

HALIFAX

REGIONAL PLAN

THEMES & DIRECTIONS

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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 receivewill 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

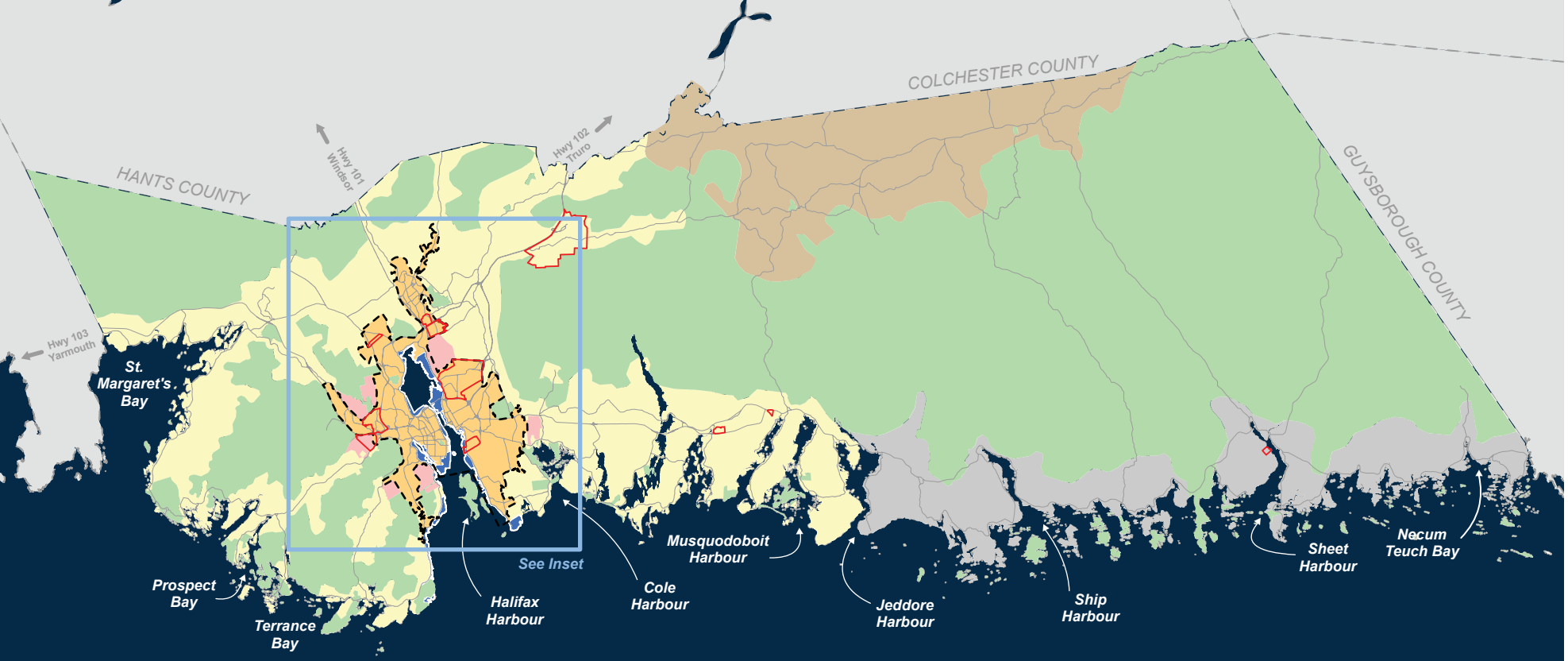
HRM's vision for the future is to enhance our quality of life by fostering the growth of healthy and vibrant communities, a strong and diverse economy, and sustainable environment.


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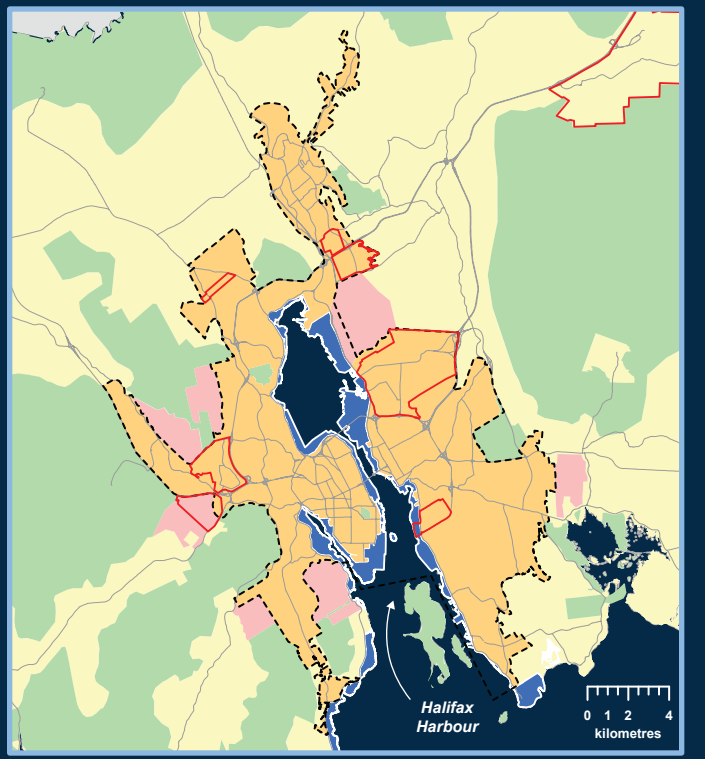
THEME 1

CONSIDERING THE REGIONAL SCALE FIRST

The Regional Plan sets out a common vision and long-range, region-wide planning policies outlining where, when, and how future growth and development should take place between now and 2031. It identifies where future housing, job opportunities, services and amenities should be located across the region as our population grows and changes, and how we should protect the natural environment, the character of our communities and the quality of life in our region. The Regional Plan directs most new development to established centres in urban, suburban and rural communities. The Municipality's physical geographic constraints, existing and planned water and wastewater infrastructure, transit boundary, as well as the location of employment and community facilities significantly impacts where and how the region grows.



Inset: Urban Core



MAP 1

Generalized Future Land Use

Designations (2014 Regional Plan)

- Urban Settlement
- Urban Reserve
- Halifax Harbour
- Rural Commuter
- Rural Resource
- Open Space and Natural Resource
- Agricultural
- Business / Industrial Park
- Urban Transit Service Boundary

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kilometres

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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
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False Easting: 25,500,000.0000
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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.

HOW THIS PLAN SHAPES OUR REGION

The Regional Plan, adopted in 2006, created the first comprehensive blueprint for growth for the entire municipality. It identified where people should live, and how development across the region should be organized and change over time. The plan had a long-range vision to locate new housing in areas that could be easily serviced with piped water and wastewater services, along with transit. Studies showed that this approach would save the Municipality and tax payers hundreds of millions of dollars when compared to previous development patterns of uncontained sprawl. These ideas were also in line with the increasingly popular concept of sustainable communities, coined "smart growth", and simultaneously ensured the protection of rural character. This 2006 plan also focused on new environmental planning measures, like watercourse setbacks, consideration of coastal flooding, parkland dedication as part of a subdivision process, protecting open space, wetlands, and requirements for watershed studies.

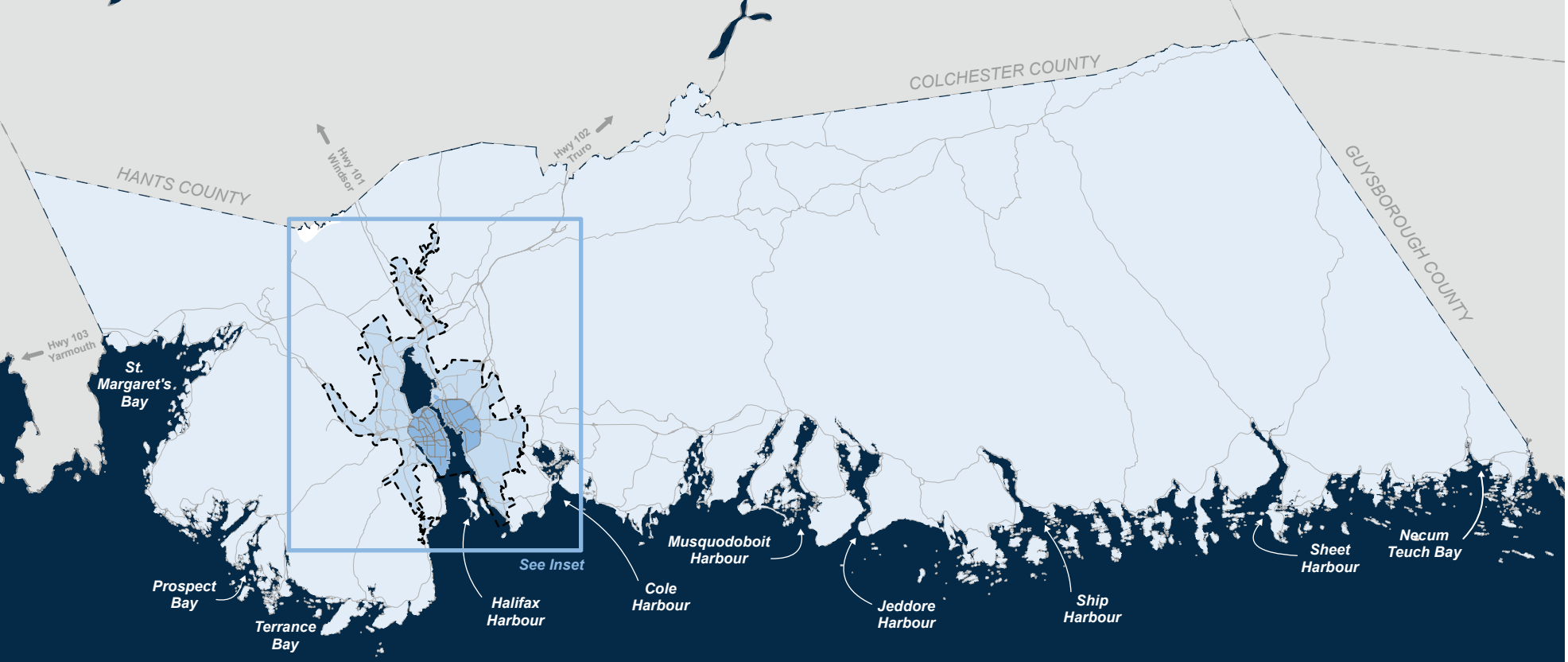
By 2014, the first Regional Plan was reviewed and readopted. The Plan continued to strategically direct new housing to areas with available infrastructure and services, in particular the Regional Centre (Peninsula Halifax and Dartmouth within the Circumferential Highway) and urban communities (those serviced with publicly managed water and wastewater service outside the Regional Centre).

The Regional Plan uses a Generalized Future Land Use map to outline specific geographic areas of the municipality and provide direction on what type of development should occur in these areas. This map uses seven general land use designations to manage growth. The Urban Settlement and Urban Reserve designations are applied to areas where development serviced with municipal water and wastewater service exists or is planned. The Rural Commuter, Rural Resource, and Agricultural designations apply to areas of rural settlement. The Open Space and Natural Resource designation applies to the region's natural network of open spaces, typically on government-owned and private resource sector lands. The Halifax Harbour designation recognizes the important economic role of our working harbour.

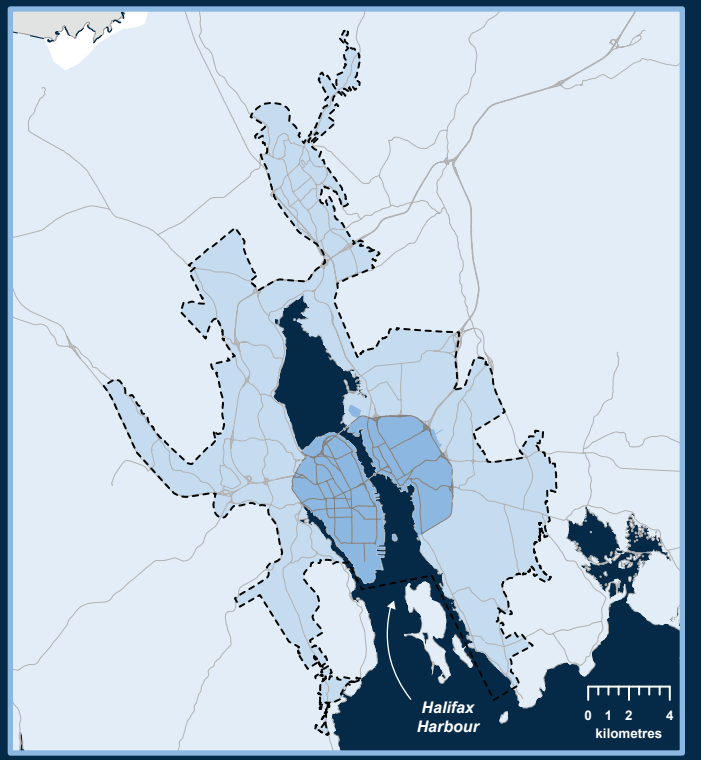
The Regional Plan also identified that additional studies were required to go deeper into policy issues, such as acting on climate change, celebrating culture and heritage, providing more transportation options, and connecting and protecting natural and open spaces. These studies have been completed since 2014 and are known as the Priorities Plans. These plans can be used to direct planning policy and work as well as Council investments and priorities.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

1.1 Review and confirm the Regional Plan's development and growth policies by considering where and how the Municipality will grow within the life of this Plan.

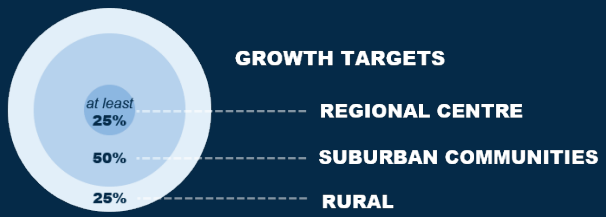


Inset: Urban Core



MAP 2

Regional Plan Geographies



- Regional Centre
- Suburban Communities
- Rural
- Urban Transit Service Boundary

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kilometres

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Projection: Transverse Mercator
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Map Units: Metre

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REGIONAL GROWTH TARGETS

The Regional Plan aims to reduce the cost of constructing and operating infrastructure by maximizing development around existing services, while planning for future requirements in a coordinated manner. This allows everyone involved in community building to plan for providing services well in advance of when they will be needed. The Regional Plan's growth management and infrastructure policies must be reviewed to ensure that they continue to adequately respond to growth and change over time.

The Regional Plan emphasizes a balanced approach to development and establishes targets for directing the location of housing growth over the life of the Regional Plan (2006-2031). In 2006, policy established that 25% of household growth was to be directed to the Regional Centre (Peninsula Halifax and Dartmouth within the Circumferential Highway); 50% directed to suburban communities (communities serviced with publicly managed water and wastewater services outside the Regional Centre) and the remaining 25% to the rural areas. During the first five-year review of the Plan, it was found that HRM was underperforming against these targets, and a study was commissioned to assess the public, private and social costs and benefits of various growth scenarios from 2011 to 2031.

The study by Stantec, called "Quantifying the Costs and Benefits of Alternative Growth Scenarios" (known as the Stantec Study) concluded that continued adherence to the Regional Plan growth targets would save the municipality $670 million in costs and that significant additional cost savings could be achieved by increasing growth in the Regional Centre. In response, the 2014 Regional Plan adjusted the growth targets to direct at least 75% of new housing units to the Regional Centre and suburban communities, with at least 25% of new housing units within the Regional Centre.

Since 2014, Regional Council has adopted the Regional Centre Plan, which was designed to accommodate up to 40% of growth in the Regional Centre. The Integrated Mobility Plan identified that to support the Municipality's mobility goals, it will be important to locate as much as 90% of growth to the Regional Centre and suburban communities.

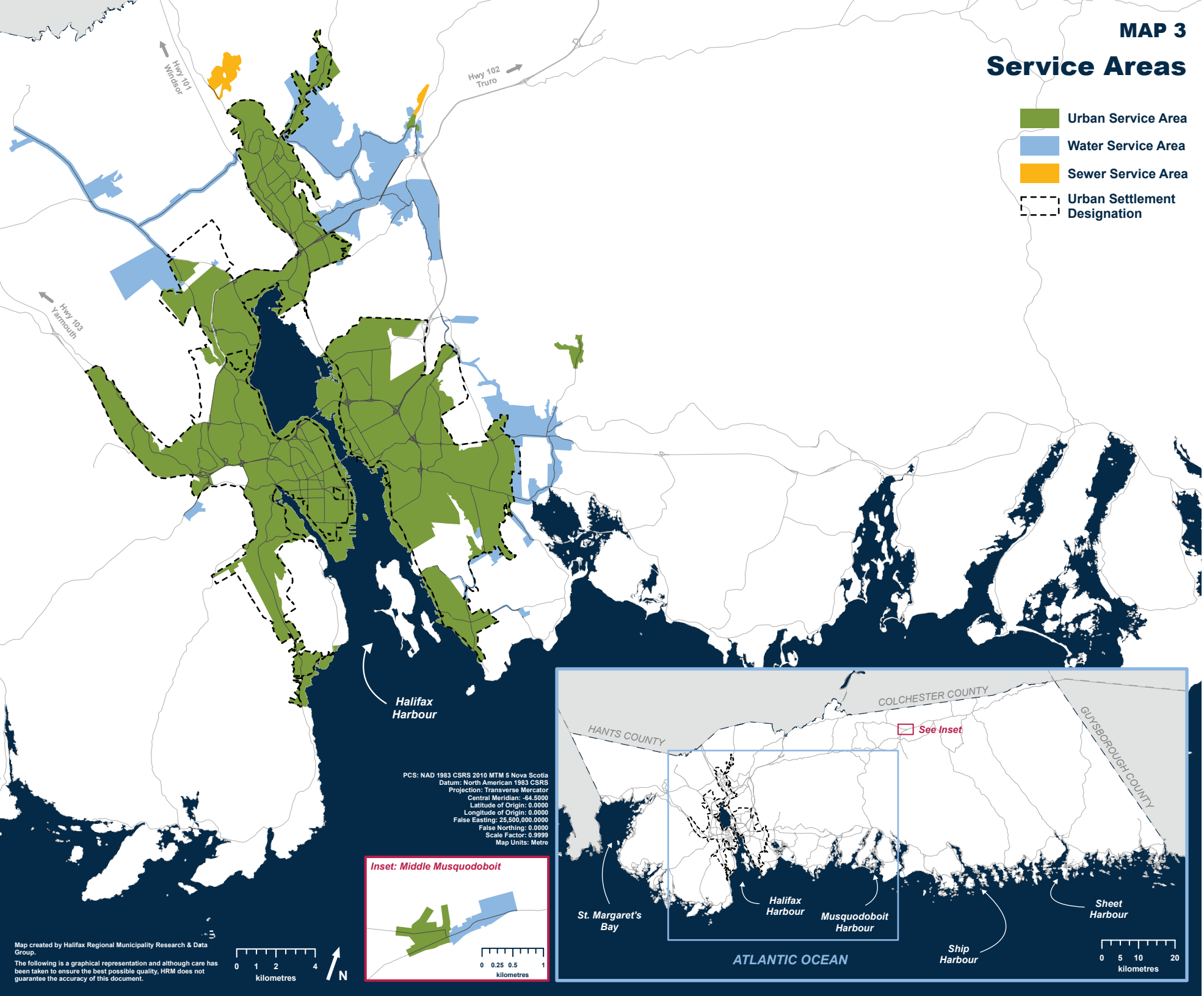
The Regional Plan Review will evaluate the supply of developable lands and growth rate, consider performance against the 2014 targets and determine if these targets should be adjusted.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

1.2 Assess progress towards achieving household growth targets, including population and housing forecasts and their implications in relation to the available supply of developable land, housing supply and demand, and the provision of a range of housing choices.

MAP 3

Service Areas



Map created by Halifax Regional Municipality Research & Data Group.

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THE URBAN SERVICE AREA

The Urban Service Area boundary establishes the location of existing piped water and wastewater services. This is used as a growth boundary to ensure the Municipality makes the most effective use of existing infrastructure. The Regional Plan requires a careful, considered process before allowing any expansion of the boundary of the Urban Service Area. This process includes a review of expected population growth, demand for new housing and HRM's growth targets. Because these factors impact long-term decision-making for the region, the Urban Service Area boundary is generally only adjusted during the five-year reviews of the Regional Plan.

The Urban Service Area boundary will be reviewed as part of this Regional Plan Review to ensure that it adequately meets the region's requirements. In addition to the process described above, the review will also consider:

- Infrastructure Master Plan: Halifax Water is the municipal water, wastewater, and stormwater utility serving the Halifax region. Halifax Water prepares a long-term servicing strategy, the Infrastructure Master Plan, to address wastewater and water systems to meet growth. The Regional Plan and the Infrastructure Master Plan should work together to effectively achieve their goals.
- Halifax Green Network Plan (HGNP): The HGNP highlights the importance of considering ecological connectivity when evaluating if lands are appropriate for development. The recommendations of the HGNP will be considered as part of the review of the Urban Service Area boundary.
- Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP): The IMP directs investment in active transportation, transit and the roadway network based on an integrated approach to mobility planning. The recommendations of the IMP will be considered as part of the review of the Urban Service Area boundary.
- Developer Requests: The Regional Plan Review will consider requests from developers to expand the Urban Service Area boundary to allow for serviced development on their lands.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

1.3 Ensure coordinated and efficient planning of municipal water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure by including Halifax Water as a key member of the Regional Plan Review Steering Committee, and assessing the projected population growth, proposed settlement pattern, and associated infrastructure requirements for the Halifax Water Infrastructure Master Plan.

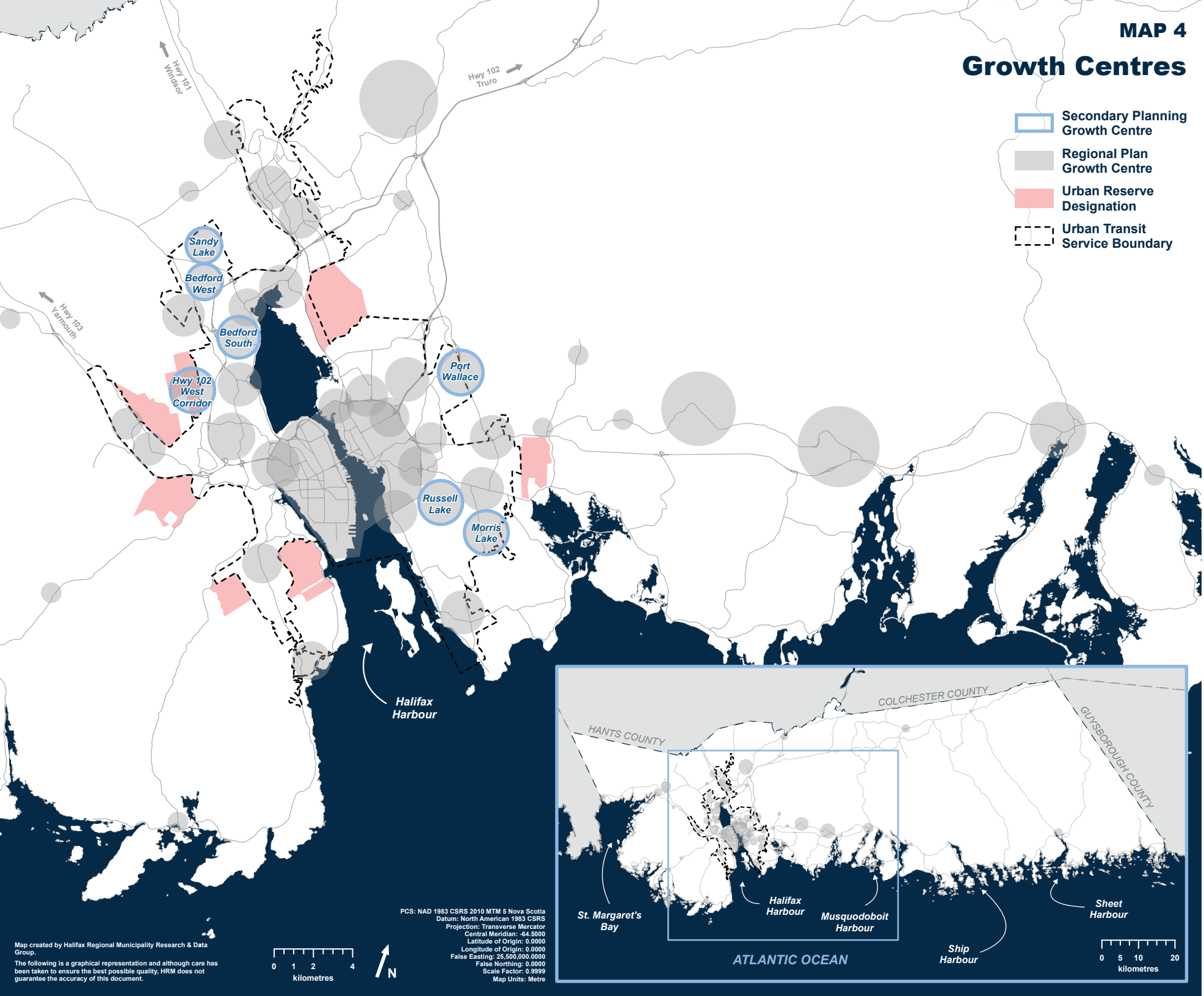
1.4 Use the concepts of the Halifax Green Network Plan to assess and consider ecological connectivity and value when identifying lands for future serviced development.

1.5 Review and clarify the process for expanding the Urban Service Area boundary to address minor issues or unique circumstances between Regional Plan review periods.

1.6 Identify any developer requests for expansions to the Urban Service Area boundary and assess whether the request should be considered, based on existing policy and the proposed future policy framework.

MAP 4

Growth Centres



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FUTURE SERVICED COMMUNITIES

Within the Urban Settlement designation, the Regional Plan identified six areas to be considered as potential future serviced communities within the 25-year horizon of the Plan. Before any development can take place, the Regional Plan calls for the Municipality to undertake a comprehensive neighbourhood planning process, often referred to as "secondary planning" or "master planning". This process identifies the appropriate land uses, street layout, density, open space and other community amenities needed for a new neighbourhood and is supported by a series of background studies. Community engagement and participation is a critically important part of the process. Secondary planning processes can take several years to complete before construction of a new community can begin.

As we enter the final 10 years of the Regional Plan, there are three remaining potential growth areas identified for serviced development that have not been initiated: Lands to the west of Sandy Lake; the Highway 102 West Corridor adjacent to Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Area; and lands southeast of Morris Lake. Each of the property owners of these lands have requested to begin the secondary planning process, so that serviced development can be achieved within the life of the Regional Plan as envisioned. The Regional Plan Review has identifed there is a need for additional serviced lands to provide housing and services based on an initial analysis of the region's projected population growth and demand for housing. Additional information regarding this work is included in the issue paper titled "Preliminary Population & Housing Analysis".

The Regional Plan identifies several areas for future growth that are directly connected to important natural areas. In particular, since the Regional Plan Review began in 2020, a significant amount of public correspondence has been received regarding the ecological, cultural and recreational importance of the Sandy Lake Regional Park and Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness areas. When places are identified for potential new development, careful consideration must be given to designing these new neighbourhoods in a way that protects the health of the valuable natural features of these areas. The planning process can define the edge between development and the natural area and incorporate natural open spaces into the development itself. The relationship between these areas must be reviewed carefully to determine an appropriate approach and should align with the objectives and actions in the Halifax Green Network Plan related to preserving natural corridors and connections. For additional information see Theme 8: Enhancing Environmental Protection.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

1.7 Recommend a process for the development of the Sandy Lake, Highway 102 West Corridor Lands and Morris Lake future serviced communities by assessing the relationship to:

- **Achieving household growth targets, including population and housing forecasts and their implications in available supply of developable land, housing supply and demand, and the provision of affordable housing;**
- **Incorporating the policies and actions of HRM's priorities plans (including the Halifax Green Network Plan, Integrated Mobility Plan, HalifACT and Sharing Our Stories); and**
- **Planning for existing and future parkland and wilderness areas.**

FINANCING GROWTH

To help facilitate growth without imposing excessive financial burden on taxpayers, the Municipality is permitted by the HRM Charter to recover infrastructure-related costs associated with new growth using "Capital Cost Contributions" or "CCCs". CCCs allow HRM to pass the cost of new infrastructure to developers and subdividers whose lands receive the benefits of the new services. These charges fund the capital cost of providing infrastructure but do not fund operating or maintenance costs.

The Integrated Mobility Plan and the Halifax Green Network Plan recommend adopting regional CCCs to cover growth-related costs for transportation, parks and recreation facilities. The Municipality has hired a consultant to undertake a major study to determine the basis, methodology and implications of adopting regional infrastructure charges. The results of this study are expected to be brought forward to Council in 2021 and outline how the Infrastructure Charge Program should be structured, what the initial charges should be, how the charge program should be implemented, and how to administer it over time.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

1.8 Use the results of the Capital Cost Infrastructure Charges study to determine the basis, methodology and implications of adopting infrastructure charges.

RESERVING LANDS FOR LONG TERM GROWTH

The Regional Plan applied the Urban Reserve designation to lands that were identified as potentially suitable for serviced urban development beyond the 25-year horizon of the plan (after 2031). These lands must be studied to determine if they are required for development in the near future and if they are still appropriate places for serviced development. Some lands may no longer be considered appropriate places for serviced development, such as the Shaw Wilderness Park in the Purcell's Cove Backlands area. As part of the Regional Plan Review, we will review the lands currently within the Urban Reserve designation and consider making adjustments where circumstances may have changed. We will also include policy intent in the Regional Plan to study scenarios for future settlement. This will guide the next iteration of the Regional Plan, which we expect will be adopted by 2031.

One Urban Reserve area has been identified as a land holding that requires special consideration because of its relationship to other council priorities and the objectives of African Nova Scotian Communities. In September 2020, Regional Council endorsed The African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity Action Plan which is a collaborative plan developed and owned by the African Nova Scotian community to advance economic development and community priorities. Action 15 is for Regional Council to "Support the Akoma-led master plan for the restoration of the historic Nova Scotia Home for Coloured Children". On May 4, 2021, Regional Council approved changes to the Regional Plan, Regional Subdivision By-Law, Cole Harbour/Westphal Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-Law to allow for adaptive reuse of the former Home and a mix of uses adjacent to Highway 7 and Giberson Drive. Comprehensive, long-term planning for the entire site will be considered through the Regional Plan Review process. At the present time, it is recommended that study begin on the lands owned by Akoma, in recognition of Council's objective to support development on the site. Analysis should occur to determine the designation that would best support the site, and what overall density is appropriate for the site based on the relationship to services.

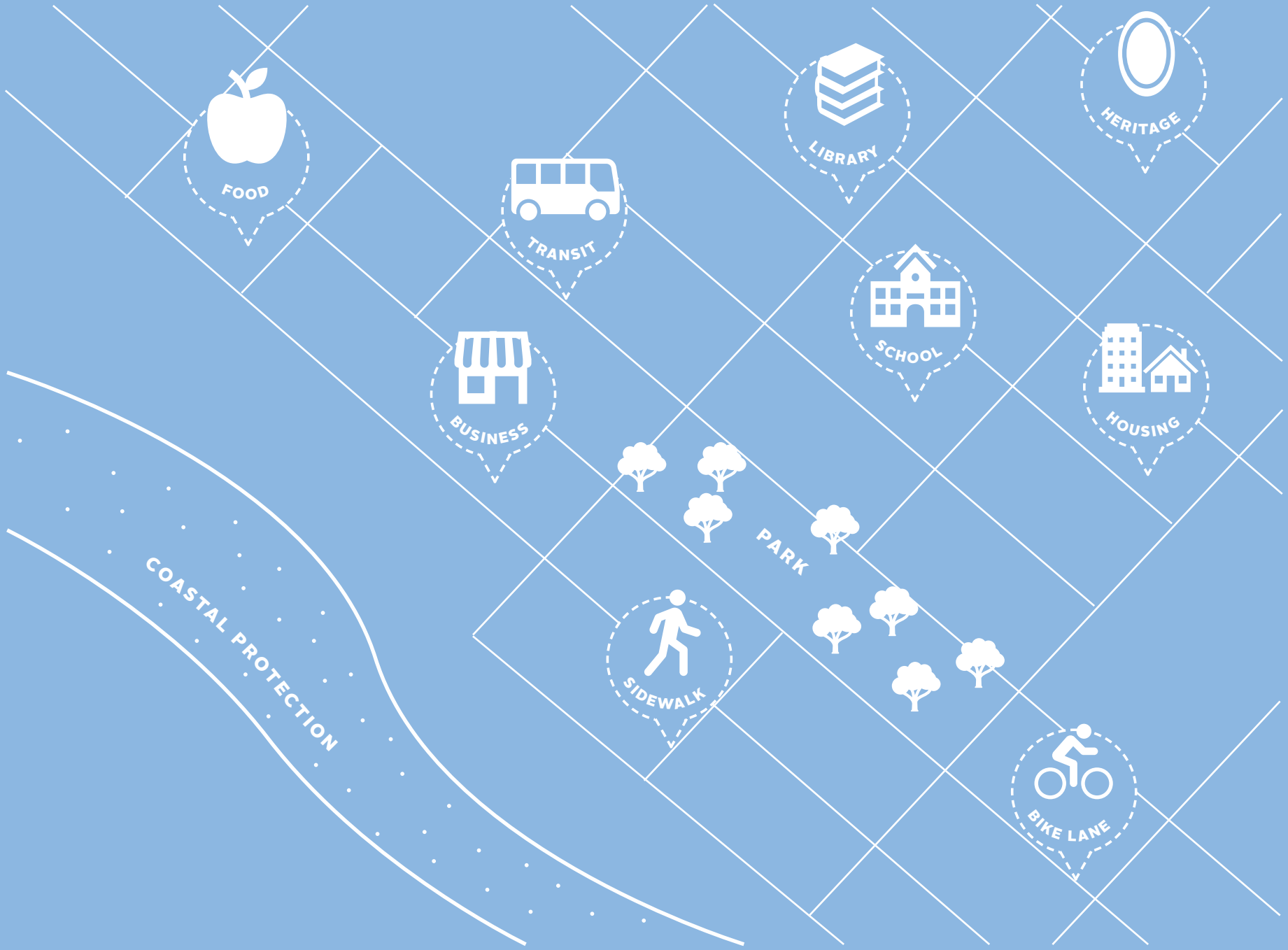
THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

1.9 Review the lands designated Urban Reserve where circumstances have changed and make appropriate amendments, such as the Purcell's Cove Backlands area.

1.10 Remove the Urban Reserve designation from the Akoma lands as directed in The Road to Economic Prosperity Action Plan and assess the future development of the entire Urban Reserve in relation to:

- **Achieving household growth targets, including population and housing forecasts and their implications in available supply of developable land, housing supply and demand, and the provision of affordable housing; and**
- **Incorporating the policies and actions of HRM's priorities plans (including the Halifax Green Network Plan, Integrated Mobility Plan, HalifACT and Sharing Our Stories).**

1.11 Adopt a policy to require future study of population growth and settlement patterns, including an assessment of Urban Reserve lands (other than the Akoma lands) and the need for new serviced development beyond 2031.


FOOD
TRANSIT
LIBRARY
HERITAGE
BUSINESS
SCHOOL
HOUSING
PARK
SIDEWALK
BIKE LANE
COASTAL PROTECTION

THEME 2

BUILDING HEALTHIER AND MORE COMPLETE COMMUNITIES

The Regional Plan provides guidance for the development of communities across the municipality. It sets policy direction at a regional scale by showing where and how to build communities in a way that makes the best use of municipal services and amenities, and strengthens our citizens' quality of life. It also guides community-level planning through documents called secondary plans, which outline in more detail how communities should be organized and developed. The Municipality is currently undertaking the Secondary Plan & By-law Simplification Program, which will reorganize secondary planning documents into three major geographies (Regional Centre, Suburban Communities and Rural Communities) and update their policies to reflect the direction of the Regional Plan.



WHAT IS A COMPLETE COMMUNITY?

HRM's priority plans have highlighted the importance of building healthy and "complete communities". Complete communities are where people of all ages, abilities, incomes and backgrounds can live, work, learn, shop and play near one another, with access to transportation, food and a variety of housing options. Complete communities provide residents with the services and resources they need, foster strong social connections and support community mental health. Healthy community design has a positive impact on residents' health and overall well-being.

The "building blocks" of a complete, healthy community include:

- Places to live, in a range of housing types for all ages, incomes and abilities, including shared housing options;
- Places to learn, work and shop, including schools and institutions, business districts and industrial areas;
- Places to play and access nature, including parks, community centres, recreation facilities and libraries;
- Places to celebrate culture and heritage, including gathering spaces, cultural landscapes, museums and heritage buildings;
- Protection of important environmental areas, including wilderness areas, coastal areas, wetlands, flood plains and wildlife habitats;
- Access to healthy, affordable food, including space for food production, and support for local food systems;
- Well connected places, with affordable and accessible transportation, including transit, active transportation routes and trails, and roads; and
- Basic services and infrastructure that create safe and healthy places, including emergency services, waste collection, and water and wastewater infrastructure.

The Municipality can be strategic by directing new development to areas that already have services and amenities that reflect the idea of a complete community and have the greatest potential to accommodate new growth. To build upon those community assets, the Regional Plan Review will study existing and planned transit, parks, facilities and other public amenities, and their relationship to potential locations for growth. This will identify the areas that can best support growth as well as any gaps that should be addressed to better support communities. Following this, the Secondary Plan and By-law Simplification Program will use this strategic direction to prepare more detailed and area-specific policies and built form regulations.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

2.1 Review and revise the Regional Plan's Settlement policies to better support the Municipality's goal of building complete communities and implementing the direction of the Priorities Plans.

2.2 Review and revise the Regional Plan's growth centre policies using a 'complete communities' analysis by:

- Defining different types of centres and adopting land use policies reflecting appropriate levels of growth for each;
- Refining the expected population growth projections based on recent observed trends;
- Identifying environmental and other physical constraints;
- In Suburban communities, targeting new development around frequent transit networks; and,
- In Rural communities, maintaining the Regional Plan's overall approach to limit sprawl and cluster development that encourages strong rural centres.



WHAT IS THE SECONDARY PLAN & BY-LAW SIMPLIFICATION PROGRAM?

To implement the planning and land use direction contained in the Regional Plan, Regional Council relies on a group of documents called Secondary Municipal Planning Strategies. Each of these are subordinate to the Regional Plan, apply to a specific community area (sub-geography) within the municipality and contain locally-oriented policies that govern land use on each individual property within that sub-geography.

The Municipality is currently undergoing a major project to simplify this secondary planning framework and bring these documents fully in line with the strategic vision set out in the Regional Plan. This is called the Secondary Plan and By-law Simplification Program. This will reorganize the Secondary Municipal Planning Strategies around three major geographies – the Regional Centre, Suburban Communities (everything outside of the Regional Centre, but inside the transit service boundary), and Rural Communities (all lands outside the transit service boundary).

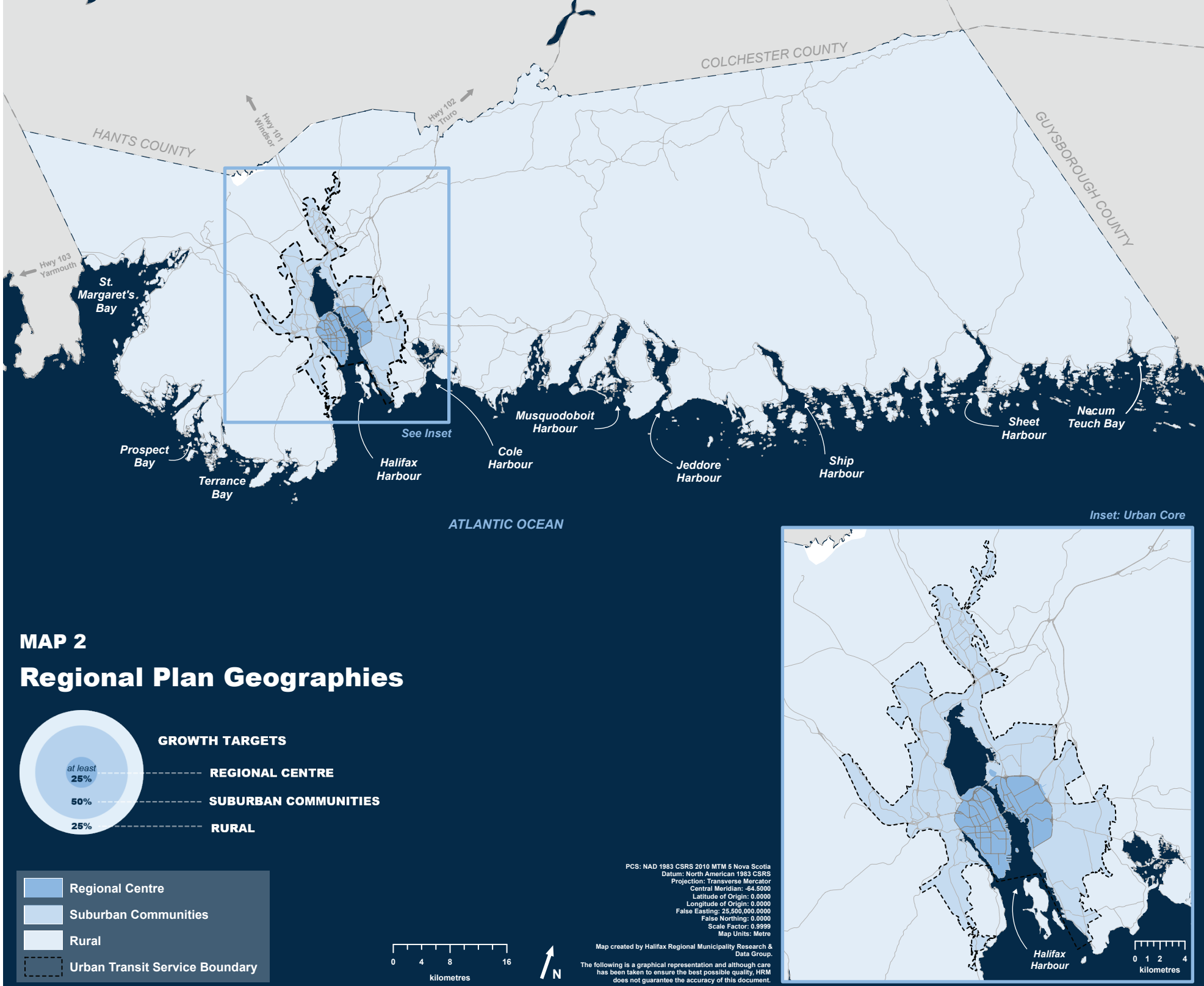
Many of HRM's 22 Secondary Municipal Planning Strategies were developed before amalgamation in 1996. Each is accompanied by a Land Use By-law, which is the regulatory implementation tool. The plans are in a variety of formats, and use different definitions, policies, and processes to regulate land use and development. In addition to implementing the Regional Plan, the Secondary Plan & By-law Simplification Program is expected to modernize planning policy and improve administration.

The creation of the Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy ("Centre Plan") is the first phase of this work. When fully adopted, the Centre Plan will turn the four original plans and by-laws into one simplified plan and by-law. The 2014 version of the Regional Plan established vision and objectives for the Regional Centre Plan, and similarly, this Regional Plan Review will guide the development of the suburban and rural plans. The work will draw on the overall objectives of the Regional Plan and priority plans, together with best practice research, information regarding demographic and economic trends, and community engagement.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

2.3 Establish the Secondary Plan and By-law Simplification Program in policy with the following broad objectives:

- **Implement the Regional Plan and priorities plans through land use and community design policies and regulations;**
- **Organize the planning framework around Regional Centre, Suburban and Rural geographic areas;**
- **Direct intensification to areas that support the building of healthier and more complete communities;**
- **Affirm that each new plan and land use by-law will respond to local conditions and needs of our diverse communities. Community input and participation in this process will be critical, providing a primary source of guiding knowledge for the plans.**



MAP 2

Regional Plan Geographies

GROWTH TARGETS

- at least 25% — **REGIONAL CENTRE**
- 50% — **SUBURBAN COMMUNITIES**
- 25% — **RURAL**

- Regional Centre
- Suburban Communities
- Rural
- Urban Transit Service Boundary

0 4 8 16
kilometres

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REGIONAL CENTRE PLAN

The Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy (SMPS) and Land Use By-law (LUB) are detailed planning documents that replace the various outdated SMPSs and LUBs covering the urban core (Halifax Peninsula and Dartmouth within the Circumferential Highway). It is expected that 40% new housing growth will occur in this area by 2031. In creating the Centre Plan and its underlying LUB, the Municipality conducted a planning process that included extensive analysis of the Regional Centre's physical, social and economic structure, public engagement, and alignment with the Regional Plan and various priority plans.

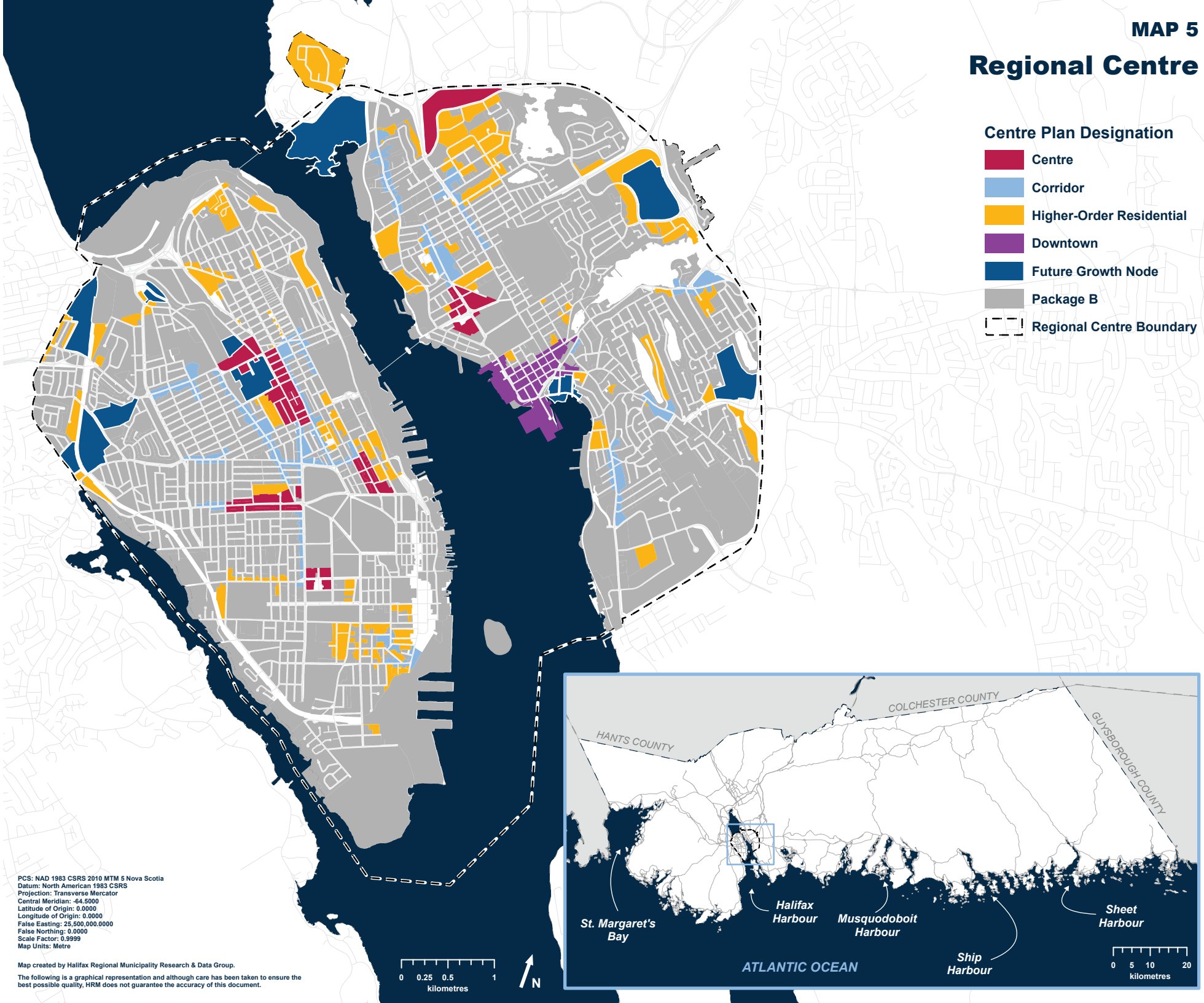
On June 13, 2017, Regional Council authorized the Centre Plan's draft direction and approved a two-phased adoption path for the Regional Centre SMPS and LUB. The first phase, known as "Package A", was adopted by Council in 2019. "Package A" included areas where most new growth will be directed, including Downtown Dartmouth, Centres, Corridors, Higher Order Residential, and Future Growth Nodes. The second phase, "Package B", will include Downtown Halifax, Established Residential areas, Institutional and Industrial lands, and Parks and Community Facilities lands. Although the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has delayed public engagement activities, "Package B" is expected to be brought forward before the Regional Plan Review is complete.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

2.4 Update Chapter 6A of the Regional Plan, "The Regional Centre" upon approval of the Regional Secondary Centre Plan to reflect the current status of this document.



MAP 5
Regional Centre



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SUBURBAN PLAN

The Suburban Planning area includes the urban area outside of the Regional Centre that is serviced with municipal water, wastewater and transit. It is expected that up to half of the Municipality's new housing will be built in this area by 2031. The Regional Plan Review will establish a vision and objectives for the Suburban Planning framework, which will help direct housing intensification in this area.

To identify locations for intensification, the Regional Plan will study the location of infrastructure, transit, facilities, and other public amenities. In suburban communities, most growth should occur where it's easier to take transit, walk, wheel, or cycle from home to work, school, shopping and community facilities. The Integrated Mobility Plan calls for directing high-density residential and employment density only where there is an existing or proposed high level of transit service. The Rapid Transit Strategy, approved by Council in May 2020, proposed a high-frequency Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Network extending into suburban communities, and a new ferry service connecting to Downtown Halifax. The Halifax Green Network Plan highlights that new development can be shaped so that important natural areas are protected. Redeveloping existing built-up areas also provides an opportunity to enhance open space connections if Green Network values are incorporated into the community design. These concepts will be built into the vision and objectives guiding the Suburban Plan review.

Once appropriate areas for intensification are identified, the Suburban Plan will create policies and regulations to achieve the desired form and scale of development (create the rules at the property level). As it is likely to take several years to bring forward the Suburban Plan, Council may continue to be asked to consider proposals not currently envisioned by the policy within the existing SMPSs and LUBs. The Regional Plan Review will set out policy to guide decision-making for these applications while the Suburban Plan is being completed. This will allow proposals that meet identified community needs and objectives to be prioritized over proposals that are inconsistent. Additional information on this topic is available in the issue paper titled "Suburban Community Design".

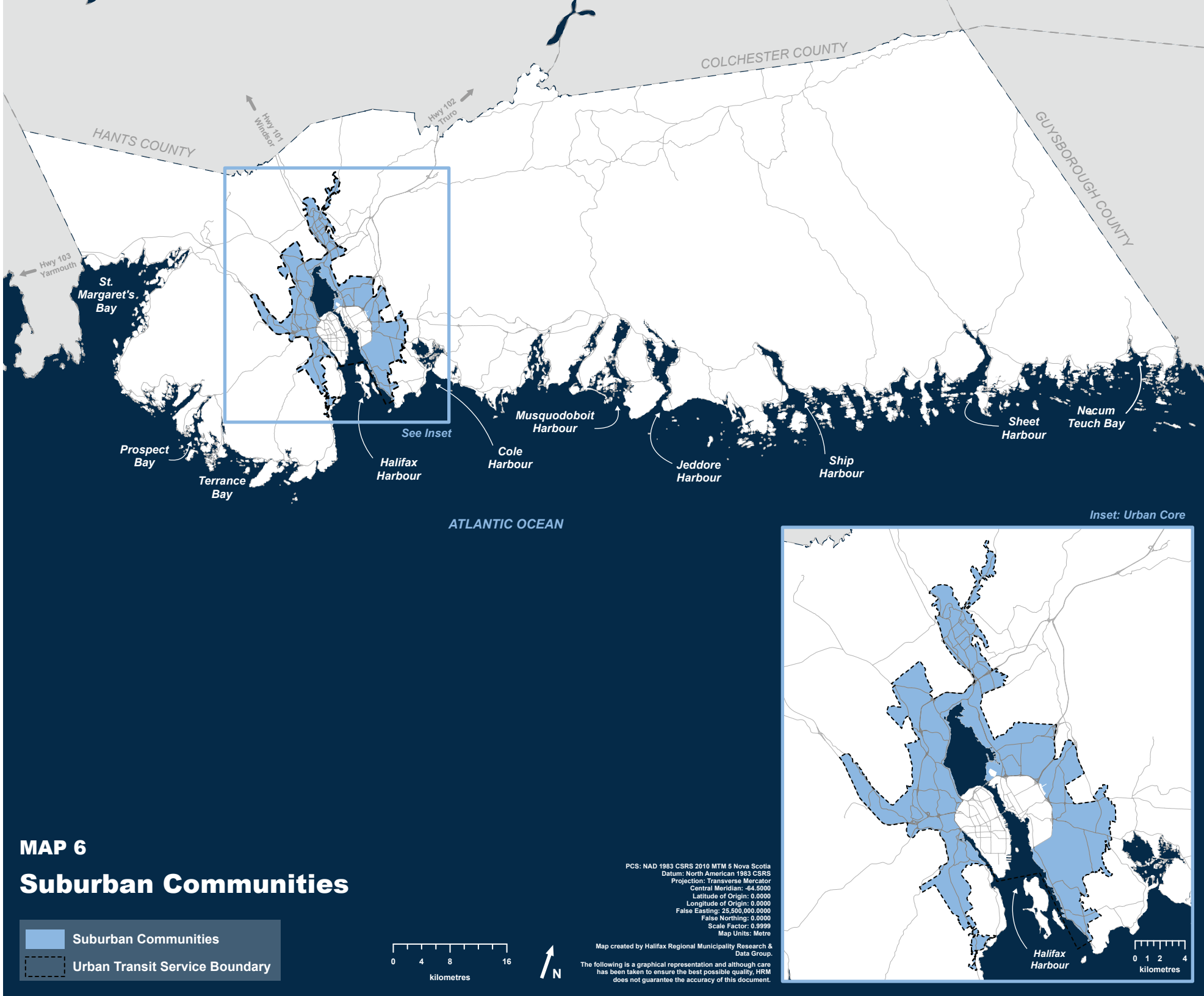
THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

2.5 Establish a vision, objectives and key principles to guide the Suburban Plan, which include:

- **Directing most growth to mixed-use, transit-oriented communities that can be served by transit, walking, wheeling and cycling;**
- **Directing growth in a way that protects and preserves valuable wilderness areas and open spaces;**
- **Ensuring planning regulations focus on affordability and accessibility, and support people-oriented urban design; and**
- **Protecting and prioritizing industrial lands and harbour access for marine-dependent uses, with other employment directed to mixed-use centres.**

2.6 Adopt interim policy guidance for applications for secondary municipal planning strategy amendments to guide site planning and built form characteristics.

2.7 Consider if the interim policy guidance may also be used to improve the processing of discretionary applications such as development agreements to further the goals and objectives of the Regional Plan.



MAP 6

Suburban Communities

Suburban Communities

Urban Transit Service Boundary

0 4 8 16
kilometres

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For more information on this topic, please read the issue paper titled Rural Community Planning

RURAL PLAN

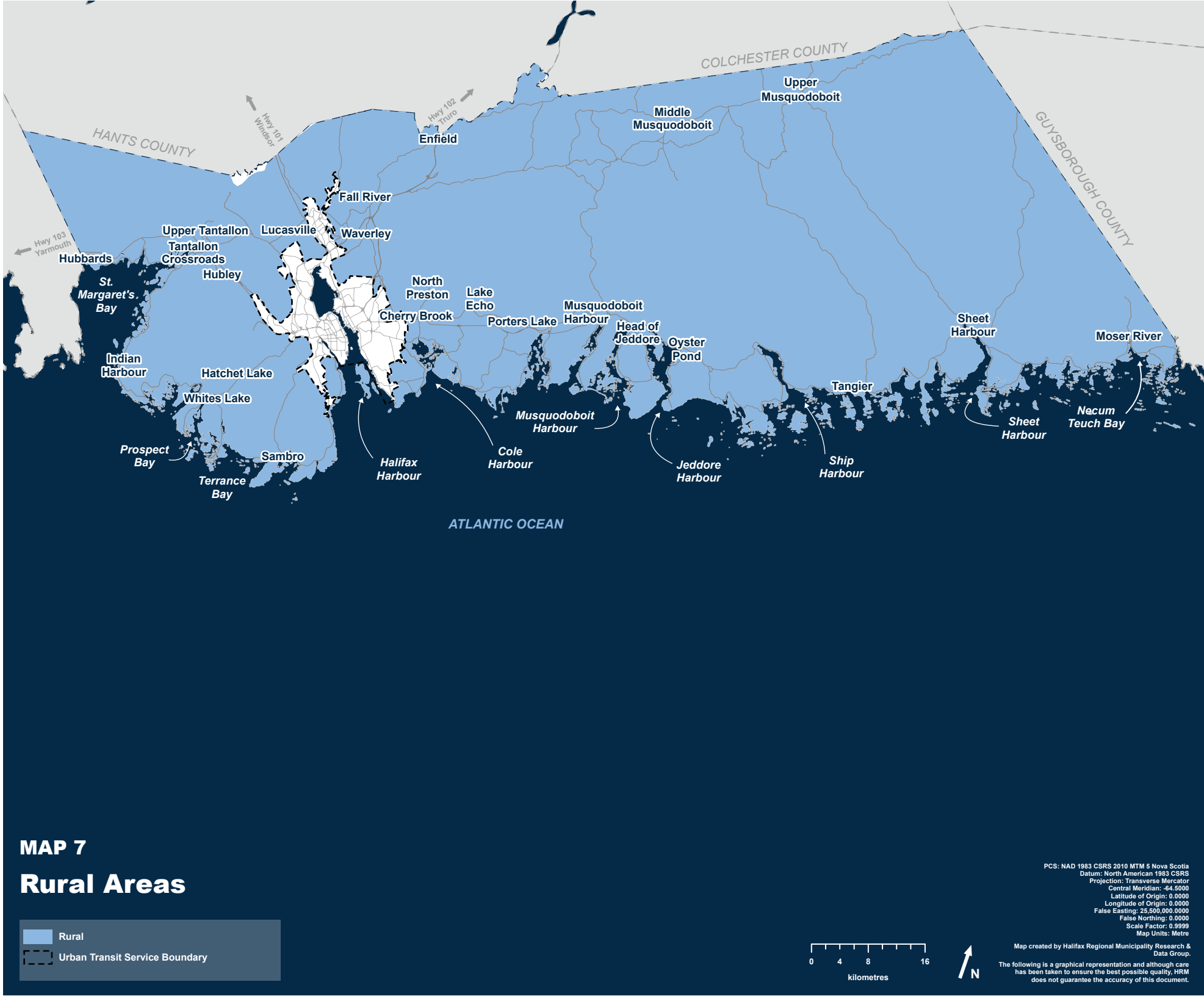
The Rural Planning area includes areas outside of the Transit Service Boundary, where most development is serviced with on-site septic systems and wells. The Regional Plan Review will establish a vision and objectives for the Rural Planning framework, which will help direct the location of future development in this area to 2031 and beyond.

Maintaining the integrity of rural land and communities is important to rural residents and a fundamental aspect of the Regional Plan. HRM's rural communities are diverse in terms of their geography, population density, and proximity to the urban core of the Municipality, and have significant ecological, economic, social and cultural value. As HRM grows, pressures on rural communities at the edge of the urban area threaten to change the traditional rural character of these areas. Residents in the rural commutershed close to the urban core experience very different lifestyles and economic opportunities and may require different services than those more distant from urban HRM, where natural resources are critically important to the economy. The Regional Plan Review provides an opportunity to think about how our urban and rural areas interact, how rural areas are supported to grow and change, and how rural residents' visions for the future of their communities can be realized.

An important part of rural planning is to recognize and support community character and rural lifestyles. Each rural community has distinctive architectural styles, building forms, natural and cultural assets, and development patterns which give the area a sense of place, identity and character. The Regional Plan can direct supportive land use regulations to help communities to maintain these special qualities, while allowing for new development in key locations. Adaptive reuse of existing buildings can provide economic options within rural communities as well as help ensure a range of affordable and accessible housing types, which are needed to allow residents to stay in their communities.

In addition to protecting community character, growth and intensification will continue to be focused in strategic locations to foster strong rural hubs. These can serve as vital service centres for larger parts of the region. Clustering intensification also helps direct development away from important cultural landscapes, significant open spaces and resource lands, such as forestry or agricultural lands.

The Regional Plan permits new large-scale rural housing developments only through the Conservation Design Development process. While the existing policies can effectively conserve open space within proposed developments, there is little policy direction to



MAP 7

Rural Areas

Rural

Urban Transit Service Boundary

0 4 8 16

kilometres

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consider broader regional landscape patterns and connectivity and, because there have been very few applications for these developments in rural growth centres, growth in this form has been limited. The Regional Plan Review will consider opportunities to revise the existing policies to better achieve their intent and to support growth in rural centres.

The Municipality can encourage healthy and sustainable rural development by establishing a clear policy for infrastructure in rural service centres. With lower population densities, providing central water, wastewater and frequent transit services would be expensive and challenging. The existing Regional Plan outlines some alternatives to traditional central wastewater and water services, such as Wastewater Management Districts and private wastewater utilities for conservation design developments. To date, these systems have not been widely adopted in the Municipality. These and other innovative solutions should be explored to understand how they might be used to encourage healthy, affordable rural community intensification and development.

Connecting rural communities is important for supporting rural economic viability and social equity. Rural mobility can be improved by clustering rural development in established centres, investing in strategic active transportation infrastructure, and expanding the Rural Transit Funding Program to improve rural mobility options. A range of rural mobility options are needed to serve the different types of rural communities. Consistent with the Integrated Mobility Plan, the Regional Plan Review will begin to study opportunities to improve rural mobility through alternatives to conventional transit, as called for in the Integrated Mobility Plan.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

2.8 Establish a vision, objectives and key principles to guide the Rural Plan which include:

- **Directing intensification to existing rural communities that act as important service centres and have the potential to be complete communities;**
- **Protecting rural landscapes as critical to the region's natural and open space network;**
- **Supportive adaptive reuse of existing buildings and land uses;**
- **Supporting working landscapes for resource industries, agriculture and food security, and tourism opportunities;**
- **Ensuring planning regulations focus on affordability and accessibility, and support building communities that reflect local character and history; and**
- **Support a range of housing forms within each rural service centre.**

2.9 Review past studies and initiate further analysis to understand the barriers and opportunities for developing innovative services in rural areas, with a focus on water, wastewater and rural public mobility.

2.10 Revise conservation design development policies to streamline the development process within rural service centres.

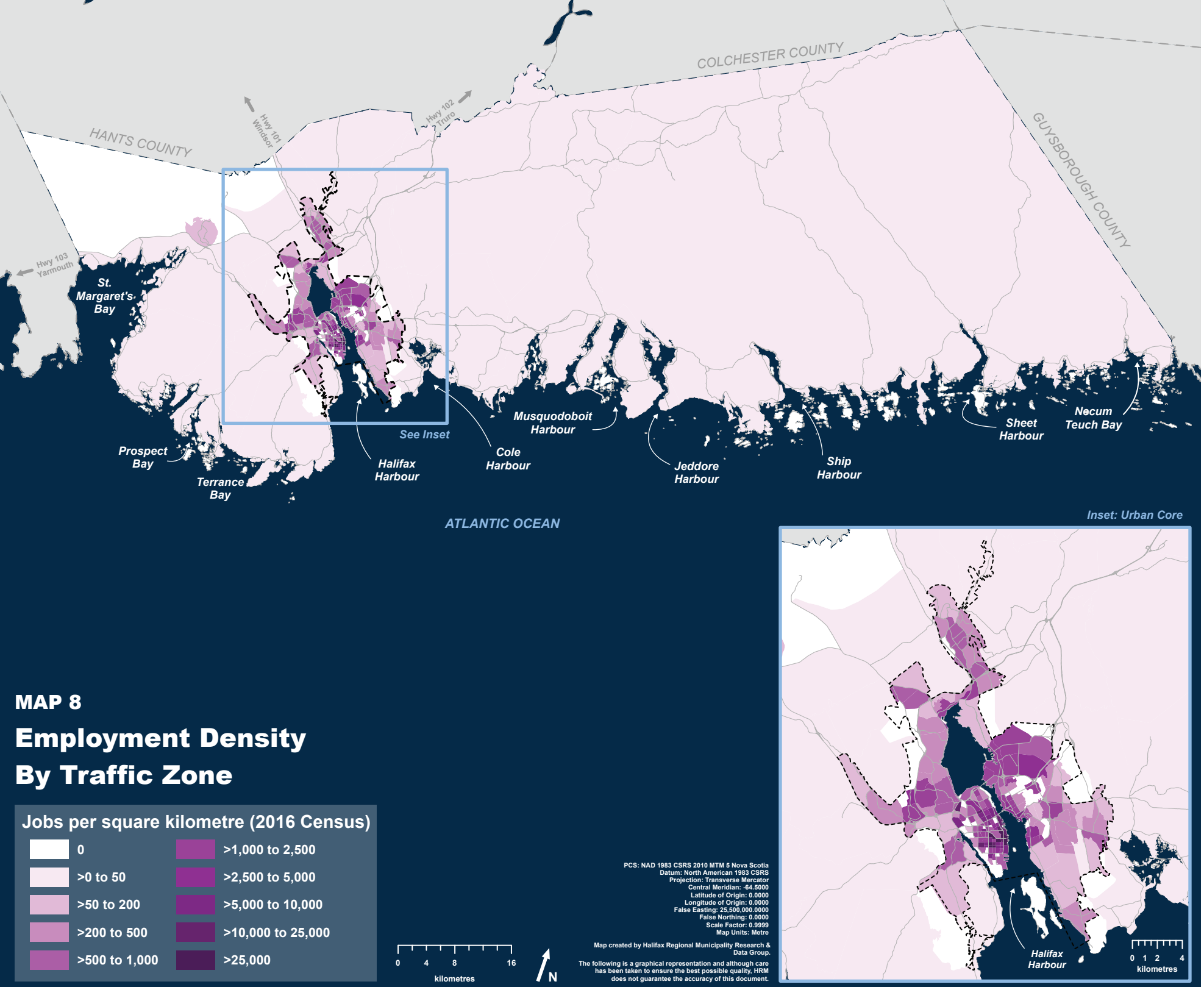



Bell Aliant
Pizza Delight
Pizza Deligh
Rooftop
Patio
Scotiabank
TURKISH
DELIGHT
petvalu

THEME 3

RECONSIDERING EMPLOYMENT AND INDUSTRIAL LANDS

The Halifax Regional Municipality is the economic hub of Atlantic Canada. The Regional Plan highlights important components of regional economic development, including protection for industrial lands, business parks, the Halifax Harbour and other coastal areas, as well as support for the rural economy.



MAP 8

Employment Density By Traffic Zone

Jobs per square kilometre (2016 Census)

- 0
- >0 to 50
- >50 to 200
- >200 to 500
- >500 to 1,000
- >1,000 to 2,500
- >2,500 to 5,000
- >5,000 to 10,000
- >10,000 to 25,000
- >25,000

0 4 8 16
kilometres

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HRM ECONOMIC STRATEGY

The Regional Plan supports Halifax's Economic Growth Plan 2016-2021, the economic strategy led by the Halifax Partnership. The Economic Growth Plan guides the activities of the Municipality and the Halifax Partnership to support Halifax's economic growth. The goals and actions of the Economic Growth Plan and the Regional Plan's objectives reinforce each other, particularly with the Economic Growth Plan's goal to "Make Halifax a better place to live and work."

The five-year review and update to the Economic Growth Plan was planned to begin in 2020. Instead, HRM and the Halifax Partnership developed the Halifax COVID-19 Economic Response and Recovery Plan that was approved by Regional Council in July 2020. It outlines how HRM and the Partnership are addressing the urgent health crisis, preparing to restart and rebuild the economy when conditions allow, and return Halifax to its long-term growth trend.

HRM and the Halifax Partnership is in the process of developing a new five-year economic strategy for 2022-27.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

3.1 Work with the Halifax Partnership to ensure that the Regional Plan is aligned with Halifax's 2022-2027 economic strategy.

HALIFAX PARTNERSHIP

The Halifax Partnership is public-private economic development organization that collaborates with Halifax Regional Municipality and other partners to lead Halifax's Economic Growth Plan.

MIXED EMPLOYMENT AREAS

Historically, most of the region's jobs have been focused in large employment nodes close to the urban core. The Burnside Industrial Park now hosts a comparable number of jobs to the downtown core, with much lower employment density. Many retail and office jobs have also left downtowns for suburban malls and large-format business parks like Dartmouth Crossing, Bayers Lake and Bedford Common. The Halifax Peninsula remains a prime employment location for professional and financial services, hosting six universities and colleges and three hospital complexes. CFB Stadacona, the Irving Shipyard and the Halifax Port Authority support harbour industrial uses.

Traditional land use planning has separated residential neighbourhoods from places of employment. As a result, residents need to travel, sometimes long distances, to get from home to work, shopping, school, and activities. This places a burden on the Municipality to provide significant transportation infrastructure and can take a toll on residents who spend many hours commuting. To better support residents to work, shop, and play close to where they live, and support the viability of rural and urban communities across the region, land use planning policy needs to provide opportunities for jobs in mixed-use centres and enable more homebased businesses. The use of Municipal properties, such as vacant lands, and community facilities, for pop-up or trial not-for-profit social enterprises, should also be explored to provide opportunities for and serve underserved communities.

For urban and suburban areas, the Integrated Mobility Plan calls for most employment growth to be directed to existing and proposed mixed-use, transit-oriented communities. Making sure that jobs are located along transit corridors and near transit hubs helps to encourage more people to walk, wheel, cycle, and take transit to work, rather than drive private vehicles. Although much of rural employment is resource-based, such as farming, fishing, mining and forestry, planning policy should support the viability of small shops and services located close to where people live.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

3.2 Adopt Regional Plan policy to direct ongoing study of employment trends and commercial space demand to inform planning for mixed use, transit-oriented communities and rural service centres.



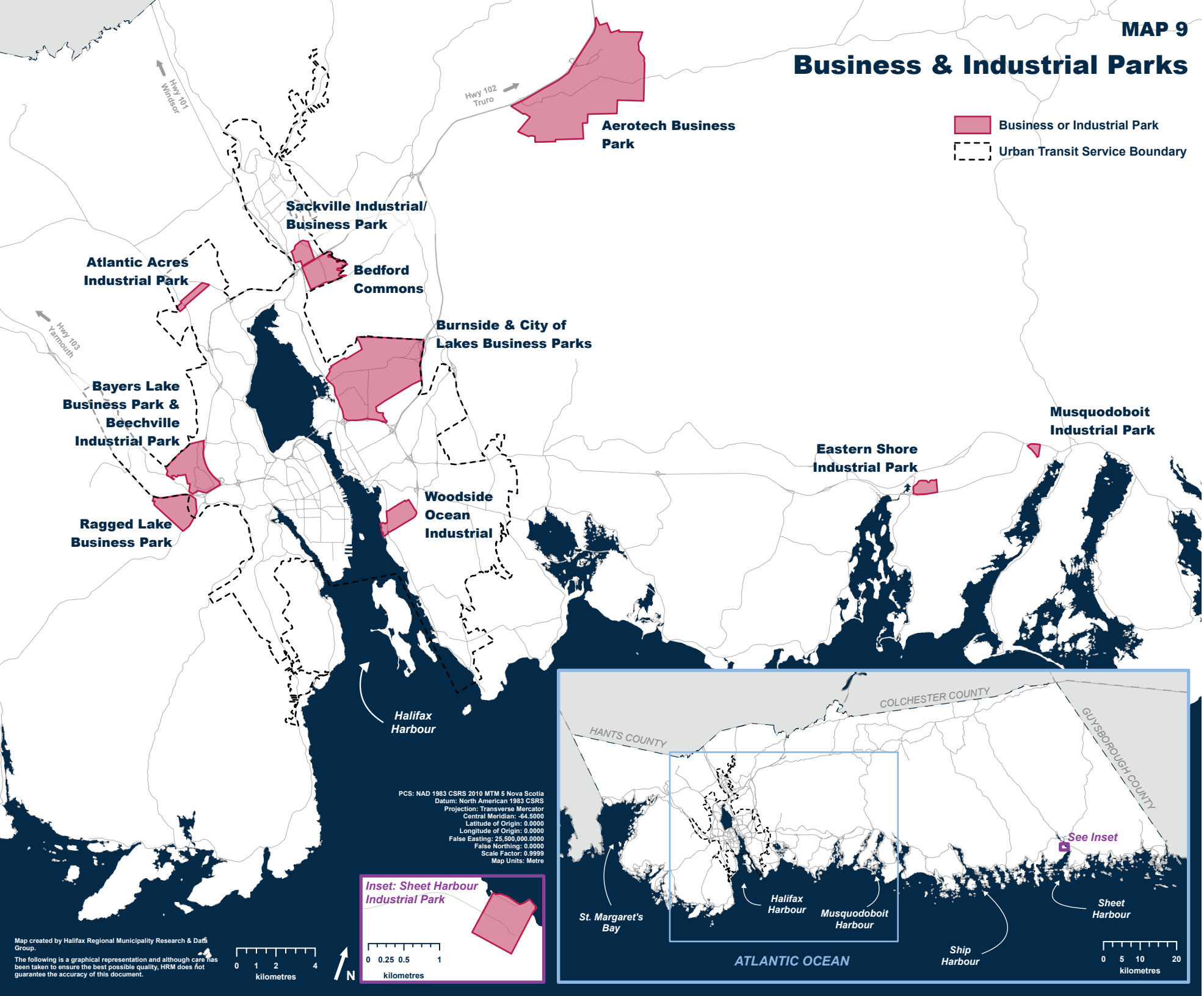
SMALL-SCALE COMMERCIAL

Traditional zoning has often separated commercial uses from residential uses which means residents must leave their neighbourhood, often for big box shopping centres or strip malls to obtain their goods. Allowing for smaller scale commercial uses to be permitted within residential neighbourhoods not only has environmental and economic benefits it also has several social benefits. Local shops help bring community together and can often tailor its services to meet the specific needs of the community. The Regional Plan review will further encourage entrepreneurial endeavours by reviewing home-based business policy and neighbourhood commercial policies.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

3.3 Establish policy to remove barriers to establishing small scale commercial uses in residential areas, including home-based business policies and regulations.

MAP 9
Business & Industrial Parks



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INDUSTRIAL LANDS

Industrial lands are a critical part of the Municipality's economy. The Regional Plan and the Economic Growth Plan both call for the Municipality to ensure there is a sufficient supply of industrial lands to provide economic development opportunities. The Industrial Employment Lands Strategy (IELS) has been completed as part of the Regional Plan Review. The IELS provides a comprehensive long-term review of Halifax's industrial employment land needs.

The IELS identified that while HRM is expected to have vacant industrial land to meet some of the industrial market demand through 2024, additional lands will be required over the short, medium and longer term to meet the need for a wider range of market demand and capture economic development opportunities. In a quickly changing global market that is seeing increased demand for industrial land, the Municipality will need to ensure that land use policy protects and proactively plans for sufficient new industrial lands, while also enabling opportunities to intensify development on existing industrial lands.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

3.4 Revise Regional Plan policy to better protect and plan for long-term industrial land needs using the recommendations of the Industrial Employment Lands Strategy. This work will:

- **Identify and designate industrial employment areas based on industry type (for example light industry, general/heavy industry, marine industry);**
- **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.**

RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Regional Plan recognizes the importance of a vibrant rural economy. In many rural communities, the resource sector - farming, fishing, mining and forestry - and supporting services, are the main economic activities and sources of employment. Together with tourism, these activities support the viability of rural communities and are key to the Municipality's economic growth.

Working landscapes are generally open spaces that provide local resources for the region's food, construction and manufacturing sectors. They also contribute to the connectivity of the natural landscape. Clustering development in rural growth centres both generates economic activity in those centres and protects working landscapes outside of those centres. Planning policy can support the rural economy by ensuring that development is permitted in the right places, and zoning regulations allow for diverse rural businesses that are flexible enough to enable the adaptive reuse of existing buildings that maintain the character of the community.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

3.5 Establish policy direction for the Rural Plan to:

- **Mitigate potential conflicts between residential uses and rural industrial, resource extraction and forestry uses;**
- **Establish land use regulations to support primary resource industries and agricultural uses within high value working landscapes, as identified by the Halifax Green Network Plan;**
- **Support large and small-scale tourist operations, including home-based businesses and eco-tourism opportunities; and**
- **Allow for adaptive reuse in rural areas.**





THEME 4

TRANSFORMING HOW WE MOVE IN OUR REGION

The Regional Plan supports safe, sustainable and accessible travel options to move conveniently throughout the region. A regional transportation system links people and communities with each other and with goods, services and opportunities in an environmentally and fiscally sustainable way. The Municipality recognizes that transportation and land use planning are inseparable and the decision-making process for both must be integrated.

COMPLETE STREETS

A holistic, flexible, context sensitive approach to the planning, design, operations and maintenance of streets that enables safe, convenient and comfortable travel and access for users of all ages and abilities regardless of transportation mode (e.g. on foot, rolling, on a bicycle, using transit, in a private vehicle). It recognizes that public streets are also places that can serve a social, economic and ecological function. A Complete Streets approach can apply to a wide variety of streets and is adaptable to the urban, suburban and rural contexts.

TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT (TDM)

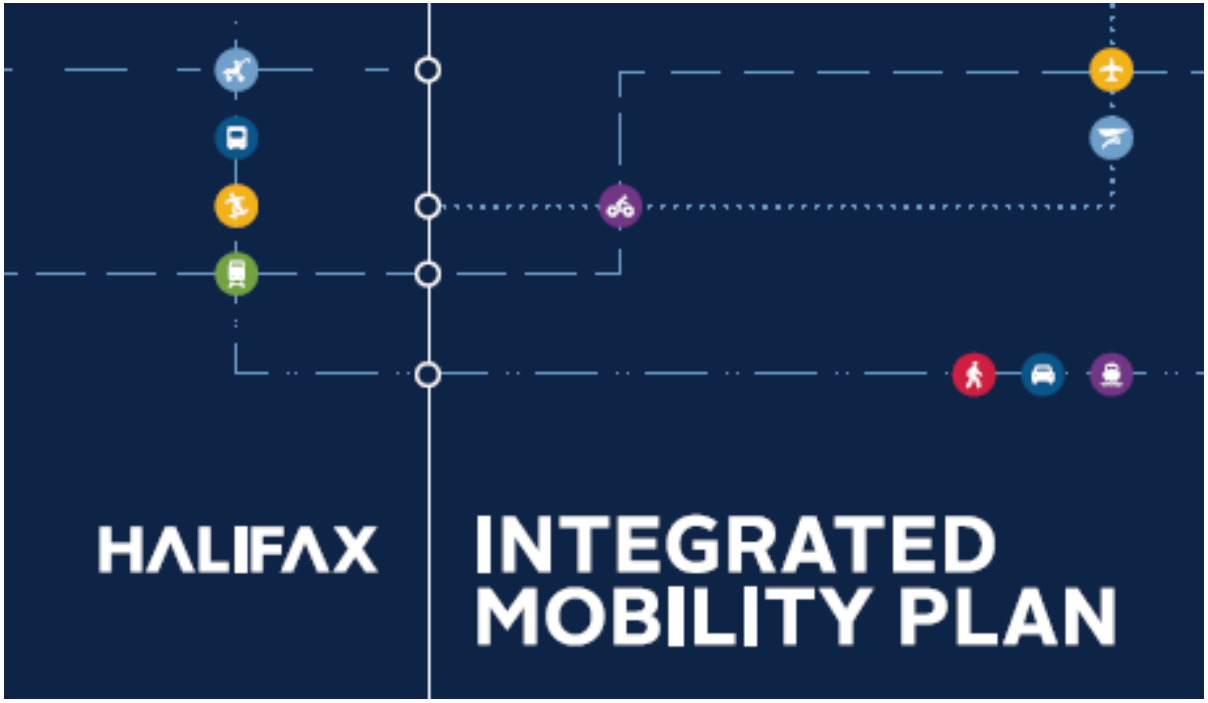
TDM aims to reduce peak-hour congestion by providing people with choice in how and when they travel. TDM initiatives aim to improve the efficiency of the transportation network by encouraging alternatives to the single occupant vehicle trip and changing travel behaviour. Mobility pricing (such as road and bridge tolls, fuel taxes, parking fees and transit fares) is a TDM measure that could help achieve the Municipality's mode share targets.

THE INTEGRATED MOBILITY PLAN

The Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP), adopted by Council in December 2017, represents a region-wide vision for mobility and directs future investment in transportation demand management (TDM), transit, active transportation (AT), and the roadway network. The IMP strives to reflect the two-way relationship between land development patterns and mobility, with the goal of better linking people and their communities.

The IMP is a meaningful shift in the Municipality's approach to transportation. It aims to provide cost-effective mobility options to meet the needs of residents across the region and encourage a shift toward non-single passenger modes of transportation. The policies and actions of the IMP are intended to move the region along a more sustainable path and improve quality of life for people of all ages, abilities and incomes.

The Regional Plan will be updated to reflect the IMP's approach and will set policy intent for future integrated mobility planning.



THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

4.1 Update the Transportation and Mobility chapter of the Regional Plan to reflect the policies and actions of the Integrated Mobility Plan and its regional approach to transportation planning by:

- Adopting policy to support the use of the Complete Streets approach to prioritize the movement of people using sustainable modes of transportation over vehicles;
- Revising the region-wide and sub-regional mode share targets;
- Removing the list of road network projects and adopting alternative policy to direct evaluation of all existing and future mobility projects through the IMP's Evaluation Scorecard;
- Adopting new guidelines for the preparation of Transportation Impact Assessments, which includes Multi-Modal Level of Service guidelines to evaluate road network performance for all mobility modes (walking, cycling, transit and vehicles);
- Continuing to implement the Active Transportation Priorities Plan and adopting policy to support its review;
- Revising policy to support the Transportation Demand Management program, which will include policies and programs that encourage behaviour change to complement investments in infrastructure aligned with mode share targets;
- Directing future study of mobility pricing mechanisms and other tools that could help the Municipality achieve its mode share targets;
- Considering a curbside management policy;
- Identifying areas requiring partnership with other levels of government and agencies to collaborate on major transportation infrastructure projects;
- Reviewing the Urban Transit Service Boundary and assessing its alignment with existing and potential housing and population growth.



FUNCTIONAL PLANS FOR MULTI-MODAL CORRIDORS

Some roads across the region have been identified as "strategic multi-modal corridors" - these are important transportation connections for moving people and goods, be it by vehicle, transit or active transportation (walking, rolling, and cycling). These corridors have been identified in the Active Transportation Priorities Plan and the IMP and further refined in the Rapid Transit Strategy. The long-term visions for maintaining and improving these corridors for all users is established through a functional planning and design process.

The functional planning and design process determines how a corridor can be reconfigured to better serve current and future mobility needs. It considers the surrounding communities, current and future transportation demand, and physical constraints such as topography and corridor width. Functional plans identify which modes should be prioritized on the corridor (like transit, or active transportation), and focus on moving more people sustainably, improving safety, and building complete streets that better connect communities. They consider how features such as transit priority corridors and improved walking, rolling and cycling infrastructure can be included within the street right of way to provide connections within communities and to other communities. Which elements are prioritized depends on the role the street plays in the community and broader mobility network.

The Municipality uses functional plans to guide the development of strategic corridors over time. Functional plans can be used for stand-alone projects, or incorporated into planning for roadway repair and reconstruction projects or projects undertaken on the street by utilities or other agencies. Functional plans can also identify private lands that the Municipality may need to acquire to accommodate future projects. One tool that can support these efforts is "Transportation Reserve Zones". These zones can be identified in Land Use By-laws to prevent development from taking place that would be in the way of future mobility projects. When they are applied to private property, the Municipality must acquire the lands within five years. However, this tool can be limiting, and further exploration of other tools should be pursued.

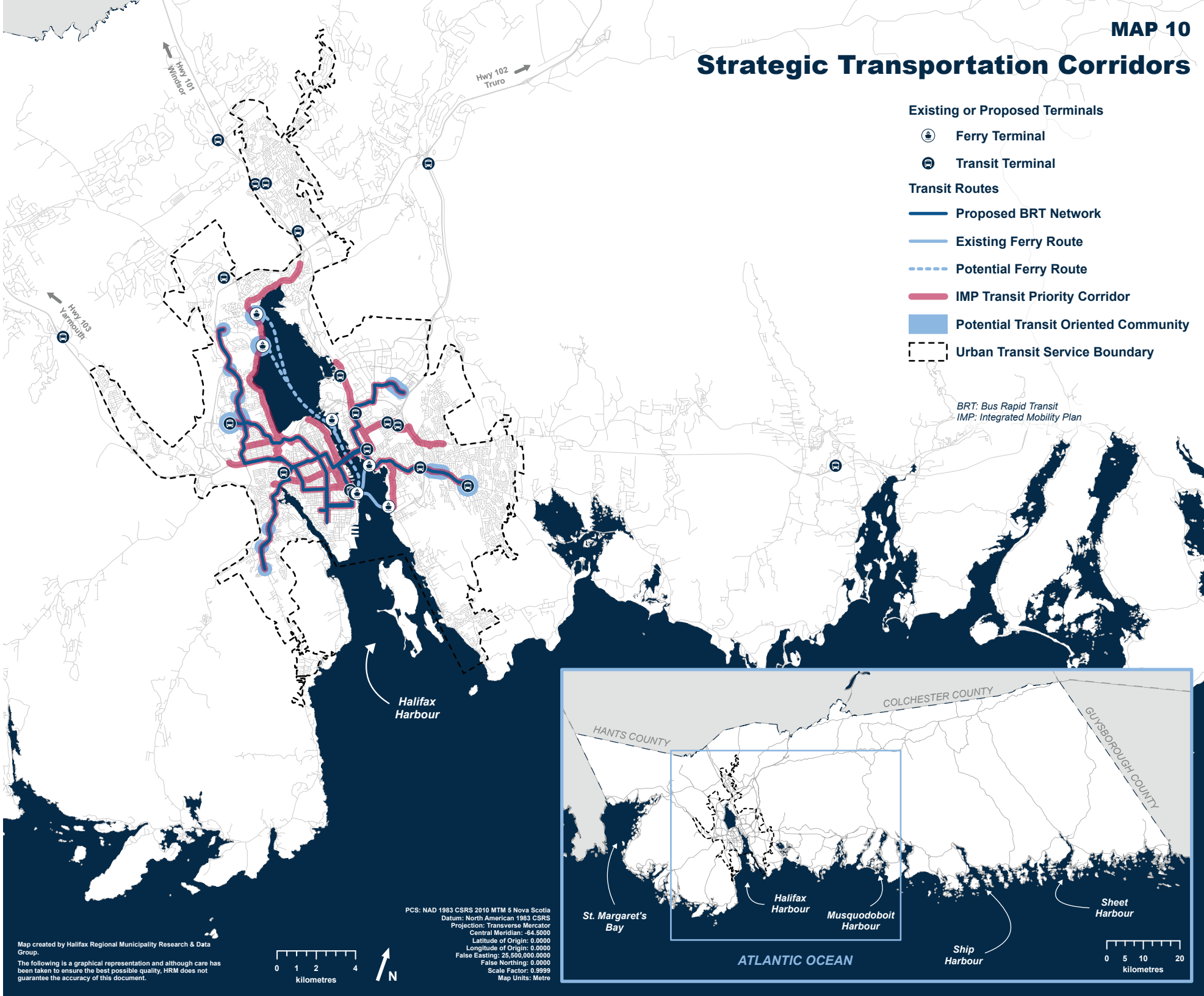
THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

4.2 Update Regional Plan policy to identify strategic multi-modal corridors that connect communities and include policy direction to guide future functional plans for these corridors that reflect the objectives of the Integrated Mobility Plan, Rapid Transit Strategy, Moving Forward Together Plan and Active Transportation Priorities Plan and align with land use planning.

4.3 Study opportunities for land acquisition tools in addition to the Transportation Reserve Zone, to acquire or preserve right-of-way lands for investments in strategic multi-modal corridors, and use this to inform a land acquisition strategy for these corridors.

MAP 10

Strategic Transportation Corridors



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Map Units: Metre

IMPLEMENTING THE RAPID TRANSIT STRATEGY: BRT AND FERRY ROUTES

In May 2020, Regional Council approved the Rapid Transit Strategy, which aims to build a rapid transit network by 2030. This strategy builds on the vision of the Integrated Mobility Plan, aiming to improve sustainable transportation options and better support population growth. It invests in high-quality transit service and infrastructure, a key to improving residents' mobility and building more sustainable, affordable, and equitable communities.

To create sustainable, transit-oriented complete communities, the Municipality is aligning land use policy and rapid transit by planning for higher-density mixed-use development around existing and planned stations and terminals, working to ensure that affordable housing and amenities are available nearby, and improving local street connectivity and active transportation infrastructure. The Rapid Transit Strategy recommends a new Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Network that would have the potential to transform the way people move within the region. The proposed BRT Network consists of four fixed-route bus lines which will provide all-day service, including 10-minute frequency from 6am to 10pm. BRT lines will have fewer stops than local routes to reduce travel times. BRT will improve freedom of movement around the municipality, complementing local and express bus routes and increasing access to employment for many residents.

The Rapid Transit Strategy also proposes three new ferry routes, each connecting a new terminal to downtown Halifax. Of these Mill Cove and Shannon Park offer development opportunities in proximity to the proposed terminal sites. Residential and mixed-use development around terminals would increase the potential ridership by providing homes and businesses nearby. While the Centre Plan has created policies to guide the development of the Shannon Park site, policy still needs to be developed for the Mill Cove site. The third route, Larry Uteck would serve the already densely developed Larry Uteck area, which has grown significantly in recent years.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

4.4 To address the importance of coordinating land use and transportation planning around Rapid Transit, the Regional Plan will plan for higher-density mixed use development around Rapid Transit, and create policy direction for the provision of affordable housing, connectivity of local streets and active transportation infrastructure near stations and terminals.

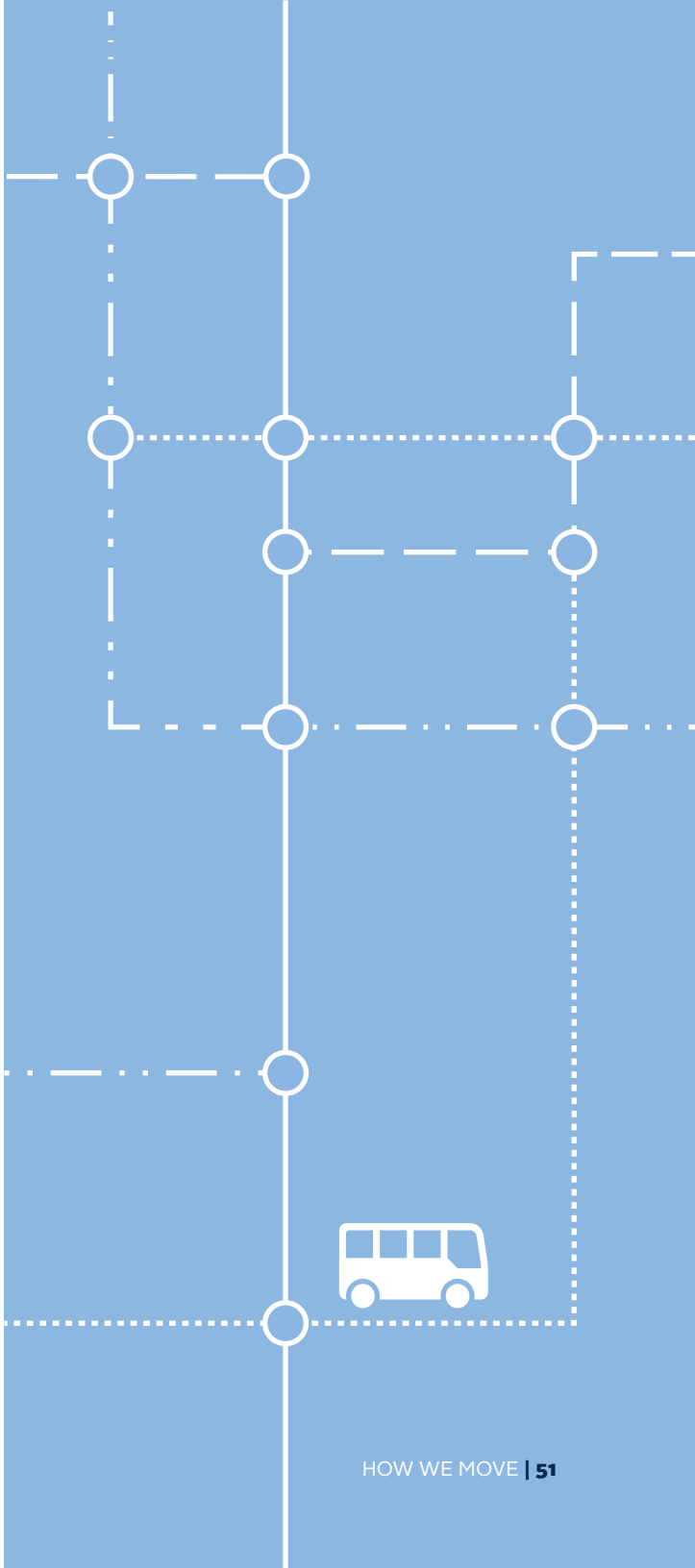
LONG-RANGE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Momentous social and technological changes, from virtual work to autonomous vehicles, are transforming how people move around cities. The long-term implications of these changes for transit and land use patterns are uncertain. The Municipality must plan to ensure the transportation system continues to work efficiently for people's changing travel behaviours while becoming more sustainable and equitable. In this context, it is vital that a long-term vision for transit, including Rapid Transit, be considered together with a long-term vision for land use. Integrated transportation and land use planning must take an iterative approach which both aligns significant future growth with transit, and responds to changing settlement, employment, and travel patterns with appropriate transit service. This vision must also consider Regional and Provincial transportation linkages, and how this connects with both suburban and rural areas.

The Regional Plan review offers an opportunity to set up future study of additional Rapid Transit corridors or areas that may be suitable for Rapid Transit expansion once the proposed network is implemented. The Regional Plan review will establish the framework for a long-term study and visioning process for land use and transportation beyond 2031. This process will feed into the creation of the next Regional Plan, intended to replace the current one at the end of its planning horizon in 2031.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

4.5 Building on the approved Integrated Mobility Plan and Rapid Transit Strategy, establish a program of study to develop a long-term vision for transportation in HRM aligned with regional strategic growth.





THEME 5

SOCIAL PLANNING FOR COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

Since the last Regional Plan review Regional Council has played an increasing role in socially minded policies and directives including the endorsement in the Housing Needs Assessment, Halifax Food Action Plan, Anti-Poverty Solutions Strategy, the creation of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, expansions and an increasing presence of the African Nova Scotia Integrated Affairs Office, and countless other initiatives. HRM has also continued our role as members of the Mobile Food Market, Halifax Food Policy Alliance, Housing and Homelessness Partnership and strengthened collaborations with not-for-profits and the Province. This Council priority area should be reflected in the updated Regional Plan.

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS PARTNERSHIP

Nine partners from three levels of government, private, and non-profit sectors collaborate with community partners to end homelessness and housing poverty in Halifax.

HALIFAX FOOD POLICY ALLIANCE

A partnership of individuals and organizations representing different sectors related to the food system, working toward a vision where no one is hungry and everyone has nutritious food that they enjoy, for generations to come, sustained by local producers.

SOCIAL POLICY FRAMEWORK

In April 2020, HRM adopted a Social Policy Administrative Order with goals to "strengthen community health and wellbeing, enhance equity and inclusion, and build on social assets and community capacity". It identifies three areas of focus; Connected Community and Mobility, Food Security, and Housing & Homelessness.

In recent years, the Municipality has begun to clarify its role in directly and indirectly supporting initiatives related to affordable housing and community health and well-being. Social planning takes place across municipal departments through recreation programming, community grants, community development, community visioning, diversity and inclusion training, youth services, parks planning, and public transit and active transportation planning. The Municipality has also worked to support housing and community health by removing barriers (such as zoning and fees) or by partnering with other levels of government and community organizations. Social planning should be included as part of all planning processes.

The Municipality does not and should not work on social planning alone. HRM works with other levels of government, arms-length organizations, non-profit organizations, and community groups on initiatives that advance diversity and inclusion, equitable and meaningful representation, and meeting the basic needs of those who call HRM home. Well-established partnerships working toward social initiatives are the Housing and Homelessness Partnership and the Halifax Food Policy Alliance and in recent months HRM has been an active member of the Provincial Housing Commission. The Regional Plan Review will look to better define our existing partnerships and identify opportunities to address existing gaps.

Currently, the Regional Plan identifies and prioritizes areas where significant growth is anticipated. Neighbourhoods that have been historically underserved and previously left out of planning exercises may not be targeted as growth areas. As a result, they have faced greater inequities and have a heightened sensitivity to the impacts of development. This includes lack of access to safe, adequate and affordable housing, good food, and services and amenities as well as the ability to respond to climate change and disasters. The Regional Plan Review will develop an inventory of corporate resources that are being used to support planning with a social lens. This will include support and tools for community engagement and community-led planning which will allow the Municipality to better identify gaps where communities need more support.

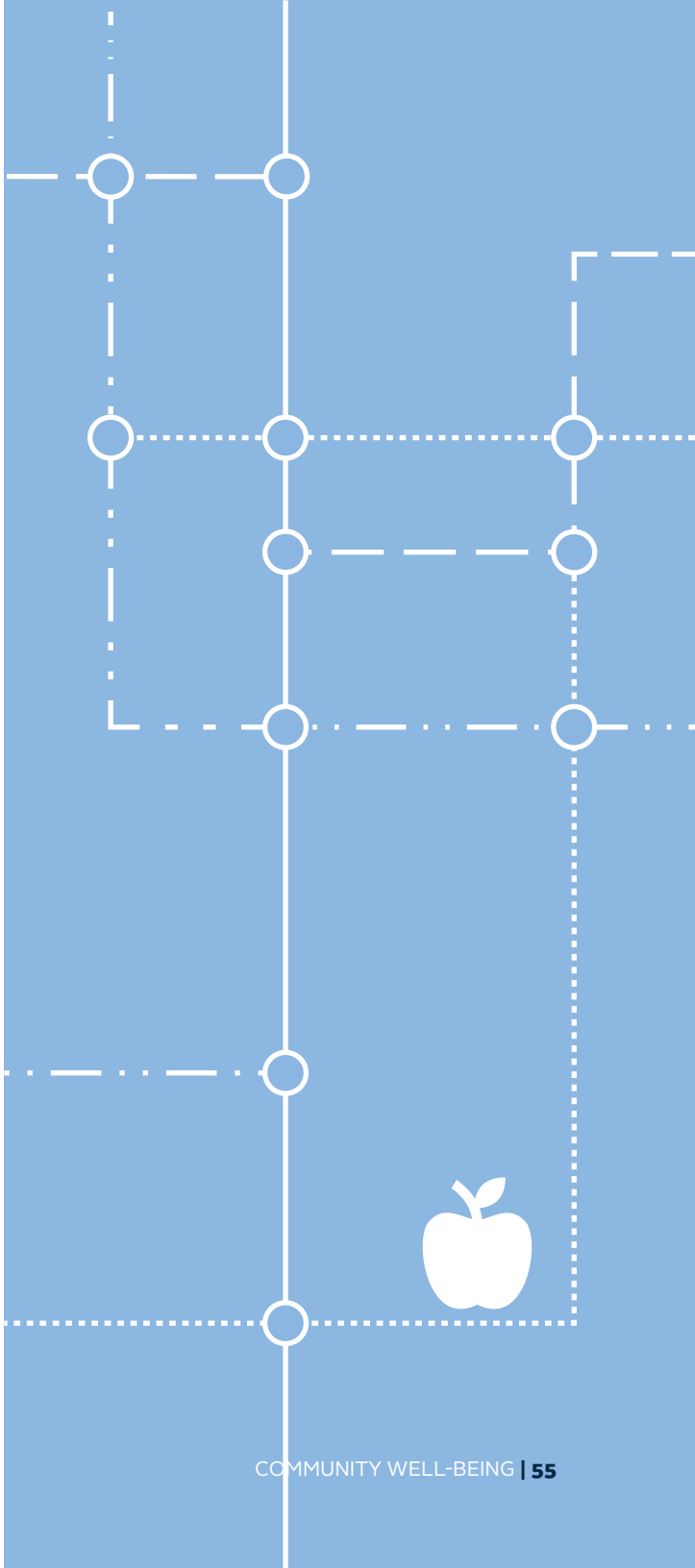
THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

5.1 Align with the work of the Social Policy Committee to define the Municipality's role in social planning and inventory the Municipality's existing initiatives to better use existing resources and identify gaps.

5.2 Study the possible use of tools that could support capacity building, such as community benefit action planning, community trusts or community-led planning or projects.

5.3 Identify neighbourhoods facing inequities or communities that have been historically underserved and underrepresented and coordinate across departments to address vulnerabilities and build upon neighbourhood capacity.

5.4 Provide continued support for the development of partnerships to provide a range of community infrastructure and services for residents towards complete communities.

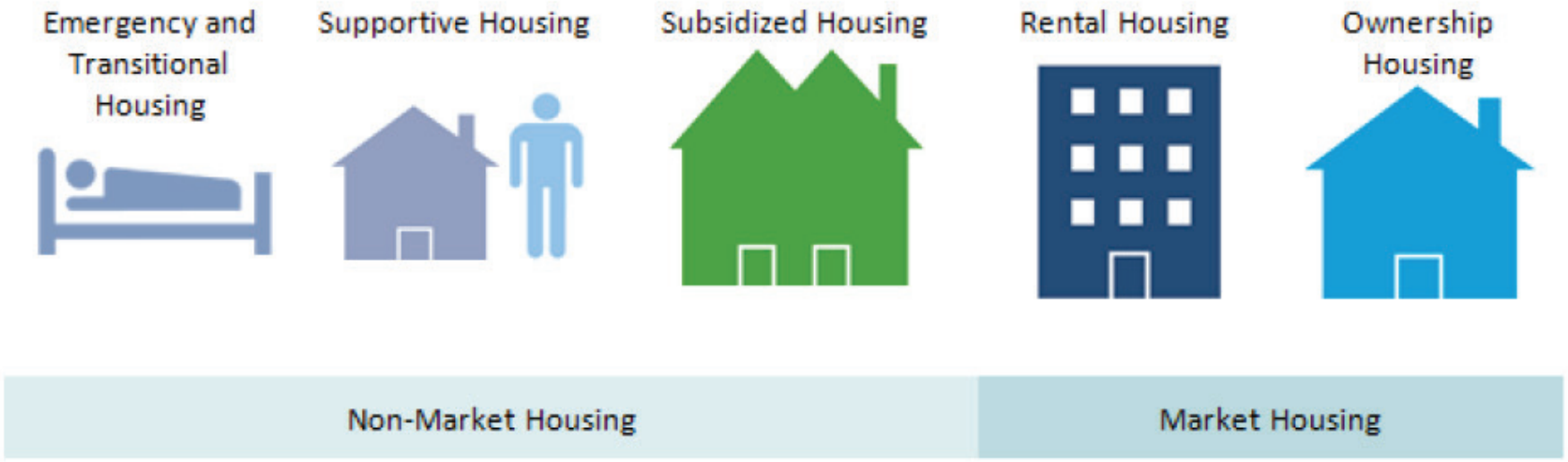


HOUSING

As Halifax continues to grow and develop, housing affordability has become an increasing issue across the municipality. While the provincial government provides services to support those in need of housing, the Municipality plays a significant role in determining where and how housing can be developed. The 2014 Regional Plan and the 2018 Affordable Housing Work Plan support the development of a variety of housing types and initiatives that address the full spectrum of the housing continuum, which is an important step to providing adequate housing for everybody.

The Municipality's role in supporting and encouraging affordable housing has increased steadily over the past several years. Through involvement with the Housing and Homelessness Partnership and Anti-Poverty Solutions Strategy, HRM has developed relationships with non-profit housing organizations, for profit developers and federal/provincial levels of government. Since the 2014 Regional Plan HRM has worked on several large initiatives including the 2015 Housing Needs Assessment, pending rental registration by-law, supporting municipal Housing First projects and directing the Federal Rapid Housing Initiative funding. HRM has further developed its support for the non-profit housing sector through waiving fees and developing grant and surplus land programs specific to affordable housing. In the fall of 2020, HRM permitted secondary and backyard suites throughout the municipality and continue to work on projects focused on removing policy and regulatory barriers to alternative forms of housing.

In addition to supporting the construction of new affordable housing options, HRM equally appreciates the importance of maintaining the region's existing affordable housing stock. While the redevelopment and revitalization of neighbourhoods can have several benefits, it can also have serious, often unforeseen impacts on the people who live in them. Many residents, or even entire communities, can be displaced or priced out as a result of increased rents or cost of services. Housing programs must include incentives to retain existing affordable housing stock and the planning process must consider the impact of redevelopment by proactively assessing for unintended consequences, preventing harms and maximizing equity.



THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

5.5 Explore additional approaches to encourage a diversity of housing forms though reviewing existing policies.

5.6 Support the development of the Housing Governance report to identify a municipal role in housing, furthering partnerships with non-profit housing organizations, private developers and the Province, to encourage the development and retention of affordable housing, including:

- Identifying planning tools to ensure no net loss of housing during redevelopment;
- Updating the Housing Needs Assessment on an annual basis;
- Removing barriers and reviewing and expanding opportunities to support the development and retention of affordable housing; and
- Study possible tools and programs to further leverage surplus or available land including community land trusts.

5.7 Develop an interim regulatory tool for a region-wide density bonus program.



FOOD SECURITY

It is estimated that between 1 in 5 and 1 in 7 households in HRM experience food insecurity. HRM has consistently ranked in the top 3 Canadian Census Metropolitan Areas with the highest rates of household food insecurity . With the rising cost of food continuing to outpace income and the challenges posed by COVID-19, these rates could worsen . The Municipality has recognized that it has an important role to play in promoting community food security. In 2020, HRM partnered with the Halifax Food Policy Alliance to develop JustFOOD: an action plan for the Halifax Region. JustFOOD is centred on food justice and working together towards a region where no one is hungry, where food and people are celebrated, and our local food system is prosperous and sustainable.

It is anticipated that JustFOOD will take two years to develop. Work in 2021 will focus on engaging with communities and sectors to define food justice, test the Framework and move towards action. JustFOOD will commit the Municipality to actions and identify the resources needed to achieve them.

The Regional Plan Review will advance the commitment to design communities that promote food security by requiring consideration of access to food and impact on the food system in new and updated planning policies. It will also implement supports for food security recommended in the Halifax Green Network Plan, HalifACT, and other municipal planning initiatives. The Municipality's Community Food Assessment Toolkit, created in 2019, offers a step-wise process to guide communities to learn more about their local food environment and plan actions to address challenges and build on strengths.

In addition to increasing access to food, the Regional Plan will also consider the conservation and enhancement of agricultural lands to strengthen and increase the resilience of our local food system. As the majority of the Municipality's prime agriculture land was developed for residential purposes in the growth of the 1960s-70s, what remains is precious. Additional effort is also needed to create more opportunities and maximize land for urban agriculture, making food production a part of the everyday landscape.

HRM'S COMMUNITY FOOD ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT

The toolkit provides practical, easy-to use tools to help people and groups:

1. Engage their communities to learn and gather information about the food environment and the food system

2. Assess opportunities and barriers to achieving community food security

3. Plan possible actions toward change

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

5.8 Support the creation of JustFOOD and ensure alignment with its goals and recommendations by:

- Directing the use of JustFOOD tools and resources to better understand community vulnerability to food insecurity and the local food landscape when updating or creating planning policies.
- Removing barriers and creating incentives for food uses such as urban agriculture, agricultural operations, food outlets, etc. and reducing the impact of non-agricultural uses on viable agricultural land.



INCLUSIVITY & PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Creating equitable complete communities requires an understanding of the lived experiences of the diverse residents that call HRM home. The Municipality must continue to develop an understanding of the effects of existing policies that disproportionately affect historically underserved and underrepresented groups. HRM has created the Diversity and Inclusion Office with expert advisors covering the African Nova Scotia, Indigenous, Acadian and Francophone, Immigrant and Accessibility communities. The Office provides leadership, strategic direction, policy advice, professional development and expertise to all aspects of the Halifax Regional Municipality (administration and Regional Council) with respect to diversity and inclusion. The Office also engages external stakeholders in supporting corporate diversity and inclusion initiatives and services. HRM now has a Public Safety Strategy that directs policy-makers to consider systemic reasons for increased crime in under-represented communities (such as racism, a lack of affordable housing, unemployment, and poor access to healthy food and health services).

Public participation during planning projects provides an important opportunity for the Municipality to hear from residents. However, traditional engagement tools often only reach those who are already engaged or have the loudest voices and have left many others out of the conversation. Alone, these tools produce narrow representation in terms of demographics, perspectives and experiences. In recent years there has been more appreciation for a variety of tools that facilitate the involvement of all residents and overcome the barriers to effective and full public participation, These tools help to engage with all community members and bring a full range of diverse perspectives, knowledge and identities to the table. The Municipality is currently creating a Public Engagement Guidebook that will help staff to develop more transparent, demographically representative and equitable public engagement programs that reflect the tunique needs of each project and the community it impacts.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

5.9 Continue to engage the Diversity and Inclusion Office as a resource during planning projects.

5.10 Review existing engagement policies and adopt the upcoming Public Engagement Guidebook.



Removing barriers and creating opportunities for the full participation of all Halifax residents and municipal employees.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

HRM has several initiatives and commitments to better partner with, serve, and represent underrepresented groups. On October 30th, 2018, Regional Council approved the creation of the Task Force on the Commemoration of Edward Cornwallis and the Recognition and Commemoration of Indigenous History. The Task Force is an equal partnership between Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) and the Mi'kmaw community, as represented by the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs (ANSMC). It was tasked with advising Regional Council on proposed changes to the commemoration of Edward Cornwallis on municipal assets, including Cornwallis Park and Cornwallis Street, and more generally, recognizing and commemorating the indigenous history in the lands now known as Halifax Regional Municipality. The Task Force made a list of recommendations on how to improve commemorations, consultation, and relations with the Mi'kmaw community and each recommendation was assigned to relevant HRM business units. The CAO will return to Council annually to report on progress.

In 2016, Regional Council approved the 2016-2021 Economic Growth Plan. The plan included a call for the development and implementation of an African Nova Scotian (ANS) Action Plan to advance ANS economic development and community priorities. The Road to Economic Prosperity Advisory Committee was established in November of 2019 and included the Halifax Partnership, HRM, Black Business Initiative, the Nova Scotia Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs and community members. The Committee assisted in the development and implementation of the plan by providing guidance and community oversight. On September 22, 2020, the African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity was approved by Regional Council. It includes actions regarding Community Benefits Agreements, reviews of policies and regulations for disproportionate negative impacts in the ANS communities, support for the Akoma master plan, review of community boundaries and commemorations, remediation of contaminated sites in ANS communities, and infrastructure funding in ANS communities.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

5.11 Ensure the Regional Plan is aligned with the 94 Calls to Action, 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. This will be achieved through Sharing Our Stories and reviews of relevant policies and by-laws.

CALLS TO ACTION

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action identifies actions for all levels of government to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation.

ACCESSIBILITY

The World Health Organization says that 15 percent of the world's population lives with an impairment or disability. Under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Canada agreed to take appropriate measures to achieve accessibility and to develop and monitor minimum accessibility standards. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Human Rights Act also direct the equal opportunities for every individual to enjoy a full and productive life free of discrimination on the basis of a disability.

The Nova Scotia Accessibility Act explains the barriers residents face, including the following: persons with disabilities disproportionately live in conditions of poverty; there is diversity among persons with disabilities; persons with disabilities continue to face attitudinal and environmental barriers that prevent them from achieving their full and equal participation in society; and persons with disabilities who are subject to multiple forms of discrimination face additional barriers. Achieving accessibility will improve the independence and well-being of persons with disabilities.

In HRM, the Diversity and Inclusion Office and the Accessibility Advisory Committee have been working to direct changes in planning policies that impact individuals with disabilities. Of relevance to planning and development are the regulations that promote physical accessibility of buildings, streets, parks, and facilities directed by the NS Building Code, the Red Book (Municipal Design Guidelines), HRM Streets By-law, Municipal Planning Strategies, and Land Use By-laws. These regulations and policies address everything from sidewalks, trees, lighting, tactile crosswalks, and traffic signals, to the built form of individual buildings, including their entrances, unit layout, types of smoke detectors, and emergency exits. Land use by-laws have the ability to affect built form, such as barrier free parking spaces, pedestrian routes through parking lots, signage and wayfinding, encouraging more ground-level commercial uses and barrier-free access to residential units, permitting supportive housing more widely, setback requirements that allow wider sidewalks and permit ramps. Integrated mobility planning requires considering ways to provide accessible mobility options, such as accessible active transportation routes, accessible taxis and Access-A-Bus. Further, planning policies direct meaningful opportunities for inclusive and accessible engagement on policy changes, so how staff run engagements and share information with the public are equally as important as built form.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

5.12 Review and update planning documents (the Regional Plan, secondary plans and land use by-laws) that bring HRM closer to the goal of being a city for people of all abilities, ages, and backgrounds. Ensure these documents align with the forthcoming HRM Accessibility & Inclusion Strategy.

5.13 Include the Accessibility Advisory Committee and Diversity & Inclusion Office in the review of the forthcoming engagement tool to ensure it uses best practices for inclusion of residents with a wide array of disabilities.


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Atlantic
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THEME 6

CELEBRATING CULTURE & HERITAGE

HRM is home to diverse cultures and histories that are expressed in many ways. Tangible assets, such as heritage buildings and sites, speak to the evolution of the community over time, while intangible assets, such as events, provide an opportunity to preserve and foster living traditions. Sharing Our Stories will provide a regional approach to the preservation of these heritage and cultural resources, which will be reflected in the Regional Plan review.



SHARING OUR STORIES

In 2014, the Regional Plan called for HRM to adopt a Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan, now called Sharing Our Stories, to be used to inform and determine priorities for culture and heritage programs and policy. Sharing Our Stories will provide direction for the Municipality to support culture, arts and heritage with specific attention to celebrating under-represented communities from across the municipality. The broad goals of Sharing Our Stories are to Express Culture through Place, Support Cultural Capacity and Value Creativity. The plan has also identified the following draft pillars:

Stewardship: Nurturing our cultural resources, maintaining them, protecting, and renewing them

Connection: Recognizing and valuing the unique yet often underrepresented or untold stories and histories within our region

Celebration: Supporting all people that live here, including newcomers, and people of all ages, abilities, cultural heritage, and interests

Access: Providing opportunities for everyone to participate and enjoy culture and heritage

As of July 2020, community and stakeholder engagement for Sharing Our Stories was been placed on hold due to the ongoing pandemic. This engagement resumed in early 2021. It is anticipated that the completion of the plan would coincide with the final phases of the Regional Plan Review.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

6.1 Incorporate the recommendations of the final Sharing Our Stories Plan into the Regional Plan, with a particular focus on initiatives that share and celebrate a more diverse range of stories.

CULTURE & HERITAGE RESOURCES

Currently, in order to incentivize the registration and conservation of heritage buildings, some of HRM's secondary planning strategies allow owners of registered heritage properties to request additional development rights using a Development Agreement. To allow registered heritage property owners across the municipality to have this opportunity, direction will be included in the Regional Plan to direct all secondary planning strategies to include a standardized Heritage Development Agreement policy.

Registered heritage properties play an important role in defining the character and identity of communities. New development on a registered heritage property must be carefully designed to ensure that it does not have a negative impact on its heritage value. Currently, some secondary planning strategies contain policies to ensure that new development in a heritage context is sensitive to the heritage character of the property and area. Region-wide heritage policies will be reviewed to determine if the direction provided to guide sensitive redevelopment on municipally registered heritage properties can be applied across the municipality.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

6.2 Amend the Regional Plan to provide Heritage Development Agreement policies that will guide sensitive redevelopment of municipally registered properties and encourage their continued preservation.

6.3 Review Regional Plan Policy CH-16 to provide additional direction for new development in a heritage context in secondary planning strategies, including the following considerations:

- **Architectural compatibility and subordination;**
- **Building scale, massing and design;**
- **Transition;**
- **Shadow impacts;**
- **Impacts on the integrity of nearby heritage properties and streetscapes; and**
- **The assessment and preservation of any unregistered structures for their heritage value, if deemed necessary.**



MAP 11

Heritage Conservation Districts (Package A)

In Effect

Proposed

Regional Centre

Historic Richmond and Hydrostone District

Harbourview

Downtown Dartmouth

Five Corners

Bloomfield

Old North Suburb

Westmount

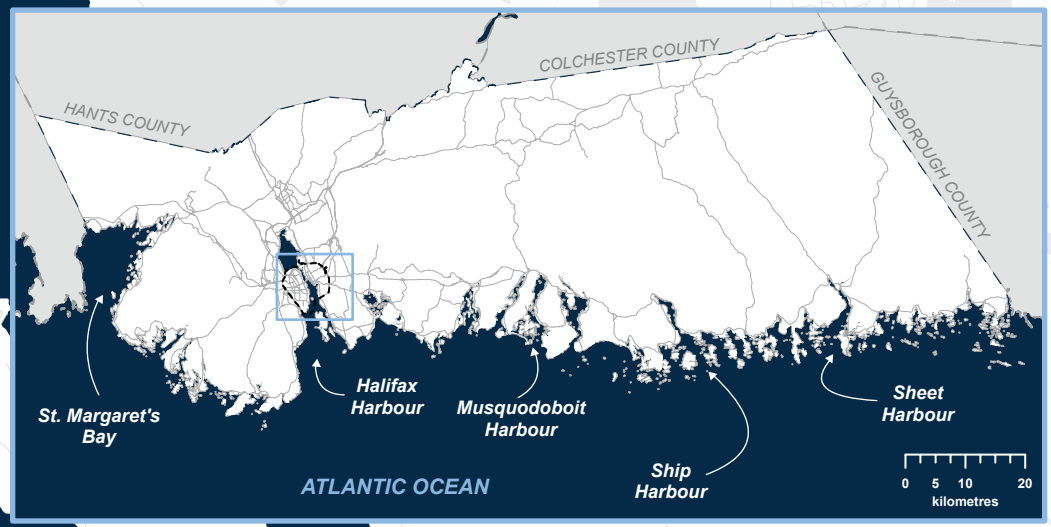
Creighton's Field

Barrington Street

Schmidtville

Victoria Road

Old South Suburb



0 0.25 0.5 1
kilometres

N

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.

HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Heritage Conservation Districts (HCDs) are urban or rural areas of historic or architectural value. HCDs are defined by the Heritage Property Act and established using a conservation plan and by-law, which govern demolition, exterior alterations and new development. Staff have worked to revise and simplify the Municipality's approach to the creation of HCDs. There are currently three HCDs in HRM: Barrington Street, Schmidtville and the Old South Suburb.

The Centre Plan currently identifies nine potential HCDs in the Regional Centre, with three additional HCDs proposed for Package B. The establishment of HCD policy for each of these areas has been prioritized by Council using the following criteria:

- Areas that include a high concentration of registered heritage properties;
- Areas that include rare examples of historic architecture;
- Areas that are experiencing a high rate of change based on development permit activity in the past five years; and
- Areas that include the potential for large-scale redevelopment as a result of their current land use designation.

The 2014 Regional Plan supports the creation of HCDs across the municipality. The approach to the identification and prioritization of HCDs used in the Regional Centre will be studied further as part of Sharing Our Stories to guide how the Municipality creates HCDs at a regional scale.

Additionally, as the number of HCDs increases, more private property owners will be required to protect their properties. Therefore, options for additional HCD incentives programs should be explored to help support their maintenance and restoration.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

6.4 Use the recommendations of Sharing Our Stories to review and enhance policies related to the creation of future Heritage Conservation Districts and the identification of additional future Heritage Conservation Districts by:

- **Updating policy to reflect the Heritage Conservation District Adoption Process approved by Regional Council at their November 17, 2020 meeting;**
- **Consideringthe Heritage Conservation District Prioritization Methodology and Evaluation approved by Regional Council at their November 17, 2020 meeting as a standard methodology moving forward; and**
- **Incorporating any additional HCD policy considerations identified by Sharing Our Stories**

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

Cultural Landscapes are distinct geographical areas representing the combined influences of nature and people over time. The Heritage Property Act identifies these areas for potential formal designation, which would offer protection similar to a Heritage Conservation District. However, the Government of Nova Scotia has not yet created regulations that allow municipalities to designate areas as Cultural Landscapes at this time. HRM will continue to work with the Province to support the development of these regulations and consider any work at the municipal level that would be required to enable HRM to designate cultural landscapes when the Provincial regulations are adopted.

In the meantime, the Municipality has worked to identify, preserve and commemorate cultural landscapes. This has included the completion of the Cultural Landscape Framework Study, which established a process for the evaluation of cultural landscapes and began to identify potential sites.

The Municipality has developed policies at the secondary planning level to identify and preserve areas of cultural significance identified through the Green Network Plan. For example, the Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy also identifies a number of future potential cultural landscapes which may be considered for formal designation once the necessary legislation is in place.

The approach to identifying, prioritizing and designating future cultural landscapes will be developed following the completion of Sharing Our Stories to ensure that it reflects the diverse evolution, heritage and culture of the region.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

6.5 Use the recommendations of Sharing Our Stories and the Halifax Green Network Plan to direct how the Municipality will collaborate with residents and stakeholders to identify, prioritize and protect potential cultural landscapes, and continue to work with the Province to support the development of regulations for cultural landscapes under the Heritage Property Act.




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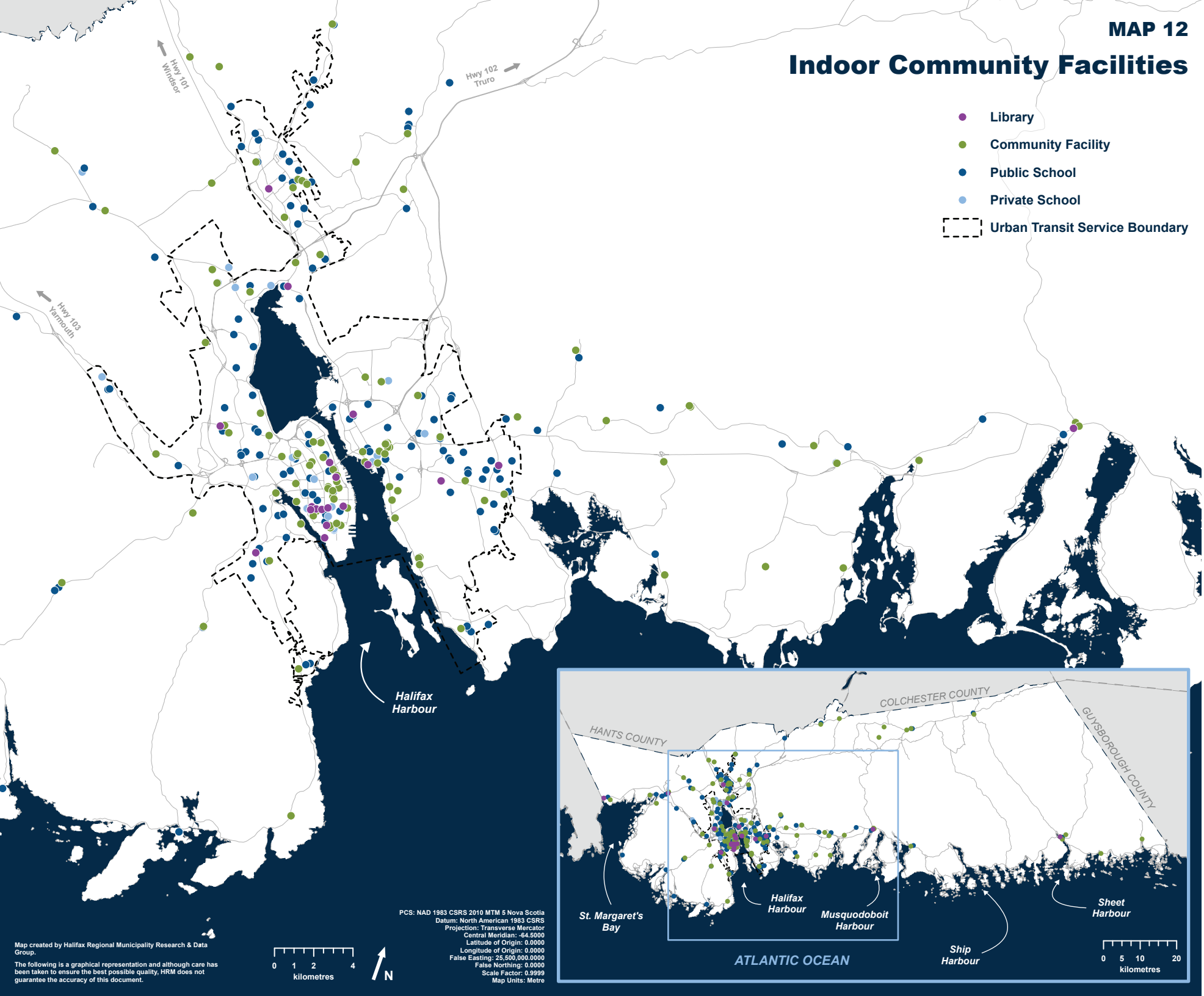
THEME 7

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.

MAP 12

Indoor Community Facilities



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.

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kilometres

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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

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 were 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 scholaire 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 scholaire 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

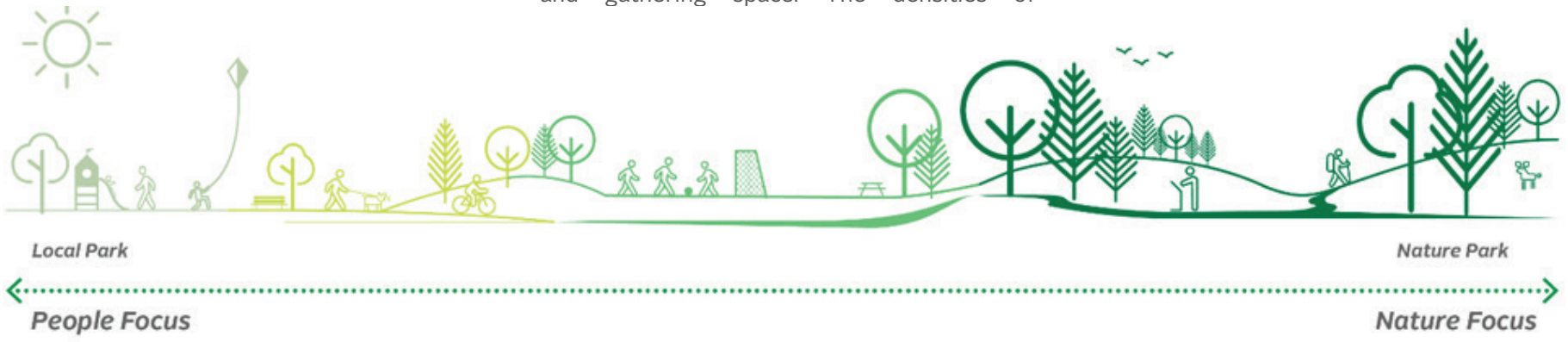
Parks are an important part of healthy, complete communities. Parks provide residents with access to green space and support active living. The Municipality's parks system should give residents access to a variety of park types, facilities and experiences. The Halifax Green Network Plan introduced the 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.

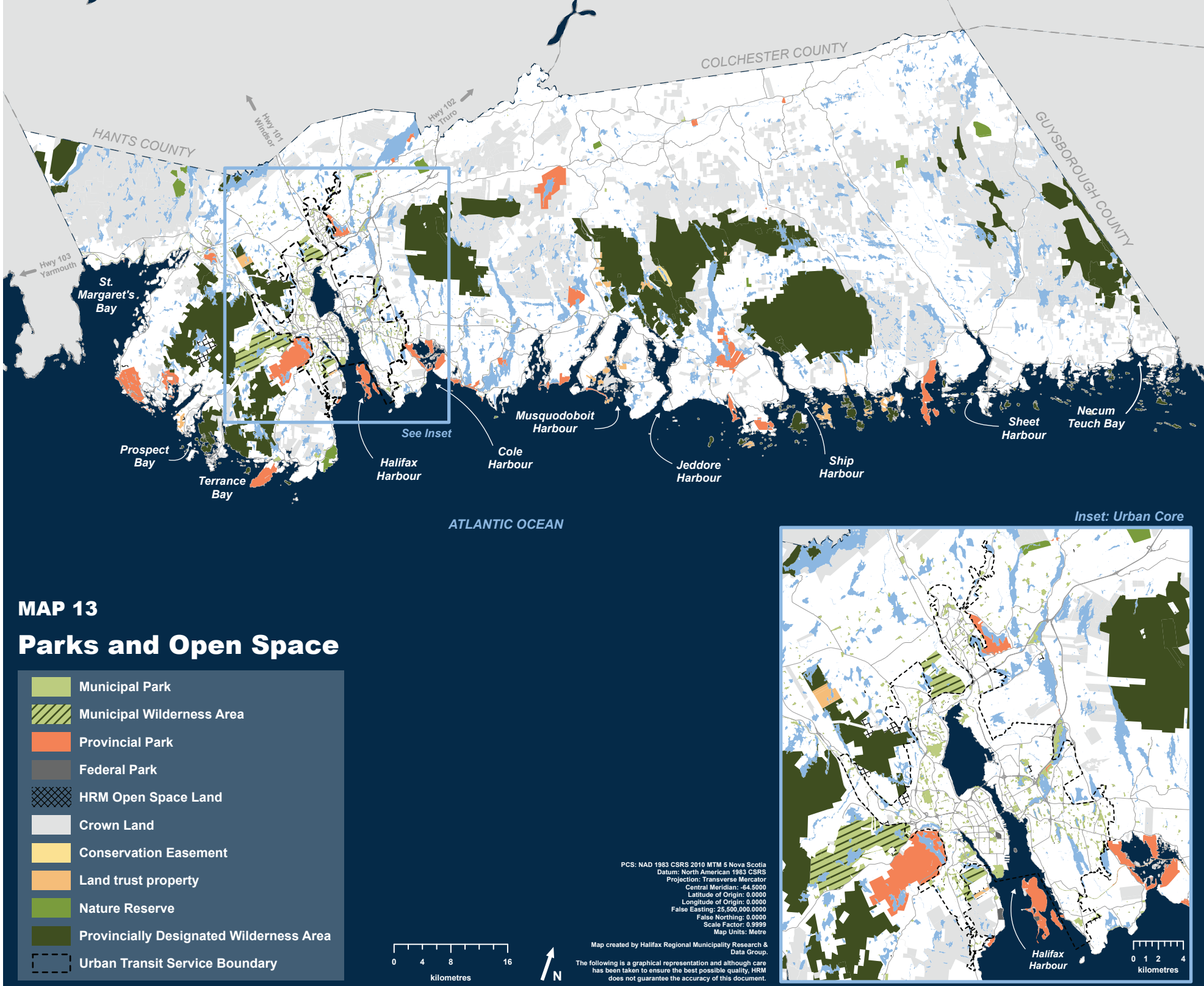
THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

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

0 4 8 16
kilometres

N

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.

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.

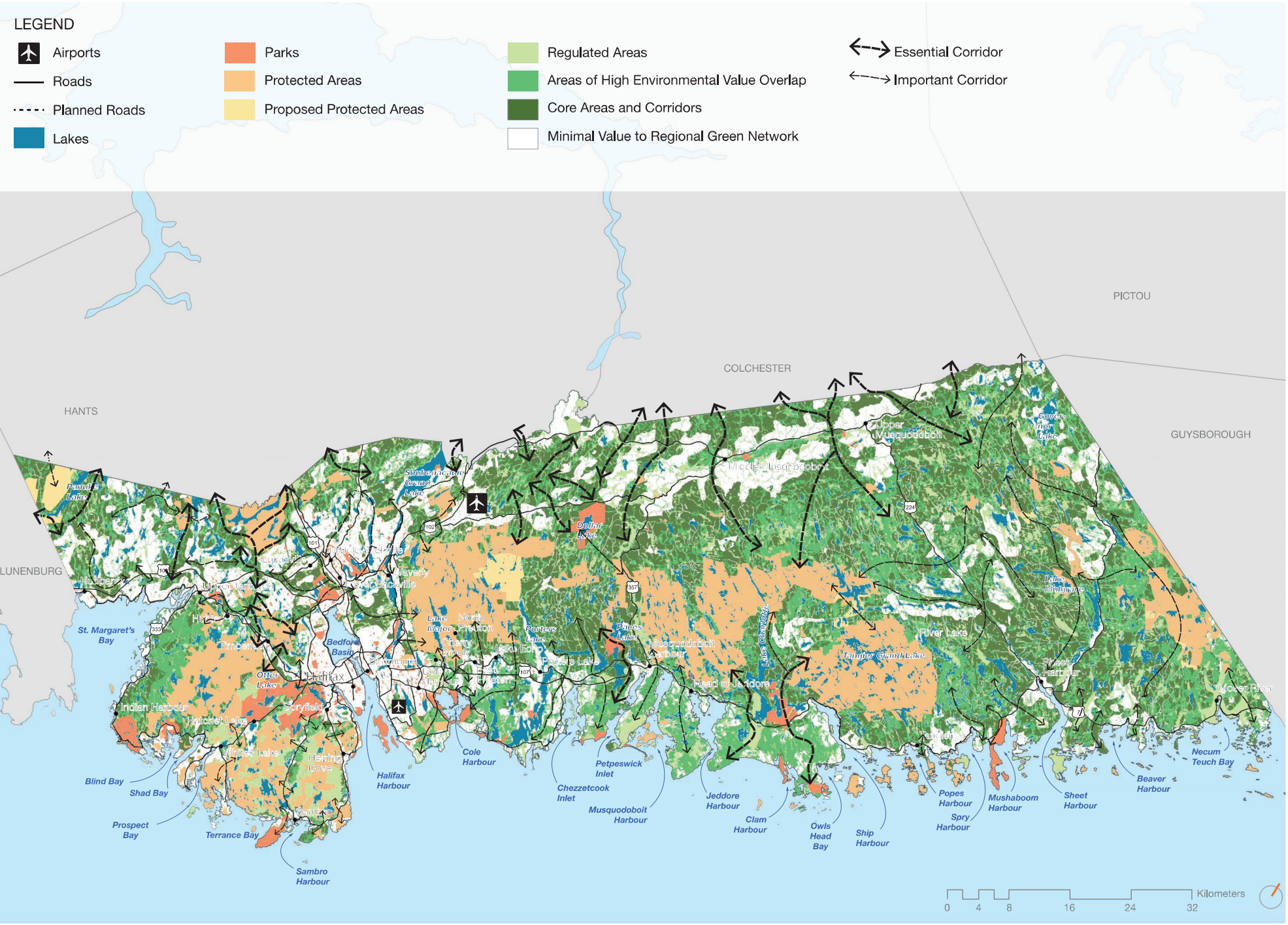




THEME 8

ENHANCING ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Open spaces and waterbodies are vital to maintaining a healthy, sustainable and desirable region. They provide important habitats and ecosystems, support economic activity, shape communities, provide opportunities for recreation, and reflect local culture and history. In 2018, Regional Council approved the Halifax Green Network Plan, which identifies ways the Municipality can better identify and protect these landscapes. This work was continued through HalifACT, which was adopted in 2020 and supports the preservation of open spaces and waterbodies as part of efforts to reduce emissions and help communities adapt to climate change.



Halifax Green Network Plan: Green Network Ecology Map

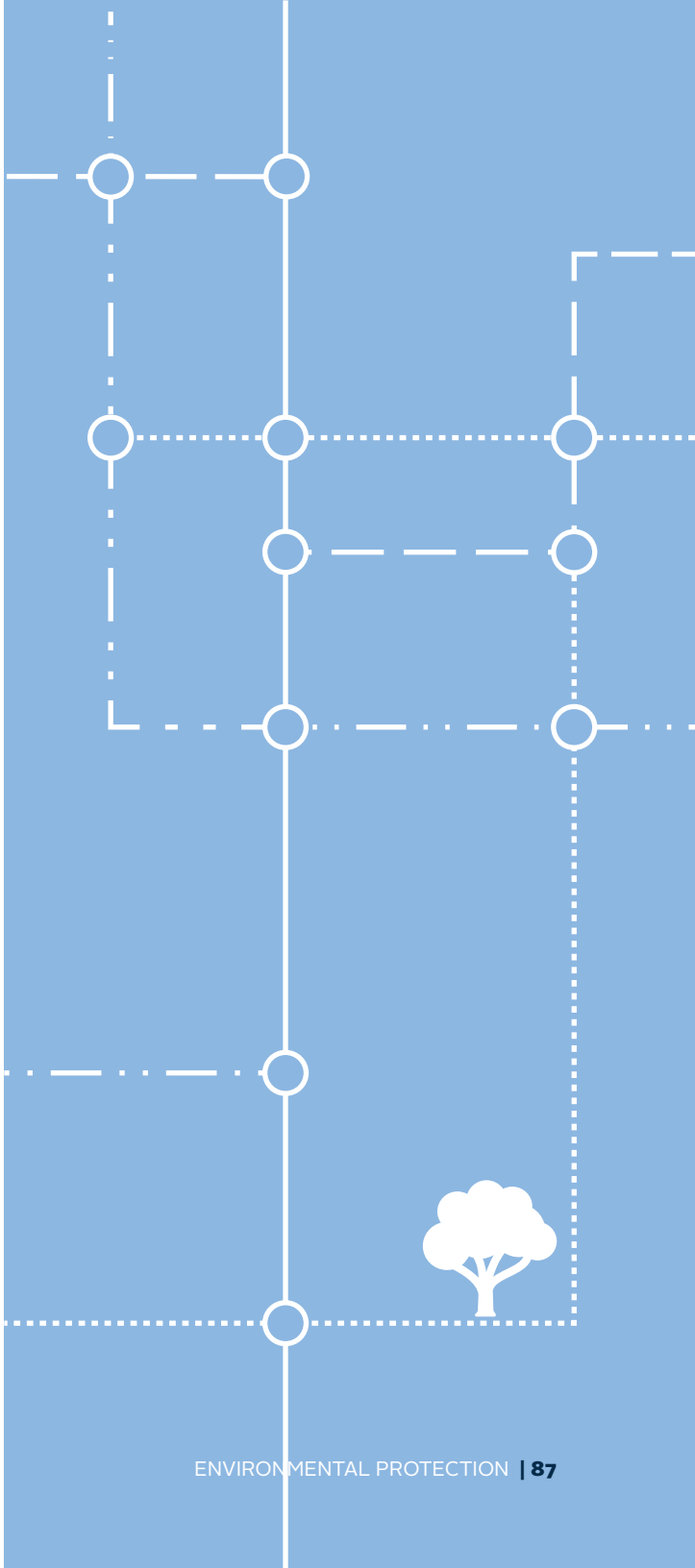
WHAT IS THE GREEN NETWORK ECOLOGY MAP?

Open spaces play an important role in shaping how communities look and feel. Policies must continue to be reviewed and updated to ensure that open spaces are properly protected when communities are being designed.

The Halifax Green Network Plan provides a high-level overview of the areas and features that contribute to the region's Green Network and health of our ecosystems. This information is summarized in the Green Network Ecology Map. This map was created using many layers of data from a variety of sources, rather than in-person fields surveys. As a result, it will be important that further studies and field work are completed when development is planned to confirm that mapped data accurately reflects conditions on the ground.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

8.1 Adopt Regional Plan policy requiring that the Green Network Ecology Map is used to help guide regional planning decisions.



PLANNING TOOLS FOR PROTECTING AND CONSERVING LAND

The protection of environmentally significant lands in HRM is vital to support the health of the region. The Regional Plan's Open Space and Natural Resource designation applies to government-owned and privately-owned lands including federal, provincial and municipal parks, protected wilderness areas and nature reserves, resource lands including for forestry, agriculture and fishing, private conservation areas, environmentally sensitive areas and similar. To help protect the region's Green Network, residential subdivision on new roads is prohibited in this designation.

The HRM Charter limits the Municipality's ability to completely prohibit development for environmental reasons, unless development is proposed in hazardous or contaminated lands including flood-prone areas, steep slopes, low-lying or unstable marshy areas, or development is prohibited by a Statement of Provincial Interest or enactment of the Province. While HRM cannot totally prohibit development unless the Charter permits the prohibition, HRM has some tools available to protect the environment:

Mitigating negative environmental effects of development: Land use by-laws can regulate development so that potential negative impacts on the environment are reduced. This can include requiring the planting or retention of vegetation as buffers, establishing setbacks from watercourses, and regulating the excavation and filling of land to prevent erosion and sedimentation.

Protecting lands around drinking water sources: To protect municipal drinking water supplies, development may be limited within watersheds to only allow for water processing facilities and very large residential lots. A large watercourse buffer may also be applied from these waterbodies.

Purchasing lands for conservation: The Municipality, other levels of government and private conservation groups may purchase lands from private owners to ensure that development does not take place. While this is the most certain way to ensure environmentally significant lands are protected, it can be expensive, as this usually requires purchasing lands for market value. Such acquisitions also need to be balanced against settlement objectives of the Regional Plan.

Limiting sprawl through subdivision and road development controls: The Regional Plan currently prohibits the construction of new roads outside of the Urban Service Boundary. This reduces sprawling development as new lots generally cannot be created unless they have frontage on existing public roads.

*For more information on his topic, please read the issue paper titled: **Planning Tools for Protecting and Conserving Land**.*

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

8.2 Continue to apply the Open Space and Natural Resource designation to recognize the value of the Green Network and revise the designation's boundaries to reflect the core areas and corridors shown on the Green Network Ecology Map.

8.3 Review Regional Plan policy to ensure that secondary planning strategies and land use by-laws include appropriate development regulations in important ecological areas and corridors and directs development away from hazardous locations.

8.4 Provide guidance for environmental considerations during policy-enabled discretionary planning applications.



NATURAL CORRIDORS

Essential Corridors provide unique or critical connections between important core areas. Their loss would severely degrade connectivity throughout the Region and to adjacent Municipalities. Important Corridors provide local connections between natural habitats.

PROTECTING NATURAL CORRIDORS

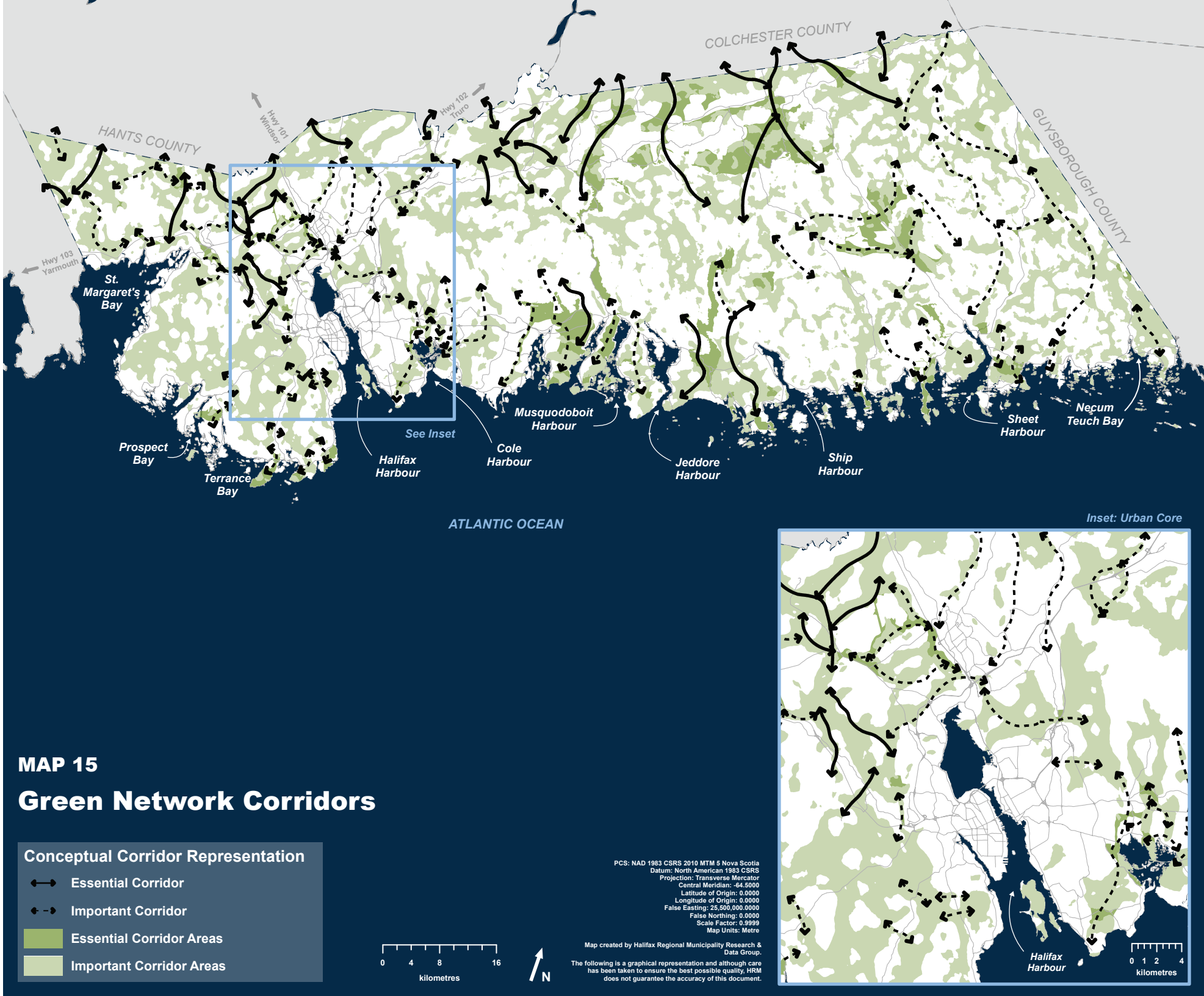
Natural corridors are undeveloped areas that provide linear connections between larger patches of wilderness. These corridors are extremely important as they connect habitats and help to maintain healthy and diverse wildlife populations. Corridors allow wildlife to move easily through the landscape when seeking shelter, food, water, space and mates. Corridors can be threatened, damaged or lost as a result of new development, natural resource extraction, highway and road construction, removal of vegetation and other human activities.

The HGNP identified the need for a clear approach for protecting natural corridors as the region grows and develops. It also identified areas where natural corridors are particularly important, such as the Chebucto Peninsula, which is home to many important species and is at risk of being completely disconnected from mainland Nova Scotia by development. Additional study is needed to understand how we can best protect these corridors at a regional scale while managing the impact of individual developments.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

8.5 Develop a regional approach to the protection of natural corridors which:

- **Directs how natural corridors should be delineated at the regional and individual site level;**
- **Prioritizes wildlife connections to the Chebucto Peninsula;**
- **Includes clear policy direction for developing wildlife crossings through major infrastructure like highways and utility corridors and coordinating this work with the provincial government, utilities and other relevant stakeholders.**



MAP 15

Green Network Corridors

Conceptual Corridor Representation

- Essential Corridor
- Important Corridor
- Essential Corridor Areas
- Important Corridor Areas

0 4 8 16
kilometres

N

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
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Scale Factor: 0.9999
Map Units: Metre

Map created by Halifax Regional Municipality Research & Data Group.

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GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

A network of natural and semi-natural engineered landscape elements designed to provide products and services such as stormwater management, water filtration and improved air quality.

NATURALIZATION

The Halifax Green Network Plan and HalifACT both encourage the inclusion and maintenance of natural areas and green infrastructure in communities where growth is located or planned. Natural areas and green infrastructure help to manage stormwater, reduce the heat island effect, improve water quality, provide shade and sequester carbon. This kind of naturalization work is already being piloted in HRM to improve the environmental health in our urban areas.

The "urban forest" includes public parks, street trees, trails, natural areas and private land in urban areas. These assets also provide the benefits of naturalization and add to the character and beauty of neighbourhoods. The Urban Forest Master Plan was adopted by Regional Council in 2012 and provides direction for planning, programming and maintaining HRM's urban forest.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

8.6 Review policies to support and where appropriate, require the use of naturalization and green infrastructure during development.

8.7 Review policies to continue to support the implementation of the Urban Forest Master Plan.

MANAGING WATER RESOURCES

Protecting the Municipality's water resources is critical for our potable water supply, supporting wildlife and overall ecological health, recreation use and aesthetic values. The Regional Plan directs land use policy to regulate water flow, mitigate flooding, reduce water pollution and protect ecological function. When planning to protect water quality, it is important to understand and maintain the health of watersheds. Environmental features such as water, soils, vegetation and habitat are all interconnected. As a result, development in one part of a watershed can impact water quality and quantity in another. A watershed approach should be used and carefully studied to inform planning decisions when development is proposed. The health of watersheds and priority waterbodies should be monitored on an ongoing basis through an established program for water quality monitoring. The Municipality is currently evaluating existing planning policy, identifying gaps and intends to propose a comprehensive water quality monitoring program that will inform the Regional Plan.

Effective stormwater management is critical to protect the water quality and quantity of HRM's waterbodies. An integrated approach to water management involves close coordination between the Municipality, the Halifax Regional Water Commission, private land owners, and the public. Stormwater regulations have typically focused on the quantity but not quality of stormwater. Managing both requires retaining natural systems and implementing sustainable approaches to manage excess run-off, filter pollutants and provide space for plant and animal life. The Regional Plan will be updated to reflect the Municipality's recent work on stormwater management practices, which includes Joint Stormwater Standards developed by HRM and Halifax Water that focus on new, large-scale developments on private property. As part of the Municipal Design Guidelines (Red Book) update, revised stormwater standards will also apply to public right-of-way and focus on reducing the quantity and improving the quality of stormwater runoff using green and natural infrastructure.

Protecting wetlands and riparian areas on the banks of lakes and waterways is an effective tool for managing stormwater and maintaining overall watershed health. As climate change increases the frequency and severity of storms, wetlands and riparian areas provide important natural buffers that help mitigate flooding. This is particularly important around drinking water sources and in rural areas where residents rely on wells. All HRM land use by-laws include watercourse buffer requirements, which aim to protect riparian areas from being damaged by development. In most by-laws this requirement

WATERSHEDS

An area of land that contains a common set of streams and rivers that all drain into a single larger body of water, such as a larger river, a lake or an ocean.

RIPARIAN AREAS

The area adjacent to the banks of a river, stream, lake, wetland, coast or other water body.



is 20 metres, however this can vary. The HGNP identified the need to further protect riparian areas and establish a consistent watercourse buffer. Greater protection for wetlands is also needed, as these areas serve important roles for natural stormwater management, provide wildlife habitat and act as carbon sinks.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

8.8 Adopt policy to direct future study and implementation of a comprehensive water quality monitoring program, including Lake Water Management Plans for urban lakes that establish phosphorus loading limits and mitigation measures and water quality monitoring protocols.

8.9 Update existing policy to reflect the Municipality's recent work to improve stormwater management practices.

8.10 Review and revise existing regulations protecting wetland and riparian areas in HRM land use by-laws to ensure greater protection for these features and ensure standards regulations are adopted across the region.

COASTAL PROTECTION

It is anticipated that sea level rise and extreme water levels, exacerbated by increasing frequency and intensity of storms, will have a significant impact on the Atlantic Coast. HRM can expect significant impacts from sea level rise and extreme water levels in coastal areas, including flooding, saltwater intrusion and coastal erosion, all of which can significantly damage infrastructure, property and natural features. As a result, it is very important to limit damage to coastal communities and ecosystems by carefully managing development in these areas.

In 2019, the Province of Nova Scotia passed the Coastal Protection Act to protect coastal properties and ecosystems. Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change is currently developing regulations, including horizontal and vertical setbacks for development and guidance for the protection of coastal marshes and barrier beaches to ensure new construction is built in places that are safer from sea level rise and coastal flooding. The Municipality is continuing to work with the Province to support the development of these regulations. Staff have identified several opportunities to improve the Municipality's existing regulations and anticipate bringing forward several changes through the Regional Plan Review that are informed by the Provincial regulations and tailored to suit the HRM context.

In addition, HalifACT calls for the Municipality to study the coast to identify vulnerabilities to sea level rise and update this information on a regular basis. This would allow for the creation of a coastal-specific adaptation strategy that will help to protect coastal communities by identifying where adaptation measures are needed and what measures should be used. Many adaptation measures are interdependent and should be used together.

COASTAL EROSION

A natural process that consists of the breakdown (or "weathering") of rock and sediments at the shoreline both above and below the water surface. In Atlantic Canada, coastal erosion happens as a result of the action of waves, and to a lesser extent tidal action, wind, storm surge, ice, rain, and surface runoff creating risks for public safety and damages to properties and infrastructure.

COASTAL SPECIFIC ADAPTATION STRATEGY

Policies and actions that tackle the challenges of climate adaptation in coastal areas. Policies and actions may include retreating from eroding coasts, strengthening coasts by re-naturalizing coastal lands or building dykes, and developing structures that can accommodate flooding.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

8.11 Continue to work with the Province to develop and adopt revised policies and regulations consistent with the Coastal Protection Act and tailored to the HRM context. This work will consider:

- Whether the current required elevation is sufficient given expected sea level rise, storm surge and coastal erosion risks (currently 3.8 CGVD - equivalent to 3.2 CGVD 2013);
- Requiring different horizontal setbacks for coastal shorelines and inland watercourses;
- Requiring coastal elevations (vertical setbacks) to apply to all uses, not just residential properties;
- Providing guidance for estuaries, salt marshes, barrier beaches and similar features;
- Providing guidance for resilient infrastructure design;
- Replacing the CGVD28 standard with CGVD2013; and
- Ensuring consistentregulations are applied across the region

8.12 Complete a spatially-based risk and vulnerability analysis of HRM's coastal waterfront and shoreline area and adopt policy to direct development of a coastal-specific adaptation strategy.

8.13 Establish requirements for updating municipal LiDAR data, digital elevation models and coastal vulnerability mapping.





THEME 9

LEADING THROUGH ACTION ON CLIMATE

Climate change is real, urgent, complex, and a global crisis. With the changing climate, we face hazards to health, economic growth, safety and the natural world. In HRM, Regional Council has declared a climate emergency and, guided by HalifACT the Municipality is working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support communities' resiliency to the effects of climate change.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE (IPCC)

The IPCC, the United Nations' body for assessing the science related to climate change, provides policymakers with regular scientific assessments on climate change, its implications and potential future risks, and puts forward adaption and mitigation options.

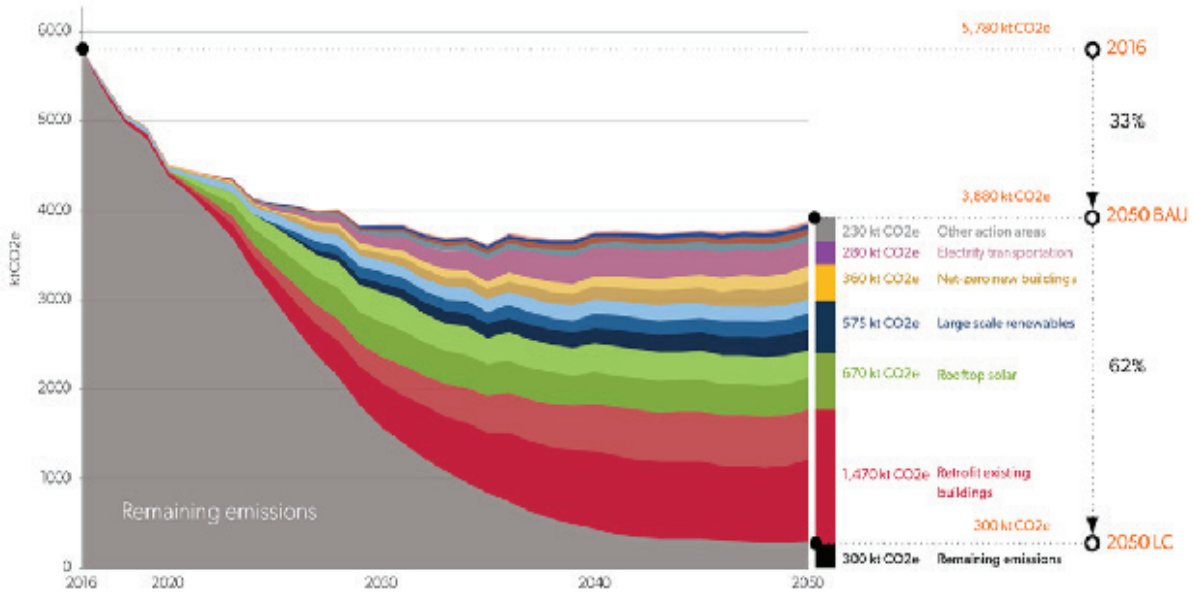
HALIFACT: ACTING ON CLIMATE TOGETHER

HalifACT: Acting on Climate Together is the Municipality's long-term climate action plan to reduce emissions and help communities adapt to a changing climate. The priority plan aligns with the 1.5-degree Celsius pathway recommended by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The plan sets a target of net-zero municipal operations by 2030, and community-wide targets of a 75% emissions reduction from the baseline year of 2016 by 2030, and net-zero emissions by 2050.

HalifACT is a community-wide plan with many stakeholders, and with the complexity that the climate crisis presents, implementation requires a new way of thinking and working. Climate impacts need to be considered as a critical part of all planning initiatives. The Regional Plan Review provides an opportunity to further integrate the climate targets and actions outlined in HalifACT into the Municipality's planning documents in a more comprehensive way.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

9.1 Update the Environment, Energy and Climate Change chapter of the Regional Plan to reflect HalifACT's net-zero emissions targets and require consideration of climate impacts across issue areas.



EFFICIENT, RESILIENT BUILDINGS AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

To achieve the Municipality's climate action goals and reduce our collective GHG emissions, HalifACT's recommendations include specific actions that can be supported through planning policy and land use regulations.

In 2016, buildings accounted for approximately 70% of total energy use in Halifax and 77% of total emissions. Retrofitting existing buildings and ensuring that new buildings are more efficient are necessary components of a successful energy transition. The design of new buildings can maximize energy performance by considering solar orientation, building shape, energy performance of the envelope and roof, high-efficiency equipment and adding on-site renewable energy. Although existing buildings are constrained by design decisions made in the past, retrofitting existing buildings will also be important to make sure the Municipality's buildings are more energy efficient and resilient to future climate impacts such as severe storms, flooding and heat.

Significantly reducing GHG emissions will require switching away from higher-carbon fuels like fuel oil and natural gas to zero carbon fuels like renewable electricity, renewable natural gas and green hydrogen. Renewable energy generation and energy storage will reduce emissions and help communities to become more resilient to power outages from extreme weather events. Existing programs, such as the Municipality's solar energy financing program, Solar City, will be adapted and expanded to include deep energy retrofits and climate resilience measures. Opportunities for low carbon district energy and microgrid systems can be explored through major planning projects. Wide-spread adoption of electric vehicles will require planning for and building charging infrastructure throughout the region.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

9.2 Consider adopting policy to encourage net-zero and climate resilient new construction when considering discretionary planning applications.

9.3 Consider adopting policy to encourage the use of alternative energy systems, such as district energy and microgrids, as part of secondary planning and master neighbourhood planning projects.

9.4 Review land use by-laws to identify regulations that may be a barrier for solar installations, energy storage systems, and electric vehicle infrastructure, and adjust land use policy and regulations as necessary.

9.5 Review the Regional Plan's wind energy policy to ensure it reflects current technology and provides opportunities for large-scale wind energy generation.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE RESILIENCY

Understanding climate change hazards and impacts, especially in vulnerable communities, are a critical aspect of Emergency Management and a core action of HalifACT. Infrastructure faces challenges related to capacity and age, as well as the impacts of extreme climate events. As climate events become more extreme and occur more frequently, increases in disruption and damage to these infrastructure systems, and the subsequent costs to repair or replace them will increase. When these systems fail, there can be significant impacts on the environment, society, and economy. As the region sees increased growth, emergency services and climate change impacts must be better incorporated into the planning process.

HalifACT identified that critical infrastructure needs to withstand the impacts of climate change, both in the near and long term. This will require the Municipality to proactively protect and strengthen infrastructure to ensure it can withstand climate change impacts such as increasingly extreme storms and climbing average temperatures. Improving community resilience will reduce the resources needed for emergency response and to repair or replace infrastructure. Understanding where, what and how much action and investment is required to reduce the risk to Halifax's critical infrastructure requires a better understanding of the risks and vulnerabilities these systems face in a changing climate.

Not all people will be affected equally by climate change. Vulnerable communities are those who may face increased exposure to climate risks, increased sensitivity to climate risks, and/or limited adaptive capacity for coping with climate impacts. Similarly, not all will be able to equally contribute to the significant action and investment required to decarbonize. The Municipality must take a leadership role to identify climate risk and develop strategies to mitigate that risk.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

9.6 Identify current and future climate change hazards and critical infrastructure at risk to extreme climate events.

9.7 Adopt policy to prioritize resiliency measures that will help reduce risk, protect critical infrastructure and require building back better.

9.8 Adopt policy to require emergency management services and current and future climate change hazard projections are considered as part of the as-of-right development process, discretionary planning applications, and during reviews of secondary plans and land use by-laws.




HALIFAX
METRO
CENTRE

THEME 10

IMAGINING HRM INTO 2050 AND BEYOND

As 2020 has taught us, society can change dramatically over a short time. However, with long-range planning, the municipality can be better prepared to handle an uncertain future, and to some extent, even direct what the future can look like based on a shared vision. Now that this plan is nearing the end of its lifespan (2031), it is time to begin thinking about what we want HRM to look like further into the future

WHY CONSIDER LONG-RANGE POLICY?

Our ideas about what the future may look like can change drastically over a few decades. In 2006, the municipality did not foresee the population growth we are currently seeing in 2021, most of which is due to immigration. In 2006, the municipality was not planning for pandemics that would transform how we work, where we choose to live, how we travel, and the importance of outdoor spaces. Since 2006, there has also been an increased push to act on climate change and real understanding of how climate change is already impacting communities (e.g., droughts, forest fires, flooding, and increased hurricanes). Social movements exposing the impacts of inequality and systemic racism have also been growing stronger each year. In 2006, the aim of our planning documents was to ensure efficiency and affordability for the municipality and to start thinking about the importance of complete communities. While these concepts are still a major focus for planning documents, plans must also demonstrate how we will tackle and prepare for climate change and crises and improve social well-being for traditionally under-served and under-represented groups.

Now is the time to start talking to communities about what they think is important to consider when envisioning HRM into 2050 and beyond. With increased population, we need to consider where are the most appropriate places to encourage more or new development and what form it should take (e.g., single unit dwellings, apartments, townhouses, shared housing, small lots, large lots). What will the household makeup look like? Will people prefer living in group settings (with family or roommates) or in small units with small household sizes? Will it be important for residents to be able to travel with ease (by car, transit, bike or walking) to downtowns and business parks or will "working from home" or suburban employment centres become the norm for a growing number of work sectors? How important will the protection of our open space and wilderness areas be to a growing population? Are residents concerned about losing the character of our historic downtowns and rural communities or are they excited about change? What do residents think is most important when considering setting up today's children for success?

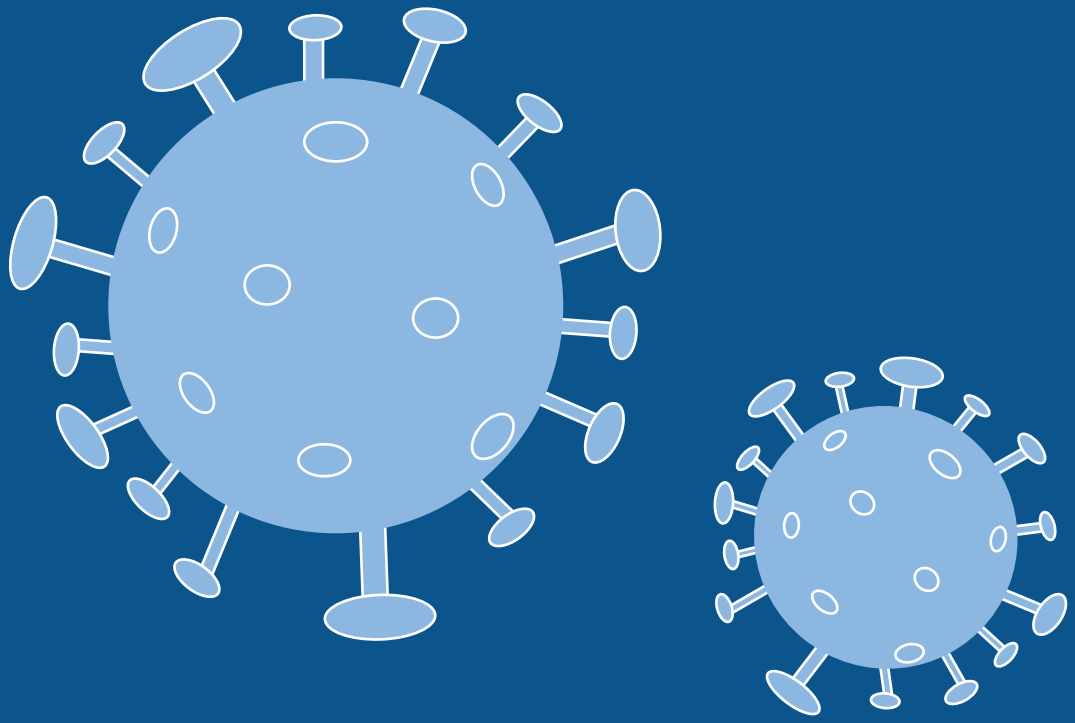
As 2020 has taught us, there are some variables we cannot control. These include pandemics, federal immigration policies that impact population growth, the impacts of climate change, industry and workforce trends (like increased automation, moving to green technology, workforce skills, ability to work anywhere with internet, market demand for traditional industries), and the global economy and political forces. However, we have the power to create tools and policies that incentivize development in ways that work toward a shared vision of what HRM can be in the future.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

10.1 Develop and model several future scenarios based on stable and uncertain variables. Determine what policies should be prioritized based on several scenarios.

10.2 Design a framework for how to engage communities on what they think should be studied and considered when planning for the future of HRM. This engagement will inform what to research over the next number of years to position us for the 2026-2030 Regional Plan Review.





THEME 11

ASSESSING THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented global public health crisis that has significant implications for the social and economic well-being of our region. HRM is facing great uncertainty, and the Regional Plan can help to guide the Municipality's recovery and response.

HOW WILL THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW CONSIDER COVID-19?

The pandemic has had an unequal impact on traditionally underrepresented groups and those with underlying health conditions, and further demonstrates the need for planning policies that support residents of all backgrounds. The policies of the Regional Plan and the underlying Priorities Plans can be used to support complete, safe and healthy communities where residents can access services and amenities within their own communities, a robust open space and active transportation network, and innovative community economic development concepts that support local business and enliven public spaces in the midst of physical distancing and gathering restrictions (e.g., introducing open streets and reducing barriers to outdoor dining, shopping and recreation). COVID-19 has seen a major shift to how and where people work, which could significantly impact employment areas and change commuting patterns. There has been an increased demand in the housing market for larger homes with private backyards, where people have extra space to work from home. The Regional Plan Review will continue to monitor trends in working from home, housing-form preferences, where people choose to live and commercial and office vacancy rates, and will aim to develop flexible land use policy and regulations that can adapt to changing conditions.

The Regional Plan Review is considering that certain aspects of society may shift for an extended period or indefinitely. Indicators of societal change may include:

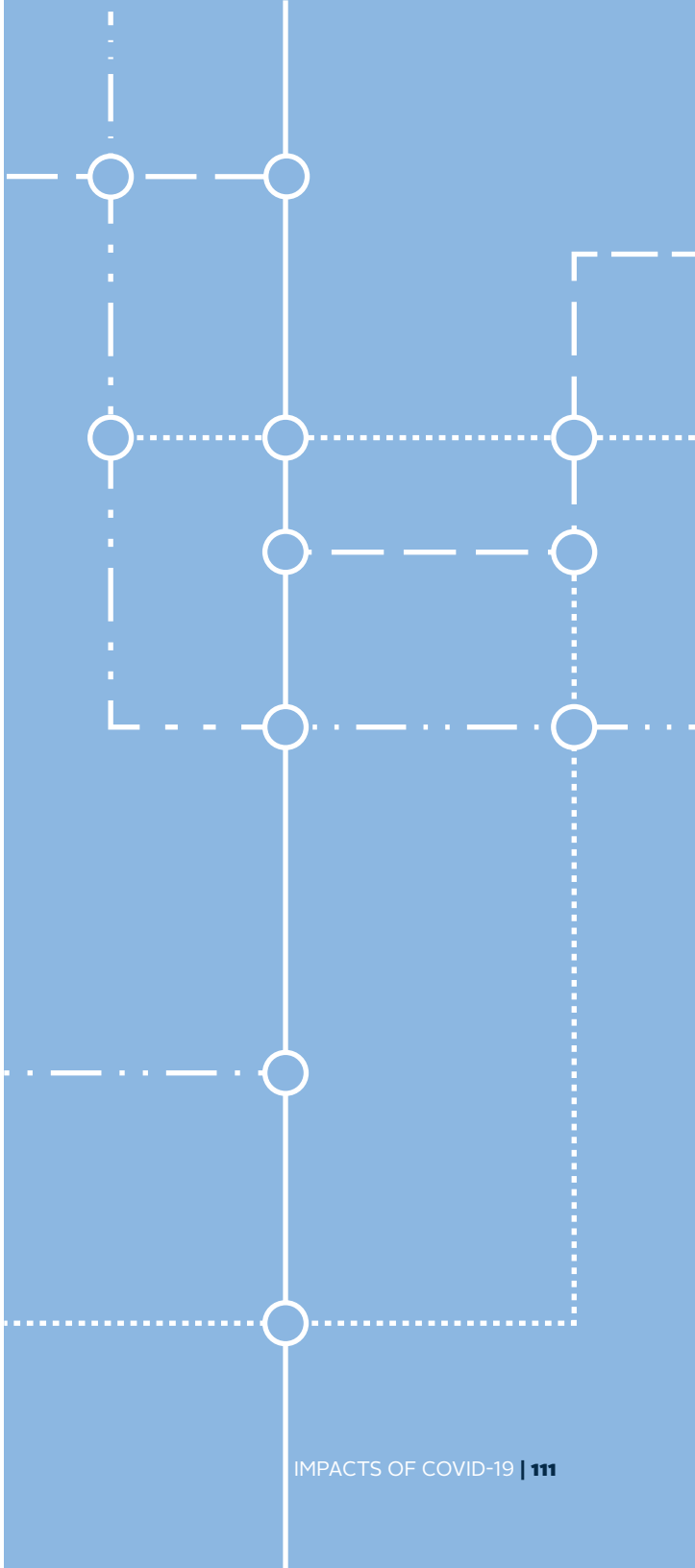
- how and where people work and attend school;
- comfort levels regarding social gatherings;
- housing-form preferences (single- or multi-unit housing, high density or low density, access to a private backyard);
- community-form preferences (urban, suburban, rural, mixed-use, small complete communities);
- changes to how people move throughout the Region; and
- the importance of outdoor and public spaces and active transportation networks.

THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

11.1 Continue to monitor the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on social, economic, environmental and population growth indicators, and adopt a framework for tracking these trends to guide future regional planning.

11.2 Identify communities with inequitable access to the social determinants of health necessary to weather a pandemic, such as housing, food security, access to green/amenity space, and transportation options, and focus on prioritizing the servicing of these communities.

11.3 Explore the potential impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on community design preferences by engaging residents about their ability to work from home, changing travel patterns, the demand for "complete communities," housing-form preferences and needs, their use of outdoor spaces, and changes in how residents socialize and gather.





GLOSSARY

Adaptation Measures: Actions that reduce the negative impact of climate change, while taking advantage of potential new opportunities.

Affordable Housing Work Plan: The result of more than a year of community engagement and consultation. It will guide the work of the Affordable Housing Working Group (part of the Housing and Homelessness Partnership) over the next five years. The focus of the plan is to build and preserve existing housing stock.

Amalgamation: Halifax Regional Municipality was created in 1996 upon the dissolving and combining (amalgamation) of 4 former municipalities (the City of Halifax, the City of Dartmouth, the Town of Bedford, and Halifax County).

Anti-Poverty Strategy/ Building Poverty Solutions: Ideas for Action Report: A collaboration between HRM and United Way Halifax, this report represents a point in time (2018) to understand the state of poverty in Halifax Regional Municipality, listen to the voices of the community, and reflect back content developed with cross-sectoral community input. It is an important first step in building our understanding and supporting community partners to address the experiences of poverty in HRM, with a focus on eliminating it.

As-of-right development: Development that complies with all applicable zoning regulations and does not require public engagement or Council approval. A development permit issued by a Development Officer is an as-of-right development process.

Autonomous Vehicles: Also known as a self-driving car, it is a computer-controlled car that drives itself.

Barrier Beaches: Narrow and elongate beaches situated parallel to the shoreline. By definition, the beach provides a barrier between the mainland and adjacent nearshore wetland, such as a salt marsh or mudflat and marine waters offshore.

Built Form: The physical shape, size and location of a structure.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT): A high-quality bus system that provides transit riders with fast, frequent, comfortable, higher capacity service. Where possible, it uses transit priority lanes. Off-board fare collection and level boarding improve accessibility and reduce time spent at stops.

Coastal Erosion: A natural process that consists of the breakdown (or "weathering") of rock and sediments at the shoreline, both above and below the water surface. In Atlantic Canada, coastal erosion happens as a result of the action of waves, and to a lesser extent tidal action, wind, storm surge, ice, rain, and surface runoff creating risks for public safety and damages to properties and infrastructure.

Coastal Marshes / Salt Marshes: Vegetated wetland that is flooded regularly by tidal water, or influenced by salt spray or seepage, such that the water and/or soil is saline or brackish. Tidal channels and/or ponds may be present.

Coastal-Specific Adaptation Strategy: Policies and actions that tackle the challenges of climate adaptation in coastal areas. Policies and actions may include retreating from eroding coasts, strengthening coasts by re-naturalizing coastal lands or building dykes, and developing structures that can accommodate flooding.

Community Benefits Agreements: Seek to achieve community benefits from infrastructure and development projects. They are collaboratively designed and implemented between communities, developers, and government. Benefits may include local, inclusive employment, procurement from a social impact or equity seeking business, or local procurement.

Community-led Planning: The community is directly involved in creating the plan and in ensuring that the actions are delivered. The planning process is based directly on community needs and ambitions, collaborative, open and inclusive, flexible and responsive, and sustainable.

Commuter-oriented Communities: The area from which a significant proportion of residents commute to work.

Complete Communities: Communities that include a range of uses and housing options to accommodate people in all stages of life, all abilities, and at a variety of income levels. Complete communities provide a place for residents to live, work, shop, learn and play. Complete communities contain mixed uses and compact development that enables people to safely and conveniently access the goods and services they need in their daily lives, all within a short journey and without the need to depend on a personal motor vehicle.

Complete Streets: A holistic, flexible, context-sensitive approach to planning, design, operations and maintenance of streets that enables safe, convenient

and comfortable travel and access for users of all ages and abilities regardless of transportation mode (e.g. on foot, rolling, on a bicycle, using transit, in a private vehicle). It recognizes that public streets are also places that can serve a social, economic and ecological function. A Complete Streets approach can apply to a wide variety of streets and is adaptable to the urban, suburban and rural contexts.

Cultural Landscapes: Cultural landscapes are places that connect the Region's residents and visitors to local history. Typically associated with a historic event, activity, person or group of people, they reflect human interaction with the land over time. Some of these areas are designated and protected, while others have yet to be officially recognized.

Discretionary Approvals: A planning process that requires public engagement and approval by Council or a designated authority. A rezoning, development agreement or municipal planning strategy amendment is considered a discretionary approval.

Food Insecurity: Means that members of a household have difficulty accessing or worry about not having enough personally acceptable food for a healthy, active life. Household food insecurity is closely related to poverty; the lower the income, the higher the risk of food insecurity.

Food Policy Alliance: Formed in 2013, the Halifax Food Policy Alliance (HFPA) is a partnership of individuals and organizations that represent different sectors related to the food system working toward a vision of Halifax, where no one is hungry and everyone has nutritious food that they enjoy, for generations to come, sustained by local producers.

Green Infrastructure: A network of natural and semi-natural engineered landscape elements designed to provide products and services such as stormwater management, water filtration and improved air quality.

HalifACT: Acting on Climate Together: HRM's long-term climate change plan to reduce emissions and help our communities adapt. The plan was adopted by Regional Council on June 23, 2020 and guides efforts to reduce emissions by conserving energy and increasing access to clean energy sources. It also helps communities adapt by raising awareness and helping people prepare.

Halifax Green Network Plan: Approved in 2018, this plan defines an interconnected open space system for the municipality, highlights ecosystem functions and benefits, and outlines strategies to manage open space.

Heat Island Effect: The heat island effect occurs when closely-packed buildings and paved surfaces amplify and trap heat in dense urban areas. These surfaces trap heat more effectively than natural ecosystems. Urban areas also generate heat through furnaces, air conditioners and vehicles, contributing to the problem.

Housing and Homelessness Partnership: A collaborative of nine partners from the three levels of government, private, and non-profit sectors that works with community partners to end homelessness and housing poverty in Halifax.

Housing Continuum: The range of housing types available in a community — from emergency shelters on one end, all the way to homeownership on the other. In between lies an assortment of housing options and types, each critically important for different people at different times.

Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) Charter: The provincial legislative document that sets out what HRM can and cannot do. Part 8 of the HRM Charter enables the Municipality to assume primary authority for planning within its jurisdiction, consistent with its urban or rural character, through the adoption of municipal planning strategies and land-use by-laws consistent with interests and regulations of the Province. The HRM Charter requires the Municipality to adopt a Municipal Planning Strategy (the Regional Plan) that includes policies which provide a framework for the environmental, social, and economic development of the Municipality.

Integrated Mobility Plan: Approved by Regional Council in December 2017, this plan creates a regional vision for mobility and helps to direct future investment in transportation demand management, transit, active transportation, and the roadway network.

JustFOOD: an action plan for the Halifax Region: This plan will engage with residents and stakeholders and unify efforts to develop "grown in Halifax" solutions. As the first food strategy in our Region, it will create a comprehensive plan to guide actions to improve food security, with clear roles for all actors in the food system and the necessary resources for positive change.

Land Use By-Law: The regulatory document that implements the intent of a municipal planning strategy.

Mode Share: The proportion of people using a given type of transportation, such as private vehicles or transit.

Municipal Drinking Water Supplies: The lakes, rivers, streams and groundwater where our drinking water comes from. The Halifax Regional Water Commission manages these areas to maintain or improve the quality of drinking water before it reaches the water supply plant and eventually our taps.

Natural Areas: Areas that have not previously been developed.

Natural Corridors: There are two types of natural corridors identified in the Halifax Green Network Plan: Essential Corridors which are connections that provide unique or critical connections between important core areas, the loss of which would severely degrade connectivity throughout the Region and to adjacent Municipalities; and Important Corridors which are connections between natural habitats, the loss of which would impact local connectivity but are unlikely to impact overall regional connectivity.

Natural Resource Extraction: The process of withdrawing materials from the natural environment, including mining and logging.

Outdoor Amenities: May include playgrounds, benches, trees that provide shade, pools, gardens, or space to play.

Park Management Plan: A document that outlines the vision and direction for a park and action to achieve that vision.

Plan Amendment Applications: Submitted when the desired use or development on a piece of land is not permitted within the existing Council-approved municipal planning strategy policies that apply to the area. Amendments to a municipal planning strategy are significant undertakings and Council is under no obligation to consider such requests. Amendments should be only considered within the broader planning context or when there is reason to believe there has been a change to the circumstances since the policy was adopted or last reviewed.

Priority Plans: Subject-focused plans used to advance directions from the Regional Plan. These include the Integrated Mobility Plan, Halifax Green Network Plan, Halifax's Economic Growth Plan, Sharing Our Stories: Culture & Heritage Plan, and HalifACT 2050: Community Energy & Climate Action Plan.

Rapid Transit Network: Frequent transit service separated partially or completely from general road traffic and therefore able to maintain higher levels of speed, reliability and vehicle productivity than can be achieved by transit vehicles operating in mixed traffic.

Rapid Transit Strategy: Approved by Regional Council in May 2020, this strategy builds on the vision from the Integrated Mobility Plan and establishes a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Network, proposes new ferry service, and sets a direction for land use policy to align with Rapid Transit.

Riparian Areas: The area adjacent to the banks of a river, stream, lake, wetland, coast or other water body.

Saltwater Intrusion: The movement of saltwater into underground sources (aquifers) of freshwater, which can occur in coastal regions or inland, and the surface movement of saltwater inland from the coast.

Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy: A community-level plan, subject to Regional Plan, that provides more detailed land use policy and regulations for a particular area of the Municipality.

Sequester Carbon: The long-term storage of carbon dioxide in plants, soils, geologic formations, and the ocean to prevent it from entering the Earth's atmosphere.

Sharing Our Stories: Also known as the Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan (CHPP), the Sharing Our Stories project will provide direction for the Municipality's role in supporting culture and heritage.

Stormwater: Rainwater that runs off land and moves away from the area where it originally falls. In urban or built up areas, it is best defined as rain that runs off surfaces where water cannot penetrate such as roofs, driveways and roads.

Stormwater Management: Methods or techniques used to reduce localized flooding and improve the quality of wet weather flow reaching waterbodies.

Strategic Multi-Modal Corridor: Transportation corridors that are important based on their role in moving people and goods by all mobility modes including active transportation (walking, rolling and cycling), transit, and by vehicle.

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.

The Task Force on the Commemoration of Edward Cornwallis and the Recognition and Commemoration of Indigenous History: An expert panel to review and advise Council regarding any changes to the commemoration of Edward Cornwallis on municipal assets, including Cornwallis Park and Cornwallis Street, and recommendations to recognize and commemorate the indigenous history in the lands now known as Halifax Regional Municipality.

Transit Priority Corridors: A street in the transportation network that features measures to give increased priority to transit vehicles, such as dedicated transit lanes.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM): A strategy aimed at reducing peak hour congestion by providing people with choice in how, when and whether they commute to work. TDM initiatives aim to improve the efficiency of the transportation network by encouraging alternatives to the single occupant vehicle trip and changing travel behaviour.

Urban Service Area: Encompasses areas where municipal approval for serviced development has been granted, as shown on Schedule B of the Regional Subdivision By-Law.

Urban Transit Service Boundary: The outer limit for providing conventional bus service, as prescribed in the Regional Plan. It closely follows the boundary of the Urban Service Area, including all contiguous communities in Halifax which currently have both municipal water and municipal sewer, where homes are generally closer together.

Watershed: An area of land that contains a common set of streams and rivers that all drain into a single larger body of water, such as a larger river, a lake or an ocean.

Western Common Wilderness Common (WCWC) Master Plan: Adopted by Regional Council on June 15, 2010. The Western Common Wilderness Advisory Committee was given the mandate to advise the design team for the Wilderness Common on planning and development issues related to the Western Common Wilderness area lands.

Working Landscape: Places that support economic activity, including forestry, agriculture, tourism, and extraction activities.