

Welcome to Today's Virtual Q&A!

Meeting will Commence at 6:30 pm

June 16, 2021

HALIFAX

Slide 1



REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW

Themes and Directions

Long-Range Planning Q & A
June 16, 2021

HALIFAX



WHY ARE WE HERE TODAY?

We are reviewing the Regional Plan.

We are here to provide an **overview of the proposed Themes and Directions**. This is the first major deliverable of the Regional Plan Review. We are kicking off a month-long engagement period on this work, including webinars on 6 key themes.

- Social Planning
- Housing
- Climate
- Environment
- Mobility
- **Long Range planning**

We are here today because we are reviewing the Regional Plan, which means we are evaluating our land use policies and making sure they represent the direction Council would like to set. We are contemplating how the municipality is physically organized and growing.

We kicked off this phase of public engagement on May 20th at Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee – which is the primary advisory body for this work.

This evening's session is focused on Long-Range Planning and is our last webinar for the week.

The Halifax Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (Regional Plan) is a strategic document built on a common vision and principles for the municipality to achieve balanced and sustainable growth.

Originally adopted in 2006, the Regional Plan provided the first comprehensive guide for future growth for the entire municipality following amalgamation. It outlines where, when, and how future growth and development should take place between now and 2031.

4

Now, just to step back and make sure everyone understands the Regional Plan – it is a strategic document – the first planning document adopted after amalgamation that provided a region-wide vision for land use. First adopted in 2006, it provided a comprehensive outline of how growth and development should take place until 2031.

REGIONAL PLAN TIMELINE



This presents the progression of the Regional Plan over the past 15 years. In 2006, we approved the original Regional Plan, and in 2014 we conducted our first review – you might recognize the name RP+5, which was the brand for that review. You can see we are aiming to complete this review in 2022.

WHAT DOES THE REGIONAL PLAN DO?

- » Provides policy direction for planning at the regional and community level
- » 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



The Regional Plan is powerful in guiding the Municipality's planning and decision-making. As a high-level policy document, it does a few different things - First, the Plan provides policy direction for planning at the regional and community level – the regional plan sits above the community or secondary plan level documents, and above our land use by-laws, and sets region-wide policy intent. Where something is important enough that it should apply everywhere, the Regional Plan policy can set up land use by-law regulations that will be applied region-wide. This has been done most often for our environmental regulations, so for example, for setbacks from watercourses, those policies sit in the Regional Plan, and the regulations are rolled out in every community's land use by-law. It can establish the Municipality's intent to do future research programs or studies. For example, the 2006 Regional Plan called for a series of transportation priorities plans, including a road network plan – which ultimately this became the Integrated Mobility Plan. With its adoption, there is ongoing work related to that plan that will get its own direction in the regional plan. And finally, the Regional Plan identifies where there are needs for different types of programming or opportunities to partner with community or other levels of government. Our mobility network is managed by different levels of government and can be supported through partnerships with other groups across our community. For example, the Regional Plan supports the rural transit funding program, which provides grants to community-based transit services in rural areas.

CENTRAL QUESTION

Regional-Scale

How do we locate housing and employment in smart (strategic) locations, so that growth can happen easily, and in a way that furthers the municipality's most important goals?

7

There are a few key questions we are trying to answer through the review. The first is: How do we locate housing and employment in smart (strategic) locations, so that growth can happen easily, and in a way that furthers the municipality's most important goals?



REGIONAL-SCALE QUESTIONS

How Are We Growing?

What is the projected demand for housing and employment over the horizon of the plan and into the future?

Where Should We Grow?

Where are the best places to locate residential and employment growth? Considerations include:

- The current land use framework and development pattern;
- The existing and future location of services and infrastructure;
- The areas we want to preserve, protect, or treat with special attention; and
- Our aspirations for a sustainable future.

We can break this down into two key questions –

First, how are we growing?

We need to evaluate the projected demand for housing and employment today and into the future. To do this, we are relying on two key pieces of information – our housing and population analysis, and our industrial and employment land analysis.

The second question we ask, is where should we grow?

Once we know how much we are going to grow, we begin to assess where new housing and jobs can be accommodated. It isn't only about where there are pieces of land that can be developed, but where that land is located, as it relates to the location of services and infrastructure.

We think about how and where we can infill, or where we should expand the city into greenfield areas – this is done with careful consideration as to how development can be serviced with water, sewer, transit, recreation – and studying how we should be preserving or protecting important pieces of ecological or cultural land. And as Regional Council has identified aspirations for a sustainable future, such as the Integrated Mobility Plan's mode share targets and the emissions reduction targets in HalifACT, we can update our modelling and assess how different land use growth scenarios might interact with these long-term objectives.

CENTRAL QUESTION

Community-Scale

Now that we have identified the best places to grow and locate residential and employment lands, how do we organize development and enable sustainable, people-oriented design?

As we define how growth should be best located amongst of various communities, we also can assess how that development should be organized to enable sustainable, people-oriented design.



COMMUNITY-SCALE QUESTIONS

How should our communities change as we grow?

What are the vision and community design objectives in our Suburban and Rural Areas?

How are we going to organize brand new communities?

In the places we are going to expand the service boundary how do we ensure a sustainable design? Considerations include:

- Organizing the development pattern to avoid ecological and cultural resources;
- Assessing the impact to receiving waters and the overall watershed; and
- Any required upgrades to regional infrastructure, including any possible shared costs.

10

We can also break the community-scale work down into two key questions –

How should our communities change as we grow?

We can define our vision for how this new growth should occur – especially in the Suburban and Rural Areas of our municipality. We can set out community-design objectives are – and start to envision where centres, corridors and important places are and what they should become in the future.

We also need to assess how we will organize brand new communities?

Places we are going to expand the service boundary are usually greenfield areas, without significant amounts of existing development. As we build these brand-new communities, we need to consider how the development can be organized to protect ecological and cultural resources, as well as how regional infrastructure should be upgraded to accommodate the growth.

11 THEMES

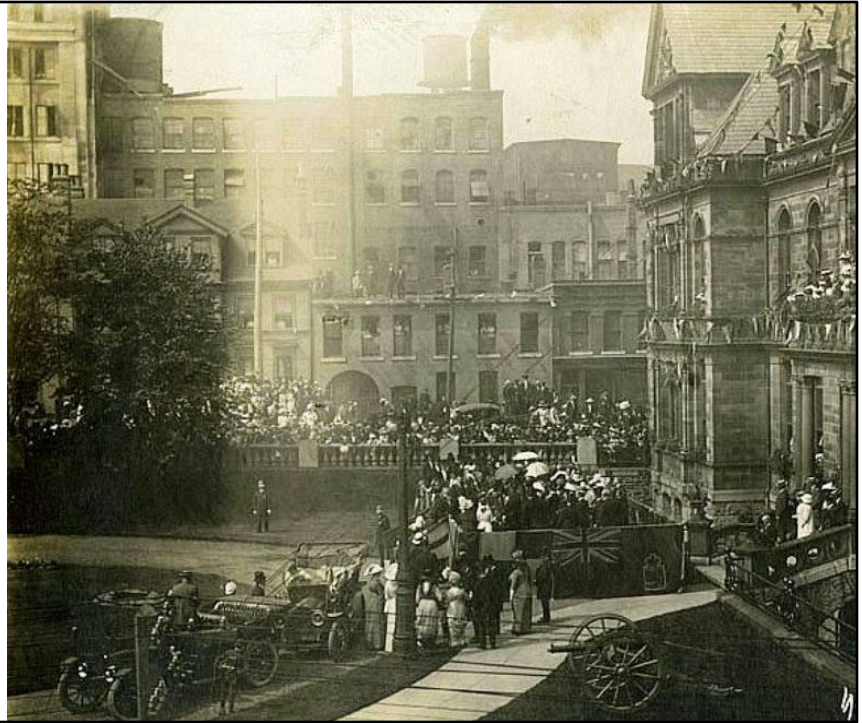


The Themes and Directions document includes 11 Themes. An overview of each theme is available to you on our website – shapeyourcityhalifax.ca/regional-plan.

Today we will be focusing on content from Themes 10 and 1 – Imaging HRM into 2050 and beyond, and Assessing the Impacts of COVID-19.

‘We formed the cities, but then the cities formed us.’

(Gehl, 2013)



Danish architect and urban design consultant based in Copenhagen whose career has focused on improving the quality of urban life by re-orienting city design towards the pedestrian and cyclist.

Every action has a reaction, and impact - sometimes these are major paradigm shifts.

Sometimes these decisions are systemic, widespread and rooted in culture – these affect all aspects of our life and how our cities have been built, and how we plan for them.

Modern planning was invented in response to inhumane living conditions in 19th century cities and to manage uses in such a way that created healthier cities – where noxious uses were separated from places where people live and recreate.

Although this created many benefits at the time, the idea that uses should be separated – for example, separating residential uses from commercial – has affected our communities over time. As technology has improved, and as we have learned more about the impacts of a car-oriented culture, we are working on integrating uses and being less concerned with use separation.

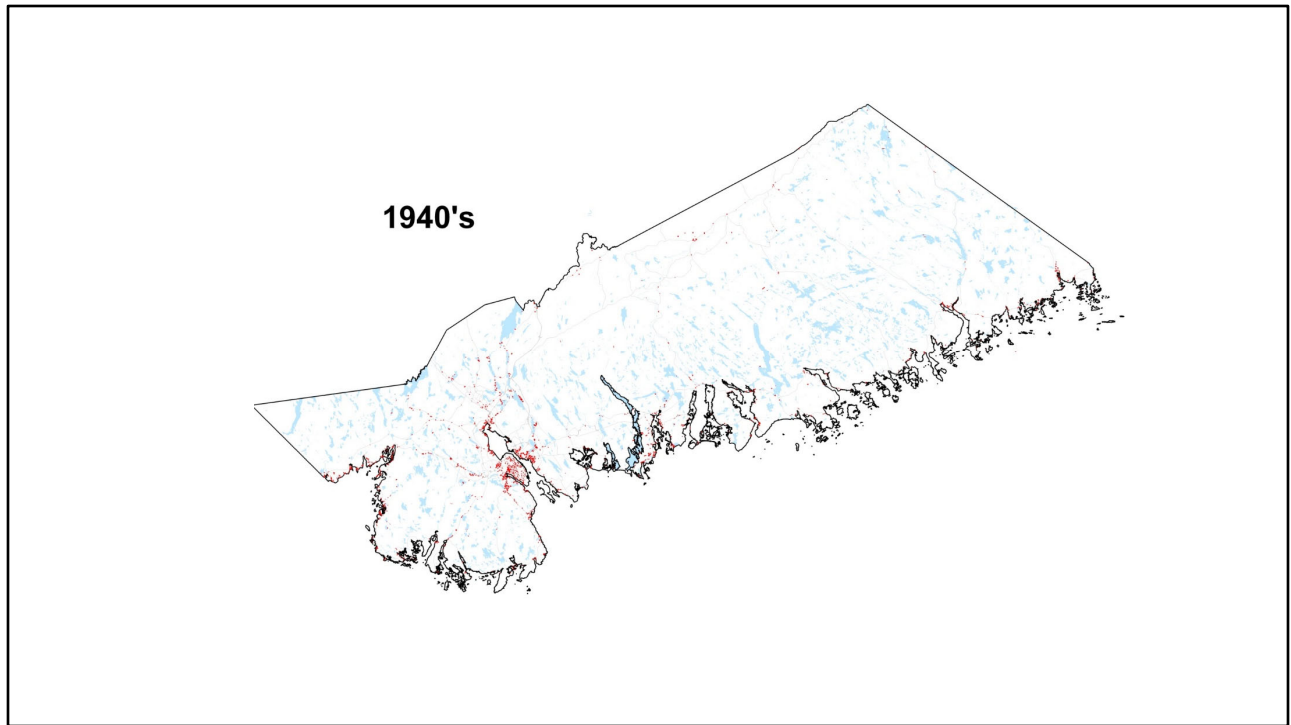
Planning is often thinking about taking an action in building community, thinking about impacts, and then mitigating these impacts.

It can also be about driving towards outcomes, and thinking about what we want to achieve, and creating rules that respond to this.

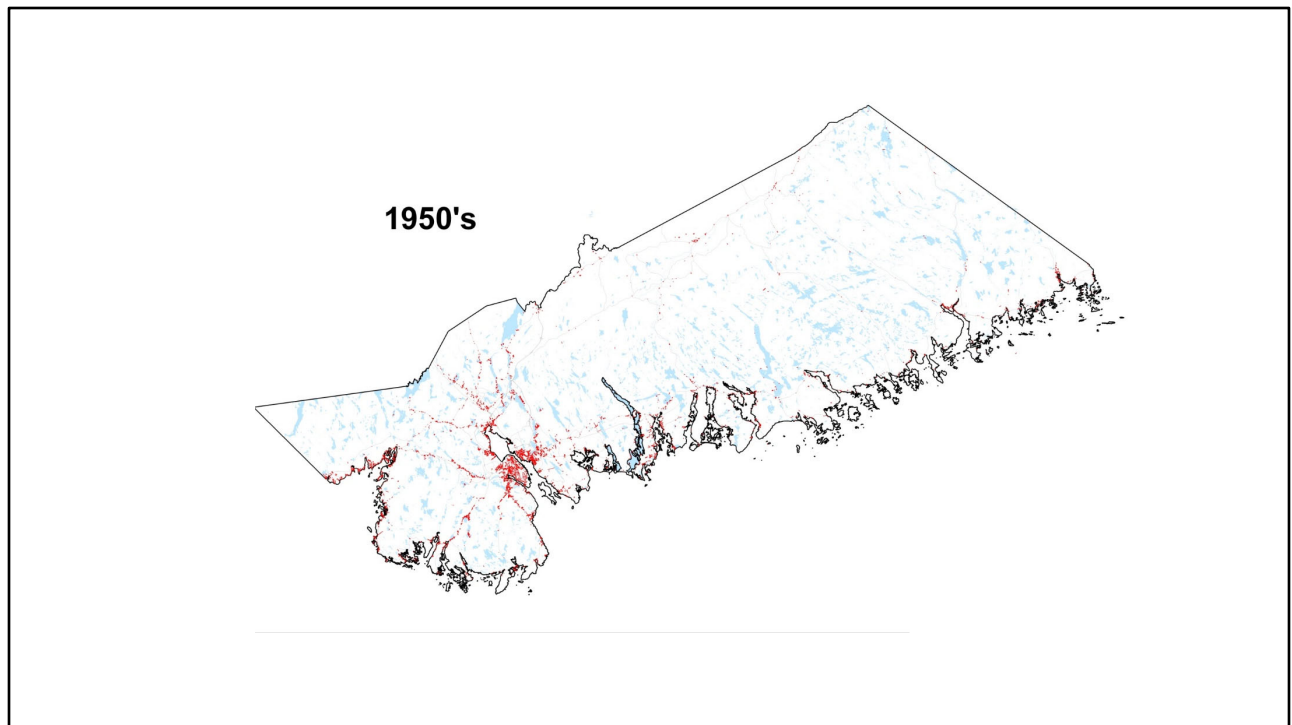
But what are we trying to create?

What is the community we are trying to build?

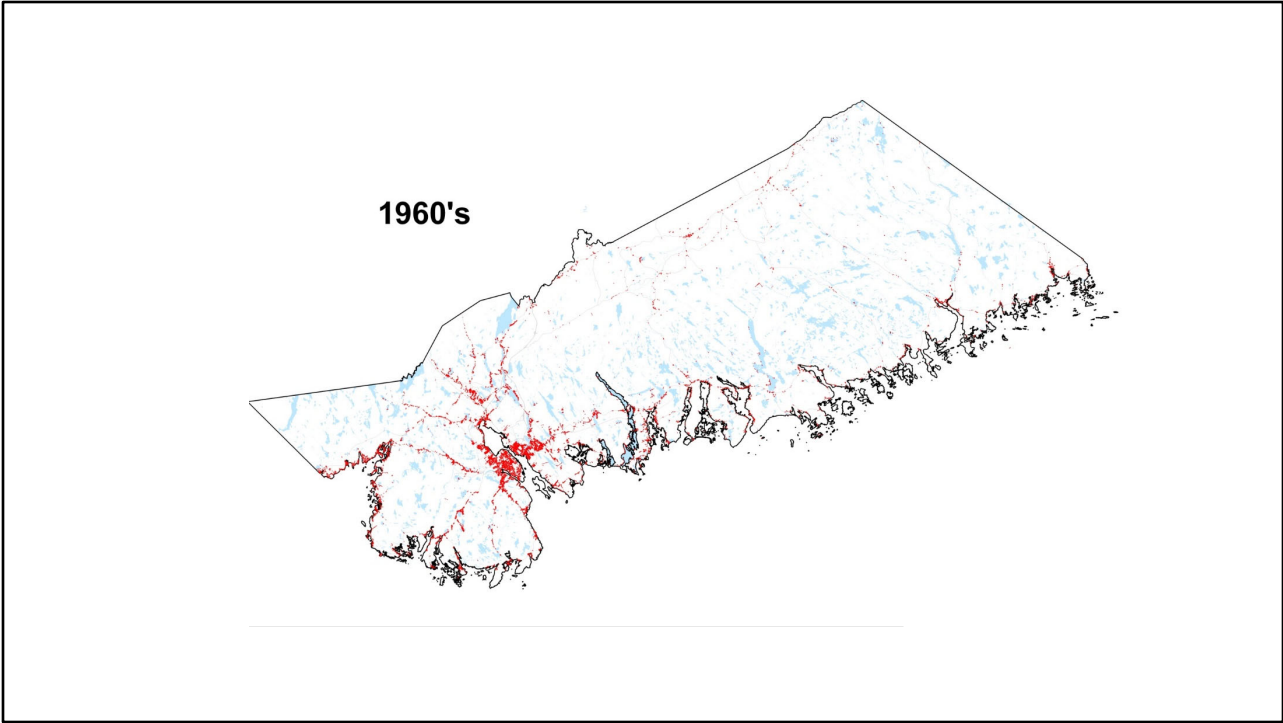
What are the ideas we have about where we have come from, and where we need to go?

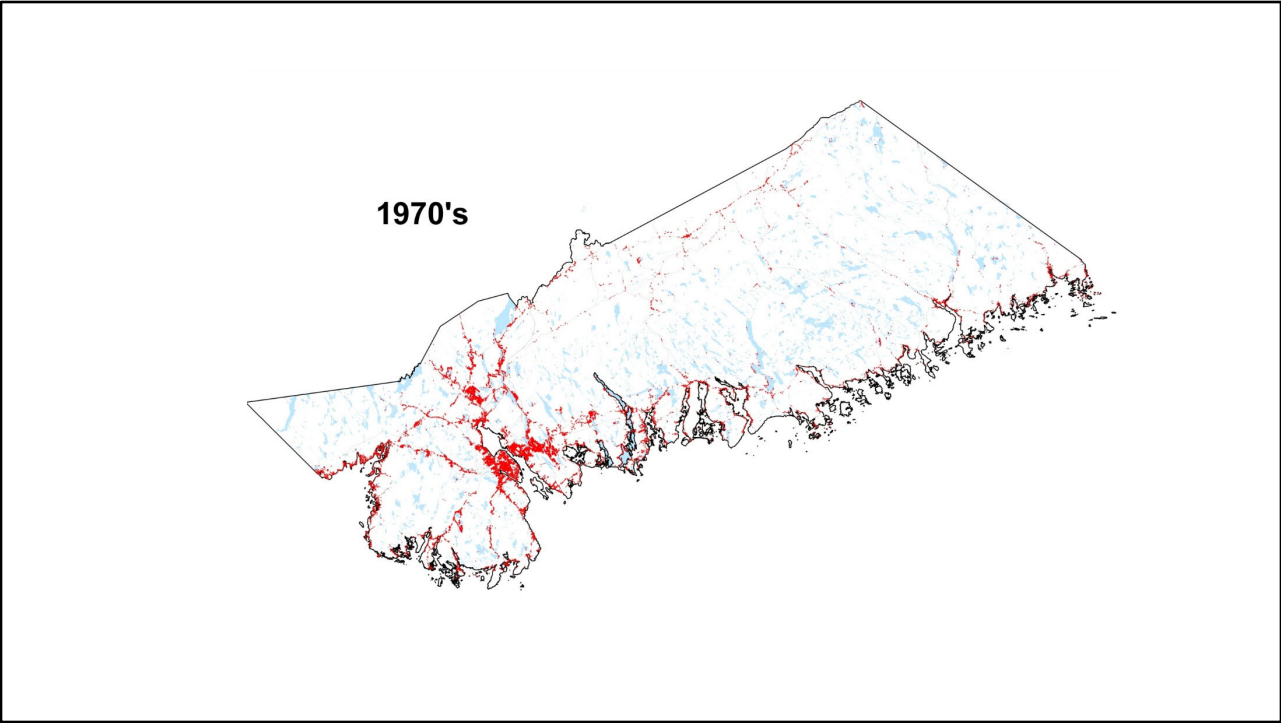


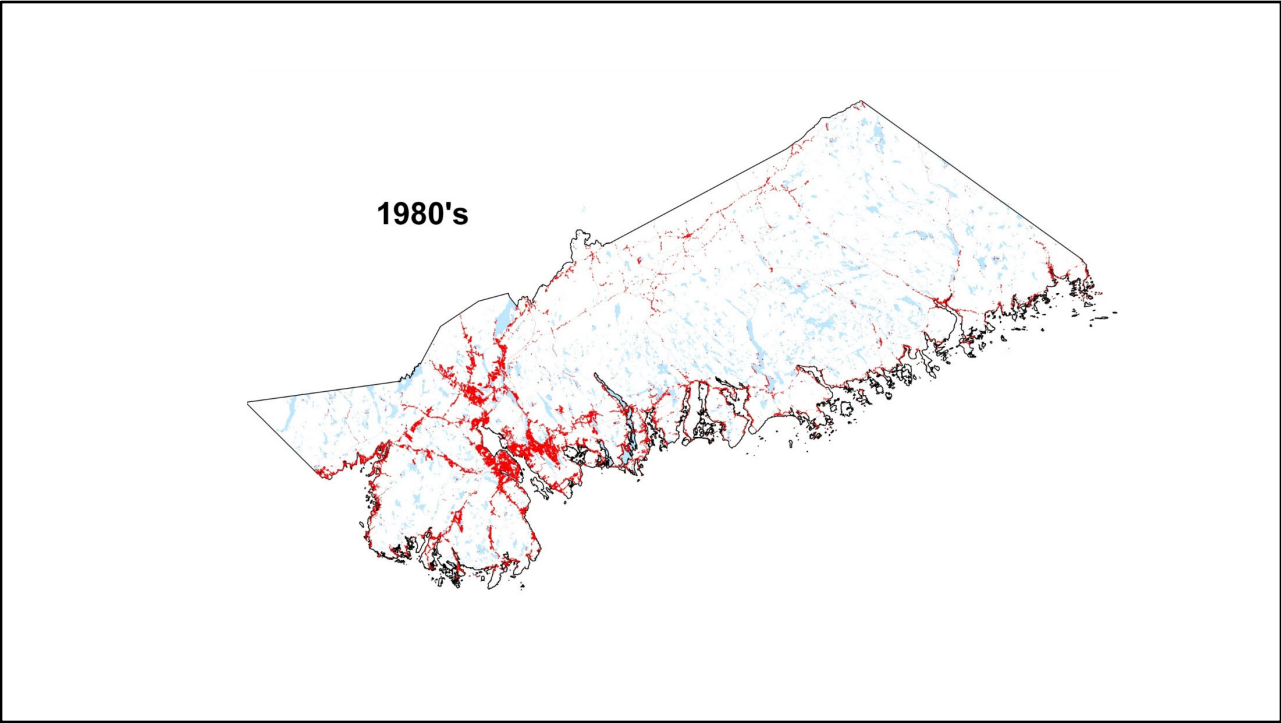
Thirty years ago our region had an unusually compact metro area surrounded by pristine rural landscape and picturesque seashore communities.

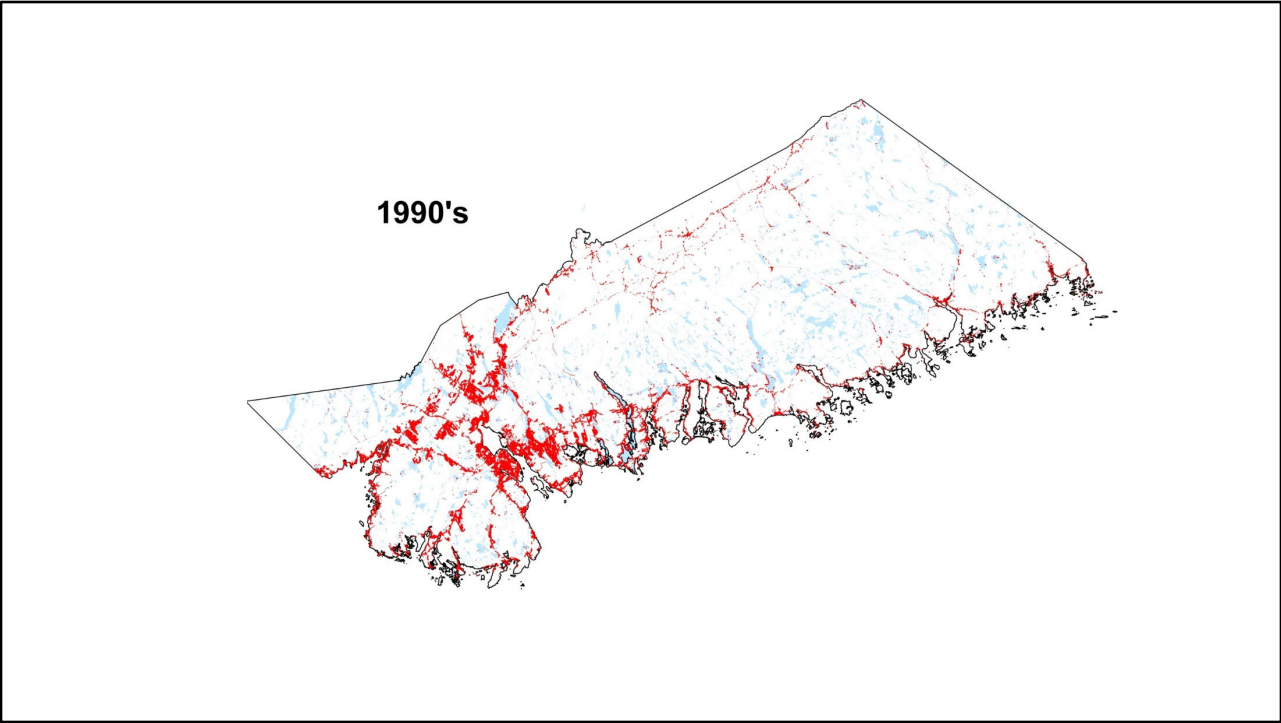


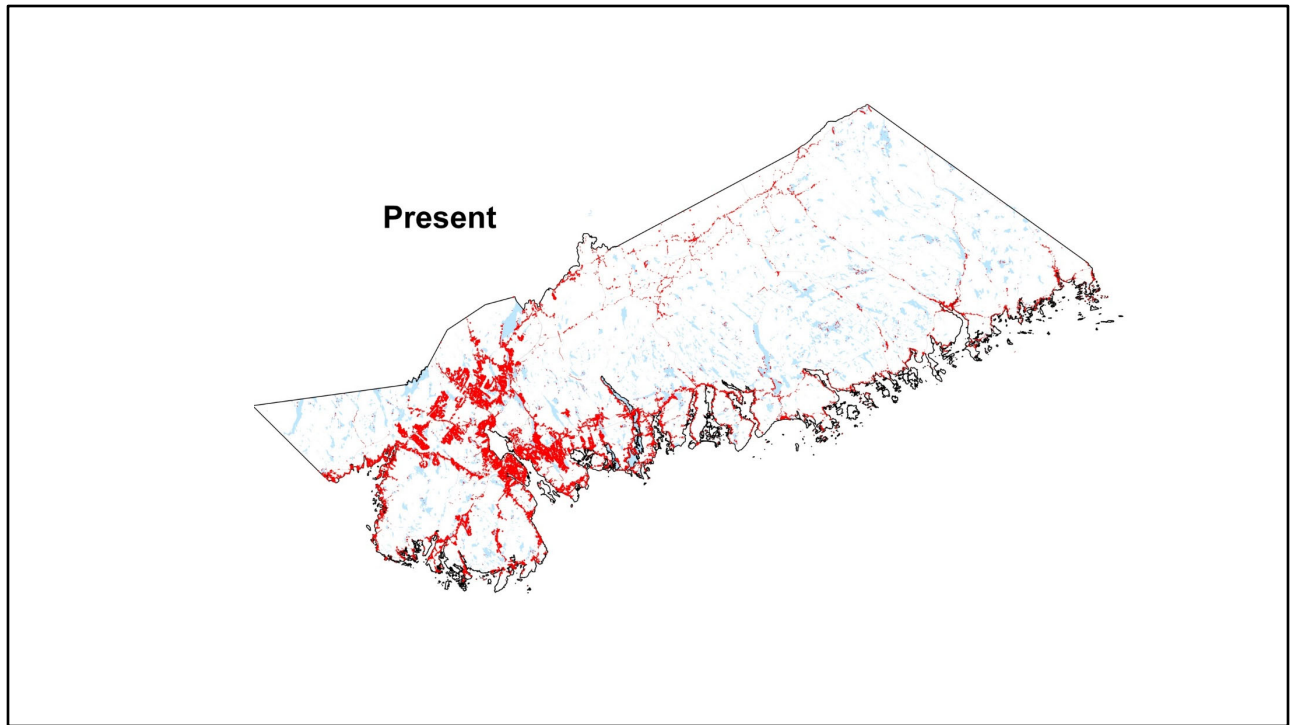
Today twice as many people live in suburban communities and in the rural commutershed. We now occupy four times as much land per person as we did then. This has happened partly because we have fewer people per household, coupled with a growing demand for large houses and lots, and partly because of uncoordinated development and infrastructure, with a lack of control over environmental impacts.



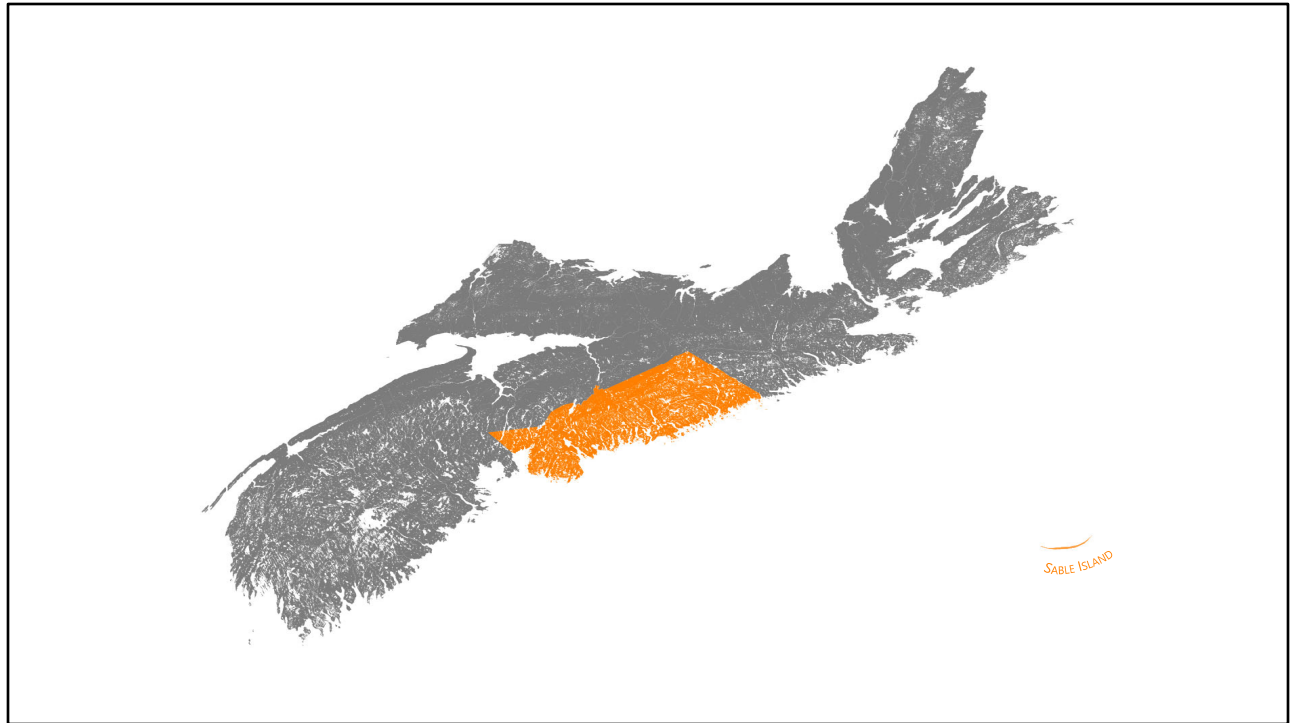






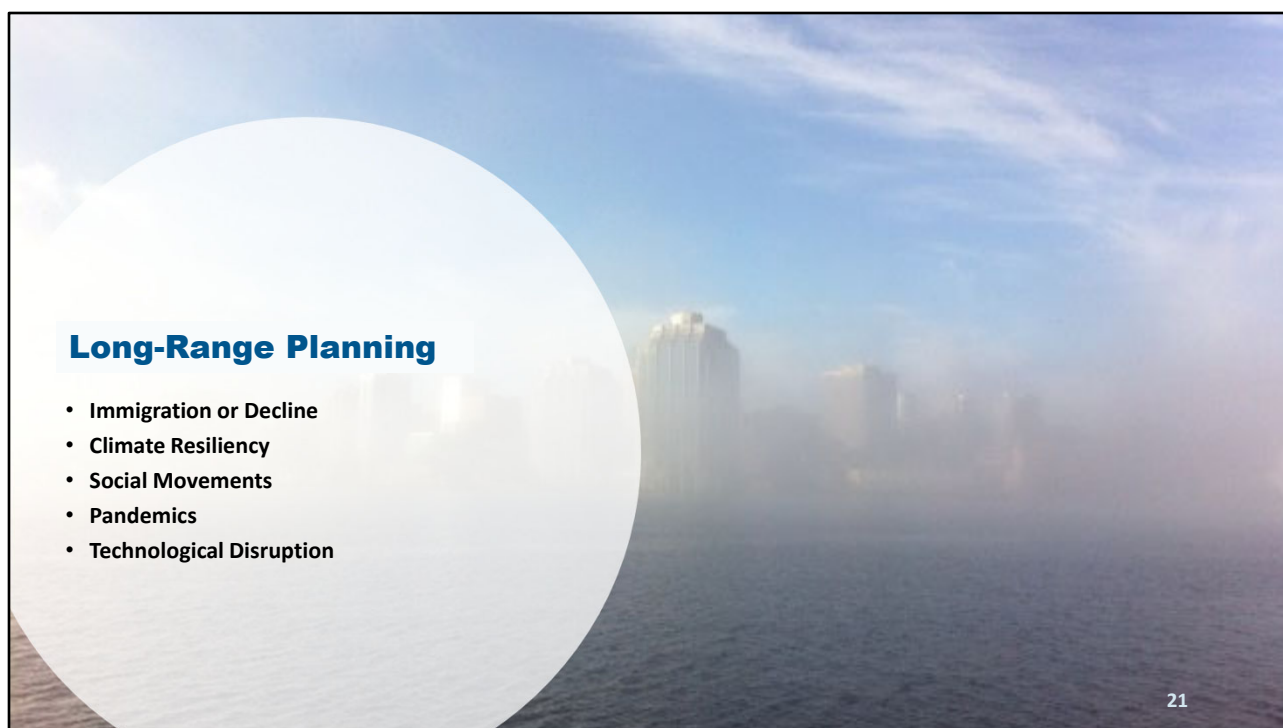


This map (from 2006) shows what our footprint would look like in 25 years if we continued to grow in a dispersed fashion and consumed land at the same rate. The serious financial and environmental implications prompted the development of the Regional Plan.



HRM: 10.4% of Nova Scotia's land area – more than half the population.

While often our planning frameworks tend to look inward, we want to begin to look more closely at our role within the region, and in particular, how connect with the hour commute around Halifax. The Region we are trying to build may extend beyond our borders – how do we engage in conversations with the province and our partners – to ensure long-term health of our province.



Our ideas about what the future may look like change drastically change over a few decades.

Factors such as immigration, climate change, social movements, and pandemics can all have an impact how we plan our communities.

The regional priorities plans that were initiated through the 2014 Regional Plan Review have started to focus on long-range planning by creating work plans and policies that tackle: climate change, protecting and connecting open spaces, nurturing our culture and heritage, and connecting our communities through a variety of means (automobile, transit, and active transportation).

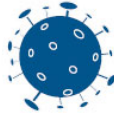
Now that this plan is nearing the end of its lifespan and our population growth has doubled since the last Plan Review, it is time to begin thinking about what we want HRM to look like further into the future.

As 2020 has taught us, society can change dramatically over a short time. Our planning asks us how 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.



Adjusting Our Thinking

- Accepting Uncertainty
- Accepting System Level Disruption
- Bringing Different Traits To the Table
 - Flexible
 - Adaptive
 - Courageous



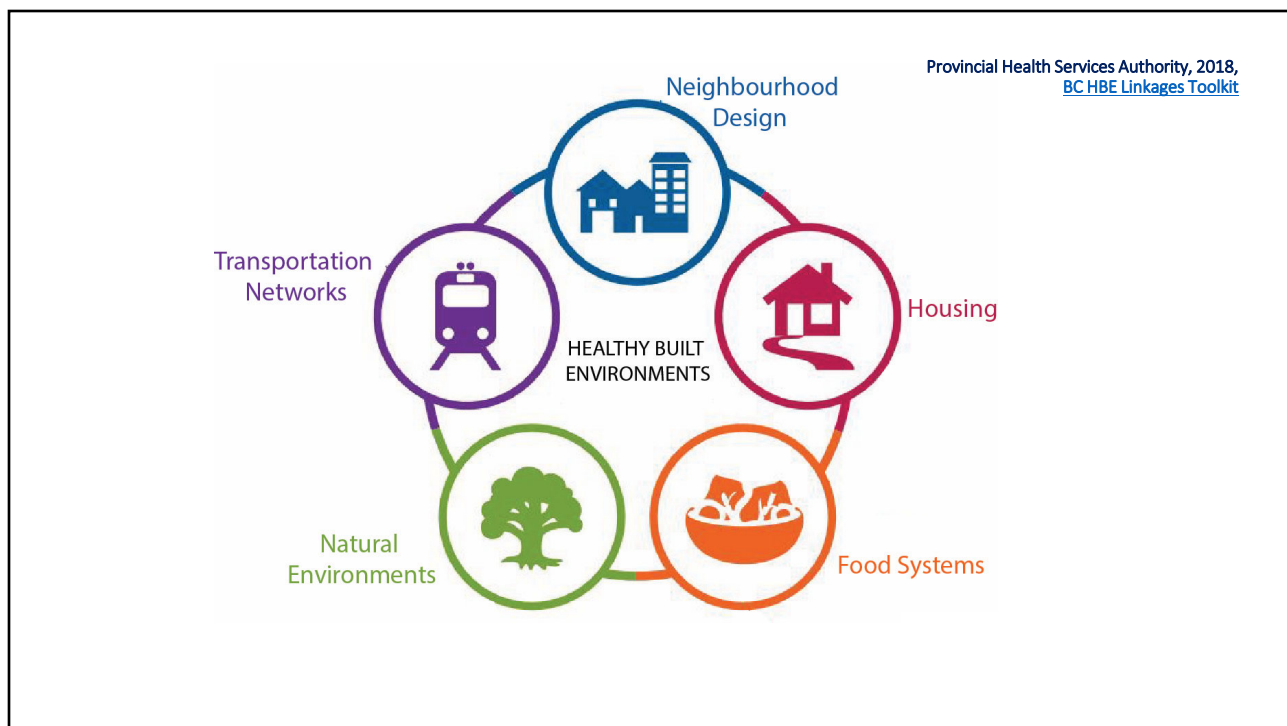
A simple example of something that has seriously impacted us the little elephant in the room.

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.

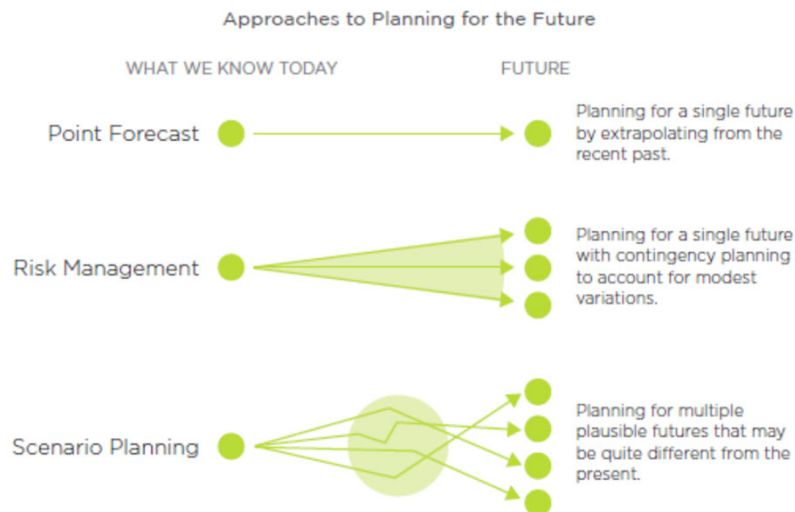
The Regional Plan Review will continue to monitor trends in working from home, housing-form preferences, where people choose to live and commercial and office vacancy rates, and will aim to develop flexible land use policy and regulations that can adapt to changing conditions.

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 multiunit housing, high density or low density, access to a private backyard); • changes to how people move throughout the Region; and • the importance of outdoor and public spaces and active transportation networks.



A growing body of literature suggests that community design can affect: the modes of transportation used by citizens; the frequency with which they engage in physical activity for utilitarian and recreational purposes; the risk and severity of vehicle-related injuries; local and regional air quality; access to and consumption of healthy and unhealthy foods; social interactions and mental health; and economic opportunities.

To address challenging health concerns, including chronic disease, mental health, and rising healthcare costs. The intersections of these issues with other key matters, like climate change and energy conservation, mean that promoting healthy communities is connected with nearly all aspects of the built environment.”



25

Our current regional strategies are all premised on a future that looks much like the past. Recognizing that the future is always uncertain, we want to begin working with citizens to imagine different futures - scenarios considering what the year 2050 and beyond may look like

In scenario planning, stories are crafted to represent a range of potential but realistic futures that could come about because of forces beyond our control. Broadly defined, external forces are trends and disruptors that could impact the future of the region in significant ways, change the availability and ways in which land might be used, and affect the ways in which people travel.

Based on these scenarios – we can then determine what policies should be prioritized.

I also have the sense that we are in a place in our growth in Halifax, that we need to leapfrog. I look at the ambitious challenge HalifACT 2050, our climate change action plan has set out for us, and the investment required to deliver on our mobility goals and aspirations through the Integrated Mobility Plan -

"It's so fantastic to be a citizen of a city, where every morning for 50 years when we've woken up we realized - today the city is a little bit better than yesterday."

(Gehl, 2013)



The most important thing I take from this, is have we made our city a little bit better than yesterday.

We've spent a lot of time working with citizens thinking about our future.

But we still need to continue to evolve our thinking and build our skills.

What do you think the next paradigm shift will be?

What are the most important issues we need to pay attention to?

To learn more, ask questions, join the project's mailing list and make your voice heard:

Visit: www.shapeyourcityhalifax.ca/regional-plan

Email: regionalplan@halifax.ca

Phone: 902.233.2501

Stay updated on other events and engagement opportunities by following the Halifax Regional Municipality on social media and Shape Your City.

The logo for the City of Halifax, featuring the word "HALIFAX" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. The text is positioned on the right side of a horizontal bar that has a light blue section on the left and a dark blue section on the right.

HALIFAX

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**Thank You
For Your
Participation!**

Regional Planning



regionalplan@halifax.ca



902-233-2501

Shape Your City: www.shapeyourcityhalifax.ca/regional-plan

Public feedback will be collected until July 16

Slide 28

Regional Plan Review

Transcript – Long Range Planning Virtual Q&A (June 16, 2021)

This transcript has been edited for content and clarity.

QUESTION: What are biggest opportunities and an issues that are coming forward in the future in HRM?

Tanya Davis, Program Manager, Transportation Planning

As our municipality grows and grows really significantly over the next number of years, I think our job will be to look at the different advancing technologies like artificial intelligence and autonomous vehicles, as well as really diving into the societal changes that we need to focus on like where people want to live, where they will work and how they want to work as well. As you know, thinking about our infrastructure, to make sure that we're building it sustainably, as well that it's inclusive and accessible for those that use it.

Shannon Miedema, Program Manager, Energy & Environment

A lot of what we're doing right now is focusing on our climate plan, [HalifACT](#), which is a 30 year plan that goes out to 2050. As part of all the work that we did to develop that -- we're coming up on its first anniversary next week -- we imagine different future scenarios based on our level of action and ambition, and the targets we wanted to achieve. And so for us, we think a lot about what Halifax is going to look like in five years, in 10 years, in 30 years, in 100 years from a climate perspective, based on what we're doing. There are a lot of interconnected pieces with planning and with transportation, but there's a lot of opportunity to plan our future growth in a way that really aligns with our climate goals. So for example, looking at hubs of areas where we live, work, and play, that have district energy systems, that allow for energy to be provided to a whole bunch of different buildings that with less greenhouse gas emissions and at a lower cost and with more resiliency to weather impacts and things like that. That's something that we really want to be looking to encourage going forward, and also to be protective of the areas we know we need to maintain for

things like corridors and other natural spaces for animals and plants that require it for their habitats as part of the [Halifax Green Network Plan](#).

We're future thinking all the time with our climate plan.

Leah Perrin, Principal Planner, Regional Policy Program

From a regional planning perspective, one of the biggest shifts for us in this Regional Plan Review is coming to terms with how much our growth rate has changed since we last did this plan review in 2014. The original Regional Plan in 2006, and then again in 2014, we weren't seeing a lot of growth in HRM. The 2014 plan is based on a foundation of 1% growth year over year and years. Our growth rate since 2016 has been about 2% - that that's double, and that's huge for we provide services, how we provide housing, how we service our population in the city. I'm really interested in making those connections, it's great to hear Shannon and Tanya talk about the connections between our departments. One thing I'm really interested in tracking is how we may see more immigration over time as a result of climate change in other parts of the world. We know that some of the most populated places in the world are also some of the most climate vulnerable, so we have an opportunity in Canada to take on climate refugees. That's something that's really interesting to me and I am looking forward to seeing how we can rise to the challenge.

QUESTION: Will the Port of Halifax need to or be able to move out of the Fairview and South End terminals given the limited amount of space and the housing development pressure?

Leah Perrin, Principal Planner, Regional Policy Program

The port is certainly managed, owned and operated by our federal government. It's a higher level of government than us, but it's a great example of a place where we need to work with other levels of government and partner with other organizations to understand their plans. So we would be in regular conversations with the Port Authority to understand how they're planning and make sure that our planning is aligned.

Shannon Miedema, Program Manager, Energy & Environment

From a climate perspective, we've been in conversations with the Port because there are some conversations happening across Canada about hydrogen and green hydrogen hubs. The ports are really well positioned to move hydrogen forward and be distributors of green hydrogen. The port here in Halifax is excited about this idea and we've been exploring it. I don't know so much about the locations of things or if they're going to move, but they are part of our stakeholder network for the climate plan, which is great to see.

QUESTION: Should current and near term future development have designated space for regional light rail?

Tanya Davis, Program Manager, Transportation Planning

As we go through the process of looking at our strategic corridors and seeing where development is going to go, from our bus rapid transit system and all the pieces that go into that - the consideration for future proofing those functional plans and the layout will be really important for the consideration for light rail. So that is definitely on our radar to think about it. I don't think light rail is a short-term goal, but it's certainly something that we're thinking about for a long term goal.

QUESTION: How are you coordinating regional growth with Hants County given its exurban population growth?

Kate Greene, Program Manager, Regional Policy Program

As I mentioned during the presentation, we're very inward-focused in how we do our planning because our political boundaries direct us to really only administer land use over the lands that we have responsibility for. But I think it's important for us to expand our scope a little wider and start to speak with some of our adjacent municipalities. East Hants would certainly be one of those municipalities. We're actually required to consult with other municipalities through this process so that will be part of what we do, but we also want to brainstorm more with them and some of the partners that we have within an hour of Halifax around what they think the big trends are

and what they're seeing in their municipalities. I speak with other planners in other communities and everyone is experiencing some pressure right now and growth that was unexpected, so we really have to stay attuned to one another particularly as things are changing quickly. We will be doing that as part of the review.

Shannon Miedema, Program Manager, Energy & Environment

From an environment perspective we are connected to Hants County because of the way the watersheds work and the sharing of watersheds. I think that's becoming increasingly important to look at and plan from a watershed perspective. I think we'll look to do that even more seriously going forward.