

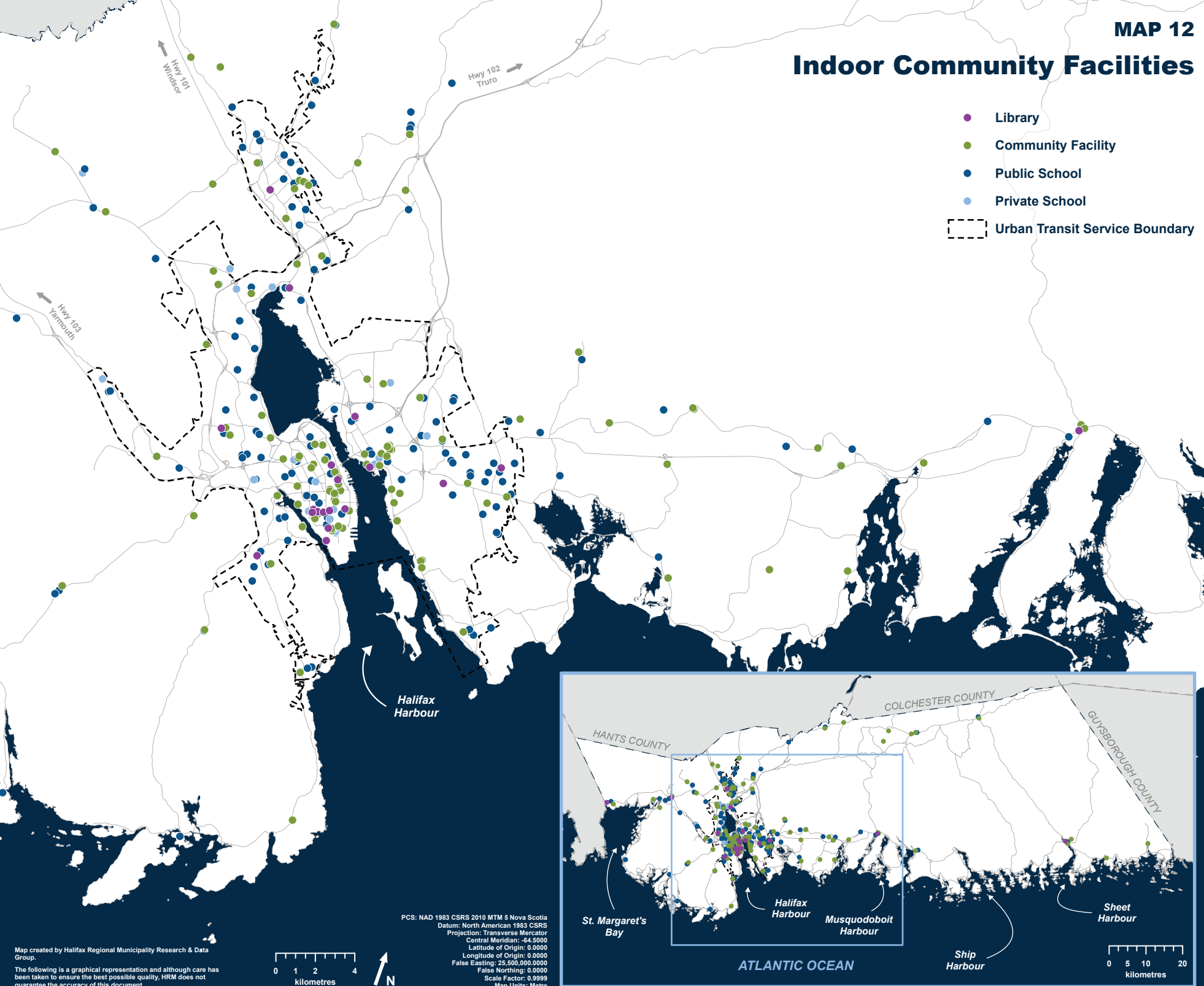
THEME 7

INTEGRATING COMMUNITY FACILITIES & PARKS

Parks and community facilities are an essential component of complete communities that support healthy lifestyles for all residents. Currently, in HRM there are more than 900 municipal parks, including playgrounds, sport courts, playing fields and other specialized amenities, as well as over 65 indoor community facilities, ranging from small community centres to large complexes with pools, arena and gymnasiums. Facilities provided by other organizations, such as schools and emergency facilities, also play an important role in the livability of our communities and should be considered when planning for development.

Indoor Community Facilities

- Library
- Community Facility
- Public School
- Private School
- Urban Transit Service Boundary



INDOOR COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The Municipality provides a variety of indoor community facilities designed to meet local and regional needs. HRM has adopted the “Hub and Spoke” model which identifies a large “hub” facility with other complementary recreation infrastructure located in the surrounding area serving as “spokes”. Clustering facilities in this way allows residents to access a wider variety of programming than can be delivered in a single facility. [The Community Facility Master Plan 2 \(CFMP2\)](#) was adopted in 2017 and provides broad direction for the renewal and enhancement of the municipality’s recreation infrastructure. It identifies aging facilities that may need investment or replacement in order to meet accessibility standards, safety requirements and changing user needs.

The location and distribution of community facilities is among the factors considered when reviewing centres for future growth. These facilities should also be located to allow for easy access using active transportation or transit where these services are available.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

- 7.1 Continue to implement the recommendations of the Community Facility Master Plan.**
- 7.2 Review and consider recreation trends, demographics and community needs as part of planning for complete communities. Consider the location and distribution of community facilities when reviewing locations for growth and ensure that services are available or planned to accommodate new development.**



LIBRARIES

Libraries play an important role in communities, in the vast range of free services provided, and in the communal space where everyone is welcome to gather. In addition to providing residents access to books and other forms of information, libraries provide free Wi-Fi inside and around library branches, technology for public use, social and meeting spaces, cultural activities, programming and learning opportunities for all ages, including English language and literacy programming, and support and referral services for those at risk in the community. Libraries provide vast virtual programs, including extensive digital collections, as well as home delivery services and community-based services in many locations outside of branches.

Halifax Public Libraries has facilities located in urban, suburban and rural areas of HRM. Some libraries are co-located with other community or regional facilities. Given the evolving role of libraries and the high level of community use, many existing older facilities do not have adequate space, or are not designed to meet modern demand. Halifax Public Libraries has a capital plan, which identifies branches that are priorities for investment, based on facility condition, population growth and social need in the community. The library has a combination of both larger facilities and smaller branches

that are located in community and connected to transit and active transportation routes.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

7.3 Consider the location and distribution of libraries when reviewing locations for growth and work with Halifax Public Libraries to ensure that services are available or planned to accommodate new development.





SCHOOLS

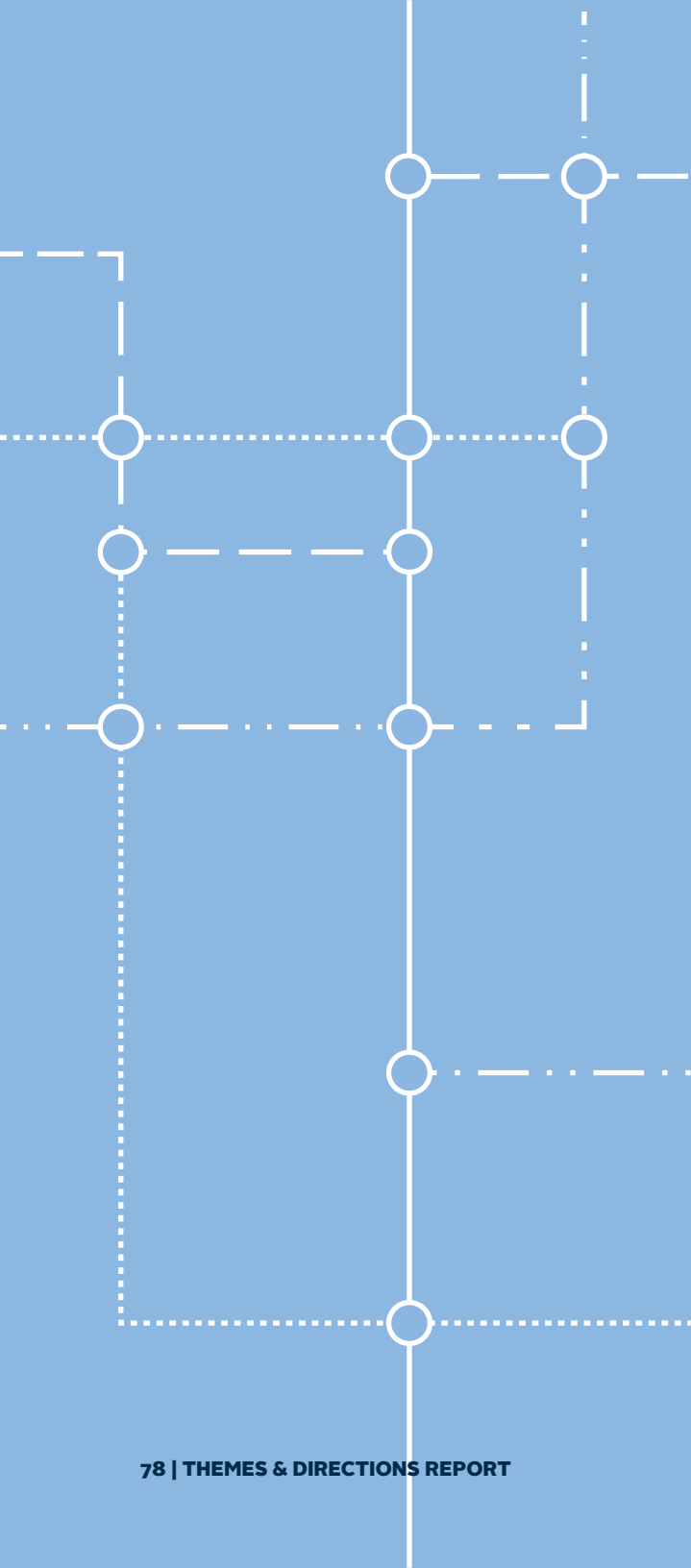
Convenient access to quality schools is an important consideration for parents when deciding where to live. As a result, the location of existing and planned schools is an important part of complete communities. In HRM, the Halifax Regional Centre for Education (HRCE) oversees English public schools and the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP) oversees all French public schools. Eleven private schools are also located in HRM.

The HRCE groups their schools into “families”, where several local elementary schools feed into more centralized junior high schools, which feed into a single regional high school.

Each Centre or Board is required to publish a Long-Range Outlook (LRO) annually. These documents provide information regarding the situation at each school, the delivery of education programs and services and the changes in student enrollment. Based on the results of the LRO, a Centre or Board may identify a school for review to determine the viability of the facility. Decisions about school locations are not made by HRM but the location of residential development and access using active transportation and transit should be considered.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

7.4 Consider the location and distribution of schools when reviewing locations for growth and work with the Halifax Regional Centre for Education and Conseil scolaire acadien provincial to ensure that services are available or planned to accommodate new development.



EMERGENCY SERVICES

An important consideration when locating growth in the Municipality is providing adequate emergency services to ensure the safety of all residents. Emergency services include hospitals, police stations, fire stations, emergency shelters and more. These services must be dispersed throughout the community as distance and response time are key to ensuring their effectiveness. Emergency services are provided by several different organizations, and their approaches to locating and expanding their services vary. As a result, the Municipality must continue to work closely with emergency service providers when planning our communities.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

7.5 Consider the location and distribution of emergency service infrastructure when locating growth and work with emergency service providers to ensure that services are available and planned to accommodate new development.

PARKS

Parks are an important part of healthy, complete communities. Parks provide residents with access to green space and support active living. The Municipality's parks system should give residents access to a variety of park types, facilities and experiences. The [Halifax Green Network Plan](#) introduced the concept of a "Park Spectrum". In addition to municipal parkland, the Park Spectrum includes school grounds, provincial and federal parkland, nature reserves and wilderness areas. This captures the full range of recreation opportunities in the region; from hiking in nature to playing on sports courts in built up parks. The spectrum captures the 'users' perspective', where the importance is placed on equitable access to parkland and amenities regardless of the park type and ownership. The Park Spectrum will be used as a basis for determining Level of Service (LOS) Standards, which identify the desired maximum distance to outdoor recreation amenities and

parkland, and the amount of parkland available per number of residents (parkland per capita).

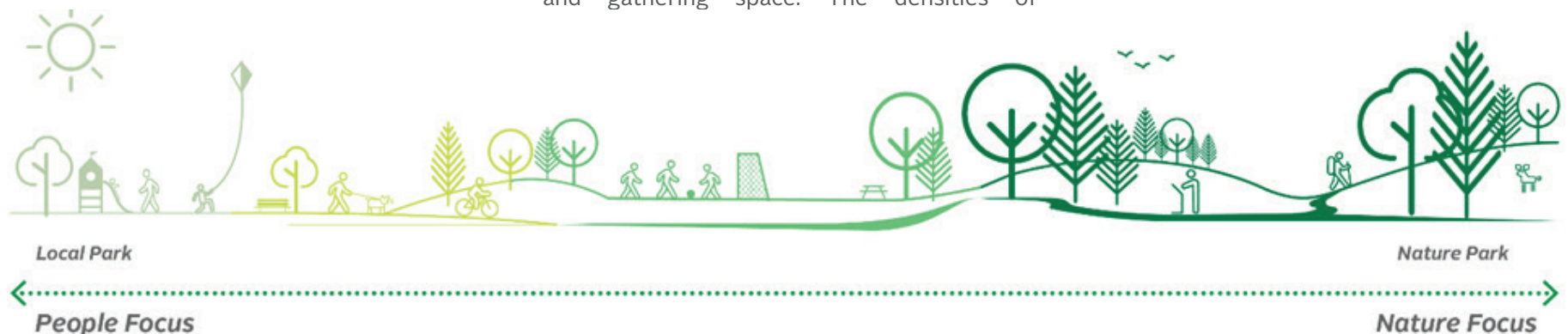
Municipalities use a Level of Service (LOS) Standard to plan and monitor recreation services provided in communities. By setting defined LOS Standards for parks and outdoor recreation amenities, residents, staff, Council, developers and other organizations can have clear expectations about how outdoor recreation will be provided. It can inform planning for park locations, sizes, amenities and programming and help to identify any gaps or overlaps.

Parkland needs often depend on settlement patterns. In more dense areas, where homes are on smaller lots or in multi-unit buildings, residents may have limited private outdoor space and rely heavily on parks for their outdoor recreation needs. In less dense areas, where most homes have large private yards, parks are still needed to provide recreation infrastructure and gathering space. The densities of

settlements are also contributing factors to the success of parks. As much as the provision of too little parkland can be an issue in a dense settlement, too much parkland in a dispersed settlement can result in underutilized spaces and difficulties in providing quality amenities.

As communities grow and change, some areas in HRM may be over-serviced while others under-serviced. Over-serviced areas should be assessed to determine if parks are suitable for naturalization or divestment. In under-serviced areas, the Municipality may need to acquire new local parkland, improve existing park infrastructure and consider other policy tools for gaining park space.

The [Halifax Green Network Plan](#) identified the following possible LOS Standards for the maximum distances to parkland within the parks spectrum based on the Municipality's settlement patterns:



Regional Centre: 500 metres (6-minute walk)

Suburban Area: 800 metres (10-minute walk)

Rural Commuter: Concentrated in Local Centres and Growth Centres in centralized locations and co-located with community facilities and schools

Rural Areas: Concentrated in Growth Centres and co-located with community facilities and schools

These distance standards meet the parkland access needs for over 90 percent of HRM residents within the Urban Settlement boundary. However, the parkland per capita standards must also be considered to ensure parkland is of sufficient size. Quality of parkland is also a consideration. These standards need further examination to consider factors such as increased densities. The availability of specialized amenities (such as sport courts and playgrounds) also require LOS Standards.

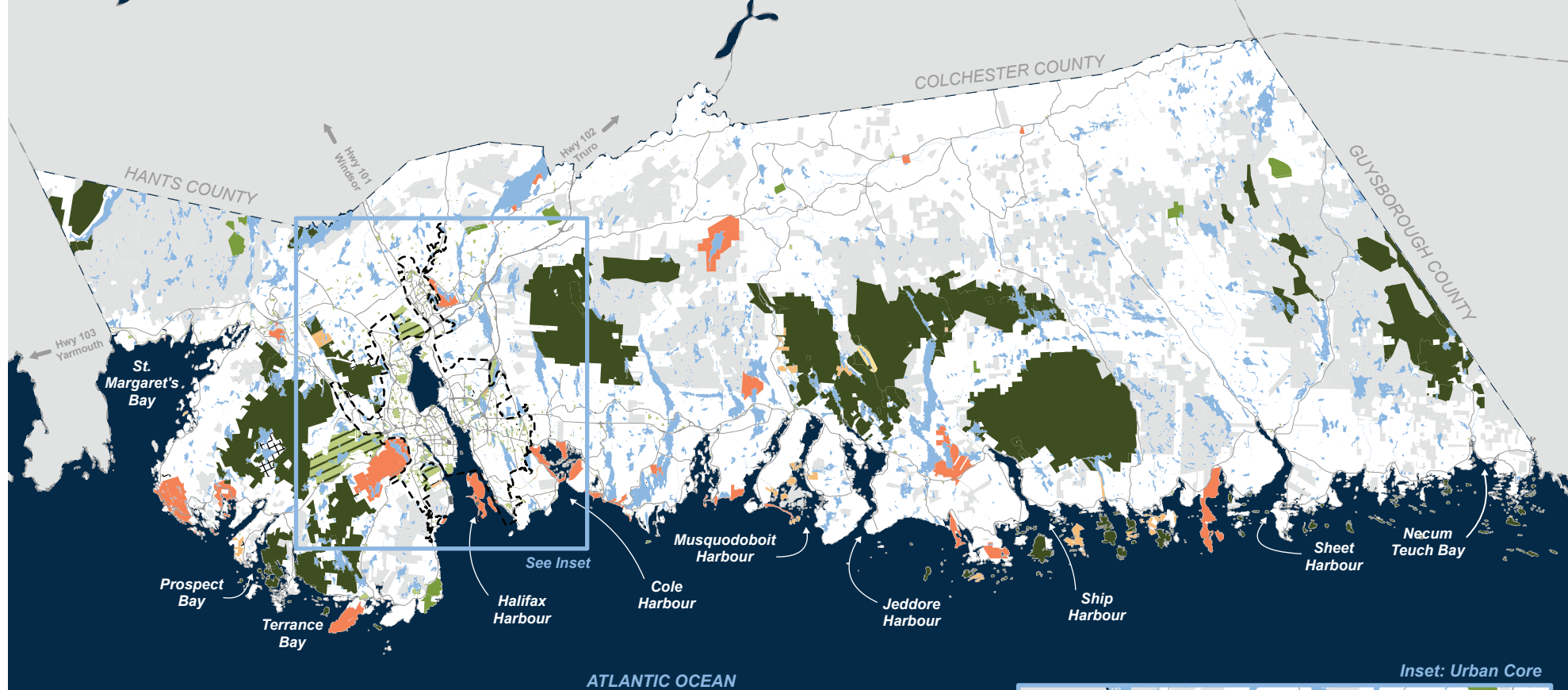
THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

7.6 Incorporate the park spectrum into the Regional Plan.

7.7 Review and develop Level of Service Standards based on the recommendations of the Halifax Green Network Plan, public engagement and spatial analysis mapping of parkland and outdoor recreation amenities and future growth.

7.8 Amend the Regional Subdivision By-law to reflect the identified Level of Service Standards.

7.9 Explore the use of policy tools like capital cost contributions, and density bonus programs to support parkland dedication based on population density.



MAP 13 Parks and Open Space

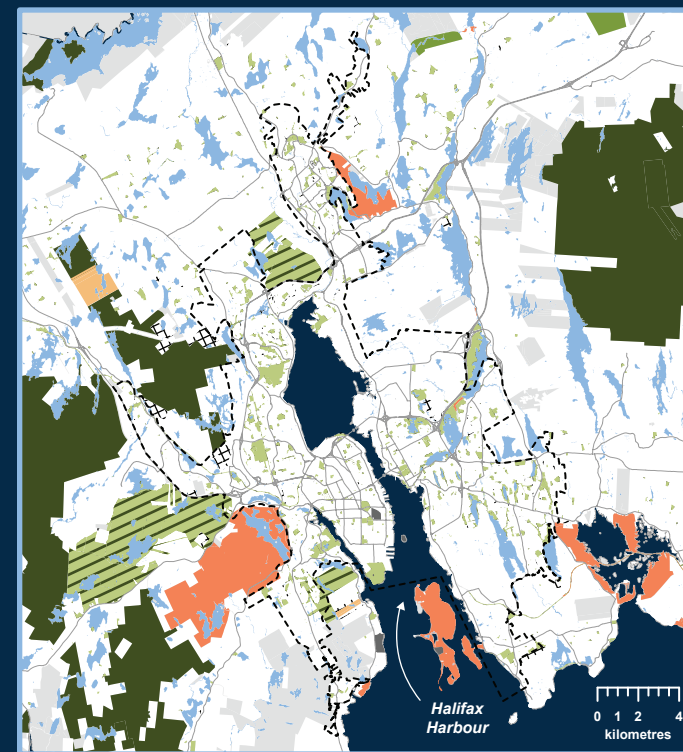
- Municipal Park
- Municipal Wilderness Area
- Provincial Park
- Federal Park
- HRM Open Space Land
- Crown Land
- Conservation Easement
- Land trust property
- Nature Reserve
- Provincially Designated Wilderness Area
- Urban Transit Service Boundary



PCS: NAD 1983 CSRS 2010 MTM 5 Nova Scotia
 Datum: North American 1983 CSRS
 Projection: Transverse Mercator
 Central Meridian: -64.5000
 Latitude of Origin: 0.0000
 Longitude of Origin: 0.0000
 False Easting: 25,500,000.0000
 False Northing: 0.0000
 Scale Factor: 0.9999
 Map Units: Metre

Map created by Halifax Regional Municipality Research & Data Group.
 The following is a graphical representation and although care has been taken to ensure the best possible quality, HRM does not guarantee the accuracy of this document.

Inset: Urban Core



WILDERNESS PARKS

HRM is home to a network of municipally, provincially, federally and non-profit owned parks and open spaces that provide wilderness protection and recreation opportunities. The Municipality currently has direct involvement in land ownership and park management for five open spaces that are being developed as Wilderness Parks within this network. The primary intent of the Wilderness Parks is for the lands to be largely retained in a natural state, offering passive access to nature. At the edge of urban settlement areas parts of these lands may be developed for formalized traditional recreation uses. The status of the five areas is described below:

Sandy Lake Regional Park: The Municipality has an active program to include additional lands to support the further development of Sandy Lake Regional Park.

Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes Area: Although much of the Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes lands is owned by the province, along with a recent land acquisition by the Nova Scotia Nature Trust, the Municipality has an active program to include additional lands for the core area of the proposed park, along with lands on its edges for access. Overall planning and coordination are also being considered.

Western Common Wilderness Common: The Municipality is currently constructing Phase 1 of the trail system outlined in the [Western Common Wilderness Common \(WCWC\) Master Plan](#) (approximately 2 kilometres). The continued implementation of the WCWC Master Plan is considered annually through the capital budget. Secondary planning for the Ragged Lake Industrial Park will further explore how the wilderness area will be managed together with future industrial development in a manner that consistent with the WCWC Master Plan.

Shaw Wilderness Park: The Municipality is currently coordinating the development of a Park Management Plan with the Nature Conservancy of Canada, which will include public engagement regarding park stewardship, trail systems and natural asset protection. The park lands will be rezoned “Regional Park” through the Regional Plan Review.

McIntosh Run Regional Park: The Municipality supports the McIntosh Run Watershed Association, who maintain the lands and trail system through a lease agreement. It is anticipated that planning for this park will consider publicly-owned lands in the surrounding area, including the Shaw Wilderness Park, Governor’s Brook District Park, and the Purcell’s Cove Backlands Trail System on abutting crown lands.

In addition to the parks identified above, parks and open spaces with similar attributes that may be under the management of other organizations and levels of government will be incorporated into the framework of regional parks and open spaces in the Regional Plan.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

- 7.10 Apply the Open Space and Natural Resources Designation and Regional Park Zone to the publicly-owned lands for the Sandy Lake Regional Park, Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes Area, Shaw Wilderness Park and McIntosh Run Regional Park, maintain the Western Common Zone for the Western Common Wilderness Common, and adopt policy to guide future park development and management of these areas as “wilderness parks”. Ensure that parks and open spaces owned and/or managed by community organizations and other levels of government are recognized within this framework.
- 7.11 Continue to work with other levels of government and conservation groups to increase access to open spaces.

