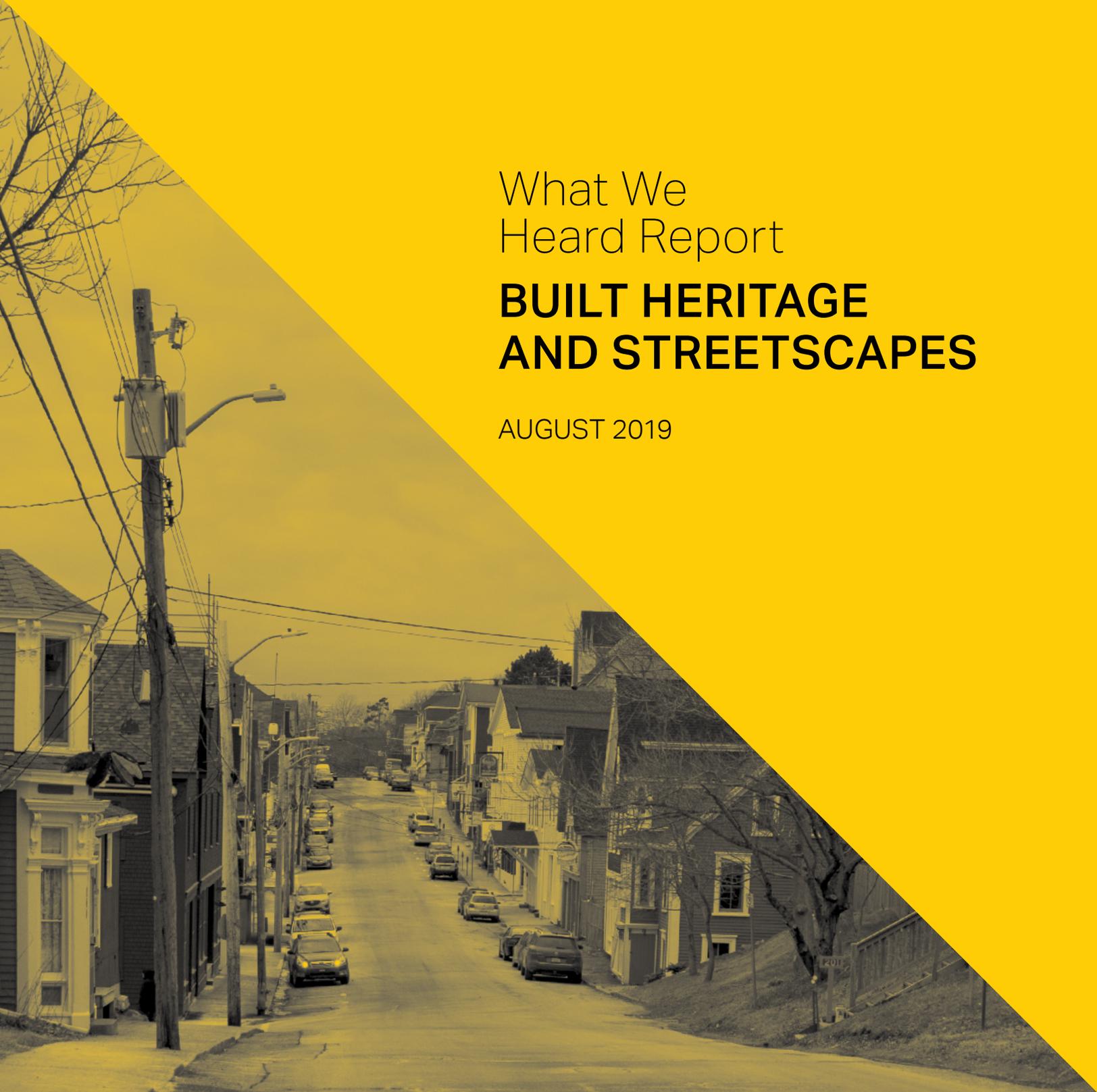




What We
Heard Report

BUILT HERITAGE AND STREETSAPES

AUGUST 2019



What We Heard Report
Built Heritage and Streetscapes
August 2019

Project Lunenburg
Town of Lunenburg Comprehensive Plan

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This report was prepared by Upland Planning and Design.

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One of the defining characteristics of Lunenburg is its built heritage. The Project Team sought to understand how residents and visitors view the defining characteristics of Lunenburg's heritage assets, frameworks and regulations, and the perception of heritage in the town. The Project Team collected public feedback and information related to Lunenburg's built heritage and streetscapes through three methods:

- ▶ Lunenburg Individual Survey
- ▶ Social Pinpoint; and,
- ▶ Built Heritage and Streetscapes 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. Social Pinpoint is 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 August 12, 2019 were analyzed. Finally, the Built Heritage and Streetscapes community workshop was held on June 19, 2019 at the Lunenburg Fire Hall.

This What We Heard Report is the fourth in a series of nine, summarizing the input from the community regarding heritage and streetscapes in Lunenburg. The input that forms the foundation of this report and its discussion will be used to guide recommendations for the Comprehensive Community Plan.

Who Was Involved

Between February and August 2019, there were over 751 engagement interactions that contributed to this report. These included:

- ▶ Over 60 participants at the Built Heritage and Streetscapes Workshop;
- ▶ 429 Social Pinpoint submissions; and,
- ▶ 262 respondents to the Lunenburg Individual Survey.



Figure 1: Built Heritage and Streetscapes Community Workshop (June 19, 2019)



Throughout the engagement interactions that took place between February and August, prominent topics arose, with over 230 written comments related to built heritage and streetscapes received and analyzed. Three major themes were established through the analysis, with further subcategories within the three major themes:

- ▶ Form and Character
- ▶ Historical Narratives; and,
- ▶ Public Realm of Streets

Form and Character

One of the three primary themes that emerged from the engagement were comments related to the architectural form and character of structures within the town. These comments deal with the tangible and spatial elements of heritage. The most significant theme relates to divergent views on architectural preservation, and a number of other ideas and emerging trends were also identified.

Architectural Preservation

Lunenburg's world-renowned architecture attracts many visitors to the town, and members of the community have a strong connection to the town's heritage landscape. However, when it comes to planning for the future, respondents had diverging views as to how the town should balance heritage preservation with modern development. Responses were received calling for total preservation and the expansion of the UNESCO heritage district while others expressed the need to loosen such regulations.

The value placed on heritage in the town is reinforced as nearly 37% of respondents to the Lunenburg Individual Survey indicated heritage as a factor in what makes Lunenburg a great place to live. Respondents between the ages of 18 and 24 and those between 55 and 64 had particularly strong agreement that the town's heritage makes it a great place to live.

Respondents expressing their desire to see heritage preservation maintained (or expanded) also mentioned how Lunenburg's architectural detail and heritage

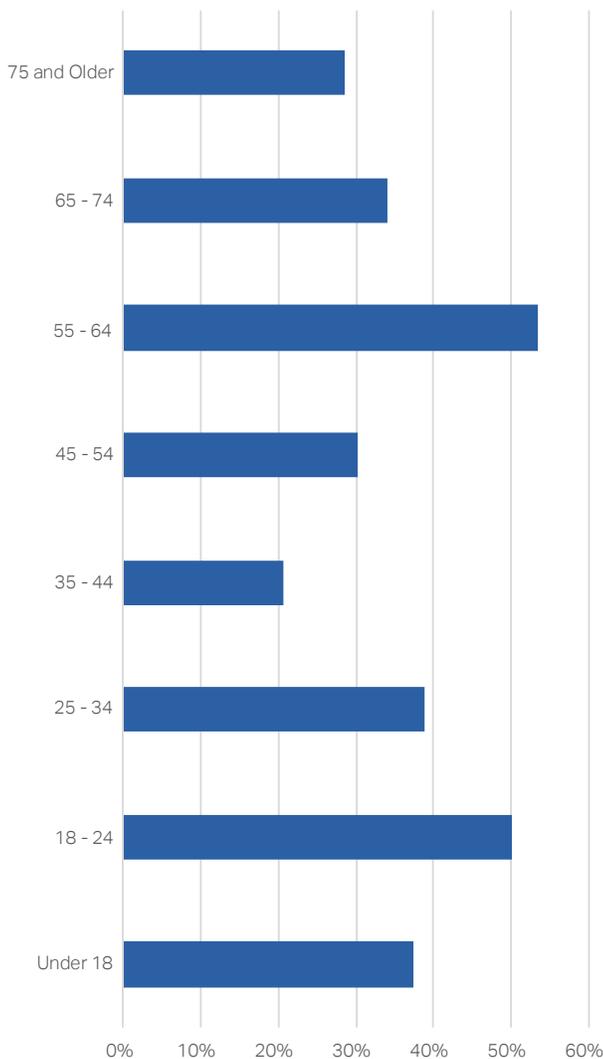


Figure 2: Percentage of survey respondents indicating 'Heritage' as what makes Lunenburg a great place to live.



Figure 3: Heritage character and identity is visible in the design of structures in the town

contributed to the town's overall character. Other respondents commented more specifically on character elements such as the presence of wood windows, absence of vinyl siding, and the unique colour pallet of the town that needed to be preserved into the future.

Dichotomously, other respondents frequently expressed the need for heritage regulations to be loosened to allow for a greater variety in the design of structures. Respondents who expressed this also commented on the need to carefully balance new development within the existing heritage framework. There were several comments related to the desire to use modern materials and techniques that have greater longevity all the while contributing to the town's unique character. Related to the potential for new construction in the town, respondents queried how design guidelines should be used – whether new buildings should replicate older buildings or not.

Views and View Planes

One of the biggest concerns expressed during the engagements was the need to protect and enhance views and view planes in the town. Many respondents felt some of the trees and bushes have become overgrown and block views throughout the town. There was support for proactive management for the town's tree and vegetation inventory to ensure they are well kept. Similarly, with regards to protecting view planes, respondents commented on the need to prevent infilling and development that would block important views, especially those from Tannery Road looking towards Old Town Lunenburg.



Figure 4: Modern development along Bluenose Drive

Emerging Threats and Opportunities

Related to the theme of architectural preservation, respondents expressed the need for greater fire suppression measures in the town to prevent the loss of heritage assets and other structures through fire. Respondents also commented on the need to consider the role of the town's churches in the future. The potential for churches to be adapted to take on different roles while maintaining their heritage significance was expressed by respondents.

Finally, as the effects of global warming, climate change and sea level rise become more evident, respondents expressed the need to align heritage preservation strategies with these imminent threats. It was felt that as climate change and sea level rise cause greater damage in the future, the ability of older structures using traditional materials and technologies to be preserved will be threatened. Permitting solar panels was also suggested as a possible update to architectural design guidelines.



Figure 5: The Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic commemorates the seafaring tradition of the Atlantic Coast (Maritime River Photography)

Input related to the history of the town primarily dealt with historical facts and their narratives, in particular, expanding the narratives to include a broader range of perspectives.

The story of Lunenburg often begins with the settlement established by the British; however, throughout the engagement, respondents commented on the need to expand the historical narrative of the town to include the stories and legacies of a greater variety of cultures and peoples, especially those who inhabited the land before the British.

There were many comments received about the need to integrate Mi'kmaq history and culture into Lunenburg's heritage and cultural landscape. Respondent suggested exploring new ways to honour Mi'kmaq culture and history, such as providing audio / visual interpretive opportunities so that residents and visitors can learn about these aspects of history. In addition to Mi'kmaq culture, respondents also felt that more can be done to highlight the experiences of the Acadians and French in the history of Lunenburg. Other historical narratives respondents wished to see greater emphasis on were:

- ▶ Residents of the town who didn't participate in fishing, agriculture, or industry;
- ▶ The role of women in town and how they shaped Lunenburg today;
- ▶ How poverty and hardship have shaped Lunenburg and how class systems have played a role in the town's history;
- ▶ The role of religion;
- ▶ The lasting impact of World War I and II including Camp Norway; and,
- ▶ The celebration of more modern history and heritage.

Finally, restoring some of the town's landscapes to their natural state including the use of indigenous plant species and trees was expressed during the engagement. Interpreting pre-settlement natural landscapes and waterways was also of interest.



The third major theme to emerge from the engagement dealt with the Public Realm of Streets. Comments related to this theme expressed what residents and visitors experience (and wished to experience) as they navigate the streets in the town. Although heritage character and design contribute to the streetscape of Lunenburg, for the purpose of this report, heritage character and design comments were outlined in the section above. Within the primary theme of public realm of streets, three secondary themes emerged: public amenities, pedestrian streets, and new streets. These secondary themes are discussed below.

Public Amenities

There was overwhelming support from respondents to improve public amenities available to residents and visitors in the town. Amenities such as more public washrooms, benches, chairs and trees were all mentioned throughout the engagement as interventions that could improve the experience of visitors but also benefit year-round residents.

Comments related to public amenities also focused on amenities that could benefit how the town functions, especially in terms of traffic and pedestrian movement. Respondents wished to see greater signage along one-way streets and confusing intersections. Finally, there was a call for greater automobile parking options, including underground parking to accommodate increased summer traffic.

Pedestrian Streets

Many comments were submitted regarding how existing streets could be improved to accommodate pedestrians better but also how new streets could be developed in the future. Along existing streets, respondents articulated the need to reorganize streets and provide more space for pedestrians while still accommodating some automobile traffic. Respondents expressed the need for sidewalk improvements throughout the town as there are streets and areas without them. Many respondents also expressed a desire to hide utilities and bury lines, so as to enhance the pedestrian experience but also to contribute to the overall character of the town.



Figure 6: A streetscape describes the “natural and built fabric of the street, and defined as the design quality of the street and its visual effect” (completecommunities.com)



At the Community Workshop, King Street was used as a template for potential changes to an existing street. Input from the engagement specifically to this street included:

- ▶ A temporary event stage at the intersection of King and Cumberland Streets;
- ▶ Underground parking under the existing bandstand;
- ▶ Closing off sections of King Street during the summer months and having the area as pedestrian only;
- ▶ Reducing the amount of hardscaping to allow precipitation to permeate into the ground;
- ▶ Planting trees along the street;
- ▶ Creating a four-way stop at the intersection of King and Pellham Streets; and,
- ▶ Reversing the direction of automobile traffic on Lincoln and Pellham Streets.

New Streets

Also at the Community Workshop, a discussion was held with regard to new development and how streets could be designed to function differently. Many respondents expressed the need for universal design and complete street principles to be used so streets can accommodate different modes of transportation and allow the most vulnerable groups in the community to safely navigate the streets, sidewalks, and public places. At the Workshop, respondents suggested design principles for new development so streets can function better. Their suggestions included:

- ▶ Pedestrian scale lighting;
- ▶ Shared streets between different modes of transportation;
- ▶ Mixing residential and commercial uses;
- ▶ Greater flexibility of space and intertwining public and private realms;
- ▶ Hiding utilities underground or at the back of properties;
- ▶ Minimizing automobile through traffic; and,
- ▶ Reducing the amount of hardscaping to allow precipitation permeation.



Figure 7: King Street was the subject of discussion at the Community Workshop and how the street could be improved.



This engagement heard from a range of residents and stakeholders in Lunenburg and the surrounding area. The responses garnered over the course of engagement indicate there exists a spectrum of opinions about how the Town should proceed with heritage preservation. There was a greater level of consensus around how new and existing streets in Lunenburg should function and operate.

Lunenburg's built heritage and history are evident throughout the town and have contributed to its success as a tourism destination in Nova Scotia and Canada. Additionally, as was expressed in the engagement, residents and visitors have a strong appreciation for the town's heritage which also holds intrinsic value to many. Whether respondents expressed the desire for total heritage preservation or the loosening of regulations to permit modern development, it is clear the heritage character and identity must be maintained as Lunenburg develops over the course of the Comprehensive Community Plan.

Striking a balance between total heritage preservation and permitting modern changes was one of the major discussion points in the engagement. Permitting modern development or the use of modern materials and technologies could alleviate some of the financial burden on property owners to maintain heritage properties, as well as the costs of building new housing. However, it was felt that clearly articulated regulations on the type of modern development and materials permitted should be considered so as to ensure Lunenburg's heritage character is maintained.

While there were diverging opinions on architectural heritage preservation, respondents were unified in feeling there is a need to present a greater extent of Lunenburg's history. Their recommendations included highlighting historical narratives that are not currently expressed to the full extent possible. Diversifying the historical narrative in Lunenburg would honor the breadth of the town's history and would better orient and inform residents and visitors as to how Lunenburg came to be.



There were many design principles and interventions that were repeatedly expressed throughout the engagement to improve existing and new streets. Respondents wished to see intimate streetscapes where interaction between people, structures, and street elements took precedence over the use of private automobiles. Throughout the engagement, the link between pedestrian areas and economic benefit were frequently discussed by respondents. There was a recognition that providing quality outdoor space in the form of sidewalks and seating areas could create economic benefit for the town. Additionally, respondents recognized that walkable, enjoyable areas in town did not only have positive environmental and health implications, but pedestrian streets could facilitate socialization between community members.

Despite polarizing opinions on total preservation of the town's architectural heritage, community members value expanding Lunenburg's historical narrative while also wishing to see greater emphasis placed on human scale and pedestrian friendly streets. As Project Lunenburg progresses, the results from this engagement will be used to inform the Comprehensive Community Plan. Planning for the future with balance in mind can preserve and enhance Lunenburg's heritage character and identity all the while accommodating progress and change for the town.



Figure 8: The Truro Public Library is an example of integrating modern architecture and materials into a historic structure. This type of design would not currently be permitted in the Lunenburg Heritage Conservation District.



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