

REGIONAL CENTRE VISION STATEMENT & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Regional Centre Vision Statement

The following vision builds on the area's inherent assets and potential strengths. This important direction-setting tool was created through previous HRMbyDesign public engagement exercises, and was confirmed through the RP+5 process and the 2014 Regional Plan.

The Regional Centre is the symbolic, historic and functional heart of the Halifax Regional Municipality. It is distinguished by its rich past as is evident in: its historic architecture, traditional neighbourhoods and national landmarks; its natural features as shaped by its grand parks, harbour, lakes, waterways and rolling hills; and its regional importance as an economic hub, capital district, educational centre, health focus and cultural heart.

- *The Regional Centre will build on its distinctions and assets to nurture an urban context that enhances quality of life, enriches urban living and becomes a global destination.*
- *The Regional Centre will assert and affirm a legible and ordered urban structure that will reinforce the best qualities and characteristics of its unique neighbourhoods and districts.*
- *The Regional Centre's cultural vitality is rooted in its diverse population and accordingly it will strive to be an open, safe, affordable, accessible and welcoming place to people of all walks of life.*
- *The Regional Centre's vibrancy, animation and economic health will be strengthened through the cultivation of a compact, civic inspired and human-scaled urban fabric of streets, blocks and buildings.*

Guiding Principles

The following Eight Guiding Principles for Urban Design were prepared by HRM residents through public engagement workshops as part of the first phase of the HRMbyDesign process and were adopted by Halifax Regional Council in 2007.

These principles are the building blocks that will give the Regional Centre its "look and feel." They reinforce the Vision Statement and will form the backbone of the Centre Plan.

1

sustainable
design, plan and build with respect for economic, environmental, social and cultural sustainability.

create resilient communities that adapt to evolving opportunities and needs.



2

high quality
New development should be of high quality and compatible with other high quality developments.

Promote high quality architecture and urban design that respects great heritage resources, including neighbourhoods.



3

heritage + culture
Heritage resources, including heritage districts, buildings, landscapes and cultural heritage, should be recognized, used, protected and enhanced.

Ensure lasting legacies (buildings, open spaces and streets) are maintained, and new ones are created.



4

movement
Integrate land use planning with transportation planning in such a way that alternatives to driving become an easy choice. Transportation options should be efficient, pleasant and readily available.

All streets should present an inviting walking environment that considers the comfort, convenience, safety and visual interest of pedestrians.

The Regional Centre, in all ways, should be conducive to, and supportive of, active transportation movement. It should provide people with choices that are viable alternatives to driving.



5

complete neighbourhoods
Support safe, mixed-use and diverse neighbourhoods, including:

Affordable housing and a variety of tenures;

Residential, commercial, employment uses; and

Visually and physically accessible amenity space, including schools and parks, within walking distance.

Ensure the necessary public services and amenities to support quality of life, cohesive communities and creative places.



6

growth & change
Ensure that new developments respond to the natural, cultural, historical, and urban character of their context.

Direct change and intensification to areas that will benefit from growth.

Every new building should contribute to the betterment of the public realm.

Design should support accessibility, active transportation and transit (i.e. streets, land uses, neighbourhoods, open spaces, circulation systems).



7

process
Foster a culture of support for the building/ construction of quality urban design.

Recognize and reward design excellence.

Involve neighbourhood communities in local planning matters.

Maintain opportunities for public participation in the implementation of HRM by Design.

Foster predictable outcomes that have been tested to be achievable and fair.



8

connected
Prominent views to prominent natural and built features should be recognized, protected and enhanced.

Enhance safe and appealing connections within the Regional Centre including to and from the waterfront, open spaces and neighbourhoods.

