



Middle – Upper Sackville & Lucasville Vision

Community Visioning

Community Visioning is a public engagement process adopted by HRM Council as a way to implement the HRM Regional Plan. Its purpose is to build consensus amongst residents and important stakeholders on what our community should look like, feel like, and be like 25 years into the future. Community Visioning engages residents in an open dialogue, discovers new ideas and solutions, and forges community support for collective action.

Middle – Upper Sackville & Lucasville Community Engagement

The Community Liaison Group (CLG) for Middle – Upper Sackville & Lucasville, is a volunteer group of local residents who have been preparing and engaging the community since September of 2008 to develop a Community Vision and Action Plan. The themes in the Vision are based on the statement “Many Neighbourhoods, One Community” reflecting the worthy challenge of community building in a semi-rural area.

The Vision is intended to reflect community wishes and desires that will, collectively, form a series of “actions” to address a wide range of community aspirations and priorities. To this end the resulting Vision is intended to reflect a broad range of the community's interest that will help shape what happens over the next two decades.

The CLG developed a number of methods to reach out to the community and gather their wishes for the Middle – Upper Sackville and Lucasville Area. Those methods included two Community Visioning forums, an on-line survey and meetings with stakeholders. A wide variety of promotion, including mail-outs, newspaper articles, posters, community signage and websites, accompanied each of these methods to inform the community and provide them the opportunity to get involved.

After collecting the feedback, the CLG developed and then distributed the Draft Vision and Action Plan to the community and provided two weeks for feedback on the draft. Feedback that suited the implementation stage of the Visioning process was compiled for consideration at that time and will be posted on our website for reference. For a detailed description of the Community Visioning Process, please refer to Appendix A.

The CLG would like to thank all the residents and community stakeholders that have shared their wishes and insight in order to bring this Vision to completion.

Community Background

Middle Sackville is located in Halifax Regional Municipality, Nova Scotia, in the Sackville River valley. The community's past growth reflects its central location, near both Halifax and Dartmouth, with easy access to Highway 102 and Highway 101. Proximity to downtown Halifax and Burnside Industrial Park gives the suburbs of Sackville the advantages of employment opportunities and services of a larger city. Middle – Upper Sackville & Lucasville area has a population of approximately 18,000, which has grown 19 % since 1996 (Community Counts). There is limited commercial activity within the Vision area, with the majority of it located in the Lower Sackville area. Many of the businesses that do exist are locally owned small to mid sized businesses.

Sackville's earliest roots as a settlement can be traced back to a fort built at the head of Bedford Basin to defend Halifax against French soldiers and their Mi'kmaq allies. Joseph Scott, one of Sackville's first residents, landed in Halifax in 1749 onboard the ship London. An entrepreneur, his timber business soon expanded beyond the head of the basin to sawmills constructed along the Sackville River. The African – Nova Scotian community of Lucasville was established in 1827, when deeds were issued to Mr. James Lucas and Mr. Moses Oliver. The name of the community was originally called Lucas Settlement, and then later Lucasville.

Through community consultation, it is evident the residents of the Vision area value particular aspects of their communities. These are the community centres that serve as meeting places for seniors, local community groups and volunteers; the watershed, consisting of the Sackville River and many lakes and streams, which provides recreational opportunities such as fishing, boating, swimming, and hiking in addition to an ecosystem for fish and wildlife; the open spaces and variety of recreational facilities to enjoy nature and encourage healthy lifestyles; and overall, the people, families, neighbours and local community groups that help the area thrive. Ultimately, this is an area where people feel they are in proximity to all of the services of the urban centre but have the attributes of the country and neighbourhoods surrounding them.

Today, there are a number of factors continuing to drive growth in this Vision area, including a new highway interchange and an above average percentage of youth.

Vision Statement

The Vision for Middle – Upper Sackville & Lucasville's future is one of semi-rural diversity. Potential for development pressure is counterbalanced with the demand to retain the semi-rural character of the area. Healthy lifestyle is cited as a key element in the central themes that inform this Vision. Outdoor and indoor recreational opportunities, the preservation of all aspects of the environment and the desire for sustainable land use development are thematic throughout the Vision. There is a desire to balance community interests to ensure that the community of Middle – Upper Sackville & Lucasville is viable economically, environmentally, and socially. This includes the creation of programs to enhance existing plans for the delivery of services to the Vision area. The Vision seeks at its core to create representation through the creation of committee(s) to address issues central to the community interest in an effort to achieve its priorities as outlined in the following Vision and Action Plan.

Middle – Upper Sackville & Lucasville recognizes the importance of advocacy and to liaise with stakeholders to express their values in the following:

- The natural environment with particular reference to open space and water resources
- Recreational opportunities
- Housing diversity including options for seniors
- Enhanced transit and active transportation opportunities
- Economic and commercial enhancements
- Sustainable land use planning

Organization of the Vision and Action Plan

As “Many Neighbourhoods” endeavouring to become “One Community” this Vision process had its unique challenges, including the future planning of a largely semi-rural area.

The centre of the Vision area was designated in the Regional Plan as a Suburban Local Centre. Effectively this is a largely undeveloped parcel of land surrounding a proposed highway interchange and the proposed Metro Transit Park and Ride.

It became clear through the process that a varied consultation effort would be required, including an expanded Vision study area, in order to maximize the amount of information processed to form the Vision. The red border on the map (Page 5) outlines the Vision area to achieve this purpose.

The aforementioned themes emerged from the Community Engagement and, as the Regional Plan identified low to medium density residential development as an appropriate guide for the area, it was concluded that some neighbourhoods would require area specific actions, if the CLG were to achieve a Vision reflective of the Community’s desire. This includes the possibility of allowing a mix and range of densities and land uses in specific areas, particularly through master planning processes.

Accordingly to reflect these differences the Vision has been structured to meet two objectives:

- (1) To apply an area wide Vision and Action Plan so that certain vision statements apply to the entire area and,
- (2) To create area specific actions for particular locations. To achieve this specific areas have been identified as area A, B, C, etc.

This approach, it is believed, will greatly assist during the implementation phase of the process.

Vision Area

Middle – Upper Sackville & Lucasville Vision Sub Areas:

“Many Neighbourhoods, One Community” describes this vision area. The many neighbourhoods as well as the undeveloped lands vary in terms of character, and as such, may be appropriate for different goals and actions. Therefore, six sub areas have been created to help assign area-specific goals and actions, in addition to area wide goals and actions that apply to the entire Vision area.

The boundary limits are intended to reflect areas that contain values as expressed through the community's Vision. These area boundaries are not identified as areas that are prescriptive or restrictive. Rather, in keeping with the underlying appreciative philosophy of the community asset based approach refinements and/or restrictions regarding land use are intended to be established through the Planning process in the Implementation phase of the project. Further study and community consultation through the Implementation phase may ultimately dictate that Area A, for example, could further extend into Area B and less so into Area C. This is but one possible outcome of that process. Accordingly the attached Middle-Upper Sackville & Lucasville Vision Area Map should not be viewed in the same light as a policy designation map.

Area A:

Consists of the proposed Margeson Drive interchange and surrounding vacant lands. These include the section of Margeson Drive from Sackville Drive to the interchange, the proposed park-and-ride area, and the undeveloped portion of the Sunset Ridge development. The circle shape of Area A is intended to be flexible in that the boundary of land parcels do not follow the circle's line, and further analysis during the implementation stage of the Vision exercise will determine Area A's actual boundaries.

Area B:

McCabe Lake North and lands fronting on the south side of McCabe Lake extending behind the Waterstone subdivision. The McCabe Lake North lands are the undeveloped lands currently owned by Twin Brooks that extend from the north and east shoreline of McCabe Lake to Highway 101. The land on the south side of McCabe Lake behind Waterstone is largely owned by United Gulf and is the future location for a portion of Margeson Drive.

Area C:

Suburban Areas. These are areas that are currently serviced with municipal sewer and water but range in lot size. It is the area from Beaverbank Road up to, and including Lively subdivision. This area includes Millwood, Orchard Park, Twin Brooks (former golf course) and the portion of Sunset Ridge with development approvals.

Area D:

Semi-Rural Areas. These are areas that have on-site water and sewer services or are partially serviced with their own sewage treatment systems. Area D includes the area north from the Lively subdivision to the Hants County line and includes: Springfield Lake,

Springfield Estates, Berry Hills, Waterstone, Timber Trails, Wilson Lake, large vacant land tracts, and the Sackville Drive and Lucasville Road corridors.

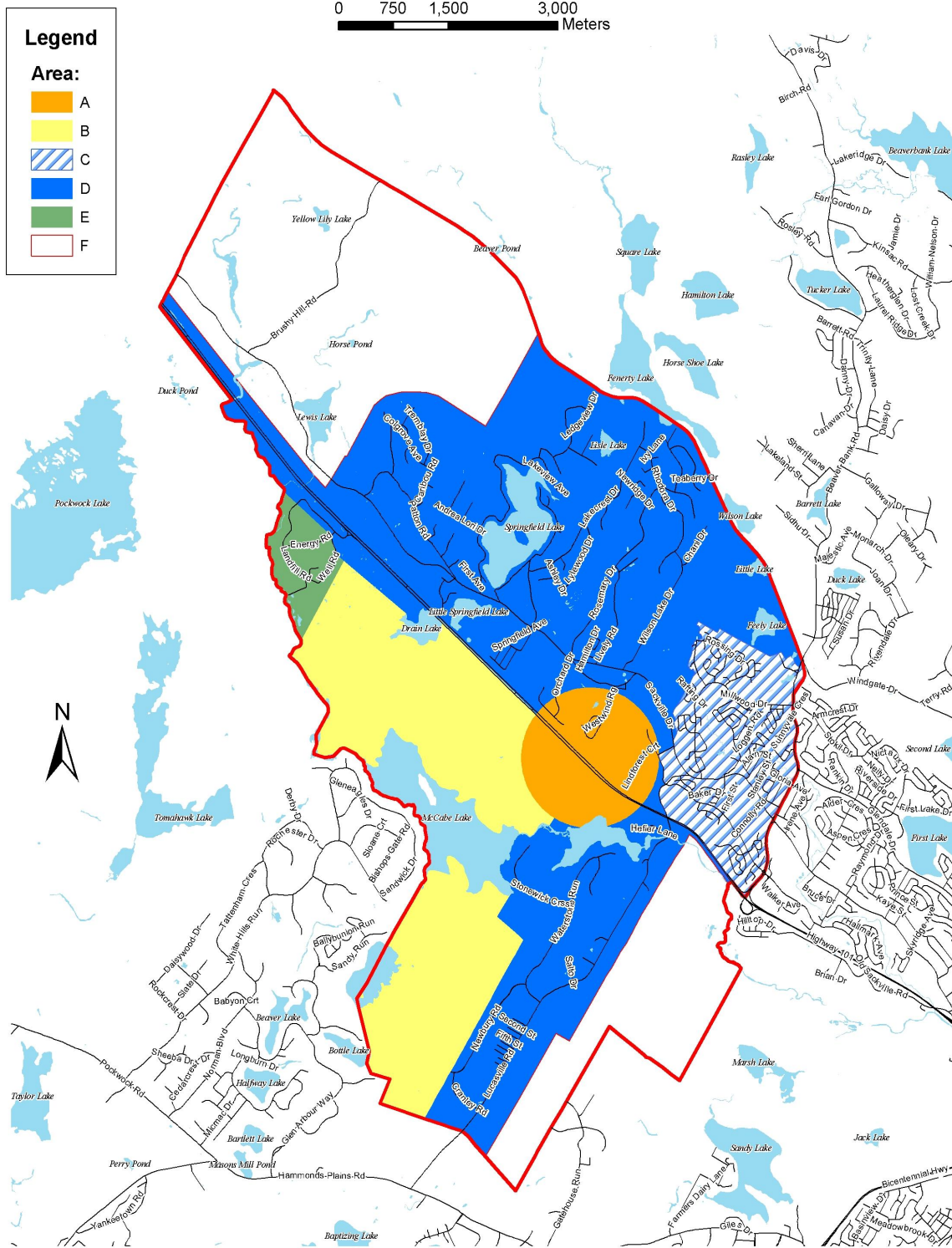
Area E:

Identified as the former land fill site south of Highway 101.

Area F:

Rural areas forming part of the periphery of the Vision area. Area wide vision and actions apply to these locations.

Middle - Upper Sackville & Lucasville Vision Area Map



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Goal & Action Statements

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The importance of well planned recreational opportunities in the Vision area is a priority. These opportunities can provide active and healthy lifestyle options for all, particularly the youth and seniors of the area. By providing recreational opportunities in this area, residents are able to lead an active lifestyle in their own communities, not having to travel far from home. In addition the community recognizes the benefits of well organized, local and affordable recreation programs. In some cases, these do not have to be elaborate, and may include things as simple as clearing lake areas for winter skating.

Recreation Facilities and Programs

GOAL: *To provide well-organized, integrated, multi-use, indoor and outdoor facilities and affordable and accessible recreational opportunities for residents to promote active lifestyles for all ages within the Vision area.*

ACTIONS:

1. Create a recreation stakeholders group to identify the requirements for recreational opportunities including recreation programs within the Vision area.
2. Explore the opportunities for a collaborative approach to the delivery of recreation facilities and programs.
3. Negotiate the use of schools as community recreation centres.

Parks and Open Space

In addition to planned parks and sufficient open space for the community, the retention and enhancement of forests are considered high priorities for Middle – Upper Sackville & Lucasville.

GOAL: *Retention, acquisition and development of parks of all sizes throughout the community.*

ACTIONS:

1. Create a Parks and Open Space group to undertake the following:
 - a) Advocate for the development of Regional Parks at Feely Lake and Lewis Lake. (Areas D & F)
 - b) Seek involvement in the discussions regarding how funds generated in the development agreement processes in the Vision area will be retained for park projects in the Vision area.

- c) Require small accessible green areas and neighbourhood parks in every subdivision in cooperation with HRM Parks and Trails.
- d) Explore the opportunity to create a Middle Sackville Commons that includes green spaces and areas for both active and passive recreation similar in structure to the Shubie Park System.

GOAL: *Preserve and enhance existing forests through the inclusion of public and private lands for future generations.*

ACTIONS:

- 1. Develop a strategy for the preservation or replacement of forestry assets, and to encourage more tree planting
 - a) Develop policies that encourage the retention of trees as part of the development process.
 - b) Develop policies that encourage the retention of public and private green spaces.

ENVIRONMENTAL OPPORTUNITIES

Water Protection

The protection of both surface water and groundwater is of high importance to the community. Rivers and lakes are central to both the landscape and the environment of the Vision area, and as such, require a high degree of protection.

GOAL: *To encourage preservation and protection of the watershed, surface and groundwater quality and quantity.*

ACTIONS:

- 1. Create an Environmental Stewardship group to lead the protection of all aspects of water resources with the following mandate:
 - a) Develop master watershed management plans for both the Sackville and the Shubenacadie River systems.
 - b) Explore options for enhanced buffers to lakes and all other watercourses with stakeholders.
 - c) To explore responsible options for lake and river access and use.
 - d) Set aside suitable areas for beach and swim areas.
 - e) Seek to provide public access to appropriate shorelines for various activities, including, but not limited to, swimming, fishing, and responsible boating.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Although the Vision area is not seen as a major commercial destination, there is a solid foundation of small and mid sized businesses. During the vision process, the community expressed a desire for additional neighbourhood services in areas that are currently without these services.

GOAL: ***Develop a strategy to explore appropriate commercial development throughout the Vision area.***

ACTIONS:

1. Encourage the creation of a Business Association for the Vision area that promotes local business in cooperation with other stake holders in an effort to create employment and a community atmosphere.
2. Direct commercial economic activity to appropriate locations through the Planning process to ensure that business growth reflects the needs of the Community.
 - a) Explore mixed use commercial and residential development including the development of neighbourhood commercial type services such as gas stations, coffee shops, and professional services such as doctor's offices.

QUALITY OF LIFE OPPORTUNITIES

The Vision process identified a desire for neighbourhoods to promote their own identity. There is also strong desire to preserve and enhance the quality of life in the community. Many important qualities were identified, which are inherent in the other themes identified throughout the Vision, but warrant their own mention due to their importance to the community.

GOAL: ***To preserve and enhance the quality of life in the community.***

ACTIONS:

Community Identity & Beautification

1. Develop an increased sense of community through events and activities.
2. Develop increased communication among residents and neighbourhoods (i.e. community website).
3. Provide identifying signage at key locations to recognize various neighbourhoods and subdivisions within the Vision area.

4. Encourage tree planting, seasonal decorating (i.e. hanging baskets, wreaths, flags) and community cleanups to increase community pride and beautification.

Safety / Policing

1. Use Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles for all trails, walkways and park areas.
2. Explore, with police, appropriate options for policing enhancements for the area.

Volunteerism

1. Encourage, support and recognize volunteerism in all age groups.
2. Investigate the development of volunteer associations where needed (i.e. neighbourhoods).

Youth

1. Advocate for increased youth services and opportunities in the Vision area.
2. Encourage the evaluation of daycare and after school programming available in the area.

Seniors

1. Provide support and encouragement for seniors to stay in the community.
 - a) Encourage adequate activities and information be available for seniors in the Vision area.

Community Centres

1. Evaluate current uses of all community centres in the area and identify ways to enhance service delivery and community access.
2. Encourage the use of community and recreation centres to allow heritage, cultural and arts components.
3. Negotiate the use of schools as community centers.

TRANSPORTATION OPPORTUNITIES

Middle - Upper Sackville & Lucasville would like to see improvements to existing transportation systems, more connectivity between subdivisions, improved maintenance of roads, expanded transit service, and provision for active transportation modes including sidewalks, trails, and bike lanes.

Transit

GOAL: *Improve the transit service by expanding the routes and frequency of service.*

ACTIONS:

1. Provide feeder routes to the Metro Link Park and Ride from various locations within the Vision area.
 - a) Short term action: Expand transit to Upper Sackville and Lucasville as a feeder route. (Area D)
2. Explore alternative modes for transit such as rail transit.
3. Form a group to work with Metro Transit to explore alternative design or size of busses to enhance the Metro Link service.

Roads

GOAL: *Have new road design address connectivity, safety, maintenance, truck traffic, timing of road construction, and long term transportation corridors.*

ACTIONS:

1. Encourage HRM and other responsible parties to provide up to date information (i.e. website) regarding future road corridor routes.
2. Provide strict controls for and enforcement of truck routes in the Vision area.

Active Transportation

Middle - Upper Sackville & Lucasville has indicated a strong desire for active transportation opportunities that would promote healthy lifestyles and offer more activities for all ages. Active transportation activities could include multi use trails, sidewalks, and bike lanes throughout the community.

GOAL: *Enhance active transportation opportunities.*

ACTIONS:

1. Facilitate the development of an active transportation working group made up of stakeholders and established groups that are pursuing similar goals (i.e. Sackville Rivers Association) to explore the provision of all modes of active transportation such as bike lanes, multi-use trails, sidewalks etc.
2. Explore the possibility of expanding the current walkway system along the Sackville River to include all watercourses.
3. Provide for road connection and parking at various points along trail systems to allow convenient access.
4. Provide sheltered bike parking at all Metro Link connection points.
5. Complete the pedestrian connection around Springfield Lake from Lakeview Avenue to Fennerty Road. (Area D)
6. Explore the feasibility and options for constructing sidewalks or walkway/bike lanes in specific areas.
 - a) Lucasville Rd. (Area D)
 - b) Sackville Dr. / Highway #1 (Area D)

INFRASTRUCTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Middle - Upper Sackville & Lucasville is made up of Areas A, B, C, D, E & F as defined in this report, and as shown on map (Page 5). These areas will have different infrastructure demands and opportunities. Infrastructure services in this section include water, sewer and storm water.

Stakeholders expressed a strong interest in maintaining the character of their community, while at the same time expressed an interest in having municipal water and/or sewer services. In some cases, this interest was to improve their current quality and quantity of potable water, and in other cases the interest was to allow for new development. However, the CLG realizes that some of the objectives may be conflicting in some areas such as the desire to maintain existing semi-rural character and also to extend piped municipal services (Area D). The CLG understands there may be a potentially inherent conflict in these positions. Ultimately the Committee has sought to establish a balance through this Vision and Action Plan.

Water / Sewer

GOAL: *Explore the potential for water and sewer servicing options for both existing and future development which may include new technologies.*

ACTION:

1. Work with applicable groups to review the feasibility and implications of extending services to Areas A, B and D.

GOAL: *Explore alternatives for sewage treatment for new developments to encourage sustainability.*

ACTION:

1. Consider a variety and the cost effectiveness of sewage treatment options, including new technologies with regard for sustainability, particularly Areas A & B.

GOAL: *Encourage a high degree of storm water management with treatments options to minimize pollution to the environment.*

ACTIONS:

1. Work with Residents Associations and other groups to undertake a protection/watershed plan for all water courses.
2. Explore the enhancement of non – disturbance buffers along rivers and lakes.

Schools

The school system has been reviewed through “Imagine Your Schools” which recommended the reduction and realignment of schools in the area. However, the area of Middle Sackville is identified as a growth center in the Regional Plan, which means there could be additional increases in population in the Middle – Upper Sackville & Lucasville community which could result in a demand for more schools in the area. It was also a desire to be able to use schools as multipurpose centers during off hours.

GOAL: *Evaluate school needs for the area based on existing and potential development and population.*

ACTION:

1. Liaise with Halifax Regional School Board to confirm the ability for schools to provide appropriate service levels.

GOAL: *Seek ways to utilize schools for community and recreation activities.*

ACTION:

1. Liaise with HRSB to find ways the community could access schools after hours, at minimal cost.

Health & Medical

The community expressed a desire for healthy lifestyles through provisions for active transportation, recreation and open spaces. The community also has a desire for easier access to 24 hour emergency health care.

GOAL: *Promote healthy lifestyles and enhanced access to healthcare services.*

ACTIONS:

1. Facilitate the location of medical offices and health clinic services in the community.
2. Support the Cobequid Community Health Board and encourage 24 hour emergency service.
3. With the support of Cobequid Community Health Board, actively promote the building of healthy community initiatives.

LAND USE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Comments from Middle-Upper Sackville & Lucasville were varied and conflicting on the subject of future land development. Many comments stated a desire to preserve the trees and forests, while at the same time indicating a desire for more housing opportunities, new recreation facilities, and a larger commercial area. There was also a strong desire to have a central gathering place that would serve the whole community (i.e. public commons, community commercial service center).

Given that the Regional Plan has already identified part of our study area as a growth center, and that the proposed Margeson Drive interchange may soon be underway, it is likely that the vision area will have new development. The goals and actions may be area-specific as a way to identify which areas may be suitable for specific types of development.

The residents were consistent in their appreciation of the community and the particular neighbourhood they lived in. Comments received from people who live in Middle – Upper Sackville & Lucasville indicate that they enjoy the fact that they live near the city yet have a lot of trees and forests that make the area semi-rural.

Master Planning

The Vision area contains three identified areas of centrally located undeveloped land that may be suitable for future development in an overall comprehensive manner i.e. master planning. These areas fall primarily into Areas A & B: that is, the interchange locations and surrounding lands, and the lands within proximity to either side of McCabe Lake within the visioning study area. While these areas may have some form of existing development approval there is still a possibility for a re-design of these lands.

GOAL: *Require new development to be well planned overall using sustainable land use practices rather than on a piecemeal basis.*

ACTIONS:

1. Encourage that master planning be completed for Areas A & B where appropriate.
2. Through the master planning process, encourage the creation of an outdoor commons or gathering place and a community commercial center.

Sustainability and Innovation

Middle–Upper Sackville & Lucasville residents are interested in sustainability and innovative techniques for new development. Sustainability techniques can include objectives to achieve efficiency in terms of: provision of water and sewer services, construction methods, layout site design (i.e. road location and forest preservation), provision for natural gas, underground wiring and, neighbourhood aesthetics.

GOAL: *Encourage developers to use modern and innovative techniques to enhance sustainability.*

ACTION:

1. Liaise with existing stakeholder groups to achieve sustainable development.

Housing Options for Seniors

As the population of the area ages, there is a strong desire to enable seniors to remain in the community through the provision of various forms of suitable seniors' housing. Middle–Upper Sackville & Lucasville expressed an interest in “garden suites”, secondary units in residential dwellings, apartments and condominium units, and units that have access to care facilities.

GOAL: *Encourage the development of new housing options targeted for seniors.*

ACTION:

1. Research and propose zoning options that would allow and encourage various forms of seniors' housing.

Residential

Middle – Upper Sackville & Lucasville residents expressed a desire for more residential housing types, including affordable and mixed-use developments.

GOAL: *Encourage a variety of housing types*

ACTION:

1. Explore various types of housing and mixed use development as appropriate.

Implementation of the Vision and Action Plan

The next stages of the Visioning process include the creation of a detailed Action Plan to clarify short, medium, and long term deliverables of this Vision. Within this process public and private initiatives and relationships will be further defined to achieve this Vision's objectives.

A major concurrent initiative - the creation of a new Secondary Planning Strategy to establish new policies for land use – will commence in accordance with the overall guiding objectives set out in this Vision.

Ultimately these processes will be advanced by way of the Vision Implementation Committee (VIC). The VIC will determine in accordance with the detailed action plan, how to advance the objectives of the Vision including, the structure, number and nature of relationships and subcommittees that will flow back into the VIC. The VIC's mandate is to ensure that each of these processes is consistent with the objectives of the Vision and Action Plan.