

Welcome to Tonight's Virtual Q&A!

Meeting will Commence at 6:30 pm

June 14, 2021

HALIFAX

Slide 1



REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW

Themes and Directions

Housing Q & A
June 14, 2021

HALIFAX



WHY ARE WE HERE TODAY?

We are reviewing the Regional Plan.

We are here to provide an **overview of the proposed Themes and Directions**. This is the first major deliverable of the Regional Plan Review. We are kicking off a month-long engagement period on this work, including webinars on 6 key themes. Tonight's Webinar is for Housing:

- Social Planning
- **Housing**
- Climate
- Environment
- Mobility
- Long Range planning

We are here today because we are reviewing the Regional Plan, which means we are evaluating our land use policies and making sure they represent the direction Council would like to set. We are contemplating how the municipality is physically organized and growing. We kicked off this phase of public engagement on May 20th at Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee – which is the primary advisory body for this work. This evening's session is focused on Housing.

The Halifax Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (Regional Plan) is a strategic document built on a common vision and principles for the municipality to achieve balanced and sustainable growth.

Originally adopted in 2006, the Regional Plan provided the first comprehensive guide for future growth for the entire municipality following amalgamation. It outlines where, when, and how future growth and development should take place between now and 2031.

4

Now, just to step back and make sure everyone understands the Regional Plan – it is a strategic document – the first planning document adopted after amalgamation that provided a region-wide vision for land use. First adopted in 2006, it provided a comprehensive outline of how growth and development should take place until 2031.

REGIONAL PLAN TIMELINE



This presents the progression of the Regional Plan over the past 14 years. In 2006, we approved the original Regional Plan, and in 2014 we conducted our first review – you might recognize the name RP+5, which was the brand for that review. You can see we are aiming to complete this review in 2022.



WHAT ARE THE THEMES & DIRECTIONS?

Key Ideas, Issues and Potential Changes.

The Themes & Directions document **shares ideas about key planning issues and provides details of the work** that will be completed during the Review. The purpose of this document is to demonstrate the scope of the Regional Plan Review to the public, stakeholders, Council, and ultimately to seek feedback on the content.

The feedback will help provide focus and direction for our work during the Review.

6

The Themes and Directions document outlines the key ideas and planning issues we will address in the Review. It is chance to step back and ask everyone – do we have this right? Are we headed in the right direction? The feedback we receive will help to provide focus and direction for our work during the Review.



The Themes and Directions document includes 11 Themes. They are all highlighted on the slide, and an overview of each theme is available to you on our website – shapeyourcityhalifax.ca/region-plan. Today we will be focusing in on Theme 1 and 5. Theme 1 focuses on our role in enabling housing across the region, and theme 5 focuses in on our role in affordable housing.

MUNICIPAL ROLE IN HOUSING



Municipal role in housing in Nova Scotia has primarily been in regulating where housing can be built.

The Province has been responsible for providing shelters and social housing.

The image shows the spectrum of housing – and different ways that people might be experiencing housing.

Reading from the left, you can see homeless people, emergency shelters, transitional housing, social housing, affordable rental housing, affordable home ownership, market rental housing, and market home ownership. Although housing is a complicated system, and there are interactions between all types of housing based on housing availability, income levels, market conditions, and strength in delivery of public housing.

This said, the municipal role in housing in Nova Scotia for the past 25 (since amalgamation) years has primarily been as a regulator. In our work in the Regional Plan, we assess how much our population is growing and how land should be brought into the servicing boundary, or how we should infill in existing areas, in order to create new housing. Although we don't build housing or control market prices, we have a role in ensuring the regulations are organized in such a way that housing can come online quickly to ensure the market can respond to population demand and need for housing.

While the Provincial Government has been responsible for providing shelters and social housing over this time, as shown on the left hand of spectrum, Affordable Housing has been an emerging area of responsibility for both the Municipal Government and the Provincial Government.

In our presentation today, we are going to focus first on how we organize housing throughout the municipality, and then in the later part of the presentation, we will speak to our role in affordable housing delivery.

CENTRAL QUESTION

Regional-Scale

How do we locate housing and employment in smart (strategic) locations, so that growth can happen easily, and in a way that furthers the municipality's most important goals?

9

There are also a few key questions we are trying to answer through the review. The first is: How do we locate housing and employment in smart (strategic) locations, so that growth can happen easily, and in a way that furthers the municipality's most important goals?



REGIONAL-SCALE QUESTIONS

How Are We Growing?

What is the projected demand for housing and employment will be over the horizon of the plan and into the future?

Where Should We Grow?

Where are the best places to locate residential and employment growth? Considerations include:

- The current land use framework and development pattern;
- The existing and future location of services and infrastructure;
- The areas we want to preserve, protect, or treat with special attention; and
- Our aspirations for a sustainable future.

10

We can break this down into two key questions –

First, how are we growing?

We need to evaluate the projected demand for housing and employment today and into the future. To do this, we are relying on two key pieces of information – our housing and population analysis, and our industrial and employment land analysis.

The second question we ask, is where should we grow?

Once we know how much we are going to grow, we begin to assess where new housing and jobs can be accommodated. It isn't only about where there are pieces of land that can be developed, but where that land is located, as it relates to the location of services and infrastructure. We think about how and where we can infill, or where we should expand the city into greenfield areas – this is done with careful consideration as to how development can be serviced with water, sewer, transit, recreation – and studying how we should be preserving or protecting important pieces of ecological or cultural land. And as Regional Council has identified aspirations for a sustainable future, such as the Integrated Mobility Plan's mode share targets and the emissions reduction targets in

HalifACT, we can update our modelling and assess how different land use growth scenarios might interact with these long-term objectives.

HOUSING ANALYSIS GOAL

Understand the dynamic between anticipated demand for housing and Halifax's capacity to accommodate residents in their preferred housing type.

11

In doing this analysis, our primary goal was to Understand the dynamic between anticipated demand for housing and Halifax's capacity to accommodate residents in their preferred housing type.

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

How many people might be living in Halifax in 2031 and 2050?

How many housing units will be needed for the population to live in?

What type of housing might be needed?

What is Halifax's capacity for additional housing based on existing policy and anticipated future policy?

Is any policy change necessary to accommodate demand or reflect changing conditions?

12

Under that umbrella, we identified a few specific questions that we were attempting to answer, for instance –

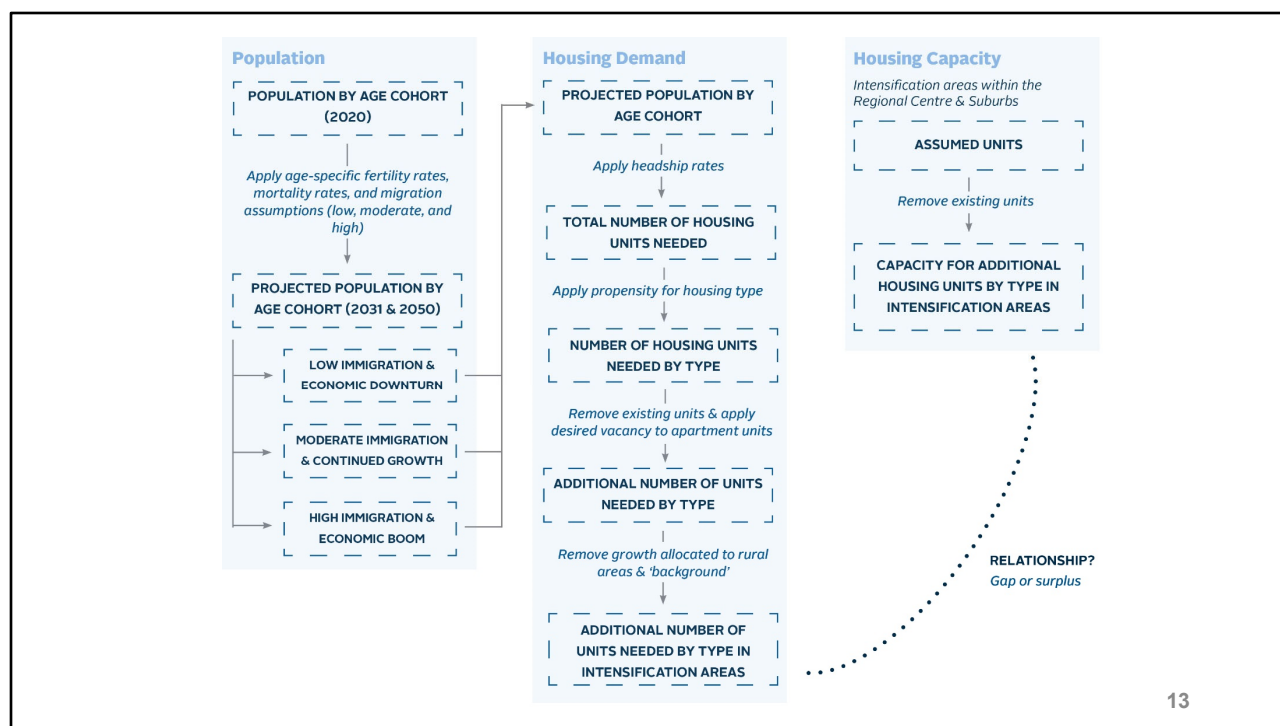
How many people might be living in Halifax in 2031 and 2050?

How many housing units will be needed for the population to live in?

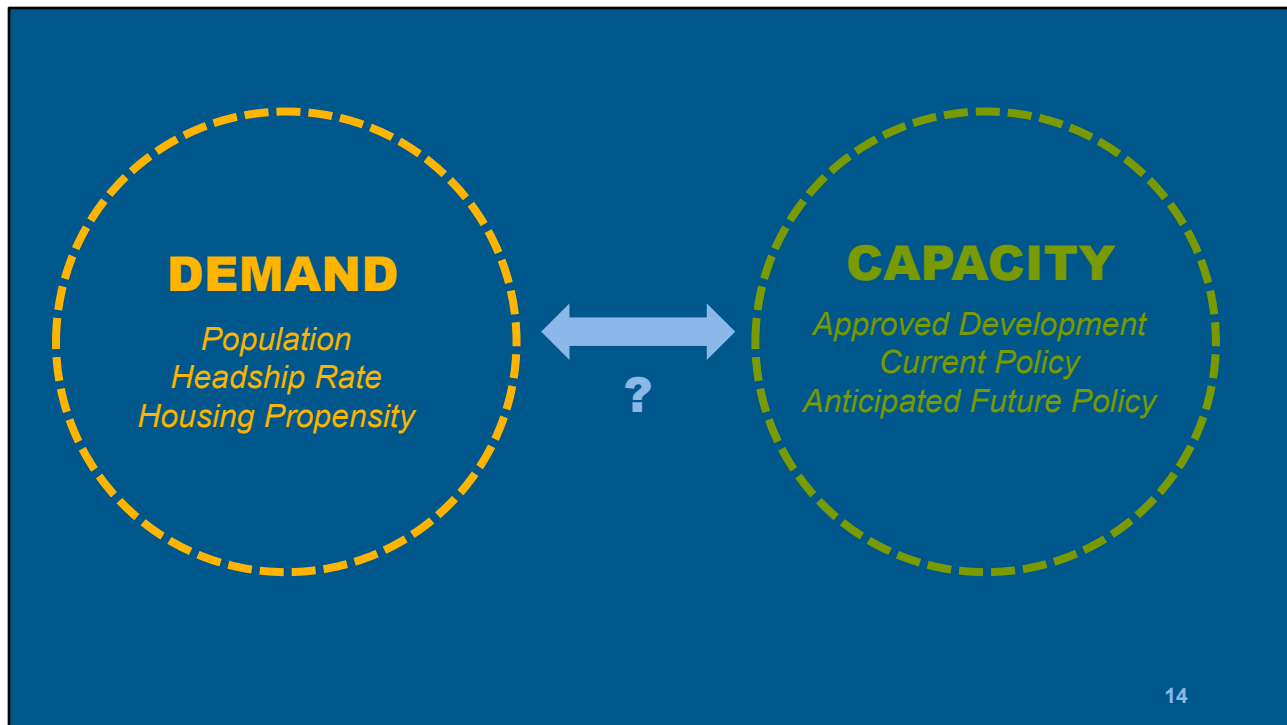
What type of housing might be needed?

What is Halifax's capacity for additional housing based on existing policy and anticipated future policy?

Is any policy change necessary to accommodate demand or reflect changing conditions?



To answer those questions, we developed a methodology based on best practices, that looks at different components of housing, including how population influences housing demand and how that relates to housing capacity. This graphic is pulled from the Issue Paper and outlines how all the components work together. For the sake of time, we won't be getting into the full details of the method in this presentation, but the Issue Paper (which will be available for your review) has more of the specifics if you're interested.



The key pieces that we looked at for this analysis were **demand** (i.e. how much housing do we think we may need?) and **capacity** (i.e. how much space do we have to locate new housing?)

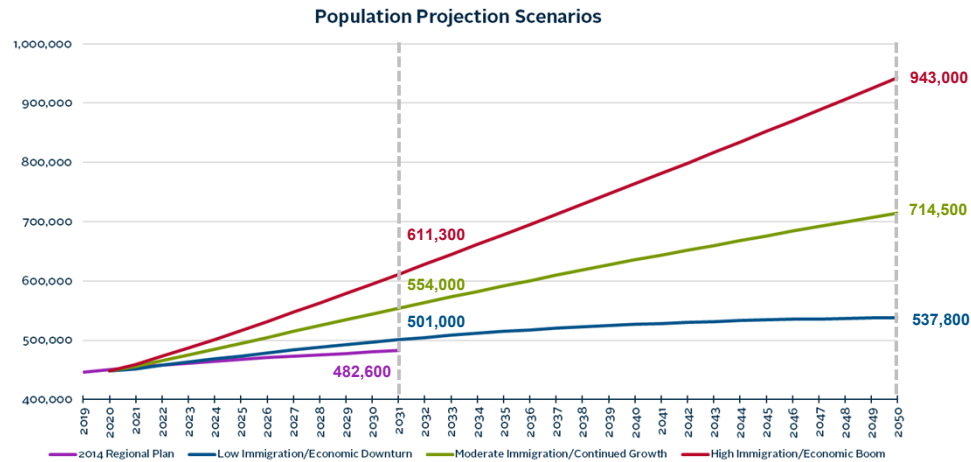
The essence of what we're trying to figure out is in the relationship between those two concepts (i.e. do we have enough capacity to accommodate the demand we may anticipate?)



On the demand side, we used a population projection and previous data on households and what type of housing people were living in to figure out how many more housing units we might need in the future.

DEMAND

POPULATION SCENARIOS

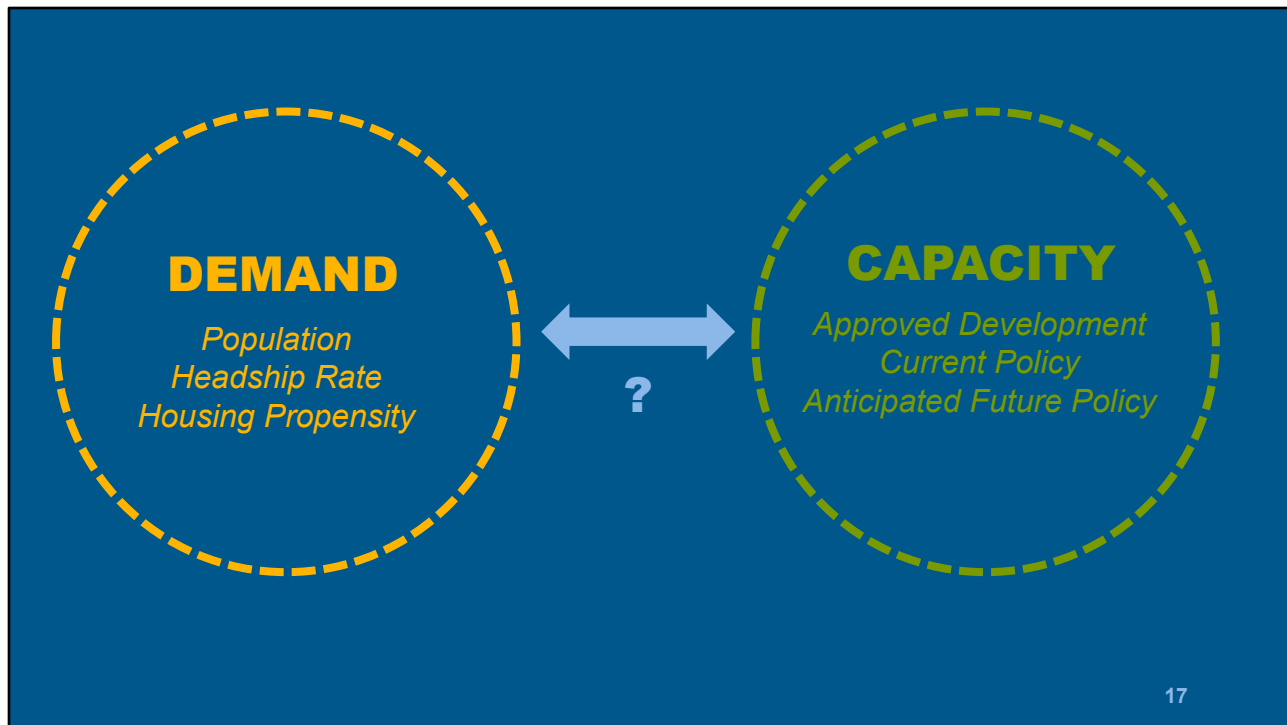


16

We created 3 population scenarios based on different assumptions around migration into and out of Halifax:

- Low Immigration & Economic Downturn
- Moderate Immigration & Continued Growth
- High Immigration & Economic Boom

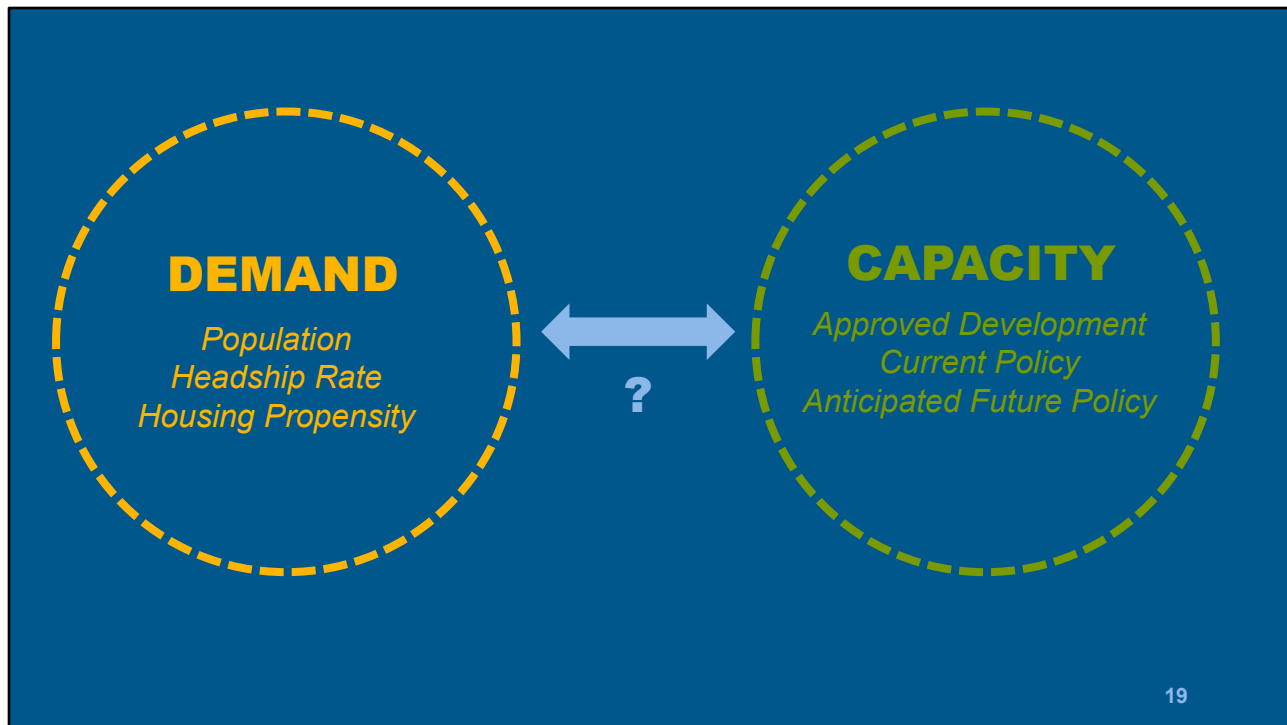
Here they are, lined up against what was in the 2014 Regional Plan. It's important to recognize here that these are not predictions. The Moderate Immigration/Continued Growth scenario was our best attempt at continuing recent trends, but then the high and low scenarios were both playing with extremes. We wanted to be able to test the resiliency of our policy in dealing with the unpredictable. We're not trying to say "This is what **will** happen," we're asking: "What would happen **if**...?"



Now on the capacity side of the equation...



...we focused on the major areas where we expect to intensify. The majority of this analysis was done by taking the acres of land area within certain designations (based on existing and anticipated future policy directions) and applying a density to that area. The density assumptions were based on the Pattern Book, staff expertise, and previous analyses completed for the Rapid Transit Strategy.



To compare the demand and capacity to each other, we needed to allocate the total demand for housing to different areas of the Municipality, and see if there is enough capacity in the growth areas for the demand that we imagine directing there.

LAND USE SCENARIOS

**SCENARIO A:
2014 REGIONAL
PLAN**

**SCENARIO B:
THE NEXT 10
YEARS**

**SCENARIO C:
THE FUTURE**

**How are we
allocating
demand?**

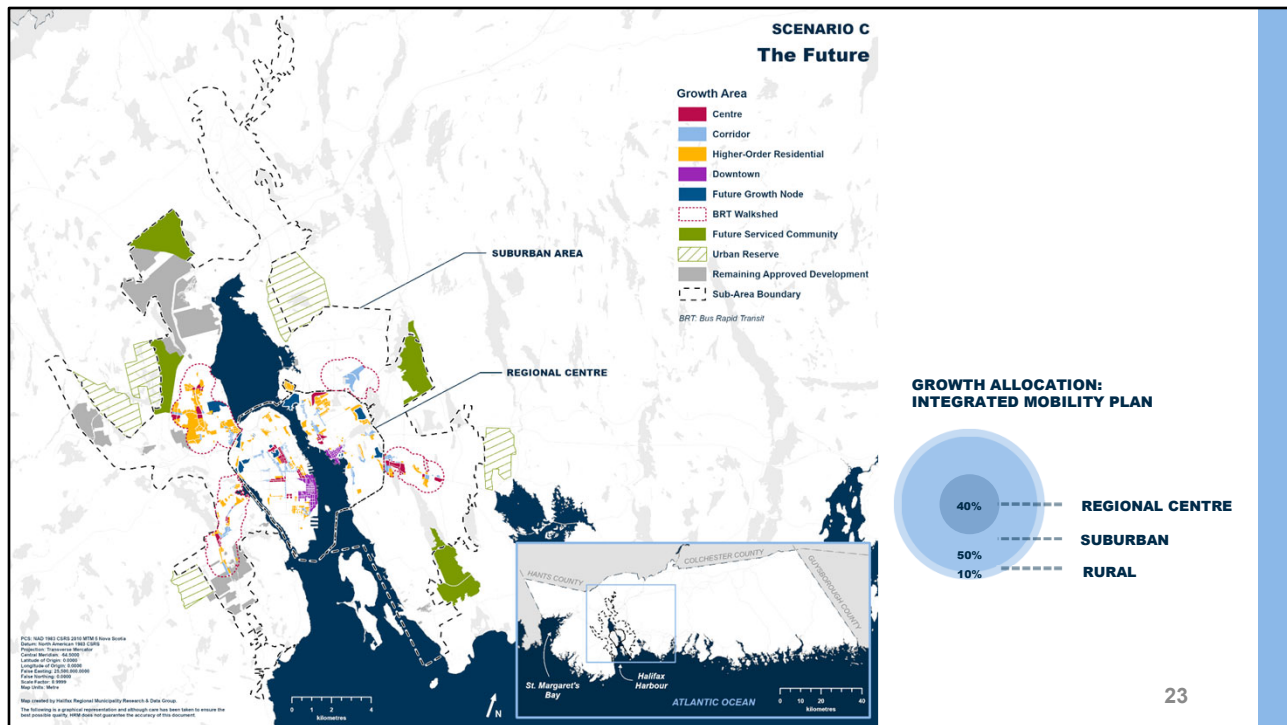
**What are we
including as part
of the capacity?**

20

To do that, we created 3 land use scenarios that differ from each other by asking

- (1) How are we allocating demand in this scenario? And
- (2) Which potential growth areas are we including as part of the capacity?

In the following slides we'll go through each of the scenarios and what was included.



Scenario C is about the longer-range. Like Scenario B, it allocates 10% of growth to the Rural areas; the main difference is the addition of the Urban Reserve lands into the capacity. Those Urban Reserve lands haven't really been evaluated yet, but they are identified in the Regional Plan as potential places for expansion. This is just to test what kind of added capacity we may get by bringing these online.

INITIAL ANALYSIS

- Adequate capacity to accommodate overall demand for housing in short-moderate term
- High demand for ground-based units (assumptions based on 2016 Census data)
- Most of the capacity in the growth areas in apartment-style housing
- If propensity for ground-based units continues, development of remaining Future Serviced Communities should be considered in the near term

24

The analysis shows that there is regulatory capacity to accommodate overall population growth in the short to moderate term.

Preliminary analysis tells us that based on the 2016 propensity of the population to live in different housing types, there will continue to be high demand for ground-based units, while most of the capacity in the growth areas is in the form of apartment-style units.

Those assumptions about what type of housing people want to live in are based on the 2016 Census. Those housing preferences will likely change in the future and are likely partially driven by the type of housing that was available and affordable to people at the time of the census. Housing preference is an aspect of this analysis that we'll continue to refine as we continue with this work.

Initial analysis of the scenarios indicates the development of the remaining Future Serviced Communities should be considered in the near term, if Regional Council chooses to respond to 2016 propensity to live in ground-based units.

We will continue to work on this analysis over the coming months and are asking for feedback as part of this period of engagement on our

housing and population analysis paper, so we can hear from the public on our methodology.



Affordable Housing

The Municipality's role in supporting and encouraging affordable housing has increased steadily over the past five years. [The Municipality has been working on affordable housing in several ways:](#)

- **Adopting a density bonusing program in the Regional Centre;**
- **Establishing an affordable housing grant program;**
- **Waiving construction fees for residential developments for Non-profit and charitable organizations;**
- **Creating an affordable housing category for the disposal of municipal surplus property;**
- **Remove regulatory barriers for secondary suites;**
- **Participating in the Rapid Housing Initiative of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation; and**
- **Continued work on Short-Term Rentals, Shared Housing and Tiny Homes.**

25

At the same time as doing work to understand the region-wide impacts of land use on housing, we are also keenly aware of current market conditions, and the need to bring affordable housing on quickly, and are working on making contributions in this area as quickly as possible, to ensure more citizen can access affordable housing.

While the provincial government provides services to support those in need of housing, the 2014 Regional Plan and the 2018 Affordable Housing Work Plan support the development of a variety of housing types and initiatives that address the full spectrum of the housing continuum, which is an important step to providing adequate housing for everybody.

Through involvement with the Housing and Homelessness Partnership and Anti-Poverty Solutions Strategy, the municipality has developed relationships with non-profit housing organizations, for profit developers and federal/provincial levels of government. Since the 2014 Regional Plan we have worked on several large initiatives such as establishing a Density Bonusing program, which allows a developer to be granted additional development rights, providing they provide the municipality

with a financial contribution towards affordable housing. The municipality has further developed its support for the non-profit housing sector through waiving fees and a surplus land and grant program specific to affordable housing. In the fall of 2020, Council permitted secondary and backyard suites throughout the municipality. In the fall the municipality also entered into agreements with not-for-profit organizations to provide affordable housing as part of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporations Rapid Housing Initiative, which will result in 52 units/rooms being constructed by the end of this year. We continue to work on projects focused on alternative forms of housing, and are currently drafting regulations for short-term rentals, shared housing and tiny homes.



Affordable Housing

The municipal role in the provision of Affordable Housing continues to evolve. Key actions to be included as part of the Regional Plan review include:

The Regional Plan Review will:

- Encourage a diversity of housing forms;
- Identify planning tools to ensure no loss of housing during redevelopment;
- Remove barriers to the development and retention of housing;
- Study possible tools to leverage surplus or available land;
- Update the Housing Needs Assessment annually; and
- Develop a region-wide density bonusing program.

26

As we recognize that housing is a right, the Regional Plan will continue to identify ways the municipality can contribute towards affordable housing.

In addition to continuing to support the construction of new affordable housing options, HRM equally appreciates the importance of maintaining the region's existing affordable housing stock. While the redevelopment and revitalization of neighbourhoods can have several benefits, it can also have serious, often unforeseen impacts on the people who live in them. Many residents, or even entire communities, can be displaced or priced out as a result of increased rents or cost of services. Housing programs must include incentives to retain existing affordable housing stock and the planning process must consider the impact of redevelopment by proactively assessing for unintended consequences, preventing harms and maximizing equity. We anticipate the provincial government will grant permissions for inclusionary zoning, under the Halifax Charter, which will help in preventing no loss of housing. We will also continue to look at how we can remove regulations, and leverage

surplus land for affordable housing, and we are requesting that Council commit to updating the Housing Needs Assessment annually. This will allow us to study how many citizens are housed or in core housing need and provide much needed information and data. And finally, we will be sure to capture the direction for a Region-Wide Density Bonusing. We have drafted an interim policy that might be applied, while this program is fully developed in our suburban and rural areas.

To learn more, ask questions, join the project's mailing list and make your voice heard:

Visit: www.shapeyourcityhalifax.ca/regional-plan

Email: regionalplan@halifax.ca

Phone: 902.233.2501

Stay updated on other events and engagement opportunities by following the Halifax Regional Municipality on social media and Shape Your City.

The logo for the City of Halifax, featuring the word "HALIFAX" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. The text is positioned on the right side of a horizontal bar that has a light blue section on the left and a dark blue section on the right, where the text is located.

HALIFAX

HALIFAX

**Thank You
For Your
Participation!**

Regional Planning



regionalplan@halifax.ca



902-233-2501

Shape Your City: www.shapeyourcityhalifax.ca/regional-plan

Public feedback will be collected until July 16

Slide 28

Regional Plan Review

Transcript - Housing Policy Virtual Q&A (June 14, 2021)

This transcript has been edited for content and clarity.

QUESTION: How has COVID-19 has impacted HRM's population projections?

Emilie Pothier, Planning Research Analyst, Regional Planning

We observed some interesting trends over the last year relating to population, housing, and the pandemic, like people moving into the Atlantic provinces from other parts of Canada as well as the move toward rural areas across the country. It's hard for us to say at this point whether those trends will continue, how long they might continue, and to what extent they might continue. For the purposes of this type of long-range exercise, we decided we mostly didn't have enough information to factor those pandemic trends into the projection.

There is one component that we did adjust slightly, which was immigration. Earlier this year the Province published data about immigration for the 2020 calendar year, which showed a 53% decrease from 2019. For the first year of our projection, we decreased the immigration assumption by 53% to reflect that dip in immigration due to the pandemic.

QUESTION: Could you please define "inclusionary zoning"?

Jillian MacLellan, Planner III, Regional Planning

Inclusionary zoning is a policy tool that would allow the Municipality to require that developments incorporate affordability [as part of the development], so that developments of a specific size/threshold provide units available to low to moderate income [households]. It's similar to an incentive or bonus zoning program. However, with inclusionary zoning instead of providing a form of public benefit, inclusionary zoning is specific to providing affordable units.

QUESTION: (Please note only portions of this multi-part question were answered during the Live Q&A, the full answers are provided below)

- 1. If an affordable home is less than 30% of your household income, do we have homes available to all levels of income?**
- 2. If an individual earns 10k for example a year, they require a home for \$250 a month or less. What does a home look like that gives individuals their privacy for \$250 a month? Is that available now?**

Jillian MacLellan, Planner III, Regional Planning

There is a wide variety of housing available throughout HRM that would address a myriad of incomes. Housing types focused on those in need of deep affordability include shelters, transitional housing, supportive housing, public housing and non-profit housing.

While \$250 a month rent would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to find in Halifax, the province offers rent supplements to help bridge the gap between the required rent and the 30% of one's income.

In some instances, the province may provide operational funding to the organization (non-profit) that is providing the housing in order to keep rents low for the residents.

While there are supports to help ensure housing affordability, the need is greater than the supports available. The 2016 census showed 25.5% of HRM households spent more than 30% of their income on housing. When focusing on rental households the percentage increases to 43.3%. Since 2016, HRM's vacancy rate has steadily decreased as rents and housing prices have steadily increased, compounding issues associated with affordability.

3. What are the average household incomes within each district?

The most recent information we have on household income by area within the Municipality is from the 2016 Census – see below:

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Zones	Median total income of households in 2015
Zone 1 - Peninsula South	\$51,811
Zone 2 - Peninsula North	\$52,995
Zone 3 - Mainland South	\$56,944
Zone 4 - Mainland North	\$58,773
Zone 5 - Dartmouth North	\$45,201
Zone 6 - Dartmouth South	\$65,047
Zone 7 - Dartmouth East	\$84,398
Zone 8 - Bedford	\$84,275
Zone 9 - Sackville	\$75,951
Zone 10 - Remainder of CMA	\$88,719
Halifax CMA (Total)	\$69,452

Data source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), [Housing Market Information Portal](#), adapted from Statistics Canada, 2016 Census.

4. What are the market rent rates in the areas of each district?

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) tracks this information in their annual [Rental Market Report](#) and [Rental Market Survey](#). Here is what CMHC reported in 2020:

Private Apartment Average Rents (\$), by Zone and Bedroom Type - Halifax CMA Source: Rental Market Survey (CMHC)					
	Bachelor	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom+	Total
Zone	Oct-20	Oct-20	Oct-20	Oct-20	Oct-20
Zone 1 - Peninsula South	930	1,270	1,758	2,029	1,417
Zone 2 - Peninsula North	824	1,036	1,265	1,477	1,166
Zone 3 - Mainland South	**	741	1,050	1,145	946
Zone 4 - Mainland North	830	970	1,239	1,478	1,179
City of Halifax (Zones 1-4)	885	1,086	1,322	1,558	1,227
Zone 5 - Dartmouth North	628	794	986	1,136	903
Zone 6 - Dartmouth South	613	915	1,159	1,083	1,063
Zone 7 - Dartmouth East	874	870	1,070	1,057	1,032
City of Dartmouth (Zones 5-7)	650	830	1,052	1,093	971
Zone 8 - Bedford	699	870	1,316	1,444	1,242
Zone 9 - Sackville	**	1,007	1,188	1,435	1,194
Zone 10 - Remainder of CMA	**	1,063	1,520	1,536	1,446
Halifax CMA	865	1,016	1,255	1,454	1,170
** – Data Suppressed					

5. Does our income in question 3 match the rent market rates in question 4 using a 30% calculation?

Is 30% of the Median Monthly Total Income of households in 2015 enough to afford Private Apartment Average Rents as of October 2020? Source: CMHC Rental Market Survey & Housing Market Information Portal					
	Bachelor	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom+	Total
Zone	Oct-20	Oct-20	Oct-20	Oct-20	Oct-20
Zone 1 - Peninsula South	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Zone 2 - Peninsula North	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Zone 3 - Mainland South	**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Zone 4 - Mainland North	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Zone 5 - Dartmouth North	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Zone 6 - Dartmouth South	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Zone 7 - Dartmouth East	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Zone 8 - Bedford	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Zone 9 - Sackville	**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Zone 10 - Remainder of CMA	**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Halifax CMA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
** – Data Suppressed					

[*Charting a New Course for Affordable Housing in Nova Scotia*](#) includes a similar analysis for the entire Province of Nova Scotia (p. 20). Due to the data available at the provincial level, that analysis uses income data from 2019, and is able to assess average income across each decile (range of incomes for the entire population split into ten equal groups), as well as for families vs. people not living in families.

2015 Total Income			2020 Private Apartment Average Rent					Affordability				
Median household income before taxes	30% of Monthly Income		Bachelor	1BR	2BR	3BR+	Total	Bachelor	1BR	2BR	3BR+	Total
Zone 1 - Peninsula South	\$51,811	\$1,295	\$930	\$1,270	\$1,758	\$2,029	\$1,417	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Zone 2 - Peninsula North	\$52,995	\$1,325	\$824	\$1,036	\$1,265	\$1,477	\$1,166	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Zone 3 - Mainland South	\$56,944	\$1,424	**	\$741	\$1,050	\$1,145	\$946	**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Zone 4 - Mainland North	\$58,773	\$1,469	\$830	\$970	\$1,239	\$1,478	\$1,179	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Zone 5 - Dartmouth North	\$45,201	\$1,130	\$628	\$794	\$986	\$1,136	\$903	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Zone 6 - Dartmouth South	\$65,047	\$1,626	\$613	\$915	\$1,159	\$1,083	\$1,063	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Zone 7 - Dartmouth East	\$84,398	\$2,110	\$874	\$870	\$1,070	\$1,057	\$1,032	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Zone 8 - Bedford	\$84,275	\$2,107	\$699	\$870	\$1,316	\$1,444	\$1,242	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Zone 9 - Sackville	\$75,951	\$1,899	**	\$1,007	\$1,188	\$1,435	\$1,194	**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Zone 10 - Remainder of CMA	\$88,719	\$2,218	**	\$1,063	\$1,520	\$1,536	\$1,446	**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Halifax CMA (Total)	\$69,452	\$1,736	\$865	\$1,016	\$1,255	\$1,454	\$1,170	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Data Sources: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Rental Market Survey & Housing Information Portal
 ** - Data Suppressed

6. To allow development are the current household incomes in the area used to determine the rent that can be charged? If not, how do HRM determine affordable housing?

The majority of HRM's affordable housing programs are only available to registered non-profits or charities. Depending on the program we may or may not require specific rents to the affordable units. For example, the Rapid Housing Initiative Program require all affordable units to charge no more than 30% of the households income, however for the Municipal Related Construction Fee Waiver program the applicant must be a non-profit or charitable housing provider which has been registered for over 1 year.

QUESTION: Can you provide any detail on how a Density Bonus program would work outside the urban core?

Jillian MacLellan, Planner III, Regional Planning

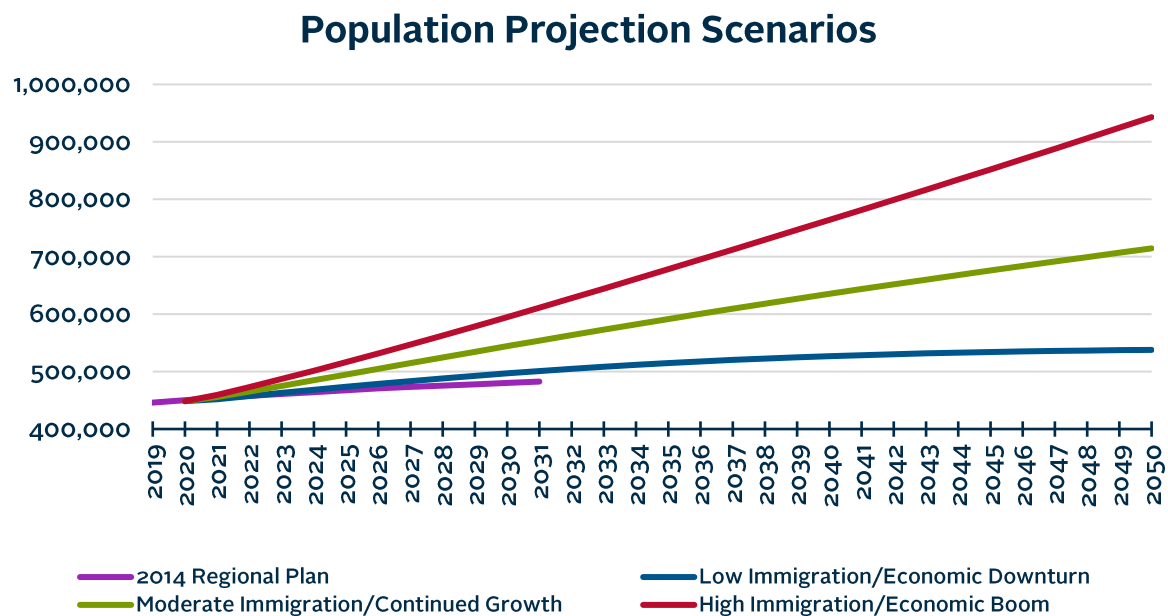
A density bonusing program outside the urban core would look similar to the density bonusing program that we have assigned to the [Regional Centre Plan Future Growth Nodes](#). Instead of assigning a specific value for the additional building floor area that's being developed, we look at the value of the land now and the value of the land after the proposed development. We would then multiply the increase in value by a predetermined coefficient. It's 12% for the future growth nodes. The value would be your density bonus requirement.

More information on this topic is available in the [Density Bonusing Issue Paper](#).

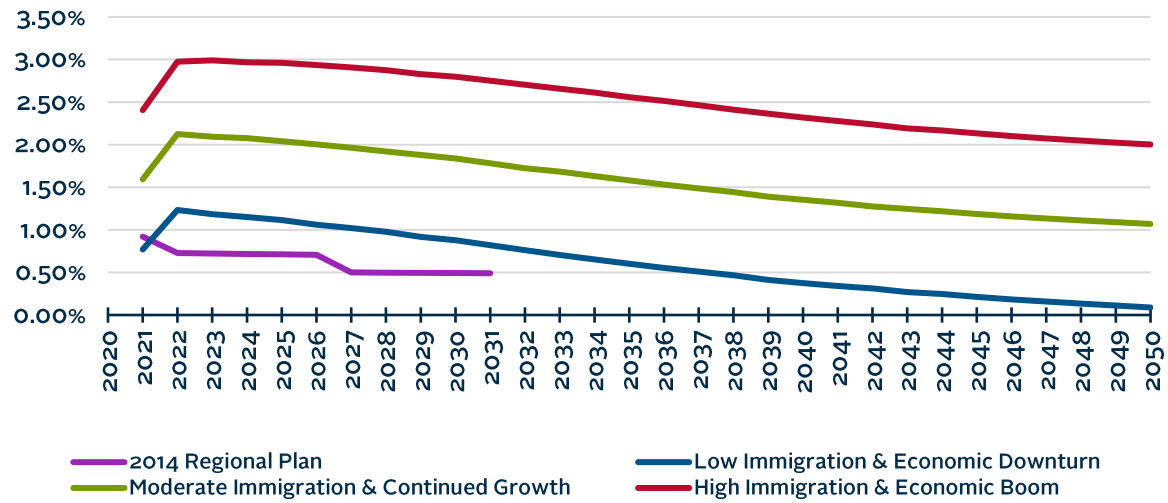
QUESTION: What percentage increase were you attributing to each growth projection - low, moderate, high?

Emilie Pothier, Planning Research Analyst, Regional Planning

We used a cohort survival model for the projections. Instead of attributing a percent annual growth to the population to project it forward, we took the existing population broken down by age group and applied assumptions around births, deaths, and migration. It ends up being a different percent annual increase for each year.



Annual Growth Rate for Population Projection Scenarios



Please note that the sharp increase from the first year of the projection is due to our immigration assumptions that were adjusted downward in relation to COVID-19.

QUESTION: Can we look at using the new Affordable Housing fund the Municipality has set up, in order to build under \$100K small home clusters – that can then be purchased by tenants using forms of “Rent to Own” financing?

Jillian MacLellan, Planner III, Regional Planning

The new affordable housing grant program is fairly broad in the types of development that it can be applied to. The minimum investment for the grant program, it's very low [\$500 per property]. We want it to be very broad in the type of projects we could help through the fund. Whereas technically, yes, the funding could be used to develop a single house, or potentially a cluster of houses, our land use bylaws do have restrictions on clustered housing. Depending on where you are in the municipality, you may or may not be able to develop a clustered styled of housing.

Regarding a rent-to-own mechanism, that is outside of the Municipality's jurisdiction.

QUESTION: What restrictions can neighbourhoods place on secondary suites?

Jillian MacLellan, Planner III, Regional Planning

In the fall of 2020, Regional Council adopted region-wide amendments to permit secondary and backyard suites throughout all residential areas. This allows these suites as accessory to single unit dwellings, two-unit dwellings, and townhouse dwellings. The restrictions on the secondary suites are that you still need to comply with the same built form requirements as the main dwelling. So, if you did need to build into your side yard or expand on the footprint of the house, you may need to apply for a variance if that's larger than what the land use bylaw allows.

We have tried to be very light on any additional restrictions to a secondary suite, as opposed to what you would have for a main dwelling.

If neighbourhoods wish to put additional restrictions on suites, restrictive covenants are a legal agreement between property owners, but they are not something that the municipality uses.

Click [here](#) for more information on secondary suites.

QUESTION: When it comes to affordable housing, do you have any ideas about how the needs and solutions might differ between our urban, suburban and rural communities? Besides keeping size of units small - which aren't family friendly - what other tools are there for keeping housing affordable?

Jillian MacLellan, Planner III, Regional Planning

Most of the municipality's provisions regarding affordable housing are meant to cover the entire municipality. They are meant to be very broad in how they are applied. There are several ways we try to ensure affordability through waiving municipal related construction fees, permit fees, and planning application fees that may be required for the development to keep the building or the development affordable once it's developed and in the long run. We also have a tax relief program. If you're a non-profit, you get your portion of your property tax relieved so that helps with the ongoing affordability as well. We want affordable housing next to amenities, and yes, smaller units can be good, but it isn't a one size fits all solution. You need to have the ability to develop affordable housing in rural areas where you may not have the same access to transit as you would in urban areas as well.

Leah Perrin, Principal Planner, Regional Planning

That question brings up our need to understand our housing supply as well. In our rural areas, we hear a lot about the need for there to be more diversity of housing to support aging in place in their communities.

Our rural communities often have many single detached homes, but not a lot of other types of housing, so expanding the supply of housing and the diversity of housing types can help more people to live there. I think in our rural communities, as well as urban communities, we need to make sure we have lots of different types of housing available to people.

QUESTION: Can we take a serious look at “Affordable Indexing” for small landlords (so they can offer lower rents in return for corresponding property tax payment reductions)? Even if this involves working with the Province to change the current Service Agreement between the two levels of government.

Jillian MacLellan, Planner III, Regional Planning

As it stands right now the municipality doesn't have a lot of flexibility and supporting affordable housing within the private sector. We can help by allowing a broad array of different types of residential uses, but we are unable to provide the same types of incentives that we're able to provide for non-profits. We can't provide money or waive certain fees as we can for non-profits.

This is something that the [Provincial Housing Commission report](#) has suggested that the Province consider changing to give municipalities more power to provide more support for affordable housing.

Changes to legislation regarding rent is more of a provincial responsibility through the Rental Tenancies Act.

QUESTION: Is there a way to make it a requirement of any new multi-unit development to include a number of affordable units equivalent to the number of units that the new development would eliminate?

Jillian MacLellan, Planner III, Regional Planning

That's something that we're looking to explore through no net loss policy. The idea of no net loss policy is that you retain the same amount of affordability you have on existing building as you would if the building was to be redeveloped. Inclusionary zoning is a tool that we can use to potentially meet that requirement.

Also, we can work with our partners with the province and the federal government to see how we can support the no net loss policies or the protection of existing rental units.

QUESTION: What can the city currently do to preserve existing affordable housing?

Jillian MacLellan, Planner III, Regional Planning

Providing help through tax relief on existing properties can be a big help. This can be a big cost saver in annual budgets.

Another tool is allowing for adaptive reuse, which means allowing interior renovations but keeping the structure of the building. The cost of constructing a building can add quite a bit to development, so if you can retain the existing structure or work within an existing building frame that can reduce costs.

QUESTION: What are the rules and regulations on building a shipping container home in HRM?

Jillian MacLellan, Planner III, Regional Planning

As it stands right now our land use bylaws don't permit shipping containers on residential properties, so that has become a bit of a barrier if you want to convert a shipping container into a residential use.

Leah Perrin, Principal Planner, Regional Planning

Shipping containers haven't been something that's been permitted. It isn't something that I have done too much work on. I have seen articles that say that by the time you've insulated them and do all of the things you need to do in order to convert them that it may not be actually that much better than some other kind of modular home. I can't speak to any authority on that but as far as I'm aware our regulations don't encourage them at the moment.

([Here is an interesting article](#) about shipping container homes and the Halifax context, from the Signal, the University of King's College Journalism School's publication)

QUESTION: What household size assumptions did you use to translate projected population into number of units?

Emilie Pothier, Planning Research Analyst, Regional Planning

One way of translating population into housing units is by taking the population and then multiplying it by an average household size. However, that method doesn't allow us to factor in the age demographics of the population and how that might affect the number of households, based on how household composition might change over different life stages (so, for instance, you could be living with your parents when you were a teenager, living with roommates in your 20s, and then living with a partner or living alone in your older years – just as a hypothetical example).

Instead of applying a uniform household size, we use a concept called headship rate, which is the likelihood of people in different age groups to head a household. Essentially, for each age group, we took the number of households headed by someone in that age group and then divided it by the total number of people in that age group, based on data from the 2016 census. We then applied those headship rates to the projected population to get the number of households.

Just to note that 'heading' a household in this context means being responsible for paying either the rent or the mortgage, utilities, etc. If more than one person in the household is responsible for those things, the 'primary household maintainer,' as they call it, will be designated to whoever's name appeared first on that Census Questionnaire.

QUESTION: Could you give us a little bit of information about why the population projection changed from what was in the 2014 Regional Plan to now?

Emilie Pothier, Planning Research Analyst, Regional Planning

The population projection used in the 2014 Regional Plan reflected about a 1% growth rate, annually. In the last few years, we've seen significantly higher population growth: around 2% each year since 2017. One of the most challenging aspects of population growth to project is migration, since it can change significantly in short periods of time due to factors like government policy and economic conditions. The migration assumptions from the projection that was in the 2014 Regional Plan were based on the

economic conditions right on the heels of the 2008 recession. Economic conditions have shifted quite a bit since that time, migration patterns have changed, and new census information and population estimates have been released. We used the new information and the context that we have today to inform the updated population projections, so they reflect what we've observed in the last 10 years.

QUESTION: How can we prioritize adaptive reuse? For example, negotiating with developers to explore that option ahead of demolition which is something that often happens with heritage and affordable properties.

Jillian MacLellan, Planner III, Regional Planning

I personally I'm a big fan of adaptive reuse. It not only has environmentally friendly aspects to it, but also affordability aspects to it too that I think are fantastic. A way that we can prioritize it is by including policy that maybe allows additional density or flexibility in the types of uses that might be permitted. We currently have a type of adaptive reuse policy in the Halifax Plan area where a heritage property can enter into a development agreement (which is a site specific agreement) to allow for the adaptive reuse of the building. As long as you retain the heritage aspects of the building you have a lot of flexibility in the types of uses that you can do.

Kate Greene, Program Manager, Regional Planning

In our community plans, we have this ability to allow for people who own registered heritage properties to request additional heritage rights through development agreement. We're hoping to allow registered property owners across the municipality to have this opportunity, and we're anticipating that there will be direction in the Regional Plan. Hopefully this will enable a region-wide policy and a standard heritage development policy so people who have a registered heritage property will have that kind of flexibility to look at adaptive reuse of those buildings and enabling more housing. The topic of adaptive reuse is also something that's been prominent in our feedback around rural areas of the municipality, where there may be decline or a change in industry that's resulting in some buildings used differently than in the way they once were. We're looking at whether we can create an adaptive reuse policy for buildings where the purpose has changed, but they could be used otherwise for housing.

QUESTION: Has the municipality looked at Co-housing for seniors? programs? If you have a home with more than two seniors in it, could they be forgiven for some extra costs, such as paying water taxes, school taxes, etc? Basically doing things that make it cost effective for seniors who choose to live in a private home to save on costs.

Jillian MacLellan, Planner III, Regional Planning

It's not exactly the same as co-housing, but we do have a shared housing project that's looking at providing a consistent approach to land uses that provides a type of housing where a variety of individuals to live in a house under separate leases. That can be applied to seniors where everyone has their own room, but they share amenities.

I appreciate with co-housing everybody has their smaller unit with larger shared amenities. There isn't really anything preventing co-housing development from happening in Halifax. It's just a different way to develop a multiple unit dwelling or bare land condo. I've been having conversations with seniors' groups on this topic and interested individuals throughout HRM.

QUESTION: Are secondary suites considered legal apartments? I'm also wondering if the current amendment for secondary suites is a temporary or long-term plan? What paperwork is required for secondary suites?

Jillian MacLellan, Planner III, Regional Planning

A secondary or backyard suite is considered a legal apartment. It can be used as a rental unit or for a family member. It could be used just as an extra unit that you have in your space for visitors or for whatever reason you might want an extra unit.

The current amendments are intended to be long term. We will monitor the success of the program and see if any future amendments need to be made. There seems to have been a good uptake in the in those who are applying for permits for secondary or backyard suites.

For the paperwork that's required, it is the same as applying for any type of permit. You would be applying for a permit specifically for secondary suite (or a backyard suite if it's separate from your main dwelling). Depending on

the amount of work or the renovations that you need to do to allow for the secondary suite, you'll have to provide a certain array of plans that show that you're building that the secondary suite and comply with the land use bylaw and the building code.

QUESTION: Our housing crisis has highlighted the lack of maintenance and some rental units when nonprofits build affordable homes through the new funding recently given out from the government will there be funding for maintenance, especially long term maintenance 10, 20, 30 years and more?

Jillian MacLellan, Planner III, Regional Planning

I'm assuming this is referring to the Rapid Housing Initiative funding, and I suppose it could also apply to the affordable housing grant funding. With the Rapid Housing Initiative funding we're working with the province to ensure that there can be funds available for operating costs as needed. HRM has waived the property tax for the properties so that will reduce their operating costs as well. We will continue to work with the groups [partner organizations] throughout the next 20 years, to make sure that they are able to keep their rents low for those in need of deep affordability but also make sure that they're able to operate.

In regards to the HRM affordable housing grant program, we'll be looking at long term financial viability when non-profits are applying for the program. Has the project already secured operating funding through the Province or through another form of funding? If not, we are open to funding mixed market developments so that they can be self-sustainable by charging market rents to help supplement the lower income rents.

QUESTION: Following up on adaptive re-use. The example that we provided was the Heritage DA policy supporting adaptive reuse. If properties are not registered heritage properties, are there other options?

Kate Greene, Program Manager, Regional Planning

In addition to heritage properties, we are also looking at developing an adaptive reuse policy. We're especially focused in rural areas. We don't know exactly what form that will take. It's a pretty new policy for us, we're trying to establish that at the region level. It's really for institutional uses or government buildings where once there was maybe a church or community facility that is no longer in use. How we might we convert so its more than just heritage properties.

Leah Perrin, Principal Planner, Regional Planning

There could be opportunities as we explore tools for the no net loss of residential units, that we could combine those two things (no net loss and adaptive reuse). We're trying to figure out ways to maintain existing units and also keep existing buildings. There are probably opportunities there, and we just need to do some more work.

Jillian MacLellan, Planner III, Regional Planning

The Rapid Housing Initiative funding was available to either new construction or converting non-residential buildings into residential buildings. The initiative was encouraging the adaptive reuse of commercial properties into residential uses.

QUESTION: How hard would it be to convert some of the existing commercial office spaces to use for affordable housing instead? Especially since there are likely to be a lot of empty commercial properties over the next couple years.

Kate Greene, Program Manager, Regional Planning

This is something we're thinking about. We have a theme area on COVID-19, but we're really interested in tracking how the use of office space is going to change over the next number of years. From a planning perspective in the more intense parts of the city where's there's a lot of

commercial and residential development, we're not as worried anymore as we used to be about those uses existing together. We're okay to have residential and office uses in the same environments. Mixed use is something we've been moving towards for a long time. Where that type of idea is more challenging is in areas like Burnside, where you might have office uses. Those areas may or may not be removed from services - we always want to make sure we have residential uses near services. I think that would be one of the main considerations and thinking about what we convert. This is a pretty new and active conversation that we're all in the middle of right now, so definitely appreciate that question. I think it's a great one to ask right now.

Leah Perrin, Principal Planner, Regional Planning

I would add - since I've been preparing for our Climate Q&A - is that much of our community GHG emissions come from our buildings. There is a huge need to retrofit our existing buildings and I'm really interested in the ways that we can combine our understanding of the housing issue with potentially improving our energy efficiency of buildings. Maybe we can do those two things together. I think there are some exciting opportunities there. There are probably some higher level of government funding that can be used to do those projects. There may be some good opportunities available to us to explore.

QUESTION: Wouldn't decommissioned schools be good candidates for cluster housing or Co-housing?

Kate Greene, Program Manager, Regional Planning

That's something we've been thinking about. One of the things that Councillor Hendsbee raised in our Council session was this idea that former schools might be a great place for affordable housing to be built. I think the Rapid Housing Initiative has identified those types of uses where we can create net new housing. We don't want to lose residential housing as we're converting facilities. Those are great sites and we are partnering with the school board (Halifax Regional Centre for Education/HRCE). We work with HRCE to identify where population is growing and where new schools are going. As those sites are decommissioned, HRCE will speak with the municipality about the decommissioning, and I think as we are urgently trying to house people now, we can work in cooperation with the Province. I believe that was identified in the [Provincial Housing](#)

[Commission report](#). I might be wrong¹. But certainly that's a topic that's being discussed. And yes, they would be good candidates because they're often connected to services.

Jillian MacLellan, Planner III, Regional Planning

We have a new surplus land program for affordable housing. Former lands that were used by schools would be something that we would look at as a strong candidate for surplus land for affordable housing.

Kate Greene, Program Manager, Regional Planning

Yes, I had mentioned those earlier. We call those institutional uses so churches and schools and community facilities and they are definitely good candidate sites for conversion.

Please note: The questions below were not answered during the Live Q&A as we ran out of time – thank you very much for your participation!

QUESTION: Why are buildings in business parks only one-storey high? Couldn't they have offices or residences on a second storey?

Thank you for this comment. The [Industrial Employment Lands Strategy](#) identified that we need to protect HRM's limited supply of industrial lands, and proactively plan for our future needs. As land values increase, lower value industrial lands can face pressure to convert to commercial or residential uses, resulting in a loss in the supply of industrial lands over time. Some industrial uses are not compatible with residential or other more sensitive uses, due to noise, odours, or the possibility that the industrial uses deal with potentially hazardous materials. Therefore, we have to be careful about how we permit non-industrial uses in our industrial parks.

That said, business parks that are more commercial than industrial in nature could definitely accommodate a wider range of uses, in more compact forms. The Dartmouth Crossing area does permit residential development by development agreement (this requires Council review and approval).

¹ Kate was not wrong – see [Recommendation #6](#), which speaks to “Leverag[ing] public assets through options such as divestiture to community housing providers or Community Land Trusts.”

QUESTION: Why is it more expensive to get water in my house here in Halifax than it is in California where they have droughts and water shortages?

HRM's municipal water supply is managed by [Halifax Water](#). Halifax Water is a regulated utility and is mandated to set rates so that they recover the costs of providing service.

QUESTION: What is the practical difference between a secondary suite and a second unit?

A secondary suite is a small separate unit that is accessory to the main dwelling. A secondary suite can be no larger than 80 square metres, does not require additional parking and is subject [modified requirements](#) under the National Building Code. A second unit has no maximum size requirement, usually requires an additional parking space and is subject to the standard requirements of the National Building Code for a unit.

Both a secondary suite and a second unit would be considered a self-contained unit and both require their own civic number.