REGIONAL MUNICIPAL PLANNING STRATEGY

DRAFT FOR COMMUNITY ENAGEMENT

JUNE 2023

(PRESENTED TO HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, JUNE 20, 2023)

PREFACE

This document, released in June 2023, represents a Draft Regional Plan for public engagement purposes. Residents of Halifax Regional Municipality, our partners and stakeholders in community, industry and other levels of government, are encouraged to read this document and provide feedback on this Draft Regional Plan. Recognizing that this Draft Plan is being released during a particularly challenging and tumultuous time as our municipality grapples with the outcome of the wildfires in the ~~Tantallon~~ Upper Tantallon* and Hammonds Plains areas, the public engagement period will run for four months. Following the close of the public engagement period on October 27, 2023, a complete amendment package will be prepared and brought forward for Regional Council's consideration and adoption.

The Halifax Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (the Regional Plan or this Plan) sets out a common vision, guiding principles and long-range, region-wide planning policies outlining where, when, and how future settlement, balanced growth and development should take place.

The Regional Plan is a powerful document that guides the Municipality's planning and decision-making. This Plan:

- provides policy direction for planning at the regional and community level;
- sets up region-wide land use by-law regulations;
- establishes the Municipality's intent to conduct future research programs or studies;
- identifies programming or partnership opportunities; and
- guides municipal operations.

Originally adopted in 2006, the Regional Plan provided the first comprehensive guide for future growth for the entire municipality following amalgamation. The 2006 Plan established policy for a 25-year horizon, from 2006-2031, with minor reviews expected every five years. The first Regional Plan review (also known as RP+5) was initiated in 2011 to make sure the Plan still reflected the Municipality's goals for growth and development, and the Plan was readopted in 2014.

The second five-year review of the Regional Plan began in 2020, just before the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to societal changes resulting from the global pandemic, the municipality has been experiencing a period of rapid population growth, beginning in 2016. This rapid growth is placing significant pressure on the Municipality's services and infrastructure, including parks, facilities, emergency services, transit, and utilities. The municipality is facing housing shortages as high housing costs and low vacancy rates impact residents' ability to secure safe, affordable and appropriate housing. Acting on the climate crisis continues to be critically important for building a more resilient and healthy future.

This period of growth, while challenging, also presents an opportunity for us to build the kind of community we want to see Halifax become. This Plan has been developed with a view to a longer-term horizon. Assuming a relatively high rate of growth continues, population projection scenarios have shown that the municipality is on track to double its population to around 1 million people in the next 25-30 years. This Plan asks: ***What does Halifax look like as a region of 1 million people?*** The policies of this Plan have been developed with a forward-looking view to supporting this growth in population over the long term, by strategically directing housing, jobs, and community infrastructure in a way that supports our goals for healthy, connected, inclusive and affordable communities. Regular monitoring of demographic and

*The Draft Regional Municipal Planning Strategy accepted by Halifax Regional Council to be used for public engagement purposes on June 20, 2023 included a clerical error that has been corrected as shown

The Draft Regional Municipal Planning Strategy accepted by Halifax Regional Council to be used for public engagement purposes on June 20, 2023 included a clerical error that has been corrected as shown economic trends, as well as flexible policy will ensure the Municipality is ready to respond to our current and future challenges. Following the adoption of this Plan, the Municipality will continue to study future growth scenarios, together with Regional Council, community and stakeholders to ensure we have a strong roadmap for the future.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Halifax Regional Municipality is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and traditional lands of the Mi'kmaq people. The Municipality acknowledges the Peace & Friendship Treaties signed in this Territory and recognizes that we are all Treaty People.

In 2015 Regional Council made a Statement of Reconciliation to First Nations communities. Recognizing the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and in working to implement those recommendations with implications for municipal governments, HRM is beginning to redefine its relationship with the Mi'kmaq and First Nations communities in the region. We are all Treaty people and have shared roles and responsibilities in planning for our region.

Planning for the future presents an opportunity to embrace *Etuaptmumk* - Two-Eyed Seeing, in which we learn to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of Western knowledges and ways of knowing. In doing so, we learn to use both perspectives for the benefit of all.[1]

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[1] http://www.integrativescience.ca/Principles/TwoEyedSeeing/

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 REGIONAL CONTEXT

The Halifax Regional Municipality (Municipality) is located in the Sipekni'katik and Eskikewa'kik districts of Mi'Kmak'i, the traditional and ancestral lands of the Mi'Kmaq First Nations. Halifax is commonly known to the Mi'Kmaq as K'jipuktuk, meaning Great Harbour.

The Municipality is the largest municipality in Nova Scotia in terms of geography and population, and is bordered by Hants County and the Municipality of Colchester to the north, the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg to the west, Guysborough County to the east, and the Atlantic Ocean along the Municipality's southern border. The Municipality was formed of four former municipalities, Halifax, Dartmouth, Bedford, and Halifax County, which were amalgamated in 1996. Now, Halifax Regional Municipality is comprised of a variety of urban, suburban and rural communities, each with unique identities and histories but with many shared attributes that contribute to the Municipality as a whole.

The Regional Plan sets out planning policy and regulation for three major geographic areas of the region: the Regional Centre, the Suburban Areas, and the Rural Areas. The evolution of these areas has been influenced by a wide range of economic, cultural, environmental, and social factors that continue to influence the physical form and character of communities and neighbourhoods.

The Regional Centre area is the most urban and densely populated area of the Municipality and is comprised of distinctive neighbourhoods that have evolved over thousands of years through use and settlement. It features a wide mix of land uses, landscapes, neighbourhoods, parks and public spaces, building types and designs, industries, services, and attractions. In the Regional Centre, most concentrated commercial districts are located within a walking distance of established neighbourhoods and communities, and within an easy reach of parks and open spaces. Also, the Halifax Harbour remains an important asset that facilitates the growth of commercial, industrial, and institutional activities in the region.

Similarly, the Suburban Area is largely urban and, in many cases, densely populated, and likewise comprised of distinct communities. These communities have developed independently over the years, each with their own history and character, but have become more connected as urban development has expanded out to meet them. As a result, suburban communities generally feature more variation in settlement patterns than is found in the Regional Centre. In some communities, this has created greater separation between residential neighbouhoods and commercial districts, requiring more travel by vehicle to access industries, services and attractions.

The Rural Area is the largest and most geographically diverse area. Similar to the rest of the Municipality, settlement in the rural area has taken place over centuries and is characterized by a mix of land uses and landscapes. Importantly, this area is also recognized for the unique ecological, social, economic, and cultural values it provides to the Municipality. The Rural Area is predominantly comprised of small community hubs where commercial uses serve surrounding traditionally rural areas. However, some parts of the Rural Area are more suburban in form due to past dispersed development patterns within commuting distance of the urban core. The Rural Area plays a crucial role in the economy of the Municipality, which continues to be shaped by historic rural farming, resource, and fishing activities of the Maritimes.

As the largest municipality in the Atlantic Canada, the municipality has a variety of roles to play. It is the capital of Nova Scotia. It is the primary point of international entry to, and exit from, Atlantic Canada. It is an important centre of production and an even more important centre for the delivery and management of goods and services. It is also a major cultural centre that people outside of Atlantic Canada look upon as a reflection of the region, and which people within the region look to as a leader.

1.1.1 HISTORICAL SETTLEMENTS

The Mi'Kmaq First Nations of K'jipuktuk established permanent villages and also moved in seasonal rounds from coastal regions in the summer where they fished and hunted, to inland areas in the wintertime. There is evidence of permanent settlements dating as far back as 10,000 years in locations such as Turtle Grove, which is a Mi'Kmaq settlement on the Dartmouth side of the Halifax Harbour, now known as Tufts Cove[2].

The first Europeans to arrive to the Atlantic region were likely Basque fishermen from the Bay of Biscay, who began whaling and fishing around 1525[3]. In the period between 1534 and 1600, early French settlers made voyages to the Atlantic east coast and landed in the Maritimes, and established alliances with Indigenous peoples in the area. Those alliances and relations emphasized peace and collaboration in trade[4].

In 1746, the British government sponsored the first settlement plan in Canada, focused on present-day Halifax, and established the Town of Halifax in 1749[5]. The design of the settlement was laid out in the typical British military manner of the time, with a regular grid system protected by military fortifications. In the same year, many warships were decommissioned and converted to transporter vessels of settlers. In 1750, the ship Alderney arrived and disembarked new settlers on the east side of the Halifax Harbour, who took up residence in what is now known as downtown Dartmouth[6].

The establishment and evolution of the Town of Halifax resulted in escalated tensions and war over land rights with the Mi'Kmaq, the original inhabitants of the lands, and led to the deportation of the French-speaking Acadians in 1755. Between 1725 and 1779, the British Crown signed a series of treaties with the Mi'Kmaq First Nations, and various Indigenous nations living in different parts of what are now the Maritimes and neighbouring areas. Commonly known as the Peace and Friendship Treaties, these agreements were mainly designed to prevent war and facilitate trade. While these treaties contained no monetary or land transfer provisions, they guaranteed hunting, fishing, and land-use rights for the descendants of the Indigenous signatories[7]. The Peace and Friendship Treaties remain in effect today.

In 2015, the Federal Government of Canada, the Provincial Government of Nova Scotia, and Council of the Municipality issued various official Statements of Reconciliation to acknowledge a new approach and commit to reconciliation with the Indigenous Peoples of Canada, the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis[8]. These

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[2] Coulter, A., Ruitenbeek, I., & Rutgers J. (2019). The Story of Turtle Grove. Retrieved July 20, 2020, from signalhfx.ca/the-story-of-turtle-grove/
[3] Bélanger, R. (2006). Basques. Retrieved July 20, 2020, from thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/basques
[4] Wallace, S. (2018). Peace and Friendship Treaties. Retrieved on July 20, 2020, from thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/peace-and-friendship-treaties
[5] Mccann, L. (2012). Halifax. Retrieved July 20, 2020, from thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/halifax
[6] Kernaghan, L. (2012). Dartmouth. Retrieved July 20, 2020, from thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/dartmouth
[7] Wallace, S. (2018). Peace and Friendship Treaties. Retrieved on July 20, 2020, from thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/peace-and-friendship-treaties
[8] Moran, R. (2015). Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Retrieved July 22, 2020, from thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/truth-and-reconciliation-commission

statements act as a commitment to learning from the lessons of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and to taking action to ensure the needs and aspirations of Indigenous peoples are fully recognized.

Following the American Revolution and the War of 1812, many Black settlers arrived from the United States. The British government granted many of these families farm land around the outskirts of Halifax and Dartmouth. These communities – Beechville, Cherry Brook, East Preston, Hammonds Plains, Lucasville and North Preston – are the oldest African Canadian communities in Canada.

1.1.2 URBAN AND SUBURBAN DEVELOPMENT

Economic development and settlement patterns in the urban and suburban parts of the Municipality, and particularly Halifax, Dartmouth, and Bedford, were affected and shaped by conflicts such as the Napoleonic Wars (1793-1815), the American Revolutionary War (1775-83), World War I (1914-18), and World War II (1939-45). This resulted in direct military investment that supported many associated shipbuilding and military supply businesses. Essentially, wartime activity maintained the local economy in the region.

The development of the railway system in the Municipality in the late 1880s and early 1900s also opened new lands for development, and improved connections to communities in Nova Scotia and Canada. As such, economic growth based on privateering, international shipping, and trade expanded wealth and population, which resulted in the prosperity of the region in the mid- to late 1800s. The commercial prosperity continued until the Halifax Explosion in 1917, which had significant impacts on many businesses and industries, as well as development patterns[9]. The Halifax Explosion levelled many areas in the North End of Halifax and portions of Dartmouth. This destruction, in part, led to the realignment of various street grids in Halifax and Dartmouth [10].

In the post-World War II years, most of the Region's housing stock was built to accommodate returning servicemen and their families. With the advent of the automobile, construction of the highway system, and extension of trunk water supply lines, development spread outward from the Regional Centre and began to connect to existing smaller towns, such as Bedford, Fairview, Armdale, Beechville, Spryfield, Cole Harbour, and others, as well as in largely undeveloped or formerly rural areas like Clayton Park, Woodside, and Hammonds Plains. The steady development and economic growth since the 1950s mostly stemmed from wholesale distribution, transportation, and specialized institutions. By the end of the 1950s, most lands within the Regional Centre were developed and the Suburban Area had begun to grow significantly in both population and geography.

The urban renewal movement that included intensive commercial and industrial expansion during the 1950s had a devastating effect on Africville, the African Nova Scotian community located on the edge of the Bedford Basin[11]. The community had been home to Black residents of Halifax since the mid-19th century. In the mid-1950s, Africville was identified as a suitable site for industrial development, and central water and sewer services, as well as other municipal services were not extended to the community[12]. In 1961, Council voted to remove the residents to make way for industrial development and the construction of the A. Murray MacKay Bridge, connecting Halifax Peninsula to Dartmouth. The residents were evicted and displaced, Africville was demolished, and the land was converted into a municipally owned park. In 1996,

[9] Mccann, L. (2012). Halifax. Retrieved July 20, 2020, from thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/halifax
[10] Kernaghan, L. & Foot, R. (2011). Halifax Explosion. Retrieved on July 21, 2020, from thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/halifax-explosion
[11] Tattrie, J. (2014) Africville. Retrieved July 22, 2020, from thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/africville
[12] Nova Scotia Archives. (2007). Gone but never forgotten. Retrieved March 3, 2021, from archives.novascotia.ca/africville/

the site was recognized as a National Historic Site as it continues to serve as a symbol of the Black Nova Scotian cultural identity, and past racial injustices[13]. In 2010, Council issued an apology for the destruction of Africville, and the eviction and displacement of its residents. A non-profit society, known as the Africville Heritage Trust Society, was established in 2012 to be the governing body intended to own and operate a museum and a community church, known as the Seaview Baptist Church and Africville Interpretive Centre[14].

During the latter half of the 20th century, residential, commercial, and industrial growth continued in the Regional Centre and Suburban Area and was largely guided by geographic and topographic limitations as well as an increasingly regional approach as parts of former Halifax County began to be amalgamated into Halifax. During this time, commercial and industrial growth expanded in the Suburban Area with the introduction and expansion of the Burnside Industrial Park in Dartmouth in the 1970s and of the Bayers Lake Business Park in Halifax in the 1980s. As major employment centres, Burnside and Bayers Lake influenced the growth of nearby suburban communities and these communities saw increasingly urban residential typologies, but the infrastructure tended to continue to be focused on the private vehicle.

Continued expansion and maintenance by the Province of Highways 111, 118, and 107 have provided greater access to suburban communities and influenced their expansion. Likewise growth in suburban communities in Halifax has been greatly stimulated by Highways 101, 102, 103. This growth has been accommodated through infill and redevelopment in established communities, as well as through secondary planning for new greenfield communities that have been built as extensions of the urban and suburban area. Development patterns between the urban and suburban areas remain relatively distinct, where settlement and infrastructure in the Regional Centre still retains its colonial-style street grid and intermixed land uses and the Suburban Area is defined by commercial arterial streets with wide rights-of-way surrounded by lower-density residential land uses.

1.1.3 RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Rural development in the Municipality has been diverse in terms of geography, population density, and proximity to the urban core. Economic development and settlement patterns in the rural area have been influenced by the same drivers that led to the expansion of Halifax – notably, naval expansion and immigrant and refugee settlement. As well, railway and highway expansion in the 20th century has led to continued growth and change in the rural area. As settlement expanded out from the urban area, linear development in the rural area along routes to the Regional Centre became more common, comprised of large estate lots, long farm lots and smaller lots along watercourses, the coast, and the highways.

Many rural communities have been uniquely shaped by their local industry, including farming, fishing, and resource activities. In the rural area, many communities are still strongly driven by these traditional industries, like farming in Musquodoboit Valley, fishing and coastal industry in Fisherman's Cove, or mining in Moose River. Communities also continue to be shaped by protected wilderness areas and parks, and other natural areas that offer important ecological services to the entire Municipality.

Throughout the 20th century, population expansion in the Municipality has led to population growth in existing rural centres. Much of this development has continued the pattern of rural character, driven by the rural economy and new housing settlement, while maintaining ecological, economic, social, and

[13] McRae, M. (n.d.). The Story of Africville. Retrieved July 22, 2020, from humanrights.ca/story/the-story-of-africville
[14] A.L. Arbic Consulting and Genesis Consulting. (2010). *Seaview Church & Africville Interpretive Centre: Update to December 2006 Feasibility Study/Business Plan.* Halifax Regional Municipality.

cultural values of these areas. However, during the 1980s and 90s, some rural areas within commuting distance of the urban core experienced significant residential development due to the pre-amalgamation subdivision regulations which allowed dispersed development patterns. In some instances, these developments have led to concerns around the availability of services and infrastructure, environmental impacts, and the maintenance of private roads. Sustainable growth continues to be a focus in the Rural Area.

1.2 REGIONAL VISION AND PRINCIPLES

1.2.1 VISION

The Regional Plan Vision was first developed in 2006 following significant engagement with municipality residents and the Regional Planning Committee and continues to guide this Plan:

The Municipality's vision for the future is to enhance our quality of life by fostering the growth of healthy and vibrant communities, a strong and diverse economy, and sustainable environment.

1.2.2 GUIDING PRINCIPLE

The Regional Plan will seek to address the needs and view of all sectors of the municipality , recognizing the diversity of its residents, communities and geographies.

1.2.3 PRINCIPLES

This Plan:

- Directs housing and employment growth to strategic locations across the region that supports building healthy, connected communities;
- Guides investments in physical and social infrastructure at the regional and local level;
- Encourages community-led initiatives and collaboration on planning, environmental management, and culture and heritage protection;
- Supports increasing housing supply across the region to meet the needs of residents of all ages, income levels and abilities;
- Reflects HRM's commitments to **addressing*** Reconciliation, Anti-Black Racism, and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in municipal planning policies and programs.

*The Draft Regional Municipal Planning Strategy accepted by Halifax Regional Council to be used for public engagement purposes on June 20, 2023 included a clerical error that has been corrected as shown

1.3 PLAN ORGANIZATION

This Plan establishes policies which are implemented through the Secondary Municipal Planning Strategies, Land Use By-laws and Priority Plan implementation programs.

This Plan is divided into the following Chapters:

1. Introduction
2. Planning for Our Region
3. Building Healthy and Complete Communities
4. Supporting Community Infrastructure
5. Building Diverse and Affordable Housing
6. Protecting the Environment and Acting on Climate
7. Transforming How We Move in Our Region
8. Driving Inclusive Economic Growth
9. Celebrating Culture, Arts and Heritage
10. Implementation

1.4 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS

The Regional Plan is the overarching planning document guiding the growth and development of the entire Municipality, including direction for community plans, and the creation of Priority Plans. This Plan provides the overall policy framework that guides and directs development throughout the municipality . It provides an overall vision for land use and general strategies.

To implement the planning and land use direction contained in this Plan, the Municipality relies on the Regional Subdivision By-law and on community plans, land use by-laws, and heritage by-laws. The community plans and land use by-laws apply to a specific community area (sub-geography) within the region. They contain locally-oriented policies that govern land use on each property within that plan area. Heritage by-laws can provide an additional layer of protection and guidance for registered heritage properties and heritage conservation districts.

Many of HRM's 22 Secondary Municipal Planning Strategies were developed before amalgamation in 1996. Each is accompanied by a Land Use By-law, which is the regulatory implementation tool. The plans are in a variety of formats, and use different definitions, policies, and processes to regulate land use and development. Recognizing the age of the existing community plans and the need to provide a comprehensive update for the entire region, this Plan guides the Community Plan & By-law Simplification Program, which has been established to modernize planning policy and improve administration. The goal of this program is to reorganize the community plans around three major geographies:

- **Regional Centre:** Halifax Peninsula and Dartmouth within the Circumferential Highway;
- **Suburban Communities:** lands outside of the Regional Centre in the Urban Settlement Designation; and
- **Rural Communities:** all lands within rural designations that used on-site services (sewer and wells).

The reorganization of HRM's planning framework into these three sub-geographies will address the issue of many different plans guiding planning decisions, by providing a regional vision and context. It will establish a unified planning approach and bring these documents more fully in line with the strategic vision set out in this Plan.

A major role of the Regional Plan is to direct the Municipality to undertake more detailed work. The 2014 Regional Plan directed the development of several Priority Plans, which have been approved by Regional Council since that time. The policies of this Plan support and implement the Priority Plans, as well as many other existing plans and initiatives. In some cases, the policies of this Plan direct that existing plans should be updated. The Priority Plans and other related Council-approved plans and policies are included in Table 1 below. The policies outlined by the Regional Plan will enable the Municipality to work towards realizing the many objectives and directions outlined in these plans. This Plan may also need to be adjusted to support updates to the priorities plans and the Regional Centre, Suburban, and Rural Plans may need to be updated periodically to support updates to this Plan.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="5">Plans and Strategies</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Priority Plans and Supporting Plans</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Integrated Mobility Plan (2017)

• Rapid Transit Strategy
• Active Transportation Priorities Plan
• Moving Forward Together Plan
• Transportation Demand Management Functional Plan
• Regional Goods Movement Scoping Strategy

Other Subject Area Plans

• Community Facilities Master Plan
• Playing Field Strategy</td><td>Halifax Green Network Plan (2018)

• The Urban Forest Management Plan</td><td>HalifACT (2020)</td><td>Sharing Our Stories (2023)</td><td>People, Planet, Prosperity: HRM Economic Strategy (2022-2027)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Other Subject Area Plans</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>• Electric Vehicle Strategy
• Solid Waste Strategy</td><td>• The Public Safety Strategy
• Diversity and Inclusion Framework
• Accessibility and Inclusion Strategy
• French Language Services Strategy</td><td>• African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity
• The Housing and Homelessness Framework
• The Halifax Housing Partnership's Affordable Housing Strategic Plan
• Integrated Tourism Master Plan
• Industrial Employment Lands Strategy</td></tr>
</table>

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• Long Term Aquatic Strategy				• JustFOOD Action Plan (Part A)

1.5 PROVINCIAL ROLE IN PLANNING

Statements of Provincial Interest enacted in accordance with the Nova Scotia *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) outline the province's vision for protecting Nova Scotia's land and water resources, and growth of communities. They are adopted as regulations under the MGA and apply to all municipalities. The statements are intended to help provincial government departments and municipalities make land use decisions that support the principles of sustainable development. Municipal planning documents must be reasonably consistent with the statements. The six statements include the:

1. Statement of Provincial Interest Regarding Drinking Water;
2. Statement of Provincial Interest Regarding Flood Risk Areas;
3. Statement of Provincial Interest Regarding Agricultural Land;
4. Statement of Provincial Interest Regarding Infrastructure;
5. Statement of Provincial Interest Regarding Housing; and
6. Statement of Provincial Interest Regarding the Development of the Nova Centre.

This Plan considers and is consistent with the following Statements of Interest as described below.

Provincial Statement (1): Drinking Water

The drinking water supply for the municipality is supplied from lakes located across the Region. The protection of these water supply watersheds is addressed by this Plan in Chapters 6 and 10.

Provincial Statement (2): Flood Risk Areas

Low-lying areas in the municipality sometimes experience flooding from intense weather events. This Plan includes policies and regulations on ocean storm surge protection, landscaping and green roof requirements, and watercourse buffers to reduce and mitigate the risk of flooding through policies contained in Chapter 6. The Secondary Municipal Planning Strategies also address flood risk areas through land use designation policies and regulations.

Provincial Statement (3): Agricultural Land

By enabling strategic growth in existing communities, this Plan provides for a variety of housing and development opportunities in urban and suburban areas where services already exist, thereby reducing development pressure on agricultural lands in other parts of the municipality. This Plan provides protections and regulations for agricultural land across the municipality in Chapters 2 and 10, and highlights the importance of agricultural land for food security in Chapter 4.

Provincial Statement (4): Infrastructure

This Plan supports the efficient use of municipal infrastructure by enabling the densification of areas where municipal water, sewer and transit services exist (the urban service area), and accommodating up to 90% of regional growth in the urban and suburban areas. Growth in these areas is supported by policy in Chapters 2, 3, 7 and 10 in this Plan and by land use policies in the Secondary Municipal Planning Strategies.

Provincial Statement (5): Housing

This Plan allows for a variety of residential forms and uses through the region, as provided by policies in Chapter 5.

Provincial Statement (6): Development of the Nova Centre

The Development of the publicly-sponsored convention centre with associated retail, hotel, residential, and office uses is recognized by the Regional Centre Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law, which are enabled by this Plan. This use is recognized as the Nova Centre (NC) Special Area in these planning documents.

1.6 INTERPRETATION

This Plan is written in the active voice to indicate purposeful direction for future development and outcome. Under the provisions of the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*, a Municipality cannot regulate directly from a Regional Municipal Planning Strategy or Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy; rather, it must regulate from a Land Use By-Law adopted by the Municipality to carry out the intent and direction of this Plan.

Implementing the actions, initiatives, and programs identified in this Plan will need to be reviewed against the priorities and municipal financial capacities of current and future Municipal work plans, as well as other existing plans.

1.6.1 KEY TERMS

This Plan uses the following key terms:;

- **Land Use By-law** means the regulatory document that implements the intent of a municipal planning strategy;
- **Municipality** or "**HRM**" means the Halifax Regional Municipality;
- **municipality** denotes the physical area of the Municipality;

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- **Priority Plan** means a subject-focused, strategic plan used to direction actions from the Regional Plan;
- **Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy** means a community-level plan, subject to the Regional Plan, that provides more detailed land use policy and regulations for a particular area of the Municipality. The term “community plan” is also used in this document to refer to these types of plans.

In this Plan, there are three used terms found in various policy statements:

- **“may”** denotes permissive action, and when used in policies, the Municipality is not obliged to undertake future action;
- **“shall”** denotes mandatory action, and when used in policies, the Municipality must implement the policy through the applicable implementation tools; and
- **“shall consider”** when used in policies, the Municipality is required to consider, but not obligated to undertake, any action or expend any money.

Figures in this Plan are provided for illustrative purposes only. Maps and appendices are part of this Plan.

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CHAPTER 2: PLANNING FOR OUR REGION

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CHAPTER 2: PLANNING FOR OUR REGION

2.0 ABOUT HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

The Halifax region is a beautiful place with a unique and valued blend of city and nature. Many of our neighborhoods are located near our striking Nova Scotian coastline. Other communities have grown around our abundant lakes and waterways. Our rural communities showcase our rich traditional and working landscapes. The city centre connects us to a visible history, and we continue to add new, more inclusive, public spaces.

We are known for being community-minded, and Halifax is recognized as one of the best places to live in Canada. Despite this, more needs to be done to help our community members who are most in need, especially when it comes to finding an affordable place to live. Equally important, we must ensure the needs of our changing population are met. Immigrants, newcomers, and people of all ages and abilities need to be reflected in our spaces and places. To achieve this, we must adopt a perspective that encompasses the diverse needs of the entire community, rather than just the majority.

We also need to re-envision our future and quickly consider how our communities will grow. Halifax is at a pivotal juncture in its journey, as we work towards addressing the legacies of colonialism and act against further climate change, while experiencing more population growth than we have seen in generations. The Regional Plan Review offers an opportunity to generate ideas and bring about transformative changes within our community.

2.1 ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Halifax Regional Municipality is in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and traditional lands of the Mi'kmaq people. Halifax Regional Municipality is also the home to peoples of African descent who have lived here for over 400 years. This Plan acknowledges that the legacies of colonialism have shaped our current settlement pattern and that a commitment to act differently is required for reconciliation. We must work together to identify and change policies that have disproportionately impacted these communities and residents.

2.2 ABOUT THIS PLAN

To ensure planning policy can be responsive to a quickly growing population, Regional Plan (this Plan) envisions that HRM will grow to be a region supporting 1 million people. The policies of this Plan have been developed with a forward-looking view to supporting this growth in population over the long term, by strategically directing housing, jobs, and community infrastructure in a way that supports our goals for healthy, connected, inclusive and affordable communities.

Population growth and development cannot be considered without a view to greater socio-economic and environmental well-being. To achieve our vision for healthy communities, equitable and sustainable growth, this Plan encourages cooperation amongst municipal business units, residents, community groups, stakeholder groups and all levels of government.

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As our community grows, most new development will be directed to established centres in urban, suburban and rural communities. The municipality's physical geographic constraints, existing and planned water and wastewater infrastructure, transit service boundary, and the location of employment and community infrastructure significantly impact where the most significant growth will occur.

2.3 REGIONAL PLANNING

This Plan provides a vision for supporting our growing population and employment base through a coordinated and managed approach to locating new development and critical services. Key principles for organizing this growth include infrastructure management, protecting our environment and cultural heritage, improving mobility, and planning cooperatively with our many partners.

Settlement should be organized in a manner that strives to protect and enhance the open space and environmental network to reduce our urban footprint. In situating housing and employment, we also must consider that where people live and how they move about for their daily activities affects their personal finances, influences their work-life balance, and helps determine their carbon footprint. Making sure that the region's communities are well-connected with each other is important for residents' access to physical activity, supports their mental health and well-being, social interactions, and access to nature.

Past studies undertaken for the Municipality have found that:

- More compact forms of development with higher densities save taxpayers money when located to make the best use of existing infrastructure and services.
- The provision of central municipal water and wastewater management services to communities with lower densities is cost prohibitive.
- Protecting and enhancing existing open spaces and green elements, including trees, forests, waterways, wetlands, and wilderness provides multiple benefits in maintaining air quality, water quality, mitigating flooding and managing carbon emissions.
- To generate the ridership needed to support high frequency transit, compact, high-density forms of development should be in close proximity to these services.
- Proactive measures are needed to combat climate change and reduce our carbon footprint by implementing sustainable transportation systems, promoting renewable energy adoption, and implementing green infrastructure projects.

When considering where intensification and new growth should occur, these four critical regional-scale services are analyzed.

Natural and Cultural Services
Protection of the open space network, valuable ecological lands, regional parks, natural corridors, culturally significant places and working landscapes will be prioritized and these assets will be protected and used to shape our region's communities.

Water and Wastewater Services
Most growth will be in the form of infill directed to the Urban Area (Regional Centre and Suburban Area) and rural centres where there is existing municipal water, wastewater services and infrastructure can be delivered in a cost-effective manner.

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Mobility Services
Infill and land use intensification will be further organized to support mobility systems that improve movement of people and goods, not just vehicles, by walking, rolling, cycling, transit or in a vehicle.

Community Services
As infill and intensification occurs, this will increase the demands for community services like schools, libraries, parks, recreational facilities, solid waste, emergency services, and energy. Gaps in service should be analyzed and addressed as part of strategic growth planning.

Historically underserved communities and vulnerable populations will require special focus as part of regional and community planning, so that investments can be directed in an equitable way and support those with the greatest need, as opposed to simply responding to population growth. New partnership initiatives, like the African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity and future Mi'kmaw Friendship Accord are needed to address historical inequities and injustices. These partnerships will be a part of how the municipality will reconsider how we invest in people and places. Learnings from this work will be incorporated into all levels of planning as they proceed.

Accordingly, this Plan envisions that most new growth will occur through urban infill, with focused intensification around rapid transit lines, to allow the Municipality and Province to plan delivery of future community services in these areas. As work proceeds with African Nova Scotia Communities and the Mi'kmaw it is recognized that shifts may be required in this vision to support outcomes.

RP-1 The Municipality shall protect and conserve ecosystem health and natural open spaces by using the green network to shape where new development is located.

RP-2 The Municipality shall direct housing and employment growth to strategic locations where water and wastewater infrastructure services are already available.

RP-3 The Municipality shall organize infill and land use intensification to improve the movement of people by aligning infill and land use intensification areas with conventional transit services, including high frequency transit service.

RP-4 The Municipality shall organize the delivery of community services to support building healthy, well serviced, and connected communities.

RP-5 The Municipality shall partner with the African Nova Scotian Communities and Mi'kmaq communities to address historic inequities and injustices and the legacy of colonial approaches to settlement.

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2.4 COMMUNITY PLANNING

This Plan also provides guidance for the development of communities across the municipality. It sets policy direction at a regional scale by showing where and how to build communities in a way that makes the best use of municipal services and amenities, strengthens equity and our residents' quality of life. It guides community-level planning which outlines in more detail how communities should be organized and developed. Community plans, formally called secondary municipal planning strategies, govern land use on each property in any given planning area.

RP-6 The Municipality shall align new secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws, and any amendments to existing secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws with the policies, goals, objectives, and growth targets of this Plan.

RP-7 The Municipality shall organize the community planning program using the following regional geographies as are generally shown on Map 1:

a) Urban Area, which includes the Regional Centre, (lands within the Halifax Peninsula and Dartmouth within the Circumferential Highway) and Suburban Area (within the Urban Area outside the Regional Centre); and

b) Rural Areas, which includes all lands outside the Urban Area inside of the municipality's boundary.

RP-8 The Municipality shall refine regional geographies as community planning proceeds, while considering watershed boundaries, existing and future planned Municipal services, local context, community input, and any other relevant technical studies.

RP-9 The Municipality shall encourage most new housing and employment to locate in the Urban Area of the municipality (Regional Centre and Suburban Area).

RP-10 The Municipality shall identify large tracts of underutilized land within the Urban Area as future growth nodes to enable redevelopment.

RP-11 The Municipality shall study groundwater availability, site-level wastewater treatment technology, and regional mobility services, in support of community planning for Rural Centres.

2.5 STRATEGIC GROWTH PLANNING

To guide the direction of new growth, this Plan sets targets for housing locations. Housing plays a crucial role in shaping the region's settlement patterns and land use. The policies and regulations in this Plan, along with the Regional Subdivision By-law, determine where housing is located throughout the region.

Strategic growth management enables coordinated investments in infrastructure by the Municipality and Province, ensuring the long-term fiscal, environmental, and social well-being of the Municipality, Nova Scotia, and the Atlantic Region. By planning strategically, communities can effectively provide the necessary services and infrastructure to support new growth.

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The municipality employs various tools to understand and manage growth in our extensive region, including development scenarios, growth targets, service area establishment, and frequent monitoring. These tools help the Municipality make informed decisions regarding land development for the greater benefit of the public. This section provides an overview of these tools.

2.5.1 POPULATION SCENARIOS

Since the last review of the Regional Plan in 2014, the municipality has experienced higher than historical rates of population growth. Since 2015, the region has grown significantly faster than anticipated, and saw the region grow to more than 480,000 people by 2022. This means that in 2022, the region reached the population that the 2014 Regional Plan anticipated for 2031. The annual change in growth can be found in Figure RP-1:

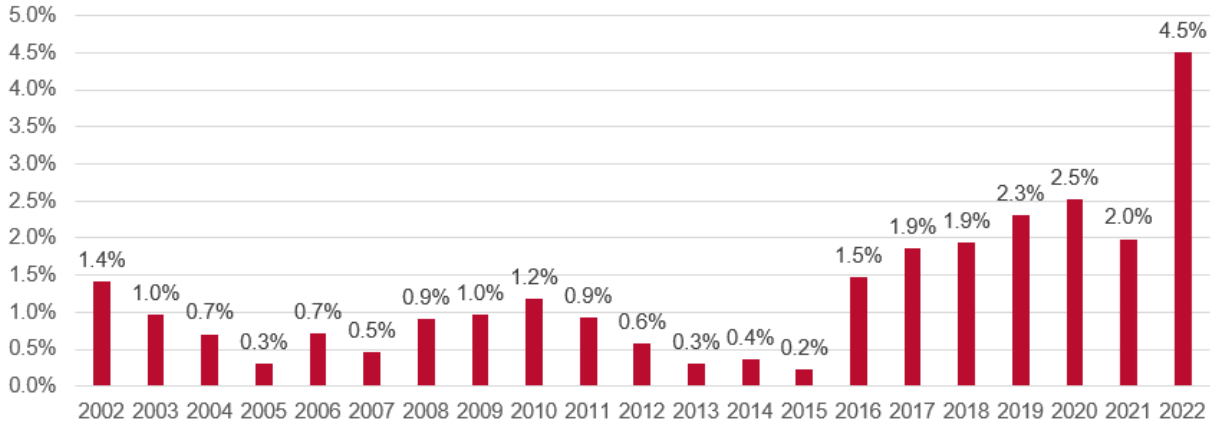

Figure RP-1 Annual Population Growth

To ensure planning policy can be responsive to changing conditions, rather than establishing a specific horizon year, policies of this Plan have been developed with a forward-looking view to supporting growth in population over the long term. The Municipality has developed a range of population scenarios to help consider how growth might occur. As of 2023, four projection scenarios have been developed as described below and shown in Figure RP-2:

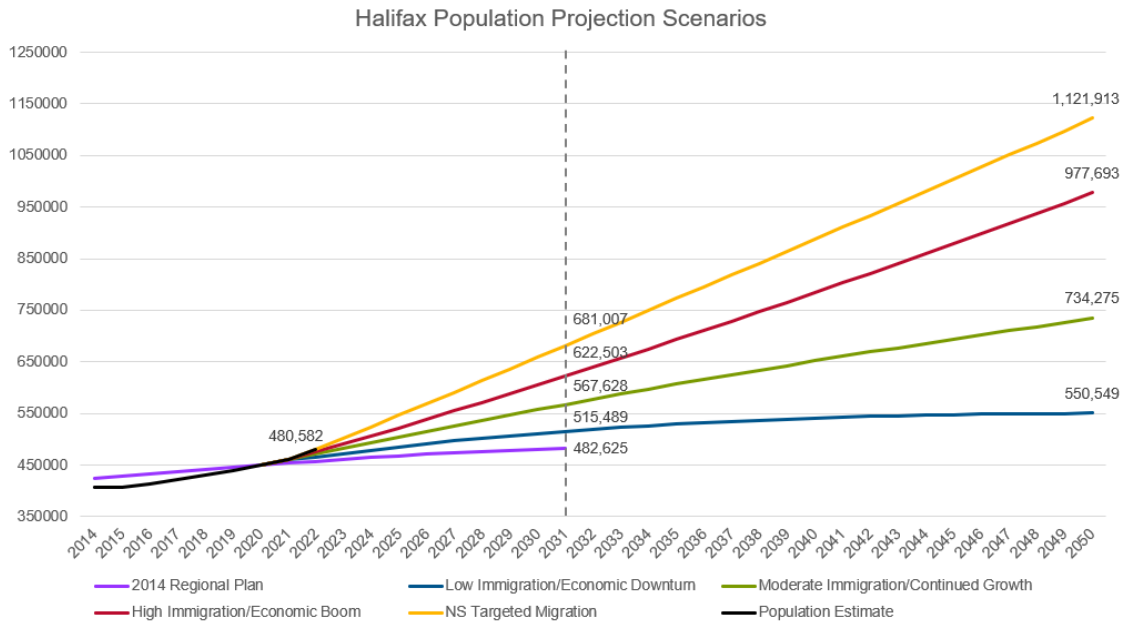

Figure RP-1 Population Projection Scenarios, 2023

RP-12 The Municipality shall organize strategic growth, infrastructure, and municipal service-delivery to support a future population of 1,000,000 people.

2.5.2 GROWTH TARGETS

While scenarios are designed to anticipate and plan for different rates of growth, the Municipality must identify how housing will be developed in places that support our overall policy goals. The 2014 Regional Plan established growth targets to direct at least 75% of new housing units to the Regional Centre and suburban communities, with at least 25% of new housing units within the Regional Centre.

Since 2014, Regional Council adopted the Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy (Centre Plan), which was designed to accommodate up to 40% of housing growth in the Regional Centre. The Integrated Mobility Plan identified that to support the Municipality's mobility goals, it will be important to locate as much as 90% of growth to the Regional Centre and Suburban Area. The Halifax Green Network Plan and HalifACT identified that focusing most new development in existing areas and minimizing greenfield development will allow the Municipality to make efficient use of resources, protect critical areas of open space and minimize carbon emissions by reducing vehicle use and improving sustainable mobility options.

RP-13 It is the intent of this Plan to direct approximately 90% of new housing units to the Urban Area.

2.5.3 SERVICE AREAS

The Urban Service Area Boundary and the Urban Transit Service Boundary are tools that help to direct where new development will be located and when supportive infrastructure investments will be made. The Urban Service Area Boundary establishes the location of existing piped water and wastewater services and establishes a growth boundary to ensure the Municipality makes the most effective use of existing infrastructure. The Urban Transit Service Area boundary establishes where conventional transit (bus and ferry) services will be provided.

Together, these tools identify where serviced development can be expected in the immediate term. It is the intent of this Plan to target 90% of new housing units to the Urban Area, which includes the Regional Centre and Suburban Area. Development that aligns with existing and proposed services will make efficient use of these services and ensures the success of future infrastructure investments.

Widespread residential development throughout the Rural Area is inconsistent with the Plan's goals and objectives of creating compact mixed-use communities and protecting rural character, natural environment and natural resources. New roads can fragment open space, affecting important environmental features and leaving islands of natural habitat that may not be large enough to sustain biodiversity. Further, extensive residential development strains existing community services and adds pressure for the development of costly infrastructure in unplanned areas.

This Plan establishes a careful, considered process before allowing any expansion of the Urban Service Area Boundary. This ensures that new serviced lands can be provided with infrastructure in a cost-effective manner when it is needed to support population growth.

RP-14 It is the intent of this Plan to direct housing and employment growth to the Urban Area, which is serviced with municipal water, wastewater and stormwater services and conventional transit services.

2.5.4 INFRASTUCTURE CHARGES

In planning for infrastructure investment, the Municipality will need to consider a range of revenue sources. To help facilitate growth without imposing excessive financial burden on existing taxpayers, the Municipality is permitted by the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter* to recover infrastructure-related costs associated with new subdivisions using infrastructure charges. These charges allow the Municipality to pass the cost of new infrastructure to developers and subdividers whose lands receive the benefits of the new services. These charges fund the capital cost of providing infrastructure but do not fund operating or maintenance costs. Charges may also be imposed under a separate by-law, applied to the entire region or a defined area, to impose, fix and provide methods of enforcing payment of charges. This kind of charge could be applied when a building permit is sought for a new building or redevelopment on an existing property.

RP-15 The Municipality shall consider establishing by-laws to allow for the recovery of growth-related costs.

RP-16 The Municipality shall establish provisions under the Regional Subdivision By-law to allow for the imposition of infrastructure charges to recover all, or part, of the capital costs incurred, or anticipated to be incurred, by the Municipality.

2.6 LONG TERM GROWTH

This Plan envisions that over time, the municipality will grow to be a region supporting 1 million people. As the region grows, investing in infrastructure will be critically important for maintaining services and quality of life for our residents. To support the region's projected growth, and the cumulative impacts of density, the Municipality will monitor growth and meet annually to share the results with service providers. Further to prepare for long term growth, a Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priority Plan will be undertaken to forecast our needs for renewing existing infrastructure and investing in new infrastructure to accommodate growth.

2.6.1 GROWTH MONITORING PROGRAM

The Municipality will continue to monitor population growth trends over time to ensure that the policies of this Plan and supporting planning documents are responsive to the municipality's population, housing and employment conditions. Demographic trends – such as residents' ages, income levels, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and immigration status – must also be regularly monitored and compared to the available supply of housing to understand whether residents' housing needs are being met. Employment forecasts will be monitored to ensure that services such as water, wastewater and transit can be provided to employment centres and to ensure there is a sufficient supply of industrial employment lands available.

RP- 17 The Municipality shall share population scenarios, growth scenarios and ongoing monitoring with other infrastructure and service providers on an annual basis.

RP-18 Regular updates of the Municipality's population, housing and employment conditions and growth scenarios shall guide reviews and amendments to this Plan, Community Plans, and any supporting planning documents or studies.

2.6.2 LONG TERM GROWTH & INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING

A Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priority Plan will provide a framework for long term planning and fiscal management, allowing the Municipality to look ahead and ask: What infrastructure and services will we need? Where will we need this? Why do we need it? How are we going to pay for it? A Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priority Plan will improve the capital budget planning process, as the Municipality's Business Units will have longer term direction and Regional Council will have guidance and information upon which to base current and future capital expenditure decisions. This process would also benefit from an improved understanding of asset management and the lifecycle of assets as they relate to significant growth planning.

Growth projections are already shared and used by Halifax Water and Halifax Transit to inform infrastructure and capital planning. These growth projections can also be used to direct Municipal investments in community infrastructure, such as emergency services, parks, community facilities, and libraries. Furthering this, the Municipality will continue to share these projections as we collaborate with the provincial government on growth, transportation, schools, healthcare facilities and public housing.

As new growth can affect existing communities and their assets (such as parks, schools, and fire stations), the Municipality will need to assess the impact of this growth and determine how investments in new and existing assets should be directed. The Municipality must also consider how investments can be made equitably, as some communities that have been historically underrepresented may have experienced less

investment over time. The Municipality must consider that investments which support vulnerable populations can have an outsized impact on community health and wellness.

Past versions of the Regional Plan envisioned growth beyond the 2031 horizon occurring in areas adjacent to the service boundary. New studies have shown that these areas are important green and natural areas. We also need to understand how future growth will interact with water and wastewater services and where there is the greatest capacity to service this level of growth, which was unanticipated in earlier iterations of this Plan.

Finally, new projects being undertaken by the Province focused on transportation planning have the potential to shift where future growth may occur. There is potential for new growth areas to emerge outside of the municipality's boundaries, within the one hour commutershed of the Regional Centre. Therefore, this Plan recommends the Municipality begin to immediately analyze how a population of 1,000,000 might be accommodated, using new scenarios for growth, and the policy direction contained in this plan.

RP-19 The Municipality shall create a Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priority Plan to guide planning and investment by identifying potential locations for long term growth, so as to ensure the efficient delivery of services and use of existing infrastructure assets.

RP-20 The Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priority Plan shall give consideration to:

a) Identifying different scenarios for locating future housing and employment growth organized to meet the needs of a potential population of 1,000,000;

b) Assessing each of these different scenarios for growth based on:

i. environmental impacts such as watershed health, flood mitigation, landscape connectivity, and restoration of important ecological features consistent with the objectives of the Halifax Green Network Plan;

ii. climate impacts such as minimizing reliance on carbon-based energy and transportation, increasing naturalization and protection of biodiversity, increasing carbon sequestration, and assessing the resilience of scenarios against potential future changes in climate;

iii. impacts to long-term provision of water, wastewater, stormwater and community infrastructure;

iv. impacts to mobility and opportunities for active transportation, transit-oriented development, or other new and emerging forms of transit-related technology; and

v. impacts to health, equity, and well-being using evidence-based parameters.

c) The relationship between different growth scenarios;

d) Financial tools such as infrastructure charges, capital budgeting, asset management and long-term infrastructure planning;

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e) **The municipality's expected growth in relation to growth in the rest of Nova Scotia, particularly in communities that are within a one-hour travel time to the Regional Centre; and**

f) **Investment models that emphasize co-location and planning for infrastructure, services, and other community benefits.**

2.7 REGIONAL LAND USE STRUCTURE

This Plan provides direction for what type of development should occur in different geographic areas of the region, using six general land use designations to manage growth. These are illustrated on Map 2: The Regional Land Use Structure Map with the intent and policy direction for each explained in this chapter, as summarized below:

- The **Open Space and Natural Resource** designation applies to the region's natural network of open spaces, typically on government-owned and private resource sector lands.
- The **Urban Settlement** and **Urban Reserve** designations are applied to areas where development serviced with municipal water, wastewater, stormwater and conventional transit service exists or is planned.
- The **Rural Commuter**, **Rural Resource**, and **Agricultural** designations apply to areas of rural settlement.

2.7.1 OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL RESOURCE DESIGNATION

Growth and development throughout the municipality has been shaped by a natural network of open space, covering the interior of the Municipality, which is generally inaccessible by public road. It consists mainly of provincial Crown lands as well as lands owned by private companies for forest production and harvesting.

The open space network consists of parks, natural corridors and trail systems that have been developed by government agencies, non-governmental organizations and private land owners. The trail systems have become the backbone of a system of interconnected open space and provide opportunity for activities such as back country hiking, biking, portaging and nature appreciation. The natural corridors interconnect natural areas and provide opportunity for wildlife to migrate between habitat patches and maintain natural ecological functions.

The open space network serves many important functions for the region. Open spaces shape the settlement form and character of the Region's communities. Protecting open spaces helps to direct urban development to appropriate locations and creates clear neighbourhood edges. Residents can access nature for outdoor recreation and aesthetic enjoyment, which improves mental and physical health. As a system, these open spaces perform important environmental services such as connecting natural areas for critical wildlife migration, retaining stormwater, mitigating flooding, preventing erosion, uptake of nutrients, abatement of pollution and moderation of climate. Therefore, it is the intent of this Plan to recognize the importance of the open space network and direct development in a way that protects valuable natural and cultural places.

RP-21 The Open Space and Natural Resource Designation shall be established on the Regional Land Use Structure Map (Map 2), as the area encompassing a natural network of open space in the interior of the Municipality. The Open Space and Natural Resource Designation shall apply to public and private lands identified for their role in the open space network, and shall generally include: parks (federal, provincial and municipal); trails and greenways; wilderness areas and nature reserves, including private conservation lands; areas of protected habitat; resource lands (including Crown lands, and commercial forestry, agriculture and fishery lands); coastal lands (including salt marshes, beaches and estuaries); areas of environmentally sensitivity; natural and wildlife corridors; and cultural landscapes.

2.7.2 URBAN SETTLEMENT DESIGNATION

The Urban Settlement Designation encompasses those areas in the Regional Centre and Suburban Area where development has access to municipal water, wastewater and conventional transit services or where those services are proposed to be provided in the short and medium term. To support building healthy, well-connected communities and the growth targets of this Plan, it is the intent of this Plan to focus most new development to existing serviced areas within the Urban Settlement Designation, with some limited expansion on to additional greenfield areas. Housing and employment growth in the Urban Settlement area will be encouraged in complete communities shaped by their access to services and amenities, and well-connected with transit and active transportation routes, as detailed in Chapter 3.

RP-22 The Urban Settlement Designation shall be established on the Regional Land Use Structure Map (Map 2). The Urban Settlement Designation shall apply to those areas where existing municipal services (including piped water, wastewater and stormwater, and conventional transit services) are located and to undeveloped lands that have been identified for future serviced development.

2.7.3 URBAN RESERVE DESIGNATION

The Urban Reserve Designation is applied to lands that may be suitable for serviced urban development in the longer-term horizon. These lands must be studied to determine if they are still appropriate places for serviced development. An assessment of these lands is required before they may be redesignated as Urban Settlement or any comprehensive planning process is undertaken.

In 2006, the Urban Reserve designation included several areas to be considered as potential future serviced communities to accommodate housing and employment growth beyond 2031. One area, the Purcell's Cove Backlands, was removed from the designation following the acquisition of the Shaw Wilderness Park. Two other areas, the interior lands bounded by Highway 7, Ross Road, Highway 207 and Broom Road in Cole Harbour/Westphal, and the Ragged Lake Lands, have been advanced by Regional Council for further study. The remaining land areas, known generally as Kidston Lake Lands, Andersen Lake Lands, Governor Lake Lands and Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lands, will be studied for the potential for future growth in alignment with the Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priority Plan. This study will determine where and how the municipality should grow, to accommodate future population growth beyond the Urban Settlement Areas identified in this Plan, aligned with Regional Council's priorities.

RP-23 The Urban Reserve Designation shall be established on the Regional Land Use Structure Map (Map 2) to identify lands that may be required for future serviced development after lands in the Urban Settlement Designation have been developed.

RP-24 The Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-law, establish an Urban Reserve Zone to regulate development of lands within the Urban Reserve Designation. This Zone shall permit open space uses and limit residential development to existing lots.

RP-25 Amendments to the Regional Land Use Structure Map (Map 2) to change the Urban Reserve designation to Urban Settlement shall only be considered once the Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priority Plan as identified under RP-19 and RP-20 is completed and shall be guided by long-term scenarios for future growth and the criteria set out by that process.

RP-26 Notwithstanding Policy RP-25, the Municipality shall complete background studies for the interior lands bounded by Highway 7, Ross Road, Highway 207 and Broom Road in Cole Harbour/Westphal in support of the African Nova Scotia Road to Economic Prosperity objective to support the Akoma-led planning process for the restoration of the historic Nova Scotia Home for Coloured Children. This process will determine the Regional Plan designation that would best support the future development of the site, in alignment with Policy HC-7 and the policies of this Plan.

RP-27 Notwithstanding Policy RP-25, the Municipality shall complete background studies for the Ragged Lake lands to determine if these lands are appropriate for industrial use, in alignment with Policy HC-7 and the policies of this Plan.

2.7.4 RURAL COMMUTER DESIGNATION

The intent of the Rural Commuter Designation is to direct development and services to centres within commuting distance to the Regional Centre while protecting the natural resource base, preserving the open space network, and continuing to foster traditional rural community character. While residential development within this designation has historically been characterized by large lot residential developments, more development will be encouraged through clustered development.

RP-28 The Rural Commuter Designation shall be established on the Regional Land Use Structure Map (Map 2) to encompass those areas within commuting distance of the Regional Centre that are heavily influenced by low-density residential development. The intent of this designation is to:

a) protect the character of rural communities and conserve open space and natural resources by focusing growth within a series of centres, as shown on the Rural Centres Map (Map 4);

b) support the delivery of convenience services to the surrounding settlement area;

c) control the amount and form of development between centres;

d) support compatible resource-based uses such as agriculture, forestry and renewable energy; and

e) **protect the natural resource base and preserve the natural features that foster the traditional rural community character.**

2.7.5 RURAL RESOURCE DESIGNATION

Many of the municipality's rural communities were built around and continue to support traditional industries like farming, fishing and other natural resource activities. These working landscapes support rural economic activities, providing local resources for the region's food, construction and manufacturing sectors and contribute to natural landscape connectivity. Rural residential development should be directed away from working landscapes to protect these industries and minimize potential conflict with any new residential development.

The Rural Resource Designation encompasses rural communities along the Eastern Shore which are beyond the traditional commutershed of the Regional Centre and have not been heavily influenced by suburban development pressures. The intent of the Rural Resource Designation is to protect the rural resource base upon which communities depend. The designation is also intended to support the delivery of commercial and community services to the surrounding settlement areas and to protect the natural features and built heritage which define the rural character of the municipality and are important to the tourism industry.

RP-29 The Rural Resource Designation shall be established on the Regional Land Use Structure Map (Map 2) to encompass lands and communities along the Eastern Shore. The intent of this designation is to:

a) **protect the natural resource base and the ability to sustain these resources in the future;**

b) **protect natural and heritage features which define the rural character and support tourism;**

c) **establish a series of centres, as shown on the Rural Centres Map (Map 4) where growth is to be supported while controlling the amount and form of development between centres; and**

d) **support the delivery of commercial and community services to the surrounding settlement areas.**

2.7.6 AGRICULTURAL DESIGNATION

The Agricultural Designation encompasses part of the Musquodoboit Valley. It contains the only remaining prime farmland within the municipality which is largely unaffected by non-agricultural uses. Although the number of farms within the area has declined over the last 50 years, the Musquodoboit Valley is still used for dairy and mixed farming, forestry and mining. A substantial portion of Valley residents are employed in the resource sector, which is a substantive economic base to support other employment sectors. Due to productive agricultural soils and climatic conditions within the Valley, these lands are highly suitable for agricultural production.

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The Agricultural Designation is intended to preserve land for farming and other forms of resource production, prevent wide-spread residential uses in resource production areas where such development may conflict with the operations of a farm, forestry or extractive facility, and protect a traditional way of life.

RP-30 The Agricultural Designation shall be established on the Regional Land Use Structure Map (Map 2) to encompass a significant portion of the Musquodoboit Valley. The intent of this designation is to:

a) encourage the use of this area for natural resource-based activities and industries such as farming, forestry, mining and renewable energy, and to protect these uses from the intrusion of incompatible non-resource related uses; and

b) support services for the surrounding agricultural communities by establishing a series of centres within which continuing development will be supported, as shown on the Rural Centres Map (Map 4), and by limiting the amount of residential development which may occur beyond these centres.

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CHAPTER 3: BUILDING HEALTHY AND COMPLETE COMMUNITIES

CHAPTER 3: BUILDING HEALTHY AND COMPLETE COMMUNITIES

3.0 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 outlined the ways that the Municipality can be strategic in directing new housing and jobs to places across the region. This Chapter provides a more detailed vision for how development can be directed at the community level.

To fully implement the planning and land use direction contained in this Plan, the Municipality relies on Community Plans and Land Use By-laws and the Subdivision By-law. Community plans and land use by-laws apply to a specific geographic area within the region.

The Municipality is currently undertaking a major update to its community planning program, which will reorganize secondary planning documents into three major geographies (Regional Centre, Suburban Area and Rural Area), as shown on Map 1. In the interim, this Plan also provides direction to current planning documents and for discretionary planning approvals to implement strategic policy directions. This chapter provides guidance for planning at the local level and sets the vision for ongoing community planning to achieve complete, healthy, and inclusive communities. This Plan affirms the Municipality's commitment to working with all communities, and in particular the Indigenous and African Nova Scotian communities to ensure that policies at the regional and community level support the goals of those communities.

3.1 OBJECTIVES

1. **Use a lens of complete and inclusive community planning to create positive and equitable health outcomes for all communities;**

2. **Integrate climate mitigation and adaptation strategies at the local level to create safe and resilient communities;**

3. **Ensure the protection of a generous network of parks, open spaces, cultural and working landscapes to support ecological, social, and economic community outcomes;**

4. **Direct new development around frequent transit networks in the Regional Centre and in Suburban communities, with design prioritizing compact, transit-supportive communities that are safe and welcoming to pedestrians;**

5. **Direct growth to rural centres where compact development patterns can support village main streets and a range of mobility options, including active transportation;**

6. **Create a welcoming and accessible environment for community input and participation; and**

7. **Develop clear and easy to understand planning documents that can adapt to changing community needs and conditions.**

3.2 COMMUNITY PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Many of the Municipality's current Secondary Municipal Planning Strategies (also called community plans) were developed before amalgamation in 1996. Each is accompanied by a Land Use By-law, which are the accompanying regulations. The plans are in a variety of formats, and use different definitions, policies, and processes to regulate land use and development.

Recognizing the age of the existing community plans and the need to provide a comprehensive update for the entire region, the Community Planning Program has been established to modernize planning policy and improve administration. The goal of this program is to reorganize the community plans around major geographies as shown on Map 1:

- **Regional Centre:** Halifax Peninsula and Dartmouth within the Circumferential Highway;
- **Suburban Area:** Lands outside of the Regional Centre in the Urban Settlement Designation; and
- **Rural Area:** Lands within rural designations that use on-site services (on-site septic systems and wells).

The Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy ("Centre Plan"), adopted in 2021, was the first phase of this work, and it replaced four community plans and land use by-laws with one plan and by-law. As the Centre Plan continues to evolve and be updated, it must continue to conform to the guiding principles and policies of the Regional Plan.

Likewise, plans for the Suburban and Rural Areas must be guided by the overall objectives of the Regional Plan and Priority Plans, as well as best practice research, information regarding demographic and economic trends, and community engagement. In the interim, the Regional Plan provides certain policies directed at the existing community plans and land use by-laws where a region-wide approach is important to achieving key strategic objectives.

The Community Planning program will use the lens of complete and inclusive communities to help create positive health outcomes for communities, support sustainable and equitable change, and in some cases transformation. Some of the building blocks of complete, healthy, communities include equitable access to:

- **Places to live**, in a range of housing types for all ages, incomes and abilities, including shared housing options;
- **Places to learn**, **work and shop**, including schools and institutions, business districts and industrial areas;
- **Places to play and access nature**, including parks, community centres, recreation facilities and libraries;
- **Places to celebrate culture, heritage and arts**, including gathering spaces, cultural landscapes, museums, heritage buildings, arts and performance spaces, and place of worship;
- **Places that are protected,** including important environmental areas, wilderness areas, coastal areas, wetlands, flood plains and wildlife habitats;
- **Places that produce and provide access to healthy and affordable food**, including space for food production, and support for local food systems;
- **Places that are well-connected**, with affordable and accessible transportation, including transit, active transportation routes and trails, and roads; and

- **Places that provide basic services and safety** including emergency services, waste collection, water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure, as well as healthcare and childcare facilities.

3.2.1 URBAN AREA LAND USE

While each Community Plan will address local context and community vision through a variety of tools, in the Urban Area, which includes the Regional Centre and the Suburban Communities, land use should be organized within broad categories or designations to enable a range of well-connected functions at a regional and local scale. While a mix of compatible land uses supported by built form provisions is supported in most designations, some lands will require protection and more limited land use permissions to ensure long-term sustainability. The designations within the Urban Area will include:

- ***Open Space, Parks and Community Facilities:*** areas that include places to play and access nature, including protected or sensitive open space lands that help shape communities, parks, and community facilities such as recreation centres, libraries, and places of worship;
- ***Downtowns:*** areas that support central business districts, entertainment areas, high mix of land uses, low-rise to high-rise buildings compatible with heritage resources and heritage conservation districts;
- ***Centres:*** areas intended to support significant population growth and a mix of land uses along frequent transit terminals and corridors, and can include commercial main streets. Centres can be major or minor hubs depending on the local context and transit service;
- ***Corridors:*** areas intended to support pedestrian oriented development along transit corridors with a mix of land uses but a lesser intensity than Centres;
- ***Higher Order Residential:*** areas that support a concentration of existing and potential new multi-unit dwelling communities with compatible commercial uses;
- ***Established Residential:*** areas intended to retain the scale of existing low-density residential neighbourhoods while providing opportunities for additional gentle infill and missing middle housing options;
- ***Future Growth Nodes:*** areas that include large sites that can accommodate significant population growth and that require more detailed comprehensive planning to determine future land uses, mobility networks, and other supporting services and amenities;
- ***Employment Lands:*** areas that include both large and small institutional lands, and industrial lands needed to support growing population and thriving economy; and
- ***Special Areas and Overlays:*** can include waterfront areas, Harbour Lands, heritage districts, and any other areas that require special land use, built form or urban design considerations.

3.3 REGIONAL CENTRE PLAN

The Regional Centre area is the most urban and densely populated area of the municipality and is comprised of distinct communities and neighbourhoods that have been shaped by a wide range of economic, cultural, environmental, and social factors. The Regional Centre is located on the Halifax Harbour, and includes a wide mix of land uses including two downtowns, many institutional and industrial employment areas, mixed-use and residential areas, parks and public spaces, services, as well as regional and national attractions.

Most concentrated commercial districts are located within walking distance of established neighbourhoods, and within easy reach of parks and open spaces. The Halifax Harbour remains an important asset that

facilitates the growth of commercial, industrial, and institutional activities in the region. The Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy (Centre Plan) establishes clear and predictable rules for development and intensification, while protecting heritage resources and providing guidance for comprehensive planning for new larger neighbourhoods. The Centre Plan provides policy directions for Downtown Halifax, Downtown Dartmouth, several Centres, and Future Growth Nodes. The Centre Plan also provides policy direction to maintain established residential areas while providing for additional housing options and gentle infill, and mandates future planning for several Heritage Conservation Districts.

3.3.1 VISION FOR THE REGIONAL CENTRE

A vision for the Regional Centre was established during the Centre Plan planning process:

The Regional Centre is the civic, cultural and economic heart of the Halifax Regional Municipality. It is a prosperous and resilient community that supports the needs, health, and well-being of a diverse and growing population. New growth is located strategically to support the creation of complete communities, human-scale design, and pedestrian comfort. The Regional Centre is the core of the best mid-sized city in Canada that welcomes all who want to live, work, play and learn here.

3.3.2 CORE CONCEPTS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE REGIONAL CENTRE

In support of the Vision, the Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy (Centre Plan) is based on the following four Core Concepts:

<u>Complete Communities</u>

- Support people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to live, work, shop, learn, and play within a short journey.
- Promote mixed use neighbourhoods with safe and convenient access to goods and services needed in daily life.

<u>Pedestrians First</u>

- Prioritize the needs and comfort of people in all seasons to make walking more convenient and viable, reduce emissions and improve public health.
- Encourage land use, transportation and design policies that prioritize walking, cycling and transit over private vehicles.

<u>Strategic Growth</u>

- Encourage increased density and a diversity of people and services in the Regional Centre to support socially, economically and environmentally responsible growth.
- Distribute growth throughout the Regional Centre in context-sensitive forms.
- Direct growth to established mixed-use commercial nodes, and under-utilized, vacant, and infill sites.

<u>Human Scale Design</u>

- Foster high-quality architecture and urban design that is designed to a human scale.

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- Adopt land use policies that result in designs that are interesting and comfortable for people at street level.

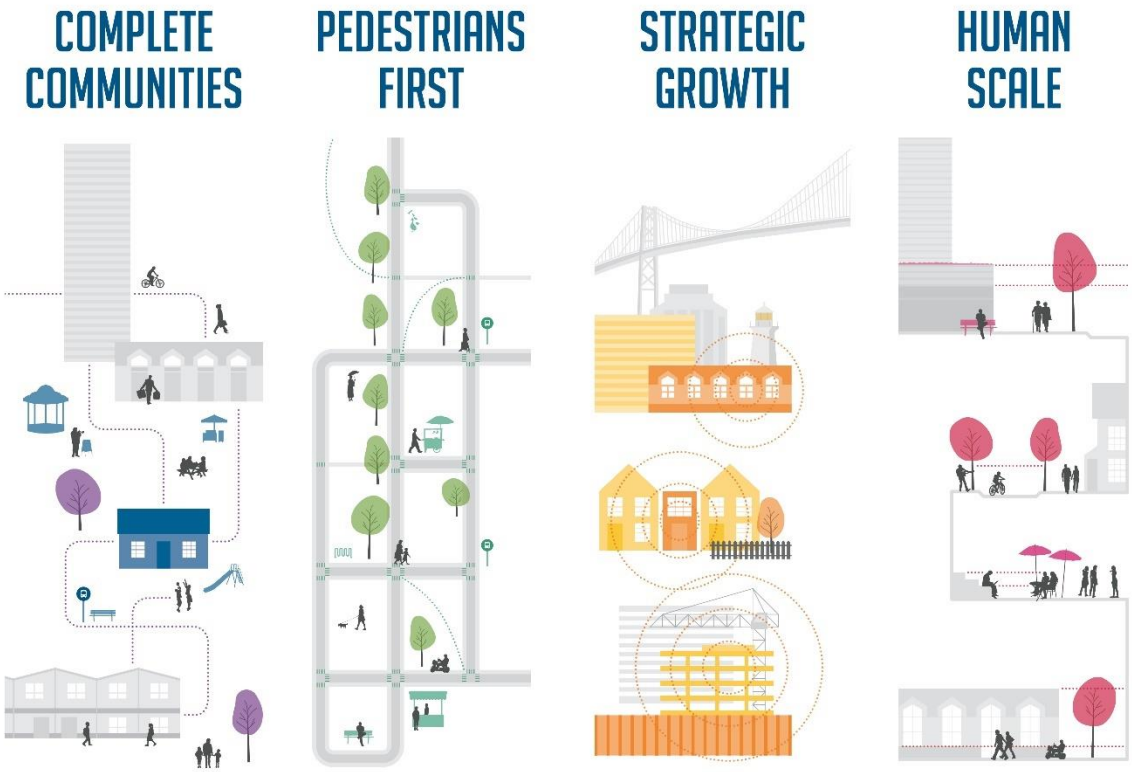

Fig. 3-1: Centre Plan Core Concepts

The Core Concepts were also supported by a set of Guiding Principles developed during the HRMbyDesign visioning process:

<u>I Sustainable</u>

- Design, plan and build with respect for economic, environmental, social and cultural sustainability.
- Create resilient communities that adapt to evolving opportunities and needs.

<u>II High Quality</u>

- New development should be of high quality and compatible with other high quality developments.
- Promote high quality architecture and urban design that respects great heritage resources, including neighbourhoods.

<u>III Heritage and Culture</u>

- Heritage resources, including heritage districts, buildings, and cultural landscapes, should be recognized, used, protected and enhanced.

- Ensure lasting legacies (buildings, open spaces and streets) are maintained, and new ones are created.

IV Movement

- Integrate land use planning with transportation planning in such a way that alternatives to driving become an easy choice. Transportation options should be efficient, pleasant and readily available.
- All streets should present an inviting barrier-free environment that considers the comfort, convenience, safety and visual interest of pedestrians.
- The Regional Centre, in all ways, should be conducive to, and supportive of, active transportation movement. It should provide people with choices that are viable alternatives to driving.

V Complete Neighbourhoods

- Support safe, mixed-use, and diverse neighbourhoods, including:
    - affordable housing and a variety of tenures;
    - residential, commercial, employment uses; and
    - visually and physically accessible amenity space, including schools and parks within walking distance.
- Encourage the public services and amenities necessary to support quality of life, cohesive communities and creative places.

VI Growth and Change

- Encourage new developments to respond to the natural, cultural, historical, and urban character of their context.
- Direct change and intensification to areas that will benefit from growth.
- Every new building should contribute to the betterment of the public realm.
- Design should support accessibility, active transportation and transit (i.e. streets, land
- uses, neighbourhoods, open spaces, circulation systems).

VII Process

- Foster a culture of support for the building/ construction of quality urban design.
- Recognize and reward design excellence.
- Involve neighbourhood communities in local planning matters.
- Maintain opportunities for public participation in the implementation of the Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy.
- Foster predictable outcomes that have been tested to be achievable and fair.

VIII Connected

- Prominent views to prominent natural and built features should be recognized, protected and enhanced.
- Enhance safe and appealing connections within the Regional Centre including to and
- from the waterfront, open spaces and neighbourhoods.

HC-1 The Vision and Core Concepts of the Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy shall guide any proposed amendments or updates to the Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law, and applicable objectives and policies of this plan.

While Centre Plan is already largely aligned with this Plan and HRM's Priority Plans, regular reviews of the Centre Plan must be undertaken to ensure alignment with any changes to this Plan, new or updated Priority Plans, or any other strategic plans or policies approved by Regional Council. One example is the Rapid Transit Strategy, which identifies key corridors and proposed locations for bus rapid transit stations and ferry terminals.

HC-2 The Municipality shall periodically review the Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law to support healthy and complete communities and ensure consistency with this Plan, Priority Plans, and any other strategic plan or policy adopted by Regional Council.

3.3.2 REGIONAL CENTRE GROWTH AREAS

The Centre Plan directs growth to a number of strategic growth areas aligned with the existing and planned mobility network, including the Rapid Transit Network. They are important at a regional scale because of their potential to provide a significant number of new housing units and jobs, and the required supporting infrastructure and services. These key areas are identified in Table 3-1 and on Map 3.

Table 3-1: RCSMPS Strategic Growth Areas

RCSMPS Designation	Growth Area
Downtown	Downtown Halifax Downtown Dartmouth
Centre	Gottingen Street Highfield Park Quinpool Road Robie/Young Street Spring Garden Road Wyse Road
Future Growth Node	Dartmouth Cove Lands Halifax Shopping Centre Lands Joseph Howe Rail Lands Kempt Road Lands M District Lands Penhorn Lands Shannon Park Lands Southdale Lands Strawberry Hill Lands West End Mall Lands Young Street Lands

HC-3 To help support growth management and the provision of services at a regional scale, any change in the designation of lands inthe Downtown, Centre or Future Growth Node Designations in the Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy shall require an amendment to this Plan and shall consider impacts on housing and population projections.

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3.4 SUBURBAN COMMUNITY PLANNING

Suburban communities have many distinct characteristics, and their individual history is often tied to the towns and communities that preceded them. While some suburban communities at the edge of the Regional Centre are very urban, others are dominated by low-density and single-use development. Suburban communities were often planned around the separation of land uses and the car as the dominant mode of transportation, which resulted in significant travel distances for residents' daily needs.

Land use and development in the Suburban Area is governed by several community plans and land use by-laws which have not been comprehensively updated. This Plan recognizes the importance of updating and modernizing community plan policies to remove barriers to more compact and transit-supportive development, while also recognizing the unique assets and characteristics of suburban communities.

The Suburban Plan will create policies and regulations to achieve the desired form and scale of development at the property level. This Plan sets out policies to guide decision-making for these applications while the Suburban Plan is being completed.

3.4.1 SUBURBAN PLAN VISION

A vision for suburban communities will be created and refined as part of the Suburban planning process.

3.4.2 SUBURBAN PLAN GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In addition to objectives of this Plan for community planning, the Suburban planning process and planning for future serviced communities will be guided by the following principles:

<u>Open Space and Culture</u>

- Identify, preserve, enhance, and showcase important natural and cultural heritage features, that contribute to sustainability and sense of place.
- Integrate natural processes and energy conservation in site design including preserving, rehabilitating and restoring natural system functions.
- Provide for generous active and passive parks and open spaces.

<u>Complete Communities</u>

- Support people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to live, work, shop, learn, and play within a short journey.
- Promote mixed use neighbourhoods with safe and convenient access to goods and services needed in daily life to create positive health outcomes.
- Use an equity lens when developing land use policies.

<u>Transit Supportive Growth</u>

- Direct growth to transit corridors, nodes, and under-utilized commercial nodes to support inclusive and connected communities;
- Locate the highest density and mix of uses within a short walk of frequent transit terminals, and mid-rise and missing middle housing within a short walk of transit station or corridor;
- Create short blocks, grid or modified grid mobility networks, and complete streets within transit walksheds.

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Pedestrians First and Human Based Design

- Prioritize the needs and comfort of people in all seasons to make walking more convenient and viable, reduce emissions and improve public health.
- Encourage land use, transportation and design policies that prioritize walking, cycling and transit over private vehicles.
- Foster high-quality architecture and urban design that is interesting and comfortable for people at street level.

HC-4 The Municipality shall develop a Suburban Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-Law for the Suburban Area identified on Map 1, which shall be guided by the policies of this Plan.

3.4.3 SUBURBAN GROWTH AREAS

In the Suburban Area, the key opportunities for significant mixed-use development will be on underutilized sites which are located close to existing or planned transit terminals and proposed rapid transit stations. These centres or hubs can be further supported by mixed-use development along other transit corridors, and infill in existing multi-unit neighborhoods.

Established residential areas characterized by low-density housing can provide additional housing options through gentle infill on smaller lots, internal conversions, secondary suites, backyard suites, cluster housing, and missing middle housing, as outlined in Chapter 5. The Suburban Plan will direct population and employment density to encourage transit-supportive growth, using form-based approach to land use planning which prioritizes high quality urban design.

This Plan recognizes the importance of preserving and providing for the expansion of Employment Lands, including institutional and industrial areas, and the ongoing work to study and plan for Future Serviced Communities, and Urban Reserves which may result in future changes to the boundary of the Suburban Plan.

Map 3 illustrates potential growth centres and mixed-use intensification corridors where growth may be directed to align with the transit corridors proposed in the Rapid Transit Strategy, as outlined in Chapter 7. Minimum densities of people or jobs along proposed rapid transit corridors are required to support a viable rapid transit service.

In addition to increased density, transit use must be supported by land use and urban design that provides walkable access to transit, and a safe, convenient and pleasant pedestrian experience. To support transit-oriented land use and development, the Suburban Design Guidelines (Appendix C) shall be considered in developing new plans and amending existing community plans and land use by-laws. Additional growth areas may be considered based on local analysis through future phases of the Suburban Planning process.

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Table 3-2: Suburban Plan Growth Areas

Suburban Growth Area Type	Location
Rapid Transit-Oriented Development *Mid to high-density, mixed-use development with ground-oriented units and pedestrian-oriented streetscapes, with transit supportive density of a minimum of 160 people and jobs per hectare to support high frequency or rapid transit*	Dunbrack & Lacewood Herring Cove Road Portland Street / Woodlawn Dartmouth Crossing*

* indicates a Provincial Special Planning Area

HC-5 To support mixed-use, transit-oriented development and healthy, complete communities in the Urban Settlement Designation, the Municipality shall establish a suburban structure to direct intensification of land use to future Rapid Transit Corridors shown on Map 3 and in Table 3-2. The areas identified as Proposed Transit Walksheds and Rapid Transit Oriented-Development on Map 3 and in Table 3-2 may be amended in response to future urban design studies and community engagement.

HC-6 When considering amendments to secondary municipal planning strategies and development agreements in Proposed Transit Walksheds identified on Map 3 and in Table 3-2, Council shall consider the applicable policies of this Plan and the Suburban Design Guidelines contained in Appendix C of this Plan.

3.4.5 FUTURE SERVICED COMMUNITIES

Within the Urban Settlement designation, several areas are shown on Map 3 as Future Serviced Communities, where new residential, commercial or industrial development is expected to be serviced with municipal water, wastewater and conventional transit services. Some of these areas have also been identified as provincial Special Planning Areas under the 2021 *Housing in the Halifax Regional Municipality Act*.

Comprehensive planning supported by a series of background studies is required to identify the appropriate land uses, street layout, density, open space and other community amenities before these lands may be developed. Community engagement and participation is a critically important part of the process. Comprehensive planning processes can take several years to complete before construction of a new community can begin.

Careful consideration must be given to designing these new neighbourhoods in a way that protects the health of the valuable natural features of these areas and maximizes the protection of these natural assets. The planning process can define the edge between development and the natural area. The relationship between these areas must be reviewed carefully and should align with the objectives and actions in the Halifax Green Network Plan related to preserving natural corridors and connections.

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Table 3-3 – Future Serviced Communities

Future Serviced Communities	Growth Centre
Low-rise to High-rise mixed-use development with a minimum density of 50-80 residents or jobs per hectare to support basic to high frequency transit	Port Wallace* Sandy Lake* Highway 102 West Corridor Morris Lake Expansion Lands* Bedford West 12* Bedford West 10 and 1*

* indicates a Provincial Special Planning Area

HC-7 Where requests are received to initiate a planning process for any of the areas identified in Table 3-3 as future serviced communities, consideration shall be given to:

a) the need for additional lands to support expected population or employment growth, with regard to achieving the target set out in Policy RP-13;

b) the results of comprehensive studies completed for the area providing background information needed to inform decisions about the potential development of the lands, including:

(i) Land Suitability Analysis – This study shall include the mapping and analysis of the area's ecological features to identify lands that are constrained, partially constrained or not constrained for development. Required considerations include:

i. Watercourse and Wetland Habitat
ii. Forest Habitat
iii. Species at Risk Habitat
iv. Landscape Connectivity
v. Surficial and Bedrock Geology
vi. Steep Slopes
vii. Contaminated Sites
viii. Areas of Cultural Significance;

(ii) Watershed Study – This study shall identify potential impacts of development on any watersheds located in the area. The study shall comply with Policy EC-19;

(iii) Transportation Study – This study shall identify how the area can connect to the rest of the municipality and how internal mobility will be handled. The study shall include:

i. Reviewing existing transportation infrastructure, demand and policy to establish an understanding of existing mobility conditions;
ii. Applying the Municipality's regional travel demand forecasting model to determine potential impacts to regional mobility as a result of development;
iii. Recommending land use and network scenarios that support the mobility goals outlined in Chapter 7 of this Plan; and
iv. Water and Wastewater Services Study – This study shall establish existing water and wastewater infrastructure conditions and develop a macro-level

servicing strategy that will establish water, wastewater and stormwater servicing infrastructure requirements for development, including cost estimates and allocation assessment; and

c) Any applicable direction contained within this Plan and Council approved Priority Plans.

HC-8 Where a planning process for any of the areas identified in Table 3-3 as a Future Serviced Community has been initiated pursuant to HC-7, the Municipality shall adopt site-specific policies in the applicable secondary municipal planning strategy to guide future site design, land use, density and form of development. In developing site-specific policies, Council shall consider the following:

a) all applicable policies of this Plan;

b) the subdivision of land;

c) the phasing of development;

d) protection and/or restoration of significant environmental and cultural features, including wildlife corridors, the urban forest, wet areas, wetlands and watercourses;

e) directing development away from sensitive environmental and cultural features, and areas that may be hazardous to the health and safety of residents, including measures to reduce the risk and impact of wildfire through site and building design and infrastructure;

f) the integrity of regional parks or federal and provincial wilderness areas adjacent to the lands are maintained and buffered, including the functioning of shared environmental, recreational or cultural features;

g) the movements of pedestrians and transit service are prioritized over car-oriented design, including short blocks, grid or modified grid mobility networks, pedestrian streetscapes, active transportation, and connections to surrounding community;

h) the adequacy of public parks, open spaces and community facilities that meet the objectives of this Plan and the requirements of the Regional Subdivision By-law;

i) impacts to municipal infrastructure and the need, if any, to concurrently approve by-laws to pay for growth related municipal infrastructure;

j) the distribution of overall densities intended for the community, and between different development blocks, phases and land owners;

k) the Suburban Design Guidelines contained in Appendix C of this Plan;

l) community-scale or site-level green infrastructure, renewable energy options and other climate mitigation design elements are integrated in development;

m) the provision of a mix of uses, community amenities, public parks and gathering areas; and

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n) **provisions for incentive or bonus zoning and off-site improvements necessary to integrate the development in the neighbourhood.**

3.5 RURAL COMMUNITY PLANNING

The municipality's rural area is the largest sub-region by land area and consists of many diverse rural communities that are critical to the region's success. Rural communities across the municipality have been shaped by their access to natural resources, such as fishing, forestry and agriculture as well as a network of open space. Rural communities also include distinct Mi'kmaq, African Nova Scotian and Acadian communities.

Maintaining the integrity of rural land and communities is important to rural residents and a fundamental aspect of the Regional Plan. The distinctive character of rural places is best protected where the economic climate supports and values working lands, and the development climate values the natural landscape and seeks to conserve it. This means avoiding fragmentation of the land that affects the character of the community, the functionality of its resource-based economy, and emerging industries such as tourism. As outlined in Chapter 2, this Plan manages growth in rural areas through its designations, including the Open Space Designation, Rural Resource Designation, Agricultural Designation and Rural Commuter Designation.

The challenges and opportunities in the municipality's rural areas are distinct from urban parts of the region. This includes a culture of close connection to the land, and history of settlement. Many of the existing community plans were completed by Halifax County, before amalgamation. These plans and their land use by-laws were developed with significant public input and continue to provide a solid foundation for planning in municipality's rural areas.

Some communities have seen change since the time the plans were written, especially those on the edge of the urban area. As a result, some of the policy guidance and land use regulations no longer reflect the communities' visions. The existing plans and land use by-laws may allow uses that the community feels are no longer appropriate or restrict uses that the community would like to support.

The Regional Plan and the Halifax Green Network Plan have also focused on stronger protections for the natural environment, and updated regulations are needed to ensure these policies are implemented. As part of the Rural Community Planning program, the Municipality will be developing a Rural Planning Framework that will build on existing community plans and provide updated policy and land use by-law regulations for the rural areas.

3.5.1 VISION FOR RURAL COMMUNITY PLANNING

A vision to help guide community planning in rural areas was developed during the 2021-2023 Regional Plan review, and was informed by previous planning in rural areas. This vision may be further refined as part of the Rural planning process:

Rural communities are defined by wilderness areas supporting ecological integrity, traditional rural economies, ecotourism and rural lifestyles. They also include well-defined and walkable centres offering a range of housing options, places to shop, learn, play and gather. Significant rural centres are thriving, compact, complete communities with multimodal connections to the rest of the region.

HC-9 The Municipality shall implement a Rural Community Planning program to develop an updated rural land use planning framework for the Rural Area identified on Map 1, that supports the overall growth management of the Municipality and the sustainable development of rural communities. In developing and implementing the program, the Municipality shall be guided by the vision for rural communities and shall:

a) Prioritize protecting natural and cultural landscapes as identified in the Halifax Green Network Plan and Sharing Our Stories;

b) Support working landscapes, including those supporting agriculture, forestry, fishing and other rural industries;

c) Recognize the range of types and scales of rural communities and develop policies that support differing community contexts, including planning with Indigenous and African Nova Scotian communities;

d) Identify rural infrastructure needs, such as groundwater capacity and wastewater management, to help better direct where growth can be accommodated;

e) Explore options for rural mobility, including partnerships and micro-mobility options;

f) Direct growth to rural centres where compact development patterns can support village main streets and a range of mobility options, including active transportation;

g) Use Conservation Design Development as a tool to preserve open space and encourage clustered development;

h) Foster rural community character and invest in unique community assets through land use and economic development policies; and

i) Ensure land use regulations permit a diversity of housing types.

3.5.2 RURAL SERVICES AND MOBILITY

With lower population densities and distance to serviced developments, providing central water, wastewater and frequent transit service is often very expensive and inefficient. Intensification and housing options can, however, be supported though alternatives such as Wastewater Management Districts and private wastewater utilities for conservation design developments. While not all rural growth centres will be able to intensify, this Plan supports the vitality of existing service centres or villages which provide important community services to large areas of the Municipality.

Connecting rural communities is important for rural economic viability and social equity. Rural mobility can be improved by clustering rural development in established centres, investing in strategic active transportation infrastructure, and expanding the Rural Transit Funding Program to improve rural mobility options. A range of rural mobility options is needed to serve the different types of rural communities, as described in Chapter 7 and the Integrated Mobility Plan.

HC-10 As part of the Rural Community Planning program, the Municipality shall continue to study options for servicing rural centres, including wastewater management districts and rural mobility, and consider the potential for semi-rural development in areas serviced by central water and/or sewer that abut un-serviced areas.

3.5.3 COMMUNITY-LED PLANNING

Rural communities are looking for ways to strengthen their economies, provide better quality of life, and build on local assets. Some communities are experiencing slow growth or even population decline and shrinking rural areas might find that their policies are not bringing the prosperity they seek, while fast-growing rural areas at the edge of the city face urban-style development pressures and loss of working landscapes. Given the large geographical area and diversity of local issues, it is important that rural community plans are developed by community for community, or are co-created to use local knowledge and address important issues while being aligned with other rural areas and the region. A robust community engagement program will develop local visions, action plans and land use policies for rural communities.

HC-11 As part of the Rural Community Planning program, the Municipality shall seek to use a participatory community engagement model to co-create and support the implementation of community visions, action plans and land use policies that use local knowledge to develop strong and resilient communities.

3.5.4 PLANNING FOR RURAL CENTRES

The municipality has the largest proportion of rural residents among census metropolitan areas in Canada and the largest rural population of any county in Nova Scotia. Rural challenges and opportunities regarding development are different from those in urban and suburban areas, and warrant policy consideration to address them effectively.

Detailed studies undertaken since the adoption of the 2006 Regional Plan have determined that the municipal costs and risks associated with piped services in rural centres are cost prohibitive. Similarly, conventional urban-style public transit with frequent service is not always feasible in rural communities due to low population and employment densities. These challenges can be mitigated by using clustered development as a more cost-effective approach for HRM to provide municipal services. The policies of this Plan direct new development to rural centres while protecting open spaces and resource lands for economic and environmental purposes.

The 2006 and 2014 Regional Plan identified a range of rural centres at different scales that would serve as hubs for surrounding areas. While some of those centres were envisioned as town or village-like places that would expect modest growth, while other centres were seen as places that would expect a more significant level of change while acting as service hubs.

While some centres are located on the edges of the suburban area and are influenced by that settlement pattern, other communities see strength in their rural character and are closely tied to the rural economy and lifestyle.

This Plan envisions a range of rural communities of different types and scales, that will require detailed planning based on their own context. As part of the Rural Community Planning program, the rural centres

set out in this Plan may be further revised based on identified service and infrastructure needs and capacities, as well as community input.

HC-12 To protect the character of rural communities and working landscapes, conserve open space and support clustered rural development, the Municipality shall establish a framework to direct growth in Rural Communities to Rural Growth Centres and Rural Local Centres as shown on Map 4 and in Table 3-5.

HC-13 To further protect the character of rural communities and working landscapes, the Municipality shall establish conservation design policies, as outlined in Chapter 10, to encourage growth within the Rural Growth Centres and to manage growth in between centres.

HC-14 The Municipality shall use the general categories of Rural Centres as set out on Map 4 and Table 3-5 to guide community planning and service provision. The communities, boundaries and characteristics of the Rural Centres identified in Table 3.5 may be further refined through the Rural Community Planning process and updated through amendments to this Plan.

Table 3-5: Rural Growth Centres and Rural Local Centres

Type of Centre	Name
Rural Growth Centres • *Mix of housing types, including ground-oriented and small apartments* • *Mix of commercial retail, institutional and recreational uses* • *Opportunity for rural express transit and park & rides*	Hubbards Upper Tantallon Tantallon Crossroads River-Lakes/Fall River Enfield Lake Echo Porters Lake Musquodoboit Harbour
Rural Local Centres • *Mix of housing types, primarily ground-oriented* • *Mix of commercial retail, institutional and recreational uses*	Cherry Brook North Preston East Preston Head of Jeddore Oyster Pond Tangier Sheet Harbour Moser River Middle Musquodoboit Upper Musquodoboit Hatchet Lake Indian Harbour Lucasville Waverley Sambro Hubley Whites Lake

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The centres identified in this Plan will be further refined through the Rural Community Planning process. There are concerns, however, that important sites within some centres could be inappropriately developed before further community planning is completed. Therefore, as an interim land use management tool, controls will be applied to certain lands within some of the rural growth centres. Under Policy IP-23 in Chapter 10 of this Plan, land uses may be approved by development agreement provided they are conducive to the creation of a focal point for the centre. This mechanism will remain in place until future community plans are completed and adopted by HRM.

3.5.5 DEVELOPMENT OUTSIDE RURAL CENTRES

Ribbon development along highways is a concern for both local and regional landscape connectivity. Ribbon development is a linear settlement pattern that concentrates development along the road frontage, leaving interior landscapes undeveloped and inaccessible. As development extends further outward, the cost of servicing increases and traffic becomes heavier. Such development also obstructs natural landscapes and views, making scenic features less visible.

HC-15 As part of the Rural Community Planning program, the Municipality shall review secondary municipal planning strategies to discourage ribbon development along highways and scenic routes and to preserve views and access to natural landscape features. Reviews may include amendments to lot sizes and lot coverage, frontage, density, and natural landscape features.

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CHAPTER 4: STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

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CHAPTER 4: STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

4.0 INTRODUCTION

Community infrastructure is essential to building healthy and complete communities. Parks, recreational spaces and programs, and libraries provide communities with safe, inclusive and accessible spaces to gather, build strong and resilient networks, engage in positive social activities, and seek safety from harm. Shared public spaces are important to our physical and mental health, leisure, economic development, environmental sustainability, and even climate resiliency. Emergency services, solid waste and energy utilities are critical infrastructure that ensure safety and security for residents.

The region's parks and community facilities, including recreation centres, libraries, are mostly operated by the Municipality, with some administered by other organizations, including federal and provincial agencies, volunteer community boards, third party (for-profit) management companies, and not-for-profit organizations. Collectively, they provide a diverse range of programs, services, civic events and safety programs to the community. As the Municipality grows and our population becomes more diverse, it will be important that the public infrastructure within our communities be maintained and enhanced to meet the growing need.

4.1 OBJECTIVES

1. **Support community wellness and active living by delivering an inclusive municipal park and community facility network that accommodates the needs of changing demographics and the region's settlement pattern.**

2. **Direct investment in public space and infrastructure at the neighbourhood, community and regional level to meet the needs of diverse communities.**

3. **Support the protection, acquisition, and management of the significant natural or cultural resources in regional parks.**

4. **Strengthen collaboration with partners in planning and maintaining inclusive, resilient and sustainable parks and community facilities in alignment with future growth.**

5. **Create opportunities for partnerships and multi-use hubs to increase equitable access and efficient service delivery.**

6. **Support community safety by delivering an inclusive emergency prevention and response infrastructure network that accommodates the needs of changing populations and HRM's unique settlement patterns, in adherence to local and national levels of service standards.**

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4.2 PARKS

Parks are an important component of the Green Network. An ecologically and economically sustainable park system contributes to the resilience and connectivity of ecological systems. It provides residents of all ages and abilities with access to nature, active and passive amenities and social cohesion. As part of the region's open space network, parks help to mitigate the impacts of extreme weather conditions such as heat waves and flooding.

The park system, along with the green network, helps shape the settlement form and character of the region's communities. A sustainable Green Network is envisioned as a system that protects important ecological functions, mitigates climate change impacts and provides recreational opportunities.

The region's park and community facilities provide accessible programs and services offering diverse recreation, leisure and cultural choices, and delivering inclusive civic events. Currently, there are over 900 municipal parks in the municipality that provide green spaces and outdoor assets, including trails, playgrounds, sport courts, sport fields and skateboard parks.

The municipality's park system needs to serve the recreation needs of a rapidly growing and changing population throughout the whole region. A connected trail system provides linkages between communities and outstanding natural and historical features, which shape the region's form and identity. An inclusive and sustainable park system is a key consideration while planning for healthy and complete communities.

There are increasing expectations concerning the quality and quantity of municipally-owned public spaces dedicated to open space, recreation and leisure pursuits. The municipality has been experiencing high levels of population growth which is expected to continue. Given the higher densities desired for growth centres and transit corridors within the municipality, there will be additional requirements for more parks to serve the needs of local residents. To plan strategically for increased demand for publicly-accessible green space for passive and active recreation, the Municipality will develop a Regional Parks Priority Plan.

CI-1 The Municipality shall support community wellness, active living and the open space network by providing a full spectrum of public parks, as identified in the Green Network Plan, for the purposes of outdoor recreation and environmental protection.

CI-2 To ensure that the Municipality's park and open space infrastructure is sufficient to support growing and healthy communities, the Municipality shall develop a Regional Parks Priority Plan that supports the objectives of this Plan and the Halifax Green Network Plan and considers:

a) Planning the park system from a region-wide perspective, recognizing the needs of ecosystems and communities, areas identified for intensification, and new planned communities, the various settlement patterns, and their respective unique character, configuration, and need;

b) Coordinating and managing a program to research and identify potential public open space parks and corridors for the provision of quality open space for recreational and social development, restoration of natural corridor and urban ecosystem function, greenway networks to connect communities and provide mobility options and significant natural habitats to guide considerations of future development;

c) **Establishing criteria for classifying and developing HRM parks including designating new park areas, and the upgrades to existing parks required to support existing and future population growth;**

d) **Developing level of service standards, policies and equitable access to a variety of park types, amenities, facilities and experiences, and an associated park and public land acquisition strategy as outlined in Policy CI-7 and C1-8;**

e) **Establishing investment and management guidelines for public open space lands, infrastructure and sustainable natural open space management strategies;**

f) **Incorporating ecosystem and climate values, cultural and heritage values, naturalization and year-round recreation when planning across the park spectrum;**

g) **Prioritizing the connections between parks and open spaces, freshwater bodies and the Atlantic Ocean for open space protection; and,**

h) **Prioritizing protection of public access to significant wilderness and coastal areas.**

4.2.1 NATURE PARKS

The municipality is home to municipally, provincially, federally and non-profit owned parks and open spaces that provide wilderness protection and recreation opportunities. The Municipality currently has direct involvement in land ownership and park management for three areas that are being developed as Nature Parks. The primary goal of park planning for these publicly held lands is to retain them in a natural state, offering passive access to nature. An overview of these areas is provided in Table CI-1 below. Lands that the Municipality currently owns, or provincially or federally owned lands will be subject to future park planning processes. As development proceeds in close proximity to park areas, attention should be placed on ensuring land use is of a suitable use and scale.

Table CI-1: Description of Nature Parks

Sandy Lake The Sandy Lake Regional Park consists of municipally owned land around Sandy Lake, Marsh Lake and Jack Lake containing a beach, formal trails, and undeveloped wilderness lands. Located near Hammonds Plains Road, it extends up to the Sackville River and encompasses the Sandy Lake watershed, including the watercourse from Sandy Lake, Marsh Lake, and into the Sackville River. The Park also includes Jack Lake, which is part of the Papermill Lake Watershed. The Municipality has an active program to include additional lands to support the further development of this nature park.
Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes (BMBCL) is an area located on the western edge of the Halifax urban core and comprises Acadian forest, wetlands, and a system of lakes and headwaters, offering wilderness opportunities to many residents and visitors. In 2021, the Municipality signed a statement of collaboration with Parks Canada to consider part of the Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes (BMBCL) area as a candidate National Urban Park, under a new federal program. The subject area considered for park planning consists of land owned or under the control of a partnership group (as shown on Map 5A) and any additional private lands that might be acquired for the purpose of connection or park integration. The Partnership Group which has been formed to guide future park planning consists of HRM; the Province;

Nova Scotia Nature Trust; Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia, as represented by Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn (KMK); Sipekne'katik First Nation; and Parks Canada.
Shaw Wilderness & McIntosh Run Portions of the Purcell's Cove Backlands, located on the Chebucto Peninsula, are nature parks that include lakes, hills with scenic views, and popular hiking and biking trails. This area is characterized by its glaciated landscape and unique ecology. In addition to being home to a variety of local plants and animal species, the Backlands have a Jack Pine/Broom Crowberry Barrens ecosystem that is naturally unique and globally rare. The Municipality is working in partnership with other provincial and not for profit agencies to establish programing for these lands and actively considers opportunities to acquire additional lands that could further support development of this Nature Park.

Once underway, park planning may recognize that additional lands could be beneficial to the park purpose and objectives, and should be considered for aquisition. Any lands that are held in private ownership are subject to other land uses, and unless they are zoned for park, are subject to existing development rights as enabled under a land use by-law, or subdivision approvals or development agreements currently in effect.

CI- 3 As park planning proceeds for the nature parks generally known as Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes, Sandy Lake and Shaw Wilderness and McIntosh Run, the Municipality shall give consideration to:

a) the goals and objectives of this Plan, the Halifax Green Network Plan and any future Regional Parks and Open Spaces Strategy as outlined in Policy CI-2;

b) the relationship to adjacent lands and community;

c) applying best practices and an equity lens to acquisition models, park planning, and design processes;

d) determining safe and environmentally sensitive access points;

e) using the analysis and findings from ecological features assessments, watershed studies, or land suitability analyses; and,

f) the findings of the Regional Park Priority Plan as outlined in Policy CI-2.

CI-4 The Municipality shall coordinate with Provincial and Federal governments and conservation groups to help establish a nature park network and use this network to pursue partnerships or changes to legislation or regulation that would help support these important projects.

CI-5 The Municipality shall study lands in close proximity to nature park areas and ensure land use is of a suitable use and scale to support the creation and ongoing use of the nature park.

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CI-6 To recognize the unique, fire-prone ecology of the Purcell's Cove Backlands and protect the majority of this area as open space, the Municipality shall establish provisions within the applicable secondary municipal planning strategy and land use by-law to limit development within the interior of the Backlands.

4.2.1 LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS

The concept of Level of Service (LOS) Standards pertain to whether a service is provided or not, how much a service is provided, measure the quality of that service, or the required levels of investment in that service. In Parks service, Level of Service (LOS) Standards can be used to identify the desired maximum distance to outdoor recreational amenities and parkland and the amount of parkland and amenities available per number of residents (parkland per capita). Defining a LOS standard is useful in setting appropriate expectations for residents for park services, and can be used to help plan and monitor the quantity and quality of parks and community facilities.

Halifax's natural and human influenced landscapes help to organize the municipality into different settlement areas, each one having distinct characteristics. Types of development and density of population differ greatly among the settlement patterns as do their natural resources, parkland and recreation facilities. Some have important natural features; others provide a wide variety of outdoor recreation opportunities. No individual community has a complete spectrum of parks and outdoor recreation experiences. To ensure equitable, sustainable and high-quality provision of parks services and outdoor amenities are available for future generations, considering the nature of Halifax's various settlement patterns, different levels of parks and outdoor recreation service should be developed for each type of settlement pattern.

To accommodate the changing population's physical and social needs, the Municipality must continuously identify gaps and overlaps in park locations, sizes, outdoor amenities, and programming based on level of services. This can help make decisions about maintenance, investments, land acquisitions and divesting in underutilized spaces.

CI-7 The Municipality shall seek to provide a balanced distribution and supply of inclusive and accessible high-quality parks and outdoor amenities according to defined level of services. The Municipality shall develop Level of Service Standards for parkland and outdoor assets with consideration given to the following:

g) the objectives and actions of this Plan and the Halifax Green Network Plan, including the park spectrum;

h) benchmark and best practices for level of services;

i) a diverse and inclusive public participation program;

j) the unique character and needs of the municipality's various settlement patterns;

k) spatial analysis of the existing parkland and outdoor recreation amenities inventory; and

l) the projected future population's demand on parkland and amenities.

CI-8 The Municipality shall conduct a parkland and outdoor asset needs assessment to identify gaps and overlaps based on Level of Service Standards. This assessment shall inform decision-making on land parkland and outdoor asset acquisition, divestment and naturalization.

CI-9 Where a proposed development is considered by development agreement, the Municipality may consider the acquisition of riparian buffers, wetlands, and islands as public open space to protect public interest and facilitate public access.

4.3 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Community facilities play an essential role in fulfilling the community's social, recreational, cultural and public safety needs. While the primary role of many community facilities is to provide opportunities for people to stay active and engaged, these shared physical spaces increasingly play a role in filling gaps in the social safety net, supporting public health and even emergency services. Libraries and recreation centres in particular are at the front lines of serving vulnerable populations be it though housing supports, food programs, welcoming seniors and youth, tutoring newcomers or providing a safe space for the unsheltered population. Community facilities are therefore part of the social infrastructure that can build strong interpersonal and social networks and can be easily mobilized when either a personal or a community emergency arises, such as a loss of housing or extreme weather events. They are the essential building blocks of healthy, inclusive and resilient communities.

The Municipality operates 30 indoor community facilities, ranging from small community centres to large complexes including community centres, recreation centres, arenas, pools, skate parks, playgrounds, sport fields and sport courts. It is crucial to also recognize the contribution of community facilities provided by other organizations in supporting the city's needs, including libraries, schools, childcare services, cultural venues, places of worship, sport clubs and emergency facilities.

There are currently gaps in the equitable access to such facilities across the region. As HRM continues to embrace strong population growth, community facilities and services will need to accommodate a fast growing and changing population's demands, while also addressing existing gaps in particular in areas with higher than average low-income and vulnerable populations.

It is important to take community facilities into consideration when planning for future development, as they play a vital role in the functioning and livability of the municipality's communities. This can be accomplished through strategic public land holdings, creating partnerships, and co-locating services in mixed-use facilities and developments.

CI-10 The Municipality shall support the development of healthy and complete communities by:

a) maintaining public lands in areas that are identified for growth and intensification;

b) identifying gaps in equitable distribution of community facilities and emergency services;

c) exploring partnerships to co-locate community facilities in mixed-use developments or multi-use facilities; and

d) prioritizing location of community facilities in areas accessible by walking or transit.

CI-11 When developing new or amending existing secondary municipal planning strategies, the Municipality shall consider the needs for community services and facilities by:

a) consulting with service providers about the service needs of current and future residents;

b) considering lands for current or future institutional uses through land use planning and land banking;

c) maintaining lands in public ownership in strategic locations; and

d) perrmitting the location of community facilities in mixed-use developments.

4.3.1 INDOOR RECREATION

Halifax recognizes that fostering lifelong participation through a variety of accessible recreational opportunities contributes to healthy lifestyles, vibrant communities, and a sustainable environment.

The Municipality provides a variety of indoor and outdoor community facilities designed to meet local and regional recreation needs. HRM has adopted the “Hub and Spoke” model which identifies a large “hub” facility with other complementary recreation infrastructure located in the surrounding area serving as “spokes”. Clustering facilities in this way allows residents to access a wider variety of programming than can be delivered in a single facility. The location and distribution of community facilities is among the factors considered when reviewing centres for future growth. These facilities should also be located to allow for easy access using active transportation or transit where these services are available.

CI-12 The Municipality shall review and consider recreation trends, demographics, equity and community needs as part of planning for complete communities and striving to provide services in an equitable manner, particularly for historically underserved communities.

CI-13 Further to Policy RP-20, the Municipality shall consider the location and distribution of community facilities as part of the Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priority Plan to ensure that services are available or planned to accommodate future growth.

In 2017, HRM endorsed The Community Facility Master Plan 2 (CFMP2), which gives direction for a clustered approach to community facilities management that will provide a more cohesive infrastructure and will encourage more integrated and universally accessible programming. It identifies aging facilities that may need investment or replacement in order to meet accessibility standards, safety requirements and changing user needs.

CI-14 The recommendations of the Community Facilities Master Plan 2, as updated from time to time, shall provide guidance for needs assessment, planning, management and financing of community facilities in the muncipality.

4.3.2 WASHROOMS AND DRINKING FOUNTAINS

Providing access to safe, clean and accessible washroom and drinking fountains is essential as the city grows. Park washroom facilities play a critical role in bolstering HRM's overall network of public washrooms. This network comprises an essential part of the ongoing work of building a more inclusive public sphere, supporting more equitable access to all HRM's public and open spaces.

The *HRM Washrooms & Drinking Fountains Strategy*, endorsed by HRM in 2020, outlines policy and design recommendations and a proposed action plan for the municipality in considering the planning, recapitalization, and installation of facilities in municipal parks. This strategy mainly focused on the recreational user needs for washrooms and drinking fountains. It does also recognize other broader society needs for washrooms and drinking fountains that are not within its scope, and addressed the needs for additional subsequent work on the matter.

CI-15 The recommendations of the *HRM Washrooms & Drinking Fountains Strategy* shall provide guidance for decision-making in the planning, recapitalization and installation of washrooms and drinking fountains in the municipality's parks and open spaces.

4.4 LIBRARIES

Libraries play an important role in communities, in the vast range of free services provided, and in the communal space where everyone is welcome to gather. In addition to providing residents access to books and other forms of information, libraries provide free Wi-Fi, technology for public use, social and meeting spaces, cultural activities, programming and learning opportunities for all ages, including English language and literacy programming, and support and referral services for those at risk in the community. Libraries provide many virtual programs, including extensive digital collections, as well as home delivery services and community-based services in many locations outside of branches. Halifax Public Libraries has facilities located in urban, suburban and rural areas of HRM. Some libraries are co-located with other community or regional facilities.

Given the evolving role of libraries and the high level of community use, many existing older facilities do not have adequate space, or are not designed to meet modern demand. Halifax Public Libraries has a capital plan, which identifies branches that are priorities for investment, based on facility condition, population growth and social need in the community. The library has a combination of both larger facilities and smaller branches that are located in community and connected to transit and active transportation routes.

CI-16 Further to Policy RP-20, the Municipality shall consider the location and distribution of libraries as part of the Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priority Plan, and work with Halifax Public Libraries to ensure that services are available or planned to accommodate future growth.

4.5 SCHOOLS

Schools are public infrastructure, and their location, design and physical condition play a significant role in neighborhood quality, city growth and quality of life. Schools have heavy impacts on transportation and transit services, road service demand, residential development and housing choice. Convenient access to quality schools is an important consideration for community when deciding where to live. As a result, the

location of existing and planned schools is an important part of building health and complete communities and are important to HRM's long-term planning.

In HRM, the Halifax Regional Centre for Education (HRCE) oversees English public schools and the Conseil Scholaire Acadien Provincial (CSAP) oversees all French public schools. Eleven private schools are also located in HRM. Each Centre or Board is required to publish a Long-Range Outlook (LRO) annually. These documents provide information regarding the situation at each school, the delivery of education programs and services, historical and projected student enrollment. Based on the results of the LRO, a Centre or Board may identify a school for review to determine the viability of the facility. HRM has a Service Exchange Agreement with HRCE, which intends to provide a long-term solution regarding shared access to facilities, programs and services as well as ensuring gymnasium availability for the general community. Those are recreational assets that are maintained by the municipality on behalf of HRCE and is part of the overall recreation service level the municipality offers to the community.

Decisions about school locations are not made by HRM but the location of residential development and access using active transportation and transit should be considered while planning for complete communities.

CI-17 Further to Policy RP-20, the Municipality shall consider the capacity, location and distribution of schools as part of the Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priority Plan, and work with the Halifax Regional Centre for Education and Conseil Scholaire Acadien Provincial to ensure that services are available or planned to accommodate long-term population growth.

CI-18 The Municipality shall encourage the Province and the Halifax Regional Centre for Education to consider the Municipality's projected population and planned settlement pattern as outlined in this Plan and secondary municipal planning strategies when deciding where to locate schools and other public facilities.

4.6 PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Public Safety Strategy 2023-2026 provides a vision and mandate for the Municipality to advance holistic, upstream approaches to public safety and ensures public safety is a shared responsibility for the greatest collective impact. Public safety is about creating the conditions in which people feel safe from harms, and when harms do happen, that people trust that there are services available to provide necessary supports. In the municipal context, this includes programs and services to enhance protective factors that build resilient individuals and communities. Protective factors can be promoted through the equitable provision of services such as youth programming and literacy development; neighbourhood planning for social cohesion and supporting community-led safety and wellbeing initiatives. The Strategy is focused on three action areas:

- Community-Led Public Safety Leadership
- A Broader Spectrum of Responses to Social Issues and Harms
- A Centre of Responsibility for Collective Impact

Community-led public safety requires safe and inclusive public spaces where community members can gather, grow their networks and build resilience. These forms of 'social infrastructure' are essential aspects of preventative approaches to crime and violence prevention - for example by creating spaces where young people can gather and feel safe, where people experiencing homelessness can access needed supports,

programs, and services, and where community groups can organize and collaborate. When planning community facilities and infrastructure, it will be important for the Municipality to incorporate a social infrastructure perspective.

CI-19 The Municipality shall undertake the actions identified in the Public Safety Strategy 2023-2026.

An important consideration when locating growth in the municipality is providing adequate emergency services to ensure the safety of all residents. Planning and delivery of emergency management is coordinated between governments, public agencies, service providers and community organizations. Emergency services include hospitals, police stations, fire stations and critical infrastructure such as emergency shelters, community medical/wellness sites, comfort centers, community educational spaces and safe community spaces (refuges). These services must be dispersed throughout the community as distance and response time are key to ensuring their effectiveness. HRM relies on an interconnected network of fire stations and other emergency response facilities and are mandated to achieve Emergency Response Time Targets (ERTT). The Municipality must continue to work closely with emergency service providers when planning our communities.

CI-20 Further to Policy RP-20, the Municipality shall consider the location and distribution of emergency service infrastructure as part of the Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priority Plan, and work with emergency service providers to ensure that services are available or planned to accommodate future growth.

CI-21 When adopting new or amending existing secondary planning strategies, or considering development agreements or amendments to land use by-laws, the Municipality shall consider the need for new or expanded emergency services within or to support proposed developments. In choosing a location for new or expanded emergency services, the Municipality must consider present and future population density, projected community uses and hazards and travel time to/from existing adjacent emergency service facilities.

4.7 FOOD SECURITY

Community food security exists when community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice. Climate change and natural disasters like droughts, floods, storms and hurricanes impact local farmers' food production abilities, and disasters elsewhere in the world can lead to supply-chain disruptions that result in empty grocery store shelves here in the municipality. Since climate-related disasters affect the ability of food producers to meet demand, these weather events can cause food availability to suffer and food prices to rise.

When people are unable to access safe and nutritious food to meet their needs, they are experiencing food insecurity. Food insecurity is a complex issue with many economic, social, geographic, and political factors. A 2018 study of Household Food Insecurity in Canada found that Nova Scotia has the highest rate of food insecurity of all ten provinces in Canada, and an estimated 16% of households in the municipality face marginal, moderate, or severe food insecurity.[1] The same study finds that at 16.7%, the municipality is more food insecure than the national average (12.7%) and is ranked as the 3rd highest Canadian census metropolitan area for rates of household food insecurity.

Given the prominence of food insecurity across Nova Scotia and the municipality, the Municipality has undertaken initiatives to develop sustainable food systems. Within HRM, the *JustFOOD Action Plan (Part A)* is an important functional plan to improve food security, reduce food inequalities, support inclusive economic growth, foster resilience in the face of climate change, and promote the health and well-being of all residents.[2] The *Action Plan* identifies several recommendations aimed at improving the geographic and physical accessibility of food, creating an enabling municipal environment for good food, and supporting and expanding community gardens and urban farms. These recommendations help to inform several of the policies in this section. Supporting equitable access to healthy foods and the development of sustainable food systems strengthens community self-reliance and improves food security.

CI-22 When preparing new secondary municipal planning strategies or amendments to existing secondary municipal planning strategies, means of furthering food security may be considered including:

a) requiring development proposals to address access to food and impacts on local food systems as part of land suitability assessments;

b) increasing opportunities for food production and food retail;

c) exploring measures to preserve existing agricultural land used for food production;

d) requiring building design features that promote environmental sustainability and food security, including green roofs and amenity garden space.

4.7.1 RURAL AGRICULTURE

Rural communities have a rich history of food production and continue to be home to a wide range of agricultural uses including crop and livestock production, aquaculture, fisheries, and forestry products. Notably, the Musquodoboit Valley contains HRM's only remaining arable land largely unaffected by non-agricultural uses. Avoiding non-agricultural development on agricultural land and allowing farms opportunities for development or expansion helps to protect HRM's local farming industry. Supporting the maintenance of sufficient land for farming within the Municipality also keeps food supply chains local, reduces emissions, and promotes the local rural economy while providing healthy and nutritious food.

CI-23 The Municipality shall consider, as part of the Rural Community Planning program, measures to preserve existing agricultural land and expand agricultural land used for food production within HRM.

CI-24 Where Provincial programs are made in support of preserving agricultural land and promoting local agriculture, the Municipality may consider means to complement or further such programs through its policies or regulations.

4.7.2 URBAN AGRICULTURE

The *JustFOOD Action Plan* emphasizes an increased demand and interest in local food production and the need for HRM to reduce barriers and create opportunities for local food production. However, outside of certain rural zones, land use by-laws have historically restricted where residents are able to sell food they produce. Given the rising cost of food, high levels of food insecurity in the region, and desire to shorten

supply chains and increase access to healthy food, the Municipality has a responsibility to enable more residents to produce and sell their own food in their communities.

While residents have always been able to grow fruit and vegetable plants, also allowing backyard hens and urban beekeeping across the region can benefit food security. The detrimental impact of mass-produced and far-travelling food on the environment has spurred interest in raising chickens for personal use. Backyard hens can provide a source of enjoyment and personal food production with minimal impacts to a surrounding residential neighbourhood. A frequent sight in backyards and parks across HRM, bees play an important role in local ecosystems as pollinators and are essential to biodiversity. Urban beekeeping is a popular option for residents to produce their own honey and ensure plants in nearby gardens and the surrounding neighbourhood are well pollinated, which supports fruit and vegetable production.

As residents keep bees, egg-laying hens, and harvest plants (such as vegetables, fruits, herbs, sprouts, ornamental plants, and flowers), there is interest in being able to sell honey, eggs, and plant produce to neighbours and the surrounding community. **Market Garden** is a term that is used to describe food that is grown or prepared to be sold or shared with neighbours and community members. Already a common practice across rural parts of Nova Scotia and other Maritime provinces, market gardens allow residents to sell food at their own property or at farmers' markets. Through expanding urban agriculture opportunities HRM can support local food security by expanding residents' ability to produce and sell food in their communities.

CI-25 The Municipality shall, through the applicable land use bylaws, permit market gardens to facilitate the production, processing, and distribution of food at a scale appropriate to the surrounding context in all zones, except for zones created with the intent to limit development near environmentally sensitive watercourses, infilled water lots, and coastal shorelines. Permitted uses and structures shall include:

a) Private gardens, community gardens, green roofs, and accessory food processing and distribution;

b) Accessory keeping of bees and egg-laying chickens;

c) Farmer's markets, except that farmer's market's shall not be permitted in low-density residential zones.

CI-26 Subject to the zone and use requirements of CI-~~21~~25*, the Municipality may permit:

a) The use of shipping containers for the growing of plants, vegetables, fruits, and worms; and

b) The secondary processing and distribution of food in the form of preserved and pickled food products.

6.7.3 GREEN ROOFS

Green roofs can offer many environmental, economic, and social benefits. Besides adding to a building's aesthetic appeal, green roofs can support a variety of plant species and provide valuable space for community gardens and recreational uses. Green roofs are also home to plants that improve air quality by

*The Draft Regional Municipal Planning Strategy accepted by Halifax Regional Council to be used for public engagement purposes on June 20, 2023 included a clerical error that has been corrected as shown.

capturing airborne pollutants, reducing carbon emissions, absorbing light that would otherwise heat urban areas during hot summer months (contributing to cooler and more comfortable urban neighbourhoods), and can reduce the amount of energy needed to heat and cool buildings.

CI-27 The Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-laws, allow rooftop greenhouses and green roof features to protrude above the maximum permitted height for main buildings to provide additional opportunities for local food production.

4.7.4 INDOOR FARMING

Farming inside of a building presents unique opportunities and benefits for food security in HRM. Indoor farming—or Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA)—encompasses a wide range of farming techniques where produce is grown indoors year-round and farmers control light, temperature, water, and carbon dioxide levels. Indoor farming is sometimes called 'vertical farming,' since crops are often grown indoors in vertically stacked layers instead of horizontally across the ground. While indoor farming can already be accommodated in agricultural zones, industrial zones can also be appropriate locations as former industrial buildings, such as warehouses, or refurbished shipping containers can provide good spaces for indoor agriculture. Different types of vertical farming include greenhouses, hydroponics, and aeroponics.

Common indoor farming production includes leafy greens; herbs; vegetables such as cucumbers and tomatoes; and fruits such as strawberries. Indoor farms can also provide an appropriate space for vertical insect farming. Edible insect species are growing in popularity as an alternative source of protein. Insects can also be used for gardening, fertilizer, for animal feed, pet food, and for use in cosmetics. Indoor agriculture allows sustainable reliable year-round food production in areas otherwise unsuitable for outdoor farming, helping to reduce the distance food needs to travel and lowering transportation emissions. The limited land usage required also means indoor farming can help preserve existing outdoor natural spaces.

CI-28 The Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-laws, allow indoor agricultural food production of plants and insects as a permitted main use within appropriate industrial zones, provided adequate separation distance to residential and other sensitive uses are established.

CI-29 The Municipality shall permit the use of shipping containers for indoor agricultural food production of plants and insects as a main or accessory use in zones that permit agricultural and industrial uses.

CI-30 Where the products from indoor farming are sold on the same property as the indoor farm building, the Municipality may consider allowing the indoor agricultural food production of plants and insects as a main use in commercial and mixed-use zones, by development agreement. In considering approval of such developments, the Municipality shall consider the following:

a) whether the proposal meets all provisions of the land use by-law;

b) the adequacy of the size of the lot on which the proposed facility will be located;

c) the adequacy of separation distances from residential and other sensitive uses, wells, watercourses and riparian areas, given the size and scale of the proposed facility;

d) **the adequacy of mitigation measures for noise, vibration, and odours from the proposed facility;**

e) **the design of the proposed facility, including that its height, massing, and location on the lot adequately considers the visual impact on adjacent properties, public roads, community facilities and open spaces; and**

f) **Policy I-9 of this Plan.**

4.7.5 CANNABIS-RELATED LAND USES

The Government of Canada legalized access to cannabis for recreational use in 2018. This Plan provides a consistent regulatory framework to accommodate cannabis-related land uses within the region.

HRM recognizes the legitimacy of cannabis production and processing operations and the economic development opportunities offered by this industry. Cannabis production facilities can be accommodated in industrial zones. In rural mixed-use and resource zones where industrial or intensive agricultural uses are permitted, standards to adequately separate cannabis production facilities from residential and other sensitive uses are necessary, and some areas may require facilities to be limited in size.

CI-31 The Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-laws, permit cannabis production facilities within appropriate industrial zones, provided adequate separation distances to residential and other sensitive uses are established.

CI-32 The Municipality may, through the applicable land use by-laws, permit cannabis production facilities within mixed-use and resource zones which also permit industrial or intensive agricultural uses, provided appropriate controls are placed on the size and scale of such facilities and adequate separation distances to residential and other sensitive uses are established.

CI-33 Where cannabis production facilities are permitted by a land use by-law, but zone requirements limit the maximum gross floor area of such a facility, the Municipality may consider larger facilities by development agreement. In considering approval of such development agreements, the Municipality shall consider the following:

a) **Other than the maximum gross floor area of the facility, whether the proposal meets all provisions of the applicable land use by-law; and**

b) **In addition to the provisions of the applicable land use by-law,**

i. **the adequacy of the size of the lot on which the proposed facility will be located;**

ii. **the adequacy of separation distances from residential and other sensitive uses, wells, watercourses and riparian areas, given the size and scale of the proposed facility;**

iii. **the adequacy of mitigation measures for noise and odours from the proposed facility;**

iv. **the design of the proposed facility, including that its height, massing, and location on the lot adequately considers the visual impact on adjacent properties, public roads, community facilities and open spaces; and**

v. **Policy I-9 of this Plan.**

The federal *Cannabis Act* has enables provinces and territories to oversee the distribution and sale of cannabis. Under the provincial *Cannabis Control Act,* the Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation (NSLC) is the only authorized seller of cannabis and cannabis products. No provincial legislation regarding cannabis consumption lounges or venues has been proposed. Until such time that the provincial government brings forward legislation permitting private retail sales of cannabis or cannabis consumption within indoor lounges or venues, these uses will not be permitted within HRM. These restrictions are intended to ensure that HRM has the opportunity to undertake a thorough planning process, including public and stakeholder consultations, prior to any private cannabis retail sales or lounges opening in our communities.

CI-34 The Municipality shall seek to ensure that municipal land use regulations for cannabis-related land uses are consistent with federal and provincial legislation. Where federal and provincial regulations have been amended, the Municipality may also amend municipal land use by-law regulations to remain consistent with these changes.

CI-35 The Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-laws, prohibit the private retail sale of cannabis and cannabis products and commercial venues for the consumption of cannabis and cannabis products, unless it is operated by the NSLC.

4.8 SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

Acknowledging the success of solid waste resource management in Halifax and Nova Scotia based on principles of source separation and landfill ban policies implemented in the 1990s, the Solid Waste Strategy was last reviewed in 2014. There is a need to improve waste diversion, align Halifax's Solid Waste Strategy with HalifACT, and promote the circular economy.

The 2014 Solid Waste Strategy Update included objectives to:

- Maximize reduction, reuse, and recycling of waste resources.
- Maximize environmental and fiscal sustainability of the waste program.
- Foster public stewardship and conservation.

An updated Solid Waste Strategy will reflect the goals of HalifACT and the Province of Nova Scotia's 2021 *Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act* to reduce community emissions, reduce waste generation and waste disposal, and increase waste diversion.

The circular economy concept supports waste reduction and disposal through the idea that products and systems should be designed in a way that they can be reused, repurposed, or remanufactured rather than discarded as waste. To further support waste reduction efforts, it is anticipated that the Province of Nova Scotia will enact new Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) legislation in 2023, which will require major changes to the Municipality's recycling program, shifting responsibility of program delivery to industry.

CI-36 The Municipality shall update the Solid Waste Strategy to align, revise, and adopt policies and regulations consistent with HalifACT, the *Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act*, and future Provincial legislation related to Extended Producer Responsibility. The Municipality shall consider amendments to community planning strategies, land use by-laws or any other HRM by-laws to implement any recommendations of a solid waste strategy system review.

4.8.1 CONSTRUCTION AND DEMOLITION

In 2023, the Province updated the Solid Waste Management Facilities Guidelines for Construction and Demolition Debris Storage, Transfer, Process and Disposal. As a result, the Municipality must update any regulatory and policy documents to align with the Provincial Guidelines.

CI-37 The Municipality shall update any Administrative Orders, Licenses, Municipal Planning Strategies, Land Use Bylaws or other regulations to align with the Provincial guidelines for Construction and Demolition Debris Storage, Transfer, Process and Disposal Facilities.

4.9 REGIONAL ENERGY AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE

As a privately owned, publicly regulated utility, Nova Scotia Power Incorporated (NSPI) is responsible for generating and distributing electricity throughout the province. The company aspires to 80% renewable energy generation by 2030, by connecting to clean energy sources in other provinces (notably hydro power in Newfoundland and Labrador), as well as wind and solar generation, battery storage and conversion of coal-fired plants. NSPI must also ensure that the electricity grid remains dependable and grows to meet new demands from an expanding population.

Most of the electrical grid is above ground for cost reasons, necessitating regular vegetation management, especially for trees which can fall onto wires and cause outages. The challenge is to balance the need for reliability with the many benefits offered by trees, especially in public rights of way. In strategic urban locations where the high costs are justifiable, both electrical and communication wiring can be placed underground. Some areas in Downtown Dartmouth and Halifax already have underground wiring. For new subdivisions, underground lines may be installed at the request of the developer, who pays a capital cost contribution to help offset future replacement costs, though this practice is not widespread.

The Municipality has commissioned studies[38] to examine the benefits and challenges of underground utilities in terms of reliability, aesthetics and cost, and has chosen a two-phased approach to implementation in new subdivision developments. Initially, undergrounding is required from the pole to the house and then, after further consultation with the development community, consideration may be given to total undergrounding within the street right-of-way.

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[38] Kinetrics Inc. *HRM Underground Utilities Feasibility Study*. 2005. Halifax. Marbec; Economic Implications of Buried Electric Utililites.2007; Stantec. Engineering Study of Joint Gas, Power, and Communication Trench. 2007; Dillon. Underground Utilities Funding/Management Best Practices Review. 2010.

CI-38 The Municipality will cooperate with Nova Scotia Power Incorporated (NSPI), its assignees or successors, in their efforts to conserve energy, anticipate and provide for future electricity needs, increase reliability, reserve space for transmission lines and equipment, and protect public health and safety, while considering the Green Network Plan, the Urban Forest Master Plan and other relevant Priorities Plans and Functional Plans.

CI-39 When planning streetscape improvement projects for commercial areas or heritage districts within the municipality, consideration shall be given to the underground placement of electrical and communication lines. Highest priority shall be given to projects within the Regional Centre. The Municipality shall work with utilities that have overhead wiring to develop a design standard for underground retrofitting and a policy respecting ownership of underground wiring under municipal right of ways.

CI-40 The Municipality shall, under the Regional Subdivision By-law, require the underground placement of electrical and communication distribution lines from the poles within the street right-of-way to the property line for subdivision applications in which new streets are proposed within the Urban Service Area. The Municipality may consider future amendments to the Regional Subdivision By-law to require the underground placement of all electrical and communication lines within street right-of-ways or rear lot servicing easements.

Communication facilities are regulated by Industry Canada which has recognized that municipalities may have an interest in the siting of these facilities, particularly with regard to aesthetic impacts on the built form and landscapes. A federal policy has been established that encourages consultation between proponents and local governments before a decision is made whether to grant a license. The means of consultation is not specified but left for the Municipality to decide upon. While Community Councils do not have ultimate decision making authority on telecommunications applications, the Municipal and its residents still have a vested interest in their outcome. In 2016, the Municipality formalized the process through Administrative Order 2015-005-GOV to provide a recommendation to Industry Canada that includes feedback from residents.

CI-41 The Municipality shall follow the protocol as described in Administrative Order 2015-005-GOV as a consultation approach for the siting of telecommunication towers and antenna and provide recommendations to Industry Canada in accordance with the Administrative Order.

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CHAPTER 5: FOSTERING DIVERSE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

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CHAPTER 5: FOSTERING DIVERSE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

5.0 INTRODUCTION

Housing affordability and availability are significant challenges facing the Municipality. The Region's low vacancy rate and lack of sufficient housing to meet the needs of our growing population is a critical issue that demands urgent attention.

HRM needs more housing across the entire housing continuum. Housing exists on a continuum (Figure 5.1) where the supply of housing responds to the range of housing demand in a community. However, due to social, economic, and geographic factors, the full range of housing needs in a community is not always met by market housing. The housing needs of individuals and families with low incomes or with special housing needs are often met by non-market housing provided by the public and not-for-profit sectors. Non-market housing encompasses a wide range of housing, including emergency shelters, transitional housing, supportive housing, cooperative or community housing, and subsidized housing.

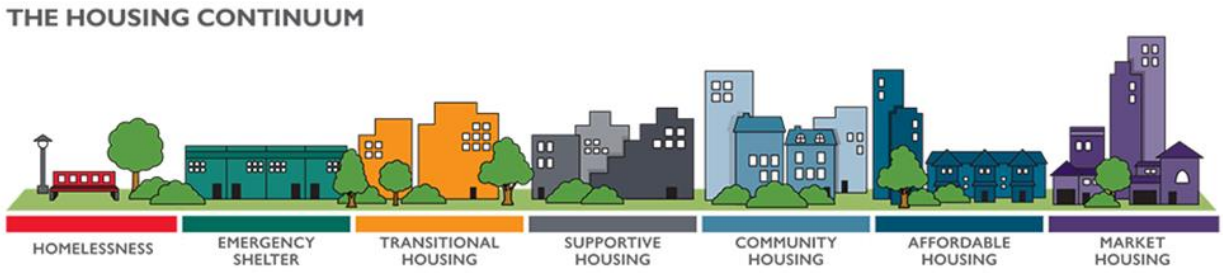

Figure 5.1: Housing Continuum. Source: About Affordable Housing In Canada, CMHC: https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/professionals/industry-innovation-and-leadership/industry-expertise/affordable-housing/about-affordable-housing/affordable-housing-in-canada

The housing landscape has been significantly impacted by the region's high rate of population growth since 2016. The rapid population growth rate, influenced by interprovincial and international migration, present challenges for the Municipality to ensure there is sufficient affordable housing for all. The COVID-19 pandemic and remote work possibilities increased inter-provincial migration from other Canadian provinces, while pandemic restrictions, high commodity prices, and labour and logistical constraints continue to present challenges for new housing construction.

The region's record-high home prices and low vacancy rates have led to affordability issues for both renters and potential homeowners. The vacancy rate dropped to a historic low of 1%, contributing to unaffordable rents. The rental market has experienced significant rent increases, far surpassing historical growth rates. Only a small percentage of available rentals are affordable for households in the lowest income bracket.

As a result, HRM is experiencing an affordable housing and homelessness crisis. The Halifax Charter defines 'affordable housing' as housing that meets the needs of a variety of households in the low to moderate income range, and CMHC defines 'core housing need' as households that spend more than 30 per cent of their income on shelter. In 2021, more than 11% of total households in the region were in core housing need, and between 2018 and 2022 the number of people who are homeless more than doubled

with the number of people forced to shelter outside increased 500%.[15] While the rise in homelessness is driven by several factors, the primary one is a lack of affordable, stable, and supportive housing.

Quickly increasing housing supply requires rethinking historical approaches to land use that have kept supply low and exacerbated economic and social inequities. The best qualities of HRM's varied neighbourhoods are found in the people living there, and this Plan will provide more people with choices of where and how to live. Increasing density in neighbourhoods rich in amenities improves housing inventory in the places best able to support growth and helps to reduce urban sprawl. Enabling the development of a mix of housing types throughout HRM helps residents to find an affordable housing option that matches their household size, composition, level of ability, and lifestyle. Supporting the development of affordable housing across the housing continuum is necessary to ensure everyone has safe and supportive housing. Having a range of housing options helps to create socially inclusive communities by allowing for a diverse range of households in every neighbourhood.

This Plan recognizes that current housing opportunities are not evenly distributed across HRM, and that we need to embrace neighbourhoods as works in progress and create housing for new residents to make more equitable communities. Increasing the affordability and range of housing available across our region is essential to ensuring resilient and socially inclusive communities where everyone can access housing.

5.1 OBJECTIVES

1. **Collaborate with government, non-profit and private sector partners to end homelessness and housing poverty in HRM.**

2. **Remove barriers to increasing housing supply for all residents across the Municipality.**

3. **Expand opportunities and incentives to support developing and retaining affordable housing.**

4. **Increase the diversity of housing types available in the Regional Centre, Suburban, and Rural communities to ensure all residents can choose housing that meet their needs.**

5. **Support increased housing density in existing residential areas with access to transit and services and provide more residents with a range of housing choices in established neighbourhoods.**

5.2 REMOVING BARRIERS TO HOUSING

As the municipality continues to face unprecedented house prices and vacancy rates, it is essential to ensure a coordinated approach to housing across the region. Many of the existing community plans were developed at a time when the region was facing a low rate of growth, and these plans must be updated to reflect recent population trends and allow the Municipality to respond to the growing demand for all types

[15] A Framework to Address Homelessness in the Halifax Regional Municipality. https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/230221rc1515.pdf

of housing. All community plans must be aligned with the policies and objectives of this Plan with regard to increasing housing supply, diversifying available housing options, and increasing housing affordability.

H-1 When preparing new secondary municipal planning strategies or amendments to existing secondary municipal planning strategies to allow new developments, means of furthering housing choice and social inclusion shall be considered including:

a) creating opportunities for a mix of housing types that serve all residents based on social, economic, physical, and cultural needs;

b) encouraging growth in locations where transit is or will be available;

c) reducing lot frontage, lot size, and parking requirements;

d) allowing infill development and additional housing in areas in the Regional Centre, Suburban and Rural centres consistent with policies in Chapters 2 and 3 of this Plan;

e) identifying existing affordable housing and development of measures to protect it;

f) enabling the adaptive reuse of obsolete, underused, or abandoned structures.

5.2 INCREASING OUR HOUSING SUPPLY

Since 2014, the municipality has welcomed record numbers of interprovincial and international newcomers and is one of the fastest growing regions in Canada. While the increase in population enriches HRM's social and economic wellbeing, this unprecedented population growth has created significant challenges for housing availability and affordability. Demand for housing has outpaced the rate of construction of new housing, putting pressure on the supply of housing that will continue to increase as the municipality grows to 1 million people. Recognizing that meeting the demand for housing is critical for building a successful region, in addition to identifying major locations for new growth as set out in Chapter 3, the Municipality will aim to increase the supply of housing by:

- Allowing **more diverse housing types;**
- Increasing **gentle density and missing middle housing;**
- Encouraging the **adaptive reuse** of former institutional and commercial properties; and
- Considering the removal of **parking minimums** for residential uses.

5.2.1 BUILDING DIVERSE HOUSING TYPES

Diverse forms of housing allow people greater variety and flexibility in deciding how to live. Housing types exist on a size and density spectrum, ranging from tiny houses that are home to a few people to large multi-unit apartment buildings that are home to hundreds. There is a need for housing to accommodate multi-generational families, seniors looking to age in place, students and young people, and housing that allows for shared accommodation and cohousing. Allowing more housing options in all types of residential areas increases housing capacity on an existing supply of land and provides opportunities for homeowners and renters to choose a neighbourhood that meets their needs. Building different types of housing is an important component to helping the Municipality meet the strategic growth objectives and targets of this Plan as set out in Chapter 2. Diversifying our housing stock requires looking beyond historical approaches

to home construction and neighbourhood design to focus on providing housing that meets the needs of people now and into the future.

H-2 The Municipality shall continue to identify and remove policy and regulatory barriers to alternative forms of housing.

H-3 To support the construction of diverse and affordable housing options, the Municipality shall continue to further explore and remove barriers to cohousing and land sharing initiatives.

H-4 The Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-laws, permit tiny homes, inclusive of mobile dwellings, as a form of residential use.

H-5 To support the development of inclusive housing that meets the needs of diverse communities, including but not limited to Mi'kmaq, Indigenous, and African Nova Scotian communities, Council may consider variations to land use by-law built form and siting requirements through site plan approval.

H-6 Cluster housing provide opportunities to cluster several residential buildings on a single property where the development of a new public street is not practical or needed to support pedestrian connectivity. The Municipality may:

a) through applicable land use by-laws, permit up to 4 main residential buildings on a single lot within the Urban Settlement Designation;

b) through applicable secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws, permit 5 or more main residential buildings on one lot by development agreement. In considering such development agreement proposals, Council shall consider:

- **i. the clustering of residential buildings on the same lot as separate dwellings or in townhouse blocks;**
- **ii. provisions to mitigate the impacts on adjacent land uses, in terms of setbacks, building scale and design, and buffering;**
- **iii. the provision of pedestrian infrastructure that is separated from vehicular traffic;**
- **iv. the provision of active transportation connections to the street network;**
- **v. the adequacy of indoor and outdoor amenity space for residents;**
- **vi. the proposal conforms to the density supported under the applicable secondary planning strategy;**
- **vii. the general maintenance of the development; and**
- **viii. any applicable matter as set out in Policy I-9 of this Plan.**

H-7 Shared housing use is a broad term that describes a variety of household forms where housing is shared by a group of individuals living under separate leases or agreements where support services may or may not be provided. In supporting the provision of shared housing uses, the Municipality:

a) shall, through the applicable land use by-laws, permit shared housing forms in all zones that permit residential uses at a scale and density that is compatible with the intent of the applicable zones. Additional controls beyond those for dwelling units shall be minimized to reduce regulatory barriers for shared housing developments;

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b) **may, through the applicable land use by-laws, permit shared housing in institutional zones at a scale and density that is compatible with surrounding uses; and**

c) **may, through the applicable land use by-laws and secondary municipal planning strategies, permit shared housing uses through a development agreement at a larger scale than would be permitted by the zone or in zones that do not permit residential uses.**

H-8 Shared housing with special care is a form of shared housing use that is designed to provide a level of care to residents with cognitive, physical or behavioural limitations. It shall be the intention of Council to replace, within existing secondary municipal planning strategies, references to residential care facilities, nursing homes, long term care, assisted care or housing targeted towards seniors housing with the term shared housing with special care.

5.2.2 GENTLE DENSITY AND THE MISSING MIDDLE

Many of the region's existing community plans envision low-density neighbourhoods which permit primarily only single unit detached houses and provide limited areas where apartments can be located. Planning and zoning in this way has limited residents' choices of where and how to live. Permit data from the five-year period between 2018 and 2022 shows that of the total number of new units approved, an average of 22% of units were in one-unit buildings, 71% of new units were in buildings containing five or more units, and only 7% were in buildings containing two, three, or four units.[16] Building the full range of the housing continuum and ensuring existing and future neighbourhoods have a full range of housing options available for residents requires supporting development of Gentle Density and Missing Middle Housing.

Gentle Density refers to providing additional housing options with minimal impact on a neighborhood's built form and character. Examples of gentle density include backyard suites and internal conversions to add additional units to existing single-unit homes. These types of projects can be less expensive and complex than new home construction and can provide affordable and well-located units in existing or new neighbourhoods. These housing options also allow homeowners increased flexibility to explore aging-in-place, intergenerational living, and an additional source of income.

Missing Middle Housing refers to housing intended to fill the gap between single-unit dwellings and large multi-unit apartments or mixed-use residential buildings. It is called 'missing' because many communities have fewer of these building types when compared to their overall housing stock. Examples include townhomes, two and three-unit dwellings, and small-scale multi-unit dwellings.

Supporting the development of Gentle Density and Missing Middle housing creates additional housing options in areas best able to accommodate growth and provides residents an opportunity to access housing that aligns with their household demographics and lifestyle preferences. These buildings maintain the existing neighbourhood scale while increasing the amount of housing available across communities, particularly in desirable neighbourhoods with access to services and amenities. Providing more housing options in more neighbourhoods can help to create socially inclusive communities for residents with different household sizes and incomes.

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[16] Source: HRM Open Data. Numbers exclude mobile home permits.

H-9 To provide more housing choice across the municipality, the Municipality shall amend existing low-density residential zones to allow any form of low-density housing to a minimum of three units per lot. Built form regulations within land use by-laws shall ensure that the building scale respects the scale of the surrounding neighbourhood.

5.2.3 ADAPTIVE REUSE

Adaptive reuse is the process of changing the primary function of an existing building and giving it a new life by adapting it and allowing new uses. When buildings have outlived their original purpose, adaptive reuse is an alternative to tearing the structure down and building a new one in its place. Enabling the repurposing of structures is environmentally sustainable, can help to protect structures of historical and cultural value to their communities, and provides opportunities for creative residential spaces. While the Suburban and Rural Community Planning programs will examine redevelopment opportunities across the region, interim measures can enable the adaptive reuse of existing structures and provide greater flexibility in land use policy. The housing possibilities presented by adaptive reuse support the Municipality's efforts to increase housing availability.

H-10 The Municipality supports the adaptive reuse of existing non-residential buildings for the creation of more housing. Within the Urban Area:

a) Where the applicable secondary municipal planning strategy designation permits residential uses, Council shall though applicable by-laws allow for the conversion of non-residential buildings to residential. Land use by-law provisions shall:

i. permit dwellings units;

ii. reduce parking requirements;

iii. permit increases to the building floor area that do not exceed 10% of the current floor area.

b) Excepting lands within the Business/Industrial Sub-Designation, Council may consider, by development agreement, increases to the footprint of a building and/or conversions of buildings to permit residential uses in areas that otherwise do not permit residential uses under the applicable secondary municipal planning strategies. Such development agreement policy shall consider:

i. the number of permitted dwellings units;

ii. reduced parking requirements;

iii. the appropriateness of residential uses in industrial zones or areas;

iv. that there is sufficient indoor and outdoor common amenity space for residents;

v. the level of proposed investment in conservation measures, reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and housing affordability is generally proportional with the additional development rights provided through the agreement;

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vi. **site context including cultural, heritage, and other considerations or priorities of this Plan; and**

vii. **Policy considerations outlined in Policy I-9.**

H-11 In the Rural Area, except within the Business Industrial Sub-Designation, Council may consider by development agreement, permitting residential uses within existing buildings that would not otherwise be permitted by the applicable secondary municipal planning strategy or land use by-law. In considering such a development agreement, in accordance with Table 5.1, Council shall consider the following:

a) a planning rationale that demonstrates:

i. how the proposed structure is underused, abandoned, or is no longer functional for its original occupation and,

ii. how the proposal is compatible within its rural context;

b) that the development is capable of being serviced by on-site water and wastewater services;

c) where the original occupancy of the main structure has been granted for a commercial land use, the proposed conversion to residential use shall retain a ground floor commercial presence;

d) the lands adequately support the proposed use in terms of lot size, configuration and vehicular access with regards to landscaping inclusive of buffering, amenity, lighting, refuse collection and other matters incidental to the operation of the proposed development; and,

e) the provisions of Policy I-9 of this Plan.

Table 5.1: Requirements for Rural Adaptive Reuse Conversions by Development Agreement

Existing Use	Proposed Use	Additional Requirements
Residential	• 1-3 dwelling units • 3-10 dwelling units	• Lot size of 3716 m² (40,000 sq. ft.) required for the first 3 dwelling units • 1858 m² (20,000 sq. ft.) of additional lot area is required for every additional dwelling unit greater than 3
Institutional	• 1-3 dwelling units • 3-10 dwelling units	• Lot size of 3716 m² (40,000 sq. ft.) required for the first 3 dwelling units • 1858 m² (20,000 sq. ft.) of additional lot area is required for every additional dwelling unit greater than 3

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Commercial Uses	• 1-10 dwelling units • Commercial ground floor (maximum of 2,000 sq ft)	• Lot size of 3716 m² (40,000 sq. ft.) required for the first 3 dwelling units • 1858 m² (20,000 sq. ft.) of additional lot area is required for every additional dwelling unit greater than 3

5.2.4 REDUCING MINIMUM PARKING REQUIREMENTS

Minimum parking requirements—regulations found in land use by-laws that require minimum ratios of parking spots per dwelling unit—can pose a barrier to building new housing. Parking is expensive to construct, raising the overall cost of the building and subsequent costs to own or rent, and is often provided in the form of expansive surface parking lots that consume greenspace. Providing more agency to homeowners, developers, and business owners to decide their own parking needs acknowledges that there is not a one-size-fits-all approach to parking.

Not all residents require a mandatory parking spot associated with their home as people choose to not own a personal vehicle, use transit, active transportation modes like walking, rolling and cycling, carpool, or access ride-share services. Being able to choose a place to live without the added costs of parking will better meet those residents' needs. Removing parking minimums for new residential developments can reduce the costs of building structured parking, provide consumers more choices and free up space on property that can be used for housing.

H-12 To support development of additional housing and efficient use of land, the Municipality shall consider reducing or removing parking minimums for residential developments, especially where transit exists or is planned.

5.3 INCREASING HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Housing affordability has become a critical issue across the municipality's urban, suburban, and rural areas. Historically considered one of Canada's more affordable cities, Halifax saw housing prices and rents rise dramatically over the past several years. The average home princes and rents have risen significantly in recent years. As the cost of housing rises, unprecedented numbers of residents are unable to find housing that is affordable and meets their needs. The number of people experiencing homelessness has continued to rise, and with highest number of people needing housing and the most people sheltering outside in HRM's history, other than after the Halifax Explosion in 1917.

Marginalized and equity deserving groups can often face systemic barriers to accessing housing, and past approaches to land use planning have historically contributed to the uprooting and displacement of these communities through urban renewal programs, gentrification, and encampment removal. A disproportionate number of those experiencing homelessness today identify as Indigenous, black, and have a disability or mental health challenges. Immigrants, refugees, and migrant individuals and families can also experience language barriers, discrimination, and struggle to find safe and affordable housing. One of the principles guiding the Municipality's *Framework to Address Homelessness* is 'Housing First,' an approach that focuses on moving people experiencing homelessness quickly from a shelter or sleeping rough to safe, sustainable,

and supportive housing. Building new affordable housing and retaining the Municipality's existing stock of affordable housing units is essential to the Housing First approach and meeting residents' needs across the entire housing continuum. Housing programs must include incentives to retain existing affordable housing stock and planning process will consider the impact of redevelopment by proactively assessing for unintended consequences, preventing harms, and maximizing equity.

HRM acknowledges the need for affordable housing across the housing continuum and is supporting the development and maintenance of affordable housing through:

- **Exploring municipal initiatives** to support the creation and retention of affordable housing such as inclusionary zoning, density bonusing, opportunities to provide surplus land to the not-for-profit sector, and policies requiring no net loss of existing affordable housing;

- **Participating in partnerships and programs** with local housing organizations, the Province, and the Government of Canada.

5.3.1 MUNICIPAL INITIATIVES

The Municipality's role in supporting and encouraging affordable housing has increased steadily over the past several years. HRM can play an important role in supporting affordable and diverse housing options through policies and regulations. Examples of key tools that support affordable housing are:

- **Inclusionary Zoning** – A planning tool that includes policies, by-laws and programs that requires private market developments to include a percentage or portion of the new units as affordable housing units. Affordable units can be required to be maintained as affordable for a set period or may be required to be affordable in perpetuity. Inclusionary zoning helps to create mixed-income housing that allows a wider range of people to enjoy the benefits a community has to offer without being priced out or displaced by new development.

- **Density Bonusing** – Is a type of Inclusionary Zoning that allows the Municipality to require a development to provide public benefits in exchange for additional development rights or relaxing certain requirements. The intent of this tool is to supplement other municipal investments so that new density is accompanied by the amenities and public benefits that can contribute to complete and inclusive communities.

- **No Net Loss/Rental Replacement** – No Net Loss/Rental Replacement housing policies require residential redevelopments to incorporate the previously existing (and often more affordable) residential units into the new development. This helps provide new housing while avoiding displacing former residents.

HRM continues to explore and implement these policies, among other initiatives, to support affordable housing and streamline its construction across all areas of the municipality.

H-13 The Municipality shall monitor housing and demographic trends to assist in determining future housing needs through annual updates to the Housing Needs Assessment and evaluating data from the federal and provincial governments, By Name List and Point In Time Count.

H-14 The Municipality shall continue to explore how to financially support the construction and maintenance of affordable and deeply affordable housing.

H-15 The Municipality shall continue to streamline zoning, bylaws, and permitting processes to support various forms of affordable housing.

H-16 The Municipality shall explore ways to support the creation and retention of affordable housing through development approvals, which may include inclusionary zoning, density bonusing, and policies requiring no net loss/rental replacement of existing affordable housing.

H-17 The Municipality shall explore opportunities to incentivize the development of housing on vacant property.

5.3.2 INCENTIVE OR BONUS ZONING

Incentive or bonus zoning is a planning tool enabled under the HRM Charter that allows the Municipality to require a development to provide public benefits in exchange for additional development rights or relaxing certain requirements. The intent of this tool is to supplement other municipal investments so that new density is accompanied by the amenities and public benefits that can contribute to complete and inclusive communities. Mixed-use developments in the Regional Centre are already required to provide bonus zoning public benefits.

To support growth and development in the suburban communities before a comprehensive plan review is completed, incentive or bonus zoning shall be required where applications are approved by Council to amend this Plan or a Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy to enable new or increased density of residential, commercial, or mixed land use in the Urban Service Area outside of the Regional Centre, including future serviced communities. Public benefits will be required in addition to any other requirements.

Public benefits shall include a mandatory contribution to affordable housing, and may include other public benefits as set out in the applicable Land Use By-law. Where the proposed development includes public benefits in the form of affordable housing provided by a not-for-profit or registered Canadian charitable organization, or a government organization, the public benefit requirements may be waived at the development permit stage.

H-18 Council shall require incentive or bonus zoning public benefits or money-in-lieu of a contribution in those areas identified in the land use by-law when considering site specific amendments to this Plan or to a Secondary Plan after February 28, 2023 outside of the Regional Centre in the Urban Service Area Boundary or Future Serviced Communities to permit:

a) new multi-unit residential, commercial, or mixed-use development; or

b) to permit additional density.

H-19 **The applicable land use by-laws shall require incentive or bonus zoning agreements or money-in-lieu of a contribution for any developments resulting from a plan amendment process considered after February 28, 2023 and shall provide for a method of tracking such developments in the land use by-law. Affordable housing developments developed by a registered Canadian charitable organization, or not-for-profit organization, or where such organizations have a housing agreement with a government organization for the site, shall not be required to provide bonus zoning public benefits.**

H-20 **The applicable land use by-laws shall provide a method for determining the value of incentive or bonus zoning public benefits for any developments resulting from a plan amendment process as outlined in Policy H-18 and may prescribe different rates of public benefits for multi-unit sites developed through a zone and for larger sites developed by a development agreement.**

H-21 **The applicable land use by-laws shall identify:**

a) the sites or areas subject to incentive or bonus zoning requirements, consistent with Policy H-18, including a method of tracking any future plan amendments;

b) the matters that the Development Officer may consider before approving an incentive or bonus zoning agreement;

c) the method to be used to determine the contribution for incentive or bonus zoning;

d) the density bonus rates and districts based on average market land values in specified areas multiplied by a coefficient of 0.6 for multi-unit sites;

e) a method to determine the value of public benefits for sites larger than 10 hectares and developed by development agreement;

f) the method used to annually update local area incentive or bonus zoning rates;

g) the method to determine, evaluate and accept the value of the public benefits; and

h) the means of administering an incentive or bonus zoning agreement.

H-22 **Subject to Policy H-18 where a development is enabled by a development agreement, the development agreement may provide for a method of when the public benefit value is paid.**

H-23 **The applicable land use by-laws shall set out the public benefits that are eligible for incentive or bonus zoning, including when money-in- lieu of a contribution shall be accepted. The majority of the calculated value of the public benefit shall be dedicated toward affordable housing, except for registered heritage properties and properties located within a Heritage Conservation District. In addition to affordable housing, the public benefit may be in the form of:**

a) conservation of a registered heritage property or a property located within a Heritage Conservation District;

b) improvements to and acquisition of lands for municipal parks;

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c) affordable community or cultural indoor space;

d) public art; or

e) other public benefits identified in the land use by-law.

For registered heritage properties and properties located within a Heritage Conservation District, the majority of the public benefit shall be dedicated to the conservation of heritage buildings and part of the remainder of the public benefit shall be dedicated toward affordable housing.

H-24 The Municipality shall establish policies to administer public benefits provided as money-in-lieu of a contribution to ensure that the funds are used for the purposes for which they were collected. This may include grants and programs in the urban, suburban, and rural areas of the Municipality.

5.3.3 SHORT TERM RENTALS

Short-term rentals are dwelling units rented out by property owners or tenants that provide temporary overnight accommodation. Short-term rentals may be offered as a rental of an entire dwelling unit, or in the form of a short-term bedroom rental, where individual bedrooms are rented out separately. This form of short-term rental is often associated with bed and breakfasts, but can also include less formal types of tourist accommodation such as lodging houses. While short-term rentals can provide unique opportunities for tourism, they can also have an impact on the long-term rental market if unregulated. HRM intends to provide a consistent approach to the regulation of short-term rentals throughout the municipality to protect housing supply while still providing opportunities for tourist accommodations.

H-25 HRM shall, through the applicable land use by-laws, establish special provisions to:

a) permit short-term rentals in residential zones, where the short-term rentals are located within the short-term rental operator's primary residence; and

b) permit short-term rentals in zones where commercial tourist accommodation uses are permitted.

5.3.4 PARTNERSHIPS

While the provision of affordable housing is often noted as the responsibility of the province, HRM acknowledges it is a shared responsibility. As a regulator of development, HRM plays a significant role in where and how housing can be developed. Our land use provisions impact housing supply, housing types and densities. The Housing and Homelessness Partnership, which is a collaborative of nine partners from the three levels of government, the private sector and non-profit organizations in Halifax, was created in 2013. The mandate of the Partnership is to "end homelessness and housing poverty in Halifax" by addressing policy and systemic issues, with the acknowledgment that affordable housing and homelessness cannot be solved by any single group or any single solution. For any significant change, all partners need to work together.

The theme of partnership has been integral for ongoing work related to housing and affordable housing, ranging from the Municipality's participation in national programs such as the Rapid Housing Initiative and the Housing Accelerator Fund to more localized initiatives such as partnering with United Way Halifax in exploring a Community Land Trust model and through working with community service providers in addressing urban encampments and homelessness. HRM has also played a formal role in provincial housing initiatives including participation in the Provincial Housing Commission and our role on the Provincial Housing Task Force.

While external partnerships are of great importance, this plan also acknowledges the significance of partnership among HRM's diverse departments and businesses units. Issues surrounding housing require expertise from all business units ranging from Finance, Real Estate, Planning and Development and Public Safety. In 2018, HRM Council endorsed 6 key initiatives to support affordable housing through the Affordable Housing Work Plan. While all 6 of the initiatives have been implemented, this work could not have been undertaken without the successful partnerships with community, housing professionals, HRM business units and external levels of government.

H-26 Where Federal and Provincial strategies or programs are made in support of affordable housing, the Municipality may consider means to further or complement such strategies or programs through its programs, policies or regulations.

H-27 The Municipality may consider partnerships or financial support for housing organizations and shall continue to participate in funding affordable housing projects through municipal programs and supporting programs offered by other levels of government.

H-28 The Municipality shall continue to explore partnerships with non-profit housing organizations, private developers and the Province, to encourage the development and retention of affordable housing.

H-29 The Municipality may study and consider the viability of new tools and programs to further leverage surplus or available land to support affordable housing, including supporting the development of community land trusts.

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CHAPTER 6: PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT AND ACTING ON CLIMATE

CHAPTER 6: PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT AND ACTING ON CLIMATE

6.0 INTRODUCTION

The natural environment is one of the defining features of the Halifax region, with its extensive coastline, lakes, rivers, wetlands, and vast natural and forested areas. Residents are highly aware of the potential impacts of climate change and advocate for the protection of the natural environment which are key priorities for preserving quality of life, climate resilience, community identity, and opportunities for outdoor recreation. The natural environment also provides many ecological and economic benefits to the residents of the Municipality. Environmental stewardship requires the collaboration of all levels of government and the community. The concept of *Netukulimk*[17] has guided the Mi'kmaq in their approach to sustainable living, and this approach teaches us that we must recognize the interconnectedness of our natural world, our role in it and our relationships to all living things. An integrated approach for environmental management is fundamental in maintaining the health and well-being of the whole natural system.

Watersheds are areas of land that drain or shed precipitation into river systems and contain all interconnected sources of water. Understanding the interactions between watershed components and how this is impacted by land uses within that system as an ecological unit is important to begin maintaining and improving the health of the entire system. Individual disruptions of hydraulic and hydrologic systems have cumulative impacts on how the system functions, impacting groundwater flow, water quality and water quantity, habitats, and the built environment.[18] Understanding how natural processes occur within watersheds can provide a robust framework for planning and land use decisions. Watersheds form the umbrella, under which a watershed management framework is nested, and lakes, as individual units, can be monitored for water quality to indicate health of the overall watershed. Narrowing in further, source water, the individual lakes and ground water that provide us with drinking water, serve the precious function of sustaining life and require special consideration. At an even smaller scale, watercourses and wetlands are integral components that function within a watershed. The land itself is also inextricably a part of the watershed with open and green space connecting the systems. The cycling of water and energy exchanges between the water, the atmosphere, and the land drive the Earth's climate. Together, the land, water, and air are a system that work together as a functional unit. It is impossible to separate these relationships, but by protecting and connecting our green spaces, we are also protecting our water and air. Understanding that the systems are connected, the Chapter begins with land, then circles back into water and air.

Regional Council has adopted The Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP) (2012); The Halifax Green Network Plan (HGNP) (2018); and HalifACT (2020) to further interrelated environmental goals. This includes advancing and protecting the natural environment through a network of green spaces and green

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[17] "Netukulimk is the use of the natural bounty provided by the Creator for the self-support and well-being of the individual and the community. Netukulimk is achieving adequate standards of community nutrition and economic well-being without jeopardizing the integrity, diversity, or productivity of our environment." (https://www.uinr.ca/programs/netukulimk/). See also: https://curriculum.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/documents/resource-files/Netukulimk_ENG.pdf

[18] https://www.muskokawatershed.org/wp-content/uploads/Watersheds-as-Ecological-UnitsMuskoka.pdf

infrastructure to preserve ecological function and biodiversity, carbon capture, connect spaces, adapt to climate change and other environmental hazards, and reduce energy consumption for residents and businesses. The Regional Plan affirms the importance of these documents in the health and sustainability of the Region.

6.1 OBJECTIVES

1. **Promote an approach to environmental management and economic development that supports a sustainable future through cooperation and collaboration with other levels of government, government agencies, residents, and non-governmental organizations.**

2. **Foster a land management and community design approach that maximizes opportunities to preserve the environment, ecology, and culture of lands and aquatic systems; and lands suited for parks, trails, wilderness areas, and corridors which provide recreational, ecological, environmental, and educational opportunities.**

3. **Adopt development practices that sustain and nourish air, land, water and groundwater resources, and reduce negative impacts to surrounding areas.**

4. **Respond to the climate emergency by supporting the rapid transition to a low carbon future by committing to a deep reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption, responding to climate change hazards and climate conditions, improving energy security and maximizing the use of renewable energy resources.**

5. **Promote practices that support the management of stormwater quality and quantity through natural topography and land cover, and use of green and natural infrastructure.**

6. **Promote practices that support safety and resiliency of communities and assets by prioritizing and upgrading critical infrastructure to withstand climate hazards, and through setting standards for resilient infrastructure for new construction.**

7. **Adopt community and ecosystem coastal adaptation strategies for the impacts of sea level rise by updating extreme water level estimates and implementing holistic approaches to coastal protection.**

6.2 PROTECTING AND CONNECTING OUR GREEN SPACES

Halifax Regional Municipality has a full spectrum of open spaces, consisting of lands for natural resources, agriculture, recreation, environmentally sensitive areas, hazard prone lands, cultural landscapes, natural corridors, trails, parks, wilderness areas, and preservation areas for potable water and waste/resource management. This foundation of open spaces forms a Green Network that provides numerous functions such as shaping development, providing ecological services, capturing carbon, retaining lands for agricultural and forestry uses, and providing recreational opportunities. The Halifax Green Network Plan (HGNP), approved in 2018 by Regional Council, defines an interconnected open space system for the municipality, highlights ecosystem functions and benefits, and outlines strategies to manage open space. Specifically, the HGNP provides land management and community design direction to:

- maintain ecologically and culturally important land and aquatic systems;

- promote the sustainable use of natural resources and economically important open spaces; and
- identify, define and plan land suited for parks and corridors.

EC-1 The Actions of the Halifax Green Network Plan shall be considered in the business planning, programming and regulatory activities of the Municipality.

6.3.1.1 A REGIONAL GREEN NETWORK

As the region grows and changes, retaining large natural areas is of critical importance to maintaining healthy communities. Natural areas should help shape the municipality's communities, establish community edges, and provide direct connection to nature. Lands of high value to the green network provide critical ecosystem services, important habitats and should be protected from significant human activity, as part of a larger effort to maintain biodiversity, mitigate climate change, and foster increased health and well-being.

Managing these areas will require balancing ecological protection with human activity to ensure that sensitive places are preserved, and the benefits of natural ecosystems are maintained. The development pattern of the region has been shaped by a natural network of open space, consisting of inaccessible Crown lands and privately held lands for natural resource production (such as forest production and harvesting). Equally important to this network is a system of large natural areas, natural corridors, and trail systems which form a backbone of interconnected green space. The Open Space and Natural Resource Designation identifies the primary areas in this network that will be maintained as natural spaces and working landscapes.

As a system, these open spaces perform environmental services such as connecting natural areas for critical wildlife migration, retention of stormwater, mitigating flooding and coastal damage, erosion prevention, uptake of nutrients, abatement of pollution and moderation of climate, and capturing carbon. Protecting isolated blocks of habitat will not adequately protect wildlife, habitat, and ecological services. Connectivity allows the uninterrupted movement of species and flow of natural processes that sustain life on earth. By strengthening, maintaining, and, when feasible, restoring these systems, we are also protecting our environment, our economy, and our quality of life.

EC-2 The Municipality shall use the Green Network Plan to identify areas that are important to maintaining biodiversity and climate change mitigation and shall change land use and subdivision regulations to manage human activity in these areas to protect the benefits of natural ecosystems.

EC-3 To preserve the interconnected system of open space and minimize fragmentation within the Open Space and Natural Resource Designation the Municipality shall, through the *Subdivision By-law*, prohibit residential development on new roads within the Open Space and Natural Resource Designation.

EC-4 The Municipality shall, through the *Subdivision By-law*, provide for the creation of one additional lot from any area of land that is within the Open Space and Natural Resources Designation and does not meet the minimum road frontage requirements provided that the area of land was in existence prior to April 29, 2006.

EC-5 The Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-law, establish a Protected Area Zone. This Zone shall be applied to protect environmentally sensitive areas including wilderness areas which have been designated under the *Wilderness Areas Protection Act*, nature reserves designated under the *Special Places Protection Act*, and conservation-related properties owned by government, non-profit conservation organizations, private conservation organizations. The Zone shall only permit scientific study and education, trails and similar public, conservation and recreational uses.

EC-6 Further to Policy EC-5, to enable property owners to retain a portion of their property and donate a portion of the property for conservation purposes, the Municipality shall, through the *Subdivision By-law*, provide for the creation of one additional area of land from any area of land within any designation provided that the additional area of land:

a) shall be used only for conservation purposes; and

b) may not meet minimum road frontage and lot area requirements.

EC-7 The Municipality may consider accepting or acquiring lands for conservation purposes.

6.3.1.2 PRESERVING NATURAL CORRIDORS

Within the open space network, larger patches of wilderness are connected through undeveloped natural corridors which provide opportunities for wildlife to move, seek shelter, food, water, space and mates; all important components for maintaining healthy, diverse wildlife populations. However, human activity such as new development, natural resource extraction, highway and road construction, and removal of vegetation are increasingly threatening these critical connections. Without intervention, there is a risk of losing and disconnecting these corridors permanently. Therefore, it is critical to identify and implement a clear approach to protect natural corridors as the region grows.

The HGNP was the initial step to begin conceptualizing the relationship between corridors and areas of high environmental value which were then further refined. The HGNP highlighted the connection between mainland Halifax and the Chebucto Peninsula as particularly under threat. By overlaying the HGNP essential corridors with land use and planning data, a high-level understanding of the interplay between wilderness and land use can be seen. Through this analysis, a pattern emerges, and highlights connections at the highest order as shown on Map 6 to identify varying levels of risk and the need for different levels of intervention. Three distinct corridor types are as described below:

1. **Corridors At Risk (Essential Corridor Area 1)** - Essential corridors present in areas that are not yet developed but are in pressure points and are at high risk of being lost. This is especially true to allow the movement of wildlife between the Chebucto Peninsula and Mainland Halifax. These types of corridors require immediate intervention.
2. **Developed Corridors (Essential Corridor Area 2)** - Essential corridors in which development has already occurred but there may be opportunities to reduce further impacts to the corridors. This type of corridor would require an intermediate level of intervention and considerations of tools to reduce any further damage as secondary planning documents and land use bylaws are updated.
3. **Protected Corridors (Essential Corridor Area 3)** - Essential corridors that are already protected through existing tools including Open Space Designation, Agricultural Designation, Growth Control measures, or Conservation Design Development. In these areas, intervention may not be required, but the existing tools must remain in place to continue to protect these corridors.

EC-8 **To further the goals of the Halifax Green Network Plan and guide amendments to this Plan, secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws, the Municipality shall consider refining the boundaries of the Essential Corridors and Important Corridors shown on Map 5 of the Halifax Green Network Plan.**

EC-9 **The Municipality shall coordinate and partner with provincial and federal levels of government, utilities, and other relevant stakeholders with a view to establishing, maintaining, protecting and strengthening wildlife corridors and wildlife crossings, including on major infrastructure like highways, utility corridors and multi-jurisdictional boundaries.**

EC-10 **The Municipality shall identify Essential Corridor Areas on Map 6 Wildlife Corridors as Essential Corridor Area-1 (ECA-1), Essential Corridor Area-2 (ECA-2), and Essential Corridor Area-3 (ECA-3). Detailed overlays for each Essential Corridor Area shall be included within applicable land use by-laws.**

EC-11 **Within all Essential Corridor Areas shown on Map 6, the Municipality shall consider:**

a) naturalization within public spaces and the right of way;

b) amending secondary municipal planning strategies and land use bylaws:

i. to limit uses or development forms that are incompatible with wildlife connectivity;

ii. to increase lot size requirements;

iii. to require reinstatement and maintenance of vegetation in riparian buffers; and

iv. to include lot coverage and landscaping requirements that promote a high percentage of open space and permeable surfaces.

EC-12 **The Municipality shall amend the Regional Subdivision By-Law, applicable secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws to permit subdivision within an Essential Corridor Area-1 (ECA-1) only by development agreement.**

EC-13 **Further to Policies EC-11 and EC-12, when adopting new or amending existing secondary municipal planning strategies or land use by-laws or the Regional Subdivision By-law, or considering development agreements or amendments to development agreements to permit new development on lands located within an Essential Corridor Area 1 (ECA-1), the Municipality shall:**

a) require the location and width of an Essential Corridor to be delineated at the site level;

b) organize land use or management of land in a way that protects the Essential Corridor 1, and ensures landscape connectivity to Essential Corridors on adjacent lands;

c) consider opportunities to dedicate or acquire parkland within or adjacent to Essential Corridors; and

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d) consider opportunities for wildlife crossings over transportation infrastructure or other major barriers.

EC-14 Further to Policy EC-11, prior to any amendments to this Plan that would result in a change to the Open Space Designation, the Agricultural Designation, or those portions of the Hammonds Plains and Beaver Bank communities that are subject to Policy I-33, the Municipality shall delineate the location and width of the Essential Corridor Area-3 that would be affected by the proposed amendment.

6.3.3 NATURALIZATION AND MUNICIPAL NATURAL ASSETS MANAGEMENT

Natural assets such as wetlands, forests, waterways, and parks can mitigate coastal damage, reduce the heat island effect, provide shade and areas for reprieve, manage stormwater, clean the air and water, provide buffers and protection to inland properties, sequester carbon, and offer aesthetic and recreational opportunities and mental and physical health benefits. Natural systems have traditionally been undervalued as they are perceived to provide these services for free. The services that these natural assets provide often cannot be replicated by human-made systems or can only be replicated at a tremendous cost. Keeping natural assets intact and seeking opportunities to increase natural assets through programming effort can provide numerous benefits as these systems are self-renewing and resilient, which reduces the maintenance requirements and costs of landscape management and ecosystem restoration. Keeping natural assets in their natural state is ideal; however, this is not always possible, and the Municipality will seek opportunities to further expand on the health, biodiversity, and resiliency of natural assets through priorities plans, naturalization programming, and natural asset management. Approaches such as green infrastructure provide natural and semi-natural engineered landscape elements designed to provide services such as stormwater management, adaptation to the effects of climate change, water filtration and improved air quality.

Since 2019, the Municipality has been working towards a naturalization initiative, beginning with a pilot program. Various community and corporate projects have been implemented, and in 2022, Regional Council approved the expansion of the naturalization pilot into a region-wide program. Currently, 31 sites have been identified for naturalization, ranging from riparian to pollinator meadows.

EC-15 The Municipality shall support a region-wide naturalization program and promote naturalization through projects, public education and awareness.

Municipal Natural Assets refer to natural resources or ecosystems that provide local, sustainable municipal services. These services provide a variety of core services such as stormwater management, water infiltration, protection from flooding and erosion, and other services. Not only do these services provide service delivery, but they also support adaptation and mitigation for climate change, enhanced biodiversity, and ecosystem health. The location of natural assets can also inform decisions related to appropriate locations for future developments as it relates to flooding and wilderness areas. In 2020-2021, the Municipality began the first step in natural assets management, a natural assets management inventory.[19]

[19] https://mnai.ca/media/2021/11/MNAI-Inventory-Cluster-2-Halifax-report-103.pdf

EC-16 The Municipality shall develop a Municipal Natural Assets framework to measure and value natural assets and make decisions on the delivery of services that natural assets provide.

6.3.4 URBAN FORESTS

The *Urban Forest Master Plan (UFMP),* first adopted in 2012 and under review in 2023, provides a comprehensive neighbourhood approach to ensure a sustainable urban forest in the Urban Settlement Designation. To modernize the language and approach to urban forestry in the Municipality, the UFMP shall be renamed the "Urban Forest Management Plan" in future versions of the document.

EC-17 The recommendations of the *Urban Forest Management Plan*, adopted in principle by the Municipality in September 2012 as amended or readopted, shall be considered in planning, programming and regulatory activities related to managing and enhancing the urban forest cover in the Municipality.

6.4 PROTECTING OUR WATER

Water is a limited and precious resource. Water not only sustains life through providing potable water supplies, wildlife habitats and aquatic corridors; it also has historic and cultural value and provides a tremendous range of ecosystem services and recreational and aesthetic values to its citizens. Watersheds are the fundamental unit to understand the environmental, social, and cultural values of water and must be protected through land-use control and retention, enhancement, and restoration of those features that regulate water flow, mitigate flooding, reduce water pollution and protect ecological functions.

The municipality is home to over 1,000 lakes, more than 20 rivers, innumerable streams, and 23 major shorelines. These interconnected systems are vulnerable and require careful management and consideration to address complex issues such as management of surface and groundwater quantity and quality, ecosystem conservation, competing interests or users, public safety, and differing mandates from various agencies. Environmental features such as water, soils, vegetation, and habitat are all interconnected, and land use activities in one area of a watershed can adversely affect the quality and quantity of water and aquatic habitat in another, with the most impact downstream from activities occurring upstream.

6.4.1. THE UMBRELLA - WATERSHED PLANNING

As the Municipality undergoes community planning to modernize our community plans, there is an opportunity to be innovative and restructure planning that integrates ecology with land use to strive toward a healthier ecosystem and communities through comprehensive community and neighbourhood planning. Land suitability studies and watershed studies will inform how development interacts within an ecological system to minimize land use impacts on the natural system.

It's important to recognize that watersheds and sub-watersheds at different scales face different pressures and that a blanket, one-size fits all watershed management approach will not appropriately address the stresses a given watershed is facing. Watershed planning in a developed urban setting where watersheds may be degraded and require restoration require different approaches than rural contexts where there is opportunity to influence how settlement can be best arranged to maximize ecosystem health. Further, there

may be urban, suburban and rural settings all located within the same watershed, adding to the complexity of watershed planning and management.

6.4.2 WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

Watershed Management acknowledges uncertainties, considers interconnections within the system, and recognizes cumulative effects and impacts on the watershed.[20] Fundamentally, a Watershed Management Framework is a mechanism to organize and address the complex interactions between land-based activities and water resources using watersheds as a unit of management through a coordinated approach. The development of a Watershed Management Framework promotes a coordinated approach to balancing equitable use of water resources with the sustainability of these vital ecosystems.

Not all watersheds are the same –urban, suburban, and rural watersheds can face different stressors and may require tailored approaches depending on various impacts. For example, an urban watershed may face higher volumes of runoff and pollutants due to impervious surfaces whereas rural areas may face issues of arsenic or lack of groundwater recharge. Therefore, although there may be common components of a Watershed Management Framework, there must be flexibility and adaptability built within the Watershed Management Framework to customize local conditions. Critical to the success of Watershed Management is genuine community-level stakeholder involvement and buy-in. Without community stewardship, a Watershed Management approach will not succeed.

EC-18 The Municipality shall consider developing community-based Watershed Management Frameworks to provide recommendations for amendments to this Plan, and new or amended secondary municipal planning strategies, using watersheds as a defined unit of management. The Watershed Management Frameworks shall consider:

a) Utilizing a holistic, adaptive approach to managing all water resources, improving the health of the watershed, and adjusting to changing circumstances;

b) Determining and mitigating the impact of water pollution;

c) Infrastructure investments, land use changes, and growth servicing;

d) The impacts of climate change and measures to reduce those impacts;

e) Restoring and maintaining water quality and natural floodplains;

f) The impacts of flooding on water quality and ecosystem resiliency;

g) Supporting, enhancing and/or restoring habitat connectivity in both aquatic and riparian zones;

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[20] https://conservationontario.ca/fileadmin/pdf/policy-priorities_section/IWM_WaterMgmtFramework_PP.pdf

h) Developing strategies to determine and implement best practices to reduce the impact of land uses adjacent to watercourses and identifying the cumulative impact of development within a watershed;

i) Developing strategies to increase the naturalization of riparian buffers where they are degraded, and prevent the destruction of habitat where riparian buffer remains in a natural state;

j) Improving the integration of publicly available and scientifically sound principles and available community water quality data into policy and decision-making;

k) Building genuine, inclusive, collaborative relationships with community stakeholders and municipal programs; and

l) Developing strategies for implementation and enforcement of watershed management strategies.

6.4.3 WATERSHED STUDIES

The goal of a watershed study is to determine the potential impact of development on all watercourses, including wetlands, riparian zones, ground water, and waterbodies. This includes impacts on the site and the watershed(s) where the site is located, both in terms of cumulative impacts of multiple developments in one watershed, and downstream effects of a single development on ecosystems. Findings should present a watershed management plan including mitigation measures to reduce the negative impacts of development on watercourses and identify features or areas where development poses unacceptable risks. Watershed management plans will seek to achieve public health standards for body contact recreation, identify and maintain, enhance or restore ecosystem services provided by riparian and aquatic ecosystems, and to maintain the natural trophic status of our lakes and waterways.

EC-19 When considering requests to develop future serviced communities as outlined in Policy HC-7, the Municipality shall require watershed or sub-watershed studies concerning natural watercourses where new or additional development could adversely affect watercourses within the watershed. The studies shall be designed to:

a) establish a reliable and accurate baseline of existing water quality;

b) Recommend water quality objectives for key receiving watercourses in the study area;

c) evaluate the capacity of any existing control structures in the watershed;

d) model potential impacts to water quality as a result of development, and determine the amount of development and maximum inputs that receiving water bodies can assimilate without adversely affecting water quality;

e) determine the parameters to be attained or retained to achieve water quality objectives;

f) identify sources of contamination within the watershed;

g) identify remedial measures to improve water quality;

h) identify areas within the watershed where changes in flow patterns from development could result in flood damage to properties or environment;

i) evaluate and identify the potential for increased flooding hazards as a result of development, taking into consideration the effects of climate change;

j) recommend strategies to achieve the water quality objectives set out under the watershed study;

k) recommend methods to reduce and mitigate loss of natural infrastructure, permeable surfaces, native plants and native soils, groundwater recharge areas, and other important environmental functions within the watershed;

l) identify appropriate riparian buffer widths for the watershed;

m) recommend potential regulatory controls and management strategies to achieve the desired objectives;

n) recommend an approach for a successful watershed monitoring program; and

o) in areas served by ground water supply, recommend measures to protect and manage quantity and quality of groundwater resources and nutrient inputs.

6.4.4 RURAL COMMUNITY WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

EC-20 In addition to Policy EC-19, where the Municipality is considering adopting a new secondary municipal planning strategy in a rural area, the following shall be considered:

a) opportunities to align the boundaries of the community plan area to the boundaries of a watershed or subwatershed;

b) Identifying and recommending measures to protect and manage natural corridors and critical habitats for terrestrial and aquatic species, including species at risk;

c) Prioritizing watershed-scale planning, including proactive protection of sensitive ecological features, including surface water bodies, wetlands, and groundwater recharge zones;

d) Quantifying the percentage impervious surfaces as the threshold for intervention and cumulative impacts of development on individual water bodies and entire watersheds; and;

e) Where applicable, developing policy to prioritize protecting natural connections between the Chebucto Peninsula and Mainland Nova Scotia.

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6.4.5 LAKE MONITORING

Lakes, as a component of the watershed, reflect the health of the surrounding watershed. Water quality monitoring is a shared responsibility between each level of government and is an essential component to successfully manage water resources. The Municipality has a critical role to play in water quality, as it is the level of government that is closest to residents with responsibilities for planning, parks and recreation, community enjoyment and well-being. Water quality monitoring was recommended by the Municipality's Water Resource Management Study in 2003 and water quality monitoring has occurred sporadically over the years. In 2020, a report prepared by AECOM[21] made recommendations and identified opportunities for the Municipality to further protect water resources. Through this work, a framework for a water quality monitoring program was chosen: a Municipal staff led approach with community volunteer support. Through this framework 76 lakes were selected for monitoring.[22]

EC-21 The Municipality may consider preparing a water quality monitoring protocol to provide guidance for water quality monitoring plans accepted by the Municipality under policies of this Plan and any other monitoring programs to be undertaken for the Municipality by landowners.

EC-22 For lakes selected for water quality monitoring, the Municipality shall continue to implement a comprehensive water quality monitoring program to provide guidance for water quality monitoring plans and protocols.

EC-23 Further to Policy EC-22, the Municipality shall undertake an adaptive management approach, and based on the data collected, may adjust the water quality monitoring program.

6.4.6 RIPARIAN AREAS AND WETLANDS

Wetlands and other watercourses are vital components of the hydrological cycle and affect the quality and quantity of water and groundwater. They are natural filters for removing sediment, contaminants and excessive nutrients which are drawn up by the vegetation and settle out naturally before entering watercourses or groundwater. They absorb and help regulate peak stormwater flows, reducing the risk of flooding and erosion downstream while offsetting groundwater extraction to reduce the risk of wells running dry.

Retaining riparian buffers is important for the protection of water quality, wildlife and the protection of property and the public from flood hazards. In addition to the functions of flood regulation, the deep-rooted, native plants in riparian buffers protect shorelines by reducing bank erosion and bank failure, reduce the impacts of sedimentation, erosion and nutrient loading on watercourses, regulate the temperature of adjacent watercourses, provide important wildlife habitat, reduce the loss of valuable lands and add aesthetic value to the Municipality[23]. Wetlands also provide a range of ecosystem services including wildlife habitat, opportunities for research and recreation, improved water quality, sediment filtration, water balance

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[21] 210211rwabsp911.pdf (halifax.ca)
[22] https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/210629rc1141.pdf
[23] Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development. *Stepping Back from the Water: A Beneficial Management Guide for New Development near water bodies in Alberta's Settled Region. 2012.*

regulation, and carbon storage and sequestration. Moreover, while enhancing the overall aesthetics of a community, wetlands are unsuitable for development as they pose a hazard for the stability of structures.

To maximize the protection benefits of riparian buffers and wetlands, the trees, shrubs, ground cover vegetation and soils must be protected. Retaining native vegetation and native soils enhances runoff storage capacity, infiltration, and nutrient recycling. Tree canopy should also be retained over watercourses, soil erosion should be prevented, and activities or land uses which introduce nutrients or contaminants into watercourses need to be excluded.

6.4.6.1 RIPARIAN AREAS

The Green Network Plan recommends a watercourse buffer of 30 metres for stream bank stability, flood mitigation, water temperature regulation, minimal protection of wildlife, partial benefits for sediment removal, and aesthetic value. A general riparian buffer of 30 metres will be applied for protection for the whole of the Municipality until buffers that meet the specific needs of each watershed can be determined through the watershed studies and implemented through amendments to secondary municipal planning strategies.

EC-24 The Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-law, require the retention of a minimum 30-metre-wide riparian buffer along all watercourses as well as wetlands contiguous with watercourses throughout the Municipality to protect the chemical, physical and biological functions of marine and freshwater resources. No alteration of land levels or the removal of vegetation in relation to development will be permitted within the buffer. Lands within the Halifax Harbour Sub-Designation on the Regional Land Use Structure Map (Map 2), industrial lands within the port of Sheet Harbour and lands within the Waterfront Residential (R-1C) Zone under the Shubenacadie Lakes Secondary Planning Strategy shall be exempted from the buffer requirement.

EC-25 Further to Policy EC-24, provisions may be made to permit certain features within the buffer including public (municipal) water control structures, boardwalks, walkways and trails of limited width and made of a permeable surface, fences, public road crossings, driveway crossings, public (municipal) wastewater, storm and water infrastructure, marine dependent uses, fisheries uses, boat ramps, wharves, small-scale accessory buildings, conservation uses, parks on public lands and historical sites and monuments within the buffer. In addition, no alteration of land levels or the removal of vegetation in relation to development will be permitted.*

EC-26 Further to Policy EC-24, a special area may be established through the Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law to allow limited recreational uses and commercial uses within a riparian buffer, through development agreement, adjacent to non-coastal watercourses where the riparian buffer has been infilled or altered prior to August 26, 2006. Any development within the special area shall be developed in an environmentally sensitive manner and provide opportunities for natural green space, water quality protection, and public access and enjoyment.

EC-27 Subject to EC*-29, the Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-law, relax the riparian buffer requirement for lots in existence on August 26, 2006, where otherwise development would be prohibitive.

*The Draft Regional Municipal Planning Strategy accepted by Halifax Regional Council to be used for public engagement purposes on June 20, 2023 included a clerical error that has been corrected as shown

EC-28 Subject to E-29, the Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-law, relax the riparian buffer requirement for lots created or approved after August 26, 2006 and before *[date of adoption, 2023]***, where otherwise development would be prohibitive but shall be no less than as shown on an approved plan of subdivision that was approved prior to** *[date of adoption]***.**

EC-29 The Municipality shall, through the Eastern Passage/Cow Bay Land Use By-Law, relax the riparian buffer requirement for Cow Bay Lake for lots created or approved after August 26, 2006 and before August 12, 2022.

EC-30 The Municipality shall consider a by-law to protect existing trees and to manage the retention and the removal of existing trees within riparian buffer zones.

The Municipality recognizes that development of water lots that have been infilled may result in undesirable impacts on the marine environment and the aesthetic character of the surrounding environment.

EC-31 The Municipality may, through secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws, consider measures to regulate development of water lots, including limiting development and establishing setbacks of buildings and structures from the water.

6.4.6.2 WETLANDS

Protecting wetlands is a shared responsibility. The Nova Scotia Department of Environment regulate wetland alterations and the Municipality regulates development adjacent to wetlands. While the Municipality cannot prevent property owners from applying for a permit to alter wetlands, the Municipality seeks to protect wetland through policy options. Through this Plan, it is the Municipality's intent to discourage the development of wetlands and develop an approach to offer incentives for the protection of wetlands.

EC-32 On all applications for development permit approval, the applicable land use by-law shall require the proponent to verify the existence and extent of any wetland. The applicable land use by-law shall prohibit development within any wetland except as required to allow for existing public infrastructure. The Municipality may consider amending the provisions made under the land use by-laws from time to time to conform to any guidelines or Statement of Provincial Interest adopted by the Province.

EC-33 The Municipality may identify wetlands to be recommended to the Province as a Wetland of Special Significance, including wetlands within all municipal drinking water supply watersheds. In doing so, the Municipality shall consider the Provincial criteria for wetlands with exceptional qualities, as may be amended from time to time.

EC-34 Wetlands designated as Wetlands of Special Significance by the Province of Nova Scotia shall have a minimum 30 metre wide riparian buffer along the edges of the wetland which will be implemented through the applicable land use by-laws.

EC-35 The Municipality may cooperate with the Province of Nova Scotia to develop an approach to protecting wetland areas. Wetland protection strategies may include:

a) provisions to permit the creation of additional lots or dwelling units where the design of a development, or the transfer of density proactively protects wetlands;

b) **identifying, prioritizing, and making recommendations to the Province of Nova Scotia for candidate wetlands to be restored, enhanced, created or expanded by compensation.**

6.5 ACTING ON CLIMATE CHANGE

6.5.1 HALIFACT

HalifACT, approved by Halifax Regional Council in 2020, is the Municipality's long-term action plan and response to Halifax declaring a climate emergency in 2019. The goals of HalifACT are to reduce emissions and help communities adapt to climate change. Through this response, it is recognized that climate change is urgent, complex, and a global crisis. Due to long timelines, the dispersal of impacts across the globe, and transformational societal and systems changes required, it is a challenge to make a rapid change to a low carbon future. The changing climate poses hazards to health, economic growth, safety and the natural world. Actions require deep greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions and preparing for the hazards associated with climate change. In order to align with the 1.5 degree Celsius pathway recommended by the world's leading scientific body on climate change, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, HalifACT has proposed collaborative actions to achieve the climate response and action out to 2050. At the Provincial level, the *Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reductions Act* (2021), set Nova Scotia's targets to be at least 53% below the 2005 emissions by 2030, and net zero by 2050 by balancing GHG emissions with GHG removals and other offsetting measures. At the Municipal level, HalifACT's targets include 75% reduction in community emissions over 2016 levels by 2030, net zero municipal operations by 2030, and net-zero community emissions by 2050.

The three themes of HalifACT shall provide guidance of immediate and future work related to climate:

- **Decarbonized and Resilient Infrastructure** includes increasing efficiencies of buildings, increasing renewable energy, decarbonizing transportation, greening government operations, protecting water systems and supplies, reducing risk to critical infrastructure, improving natural areas and green infrastructure, integrating climate into planning processes (including carbon-neutral district energy and microgrids, land protection, and land acquisition), and coastal preparedness.
- **Prepared and Connected Communities** includes emergency management, community capacity, food security and resiliency, and supporting businesses for decarbonization.
- **Coordinated Governance and Leadership** includes monitoring and reporting, carbon accounting, mainstreaming climate into municipal operations, and governance and capacity for action.

EC-36 HalifACT, approved in 2020 and as updated from time to time, shall provide guidance to the Municipality for actions and programs related to improving energy security and energy conservation; supporting renewable energy sources; reducing energy consumption; mitigating climate change; and adapting to climate hazards. To further the goals of HalifACT, the Municipality shall consider adopting or amending by-laws.

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EC-37 The recommendations of HalifACT provide guidance for corporate priority actions to manage the risks associated with climate change and actions to achieve municipal and community targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. To implement or further an action or program of HalifACT, the Municipality may consider amendments to this Plan, secondary municipal planning strategies, land use by-laws or any other by-laws of the Municipality.

EC-38 The Municipality shall co-operate with external stakeholders and various levels of government in developing policies and programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and, where deemed advisable by the Municipality, shall consider adopting or amending by-laws to achieve these objectives.

6.5.3 STORMWATER & FLOODING

With the increased intensity and frequency of storm events linked to climate change, extreme rainfall events are becoming more prominent. Stormwater volume is increasing throughout every season with more precipitation falling as more intense rain rather than snow due to rising temperatures. The impacts of this includes flooding of property and streets, increased infiltration into the wastewater system, erosion, and degradation of water bodies due to pollutants in runoff. As flooding increases, so too will the pressure in areas with stormwater systems, including natural systems like lakes and rivers, and the associated reactive maintenance costs. Increased flooding also impacts quality of life to citizens, through reduced safety, degradation of the natural environment, and property damage due to major storm events.

In 2007, Regional Council approved the transfer of the Municipality's wastewater and stormwater services through the Wastewater and Storm Water Transfer Agreement (the Transfer Agreement) to the Halifax Regional Water Commission (Halifax Water) which was subsequently approved by the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board (the Board). Through this governance structure, Halifax Water is responsible for the operation and administration of publicly owned stormwater facilities within the commutershed of the Regional Centre. As a public utility, Halifax Water is expected to finance its operations through user fees and charges which finance new connections to its facilities. To manage development in a fair and cost-effective manner, close cooperation between Halifax Water and the planning and operational activities of the Municipality is essential.

Within the Municipality's watersheds, there are varying levels of development and sensitivities. With changing technologies and extensive differences from watershed to watershed, stormwater management should focus on a comprehensive, system-based approach rather than a one-size-fits-all approach. Best Management Practices should be utilized to promote controlling stormwater at the source by regulating site design features, capturing and treating rain where it lands, and using green infrastructure to improve stormwater runoff quality and maintain infiltration. In some circumstances, such as highly urbanized watersheds, the Municipality may consider paying for retrofits to improve water quality in receiving watercourses, if feasible. Support for day lighting of streams and rivers will also be considered where doing so would enhance flood resiliency, the aesthetics of the area, or further restoration of a heritage resource.

The Integrated Stormwater Management Policy Framework passed by Regional Council on January 16, 2018 was developed in partnership with Halifax Water. The purpose of the policy was to prevent loss of life and property due to major storm events, and foster efficient and effective work management processes, safe and convenient use of streets and other land areas before, during and after storm events, and mitigate

the long-term impacts of development on natural systems and downstream properties. As part of this work several documents were adopted, as listed below, with more work to follow:

- By-Law G-200, A By-Law Respecting Grade Alteration;
- Administrative Order 2020-010-OP for Halifax Stormwater Management Standards for Development Activities; and
- By-Law L-402 Respecting Lot grading (to amend By-law L-400).

Stormwater management is a collaborative approach in partnership with Halifax Water and Nova Scotia Environment with future work focusing on public education, adopting standards for green infrastructure for municipal rights-of-way, and encouraging the maintenance, restoration, and/or improvement of natural infrastructure.

EC-39 The Municipality shall continue work toward a comprehensive, holistic, and future-looking stormwater management policy in partnership with Halifax Water.

EC-40 The Municipality shall continue work toward improving stormwater management practices to reduce the impacts of development on natural systems and downstream properties. Where deemed advisable, the Municipality shall consider adopting or amending by-laws to achieve these actions.

EC-41 Green infrastructure such as naturalized stormwater ponds, bioswales, and nature-based solutions shall be the preferred approach to managing stormwater. Where development is considered by development agreement or through an amendment to a secondary municipal planning strategy, the Municipality shall consider the use of naturalization and green infrastructure and promote approaches to manage stormwater on private property for multi-unit residential, commercial and industrial developments.

EC-42 The Municipality shall consider adopting a stormwater management and/or erosion control by-law with provisions made that may be area specific and may vary by type of development and, where required, be subject to approval by the Review Board. When considering adoption or amendments to the by-law, the following matters may be considered:

a) the cost and effectiveness of methods to reduce increased stormwater flows caused by development with consideration given to problems associated with downstream flooding, stream bank erosion, water and groundwater contamination, natural habitat loss, and inflow and infiltration into wastewater systems;

b) the potential for maintaining natural vegetation where possible and employing green infrastructure, naturally occurring soils and native plant species in stormwater management plans;

c) means to reduce site disturbance and impervious surfaces in new developments;

d) methods of reducing sediments, nutrients and contaminants being discharged into watercourses; and

e) the recommendations contained in a watershed study undertaken pursuant to policy EC-19 of this Plan.

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EC-43 The Municipality may consider regulatory and operational measures to reduce the quantity and improve the quality of stormwater entering public stormwater facilities and watercourses including, but not limited to, minimum water quality standards for release to a receiving environment, public education programs, animal waste control, spill prevention plans, enhanced street sweeping, reduction in road salts, land use restrictions and revisions of development standards. Any such measures may apply in whole or in part of HRM and may require approval of the Review Board.

EC-44 The Municipality may consider supporting retrofits to existing stormwater facilities where it has been determined that such retrofits could be expected to mitigate flooding or to improve the quality of stormwater entering watercourses, lakes and wetlands.

EC-45 Where public stormwater collection infrastructure must undergo significant repair or replacement, the Municipality may consider supporting funding for daylighting of the watercourse involved with consideration given to:

a) feasibility in relation to the surrounding environment, land use and ownership, adequacy of space, drainage and potential flooding issues, safety and other practical or engineering considerations as appropriate.

b) replacement of culverts with bridges or an open bottom culvert rather than straight pipe is preferred wherever possible;

c) the potential for legal and liability issues arising; and

d) costs and the availability of funding.

EC-46 In the event that the Province of Nova Scotia considers imposing standards on the quality of stormwater entering watercourses, the Municipality shall participate in consultations and shall consider amending any stormwater management by-law approved pursuant to Policy EC-4842* to be consistent with or complement standards adopted by the Province of Nova Scotia.

EC-47 The Municipality shall support efforts by Halifax Water to create a rate structure for stormwater management services that provides incentives for the retention of on-site stormwater and may consider any amendments to municipal by-laws or planning documents which would assist in facilitating these efforts.

6.5.4 FLOODPLAINS

Land adjacent to rivers and streams which are subject to flooding (floodplains) are unsuitable for development. Development or alteration of a floodplain can restrict normal water drainage patterns and cause significant damage to property and infrastructure and risk to life. Limiting development on these lands reduces the need for costly flood control infrastructure such as channels, reservoirs and dykes, and protects the public from property damage and loss of life. In the early 1980s, floodplain mapping for the Sackville and Little Sackville Rivers was prepared under the Canada-Nova Scotia Flood Damage Reduction Program and policies and regulations have been adopted under the Sackville planning documents to reduce the risk to property and the need for flood control measures.

*The Draft Regional Municipal Planning Strategy accepted by Halifax Regional Council to be used for public engagement purposes on June 20, 2023 included a clerical error that has been corrected as shown

To minimize effects upon natural stormwater flows, HRM will exercise control over the placement and stabilization of fill necessary for the flood proofing of structures permitted within a floodplain designation of a Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy. Through the review of subdivision applications, any roadways proposed within a floodplain designation will need to meet HRM's stormwater management requirements. The following policy is intended to mitigate the consequences of flooding along major rivers and emphasize the environmental importance of rivers in regulating and draining water flows through watersheds.

EC-48 The Municipality shall restrict development and prohibit the placement of fill or alteration of grades in association with development that restricts the capacity of flow or increases flood levels within the 1 in 100 year and 1 in 20 year floodplains for designated watercourses, under secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws.

EC-49 Where appropriate, the Municipality shall permit water control structures, boardwalks and walkways, conservation uses, historic sites and monuments, and wastewater, stormwater and water infrastructure within floodplains.

EC-50 Within the 1 in 20 year floodplain, treatment facilities for wastewater, storm water and water shall be limited to facilities that were in existence on or before June 25, 2014 or facilities installed by Halifax Water after June 25, 2014 where they deemed the facilities necessary for public health and safety.

EC-51 Within the 1 in 100 year floodplain, the Municipality may, through secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws, permit development which has been adequately flood-proofed.

EC-52 The Municipality may consider regulatory and operational measures to reduce flooding including but not limited to:

a) adopting flood resilient design standards for new development; and

b) interventions in major overland flood routes in historically flood prone areas.

6.5.5 COASTAL PROTECTION

The municipality has an extensive coastal shoreline, offering aesthetic appeal and picturesque views. Coastal habitats such as marshlands offer valuable ecological services and provide habitat to species at risk. Protecting, restoring, and maintaining coastal habitat not only protects ecological services, but can mitigate impacts of flooding and storm surge on human safety and property.

The impacts of climate change are already being felt through increased climate events. HRM recognizes that these impacts will continue over time, and that we need to adapt to these changes. Climate change adaptation includes planning for, and acting on, the anticipated impacts of climate change. This can be achieved by readying existing infrastructure and communities, and by making new policies and standards to adapt our communities and infrastructure. Climate resiliency is the ability to recover quickly from the negative impacts of a climate hazard or event. This applies to both communities and to infrastructure. By identifying vulnerabilities, we can prioritize where and how to adapt.

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EC-53 The Municipality shall regularly update municipal LiDAR data, digital elevation models and vulnerability mapping, and may adopt policy to require emergency management services and current and future climate change hazard projections are considered as part of the as-of-right development process, discretionary planning applications, and during reviews of planning documents.

EC-54 The Municipality shall seek to complete a spatially-based risk and vulnerability analysis of the Municipality's coastal waterfront and shoreline area and may consider adopting a coastal-specific adaptation policy using a PARAEBA (Protect, Accommodate, Retreat, Avoid or Ecosystem Based Adaptation) Framework or other suitable framework for climate change adaptation planning to plan for hazards and increase resilience to those hazards.

EC-55 The Municipality shall develop and/or update policies to limit development in areas determined to be vulnerable to climate hazards.

EC-56 The Municipality shall foster sustainable coastal management along its coasts considering long term climate impacts, ecosystem health, public risk and vulnerability assessments, adaptation strategies and cost-benefit analysis of adaptation approaches. A coastal management approach shall also consider opportunities to retain and improve public coastal access.

Sea level has slowly risen along the Atlantic Coast due to coastal subsidence and accelerated by global warming. Of additional concern is the anticipated increase in the frequency and severity of storm events related to climate change. Rising sea levels and storm surges can result in increased damage to coastal communities and have significant impacts on coastal infrastructure, environmental assets, utilities, properties and community economic development. The following measures encourage the protection of natural coastal environments and mitigate the potential impact that coastal inundation and storm surge events could have on human safety.

EC-57 Where a lot abuts the coast of the Atlantic Ocean, including its inlets, bays, and harbours, the Municipality shall, through the applicable land use-bylaw, prohibit issuing permits for any portion of a main building or a backyard suite use, including their basements, that are proposed to be erected, constructed, altered, reconstructed, or located at an elevation less than 3.2 metres above the Canadian Geodetic Vertical Datum 2013 (CGVD2013) standard. Provisions shall be made within the by-law to permit residential accessory structures, marine dependant uses, open space uses, parking lots and temporary uses within the 3.2 metre elevation. Consideration may be given to amending the by-law requirements where an updated system of measurement or methodology is adopted by the Municipality to provide a reasonable level of safety or to conform with legislation, regulations, guidelines, or statements of interest adopted by the Province.

EC-58 To support long-term safety, the Municipality shall endeavor to define coastal setbacks for development that consider coastal erosion, sea level rise, and wave runup, and may develop by-laws or policies to further inform secondary municipal planning strategies and land-use by-laws.

EC-59 Upon the adoption of the provincial *Coastal Protection Act* regulations, the Municipality shall adopt consistent policies and regulations that are tailored to the HRM context. In the event that the Province of Nova Scotia considers revising the *Coastal Protection Act*, the Municipality shall participate in consultations and shall consider amending or adopting policies to be consistent with or complement standards adopted by the Province of Nova Scotia and tailored to the HRM context.

EC-60 The Municipality may consider limiting development or managed retreat in areas determined to be vulnerable to hazards such as storm surge and coastal erosion through secondary municipal planning strategies and land use bylaws.

EC-61 The Municipality may encourage maintaining, protecting and/or restoring natural coastal ecosystems, encouraging use of nature-based and/or hybrid infrastructure on coastlines, and minimizing the use of hard infrastructure on coastlines such as armour stone and seawalls through best management practices, public education, and guidebooks.

EC-62 The Municipality shall limit development on islands and existing undersized coastal lots which are prone to hazards such as storm surge and coastal erosion through land use bylaws.

6.5.6 PROTECTING INFRASTRUCTURE

Critical infrastructure includes a complex network of systems of energy, telecommunications, transportation, water supply, wastewater treatment, solid waste management, and buildings and food systems that are critical to support economic prosperity and social well-being. In the near and long term, critical infrastructure needs to withstand increasingly extreme storms, changing temperatures, and other climate impacts. New construction should also be built to withstand the impacts of the changing climate. To reduce future impacts, the resilience of new construction and existing critical infrastructure must be improved.[24]

EC-63 The Municipality shall seek to identify current and future climate change hazards and critical infrastructure at risk to climate hazards and may adopt policy to prioritize resiliency measures that will help reduce risk, protect critical infrastructure, and rebuild more resilient infrastructure.

EC-64 The Municipality shall incorporate new standards into the Municipal Design Guidelines that consider climate change impacts and improve the resiliency of new and retrofitted municipal infrastructure in the right-of-way.

EC-65 To support climate resilient design standards the Municipality may:

a) retrofit and construct municipal facilities with climate resilient building designs;

b) develop, promote, and incentivize climate resilient building design practices;

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24 https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/about-the-city/energy-environment/HRM_HaliFACT_vNew%20Logo_.pdf

c) **consider net-zero and climate resilient new construction as part of discretionary planning applications; and**

d) **set standards for resilient new construction that exceed existing building codes, where Provincial Regulations allow.**

EC-66 The Municipality may consider supporting retrofits to existing infrastructure where it has been determined that such retrofits could be expected to mitigate impacts of climate hazards on assets, systems or communities, with consideration given to:

a) **feasibility in relation to the surrounding environment, land use and ownership, adequacy of space, safety and other practical or engineering considerations as appropriate;**

b) **the potential for legal and liability issues arising; and**

c) **costs and the availability of funding.**

6.5.7 RENEWABLE ENERGY

As identified by HalifACT in 2016, fuel and electricity consumption in residential, commercial and industrial buildings accounted for 70% of all energy use in Halifax and 77% of total GHG emissions. Action on reducing energy consumption, increasing efficiency, and utilizing alternative energy sources is critical for meeting the objectives of HalifACT for a low carbon, 1.5 degree Celsius pathway.[25]

EC-67 The Municipality shall work with renewable energy suppliers and provincial regulators to increase access to a comprehensive renewable energy distribution system across the Region.

EC-68 The Municipality shall, through applicable land-use by-laws, permit large-scale solar installations in the Rural Commuter Designation, the Rural Resource Designation, and the Agricultural Designation in accordancewith applicable legislation, regulations, guidelines, or statements of interest adopted by the Provincial or Federal government. Where Federal and Provincial regulations have been amended, the Municipality may also amend municipal land use by-law regulations to remain consistent with these changes.

EC-69 The Municipality shall encourage the use of alternative energy systems, such as district energy and microgrids, as part of secondary planning and master neighbourhood planning projects.

EC-70 To support renewable energy sources and reduced reliance on fossil fuels in the development of different sites, the Municipality may:

[25] https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/about-the-city/energy-environment/HRM_HaliFACT_vNew%20Logo_.pdf

a) **through applicable land use by-laws, permit district energy facilities in areas of high growth and density;**

b) **encourage new development located within an area served by a district energy system to connect to such a system;**

c) **identify opportunities to capture and redistribute waste energy, and encourage combined heat and power systems;**

d) **develop, promote, and incentivize net-zero building design practices; and**

e) **consider amendments to this Plan, including incentive or bonus zoning policies, to support renewable energy technologies in buildings that are designed to meet or exceed net zero energy standards, subject to future amendments to the Nova Scotia Building Code to establish net-zero construction standards.**

EC-71 The Municipality shall seek to recognize advances in solar installations, and energy storage systems, and may amend policy and municipal land use by-law regulations to remove barriers for these utilities.

EC-72 Subject to any urban design requirements as outlined in applicable land use bylaws, land use by-laws shall allow rooftop solar collectors to protrude above the maximum permitted height for main buildings to reduce potential barriers to on-site renewable energy production.

EC-73 The Municipality shall, through applicable land use by-law, require electric vehicle infrastructure in new construction.

EC-74 Further to Policy EC-73, the number of vehicle parking stalls providing all electrical components except for a physical charger ("EV Ready") shall be as follows:

a) **For all new residential uses, every required vehicle parking stall shall be "EV Ready"; and**

b) **For all other non-residential uses, 20% of the required vehicle parking stalls shall be "EV Ready".**

6.5.8 WIND ENERGY

Within the applicable Regional Plan policy designations, three energy overlay zones were created to reflect how wind energy facilities should be treated differently between the urban and rural areas of the Municipality. The energy zones in the urban and rural areas permit a range of wind energy facilities including micro, small, medium and large scale machines which have been classified based on different heights and levels of power generation. These range from large wind farms to smaller machines used as supplemental power sources for businesses and residences.

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EC-75 Within all Regional Plan Designations, the Municipality shall establish three overlay zones including an Urban Wind (UW-1) Zone, a Rural Wind (RW-2) Zone and a Restricted (R) Zone within the Land Use By-law to regulate wind energy facilities. These regulations will be implemented through the community land use by-laws. The Urban Wind (UW-1) Zone and the Rural Wind (RW-2) Zone shall be applied to those areas where various categories of wind energy facilities shall be permitted in urban and rural areas. The Restricted (R) Wind Zone shall be applied to those areas where wind energy facilities shall be prohibited including Regional Parks, Conservation Areas, Protected Areas ,the Western Commons and areas within Urban areas not suitable for wind energy facilities.

EC-76 The Municipality shall establish requirements within the applicable Land Use By-laws that include regulations to control height, scale, access, setback and separation distances of such facilities in order to adequately address operational needs, safety concerns and the mitigation of impacts to adjacent properties.

Wind turbines should be permitted in the Municipality without placing a limit on the number of wind turbines within a particular location, provided that distance separation requirements can be met. However, where a property abuts another or where several properties are contiguous and are intended to be used to connect into the same large wind energy facility, the setback requirement from the property boundary may be waived where the adjoining property forms part of the same wind farm.

EC-77 The Municipality seeks to encourage the development of large-scale wind energy facilities in rural areas by permitting the expansion of wind farms in suitable locations. Accordingly, where a large-scale wind turbine is proposed to connect to a wind energy facility on an adjacent lot, the setback requirement from the property boundary may be waived where the adjoining property forms part of the same wind farm.

The Municipality recognizes that municipal regulations duplicating Provincial and/or Federal requirements should be minimized so as not to unduly hinder wind energy development and that the Provincial Environmental Assessment process guidelines may change over time which could necessitate changes to municipal regulations in order to remain both consistent and complimentary. Accordingly, the Municipality may seek to amend municipal regulations to ensure that future requirements are adequate to regulate wind energy facilities in the Municipality.

EC-78 The Municipality shall seek to ensure that Federal and Provincial processes comply with municipal requirements for large scale wind energy facility development. Where Federal and Provincial regulations have been amended, the Municipality may amend municipal land use by-law regulations to remain consistent with these changes.

EC-79 The Municipality shall seek to recognize advances in wind energy technology and wind energy standards and may amend this Plan, secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws to reflect these changes.

CHAPTER 7: TRANSFORMING HOW WE MOVE IN OUR REGION

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CHAPTER 7: TRANSFORMING HOW WE MOVE IN OUR REGION

7.0 INTRODUCTION

The shape of our communities is a result of where we locate the things we need to live our lives – homes, schools, shops, parks, and services - and how we are able to move between them. Moving between the places where we live, work, learn, shop, and play both has a direct impact on, and is directly impacted by the distribution of these places in the city. It is impossible to separate good land use planning from good transportation planning.

As discussed elsewhere in this Plan, the creation of healthy and complete communities – where access to mobility, food, housing options, services, social connections, and the other building blocks of a healthy life are available to people of all ages, abilities, incomes, and backgrounds – is fundamental. Providing safe, accessible, attractive, and convenient mobility options to move within and between our neighbourhoods is an essential piece of creating healthy and complete places to live, work, learn, shop, and play.

Throughout our history, how people have moved and settled has shaped the municipality, beginning with water routes used by the Mi'kmaq, then influenced by military fortifications, the construction of railway networks, and expansion into the hinterlands with linear road patterns. Growth in the municipality became more dispersed, but remained linked through the advent of the automobile and a provincial highway system which expands beyond its borders into adjacent municipalities.

The municipality is geographically diverse, consisting of a variety of settlement patterns including compact, walkable, transit-oriented form in the urban areas, suburban arterial roads with limited connectivity and density, larger service-centre rural villages, remote residential communities, and natural resource based lands. Transportation and land use planning are inseparable, and the decision-making process for both must be integrated. Through integrated transportation and community planning, the Regional Plan supports safe, healthy, affordable, sustainable and inclusive travel options to connect both people and goods throughout the region. An effective transportation system forms a powerful tool for shaping future development which requires new investments in infrastructure that should be planned strategically in conjunction with land use and coordinated with all levels of government.

The municipality has been experiencing strong population growth and must prepare to meet surging demand for both housing and transportation. The location of new housing in relation to jobs, shops and services will affect the need for mobility, while the investments made in transportation networks will affect the form which that mobility takes and where new development locates, creating feedback loops which encourage similar future spending. Two alternatives come to mind:

- Motor vehicle capacity continues to expand as in the past, spawning automobile-dependent large retail tracts and dispersed housing which, in turn, generates more traffic and creates pressure for further freeway expansion which begins the cycle again; or

- The emphasis shifts from moving vehicles to moving people and goods, by investing in facilities and encouraging building forms that support walking, rolling, cycling, and public transit, while recognizing that some new road connections may have strategic value.

This Plan embraces the second alternative: we want to transform how we move in our region. We must offer connected, healthy, affordable, sustainable and inclusive travel options for moving both people and goods, through integrated transportation and community planning. Driving can be a choice rather than a necessity. Households need not bear the expense of owning multiple cars on top of high mortgages or rents. Walking, rolling or cycling must be safe and affordable options for residents' daily routines, benefitting our mental and physical health. Frequent buses in reserved lanes can offer alternatives to sitting in traffic. Ferries can provide shortcuts while avoiding congested bridges. Electric buses and cars can clear the air for residents, pedestrians and cyclists.

7.1 OBJECTIVES

1. **Connect people to one another, to jobs, education, recreation, food and other daily needs by facilitating sustainable choices in transportation and lifestyle, anticipating demand, managing congestion and considering the context of urban, suburban and rural communities.**

2. **Improve healthy opportunities and quality of life for people of all ages, abilities and incomes through development and design that supports a shift towards sustainable modes (walking, rolling, cycling, and transit).**

3. **Support environmentally responsible mobility by building and maintaining connected, healthy, safe, affordable, accessible, and sustainable networks that prioritize walking, rolling, bicycling and public transit.**

4. **Align capital investments and land use policy by preserving strategic rights-of-way and orienting development so most residents, jobs, shops and services are near frequent public transit.**

5. **Recognize that streets have many functions, including as public space and for walking, rolling, cycling and transit, by implement a Complete Streets approach, managing curbside access and optimizing parking while supporting the needs of local businesses.**

7.2 INTEGRATED MOBILITY PLAN

The *Integrated Mobility Plan* (IMP), adopted by Council in December 2017, represents a region-wide vision for mobility and directs future investment in transportation demand management (TDM), transit, active transportation (AT), freight, the roadway network, and parking. The IMP strives to reflect the two-way relationship between land development patterns and mobility, with the goal of better linking people and their communities. The policies and actions of the IMP are intended to move the region along a more sustainable path and improve quality of life for people of all ages, abilities and incomes.

7.2.1 PILLARS AND PRINCIPLES

The IMP set out Pillars and Principles of the mobility network to describe outcomes and how those outcomes will be achieved. Since the IMP's adoption, the Municipality has further recognized the importance of equity, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of mobility, the role of the transportation system in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and acting on climate change. The pillars and principles to guide the Municipality's mobility network include:

THE PILLARS (What people want):

- A **CONNECTED** mobility system links people and communities with important goods, services and opportunities.
- A **HEALTHY** transportation system supports comfortable, convenient and safe opportunities for active living.
- An **AFFORDABLE** transportation system offers low-cost mobility for citizens and value for money for taxpayers.
- A **SUSTAINABLE** transportation system protects air, land and water, minimizes greenhouse gas emissions, adapts to climate change, meets the needs of all people, and uses financial resources wisely.
- An **EQUITABLE** transportation system recognizes the diverse needs and vulnerabilities of all people, including rural residents, historically underrepresented communities and recent immigrants.

THE PRINCIPLES (How to achieve what people want):

- **COMPLETE COMMUNITIES** provide a place for residents to live, work, shop, learn and play without depending on a private vehicle.
- **MOVE PEOPLE:** By focusing on the number of people (and the volume of goods) using a transportation corridor, rather than the number of vehicles, planners can more easily recognize more efficient, affordable and environmentally responsible options.
- **MANAGE CONGESTION** instead of attempting to eliminate it: Managing congestion, instead of trying to eliminate it, encourages people to choose other modes or trip times.
- **INTEGRATE SOLUTIONS:** Taken together, policies for high-quality public transit, walking/cycling facilities and Complete Communities can reinforce each other to help shift trips from solo driving to more sustainable modes. Solutions must be evaluated and implemented as a suite.

The Regional Plan supports these Pillars and Principles which guide the Municipality in its work towards a robust, connected region and forms the backbone of the relationship between transportation and land use planning. Implementation of the Integrated Mobility Plan is also vital to the success of HalifACT.

M-1 The Integrated Moblity Plan, approved in 2017 and as updated from time to time, shall provide guidance to the Municipality for actions and programs related to the region's mobility network.

7.3 SETTING TARGETS AND MEASURING PROGRESS

Transitioning to a network that prioritizes walking, rolling, cycling, and transit following decades of cars-first planning will require years of challenging work and significant investment. In this context, it is important to define targets and measure our progress regarding the transformation of how we move in our region.

One typical measure of the state of the mobility system is the percentage of people using each of the different modes (walking/rolling, cycling, transit, private vehicle), referred to as the 'mode share'. By directing housing and employment growth to places where people can easily access transit or take trips by active transportation, we can increase the proportion of people using sustainable modes of transportation over private vehicles.

While this is a logical and useful measure in theory, in practice it is difficult to assess, as it involves understanding the daily choices of a statistically significant portion of the population and how those evolve over time. For example, the standard source of data for mode share comes from the "Journey to Work" data released every five years as part of Statistics Canada's Census data. This measure, while certainly part of a rigorous and statistically robust nationwide survey, has several weaknesses:

- **It is collected once every five years**, which provides regular but sparse updates on progress.
- **It is only concerned about one type of trip – specifically movement from home to work,** which is only one small portion of daily travel needs.
- **It has typically only asked the respondent to specify their "primary" mode of travel,** which obfuscates any variation for people whose mode of travel can change from day to day or who use multiple modes to get to work. (For the first time in 2021, Census respondents were also asked for a secondary mode of travel.)
- **It asks only about the respondent's most recent week**, which does not provide insight into how their travel choices may vary throughout the year.

The 2021 Census is an excellent illustration of the limitations of depending on its Journey to Work data to assess progress on mode share. This most recent census was conducted in May of 2021 in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, when there were still significant restrictions on travel locally and across the country. Respondents to the census were asked about their recent travel habits, which were most likely still significantly different than a more 'normal' time. This means that the 2021 Journey to Work data, therefore, is not useful in assessing how the travel habits of residents may have evolved since the 2016 Census. This leaves a significant gap in our understanding of mode share, one that notably pre-dates the adoption of the IMP at the end of 2017 and will leave a ten year gap in useful data by the time the 2026 Census results are released.

HRM conducted its first ever Household Travel Activity Survey in 2018 and recently completed the first regular update this year, as an important supplement to the Census and an input to various transportation planning activities. There are many challenges related to conducting the survey to produce a statistically significant result (such as changes in technology and willingness of the public to participate) that make this an expensive and difficult process.

With the above in mind, the Municipality must examine alternative approaches to surveying the public, assessing mode share itself, and exploring potential measures and data sources that could be used to track overall progress. In the interim, this Plan presents target mode shares to provide continuity with previous plans.

M-2 The Municipality shall investigate alternative approaches to surveying the public's travel habits and preferences, assessing overall performance of the mobility system, and progress towards a sustainable mobility system.

7.3.1 MODE SHARE TARGETS

Setting targets for sustainable mode share that are aligned with the targets for housing growth outlined in Chapter 2 will demonstrate how the Municipality can shift toward making sustainable modes the primary choice for residents.

Recent mode share distributions for commuters are compared to the IMP mode share targets in the table below. Importantly, commuting is only one type of trip, and especially after the Covid-19 pandemic, other trips are increasingly significant when considering capacity, congestion, risk and emissions.

Table 7.1: Mode Share Targets

Region	Mode	Census Journey To Work				IMP 2031 TARGET	NEW 2031 TARGET
		2006	2011	2016	2021		
HRM Overall	Auto	75	75	78	82	70	65
	Transit	13	13	13	8	16	20
	AT	12	10	10	8	14	15
Regional Centre	Auto	48	49	50	--	40	35
	Transit	18	20	20	--	23	25
	AT	33	30	29	--	37	40
Suburbs	Auto	80	80	81	--	74	70
	Transit	14	15	13	--	20	22
	AT	5	4	5	--	6	8

M-3 The Municipality shall strive to achieve or exceed the 2031 targets for the percentage of trips to work by transit and active transportation set out in Table 7.1 of this Plan, and will seek to measure and track the percentage of all trips by transit and active transportation.

7.4 REGIONAL AND COMMUNITY MOBILITY

This Plan sets out a vision for a transportation system that links people and communities with each other and with goods, services and employment in an environmentally and fiscally sustainable way. The mobility network is composed of both regional and community connections. At the regional scale, the airport,

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highways, ports, railways, major transit corridors, and active transportation greenways link people and goods to communities across the region, to the rest of the province and beyond.

At the community level, mobility connections will be designed differently depending on the type of community. “Strategic corridors” are designed to improve public safety, connect communities and manage congestion by prioritizing sustainable modes of transportation (walking, rolling, cycling and transit) over private motor vehicles . Both regional and community mobility connections must be integrated with land use planning. Identifiying corridors at the regional and community scale will help to direct investment and support the region’s growth.

M-4 The Regional and Community Links Map (Map 7) shall identify Strategic Corridors and Potential Future Connections to provide guidance for planning the regional and community mobility network.

M-5 The Municipality shall apply a holistic lens to evaluating, planning and designing mobility network expansions, and in doing so, shall consider:

a) assessing needs for and impacts of network expansion at a multimodal network level;

b) the inseparable relationship between land use and mobility;

c) prioritizing and enhancing public transit and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists;

d) the impacts of any network expansion on travel demand, choice of mode, route, and time of travel;

e) new demand likely to be generated by land development facilitated by new capacity in the network;

f) the ability to address growth or changes in travel demand primarily through sustainable modes of travel;

g) the Integrated Mobility Plan Evaluation Scorecard;

h) Multi-Modal Level of Service;

i) updating Municipal Design Guidelines, including roadway retrofitting and urban/suburban Complete Streets design for accessibility, inclusion, and people of all ages and abilities;

j) impacts on adjacent buildings, streetscapes, land uses, parks and natural corridors;

k) impacts on, and the needs of underrepresented communities, including Mi’kmaq, urban indigenous and African Nova Scotian communities;

l) whether the expansion shall improve accessibility for all ages and abilities;

m) operation and maintenance costs;

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n) **additional opportunities to improve active transportation or transit on parallel corridors which could be converted to Complete Streets;**

o) **the potential to divert freight onto other modes or away from residential communities; and**

p) **collaboration with the Province and/or Joint Regional Transportation Agency on planning and connections throughout the broader region.**

7.4.1 IMP EVALUATION SCORECARD

Roadway expansion cannot eliminate congestion, and incurs financial, social and environmental impacts. The Integrated Mobility Plan shifts emphasis from road capacity expansion to more sustainable transportation modes, easing bottlenecks, facilitating public transit, and improving the safety and convenience of walking, rolling and cycling. Where new roads or expansion are appropriate to support growth, the IMP offers an Evaluation Scorecard to help with decision-making.

The Scorecard includes the four Pillars of integrated mobility: Connected, Healthy, Sustainable and Affordable. It also considers three important factors that projects can influence: Mode Choice, Experience and Land Use. Other factors must also come into play, including equitable access for vulnerable or historically underserved communities, the timing of complementary projects, and applying relevant data based on geographies that align with community planning boundaries.

For roadway proposals, it is important to weigh the benefits and impacts beyond those for general vehicle traffic. Thoughtful efforts to ease strategic bottlenecks can benefit all users, ease freight movement, and prioritize transit, emergency vehicles and evacuation routes while minimizing land consumption. In many cases, new roadways can reduce traffic on parallel routes, enabling them to be reconfigured as Complete Streets. Whenever new transportation routes are planned, the Municipality should consider the social ramifications and plan with a diversity and inclusion lens.

M-6 The Municipality may use the IMP Project Evaluation Scorecard to help guide decisions, set priorities and evaluate the benefits of road network projects, and in doing so shall consider equitable access for vulnerable or historically underserved communities, timing of complementary projects, and other relevant data.

M-7 Further to Policy M-6, when assessing the implications of new mobility infrastructure, the Municipality shall consider:

a) **services that support historically underrepresented or underserved communities;**

b) **opportunities for low-cost transportation;**

c) **opportunities to improve public safety;**

d) **impacts on:**

   i. **residential neighbourhoods and buildings;**

   ii. **heritage conservation areas;**

   iii. **registered heritage properties;**

   iv. **environmentally or culturally significant landscapes and streetscapes; and**

   v. **sacred places, landmarks and places of worship.**

7.4.2 TRANSPORTATION RESERVES

Transportation Reserves are a planning tool enabled by the HRM Charter to identify lands that are needed to widen or alter streets or pathways, or to develop new streets or pathways. To support efforts to accommodate future projects, a Transportation Reserve Zone can be identified on private property to acquire lands for future mobility within five years. The Municipality may request the Province to amend this time limitation, and will also explore other tools such as trading or shifting density through zoning.

M-8 The Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-law, establish a Transportation Reserve Zone over the portions of the corridors it plans to acquire. If the Municipality has not acquired the subject properties within the time frame set forth in the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter as amended from time to time, the lands shall revert to the zone, under the applicable land use by-law, of the adjoining lands to the centre line of the corridor.

M-9 The Municipality shall review the time required to acquire lands for the Transportation Reserve Zone, and may request amendments to the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter to increase the time frame to acquire Transportation Reserves.

M-10 The Municipality shall review the tools available to preserve lands for future rights-of-way for all modes of transportation, and may request amendments to the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter accordingly.

7.4.3 REGIONAL COOPERATION

The Joint Regional Transportation Agency (JRTA) is a provincial Crown Corporation created to address transportation issues associated with rapid growth in Halifax and surrounding communities. To carry out their mandate, the JRTA is collaborating with key partners, including the Municipality, to create a Regional Transportation Plan to ensure the transportation system is prepared for a period of unprecedented growth. The Regional Transportation Plan will establish a coordinated and strategic vision for a transportation system that improves the safe and efficient flow of people and goods into, out of, and throughout Halifax and surrounding communities. The Municipality will participate as a key partner with the JRTA on the Regional Transportation Plan.

M-11 The Municipality shall participate in provincial mobility planning initiatives such as the Joint Regional Transportation Agency (JRTA). The principles and objectives of the Regional Plan and the Integrated Mobility Plan shall guide the Municipality's approach to this work.

M-12 The Municipality shall consider opportunities to improve regional and inter-regional motorcoach, passenger rail and air service, through such means as:

a) facilitating public-private and inter-agency partnerships to increase services, improve connections, integrate reservations and coordinate fares;

b) transit agreements with Halifax Stanfield International Airport and other agencies;

c) seeking to integrate local mobility with downtown train/motorcoach stations;

d) allowing motorcoaches and rural transit vehicles to use transit lanes;

e) **considering potential future passenger rail, including regional service, when planning adjacent to railways;**

f) **identifying synergies between passenger and freight services; and**

g) **encouraging CN and the ports to retain and improve rail and port infrastructure and services, including potential to carry refrigerated containers and acid-bearing construction spoil through the Halifax Peninsula by rail.**

7.5 COMPLETE COMMUNITIES AND STREETS

This Plan envisions a “complete communities” approach to land use planning. Housing and jobs should be located near services and amenities, so that residents and employees can take shorter trips by walking, rolling, cycling or taking transit, reducing the need to drive long distances and minimizing the amount of space needed to move and store cars. This also reduces safety risk, noise and emissions, including greenhouse gas emissions.

Walkability is affected by community layout, the orientation and facades of buildings, and the pedestrian facilities themselves. Pedestrian facilities should enable safe, short, inclusive, and attractive connections between housing, jobs, schools, shops, community facilities, health care and transit. In terms of street layout, blocks should be short, with frequent intersections offering multiple routes. In the absence of a street grid, long culs-de-sacs or loops should include pathways connecting to other streets.

7.5.1 COMPLETE STREETS

In addition to facilitating movement as *links,* streets can be *places* where people shop, stroll and socialize. A street can function as both a "link" and a "place" to varying degrees. Recognizing these dual aspects, “Complete Streets” is an approach to street design and maintenance affirming that streets can be important public spaces as well as pathways for the movement of people (and goods) using various modes of sustainable transportation.

Conventional street classifications and design standards have focused on accommodating private vehicles. A Complete Streets approach emphasizes improvements to the safety, comfort, and efficiency of movement for all users, including pedestrians, cyclists and transit riders in an inclusive manner. This approach can apply many solutions in different contexts to support appropriate combinations of modes and uses.

The Complete Streets approach is adaptable to rural villages. Features such as roundabouts at each end of a village centre can slow traffic and signal to motorists that they are entering an area where pedestrians and cyclists are more common. Sidewalks and crosswalks can be provided at strategic locations, and pedestrian-scale lighting can also contribute to a sense of place. Such features will require the cooperation of the Province which owns the right-of-way for rural highways.

M-13 The Municipality shall support the use of the Complete Streets approach to prioritize the movement of people using sustainable modes of transportation over vehicles through planning, design and maintenance generally consistent with the *Integrated Mobility Plan, Urban Forestry Management Plan, Halifax Green Network Plan, Active Transportation Functional Plan, Rural Active Transportation Strategy, Rapid Transit Strategy* and *Moving Forward Together Plan,* as may be amended or updated by Regional Council from time to time.

M-14 The Municipal service design standards for streets shall be reviewed from time to time to ensure that streets are designed for all ages, abilities and modes of travel and reflect the intended character of the community in which the streets are located.

M-15 The Municipality shall consider improvements to existing streets and pathways that support the safety and convenience of pedestrians through ongoing reviews of street design standards, street improvements, street and sidewalk maintenance operations, capital improvements and updates to the Municipal Design Guidelines.

M-16 The Municipality shall consider establishing new public street connections to support the strategic growth objectives of this Plan, address gaps in the street grid, facilitate efficient transit service, improve pedestrian access to transit facilities and other key destinations, and facilitate emergency access.

M-17 The Municipality shall consider opportunities to dedicate streets, or portions of streets, as car-free zones, and shall continue to support programs for Open Streets events and converting parking spaces for use by pedestrians or cyclists.

7.5.2 COMMUNITY SAFETY

The Municipality is committed to the safety of all users through the approval of the Strategic Road Safety Framework[26] which is focused on a "Towards Zero" approach (zero fatalities and injuries for people using any mode of transportation) and by partnering with Operation Lifesaver to promote public safety around railways and at grade crossings. Further, to reduce the risk associated with the railway industry, including derailments, hazardous goods, noise, vibration, and emissions, Railway Proximity Guidelines have been endorsed by the Railway Association of Canada (RAC) and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM).

M-18 Streets and communities shall be designed to improve public health and safety. The Municipality shall seek to reduce serious injuries and fatalities on streets and other transportation facilities by:

a) using a "Towards Zero" approach to injuries and fatalities for street safety and security;

b) applying the Strategic Road Safety Framework;

c) partnering with schools and groups to promote safe walking and cycling;

d) partnering with Operation Lifesaver to raise awareness about railway hazards;

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[26] https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/180717rc1422.pdf

e) encouraging the Province to locate schools within walkable communities; and

f) requiring sidewalksor restricting car traffic on streets serving schools.

M-19 The Municipality shall seek to minimize exposure to transportation related safety risk, emissions, noise, vibration and nuisance, by considering:

a) partnerships to re-route trucks away from housing or shift freight to other modes;

b) investing in alternatives to internal combustion propulsion for buses, ferries and civic vehicles;

c) facilitating provision of alternative energy sources for private vehicles;

d) supporting partnerships for alternative energy sources for railway or port operations;

e) facilitating provision of emergency access routes;

f) improving communications between transportation operators and emergency services;

M-20 The Municipality shall, through applicable land use by-laws, require minimum setbacks from a freeway or railway track other than a siding, light rail or spur line, for new residential buildings, excluding indoor parking, pedways, loading/boarding areas, and non-hazardous goods storage areas, to reduce health and safety risks. Where the required setback distance cannot be provided, the applicable land use by-law shall require the submission of a report by a qualified Professional Engineer identifying the measures necessary to mitigate nuisance and safety risks.

M-21 In considering development agreements or amendments to development agreements, or any proposed amendments to this Plan, secondary municipal planning strategies, or land use by-laws, the Municipality shall consider the recommendations of the Railway Proximity Guidelines (Railway Association of Canada and Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2013), subsequent updates, best practices, rail or road traffic volumes, and railway or roadway speeds.

M-22 The Municipality may, through applicable secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws, require site layout, landscaping and building design features to mitigate exposure of new high-density dwelling uses to risk of noise, vibration, fumes, emissions and risk from railways, roads, ports, vessels, industry, gas stations or other sources of air pollution.

7.6 TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT

Roadway congestion cannot be eliminated, but it can be managed through Transportation Demand Management (TDM) by reducing peak-time congestion. TDM initiatives improve the efficiency of the transportation network by encouraging alternatives to single occupant vehicle trips through incentives such as fare promotions and ride-share programs, and/or through disincentives such as re-allocating road space or adjusting tolls based on routes and time of day.

TDM should be considered during discretionary development approvals or when Traffic Impact Assessments are required. When more trip demand is captured by sustainable travel modes, there is less demand on road networks and parking supply. This, in turn, helps to achieve the goals for reducing community GHG emissions as set out in HalifACT.

M-23 The Municipality shall continue to identify and deliver Transportation Demand Management initiatives that discourage single occupant automobile travel during peak hours and encourage and support the use of sustainable modes of travel, including but not limited to measures outlined in the *Integrated Mobility Plan.*

M-24 In considering development agreements or amendments to development agreements, or any proposed amendments to this Plan, secondary municipal planning strategies, or land use by-laws, the Municipality shall consider requirements and incentives for Transportation Demand Management (TDM), such as:

a) reducing parking requirements where proposals include shared parking, car-sharing, secure bicycle parking and amenities, or other on-site TDM measures; and

b) Dedicated parking spots for vanpools, carpools and carshare.

7.7 ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Active transportation (AT) includes any form of human-powered mobility or motorized assistance for persons with disabilities, such as walking, bicycling, skateboarding, using a wheelchair, rollerblading or scootering. Investing in safe and connected infrastructure for AT for people of all ages and abilities is an essential part of the municipal transportation network. The Municipality's focus is to develop local and regional networks integrated with transit routes and land use, to attract more residents to active modes and provide options for people to move in their communities. AT is an affordable and environmentally sustainable form of transportation that promotes health and well-being while helping mitigate automobile congestion. Expanding AT facilities is also supported by HalifACT, as it helps to lower transportation-related carbon emissions and improve air quality.

The Active Transportation Priorities Plan seeks to increase the number of Active Transportation (AT) trips to work, school, shopping, and services. To recognize the strong interest in rural areas for AT, in 2023 Regional Council endorsed amendments to the Active Transportation Priorities Plan to provide criteria to prioritize rural AT projects. The Province also recognizes the importance of rural cycling through its Blue Route program.

M-25 *The 2014-2019 Active Transportation Priorities Plan*, as may be amended from time to time, together with the *Integrated Mobility Plan* and subsequent updates, shall provide guidance for the objectives, policies, plans and standards of an Active Transportation (AT) network.

M-26 When considering proposed AT projects or updating the Active Transportation Priorities Plan and Integrated Mobility Plan, the Municipality shall consider the following criteria:

a) strategic corridors as shown on Map 7;

b) connectivity to transit;

c) equitable access for traditionally underserved communities;

d) links across geographic/topographic barriers; and

e) synergy with the provincial Blue Route.

M-27 In considering development agreements or amendments to development agreements, or any proposed amendments to this Plan, secondary municipal planning strategies, or land use by-laws, the Municipality shall consider:

a) protecting existing or planned AT routes from development that would disrupt their continuity;

b) requiring planned AT routes to be built by developers to the Municipality's standards when the land abutting them is developed; and

c) requiring that new development be connected to, and provide access to, existing and planned AT routes.

M-28 Priority projects for the AT network shall be those identified in the Active Transportation Priorities Plan, as may be amended from time to time.

7.7.1 WALKING AND ROLLING

Healthy communities are designed with active transportation in mind. Pedestrian facilities should enable safe, short and attractive connections between homes, jobs, schools, shops, community facilities and transit stops, provide safer crossing opportunities, minimize road crossing distances, provide refuges from traffic and consider inclusivity and accessibility.

New developments can generate pedestrian demand on existing roads. This has led to accessibility issues as new subdivisions with sidewalks connect to streets without sidewalks. The Municipality can require infrastructure charges toward off-site capital works needed to accommodate new subdivisions in pre-designated locations.

M-29 The Municipality shall prioritize pedestrian infrastructure and apply a "Pedestrian First" approach to designing streets within the Urban Area.

M-30 In considering development agreements or amendments to development agreements, the Municipality shall consider requiring developers to construct, or contribute to costs for off-site sidewalks necessary to accommodate anticipated pedestrian trips arising from new development.

M-31 The Municipality shall ensure that construction management plans mandated in the Construction Site Management Administrative Order require that developers maintain safe and convenient sidewalk connections along the frontage of projects under construction.

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7.7.2 CYCLING

Bicycling should be comfortable and enjoyable using a network designed for people of "All Ages and Abilities" (AAA). AAA facilities help protect cyclists from trucks, buses and automobiles using physical barriers or low-traffic streets.

Developing an AAA bikeway network within the Regional Centre offers the highest potential to attract new cyclists due to the compact mix of uses. In suburban communities, a combination of multi-use pathways, bicycle lanes and local street bikeways will provide connectivity to the Regional Centre bikeway network, as well as to local transit, jobs, shops and community facilities. In rural areas, most links will be provided through multi-use pathways and paved shoulders.

M-32 When considering proposed cycling projects or updating the Active Transportation Priorities Plan and Integrated Mobility Plan, the Municipality shall consider:

a) An All Ages and Abilities (AAA) bikeway network enabling all-season cycling in the Regional Centre and within the suburban cycling catchment of Rapid Transit;

b) In the Urban Area, bicycling networks connected to transit, employment districts, shopping, schools, service centres, other community amenities, and to the Regional Centre AAA network;

c) Rural bicycle infrastructure that connects communities, consistent with the Rural Active Transportation Infrastructure program; and

d) End-of-trip bicycle facilities at public destinations, including secure bike parking, change rooms and showers.

7.7.3 MICROMOBILITY

Micromobility has blurred the line between active and motorized transportation in the form of motor-assisted bikes and scooters, typically powered by batteries. Appropriately managed micromobility can extend the catchment of public transit by helping solve the "last mile problem" typically associated with ferry or park-and-ride terminals. Provincial laws were established in 2022 that limit speeds to 32 kilometres per hour, but there is a need for further regulation and enforcement. In urban areas, personal electric micromobility devices may conflict with other users on sidewalks.

In rural areas, use of personal Off-Road Vehicles (ORVs) has long been an issue, especially on multi-use trails. These vehicles are typically powered by gasoline engines and cause rutting, noise and fumes. The issue is complicated because many trails have been established, and are maintained, by dedicated volunteers with ORV clubs. There is also interest in allowing ORVs to operate within segments of highway rights-of-way which provide strategic access to trails.

M-33 The Municipality shall work with the Province, and may consider adopting a by-law, to manage the use of micromobility devices including, but not limited to, motor-assisted bikes and scooters, and off-road vehicles.

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7.8 PUBLIC TRANSIT

Like many mid-sized cities in Canada, transit service in HRM has been challenged by the ongoing shift toward dispersed, car-oriented land uses and complex commutes, including growing employment at peripheral business parks which are more challenging to serve with transit. Prior to the COVID pandemic, transit ridership had been rising, but ongoing impacts of the pandemic, including permanent shifts to working from home have further undermined ridership. Bus usage has since been recovering from the impacts of the pandemic, and the challenge now is to resume pre-pandemic ridership levels for both buses and ferries.

As outlined in Chapter 2, this Plan uses the Urban Transit Service Boundary as a tool to direct where conventional public transit resources will be located (buses and ferries). The Urban Transit Service Boundary is applied to the Urban Area, where denser development allows these services to operate most efficiently.

Short-term service improvements have been guided by the *Halifax Transit Moving Forward Together Plan* which re-imagined the transit network based on four core principles:

- Increase the Proportion of Resources Allocated Towards High Ridership Services;
- Build a Simplified Transfer Based Network;
- Invest in Service Quality and Reliability; and
- Give Transit Increased Priority in the Transportation Network.

The Municipality must not only improve transit service but also integrate it with land use planning and other transportation modes. This calls for strategically located terminals and other facilities based on considerations that may not yet be reflected in local zoning. Halifax Transit needs the latitude to plan stations for safe and convenient access by pedestrians, cyclists, buses and automobiles, including pick-up/drop-off zones, staging areas and, where applicable, park-and-ride lots or structures.

Wherever possible, passenger facilities such as waiting areas should abut streets, provide good lighting, and have convenient connections to shops, services and community facilities. Transit facilities and services are to be planned in collaboration with land use planning and community design to support healthy communities, as outlined in Chapter 3. Accessibility for persons with disabilities is a high priority, with an all-low-floor regular bus fleet and a supplementary, door-to-door Access-A-Bus service which requires advance reservations. Efforts continue to ensure that bus stops are compatible with ramps which are deployed by low-floor buses. Access-A-Bus reservation requests sometimes exceed available capacity, a challenge which continues to be addressed.

The Rapid Transit Strategy proposes Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) lines with frequent all-day service, together with new ferry routes to transform transit service, create a viable alternative to driving, and shift ridership to help achieve the mode and climate targets of this plan and others. Implementation hinges on support from other levels of government, and provision is being made to enable possible future upgrades from BRT to Light Rail Transit (LRT). The proposed Rapid Transit system serves as a framework for developing complete communities within a convenient walking distance of stations and terminals. New all-day ferry services will complement the BRT corridors, converging on the existing downtown Halifax ferry terminal site.

Continued and new investment in transit will be required to address emerging transportation issues, all the more in view of unprecedented population growth. Through the Rapid Transit Strategy and ongoing

research, the Municipality is well positioned to partner with other levels of government for substantial investment in higher-order transit modes that will shape future development. Providing system-wide accessibility must remain an important consideration. The Municipality will continue to investigate the potential demand for, and feasibility of new services such as rail, bus rapid transit and expanded ferry service.

M-34 The Urban Transit Service Boundary shall be established on Map 7 to identify the area within which the Municipality will direct future investment in conventional public transit (bus and ferry) services. Rural express service may be considered beyond this area.

M-35 The Municipality's transit service plans shall consider the long term growth and settlement pattern envisaged in this Plan, the Moving Forward Together Plan and the Rapid Transit Strategy.

M-36 Transit Service Plans shall continue to be prepared at regular intervals for consideration by the Municipality. These plans will be developed in consultation with the public and other stakeholders where substantive changes are proposed, and shall include consideration of socioeconomic equity, the needs of persons with disabilities, and preserving corridors for future investments and decision-making. Upon adoption by the Municipality, Transit Service Plans shall provide guidance for investment in transit services.

M-37 The Municipality shall permit public transit facilities in all zones. Transit facilities shall not be subject to zone requirements, but will be planned in collaboration with municipal land use, environment and community design staff.

M-38 The Municipality shall continue to implement transit priority measures, such as designated transit lanes, transit signal priority and queue jump lanes, to improve the reliability and travel time of public transit vehicles.

M-39 In considering development agreements or amendments to development agreements, or any proposed amendments to this Plan, secondary municipal planning strategies, or land use by-laws for lands within the Urban Transit Service Boundary, the Municipality shall require mixed-use residential and commercial areas designed to maximize access to public transit.

7.8.3 RURAL PUBLIC MOBILITY

Loss of train, motorcoach and flagstop bus service in the 1990s and early 2000s left rural residents almost completely dependent on cars for trips beyond walking or cycling distance. Households without their own car and driver depend on others for transportation. Provincial carpool parking lots are provided at some freeway interchanges to encourage carpool commuting. There have also been proposals to subsidize carshare programs for rural residents who can drive but have limited car availability.

Recognizing that the Halifax Transit service model of fixed routes and fixed schedules is challenging to provide effectively and efficiently in rural communities, the Rural Transit Funding Program provides grants to not-for-profit community organizations to operate community-based transit services in rural communities within the Municipality. These transit service providers offer an efficient, cost-effective form of public transportation outside of Halifax Transit's service area. These services also receive funding through the

provincial Community Transportation Assistance Program (CTAP) and collaborate through the Nova Scotia Community Transportation Network and the Rural Transportation Association.

At the federal level, beginning in 2021, the Rural Transit Solutions Fund offers a total of $250 million for capital grants available over 5 years to develop local mobility solutions in rural, remote, northern and indigenous communities. Eligible capital projects include vehicles, vessels or digital platforms for on-demand services, public-owned rural transit, ride shares and volunteer community car-pooling.

M-40 The Municipality may consider programs to encourage and assist rural and low-volume public mobility in areas outside the Urban Transit Service Boundary by:

a) supporting and expanding the municipal Rural Transit Funding program;

b) collaborating with the Province on rural mobility initiatives;

c) investigating additional public mobility solutions for rural communities; and

d) considering public-private partnerships for rural routes.

7.9 CURBSIDE MANAGEMENT

7.9.1 PARKING

Parking affects housing costs, business viability, pedestrian access, local traffic patterns, land consumption, stormwater absorption, and the use of limited street space by multiple modes of travel. Parking may be on-site, off-site or shared.

On-site parking in private developments is influenced by both land use by-laws setting minimum and/or maximum requirements based on the size and type of development, and by private-sector formulas for financing. To free retailers from having to compete by providing ever-larger parking lots, in business districts the Municipality should consider limiting the number of parking spaces and paved surface area. Shared parking or “Park-once-and-walk areas” can be utilized where parking is shared between businesses, enabling users to park only once to access several shops and services on foot.

In the case of on-street parking, it must be optimized to serve nearby shops and services, and to balance other priorities such as transit or bike lanes and loading areas. Parking fees and pay stations can also be programmed to encourage sufficient turnover to prioritize curbside spaces for retail customers rather than commuters.

Parking in rural village centres may have different considerations than parking in urban areas. In a rural setting, parking can be consolidated and placed between businesses rather than in front, enabling buildings to be closer to the road, more attractive and more easily reached on foot. Consolidated village parking lots can also support carpooling, park-and-ride bus service, a rural bus shelter, parcel pick-up/drop-off, or an electric vehicle recharging hub.

The 2009 *Regional Parking Strategy* led to an increased municipal role in planning for parking. As follow-up, the 2013 *Parking Roadmap Implementation Study* measured parking demand, reviewed enforcement and governance, recommended improvements for wayfinding, and considered marketing, technology and communications. Parking demand is not a fixed factor: it is influenced by supply, pricing and visibility, as

well as by the attractiveness of alternative modes. Parking demand must be managed through a wide range of municipal policies, regulations and investment decisions.

M-41 ***The Regional Parking Strategy Functional Plan, Parking Roadmap*** **and updates shall guide strategies to increase the efficiency of the existing parking system, reduce parking demand and advance related mobility and affordability objectives of this Plan.**

M-42 **In considering development agreements or amendments to development agreements, amendments to this Plan, secondary municipal planning strategies or land use by-laws, the Municipality shall seek to reduce, and will consider limiting the number of on-site vehicle parking spaces and the total paved surface of parking lots.**

M-43 **When considering new secondary municipal planning strategies under the Community Planning program, the Municipality shall consider, through applicable land use by-laws, permitting temporary uses on surface parking lots, including but not limited to modular housing, pop-up clinics, pop-up retail, outdoor retail display, pop-up bicycle repair, pop-up waste collection, fairs, crafts and exhibitions, but excluding auto dealerships, warehousing, self storage, waste storage, junk yards and other obnoxious uses.**

M-44 **When allocating space for curbside parking, the Municipality shall prioritize accessible parking with regard to preferred locations and anticipated demand.**

7.9.2 DELIVERIES AND LOADING ZONES

Local deliveries, especially for businesses, often use curb space which is also important for bikeways and short-term parking. Requiring on-site loading can ease demand for curbside space. Transportation Corridor Functional Plans can identify trade-offs and point to possible solutions. Innovative approaches may include neighbourhood pick-up/drop-off hubs, satellite warehouses serving small local delivery vehicles, electric propulsion and cargo bikes.

Some cities are supporting e-delivery pilot projects. These may involve working with the private sector to implement “micro-hubs” where larger vehicles drop off goods and e-bikes do the “last mile” of delivery within the core. Coupled with All Ages and Abilities bike networks, such initiatives may help delivery companies by avoiding congestion, and help municipalities by reducing the need for curbside loading.

M-45 **Where strategic corridors (Map 7) have been identified to prioritize active transportation, in considering development agreements or amendments to development agreements, amendments to this Plan, secondary municipal planning strategies or land use by-laws, the Municipality may require on-site loading to minimize the need for curbside access within the right-of-way.**

7.10 GOODS MOVEMENT

With an urban deep-water port, a second port at Sheet Harbour, an international airport and direct connections to freeways and rail corridors, the Municipality is a key multi-modal freight and logistics hub for the eastern seaboard. Collaboration between all three levels of government, multiple agencies and transport operators is critical to success, both for inter-regional and local goods movement.

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Port-related activity is the largest contributor to heavy truck traffic on the Halifax Peninsula. Important as it is for serving shippers, container truck traffic has resulted in traffic congestion, noise pollution, poor air quality and vibration. Pedestrian safety, noise complaints, and health concerns from emissions are all major factors to consider. Truck traffic conflicts with pedestrian flows in Downtown Halifax, particularly to and from the Halifax ferry terminal and the waterfront.

Greater use of rail for freight may alleviate these impacts, though loss of rail service in much of the province has left no alternative to trucking for some shippers. On the Halifax Peninsula, efforts are being made to shift container movement towards rail. For logistical reasons this does not include refrigerated units or acid-bearing construction spoil destined for safe disposal at the South End docklands, though technology is available to do so. To avoid overloading Peninsula transportation corridors, some port growth could take advantage of underutilized marine industrial land in Woodside.

Suburban freight movement is oriented to industrial parks, harbour-oriented industry, container trans-shipment and deliveries to large stores. Trucks are the dominant suburban mode, though two industrial parks are served by rail: Bedford (at Rocky Lake) and Burnside. Woodside and Wrights Cove have docks in addition to an active rail line. Roads in business parks are designed to accommodate heavy goods vehicles. The new Highway 107 Extension (Burnside Expressway) will provide more efficient truck access between Dartmouth, Sackville, the Annapolis Valley (via Highway 101), the Halifax Stanfield International Airport and the Trans-Canada Highway at Truro (via Highway 102).

M-46 Where appropriate, the Municipality shall consider accommodation of freight and commercial vehicles in planning and designing for transportation and land use, including:

a) encouraging CN and the ports to retain and improve rail and port infrastructure and services, including potential to carry refrigerated containers and acid-bearing construction spoil through the Halifax Peninsula by rail;

b) facilitating early implementation of the planned trailer and container rail shuttle to alleviate downtown truck traffic;

c) encouraging the reuse and intensification of port related activities on underutilized land in Woodside;

d) reviewing the Truck Route By-Law with consideration given to current and projected trucking demand, adjacent land uses and planned settlement patterns;

e) considering trucks when designing Complete Streets on designated truck routes;

f) allowing for oversize loads between terminals and freeways; and

g) requiring building setbacks and design requirements to mitigate noise, fumes, vibration and risk.

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7.11 LOOKING BEYOND: THE FUTURE OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

As Nova Scotia looks to the long-term future, its ports, railways and freeways form a framework which can be integrated and adapted as technologies develop and population continues to grow. Emerging technologies such as electrification, variable electronic tolling and autonomous driving all hold potential for improved efficiency and reduced impacts if strategically coordinated.

The need for highly visible parking is likely to decrease as Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) will guide drivers to parking lots and, eventually, will guide the cars themselves. Autonomous Vehicles (AVs) will encourage more use of car share services and virtual valet parking, further reducing the need for prominent parking at individual premises, though the demand for curb space is likely to increase.

In the meantime, surface parking should be designed to facilitate future infill development, for example by avoiding front yards and laying out internal parking lanes so they can become future street grids. Parking structures should be designed to facilitate future conversion to offices or residences.

In addition to supporting Active Transportation and transit, HalifACT calls for a switch to electric vehicles (EVs) for private, public, and commercial transportation. Wide-spread adoption of electric vehicles will require planning for and building charging infrastructure throughout the region, and coordination with local partners and industry specialists to prepare for a shift from gasoline to electricity. EVs will alleviate some of the impacts of automobile dependency, but they are not a panacea. Investing in sustainable modes and Complete Communities must play a significant role in tackling transportation emissions, safety risk, household costs and land consumption.

For adapting to climate change, transportation facilities and services will need to consider sea level rise, heat waves, severe storms, wildfires, and risks associated with tropical pests and disease. Existing infrastructure will have to be monitored for resilience, and new structures will have to be designed to withstand or adapt to a changing environment. It will also be important to consider the potential role of transportation corridors for evacuation and emergency access.

M-47 The Municipality shall consider climate hazards, ecosystem restoration and impacts to the Green Network when retrofitting or constructing new transportation facilities.

M-48 In considering amendments to this Plan, the Municipality shall research long-term factors in relation to land use and transportation, such as:

a) Travel implications of work-from-home, distance learning and online shopping;

b) Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), Ride Sharing apps, Car Sharing, Autonomous Vehicles (AVs), Mobility as a Service (MaaS) and variable road user charges;

c) Variable tolls and parking rates, and shared toll/parking/transit payment platforms;

d) Potential for integrating local and inter-regional public transportation;

e) Rail, motorcoach and other modes to complement buses and ferries;

f) **Opportunities for synergy between freight and passenger carriers;**

g) **Low-carbon propulsion for road, rail and marine use;**

h) **Adoption of electric vehicles;**

i) **Health impacts of roadway, tire and brake particulates; and**

j) **Futureproofing short-term projects for long-term risks and opportunities, including climate change adaptation, additional modes and disruptive technologies.**

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CHAPTER 8: DRIVING ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

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CHAPTER 8: DRIVING ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

8.0 INTRODUCTION

Halifax Regional Municipality is the economic hub of Atlantic Canada and, at the time of this Plan's adoption, one of Canada's fastest growing cities. This period of unprecedented growth has economic benefits but also brings challenges. In 2022, Regional Council adopted *People. Planet. Prosperity. Halifax's Inclusive Economic Strategy 2022-27* – a plan that seeks to ensure Halifax's prosperity is inclusive and improves the well-being of all its residents.

Regional Council has also endorsed the *African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity*: a strategy developed and owned by the African Nova Scotian community to address systemic issues and improve economic and quality of life outcomes for African Nova Scotians. It aims to attract investment to historic African Nova Scotian communities, increase labour force attachment and entrepreneurship, and build community capacity.

The Regional Plan reinforces the goals and actions of both these economic development strategies. It adopts policies that encourage employment opportunities in mixed-use centres, reduce barriers to small-scale commercial operations, maximize the social benefits of economic growth, and recognize the unique needs of historic African Nova Scotian communities. The Plan also acknowledges the different character and issues in rural areas of the municipality and creates policies to support infrastructure development, working landscapes and increasing as-of-right development while preserving open space.

Attracting employment and business requires sufficient land and space for companies to set up operations. The *Industrial Employment Lands Strategy* (2020), outlines the growing demand for industrial land throughout the Municipality and makes recommendations for HRM to ensure sufficient supply. The Regional Plan adopts policies that protect industrial and harbour lands for intensive employment uses.

8.1 OBJECTIVES

1. **Support economic growth by increasing the population, labour force and Gross Domestic Product (GDP).**

2. **Remove barriers to economic growth by developing policies and regulations that encourage small scale commercial uses and home based businesses.**

3. **Support rural economic development by protecting working landscapes and encouraging clustered development to create complete communities.**

4. **Direct growth to mixed use centres that provide jobs and services for the surrounding area.**

5. **Continuously improve quality of life for residents by addressing housing affordability and equity.**

6. **Protect industrial lands, ensure adequate supply of industrial land by type and location, and protect harbour lands for marine industrial uses.**

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7. **Focus on inclusive economic prosperity by maximizing economic and social benefits of major projects within communities, implementing the *African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity Plan* and working with Mi'kmaq and Indigenous rightsholders on the Cornwallis Task Force and Truth & Reconciliation recommendations.**

8. **Encourage the growth of the green economy and growth of new employment sectors that support the transition to a low-carbon future.**

8.2 ECONOMIC STRATEGY

Since 2006 the Municipality has adopted a series of 5-year economic strategies. Each of these has focused on attracting and retaining talent, and promoting the municipality as an attractive place to live, work and do business. *People. Planet. Prosperity. Halifax's Inclusive Economic Strategy 2022-27* continues to focus on talent retention and growth but includes quality of life as a key measure of success. The strategy adopts three strategic goals:

- **Inclusive & Sustainable Growth** – increasing the GDP to $25 billion and addressing systemic and historic inequities;
- **Talent Development & Retention** – increasing Halifax's population to 525,000 and its labour force to 310,000; and
- **Improve Quality of Life** - ensuring that rising living standards and prosperity can be enjoyed by all and addressing affordability and environmental issues.

EP-1 ***People. Planet. Prosperity. Halifax's Inclusive Economic Strategy 2022-27* shall provide the direction for the Municipality's economic development initiatives. This Plan shall encourage planning and regulatory activities that maximize the economic and social benefits of major projects, increase housing stock, support environmental sustainability and resiliency, and grow African Nova Scotian and Indigenous prosperity.**

8.2.1 MAJOR INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS

The municipality is home to a number of institutions that are major employers and provide a wide range of services and economic, social, and cultural benefits to the Municipality. The Municipality values the presence of major institutions located throughout the region, including post-secondary institutions, hospitals and healthcare facilities, and the Department of National Defence, and Halifax International Airport Authority, together with their important contributions to research, employment, training, public health, industry, arts, and culture. These institutions cumulatively provide employment for tens of thousands of residents. Where these sectors cluster mutually supportive facilities, they create employment and research hubs that function as focal points for the entire Atlantic region. While the Municipality has limited jurisdiction over provincial and federal institutions, coordination of planning efforts can support mutually beneficial goals, and a high level of service.

EP-2 **The Municipality may consider partnerships with major institutions located throughout the region, including post-secondary institutions, hospitals, health care facilities and the Department of National Defense to ensure sufficient land is available for their current needs and future expansion, and for collaboration on needs such as infrastructure, transportation, housing and municipal services.**

8.2.1.1 POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

Ten post-secondary institutions afford competitive advantages for Halifax by attracting international students, fostering innovation, generating employment and offering a highly educated and well-trained workforce. A diverse student base contributes to the vibrant social and entertainment opportunities available both on campus and downtown.

The Halifax Higher Education Partnership (HHEP) recognizes the many synergies between municipal, academic and training programs that can be achieved through collaboration. Regular HHEP meetings bring together representatives from the universities, Nova Scotia Community College, the Halifax Partnership and the Municipality to explore issues and opportunities of mutual interest. Recent examples include retention of international student talent, research and development clusters, and an emphasis on innovation. Other partnerships have also been established between individual universities or faculties and the private sector, the Province or the Municipality based on research needs and interests. There are also opportunities for collaboration on specific challenges such as campus expansion plans and neighbourhood impacts.

EP-3 The Municipality recognizes the important role post-secondary institutions have in talent attraction and retention and shall consider collaborating on campus planning initiatives and mitigating neighbourhood impacts.

8.2.1.2 DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Halifax is home to Canada's East Coast Navy and is Canada's largest military base by population. Along with CFB Shearwater, the Base employs approximately 11,000 military and civilian employees, plus a further 4,500 reservists. The Department of National Defence (DND) operates numerous facilities located throughout the municipality and is a significant contributor to local businesses and non-profit organizations.

There has been increasing development pressure in the area surrounding CFB Shearwater, which historically was remote enough for its aircraft operations to have minimal noise impact on residents. As development in the area intensifies, noise complaints are increasing. DND has altered operating hours and base locations used for aircraft operations to address these concerns, but further feasible changes to base operations are limited.

EP-4 The Municipality shall collaborate with the Department of National Defence on noise mitigation efforts for residential areas in the vicinity of CFB Shearwater.

8.2.1.3 HALIFAX STANFIELD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Halifax Stanfield International Airport (airport code YHZ) is the primary international gateway airport for Atlantic Canada and is located in one of the region's largest transportation centres. Passenger traffic and air cargo are growing consistently and the Halifax International Airport Authority (HIAA), which operates the airport, has long term expansion plans for the airfield, terminal, cargo and commercial areas. To achieve these plans, HIAA must consider appropriate infrastructure, servicing and land use guidelines for development.

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The airport is a major economic and employment generator for the municipality. Ongoing communication between HIAA and HRM regarding future land use plans will help ensure adequate infrastructure is in place to support airport expansion, and compatible land uses are in place.

EP-5 The Municipality shall collaborate with the Halifax International Airport Authority in the development of airport-related facilities to ensure that municipal infrastructure requirements are adequate for any future expansion plans.

8.3 MIXED USE COMMUNITIES AND MIXED EMPLOYMENT CENTRES

This Plan directs 90% of new housing units to the Regional Centre and suburban communities. This target is meant to avoid escalating municipal costs by limiting sprawl and its associated servicing costs and encouraging the development of complete communities as described in Chapter 2 – walkable areas that enable people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to live, work, shop and play near to one another, with multiple mobility options. Clustering development in strategic locations will support efficient use of infrastructure, reduce land consumption and foster vibrant, community-oriented neighbourhoods.

Traditionally, land use policy has separated residential and commercial uses through municipal zoning and corporate siting formulas – a pattern that produces isolated commercial hubs such as big box tracts and strip malls, and forces people to travel outside of their communities to get goods and services. Adopting more inclusive zoning that permits human-scaled commercial activity to complement nearby residential uses is key to enabling complete communities.

Similarly, the Halifax region's employment locations have dispersed. Historically, employment and services were concentrated in the urban core, with residents travelling in and out during peak hours. Now, employment nodes also thrive in suburban and rural business parks, highway commercial strips and semi-rural shopping centres. The 2022 downtown office vacancy rate is at a 10-year high[27] as jobs relocate to other areas of the Municipality and employees shift to working from home in the wake of the pandemic. There may be opportunities to repurpose underused office buildings for residential units and attract more residents to the urban core.

All these changes have implications for land use regulations, traffic and transportation patterns. Land use policy should be responsive to these shifts in trends for employment and commercial space demand. Adopting policy that encourages less separation of use and more mixed-use communities where appropriate can lessen the burden on municipal infrastructure while reducing the amount of time residents must spend commuting.

EP-6 As part of the Suburban and Rural Community Planning program, the Municipality shall consider amendments to secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws to allow for increased small-scale commercial opportunities and home-based businesses in residential and mixed use zones.

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[27] 2022 Halifax Index https://halifaxpartnership.com/research-strategy/halifax-index-2022/real-estate/#:~:text=Halifax's%20overall%20office%20vacancy%20rate,%25%20and%2012.0%25%2C%20respectively.

EP-7 The Municipality shall monitor employment and labour force trends and demand for commercial space to inform planning for mixed use, transit-oriented communities and rural service centres.

EP-8 The Municipality shall, where appropriate, undertake studies and partnerships to better understand the viability of office-to-residential conversions, and implications for municipal regulatory and financial policy.

8.4 INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT LANDS

Industrial lands are a critical part of the Municipality's economy. The industrial sector offers high quality employment opportunities and has spin-off growth benefits for retail and residential development. Industrial lands generally have high assessed values which contribute to the municipal tax base. Through development of its industrial employment land base, the Municipality will be better positioned to build more balanced, complete, and competitive communities. For Halifax to continue to be competitive and attractive to a broad range of industrial and commercial sectors, the Municipality must ensure that it has a sufficient supply and market choice of serviced industrial employment lands.

The competitiveness of Halifax's export-based economy is partly determined by the availability and quality of its developable industrial employment lands. One of the most important site selection criteria that can be influenced by the Municipality is an ample supply of suitable, vacant, serviced (and serviceable) industrial land that is available for purchase and absorption.

As land prices increase, industrial lands can face pressure to convert to non-industrial uses, such as large-format retail, office and residential developments. The policies of this Plan are intended to protect and promote sites suitable for industrial uses. The recommendations of the 2020 Industrial Employment Lands Strategy will guide the policies of this Plan to:

- Identify and designate industrial employment areas based on industry type;
- Establish a framework for consistent industrial zoning to be adopted in existing and future industrial employment areas across the Municipality;
- Introduce policy to direct where and how employment-supportive (non-industrial) uses can be accommodated in industrial employment areas; and
- Adopt policy to direct ongoing study of industrial employment trends, industrial land availability, conversion pressures, and opportunities for land intensification to inform planning for long-term industrial land needs.

EP-9 A Business/Industrial Sub-Designation shall be established on the Regional Land Use Structure (Map 2) and applied to all existing business/industrial parks and proposed expansion areas. Its primary intent is to preserve industrial lands for industrial uses, while allowing for commercial uses that support business and employees.

EP-10 Within the Business/Industrial Sub-Designation, the Municipality may amend applicable secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws to enable heavy industrial, light industrial, commercial industrial, or other employment-supportive uses.

EP-11 When identifying new areas that may be suitable for industrial use, the Municipality shall:

a) **Consider the existing and anticipated supply of industrial lands within the Business/Industrial Sub-Designation;**

b) **Prioritize areas close to transportation links such as 100 series highways, rail lines and port access;**

c) **Require setbacks and buffers from less intensive uses and roads;**

d) **Not designate lands identified Essential Corridors or High Ecological Value Areas on Map 6, or identified as environmentally sensitive or at-risk for climate hazards by any study resulting from policies of this Plan; and**

e) **Avoid sites of cultural or historical importance as identified through consultation with communities.**

8.4.1 HEAVY INDUSTRIAL

Heavy industrial areas accommodate industries that produce large, complex products which are often used in further manufacturing, rather than sold to consumers directly. It involves the manufacture and/or processing of products from raw materials, extraction of raw materials, and use or storage of flammable, explosive or hazardous products. Heavy industrial uses generally include noise, smoke, dust or fumes that can be obnoxious to adjacent uses. Such areas require large lots with sufficient setbacks and buffers to minimize nuisance to neighbouring land uses. Products manufactured in heavy industrial settings tend to be transported and therefore require easy access to major transportation routes such as highways, rail, ports and airports.

EP-12 The Municipality may consider permitting heavy industrial uses in appropriate locations. Heavy industrial uses include manufacturing, processing, construction and demolition (C&D) uses, extraction of raw materials and production and use of hazardous materials, as well as light industrial uses. No residential uses except for caretaker units shall be permitted.

EP-13 Heavy industrial uses shall be located on large lots, set back and buffered from less intensive uses and roads.

8.4.2 LIGHT INDUSTRIAL

Light industrial uses involve the processing, fabrication, assembly, treatment, or packaging of products from previously prepared materials, finished products or parts. Most light industry products are produced directly for consumers rather than use by other industries. Research facilities and industrial printing are included in light industrial uses.

Light industrial facilities normally have less environmental impact than heavy industry and do not include hazardous and flammable products to the same degree. They still generate noise, dust and fumes and therefore require setbacks and buffers to protect adjacent land uses from nuisance by-products.

EP-14 The Municipality may consider permitting light industrial uses in appropriate locations. Light industrial uses shall include light manufacturing – the processing, fabrication, assembly, treatment, or packaging of products from previously prepared materials, finished products or parts. No residential uses except for caretaker units shall be permitted.

8.4.3 COMMERCIAL INDUSTRIAL

Commercial-industrial areas are intended to accommodate light industrial uses and a range of commercial uses that support industries, workers and customers. Commercial-Industrial areas may be used as buffers from streets and from zones that support less intensive uses. Retail and office uses and sizes should be limited so as to maximize the amount of land available for industrial and employment uses.

EP-15 Commercial Industrial uses may be permitted in heavy and light industrial areas, as well as mixed-use areas where appropriate, to accommodate light industrial uses and a range of commercial uses that support industries, workers and customers.

EP-16 Commercial Industrial uses shall be primarily directed to major streets and highway interchanges and may act as a transitional use to buffer to more intensive industrial uses. Secondary municipal planning strategies shall set a maximum size on retail uses in Commercial Industrial areas.

8.4.6 INDUSTRIAL LAND PROTECTION

The Industrial Employment Lands Strategy (2020) emphasized the need for industrial land to be protected from institutional and commercial encroachment and to ensure adequate employment lands available for future growth. To support this goal, the IELS recommended implementing policies to protect industrial areas from conversion and fragmentation. Such policies recognize there may be circumstances where conversions to non-employment uses are justified but require a systematic approach to evaluate conversion requests.

EP-17 The Municipality may consider conversion of industrial and employment lands to non-industrial and employment uses through a comprehensive review of planning documents that considers the following criteria:

a) whether the land is required for the Municipality to maintain a sufficient supply of land for industrial and employment purposes over the long term;

b) the proposed uses would not adversely affect the overall viability of the employment area and conversion will not introduce incompatible land uses to the surrounding employment area;

c) existing or planned infrastructure and public service facilities are available to accommodate the proposed uses, including public transit access;

d) site(s) are mixed use blocks and located along the edges of employment areas, or the site is an irregular or island parcel unable to support industrial uses;

e) conversion of the site(s) will not compromise any other planning policy objectives of the Municipality, including planned commercial functions;

f) **the site is constrained due to size, configuration, or physical conditions (e.g. grade, natural heritage, environmental features) that do not make it feasible for industrial employment uses;**

g) **that the conversion proposal can demonstrate that a similar level of employment density (e.g., jobs per hectare) would be maintained; and**

h) **conversion of the site(s) will result in a more logical land use boundary for an employment area.**

EP-18 Any sites appropriate for intensive marine-dependent industrial uses shall be discouraged from converting to residential uses.

Demand for industrial land is high and is projected to remain so for the long-term. While the municipality is geographically large, there is a limited supply of industrial land, particularly in serviced areas. One potential response is intensification of industrial lands, by developing less restrictive land use regulations and permitting mixing of industrial with other complementary employment uses. Industrial intensification strategies may allow for more efficient use of land and infrastructure, reduced sprawl, and a better-connected transportation system.

EP-19 The Municipality shall undertake a study of industrial intensification strategies to consider land use changes such as building density, height limits, setbacks and buffers, parking requirements, and mixing of industrial with other complementary employment uses where contextually appropriate.

8.4.5 HALIFAX HARBOUR

Halifax Harbour plays a strategically important economic role to HRM and the Province of Nova Scotia for shipping, ship building, naval operations and other port related industries. HRM seeks to ensure that sufficient lands are retained for these purposes and that the viability of these activities is not compromised by development of incompatible uses in their proximity.

8.4.5.1 HALIFAX HARBOUR SUB-DESIGNATION

EP-20 The Halifax Harbour Sub-Designation shall be established on the Regional Land Use Structure (Map 2) and applied from Hartlen Point in Eastern Passage to Chebucto Head, including Northwest Arm and Bedford Basin, and extend inland generally to the first major roadway paralleling the Harbour. The Sub-Designation's primary intent is to preserve lands for marine-industrial uses.

EP-21 Within the Halifax Harbour Sub-Designation, the Municipality shall establish zoning under applicable land use by-laws where existing harbour-related industrial uses are located and lands or water lots determined by the Municipality to be suitable for these uses in the future. Corresponding land use regulations shall be established under the applicable land use by-laws. Amendments to applicable land use by-laws may be made to:

a) **allow for additional lands or water lots for harbour-related industrial uses that have not been previously been identified where such lands are considered appropriately situated for these uses;**

b) **implement regulations that mitigate potential negative impacts of existing and potential marine-dependent industrial and commercial areas on adjacent uses, while maintaining the economic viability of marine-dependent uses; and**

c) **discourage new residential development from locating in areas that are suitable for intensive marine dependent industrial and commercial uses.**

8.4.5.2 WATER LOTS

While waterfront property ownership typically stops at the shoreline, a number of lots exist around these waterbodies that were created prior to Confederation in 1867. Known as pre-Confederation water lots, the approval of the Federal Government is required before these lots can be infilled and development of these lots is subject to the Municipality's land use policies and regulations.

The Municipality will encourage senior levels of government to only consider harbour infilling for the purpose of marine related purposes, such as wharfs or marinas, or to provide public recreational areas or public access to the waterfront. Any infill that could have negative environmental impact should be discouraged.

EP-22 Secondary municipal planning strategies shall discourage infilling of pre-Confederation water lots by adopting policies that limit development on water lots and establish regulations on how to consider water lots when calculating lot area and setbacks.

Sulfide-bearing material (SBM), commonly known as pyritic slate is a frequent by-product of development in HRM. Once excavated and exposed to air and water, pyritic slate can generate acidic runoff that is a known risk to watersheds and associated ecosystems. Therefore, its safe disposal is a significant issue. One of the most environmentally acceptable practices is to submerge it in salt water which mitigates acid generation and also creates infilled land around the shoreline.

The Halifax Port Authority operates the only large-scale commercial SBM infill site in HRM, but privately-owned pre-Confederation water lots may also apply to host SBM infill. Both Federal and Provincial regulations apply to SBM disposal. HRM has no direct control over permitting or regulating the disposal of SBM, but it can influence infill processes through its authority to regulate land use and nuisances (such as truck routes and noise).

The Halifax Port Authority has expressed concern about the longer-term availability of SBM infill capacity and the need to plan for additional future capacity. The siting of any future commercial SBM infill facilities would benefit from a collaborative approach from all levels of government and relevant stakeholders.

EP-23 The Municipality shall encourage a collaborative, multi-stakeholder approach to the siting and approval of sulfide-bearing material disposal sites, that considers impacts on environment, adjacent neighbourhoods, and uses and regulation of infilled sites.

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8.4.5.3 HALIFAX PORT AUTHORITY

Halifax Port Authority is a major landowner along the municipality's harbour lands. The Port oversees commercial cargo shipping and cruise operations – both significant contributors to HRM's economy. It also manages the Halifax Seaport, an arts and cultural district with cruise terminals, retailers, a national museum, a farmers market, and Nova Scotia College of Art & Design. The Port is planning expansion and improvement projects over the coming years where warranted by projected increases in both passenger and freight traffic.

EP-24 The Municipality shall collaborate with the Halifax Port Authority in the development of port-related facilities to ensure that municipal infrastructure requirements are adequate for any future plans.

8.4.5.4 HALIFAX OCEAN SUPERCLUSTER

Halifax is Canada's largest centre for ocean research. Ocean-related industries account for approximately one-third of Nova Scotian business R&D, and general 13.5% of Nova Scotia's GDP[28]. The Government of Canada has established a Federal Ocean Supercluster program in HRM, bringing together industry, research and government to create and collaborate on projects that grow Canada's ocean economy.

EP-25 The Municipality shall work with government and industry partners to ensure available harbour-front land can support the needs of growing ocean-related industries and the Federal Ocean Super Cluster program.

8.5 RURAL EMPLOYMENT LANDS

There are extensive rural lands within the municipality's geographic boundaries. These lands provide much of the open space and natural resources that support the municipality. Rural areas have a larger share of businesses in industrial, resource and goods-producing sectors than other areas of the municipality. Policies that preserve agricultural and resource lands maintain areas needed for economic growth. The Halifax Green Network Plan identifies these areas as the municipality's working landscapes: open spaces that support regional economic sectors such as resource extraction, agriculture, tourism, construction and manufacturing. Preserving these areas is important for the regional economy.

EP-26 As part of the Rural Community Planning program, the Municipality shall establish policies and zoning under applicable secondary planning strategies and land use by-laws to preserve working landscapes, as identified on the Green Network Plan's Working Landscape Open Space Values Map, to protect them from residential encroachment and minimize land use conflicts.

EP-27 As part of the Rural Community Planning program, the Municipality shall establish policies under applicable secondary planning strategies and land use by-laws to support primary resource industries.

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[28] Halifax Partnership, 2023 https://halifaxpartnership.com/key-sectors/oceans/

8.7 TOURISM

Tourism is a major economic sector for Halifax. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, there were 5.3 million overnight stays per year and $1.3 billion in spending by visitors to the municipality[29]. The sector is now recovering with the number of visitors arriving by air and land rebounding, hotel occupancy increasing, and cruise ship arrivals on par with 2019 levels.

HRM itself is a major tourism stakeholder. The Municipality owns Scotiabank Centre and is a 50% shareholder in the Halifax Convention Centre, provides funding to large-scale events and community organizations, and supports Discover Halifax, the regional destination marking organization. In 2021, Regional Council endorsed the Halifax Regional Integrated Tourism Master Plan, developed by Discover Halifax, which includes actions that aim to grow tourism revenue and employment.

EP-28 The Municipality shall work with Discover Halifax to implement the goals of the Integrated Tourism Master Plan by:

a) reviewing secondary land use policies and relevant by-law changes to support Designated Arts Districts and Entertainment Districts in appropriate locations;

b) working with stakeholders to identify infrastructure needs that would support increased tourism (such as outdoor performance spaces, waterfront park spaces, transportation options, broadband and cellular coverage, and washrooms);

c) working with community and stakeholders to increase the tourism focus for the Dartmouth waterfront and the canoe-kayak facilities on Lake Banook;

d) Partner with the Wild Islands Tourism Advancement Partnership to implement the 100 Wild Islands Plan through infrastructure investments, potential property sales or transfers, and funding and in-kind support.

EP-29 The Municipality shall explore development and property transfer opportunities for historically underrepresented communities to develop cultural and creative businesses on that land.

EP-30 The Municipality may consider partnerships, changes to municipal bylaws and land use policies, and incentives to support the creation of arts and entertainment hubs that support tourism and the creative economy.

8.7.1 RURAL TOURISM

Tourism is a major economic driver in rural areas of the municipality. Cultural landscapes, recreational spaces, trails and scenic byways create attractive tourism destinations, and “unspoiled” landscapes support eco-tourism. Tourism uses are considered working landscapes in the Halifax Green Network Plan given the economic opportunities they provide to rural communities in particular.

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[29] Discover Halifax, 2019 Annual Report

The scenic landscapes and attractions in the municipality's rural areas can be negatively impacted by poorly designed and screened residential, industrial or commercial developments. Ensuring scenic routes, trails and eco-tourism sites have adequate buffers and screening will strengthen rural tourism and allow more eco-tourism sites to flourish. Underdeveloped tourism infrastructure, such as lodging, restaurants, recreational experiences, washrooms and communication linkages (cellular and broadband), can also hinder efforts to draw visitors to otherwise highly marketable scenic landscapes. Encouraging small-scale commercial operations that meet visitors' needs can support tourism and local economic growth while not detracting from the landscape.

EP-31 Through the Rural Community Planning program, the Municipality shall consider amendments to applicable secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws to allow for increased small-scale commercial opportunities and home based businesses in rural areas that support and enhance tourism. These amendments may remove restrictions on small-scale accommodations, tour operations, commercial recreation, and retail, and introduce design guidelines to ensure operations complement the landscape.

EP-32 Through the Rural Community Planning program, the Municipality shall establish policies and zoning under applicable secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws to ensure that rural industrial developments are adequately screened from scenic roads and trails.

EP-33 The Municipality shall explore approaches to tourist accommodations in rural parts of the Municipality.

8.8 INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

HRM's 2022-27 Economic Strategy addresses the issue of equitable economic prosperity. While the municipality is growing, groups such as African Nova Scotians (ANS), Indigenous peoples, rural Halifax communities, those in underrepresented groups, and those experiencing poverty have not attained the same levels of growth and prosperity as others. The 2022-27 Economic Strategy has established well-being and quality of life as a measure of successful economic growth. Regional Plan policies that address equity and affordability will support these objectives.

There are land use policies and tools that can help spread the impact of economic benefits throughout communities more broadly. Some of these are outlined in the *African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity* - a collaborative plan developed and owned by the African Nova Scotian community to advance economic development and community priorities, that Council endorsed in 2020. There are also themes HRM could explore for land use implications in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and the recommendations of the Task Force on the Commemoration of Edward Cornwallis and the Recognition and Commemoration of Indigenous History.

EP-34 The Municipality shall study and where required, seek legislative authority, for tools that could maximize economic and social benefits of major projects within communities, such as community benefit agreements, community action planning, community trusts and community-led planning or projects.

EP-35 When plans, policies and by-laws are reviewed, the Municipality shall ensure alignment with the 94 Calls to Action, the recommendations from the Task Force on the Commemoration of Edward Cornwallis and the Recognition and Commemoration of Indigenous History, and the African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity.

8.8.1 HISTORICAL AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIAN COMMUNITY ACTION PLANNING

HRM is taking steps to create more inclusive economic growth and have communities more actively involved in the planning and development process. Both the Road to Economic Prosperity for African Nova Scotian Communities and *People. Planet. Prosperity: Halifax's Inclusive Economic Strategy 2022-27* aim to consider and, where possible, incorporate community benefits in the development approval process. This can be achieved through the use of community action plans – a process for residents to identify strengths and opportunities, create a vision for their community's future, and develop an action plan to achieve it.

The municipality is home to a number of historic African Nova Scotian communities. Beechville, Lucasville, Upper Hammonds Plains, Lake Loon, Cherry Brook, North Preston, and East Preston were all established in the late 18th and early 19th centuries by land grants given to families of African descent. These are some of the oldest and largest indigenous Black communities in Canada. HRM's goal is to undertake community action planning with these historic African Nova Scotian areas, to allow residents to take a leading role in the evolution of their community with municipal support.

EP-36 The Municipality shall ensure the policies of this Plan, secondary municipal planning strategies and by-laws align with the African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity.

EP-37 The Municipality shall build on its work with African Nova Scotian communities to create Historical African Nova Scotian Community Action Plans, using the Beechville Community Action Plan as a model. This work shall have the Municipality provide support to communities as they identify community needs and priorities, establish a vision, and create action plans.

EP-38 The Municipality shall incorporate Historical African Nova Scotian Community Action Plans into planning policies and by-law regulations where possible.

EP-39 The Municipality shall identify resource needs for community action planning work, and for action plan items themselves, through its annual budget and business planning process.

HRM is working with the African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity Advisory Committee (REPAC) on ways to increase housing options and allow property owners more flexibility in land uses. This work aligns with the Provincial Land Titles Clarification Initiative – a process to help residents in 13 communities gain title to their land. Historic African Nova Scotian communities are disproportionally affected by lack of clear title to their lands as original settlers were often given land but not the accompanying legal deeds. Properties have since been purchased, subdivided and built upon by community members in patterns that may not meet modern municipal lot requirements.

The *Land Titles Clarification Act* (1963) and the *Land Titles Initiative Acceleration Act* (2021) recognize the de-facto lots created over time and allow residents to establish legal title. These Acts establish community

boundaries that in some cases do not capture the entire community and exclude properties from consideration. This Plan aims to resolve this issue by creating policy that will officially recognize lots in existence in all African Nova Scotian communities prior to municipal subdivision regulations. Given that this form of subdivision will not create new development but recognizes existing lots and dwellings, these requests shall be exempted from parkland dedication requirements.

EP-40 The Municipality shall recognize lots in communities designated "land titles clarification areas" under the *Land Title Clarification Act*, as existing prior to the date the applicable land use by-law was adopted. The Regional Subdivision By-law shall provide lot design requirements that support the unique circumstances of these lots.

EP-41 Under the Regional Subdivision By-Law, the Municipality shall not apply parkland dedication requirements to lots recognized through Policy EP-40.

In African Nova Scotian communities, families traditionally built multiple dwellings on one lot. Clustering dwellings on one lot allowed families to pool their resources by providing multi-generational housing options, created a village-style community, and allowed property owners to access the full value of their land via investment opportunities. Building multiple houses per property lent itself well to the type of lots often found in African Nova Scotian communities, which tended to be long and narrow with little road frontage.

Modern municipal subdivision requirements for public road frontage and limitations on the number of lots per property mean that many residents have been unable to share land with family members or access the value in their properties through subdivision. This has solidified an historic inequity in property rights, based on the original land grants and type of lot.

A number of the Municipality's community plans have policies and subdivision rules permitting the "Same Number or Fewer Lots Than There Are Dwellings," allowing more houses than there are lots. These rules generally permit subdivisions if dwellings can establish right-of-way or an easement to a public street, and access water and wastewater servicing or have adequate space for onsite servicing.

EP-42 The Municipality shall establish policies under applicable secondary municipal planning strategies to enable properties in historic African Nova Scotian communities to subdivide, and to create lot design requirements in applicable land use by-laws permitting fewer lots than there are dwellings in these communities.

8.9 GREEN ECONOMY

HalifACT is HRM's climate change action plan – a transformational plan adopted in response to Regional Council's declaration of a climate emergency. It commits to a deep reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and strengthening resilience to climate impacts. Achieving this requires an operational shift in many sectors, particularly transportation, construction and development. In 2022-23 Regional Council established a Climate Action Tax, to be incorporated into annual municipal budgets for at least 10 years, to fund HalifACT's strategic initiatives. This tax supports projects such as electric vehicles and buses, net-zero buildings and infrastructure resiliency. It is also being used to leverage climate action funding from the private sector, federal and provincial governments, as a collaborative, multi-stakeholder approach is necessary for the plan to succeed.

Decarbonizing the building, transportation and energy sectors requires investment, but is also a major economic opportunity. These investments will generate employment and stimulate new and existing businesses. Investments in building retrofits, renewable energy, energy storage, transit systems and active transportation will stimulate economic activity and grow new employment sectors.

EP-43 The Municipality shall support the growth of the low carbon economy by working with community partners and stakeholders to develop workforce and business development programs. Such programs may include skills and trade development, industrial process efficiencies, and support for business initiatives that reduce emissions and strengthen climate resilience.

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CHAPTER 9: CELEBRATING CULTURE, ARTS AND HERITAGE

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9.0 INTRODUCTION

Culture, arts and heritage are the tangible and intangible features that define the municipality and its people and make us unique. Culture relates to the specific practices, traditions, art, and cultural expressions that exist throughout the region. Heritage is the physical evidence of the past - the objects, buildings, and landscapes that tell the story of how the municipality evolved.

In 2023, Council will consider adopting *Sharing Our Stories: Supporting Culture and Heritage in the Halifax Region*.[30] This Priority Plan will provide strategic direction for HRM's policies and investments on culture and heritage for the next ten years. It is intended to be a tool to support Reconciliation, Anti-Black Racism and HRM's Diversity and Inclusion Framework. The objectives and actions in this Plan are reflected in Regional Plan policies for culture and heritage. Recognizing that much of the current public art, registered built heritage and museum interpretations reflect a history of colonization, the policies in this Plan aim to increase access and exposure to diverse cultures, as well as preserve and celebrate a wider range of cultural resources.

The region contains numerous historic buildings, places, and landscapes from different eras and cultures that all create a unique sense of place. The Regional Plan establishes policies that preserve significant cultural and heritage assets while balancing the need to accommodate growth. It also addresses the need to consider environmental impacts of demolition and benefits of adaptive reuse for existing buildings.

9.1 OBJECTIVES

1. **Reflect the Municipality's commitment to addressing* Reconciliation, Anti-Black Racism, and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in municipal policies and programs.**

2. **Preserve cultural, artistic and heritage resources in the municipality and develop policies, programs and regulations to protect and enhance them.**

3. **Ensure the broad diversity and range of the municipality's history, art and culture is reflected in municipal policies and programs.**

4. **Support both community-led and collaborative processes to recognize and celebrate heritage, culture and art.**

*The Draft Regional Municipal Planning Strategy accepted by Halifax Regional Council to be used for public engagement purposes on June 20, 2023 included a clerical error that has been corrected as shown

[30] Please note that as of the writing of this Draft Regional Plan, Regional Council has not yet adopted Sharing Our Stories. The plan is forthcoming, and the draft policies within this chapter reflect the proposed policies within the draft Sharing Our Stories Plan. Significant community engagement has been undertaken to support the development of Sharing Our Stories, however, should Regional Council choose to not adopt Sharing Our Stories, or choose to adopt an alternative policy, this chapter will be adjusted.

5. **Strengthen heritage preservation through development policies that encourage heritage protection and identify potential Heritage Conservation Districts throughout the municipality.**

6. **Broaden heritage protection through the identification and preservation of landscapes of cultural significance.**

9.2 SHARING OUR STORIES

Sharing Our Stories, HRM's proposed Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan, creates a new strategic direction for culture and heritage. It is committed to reflecting all the diverse cultures, values and histories in the region, and enhancing working relationships with the public, stakeholders and rightsholders to achieve shared outcomes and projects. Strong partnerships with communities will be needed to effectively implement the Plan's vision. Creation of Sharing our Stories followed a community-led process to ensure that the plan would be shaped by the region's people and diverse cultural groups, and focused special attention on communities whose unique interests or views have often not been addressed through previous, more conventional engagement processes.

Sharing Our Stories connects a number of existing Council initiatives, including the Task Force on the Commemoration of Edward Cornwallis and the Recognition and Commemoration of Indigenous History; African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity; Diversity & Inclusion Framework; French Language Services Strategy; Accessibility and Inclusion Strategy; and Social Value Framework in the Procurement Administrative Order. The four pillars of the Plan are:

- **Stewardship** – taking care of cultural resources and maintaining heritage, archaeological and intangible cultural assets.
- **Connection** - recognizing and valuing the unique, yet often underrepresented or untold, histories within our region; and celebrating the narratives of struggle, survival, resilience, and perseverance to actively reflect underrepresented forms of culture.
- **Celebration** - expressing culture and heritage in a meaningful way, and reflecting people of all ages, abilities, geographies, religions, and cultural heritage.
- **Access** - providing opportunities for everyone to participate by reducing barriers, promoting participation in existing programs and events, and creating equitable access to resources.

Sharing Our Stories will set priorities and policy direction to be incorporated into the Regional Plan and other policy documents.

CH-1 Sharing Our Stories: Supporting Culture and Heritage in the Halifax Region will provide the direction for the municipality's policies and initiatives around culture and heritage.

9.2.1 MI'KMAQ AND INDIGENOUS RECONCILIATION

In 2015 Regional Council made a Statement of Reconciliation to First Nations communities. In recognizing the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and in working to implement those recommendations with implications for municipal governments, the Municipality began to redefine its relationship with the Mi'kmaq and First Nations communities in the region.

A friendship accord is a formal agreement that publicly declares the commitment of two or more governments and/or communities to work together in a long-term relationship based on mutual understanding and respect. While not legally binding, it expresses shared principles and an agreed-upon framework for collaboration. Friendship accords have been used in the Indigenous-municipal context across Canada as a means of advancing reconciliation.

CH-2 The Municipality shall consider establishing Friendship Accords with Mi'kmaq communities, organizations, Band Councils, and Grand Council, to enhance communication, explore areas for collaboration, and outline the evolving government-to-government relationship.

In 2017, a Special Advisory Committee on Commemoration of Edward Cornwallis and the Recognition and Commemoration of Indigenous History was created. An equal partnership between the Halifax Regional Municipality and the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Chiefs, the committee had a mandate to provide advice to Regional Council regarding the commemoration of Edward Cornwallis on municipal assets and on the recognition and commemoration of indigenous history in the lands now known as the Halifax Regional Municipality. After a public consultation process, in 2020 the committee provided 20 recommendations to Regional Council, all of which were approved.

CH-3 The Municipality shall increase commemoration and representation of Mi'kmaq and Indigenous communities by considering:

a) Use of Mi'kmaq and Indigenous names, terms, and significant personages when naming municipal assets;

b) Commemoration of Mi'kmaq and Indigenous history and perspectives in planning and programming for parks and public spaces; and

c) A review of the evaluation criteria for heritage sites and properties to include more emphasis on intangible and cultural significance, with increased focus on under-represented groups including Mi'kmaq and First Nations.

CH-4 the Municipality shall request enabling amendments to the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter* to permit the creation of community benefit agreements that will demonstrably bring benefits to Mi'kmaq communities. Mi'kmaq representatives shall participate in the assessment of development proposals that apply for any such incentive.

9.2.2 AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIAN COMMUNITY PLANNING

In 2020 Regional Council endorsed the *African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity* - a collaborative plan developed and owned by the African Nova Scotian community to advance economic development and community priorities. The plan emphasizes community-led planning and increased recognition of historic African Nova Scotian (ANS) sites and communities. Some of this work is already underway, with Council's approval of the Beechville Planning Strategy Review and Community Action Plan in 2020. These initiatives will create new municipal planning policies that address the Beechville ANS community's priorities, and address matters important to the Beechville community that are outside the scope of Municipal Planning documents.

HRM has also worked with ANS communities in the Preston-Cherry Brook area to support the adaptive reuse of the former Nova Scotia Home for Coloured Children - a registered heritage site with significant cultural and historical value to the African Nova Scotian community. By changing planning policies and zones, Council was able to support Akoma Holdings Inc's vision to redevelop the site as a mix of economic and social opportunities that would benefit African Nova Scotians and the general community. The Akoma project may act as a model for other community-led adaptive reuse initiatives.

CH–5 The Municipality shall work with African Nova Scotian communities to identify significant sites for preservation and interpretation.

CH–6 The Municipality shall support African Nova Scotian community work to identify opportunity sites for adaptive reuse and support community planning exercises.

CH–7 The Municipality shall collaborate with African Nova Scotian communities to undertake community boundary reviews of historic African Nova Scotian communities to determine the original boundaries and, where possible, restore them.

CH-8 The Municipality shall work with African Nova Scotian communities to ensure community boundaries are accurate and update municipal mapping and boundary markers where necessary.

9.2.3 OTHER TRADITIONALLY UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS

Sharing Our Stories identifies several other traditionally under-represented groups whose stories and interests should be celebrated and commemorated through cultural programing, supports, events and facilities. These groups include, but are not limited to the LGBTQ2S+ community, persons with disabilities, immigrants and newcomers and the Acadian and Francophone communities. Through the actions contained in the Sharing Our Stories Plan, through regional and community planning policies, and through other municipal policies and directives the municipality intends to strengthen the representation of these communities and groups.

CH-9 The Municipality shall maintain a community-centered approach to implementing the actions in Sharing Our Stories, utilizing a community-led process for identifying and leveraging our region's cultural resources. This may include:

a) community-led mapping, conservation and asset naming;

b) community-led engagement in land use planning in areas of cultural significance and value;

c) supporting community-led projects for identification, interpretation and protection of heritage and cultural sites; and

d) community-directed events, art and placemaking.

9.3 PROTECTION OF HERITAGE RESOURCES

Historic buildings, sites, districts and cultural landscapes define the character of many communities and neighbourhoods in the municipality, both urban and rural. They provide insight into community evolution

and reveal elements of local culture and social history. Distinctive architectural forms, styles and details, groups of buildings, and varied landscape settings all contribute to local character, authenticity and sense of place.

CH-10 The Municipality shall identify buildings, sites, streetscapes, cultural landscapes, and districts of historic, architectural or cultural value in both urban and rural areas and support their designation, interpretation, conservation and continued use.

CH-11 The Municipality may consider identifying sites of cultural or historical importance to communities, for preservation and interpretation, or as opportunity sites for future community development projects.

CH–12 The Municipality shall explore policies and changes to secondary municipal planning strategies to encourage conservation and re-use of culturally, historically or architecturally significant sites, including educational and religious institutional buildings.

CH–13 The Municipality shall develop cultural and heritage impact assessment criteria within secondary municipal planning strategies, land use by-laws and heritage by-laws to support the evaluation of new development in heritage contexts, including comprehensive development applications like large development agreements and plan amendments.

CH-14 The Municipality shall seek to conserve and maintain registered heritage properties owned by the Municipality and shall seek to register additional significant heritage properties owned by the Municipality.

CH-15 The Municipality shall develop conservation management plans for all heritage properties and cultural assets owned by the Municipality to ensure appropriate levels of conservation, maintenance, and upgrades and to meet accessibility, environmental, and municipal conservation standards.

9.3.1 HERITAGE REGISTRY

Since 1981, HRM has administered a heritage property program enabled by the *Heritage Property Act of Nova Scotia*. In 2023, the HRM Heritage Registry included approximately 510 properties, concentrated principally in peninsular Halifax and Downtown Dartmouth, and dating mainly to the 19th century. While the program has grown and expanded in recent years, there is a need for a renewed, updated, and more comprehensive region-wide inventory of heritage resources that could potentially qualify for formal designation as registered heritage properties and sites. There is also a need to refine the criteria for heritage registration to ensure that all aspects of HRM's built heritage, including modern heritage, traditionally under-represented groups and all parts of the municipality are represented.

CH-16 The Municipality shall maintain a Registry of Heritage Properties which includes information on all properties registered as Municipal Heritage Properties and shall continue to update the registry by developing statements of significance, heritage value, and character defining elements for each property so registered.

CH-17 The Municipality shall review and update its criteria and methodology for identifying and evaluating heritage properties as necessary to ensure that the registry accurately represents diverse communities, cultures and time periods.

CH-18 The Municipality shall consider amending secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws to identify Heritage Conservation Design Requirements for properties that abut municipally and provincially registered heritage properties to ensure that new developments include complementary transitions to the registered heritage property.

9.3.2 HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

The *Heritage Property Act* enables HRM to designate an area as a Heritage Conservation District (HCD) through the adoption of a heritage conservation district plan and by-law. This allows HRM to protect and enhance the cultural heritage value of neighbourhoods and areas. It also enables HRM to provide strong protection from demolition for all buildings within a district, whether registered or not, and to provide financial incentives for their restoration and rehabilitation. The designation of such districts will be a priority in future secondary planning strategies.

Heritage Conservation Districts (HCDs) are areas identified by the Municipality as having significant heritage value and character. HCDs are established through a conservation plan and by-law adopted under the *Heritage Property Act*. As a planning tool, HCDs enable the Municipality to conserve the broader context of heritage resources by focusing on the district as a whole and establishing policies, guidelines, and programs that ensure the evolution of the area reinforces key heritage attributes.

The Regional Centre is home to three HCDs (Barrington Street, Old South Suburb and Schmidtville). There are thirteen more potential HCDs listed in the Regional Centre Plan Area for Council to consider for designation. There are currently no approved or proposed HCDs in other areas of the Municipality. The Regional Plan encourages identification of potential HCDs in suburban and rural areas using analyses of the age, history, cultural associations and architectural styles of properties in these areas.

The *Heritage Property Act* requires that any HCD be preceded by background studies that address a range of issues, including character defining elements, heritage conservation measures, boundaries, the relationship to applicable planning documents, and social and economic impacts. Demolition protection for municipally registered heritage properties outside of HCDs is limited under the *Heritage Property Act*. It is only by designating a specific area an HCD, under the authority of the *Heritage Property Act*, where Council can establish stronger policies that improve demolition controls for identified heritage resources.

CH-19 In collaboration with community partners, residents, property owners and institutions, the Municipality shall identify areas eligible to be designated as Proposed Heritage Conservation District Study Areas. These Proposed Study Areas shall be identified and mapped in the appropriate secondary municipal planning strategies. Emphasis shall be placed on identifying Proposed Study Areas outside the Regional Centre.

CH-20 Methodology to identify and prioritize Proposed HCD Study Areas shall consider:

a) areas that include a high concentration of registered heritage properties;

b) areas that include rare examples of historic architecture;

c) areas that are experiencing a high rate of change based on development permit activity in the past five years; and

d) areas that include the potential for large-scale redevelopment as a result of their current land use designation.

CH-21 When establishing an HCD the Municipality shall follow a Public Participation Program adopted in accordance with The *Heritage Property Act* and it's regulations.

CH-22 Until such time as conservation measures are adopted by Regional Council for proposed HCD Study Areas, the land use policies and regulations within existing secondary municipal planning strategies shall encourage development that is sensitive to the architectural character and heritage value of these areas by limiting the scale and density of permitted development.

9.3.3 HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT POLICY

Heritage development agreement policies encourage the conservation and adaptive re-use of heritage properties by allowing additional development rights (i.e., density) that may offset conservation costs. Heritage development agreements can add a large number of new residential units while encouraging the registration of previously unprotected heritage properties for the purpose of making use of the flexibility that these policies provide. Without the incentive of additional land-use flexibility, there is little interest in registering properties when the implications of the designation on future development potential is unknown. The result is the continued loss of potential heritage properties and the historical character of urban, rural and suburban communities.

In response to increased interest and the success of existing policies within the Regional Centre, heritage development agreements may be considered in all areas of the Municipality. The policies of this Plan shall apply to all areas of the Municipality outside of the Regional Centre, Downtown Halifax, and established Heritage Conservation Districts.

CH-23 On any registered heritage property, or on a lot containing a registered heritage building located outside of the Regional Centre Secondary Plan Area, Downtown Halifax Secondary Plan Area or any established Heritage Conservation District, Council may consider a development agreement for any development or change in use not otherwise permitted by the Land Use By-law. The purpose of this policy is to support the conservation and adaptive re-use of heritage properties and buildings. In considering such development agreement proposals, Council shall consider that:

a) the development proposal maintains the heritage value of any registered heritage property of which it is part, including a registered heritage streetscape, heritage conservation district, or Cultural Landscape, and does not propose to demolish any registered heritage buildings that exist on the property;

b) the impact on adjacent uses, particularly residential uses, is minimized in terms of intensity of use, scale, height, traffic generation, noise, hours of operation, and such other land use impacts as may be required as part of the development;

c) the level of proposed investment in conservation measures on the property is generally proportional with the additional development rights provided through the agreement, especially in cases of new construction;

d) **any unregistered, historic buildings on the site of the development must be evaluated for their heritage value through a heritage impact statement, and if not retained as part of the development, opportunities for de-construction to salvage and recycle re-usable materials and features shall be encouraged;**

e) **if a heritage building is proposed to be vacant for a period exceeding three months, a plan is developed to secure and maintain the heritage building;**

f) **if a heritage building is proposed to be relocated or lifted from its foundation, a plan approved by a certified structural engineer must be submitted prior to any intervention; and**

g) **the proposal is generally consistent with the other policies of the secondary plan area of which it is part, especially heritage policies.**

9.3.4 HERITAGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In 2020 Regional Council adopted HalifACT - a long-term action plan to help HRM adapt to a changing climate by reducing emissions, switching to clean and reliable energy sources, growing the green economy, and showing leadership from local government. The plan establishes targets for decarbonization (greenhouse gas emission reductions) and actions to achieve this.

Deconstruction, or salvage, is a heritage preservation tool that supports sustainability goals. Removing pieces of an existing building to be repurposed, instead of mechanically demolishing an entire structure, reduces the volume of materials sent to the landfill, retains high quality and local building materials that are increasingly more expensive and difficult to find, and assists property owners in sourcing period appropriate elements for older buildings. Reusing building materials benefits the environment by reducing the need to create or source new materials, and minimizing emissions that accompany demolition and new construction. It may also reduce disposal costs.

Including salvage requirements in heritage development agreements will encourage preservation and reuse of heritage building materials and features, and support HRM's HalifACT goal to embed low carbon objectives in all aspects of community planning, policy and infrastructure.

CH-24 The Municipality shall consider amending heritage development agreement policies in secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws to include requirements around deconstruction and salvage of building materials.

CH-25 The Municipality shall consider deconstruction and salvage as a component of any demolition undertaken on properties owned by the Municipality.

CH-26 The Municipality shall consider updating the eligibility criteria of all financial incentives programs for heritage properties or heritage conservation districts to include energy efficiency retrofits with the objective of assisting in the sustainability and viability of these structures.

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9.3.5 CULTURAL LANDSCAPES & SCENIC VIEWS

Cultural landscapes are defined under the *Heritage Property Act* as distinct geographical areas or properties uniquely representing the combined work of nature and of people. These landscapes vary dramatically in size and character - from historic settlements to prehistoric rock art sites to designed landscapes such as parks and gardens. Examples may include a burial ground, a historical garden or much larger landscapes reflecting human intervention, such as the pastures of the Musquodoboit Valley, the Shubenacadie Canal, or the Bedford Barrens.

Scenic views, including “scenic entry routes” or “views from the road” are also an important component of cultural landscapes, often providing views of outstanding natural and cultural features. Examples include views of Halifax Harbour, views of the North West Arm, and the Long Hill view over Cole Harbour.

Cultural landscapes provide opportunities for the interpretation and understanding of important historical settings and past patterns of land use. Preserving and promoting these landscapes can also provide opportunities to enhance the sense of a place for both residents and visitors alike.

The Halifax Green Network Plan identifies 17 priority areas throughout HRM as a starting point for a comprehensive inventory of landscapes of cultural significance. Eleven of these sites are listed in the Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy for specific consideration under Urban Structure and Urban Design guidelines.

CH-27 The Municipality shall work with the Province to advance amendments to the *Heritage Property Act* to allow for the development of regulations for cultural landscapes.

CH-28 The Municipality shall, through the Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan and community planning programs, consider the identification of significant cultural landscapes.

CH-29 The Municipality shall collaborate with Mi’kmaq and Indigenous communities to identify cultural heritage and sites of cultural significance to Indigenous Peoples, and consider how they may best be recognized and preserved.

CH-30 Further to Policy CH-28, when considering any amendments to secondary municipal planning strategies involving lands adjacent to an identified significant cultural landscape, the Municipality shall give consideration to the potential impact of development on its cultural and historic value and environmental resources.

9.3.6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Archaeological resources are the remains of any building, structure, activity, place or cultural feature or object that, because of the passage of time, is on or below the surface of land or water and is of significance to the understanding of the history of a people or place. Archaeological sites can be protected under provincial legislation, the *Special Places Protection Act,* which regulates the destruction, alteration or removal of archaeological resources from these sites.

The development of these sites could present a significant risk to archaeological resources. If these sites are recognized and appropriately addressed prior to development taking place, adverse consequences can be mitigated and archaeological resources preserved.

CH-31 The Municipality shall work with the Province to consider mechanisms for municipal archaeological protection under the *Special Places Protection Act*.

CH-32 The Municipality shall collaborate with the Province on developing a Regional Archaeology Strategy that establishes a process for identifying significant sites, culture and heritage assessment requirements, and mitigation measures to ensure archaeological resources are preserved.

9.3.7 CONSERVATION STANDARDS

Conservation standards are adopted by Regional Council under By-law H-200 - the *Heritage Property By-law* to direct the evaluation of alterations to heritage buildings and properties, and to evaluate new development that may impact heritage buildings and properties. Staff interpret these standards and provide recommendations to the heritage advisory committee and Regional Council on applications under the *Heritage Property Act*, or relevant planning policies pertaining to development on, or abutting, heritage properties. The conservation standards are also used by the heritage officer in the administration of heritage conservation districts.

CH-33 By-law H-200, the *Heritage Property By-law,* adopted by the Municipality shall identify Conservation Standards. These Conservation Standards shall be used in assessing the impacts of a proposed intervention on the heritage value and character defining elements of a heritage property. Applications for substantial alteration to heritage properties shall:

a) include an approach to address design strategies that make a new development compatible with, distinguishable from, and subordinate to a heritage property; and

b) address the relationship of the new structure to the lot, its relationship to the surrounding area, its massing and façade relations with the heritage property.

CH-34 The Municipality shall consider the use of other mechanisms, such as financial incentives, land use incentives and policies, to encourage the use, preservation or protection, restoration, or renovation of heritage resources, as enabled by the *Heritage Property Act.*

9.4 DEVELOPMENT ABUTTING REGISTERED HERITAGE PROPERTIES

The Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy contains criteria requiring that the architecture of new development abutting heritage properties be sensitive and complementary to the heritage properties. While this criterion applies only within the Regional Centre Plan Area, the development of properties which abut federally, provincially, or municipally registered heritage properties in all areas of HRM also warrants consideration.

This plan will provide guidance for development abutting heritage properties. The intent is to support innovative design solutions, with emphasis on heritage integration, that incorporate architecture, place-making, and material selection of the highest quality that are appropriate in relation to their abutting neighbours.

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CH-35 In considering applications for development agreements, and amendments to this Plan, secondary municipal planning strategies or land use by-laws for lands abutting federally, provincially, or municipally registered heritage properties and located outside of HCDs, the Municipality shall require a Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) in in accordance with By-law H-200, the *Heritage Property By-law*. The HIS shall be required where an application is made for a development where the floor area of any proposed new construction exceeds 1,000 square metres.

CH-36 Further to Policy CH-35, where an HIS identifies impacts to an abutting heritage property, the Municipality shall consider measures to mitigate those impacts consistent with municipal conservation standards.

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CHAPTER 10: IMPLEMENTATION

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CHAPTER 10: IMPLEMENTATION

10.0 INTRODUCTION

The Regional Plan guides the Municipality's planning and decision-making and represents the vision of the community. Through open, transparent and inclusive dialogue, the Municipality has the responsibility of achieving the Plan's vision through actions using available planning tools. Planning is not a static practice, it is iterative process evaluating and reporting on actions and successes and adapting to changing situations. The success of this Plan depends on aligning all policies and programs throughout HRM to achieve the vision and objectives of this Plan.

10.1 OBJECTIVES

1. **Provide for the effective implementation of the policies outlined in this Plan;**
2. **Engage citizens in the development of policies, programs and services as the basis for building healthy, strong and inclusive communities;**
3. **Monitor the effectiveness of policies and programs of this Plan;**
4. **Undertake periodic reviews of this Plan to assess whether changes are needed; and**
5. **Ensure that HRM policies and programs are aligned to achieve the vision and objectives of this Plan.**

10.2 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Since 2016, Planning and Development has been continually updating and reviewing engagement practices, policies and processes. Some of these improvements include lessening the dependence on public information meetings by encouraging open house-style meetings, using a range of mediums to allow residents to engage, developing more user-friendly outreach, and redesigning notifications and signage, as well as updating virtual engagement as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

10.2.1 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FOR PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND PLANNING DOCUMENTS

A public participation policy is legislatively required to guide how the opinions of the public are sought on proposed planning documents, as described under the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*. In 2023,

Regional Council is considering approval[31] of a proposed Administrative Order 2023-002-ADM and the accompanying Planning and Development Public Engagement Guidebook (Guidebook). The Guidebook was developed following Regional Council's direction in 2016 to update HRM's engagement processes to establish an updated and consistent approach to designing engagement practices. The purpose of the Guidebook is to support staff to pro-actively address public engagement with influence, impact, inclusion, and accessibility as primary and core considerations. The Administrative Order establishes minimum standards for public participation and establishes a method for engagement with abutting municipalities, as required by the *Charter*.

I-1 A public participation policy shall be adopted by Council as an Administrative Order. This Administrative Order:

a) shall, in accordance with section 219 of the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*, establish the ways and means of seeking the opinions of the public;

b) shall, in accordance with section 219A of the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*, establish a method for engaging with abutting municipalities respecting a new Municipal Planning Strategy or amendments to them;

c) may identify additional methods for public participation, including the use of a Public Engagement Guidebook for additional or different public participation, and for the removal of barriers to participation; and

d) may provide for public participation for certain planning applications other than planning documents.

10.3 PLANNNG TOOLS

10.3.1 SECONDARY MUNICIPAL PLANNING STRATEGIES

Various community plans, formally called secondary municipal planning strategies, were adopted prior to amalgamation and prior to this Plan being adopted. These plans present visions, objectives and policies of a community which may not be consistent with this Plan. Over time HRM will use the Community Planning Program to achieve consistency in all its planning documents and programs to ensure that they are consistent with this Plan and supporting Priority Plans and that they reflect current community issues and desires for future change.

As part of the Community Planning program, the Municipality will engage with communities to understand their visions in relation to the overarching goals of the Regional Plan. Where Community Visions were approved in principle by HRM in 2006, these may be considered and updated as part of the Community Planning program.

[31] *Please Note: As of the writing of this Draft Regional Plan, Administrative Order 2023-002-ADM has been presented to Regional Council but not yet adopted. Should Regional Council choose not to approve this AO, this section will be adjusted.*

I-2 **Existing secondary municipal planning strategies, identified in Appendix B to this Plan, shall remain in effect until amended or repealed by the Municipality.**

I-3 **When evaluating amendments to Land Use By-laws or development agreement applications, in the event of conflict between the policies of this Plan and a Secondary Planning Strategy, the more stringent shall prevail.**

I-4 **Where minimum setbacks from watercourses established under secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws differ from the minimum thirty (30) meter setback specified by this Plan, the more stringent shall prevail.**

I-5 **When new secondary municipal planning strategies or amendments to existing secondary planning strategies are brought forward for approval, the Municipality shall consider whether the proposed objectives and policies are consistent with or further achieve the objectives and policies of this Plan.**

I-6 **The Community Visioning statements approved by HRM for the Bedford Waterfront; Fall River; Musquodoboit Harbour; Middle/ Upper Sackville/ Lucasville; Spryfield; Penhorn/ Woodlawn; Woodside and Upper Tantallon shall be considered and may be updated when preparing secondary municipal planning strategies.**

I-7 **Given the strategic importance of regional objectives in mitigating climate change and protecting the future health of the municipality, new secondary planning strategies or amendments to existing secondary planning strategies, shall organize land use or management of land in a manner, including the scale, location, density and form of development, so that:**

a) the protection of environmental or cultural features of significance on the lands is considered, including wildlife corridors, the urban forest, wet areas, wetlands and watercourses;

b) the integrity of regional parks or federal and provincial wilderness areas adjacent to the lands are maintained, including the functioning of shared environmental, recreational or cultural features;

c) the movements of pedestrians and transit service are prioritized over car-oriented design, including the connections to surrounding community;

d) the future rapid transit corridors are considered as key locations or residential and mixed-use intensification, particularly within 500m of the corridor; and

e) the design includes community-scale or site-level green infrastructure, renewable energy and other climate mitigation design elements.

10.3.2 PRIORITY PLANS

Since the adoption of this Plan in 2014, Regional Council has approved several priority plans including the Integrated Mobility Plan, Halifax Green Network Plan, HalifACT, and Halifax's Inclusive Economic Strategy

2022-2027. This Plan provides detailed policies related to these plans. For clarity, this Plan supports the priority plans which are actively used by staff to guide ongoing work.

I-8 In considering development agreements or amendments to development agreements, or any proposed amendments to the Regional Plan, secondary planning strategies, or land use by-laws, in addition to the policies of this Plan, the Municipality shall consider the objectives, policies and actions of the priorities plans approved by Regional Council since 2014, including:

a) The Integrated Mobility Plan;

b) Halifax Green Network Plan;

c) HalifACT;

d) Halifax's Inclusive Economic Strategy 2022-2027;

e) Sharing Our Stories[32]; and

f) any other priority plan approved by Regional Council while this policy is in effect.

10.3.3 DISCRETIONARY APPLICATIONS

Discretionary applications include proposed amendments to this Plan, secondary municipal planning strategies, or land use by-laws, and proposed development agreements or amendments to development agreements, that require approval by Regional Council. This section outlines the circumstances and policy criteria that must be considered by Council when reviewing such proposals.

I-9 In considering a secondary municipal planning strategy amendment or development agreement applications pursuant to the provisions of this Plan or any Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy, in addition to all other criteria as set out in various policies of this Plan, Council shall consider that:

a) the proposal is appropriate and not premature by reason of:

i. the financial capacity of the Municipality to absorb any costs relating to the development;

ii. the adequacy of municipal wastewater facilities, stormwater systems or water distribution systems;

[32] Please note that as of the writing of this Draft Regional Plan, Regional Council has not yet adopted Sharing Our Stories. The plan is forthcoming, and the draft policies within this chapter reflect the proposed policies within the draft Sharing Our Stories Plan. Significant community engagement has been undertaken to support the development of Sharing Our Stories, however, should Regional Council choose to not adopt Sharing Our Stories, or choose to adopt an alternative policy, this chapter will be adjusted.

iii. **the proximity of the proposed development to schools, parks, and community facilities, and the capability of these services to absorb any additional demands;**

iv. **the adequacy of transportation infrastructure for pedestrians, cyclists, public transit and vehicles for travel to and within the development; and**

v. **the impact on registered heritage buildings, heritage streetscapes, and heritage conservation districts;**

b) **the subject lands are suitable for development in terms of the steepness of grades, soil and geological conditions, locations of watercourses, wetlands, and susceptibility to flooding;**

c) **that development regulations in the proposed development agreement will adequately mitigate potential conflict between the proposed development and nearby land uses, by reason of:**

i. **type of use(s);**

ii. **built form of the proposed building(s);**

iii. **impacts on adjacent uses, including compatibility with adjacent residential neighbourhoods, parks, community facilities, and railway operations;**

iv. **traffic generation, safe access to and egress from the site, and parking;**

v. **open storage and signage; and**

vi. **impacts of lighting, noise, fumes and other emissions.**

I-10 **Further to Policy I-9, at the time of application, proposals for development agreements shall identify any of the following conditions which are not suitable for development and development shall be directed away from these areas which include:**

a) **environmental features, including but not limited to aquatic, coastal, and riparian habitats, wetlands, and areas with steep slopes;**

b) **areas prone to flooding;**

c) **critical environmental features located within an Essential Corridor Special Area; and**

d) **areas that directly connect to adjacent Essential Corridor Special Areas.**

I-11 **Further to Policy I-10, opportunities to enhance or restore degraded environmental features shall be identified and considered as part of the development proposal where possible.**

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I-12 Provided other policies of this Plan are satisfied and the proposed development is limited in scale, for the purpose of providing for the development of similar uses on properties which abut one another or share a common street line, the Municipality may consider the following development agreements or amendments to the applicable Land Use By-laws, for lands which are located where land use designations abut one another, as shown on the Regional Land Use Structure Map (Map 2):

a) amendments within a designation to provide for the development of uses which are uses permitted within the abutting designation;

b) amendments within a designation to provide for the development of uses which are uses permitted by the zone on the abutting property within the abutting designation;

c) development agreements within a designation which are extensions of development agreements in effect on the abutting property within the abutting designation.

10.3.4 CONSERVATION DESIGN DEVELOPMENTS

The Conservation Design Development is a development tool that allows for clustered residential development in a manner that helps to preserve significant environmental and cultural features of the landscape. The Conservation Design Development tool was first introduced under the 2006 Regional Plan. These policies are intended to encourage growth within the Rural Growth Centres and to manage growth in between centres. The design process for a Conservation Design Development involves identifying lands that support important environmental functions or pose environmental hazards as primary conservation features. Culturally significant lands or those lands that provide environmental functions are identified as secondary conservation features and should be protected or incorporated as part of the development. Through this process, areas of the site best suited for development are identified and the development is designed to optimize environmental features and mitigate environmental impacts.

There are three (3) types of Conservation Design Development that may be considered for approval by development agreement:

- Lower Density Classic Conservation Design;
- Higher Density Classic Conservation Design; and
- Hybrid Conservation Design.

Classic Conservation Design Form (Lower Density and Higher Density)

The Classic Conservation Design Development form (Lower Density and Higher Density) involves the entire site, inclusive of a shared private driveway, being held in single ownership and requires building sites to be clustered on a portion of the site, conserving a larger connected common open space on the remainder of the site. Within Rural Growth Centres, a higher density option is available as means of supporting residential development within the Rural Growth Centres.

Hybrid Conservation Design Development Form

The Hybrid Conservation Design Development form is similar to a small-scale traditional residential subdivision development where individual lots are created on a new public street. Under this form a higher percentage of lands is conserved as open space on individual lots. This is achieved through restricting site development, inclusive of buildings, individual driveways and lawns, to a small area of the lot and

conserving the remainder of the lot as a non-disturbance area. The overall development is to be designed so that individual non-disturbance areas are contiguous for mutual ecological benefit.

The type of Conservation Design Development enabled is determined based on the location of a site in relation to the Rural Growth Centres. Higher densities are encouraged within the Rural Growth Centres.

I-13 Subject to Policy I-14, the Municipality shall consider the following types of Conservation Design Development by development agreement where one-third or more of an area of land is within a Rural Growth Centre as shown on Map 4:

a) Lower Density Classic Conservation Design Development;

b) Higher Density Classic Conservation Design Development; or

c) Hybrid Conservation Design Development.

I-14 Lands entirely within the Lake Echo Sub-watershed, as generally illustrated on Map 4 shall not be eligible for Conservation Design Development, unless a proponent submits a survey prepared by a Nova Scotia Land Surveyor demonstrating that the subject area of land or a portion of the area of land is outside the Lake Echo Sub-watershed. Where any portion of a subject area of land is within the sub-watershed, the area of land within the watershed may be included for density and the net area calculation.

I-15 Subject to Policy I-16, the Municipality shall consider the following types of Conservation Design Development by development agreement where more than two thirds of the area of land is outside the boundaries of a Rural Growth Centre shown on Map 4:

a) Lower Density Classic Conservation Design Development to a maximum of 100 dwelling units; or

b) Hybrid Conservation Design Development to a maximum of 30 dwelling units.

I-16 A development agreement under Policy I-15 shall only be considered subject to the following location criteria:

a) On an area of land within the

i. Rural Commuter Designation; or

ii. Rural Resource Designation; and

b) On an area of land outside the:

i. Beaver Bank / Hammonds Plains Growth Control Areas as shown on Schedule J of the Regional Subdivision By-Law,

ii. the Rural Area Designation under the Eastern Passage/Cow Bay Plan Area; and

iii. **NEF 30 Contour as shown on Map 3 of the Planning Districts 14 & 17 (Shubenacadie Lakes) Municipal Planning Strategy; and**

c) **On an area of land which was in existence as of April 29, 2006 that has a minimum of 20 metres of continuous frontage on a publicly owned and maintained street/road which was in existence as of April 29, 2006.**

I-17 Any Conservation Design Development application made pursuant to policies I-13 and I-15 shall be in accordance with Table I-1 and the following:

Site Studies and Assessments

a) **Where the proposed development is to be serviced by a groundwater supply, a hydrogeological assessment conducted by a qualified professional has determined that there is an adequate supply of groundwater to service the development without adversely affecting groundwater supply in adjacent developments;**

b) **The development shall not rely on cisterns for potable water supply, except in special circumstances as may be authorized under an approved secondary planning strategy;**

Site Development, Connectivity and Open Space Design

c) **Primary Conservation Areas or Features as defined in Table I-1 are protected and retained as Open Space;**

d) **Where an area of land is subject to Policy I-14, proposed streets and building sites shall be located outside the Lake Echo Sub-Watershed.**

e) **A private driveway for Low Density Classic Conservation Design Development and High Density Classic Conservation Design Development shall only provide access to a public street for up to 20 dwelling units; and,**

Separation Distances

f) **Residential dwellings shall maintain a minimum separation of 800 metres from any permanent extractive facility.**

I-18 For any Conservation Design Development application made pursuant to policies I-13 and I-15, the Municipality shall consider the following criteria:

Site Development, Connectivity and Open Space Design

a) **Secondary Conservation Areas are incorporated as part of the overall Open Space Requirements;**

b) **The proposed streets and buildings sites are designed to avoid, where possible, Conservation Areas and Features;**

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c) **Connectivity of natural networks, including trails, is maintained with any open space on adjacent parcels, as illustrated by the Essential Corridors and High Ecological Value Areas as shown on Map 6;**

d) **Where a development pursuant to Policy I-13 is proposed for lands that extend beyond a Rural Growth Centre as illustrated on Map 4, preference shall be given to siting the development within the boundary of the Growth Centre.**

Parkland Dedication and Additional Considerations

e) **Parkland dedication may be relaxed to a minimum of 5% for the Lower Density and Higher Density Classic Conservation Design Developments; and**

f) **Any applicable matter as set out in Policy I-9 of this Plan.**

Table I-1: Conservation Design Development Standards

Property Location	Land Use Requirements	
Within Rural Growth Centres	**Lower Density Classic Conservation Design Development**	
	Maximum Density	1 unit per hectare of net developable area*
	Open Space Requirement	40% of the net developable area as common open space
	Permitted Residential Uses	Single Unit Dwelling, Two Unit Dwelling and Townhouse Dwelling, including Secondary and Backyard Suites
	Higher Density Classic Conservation Design Development	
	Maximum Density	(a) One unit per 0.4 hectares of net developable area where the development is serviced with a municipal water supply; or (b) One unit per 0.5 hectares of net developable area where the development is serviced with a groundwater supply; or (c) Where a secondary planning strategy is adopted after August 29, 2006, the density prescribed by the secondary planning strategy.
	Open Space Requirement	(a) 40% of the net developable area as common open space; or (b) Where a secondary planning strategy is adopted after August 29, 2006, the open space requirement prescribed by the secondary planning strategy.
	Permitted Residential Uses	(a) Single Unit Dwelling, Two Unit Dwelling and Townhouse Dwelling

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		(b)Townhouses, shared housing uses, and multiple unit buildings prescribed by a secondary planning strategy adopted after August 29, 2006 (c) Secondary and Backyard Suites
	Hybrid Conservation Design Development	
	Maximum Density	1 unit per hectare of net developable area
	Open Space Requirement	80% of each lot is retained as a site non-disturbance area
	Permitted Residential Uses	Single Unit Dwelling and Two Unit Dwellings, including Secondary and Backyard Suites
Outside Rural Growth Centres	**Lower Density Classic Conservation Design Development**	
	Maximum Density	1 unit per hectare of net developable area to a maximum of 100 units
	Open Space Requirement	40% of the net developable area as common open space
	Permitted Residential Uses	Single Unit Dwelling and Two Unit Dwelling
	Hybrid Conservation Design Development	
	Maximum Density	1 unit per hectare of net developable area to a maximum of 30 units
	Open Space Requirement	80% of each lot is retained as a site non-disturbance area
	Permitted Residential Uses	Single Unit Dwelling and Two Unit Dwelling
Inside or Outside Rural Growth Centres	**All Types of Conservation Design Development**	
	Permitted Other Uses	Publicly or Privately owned Community Facilities, Home-Based Offices, Day Cares, and small-scale Bed and Breakfasts
	Permitted Open Space Uses	Agriculture, passive recreation, conservation-related uses or the placement of wastewater management facilities, community wells or other community facilities designed to service the development.
	Primary Conservation Areas or Features	Riparian buffers, wetlands, natural drainage systems, natural detention storage areas, slopes exceeding 30%, and floodplains, environmentally sensitive areas, archaeological sites and other areas of high ecological value.
	Secondary Conservation Areas or Features	Mature forests, bare rock, scenic views, trails, historic sites and buildings, and other features of high cultural value.

*Net Developable Area means the gross area of a property excluding riparian buffers and wetlands, floodplains and slopes in excess of 30%.

I-19 Subject to policies I-17 and I-18 of this Plan and notwithstanding the maximum density requirements in I-15 and Table I-1, within Rural Growth Centres as shown on Map 4:

a) **secondary and backyard suites shall be permitted as additional units; and**

b) **the Municipality shall permit amendments to existing Conservation Design development agreements to allow for secondary and backyard suites as accessory uses**

provided the secondary and backyard suites meet the requirements of the applicable land use by-law.

10.3.4 SPECIAL PLANNING AREAS

In early 2022, the Province of Nova Scotia created an Executive Panel on Housing to address housing challenges in the region. As part of this initiative, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing designated several Special Planning Areas in the Municipality to support the development of as many as 22,600 new residential units. To help accelerate an increase in the supply of housing, as outlined in the *Housing in the Halifax Regional Municipality Act*, the designation of a Special Planning Area allows the Minister to make decisions on planning matters in those areas.

At the time these areas were created, detailed planning for many of the Special Planning Areas had already been underway for some time, and draft policies for several had been well advanced. In instances where policy development has advanced to its late stages, allowing Special Planning Areas to proceed to early site development works concurrent with the resolution of detailed planning matters for the subject sites can help support the current demand for housing,

I-20 Notwithstanding Policy I-9, the Housing Task Force may consider development agreements on lands designated as a Special Planning Area which supersede the Regional Subdivision By-law requirements to enable early tree removal, blasting, and earthworks by development agreement. The intent of this policy is to enable early site works concurrent with the resolution of detailed planning matters for the subject sites. As a requirement of the development agreement, the following drawings prepared by a Professional Engineer must be submitted as a condition of permitting:

a) **Site Disturbance Plan;**

b) **Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan; and**

c) **Site Grading and Stormwater Management Plan.**

10.3.5 REGIONAL OPPORTUNITY SITES

The Regional Plan Review considered several requests for mixed-use development on large parcels of land. These sites present an opportunity for new housing development that is needed to support the significant demand for housing of all types across the Municipality. In other instances new Federal Programs for housing have resulted in site specific amendment to the Regional Plan to enable housing. These property specific rules are outlined in this section.

10.3.5.1 SUBURBAN AREA SITES

I-21 Notwithstanding the provisions of the Planning District 4 Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy, the Municipality may undertake a neighbourhood planning process for the Halifax Exhibition Centre lands (PIDs 40600728, 41457987, and 41432642). When considering this planning process, Council shall consider the following:

a) applicable direction contained in this Plan and Council approved Priority Plans;

b) that the proposal envisions a mixed-use neighbourhood that will provide a range of housing types and dwelling unit types, places of employment, and services where daily needs of residents can be met;

c) that a public participation program provides diverse and inclusive opportunities for public engagement during the planning process;

d) **opportunities to coordinate with the ongoing planning for the expansion of the Ragged Lake Industrial Park, with particular regard to the transportation network and water and wastewater servicing infrastructure;**

e) the relationship of the site to surrounding uses and neighbourhoods, including the Prospect Road area, Long Lake Provincial Park, Western Common Wilderness area, and the Ragged Lake Industrial Park;

f) if required, a land suitability assessment that identifies vulnerable landforms, sensitive ecological features and climate hazards, including any wetlands, watercourses, flood prone areas, steep slopes, forest cover, contaminated sites, and wildlife habitats and corridors;

g) if required, a culture and heritage assessment that identifies and evaluates culture and heritage resources located on or adjacent to the opportunity site;

h) if required, a baseline infrastructure study that assesses existing transportation infrastructure assets and constraints (using a multi-modal level of service analysis), and existing wastewater and water services infrastructure capacity and constraints;

i) overall site design, development densities and building massing consider all background studies and the Suburban Design Guidelines contained in Appendix C;

j) the classes of land uses permitted;

k) phasing of development ensuring a variety of uses are provided within the first buildings constructed on the site;

l) the use and conservation of energy;

m) the adequacy of proposed and existing public parks, open spaces and community recreation facilities that meet the objectives of this Plan and the Halifax Green Network Plan;

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n) **the development's transportation network prioritizes walking, the easy use of mobility devices, cycling and transit and allows for connections to surrounding neighbourhoods;**

o) **provisions for incentive or bonus zoning; and**

p) **off-site improvements necessary to integrate the development in the neigbourhood.**

I-22 The Municipality may permit mixed-use development in the Bedford Commons area (PIDs 00416222, 41214404, 41214370, 41240276, 00428458). When considering this planning process, Council shall consider the following:

a) **applicable direction contained in this Plan and Council approved Priority Plans;**

b) **that the proposal envisions a mixed-use neighbourhood that will provide a range of housing types and dwelling unit types, places of employment, and services where daily needs of residents can be met;**

c) **the relationship of the site to surrounding uses and neighbourhoods, including the existing commercial and industrial development in the area;**

d) **overall site design, development densities and building massing consider all background studies and the Suburban Design Guidelines contained in Appendix C;**

e) **the classes of land uses permitted;**

f) **phasing of development;**

g) **the use and conservation of energy;**

h) **the adequacy of public parks, open spaces and community recreation facilities that meet the objectives of this Plan and the Halifax Green Network Plan;**

i) **the development's transportation network prioritizes walking, the easy use of mobility devices, cycling and transit and allows for connections to surrounding neighbourhoods;**

j) **provisions for incentive or bonus zoning; and**

k) **off-site improvements necessary to integrate the development in the neighbourhood.**

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10.3.5.2 RURAL AREA SITES

I-23 The Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-law, establish a Comprehensive Development District (CDD) Zone to apply to certain lands within the following Rural Growth Centres: Hubbards, Musquodoboit Harbour, Porters Lake and Upper Tantallon. This zone is intended to protect these lands as focal points for development within these centres by requiring development to proceed by development agreement except for the continuation and expansion of existing uses. In considering approval of such development agreements, HRM shall consider the following:

a) whether the development is designed as part of a focal point for the distribution of services to the outlying area;

b) the types of land uses to be included in the development which may include a mix of medium-density residential uses, secondary suites and backyard suites, ground floor commercial, institutional uses, recreation uses and parking facilities;

c) where necessary, locations for pedestrian sidewalks;

d) architectural details marking the entrance to buildings;

e) controls on signage;

f) controls on heights, massing, scale and type of development;

g) details of the exterior architectural design of new buildings which should be complementary to the traditional building style within the surrounding community;

h) where necessary, details concerning preferred traditional building materials;

i) appropriate locations of parking for park-and-ride facilities and retail outlets; and

j) any applicable matter as set out in policy I-9 of this Plan.

10.3.5.3 SITES SUPPORTING AFFORDABLE HOUSING INITIATIVES

I-24 The Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-law, permit emergency shelter uses, shared housing uses, multi-unit dwellings uses and community facility uses on 5853 College Street, Halifax, (PID 00125427) to support the development of affordable housing through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Rapid Housing Initiative. Land use by-law requirements shall ensure that the building scale respects the historic character of the Carlton Street area.

I-25 The Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-law, permit a shared housing use and multi-unit dwelling use at PID 40302507 to support the development of affordable housing through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Rapid Housing Initiative. Land use by-law requirements shall ensure that the building scale respects the character of the surrounding community.

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10.4 THE REGIONAL SUBDIVISION BY-LAW

A Regional Subdivision By-law is adopted concurrently to implement the policies of this Plan. This By-law is an effective tool in achieving various objectives of this Plan such as regulating where municipal water and wastewater services will be provided and establishing design standards for municipal streets and parkland acquisitions.

I-26 When amendments to the Regional Subdivision By-law are brought forward for approval, the Municipality shall consider whether the proposed amendments are consistent with or further achieve the objectives and policies of this Plan, including any plans referenced by policies of this Plan for guidance.

I-27 The Regional Subdivision By-law may establish application submission requirements which require electronic document submissions and do not require paper submissions.

10.4.1 GROWTH MANAGEMENT

To control development outside of rural centres and protect the open space network, this Plan discourages the ongoing development of large-lot residential subdivisions in the rural area. Limited development on existing roads will continue to be permitted in line with existing community plans and land use by-laws.

I-28 Within the Rural Commuter, Rural Resource, Agricultural and Open Space and Natural Resource designations, the Municipality shall, through the Regional Subdivision By-law, permit the subdivision of lots fronting existing local roads, including existing private roads, to the extent currently provided for under existing Secondary Planning Strategies, and for those roads shown on completed tentative and final subdivision applications submitted on or before August 26, 2006. Within these designations but outside of Water Service Areas, lots fronting on existing non-local roads shall be permitted with wider frontages.

I-29 The Municipality shall, through the Regional Subdivision By-law, establish provisions to allow the approval of a maximum of eight lots on new public streets, per area of land with public street frontage in existence on August 26, 2006:

a) within the Rural Commuter Designation, where the proposed road intersects with a local road; and

b) within the Rural Resource Designation, where the proposed road intersects with a local road or non-local road.

I-30 The Municipality shall, through the Regional Subdivision By-law, prohibit approval of new private roads throughout the municipality.

I-31 The Municipality shall, through the Regional Subdivision By-law, regulate the design of flag lots in new subdivisions such that no more than three flag lots are contiguous to each other except that flag lots shown on tentative or final subdivision applications on file prior to March 13, 2004 are exempted from these requirements.

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I-32 **Where a secondary municipal planning strategy so provides, the Regional Subdivision By-law may permit the creation of additional lots from an area of land which does not meet the minimum lot frontage requirements, providing the lots have access to a road. These provisions may also include the ability to retain lot frontage exemptions for areas of land which have undergone minor alterations that do not increase development potential.**

I-33 **Until transportation infrastructure capacity is increased within the Hammonds Plains and Beaver Bank areas, residential subdivision activity shall be limited. The Municipality shall, through the Regional Subdivision By-law, establish special provisions in the Hammonds Plains and Beaver Bank communities to:**

a) limit development within portions of the Hammonds Plains and Beaver Bank communities;

b) prohibit the creation of new roads to generate residential development except where new roads can be demonstrated to improve traffic safety or achieve better regional network connectivity; and

c) permit approval of one additional lot from any area of land in existence prior to April 29, 2006, which does not meet minimum road frontage requirements.

I-34 **The Municipality shall, through the Regional Subdivision By-law, allow subdivision approvals from concept applications which were filed prior to April 29, 2006 on lands outside of the portions of the Hammonds Plains and Beaver Bank communities identified pursuant to Policy I-33 and within the Beaver Bank, Hammonds Plains and Upper Sackville Secondary Planning Strategy subject to the restriction that where a completed tentative or final subdivision application, for the initial phase of subdivision construction has not been filed by April 29, 2007, no subdivision approvals shall be granted under this exemption.**

I-35 **Notwithstanding I-34, the area identified as the Indigo Shores Special Planning Area in accordance with the *Housing for Halifax Regional Municipality Act* and as shown as Schedule I of the Beaver Bank, Hammonds Plains and Upper Sackville Land Use By-law, shall be exempt from the restrictions identified in I-34. Further, the development of this area shall proceed by way of applied R-1 (Single Unit Dwelling) Zoning and by way of a development agreement to allow the development of more than 25 lots per year.**

I-36 **Before considering any amendment to this Plan or the Regional Subdivision By-law to permit additional serviced development within the Beaver Bank and Hammonds Plains Growth Control Area, or the Middle Sackville community, the Municipality shall complete the Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priority Plan as outlined in RP-21.**

10.4.2 LEGACY SUBDIVISION APPROVALS

Prior to the adoption of the Regional Plan in 2006, applications for subdivision and development were approved that are not aligned with the overall growth management strategy of this Plan. While existing development rights have been acknowledged, should these rights not have been exercised, these rights will be phased out over time to ensure that new development meets the objectives of this Plan.

I-37 **The Municipality shall, through the Regional Subdivision By-law, establish restrictions on future development resulting from concept applications which were approved pursuant to the Interim Growth Management Controls. Subdivision pursuant to any completed concept application on file prior to January 22, 2004 may be considered for approval subject to the following:**

a) where a tentative or final subdivision application for the initial phase of subdivision construction has not been filed prior to April 29, 2006, subdivision may only be granted in accordance with the provisions of this Plan; and

b) where a final subdivision application for the final phase of subdivision has not been filed prior to April 29, 2031, subdivision may only be granted in accordance with the provisions of this Plan.

I-38 **The Municipality shall replace all existing growth management mechanisms contained in secondary municipal planning strategies with the growth management provisions contained in this Plan except that:**

a) the provisions adopted under the Eastern Passage/Cow Bay Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy shall continue to apply; and

b) provision shall be made within the Beaver Bank, Hammonds Plains and Upper Sackville Planning Strategy to allow for the development of large-scale subdivisions on lands zoned or under application for rezoning to a Comprehensive Development District prior to April 29, 2006.

I-39 **The Municipality shall, through the Regional Subdivision By-law, establish special provisions to allow for consideration of approval of Lands of J. E. F. Hallett in Fall River (PID No's. 00506857 and 00506840), Lands of Atlantic East Properties Ltd. (Abbecombec Village) in Clam Bay (PID No. 41054024) and Lands of Kellswater Holdings Limited in Lake Echo (PID No's. 40168478 and 40881484) provided that[33]:**

a) where a completed tentative or final subdivision application, for the initial phase of subdivision construction, pursuant to a completed concept application has not been filed by April 29, 2007, no subdivision approvals shall be granted under this exemption; and

b) where a final subdivision application for the final phase of subdivision has not been filed prior to April 29, 2031, subdivision may only be granted in accordance with the provisions of this Plan.

[33] Please note this policy is an existing policy within the 2014 Regional Plan. The PIDs and property owners identified in this policy may have changed since 2014. This will be reviewed and updated to reflect the correct status of these parcels.

10.4.3 10 HECTARE LOTS

The HRM Charter enables lots that exceed 10 hectares in area to be created outside of the municipal subdivision approval process. This exception is generally intended for resource uses, such as farming or forestry. In recent years, however, it has become more common for people to utilize the exemption with the intent to create such lots for cottage or residential development. Although such lots can be created without meeting land use by-law requirements for road frontage, the lots must meet land use by-law requirements in order to obtain development permits.

To recognize that development permits were issued for a limited number of single unit dwellings on lots created through the 10-hectare exception in the HRM Charter, in 2017 Council approved relaxing the road frontage requirements and allowing the continued development of subdivisions that had received permits for some, but not all lots. The policies in this section represent a one-time exception, intentionally focused on these unique situations to maintain the general intent of this Plan while being fair to affected property owners.

I-40 The Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-laws, permit residential uses located on lots that do not meet road frontage requirements and were issued development permits on or before April 1, 2016.

I-41 The Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-laws, permit development on lots that existed on or before April 1, 2016, and do not meet road frontage requirements within identified subdivisions that received development permits for some, but not all, lots located with the same subdivision.

I-42 The Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-law, permit development on ten (10) lots that do not meet road frontage requirements and that existed on or before April 1, 2016 on the east side of Scots Lake in Musquodoboit Harbour.

10.4.4 PARKLAND DEDICATION

The Municipality relies on a minimum of 10% park dedication for new subdivisions to acquire lands for future local parks. Currently, HRM uses a park classification system (Table 10.2) to guide how parkland dedication is determined. Each type of park has their recreation function, design features and size of community they intend to serve. The number of proposed households are key consideration when calculating the amount of lands needed to be acquired for parkland purposes through subdivision process.

Exemptions for park dedication could potentially detract from HRM's financial ability to carry out the vision of the Regional Plan and acquire lands that have longstanding value to the region for leisure and recreation. Given the pressures of population growth and the need for park infrastructure to support the growing needs of the region, parkland dedication of 10% will be expected, with limited application of a reduction to 5%.

I-43 Subject to Policy EP-41, the Municipality shall, through the Regional Subdivision By-law, establish a requirement for a minimum of 10% park dedication for new subdivisions.

I-44 Further to Policy I-43, the required parkland dedication amount shall be reduced to 5% where a development meets the following conditions:

a) **Classic Conservation Design Developments as provided for under Section 10.3.4 of this Plan; or**

b) **development is on a parcel of land that:**

   i. **was in existence on June 16, 2007;**

   ii. **the parcel of land is wholly designated Rural Resource, Agricultural, or Open Space and Natural Resources; and**

   iii. **the subdivision results in a maximum of two lots, no remainder lots, and cannot be further subdivided.**

Table 10.2: Parks Classification System

Park Type	Criteria
Regional Parks	**Capacity** • preserve and protect significant natural or cultural resources • serve the educational, cultural and recreation needs of the population of the entire region as well as for visitors to HRM. **Amenity** • All amenity categories including open space, wilderness, scenic beauty, flora, fauna, and recreational, archaeological, historical, cultural and/or geological resources **Ownership -** federal, provincial, municipal, or non-profit conservation organization properties
District Parks	**Capacity** • serve the recreation needs of several communities with a population in the range of 10,000 people. **Amenity** • walking and cycling trails, sports fields, picnic areas, supervised beaches, and play facilities for children • intended for passive recreation uses that are left in a predominantly natural state. **Ownership -** Municipal government

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Community Parks	**Capacity** • to serve the recreation needs of a community comprised of three or four neighbourhoods with a population in the range of 1,200 people. **Amenity** • may be designed for organized youth and recreational adult level sports but may also include facilities for play by children. • may also be designed for passive recreation and left in a predominantly natural state. **Ownership -** Municipal government
Neighbourhood – Community Hybrid Parks	**Capacity** • The hybrid may serve recreational services for in the population range of approximately 1,000 people. **Amenity** • The Neighbourhood-Community Park Hybrid is an intermediate park that requires more space than a neighbourhood park and may serve the function of a neighbourhood and/or community park. **Ownership -** Municipal government
Neighbourhood Parks	**Capacity** • These parks typically provide centrally located recreational services for neighbourhoods of 80 - 120 people. **Amenity** • primarily designed to provide unorganized play activities for children, quiet seating or rest areas • linear linkages between other municipal parks or open spaces. **Ownership -** Municipal government

I-45 When the Municipality is acquiring land through parkland dedication through the subdivision process, the following shall be considered:

a) the park classification system in Table 10.2;

b) level of service standards for parkland and outdoor amenities;

c) the anticipated cost to the Municipality of maintenance and operation of the parkland;

d) connection to existing trails and park systems;

e) access to coastal areas; and

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f) access to wetlands, lakes and other watercourses.

10.5 WATER AND WASTEWATER SERVICES

10.5.1 URBAN SERVICE AREA

The Municipality works closely with Halifax Water to plan for the Municipality's piped water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure needs. To effectively support decision-making for long-term growth and infrastructure investments, amendments to the Urban Service Area boundary should be limited. Amendments to the Urban Service Area may be considered if warranted by changes in population or employment growth, or where strategic investments in infrastructure support building healthy and complete communities.

The Municipality will regularly monitor our population and employment projections to inform whether additional lands may be required to accommodate growth within the urban area and may make amendments to the Urban Settlement and Urban Reserve designation during regular reviews of this Plan.

I-46 The Municipality shall establish an Urban Service Area within the Regional Subdivision By-law to identify those areas where municipal wastewater and stormwater collection and water distribution systems are to be provided. Lands within the Urban Service Area shall only be developed with municipal wastewater and stormwater collection and water distribution systems.

I-47 The Municipality shall seek to prevent premature development for residential or mixed-use development with on-site services on lands designated Urban Settlement but not yet within the Urban Service Area by establishing an Urban Settlement Zone over these lands under the applicable land use by-law. This zone shall permit public parks and playgrounds but restrict new development to single unit dwellings serviced with on-site sewage disposal systems and wells on two-hectare lots on existing roads.

I-48 The Municipality shall seek to prevent premature development for industrial and other employment uses on lands designated Urban Settlement and within the Business/ Industrial Sub-Designation but not yet within the Urban Service Area by establishing an Urban Settlement Employment Zone over these lands under the applicable land use by-law. This zone shall permit utilities, conservation uses, and public parks and playgrounds.

I-49 In considering amendments to include additional lands within the Urban Service Area boundary, the Municipality shall:

a) undertake a planning process for the lands to be included within the Urban Service Area consistent with Policies HC-7 and HC-8, except that this requirement may be waived where, in the opinion of the Municipality and Halifax Water, the proposed amendment represents a minor adjustment to the Area;

b) consider the costs and feasibility of providing municipal services and infrastructure related to the extension;

c) consider the need to oversize the water, wastewater or stormwater systems to allow for future development within the Urban Settlement designation; and

d) consider the need for infrastructure charges to pay for improvements consistent with Policy RP-15 and RP-16 and if it is determined that a charge is required, an infrastructure charge area shall be established or adopted concurrently with the boundary amendment.

10.5.2 WATER SERVICE AREAS

Although this Plan encourages a more compact urban form in which development is serviced with wastewater and water distribution systems, it recognizes that developments already exist that are serviced with a water distribution system and on-site sewage disposal systems.

However, the risk of inadequate performance of on-site sewage disposal systems in areas which are serviced with a central water supply is of concern. There is a higher degree of risk of on-site sewage disposal system failure in areas serviced with central water because the unlimited source of water can cause hydraulic overloading.[34]

The Municipality will recognize existing lands serviced by municipal water services only, and will only allow for limited extensions in certain circumstances.

I-50 The Municipality shall, through the Regional Subdivision By-law, establish Water Service Areas where development shall be permitted which is serviced by a public water distribution system but without a municipal wastewater system. Within these areas, a water distribution system shall be required to service all new developments located adjacent to an existing water distribution system where a new or extended public street or highway is proposed. Further, no water distribution system shall be permitted to extend outside of a Water Service Area.

I-51 The Municipality may consider establishing new Water Service Areas, subject to the financial ability of the Municipality to absorb any related costs, if:

a) (i) the area is within a Rural Commuter, Rural Resource or Agricultural centre and it has been determined through a planning process that significant new growth is to be encouraged in this area; or

(ii) the lands are adjacent to an existing Water Service Area and a Conservation Design Development is proposed; or

(iii) the lands are adjacent to an existing Water Service area and within the portion of PID 40150567 designated Rural Commuter; and

[34] Dillon Consulting Ltd. 2002. Ibid

b) an area charge needed to pay for the water services or stormwater services has, where required, been adopted by by-law.

I-52 The Municipality may consider expanding existing Water Service Areas to existing communities, subject to the financial ability of the Municipality to absorb any costs related to the expansion, if:

(a) (i) the lands are near a water distribution system owned and operated by Halifax Water; or

(ii) a study has been prepared by a qualified person verifying that there is a water quality or quantity problem that cannot reasonably be rectified by an alternative means; or

(iii) there are environmental concerns related to the long-term integrity of on-site sewage disposal systems and a wastewater management plan is also considered in accordance with Policy I-5~~9~~7*; and

(b) an area charge needed to pay for growth related improvements to the water or stormwater services has been adopted by by-law, or Halifax Water has advised that an area charge is not required.

10.5.3 SOURCE WATER PROTECTION

Source water areas are the lakes, rivers, streams and groundwater that supply drinking water. Under the *Environment Act*, the Province is responsible for regulating water utilities and may designate Protected Water Areas (PWA) for water supply and regulate activities that may impair source water quality. Halifax Water is the utility responsible for enforcing regulations in the PWAs to keep the water clean and sustain the drinking water supply for future generations.

Halifax Water manages 9 surface water supply areas (watersheds) and 2 groundwater supply areas (wellheads). The Source Water Protection Areas (Map 8) consist of:

Surface Water Supply Areas	
Provincially Designated Water Supply Areas (protected through provincial legislation)	• Bennery Lake • Lake Major • Pockwock
Non-designated drinking water supply areas	• Collins Park • Middle Musquodoboit • Bomont
Emergency Supply Areas	• Lake Lemont • Chain Lakes
Future Water Supply Area	• Tomahawk Lake
Wellhead Drinking Supply Areas (surface and subsurface area surrounding a water well)	• Five Island Wellhead • Silver Sands Wellhead

Land use activities within Provincially designated water supply areas are currently regulated under existing land use by-laws leading to a wide variation in the range of permitted land uses within each community.

*The Draft Regional Municipal Planning Strategy accepted by Halifax Regional Council to be used for public engagement purposes on June 20, 2023 included a clerical error that has been corrected as shown

The Municipality will continue to allow for a variety of land uses provided that these uses do not threaten the municipal water supply and a consistent policy and regulatory approach is achieved throughout each watershed. Although Lake Thomas and Grand Lake are not designated water supply areas for the Region, Lake Thomas is upstream from two small system water treatments in which Halifax Water responds to spills, and, Grand Lake is a water supply area for the Municipality of East Hants. The Municipality recognizes the importance of Grand Lake to the residents of the Municipality of East Hants and intends to comply with the Provincial Statement of Interest in Drinking Water to help ensure the long-term sustainability of Grand Lake by creating regulations that protect the watershed from contaminates which may jeopardize the health of residents in the neighbouring municipality. Consideration may need to be given to adopting municipal measures to protect these water supplies as well as future water supplies.

I-53 The Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-law, establish a Protected Water Supply Zone which:

a) shall be applied to all publicly owned lands which serve as a water supply watershed, including emergency water supply watersheds and well head protection areas;

b) may be applied to private lands within these watersheds deemed necessary to protect the public water supply;

c) shall permit water distribution and purification facilities, passive parks and trails, conservation related uses, and other uses as provided by the existing community planning strategies for these areas; and

d) shall establish a minimum 100 metre riparian buffer around primary water supply sources, including Bennery Lake, Pockwock Lake, and Lake Major, which may be relaxed for privately owned properties adjacent to these lakes through the land use bylaw.

I-54 For any lands within a watershed or ground water supply area where a public water supply system has been established or is proposed, Council shall consider amendments to land use by-laws deemed necessary to:

a) protect the water supply;

b) ensure a consistent regulatory approach within each watershed; or

c) conform with any Statement of Provincial Interest Regarding Drinking Water.

10.5.4 GROUND WATER SUPPLIES

The Municipality seeks to ensure that development in rural areas has an adequate and sustainable water supply. Hydrogeological studies can address this objective through testing to assess long-term sustainable yield of larger subdivisions with many lots or any potential impact on existing wells in adjacent subdivisions. The HRM Charter allows the Municipality to require hydrogeological studies as a condition of subdivision approval. A comprehensive understanding of groundwater supplies across the region is required to further direct development to appropriate rural centres where water is available.

I-55 The Municipality shall require a hydrogeological assessment for all subdivision applications to be serviced with on-site wells where the number of residential lots consists of ten or more. Subdivision approval will only be granted where the study determines that the quantity and quality of the groundwater source is sufficient to service the proposed development without adversely affecting groundwater supply in adjacent developments.

I-56 To support growth in Rural Centres, through the Rural Community Planning program, the Municipality shall:

a) undertake a region-wide hydrogeological study regarding groundwater capacity across the rural areas of the region; and

b) cooperate with the Province of Nova Scotia to monitor the effects of development on the groundwater table and natural groundwater flows.

10.5.5 PRIVATE ON-SITE SEWAGE DISPOSAL SYSTEMS AND WASTEWATER FACILITIES

Malfunctioning on-site sewage disposal systems may cause bacteria and other contaminants to enter groundwater and surface water which may pose health risks and cause environmental degradation. Contamination has resulted in closures to swimming and shellfish harvesting and has increased the eutrophication process of lakes and estuaries. The Municipality may seek measures to reduce the risk of these occurrences.

I-57 To support growth in Rural Centres and protect public health and the environment, through the Rural Community Planning program, the Municipality shall consider:

a) establishing Wastewater Management Districts within Rural Centres as shown on Map 4, or for areas that have failing on-site sewage disposal systems that cannot be remediated by private on-site sewage disposal systems; and

b) adopting a private on-site sewage disposal system by-law to require such systems to be maintained.

10.6 MEASURING SUCCESS, REVIEWING OUR PLAN, AND ADAPTING TO CHANGE

Performance measures assist in evaluating the effectiveness of policies, programs, and investments in achieving the vision and objectives of this Plan. Evaluations by external organizations also provide valuable feedback.

I-58 The key performance indicators presented in Appendix A to this Plan shall be used by the Municipality to assist in evaluating the effectiveness of policies, programs, and investments in achieving the stated vision and objectives of this Plan.

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I-59 When undertaking reviews of this Plan, secondary municipal planning strategies or other HRM programs and investments, the Municipality shall seek the views of residents, institutions, businesses and community organizations in evaluating the effectiveness of existing policies, programs and investments.

Amendments to this Plan may be brought forward periodically to address non-substantive matters or amendments which are consistent with or further the vision and objectives of this Plan. A comprehensive review will be undertaken on a five year basis to evaluate the effectiveness of policies and programs in achieving the vision and objectives of this Plan.

I-60 Amendments to this Plan may be considered from time to time to address non-substantial matters or amendments which are consistent with or further the vision and objectives of this Plan.

I-61 This Plan shall be reviewed every five years, from the date the most recent five year review has been completed by Council and any changes have come into force, to evaluate the effectiveness of policies and programs adopted pursuant to this Plan in achieving its vision and objectives and where appropriate, amendments may be considered.

I-62 Proposed amendments to this Plan shall be accompanied by any amendments to secondary municipal planning strategies, land use by-laws and the Regional Subdivision By-law or other planning documents required for implementation so that these documents are consistent with this Plan.

10.7 TRANSITION TO THIS PLAN

I-63 Until this Plan becomes effective in accordance with the requirements of the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*, the Regional Plan adopted by Council on June 25, 2014 and as amended, shall remain in effect.

I-64 Where any completed development agreement application was received by the Municipality prior to Council's first notification to adopt this Regional Plan, the application shall be considered in accordance with the Regional Plan policies in effect at the time the application was received.

I-65 Future Business Plans and Budgets shall be reviewed by the Municipality to ensure alignment with the Regional Plan. Where Business Plan deliverables need to be adjusted, removed, or added, these changes shall be advanced during the regular Business Planning process for the purpose of strategic alignment to the Regional Plan.

Additional transition policies regarding specific developments may be included in this section.

APPENDIX A: KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Key Performance Indicators will be developed based on the final proposed version of this Plan.

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APPENDIX B: EXISTING SECONDARY MUNICIPAL PLANNING STRATEGIES

Secondary Municipal Planning Strategies (SMPS)	Area Plans within SMPS
• Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy	-
• Dartmouth Municipal Planning Strategy	• Port Wallace Secondary Planning Strategy
• Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy	• Bedford Highway Secondary Planning Strategy • Fairview Secondary Planning Strategy • Mainland South Secondary Planning Strategy • Wentworth Secondary Planning Strategy • Western Common Area Secondary Planning Strategy
• Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy	
• Eastern Passage/Cow Bay Municipal Planning Strategy	
• Cole Harbour/Westphal Municipal Planning Strategy	
• Sackville Municipal Planning Strategy	
• Sackville Drive Secondary Planning Strategy	
• Bedford Municipal Planning Strategy	
• Timberlea/Lakeside/Beechville Municipal Planning Strategy	
• Lawrencetown Municipal Planning Strategy	
• Porters Lake and Lake Echo (Planning Districts 8 and 9) Municipal Planning Strategy	
• Lake Major, North Preston, Lake Loon/Cherry Brook and East Preston Municipal Planning Strategy	
• Shubenacadie Lakes (Planning Districts 14 and 17) Municipal Planning Strategy	• River Lakes Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy
• Beaver Bank, Hammonds Plains and Upper Sackville Municipal Planning Strategy	
• St. Margaret's Bay (Planning Districts 1 and 3) Municipal Planning Strategy	

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APPENDIX C: SUBURBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

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