



Halifax Regional Municipality

## **REGIONAL PARKING STRATEGY FUNCTIONAL PLAN**

---

FINAL REPORT

AUGUST 2008



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

Decisions on parking affect all aspects of development in Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) including land use, built form, economic development, travel behaviour and financial health. The setting of parking policy is a complex issue involving many interests and stakeholders. In many urban areas throughout Canada, parking has been approached from a simple demand/supply problem without consideration of the many factors that influence the demand for parking or the impacts of the supply of parking. The HRM Regional Parking Strategy is based on the conviction that a balanced approach must be adopted for all facets of parking. It reflects current trends in parking management that are moving away from a “more parking is better” approach, in recognition that too much parking is as harmful as too little. However, it is also recognized that having adequate parking supply is essential to the functioning of both commercial development and to the daily lives of residents of HRM.

HRM is at a critical point in its on-going evolution. The Regional Municipal Planning Strategy outlines a bold Vision for the Region that envisions a significant change in both urban form and transportation behaviour, with the over-arching goal of becoming a more sustainable Region. It is therefore important that the issue of parking be approached carefully and comprehensively as HRM moves forward with the implementation of its Planning Strategy.

This Parking Strategy is one of five functional plans being prepared in support of the overall Transportation Master Plan (TMP). Key objectives of the TMP are to improve traffic flow by shifting the trend away from single occupant vehicle travel. Other plans in various stages of completion include the Road and Road Network Strategy, Public Transit, Active Transportation and Transportation Demand Management. When complete, the TMP will provide a blueprint for the transportation system and related policies and programs for the next 25 years.

### STUDY OBJECTIVES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Regional Parking Strategy is a 25-year plan to ensure that parking in the HRM will be designed, supplied, and managed to:

- **Support a choice of integrated travel modes**, emphasizing active transportation, public transit and carpooling.
- **Encourage alternatives to the single occupant vehicle trip.**
- **Help mitigate traffic congestion** in the Regional Centre and outlying employment and retail centres.
- **Promote efficient land use** and support the development of mixed-use, transit and pedestrian oriented centres as outlined in the Regional Plan.
- **Operate efficiently and equitably** and be affordable to the Municipality and its citizens.
- **Support local business, tourism, and service sectors** and the community's economic development.

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- **Protect the environment** by minimizing impacts of parking facilities on air, water, land and other natural resources.
- **Link with other ongoing studies**, such as the Urban Design Study, Public Transit Functional Plan, and Transportation Demand Management Functional Plan.

In support of these objectives, the following principles were developed to guide the identification and evaluation of potential parking strategies and solutions:

|                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1. Integration with other plans</b>            | Parking strategies should integrate with and support land use and transportation objectives of related plans (e.g. Transportation Demand Management Functional Plan).                                                        |
| <b>2. Consumer Choice</b>                         | People should have a variety of parking and travel options from which to choose.                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>3. Multimodal interconnectivity and access</b> | Parking facilities are not only for automobiles and should be supplied and designed to support transportation linkages and travel by other modes (e.g., bicycle parking, convenient transit access).                         |
| <b>4. Efficient Utilization</b>                   | Parking facilities should be sized and managed so that spaces are frequently occupied.                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>5. Flexibility</b>                             | Parking policies and plans should be flexible to appropriately and equitably deal with varying needs across the HRM. A “one size fits all” approach will not achieve the desired outcomes.                                   |
| <b>6. Pricing</b>                                 | Users should pay directly for the parking facilities they use as much as possible.                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>7. Quality vs. Quantity</b>                    | The quality of parking facilities (e.g., aesthetics, security, convenience) should be considered as important as quantity.                                                                                                   |
| <b>8. Innovative Approaches</b>                   | HRM has the potential to be an innovator in terms of parking management, and parking solutions should make use of innovative approaches (e.g., electronic fee collections systems, wayfinding systems) wherever appropriate. |
| <b>9. Consultation</b>                            | Key stakeholders, including residential, business, and institutional representatives should be involved in developing appropriate parking solutions.                                                                         |

### STUDY SCOPE

Consistent with the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy, the Parking Strategy covers the entire Halifax Regional Municipality including both urban and rural areas. It addresses all aspects of parking including private parking for commercial and residential uses, on-street parking, off-street public parking and related policies for the control, design and management of parking. In conjunction with other functional plans, the Parking Strategy also identifies options for promoting ride-sharing and active transportation. One of the over-riding themes of the strategy is about balancing the needs of different stakeholders including residents, businesses, institutions and tourism industries.

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## STUDY PROCESS AND STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

The HRM Parking Strategy is the result of the efforts of a large number of people. Specifically, in order to facilitate and guide the development of the Strategy, HRM established a Community Working Group comprised of representatives from HRM staff, community representatives, business associations, hospital and university representatives, the Waterfront Development Corporation and the Ecology Action Centre. This Working Group met four times during the study and had an opportunity to comment on the proposed study recommendations in draft form.

The Parking Strategy also incorporated several opportunities for public consultation, including two rounds of public open houses held at various locations throughout the Region.

The first round of public consultations was conducted in early March 2007. These meetings were intended to inform the public about the Parking Strategy and the types of options being considered, and to give participants an opportunity to consider and recommend options that could be pursued to address current issues as well as future objectives. The key findings of the initial consultation were as follows:



**Many HRM residents provided valuable input over the course of the parking strategy.**

- Parking management must support the competitiveness of Downtown Businesses;
- More transportation options are needed, particularly public transit;
- Residential on-street parking management needs to be improved;
- The design and appearance of parking is important; and
- Parking pricing should be fair and equitable.

A second round of public open houses was held in June 2007 to obtain feedback on the key strategy recommendations. In general, the draft recommendations were well received by the public, noting the following:

- If parking standards are reduced, viable options to the car must be provided, including rapid transit;
- As development occurs in the downtown, there will be a need for more parking;
- The layout of sites should be improved to ensure that parking does not affect the pedestrian environment, and sites should include bike parking, preferential parking for carpools and other supportive measures; and
- Parking standards should be simplified so that they are more understandable for developers and the public.

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Many people suggested that there is a need to look into the future where cars may not be as prominent as they are today, and ensure that this is taken into account in present day decisions on parking.

### Existing Conditions and Identification of Issues

#### EXISTING PARKING STANDARDS

Based on a comparison of HRM parking standards with 11 other Canadian jurisdictions, minimum requirements in Halifax Mainland and other more suburban and rural HRM communities required the highest parking levels of jurisdictions assessed for general office, government office, general retail, large retail, grocery store, and restaurant uses in many instances.

With the exception of the Halifax Peninsula and Downtown Dartmouth, parking standards for general office uses range from 4 to 6 spaces per 100 m<sup>2</sup> of floor area, which, by most accounts, translates into more than one space per employee. This existing requirement to require “more than ample” employee parking is a major barrier to achieving more compact and pedestrian friendly built form objectives, and a disincentive to transit and other forms of sustainable transportation. It is also an unnecessary financial burden given the increasing cost of constructing parking.



**Current parking by-laws outside of the Halifax Peninsula generally require more parking than is needed.**

#### EXISTING TRAVEL BEHAVIOUR

Overall, HRM residents are fairly dependent on private automobiles with approximately 78% of all commuting trips taking place by car, and 68% of commuting trips by cars with only one occupant. However, for commuting trips to the urban core (Downtown Halifax and Downtown Dartmouth), there is substantially less reliance on passenger cars. Almost half of work trips originating in the Urban Core are made by public transit, walking, cycling, or other non-auto modes. This reduced reliance on private automobiles for trips to the urban core is no doubt a function of the availability and quality of transit services and walking/cycling environments, but it is also a function of parking pricing and supply. Although there are high rates of free parking in Downtown Halifax (40%) and Downtown Dartmouth (54%), parking is almost never priced for commuters or shoppers outside of the urban core. It is noteworthy that based on an attitudinal survey conducted for this study, 29% of auto commuters responded they would shift to another mode of transportation if parking was priced.

#### OBSERVED PARKING DEMAND AND UTILIZATION

Observed parking utilization rates mirror the trends in existing parking standards and travel behaviour with the core areas experiencing the highest utilization rates for public and private parking lots.

Based on surveys undertaken for this Parking Strategy, average occupancies for public parking lots in Downtown Halifax and Downtown Dartmouth were 66% while lots near the University and hospital area were 70% on average, with some lots approaching 100% occupancy. Similarly, on-street parking in Downtown Halifax was almost always full when surveyed. Parking utilization in

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Downtown Dartmouth was observed to be slightly lower with public lots averaging 42% utilization and peak on-street occupancies averaging 68%.

Outside of the Urban Core, the majority of parking is provided in the form of private off-street parking. As part of this strategy, parking occupancies were sampled at 45 commercial retail lots throughout region at different times of the day and during different seasons. On average, these lots were less than 40% full indicating that parking is significantly over-supplied. Only one lot (Sunnyside Mall) was observed to have a high rate of utilization (95% at the peak).

**SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

HRM is a large and diverse region with many different transportation and parking needs. To guide development of the Regional Parking Strategy, key needs and priorities areas were identified based on the review of existing conditions, policy considerations, and extensive consultation with members of the public, HRM staff, and other key stakeholders. Exhibit ES.1 provides a summary of existing/future needs and opportunities together with a listing of key policy directions grouped according to six categories.

## **Proposed Parking Strategies**

Addressing existing and future parking needs within HRM will require a comprehensive set of strategic initiatives aimed at addressing the needs and opportunities identified previously. Reflecting a holistic approach to parking management, these strategies focus on increasing parking supply options as well as managing the demand for parking.

Based on input from all stakeholders, this study developed a comprehensive set of potential recommendations under the following categories:

- Strategies that increase the efficiency of the existing “parking system”;
- Strategies that reduce parking demand; and
- Supporting strategies.

Strategies under these three categories are discussed in the following sections. These strategies have been translated into a set of specific recommendations as detailed in Exhibit ES.3 at the end of this Executive Summary.

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**Exhibit ES.1: Summary of Needs and Priority Areas**

| Category and Issue/Opportunity                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Proposed Policy Direction                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Growth Management</b><br><br><i>The RMPS outlines that future population and employment growth will be directed towards the Regional Centre (25%), suburban areas (50%), and rural areas (25%). A key aspect of the plan is the centres, envisioned as mixed-use transit oriented areas, which will accommodate much of this growth. There are several key areas in which parking policies and parking management need to be improved upon to help achieve the land use and transportation objectives outlined in the Regional Plan.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Modify Parking Requirements to Support Regional Plan Objectives</li> <li>▪ Accommodate Growth in the Regional Centre</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Governance and Public Parking Supply</b><br><br><i>HRM currently has a fragmented approach to parking management, both in the downtown areas, as well as across the regional municipality. The fact that HRM currently only plays a small role in the provision of collective, off-street parking limits opportunities for shared parking and pricing strategies to encourage efficient use of off-street parking.</i>                                                                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enhance Parking Administration</li> <li>▪ Increase Municipal Role In Providing Public Parking</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Enhanced Transportation Choice</b><br><br><i>Parking can be managed to support and encourage a variety of transportation options and reduce the number of commuters travelling in single occupant vehicles. Potential strategies to promote transportation choice include preferential carpool parking, bicycle parking, enhancing park and ride facilities.</i>                                                                                                                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Modify Parking Requirements to Reduce Auto Dependency</li> <li>▪ Use Parking to Support Improved Transportation Options</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Efficient and Cost Effective Parking Supply</b><br><br><i>Parking is a valuable resource and should be managed to maximize its efficiency and usefulness for both businesses and residents and to ensure its availability for intended users.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adopt Innovative solutions For On-street Parking Management</li> <li>▪ Address Residential On-Street Parking Issues</li> <li>▪ Enhance Parking Experience for the Downtown Discretionary Traveller</li> <li>▪ Refine and Harmonize Mobility Disabled Parking Standards</li> </ul> |
| <b>Improved Urban Design and Environmental Performance</b><br><br><i>Parking has a significant impact on urban design. In particular, the need to supply parking can impact the shape of buildings resulting in conditions that are neither transit-supportive nor pedestrian friendly.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve Urban Design and Environmental Performance</li> <li>▪ Improve Urban Design of Parking Facilities</li> <li>▪ Mitigate Environmental Impacts of Parking Facilities</li> </ul>                                                                                               |
| <b>Funding and Fiscal Tools</b><br><br><i>The cost of constructing parking is increasing significantly, yet most parking in HRM is "free". It is in the interest of all residents, businesses and HRM to develop a parking strategy that is financially sustainable.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve Funding and Fiscal Tools</li> <li>▪ Promote Full-Cost Pricing of Parking</li> <li>▪ Develop Improved Funding Mechanisms</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                        |

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### STRATEGIES TO INCREASE PARKING CAPACITY AND EFFICIENCY

Several strategies are proposed to increase parking capacity and efficiency. These strategies focus on maximizing the efficiency of the existing on-street and off-street parking supply, ensuring that a reasonable amount of parking is provided for new development, and strategically increasing HRM's role in providing public parking to support existing and future development in a manner that reflects the overall goal of reducing automobile dependence.

#### Revise Parking Zoning Standards

Parking standards are an important tool for achieving the overall directions outlined in the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (RMPS) for land use, particularly with respect to the "Centres." Significant revisions are proposed for parking standards in HRM as detailed in the main report incorporating the following policies:

- Shared parking provisions and other mechanisms for flexibility in required parking;
- Reduced minimum parking requirements; and
- Maximum parking standards.

Revised parking standards will allow for:

- Consistent standards for mobility disabled parking across HRM;
- Shared parking provisions that specify reductions in required parking where parking is shared;
- Reductions in required parking where off-street or other collective parking is available;
- Reductions in required parking given good transit service or other Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures (i.e., preferential carpool parking, priced parking, bicycle parking, transit pass programs, etc.);
- Allowances for off-site parking at a reasonable distance; and
- Reductions in parking standards for lower income and seniors housing.

Exhibit ES.2 provides a description of the proposed changes to existing parking standards while the actual recommended standards are included in the main report.

#### Improve User Information

A comprehensive information system that includes vehicle and pedestrian wayfinding systems can help to maximize the efficiency of the parking system. A lack of signage and wayfinding can cause confusion and frustration for drivers and in turn hurt retailers. User information can also help make it easier for people who are unfamiliar with available parking options to determine which one's best meet their needs. This includes tourists, retail customers and even commuters.

**Some cities in the United Kingdom have developed dynamic signage systems that direct drivers to lots with available spaces. This could be a longer term measure for Halifax.**

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A comprehensive strategy is required to improve parking user information, addressing signage, printed materials (e.g., maps), and Internet resources. It is recommended that HRM work in partnership with the private sector and local business areas to develop a “common look and feel” for parking signage and related information. Dynamic wayfinding systems in Downtown Halifax and Downtown Dartmouth could be pursued in the longer term.

### Exhibit ES.2: Proposed Framework for Parking Standards

| Area                                                    | Approach to Parking Management                                                   | Minimum Parking Standard                                                                                                           | Maximum Parking Standard                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Downtown Halifax                                        | Emphasize public parking and TDM                                                 | Private parking banned for non-residential development <sup>(1)</sup> - mandatory participation in cash-in-lieu of parking program |                                             |
| Halifax Peninsula and Downtown Dartmouth <sup>(2)</sup> | Emphasize public parking and TDM                                                 | Low minimum requirements for most developments above a certain size – cash-in-lieu of parking available                            | Tight parking maximums for most uses        |
| Regional Centre – Dartmouth                             | Allow flexibility in private parking provision/ emphasize public parking and TDM | Low minimum requirements for most uses– cash-in-lieu of parking available                                                          | Parking maximums for most uses              |
| Outer Urban                                             | Allow flexibility in private parking provision                                   | Mid-level minimum requirements for all uses with adjustment factors                                                                | No parking maximums                         |
| Outlying Areas                                          | Require ample private parking/ Allow flexibility in private parking provision    | Mid-level minimum requirements for all uses with adjustment factors                                                                | No parking maximums                         |
| Urban/Suburban District Centre                          | Allow flexibility in private parking provision/ emphasize public parking and TDM | Low minimum requirements for most uses – cash-in-lieu of parking available                                                         | Tight maximum standards for surface parking |
| Urban/Suburban Local Centre                             | Allow flexibility in private parking provision/ emphasize public parking and TDM | Low minimum requirements for most uses – cash-in-lieu of parking available                                                         | Maximum standards for surface parking       |
| Rural Commuter Centre <sup>(3)</sup>                    | Allow flexibility in private parking provision                                   | Mid-level minimum requirements for most uses                                                                                       | Parking maximums for some uses              |

<sup>(1)</sup> Parking lots and structures are currently banned in Downtown Halifax and the Halifax Waterfront through the Land Use By-Law and may only be permitted through direct Council approval. It is proposed that this approach be maintained in tandem with mandatory cash-in-lieu of parking contributions.

<sup>(2)</sup> In the Capital District, outside of Downtown Halifax, a minimum of 50% of required parking must be provided as short-term, public parking.

<sup>(3)</sup> Rural Commuter Centre includes Rural Commuter, Rural Commuter District, and Rural Commuter Local Centres

#### Optimize On-Street Parking Management

Recommended strategies for on-street parking generally attempt to maximize on-street parking opportunities for all users where it can be done without impacting the integrity of residential areas. This approach is consistent with the overall principle of promoting shared parking and efficient land use. However, it is also recognized that residents should not be penalized for living in urbanized areas, such as the Peninsula.

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Key recommended strategies related to on-street parking include:

- Introducing parking pricing on selected streets on weekends to discourage long-term parking and to ensure availability for visitors.
- Improving user information to better explain parking regulations along with policies to reduce parking fines for first time offenders.
- Modifying the existing residential parking exemption program to allow implementation over a multi-block permit zone.
- Increasing the use of the Parking by Permit Only program in residential areas that have a high occurrence of employees using on-street parking, if desired by residents.

**A typical urban parking space has an estimated annualized value of \$1,000 to \$2,000, which suggests it is important that on-street parking is priced equitably and fairly.**

### Expand Municipally Owned Public Parking Supply

Public parking plays an important role in helping to achieve development objectives in a sustainable manner since shared parking is one of the most desirable ways to reduce “peak” parking demand. Other than park and ride facilities, HRM currently operates very few public off-street parking facilities. Aside from the Metro Park, which is a public-private operation, HRM owns and operates only six lots, totalling approximately 100 spaces.

As areas such as the Spring Garden Road Area and the waterfront areas of Downtown Halifax and Dartmouth are developed, existing surface lots will be lost and there will be increasing pressures for public parking. While it is not the role for HRM to make up for this loss of parking, it is appropriate that HRM ensures that there is a basic amount of parking available for public use. By taking on a greater role in providing public parking, HRM can ensure that parking is not over-supplied. The development of funding mechanisms for parking provision (such as cash-in-lieu of parking) will not initially be applied to the development of parking structures. Any funds from parking will be applied to public transit and other alternative modes of transportation.



**Opportunities exist to develop new public spaces that can be used for public parking during peak parking demand periods and pedestrian uses for the remainder.**

## STRATEGIES THAT REDUCE COMMUTER PARKING DEMAND

Reducing the number of commuters travelling in single occupant vehicles is a key strategy of the Regional Plan and will help to reduce the overall need for parking. This strategy is contingent on the availability of travel alternatives that are financially viable, safe, and convenient along with appropriate incentives to use them. Strategies proposed for reducing commuter-parking demand relate to many areas of transportation demand management, including improving transit, promoting active transportation, encouraging ridesharing, and developing more progressive approaches to parking pricing. Overall, parking management in HRM needs to be viewed as a key component of the TDM program.

### Improve Transit Options

HRM has made considerable strides in improving transit services, with the introduction of the MetroLink and other innovative improvements such as the proposed Downtown Shuttle and University Transit Pass. The Rural Transit and Park and Ride Study will result in even more transit options for HRM travellers. However, these improvements may not be enough to break the cycle of auto dependence that currently exists in many part of the HRM.

**It is estimated that HRM's employment will grow by about 40,000 workers by 2025. Assuming an average cost of \$60 per month per parking space, this translates into a direct capital cost of \$30 million dollars for new parking annually! It is therefore important to consider a range of alternatives to accommodate transportation needs.**

Consistent with the overall directions of the RMPS, key recommendations to improve transit options are as follows:

- Involve Metro Transit in site design decisions to ensure that transit needs are considered in advance of development.
- Expanding and improving regular transit services, particularly to under-served employment areas such as Burnside.
- Improve access to trunk transit services by improving feeder bus services and walking and cycling connections to park and ride lots.

### Promote Active Transportation

HRM approved its Active Transportation Plan (ATP) in 2006. This plan outlines a comprehensive strategy for improving conditions for walking and cycling in the Region, both from an infrastructure perspective as well as from a policy perspective. In conjunction with the approval of the ATP, amendments were also made to the Land Use By-law to include requirements for bicycle parking for new development. The amendments are among the most progressive in Canada and include provisions such as a reduction in auto parking spaces (up to 10%), where sheltered bicycle parking, and showers or clothes lockers are provided.

Building on the recommendations of the ATP, this parking strategy recommends expanding bicycle parking throughout the region and particularly at HRM-owned buildings and parking facilities.



**Providing secure bicycle parking at strategic locations is one of many recommendations outlined in the HRM Active Transportation Plan.**

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One area where there is overlap between providing facilities for active transportation and ensuring sufficient parking is in corridors with on-street parking. Implementing bicycle lanes in some of the corridors identified in the ATP may require the elimination of on-street parking on one or both sides. Examples of these corridors include Connaught Avenue, Inglis Street, Windsor Street and Quinpool Road. In these cases, trade-offs need to be made to balance the desire to accommodate active transportation and the need to ensure parking for businesses and residents. As part of this Parking Strategy, a preliminary set of evaluation criteria has been developed which can be used by HRM in making such trade-offs. It is also recommended that residents and businesses along active transportation corridors have input into the final design, while recognizing the overarching goal of creating a series of AT corridors throughout the Region. In some cases, more innovative techniques such as shared bike lanes or narrow bike lanes (e.g., 1.2 metres versus the standard 1.5 metres) could be implemented to allow bike corridors to continue through constrained areas without affecting parking for businesses.

### Encourage Ridesharing and TDM

Transportation demand management (TDM) is a set of strategic initiatives geared at improving the efficiency of the transportation network, encouraging alternatives to the single occupant vehicle trip and encouraging behavioural change. It also includes the use of policies, programs, services, and



**Car-sharing is a concept gaining momentum across Canada and will soon be available in Halifax.**

products to influence whether, why, when and how people travel. Potential TDM initiatives range from incentive programs that encourage people to carpool or take transit, to regulatory and pricing measures. HRM is currently undertaking a Transportation Demand Management Functional Plan, one of the five Functional Plans of the Transportation Master Plan.

One recommendation included in this Parking Strategy that could be implemented in advance of the full TDM plan includes the provision of dedicated parking spaces in HRM surface lots for licensed vanpools (e.g. Green-rider) as well as for car-share vehicles (on an interim basis).

**Many people may not be aware that a landowner would need to charge about \$40 per month or \$0.50/hr to recover the construction costs and on-going maintenance costs for a surface parking space. This increases to \$120/month or \$1.50/hr for above grade structures and up to \$200/month or \$2.50/hr for below grade parking.**

### Parking Pricing

Though often controversial, charging for parking is one of the most effective ways to ensure its efficient use. In areas of high demand, parking should ideally be priced so that on average, spaces are 85% occupied. Charging for public parking also has been shown to reduce the amount of complaints, since the action of paying for parking serves to alert people to parking time limits and other restrictions.

Within HRM, parking is generally priced within the Capital District, but most parking outside of this area is free. Even within the Capital District there are a high number of employees who report receiving free parking. Ultimately, the cost of this parking is borne by employers, businesses, or HRM.

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As an overall direction, this parking strategy recommends moving towards a parking pricing system that better reflects the true cost of parking. Short-term recommendations in support of this objective would include:

- Continuing to price on-street parking in commercial areas according to demand while ensuring frequent turnover.
- Expanding the extent of parking pricing as appropriate and in consultation with business associations.
- Improving signage to better explain time restrictions and pricing.
- Providing discounts to fuel-efficient vehicles and high occupancy vehicles.



**As a short term incentive for more efficient vehicle purchases, HRM could consider reduced parking rates in off-street lots for environmentally friendly vehicles**

Over the longer term, the proposed strategy of reducing minimum parking requirements and implementing parking maximums in the centres will also help to create a market for priced parking.

### SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

#### Update Parking Governance Structure

Within HRM, a number of distinct groups are responsible for various aspects of parking including on-street parking regulations (Public Works and Transportation), parking standards (Planning and Development) and revenue collection (Finance). Real Property and Asset Management is responsible for HRM owned parking lots. Metro Transit is responsible for managing park and ride lots.

Unlike many other municipalities, there is no distinct parking department, nor does HRM have a parking authority or commission. As a result, the private sector plays a significant role in providing parking for the general public. This condition is advantageous in that the private sector tends to manage parking efficiently and price parking according to market rates. One disadvantage is that HRM has less control over issues such as signage and wayfinding and the design of parking facilities. The lack of a central department responsible for parking, also makes it more difficult to plan for and construct public parking, where required, to support the development of the centres in a form that is supportive of transit.

Several options were considered for the management of parking in HRM including:

- Maintaining the status quo;
- Maintaining the status quo, in conjunction with a parking advisory committee;
- Establishing a parking corporation or parking authority;
- Establishing a distinct parking department or division;
- Establishing a Parking District (for specific areas); or
- Designating a Parking Manager.

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A hybrid parking committee/parking manager model is recommended for HRM as an interim step towards evolving the parking system. The Parking Advisory Committee would act as a guide regarding parking-related issues and make recommendations to Council. It should consist of members of the public and stakeholders across HRM, such as business associations, universities and resident groups. The parking manager would be responsible for implementing policy and planning direction received from Council and coordinating efforts between the various municipal departments. This blended approach also allows departments that have particular expertise (such as public works) to continue to be responsible for aspects of the parking system that they are best suited to handle.

**Funding Parking Management and Development**

There are a wide variety of fiscal tools available to support parking management. These can generally be grouped under three categories i) user pricing, ii) financial incentives and iii) parking taxes. All of these strategies are currently in place to some degree in the HRM.

As a general strategy, it is recommended that the parking system is, at a minimum, financially sustainable. This means that the cost of constructing new parking should be recovered through user fees or other revenue sources. In a broader sense, it also means that those who use or benefit from parking should bear most of the cost of constructing and maintaining parking.

Several potential funding approaches are outlined in the main report including:

- Implementing appropriate **user fees** for public parking (current practice in Capital District).
- Implementing a **cash-in-lieu** policy whereby developers would be relieved from some or all parking requirements in exchange for contributing a set amount to a fund. It is proposed that cash-in-lieu would be mandatory for development in Downtown Halifax.
- Implementing **parking tax reforms** which would more directly reflect the cost of parking (or impacts of parking) on the Region (e.g. commercial parking taxes, parking levies or stormwater management fees).
- Establishing a **fund** to allow HRM to direct revenues from the parking system to a dedicated fund.

The selection of the preferred strategy, or combination of strategies, is somewhat contingent on the outcome of the on-going HRM Tax reform process.

Any strategy would need to be implemented in a manner that would not affect Regional competitiveness nor result in a more complex tax regime for businesses.

**Parking Payment Technology**

Parking revenue collection technology has implications for parking administration, user convenience, parking utilization, and costs and revenues, among other factors. HRM currently derives the vast majority of its parking revenue from on-street parking. At the present time, single space parking meters are used exclusively for on-street parking payment.

There are many existing and emerging technologies for on-street parking payment pay and display machines, pay by cell phone or in-car parking meters. Many cities have also implemented combinations of these technologies.

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The preliminary recommended approach for on-street parking payment systems is to maintain the existing parking meters in the short term, and to make way for next generation technologies as they become more prevalent. In the interim, adding an the option of pay by cell phone to existing parking meters is technically feasible and would serve to increase user convenience.

### Urban Design

There is a desire among all stakeholders to significantly change the design of parking facilities throughout the region, focusing on treatments that reduce the environmental impacts of parking and provide improved amenities for pedestrians, cyclists and transit riders.

Approaches articulated in the Parking Design Considerations report included with this Parking Strategy outline a series of directions such as:

- Locating surface lots behind buildings and inside city blocks to avoid large gaps in building and public realm continuity and orient building fronts towards the street;
- Ensuring architectural quality of parking structures;
- Providing clearly marked pedestrian aisles in surface parking lots;
- Designing parking facilities to provide as much barrier free access as possible in compliance with the Nova Scotia Code Barrier Free Standards; and
- Using low-impact development practices to reduce stormwater runoff from parking lots and remove pollutants and sediments on site.



**There are many techniques available to reduce the environmental impacts of surface parking through landscaping.**

## Implementation Considerations

The Regional Parking Strategy is intended to be a forward-looking plan that will guide decisions on parking over the next 25 years. The Parking Strategy presents a series of comprehensive recommendations to improve parking conditions in the downtown for consideration by HRM and other stakeholders. This program of strategies and actions would be carried out over both the short, medium and longer term through further planning and budgeting processes.

An over-riding recommendation of this Parking Strategy is for HRM to recognize the many benefits of involving business owners, private developers, all business units and the public in decisions on parking. There are tremendous opportunities for growth in HRM and this parking strategy should be used as a guide to ensure that parking decisions are made so as to foster and promote new development in a manner that ensures the long terms environmental, economic and social sustainability of the Region.

### SHORT TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

In effort to build capacity and gain momentum for the implementation of the full parking strategy, several short-term actions are proposed:

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- Hire parking manager/develop Parking Advisory Committee.
- Develop “model” parking standards for all of HRM, with active ground floor uses at street level.
- Develop a cash-in-lieu standard.
- Implement pay by cell phone for on-street parking.
- Develop a parking portal through HRM’s website.
- Modify on-street residential parking programs.
- Incorporate the recommended parking strategies into other functional plans and the overall Transportation Master Plan.

**Exhibit ES.2: Summary of Recommended Strategies and Implementing Actions**

| Strategy                                                               | ID    | Implementing Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b><i>Strategies that Increase Parking Capacity and Efficiency</i></b> |       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| A.1 Revise Parking Zoning Standards                                    | A.1.1 | In the short term, adopt proposed adjustment factors as guidelines to be implemented by staff on a case-by-case basis. They should be formalized into the new land use zoning by-law.                                                                                                                                                                 |
|                                                                        | A.1.2 | Implement changes to parking standards in conjunction with on-going reviews of zoning standards and the development of the centres plans, consistent with the proposed framework.                                                                                                                                                                     |
|                                                                        | A.1.3 | Modify parking space dimension requirements for standard and accessible parking spaces.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                                                        | A.1.4 | Adopt consistent set of mobility disabled parking standards across HRM.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| A.2 Improve User Information                                           | A.2.1 | Work in partnership with the private sector to develop common formats, colours and logos for collective parking signage including directional signage, location/identification signage and wayfinding signage. Signage can be tailored to local business areas (e.g. Spring Garden Road, Quinpool Road, Downtown Dartmouth, etc.).                    |
|                                                                        | A.2.2 | Develop pedestrian oriented-signage throughout existing and proposed Centres to direct pedestrians to/from parking areas.                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|                                                                        | A.2.3 | Develop a parking portal through HRM’s website to be a “one-stop-shop” for parking information. The portal should include information on publicly accessible parking, links to available monthly parking for commuters, parking maps, details on prices, regulations, and fine payment, and future expansion plans, among other relevant information. |
|                                                                        | A.2.4 | Establish a database of all public and private parking that can be used in developing above materials.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|                                                                        | A.2.5 | Develop improved signage for park and ride facilities that is clearly visible, and consistent with Metro Transit logos, particularly where such facilities are shared with other uses (e.g., Penhorn Mall).                                                                                                                                           |

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| Strategy                                              | ID     | Implementing Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A.3 Optimize On-Street Parking Management             | A.3.1  | Continue to price on-street parking in commercial areas according to demand while ensuring frequent turnover through enforcement and pricing.                                                                                                                        |
|                                                       | A.3.2  | In consultation with businesses, introduce parking pricing in busy commercial areas on evenings and weekends to discourage long-term parking and to ensure availability for visitors.                                                                                |
|                                                       | A.3.3  | Ensure priced on-street parking in HRM is patrolled several times daily to discourage violations, particularly in central Halifax.                                                                                                                                   |
|                                                       | A.3.4  | Provide enforcement officers with real-time wireless information and ticketing systems to automate enforcement and allow each officer to patrol a larger area.                                                                                                       |
|                                                       | A.3.5  | Offer "First Free Time" exemptions of parking infractions along with brochures explaining parking regulations.                                                                                                                                                       |
|                                                       | A.3.6  | Improve signage to better explain on-street time restrictions and pricing.                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                                                       | A.3.7  | Develop promotional material to make employees in Downtown Halifax aware of the problems caused by "meter feeding" and available off-street parking options.                                                                                                         |
|                                                       | A.3.8  | Consider on-street parking should in all new developments and street design projects, particularly in the Centres.                                                                                                                                                   |
|                                                       | A.3.9  | Modify the Residential Parking Exemption Program in line with the proposed changes detailed in the <b>Residential On-Street Parking Management Report</b> (based on the active management approach).                                                                 |
|                                                       | A.3.10 | Modify the Parking by Permit Only Program in line with the proposed changes detailed in the <b>Residential On-Street Parking Management Report</b> .                                                                                                                 |
|                                                       | A.3.11 | Increase use of Parking by Permit Only program in residential areas that have a high occurrence of employees using on-street parking. Example areas include streets around Halifax Commons and the area near the Stadacona Barracks of Canadian Forces Base Halifax. |
|                                                       | A.3.12 | Increase enforcement of residential parking programs.                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|                                                       | A.3.13 | Increase options for applying for and renewing permits and for obtaining visitor parking permits, including provisions for on-line application.                                                                                                                      |
| A.4. Expand Municipally-Owned Public Parking Supply   | A.4.1  | Increase the role of HRM in providing public parking, particularly in Centres where parking facilities can serve multiple users and destinations, thereby lowering overall parking supply required.                                                                  |
|                                                       | A.4.2  | Locate and design public parking to establish transportation nodes, including transit and pedestrian connections.                                                                                                                                                    |
|                                                       | A.4.3  | Seek opportunities for additional municipally owned public parking, particularly in Downtown Halifax.                                                                                                                                                                |
|                                                       | A.4.4  | Consider the needs of tour bus parking in developing municipally owned public parking.                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Strategies that Reduce Commuter Parking Demand</b> |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| B.1 Improve Transit Options                           | B.1.1  | Increase the involvement of Metro Transit in site design decisions, particularly in the Centres.                                                                                                                                                                     |
|                                                       | B.1.2  | Expand and improve transit services, particularly with Metro Link extensions to suburban areas. (refer to Rural Transit and Park and Ride Study)                                                                                                                     |
|                                                       | B.1.3  | Improve access to trunk transit service through strategic park and ride expansions, improved feeder service, walking and cycling connections, and transit-oriented development. (refer to Rural Transit and Park and Ride Study)                                     |
|                                                       | B.1.4  | Support expansion proposed downtown shuttle service.                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

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| Strategy                                       | ID    | Implementing Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------------------------------------|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| B.2 Promote Active Transportation              | B.2.1 | Provide bicycle lockers and other amenities (e.g. showers at office buildings, benches, etc.) throughout the Centres.                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|                                                | B.2.2 | Install additional secure bike parking facilities in City-owned parking lots and in key areas.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|                                                | B.2.3 | Consider active transportation corridor needs in on-street parking design and regulation.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|                                                | B.2.4 | Continue to promote integration of cycling with transit services (e.g., bike boxes at park and ride stations).                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|                                                | B.2.5 | Implement active transportation infrastructure and improvements as specified in the Active Transportation Functional Plan                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| B.3 Encourage Ridesharing and TDM              | B.3.1 | Provide preferential parking for licensed vanpools on HRM surface lots.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|                                                | B.3.2 | Foster the development of car-sharing                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|                                                | B.3.3 | Promote and encourage the use of the online ridematching system, HRMsmarttrip.ca                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|                                                | B.3.4 | Expand, upgrade, and promote the network of carpool lots in HRM.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|                                                | B.3.5 | Through the TDM functional plan, establish and support Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) to provide transportation and parking management services in specific areas.                                                                                                                                                  |
| B.4 Parking Pricing                            | B.4.1 | Provide discounts to fuel-efficient vehicles and high-occupancy vehicles at public off-street lots.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|                                                | B.4.2 | Require that parking costs be identified separately from occupancy costs in Centres for both commercial and multi-unit residential development.                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|                                                | B.4.3 | Develop a detailed parking plan for each Centre identifying strategic parking locations, outlining how parking will be used to support transportation objectives and the steps to establish a market for priced parking, where feasible.                                                                                           |
| <b>Supporting Strategies</b>                   |       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| C.1 Updated Parking Governance Structure       | C.1.1 | Create a Parking Manager position with appropriate support staff to oversee parking and coordinate activities between relevant municipal departments.                                                                                                                                                                              |
|                                                | C.1.2 | Create a Parking Advisory Committee and appoint members from across HRM including members of the public and key stakeholders.                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| C.2 Funding Parking Management and Development | C.2.1 | Develop an approach for determining the cash-in-lieu of parking rate.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|                                                | C.2.2 | Implement a stormwater management fee based on the amount of impermeable surface on a site (pending HRM tax reform review).                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                                                | C.2.3 | Establish a mechanism to direct surplus parking revenues into a dedicated capital fund to support the development of TDM related projects, including the downtown shuttle.                                                                                                                                                         |
|                                                | C.2.4 | Develop a business plan for developing municipally owned parking in Downtown Halifax, developing Centres, and other commercial and transit corridors that incorporates parking planning, rate structure, funding with future development and transit/TDM investment, moving towards full cost-recovery for publicly owned parking. |

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| Strategy                       | ID    | Implementing Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| C.3 Parking Payment Technology | C.3.1 | Enhance existing single-space on-street meters with pay by cell phone technology.                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|                                | C.3.2 | Adopt alternative revenue collection technologies for on-street parking in the future when existing equipment needs to be replaced and more innovative solutions are proven and more affordable.                                                                                      |
|                                | C.3.3 | Move to pay-on-foot for all HRM-operated, access-controlled lots.                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|                                | C.3.4 | Implement pay-and-display for HRM-operated surface lots without access control.                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|                                | C.3.5 | Consider proximity cards for monthly parkers in HRM-operated lots.                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| C.4 Urban Design               | C.4.1 | Develop educational material regarding good parking design and require parking facilities to consider key urban design issues (e.g., location, architecture, pedestrian facilities) during site plan approval process. This material should be incorporated into the land use by-law. |
|                                | C.4.2 | Provide direction regarding parking location and design in new form-based zoning for the Regional Centre.                                                                                                                                                                             |

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Why is a Regional Parking Strategy Needed?

Parking is an essential component of the transportation system and a major component of the urban fabric. Either directly or indirectly, parking policies can have an effect on the quality of life for residents, congestion levels, the environment, attractiveness of urban areas, and financial performance (Exhibit 1-1). Too much parking can lead to the degradation of urban spaces while too little parking can affect the viability of commercial activities.

The Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) is at a critical point in its on-going evolution. The Regional Municipal Planning Strategy outlines a bold vision for the Region that envisions a significant change in both land use and transportation behaviour, with the goal of becoming a more sustainable region. It is therefore important that the issue of parking be approached carefully and comprehensively as HRM moves forward with the implementation of the Regional Plan. Accordingly, the Municipality has identified the need for a comprehensive strategic parking plan to support existing and future development over the coming decades.

This Parking Strategy is one of five functional plans being prepared in support of the overall Transportation Master Plan. Key objectives of the TMP are to improve traffic movements and shift the trend away from single occupant vehicle travel. Other plans in various stages of completion include Road and Road Network Strategy, Public Transit, Active Transportation and Transportation Demand Management. When complete, the Transportation Master Plan will provide a blueprint for the transportation system and related policies and programs for the next 25 years.

**Exhibit 1-1: Economic, Social, and Environmental Effects of Parking**

| Category      | Interactions with Parking                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Economic      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability and price influences accessibility to businesses and business location choice</li> <li>• Facility construction and operation costs can be a significant portion of development costs</li> <li>• Facilities can generate revenue</li> </ul>                                                                                                          |
| Social        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision and design affects urban design of area and use of street</li> <li>• Spillover on residential streets can be a nuisance to affected residents</li> <li>• Oversupply and low cost can encourage auto use, making transit and non-motorized modes less feasible</li> <li>• Pricing effects may be inequitably felt by lower-income travellers</li> </ul> |
| Environmental | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability and price influences use of lower polluting modes of transportation</li> <li>• Facilities represent a major source of impervious surface and stormwater runoff</li> <li>• Loss of green space and increased paved surfaces contribute to the urban heat island effect</li> </ul>                                                                    |

## 1.2 Project Scope

The Regional Parking Strategy will address all aspects of parking including private parking for commercial and residential uses, on-street parking, off-street public parking and related policies for the control, design and management of parking. In conjunction with other functional plans, the Parking Strategy will also identify options for carpool and park-and-ride lots, and options to promote public transit and active transportation. One of the over-riding themes of the study is about balancing the needs of different stakeholders including residents, businesses, institutions and tourism industries. This reflects the need to build partnerships to ensure successful implementation of proposed parking strategies.

## 1.3 Guiding Philosophy, Objective, and Guiding Principles

This parking strategy is based on the conviction that a balanced approach must be adopted for all facets of parking. It reflects a new paradigm shift in North American parking management away from the “more parking is better” approach. Some examples of the main differences in the traditional and new approaches to parking management area summarized as follows:<sup>1</sup>

| Traditional Parking Approach                                                                                                | New Parking Approach                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A parking problem means inadequate supply.                                                                                  | Parking problem can mean a multitude of issues including inadequate supply, inefficient management and inadequate information. |
| More parking is better.                                                                                                     | Too much parking supply is as harmful as too little.                                                                           |
| Parking requirements should be applied consistently without exception or variation.                                         | Parking requirements should reflect each particular situation, and should be applied flexibly.                                 |
| Parking should be provided free or at a low cost, especially in downtowns to compete with suburban malls with free parking. | As much as possible, users should pay directly for parking facilities.                                                         |

Building off this philosophy, the purpose of the Regional Parking Strategy is to develop a 25-year plan to ensure that parking in the HRM is designed, supplied, and managed to:

- **Support a choice of integrated travel modes**, emphasizing active transportation, public transit and carpooling;
- **Encourage alternatives to the single occupant vehicle trip**;
- **Help mitigate traffic congestion** in the Regional Centre and outlying employment and retail centres;
- **Promote efficient land use** and support the development of mixed-use, transit- and pedestrian-oriented centres as outlined in the Regional Plan;
- **Operate efficiently and equitably** and be affordable to the Municipality and its citizens;
- **Support local business, tourism, and service sectors** and the community's economic development; and

<sup>1</sup> from Parking Management: Strategies, Evaluation and Planning, Victoria Transport Policy Institute, 2006

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- **Protect the environment** by minimizing impacts of parking facilities on air, water, land and other natural resources.

Based on these objectives, HRM priorities, and parking management practice, a set of nine principles were developed to guide the identification and evaluation of potential parking strategies and solutions:

|              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Principle 1. | <b>Integration with other plans:</b> Parking strategies should integrate with and support land use and transportation objectives of related plans (e.g. Transportation Demand Management Functional Plan).                                                 |
| Principle 2. | <b>Consumer choice:</b> People should have a variety of parking and travel options from which to choose.                                                                                                                                                   |
| Principle 3. | <b>Multimodal interconnectivity and access:</b> Parking facilities are not only for automobiles and should be supplied and designed to support transportation linkages and travel by other modes (e.g., bicycle parking, convenient transit access).       |
| Principle 4. | <b>Efficient utilization:</b> Parking facilities should be sized and managed so that spaces are frequently occupied.                                                                                                                                       |
| Principle 5. | <b>Flexibility:</b> Parking policies and plans should be flexible to appropriately and equitably deal with varying needs across the HRM. A “one size fits all” approach will not achieve the desired outcomes.                                             |
| Principle 6. | <b>Pricing:</b> Users should pay directly for the parking facilities they use as much as possible.                                                                                                                                                         |
| Principle 7. | <b>Quality vs. quantity:</b> The quality of parking facilities (e.g., aesthetics, security, convenience) should be considered as important as quantity.                                                                                                    |
| Principle 8. | <b>Innovative approaches:</b> HRM has the potential to be an innovator in terms of parking management, and parking solutions should make use of innovative approaches (e.g., electronic fee collections systems, wayfinding systems) wherever appropriate. |
| Principle 9. | <b>Consultation:</b> Key stakeholders, including residential, business, and institutional representatives should be involved in developing appropriate parking solutions.                                                                                  |

## 1.4 Structure of the Regional Parking Strategy

The report is organized into seven chapters as follows:

- **Chapter 1: Introduction** – Outlines the need for a Regional Parking Strategy and the objectives and guiding principles;
- **Chapter 2: Planning and Policy Context** – Positions the Regional Parking Strategy within HRM’s planning framework, including the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy and Transportation Master Plan, and overviews relevant by-laws and programs (e.g., land use by-laws);
- **Chapter 3: Existing Conditions** – Describes existing travel behaviour, parking management practices, as well as parking conditions among different uses (e.g., commercial, residential, park and ride);

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- **Chapter 4: Needs and Priority Areas** – Identify key needs and priority action areas with respect to parking based on the review of documentation, existing conditions, and best practices;
- **Chapter 5: Strategic Alternatives** – Presents and assesses a variety of strategies to increase parking efficiency, reduce demand, and improve governance and urban design;
- **Chapter 6: Recommended Strategies** – Summaries recommended strategies and related actions;
- **Chapter 7: Implementation Plan** – Outlines steps to implement the recommended actions, including short-term initiatives and strategies tailored towards achieving compact, mixed-use development in the Centres, in order to support existing and future development over the coming decades.

In addition to this main report, several background reports were prepared as part of the study and are included under separate cover. These background reports are intended to provide more detailed information on specific topics. Where there are differences between the background reports and main report, the main report shall govern.

**Background reports:**

Appendix A - Background Report

Appendix B - Parking Zoning By-Law Paper

Appendix C - Residential On-Street Parking Management Report

Appendix D - Addressing On-street Parking and Bikeway Conflicts

Appendix E - Parking Technology Paper

Appendix F - Parking Design Considerations

Appendix G - Consultation Reports

## 2. PLANNING AND POLICY CONTEXT

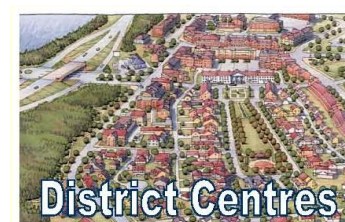
### 2.1 Regional Municipal Planning Strategy

Between 2001 and 2026, HRM expects approximately 84,000 new residents and 40,000 new jobs. Adopted in June 2006, the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (RMPS) is a guide for the future development of Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM). The RMPS intends to shape settlement in an efficient way such that transit and other alternatives to commuting (than the single occupant vehicle trip) will become more viable. The Regional Plan directs this growth towards the Regional Centre (25%), suburban areas (50%), and rural areas (25%).

A key aspect of the plan is the centres, which will accommodate much of this growth. These centres (Exhibit 2-1) have been strategically located in HRM where services such as transit, wastewater and water distribution services can be economically provided to support development. Other reasons for the growth centres being selected included the existence of community commercial nodes upon which the mixed-use centres can be built, even in the rural areas. These centres are envisioned as mixed-use transit oriented areas. Given that many of these areas are currently dominated by large parking lots (e.g., West End Mall and Penhorn Mall) and parking is a key link between land use and transportation, **the appropriate design and provision of parking and park and ride facilities will be a key factor in the success of the centres vision.** Moreover, given the central nature of the centres to the RMPS, the Regional Parking Strategy is an integral component in moving forward on the Plan and achieving its objectives.

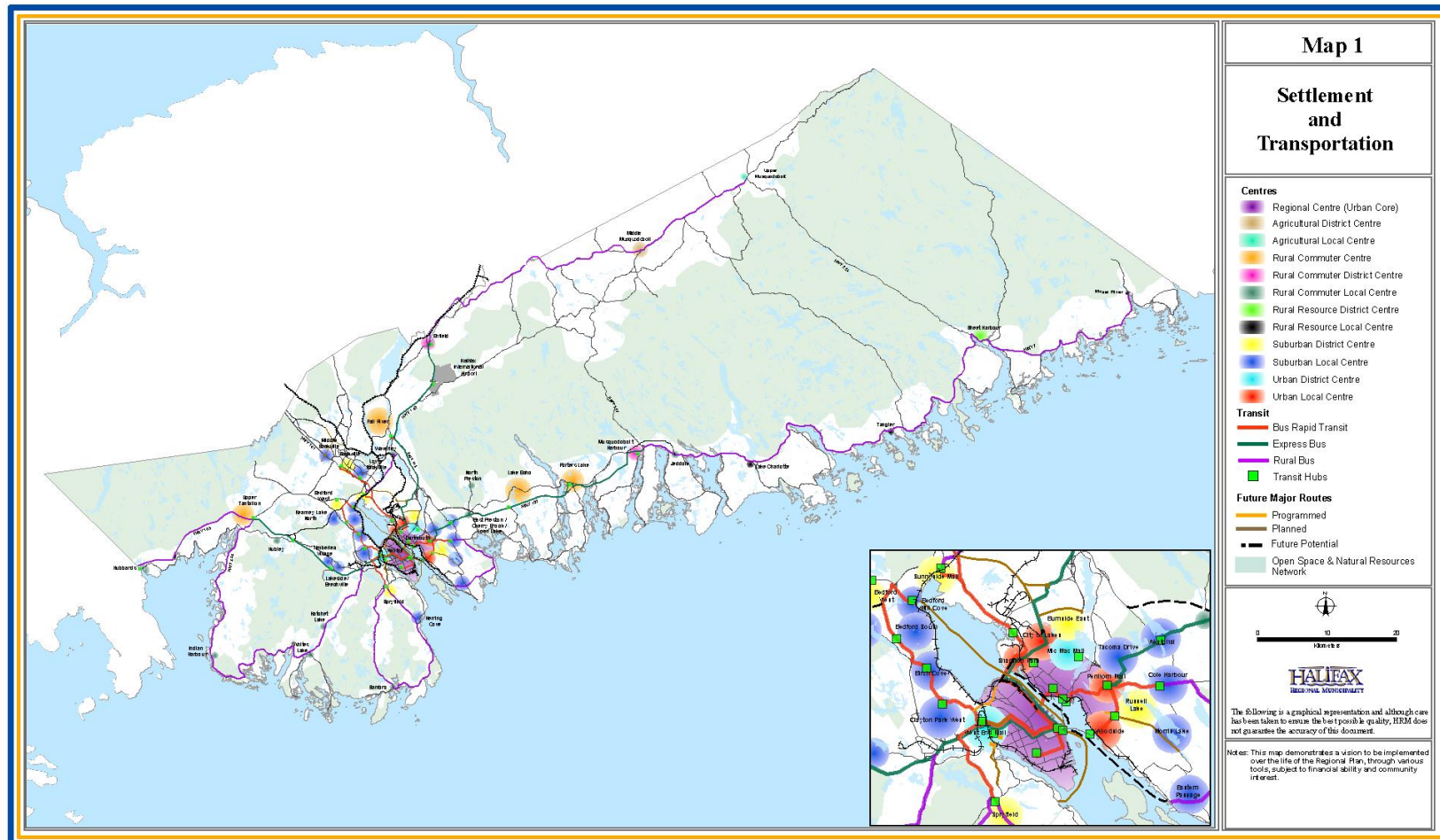
In addition to the centres, other aspects of the RMPS that will be addressed in Regional Parking Strategy include:

- **Affordable housing** – The RMPS attempts to produce a continuum of housing options, in particular to ensure housing affordability for lower income and special needs residents (e.g., seniors). Parking supply requirements affect the affordability of units. Policies and options surrounding parking requirements for such units are investigated.
- **Infill development** – Parking requirements can often inhibit infill development or redevelopment, particularly on smaller lots. Since infill development and intensification is generally desirable and supports RMPS objectives, parking options for encouraging such development are explored.
- **Transit-oriented development** – Parking requirements should be sensitive to transit service in the area to prevent parking oversupply and encourage transit use. This can also support the development of more affordable housing. Encouraging transit-oriented housing and mixed use developments are other aspects of the RMPS for which parking-related options are explored.



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Exhibit 2-1: RMPS - Settlement and Transportation Map

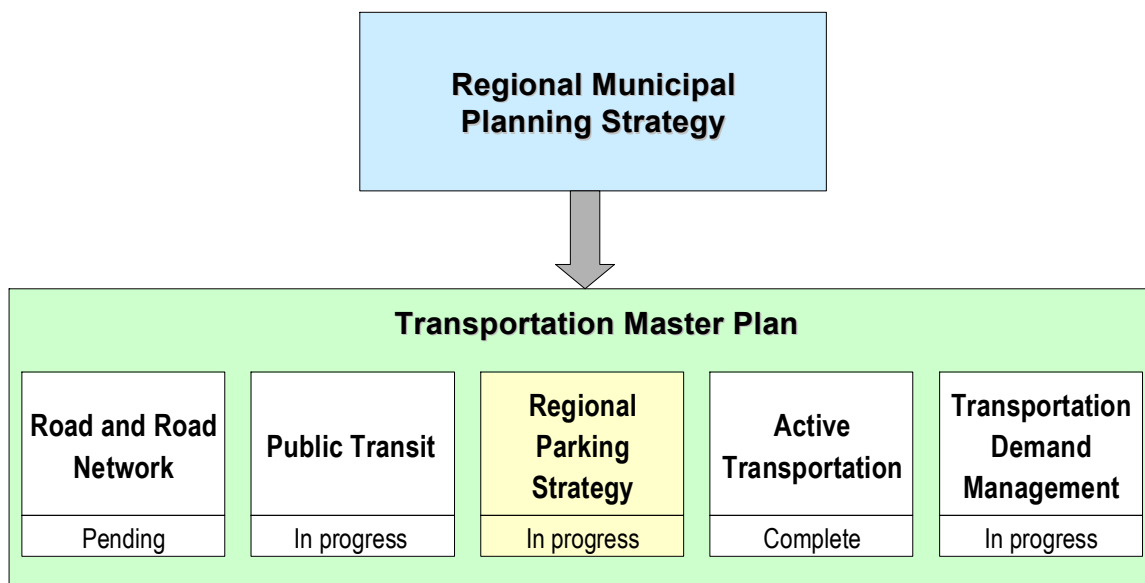


## 2.2 Transportation Master Plan

The RMPS outlines a framework for the Transportation Master Plan (TMP), which will guide management and development of the transportation system over the next 25 years. Key objectives of the TMP are to improve traffic movements and shift the trend away from single occupant vehicle travel. The TMP is comprised of five functional plans, one of which is the Regional Parking Strategy, as outlined in Exhibit 2-2.

There are many links between the Regional Parking Strategy and other functional plans. Park and ride is a key interaction with public transit, while all strategies aimed at reducing parking demand also relate to TDM. In particular, much of the data collected through the Regional Parking Strategy will support work on the TDM plan. The Active Transportation Plan is discussed further below.

**Exhibit 2-2: Structure of the Transportation Master Plan**



### 2.2.1 ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION FUNCTIONAL PLAN

The Active Transportation (AT) Functional Plan, approved in principle on November 14th, 2006 by Halifax Regional Council, recommends an active transportation network plan for the urban, suburban and rural areas for both on-road and off-road facilities, a phased implementation plan, and active transportation policies to encourage non-motorized travel. There are several key interactions between the AT Plan and the Regional Parking Strategy:

- Bicycles require their own parking. The AT Plan provides technical recommendations on the design, location, and provision of bicycle parking, which will be considered in the Regional Parking Strategy.
- Parking facilities influence the safety and accessibility of bicycle, pedestrian, and other non-motorized travel to a given destination. This is particularly the case in mixed-use areas, such as the envisioned Centres, where there are more trips by walking, cycling, and other active modes. In addition, on-street parking can conflict with cycling in certain cases. The AT plan addresses this issue specifically (Technical recommendations 35 and 36) stating that on-street parking should be removed or relocated on proposed

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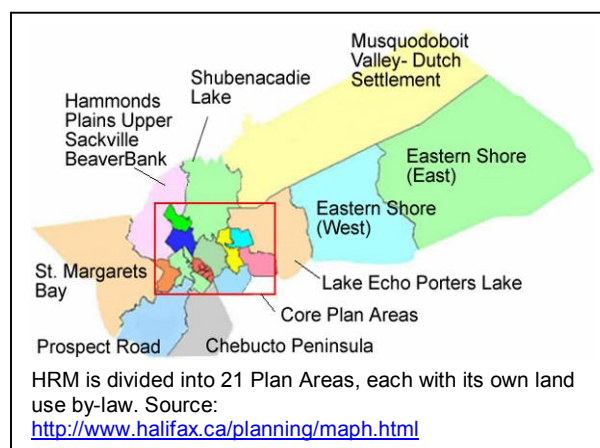
bikeway routes, if possible. Parking design standards to improve conditions for walking and cycling are considered.

- Increased use of non-motorized modes has the potential to reduce parking demand, which is an objective of the RPS. In addition, active transportation modes require much less land for parking and allow more intense land development. The AT Plan quotes the figure that as many as 20 bicycles can be stored in the space required for one automobile.

### 2.3 Land Use By-Laws

Land use in HRM is regulated by 21 individual land use by-laws, each applying to different communities, groups of communities, or specific areas. Parking is also regulated by site development and building standards, which exist for Burnside Business Park and Bayers Lake Business Park. Land use by-laws in HRM regulate many areas of parking including:

- Minimum required vehicle parking;
- Supporting mechanisms (e.g., shared parking, off-side parking, etc.);
- Minimum required bicycle parking;
- Parking design characteristics (e.g.,



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landscaping, access, etc.).

location on a lot, paving surface,

Minimum parking requirements, in particular, have a large impact on parking supply and development form, and changes to the existing zoning by-laws make up a key strategy of the RPS. These 23 individual regulating documents were reviewed in detail, as documented in the **Background Report**. Key findings from this review are summarized in Section 4.1.1.

### 2.4 On-Street Parking By-laws and Programs

On-street parking is a very important source of parking, particularly in the Regional Centre. On-street parking in HRM is regulated by a variety of by-laws and programs, which must be considered in the development of the RPS.

#### 2.4.1 RESIDENTIAL ON-STREET PARKING

The Residential On-Street Parking Policy, established in October 2002, strives to provide a balance between on-street parking overuse and the neighbourhood problems overuse creates, and the fact that on-street parking is a public amenity and provides benefits to the greater community. It outlines

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objectives, principles, and the process that local residents/business owners can follow in concert with HRM staff to have parking regulations implemented on their street.

To implement the policy, many streets on Peninsular Halifax and in the Dartmouth Core have on-street parking restrictions (e.g., 2 hour parking, no parking 11AM-11:30AM, etc.). These restrictions are normally combined with one of two basic on-street parking permit systems as defined in By-Law P-1000:



- **Residential Parking Exemptions** – which exempt residents' vehicles from certain posted on-street parking time limit restrictions at their place of residence; and
- **Parking by Permit Only** –entitles *only* permit holders to park their automobile on the street within a specified area. This program is open to residents (first priority) and non-residents (space permitting).

Management of on-street parking has been identified as a key issue through a variety of consultation activities conducted as part of this study, including open houses/workshops, an attitudinal survey, and contact with city councillors. As such, recommendations regarding modifications to the Residential Parking Permit form an important component of the RPS.

### 2.4.2 ON-STREET METERS AND FINES

Metered on-street parking is governed by By-Law P-500, passed in December 1997, which outlines basic regulations for placing of meters, marking of on-street spaces, and penalties for infraction. The By-Law specifies that Council must approve modifications to on-street parking rates.

Fine amounts specified in the 1997 By-Law were increased by HRM in August 2006 to comply with new provincial legislation. Some of the current fines for on-street parking violation include:

- Parked Overtime Specified (s. 151), penalty is \$25;
- Obstructing snow removal (s. 139), penalty is \$50;
- Accessible parking (s.145(3)), penalty is \$100; and,
- HRM approved Fire Lanes (s150(2)), penalty is \$100.

The RPS will consider the equity and success of the new fine regime.

### 2.4.3 OVERNIGHT WINTER PARKING BAN

Under the authority of section 202 of the Motor Vehicle Act, the Traffic Authority for Halifax Regional Municipality can implement the Winter Parking Ban regulation (though it should be noted that it is not implemented automatically every year). The purpose of the ban is to help snow cleaning crew clear roads quickly and safely after a snowstorm. The regulation prohibits on-street parking from 1 am to 7 am daily on-streets and roads located in the Urban Core (i.e., defined as the former City of Halifax, City of Dartmouth, Town of Bedford, Upper Sackville, and surrounding urbanized areas in Halifax County<sup>2</sup>) that are maintained by HRM Transportation and Public Works crews. The starting date is determined by prevailing weather conditions and HRM notifies the public through the media

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.halifax.ca/Works/Streets/regionboundary.html> for a full description of Urban Core boundaries.

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in advance of the implementation. Once the ban comes into effect, it applies every night until March 31, regardless of weather conditions.

Similar to municipal policies, the Province's winter parking ban takes effect yearly, starting on a predetermined date in mid December (usually December 15<sup>th</sup>) and lasting until the end of March on the following year. The ban is also in effect from one hour after a storm begins until two hours after it has stopped. The regulations applies to 14 municipalities and does not permit parking on roads maintained by the Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal between 1 am and 7 am. During the period HRM's winter parking ban regulations are not in effect, the provincial overnight winter parking ban stays in effect for regions outside of the HRM Urban Core beginning on the predetermined start date. This applies to streets located in the former County of Halifax that are maintained by the Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

The Winter Parking Ban is unpopular among many residents of the Urban Core that rely on on-street parking as their primary source of residential parking. However, since the Winter Parking Ban is a matter of provincial legislation, it is beyond the scope of the HRM Regional Parking Strategy.

### 2.5 Mayor's Task Force on Parking

The Mayor's Task Force on Parking was commissioned in April 2000 to deal with parking problems in Halifax's Central Business District, defined as the area bounded by Cogswell Street in the north, the Westin Hotel in the south, Lower Water Street to the east, and Brunswick Street to the west. This task force produced a report in October 2000, which included a variety of recommendations:

- Increase the number of monthly parking spaces downtown;
- A new development strategy may be required for the downtown area, particularly the sections dealing with parking regulations;
- Increase the involvement of the municipality in the development of new parking facilities;
- Establish minimum parking standards for new development in the Central Business District supported by cash-in-lieu policies, which could allow developers to avoid constructing parking by paying a fee of approximately \$10,000 per space;
- Improve municipal directional signage to ensure that parking facilities are more fully utilized; and
- Appoint of a body, such as a Transportation and Parking Commission for the downtown business district to provide guidance on parking, transportation, and renewal issues in the downtown core. This commission should also be funded to forecast growth in the downtown and assure accommodation of parking facilities to meet future needs.

The analysis and recommendations of the Mayor's Task Force on Parking were considered in the development of this strategy.

### 2.6 Regional Centre Urban Design Study



The ongoing Regional Centre Urban Design Study, "HRM by Design", reflects the importance of urban design expressed in the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy. The study intends to articulate an urban design strategy for the Regional Centre including new design guidelines and incentives for good design and development.

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Council adopted urban design concepts and strategies proposed as part of the study in July 2007. Key strategies of HRM by Design include:

- Reinforcing unique local identity by defining distinct neighbourhoods and districts;
- Enhancing the quality of the public realm through the creation of new, and improvement of existing, prominent open spaces;
- Enhancing the quality of the public realm through the development of prominent streetscapes;
- Enhancing the quality of the public realm through improvements to civic design; and
- Developing urban character and shape growth and urban structure through re-urbanization.

Since parking is a significant component of the urban fabric, the Regional Parking Strategy has many interactions with HRM by Design. In particular, the third recommendation regarding the development of prominent streetscapes as primary public open space will need to be balanced carefully with transportation considerations, such as on-street parking.

## 2.7 HRM Tax Reform Project

HRM is currently engaged in a process to rebuild its municipal tax system. The HRM Tax Reform Project is being headed up by the Tax Reform Committee, established in December 2006. This project is currently ongoing with initial consultations having been conducted in May 2007. The timing of this study provides a unique opportunity for the Regional Parking Strategy to provide input on tax reform dealing with parking-related fiscal strategies.

### 3. EXISTING CONDITIONS

#### 3.1 Travel Patterns and Behaviour

Parking and travel patterns are integrally linked, since travel patterns and travel behaviour (i.e., mode choice) determine the demand for parking, while parking supply characteristics (e.g., availability of parking, price, convenience, etc.) have a significant impact on travel characteristics. For example, based on an attitudinal survey in Halifax conducted as part of this study, 17% of auto commuters (i.e., drive alone and carpool) currently receiving free parking would definitely shift to another mode if parking was not free. Travel patterns and mode choice are assessed based on 2001 Journey-to-Work data from Statistics Canada<sup>3</sup>.

Data and analysis has been summarized by subareas within the HRM as follows:

- **Urban Core:** Halifax Peninsula and Dartmouth area inside the Circumferential highway (also referred to as the Regional Centre);
- **Suburban:** Concentrated development surrounding the Urban Core, including such communities as Beavertown, Sackville, Bedford, Timberlea, Herring Cove, Eastern Passage, and Cole Harbour;
- **Rural Commutershed:** Less concentrated areas of development surrounding the Suburban subarea including such communities as Lucasville, Hammonds Plains, Tantallon, East Jeddore, Musquodoboit Harbour, the International Airport, and Lawrencetown; and,
- **Rural:** The remainder of HRM's eastern Region outside of the Rural Commutershed including such communities as Enfield, Lantz, Clam Bay, and Ecum Secum.

The distribution of work trips is summarized in Exhibit 3-1 and show that the Urban Core is the major employment area with 56% of work trips (63% in 1996). The suburban subarea is the major place of residence, however, accounting for 51% of all work trip origins (49% in 1996). When compared with 1996 values, the data illustrate a trend of decentralization both of jobs and of the workforce. Indeed, suburb-to-suburb trips are the second most prevalent origin-destination pair at 22% of all trips, recently surpassing the number of Urban Core-to-Urban Core trips.

Decentralization of employment and the labour force has important implications for travel mode choice and parking demand, since it is more difficult to serve such trips well using transit and they are more commonly made by private vehicle. In addition, suburban workplaces typically have ample private off-street parking, which is not priced, as compared to downtown parking, which is typically more supply constrained, collective, and priced. Together, the decentralization of the labour force and employment contribute to a car-based culture. It is important that future growth be focused on the Regional Centre and other centres as defined by the Regional Plan to support a more balanced transportation system.

Such travel behaviour observations are supported by the journey to work mode split data by place of residence displayed in Exhibit 3-2. Almost half of work trips originating in the Urban Core are made by public transit, walking, cycling, or other non-auto modes. By comparison, 84% of work trips originating in the Suburban subarea are made by private vehicle. If the decentralization trend continues, the demand for commuter parking in the Suburban subarea will increase significantly

<sup>3</sup> As reported in the *Baseline Report – Population, Housing, Employment, Journey-to-Work*, prepared for Regional Planning, Halifax Regional Municipality, January 2004

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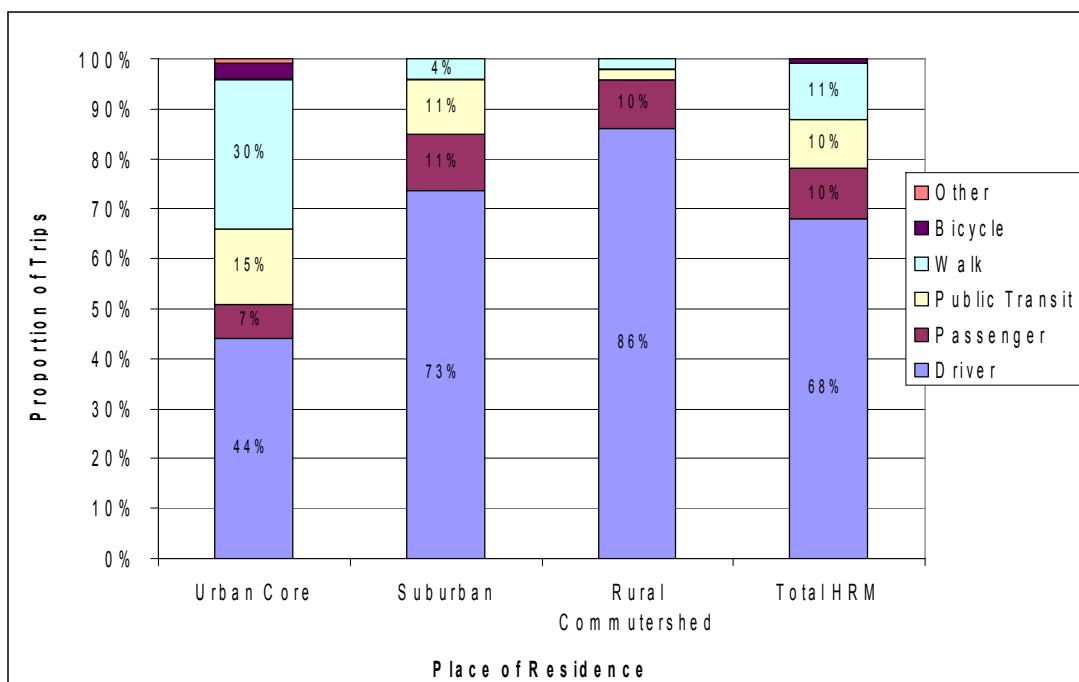
given the high auto use among such commuters. On the other hand, pressures on the downtown parking supply may be mitigated to a degree. Employment forecasts and growth in parking demand will be discussed further in Section 4.1.

**Exhibit 3-1: Place of Residence to Place of Work Trips by Subarea**

| Place of Residence (Origin) | Urban Core | Suburban   | Rural Commutershed | Rural     | Total Origins |
|-----------------------------|------------|------------|--------------------|-----------|---------------|
| Urban Core                  | 20%        | 6%         | 0%                 | 0%        | 27%           |
| Suburban                    | 27%        | 22%        | 3%                 | 0%        | 51%           |
| Rural Commutershed          | 9%         | 8%         | 3%                 | 0%        | 21%           |
| Rural                       | 0%         | 0%         | 0%                 | 1%        | 1%            |
| <b>Total Destination</b>    | <b>56%</b> | <b>36%</b> | <b>6%</b>          | <b>1%</b> | <b>100%</b>   |

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Journey-to-Work Data, and HRM Planning Services

**Exhibit 3-2: Journey to Work by Mode and Place of Residence**



Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Journey-to-Work Data, and HRM Planning Services

## 3.2 Management of Parking

Responsibility for the day-to-day management of parking in the HRM is spread across several City divisions:

- **Traffic and Right-of-Way Services**, under Transportation and Public Works Services, is responsible for many aspects of on-street parking regulation and operation, including on-street parking locations, signage and the residential on-street parking program.

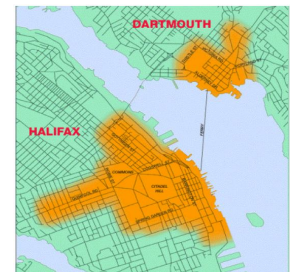
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- **The Parking Ticket Enforcement Division** of General Revenue, under the Financial Services Department, is responsible for most aspects of parking enforcement and on-street parking meters, including managing contracted enforcement officers, issuance of tickets and maintenance of the ticket database and ticket imaging system, processing and collection of fines associated with parking violations, and meter technology and meter maintenance.
- **Real Property (a division of Transportation and Public Works)** manages and operates municipal owned parking lots, although HRM has also demonstrated willingness to engage in public private partnerships to develop parking facilities. Metro Park, which opened in April 2002, is owned by the Municipality; however, it was designed and constructed by a private company and is operated by the same company through a 25-year management agreement.

Long-term planning for parking is largely undertaken both directly and indirectly by the **Community Development Department**. This department is responsible for developing and overseeing plans, policies, and by-laws that affect many aspects of parking, such as the land use by-laws, which govern off-street parking requirements for new development, the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy, as well as this Regional Parking Strategy. As discussed further in Section 4.2, one of the drawbacks of this fragmented approach to parking management is that it is difficult to implement parking strategies in a co-ordinated manner. Other potential parking governance models are discussed later in Section 5.3.1

### 3.3 Parking in the Capital District

The Capital District encompasses a diversity of areas within Downtown Halifax, Downtown Dartmouth, Gottingen Street, Spring Garden Road, and the Quinpool Road areas. The Capital District is the main centre for business, tourism, and culture within HRM, being unique in its density, mix of uses, heritage value, and accessibility by a variety of transportation modes. As in many successful city centre areas, parking in the Capital District is in high demand and well utilized, particularly in Downtown Halifax. As such, effective parking management is particularly important in these areas.



The sections below detail existing conditions parking supply and utilization as well as parking pricing for both public parking in the Capital District. Parking surveys were conducted of publicly accessible parking (both off-street and on-street) to gain a better understanding of parking supply and utilization in the Capital District, as well as other issues, such as illegal parking.

#### 3.3.1 PUBLIC OFF-STREET LOTS

Collective, off-street lots are the main supply of parking in the Capital District. They are geared towards serving the needs of both long-term (i.e. all day) and short-term parkers.

##### 3.3.1.1 Supply and Utilization

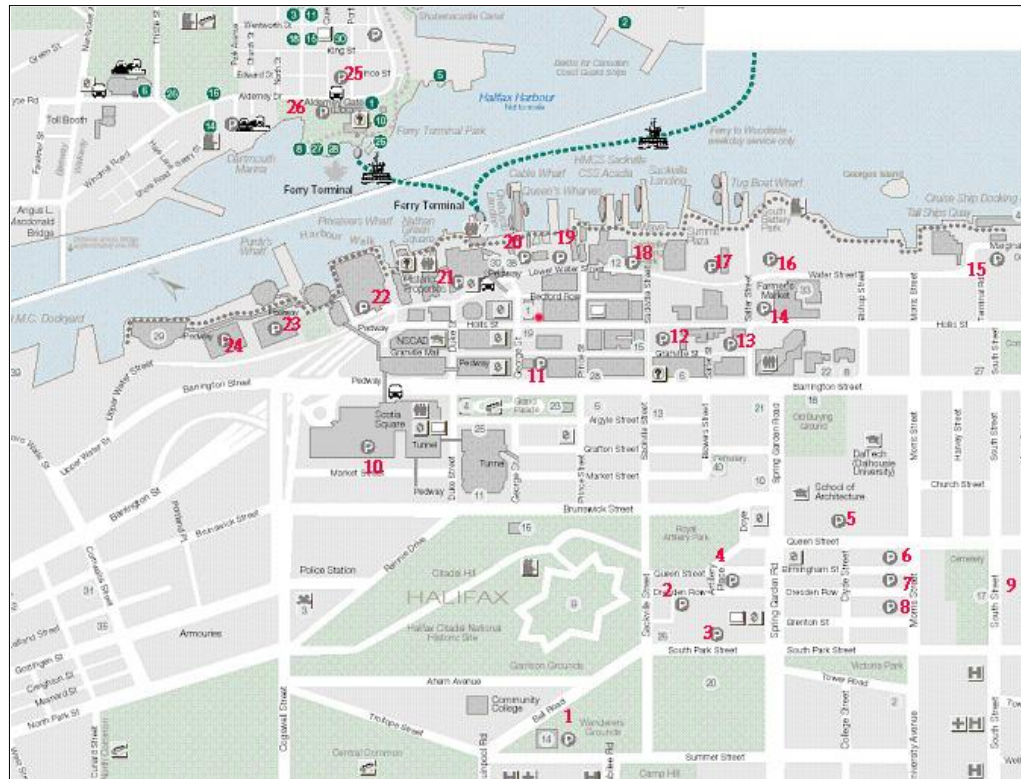
Off-street parking data was collected for publicly accessible parking on Wednesday, December 20<sup>th</sup> and Thursday, December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2006 for central Halifax and Downtown Dartmouth. Surveyed locations are displayed below in Exhibit 3-3. Surveyed off-street lots are grouped into three areas:

- Spring Garden/Citadel: Lots 1-9

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- Downtown Halifax: Lots 10-24
- Downtown Dartmouth: Lots 25-26

**Exhibit 3-3: Off-Street Lots Surveyed**



More than 7,000 spaces were surveyed in total, including 1,679 spaces in the Spring Garden/Citadel area, 5,050 spaces in Downtown Halifax, 266 spaces at the Halifax Waterfront, and 349 spaces in Downtown Dartmouth. Exhibit 3-4 summarizes overall parking supply and utilization for each area.

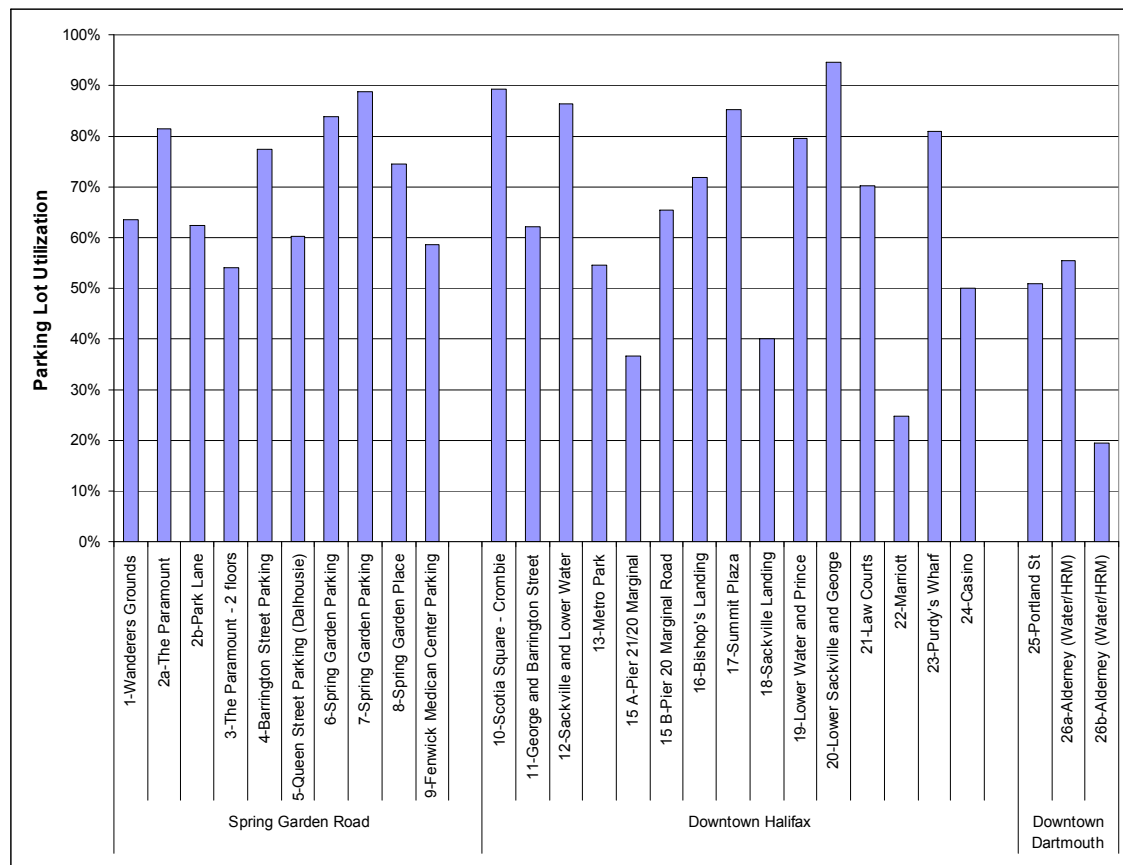
**Exhibit 3-4: Summary of Parking Supply and Utilization**

| Area                        | Lots (#) | Parking Supply | Vacant Spaces | Utilization |
|-----------------------------|----------|----------------|---------------|-------------|
| Spring Garden/Citadel       | 10       | 1,679          | 543           | 68%         |
| Downtown Halifax/Waterfront | 15       | 5,316          | 1,275         | 75%         |
| Dartmouth total             | 3        | 349            | 178           | 49%         |

As shown in previous Downtown parking surveys, many off-street lots are well used, but numerous spaces are available in many lots. Exhibit 3-5 summarizes parking utilization by lot in the mid afternoon on a typical weekday. Lots have on average 25% vacancy in Downtown Halifax/Waterfront, 32% vacancy in the Spring Garden/Citadel area, and 51% vacancy in Downtown Dartmouth.

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**Exhibit 3-5: Mid Afternoon Parking Utilization**



### 3.3.1.2 Pricing

Rates for off-street parking in the Capital District, range from approximately \$70-\$160 per month. Rates in Downtown Halifax (e.g., Metro Park) are the most expensive averaging approximately \$145 per month for unreserved spaces. This is relatively low compared to the five most expensive parking districts in Canada (median monthly unreserved rate):

- Calgary – C\$375.00 per month;
- Toronto – C\$300.00 per month;
- Montreal – C\$259.00 per month;
- Ottawa – C\$195.00 per month; and,
- Vancouver – C\$194.00 per month<sup>4</sup>.

Halifax rates are; however, much higher than Moncton (\$50-85) or St. John (\$60).

Most off-street lots also have daytime hourly and evening/weekend rates. Daytime hourly rates are typically in the \$2-\$3 per hour rate in Downtown Halifax and slightly less expensive in the Spring Garden Area and Downtown Dartmouth. This is more expensive than on-street parking, which costs

<sup>4</sup> Based on report by Colliers International <http://www.colliersmn.com/prod/cclod.nsf/publish/E090914A985DBEC5852571D4006172DD>

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\$1.50 per hour in Downtown Halifax and \$3.00 per hour on the Halifax Waterfront. In addition, there is typically a flat evening/weekend rate in the range of \$5-\$6, with the exception of the WDCL lots which are now 24 hours.

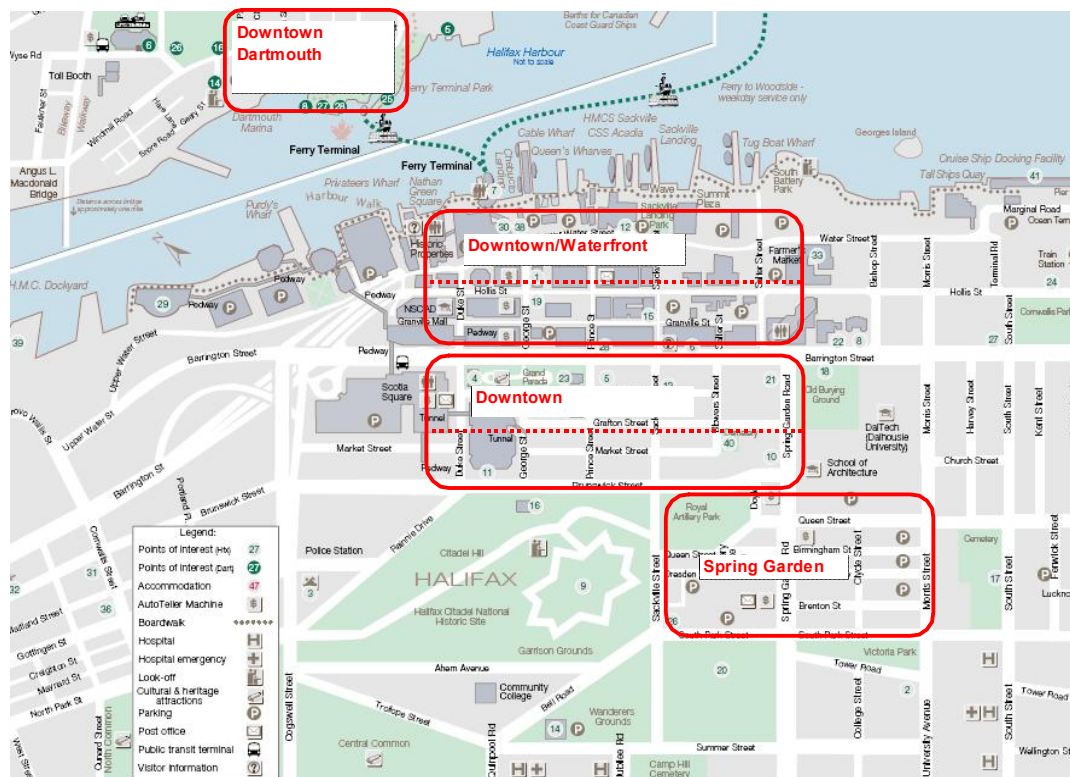
### 3.3.2 ON-STREET PARKING

On-street parking is typically the most convenient form of parking in the Capital District, which experiences the highest demand. As such, on-street parking should be reserved for high-priority users (e.g. visitors, shoppers, disabled, etc.) for short-term parking. It should be managed to generate parking turnover at regular intervals so that many motorists have access to these high-demand spaces.

#### 3.3.2.1 Supply and Utilization

On-street parking data was collected on Wednesday, December 20<sup>th</sup> and Thursday, December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2006 for central Halifax and Monday January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2007 for Downtown Dartmouth. Surveys were conducted at 30 minute intervals between 9 AM and 6 PM. License plates of parked vehicles were recorded so that parking duration could be determined. Areas surveyed are displayed in Exhibit 3-6 and include many segments in lower and upper Downtown Halifax, Downtown Dartmouth, and the Spring Garden area.

**Exhibit 3-6: Areas Surveyed in the On-Street Parking Survey**



On-street parking survey results are summarized in Exhibit 3-7 presented by analysis areas. The results indicate that on-street parking in Downtown Halifax is close to capacity on weekdays. Average occupancy is in the 70%-85% range, but almost no on-street is available at certain points in the morning and afternoon in the Downtown and Downtown Waterfront areas. There is slightly

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more demand for on-street parking spaces in the area south of Barrington Street compared to the other Downtown area.

As shown by the parking turnover value, each Downtown Halifax parking space was used by an average of approximately 6 cars between 9AM and 6:30 PM on the survey day. More vehicles could have used these high demand spaces if fewer vehicles had overstayed the parking time limit. The parking time limit for most surveyed on-street parking spaces in Downtown Halifax was either 90 minutes or two hours. A range for the parking overstay rate was calculated based on a 90-minute and two hour time limit. The proportion of vehicles parked for longer than permitted ranged from approximately 10%-30%, which is relatively high. In addition, this does not include the vehicles with expired metres. Time limit violations could be reduced through stricter enforcement or by increasing the time limit.

There is less demand for on-street parking in the Spring Garden Road area and in Downtown Dartmouth, although on-street spaces in the Spring Garden Road area were almost completely occupied at midday on the survey day.

**Exhibit 3-7: On-Street Parking Survey Results**

| Area                | From                    | To         | Spaces | Occupancy |                        |                        |
|---------------------|-------------------------|------------|--------|-----------|------------------------|------------------------|
|                     |                         |            |        | Average % | Maximum % (9AM - 12PM) | Maximum % (12PM - 6PM) |
| Spring Garden       |                         |            | 75     | 72%       | 81%                    | 95%                    |
| Downtown            |                         |            |        |           |                        |                        |
|                     | Brunswick               | Grafton    | 79     | 65%       | 100%                   | 99%                    |
|                     | Grafton                 | Barrington | 94     | 76%       | 97%                    | 97%                    |
|                     | Upper Downtown subtotal |            | 173    | 71%       | 98%                    | 98%                    |
| Downtown Waterfront |                         |            |        |           |                        |                        |
|                     | Barrington              | Hollis     | 49     | 82%       | 94%                    | 98%                    |
|                     | Hollis                  | Water      | 20     | 86%       | 95%                    | 100%                   |
|                     | Lower Downtown subtotal |            | 69     | 83%       | 94%                    | 96%                    |
| Downtown Dartmouth  |                         |            | 72     | 51%       | 63%                    | 68%                    |

| Area                | From                    | To         | Max Allowed Duration (hrs) | Average Duration (hrs) | Turn-Over <sup>(1)</sup> (Cars/Wkday) | Overstayed Parkers <sup>(2)</sup> (%) |
|---------------------|-------------------------|------------|----------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Spring Garden       |                         |            | 1.5-2                      | 1.2                    | 5.7                                   | 11%-17%                               |
| Downtown            |                         |            |                            |                        |                                       |                                       |
|                     | Brunswick               | Grafton    | 1.5-2                      | 1.2                    | 5.3                                   | 9%-18%                                |
|                     | Grafton                 | Barrington | 1.5-2                      | 1.3                    | 5.5                                   | 11%-21%                               |
|                     | Upper Downtown subtotal |            |                            | 1.3                    | 5.4                                   |                                       |
| Downtown Waterfront |                         |            |                            |                        |                                       |                                       |
|                     | Barrington              | Hollis     | 1.5-2                      | 1.1                    | 6.8                                   | 9%-14%                                |
|                     | Hollis                  | Water      | 1.5-2                      | 1.7                    | 5.0                                   | 19%-28%                               |
|                     | Lower Downtown subtotal |            | 1.5-2                      | 1.3                    | 6.3                                   |                                       |
| Downtown Dartmouth  |                         |            | 1.5                        | 0.9                    | 4.3                                   | 3%-6%                                 |

(1) Turn-Over: Total Different Cars Parked 9AM-6PM/ Number of Spaces

(2) Range is based on calculation for 90 minute and two hour time limit

Upper downtown defined as section south of Barrington Street

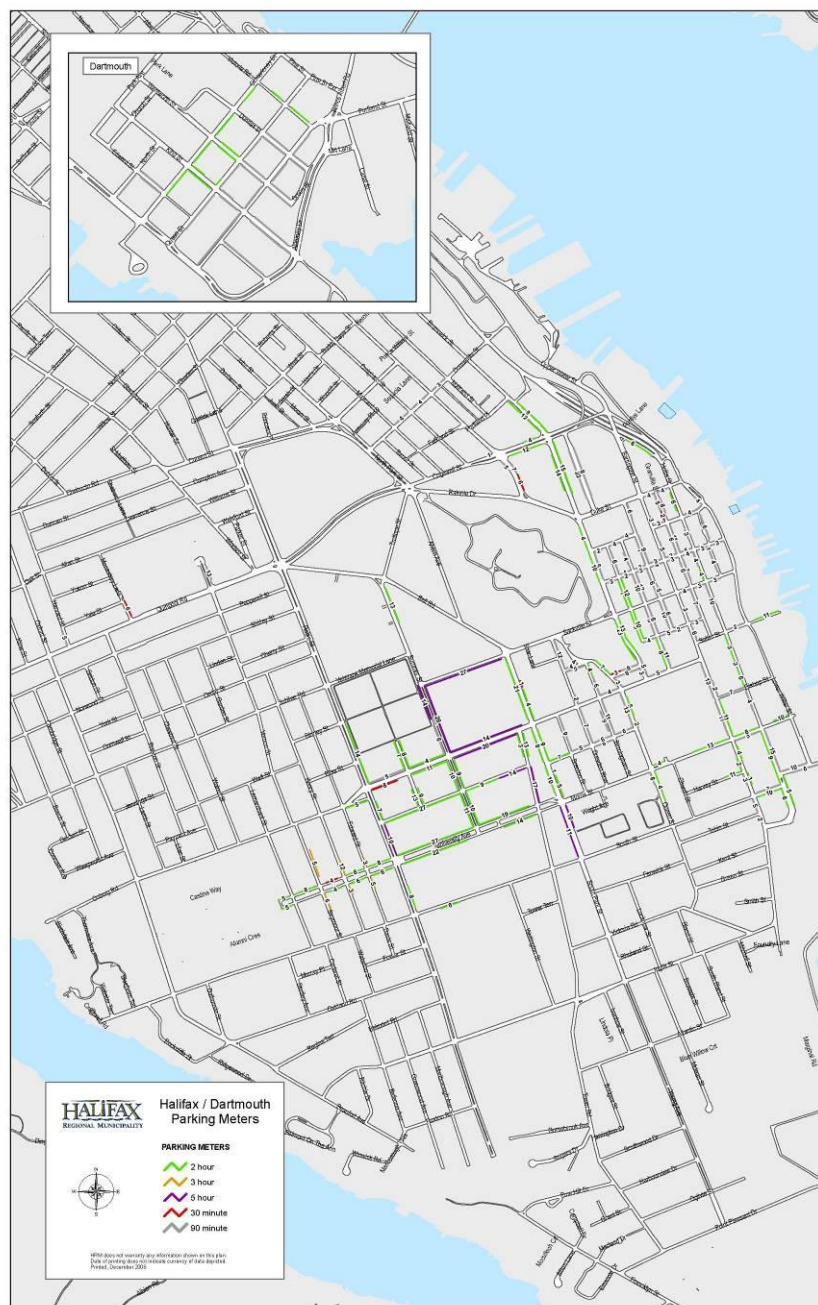
### 3.3.2.2 Pricing and Timing

Much of the on-street spaces in the Capital District are metered, particularly in Downtown Halifax, Downtown Dartmouth, and the Spring Garden/University area. The cost to park at a meter is \$1.50 per hour in Downtown Halifax and \$3.00 per hour on the Halifax Waterfront. This is cheaper than most hourly rates at collective off-street lots. All on-street metered parking is free and not time restricted between 6:00 pm and 8:00 am and on weekends and holidays, resulting in little turnover.

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Time restrictions for metered on-street spaces vary by the demand for parking. Parking in the core of Downtown Halifax and Downtown Dartmouth is primarily limited to 90 minutes. Surrounding the downtowns and in the Spring Garden/University area, most on-street parking is limited to two hours.

**Exhibit 3-8: Parking Meters in Halifax and Dartmouth**



### 3.4 Municipally Owned Parking

Other than park and ride facilities, HRM currently operates very few public off-street parking facilities. As shown in Exhibit 3-9, HRM owns and operates only six lots, totalling approximately 100 spaces. Furthermore, several of these lots are reserved for HRM employees. These lots are generally priced below market rates and, unsurprisingly, have little vacancy for monthly parking.

**Exhibit 3-9: Municipally Owned and Operated Parking Facilities**

| Location                                   | Restrictions                                                         | Supply | Cost (\$/month) | Status                    |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Base of Citadel Hill                       | Open access                                                          | 35     | \$57.50         | No Vacancy – waiting list |
| Creighton St. North of Cogswell            | Open access                                                          | 8      | \$20.00         | No Vacancy – waiting list |
| Above Railway Tracks at Alderney           | HRM staff only – Fire Services and Planning and Development vehicles | 30     | N/A             | No Vacancy                |
| Granville St. across from Providence House | Open access                                                          | 35     | \$115.00        | No Vacancy – waiting list |
| Park Ave.                                  | HRM staff only                                                       | N/A    | \$33.90         | No Vacancy                |

The primary source of parking owned by the municipality, however, is the Metro Park, which was developed through a public-private partnership. This 589 space facility, which opened in April 2002, is owned by the Municipality; however, it was designed and constructed by a private company and is operated by the same company through a 25-year management agreement. In addition, Metro Park also has 4,855 square feet of retail space as well as bicycle parking.



### 3.5 Commercial Parking

To investigate commercial parking supply and utilization trends, parking surveys were conducted at retail centres and business parks across the HRM. At each site, total parking supply was enumerated through site visits and examination of aerial photography. Parking occupancy was surveyed on Saturday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2007 in the early afternoon, through the use of aerial photographs (taken specifically for this project). This approach allowed for parking occupancy to be easily captured for a variety of areas at the same time, but did not allow for accurate assessment of parking occupancy in parking structures. As such, parking occupancy was not assessed for West End Mall.

In addition to total supply and utilization, parking supply and occupancy ratios (i.e. spaces/ unit floor area) were also investigated. Gross floor area was estimated for each site by multiplying the building footprint area (taken from GIS maps) by the number of storeys observed at a site. This estimation procedure did not provide a high level of accuracy, particularly when a shopping centre did not have a uniform number of stories, but is sufficient to provide a general understanding of parking supply trends at commercial centres.

The results are displayed in Exhibit 3-10 and indicate that many commercial centres are heavily auto-oriented. Most sites supply parking at a rate between 4 and 6 spaces/100 m<sup>2</sup>. Sites with grocery stores tend to supply higher levels of parking. Parking demand is more variable. Parking

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occupancy ratios ranged from 1.5 spaces per 100 square metres gross floor area at Penhorn Mall (which has significant unoccupied floor space) to 5.8 spaces per 100 square metres gross floor area at Costco in Bayers Lake. These sites also had the lowest and highest observed parking supply utilization at 30% and 85%, respectively. The average parking utilization rate for the surveyed sites is 58%, indicating a large supply of unoccupied parking at many sites on a typical weekly peak.

### 3.6 Residential Parking

Residential parking is required for most types of dwellings across the HRM. As such, most dwellings have their own private on-site parking. Parking management is of greater concern, however, in areas where many residents rely on on-street parking. This includes Central Halifax neighbourhoods, such as the South End, the Commons area, and the North End<sup>5</sup>. In these areas, residents compete with other visitors (e.g. university students, downtown employees, shoppers, etc.) for on-street spaces.

Many of these areas have implemented the Residential Parking Exemption program to exempt residents from the restrictions on their street imposed by the Traffic Authority (e.g., one hour parking, no parking for a 30 minute interval in the morning and/or afternoon, no parking except by permit, etc.). Based on visits to such areas, it appears that on-street parking time limits on residential streets are often poorly enforced, which is why many residents support changes to on-street parking policy.

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<sup>5</sup> A survey conducted by residents of the residential area surrounded by Cogswell Street, Gottingen Street, Cornwallis Street, and North Park Street, which elicited responses from 87 dwellings, indicated that 87% of respondents support changes to the on-street residential parking policy. Key reasons for this dissatisfaction include that residents do not want to compete with non-residents for on-street spaces (57%), parking rules are not enforced (35%), and they have more than one vehicle (15%).

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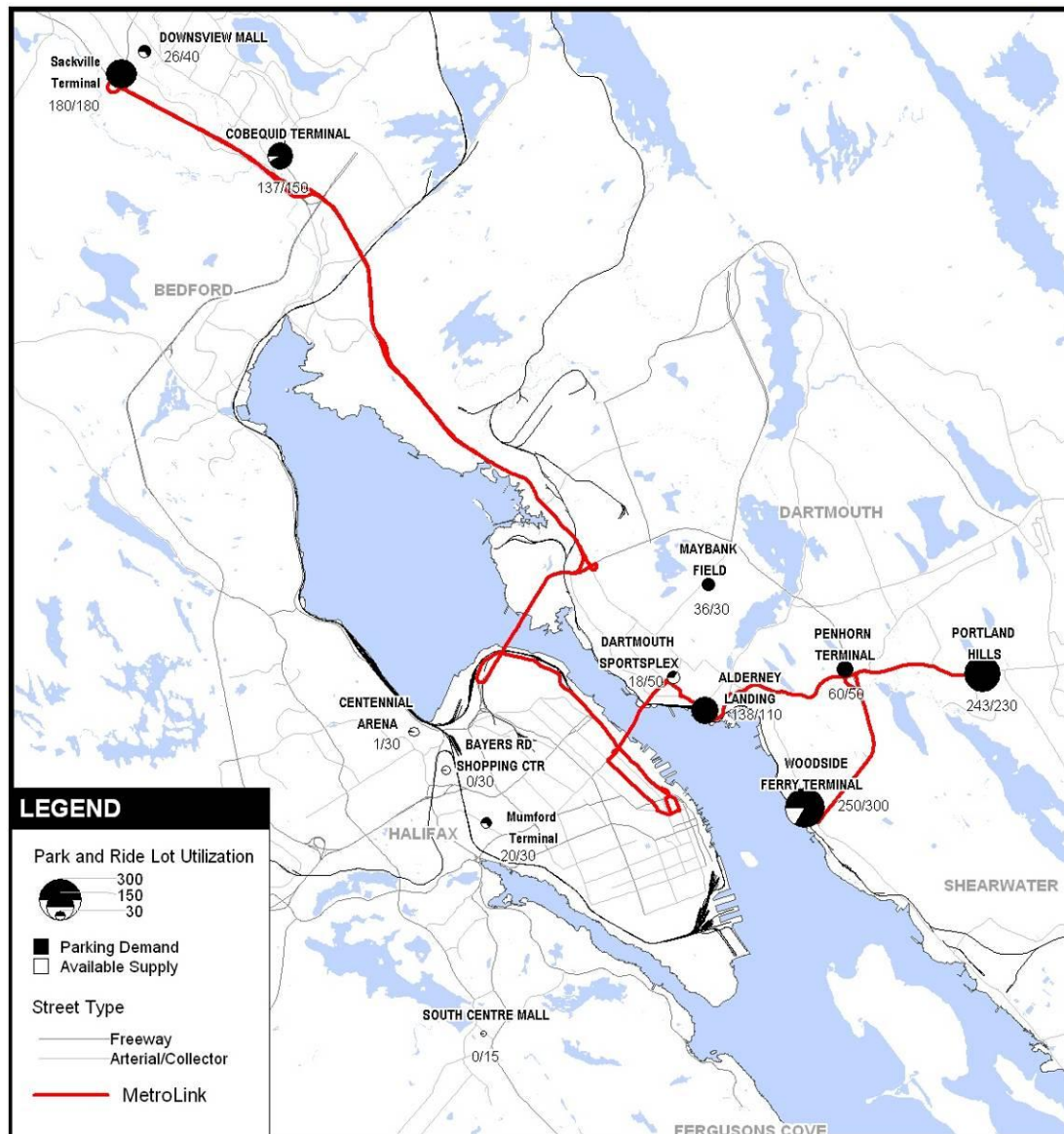
**Exhibit 3-10: Estimated Parking Supply Ratios for Major Commercial Centres**

| Commercial Centre                         | Location             | Major Uses       | Centre Designation | Total Parking Supply | Parking Occupancy (Sat. May 19 <sup>th</sup> ) | Utilization (%) | Estimated GFA (100 m <sup>2</sup> ) | Parking Supply Ratio (spaces / 100 m <sup>2</sup> ) | Parking Occupancy Ratio (spaces / 100 m <sup>2</sup> ) |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Superstore/Other Mall                     | Bedford              | Retail & Grocery |                    | 1,378                | 385                                            | 28%             | 247                                 | 5.6                                                 | 1.6                                                    |
| Sobeys Mall Area                          | Tantallon            | Retail & Grocery |                    | 866                  | 347                                            | 40%             | 118                                 | 7.4                                                 | 2.9                                                    |
| Mic Mac Mall                              | Dartmouth            | Retail           | Urban District     | 3,708                | 2,781                                          | 75%             | 876                                 | 4.2                                                 | 3.2                                                    |
| Sportsplex Dartmouth Shopping Centre Mall | Dartmouth            | Retail & Grocery | Regional Centre    | 445                  | 345                                            | 78%             | 74                                  | 6.1                                                 | 4.7                                                    |
| Penhorn Mall Area                         | Dartmouth            | Retail           | Urban Local        | 2,414                | 725                                            | 30%             | 470                                 | 5.1                                                 | 1.5                                                    |
| Superstore Strip Mall Area                | Musquodoboit Harbour | Retail & Grocery |                    | 494                  | 420                                            | 85%             | 91                                  | 5.4                                                 | 4.6                                                    |
| Sobeys/Shoppers Strip Area                | Spryfield            | Grocery          |                    | 338                  | 119                                            | 35%             | 48                                  | 7.1                                                 | 2.5                                                    |
| CTC Mall                                  | Spryfield            | Retail & Grocery | Suburban District  | 563                  | 254                                            | 45%             | 161                                 | 3.5                                                 | 1.6                                                    |
| West End Mall                             | Halifax              | Retail           | Urban District     | 2,679                | -                                              | -               | 832                                 | 3.2                                                 | -                                                      |
| Home Depot/Strip Mall                     | Bayers Lake          | Retail           |                    | 662                  | 530                                            | 80%             | 160                                 | 4.1                                                 | 3.3                                                    |
| Kent Building Supplies                    | Bayers Lake          | Retail           |                    | 369                  | 259                                            | 70%             | 93                                  | 4.0                                                 | 2.8                                                    |
| Home Sense Plaza                          | Bayers Lake          | Retail           |                    | 570                  | 228                                            | 40%             | 103                                 | 5.5                                                 | 2.2                                                    |
| Walmart                                   | Bayers Lake          | Retail           |                    | 726                  | 363                                            | 50%             | 130                                 | 5.6                                                 | 2.8                                                    |
| Costco                                    | Bayers Lake          | Retail & Grocery |                    | 778                  | 662                                            | 85%             | 114                                 | 6.8                                                 | 5.8                                                    |

### 3.7 Park and Ride

Park and ride lots improve transportation choice by allowing residents to access transit services using a private vehicle. Such residents may not have been able to access transit otherwise or may simply prefer not to use feeder bus service. Park and ride lots support transit ridership and reduce parking demand at central employment locations, such as Downtown Halifax, where parking may be expensive and constrained. Metro Transit operates thirteen park and ride lots across the HRM, which are very popular among commuters. An analysis of Metro Transit park and ride lots indicates that most lots, particularly those along MetroLink routes are near or at capacity (Exhibit 3-11). As such, primary strategies in the short-term include improving feeder service to the stations and expanding park and ride supply.

**Exhibit 3-11: Metro Transit Park and Ride Lots**



Source: Metro Transit

## 4. NEEDS AND PRIORITY AREAS

HRM is a large and diverse regional municipality with many different transportation and parking needs. To guide development of the Regional Parking Strategy, key needs and priority areas were identified based on the review of existing conditions, policy consultation, and extensive consultation with members of the public, HRM staff, and other key stakeholders (e.g., DND, Universities, etc.). These key needs set the basis for the strategic alternatives and recommended options outlined Sections 5 and 6, respectively.

Parking management needs and priority areas are grouped under six categories:

- Growth management;
- Enhanced Governance and public parking supply;
- Improved transportation choice;
- Efficient and cost-effective parking supply;
- Improved urban design; and
- Sustainable funding.

### 4.1 Growth Management

HRM expects both the population and employment of the region to grow by almost 25% between 2001 and 2026. The Regional Municipal Planning Strategy is a guide for the future development of Halifax Regional Municipality that intends to shape settlement in an efficient way such that transit and other alternatives to commuting will become more viable. The Plan outlines that this growth will be directed towards the Regional Centre (25%), suburban areas (50%), and rural areas (25%). A key aspect of the plan is the centres, envisioned as mixed-use transit oriented areas, which will accommodate much of this growth. The primary centre is the Regional Centre, which will continue to face increased pressure on its transportation system unless strategies can be put in place to reduce single-occupant vehicle use and congestion. There are several key areas in which parking policies and parking management need to be improved upon to help achieve the land use and transportation objectives outlined in the Regional Plan.

#### 4.1.1 MODIFY PARKING REQUIREMENTS TO SUPPORT REGIONAL PLAN OBJECTIVES

Parking standards are often a blunt policy tool. As stated in a recent US EPA publication, “Generic parking standards have not kept up with the complexity of modern mixed-use development and redevelopment.”<sup>6</sup>, and this has so far been the case in most of HRM. Common mechanisms for encouraging more efficient parking supply and land development, such as shared parking or off-site parking provisions are not widely adopted in HRM. In addition, most land use by-laws in HRM do not provide any special consideration for transit oriented development, infill development, or affordable housing, which often have unique parking requirements.

Aspects of the RMPS that are not supported by current land use by-laws include:

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<sup>6</sup> US Environmental Protection Agency. (2006) Parking Spaces/Community Places – Finding the Balance Through Smart Growth Solutions. Washington, DC.

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- **Centres** - These centres are envisioned as mixed-use transit oriented areas, and will accommodate much of the population and employment growth to 2026. Reflecting the impact of parking on the centres, much of the description of the centres in the RMPS focuses on the types of how parking should be provided, including shared parking, park and ride facilities, and the design of parking (e.g., surface vs. structured, street or side yard, etc.). Given that many of these areas are currently dominated by large parking lots (e.g., West End Mall and Penhorn Mall) and are in areas subject to high and inflexible minimum parking requirements, significant changes are required to current parking policy to help achieve the centres vision.
- **Affordable housing** – The RMPS attempts to produce a continuum of housing options, in particular to ensure housing affordability for lower income and special needs residents (e.g., seniors). High residential parking requirements in many areas increase residential development costs and make it more difficult to provide affordable housing.
- **Infill development** – Parking requirements can often inhibit infill development or redevelopment, particularly on smaller lots. Since infill development and intensification is generally desirable and supports RMPS objectives, parking standards should be sensitive to such types of development.
- **Transit-oriented development** – Parking requirements should be sensitive to transit service in the area to prevent parking oversupply and encourage transit use. This can also support the development of more affordable housing. Encouraging transit-oriented housing is another aspect of the RMPS for which parking-related options are explored

### 4.1.2 ACCOMMODATE GROWTH IN THE REGIONAL CENTRE

Parking in the Regional Centre, particularly in the Halifax Central Business District, is in high demand and is viewed by many as in short supply. This is largely because the Halifax area is fortunate to have a successful downtown and relatively centralized employment. Almost 70% of jobs in the HRM are within five kilometres of City Hall (average of 38% in other Canadian cities) and the majority of the jobs in the HRM (56%) are in the Regional Centre. In the absence of major investment in transit and other alternative modes of transportation), these parking issues will increase in the future, particularly for commuter parking, as employment growth generates additional parking demand.

While employment forecasts for the Regional Centre and Downtown Halifax and Dartmouth vary, it can be assumed from the RMPS that at least 10,000 additional jobs are expected in the Regional Centre between 2001 and 2006 (25% of the 40,000 new jobs expected for the HRM by 2026). This number may be higher or lower depending on whether the trend towards employment decentralization can be reversed. Assuming 10,000 new jobs and existing travel behaviour, this will translate into demand for approximately 6,000 additional commuter parking spaces in the Regional Centre.

Many of these spaces will be required for new employees in downtown Halifax where parking is perceived to be most constrained. Downtown parking needs are not straightforward. Many different users make use of the downtown road network and parking including residents, employees, shoppers and other recreational visitors, tourists, and freight vehicles. Commuters complain that

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monthly parking spaces are scarce; however, based on surveys conducted in mid-December 2006, more than 1,200 of the 5,300 collective, off-street spaces in Downtown Halifax and the Halifax Waterfront were vacant during the peak demand time on a typical weekday. However, future development may reduce existing parking supply, as expected in the Halifax Waterfront. In addition, surveys show that on-street parking is fully used at peak times during the day. Given the expected employment growth in the Regional Centre and Downtown Halifax, strategies are required to make more efficient use of existing parking, reduce the number of downtown employees and visitor who drive, and strategically increase parking supply.

Specific gaps in parking policy and management related to the Regional Centre include:

- New office and retail development are not required to provide parking on the Peninsula, while HRM has little administrative or funding capacity to develop collective parking facilities;
- Downtown parking policies include few parking demand reducing measures (e.g. preferential carpool parking, enhanced bicycle facilities, etc.);
- On-street parking pricing and enforcement could be optimized to ensure more regular turnover and availability; and
- Parking wayfinding needs to be improved to direct motorists to available parking.

## 4.2 Governance and Public Parking Supply

### 4.2.1 ENHANCE PARKING ADMINISTRATION

HRM currently has a fragmented approach to parking management, both in the downtown areas, as well as across the region. Different business units oversee an area of the parking system that is particular to the department mandate. While this is a common approach in smaller or developing communities, the parking system in HRM is too complex not to have a body responsible for integration and coordination across departments. There is currently no body that sees parking in a broad scope, sets objectives for the parking system (e.g., increase the amount of collective parking), and coordinates parking-related activities between the departments. Whether it is in the form of a parking authority, parking committee, parking department, parking district, or parking manager, such an administrative change is needed, particularly if many of the recommendations of the Regional Parking Strategy are to be implemented in an effective manner.

### 4.2.2 INCREASE MUNICIPAL ROLE IN PROVIDING PUBLIC PARKING

HRM currently only plays a small role in the provision of collective, off-street parking. HRM operates only six lots. Furthermore, several of these lots are reserved for HRM employees. These lots are generally priced below market rates and, unsurprisingly, have little vacancy for monthly parking. The primary source of parking owned by the municipality, however, is the Metro Park, which was developed through a public-private partnership. This 589-space facility, which opened in April 2002, is owned by the Municipality, however, it was designed and constructed by a private company and is operated by the same company through a 25-year management agreement.

The small municipal role in the provision and operation of off-street parking is related to historical approaches to parking management, the lack of a specialized coordinating parking body, as well as the lack of funding mechanisms to raise funds for publicly owned, collective parking facilities. While some may view the dominance of the private sector in the provision of collective parking facilities in

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central areas as the most efficient use of resources, there are several reasons why HRM should build capacity to be able to develop publicly owned, collective parking facilities:

- Development of such facilities can be used in concert with parking supply regulations (e.g., lower parking minimums requirements, maximum parking requirements, etc.) to promote collective and priced parking over free, private parking. This will support more efficient use of the parking supply and support TDM objectives. The role of the municipality in fostering the development of collective and priced parking is particularly important in many Centres where the trend is to discount some or all of the cost of parking into the cost of real estate development. Public sector involvement in the provision of parking is required in these locations to initiate and continue a market for paid parking. Such a market may not develop if parking is solely left to private developers.
- Such facilities can be targeted to support economic development and more compact urban form in commercial districts and downtowns with limited parking. This will require further study.
- By increasing the amount of municipally owned land in high-demand areas, HRM will have increased control over how these parking lots are eventually redeveloped to ensure that they support urban visions for the area.
- Increasing the amount of municipally owned parking will give HRM increased control over signage and wayfinding and the design of parking facilities.
- HRM will have increased ability to promote TDM objectives through parking initiatives. Enhanced Transportation Choice

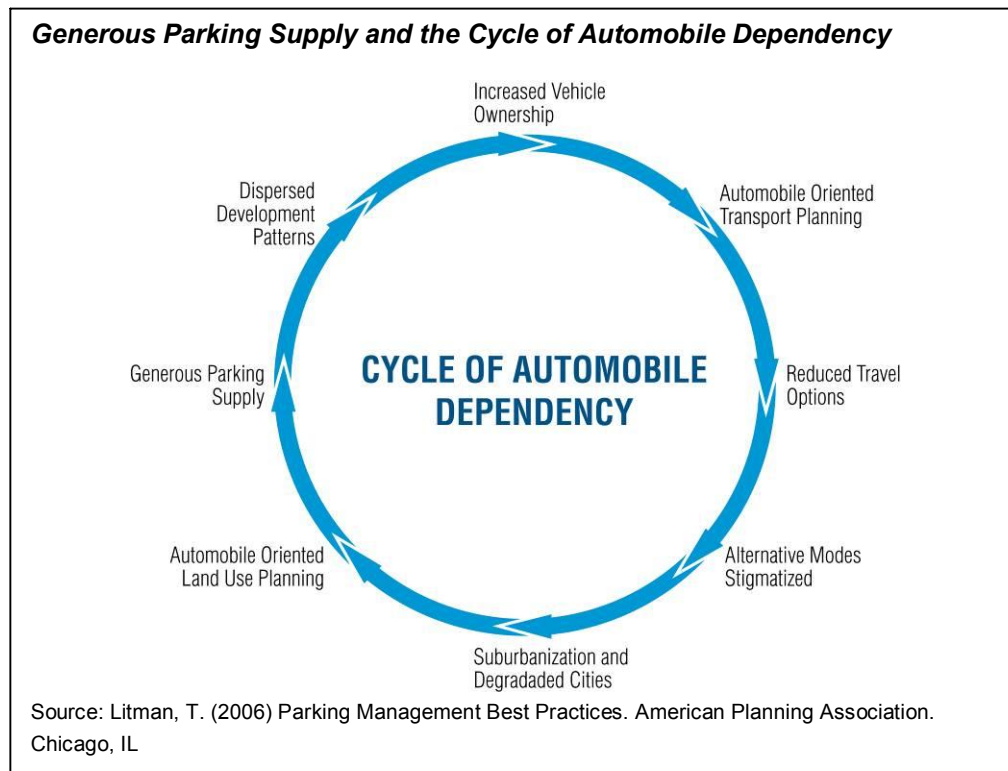
### MODIFY PARKING REQUIREMENTS TO REDUCE AUTO DEPENDENCY

Outside of the Halifax Peninsula and downtown Dartmouth, land use by-laws require that new development provide ample off-street parking in most cases. In certain cases (e.g. large retail), these standards require more parking than may ever be required, even during seasonal peak demands, such as the December shopping peak. A comparison of HRM parking standards with 11 other Canadian jurisdictions<sup>7</sup> indicated that **minimum requirements in Halifax Mainland and other more suburban and rural HRM communities required the highest parking levels of jurisdictions assessed for general office, government office, general retail, large retail, grocery store, and restaurant uses in many instances.**

<sup>7</sup> Canadian jurisdictions considered include Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Niagara Falls, London, Hamilton, Mississauga, Markham, Toronto, Kingston, and Ottawa.

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This parking policy approach is relatively simple to implement for a local government and minimizes instances of parking spillover, but helps to create and reinforce automobile dependence encourages the oversupply of parking, increases the costs of development, and may inhibit redevelopment of existing buildings or vacant land. As such, there is significant opportunity to revise parking standards in HRM to make them more reflective of commonly experienced parking demands and to make new development more supportive of all modes of transportation, particularly sustainable modes.



### 4.2.3 USE PARKING TO SUPPORT IMPROVED TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

Parking can be managed to support and encourage a variety of transportation options and reduce the number of commuters travelling in single occupant vehicles. Potential strategies to promote transportation choice include preferential carpool parking, bicycle parking, enhancing park and ride facilities, upgrading and expanding existing carpool lots used by Green Rider, and providing subsidized carshare parking, among others, as discussed further in Section 5.2. Potential conflicts between vehicle parking and other forms of transportation must also be considered. On-street parking may reduce safety for cyclists or make on-street bike lanes infeasible depending on pavement widths. In addition, there may be tradeoffs between maintaining on-street parking and sidewalk widening. Overall, parking management in HRM needs to be viewed as a key component of transportation demand management (TDM) strategies.

However, the success of parking related TDM strategies is contingent on the availability of travel alternatives that are financially viable, safe and convenient. HRM has made considerable strides in improving transit services, with the introduction of the MetroLink. Options for walking and cycling will be enhanced through the implementation of the Active Transportation Functional Plan. When complete, the Rural Transit and Park and Ride Study will expand transit options throughout the Region. Additional strategies are required to support the overall parking management strategy by

improving travel options (e.g., expand U-pass program, expand feeder bus network, implementation of circulator buses similar to FRED in commuter origins, etc.).

### 4.3 Efficient and Cost-Effective Parking Supply

#### 4.3.1 ADOPT INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR ON-STREET PARKING MANAGEMENT

On-street parking is a key source of short-term, convenient parking in the downtown areas and in other core area commercial districts. On-street parking management must balance the needs of consistent enforcement and ensuring turnover, while being attractive to potential customers and other visitors. Particular concerns of business owners include ticketing and high ticket costs, on-street meter feeding, and short-term parking costs.

#### 4.3.2 ADDRESS RESIDENTIAL ON-STREET PARKING ISSUES

Residential on-street parking policies and enforcement practices need to provide parking conditions that are acceptable and beneficial to local residents, while ensuring efficient utilization of publicly owned on-street parking. Based on attitudinal survey results, more than one quarter of residents in the Halifax Peninsula and Dartmouth Core are affected by parking spillover, which may make it difficult for them to find on-street parking near their place of residence. Particular concerns include the lack of on-street parking during the day due to parking from nearby employees and during the evening from evening visitors to core areas (e.g., theatre patrons, restaurant customers, etc.). As discussed further in Section 5.1.3, there is a need to enhance residential on-street parking permit systems and associated enforcement.

#### 4.3.3 ENHANCE PARKING EXPERIENCE FOR THE DOWNTOWN DISCRETIONARY TRAVELLER

Based on the attitudinal survey, a significant proportion of commuters and shoppers often have trouble finding parking in Downtown Halifax, which reduces the competitiveness of the downtown with respect to more suburban areas with abundant parking. These results are supported to a degree by the parking surveys, which indicated that on-street parking in Downtown Halifax is normally highly utilized although there are many available spaces in off-street lots. Strategies need to be developed to improve the parking experience for downtown travelers, particularly discretionary travellers (e.g., shoppers). Potential options, discussed further in Section 5, include user information and wayfinding, innovative approaches to collective parking enforcement and pricing, increasing the number of monthly parking passes through efficient management of existing facilities, and remote bus and tourist parking, among others.



#### 4.3.4 REFINES AND HARMONIZES MOBILITY DISABLED PARKING STANDARDS

The availability of parking spaces designed with the needs of disabled travelers in mind is a prerequisite for full participation in the economic and social life of the community, particularly as the population ages. Halifax and Dartmouth Land Use By-laws do not specify any requirements for accessible parking spaces. In addition, there is an opportunity to harmonize the approach regarding mobility disabled parking requirements across HRM.

## 4.4 Improved Urban Design and Environmental Performance

### 4.4.1 IMPROVE URBAN DESIGN OF PARKING FACILITIES

At the broad scale, parking has a significant impact on urban design. In particular, the need to supply parking can impact the shape of buildings resulting in conditions that are neither transit-supportive nor pedestrian friendly. Similarly, the appearance and scale of large surface parking lots can detract from the pedestrian environment. Urban design guidelines provide an opportunity to help new parking facilities be developed with consideration to architectural integration, the needs of pedestrians and cyclists, integration with transit.

#### Penhorn Mall



Bus stops at Penhorn Mall are located far from an entrance to the mall, reducing the attractiveness of transit for mall employees and shoppers.



Parking is a major impermeable surface and results in extensive stormwater runoff.

### 4.4.2 MITIGATE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF PARKING FACILITIES

Parking, in particular surface parking is a major impermeable surface, often accounting for most of the impermeable cover in commercial developments. Stormwater runoff from parking facilities can lead to pollution of water runoff and eventual contamination of the rivers. HRM has many rivers and lakes that could be affected by runoff from parking. Measures, such as more landscaping and stormwater impact fees may help to reduce the runoff from parking lots. This would also likely result in reduced water treatment costs for HRM.

## 4.5 Funding and Fiscal Tools

### 4.5.1 PROMOTE FULL-COST PRICING OF PARKING

The overwhelming majority of parking throughout the HRM, with the exception of the Capital District, is not priced. In other words, the cost of constructing and maintaining parking is not passed on to drivers. Similarly, the true costs of parking on the environment and need for supporting transportation facilities is seldom quantified. As a result, non-motorists subsidize motorists through higher prices on goods and higher taxes.

Parking pricing represents an important market-based strategy for affecting travel behaviour. Based on a survey of HRM residents, respondents with access to free employee parking were 13% more likely to drive alone and 31% less likely to take public transit. Of the respondents who commute by automobile and have access to free parking at their destination, 17% would shift to another mode if parking was not free, while a further 12% would shift if parking was sufficiently priced.

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Parking is not free to provide and encouraging a user-pay approach to commuter parking will result in more effective utilization of this resource and have desirable effects of mode choice from a policy perspective. Strategies to help promote priced parking are discussed further in Section 5.2.4. Examples include placing tight restrictions on new parking, encouraging separate identification of parking costs within building occupancy costs particularly private surface parking, and developing publically owned priced parking to establish a market. Initiatives would need to be implemented in such a way as not to disadvantage the Regional Centre.

**4.5.2 DEVELOP IMPROVED FUNDING MECHANISMS**

Under the present system, all net revenues from parking operations are directed back into general city accounts and there is no provision for keeping these revenues separate. By the same token, any capital improvements for parking lots or structures are allocated through the annual budget process, in the same manner as general transportation expenditures. Similarly, administrative requirements for parking operations are not distinguished from other departmental requirements.

If HRM is going to begin to play a larger role in the provision of public parking, it needs to establish more formal funding mechanisms for capital and operating costs associated with parking facilities. This may also extend to parking administrative costs.. A variety of viable funding alternatives are available, as discussed further in Section 5.3.2.

## 5. STRATEGIC ALTERNATIVES

Addressing existing and future parking needs within HRM will require a comprehensive set of strategic initiatives aimed at addressing the needs and opportunities identified in the previous chapter. Reflecting a holistic approach to parking management, these strategies focus on increasing parking supply options as well as managing the demand for parking. The remainder of this chapter identifies and describes a series of potential recommendations under the following categories:

- Strategies that increase the efficiency of the existing “parking system”;
- Strategies that reduce parking demand; and,
- Supporting strategies.

### 5.1 Strategies that Increase Parking Capacity and Efficiency

#### 5.1.1 STRATEGY A.1: REVISE PARKING STANDARDS

Parking standards are a part of the land-use by-law and govern the supply and design requirements for off-street parking facilities for new development. They are one of the most significant tools available to a municipality for influencing its parking supply with large implications for transportation behaviour, urban design, and development patterns. Existing parking standards need to be revised for several reasons.

Current parking zoning standards require high levels of off-street parking in many areas of HRM. As discussed in Sections 4.1.1 and 0, existing standards do not support many aspects of the RMPS, and contribute to auto-oriented land use planning and auto dependency in many areas of HRM. In addition, there is little consistency in the amount of required parking across areas of similar urban structure (e.g. Halifax Mainland vs. Dartmouth) and somewhat arbitrary boundaries for these divisions. These inconsistencies are a result of jurisdictional boundaries, which predate the creation of HRM. There is a need to revise the structure of the existing parking standards based on existing and desired land use and transportation characteristics, rather than jurisdictional boundaries. The recommended approach is to modify parking standards to allow flexibility in private parking provision, while moving towards an emphasis on collective parking and transportation demand management for the Peninsula, Dartmouth (within the Regional Centre, and other centres in the longer term.

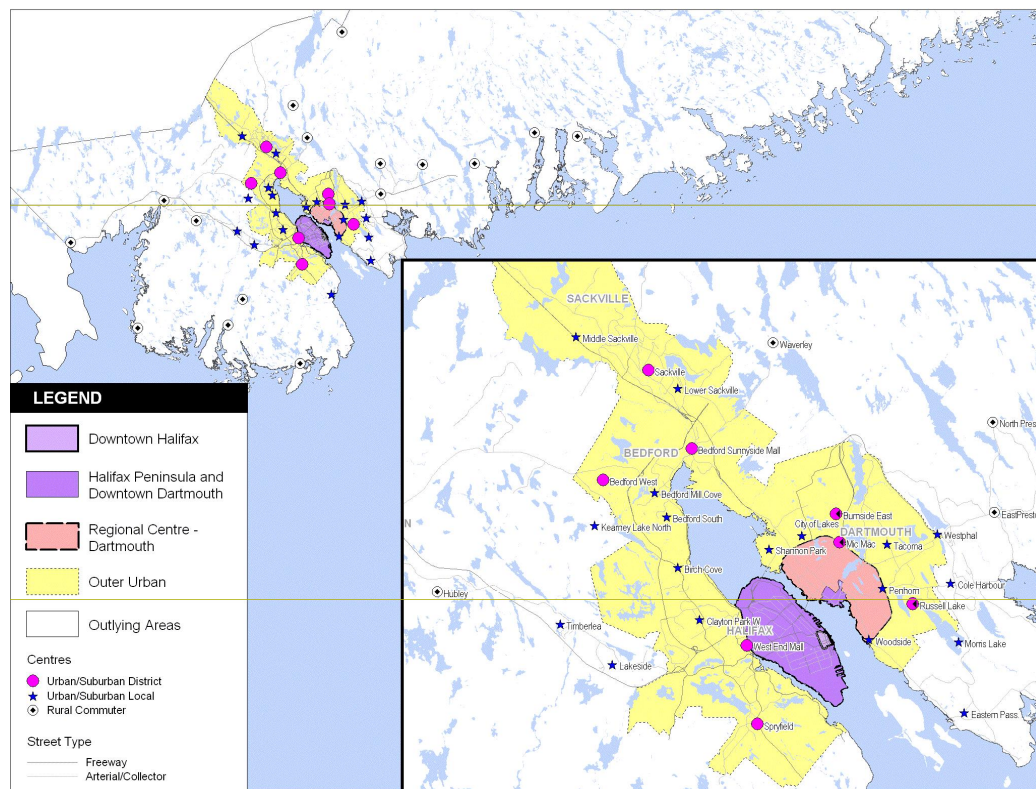
Four primary changes to existing parking standards are proposed, as discussed in detail in the **Parking Standards Paper**.

#### **Geographic Structure**

The geographic structure of the parking standards should be modified as illustrated in Exhibit 5-1. New geographic categories of Downtown Halifax, Halifax Peninsula and Downtown Dartmouth, Regional Centre – Dartmouth, Outer Urban, Outlying Areas, and Centres (i.e., District, Local, and Rural Commuter) are more reflective of the RMPS and existing and desired land use and transportation characteristics.

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**Exhibit 5-1: Proposed Geographic Structure for Parking Standards**



### Minimum and Maximum Parking Standards

Existing minimum parking standards should be revised and maximum-parking standards instituted throughout HRM for commercial uses. The proposed framework is summarized in Exhibit 5-2.

Of particular note, mandatory cash-in-lieu of parking is proposed for Downtown Halifax to ensure that new development should be involved in addressing some of the parking demand it generates. With such an approach, a minimum parking requirement is set, but developers are required to meet this parking by providing funds for each required space. The municipality in turn uses these funds to construct strategically located parking structures that most efficiently meet parking needs and balance considerations for economic development, TDM, downtown architecture, etc. However, HRM intends to use the funds collected in this manner for the development of transit. Note that the cash-in-lieu of parking requirement would only be for development above a certain size threshold to avoid unduly discouraging smaller infill projects. Proposed values for minimum and maximum parking requirements are summarized in Exhibit 5-3. These are presented as ranges reflecting that these recommendations were not derived from a comprehensive parking standards review.

In addition, preferential carpool parking is required for larger office uses. This is similar to Portland, Oregon. For office uses with more than 20 parking spaces, five spaces or five percent of the parking spaces on site, whichever is less, must be reserved for carpool use. These spaces must be clearly signed and located close to the building entrance.

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**Exhibit 5-2: Proposed Framework for Parking Standards**

| Area                                                    | Approach to Parking Management                                                   | Minimum Parking Standard                                                                                                                                                                   | Maximum Parking Standard                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Downtown Halifax                                        | Emphasize public parking and TDM                                                 | Private parking banned for non-residential development <sup>(1)</sup> - mandatory participation in cash-in-lieu of parking program for large new development to support collective parking |                                             |
| Halifax Peninsula and Downtown Dartmouth <sup>(2)</sup> | Emphasize public parking and TDM                                                 | Low minimum requirements for most developments above a certain size – cash-in-lieu of parking available                                                                                    | Tight parking maximums for most uses        |
| Regional Centre – Dartmouth                             | Allow flexibility in private parking provision/ emphasize public parking and TDM | Low minimum requirements for most uses– cash-in-lieu of parking available                                                                                                                  | Parking maximums for most uses              |
| Outer Urban                                             | Allow flexibility in private parking provision                                   | Mid-level minimum requirements for all uses with adjustment factors                                                                                                                        | No parking maximums                         |
| Outlying Areas                                          | Allow flexibility in private parking provision                                   | Mid-level minimum requirements for all uses with adjustment factors                                                                                                                        | No parking maximums                         |
| Urban/Suburban District Centre                          | Allow flexibility in private parking provision/ emphasize public parking and TDM | Low minimum requirements for most uses – cash-in-lieu of parking available                                                                                                                 | Tight maximum standards for surface parking |
| Urban/Suburban Local Centre                             | Allow flexibility in private parking provision/ emphasize public parking and TDM | Low minimum requirements for most uses – cash-in-lieu of parking available                                                                                                                 | Maximum standards for surface parking       |
| Rural Commuter Centre <sup>(3)</sup>                    | Allow flexibility in private parking provision                                   | Mid-level minimum requirements for most uses                                                                                                                                               | Parking maximums for some uses              |

<sup>(1)</sup> Parking lots and structures are currently banned in Downtown Halifax and the Halifax Waterfront through the Land Use By-Law and may only be permitted through direct Council approval. It is proposed that this approach be maintained in tandem with mandatory cash-in-lieu of parking contributions.

<sup>(2)</sup> In the Capital District, outside of Downtown Halifax, a minimum of 50% of required parking must be provided as short-term, public parking.

<sup>(3)</sup> Rural Commuter Centre includes Rural Commuter, Rural Commuter District, and Rural Commuter Local Centres

**Exhibit 5-3: Proposed Ranges for Parking Standards**

| Urban Structure Category                 | Multi-Unit Residential                 |                          |                          |                          | Office                                                                  |                                          | Retail                                                  |                                         |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
|                                          | Bachelor                               | 1 Bedroom                | 2+ Bedroom               | Senior Citizen Residence |                                                                         |                                          |                                                         |                                         |
|                                          | Minimum<br>(Spaces/unit)               | Minimum<br>(Spaces/unit) | Minimum<br>(Spaces/unit) | Minimum<br>(Spaces/unit) | Minimum<br>(Spaces/<br>100m <sup>2</sup> )                              | Maximum<br>(Spaces/ 100m <sup>2</sup> )  | Minimum<br>(Spaces/ 100m <sup>2</sup> )                 | Maximum<br>(Spaces/ 100m <sup>2</sup> ) |
| Downtown Halifax                         | 0-0.3                                  | 0.3-0.6                  | 0.6-0.8                  | 0.2-0.33                 | 0.5-1.0 - mandatory cash-in-lieu of parking contribution <sup>(1)</sup> |                                          |                                                         |                                         |
| Halifax Peninsula and Downtown Dartmouth | 0-0.3                                  | 0.3-0.6                  | 0.6-0.8                  | 0.2-0.33                 | 0.5-1.0 <sup>(1,3)</sup>                                                | 1.5 – 2.5                                | 1.0-1.5 <sup>(1,2,3)</sup>                              | 3.0-4.0                                 |
| Regional Centre – Dartmouth              | 0.3-0.6                                | 0.5-0.8                  | 0.8-1.0                  | 0.25-0.4                 | 1.0-1.5 <sup>(1)</sup>                                                  | 2.0 – 2.5                                | 1.5-2.5 <sup>(1,2)</sup>                                | 4.0-5.0                                 |
| Outer Urban                              | 0.5-0.8                                | 0.6-0.9                  | 0.9-1.2                  | 0.25-0.4                 | 1.8 - 2.5                                                               | -                                        | 2.5-3.5                                                 | -                                       |
| Outlying Areas                           | 0.8-1.0                                | 0.8-1.2                  | 1.0-1.5                  | 0.25-0.5                 | 2.5 – 3.0                                                               | -                                        | 3.0-4.0                                                 | -                                       |
| District Centre                          | Jurisdictional standard reduced by 20% |                          |                          |                          | 1.0-1.5                                                                 | 2.0 – 2.5 surface parking <sup>(4)</sup> | Jurisdictional standard reduced by 5-10% <sup>(2)</sup> | 3.0-4.0 surface parking <sup>(4)</sup>  |
| Local Centre                             | Jurisdictional standard reduced by 10% |                          |                          |                          | 1.5-2.0                                                                 | 2.5 – 3.0 surface parking <sup>(4)</sup> | Jurisdictional standard reduced by 5-10% <sup>(2)</sup> | 3.0-4.0 surface parking <sup>(4)</sup>  |
| Rural Commuter Centre <sup>(5)</sup>     | Jurisdictional standard                |                          |                          |                          | 2.0 – 2.5                                                               | -                                        | Jurisdictional standard <sup>(2)</sup>                  | 5.0-6.0 surface parking <sup>(4)</sup>  |

Note:

<sup>(1)</sup> Developments smaller than a certain size (e.g. GFA<200-300m<sup>2</sup>) exempted from minimum requirement<sup>(2)</sup> Ground floor retail below a certain size (e.g. GFA<150m<sup>2</sup>) in a mixed-use building exempted from minimum parking requirement<sup>(3)</sup> Within the Capital District a minimum of 50% of required parking must be provided as short-term public parking<sup>(4)</sup> Allow extension to maximum on surface parking equivalent to 50% of all spaces available for park and ride.<sup>(5)</sup> Rural Commuter Centre includes Rural Commuter, Rural Commuter District, and Rural Commuter Local Centres

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### Adjustment Factors

Adjustment factors should be incorporated into the parking zoning by-law to make required parking more reflective of local parking demand and provide incentives for developers to reduce off-street parking in favour of supporting transportation alternatives where available. Adjustment factors typically allow a percentage reduction in the minimum amount of parking required based on development characteristics that increase the efficiency of the parking supply and reduce parking demand. Examples of proposed adjustment factors include:

- **Unbundled parking** – For residential buildings of more than 10 units, if parking spaces are sold/leased separately from dwellings, reduce minimum parking requirement by 5%-10%;
- **Transit access** – For office uses, reduce minimum parking requirement by 10%-15% if within 400 m of transit stop with at least 15 minute peak hour service; and
- **On-street parking availability** – For retail uses, reduce required parking 1 for 1, for each on-street parking space abutting or nearby the property suitable for customer parking.

### Mobility Disabled Parking Standards

A consistent set of standards for mobility disabled parking standards should be developed across HRM, as follows:

- **Non-medical:** One accessible space is required for the first one to 15 general parking spaces. One additional accessible space is proposed for each additional twenty-five parking spaces (40, 65, etc.) up to the first 115 spaces. After 115 spaces, one additional accessible space is proposed for each additional fifty parking spaces.
- **Medical Facilities:** Consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act, a minimum of 10% of all spaces at medical facilities should be accessible, with a minimum of one accessible space where there are less than 10 regular spaces.

### Recommended Actions

HRM has the opportunity to be a leader with respect to innovative parking policy. The recommendations detailed here provide direction to revise parking standards to ensure that parking in the HRM is supplied to support a choice of integrated travel modes, encourage alternatives to the single occupant vehicle trip, promote efficient land use, and support local businesses, among other objectives.

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A.1.1 | In the short term, adopt proposed adjustment factors as guidelines to be implemented by staff on a case-by-case basis. They should be formalized into the new land use zoning by-law. |
| A.1.2 | Implement changes to parking standards in conjunction with on-going reviews of zoning standards and the development of the centres plans, consistent with the proposed framework.     |
| A.1.3 | Modify parking space dimension requirements for standard and accessible parking spaces.                                                                                               |
| A.1.4 | Adopt consistent set of mobility disabled parking standards across HRM.                                                                                                               |

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### *Supportive Initiatives*

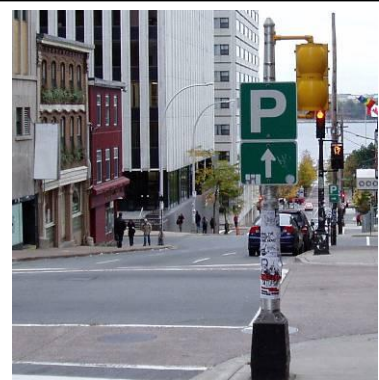
- Update and centralize parking governance structure (see Strategy C.1: Update Parking Governance Structure);
- Formalize role of HRM in providing and managing public parking (see Strategy A.4: Expand Municipally-Owned Public Parking Supply); and
- Conduct study to determine cash-in-lieu of parking contribution required per space (see Strategy C.2: Funding Parking Management and Development).

### 5.1.2 STRATEGY A.2: IMPROVE USER INFORMATION

A comprehensive parking information system, including street signs for drivers and pedestrian, internet-based information, and maps and other printed material can help to maximize the efficiency of the parking system. This is particularly the case in downtown areas, commercial corridors, and Centre. Downtown Halifax is a prime candidate for improved parking user information (the Park Smart program provides information to both residents and visitors in the form of a brochure.). Based on surveys conducted in mid-December 2006, more than 20% of collective, off-street spaces in Downtown Halifax and the Halifax Waterfront were vacant during the peak demand time on a typical weekday. During consultation activities conducted as part of this study, members of the public and business community have repeatedly identified better wayfinding as an important strategy in improving the efficiency of the existing parking supply. In addition, the lack of monthly parking was also cited as a common issue.

There are many ways that parking user information in HRM could be improved. There is no common signage and wayfinding system for off-street public parking in HRM, which is in part due to the limited role that HRM plays in providing off-street parking. In addition, signage at park and ride lots is generally not sufficiently visible or clear. Printed information on parking is generally provided by the private sector and local business associations, and as a result is varied in format and content. A number of brochures and websites contain information on parking on specific topics, although there is no portal for parking information on HRM's website. The ideal portal would be a "one-stop-shop" for parking information and include the following information (or links to the information):

- Enhanced information on publicly accessible parking (both HRM and privately owned) and potentially links to available monthly parking for commuters, both privately and publicly owned;
- Map of publicly accessible parking in the downtown (e.g., Park Smart brochure);
- Parking prices and related regulations;
- Information on paying fines;



Static Parking Signage in Halifax

Example of Dynamic Parking Signage

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- Key contact information;
- Link to parking by-laws; and
- Future parking expansion plans.



A comprehensive strategy is required to improve parking user information, addressing signage, printed materials (e.g., maps), and internet resources. It is recommended that HRM work in partnership with the private sector and local business areas to develop a “common look and feel” for parking signage and related information. Dynamic wayfinding systems in Downtown Halifax and Downtown Dartmouth could be pursued in the longer term. Options for parking guidance and wayfinding are discussed in detail in the **Parking Technology Report**.

### **Recommended Actions**

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A.2.1 | Work in partnership with the private sector to develop common formats, colours and logos for collective parking signage including directional signage, location/identification signage and wayfinding signage. Signage can be tailored to local business areas (e.g. Spring Garden Road, Quinpool Road, Downtown Dartmouth, etc.).                    |
| A.2.2 | Develop pedestrian oriented-signage throughout existing and proposed Centres to direct pedestrians to/from parking areas.                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| A.2.3 | Develop a parking portal through HRM's website to be a “one-stop-shop” for parking information. The portal should include information on publicly accessible parking, links to available monthly parking for commuters, parking maps, details on prices, regulations, and fine payment, and future expansion plans, among other relevant information. |
| A.2.4 | Establish a database of all public and private parking that can be used in developing above materials.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| A.2.5 | Develop improved signage for park and ride facilities that is clearly visible, and consistent with Metro Transit logos, particularly where such facilities are shared with other uses (e.g., Penhorn Mall).                                                                                                                                           |

### **Supportive Initiatives**

The provision of user information is somewhat constrained in that the management of the municipal parking system is not a separate distinguishable administrative body; rather a number of distinct HRM departments are responsible for various aspects of parking. This makes it more difficult to

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separate out responsibilities for parking, and to convey these in a meaningful manner to the public. As shown below, having an administrative body responsible for parking, such as a parking authority, facilitates a consistent look to signage, metering, etc.

- Update and centralize parking governance structure (See Strategy C.1).
- Formalize role of HRM in providing and managing public parking (see Strategy C.1: Update Parking Governance Structure).
- Improve signage for on-street parking, in conjunction with changes to payment technologies (see Strategy C.3: Parking Payment Technology).



### 5.1.3 STRATEGY A.3 OPTIMIZE ON-STREET PARKING MANAGEMENT

On-street parking is a highly beneficial resource for both businesses and residents in an urban area when managed properly. On-street parking promotes more pedestrian-oriented areas, since it reduces the need for off-street parking. Off-street parking often separates buildings from the street, makes it more difficult to achieve compact urban form, and interrupts the sidewalk with access driveways. In residential areas, streets provide opportunities for visitor parking and parking for dwellings without driveways. On-street parking can also act as a traffic-calming device, reducing vehicle speeds and providing a buffer for pedestrians. Given these benefits, it is no surprise that on-street parking is envisioned to be an important component of many of the Centres.



The general recommended approach regarding on-street parking management is summarized as follows:

- On-street parking should be managed as a public resource with pricing and supply management attempting to balance equity and parking turnover.
- No employee should receive free daily on-street parking where parking is in high demand.
- On-street parking regulations should be strictly enforced to prevent abuse and to reduce the number of tickets issued over the longer term.

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- Residential parking programs should not be designed to generate excess revenues from resident charges; however residents should pay for their fair share of the administrative costs of the programs.
- Opportunities for increasing on-street parking supply should be pursued with the recognition that tradeoffs with active transportation and other public realm improvements (e.g., sidewalk cafes) will need to be balanced.

Related strategies are discussed first in terms of pricing, enforcement, and supply, and then for residential parking programs.

### **On-Street Parking Pricing, Enforcement, and Supply**

On-street parking pricing and enforcement as well as adequate supply are important components of a parking system that is oriented towards serving the needs of customers and visitors as well as employees. Parking pricing, combined with time restrictions, can help to increase turnover and prevent abuse, which in turn supports businesses. Yet, it must also be recognized that excessive pricing or other restrictions can impact the viability of retail operations.

#### ***Pricing***

On-street parking pricing is prevalent throughout the Capital District. There are several ways that pricing for on-street parking could be improved relating to pricing practices and time limits. There is a need to continually review both pricing and time limits for on-street parking to ensure that spaces are used efficiently and equitably. On-street parking is in high demand, particularly on the Halifax Peninsula. Occupancies close to Downtown Halifax are typically 95%-100% on weekdays. Occupancy of 85% is desirable to improve the downtown experience for motorists and reduce the need to cruise for parking, which adds to downtown congestion and air pollution. While regular enforcement is also key, increasing the cost to park at a meter from \$1.50 to \$2.00 per hour in Downtown Halifax and \$2.00 to \$2.50 per hour on the Halifax Waterfront might reduce demand and encourage more turnover. Regular monitoring would provide feedback on how pricing is affecting on-street parking availability.

In terms of time limits, on-street parking time restrictions range from 90 minutes to 5 hours with streets closest to the core generally having a 90-minute limit. Parking is free on evenings and weekends, which has advantages for tourists and visitors, but is sometimes abused by local residents/employees. It is proposed that the hours of operation of meters be extended in high demand areas to weeknights (from 6 PM to 7 PM, and potentially to 9 PM) and Saturdays. Note that these changes would need to occur on an area-wide rather than street-specific basis to avoid motorists cruising for free parking and congesting particular streets with free parking. The impacts on adjacent businesses would need to be considered carefully; however, it is noted that charging for parking often tends to promote a higher turnover, which is positive for business.

Pricing can also be used to encourage the use of more efficient vehicles such as hybrids and motorcycles, as discussed further in Strategy B.4: Parking Pricing. It is recommended that motorcycles be allowed to share metered spaces with other vehicles; however, they should not be exempted from fees when they are the sole occupier of an on-street space.

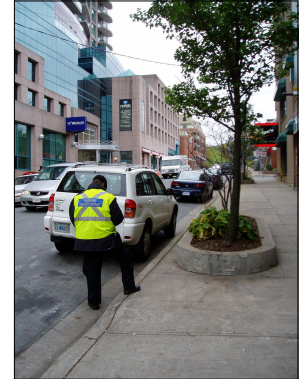
On-street parking payment technology is another consideration in on-street parking management, which is further discussed in Strategy C.3: Parking Payment Technology.

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### **Enforcement**

On-street parking pricing and time limits hold little force without proper enforcement. While on-street parking occupancies close to Downtown Halifax are typically 95%-100% on weekdays, approximately 10%-30% of these vehicles exceed posted parking time limits. In addition, issues have been raised around the consistency of enforcement and the high parking fines for exceeding time limits. In general, there appears to be a lack of understanding among residents of the purpose of time limits.

There is a need to improve enforcement and education regarding on-street parking regulations. Enforcement officers should be provided with real-time wireless information and ticketing systems to automate enforcement and allow each officer to patrol a larger area<sup>8</sup>. More enforcement officers may also be required. Automated enforcement would also allow officers to identify first-time violators and provide them with a "First-Time Free" ticket as well as information on on-street parking regulations.



### **Supply**

Reflecting the value of on-street parking, HRM should continue to look for opportunities to provide additional on-street parking. As an overall policy, any major redevelopment that will significantly change a street should provide for on-street parking. In addition, on-street parking should be considered in all new developments and be an integral part of the Centres.

### **Recommended Actions**

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A.3.1 | Continue to price on-street parking in commercial areas according to demand while ensuring frequent turnover through enforcement and pricing.                                               |
| A.3.2 | In consultation with local businesses, introduce parking pricing in busy commercial areas on evenings and weekends to discourage long-term parking and to ensure availability for visitors. |
| A.3.3 | Ensure priced on-street parking in HRM is patrolled several times daily to discourage violations, particularly in central Halifax.                                                          |
| A.3.4 | Provide enforcement officers with real-time wireless information and ticketing systems to automate enforcement and allow each officer to patrol a larger area.                              |
| A.3.5 | Offer "First Free Time" exemptions of parking infractions along with brochures explaining parking regulations.                                                                              |
| A.3.6 | Improve signage to better explain on-street time restrictions and pricing.                                                                                                                  |
| A.3.7 | Develop promotional material to make employees in Downtown Halifax aware of the problems caused by "meter feeding" and available off-street parking options.                                |
| A.3.8 | Consider on-street parking should in all new developments and street design projects, particularly in the Centres.                                                                          |

### **Supportive Initiatives**

- Work in partnership with the private sector to develop common formats, colours and logos for collective parking signage including directional signage, location/identification signage and wayfinding signage. (Strategy A.2: Improve User Information)

<sup>8</sup> See Campbell, S., *Case Study: Vancouver Automates City Parking Bylaw Enforcement Through Real-Time Wireless Information and Ticketing System*. The Parker, 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter, 2003.

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- Reduce required off-street parking for retail development 1 for 1, for each on-street parking space abutting or nearby the property suitable for customer parking (See Strategy A.1: Revise Parking Standards)
- Ensure sufficient spaces for loading and other needs such as tour bus parking
- In primary active transportation corridors, balance the need for on-street parking with requirements for bicycle infrastructure (Strategy B.2: Promote Active Transportation)
- Consider providing preferential pricing for environmentally friendly vehicles such as motorcycles/mopeds, smart cars and car-share vehicles (see Strategy B.4: Parking Pricing)

### Residential Parking Programs

Management of on-street parking residential areas must strive to provide a balance between the parking needs of local residents, and the fact that on-street parking is a public amenity and provides benefits to the greater community as well as local businesses. On-street parking management is of particular concern in areas where many residents rely on on-street parking. This includes Central Halifax neighbourhoods, such as the South End, the Commons area, and the North End. In these areas, residents compete with other visitors (e.g. university students, downtown employees, shoppers, etc.) for on-street spaces.

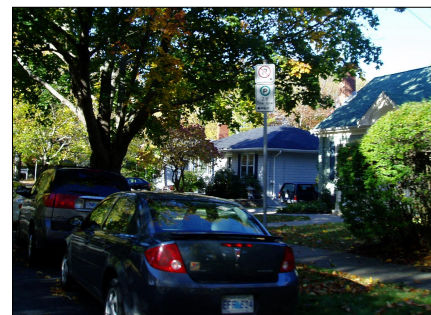


Many streets on Peninsular Halifax and in the Dartmouth Core have on-street parking restrictions, such as 1 hour parking, 2 hour parking, no parking 11AM-11:30AM, no parking 12AM-6AM, and no on-street parking, among others. These restrictions are normally combined with one of two basic on-street parking permit systems as defined in By-Law P-1000:

- **Residential Parking Exemptions (RPE)** – which exempt residents' vehicles from certain posted on-street parking time limit restrictions at their place of residence; and
- **Parking by Permit Only (PPO)** – which only entitles permit holders to park their automobile on the street within a specified area. This program is open to residents (first priority) and non-residents (space permitting).

Both systems are residential permit systems. The Residential Parking Exemption is similar to most residential permit programs in other cities where only residents have access to permits. The Parking by Permit Only program is relatively unique in that non-residents also have access to permits. Such a program is most suited to areas where on-street parking is deemed appropriate for daytime employee parking.

However, many residents in these areas support changes to the current Residential Parking Exemption program because it is overly restrictive, and inconsistently enforced. As the Regional Parking Strategy helps to guide development away from the practice of providing vast supplies of free surface parking, particularly around Centres identified in the Regional Plan, the need for appropriate regulation of residential on-street parking will only increase.



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The **Residential On-Street Parking Management Report** compares practices in HRM to jurisdictions across Canada and identifies areas for improvement for both the Residential Parking Exemption Program and the Parking by Permit Only Program. Two sets of changes are proposed to the RPE program based on the level of management required from HRM. Recommended changes will involve more active management by HRM. Key changes to the RPE program include:

- Changing the area of application to a multi-block permit zone from a single block or street;
- Allowing more than one Exemption per dwelling. One Exemption should be allowed for each vehicle without access to off-street parking with the maximum number of exemptions set at 85% of total on-street spaces in the permit zone. The price of an exemption should increase for each vehicle per dwelling (e.g., \$30/year for the first vehicle, \$75/year for the second vehicle, \$125 for the third vehicle). The current program only allows one exemption per dwelling.
- Allow up to two or three Visitor Exemptions per dwelling unit at any given time based on local conditions with the maximum number of Visitor Exemptions set at 5% of parking spaces in the permit zone. The current program only allows one Visitor Exemption per dwelling at any given time and there is no limit in the permit zone. Visitor exemptions should be available for single day or two week periods as is currently the case.
- HRM should provide for multiple application procedures to maximize user convenience. Initial applications for Exemptions should be accommodated via fax, mail, or in-person. Renewals or Visitor Exemption applications should also be accommodated via the Internet.
- Enforcement should occur regularly, ideally on a daily basis in high demand areas.

HRM's Parking by Permit Only program is relatively unique in that it is open to non-residents in addition to residents, space permitting. Such a program is only suited to areas where on-street parking can best be used as a source of long-term parking for non-residents, in addition to serving the parking needs of residents. This includes residential areas that have a high occurrence of local employees using on-street parking. This program requires careful design and implementation, to be successful, since non-residents must be willing to pay a premium for permits. However, potential benefits include reduction in competition for on-street spaces, to the benefit of local residents, reduction in commuter parking shortages in the nearby area, reduction in illegal parking on residential streets, and revenue generation for HRM with potential benefits to local businesses/residents if revenue is used for community improvements. In addition, the PPO program may come in useful around certain Centres designated in the Regional Plan as they develop, where long-term parking may be at a premium, and it will be important to appropriately regulate on-street parking in nearby residential areas.

As identified in the **Residential On-Street Parking Management Report**, a successful PPO program will require the proper combination of a number of factors including the number of permits offered, the price, the size of the permit zone, and the availability and price of other public parking, among other factors. Key changes to the current PPO program include:

- A PPO zone should include most or all streets in an area expected to be in demand for non-resident long-term parking.
- Allocation of resident, visitor, and non-resident permits will need to be carefully managed to ensure that non-residents paying for a permit can find a space. Otherwise, there will be little incentive for non-residents to purchase permits. As such, the total number of

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resident permits issues should not exceed 85% of total spaces in the PPO zone. The total number of all permits issues (resident, visitor, and non-resident) should not exceed 95% of total spaces.

- While the price of resident parking permits should be similar to the Residential Parking Exemption price (i.e., \$30/year), the price of non-resident permits should be set at approximately one half to three quarters the price of local market rates, since this parking represents commuter parking rather than resident parking.
- Visitor permits should be limited to two per dwelling unit at any given time. In addition, the combined number of resident and visitor permits issues should not exceed 90% of total parking spaces in the PPO zone at any given time.
- It is particularly important that enforcement officers patrol the PPO zone in the morning when most non-resident permit holders will seek to park and in the later afternoon/early evening when most residents will seek to park.

### **Recommended Actions**

|        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A.3.9  | Modify the Residential Parking Exemption Program in line with the proposed changes detailed in the <b>Residential On-Street Parking Management Report</b> (based on the active management approach).                                                                 |
| A.3.10 | Modify the Parking by Permit Only Program in line with the proposed changes detailed in the <b>Residential On-Street Parking Management Report</b> .                                                                                                                 |
| A.3.11 | Increase use of Parking by Permit Only program in residential areas that have a high occurrence of employees using on-street parking. Example areas include streets around Halifax Commons and the area near the Stadacona Barracks of Canadian Forces Base Halifax. |
| A.3.12 | Increase enforcement of residential parking programs.                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| A.3.13 | Increase options for applying for and renewing permits and for obtaining visitor parking permits, including provisions for on-line application.                                                                                                                      |

### **STRATEGY A.4: EXPAND MUNICIPALLY-OWNED PUBLIC PARKING SUPPLY**

Collective parking plays an important role in helping to achieve development objectives in a sustainable manner since shared parking is one of the most desirable ways to make efficient use of parking supply. The Regional Plan, as well as the Regional Centre Urban Design Strategy, is contingent on achieving more compact mixed-use development forms. One of the ways of achieving this form is through the re-development of surface parking lots. This redevelopment is already happening in the Spring Garden Road Area and is inevitable in the waterfront areas of Downtown Halifax and Dartmouth. As these surface lots get developed, there will be increasing pressures for public parking.



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As discussed in Section 4.2.2, HRM currently plays only a small role in the provision of collective, off-street parking; however, there are many reasons for HRM to build this capacity. Broadly, these include the ability to better support and promote: shared, priced parking over free, private parking, particularly in the Centres; economic development and urban redevelopment; parking signage and wayfinding; and TDM initiatives. Thus, it is recommended that HRM increase the reliance on public parking, and particularly municipally owned public parking, to support intensification of the Centres and to facilitate shared parking.



Any municipally owned public parking must be run on a full cost-recovery basis. In general, it should be geared towards short-term business parking needs, rather than single-occupant vehicle commuter parking. In addition, all parking supply decisions should be based on the assumption of increased transit usage and that parking may be an interim use. For example, as MetroLink services are extended, the need for parking near current end-stations will diminish, providing opportunities for transit-oriented development on former parking sites.

Developing municipally owned public parking effectively will require changes to several areas of parking management, including parking zoning standards, administration, and funding, as outlined in the Supportive Initiatives.

### **Recommended Actions**

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A.4.1 | Increase the role of HRM in providing public parking, particularly in Centres where parking facilities can serve multiple users and destinations, thereby lowering overall parking supply required. |
| A.4.2 | Locate and design public parking to establish transportation nodes, including transit and pedestrian connections.                                                                                   |
| A.4.3 | Seek opportunities for additional municipally owned public parking, particularly in Downtown Halifax.                                                                                               |
| A.4.4 | Consider the needs of tour bus parking in developing municipally owned public parking.                                                                                                              |

### **Supportive Initiatives**

- Establish a market for priced parking, particularly in the Centres (see Strategy C.2: Funding).
- Encourage joint development opportunities and public-private partnerships
- Develop a more formalized organizational and administrative structure for managing municipal parking (Strategy C.1: Update Parking Governance Structure).
- Develop a business plan for developing municipally owned parking in Downtown Halifax and developing Centres that incorporates parking planning, rate structure, funding (including cash-in-lieu funds) with future development and transit/TDM investment, moving towards full cost-recovery for publicly owned parking (see Strategy C.2: Funding Parking Management and Development).

## 5.2 Strategies that Reduce Commuter Parking Demand

Reducing the number of commuters travelling in single occupant vehicles is a key strategy of the Regional Plan and will help to reduce the overall need for parking. This strategy is contingent on the availability of travel alternatives that are financially viable, safe, and convenient along with appropriate incentives to use them. Strategies proposed for reducing commuter-parking demand relate to many areas of transportation demand management, including improving transit, promoting active transportation, encouraging ridesharing, and developing more progressive approaches to parking pricing. Overall, parking management in HRM needs to be viewed as a key component of TDM strategies.

### 5.2.1 STRATEGY B.1: IMPROVE TRANSIT OPTIONS

During consultation activities, many members of the public emphasized that current transportation behaviour is not sustainable and identified the need to improve transportation options, particularly public transit. Improved transit service can significantly reduce auto commuting and associated parking demand, particularly when combined with priced parking<sup>9</sup>. This is reflected in the proposed reductions in office and retail parking requirements for areas well served by transit (See Strategy A.1: Revise Parking Standards) HRM has made considerable strides in improving transit services, with the introduction of the Metro link. In addition, Metro Transit works with several of the local university and colleges to provide the widely successful transit U-Pass, giving all full time students unlimited access to regular transit services during the academic year. FRED (Free Rides Everywhere Downtown) is another successful transit-based program. This free shuttle bus, which runs from July to October and transports residents and visitors around Downtown Halifax is provided by the Downtown Halifax Business Commission in partnership with Metro Transit and through the support of a variety of Downtown Halifax businesses and associations. A variety of strategies are proposed to improve transit and reduce commuter parking demand:



- Increase the involvement of Metro Transit in site design decisions:** Better physical integration of transit with key destinations (e.g., transit stops in front of shopping centres) is needed. While Metro Transit is already involved in planning through the Transportation and Public Works Department, this role should be increased. Metro Transit representatives should be consulted early in the design process on all new developments with transit service, particularly in the Centres, to ensure that provisions for transit are made in the site design. This may also allow Metro Transit to make service adjustments in advance of major new developments.
- Expand and improve transit services:** Expanding and improving transit service to key employment nodes, such as the Halifax CBD, Burnside, the hospital/university area, the

<sup>9</sup> Peng, Z., Dueker, K.J., and J.G. Strathman. Residential Location, Employment Location, and Commuter Responses to Parking Charges. In *Transportation Research Record: Journal of the Transportation Research Board*, No. 1556, TRB, National Research Council, Washington, D.C., 1996, pp. 109-118.

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naval dockyards, and the international airport will lead to less auto commuting. In particular, suburban and rural areas, where more than 70% of commuters are auto drivers, could be influenced by improvements to high quality transit service, such as MetroLink. The Rural Transit and Park and Ride Study and provides guidance on expanding transit options throughout the Region.

- Improve access to trunk transit services:** Park and ride facilities have been implemented successfully, particularly at nodes served by Metro Link. Park and ride facilities served more than 1,300 transit riders daily in HRM, including many commuters who otherwise would have driven to their workplace. However, park and ride facilities have been criticized as being expensive, undermining local bus routes in suburban areas and resulting in emission-intensive, short-distance auto use (i.e., cold-start emissions). Park and ride will remain an important means of supporting access to trunk bus routes for those without access to feeder bus service, and such facilities should be expanded as part of extensions to Metro Link service. However, other methods of improving access to transit services should be considered. Ottawa's transit system provides an example of how express bus service can circulate through neighbourhoods and then provide rapid connection to key employment hubs aided by bus rapid transit infrastructure. In addition, pedestrian and cyclist connections to key transit terminals should be improved. As areas around transit terminals become more urbanized, there will be opportunities for transit-oriented development.



A new development sign near Portland Hills Terminal.

### **Recommended Actions**

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| B.1.1 | Increase the involvement of Metro Transit in site design decisions, particularly in the Centres.                                                                                                                                           |
| B.1.2 | Expand and improve transit services, particularly with Metro Link extensions to suburban areas. (Refer to Rural Transit and Park and Ride Functional Plan)                                                                                 |
| B.1.3 | Improve access to trunk transit service through strategic park and ride expansions, improved feeder service, walking and cycling connections, and transit-oriented development. (Refer to Rural Transit and Park and Ride Functional Plan) |
| B.1.4 | Support proposed downtown shuttle service.                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

### **Supportive Initiatives**

- Implement site design guidelines to encourage transit to be better integrated with activity centres, rather than separated from entrances by surface parking (See Strategy C.4: Urban Design).
- Improved user information at park and ride facilities (See Strategy A.2: Improve User Information).
- Create a transportation management association (TMA) to promote the benefits of employer-provide transit passes (See Strategy B.3: Encourage Ridesharing and TDM).

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### 5.2.2 STRATEGY B.2: PROMOTE ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Promoting walking and cycling is another key strategy in reducing commuter-parking demand. Many work trips in HRM are relatively short-distance and could potentially be made by bike or foot. HRM has one of the highest active transportation levels in the country. Almost 35% of residents living in the Regional Centre walk or cycle to work on a regular basis. To promote cycling, Land Use By-Laws within the Regional Centre specify requirements for short- and long-term bicycle parking for all uses, including parking lots and structures. In addition, reductions in motor vehicle parking (up to 10% of the required amount) are allowed if additional bicycle parking, sheltered bicycle parking, and the provision of showers or clothes lockers are provided. Options for walking and cycling will be further enhanced through the implementation of the recently approved Active Transportation Functional Plan.

Potential conflicts between vehicle parking and other forms of transportation must also be considered. For example, on-street parking may reduce safety for cyclists or make on-street bike lanes infeasible depending on pavement widths. In addition, there may be tradeoffs between maintaining on-street parking and sidewalk widening or sidewalk cafes. On the other hand, on-street parking is important to pedestrians, particularly on busy streets, since it has a traffic calming effect and acts as a buffer between pedestrians and traffic. A separate report, **Addressing On-Street Parking and Bikeway Conflicts**, outlines options for balancing the needs for on-street parking and on-road active transportation facilities.



#### **Recommended Actions**

|       |                                                                                                                           |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| B.2.1 | Provide bicycle lockers and other amenities (e.g. showers at office buildings, benches, etc.) throughout the Centres.     |
| B.2.2 | Install additional secure bike parking facilities in City-owned parking lots and in key areas.                            |
| B.2.3 | Consider active transportation corridor needs in on-street parking design and regulation.                                 |
| B.2.4 | Continue to promote integration of cycling with transit services (e.g., bike boxes at park and ride stations).            |
| B.2.5 | Implement active transportation infrastructure and improvements as specified in the Active Transportation Functional Plan |

#### ***Supportive Initiatives***

- Implement site design guidelines that reduce parking as a barrier to walking and cycling (e.g., buildings entrances fronting the street, pedestrian aisles in parking lots, etc.) (See Strategy C.4: Urban Design).

#### **5.2.3 STRATEGY B.3: ENCOURAGE RIDESHARING AND TDM**

Transportation demand management (TDM) is the use of policies, programs, services and products to influence *whether, why, when, where* and *how* people travel. Its goal is to make personal travel decisions more sustainable, and to make more efficient use of the existing transportation system. Potential TDM initiatives range from incentive programs that encourage people to carpool or take transit, to regulatory and pricing measures.

Within HRM, about 10% of people travelling to work do so as a car passenger, compared to 68% as car drivers. This is typical of most cities across Canada. One of the most direct ways of reducing commuter-parking demand, particularly in areas that are not well served by public transit, is to encourage people to carpool. For each additional person who carpools instead of driving, one less commuter parking space is required. In addition to concerns regarding air quality, climate change, and congestion, since parking costs in the range of \$40 (surface) to \$200 (underground structured) per month to provide, there is also a strong economic case for encouraging more efficient forms of travel.

TDM programs currently in place in HRM include the successful U-Pass program, discussed earlier, and Green Rider, a vanpooling service for rural residents who commute to HRM. In addition, a carshare company, CarShareHFX, is expected to start providing services in mid-2008. Potential options for encouraging ridesharing and TDM in HRM are outlined below. A TDM Functional Plan, currently under development, will more fully outline how TDM can be successfully implemented in HRM.

- **Employer shuttles or vanpools** –HRM should encourage the growth of its existing vanpooling service, Green Rider, by providing preferential parking treatment, particularly in Downtown Halifax. This could be in the way of reserved spaces in municipal lots or by subsidizing any parking charges for Green Rider vans. Requiring preferential carpool parking for new office buildings could also support vanpooling in the long term. Vanpools are particularly applicable for employers located in areas with less frequent transit service and lower paying jobs (e.g., call centres).
- **Promote carpooling** – There are several measures that HRM could initiate to help promote car-pooling. Preferential spaces for carpool vehicles are suggested for office uses in the parking zoning by-law (see Strategy A.1: Revise Parking Standards). Reduced parking fares could also be provided for carpool vehicles in municipal lots. Continued promotion of HRM's new ridematching program: HRMsmarttrip.ca should continue.

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Preferential parking for vanpools and carpools can encourage ridesharing if the parking is substantially more convenient or less expensive than other parking.

- **Promote carsharing**– The popularity of carsharing is growing in urban centres as a cost-effective alternative to auto ownership or at least to owning a second vehicle. HRM should support the development of CarShareHFX. For example, the City of Berkeley, California retired its fleet vehicles and replaced them with carsharing vehicles saving an estimated \$250,000 in the first three years of the program<sup>10</sup>. In addition, it is recommended that parking requirement reductions be considered for multi-unit residential buildings where it is agreed that carshare vehicles will be available to residents.
- **Promote pool vehicles** - Pool vehicles are similar to carsharing, but are employer-based. To address the fact that people need to occasionally use their car for workday trips such as meetings and site visits, employers can purchase a small number of vehicles that can be booked on short notice by employees. This allows employees to commute by transit or alternate modes, even if they need a car during the day. Many municipalities maintain a fleet of pool cars.
- **Establish Transportation Management Associations (TMAs)**– TMAs implement TDM initiatives and help target individuals in key markets, offering customized local services including carpool programs, vanpool assistance, shuttles and Emergency Ride Home programs, as well as incentives, promotions, and events. Recommended Actions

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| B.3.1 | Provide preferential parking for vanpools.                                                                                                                                        |
| B.3.2 | Foster the development of car sharing.                                                                                                                                            |
| B.3.3 | Promote and encourage the use of the online ridematching system, HRMsmartrip.ca                                                                                                   |
| B.3.4 | Expand, upgrade, and promote the network of carpool lots in HRM.                                                                                                                  |
| B.3.5 | Through the TDM functional plan, establish and support Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) to provide transportation and parking management services in specific areas. |

<sup>10</sup> City of Berkeley. March 16, 2005. Berkeley's CarShare Program Nominated for Prestigious 'Innovations in American Government Award.' Berkeley CA.

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### *Supportive Initiatives*

- Require preferential carpool parking for office buildings requiring more than 20 parking spaces (see Strategy A.1: Revise Parking Standards).
- Consider the presence of carshare vehicles favourably in allowing for a reduction in required parking for multi-unit residential development (see Strategy A.1: Revise Parking Standards).
- Encourage ridesharing and the use of high efficiency vehicles through progressive pricing practices at municipal lots (see Strategy B.4: Parking Pricing).



### 5.2.4 STRATEGY B.4: PARKING PRICING

While some may view priced parking as a by-product of parking undersupply, many of the most desirable urban areas do not have an oversupply of parking and charge for its use. The reverse is also true. The general approach of the Regional Parking Strategy is to encourage full-cost pricing for parking wherever feasible.

At the most basic level, charging for parking allows for the best use of a limited resource, inducing greater turnover of the most convenient spaces, increasing parking availability, and generating revenue to fund community improvements. Parking pricing also has a very strong TDM effect. Based on a survey of HRM residents, of the respondents who commute by automobile and have access to free parking at their destination, 17% would shift to another mode if parking was not free, while a further 12% would shift if parking was sufficiently priced. The majority of participants in public consultation conducted as part of this study indicated that they were supportive of higher parking prices and parking restraint policies as long as these were coupled with improvement in other mobility options.

In general, parking fees should follow several key principles:

- The most convenient parking spaces, typically on-street stalls close to building entrances, should be priced higher than surrounding off-street lots to promote regular turnover;
- To help achieve TDM objectives, the monthly cost of parking should exceed the cost of a monthly transit pass; and
- On-street parking should be priced to achieve 85% occupancy to reduce the need to cruise for parking and improve the parking experience for motorists, especially in downtown areas.

Parking pricing is most effective when it is combined with a comprehensive package of incentives for alternatives modes, such as bus rapid transit, shuttle services, bus service, and pedestrian improvements. Parking fees can also be used to support more efficient forms of transportation. For example, Vancouver's parking authority, EasyPark, offers a 50% discount at its lots for hybrids and Smart cars, and a 25% discount for high occupancy vehicles carrying three or more people. Hybrids and Smart cars must register and get a special sticker to be eligible for the discount since many EasyPark lots are not attended. HRM could also provide discounts to fuel-efficient vehicles and high-occupancy vehicles at public off-street lots. In the short-term, fuel-efficient vehicles could be offered reductions on monthly parking costs at municipal lots. This initiative could be expanded to

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short-term parkers as HRM constructs more collective, off-street lots. If these lots are operated by attendants, HRM should consider providing discounts for high occupancy vehicles.

The overwhelming majority of parking throughout the HRM, with the exception of the Capital District, is not priced. In other words, the cost of constructing and maintaining parking is not passed on to its users. How can a market for priced parking develop in areas where none currently exists? Such a market may develop with or without municipal intervention. In built up urban areas undergoing redevelopment or intensification, the increasing value of land may lead to constrained parking and encourage building operators to charge for parking. This will occur if sufficient development is allowed and parking requirements are not so high as to require an oversupply of parking and undermine the potential for priced parking. The proposed revisions to parking zoning standards, outlined in Strategy A.1, recommend reductions to most minimum parking requirements as well as maximum parking limitations in certain areas.

Achieving the vision for many of the Centres as compact, mixed-use, transit-oriented areas is also consistent with areas that charge for parking. Indeed, the success of priced parking may be seen as a measure of success of achieving the Centres vision. However, developing a market for priced parking in many of these areas will require careful planning given that many currently consist predominantly of highly auto-oriented retail sites with ample free parking (e.g., Penhorn Mall, West End Mall). While each Centre will need to be treated differently based on site-specific conditions and type of Centre, establishing a market for priced parking in these areas will require several common steps:

- Encouraging redevelopment on existing surface parking facilities;
- Placing tight restrictions on new parking, particularly private surface parking;
- Encourage development of shared parking in strategic locations, ideally as priced parking in structures and on-street;
- Encouraging separate identification of parking costs within building occupancy costs
- Developing a significant stock of priced public parking, in the range of 30 percent to 50 percent of total parking supply, through on-street and off-street facilities.

### ***Recommended Actions***

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| B.4.1 | Provide discounts to fuel-efficient vehicles and high-occupancy vehicles at public off-street lots.                                                                                                                                      |
| B.4.2 | Require that parking costs be identified separately from occupancy costs in Centres for both commercial and multi-unit residential development.                                                                                          |
| B.4.3 | Develop a detailed parking plan for each Centre identifying strategic parking locations, outlining how parking will be used to support transportation objectives and the steps to establish a market for priced parking, where feasible. |

### ***Supportive Initiatives***

- Continue to refine on-street parking prices in relation to maintaining 85% occupancy (see Strategy A.3 Optimize On-Street Parking Management).

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- Revise parking zoning standards to reduce private, off-street parking and help create a market for public, priced parking, particularly in the new Centres (see Strategy A.1: Revise Parking Standards).
- Develop a more formalized organizational and administrative structure for managing municipal parking (see Strategy C.1: Update Parking Governance Structure).
- Introduce financial strategies to ensure cost-recovery of public parking (see Strategy C.2: Funding).

## 5.3 Supporting Strategies

### 5.3.1 STRATEGY C.1: UPDATE PARKING GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The need for an organizational structure responsible for parking management across HRM was identified in Section 4.2.1. HRM currently has a fragmented approach to parking management, both in the downtown areas, as well as across the regional municipality. Different City divisions oversee an area of the parking system that is particular to the department mandate. There is currently no body that sees parking in a broad scope, sets objectives for the parking system (e.g., increase the amount of collective parking), and helps to coordinate parking-related activities between the departments. While this is a common approach in smaller or developing communities, the parking system in the HRM is too complex not to have a body responsible for integration and coordination across departments. A centralized parking structure would also be responsible for implementing many of the recommendations of this Regional Parking Strategy.

Parking management or oversight can be delivered in various forms. There are advantages and disadvantages to each that need to be weighed and considered in context of the greater Halifax Region and the existing municipal governance structure. Five parking management types are described below and assessed in Exhibit 5-4.

- **Parking committee** - Parking management that uses a parking committee is essentially run by a variety of departments with citizen oversight. Each department oversees an area of the system particular to the department's mandate (i.e. police department oversees enforcement, public works oversees parking metres and general maintenance). The committee is a group of stakeholders from the municipality that meet to discuss parking related issues and act as a guide, making recommendations to Council; who then make the final decisions and instruct the various departments accordingly.
- **Parking authority** - Parking Authorities are a governing body unto themselves. The point of forming an authority is to create an independent unit that oversees all aspects of the parking operation and may own the land resources that the parking is located on. By having full control and possible ownership of the parking system, parking authorities are able to undertake bond issuance for repairs, replacement and expansion of the parking system since all parking revenues would go to the authority. Typically, parking authorities answer directly to a board of directors comprised of citizens and elected officials from council.
- **Parking department** - Similar to a parking authority, parking departments oversee all aspects of the parking system and its operation. The key difference is that parking departments are a division of the municipal government and answer directly to a council as any other department would. The municipality maintains ownership over the parking facilities and property.
- **Parking district** - A Parking District is a form of governance that blends a parking department with community representation through a committee or board. The district is ultimately accountable to a council the same as a department, but incorporates direct community representation through the board. In this case, the board has direct authority over the function of the parking system by overseeing a dedicated parking district staff. Council empowers the board by appointing members and authority, but is ultimately responsible for major policies and annual budgets. Day-to-day operations and decisions are the responsibility of the board and the parking district manager. Often parking

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districts are established in a building or location separate from the municipal government in order to stress the community involvement and directive.

- Parking manager** - A parking manager is assigned to oversee parking and act as a principal liaison between a council and the other departments that manage various aspects of the parking system. This form of management allows for the centralization of the parking system management function through one individual who then becomes the face for the Region's parking system. A parking manager allows for parking decision making to be streamlined and up-to-date. Similarly, Council is privy to continuous feedback and information updates on the parking system and is able to enact changes that represent the best interest of the Community. Parking management can be either a new position within the Region, a re-assignment of an existing staff person or can be contracted out to a third party professional. In each parking management type discussed, a parking manager needs to be assigned or retained to oversee operations under the direction of a board, committee or Council.

**Exhibit 5-4: Assessment of Types of Parking Management**

| Management Type    | Advantages                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Disadvantages                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Parking Committee  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High priority on community representation.</li> <li>• Low cost, as committee membership is voluntary.</li> <li>• Council is provided with recommendations and insight into parking decision making matters allowing them to make informed decisions and give directives to staff.</li> <li>• Parking management is a for-front issue that is actively managed prior to issues arising that demand Council attention.</li> </ul>                                                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cumbersome due to committee-council-staff order of operations.</li> <li>• Committees have a tendency to focus solely on serving the needs of the community without consideration to budget constraints and burden to staff.</li> </ul>                                                                                   |
| Parking Authority  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Often more efficient than a city department operation and is a complete management package that alleviates responsibility from the municipal government.</li> <li>• High priority on operating budget based parking system.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High degree of autonomy can lead to a loss of control on the part of the Regional Government.</li> <li>• Community interest often becomes a secondary issue as Authorities inevitably become increasingly business like as they undertake debt to provide parking resources.</li> <li>• Added staffing costs.</li> </ul> |
| Parking Department | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High priority on parking system operation.</li> <li>• Overall fit with other local initiatives, department projects and vision for community.</li> <li>• Council is provided with recommendations and insight into parking decision-making matters allowing them to make informed decisions and directives to staff.</li> <li>• Parking management is a for-front issue that is actively managed prior to issues arising that demand Council attention.</li> <li>• Lower cost for staffing as some existing Region</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Added layer of management and new department require additional staff and increase local government operating costs.</li> <li>• Council maintains sole responsibility for decision making without the benefit of citizen advisory board.</li> </ul>                                                                      |

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| Management Type  | Advantages                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Disadvantages                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                  | staff could be assigned to Parking Department.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Parking District | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High priority on community goals and interrelationships with other Regional Departments.</li> <li>• Board takes responsibility for most decisions with policy being established at the directive of Council.</li> <li>• Lower cost since some existing staff could be assigned to Parking District.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Added layer of management and new department require additional staff and increase local government operating costs.</li> </ul>                                                  |
| Parking Manager  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher priority on parking system operation.</li> <li>• High degree of interrelationship with other departments.</li> <li>• Low cost, as only one manager plus optional support staff is required.</li> <li>• One individual coordinates parking, advises Council, interfaces with the Community, and provides interdepartmental coordination.</li> <li>• Parking management is a for-front issue that is actively managed prior to issues arising that demand Council attention.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council is still responsible for oversight and limited staff resources may hinder optimal decision making with regard to parking initiatives and fundamental changes.</li> </ul> |

A hybrid parking committee/parking manager model is recommended for HRM as an interim step towards evolving the parking system. The Parking Advisory Committee would act as a guide regarding parking-related issues and make recommendations to Council. It should consist of members of the public and stakeholders across HRM, such as business associations. The parking manager would be responsible for implementing direction received from Council and coordinating efforts between the various municipal departments. This blended approach also allows departments that have particular expertise (such as public works) to continue to be responsible for aspects of the parking system that they are best suited to handle.

The parking manager would oversee all aspects of parking in HRM. Specific responsibilities would include:

- Overseeing implementation of the Regional Parking Strategy, under Council's guidance;
- Regulating parking rates and establishing parking policies in the Regional Centre, other Centres identified in the RMPS, and other areas of interest;
- Integrate parking policy, planning, and fee structures with transit and TDM planning, initiatives, and outreach;
- Develop a business plan for developing municipally owned parking in Downtown Halifax, developing Centres, and other commercial and transit corridors that incorporates parking planning, rate structure, funding (including cash-in-lieu funds) with future development and transit/TDM investment; and
- Work with private parking operators to ensure coordination and consistency of parking supply.

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The proposed governance model is a low cost approach that can be put in place relatively quickly to ensure more strategic and coordinated planning and action regarding parking management. In the future, to support the development of the Centres and to enable intensification of commercial and transit corridors, there may be a need for a more consolidated parking management structure with the authority to collect revenue, acquire land, and develop and operate parking facilities. As such, Council should assess the success of the parking committee/parking manager organizational model periodically.

### ***Recommended Actions***

|       |                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| C.1.1 | Create a Parking Manager position with appropriate support staff to oversee parking and coordinate activities between relevant municipal departments. |
| C.1.2 | Create a Parking Advisory Committee and appoint members from across HRM including members of the public and key stakeholders.                         |

### ***Supportive Initiatives***

- Develop a business plan for developing municipally owned parking in Downtown Halifax, developing Centres, and other commercial and transit corridors (see Strategy C.2: Funding Parking Management and Development)

### **5.3.2 STRATEGY C.2: FUNDING PARKING MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT**

The more active approach to parking management recommended here, including increasing the role of HRM in providing parking, will require appropriate funding. This is particularly the case with financing the construction and operation of parking facilities. Capital costs range anywhere from \$8,000 per space for a suburban surface parking lot to \$60,000 per space for an underground parking facility (construction and land cost)<sup>11</sup>. As such, financing parking can be one of the most challenging parts of parking development.

There is a need to move beyond the practice of one-time funding through the capital budgeting process to funding approaches that are more self-sustaining. There are a wide variety of fiscal tools considered to finance parking development in HRM. These can generally be grouped under four categories i) user pricing, ii) cash-in-lieu of parking, iii) parking tax reform, and iv) capital funds, as discussed below.

#### **User Fees**

The overwhelming majority of parking throughout HRM, with the exception of the Capital District, is not priced. In other words, the cost of constructing and maintaining parking is not passed on to its users. An owner would need to charge about \$40 per month or \$0.50/hr to recover the construction costs and on-going maintenance costs for a surface parking space. This increases to \$120/month or \$1.50/hr for above grade structures and up to \$200/month or \$2.50/hr for below grade parking<sup>12</sup>. Where parking is not priced sufficiently to offset these costs, the cost of parking is bundled into leases and higher prices for goods and services. For example, in the case of retail uses with free parking, customers who take transit or walk subsidize parking for customers who drive through higher prices on goods.

<sup>11</sup> Developing Parking Policies to Support Smart Growth in Local Jurisdictions: Best Practices, Metropolitan Transportation Commission, 2007. [www.mtc.ca.gov/planning/smart\\_growth/parking\\_seminar/BestPractices.pdf](http://www.mtc.ca.gov/planning/smart_growth/parking_seminar/BestPractices.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Costs are based on internal estimates by IBI Group and may vary by location and geotechnical conditions

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As described in Strategy B.4: Parking Pricing, charging for parking is important from a transportation demand management perspective, to reduce single occupant vehicle travel. User fees also promote the best use of limited parking resources, inducing greater turnover of the most convenient spaces, increasing parking availability, and generating revenue to fund community improvements. This section also describes how a market for priced parking can be developed in areas where none currently exists

As a general strategy, it is recommended that over time, the full costs of parking be better reflected in both user fees. Over time, user fees should make up an increasing portion of the revenue required to fund parking facilities.

### Cash-in-lieu of Parking/Development Charges

It is proposed that, in the Regional Centre and most other Centres, the zoning by-law should allow a developer to pay cash-in-lieu of parking of providing all of the parking required in the minimum parking requirements. Mandatory cash-in-lieu of parking is proposed for Downtown Halifax to ensure that new development should be involved in addressing some of the parking demand it generates. Cash-in-lieu of parking is also intended to facilitate more intensified development and reduced parking supply.

The cash-in-lieu of parking price would need to be calculated based on the cost of land and the cost per stall of the type of parking facility to be developed: surface, above-grade, or below-grade. The cash-in-lieu of parking rate should be reassessed regularly as it will be impacted by the cost of land and construction at the time of the cash-in-lieu of parking application.

### Parking Tax Reform

As discussed, the costs of constructing and maintaining parking are often not passed on to its users. Similarly, the true costs of parking on the environment (e.g., increased stormwater runoff, urban heat island effect, and increased auto use) and need for supporting transportation facilities are seldom quantified. One approach to better 'internalize' these costs and is through parking tax reforms. While parking tax reforms are more complex and controversial, funds raised from such reforms could potentially be used to support parking management activities as well as the development of more strategic and environmentally responsible parking facilities. Potential approaches could include:

- **Commercial parking taxes** – taxes on paid parking transactions. Such an approach is adopted in many cities, such as San Francisco, California and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
- **Stormwater management fees** – which reflect the large amount of stormwater runoff generated by parking facilities, particularly surface lots, and associated environmental impacts to water resources and costs to HRM for treatment of this runoff. Such a fee could be based on parking area or alternatively on the total impermeable land cover on a site. This would favour parking structures over surface parking lots, and more compact downtown sites over sprawling suburban sites. In addition, fees could be reduced if operators adopt measures to capture and treat stormwater runoff onsite (e.g., increased landscaping, bio-swale, permeable pavement, etc.).

Stormwater management fees are the recommended approach given that they are most clearly tied to environmental and financial costs (stormwater conveyance and treatment) resulting from parking. Based on consultation with the public, they appear to be the approach most supported by the public. A decision on the recommended parking tax reform will require further discussion in the context of ongoing overall tax reform for HRM. As a general strategy, it is recommended that over time, the full costs of parking be better reflected in both user fees and property taxes. However, this should not be done at the expense of Regional competitiveness.

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### Capital Fund

A capital fund would allow HRM to direct revenues from the parking system to a dedicated fund. This fund could in turn be used to help finance the capital costs of TDM related projects such as the proposed downtown shuttle.

### *Recommended Actions*

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| C.2.1 | Develop an approach for determining the cash-in-lieu of parking rate based on the cost of land and the type of parking facility to be developed.                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| C.2.2 | Implement a stormwater management fee based on the amount of impermeable surface on a site.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| C.2.3 | Establish a mechanism to direct surplus parking revenues into a dedicated capital fund to support the development of TDM related projects, including the downtown shuttle.                                                                                                                                                        |
| C.2.4 | Develop a business plan for developing municipally owned parking in Downtown Halifax, developing Centres, and other commercial and transit corridors that incorporates parking planning, rate structure, funding with future development and transit/TDM investment, moving towards full cost-recovery for publicly owned parking |

### *Supportive Initiatives*

- Increase the role of HRM in providing public parking, particularly in Centres where parking facilities can serve multiple users and destinations (see Strategy A.4: Expand Municipally-Owned Public Parking Supply).
- Revise parking zoning standards to reduce private, off-street parking and help create a market for public, priced parking, particularly in the new Centres (see Strategy A.1: Revise Parking Standards).
- Develop a more formalized organizational and administrative structure for managing municipal parking (see Strategy C.1: Update Parking Governance Structure).

### 5.3.3 STRATEGY C.3: PARKING PAYMENT TECHNOLOGY

Parking revenue collection technology has implications for parking administration, user convenience, parking utilization, and costs and revenues, among other factors. HRM currently derives the vast majority of its parking revenue from on-street parking. As HRM takes a more active role in parking management, particularly in downtown areas and in the Centres, it is recommended that HRM actively pursue opportunities to develop more collective parking (see

Strategy A.4: Expand Municipally-Owned Public Parking Supply). Along with a desire to improve management of existing supply, these new municipal facilities will create the opportunity for new approaches to revenue collection for on-street and off-street parking.

#### *On-Street Parking Payment Technology*

Currently in HRM, single-space parking meters are used exclusively for on-street parking. Existing single-space meters are generally in good repair and replacement is not required in the short-term. In addition, these meters represent a substantial capital investment and Haligonians and service personnel are familiar with the existing equipment. The main advantages offered by alternative pay and display and pay by space systems are the flexibility in payment options, as well as the ability for the pay stations to be connected through a wireless network. Providing more payment options and

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allowing customers to top up their payment remotely (e.g., by cell phone) has been shown to lead to greater customer (and business) satisfaction and increased revenues<sup>13</sup>.

As such, the preferred approach is to maintain, but actively enhance existing on-street meters. This option is cost-effective in terms of equipment and training costs, but will result in improved customer service and increased revenue. In addition, it allows HRM to adopt alternative technologies in the future when existing equipment needs to be replaced and more innovative solutions are proven and more affordable. It is recommended that existing on-street meters be enhanced with pay by cell phone technology, as detailed in the **Parking Technology Report**. The preferred approach for implementation does not require any changes to existing equipment other than stickerizing existing meters with instructions and a unique stall ID. This system would allow users to call a number, setup an account, enter the stall ID, and be billed on their credit card. The system can be setup so that users call at the beginning and end of their parking stay or receive a text message before their time runs out and can call and pay for additional time, if permitted by parking time restrictions. Cell phone payments are also shown on hand held devices to allow for enforcement.



In the medium to longer term, there are other technologies such as in-car parking meters that could serve to enhance payment options for on-street parking.

### ***Off-Street Parking Payment Technology***

Other than park and ride facilities, HRM currently operate very few public off-street parking facilities and the majority of these lots are reserved for HRM employees. These lots are primarily operated using a monthly permit with no in/out gate control. As HRM begins to operate more off-street lots for more public uses, selecting appropriate off-street parking payment technology will be an important activity.

There are three common systems used for revenue collection at off-street lots. Pay-in-lane is the traditional approach in which the driver pays from inside the vehicle upon entering the garage or surface lot, and uses the ticket to exit the garage, or vice versa. The pay-and-display method has the driver pay for a ticket at a pay station after parking and displaying the ticket on the windshield. The pay-on-foot method has the driver take a ticket on entry, and pay at a machine prior to exit (see Exhibit 5-5).

### **Exhibit 5-5: Example of Pay-on-Foot System**

<sup>13</sup> Campbell, S. *UCSB is Using 21<sup>st</sup> Century Technology to Boost Parking Service and Revenues*, The Parker, 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter, 2005.  
Anonymous. *White Rock Case Study*, The Parker, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter, 2006.



On entry drivers take a ticket, or alternatively insert a credit card.



On exit, drivers pay to validate their ticket.

Pay-on-foot provides the lowest labour costs and fastest processing times. As such, it is recommended that HRM move to pay-on-foot for all access-controlled lots, and pay-and-display for surface lots without access control, as detailed in the **Parking Technology Report**. Other technologies, such as proximity cards will need to be considered for monthly parkers.

#### **Recommended Actions**

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| C.3.1 | Enhance existing single-space on-street meters with pay by cell phone technology.                                                                                                                |
| C.3.2 | Adopt alternative revenue collection technologies for on-street parking in the future when existing equipment needs to be replaced and more innovative solutions are proven and more affordable. |
| C.3.3 | Move to pay-on-foot for all HRM-operated, access-controlled lots.                                                                                                                                |
| C.3.4 | Implement pay-and-display for HRM-operated surface lots without access control.                                                                                                                  |
| C.3.5 | Consider proximity cards for monthly parkers in HRM-operated lots.                                                                                                                               |

#### **Supportive Initiatives**

- Ensure priced on-street parking in HRM is patrolled several times daily to discourage violations, particularly in central Halifax.
- Improve signage to better explain on-street time restrictions and pricing.
- Develop promotional material to make employees in Downtown Halifax aware of the problems caused by “meter feeding” and available off-street parking options.

#### **5.3.4 STRATEGY C.4: URBAN DESIGN**

The ongoing Regional Centre Urban Design Study, “HRM by Design”, reflects the importance of urban design expressed in the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy. The study intends to articulate an urban design strategy for the Regional Centre including new design guidelines and incentives for good design and development.

Parking is a significant component of the urban fabric. In suburban areas, for example, up to 75 percent of the site can be dedicated to surface parking<sup>14</sup>. When functional requirements are the only objectives considered in parking facility design, the result is often undesirable characterized by

<sup>14</sup> Tri-Met. January 1996. Planning and Design for Transit Handbook. Portland OR.

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unattractive streetscapes, lack of safety and comfort for non-motorists, and lack of greenery. To support HRM by Design, the urban design issues and best practices regarding parking design are discussed in the **Parking Design Considerations Report**.

What makes a good design? Although identifying a first-rate parking facility design depends greatly on the subtleties of its local environment, a good design should prioritize the following core principles:

1. Respect the existing or planned context;
2. Enhance the safety and attractiveness of the public realm;
3. Provide safe, comfortable and convenient routes for pedestrians, and parking for cyclists;
4. Create convenient and safe links to public transit;
5. Provide for easy parking access and good internal circulation and manoeuvring;
6. Provide shade and high quality landscaping;
7. Mitigate the urban heat island effect; and
8. Manage stormwater quality and quantity on-site.<sup>15</sup>

The **Parking Design Considerations Report** discusses how the design of parking facilities can be improved with respect to ten design categories including location, layout, parking structures, bicycle circulation and parking, barrier free access, stormwater management, landscaping, lighting, loading and trash collection, and snow storage. Some key recommendations include:

- Locate surface lots behind buildings and inside city blocks to avoid large gaps in building and public realm continuity and orient building fronts towards the street;
- Ensure architectural quality of parking structures and provide retail or community space on the ground floor fronting the street to ensure continuity along a main street;
- Provide clearly marked pedestrian aisles in surface parking lots;
- Design parking facilities to provide as much barrier free access as possible in compliance with the Nova Scotia Code Barrier Free Standards;
- Use low-impact development practices (e.g., bio-retention cells, rain gardens, permeable pavement) to reduce stormwater runoff from parking lots and remove pollutants and sediments on site.

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<sup>15</sup> Adapted in part from Design Guidelines for 'Greening' Surface Parking Lots, November 2007, Draft, Urban Design, Toronto City Planning.

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Charles Hayden parking garage in Toronto provides landscaping and pedestrian amenities to add to the street realm.



Metro Park in Downtown Halifax illustrates good urban design, incorporating street-level retail as well as architectural features.

### ***Recommended Actions***

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| C.4.1 | Develop educational material regarding good parking design and require parking facilities to consider key urban design issues (e.g., location, architecture, pedestrian facilities) during site plan approval process. This material should be incorporated into the land use by-law. |
| C.4.2 | Provide direction regarding parking location and design in new form-based zoning for the Regional Centre.                                                                                                                                                                             |

## 6. RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

Traditional approaches to parking planning have focused on capacity issues (i.e., Is there enough? How do we provide more parking?). The strategies recommended in this functional plan reflect a new paradigm in the way parking is managed. The paradigm moves beyond the “predict and provide” approach and is based on a more holistic and nuanced approach to parking management. Key aspects of this approach include:

- A “parking problem” may be due to a variety of issues including inefficient management, lack of transportation options, inadequate user information, or inadequate supply;
- Too much parking is as harmful as too little;
- Parking requirements should reflect each particular situation and should be applied flexibly; and
- As much as possible, users should pay directly for parking facilities.

Existing parking management strategies in HRM deal with supply, demand, and supporting elements, such as payment technology and governance. Recommended strategies and related actions summarized in Exhibit 6-1 build on these and outline how parking can be managed in HRM to support business and tourism, encourage growth and efficient land use, and support a choice of integrated travel modes, move towards greater urban sustainability.

**Exhibit 6-1: Summary of Strategies and Related Actions**

| Strategy                                                               | ID    | Implementing Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b><i>Strategies that Increase Parking Capacity and Efficiency</i></b> |       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| A.1 Revise Parking Zoning Standards                                    | A.1.1 | In the short term, adopt proposed adjustment factors as guidelines to be implemented by staff on a case-by-case basis. They should be formalized into the new land use zoning by-law.                                                                                                                                                                 |
|                                                                        | A.1.2 | Implement changes to parking standards in conjunction with on-going reviews of zoning standards and the development of the centres plans, consistent with the proposed framework.                                                                                                                                                                     |
|                                                                        | A.1.3 | Modify parking space dimension requirements for standard and accessible parking spaces.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                                                        | A.1.4 | Adopt consistent set of mobility disabled parking standards across HRM.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| A.2 Improve User Information                                           | A.2.1 | Work in partnership with the private sector to develop common formats, colours and logos for collective parking signage including directional signage, location/identification signage and wayfinding signage. Signage can be tailored to local business areas (e.g. Spring Garden Road, Quinpool Road, Downtown Dartmouth, etc.).                    |
|                                                                        | A.2.2 | Develop pedestrian oriented-signage throughout existing and proposed Centres to direct pedestrians to/from parking areas.                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|                                                                        | A.2.3 | Develop a parking portal through HRM's website to be a “one-stop-shop” for parking information. The portal should include information on publicly accessible parking, links to available monthly parking for commuters, parking maps, details on prices, regulations, and fine payment, and future expansion plans, among other relevant information. |

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| Strategy                                              | ID     | Implementing Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                       | A.2.4  | Establish a database of all public and private parking that can be used in developing above materials.                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                                       | A.2.5  | Develop improved signage for park and ride facilities that is clearly visible, and consistent with Metro Transit logos, particularly where such facilities are shared with other uses (e.g., Penhorn Mall).                                                          |
| A.3 Optimize On-Street Parking Management             | A.3.1  | Continue to price on-street parking in commercial areas according to demand while ensuring frequent turnover through enforcement and pricing.                                                                                                                        |
|                                                       | A.3.2  | In consultation with businesses, introduce parking pricing in busy commercial areas on evenings and weekends to discourage long term parking and to ensure availability for visitors.                                                                                |
|                                                       | A.3.3  | Ensure priced on-street parking in HRM is patrolled several times daily to discourage violations, particularly in central Halifax.                                                                                                                                   |
|                                                       | A.3.4  | Provide enforcement officers with real-time wireless information and ticketing systems to automate enforcement and allow each officer to patrol a larger area.                                                                                                       |
|                                                       | A.3.5  | Offer "First Free Time" exemptions of parking infractions along with brochures explaining parking regulations.                                                                                                                                                       |
|                                                       | A.3.6  | Improve signage to better explain on-street time restrictions and pricing.                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                                                       | A.3.7  | Develop promotional material to make employees in Downtown Halifax aware of the problems caused by "meter feeding" and available off-street parking options.                                                                                                         |
|                                                       | A.3.8  | Consider on-street parking should in all new developments and street design projects, particularly in the Centres.                                                                                                                                                   |
|                                                       | A.3.9  | Modify the Residential Parking Exemption Program in line with the proposed changes detailed in the <b>Residential On-Street Parking Management Report</b> (based on the active management approach).                                                                 |
|                                                       | A.3.10 | Modify the Parking by Permit Only Program in line with the proposed changes detailed in the <b>Residential On-Street Parking Management Report</b> .                                                                                                                 |
|                                                       | A.3.11 | Increase use of Parking by Permit Only program in residential areas that have a high occurrence of employees using on-street parking. Example areas include streets around Halifax Commons and the area near the Stadacona Barracks of Canadian Forces Base Halifax. |
|                                                       | A.3.12 | Increase enforcement of residential parking programs.                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|                                                       | A.3.13 | Increase options for applying for and renewing permits and for obtaining visitor parking permits, including provisions for on-line application.                                                                                                                      |
| A.4. Expand Municipally-Owned Public Parking Supply   | A.4.1  | Increase the role of HRM in providing public parking, particularly in Centres where parking facilities can serve multiple users and destinations, thereby lowering overall parking supply required.                                                                  |
|                                                       | A.4.2  | Locate and design public parking to establish transportation nodes, including transit and pedestrian connections.                                                                                                                                                    |
|                                                       | A.4.3  | Seek opportunities for additional municipally owned public parking, particularly in Downtown Halifax.                                                                                                                                                                |
|                                                       | A.4.4  | Consider the needs of tour bus parking in developing municipally owned public parking.                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Strategies that Reduce Commuter Parking Demand</b> |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| B.1 Improve Transit Options                           | B.1.1  | Increase the involvement of Metro Transit in site design decisions, particularly in the Centres.                                                                                                                                                                     |

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| Strategy                                       | ID    | Implementing Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------------------|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                | B.1.2 | Expand and improve transit services, particularly with Metro Link extensions to suburban areas. (refer to Rural Transit and Park and Ride Study)                                                                                         |
|                                                | B.1.3 | Improve access to trunk transit service through strategic park and ride expansions, improved feeder service, walking and cycling connections, and transit-oriented development. (refer to Rural Transit and Park and Ride Study)         |
|                                                | B.1.4 | Support expansion proposed downtown shuttle service.                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| B.2 Promote Active Transportation              | B.2.1 | Provide bicycle lockers and other amenities (e.g. showers at office buildings, benches, etc.) throughout the Centres.                                                                                                                    |
|                                                | B.2.2 | Install additional secure bike parking facilities in City-owned parking lots and in key areas.                                                                                                                                           |
|                                                | B.2.3 | Consider active transportation corridor needs in on-street parking design and regulation.                                                                                                                                                |
|                                                | B.2.4 | Continue to promote integration of cycling with transit services (e.g., bike boxes at park and ride stations).                                                                                                                           |
|                                                | B.2.5 | Implement active transportation infrastructure and improvements as specified in the Active Transportation Functional Plan                                                                                                                |
| B.3 Encourage Ridesharing and TDM              | B.3.1 | Provide preferential parking for licensed vanpools on HRM surface lots.                                                                                                                                                                  |
|                                                | B.3.2 | Foster the development of car-sharing                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|                                                | B.3.3 | Promote and encourage the use of the online ridematching system, HRMsmarttrip.ca                                                                                                                                                         |
|                                                | B.3.4 | Expand, upgrade, and promote the network of carpool lots in HRM.                                                                                                                                                                         |
|                                                | B.3.5 | Through the TDM functional plan, establish and support Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) to provide transportation and parking management services in specific areas.                                                        |
| B.4 Parking Pricing                            | B.4.1 | Provide discounts to fuel-efficient vehicles and high-occupancy vehicles at public off-street lots.                                                                                                                                      |
|                                                | B.4.2 | Require that parking costs be identified separately from occupancy costs in Centres for both commercial and multi-unit residential development.                                                                                          |
|                                                | B.4.3 | Develop a detailed parking plan for each Centre identifying strategic parking locations, outlining how parking will be used to support transportation objectives and the steps to establish a market for priced parking, where feasible. |
| <b>Supporting Strategies</b>                   |       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| C.1 Updated Parking Governance Structure       | C.1.1 | Create a Parking Manager position with appropriate support staff to oversee parking and coordinate activities between relevant municipal departments.                                                                                    |
|                                                | C.1.2 | Create a Parking Advisory Committee and appoint members from across HRM including members of the public and key stakeholders.                                                                                                            |
| C.2 Funding Parking Management and Development | C.2.1 | Develop an approach for determining the cash-in-lieu of parking rate.                                                                                                                                                                    |
|                                                | C.2.2 | Implement a stormwater management fee based on the amount of impermeable surface on a site (pending HRM tax reform review).                                                                                                              |
|                                                | C.2.3 | Establish a mechanism to direct surplus parking revenues into a dedicated capital fund to support the development of TDM related projects, including the downtown shuttle.                                                               |

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| Strategy                       | ID    | Implementing Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|--------------------------------|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                | C.2.4 | Develop a business plan for developing municipally owned parking in Downtown Halifax, developing Centres, and other commercial and transit corridors that incorporates parking planning, rate structure, funding with future development and transit/TDM investment, moving towards full cost-recovery for publicly owned parking. |
| C.3 Parking Payment Technology | C.3.1 | Enhance existing single-space on-street meters with pay by cell phone technology.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|                                | C.3.2 | Adopt alternative revenue collection technologies for on-street parking in the future when existing equipment needs to be replaced and more innovative solutions are proven and more affordable.                                                                                                                                   |
|                                | C.3.3 | Move to pay-on-foot for all HRM-operated, access-controlled lots.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|                                | C.3.4 | Implement pay-and-display for HRM-operated surface lots without access control.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|                                | C.3.5 | Consider proximity cards for monthly parkers in HRM-operated lots.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| C.4 Urban Design               | C.4.1 | Develop educational material regarding good parking design and require parking facilities to consider key urban design issues (e.g., location, architecture, pedestrian facilities) during site plan approval process. This material should be incorporated into the land use by-law.                                              |
|                                | C.4.2 | Provide direction regarding parking location and design in new form-based zoning for the Regional Centre.                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

## 7. IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

The Regional Parking Strategy is intended to be a forward-looking plan that will guide decisions on parking over the next 25 years. The Parking Strategy presents a series of comprehensive recommendations to improve parking conditions in HRM for consideration by the municipality and other stakeholders. This program of strategies and actions would be carried out over both the short, medium and longer term through further planning and budgeting processes.

An over-riding recommendation of this Parking Strategy is for HRM to recognize the many benefits of involving business owners, private developers, all City Departments and the public in decisions on parking. There are tremendous opportunities for growth in HRM and this parking strategy should be used as a guide to ensure that parking decisions are made so as to foster and promote new development in a manner that ensures the long terms environmental, economic and social sustainability of the Region.

### 7.1 Short-Term Actions

This section describes actions that can be implemented immediately to improve parking management in HRM and build capacity to support existing and future development in line with the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy. They include a broad range of actions relating to parking governance, zoning by-laws, payment technology, user information, and residential parking.

#### **Hire parking manager/develop Parking Advisory Committee**

One of the first steps towards more coordinated parking management in HRM is to update the currently fragmented parking governance structure. A hybrid parking committee/parking manager model is recommended for HRM in the short-term to set directions for parking in HRM and coordinate parking-related activities across departments. Setting up this structure is an important first step in moving towards more active management of the parking system including building capacity for HRM to provide and operate more collective parking. It is envisioned that the parking manager will oversee implementation of the Regional Parking Strategy with direction from the Parking Advisory Committee and Council.

#### **Develop a cash-in-lieu of parking by-law**

A key aspect of the proposed parking zoning by-law modifications includes mandatory Cash-in-lieu of parking for Downtown Halifax as well as optional cash-in-lieu of parking in the Centres. This will provide an important source of funds for developing municipal parking facilities, provided that proper incentives exist for developers to make use of this option. To start generating funds and help build awareness of this option, cash-in-lieu of parking should be made available quickly. This involves developing a cash-in-lieu of parking by-law specifying, in particular, the rate, which should be based on a simple equation incorporating the cost of land and type of parking facility to be developed.

#### **Develop “model” parking zoning by-laws for the Centres**

Visioning exercises for some of the Centres are well underway. As development proceeds in these areas, there is an immediate need for guidance regarding parking. A generic model parking zoning by-law should be created based on the parking zoning by-law recommendations for the Centres. This model by-law could be tailored to each individual Centre and enacted quickly to ensure that, from a parking perspective, new development in the Centres help to support the local visions for these areas.

#### **Implement pay by cell phone for on-street parking**

Pay by cell phone for on-street parking can be implemented quickly for relatively low cost to improve payment options for on-street parking, while maintaining the existing single-space meters. The preferred approach is that adopted by Saskatoon, Saskatchewan and West Palm Beach, Florida<sup>16</sup>. Once a contract has been established with the private company that operates this system, few changes are required to existing equipment other than sticker existing meters with instructions and a unique stall ID.

Implementing pay by cell phone for on-street parking should be a 'quick win' action of the new parking governance structure, to build awareness and support of the willingness to improve management of on-street parking.

#### **Develop a parking portal through HRM's website**

Reflecting current departmentalization of parking responsibilities, information on the parking system in HRM is not consolidated in one area on the website. Another short-term action of the new parking governance structure should be to consolidate this information into a "one-stop-shop" portal for parking information on the HRM website. Initially, the portal can simply link to all available online information on the parking system. In the short-term, however, it should be expanded to include:

- Enhanced information on publicly accessible parking (both HRM and privately owned) and potentially links to available monthly parking for commuters, both privately and publicly owned;
- Online fine payment;
- Residential parking permit programs (including online application and renewal options)
- Link to parking by-laws; and
- Future parking expansion plans.

#### **Reform On-Street Residential Parking Programs**

Many changes are recommended to the Residential Parking Exemption and Parking by Permit Only programs, as summarized in Section 5.1.3. These reforms will offer greater flexibility to residents of HRM who rely on on-street parking and reflect many of their expressed concerns. Changes to the Residential Parking Exemption program will affect more residents. Necessary actions for this program include:

- Identify multi-block permit zones and determine number of residential and visitor exemptions to be offered in each zone;
- Establish the pricing scheme for parking exemptions, which is recommended to increase for each additional exemption, and should allow the program to be self-financing; and
- Proceed with further consultation with residents on proposed changes to these programs.

Enforcement plans are required to support changes to the residential parking programs to ensure they are effective and build support from residents. In addition, work should proceed as part of the

<sup>16</sup> West Palm Beach implemented pay by cell phone on 1,500 MacKay single space meters for \$5,000 (see Olley, RS. *Ringling In: A New Way to Pay for Meters*. The Parking Professional, March 2007.)

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parking portal project to accommodate online Exemption Renewals or Visitor Exemption applications.

### **Incorporate the recommended parking strategies into other functional plans and the overall Transportation Master Plan**

The recommended parking strategies touch on many areas of urban transportation and development including public transit, active transportation, management of streets, and transportation demand management. As the Transportation Master Plan is prepared, it is essential that recommendations from the constituent functional plans are mutually supportive.

## **7.2 Planning for Parking in Centres**

The pilot community visioning process, VisionHRM, is nearly complete for three Centres: Bedford Waterfront, Fall River, and Musquodoboit Harbour. Current plans are to proceed with similar visioning exercises for all of the Growth Centres. Moving beyond the visioning process, it is clear that “getting the parking right” will be an important aspect of achieving the visions developed for the Centres, particularly in areas such as Penhorn Mall (the next Centre slated for community visioning), which have the potential to be transit-oriented centres. As outlined in the recommended actions, there is a need to “develop a detailed parking plan for each Centre identifying strategic parking locations, outlining how parking will be used to support transportation objectives and the steps to establish a market for priced parking, where feasible.” (B.4.3).

Such parking plans will take direction from the strategic recommendations of this functional plan and the community visioning to provide detailed recommendations on how parking should be developed to help achieve the Centre vision. Specifically, these plans should:

- Consider a vision for each Centre to identify key roles for parking (e.g., space-efficient structured parking, provide short-term needs for retail customers, commuter park and ride, support transportation demand management initiatives, etc.);
- Develop/identify land use forecasts for population and employment, commercial office and retail floor areas;
- Develop/identify transportation planning targets for future transit and auto use, and vehicle occupancy;
- Use land use forecasts and transportation planning targets to project short-, medium-, and long-term parking demand;
- Assess feasibility for establishing a market for priced parking and identify strategies to foster such a market building off options outlined in Section 5.2.4 (e.g., redevelopment on existing surface parking facilities, separate identification of parking costs from building occupancy costs, public sector provision of priced parking, etc.);
- Develop targets for proportion of parking to be provided as priced and structured;
- Assess potential for public sector parking involvement including both on- and off-street parking;
- Develop parking requirements for existing and future conditions to support transportation and land use targets, including requirements for structured parking and tight maximum limitations, where feasible;
- Identify strategic locations for shared, collective parking and on-street parking;

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- Develop a business plan for public sector parking considering all available funding options (e.g. cash-in-lieu of parking, reserve fund, user fees, private sector involvement);
- Identify policy and regulatory components including secondary plan policies, zoning by-law requirements, and urban design guidelines; and
- Develop a parking phasing plan including the potential for surface parking to be redeveloped as transit service is improved.