

APPENDIX C

COMMENT FORUM RESPONSES

USER NAME	COMMENT
KFB	Think about parks as helping with climate change and biodiversity conservation. They are not solely for playgrounds. They are nature-based solutions that also reconnect people with nature, sequester carbon, cleanse water and air, cool the temperature, absorb precipitation, allow for active transportation, and provide stepping stones of habitat for urban wildlife. Develop a parks strategy. A well-planned strategy would support coordinated initiatives and accountability for parks. A coherent strategy would provide short and long-term planning in a systematic way, for an effective network of core parks with corridors linking them together, for people and for other species, such as birds, bees and butterflies. Incorporate diverse native plantings in parks, including: both deciduous and evergreen trees for summer and winter bird habitat; flowering trees and shrubs for butterflies and hummingbirds; edible berry, seed and nut bearing plants for robins, waxwings and squirrels; and ground cover other than grass, for frogs, snakes and salamanders. Cities are their home, too. :-) We can live in co-existence.
KEITH JACKSON	Residents who purchase houses for retirement or long term investments do not want their neighborhoods invaded by apartment buildings and businesses. We want to know that we can live in a neighborhood whose zoning will be stable and who do not have worry about disruptions that destroy the stability and character of the neighborhood. How will HRM ensure residents can find and live in a stable neighborhood?
KEITH JACKSON	I have no problem applying the concept of complete communities to undeveloped areas where a master plan can be put in place to implement the concept. I have a lot of difficulty with injecting apartments, density and multistory residential/commercial buildings into mature, stable neighborhoods where the vast majority of residents are opposed to them, despite the wishes of developers and planners. There is a fatal flaw in the process where planners and developers get authorization from Regional Council to pursue a study or development agreement before the neighborhood gets to provide input. Residents are already behind in the process because the planners have agreed to change the zoning, developers have produced preliminary plans and Regional Council has approved the planning project. The public is supposed to be protected by zoning but this can be changed in an instant by planners at the request of developers. Why are developers allowed to change zoning so easily? What is the purpose of zoning if HRM does not follow their own zoning bylaws but change them constantly to suit developers at the expense of residents? How do frequent zoning changes protect residents who invest in housing based upon zoning?

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KEITH JACKSON	I don't know why Sunnyside Mall is considered a growth area. The rail transit terminal issues seems to be dead. The mall area itself is underutilized and could be revitalized, but the Sackville Floodplains indicates that much of the area is under flood risk. The areas of Fort Sackville, North St, Eaglewood, Ridgevale, Admiral's Cove and Shore Drive are all mature established neighborhoods. The current SPS values and protects RSU neighborhoods and residents bought into the RSU zoning when they retired, bought and/or built in the area. Put density where it will not destroy existing neighborhoods. Build high and higher density in the Sunnyside Mall area, but protect the mature neighborhoods from developers and planners who only see density and growth, not quality, character and stability. Forcing apartments and density upon settled RSU neighborhoods creates panic and upset amongst current residents who resent developers and planners invading their neighborhoods with multistory concrete buildings that do not belong there. HRM needs a policy to protect these neighborhoods such as the "established," "mature" or "stable" neighborhood policies that exist in other municipalities. The Bedford SPS is in fact a stable neighborhood policy for all Bedford RSU neighborhoods. If the Bedford SPS is changed, there needs to be a similar policy to continue to protect these established neighborhoods. Refine or narrow the policy but don't kill it. Why is the "protection of rural character" important, but not the protection of neighborhood character? Plan amendments should be used for undeveloped lands and special circumstances, not for changing zoning in existing stable neighborhoods. Development agreements are abused by developers and HRM should clamp down on this method of violating zoning laws.

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ENVIROCARES	Fall River was designated as a Secondary Growth Centre in the earlier version of the Regional Plan. I would like to bring attention to two items in that plan related to environmental protection and potential damage to water quality in the lakes in the Fall River area - Lake William, Lake Thomas, Lake Fletcher and Grand Lake. Most of the area was unserved for water and wastewater when the original development plans and the the land-use bylaws were developed; and the, mostly, residential properties relied on dug/drilled wells or withdrawal from the above lakes for domestic water, and septic tanks and dispersal fields, with periodic septic tank pumping, for wastewater disposal. Over time a few communal sewage treatment systems (STS) were installed, and portions of the area were serviced by Halifax Water for domestic water; part of that was achieved by Halifax Water establishing water withdrawal facilities on some of the lakes noted above. Most of the residential development was for single family dwellings on relatively large lots, required by the septic system dispersal beds. As well, the municipality passed a number of land use by-laws, including the requirement for buffer zones around all water bodies and watercourses, to protect them from pollution and nutrient loading from the septic dispersal fields. Increased residential development in Districts 14 & 17 has occurred since the designation of the area as a Secondary Growth Region along with the increased provision of central water to the area by Halifax Water. I would like the new review to examine the Land-use Bylaw (LUB) as it relates to buffer zones and the introduction of enhanced STS to the area as part of the review. The LUB Bylaw for Districts 14 & 17, subsection 4.17: Setback From Watercourse is provided, in part, below for reference to my comments: WATERCOURSE SETBACKS AND BUFFERS (a) No development permit shall be issued for any development within 20m of the ordinary highwater mark of any watercourse, except on lots zoned R-1C. (b) Where the average positive slopes within the 20m buffer are greater than 20%, the buffer shall be increased by 1 metre for each additional 2% of slope, to a maximum of 60m. (c) Within the required buffer pursuant to clauses (a) and (b), no excavation, infilling, tree, stump and other vegetation removal or any alteration of any kind shall be permitted in relation to a development.

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ENVIROCARES (CONT.)	(d) Within the required buffer pursuant to clauses (a) and (b), activity shall be limited to the placement of one accessory structure or one attached deck not exceeding a footprint of 20 m² or a combination of an accessory structure and attached deck not exceeding 20 m², fences, boardwalks, walkways and trails not exceeding 3 metres in width, wharfs, boat ramps, marine dependent uses, fisheries uses, conservation uses, parks on public lands, historic sites and monuments, and public road crossings, driveway crossings and wastewater, storm and water infrastructure, and water control structures (added in 2014) Within the buffer required pursuant to clause (e), no excavation, infilling, tree, stump and other vegetation removal or any alteration of any kind shall be permitted in relation to a development. Note that subsections 4.17 (1)(a), (c), and (f) preclude any disturbance of the 20m buffer zone for residential development. Also note that subsection 4.16(1)(d) completely ignores those subsections in specifying that wastewater, storm and water infrastructure, [and water control structures added in 2014] and completely eliminates the function of the buffer zone in filtering wastewater and other pollutants before it reaches the watercourses. Some of the more recent development proposals for the area propose to use the buffer zone for the septic dispersal area or for the creation of vegetated swales to deal with runoff from the impervious surfaces to be developed on the site. An undisturbed buffer zone has the purpose to filter runoff and subsurface water flow before it reaches the watercourse, and the 20m distance is a minimum distance for such a function to be effective. The new review should aim to eliminate any disturbance of the pre-development vegetation or underlying ground that would relate to wastewater and surface runoff, as a minimum.

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ENVIROCARES (CONT.)	The second item relates to the introduction of enhanced STS as a means for increasing the density of people living on plots of land previously occupied by a single family dwelling. An enduring regulatory requirement is that any development proposal must provide a phosphorus loading analysis which will prove that measures are taken to ensure that the phosphorus loading will not increase beyond pre-development levels as a result of the new development. In recent months several development proposals have been submitted to HRM which would increase the phosphorus loading by one or more orders of magnitude above the pre-development levels; but by the use of enhanced STS units, the phosphorus would be precipitated out of the effluent by electrodes to maintain pre-development levels, or lower. However studies by the manufacturers have shown that the electrodes in these systems tend to oxidize quickly, and other studies have shown that in the caustic environment of the septic tank, the electrical terminals also corrode quickly; the result is that the enhanced units, without frequent maintenance, will be reduced to standard STS in terms of phosphorus removal. And there lies the problem. Neither HRM nor NS environment have regulations in place to put the responsibility on the owner(s) of the enhanced STS to ensure regular maintenance is provided, no requirement for documentation by a certified operator to be supplied to any government agency as proof of a regular maintenance schedule, and no regulations giving authority for legal or other action if non-compliance occurs. Without this protection, the enhanced STS units could/ will fail and that failure will be undetected for an extended period; the result will be greatly increased nutrient load entering watercourses. The recent problem with blue-green algae bloom in Grand Lake is a realistic result scenario for all the lakes noted above. The enhanced STS situation is not a problem unique to the Fall River area. With the increasing population density occurring throughout HRM, and across the Province, more and more proposals will be made for such systems and every district will be threatened by such outcomes. The review should consider these consequences and interact with NS Environment to ensure regulations are enacted to ensure the owners are responsible for the maintenance of the systems, required to submit proof to a governing agency of the maintenance, subject to legal action if they are not in compliance, and financially responsible for the clean-up costs due to non-compliance.

USER NAME	COMMENT
LBHORNE	We all just got a postcard with a free stamp on it and a beautiful aerial photo of the sun rising over the harbour above the phrase "JOIN ME IN HALIFAX." I wholeheartedly agree: this city needs immigration. Especially with the global warming and the relative peace and stability of the region, we can expect the need to welcome thousands if not millions of new climate refugees in the coming decades. At the same time, we need to acknowledge that we do not have a plan for safely housing and integrating new migrants to the province. Even when we bring Family Doctors in with foreign credentials, and relatively high wages, they often do not stay here. Why is that? Affordable housing is disappearing in this city, and with it, the entry-level experience of joining us here in Halifax. Meanwhile land speculators like the George Armoyan and Wadih Fares proliferate, and predatory landlords like Stephen Metledge scoop up more and more of the space for low income people and force them to live in substandard conditions. The city needs to have a plan for this. This year a community group popped up to build tiny homes for people without a home, and they helped many people achieve needed safety and stability. The city councils response was to dismantle these safe houses and push homeless people back into living in fabric shacks i.e. tents. This is not in line with "JOIN ME IN HALIFAX": we are guests on stolen Mi'kmaq land. We have no jurisdiction to be kicking homeless people out of parks. We need bold vision and to stop passing the buck to the province when it comes to solving problems, here.
DEB H	The city has a transit route that goes from Cole Harbour, turns at Ross Road, goes down Highway 107 to Porters Lake, crosses over to Highway 207 and drives to Seaforth. At this point, it turns around and goes back along the same route. For some reason, Lawrencetown and Five Fatham Harbour are totally ignored. I live in east Lawrencetown, right beside Lawrencetown beach. I have friends and family who do not have any other modes of transportation besides the transit. Why are they not able to visit this beach, when we have a bus route that could easily take them here? Please change the route so it continues in a complete circle to allow people to visit this beach and allows people to access the city or Porters Lake to get staples such as groceries.

