

HALIFAX

Engagement Strategy



# Suburban Plan



## **Acknowledgement**

Halifax Regional Municipality is located in the traditional, unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people, who have lived here since time immemorial. We recognize that we are all Treaty People and respect the Peace and Friendship Treaties signed here. Through this planning process, we seek to strengthen our commitment to a relationship of trust and collaboration with local First Nations and the Indigenous community.

## **Affirmation**

We acknowledge that Nova Scotia is the birthplace of the African presence in Canada. African Nova Scotians are a distinct founding people in our community who have contributed to and have been a key part of Nova Scotian culture and history for over 400 years. We acknowledge that African teachings, strength, and perseverance continue to challenge and inspire our community.

## HOW THIS DOCUMENT IS ORGANIZED

This Engagement Strategy guides various engagement phases and activities throughout the Suburban Plan. The document is organized in five sections:

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1. **Introduction:** A summary of the strategy and its purpose.
  2. **Engagement approach:** A detailed explanation of the guiding principles and tools we will use to engage the community.
  3. **Engagement implementation:** A breakdown of how each engagement phase will be organized and executed.
  4. **Evaluation:** A framework for assessing the effectiveness of our engagement efforts.
  5. **Glossary:** A list of words and definitions frequently used in the Suburban Plan project.
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Throughout the document, you will find information that highlights the goals driving our engagement approach and the tools we will use to achieve them. If you require access to this information in a language or format that is more accessible to you, please email [suburbanplan@halifax.ca](mailto:suburbanplan@halifax.ca).

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# Introduction

1



## Land use planning

1.1

Municipalities have the primary responsibility for land use planning. Land use planning is concerned with the social, economic and sustainable development of communities. It seeks to organize land use to ensure an efficient and strategic use of land, safeguard natural resources, reduce land use conflicts and the impacts of development, and to support other community goals such as equitable access to housing, transit, recreational opportunities, and beautiful public spaces.

Guided by a vision for the future, professional planners work closely with residents, community groups, property owners and others to develop a plan and supporting regulations to guide growth and change in the community. Any new plan or changes to a plan must be approved by Council.

# Planning framework

1.2

Land use and infrastructure in the Halifax Regional Municipality is guided by the Regional Plan. The Regional Plan is further implemented by a series of priority plans and community plans (or Secondary Municipal Planning Strategies) and their associated land use by-laws.

The **Suburban Plan** is intended to **replace all or portions of eleven existing community plans** with one plan and one land use by-law that contains updated planning policies and regulations that reflect and address current opportunities and challenges experienced by suburban communities. The Suburban Plan will not replace community planning work already underway in communities such as Beechville and Millbrook First Nation lands in the Suburban Area. The new plan and land use by-law will be developed with the understanding that both the documents and the communities they guide will evolve, ensuring they remain living documents that are updated as needed after adoption.

## Purpose

1.3

The Halifax Regional Municipality is experiencing rapid growth, placing significant pressure on its suburban communities. Many of the planning documents guiding these areas were created prior to the municipality's amalgamation in 1996, leaving them outdated in addressing current challenges. To tackle these issues, Regional Council launched the suburban planning process, with a focus on complete and accessible communities and encouraging transit-supportive development along proposed rapid transit corridors.

The suburban planning process will be bolstered by ongoing initiatives within communities. The process will involve close collaboration with diverse cultural groups, including Indigenous and African Nova Scotian communities, some of which are leading independent planning efforts. The municipality has created an African Nova Scotian Community Action Planning (ANSCAP) program, which will allow



African Nova Scotian (ANS) communities to develop their own action plans with municipal support. This work will enable ANS communities to identify community needs and priorities, establish a vision, and create action plans. The municipality will then support these community actions through amendments to applicable community plans and land use by-laws or through other actions under the municipality's jurisdiction. The ANSCAP program will continue in tandem with the suburban planning process.

The Suburban Plan will **establish a unified planning framework** for growth that integrates critical infrastructure, housing affordability and environmental sustainability. Central goals include promoting higher-density, mixed-use development near rapid transit, fostering affordable housing options and aligning land use policies with the mobility objectives of the Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP) and the Rapid Transit Strategy.

Additionally, the Suburban Plan will coordinate with projects led by Halifax Water, Link Nova Scotia (Joint Regional Transportation Agency), the Regional Plan review and other key projects and municipal priority plans. Central to this project is a commitment to **robust engagement and inclusive outreach**, ensuring transformative and equitable community development.

## Area

1.4

The Suburban Plan will create a unified planning framework for communities that are located **outside the Regional Centre** and generally **inside the Urban Settlement Designation**. The project boundary encompasses numerous communities, including Armdale, Bedford, Clayton Park, Cole Harbour, Eastern Passage, Fairview, Sackville and Spryfield, with potential refinements based on further analysis and public input. While the intent is that the Suburban Plan focus on serviced areas, minor changes to the boundary may be required to efficiently administer the plan based on additional analysis and community engagement.



# Project phases

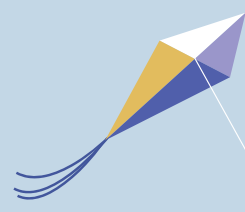
The project will be organized in three key phases, supported by two periods of engagement, generally between 2025 and 2028, subject to minor change based on various studies, reviews, and Regional Council directions.



PHASE 1  
**Listen, learn and  
confirm key directions**

PHASE 2  
**Share the plan**

PHASE 3  
**Adopt the plan**



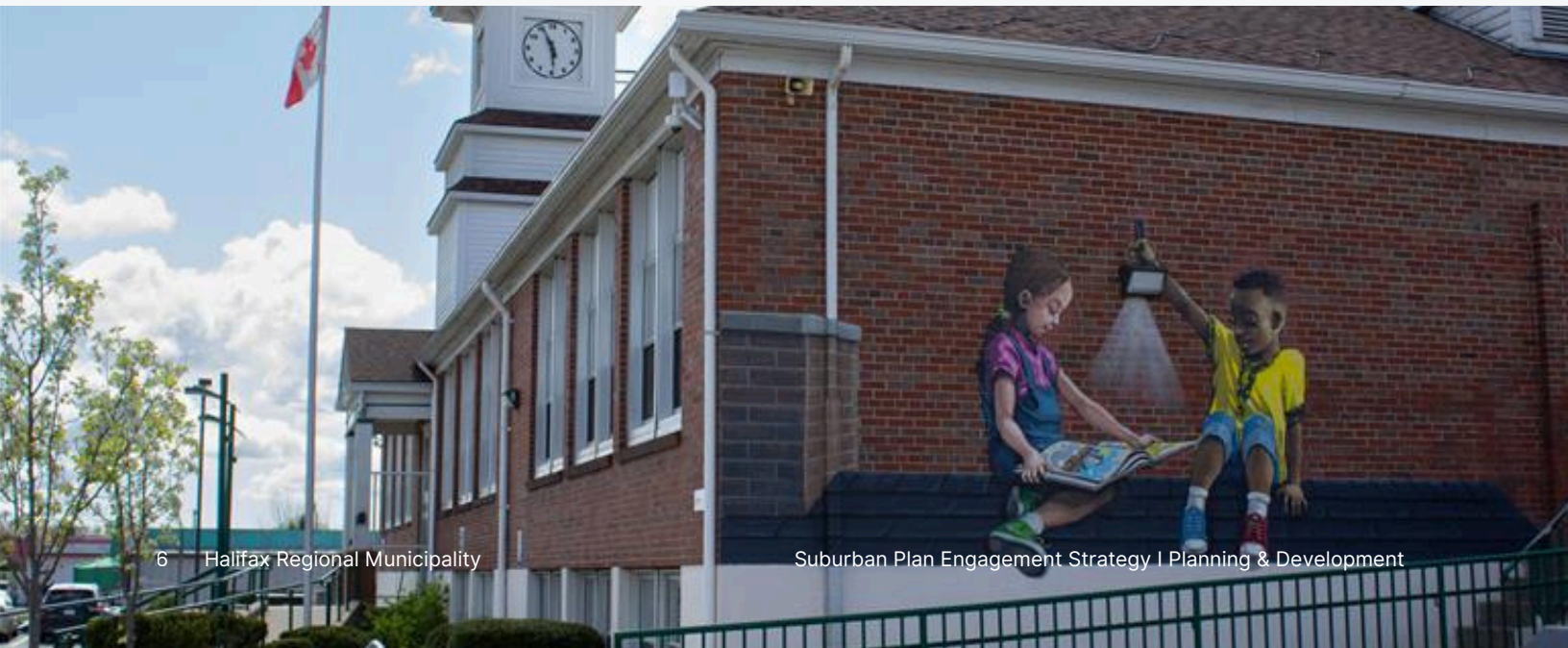
## PHASE 1

2025-2026

### Listen, learn and confirm key directions

*Engaging with the community to understand their needs, explore local challenges and opportunities, and gather insights to shape key directions and the Suburban Plan.*

- Review current plans, policies, and trends in the Suburban Area.
- Review, initiate or participate in background technical studies.
- Present a revised work plan, engagement strategy and initial directions to Regional Council for consideration.
- Launch the first engagement phase in 2025 to connect with community members, understand the unique character of each suburban community and identify local challenges and opportunities.
- Develop and share a vision for suburban communities, including key directions, major initiatives, growth options, and community design concepts.
- Publish the first What We Heard report summarizing feedback from Phase 1 and a document summarizing the key directions that will guide the development of the Suburban Plan.



## PHASE 2

2027

### Share the plan

*Present a detailed draft plan and gather community input to refine and improve it before final approval.*

- Draft and present a detailed draft plan and land use by-law informed by earlier engagement, technical studies and staff input.
- Conduct a third round of engagement to gather feedback on the draft plan from community members and other key partners.
- Release a final What We Heard report summarizing feedback on the draft plan.

## PHASE 3

2028

### Adopt the plan

*Finalize the plan, incorporate all feedback and technical insights and prepare for official approval and implementation.*

- Finalize the plan, incorporating community input and technical insights.
- Present the plan for formal approval process with Regional Council.
- Submit the plan for provincial review.



# Engagement approach

The Suburban Plan’s engagement approach is guided by the municipality’s **Community Engagement Strategy**, which provides a framework for all municipal projects to enhance diversity, inclusion and consistency across our engagement efforts. In addition, the Community Planning team has developed project-specific commitments based on co-creation, experience, feedback and evaluation to ensure meaningful participation.

Together, the principles below will shape engagement that is clear, inclusive, community-driven and continuously evolving to meet the residents we serve.



## Feedback welcomed

The engagement team actively invites feedback on how to improve engagement processes and strengthen adherence to these principles, reinforcing the municipality’s commitment to meaningful and inclusive community participation.

# Guiding principles

2.1

## Transparency

1

- Provide clear, accurate and timely information about engagement opportunities and decision-making processes.
- Clearly define the level of influence the community has in each stage of the project.
- Share relevant background information and decision-making criteria upfront.
- Ensure that community input is acknowledged, documented and reflected in outcomes.
- Prepare for engagement with relevant information and, when possible, include decision-makers in the process.
- Consider site-specific development requests in a transparent manner as part of the overall planning project.

## Accessibility and inclusion

2

- Meet people where they are through a variety of platforms including online, in-person and print with accessible, equitable and diverse engagement methods.
- Remove barriers to participation by considering physical, cognitive, linguistic and other accessibility needs for each engagement event. Tools include, but are not limited to, accessible space planning, daycare services, translation/interpretation, plain language, etc.
- Plan well in advance to accommodate accessibility needs for engagement events, also offer flexible engagement opportunities that can adapt to accessibility needs on short notice.
- Design inclusive spaces where all voices are heard, valued and considered in decision-making.
- Select and support spaces for input that are accessible and equitable for all, ensuring all participants feel heard and valued at every engagement event.
- Ensure diverse forms of community feedback by providing varied timeframes, forums, formats and/or locations.

## Trust and respect

3

- Collaborate with and learn from local community groups, leaders and initiatives, such as the African Nova Scotia Community Action Planning Program (ANSCAP).
- Build relationships with community members through consistent and meaningful engagement.
- Encourage open, honest feedback and provide opportunities for dialogue.
- Demonstrate respect by ensuring engagement efforts are culturally responsive and community-driven.

- Celebrate and highlight the unique identities, histories and character of suburban communities, neighbourhoods and places.
- Empower local leaders to share information, co-create and promote engagement documents and opportunities and connect planning staff with their communities and partner organizations.

## **Timely and clear communication**

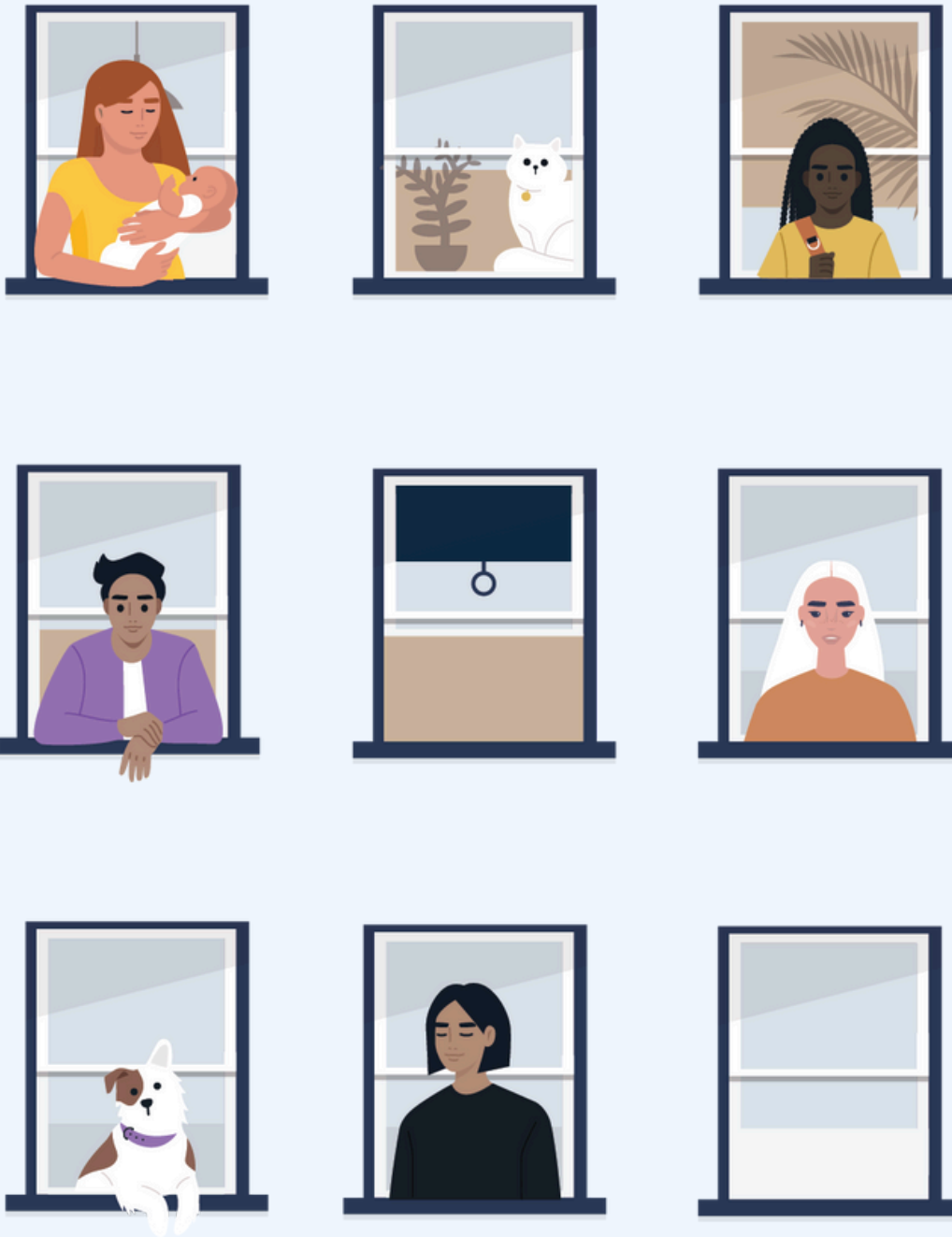
**4**

- Provide regular updates on engagement opportunities, outcomes and next steps (a minimum general quarterly project update will be shared with everyone on our mailing list).
- Use multiple communication channels (e.g., social media, printed materials, email, community networks) to ensure broad outreach.
- Ensure messaging is clear, concise and accessible to a diverse audience.
- Work with community leaders and organizations to select the most effective tools and methods for communication.
- Coordinate with existing community events and initiatives to encourage participation and minimize redundancy and over-engagement.

## **Continuous learning**

**5**

- Approach all work with openness, humility, and a learning mindset.
- Offer opportunities for feedback with each engagement event to assess effectiveness, identify gaps and improve future engagement phases.
- Strengthen organizational understanding of community priorities by actively sharing engagement results from diverse perspectives.
- Foster long-term partnerships with community members, organizations and leaders.
- Be available outside of scheduled engagement activities to meet with community members and other key partners.



## Best practices

The municipality contracted Upland Planning + Design to complete a scan of recent, similarly scaled planning projects in different Canadian jurisdictions (Kitchener, Calgary, Edmonton and Victoria). The best practices scan recommends creative solutions for virtual and in-person engagement, as well as general lessons learned from engagement related to these projects. These lessons and ideas have been considered and incorporated as part of this engagement strategy and will be used for the creation of the project's implementation plans.

# Engagement toolbox

The Suburban Plan’s engagement strategy is developed for the overall planning process, to provide guiding principles and tools that can be tailored to each phase. The engagement methods for this project are listed below and drawn from the **Community Engagement Strategy 2024 Playbook** and informed by successful practices from the Centre Plan, Regional Plan, and other projects. Staff will collaborate with local leaders, community groups and internal business units to determine the most suitable tools for each phase of the project. While some tools will be applied throughout all phases, specific details will be outlined in the implementation plan for each stage.

| Formal engagement opportunities  |                        |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Kick-off events                  | Open houses            |
| Key partner meetings & workshops | Signature project tool |
| Suburban Planning Working Group  |                        |

| Informal engagement opportunities |                 |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Relationship building             | Pop-ups         |
| Mobile planner                    | Community tours |
| Site visits                       | Presentations   |
| Newsletters                       |                 |

| Virtual Presence |       |              |
|------------------|-------|--------------|
| Website          | Email | Social media |

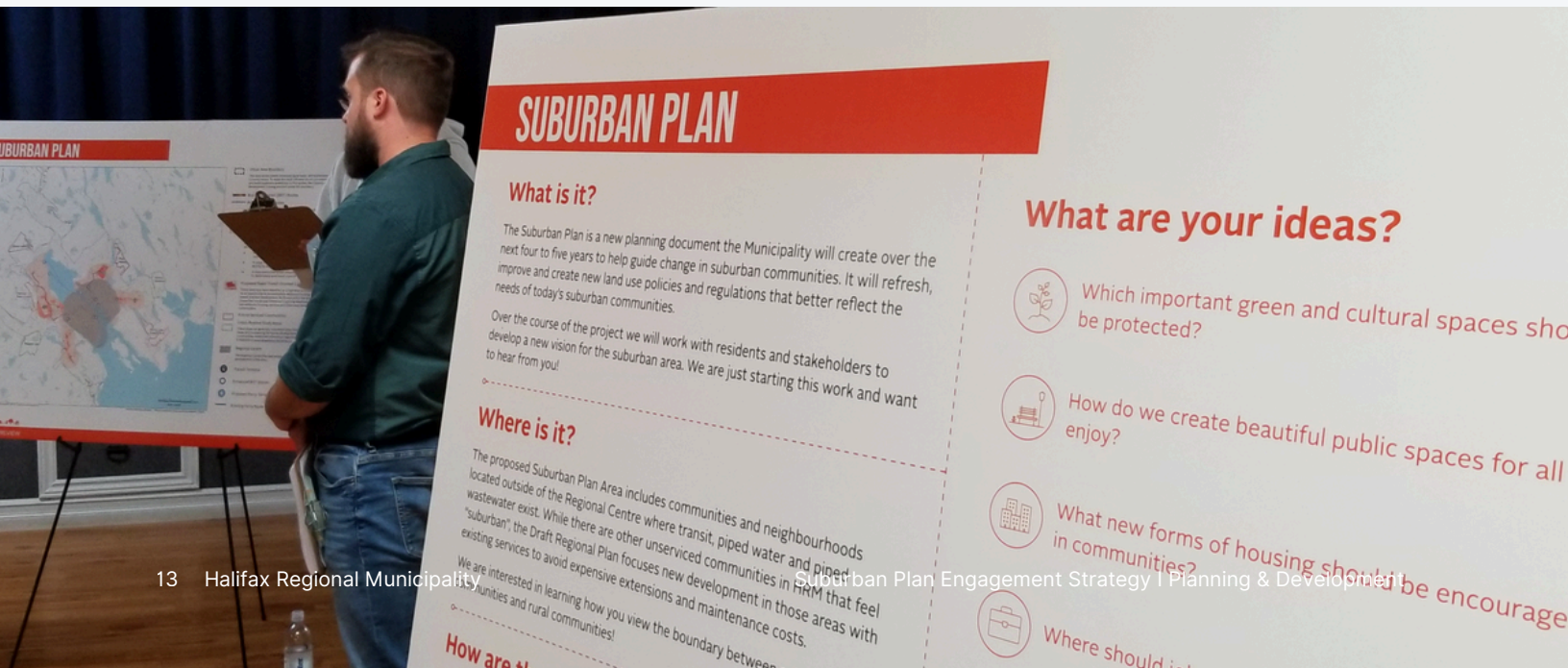
| Getting the word out                                     |                |           |                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------|------------------------|
| Advertising                                              | Correspondence | Telephone | Councillor newsletters |
| Collaboration with other municipal departments & offices |                |           |                        |

## Kick-off events

These events are intended to kick off the planning process in various communities, generate enthusiasm and seek community champions. They can also be used to help celebrate or conclude the planning process and share information on the approved plan.

## Open houses

Open houses are public information sharing sessions with displays or stations staffed by municipal employees, key partners, and experts. An open house is less formal than a public information meeting and offers opportunities for residents to come and go and engage on a one-on-one basis. The municipality will plan, advertise and facilitate open houses in various locations across the Suburban Area during the engagement process. Accessibility and childcare needs will be considered when determining locations and programming for these sessions to occur. Open houses will be planned to ensure that spaces are available to ensure the effective participation of all attendees, including adjustments for individuals with visual, hearing or other accessibility needs. In certain cases, open houses can include presentations or workshop components.



## **Key partner meetings & workshops**

Key partner meetings and workshops are opportunities for industry or community members with similar interests to discuss complex issues and explore collaborative solutions. Examples of key partner groups include environmental groups, industrial property owners and Indigenous and African Nova Scotian communities. Design charettes, community visioning activities and participatory mapping exercises are common tools used to guide formal planning workshops that can be used throughout the engagement process.

## **Signature project tool**

A unique physical tool will be developed to provide an attraction at engagement events such as workshops, open houses, presentations, etc. This large physical element provides a touchpoint at events and signature project identifier. Examples of a potential unique physical tool include a large-scale map, fabric information panels or interactive displays. This method will provide participants with a memorable project experience and attraction for project events. Accessibility and accommodation will be a crucial factor in the design of this element.

## **Suburban Planning Working Group**

A working group may be established with representation from various industry, key interest groups, and community representatives to provide advice to staff and help facilitate public participation.

# **Informal engagement opportunities**

2.4

## **Relationship building**

Relationship building is an informal meeting with community organizations and individuals to build trust between planners and residents, especially for equity-deserving groups that have been and continue to be negatively affected by municipal decisions and excluded from the planning process. This type of engagement encourages mutual respect between staff and community members and allows residents to feel more comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas. It is important that staff engage in relationship building proactively before key decisions are made and continue to foster meaningful relationships with community members throughout the suburban planning engagement process.

## Pop-ups

Pop-ups are public information sessions with displays or stations integrated temporarily into existing community spaces or events. Pop-ups are informal opportunities for residents to engage with planning staff about general suburban planning topics, or themes can be tailored to align with the location the pop-up is occurring (e.g. engaging with the public about mobility at a Halifax Transit terminal, discussing green space needs at a local park, talking to people about commercial uses at a shopping centre, etc.). Pop-ups can also be used to increase awareness about other ways to engage with the process and to meet the public at community organized events such as BBQs, festivals and events.

## Mobile planner

The mobile planner will function as a pop-up experience featuring displays and interactive elements related to the Suburban Plan. Designed for mobility, it will travel between communities, serving as both an engagement tool and a platform to celebrate each community's unique identity. This element may remain on each site for multiple days, with designated hours for community/staff participation. Each location will incorporate interactive placemaking tools that highlight local characteristics while ensuring accessibility and adaptability to meet accommodation needs. This initiative should be supported by collaboration with community groups and business improvement districts. Additionally, accessibility experts will conduct a comprehensive review to identify and address potential barriers.

## Community tours

Community tours will be organized in collaboration with planning staff, local community groups, and subject matter experts. Each tour will focus on a specific topic or Neighbourhood, aiming to foster a deeper connection between planning initiatives and the community. They can be useful in gathering early perspectives or seeking feedback on proposed policies and their potential impact on local communities.

## Site visits

Site visits are opportunities for the municipality to visit a specific location or neighbourhood and explore the space. This allows us to build connections and learn about the unique characteristics of an area. Site visits can be used to gain a better understanding of how people interact with the site, identify potential issues, take photos, and build relationships with members of the public.

## Presentations

Staff will offer presentations to community members and key partner groups as capacity allows and by request. These presentations will be offered in-person, virtually or hybrid and share information related to the project and offer opportunities to ask questions and provide feedback. Presentations are intended to reduce barriers to participation and engage more residents in the planning process.

## Website

The Suburban Plan will feature a web page that serves as an engagement platform and a central space to learn about the project. This online hub will provide updates, resources, and opportunities for community input, ensuring residents stay informed and involved in shaping the future of their suburban communities. The website will provide engagement resources such as surveys, fact sheets, FAQs, videos, podcasts, as well as a library of project reports, studies, mapping and more. The website will be refreshed frequently with project updates and resources.

The website will prioritize accessibility and ease of use according to the municipality's Web Content Access Guidelines. Digital resources will be offered in traditional print formats upon request. Translation of website content will be provided as frequently as possible.

## Email

Communication by email will connect residents and key partners with project staff through a central email address. Email will serve as a communication tool and a data collection method analyzed to determine themes and sentiments on various subjects. Staff will use email blasts to community organizations and individuals on our contact list to provide project updates and advertise engagement events.

When a request for input on a planning project is issued to the public, a designated email address or office address will be provided for residents to submit their feedback. If a resident poses a question about the project, staff will follow up with them through their preferred method of communication, ensuring ongoing engagement and clarity.

## Social Media

In collaboration with the municipality's Corporate Communications team, social media sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Reddit, Instagram and other virtual platforms will be used to communicate engagement opportunities for the Suburban Plan. We will also explore opportunities to virtually engage residents on a more interactive level through online forums, polls, quizzes and livestreams. Although the municipality's social media accounts have significant reach, not all demographics interact with or have access to these platforms. It is important that these platforms are not relied upon exclusively to communicate engagement opportunities.

## Newsletters

The municipality will send out regular email newsletter updates to anyone who requests to be added to the project mailing list. These newsletters will provide updates on the work completed, and information regarding key topics, project deliverables and upcoming public engagement events and activities."

## Council, government organizations, key partner groups

2.6

The process will leverage the community connections and expertise of various committees and boards of Council, First Nations, African Nova Scotian and other key partner groups. Residents can also directly reach out to members of Regional Council and participate in the formal public hearing process.



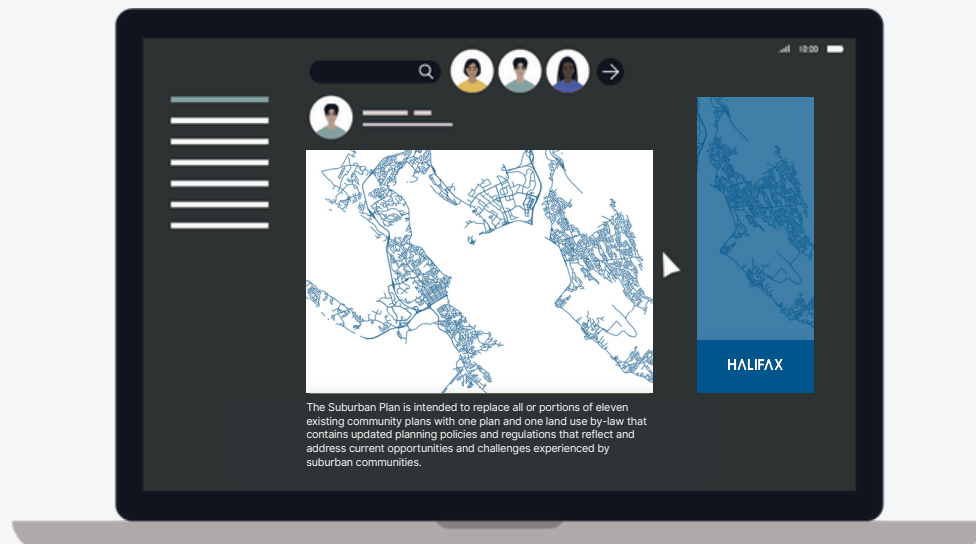
# Site-specific development requests

To help develop the vision for the Suburban Area, applications for site-specific amendments to Municipal Planning Strategies will be considered comprehensively through the suburban planning process. Requests will be reviewed against the guiding principles and objectives of the overall Suburban Plan, as well as their relationship to the vision for the local neighbourhood.

To ensure that these requests are received in an orderly manner and include a consistent level of information that will allow for their fulsome consideration, submissions must include the following:

- the civic address and/or PID of all properties included in the request;
- a map or survey of all properties and existing structures included in the request;
- a signed letter from the owners of all properties included in the request, confirming their knowledge of and support for the request;
- a description of what is being requested, including requested number of units, building heights, etc; and
- a description of how the request meets the overall goals and objectives of the suburban planning process and the vision for the local area.

Site specific development requests must be submitted to [suburbanplan@halifax.ca](mailto:suburbanplan@halifax.ca) for consideration. Staff will review all requests and may reach out if additional information is required.



# Getting the word out

Community engagement will be supported by a detailed communication plan. Some of the tools may include the following:

## Advertising

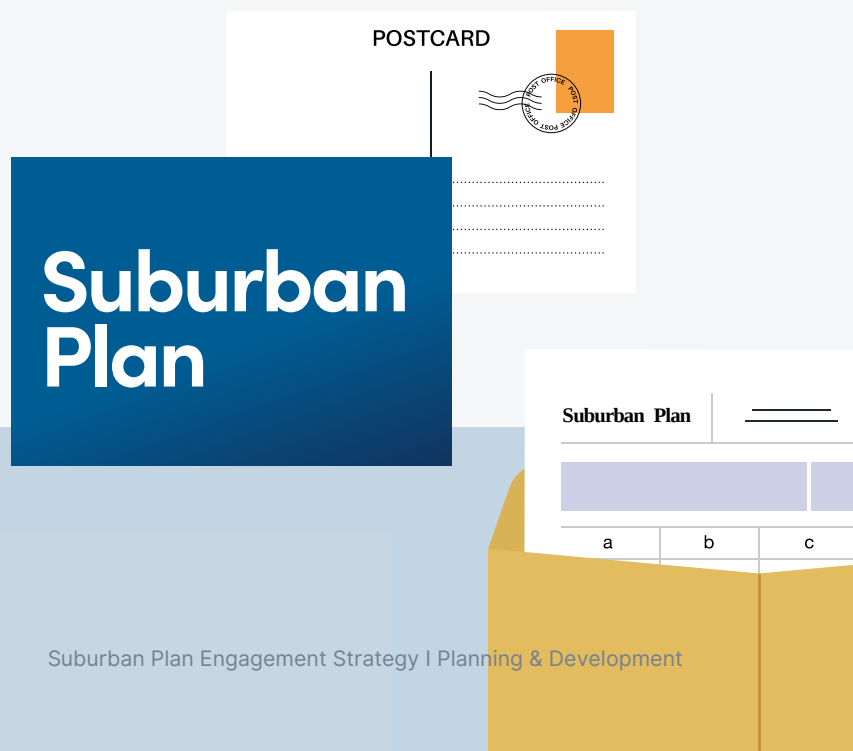
In addition to social media posts, we will collaborate with the municipality's Corporate Communications team to create advertisements that promote awareness around Suburban Plan engagement opportunities. This campaign may consist of print, radio and digital advertisements, which can be tailored to geo-target Suburban Area residents.

## Correspondence

Correspondence includes newsletters, postcards and business cards that are given to community members to inform them of proposed changes to their neighbourhood or to share information about a planning project. Correspondence typically provides a high-level overview of the initiative, links to a webpage where residents can find more information, a call to action and a staff contact or other channel to contact the municipality.

Correspondence may be used at key stages of the project to offer opportunities to connect residents and key partners with project staff. Staff will log pieces of correspondence to analyze general themes and sentiments related to specific topics.

When a request for input on a planning project is issued to the public, a designated email address or office address will be provided for residents to submit their feedback. If a resident poses a question about the project, staff will follow up with them through their preferred method of communication, ensuring ongoing engagement and clarity.



## Telephone

Telephone calls can be used to inform people of proposed changes to their community or to share information about a planning project. Typically, a staff phone number will be provided to residents that wish to discuss the project with a planner one-on-one.

## Councillor newsletters

Staff will provide frequent updates to members of Council, both formally and informally. Communication at key milestones will be provided to allow Councillors to consider including updates in their newsletters.

## Collaboration with other municipal departments & offices

We will explore opportunities to work with other municipal departments and offices to promote Suburban Plan engagement opportunities. Some examples include:

- creating posters and digital screens that can be displayed in municipal recreation centres, libraries, and transit terminals;
- sharing information with 311 services; and
- informing the Councillor's Support Office of engagement opportunities.



# Engagement implementation

3

The Suburban Plan project will feature three key periods of community engagement. The first, launching in 2025, is part of the listen & learn phase, aimed at gathering insights and understanding community perspectives. The second, occurring during the key ideas and directions phase, will focus on collecting feedback on proposed planning policies. The third, will occur during the sharing the plan and will focus on providing opportunities for understanding and feedback around the proposed policies and regulations.

For each phase, a detailed implementation plan will be shared to outline specific engagement activities, resources and timelines, ensuring transparency and clarity for the public. These plans will be developed using the municipality's **Community Engagement Playbook**, a comprehensive guide that ensures engagement efforts are inclusive, accessible and aligned with municipal priorities. The specific elements of each Implementation Plan are outlined below.

## Implementation plan

3.1

Each implementation plan will cover the following information for the overall engagement phase and individual engagement methods:

### Assess the need and purpose

1

- The plan defines the "who, what, when, where, and why" of your engagement, ensuring alignment with initiative goals.
- Determine the level of community engagement required, considering factors like legislative mandates, council directives, and the initiative's community impact.
- Identify whether the initiative impacts high, medium or low levels of community interest and influence.

### Understand the impacted communities

2

- Use data and reports to identify community demographics, cultural customs, languages spoken, socioeconomic factors and environmental or historical contexts.
- Account for translation needs, technology access and the role of local resources and organizations.

## Address barriers

3

- Address accessibility, inclusivity and realistic timelines. Include the key phases, milestones and decision-making time frames.
- Proactively identify and mitigate barriers to participation, such as physical, informational or cultural obstacles.
- Use tools like the *Multilingual Policy* or *Accessibility Strategy* to promote inclusion.
- Coordinate accessibility accommodation support well in advance of engagement events.
- Create a process for communicating accessibility accommodations available at each engagement event.

## Design activities

4

- Select appropriate engagement methods that consider community goals and needs, as well as project objectives (e.g., workshops, surveys, online platforms).
- Engagement methods will be designed with the identified needs of the community in mind, ensuring that the engagement process accommodates those needs and supports inclusive participation.
- Incorporate a mix of in-person and virtual methods to address the digital divide and expand reach.

## Implement the plan

5

- Ensure that all engagement activities are welcoming, accessible, and inclusive. Accommodations available at each activity will be part of advertising and communication for each event.
- Communicate consistently and appropriately with key partners and adjust the plan based on real-time feedback, including event surveys to identify gaps.

## Analyze feedback

6

- Collect and categorize participant input, using methods such as comment logs and What We Heard reports.
- Transparently document how feedback influenced decisions.

## Evaluate the engagement

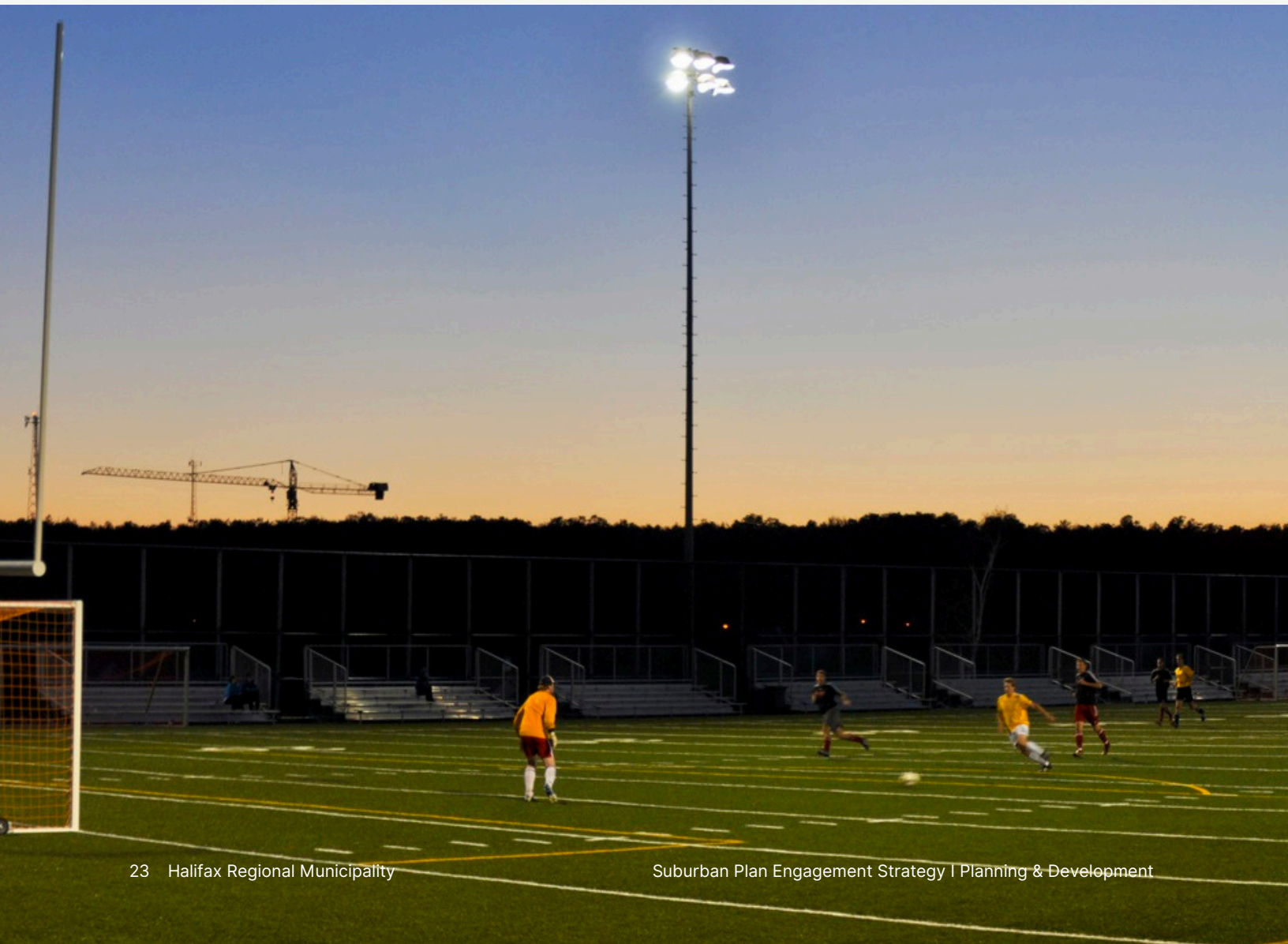
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- Assess the success of the engagement using both qualitative and quantitative indicators (e.g. participation numbers, diversity of input).
- Conduct team debriefs to refine future engagement plans.

# Required sections in implementation plans

3.2

- **Project phase background:** Context for the engagement phase.
- **Engagement goals:** Objectives specific to the phase.
- **Engagement methods:** Tools and techniques to be used, level of influence anticipated, accessibility accommodations available.
- **Resources required:** Staff, materials, accessibility accommodations and facilities needed for each method.
- **Timeline:** Schedule for the engagement phase.
- **Impact and influence:** Assessment of community impact and participants' level of influence for each method with the following guide:



| DETERMINING FACTORS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |        |                                                                                                                      |                                                                             |                                                                                  |                                                                            |                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |        | Regional Council Direction                                                                                           | Legislative Requirement                                                     | Technical Factors                                                                | Budget                                                                     | Example                                                                                                                      |
| INFLUENCE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | High   | Council direction or desire to have community define policy or outcome                                               | Strong legislative or Regional Council policy requiring engagement          | Not many technical constraints/ strong abilities to affect technical constraints | Budget or programs available to implement change                           | Secondary Plan Amendment                                                                                                     |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Medium | Regional Council policy or requirements cannot be changed, but there is some ability to affect the policy or outcome | Moderate legislative or Regional Council policy requirements for engagement | Some technical constraints that limit outcome options                            | Some ability to adjust budgets or programs to implement change             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Agreement</li> <li>• Bike Lanes</li> <li>• Recreation Centre</li> </ul> |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Low    | Regional Council direction does not allow for ability to influence the policy or outcomes                            | No legislative or policy direction to engage                                | Limited ability to affect outcome due to technical standards or constraints      | Minimal or no ability to adjust budgets or programming to influence change | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site Plan Approval</li> <li>• Driveway Location</li> </ul>                          |
| <p><b>What is the appropriate level of public participation for your engagement?</b> The level of public participation also depends on the complexity of the project/initiative, timelines and resources and may change throughout an initiative. Use your results from the previous tables in the matrix below.</p> |        |                                                                                                                      |                                                                             |                                                                                  |                                                                            |                                                                                                                              |
| IMPACT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | High   | Inform                                                                                                               | Involve/Collaborate                                                         | Collaborate/Empower                                                              |                                                                            |                                                                                                                              |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Medium | Inform                                                                                                               | Consult                                                                     | Involve/Collaborate                                                              |                                                                            |                                                                                                                              |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Low    | Inform                                                                                                               | Inform/Consult                                                              | Inform/Consult                                                                   |                                                                            |                                                                                                                              |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |        | Low                                                                                                                  | Medium                                                                      | High                                                                             |                                                                            |                                                                                                                              |
| <b>INFLUENCE</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |        |                                                                                                                      |                                                                             |                                                                                  |                                                                            |                                                                                                                              |



# Evaluation

4

Evaluating the success of engagement efforts is critical to ensuring they meet the goals of inclusivity, accessibility and effectiveness. The evaluation process will employ various tools and indicators to measure the impact of engagement activities, assess participant satisfaction, and guide future improvements.

# Evaluation tools and methods

4.1

## Web analytics and trend analysis

1

- Track various website metrics to determine usage.
- Information collected will ensure participant confidentiality and adhere to privacy legislation requirements.
- Analyze the volume and patterns of engagement with web-based resources to identify high-interest areas and optimize content delivery.

## Comment summaries

2

- Record and categorize input received from key partners.
- Summarize key themes, identify common concerns or suggestions, and provide clear responses where appropriate.

## Attendance tracking

3

- Document attendance numbers at all engagement events, segmented by demographics and community groups where possible.
- Demographic data collection at in-person events will be limited to optional postal code identification. Virtual engagement may ask further demographic information that encourages privacy and trust for optional self-identification such as age, disability, gender, etc.
- Use attendance data to assess participation levels and identify gaps in participation and update subsequent phases of engagement to better reach underrepresented groups.

## Engagement event evaluations

4

- Provide participants with opportunities to evaluate the engagement methods used during events (e.g., format, accessibility, clarity of communication).
- Offer multiple avenues for survey (e.g., in-person paper survey, virtual survey, conversation, etc.).
- Collect feedback on the effectiveness of the engagement approach, separate from input on the project content.
- Summarize and analyze these evaluations to inform improvements in future engagement efforts.

## Qualitative and quantitative surveys

5

- Use pre- and post-engagement surveys to assess participant understanding, satisfaction, and the perceived value of their input.
- Provide accommodation support for survey participation by participants with accessibility needs.
- Include open-ended and structured questions to capture both detailed feedback and measurable data points.



# Indicators of success

The success of engagement efforts will be measured using the following qualitative and quantitative indicators:

## ■ **Inclusive participation:**

Evidence that all affected groups, including underrepresented and historically marginalized communities, were engaged.

## ■ **Balanced and complete information:**

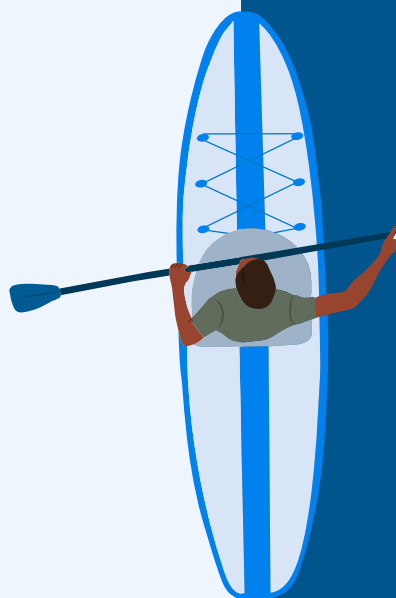
Participant understanding of the project and its goals, reflected through feedback and surveys.

## ■ **Effective process:**

Demonstrated alignment of engagement activities with established goals and participant needs.

## ■ **Capacity building:**

Increased participant knowledge and strengthened relationships between the community and project team.



# Reporting and continuous improvement

4.3

A comprehensive *What We Heard* report will be prepared for each phase of the project, summarizing the results of the engagement activities. Key elements of the report will include:

- participant demographics and attendance data;
- thematic summaries of feedback and how it influenced project decisions;
- assessment of engagement tools and methods, with recommendations for future improvement;
- metrics from web analytics, surveys, and event evaluations; and
- gap analysis based on participant feedback and surveys to be considered and incorporated in future phases and projects.

The findings will be shared publicly to maintain transparency and ensure ongoing refinement of the engagement strategy. By continuously evaluating and adapting the approach, we aim to foster a community-driven process that supports equitable and impactful planning outcomes.



# Glossary

## **Accessible and complete communities:**

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

## **Amalgamation:**

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

## **Community plan:**

Also known as a secondary municipal planning strategy, is a detailed land use policy document for a particular area of the municipality subject to the Regional Plan.

## **Municipal priority plans:**

Provide detailed guidance, policies and actions on specific issues that are important to the municipality's growth. They set the long-term direction for municipal decisions and investments and may include regulations, programs, facilities or partnerships and associated budgetary requirements. The priority plans were created with significant public consultation and reflect the desires of residents, key partners and Regional Council. The priority plans include the *Integrated Mobility Plan*, *Halifax Green Network Plan*, *HalifACT*, *Halifax's Inclusive Economic Strategy 2022-2027*, *Sharing Our Stories: HRM's Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan*, and *African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity*.

## **Key partners:**

Individuals or organizations who can affect or be affected by the outcomes of a project. Engaging a variety of key partners is essential for creating a Suburban Plan that reflects the diverse needs and wants of communities. Types of key partners can include:

- residents (property owners and renters);
- non-profit organizations;
- other levels of government;
- business owners;
- developers, builders and development industry representatives; or
- Nova Scotia Health, Halifax Regional Centre for Education (HRCE) and other public organizations

**Land use by-law:**

Regulatory tool to implement policies contained in the community plan through regulations that are legally enforceable.

**Rapid transit corridors:**

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

**Regional Centre:**

Peninsula Halifax and Dartmouth inside of the Circumferential Highway.

**Regional Plan:**

The Halifax Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (Regional Plan) guides growth and development for the entire municipality. The Regional Plan sets out a common vision, principles and long-range, region-wide planning policies. The planning policies outline where, when and how future growth and development should take place.

**Suburban Area:**

The area generally outside of the Regional Centre but within the Urban Service Boundary.

**Urban Service Boundary:**

Where developments have access to municipal water, wastewater and transit services.

**HALIFAX**



[halifax.ca/SuburbanPlan](https://halifax.ca/SuburbanPlan)