

CHAPTER 8: DRIVING ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

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8.0 INTRODUCTION

Halifax Regional Municipality is the economic hub of Atlantic Canada and, at the time of this Plan's adoption, one of Canada's fastest growing cities. This period of unprecedented growth has economic benefits but also brings challenges. In 2022, Regional Council adopted *People. Planet. Prosperity. Halifax's Inclusive Economic Strategy 2022-27* – a plan that seeks to ensure Halifax's prosperity is inclusive and improves the well-being of all its residents.

Regional Council has also endorsed the *African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity*: a strategy developed and owned by the African Nova Scotian community to address systemic issues and improve economic and quality of life outcomes for African Nova Scotians. It aims to attract investment to historic African Nova Scotian communities, increase labour force attachment and entrepreneurship, and build community capacity.

The Regional Plan reinforces the goals and actions of both these economic development strategies. It adopts policies that encourage employment opportunities in mixed-use centres, reduce barriers to small-scale commercial operations, maximize the social benefits of economic growth, and recognize the unique needs of historic African Nova Scotian communities. The Plan also acknowledges the different character and issues in rural areas of the municipality and creates policies to support infrastructure development, working landscapes and increasing as-of-right development while preserving open space.

Attracting employment and business requires sufficient land and space for companies to set up operations. The *Industrial Employment Lands Strategy* (2020), outlines the growing demand for industrial land throughout the Municipality and makes recommendations for HRM to ensure sufficient supply. The Regional Plan adopts policies that protect industrial and harbour lands for intensive employment uses.

8.1 OBJECTIVES

- 1. Support economic growth by increasing the population, labour force and Gross Domestic Product (GDP).**
- 2. Remove barriers to economic growth by developing policies and regulations that encourage small scale commercial uses and home based businesses.**
- 3. Support rural economic development by protecting working landscapes and encouraging clustered development to create complete communities.**
- 4. Direct growth to mixed use centres that provide jobs and services for the surrounding area.**
- 5. Continuously improve quality of life for residents by addressing housing affordability and equity.**
- 6. Protect industrial lands, ensure adequate supply of industrial land by type and location, and protect harbour lands for marine industrial uses.**

7. **Focus on inclusive economic prosperity by maximizing economic and social benefits of major projects within communities, implementing the *African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity Plan* and working with Mi'kmaq and Indigenous rightsholders on the Cornwallis Task Force and Truth & Reconciliation recommendations.**
8. **Encourage the growth of the green economy and growth of new employment sectors that support the transition to a low-carbon future.**

8.2 ECONOMIC STRATEGY

Since 2006 the Municipality has adopted a series of 5-year economic strategies. Each of these has focused on attracting and retaining talent, and promoting the municipality as an attractive place to live, work and do business. *People. Planet. Prosperity. Halifax's Inclusive Economic Strategy 2022-27* continues to focus on talent retention and growth but includes quality of life as a key measure of success. The strategy adopts three strategic goals:

- **Inclusive & Sustainable Growth** – increasing the GDP to \$25 billion and addressing systemic and historic inequities;
- **Talent Development & Retention** – increasing Halifax's population to 525,000 and its labour force to 310,000; and
- **Improve Quality of Life** - ensuring that rising living standards and prosperity can be enjoyed by all and addressing affordability and environmental issues.

EP-1 *People. Planet. Prosperity. Halifax's Inclusive Economic Strategy 2022-27* shall provide the direction for the Municipality's economic development initiatives. This Plan shall encourage planning and regulatory activities that maximize the economic and social benefits of major projects, increase housing stock, support environmental sustainability and resiliency, and grow African Nova Scotian and Indigenous prosperity.

8.2.1 MAJOR INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS

The municipality is home to a number of institutions that are major employers and provide a wide range of services and economic, social, and cultural benefits to the Municipality. The Municipality values the presence of major institutions located throughout the region, including post-secondary institutions, hospitals and healthcare facilities, and the Department of National Defence, and Halifax International Airport Authority, together with their important contributions to research, employment, training, public health, industry, arts, and culture. These institutions cumulatively provide employment for tens of thousands of residents. Where these sectors cluster mutually supportive facilities, they create employment and research hubs that function as focal points for the entire Atlantic region. While the Municipality has limited jurisdiction over provincial and federal institutions, coordination of planning efforts can support mutually beneficial goals, and a high level of service.

EP-2 The Municipality may consider partnerships with major institutions located throughout the region, including post-secondary institutions, hospitals, health care facilities and the Department of National Defense to ensure sufficient land is available for their current needs and future expansion, and for collaboration on needs such as infrastructure, transportation, housing and municipal services.

8.2.1.1 POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

Ten post-secondary institutions afford competitive advantages for Halifax by attracting international students, fostering innovation, generating employment and offering a highly educated and well-trained workforce. A diverse student base contributes to the vibrant social and entertainment opportunities available both on campus and downtown.

The Halifax Higher Education Partnership (HHEP) recognizes the many synergies between municipal, academic and training programs that can be achieved through collaboration. Regular HHEP meetings bring together representatives from the universities, Nova Scotia Community College, the Halifax Partnership and the Municipality to explore issues and opportunities of mutual interest. Recent examples include retention of international student talent, research and development clusters, and an emphasis on innovation. Other partnerships have also been established between individual universities or faculties and the private sector, the Province or the Municipality based on research needs and interests. There are also opportunities for collaboration on specific challenges such as campus expansion plans and neighbourhood impacts.

EP-3 The Municipality recognizes the important role post-secondary institutions have in talent attraction and retention and shall consider collaborating on campus planning initiatives and mitigating neighbourhood impacts.

8.2.1.2 DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Halifax is home to Canada's East Coast Navy and is Canada's largest military base by population. Along with CFB Shearwater, the Base employs approximately 11,000 military and civilian employees, plus a further 4,500 reservists. The Department of National Defence (DND) operates numerous facilities located throughout the municipality and is a significant contributor to local businesses and non-profit organizations.

There has been increasing development pressure in the area surrounding CFB Shearwater, which historically was remote enough for its aircraft operations to have minimal noise impact on residents. As development in the area intensifies, noise complaints are increasing. DND has altered operating hours and base locations used for aircraft operations to address these concerns, but further feasible changes to base operations are limited.

EP-4 The Municipality shall collaborate with the Department of National Defence on noise mitigation efforts for residential areas in the vicinity of CFB Shearwater.

8.2.1.3 HALIFAX STANFIELD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Halifax Stanfield International Airport (airport code YHZ) is the primary international gateway airport for Atlantic Canada and is located in one of the region's largest transportation centres. Passenger traffic and air cargo are growing consistently and the Halifax International Airport Authority (HIAA), which operates the airport, has long term expansion plans for the airfield, terminal, cargo and commercial areas. To achieve these plans, HIAA must consider appropriate infrastructure, servicing and land use guidelines for development.

The airport is a major economic and employment generator for the municipality. Ongoing communication between HIAA and HRM regarding future land use plans will help ensure adequate infrastructure is in place to support airport expansion, and compatible land uses are in place.

EP-5 The Municipality shall collaborate with the Halifax International Airport Authority in the development of airport-related facilities to ensure that municipal infrastructure requirements are adequate for any future expansion plans.

8.3 MIXED USE COMMUNITIES AND MIXED EMPLOYMENT CENTRES

This Plan directs 90% of new housing units to the Regional Centre and suburban communities. This target is meant to avoid escalating municipal costs by limiting sprawl and its associated servicing costs and encouraging the development of complete communities as described in Chapter 2 – walkable areas that enable people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to live, work, shop and play near to one another, with multiple mobility options. Clustering development in strategic locations will support efficient use of infrastructure, reduce land consumption and foster vibrant, community-oriented neighbourhoods.

Traditionally, land use policy has separated residential and commercial uses through municipal zoning and corporate siting formulas – a pattern that produces isolated commercial hubs such as big box tracts and strip malls, and forces people to travel outside of their communities to get goods and services. Adopting more inclusive zoning that permits human-scaled commercial activity to complement nearby residential uses is key to enabling complete communities.

Similarly, the Halifax region's employment locations have dispersed. Historically, employment and services were concentrated in the urban core, with residents travelling in and out during peak hours. Now, employment nodes also thrive in suburban and rural business parks, highway commercial strips and semi-rural shopping centres. The 2022 downtown office vacancy rate is at a 10-year high²⁷ as jobs relocate to other areas of the Municipality and employees shift to working from home in the wake of the pandemic. There may be opportunities to repurpose underused office buildings for residential units and attract more residents to the urban core.

All these changes have implications for land use regulations, traffic and transportation patterns. Land use policy should be responsive to these shifts in trends for employment and commercial space demand. Adopting policy that encourages less separation of use and more mixed-use communities where appropriate can lessen the burden on municipal infrastructure while reducing the amount of time residents must spend commuting.

EP-6 As part of the Suburban and Rural Community Planning program, the Municipality shall consider amendments to secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws to allow for increased small-scale commercial opportunities and home-based businesses in residential and mixed use zones.

²⁷ 2022 Halifax Index <https://halifaxpartnership.com/research-strategy/halifax-index-2022/real-estate/#:~:text=Halifax's%20overall%20office%20vacancy%20rate,%25%20and%2012.0%25%2C%20respectively.>

- EP-7 The Municipality shall monitor employment and labour force trends and demand for commercial space to inform planning for mixed use, transit-oriented communities and rural service centres.**
- EP-8 The Municipality shall, where appropriate, undertake studies and partnerships to better understand the viability of office-to-residential conversions, and implications for municipal regulatory and financial policy.**

8.4 INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT LANDS

Industrial lands are a critical part of the Municipality's economy. The industrial sector offers high quality employment opportunities and has spin-off growth benefits for retail and residential development. Industrial lands generally have high assessed values which contribute to the municipal tax base. Through development of its industrial employment land base, the Municipality will be better positioned to build more balanced, complete, and competitive communities. For Halifax to continue to be competitive and attractive to a broad range of industrial and commercial sectors, the Municipality must ensure that it has a sufficient supply and market choice of serviced industrial employment lands.

The competitiveness of Halifax's export-based economy is partly determined by the availability and quality of its developable industrial employment lands. One of the most important site selection criteria that can be influenced by the Municipality is an ample supply of suitable, vacant, serviced (and serviceable) industrial land that is available for purchase and absorption.

As land prices increase, industrial lands can face pressure to convert to non-industrial uses, such as large-format retail, office and residential developments. The policies of this Plan are intended to protect and promote sites suitable for industrial uses. The recommendations of the 2020 Industrial Employment Lands Strategy will guide the policies of this Plan to:

- Identify and designate industrial employment areas based on industry type;
- Establish a framework for consistent industrial zoning to be adopted in existing and future industrial employment areas across the Municipality;
- Introduce policy to direct where and how employment-supportive (non-industrial) uses can be accommodated in industrial employment areas; and
- Adopt policy to direct ongoing study of industrial employment trends, industrial land availability, conversion pressures, and opportunities for land intensification to inform planning for long-term industrial land needs.

EP-9 A Business/Industrial Sub-Designation shall be established on the Regional Land Use Structure (Map 2) and applied to all existing business/industrial parks and proposed expansion areas. Its primary intent is to preserve industrial lands for industrial uses, while allowing for commercial uses that support business and employees.

EP-10 Within the Business/Industrial Sub-Designation, the Municipality may amend applicable secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws to enable heavy industrial, light industrial, commercial industrial, or other employment-supportive uses.

EP-11 When identifying new areas that may be suitable for industrial use, the Municipality shall:

- a) **Consider the existing and anticipated supply of industrial lands within the Business/Industrial Sub-Designation;**
- b) **Prioritize areas close to transportation links such as 100 series highways, rail lines and port access;**
- c) **Require setbacks and buffers from less intensive uses and roads;**
- d) **Not designate lands identified Essential Corridors or High Ecological Value Areas on Map 6, or identified as environmentally sensitive or at-risk for climate hazards by any study resulting from policies of this Plan; and**
- e) **Avoid sites of cultural or historical importance as identified through consultation with communities.**

8.4.1 HEAVY INDUSTRIAL

Heavy industrial areas accommodate industries that produce large, complex products which are often used in further manufacturing, rather than sold to consumers directly. It involves the manufacture and/or processing of products from raw materials, extraction of raw materials, and use or storage of flammable, explosive or hazardous products. Heavy industrial uses generally include noise, smoke, dust or fumes that can be obnoxious to adjacent uses. Such areas require large lots with sufficient setbacks and buffers to minimize nuisance to neighbouring land uses. Products manufactured in heavy industrial settings tend to be transported and therefore require easy access to major transportation routes such as highways, rail, ports and airports.

EP-12 The Municipality may consider permitting heavy industrial uses in appropriate locations. Heavy industrial uses include manufacturing, processing, construction and demolition (C&D) uses, extraction of raw materials and production and use of hazardous materials, as well as light industrial uses. No residential uses except for caretaker units shall be permitted.

EP-13 Heavy industrial uses shall be located on large lots, set back and buffered from less intensive uses and roads.

8.4.2 LIGHT INDUSTRIAL

Light industrial uses involve the processing, fabrication, assembly, treatment, or packaging of products from previously prepared materials, finished products or parts. Most light industry products are produced directly for consumers rather than use by other industries. Research facilities and industrial printing are included in light industrial uses.

Light industrial facilities normally have less environmental impact than heavy industry and do not include hazardous and flammable products to the same degree. They still generate noise, dust and fumes and therefore require setbacks and buffers to protect adjacent land uses from nuisance by-products.

EP-14 The Municipality may consider permitting light industrial uses in appropriate locations. Light industrial uses shall include light manufacturing – the processing, fabrication, assembly, treatment, or packaging of products from previously prepared materials, finished products or parts. No residential uses except for caretaker units shall be permitted.

8.4.3 COMMERCIAL INDUSTRIAL

Commercial-industrial areas are intended to accommodate light industrial uses and a range of commercial uses that support industries, workers and customers. Commercial-Industrial areas may be used as buffers from streets and from zones that support less intensive uses. Retail and office uses and sizes should be limited so as to maximize the amount of land available for industrial and employment uses.

EP-15 Commercial Industrial uses may be permitted in heavy and light industrial areas, as well as mixed-use areas where appropriate, to accommodate light industrial uses and a range of commercial uses that support industries, workers and customers.

EP-16 Commercial Industrial uses shall be primarily directed to major streets and highway interchanges and may act as a transitional use to buffer to more intensive industrial uses. Secondary municipal planning strategies shall set a maximum size on retail uses in Commercial Industrial areas.

8.4.6 INDUSTRIAL LAND PROTECTION

The Industrial Employment Lands Strategy (2020) emphasized the need for industrial land to be protected from institutional and commercial encroachment and to ensure adequate employment lands available for future growth. To support this goal, the IELS recommended implementing policies to protect industrial areas from conversion and fragmentation. Such policies recognize there may be circumstances where conversions to non-employment uses are justified but require a systematic approach to evaluate conversion requests.

EP-17 The Municipality may consider conversion of industrial and employment lands to non-industrial and employment uses through a comprehensive review of planning documents that considers the following criteria:

- a) whether the land is required for the Municipality to maintain a sufficient supply of land for industrial and employment purposes over the long term;**
- b) the proposed uses would not adversely affect the overall viability of the employment area and conversion will not introduce incompatible land uses to the surrounding employment area;**
- c) existing or planned infrastructure and public service facilities are available to accommodate the proposed uses, including public transit access;**
- d) site(s) are mixed use blocks and located along the edges of employment areas, or the site is an irregular or island parcel unable to support industrial uses;**
- e) conversion of the site(s) will not compromise any other planning policy objectives of the Municipality, including planned commercial functions;**

- f) the site is constrained due to size, configuration, or physical conditions (e.g. grade, natural heritage, environmental features) that do not make it feasible for industrial employment uses;
- g) that the conversion proposal can demonstrate that a similar level of employment density (e.g., jobs per hectare) would be maintained; and
- h) conversion of the site(s) will result in a more logical land use boundary for an employment area.

EP-18 Any sites appropriate for intensive marine-dependent industrial uses shall be discouraged from converting to residential uses.

Demand for industrial land is high and is projected to remain so for the long-term. While the municipality is geographically large, there is a limited supply of industrial land, particularly in serviced areas. One potential response is intensification of industrial lands, by developing less restrictive land use regulations and permitting mixing of industrial with other complementary employment uses. Industrial intensification strategies may allow for more efficient use of land and infrastructure, reduced sprawl, and a better-connected transportation system.

EP-19 The Municipality shall undertake a study of industrial intensification strategies to consider land use changes such as building density, height limits, setbacks and buffers, parking requirements, and mixing of industrial with other complementary employment uses where contextually appropriate.

8.4.5 HALIFAX HARBOUR

Halifax Harbour plays a strategically important economic role to HRM and the Province of Nova Scotia for shipping, ship building, naval operations and other port related industries. HRM seeks to ensure that sufficient lands are retained for these purposes and that the viability of these activities is not compromised by development of incompatible uses in their proximity.

8.4.5.1 HALIFAX HARBOUR SUB-DESIGNATION

EP-20 The Halifax Harbour Sub-Designation shall be established on the Regional Land Use Structure (Map 2) and applied from Hartlen Point in Eastern Passage to Chebucto Head, including Northwest Arm and Bedford Basin, and extend inland generally to the first major roadway paralleling the Harbour. The Sub-Designation's primary intent is to preserve lands for marine-industrial uses.

EP-21 Within the Halifax Harbour Sub-Designation, the Municipality shall establish zoning under applicable land use by-laws where existing harbour-related industrial uses are located and lands or water lots determined by the Municipality to be suitable for these uses in the future. Corresponding land use regulations shall be established under the applicable land use by-laws. Amendments to applicable land use by-laws may be made to:

- a) allow for additional lands or water lots for harbour-related industrial uses that have not been previously been identified where such lands are considered appropriately situated for these uses;
- b) implement regulations that mitigate potential negative impacts of existing and potential marine-dependent industrial and commercial areas on adjacent uses, while maintaining the economic viability of marine-dependent uses; and
- c) discourage new residential development from locating in areas that are suitable for intensive marine dependent industrial and commercial uses.

8.4.5.2 WATER LOTS

While waterfront property ownership typically stops at the shoreline, a number of lots exist around these waterbodies that were created prior to Confederation in 1867. Known as pre-Confederation water lots, the approval of the Federal Government is required before these lots can be infilled and development of these lots is subject to the Municipality's land use policies and regulations.

The Municipality will encourage senior levels of government to only consider harbour infilling for the purpose of marine related purposes, such as wharfs or marinas, or to provide public recreational areas or public access to the waterfront. Any infill that could have negative environmental impact should be discouraged.

EP-22 Secondary municipal planning strategies shall discourage infilling of pre-Confederation water lots by adopting policies that limit development on water lots and establish regulations on how to consider water lots when calculating lot area and setbacks.

Sulfide-bearing material (SBM), commonly known as pyritic slate is a frequent by-product of development in HRM. Once excavated and exposed to air and water, pyritic slate can generate acidic runoff that is a known risk to watersheds and associated ecosystems. Therefore, its safe disposal is a significant issue. One of the most environmentally acceptable practices is to submerge it in salt water which mitigates acid generation and also creates infilled land around the shoreline.

The Halifax Port Authority operates the only large-scale commercial SBM infill site in HRM, but privately-owned pre-Confederation water lots may also apply to host SBM infill. Both Federal and Provincial regulations apply to SBM disposal. HRM has no direct control over permitting or regulating the disposal of SBM, but it can influence infill processes through its authority to regulate land use and nuisances (such as truck routes and noise).

The Halifax Port Authority has expressed concern about the longer-term availability of SBM infill capacity and the need to plan for additional future capacity. The siting of any future commercial SBM infill facilities would benefit from a collaborative approach from all levels of government and relevant stakeholders.

EP-23 The Municipality shall encourage a collaborative, multi-stakeholder approach to the siting and approval of sulfide-bearing material disposal sites, that considers impacts on environment, adjacent neighbourhoods, and uses and regulation of infilled sites.

8.4.5.3 HALIFAX PORT AUTHORITY

Halifax Port Authority is a major landowner along the municipality's harbour lands. The Port oversees commercial cargo shipping and cruise operations – both significant contributors to HRM's economy. It also manages the Halifax Seaport, an arts and cultural district with cruise terminals, retailers, a national museum, a farmers market, and Nova Scotia College of Art & Design. The Port is planning expansion and improvement projects over the coming years where warranted by projected increases in both passenger and freight traffic.

EP-24 The Municipality shall collaborate with the Halifax Port Authority in the development of port-related facilities to ensure that municipal infrastructure requirements are adequate for any future plans.

8.4.5.4 HALIFAX OCEAN SUPERCLUSTER

Halifax is Canada's largest centre for ocean research. Ocean-related industries account for approximately one-third of Nova Scotian business R&D, and general 13.5% of Nova Scotia's GDP²⁸. The Government of Canada has established a Federal Ocean Supercluster program in HRM, bringing together industry, research and government to create and collaborate on projects that grow Canada's ocean economy.

EP-25 The Municipality shall work with government and industry partners to ensure available harbour-front land can support the needs of growing ocean-related industries and the Federal Ocean Super Cluster program.

8.5 RURAL EMPLOYMENT LANDS

There are extensive rural lands within the municipality's geographic boundaries. These lands provide much of the open space and natural resources that support the municipality. Rural areas have a larger share of businesses in industrial, resource and goods-producing sectors than other areas of the municipality. Policies that preserve agricultural and resource lands maintain areas needed for economic growth. The Halifax Green Network Plan identifies these areas as the municipality's working landscapes: open spaces that support regional economic sectors such as resource extraction, agriculture, tourism, construction and manufacturing. Preserving these areas is important for the regional economy.

EP-26 As part of the Rural Community Planning program, the Municipality shall establish policies and zoning under applicable secondary planning strategies and land use by-laws to preserve working landscapes, as identified on the Green Network Plan's Working Landscape Open Space Values Map, to protect them from residential encroachment and minimize land use conflicts.

EP-27 As part of the Rural Community Planning program, the Municipality shall establish policies under applicable secondary planning strategies and land use by-laws to support primary resource industries.

²⁸ Halifax Partnership, 2023 <https://halifaxpartnership.com/key-sectors/oceans/>

8.7 TOURISM

Tourism is a major economic sector for Halifax. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, there were 5.3 million overnight stays per year and \$1.3 billion in spending by visitors to the municipality²⁹. The sector is now recovering with the number of visitors arriving by air and land rebounding, hotel occupancy increasing, and cruise ship arrivals on par with 2019 levels.

HRM itself is a major tourism stakeholder. The Municipality owns Scotiabank Centre and is a 50% shareholder in the Halifax Convention Centre, provides funding to large-scale events and community organizations, and supports Discover Halifax, the regional destination marketing organization. In 2021, Regional Council endorsed the Halifax Regional Integrated Tourism Master Plan, developed by Discover Halifax, which includes actions that aim to grow tourism revenue and employment.

EP-28 The Municipality shall work with Discover Halifax to implement the goals of the Integrated Tourism Master Plan by:

- a) reviewing secondary land use policies and relevant by-law changes to support Designated Arts Districts and Entertainment Districts in appropriate locations;**
- b) working with stakeholders to identify infrastructure needs that would support increased tourism (such as outdoor performance spaces, waterfront park spaces, transportation options, broadband and cellular coverage, and washrooms);**
- c) working with community and stakeholders to increase the tourism focus for the Dartmouth waterfront and the canoe-kayak facilities on Lake Banook;**
- d) Partner with the Wild Islands Tourism Advancement Partnership to implement the 100 Wild Islands Plan through infrastructure investments, potential property sales or transfers, and funding and in-kind support.**

EP-29 The Municipality shall explore development and property transfer opportunities for historically underrepresented communities to develop cultural and creative businesses on that land.

EP-30 The Municipality may consider partnerships, changes to municipal bylaws and land use policies, and incentives to support the creation of arts and entertainment hubs that support tourism and the creative economy.

8.7.1 RURAL TOURISM

Tourism is a major economic driver in rural areas of the municipality. Cultural landscapes, recreational spaces, trails and scenic byways create attractive tourism destinations, and “unspoiled” landscapes support eco-tourism. Tourism uses are considered working landscapes in the Halifax Green Network Plan given the economic opportunities they provide to rural communities in particular.

²⁹ Discover Halifax, 2019 Annual Report

The scenic landscapes and attractions in the municipality's rural areas can be negatively impacted by poorly designed and screened residential, industrial or commercial developments. Ensuring scenic routes, trails and eco-tourism sites have adequate buffers and screening will strengthen rural tourism and allow more eco-tourism sites to flourish. Underdeveloped tourism infrastructure, such as lodging, restaurants, recreational experiences, washrooms and communication linkages (cellular and broadband), can also hinder efforts to draw visitors to otherwise highly marketable scenic landscapes. Encouraging small-scale commercial operations that meet visitors' needs can support tourism and local economic growth while not detracting from the landscape.

EP-31 Through the Rural Community Planning program, the Municipality shall consider amendments to applicable secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws to allow for increased small-scale commercial opportunities and home based businesses in rural areas that support and enhance tourism. These amendments may remove restrictions on small-scale accommodations, tour operations, commercial recreation, and retail, and introduce design guidelines to ensure operations complement the landscape.

EP-32 Through the Rural Community Planning program, the Municipality shall establish policies and zoning under applicable secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws to ensure that rural industrial developments are adequately screened from scenic roads and trails.

EP-33 The Municipality shall explore approaches to tourist accommodations in rural parts of the Municipality.

8.8 INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

HRM's 2022-27 Economic Strategy addresses the issue of equitable economic prosperity. While the municipality is growing, groups such as African Nova Scotians (ANS), Indigenous peoples, rural Halifax communities, those in underrepresented groups, and those experiencing poverty have not attained the same levels of growth and prosperity as others. The 2022-27 Economic Strategy has established well-being and quality of life as a measure of successful economic growth. Regional Plan policies that address equity and affordability will support these objectives.

There are land use policies and tools that can help spread the impact of economic benefits throughout communities more broadly. Some of these are outlined in the *African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity* - a collaborative plan developed and owned by the African Nova Scotian community to advance economic development and community priorities, that Council endorsed in 2020. There are also themes HRM could explore for land use implications in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and the recommendations of the Task Force on the Commemoration of Edward Cornwallis and the Recognition and Commemoration of Indigenous History.

EP-34 The Municipality shall study and where required, seek legislative authority, for tools that could maximize economic and social benefits of major projects within communities, such as community benefit agreements, community action planning, community trusts and community-led planning or projects.

EP-35 When plans, policies and by-laws are reviewed, the Municipality shall ensure alignment with the 94 Calls to Action, the recommendations from the Task Force on the Commemoration of Edward Cornwallis and the Recognition and Commemoration of Indigenous History, and the African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity.

8.8.1 HISTORICAL AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIAN COMMUNITY ACTION PLANNING

HRM is taking steps to create more inclusive economic growth and have communities more actively involved in the planning and development process. Both the Road to Economic Prosperity for African Nova Scotian Communities and *People. Planet. Prosperity: Halifax's Inclusive Economic Strategy 2022-27* aim to consider and, where possible, incorporate community benefits in the development approval process. This can be achieved through the use of community action plans – a process for residents to identify strengths and opportunities, create a vision for their community's future, and develop an action plan to achieve it.

The municipality is home to a number of historic African Nova Scotian communities. Beechville, Lucasville, Upper Hammonds Plains, Lake Loon, Cherry Brook, North Preston, and East Preston were all established in the late 18th and early 19th centuries by land grants given to families of African descent. These are some of the oldest and largest indigenous Black communities in Canada. HRM's goal is to undertake community action planning with these historic African Nova Scotian areas, to allow residents to take a leading role in the evolution of their community with municipal support.

EP-36 The Municipality shall ensure the policies of this Plan, secondary municipal planning strategies and by-laws align with the African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity.

EP-37 The Municipality shall build on its work with African Nova Scotian communities to create Historical African Nova Scotian Community Action Plans, using the Beechville Community Action Plan as a model. This work shall have the Municipality provide support to communities as they identify community needs and priorities, establish a vision, and create action plans.

EP-38 The Municipality shall incorporate Historical African Nova Scotian Community Action Plans into planning policies and by-law regulations where possible.

EP-39 The Municipality shall identify resource needs for community action planning work, and for action plan items themselves, through its annual budget and business planning process.

HRM is working with the African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity Advisory Committee (REPAC) on ways to increase housing options and allow property owners more flexibility in land uses. This work aligns with the Provincial Land Titles Clarification Initiative – a process to help residents in 13 communities gain title to their land. Historic African Nova Scotian communities are disproportionately affected by lack of clear title to their lands as original settlers were often given land but not the accompanying legal deeds. Properties have since been purchased, subdivided and built upon by community members in patterns that may not meet modern municipal lot requirements.

The *Land Titles Clarification Act* (1963) and the *Land Titles Initiative Acceleration Act* (2021) recognize the de-facto lots created over time and allow residents to establish legal title. These Acts establish community

boundaries that in some cases do not capture the entire community and exclude properties from consideration. This Plan aims to resolve this issue by creating policy that will officially recognize lots in existence in all African Nova Scotian communities prior to municipal subdivision regulations. Given that this form of subdivision will not create new development but recognizes existing lots and dwellings, these requests shall be exempted from parkland dedication requirements.

EP-40 The Municipality shall recognize lots in communities designated “land titles clarification areas” under the *Land Title Clarification Act*, as existing prior to the date the applicable land use by-law was adopted. The Regional Subdivision By-law shall provide lot design requirements that support the unique circumstances of these lots.

EP-41 Under the Regional Subdivision By-Law, the Municipality shall not apply parkland dedication requirements to lots recognized through Policy EP-40.

In African Nova Scotian communities, families traditionally built multiple dwellings on one lot. Clustering dwellings on one lot allowed families to pool their resources by providing multi-generational housing options, created a village-style community, and allowed property owners to access the full value of their land via investment opportunities. Building multiple houses per property lent itself well to the type of lots often found in African Nova Scotian communities, which tended to be long and narrow with little road frontage.

Modern municipal subdivision requirements for public road frontage and limitations on the number of lots per property mean that many residents have been unable to share land with family members or access the value in their properties through subdivision. This has solidified an historic inequity in property rights, based on the original land grants and type of lot.

A number of the Municipality’s community plans have policies and subdivision rules permitting the “Same Number or Fewer Lots Than There Are Dwellings,” allowing more houses than there are lots. These rules generally permit subdivisions if dwellings can establish right-of-way or an easement to a public street, and access water and wastewater servicing or have adequate space for onsite servicing.

EP-42 The Municipality shall establish policies under applicable secondary municipal planning strategies to enable properties in historic African Nova Scotian communities to subdivide, and to create lot design requirements in applicable land use by-laws permitting fewer lots than there are dwellings in these communities.

8.9 GREEN ECONOMY

HalifACT is HRM’s climate change action plan – a transformational plan adopted in response to Regional Council’s declaration of a climate emergency. It commits to a deep reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and strengthening resilience to climate impacts. Achieving this requires an operational shift in many sectors, particularly transportation, construction and development. In 2022-23 Regional Council established a Climate Action Tax, to be incorporated into annual municipal budgets for at least 10 years, to fund HalifACT’s strategic initiatives. This tax supports projects such as electric vehicles and buses, net-zero buildings and infrastructure resiliency. It is also being used to leverage climate action funding from the private sector, federal and provincial governments, as a collaborative, multi-stakeholder approach is necessary for the plan to succeed.

Decarbonizing the building, transportation and energy sectors requires investment, but is also a major economic opportunity. These investments will generate employment and stimulate new and existing businesses. Investments in building retrofits, renewable energy, energy storage, transit systems and active transportation will stimulate economic activity and grow new employment sectors.

EP-43 The Municipality shall support the growth of the low carbon economy by working with community partners and stakeholders to develop workforce and business development programs. Such programs may include skills and trade development, industrial process efficiencies, and support for business initiatives that reduce emissions and strengthen climate resilience.

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