

APPENDIX A

VIRTUAL Q&A SESSION TRANSCRIPTS



REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW

Themes and Directions

Social Policy Q & A
June 11, 2021

HALIFAX

Slide 2



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.

Today's Webinar is for Social Policy:

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

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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. Today's session is focused on social policy.

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.

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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 14 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 ARE THE THEMES & DIRECTIONS?

Key Ideas, Issues and Potential Changes.

The Themes & Directions document **shares ideas about key planning issues and provides details of the work** that will be completed during the Review. The purpose of this document is to demonstrate the scope of the Regional Plan Review to the public, stakeholders, Council, and ultimately to seek feedback on the content.

The feedback will help provide focus and direction for our work during the Review.

HALIFAX

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The Themes and Directions document outlines the key ideas and planning issues we will address in the Review. It is chance to step back and ask everyone – do we have this right? Are we headed in the right direction? The feedback we receive will help to provide focus and direction for our work during the Review.

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?

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There are also 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 will be 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.

11 THEMES



The Themes and Directions document includes 11 Themes. They are all highlighted on the slide, and an overview of each theme is available to you on our website – shapeyourcityhalifax.ca/region-plan.

Today we are focusing on theme 5...

Theme 5 Social Planning for Community Well-Being

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....Which is called Social Planning for Community Well-Being.

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. 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. Examples of well-established partnerships that are working toward social initiatives are the Housing and Homelessness Partnership, and the Halifax Food Policy Alliance.



Social Policy

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”.

The Regional Plan will:

- **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.**

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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”. This administrative order also set up a Social Policy Committee – which is made of people across HRM. Social planning takes place across municipal departments in many ways - through recreation programming, community grants, community development, land use planning, diversity and inclusion training, youth services, climate change planning, parks planning, and public transit and active transportation planning. The Social Policy committee is analyzing how we work in the community, and how we use a social lens. As this work advances, we will include it in the Regional Plan.



Social Policy

The Regional Plan will:

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

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Currently, the Regional Plan identifies and prioritizes areas where we expect to see significant growth in new housing and jobs. Some existing neighbourhoods may not have been identified as growth areas or for new infrastructure like transit or central services. Or some neighbourhoods may be feeling the pressure of gentrification, resulting from lots of new infill development. These situations can exacerbate inequities and create heightened sensitivity to the impacts of development. This includes a 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. We work directly with vulnerable communities and need to continue to build on this work to identify better tools that will strengthen neighbourhoods, while the city is growing and changing. Examples include community benefit action planning and community land trusts. Finally community-based partnerships are so important for our work, and we will continue to provide support for these.



Housing

The Municipality's role in supporting and encouraging affordable housing has increased steadily over the past several years.

The Regional Plan Review will:

- Encourage a diversity of housing forms;
- Identify planning tools to ensure no loss of housing during redevelopment;
- Update the Housing Needs Assessment annually;
- Remove barriers to the development and retention of housing;
- Study possible tools to leverage surplus or available land; and
- Develop a region-wide density bonusing program.

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The Municipality's role in supporting and encouraging affordable housing has increased steadily over the past several years. We recognize that housing is a right.

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 and provincial levels of government. Since the 2014 Regional Plan, HRM has worked on several initiatives including the 2015 Housing Needs Assessment, a forthcoming rental registration by-law, supporting municipal Housing First projects and directing the Federal Rapid Housing Initiative funding. This slide lists the actions we will be focused on during the Regional Plan review – and if you have an interest in this topic, we'd also encourage you to come to our Housing session on Monday evening at 6:30pm.



Food Security

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 planning policies.

The Regional Plan will 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.

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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, the Municipality partnered with the Halifax Food Policy Alliance to develop the JustFOOD Action Plan. 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.

The Regional Plan Review will advance our 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.



Inclusivity and 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.

The Regional Plan Review will:

- **Engage the Diversity and Inclusion Office as a resource during planning projects; and**
- **Review engagement policies through the upcoming Public Engagement Guidebook.**

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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.

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.

Through our work, we are looking at ways to improve our engagement practices, and the Regional Plan review will make sure that the Plan supports these efforts.



Community Partnerships

HRM has several initiatives and commitments to better partner with, serve, and represent underrepresented groups. This includes the work of the 'Task Force on the Commemoration of Edward Cornwallis and the Recognition and Commemoration of Indigenous History'; and the approval of the 'African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity Action Plan'.

The Regional Plan Review will:

- **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.**

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Council has recently created two initiatives to partner with the Mi'kmaw and the African Nova Scotian Communities, to begin to address some of the most important issues identified by these communities.

There are number of actions contained in these documents that Planning & Development will need to act on quickly.

The Cornwallis Task Force report resulted in a numbers actions – including, this week renaming the park to Peace and Friendship Park, and we also started the process to rename Cornwallis Street. More generally, the report gave us direction for recognizing and commemorating the indigenous history in the lands now known as Halifax Regional Municipality.

The African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity Action Plan directed us to consider opportunities for Community Benefits Agreements, review policies and regulations that may have disproportionately negative impacts in African Nova Scotian communities, support for the Akoma master plan, review of community boundaries and commemorations, remediation of contaminated sites in African Nova Scotian communities, and infrastructure funding for those communities.

We are continuing to work with our partners in Diversity and Inclusion in responding to the calls for action contained in these documents.



Accessibility

The Nova Scotia Accessibility Act explains the barriers residents face, including that: 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.

The Regional Plan Review will:

- **Review and update planning documents that bring HRM closer to the goal of being a city for people of all abilities, ages, and backgrounds; and**
- **Include the Accessibility Advisory Committee and Diversity & Inclusion Office in the review of the upcoming engagement tool.**

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The Nova Scotia Accessibility Act explains the barriers residents face, including:

that 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 are subject to multiple forms of discrimination and face additional barriers. Achieving accessibility will improve the independence and well-being of persons with disabilities.

Through the Regional Plan Review we will be reviewing our planning documents to make sure that they are aligned with the goal of bringing HRM closer to being a city for people of all abilities, ages, and backgrounds

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 a bold, white, sans-serif font. The text is positioned on the right side of a dark blue horizontal bar that spans the width of the slide. The bar has a lighter blue geometric shape on the left side, creating a stylized background for the text.

HALIFAX

**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 19

Regional Plan Review

Transcript - Social Policy Virtual Q&A (June 11, 2021)

This transcript has been edited for content and clarity.

QUESTION: What work has the municipality been doing around access to food? Can you talk more about the food action plan?

Leticia Smillie, Planner III, Regional Planning

Earlier in 2019, Regional Council approved and formalized our relationship with the Halifax food Policy Alliance, a collaboration of local organizations and individual

working across the food system, working towards increasing food security and strengthening access to food. As part of that motion in 2019, we agreed to work together to co-lead the development of an action plan for the region, the birth of JustFood. At this point we're in the early stages of the work. We've been working and building on the Halifax Food Charter, which was designed through community engagement in 2018, and lays out a number of principles for JustFood. And we've been trying to advance that to identify some goals for our local food system, and then working towards action. The intention for JustFood is for it to be an action plan that has strategic actions and then dedicates the resources such as policies, funding, programs, partnerships, and performance measurement to make sure that those actions become reality and we see positive change in our local food system.

We've been having a series of workshops. We just had our first workshop in March with people who are working in support of food, to learn more about each other and the amazing work that's already happening, which Just Food will build on, and then starting to work collaboratively together towards the actions and the things that we want JustFOOD to achieve.

We're having another workshop, #2, which is open to anybody who is interested in participating, and that's happening next Thursday and Friday, June 17 and 18. There is information on this at

<https://www.shapeyourcityhalifax.ca/foodaction> . It is open to everybody, and we're identifying what people want JustFOOD to achieve and then providing a space for us to work collaboratively towards what's needed to actually make this a reality.

We'll continue doing engagement over the summer and into the fall, so there are lots of opportunities for people to participate, in the ways in which they would like to participate. . We're then looking at later this year or early

next year to have a draft plan, and more engagement as we figure out what is needed to make the actions a reality.

JustFOOD is about collective impact, recognizing that while the municipality certainly has lots of roles and things that we need to be committing to and carrying forward, we also need to bring together others to help us, and to take on commitments on their own, working together to make positive change in our local food system.

QUESTION: What is the role that the province plays in affordable versus the role that the municipality plays? How is the municipality is considering the recent Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Commission report in its work?

Jill MacLellan, Planner III, Regional Planning:

It was really exciting to see the Affordable Housing Commission report come out and suggest a lot of the initiatives that we've been exploring as well. That includes looking at community land trusts, supporting shared housing, which is a form of group housing or people living under different leases. The Commission report also spoke to a need to have a housing needs assessment and a housing strategy, which are all initiatives HRM has been exploring as well. It was exciting to see all of the work [put into the report] and also the acknowledgement that [affordable housing] is something that municipalities need to play a role in as the Commission spoke to expanding the tools municipalities have to support affordable housing.

QUESTION: How is the Municipality looking at public engagement practices to consider diversity including a diversity of perspectives?

Mapfumo Chidzonga, Diversity and Inclusion Advisor to Regional Planning:

As you may know, our traditional engagement practices especially for planning, include public information meetings, maybe on-site signage; some planning policy projects also have unique engagement strategies that they employ. The issue is that oftentimes our engagement isn't right size, so it can be quite rigid, and sometimes lacks the transparency regarding the purpose of the process, and the scope of the decision that's being made. Sometimes we have a traditional engagement approaches that are set up to be confrontational and ultimately the participation, as mentioned in the presentation, tends to have a bias towards folks who are already

engaged, or whoever has a louder voice. Most recently we've been grappling with the reality that we have under-utilized a lot of the new technology that's out there and given our current situation with the pandemic, we are almost being forced to use more of the technology that's out there for online engagement.

So what our holistic approach to engagement is a renewed approach, one that seeks to make engagement more modern, not only using the traditional practices, but combining them with newer best practices which will help us to identify and remove barriers to participation. We're looking at engagement in which folks are not going to be excluded from the process, on the basis of, say, race, gender, or class. The idea is that all groups have access to the resources and the opportunities necessary to be able to fully participate. And then on the back end of this we would like that differences in project outcomes won't be predicted on the basis of say, race, class, gender, or ability, or other dimensions of identity. The insights from these often underrepresented groups in our process and underserved in our services, these groups, their insights, can and should be reflected in the project outcomes. So we'd like for the systemic barriers that they face, the inequities that they face to be addressed proactively. And also, we continue to acknowledge them in our reports and our recommendations as well in the projects that we do. We are currently in the process of developing a public engagement guidebook, which we hope will provide us with a more coordinated HRM-wide approach to our engagement to allow us to be more effective, to create accessible, barrier free engagement practices as well. We continue to learn from the various groups that we serve, for better inclusion in our processes so we leverage their knowledge, their expertise and we recognize them as competent and capable agents who should be part of our process throughout and that's been made possible largely by the support of the Diversity and Inclusion Office / African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office, who have been helping us with their advice, their great in-depth knowledge of the community and on the most culturally appropriate approaches to engaging them fully.

QUESTION: Can you provide an update on the Social Policy Committee, and the work that they are doing right now?

Paul Johnston, Managing Director, Government Relations and External Affairs:

About a year ago, Council approved a social policy for HRM. There are three theme areas that were identified, and you can see them all reflected in the Regional Plan Review presentation today: housing and homelessness, food security, and connected communities.

As a result of that work, and the policy that Council passed, we put together a social policy team or committee within HRM. It's an internal committee, consisting of representatives from Business units throughout the municipality.

Social policy is an interesting area to work in because it's an area that the municipality doesn't necessarily have the "mandate", but we certainly play a part in that area every day. When you think of those theme areas that I mentioned, primarily, the housing area in terms of the regional Plan, and then a lot of the great work that Leticia has been doing on food security that she just mentioned in the earlier answer.

So that team has been together for slightly less than a year, and really the overall focus for the first while has been figuring out how to break down silos internally and figure out how collectively, as a municipality we can start to address and advance these areas. There's a lot of good work. The team has really gotten its legs underneath it. In the last few months, we're starting to embark now in a strategic planning process to figure out how we can push these theme areas forward at the municipal level over the next number of months and number of years.

Mary Chisholm, Senior Policy Advisor, Government Relations and External Affairs:

The social policy team has really helped to advance cross collaboration across municipality prior to having the social policy team. We didn't have an ability for people or for staff at HRM to get together to focus on issues that are cross cutting and really helped to problem-solve them. The social policy team was initiated shortly after the pandemic began so early on we focused on distributing funding we received through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and we were able to use the social policy team to help figure out what projects we should be focusing on that align with the three focus areas. We were able to pick some really neat projects and was

one of our first deliverables as a team.

We've also throughout the past year invited external stakeholders in to present to the team, and we found the team to be a really good space for these presenters to come and kind of let us know what they're working on and how we as an organization can best support

Them. We will continue to do that going forward.

We're also focusing now on how we can be strategic as a team and help to align the work of this social policy with other initiatives that are currently underway, like this Regional Plan Review and how we can best support that.

The social policy team has added value so far and we're looking forward to where it can go next.

QUESTION: How has the municipality been working on the issue of short-term rentals (STRs) / AirBnBs?

Jill MacLellan, Planner III, Regional Planning:

Prior to the pandemic, HRM had prepared a report looking at [Short Term Rentals(STRs)]. We had completed a region wide survey to gauge or understand how residents were impacted by [STRs] and whether they were something they welcomed in their neighborhoods.

And we did hear about some of the benefits of [STRs] making it more flexible to travel, having new people in their neighborhood, which can sometimes be fun.

But there were a lot of concerns about how this impacted established neighborhoods. If your neighbor is changing on a weekly basis, the stress that can involve. Also, the impact STRs were having on the housing market was something that really became apparent as an issue.

I think people are well aware that our vacancy rate is quite low. So even though approximately 1% of units in our housing market have been lost to air BNBs, and while that number appears to be low, that does have a significant impact on our vacancy rate.

Through the analysis of the survey and research that we have done, Council did direct us to draft a regulatory by law, which is something that we're working on right now. We're hoping to have a public survey out in the upcoming months to gauge how people feel about the direction we're looking to pursue with this regulatory by law. Part of that project will be

updating our land use bylaws to include terminology around short term rentals because most of our bylaws, were written prior to the existence of short term rentals or the prevalence of short term rentals. We're looking to update our bylaws so we can deal with them as a land use.

QUESTION: How is the municipality thinking about urban agriculture at a local scale?

Leticia Smillie, Planner III, Regional Planning

Because of our geography and the fact the majority of our prime agricultural land was unfortunately developed in the 60-70s when our communities were growing quickly, , we only have a few pockets of prime soil, which we need to protect. We also have a lot of opportunity space for agriculture embedded right in our urban landscape.

For our local food system, urban agriculture is one of the most important things that we should be focusing on and this is an example of how the Regional Plan and Just Food could be working hand in hand.

For the Regional Plan, where it's about land use and land use regulations, there's an opportunity for us to make sure that we're removing the barriers to having urban agriculture and food uses all around us in our urban landscape. We could remove some of the barriers and also create opportunities for urban agriculture. Things like requiring edible landscaping as part of new developments, or making sure that zoning permits food outlets like grocery stores or healthy corner stores. Make sure that we provide opportunities, and reduce barriers through the Regional Plan. Through JustFOOD we can consider how to create incentives for those opportunities. It's not really enough just for us to create ability for people have food uses, we really want to look at what can we do to make it more attractive for more urban agriculture right in our landscape and normalize urban agriculture as part of our cities. There are lots of things that could be done in terms of incentives through JustFOOD. Funding, tax incentives, etc. there are different opportunities that are open to us through JustFOOD.

QUESTION: What are the best ways to engage with communities that are traditionally underrepresented?

Mapfumo Chidzonga, Diversity and Inclusion Advisor to Regional Planning:

I think we need to begin by asking the question why are we missing out on these communities? How are they being excluded? Exclusion can be on the basis of linguistic, cultural, economic, or accessibility, or age, or gender. It's not enough to say someone is missing from the table. We need to start anticipating and addressing the barriers. Why they're missing from the table. We need to understand how and why these persons are excluded and how we can work to foster a more inclusive and accessible engagement.

For example, within our public engagement guidebook, we built in tools that will prompt folks who are planning engagement to consider factors such as language, so which languages are being spoken, is translation available written and oral? Are we thinking critically about meeting locations? What's an accessible meeting location? Is it safe? Is it in a neutral meeting place? Often we have a tendency to invite folks into our spaces. Are we going out to communities enough? Is there a central location that we can find? Should we be considering multiple meetings at varying locations? Will participants be given enough time, ample time to participate? Are we working within budget constraints? So maybe we could think of more flexible budgets to allow for us to have a more accessible engagement. When we think about communication, do the communication methods that we use accommodate everyone are we providing the same screen readers for people with visual impairments? Do we need Braille or sign language? These types of services are available. They often require that we put in a lot of time and effort on the front end to make it possible, but they are out there.

We often don't consider the fact that some folks have responsibilities. They have dependents to care for – to what degree do we consider childcare as a barrier for participation though the structure of our meetings?

Sometimes different meeting structures aren't appropriate, so we could consider opening ourselves up to "community circle" approaches. They tend to foster more of the trust based conversations, trust building conversations, as well as getting into some of the stories. The stories that we miss out on. Stories are a key aspect of culturally appropriate engagement. Understanding that maybe our open houses or informational meetings aren't the best way to get at some of the really detailed

experiences that we might be wishing to get from the feedback. Also, technical knowledge, that's one that's also becoming more prominent. A lot of folks have been in the past and continued to be excluded on the basis of their technical knowledge about, say, the planning process or how bureaucracies operate. So we could do our part do better to educate in the same way that we're providing information.

We're also building capacity, so we need to build that into our processes as well so that we are not only just taking the feedback, it's not a transactional process, but also as a reciprocal one. So it's a give and take, and in that way we build relationship with communities.

These are some of the steps we can take to include groups that have been traditionally excluded if we recognize these barriers and we start to address them proactively, we can start to get at these groups and definitely have a more representative participation.

And obviously more reflective public service provision.

QUESTION: What is the Rapid Housing Initiative and how is the Municipality considering it?

Jill MacLellan, Planner III, Regional Planning:

The Rapid Housing Initiative was a Federal relief program where the Municipality was given 8.7 million dollars to develop a minimum of 28 affordable housing units. These are units that are directed towards those in need of deep affordability, those who are on either income assistance or who are homeless or at risk of being homeless.

The caveat of the funding is that the developments need to be completed within one year, which is a very tight timeline, and it could only be for developments that would bring new housing to the market. It had to be either constructing new housing, or converting non-market housing – for example converting a commercial building into a residential building - or rehabilitating uninhabitable buildings. If a building has been vacant for a certain amount of time and it would not meet minimum occupancy standards, the money could be used to rehabilitate that building as well. If it's new construction, it has to be modular - which speaks to the need for speed of the construction.

This funding was announced towards the end of October of 2020 and by the end of November, HRM was able to pull the team together to put out a call of submissions to nonprofits to see who could build this housing.

Because HRM isn't a provider of housing ourselves, we had to partner with

a non-profit who could actually build and monitor the housing. Within that month we were able to put out a call for submissions and select three successful candidates.

One of the reasons for the success of moving this project so quickly was due to our relationships through the Housing and Homelessness Partnership through the relationships that we have with working with other groups on the Anti-Poverty Solutions Strategy. We already have a lot of those contacts so we were able to move fairly quickly with that.

The three developments that we were able to provide funding for include the Adsum House for Women and Children, they're building 25 units directed towards women and women with children. The Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre which is providing 10 bedrooms through shared housing and seven individual units directed towards the urban indigenous population and that will be part of a larger development that has a shelter component in programming.

As well, the North End Community Health Association is building 10 bedrooms as shared housing that will be directed towards the African Nova Scotian community and urban indigenous population.

We are currently working with those three groups to get the buildings developed. There's still

lots of work that needs to be done to get these buildings completed by the end of the year and occupied by March of 2022, but it has been a great experience so far and really looking forward to getting these 52 units on line.

QUESTION: Are there any examples of community land trusts or community benefit agreements?

Are there any successful examples?

Kate Greene, Regional Policy Program Manager:

Community Land Trusts are something new that the municipality has just started exploring. It's a different way that communities might be able to participate in land ownership, and then hold that land in common within community, build housing and hold that land in hands of community.

Over time, that that housing could be held for social purposes, then as it changes hands you can control the price of the housing so that people are able to continue to access that and continue live on that land.

It's a tool that we're exploring and seeing if it's a way of giving communities control of how they live in their community, especially to combat raising

prices around affordable housing.

The other thing we're looking at is how the municipality could play a role in being a resource to help NGOs trying to create that type of structure of housing. We're looking to examples across the country. There's examples in Vancouver where the municipality actually uses public land as an asset allows for NGOs or other groups to come and build housing on that land. You have multiple pieces of land and you can capitalize on that as an asset, and more quickly build housing at an affordable rate.

The other thing that is interesting that we've learned about is that municipalities in Vancouver other places actually retain expertise in housing that are able to help NGOs or community groups build housing, get involved in housing. One of the things that's been identified that NGOs are missing is expertise and how to go about building housing. Purchasing land is really challenging. Exploring ways the municipality can use in-house expertise and lend that out to NGOs as they need it and help people build social purpose housing. Those are some of the ways we're exploring new models or ownership. They can help with building more affordable housing in our communities.

Jill MacLellan, Planner III, Regional Planning:

One of the initiatives that HRM recently adopted was a new surplus category in our for our surplus lands. We have a category that's specific to affordable housing, so it's not a community land trust, but we are starting to get ourselves set up to be able to identify land that is appropriate for affordable housing, should we ever be in a position where we're able to establish a municipal community land trust, or be able to support a nonprofit community Land Trust. We're already starting to identify land that's appropriate for that use.

QUESTION: There's a bit of a complicated relationship between the Province and the Municipality and how both work on social housing. How has the Municipality been working with the Province to help us to the social policy work it's interested in?

Paul Johnston, Managing Director, Government Relations and External Affairs:

We can't advance a lot of our social policy priorities or initiatives alone. We need the Province to work in partnership with us. We need community partners working with us because these are broad issues, and so I guess in

terms of our work with the Province – to simplify it - it falls into two kinds of categories:

There's the area of partnership or relationship building, where there are a lot of initiatives that we can take as a municipality, but the Province has the mandate to do a lot of that work, so we need to work pretty closely with them. At the staff level we have built good relationships with Community Services, and Infrastructure and Housing staff and meet with them regularly. Sometimes it's just as simple as sharing information on a regular basis to understand what staff at the Province are up to, and trying to identify gaps or areas that we can work a little more closely together. That's the first piece.

Second piece is a bit more mechanical, and that's around legislative changes, infrastructure programming, that sort of thing. A lot of the tools or levers that the municipality wants to implement or enact, especially in the area of housing which is probably the best example – requires permission from the Province through legislation to do. We've had some pretty good success in the last couple of years in working with the Province to get a few of those legislative changes and there are several more that we're that we're still working on with them. It's a similar process where we work with staff in the provincial departments that are responsible, for example, for the municipal Charter is probably the best example which is governed by Municipal Affairs. We work with them to prioritize and identify what those legislative changes may be that we need in order to advance some of this work, and work with them to try to get those priority areas through the legislature and then hopefully have a successful outcome in terms of getting some of those specific areas we need to move, like the housing portfolio for instance.

QUESTION: Can you describe the Mobile Food Market and how it has been working?

Leticia Smillie, Planner III, Regional Planning

The Mobile Food Market has been in operation since 2016 and it brings healthy and affordable food to communities at a higher risk of food insecurity, with challenges to accessing food. From my perspective and I think I speak for the rest of the JustFOOD team on this - the Mobile Food Market is a great example of the kind of collaborative effort and the collective impact that's required to progress such a complicated issue as food security. The champions for the development of the Mobile Food

Market were the Ecology Action Center, Nova Scotia Health Authority and HRM, and we now have Metro Works acting as the host for the Mobile Food Market. We came together to support the service with in-kind contributions, like access to a Halifax Transit bus, facilities and expertise and leadership for the development of the Mobile Food Market. The Mobile Food Market is designed for communities to decide what type of market they need to serve their needs and their capacities such as the kinds of infrastructure they have on location. The Mobile Food Market works with these community teams, using local teams to help figure out what are the types of markets that they need and then matches the service like bulk delivery, on site markets, produce packs, etc. so they can have their own markets or do their own community food distribution. Or they come in and set up for market and have all the infrastructure there to have a mobile food market. There are all kinds of different relationships and different ways that the markets are rolling out in communities based on what communities are saying that they need.

It's about making sure that we recognize that communities are the experts in terms of what they need. When we're creating social policy it's really important to be working all together.

Another important partner in the Mobile Food Market, is the Province who's been a consistent funder and part of the decision making. It's an example of how we need to come together to progress these complex issues, and it's about figuring out what are the best pieces and the ways that your organization can progress things and then work with others in the ways in which they are best at moving things forward. It's about putting aside the bureaucracy and the barriers that are often in place, for us to work together. Recognize that we need to get out of our own way and help communities.

To learn more about the Regional Plan Review or contact the Team:

Visit: www.shapeyourcityhalifax.ca/regional-plan

Email: regionalplan@halifax.ca

Phone: 902.233.2501



REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW

Themes and Directions

Housing Q & A
June 14, 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. Tonight's Webinar is for Housing:

- 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 Housing.

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.

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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 14 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 ARE THE THEMES & DIRECTIONS?

Key Ideas, Issues and Potential Changes.

The Themes & Directions document **shares ideas about key planning issues and provides details of the work** that will be completed during the Review. The purpose of this document is to demonstrate the scope of the Regional Plan Review to the public, stakeholders, Council, and ultimately to seek feedback on the content.

The feedback will help provide focus and direction for our work during the Review.

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The Themes and Directions document outlines the key ideas and planning issues we will address in the Review. It is chance to step back and ask everyone – do we have this right? Are we headed in the right direction? The feedback we receive will help to provide focus and direction for our work during the Review.



The Themes and Directions document includes 11 Themes. They are all highlighted on the slide, and an overview of each theme is available to you on our website – shapeyourcityhalifax.ca/region-plan. Today we will be focusing in on Theme 1 and 5. Theme 1 focuses on our role in enabling housing across the region, and theme 5 focuses in on our role in affordable housing.

MUNICIPAL ROLE IN HOUSING



Municipal role in housing in Nova Scotia has primarily been in regulating where housing can be built.

The Province has been responsible for providing shelters and social housing.

The image shows the spectrum of housing – and different ways that people might be experiencing housing.

Reading from the left, you can see homeless people, emergency shelters, transitional housing, social housing, affordable rental housing, affordable home ownership, market rental housing, and market home ownership. Although housing is a complicated system, and there are interactions between all types of housing based on housing availability, income levels, market conditions, and strength in delivery of public housing.

This said, the municipal role in housing in Nova Scotia for the past 25 (since amalgamation) years has primarily been as a regulator. In our work in the Regional Plan, we assess how much our population is growing and how land should be brought into the servicing boundary, or how we should infill in existing areas, in order to create new housing. Although we don't build housing or control market prices, we have a role in ensuring the regulations are organized in such a way that housing can come online quickly to ensure the market can respond to population demand and need for housing.

While the Provincial Government has been responsible for providing shelters and social housing over this time, as shown on the left hand of spectrum, Affordable Housing has been an emerging area of responsibility for both the Municipal Government and the Provincial Government.

In our presentation today, we are going to focus first on how we organize housing throughout the municipality, and then in the later part of the presentation, we will speak to our role in affordable housing delivery.

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?

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There are also 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 will be 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.

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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.

HOUSING ANALYSIS GOAL

Understand the dynamic between anticipated demand for housing and Halifax's capacity to accommodate residents in their preferred housing type.

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In doing this analysis, our primary goal was to Understand the dynamic between anticipated demand for housing and Halifax's capacity to accommodate residents in their preferred housing type.

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

How many people might be living in Halifax in 2031 and 2050?

How many housing units will be needed for the population to live in?

What type of housing might be needed?

What is Halifax's capacity for additional housing based on existing policy and anticipated future policy?

Is any policy change necessary to accommodate demand or reflect changing conditions?

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Under that umbrella, we identified a few specific questions that we were attempting to answer, for instance –

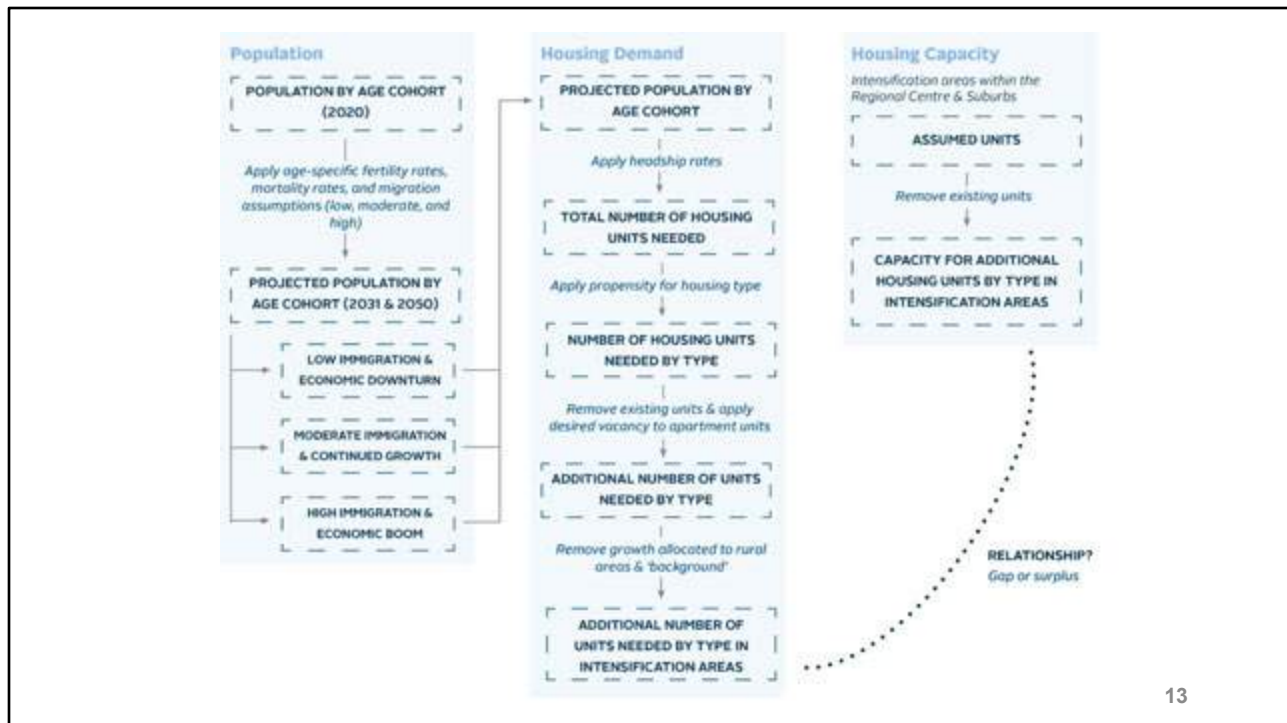
How many people might be living in Halifax in 2031 and 2050?

How many housing units will be needed for the population to live in?

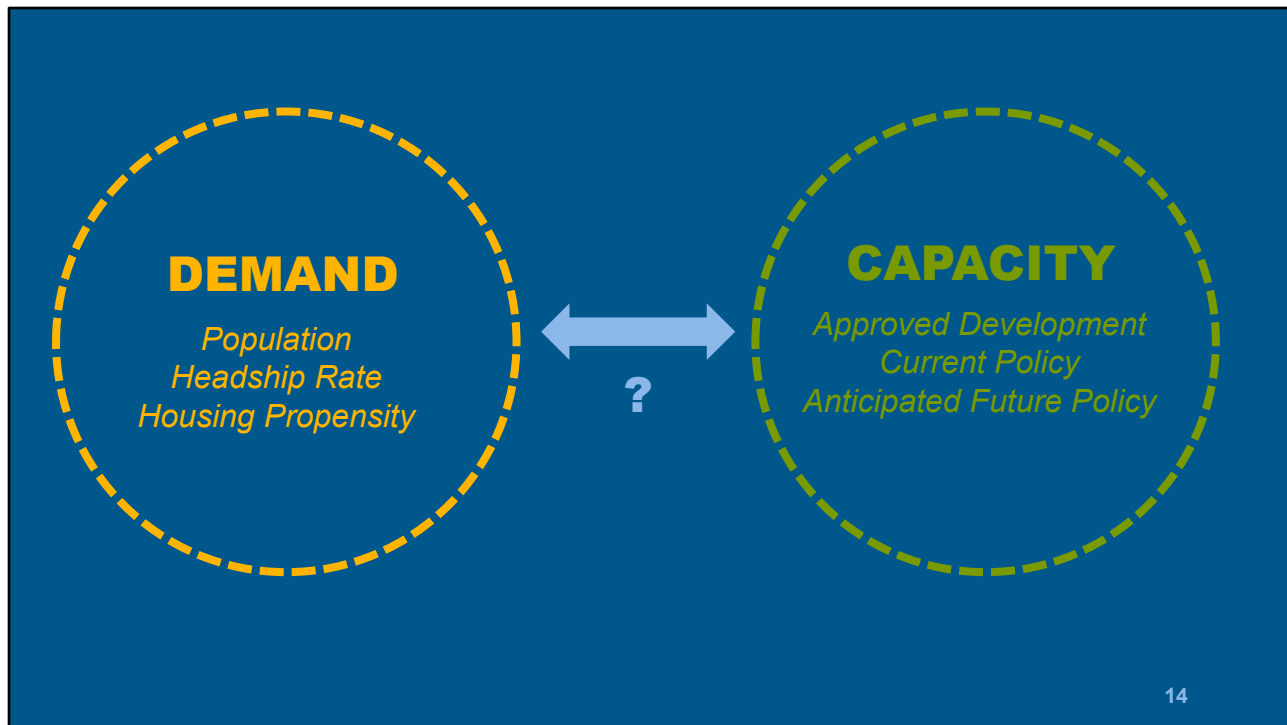
What type of housing might be needed?

What is Halifax's capacity for additional housing based on existing policy and anticipated future policy?

Is any policy change necessary to accommodate demand or reflect changing conditions?



To answer those questions, we developed a methodology based on best practices, that looks at different components of housing, including how population influences housing demand and how that relates to housing capacity. This graphic is pulled from the Issue Paper and outlines how all the components work together. For the sake of time, we won't be getting into the full details of the method in this presentation, but the Issue Paper (which will be available for your review) has more of the specifics if you're interested.



The key pieces that we looked at for this analysis were **demand** (i.e. how much housing do we think we may need?) and **capacity** (i.e. how much space do we have to locate new housing?)

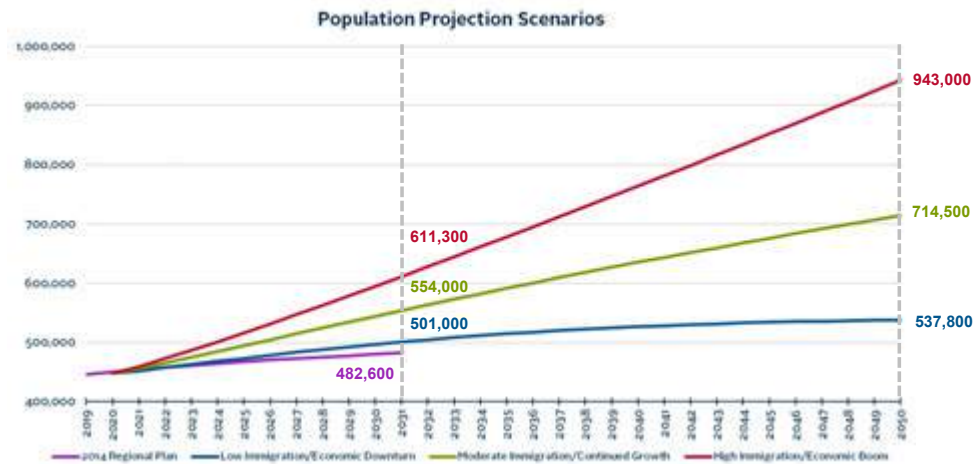
The essence of what we're trying to figure out is in the relationship between those two concepts (i.e. do we have enough capacity to accommodate the demand we may anticipate?)



On the demand side, we used a population projection and previous data on households and what type of housing people were living in to figure out how many more housing units we might need in the future.

DEMAND

POPULATION SCENARIOS

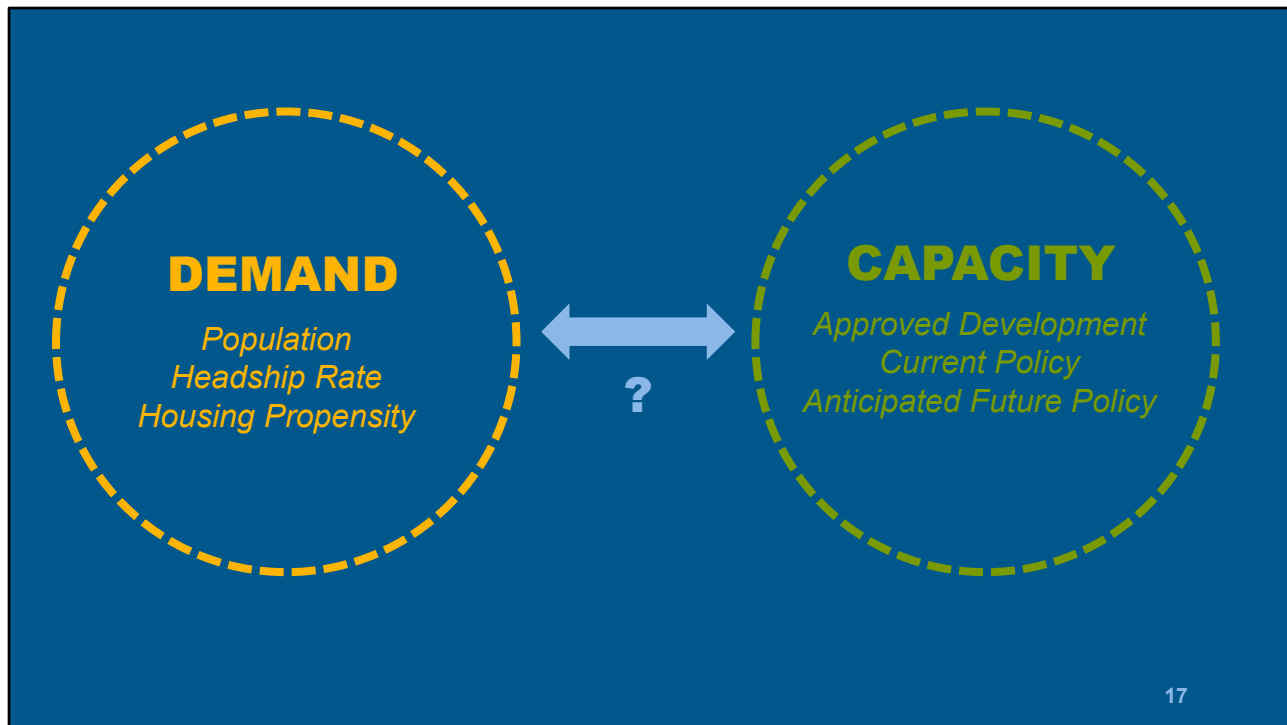


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We created 3 population scenarios based on different assumptions around migration into and out of Halifax:

- Low Immigration & Economic Downturn
- Moderate Immigration & Continued Growth
- High Immigration & Economic Boom

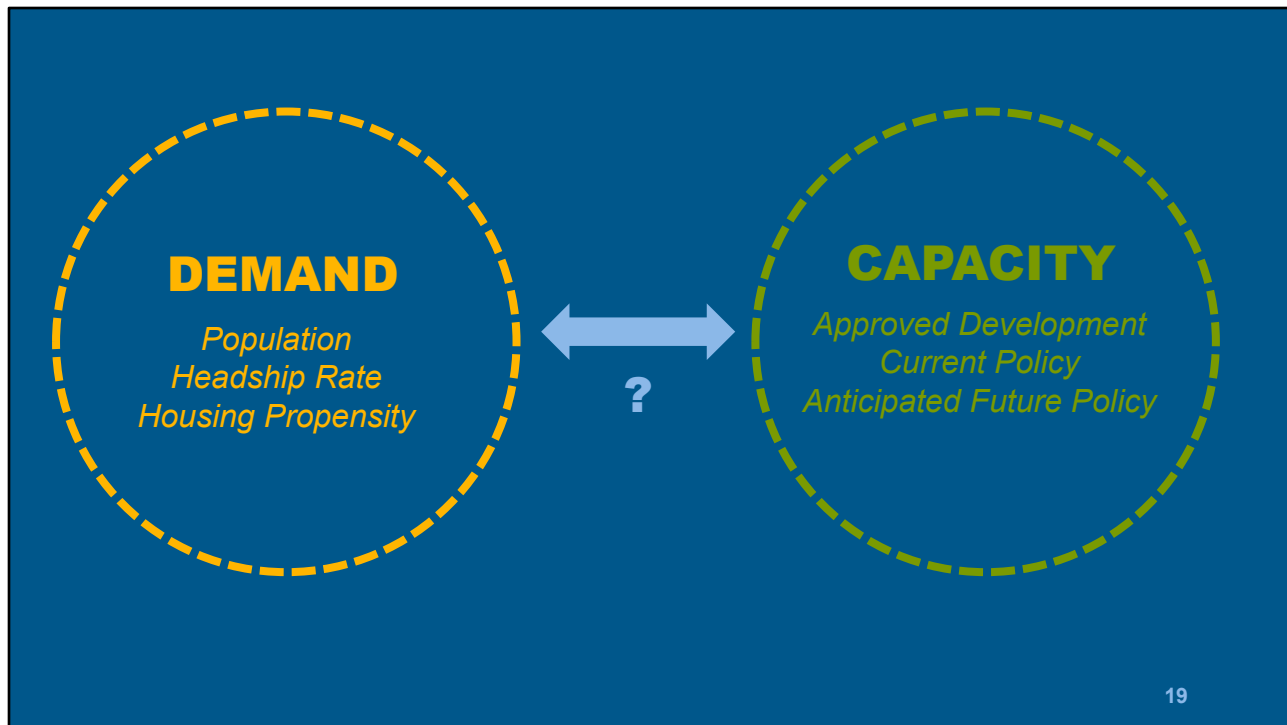
Here they are, lined up against what was in the 2014 Regional Plan. It's important to recognize here that these are not predictions. The Moderate Immigration/Continued Growth scenario was our best attempt at continuing recent trends, but then the high and low scenarios were both playing with extremes. We wanted to be able to test the resiliency of our policy in dealing with the unpredictable. We're not trying to say "This is what **will** happen," we're asking: "What would happen **if**...?"



Now on the capacity side of the equation...



...we focused on the major areas where we expect to intensify. The majority of this analysis was done by taking the acres of land area within certain designations (based on existing and anticipated future policy directions) and applying a density to that area. The density assumptions were based on the Pattern Book, staff expertise, and previous analyses completed for the Rapid Transit Strategy.



To compare the demand and capacity to each other, we needed to allocate the total demand for housing to different areas of the Municipality, and see if there is enough capacity in the growth areas for the demand that we imagine directing there.

LAND USE SCENARIOS

**SCENARIO A:
2014 REGIONAL
PLAN**

**SCENARIO B:
THE NEXT 10
YEARS**

**SCENARIO C:
THE FUTURE**

**How are we
allocating
demand?**

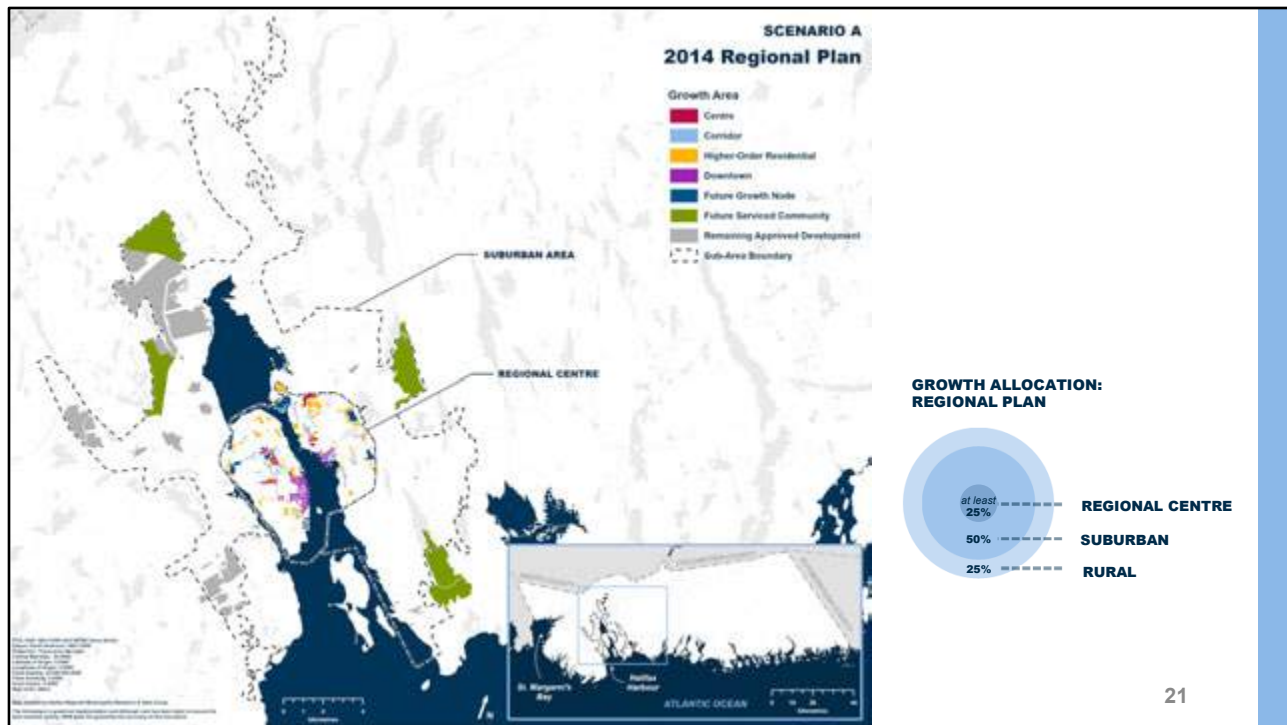
**What are we
including as part
of the capacity?**

20

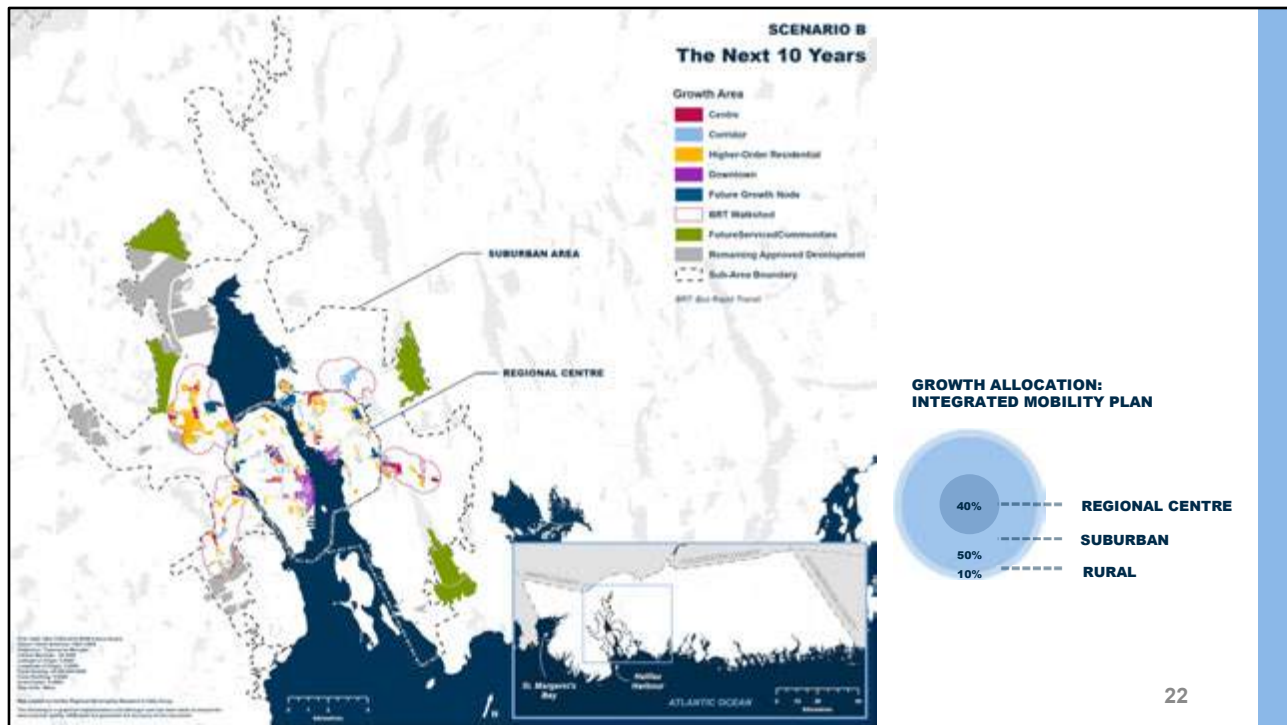
To do that, we created 3 land use scenarios that differ from each other by asking

- (1) How are we allocating demand in this scenario? And
- (2) Which potential growth areas are we including as part of the capacity?

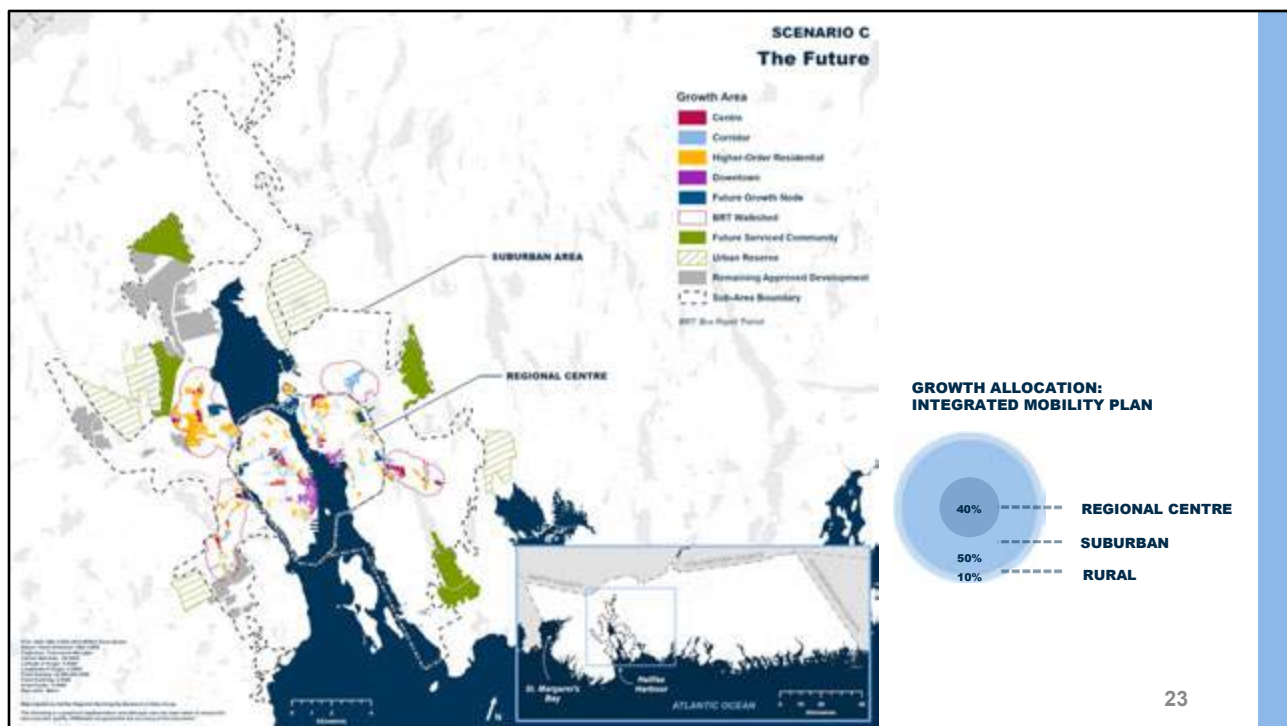
In the following slides we'll go through each of the scenarios and what was included.



Scenario A looks at the impacts of the 2014 Regional Plan. The growth targets reflect that plan, since 25% of the growth has been allocated to the Rural Areas, with the remaining 75% in the Regional Centre and Suburbs. The growth areas that are taken into account for housing capacity include the Regional Centre Package A areas, the Future Serviced Communities of Sandy Lake, Morris Lake, Port Wallace, and the Highway 102 West Corridor Lands, and existing approved development.



Scenario B takes into account some more recent policy directions laid out in the Integrated Mobility Plan. It allocates 10% of the growth to the Rural areas, with the remaining 90% in the Regional Centre/Suburbs. The same growth areas are taken into account for capacity as in Scenario A, with the addition of areas within the suburban Bus Rapid Transit walksheds. These BRT areas include the Centres, Corridors, Higher-Order Residential, and Future Growth Nodes that were used in the development of the Rapid Transit Strategy. These lands have not been officially designated in this way, but help us to imagine a potential future where BRT exists and what that might look like from a land use perspective.



Scenario C is about the longer-range. Like Scenario B, it allocates 10% of growth to the Rural areas; the main difference is the addition of the Urban Reserve lands into the capacity. Those Urban Reserve lands haven't really been evaluated yet, but they are identified in the Regional Plan as potential places for expansion. This is just to test what kind of added capacity we may get by bringing these online.

INITIAL ANALYSIS

- Adequate capacity to accommodate overall demand for housing in short-moderate term
- High demand for ground-based units (assumptions based on 2016 Census data)
- Most of the capacity in the growth areas in apartment-style housing
- If propensity for ground-based units continues, development of remaining Future Serviced Communities should be considered in the near term

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The analysis shows that there is regulatory capacity to accommodate overall population growth in the short to moderate term.

Preliminary analysis tells us that based on the 2016 propensity of the population to live in different housing types, there will continue to be high demand for ground-based units, while most of the capacity in the growth areas is in the form of apartment-style units.

Those assumptions about what type of housing people want to live in are based on the 2016 Census. Those housing preferences will likely change in the future and are likely partially driven by the type of housing that was available and affordable to people at the time of the census. Housing preference is an aspect of this analysis that we'll continue to refine as we continue with this work.

Initial analysis of the scenarios indicates the development of the remaining Future Serviced Communities should be considered in the near term, if Regional Council chooses to respond to 2016 propensity to live in ground-based units.

We will continue to work on this analysis over the coming months and are asking for feedback as part of this period of engagement on our

housing and population analysis paper, so we can hear from the public on our methodology.



Affordable Housing

The Municipality's role in supporting and encouraging affordable housing has increased steadily over the past five years. [The Municipality has been working on affordable housing in several ways:](#)

- **Adopting a density bonusing program in the Regional Centre;**
- **Establishing an affordable housing grant program;**
- **Waiving construction fees for residential developments for Non-profit and charitable organizations;**
- **Creating an affordable housing category for the disposal of municipal surplus property;**
- **Remove regulatory barriers for secondary suites;**
- **Participating in the Rapid Housing Initiative of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation; and**
- **Continued work on Short-Term Rentals, Shared Housing and Tiny Homes.**

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At the same time as doing work to understand the region-wide impacts of land use on housing, we are also keenly aware of current market conditions, and the need to bring affordable housing on quickly, and are working on making contributions in this area as quickly as possible, to ensure more citizen can access affordable housing.

While the provincial government provides services to support those in need of housing, 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.

Through involvement with the Housing and Homelessness Partnership and Anti-Poverty Solutions Strategy, the municipality has developed relationships with non-profit housing organizations, for profit developers and federal/provincial levels of government. Since the 2014 Regional Plan we have worked on several large initiatives such as establishing a Density Bonusing program, which allows a developer to be granted additional development rights, providing they provide the municipality

with a financial contribution towards affordable housing. The municipality has further developed its support for the non-profit housing sector through waiving fees and a surplus land and grant program specific to affordable housing. In the fall of 2020, Council permitted secondary and backyard suites throughout the municipality. In the fall the municipality also entered into agreements with not-for-profit organizations to provide affordable housing as part of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporations Rapid Housing Initiative, which will result in 52 units/rooms being constructed by the end of this year. We continue to work on projects focused on alternative forms of housing, and are currently drafting regulations for short-term rentals, shared housing and tiny homes.



Affordable Housing

The municipal role in the provision of Affordable Housing continues to evolve. Key actions to be included as part of the Regional Plan review include:

The Regional Plan Review will:

- Encourage a diversity of housing forms;
- Identify planning tools to ensure no loss of housing during redevelopment;
- Remove barriers to the development and retention of housing;
- Study possible tools to leverage surplus or available land;
- Update the Housing Needs Assessment annually; and
- Develop a region-wide density bonusing program.

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As we recognize that housing is a right, the Regional Plan will continue to identify ways the municipality can contribute towards affordable housing.

In addition to continuing to support 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. We anticipate the provincial government will grant permissions for inclusionary zoning, under the Halifax Charter, which will help in preventing no loss of housing. We will also continue to look at how we can remove regulations, and leverage

surplus land for affordable housing, and we are requesting that Council commit to updating the Housing Needs Assessment annually. This will allow us to study how many citizens are housed or in core housing need and provide much needed information and data. And finally, we will be sure to capture the direction for a Region-Wide Density Bonusing. We have drafted an interim policy that might be applied, while this program is fully developed in our suburban and rural areas.

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 a bold, white, sans-serif font. The text is positioned on the right side of a dark blue horizontal bar that spans the width of the page footer. The bar has a lighter blue geometric shape on the left side, creating a stylized background for the text.

HALIFAX

**Thank You
For Your
Participation!**

Regional Planning



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

Public feedback will be collected until July 16

Slide 28

Regional Plan Review

Transcript - Housing Policy Virtual Q&A (June 14, 2021)

This transcript has been edited for content and clarity.

QUESTION: How has COVID-19 has impacted HRM's population projections?

Emilie Pothier, Planning Research Analyst, Regional Planning

We observed some interesting trends over the last year relating to population, housing, and the pandemic, like people moving into the Atlantic provinces from other parts of Canada as well as the move toward rural areas across the country. It's hard for us to say at this point whether those trends will continue, how long they might continue, and to what extent they might continue. For the purposes of this type of long-range exercise, we decided we mostly didn't have enough information to factor those pandemic trends into the projection.

There is one component that we did adjust slightly, which was immigration. Earlier this year the Province published data about immigration for the 2020 calendar year, which showed a 53% decrease from 2019. For the first year of our projection, we decreased the immigration assumption by 53% to reflect that dip in immigration due to the pandemic.

QUESTION: Could you please define "inclusionary zoning"?

Jillian MacLellan, Planner III, Regional Planning

Inclusionary zoning is a policy tool that would allow the Municipality to require that developments incorporate affordability [as part of the development], so that developments of a specific size/threshold provide units available to low to moderate income [households]. It's similar to an incentive or bonus zoning program. However, with inclusionary zoning instead of providing a form of public benefit, inclusionary zoning is specific to providing affordable units.

QUESTION: *(Please note only portions of this multi-part question were answered during the Live Q&A, the full answers are provided below)*

- 1. If an affordable home is less than 30% of your household income, do we have homes available to all levels of income?**
- 2. If an individual earns 10k for example a year, they require a home for \$250 a month or less. What does a home look like that gives individuals their privacy for \$250 a month? Is that available now?**

Jillian MacLellan, Planner III, Regional Planning

There is a wide variety of housing available throughout HRM that would address a myriad of incomes. Housing types focused on those in need of deep affordability include shelters, transitional housing, supportive housing, public housing and non-profit housing.

While \$250 a month rent would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to find in Halifax, the province offers rent supplements to help bridge the gap between the required rent and the 30% of one's income.

In some instances, the province may provide operational funding to the organization (non-profit) that is providing the housing in order to keep rents low for the residents.

While there are supports to help ensure housing affordability, the need is greater than the supports available. The 2016 census showed 25.5% of HRM households spent more than 30% of their income on housing. When focusing on rental households the percentage increases to 43.3%. Since 2016, HRM's vacancy rate has steadily decreased as rents and housing prices have steadily increased, compounding issues associated with affordability.

3. What are the average household incomes within each district?

The most recent information we have on household income by area within the Municipality is from the 2016 Census – see below:

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Zones	Median total income of households in 2015
Zone 1 - Peninsula South	\$51,811
Zone 2 - Peninsula North	\$52,995
Zone 3 - Mainland South	\$56,944
Zone 4 - Mainland North	\$58,773
Zone 5 - Dartmouth North	\$45,201
Zone 6 - Dartmouth South	\$65,047
Zone 7 - Dartmouth East	\$84,398
Zone 8 - Bedford	\$84,275
Zone 9 - Sackville	\$75,951
Zone 10 - Remainder of CMA	\$88,719
Halifax CMA (Total)	\$69,452

Data source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), [Housing Market Information Portal](#), adapted from Statistics Canada, 2016 Census.

4. What are the market rent rates in the areas of each district?

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) tracks this information in their annual [Rental Market Report](#) and [Rental Market Survey](#). Here is what CMHC reported in 2020:

Private Apartment Average Rents (\$), by Zone and Bedroom Type - Halifax CMA Source: Rental Market Survey (CMHC)					
	Bachelor	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom+	Total
Zone	Oct-20	Oct-20	Oct-20	Oct-20	Oct-20
Zone 1 - Peninsula South	930	1,270	1,758	2,029	1,417
Zone 2 - Peninsula North	824	1,036	1,265	1,477	1,166
Zone 3 - Mainland South	**	741	1,050	1,145	946
Zone 4 - Mainland North	830	970	1,239	1,478	1,179
City of Halifax (Zones 1-4)	885	1,086	1,322	1,558	1,227
Zone 5 - Dartmouth North	628	794	986	1,136	903
Zone 6 - Dartmouth South	613	915	1,159	1,083	1,063
Zone 7 - Dartmouth East	874	870	1,070	1,057	1,032
City of Dartmouth (Zones 5-7)	650	830	1,052	1,093	971
Zone 8 - Bedford	699	870	1,316	1,444	1,242
Zone 9 - Sackville	**	1,007	1,188	1,435	1,194
Zone 10 - Remainder of CMA	**	1,063	1,520	1,536	1,446
Halifax CMA	865	1,016	1,255	1,454	1,170
** – Data Suppressed					

5. Does our income in question 3 match the rent market rates in question 4 using a 30% calculation?

Is 30% of the Median Monthly Total Income of households in 2015 enough to afford Private Apartment Average Rents as of October 2020? Source: CMHC Rental Market Survey & Housing Market Information Portal					
	Bachelor	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom+	Total
Zone	Oct-20	Oct-20	Oct-20	Oct-20	Oct-20
Zone 1 - Peninsula South	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Zone 2 - Peninsula North	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Zone 3 - Mainland South	**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Zone 4 - Mainland North	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Zone 5 - Dartmouth North	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Zone 6 - Dartmouth South	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Zone 7 - Dartmouth East	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Zone 8 - Bedford	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Zone 9 - Sackville	**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Zone 10 - Remainder of CMA	**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Halifax CMA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
** – Data Suppressed					

[*Charting a New Course for Affordable Housing in Nova Scotia*](#) includes a similar analysis for the entire Province of Nova Scotia (p. 20). Due to the data available at the provincial level, that analysis uses income data from 2019, and is able to assess average income across each decile (range of incomes for the entire population split into ten equal groups), as well as for families vs. people not living in families.

2015 Total Income			2020 Private Apartment Average Rent					Affordability				
Median household income before taxes	30% of Monthly Income		Bachelor	1BR	2BR	3BR+	Total	Bachelor	1BR	2BR	3BR+	Total
Zone 1 - Peninsula South	\$51,811	\$1,295	\$930	\$1,270	\$1,758	\$2,029	\$1,417	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Zone 2 - Peninsula North	\$52,995	\$1,325	\$824	\$1,036	\$1,265	\$1,477	\$1,166	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Zone 3 - Mainland South	\$56,944	\$1,424	**	\$741	\$1,050	\$1,145	\$946	**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Zone 4 - Mainland North	\$58,773	\$1,469	\$830	\$970	\$1,239	\$1,478	\$1,179	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Zone 5 - Dartmouth North	\$45,201	\$1,130	\$628	\$794	\$986	\$1,136	\$903	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Zone 6 - Dartmouth South	\$65,047	\$1,626	\$613	\$915	\$1,159	\$1,083	\$1,063	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Zone 7 - Dartmouth East	\$84,398	\$2,110	\$874	\$870	\$1,070	\$1,057	\$1,032	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Zone 8 - Bedford	\$84,275	\$2,107	\$699	\$870	\$1,316	\$1,444	\$1,242	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Zone 9 - Sackville	\$75,951	\$1,899	**	\$1,007	\$1,188	\$1,435	\$1,194	**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Zone 10 - Remainder of CMA	\$88,719	\$2,218	**	\$1,063	\$1,520	\$1,536	\$1,446	**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Halifax CMA (Total)	\$69,452	\$1,736	\$865	\$1,016	\$1,255	\$1,454	\$1,170	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Data Sources: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Rental Market Survey & Housing Information Portal
 ** - Data Suppressed

6. To allow development are the current household incomes in the area used to determine the rent that can be charged? If not, how do HRM determine affordable housing?

The majority of HRM's affordable housing programs are only available to registered non-profits or charities. Depending on the program we may or may not require specific rents to the affordable units. For example, the Rapid Housing Initiative Program require all affordable units to charge no more than 30% of the households income, however for the Municipal Related Construction Fee Waiver program the applicant must be a non-profit or charitable housing provider which has been registered for over 1 year.

QUESTION: Can you provide any detail on how a Density Bonus program would work outside the urban core?

Jillian MacLellan, Planner III, Regional Planning

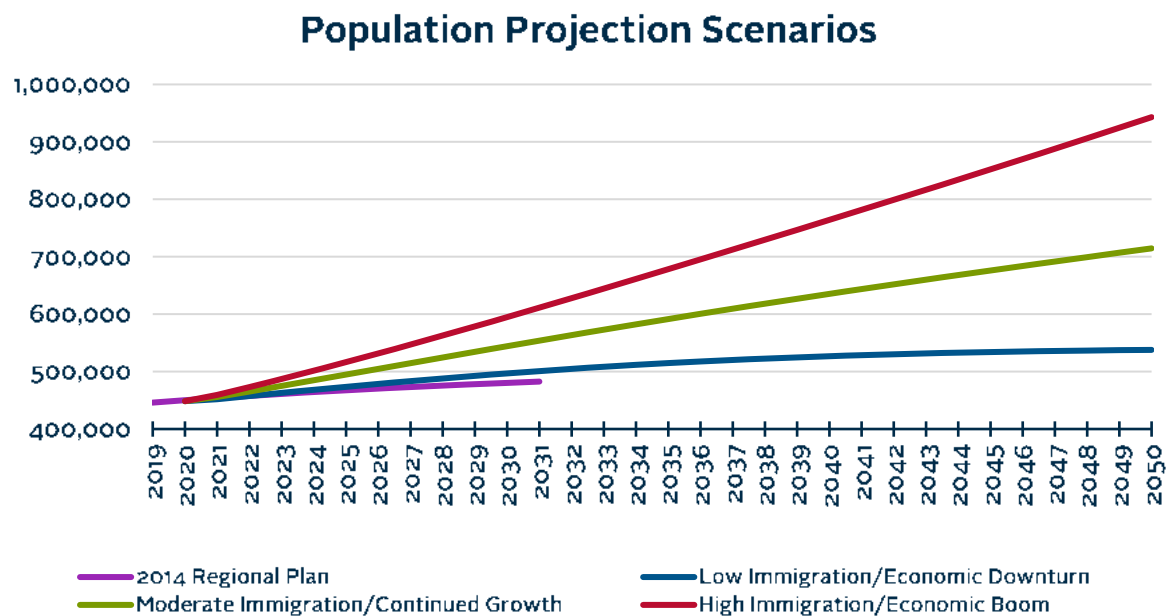
A density bonusing program outside the urban core would look similar to the density bonusing program that we have assigned to the [Regional Centre Plan Future Growth Nodes](#). Instead of assigning a specific value for the additional building floor area that's being developed, we look at the value of the land now and the value of the land after the proposed development. We would then multiply the increase in value by a predetermined coefficient. It's 12% for the future growth nodes. The value would be your density bonus requirement.

More information on this topic is available in the [Density Bonusing Issue Paper](#).

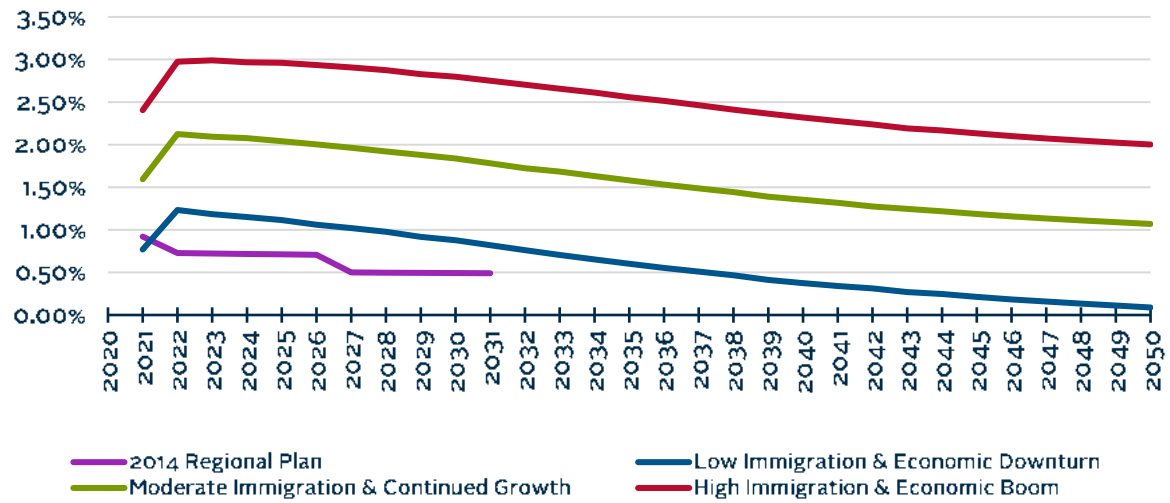
QUESTION: What percentage increase were you attributing to each growth projection - low, moderate, high?

Emilie Pothier, Planning Research Analyst, Regional Planning

We used a cohort survival model for the projections. Instead of attributing a percent annual growth to the population to project it forward, we took the existing population broken down by age group and applied assumptions around births, deaths, and migration. It ends up being a different percent annual increase for each year.



Annual Growth Rate for Population Projection Scenarios



Please note that the sharp increase from the first year of the projection is due to our immigration assumptions that were adjusted downward in relation to COVID-19.

QUESTION: Can we look at using the new Affordable Housing fund the Municipality has set up, in order to build under \$100K small home clusters – that can then be purchased by tenants using forms of “Rent to Own” financing?

Jillian MacLellan, Planner III, Regional Planning

The new affordable housing grant program is fairly broad in the types of development that it can be applied to. The minimum investment for the grant program, it's very low [\$500 per property]. We want it to be very broad in the type of projects we could help through the fund. Whereas technically, yes, the funding could be used to develop a single house, or potentially a cluster of houses, our land use bylaws do have restrictions on clustered housing. Depending on where you are in the municipality, you may or may not be able to develop a clustered styled of housing.

Regarding a rent-to-own mechanism, that is outside of the Municipality's jurisdiction.

QUESTION: What restrictions can neighbourhoods place on secondary suites?

Jillian MacLellan, Planner III, Regional Planning

In the fall of 2020, Regional Council adopted region-wide amendments to permit secondary and backyard suites throughout all residential areas. This allows these suites as accessory to single unit dwellings, two-unit dwellings, and townhouse dwellings. The restrictions on the secondary suites are that you still need to comply with the same built form requirements as the main dwelling. So, if you did need to build into your side yard or expand on the footprint of the house, you may need to apply for a variance if that's larger than what the land use bylaw allows.

We have tried to be very light on any additional restrictions to a secondary suite, as opposed to what you would have for a main dwelling.

If neighbourhoods wish to put additional restrictions on suites, restrictive covenants are a legal agreement between property owners, but they are not something that the municipality uses.

Click [here](#) for more information on secondary suites.

QUESTION: When it comes to affordable housing, do you have any ideas about how the needs and solutions might differ between our urban, suburban and rural communities? Besides keeping size of units small - which aren't family friendly - what other tools are there for keeping housing affordable?

Jillian MacLellan, Planner III, Regional Planning

Most of the municipality's provisions regarding affordable housing are meant to cover the entire municipality. They are meant to be very broad in how they are applied. There are several ways we try to ensure affordability through waiving municipal related construction fees, permit fees, and planning application fees that may be required for the development to keep the building or the development affordable once it's developed and in the long run. We also have a tax relief program. If you're a non-profit, you get your portion of your property tax relieved so that helps with the ongoing affordability as well. We want affordable housing next to amenities, and yes, smaller units can be good, but it isn't a one size fits all solution. You need to have the ability to develop affordable housing in rural areas where you may not have the same access to transit as you would in urban areas as well.

Leah Perrin, Principal Planner, Regional Planning

That question brings up our need to understand our housing supply as well. In our rural areas, we hear a lot about the need for there to be more diversity of housing to support aging in place in their communities.

Our rural communities often have many single detached homes, but not a lot of other types of housing, so expanding the supply of housing and the diversity of housing types can help more people to live there. I think in our rural communities, as well as urban communities, we need to make sure we have lots of different types of housing available to people.

QUESTION: Can we take a serious look at “Affordable Indexing” for small landlords (so they can offer lower rents in return for corresponding property tax payment reductions)? Even if this involves working with the Province to change the current Service Agreement between the two levels of government.

Jillian MacLellan, Planner III, Regional Planning

As it stands right now the municipality doesn't have a lot of flexibility and supporting affordable housing within the private sector. We can help by allowing a broad array of different types of residential uses, but we are unable to provide the same types of incentives that we're able to provide for non-profits. We can't provide money or waive certain fees as we can for non-profits.

This is something that the [Provincial Housing Commission report](#) has suggested that the Province consider changing to give municipalities more power to provide more support for affordable housing.

Changes to legislation regarding rent is more of a provincial responsibility through the Rental Tenancies Act.

QUESTION: Is there a way to make it a requirement of any new multi-unit development to include a number of affordable units equivalent to the number of units that the new development would eliminate?

Jillian MacLellan, Planner III, Regional Planning

That's something that we're looking to explore through no net loss policy. The idea of no net loss policy is that you retain the same amount of affordability you have on existing building as you would if the building was to be redeveloped. Inclusionary zoning is a tool that we can use to potentially meet that requirement.

Also, we can work with our partners with the province and the federal government to see how we can support the no net loss policies or the protection of existing rental units.

QUESTION: What can the city currently do to preserve existing affordable housing?

Jillian MacLellan, Planner III, Regional Planning

Providing help through tax relief on existing properties can be a big help. This can be a big cost saver in annual budgets.

Another tool is allowing for adaptive reuse, which means allowing interior renovations but keeping the structure of the building. The cost of constructing a building can add quite a bit to development, so if you can retain the existing structure or work within an existing building frame that can reduce costs.

QUESTION: What are the rules and regulations on building a shipping container home in HRM?

Jillian MacLellan, Planner III, Regional Planning

As it stands right now our land use bylaws don't permit shipping containers on residential properties, so that has become a bit of a barrier if you want to convert a shipping container into a residential use.

Leah Perrin, Principal Planner, Regional Planning

Shipping containers haven't been something that's been permitted. It isn't something that I have done too much work on. I have seen articles that say that by the time you've insulated them and do all of the things you need to do in order to convert them that it may not be actually that much better than some other kind of modular home. I can't speak to any authority on that but as far as I'm aware our regulations don't encourage them at the moment.

([Here is an interesting article](#) about shipping container homes and the Halifax context, from the Signal, the University of King's College Journalism School's publication)

QUESTION: What household size assumptions did you use to translate projected population into number of units?

Emilie Pothier, Planning Research Analyst, Regional Planning

One way of translating population into housing units is by taking the population and then multiplying it by an average household size. However, that method doesn't allow us to factor in the age demographics of the population and how that might affect the number of households, based on how household composition might change over different life stages (so, for instance, you could be living with your parents when you were a teenager, living with roommates in your 20s, and then living with a partner or living alone in your older years – just as a hypothetical example).

Instead of applying a uniform household size, we use a concept called headship rate, which is the likelihood of people in different age groups to head a household. Essentially, for each age group, we took the number of households headed by someone in that age group and then divided it by the total number of people in that age group, based on data from the 2016 census. We then applied those headship rates to the projected population to get the number of households.

Just to note that 'heading' a household in this context means being responsible for paying either the rent or the mortgage, utilities, etc. If more than one person in the household is responsible for those things, the 'primary household maintainer,' as they call it, will be designated to whoever's name appeared first on that Census Questionnaire.

QUESTION: Could you give us a little bit of information about why the population projection changed from what was in the 2014 Regional Plan to now?

Emilie Pothier, Planning Research Analyst, Regional Planning

The population projection used in the 2014 Regional Plan reflected about a 1% growth rate, annually. In the last few years, we've seen significantly higher population growth: around 2% each year since 2017. One of the most challenging aspects of population growth to project is migration, since it can change significantly in short periods of time due to factors like government policy and economic conditions. The migration assumptions from the projection that was in the 2014 Regional Plan were based on the

economic conditions right on the heels of the 2008 recession. Economic conditions have shifted quite a bit since that time, migration patterns have changed, and new census information and population estimates have been released. We used the new information and the context that we have today to inform the updated population projections, so they reflect what we've observed in the last 10 years.

QUESTION: How can we prioritize adaptive reuse? For example, negotiating with developers to explore that option ahead of demolition which is something that often happens with heritage and affordable properties.

Jillian MacLellan, Planner III, Regional Planning

I personally I'm a big fan of adaptive reuse. It not only has environmentally friendly aspects to it, but also affordability aspects to it too that I think are fantastic. A way that we can prioritize it is by including policy that maybe allows additional density or flexibility in the types of uses that might be permitted. We currently have a type of adaptive reuse policy in the Halifax Plan area where a heritage property can enter into a development agreement (which is a site specific agreement) to allow for the adaptive reuse of the building. As long as you retain the heritage aspects of the building you have a lot of flexibility in the types of uses that you can do.

Kate Greene, Program Manager, Regional Planning

In our community plans, we have this ability to allow for people who own registered heritage properties to request additional heritage rights through development agreement. We're hoping to allow registered property owners across the municipality to have this opportunity, and we're anticipating that there will be direction in the Regional Plan. Hopefully this will enable a region-wide policy and a standard heritage development policy so people who have a registered heritage property will have that kind of flexibility to look at adaptive reuse of those buildings and enabling more housing. The topic of adaptive reuse is also something that's been prominent in our feedback around rural areas of the municipality, where there may be decline or a change in industry that's resulting in some buildings used differently than in the way they once were. We're looking at whether we can create an adaptive reuse policy for buildings where the purpose has changed, but they could be used otherwise for housing.

QUESTION: Has the municipality looked at Co-housing for seniors? programs? If you have a home with more than two seniors in it, could they be forgiven for some extra costs, such as paying water taxes, school taxes, etc? Basically doing things that make it cost effective for seniors who choose to live in a private home to save on costs.

Jillian MacLellan, Planner III, Regional Planning

It's not exactly the same as co-housing, but we do have a shared housing project that's looking at providing a consistent approach to land uses that provides a type of housing where a variety of individuals to live in a house under separate leases. That can be applied to seniors where everyone has their own room, but they share amenities.

I appreciate with co-housing everybody has their smaller unit with larger shared amenities. There isn't really anything preventing co-housing development from happening in Halifax. It's just a different way to develop a multiple unit dwelling or bare land condo. I've been having conversations with seniors' groups on this topic and interested individuals throughout HRM.

QUESTION: Are secondary suites considered legal apartments? I'm also wondering if the current amendment for secondary suites is a temporary or long-term plan? What paperwork is required for secondary suites?

Jillian MacLellan, Planner III, Regional Planning

A secondary or backyard suite is considered a legal apartment. It can be used as a rental unit or for a family member. It could be used just as an extra unit that you have in your space for visitors or for whatever reason you might want an extra unit.

The current amendments are intended to be long term. We will monitor the success of the program and see if any future amendments need to be made. There seems to have been a good uptake in the in those who are applying for permits for secondary or backyard suites.

For the paperwork that's required, it is the same as applying for any type of permit. You would be applying for a permit specifically for secondary suite (or a backyard suite if it's separate from your main dwelling). Depending on

the amount of work or the renovations that you need to do to allow for the secondary suite, you'll have to provide a certain array of plans that show that you're building that the secondary suite and comply with the land use bylaw and the building code.

QUESTION: Our housing crisis has highlighted the lack of maintenance and some rental units when nonprofits build affordable homes through the new funding recently given out from the government will there be funding for maintenance, especially long term maintenance 10, 20, 30 years and more?

Jillian MacLellan, Planner III, Regional Planning

I'm assuming this is referring to the Rapid Housing Initiative funding, and I suppose it could also apply to the affordable housing grant funding. With the Rapid Housing Initiative funding we're working with the province to ensure that there can be funds available for operating costs as needed. HRM has waived the property tax for the properties so that will reduce their operating costs as well. We will continue to work with the groups [partner organizations] throughout the next 20 years, to make sure that they are able to keep their rents low for those in need of deep affordability but also make sure that they're able to operate.

In regards to the HRM affordable housing grant program, we'll be looking at long term financial viability when non-profits are applying for the program. Has the project already secured operating funding through the Province or through another form of funding? If not, we are open to funding mixed market developments so that they can be self-sustainable by charging market rents to help supplement the lower income rents.

QUESTION: Following up on adaptive re-use. The example that we provided was the Heritage DA policy supporting adaptive reuse. If properties are not registered heritage properties, are there other options?

Kate Greene, Program Manager, Regional Planning

In addition to heritage properties, we are also looking at developing an adaptive reuse policy. We're especially focused in rural areas. We don't know exactly what form that will take. It's a pretty new policy for us, we're trying to establish that at the region level. It's really for institutional uses or government buildings where once there was maybe a church or community facility that is no longer in use. How we might we convert so its more than just heritage properties.

Leah Perrin, Principal Planner, Regional Planning

There could be opportunities as we explore tools for the no net loss of residential units, that we could combine those two things (no net loss and adaptive reuse). We're trying to figure out ways to maintain existing units and also keep existing buildings. There are probably opportunities there, and we just need to do some more work.

Jillian MacLellan, Planner III, Regional Planning

The Rapid Housing Initiative funding was available to either new construction or converting non-residential buildings into residential buildings. The initiative was encouraging the adaptive reuse of commercial properties into residential uses.

QUESTION: How hard would it be to convert some of the existing commercial office spaces to use for affordable housing instead? Especially since there are likely to be a lot of empty commercial properties over the next couple years.

Kate Greene, Program Manager, Regional Planning

This is something we're thinking about. We have a theme area on COVID-19, but we're really interested in tracking how the use of office space is going to change over the next number of years. From a planning perspective in the more intense parts of the city where's there's a lot of

commercial and residential development, we're not as worried anymore as we used to be about those uses existing together. We're okay to have residential and office uses in the same environments. Mixed use is something we've been moving towards for a long time. Where that type of idea is more challenging is in areas like Burnside, where you might have office uses. Those areas may or may not be removed from services - we always want to make sure we have residential uses near services. I think that would be one of the main considerations and thinking about what we convert. This is a pretty new and active conversation that we're all in the middle of right now, so definitely appreciate that question. I think it's a great one to ask right now.

Leah Perrin, Principal Planner, Regional Planning

I would add - since I've been preparing for our Climate Q&A - is that much of our community GHG emissions come from our buildings. There is a huge need to retrofit our existing buildings and I'm really interested in the ways that we can combine our understanding of the housing issue with potentially improving our energy efficiency of buildings. Maybe we can do those two things together. I think there are some exciting opportunities there. There are probably some higher level of government funding that can be used to do those projects. There may be some good opportunities available to us to explore.

QUESTION: Wouldn't decommissioned schools be good candidates for cluster housing or Co-housing?

Kate Greene, Program Manager, Regional Planning

That's something we've been thinking about. One of the things that Councillor Hendsbee raised in our Council session was this idea that former schools might be a great place for affordable housing to be built. I think the Rapid Housing Initiative has identified those types of uses where we can create net new housing. We don't want to lose residential housing as we're converting facilities. Those are great sites and we are partnering with the school board (Halifax Regional Centre for Education/HRCE). We work with HRCE to identify where population is growing and where new schools are going. As those sites are decommissioned, HRCE will speak with the municipality about the decommissioning, and I think as we are urgently trying to house people now, we can work in cooperation with the Province. I believe that was identified in the [Provincial Housing](#)

[Commission report](#). I might be wrong¹. But certainly that's a topic that's being discussed. And yes, they would be good candidates because they're often connected to services.

Jillian MacLellan, Planner III, Regional Planning

We have a new surplus land program for affordable housing. Former lands that were used by schools would be something that we would look at as a strong candidate for surplus land for affordable housing.

Kate Greene, Program Manager, Regional Planning

Yes, I had mentioned those earlier. We call those institutional uses so churches and schools and community facilities and they are definitely good candidate sites for conversion.

Please note: The questions below were not answered during the Live Q&A as we ran out of time – thank you very much for your participation!

QUESTION: Why are buildings in business parks only one-storey high? Couldn't they have offices or residences on a second storey?

Thank you for this comment. The [Industrial Employment Lands Strategy](#) identified that we need to protect HRM's limited supply of industrial lands, and proactively plan for our future needs. As land values increase, lower value industrial lands can face pressure to convert to commercial or residential uses, resulting in a loss in the supply of industrial lands over time. Some industrial uses are not compatible with residential or other more sensitive uses, due to noise, odours, or the possibility that the industrial uses deal with potentially hazardous materials. Therefore, we have to be careful about how we permit non-industrial uses in our industrial parks.

That said, business parks that are more commercial than industrial in nature could definitely accommodate a wider range of uses, in more compact forms. The Dartmouth Crossing area does permit residential development by development agreement (this requires Council review and approval).

¹ Kate was not wrong – see [Recommendation #6](#), which speaks to “Leverag[ing] public assets through options such as divestiture to community housing providers or Community Land Trusts.”

QUESTION: Why is it more expensive to get water in my house here in Halifax than it is in California where they have droughts and water shortages?

HRM's municipal water supply is managed by [Halifax Water](#). Halifax Water is a regulated utility and is mandated to set rates so that they recover the costs of providing service.

QUESTION: What is the practical difference between a secondary suite and a second unit?

A secondary suite is a small separate unit that is accessory to the main dwelling. A secondary suite can be no larger than 80 square metres, does not require additional parking and is subject [modified requirements](#) under the National Building Code. A second unit has no maximum size requirement, usually requires an additional parking space and is subject to the standard requirements of the National Building Code for a unit.

Both a secondary suite and a second unit would be considered a self-contained unit and both require their own civic number.



REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW

Themes and Directions

Climate Q & A
June 15, 2021

HALIFAX

Slide 2



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. Today's Webinar is for Climate:

- 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 that 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.

Today's session is focused on our climate policy.

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.

The Regional Plan is a strategic document – the first plan 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.

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. So for example, for coastal elevation setbacks, 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 Regional Plan set an intent to adopt an open space plan, which became the Halifax Green Network Plan. With its adoption, there is ongoing work related to that plan that will get its own direction in the regional plan. I will also talk today about how the Municipality has adopted HalifACT, our Climate Change Action plan, and how the Regional Plan will support the ongoing work of that 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. Taking action on climate requires cooperation across our community, and the Regional Plan can support partnerships with other groups to achieve our goals.

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. We are aiming to complete this review in 2022.



WHAT ARE THE THEMES & DIRECTIONS?

Key Ideas, Issues and Potential Changes.

The Themes & Directions document **shares ideas about key planning issues and provides details of the work** that will be completed during the Review. The purpose of this document is to demonstrate the scope of the Regional Plan Review to the public, stakeholders, Council, and ultimately to seek feedback on the content.

The feedback will help provide focus and direction for our work during the Review.

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The Themes and Directions document outlines the key ideas and planning issues we will address in the Review. It's chance to step back and ask everyone – do we have this right? Are we headed in the right direction? The feedback we receive will help provide focus and direction for our work during the Review.

11 THEMES



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The Themes and Directions document includes 11 Themes. They are all highlighted on the slide, and an overview of each theme is available to you on our website – shapeyourcityhalifax.ca/regional-plan.

Today we are focusing on issues that are part of 2 themes –

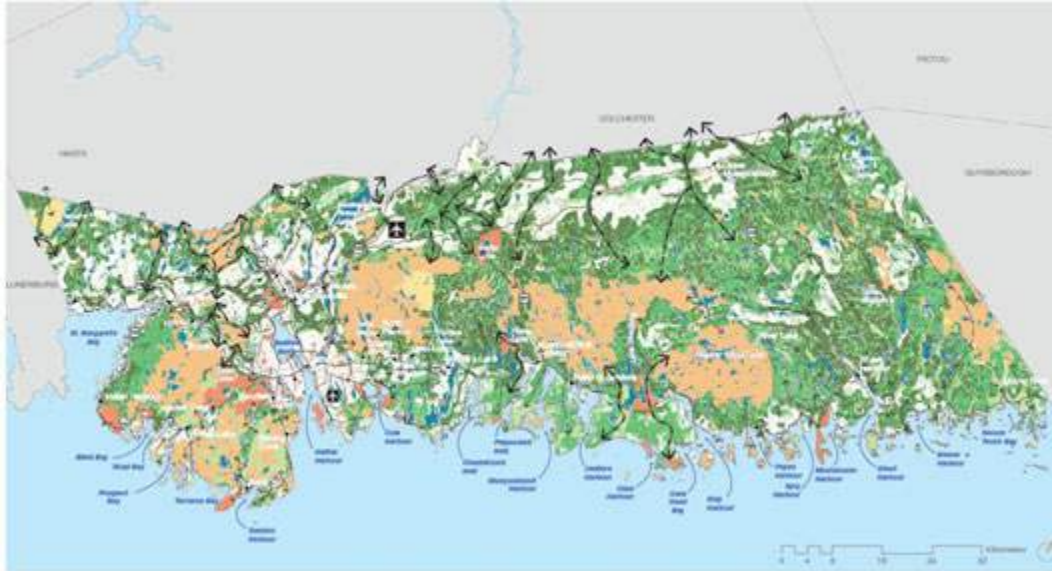
Theme 8, Enhancing Environmental Protection, and Theme 9, Leading Through Action on Climate.

Climate

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Climate change is a real, urgent, complex, global crisis. With the changing climate, we face hazards to our health and safety, the natural world, and our economic growth. In HRM, Regional Council declared a climate emergency on January 29th, 2019. Climate impacts need to be considered as a critical part of all our planning work.

Halifax Green Network Plan

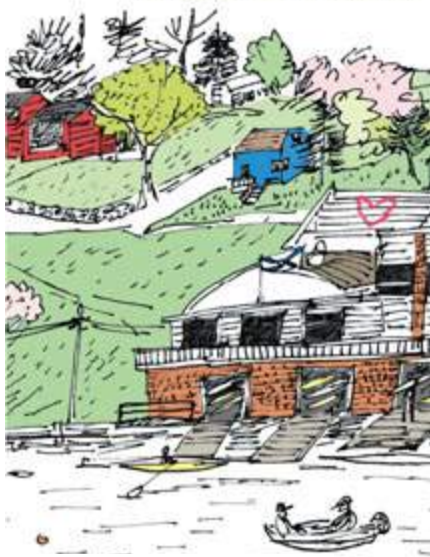


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Environmental management was one of the core underpinnings of the Regional Plan when it was first adopted. The 2006 plan identified the natural environment as one of HRM's defining features, and recognized that growth and development in HRM had been and would continue to be shaped by a network of open space. We have furthered this understanding with the adoption of the Halifax Green Network Plan in 2018. It provides a high-level overview of the areas and features that contribute to the region's Green Network. The Green Network Plan recognizes the important role that our natural open spaces play in both mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change, by capturing, storing and reducing atmospheric carbon and offsetting the Region's greenhouse gas emissions, as well as reducing the impacts of floods and heat waves by regulating stormwater runoff, stabilizing micro-climates, reducing wind effects and limiting the urban heat island effect.

HalifACT 2050

ACTING ON CLIMATE TOGETHER



www.halifax.ca/climate

HalifACT

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.

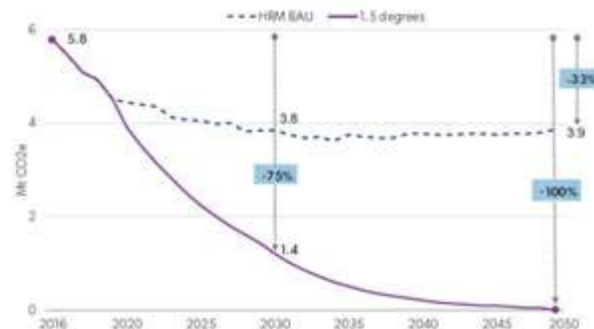
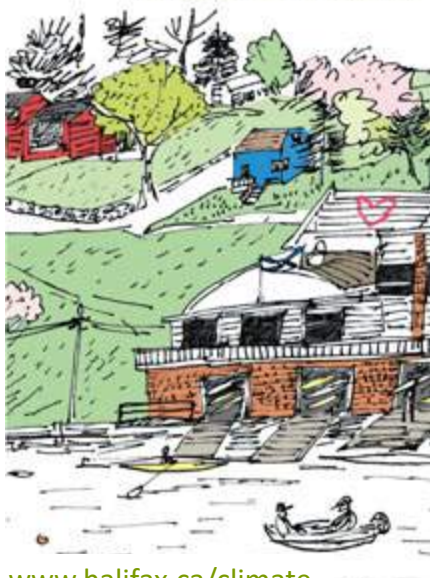


Figure 2: HalifACT's 1.5°C pathway and carbon budget

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Adopted by Regional Council in 2020, HalifACT is the Municipality's climate action plan to reduce emissions and help communities adapt to a changing climate. The Plan is aligned with the low carbon pathway recommended by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which suggested that the risks of climate change could be substantially reduced if global warming was limited to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. HalifACT sets several emissions reduction targets, including a target of net-zero municipal operations by 2030, community-wide targets of 75% emissions reduction from the 2016 baseline by 2030, and achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. While the target of net-zero emissions is important, Halifax must commit to a steep reduction pathway to limit total emissions over time and stay within our carbon budget.



THE REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW WILL:

- Update the Environment, Energy and Climate Change chapter of the Regional Plan to reflect HalifACT's emissions reduction targets
- Consider climate impacts across issue areas

HalifACT is a community-wide plan with many stakeholders, and implementation requires us to think of climate impacts in all the work that we do. The Regional Plan can take a powerful role in setting that direction. Through the Review, we will develop policy, complete additional study and set up future work to implement the recommendations of HalifACT.



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.

THE REGIONAL PLAN WILL:

- Review land use by-law regulations to remove barriers
- Consider opportunities to support net-zero and climate resilient new construction
- Explore opportunities for alternative energy systems, like district energy or microgrids
- Ensure policy and regulations are up to date with new technology (e.g. wind energy policy)

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The Regional Plan has an important role to play in setting our land use planning policy and regulations in a way that supports our emission reduction targets.

In 2016, buildings accounted for 70% of HRM's total energy use and 77% of total emissions. Retrofitting existing buildings and ensuring that new buildings are more efficient is necessary for a successful energy transition.

One of the most important things we can do, is make sure that there aren't any barriers in our planning policy or regulations that would make it difficult for people to use these new energy efficient technologies. For example, are there regulations that would prevent installing solar panels because of height restrictions, or are there limitations on where electric vehicle charging stations could go on a site? So we can do that review of our regulations through the Regional Plan Review.

We may also have opportunities through discretionary planning applications – which require Council review and approval. For example, we could write policy that requires Council to consider the energy efficiency of new developments, or when we are designing new communities through a master planning process, are there opportunities to consider alternative energy systems? The HRM Charter allows us to require district energy for the Cogswell area – and we can explore if there might be opportunities elsewhere as well.

And finally, where there are existing policies and regulations, it will be important that those are kept up to date. For example, our wind energy policy was adopted in 2011. Through the Review, we will check to make sure that that policy reflects current wind energy technology.



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.

THE REGIONAL PLAN WILL:

- Identify current and future climate change hazards and critical infrastructure at risk to extreme climate events
- Adopt policy to prioritize resiliency measures to reduce risk, protect critical infrastructure and require building back better
- Adopt policy to require emergency management services and climate change hazard projections are considered as part of the development process

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Understanding climate change hazards and impacts, especially in vulnerable communities, are a critical aspect of Emergency Management and a core action of HalifACT. As climate events become more extreme and occur more frequently, we can expect more disruptions and damage to our critical infrastructure systems, which include energy, telecommunications, transportation, our water supply, wastewater treatment, solid waste management, buildings and food systems.

We must take action to proactively protect and strengthen our critical infrastructure and improve community resilience.

The Municipality can take a leadership role to identify current and future climate hazards, and critical infrastructure that may be at risk to extreme climate events.

Once we have identified those risks, we can develop strategies to mitigate them.

The Regional Plan can include policy to prioritize resiliency measures to reduce risk and protect critical infrastructure, and require that we build back better. For example, where we know there will be significant risk from sea level rise and extreme water levels on our coast, land use policy can direct important infrastructure away from those areas.

Where we are regularly planning for new development in our communities, Regional Plan policy can require that we consider emergency management and climate hazard projections early in the development process.



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 REVIEW WILL:

- Adopt policy to support a comprehensive water quality monitoring program
- Update policy to support ongoing work to improve stormwater management practices
- Review wetland and riparian buffer regulations
- Continue to require studies of environmental features as part of planning for future serviced communities

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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.

Through the Regional Plan Review, we will both be supporting ongoing work and looking at ways to update our existing regulations.

Some ongoing work includes the proposed water quality monitoring program, which has recently been considered by the Environment & Sustainability Standing Committee. Assuming the proposed approach is adopted by Council, we would plan to write Regional Plan policy which supports that work. Where the proposed program involves working with community, the policy can lay out that direction so we can continue to build those partnerships.

Another ongoing piece of work has been on stormwater management – so our Infrastructure Planning group has been working with Halifax Water on updating the joint stormwater standards, first for large scale developments on private property - and the Municipal Design Guidelines or “Red Book review” is looking at both the public right of way and using green infrastructure.

The Regional Plan includes policy and sets up land use by-law regulations for riparian buffers around watercourses, and there is some regulation around wetlands, which aim to protect these features from being damaged by development. The HGNP identified the need to further protect riparian areas and establish a consistent watercourse buffer across the region. 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. So we are intending to review those policies and regulations and make those updates.

And finally, the Regional Plan sets out requirements for studying environmental features before development can take place for new communities, and we will continue to do that as we plan for future growth.



Coastal Protection

Sea level rise and extreme water levels, exacerbated by increasing frequency and intensity of storms, is expected to significantly impact the Atlantic Coast.

HRM can expect impacts from sea level rise and extreme water levels in coastal areas, including:

- Flooding
- Saltwater intrusion
- Coastal erosion

All of which can significantly damage infrastructure, property and natural features. Limiting damage to coastal communities and ecosystems will require carefully managing development in these areas.

HRM will 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.

Regarding Coastal Protection –

We expect that sea level rise and extreme water levels, exacerbated by increasing frequency and intensity of storms, will significantly impact the Atlantic Coast.

As a result of climate change, 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.

The Regional Plan does set out vertical setback requirements that are implemented through the various community land use by-laws, but we've identified a few gaps in the way this regulation works.

The Province is continuing to work on the Coastal Protection Act regulations. We have been meeting with the Dept of Environment to understand their proposed approach. We are hoping that our timelines will align, so that we will be in a position to adopt revised policies and regulations that are consistent with the Coastal Protection Act and also tailored to the HRM context. If our timelines don't align, there are likely still some adjustments to be made to our policies to strengthen them.



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. The Urban Forest Master Plan provides direction for planning, programming and maintaining HRM's urban forest.

Natural areas and green infrastructure help to:

- manage stormwater
- reduce the heat island effect
- improve water quality
- provide shade
- sequester carbon.

This kind of naturalization work is already being piloted in HRM to improve the environmental health in our urban areas.

17

And finally, 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. The Urban Forest Master Plan provides direction for planning, programming and maintaining HRM's urban forest. Natural areas and green infrastructure help to:

- manage stormwater
- reduce the heat island effect
- improve water quality
- provide shade
- sequester carbon.

This kind of naturalization work is already being piloted in HRM to improve the environmental health in our urban areas and contribute to our actions on climate.

Panelists

Slide 18

Shannon Miedema, Program Manager, Energy and Environment

Kevin Boutilier, Clean Energy Specialist, Energy and Environment

Taylor Owen, Climate Change Specialist, Energy and Environment

Kate Greene, Program Manager, Regional Planning

Leah Perrin, Principal Planner, Regional Planning (Plan Review)

HALIFAX

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.

HALIFAX

**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 20

Regional Plan Review

Transcript – Climate Virtual Q&A (June 15, 2021)

This transcript has been edited for content and clarity.

QUESTION: What is happening to meet our retrofit targets in HRM?

Shannon Miedema, Program Manager, Energy and Environment

That's one of the seven critical core areas that we put forward to Council when we took the plan to them last June. We saw it as an area where the city had a really big role to play in moving forward and building industry capacity and market readiness for deep energy retrofits of our existing building stock. Our first order of business is to design a community program that incentivizes deep energy retrofits, renewable energy on buildings as well as climate resiliency considerations. We're looking at how to reduce risks from climate at the same time as doing work on any one particular building. We have a retrofit design team with many different stakeholders who are experts in different parts of this work, and they've been working on a weekly basis to try and come up quite quickly with a pilot program to test out. We will be bringing that forward to Council this summer for approval and starting to roll it out.

QUESTION: I'm glad you showed the Saint Mary's Boat Club. The boat club is a casualty of climate change with rising ocean levels - the club floods every year. Has the city decided if it wants to build a new boat club or move the existing building higher up the hill?

Shannon Miedema, Program Manager, Energy and Environment

We have done some work at that site a number of years ago. They did a 'living shorelines' pilot project on some of the eroding shoreline at the St. Mary's Boat Club in partnership with some nonprofit groups and with the Nature Based Solutions business. I think it was being monitored by a PHD or postdoc student at Saint Mary's University. In our capital plan, a few years out, there is some money marked for the renewal of that asset that will require looking at the current and future climate risks of that site and trying to figure what is the best long-term, climate-informed solution. One of the other things we are working on across our whole community is doing some climate hazard mapping and risk and vulnerability assessments of our infrastructure and our assets across the whole spectrum of what we own and across the entire shoreline. The St. Mary's Boat Club would be

part of that overarching work as well.

QUESTION: I would like to provide feedback relating to the climate change section to the Regional Plan Review team, and ask the related question: Section 9 of the Themes and Directions report, Leading Through Action on Climate speaks to updating the Environment, Energy and Climate Change chapter to reflect the net zero emissions targets laid out in HalifACT 2050 and to require consideration of climate impacts across all issue areas. It is great to hear that this chapter will be updated and expanded. However, especially as the HalifACT 2050 plan takes on a whole of community approach to addressing and mitigation the effects of climate change in HRM, I would like to hear whether the issue of climate change will be elevated within the next iteration of the Regional Plan beyond consideration within this single chapter. HalifACT 2050 puts forward some of the most ambitious climate targets of any North American city, and I would like to hear any comments on whether something like a requirement to apply a climate lens to all decisions which fall under the Regional Plan is being considered, and if so what that would look like. For example, would there be a consideration of adding a focus of mitigation of climate change (and emissions reductions) explicitly into the guiding Principles of the Regional Plan?

Kate Greene, Program Manager, Regional Planning

I would say that we agree with your statement. You've asked if the focus on mitigation of climate change can be included in the principles, and we have done that, especially in the idea of transforming as a community. We think that we almost need to leapfrog in managing our growth right now and we see the lens of climate change as being one of the most important ways we need to think about how we're growing. It's of critical importance to us and it will be elevated throughout the Regional Plan Review, and likely the Regional Plan itself as compared to the last iteration. Shannon Miedema is on our steering committee and she's helping us guide the Regional Plan Review because we think this lens of climate change is so important to our work right now. She's at the table helping us make decisions and making sure we're guiding the municipality in the right direction.

QUESTION: Is there a plan for wilderness stewardship training of volunteers to mitigate the inadvertent damage caused by the public use of the wilderness for recreation?

Kate Greene, Program Manager, Regional Planning

I'm not aware of a plan right now for training of volunteers, a specific plan. Although some other folks on the in the group might be aware of that. We have been speaking with our Parks and Recreation team about how we manage the interface between development and wilderness areas and how we organize land use strategically to prevent impacts on really important ecological areas. An example of this would be where you have development and then you have a wilderness area directly adjacent. You organize the development in the park in such a way that the heavier used portion of the park, where we're going to have people using it often, abuts development and provides a bit of a buffer to the actual wilderness area or portion of the land that you want protected. We've been talking a lot about partnerships and how we work in partnership with community to manage the environment. That's a way that we need to work with community right now, so that there's education and that we can make the public more aware of human impacts on wilderness areas. I expect to see that conversation evolve over the coming years.

Shannon Miedema, Program Manager, Energy and Environment

I would add that the province has designated wilderness areas that have a set of restrictions for use so they're very different from parks and parkland. They have a certain amount of enforcement. I'm not sure if they are working with volunteers on any type of remedial activity but that would be a question for the province.

QUESTION: With rising land costs does the city plan on upping its budget for acquiring new parkland? I think it is at 500k a year now but that won't be enough. For example, a piece for Blue Mountain sold for 2.9 million.

Kate Greene, Program Manager, Regional Planning

This is something that Council is grappling with right now. We presented on the Themes and Direction Report at Committee of the Whole, and that question did come up around how we manage our parks, think about parks at a regional level, and strategize on how to acquire important pieces of

land. There is a plan for acquisition that's already in the budget, and that Parks and Recreation works toward, but if we want to make that larger and actually acquire significant pieces of land, then that would probably be direction that Council would need to give staff. It's being raised, especially with the conversation around Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes and the Sandy Lake area. People are interested in understanding what can be done to preserve land over time.

QUESTION: What are you doing to increase the adoption of electric vehicles across the community?

Kevin Boutilier, Clean Energy Specialist, Energy and Environment

We're just finalizing a municipal electric vehicle strategy and it's going to have both a public and a corporate component to it. The public component will determine where and in what quantity should public EV charging be available for public use. The intention of the public deployment plan is to ease range anxiety for property owners who are looking to get electric vehicles, which is a major concern and a major barrier that is perceived by folks wanting to switch to electric vehicles. It also gives an indication that there are investments being made in this space, so that if you were to go EV, you'll be in a good spot in the long term. We're also looking to work with the Province to try to implement some policies to make EV adoption a lot easier, to ensure that there is a stock at dealerships - it is actually very difficult to get them currently. With regards to our corporate initiatives, we're looking to electrify our entire light duty fleet by 2030, so that strategy is hopefully going to be public later this summer and then we will start implementation.

QUESTION: In terms of the targets that we've set for 2030 and 2050. Do you feel that it's possible to meet the targets that we have set?

Shannon Miedema, Program Manager, Energy and Environment

That's the \$22 billion question! That is the collective estimated guess of how much the climate plan will cost everybody in HRM, but with the resulting additional \$22 billion to the good starting to be realized in 2030. This is over 30 years, but Halifax is called HalifACT because the ACT stands for Acting on Climate Together. As the city, we recognize that we play an important role and we can directly control some of our emissions,

about 2% of the total emissions. It's about working with all of our stakeholders and opening up policies and using those different levers that we have to galvanize the climate action movement in the city. It's 100% technologically possible, financially possible, but it's about doing things differently and being comfortable with getting away from our business as usual approach where we take a really long time planning. We really need to dive into the action. We need our utilities, other levels of government, and all of our residents as well. If we all do our part and mobilize quickly to do it, then we can succeed. We really need to aggressively drive down our emissions by 2030. Our window of opportunity is narrowing and so that's the pressure. It's urgent and we need really scaled-up action. We've done some really great things that we can build on, but we really need to start scaling them up and acting much more quickly than we have been.

QUESTION: I would love to hear more on what will be incorporated into the Regional Plan to ensure that the expansion of the HRM's solar energy financing program Solar City will allow HRM to further support deep energy retrofits needed across the municipality to meet HRM's ambitious climate goals? What considerations are being taken to support homeowners, renters, rental property owners as they consider participation in such programs?

Shannon Miedema, Program Manager, Energy and Environment

It's probably not really the role of the Regional Plan other than to enable types of directions on programs. That's much more of a kind of technical question.

Kevin Boutilier, Clean Energy Specialist, Energy and Environment

It may be the role of the Regional Plan to limit barriers that may exist. With the current Solar City program, we do have legislative authority to expand that to energy efficiency measures, so anything that does reduce greenhouse gas emissions. However, it is limited to non-profits or residential properties. We're looking to develop a new program with the design group that we've developed in the last couple of months to expand the program so it can hit many more measures, but also to be more equitable to other property owners and other property types. We are looking to be successful through a funding grant through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to do a study to determine what type of accessible financing would be best for renters or for low-medium income property owners. We're hoping to work with third party finance or investors so that

we can go beyond our current PACE [Property Assessed Clean Energy] program limitations to ensure that all property owners within the municipality, regardless of the ownership type, can implement these energy efficiency or similar measures within their property. It is currently ongoing.

Kate Greene, Program Manager, Regional Planning

We're also thinking about affordability and the idea of energy poverty. We're in a tricky housing situation right now. Many people are struggling to make ends meet and be living in housing that they can afford. Energy poverty is something that we're thinking about actively and trying to build into the affordable housing conversation. We have to think holistically in everything we're working on, whether it be housing or just how we're organizing land use. We have to have this view of climate and understand how it's impacting people on a lot of levels. Solar energy, and just allowing people additional opportunities to try out different technologies at the site level are really important, and in planning we're just trying to remove barriers but also advocate for that type of thinking in all our work.

QUESTION: Does the municipality have any additional data that would help us assess climate risks?

Shannon Miedema, Program Manager, Energy and Environment

As part of the climate plan development we had our consultants put together the current and anticipated climate risks for the municipality which comes from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. They're about to release their next major report this summer. We're a little scared for what it's going to say because every time they release a new report, things are more serious than the last time. We have heard that that's what we can expect this time around in terms of things like the rate of change for sea level rise and extreme storms. We work with our partners locally to hone into the global numbers to make them relevant at a local scale. The federal government has some great online resources. The [Climate Atlas](#) is a great place to start for anyone wanting to look at that type of information. We also have work that was done on floodplain modelling along the [Sackville Rivers](#), the Shubie system. That is all available publicly. We also have LIDAR so we have really detailed digital elevation modeling for our entire municipality now. We used to just have it for a subsection. It's now our entire coastline, watersheds, and topography, and that can be used for so many different applications and that's available on [Open Data](#). Students,

academics, consultants, everybody can access it for research in different projects. That will form the base of all the new climate in flood risk mapping that we're going to be doing once we get the data from the international report.

QUESTION: What actions are being taken when we're thinking about protecting residents from the increasing impacts of climate change?

Shannon Miedema, Program Manager, Energy and Environment

Adaptation is really interesting. We spent a lot of time at first on mitigation and then realized that even with all our efforts around mitigation, we need to look at adaptation. We need to look at preparing ourselves for impacts that we have already experienced and that we know we will experience again and probably at changing rates and changing severities over time. It's about building resilience, resilient communities, safe communities, safe and resilient infrastructure, and healthy ecosystems. There is a lot of work to do on this side of things. We only hired our first Climate Change Specialist focused on adaptation a couple of months ago. Our first order of business is working with the province on their Coastal Protection Act to see what regulations are going to come through for HRM in terms of how we manage planning and development along the coasts. We're also trying to get going on our climate hazard mapping and doing some risk and liability assessments of critical infrastructure, and we're working with our emergency management team on that as well. There's lots of work to do.

QUESTION: How we are engaging with stakeholders in HalifACT?

Taylor Owen, Climate Change Specialist, Energy and Environment

In the creation of the plan we did a lot of stakeholder engagement. We have almost 400 people including internal stakeholders, those are people across HRM. We're working with a lot of different business units as well as external organizations including different levels of government, academic institutions, nonprofits, businesses, Nova Scotia Power, and our utilities. That group came together to help us inform how the plan was created and we've been putting a lot of work into keeping that group together, because it was really informative for us and a good group to have together to be able to bounce ideas around and get some action going. That group has now been moving into the implementation phase, and we've been meeting

on a quarterly basis to provide updates on how the plan being implemented as well as what the climate actions are that are happening across the city that are feeding into this collective action of implementing the plan. We've also been doing some collective impact work, bringing together a lot of different people from different stakeholder organizations to start working on projects together and driving down emissions or coming up with adaptation projects. It's been a great opportunity to connect with people working on climate across the city.



REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW

Themes and Directions

Environment Q & A
June 15, 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. Tonight's Webinar is on the Environment:

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

3

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.

As one component of our engagement, we have been hosting virtual Q&A sessions on various topics of interest and tonight's session is focused on the Environment theme.

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 document post-amalgamation that provided a region-wide vision for land use. It was first adopted in 2006. It provided a comprehensive outline of how growth and development should take place between 2006 and 2031.

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



So as a high-level policy document, the Regional Plan 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.

-The Regional Plan policy can set up land use by-law regulations that will be applied region-wide. So for example, for watercourse buffers, those policies sit in the Regional Plan, and the regulations are rolled out in the community land use by-laws.

-It can establish the Municipality's intent to do future research programs or studies. The Green Network Plan is an example of a study that was identified during our last Regional Plan Review

-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. Environmental protection requires cooperation across our community, and the Regional Plan can support partnerships with other groups to achieve our goals.

REGIONAL PLAN TIMELINE



This presents the progression of the Regional Plan over the past 14 years. In 2006 we approved the Regional Plan, 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 ARE THE THEMES & DIRECTIONS?

Key Ideas, Issues and Potential Changes.

The Themes & Directions document **shares ideas about key planning issues and provides details of the work** that will be completed during the Review. The purpose of this document is to demonstrate the scope of the Regional Plan Review to the public, stakeholders, Council, and ultimately to seek feedback on the content.

The feedback will help provide focus and direction for our work during the Review.



HALIFAX

11 THEMES



The Themes and Directions document includes 11 Themes. They are all highlighted on the slide, and an overview of each theme is available to you on our website – shapeyourcityhalifax.ca/region-plan. Today we are focusing on theme 8

Theme 8 Enhancing Environmental Protection

Theme 8 is about enhancing environmental protection and I will go into a bit more detail about how we are considering this through the Regional Plan Review

THEMES & DIRECTIONS

Theme 8: Enhancing Environmental Protection

- Using the Green Network Plan Ecology Map to guide planning decisions
- Reviewing interactions between land use and important ecological areas and wildlife corridors
- Continue to support naturalization and green infrastructure
- Continue to support the implementation of the Urban Forest Master Plan
- Continued development of Watershed Management, Water Quality Programs
- Improved consideration of watercourses and wetlands
- Improve coastal area management



Biggest Moves:

Developing a program of study for the protection of wildlife corridors

Reviewing the Municipality's ability to protect environmentally sensitive or important lands

Improving protection for water course, wetlands and coastal areas

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Environmental management was one of the main focuses of the regional plan when it was first adopted in 2006. It identified the natural environment as one of HRM's defining features, and the plan homed in on this idea that growth and development in HRM had been and would continue to be shaped by a network of open space. The plan set up that when planning for new communities, we should start by examining these places on a watershed basis – this means determining how development should take place to ensure that the health of the watersheds is maintained.

Since that time, we have furthered this understanding with the Halifax Green Network Plan – it provides a high-level overview of the areas and features that contribute to the region's Green Network. The Green Network Plan is being implemented through many different ongoing initiatives across the organization, but our work on the Regional Plan Review will be instrumental in making sure that our region-wide policy is consistent with that plan.

We will be looking to complete some additional study and set up future work related to for example, naturalization and the protection of natural corridors, water resources and coastal areas. I'll talk about each of these pieces of work in a bit more detail in the next few slides.



Planning Tools for Protecting and Conserving Land

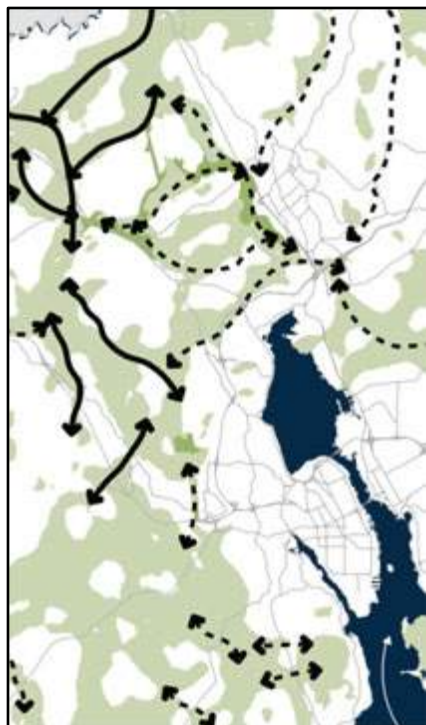
The HRM Charter limits the Municipality's ability to completely prohibit development. However, HRM has some tools to protect the environment which include:

- Mitigating negative environmental effects of development
- Protecting lands around drinking water sources
- Purchasing lands for conservation
- Limiting sprawl through subdivision and road development controls

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One of the most common questions is how the Municipality can protect environmentally significant land from development. The tools available are dictated by the HRM Charter, which –simply put- outlines the powers that the Province has granted the Municipality. In regard to the environmentally significant lands, we have four main tools under the HRM Charter – We are able to prohibit development in certain circumstances, for example in flood-prone areas, or where there are steep slopes and low-lying or marshy areas. This is also how we protect the lands around drinking water sources. We are also able to purchase or support a conservation group's purchase of significant lands to ensure no development takes place, a common example of this is our wilderness parks which we are continuing to work with our community partners to protect given their important role in our green network and as part of our parks spectrum. One of the strongest tools we have is limiting significant residential subdivision outside of the Urban Service Area – the Regional Plan and our Regional Subdivision By-law already do this – this was one of the most significant pieces of the original 2006 regional plan. We've been asked a number of times about whether the Municipality

should be asking the Province for changes to the HRM Charter, and in fact there were some requests that made when the Green Network Plan was adopted - but in the meantime, given the uncertainty around the timing of these requests, we are focusing on how to best use our existing tools to maintain our important environmental lands. So we are continuing to explore the full range of planning tools available to the Municipality, and that is something we will be doing through the Regional Plan Review.



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.

The HGNP identified the need for a clear approach for protecting natural corridors as the region grows and develops.

Additional study is needed to understand how we can best protect these corridors at a regional scale while managing the impact of individual developments.

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One major aspect of the Green Network Plan is the idea of natural corridors, which 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. The HGNP identified the need for a clear approach for protecting natural corridors as the region grows and develops. The GNP identified these corridors at a high level, but where our regulations work at the site level, there is some additional study needed to understand how we can best protect these corridors at a regional scale while managing the impact of individual developments. We expect through the Regional Plan Review that we will set up for that future study.



Naturalization

The Halifax Green Network Plan and HalifACT both encourage the inclusion and maintenance of natural areas and the use of green infrastructure in communities where growth is located or planned. The Urban Forest Master Plan provides direction for planning, programming and maintaining HRM's urban forest.

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.

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The Halifax Green Network Plan and HalifACT both encourage the inclusion and maintenance of natural areas in communities where growth is located or planned. The Urban Forest Master Plan provides direction for planning, programming and maintaining HRM's urban forest. Natural areas help to:

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This kind of naturalization work is already being piloted in HRM to improve the environmental health in our urban areas.



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 Review will:

- Adopt policy to support a comprehensive water quality monitoring program
- Update policy to support ongoing work to improve stormwater management practices
- Review wetland and riparian buffer regulations
- Continue to require studies of environmental features as part of planning for future serviced communities

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Protecting the Municipality's water resources is critical for our drinking water supply, wildlife/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. Through the Regional Plan Review, we will both be supporting ongoing work and looking at ways to update our existing regulations.

-Some ongoing work includes the proposed water quality monitoring program. This program is currently being considered and, assuming the proposed approach is adopted by Council, we would plan to write Regional Plan policy which supports that work and the community partnerships that make it possible,

-Another ongoing piece of work has been on stormwater management – we are continuing to work with Halifax Water on updating the joint stormwater standards for private properties – as well as updating our own standards for public right of way and using green infrastructure.

-The HGNP identified the need to further protect riparian areas and establish a consistent watercourse buffer across the region. 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. So through the RPR we are intending to review our current land use by-law regulations/policies for these areas and make those updates.

-And finally, the Regional Plan sets out requirements for studying environmental features before development can take place for new communities, and we will continue to do that as we planning for future growth.



Coastal Protection

Sea level rise and extreme water levels, exacerbated by increasing frequency and intensity of storms, is expected to significantly impact the Atlantic Coast.

HRM can expect impacts from sea level rise and extreme water levels in coastal areas, including:

- Flooding
- Saltwater intrusion
- Coastal erosion

All of which can significantly damage infrastructure, property and natural features. Limiting damage to coastal communities and ecosystems will require carefully managing development in these areas.

HRM will 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.

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And finally – regarding Coastal Protection –

We expect that sea level rise and extreme water levels, exacerbated by increasing frequency and intensity of storms, will significantly impact the Atlantic Coast.

As a result of climate change, 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.

The Regional Plan does set out vertical setback requirements that are implemented through the various community land use by-laws, but we've identified a few gaps in the way this regulation works.

The Province is continuing to work on the Coastal Protection Act regulations. We have been meeting with the Dept of Environment to understand their proposed approach. We are hoping that our timelines will align, so that we will be in a position to adopt revised policies and regulations that are consistent with the Coastal Protection Act and also tailored to the HRM context. If our timelines don't align, there are likely still some adjustments to be made to our policies to strengthen them.

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 a bold, white, sans-serif font. The text is positioned on the right side of a dark blue horizontal bar that spans the width of the slide. The bar has a lighter blue geometric shape on the left side, creating a stylized background for the text.

HALIFAX

**Thank You
For Your
Participation!**

Regional Planning



regionalplan@halifax.ca
902-233-2501

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Public feedback will be collected until July 16

Slide 17

Regional Plan Review

Transcript – Environment Virtual Q&A (June 15, 2021)

This transcript has been edited for content and clarity.

QUESTION: Why the delay in undertaking the further work on natural corridors until after completion of the Regional Plan?

Leah Perrin, Principal Planner, Regional Planning

We are grappling with a huge amount of work. The Themes and Directions report includes the Halifax Green Network Plan which gave us many directions to work on a variety of things. The natural corridors obviously are one of the most important things that we will need to tackle in the coming months and years. We're looking at ways that we can advance that work through the Region Plan Review so I wouldn't describe it as a delay. We are interested in continuing on with that work. Given that the Green Network Plan is at that high level, and there may be a need to do additional field work, potentially ground truthing, to understand exactly what we're looking at on the ground and understanding how we can regulate those corridors at the site level. It's a significant amount of work, and so it may take some time. We will be working to resource our different projects through the Regional Plan Review and we'll tackle that as we go.

Kate Greene, Program Manager, Regional Planning

We know that there are some corridors that are more important than others in the sense that they are more sensitive or may be closer to development and more under threat. We want to prioritize how we work on them and work in a more coordinated fashion on those as quickly as possible. We've also been meeting with community members and have been working with Karen Beazley (Dalhousie University School for Resource and Environmental Studies) and others to try and rely on expertise in the community to learn more about the important corridors and ecologically sensitive areas. We're certainly not delaying the work, but we're trying to be clear about how we're working on it. We won't be able to get all of that done by the time the Regional Plan comes forward for adoption. A lot of it will be setting up to make sure that we can do that work over the next number of years.

QUESTION: Does the Regional Plan have any role to play in preserving and enhancing the health of wilderness environment that is within HRM but is provincially owned?

Leah Perrin, Principal Planner, Regional Plan

The Municipality is a creature of the Province. We're at the whims of the Province to manage their land as they choose. The Regional Plan does set out the Open Space and Natural Resource designation and we have included much of that Crown Land in that designation. There are specific requirements in there around how land can be subdivided. For example, if the Province chose to sell land, that land would be subject to our municipal regulations, our zoning.

QUESTION: Is there a way to measure carbon sequestration to determine the effects of changes in urban development that affects wilderness areas within HRM?

Shannon Miedema, Program Manager, Energy and Environment

That's a tough one. We do contemplate carbon sequestration in HalifACT, our climate action plan, as part of an important way to help us get to our targets of 2030 and 2050. Recognizing that we have to deal with our relationship and treatment of nature if we're going to be able to improve our climate situation and recognizing that preserving what we do have is really important. Not just for climate mitigation purposes, but also on the adaptation side with reducing flood risks, providing shade, those kinds of things. In our climate plan we also have some actions around regreening initiatives. That is slower. We have to do a lot in a really short term. We also are thinking long term out to 2050 and beyond. You might have heard about different tree goals that the federal government and internationally, around – let's just plant millions of trees – and that will help us ultimately in the long term get to our climate targets. It's not going to help us very much in the short term.

Penelope Kuhn, Policy Coordinator, Parks and Recreation

I would just add that it's incredibly complex to understand carbon sequestration changes in a wilderness area, in a forest. There's a lot of academic literature out there. Folks that have tried to do that. Something we could look at, possibly down the road, is partnering with academics that are studying and measuring these types of changes in forests. Again, it's

complex and depends on the types of trees and the climate, for example. There is lots of work to be done on that.

QUESTION: What steps are being taken to protect stream and lake watershed areas in the Sambro and Purcell's Cove wilderness areas? I mean areas outside the Terence Bay Wilderness or outside existing protected areas like the Shaw Backlands. In particular areas around Governors Pond, First and Third Pond, and even Grover Lake -- where it seems there are several major subdivisions being proposed.

Leah Perrin, Principal Planner, Regional Planning

The land use by-law regulations have watercourse buffers around watercourses. We're interested in ways that we can better protect watercourses and wetlands. The presentation covered some pieces of that.

These lakes are outside the Urban Service Area, so there is limited subdivision that is allowed in this rural area. Most large-scale development would need to be considered through a [conservation design development](#) process. There are some subdivisions that were approved before the Regional Plan was adopted in 2006, which may just be developing now. Development on those lands will need to meet the watercourse buffer requirements in the applicable land use by-law.

QUESTION (With respect to water bodies): #2) what out of these areas has to be directly protected by the Province, and where are there areas of cooperation needed between the Province and Municipality?

Leah Perrin, Principal Planner, Regional Planning

There's jurisdictional overlap between what the municipality is able to do, what the Province, is able to do. For example, the Province is responsible for approving wetland alteration permits. There is definite coordination required to make sure that we are, from a municipal perspective, using the full range of tools that we have available to us to make sure that we're protecting things as much as we can. Where there are gaps in what we're able to do, that we're coordinated with the Department of Environment to understand their processes and work together on ways to improve.

Shannon Miedema, Program Manager, Energy and Environment

It's almost always a multi-stakeholder partnership when it comes to any

type of water. We do work closely with the Province but also with all the land-owners in the area – developers, quarries, homeowners. There's a lot of moving parts and we know that our urban lakes and watersheds are stressed and it's a whole complicated series of reasons that you can't really tease out. We're talking about the need for multi stakeholder management of these water bodies and we're really excited about some of the work we're doing internally. We've proposed a new water quality monitoring program for a series of lakes within HRM that's gotten the approval of the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee of Council and it's going to Regional Council at the end of this month¹. If they approve that, then we'll be launching a new program and we haven't had a program to regularly monitor our lakes for quite a number of years now. That's the piece that we're really looking forward to, and then we continue to do a lot of work in particular lakes like Banook and MicMac and some other lake across the region.

QUESTION: Does the delay in implementing the Lahey report affect the environment within HRM?

Kate Greene, Program Manager, Regional Planning

In our Regional Plan, the focus on Crown land is on protecting it as open space. It plays an important role in our open space network. We're always wanting to work with the Province on continuing to monitor protection of open space and sustainable practices around management of land and forests. I think that's part of an ongoing conversation that we're continually having with the Province. The Regional Plan reinforces the underpinnings of the with a focus on environment and environmental planning. I think the Lahey Report starts to refocus our practices, and I think that aligns with the Regional Plan and what we're trying to do with the outer reaches of the municipality.

¹ This will be discussed at Regional Council on June 29, 2021, see item 11.4.1: <https://www.halifax.ca/city-hall/regional-council/june-29-2021-halifax-regional-council-special-meeting>

QUESTION: How is the Open Data Initiative being promoted in this process? For example, existing water quality data collection in a Machine Readable format so then it communicated in a community-accessible way.

Emma Wattie, Water Resources Specialist, Energy and Environment

There is open data policy for HRM and that's really what will help guide us moving forward. If the Water Quality Program gets approved by Regional Council that information would be made available in an accessible way but also in a manageable way. Community members will be able to not just see raw data on its own, but also be able to understand it. In terms of open data there are several different open data platforms within HRM. There are other open data platforms that would be for the water quality side and we'd looking to make our data available moving forward.

QUESTION: (FOLLOW UP): Great, how about Open Data with regards to Regional Planning data collection?

Leah Perrin, Principal Planner, Regional Planning

We are interested in getting much better at our data collection overall, for the Regional Plan. We have a set of indicators in the Regional Plan that need to be updated and we're interested in just getting better overall at data collection and tracking as much as we can over time and making sure we're understanding how we're meeting our goals and objectives.

Kathleen Fralic, Planner III, Regional Planning

Some of the open data from our priorities plans, for example, the Halifax Green Network plan data is available through our Open Data portal. There is a fair amount of our grounding data, that is that we're working with for the Regional Plan Review, is available through that portal as well.

(For more information on HRM's Open Data initiative, see here:
<https://www.halifax.ca/home/open-data>)

QUESTION: What will expansion of green infrastructure look like in both municipal right of ways and private/residential properties (as outlined in the presentation) look like and what modifications and policies within the Regional Plan can be implemented to promote putting more green infrastructure in place - including in the Regional Centre?

Leah Perrin, Principal Planner, Regional Planning

The Regional Plan is a high level document and so it will be supportive of other initiatives. The green infrastructure piece has been worked on by our Infrastructure Planning group. In terms of the right-of-ways, we work with a wide range of people, including Halifax Water. That technical aspect may be Energy and Environment.

Shannon Miedema, Program Manager, Regional Planning

Within the Planning department there's some folks working on joint stormwater standards with Halifax Water and looking at what standards would need to be in place for different types of green infrastructure. By that we mean things like bioswales to try and reduce flood impacts, to stormwater to slow heavy rain events before it hits our water bodies to try and limit impacts and limit flooding.

We've also been working closely with the department that deals with their right of ways, Transportation & Public Works, and we actually have a project that's including some green infrastructure in downtown Dartmouth. Climate funding is being put towards that to enable it. That came about as a motion of Councillor Austin's a little while ago so that will be a really interesting project to look at. We've done some work with developers on getting some bioswales in but it's at the early stages. We flagged it as an area of focus as part of environment being a strategic initiative Council over the next four years.

Penelope Kuhn, Policy Coordinator, Parks and Recreation

We do have a naturalization program with a few pilot projects. One of them is in the right-of-way area. That was an initiative that was brought to us from a resident. They've taken a pretty large right-of-way area that was turfgrass and put in hundreds of pollinating plants. It's been very successful. We also have pilots within parks for naturalization, so we've got 3 pilots total and will be going back to Regional Council with the staff report about those pilots at the end of this year. We'll make some

recommendations on moving forward with the full naturalization strategy at that point.

QUESTION: The Urban Forest Master Plan has some neighbourhood goals to increase canopy cover. What role will these goals and/or the Green Network Plan have in the future when HRM urban forests or parklands may be at threat of sale or clearcutting for development. How can these parklands be saved?

Leah Perrin, Principal Planner, Regional Planning

We have an ongoing challenge with trees on private property. We are interested in maintaining as many trees as part of our urban forest canopy as possible and when development is taking place there is always the threat that we will lose some of those trees. It's an ongoing challenge with our regulations. We are typically able to require tree retention through development agreements or if you're around a riparian buffer. We're limited what we can do when the trees are cut when no development is yet proposed. We're continuing to work on a staff report that will address this issue. It is an ongoing issue that we're dealing with our Urban Forester and we are continuing to look for different solutions.

Shannon Miedema, Program Manager, Energy and Environment

We've consulted with other cities across Canada as part of the research for that report to try and figure out what might be the right fit for Halifax. That report is still in draft right now.

QUESTION: What steps are being taken to protect stream and lake watershed areas surrounding the Preston areas? With new development going on close to the city's water supply, are there precautions being taken to preserve the natural function of Lake Major?

Leah Perrin, Principal Planner, Regional Planning

We do work with Halifax Water. They have their own staff, that work on watershed management and [source water protection](#) planning. They have source water protection plans for all of our drinking water supplies. We work regularly with Halifax Water to make sure we understand exactly what those source water protection plans are saying and that our

regulations are aligned with them. If there is any development that's proposed in the area that could affect those source water lands, we would be consulting with Halifax Water and making sure that we're taking the right steps to make sure that isn't affected.

Kate Greene, Program Manager, Regional Planning

We are also working on the [African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity](#) which focuses on African Nova Scotian communities and has specific goals for infrastructure and planning around water and land use. We're working with that group of people to try and identify issues that are important to community and I suspect that will be raised as part of that process. We will look at it through that through the road to economic prosperity.

QUESTION: Wondering what HRM is doing about sea level rise and storm surge?

Samantha Page, Adaptation Climate Change Specialist, Energy and Environment

It's a really big issue, especially with hurricane season already starting. We have recently flown LiDAR, which is detailed elevation models for all of HRM. This is really exciting because it allows us to very accurately map climate hazards. We'll be using this to overlay updated sea level rise and extreme water level numbers. We're currently doing an extreme water level mapping project. We're going to update our sea level rise numbers. We're waiting a little bit on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, they're the international body on climate knowledge and they are releasing their latest numbers next month. The last update was in 2013, so we're excited to get those updated sea level rise numbers and latest climate science which we'll be using to come up with localized projections on sea level rise. Then we'll be mapping those on our detailed LiDAR maps. Those will be made public. Stay tuned for those, but we're excited to be able to update those for all HRM. In the past we've only been able to do certain areas, but now with the LiDAR data we will be able to do it for all HRM.

QUESTION: Could you tell us a little bit more about the Water Quality Monitoring program that is coming forward?

Emma Wattie, Water Resources Specialist, Energy and Environment

It went to the Environmental and Sustainability Standing Committee earlier this month and was unanimously approved and will be presented to Regional Council later. This program, if approved, would monitor water quality at 74 different lakes across HRM, which have been assessed in a previous study that's also available publicly now. That was done by AECOM and these lakes are a mixture of the highly vulnerable and moderately vulnerable, lakes that have been identified through other previous HRM studies and have been qualified to have high concerns. There will be a mixture of different things that will be collected. The main thing about the program is that it will be a hybrid, in partnership with a lot of communities. We'll be looking for community groups to be involved with the program itself and to support some of the data collection. Training and protocols will be in place. That's a quick overview of what that program will look like.

QUESTION: In HalifACT there is an action item about promoting naturalization on private property. I'm just wondering where that stands and what we can do to support that.

Penelope Kuhn, Policy Coordinator, Parks and Recreation

That's an action item (in HalifACT) but I don't really have an update on what's been done, but perhaps after the staff report that I mentioned earlier about naturalization, there could be some synergy with that how the municipality moves forward on that.

Shannon Miedema, Program Manager, Regional Planning

Our first step was really to inventory all natural assets within the boundaries of HRM, whether HRM has any ownership or control over them or not. Looking at the pilot projects that Parks & Recreation is doing on HRM-owned land, then looking to promote or incentivize other people to do similar things on their lands and what the co-benefits are. There's a big public education component, community mobilization component to that, just like there is for a lot of climate action. We're in the very early stages of that particular action. I'll just say there are 46 actions in the climate plan, and they're all very large, long-term, multi-pieced actions. We're trying to

keep our eyes on all of them right now.

Penelope Kuhn, Policy Coordinator, Parks and Recreation

There's also a [boulevard gardening administrative order](#) that is new and that allows homeowners or landowners to, instead of just having turfgrass in the boulevard (the area between the road and the sidewalk), have all sorts of naturalized plants, such as pollinator plants. That's a new change for HRM, which is a great synergy with the other naturalization projects that we have started as well.

Kate Greene, Program Manager, Regional Planning

From the planning perspective, we are using the Regional Plan Review to frame up our objectives for our suburban and rural planning processes. That way we create detailed regulations in our suburban and rural areas, similar to the way we created regulations for the Centre Plan. One of the things that Council is talking about a lot is green-oriented design and how we consider open space and natural areas in designing or infilling communities. I think that would be an important part of our work going forward and I would say COVID has created more awareness around the importance of green areas, not just for their environmental function, but also for their health benefits and mental health benefits. We're seeing renewed energy around that as well in terms of community design, which is great to hear from Council.

QUESTION: Earlier we were talking about the Coastal Protection Act which is being developed by the province. How is HRM working with the Province on this on this initiative?

Samantha Page, Adaptation Climate Change Specialist, Energy and Environment

On the Energy and Environment side of things, with an adaptation perspective being such a huge part of HalifACT, we're in really close conversations with them. The Act was passed and they are at the stage where they're working on developing the regulations. We have a little bit of insight as to what those will look like, but we're still like everyone else waiting to see what those regulations are going to be and how they align with HalifACT. We were on the same page of the importance of having smart planning around coastal areas. It will be interesting to see what they come out with. We're going to continue to move forward with our climate

action and making sure that when we do our updated sea level rise and extreme water level maps that those are going to be integrated into our planning and updated vertical allowance numbers for development, how far above sea level you would need to develop and hopefully those align with the Coastal Protection Act. I think it's really important that we will align with them, but we may go above and beyond what the Province has suggested based on our localized context.

Leah Perrin, Principal Planner, Regional Planning

In the Themes and Directions Report there is a little bit of a laundry list of gaps that we've identified about the way our coastal requirements work right now. One example is that we have coastal elevation requirements, but the horizontal set back is the same as for inland watercourses. There really is a difference, obviously between the ocean and inland watercourses and regulations should probably reflect that. Another thing might be, how do we deal with barrier beaches or estuaries? These are partly inland but they're still coastal. They still are subject to storm surge and wave action, and need to be treated differently than a lake would be. It will be interesting to see how the Province moves forward and then it will be great if we're aligned. We can certainly go over and above whatever it is that they propose. We are over and above right now with our coastal elevation requirements anyway. That won't be much of a change.



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.

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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?

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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.

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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 – Imagining 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.

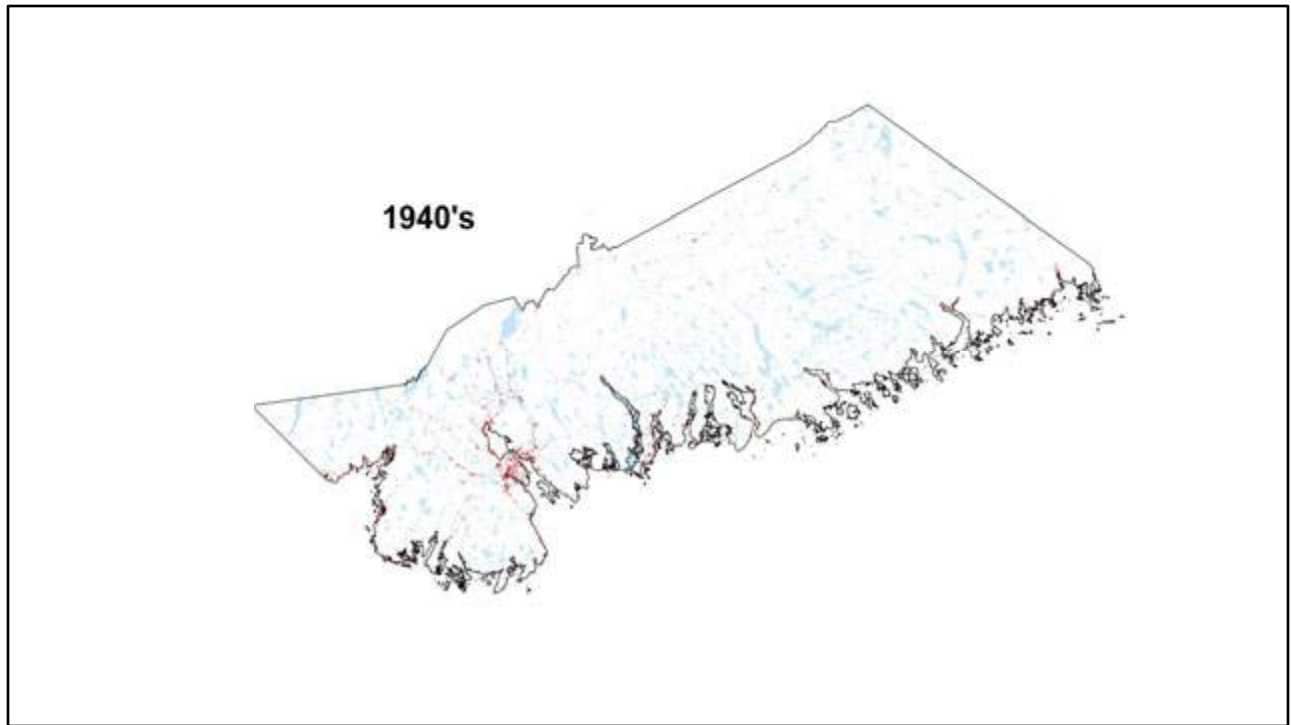
Planning is often thinking about taking an action in building community, thinking about impacts, and then mitigating these impacts.

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

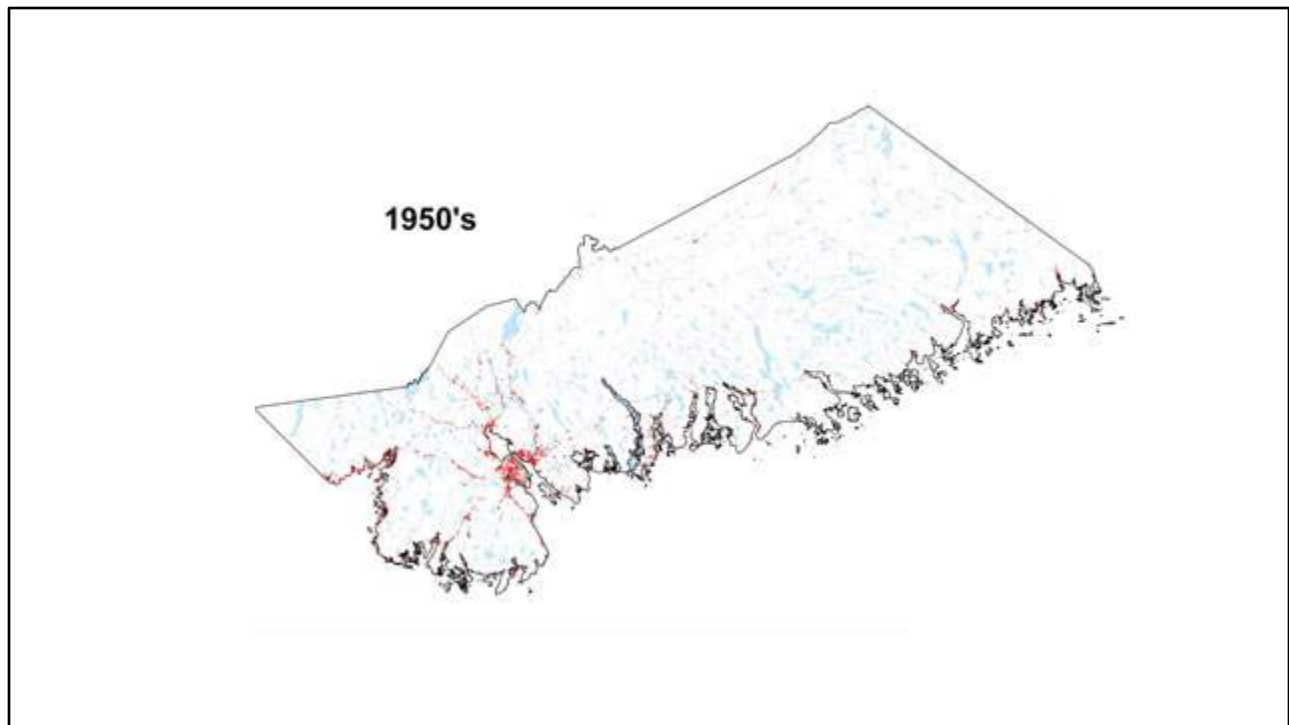
But what are we trying to create?

What is the community we are trying to build?

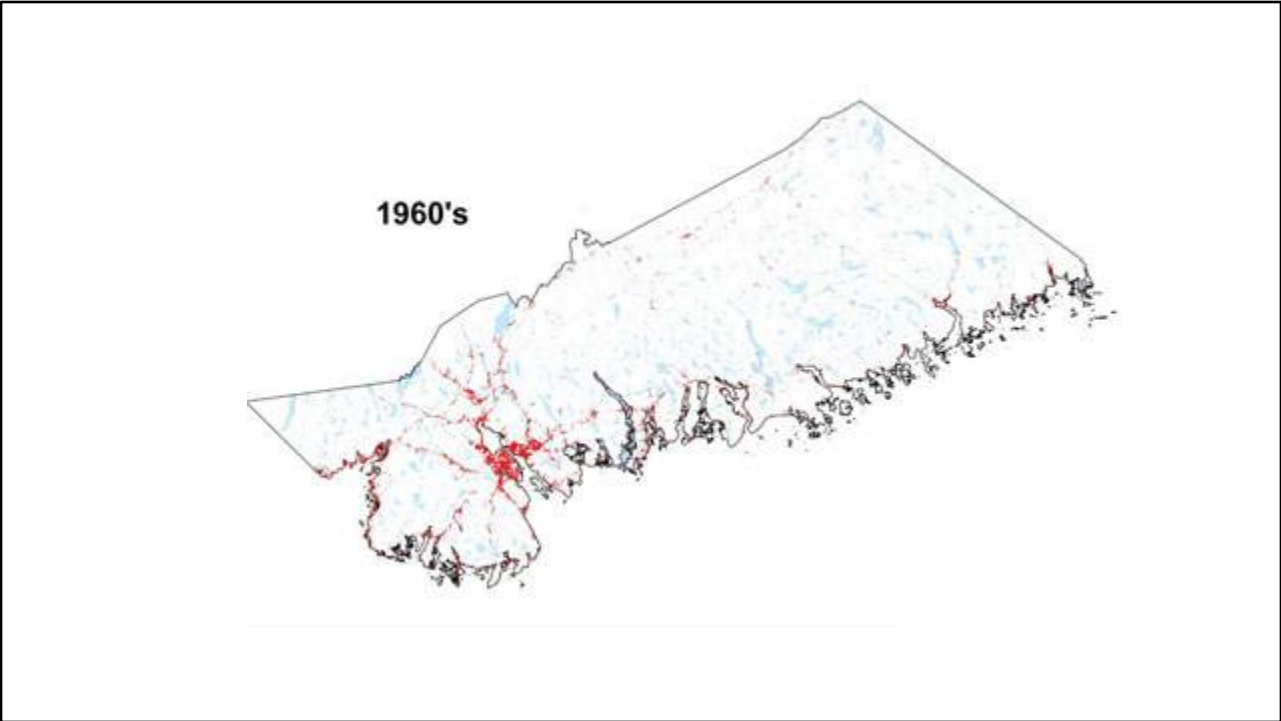
What are the ideas we have about where we have come from, and where we need to go?

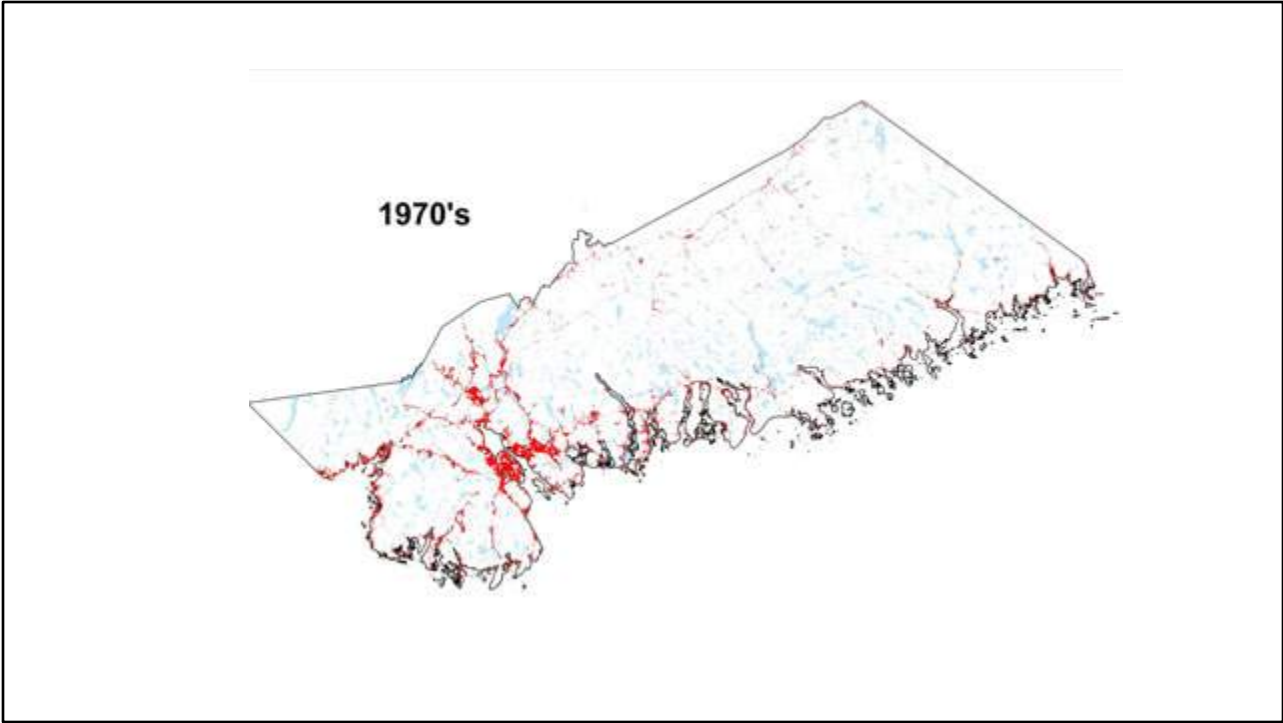


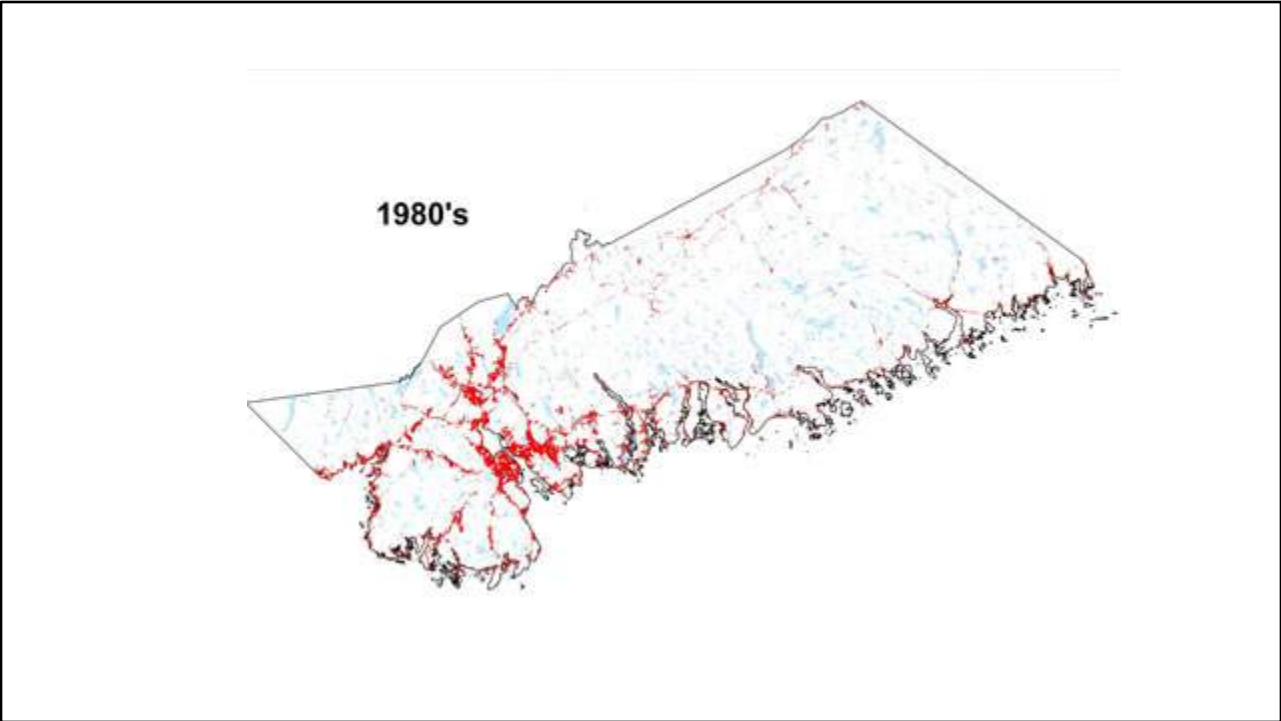
Thirty years ago our region had an unusually compact metro area surrounded by pristine rural landscape and picturesque seashore communities.

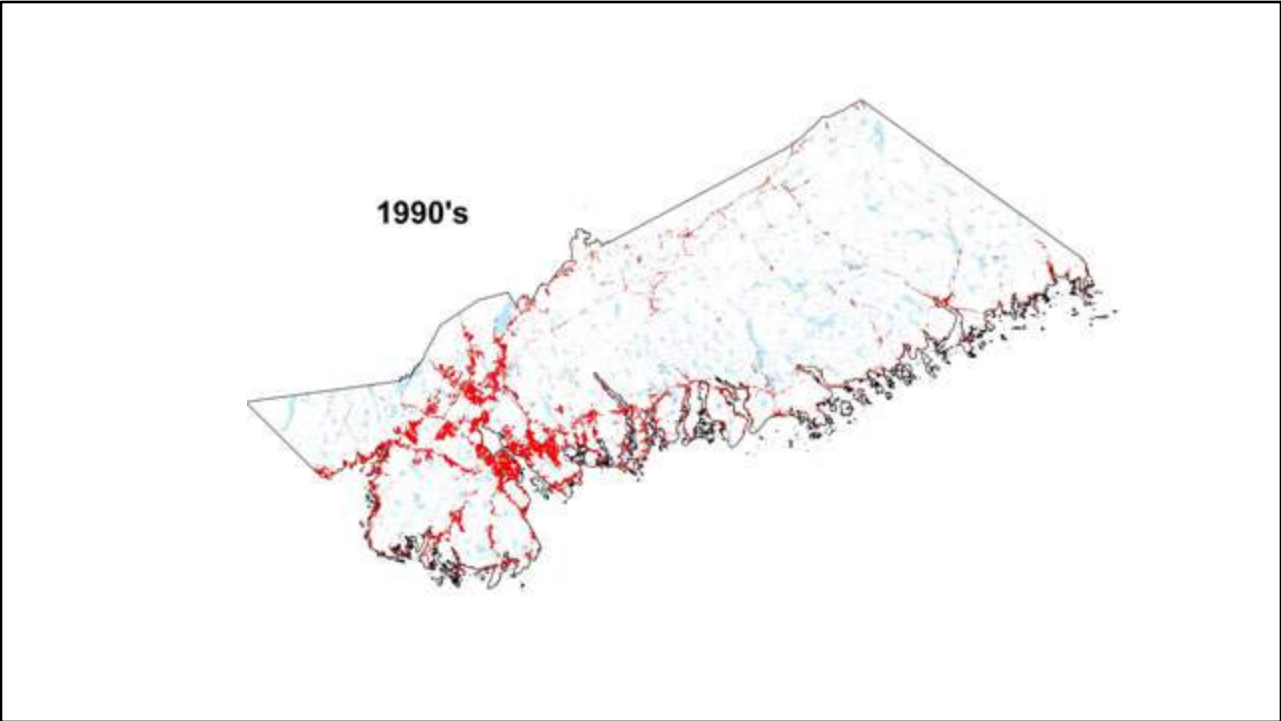


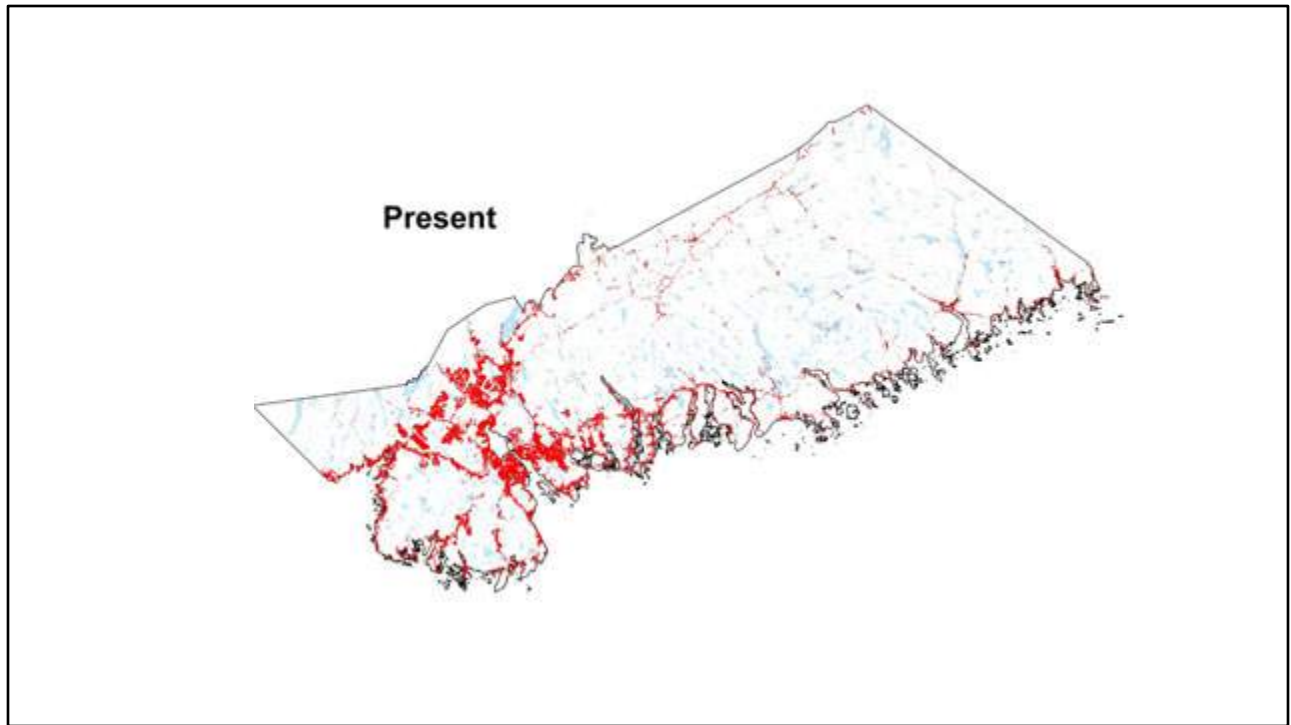
Today twice as many people live in suburban communities and in the rural commutershed. We now occupy four times as much land per person as we did then. This has happened partly because we have fewer people per household, coupled with a growing demand for large houses and lots, and partly because of uncoordinated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



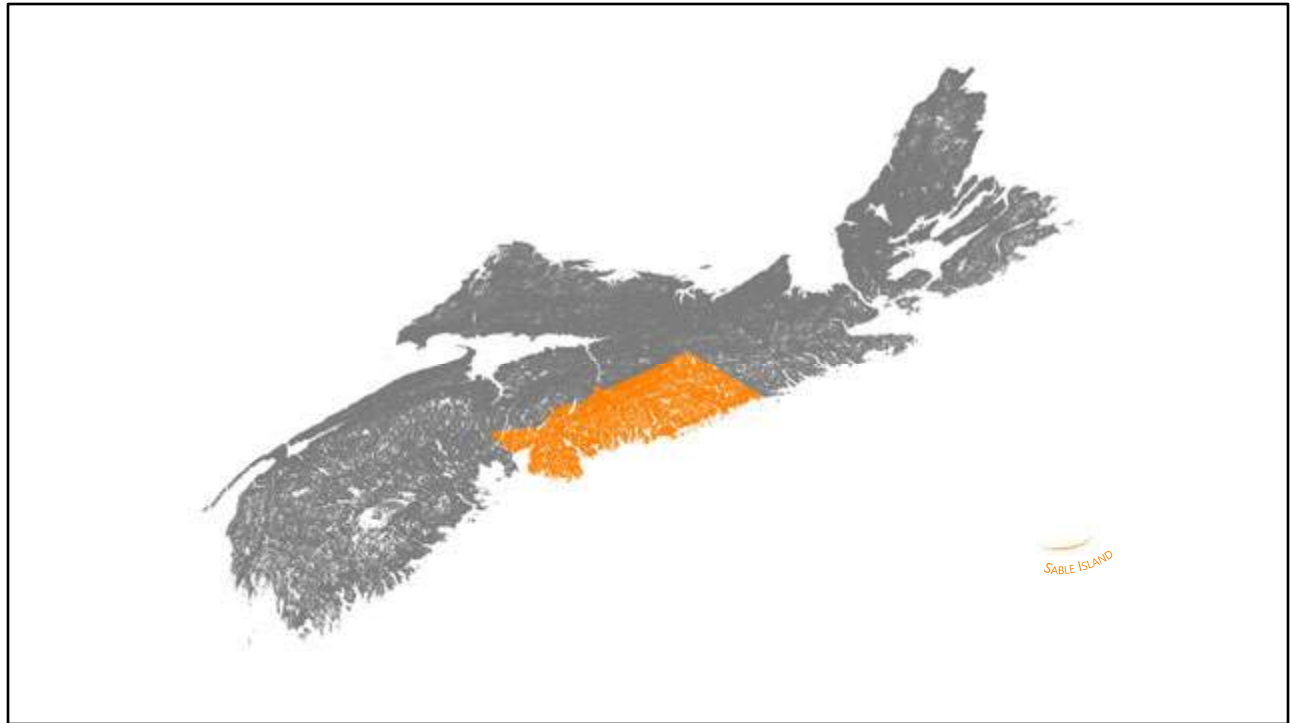






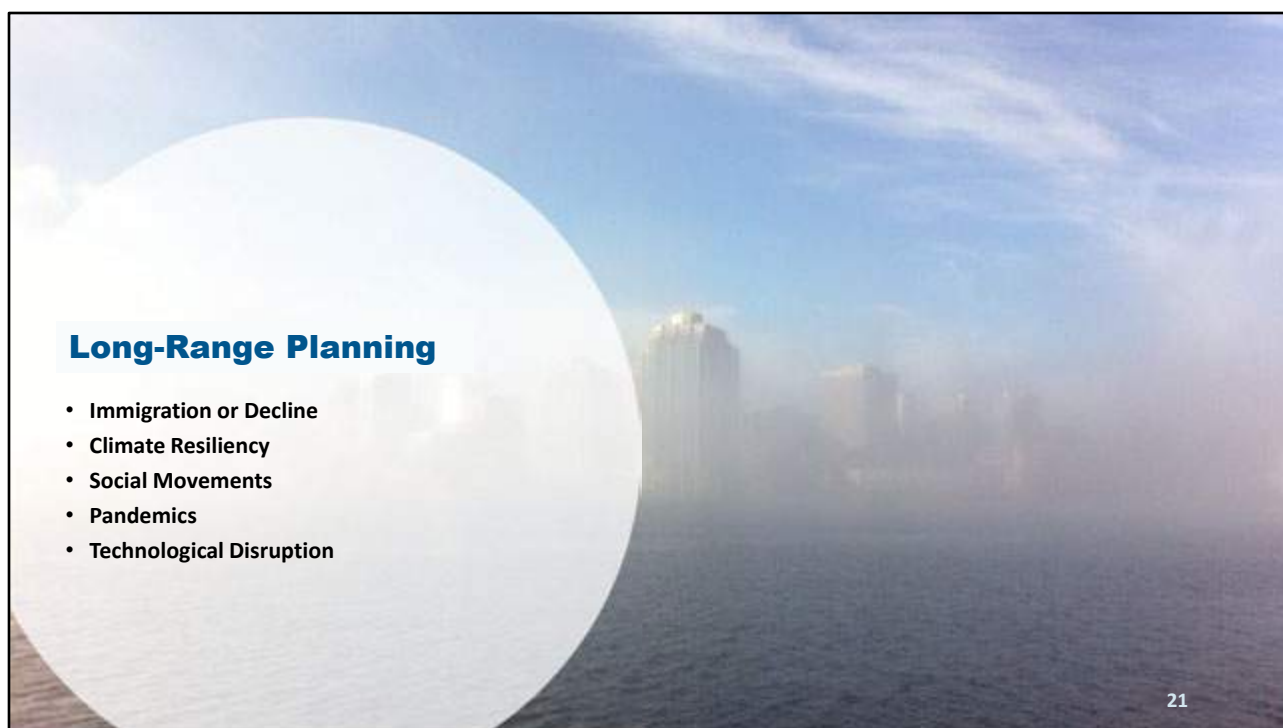


This map (from 2006) shows what our footprint would look like in 25 years if we continued to grow in a dispersed fashion and consumed land at the same rate. The serious financial and environmental implications prompted the development of the Regional Plan.



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.



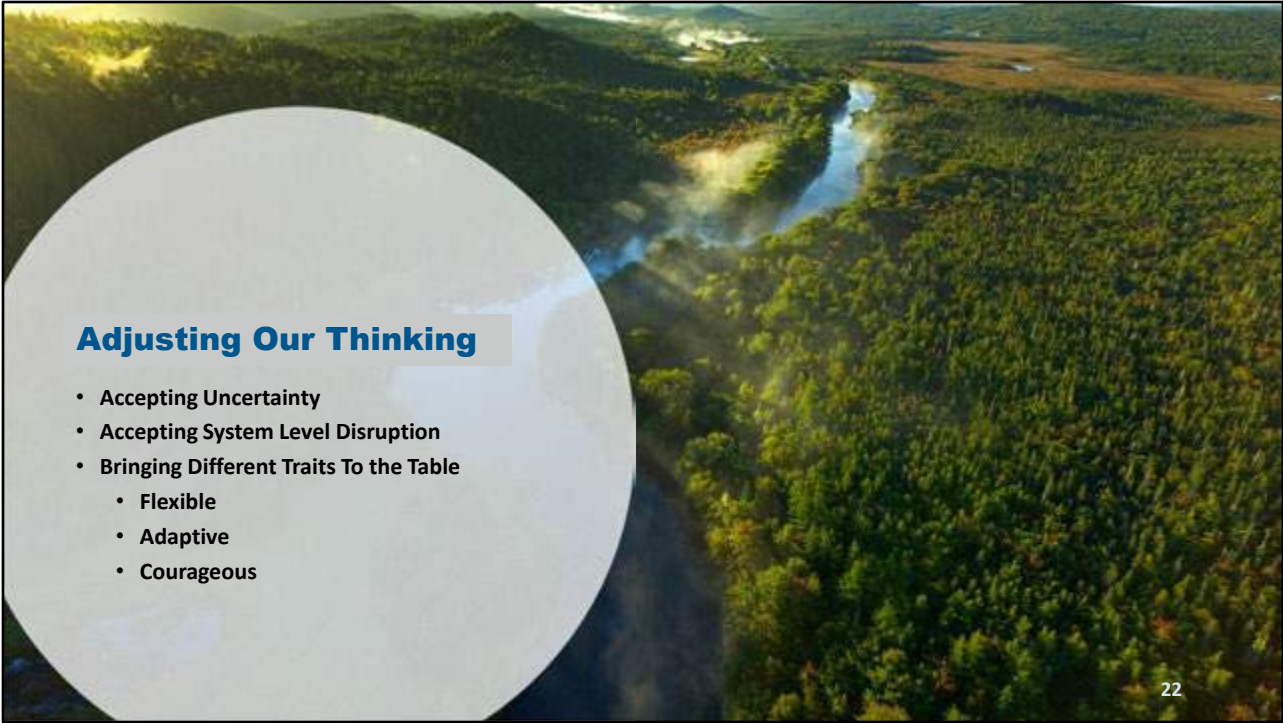
Our ideas about what the future may look like change drastically change over a few decades.

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 a bold, white, sans-serif font. The text is positioned on the right side of a dark blue horizontal bar that spans the width of the slide. The bar has a lighter blue geometric shape on the left side, creating a stylized background for the text.

HALIFAX

**Thank You
For Your
Participation!**

Regional Planning



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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.



REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW

Themes and Directions

Mobility 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. Today's Webinar is for Mobility:

- 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 Mobility.

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.

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.

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 ARE THE THEMES & DIRECTIONS?

Key Ideas, Issues and Potential Changes.

The Themes & Directions document **shares ideas about key planning issues and provides details of the work** that will be completed during the Review. The purpose of this document is to demonstrate the scope of the Regional Plan Review to the public, stakeholders, Council, and ultimately to seek feedback on the content.

The feedback will help provide focus and direction for our work during the Review.

7

The Themes and Directions document was recently released, and it outlines the key ideas and planning issues we will address in the Review. It is chance to step back and ask everyone – do we have this right? Are we headed in the right direction? The feedback we receive will help to provide focus and direction for our work during the Review.



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 1 and 4. Theme 1 focuses on our role in enabling growth across the region, and theme 4 focuses on mobility.

The Municipality recognizes that transportation and land use planning are inseparable and the decision-making process for both must be integrated.

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?

9

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.

10

We can break this down into two key questions –

First, how are we growing?

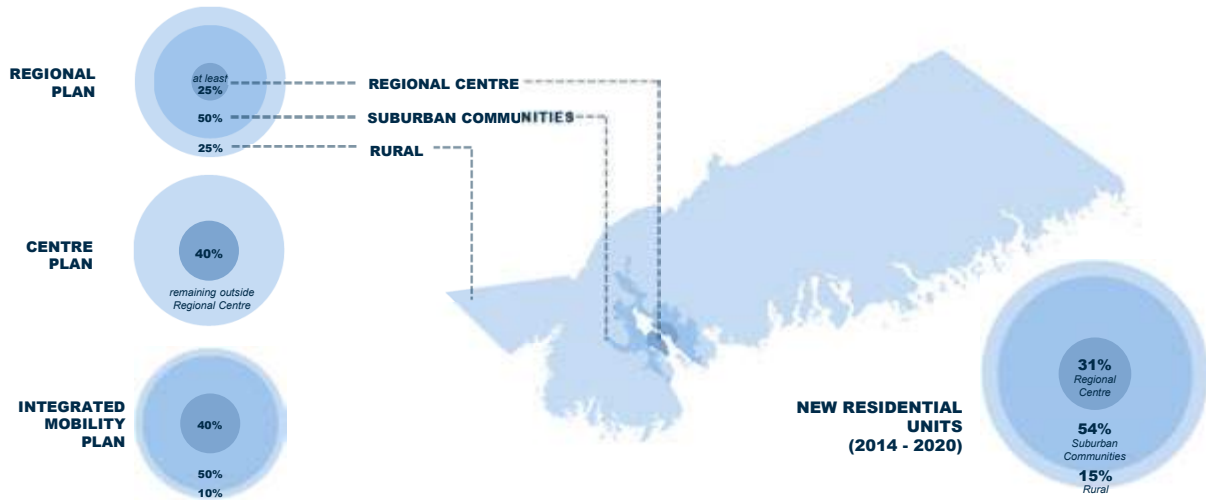
We need to evaluate the projected demand for housing and employment today and into the future. To do this, we are relying on two key pieces of information – our housing and population analysis, and our industrial and employment land analysis.

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.

GROWTH TARGETS



11

The Regional Plan set growth targets for where new housing should be located.

The 2014 Regional Plan identified that 75% of new housing units should be located inside the Regional Centre and Suburban Communities, with at least 25% in the Regional Centre.

When we completed the foundational work for the Centre Plan, it identified that the Regional Centre could accommodate 40% of new growth.

Following that, in 2017, the Integrated Mobility Plan looked in further detail at the growth targets and assessed our ability to meet our mode share targets (which aim to increase how often residents walk, cycle, roll or take transit, and decrease our reliance on private vehicles). That plan suggested that in order to meet our mode-share targets we need to locate as much growth as possible within the service boundary. So the IMP assumed that the Centre Plan would meet its 40% target, that 50% growth would be achieved in suburban areas, inside the service boundary, with only 10% growth outside the service boundary.

On the right you can see how we have performed against these growth targets in the past 6 years – 31% of new units were built in the Regional Centre, 54% in suburban communities, and 15% in rural communities.



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

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The Integrated Mobility Plan – or IMP – contains a region-wide vision for mobility and directs future investment in transportation demand management, transit, active transportation, and the roadway network. The IMP represents a significant shift in the Municipality's approach to transportation. The movement of people, rather than vehicles, is at the heart of the plan.

Since the plan's adoption in 2017, a team of staff across municipal departments has been working to move the IMP's actions forward. Our work on the Regional Plan Review will be instrumental in making sure that our region-wide mobility policies are consistent with that plan. We will update the Transportation and Mobility chapter of the Regional Plan to reflect the policies and actions of the IMP and its regional approach to transportation planning. We'll also set policy intent in the Regional Plan for future work that we intend to do as the city grows. This will involve many different actions, and I'll talk about a few of them in more detail on the following slides.



Functional Plans for Multi-Modal Corridors

Some roads across the region have been identified as “strategic multi-modal corridors”. These are important connections for moving people and goods, by vehicle, transit or active transportation.

THE REGIONAL PLAN WILL:

- Update Regional Plan policy to identify strategic multi-modal corridors that connect communities
- Study opportunities for land acquisition tools to inform an acquisition strategy for these corridors

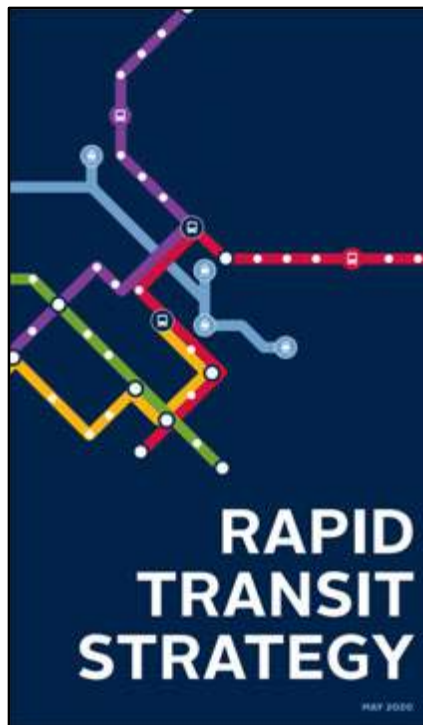
13

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, using a mobility device or cycling).

These corridors have been identified in the Moving Forward Together Plan, Active Transportation Priorities Plan and the IMP and were further refined in the Rapid Transit Strategy.

We will update Regional Plan policy to identify strategic multi-modal corridors that connect communities. This means we will include policy direction to guide future functional plans for these corridors and direct land use along these corridors so that it supports our mobility objectives.

We will also set up study of land acquisition tools, which will help us in preserving and acquiring right-of-way lands for investments in these corridors and help in guiding a land acquisition strategy.



Implementing the Rapid Transit Strategy

Adopted in 2020, the Rapid Transit Strategy aims to build a rapid transit network by 2030. It recommended a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network and three new ferry routes connecting a new terminal to downtown Halifax.

THE REGIONAL PLAN WILL:

- Plan for higher-density mixed use development around Rapid Transit, and create policy direction for providing affordable housing, connectivity of local streets and active transportation infrastructure near stations and terminals

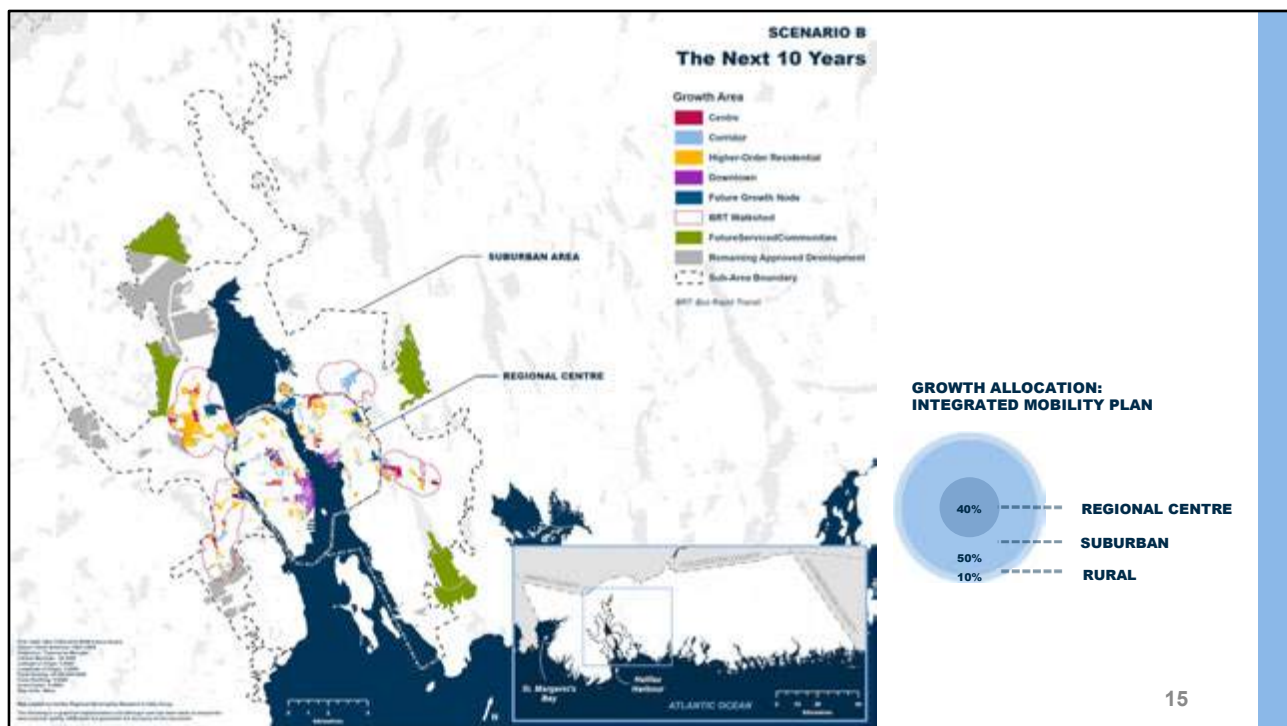
14

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 directs investment in high-quality transit service and infrastructure, a key to improving residents' mobility and building more sustainable, affordable, and equitable communities.

The proposed Bus Rapid Transit (or 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.

To create sustainable, transit-oriented complete communities, the Municipality is aligning our 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.



As I mentioned earlier, the Regional Plan and Integrated Mobility Plan directs that most growth should be located where there are existing services. To achieve the IMP's mode share targets, we know that we have to locate most new housing and jobs where people can easily access the frequent transit network.

During the Rapid Transit Strategy, we looked at a so-called "walkshed" of 800 metres – with the expectation that people that live and work within 800 metres of a rapid transit stop would be able to easily access the network – and we explored how we could update our land use policy to encourage new housing and jobs to locate around the rapid transit network.

We have continued this work during the Regional Plan Review. The map on the slide is a part of our scenario planning from our population and housing analysis, and it shows the BRT walksheds and some preliminary ideas about how growth could happen in these areas. As we update our land use policies for our suburban areas – those areas outside the Regional Centre, but inside the Urban Transit Service Boundary, we will be working to make sure that most growth is aligned with the transit network.



Regional Transportation Planning

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.

16

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.

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 as travel behaviour patterns continue to change.

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.



Accessibility

Many residents are affected by accessibility concerns and with an aging population, the amount of people with mobility limitations will increase. Creating an accessible city helps create barrier-free and safe journeys for everyone.

THE REGIONAL PLAN WILL:

- Review and update planning documents to ensure they support the Accessibility Strategy and work toward making HRM an inclusive

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And finally, the Regional Plan has important role to play in our work towards making HRM a city for people of all abilities, ages and backgrounds. When we're talking about mobility across the region, accessibility is one of the most important considerations. Our planning and development regulations address a wide range of physical accessibility issues – including access to buildings, the design of the buildings themselves, how our streets and sidewalks are organized, the location of barrier-free parking, signage and wayfinding, etc. Our strategic planning can also support accessible active transportation routes, accessible taxi services and accessible transit. Our planning policies can support how we run our public engagement activities in an inclusive and accessible way, and direct that we partner with community to learn from others' experiences and help to improve the work we do and the services we deliver.

Through the Regional Plan Review we will be reviewing our planning documents to make sure that they are aligned with the goal of bringing HRM closer to being a city for people of all abilities, ages, and backgrounds. Regional Council recently approved the Accessibility Strategy, and the Regional Plan will support that ongoing work.

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Public feedback will be collected until July 16

Slide 19

Regional Plan Review

Transcript - Mobility Virtual Q&A (June 16, 2021)

This transcript has been edited for content and clarity.

QUESTION: Could you provide us with some additional information regarding the rural transit funding program?

Erin Blay, Supervisor, Service Design and Projects, Halifax Transit

The Rural Transit Funding Program was approved in 2014. Regional Council identified a need through the Regional Plan approval that would help the municipality to support not-for-profit organizations that were providing transportation services for members of the HRM community where Halifax Transit service isn't operating and maybe doesn't make sense. The Rural Transit Funding Program is a grants program through which rural transit operators can apply for funding to subsidize the cost of operating their service within HRM. In order to qualify, an organization has to be providing a service that's not competing with Halifax Transit generally, in the rural areas or outer urban area. It has to be available to the public and be operated by a not-for-profit. Grants are awarded to approved organizations in two ways -- One is a lump sum payment and that's either \$5,000 or \$10,000 per year. Then after that, for every in-service kilometre that they report to us, they are paid \$0.50 per kilometre. For example, last year even with the pandemic through this program, we paid out nearly a quarter of \$1,000,000 to four service providers in HRM. I think that one of the really cool parts that program is that since it is areas outside of the Halifax Transit Service area, it's likely that a large percentage of the trips that are being made on those services wouldn't have been made if these organizations weren't available.

QUESTION: How is the municipality working to design complete streets?

Tanya Davis, Program Manager, Transportation Planning

As part of the IMP, one of the foundational policies is complete streets. Over the last number of years, we've created a complete streets checklist. As our capital projects come up, we look at each project through a complete streets lens. For example, how can we adapt the street to be more user friendly for all ages and abilities? It's important as we go through that we try to adapt the streets to accommodate that. It's important to note that not all streets will be complete for all users. Some streets will have

certain priorities for different users. It's a great way to make sure that we're looking at how to accommodate people as they move through our streets.

QUESTION: Once the Rapid Transit system is completed in 2030, will the RTS lines all have dedicated bus lanes for the entire route or at least a significant portion?

Erin Blay, Supervisor, Service Design and Projects, Halifax Transit

The [Rapid Transit Strategy](#) was approved in the spring of last year and the proposed bus rapid transit network or BRT network includes four fixed route bus lines that will operate all day seven days a week with at least 10 minute frequency from 6:00 AM to 10:00 PM. The Rapid Transit Strategy estimates that approximately 60% of the BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) network will have dedicated lanes – that's subject to functional and detailed design. Sixty percent is a pretty good amount. That's not to say that the rest of the network won't -- the other 40% could have, for example, signal priority. This would be the starting phase. I think we would also be looking to extend beyond that 60% as well.

QUESTION: Great presentation! You mentioned how HRM will be focusing new development of homes and jobs around existing transit and BRT infrastructure. I strongly agree, but how will this be accomplished? Much of this area has already been developed. Thanks for your consideration!

Kate Greene, Program Manager, Regional Planning

When we did the Rapid Transit Strategy, we studied our suburban areas, in particular the opportunities for redevelopment along those corridors. We looked at things like the age of buildings, the size of properties that were directly adjacent to the corridors as well as underutilized sites like parking lots, where do those exist? We explored what the opportunities are to infill in such a way that we can begin to transition those corridors and the densities that are along those corridors. When we set our planning policy through the Regional Plan, one of the things we'll be working on with Council is what do we want those corridors to look like? What's the scale of buildings? How many people do we want to locate along those corridors in order to support rapid transit? There's lots of work out there around how many people you need to put in close proximity to those corridors in order to support transit and high frequency transit in particular. The idea is, as

people move to those corridors and start living in those corridors, they don't actually have to commute by car. They can use the transit system to get around in the city and make a different mode choice.

Leah Perrin, Principal Planner, Regional Planning

The reason that we focused that work on the suburban areas is that the Regional Centre Plan process has already looked at where growth will go in the Regional Centre. With these density targets, you know what level of development you need in order to support rapid transit -- in the Regional Centre we have a lot of places already that will support that level of transit. Our future work is focused on areas where we haven't done that additional research and it will support our future regulations.

QUESTION: What are the BRT routes and ferry routes included in the Rapid Transit Strategy?

Erin Blay, Supervisor, Service Design and Projects, Halifax Transit

The Rapid Transit Strategy included four fixed route bus lines. We call those the Purple line, the Green line, the Red line and the Yellow line.

The Purple line will travel on Larry Uteck and it's a cross town route. It starts on Larry Uteck and goes all the way to Dartmouth Crossing. It travels in Clayton Park via Dunbrack through Bayers Road and Young Street where there's currently construction on transit priority lanes. Through North Street over the bridge across Wyse Rd and Commodore Drive, to terminate in Dartmouth Crossing. The purple line crosstown is a little bit like the existing Route 3 in some ways.

There's the Green line which will travel from Lacewood all the way to the south end of the peninsula, similar to the existing Corridor route 4. It will travel along Lacewood, Joseph Howe, all the way along Robie Street where we've also started to introduce transit priority, terminating at Saint Mary's University.

The Red line will be traveling in from Dartmouth, Cole Harbour, from the Portland Hills Terminal along Portland Street over the bridge, through downtown Dartmouth and into downtown Halifax over the bridge and up Spring Garden Rd to Dalhousie.

The last line is the Yellow line that's connecting Mainland South. It starts

on Greystone and travels along Herring Cove Rd and to the peninsula and downtown via Connaught, Quinpool, Spring Garden Rd and Barrington.

The three ferry routes are also part of the Rapid Transit Strategy, and all of them are planned to terminate at the Halifax Ferry Terminal. The three new routes are proposed from Larry Uteck, Mill Cove, and Shannon Park.

QUESTION: How is the Transit Service Boundary being considered through the Regional Plan Review?

Kate Greene, Program Manager, Regional Planning

The Urban Transit Service Boundary is where we run conventional bus service and it is an important way that we organize growth and consider where we're going to infill or grow. Often what the municipality does is we think about growing in areas where there are existing services -- where there are bus lines already, where there's piped water, where there's piped wastewater -- that helps us to manage infrastructure efficiently, prevent it from sprawling and keep taxes low on the whole of our citizens and residents. When we review the Regional Plan, we take a look at our infrastructure boundaries, one of which is the Urban Transit Service Boundary, and we study how our population has been growing, where we anticipate future demand to bring new land on line, check to see if there's a need to expand or adjust that boundary in order to accommodate development or our growing population. We're going to start in on that exercise. We've just finished our population projections and are about to start in on this additional work now.

QUESTION: Could you talk a little bit about some of the major active transportation projects that are either coming up or are currently underway?

David MacIsaac, Supervisor, Active Transportation, Transportation and Public Works

We've got active transportation objectives across the municipality, within the Regional Centre. We do a lot of work in suburban communities and increasingly Council has asked us to come back with an action on the IMP for active transportation in rural HRM. The Regional Centre has historically had a very good sidewalk network, so in other parts of this municipality we're playing catch up in terms of building new sidewalks, but we're lucky in the Regional Centre for the most part, that infrastructure is in place.

The focus in the Regional Centre right now is on building bicycle facilities that are safe and comfortable. We call for all ages and abilities so really, for people who don't bicycle now, who aren't comfortable riding in mixed traffic. That makes sense, the technical term for a bicyclist in the engineering profession, is a vulnerable road user because you're not protected by steel and airbags and stuff like that. What we need to do is engineer and design the facilities so that they are safer. What that means in the Regional Centre is on busier streets where we have facilities, we're putting in protected bicycle lanes and doing work at intersections to make them safer. What you will see around town right now are for example on Hollis St, we've got a curb and bollards to protect the bicyclists from the vehicles. South Park Street, we now have protected bike lanes.

One of the other facility types that has been quite successful in other places in North America and Europe are local street bikeways, sometimes called Bicycle Blvd. These are local streets that have not too much traffic, where we put in traffic calming measures and that offer that connectivity from where people live to where they're traveling.

Also, for multi-use pathways, a big project for us now is to make a connection from the peninsula to the western mainland of Clayton Park, Fairview, those places. It's not very well connected now. As part of the Bayers Road transit priority project, we built a multi-use pathway and over the next year or two we're working to connect that to the Chain of Lakes Trail that will connect up into neighbourhoods and even to Lunenburg. That gives you an idea what we're doing in the Regional Centre. In more suburban communities, the focus is on a lot of multi-use pathways or trails. In rural HRM, we're looking at community centres and often on provincial roads, putting in sidewalks, multi-use pathways there. More information about active transportation is available on the HRM website [here](#).

QUESTION: Looking at recent developments, there does not seem to be effective pathways to promote walkability. Does HRM have the ability to direct or advise developers on infrastructure layout? Also could existing neighbourhoods be "retrofitted" with pathways to promote walkability?

David MacIsaac, Supervisor, Active Transportation, Transportation and Public Works

We work in the Transportation and Public Works department, and quite closely with our colleagues in Planning and Development, and they involve us as development applications come in. We work to make them as walkable and connected as possible. I would say there's a challenge. This is something that we talk about as we're doing these regional plans -- sometimes development will get built, the developer as part of that will put in the infrastructure for walking, sometimes bicycling but then there's a disconnect between that and the rest of the network. We have these gaps and we don't have a whole lot of funding and resources as a municipality to fill in those gaps. There's a lot more gaps than we have resources to fill. That's a challenge and we know where a lot of those are, and we're trying to kind of pick them off as we can, but it's certainly a challenge for us.

Leah Perrin, Principal Planner, Regional Planning

I think the question about advising developers on infrastructure layout, certainly through the subdivision process, we do have regulations around how street networks are laid out. There is an ongoing project to review what's called the municipal design guidelines or Red Book that will take more of a complete street lens. I'm not the expert on that, but just thought I would mention it.

Tanya Davis, Program Manager, Transportation Planning

Our municipal specifications are being updated and are coming back to Council on the next steps soon¹. The other thing that we've been working on is the traffic impact assessment guidelines, which is another tool in the toolbox that speaks to how development and the right-of-way interact. There's lots of work being done to continue to move that conversation forward and to make sure that we're getting good infrastructure built.

¹ Update: Regional Council will discuss this matter at their June 29, 2021 meeting – see Item 11.1.11: <https://www.halifax.ca/city-hall/regional-council/june-29-2021-halifax-regional-council-special-meeting>

QUESTION: Is HRM starting to think about autonomous vehicles (and their implications) in long range mobility and land use planning? We could see lots more of this in 2031++

Tanya Davis, Program Manager, Transportation Planning

We are definitely thinking about autonomous vehicles. We know at some point they will be here in Nova Scotia and I've been working with colleagues nationally on this topic. I sit on a committee through the Transportation Association of Canada to figure out what those impacts are, how we will deal with them because it's not only autonomous vehicles coming, it's how we deal with them from an infrastructure perspective, right down to something as simple as how we paint the lines on our roads in order to guide the vehicles. It's a big topic of conversation in the transportation industry, and something that we're participating in at a national and international level.

Kate Greene, Program Manager, Regional Planning

For the Regional Plan Review, we're asking citizens and residents about their ideas on how we should planning for the long range and what issues are important to begin to imagine possible future states of our community, so we can start to accommodate our rapidly growing population. Part of how we're thinking about this is that there are lots of different possible futures. How do we organize ourselves today to be able to respond to those possible futures as quickly as possible? How do we adapt? Part of that is putting our thinking caps on and thinking about what future state might be most impactful to land use and planning and how our transportation system is organized. Autonomous vehicles could be a major technological change that change how we live. We're wanting everyone's input on that, not just our own.

QUESTION: Great to hear that the priority for transit in the suburbs will be these existing areas where densification will also be prioritized. How do you expect to help prioritize active transportation in these areas to increase, say, walkability and meet community members' needs close to home in these areas, further reducing dependance on cars?

David MacIsaac, Supervisor, Active Transportation, Transportation and Public Works

In more suburban communities some of the things we're doing is working to fill in the sidewalk gaps. Some of those suburban communities are places that were built when the land use planning regulations didn't require sidewalks to go in. We are playing catch up there. The focus when we put new sidewalks or active transportation infrastructure in those suburban communities is to make those connections between where people live and where they access transit and where they shop. I think our suburban communities in Halifax have a bit of a reputation for being car centered. Often when you look at the distances between where people live and where they could shop or access services or go to school, they're not that far. It's very walkable and bikeable, so it's about the infrastructure and making those connections, playing catch up, and then going back and filling in those gaps that weren't put in place in the beginning.

One of the projects that we've started in the past two or three years that are relevant to suburban communities are the street to street walkways that exists behind people's houses. Often those facilities were put in when those communities were built and then haven't been rehabilitated since. That's 20 plus years since -- and what we see in those suburban communities is those end up being quite active for walking, for kids getting to school. We've been making steady progress over the past number of years, rehabilitating and making it possible for them to be cleared from snow in the winter just by having a better-quality surface.

One of the things that we do have in our suburban communities for active transportation is a lot of community groups. Lower Sackville, Cole Harbour, and Spryfield have community trails associations, who are great advocates for active transportation in their communities and have really done some of the work of planning, building, and maintaining some of those facilities. Active transportation is important in suburban HRM and there's some good projects happening. From a mobility perspective it's really one of those

great integrated mobility stories where getting people from their front door to the transit stop requires that active transportation infrastructure in the middle. Working with our colleagues in Transit we are picking those off and making it more accessible and more possible to make those connections.

QUESTION: Are there any plans to install bike paths on Quinpool Road? As indicated there is not much connection in the east-west direction.

David MacIsaac, Supervisor, Active Transportation, Transportation and Public Works

Right now, the plan for bike facilities East-West and that part of the peninsula is to use those local street bikeway facilities. One block north of Quinpool, we've got a segment of local street bikeway on Allen Street. This construction season we're going to build a safer crossing of Oxford to get over to Oak Street and continue further west and eventually across Connaught. Then on the south side of Quinpool we've got a local street bikeway candidate route on Norwood and Shirley. We are looking at the first block of Quinpool from Robie up to Vernon and Quingate that is part of our midtown bikeway planning process. I think that if there were to be bicycle facilities on Quinpool itself in the future, it would have to be a part of a larger planning project. Probably, a complete streets planning project looking at the overall functions, what we need to have on Quinpool from all those modes. But for now, what we're working on is those local street bikeway routes on either side of Quinpool.

QUESTION: Transit infrastructure and plans seem to be focused on transporting people to and from the urban core, especially Downtown Halifax. There are lots of gaps in outer areas like Dartmouth, which will grow exponentially in the near future, yet lacks the plans to support transit in and between non-peninsula communities. Will there be any shift in focus towards inter-community transportation?

Erin Blay, Supervisor, Service Design and Projects, Halifax Transit

There are two things here. First, transit by the nature of the service and the fact that it's not cheap to run, we typically focus our service on the highest trip demand first, providing that with the highest level of service. Right now, our service is very weighted towards those large employment destinations like Downtown Halifax, Burnside, Dartmouth Crossing. These areas also have the highest potential for increased demand. What you would have

seen in the Rapid Transit Strategy routes, that's what those routes were trying to address, those huge demand pockets. All that said, that doesn't include all of the other service that will be on the map, including local service corridor routes, level of service, which can still be 10-15 minute level of service. Other types of routes in the network, many of which will also be able to take advantage of a transit priority measures like those planned or in the works for Portland Street in Dartmouth or Dunbrack. While they're not the same as bus rapid transit, they have always the potential to be upgraded to that in the future. The purpose of those routes is to bring people to locations where they can transfer to other route types and then make those really important connections and they bring people to other locations where they can eat, shop, play, go to school and work near their own community so that they don't have to travel into the peninsula. This describes the hub and spoke style of network that Regional Council approved in the [Moving Forward Together Plan](#).

QUESTION: Many cities are reducing their default speed limits on residential streets to 30km and 40km for safety purposes. Is this something that could be considered in the Regional Plan Review?

Tanya Davis, Program Manager, Transportation Planning

We've had lots of questions around speed limits, over the last little bit around road safety. The way our provincial government is set up we have a NS Motor Vehicle Act and in that, it outlines the default speed limits. The lowest speed limit that we can set currently is 50 kilometers an hour. However, our road safety team in Transportation & Public Works has been working closely with our colleagues at the Provincial Government through the Traffic Authority to work on lowering the default speed limit in neighbourhoods. We as a municipality had to put in an application to say, we think this is a really good idea, we should lower these speeds, these speeds are higher than we would like to see on our residential streets. Can we work together and come up with a new default? I don't know how many neighbourhoods have had lower speed limits put in, but there's been quite a few recently. We're hoping to see more as we go through the process because we know it's one tool in the toolbox to get slower speeds on our streets.

Other tools that we've been looking at though through the [road safety team](#) is around traffic calming, bump outs, speed tables, and speed humps. The complete streets lens and guidelines also help when we're designing new

streets, or retrofits, that we're designing them for the speed in which it's intended. Reducing speed limits is only one piece. There are other pieces in the toolkit to do.

David MacIsaac, Supervisor, Active Transportation, Transportation and Public Works

A lot of what we do with mobility in the municipality has to happen in the context of the Provincial legislation. The municipality owns a certain number of roads, but we've got a provincial highway system that surrounds us. That really impacts modal choice in the municipality. Looking at the Regional Plan, there are tools, policies, and programs that Council can approve and help shape how we're going forward from a mobility perspective. A lot of the factors that will influence how people travel will depend on provincial legislation and provincial policy decisions. We have mechanisms to coordinate for that, but it's something to keep in mind, as we're looking at the future and looking at if we're going to change how we move in the municipality, it has to involve all those jurisdictions, coordinating and collaborating on things like speed limits, road safety and some of the decisions that are made about how we use the infrastructure that we've got.