

HALIFAX

**DOWNTOWN HALIFAX
SECONDARY MUNICIPAL
PLANNING STRATEGY**

**DOWNTOWN HALIFAX
SECONDARY MUNICIPAL PLANNING STRATEGY**

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that this is a true copy of the Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy which was passed by a majority vote of the Council of the Halifax Regional Municipality at a duly called meeting held on the ___th day of _____, 201_, and reviewed by Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations on the ___th day of _____, 201_, and is in effect as of the ___th day of _____, 201_.

GIVEN UNDER THE HAND of the Municipal Clerk and under the Corporate Seal of the Halifax Regional Municipality this ____ day of _____, 201_.

Kevin Arjoon
Municipal Clerk

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 OVERVIEW	1
1.2 GOALS OF THIS PLAN.....	1
1.3 DOWNTOWN HALIFAX PLAN AREA.....	1
1.4 INTRODUCTION TO DEVELOPMENT & DESIGN REVIEW	2
CHAPTER 2: VISION AND PRINCIPLES.....	3
2.1 OVERALL VISION FOR DOWNTOWN HALIFAX	3
2.2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES.....	3
2.3 THE TEN BIG MOVES	4
2.4 DOWNTOWN PRECINCT VISIONS.....	5
2.4.1 Vision for Precinct 1: Southern Waterfront.....	5
2.4.2 Vision for Precinct 2: Barrington Street South.....	6
2.4.3 Vision for Precinct 3: Spring Garden Road Area	6
2.4.4 Vision for Precinct 4: Lower Central Downtown.....	7
2.4.5 Vision for Precinct 5: Barrington Street Heritage Conservation District	7
2.4.6 Vision for Precinct 6: Upper Central Downtown	7
2.4.7 Vision for Precinct 7: Historic Properties.....	8
2.4.8 Vision for Precinct 8: Cogswell Area.....	8
2.4.9 Vision for Precinct 9: North End Gateway.....	8
CHAPTER 3: BUILT FORM AND PRECINCT FRAMEWORK.....	10
3.1 BUILT FORM FRAMEWORK	10
3.2 DOWNTOWN PRECINCTS.....	11
3.2.1 Waterfront Development (Precincts 1 and 4)	11
3.2.2 Spring Garden Road (Precinct 3)	12
3.3 COMPLETE COMMUNITIES - LAND USE.....	12
3.3.1 Land Use	12
3.3.2 Provision of a Mix of Housing Types.....	13
3.3.3 Urban Agriculture	13
3.4 PEDESTRIAN FIRST STREETSCAPES	13
3.4.1 Primary Pedestrian-Oriented Commercial Streetscapes.....	14
3.4.2 Drive-Throughs.....	14
3.4.3 Pedestrian Weather Protection	14
3.4.4 Existing Street Grid and Blocks	14
3.4.5 Parking.....	15
3.5 BUILDING DESIGN	15
3.5.1 Heights Framework.....	15
3.5.2 Incentive or Bonus Zoning.....	16

3.5.3	Multi-District Recreation Facility	16
3.5.4	Building Envelopes	17
3.5.5	Streetwall Character	17
3.5.6	Sustainable Building Design.....	18
3.5.7	Signage.....	18
3.5.8	Heritage Character.....	18
3.5.9	Building Impact on the Street.....	19
3.5.10	Landscaping & Rooftops	19
CHAPTER 4: HERITAGE CONSERVATION		20
4.1	INTRODUCTION	20
4.2	DOWNTOWN HALIFAX HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS	20
4.3	PARTNERSHIPS AND INCENTIVES.....	20
4.3.1	Partnerships with the Province	20
4.3.2	Heritage Registry.....	21
4.3.3	Financial Incentives	21
CHAPTER 5: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT		22
5.1	INTRODUCTION	22
5.2	ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS.....	22
5.3	PUBLIC LANDS & FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT	23
5.4	COGSWELL INTERCHANGE LANDS	23
CHAPTER 6: PUBLIC REALM		25
6.1	INTRODUCTION	25
6.2	OPEN SPACES & CONNECTIONS.....	25
6.2.1	Waterfront Harbourwalk	25
6.3	GATEWAYS.....	26
6.4	VIEWS & VISUAL CHARACTER.....	26
6.4.1	Waterfront View Corridors.....	26
6.5	PUBLIC ART	27
6.6	PEDESTRIAN AMENITY & COMFORT	27
CHAPTER 7: IMPLEMENTATION		28
7.1	INTRODUCTION	28
7.2	REGULATORY TOOLS.....	28
7.2.1	Land Use By-law	28
7.2.2	Design Manual.....	28
7.2.3	Site Plan Approval.....	28
7.2.4	Site Plan Notification.....	29
7.2.5	Design Review Committee	29
7.2.6	Variations to Building Envelopes and Design Elements.....	29
7.3	PUBLIC INVESTMENT.....	29

7.4	PLAN MONITORING PROGRAM	30
7.4.1	Amendments to this Plan	30
7.5	NON-CONFORMING BUILDINGS	30
	Appendix A: Plan Monitoring Performance Measures	32

List of Maps:

Map 1 - Plan Area and Urban Structure.....	34
Map 2 - Downtown Precincts.....	35
Map 3 - Central Blocks.....	36
Map 4 - Maximum Pre-Bonus Heights.....	37
Map 5 - Maximum Post-Bonus Heights.....	38
Map 6 - Heritage District.....	39
Map 7 - Open Spaces.....	40
Map 8 - Views.....	41
Map 9 - Prominent Visual Terminus Sites.....	42

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

The *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter (HRM Charter)* gives Council the broad authority to plan within its jurisdiction through the adoption of municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws. A municipal planning strategy may also provide for the preparation and adoption of a secondary planning strategy and accompanying land-use by-law, that applies to a specific area of the municipality.

The Halifax Regional Municipality Planning Strategy (Regional Plan) is the primary municipal planning strategy for Halifax Regional Municipality. Where the Regional Plan addresses planning matters relevant to the entire municipality, this document, the Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy (Plan) focuses on detailed, local planning matters within only a portion of the municipality. This Plan, therefore, includes policy statements to specifically guide the development and management of Downtown Halifax.

To carry out the intent of any secondary municipal planning strategy, a planning strategy is accompanied by a land-use bylaw. The land use by-law is the principal mechanism by which the land use policies of this plan will be implemented. It includes standards that regulate the use and development of both land and buildings within the area governed by the strategy, otherwise known as the plan area.

1.2 GOALS OF THIS PLAN

This Plan reflects the vision that Halifax Regional Council and the citizens of Halifax Regional Municipality have for the downtown core of Halifax.

This Plan seeks to provide a coherent structure that respects and builds upon these existing elements of the downtown. Most importantly, a downtown 'precincts' approach helps to co-ordinate, focus and direct land uses, development, public investments, and cultural planning strategies. It is intended to provide guidance on the 'look and feel' of the downtown until the year 2031 and identify where change ought to occur and in what form that change should take.

This Plan provides a vision for the distinct character and growth aspirations for downtown Halifax. The Barrington Street Heritage Conservation District Plan is a companion document regulating the heritage aspects of this heritage conservation district as enabled under the regulatory framework of the Nova Scotia *Heritage Property Act*. The Plan is intended to be read in conjunction with the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy.

The overall goals of this Plan include fostering a positive downtown development climate, making a beautiful public realm, improving heritage protection, investing in public spaces, promoting high quality architecture, and well-designed streetscapes. More specifically, while many planning issues are common across the Regional Centre, downtown Halifax has some unique issues and needs. This Plan provides specific policies to support the character of downtown Halifax. This Plan will:

- (a) improve heritage protection and heritage assistance;
- (b) create clarity and predictability in the development approval process so that quality development can occur more efficiently and with fewer appeals;
- (c) acknowledge that it is people (residents and workers) that make a lively, vibrant downtown and to achieve that we need design standards to improve the beauty of downtown's architecture and public spaces;
- (d) bring more people to live and work in downtown Halifax, by directing a mix of quality residential and commercial development to areas that can both accommodate it and benefit from it; and
- (e) further the goals of the Regional Plan.

1.3 DOWNTOWN HALIFAX PLAN AREA

The Downtown Halifax Plan encompasses the commercial heart of Halifax Regional Municipality's Regional

Centre. The Plan Area boundary is shown on **Map 1**¹ and includes the business districts of downtown Halifax and Spring Garden Road. The Plan Area functions as the central business district, cultural heart and civic seat of the municipality, and possesses a mix and intensity of land uses within the region. Framed by the Halifax Citadel National Historic Site and the Halifax waterfront, the Plan Area consists of the historic settlement's original block and street pattern, and numerous heritage and cultural landmarks in a distinctive landscape setting.

Map 1 is the Plan Area and Urban Structure map. This map has only a single land use designation, the Downtown Halifax designation, drawing on the history of a mix of uses and intensity within the Plan's boundary. This designation considers both the existing natural and urban fabric of the community and future growth objectives to encourage a more liveable and healthy environment.

Policy 1 The Municipality shall adopt the Plan Area and Urban Structure map for the Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy Plan Area as shown on **Map 1**.

1.4 INTRODUCTION TO DEVELOPMENT & DESIGN REVIEW

Prior to adoption of this Plan, significant developments in downtown Halifax were typically conducted using development agreements. This process, while ultimately effective, could be slow and did not provide the clarity and predictability desired by both citizens and developers. The development of this Plan took a strategic approach by front-loading consultations to focus on the desired urban form of the downtown. Thus, the urban form of downtown Halifax has been established with relative certainty, and the process of development review can instead focus on design.

The Land Use By-law is the principal mechanism by which the land use policies of this Plan will be implemented. The Land Use By-law's regulatory structure will include a design review process. The design review process improves certainty and efficiency for downtown development using site plan approval, the implementation of a Design Manual within the Land Use By-law, and a Design Review Committee.

The Land Use By-law is comprised of the following four key components that work together to regulate and guide new development:

- (a) Built Form and Height Framework: These requirements constitute the development envelope and form the quantitative elements that new buildings must achieve. The Land Use By-law accomplishes this by establishing standards for building height, massing, streetwall height and setbacks.
- (b) Site Plan Approval and Design Review: Within all areas under this Plan, much of new development is to be reviewed and approved through the site plan approval process.
- (c) Design Manual: The Design Manual forms part of the Land Use By-law and is the primary reference document to be used in designing and reviewing development proposals through . It contains the detailed architectural guidelines and principles to be followed.
- (d) Bonus Zoning: The Land Use By-law contains two building height regimes; a lower, pre-bonus height that is achieved without the contribution of public benefits, and a post-bonus height that is achieved by providing a public benefit.

The preamble and policies implementing these regulatory elements are found in Chapter 7: Implementation.

¹ This is the same area defined as the "HRM by Design Downtown Plan Area" in the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*.

CHAPTER 2: VISION AND PRINCIPLES

This Plan articulates a compelling vision for downtown Halifax looking forward to the year 2031 and beyond. The vision is described through the following sections in this chapter: (1) overall vision statement for downtown Halifax, (2) guiding principles, (3) ten big moves, and (4) precinct visions. These four components of the vision for downtown Halifax are intended to support and guide the implementation of this Plan in terms of the design of development and public spaces.

2.1 OVERALL VISION FOR DOWNTOWN HALIFAX

By the year 2031, downtown Halifax will become a thriving urban environment with a strengthened historic heart. Many more people will live in downtown Halifax's mixed use neighbourhoods enjoying splendid public spaces and human-scale streetscapes. A mix of housing types will increase living and working opportunities for all people and will appropriately transition in scale and design to surrounding neighbourhoods and cultural destinations. The streetscape experience will be improved through redevelopment and reinvestment that incorporates active street level shops and activities. Infill development and redesigned streetscapes will encourage a culture of walking.

Pedestrian and visual connections will unify the downtown through beautifully designed streets that link the harbour with Citadel Hill. Downtown Halifax will define its character by distinct precincts that celebrate and reinforce the downtown as a civic, cultural, and economic destination. High-quality public plazas, forecourts, courtyards and promenades will complement and visually connect every precinct, adding valuable public amenities and performance spaces throughout the downtown. The Halifax Harbourwalk will be celebrated as one of the best attractions of downtown Halifax.

Barrington Street will be defined as the historic heart of downtown Halifax, supported by its designation as a heritage conservation district. Halifax's history will further be preserved through the establishment of two additional heritage districts in the surrounding areas, the Old South Suburb area and Historic Properties.

The Cornwallis Park area will become the southern gateway into downtown Halifax, with a revitalized park to include public art. Once infill development on vacant sites in the central downtown Halifax area is underway, the Cogswell Interchange will be transformed into a new mixed-use precinct functioning as the northern gateway into the downtown. Visitors will immediately feel welcomed and connected to downtown Halifax because of the enhancement of these gateways. Much greater emphasis will be placed on walking, cycling and transit in downtown Halifax.

2.2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

There are six overarching principles that represent the major themes carried forward in this Plan. These high-level principles set the stage for the policies and strategies that follow:

- (a) **A Sustainable Downtown:** The promotion of a compact, intensified and walkable downtown is a central ingredient in the Municipality's regional sustainability objectives and a major focus of this Plan. This Plan features strategies to promote sustainable settlement patterns and building design practices.
- (b) **A Living Downtown:** Create a living downtown by supporting the creation of new residential opportunities, including desirable high-density neighbourhoods, with a variety of housing choices supported by high quality community, streetscape and open space amenities that are open year-round.
- (c) **A Distinct Downtown:** Maintain a distinctive downtown by preserving and reinforcing the elements that impart a sense of history, culture and a unique natural setting.
- (d) **A Beautiful Downtown:** Restore the pursuit of longevity, civic pride, visual appeal, and inspiring qualities to the design, improvement and construction of streets, open spaces and buildings.
- (e) **A Connected Downtown:** Strengthen the visual and physical connections between historical and natural assets, and civic and open space destinations in the downtown. In addition, create similar connections to surrounding districts and neighbourhoods outside S
- (f) **A Vibrant Downtown:** Create a vibrant downtown by developing policies and procedures that encourage an urban environment with a broad mix of land uses, the required infrastructure and the

necessary critical mass to support a creative and exciting economic, cultural and social community.

2.3 THE TEN BIG MOVES

Collectively, ten aspirations constitute a shared and widely agreed upon vision of what we want downtown Halifax to look like by the year 2031. The ten big moves represent a summary of the key strategies established in this Plan:

1. Defined and distinct downtown precincts

Downtown Halifax features nine distinct precincts with varying characters, functional identities and building forms. The objective of defining these precincts is to help focus and direct land uses, define appropriate character for development, protect heritage, and guide public investment. The precincts are shown on **Map 2**, with the vision statements described in the next section of this chapter.

2. Increase live and work opportunities in the downtown

The future vibrancy and economic growth of the downtown depends on many more people living and doing business there. Preliminary work done for the Regional Centre envisions downtown Halifax and Dartmouth together accommodating 14 percent of the Regional Centre's residential growth. The downtowns will continue to be the primary location for new office development in the Regional Centre.

3. A protected and vibrant historic heart

Halifax's rich heritage assets are a main attraction for tourists and locals, increasing the economic prosperity of the downtown. The protection and preservation of these heritage resources is a key pillar of this Plan. The Barrington Street Heritage Conservation District has to date implemented strong methods of heritage protection, and supported heritage conservation and reinvestment in heritage buildings through a generous incentive program. Future study is also recommended in the Barrington Street South ('Old South Suburb') and Historic Properties areas to implement similar programs. Design guidelines and incentives will protect heritage resources outside of heritage districts.

4. Integrate the Cogswell and Cornwallis Park Gateways

The transformation of the Cogswell Interchange lands and Cornwallis Park gateways will serve as catalysts for revitalization and the attraction of new residents and businesses to downtown. Public support for the redevelopment of the Cogswell Interchange and rejuvenation of Cornwallis Park is tremendous, particularly in the Cogswell area due to opportunities to provide more public open space and amenities, and new residential and commercial development.

5. Provide a variety of new and improved open space anchors and connections

The amount and quality of public open space and amenities must increase in parallel with the increase in residents and workers downtown to provide signature destinations downtown, ensure amenities for high-density residential living, and to stimulate the downtown revitalization. Visual and physical connections along the east-west streets that terminate in outdoor public open spaces on the waterfront are important in re-establishing the link between the Citadel and the Harbour, and are a key component of the downtown Halifax vision.

6. Great streets that support a culture of walking

Improved streetscapes are intended to enhance the downtown experience, supplement the open space network, promote a culture of walking, support street level retail operations, and strengthen precinct identities. Beautiful, well-designed, pedestrian-friendly streets will inspire more people to explore downtown shops, restaurants and entertainment venues. Great streets connect local neighbourhoods and precincts, increasing downtown vibrancy around the clock. A key principle in support of great streets is promoting the infill of vacant and underutilized lands and surface parking lots with high-quality development.

7. Improve the quality of existing buildings & structures

As part of the urban design objectives for downtown Halifax, this Plan will encourage, assist and enable the improvement and transformation of existing buildings and infrastructure. Strategies include improvements to undesirable street level conditions, updating and enhancing existing towers and parking structures through façade improvements, and improved lighting.

8. Reinforce visual connections & civic pride

Visually prominent sites provide unique opportunities to define areas, strengthen visual connections, animate open spaces, and to orient and stimulate pedestrian movement. These sites are appropriate for urban design features such as public art, monuments, attractions, landmark architecture, and civic or cultural facilities. Potential opportunity sites include: Granville Mall, the Halifax ferry terminal, waterfront open spaces at the foot of east-west streets, the Cogswell and Commons Gateway, and the north & south ends of Barrington and Hollis streets.

9. New developments designed to enhance the pedestrian experience

The approach to guiding new development is focused on ensuring a vital, inviting pedestrian environment that will attract residents, enhance retail uses at street level, encourage active transportation choices, and resonate with visitors to downtown Halifax. Proposed strategies to achieve these objectives include: enhancing existing heritage with complementary design, directing height to where it is appropriate, ensuring sun penetration on sidewalks and minimizing wind impacts, promoting a coherent relationship between neighbouring buildings, and ensuring the pedestrian experience is comfortable, safe and visually appealing. This includes the idea that tall buildings have the greatest civic obligation to be appropriately located, and to feature high quality materials, roof treatments, and overall architectural excellence.

10. A transit and active transportation friendly downtown

Building on the goals of the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy, this Plan promotes access to downtown Halifax primarily through investment in public transportation, providing alternatives to the dependence on the automobile. Development in turn should be provided at appropriate densities to support continued transit use and much greater emphasis shall be placed on walkability and cycling in downtown Halifax.

2.4 DOWNTOWN PRECINCT VISIONS

Downtown Halifax features nine distinct precincts as shown on **Map 2**, each with varying characters, functional identities and building forms. The objective of defining these precincts is to help focus and direct land uses, define appropriate character for development, protect heritage, and direct public investment. The following precinct-specific vision statements articulate long-term goals for these areas that support guidelines for development and public spaces established in the Design Manual and through future functional plans outlined in this Plan.

2.4.1 Vision for Precinct 1: Southern Waterfront

Centred on the southern end of Lower Water Street and anchored by the Halifax Harbourwalk, Cornwallis Park, and the seawall, the southern waterfront is one of downtown Halifax's most desirable neighbourhoods. Building on the existing residential area, significant residential intensification alongside a mix of other compatible civic and commercial uses can serve to create both a great new destination and a splendid place to live overlooking the harbour and within enviable proximity to all the amenities that downtown living has to offer.

New mixed-use, mid-rise and high-rise buildings will be the emphasis of the new infill, which will serve to introduce a significant critical mass of people while closing the gaps in the southern waterfront streetscape. These developments will solidify the link between the central downtown and its southern extent anchored by the train station. Building on the existing residential character and heritage resources, new developments will create an integrated and harmonious high density neighbourhood with an exceptional street-level vibrancy including convenience retail outlets, sidewalk cafes, specialty shops, end of street plazas and grade-access residential units.

Defining landmark developments and improvements include the adaptively reused and integrated power plant facility, a landmark development of signature architectural quality at the southern terminus of Lower Water Street, and waterfront plazas framed by new potential cultural attractions at the foot of Morris Street and Marginal Road. In concert with open space and streetscape improvements, a strong linkage will be established between the Halifax Harbourwalk and Cornwallis Park to complete the connection between downtown Halifax's southern destination anchors and further stimulate pedestrian movement throughout

the area. The southern waterfront is a precinct defined by the harbour, with open spaces along the Halifax Harbourwalk, at the end of the streets leading to the harbour. New buildings will fill in existing gaps along the streetscape. Lower Water Street will have great sidewalks, landscaping and a streetwall that emphasizes its meandering qualities. Pedestrian-oriented retail shops and services will frame open spaces.

2.4.2 Vision for Precinct 2: Barrington Street South

Centred on the historic south Barrington Street spine and anchored by Cornwallis Park, this precinct serves as downtown Halifax's southern gateway comprised of an eclectic mix of small to mid-sized specialty retail, restaurant and professional office uses. This precinct will serve as a renewed community focus for the surrounding neighbourhoods, while providing for a transition in scale and intensity between the downtown and the established low-rise residential areas to the south and west. The low to mid-rise heights, concentration of impressive historic buildings and the formal public square are defining qualities that lend to this precinct's traditional 'European' charm and character.

Improvements to Cornwallis Park and its framing streetscapes enhance the image of the park and serve as a catalyst for revitalizing the area. This will occur through the creation of a traditional urban square framed by continuous at-grade commercial uses, cafes, hotels and key historic buildings, including the train station. Speciality shops, restaurants and services will be drawn to the distinct architectural character of south Barrington and Hollis Streets, providing the local and surrounding residential population with convenience and complementary amenities. Infilling of vacant lots combined with streetscape improvements will greatly strengthen the precinct's role as a link between the south end, the Spring Garden Road area, the waterfront and the central downtown.

Defining landmark developments and improvements will include the enhancement of Cornwallis Park to establish and formalize its civic function as the third anchor point in the triangle of downtown public squares, which includes the Grand Parade and Public Gardens. The park's signature paving and landscape treatments will extend onto the surrounding streets and to the fronts of the framing buildings. The framing of Cornwallis Park will be completed with a signature development at its south face, which can integrate the existing grocery store function while providing a compelling architectural landmark and public art installations to the Barrington and Hollis view terminus sites.

2.4.3 Vision for Precinct 3: Spring Garden Road Area

This precinct is one of downtown Halifax's most appealing and vibrant mixed-use areas centred on the lively Spring Garden Road commercial corridor. With proximity to major health and academic institutional complexes, and surrounded by tremendous green amenity, the Spring Garden Road precinct will play a leading role in defining the image of downtown as a livable, enriching and sustainable place to live, work and play. Additional commercial uses and enhancements to the streetscapes will further strengthen the precinct's critical pedestrian function as a link between the downtown and the institutions and neighbourhoods to the west and east.

Residential, office, retail and mixed-uses in mid to high-rise buildings will continue to ensure the critical density of people and activity that lend to the precinct's vitality while providing for greater utility and physical enclosure to the surrounding open spaces. New, large scaled developments will be carefully designed to ensure that pedestrians on Spring Garden Road continue to enjoy sunlight for significant periods throughout the day. Infill opportunities along Clyde Street, adjacent to the historic Schmidville neighbourhood, reinforces its residential character while transitioning in height from the mid-rise buildings permitted along Spring Garden Road, to the existing low-rise buildings of Schmidville to the south. The mixed-use nature of the new buildings along Clyde Street provide a transition in intensity of use from the active retail required along Spring Garden Road to the primarily residential uses in Schmidville. Infill developments along Spring Garden Road to the east of Queen Street will reinforce the area's distinct qualities characterized by historic civic monuments with landscaped setbacks.

Defining landmark developments and improvements will include the enhancement of Spring Garden Road as the key east-west downtown pedestrian connection that links the Public Gardens to the Barrington Street Heritage Conservation District. The former Halifax Infirmary property will be infilled with a mix of uses that will serve to fill the major 'gaps' in the precinct while complementing the adjacent established and historically

significant neighbourhoods.

2.4.4 Vision for Precinct 4: Lower Central Downtown

Fronting on the central waterfront, and containing a large concentration of downtown office towers, hotels and major regional attractions, this precinct will continue to serve as the primary regional hub for commerce, culture and tourism. The gaps along the waterfront are infilled with a mix of uses that integrate parking facilities and are focused around a series of distinctly designed waterfront plazas at the ends of the streets leading to the Halifax Harbour. Most significant of these plazas is at the terminus of the Grand Promenade, which serves as a splendid east-west spine that links the waterfront, Grand Parade and the Citadel along Carmichael and George Streets. The design of the Grand Promenade will provide an appealing route for pedestrians to traverse the steep slope to access many downtown attractions and destinations.

New mid and high-rise developments along the waterfront will step down in height to ensure a low-rise frontage along the Halifax Harbourwalk, while infill within the historic block and street pattern will be massed to ensure that buildings have proportional relationships to the shallow depths of the blocks and narrow widths of the streets. In addition to major new office complexes, substantial new high-density residential developments will help to balance the mix of uses in the precinct and ensure a vibrant street life throughout the day and in all seasons.

Defining landmark developments and improvements will include the infill of major vacant sites to the south and along the waterfront, the redevelopment of the ferry terminal to create an identifiable civic landmark, and major enhancements to the public realm that include key streetscape improvements, new plazas and key public art installations.

2.4.5 Vision for Precinct 5: Barrington Street Heritage Conservation District

The Barrington Street Heritage Conservation District is the downtown's heritage heart and soul, and serves as the central retail spine that connects to all but one of downtown Halifax's precincts. Building on its exceptional assets, which include great accessibility, traditional 'main street' charm, and an extraordinary assembly of historic resources, this precinct will continue to be one of the downtown Halifax's key destinations for shopping, dining, galleries, entertainment and cultural attractions. Sensitive adaptive re-use, additions and infill help to enhance the street while reinforcing its historic character. New development will be harmonious with the existing historic character of Barrington Street in terms of massing and proportion, materials, and architectural features, but will not necessarily mimic heritage architecture. A residential population and small-scale businesses in the creative sector will be drawn to the loft spaces and prestigious character associated with the grandeur of the historic buildings.

The heritage value of the Barrington Street Heritage Conservation District lies in the historic and architectural significance of its buildings and civic open spaces, and its evolution as Halifax's principal downtown commercial street for over 260 years. The open spaces, churches, and historic government buildings at the northern and southern ends of the precinct provide tangible reminders of the downtown's social, civic, and religious development in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, and the continuation of these functions in the present day.

The northern and southern ends of the precinct are characterized by historic government buildings and churches with a high order of architectural design set in landscaped open spaces, and defined by formalized paths, perimeter walls, and public monuments. The old commercial part of the precinct between these historic open spaces has a dense urban form based on the original block pattern of sixteen, 12.2m x 18.3m lots per block. Some buildings occupy single lots; others occupy double lots or larger lot consolidations. Buildings vary in width and height, from two to six storeys, with most in the three or four storey range, giving the streetscape a varied skyline and block profile. Some buildings are low and narrow, others higher and wider, in many cases with a projecting cornice or parapet at the roof-line. This varied profile is an important character-defining element of Barrington Street and contributes both to the architectural variety and human scale of the street and the varied sunlight and shadow conditions.

2.4.6 Vision for Precinct 6: Upper Central Downtown

Fronting on the Citadel, anchored to the north and south by major civic destinations, and near Barrington Street, this precinct has enhanced appeal as a location for the hospitality and entertainment industry. The fine-grained historic block and street pattern lends well to the concentration of pedestrian-oriented alternative shops, restaurants, bars, night clubs, sidewalk cafes and cultural venues such as performing arts theatres. Infill and redevelopments continue to intensify this area's distinct function as the downtown's arts and entertainment district by accommodating complementary uses such as hotels, small-scale offices for creative related ventures, galleries and artist studios.

New low to mid-rise buildings will be designed to ensure proportional relationships to the shallow depths of the blocks and narrow widths of the streets. Streetscape improvements accommodate the area's high pedestrian volumes and support spill out activities, and lend well to the staging of outdoor events and festivals. Buildings fronting on George, Argyle and Carmichael Streets will be re-adapted to provide a positive pedestrian frontage. New development will feature smaller-scale commercial spaces, narrower frontages, and architectural detailing that supports a pedestrian environment.

A central feature to the Upper Central Downtown Precinct, and an exception to its low to mid-rise buildings, is the development of the Nova Centre, which includes a publicly-sponsored convention centre together with retail, hotel, residential or office.

2.4.7 Vision for Precinct 7: Historic Properties

This contiguous and intact heritage environment will continue to serve as a major attraction and hub of social and commercial activity in downtown Halifax. Anchored by the waterfront and the Granville Street Pedestrian Mall, this precinct's character is defined by low-rise buildings and the intimate spaces they frame. The convergence of small-scale retail uses, a market, restaurants, bars, institutional uses, galleries, and hotels creates a charming and vibrant 'urban village' in the heart of downtown. This unique function will be further strengthened with the transformation of the Cogswell Interchange, which places this precinct in a central position to serve as an area focus and primary pedestrian linkage to newly developed areas to the north.

Sensitive adaptive re-use, additions and infill will help to revitalize the precinct while reinforcing its historic character. The Granville Street Pedestrian Mall will be further enhanced by the development of the site to its north, which will reinforce the low-rise street wall and provide a complementary landmark feature to mark its north view terminus. Enhancements to the streetscapes and crosswalks, as well as a potential plaza to the north, will help to strengthen east-west pedestrian connections and links to the waterfront.

2.4.8 Vision for Precinct 8: Cogswell Area

Over the life of this Plan, the dismantling of the Cogswell Interchange will enable the transformation of this area into a coherent and appealing mixed-use precinct that will serve to reconnect the downtown with the north end, provide a compelling northern gateway, and accommodate a significant density of office, commercial and residential uses. The development of contemporary landmark towers will enhance and update the downtown skyline and potentially redefine its image. These high densities will be supported by a network of pedestrian-scaled blocks framed by high-quality streetscapes and public spaces. Existing buildings and structures that ignore the pedestrian experience will be readapted to provide positive street frontages with retail use at-grade.

New streets and improved alignments will enhance pedestrian connections to the waterfront and to the north end neighbourhoods. Towers will sit on low-rise podiums that reinforce human-scaled streetscapes while accommodating rooftop gardens and amenity spaces for their inhabitants. Building heights will step down toward the neighbourhoods to the north and the harbour while further enhancing the shape of the skyline. The approach and entry into the downtown from Barrington and Cogswell Streets will be greatly enhanced through high-quality streetscaping and clearly defined gateways with landmark public art installations.

2.4.9 Vision for Precinct 9: North End Gateway

Fronting onto the Citadel and interfacing with the existing historic neighbourhoods of the north end, this

precinct will become one of the downtown's most desirable residential neighbourhoods afforded with tremendous views of the Halifax Harbour and proximity to the Commons and the services and shops of Gottingen Street.

Existing civic and recreational facilities will be integrated into new, mixed-use developments that frame the streets while providing architectural features to enhance important north-south view corridors from the areas to the north. Mid-rise buildings will provide interior courtyard gardens accessed through mid-block connections. Their massing and material quality will provide for a complementary transition to the distinct character of the neighbourhood to the north. Gottingen's intersection with Cogswell and its link to Brunswick will become an important civic focus for the area that will extend the 'main street' character towards Citadel Hill.

Policy 2 The Municipality shall, through the applicable provisions contained in the Land Use By-law and through capital investments in downtown Halifax, implement the vision for downtown Halifax as outlined in this chapter to guide future development and investment in public space in downtown Halifax. This vision consists of the following components:

- (a) Downtown Halifax Vision Statement;
- (b) Guiding Principles;
- (c) The Ten Big Moves; and
- (d) Downtown Precinct Visions.

CHAPTER 3: BUILT FORM AND PRECINCT FRAMEWORK

3.1 BUILT FORM FRAMEWORK

Built form generally refers to the shape, pattern and configuration of buildings and structures that frame streets and open spaces. Built form also refers to architecture; that is, the height of buildings, the articulation of their form, and the quality of their materials and construction. The distinct built form identity of downtown Halifax, as with most historic centres, is closely linked to its human-scale and the fine-grain rhythm of uses and buildings.

The built form framework for downtown Halifax guides decisions regarding growth and development such that the desired scale, function, quality and character of new development are consistent with the vision and principles outlined in Chapter 2. The built form framework ensures that development maintains appropriate relationships with streets and open spaces, that there are appropriate relationships between buildings, and that there are appropriate transitions between areas of differing scale and intensity of use. Although the built form framework is considerate of land uses, its central focus is on the character, shape, scale and design of buildings; it is therefore said to be a form-based approach to development regulation, consistent with the direction of the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy.

The built form framework establishes and is supported by the following objectives:

- (a) Shaping and guiding new development to respond to the unique context and potential of downtown Halifax;
- (b) Clarity of urban design intentions and a reasonable level of predictability of outcomes in the form, scale and intensity of new development;
- (c) Flexibility for a variety of development responses that may be shaped by land uses, market forces, and the complex and organic nature of existing building, property and block patterns in downtown Halifax;
- (d) Securing meaningful public benefits from the private sector through the carefully considered use of bonus zoning as enabled under the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*;
- (e) Enhancing the pedestrian environment by ensuring appropriate interfaces between buildings and sidewalks;
- (f) Maximizing sun exposure and views of the sky by introducing appropriate controls for building massing and the relationships between buildings;
- (g) Reinforcing distinct precinct character by identifying desirable unique built form characteristics and guiding new developments to reinforce and enhance those defining qualities;
- (h) Ensuring feasible and viable forms of development by providing a framework in which a variety of uses and functions can be accommodated with consideration for necessary functions such as servicing, parking, and access to light and privacy; and
- (i) Attention to civic design and architectural quality by providing guidance for building articulation, material quality, sustainable design, and for reinforcing the visual prominence of special sites.

The built form framework recognizes the complexity of downtown Halifax with respect to property ownership, property size and configurations, block and street patterns, land uses, as well as existing building types, densities and heights. Therefore, the approach taken for shaping new development focuses on defining a set of parameters and standards concerned with ensuring the appropriate building form. Accordingly, the built form framework is comprised of the following four sections:

- (a) Downtown Precincts – established to focus and direct context-specific land uses, appropriate development character, heritage protection, and public investment in accordance with existing and desired precinct character;
- (b) “Complete Communities” Land Use – provides guidance for directing certain uses and supporting amenities, services and programs to reinforce existing or desired land use characteristics;
- (c) “Pedestrians First” Streetscapes – provides guidance for the design of streetscapes and associated design elements in support of a positive pedestrian-oriented environment; and
- (d) Building Design – provides guidance for consideration of the unique qualities of the different precincts that make up the downtown, and guidance for the appropriate height, massing, and design of new development.

These four sections are interrelated components of the built form framework, and all four are to be considered in concert when determining the appropriate development scale, character and design on any given site.

3.2 DOWNTOWN PRECINCTS

As outlined in Chapter 2, downtown Halifax features nine distinct precincts. These are defined on **Map 2**. They have varying characters, functional identities and building forms. The objective of identifying these precincts is to define appropriate character for development, protect heritage, and direct public investment.

Policy 3 The Municipality shall adopt the downtown precincts as shown on **Map 2** and use these precincts to define appropriate character for development through the site plan approval process.

3.2.1 Waterfront Development (Precincts 1 and 4)

The Halifax waterfront includes lands extending from the east of Lower and Upper Water Streets to the water's edge. These lands are a significant public resource and define the image and identity of downtown Halifax. Most undeveloped lands within this area are owned by the Waterfront Development Corporation Limited (WDCL), the provincial crown corporation responsible for purchasing, consolidating, redeveloping, and revitalizing lands around Halifax Harbour. WDCL works with private sector developers to facilitate investment in public infrastructure and amenities to further reinforce the waterfront as a vibrant place to live, do business, invest and visit.

The waterfront is uniquely characterized by an organic and diverse built form with many opportunities for intensification and redevelopment. A higher degree of design discretion is required to respond to this unique development pattern and ensure future waterfront development responds to public interests and objectives in relation to the water's edge. The water's edge and the terminus of the east-west Harbour streets are fundamental components of the open space network for downtown, as are the goals of public and visual access to the water. The east-west orientation of buildings as typified by Historic Properties is an established character to be reinforced through the design review process anticipated by this Plan. It is critical for public safety reasons that new development along the Halifax waterfront includes design measures to mitigate the impacts of sea level rise. These considerations will be addressed as part of the design review guidelines.

In recognition of the shared mandate for planning the public use of these lands, the Municipality shall seek to negotiate an agreement with WDCL, with appropriate capital and operating cost sharing strategies that will guide the following design objectives for the waterfront:

- (a) Encourage low, medium, and high-rise development at appropriate locations and massing that will enhance the waterfront experience through well-designed architecture and public spaces;
- (b) Encourage linear building forms perpendicular to Lower Water Street that step down in height as they approach the water's edge;
- (c) Ensure visual and public access to the water's edge and views of the harbour through the extensions of east-west streets as public open space, and a continuous public boardwalk along the water's edge;
- (d) Establish appropriate funding arrangements for capital public realm improvements;
- (e) Ensure a continuous, pedestrian scale streetwall along the east side of Lower Water Street;
- (f) Encourage the redevelopment of surface parking lots and restrict future surface parking; and
- (g) Ensure development mitigates the impacts of climate change and where possible, incorporates sustainable design principles.

Policy 4 The Municipality shall, through the Land Use By-law, provide provisions for lands along the Halifax waterfront east of Lower Water Street. The Land Use By-law shall include provisions for development within Area HW, which represents the waterfront lands, to address the following matters:

- (a) Provide more discretion over the design and form of development;
- (b) Ensure appropriate transitions in heights stepping down to the water's edge;
- (c) Maximize view of the sky, sun penetration to public spaces and streets, and visual and public access to the water;
- (d) Allow for flexibility in building forms that reinforce the east-west orientation of development;
- (e) When water lots are to be infilled, the development shall ensure public use and access to the water's edge; and
- (f) Incorporate provisions to ensure development considers measures to mitigate the effects of sea level rise and storm surge events.

Policy 5 The Municipality shall seek to negotiate an agreement with Waterfront Development Corporation Limited to further implement the development and public realm objectives for the Halifax Waterfront.

3.2.2 Spring Garden Road (Precinct 3)

Spring Garden Road is an important pedestrian and retail corridor connecting major employment, open spaces and cultural destinations. In recognition of this function, built form provisions will be established to ensure development is further stepped back on the south side of Spring Garden Road between Queen Street and South Park Street to provide adequate sunlight penetration to the street. Increased setbacks of the building above a certain height will also be required on the east side of South Park Street between Spring Garden Road and Sackville Streets adjoining the Public Gardens.

Policy 6 The Municipality shall, through the Land Use By-law, establish built form requirements for development on the south side of Spring Garden Road between Queen Street and South Park Street, and along the east side of South Park Street between Sackville Street and Spring Garden Road, to ensure adequate sunlight penetration to the street and the adjoining Public Gardens.

3.3 COMPLETE COMMUNITIES - LAND USE

Complete communities allow people to find housing, employment, shopping, entertainment, and recreation within a small area. These communities make it easy for someone to fulfill most of their daily needs with a variety of transportation options such as walking, cycling, and transit. Such an approach depends on encouraging diverse land uses to occur, rather than separating them in different areas of the community.

3.3.1 Land Use Mix

In support of the diverse urban character of downtown Halifax, a broad range of residential, commercial, and cultural uses are permitted and encouraged throughout the downtown with few restrictions. The importance of downtown Halifax as an employment centre will continue to be recognized and supported. The components of the built form framework discussed in section 3.5 Building Design, provide for varied forms of development in low, mid, and high-rise buildings to accommodate the future employment growth needs for downtown. This Plan also supports more people living downtown. Residential growth is supported by removing previous density limitations and encouraging a broad mix of unit types, housing affordability, and amenities to support downtown living. These strategies are further discussed in section 3.3.2.

Policy 7 The Municipality shall establish a Downtown Halifax designation and apply it to all of the lands as shown on **Map 1**.

Policy 8 The Municipality shall establish two zones in the Land Use By-law within the Downtown Halifax designation. An Institutional, Cultural & Open Space Zone (ICO) and a Downtown Halifax Zone (DH-1). The Institutional, Cultural & Open Space Zone as identified on the map in the Land Use By-law, is intended for use on lands containing parks, museums, libraries, places of worship, existing university academic buildings, and other similar institutions or open spaces. The Downtown Halifax Zone is intended for use on all other

lands.

- Policy 9 The Municipality shall establish provisions within the Land Use By-law to ensure that accessory eating or retail uses within any Institutional, Cultural & Open Space Zone (ICO), have no separate entrances from the exterior of the building.

3.3.2 Provision of a Mix of Housing Types

This Plan sets a goal of increasing residential population in downtown Halifax with individuals and families at all stages of their lives, and from across the demographic and economic spectrum with a variety of housing needs. The following policies address two key aspects of downtown housing related to housing type and affordability.

Housing Type: The lack of downtown housing opportunities for households of two or more people must be addressed. Downtown housing is currently dominated by studio and one-bedroom apartment units. The existing downtown housing stock must therefore be augmented with an increased number of two-or-more-bedroom dwelling units through requirements established in the Land Use By-law that specify minimum ratios for dwelling unit types.

Housing Affordability: Housing opportunities for residents with a variety of income levels must be accommodated. Therefore, housing affordability, as defined in the Land Use By-law, shall be encouraged through the bonus zoning provisions of this Plan. The external appearance of affordable units should be indistinguishable from market units. These and other design considerations for such housing are set out in the Design Manual.

Beyond the regulatory provisions of the Land Use By-law, there is a significant opportunity for municipal, provincial and federal departments and agencies to lead the way in increasing housing affordability with the redevelopment of publicly owned lands in downtown Halifax.

- Policy 10 The Municipality shall, through the Land Use By-law, require a mix of housing types in downtown Halifax.
- Policy 11 The Municipality shall encourage the provision of affordable residential units in downtown Halifax through the bonus zoning provisions of this Plan. Further, it shall be the intention of the Municipality to collaborate with other orders of government to encourage leadership in the provision of housing affordability in the redevelopment of publicly owned lands in the downtown.

3.3.3 Urban Agriculture

Urban agriculture is an opportunity for people to improve their food security, make social connections, and fulfill their recreation needs by growing on a small scale in the urban environment. This could take the form of such things as community gardens, rooftop planters and greenhouses, beekeeping, collecting fruit from urban trees, and many more similar activities. These activities are consistent with this Plan's principles of sustainability, vibrancy, and beauty, and should be encouraged.

- Policy 12 The Municipality shall, through the Land Use By-law, permit urban agriculture activities and related structures such as community gardens, rooftop planters and greenhouses, and bee hives in all zones.

3.4 PEDESTRIAN FIRST STREETSCAPES

A pedestrian-first approach to streets and streetscapes prioritizes the needs and comfort of pedestrians in all seasons. Such an approach recognizes that—while other means of transportation are important—all trips begin and end on foot. If the urban environment is well-designed, many trips can be completed purely on foot or in a wheelchair. Downtown Halifax already has a diversity of land uses, a complete sidewalk network, and many of the public space improvements that make walking or wheeling enjoyable. Continued attention to these details will result in an even better environment for pedestrians in downtown

Halifax.

3.4.1 Primary Pedestrian-Oriented Commercial Streetscapes

Primary pedestrian-oriented commercial streetscapes are those downtown Halifax streetscapes with primarily at-grade retail or other commercial uses that animate the sidewalk, and that should be encouraged and enhanced. These streets typically feature streetwalls with continuous retail uses at grade and are characterized by close placement to the sidewalk, narrow shop fronts, high levels of glazing, and frequent entries. New developments along primary pedestrian-oriented commercial streetscapes will be required to provide active at-grade uses. Examples of such active uses include: retail, restaurants and cafes, banking, and other services.

Policy 13 The Municipality shall, through the Land Use By-law, designate primary pedestrian-oriented commercial streetscapes, including significant portions of Barrington Street and Spring Garden Road, and establish requirements for retail and other commercial uses at street level.

3.4.2 Drive-Throughs

Drive-throughs are often seen as a convenient service delivery model within primarily automobile-oriented environments. However, they are not appropriate in a denser and more compact urban context, particularly where a key goal is to foster a healthy pedestrian environment. To reduce potential conflicts between pedestrians and automobiles, maintain the built form character of urban neighbourhoods, and protect the aesthetic quality of urban streetscapes, drive-throughs will be prohibited in downtown Halifax.

Policy 14 The Municipality shall, through the Land Use By-law, prohibit drive-throughs within the Downtown Halifax designation.

3.4.3 Pedestrian Weather Protection

A crucial aspect of encouraging a vibrant downtown is making it comfortable for pedestrians in all seasons. Through design review, the Design Manual shall encourage development that incorporates provisions for weather protection such as canopies or awnings at the street level.

Throughout downtown Halifax a system of pedways provides year-round interior connections between major downtown destinations such as shopping districts, office towers, hotels, and convention facilities. While pedway networks may provide pedestrian weather protection, pedways in downtown Halifax can reduce pedestrian activity at the street level, contrary to the intent of this Plan. Although future pedestrian connections will be encouraged at the street level, this Plan recognizes the existing pedway system and enables its continuation in conjunction with major developments, provided the design conforms with the design guidelines set out in the Land Use By-law, and that they do not obscure east-west views of the Harbour.

Policy 15 The Municipality shall establish provisions in the Design Manual section of the Land Use By-law to encourage development to incorporate features such as canopies and awnings to provide weather protection for pedestrians at the street level.

Policy 16 The Municipality may permit pedways to be constructed in conjunction with development projects provided they are connected to the existing pedway network. In this regard, any new pedway shall:

- (a) Connect with a clearly defined and accessible indoor route to another existing pedway; and
- (b) Not obscure east-west views of the Halifax Harbour.

3.4.4 Existing Street Grid and Blocks

In the past, streets have been closed and blocks have been consolidated to enable large scale development

projects. The traditional street grid provides a high level of connectivity and is an important characteristic of the downtown. It should not be subject to further consolidation or widenings. The Cogswell Interchange presents an opportunity to re-establish a network of streets and new blocks that better integrate with the traditional street grid of downtown Halifax, and improves the connectivity between downtown Halifax and the north end of the peninsula.

Policy 17 The Municipality shall not close streets or permit blocks in downtown Halifax to be consolidated for development, except for the reorganization of the network of streets associated with the Cogswell Interchange.

Policy 18 The Municipality shall not undertake substantial street widenings in the Plan area, shown on **Map 1**, that would materially alter the character of the street grid.

3.4.5 Parking

Parking is an important amenity for many people who want to visit downtown Halifax, and for residents who are making trips within the downtown that require a vehicle. However, parking facilities and excess parking, especially surface parking lots, can contribute to a poor pedestrian environment because of the space they require. Parking, where necessary, should be designed and located with the pedestrian-oriented environment of downtown Halifax in mind. Within increased focus on encouraging active transportation as a convenient mode of transportation, bicycle parking will be required.

Policy 19 The Municipality shall, through the Land Use By-law, require on-site bicycle parking.

Policy 20 The Municipality shall, through the Land Use By-law, exempt development within downtown Halifax from requiring on-site vehicular parking.

Policy 21 The Municipality shall, through the Land Use By-law, prohibit forms of parking lots and structures that detract from a pedestrian-focused environment. The types of prohibited facilities may be tailored to each precinct in consideration of the precinct visions established in section 2.3 of this Plan.

Policy 22 To limit surface parking and encourage appropriately designed parking structures, the Municipality shall, through the Land Use By-law, establish design criteria related to location, design, and layout of commercial parking garages

3.5 BUILDING DESIGN

Downtown Halifax comprises areas that are established and stable, areas that are dynamic and ever-changing, and areas that are historic. While accommodating future growth is a fundamental objective of this Plan, development will not occur uniformly, in scale or in character, over time. This section serves to provide predictability with respect to important design characteristics that development must observe depending on location, adjacencies, distinct areas or streets and desired land uses.

3.5.1 Heights Framework

To ensure clarity and predictability in the desired height and building pattern for downtown Halifax, this Plan establishes a maximum heights framework for development. Except under the conditions outlined within the Land Use By-law and Design Manual, the maximum heights framework can only be modified through an amendment to this Plan. The maximum heights framework provides a rational and balanced height pattern resulting from the synthesis of urban design considerations tailored to the downtown Halifax context including:

- (a) Protection of the pedestrian street level experience by promoting views of the sky above and sunlight penetration to the street;
- (b) Reinforcing the existing and desired character of the nine downtown Halifax precincts;
- (c) The introduction of Heritage Conservation Districts;
- (d) Respecting the modestly scaled historic block and street pattern;

- (e) A transition in heights to the Citadel, heritage areas, low-rise neighbourhoods and the waterfront;
- (f) Reinforcing a distributed and varied height pattern by directing taller buildings to areas where they already exist; and
- (g) Upholding the Citadel View Planes and Ramparts requirements from the Land Use By-law for Halifax Peninsula.

Policy 23 The Municipality shall adopt the building heights shown on **Map 4** as the maximum pre-bonus building heights permitted in the Plan area.

3.5.2 Incentive or Bonus Zoning

Subject to the provisions of the Land Use By-law, View Planes and Citadel Ramparts regulations, a bonus in height is offered as an incentive for specific public benefits in excess of the minimum development requirements as set out in this Plan. The maximum post-bonus height as shown on **Map 5** can only be achieved by providing a public benefit. The pre-bonus heights as defined on **Map 4** will typically be lower than those shown on **Map 5**. To encourage redevelopment and to provide further incentive for the conservation and re-use of heritage resources, the bonus zoning provisions shall not be applied within the Barrington Street Heritage Conservation District (precinct 5), the two potential Heritage Conservation Districts (precincts 2 and 7), or to low-rise building forms. Bonus zoning is voluntary, predictable and transparent. The resulting proposals shall demonstrate principles of good planning practice. The proposed public benefits must demonstrate how they will improve the social or public realm of the area experiencing urban intensification. Public benefits provided shall be of high quality, long-lasting, and respond appropriately to the local context. Public benefits should be located within the development site or Plan area.

Policy 24 Notwithstanding Policy 23, the Municipality shall adopt the building heights shown on **Map 5** as the maximum post-bonus heights permitted in this Plan. These post-bonus heights shall only be permitted through the provision of public benefit, as provided for in Policy 25.

Policy 25 The Municipality shall consider a variety of public benefits when assessing site plan approval applications seeking a height bonus in exchange for the provision of a public benefit, in accordance with the bonus zoning provisions of the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*. The Municipality shall establish provisions in the Land Use By-law to guide negotiations of appropriate public benefits including:

- (a) Affordable housing units on the lot;
- (b) Conservation of a registered heritage property as part of development;
- (c) Publicly accessible amenity or open space on the project site;
- (d) Affordable community or cultural indoor space;
- (e) Public art; and
- (f) Cash-in-lieu where the Development Officer deems none of the above are appropriate.

Policy 26 The Municipality shall, through the Land Use By-law, identify areas where bonus zoning is permitted, set out matters that shall be considered before approving an incentive or bonus zoning agreement and the method to be used to determine the public benefit and its value.

Policy 27 Further to Policy 25, the value of public benefits shall be based on a share of increase in local land values resulting from post-bonus heights, which shall be set out in the Land Use By-law for the entire Plan Area.

3.5.3 Multi-District Recreation Facility

In 2011, a new YMCA recreation facility was approved as part of a mixed-use development, extending from the south-east corner of Sackville and South Park Streets. Part of the proposal included a residential tower, to a maximum height of 49 metres, on lands where the maximum permitted height is 23 metres.

- Policy 28 Notwithstanding the maximum pre- and post-heights shown on **Map 4** and **Map 5**, but subject to the Rampart requirements of the Land Use By-law, the Municipality shall establish provisions in the Land Use By-law to permit an increase in the maximum building height on lands at the south-east corner of Sackville Street and South Park Street from 23 metres to 49 metres, where a new multi-district recreation facility is developed in whole or as part of a mixed-use development at 1565, 1599 and 1601 South Park Street and 5600 Sackville Street. With the additional height, there shall be provisions for the upper storeys of a building on these lands to be stepped back from Sackville Street and South Park Street.
- Policy 29 Pursuant to Policy 28, a multi-district recreation facility means a building or part of a building that has a minimum of 6500 square metres of gross floor area, which is used for community recreation activities, for which a membership or instruction fee may be charged, and that includes a gymnasium, an exercise room, a swimming pool, meeting rooms, and community gathering areas.

3.5.4 Building Envelopes

Building envelopes establish the massing of new developments in downtown Halifax. These envelopes were derived from a comprehensive process of exploration and testing and embody a complex and layered set of urban design considerations. As a result, the building envelopes:

- (a) Reinforce human-scaled streetscapes through proportional street wall heights;
- (b) Provide transitions in scale to low-rise areas and the waterfront;
- (c) Define appropriate standards for bulk, above grade stepbacks, and separation distances of buildings to ensure adequate street-level conditions with respect to minimizing wind and maximizing sun penetration and sky exposure; and
- (d) Balance height and massing relationships to prevent a canyon effect on streets where taller buildings are appropriate.

The envelopes organize all possible building heights into the following categories:

- (a) Low-rise building envelope;
- (b) Mid-rise building envelope; and
- (c) High-rise building envelope.

The envelopes are categorized in this way to reflect the differing set of urban design standards that are applicable for each of the three ranges of heights. Although the guidance provided in this Chapter with respect to matters such as heritage and streetwall conditions are consistently applied to all three envelopes, the massing standards will differ among them. Buildings have different effects as they get taller, and can have compounding impacts on the public realm that need to be mitigated with corresponding controls on massing, floor plate size, and separation distances.

- Policy 30 The Municipality shall, through the Land Use By-law, adopt building envelopes for low, mid, and high-rise portions of buildings for the purposes of establishing desirable building streetwall heights and massing requirements.

3.5.5 Streetwall Character

Streetwall character is primarily concerned with providing guidance for how buildings should interface with the sidewalk and the quality of the enclosure they provide to the street. The placement, scale and design quality of the building's streetwall determines the nature and character of the streetscape and reinforces desired pedestrian or broader public realm objectives. This Plan, therefore, provides direction on streetwall height and on streetwall setbacks:

- (a) Streetwall height refers to the height of the base of a building rising from the sidewalk level. The height of the streetwall shall ensure a comfortable human-scaled street enclosure. Accordingly, maximum streetwall heights will change in accordance with the varying widths of downtown streets.

This enables a range in streetwall heights that can accommodate as much as a two-storey discrepancy on steep sloping sites with frontages on streets of differing elevations.

- (b) Streetwall setback refers to the location of the front face of a building relative to the street line. While retail and commercial streets are framed by buildings uniformly placed at the sidewalk with no setback, other areas that are more residential or institutional in character are framed by buildings that vary in their setback from the street. To reinforce existing and desired streetscape and land use characteristics, streetwall setbacks are categorized into a hierarchy of setback standards.

Policy 31 The Municipality shall, through the Land Use By-law, establish provisions to control streetwall heights, streetwall setbacks and setbacks, and how buildings should interface with the sidewalk.

Policy 32 Streetwall height shall be no less than two storeys, as measured from the sidewalk level.

Policy 33 Overhanging or cantilevered portions of a streetwall shall not exceed 25% of any building façade, as measured horizontally, at-grade or sidewalk level.

3.5.6 Sustainable Building Design

Sustainable design is architecture, landscaping and engineering that considers conserving energy, materials, natural resources and systems in their planning, design, construction and life cycle. This includes public as well as private development, and encompasses streets, parks, and buildings.

This Plan supports principles of sustainable building design as part of the design program for downtown Halifax development. However, many aspects of sustainable building design fall outside the scope of a municipal plan, and are best handled by other policies and regulations, such as the building code.

Policy 34 The Municipality shall coordinate with the Province in strengthening existing municipal and provincial regulations in the areas of energy conservation and sustainable building and site design.

3.5.7 Signage

Signs are an important facet of the external design of development and the overall image of downtown Halifax. Accordingly, the Land Use By-law will regulate aspects of signage related to the size, placement, and design of signs associated with development to ensure they contribute to the quality of individual buildings and the public realm.

Policy 35 The Municipality shall, through the Land Use By-law, regulate the size, placement and design quality of signs in downtown Halifax.

3.5.8 Heritage Character

Heritage character identifies the variety of heritage resources and contexts that currently exist in downtown Halifax that should have priority consideration where impacted by a new development. These resources are a legacy of the area's rich history and are a defining feature of downtown Halifax's character. Heritage policies in Chapter 4 govern heritage conservation, and distinct from those policies, the purpose of this section is to ensure development abutting heritage resources provides appropriate transitions based on the significance of the heritage resource. The Design Manual section of the Land Use By-law includes heritage guidelines for developments that are integrated with or abutting registered heritage properties. The intent of the guidelines is to ensure complementary development beside or surrounding registered heritage buildings.

One of the defining elements of the urban design character of downtown Halifax is the historic grid of the blocks that define much of the original settlement block pattern, designated as Central Blocks on **Map 3**. On these blocks, the scale of new developments shall be proportional to the modest depths of the blocks and narrow street widths. Special built form provisions will be established in the Land Use By-law in consideration of the historic block pattern.

- Policy 36 The Municipality shall, through the Design Manual section of the Land Use By-law, include heritage guidelines to be used in evaluating development proposals that are on or abutting registered heritage properties.
- Policy 37 The Municipality shall, through the Land Use By-law, establish appropriate building form provisions for the “Central Blocks” as shown on **Map 3**.

3.5.9 Building Impact on the Street

The design of buildings can have impacts on the micro-climate at street level, impacting the amount of sunlight and wind streets receive and thereby affecting pedestrian comfort. Good building design, meeting appropriate performance standards, can take these impacts into account, and implement measures to promote comfortable micro-climates.

- Policy 38 The Municipality shall, through the Land Use By-law, mitigate the impacts of development by:
- (a) Including requirements to maximize sunlight penetration and minimize wind impacts on sidewalks, particularly in relation to high-rise developments; and,
 - (b) Requiring all proposed developments for buildings taller than 22 metres to be subject to a wind impact assessment.

3.5.10 Landscaping & Rooftops

In situations where a building does not cover the whole lot, the open lands can help contribute to the beauty and quality of the public realm through well-designed landscaping.

Another area where landscaping can be beneficial is on rooftops. Here, landscaping can provide amenity space to residents. Even on inaccessible rooftops, purpose-designed landscaping can help contribute to sustainability goals by reducing rainwater runoff, keeping buildings cool in the summer and warm in the winter, and by extending the life of the rooftop. Rooftop landscaping can also improve the aesthetic quality of buildings when viewed from high vantage points, such as Citadel Hill.

- Policy 39 The Municipality shall, through the Land Use By-law, regulate ground-level landscaping.
- Policy 40 The Municipality shall require landscaping on those areas of a roof that are identified in the Land Use By-law. The Land Use By-law shall allow, on rooftops at a height equal to or exceeding 33.5 metres, landscaping to be substituted in whole or part by solar energy systems, including solar hot water, solar hot water, and solar electric.

CHAPTER 4: HERITAGE CONSERVATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Protection of heritage resources is a key component of the urban design vision and principles that underpin this Plan. Downtown Halifax consists of many unique and landmark historic buildings from different eras that play a role in defining the character of downtown Halifax and should be preserved and enhanced through the means set out in the *Charter* and the *Heritage Property Act*.

4.2 DOWNTOWN HALIFAX HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

A Heritage Conservation District (HCD) recognizes that there is a heritage character and heritage attributes that emerge from a collection of properties, including buildings, structures and landscapes (i.e. a street or a neighbourhood) where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. HCDs enable the Municipality to conserve the broader context of heritage resources. By focusing on the district as a whole, the Municipality can prescribe policies and guidelines and establish programs that over time, can link together heritage resources in a tangible way to ensure that the evolution of the area reinforces key heritage attributes. As such, HCDs ought to be considered not only as environments that already display a continuous heritage character, but should also be understood as a tool that can link together fragmented areas through the sensitive evolution of a district. There is currently one Heritage Conservation District enforced within downtown Halifax, the Barrington Street Heritage Conservation District. The Old South Suburb HCD is currently underway, and a third HCD, the Historic Properties area, is proposed.

Historic Properties Area

The Historic Properties area has long been recognized as one of the most cohesive heritage environments in downtown Halifax. The late 18th century waterfront warehouses were designated as a National Historic Site in 1963 and by the mid 1980s, all of the buildings in the three-block area bounded by Duke and former Buckingham Street between the Harbour and Granville Street had been registered as municipal heritage properties. Also, in 2006 the entire “Granville Block” between Hollis Street and Granville Street was designated as a National Historic Site.

Old South Suburb

The Old South Suburb (Barrington South Area) between Bishop Street and Cornwallis Park and including the parallel blocks along Hollis Street, also has a distinct character influenced by the many heritage buildings within it. This area was the first suburb developed outside the original walls of Halifax in the 18th Century, and includes some of our most prominent institutional, residential and commercial buildings.

Policy 41 The Municipality shall consider undertaking background studies and developing policies, strategies, and programs for a potential heritage conservation district in the Historic Properties area, and continue the work being done on the Old South Suburb HCD , as shown on **Map 6**.

4.3 PARTNERSHIPS AND INCENTIVES

4.3.1 Partnerships with the Province

Under the *Heritage Property Act*, registered municipal heritage properties are protected from demolition for only three years, pursuant to the Act. The Municipality will seek to collaborate with the Province of Nova Scotia to strengthen demolition controls, and other opportunities for strengthened protection for registered heritage properties.

Policy 42 The Municipality shall continue to encourage the Province of Nova Scotia to amend the *Heritage Property Act* to strengthen demolition control for registered municipal heritage properties.

4.3.2 Heritage Registry

The Municipality has established a Registry of Heritage Properties. In updating the Registry of Heritage Properties and establishing the new inventory, it is important to fully understand the heritage values and character defining elements that must be protected. In the same vein, heritage attributes may include the entire front facade, all portions of the building exterior, the entrance, and/or the landscaped portions of a property. These can potentially inform the design of new buildings and alterations.

- Policy 43 The Municipality shall continue to maintain a Registry of Heritage Properties which shall include information on all properties registered as Municipal Heritage Properties and shall:
- (a) continue to update the registry by developing statements of significance, heritage value, and character defining elements for each property so registered; and
 - (b) establish an inventory of properties that have potential for registration as municipal heritage properties or inclusion in municipal heritage conservation districts.
- Policy 44 The Municipality may proactively encourage new heritage property registrations by means of public education through publications, workshops, registration campaigns, and direct contact with potential heritage property owners.

4.3.3 Financial Incentives

The Municipality has a Heritage Incentives Grant Program that is available to residential or commercial heritage properties throughout the Municipality. The Municipality also provides grants to churches and other registered properties owned by non-profit organizations through its Community Grants program. Temporary incentive programs have also been developed specifically for the restoration of properties within Heritage Conservation Districts.

- Policy 45 The Municipality may provide financial incentives for the restoration and renovation of municipally registered heritage properties and properties in heritage conservation districts, subject to availability of funds and the annual budget process.

CHAPTER 5: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Among its many region-wide goals, the Halifax Regional Municipality Economic Growth Plan² calls for a vibrant, healthy and attractive downtown as a key ingredient in making our region a world-class urban centre. Downtown Halifax is the showroom for the Municipality given its prominence as the regional employment centre, the setting for major events, and the physical and symbolic centre for municipal and provincial governments.

The vision for downtown Halifax builds on the Municipality's reputation as a great and competitive Municipality. Downtown Halifax development policies must seek to promote growth and investment while protecting the heritage and human scale that attracts employees and residents to the centre.

The ideas in this Plan related to economic competitiveness and sustainability are fundamental to the goals of attracting and keeping a talented work force, which is critical to the future of downtown Halifax and the region. Excitement, vibrancy and a full suite of cultural, social and recreational amenities, choices in housing and diversity in all things will define successful cities moving forward.

There are four basic interconnected components of a successful downtown and a living, authentic and a dynamic municipality which are embodied in this Plan:

- (a) Liveability: which relates to the walkability and experience at the street level;
- (b) Critical mass: of buildings and people living, working, shopping and moving about downtown;
- (c) Economic Prosperity: when a critical mass and liveable downtown are achieved, there is an upward spiral whereby prosperity is increased; and
- (d) Culture: with increased prosperity comes opportunity for cultural undertakings such as art, theatre, music, and heritage preservation. The more these are funded and supported, the more liveable the downtown.

5.2 ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

This Plan promotes varied opportunities to accommodate the critical mass required to support the optimal growth for downtown Halifax. There are significant opportunities to grow within downtown Halifax by filling in the gaps, which includes vacant or underutilized lands where future growth could be directed within the capacity of existing municipal services. Also, there are many heritage resources which are candidates for reuse and revitalization.

This Plan provides for short, medium and long-term development growth. Over the course of this Plan starting in 2009, full realization of the build out of the downtown vision could yield upwards of 1.4 million square metres of development. This capacity is intended to achieve the following outcomes:

- (a) Ensure the viability of the traditional Central Business District (precincts 4, 5, 6, and 7) as a major employment location for the region;
- (b) Support related commercial, institutional and residential development needed to sustain employment growth;
- (c) Infilling and intensifying vacant or underutilized properties along the waterfront and traditional Central Business District; and
- (d) Support the redevelopment of the Cogswell Interchange lands (precinct 8).

With a clear and compelling vision articulated for the growth of downtown Halifax, there is greater certainty over the desired form of development. This Plan therefore includes form-based policies to support the timely implementation of this vision. The Plan will streamline the development approvals process for downtown Halifax to facilitate greater levels of development investment in the downtown Halifax and employ bonus zoning to secure key public benefits as identified in Chapter 3 of this Plan. The design review program for downtown development together with a capital investment plan, will create the desired image of downtown

² Halifax Regional Municipality's Economic Growth Plan 2016 - 2021.

Halifax as a vibrant and liveable place and a magnet for future growth. The policies creating a clear heights framework and the site plan approval process, located in Chapter 3 and 7, respectively, achieve these tasks.

Policy 46 The Municipality shall encourage applicants for development to efficiently use downtown land by consolidating primary development parcels with remnant abutting parcels where possible.

Policy 47 The Municipality shall:

- (a) ensure a critical mass of development to support future growth by providing for adequate development capacity and varied forms of development to accommodate the commercial and residential targets of this Plan;
- (b) provide clarity and predictability for downtown development;
- (c) promote high quality design, the revitalization of heritage resources, and encourage the redevelopment of vacant and underutilized lands in downtown Halifax;
- (d) develop a capital investment program to implement the desired improvements to the public realm;
- (e) facilitate higher order transit service for downtown Halifax; and
- (f) encourage growth of office development and related supportive uses particularly in the central business district (precincts, 4, 5, 6, and 7) to ensure downtown Halifax maintains its position as the dominant employment centre within the region.

5.2.1 Downtown Shuttle

Creation of a frequent, high-capacity shuttle service in downtown Halifax, with connections to nearby destinations such as hospitals and universities, has several benefits. First, it can expand the reach of express transit services and ferries that stop at a single location downtown. It can also improve connectivity within the downtown for visitors, shoppers, and employees alike.

Policy 48 The Municipality shall implement a downtown shuttle program that will service the needs of the downtown enabling connections to employment, shopping and cultural areas of the downtown for residents and visitors.

5.3 PUBLIC LANDS & FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT

There are significant vacant land holdings in downtown Halifax that are owned by municipal, provincial, and federal orders of government and agencies such as the Waterfront Development Corporation Limited. The downtown also has future needs with respect to investment and development of major public facilities such as expanded and new facilities for conventions, culture and recreation. This Plan presents an opportunity for government, in partnership with the private sector, to lead in the strategic development of these lands and facilities as demonstration projects for implementing the urban design vision for downtown Halifax. This Plan, therefore, supports an intergovernmental and co-ordinated approach to ensure strategic investment in public facilities and redevelopment of key public lands.

Policy 49 The Municipality shall work in cooperation with other orders of government to encourage the strategic redevelopment of public lands and investment in public amenities and support the implementation of this Plan. It shall be the intention of the Municipality to pursue agreements with the federal and provincial governments as appropriate to further goals related to sustainable building design and housing affordability.

5.4 COGSWELL INTERCHANGE LANDS

The Cogswell Interchange lands present a significant opportunity for transforming the downtown at its northern gateway. Repeatedly, throughout project consultations, the community has been nearly unanimous in requesting that the Cogswell Interchange be removed and a grid of city blocks and new development parcels be restored; an approach that is consistent with the Ten Big Moves.

The Municipality commissioned a conceptual plan for the Cogswell Interchange lands, titled “Cogswell Transformed⁴”. This concept plan considers:

- (a) Land use and long-term economic functions for downtown Halifax;
- (b) Appropriate transition in form and land use to nearby neighbourhoods;
- (c) Special attention to the design of the street network to ensure it meets the urban design objectives of the plan related to extension of the street grid pattern; and
- (d) The timing of bringing Cogswell Interchange lands into the development market once vacant and underutilized lands in the traditional CBD are developed.

Detailed planning and design is now underway for the redevelopment of the Cogswell Interchange lands. This Plan reflects the Municipality’s commitment to move forward with the planning and design work for the redevelopment of the Cogswell Interchange lands. This approach will capitalize on the momentum of this Plan, and will enable sound decision-making on the future use of these lands.

Policy 50 The Municipality may build on the Cogswell Transformed plan and continue the process of determining future use and urban design of the Cogswell Interchange lands.

⁴ Ekistics Planning & Design. Cogswell Transformed – A Plan for the Redevelopment of the Cogswell Interchange. 2014

CHAPTER 6: PUBLIC REALM

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Fulfilling each of the guiding principles of this Plan depends on the public realm and buildings. The streets, sidewalks, plazas, parks, and other public spaces contribute to downtown Halifax's liveliness, beauty, sustainability, vibrancy, and connectedness.

6.2 OPEN SPACES & CONNECTIONS

Downtown Halifax includes several existing public spaces connected by the fine-grained street network. Ongoing reinvestment and maintenance of these existing spaces will continue. However, additional public spaces and pedestrian connections are desirable, particularly on the larger blocks outside of the Central Blocks. Except for the Cogswell Interchange lands, the urban fabric of downtown Halifax is well established; the subdivision of lands is unlikely to happen at any significant scale, so opportunities for the Municipality to acquire new lands for public spaces are limited. Rather, future development of open spaces and pedestrian connections will need to occur in partnership with private land owners and other bodies, such as the Waterfront Development Corporation Limited.

Provisions in the Land Use By-law, described in this Chapter, will secure the open spaces at the terminus of east-west streets for views and public access. The bonus zoning provisions, outlined in Chapter 3 of this Plan, will encourage the provision of public open spaces and through-block pedestrian connections. The Municipality will seek to work in cooperation with the Waterfront Development Corporation Limited and other relevant agencies and property owners to ensure a continuous public access is maintained along the Harbour as a key component of the open space network.

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| Policy 51 | The Municipality shall recognize the “Grand Promenade” along George and Carmichael Streets as the primary east-west pedestrian connection linking major civic and cultural attractions to one another. Investments in public infrastructure shall ensure that the design quality of these streets reinforce their role as the symbolic historic and civic axis of downtown Halifax. |
| Policy 52 | The Municipality may implement a system of interconnected, high quality open spaces as generally shown on Map 8 . This map may be used as reference when reviewing the necessity of public amenity spaces proposed through the bonus zoning process. |
| Policy 53 | The Municipality shall use the physical design of streetscapes as a tool to guide users through the landscape, between prominent public spaces and landmark buildings. |
| Policy 54 | The Municipality shall ensure open space plazas are constructed with new development where east-west streets terminate at the water's edge. Plazas should be designed to accommodate a variety of civic gatherings, performances and outdoor cafes, and ensure surrounding uses are public, highly visible and serve to animate the plazas including retail, sidewalk cafes and cultural attractions. |
| Policy 55 | The Municipality shall consider opportunities for open spaces in conjunction with major redevelopments to incorporate forecourts, courtyards and mid-block pedestrian connections on larger development blocks to enhance pedestrian connectivity of downtown Halifax. |

6.2.1 Waterfront Harbourwalk

The Harbourwalk waterfront trail is a component of the active transportation network in downtown Halifax. This trail not only connects communities to one another, but also enables connections to be made to other parks, open spaces and natural areas. However, with restrictions to access in some areas along the harbour, it is important to note that the trail may veer away from the water at specific locations, such as through the HMC Dockyard.

Within downtown Halifax much of the Harbourwalk consists of boardwalk which, along with its connected plazas, is also a prominent public space. These spaces host public festivals throughout the year, act as the point of entry for cruise ship passengers and ferry riders, and are visited by millions of people annually.

Policy 56 The Municipality shall consider opportunities to extend and improve the continuous Harbourwalk waterfront trail through the Plan area, acknowledging that at certain points it will be necessary for the trail to diverge from the waterfront.

Policy 57 The Municipality shall establish an agreement with the Waterfront Development Corporation Limited and other relevant agencies and property owners to ensure collaboration in the development of the open space system along the Halifax waterfront.

6.3 GATEWAYS

As identified in the Ten Big Moves in Chapter 2, clearly defined gateways enhance orientation, define a sense of place and contribute to civic pride. This Plan identifies two primary gateways into the downtown, the Cogswell Interchange lands and Cornwallis Park to the north and south respectively. Investing in and transforming these areas will create distinct and memorable entry points into downtown Halifax.

Policy 58 The Municipality shall designate the primary north and south gateways of downtown Halifax as Cogswell Interchange lands and Cornwallis Park. The Municipality shall support the transformation of these areas into areas with a high quality of urban design which provides a sense of welcome and arrival to people entering the downtown.

6.4 VIEWS & VISUAL CHARACTER

As recognized by the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy, views from the Citadel to the harbour are a cherished part of the Municipality's heritage. They have defined and shaped the urban form and skyline of downtown Halifax. In recognition of their value, the Land Use By-law will continue to maintain the protection of the Citadel View Planes and Rampart views. In addition to the Citadel views, there are other important public views down streets to prominent terminus sites. In some cases, these terminus sites already contain buildings or features that provide a strong visual anchor for someone looking down a street; these visual anchors should be protected. In other situations, sites that could be strong visual anchors are currently underutilized or lacking in meaningful architectural design. As these sites redevelop they should have the highest level of architectural design. These views and their terminus sites are illustrated on **Map 10**.

Policy 59 The Municipality shall, through the Land Use By-law, protect designated views from the Citadel including the Citadel View Planes and Ramparts views.

Policy 60 The Municipality shall, through the Land Use By-law, promote a high level of architectural design quality on visual terminus sites, as identified on **Map 10**. The Land Use By-law shall include criteria for considering variations to the requirements of the Land Use By-law on visual terminus sites where such variations would improve the site's role as a visual anchor for views down the identified street leading to that site.

6.4.1 Waterfront View Corridors

As outlined in the Vision, a defining feature of downtown Halifax is the east-west visual connection between Citadel Hill and the Halifax Harbour. These views are protected along the length of the downtown's east-west streets by the existence of public rights-of way. However, these streets typically terminate at Lower Water Street, and there is a risk that development at these termini could block these views and cut off convenient public access to the waterfront. The continuation of the east-west routes onto the waterfront lands preserves the views to the harbour and provides pedestrian links to waterfront amenities such as plazas and open spaces located at the foot of the corridors. Therefore, it is important to preserve the corridors through the creation of waterfront view corridors in the Land Use By-law.

Policy 61 The Municipality shall, through the Land Use By-law, provide for the preservation of

waterfront views and public access to the waterfront through view corridors, as shown on **Map 9**.

6.5 PUBLIC ART

The Municipality's Public Art Policy⁵ calls for installation of public art to celebrate Halifax's cultural identity and showcase local arts and culture in downtown Halifax. Public art will help reinforce the unique identity of the precincts and can enhance the overall quality and experience of the public realm. In downtown Halifax, public art should be considered at a variety of scales and contexts including:

- (a) Larger installations at visually prominent locations such as the terminus of view corridors, at gateways on prominent corners, or in public open spaces; and
- (b) Smaller installations along streetscapes, walkways, and interior courtyards, and in association with buildings.

Public art is broadly defined in the Public Art Policy⁶ and may include memorials, sculptures, water features, murals, lighting, or individual art installations, and may combine with building and landscape design. It may also include traditionally functional elements such as street furniture and utility boxes. The Municipality shall support the installation of public art through its capital investment programs and in partnership with the private sector through the bonus zoning provisions of this Plan.

Policy 62 The Municipality shall support the installation of public art at appropriate locations in downtown Halifax through its capital investment programs and through the bonus zoning provisions of the Land Use By-law.

6.6 PEDESTRIAN AMENITY & COMFORT

How the public realm is designed, programmed and interfaces with surrounding spaces and land uses is crucial to its capacity to attract and support a broad spectrum of users and to ensure that there are places where people feel comfortable and safe. The Municipality supports the principles of safety, universal design, public amenity and accessibility. The Design Manual contained in the Land Use By-law will provide further guidance on how these principles may be tailored through the downtown Halifax context in terms of guiding further investment whether by the Municipality, or through private sector contributions.

Policy 63 The Municipality shall consider using a range of best practice guidelines and strategies when designing public spaces in downtown Halifax to enhance safety and comfort, and promote accessibility for all users. These include:

- (a) Crime Prevention through Environmental Design Strategies to enhance safety;
- (b) Universal design principles to promote accessibility for all users;
- (c) Special design treatments for identifying pedestrian corridors;
- (d) Wayfinding signage systems; and
- (e) A co-ordinated system of site furnishings and amenities.

⁵ Halifax Regional Municipality. *Public Art Policy*. 2008.

⁶ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 7: IMPLEMENTATION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This Plan is the primary policy document used to guide decision-making for development and investment within downtown Halifax. It provides a vision for land use, built form, design, heritage preservation and public investment, and it sets out general strategies and approaches to be used by the Municipality and all its citizens and partners to achieve that vision.

Policy 64 The Municipality shall adopt this Plan as the Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy for the area shown on **Map 1**.

7.2 REGULATORY TOOLS

7.2.1 Land Use By-law

The Land Use By-Law is the principal tool for guiding development in downtown Halifax. It takes the policy intent of this Plan and implements it. The Land Use By-law includes zones, permitted uses, and the quantitative regulations that shape the form of lots and buildings. It also includes the Design Manual.

Policy 65 The Municipality shall adopt a Land Use By-law for the Plan Area identified on **Map 1**. The Land Use By-law shall include provisions for downtown precincts, permitted land uses, building envelopes and streetwall characteristics, development permitting, design review, and bonus zoning.

7.2.2 Design Manual

The Design Manual will form part of the Land Use By-law, establishing comprehensive design guidelines for development addressing matters related to external design, streetwall character, heritage, building articulation and materials, lighting, landscaping, parking, and signs. This Manual will be the primary reference used in the design review process for both non-substantive and substantive site plan approvals, as outlined in section 7.2.3.

Policy 66 The Municipality shall adopt a Design Manual as part of the Land Use By-law to provide design guidance in the site plan approval process. The Design Manual shall include provisions related to qualitative elements of development such as building design, streetwall character, heritage character, building articulation and materials, lighting, landscaping, parking, signs, and other similar matters.variation

7.2.3 Site Plan Approval

Site plan approval is a development approval process enabled under the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*. This process helps to improve clarity, predictability and timeliness in the development approval process. It also provides an opportunity to address building design quality, which can be difficult in traditional zoning approaches. Under site plan approval, the approval of any development application shall occur in two parts:

- (a) the quantitative elements of an application are subject to the prescriptive criteria in the Land Use By-law; and
- (b) the qualitative elements of an application are subject to approval resulting from a design review process against the Design Manual.

There are two levels of site plan approval, substantive and non-substantive. Non-substantive site plan approval deals with small-scale considerations such as new window and door openings, nominal changes to the exterior appearance of existing buildings, and additions or new buildings that are small. Substantive site plan approval deals with large-scale considerations such as larger additions or new buildings.

Policy 67 The Municipality shall adopt the site plan approval process for the Downtown Halifax Plan

- Area shown on Map 1.
- Policy 68 The site plan approval criteria shall be defined in the Land Use By-law and shall address the following matters:
- (a) conformance with the Design Manual addressing matters such as architectural and site design, as well as heritage compatibility;
 - (b) provisions for non-substantive and substantive site plan approval;
 - (c) requirements for a public information meeting prior to an application for site plan approval being submitted to the Municipality; and,
 - (d) classes of development that are, and are not, subject to site plan approval.

7.2.4 Site Plan Notification

The *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter* enables Council to specify notification requirements for development proposals within site-plan approval areas.

- Policy 69 The Municipality shall, through the Land Use By-law, establish a notification area of 100 metres for substantive site plan approvals and provisions for when site plan approval does not require a notification area.

7.2.5 Design Review Committee

The site plan approval provisions of the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter* enable the establishment of a Design Review Committee to ensure that the design of proposed developments meets the intent of this Plan. The Design Review Committee will be established through the Land Use By-law to administer the Design Manual section of the Land Use By-law, and variations to the Land Use By-law.

- Policy 70 The Municipality shall, through the Land Use By-law, establish a Design Review Committee to evaluate substantive site plan approval applications in conformance with the Design Manual section of the Land Use By-law and variations to the Land Use By-law. Council shall determine an appropriate composition for the committee.

7.2.6 Variations to Building Envelopes and Design Elements

The Land Use By-law and its attached Design Manual set out a series of best practice design requirements as a framework for promoting and requiring high quality buildings and public spaces in downtown Halifax. However, architecture and urban design are creative fields, and designers in those fields often produce unique designs that would nonetheless be generally accepted as high quality. Rather than trying to implement a Land Use By-law and Design Manual that consider all unique design solutions, this Plan allows for some flexibility to consider and approve variations to the regulations to allow for improved building designs.

Where all other conditions are met, and subject to certain design conditions, variations to building envelopes and design elements may be considered, including variations to institutional campus signage. The intention of these variations is not to enable a substantial increase in buildable volume on a site, but rather to avoid rigid interpretations of policy that would compromise quality of building design.

- Policy 71 To enable improved building design, the Municipality may permit variations to built form requirements in accordance with the criteria in the Design Manual and Land Use By-law

- Policy 72 The Municipality may permit variations to signage on institutional campuses in accordance with the variation criteria in the Design Manual and Land Use By-law.

7.3 PUBLIC INVESTMENT

The importance of the public realm is critical to the downtown and improvements to streetscapes, open spaces, gateways and other public spaces are needed to achieve the overall vision of this Plan. these spaces frame the most prominent aspects of the urban environment, particularly in relation to heritage conservation districts, and provide the greatest impact on the image and impression of downtown Halifax.

In 2014, the Municipality approved a capital improvement campaign. The project list for the campaign includes significant public realm improvements within downtown Halifax, including streetscaping improvements to Spring Garden Road, Barrington Street, and Argyle Street. Streets such as Argyle Street, Granville Street, and Bedford Row shall be prioritized for sidewalk cafes, street performances, and other pedestrian-oriented uses while vehicular use and through traffic shall be discouraged along these streets.

To bring the ideals of this Plan to fruition, the Municipality must continue to provide leadership in undertaking capital investment and funding programs that exemplify a high quality and attractive public realm, support heritage restoration and renovation, and reinforce active transportation and a transit-oriented transportation system. To demonstrate the Municipality's commitment to making these investments a reality, ongoing, multi-year capital investment strategies that prioritize this work should be prepared.

Policy 73 The Municipality shall implement a capital improvement funding program tailored to downtown Halifax for the years beyond 2019. The program shall include a multi-year implementation schedule.

7.4 PLAN MONITORING PROGRAM

This Plan sets a clear direction for development and investment within downtown Halifax until the year 2031. To implement this new direction, the co-operation of numerous agencies and initiatives will be needed, both within and outside the municipal government. This Plan will be reviewed periodically to determine the degree of success in achieving its intent and address any changes in underlying assumptions or economic conditions. Effective implementation of this Plan is an effective monitoring program. This program will be conducted through reviews as necessary, as well as through a mandatory ten-year review as outlined in the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*. The Plan Monitoring Performance Measures outlined in Appendix A may be used to monitor the implementation of this Plan on an ongoing basis.

Policy 74 The Municipality shall maintain a program, including appropriate criteria and benchmarks, to monitor success in implementing the policies of this Plan.

Policy 75 The Municipality shall conduct a ten-year review of this Plan from the date of adoption of this Plan or a previous review of it as required by the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*.

7.4.1 Amendments to this Plan

In the process of implementing this Plan, there may be a need for amendments to address emerging land use and regulatory issues. The Municipality will establish a process to enable the public, community groups, adjacent municipalities, boards, commissions, government agencies, and others to propose changes to this Plan and its implementing by-laws. This process provides for a continuous and systematic review of this Plan and associated regulations in response to changing conditions and circumstances impacting growth and development throughout The Municipality.

The amendment process may occur from time to time as necessary. Reviews are designed to address amendments that propose both non-substantial technical and more substantial changes. This amendment process, provides sufficient time to measure the effects of new land use initiatives, and provides predictability to determine when new land use initiatives may be introduced. Reviews will include the monitoring of the performance measures in Appendix A. Reviews require early and continuous public involvement and dialogue.

Policy 76 The Municipality may review and evaluate the policies contained in this Plan and development regulations from time to time.

7.5 NON-CONFORMING BUILDINGS

This Plan and the Downtown Halifax Land Use By-law diverge from previous MPS policies and land use by-law regulations in both approach and intended outcome. It is therefore expected that many existing buildings in downtown Halifax will not conform to the new Land Use By-law provisions. To support the

growth aspirations for downtown Halifax, this Plan will allow for the extension, enlargement, and alteration of non-conforming buildings.

Policy 77 It shall be the intention of the Municipality to allow for the extension, enlargement, and alteration of non-conforming buildings in downtown Halifax provided the development brings the building closer into compliance with the Land Use By-law, the non-compliance is not worsened, or a variation is granted by the development officer.

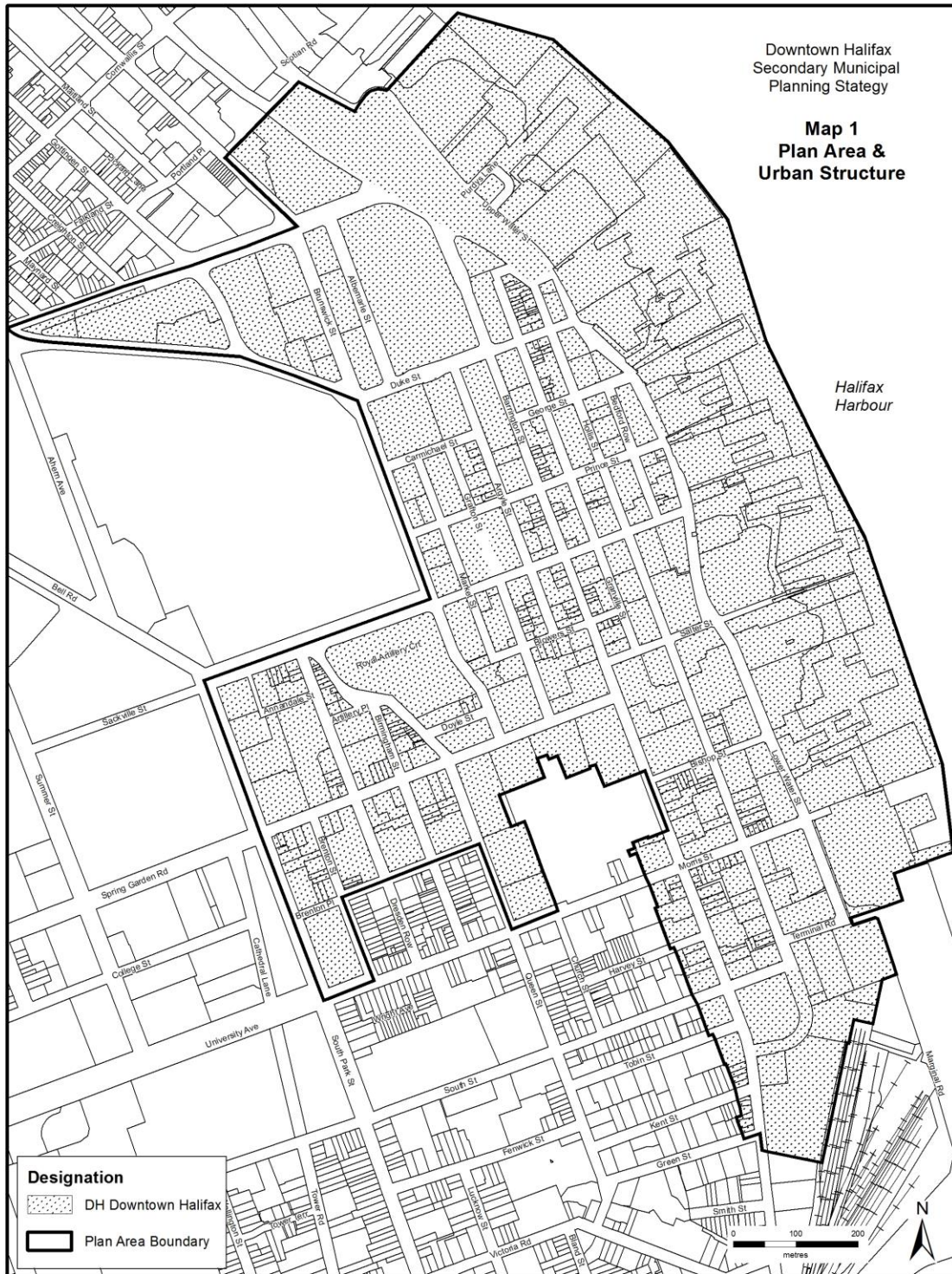
DRAFT

Appendix A: Plan Monitoring Performance Measures

All measurements for area within Plan boundary, unless otherwise noted. Measurement date on March 31st (*i.e.* end of fiscal year) unless otherwise noted.

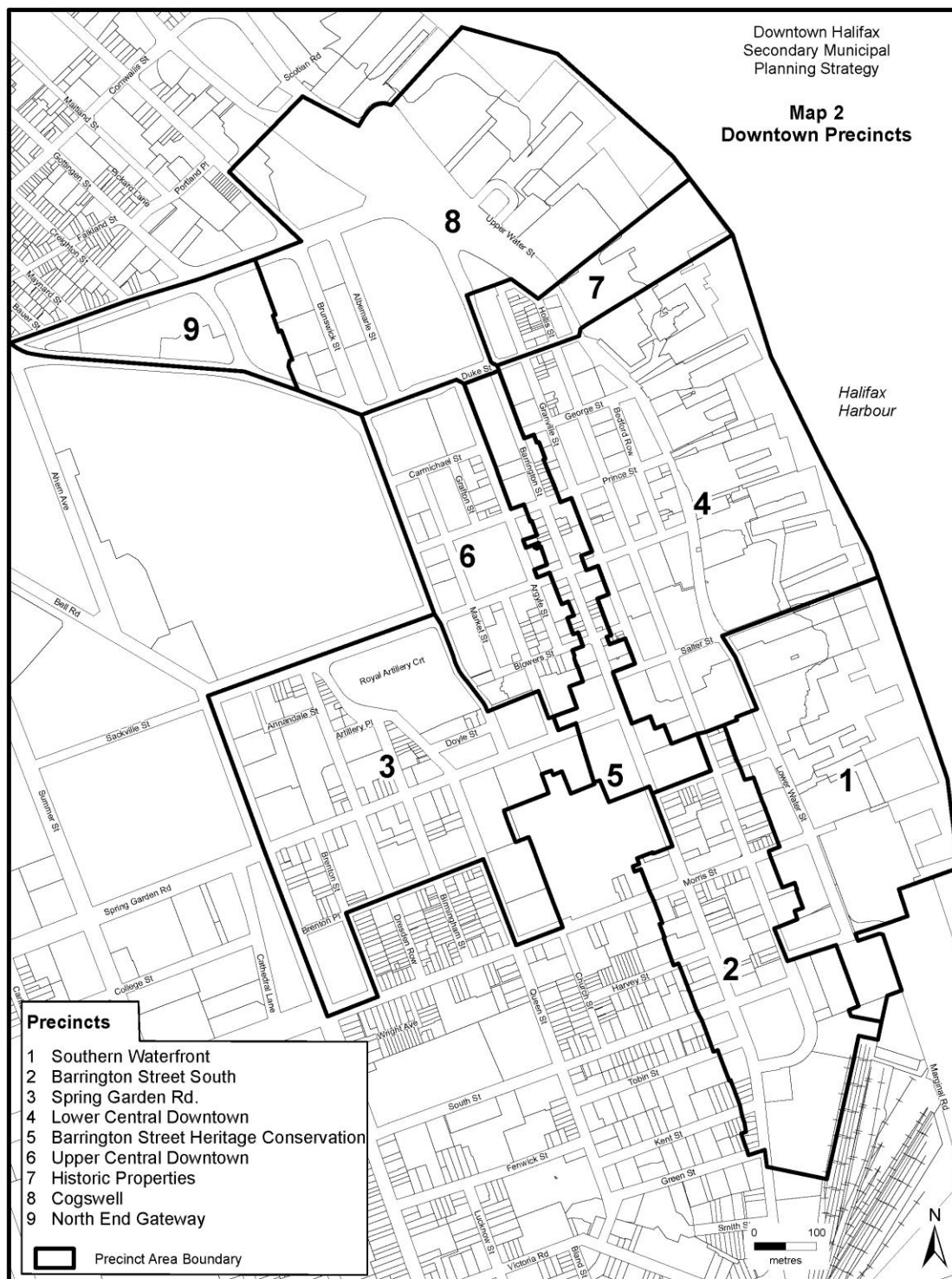
		FY 2008 - 09	FY 2015 – 16	Notes
Process	Average time from formal submission to approval	16 months	60 days	
	Substantive Site Plan Approval Applications			
	No. approved	-		
	No. approved with conditions			
	No. denied			
	No. open			
	Variation Requests			
	Largest no. of variances requested			
	Mean no. requested	-		
	No. approved			
	No. denied			
	No. open			
Growth Trends	Office space inventory			Total floor area in June for rental (<i>i.e.</i> not owner-occupied) office properties larger than 5,000 SF in size
	Class A	1,390,304 SF	1,829,541 SF	
	Class B	3,565,709 SF	3,600,754 SF	
	Class C	468,777 SF	428,024 SF	
	Total	5,424,790 SF	5,858,319 SF	
	Annual average office vacancy rate			Average of December and June vacancy rates for rental (<i>i.e.</i> not owner-occupied) office properties larger than 5,000 SF in size
	Class A	3.41 %	19.99 %	
	Class B	3.37 %	11.48 %	
	Class C	2.75 %	19.84 %	
	Total	3.31 %	14.69 %	
	No. of dwelling units occupied by usual residents	4,780 (2006 census)	5,140 (2016 census)	Census tracts 2050004.01, 2050008.00, and 2050009.00
	No. of people living downtown	7,759 (2006 census)	8,601 (2016 census)	Census tracts 2050004.01, 2050008.00, and 2050009.00
Public Realm + Benefit	Value of HRM investment made in public realm	-		
	Bonus Density Agreements	-		
	Number of agreements		8	
	\$ value in Public Space category		\$670,000	
	\$ value in Public Parking category		\$390,000	
	\$ value in Public Art category		\$25,000	

	\$ value in Sustainable Building Practices category		\$880,000	
	Total \$ value		\$1,965,000	
	Surface parking area	15.0 ha	13.2 ha	Measured from aerial imagery dated 2010.10.13 and 2016.4.29
Municipal Investment in Downtown Halifax Heritage	Heritage Property program:	-	\$111,627 in grants for 15 projects	Measurements are for the total time period since last reporting period
	Heritage Conservation District funding	-	\$1.4 million in grants and \$2 million in property tax credits	
	Investment in HRM-owned heritage properties	-	~\$10 million	



Effective:

Note: Effective date does not indicate date of data creation.



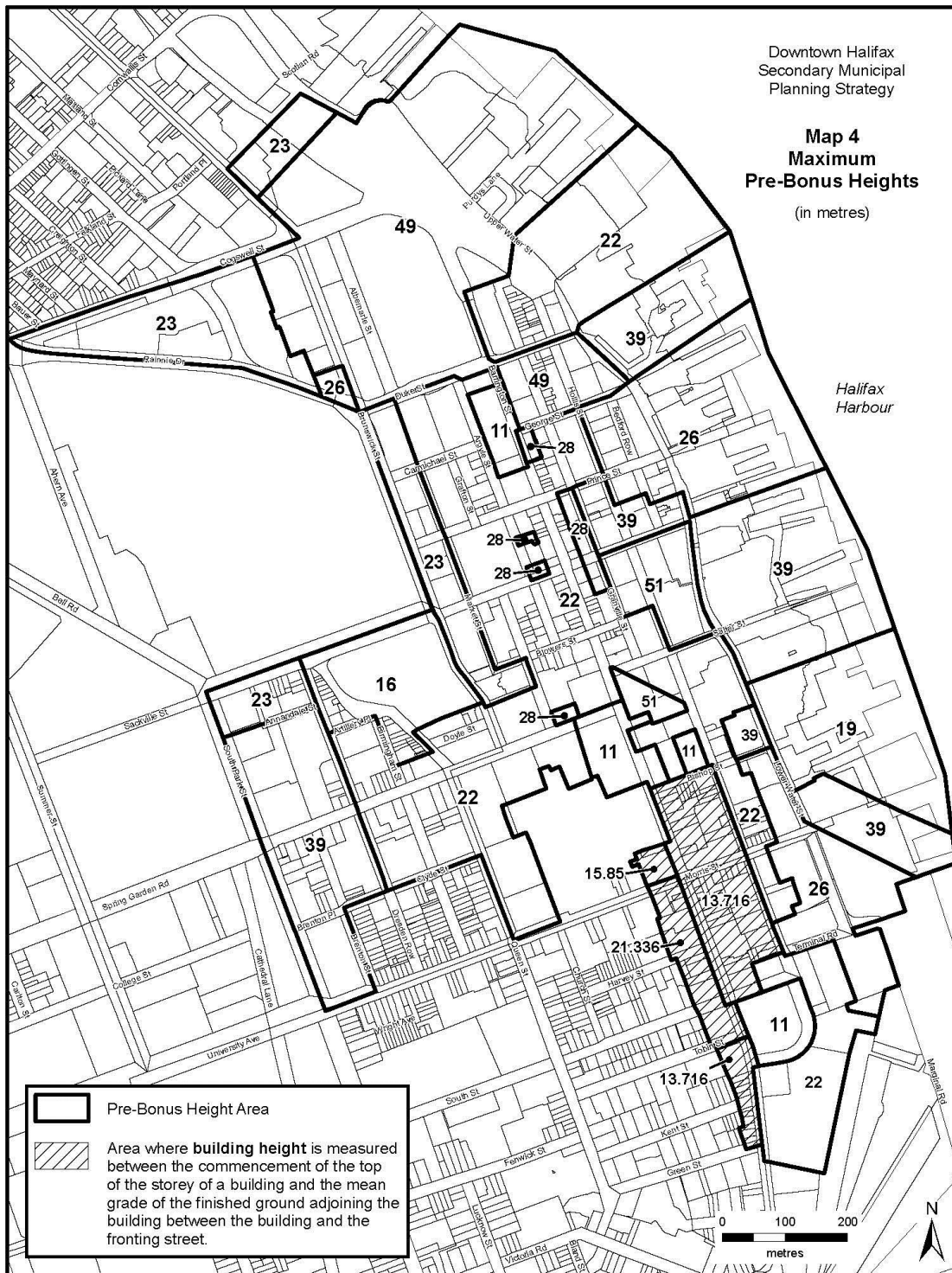
Effective:

Note: Effective date does not indicate date of data creation.



Effective:

Note: Effective date does not indicate date of data creation.

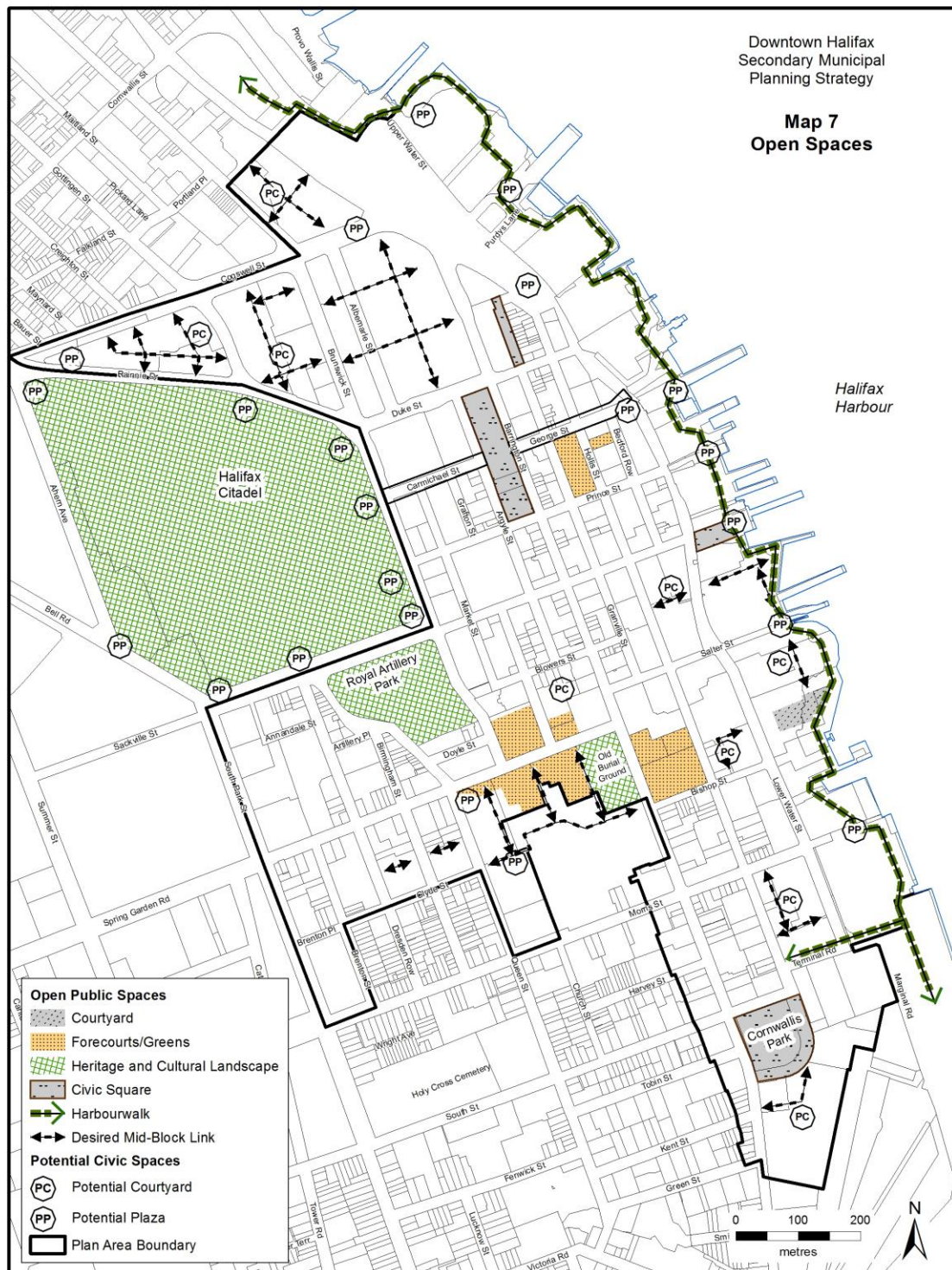


**Map 6
Heritage Districts**



Effective:

Note: Effective date does not indicate date of data creation.



Effective:

Note: Effective date does not indicate date of data creation.

