



Housing affordability is one of the largest challenges facing HRM today and there is a need for more housing to support HRM's growing population. The Municipality plays a significant role in guiding where and how housing may be developed. This Plan explores tools HRM can use to enable affordable housing, while partnering with other levels of government and housing organizations. The Draft Plan proposes to remove key barriers to increasing housing supply. It also looks to enable a mix of housing types, allowing for diverse and inclusive communities in every neighbourhood. Gentle Density and Missing Middle draft policies allow more housing and a variety of housing options to be built in areas already serviced by municipal infrastructure.

What's in the Draft Plan?

Gentle Density

- Permit additional housing that has little impact on an area's built form and character.
- Examples include backyard suites, in-law suites, and internal house conversions to create new units.
- Benefits include intergenerational living spaces, aging in place, and additional income for property owners.
- The Regional Plan is proposing to allow up to three units per lot in all low-density residential areas of the municipality. Backyard and secondary suites are already permitted and would be included in this total. These changes would come with built form regulations to ensure building scales fit the scale of the neighbourhood.

Missing Middle

- Examples are townhouses, two- and three-unit dwellings, and small multi-unit buildings.
- Missing middle housing options support walkable complete communities that meet the needs of all residents.



Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) is seeking feedback on the Draft Regional Plan (released June 2023). This Topic Summary provides a broad overview of objectives and policies contained in the Draft Plan. For further details, speak with a staff member or consult the Draft Plan. The Draft Plan is available online and in Halifax Public Libraries.

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Encouraging Adaptive Reuse

- Adaptive reuse means changing the original purpose of the building and renovating it to accommodate a new use, instead of being torn down. Adaptive reuse is environmentally beneficial as it avoids the need for new construction, and can help preserve historically significant buildings.
- The Draft Regional Plan includes policy to permit adaptive reuse of non-residential buildings, such as underused commercial office towers, to increase housing supply.

Exploring New Municipal Tools

- Inclusionary Zoning: this tool can require a certain number or percentage of affordable units in new construction projects. This helps create mixed-income communities for a wider range of people.
- Density Bonusing: A requirement that some types of public benefits in new developments, in exchange for approving a larger number of units. Affordable housing is one of the public benefits HRM may require.
- No Net Loss/Rental Replacement: this tool can ensure redevelopment projects incorporate or replace the residential units that are lost when new development takes place. This helps provide new housing while avoiding displacing current residents.

Pursuing Partnerships

- Housing & Homelessness Partnership: A collaboration of nine partners from the three levels of government, the private sector and non-profit organizations. The Partnership's goal is to end homelessness and housing poverty in Halifax, with members working together to address systemic issues that require input from multiple stakeholders.
- Federal funding programs: HRM is accessing funding through national programs, such as the Rapid Housing Initiative and Housing Accelerator Fund, to create deeply affordable housing and fast-tracked development. This housing is often created in partnership with community service providers who have expertise working with those experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity.

More information on this topic is contained in Chapter 5 of the Draft Plan.