



West Hants

Public Hearing Agenda

1. Intro by Mayor
2. Presentation by Planner (Will Hong)
3. Comments or Questions from Public
4. Comments from Council
5. Conclusion of Public Hearing





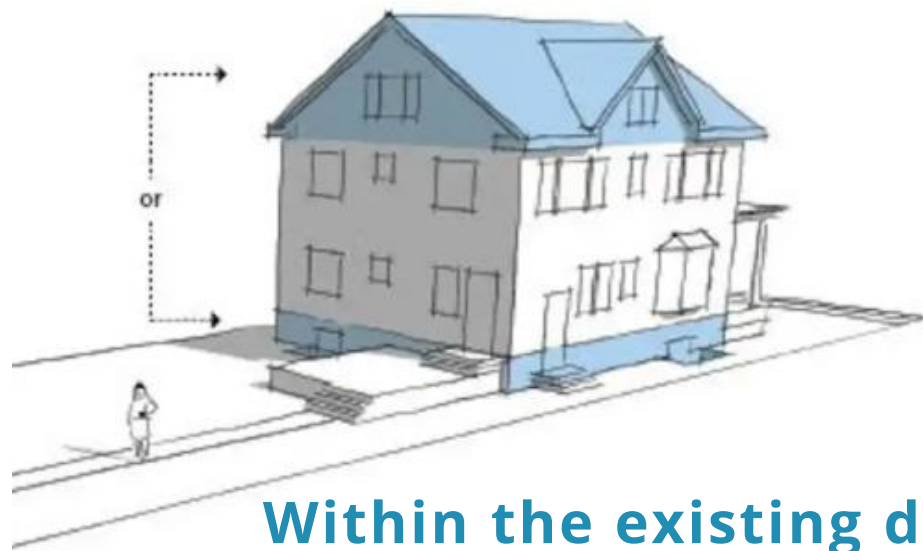
West Hants
something inspiring awaits

HAF Initiatives #1-3 Amendments to Planning Documents

March-25-2025

Background: Housing Policy in West Hants Regional Municipality

- In **July 2020**, Council approved the amendments to allow secondary suites within or attached to single unit and two unit dwellings in **all zones**.

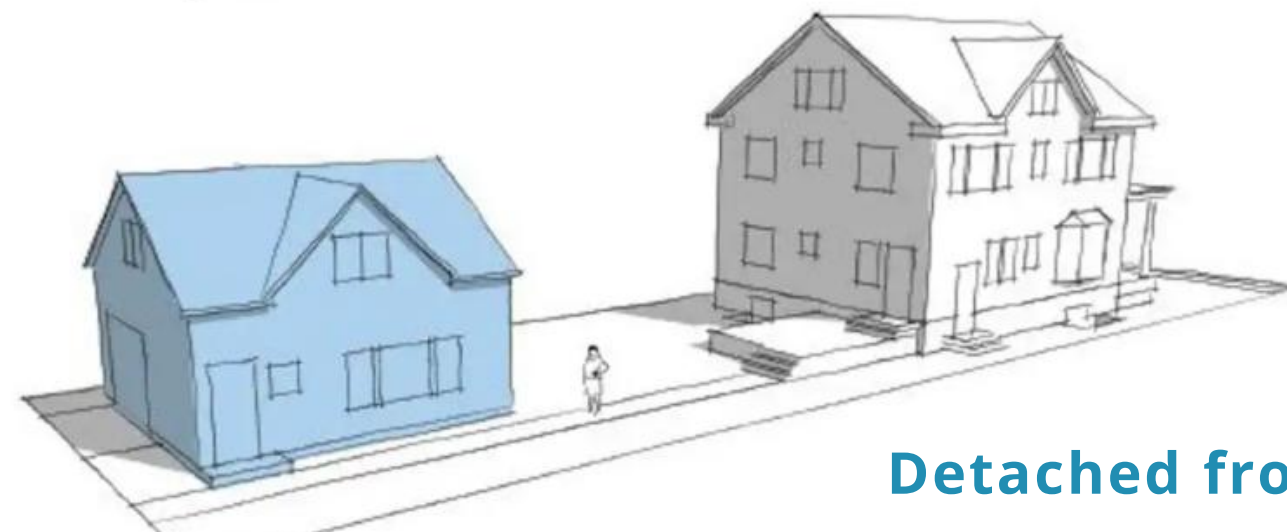


Within the existing dwelling



Attached to the existing dwelling

- In **November 2022**, Council further permitted detached secondary suites accessory to single and two-unit dwellings in all zones.



Detached from the main dwelling

Background: Existing Density As-of-right

Zones	Density as-of-right
Single Unit Residential (R-1) and other zones that permit single unit dwelling	2 Units (1 main unit + 1 ADU)
Two Unit Residential (R-2) and other zones that permit two unit dwelling	4 Units (2 main units + 2 ADUs)

Background: Housing Policy in West Hants Regional Municipality

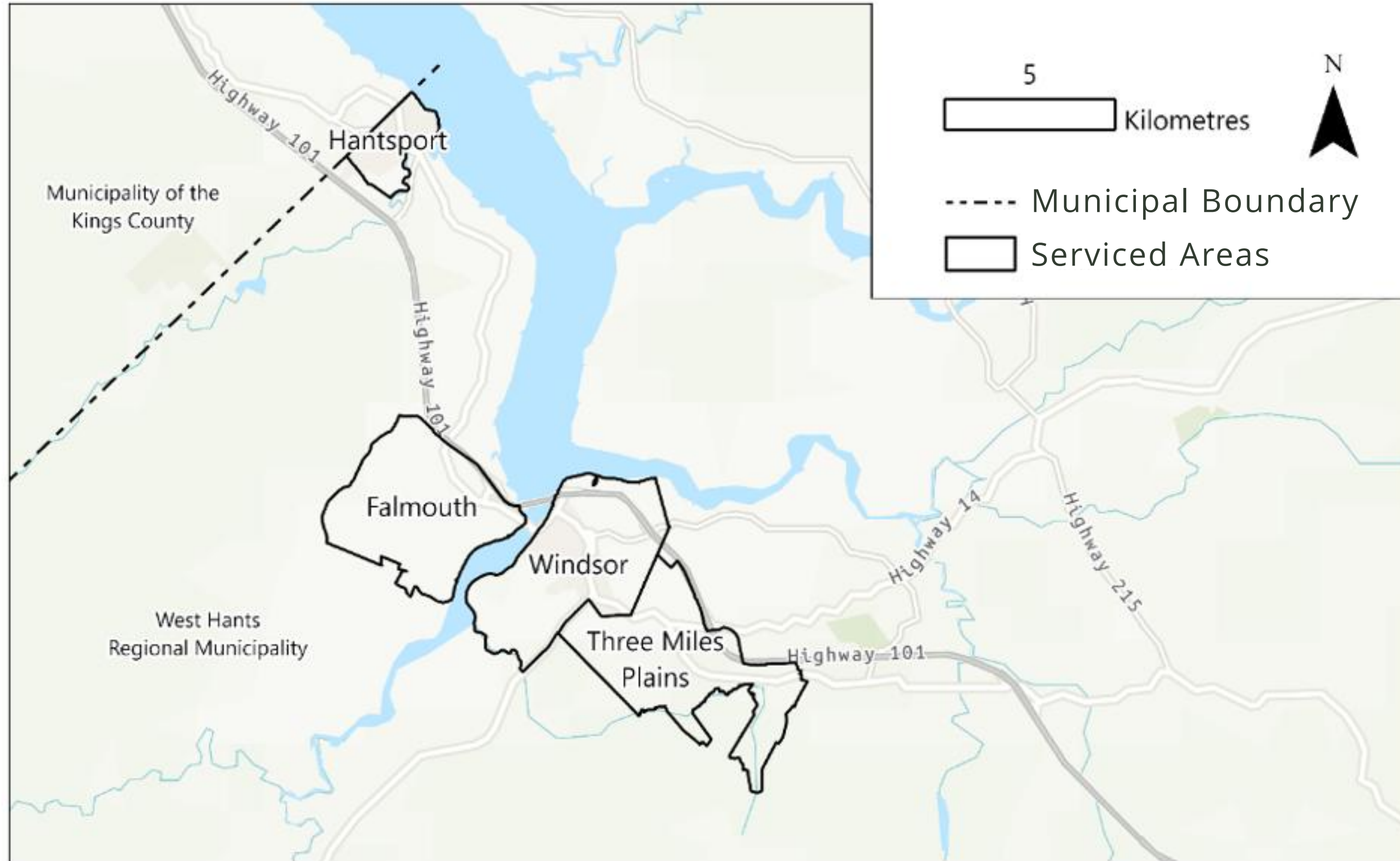
- In **August 2023**, staff developed a Housing Action Plan with attainable housing initiatives in order to apply for the Housing Accelerator Fund.
- In **January 2024**, the Municipality secured the funding and Council approved the Housing Action Plan and directed staff to implement the initiatives.
- In **May 2024**, as part of the Housing Action Plan Initiatives #4, Council removed the permit fees for secondary suites for three years.
- Between **August and September 2024**, the Planning Department initiated public engagement process for Initiatives #1-3 to understand the housing needs. Staff further used the feedback received to refine and finalize the draft amendments.

Background: Housing Accelerator Fund

- West Hants Regional Municipality was selected to participate and signed a contribution agreement with the CMHC, which approved for **\$1.08 million** funding over the 3-year funding period.
- The funding agreement requires the Municipality to deliver on the first three initiatives by March 2025 prior to the full Plan Review being completed
 - #1 - Allow greater density as-of-right within the serviced areas**
 - #2 - Create affordable housing policies**
 - #3 - Reduce minimum parking requirements**



Initiatives 1-3 will be focused within the serviced areas



Housing Action Plan Progress To Date

1. Allow greater density as-of-right within serviced areas  **Pending Approval**
2. Create affordable housing policy requirements  **Pending Approval**
3. Reduce parking requirements  **Pending Approval**
4. Remove permit fees for accessory dwelling units  **Completed**
5. Promote infill development  Ongoing
6. Promote alternative housing forms (pre-approved housing)  Ongoing
7. Upgrade permitting system for online applications  Ongoing
8. Integrated Resource Plan  Ongoing

Purpose of Amendments

Housing Challenges

Median Housing Sale Price



Source: WHRM Housing Needs Assessment, 2023

Survey Finding: percentage of residents pay over 30% of income toward housing



Survey Findings: Housing Tenure

- **76% of renters** in the Municipality reported living in unaffordable housing, compared to **33% of homeowners**.
- Renters are **more likely to support** the statement that the municipality should provide incentives to developers to provide affordable housing units within proposals.

Purpose of Amendments

Public Engagement

Channels/Event	# of Touchpoints
Social Media (17 Facebook Posts)	1,200 people per post
HAF Project Webpage	127 visitors
Open House Sessions	20 Attendees
Online Survey	320 Responses
Unique Comments	376 comments

What We Heard:

Housings:

- greater choice in housing
- more housing
- more affordable options
- increased density

Others:

- support for lot coverage





Summary of Changes to Planning Documents

Municipal Planning Strategy

- Allow up to 4 units on a residential lot serviced by municipal water and sewer
- Enable missing middle housing options
- Recognize housing needs of vulnerable populations
- Encourage and promote affordable housing developments

Land Use By-law

- Introduce lot coverage requirement to residential lot
- Adjust minimum lot area and setbacks to be consistent in zones across the board
- Enable bonus zoning for affordable housing units
- Reduce parking requirements within serviced areas





Initiative 1: Changes to Residential Zones

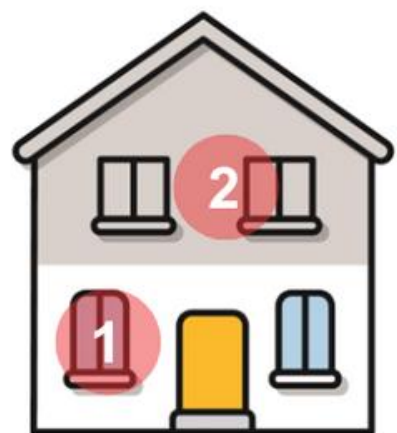
Current Zones	Proposed Zones	Current Density as-of-right	Proposed Density as-of-right
Single Unit Residential (R-1)	Low Density Residential (R-1)	2 Units (1 main unit + 1 ADU)	4 Units
Two Unit Residential (R-2)	Medium Density Residential (R-2)	4 Units (2 main units + 2 ADUs)	6 Units
Multiple Units Residential (R-3)	High Density Residential (R-3)	Varied in areas	12 Units

- Maximum height remain unchanged with 35 ft (3 storeys) as-of-right



Initiative 1:

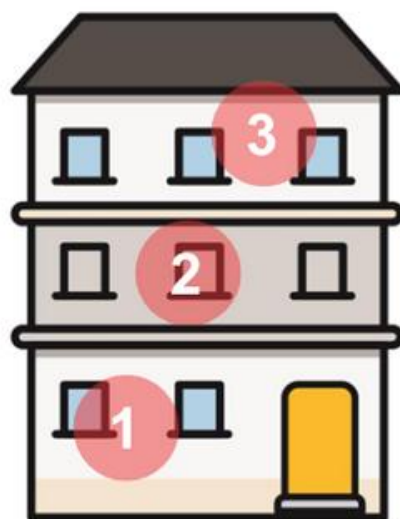
What does up to four units look like in R-1?



Duplex
(Two-unit Dwelling)



Semi-detached Dwelling
(Two-unit Dwelling)



Triplex
(Three-unit Dwelling)



Fourplex
(Four-unit Dwelling)



Townhouse



Three Single Unit Dwellings on the same lot



← Lot Line →



Four Single Unit Dwellings on the same lot





Initiative 1: What will R-2 and R-3 look like?

Medium Density Residential (R-2)

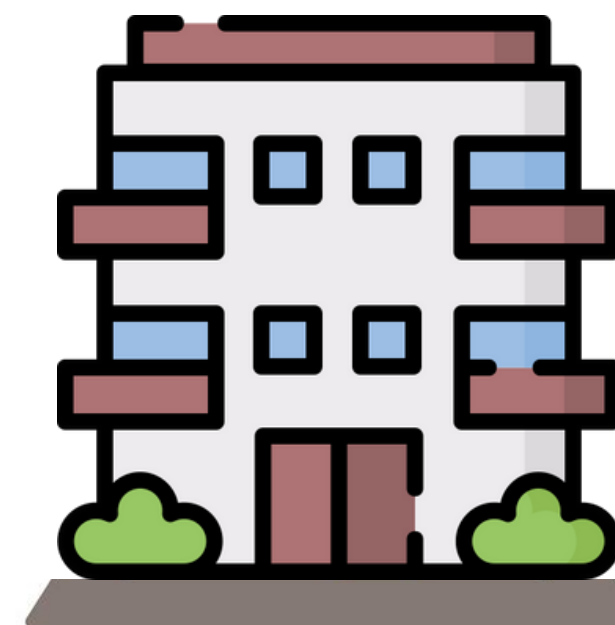


Small Apartment (up to 6 units)



- Maximum lot coverage 50% and landscaping requirements
- Recreational space requirements

High Density Residential (R-3)



Small Apartment (up to 12 units)



- Maximum lot coverage 40% and landscaping requirements
- Recreational space requirements

What's getting built in the recent years



83 units, 6 storeys



40 units, 5 storeys

What many people want to see more

Single-unit dwelling
(most common type of housing in WHRM)

Missing middle housing

Mid to high-rise apartment



- **Compatible in scale** with single-unit neighborhoods
- **Already exists** in many serviced neighborhoods
- **Similar Height** with a single-unit dwelling (3 storeys)
- Offering **affordable** housing options for all life stages



Two-unit Dwelling



Three-unit Dwelling



Four-unit Dwellings



Townhouse



Stacked Townhouse



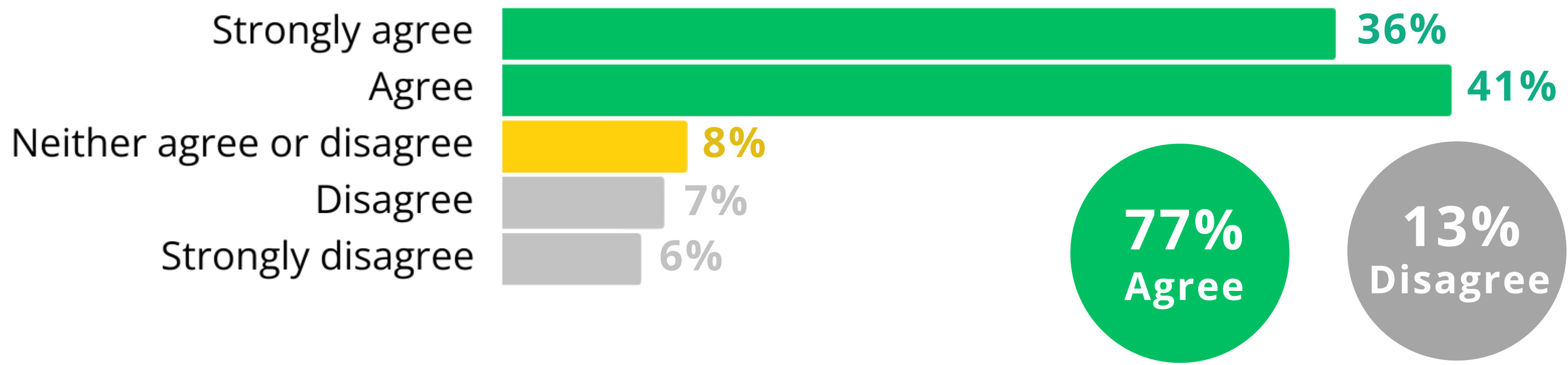
Secondary Suite

Online Survey

Preference Question - Q18

(Likert Scale, 301 responses)

Do you agree or disagree: **I support more housing types in residential areas provided they are compatible in scale with the existing neighborhood. (e.g., duplex, triplex, fourplex, townhouse)**



What Residents Liked

- Retains **young families** and **professionals** in the Municipality
- Promotes **affordability** and **equity** to people at different life stages
- Middle density allows **compact/complete communities**, and **more housing options**

What other municipalities in NS are doing to allow density

<p>Town of Antigonish</p>	<p>Up to <u>4 units</u> per lot in Residential Neighbourhood (RN-1)</p>
<p>Victoria County</p>	<p>Up to <u>3 units</u> per lot in both Residential Centre (R-1) and Hamlet Residential (HR) zones</p>
<p>Municipality of the District of Guysborough</p>	<p>Up to <u>4 units</u> across the board</p>
<p>Municipality of the County of Richmond</p>	<p>Up to <u>4 units</u> across the board (rural and town centre)</p>
<p>Town of Yarmouth</p>	<p><u>2 units</u> in Low Density Residential (R-1), up to <u>8 units</u> in Medium Density Residential (R-2) zone</p>
<p>Municipality of the District of Lunenburg</p>	<p>Up to <u>5 units</u> across all residential zones</p>

Initiative 2: Amendments in relation to Affordable Housing Policies

- Adding a clear definition of “Affordable Housing Unit” to the Land Use By-law
- Introducing policies and provisions to encourage affordable housing units within a development through bonus zoning.
- Introducing policies to allow Council to identify suitable surplus Municipal-owned properties for the purpose of affordable housing development and sell such properties below market value if Council determines that it is in the best interest of the Municipality to do so.

Initiative 2: Amendments in relation to Affordable Housing Policies

Proposed Definition of “Affordable Housing Unit”

Affordable Housing Unit means:

- (a) housing that costs less than 30% of before-tax household income or as otherwise defined by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) or the Province of Nova Scotia; and
- (b) dwellings constructed under the Province of Nova Scotia and/or Federal Affordable Housing cost sharing or funding program.



Initiative 2: Amendments in relation to Affordable Housing Policies

Bonus Zoning Provision in Proposed Medium Density Residential (R-2) and High Density Residential (R-3)

Zoning	Bonus Condition	Bonus Density	Bonus Lot Coverage	Bonus Height
Medium Density Residential (R-2)	Minimum of five (5) Affordable Housing Unit	Increase by 35%	Increase by 10%	N/A
High Density Residential (R-3)		Increase by 40%	Increase by 10%	Increased to a maximum of 4 storeys (45 feet)



Initiative 2: Amendments in relation to Affordable Housing Policies

Surplus Municipal-owned land for the purpose of affordable housing

- It shall be the policy of Council to identify surplus Municipal-owned properties that may be suitable for affordable housing development.
- It shall be the policy of Council to consider the disposal of identified surplus Municipal-owned properties to housing providers at a price less than market value for the purpose of affordable housing development, where Council determines that it is in the best interest of the Municipality to do so.





Initiative 3: Amendments in relation to Parking

Original Proposal:

1 parking space per dwelling unit for all dwellings across the Municipality



Revised Proposal after Public Engagement:

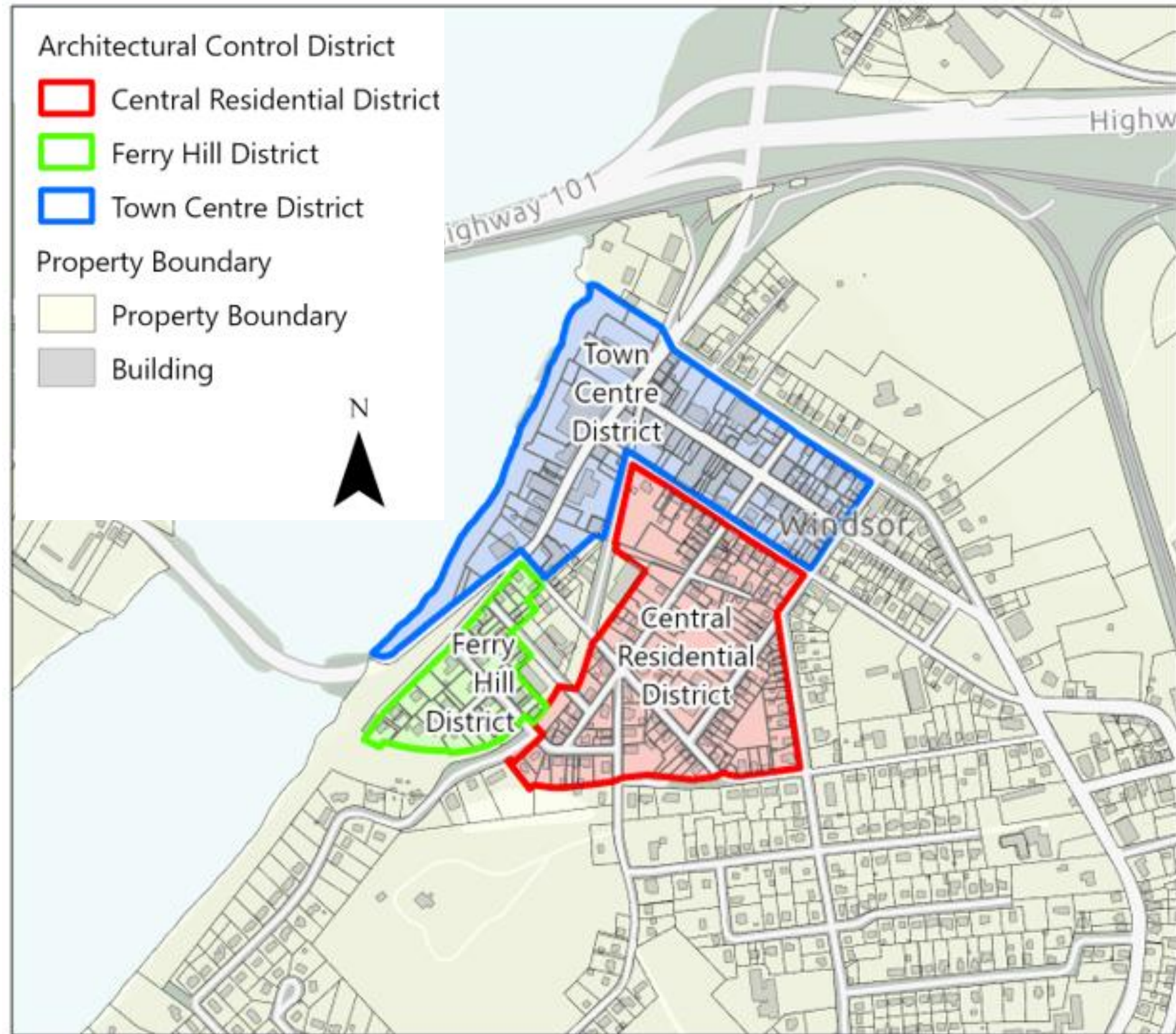
Growth Centres (Falmouth, Hantsport, Three Mile Plains and Windsor):

1 parking space per dwelling unit for all dwellings

Outside Growth Centres: parking requirements remain unchanged



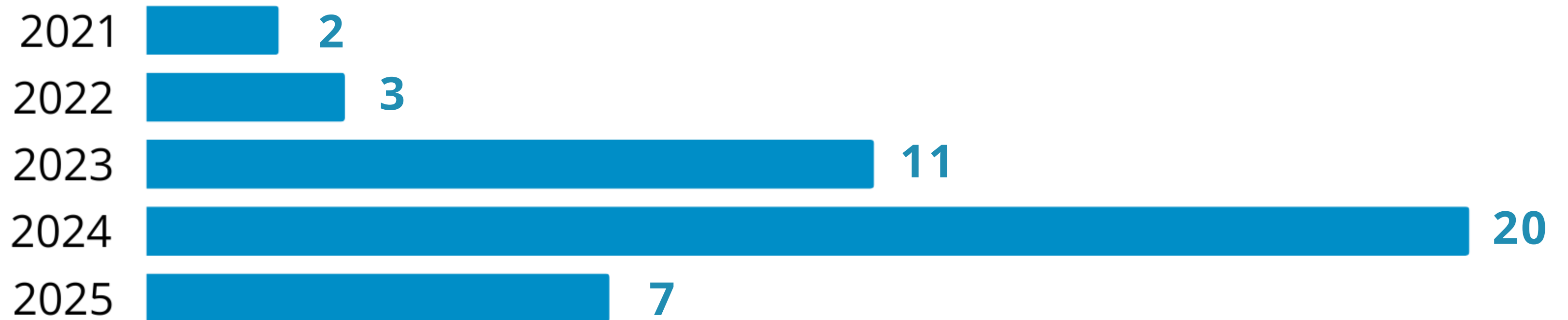
Concerns We Heard - Historic Area of Downtown Windsor



- Historic neighborhood in Windsor is protected under Architectural Control District overlay.
- The majority of properties within the Architectural Control District are designated Town Centre, which will not be affected by the amendments of increasing density.
- Staff identified 144 properties within the District that are designated Residential. Any new developments will need to meet architectural guidelines provided in the Architectural Design Manual.

Gentle Density:

Number of Permit Issued for Secondary Suites 2021-2025



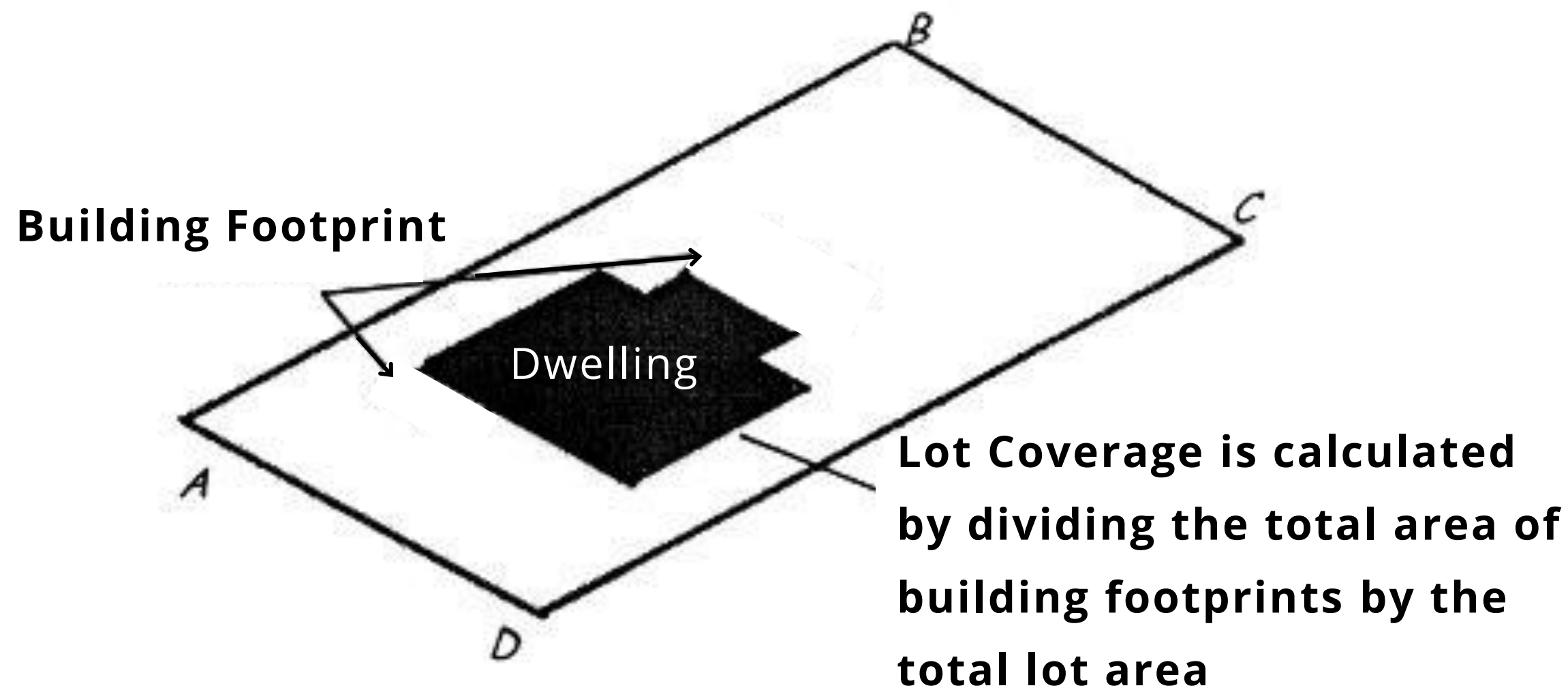
(As of March 20)

Key Learnings:

- No sudden influx of applications for additional density of secondary suites
- The number of applications were gradual and incremental over the years
- Application increased after Council approved detached secondary suites in 2020
- Application increased again after Council removed permit fees in 2024

Our Response to Stormwater Management - Lot Coverage Requirement

- There are currently no controls on lot coverage in our Municipality
- Any new developments in R-1, R-2, and R-3 will be subject to **Lot Coverage Requirement**
- 76% surveyed residents in serviced areas supported this initiative



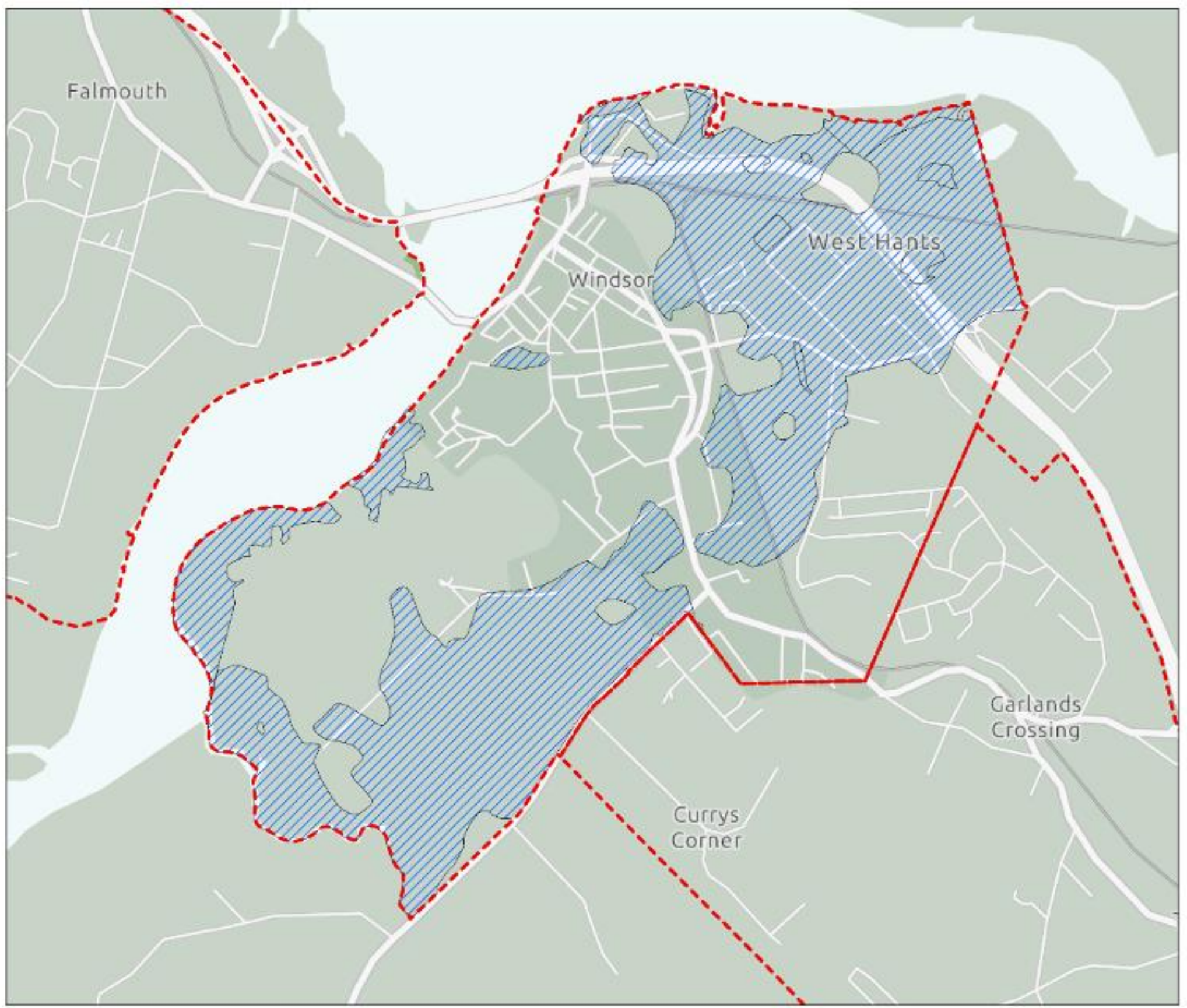
Proposed Lot Coverage Requirement	
Low Density Residential (R-1)	50%
Medium Density Residential (R-2)	
High Density Residential (R-3)	40%

Key Learnings:

- Ensure certain portion of a property maintain permeable surface needed to retain stormwater on-site.

Environmental Constraints Overlay

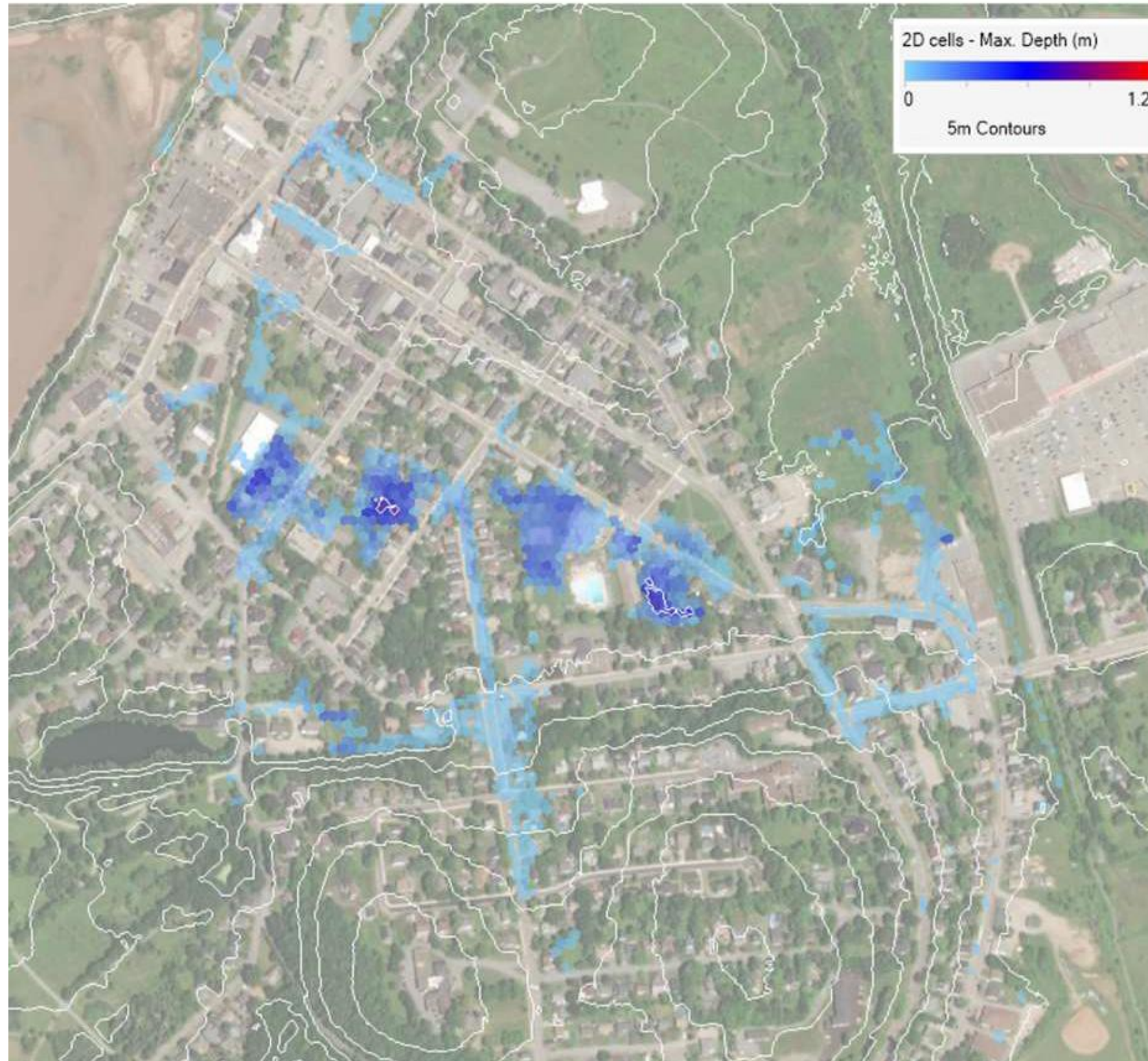
- Includes lands which are subject to flooding or subsidence, are low lying, marshy or unstable, or have other constraints for development by virtue of soil conditions or topography.
- Properties within the environmental constraints layer are subject to provide environmental study during the permitting process.
- Staff identified 156 residential lots within the environmental constraints layer, among which 41 are vacant lots.



--- Serviced Areas
▨ Environmental Constraints Layer



Previously Flooded Area in Windsor



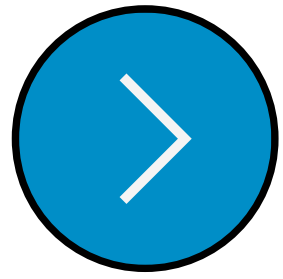
- Properties along Stannus, Victoria, and Gray Street are zoned Two Unit Residential (R-2).
- Staff identified 80 residential properties that will be impacted by the proposed amendments. The majority of lots will not be eligible for increase density as-of-right due to small lot size.
- Only 27 properties that are large enough to accommodate medium density, and only three of them are vacant lots.

Source: CBCL Windsor Flood Study 02/11/25



Our Response to Stormwater Management - Plan Review Project

- Staff are working with the consultants to develop new policies and regulations regarding stormwater management in new Regional MPS and LUB.
- Currently evaluating potential tools and strategies such as:
 1. Update the environmental constraint overlay so that stormwater and flooding will be addressed during the permitting stage for properties that fall within flood-prone area
 2. Request additional requirements for stormwater management plans and lot grading plans for future as-of-right developments.
- Anticipated timeline for new regional plans for Council's consideration in late Summer or early fall 2025.



Next Steps

Process



Comments or Questions from Public



Recommendation - Windsor (1 of 2)

- ...that Council gives Second Reading and approves amending the text of the Windsor Municipal Planning Strategy and Windsor Land Use By-law to accommodate a wider range of “missing middle” housing forms, create affordable housing policy, and relax parking requirements in a manner substantively the same as the draft set out in Attachment A and B of the Planning and Heritage Advisory Committee report #23-21 dated January 9, 2025.



Recommendation - Windsor (2 of 2)

- ...that Council gives Second Reading and approves amending the map of the Windsor Land Use By-law to reflect the proposed zoning changes in a manner substantively the same as the draft set out in Figure 1 of the Planning Advisory Committee report #23-21 dated January 9, 2025.



Recommendation - Hantsport (1 of 2)

- ...that Council gives Second Reading and approves amending the text of the Hantsport Municipal Planning Strategy and Hantsport Land Use By-law to accommodate a wider range of “missing middle” housing forms, create affordable housing policy, and relax parking requirements in a manner substantively the same as the draft set out in Attachment A and B of the Planning and Heritage Advisory Committee report #23-21 dated January 9, 2025.



Recommendation - Hantsport (2 of 2)

- ...that Council gives Second Reading and approves amending the map of the Hantsport Land Use By-law to reflect the proposed zoning changes in a manner substantively the same as the draft set out in Figure 1 of the Planning Advisory Committee report #23-21 dated January 9, 2025.



Recommendation - West Hants (1 of 2)

- ...that Council gives Second Reading and approves amending the text of the West Hants Municipal Planning Strategy and West Hants Land Use By-law to accommodate a wider range of “missing middle” housing forms, create affordable housing policy, and relax parking requirements in a manner substantively the same as the draft set out in Attachment A and B of the Planning and Heritage Advisory Committee report #23-21 dated January 9, 2025.



Recommendation - West Hants (2 of 2)

- ...that Council gives Second Reading and approves amending the map of the West Hants Land Use By-law to reflect the proposed zoning changes in a manner substantively the same as the draft set out in Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3, and Figure 4 of the Planning Advisory Committee report #23-21 dated January 9, 2025.