



**Subject:** *Uniacke Secondary Planning Strategy - Transportation*  
**To:** CAO for Planning Advisory Committee, June 18, 2024  
**Date Prepared:** June 12, 2024  
**Related Motions:** PAC23(59) and C23(383)  
**Prepared by:** Debbie Uloth, Project Planner  
**Approved by:** John Woodford, Director of Planning and Development

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### Summary

As part of the Uniacke Secondary Planning Strategy, Planning staff have completed a review of transportation issues and opportunities in the Uniacke area. This report includes recommendations for Planning Advisory Committee's consideration.

### Financial Impact Statement

Planning staff has budgeted for the Uniacke Secondary Planning Strategy as part of the 2024/2025 Budget Cycle.

### Recommendation

Include the recommendations outlined in the Uniacke SPS Transportation report in the draft Uniacke Secondary Planning Strategy Report.

### Recommended Motion

*Planning Advisory Committee recommends that Council:*

- *authorize staff to include the recommendations outlined in the Uniacke SPS Transportation report in the draft Uniacke Secondary Planning Strategy Report.*

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## Background

As part of the Uniacke Secondary Planning Strategy, staff have undertaken a review of transportation in the Uniacke area. Staff have reviewed the survey responses related to transportation and have developed some proposed improvements that could be made in the community as the population grows.

### SURVEY RESULTS

Sidewalks was the most requested community improvement identified in the Uniacke SPS survey responses. It was mentioned in regards to safety, connectivity, trails, community improvement, and more. In response, Municipal Infrastructure and Operations staff have prepared sidewalk cost options for Councillor's consideration. This is discussed further in the following section.

According to the survey results, approximately 67% of respondents commute out of the study area for work. Nearly 34% of respondents were close to retirement age, and therefore wouldn't be commuting out of the community for work. It is not surprising the respondents indicated that they were interested in having opportunities for transit connecting to HRM. Other comments about commuting included ensuring that road networks were well maintained and cleared of snow. Many respondents commented about the intersection at Highway 1, the Irving, and Highway 101 interchange and concerns around safety. According to the RCMP, between 2020-2023, there were 10 accidents reported at that intersection. Planning staff have spoken to Nova Scotia Public Works about residents' safety concerns and they are aware of the safety issues; however, NSPW does not currently have plans for improvements at the intersection. That being said, NSPW did indicate that this intersection could be a potential candidate for improvements in a future year.

Other transportation related comments included having another interchange to access Highway 101, reduced speeds, more police presence for rush-hour, better painted lines on the road, better winter maintenance, bike routes, and internet for residents who work at home.

### SIDEWALKS

Sidewalks were mentioned numerous times through-out the Uniacke SPS survey results. In order to develop a traditional community centre, sidewalks are required to allow for connectivity and to allow pedestrians to safely access amenities in their community. Constructing sidewalks along Highway 1 would also increase accessibility for the community. Seniors from the Parkview Manor would be able to walk from their apartments to the sidewalk and the sidewalks would also allow for wheelchair and stroller access. Therefore, Infrastructure and Operations have completed the estimated costs for the construction of a sidewalk along Highway 1.

Detailed preliminary cost estimates have been completed for all three phases of the proposed sidewalk and can be provided to PAC if requested. Below staff have highlighted the expected total price to construct each section, a map showing each phase has been attached as Appendix B:

Phase 'A' - Parkview Manor to Uniacke School (1100m) = **\$2,906,000.00**

Phase 'B' - Uniacke School to Pentz Lake Drive (670m) = **\$2,005,000.00**

Phase 'C' - Pentz Lake Drive to Etter Road (900m) = **\$2,530,000.00**

Total Cost of Construction (2024) = **\$7,441,000.00**

Total Cost of Construction (2015) = **\$2,500,000.00**

Though the price has increased dramatically over the past decade, it is important to consider the impact of inflation, as well as changes to the scope:

- The original estimate was for a 1.2m asphalt sidewalk, while the Municipality's current standard is 1.8m concrete;

- Storm infrastructure has been added which was not included in the previous estimate; and
- The sidewalk now extends to Parkview Manor and includes RRFBs (flashing crosswalk lights), thereby adding roughly 210m to the total length.

Staff recommends that PAC authorize staff to explore funding for Phase “A” - Parkview Manor to Uniacke School sidewalk. There may be funding opportunities through the Canada Community Building Fund or other programs.

### PROPOSED ROAD CONNECTIONS MAP

As mentioned as part of the Commercial Background Report, staff have recommended that a Required Future Transportation Connection Map for the Uniacke SPS study area be added to the Subdivision Bylaw. Planning staff have drafted a map for the review of PAC and are recommending that the draft map be added to the draft Uniacke Secondary Planning Strategy. The draft map has been added as Appendix A.

### TRANSIT

Transit opportunities are one of the items mentioned in the Uniacke SPS survey results. Respondents mentioned having both transit run through the community and having a transit stop by the Highway 1 and Highway 101 interchange that could connect into Halifax transit routes at the Sackville Terminal. Transit is expensive but it does provide benefits to the community. It can save residents money, it provides opportunities to those without a vehicle or reliable vehicle, it reduces greenhouse gasses and keeps extra cars off the road, and it provides opportunities to connect with other communities and opens employment opportunities to the young or underemployed.

Staff recommend adding a project to Section E3: Municipal Projects and Studies of the Municipal Planning Strategy, to complete a transit feasibility study for the Mount Uniacke area.

The Joint Regional Transportation Agency (JRTA) is a provincial Crown Corporation reporting to the provincial Minister of Public Works. JRTA is working on a regional transportation plan. The plan is supposed to:

- establish a long-term, coordinated vision for a regional transportation system that makes sustainable growth and development possible;
- play a critical role in advancing broader Provincial Government initiatives to tackle climate change, support growth and economic development; and
- improve the health, well-being, and quality of life of Nova Scotians.

The plan is anticipated to be completed in November of 2024 and will include both shorter and longer-term actions, looking at the next 20 years and beyond. East Hants can support the plan by adding policies to the Municipal Planning Strategy that support opportunities for the development of transit through the Uniacke SPS area. Therefore, staff suggests that a policy be added to Section C1: Growth Management and Infrastructure of the Municipal Planning Strategy that supports transit through the community to Halifax.

There is an abundance of opportunities that a regional bus or light rail would bring to the community including connecting Mount Uniacke to other communities, an affordable and sustainable transportation option, and it would bring economic and growth opportunities to the community. In addition, light rail and a multiuse trail can be constructed in the same corridor. Examples and best practices are available for areas of the USA.

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## Alternatives

Below are the recommendations associated with the Uniacke SPS Transportation Report:

1. Recommend that a transit feasibility study for Mount Uniacke be added to Section E3: Municipal Projects and Studies of the Municipal Planning Strategy.
2. Recommend that a policy be added to Section C1: Growth Management and Infrastructure of the Municipal Planning Strategy supporting the future development of transit through Mount Uniacke.

3. Recommend that the Subdivision Bylaw be amended by adding the draft Required Future Transportation Connection Map for Mount Uniacke.
4. Recommend that Council authorize staff to explore funding options for Phase “A” - Parkview Manor to Uniacke School sidewalk

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## Attachments

Appendix A - Draft Required Future Transportation Connection Map Mount Uniacke

Appendix B - Sketches of Proposed Sidewalk Phases