

BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

The Halifax Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (the Regional Plan) sets out a common vision, guiding principles and long-range, region-wide planning policies outlining where, when, and how future settlement, balanced growth and development should take place between now and 2031.

The Regional Plan is a powerful document that guides the Municipality's planning and decision-making. The Regional Plan:

- provides policy direction for planning at the regional and community level (secondary planning);
- sets up region-wide land use by-law regulations;
- establishes the Municipality's intent to conduct future research programs or studies;
- identifies programming or partnership opportunities; and
- sets up governance structures.

WHAT IS THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW?

Originally adopted in 2006, the Regional Plan provided the first comprehensive guide for future growth for the entire municipality following amalgamation. The Plan established policy for a 25-year horizon, from 2006-2031, with minor reviews expected every five years. The first Regional Plan review (RP+5) was initiated in 2011 to make sure the Plan still reflected the Municipality's goals for growth and development. The Regional Plan was readopted in 2014. The second five-year review began in 2020, and work will continue over the next two years. The next significant review of the Regional Plan is being planned for 2026-2030 (at the end of the 25-year horizon of the 2006 Regional Plan).

The objectives of the current Regional Plan Review are to:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of the policies and programs contained in the 2014 Regional Plan

- Propose revised policies as necessary based on any new policy direction contained in the Priority Plans, including:
 - [Integrated Mobility Plan](#) (adopted in 2017)
 - [Halifax Green Network Plan](#) (adopted in 2018)
 - [Economic Growth Plan 2016 – 2021](#)
 - [Sharing Our Stories](#) (Culture & Heritage Priorities Plan) (adopted in 2020)
 - [HalifACT](#) (Community Energy & Climate Action Plan) (adoption targeted for 2020)
- Engage with the public to identify any new or emerging issues not captured through Priority Planning
- Establish policy direction to continue guiding the Secondary Plan & By-law Simplification program
- Identify key emerging trends and planning research that might be required to establish the policy program for the next significant review period



WHAT IS THE THEMES & DIRECTIONS REPORT?

This document, the Themes and Directions Report, is the first deliverable of the Regional Plan Review. The purpose of this document is to explain the scope of the Regional Plan Review to the public, stakeholders and Regional Council, and to seek feedback. This document shares ideas about key planning issues and provides details of the work that will be completed during the review. The feedback we receive will help provide focus and direction for future work during the Review.

This document includes eleven Themes:

1. Considering How We Develop at the Regional Scale First
2. Building Healthier and More Complete Communities
3. Reconsidering Employment and Industrial Lands
4. Transforming How We Move in our Region
5. Social Planning for Greater Community Well-Being
6. Celebrating Culture & Heritage
7. Integrating Community Facilities and Parks
8. Enhancing Environmental Protection
9. Taking Action on Climate
10. Long-Range Planning: Imagining HRM into 2050 and Beyond
11. Impacts of COVID-19

Each Theme introduces an overall topic area bringing together work completed over the last five years. The Directions – highlighted in each Theme under the heading “The Regional Plan Review will” – explain the work that will be done through the Regional Plan Review. This work includes:

- reviewing and amending existing Regional Plan policy;
- writing new policy and land use by-law regulations;
- identifying where further study is needed and how the Regional Plan policy will set up research programs for those topics; and
- identifying areas where the Regional Plan may guide and support programming or partnerships.

The Appendix includes several Issue Papers that provide further detailed information on topics including: Population and Housing Projections; Density Bonusing; Planning Tools for Protecting and Conserving Land; Suburban Community Design; and Rural Planning.

REGIONAL PLAN VISION

HRM's vision for the future is to enhance our quality of life by fostering the growth of healthy and vibrant communities, a strong and diverse economy, and sustainable environment.