



What We
Heard Report
**ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**

FEBRUARY 2020



What We Heard Report
Economic Development
February 2020

Project Lunenburg
Town of Lunenburg Comprehensive Plan

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This report was prepared by Upland Planning and Design.

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Just as Lunenburg's economy has transitioned since the town's inception, it will continue to evolve into the future. The Project Team sought to understand what the future economy of Lunenburg may look like and the actions that may help the town achieve its goals. Information related to economic development that forms the foundation of this report was collected by the following means:

- ▶ The Lunenburg Individual Survey;
- ▶ The Social Pinpoint Interactive Map; and,
- ▶ The Economic Development Community Workshop.

The Lunenburg Individual Survey, which collected responses between February 27 and April 7, 2019, asked respondents open- and closed-ended questions regarding demographics, issues and opportunities in Lunenburg, among others. Comments were also collected between February 2019 and January 2020 using Social Pinpoint, a web-based engagement platform, that was open to the public to leave location-specific comments on a map of Lunenburg. Finally, the Economic Development community workshop was held on January 9, 2020, between 6:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. At the community workshop, community members, in small groups, brainstormed and discussed the future economy of Lunenburg and the strategic directions and actions that may be taken to promote economic development in the future.

There were also three additional surveys intended to collect information from key economic industries and contributors - the Visitor Intercept Survey; the Builder and Developers Survey; and, the Hospitality, Accommodation and Tourism Sector Survey. The results from these surveys are included as separate sections in this What We Heard Report.

This What We Heard Report on economic development is the eighth in a series of nine summarizing the input from the community regarding economic development. The information within this report will be used to guide the recommendations for the Comprehensive Community Plan in the Town of Lunenburg.

Who Was Involved



Between February, 2019 and January, 2020, there were over 750 engagement interactions that contributed to this report. This included:

- ▶ 262 respondents to the Lunenburg Individual Survey;
- ▶ Over 450 Social Pinpoint submissions; and,
- ▶ Over 40 participants at the Economic Development Community Workshop.

At the Economic Development Community Workshop Neil Lovitt, Vice President of Economic Intelligence at Turner Drake and Partners, presented on the local economy in Lunenburg and economic development more broadly - establishing approaches the town may take to pursue economic development in the future.

Engagement Results

Throughout Project Lunenburg, the Project Team received a variety of in-person and online comments related to the economy and economic development. Comments were analyzed and categorized into themes that appeared most prominently through the engagement. Based on the results of the engagement, four primary themes emerged as well as several secondary themes. Although comments were analyzed and categorized into one of the primary themes, and where applicable, the secondary themes, many of the comments were complementary to other themes that emerged. The four primary themes that emerged from the engagement were:

- ▶ Socioeconomic Diversity;
- ▶ Destination Management;
- ▶ Cooperation + Collaboration; and,
- ▶ Environmental Responsibility + Sustainability.



The primary economic development theme relates to Lunenburg's **socioeconomic diversity**. Comments dealt with the local economy in the town and the economic sectors that are important, while also dealing with the relationship between the regulatory environment and the real (and perceived) impacts they have on economic development.

Economic Diversity

Lunenburg's world-renowned architecture, culture, waterfront, and coastline attract many visitors to the town, but there was a general sentiment among respondents that Lunenburg should look to strike more of a balance between tourism and other sectors that operate in town. Well-paying, year-round jobs in a variety of industries are highly desired in the town. Respondents felt emphasis should be placed on adopting or expanding new and innovative industries as opposed to focusing efforts on developing tourism-related industries. Readyng the Town and the community to be proactive and prepared for changing economic conditions was seen as critical to Lunenburg's economic future.

Respondents felt more effort was needed to leverage and promote existing expertise, infrastructure, and the workforce in the community. These comments especially referred to industries in the marine, manufacturing, and processing sectors. Respondents value these industries and their prominence in the town, notably those along the waterfront as they help maintain a working waterfront environment – an important characteristic of the town to many.

While some participants were open to new and innovative industries locating in Lunenburg, there were also opinions about conducting economic development in a manner whereby the type of industry, their location, and form should be strictly controlled. Some respondents felt certain industries and development could threaten the heritage character and aesthetic of Lunenburg. On the other hand, some respondents felt this sentiment has contributed to blanket opposition and an atmosphere of negativity when development is proposed in the town.

Lunenburg's working waterfront plays a key role in community identity.





There was an appreciation and understanding of how the local economy does not function in isolation of other critical factors in Lunenburg, and how economic development is just 'one piece of the puzzle'. Respondents suggested that more economic activity that enables local year-round employment could act as a catalyst to attract young families to the town. However, throughout the engagement, many respondents felt the short supply of housing, especially housing that is affordable, is creating barriers for young families, among other cohorts. Respondents commented on the need for a comprehensive approach to economic development, where housing, transportation, and other livability factors are integrated into decision-making.

Land Use Regulatory Flexibility

Throughout the engagement, respondents commented on the need for changes to the regulatory environment and processes in Lunenburg, to help stimulate and maintain economic activity. Respondents wished to see greater flexibility in existing regulations affecting developers or entrepreneurs, such as heritage and land use regulations, to attract an array of types and scales of businesses. Related, some comments suggested the Town could create incentives that would help local businesses to flourish. Finally, respondents noted the need to plan for more dense settlement patterns that could accommodate more people and businesses in the community. While most comments were general, several responses throughout the engagement focused on Old Town Lunenburg, and the public works building in particular. Respondents felt this area, specifically Cumberland Street, could be re-adapted by relocating public works out of this area and developing housing or an artistic/cultural building.

In addition to greater flexibility, respondents expressed the need for reduced barriers to development and industry. Many respondents feel there is excessive 'red tape' in the town which is causing investors to look elsewhere. Respondents also noted that the regulatory environment is difficult for small businesses (especially for start-ups) making it difficult to grow. Policy and regulations that permit more home-based businesses and live/work units could benefit the community greatly.



The second primary theme to emerge from the engagement dealt with improving the management of Lunenburg as a destination for visitors. Within the community, there is an appreciation of the tourism industry and the benefits it brings; however, respondents felt that enhancing the way the town is promoted and operates could improve the town as a destination, but also improve the quality of life for residents. Participants felt creating a more intuitive experience for visitors would positively impact the community.

Respondents noted the need for town-wide action, where the coordination and planning of activities, facilities and events are done with greater cooperation. There was a feeling in the community that businesses and organizations involved in tourism are fragmented in their approach to attracting and catering to visitors. Respondents suggested the development of a shared communication plan among local organizations, businesses, and the Town, that could guide a unified and systematic approach to improving the promotion of Lunenburg. Related, many participants throughout the engagement emphasized the need for the town to renew and refine its 'brand' as a destination - although specifics were not discussed.

How might Lunenburg develop shoulder season and winter tourism opportunities?



In addition to broad-level suggestions about the management of the tourism industry in Lunenburg, participants made suggestions regarding specific initiatives that could be pursued by the Town and community. These included:

- ▶ Establishing Lunenburg as a major port of call through the enhancement of the town's marine transportation infrastructure for personal craft;
- ▶ Developing eco-tourism opportunities;
- ▶ Developing cycle tourism opportunities in Lunenburg and the region;
- ▶ Emphasizing the arts, culture and heritage sectors in Lunenburg through research and education initiatives; and,
- ▶ Exploring businesses and industries that could take place in the shoulder season and winter.



Participants felt that greater **cooperation and collaboration** between all individuals, organizations, and businesses are needed as the town moves into the future. Respondents felt relationships in the town need to be strengthened and fostered, and that the future economy of Lunenburg can be more effectively built with strong relationships and collaboration between local, regional, and national partners.

Many comments were about how the Town of Lunenburg could place a greater emphasis on collaboration with other municipalities, collaboration within the current Town organization, and collaboration between the Town and the community at large. Respondents wished to see the Town pursue more joint agreements, cooperation and innovative partnerships between municipal and provincial entities, in order to provide new services such as public transportation, and expand already existing services such as healthcare. Participants also felt more data sharing between the Town and public could positively impact economic development.



► *“Placemaking” - a process that involves a collaborative approach to re-imagining and reinventing public spaces. The parklet installed on King Street during the summer of 2019 represented a placemaking initiative to facilitate creative use of the space.*

Community Collaboration

In addition to improved collaboration between the Town and other jurisdictions, respondents felt that greater cooperation, collaboration, and consensus-building is needed among the community itself. Several respondents felt there is a need for a cultural shift within the community, whereby ‘gatekeeping’ is replaced with promoting openness in a welcoming and nurturing manner. Respondents noted examples of communities outside of Lunenburg collaborating to put on festivals and events that benefit the community. Respondents also made specific suggestions for initiatives the community can pursue together. These included:

- Undertaking placemaking opportunities for residents and visitors;
- Developing Lunenburg as an innovation hub through the support of small business and entrepreneurs;
- Actively promoting immigration;
- Working with and developing ideas from other small communities; and,
- Working with local businesses and agencies to recruit a workforce for the town’s industries and businesses.



Educational & Post Secondary Collaboration

Throughout the engagement, respondents noted the need for greater collaboration between the Town and educational/post-secondary institutions. Emphasis was placed on creating partnerships with existing institutions to develop skills related to the trades, and arts and culture, among many others. Many respondents noted the importance of attracting education in the disciplines of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). While many comments suggested developing traditional educational opportunities, respondents also felt the community could adopt and promote more life-long learning opportunities for people of all ages and abilities.

Weight was given to attracting educational programs (and industries) that are not location dependent. Satellite or branch campuses, where students learn at a facility associated with an established institution but which are located away from the main campus, were proposed as an opportunity for the town to pursue. Finally, respondents felt the town should be ready to adopt pilot programs for education as they emerge.



The fourth and final theme to emerge from the engagement surrounded **environmental responsibility and sustainability**. Participants felt the economy must be developed in a manner that is in harmony with the natural environment, while also improving the current environmental conditions that have been the result of human activity in the town. Many respondents want to see a local circular economy developed, where renewable and non-renewable resources are used to their greatest efficiencies and waste is reduced. Participants also felt the elimination of single-use items within the town could reduce waste and help the economy grow in tune with the environment.

There was overwhelming support from respondents to develop and permit clean energy production. Clean energy production and development through technologies for wind and solar could represent an economic opportunity for local business/industry while also creating economic efficiencies by saving the Town and energy users money by reducing energy needs. Community members expressed their desire to see regional energy strategies and 'green' industries enabled in the town and region. There was also support for more local food production as an economic opportunity that could improve environmental sustainability in Lunenburg while also tackling food access and affordability concerns.

In addition to those broad-level actions, respondents noted several specific initiatives the town could achieve. Participants felt cleaning the harbour could help protect existing marine assets while also creating new economic opportunities. Other participants suggested the town oppose commercial fish farming near the town and its harbour due to concern for environmental impacts outweighing local economic benefit.



The Project Lunenburg team conducted visitor intercept surveys in Lunenburg during the summer of 2019 to receive feedback and input from people visiting the town. In total, there were 64 respondents to the survey. Visitors to Lunenburg travel as individuals or as part of groups as large as 40+ people, usually part of tour groups. The average group size of visitors, based on the survey results, was 3.8 people per group, while two-person groups were the most frequent to visit Lunenburg. Almost all (92%) of the surveyed visitors to Lunenburg were visiting for leisure purposes.

Most visitors (78%) to Lunenburg, based on the survey results, arrived via private automobile (car, truck, van, etc.). The remaining visitors arrived by recreation vehicle (RV)/camper (11%) or as part of a tour group on a bus (11%). As visitors arrived in Lunenburg, they overwhelmingly felt (97%) their destination was easy to find. Despite most parties arriving in Lunenburg via private automobile, once in town, almost all visitors (98%) walked as some form of transportation, while only 27% used a private automobile as a form of transportation within the town.

The majority of visitors to Lunenburg felt parking was easy to find. Nearly 72% of respondents noted they did not have a hard time finding parking, with 14% identifying parking as difficult to find. Visitors who indicated parking was difficult to find identified traffic and the size of their vehicle (especially for RV/camper drivers) as the primary reasons parking was difficult to find. The remaining 14% of respondents indicated they did not need parking while they were in town.

More than half of the surveyed visitors to Lunenburg did not stay overnight in the town. For visitors that did stay overnight, the top accommodation type was a hotel (20%), followed by inns (17%), and a rented room in a house/apartment (17%). Staying overnight in a bed and breakfast or at the town's campground was the accommodation type for 13% of visitor respondents that stayed overnight.

Accommodation location (25%), cost (16%), and availability (13%) were the top three contributing factors to the choice of accommodation for respondents

The Lunenburg waterfront is a popular destination for visitors.





staying overnight in Lunenburg. Respondents also noted the accommodation’s quality, architecture, and historical significance as reasons for selecting the accommodation they stayed in.

When planning to visit Lunenburg, there is a range of activities that visitors anticipated doing (Figure 1). Visiting the waterfront (77%), dining (55%), and shopping (38%) were the top three activities visitors planned to accomplish while in Lunenburg. Many visitors indicated that simply wandering and exploring the town were planned activities for their trip.

Visitors were also asked what infrastructure improvements could make Lunenburg a better tourist destination. The top three improvements as indicated by visitors were:

- ▶ More public washrooms;
- ▶ Bike shares/rentals; and,
- ▶ More sidewalks/crosswalks

Respondents also indicated more outdoor seating, public wifi and better wayfinding/signage would be welcome infrastructure improvements in Lunenburg. Visitors to the town later in the summer months expressed their desire for more shops and restaurants to be open to the public and for businesses to have longer hours. Other comments visitors left for what they’d like to see more of in Lunenburg included:

- ▶ More live, open music;
- ▶ More transportation options, including bike rentals and public mooring;
- ▶ More architectural diversity;
- ▶ A history museum; and,
- ▶ Spaces designed with accessibility in mind.

Several respondents noted they would like to see fewer automobiles, RVs, and horse-drawn carriages in Old Town. Visitors felt that too much space was dedicated to automobiles and parking, taking away from the character of the town. Overall, nearly 80% of visitors ‘Strongly Agreed’ that they were satisfied with their trip to Lunenburg.

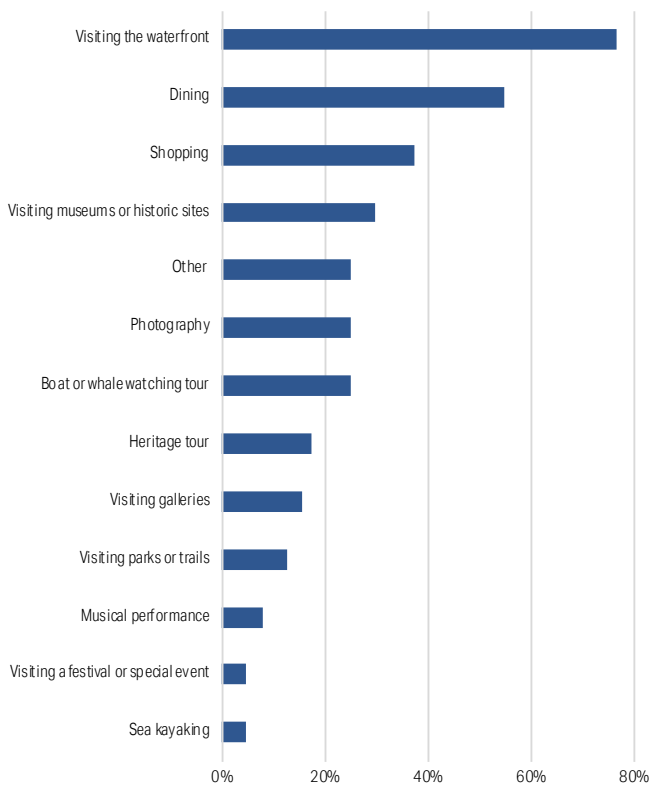


Figure 1. Activities visitors planned on completing while in Lunenburg.

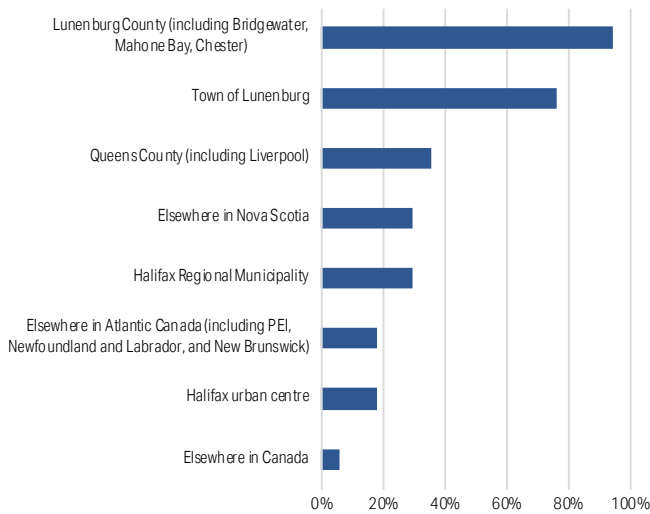


Figure 2. Geographic market for builders and developers.

The Developer and Builders Survey targeted individuals who own or operate companies within the development, construction or building trades sector across Nova Scotia. There was a total of 17 individuals who completed the survey between January 15 and February 15, 2020. The size of businesses that completed the survey, based on the number of employees, varied from one person, up to 40 employees, with an average of 11 employees per business.

Survey respondents have their businesses headquartered throughout Nova Scotia, but 82% of respondents' businesses are located in Lunenburg County. Businesses are also headquartered in Hants County and Halifax Regional Municipality. Just as the head office location varies for each business, the geographic market in which the businesses operate also varies (Figure 2). The majority (94%) of businesses operate within Lunenburg County, while 76% operate in the Town of Lunenburg. Survey respondents also conduct building and development services across Nova Scotia, Atlantic Canada, and elsewhere in Canada.

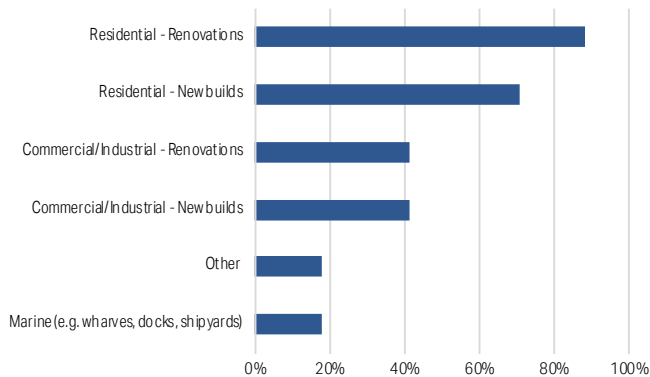


Figure 3. Forms of development builders and developers pursue.

Most respondents (88%) conduct residential renovations, while 71% are engaged in building new residential structures (Figure 3). Conversely, 41% of respondents are engaged in commercial/industrial new builds and renovations. Only 18% of respondents conduct marine construction. The size of business and type of development they conduct impacts how many structures if any, each business builds in a year. Approximately 47% of respondents construct between zero and five new structures each year, while 24% do not engage in the construction of new structures. Only 12% of survey respondents operate a business that constructs between 11 and 20 structures per year, and 18% of respondents construct six to 10 structures per year.

Generally, respondents felt the residential and commercial construction market has grown over the past 12 to 24 months in Lunenburg. Respondents indicated there has been a greater number of renovations and new constructions, and more competition in recent

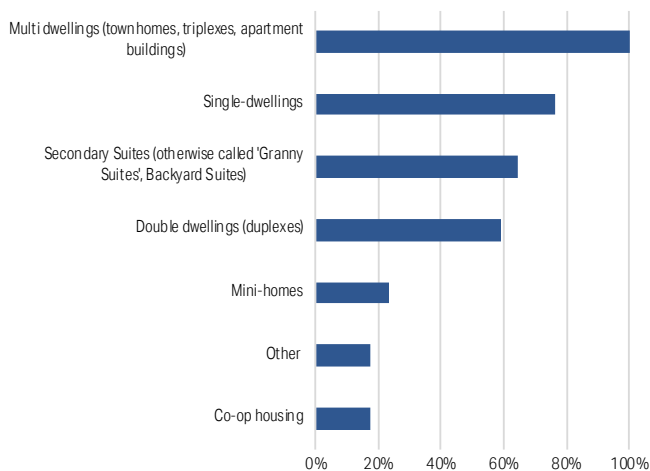


Figure 4. Types of housing developers and builders predict will be in greatest demand in Lunenburg over the next 10 years.

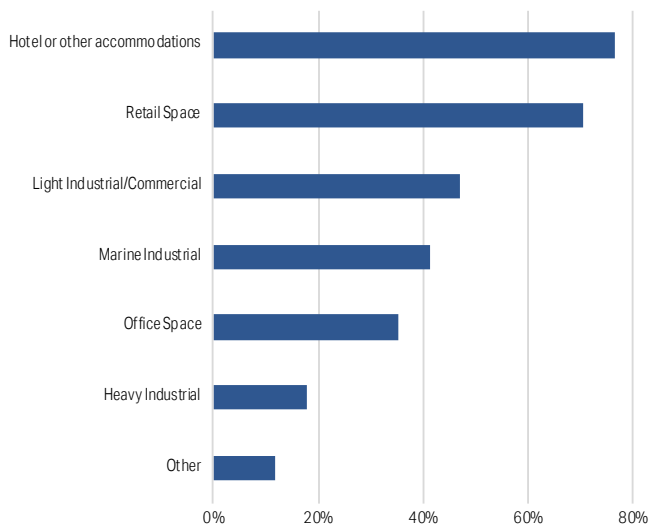


Figure 5. Types of commercial/industrial properties developers and builders predict will be in greatest demand in Lunenburg over the next 10 years.

years. Several respondents noted the increased cost of labour and materials, especially as the building code has changed. In the next 12-24 months, builders and developers felt there will be no change in development patterns in Lunenburg, or if any, activity will increase.

Survey respondents indicated they think multi-unit dwellings (100%) and single-dwellings (76%) will be in greatest demand in Lunenburg over the next 10 years (Figure 4). Respondents also noted they think secondary suites and double dwellings will also be in high demand over the next 10 years. In regard to commercial and industrial development, 77% of survey respondents think hotel or other accommodations will have the greatest demand over the next 10 years (Figure 5).

Respondents recognized there are several factors, crossing various jurisdictions, that could make residential and commercial/industrial development more viable. Respondents noted a greater population and lower commercial tax rate could attract more people to live and work in the Lunenburg area and would thus increase demand for residential and commercial development. Additional factors survey respondents thought could make residential, commercial, and industrial development more viable include:

- ▶ Assistance with interpreting building code requirements and regulations;
- ▶ Greater permitted activities within land use regulations; and,
- ▶ Quicker turnaround times for permits.

Respondents to the survey felt there is new development and infill development (redevelopment of previously built-up areas) potential in Lunenburg. Respondents noted specific streets, including Centennial Avenue, James Road, Victoria Road, Green Street, Tannery Road, Dufferin Street, and Starr Street, as areas where new and infill development could take place. While some survey respondents felt Blockhouse Hill should be developed for residential purposes, other respondents felt this area should remain in its current state.



“The development potential is only limited by imagination and ambition to drive it forward”

- Survey respondent.

The surveyed developers and builders had differing perspectives about the impacts of regulations on their business. While some respondents noted the land use bylaw and heritage bylaw (and certificate of appropriateness) as challenges to their business, several respondents noted that these regulations support their businesses and its operation. Specific challenges included the permitting process, lack of a full-time building inspector/heritage officer, and building code requirements.

Builders and developers generally feel that Lunenburg is a good place to conduct their business. There is an appreciation of the heritage character of Lunenburg’s architecture and buildings, with respondents feeling these assets should be preserved. However, respondents noted that imitation heritage should be prevented and areas outside of the UNESCO heritage district should be permitted to have more creative forms of development.

Residential construction in Lunenburg.



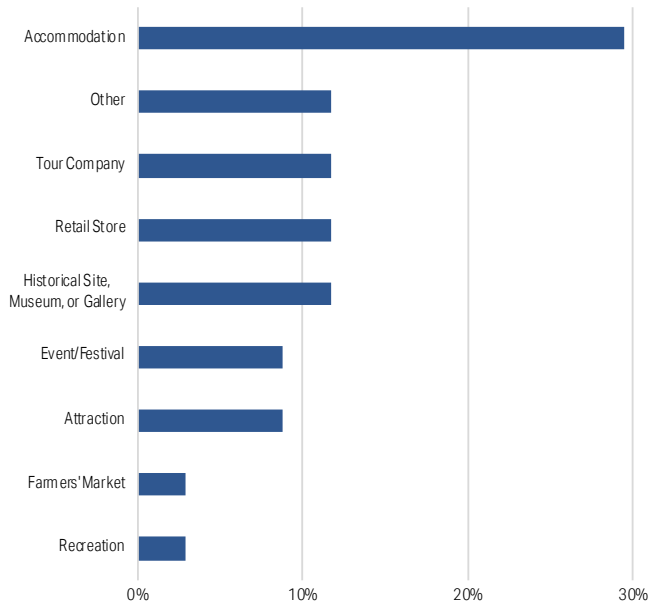


Figure 6. Primary purpose of respondents' business or activity.

The second industry-specific survey sought input from individuals who operate or lead businesses or other activities in the hospitality, accommodation and tourism sector. Between January 15 and February 5, 2020, there were 34 respondents to the survey. The number of years respondents have been operating their business or activities ranged from fewer than six years (33%), between six and 10 years (17%) and for 11 or more years (50%). The majority (63%) of respondents are full-time homeowners in Lunenburg, while 7% are full-time renters. Conversely, 30% of respondents to the survey are not a resident of the town.

There is a wide range in the types of businesses and activities respondents operate in Lunenburg. Nearly 30% of the respondents indicated the primary purpose of their business or activity was accommodation-based (Figure 6). Survey respondents also take part in retail trade, events/festivals, historic sites, museums, and galleries, among others. Of those respondents who participate in the accommodation sector, 44% operate a guesthouse/BnB, 33% operate a short-term rental (Airbnb, VRBO, etc.), and 11% operate a hotel or motel with 10 rooms or more.

Lunenburg's popularity as a tourist destination plays a significant role in the year-round employment opportunities within the town. During the respondents' busiest time of the year, their business or activity employed on average, approximately 5.7 employees (full-time equivalent hours, based on a 40-hour workweek). Conversely, during the off-season, respondents employed an average of 1.8 employees. This range in year-round employment opportunities is also reflected in the times of year businesses or activities operate. Less than two-third (63%) of respondents operate year-round, while 30% only operate in June, July and August.

As economic conditions shift, the short- and long-term plans for individuals operating businesses may also change. Approximately one-third of respondents to the survey indicated their five-year plan was to either remain the same or expand, while 18% of respondents noted they planned to sell their business within five years. The



age of the business' operator and financial barriers - primarily high property taxes - were cited as the primary reasons why individuals were planning on selling their business. Nearly 18% of respondents also noted they planned on diversifying their business or activity to adapt to changing economic conditions and customer preferences.

Respondents from the hospitality, accommodation and tourism sector commented on several barriers and challenges that exist for their business or activity, and included those that occur on a variety of scales. At a macro-scale, respondents identified increased global competition and online shopping as barriers and challenges. Conversely, respondents noted several local-level barriers and challenges that were impacting their business and activity. These included:

- ▶ Limited tourism promotion and advertising on behalf of the Town;
- ▶ High costs to operate their business (e.g. property taxes, operating costs, etc.)
- ▶ Limited space for retail and farmers' market stands;
- ▶ Limited venue space for music events and concerts;
- ▶ The absence of off-season promotion;
- ▶ Prevalence of unlicensed accommodations, particularly short-term rentals;
- ▶ Limited cooperation between businesses and organizations;
- ▶ Centralized nature of businesses in Lunenburg – i.e. they are generally located in the Old Town core area;
- ▶ Fewer year-round residents to support local businesses.

Generally, respondents to the survey indicated they are 'Somewhat' to 'Very Aware' of municipal and provincial regulations regarding the properties associated with their business or activity. 42% of respondents were 'Somewhat Aware' of provincial regulations concerning the properties associated with their business and 46% were 'Very Aware'. Additionally, 50% of respondents indicated they were 'Somewhat Aware' of municipal planning policies and regulations, while just 35% indicated they were 'Very Aware'.

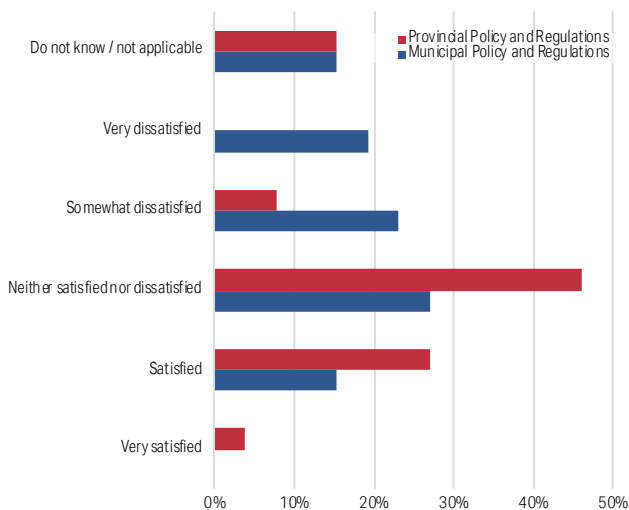


Figure 7. Respondents' level of satisfaction with municipal and provincial policy and regulations.

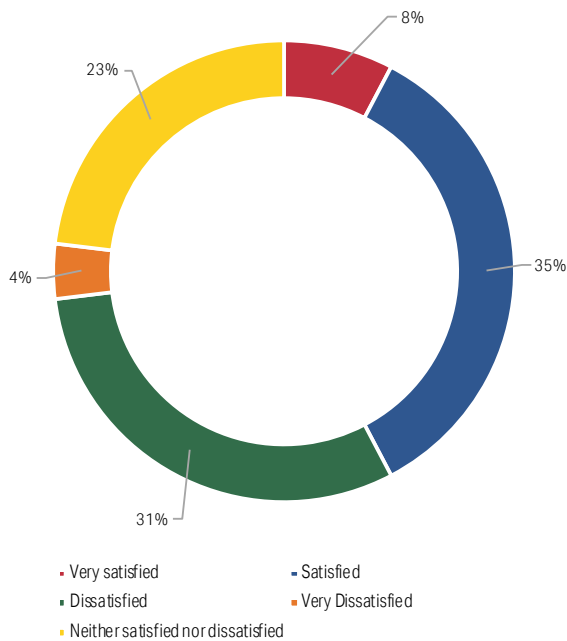


Figure 8. Level of satisfaction with road system in Lunenburg.

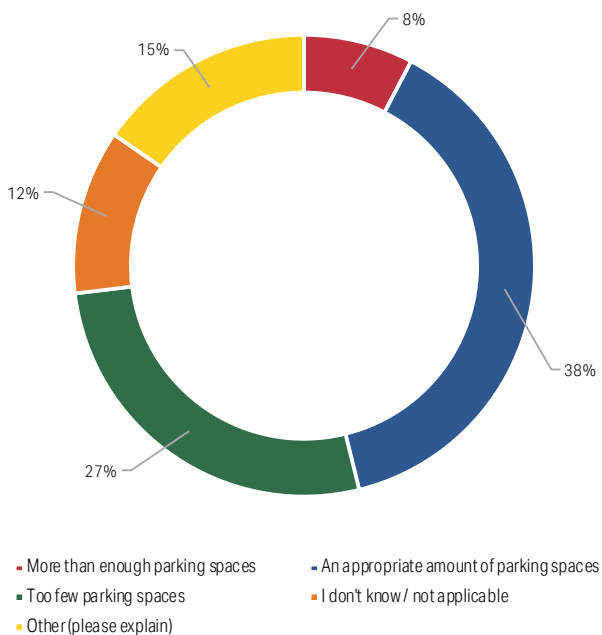


Figure 9. Level of satisfaction with parking availability in Lunenburg.

The level of satisfaction with provincial and municipal policy and regulations varied among respondents (Figure 7). 46% of respondents were 'Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied' with provincial policy and regulations, while 27% expressed they were 'Satisfied'. Conversely, 27% of respondents expressed they were 'Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied' with municipal policy and regulation; however, over 42% of respondents indicated they were either 'Somewhat Dissatisfied' or 'Very Dissatisfied' with municipal policy and regulations.

Respondents noted several reasons for their low level of satisfaction of municipal policy and regulations, including:

- ▶ Lack of communication from the Town regarding policy and regulations – respondents feel there is unwillingness from the Town to work with businesses;
- ▶ Timeliness of responses from the Town regarding permits and interpretation of policy and regulations;
- ▶ Lack of regulations for short-term rentals; and,
- ▶ Inconsistent enforcement of regulations

Although 35% of respondents are 'Satisfied' with the road system within Lunenburg, 31% expressed they were 'Dissatisfied' (Figure 8). While 38% of respondents noted there is an appropriate number of parking spaces in Lunenburg, 27% noted there were too few spaces (Figure 9). Respondents expressed the need for better parking management, especially during the summer months to help coordinate the parking of visitors, business operators and employees in Old Town.

Respondents note that the built and natural environment in Lunenburg are excellent features in the town, greatly contributing to the town's popularity as a tourist destination. However, throughout the survey, respondents indicated that the Town should take on a greater role of promoting and advertising the town as a destination, and also be more accepting of innovative ideas and approaches to business development. Additionally, respondents noted the potential for greater year-round tourism opportunities. Nevertheless, 88% of respondents to the survey either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that Lunenburg is a great place to operate a business.



Respondents also made suggestions for interventions within the town that could improve the overall beauty and functionality for residents and visitors. These included:

- ▶ Increasing the number of public washrooms;
- ▶ Improving wayfinding and signage for streets and trails;
- ▶ Introducing more flower baskets, planters and decorations during the summer months; and,
- ▶ General landscaping improvements in the town's parks and trails.



During this phase of engagement, residents, community members, and other stakeholders from Lunenburg and the surrounding area provided input regarding Lunenburg's economy and economic development. Based on the responses that were received, there is a high degree of enthusiasm for what the future may hold, but in order for the town to be successful, greater collaboration and communication among all members of the community is needed and desired.

A collaborative approach to economic development is desired in Lunenburg, a need that is highlighted by the diverging opinions as to how Lunenburg's economy should be developed and what its focus should be. Tourism plays a prominent role in the town's economy, contributing local jobs and income for the community; however, respondents would like to see the economy developed so Lunenburg is not just a 'tourist town'. As tourism is further developed, respondents feel the cultural, artistic and heritage aspects of the community should be the focal point. Maintaining the 'working town' identity and working waterfront are important characteristics for the future economy of Lunenburg. Economic development in Lunenburg should also include improvements to the physical realm, including streets, parks and other public spaces, to enhance the quality of life for residents while also improving visitor experiences.

There were many diverging, and sometimes directly opposing, perceptions and perspectives shared throughout the engagement, reinforcing the need for a cooperative and collaborative approach to economic development and community building. Three examples that appeared throughout the engagement that highlight this need are:

- ▶ There was a perception among many engagement participants that there is too much administrative 'red tape' which is causing businesses to leave and prevent new businesses from coming. However, throughout the engagement, other respondents expressed apprehension about permitting a variety of businesses and industries in the town, with calls for strict regulation / limitation of commercial or industrial land uses.



- ▶ Among several engagement participants and hospitality, accommodation and tourism sector business operators, there was a feeling that too few parking spaces are available in Lunenburg. Input from Visitor Survey respondents, however, oppose this view as nearly three-quarters of those surveyed indicated they did not have trouble finding a parking spot.
- ▶ Businesses, especially those in the hospitality, accommodation and tourism sector are hesitant to remain open during the shoulder and off-season, but many respondents to the Visitor Survey expressed their disappointment in the number of closed businesses later in the tourism season.

These three examples highlight how a lack of communication between individuals and community groups with different perspectives and interests has created economic disunity. As expressed at the community workshop by Neil Lovitt, consensus building and collaboration need to be better integrated into economic development decision-making so binary decisions (yes or no) can be turned into “how can we make this work for everyone?”

Business operators and members of the community both felt greater communication is needed from the Town, especially with regards to regulations, policies, and codes. Being able to understand and navigate any regulatory or permitting processes could alleviate any real (and perceived) regulatory barriers that exist. Respondents also felt the Town should take on a more proactive role within economic development, whether it be working with businesses, the community, or other municipalities.

There is a sense of possibility and optimism with regard to the economy and economic development in Lunenburg. The built form, natural environment, and cultural realm are incredible assets in the town and help to attract and retain visitors and residents in the community. Pairing these assets with greater collaboration and coordination will help to leverage the immense human capital that exists in Lunenburg. The results from this engagement will be integrated into the Comprehensive Community Plan and will help guide decision-making regarding the future economy of Lunenburg.



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