



What We Heard Report

TRANSPORTATION

JUNE 2019





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What We Heard Report
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 June 2019

Project Lunenburg
 Town of Lunenburg Comprehensive Plan

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This report was prepared by Upland Planning and Design.

As part of Project Lunenburg and the development of a Comprehensive Community Plan, the Project Team along with the community and its stakeholders explored transportation issues and opportunities. Transportation was examined as an individual topic but also as part of a larger discussion about the future of Lunenburg. The Project Team collected feedback and information related to transportation through three activities:

- ▶ Lunenburg Individual Survey;
- ▶ Social Pinpoint; and,
- ▶ Transportation Community Workshop.

The Lunenburg Individual Survey, which asked respondents open- and closed-ended questions, was released to the public through a variety of methods including a mail-out invitation enclosed in Lunenburg residents' electricity bills. Survey responses were collected between February 27 and April 7, 2019. Also opened to the public at this time was Social Pinpoint - a web-based engagement platform that allows community members to leave location-specific comments by clicking on a map of Lunenburg (Figure 1). Social Pinpoint will be active throughout the engagement phase of Project Lunenburg, so for the purpose of this report the comments received on Social Pinpoint between February 28 and May 14, 2019 were analyzed.

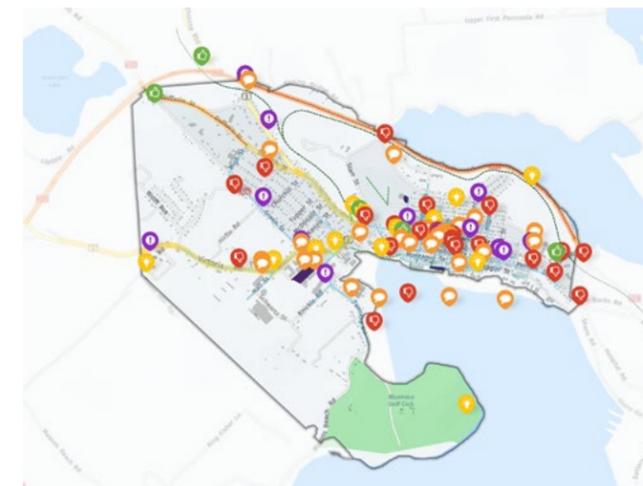


Figure 1: Project Lunenburg Social Pinpoint (June 13, 2019)

This What We Heard Report is the third in a series of ten that provides summaries of public insight on topics addressed through Project Lunenburg. The first What We Heard Report detailed findings of the Lunenburg individual survey, and those general findings are referred to throughout this paper alongside findings about transportation specifically. This compilation of comments and discussions will guide the comprehensive plan and create a vision for the future of transportation in Lunenburg.

Who Was Involved

Between February and May 2019, there were over 590 engagement interactions that contributed to this report. These included:

- ▶ Over 60 participants at the Transportation Community Workshop;
- ▶ 53 of 271 Social Pinpoint submissions; and,
- ▶ 262 respondents to the Lunenburg Individual Survey.

Throughout these discussions, 'transportation' took on a broad definition. Transportation was taken to include the physical infrastructure and systems that move people and goods, as well as perceived barriers to mobility. In this report, 'pedestrian' includes any human powered form of transportation such as walking, cycling, the use of assistive devices, and other forms of active transportation.



Figure 2: Transportation community workshop (May 22, 2019)

Engagement Results

Throughout the engagement interactions that took place between February and May prominent topics arose, with over 255 written comments related to transportation received and analyzed. Four major themes were established through the analysis:

- ▶ Complete Streets and Universal Design;
- ▶ Parking and Traffic Management;
- ▶ Intra- and Inter-Municipal Transportation; and,
- ▶ General Maintenance.

Although comments were analyzed and categorized into one of the four major themes, many comments resonate with several themes.

Complete Streets and Universal Design

The primary theme that came out of the engagement activities was pedestrianizing the town. Comments suggested integrating complete streets and universal design principles to allow our spaces to be used and enjoyed by everyone regardless of age or ability. Many respondents mentioned that the Town's infrastructure does not meet the needs of seniors and person's with accessibility issues due to its design. In response to this, complete streets and universal design promote an equitable approach to transportation which accommodates all modes and allows the most vulnerable groups to safely navigate the streets, sidewalks, and public places.

Respondents felt the current transportation system is built primarily for the private automobile, offering solutions such as:

- ▶ New sidewalks to facilitate safer pedestrian movement;
- ▶ Bicycle lanes throughout the town, including connecting the rural fringes to central areas;
- ▶ Reduced speed limits;
- ▶ Pedestrian amenities like chairs, benches, and canopies along streets;
- ▶ Ensuring the transportation network enables and promotes comfortable and safe mobility for people of all ages, abilities, and sizes; and,
- ▶ Permanent or temporary pedestrian streets.



▶ *"Complete Streets"* - transportation design that accommodates a variety of modes and prioritizes equitable access to transportation.

▶ *"Universal Design"* - design that prioritizes making spaces comfortable, safe and accessible for people of all abilities



Figure 3: The Town's steep topography can make it difficult to navigate some streets

Respondents felt that any solutions needed to be implemented throughout the town and year-round. For example, many of the streets in Old Town have sidewalks; however, respondents stated there was a need for more sidewalks in New Town and better connections between Old and New Town. An integrated network of sidewalks, bike lanes, pathways, and trails facilitates active transportation connections throughout the town.

Design that promotes multi-modal transportation choices would also assist in facilitating a more environmentally sustainable system. Many respondents expressed the need for a 'green' transportation system; however, private automobiles tend to be the primary mode of transportation in the town because of barriers to active transportation such as safety and accessibility

Parking and Traffic Management

One of the biggest concerns that prominently appeared was parking and traffic management. Many respondents expressed concerns about the increased pressure during tourism season. With an influx of visitors to the town, respondents expressed that roadways become congested and parking availability is greatly reduced. Respondents were particularly worried about the volume of private automobiles in addition to recreational vehicles (RVs) and tour buses. One suggestion to come out of engagement was the development of more parking spaces outside of the town's central areas, to help alleviate parking shortages. Coupled with a shuttle service from parking areas to the town, many respondents felt this type of parking and traffic strategy could benefit the town and its visitors. With regard to parking, respondents also requested increased enforcement and protection of private residential parking spaces.

Although many of the concerns were seasonal, stakeholders also discussed more general issues. Suggestions to improve the town's car traffic included:

- ▶ Re-alignment of the intersection at Dufferin, Falkland, and Lincoln, perhaps implementing a roundabout to improve automobile movement and pedestrian safety;
- ▶ Implementation of an improved signage system, including signage for one way streets, parking areas and pedestrian destinations;
- ▶ Introduction of traffic calming measures such as four-way stops along King and Pelham Street;
- ▶ Reversing the direction of some one-way streets in Old Town, specifically Pelham, Lincoln and Cumberland.
- ▶ Increasing the number of accessible parking spaces; and
- ▶ Managing the loading and unloading of delivery trucks, especially in Old Town (respondents felt trucks often blocked traffic and created a hazard for pedestrians and vehicle traffic).



Figure 4: Parking in the central core can be difficult to find during peak tourism season

Intra- and Inter-Municipal Transportation

Many comments requested the implementation of better intra-municipal transportation options, and the results of the Lunenburg Individual Survey suggest the transportation options in the town are inadequate. As further evidence of this, 80 of 262 survey respondents indicated the availability of transportation options as a challenge in the town. Respondents between the ages of 18 and 24 and children under 18 had particularly strong agreement that transportation options are a challenge (Figure 5).

Throughout the engagement participants requested the expansion of cycle, pedestrian, and mixed-use trails. In addition to active transportation improvements, many respondents indicated public transportation within the town could help meet the needs of the community and its visitors. Approximately one quarter of households stated that difficulties accessing amenities without a vehicle was an issue in the town (Lunenburg Individual Survey).

There was also a desire to see inter-municipal transportation options expanded. Most frequently mentioned was the desire to see regional public transportation options increased. The need for safe, reliable, and year-round public transportation to destinations such as Bridgewater, Mahone Bay, and Halifax were repeatedly mentioned. Also, at a regional level, participants expressed their desire to see safer cycle infrastructure along Provincial Highways for recreational and tourist users.

Finally, comments related to marine transportation focused around the expansion of available spaces for both small and large vessels to dock. Many respondents expressed the need for an expansion of infrastructure to support recreational boating for residents in the Town but also as a port of call for visitors.

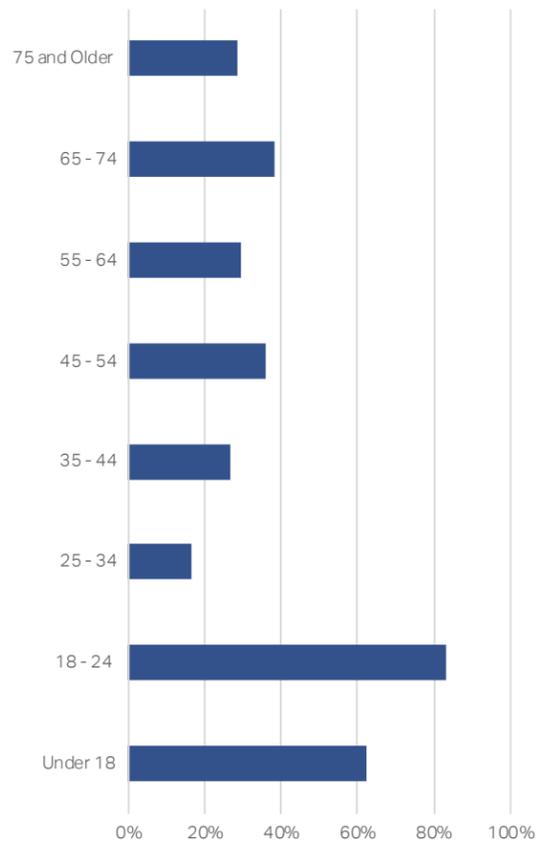


Figure 5: Percentage of survey respondents indicating 'transportation options' as a challenge in Lunenburg

General Maintenance

A general concern that was discussed throughout the engagement was the need to ensure high-quality infrastructure and ongoing maintenance. Several comments indicated locations within the town where the paving or filling of pot holes could improve the conditions for drivers.

There were also many comments related to winter maintenance, specifically snow removal. Many feel the municipality can play a greater role in facilitating a safe transportation system by ploughing snow away from residents' driveways. Finally, more general comments offered support for paving some of the town's trails. Doing so would not only improve access for wheelchair users and cyclists, but would also make it possible to plow these trails, making them available for year-round pedestrian use.



Figure 6: Respondents felt that there is a need for more public mooring facilities along the waterfront

Discussion

Feedback related to transportation was received from a wide range of community members and stakeholders within the Town of Lunenburg and the wider region. The results from the engagement highlighted what the community valued most in a transportation system, but also where barriers and challenges currently exist. Input from the community encouraged the development of a multi-modal transportation system which is safe and accessible for everyone.

Several key themes emerged from the engagement: implementing complete street and universal design principles; using tools and strategies to manage parking and traffic concerns in the Town; developing integrated intra- and inter-municipal transportation options; and investing and maintaining the current transportation system. Designing a transportation system with these themes in mind could improve the social and physical, economic, and environmental health of the town.

There are clear social and health benefits to having a safe, accessible, transportation system with many mobility options, but the existing conditions do not meet these standards and are not working for everyone. Seniors and persons living with disabilities may have reduced physical mobility and therefore are unable to navigate certain areas of the town. Curbs and narrow sidewalks can prevent people who rely on pedestrian transportation modes from completing day-to-day tasks, which can cause physical and social isolation. Designing a transportation system with safety and accessibility in mind will also benefit the community as a whole; parents and youth both commented on how they often felt unsafe on the town's streets, hoping to see safety take priority.

The link between an effective transportation system and a healthy economy was clearly articulated by engagement respondents. Respondents recognized the importance of tourism in Lunenburg, but careful planning could move people and goods more efficiently and effectively. These benefits would also extend to the residents of the community as a whole who may be able to meet their needs within Lunenburg as opposed to having to travel to other regional centres. Additionally, inter-municipal transportation options such as regional buses and bicycle networks would not only draw more visitors to the Town, but could enable residents in the town to commute to employment opportunities outside of Lunenburg without the use of a private automobile.

Environmental concerns due to the reliance on private automobiles was expressed throughout the engagement process. Many respondents indicated barriers to using alternative modes of transportation including safety along current routes and lack of access to destinations. Improving mobility options and addressing concerns of accessibility and safety could reduce car-related pollution in Lunenburg.

Despite the changing landscape of transportation, people want the ability to navigate their communities by foot or wheel. The results from this report show the community of Lunenburg values a safe, integrated, and holistic transportation system. Moving forward, the results of the engagement and this report will be used to influence the outcomes of the Comprehensive Community Plan. As the largest area of public space in any town or city, rethinking how streets and roads are used can benefit everyone.



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UPLAND