024, the Province confirmed that it would not proclaim the Coastal Protection Act.)*
- *Adopt the regulations of the Lahey Report as it provides the best practices for the environment and industry.*
- *Provide guidance to easily approve residential solar panel developments or other means of renewable energy.*
- *Nearby neighbours need to be informed of surrounding developments.*

### MAPS

- *Provide a large variety of maps in the plan review.*
- *"No-go" zones for wind turbine development, environmental constraints (e.g., flood, wetlands, watershed), zoning, etc.*

### NUISANCE CONTROL

- *Provide regulations on burning, specifically garbage.*

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## SHORT-TERM RENTALS & OTHER AREAS OF DISCUSSION

### Communication/Advertisement

- *Most felt that the event should have been advertised better with a more detailed description of the event.*
- *The Council and Brighter Community Planning were expected to give a presentation explaining the process, purpose, history, current policies, etc.*
- *Many expected Council members to be in attendance.*
- *Concerns on the timing of the plan review with municipal elections within the year.*
- *The current and proposed (draft) LUB and MPS should be easily accessible.*
- *Provide accurate data (some of the boards displayed inaccurate data).*

## 2.2 SURVEYS

### 2.2.1 ONLINE SURVEYS

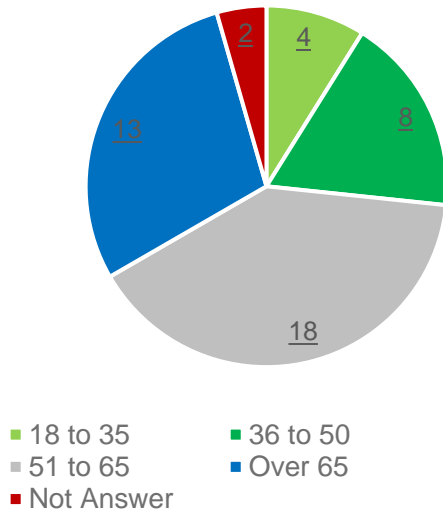
Community members were asked to complete a survey, which included demographics on the age and community of participants and covered a range of topics, including priorities for improving their community, vision and aspirations for the next decade, housing supply, where growth should be focused, transportation (including active transportation), the environment (including climate change, coastal erosion, and renewable energy), and the economy. Participants were also asked to provide three words that inspired them for the future of the Municipality. There were 45 surveys submitted. The timeline for the completion of online surveys was extended to 31 March 2024.

The online survey results are as follows:



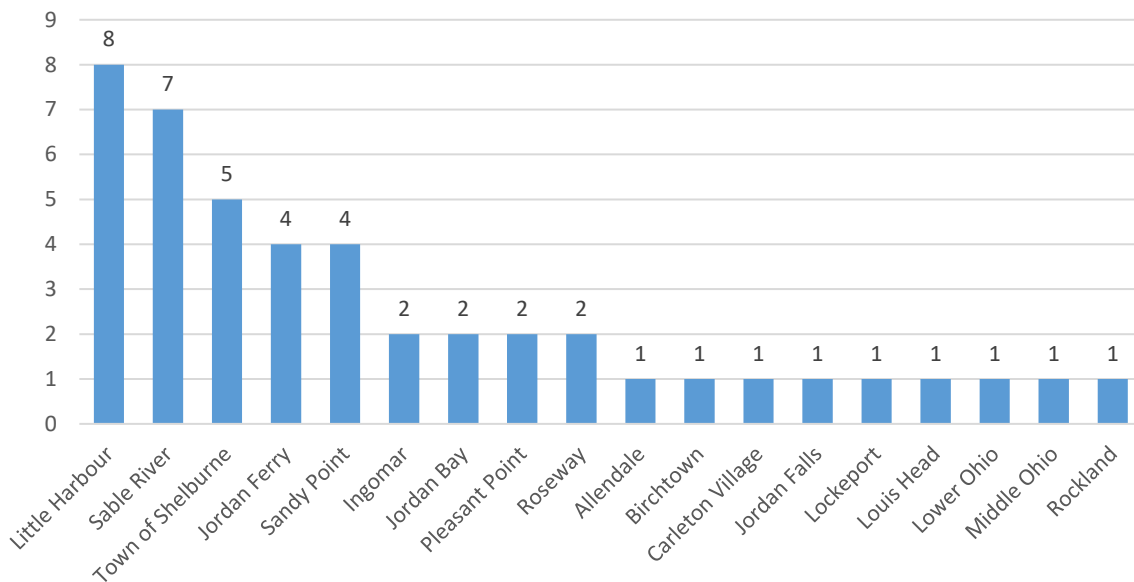
# What We Heard Report

Ages of Survey Respondents



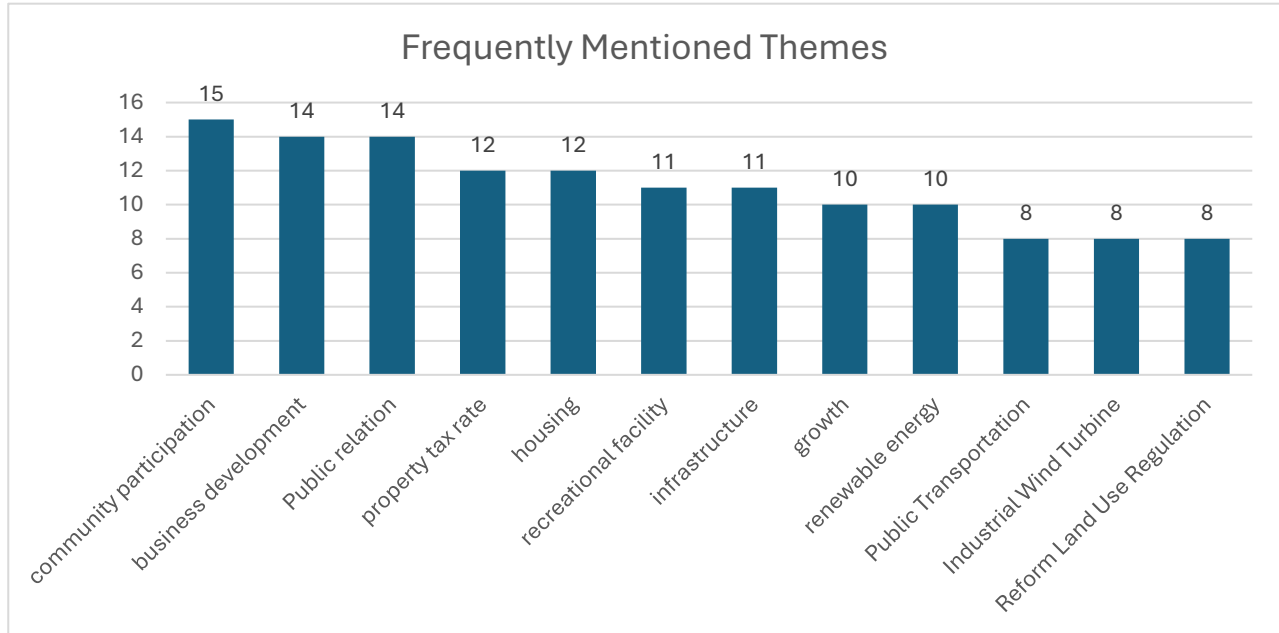
Note: There were two instances where data from the surveys could not be used. Poorer quality data was not used, which resulted in Questions 4, 10, and 12 being removed from the analysis. As a result of a previous question having participants rank options, Question 4 Vision saw most participants ranking again rather than using a Likert scale to rate importance, as instructed. Questions 10 Economy and 12 Environment were combined into one question on the online survey, so this data was not harvested.

Communities of Survey Respondents



# What We Heard Report

## 2.3 MOST FREQUENTLY MENTIONED THEMES FROM SURVEY RESPONSES



### 2.3.1 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION (IN DECISION MAKING AND GOVERNANCE)

Many respondents wished to see greater participation from the community and/or less government intervention in governance and policy-making. Many respondents spoke about frustration towards the unclarity in the communication between government and community members. They wish to have more ways for public input in the decision making process. Respondants that highlighted this theme often mentioned public relationship.

“Keep communicating and meeting community stakeholders in planning and decision making.” (Vision and aspiration)

“A more free, caring and supportive society taking responsibility for their own actions and less reliance on government. A much reduced government and taxes.” (Vision and aspiration)

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"Inclusion - low community turn out due to lack of information. Meet Community on the behalf of municipality. Transparency regarding the (unrecognizable) behind the open ended questions Questions are (unrecognizable), derived from researched truth or for political agenda? Objective or Subjective?" (Issues the Municipality should consider)

"Freedoms, Charter and Bill of Rights should take precedence over local by-laws. Referendum for any changes rather than impose your will as you did with the recent wind-farm debacle. More communication in letter form as not everybody has or uses facebook... As residents and citizens we demand our elected representatives listen to us, if not please leave." (Issues the Municipality should consider)

"There needs to be more talk on how the municipality can engage in community development and vice versa. Coming from a background of community building and the role of arts and culture in public spaces, it's a personal priority to have more input from community and see the following through as opposed to just taking all feedback and not doing anything about it." (Issues the Municipality should consider)

### 2.3.2 BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Many respondents wished to see more a supportive environment to attract businesses. They deemed it as crucial for more local services, employment, retaining population, and growth in the community.

"Business within the county should be encouraged as business tax should there be enough businesses should offset personal property taxes." (Priority not listed in question)

"To allow for youth and housing and business that maintains or encourages a focus on sustainability and preservation of the land" (Vision and aspiration)

"Better access to community spaces, more eating / drinking / grocery shopping in underserviced communities" (Vision and aspiration)

"Growth small businesses downtown (including sprucing up downtown look and feel), alternative schooling options, natural coastline preservation, attract more visitors (what is the vision for why someone would visit Shelburne?), water access/activities for

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visitors (we have a beautiful harbour yet don't offer a lot for people to enjoy it when they come visit), support for small farmers."  
(Vision and aspiration)

### 2.3.3 (GOVERNMENT) PUBLIC RELATIONSHIP

*A number of respondents expressed frustration, which seemed to emanate from having limited opportunities for information and communication.*

"Actions being responsive to voices. Decisions being enforced."  
(Vision and aspiration)

"A place where citizen input and engagement is valued, citizen quality of life is a priority in local government decisions, and local government is accountable to citizens." (Vision and aspiration)

"I am very concerned that this county was so willing to "sell us out" in terms of providing a green light to the wind turbine project of past years which would have completely devalued our property. This has affected the credibility residents feel toward the local council and lends toward distrust." (Priority not listed in question)

"Need more public notification not just relying on people reading the municipal web page. How do we know to look there. Please let people know when you have something put together. Do not let part time residents restrict full time residents." (Issues the Municipality should consider)

"This was a big disappointment. Expected some context for taking public input. Feel like public being ignored/co-opted again. Hope this doesn't check the box for public input. This was weak!" (Issues the Municipality should consider)

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### 2.3.4 (PROPERTY) TAX RATE

Many respondents find the current (property) tax rate being burdensome and hope to lower it.

"Not being dictated to as to how we use and develop our properties that we are taxed heavily on. Improve health care in our community. Bring in businesses to create employment." (Priority not listed in question)

"My biggest vision would be to stop the municipality from raising our taxes to the extent I can no longer live there and end up selling my house because of that. I am 67 years old and have worked very hard to get a modest home on a lake with 1260 sq ft. My assessment went up 73% this year. When we appealed our assessment 5 years ago, PVS said that our assessment would go up for the first few years and then would start dropping. Our home is 7 years old now and I do not see that happening." (Vision and aspiration)

"A more free, caring, and supportive society taking responsibility for their own actions and less reliance on government. A much-reduced government and taxes." (Vision and aspiration)

"Encourage growth in an intelligent way. Lower taxes for those providing jobs and housing." (Priority not addressed)

"Focus on revenue producing initiatives rather than gaining revenue from taxing individual homeowners." (Priority not addressed)

### 2.3.5 HOUSING

Many respondents hope to see more housing development and alternatives in the community. Housing was deemed as a crucial component to retain population, improving quality of life, and the vibrancy of the community. Aside from encouraging more housing development, some respondents wanted to see more variety of housing and less roadblocks for development.

*"Allowing alternative builds such as moved earth, Struble, cob, card wood etc. Also off grid houses." (Priority not addressed)*

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*"Freedom to build/live in unconventional types of homes (tiny house, earth ship, log home, yurt, fold out home from China...) on your own property. Equality when considering who can build - allowing a lower income family to build/ live on their land. (High income people hire contractors or lawyers to find loopholes to do what they want). Making information easily available for people who need to navigate building permits. What does the individual person need? (drawings, blueprints, CAD, engineer stamped drawings, are purchased drawing from the USA off the internet going to be accepted?...). People who are capable of building, without hiring tradespeople, should be allowed to as long as things are building code standards and pass inspection." (Priority not addressed)"Focus on revenue producing initiatives rather than gaining revenue from taxing individual homeowners." (Priority not addressed)*

*"Better healthcare, more multi-unit housing, fulltime jobs, expansion of water and sewer services, amalgamation." (Vision and aspiration)*

*"Support industries that will provide job security for future generations. Invest in services that will increase quality of life for residents (health care, recreation facilities, housing, etc.)" (Issues the Municipality should consider)*

*"Putting road blocks in the path of growth, or housing is not going to benefit the county." (Issues the Municipality should consider)*

*"Initiatives to keep young people from moving away - providing more choices for education, employment, recreation activities and housing." (Issues the Municipality should consider)*

### 2.3.6 RECREATIONAL FACILITY

Respondents generally are not as opinionated towards this as to other themes. They welcome and hope to have more recreational facilities in the community to improve quality of life and attract/retain more people in the community.

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*"Cultural/community activities and infrastructure to hold them in. Access to public transportation." (Priority not addressed)*

*"I would like to see a community that is thriving off eco tourism. I foresee the trails being opened up to OHV for travelling, more walking trails, perhaps to a destination such as a "look off" type view, water, etc. boat tours to seal island, mc nutt's, shark fishing tours, etc." (Vision and aspiration)*

*"Initiatives to keep young people from moving away - providing more choices for education, employment, recreation activities and housing." (Issues the Municipality should consider)*

*"Recreation issues like ball fields/ multi purpose center were not in this survey. I would assume everyone should be in favor of children and adults receiving exercise at a very low cost. And the ball field is the least expensive sport to play. This type of sport allows just about every generation to enjoy even if it is just grandma and grandpa cheering on the grandchildren." (Issues the Municipality should consider)*  
*"What are the intentions of the Plan Review? Are their plans to revitalize the Groventine Ball Park and add to its abilities to provide sport. Add play area, natural playground." (Additional questions and comments)*

### 2.3.7 GROWTH

*"Growth" as a theme represents the general idea of respondents wanting to see more population and business growth shaping their community in the future. Such components are deemed as crucial in sustaining the community. This theme is closely linked to housing and business development. A few respondents who addressed this theme also specified the type of growth they wish to happen.*

*"Same small community feel but greater population and amenities." (Vision and aspiration)*

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*"Slow growth. People living on their own how they want to, with few restrictions." (Vision and aspiration)*

*"Growth (of) small businesses (in) downtown (including sprucing up downtown look and feel)." (Vision and aspiration)*

*"If the Municipality could work aggressively to encourage large residential developments to grow our pop. it would ensure the growth of our community, while making it much more attractive to industry and economic development which would help protect and grow our services and help combat some existing social issues." (Additional questions and comments)*

### 2.3.8 INFRASTRUCTURE

*"Infrastructure" as an identified theme represents the general idea of respondents wanting to see more hard infrastructure being added or maintained in their community. This includes transportation, cell phone service, water and sewage services, etc.*

*"Cultural/community activities and infrastructure to hold them in. Access to public transportation." (Priority not addressed)*

*"Better cell service, (unrecognizable) alternative energy, solar, wind." (Priority not addressed)*

*"More transportation options" (Vision and aspiration)"Better healthcare, more multi-unit housing, fulltime jobs, expansion of water and sewer services, amalgamation." (Vision and aspiration)*

*"Upgrading secondary roads with have been neglected over the past years." (Issues the Municipality should consider)*

### 2.3.9 RENEWABLE ENERGY

Multiple respondents mentioned that they want to see more renewable energy. It is important to note that concerns towards industrial wind turbine are also prevalent among the responses. A distinction between



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having private renewable energy devices and respondents' opinions on large scale wind turbine project needs to be drawn in the future reviewing of the survey results.

*"Access to incentives for installation of solar panel." (Priority not addressed)*

*"Possible wind turbine installation." (Vision and aspiration)*

*"More solar power & an affordable public transport system." (Vision and aspiration)*

*"No Wind Farms! Solar yes and individuals doing solar should be encouraged but definitely NO Wind Farms, they are a blot on the landscape and not worth the environmental impact." (Issues the Municipality should consider)*

*"You left out Wind Turbines and Solar which will play a huge part in future development. They are coming and hopefully this issue will be addressed in policies that are both transparent and science-based, using up to date scientific data to plot the future course that will protect Flora, Fawna and Taxpayers." (Issues the Municipality should consider)*

*"Anything that makes us more sustainable (solar, raising animals, growing food, hunting, fishing) should be welcomed and encouraged, even supported (including financially) by the municipality." (Additional questions and comments)*

### 2.3.10 PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Many respondents briefly mentioned about having more public transportation options in the community. It is deemed as crucial to residents' mobility and beneficial to improve the quality of life of community members. One respondent also expressed his doubt about the feasibility of having such a service in areas outside of the Town of Shelburne.

*"More solar power & an affordable public transport system." (Vision and aspiration)*

*"There are no methods of Public Transportation. The taxi needs to be prebooked days in advance. Uber/Lyft is needed."*

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*Bring back the train, the bus, the guy with a passenger van.”  
(Issues the Municipality should consider)*

*“If you really think public transportation can work outside of the Town of Shelburne, think again. Can you see a lobster fisherman hauling traps to their boat via bus? Can the lobster boats sail without diesel fuel? Can anyone outside of town get anywhere in an electric vehicle? I am doubtful.”  
(Issues the Municipality should consider)*

*“Bike rental program for town. Public transportation of some sort that is affordable.” (Priority not addressed)*

### 2.3.11 INDUSTRIAL WIND TURBINE

Multiple respondents expressed their concerns against the large-scale industrial wind turbine developments in the community. The survey results appear that the wind turbine project might be an incident that caused a degree of friction between some members of the public and the local government.

*“No commercial wind turbines.” (Priority not addressed)*

*“I am very concerned that this county was so willing to “sell us out” in terms of providing a green light to the wind turbine project of past years which would have completely devalued our property. This has affected the credibility residents feel toward the local council and lends toward distrust.” (Priority not listed in question)*

*“No Wind Farms! Solar yes and individuals doing solar should be encouraged but definitely NO Wind Farms, they are a blot on the landscape and not worth the environmental impact.”  
(Issues the Municipality should consider)*

*“Responsible siting of wind turbines is necessary. Properly engaging residents on where industrial turbines are located is part of the engagement required to protect residents health, environment, biosphere and source drinking water.” (Issues the Municipality should consider)*

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*"Green Energy is not actually green at all. Canada should consider nuclear power and stop destroying the environment with wind turbines and solar panels." (Issues the Municipality should consider)*

*"You don't encourage growth by allowing investors to make a fortune building wind turbines. Whoever thought that was a good idea should be fired." (Issues the Municipality should consider)*

### 2.3.12 REFORM LAND USE REGULATIONS

Multiple respondents mentioned that they have encountered complication with interpreting local land use regulations and wished for more simplification and clarity regarding the provisions and communication with the public. Some found existing land use regulation fail to do its purpose in Shelburne.

*"Making information easily available for people who need to navigate building permits. What does the individual person need? (drawings, blueprints, CAD, engineer stamped drawings, are purchased drawing from the USA off the internet going to be accepted?...)." (Priority not listed in question)*

*"Add land use bylaw. Change webpage on (unrecognizable), be more clear." (Issues the Municipality should consider)*

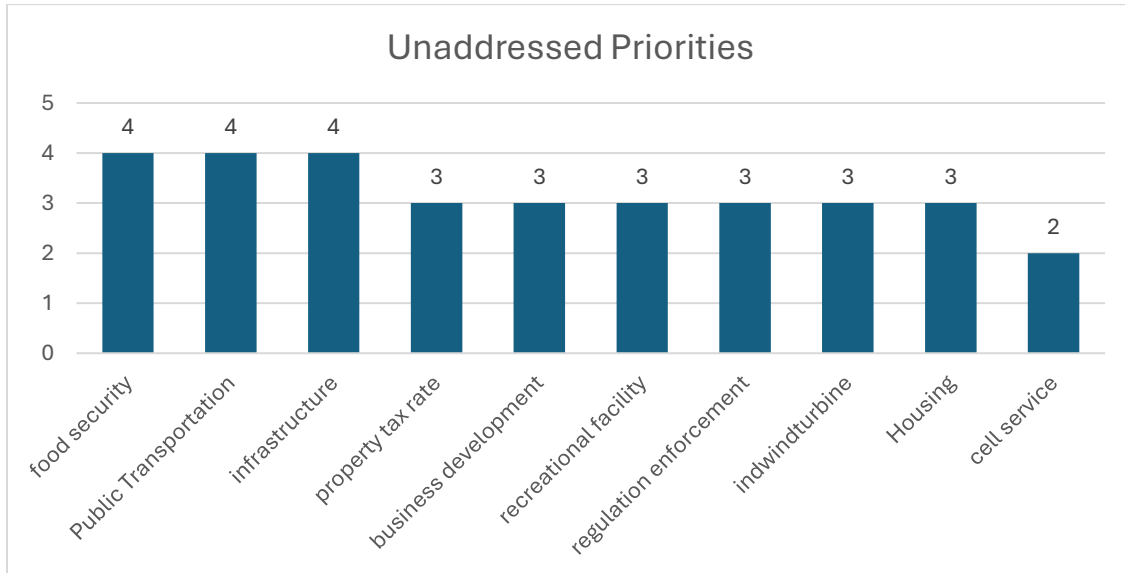
*"The real reason for land by laws. What is the municipalities intentions?" (Issues the Municipality should consider)*

*"What is the delay in having building by-laws in Shelburne County?" (Additional questions and comments)*

*"Intelligent development of policies/land use by-laws that address the specific concerns of Shelburne's Municipal populace. (not some cut and paste recycling of abutting Municipalities MPS in order to meet a deadline)." (Vision and aspiration)*

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## 2.4 PRIORITIES NOT LISTED IN SURVEY QUESTIONS.



### 2.4.1 FOOD SECURITY

Although Food Security is not a frequently mentioned theme across all survey responses, it ranks the top as a priority not addressed in our survey questions. Food security is an issue that may be related to the difficulties of local residents accessing food retail services since there is only one major grocery vendor, Sobeys, located in the Town of Shelburne. Residents living in the municipality have limited options for other sources of acquiring groceries aside from local convenience stores.

Being a low-density municipality with settlements in scattered patterns, accessing grocery stores and other services in the Town of Shelburne would mean heavy dependence on private automobiles. This explains why the equal number of times public transportation appeared as an unaddressed priority. Moreover, a few responses also call for supporting local gardens and other measures to promote self-reliance in food production.



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*PLEASE PROVIDE ANY PRIORITIES THAT WERE NOT LISTED IN THE PREVIOUS QUESTION.*

"Public transportation, Food security, Arts and culture, Access to education and resources, Access to free healthcare."

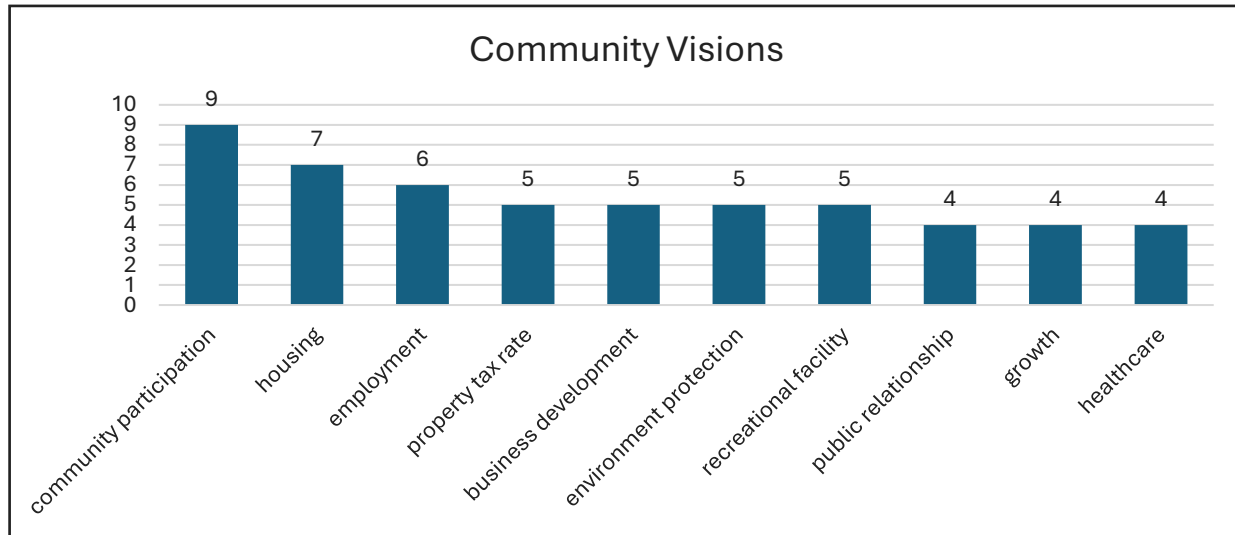
"Allowing and promoting more people to grow their own vegetables and raise animals. Expanding hunting and fishing for more sustainable communities. Cuts down on trucks and fuel use delivering to stores..."

"Promote self reliance (food growth and animal husbandry)."



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## 2.5 VISIONS & ASPIRATIONS



### 2.5.1 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

As discussed in All Identified Themes, community participation in decision-making and governance was the most frequently mentioned theme from all survey responses. This outcome shows the strong willingness of community members to participate in shaping their community with a notable sense of self-dependence and determination. Respondents who mentioned community participation answering this question, commonly call for more opportunities for public input in decision- and rule-making.

#### *WHAT ARE YOUR VISION AND ASPIRATIONS FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OVER THE NEXT DECADE?*

*"Keep communicating and meeting community stakeholders in planning and decision making."*

*"Each neighbourhood/area of the municipality works together towards the same goal."*

*"Safety, peaceful, harmonizing (unrecognizable) led by the people for the people with limited government outreach."*

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"A more free, caring and supportive society taking responsibility for their own actions and less reliance on government."

"Give more opportunity to be heard on issues that concern our well being and financial income."

"Friendly, self-supporting community. less reliance on government (and taxes)."

"A place where citizen input and engagement is valued, citizen quality of life is a priority in local government decisions, and local government is accountable to citizens."

### 2.5.2 HOUSING

Being a frequently mentioned theme for visions and aspirations, it shows that community members deem housing as a crucial component in sustaining people's living qualities and lifestyles, as well as the growth of the community. Respondents want more investment into diversifying housing resources that are affordable to local working communities, and they welcome housing options different than the traditional form of single-detached dwelling.

#### *WHAT ARE YOUR VISION AND ASPIRATIONS FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OVER THE NEXT DECADE?*

"More employment options with affordable housing for our youth."

"To allow for youth and housing and business that maintains or encourages a focus on sustainability and preservation of the land."

"I would like to see a vibrant working community. A place where people work like to visit and stay."

"Affordable housing."

"Better healthcare, more multi-unit housing, fulltime jobs, expansion of water and sewer services, amalgamation."

"Invest in services that will increase quality of life for residents (health care, recreation facilities, housing, etc.)."

"I would like to see more off grid living, on people's own terms, with a minimum of by-laws. By-laws that keep everyone safe, but aren't infringing on freedom to live a different style than most are accustomed to."

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### 2.5.3 EMPLOYMENT

Employment as a frequently mentioned theme in this question, is closely associated with respondents' hope for retaining and attracting younger generations in the community. Having more employment opportunities in the community brings more population and matters to the growth and sustainability of community presence. Employment opportunities occur with more business development, which as a theme was also mentioned several times in the responses. More population also means business opportunities attracting different service providers to the community and meeting the local needs. Creating a supportive environment for business development may likely be the solution to actualize the vision of more employment in the community.

#### *WHAT ARE YOUR VISION AND ASPIRATIONS FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OVER THE NEXT DECADE?*

"More employment options with affordable housing for our youth."

"I would like to see a vibrant working community. A place where people work like to visit and stay."

"Be "the community to live & work in" in NS."

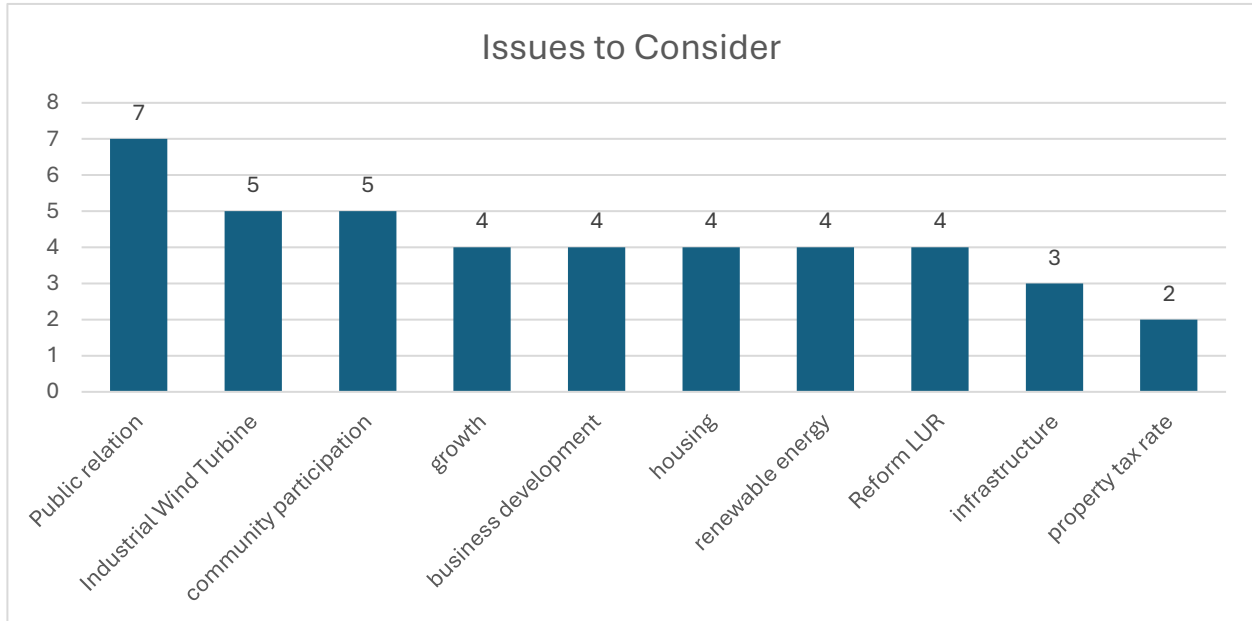
"More services for youth - education, employment, culture."

"Support industries that will provide job security for future generations."



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## 2.6 ISSUES THE MUNICIPALITY SHOULD CONSIDER.



### 2.6.1 (GOVERNMENT-)PUBLIC RELATION

Responses to this question suggest that there is an opportunity for improvement, especially when it comes to information sharing and public input in decision-making. Respondents were commonly disappointed with transparency and lack of public input. Responses suggest that many community members felt that more could be done in terms of increasing public engagement, which is a long-standing issue.

*ARE THERE ANY OTHER ISSUES THAT THE MUNICIPALITY SHOULD CONSIDER AS PART OF THIS PLAN REVIEW WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN ADDRESSED IN THIS SURVEY?*

“Need more public notification not just relying on people reading the municipal web page. How do we know to look there. Please let people know when you have something put together.”

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"This was a big disappointment. Expected some context for taking public input. Feel like public being ignored/co-opted again. Hope this doesn't check the box for public input. This was weak!"

"There needs to be more talk on how the municipality can engage in community development and vice versa."

"Inclusion - low community turn out due to lack of information. Meet Community on the behalf of municipality. Transparency regarding the (unrecognizable) behind the open-ended questions. Questions are (unrecognizable), derived from researched truth or for political agenda? Objective or Subjective?"

"I think there should have been a presentation. A survey for input from citizens who can look at an outdated strategy 7 pages, doubled sided and have input?"

"Freedoms, Charter and Bill of Rights should take precedence over local by-laws. Referendum for any changes rather than impose your will as you did with the recent wind-farm debacle. More communication in letter form as not everybody has or uses facebook... As residents and citizens we demand our elected representatives listen to us, if not please leave."

"You need to listen to your constituents more & not try to push through changes that may have a negative lasting impact. Planning laws need to be adhered to especially in historic & culturally sensitive areas. Infractions need to be addressed or reversed, not forgiven."

### 2.6.2 INDUSTRIAL WIND TURBINE

*ARE THERE ANY OTHER ISSUES THAT THE MUNICIPALITY SHOULD CONSIDER AS PART OF THIS PLAN REVIEW WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN ADDRESSED IN THIS SURVEY?*

Multiple respondents openly expressed their opposition against large-scale wind turbines in the municipality. Their concerns about wind turbines including the disruption of local scenery, noises, and proper setbacks for these infrastructures. A few respondents also questioned the purpose and reliability of wind turbines.

"No Wind Farms! Solar yes and individuals doing solar should be encouraged but definitely NO Wind Farms, they are a blot on the landscape and not worth the environmental impact."

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“Responsible siting of wind turbines is necessary. Properly engaging residents on where industrial turbines are located is part of the engagement required to protect residents health, environment, biosphere and source drinking water.”

“Green Energy is not actually green at all. Canada should consider nuclear power and stop destroying the environment with Wind turbines and solar panels. The beautiful Nova Scotia land and sea scapes are what make it special. Monster size industrial complexes are not attractive, not dependable and can be loud. They do more environmental harm than good and actually contribute to global warming.”

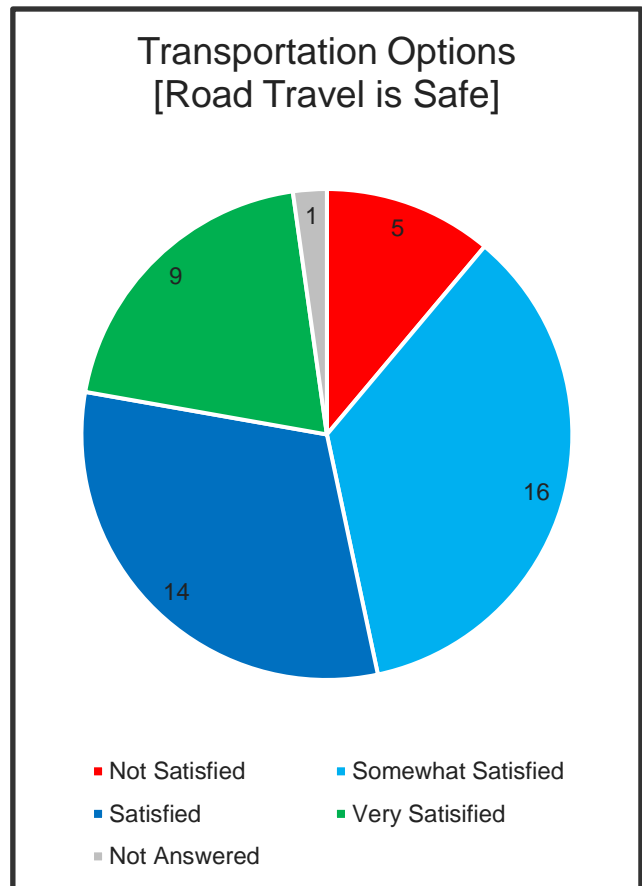
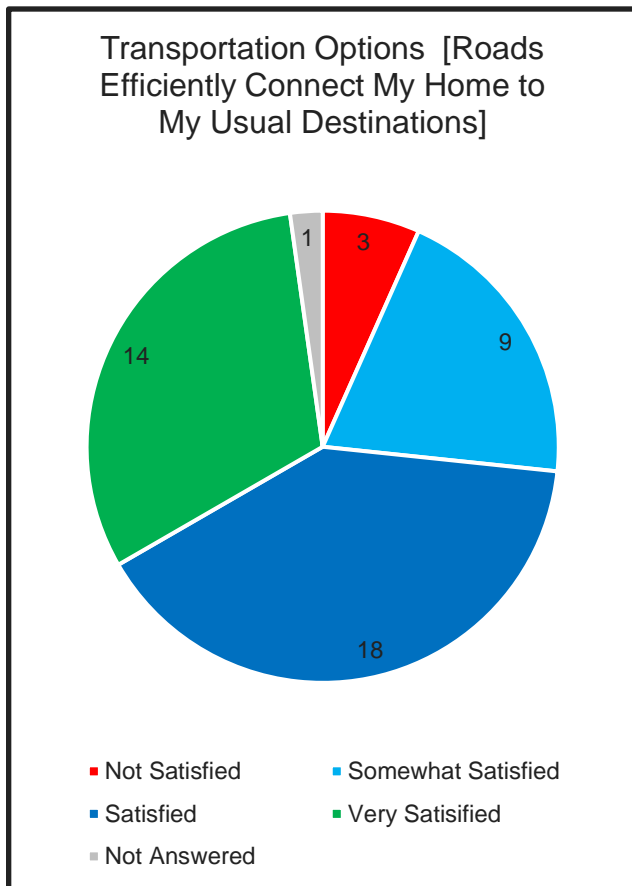
“You don't encourage growth by allowing investors to make a fortune building wind turbines. Whoever thought that was a good idea should be fired.”

“Meaningful setbacks for commercial and industrial development from residential areas (wind turbines 2 - 4 km like other municipalities, noise intensive activities like motorcycle racetracks far from residences ...).

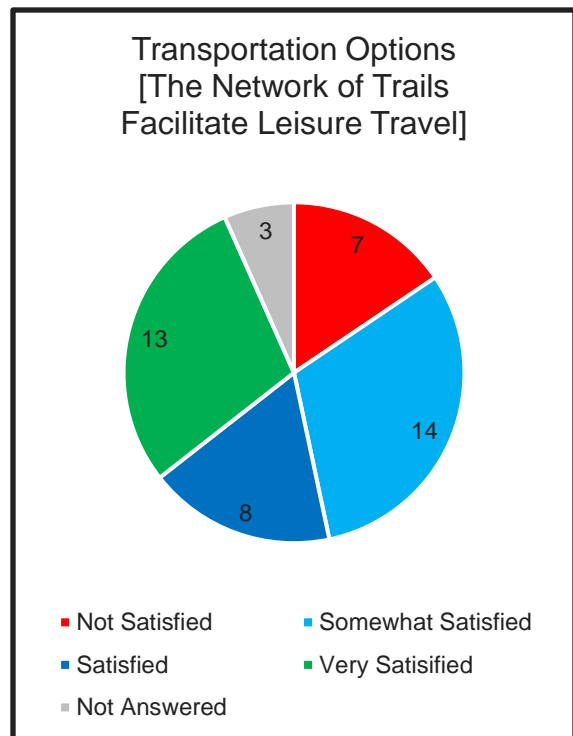
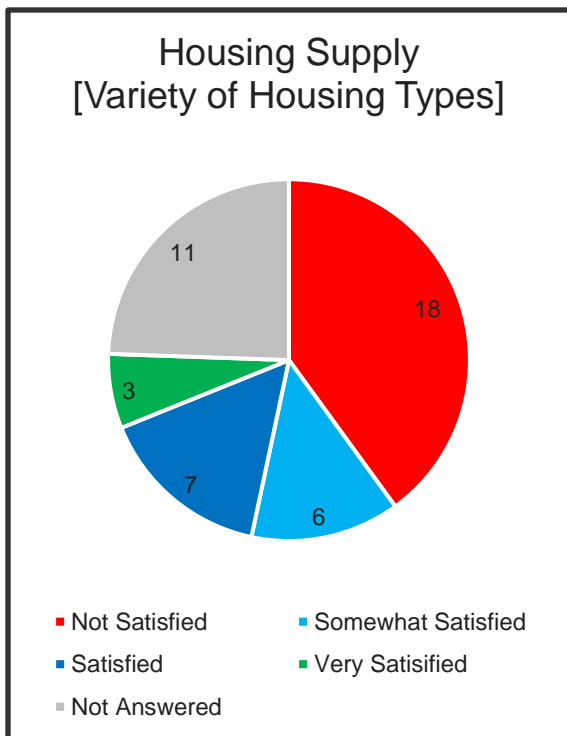
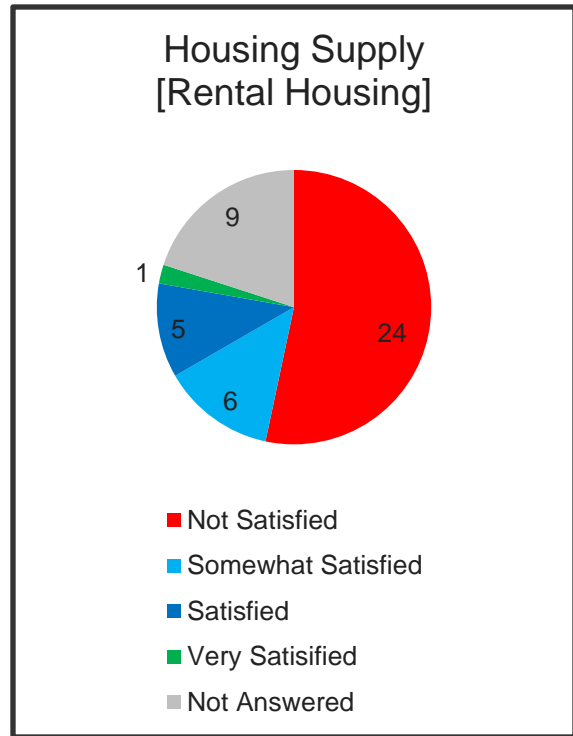
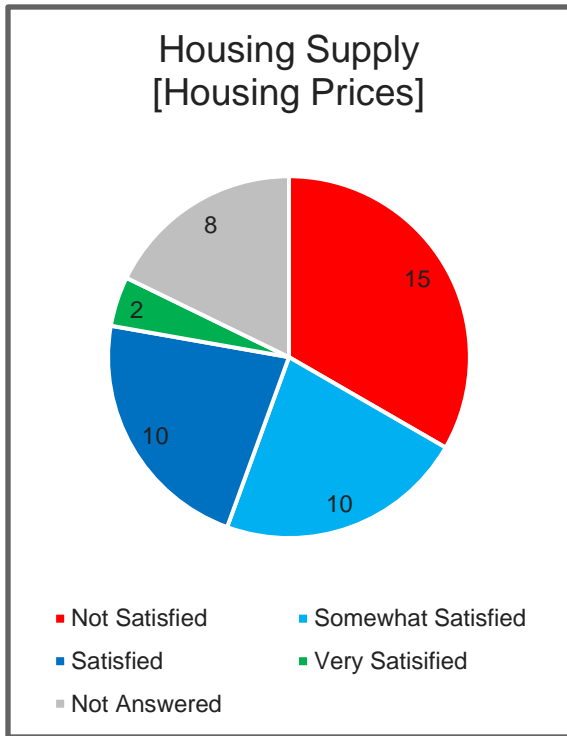
# What We Heard Report

## 2.7 COMMUNITY SATISFACTION RESULTS

The surveys measured participants' satisfaction regarding housing and transportation within the municipality. Information from 45 participants was analyzed.



# What We Heard Report



# What We Heard Report

## 3 KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Reporting on key informant interviews is essential for capturing and analyzing key themes and insights obtained during the initial phase of community engagement. The following report outlines the main findings of the key informant interviews.

Key informants included community leaders, experts, and individuals with unique perspectives drawn from traditionally underrepresented groups, key members of the local business community, members of Council and senior staff, and adjacent municipalities. An overview of the plan review process was provided for all interviewees as well as a description of the current planning documents and other key municipal reports.

### 3.1 KEY THEMES

Key themes provide a framework for understanding the various dimensions of planning and development discussions within the Municipality. They encompass concerns related to infrastructure, economic growth, community planning, population dynamics, service provision, and environmental considerations. Each of these themes reflects the priorities and challenges facing the Municipality and can guide future planning efforts.

#### 3.1.1 CHALLENGES AND GOALS

##### *HOUSING AND ACCESSIBILITY :*

- *There's a pressing need for accessible housing for students and staff, indicating a broader concern for inclusivity.*
- *Regulations must be established to ensure access for all, including international students and individuals with disabilities.*

##### *ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY:*

- *The impact of climate change and coastal development is a significant concern for critical infrastructure and insurance.*

## What We Heard Report

- *Balancing economic development with environmental preservation is a critical challenge that requires careful zoning regulations.*

### EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND SHELTER:

- *Emergency management should focus on providing housing and shelter during crises like climate-related events.*
- *Meeting provincial requirements for emergency preparedness is essential for community resilience.*

### RENEWABLE ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY:

- *Creating best practices for renewable energy by-laws is crucial to encourage sustainable energy sources.*
- *Designating areas for renewable energy projects and banning high-energy-consuming activities like cryptocurrency farms is part of this goal.*

### LAND USE PLANNING AND ZONING:

- *Establishing clear zoning regulations for different land uses, including commercial, industrial, and residential, is necessary.*
- *Mapping areas for specific uses, such as waste transfer or disposal, is important for orderly development.*

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND TRANSPARENCY:

- *Incorporating community consultation into decision-making processes is essential, particularly when banning or permitting specific business activities.*
- *Ensuring transparency in the planning and regulatory process is vital for gaining public trust and support.*

### NATURAL RESOURCE AND WATERSHED MANAGEMENT:

- *Defining what development is allowed in drinking watershed areas is critical to protect water resources.*

## What We Heard Report

- *Cooperation with provincial and federal governments is necessary to incorporate development restrictions for environmental and wildlife protection reasons.*

### 3.1.2 KEY FOCUS AREAS

#### INFRASTRUCTURE AND CONNECTIVITY:

- *Reliable internet and cell phone connectivity is essential for businesses and residents, as it enables remote work opportunities and ensures access to essential services.*
- *Access road safety and traffic management are critical concerns, especially in remote areas like Jordan Falls and Sable River, where accidents can lead to disruptions in transportation.*

#### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

- *Work from home opportunities are important for economic resilience, as they provide a flexible work environment and attract remote workers, potentially increasing the local talent pool.*
- *Distinguishing between commercial/business and industrial zones is crucial for maintaining the quality of life for residents, as some industrial activities may generate noise, pollution, or safety concerns.*

#### COMMUNITY PLANNING:

- *Clear zoning regulations guiding growth in commercial, residential, and industrial zones are necessary to prevent haphazard development and maintain the character of the community.*
- *A long-term vision for community growth, along with a well-defined 10-15-20 year planning timeline, ensures that the municipality's development is sustainable and aligned with community goals.*



# What We Heard Report

## POPULATION AND MIGRATION:

- *Addressing the needs of an aging population is essential to provide healthcare, housing, and social services that cater to the elderly.*
- *Attracting immigrants and managing interprovincial migration is crucial for sustaining and diversifying the local population, which can support economic growth.*

## SERVICE PROVISION:

- *Shared services like fire and solid waste management are cost-effective and efficient ways to meet the needs of the community, but their impact on local businesses must be assessed.*
- *Understanding the effect of development in nearby areas on local businesses is necessary to mitigate potential negative consequences.*

## ENVIRONMENTAL AND HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS:

- *Cemetery maintenance ensures the respectful treatment of deceased community members and preserves historical and cultural heritage.*
- *Addressing heritage issues contributes to the preservation of the municipality's historical identity and can be a tourism attraction.*

## SPATIAL PLANNING AND ZONING:

- *Defining areas for housing development prevents urban sprawl, maintains green spaces, and preserves the quality of life for residents.*
- *Identifying areas for utility development, such as sewer and water services, is essential to support the growth of commercial, business, and housing areas and meet the infrastructure needs of the community.*

# What We Heard Report

## 3.1.3 IMPACT ON LIVABILITY

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND HEALTHY LIVING:

- *Promoting healthy living through recreation and community development is essential for the well-being of residents.*
- *Public spaces like community gardens play a crucial role in encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle.*

### HOUSING AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:

- *Increasing housing availability should focus on sustainable and green design, mixed-use opportunities, and proximity to services.*
- *The impact of climate change on housing materials and locations must be considered in housing development.*

### TRANSIT AND ACCESSIBILITY:

- *Supporting existing transit services, like Sou'West Nova Transit, is vital to ensure accessible transportation for all residents.*
- *The construction of new developments, like apartment buildings, should prioritize accessibility, including sidewalks, to accommodate all community members.*

### HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT CONTROLS:

- *Setting clear ground rules for the scope of developments is crucial to maintain the character of the community.*
- *Rapid changes in housing prices necessitate development controls to ensure housing remains affordable and accessible.*

### GOVERNMENT SUPPORT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:

- *Federal and provincial programs should be sought to assist first-time homebuyers and address homelessness and housing insecurity.*

## What We Heard Report

- *Engaging residents in the planning process ensures that their concerns are heard and addressed, fostering a sense of community involvement and trust.*

### 3.1.4 SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE

#### ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP:

- *Environmental protection and resilience are vital for mitigating the impacts of climate change, such as droughts, floods, and temperature extremes.*
- *Support for sustainable farming practices and responsible waste management, including beach and shoreline clean-up, is essential for preserving natural resources.*

#### EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND RESILIENCE:

- *Planning for the impact of fires, floods, storms, and sea level rise, including evacuation plans, is crucial for community resilience.*
- *The value of an Emergency Management Office (EMO) in coordinating response efforts during emergencies is evident in the example of an emergency water source provided by the SCC Campus.*

#### INFRASTRUCTURE AND REGULATION:

- *Ensuring access to clean water, proper solid waste treatment, and maintenance of critical infrastructure like tree care are essential for community well-being.*
- *New residents' concerns about regulations indicate the importance of clearly defined rules and zones for environmental protection, especially in low-lying areas prone to flooding.*

# What We Heard Report

## 3.2 COMMON INSIGHTS

The following common insights emerged across the interviews. These insights could serve as valuable reference points for decision-making.

**Community Engagement and Transparency are Vital:** Community engagement is consistently emphasized as an important factor in decision-making. Inclusivity, open dialogue, and transparency in the planning and regulatory processes help build trust and ensure that residents' concerns are addressed.

**Sustainability and Resilience are Key Priorities:** Sustainability and resilience are recurring themes, whether in the context of housing, infrastructure, or environmental management. The impact of climate change, along with the need for renewable energy, responsible waste management, and protection against natural disasters, underscores the municipality's commitment to long-term sustainability.

**Regulation and Zoning are Essential:** Zoning regulations are seen as necessary to manage and guide development. Clear ground rules for the scope of developments, regulations for housing, and the delineation of commercial, industrial, and residential zones are mentioned consistently to maintain the character and quality of life in the community.

**Economic Growth and Job Opportunities Matter:** The need for job opportunities, including remote work options and attracting new talent, is highlighted in various contexts, from supporting local businesses to addressing housing affordability and accessibility.

**Resource Preservation and Environmental Responsibility:** The preservation of natural resources and responsible environmental practices, such as sustainable farming, beach clean-up, and protection of watersheds, is a common thread. The municipality is dedicated to addressing environmental challenges and ensuring the availability of resources for future generations.

## What We Heard Report

### 3.2.1 DIVERGENT PERSPECTIVE

While the previously identified themes and bullet points address various aspects of community planning and development, there are also some divergent perspectives and challenges presented in the comments. These comments may not neatly fit into the existing themes but are important considerations for the municipality:

#### *INTERNET AND ROAD CONNECTIVITY:*

- *Some residents are concerned about reliable internet and cell phone connectivity. This issue is critical for remote work opportunities and accessing essential services.*
- *The safety of access roads and traffic management is also a concern, especially in remote areas where accidents can disrupt transportation.*

#### *ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ZONING:*

- *The distinction between commercial/business and industrial zones is essential to maintain the quality of life for residents, considering the potential noise, pollution, and safety concerns posed by industrial activities.*
- *While attracting remote workers through work-from-home opportunities is seen as an economic benefit, the impact on local businesses needs to be assessed.*

#### *COMMUNITY PLANNING AND GROWTH:*

- *Clear zoning regulations are essential to prevent haphazard development and maintain the community's character.*
- *A long-term vision for community growth, with a well-defined planning timeline, is necessary for sustainable development aligned with community goals.*

#### *POPULATION AND MIGRATION:*

- *Addressing the needs of an aging population is essential, particularly regarding healthcare, housing, and social services.*

## What We Heard Report

- *Attracting immigrants and managing interprovincial migration is crucial for sustaining and diversifying the local population to support economic growth.*

### *SERVICE PROVISION:*

- *Shared services like fire and solid waste management are cost-effective but must be assessed for their impact on local businesses.*
- *Understanding the effect of development in nearby areas on local businesses is necessary to mitigate potential negative consequences.*

### *HERITAGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS:*

- *Cemetery maintenance and addressing heritage issues are essential for preserving the municipality's historical identity and cultural heritage.*
- *Consideration of sea level rise and storm surge in low-lying areas is crucial to ensure community safety.*

### *SPATIAL PLANNING AND ZONING:*

- *Defining areas for housing development prevents urban sprawl and maintains green spaces.*
- *Identifying areas for utility development is essential to meet the infrastructure needs of the community.*

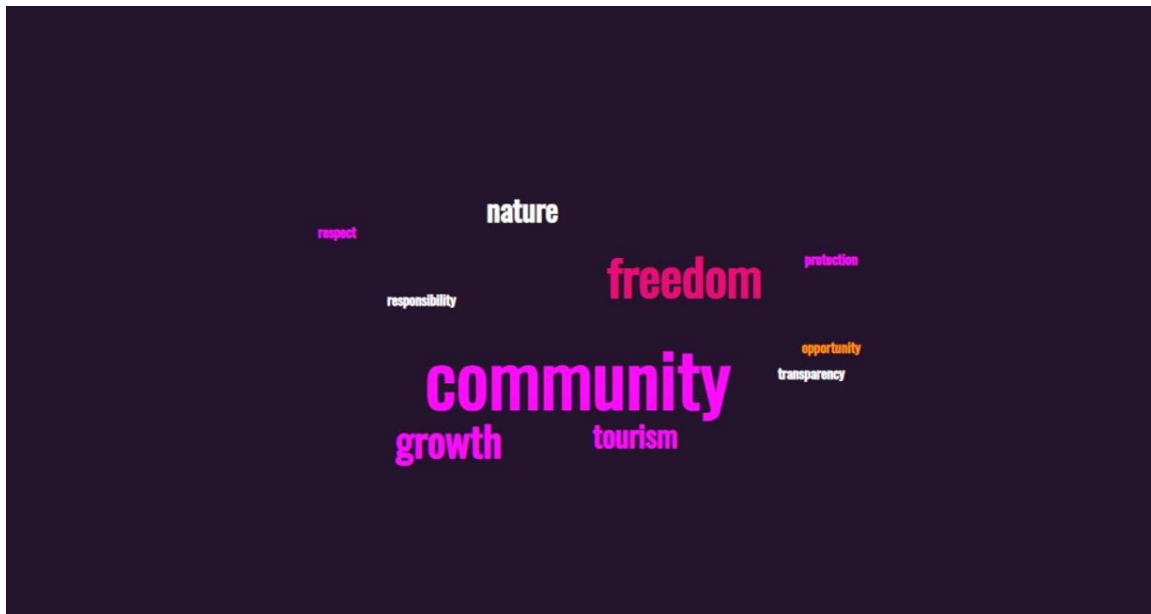
## 4 CONCLUSION

An analysis of responses found that the most relevant words in these engagement exercises, in order of frequency, are: community, freedom, growth, nature, and tourism. The residents feel a part of their community and wish to retain their rural way of life, with regulation that is appropriate and uncomplicated. There needs to be opportunities and conditions for economic and population growth, especially those aimed at retaining youth. There is respect for the natural environment, with suggestions for targeted areas for industrial development. The Municipality has limited jurisdiction under the *Municipal Government Act*, which means that it does not have the

## What We Heard Report

ability to address all residents' needs such as influencing assessments (which results in higher tax bills even if the municipal tax rate is unchanged), the condition of Provincial roads, or requirements of the National Building Code standards (as adopted by the Province and Municipality). The issue of siting large-scale wind turbines appears divisive. Sustainable development, ageing in place, food security, climate change, protecting natural assets, housing availability and affordability, connectivity, and flexibility were important to residents.

Data suggest that the Municipality would benefit from a formal engagement strategy. Rural communities often face unique logistical challenges in organizing community engagement sessions, particularly given the large geographical area in the Municipality. Poor cell coverage and lack of public transit can also be barriers. An engagement strategy would allow multiple channels for engagement to capture a diversity of perspectives from across the Municipality. It is suggested that there be additional methods to complement, rather than replace, the Municipality's traditional outreach and engagement.



# What We Heard Report

## ” Relevant Words ?

Sort result by: Relevance ▾

1.	<b>community</b>	9 times	Relevance 1
2.	<b>freedom</b>	5 times	Relevance 0.55
3.	<b>growth</b>	4 times	Relevance 0.44
4.	<b>nature</b>	3 times	Relevance 0.33
5.	<b>tourism</b>	3 times	Relevance 0.33