



REGIONAL MUNICIPAL PLANNING STRATEGY

HALIFAX

REGIONAL MUNICIPAL PLANNING STRATEGY

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that this is a true copy of the Halifax Regional 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 ____ day of _____, _____, and reviewed by Municipal Affairs and Housing on the ____ day of _____, _____, and is in effect as of the ____ day of _____, _____.

GIVEN UNDER THE HAND of the Municipal Clerk and under the seal of Halifax Regional Municipality this ____ day of _____, 20____.

Municipal Clerk

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Halifax region is a beautiful place with a unique and valued blend of communities and nature. Many communities are located near the striking Nova Scotian coastline, while others communities have grown around abundant lakes and waterways. Rural communities showcase rich traditional and working landscapes. Historic sites and neighbourhoods connect to a visible history. The municipality is growing and changing, with diverse and inclusive communities and public spaces.

The Halifax Regional Municipality is known for being community-minded and has been recognized as one of the best places to live in Canada. Despite this, more needs to be done to help community members who are most in need, especially when it comes to finding adequate and affordable housing, amenities, and services. Immigrants, newcomers, and people of all ages, abilities, incomes, and backgrounds need to be reflected in our spaces and places. Historically marginalized communities are disproportionately affected by policy changes, and their voices must be brought into decision-making. The Regional Plan offers an opportunity to identify a diversity of interests and needs across our communities and bring forward transformative changes in how we grow as a region.

1.2 ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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

Nova Scotia is the birthplace of the African presence in Canada. African Nova Scotians are a distinct founding people in our community who have contributed to and have been a key part of Nova Scotian culture and history for over 400 years.

Between 2015 and 2023, Halifax Regional Council has endorsed the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, the recommendations of the *Task Force on the Commemoration of Edward Cornwallis and the Recognition and Commemoration of Indigenous History*, and the *Road to Economic Prosperity for African Nova Scotian Communities*.

1.3 REGIONAL CONTEXT

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

The Halifax Regional Municipality is the largest municipality in Nova Scotia in terms of geography and population. It is bordered by Hants County and the Municipality of Colchester to the north, the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg to the west, Guysborough County to the east, and the Atlantic Ocean along the Municipality's southern border. The Municipality was formed of four former municipalities, the City of Halifax, the City of Dartmouth, the Town of Bedford, and the Municipality of the County of Halifax (Halifax County),

which were amalgamated in 1996. Now, Halifax Regional Municipality is comprised of a variety of urban and rural communities, each with unique identities and histories but with many shared attributes that contribute to the Municipality as a whole.

The Halifax Regional Municipality has a variety of roles. It is the capital of Nova Scotia. It is the primary point of international entry to and from Atlantic Canada. It is an important centre of production and for the delivery and management of goods and services. It is also a major cultural centre that people outside of Atlantic Canada look upon as a reflection of the region, and which people within the region look to as a leader.

1.3.1 HISTORICAL SETTLEMENTS

The Mi'kmaq established permanent settlements in K'jipuktuk and also moved in seasonal rounds from coastal regions in the summer where they fished and hunted, to inland areas in the wintertime. There is evidence of permanent settlements dating as far back as 10,000 years in locations such as Turtle Grove, which is a Mi'kmaq settlement on the Dartmouth (Punamu'kwati'jk) side of the Halifax Harbour, now known as Tufts Cove¹.

The first Europeans to arrive to the Atlantic region were likely Basque fishermen from the Bay of Biscay, who began whaling and fishing around 1525.² In the period between 1534 and 1600, early French settlers made voyages to the Atlantic east coast and landed in the Maritimes, and established alliances with Indigenous peoples in the area. Those alliances and relations emphasized peace and collaboration in trade.³

In 1746, the British government sponsored their first settlement plan in Canada, focused on present-day Halifax, and established the Town of Halifax in 1749.⁴ The design of the settlement was laid out in the typical British military manner of the time, with a regular grid system protected by military fortifications. In the same year, many warships were decommissioned and converted to transporter vessels of settlers. In 1750, the ship Alderney arrived and disembarked new settlers on the east side of the Halifax Harbour, who took up residence in what is now known as downtown Dartmouth.⁵

The establishment and evolution of the Town of Halifax resulted in escalated tensions and war over land rights with the Mi'kmaq, the original inhabitants of the lands. These conflicts also led to multiple British deportation campaigns of the French-speaking Acadians between 1755 and 1764. Between 1725 and 1779, the British Crown signed a series of treaties with the Mi'kmaq Nation, and various Indigenous nations living in various parts of what are now the Maritimes and neighbouring areas. Commonly known as the Peace and Friendship Treaties, these agreements were mainly designed to prevent war and facilitate trade. These treaties guaranteed hunting, fishing, and land-use rights for the descendants of the Indigenous signatories.⁶ The Peace and Friendship Treaties remain in effect today.

¹ Coulter, A., Ruitenbeek, I., & Rutgers J. (2019). The Story of Turtle Grove. Retrieved July 20, 2020, from signalhfx.ca/the-story-of-turtle-grove/

² Bélanger, R. (2006). Basques. Retrieved July 20, 2020, from thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/basques

³ Wallace, S. (2018). Peace and Friendship Treaties. Retrieved on July 20, 2020, from thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/peace-and-friendship-treaties

⁴ Mccann, L. (2012). Halifax. Retrieved July 20, 2020, from thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/halifax

⁵ Kernaghan, L. (2012). Dartmouth. Retrieved July 20, 2020, from thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/dartmouth

⁶ Wallace, S. (2018). Peace and Friendship Treaties. Retrieved on July 20, 2020, from thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/peace-and-friendship-treaties

In 2015, the Federal Government of Canada, the Provincial Government of Nova Scotia, and the Council of the Municipality issued various official Statements of Reconciliation to acknowledge a new approach and commit to reconciliation with the Indigenous Peoples of Canada, the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis.⁷ These statements act as a commitment to learning from the lessons of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and to taking action to recognize the needs and aspirations of Indigenous peoples.

Between 1783-1815, Black settlers arrived in the Halifax region from the United States and the Caribbean. These settlers immigrated to Halifax in three distinct waves: the Black Loyalists in 1783, exiled Jamaican Maroons in 1796, and the War of 1812 Refugees between 1813-1815. Historical African Nova Scotian communities— including Beechville, Cherry Brook, Lake Loon, East Preston, Lucasville, North Preston, and Upper Hammonds Plains— are some of the oldest African Canadian communities in Canada.

The British government granted many African Nova Scotian families land around the outskirts of Halifax and Dartmouth. This land was rocky and infertile. Moreover, Black settlers received “tickets of location” and/or “licenses of occupations” for land rather than clear legal titles. These unclear land titles still prevent many African Nova Scotians from bequeathing or selling land, acquiring mortgages, or accessing housing grants. Acquiring legal title to these lands for African Nova Scotian families is a historical and ongoing issue. Chapters 8, 9 and 10 of this Plan include policies relating to the Municipality’s role in fostering inclusive economic prosperity, community planning, and the Land Titles Clarification initiative.

The municipality is comprised of distinct communities and waves of settlement. In recent decades it has been the point of entry and ultimate home to Lebanese, Kosovar, Syrian, and Ukrainian immigrant and refugee communities, and many more who have left their unique mark on the cultural identity of the region. The municipality is home to eight post-secondary educational institutions, which attract domestic and international students to settle here either temporarily or permanently.

1.3.2 REGIONAL PLAN GEOGRAPHIES

The Regional Plan sets out planning policy and regulation for the entire municipality which includes region-wide direction as well as three major geographic areas: The Regional Centre, the Suburban Area, and the Rural Area. The Regional Centre and Suburban Area are together referred to as the Urban Area in this Plan. The evolution of these areas has been influenced by a wide range of economic, cultural, environmental, and social factors that continue to influence the physical form and character of communities and neighbourhoods.

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

⁷ Moran, R. (2015). Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Retrieved July 22, 2020, from thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/truth-and-reconciliation-commission

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

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

1.3.3 URBAN SETTLEMENT

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

The development of the railway system in the late 1800s and early 1900s also opened new lands for development, and improved connections to communities in Nova Scotia and Canada. As such, economic growth based on privateering, international shipping, and trade expanded wealth and population, which resulted in the prosperity of the region in the mid- to late-1800s. The commercial prosperity continued until the Halifax Explosion in 1917, which had significant impacts on many businesses and industries, as well as development patterns.⁸ The Halifax Explosion levelled many areas in the North End of Halifax and portions of Dartmouth. This destruction, in part, led to the realignment of various street grids in Halifax and Dartmouth.⁹

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

⁸ McCann, L. (2012). Halifax. Retrieved July 20, 2020, from thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/halifax

⁹ Kernaghan, L. & Foot, R. (2011). Halifax Explosion. Retrieved on July 21, 2020, from thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/halifax-explosion

The urban renewal movement changed the face of the Regional Centre. It included the creation of a Master Plan for the City of Halifax in 1949, and the opening of the Angus L. MacDonald Bridge in 1955 and the A. Murray MacKay Bridge in 1970. A number of urban renewal projects in the 1960s and 1970s resulted in the large-scale redevelopment of various blocks in Downtown Halifax. The partial construction of the Harbour Drive Highway included the displacement of established communities to make way for the Cogswell Interchange's construction in 1969 to 1970.

The urban renewal movement affected the African Nova Scotian community of Africville which was located on the edge of the Bedford Basin. In 1961, the City of Halifax began the movement of Africville residents to make way for planned industrial development and the construction of the A. Murray MacKay Bridge connecting Halifax to Dartmouth. In 1996, the Africville site was recognized as a National Historic Site as it continues to serve as a symbol of the Black Nova Scotian cultural identity, and past racial injustices.¹⁰ In 2010, Halifax Regional Council issued an apology to the former residents of Africville. A non-profit society, known as the Africville Heritage Trust Society, was established in 2012 to be the governing body intended to own and operate a museum and a community church, known as the Seaview Baptist Church and Africville Interpretive Centre.¹¹

During the latter half of the 20th century, residential, commercial, and industrial growth continued in the Regional Centre and expanding into suburbs. This was guided by geographic and topographic limitations as well as land use planning and investment in highways, bridges and infrastructure. There was an increasingly regional approach as parts of Halifax County were annexed to become parts of the cities of Halifax and Dartmouth. During this time, commercial and industrial growth expanded in the Suburban Area with the introduction and expansion of the Burnside Park in Dartmouth in the 1970s and of the Bayers Lake Business Park in Halifax in the 1980s. As major employment centres, Burnside and Bayers Lake influenced the growth of nearby suburban communities and these communities saw increasingly urban residential typologies, but the infrastructure tended to continue to be focused on the private vehicle.

The 21st century has seen a focus of planning policy to direct growth in population and jobs to the municipality's Urban Area. Recognizing the environmental, social, and economic importance of growth management, in 2006, the first Regional Plan was adopted by Halifax Regional Council. It provided region-wide policies and defined an urban service boundary. The Regional Plan and several subsequent planning documents and adjustments, notably including the Downtown Halifax Plan (2009) and the Centre Plan (2019, 2021), encouraged densification in the Urban Area. During the same period, the adoption of several heritage conservation districts recognized the importance of a connection to historical neighbourhoods and structures. These policy changes have been accompanied by strong mixed-use development activity in the Urban Area since 2010. Since 2015, the municipality's population has grown significantly faster than anticipated, and the construction of housing has fallen behind demand. This has led to an unprecedented housing, homelessness, and affordability crisis.

1.3.4 RURAL SETTLEMENT

Rural development in the Municipality has been diverse in terms of geography, population density, and proximity to the urban core. Economic development and settlement patterns in the rural area have been

¹⁰ McRae, M. (n.d.). The Story of Africville. Retrieved July 22, 2020, from humanrights.ca/story/the-story-of-africville

¹¹ A.L. Arbic Consulting and Genesis Consulting. (2010). *Seaview Church & Africville Interpretive Centre: Update to December 2006 Feasibility Study/Business Plan*. Halifax Regional Municipality.

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

Many rural communities have been uniquely shaped by their local industry, including farming, fishing, and resource activities. In the rural area, many communities are still strongly driven by these traditional industries, like farming in the Musquodoboit Valley, fishing and coastal industry in Sambro, or mining in Moose River. Communities also continue to be shaped by existing protected wilderness areas and parks, and other natural areas that offer important ecological services to the entire municipality. Many historical African Nova Scotian communities are in the Rural area and maintain a strong connection to land, culture, and history.

Throughout the 20th century, population expansion in the municipality has led to population growth in existing rural centres. Much of this development has continued the pattern of rural character, driven by the rural economy and new housing settlement, while maintaining ecological, economic, social, and cultural values of these areas. However, during the 1980s and 1990s, some rural areas within commuting distance of the urban core experienced significant residential development due to the pre-amalgamation subdivision regulations which allowed dispersed development patterns. In some instances, these developments have led to concerns around the availability of services and infrastructure, emergency response and egress, environmental impacts, and the maintenance of private roads.

1.4 REGIONAL VISION AND PRINCIPLES

1.4.1 VISION

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

To enhance our quality of life by fostering the growth of healthy and vibrant communities, a strong and diverse economy, and sustainable environment.

1.4.2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This Plan:

- **Addresses the needs of the Halifax Regional Municipality as a whole, recognizing the diversity of its residents, communities, and geographies;**
- **Strategically directs housing, services, infrastructure, and employment in support of healthy and connected communities;**
- **Guides investments in physical and community infrastructure at the regional and local level;**

- **Supports increasing housing supply across the region to meet the needs of residents of all ages, income levels, and abilities;**
- **Recognizes the importance of parks and open space, wilderness, natural assets, and environmentally sensitive areas to supporting residents' quality of life and the region's environmental health;**
- **Promotes action to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change;**
- **Organizes land use and infrastructure investment to improve mobility and promote a range of choices for getting around;**
- **Promotes community-led initiatives and collaborative planning;**
- **Supports quality of life and equitable economic growth;**
- **Reflects the Municipality's commitments to diversity and inclusion and acknowledging the needs and aspirations of Indigenous people; and**
- **Provides a framework for cost-effective, timely, and evidence-based decision-making.**

1.5 REGIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The *Regional Municipal Planning Strategy* (referred to as the "Regional Plan" or "this Plan") is the overarching planning document guiding the growth and development of the entire municipality. The Halifax Regional Municipality's first Regional Plan was adopted in 2006 and reviewed and readopted in 2014. This Plan (2025) guides the Municipality's planning and decision-making in several main ways:

- **Sets Strategic Direction**
This plan sets a common vision, guiding principles and long-range, strategic policies for where, when, and how the region will grow and develop.
- **Guidance for Community Plans (Secondary Municipal Planning Strategies)**
The policies of this Plan provide the guiding framework for locally oriented policies found in the Municipality's community plans (formally called Secondary Municipal Planning Strategies), which apply to specific areas of the municipality. All comprehensive reviews or site-specific amendments to community plans will be aligned with the policies of this Plan. Policies in this Plan which provide guidance for amendments to community plans typically include statements such as: "When considering amendments to secondary municipal planning strategies, the Municipality shall consider..." or "It shall be the intention of Council to consider..."
- **Land Use Regulations**
The planning direction contained in this Plan is implemented through the community plans (formerly secondary municipal planning strategies), land use by-laws, and the Regional Subdivision By-law.. These planning documents, along with the heritage by-laws, govern land use on each property within a given plan area. Policies in this Plan that directly regulate land use typically include statements such as: "The Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-law..." or "The Municipality shall, through the *Regional Subdivision By-law*..."

- **Priorities Plans and Strategic Plans**

The Municipality's Priorities Plans, strategies and guidance documents are intended as management plans to guide detailed actions to be taken to carry out the policy directives of this Plan. They do not represent land use policy, but rather act as detailed management guides for the Municipality's strategic initiatives, including programs, services, partnerships, and facilities, and their associated budgetary requirements.

- **Future Study**

This Plan establishes the Municipality's intent to conduct future research program or studies. These studies may be needed to further the work identified by a Priorities Plan or to support amendments to land use regulations, including future amendments to this Plan.

1.6 PROVINCIAL ROLE IN PLANNING

Municipal planning documents, including this Plan and all supporting secondary planning strategies, land use by-laws, and the *Regional Subdivision By-Law*, must be reasonably consistent with Statements of Provincial Interest and fulfill the minimum planning requirements as set out by the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter* and any associated regulations (referred to in this Plan as the *HRM Charter*).

1.6.1 STATEMENTS OF PROVINCIAL INTEREST

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

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

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

Provincial Statement (1): Drinking Water

The Municipality's drinking water supply is supplied from surface water and groundwater located across the Region. The protection of these municipal water supply watersheds is addressed by this Plan in Chapter 6.

Provincial Statement (2): Flood Risk Areas

Low-lying areas in the municipality sometimes experience flooding from intense weather events. This Plan includes policies and regulations on planning for flood risk areas, stormwater management, and watercourse buffers to reduce and mitigate the risk of flooding through policies contained in Chapter 6. Community plans also address flood risk areas through land use designation policies and regulations.

Provincial Statement (3): Agricultural Land

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

Provincial Statement (4): Infrastructure

This Plan supports the efficient use of municipal infrastructure by enabling the densification of areas where municipal water, sewer and transit services exist (the Urban Area). Growth in these areas is supported by policy in Chapters 2, 3, 7 and 10 in this Plan and by land use policies in community plans.

Provincial Statement (5): Housing

This Plan recognizes that the Municipality is experiencing a housing shortage crisis, and responds to this challenge by enabling a variety of residential forms and uses through the region, as provided by policies in Chapter 5.

Provincial Statement (6): Development of the Nova Centre

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

1.6.2 MINIMUM PLANNING REQUIREMENTS

Under subsection 229(4) of the *HRM Charter*, the Minister may make regulations (a) prescribing matters in respect of which the inclusion of statements of policy in a municipal planning strategy is either mandatory or discretionary, and (b) prescribing requirements that a municipal planning strategy must fulfill. These have been established by the Minister as the *Minimum Planning Requirements Regulations*.

Section 4 of the *Minimum Planning Requirements Regulations* sets out mandatory content that a municipal planning strategy must contain, and Section 4A sets out mandatory content related to housing supply. Section 14 identifies specific mandatory requirements related to wind turbine setbacks.

The mandatory content identified in the *Regulations* is addressed as follows:

- Each Chapter of this Plan includes background and contextual information informing the Municipality's goals and objectives;
- Maps 1 and 2 depict the intended future uses of the lands;

- Policy related to residential uses is included in Chapters 2, 3, 5 and 10;
- Policy related to commercial and industrial uses is included in Chapters 2, 3, 8 and 10;
- Policy related to institutional uses is included in Chapters 2, 3, 4, 8 and 10;
- Policy related to resource uses is included in Chapters 2, 3, 6, 8 and 10;
- Policy describing the procedures to be followed when reviewing this Plan and provide for public consultation and notice is included in Chapter 10;
- Policy related to housing supply is included in Chapters 2, 3, 5, and 10; and
- Policy related to wind energy is included in Chapter 6.

1.7 PLAN ORGANIZATION

This Plan establishes policies which are implemented through secondary municipal planning strategies, land use by-laws, the Regional Subdivision By-law, and priorities plans.

This Plan is divided into the following chapters:

1. **Introduction:** An overview of the history of settlement in the area into urban and rural communities, the Regional Plan Vision and Guiding Principles, planning framework and the use of key terms;
2. **Planning for the Region:** Establishes the regional land use structure, and sets direction for strategic growth and infrastructure planning and (See also *Maps 1 and 2*);
3. **Building Healthy and Complete Communities:** Direction on community planning for urban and rural areas, and planning for future serviced communities (See also *Map 3 and 4*);
4. **Strengthening Community Infrastructure:** Direction on parks, community facilities, emergency services, food security, solid waste management, and utilities (See also *Map 5*);
5. **Fostering Diverse and Affordable Housing:** Direction on removing barriers to housing and supporting initiatives for a range of safe, sustainable, and affordable housing options;
6. **Protecting the Environment and Acting on Climate:** Direction for acting on climate, protecting natural areas including source water, watercourses, wetlands, watersheds, and coastlines (See also *Map 6*), protecting critical infrastructure, and transitioning to a low carbon future;
7. **Providing Options for Mobility:** Direction for providing connected mobility networks, complete streets, identifying multi-modal strategic corridors (see also *Map 7*), coordinating regionally for mobility, and planning for efficient transit services (see also *Map 8*);
8. **Promoting Economic Prosperity:** Direction for working with institutional partners, providing additional opportunities for mixed use and employment, protecting industrial lands, cannabis-related uses, rural employment, tourism, inclusive economic prosperity, and the green economy;
9. **Celebrating Culture, Arts and Heritage:** Direction for recognition and protection of culture and heritage, including with Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotian communities and other traditionally underrepresented groups; and
10. **Implementation:** Direction on available tools implementing the Plan, transitioning to the Plan, engaging residents, and monitoring and reviewing the Plan.

1.8 INTERPRETATION

This Plan is written in the active voice to indicate purposeful direction for future development and outcome. Under the provisions of the *HRM Charter*, a Municipality cannot regulate directly from the *Regional Municipal Planning Strategy* or a secondary municipal planning strategy; rather, it must regulate from a land

use by-law or subdivision by-law adopted by the Municipality to carry out the intent and direction of this Plan. The Municipality may also regulate by development agreement.

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

1.8.1 KEY TERMS

This Plan uses the following key terms:

- **Land Use By-Law** means a by-law that implements the intent of a municipal planning strategy.
- **Land Use Structure** means a map of the lands within the Municipality or within parts of the Municipality that depicts the intended future uses of the lands as contemplated by the municipal planning strategy. This is sometimes referred to as a generalized future land use map.
- The **Municipality** means the Halifax Regional Municipality.
- The **municipality** (lower case) denotes the physical area of the Halifax Regional Municipality.
- **Priorities Plan** means a subject-focused, strategic plan used to guide detailed actions to be taken to carry out the policy directives of this Plan. They do not represent land use policy, but rather act as detailed management guides for the Municipality's strategic initiatives, including programs, services, partnerships, and facilities, and their associated budgetary requirements.
- **Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy** means a community-level plan that provides more detailed land use policy and regulations for a particular area of the Municipality. The term "Community Plan" is also used in this document to refer to these types of plans.

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

- **"may"** denotes permissive action, and when used in policies the Municipality is not obliged to undertake any action.
- **"Regional Centre"** means the Halifax Peninsula and Dartmouth within the Circumferential Highway (see also *Map 2*).
- **"Rural Area"** means the Rural Area as shown on Map 2 and are lands where municipal water, wastewater services and conventional transits are not available or are planned to be considered under this Plan (see also *Map 2*).
- **"shall"** denotes mandatory action, and when used in policies the Municipality must implement the policy through the applicable implementation tools.
- **"shall consider"** when used in policies, means the Municipality is required to consider, but is not obligated to undertake, any action or expend any money.
- **"Suburban Area"** means the area shown as the Suburban Area on Map 2 and where municipal water and wastewater services and conventional transit are available or planned (see also *Map 2*).
- **"this Plan"** means the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy for Halifax Regional Municipality.

- **“Urban Area”** means the Regional Centre and the Suburban Area as shown on Map 2 and where municipal water and wastewater services and conventional transit are available or planned (see also *Map 2*).

CHAPTER 2:

PLANNING FOR THE

REGION

CHAPTER 2: PLANNING FOR THE REGION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

2.2 OBJECTIVES

- 1. Organize housing growth, employment, infrastructure, and service delivery to support a future population of one million people in the municipality.**
- 2. Establish a planning framework organized around four geographic areas: Region-Wide, Regional Centre, Suburban and Rural Areas.**
- 3. Develop and implement a Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priorities Plan guided by the Objectives and Policies in this Plan and supported by financial tools and investments.**
- 4. Organize the delivery of community services to support healthy and connected communities with a high quality of life.**
- 5. Foster healthy ecosystems by designing communities which encourage protection of significant environmental and cultural features.**
- 6. Preserve agricultural and resource lands.**

2.3 REGIONAL PLANNING

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

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

Past studies undertaken for the Municipality have found that:

- More compact forms of development with higher densities can save taxpayers money when located to make the best use of existing infrastructure and services;
- Extending central municipal water and wastewater management services long distances to serve communities with lower densities can be less cost-effective;
- Protecting and enhancing existing parks and open spaces and green elements, including trees, forests, waterways, wetlands, and wilderness, provides multiple benefits in maintaining air quality, water quality, mitigating flooding and managing carbon emissions;
- Compact, high-density forms of development located close to high frequency transit can help generate the required ridership, support quality transit service, and equitable communities; and
- Proactive measures are needed to address climate change and reduce our carbon footprint by planning for complete communities that encourage low-carbon transportation, protect the natural environment and promote renewable energy adoption.

When considering where settlement and new growth may occur, four critical regional-scale services are analyzed:

1. Natural and Cultural Services

The open space network, valuable ecological lands, regional parks, natural corridors, culturally significant places, and working landscapes will be assessed and these assets considered when planning for our region's communities.

2. Water and Wastewater Services

Most growth will be in the form of infill directed to where there is existing or planned municipal water and wastewater services and infrastructure can be delivered in a cost-effective manner.

3. Mobility Services

Infill and land use growth will be further organized to support mobility systems that improve movement of people and goods, whether by walking, rolling, cycling, transit or in a vehicle.

4. Community Services

As infill and growth occur, this will increase the demands for community services like schools, libraries, parks, recreation facilities, solid waste, emergency services, and energy. Gaps in service may be analyzed and addressed as part of strategic growth planning.

With these services in mind, this Plan envisions that most new growth will occur through urban infill, with focused growth around areas with access to frequent transit, to allow the Municipality and Province to plan delivery of future community services in these areas. Historically underserved communities and vulnerable populations will require special focus, so that investments can be directed in an equitable way and support

those with the greatest need, as opposed to simply responding to population growth. As work proceeds with African Nova Scotia communities and Mi'kmaw communities it is recognized that shifts may be required in this vision to support outcomes. New partnership initiatives similar to the *Road to Economic Prosperity for African Nova Scotian Communities* and future Mi'kmaw Friendship Accord are needed so that the Municipality may reconsider how it invests in people and places.

- RP-1 The Municipality shall consider the natural environment and biodiversity when planning for new development.**
- RP-2 The Municipality shall consider directing housing and employment growth to strategic locations where water and wastewater infrastructure services are already available or planned to be considered over time.**
- RP-3 The Municipality shall coordinate land use and mobility to improve the movement of people by aligning infill and growth with transit services, including high frequency transit service.**
- RP-4 The Municipality shall organize the delivery of community services to support building healthy, well serviced, and connected communities.**
- RP-5 The Municipality may work with the African Nova Scotian communities and Mi'kmaq communities to reconsider how it invests in people and places.**

2.3.1 REGIONAL LAND USE STRUCTURE

This Plan provides direction for what type of development may occur in different geographic areas of the region, using six general land use designations and two land use sub-designations to manage growth. These are illustrated on Map 1 (The Regional Land Use Structure Map) with the intent and policy direction for each explained in this chapter, as summarized below:

- The **Open Space and Natural Resource** designation applies to the region's natural network of open spaces, typically on government-owned and private resource sector or conservation lands.
 - The **Urban Settlement** designation is applied to areas where development serviced with municipal water, wastewater, and conventional transit service exists or is planned in the short term to medium term.
 - The **Urban Reserve** designation is applied to areas which may be considered to accommodate future growth, where development serviced with municipal water, wastewater, and conventional transit service is being considered in the long-term.
 - The **Rural Commuter**, **Rural Resource**, and **Agricultural** designations apply to areas of rural settlement.
 - The **Business/Industrial Park** and **Halifax Harbour** Sub-Designations are applied as an overlay to main designations to prioritize certain lands for employment uses. Policies establishing these Sub-Designations are included in Chapter 8.
- RP-6 To manage growth and future land use, this Plan shall establish the Regional Land Use Structure for the municipality and shall include the following designations and sub-designations, as set out in Map 1: Open Space and Natural Resource, Urban Settlement, Urban Reserve, Rural Commuter, Rural Resource, Agricultural Designation; Business/Industrial Park and Halifax Harbour Sub-Designations.**

2.3.1.1 OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL RESOURCE DESIGNATION

Growth and development throughout the municipality has been shaped by a natural network of open space, covering much of the municipality. The open space network consists of large areas of provincial Crown lands, lands owned by private companies for forest production and harvesting, parks and trail systems.

The open space network serves many important functions for the region. Open spaces shape the settlement form and character of the municipality's communities. Protecting open spaces helps to direct urban development to appropriate locations and creates clear neighbourhood edges. The region's public parks and other public open spaces allow residents to access nature for outdoor recreation and aesthetic enjoyment, which improves mental and physical health. As a system, these open spaces perform important environmental services such as connecting natural areas for critical wildlife migration, retaining stormwater, mitigating flooding, preventing erosion, uptake of nutrients, abatement of pollution and moderation of climate. Therefore, it is the intent of this Plan to strengthen the connection between public open spaces and public parks to conserve biodiversity, provide opportunities for outdoor recreation, recognize the region's natural and cultural heritage, and support ecosystem functions.

RP-7 To recognize the importance of the open space network the Open Space and Natural Resource Designation shall be established on the Regional Land Use Structure Map (Map 1), as the area encompassing a natural network of open space in the Municipality. The Open Space and Natural Resource Designation may apply to public and private resource sector lands identified for their role in the open space network, and generally include:

- a) federal parks;**
- b) habitat protected by federal and provincial legislation;**
- c) regional parks;**
- d) trail and greenway networks;**
- e) provincially designated parks;**
- f) provincial parks reserves;**
- g) provincially designated wilderness areas and nature reserves;**
- h) provincial Crown lands classified C1(resource) and C2 (resource and recreation);**
- i) private conservation areas;**
- j) all municipal conservation areas;**
- k) commercial forestry, agriculture and fishery lands; and**
- l) environmentally sensitive areas including wetlands, salt marshes and beaches.**

2.3.1.2 URBAN SETTLEMENT DESIGNATION

The Urban Settlement Designation encompasses those areas in the Urban Area (the Regional Centre and Suburban Area) where development has access to municipal water, wastewater, and conventional transit services or where those services are proposed to be considered to accommodate population growth. To support building healthy, well-connected communities and the growth targets of this Plan, it is the intent of this Plan to focus most new development to existing serviced areas and undeveloped lands that may be considered for future serviced development within the Urban Settlement Designation. Housing and employment growth in the Urban Settlement area will be encouraged in complete communities shaped by their access to services and amenities, and that are well-connected with transit and active transportation routes, as detailed in Chapter 3.

RP-8 To support building healthy, well-connected communities and the growth targets of this Plan, the Urban Settlement Designation shall be established on the Regional Land Use Structure Map (Map 1). The Urban Settlement Designation shall apply to those areas where existing municipal services (including piped water, wastewater, and conventional transit services) are located and to undeveloped lands that may be considered for future serviced development.

2.3.1.3 URBAN RESERVE DESIGNATION

The Urban Reserve Designation is applied to lands that may be suitable for serviced urban development in the longer-term horizon. Since 2006, the Urban Reserve designation had included several areas to be considered as potential future serviced communities after 2031 to accommodate housing and employment growth. An assessment of these lands is required in accordance with Policy RP-11 before they may be redesignated as Urban Settlement or any comprehensive planning process is undertaken, to ensure alignment with Regional Council's priorities. Two areas, the interior lands bounded by Highway 7, Ross Road, Highway 207, and Broom Road in Cole Harbour/Westphal, and the Ragged Lake Lands, have been advanced by Regional Council already for further study. The interior lands bounded by Highway 7, Ross Road, Highway 207, and Broom Road in Cole Harbour/Westphal have also been designated by the Province of Nova Scotia as a Special Planning Area. One area, the Purcell's Cove Backlands, was studied previously, but additional work is required to complete the assessment. The remaining land areas, known generally as Kidston Lake Lands, Anderson Lake Lands, Governor Lake North Lands and the private lands in the Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes area, will be studied for the potential for future growth in alignment with the Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priorities Plan. This work will determine where and how the municipality may decide to grow, to accommodate future population growth beyond the areas designated Urban Settlement in this Plan.

RP-9 The Urban Reserve Designation shall be established on the Regional Land Use Structure Map (Map 1) to identify lands that may be required for future serviced development.

RP-10 The Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-law, establish an Urban Reserve Zone to regulate development of lands within the Urban Reserve Designation. This Zone shall permit open space uses and limit residential development to existing lots.

RP-11 Amendments to the Regional Land Use Structure Map (Map 1) to change the Urban Reserve Designation to Urban Settlement Designation shall only be considered once the Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priorities Plan as identified under Policies RP-27 and RP-28 is

completed and shall be guided by long-term scenarios for future growth, infrastructure and service delivery capacity and the criteria set out by that process. Where it has been determined through that process that lands designated Urban Reserve are not suitable for future serviced development, amendments to this Plan may be considered to apply an appropriate alternative designation.

RP-12 Further to RP-11, the Municipality shall undertake a land suitability analysis of the lands in the Purcells Cove Backlands area designated Urban Reserve, and may use that analysis to consider the Rural Commuter designation for these lands, in accordance with Policy RP-15, and an appropriate community plan designation, zone, land uses, development density, site design, and built form standards.

RP-13 Notwithstanding Policy RP-11, to support the *Road to Economic Prosperity Action Plan* objective to support the Akoma-led planning process for the restoration of the historic Nova Scotia Home for Coloured Children and development opportunities for African Nova Scotia communities, the Municipality may undertake analysis in accordance with Policy HC-12 to consider changing the Urban Reserve Designation to another Regional Plan designation for the lands bounded by Highway 7, Ross Road, Highway 207 and Broom Road in Cole Harbour/Westphal, and surrounding lands.

RP-14 Notwithstanding Policy RP-11, the Municipality may undertake analysis in accordance with Policy HC-12 to consider changing from the Urban Reserve Designation to another Regional Plan designation for the Ragged Lake lands for industrial and park development.

2.3.1.4 RURAL COMMUTER DESIGNATION

The intent of the Rural Commuter Designation is to direct development and services to centres within commuting distance to the Regional Centre while continuing to protect rural settlement patterns and abundance of open spaces, wilderness, and natural resources. While residential development within this designation has historically been characterized by large lot residential subdivisions and dispersed development on established roads, most new development is to be encouraged within centres and through clustered development.

Lands adjacent to Morris Lake, including CFB Shearwater, were initially identified for future serviced development prior to the adoption of the 2006 Regional Plan as part of the Morris/Russell Lake Secondary Planning Strategy. At that time, it was expected that the Department of National Defence would be divesting of CFB Shearwater, and that these lands would be included in the growth area. Subsequently, it was confirmed that CFB Shearwater would remain an active base, and the 2014 Regional Plan identified that there may instead be an opportunity to consider shifting the growth area to the north, because of the change in status of CFB Shearwater. These lands, known as the Morris Lake Expansion Lands, are currently designated Rural Commuter, and will be studied to determine if a future serviced community may be supported here. This area of land has been designated as a Special Planning Area to support the development of housing and allows the Minister to make decisions on planning matters.

The Halifax Exhibition Centre lands on Prospect Road are currently designated Rural Commuter due to their location in the Planning District 4 (Prospect) Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy. In 2022, the Halifax Exhibition Centre lands were identified as an opportunity site where a mixed-use development may be considered through a neighbourhood planning process, as outlined in Policy IM-20 in Chapter 10. As

part of the neighbourhood planning process, changes may be required to this Plan to bring these lands into the Urban Settlement Designation.

RP-15 The Rural Commuter Designation shall be established on the Regional Land Use Structure Map (Map 1) and applied to areas within commuting distance of the Regional Centre that have been predominantly characterized by low-density residential development. The intent of this designation is to:

- a) manage growth by focusing residential subdivision in Rural Centres (Map 4) and away from open space and natural resources as identified in Policies IM-30 to IM-37;**
- b) support a range of uses in centres so that surrounding rural communities have local access to services;**
- c) encourage clustered forms of residential development using the Conservation Design Development approach, including higher residential densities within Rural Growth Centres, as identified in in Policies IM-10 to IM-17;**
- d) support resource-based uses such as agriculture, forestry, and renewable energy.**

RP-16 Notwithstanding Policy RP-15, the Municipality may consider changing from the Rural Commuter Designation to another Regional Plan designation for the Morris Lake Expansion Lands, in accordance with Policies HC-12 to HC-14 and the policies of this Plan.

RP-17 Notwithstanding Policy RP-15, the Municipality may consider changing from the Rural Commuter Designation to another Regional Plan designation for the Halifax Exhibition Centre, in accordance with Policy IM-20 of this Plan.

2.3.1.5 RURAL RESOURCE DESIGNATION

HRM's Rural Area holds distinct characteristics, often shaped by an abundance of natural features such as forests, coastal views, waterbodies and wetlands, and open spaces. These areas typically have low-density development, limited commercial activity, and a strong connection to the natural environment, ecological features and scenic landscapes.

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

The Rural Resource Designation is applied to rural communities along the Eastern Shore which are beyond the traditional commuter-shed of the Regional Centre and have not been heavily influenced by suburban development pressures. The intent of the Rural Resource Designation is to direct development to local centres that act as hubs for commercial uses and community services that residents need. Outside of centres, land use policies are intended to support resource industries while protecting important natural features and built heritage which define the rural character of communities and are important to the tourism industry.

RP-18 The Rural Resource Designation shall be established on the Regional Land Use Structure Map (Map 1) to encompass lands and communities along the Eastern Shore. The intent of this designation is to:

- a) support natural resource-based industries by directing residential development away from working landscapes to protect these industries and the natural resources they depend on;**
- b) direct development to local centres, as generally shown on the Rural Centres Map (Map 4), and support a range of uses to provide commercial and community services to residents;**
- c) encourage clustered forms of residential development using the Conservation Design Development approach, as identified in IM-10 to IM-17 of this Plan; and**
- d) manage the amount and form of residential subdivision, as identified in IM-30 to IM-37.**

2.3.1.6 AGRICULTURAL DESIGNATION

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

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

The Agricultural Designation supports the Municipality's implementation of the *Statement of Provincial Interest Regarding Agricultural Land*. This Provincial legislation requires this Plan to identify agricultural lands within the planning area, and address the protection of agricultural land through measures such as giving priority to agricultural uses over other land uses and limiting the density of development.

RP-19 The Agricultural Designation shall be established on the Regional Land Use Structure Map (Map 1) to encompass a significant portion of the Musquodoboit Valley. The intent of this designation is to:

- a) encourage the use of this area for natural resource-based activities and industries such as farming, forestry, and renewable energy, and to protect these uses from the intrusion of incompatible non-resource related uses;**
- b) support services for the surrounding agricultural communities by establishing a series of centres, as generally shown on the Rural Centres Map (Map 4);**

- c) **encouraging clustered residential development within established centres using the Conservation Design Development approach, as identified in IM-10 to IM-17 of this Plan; and**
- d) **managing the amount and form of residential subdivision, as identified in IM-30 to IM-37 of this Plan.**

2.4 COMMUNITY PLANNING

In addition to the region-wide policies, this Plan also provides guidance for the development of communities and neighbourhoods across the municipality. It sets policy direction at a regional scale by showing where and how to build communities in a way that makes the best use of municipal services and amenities, strengthens equity and residents' quality of life. It guides community-level planning which outlines in more detail how communities may be organized and developed. Community Plans (formally called Secondary Municipal Planning Strategies) further govern land use on each property in any given planning area. The Community Planning program is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

The Community Planning program will organize the planning framework around subregional geographies, as generally shown on Map 2. While this plan directs most growth to the Urban Area, some growth is also anticipated in communities in the Rural Area. The municipality's settlement pattern has changed over time and will continue to change. The Rural Area is particularly diverse, and includes communities of suburban-rural, semi-rural, and rural character. Further analysis of communities, especially those around the edge of the Urban Area is needed to determine how growth and land use may be managed over time, or where infrastructure and services may be further extended. The Municipality will examine existing and proposed land use and densities, settlement patterns, services and infrastructure capacities, and engage with residents to further refine these boundaries and guide the Community Planning program.

RP-20 The Municipality shall undertake a Community Planning program to develop new secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws and review existing secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws, aligned with the policies, goals, objectives, and growth targets of this Plan.

RP-21 The Municipality shall organize the Community Planning program using the following subregional geographies as generally shown on Map 2:

- a) **the Urban Area, which includes the Regional Centre (Halifax Peninsula and Dartmouth within the Circumferential Highway) and Suburban Area (lands outside of the Regional Centre, where municipal water and wastewater services and conventional transit are available or planned to be considered); and**
- b) **the Rural Area, which includes all lands outside the Urban Area inside of the municipality's boundary.**

RP-22 The Municipality shall refine subregional geographies as community planning proceeds, while considering watershed boundaries, including potable water sources, existing and future planned municipal services, new growth areas or future serviced communities, local context, community input, and any other relevant technical studies.

2.5 STRATEGIC GROWTH PLANNING

To guide the direction of new growth, this Plan sets targets for housing growth. Housing plays a crucial role in shaping the region’s settlement patterns, land use, infrastructure and service delivery. The policies of this Plan, supported by the regulations of the *Regional Subdivision By-Law*, determine where housing is located throughout the region.

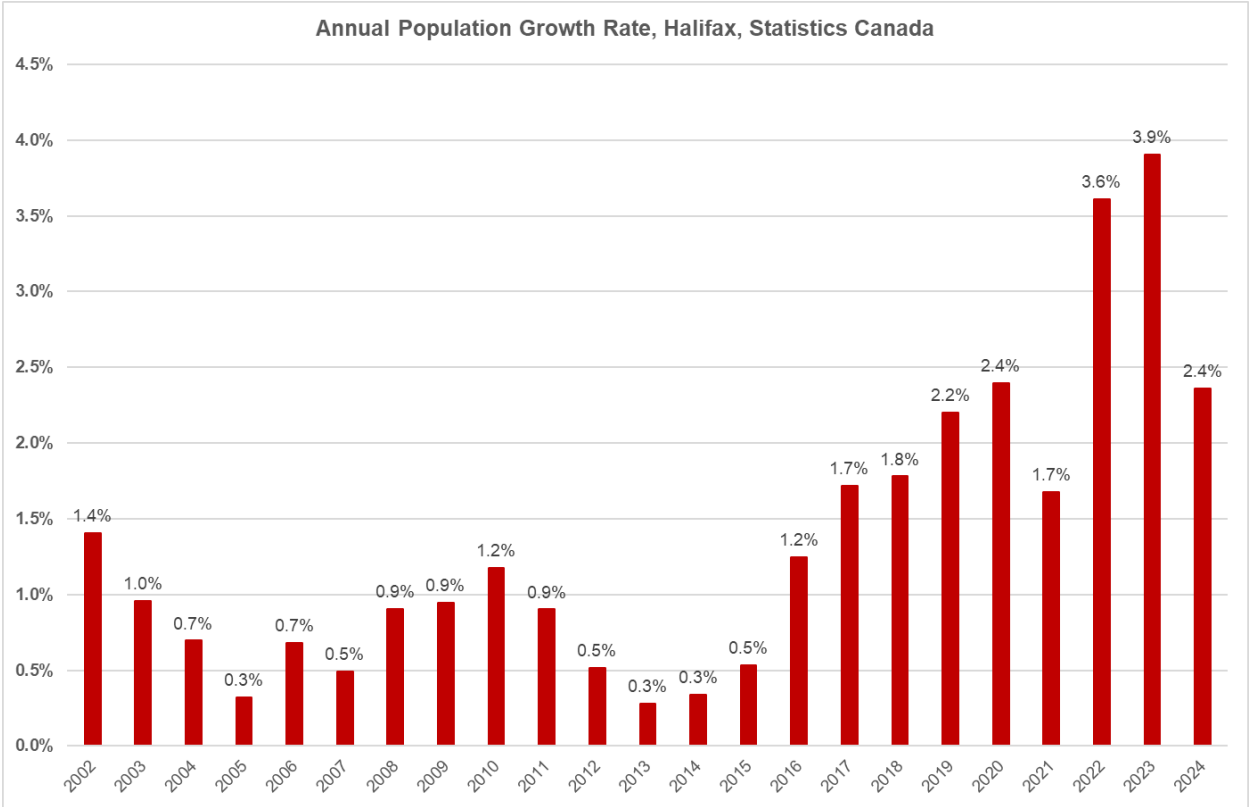
Strategic growth management enables coordinated investments in infrastructure by the Municipality and Province, ensuring the long-term fiscal, environmental, and social well-being of the Municipality, Nova Scotia, and the Atlantic Region. By planning strategically, communities can effectively provide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

To understand and manage growth in our extensive region, the Municipality studies various development scenarios, evaluates potential growth targets, and undertakes ongoing monitoring. These tools provide an evidence-based decision-making framework for land use planning policies and regulations and help the Municipality make informed decisions regarding land development for the greater benefit of the public. This section provides an overview of these tools.

2.5.1 POPULATION GROWTH AND MONITORING

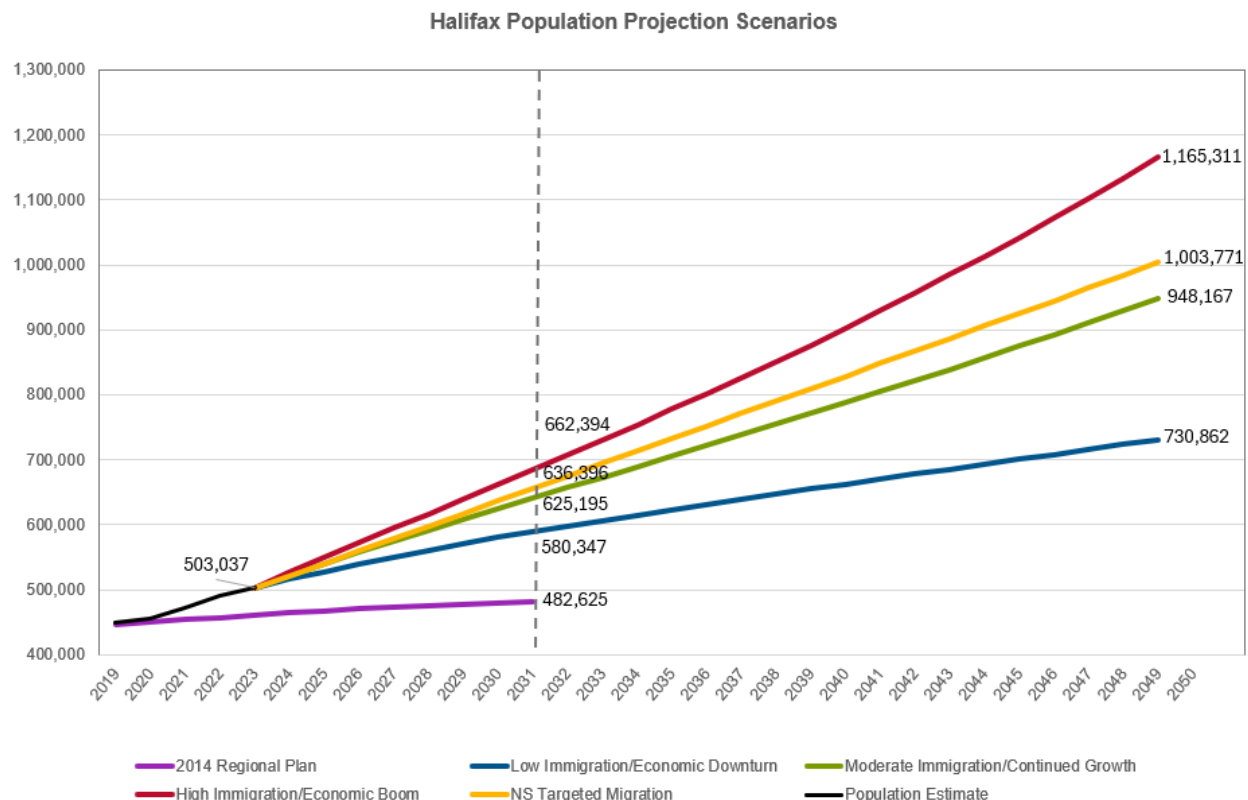
Since the last review of the Regional Plan in 2014, the municipality has experienced higher than historical rates of population growth. Since 2015, the region has grown significantly faster than anticipated. By 2023, the region had exceeded the growth that the 2014 Regional Plan expected for 2031, and saw population grow to more than 500,000 people in 2024. The annual change in growth can be found in Figure 2.1:

Figure 2.1: Annual Population Growth



So that planning policy can be responsive to changing conditions, rather than establishing a specific horizon year, policies of this Plan have been developed with a forward-looking view to supporting population growth, as the municipality grows to support a million people. The Municipality has developed a range of population scenarios to help consider how growth might occur over time. As of 2025, four projection scenarios were developed as described below and shown in Figure 2.2. NS Targeted Migration (NSTM) refers to population growth represented by the target announced by the Province of Nova Scotia in September 2021 for a provincial population of two million people in 2060.

Figure 2.2: Population Projection Scenarios, 2025



The Municipality will continue to monitor population growth trends over time to inform future updates to the policies of this Plan and supporting planning documents so that they are responsive to the municipality's population, housing, and employment conditions. Demographic trends – such as residents' ages, income levels, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and immigration status – can be regularly monitored and compared to the available supply of housing to understand whether residents' housing needs are being met. Employment and economic trends can inform the need for commercial space and the supply of industrial employment lands.

Growth projections can also be used to help evaluate and direct Municipal investments in community infrastructure, such as emergency services, parks, community facilities, and libraries. The Municipality will continue to share these projections with Halifax Water and HRM departments, along with the Provincial Government to collaborate on growth, transportation, schools, healthcare facilities and public housing.

- RP-23 The Municipality shall consider organizing strategic growth, infrastructure, and municipal service delivery to support a future population of one million people and facilitate a supply of safe, sustainable, and affordable housing.**
- RP-24 The Municipality shall share population projections, growth scenarios and ongoing monitoring with other infrastructure and service providers, including the Provincial Government of Nova Scotia, on an ongoing basis.**
- RP-25 Regular updates of the Municipality's population, housing and employment conditions and growth scenarios shall guide reviews and amendments to this Plan, secondary municipal planning strategies, and any supporting planning documents or studies and shall be shared with the Provincial Government of Nova Scotia.**

2.5.2 STRATEGIC GROWTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING

This Plan envisions that over time, the municipality's population will grow to one million people. As the region grows, investing in infrastructure and services will be critically important for maintaining quality of life for residents. While scenarios are designed to anticipate and plan for different rates of growth, the Municipality will analyze how housing will be developed in strategic places that support overall policy goals. The 2014 Regional Plan established growth targets to direct at least 75% of new housing units to the Regional Centre and suburban communities (the Urban Area), with at least 25% of new housing units within the Regional Centre.

Since 2014, Regional Council adopted the *Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy* (the Centre Plan). The Centre Plan was intended to accommodate up to 40% of the municipality's housing growth anticipated within the 2014 Regional Plan within the Regional Centre. The *Integrated Mobility Plan* identified that locating 90% of housing growth in the Regional Centre and Suburban Area (i.e. the Urban Area) would best support the Municipality's mobility goals. The *Halifax Green Network Plan* and *HalifACT* identified that minimizing sprawl will allow the Municipality to make efficient use of resources, protect critical areas of open space and minimize carbon emissions by reducing vehicle use and improving sustainable mobility options.

To support the region's projected growth, and respond to the cumulative impacts of density, the Municipality will monitor growth and aim to share the results annually with service providers. Furthermore, to prepare for population growth to one million people, a Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priorities Plan will help forecast needs for renewing or building new infrastructure and services to accommodate growth.

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

As new growth can affect existing communities and their assets (such as recreation facilities, libraries, parks, schools, and fire stations), the Municipality will continue to assess the impact of this growth and determine how investments in new and existing assets are to be directed. The Municipality also can

consider how investments can be made equitably, as some communities may have experienced less investment over time, including how investments also support vulnerable populations that are critical to supporting community health, wellness and prosperity.

Finally, there is potential for new growth areas to emerge inside and outside of the municipality's boundaries, within the one-hour commuter-shed of the Regional Centre. New projects being undertaken by the Province focused on transportation planning also have the potential to shift where future growth may occur. Therefore, this Plan recommends the Municipality begin to immediately consider how a population of one million might be accommodated, using new scenarios for growth, and the policy direction contained in this Plan.

RP-26 It is the intent of this Plan to target at least 75% of new housing units to be located in the Urban Area.

RP-27 The Municipality shall create a Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priorities Plan to guide planning and investment by identifying potential locations and settlement patterns for long-term growth to support the efficient delivery of services and use of existing infrastructure and assets, and shall make this information publicly available.

RP-28 In developing the Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priorities Plan, the Municipality shall consider:

- a) identifying different scenarios for locating future housing and employment growth organized to meet the needs of a potential population of one million people;**
- b) analyzing the implications of changing the extent of the Urban Area and directing up to 90% of new housing units to the Urban Area;**
- c) assessing each scenario for growth based on:**
 - i. environmental impacts such as watershed health, flood mitigation, landscape connectivity and biodiversity;**
 - ii. climate impacts such as minimizing reliance on carbon-based energy and transportation, increasing naturalization and protection of biodiversity, increasing carbon sequestration, and assessing the resilience of scenarios against potential future changes in climate;**
 - iii. impacts to long-term provision of water, wastewater, stormwater, energy, and community infrastructure;**
 - iv. impacts to mobility and opportunities for active transportation, transit-oriented development, or other new and emerging forms of transportation; and**
 - v. impacts to health, equity, and well-being using evidence-based parameters;**
- d) the relationship between different growth scenarios, and whether the scenarios align with growth targets and strategic growth objectives of this Plan;**

- e) **whether the settlement pattern, growth targets or infrastructure and service delivery may need to change to facilitate strategic investments in community-building;**
- f) **considering financial tools such as infrastructure charges, capital budgeting, asset management, integration opportunity and long-term infrastructure planning;**
- g) **considering the municipality's expected growth in relation to growth in the rest of Nova Scotia, particularly in communities that are within a one-hour travel time to the Regional Centre; and**
- h) **considering investment models that emphasize co-location and planning for infrastructure and community services.**

2.5.3 STRATEGIC GROWTH AND LAND USE PLANNING

Across the region, new housing and employment growth can be directed strategically so that services and infrastructure can be comprehensively planned and coordinated at the regional scale and guide local infrastructure investments. As the region continues to grow, this Plan prioritizes building complete communities and neighbourhoods that are sustainable, inclusive, and resilient places where people can live, work, and thrive. A well-designed complete community provides a diverse mix of housing, jobs, services, and amenities, connected by efficient transportation modes and networks.

This Plan aims to direct growth in a strategic manner to maximize existing infrastructure and services to reduce costs and environmental impact, while also enhancing the quality of life for all residents. All communities across the region need access to housing, jobs and essential services to support social cohesion, economic vitality, and environmental sustainability. This Plan prioritizes planning for communities that will manage growth in a way that balances development with long-term service delivery, ensuring that new and existing neighborhoods remain functional, livable, and adaptable to future needs.

The municipality's settlement pattern varies widely, from a dense and compact urban core in the Regional Centre and suburban areas, to lower density suburban and rural neighborhoods, to traditional rural, dispersed communities. It is the intent of this Plan to plan for complete communities at these varying scales. Housing and employment density targets can guide the Community Planning program and comprehensive planning processes so that new development will be supported by existing or planned transit routes.

In the Urban Area, where municipal piped services and conventional transit are located, housing and employment may be supported by community design that includes a mix of land uses, pedestrian-oriented design, short blocks, and active transportation connections to help reduce car dependence and transportation costs for residents. Areas with existing or planned frequent transit can better support higher residential and job densities than areas with only local, less frequent, transit service.

In the Rural Area, communities are diverse in terms of their geography, population density, and proximity to the Urban Area of the Municipality, and further work must be done to understand these differing contexts and tailor approaches to planning complete communities based on those contexts. Communities within commuting distance to the urban core are often more suburban than rural in nature and could continue to grow more urban over time. New future serviced communities could be considered in strategic locations. Approaches to land use and community design in these cases may be similar to approaches in the Urban Area, with housing and employment supported in mixed-use, walkable neighbourhoods. Traditional rural

communities, often supported by natural resource industries with dispersed settlement patterns, will continue to access smaller local centres where residents can access the goods and services they need.

RP-29 The Municipality shall plan for and support the development of complete communities by strategically directing growth to areas that optimize existing and/or planned infrastructure, services, and transportation networks. In doing so, the Municipality shall consider:

- a) encouraging housing and employment growth in new or existing neighbourhoods by incorporating a mix of land uses and housing options; and
- b) prioritizing planning for mobility environmental sustainability, and the delivery of essential services and community facilities to ensure that both new and existing communities remain resilient over the long term.

RP-30 It is the intent of this Plan to support transit-oriented communities and plan for growth at the regional scale, including provision of services and infrastructure. This may require adopting new or amending existing planning documents to adjust the location of growth centres as generally shown on Maps 3 or 4, or to account for a significant increase in expected residential or employment density. When considering adopting or amending planning documents for these purposes, the Municipality shall consider:

- a) current population and employment projections as they relate to the need for additional opportunities for new housing or employment lands;
- b) housing and employment densities, informed by the guidelines generally outlined in Table 2.1 to support existing or planned transit service and help achieve the mobility mode share targets outlined in Policy M-4; and
- c) the infrastructure and service levels required to support future development, aligned with overall strategic growth objectives of this Plan, the forthcoming Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priorities Plan and the long-term scenarios for future growth and criteria set out by that process, consistent with Policy RP-27 and RP-28.

Table 2.1: Transit Supportive Land Use Guidelines

Available Transit Service Type	Distance from Transit Service*	Neighbourhood Density Guidelines**
Local Transit Route Service (30 to 60 Minute Frequency)	Up to 400 metres	22-36 units per hectare/ 50-79 residents and jobs combined
Corridor Route Service (5 to 30 Minute Frequency)	400-800 metres	Minimum 37 units per hectare/ 80 residents and jobs combined
Rapid Transit: Existing/Proposed Bus Rapid Transit and Ferry Service (5 to 15 Minute Frequency)	Up to 800 metres	Minimum 72 units per hectare/ 160 residents and jobs combined

*Generally describes expected walking/rolling distances, with consideration for accessible paths of travel with grades of approximately 5% or less.

** The densities listed are provided as a guideline at a neighbourhood scale and may be adjusted when considering infrastructure and servicing needs, site or neighborhood constraints and compatibility, or the overall structure of the planning framework.

CHAPTER 3: BUILDING HEALTHY AND COMPLETE COMMUNITIES

CHAPTER 3: BUILDING HEALTHY AND COMPLETE COMMUNITIES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 outlined the ways that the Municipality can be deliberate in directing new housing and jobs to strategic places across the region, so that the settlement pattern supports the delivery of the environmental, social and fiscal goals of the municipality. This Chapter provides a more detailed vision for how this strategic direction can be realized at the local level to achieve complete, healthy, and inclusive communities. The strategic directions found in this Plan are implemented through community plans and land use by-laws (which apply to specific geographic areas of the municipality), and the *Regional Subdivision By-law*. This Plan affirms the Municipality's commitment to working with all communities to enhance and protect their unique identities, and in particular Indigenous and African Nova Scotian communities, so that policies at the regional and community level support the goals of those communities.

3.2 OBJECTIVES

- 1. Develop regional-scale policy to guide amendments to community plans, land use by-laws, and the Regional Subdivision By-law to be implemented through locally oriented policies.**
- 2. Identify a Community Planning framework, including a vision and guiding principles for the Regional Centre, Suburban and Rural Areas.**
- 3. Foster communities that are attractive, healthy places to live for people of all ages, incomes, backgrounds and abilities and where residents can access goods, services and facilities they need.**
- 4. Focus new growth in centres where supporting services and infrastructure are already available or are planned.**
- 5. Within the Urban Area, enable the design of compact, walkable, transit-supportive communities that are safe and welcoming to residents.**
- 6. Within the Rural Area, support development of compact rural centres where residents can access services they need using a range of mobility options.**
- 7. Develop clear and easy to understand planning documents that can adapt to changing community needs and conditions.**

3.3 COMMUNITY PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Many of the Municipality's community plans were developed before amalgamation in 1996. Each is accompanied by regulations in a Land Use By-Law. The plans have been developed in a variety of formats, using different definitions, policies, and processes to regulate land use and development.

Recognizing the age of these existing community plans and the need to provide a comprehensive update for the entire region, the Community Planning program (formerly Plan and By-law Simplification) has been established to modernize planning policy to better serve the needs of residents and to improve administration. The goal of this program is to reorganize the community plans generally around the subregional geographies as shown on Map 2 (the Regional Centre, the Suburban Area, and the Rural Area).

The *Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy* (Centre Plan), adopted in 2021, was the first phase of this work, replacing four community plans and land use by-laws with one plan and by-law. As the municipality grows, policies for the Regional Centre will be updated and be reasonably consistent to the guiding principles and policies of the Regional Plan.

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

The Community Planning program will use the lens of complete and inclusive communities to help create positive health outcomes for communities, support sustainable and equitable change, and in some cases transformation. While communities range in their size and density and have their own character and identity, some of the common building blocks of complete and healthy communities include:

- **Places to live**, in a range of housing types for all ages, incomes and abilities;
- **Places to learn, work and shop**, including schools and libraries, institutions, and employment areas;
- **Places to play and access nature**, including parks, community centres, recreation facilities and libraries;
- **Places to celebrate culture, heritage, and arts**, including gathering spaces, cultural landscapes, museums, heritage buildings, arts and performance spaces, and place of worship;
- **Places that are protected**, including important environmental or natural resource areas, wilderness areas, coastal areas, wetlands, floodplains, and wildlife habitats;
- **Places that produce and provide access to healthy and affordable food**, including space for food production, and support for local food systems;
- **Places that are well-connected**, with affordable and accessible transportation, including transit, active transportation routes and trails, and roads; and
- **Places that provide basic services and safety** including emergency services, waste collection, water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure, energy infrastructure, as well as healthcare and childcare facilities.

3.3.1 REGIONAL CENTRE PLANNING

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

Most concentrated commercial districts are located within walking distance of established neighbourhoods, and within easy reach of parks and public spaces. The Halifax Harbour remains an important asset that facilitates the growth of commercial, industrial, recreational, and institutional activities in the region. The *Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy* (Centre Plan) establishes clear and predictable rules for development and intensification, while protecting heritage resources and providing guidance for comprehensive planning for new larger neighbourhoods. The Centre Plan provides policy directions for Downtown Halifax, Downtown Dartmouth, several Centres, and growth nodes with a strong focus on complete communities, pedestrians, human scale design, and strategic growth. The Centre Plan also provides policy direction to maintain established residential areas while providing for additional housing options and gentle infill, and mandates future planning for several Heritage Conservation Districts. With increased levels of population growth in the Municipality, future amendments to Centre Plan will need to consider additional opportunities for housing.

3.3.1.1 REGIONAL CENTRE VISION, CORE CONCEPTS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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

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

In support of the Vision, the *Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy* (Centre Plan) was based on four Core Concepts and a set of Guiding Principles developed during the *HRMbyDesign* visioning process. The Core Concepts and Guiding Principles are contained in the Centre Plan.

While Centre Plan is already largely aligned with this Plan, regular reviews must be undertaken to align with any changes to this Plan, and direction to consider amending this Plan in new or updated Priorities Plans, or any other strategic plans or policies approved by Regional Council.

HC-1 The Vision, Core Concepts, and Guiding Principles of the *Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy* shall guide any proposed amendments or updates to the *Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy* and *Land Use By-Law*.

HC-2 During reviews of the *Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy* and *Land Use By-Law*, the Municipality shall consider whether updates are required to align with the policies of this Plan and Priorities Plans and other strategic plans and policies where Council authorized the direction contained in those plans and policies as a framework for amendments to the *Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy* and the *Land Use By-Law*.

3.3.2 SUBURBAN COMMUNITY PLANNING

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

Land use and development in the Suburban Area (see Map 2) is governed by several community plans and land use by-laws which have not been comprehensively updated. This Plan recognizes the importance of updating and modernizing community plan policies to remove barriers to more compact and transit-supportive development, while also recognizing the unique assets and characteristics of suburban communities.

The Suburban Planning process will create policies and regulations to achieve the desired form and scale of development at the property level and help identify key investments needed to support both existing and new communities. This Plan sets out policies to guide decision-making for these applications while planning for the Suburban Area is being completed.

3.3.2.1 SUBURBAN PLANNING VISION AND CORE CONCEPTS

A vision for the Suburban Area was developed during the 2021-2025 Regional Plan review and was informed by previous community visioning in several suburban communities. This vision is expected to be further refined as part of the Suburban Planning process.

Urban communities are centred around a network of parks and trails, beautiful, walkable, and vibrant centres, main streets, and neighbourhoods. Residents enjoy an easy access to frequent and reliable transit, a wide range of housing options, food, recreation, services, and employment opportunities.

In addition to objectives of this Plan for community planning, the Suburban Planning process will be guided by the following five Core Concepts, which can also be further refined through the planning process:

Open Space and Culture

Suburban communities feature a wide variety of natural and cultural assets that contribute to the character of each neighbourhood. They also play an important role in supporting the health of residents and the environment. This Plan encourages the protection and enhancement of natural and cultural assets by:

- Applying information about important natural features that contribute to sustainability and sense of place in future growth;

- Supporting the integration of natural processes and energy conservation in site design, including preserving, rehabilitating, and restoring natural system functions, and
- Supporting access to active and passive parks and open spaces.

Complete Communities

Complete communities support people of all ages, backgrounds, abilities, and incomes to sustainably live, work, shop, learn, and play near one another. Historically, suburban communities have developed in a manner that has kept residential areas separate from commercial areas. This means that residents are generally dependent on vehicles to access the services and amenities they require on a daily basis. This Plan supports the creation of more complete and accessible communities by:

- Supporting people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds to live, work, shop, learn, and play within a short journey;
- Promoting mixed use neighbourhoods with safe and convenient access to goods and services needed in daily life to create positive health outcomes; and
- Using an equity lens when developing land use policies to address housing shortages, and permitting a range of housing options and related land uses.

Human-Scale Design

Human-scale design is focused on building and streetscape design that makes people feel more at ease and allows them to relate to their surroundings. It refers to a relationship between the size, shape, and design of components in the urban environment that matches the pace of pedestrians. Buildings and streets, as well as elements like trees and street furniture, all contribute to providing a scale that is comfortable for people. Human-scale design makes urban environments more interesting, encourages exploration, and draws more people to local shops and services. This Plan provides direction for the built environment that respects the human scale by:

- Supporting options for missing middle housing, which is housing such as small multi-unit dwellings and mid-rise multi-unit dwellings; and
- Supporting human-scale experience for taller buildings through design that provides stepbacks for the upper storeys, low streetwalls with architectural detailing, weather protection, and frequent entrances.

Pedestrians First

Pedestrians first policies prioritize the needs and comfort of people walking and rolling. This Plan provides direction for the built environment that respects the human scale. The intent of this Plan is to create safe, comfortable and enjoyable environments in all seasons for people of all ages and abilities. Pedestrians first design makes walking and rolling, as well as all other forms of sustainable transportation a more convenient and viable transportation choice. It leads to community benefits, such as emission reductions, improved accessibility and improved public health. To increase residents' comfort and convenience when walking or rolling, development in suburban communities will need to be carefully designed. This plan supports pedestrians first by:

- Prioritizing the needs and comfort of people in all seasons to make walking/rolling more convenient and viable, reduce emissions and improve public health;
- Encouraging land use, transportation and design policies that prioritize walking/rolling, cycling and transit to reduce car dependency; and
- Fostering high-quality architecture and urban design that is interesting and comfortable for people at street level.

Transit Supportive Growth

Dependence on personal vehicles to access employment, education, shopping, and other services and amenities has resulted in significant traffic congestion in suburban communities. This Plan supports easier access to transit by:

- Directing growth to transit corridors, nodes, and under-utilized commercial areas to support inclusive and connected communities; and
- Locating the highest density and mix of uses within a short walk or roll of frequent transit services, and mid-rise and missing middle housing within a short walk or roll of transit facilities or corridors.

HC-3 The Municipality shall develop a Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-Law for the Suburban Area as generally identified on Map 2, and shall consider:

- a) the policies of this Plan and the Suburban Planning Vision and Core Concepts (Open Space and Culture, Complete Communities, Human-Scale Design, Pedestrians First, and Transit Supportive Growth); and**
- b) measures to increase opportunities for safe, sustainable, and affordable housing.**

3.3.3 RURAL COMMUNITY PLANNING

The municipality's Rural Area is the largest sub-region by land area and consists of many diverse rural communities that are critical to the region's success. Communities in this area are diverse in terms of their geography, population density, and proximity to the urban core of the Municipality. Communities within commuting distance to the urban core are often more suburban than rural in nature and could continue to grow more urban over time, while more rural traditional communities have been shaped by their access to natural resources, such as fishing, forestry, and agriculture as well as a network of open space. Rural communities also include distinct Mi'kmaq, African Nova Scotian, and Acadian communities.

Maintaining the integrity of rural land and communities is important to rural residents and a fundamental aspect of the Regional Plan. The distinct character of rural places is often tied to the natural landscape that surrounds these communities. This has been shaped by conservation efforts as well as industries that respect and utilize the various forms of working landscapes across our region. This Plan intends to avoid fragmentation of the land that affects the character of the community, the functionality of its resource-based economy, and emerging industries such as tourism. As outlined in Chapter 2, this Plan manages growth in rural areas through its designations, including the Open Space and Natural Resource Designation, Rural Resource Designation, Agricultural Designation, and Rural Commuter Designation.

The challenges and opportunities in the Rural Area are distinct from urban parts of the region. This includes a culture of close connection to the land, and history of settlement. Some communities are more suburban in character, and some of these places have seen significant growth in recent years. Many of the existing community plans were completed by Halifax County, before amalgamation. These plans and their land use by-laws were developed with significant public input and continue to provide a solid foundation for planning in municipality's rural areas.

Some communities have seen change since the time the plans were written, especially those on the edge of the Suburban Area. As a result, some of the policy guidance and land use regulations no longer reflect

the communities' visions. The existing plans and land use by-laws may allow uses that the community feels are no longer appropriate or restrict uses that the community would like to support. Further, some areas that are included in the Rural Area on Map 2 are also places that are being considered for future services under region-wide policies. Therefore, as work proceeds on strategic growth, some areas may shift from rural to suburban.

As part of the Rural Community Planning program, the Municipality will develop a Rural Planning Framework that builds on existing community plans and provides updated policy and land use by-law regulations for rural communities. Further analysis of communities around the Urban Area which have a suburban or semi-rural character, including the areas designated as Urban Reserve, will be undertaken to determine how settlement, growth and land use may be managed over time, and how these areas should be addressed within the Community Planning Framework.

3.3.3.1 RURAL PLANNING VISION

A vision to help guide community planning in rural areas was developed during the 2021-2025 Regional Plan review, and was informed by previous planning in rural areas. This vision may be further refined as part of the Rural Community Planning process:

Rural communities are defined by natural areas supporting ecological integrity, traditional rural economies, ecotourism, and rural lifestyles. They also include well-defined and walkable centres offering a range of housing options, places to shop, learn, play, and gather. Rural centres are thriving, compact, complete communities with connections to the rest of the region. Some communities near the Urban Area may change to a more suburban or urban form over time.

HC-4 The Municipality shall implement a Rural Community Planning program to develop an updated land use planning framework for the Rural Area as generally identified on Map 2, that supports the overall growth management of the Municipality and the sustainable development of rural communities. In developing and implementing the program, the Municipality shall consider:

- a) managing land use around natural and cultural landscapes;**
- b) managing land use to support working landscapes, such as lands used for agriculture, forestry, fishing and other rural industries;**
- c) recognizing the range of types and scales of communities including suburban-rural, semi-rural and rural communities, and developing policies that support differing community contexts;**
- d) community-led planning with Indigenous and African Nova Scotian communities;**
- e) identifying rural infrastructure needs, such as groundwater capacity and wastewater management, to help better direct where growth can be accommodated;**
- f) exploring options for rural mobility, including partnerships;**
- g) directing growth to centres where compact development patterns can support village main streets and a range of mobility options, including walking/rolling and cycling;**

- h) exploring opportunities to enhance parks and community facilities;
- i) using Conservation Design Development as a tool to encourage clustered residential development that manages land around open space;
- j) fostering community character and investing in unique community assets through land use and economic development policies; and
- k) permitting a diversity of housing types.

3.4 URBAN AREA LAND USE

The Urban Area includes the Regional Centre and the Suburban Area which is generally where municipal piped services and conventional transit are located. While each Community Plan will address local context and community visions through a variety of planning tools, the Urban Area, will be organized within broad land use categories or designations to enable a range of well-connected functions at a regional and local scale. While a mix of compatible land uses supported by built form provisions is enabled in most designations, some lands will require protection and more limited land use permissions to support long-term sustainability.

HC-5 As part of the Community Planning program, when developing Land Use Structures in the Urban Area, the Municipality shall consider including the following designations and any others that may be required:

- a) ***Open Space, Parks, and Community Facilities:*** areas that include places to play and access nature, including protected or sensitive open space lands that help shape communities, parks, and community facilities such as recreation centres, libraries, and places of worship;
- b) ***Downtowns:*** areas that support central business districts, entertainment areas, high mix of land uses, low-rise to high-rise buildings compatible with heritage resources and heritage conservation districts;
- c) ***Centres:*** areas intended to support significant population growth and a mix of land uses along frequent transit services and corridors, and can include commercial main streets. Centres can be major or minor hubs depending on the local context and transit service;
- d) ***Corridors:*** areas intended to support pedestrian oriented development along transit corridors with a mix of land uses but a lesser intensity than Centres;
- e) ***Higher Order Residential:*** areas that support a concentration of existing and potential new multi-unit dwelling communities with compatible commercial uses;
- f) ***Residential:*** areas intended to retain the smaller-scale built form of existing low-density residential neighbourhoods while providing opportunities for additional infill and missing middle housing options;
- g) ***Growth Nodes:*** areas that include large sites that can accommodate population growth and that require more detailed comprehensive planning to determine land uses, mobility

networks, and other supporting services and amenities. Growth Nodes can be major or minor hubs depending on the local context and transit service.

- h) **Employment Lands:** areas that include both large and small institutional lands, and industrial lands needed to support a growing population and thriving economy; and
- i) **Special Areas and Overlays:** can include waterfront areas, heritage districts, and any other areas that require special land use, built form or urban design considerations.

3.4.1 REGIONAL CENTRE GROWTH AREAS

The Centre Plan has identified that growth is to be distributed throughout the Regional Centre in context-specific forms, in strategic areas where complete communities can be supported with human-scale and pedestrian-oriented design. Most of the growth will be directed to the Downtown, Centre, Corridor, Higher-Order Residential, and Future Growth Node Designations, by allowing a mix of uses within a variety of building forms, as outlined in Policy HC-5. These are important growth areas at a regional scale because of their potential to provide a significant number of new housing units and jobs, and the required supporting infrastructure and services. These growth areas are generally identified in Table 3.1 and on Map 3 (Urban Growth Areas). The land use policies that guide their development are included in the Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy and Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy.

Table 3.1: Regional Centre Growth Areas

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

**Indicates a Provincial Special Planning Area*

***Note that Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy continues to be applied to portions of Downtown Halifax.*

- HC-6 It shall be the intent of this Plan to support the strategic and efficient delivery of services and infrastructure and promote complete communities in the Regional Centre that are pedestrian-and transit-supportive and provide safe and convenient access to jobs, goods and services, by directing growth to the Growth Areas as generally shown in Table 3.1 and Map 3.**
- HC-7 The Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy shall establish appropriate designations and detailed land use and built form policies for development in the Regional Centre, consistent with the policies of this Plan, the Regional Centre Vision, Core Concepts and Guiding Principles.**

3.4.2 SUBURBAN GROWTH AREAS

Suburban communities will play a critical role in the region's ability to be responsive to a quickly growing population. In the Suburban Area, the key opportunities for significant mixed-use development will be on underutilized sites which are located close to existing or planned transit terminals, frequent transit routes and proposed rapid transit stations. These centres or hubs can be further supported by mixed use development along other transit corridors, and infill in existing multi-unit neighborhoods. Community services and post-secondary areas can also provide opportunities for additional housing, including student housing.

The Suburban Planning process will direct population and employment density to encourage transit-supportive growth in complete communities, using a built form-based approach to land use planning which prioritizes high quality urban design. Areas of small-scale infill within established residential areas are also envisioned to contribute to the development of complete communities that are compatible with the surrounding context.

Transit-oriented development in complete communities in the Suburban Area will guide strategic investments in services and infrastructure and help to support a viable rapid transit service. Map 3 (Urban Growth Areas) shows the proposed rapid transit routes as identified in the *Rapid Transit Strategy* (2020) and Potential Suburban Future Growth Areas which will be evaluated and further refined through the Suburban Planning process.

The detailed boundaries of growth areas and the land use policies guiding development in the Suburban Area will be determined through the Suburban Planning process. Complete communities must be supported by land use and urban design that provides walkable access to transit, a safe, convenient, and pleasant pedestrian experience. The sites generally shown in Table 3.2 have been identified as existing underutilized sites in key locations that could be redeveloped. These sites have been identified so that they can be studied and considered as part of the Suburban Plan and in support of ongoing regional modelling efforts.

Table 3.2: Potential Suburban Growth Areas

Suburban Growth Areas Type	Location
Potential Future Growth Areas**	Dartmouth Crossing* Dunbrack Street and Lacewood Drive Downsview Mall Herring Cove Road at Dentith Road Mill Cove Portland Street / Norman Newman Drive Tacoma Drive Woodlawn Mall

* Indicates a Provincial Special Planning Area

** The detailed boundaries of growth areas and the land use policies guiding development in the Suburban Area will be determined through the Suburban Planning process.

HC-8 The Municipality shall study existing and needed infrastructure and services to support future population within the areas generally described in Table 3.2. This work can be supported through the Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priorities Plan described in Policy RP-27 and RP-28 of this Plan.

HC-9 It shall be the intent of this Plan to support the strategic and efficient delivery of services and infrastructure and promote complete communities in the Suburban Area that are pedestrian- and transit-supportive and provide safe and convenient access to jobs, goods and services, by directing growth to high-frequency transit corridors, as generally shown on Map 3 and in Table 3.2, and other areas served by frequent transit.

HC-10 Through the Suburban Community Planning process, when considering detailed policies for potential growth areas, the Municipality shall consider:

- a) the level of existing services and infrastructure supporting existing neighbourhoods, and opportunities for efficient service delivery;
- b) whether the mobility network, including the location of existing or proposed transit services, streets and active transportation facilities prioritize pedestrians, cyclists and transit and are well-connected;
- c) opportunities to design communities that support mixed-use neighbourhoods with a range of housing opportunities, places of employment, and services where daily needs of residents can be met;
- d) opportunities for public parks, open spaces, and community facilities that meet the recreational needs of residents;
- e) measures to support new developments to be integrated with surrounding uses and neighbourhoods;
- f) opportunities to support healthy communities that support food security, urban agriculture, and the conservation of energy;
- g) the presence of any significant environmental and cultural features;

- h) **climate risks and opportunities to mitigate any potential impacts, such as overland and coastal flooding or stormwater management;**
- i) **risks, impacts and opportunities associated with nearby railways, highways, and high traffic arterial roadways; and**
- j) **the applicable policies of this Plan, including the Suburban Planning Vision and Core Concepts; and**
- k) **the neighbourhood density guidelines in Table 2.1 and mode share targets as outlined in Policy M-4.**

3.4.3 FUTURE SERVICED COMMUNITIES

Within or adjacent to the Urban Area, this Plan identifies several areas as potential Future Serviced Communities, where new residential, commercial, or industrial development may be serviced with municipal water, wastewater, and conventional transit services. Policies to support the Future Serviced Communities of Port Wallace, Bedford West Sub-Area 10 and Sub Areas 12 and 1 have been approved and development will be ongoing in the coming years.

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

Careful consideration must be given to designing these new neighbourhoods in a way that protects the health of the valuable natural features and assets of these areas. The planning process can define the edge between development and the natural areas and consider how development can best be organized in a manner that recognizes environmental features.

The communities that may be considered for future serviced development and will be required to proceed through a comprehensive planning process are outlined in Table 3.3 and shown on Map 3. These include:

Mixed Use Neighbourhoods:

- Sandy Lake and the Highway 102 West Corridor Lands were identified as potential Future Serviced Communities in the 2006 Regional Plan.
- Lands adjacent to Morris Lake were initially identified for future serviced development prior to the adoption of the 2006 Regional Plan as part of the Morris/Russell Lake Secondary Planning Strategy. At that time, it was expected that the Department of National Defence would be divesting of CFB Shearwater, and that these lands would be included in the growth area. Subsequently, it was confirmed that CFB Shearwater would remain an active base, and the 2014 Regional Plan identified that there instead may be an opportunity to consider shifting the growth area to the north, because of the change in status of CFB Shearwater. As outlined in Policy RP-16 in Chapter 2, background studies of these lands are ongoing.
- In 2021, Sandy Lake and Morris Lake Expansion were designated as Provincial Special Planning Areas under the *Housing in the Halifax Regional Municipality Act*. In 2025, the Highway 102 West Corridor Lands were designated as a Provincial Special Planning Area.

Industrial Lands Expansion:

- Burnside Phase 14 includes municipally-owned land that has been identified for future serviced industrial park expansion. These lands will be required to follow the comprehensive planning process outlined in Policies HC-11 to HC-14 and align with the policies outlined in Policy EC-13 in Chapter 8.

Table 3.3: Future Serviced Communities

Mixed Use Neighbourhoods	Sandy Lake* Highway 102 West Corridor* Morris Lake Expansion Lands*
Industrial Lands Expansion	Burnside Phase 14

* Indicates a Provincial Special Planning Area

HC-11 For any of the Future Serviced Communities identified in Table 3.3, before choosing to initiate a planning process, the Municipality shall assess whether detailed study is warranted by considering:

- a) current population and employment projections and the implications related to the need for additional lands for new housing or employment; and**
- b) the fiscal implications to the Municipality, Halifax Water, other infrastructure and service providers and their capacity to provide service and meet additional financial commitments.**

HC-12 Where Council has determined that detailed study is warranted pursuant to Policy HC-11, the Municipality shall undertake comprehensive studies for the area providing background information needed to inform decisions about the potential development of the lands, including:

- a) Land Suitability Analysis – This study shall include the mapping and analysis of the area’s ecological features to identify lands that are constrained, partially constrained, or not constrained for development. Required considerations include:**
 - i. Watercourse and wetland habitat;**
 - ii. Forest habitat;**
 - iii. Species at risk habitat;**
 - iv. Landscape and ecological connectivity;**
 - v. Surficial and bedrock geology;**
 - vi. Steep slopes;**
 - vii. Contaminated sites;**
 - viii. Areas of cultural significance; and**
 - ix. Presence of adjacent parks, wilderness areas, conservation areas, and other similarly designated lands.**
- b) Watershed Study – This study shall identify potential impacts of development on any watersheds located in the area. The study shall comply with Policy EN-17;**

- c) **Transportation Study** – This study shall identify how the area can connect to the rest of the municipality and how internal mobility will be handled. The study shall include:
 - i. Reviewing existing transportation infrastructure, demand, and policy to establish an understanding of existing mobility conditions;
 - ii. Applying the Municipality’s regional travel demand forecasting model to determine potential impacts to regional mobility as a result of development;
 - iii. Recommending land use and network scenarios that support the mobility goals outlined in Chapter 7 and mode share targets in Policy M-4 of this Plan; and
- d) **Water and Wastewater Services Study** – This study shall:
 - i. Establish existing water and wastewater infrastructure conditions;
 - ii. Develop a macro-level servicing strategy that will establish water, wastewater, and stormwater servicing infrastructure requirements for the development, including cost estimates and allocation assessment; and
 - iii. Identify any need to oversize the water, wastewater or stormwater systems to allow for future development, consistent with Policy IM-59.

HC-13 When considering whether initiation of a comprehensive planning process is warranted for any of the potential Future Serviced Communities identified in Table 3.3, the Municipality shall consider the results of the studies as outlined in Policy HC-12, and all applicable policies of this Plan.

HC-14 Where a planning process for any of the potential Future Serviced Communities identified in Table 3.3 has been initiated pursuant to HC-13, the Municipality shall consider adopting site-specific policies and regulations in the applicable secondary municipal planning strategy and land use by-law to guide future site design, land use, density, and form of development. In developing site-specific policies and regulations, the Municipality shall consider the following:

- a) all applicable policies of this Plan;
- b) the subdivision of land;
- c) the phasing of development;
- d) protection and/or restoration of significant environmental and cultural features;
- e) directing development away from sensitive environmental and cultural features, and areas that may be hazardous to the health and safety of residents, including measures to reduce the risk and impact of wildfire, flooding, or other hazards through site and building design and infrastructure;
- f) that the integrity of federal, provincial, and municipal parks, and other protected areas that are adjacent to the lands are maintained and buffered;
- g) the movements of pedestrians and transit service are prioritized over car-oriented design, including short blocks, grid or modified grid mobility networks, pedestrian streetscapes, walking/rolling, cycling, and connections to surrounding community;

- h) the adequacy of public parks, public open spaces, and community facilities that meet the objectives of this Plan and the requirements of the *Regional Subdivision By-Law*;
- i) impacts to municipal infrastructure and the need, if any, to concurrently approve by-laws and/or amendments to the *Regional Subdivision By-Law*, to pay for growth related municipal infrastructure, consistent with Policy IM-60;
- j) the distribution of overall densities intended for the community, and between different development blocks, phases, and landowners;
- k) community-scale or site-level green infrastructure, renewable energy options and other climate mitigation and adaptation design elements;
- l) the provision of a mix of uses, community amenities, public parks and gathering areas; and
- m) provisions for incentive or bonus zoning and off-site improvements necessary to integrate the development in the neighbourhood.

3.5 RURAL AREA LAND USE

The municipality's rural area is the largest sub-region by land area and consists of many diverse rural communities that are critical to the region's success. Land use planning in rural communities is guided by this Plan and several community plans and land use by-laws, most of which were adopted before amalgamation in 1996. While the number of plans and by-laws may be reduced, the large geography of the rural area requires a deeper understanding of the distinctive character of suburban-rural, semi-rural and rural places to help establish an appropriate land use framework. This will be established through the Rural Community Planning program and background studies.

HC-15 As part of the Rural Community Planning program, the Municipality shall develop a rural planning framework and land use structure that responds to the needs and distinct character of suburban-rural, semi-rural and rural communities.

3.5.1 RURAL SERVICES AND MOBILITY

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

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

HC-16 As part of the Rural Community Planning program, the Municipality shall continue to study groundwater availability, site-level wastewater treatment technology, localized approaches to on-site wastewater treatment governance, and mobility infrastructure, in support of community planning for the Rural Area.

3.5.2 COMMUNITY-LED PLANNING

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

HC-17 As part of the Rural Community Planning program, the Municipality shall consider participatory community engagement models to co-create and support the development of community visions, action plans and land use policies that use local knowledge to promote distinctive community character.

3.5.3 PLANNING FOR RURAL CENTRES

The municipality has the largest proportion of rural residents among census metropolitan areas in Canada and the largest rural population of any county in Nova Scotia. Communities within commuting distance to the urban core are often more suburban than rural in nature and could continue to grow more urban over time. Approaches to land use and community design in these cases may be similar to approaches in the Urban Area, with housing and employment supported in mixed-use, walkable neighbourhoods. Traditional rural communities, often supported by natural resource industries with dispersed settlement patterns, will continue to support smaller local centres where residents can access the goods and services they need. Challenges and opportunities regarding development are different from those in more urban areas and warrant policy consideration to address them effectively.

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

The 2006 and 2014 Regional Plans identified a range of rural centres at different scales that would serve as hubs for surrounding areas. Some of those centres were envisioned as town or village-like places that would expect growth, while other centres were seen as places that would expect a more modest level of change while acting as service hubs. Some centres are located on the edges of the suburban area and are influenced by that settlement pattern, and other communities are closely tied to the rural economy and lifestyle and see strength in their rural character.

This Plan envisions a range of rural communities of different types and scales, that will require detailed planning based on their own context. These centres are largely the same as those identified in the 2014 Regional Plan, with the following notable adjustments being made in this Plan:

- The boundaries of the **Enfield** growth centre have been adjusted to exclude the area covered by the Grand Lake Source Water Protection Area Near Zone, which provides drinking water for residents of the Municipality of East Hants.
- The boundaries of the **Tantallon Crossroads** growth centre have been adjusted to match the boundaries delineated as part of the planning process for this area, adopted in 2014 within the Planning Districts 1 & 3 (St. Margaret's Bay) Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy.
- The boundaries of the **River-Lakes/ Fall River** growth centres have been adjusted to match the boundaries delineated as part of the planning process for this area, adopted in 2013 within the Planning Districts 14 & 17 (Shubenacadie Lakes) Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy.

The historic African Nova Scotian communities of Cherry Brook, North Preston, East Preston, and Lucasville are identified as rural local centres. Further detail on community-led planning for these and other historic African Nova Scotian communities, as supported by the *Road to Economic Prosperity for African Nova Scotian Communities*, is outlined in Chapter 8.

As part of the Rural Community Planning program and future reviews of this Plan, the rural centres set out in this Plan may be further revised based on identified service and infrastructure needs and capacities, as well as community input. In the interim, controls may be applied to certain lands within some of the rural growth centres so that important sites within those centres are not inappropriately developed before further community planning is completed. Under Policy IM-22 in Chapter 10 of this Plan, land uses may be approved by development agreement provided they are conducive to the creation of a focal point for the centre. This mechanism will remain in place until future community plans are completed and adopted by the Municipality.

HC-18 To protect the character of rural communities and working landscapes, manage land around open space and support clustered rural development, the Municipality shall establish a framework to direct growth in Rural Communities to Rural Growth Centres and Rural Local Centres as shown on Map 4 and in Table 3.4.

HC-19 To further protect the character of rural communities and working landscapes, the Municipality shall establish conservation design policies, as outlined in Policies IM-10 to IM-17 in Chapter 10, to encourage growth within the Rural Growth Centres and to manage growth in between centres.

HC-20 The Municipality shall use the general categories of Rural Centres as set out on Map 4 and Table 3.4 to guide community planning and service provision. The communities, boundaries and characteristics of the Rural Centres identified in Table 3.4 may be further refined through the Rural Community Planning process and the African Nova Scotian Community Action Planning process, and updated through amendments to this Plan.

Table 3.4: Rural Growth Centres and Rural Local Centres

Type of Centre	Name
Rural Growth Centres	Hubbards Upper Tantallon Tantallon Crossroads River-Lakes/Fall River Enfield Lake Echo Porters Lake Musquodoboit Harbour
Rural Local Centres	Cherry Brook* North Preston* East Preston* Head of Jeddore Oyster Pond Tangier Sheet Harbour Moser River Middle Musquodoboit Upper Musquodoboit Hatchet Lake Indian Harbour Lucasville* Waverley Sambro Hubley Whites Lake

* Denotes a Historic African Nova Scotian Community

3.5.4 DEVELOPMENT OUTSIDE RURAL CENTRES

Widespread residential development throughout the Rural Area is inconsistent with the Plan's goals and objectives of creating compact mixed-use communities and protecting rural character, natural environment, and natural resources. Some outdated community plans and land use by-laws permit multiple unit dwellings and townhouses outside of growth centres and in a form that differs from traditional rural community character. Extensive residential development outside of growth centres can strain existing community services and add pressure for the development of costly infrastructure in unplanned areas. Large on-site septic systems and wells must be carefully managed to avoid environmental risks. Further, new roads can fragment open space, affecting important environmental features and leaving islands of natural habitat that may not be large enough to sustain biodiversity.

HC-21 The Municipality shall review and may amend secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws to discourage significant residential development outside of rural growth centres. Reviews shall consider:

- a) where on-site septic and well services are to be used, limiting the range of permitted land uses and residential density outside of rural growth centres;
- b) whether existing built form regulations are appropriate or new regulations are needed to support the character of rural communities; and

- c) limiting development along highways and scenic routes to preserve views and access to natural landscape features.**

CHAPTER 4: STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

CHAPTER 4: STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

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

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

4.2 OBJECTIVES

- 1. Plan and direct investment in a network of parks and community facilities at neighbourhood, community and regional scales to meet a diversity of community needs.**
- 2. Continue to plan and develop regional parks including those that provide access to nature.**
- 3. Collaborate with other orders of government and community partners to plan and maintain parks and community infrastructure to support communities.**
- 4. Support equitable access and efficient service delivery by strategically locating investments and exploring opportunities for co-locating services.**
- 5. Consider and plan for emergency prevention and response infrastructure as a critical part of building healthy, complete, and resilient communities.**
- 6. Remove barriers to food security in land use regulations.**

4.3 PARKS

The region's parks and outdoor facilities provide recreation programs and access to nature for leisure, sports, public art, culture, and inclusive civic events. Currently, there are over 900 municipal parks with a range of assets such as playing fields, beaches, trails, playgrounds, sports courts, and community gardens.

Parks support both recreation and natural systems protection. An ecologically and economically sustainable park system contributes to the resilience and connectivity of ecological systems and provides opportunities to access nature. Policies on the conservation and connectivity of ecological systems are contained in Chapter 6. As part of the region's open space network, parks help to clean air, control stormwater runoff, and mitigate the impacts of extreme weather conditions such as heat waves and flooding. The park system helps shape the settlement form and character of the region's communities.

The municipality's park system will need to serve the needs of a rapidly growing and changing population throughout the region. An inclusive and sustainable park system is a key consideration while planning for healthy and complete communities. So that equitable, sustainable, and high-quality provision of parks services and outdoor amenities are available for future generations, different levels of parks and outdoor recreation service can be developed for each type of settlement pattern, along with consideration for a range of mobility options.

- CI-1 The Municipality shall consider supporting community wellness, active living, and the open space network by providing a variety of public parks for a range of purposes including outdoor recreation and environmental protection.**
- CI-2 The Municipality shall establish a Regional Park Zone under applicable land use by-laws which may be applied in any designation. This Zone shall:**
 - a) generally be applied to existing Federal Parks, Provincial Parks, Provincial Park reserves, non-designated Provincial Parks and Regional Park lands owned by the Municipality; and**
 - b) permit recreation uses, park uses, and other uses as provided by applicable secondary municipal planning strategies.**
- CI-3 Where Municipal lands are identified for park use, appropriate park and institutional zoning shall be applied through the applicable secondary municipal planning strategy and land use by-law as part of the Community Planning programs.**
- CI-3A When developing a Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-Law for the Suburban Area, the Municipality shall consider the value of McNabs Island as an asset for tourism and recreation in the region.**

4.3.1 PARKS AND OUTDOOR FACILITIES PRIORITIES PLAN

To plan strategically and respond to changing needs, the Municipality intends to develop a Parks and Outdoor Facilities Priorities Plan for the provision of parks and outdoor facilities and the development of associated standards. This Priorities Plan will also consider related factors such as food security, affordability, learning, culture, events, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Level of service analysis will be used to identify distances to outdoor recreational facilities and the amount of parkland and amenities available per number of residents. Understanding the level of service as part of the Priorities Plan will help to set appropriate expectations for facilities as part of healthy and complete

communities. Growth modelling identified through the Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priorities Plan may inform the Parks and Outdoor Facilities Priorities Plan.

CI-4 The Municipality shall develop a Parks and Outdoor Facilities Priorities Plan that responds to population growth and settlement patterns identified in this Plan and the Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priorities Plan, with consideration for:

- a) a variety of outdoor recreation and leisure experiences across a variety of park types, ranging from local neighbourhood parks to regional recreation sports hubs and wilderness parks;
- b) identifying parks and outdoor facility needs that includes social equity considerations;
- c) approaches and analysis for the amount, type, and system of parkland and outdoor facilities for existing and growing areas of the Municipality (Level of Service);
- d) opportunities to access a variety of park types by walking/rolling, cycling and transit;
- e) recognizing differing needs and approaches for parkland and outdoor facilities between communities and across urban and rural areas of the Municipality;
- f) recognizing food security, heritage, cultural, and learning initiatives; and
- g) identifying important ecological features within the Municipality's parks and considering ways to both protect those resources and allow for appropriate recreation uses and activities.

4.3.2 REGIONAL WILDERNESS PARKS

The municipality is home to municipally, provincially, federally, and non-profit owned parks and open spaces that provide wilderness protection and recreation opportunities. At the time of drafting this Plan, the Municipality currently has direct involvement in land ownership and park management for four areas that are being developed as wilderness parks. The primary goal of park planning for these publicly held lands is to retain them in a natural state, protect the quality of the natural ecosystems, biodiversity, and provision of ecosystem services, and offer passive access to nature.

An overview of these areas is provided in Table 4.1 below. Lands that the Municipality currently owns, or provincially or federally owned lands will be subject to future park planning processes. As development proceeds near park areas, it will be important to consider the proposed uses, built form and density of development.

Table 4.1: Description of areas being developed as Wilderness Parks

Sandy Lake

The Sandy Lake Regional Park consists of municipally owned land around Sandy Lake, Marsh Lake and Jack Lake containing a beach, formal trails, and undeveloped wilderness lands. Located near Hammonds Plains Road, it extends up to the Sackville River and encompasses parts of the Sandy Lake watershed, including the watercourse from Sandy Lake, Marsh Lake, and into the Sackville River. The Park also includes Jack Lake, which is part of the Papermill Lake Watershed. The Municipality has an active program to include additional lands to support the further development of this wilderness park.

Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes

Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes (BMBCL) is an area located on the western edge of the Halifax urban core and comprises Acadian forest, wetlands, and a system of lakes and headwaters. The Provincial Designated Wilderness Area and adjacent Municipal lands offer wilderness opportunities to many residents and visitors. In 2021, the Municipality signed a statement of collaboration with Parks Canada to consider part of the Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes (BMBCL) area as a candidate National Urban Park, under a new federal program. The subject area considered for park planning consists of land owned or under the control of a partnership group (as shown on Map 5).

Shaw Wilderness and McIntosh Run

Shaw Wilderness Park and McIntosh Run Regional Park are two large parks located on the Chebucto Peninsula, adjacent to provincial lands. Both parks provide for popular hiking and biking trails and hills with unique scenic views. The parks also contain distinct ecological aspects that include the Jack Pine / Broom Crowberry Barrens ecosystem, which is globally rare. The Municipality has established working partnerships with community organizations for these lands and intends to continue to work these partners to develop further programming.

Western Common Wilderness Common

The Western Common Wilderness Common, situated within the Western Common, extends over lands owned by the Municipality between Highway 103 to the north and Highway 333 (Prospect Road) to the south. It extends from the Ragged Lake Business Park in the east to the Nine Mile River in the west. Following the policies and conceptual land use plan approved for the Western Common within the Halifax, Timberlea/Lakeside/Beechville and Planning District 4 (Prospect) Secondary Municipal Planning Strategies on July 2, 2000, the Western Commons Wilderness Common Master Plan was adopted on June 15, 2010 as guidance for future development and management of the park. The Master Plan identified that the park will provide outdoor recreation opportunities such as hiking and canoeing, while also serving local needs for swimming and community trails. Ongoing planning for the potential expansion of the Ragged Lake Industrial Park will need to consider impacts on the Western Common Wilderness Common and the areas designated for Active Recreation in the Western Common Conceptual Land Use Plan.

A goal of wilderness park planning and management of public lands is to retain them in a natural state over the long term. The intent is that conservation planning and management would allow limited recreation opportunities but prohibit incompatible activities, adopt mechanisms for managing compatible activities, and collaborate with other levels of governments and key partners on conservation outcomes.

Wilderness parks can contribute to federal and provincial goals for nature and wilderness protection. The Government of Canada is committed through the *Target 1 Challenge* to conserving 25 percent of Canada's land and 25 percent of its oceans by 2025. The Province of Nova Scotia has committed to protecting 20% of its lands and waters by 2030 through its development of the *Nova Scotia Collaborative Protected Areas Strategy*. The Canadian Protected and Conserved Areas Database (CPCAD) is compiled and managed by Environment and Climate Change Canada, in collaboration with federal, provincial, territorial jurisdictions, and other data providers. CPCAD outlines criteria for inclusion in the database relating to protection and conservation standards and wilderness parks may be included in the future.

CI-5 As park planning proceeds for the wilderness parks generally known as Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes, Sandy Lake, Shaw Wilderness Park and McIntosh Run, the Municipality shall consider:

- a) the goals and objectives of this Plan, and any future Parks and Outdoor Facilities Priorities Plan as outlined in Policy CI-4;
- b) the relationship of planned park facilities within the park to adjacent lands and community;
- c) applying best practices and an equity lens to park planning and design processes;
- d) determining safe and environmentally sensitive access points;
- e) using the analysis and findings from ecological features assessments, watershed studies, or land suitability analyses;
- f) where opportunities arise, coordinating and partnering with Provincial and Federal governments and conservation groups to help establish wilderness parks, which may result in pursuing inclusion of wilderness parks in the Canadian Protected and Conserved Areas Database.

CI-6 The Western Common Wilderness Common Master Plan, endorsed by the Municipality on June 15, 2010, shall provide guidance for the development and management of the Western Common Wilderness Common.

4.3.3 WASHROOMS AND DRINKING FOUNTAINS

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

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

CI-7 The recommendations of the *HRM Washrooms and Drinking Fountains Strategy*, as may be amended from time to time, shall be considered in the planning, recapitalization, and installation of washrooms and drinking fountains in the municipality's parks and open spaces.

4.4 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The Municipality operates a range of community facilities that include recreation assets such as gymnasiums, ice surfaces, swimming pools, and multi-purpose rooms. It is crucial to also recognize the contribution of community facilities provided by other organizations in supporting the municipality's needs, including libraries, schools, childcare services, cultural venues, places of worship, sport clubs, and

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

As the municipality's population grows, it will be important to understand any gaps in the equitable access to facilities across the region. Community facilities and services will need to respond to population growth, as well as demographic and social change, in particular when serving vulnerable populations.

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

CI-8 Further to Policies RP-27 and RP-28, the Municipality shall consider recommendations for the location and distribution of community facilities to support anticipated future population growth as part of the Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priorities Plan.

CI-9 The Municipality shall support the development of healthy and complete communities by:

- a) retaining existing public lands that may support current or future community use in areas that are identified for growth;**
- b) identifying gaps in equitable distribution of community facilities and emergency services;**
- c) exploring partnerships to co-locate community facilities in mixed use developments or multi-use facilities;**
- d) prioritizing location of community facilities in areas accessible by walking/rolling, cycling, or transit; and**
- e) reviewing the tools available to preserve or acquire lands for future community facilities in areas planned for growth.**

CI-10 When developing new or amending existing secondary municipal planning strategies, the Municipality shall consider the needs for community services and facilities by:

- a) permitting municipal community facilities in all zones;**
- b) consulting with service providers about the service needs of current and future residents;**
- c) considering lands for current or future institutional uses;**

- d) maintaining lands, where they exist, in public ownership in strategic locations; and
- e) considering strategic location and co-location of Municipal community facilities within communities, coordinated with one another, other service providers, and mixed-use development.

4.4.1 INDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES PRIORITIES PLAN

The Municipality recognizes that fostering lifelong participation through a variety of accessible recreational opportunities contributes to healthy lifestyles, vibrant communities, and a sustainable environment. In 2017, the Municipality approved *The Community Facility Master Plan 2 (CFMP2)* as a framework for municipal decision-making regarding recreation facilities. CFMP2 gives direction for a strategic approach to community facilities management to provide a more cohesive infrastructure and encourage more integrated and universally accessible programming. It identifies aging facilities that may need investment or replacement to meet accessibility standards, safety requirements and changing user needs. It provides a “Hub and Spoke” model which identifies a large “hub” facility with other complementary recreation infrastructure located in the surrounding area serving as “spokes.” Considering facilities in this way allows residents to access a wider variety of programming than can be delivered in a single facility.

The Municipality intends to develop an Indoor Recreation Facilities Priorities Plan to guide the provision of facilities such as multi-district centres, arenas, aquatic facilities, and gymnasiums for both existing and new growth areas. This plan will be developed in conjunction with the Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priorities Plan and will consider the location and distribution of community facilities. It will be important to consider the ability to access these facilities by walking/rolling, cycling, transit, or short car trips.

- CI-11 The Municipality shall review and consider recreation trends, demographics, equity, mobility, and community needs as part of planning for complete communities and striving to provide services in an equitable manner, particularly for historically underserved communities.**
- CI-12 The Municipality shall develop an Indoor Recreation Facilities Priorities Plan, that responds to population growth and settlement patterns identified in this Plan and the Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priorities Plan, with consideration for:**
 - a) providing a variety of recreation and leisure experiences;
 - b) the regional distribution of recreation facilities;
 - c) the potential efficiency of clustering facilities;
 - d) connectivity and proximity to parks and outdoor recreation experiences;
 - e) connectivity to the mobility network for all modes of transportation;
 - f) analysis of the amount, type, and system of indoor recreation facilities for existing and growing areas of the Municipality and approaches for service provision; and
 - g) the recognition of differing needs for indoor recreation facilities between communities and across urban and rural areas of the Municipality.

4.4.2 LIBRARIES

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

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

CI-13 Further to Policies RP-27 and RP-28, the Municipality, working together with Halifax Public Libraries, shall consider the location and distribution of libraries to support anticipated future population growth as part of the Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priorities Plan.

4.4.3 PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School location, design and amenities play a significant role in neighbourhoods and quality of life. Schools have heavy impacts on transportation and transit services, road service demand, residential development, and housing choice. Convenient access to quality schools is an important consideration for community when deciding where to live. Although decisions about school locations are not made by the Municipality, the location of existing and planned schools is an important part of building healthy and complete communities and are important to HRM's long-term planning.

In HRM, the Halifax Regional Centre for Education (HRCE) oversees English public schools and the Conseil Scolaire Acadien Provincial (CSAP) oversees all French public schools. Each Centre or Board is required to publish a Long-Range Outlook annually. These documents provide information regarding the situation at each school, the delivery of education programs and services, historical and projected student enrollment. Based on the results of the Long-Range Outlook, a Centre or Board may identify a school for review to determine the viability of the facility.

CI-14 Further to Policies RP-27 and RP-28, the Municipality, working together with the Halifax Regional Centre for Education and Conseil Scolaire Acadien Provincial, shall consider the capacity, location, and distribution of schools to support anticipated future population growth as part of the Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priorities Plan.

CI-15 The Municipality shall encourage the Provincial Government and the Halifax Regional Centre for Education and Conseil Scolaire Acadien Provincial to consider the Municipality's projected population and planned settlement pattern as outlined in this Plan and secondary municipal planning strategies when deciding where to locate schools and other public facilities.

4.4.4 CHILD CARE AND HEALTH CARE

Childcare and health care facilities are critical components of complete communities. While the Province takes a leading role in both areas, this Plan recognizes that the Municipality has a role to play in supporting these uses across the region.

In Nova Scotia, day care is provincially regulated and provided by individuals, commercially or by non-profit groups. In July 2021, the provincial and federal governments signed a 5-year funding agreement, the Canada-Nova Scotia Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement, to increase access to childcare. The intent of this Agreement is to significantly reduce child care fees and create new early learning and childcare spaces, and enhance before and after school care options. It will therefore be important that community plans and land use by-laws, which currently have differing regulations for the size and requirements for childcare facilities, enable childcare uses broadly. The Municipality currently houses childcare and day care programs within Municipally owned buildings that are leased to outside entities, so that childcare is available in communities.

To support the health and well-being of residents, it will be similarly important to permit health care uses broadly, including family medicine, primary health care, walk-in clinics, dentist offices, and other practitioner services.

CI-16 When developing new or amending existing secondary municipal planning strategies, the Municipality shall consider the needs for childcare and health care by allowing these uses in residential, commercial, mixed use, and institutional zones at a scale appropriate to the community needs and context.

CI-17 The Municipality shall work with the provincial government to support goals for growing capacity and improving access to health care and childcare in response to existing community needs and anticipated future growth.

4.5 PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

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

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

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

programs, and services, and where community groups can organize and collaborate. When planning community facilities and infrastructure, the Municipality may consider a social infrastructure perspective.

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

- CI-18 The Municipality shall consider undertaking the actions identified in the *Public Safety Strategy 2023-2026*.**
- CI-19 Further to Policies RP-27 and RP-28, the Municipality shall consider the location and distribution of emergency service infrastructure as part of the Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priorities Plan, and shall collaborate with emergency service providers on service provision to accommodate existing and future community needs.**
- CI-20 When adopting new or amending existing secondary planning strategies, the Municipality shall consider the need for new or expanded municipal emergency services within or to support proposed developments. In evaluating a location for new or expanded emergency services, the Municipality shall consider present and future population density, projected community uses and hazards and travel time to/from existing adjacent emergency service facilities.**

4.6 FOOD SECURITY AND FOOD SYSTEMS

Household food insecurity is the inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints. Community food security exists when all residents have access to enough good food from a food system that maximizes food independence and can be sustained for generations to come. Food insecurity, at both the community and household level, is complex with economic, social, geographic, and political factors. In 2022, and among Canadians, the percentage of individuals living in food insecure households was highest in Atlantic Canada. In Nova Scotia, the percentage of people living in food insecure households increased from 17.7% in 2021 to 22.0% in 2022. In the Census Metropolitan Area of Halifax in 2022, the percentage of people living in food insecure households was 20.5%.

Although financial constraints are the strongest predictor of household food insecurity, the physical accessibility of quality, affordable food also impacts food security. Given the prominence and far-reaching impacts of food insecurity, in 2023 the Municipality approved in principle the *JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region*, a long-range strategy towards a healthy, just, and sustainable food system for the Halifax region. *JustFOOD* sets the stage for our regional food system, captures public engagement findings, and includes 56 recommendations for positive food system change. *JustFOOD* is designed to bring communities and key players together to improve food security, reduce food inequities, support inclusive economic growth, foster resilience in the face of climate change, and promote the health and well-being of

all residents. *JustFOOD* informs the policies in this section and the need to increase opportunities for communities to more readily access food within their communities and strengthen the local food system.

Rural communities in particular have a rich history of food production and continue to be home to a wide range of agricultural uses including crop and livestock production, aquaculture, fisheries, and forestry products. Notably, the Musquodoboit Valley contains the Municipality's only remaining arable land largely unaffected by non-agricultural uses and as such, this Plan includes these lands in the Agricultural designation. Avoiding non-agricultural development on and near agricultural land and allowing farms opportunities for development or expansion helps to protect the municipality's local farming industry. Supporting the maintenance of sufficient land for farming within the municipality also keeps food supply chains local and promotes the local rural economy while contributing to food security.

CI-21 The *JustFOOD Action Plan*, as may be amended from time to time, shall be considered by the Municipality for actions and programs related to increasing food security, strengthening the local food system, and advancing food justice and sovereignty. To further the goals and advance action on the *JustFOOD Action Plan*, the Municipality may consider amending secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws.

CI-22 When preparing new or amending existing secondary municipal planning strategies, the Municipality shall consider opportunities to promote food security, address access to food and local food systems, by:

- a) permitting food production and food retail uses, including new forms of production such as on-land, closed containment fish farms where appropriate;**
- b) preserving existing agricultural land used for food production; and**
- c) requiring building and site designs that promote food sustainability, including rooftop landscaping, amenity garden space, and edible landscaping.**

CI-23 The Municipality shall consider, as part of the Rural Community Planning program, measures to preserve existing agricultural land and uses so that sufficient lands are available for food production within the municipality.

CI-24 Where Provincial programs support preserving agricultural land and promoting local agriculture, the Municipality may complement or further such programs through its policies or regulations.

4.6.1 MARKET GARDENS

The *JustFOOD Action Plan* emphasizes an increased demand and interest in local food production and the need to reduce barriers and create opportunities for local food production. Land use by-laws have historically restricted where residents are able to sell food they produce and where they can buy food in their residential neighbourhoods. While residents have always been permitted to grow fruit and vegetables, egg-laying hens and beekeeping have not always been permitted. Backyard hens can provide personal food production, while minimizing impacts to a surrounding residential neighbourhood. Bees as pollinators play an important role in local ecosystems and biodiversity. As residents produce food locally, there is interest in being able to sell products to neighbours and the surrounding community. This is referred to as

a “market garden.” Market gardens allow residents to grow food on properties and in greenhouses to sell at their own property or at farmers’ markets.

CI-25 The Municipality shall consider, through the applicable secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws, permitting market gardens to facilitate the production, and distribution of food at a scale appropriate to the surrounding context and in conjunction with a residential use, except in zones created with the intent to limit development near environmentally sensitive watercourses, infilled water lots, and coastal shorelines. Permitted uses shall include:

- a) accessory keeping of bees and egg-laying hens;**
- b) small accessory structures to support the sale of goods; and**
- c) farmers’ markets, except in low-density residential zones.**

CI-26 Further to Policy CI-25, the Municipality may amend secondary plans and land use by-laws to permit:

- a) the use of shipping containers for food production and processing; and**
- b) the secondary processing and distribution of food.**

4.6.2 ROOFTOP LANDSCAPING AND GREENHOUSES

Rooftop soft landscaping and greenhouses can offer environmental, economic, and social benefits. They can support space for private or shared gardens. Green roofs can also reduce the urban heat island effect and reduce the amount of energy needed to heat and cool buildings.

CI-27 The Municipality shall consider, through the applicable land use by-laws, allowing rooftop greenhouses and soft landscaping on rooftops, with rooftop greenhouses permitted to protrude above the maximum permitted height for main buildings.

4.6.3 INDOOR FARMING

Indoor farming (or Controlled Environment Agriculture) encompasses a wide range of farming techniques where produce is grown indoors year-round, and farmers can control light, temperature, water, and carbon dioxide levels. Indoor farming can appropriately be accommodated in agricultural zones and industrial zones. Common indoor farming production includes plants, vegetables, fibres, and edible insects. Indoor agriculture allows reliable year-round food production, helping to reduce the distance food needs to travel, and reducing land needs for food production.

CI-28 The Municipality shall consider, through the applicable land use by-laws, allowing indoor food production of plants and insects as a permitted main use within appropriate industrial zones.

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

CI-30 In commercial and mixed use zones and where the produced products from indoor food production are sold on the same property, the Municipality may allow indoor food production as a main use by development agreement. In considering approval of such agreements, the Municipality shall consider the following:

- a) whether the proposal meets all provisions of the land use by-law;
- b) the adequacy of the size of the lot on which the proposed facility will be located;
- c) the adequacy of separation distances from residential and other sensitive uses, wells, watercourses, and riparian areas, given the size and scale of the proposed facility;
- d) the adequacy of mitigation measures for noise, vibration, and odours from the proposed facility;
- e) the design of the proposed facility, including that its height, massing, and location on the lot adequately considers the visual impact on adjacent properties, public roads, community facilities and open spaces; and
- f) Policy IM-9 of this Plan.

4.7 SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

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

The 2014 *Solid Waste Strategy* update included objectives to:

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

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

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

CI-31 The Municipality shall consider updating the *Solid Waste Strategy* to align, revise, and adopt policies and regulations consistent with *HalifACT*, the *Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act*, and Provincial legislation related to Extended Producer Responsibility. The Municipality shall consider amendments to secondary municipal

planning strategies, land use by-laws or any other by-laws to implement any recommendations of a solid waste strategy system review.

4.7.1 CONSTRUCTION AND DEMOLITION

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

CI-32 The Municipality may update any administrative orders, licenses, secondary municipal planning strategies, land use by-laws, or other regulations to align with the Provincial guidelines for Construction and Demolition Debris Storage, Transfer, Process and Disposal Facilities.

4.8 REGIONAL ENERGY AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE

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

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

CI-33 The Municipality may-cooperate with Nova Scotia Power Incorporated (NSPI), its assignees or successors, in their efforts to conserve energy, anticipate and provide for future electricity needs, increase reliability, reserve space for transmission lines and equipment, and protect public health and safety, while considering other policies in this Plan, and other relevant Priorities Plans and Functional Plans.

CI-34 The Municipality shall follow the protocol as described in Administrative Order 2015-005-GOV, as amended from time to time, as a consultation approach for the siting of telecommunication towers and antenna and provide recommendations to Industry Canada in accordance with the Administrative Order.

CHAPTER 5: FOSTERING DIVERSE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

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5.1 INTRODUCTION

Housing is a key determinant of health. Housing affordability and availability are significant challenges facing the municipality. At the time of drafting this Plan, the Municipality is experiencing a housing shortage crisis, and it is currently the most urgent priority in municipal land use planning, regulation and development approval to rapidly increase the supply of housing.

There are a variety of housing models that respond to different family structures, income levels, and stages of life. These housing models include a range of market and non-market housing models. The municipality needs more housing of all models. Due to social, economic, and geographic factors, the full range of housing needs in a community are not always met by market housing. The housing needs of individuals and families within the low to moderate income range or with special housing needs are often met by non-market housing provided by the public and not-for-profit sectors. Non-market housing encompasses a wide range of housing models, including housing with varying levels of social supports and subsidies.

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

The region's record-high home prices and low vacancy rates have led to affordability issues for both renters and potential homeowners. A low vacancy rate has continued to contribute to unaffordable rents: although the apartment vacancy rate increased to 2.1% from a historic low of 1% between 2021-2023, a healthy rate is considered between 3% and 5%. The rental market has experienced significant rent increases, far surpassing historical growth rates. Only a small percentage of available rentals are affordable for households in the lowest income bracket.

As a result, the municipality is experiencing an affordable housing and homelessness crisis. The *HRM Charter* defines 'affordable housing' as "housing that meets the needs of a variety of households in the low to moderate income range," and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) defines 'core housing need' as households who cannot access housing that meets standards for adequacy (housing condition), suitability (enough space), and affordability (less than 30% of before-tax income). The 2021 Census showed that 42.5% of households in Halifax are renters. Of that number, 36.7% of these households are in core housing need. For homeowners, the number of households in the municipality in core housing need is 10.6%.

Halifax-based outreach workers have noted significant increases in the number of people experiencing homelessness and lack sufficient health supports and personal income to afford housing. They have also noted an increase in the number of seniors experiencing homelessness, many of them for the first time in their lives. Between 2018 and 2022 the number of people who are homeless more than doubled with the

number of people forced to shelter outside increased 500%.¹² While the rise in homelessness is driven by several factors, the primary one is a lack of affordable, stable, and supportive housing.

Although 2024 has started to show signs of more modest population growth than what has been experienced in recent years, the Municipality continues to place priority and focus on increasing housing supply region-wide. At the time of the drafting of this Plan, the demand for housing still outpaces current supply, and quickly increasing housing supply will require rethinking historical approaches to land use while also positioning our communities to be ready for growth. The best qualities of the municipality's varied neighbourhoods are found in the people living there, and this Plan will provide more people with choices of where and how to live. Increasing density in neighbourhoods where there are existing services and infrastructure improves housing inventory in the places best able to support growth. Enabling the development of a mix of housing types throughout the municipality helps residents to find an affordable housing option that matches their household size, composition, level of ability, and lifestyle. Supporting the development of affordable housing across all housing models is needed so that everyone has safe and supportive housing. Having a range of housing options helps to create socially inclusive communities by allowing for a diverse range of households in every neighbourhood.

This Plan recognizes that tools are needed to both maintain the existing housing stock, which is also often more affordable, along with building new housing units. Increasing the affordability and range of housing available across the region is essential to ensuring resilient and socially inclusive communities where everyone can access housing.

5.2 OBJECTIVES

- 1. Collaborate with government, non-profit and private sector partners to end homelessness and housing poverty in the municipality.**
- 2. Identify and remove existing barriers to increasing housing supply for all residents across the municipality.**
- 3. Support opportunities for diverse forms of housing, including shared housing, culturally inclusive housing, and community land trusts.**
- 4. Expand opportunities and incentives to support developing and retaining affordable housing.**
- 5. Increase the diversity of housing types available in all communities so that all residents can choose housing that meet their needs.**
- 6. Support increased housing density and options in areas with access to transit and services.**

¹² A Framework to Address Homelessness in the Halifax Regional Municipality.
<https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/230221rc1515.pdf>

5.3 REMOVING BARRIERS TO HOUSING

Many of the existing community plans were developed at a time when the region was facing a low rate of growth, and these plans must be updated to reflect recent population trends and allow the Municipality to respond to the growing demand for all types of housing. All community plans must be aligned with the policies and objectives of this Plan with regard to increasing housing supply, diversifying available housing options, and increasing housing affordability.

H-1 When preparing new secondary municipal planning strategies or amendments to existing secondary municipal planning strategies, the Municipality shall consider prioritizing the increased supply of safe, sustainable, and affordable housing, and furthering housing choice and social inclusion by:

- a) enabling a mix of housing types that serve all residents;**
- b) encouraging growth in locations where frequent transit is or will be available;**
- c) reducing minimum required lot frontage, lot size, and parking;**
- d) allowing residential uses in all zones except for:**
 - i. areas zoned for industrial, military, park, transportation reserve and utility uses; or**
 - ii. zones intended to protect the environment, water supply, floodplains or another similar interest;**
- e) identifying existing affordable housing and measures to protect it;**
- f) enabling the adaptive reuse of structures;**
- g) considering innovative approaches that meet unique cultural needs;**
- h) removing angle controls and establishing height maximums that support mid and high-density residential developments, including using mass timber construction;**
- i) enabling and expediting modular housing, factory built housing and mass timber constructed housing.**

5.4 INCREASING OUR HOUSING SUPPLY

At the time of the drafting of this Plan, the Province and, in particular, the Municipality are experiencing a housing shortage crisis. Recognizing that meeting the demand for housing is critical for building a successful region, in addition to identifying major locations for new growth as set out in Chapter 3, the Municipality will aim to increase the supply of housing by:

- Allowing more **diverse housing types** in all residential areas;
- Increasing **gentle density** and **missing middle** housing;

- Enabling **adaptive reuse**; and
- Removing or reducing parking requirements.

H-2 Responding to the housing shortage crisis and meeting the housing needs of a growing population is the most urgent priority in municipal land-use planning, regulation and development approval. It is the intention of this Plan to rapidly increase the supply of housing in the Municipality by removing barriers to housing and allowing a variety of residential forms and uses, including temporary housing in non-permanent structures, throughout the region.

5.4.1 ENABLING DIVERSE HOUSING TYPES

This Plan encourages the development of diverse forms of housing to allow people variety and flexibility in deciding how to live, and is an important component to helping the Municipality meet the strategic growth objectives of this Plan. Housing types exist on a size and density spectrum, ranging from tiny houses that are home to a few people to large multi-unit apartment buildings that are home to hundreds. Flexible zoning and built form requirements help to enable a range of housing types in all communities that can accommodate multi-generational families, seniors looking to age in place, students and young people, and housing that allows for various forms of shared accommodation.. Allowing more housing options in all types of residential areas can increase housing capacity on an existing supply of land and provide opportunities for homeowners and renters to choose a neighbourhood that meets their needs.

Diversifying the housing stock requires looking beyond historical approaches to home construction and neighbourhood design to focus on providing housing that meets the needs of people now and into the future. Special measures, such as removing requirements for residential buildings to include a mix of units or limiting ground floor commercial space, may only be considered during an urgent housing shortage crisis.

Shared housing use is a broad term that describes a variety of household forms where housing is shared by a group of individuals living under separate leases or agreements where support services may or may not be provided. Shared housing with special care is a form of shared housing use that is designed to provide a level of care to residents with cognitive, physical, or behavioural limitations.

Cluster housing can provide opportunities to place multiple residential buildings on a single property, either in the style of a traditional manufactured home park, or other form where the development of a new public street is not practical or needed to support pedestrian connectivity or other goals of this Plan. Cluster housing may include land-lease communities, a type of housing tenure where the resident owns their home but leases the land on which their home is situated.

H-3 To support the development of increased housing supply, the Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-laws:

- permit tiny homes, inclusive of mobile dwellings, converted shipping containers and manufactured housing, as a form of residential use; and**
- establish height maximums that offer flexibility and support the construction of mid and high-density residential developments;**
- for multi-unit residential buildings that begin construction on or before April 1, 2027, provide that no requirement related to unit mix applies; and**

- d) for multi-unit residential buildings that begin construction on or before April 1, 2027, provide that no requirement for more than 20% ground floor commercial space applies.
- H-4** Shared housing use is a broad term that describes a variety of household forms where housing is shared by a group of individuals living under separate leases or agreements where support services may or may not be provided. To support the provision of shared housing uses, the Municipality:
- a) shall, through the applicable land use by-laws, permit shared housing forms in all zones that permit residential uses at a scale and density that is compatible with the intent of the applicable zones. Additional controls beyond those for dwelling units shall be minimized to reduce regulatory barriers for shared housing developments;
 - b) may, through the applicable land use by-laws, permit shared housing in institutional zones at a scale and density that is compatible with surrounding uses; and
 - c) may, through the applicable land use by-laws and secondary municipal planning strategies, permit shared housing uses through a development agreement at a larger scale than would be permitted by the zone or in zones that do not permit residential uses.
- H-5** Shared housing with special care is a form of shared housing use that is designed to provide a level of care to residents with cognitive, physical, or behavioural limitations. Within existing secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws, references to residential care facilities, nursing homes, long term care, assisted care or housing targeted towards seniors housing shall be replaced with the term shared housing with special care.
- H-6** To support the construction of diverse and affordable housing options, the Municipality shall continue to further explore and remove barriers to cohousing and land sharing initiatives.
- H-7** To support the provision of cluster housing, through the Community Planning programs, the Municipality shall consider amending applicable secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws to:
- a) permit multiple residential buildings on one or more lots in a clustered form;
 - b) regulate land uses within manufactured home parks, including land lease communities; and
 - c) allow for development patterns that meet unique cultural needs.

5.4.2 GENTLE DENSITY AND THE MISSING MIDDLE

Many of the Municipality's community plans envisioned low-density neighbourhoods with primarily single unit detached houses and limited areas where apartments would be located. Planning and zoning in this way has limited residents' choices of where and how to live. Enabling the full range of the housing continuum in existing and future neighbourhoods includes supporting development of 'gentle density' and 'missing middle' housing.

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

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

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

H-8 To enable more housing choice across the municipality, the Municipality shall consider:

- a) in the Urban Area, permit at least four dwelling units on a lot through the applicable secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws; and**
- b) in the Rural Area, consider amending applicable secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws to permit up to four units on a lot where municipal water service or sufficient groundwater is available.**

5.4.3 ADAPTIVE REUSE

Adaptive reuse is the process of changing the primary function of an existing building and giving it a new life by adapting it and allowing new uses. When buildings have outlived their original purpose, adaptive reuse is an alternative to tearing the structure down and building a new one in its place. Enabling the repurposing of structures is environmentally sustainable, can help to protect structures of historical and cultural value to their communities, and provides opportunities for creative residential spaces. The housing possibilities presented by adaptive reuse support the Municipality's efforts to increase housing availability.

The Community Planning programs will examine opportunities across the region to enable the adaptive reuse of existing structures by providing greater flexibility in land use policy. Adaptive reuse conversions will be permitted for consideration in the Rural Area by development agreement, as outlined in Policy IM-18 in Chapter 10.

In recent years, office vacancy rates have been high as employees have shifted to working from home in the wake of the pandemic. There may be opportunities to encourage repurposing underused office buildings or other commercial or institutional buildings for residential units through financial incentives.

H-9 The Municipality shall consider:

- a) encouraging the adaptive reuse of existing structures for housing by including flexibility in land use requirements in applicable secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws; and**
- b) studying the viability of incentives for non-residential to residential conversion.**

5.4.4 REMOVING MINIMUM PARKING REQUIREMENTS

Minimum parking requirements are regulations that require minimum ratios of parking spots per dwelling unit. Parking raises the overall cost of construction and is often provided in the form of surface parking lots that reduce potential greenspace or development footprint. Not all residents require a parking spot associated with their home as many do not or cannot drive. Providing more flexibility homeowners, developers, and business owners to decide their own parking needs acknowledges that there is not a one-size-fits-all approach to parking.

The Province of Nova Scotia has also recognized the barriers that minimum parking requirements place on the cost of residential land development. The *Minimum Planning Requirements Regulations* prohibit the Municipality from requiring on-site parking for residential land uses within the Urban Service Area boundary. Where developments choose to provide parking for residential uses, land use by-laws will continue to regulate associated loading, siting and landscaping requirements.

H-10 To support development of additional housing and efficient use of land, there shall be no required parking spaces for residential uses within the Urban Service Area.

5.5 INCREASING HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

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

Marginalized and underserved residents can often face systemic barriers to accessing housing, and past approaches to land use planning have historically contributed to the uprooting and displacement of these vulnerable communities. A disproportionate number of those experiencing homelessness today identify as Indigenous, Black, and/or have a disability or, mental health or addiction challenges. Immigrants, refugees, and migrant individuals and families can also experience language barriers, discrimination, and struggle to find safe and affordable housing. One of the principles guiding the Municipality's *Framework to Address Homelessness* is 'Housing First,' an approach that focuses on moving people experiencing homelessness quickly from a shelter or sleeping rough to safe, sustainable, and supportive housing. Building new affordable housing and retaining the Municipality's existing stock of affordable housing units is essential to the Housing First approach and meeting residents' needs across the entire housing continuum. Housing

programs must include incentives to retain existing affordable housing stock. When drafting new or preparing amendments to existing community plans, it will be important to consider the impact of redevelopment by proactively assessing for unintended consequences (such as displacement of existing housing units).

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

- **Exploring municipal initiatives** to support the creation and retention of affordable housing such as inclusionary zoning, incentive or bonus zoning, opportunities to provide surplus land to the not-for-profit sector, and policies requiring no net loss of existing affordable housing; and
- **Participating in partnerships and programs** with local housing organizations and other orders of government, the Province, and the Government of Canada.

5.5.1 MUNICIPAL INITIATIVES

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

- **Inclusionary Zoning** – A planning tool that requires private market developments to include a percentage or portion of the new units as affordable housing units. Affordable units can be required to be maintained as affordable for a set period or may be required to be affordable for the life of the development. Inclusionary zoning helps to create mixed-income housing, and affordable units may be designed to be indistinguishable from market-rate units.
- **Incentive or Bonus Zoning (also known as Density Bonusing)** – A planning tool that allows the Municipality to require a development to provide public benefits or cash-in-lieu in exchange for relaxing certain requirements if the applicant exceeds other requirements or undertakes other action. The intent of this tool is to allow additional development rights and supplement other municipal investments so that new density is accompanied by the amenities and public benefits (including contributions to affordable housing) that can contribute to complete and inclusive communities.
- **Municipal Surplus Land and Grants for Affordable Housing** – Funds collected through the Density Bonusing programs are used as part of the funding for the Municipality's Affordable Housing Grant Program. The Municipality has also created an affordable housing category for municipally-owned land deemed surplus. These programs allow the Municipality to support registered non-profit or charitable organizations who provide deeply affordable housing units.
- **No Net Loss/Rental Replacement** – No Net Loss/Rental Replacement housing policies typically require that when existing residential buildings are redeveloped, the new development will incorporate the displaced (and often more affordable) residential units, and/or assists displaced tenants in locating alternative and suitable housing.

The Municipality continues to explore and implement these tools, among other initiatives, to support affordable housing construction, maintenance and retention across all areas of the municipality.

- H-11 The Municipality shall monitor housing and demographic trends to assist in determining future housing needs through regular updates to the Housing Needs Assessment and evaluating data from the federal and provincial governments, By Name List and Point in Time Count.**

- H-12 The Municipality may utilize the Affordable Housing Grant Program and continue to explore other opportunities to financially support the construction and maintenance of affordable and deeply affordable housing.**

- H-13 The Municipality shall continue to remove barriers to and support various forms of affordable housing through reviews of planning documents, by-laws and administrative orders.**

- H-14 The Municipality shall develop a Housing Strategy which shall identify ways to support the construction and retention of affordable housing. Considerations may include inclusionary zoning, density bonusing, policies requiring no net loss/rental replacement of existing affordable housing, and opportunities to acquire or dispose of land for affordable housing. The Housing Strategy shall respond to updated Housing Needs Assessments and include considerations for the Municipality's efforts to address homelessness, and may align with this Plan's data monitoring policies.**

- H-15 The Municipality shall consider opportunities to incentivize development of housing on surplus municipal property.**

5.5.2 PARTNERSHIPS

While the provision of affordable housing is often noted as the responsibility of the Province, the Municipality acknowledges it is a shared responsibility. As a regulator of land uses, the Municipality plays a significant role in where and how housing can be developed. Municipal land use regulations impact housing supply, housing types and densities. Formed in 2013, the Housing and Homelessness Partnership is a collaborative of nine partners from the three levels of government, the private sector, and non-profit organizations in Halifax. The mandate of the Partnership is to “end homelessness and housing poverty in Halifax” by addressing policy and systemic issues, with the acknowledgment that affordable housing and homelessness cannot be solved by any single group or any single solution. For any significant change, all partners need to work together. In 2018, Regional Council endorsed six key initiatives to support affordable housing through the Affordable Housing Work Plan, which could not have been implemented without successful partnerships with community, housing professionals, Municipal business units and other orders of government.

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

- H-16** Where Federal and Provincial strategies or programs are made in support of affordable housing, the Municipality shall consider opportunities to further or complement such strategies or programs through its programs, policies, or regulations.
- H-17** The Municipality may consider partnerships or financial support for housing organizations and continue to participate in funding affordable housing projects through Municipal programs and supporting programs offered by other orders of government.
- H-18** The Municipality may continue to explore partnerships with non-profit housing organizations, private developers and other orders of government to encourage the development and retention of affordable housing.
- H-19** The Municipality shall study and consider the viability of new tools and programs to further leverage surplus or available land to support affordable housing, including supporting the development of community land trusts.

5.5.3 INCENTIVE OR BONUS ZONING

Incentive or bonus zoning is a planning tool enabled under the *HRM Charter* that allows the Municipality to require a development to provide public benefits in exchange for additional development rights or relaxing certain requirements. The intent of this tool is to supplement other municipal investments so that new density is accompanied by the amenities and public benefits that can contribute to complete and inclusive communities. Most developments in the Regional Centre that exceed 2,000 square metres of floor area are already required to provide bonus zoning public benefits.

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

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

- H-20** The Municipality shall require incentive or bonus zoning public benefits or money-in-lieu of a contribution in those areas identified in the land use by-law when considering site specific amendments to this Plan or to a secondary municipal planning strategy after February 28, 2023 outside of the Regional Centre in the Urban Area as shown on Map 2, or Future Serviced Communities to permit:
- a) new multi-unit residential, commercial, or mixed use development; or
 - b) additional density.
- H-21** Further to Policy H-20, the applicable land use by-laws shall require incentive or bonus zoning agreements or money-in-lieu of a contribution for any developments resulting from

a plan amendment process considered after February 28, 2023, and shall provide for a method of tracking such developments in the land use by-law. Affordable housing developments developed by a registered Canadian charitable organization, or not-for-profit organization, or where such organizations have a housing agreement with a government organization for the site, shall not be required to provide bonus zoning public benefits.

H-22 Further to Policy H-20, the applicable land use by-laws shall provide a method for determining the value of incentive or bonus zoning public benefits for any developments resulting from a plan amendment process as outlined in Policy H-20 and may prescribe different rates of public benefits for multi-unit sites developed through a zone and for larger sites developed by a development agreement.

H-23 Further to Policy H-20, the applicable land use by-laws shall identify:

- a) the sites or areas subject to incentive or bonus zoning requirements, consistent with Policy H-20, including a method of tracking any future plan amendments;
- b) the matters that the Development Officer may consider before approving an incentive or bonus zoning agreement;
- c) the method to be used to determine the contribution for incentive or bonus zoning;
- d) the density bonus rates and districts based on average market land values in specified areas multiplied by a coefficient of 0.6 for multi-unit sites;
- e) a method to determine the value of public benefits for sites larger than 10 hectares and developed by development agreement;
- f) the method used to annually update local area incentive or bonus zoning rates;
- g) the method to determine, evaluate and accept the value of the public benefits; and
- h) the means of administering an incentive or bonus zoning agreement.

H-24 Subject to Policy H-20, where a development is enabled by a development agreement, the development agreement may provide for a method of when the public benefit value is paid.

H-25 Further to Policy H-20, the applicable land use by-laws shall set out the public benefits that are eligible for incentive or bonus zoning, including when money-in-lieu of a contribution shall be accepted. The majority of the calculated value of the public benefit shall be dedicated toward affordable housing, except for registered heritage properties and properties located within a Heritage Conservation District. In addition to affordable housing, the public benefit may be in the form of:

- a) conservation of a registered heritage property or a property located within a Heritage Conservation District;
- b) improvements to and acquisition of lands for municipal parks;
- c) affordable community or cultural indoor space;

- d) public art; or
- e) other public benefits identified in the land use by-law.

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

- H-26 The Municipality shall establish policies to administer public benefits provided as money-in-lieu of a contribution to ensure that the funds are used for the purposes for which they were collected. This may include grants and programs in the Urban and Rural Areas of the Municipality.**

5.5.4 SHORT-TERM RENTALS

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

The Municipality is exploring alternative approaches to tourist accommodations in the Rural Area, recognizing there are distinct rural housing challenges and the tourist industry in rural areas has unique needs. Whereas the intent of short-term rental regulations is to mitigate the impact on the long-term rental market, and while there is in many cases a lack of suitable long-term rental accommodation in Rural Area, some short-term rentals in rural communities are non-winterized second properties or cottages which can not otherwise be used for long-term housing. In addition, some zones in rural areas permit commercial accommodation uses. Short-term rental regulations may address the Rural Area context, as further outlined in Policy EC-33 in Chapter 8.

- H-27 The Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-laws, establish special provisions to:**
- a) permit short-term rentals in residential zones, where the short-term rentals are located within the short-term rental operator's primary residence; and**
 - b) permit short-term rentals in zones where commercial tourist accommodation uses are permitted.**

CHAPTER 6: PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT AND ACTING ON CLIMATE

CHAPTER 6: PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT AND ACTING ON CLIMATE

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The natural environment is one of the defining features of the Halifax region, with its extensive coastline, lakes, rivers, wetlands, and vast natural and forested areas. Residents are highly aware of the potential impacts of climate change and some residents advocate for the protection of the natural environment, which are key priorities for preserving quality of life, climate resilience, community identity, and opportunities for outdoor recreation. The natural environment also provides many ecological and economic benefits to the residents of the Municipality. Environmental stewardship requires the collaboration of all levels of government and the community working with Mi'kmaw Nations, and incorporation of Mi'kmaw Knowledge. The concept of *Netukulimk*¹³ has guided the Mi'kmaq in their approach to sustainable living, and this approach teaches us that we must recognize the interconnectedness of our natural world, our role in it and our relationships to all living things. An integrated approach for environmental management assists in maintaining the health and well-being of the whole natural system.

The municipality has a full spectrum of open spaces, consisting of lands for natural resources, agriculture, recreation, environmentally sensitive areas, hazard prone lands, cultural landscapes, natural corridors, trails, parks, wilderness areas, and preservation areas for potable water as well as areas for waste/resource management. Open spaces shape development, provide ecosystem services, capture carbon, retain lands for agricultural and forestry uses, and provide recreational opportunities. In addition to the services they provide to human communities, open spaces and intact ecosystems support biodiversity and ecological functionality which are inherently valuable.

An intent of this Plan is to manage land use around lands of high ecological value that provide ecosystem services, habitat, and biodiversity. “Ecosystem services” are the many and varied benefits to humans provided by the natural environment and healthy ecosystems. Ecosystems can provide natural pollination of crops, mitigate extreme weather and flooding, and help to protect waterways and groundwater from contamination, along with being a benefit for human mental and physical well-being. Natural systems have traditionally been undervalued as built/grey infrastructure has been widely perceived to work better than natural systems. Increasingly, this is being disproven, particularly as growing climate hazards expose weaknesses in human-built systems. Ecosystem services often cannot be replicated by human-made systems or can only be replicated at a tremendous cost.

The impacts of climate change are already being felt through the increased frequency and severity of climate events. The Municipality recognizes that these impacts will continue over time, and that we need to adapt to these changes. Climate change adaptation includes planning for, and acting on, the anticipated impacts of climate change. This can be achieved by readying existing infrastructure and communities, and

¹³ “Netukulimk is the use of the natural bounty provided by the Creator for the self-support and well-being of the individual and the community. Netukulimk is achieving adequate standards of community nutrition and economic well-being without jeopardizing the integrity, diversity, or productivity of our environment.” (<https://www.uinr.ca/programs/netukulimk/>). See also: https://curriculum.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/documents/resource-files/Netukulimk_ENG.pdf

by making new policies and standards to adapt our communities and infrastructure. Climate resiliency is the ability to recover quickly from the negative impacts of a climate hazard or event. This applies to both communities and to infrastructure. By identifying vulnerabilities, we can prioritize where and how to adapt.

The development of this chapter was informed by the *Urban Forest Management Plan* (UFMP and formerly known as the Urban Forest Master Plan) (2025), the *Halifax Green Network Plan* (HGPN) (2018), and *HalifACT* (2020) and the objectives of this Plan. This includes advancing and protecting the natural environment and recognizing climate change.

6.2 OBJECTIVES

- 1. Adopt development practices that sustain and nourish air, land, soil, water, and groundwater resources, and reduce negative impacts to surrounding areas.**
- 2. Foster a land management and regional landscape planning approach that assists in preserving land and aquatic systems with ecological, recreational and educational value.**
- 3. Collaborate with other orders of government, agencies, residents, and organizations to facilitate a comprehensive approach to respond to climate change and environmental management.**
- 4. Collect, use and share environmental data and climate change projections to inform municipal projects and policy, and direct updates to development practices and standards in response to changing environmental conditions and climate hazards;**
- 5. Support the rapid transition to a low carbon future by promoting the use of renewable energy resources.**
- 6. Support the development of resilient, prepared, and connected communities and infrastructure informed by climate change risks, vulnerabilities, and hazards.**

6.3 ACTING ON CLIMATE

Climate change is urgent, complex, and a global crisis. The changing climate poses hazards to health, economic growth, safety, and the natural world. Making a rapid shift to a low carbon future is challenging due to dispersed impacts across the globe and the transformational societal and systems changes required. Actions required include deep greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions and preparing for the hazards associated with climate change. In 2020, Halifax Regional Council authorized the direction contained in *HalifACT 2050: Acting on Climate Together (HalifACT)*, the Municipality's climate action plan, and directed that the actions be carried out as part of the multi-year budget and business planning process. The goals of *HalifACT* are to reduce emissions, help communities adapt to climate change, work to mitigate further worsening climatic conditions, and sustain ecological functionality throughout the region. To align with the 1.5-degree Celsius pathway recommended by the world's leading scientific body on climate change, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *HalifACT* has proposed collaborative actions to achieve appropriate climate response and action out to 2050. At the Provincial level, the *Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reductions Act* (2021) set Nova Scotia's targets to be at least 53% below the 2005 emissions by 2030, and

net zero by 2050 by balancing GHG emissions with GHG removals and other offsetting measures. At the Municipal level, *HalifACT*'s targets include 75% reduction in community emissions over 2016 levels by 2030, net zero municipal operations by 2030, and net-zero community emissions by 2050.

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

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

EN-1 When preparing business plans and programs, the Municipality shall consider *HalifACT*.

EN-2 The recommendations of *HalifACT* provide guidance for corporate priority actions to manage the risks associated with climate change and actions to achieve municipal and community targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. To implement or further an action or program of *HalifACT*, the Municipality may consider amendments to this Plan, secondary municipal planning strategies, land use by-laws or any other by-laws of the Municipality.

EN-3 The Municipality shall co-operate with external interest holders and various levels of government in developing policies and programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase resilience, and, where deemed advisable by the Municipality, shall consider adopting or amending by-laws to achieve these objectives.

6.4 PROTECTING AND CONNECTING OPEN SPACE

As the region grows and changes, retaining natural and ecologically connected areas is important to maintaining healthy communities, retaining biodiversity, and adapting to and mitigating climate change. An intent of this Plan is that natural areas help shape the municipality's communities, establish community edges, and provide opportunities to connect to nature. Balancing ecological protection with human activity is important so that sensitive places are protected and the benefits of natural ecosystems are maintained while allowing for development and change.

The development pattern of the region has been shaped by a natural network of open space, consisting of Crown lands and privately held lands for natural resource extraction (such as forest production and harvesting), along with large natural areas, natural corridors, parks and trail systems that form a backbone of interconnected green space. The Open Space and Natural Resource Designation identifies the primary areas in this network that are natural spaces and working landscapes. As outlined in Policies IM-30 to IM-37 of Chapter 10, the *Regional Subdivision By-Law* will further control subdivision outside of rural centres and manage land use intensity around open space and working landscapes.

In 2018, Council authorized the direction contained in the *Halifax Green Network Plan* (HGNP), as framework for amending the Regional Plan, Secondary Municipal Planning Strategies and developing new planning documents. The HGNP defines an interconnected open space system for the municipality, highlights ecosystem functions and benefits, and outlines strategies to manage open space. Specifically, the HGNP provides land management and community design direction to:

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

The HGNP recommended actions to be taken, including as guidance for ongoing municipal programs and operations, and other actions to be considered through an ongoing program of work and amendments to planning documents as identified in this Plan.

EN-4 When preparing business plans and programs, the Municipality may consider the *Halifax Green Network Plan*.

EN-5 The Municipality may undertake studies to identify areas that are important to maintaining biodiversity and climate change mitigation and adaptation. The Municipality may consider amending applicable planning documents to manage land uses to implement the findings of these studies.

EN-6 The Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-law, establish a Protected Area Zone. This Zone shall be applied to protect environmentally sensitive areas including wilderness areas which have been designated under the *Wilderness Areas Protection Act*, nature reserves designated under the *Special Places Protection Act*, and conservation-related properties owned by government, non-profit conservation organizations, and private conservation organizations. The Zone shall permit scientific study and education, nature-related recreation and interpretation activities, and conservation uses.

6.4.1 ECOLOGICAL CORRIDORS

To support healthy and sustainable natural ecosystems, the Municipality may study the feasibility of preserving and enhancing ecological corridors. The International Union for Conservation of Nature's *Guidelines for Conserving Connectivity Through Ecological Networks and Corridors* defines ecological corridors as "clearly defined geographical spaces that are governed and managed over the long term to maintain or restore effective ecological connectivity and biodiversity."¹⁴ Ecological connectivity can:

- Help species adapt to climate change;
- Lessen the impact of human development on natural habitats;
- Connect various habitat types needed for species' different life stages, including migration and mating;
- Support vital ecosystem services like provision of food and clean air, as well as nutrient, and water cycles;
- Promote human-wildlife coexistence; and,

¹⁴ Guidelines for conserving connectivity through ecological networks and corridors, International Union for Conservation of Nature, <https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/PAG-030-En.pdf>

- Foster ways for people to connect with nature.

This Plan recognizes that the municipality may require different approaches to ecological corridors. While some corridors may accommodate the movement of species over land, some may require approaches to vertical space for the movement of flying, or subterranean, species. Detailed studies are needed to consider what a well-functioning corridor looks like, the kinds of policy tools and program actions that could be used, and where best to use them. Differences between urban and rural contexts are important to consider. After these studies are complete, the Municipality may consider a variety of actions, including amendments to planning documents, partnerships, and establishing infrastructure standards.

EN-7 The Municipality shall establish a program to identify opportunities to maintain or improve ecological connectivity, with a goal of maintaining and restoring ecosystem services, biodiversity, and better protections for species at risk. This work may consider:

- a) the characteristics of a well-functioning corridor, including optimal and possible corridor widths;
- b) mapping of ecological features, including habitats for species at risk using the most up-to-date occurrence data;
- c) areas of existing development, existing development rights and land ownership;
- d) aquatic corridors;
- e) opportunities for wildlife crossings over or under transport corridors such as highways, roads and railways;
- f) identifying possible corridor locations to be the focus areas for future work;
- g) types of corridors; and
- h) types of potential policy tools or programs that would be best suited for each corridor type.

EN-8 Further to Policy EN-7, where ecological corridors have been defined, the Municipality may consider:

- a) creating programs to restore connectivity on public land; and
- b) amending this Plan, applicable secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws where necessary.

EN-9 The Municipality may coordinate and partner with the Provincial and Federal government, adjacent municipalities, utility providers and private landowners including conservancy groups. Where corridors have been identified, the Municipality may work with interest holders to encourage opportunities for corridor protection or restoration including for wildlife crossings, naturalization, and fish passage on and across infrastructure such as roads, highways, trails, utility corridors, dams, and water control infrastructure.

6.4.2 NATURALIZATION AND MUNICIPAL NATURAL ASSET MANAGEMENT

Healthy ecosystems like wetlands, forests, rivers, and natural parks are valuable natural assets because they provide important services to communities. These natural areas help reduce the impacts of climate change—for example, shorelines can prevent erosion, urban trees can cool cities, and wetlands can manage stormwater. They also filter air and water, protect land, store carbon, offer recreational spaces, and support mental and physical health. Because they renew and sustain themselves, natural assets are cost-effective and durable. Investing in them lowers long-term maintenance and boosts a community's ability to adapt to climate change. Green infrastructure—solutions that work with nature—play a key role in building a more climate-resilient municipality.

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

In 2020-2021, the Municipality began the first step in formal natural assets management by developing a natural assets management inventory as part of the Municipal Natural Assets Initiative. The Municipality also participated in the Natural Assets Initiative (NAI)'s Natural Asset Management Road Map exercise, which seeks to develop strategies for managing natural assets as critical infrastructure.¹⁵ Municipal Natural Assets refer to natural features or ecosystems that provide local, sustainable municipal services. The location of natural assets can also inform decisions related to future development, including housing and employment uses, so that future development recognizes and enhances the value of these assets. Where the Municipality has identified important natural assets, development of site-specific management plans may be required. Management Plans can both ensure proper management and also capitalize on educational, recreational, and cultural opportunities.

EN-10 The Municipality shall consider supporting a region-wide naturalization program and promote naturalization through projects, public education, and awareness.

EN-11 The Municipality shall consider developing a Municipal Natural Assets framework to measure and value natural assets.

6.4.3 URBAN FORESTS

The municipality's urban forest is one of its most important assets. The municipality has been recognized as a Tree City of the World by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Arbor Day Foundation, in recognition of the Municipality's efforts to meet standards for the care and planning of urban trees and forests. The *Urban Forest Master Plan (UFMP)*, first adopted in 2012, provided a comprehensive neighbourhood approach to support a sustainable urban forest in the Urban Area. In 2025, Council revoked the UFMP and supported the principles contained in Urban Forest Management Plan. The

¹⁵ Municipal Natural Assets Initiative (MNAI). (2021). Toward natural asset management in the Halifax Regional Municipality, Nova Scotia. Summary of inventory results and recommendations. <https://mnai.ca/media/2021/11/MNAI-Inventory-Cluster-2-Halifax-report-103.pdf>

2025 UFMP updated the approach to urban forestry in the Municipality. Future updates to the UFMP may consider opportunities to protect trees on private property within the serviced area through a general by-law or other tools and incentives, where the *HRM Charter* allows.

EN-12 When preparing business plans and programs, the Municipality may consider the recommendations in the *Urban Forest Management Plan*.

EN-13 The Municipality may consider a by-law within the serviced area, or other regulatory approaches, tools or incentives, to protect existing trees or vegetation on private property and to manage the retention and the removal of existing trees or vegetation within riparian buffer zones.

6.4.4 BIRD-SAFE DESIGN

The municipality falls directly under the Atlantic Flyway, a major flight path for millions of migratory birds in North America and is home to 4 internationally Important Birds Areas. The municipality is home to 18 federally protected Species at Risk bird species, and a further 6 protected as provincially protected Endangered Species. These protections are to prevent harm to these species which are at risk of extinction. It is estimated that 25 million birds die each year from window collisions in Canada. Bird mortality is disproportionately higher as a result of mid-rise and high-rise buildings, especially when located close to natural habitats such as parks, forests, and shorelines.

Two major causes of bird mortality are transparent or reflective glass and night light emission. Birds will fly into windows that look like vegetation or sky, including the windows on ground floor lobbies, balconies, courtyards, green roofs, and building corners. Birds also become attracted to lighting from buildings during migration, effectively trapping them into the unfamiliar urban environment.

As the Municipality is located within an essential migratory path and some areas are developed with and are planned for a mid-rise and high-rise built form, there is a risk to the survival of birds. To support a healthy and sustainable natural ecosystem, the Municipality must work towards reducing and minimizing this risk through careful consideration and design.

EN-14 When developing new or amending existing secondary municipal planning strategies and land use bylaws, the Municipality shall consider adopting Bird Safe Design measures, through, amongst others, the external appearance of structures to reduce the risks to birds through requirements for glazing, window treatments, lighting, landscaping, building amenities, and other design features.

6.5 PROTECTING OUR WATER

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

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

6.5.1 THE UMBRELLA – WATERSHED PLANNING

A watershed is an area of land where all water, including precipitation, drains or sheds to one river or lake system. Understanding the interactions between watershed components and how this is impacted by land uses within that system as an ecological unit is important to begin maintaining and improving the health of the entire system. Individual disruptions of hydraulic and hydrologic systems have cumulative impacts on how the system functions, impacting groundwater flow, water quality and water quantity, habitats, and the built environment. Understanding how natural processes occur within watersheds can provide a robust framework for planning and land use decisions. Watersheds form the umbrella, under which a watershed management plan is nested, and lakes, as individual units, can be monitored for water quality to indicate health of the overall watershed. Narrowing in further, source water, the individual lakes and ground water that provide us with potable drinking water, serve the precious function of sustaining life and require special consideration. At an even smaller scale, watercourses and wetlands are integral components that function within a watershed.

Watershed management acknowledges uncertainties, considers interconnections within the system, and recognizes cumulative effects and impacts on the watershed. A Watershed Management Framework is a mechanism to develop watershed management plans, which organize and address the complex interactions between land-based activities and water resources using a watershed as a unit of management. The development of Watershed Management plans can promote a coordinated approach to balancing equitable use of water resources with the sustainability of these vital ecosystems. In 2024, Regional Council endorsed the draft Framework for Integrated Watershed Management, and chose two watersheds in the municipality to pilot the use of the Framework in developing management plans.

Watersheds and sub-watersheds exist at different scales and face different pressures. A blanket, one-size fits all watershed management approach will not appropriately address the stresses a given watershed is facing. Urban and rural watersheds can face different stressors and may require tailored approaches depending on various impacts. For example, an urban watershed may face higher volumes of runoff and pollutants due to impervious surfaces whereas rural areas may face issues of arsenic or lack of groundwater recharge. Therefore, although there may be common components within the Framework for Integrated Watershed Management, there must be flexibility and adaptability built in to customize to local conditions. Critical to the success of watershed management is genuine community-level involvement and buy-in. Without community stewardship, a watershed management approach will not succeed.

EN-15 The Municipality shall consider developing a community-based Framework for Integrated Watershed Management to improve management and protection of water resources. The Watershed Management Frameworks shall consider:

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

- b) determining and mitigating the impact of water pollution;
- c) the impacts of climate change and measures to reduce those impacts;
- d) the impacts of flooding on water quality and ecosystem resiliency;
- e) opportunities to restore and maintain water quality and natural floodplains;
- f) developing strategies to determine the cumulative impact of development on individual water bodies or within a watershed, such as quantifying the percentage of impervious surfaces as the threshold for intervention;
- g) creating programs to restore impacts of development near and adjacent to watercourses and wetlands, including opportunities to restore degraded riparian areas and critical habitat;
- h) improving the integration of publicly available data, including community water quality data, and scientifically sound principles into policy and decision-making;
- i) building inclusive and collaborative relationships with the community;
- j) coordination with adjacent municipalities and other orders of government on management of shared watersheds; and
- k) developing implementation strategies for watershed management.

EN-16 The Municipality may consider amendments to this Plan, secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws necessary to implement any approved watershed management plan. Amendments may include aligning community plan area, designation or zoning boundaries with watershed boundaries, or adjustments to the requirements for watershed studies.

6.5.1.1 WATERSHED STUDIES

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

EN-17 When considering comprehensive planning processes for future serviced communities as outlined in Policy HC-12 to HC-14, the Municipality shall require watershed or sub-watershed studies where new or additional development could adversely affect watercourses within the watershed or potable drinking water supply areas. The studies shall be designed to:

- a) establish a reliable and accurate baseline of existing water quality;
- b) recommend water quality objectives for key receiving watercourses in the study area and determine the parameters to be attained or retained to achieve water quality objectives;
- c) evaluate the capacity of any existing control structures in the watershed;
- d) model potential impacts to water quality as a result of development, and determine the amount of development and maximum inputs that receiving water bodies can assimilate without adversely affecting water quality;
- e) identify sources of contamination within the watershed;
- f) identify remedial measures to improve water quality;
- g) identify areas within the watershed where changes in flow patterns from development could result in flood damage to properties or environment;
- h) evaluate and identify the potential for increased flooding hazards as a result of development, taking into consideration current and future impacts of climate change;
- i) recommend methods to reduce and mitigate loss of natural infrastructure, permeable surfaces, native plants and native soils, groundwater recharge areas, and other important environmental functions within the watershed;
- j) identify appropriate riparian buffer widths for the watershed;
- k) recommend potential regulatory controls and management strategies to achieve the desired objectives;
- l) recommend an approach for a successful watershed monitoring program;
- m) in areas served by ground water supply, recommend measures to protect and manage quantity and quality of groundwater resources and nutrient inputs; and
- n) for studies undertaken within a municipal drinking water supply watershed, report findings to Halifax Water and require implementation of any requested mitigative measures.

6.5.2 SOURCE WATER PROTECTION

Source water areas are the lakes, rivers, streams, and groundwater that supply potable drinking water. Under the *Environment Act*, the Province is responsible for regulating water utilities and may designate Protected Water Areas (PWA) for water supply and regulate activities that may impair source water quality. Halifax Water is the utility responsible for enforcing regulations in the PWAs to keep the water clean and sustain the potable drinking water supply for future generations.

The Statement of Provincial Interest Regarding Drinking Water requires the Municipality to identify all municipal water supply watersheds within the region and address the protection of drinking water in municipal water supply watersheds by considering measures such as:

- restricting permitted uses to those that do not pose a threat to drinking water quality;
- balancing the expansion of existing uses against the risks posed to drinking water quality;
- limiting the number and size of lots as well as the density of development to recognize the potential for cumulative impacts on drinking water quality;
- setting out separation distances between new development and watercourses to provide protection from run-off;
- establishing measures to reduce erosion, sedimentation, run-off and vegetation removal associated with development.

Halifax Water manages nine surface water supply areas (watersheds) and two groundwater supply areas (wellheads). Halifax Water develops Source Water Protection Plans for each area. The Source Water Protection Areas (Map 6) consist of the areas indicated on Table 6.1:

Table 6.1: Potable Drinking Water Supply Areas

Surface Water Supply Areas	
Provincially Designated Water Supply Areas (protected through provincial legislation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bennery Lake • Lake Major • Pockwock
Non-designated potable drinking water supply areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collins Park • Middle Musquodoboit • Bomont
Water supply area for East Hants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grand Lake (“Near Zone”)
Emergency Supply Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lake Lemont • Chain Lakes
Future Water Supply Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tomahawk Lake
Wellhead Potable Drinking Water Supply Areas (surface and subsurface area surrounding a water well)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five Island Wellhead • Silver Sands Wellhead

Land use activities within Provincially designated water supply areas are currently regulated under existing land use by-laws leading to a wide variation in the range of permitted land uses within each community. The Municipality will continue to allow for a variety of land uses provided that these uses do not threaten the municipal water supply and a consistent policy and regulatory approach is achieved throughout each watershed. Although Lake Thomas and Grand Lake are not designated water supply areas for the municipality, Lake Thomas is upstream from two small system water treatments in which Halifax Water responds to spills, and, Grand Lake is a water supply area for the Municipality of East Hants. Halifax Regional Municipality recognizes the importance of Grand Lake to the residents of the Municipality of East Hants and will comply with the Provincial Statement of Interest in Drinking Water to support the long-term sustainability of Grand Lake by creating regulations that protect the watershed from contaminants which may jeopardize the health of residents in the neighbouring municipality. Consideration will need to be given to adopting municipal measures to protect these water supplies as well as future water supplies.

EN-18 The Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-law, establish a Protected Water Supply Zone which:

- a) shall be applied to all publicly owned lands which serve as a water supply watershed, including emergency water supply watersheds and well head protection areas;
- b) may be applied to lands within these watersheds deemed necessary to protect the public water supply;
- c) shall permit water distribution and purification facilities, passive parks and trails, conservation related uses, and other uses as provided by applicable secondary municipal planning strategies; and
- d) shall establish a minimum 100 metre riparian buffer around primary water supply sources, including Bennery Lake, Pockwock Lake, and Lake Major, which may be relaxed for privately owned properties adjacent to these lakes through the applicable land use by-law.

EN-19 For any lands within a watershed or ground water supply area where a public water supply system has been established or is proposed, the Municipality shall consider amendments to secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws to:

- a) protect the water supply;
- b) apply a consistent regulatory approach within each watershed; or
- c) conform with any Statement of Provincial Interest Regarding Drinking Water.

6.5.3 STORMWATER AND FLOODING

With the increased intensity and frequency of storm events linked to climate change, extreme rainfall events are becoming more prominent. Climate change projections indicate an increase in the frequency and intensity of precipitation events, increasing stormwater runoff, inflow and infiltration into stormwater and wastewater systems, erosion, and impacts of water quality due to pollutants in runoff. The increased risk of overland flooding and subsequent impacts to infrastructure, the natural environment, and community safety point to the need for stormwater management, including grey, green and hybrid infrastructure.

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

The Municipality's watersheds are comprised of diverse patterns of development, ecological services and drainage systems that require a systems-based approach to stormwater management that addresses the unique needs of each watershed. Best Management Practices are important to promote managing stormwater at the source by regulating site design features, capturing and treating precipitation where it lands, and using green and hybrid infrastructure to maintain infiltration and improve the quality and quantity

of runoff. Examples of site-specific interventions include retrofits in highly urbanized watersheds to improve water quality and quantity in receiving watercourses, if feasible, as well as support for daylighting of streams and rivers, where doing so would enhance flood resiliency, habitat provision, ecological connectivity, the aesthetics of the area, or further restoration of a heritage resource.

The *Integrated Stormwater Management Policy Framework*, endorsed by Regional Council in 2018, was developed in partnership with Halifax Water. The purpose of the policy framework is to prevent loss of life and property due to major storm events, and foster efficient and effective work management processes, safe and convenient use of streets and other land areas before, during and after storm events, and mitigate the long-term impacts of development on natural systems and downstream properties. To date, this policy framework has been implemented through the adoption of:

- *By-Law G-200 Respecting Grade Alteration and Stormwater Management Associated with Land Development*;
- Administrative Order 2020-010-OP for Halifax Stormwater Management Standards for Development Activities; and
- *By-Law L-400 Respecting Lot Grading*.

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

EN-20 The Municipality shall continue to work toward a comprehensive, holistic, and future-looking stormwater management policy in partnership with Halifax Water.

EN-21 The Municipality shall consider developing requirements for improved stormwater management practices to reduce the impacts of development and infrastructure upgrades on natural systems and downstream properties. Where deemed necessary to implement these requirements, the Municipality shall consider adopting or amending this Plan, the Regional Subdivision By-Law, secondary municipal planning strategies, land use by-laws, other by-laws, or administrative orders.

EN-22 The Municipality may consider operational measures or programming to reduce the quantity and improve the quality of stormwater entering public stormwater facilities and watercourses including, but not limited to public education programs, animal waste control, spill prevention plans, enhanced street sweeping, or reduction in road salts.

EN-23 Green infrastructure such as naturalized stormwater ponds, bioswales, and nature-based solutions shall be considered as an approach to managing stormwater. Where development is considered through an amendment to this Plan or a secondary municipal planning strategy, the Municipality shall consider requiring the use of naturalization and green infrastructure and promote approaches to manage stormwater on private property for multi-unit residential, commercial, and industrial developments.

EN-24 The Municipality shall consider adopting a stormwater management and erosion control by-law with provisions made that may be area specific and may vary by type of development. When considering adoption or amendments to the by-law, the following matters may be considered:

- a) the cost and effectiveness of methods to reduce increased stormwater flows caused by development with consideration given to problems associated with downstream flooding, stream bank erosion, water and groundwater contamination, natural habitat loss, and inflow and infiltration into wastewater systems and climate change projections;
 - b) the potential for maintaining natural vegetation where possible and employing green infrastructure, naturally occurring soils and native plant species in stormwater management plans;
 - c) means to reduce site disturbance and impervious surfaces in new developments;
 - d) methods of reducing sediments, nutrients and contaminants being discharged into watercourses; and
 - e) the recommendations contained in a watershed study undertaken pursuant to Policy EN-17 of this Plan.
- EN-25** The Municipality may consider supporting retrofits to existing stormwater facilities where it has been determined that such retrofits could be expected to mitigate flooding or to improve the quality of stormwater entering watercourses, lakes, and wetlands.
- EN-26** Where public stormwater collection infrastructure must undergo significant repair or replacement, the Municipality may consider supporting funding infrastructure that may enhance the ecological integrity of the watercourse and riverbed. Improvements for daylighting of the watercourse and/or limiting non-natural features within the watercourse itself may be considered in addition to the following considerations:
- a) the feasibility in relation to the surrounding environment, land use and ownership, adequacy of space, drainage and potential flooding issues, safety and other practical or engineering considerations as appropriate;
 - b) the replacement of culverts with bridges or an open bottom culvert rather than straight pipe is preferred where appropriate;
 - c) the potential for legal and liability issues arising; and
 - d) the costs and the availability of funding.
- EN-27** In the event that the Province of Nova Scotia considers imposing standards on the quality of stormwater entering watercourses, the Municipality shall participate in consultations and shall consider amending applicable by-laws or administrative orders to be consistent with or complement standards adopted by the Province of Nova Scotia.
- EN-28** The Municipality shall support efforts by Halifax Water to create a rate structure for stormwater management services that provides incentives for the retention of on-site stormwater and may consider any amendments to by-laws, administrative orders or planning documents which would assist in facilitating these efforts.

6.5.4 FLOODPLAINS

Land adjacent to rivers and streams which are subject to flooding (floodplains) are unsuitable for development. Development or alteration of a floodplain can restrict normal water drainage patterns and cause significant damage to property and infrastructure and risk to life. Limiting development on these lands reduces the need for costly flood control infrastructure such as channels, reservoirs and dykes, and protects the public from property damage and loss of life. The Province of Nova Scotia's Statement of Provincial Interest Regarding Flood Risk Areas mandates that planning documents implement controls on development within floodplains "to protect public safety and property and to reduce the requirement for flood control works and flood damage restoration in floodplains." This Statement points to floodplains that were identified under the Canada-Nova Scotia Flood Damage Reduction Program in the 1980s as areas of particular concern. It also enables the application development controls to additional floodplain areas that are identified through further investigation.

Recent studies of the Sackville and Little Sackville Rivers Floodplains (2017) and Shubenacadie River Floodplains (2020) have provided direction for updating floodplain regulations in community plans and land use by-laws for those river systems. Future studies of other municipal watersheds may be undertaken to allow for similar regulation updates in other areas. Region-wide flood mapping exercises, completed in 2024, will provide guidance for future interventions in areas at risk to flooding.

EN-29 The Municipality shall seek to identify locations of floodplains or flood risk areas, through detailed modelling of watersheds throughout the municipality.

EN-30 Where the Municipality has identified the location of floodplains or flood risk areas, secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws shall be amended to:

- a) be reasonably consistent with the Statement of Provincial Interest Regarding Flood Risk Areas;**
- b) prohibit or regulate development on land subject to flooding or subsidence; and**
- c) prohibit or limit the placement of fill or alteration of grades in association with development in the floodway and floodway fringe areas.**

EN-31 The Municipality shall work to mitigate identified current and future flood risks and reduce flooding through measures including, but not limited to:

- a) adopting or amending planning documents to prohibit or regulate development on land subject to flooding or subsidence;**
- b) establishing flood resilient design standards for new development;**
- c) directing interventions such as changes to stormwater infrastructure in major overland flood routes in historically flood-prone areas.**

6.5.5 LAKE MONITORING

Lakes are an important component of any watershed, and can reflect the overall health of the surrounding watershed. Water quality monitoring is a shared responsibility between all orders of government and is an

essential component to successfully manage water resources. The Municipality has a critical role to play in water quality, as it is the level of government that is closest to residents with responsibilities for planning, parks and recreation, community enjoyment and resident well-being. Water quality monitoring was recommended by the Municipality's Water Resource Management Study in 2003 and water quality monitoring has occurred sporadically over the years since. In 2020, a report titled Water Quality Monitoring Policy and Program Development (AECOM) recommended and identified opportunities for the Municipality to further protect and monitor water resources. The Municipality subsequently adopted a water quality monitoring program in the spring of 2022, known as LakeWatchers, which takes a Municipal staff-led approach with community volunteer support. To date, 77 lake basins have been selected for monitoring through this community-based water quality monitoring program.

EN-32 The Municipality shall prepare an approach to water quality monitoring to provide guidance for water quality monitoring plans accepted by the Municipality under policies of this Plan and any other monitoring programs to be undertaken for the Municipality by landowners.

EN-33 For lakes selected for water quality monitoring, the Municipality shall continue to implement a comprehensive water quality monitoring program to provide guidance for water quality monitoring plans and protocols, and inform future land use policy. This program shall:

- a) use an adaptive management approach, and based on the data collected, the Municipality may adjust the water quality monitoring program;**
- b) be used to inform priority areas for the adoption of nature-based solutions for stormwater management; and**
- c) be used to recommend other interventions to improve lake water quality.**

6.5.6 WATERCOURSES AND WETLANDS

Watercourses and wetlands are vital components of the hydrological cycle and affect the quality and quantity of water and groundwater.

Wetlands are natural filters for removing sediment, contaminants and excessive nutrients which are drawn up by the vegetation and settle out naturally before entering watercourses or groundwater. They absorb and help regulate peak stormwater flows, reducing the risk of flooding and erosion downstream while offsetting groundwater extraction to reduce the risk of wells running dry. Wetlands also provide a range of ecosystem services including wildlife habitat, opportunities for research and recreation, improved water quality, sediment filtration, water balance regulation, and carbon storage and sequestration. Moreover, while enhancing the overall aesthetics of a community, wetlands are unsuitable for development as they pose a hazard for the stability of structures.

Riparian areas along the edges of lakes and waterways have multiple functions. Vegetation can stabilize banks, prevent erosion, slow and filter stormwater, provide habitats and contribute to continuous, interconnected wildlife corridors. These functions may be compromised if riparian areas are narrowed, degraded or destroyed. Retaining buffers is important for the protection of water quality, wildlife and the protection of property and the public from flood hazards. In addition to the functions of flood regulation, the deep-rooted, native plants in buffers protect shorelines by reducing bank erosion and bank failure, reduce the impacts of sedimentation, erosion and nutrient loading, regulate the temperature of water bodies,

provide important wildlife habitat, reduce the loss of valuable lands and add aesthetic value to the Municipality.

A general riparian buffer of 30 metres will be applied to watercourses, wetlands contiguous to watercourses and Wetlands of Special Significance for protection for the whole of the Municipality. At the discretion of Council, there may be relaxation of these buffers to ensure there is not a loss of all reasonable uses and recognize existing property rights, either through the applicable land use by-laws or by development agreement. Where existing community plans have more restrictive buffers, these regulations will remain in place. The development of water lots that have been infilled may result in undesirable impacts on the marine environment and the aesthetic character of the surrounding environment, and therefore development on these lots will be discouraged through the community planning process.

Protecting wetlands is a shared responsibility. The Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Climate Change regulates watercourse and wetland alterations while the Municipality regulates development adjacent to wetlands and can discourage wetland alterations through land use planning tools. It is the intent of this Plan to discourage the development of wetlands and develop an approach to offer incentives for the protection of wetlands. Recognizing that the Municipality does not have the jurisdiction over the issuance of permits to alter wetlands, it is the intent of this Plan to limit development within wetlands and to seek incentive approaches and partnership with other levels of government and non-governmental agencies for the protection of wetlands.

EN-34 The Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-law, require the retention of a minimum 30-metre wide riparian buffer along all inland watercourses to protect the chemical, physical and biological functions of freshwater resources. Where a wetland's vegetation, hydric soils, and hydrology share a boundary with a watercourse, the buffer shall be from the edge of a wetland. The land use by-laws shall include provisions regarding alteration of land levels and vegetation disturbance in relation to development within a buffer. To ensure there is not a loss of all reasonable uses, Council may consider permitting development where it can be demonstrated that a property cannot be reasonably developed in complying with the buffer requirement.

EN-35 Further to Policy EN-34, provisions may be made to permit certain features within the buffer on both public and private lands including marine dependent uses, fisheries uses, conservation uses, fences, wharfs, boat ramps, historic sites, historic monuments, driveway crossings, boardwalks, walkways, and trails of a limited width and the placement of one accessory structure or one attached deck not exceeding a footprint of 20 m² or a combination of an accessory structure and attached deck no exceeding a footprint of 20 m². In addition, provisions may be made to permit certain features within the buffer on public lands including wastewater, storm and water infrastructure, and public water control structures, parks, public roads, and active transportation crossings.

EN-36 Further to Policy EN-35, a special area may be established through the Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-Law to permit, by development agreement, limited recreational uses and commercial uses within a watercourse buffer adjacent to a non-coastal watercourse where the watercourse buffer has been altered prior to August 26, 2006. Any development within the special area shall be developed in an environmentally sensitive manner.

- EN-37** Further to Policy EN-34, the Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-law, relax the watercourse buffer requirement for lots in existence on August 26, 2006, where otherwise development would be prohibited.
- EN-38** Further to Policy EN-34, the Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-law, relax the watercourse buffer requirement:
- a) for lots approved as a result of a completed tentative or final subdivision application on file after August 26, 2006 and before *[effective date]*, to no less than as shown on an approved plan of subdivision; and
 - b) for lots approved on a tentative or final subdivision application approved pursuant to a completed concept subdivision application which was on file prior to *[effective date]*, to no less than as shown on the approved concept plan.
- EN-39** On all applications for development permit approval, the applicable land use by-law shall require the applicant to verify the existence and extent of any wetland. The applicable land use by-law shall prohibit development within any wetland. Where a Wetland Alteration approval permit has been granted and the land is no longer considered to be a wetland by Nova Scotia Environment, development shall be permitted.
- EN-40** Wetlands designated as Wetlands of Special Significance by the Province of Nova Scotia shall have a minimum 30-metre wide riparian buffer along the edges of the wetland which will be implemented through the applicable land use by-laws. To ensure there is not a loss of all reasonable uses, Council may consider permitting development where it can be demonstrated that a property cannot be reasonably developed in complying with the buffer requirement. The buffer shall not apply to Wetlands of Special Significance where a Wetland Alteration approval permit has been granted and the land is no longer considered to be a wetland by Nova Scotia Environment.
- EN-41** Further to Policy EN-40, the Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-law, relax the buffer for Wetlands of Special Significance, where otherwise development would be prohibited. The buffer shall not apply to Wetlands of Special Significance where a Wetland Alteration approval permit has been granted and the wetland is no longer considered a wetland by Nova Scotia Environment.
- EN-42** Further to Policy EN-40, provisions may be made to permit certain features within the buffer on both public and private lands including marine dependent uses, fisheries uses, conservation uses, fences, wharfs, boat ramps, driveway crossings, boardwalks, walkways, and trails of a limited width and the placement of one accessory structure or one attached deck not exceeding a footprint of 20m² or a combination of an accessory structure and attached deck not exceeding a footprint of 20m². In addition, provisions may be made to permit certain features within the buffer on public lands including wastewater, storm and water infrastructure, historic sites, historic monuments, and public water control structures parks, public roads, and active transportation crossings.
- EN-43** (1) Where the requirements for buffers for inland watercourses and wetlands prohibits development of the main use on a property, alternative approaches to the application of the buffer or a reduced buffer may be considered by development agreement, if a report by a

water resources engineer or similar qualified professional is provided that identifies and recommends:

- a) measures to minimize or remediate the impacts of any loss of existing vegetation or pervious surfaces;
- b) measures that will be used to maintain water quality and limit downstream impacts of the development; and
- c) stormwater management approaches or controls to manage stormwater, sedimentation or erosion on the site of the development.

(2) In considering a development agreement under Policy EN-43(1), the Municipality shall consider the following:

- a) whether the proposed development agreement includes provisions to mitigate the impacts of development on the watercourse or wetland and its associated riparian area during and after construction. Measures to be considered include:
 - i. directing development away from lands that:
 - a. are subject to flooding or subsidence;
 - b. have steep slopes;
 - c. are low-lying, marshy or unstable;
 - d. are otherwise hazardous for development because of their soil conditions, geological conditions, undermining or topography; and
 - e. are located in an area where development is prohibited by a statement of Provincial interest or by an enactment of the Province;
 - ii. retaining or planting trees and vegetation for the purposes of sedimentation and erosion control;
 - iii. site design that manages stormwater flows in a way that mimics natural processes, such as the use of green infrastructure;
 - iv. limiting commercial or industrial uses within the buffer that involve the storage, manufacturing, or distribution of hazardous materials; and
 - v. limiting the placement of off-site fill; and
- b) the provisions of IM-9.

EN-44 The Municipality may identify wetlands to be recommended to the Province as a Wetland of Special Significance, including wetlands within all municipal potable drinking water supply watersheds. In doing so, the Municipality shall consider the Provincial criteria for wetlands with exceptional qualities, as may be amended from time to time.

EN-45 The Municipality may cooperate with the Province of Nova Scotia to develop an approach to protecting wetland areas. The Municipality shall consider wetland protection strategies such as:

- a) enabling the creation of additional lots or dwelling units where the design of a development, or the transfer of density proactively protects wetlands;**
- b) identifying, prioritizing, and making recommendations to the Province of Nova Scotia for candidate wetlands to be restored, enhanced, created, or expanded by compensation.**

EN-46 The Municipality shall consider, through secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws, measures to regulate development of water lots, including limiting development and establishing setbacks of buildings and structures from the water.

6.5.7 COASTAL PROTECTION

The municipality has an extensive coastal shoreline along the Atlantic Ocean. The inter-tidal zone and coastal habitats such as marshlands offer valuable ecological services and provide habitat to species at risk. Protecting, restoring, and maintaining coastal habitat not only protects ecological services, but can mitigate impacts of flooding and storm surge on human safety and property. The coastline also offers aesthetic appeal and picturesque views.

Sea level has slowly risen along the Atlantic Coast due to a combination of coastal subsidence and the accelerating impacts of climate change. Additionally, the frequency and intensity of extreme storm events are expected to increase, heightening the risks associated with storm surges and coastal flooding. These changes pose significant threats to coastal infrastructure, natural ecosystems, utilities, properties, and local economies. In permitting development in coastal environments, the Municipality must recognize the potential impacts that coastal inundation and storm surge events could have on human safety and prioritize proactive adaptation strategies to build resilience against these evolving coastal hazards.

Coastal areas of the municipality are experiencing the impact of climate hazards which will continue over time. Using a precautionary approach, a general horizontal coastal buffer of 30 metres and a vertical elevation of 3.2 metres will be applied to coastal areas. There will be relaxation of these buffers to ensure there is not a loss of all reasonable uses and recognize existing property rights, either through applicable land use by-laws or by development agreement. Where existing community plans have more restrictive buffers, these regulations will remain in place. Development on islands will be regulated by development agreement to allow for sufficient consideration of climate hazards associated with these unique coastal environments. The development of water lots that have been infilled may result in undesirable impacts on the marine environment and the aesthetic character of the surrounding environment, and therefore development on these lots will be discouraged through the community planning process.

It is anticipated that further changes to required buffer and elevations in coastal areas will be brought forward using an updated system of measurement or methodology to be considered by the Municipality or a higher level of legislation is adopted to provide a reasonable level of safety. This will be guided by a spatially-based risk and vulnerability analysis, and in the future this may result in different coastal buffer and elevation requirements depending on the relative risks associated with different locations.

- EN-47** The Municipality shall consider through the applicable land use by-laws, requiring the retention of a minimum 30-metre wide buffer along all coastal areas to protect the chemical, physical and biological functions of marine resources, and mitigate risk related to coastal hazards such as coastal erosion, coastal flooding and sea level rise. Where a wetland's vegetation, hydric soils, and hydrology share a boundary with a coastal area, the buffer shall be from the edge of a wetland. The applicable land use by-laws may include provisions regarding alteration of land levels and vegetation disturbance in relation to development within the buffer. To ensure there is not a loss of all reasonable uses, Council may consider permitting development where it can be demonstrated that a property cannot be reasonably developed by complying with the buffer requirement. Lands within the Halifax Harbour Sub-Designation on the Regional Land Use Structure Map (Map 1) and industrial lands within the port of Sheet Harbour shall be exempted from the buffer requirement.
- EN-48** Further to Policy EN-47, provisions may be made to permit certain features within the buffer on both public and private lands including marine dependent uses, fisheries uses, conservation uses, fences, wharfs, boat ramps, driveway crossings, boardwalks, walkways, and trails of a limited width and the placement of one accessory structure or one attached deck not exceeding a footprint of 20 m² or a combination of an accessory structure and attached deck no exceeding a footprint of 20 m². In addition, provisions may be made to permit certain features within the buffer on public lands including wastewater, storm and water infrastructure, historic sites, historic monuments, and public water control structures parks, public roads, and active transportation crossings.
- EN-49** Further to Policy EN-47, the Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-law, relax the coastal buffer requirement for lots in existence on August 26, 2006, where otherwise development would be prohibited.
- EN-50** Further to Policy EN-47, the Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-law, relax the coastal buffer requirement:
- a) for lots approved as a result of a completed tentative or final subdivision application on file after August 26, 2006 and before *[effective date]*, to no less than as shown on an approved plan of subdivision; and
 - b) for lots approved on a tentative or final subdivision application approved pursuant to a completed concept subdivision application which was on file prior to *[effective date]*, to no less than as shown on the approved concept plan.
- EN-51** Further to Policy EN-47, the Municipality shall, through the Eastern Passage/Cow Bay Land Use By-Law, relax the buffer requirement for Cow Bay Lake for lots created or approved after August 26, 2006 and before August 12, 2022.
- EN-52** Where a lot abuts the coast of the Atlantic Ocean, including its inlets, bays, and harbours, the Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-law, prohibit residential, commercial and institutional main buildings and backyard suite uses to be built at an elevation less than 3.2 metres above the Canadian Geodetic Vertical Datum 2013 (CGVD2013) standard. Provisions shall be made within applicable land use by-laws to permit accessory uses, marine dependent and fishery uses within the 3.2-metre elevation. Provisions shall be made to include floodproofing measures to meet the coastal elevation.

To ensure there is not a loss of all reasonable uses, Council may consider relaxing this requirement for residential, commercial, or institutional uses where a report by a qualified Professional Engineer identifies alternative measures to mitigate environmental and safety risks.

EN-53 (1) For development on islands, or where it can be demonstrated that the requirements for buffers for properties along the coast of the Atlantic Ocean prohibits development of the main use on a property, alternative approaches to the application of the buffer or a reduced buffer may be considered by development agreement, if:

a) for development on islands or along the coast, a report by a professional engineer with an Infrastructure Resilience Professional designation is provided, identifying measures that will be used to mitigate risks of flood damage and public safety on the development site, including confirmation that the proposed development does not increase the risk or hazard for surrounding buildings, adjacent uses, adjacent coastlines or egress routes;

b) for islands:

i. where parking, access or other supporting infrastructure is to be located on privately owned lands not subject to the agreement, the required easements have been obtained from the property owners in favour of the lot to be developed and the supporting infrastructure is permitted by the applicable land use by-law on the lands on which it will be located; and

ii. the density of residential units on the site does not exceed 1 unit per 1.5 hectares. If the area of the island is less than 1.5 hectares, the density of residential units is limited to 1 residential unit.

(2) In considering a development agreement under Policy EN-53(1), the Municipality shall consider:

a) whether the proposed development agreement includes provisions to mitigate the impacts of development on the coastal area during and after construction. Measures to be considered include:

i. directing development away from lands that:

a. are subject to flooding or subsidence;

b. have steep slopes;

c. are low-lying, marshy or unstable;

d. are otherwise hazardous for development because of their soil conditions, geological conditions, undermining or topography; and

e. are located in an area where development is prohibited by a statement of Provincial interest or by an enactment of the Province;

- ii. retaining or planting trees and vegetation for the purposes of sedimentation and erosion control, where appropriate;
- iii. site design that manages stormwater flows in a way that mimics natural processes, such as the use of green infrastructure;
- iv. limiting coastal armouring such as retaining walls or armour stone;
- v. limiting commercial or industrial uses within the buffer that involve the storage, manufacturing, or distribution of hazardous materials; and

b) the provisions of IM-9.

EN-54 To support long-term safety, the Municipality shall endeavor to further define coastal buffers and elevations for development that consider coastal erosion, sea level rise, wave runup, climate change, and where necessary, shall consider amending this Plan, applicable secondary municipal planning strategies and land-use by-laws. Amendments shall be considered where an updated system of measurement or methodology is identified by the Municipality to provide a reasonable level of safety, or to conform with legislation, regulations, guidelines, or statements of interest adopted by the Province of Nova Scotia.

EN-55 The Municipality shall consider undertaking a spatially-based risk and vulnerability analysis of the Municipality's coastal waterfront and shoreline area and may consider adopting a coastal-specific adaptation policy using a PARAEBA (Protect, Accommodate, Retreat, Avoid or Ecosystem Based Adaptation) Framework or other suitable framework for climate change adaptation planning to plan for hazards and increase resilience to those hazards.

EN-56 The Municipality may consider developing strategies for sustainable coastal management along its coasts which consider long term climate impacts, ecosystem health, public risk and vulnerability assessments, adaptation strategies and cost-benefit analysis of adaptation approaches.

EN-57 Where lands have been determined by a risk and vulnerability analysis to be vulnerable to hazards such as storm surge and coastal erosion, the Municipality may consider amendments to secondary municipal planning strategies and land use bylaws to address those risks and vulnerabilities through appropriate development regulations.

EN-58 When considering projects on municipally owned land, the Municipality may:

- a) consider opportunities to maintain, protect or restore natural coastal ecosystems;
- b) encourage the use of nature-based or hybrid infrastructure on coastlines; and
- c) minimize the use of hard infrastructure on coastlines such as armour stone and seawalls and prioritize restorative approaches to coastline stabilization through tools such as best management practices, public education, and guidelines.

6.6 PROTECTING CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Critical infrastructure refers to processes, systems, facilities, technologies, networks, assets and services essential to the health, safety, security or economic well-being of residents and the effective functioning of government. Critical infrastructure can be stand-alone or interconnected and interdependent within and across provinces, territories, and national borders. Disruptions of critical infrastructure could result in catastrophic loss of life, adverse economic effects, and significant harm to public confidence.

The Municipality's critical infrastructure includes a complex network of systems of energy, telecommunications, transportation, water supply, wastewater treatment, solid waste management, and buildings and food systems that are critical to support economic prosperity and social well-being. In the near and long term, critical infrastructure needs to withstand increasingly extreme storms, changing temperatures, and other climate impacts. It will be important for new development to be built to withstand the impacts of the changing climate. To reduce future impacts, the resilience of new construction and existing critical infrastructure must be improved.

EN-59 The Municipality shall regularly update municipal LiDAR data, digital elevation models and vulnerability mapping, and may adopt policy to require consideration of emergency management services and current and future climate change hazard projections as part of reviews of planning documents.

EN-60 The Municipality shall seek to identify current and future climate change hazards and critical infrastructure at risk to climate hazards and may adopt policy to prioritize resiliency measures that will help reduce risk, protect critical infrastructure, and increase the resilience of infrastructure.

EN-61 To support climate resilient design, the Municipality may:

- a) retrofit and construct municipal facilities with climate resilient building and site designs;**
- b) develop, promote, and incentivize climate resilient building and site design practices, including FireSmart or other wildfire protection measures;**
- c) request the Province to prescribe additional standards for resilient new construction that exceed existing building codes.**

EN-62 The Municipality may support retrofits to existing municipal infrastructure where it has been determined that such retrofits could be expected to mitigate impacts of current and future climate hazards on assets, systems, or communities, with consideration given to:

- a) feasibility in relation to the surrounding environment, land use and ownership, adequacy of space, safety and other practical or engineering considerations as appropriate;**
- b) the potential for legal and liability issues arising; and**
- c) costs and the availability of funding.**

6.7 TRANSITIONING TO A LOW CARBON FUTURE

6.7.1 RENEWABLE ENERGY

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

District Energy Systems supply thermal energy or electricity to multiple buildings via a central plant or several interconnected plants. They can be an efficient method of using waste energy to heat or cool surrounding buildings. Microgrids are small-scale, self-sufficient energy systems, which may or may not be connected to the larger ("macro") electricity transmission network. They can be the key to emissions reductions, resilience, and energy storage. There are also opportunities for solar energy generation, which can be supported by permitting solar energy operations as a land use in appropriate locations.

EN-63 The Municipality may work with provincial regulators and consult with renewable energy suppliers regarding ways to increase access to a comprehensive renewable energy distribution system across the region.

EN-64 The Municipality shall encourage the use of alternative energy systems, such as district energy and microgrids, as part of the Community Planning programs and comprehensive planning projects.

EN-65 To support renewable energy sources and reduced reliance on fossil fuels in the development of different sites, the Municipality may:

- a) through applicable land use by-laws, permit district energy facilities in areas of high growth and density;
- b) encourage new development located within an area served by a district energy system to connect to such a system;
- c) identify opportunities to capture and redistribute waste energy, and encourage combined heat and power systems; and
- d) consider amendments to this Plan, including incentive or bonus zoning policies, to support renewable energy technologies in buildings that are designed to meet or exceed net zero energy standards.

EN-66 The Municipality may, through applicable land-use by-laws, permit commercial solar energy facilities in the Rural Commuter Designation, the Rural Resource Designation, and the Agricultural Designation in mixed use, resource or mixed resource, commercial, and industrial zones in accordance with applicable legislation, regulations, guidelines, or statements of interest adopted by the Provincial or Federal government. Where Federal and Provincial regulations have been amended, the Municipality may also amend municipal land use by-law regulations to remain consistent with these changes. The land use by-laws may require fencing, landscaping and outdoor lighting for commercial solar energy facilities.

- EN-67** Where technological advances have been made in solar installations, commercial solar energy facilities, and energy storage systems, the Municipality may amend land use by-law regulations to remove barriers for these uses.
- EN-68** Commercial Solar Energy Facilities, community solar projects, and developments proposing solar installations not permitted by a land use by-law as-of-right may be considered by development agreement, except where located in a zone intended to protect a floodplain. In considering a development agreement, the Municipality shall consider:
- a) whether the site is designed and developed in an environmentally sensitive manner to mitigate potential impacts on water and soil quality, including any leaching, runoff or drainage;
 - b) whether to vary the built form and land use requirements for Commercial Solar Energy Facilities as established in the Land Use By-Law for Beaver Bank, Hammonds Plains and Upper Sackville; and
 - c) Policy IM-9.
- EN-69** Subject to any urban design requirements as outlined in applicable land use bylaws, land use by-laws shall allow rooftop solar collectors to protrude above the maximum permitted height for main buildings to reduce potential barriers to on-site renewable energy production.
- EN-70** Where parking is provided for a development, the Municipality may, through applicable land use by-laws, require a set number of those vehicle parking stalls to contain the electrical components necessary for electric vehicle charging.

6.7.2 WIND ENERGY

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

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

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

- EN-71** Within all Regional Plan Designations, the Municipality shall establish three overlay zones including an Urban Wind (UW-1) Zone, a Rural Wind (RW-2) Zone and a Restricted (R) Zone within the Land Use By-Law to regulate wind energy facilities. These regulations will be implemented through the community land use by-laws. The Urban Wind (UW-1) Zone and the Rural Wind (RW-2) Zone shall be applied to those areas where various categories of wind energy facilities shall be permitted in urban and rural areas. The Restricted (R) Wind Zone shall be applied to those areas where wind energy facilities shall be prohibited including Regional Parks, Conservation Areas, Protected Areas, the Western Commons, and areas within densely developed areas not suitable for wind energy facilities.
- EN-72** The Municipality shall establish requirements within the applicable Land Use By-Laws that include regulations to control height, scale, access, setback, and separation distances of such facilities in order to adequately address operational needs, safety concerns and the mitigation of impacts to adjacent properties.
- EN-73** The Municipality seeks to encourage the development of large-scale wind energy facilities in rural areas by permitting the expansion of wind farms in suitable locations. Accordingly, where a large-scale wind turbine is proposed to connect to a wind energy facility on an adjacent lot, the setback requirement from the property boundary may be waived where the adjoining property forms part of the same wind farm.
- EN-74** The Municipality shall seek to ensure that Federal and Provincial processes comply with municipal requirements for large scale wind energy facility development. Where Federal and Provincial regulations have been amended, the Municipality may amend municipal land use by-law regulations to remain consistent with these changes.
- EN-75** The Municipality shall seek to recognize advances in wind energy technology and wind energy standards and may amend this Plan, secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws to reflect these changes.

CHAPTER 7: PROVIDING OPTIONS FOR MOBILITY

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7.1 INTRODUCTION

Our communities are shaped by where we locate the things we need to live our lives – homes, jobs, schools, shops, parks, and services – and how we are able to move between them. Providing safe, accessible, attractive, and convenient mobility options to move within and between our communities is an essential piece of creating healthy and complete communities where we can live, work, learn, shop, and play.

The municipality is geographically diverse, with a variety of settlement patterns including compact, walkable, transit-oriented neighbourhoods, communities built around arterial roads with limited connectivity and density, larger service-centre rural villages, remote residential communities, and natural resource-based lands. Transportation and land use planning are inseparable, and the decision-making process for both must be integrated. This Plan supports safe, sustainable, and accessible travel options to move conveniently throughout the region. An effective regional transportation system links people and communities with each other and with goods, services, and employment in an environmentally and fiscally sustainable way.

In December 2017, Council authorized the direction contained in the *Integrated Mobility Plan* (IMP) as a framework for amending the Regional Plan and developing new planning documents. The IMP upholds a vision for mobility that also guides this Plan: “Residents will have a choice of connected, healthy, affordable, sustainable travel options for moving both people and goods, through integrated transportation and land-use planning.” Implementation of the IMP is also vital to the success of *HalifACT*, which calls for decarbonizing our transportation systems by expanding transit and active transportation infrastructure and supporting a shift to electric vehicles.

7.2 OBJECTIVES

- 1. Support mobility choices in urban and rural communities for those of all ages and abilities, backgrounds, and income levels.**
- 2. Create and maintain complete and safe networks for walking/rolling, cycling, transit, goods movement, and driving.**
- 3. Build complete streets to improve mobility and connectivity, reduce emissions and protect the natural environment, and support the local economy.**
- 4. Target that at least 35% of trips to work are by walking/rolling, cycling, and transit by 2031, and develop long-term mode-share targets for the municipality as it grows towards a population of 1,000,000 people.**
- 5. Develop reliable data sources and methods to understand travel habits and preferences, and to monitor and manage transportation demand.**

6. Collaborate and partner with other orders of government, agencies, and service providers on regional mobility and goods movement initiatives.

7.3 PILLARS AND PRINCIPLES

As adopted in 2017, the IMP is guided by four pillars: A transportation system that is Connected, Healthy, Affordable, and Sustainable. It is also guided by four principles: Complete Communities, Move People, Manage Congestion, and Integrate Solutions. In this Plan, an additional pillar of Equity is added. This pillar recognizes that there are diverse needs and vulnerabilities for historically underserved groups and communities, and that specific initiatives or considerations may be required to better serve all people in the municipality. The pillars and principles to guide the Municipality's mobility network, as adapted from the IMP, are summarized in Table 7.1.

Population growth and our settlement pattern, a need to act on climate change, along with trends in new technology may fundamentally change how and why we move around. When responding to these changes, it remains the intent of this Plan to promote safe, connected, and accessible complete networks in alignment with the pillars and principles. This includes the continued prioritization of walking/rolling, cycling, transit, and goods movement as fundamental to creating healthy, equitable, and complete communities.

Table 7.1: Mobility Network Pillars and Principles

Pillars	Principles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A CONNECTED mobility system links people of all ages and abilities with important goods, services, and opportunities. A HEALTHY transportation system supports comfortable, convenient, and safe opportunities for active living. An AFFORDABLE transportation system offers low-cost mobility for citizens and value for money for taxpayers. A SUSTAINABLE transportation system protects air, land, and water, minimizes greenhouse gas emissions, adapts to climate change, meets the needs of all people, and uses financial resources wisely. An EQUITABLE transportation system recognizes the diverse needs and vulnerabilities of all people, including low-income residents, historically underserved communities, people with disabilities, and new immigrants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COMPLETE COMMUNITIES provide a place for residents to live, work, shop, learn and play without depending on a private vehicle. MOVE PEOPLE: By focusing on the number of people (and the volume of goods) using a transportation corridor, rather than the number of vehicles, transportation professionals can more easily recognize more efficient, affordable, and environmentally responsible options, such as walking/rolling, cycling, and taking transit. MANAGE CONGESTION: Managing congestion, instead of trying to eliminate it, encourages people to choose other modes or times to travel. INTEGRATE SOLUTIONS: Taken together, policies for high-quality public transit, walking/rolling and cycling facilities and land use planning can reinforce each other to help shift trips from solo driving to more sustainable modes. Solutions must be evaluated and implemented as a suite.

- M-1** When preparing business plans and programs, the Municipality shall consider the *Integrated Mobility Plan* and the pillars and principles contained in Table 7.1.

7.3.1 MOBILITY PLANS, STRATEGIES, AND PROGRAMS

Various plans, strategies, and programs are in place or planned to guide the Municipality's strategic planning and investments for the mobility network. As discussed in Chapter 2, this Plan supports the development of a Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priorities Plan that will inform long-term transportation planning in alignment with other infrastructure investments, along with modelling growth in population and employment.

M-2 When preparing business plans and programs related to mobility, the following plans and strategies may be considered:

- a) *The Integrated Mobility Plan (2017);*
- b) *Rapid Transit Strategy (2020);*
- c) *Halifax Transit Moving Forward Together Plan (2016);*
- d) *Active Transportation Priorities Plan (2019);*
- e) *Road Safety Strategy (2024);*
- f) *Parking Roadmap Implementation Report (2016); and*
- g) *Regional Goods Movement Opportunity Scoping Strategy (2016).*

M-3 When developing and updating the plans and strategies referenced in Policy M-2, the Municipality may consider:

- a) the recommendations of the forthcoming Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priorities Plan;
- b) the direction authorized by Council through the priorities plans and strategies including the *Accessibility Strategy*, *HalifACT*, the *Halifax Green Network Plan*, and the *Urban Forest Master Plan*; and
- c) the policies of this Plan and any specific community design objectives identified through the Community Planning Programs.

7.4 SETTING TARGETS AND MEASURING PROGRESS

A growing population means that more residents will be making trips every day in the municipality. To meet goals for a sustainable future, this Plan and the IMP aim to ensure that as many of these additional trips as possible can be taken by modes other than private vehicles. Transitioning to a network that prioritizes walking/rolling, cycling, and transit will require challenging work and significant investment. In this context, it is important to define targets and measure our progress regarding the transformation of how we move in our region.

7.4.1 SETTING TARGETS

The 2014 Regional Plan contained a target that by 2031, at least 30% of trips will be made by walking/rolling, cycling or transit. This was reflected in the IMP as a 2031 target for 16% of trips by Transit and 14% by active transportation (AT, or walking/rolling and cycling). This Regional Plan updates the mode share targets for 2031 as shown in Table 7.2 to achieve at least 35% of trips walking/rolling, cycling and transit overall in the Municipality. Due to the dispersed settlement pattern in the Rural Area, specific 2031 mode share targets have not been set for areas outside of the Urban Area.

As the Municipality plans for a population of 1 million people in the long-term horizon, it will be increasingly important to accelerate a shift in mode share towards walking/rolling, cycling and transit; reduce car dependency; and manage transportation demand. Table 7.2 includes new targets for the long-term horizon. There were developed to align with the housing targets and transit-supportive density targets outlined Policies RP-26 and RP-30 in Chapter 2.

Table 7.2: Mode Share Targets (Note: totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding)

Geography		Mode	Census Journey to Work			Target	
			2011	2016	2021*	2031	Long-Term (1M People)
Overall Municipality		Auto	77%	78%	84%	<65%	<50%
		Transit	12%	13%	8%	>20%	>30%
		Cycling	11%	10%	1%	>3%	>5%
		Walking / Rolling			8%	>12%	>15%
Urban Area	Regional Centre	Auto	49%	50%	57%	<35%	<20%
		Transit	20%	20%	16%	>25%	>25%
		Cycling	4%	3%	3%	>10%	>15%
		Walking / Rolling	26%	26%	22%	>30%	>40%
	Suburban	Auto	80%	81%	85%	<75%	<45%
		Transit	15%	13%	9%	20%	>25%
		Cycling	0.4%	0.5%	0.3%	>5%	>10%
		Walking / Rolling	4%	5%	4%	>10%	>20%

*Data for the 2021 Census was collected in May of 2021 during periods of major lockdowns and movement restrictions, so is not representative of typical conditions.

M-4 The Municipality shall strive to achieve the 2031 and long-term mode share targets as set out in Table 7.2.

7.4.2 MEASURING PROGRESS

To guide and evaluate investment, it is key to have robust and relevant data that considers all types of trips and all modes of travel. For mode-share targets, the standard source of data has been the Journey to Work

data released every five years by Statistics Canada. This data has been identified to have some weaknesses (i.e., it is only collected every five years, only concerns one type of trip, and does not allow for a variety of responses for day-to-day changes or hybrid work arrangements). While this data on its own leaves a gap in our understanding of travel activity and preferences, the Municipality conducted travel activity surveys in 2018 and 2022 to supplement the information from the census with wider considerations of the types of trips residents make. The Municipality will continue to explore alternative approaches to measuring progress, gathering data, and surveying the public on travel activity and preferences.

M-5 The Municipality shall investigate alternative approaches to surveying the public's travel habits and preferences, assessing overall performance of the mobility system, and progress towards mobility goals and targets.

7.5 COMMUNITY PLANNING AND MOBILITY

The varying geographies of the municipality and their road and settlement patterns necessitate a range of context-sensitive mobility approaches.

7.5.1 URBAN AREA LAND USE AND MOBILITY

To reduce car dependency for residents in the Urban Area, the Municipality must coordinate land use planning with investments in safe and accessible multimodal infrastructure. Having multiple mobility options available will allow residents to participate fully in society without needing access to a private vehicle.

Today, the most density and mix of land uses are located in the Regional Centre. Housing, workplaces, and destinations for daily life are generally close to one another. With a generally tighter grid of streets, there are more complete networks for walking/rolling, cycling and transit routes. Accordingly, the Regional Centre is the area where the highest number of people already walk/roll, cycle, and take transit.

The Suburban Area contains a range of community types. Some are generally mixed use, with well-connected streets, sidewalks, cycling routes and transit service. However, for many suburban communities, residential areas, places of employment, and daily destinations are separated from one another. Safe and convenient walking/rolling, cycling and transit connections may not exist. Accordingly, vehicular travel is the dominant travel mode today. Where an existing street network for driving has large blocks that make walking/rolling and cycling difficult, there may be a need to consider additional mid-block connections. Walkways, trails and the Halifax Harbour Bridges can connect neighbourhoods with additional useful, safe, and direct options. The success of these connections requires special considerations for safety, maintenance, accessibility, and adjacent land uses.

M-6 As part of the Suburban Community Planning program, the Municipality shall consider integrating mobility into secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws by:

- a) promoting a mix of uses in areas well served by transit; and**
- b) building and site design requirements to enhance the experience and convenience for walking/rolling, cycling, and taking transit.**

7.5.2 MOBILITY CHOICES IN THE RURAL AREA

Improving mobility for rural residents focuses on providing attractive transportation options so residents can drive less. This can be achieved by improving the walkability and clustering of services in community main street areas (as discussed in Chapter 3 of this Plan), by integrating trail networks, supporting alternative methods for rural public mobility, including carpooling, ride-sharing, and Park & Ride options.

The standard Halifax Transit model of fixed bus routes and schedules is often not the most convenient or cost-effective model for transit service in rural communities. As an alternative, the Municipality's Rural Transit Funding Program provides grants to not-for-profit community organizations to operate community-based transit services in rural communities. These services can also receive funding and assistance from programs administered by other orders of government.

In 2022, the Municipality established a Rural Active Transportation Program to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety in rural communities. In many areas of the municipality, community groups maintain trail networks that provide important connections. Some of these multi-use pathways are for walking/rolling and cycling only, while others also permit off-highway vehicles and horses. The Municipality continues to collaborate with community groups in maintaining, improving, and expanding these connections.

- M-7 The Municipality may consider programs to encourage and assist rural public mobility by:**
- a) supporting and expanding the municipal Rural Transit Funding program; and**
 - b) collaborating with the Province of Nova Scotia and community groups on rural mobility initiatives.**
- M-8 The Municipality may invest in infrastructure for walking/rolling and cycling that connects communities, consistent with the Rural Active Transportation Program.**
- M-9 The Municipality may collaborate with community groups and the Province of Nova Scotia in maintaining, improving, and expanding regional active transportation and trail networks.**

7.6 COMPLETE STREETS AND NETWORKS

Car-dependent settlement patterns affect the accessibility and affordability of communities, increase carbon emissions and degrade the natural environment, which impacts residents' health and quality of life. For residents to have safe, affordable, and accessible choices in how they travel in the region, the Municipality must plan both individual streets and the broader mobility network in a comprehensive and integrated way. It is the intent of this Plan to reduce car dependency and encourage shifts to low-carbon transportation modes by building *complete streets* and *complete networks* that accommodate a range of mobility options. This does not mean that vehicle travel is not designed for and accommodated rather, cars are one option among several practical and safe options.

7.6.1 COMPLETE STREETS AND STRATEGIC CORRIDORS

Complete streets is a holistic, flexible, and context-sensitive approach to street design and maintenance that is a fundamental component of the IMP. The intent of the complete streets approach is to design a given right-of-way to balance multiple functions. Complete street design considerations include:

- **Streets for people**, prioritizing the safety and accessibility for people walking, rolling, cycling, and using transit;
- **Streets as places**, with commerce, places to sit, waste receptacles, washrooms, protection from the weather, consideration of daylight, events, public art, signage, and pedestrian-friendly building faces or streetwalls; and
- **Streets as ecosystems**, which can include street trees, edible landscaping or vegetation for ecological connectivity, habitat for pollinators and other wildlife, stormwater management, snow storage, and mitigation for extreme weather events.

Community groups and organizations often lead initiatives for street beautification, public art, hosting pedestrian-only events, and creating a sense of safety and security, and maintenance. Complete streets should be context-specific in their design, with consideration for culture, history, heritage, cultural landscapes and scenic views, and landmarks.

Strategic Corridors, as identified on Map 7, are high-value corridors important to creating a multimodal mobility network in the Urban Area. These corridors were initially identified in the Active Transportation Priorities Plan and the IMP and have been refined following the identification of bus rapid transit corridors in the *Rapid Transit Strategy*, and other corridors identified through further analysis. The long-term visions for maintaining and improving these corridors for all users is established through a functional planning and design process.

The functional planning and design process determines how a corridor can be reconfigured to better serve current and future mobility needs. It considers the surrounding communities, current and future transportation demand, and physical constraints such as existing infrastructure, topography and corridor width. Functional plans identify which modes to prioritize on the corridor (like transit, or active transportation), and focus on moving more people sustainably, improving safety, and building complete streets that better connect communities. They consider how features such as transit priority and improved walking, rolling and cycling infrastructure can be included within the street right of way to provide connections within neighbourhoods and to other communities. Which elements are prioritized depends on the role the street plays in the community and broader mobility network.

The Municipality uses functional plans to guide the development of strategic corridors over time. Functional plans can be used for standalone projects or incorporated into planning for roadway repair and reconstruction projects or projects undertaken on the street by utilities or other agencies. Functional plans can also identify lands that the Municipality may need to acquire to accommodate future projects. Transportation Reserves are a planning tool enabled by the *HRM Charter* that allow the Municipality to proactively identify lands that are needed to widen or alter streets or pathways, or to develop new streets or pathways. To support transportation projects, a Transportation Reserve Zone can be identified to acquire lands for new streets or pathways, subject to requirements as set out in the *HRM Charter*. The Municipality will continue to explore opportunities to use other tools or methods to plan for future mobility connections.

M-10 The Municipality shall consider integrating a Complete Streets approach in guiding infrastructure investments and regulatory activities, with consideration for community input.

M-11 The Municipality shall consider opportunities to:

- a) make streets or portions of streets car-free or transit-priority; and

- b) continue to support programs and requests for Open Streets events for pedestrian, cycling, transit, business, and community uses.
- M-12** Through the functional planning and design process, the Municipality shall prioritize improvements to Strategic Corridors as generally shown on Map 7, utilizing a Complete Streets approach that seeks to improve road safety and prioritizes walking/rolling, cycling, and transit where appropriate.
- M-13** Where the Municipality has identified lands that are needed to support the mobility network, the Municipality may, through the applicable secondary municipal planning strategy and land use by-law, identify a Transportation Reserve over the required portions of the corridor to be acquired, subject to the provisions of the *HRM Charter*.
- M-14** The Municipality may review the tools available to plan for future rights-of-way for all modes of transportation, including the approach to transportation reserves.

7.6.2 COMPLETE NETWORKS

Complete networks provide options for moving between destinations via streets, trails, parks, plazas, and the transit system. They enable people of all ages, abilities, backgrounds, and incomes to move safely and efficiently. A complete network is:

- Connected and continuous, convenient and safe for all travel modes;
- Accessible to people with varying needs, abilities, and preferences; and
- Where vulnerable road users can take safe, useful, and enjoyable journeys.

Designing a *complete network* means not just considering individual streets in isolation but understanding how people move across the region using different travel modes, on varying types of streets, trails or other informal connections. Accordingly, a *complete network* requires considering how travellers move between modes: an accessible route to walk or roll from a transit stop to a destination; Park & Ride facilities aligned with the transit network; and effective bicycle or vehicle parking solutions at the end of the trip. Every person taking transit or driving a car starts and ends their trip as pedestrian, making designing for this user type especially important in our transportation network. Some locations can be specifically designed as “mobility hubs” – places where people on multi-modal trips switch modes.

As the Municipality plans for a future population of 1 million people, additional connections between communities will be needed to support the existing and future settlement pattern. It is the intent of this Plan that the Municipality will further consider the need for new transportation routes to improve connectivity and support the housing targets outlined in Policy RP-26 and RP-30 in Chapter 2.

The Municipality is considering options to improve access and egress in rural and suburban communities after the experience with wildfires in the Hammonds Plains and Upper Tantallon areas in 2023. This disaster highlighted the need to plan for emergency evacuation from established and new communities across the municipality. At the time of drafting this Plan, the Municipality is reviewing emergency egress options from existing neighbourhoods across the municipality. This work will also consider establishing standards for adequate emergency egress routes from new developments.

- M-15** To support the growth anticipated by this Plan, the Municipality shall continue to study and identify any additional mobility network connections or changes required for complete and integrated mobility networks at the regional and community level.
- M-16** The Municipality shall consider undertaking a region-wide subdivision egress review study to identify areas that may be vulnerable in emergency or hazardous situations and may develop an implementation strategy based on its findings.

7.6.3 ROAD SAFETY AND ACCESSIBILITY

In 2024, the Municipality adopted a *Road Safety Strategy*, which includes a vision to achieve zero fatalities and serious injuries for all road users in the municipality by 2038. It adopts Vision Zero, an internationally recognized road safety concept asserting that fatalities and serious injuries on roads are preventable through an integrated, multi-disciplinary approach.

A Safe Systems Approach underlies Vision Zero. This approach recognizes that achieving the vision of zero fatalities and serious injuries requires a shared responsibility and culture of road safety among all levels of government, public and private industry, and all types of road users. The Strategy recognizes that the Municipality can taking a leading role in this change. The Strategy serves as a guiding document for approaches and principles to be reflected in Municipal programs and activities. It identifies five priority areas for the Road Safety Program: Intersections; safe speeds, vulnerable road users; safe schools; and data management.

Accessibility is an important consideration in all new road projects, road safety improvements, and mobility initiatives. The Municipal Design Guidelines include Accessibility as a design philosophy, committing to implementing regulations associated with the *Nova Scotia Accessibility Act* (2017). The municipality's *Accessibility Strategy*, within the Diversity & Inclusion Framework, aims to make the municipality accessible by 2030 with 30 actions items, including actions for public transit and transportation infrastructure.

- M-17** The Municipality shall seek to improve road safety and accessibility by:
- a) considering the implementation of the *Road Safety Strategy*, with priority areas including intersections, safe speeds, vulnerable road users, safe schools, and data management; and
 - b) considering the accessibility goals and outcomes identified by the *Accessibility Strategy* in infrastructure and mobility initiatives.

7.7 ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Active transportation (AT) is any form of human-powered mobility including walking, cycling, skateboarding, using a wheelchair, rollerblading, or scootering. It also includes devices used by people with disabilities. These options support affordability, health outcomes, and *HalifACT* objectives to lower transportation-related carbon emissions and improve air quality. The *Active Transportation Priorities Plan* seeks to increase the number of AT trips to work, school, shopping, and services. In 2023, Regional Council endorsed amendments to the *Active Transportation Priorities Plan* to provide criteria to prioritize rural AT projects.

An objective of the IMP is to "encourage walking and bicycling by building complete and connected networks that respond to the needs of urban, suburban and rural communities, for all ages and abilities." Access to activities, such as shopping for healthy food, travelling to work or appointments and socializing, is an important component of wellness. Mobility options provide people of all ages and abilities with the independence to pursue these activities, including those with physical, visual, auditory and mental disabilities. An integrated mobility network, coupled with land-use plans that support the development of compact, complete communities, will allow people to choose how they move. Viable options to walk/roll, ride a bicycle or take transit to reach daily destinations are needed by those who are too young or unable to drive. Improving mobility options will ultimately make the region more equitable.

For walking/rolling and cycling, appropriate paths vary depending on the individual and the context. In terms of street layout, short blocks with frequent intersections offer multiple and more direct routes. To consider a given street as an appropriate part of a complete network, physically separating facilities for walking/rolling, cycling, and driving may be needed, depending on travel volumes and speeds, and other roadway and design factors. Creating and maintaining an All Ages and Abilities (AAA) network for year-round access, particularly in the Urban Area, will allow residents to meet their daily needs while walking, rolling, cycling, and taking transit.

Cycling networks have traditionally been underserved when planning mobility networks and designing or retrofitting streets. Cyclists are vulnerable road users and require specific infrastructure and network planning to provide safe conditions that enable cycling as a choice. The Municipality's 2019 traveller preference survey indicated that 60% of respondents would like to start cycling or cycle more often. Most respondents indicated that a lack of safe cycling infrastructure was the primary reason that they did not cycle more often.

New developments can generate transportation demand on existing streets in the area. In some cases, new development connects to streets built using previous standards without sidewalks or bikeways. There is a need to consider how to build more complete walking/rolling and cycling networks throughout neighbourhoods, and ways to fund these infrastructure investments in existing and new neighbourhoods. Appropriate financial tools such as area rates and infrastructure charges are further discussed in Policies IM-53 and IM-54 in Chapter 10 and will be considered as part of the Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priorities Plan.

Shared micromobility services represent new ways for people to access both active transportation options such as bikes and e-bikes but also electric kick-scooters (e-scooters). They can improve access to cheaper, less polluting mobility options. There are a variety of models for implementing shared micromobility services.

M-18 When considering proposed walking/rolling and cycling projects, or updating the *Active Transportation Priorities Plan* and *Integrated Mobility Plan*, the Municipality shall consider:

- a) connectivity to existing or planned active transportation infrastructure, existing or planned transit infrastructure and routes, the provincial Blue Route, active transportation trails, schools, parks, community facilities, and other key destinations including employment, visitor destinations, services, and mixed use areas;**
- b) an All Ages and Abilities (AAA) walkway and bikeway network within the Urban Area;**
- c) winter access and maintenance;**
- d) road safety;**

- e) wayfinding;
- f) access for traditionally underserved groups and communities; and
- g) options for funding new or expanded infrastructure.

M-19 The Municipality may facilitate implementation of shared micromobility services.

M-20 The Municipality may consider ensuring that construction management plans mandated in the *Construction Site Management Administrative Order* require that developers maintain safe, accessible, and convenient walking/rolling and cycling connections along the frontage of projects under construction.

7.8 TRANSIT

The Urban Transit Service Boundary (UTSB), illustrated on Map 8, outlines a defined area within HRM where conventional public transit (bus and ferry) can operate efficiently with reasonable service spans and frequencies. It also serves as the focus for future transit investments. This Plan intends for conventional public transit services to be provided within the UTSB.

The Halifax Transit *Moving Forward Together Plan* is the most recent five-year service plan, guiding short-term service improvements for the transit network based on four core principles:

- Increasing the Proportion of Resources Allocated Towards High Ridership Services;
- Building a Simplified Transfer Based Network;
- Investing in Service Quality and Reliability; and
- Giving Transit Increased Priority in the Transportation Network.

Transit service in the municipality has historically been challenged by shifts toward dispersed, car-oriented land uses and long commutes. This has included growing employment at business and industrial parks at on the edge of the Urban Area that are challenging to effectively serve with transit. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, transit ridership in the municipality had been rising, but was severely impacted from 2020 to 2022. Ridership levels returned steadily and boardings exceeded pre-pandemic totals by approximately 5% in 2024. This is despite some shifts to working from home and flexible work hours across many industries.

This Plan directs the Municipality to integrate transit service and land use planning and to provide for a denser level of development and mix of uses along routes and in walksheds serviced by rapid transit and frequent transit within the Urban Area. . This will allow for the strategic location of terminals, stations, stops, and facilities connecting to complete networks, enabling safe and convenient access for transit vehicles as well as people walking/rolling, cycling, and driving. This includes bicycle parking, pick-up/drop-off areas, and in some cases Park & Ride lots or structures. Adjacent land uses are a central consideration, with active street frontages (including shops, services, and community facilities) complementing transit as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 of this Plan. Accessibility for persons with disabilities is needed with both regular buses and door-to-door Access-A-Bus service. Efforts continue to ensure that bus stops are accessible and compatible with ramps on buses.

The *Rapid Transit Strategy* proposes Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) lines with frequent all-day two-way service, together with new ferry routes. This Strategy looks to transform transit service to be a preferable alternative to driving, and shift ridership to help achieve the mode share targets of this Plan and climate targets of *HalifACT*. Implementing the *Rapid Transit Strategy* is critical for supporting continued, sustainable growth

in the municipality, and will need support from other orders of government. The proposed Rapid Transit system serves as a framework for developing complete communities within a convenient walking/rolling distance of stops and stations. Locations of future transit facilities and terminals will be strategically located to optimize service and create a transportation mode that is convenient and preferable to current and new users. Transit facilities will be enabled in all zones within the Municipality and will not be subject to zoning requirements.

Reliability of the transit system is fundamental to maintaining and growing ridership. Reliability is increased through investing in transit priority measures, such as transit-only lanes, queue jumps, and advance signal phasing. BRT service will require significant amounts of dedicated space to bypass congestion and provide high quality, reliable service. Provision is also being made along key corridors to enable potential future upgrades conversion from BRT to Light Rail Transit (LRT).

Existing routes outside the UTSB, including Rural and Regional Express routes, can continue to operate, subject to budget approvals and Regional Council approval of transit service plans. Regional Express routes may be modified, which can include increases in service levels where warranted. However, no other increase in service beyond the UTSB is permitted, including new routes, new service areas, or additional service on existing routes. Adjustments to existing routes outside this boundary may be considered in response to changes in road networks, infrastructure, transit demand or ridership levels.

- M-21 The Municipality shall consider directing future investment in conventional public transit (bus and ferry) services within the Urban Transit Service Boundary, as shown on Map 8. It is the intention of Council that the level of service outside this boundary will not be increased, with the exception of regional express service which may be considered outside of the boundary, and modifications to services may be considered that serve to facilitate operational planning. Existing routes and services not contained within this Boundary will continue to exist, and any service reductions will be based upon performance standards approved by the Municipality.**
- M-22 The Municipality shall consider regularly developing and adopting Transit Service Plans to provide guidance for transit service provision and monitor and evaluate their performance.**
- M-23 The Municipality's future transit service plans shall consider the growth and settlement pattern supported by this Plan, the *Integrated Mobility Plan*, *Rapid Transit Strategy*, and the forthcoming Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priorities Plan.**
- M-24 The Municipality shall consider prioritizing implementation of the rapid transit network as identified in the *Rapid Transit Strategy*.**
- M-25 The Municipality shall continue to consider transit priority measures to improve the reliability and travel time of public transit vehicles, especially in support of the rapid transit network.**
- M-26 The Municipality shall permit public transit facilities in all zones, which shall not be subject to zone requirements.**

7.9 GOODS MOVEMENT

The goods movement network encompasses truck routes, industrial areas, curbside areas for deliveries, railways, and connections to airport and port facilities. The municipality is a key multi-modal freight and logistics hub for eastern North America. Collaboration between all orders of government, agencies, and operators is critical to success for goods movement and the integration of goods movement facilities with communities.

The needs for goods movement, such as commercial truck traffic and rail freight, can sometimes be at odds with residential and other sensitive uses. When considering appropriate places for increased housing density, it is important to consider the location of major ports or goods movement corridors along with appropriate measures for pedestrian safety and to mitigate impacts such as health concerns from noise or air pollution.

M-27 The Municipality shall plan for the goods movement network by:

- a) collaborating with other orders of government, municipalities, agencies, operators, and organizations on good movement initiatives;**
- b) considering reviewing the *Truck Route By-Law* from time to time, with consideration given to current and projected trucking demand, adjacent land uses and planned settlement patterns, and considering trucks when designing Complete Streets on designated truck routes as part of the functional planning and design process;**
- c) considering amending applicable secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws to require appropriate building setbacks, design requirements and other mitigative measures for residential and other sensitive uses to reduce health and safety risks related to major transportation corridors such as highways and railways.**

7.10 TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT

Traffic congestion cannot be eliminated, but it can be managed through Transportation Demand Management (TDM). TDM initiatives aim to maximize the efficiency of the transportation network by reducing single occupant vehicle trips during peak periods: When more trip demand is captured by walking/rolling, cycling and transit, there is less demand on the road network and for parking. This can be achieved through incentives (such as reduced transit fare/pass programs, encouraging ride sharing, permitting flexible work arrangements) or disincentives (such as varying parking fees or road tolls based on time of day). Outreach with employers to increase awareness of TDM programs and initiatives is a major part of the TDM program. Other TDM initiatives include public education campaigns supporting sustainable modes, promoting active and safe routes to school, and cycling safety training. TDM can also be considered during discretionary development approvals or when Traffic Impact Assessments are required.

M-28 The Municipality shall continue to identify and consider the Transportation Demand Management initiatives that discourage single occupant automobile travel during peak hours and encourage and support the use of sustainable modes of travel, with measures including but not limited to those outlined in the *Integrated Mobility Plan*.

7.11 VEHICLE PARKING AND LOADING

Parking affects housing costs, business viability, pedestrian access, local traffic patterns, land consumption, stormwater absorption, and the use of limited street space by multiple modes of travel. Parking may be onsite, off-site or shared.

On-street vehicle parking may compete with other complete streets objectives. Managing and pricing parking appropriately can help to meet community, safety, and convenience goals. When allocating on-street space at the curbside, there is an opportunity to prioritize accessible parking at preferred locations and reflect anticipated needs. In 2021, the Municipality developed Accessible Parking Guidelines, including guidance for on-street accessible parking.

On-site vehicle parking requires space that could otherwise be used for housing, active transportation or transit lanes, stormwater management, open space and tree canopy cover. Availability and cost of parking at the destination is found to influence the choice of whether to drive versus choosing other options.

Shared parking or “park-once-and-walk areas” can be utilized where parking is shared between businesses, enabling users to park only once to access several shops and services on foot. In rural centres, parking can be consolidated to support local businesses and Park & Ride or car-pooling.

Local deliveries often use curb space, whereas requiring on-site loading can ease demand for curbside space for other uses. Functional plans for strategic corridors can identify trade-offs and point to possible solutions.

M-29 The Municipality shall consider developing strategies to increase the efficiency and service of the existing parking system, reduce parking demand, and advance related mobility, accessibility, and sustainability objectives.

M-30 When amending or adopting secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws, the Municipality shall consider:

- a) not requiring on-site parking in order to support development of additional housing and utilize land efficiently;**
- b) limiting the number of parking spaces, scale and location of paved surface areas provided as part of development;**
- c) requirements to locate surface parking and provide landscaping; and**
- d) permitting temporary uses on surface parking lots, such as modular housing, retail, community services, and events.**

CHAPTER 8: PROMOTING ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

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8.1 INTRODUCTION

Halifax Regional Municipality is the economic hub of Atlantic Canada and, at the time of the writing of this Plan, one of Canada's fastest growing cities. This growth has economic benefits but also brings challenges. In 2022, Regional Council adopted *People. Planet. Prosperity. Halifax's Inclusive Economic Strategy 2022-27* – a plan that seeks to ensure Halifax's prosperity is inclusive and improves the well-being of all its residents.

In 2020, Regional Council endorsed the *Road to Economic Prosperity for African Nova Scotian Communities*. This is a strategy developed and owned by African Nova Scotian community to address systemic issues and improve economic and quality of life outcomes for African Nova Scotians. It aims to attract investment to historic African Nova Scotian communities, increase labour force attachment and entrepreneurship, and build community capacity.

This Plan reinforces the goals and actions of both these economic development strategies and highlights the Municipality's role in working together with partners to develop a prosperous economy that benefits all residents. The land use policies in this chapter support economic development opportunities by encouraging employment opportunities in mixed use centres, reducing barriers to small-scale commercial operations, and ensuring a sufficient supply of industrial lands. To maximize the social benefits of economic growth, this Plan also recognize the unique needs of historic African Nova Scotian communities and rural communities.

8.2 OBJECTIVES

- 1. Support economic development initiatives by working with institutions on land use, community integration and talent recruitment and retention.**
- 2. Remove land use barriers to small-scale commercial uses and home-based businesses.**
- 3. Protect industrial lands, work to ensure an adequate supply of industrial land by type and location, and protect harbour lands for marine industrial uses.**
- 4. Support rural economic development by protecting working landscapes from residential encroachment and land use conflicts.**
- 5. Take a community-first approach to tourism development and related initiatives for infrastructure, accommodations, arts, entertainment, parks, and events.**
- 6. Promote inclusive economic prosperity of major projects within communities, implementing the *African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity Plan*, and working with Mi'kmaq on the recommendations of the *Task Force on the Commemoration of Edward Cornwallis and***

the Recognition and Commemoration of Indigenous History and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action.

7. **Encourage the growth of the green economy and new employment sectors that support the transition to a low-carbon future.**

8.3 ECONOMIC STRATEGY

Since 2006, the Municipality has adopted a series of 5-year economic strategies. Each of these has focused on attracting and retaining talent and promoting the municipality as an attractive place to live, work and do business. *People. Planet. Prosperity. Halifax's Inclusive Economic Strategy 2022-27* continues to focus on talent retention and growth but includes quality of life as a key measure of success. It adopts three strategic goals:

- **Promote and Maximize Inclusive and Sustainable Growth** – increase the GDP to \$25 billion by 2027, make it easier to do business, and leverage opportunities for inclusive growth;
- **Attract, Retain, and Develop Talent** increase Halifax's population to 525,000 and its labour force to 310,000 by 2027, and, and build a skilled, diverse, and inclusive workforce; and
- **Make Halifax a Better Place to Live, Work, and Visit** – increase residents' well-being on a continuous basis, and improve quality of life.

EC-1 When preparing business plans and programs, the Municipality may consider the *People. Planet. Prosperity. Halifax's Inclusive Economic Strategy 2022-27*.

8.3.1 MAJOR INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS

The municipality is home to several institutions that are major employers and provide a wide range of services and economic, social, and cultural benefits to the Municipality. The Municipality values the presence of major institutions located throughout the region, including post-secondary educational institutions, Nova Scotia Health Authority, Department of National Defence, Halifax Port Authority and Halifax International Airport Authority, together with their important contributions to research, employment, training, public health, industry, arts, and culture. These institutions cumulatively provide employment for tens of thousands of residents. Where these sectors cluster mutually supportive facilities, they create employment and research hubs that function as focal points for the entire Atlantic region. While the Municipality has limited jurisdiction over provincial and federal institutions, coordination of planning efforts can support mutually beneficial goals, and a high level of service.

EC-2 The Municipality recognizes the value of major institutions to the region's economic prosperity, including post-secondary educational institutions, Nova Scotia Health Authority, Department of National Defence, Halifax Port Authority, and Halifax International Airport Authority, and shall consider the location and needs of major institutional facilities when planning for municipal community facilities, infrastructure, transportation, and housing.

8.3.1.1 POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

Eight post-secondary educational institutions afford competitive advantages for the municipality by attracting domestic and international students, fostering innovation, generating employment, and offering a highly educated and well-trained workforce. Post-secondary institutions are integrated into various

neighbourhoods and a diverse student base contributes to vibrant communities. Post-secondary students and faculties have a strong relationship to housing and culture.

The Halifax Higher Education Partnership (HHEP) recognizes the many synergies between municipal, academic, and training programs that can be achieved through collaboration. Regular HHEP meetings bring together representatives from the post-secondary educational institutions, the Halifax Partnership, and the Municipality to explore issues and opportunities of mutual interest. Recent examples include retaining international student talent, research and development clusters, and an emphasis on innovation. Other working relationships have been established between individual universities or faculties and the private sector, the Province and the Municipality based on research needs and interests.

EC-3 The Municipality shall work with post-secondary institutions on talent attraction and retention, housing, and campus and neighbourhood planning and integration.

8.3.1.2 DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Halifax is home to Canada's East Coast Navy and is Canada's largest military base by population. Along with CFB Shearwater, the Base employs approximately 11,000 military and civilian employees, plus a further 4,500 reservists. The Department of National Defence (DND) operates numerous facilities located throughout the municipality and is a significant contributor to local businesses and non-profit organizations.

There has been increasing development pressure in the area surrounding CFB Shearwater, which historically was remote enough for its aircraft operations to have minimal noise impact on residents. As development in the area intensifies, noise complaints are increasing. DND has altered operating hours and base locations used for aircraft operations to address these concerns, but further feasible changes to base operations are limited.

EC-4 When considering land use regulations in the vicinity of CFB Shearwater, the Municipality shall consult with the Department of National Defence to ensure proposed regulations consider the Base and related facilities, and shall consider noise mitigation efforts where additional residential development is proposed.

8.3.1.3 HALIFAX STANFIELD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Halifax Stanfield International Airport is the primary international gateway airport for Atlantic Canada and is located in one of the region's largest transportation centres. Passenger traffic and air cargo are growing consistently and the Halifax International Airport Authority (HIAA), which operates the airport, has long-term expansion plans for the airfield, terminal, cargo, and commercial areas. To achieve these plans, HIAA must consider appropriate infrastructure, servicing, and land use guidelines for development.

As a major economic and employment generator for the municipality, ongoing communication between HIAA and the Municipality regarding future land use plans will help ensure adequate infrastructure is in place to support airport expansion, and compatible land uses are in place. To mitigate noise impacts, regulations to restrict residential development near the airport have been adopted.

EC-5 When considering land use regulations in the vicinity of the Halifax Stanfield International Airport, the Municipality shall consult with the Halifax International Airport Authority to

ensure proposed regulations consider the airport and related facilities and any future expansion plans, including needs for municipal infrastructure and requirements for noise mitigation.

8.3.1.4 HALIFAX PORT AUTHORITY

The Halifax Port Authority is a major landowner along the municipality's harbour lands. The Port oversees commercial cargo shipping and cruise operations – both significant contributors to the municipality's economy. It also manages the Halifax Seaport, an arts and cultural district with cruise terminals, retailers, a national museum, a farmers' market, and Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. The Port is planning expansion and improvement projects over the coming years as warranted by projected increases in both passenger and freight traffic.

EC-6 The Municipality shall collaborate with the Halifax Port Authority to ensure proposed municipal infrastructure and land use regulations consider impacts on existing port facilities and any potential expansion.

8.4 MIXED USE COMMUNITIES AND MIXED EMPLOYMENT CENTRES

This Plan encourages the development of complete communities – walkable areas that enable people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds to live, work, shop and play near to one another, with different options to get around. Clustering development and services in strategic locations supports the efficient use of infrastructure, reduces land consumption, and fosters vibrant, community-oriented neighbourhoods.

Traditionally, land use policy has separated residential and commercial uses through municipal zoning and corporate siting formulas – a pattern that produces isolated commercial hubs and often forces people to travel outside of their residential communities to get goods and services. Zoning similarly limits the locations of some services, such as medical clinics and daycares to mixed use, commercial, and institutional areas (though there are provisions for home-based businesses to exist in residential areas with the operator living on site). More inclusive zoning that permits compatible services and commercial activity to complement nearby residential uses is key to enabling complete communities. Encouraging less separation of uses and more mixed-use communities can lessen the burden on municipal infrastructure while reducing the amount of time residents need to spend commuting.

EC-7 As part of the Community Planning programs, the Municipality shall consider new or amended secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws to permit, at a scale appropriate to the surrounding context, services such as daycares, medical clinics, professional offices, small-scale commercial uses and home-based businesses in primarily residential areas.

EC-8 The Municipality shall monitor employment and labour force trends and demand for commercial space to inform planning for mixed use, transit-oriented communities, and rural service centres.

8.5 INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT LANDS

Industrial lands are a critical part of the Municipality's economy. The industrial sector offers high quality employment opportunities and has spin-off growth benefits for retail and residential development. Industrial lands generally have high assessed values which contribute to the municipal tax base. Through development of its industrial employment land base, the Municipality will be better positioned to build more balanced, complete, and competitive communities. For Halifax to continue to be competitive and attractive to a broad range of industrial and commercial sectors, the Municipality must ensure that it has a sufficient supply and market choice of serviced industrial employment lands.

The competitiveness of Halifax's export-based economy is partly determined by the availability and quality of suitable, vacant, serviced (and serviceable) industrial employment lands that is available for purchase and absorption. The Municipality's Business and Industrial Parks program manages six business and industrial parks including Aerotech Business Park, Bayers Lake Business Park, Burnside Park (including Atlantic Gateway-Halifax Logistics Park), City of Lakes Business Park, and Ragged Lake Business Park. The *Industrial Employment Lands Strategy* (2020) outlined the growing demand for industrial land throughout the municipality and made recommendations for the Municipality to ensure sufficient supply. It found at that time that development within the municipality's Industrial Parks had accounted for 44% of the previous five years' non-residential development throughout the municipality, expressed in building gross floor area. At that time, the municipality's industrial employment lands were anticipated to accommodate 36% of the total employment growth over the 2019 to 2039 forecast period, totaling approximately 17,500 jobs. This study was undertaken just prior to the pandemic and a large upswing in economic development and population growth in the municipality. Therefore, updated forecasts and targets may be needed to provide an adequate supply of industrial employment lands. The policies of this Plan are intended to protect and promote sites suitable for industrial uses.

EC-9 The Municipality shall consider the recommendations of the 2020 *Industrial Employment Lands Strategy*, as may be amended from time to time, as guidance for:

- a) amendments to this Plan, secondary municipal planning strategies, and industrial land use policies and regulations;**
- b) planning for long-term industrial employment land growth in alignment with economic targets; and**
- c) governance and management of municipal industrial parks.**

EC-10 A Business/Industrial Sub-Designation shall be established on the Regional Land Use Structure (Map 1) and applied to existing business/industrial parks and proposed industrial expansion areas. The intent of this Sub-Designation is to prioritize industrial lands for industrial uses, while allowing for commercial uses that support businesses and employees.

EC-11 Within the Business/Industrial Sub-Designation, the Municipality may amend applicable secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws to enable heavy industrial, light industrial, commercial industrial, or other employment-supportive uses.

EC-12 When identifying new areas that may be suitable for industrial use, the Municipality shall consider:

- a) the existing industrial land supply and anticipated market demand for industrial lands within the Business/Industrial Sub-Designation;
- b) prioritizing areas close to transportation links such as 100-series highways, rail lines, airports, and port access;
- c) avoiding areas with significant environmental sensitivity or at-risk for climate hazards by any study resulting from policies of this Plan;
- d) avoiding sites of cultural or historical importance as identified through consultation with communities;
- e) impacts on ecological connectivity, ecosystem services, scenic landscapes and views, and opportunities for open space planning
- f) other priority, strategic, and community plans; and,
- g) the incorporation of parks.

EC-13 Where lands have been identified for future serviced industrial land expansion, these lands shall undertake a comprehensive planning process aligned with Policies HC-11 to HC-14.

8.5.1 INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT LAND USE FRAMEWORK

The Municipality's community plans and land use by-laws have regulated industrial lands across the region in varying ways. Over time, industrial land use zoning will be modernized and streamlined through the Community Planning programs, or through area-specific projects which are strategically important for the Municipality's Business and Industrial Parks program. A consistent industrial employment land use framework is established in this Plan to guide future amendments to community plans and land use by-laws.

8.5.1.1 HEAVY INDUSTRIAL

Heavy industrial areas accommodate industries that produce large, complex products which are often used in further manufacturing, rather than sold to consumers directly. It involves the manufacture and/or processing of products from raw materials, extraction of raw materials, and use or storage of flammable, explosive or hazardous products. Heavy industrial uses generally include noise, smoke, dust, or fumes that can be obnoxious to adjacent uses. Such areas require large lots with sufficient setbacks and buffers to minimize nuisance to neighbouring land uses. Products manufactured in heavy industrial settings tend to be transported and therefore require easy access to major transportation routes such as highways, rail, ports, and airports.

EC-14 When amending or adopting secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws, the Municipality shall:

- a) consider appropriate locations for heavy industrial uses, including manufacturing, processing, abattoirs, construction, and demolition (C&D) uses, extraction of raw materials and production and use of hazardous materials;

- b) **not permit residential uses except for caretaker units in areas which permit heavy industrial uses; and**
- c) **consider directing heavy industrial uses to locate on adequately large lots, set back and buffered where existing less intensive uses are present.**

8.5.1.2 LIGHT INDUSTRIAL

Light industrial uses involve the processing, fabrication, assembly, treatment, or packaging of products from previously prepared materials, finished products or parts. Most light industry products are produced directly for consumers rather than for other industries. Research facilities and industrial printing are included in light industrial uses.

Light industrial facilities normally have less environmental impact than heavy industry and do not include hazardous and flammable products to the same degree. They may still generate noise, dust, and fumes and may require setbacks and buffers to protect adjacent land uses from nuisance.

EC-15 When amending or adopting secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws, the Municipality shall consider appropriate locations for light industrial uses.

8.5.1.3 COMMERCIAL INDUSTRIAL

Mixed commercial-industrial areas are intended to accommodate light industrial uses and a range of commercial uses that support industries, workers, and customers. Commercial-industrial areas may be used as buffers from streets and from zones that support less intensive uses. Limiting retail and office uses and sizes maximizes the amount of land available for industrial and employment uses.

EC-16 Where heavy and light industrial uses are permitted, when amending or adopting secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws, the Municipality shall consider:

- a) **permitting a range of commercial uses that support industries, workers, and customers;**
- b) **directing non-industrial uses to major streets and highway interchanges to facilitate employee and customer access and to serve as a transitional use to buffer to more intensive industrial uses; and**
- c) **establishing a maximum size of standalone retail uses.**

8.5.1.4 CANNABIS-RELATED LAND USES

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

The Municipality recognizes the legitimacy of cannabis production and processing operations and the economic development opportunities offered by this industry. Cannabis production facilities can be accommodated in industrial zones. In rural mixed use and resource zones where industrial or intensive agricultural uses are permitted, standards to adequately separate cannabis production facilities from

residential and other sensitive uses are necessary, and some areas may require facilities to be limited in size.

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

EC-17 The Municipality shall seek to ensure that municipal land use regulations for cannabis-related land uses are consistent with federal and provincial legislation. Where federal and provincial regulations have been amended, the Municipality may amend land use by-laws to remain consistent with these changes.

EC-18 The Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-laws, permit cannabis production facilities within appropriate industrial zones, provided adequate separation distances to residential and other sensitive uses are established.

EC-19 The Municipality may, through the applicable land use by-laws, permit cannabis production facilities within mixed use and resource zones which also permit industrial or intensive agricultural uses, provided appropriate controls are placed on the size and scale of such facilities and adequate separation distances to residential and other sensitive uses are established.

EC-20 Where cannabis production facilities are permitted by a land use by-law, but zone requirements limit the maximum gross floor area of such a facility, the Municipality may consider larger facilities by development agreement. In considering approval of such development agreements, the Municipality shall consider the following:

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

b) Policy IM-9 of this Plan.

EC-21 The Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-laws, prohibit the private retail sale of cannabis and cannabis products and commercial venues for the consumption of cannabis and cannabis products, unless it is operated by the NSLC.

8.5.2 LONG-TERM INDUSTRIAL LAND PROTECTION

The *2020 Industrial Employment Lands Strategy* emphasized the need for industrial land to be protected from residential, commercial, and institutional encroachment and to ensure adequate employment lands available for future growth. As land prices increase, industrial lands can face pressure to convert to non-industrial uses, such as large-format retail, office, commercial recreation, and residential developments. Policy is needed to protect industrial areas from conversion and fragmentation. There may be

circumstances where conversions to non-employment uses are justified but require a systematic approach to evaluate conversion requests.

Demand for industrial land is high and is projected to remain so for the long-term. While the municipality is geographically large, there is a limited supply of industrial land, particularly in serviced areas. One potential response is intensification of industrial lands, by developing less restrictive land use regulations and permitting mixing of industrial with other complementary employment uses. Industrial intensification may allow for more efficient use of land and infrastructure, reduced sprawl, and a better-connected transportation system.

EC-22 The Municipality may consider conversion of industrial and employment lands within the Business/Industrial Sub-Designation to non-industrial and employment uses through a comprehensive review of planning documents that considers the following criteria:

- a) whether the land is required for the Municipality to maintain a sufficient supply of land for industrial and employment purposes over the long term;
- b) the proposed uses would not adversely affect the overall viability of the employment area and conversion will not introduce incompatible land uses to the surrounding employment area;
- c) existing or planned infrastructure, parks, community facilities and other public service facilities are available to accommodate the proposed uses, including public transit access;
- d) site(s) are mixed use blocks and located along the edges of employment areas, or the site is an irregular or island parcel unable to support industrial uses;
- e) conversion of the site(s) will not compromise any other planning policy objectives of the Municipality, including planned commercial functions;
- f) site constraints such as size, configuration, or physical conditions (e.g. grade, natural heritage, environmental features) that may make it unfeasible for industrial employment uses; and
- g) that the conversion proposal can demonstrate that a similar level of employment density (e.g. jobs per hectare) would be maintained.

EC-23 Through the Community Planning programs, it shall be the intent of the Municipality to identify sites appropriate for intensive marine-dependent industrial uses and to consider:

- a) applying an appropriate designation and zone that will ensure marine-dependent industrial uses continue to be permitted;
- b) whether provisions are needed in applicable land use by-laws to mitigate conflicts between intensive marine-dependent uses with less intensive uses, such as a residential uses.

EC-24 The Municipality shall consider industrial intensification strategies to inform potential land use regulation changes such as building density, height limits, setbacks and buffers,

parking requirements, and mixing of industrial with other complementary employment uses where contextually appropriate.

8.5.3 HARBOUR INDUSTRIAL LANDS

The Halifax Harbour plays a strategically important economic role to the Municipality and the Province of Nova Scotia for shipping, ship building, naval operations, and other port-related industries. The Municipality seeks to ensure that sufficient lands are retained for these purposes and that the viability of harbour-related industrial activity is not compromised by incompatible uses developed nearby.

EC-25 The Halifax Harbour Sub-Designation shall be established on the Regional Land Use Structure (Map 1) and applied from Eastern Passage to Purcells Cove, including the Northwest Arm and Bedford Basin, and extend inland generally to the first major roadway paralleling the Harbour. The Sub-Designation's primary intent is to identify lands suitable for marine-industrial uses; however, the designation also supports a range of development opportunities such as transportation uses and facilities including ferries, recreational uses, residential uses, institutional uses, and matters related to environmental improvement and protection.

EC-26 Within the Halifax Harbour Sub-Designation, the Municipality shall consider, through applicable land use by-laws, permitting harbour-related industrial uses on sites that have been identified as appropriately situated for these uses.

8.5.3.1 WATER LOTS

While waterfront property ownership typically stops at the shoreline, a number of lots, known as Pre-Confederation water lots, exist around these waterbodies that were created prior to Confederation in 1867. The jurisdiction to infill Pre-Confederation water lots as navigable waters fall under the Federal Government through Transport Canada and Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) with the mandates to ensure infilling does not impede navigation or impact fish and fish habitat, respectively. Should the infilling be granted by the higher order authority, the lots are then subject to the Municipality's land use policies and regulations. The Municipality will work cooperatively with the Federal Government with respect to infilling approvals to ensure compliance with infilling activities along the Northwest Arm and regulate building activity.

The Municipality will encourage higher orders of government to only consider harbour infilling for the purpose of marine related purposes, such as wharfs or marinas, or to provide public recreational areas or public access to the waterfront. Any infill that could have negative environmental impact is discouraged.

Sulfide-bearing material (SBM), commonly known as pyritic slate is a frequent by-product of development in the municipality. Once excavated and exposed to air and water, pyritic slate can generate acidic runoff that is a known risk to watersheds and associated ecosystems. Therefore, its safe disposal is a significant issue. One of the most environmentally acceptable practices is to submerge it in salt water which mitigates acid generation and also creates infilled land around the shoreline.

The Halifax Port Authority operates the only large-scale commercial SBM infill site in the municipality, but privately-owned pre-Confederation water lots may also apply to host SBM infill. Both Federal and Provincial regulations apply to SBM disposal. The Municipality has no direct control over permitting or regulating the

disposal of SBM, but it can influence infill processes through its authority to regulate land use and nuisances (such as truck routes and noise).

The Halifax Port Authority has expressed concern about the longer-term availability of SBM infill capacity and the need to plan for additional future capacity. The siting of any future commercial SBM infill facilities would benefit from a collaborative approach from all levels of government and interest holders.

EC-27 The Municipality may consider amending secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws to discourage or regulate infilling of pre-Confederation water lots.

EC-28 The Municipality shall encourage a collaborative approach to the siting and approval of sulfide-bearing material disposal sites that considers impacts on environment, adjacent neighbourhoods, and uses and regulation of infilled sites. This approach shall consider input from all levels of government and interest holders.

8.5.3.2 HALIFAX OCEAN SUPERCLUSTER

Halifax is Canada's largest centre for ocean research. In 2023, ocean technology industry accounted for about one-third of Nova Scotian business research and development, and about 13.5% of Nova Scotia's GDP.¹⁶ The Government of Canada has established a Federal Ocean Supercluster program in the municipality, bringing together industry, research, and government to create and collaborate on projects that grow Canada's ocean economy.

EC-29 The Municipality shall work with government and industry partners to identify available harbour-front land to support the needs of growing ocean-related industries and the Federal Ocean Super Cluster program.

8.6 RURAL EMPLOYMENT LANDS

The municipality's extensive rural lands provide open space and support natural resource industries. Rural areas have a larger share of businesses in industrial, resource and goods-producing sectors than other areas of the municipality, including agricultural and natural resource lands which support the municipality's economy. The *Halifax Green Network Plan* identifies these areas as the municipality's working landscapes – places that support regional economic sectors such as resource extraction, agriculture, tourism, construction, and manufacturing. These areas are important for the regional economy.

EC-30 As part of the Rural Community Planning program, the Municipality shall consider establishing policies under applicable secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws to support primary resource industries and working landscapes by:

- a) identifying important areas for resource extraction, agriculture, tourism, and other rural industries; and**
- b) considering measures to mitigate potential land use conflicts with industries.**

¹⁶ [Ocean Technology Snapshot](#), Halifax Partnership, 2023.

8.7 TOURISM

Tourism is a major economic sector for Halifax. Nearly 15,000 residents work in accommodation and food service industries, and there is a total of over 23,000 tourism-related jobs in the municipality. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, there were 5.3 million overnight stays per year and \$1.3 billion in spending by visitors to the municipality¹⁷. The sector is now recovering with the number of visitors arriving by air and land rebounding, hotel occupancy increasing, and cruise ship arrivals on par with 2019 levels. More than half of Nova Scotia's tourism revenues are generated in the municipality.

The Municipality itself is a major tourism interest holder. The Municipality owns Scotiabank Centre and appoints half of the board members of the Halifax Convention Centre Limited that operates the Halifax Convention Centre and provides funding to large-scale events and community organizations. The Municipality supports Discover Halifax, the regional destination marketing and management organization. In 2021, Regional Council endorsed the *Integrated Tourism Master Plan*, which aims to support and grow the local tourism industry, shape economic growth, and build better communities for visitors and residents. The plan involves a community-first approach, promoting Halifax as a destination of choice for leisure and business travelers, and focusing on growth to benefit everyone, both visitors and residents. Community first means that the benefits of tourism are felt by the local community and that tourism infrastructure is developed with both visitors and residents in mind. Access to nature is important to quality of life in the municipality that both benefits residents and attracts visitors.

EC-31 The Municipality shall work with Discover Halifax to implement the goals of the *Integrated Tourism Master Plan* by:

- a) taking a community-first approach that enriches the lives of both residents and visitors, and recognizes the social and environmental impacts of tourism on local communities;
- b) considering changes to applicable secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws to support Designated Arts Districts and Entertainment Districts in appropriate locations;
- c) working with key partners to identify infrastructure needs that would support increased tourism (such as outdoor performance spaces, waterfront park spaces, transportation options, broadband and cellular coverage, and washrooms);
- d) working with community and stakeholders to increase the tourism focus for the Dartmouth Waterfront; and
- e) considering opportunities to support the Wild Islands Tourism Advancement Partnership to implement the 100 Wild Islands Plan through infrastructure investments, potential property sales or transfers, and funding and in-kind support.

EC-32 The Municipality shall consider support for Mi'kmaq, Indigenous, and African Nova Scotian businesses and initiatives that demonstrate a connection to history and culture, including:

¹⁷ Discover Halifax, 2019 Annual Report

- a) potential property transfer opportunities;
- b) transportation connections to cultural and historic sites; and
- c) community-identified initiatives to increase tourism and learning.

8.7.1 RURAL TOURISM

Tourism is a major economic driver in rural areas of the municipality. Cultural landscapes, recreational spaces, trails, and scenic byways create attractive tourism destinations, and support eco-tourism. Tourism uses are considered working landscapes in the *Halifax Green Network Plan* given the economic opportunities they provide to rural communities.

The scenic landscapes and attractions in the municipality's rural areas can be negatively impacted by poorly designed and screened residential, industrial, or commercial developments. Where scenic routes, trails and eco-tourism sites are identified, measures such as buffers and screening may be considered to strengthen rural tourism and allow more eco-tourism sites to flourish. Underdeveloped tourism infrastructure, such as lodging, restaurants, recreational experiences, washrooms, and communication linkages (cellular and broadband), can also hinder efforts to draw visitors to otherwise highly marketable scenic landscapes. Encouraging small-scale commercial operations that meet visitors' needs can support tourism and local economic growth while not detracting from the landscape.

Beaches and coastal access are attractions for municipal residents and visitors alike. Only 14 percent of Nova Scotia's coastline is publicly owned, and most of the municipality's coastal lands are privately owned. Protecting existing access on public land and considering opportunities to increase accessible options to the coastline on publicly owned land will benefit both residents and visitors.

EC-33 The Municipality may consider amendments to applicable secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws to allow for increased small-scale commercial opportunities, home-based businesses in rural areas that support and enhance tourism. Measures to consider include removing land use restrictions on small-scale accommodations, tour operations, commercial recreation, food establishments, and retail, and establishing design requirements to encourage operations to complement the landscape.

EC-34 Through the Rural Community Planning program, the Municipality shall consider requiring, through applicable secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws, screening of rural industrial developments from scenic roads and trails.

EC-35 The Municipality shall consider opportunities to facilitate improved public access to the coastline, such as:

- a) acquiring coastal lands where possible through the parkland dedication process when subdivisions are proposed, as set out in Policy IM-49 and the *Regional Subdivision By-Law*;
- b) identifying and removing barriers on municipal land to access the coastline, where appropriate;

- c) considering the need for supportive municipal infrastructure such as transportation options to coastal areas and on-site accessibility features at municipal beaches or parks; and
- d) partnering with the Province and Federal governments to maintain and expand current access over public lands and improve accessibility to publicly-owned parks and other coastal lands, where appropriate.

8.8 INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

While the municipality is growing, groups such as African Nova Scotians (ANS), Indigenous peoples, rural Halifax communities, those in underrepresented groups, and those experiencing poverty have not attained the same levels of growth and prosperity as others. *People. Planet. Prosperity. Halifax's Inclusive Economic Strategy 2022-27* has established well-being and quality of life as a measure of successful economic growth. This strategy has informed the development of this Plan.

Land use policies and tools can help spread the impact of economic benefits throughout communities more broadly. Some of these are outlined in the *Road to Economic Prosperity for African Nova Scotian Communities* – a collaborative plan developed and owned by the African Nova Scotian community to advance economic development and community priorities, endorsed by Regional Council in 2020. The *Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action* and the recommendations of the *Task Force on the Commemoration of Edward Cornwallis and the Recognition and Commemoration of Indigenous History* include opportunities to improve commemorations, consultation, and relations with the Mi'kmaw community, as well as land use implications.

Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs) are tools used in some other jurisdictions to establish formal agreements setting out specific benefits a community will receive in exchange for being impacted by a development project. CBAs are typically individual agreements specific to particular projects, so that the benefits included in each agreement can be different and shaped to each community's unique circumstances. Common benefits include training and employment opportunities, procurement from local businesses during construction, and spaces, uses or features in the project itself that can benefit the community. The *HRM Charter* does not presently enable formal CBAs; however, the Municipality will pursue opportunities to achieve similar objectives through existing tools.

EC-36 The Municipality may study and seek legislative authority for tools that could maximize economic and social benefits of major initiatives within communities, such as community benefit agreements, community action planning, community land trusts and community-led planning or projects.

EC-37 When plans, policies and by-laws are reviewed, the Municipality shall consider the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action*, the recommendations from the *Task Force on the Commemoration of Edward Cornwallis and the Recognition and Commemoration of Indigenous History*, and the *Road to Economic Prosperity for African Nova Scotian Communities*.

8.8.1 HISTORICAL AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIAN COMMUNITY ACTION PLANNING

The Municipality is taking steps to create more inclusive economic growth and have communities more actively involved in the planning and development process. Both the *Road to Economic Prosperity for African Nova Scotian Communities* and *People. Planet. Prosperity: Halifax's Inclusive Economic Strategy 2022-27* aim to consider and, where possible, incorporate community benefits in the development approval process. This can be achieved through the use of community action plans – a process for residents to identify strengths and opportunities, create a vision for their community's future, and develop an action plan to achieve it.

The municipality is home to a number of historic African Nova Scotian communities. Beechville, Lucasville, Upper Hammonds Plains, Lake Loon, Cherry Brook, North Preston, and East Preston were all established in the late 18th and early 19th centuries by land grants given to families of African descent. Many of these land grants were “tickets of location” and/or “licenses of occupations” for land rather than clear legal titles and acquiring legal title to these lands for African Nova Scotian families is a historical and ongoing issue. Many African Nova Scotians have strong historical connections to their communities and lands, and view community land as sacred. These are some of the oldest and largest Black communities in Canada.

African Nova Scotian communities throughout the Municipality are particularly vulnerable to gentrification. Unclear title to community-owned land and outdated community planning policies have affected historic community members and their experiences within their communities. The Municipality's goal is to undertake community action planning with these historic African Nova Scotian areas, to allow residents to take a leading role in the evolution of their community with Municipal support.

The Road to Economic Prosperity for African Nova Scotian Communities contains actions to support African Nova Scotian (ANS) communities through Community Action Planning. The concept and implementation of ANS Action Planning originated through the work of the Beechville community. *The Road to Economic Prosperity Action Plan* includes Action 13 to “create a framework to identify and address legislation, policy, and land use by-laws that impact ANS communities, and establish mechanisms for community input on required changes,” and Action 16 to “review the naming, boundaries, and zoning of historic ANS communities, and zoning affecting ANS communities.”

The Municipality has created an African Nova Scotian Community Action Planning program, which will allow ANS communities to develop their own action plans with municipal support. This work will enable ANS communities to identify community needs and priorities, establish a vision, and create action plans. The Municipality will then support these community actions by considering amendments to applicable community plans and land use by-laws consistent with the *HRM Charter*, or through other actions under the Municipality's jurisdiction. The Municipality can develop new planning policies and land use regulations for ANS communities that are responsive to community needs and priorities. Planning strategy reviews can be iterative, particularly if a community has identified a need to address and prioritize an urgent planning issue before comprehensive community-wide policy can be developed. Where a community's actions are under the jurisdiction of other orders of government, the Municipality can support the community by investigating the issue and advocating for change. The Municipality may identify-resource needs to support the ANS Community Action Planning program through the annual budget and business planning process.

EC-38 When preparing business plans and programs, the Municipality may consider the *Road to Economic Prosperity for African Nova Scotians*.

EC-39 The Municipality shall support the work of African Nova Scotian Communities to create and consider measures to implement Community Action Plans, by:

- a) supporting communities to identify community needs and priorities, establish a vision, and develop a series of actions;**
- b) investigating and resolving identified community actions that are within the Municipality's jurisdiction, wherever possible;**
- c) investigating and advocating for identified community actions that are within the jurisdiction of other orders of government, wherever possible;**
- d) undertaking a comprehensive review of land use planning policy and regulations applicable to the community, and considering amending or adopting new secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws;**
- e) considering resource needs for African Nova Scotian Community Action Planning, and for Community Actions Plans through the annual budget and business planning process.**

8.9 GREEN ECONOMY

HalifACT is the Municipality's climate change action plan – a transformational plan adopted in response to Regional Council's declaration of a climate emergency. It commits to a deep reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and strengthening resilience to climate impacts. Achieving this requires an operational shift in many sectors, particularly transportation, agriculture, construction, and development. *HalifACT* initiatives support projects such as purchasing electric vehicles and buses, converting municipal buildings to net-zero, and infrastructure resiliency projects. Municipal funding can also leverage climate action funding from the private sector, federal and provincial governments, as a collaborative approach is necessary for the plan to succeed.

Decarbonizing the building, transportation and energy sectors requires investment, but is also a major economic opportunity. These investments will generate employment and stimulate new and existing businesses. Investments in building retrofits, renewable energy, energy storage, transit systems and active transportation aim to stimulate economic activity and grow new employment sectors.

EC-40 The Municipality shall support the growth of the low carbon economy by working with community partners and interest holders to develop workforce and business development programs. Such programs may include skills and trade development, industrial process efficiencies, and support for business initiatives that reduce emissions and strengthen climate resilience.

CHAPTER 9: CELEBRATING CULTURE, ARTS AND HERITAGE

CHAPTER 9: CELEBRATING CULTURE, ARTS AND HERITAGE

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Culture, arts, and heritage are the tangible and intangible features that define the municipality and its people and make us unique. Culture relates to the specific practices, traditions, art, and cultural expressions that exist throughout the region. Heritage is the physical evidence of the past – the objects, buildings, and landscapes that tell the story of how the municipality evolved.

In 2024, Regional Council endorsed the direction contained in *Sharing Our Stories: The Halifax Regional Municipality's Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan (Sharing Our Stories)* as a framework for amending the Regional Plan, and amending or adopting new community plans, as well as other municipal policies and programs. *Sharing Our Stories* provides strategic direction for the Municipality's policies and investments on culture and heritage for the next ten years, and its objectives and actions are reflected in the policies found in this chapter. *Sharing Our Stories* aims to increase access and exposure to diverse cultures, as well as preserve and celebrate a wide range of cultural resources.

The municipality contains numerous historic buildings, places, and landscapes from different eras and cultures that all create a unique sense of place. This Plan establishes policies that aim to preserve significant cultural and heritage assets while balancing the need to accommodate growth. It also addresses the need to consider environmental impacts of demolition and benefits of adaptive reuse for existing buildings.

9.2 OBJECTIVES

- 1. Develop policies, programs, and regulations to protect and enhance a broad diversity and range of cultural, artistic and heritage resources.**
- 2. Foster partnerships and increase commemoration and representation of Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotian communities.**
- 3. Support community-led and collaborative processes to recognize and celebrate heritage, culture, and art.**
- 4. Establish updated criteria for heritage resource registration and broaden consideration to include cultural landscapes and scenic views.**
- 5. Encourage and incentivize maintaining registered heritage properties and properties located within a heritage conservation district and provide opportunities for their creative adaptive reuse.**

9.3 SHARING OUR STORIES

Sharing Our Stories creates a new strategic direction for culture and heritage. It is committed to reflecting all the diverse cultures, values, and histories in the region, and enhancing working relationships with the public and rightsholders to achieve shared outcomes and projects. Strong partnerships with communities will be needed to effectively implement the plan's vision. *Sharing Our Stories* was developed following a community-led process to allow the plan to be shaped by the region's people and diverse cultural groups, and focused special attention on communities whose unique interests or views have often not been addressed through previous, more conventional engagement processes.

Sharing Our Stories connects a number of existing Council initiatives, including the *Task Force on the Commemoration of Edward Cornwallis and the Recognition and Commemoration of Indigenous History*; *Road to Economic Prosperity for African Nova Scotian Communities*; *Diversity and Inclusion Framework*; *French Language Services Strategy*; *Accessibility and Inclusion Strategy*; and the Social Value Framework in the Procurement Administrative Order. The four pillars of the Plan are:

- **Stewardship** – taking care of cultural resources and maintaining heritage, archaeological and intangible cultural assets.
- **Connection** – recognizing and valuing the unique, yet often underrepresented or untold histories within our region; and celebrating the narratives of struggle, survival, resilience, and perseverance to actively reflect underrepresented forms of culture.
- **Celebration** – expressing culture and heritage in a meaningful way, and reflecting people of all ages, abilities, geographies, religions, and cultural heritage.
- **Access** – providing opportunities for everyone to participate by reducing barriers, promoting participation in existing programs and events, and creating equitable access to resources.

Sharing Our Stories identifies projects, actions and timelines to guide internal operations, prioritize the work of the municipality, support creative industries and ensure that that region's unique stories, art, cultures and histories are preserved and celebrated.

CH-1 When preparing business plans and programs, the Municipality may consider the *Sharing Our Stories: The Halifax Regional Municipality's Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan*.

9.3.1 MI'KMAQ AND INDIGENOUS RECONCILIATION

In 2015, Regional Council made a Statement of Reconciliation to First Nations communities. This Statement recognizes the significance of the undertaking of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) with the release of the TRC's final report and its recommendations, and the deep and lasting traumatic impact that Canada's Indian Residential Schools had on individuals, their families, and communities both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. This Statement commits to learning from the lessons of the TRC.

A friendship accord is a formal agreement that publicly declares the commitment of two or more governments and/or communities to work together in a long-term relationship based on mutual understanding and respect. While not legally binding, it expresses shared principles and an agreed-upon framework for collaboration. Friendship accords have been used in the Indigenous-municipal context across Canada as a means of advancing reconciliation.

In 2017, a Special Advisory Committee on Commemoration of Edward Cornwallis and the Recognition and Commemoration of Indigenous History was created. An equal partnership between the Halifax Regional Municipality and the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Chiefs, the committee had a mandate to provide advice to Regional Council regarding the commemoration of Edward Cornwallis on municipal assets and on the recognition and commemoration of Indigenous history in the lands now known as the Halifax Regional Municipality. After a public consultation process, in 2020 the committee provided 20 recommendations to Regional Council, all of which were approved.

Municipal planning and programming presents an opportunity to embrace *Etuaptmumk* or Two-Eyed Seeing, seeing from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of Western knowledges and ways of knowing. In doing so, we learn to use both perspectives for the benefit of all.¹⁸

CH-2 The Municipality shall explore establishing Friendship Accords with Mi'kmaq communities and consider additional opportunities to enhance communication, areas for collaboration, and outline the evolving government-to-government relationship.

CH-3 The Municipality shall consider increasing commemoration and representation of Mi'kmaq and Indigenous communities by:

- a) using Mi'kmaq and Indigenous names, terms, and significant personages when naming municipal assets;**
- b) commemorating and integrating Mi'kmaq and Indigenous history and perspectives, including Two-Eyed Seeing, in municipal planning and programming initiatives; and**
- c) reviewing the evaluation criteria for heritage sites and properties to include more emphasis on intangible and cultural significance, with increased focus on under-represented groups including Mi'kmaq and First Nations.**

9.3.2 AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIAN CULTURE AND HERITAGE

In 2020, Regional Council endorsed the *Road to Economic Prosperity for African Nova Scotian Communities* – a collaborative plan developed and owned by the African Nova Scotian community and increased recognition of historic African Nova Scotian (ANS) sites and communities. Some of this work is already underway, with Regional Council's approval to undertake African Nova Scotian Community Action Planning as described in Chapter 8.

The Municipality has also worked with ANS communities in the Preston Township to support the adaptive reuse of the former Nova Scotia Home for Coloured Children – a registered heritage site with significant cultural and historical value to the African Nova Scotian community. By changing land use policy, Regional Council was able to support Akoma Holdings Inc.'s vision to redevelop the site as a mix of economic and social opportunities that would benefit African Nova Scotians and the general community. These lands have since been designated a Special Planning Area under the *Housing in the Halifax Regional Municipality Act*.

¹⁸ <http://www.integrativescience.ca/Principles/TwoEyedSeeing/>

- CH-4 The Municipality shall work with African Nova Scotian communities to identify significant sites to be considered for preservation and interpretation.**
- CH-5 The Municipality shall support African Nova Scotian communities to identify opportunity sites for adaptive reuse.**
- CH-6 The Municipality shall work with African Nova Scotian communities to identify the community boundaries of historic African Nova Scotian communities, and the Municipality may consider restoring those boundaries and updating municipal mapping and boundary markers.**

9.3.3 COMMUNITY-LED APPROACHES

During the development of *Sharing Our Stories*, several other traditionally under-represented groups highlighted the importance of celebrating and commemorating their stories and interests through cultural programming, supports, events and facilities. The Municipality will strengthen the representation of these communities and groups by taking a community-led approach to implementing the actions contained in *Sharing Our Stories*.

- CH-7 The Municipality shall consider a community-centered approach to implementing the actions in *Sharing Our Stories*, that supports a community-led process for under-represented groups and communities to identify, conserve and leverage the region's cultural resources. This may include municipal support for the consideration of:**
 - a) community-led mapping, conservation, and asset naming;**
 - b) community-led engagement in land use planning in areas of cultural significance and value;**
 - c) encouraging multilingualism as a connection to culture;**
 - d) supporting community-led projects for identification, interpretation and protection of heritage and cultural sites; and**
 - e) community-directed events, art and placemaking.**

9.4 PROTECTION OF HERITAGE RESOURCES

Historic buildings, sites, districts, and cultural landscapes define the character of many communities and neighbourhoods in the municipality, both urban and rural. They provide insight into community evolution and reveal elements of local culture and social history. Distinctive architectural forms, styles and details, groups of buildings, and varied landscape settings all contribute to local character, authenticity, and sense of place.

- CH-8 The Municipality shall consider identifying buildings, sites, streetscapes, cultural landscapes, and districts of historic, architectural, or cultural value in both urban and rural areas and may support consideration of their designation, interpretation, conservation, and continued use.**

- CH-9** The Municipality shall consider identifying sites of cultural or historical importance to communities, for preservation and interpretation, or as opportunity sites for future community development projects.
- CH-10** The Municipality shall consider amending applicable secondary municipal planning strategies to encourage conservation and re-use of culturally, historically, or architecturally significant sites, including educational and religious institutional buildings.
- CH-11** The Municipality shall develop cultural and heritage impact assessment criteria within applicable secondary municipal planning strategies, land use by-laws and heritage by-laws to support the evaluation of new development in heritage contexts, including comprehensive development applications like large development agreements and secondary municipal planning strategy amendments.
- CH-12** The Municipality shall actively conserve, maintain and provide an active use for registered heritage properties owned by the Municipality and shall seek to register additional significant heritage properties owned by the Municipality.
- CH-13** The Municipality shall develop conservation management plans for all heritage properties and cultural assets owned by the Municipality to ensure appropriate levels of conservation, maintenance, and upgrades and to meet accessibility, environmental, and municipal conservation standards.
- CH-14** The Municipality shall consider the use of other mechanisms, such as financial incentives, land use incentives and policies, to encourage the use, preservation or protection, restoration, or renovation of heritage resources, as enabled by the *Heritage Property Act*.

9.4.1 HERITAGE REGISTRY

Since 1981, the Municipality has administered a heritage property program enabled by the *Heritage Property Act of Nova Scotia*. In 2024, the Registry of Heritage Properties included approximately 516 properties, concentrated principally in peninsular Halifax and Downtown Dartmouth, and dating mainly to the 19th century. While the program has grown and expanded in recent years, there is a need for a renewed, updated, and more comprehensive region-wide inventory of heritage resources that could potentially qualify for formal designation as registered heritage properties and sites. There is also a need to refine the criteria for heritage registration to ensure that all aspects of the municipality's built heritage are represented, including modern heritage, traditionally under-represented groups and all parts of the municipality.

- CH-15** The Municipality shall maintain a Registry of Heritage Properties which includes information on all properties registered as Municipal Heritage Properties and shall continue to update the registry by developing statements of significance, heritage value, and character defining elements for each property so registered.
- CH-16** The Municipality shall review and update its criteria and methodology for identifying and evaluating heritage properties as necessary to ensure that the registry accurately represents diverse communities, cultures, and time periods.

9.4.2 HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Heritage Conservation Districts (HCDs) are areas identified by the Municipality as having significant heritage value and character. HCDs enable the Municipality to protect and enhance the cultural heritage value of neighbourhoods by establishing district-wide policies, guidelines, and programs that ensure the evolution of the area reinforces key heritage attributes. The *Heritage Property Act* enables the Municipality to designate an area as a Heritage Conservation District (HCD) by adopting a heritage conservation district plan and by-law. It enables the Municipality to provide strong protection from demolition for buildings within a district considered to be contributing heritage resources, whether registered or not, and to provide financial incentives for their restoration and rehabilitation. The designation of such districts will be a priority in future secondary planning strategies.

The Regional Centre is home to three HCDs (Barrington Street, Old South Suburb and Schmidville). There are thirteen more potential HCDs identified in the Regional Centre for Council to consider for designation. There are currently, at the time of drafting this Plan, no approved or proposed HCDs in other areas of the Municipality. The Regional Plan encourages identification of potential HCDs in suburban and rural areas using analyses of the age, history, cultural associations, and architectural styles of properties in these areas.

The *Heritage Property Act* requires that any HCD be preceded by background studies that address a range of issues, including character defining elements, heritage conservation measures, boundaries, the relationship to applicable planning documents, and social and economic impacts. Demolition protection for municipally registered heritage properties outside of HCDs is limited under the *Heritage Property Act*. It is only by designating a specific area an HCD, under the authority of the *Heritage Property Act*, where Regional Council can establish stronger policies that improve demolition controls for identified heritage resources.

CH-17 In collaboration with community partners, residents, property owners and institutions, the Municipality shall identify areas eligible to be designated as Proposed Heritage Conservation District Study Areas. These Proposed Study Areas shall be identified and mapped in the applicable secondary municipal planning strategies. Emphasis shall be placed on identifying Proposed Study Areas outside the Regional Centre.

CH-18 Methodology to identify and prioritize Proposed HCD Study Areas shall consider:

- a) areas that include a high concentration of registered heritage properties;**
- b) areas that include rare examples of historic architecture;**
- c) areas that are experiencing a high rate of change based on development permit activity in the past five years;**
- d) areas that have been identified by an underrepresented group or community as being of cultural heritage significance; and**
- e) areas that include the potential for large-scale redevelopment as a result of their current land use designation.**

CH-19 Until such time as conservation measures are adopted by Regional Council for proposed HCD Study Areas, the land use policies and regulations within existing secondary municipal

planning strategies shall encourage development that is sensitive to the architectural character and heritage value of these areas by incentivizing internal conversion of existing properties.

9.4.3 HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT POLICY

Heritage development agreement policies encourage the conservation and adaptive re-use of heritage properties by allowing additional development rights (i.e., density, additional land uses, flexibility around built form requirements) that may offset conservation costs. Heritage development agreements can add a large number of new residential units while encouraging the registration of previously unprotected heritage properties for the purpose of making use of the flexibility that these policies provide.

In response to increased interest and the success of existing policies within the Regional Centre, heritage development agreements may be considered in all areas of the Municipality. The policies of this Plan shall apply to all areas of the Municipality outside of the Regional Centre, Downtown Halifax, and established Heritage Conservation Districts, as heritage development agreements are enabled in the community plans for those areas.

CH-20 In support of the conservation and adaptive re-use of registered heritage properties and buildings, the Municipality may consider a development agreement for any development or change in use not otherwise permitted by the land use by-law, providing:

- a) the development agreement relates to one of the following:**
 - i. a registered heritage property, including a streetscape or a cultural landscape,**
 - ii. a lot containing a registered heritage building, or**
 - iii. a site consisting of two or more abutting properties, at least one of which is a registered heritage property or contains a registered heritage building; and**
- b) the property is located outside of the:**
 - i. Regional Centre Secondary Plan Area,**
 - ii. the Downtown Halifax Secondary Plan Area, and**
 - iii. an established Heritage Conservation District;**

For a development agreement under this policy, the Municipality shall consider:

- c) whether the development proposal maintains the heritage value of any registered heritage property of which it is part;**
- d) whether the level of proposed investment in conservation measures on the property is generally proportional with the additional development rights provided through the agreement, especially in cases of new construction;**
- e) any unregistered historic buildings on the site of the development, and whether options for their conservation are evaluated and incorporated wherever possible;**

- f) if a heritage building is proposed to be relocated or lifted from its foundation, whether to impose a condition that prior to issuance of a building or development permit, a plan approved by a certified structural engineer must be submitted prior to any intervention;
- g) the provisions of Policy CH-30, if:
 - i. a development site consists of two or more abutting properties, and
 - ii. the development proposed does not require a substantial alteration to the registered heritage property/ building;
- h) whether the proposal is generally consistent with the heritage policies of the secondary plan area of which it is part;
- i) incentive or bonus zoning is provided consistent with the requirements of the Land Use Bylaw;
- j) the development agreement requires a waiver under Section 18 of the Heritage Property Act to be registered on the property before a development permit is issued for any portion of the development; and
- k) the provisions of Policy IM-9.

For the purposes of Policy CH-20, the following definitions apply:

"Abutting" means properties that share a common boundary (i.e., property line, wall). Properties are not abutting where they share only one boundary point as opposed to a boundary line (i.e. properties which meet only at a shared corner).

9.4.4 HERITAGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

HalifACT, the Municipality's long-term climate change action plan, establishes targets for decarbonization (greenhouse gas emission reductions) and actions to achieve this.

Deconstruction, or salvage, is a heritage preservation tool that supports sustainability goals. Removing pieces of an existing building to be repurposed, instead of mechanically demolishing an entire structure, reduces the volume of materials sent to the landfill, retains high quality and local building materials that are increasingly more expensive and difficult to find, and assists property owners in sourcing period appropriate elements for older buildings. Reusing building materials benefits the environment by reducing the need to create or source new materials, and minimizing emissions that accompany demolition and new construction. It may also reduce disposal costs. Requirements for deconstruction or salvage could encourage preservation and reuse of heritage building materials and features, and support the Municipality's *HalifACT* goal to embed low carbon objectives in all aspects of community planning, policy, and infrastructure. The Municipality will continue to investigate opportunities to encourage this approach.

CH-21 The Municipality may investigate the potential to establish requirements around deconstruction and salvage of building materials as part of development proposals for registered heritage properties.

CH-22 The Municipality shall consider deconstruction and salvage as a component of any demolition undertaken on properties owned by the Municipality.

CH-23 The Municipality shall consider updating financial incentive programs for registered heritage properties or contributing resources within heritage conservation districts to include energy efficiency retrofits with the objective of assisting in the sustainability and climate resiliency of these structures.

9.4.5 CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

Cultural landscapes are defined under the *Heritage Property Act* as distinct geographical areas or properties uniquely representing the combined work of nature and of people. These landscapes vary dramatically in size and character – from historic settlements to prehistoric rock art sites to designed landscapes such as parks and gardens. Examples may include a burial ground, a historical garden or much larger landscapes reflecting human intervention, such as the pastures of the Musquodoboit Valley, the Shubenacadie Canal, or the Bedford Barrens. Scenic views of outstanding natural and cultural resources are another example, such as views of Halifax Harbour, the Northwest Arm, and Long Hill over Cole Harbour.

Cultural landscapes provide opportunities for the interpretation and understanding of important historical settings and past patterns of land use. Preserving and promoting these landscapes can also provide opportunities to enhance the sense of a place for both residents and visitors alike.

The *Halifax Green Network Plan* identifies 17 priority areas throughout the municipality as a starting point for a comprehensive inventory of landscapes of cultural significance. Eleven of these sites are listed in the *Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy* for specific consideration under Urban Structure and Urban Design guidelines.

CH-24 The Municipality shall work with the Province of Nova Scotia to advance amendments to the *Heritage Property Act* to allow for the development of regulations for cultural landscapes.

CH-25 The Municipality shall, through Community Planning:

- a) consider the identification of significant cultural landscapes; and**
- b) consider the potential impacts of new development on lands on or adjacent to identified significant cultural landscapes and consider measures to mitigate potential adverse impacts on a cultural landscape's cultural value, historic value, and environmental resources.**

CH-26 The Municipality shall collaborate with under-represented groups and communities to identify cultural heritage sites of cultural significance and consider methods for recognition, commemoration, and preservation.

9.4.6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Archaeological resources are the remains of any building, structure, activity, place or cultural feature or object that, because of the passage of time, is on or below the surface of land or water and is of significance to the understanding of the history of a people or place. Archaeological sites can be protected under

Provincial legislation, the *Special Places Protection Act*, which regulates the destruction, alteration, or removal of archaeological resources from these sites.

Development can present a significant risk to archaeological resources. If archaeological sites are recognized and appropriately addressed prior to development taking place, adverse consequences can be mitigated, and archaeological resources preserved. The Municipality intends to work with the Province to identify archaeological sites and determine appropriate measures for mitigation.

CH-27 The Municipality shall work with the Province to consider mechanisms for municipal archaeological protection.

CH-28 The Municipality shall collaborate with the Province on developing a Regional Archaeology Strategy that establishes a process for identifying significant sites, culture and heritage assessment requirements, and mitigation measures to ensure archaeological resources are preserved.

9.4.7 CONSERVATION STANDARDS

Conservation standards are adopted by Regional Council under By-Law H-200, the *Heritage Property By-Law*, to direct the evaluation of alterations to heritage buildings and properties, and to evaluate new development that may impact heritage buildings and properties. Staff interpret these standards and provide recommendations to the heritage advisory committee and Regional Council on applications under the *Heritage Property Act*, or relevant planning policies pertaining to development on, or abutting, heritage properties. The conservation standards are also used by the heritage officer in the administration of heritage conservation districts.

CH-29 By-Law H-200, the *Heritage Property By-Law*, shall identify Conservation Standards. These Conservation Standards shall be used in assessing the impacts of a proposed intervention on the heritage value and character defining elements of a heritage property. Applications for substantial alteration to heritage properties shall:

- a) include an approach to address design strategies that make a new development compatible with, distinguishable from, and subordinate to a heritage property; and
- b) address the relationship of the new structure to the lot, its relationship to the surrounding area, its massing and façade relations with the heritage property.

9.5 DEVELOPMENT ABUTTING REGISTERED HERITAGE PROPERTIES

This Plan provides guidance for development abutting federally, provincially, or municipally registered heritage properties. It is important for the architecture of new development abutting heritage properties to be sensitive and complementary to the heritage properties. A Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) is a study that determines whether a heritage resource will be impacted by a proposed development or site alteration, and provides guidance to mitigate those impacts. The intent is to support innovative design solutions, with emphasis on heritage integration, that incorporate architecture, place-making, and material selection of the highest quality that are appropriate in relation to their abutting neighbours.

CH-30 For lands abutting federally, provincially or municipally registered heritage properties, the Municipality shall, when reviewing applications for development agreements or amendments to secondary municipal planning strategies, or when reviewing the provision of public infrastructure or services for said lands, consider a range of design solutions and architectural expressions that are compatible with the abutting federally, provincially or municipally registered heritage properties by considering the following:

- a) the careful use of materials, colour, proportion, and the rhythm established by surface and structural elements reinforces those same aspects of the existing buildings;
- b) ensuring that new development is visually compatible with yet distinguishable from the abutting registered heritage property. To accomplish this, an appropriate balance must be struck between mere imitation of the abutting building and pointed contrast, thus complementing the abutting registered heritage property in a manner that respects its heritage value;
- c) ensuring that new developments respect the building scale, massing, proportions, profile and building character of abutting federally, provincially or municipally registered heritage structures by ensuring that they:
 - i. incorporate fine-scaled architectural detailing and human-scaled building elements.
 - ii. reinforce, the structural rhythm (i.e., expression of floor lines, structural bays, etc.) of abutting federally, provincially or municipally registered heritage properties; and
 - iii. any additional building height proposed above the pedestrian realm mitigate its impact upon the pedestrian realm and abutting registered heritage properties by incorporating design solutions, such as stepbacks from the street wall and abutting registered heritage properties, modulation of building massing, and other methods of massing articulation using horizontal or vertical recesses or projections, datum lines, and changes in material, texture or colour to help reduce its apparent scale;
- d) the siting of new developments such that their footprints respect the existing development pattern by:
 - i. physically orienting new structures to the street in a similar fashion to existing federally, provincially or municipally registered heritage structures to preserve a consistent street wall; and,
 - ii. respecting the existing front and side yard setbacks of the street or heritage conservation district including permitting exceptions to the front yard requirements of the applicable land use by-laws where existing front yard requirements would detract from the heritage values of the streetscape;
- e) not unreasonably creating shadowing effects on public spaces;
- f) complementing historic fabric and open space qualities of the existing streetscape;

- g) ensuring that parking facilities (surface lots, residential garages, stand-alone parking and parking components as part of larger developments) are compatible with abutting federally, provincially or municipally registered heritage structures;
- h) placing public infrastructure or services in locations which do not detract from or adversely impact the heritage value or architectural integrity of the heritage resource;
- i) having the proposal meet the heritage considerations of the appropriate Secondary Planning Strategy, as well as any applicable urban design guidelines; and,
- j) any applicable matter as set out in Policy IM-9 of this Plan.

For the purposes of Policy CH-30, the following definitions apply:

"Abutting" means properties that share a common boundary (i.e., property line, wall). Properties are not abutting where they share only one boundary point as opposed to a boundary line (i.e. properties which meet only at a shared corner).

"Building scale" means a building's size relative to another building's size, or the size of one building's elements relative to another building's elements.

"Massing" means the way in which a building's gross cubic volume is distributed upon the site, which parts are higher, lower, wider, or narrower.

"Proportion" means the relationship of two or more dimensions, such as the ratio of width to height of a window or the ratio of width to height of a building or the ratio of the height of one building to another.

"Profile" means a building's cross-sectional shape or the shape of its outline.

"Building character" means the combined effect of all of the architectural elements of a building or a group of buildings.

"Human-scaled building elements" means a range of building details from small (masonry units, doorknobs, window muntins, etc.) to medium (doors, windows, awnings, balconies, railings, signs, etc.) to large (expression of floor lines, expression of structural bays, cornice lines, etc.).

"Street wall" means the vertical plane parallel to the street in which the front building facades of the majority of the buildings along a street are located.

"Pedestrian realm" means the volume of space enclosed by the horizontal plane of the street and sidewalks, and the vertical planes of the facing streetwalls. The height of this volume is determined by the height of the base of the adjacent buildings as defined by a major cornice line or by the point at which a building's massing is first stepped-back from the streetwall. Where cornice lines or setbacks do not exist, the height will be generally two to five stories, as appropriate.

CH-30 shall not apply within the Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Plan Area.

CHAPTER 10:

IMPLEMENTATION

CHAPTER 10: IMPLEMENTATION

10.1 INTRODUCTION

The Regional Plan guides the Municipality's planning and decision-making and represents the vision of the community. Through open, transparent, and inclusive dialogue, the Municipality has the responsibility of achieving the Plan's vision through actions using available planning tools. Planning is not a static practice; it is iterative process evaluating and reporting on actions and successes and adapting to changing situations. The success of this Plan depends on aligning all policies and programs throughout HRM to achieve the vision and objectives of this Plan.

10.2 OBJECTIVES

- 1. Provide for the effective implementation of the policies outlined in this Plan.**
- 2. Engage residents in developing policies, programs, and services as the basis for building healthy and inclusive communities.**
- 3. Monitor the effectiveness of policies and programs of this Plan.**
- 4. Undertake periodic reviews of this Plan to assess whether changes are needed.**
- 5. Ensure that the Municipality's policies, regulations and programs are aligned to achieve the vision, principles, and objectives of this Plan.**

10.3 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Since 2016, the Municipality has been continually updating and reviewing engagement practices, policies, and processes. Some of these improvements include lessening the dependence on public information meetings by encouraging open house-style meetings, using a range of mediums to allow residents to engage, developing more user-friendly outreach, and redesigning notifications and signage, as well as updating virtual engagement as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

10.3.1 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FOR PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND PLANNING DOCUMENTS

A public participation policy is legislatively required to identify opportunities and establish ways and means of seeking the opinions of the public proposed planning documents, as described under the *HRM Charter*. In 2023, Regional Council approved Administrative Order 2023-002-ADM and the accompanying Planning and Development Public Engagement Guidebook (Guidebook). The Guidebook was developed following Regional Council's direction in 2016 to update the Municipality's engagement processes to establish an updated and consistent approach to designing engagement practices. The purpose of the Guidebook is to

support staff to pro-actively address public engagement with influence, impact, inclusion, and accessibility as primary and core considerations. The Administrative Order establishes minimum standards for public participation and establishes a method for engagement with abutting municipalities, as required by the *HRM Charter*, and requires using the Guidebook to determine if different or additional public participation is needed to support the review of planning document.

IM-1 A public participation policy shall be adopted by Regional Council as an Administrative Order. This Administrative Order:

- a) shall, in accordance with section 219 of the *HRM Charter*, establish the ways and means of seeking the opinions of the public;**
- b) shall, in accordance with section 219A of the *HRM Charter*, establish a method for engaging with abutting municipalities respecting a new Municipal Planning Strategy or amendments to them;**
- c) may identify additional methods for public participation, including the use of a Public Engagement Guidebook for additional or different public participation, and for the removal of barriers to participation; and**
- d) may provide for public participation for certain planning applications other than planning documents.**

10.4 PLANNING TOOLS

10.4.1 SECONDARY MUNICIPAL PLANNING STRATEGIES

Various community plans were adopted prior to amalgamation and prior to this Plan being adopted. These plans present visions, objectives and policies of a community which may not be consistent with this Plan. Over time, the Municipality will use the Community Planning program to achieve consistency in all its planning documents and programs to ensure that they are consistent with this Plan and that they reflect current community issues and desires for future change.

As part of the Community Planning program, the Municipality will engage with communities to understand their visions in relation to the overarching goals of the Regional Plan. Where Community Visions were approved in principle by the Municipality in 2006, these may be considered and updated as part of the Community Planning program.

IM-2 Existing secondary municipal planning strategies, identified in Appendix B to this Plan, shall remain in effect until repealed by the Municipality.

IM-3 When evaluating amendments to land use by-laws or development agreement applications, in the event of conflict between the policies of this Plan and a secondary municipal planning strategy, the more stringent shall prevail.

IM-4 Where minimum setbacks or buffers from watercourses, coastal areas, or wetlands are established under secondary municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws differ from the minimum buffer specified by this Plan, the more stringent shall prevail.

- IM-5** When new secondary municipal planning strategies or amendments to existing secondary municipal planning strategies are brought forward for approval, the Municipality shall consider whether the proposed objectives and policies are consistent with or further achieve the objectives and policies of this Plan.
- IM-6** The Community Visioning statements approved by the Municipality for the Bedford Waterfront; Fall River; Musquodoboit Harbour; Middle/ Upper Sackville/ Lucasville; Spryfield; Penhorn/ Woodlawn; Woodside and Upper Tantallon shall be considered and may be updated when preparing secondary municipal planning strategies.
- IM-7** When considering adopting new or amending existing planning documents, it shall be the intention of Council to consider the regional objective of building complete communities and organizing land uses in a manner that:
- a) respects the environmental or cultural features of significance on the lands;
 - b) mitigates potential impacts of development on lands that are adjacent to federal, provincial, and municipal parks , and other protected areas;
 - c) prioritizes the movements of people walking/rolling, cycling and taking transit over car-oriented design, including the connections to surrounding community;
 - d) locates residential and mixed-use growth near future rapid transit corridors, particularly within 500 metres of a corridor; and
 - e) includes community-scale or site-level green infrastructure, renewable energy, and other climate mitigation and adaptation design elements.

10.4.2 PRIORITIES PLANS

Priorities plans are subject-focused, strategic plans that can include guidance for the Municipality's strategic initiatives, including programs, services, partnerships, and facilities, and their associated budgetary requirements. Regional Council has endorsed several priority plans since 2014 including the *Integrated Mobility Plan*, *Halifax Green Network Plan*, *HalifACT*, *Halifax's Inclusive Economic Strategy 2022-2027*, and *Sharing Our Stories: HRM's Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan*. Existing Priorities Plans have assisted in the development of the policies of this Plan and will continue to assist in guiding staff with ongoing work. Future Priorities Plans, such as the Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priorities Plan (see Policy RP-27), may also be used to guide future amendments to this Plan and other planning documents once endorsed by Regional Council.

- IM-8** In considering any proposed amendments to planning documents, the Municipality shall consider the objectives, policies and actions of the Priorities Plans endorsed by Regional Council.

10.4.3 DISCRETIONARY APPLICATIONS

Discretionary applications include proposed development agreements or amendments to development agreements, or land use by-law amendments which may be considered pursuant to the policies of this Plan

or secondary municipal planning strategies. This section outlines the circumstances and policy criteria that must be considered by the Municipality when reviewing such proposals.

IM-9 (1) In considering a development agreement, amendments to a development agreement, or any amendments to a land use by-law pursuant to the provisions of this plan or any secondary municipal planning strategy, the Municipality shall consider:

- a) whether the proposal is reasonably consistent with the intent of the policies of this Plan and the applicable secondary municipal planning strategy;**
- b) that priority be given to increasing the supply of safe, sustainable and affordable housing;**
- c) where applicable, the environmental features or areas which may not be suitable for development, including:**
 - i. land subject to flooding or subsidence;**
 - ii. steep slopes;**
 - iii. low-lying, marshy or unstable land, including watercourses and wetlands of all types;**
 - iv. tree cover; and**
 - v. habitat for species-at-risk;**
- d) for the features and areas identified in IM-9 (c), how the development may be directed away from or managed within these areas and the opportunities to enhance or restore degraded environmental features as part of the development proposal, where possible;**
- e) the provisions of CH-30, where applicable;**
- f) whether the proposal is appropriate and not premature, with consideration given to:**
 - i. the financial capacity of the Municipality to absorb any costs relating to the development;**
 - ii. municipal or private wastewater, stormwater, and water infrastructure provision;**
 - iii. emergency services to support the proposed development;**
 - iv. schools, parks, and community facilities;**
 - v. road networks leading or next to, or within the development;**
 - vi. transportation infrastructure for walking/rolling, cycling, transit, and vehicles for travel to and within the development;**

- vii. whether the subject lands are suitable for development in terms of the steepness of grades, soil and geological conditions, locations of watercourses, wetlands, and susceptibility to flooding; and
- g) whether development regulations in the proposed rezoning or development agreement will mitigate the potential conflicts between the proposed development and nearby land uses, by reason of:
 - i. the type of use(s);
 - ii. the built form of any proposed building(s);
 - iii. impacts on adjacent uses, including compatibility with adjacent residential neighbourhoods, parks, community facilities, and railway operations;
 - iv. traffic generation, safe access to and egress from the site, and parking;
 - v. open storage and signage,
 - vi. maintenance;
 - vii. impacts of lighting, noise, fumes, and other emissions; and
 - viii. any other relevant matter of planning concern.

(2) Notwithstanding any policy of the applicable secondary municipal planning strategy or this Plan, for multi-unit residential buildings that begin construction on or before April 1, 2027, there shall be no requirement:

- a) related to the unit mix of the proposed buildings; and
- b) for more than 20% ground floor commercial space.

10.4.4 CONSERVATION DESIGN DEVELOPMENTS

Conservation Design Development is a development tool that allows for clustered residential development in a manner that helps to preserve significant environmental and cultural features of the landscape. The Conservation Design Development tool was first introduced under the 2006 Regional Plan. These policies are intended to encourage growth within the Rural Growth Centres and to manage growth in between centres. The design process for a Conservation Design Development involves identifying lands that support important environmental functions or pose environmental hazards as primary conservation features. Culturally significant lands or those lands that provide environmental functions are identified as secondary conservation features and are to be protected or incorporated as part of the development. Through this process, areas of the site best suited for development are identified and the development is designed to optimize environmental features and mitigate environmental impacts.

There are three (3) types of Conservation Design Development that may be considered for approval by development agreement:

- Lower Density Classic Conservation Design;

- Higher Density Classic Conservation Design; and
- Hybrid Conservation Design.

Classic Conservation Design Form (Lower Density and Higher Density)

The Classic Conservation Design Development form (Lower Density and Higher Density) involves the entire site, inclusive of a shared private driveway, being held in single ownership and requires building sites to be clustered on a portion of the site, conserving a larger connected common open space on the remainder of the site. Within Rural Growth Centres, a higher density option is available as means of supporting residential development within the Rural Growth Centres.

Hybrid Conservation Design Development Form

The Hybrid Conservation Design Development form is similar to a small-scale traditional residential subdivision development where individual lots are created on a new public street. Under this form a higher percentage of lands is conserved as open space on individual lots. This is achieved through restricting site development, inclusive of buildings, individual driveways, and lawns, to a small area of the lot and conserving the remainder of the lot as a non-disturbance area. The overall development is to be designed so that individual non-disturbance areas are contiguous for mutual ecological benefit.

The type of Conservation Design Development enabled is determined based on the location of a site in relation to the Rural Growth Centres. Higher densities are encouraged within the Rural Growth Centres.

IM-10 Subject to Policy IM-11, the Municipality shall consider the following types of Conservation Design Development by development agreement where one-third or more of an area of land is within a Rural Growth Centre as shown on Map 4:

- a) Lower Density Classic Conservation Design Development;
- b) Higher Density Classic Conservation Design Development; or
- c) Hybrid Conservation Design Development.

IM-11 Lands entirely within the Lake Echo Sub-watershed, as generally illustrated on Map 4 shall not be eligible for Conservation Design Development, unless a proponent submits a survey prepared by a Nova Scotia Land Surveyor demonstrating that the subject area of land or a portion of the area of land is outside the Lake Echo Sub-watershed. Where any portion of a subject area of land is within the sub-watershed may be included for density and the area calculation as set out in Table 10.1.

IM-12 Subject to Policy IM-13, the Municipality shall consider the following types of Conservation Design Development by development agreement where more than two thirds of the area of land is outside the boundaries of a Rural Growth Centre shown on Map 4:

- a) Lower Density Classic Conservation Design Development to a maximum of 100 dwelling units; or
- b) Hybrid Conservation Design Development to a maximum of 30 dwelling units.

IM-13 A development agreement under Policy IM-12 shall only be considered subject to the following location criteria:

- a) On an area of land within the
 - i. Rural Commuter Designation; or
 - ii. Rural Resource Designation; or
 - iii. Agricultural Designation that is also within the Village Designation under the Musquodoboit Valley/ Dutch Settlement Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy; and
- b) On an area of land outside the:
 - i. Beaver Bank / Hammonds Plains Growth Control Areas as shown on Schedule J of the Regional Subdivision By-Law;
 - ii. the Rural Area Designation under the Eastern Passage/Cow Bay Plan Area; and
 - iii. NEF 30 Contour as shown on Map 3 of the Planning Districts 14 and 17 (Shubenacadie Lakes) Municipal Planning Strategy; and
- c) On an area of land which was in existence as of April 29, 2006 that has a minimum of 20 metres of continuous frontage on a publicly owned and maintained street/road which was in existence as of April 29, 2006.

IM-14 Any Conservation Design Development by development agreement made pursuant to Policies IM-10 and IM-13 shall be in accordance with Table 10.1 and the following:

Site Studies and Assessments

- a) Where the proposed development is to be serviced by a groundwater supply, a hydrogeological assessment conducted by a qualified professional has determined that there is an adequate supply of groundwater to service the development without adversely affecting groundwater supply in adjacent developments;
- b) The development shall not rely on cisterns for potable water supply, except in special circumstances as may be authorized under an approved secondary planning strategy;

Site Development, Connectivity and Open Space Design

- c) Primary Conservation Areas or Features as defined in Table 10.1 are protected and retained as Open Space;
- d) Secondary Conservation Areas are incorporated as part of the overall Open Space Requirements;
- e) The proposed streets and buildings sites are designed to avoid, where possible, Conservation Areas and Features;
- f) Where an area of land is subject to Policy IM-11, proposed streets and building sites shall be located outside the Lake Echo Sub-Watershed;

- g) A private driveway for Low Density Classic Conservation Design Development and High Density Classic Conservation Design Development shall only provide access to a public street for up to 20 dwelling units (exclusive of secondary and backyard suites);
- h) The proposed site design shall consider ways to maintain landscape connectivity between the identified Primary and Secondary Conservations Areas and any public open space on adjacent parcels, including public trails;
- i) Where a development pursuant to Policy IM-12 is proposed for lands that extend beyond a Rural Growth Centre as illustrated on Map 4, preference shall be given to siting the development within the boundary of the Growth Centre.

Separation Distances

- j) Residential dwellings shall maintain a minimum separation of 800 metres from any permanent extractive facility.

Parkland Dedication and Additional Considerations

- k) Parkland dedication may be relaxed to a minimum of 5% for the Lower Density and Higher Density Classic Conservation Design Developments; and
- l) The provisions of Policy IM-9.

- IM-15 Subject to policies IM-10, IM-12 and IM-14 of this Plan and notwithstanding the maximum density requirements in IM-12 and Table 10.1, Conservation Design Developments either fully or partially located within a Rural Growth Centre shown on Map 4 may include secondary and backyard suites as additional units, consistent with the provisions of the applicable Land Use By-Law.
- IM-16 The Municipality may permit amendments to existing Conservation Design development agreements which are either fully or partially located within a Rural Growth Centre shown on Map 4 to allow for secondary and backyard suites as additional units provided the requirements of IM-15 are satisfied.
- IM-17 The Municipality may permit amendments to existing Conservation Design development agreements located outside of a Rural Growth Centre shown on Map 4, to allow for secondary and backyard suites as a permitted housing form consistent with the applicable Land Use By-Law, provided there is no change to the maximum permitted density and the requirements of IM-14 are satisfied.

Table 10.1: Conservation Design Development Standards

Property Location	Land Use Requirements
Definitions	The <u>Net Developable Area</u> is the gross area of a lot excluding riparian buffers and wetlands, floodplains, and slopes in excess of 30%.

	<p>The <u>Gross Developable Area</u> is the entire area of a lot which includes riparian buffers and wetlands, floodplains, and slopes in excess of 30%.</p> <p>For developments that have a construction permit issued and begin construction before April 1, 2027, developable area may be calculated as Gross Developable Area.</p> <p>For all other developments, developable area shall be calculated as Net Developable Area.</p>	
Within Rural Growth Centres	Lower Density Classic Conservation Design Development	
	Maximum Density	1 unit per hectare of developable area
	Open Space Requirement	40% of the developable area as common open space
	Permitted Residential Uses	Single Unit Dwelling, Two Unit Dwelling and Townhouse Dwelling, including Secondary and Backyard Suites
	Higher Density Classic Conservation Design Development	
	Maximum Density	(a) One unit per 0.4 hectares of developable area where the development is serviced with a municipal water supply; or (b) One unit per 0.5 hectares of developable area where the development is serviced with a groundwater supply; or (c) Where a secondary planning strategy is adopted after August 29, 2006, the density prescribed by the secondary planning strategy.
	Open Space Requirement	(a) 40% of the developable area as common open space; or (b) Where a secondary planning strategy is adopted after August 29, 2006, the open space requirement prescribed by the secondary planning strategy.
	Permitted Residential Uses	(a) Single Unit Dwelling, Two Unit Dwelling and Townhouse Dwelling (b) Townhouses, shared housing uses, and multiple unit buildings prescribed by a secondary planning strategy adopted after August 29, 2006 (c) Secondary and Backyard Suites
	Hybrid Conservation Design Development	
	Maximum Density	1 unit per hectare of developable area
	Open Space Requirement	80% of each lot is retained as a site non-disturbance area
	Permitted Residential Uses	Single Unit Dwelling and Two Unit Dwellings, including Secondary and Backyard Suites
Outside Rural	Lower Density Classic Conservation Design Development	
	Maximum Density	1 unit per hectare of developable area to a maximum of 100 units

Growth Centres	Open Space Requirement	40% of the developable area as common open space
	Permitted Residential Uses	Single Unit Dwelling and Two Unit Dwelling, including Secondary and Backyard Suites
	Hybrid Conservation Design Development	
	Maximum Density	1 unit per hectare of developable area to a maximum of 30 units
	Open Space Requirement	80% of each lot is retained as a site non-disturbance area
	Permitted Residential Uses	Single Unit Dwelling and Two Unit Dwelling, including Secondary and Backyard Suites
Inside or Outside Rural Growth Centres	All Types of Conservation Design Development	
	Permitted Other Uses	Publicly or Privately owned Community Facilities, Home-Based Offices, Day Cares, and Short-term Rentals where permitted by the applicable Land Use By-Law.
	Permitted Open Space Uses	Agriculture, passive recreation, conservation-related uses or the placement of wastewater management facilities, community wells or other community facilities designed to service the development.
	Primary Conservation Areas or Features	Riparian buffers, wetlands, natural drainage systems, natural detention storage areas, slopes exceeding 30%, and floodplains, environmentally sensitive areas, archaeological sites, and other areas of high ecological value.
	Secondary Conservation Areas or Features	Mature forests, bare rock, scenic views, trails, historic sites and buildings, and other features of high environmental or cultural value.

10.4.5 ADAPTIVE REUSE IN RURAL AREAS

As outlined in Chapter 5, the adaptive reuse of existing structures can provide greater flexibility in land use policy to respond to rural housing demand in the near term. Recognizing these internal conversions will be considered by development agreement in advance of comprehensive planning for rural communities. Internal conversions are intended to maintain existing community character by retaining building envelopes.

IM-18 In the Rural Area, internal building conversions to create new residential dwelling units that are not otherwise permitted through the secondary municipal planning strategies or land use by-laws may be considered by development agreement. These internal conversions may be permitted in existing residential, institutional, utility or commercial buildings. This conversion shall not be considered in an accessory building as defined under the land use by-law. To support compatibility with existing community character, the proposed development must utilize the existing building envelope and existing lot. In considering such a development agreement, the Municipality shall consider the following:

- a) in addition to residential uses, any other proposed uses are permitted in the zone applied to the site;

- b) where the proposed development is to be serviced by a groundwater supply, a hydrogeological assessment conducted by a qualified professional has determined that there is an adequate supply of groundwater to service the development without adversely affecting groundwater supply in adjacent developments;
- c) where the proposed development is to be serviced by an on-site wastewater system, Provincial approval is to be provided demonstrating that the existing or proposed on-site septic system is:
 - i. adequate to accommodate the proposed residential adaptive reuse development; and
 - ii. is in compliance with all provincial regulations, for any necessary upgrades to an existing system or a new system where the existing system is insufficient;
- d) that changes to the size and form of the existing building are permitted only:
 - i. to meet or exceed building code requirements to create habitable space or improve accessibility or energy efficiency;
 - ii. for architectural design or façade changes, including new or altered window and door openings, cladding material, and rooflines;
 - iii. for decks, patios and similar unenclosed features; or
 - iv. for steps, stairs and other entryways;
- e) the provisions of Policy IM-9.

10.4.6 SPECIAL PLANNING AREAS

In early 2022, the Province of Nova Scotia created an Executive Panel on Housing to address housing challenges in the region. As part of this initiative, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing designated several Special Planning Areas in the Municipality to support the development of housing. To help accelerate an increase in the supply of housing, as outlined in the *Housing in the Halifax Regional Municipality Act*, the designation of a Special Planning Area allows the Minister to make decisions on planning matters in those areas.

At the time these areas were created, detailed planning for many of the Special Planning Areas had already been underway for some time, and draft policies for several had been well advanced. In instances where policy development has advanced to its late stages, allowing Special Planning Areas to proceed to early site development works concurrent with the resolution of detailed planning matters for the subject sites can help support the current demand for housing.

IM-19 Notwithstanding Policy IM-9, the Housing Task Force may consider development agreements on lands designated as a Special Planning Area which supersede the *Regional Subdivision By-Law* requirements to enable early tree removal, blasting, and earthworks by development agreement. The intent of this policy is to enable early site works concurrent with the resolution of detailed planning matters for the subject sites. As a requirement of

the development agreement, the following drawings prepared by a Professional Engineer must be submitted as a condition of permitting:

- a) Site Disturbance Plan;
- b) Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan; and
- c) Site Grading and Stormwater Management Plan.

10.4.7 REGIONAL OPPORTUNITY SITES

The Regional Plan Review considered several requests for mixed use development on large parcels of land. These sites present an opportunity for new housing development that is needed to support the significant demand for housing of all types across the Municipality. In other instances, new Federal Programs for housing have resulted in site specific amendments to the Regional Plan to enable housing. These property specific rules are outlined in this section.

10.4.7.1 URBAN AREA SITES

In 2022, the Regional Plan Review considered several requests for mixed-use development on large parcels of land. Two sites (Halifax Exhibition Centre and Bedford Commons, as generally shown on Map 3) were identified as opportunity sites for new housing development that is needed to support the significant demand for housing of all types across the Municipality. Since the 2022 Regional Plan Review amendments, Regional Council has directed that comprehensive planning processes may begin for both Opportunity Sites. For the Bedford Commons site, additional adjacent properties were identified for consideration as part of this planning process, which are now reflected in Policy IM-21 and on Map 3. For both sites, the comprehensive planning process will determine the appropriate planning tools to be used to regulate development, and the appropriate future land uses and densities. Future amendments will be prepared and may be incorporated into this Plan and the applicable secondary municipal planning strategy.

IM-20 Notwithstanding the provisions of the *Planning District 4 Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy*, the Municipality may undertake a neighbourhood planning process for the Halifax Exhibition Centre lands (PIDs 40600728, 41457987, and 41432642). When considering amendments to planning documents for these lands, Council shall consider:

- a) this Plan, including Policy IM-8;
- b) whether the proposal contains a mixed use neighbourhood that will provide a range of housing types and dwelling unit types, places of employment, and services where daily needs of residents can be met;
- c) requiring the public participation program provide diverse and inclusive opportunities for public engagement;
- d) opportunities to coordinate with the ongoing planning for the expansion of the Ragged Lake Industrial Park, with particular regard to the transportation network and water and wastewater servicing infrastructure;

- e) the relationship of the site to surrounding uses and neighbourhoods, including the Beechville community, the Prospect Road area, Long Lake Provincial Park, Western Common, and the Ragged Lake Industrial Park;
- f) if required, a land suitability assessment that identifies vulnerable landforms, sensitive ecological features and climate hazards;
- g) if required, a culture and heritage assessment that identifies and evaluates culture and heritage resources located on or adjacent to the opportunity site;
- h) if required, a baseline infrastructure study that assesses existing transportation infrastructure assets and constraints (using a multi-modal level of service analysis), and existing wastewater and water services infrastructure capacity and constraints;
- i) the overall site design, development densities and building massing, and how these aspects have considered the recommendations of any required background studies;
- j) the classes of land uses permitted;
- k) whether phasing of development will enable a variety of uses to be provided within the first buildings constructed on the site;
- l) the adequacy of proposed and existing public parks, open spaces and community recreation facilities that meet the objectives of this Plan;
- m) whether the development's transportation network prioritizes walking, the easy use of mobility devices, cycling and transit and allows for connections to surrounding neighbourhoods;
- n) provisions for incentive or bonus zoning; and
- o) off-site improvements necessary to integrate the development in the neighbourhood.

IM-21 The Municipality may permit mixed use development in the Bedford Commons area (PIDs 00416222, 41214404, 41214370, 41240276, 00428458, 41395831, 00428896, 40111759, 40111742, 40111734 and 00415679). When considering amendments to planning documents for these lands, Council shall consider:

- a) this Plan, including Policy IM-8;
- b) whether the proposal contains a mixed use neighbourhood that will provide a range of housing types and dwelling unit types, places of employment, and services where daily needs of residents can be met;
- c) the relationship of the site to surrounding uses and neighbourhoods, including the existing commercial and industrial development in the area;
- d) the overall site design, development densities and building massing, and how these aspects have considered the recommendations of any required background studies;

- e) the classes of land uses permitted;
- f) phasing of development;
- g) the use and conservation of energy;
- h) the adequacy of public parks, open spaces, and community recreation facilities that meet the objectives of this Plan;
- i) whether the development's transportation network prioritizes walking, the easy use of mobility devices, cycling and transit and allows for connections to surrounding neighbourhoods;
- j) provisions for incentive or bonus zoning; and
- k) off-site improvements necessary to integrate the development in the neighbourhood.

10.4.7.2 RURAL AREA SITES

IM-22 The Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-law, establish a Comprehensive Development District (CDD) Zone to apply to certain lands within the following Rural Growth Centres: Hubbards, Musquodoboit Harbour, Porters Lake and Upper Tantallon. This zone is intended to protect these lands as focal points for development within these centres by requiring development to proceed by development agreement except for the continuation and expansion of existing uses.

- (1) Where the proposed development is to be serviced by a groundwater supply, a hydrogeological assessment conducted by a qualified professional shall be required, which must demonstrate that there is an adequate supply of groundwater to service the development without adversely affecting groundwater supply in adjacent developments;
- (2) In considering approval of any development agreements pursuant to this policy, the Municipality shall consider the following:
 - a) whether the development is designed as part of a focal point for the distribution of services to the outlying area;
 - b) the types of land uses to be included in the development which may include a mix of medium-density residential uses, secondary suites and backyard suites, ground floor commercial, institutional uses, recreation uses and parking facilities;
 - c) where applicable, connections to existing and planned opportunities for the rural active transportation network are provided;
 - d) architectural details marking the entrance to buildings;
 - e) controls on signage;

- f) controls on heights, massing, scale, and type of development;
- g) whether the details of the exterior architectural design of new buildings are complementary to the traditional building style within the surrounding community;
- h) where necessary, details concerning preferred traditional building materials;
- i) appropriate locations of parking for Park & Ride facilities, where applicable, and retail outlets; and
- j) the provisions of Policy IM-9.

10.4.7.3 SITES SUPPORTING AFFORDABLE HOUSING INITIATIVES

The Rapid Housing Initiative is a federal program operated by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) that provides funding for the rapid development of new deeply affordable housing. Site-specific amendments to the 2014 Regional Plan in 2021 and 2022 enabled developments under this program to proceed. These policies are maintained in this Plan to ensure continued policy support for these developments.

IM-23 The Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-law, permit emergency shelter uses, shared housing uses, multi-unit dwellings uses, and community facility uses on 5853 College Street, Halifax, (PID 00125427) to support the development of affordable housing through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Rapid Housing Initiative. Land use by-law requirements shall ensure that the building scale respects the historic character of the Carlton Street area.

IM-24 The Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-law, permit a shared housing use and multi-unit dwelling use at 7044 and 7050 Highway 207, West Chezzetcook (PID 40302507) to support the development of affordable housing through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Rapid Housing Initiative. Land use by-law requirements shall ensure that the building scale respects the character of the surrounding community.

10.4.8 TRANSIT ORIENTED SUBURBAN AREA OPPORTUNITY SITES

The Suburban Community Planning program will involve a comprehensive planning process to develop a vision and future land use structure for the Suburban Area. Given the present housing shortage and the urgent need to increase the supply of safe, sustainable and affordable housing, it is reasonable to provide additional opportunity to allow those residential or mixed-use development to proceed where they are aligned with the Suburban Community Planning Vision and Core Concepts as outlined in Section 3.3.2.1 and Policy HC-3 and are ready to develop. Proposed developments may be considered by development agreement, where certain criteria and requirements can be met including accelerated project start and completion timelines.

IM-25 Notwithstanding Policy IM-3 but subject to Policy IM-26, Policy IM-27 and Policy IM-9, prior to the adoption of the Suburban Plan, development proposals that align with Section 3.3.2.1 including Policy HC-3 of this Plan for residential or mixed-use buildings that provide

primarily residential uses within the Suburban Area as identified on Map 2 and in the Urban Service Boundary, may be considered by development agreement or an amendment to an existing development agreement, provided they meet the following criteria:

- a) the proposed development site is located within the Suburban Area as identified on Map 2 but outside the Suburban Housing Accelerator Secondary Municipal Plan Area;
- b) the proposed development site is located within an 800 metre walkshed of a Planned Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) route or the Mill Cove Ferry Terminal as identified on Map 3;
- c) the proposed development site is no more than 2 hectares in total area;
- d) the proposed development must not result in the demolition of an existing building containing three dwelling units or more; and
- e) a complete application for a development agreement must be on file with the Municipality on or before the first notice of the intention of Council to adopt the Suburban Plan.

IM-26 In considering an application for a development agreement or an amendment to a development agreement under Policy IM-25, the Municipality shall consider:

- a) that the development's permitted density and built form on the site considers walking distance to transit, local context and transitions in height and massing to low-rise residential neighbourhoods;
- b) the development's site design supports necessary infrastructure upgrades;
- c) whether to vary the built form and land use requirements in the Housing Accelerator Zone and applicable section of the Suburban Housing Accelerator Land Use By-Law;
- d) on-site and off-site improvements necessary to integrate the development in the surrounding area, including street and active transportation that support Bus Rapid Transit Corridors;
- e) whether ground floor commercial or institutional space is included to support local services and employment uses;
- f) provisions for incentive or bonus zoning consistent with requirements set out policies in Section 5.5.3 of this Plan and applicable land use by-laws;
- g) the project commencement date shall not exceed 18 months with one opportunity for a one-time extension not exceeding 6 months; and
- h) the project completion date shall not exceed three years from the date of commencement.

IM-27 A Development Agreement or an amendment to development agreement under Policy IM-25 and IM-26 shall:

a) for a development that is located:

- i. in a low-density residential area that is not near bus rapid routes or the Mill Cove Ferry Terminal, not exceed the built form for a low-rise building as set out in the Suburban Housing Accelerator Land Use By-Law;
- ii. near bus rapid transit routes or the Mill Cove Ferry Terminal and abuts a low-density residential area, not exceed the mid-rise built form as set out in the Suburban Housing Accelerator Land Use By-Law; and
- iii. near bus rapid transit routes or the Mill Cove Ferry Terminal and not abutting low-density residential areas, not exceed the tall mid-rise built form as set out in the Suburban Housing Accelerator Land Use By-Law; and

b) unless otherwise varied by the development agreement, require the applicable provisions of the Suburban Housing Accelerator Land Use By-Law to apply.

10.5 THE REGIONAL SUBDIVISION BY-LAW

The *Regional Subdivision By-Law* is amended concurrently to implement the policies of this Plan. This By-Law is an effective tool in achieving various objectives of this Plan such as regulating where municipal water and wastewater services will be provided and establishing design standards for municipal streets and parkland acquisitions.

IM-28 The *Regional Subdivision By-Law* and any proposed amendments to this By-Law shall be consistent with the objectives and policies of this Plan.

IM-29 The *Regional Subdivision By-Law* may establish application submission requirements which require electronic document submissions and do not require paper submissions.

10.5.1 RURAL GROWTH MANAGEMENT

To control development outside of rural centres and manage land use around open space and working landscapes, this Plan discourages the ongoing development of large-lot residential subdivisions in the Rural Area. Large-scale residential development can impact open spaces that define rural character, take natural resource lands out of production and conflict with resource industries such as farming, forestry and mining. Extensive road development to service residential developments may fragment landscapes, affecting important natural features and leaving islands of natural habitat that may not be enough to sustain biodiversity. Further, extensive dispersed residential development strains existing community services and adds pressure for the Municipality to develop costly infrastructure in unplanned areas.

To minimize these impacts, since the original adoption of the Regional Plan in 2006, it has been the intent of this Plan to discourage large-scale as-of-right development in the Rural Commuter, Rural Resource and Agricultural Designations, and limit residential subdivision in the Open Space and Natural Resource Designation. These policies are implemented through provisions established in the *Regional Subdivision By-Law*. Interim Growth Management Controls, established by Ministerial Order in 2004 during the development of the 2006 Regional Plan, were replaced first by the policies of the 2006 Regional Plan, continued by the 2014 Regional Plan and are now continued by the policies of this Plan, except provisions

adopted under the Eastern Passage/ Cow Bay Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy will continue to apply, and special provisions will continue to apply for areas within the Beaver Bank, Hammonds Plains, and Upper Sackville Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy.

Limited development on existing roads will continue to be permitted in line with existing community plans and land use by-laws. Additionally, limited subdivision which has traditionally been used for kinship purposes will continue to be permitted. The *Regional Subdivision By-Law* permits the creation of an additional lot which does not meet the minimum road frontage requirements, provided the area of land being divided was in existence prior to August 1, 1987 (consistent with the *Provincial Subdivision Regulations*), except where other provisions have been established in existing community plans. For lands in the Open Space and Natural Resource Designation, where residential subdivision is more restricted, this date was adjusted forward with the adoption of the 2006 Regional Plan.

Due to variations in the levels of road construction and challenges with long-term regular maintenance, private roads can result in unsafe passage for commercial and emergency vehicles and create dangerous access situations. Therefore, it is the intent of this Plan that the *Regional Subdivision By-Law* will continue to not permit the creation of new private roads. Future studies will determine how best to manage new residential development in the Rural Area and options for rural road standards will be considered at that time.

In some communities, particularly in the Rural Area, additional connections may be needed to provide for safe and efficient emergency access to and egress from existing subdivisions. Nothing in this Plan nor the *Regional Subdivision By-Law* prevents the Municipality from creating emergency access routes.

IM-30 To manage land use around the region's interconnected system of open space and minimize landscape fragmentation within the Open Space and Natural Resource Designation, the Municipality shall, through the *Regional Subdivision By-Law*, prohibit subdivision which creates lots for residential uses on new roads.

IM-31 Within the Rural Commuter, Rural Resource, Agricultural and Open Space and Natural Resource designations, the Municipality shall, through the *Regional Subdivision By-Law*, permit the subdivision of lots fronting existing local roads, including existing private roads, to the extent provided for under existing Secondary Municipal Planning Strategies, and for those roads shown on completed tentative and final subdivision applications submitted on or before August 26, 2006. Within these designations but outside of Water Service Areas, lots fronting on existing non-local roads shall be permitted with wider frontages.

IM-32 The Municipality shall, through the *Regional Subdivision By-Law*, establish provisions to allow for the approval of a maximum of eight lots on new public streets, per area of land with public street frontage in existence on August 26, 2006:

- a) within the Rural Commuter Designation, where the proposed road intersects with a local road; and**
- b) within the Rural Resource Designation, where the proposed road intersects with a local road or non-local road.**

IM-33 The Municipality shall, through the *Regional Subdivision By-Law*, regulate the design of flag lots in new subdivisions such that no more than three flag lots are contiguous to each other

except that flag lots shown on tentative or final subdivision applications on file prior to March 13, 2004 are exempted from these requirements.

- IM-34** Where a secondary municipal planning strategy so provides, the *Regional Subdivision By-Law* may permit the creation of additional lots from an area of land which does not meet the minimum lot frontage requirements, providing the lots have access to a road. These provisions may also include the ability to retain lot frontage exemptions for areas of land which have undergone minor alterations that do not increase development potential.
- IM-35** The Municipality shall, through the *Regional Subdivision By-Law*, provide for the creation of one additional lot from any area of land that is within the Open Space and Natural Resources Designation and does not meet the minimum road frontage requirements provided that the area of land was in existence prior to April 29, 2006.
- IM-36** The Municipality shall replace all existing growth management mechanisms contained in secondary municipal planning strategies with the growth management provisions contained in this Plan except that:
- a) the provisions adopted under the *Eastern Passage/Cow Bay Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy* shall continue to apply; and
 - b) provision shall be made within the *Beaver Bank, Hammonds Plains and Upper Sackville Planning Strategy* to allow for the development of large-scale subdivisions on lands zoned or under application for rezoning to a Comprehensive Development District prior to April 29, 2006.
- IM-37** The Municipality shall, through the *Regional Subdivision By-Law*, prohibit approval of new private roads throughout the municipality.

10.5.1.1 BEAVER BANK AND HAMMONDS PLAINS GROWTH CONTROL AREAS

Subdivision has been limited in portions of the Beaver Bank and Hammonds Plains communities since prior to the adoption of the 2006 Regional Plan, due to identified limitations in major transportation infrastructure. These growth control mechanisms may be adjusted in the future in alignment with the Municipality's long-term growth plans, as informed by the future Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priorities Plan, as outlined in Policies RP-27 and RP-28. Until comprehensive study of future community development and infrastructure planning in these areas is completed, the growth control mechanisms in the Beaver Bank and Hammonds Plains communities will continue to be applied.

- IM-38** Until transportation infrastructure capacity is increased within the Beaver Bank and Hammonds Plains areas, residential subdivision activity shall be limited. The Municipality shall, through the *Regional Subdivision By-Law*, establish special provisions in the Beaver Bank and Hammonds Plains communities to:
- a) limit subdivision and prohibit the creation of new public streets for residential uses within portions of the Hammonds Plains and Beaver Bank communities; and

- b) permit approval of one additional lot from any area of land in existence prior to April 29, 2006, which does not meet minimum road frontage requirements.

IM-39 Before considering any amendment to this Plan or the *Regional Subdivision By-Law* to adjust the subdivision restrictions pursuant to Policy IM-38, the Municipality shall complete the Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priorities Plan as outlined in Policy RP-27 and RP-28.

10.5.1.2 SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR LEGACY SUBDIVISION APPROVALS

Prior to the adoption of the Regional Plan in 2006, applications for subdivision and development in the Rural Area were approved that may not be aligned with the overall growth management strategy of this Plan. While existing development rights have been acknowledged, should these rights not have been exercised, these rights will be phased out over time to ensure that new development meets the objectives of this Plan. The Municipality anticipates that future work on long-term growth (as outlined in Chapter 2) and Rural Community Planning (as outlined in Chapter 3) could enable different forms of development on these lands in the future.

IM-40 The Municipality shall, through the *Regional Subdivision By-Law*, establish restrictions on future development resulting from concept applications which were approved prior to the establishment of the Interim Growth Management Controls. Subdivision pursuant to any completed concept applications on file prior to January 22, 2004 may be considered for approval subject to the following:

- a) a tentative or final subdivision application for the initial phase of subdivision construction must have been filed prior to April 29, 2006;
- b) approval may only be granted for a maximum of 25 lots per year; and
- c) unless section 295 of the Charter applies, where a tentative or final subdivision application for the final phase of subdivision has not been filed prior to April 29, 2031, subdivision may only be granted in accordance with the provisions of this Plan.

IM-41 The Municipality shall, through the *Regional Subdivision By-Law*, establish special provisions to allow for consideration of approval of lands now or formerly of Harbouredge Realty Administration Corp (Abbecombec Village) in Clam Bay provided that:

- a) approval of a maximum of 25 lots per year may be granted; and
- b) unless section 295 of the Charter applies, where a completed tentative or final subdivision application, pursuant to Concept Plan #13666 approved April 24, 2007, has been filed prior to April 29, 2031.

IM-42 The Municipality shall, through the *Regional Subdivision By-Law*, allow subdivision approvals of a maximum of 25 lots per year from concept applications which were filed prior to April 29, 2006 on lands outside of the portions of the Hammonds Plains and Beaver Bank

communities identified pursuant to Policy IM-38 and within the *Beaver Bank, Hammonds Plains and Upper Sackville Secondary Planning Strategy* subject to the restriction that where a completed tentative or final subdivision application for the initial phase of subdivision construction has not been filed by April 29, 2007, no subdivision approvals shall be granted under this exemption.

- IM-43** Notwithstanding IM-42, the area identified as the Indigo Shores Special Planning Area in accordance with the *Housing for Halifax Regional Municipality Act* and as shown as Schedule I of the *Beaver Bank, Hammonds Plains and Upper Sackville Land Use By-Law*, shall be exempt from the restrictions identified in IM-42. Further, the development of this area shall proceed by way of applied R-1 (Single Unit Dwelling) Zoning and by way of a development agreement to allow the development of more than 25 lots per year.

10.5.2 LAND TITLES CLARIFICATION INITIATIVE

The Land Titles Initiative is an initiative of the Province of Nova Scotia to help residents in certain African Nova Scotian communities get clear title to their land. In HRM, this applies to the communities of North Preston, East Preston, and Cherry Brook/Lake Loon. This initiative is supported by the *Land Titles Clarification Act* (1963) and the *Land Titles Initiative Acceleration Act* (2021). These Acts establish community boundaries that in some cases do not capture the entire community and exclude properties from consideration. This Plan aims to resolve this issue by creating policy that will officially recognize lots in existence in African Nova Scotian communities prior to municipal subdivision regulations. Given that this form of subdivision will not create new development but recognizes existing lots and dwellings, these requests shall be exempted from parkland dedication requirements.

- IM-44** The Municipality shall recognize lots in communities designated “land titles clarification areas” under the *Land Titles Clarification Act*, as existing prior to the date that the applicable land use by-law was adopted. The *Regional Subdivision By-Law* shall include lot design requirements that support the unique circumstances of these lots. This may include removing the requirements for lot area and frontage under specific circumstances such as clarifying eligibility for lot frontage exemptions and enabling subdivision for more than one main building on a lot.
- IM-45** Under the *Regional Subdivision By-Law*, the Municipality shall exempt lots recognized through Policy IM-44 from parkland dedication requirements.

10.5.3 10-HECTARE LOTS

The *HRM Charter* enables lots that exceed 10 hectares in area to be created outside of the municipal subdivision approval process. This exception is generally intended for resource uses, such as farming or forestry. In recent years, however, it has become more common for people to utilize the exemption with the intent to create such lots for cottage or residential development. Although such lots can be created without meeting land use by-law requirements for road frontage, the lots must meet land use by-law requirements in order to obtain development permits.

To recognize that development permits were issued for a limited number of single unit dwellings on lots created through the 10-hectare exception in the *HRM Charter*, in 2017 Regional Council approved relaxing the road frontage requirements and allowing the continued development of subdivisions that had received

permits for some, but not all lots. The policies in this section represent a one-time exception, intentionally focused on these unique situations to maintain the general intent of this Plan while being fair to affected property owners.

IM-46 The Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-laws, permit residential uses located on lots that do not meet road frontage requirements and were issued development permits on or before April 1, 2016.

IM-47 The Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-laws, permit development on lots that existed on or before April 1, 2016, and do not meet road frontage requirements within identified subdivisions that received development permits for some, but not all, lots located with the same subdivision.

IM-48 The Municipality shall, through the applicable land use by-law, permit development on ten (10) lots that do not meet road frontage requirements and that existed on or before April 1, 2016 on the east side of Scots Lake in Musquodoboit Harbour.

10.5.4 PARKLAND DEDICATION

Consistent with the provisions of the *HRM Charter*, the Municipality relies on a 10% park dedication from new subdivisions. Currently, the Municipality uses a park classification system established within the *Regional Subdivision By-law* to guide how parkland dedication is determined. Each type of park has their recreation function, design features and size of community they intend to serve. The number of proposed households are a key consideration when calculating the amount of lands needed to be acquired for parkland purposes through the subdivision process.

General requirements for parkland dedication are established in the *Regional Subdivision By-Law*. Exemptions for park dedication could potentially detract from the Municipality's financial ability to carry out the vision of this Plan and acquire lands that have longstanding value to the region for leisure and recreation. Given the pressures of population growth and the need for park infrastructure to support the growing needs of the region, parkland dedication of 10% will be required, with limited application of a reduction to 5%.

Where a comprehensive neighbourhood planning process has been undertaken, such as for a Future Growth Node in the Regional Centre or a Future Serviced Community as described in Chapter 3, alternative approaches to parkland dedication that differ from the *Regional Subdivision By-Law* may be established through secondary municipal planning strategies.

IM-49 Subject to IM-45 and IM-51, the Municipality shall, through the *Regional Subdivision By-Law*, establish a requirement for a 10% park dedication for new subdivisions.

IM-50 Further to Policy IM-49, the required parkland dedication amount shall be reduced to 5% where a subdivision meets the following conditions:

- a) Classic Conservation Design Developments as provided for under Section 10.4.3 of this Plan; or**
- b) the parcel of land to be subdivided:**

- i. was in existence on [date of first notice to adopt this Plan]; and
 - ii. will result in the creation of a maximum of two lots, no remainder lots, and cannot be further subdivided.
- IM-51** Alternative approaches to parkland dedication may be established in secondary municipal planning strategies, subject to the provisions of the *HRM Charter*.
- IM-52** The *Regional Subdivision By-law* shall contain a parkland classification system that outlines service delivery criteria for various park types for dedications to guide the Municipality when acquiring land through the subdivision process.

10.5.5 INFRASTRUCTURE CHARGES

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

- IM-53** The Municipality shall establish provisions under the *Regional Subdivision By-Law* to allow for the imposition of infrastructure charges to recover all, or part, of the capital costs incurred, or anticipated to be incurred, by the Municipality.
- IM-54** The Municipality shall consider establishing by-laws to allow for the recovery of costs.

10.5.6 UNDERGROUND TELECOMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

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

The Municipality has commissioned studies³⁸ to examine the benefits and challenges of underground utilities in terms of reliability, aesthetics, and cost, and has chosen a two-phased approach to implementation in new subdivision developments. Initially, undergrounding is required from the pole to the property and then, after further consultation with the development community, consideration may be given to total undergrounding within the street right-of-way.

IM-55 The Municipality shall, through the *Regional Subdivision By-Law*, require the underground placement of electrical and communication distribution lines from the poles within the street right-of-way to the property line for subdivision applications in which new streets are proposed within the Urban Service Area. The Municipality may consider future amendments to the *Regional Subdivision By-Law* to require the underground placement of all electrical and communication lines within street rights-of-way or rear lot servicing easements.

10.6 WATER AND WASTEWATER SERVICES

10.6.1 URBAN SERVICE AREA

The Municipality works closely with Halifax Water to plan for the Municipality's water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure needs. This Plan establishes a careful, considered process before allowing any expansion of the Urban Service Area Boundary. To effectively support decision-making for long-term growth and infrastructure investments, major amendments to the Urban Service Area boundary may only be considered if warranted by changes in population or employment growth, or where strategic investments in infrastructure support building healthy and complete communities, as may be determined by the forthcoming Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priorities Plan. As outlined in Policy RP-24 and RP-25 in Chapter 2, the Municipality will regularly monitor population and employment projections to inform whether additional lands may be required to accommodate growth within the Urban Area and may consider amendments to the Urban Service Area boundary during future reviews of this Plan.

IM-56 The Municipality shall establish an Urban Service Area within the *Regional Subdivision By-Law* to identify those areas where municipal wastewater and stormwater collection and water distribution systems are to be provided. Lands within the Urban Service Area shall only be developed with municipal wastewater and stormwater collection and water distribution systems.

IM-57 The Municipality shall seek to prevent premature development for residential or mixed use development with on-site services on lands designated Urban Settlement but not yet within the Urban Service Area by establishing an Urban Settlement Zone over these lands under the applicable land use by-law. This zone shall permit public parks and playgrounds but restrict new development to single unit dwellings serviced with on-site sewage disposal systems and wells on lots with a minimum size of two hectares on existing roads.

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

- IM-58** The Municipality shall seek to prevent premature development for industrial and other employment uses on publicly-owned lands designated Urban Settlement and within the Business/ Industrial Sub-Designation but not yet within the Urban Service Area by establishing an Urban Settlement Employment Zone over these lands under the applicable land use by-law. This zone shall permit utilities, conservation uses, and public parks and playgrounds.
- IM-59** In considering requests to amend the Urban Service Area boundary to include additional lands, the Municipality shall:
- a) study the lands to be included within the Urban Service Area consistent with Policies HC-11 to HC-14, except that this requirement may be waived where the proposed amendment represents a minor adjustment to the Area and is consistent with Policy IM-61;
 - b) consider the costs and feasibility of providing municipal services and infrastructure related to the extension;
 - c) consider the need to oversize the water, wastewater, or stormwater systems to allow for future development within the Urban Settlement designation; and
 - d) consider the need for a charge to pay for growth-related improvements to water, wastewater or stormwater systems.
- IM-60** Where new secondary municipal planning strategy policy is being considered for adoption for a Future Serviced Community consistent with Policy HC-14, the Urban Service Area boundary may be amended, provided that:
- a) a by-law has been established or is proposed concurrently to pay for growth-related municipal infrastructure, or the Municipality has determined that a by-law is not warranted; and
 - b) where required, a charge needed to pay for growth-related improvements to the water, wastewater, or stormwater services has been approved by the Nova Scotia Regulatory and Appeals Board.
- IM-61** The Municipality may consider minor adjustments to the Urban Service Area boundary where:
- a) the lands to be included within the boundary are adjacent to existing developed lands within the boundary that are serviced with municipal water, wastewater and stormwater systems and the adjustment will improve the interconnection of existing communities; and
 - b) (i) the adjustment will clarify and align the Urban Service Area boundary with the Urban Settlement Designation where a generalized line had been drawn; or

(ii) where Halifax Water identifies that the adjustment is needed to facilitate efficient installation of new infrastructure within the existing boundary; and

- c) the costs for installation of water, wastewater and/or stormwater infrastructure is to be borne by the proponent of the proposed development, and the Municipality and Halifax Water have determined there is no need for a municipal contribution to oversize the water, wastewater or stormwater systems to allow for future development.

10.6.2 WATER SERVICE AREAS

Although this Plan encourages a more compact urban form in which development is serviced with wastewater and water distribution systems, it recognizes that developments already exist that are serviced with a water distribution system and on-site sewage disposal systems.

However, the risk of inadequate performance of on-site sewage disposal systems in areas which are serviced with a central water supply is of concern. There is a higher degree of risk of on-site sewage disposal system failure in areas serviced with central water because the unlimited source of water can cause hydraulic overloading.³⁴

The Municipality will recognize existing lands serviced by municipal water services only, and will only allow for extensions in certain circumstances.

IM-62 The Municipality shall, through the *Regional Subdivision By-Law*, establish Water Service Areas where development shall be permitted which is serviced by a public water distribution system but without a municipal wastewater system. Within these areas, a water distribution system shall be required to service all new developments located adjacent to an existing water distribution system where a new or extended public street is proposed. Further, no water distribution system shall be permitted to extend outside of a Water Service Area.

IM-63 The Municipality may consider establishing new Water Service Areas, subject to the financial ability of the Municipality and Halifax Water to absorb any related costs, if the following conditions are met:

a) That:

- i. the area is within the Rural Commuter designation or within a Rural Centre as shown on Map 4 within the Rural Resource or Agricultural designation, and it has been determined through a planning process that significant new growth is to be encouraged in the area; or
- ii. the lands are adjacent to an existing Water Service Area and a Conservation Design Development is proposed; or
- iii. the lands are adjacent to an existing Water Service area and within the portion of PID 40150567 designated Rural Commuter; and

³⁴ Dillon Consulting Ltd. 2002. *Water Resource Management Study*.

- b) an area charge needed to pay for the water services or stormwater services has, where required, been adopted by by-law.

IM-64 The Municipality may consider expanding existing Water Service Areas to existing communities, subject to the financial ability of the Municipality to absorb any costs related to the expansion, if the following conditions are met:

(a) that:

- i. the lands are near a water distribution system owned and operated by Halifax Water; or
- ii. a study has been prepared by a qualified person verifying that there is a water quality or quantity problem that cannot reasonably be rectified by an alternative means; or
- iii. there are environmental concerns related to the long-term integrity of on-site sewage disposal systems and a wastewater management plan is also considered in accordance with Policy IM-67; and

- (b) an area charge needed to pay for growth related improvements to the water or stormwater services has been adopted by by-law, or Halifax Water has advised that an area charge is not required.

10.6.3 GROUND WATER SUPPLIES

Development in rural areas requires an adequate and sustainable water supply. Hydrogeological studies can address this objective through testing to assess long-term sustainable yield of larger subdivisions with many lots or any potential impact on existing wells in adjacent subdivisions. The *HRM Charter* allows the Municipality to require hydrogeological studies as a condition of subdivision approval. A comprehensive understanding of groundwater supplies across the region is required to further direct development to appropriate rural centres where water is available.

IM-65 The Municipality shall require a hydrogeological assessment for all subdivision applications to be serviced with on-site wells where the number of residential lots consists of ten or more. Subdivision approval will only be granted where the study determines that the quantity and quality of the groundwater source is sufficient to service the proposed development without adversely affecting groundwater supply in adjacent developments and municipal potable drinking water supply areas.

IM-66 To support growth in Rural Centres, through the Rural Community Planning program, the Municipality shall consider:

- a) undertaking a region-wide hydrogeological study regarding groundwater capacity across the rural areas of the region; and
- b) cooperating with the Province of Nova Scotia to monitor the effects of development on the groundwater table and natural groundwater flows.

10.6.4 PRIVATE ON-SITE SEWAGE DISPOSAL SYSTEMS AND WASTEWATER FACILITIES

Malfunctioning on-site sewage disposal systems may cause bacteria and other contaminants to enter groundwater and surface water which may pose health risks and cause environmental degradation. Contamination has resulted in closures to swimming and shellfish harvesting and has increased the eutrophication process of lakes and estuaries. The Municipality may seek measures to reduce the risk of these occurrences.

IM-67 To support growth in Rural Centres and protect public health and the environment, through the Rural Community Planning program, the Municipality shall consider:

- a) establishing Wastewater Management Districts within Rural Centres as shown on Map 4, or for areas that have failing on-site sewage disposal systems that cannot be remediated by private on-site sewage disposal systems;**
- b) establishing wastewater management districts for areas where significant development is occurring; and**
- c) adopting a private on-site sewage disposal system by-law to require such systems to be maintained.**

10.7 MUNICIPAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Municipal Design Guidelines provide uniform standards for the design and construction of streets, drainage, street trees, lighting, and associated municipal infrastructure. The Municipal Design Guidelines apply to the design of new streets and to the maintenance or redesign of existing roadways. For new subdivisions, the *Regional Subdivision By-Law* requires that municipal services and streets be designed as set out in the Municipal Design Guidelines and the Halifax Water Design Specifications.

The Municipal Design Guidelines play a key role in establishing streets as multi-modal corridors; they are also the key tool in implementing a complete streets lens that incorporates streets as places and their role in the urban forest and for ecological connectivity. In rural areas, where private roads are no longer permitted, there may be a need to establish different rural local roads standards to support rural mobility while maintaining safety including access for emergency and service vehicles.

Comprehensive planning exercises may identify connectivity gaps for walking/rolling and cycling, with desirable connections that do not currently exist across larger blocks or between cul-de-sacs. To support intensifying land uses and a mode shift towards walking/rolling and cycling, there will be a need to increase connectivity for more options to move between destinations. In some cases, these connections may be best served by new municipal streets that also serve vehicles. Alternatively, connectivity may be served by paths or trails that only provide connections for walking/rolling and cycling, or emergency services.

IM-68 The Municipal Design Guidelines shall be used to establish minimum standards to be met for the design of streets, drainage, street trees and lighting, and associated municipal infrastructure. To further support objectives for complete streets and complete networks, the Municipality may update the Municipal Design Guidelines from time to time to provide guidance and design standards for:

- a) new rights-of-ways and existing rights-of-way, including in the Rural Area, with consideration for alignment with the policies and objectives in this Plan;
- b) development block lengths, driveways, walkways, bikeways, and multi-use paths that support connectivity and appropriate land use intensification;
- c) green infrastructure and landscaping standards for rights-of-way to support the policies and objectives in this Plan;
- d) addressing current and future climate change impacts and improving the resiliency of new and retrofitted municipal infrastructure to support the policies and objectives in this Plan; and
- e) underground wiring and retrofitting of underground utilities.

10.8 MEASURING SUCCESS, REVIEWING THE PLAN AND ADAPTING TO CHANGE

Performance measures assist in evaluating the effectiveness of policies, programs, and investments in achieving the vision and objectives of this Plan. Evaluations by external organizations also provide valuable feedback.

Amendments to this Plan may be brought forward periodically to address non-substantive matters or amendments which are consistent with or further the vision and objectives of this Plan. A comprehensive review will be undertaken on at least a ten-year basis to evaluate the effectiveness of policies and programs in achieving the vision and objectives of this Plan. As outlined in Policies RP-27 and RP-28 in Chapter 2, it is the intent of this Plan to undertake a Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priorities Plan and review the areas designated as Urban Reserve to determine if they are required for future growth. The Suburban and Rural Community Planning processes will also evaluate areas that can support growth and develop as complete communities. It is anticipated that this Plan may need to be amended as that work progresses.

- IM-69 Regular data monitoring shall be used by the Municipality to assist in evaluating the effectiveness of policies and programs in achieving the stated vision and objectives of this Plan.**
- IM-70 Amendments to this Plan may be considered from time to time to address non-substantial matters or amendments which are consistent with or further the vision and objectives of this Plan.**
- IM-71 This Plan shall be reviewed at least every ten years, from the date the most recent ten year review has been completed and any changes have come into effect, to evaluate the effectiveness of policies and programs adopted pursuant to this Plan in achieving its vision and objectives and where appropriate, amendments may be considered.**

- IM-72** Proposed amendments to this Plan shall be accompanied by any amendments to secondary municipal planning strategies, land use by-laws and the *Regional Subdivision By-Law* or other planning documents required for implementation so that these documents are consistent with this Plan.

10.9 TRANSITION TO THIS PLAN

- IM-73** Where any completed application for development agreement or amendment to a development agreement or amendments to the land use by-law were received by the Municipality prior to Regional Council's first notification to adopt this Plan, the application shall be considered in accordance with the policies in effect at the time the application was received.
- IM-74** Notwithstanding Policies IM-10 to IM-17 inclusive of this Plan, the Municipality may consider a development agreement application on lands identified in Appendix C of this Plan in accordance with Policies S-15 and S-16 of the 2006 Regional Plan provided that a completed application has been submitted to HRM prior to December 31, 2014. Further, the Municipality may consider substantive and non-substantive amendments to an existing development agreement on lands identified on Appendix C of this Plan in accordance with Policies S-15 and S-16 of the 2006 Regional Plan.
- IM-75** Notwithstanding Policies IM-10 to IM-17 inclusive, applications for non-substantive amendments to approved development agreements for Conservation Design Development shall be considered under the policies in effect at the time the development agreement was approved provided that the proposed amendments were identified in the agreement as non-substantive.
- IM-76** Subject to IM-77, the Regional Plan adopted by Council on June 25, 2014 and as amended, is hereby repealed.
- IM-77** Until this Plan becomes effective in accordance with the requirements of the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*, the Regional Plan adopted by Council on June 25, 2014 and as amended, shall remain in effect.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: DATA MONITORING

Regional Plan Data Monitoring



1. Population Growth Data

- ✓ Total Population
- ✓ Annual Population Growth
- ✓ Total Number of Households
- ✓ Population Growth in Regional Centre, Suburban and Rural Areas



2. Housing Supply Data

- ✓ Total Housing Units
- ✓ Annual Housing Unit Growth
- ✓ New Residential Units Growth in Regional Centre, Suburban and Rural Communities



3. Other Housing-Related Data

- ✓ Housing Types
- ✓ Vacancy Rate
- ✓ Average Rent
- ✓ Households in Core Housing Need



4. Data Analysis

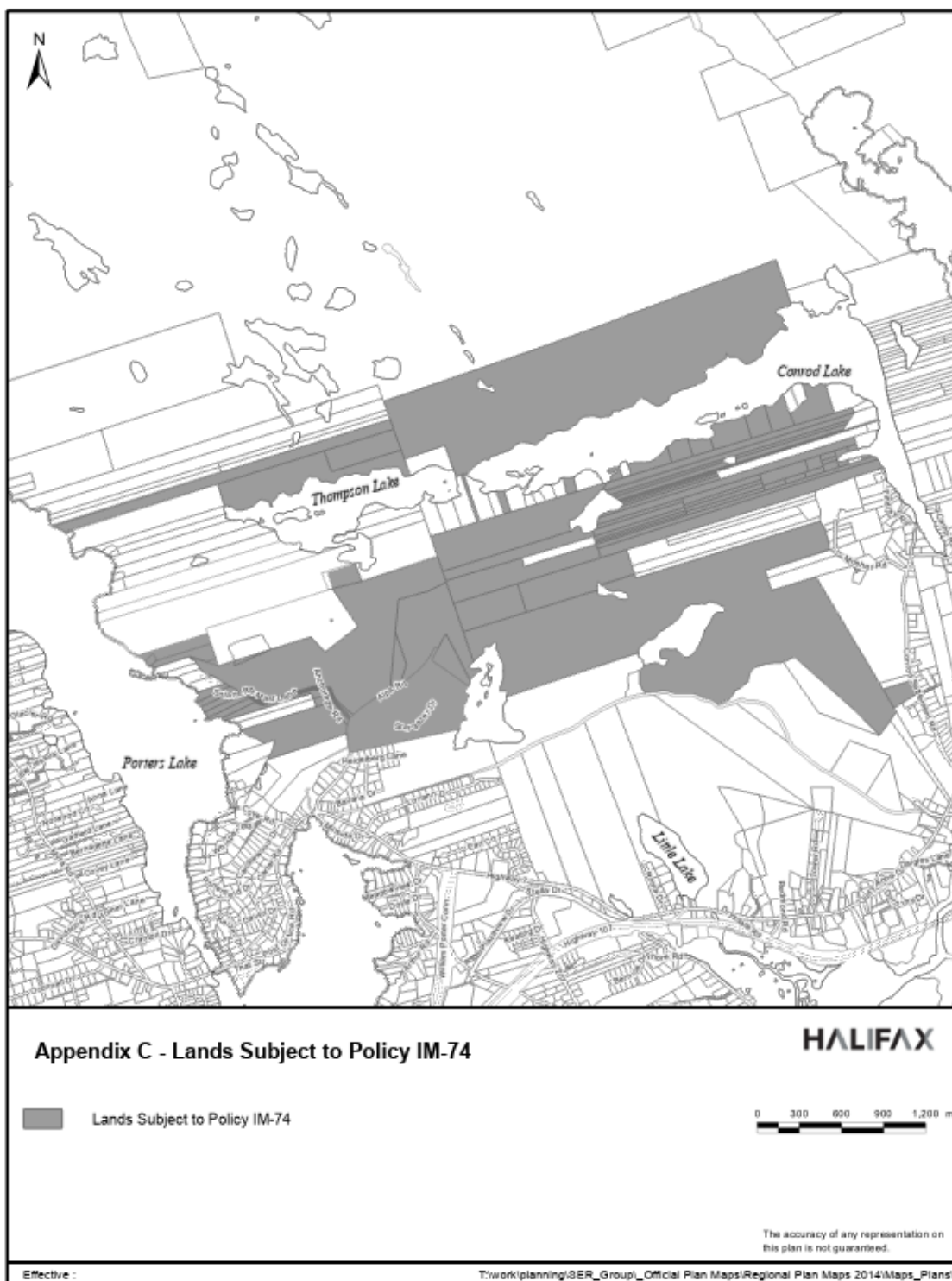
- ✓ Total Number of Households vs Housing Units
- ✓ Annual Population Growth vs Housing Unit Growth
- ✓ 90% of Regional Plan Growth Target vs New Residential Units in Urban Area
- ✓ Population Growth vs New Residential Units in Regional Centre, Suburban and Rural Communities

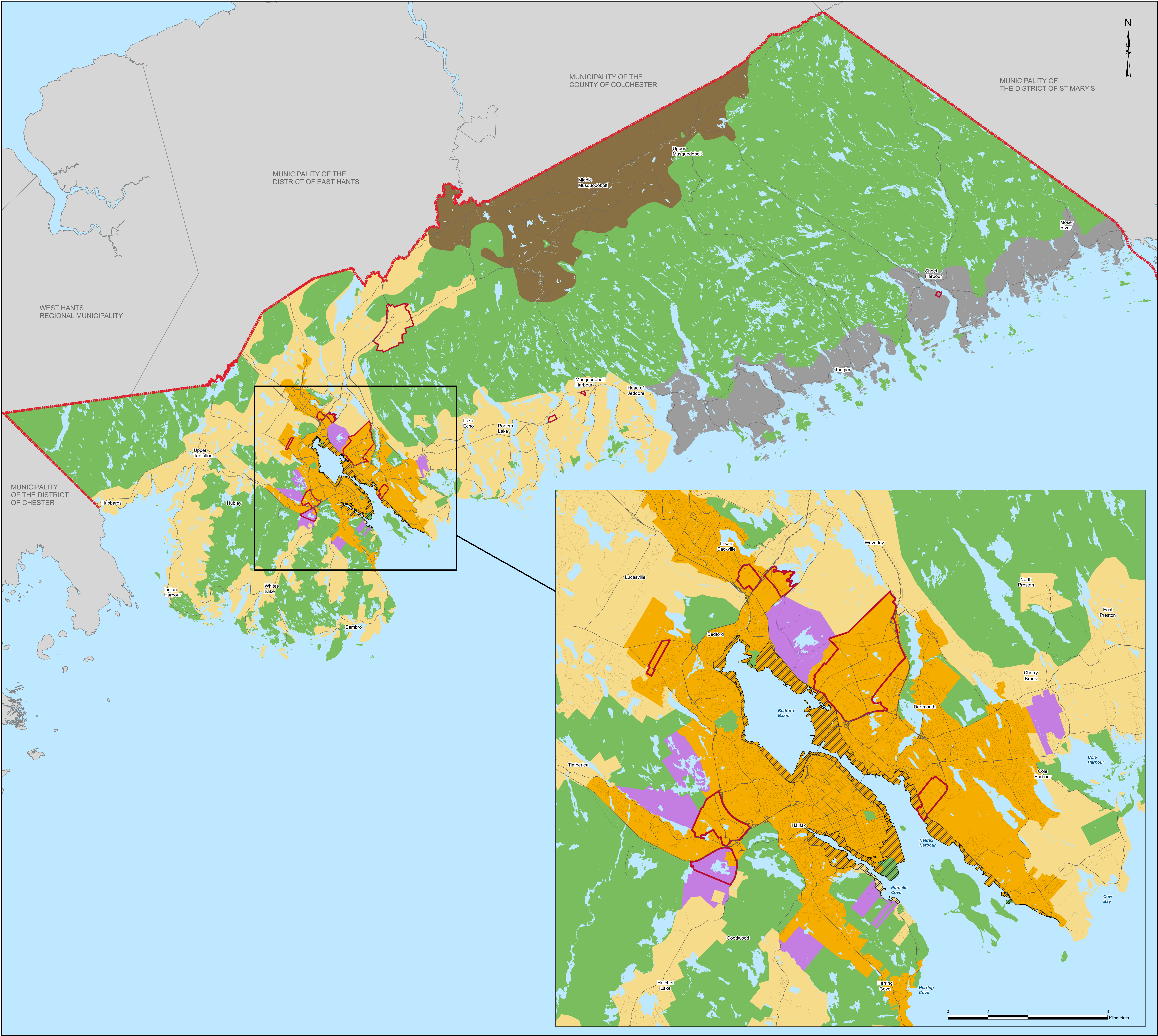
APPENDIX B: EXISTING SECONDARY MUNICIPAL PLANNING STRATEGIES

Secondary Municipal Planning Strategies (SMPS)	Area Plans within SMPS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suburban Housing Accelerator Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dartmouth Municipal Planning Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Port Wallace Secondary Planning Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bedford Highway Secondary Planning Strategy Fairview Secondary Planning Strategy Mainland South Secondary Planning Strategy Wentworth Secondary Planning Strategy Western Common Area Secondary Planning Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eastern Passage/Cow Bay Municipal Planning Strategy 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cole Harbour/Westphal Municipal Planning Strategy 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sackville Municipal Planning Strategy 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sackville Drive Secondary Planning Strategy 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bedford Municipal Planning Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bedford South Secondary Planning Strategy Bedford West Secondary Planning Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timberlea/Lakeside/Beechville Municipal Planning Strategy 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lawrencetown Municipal Planning Strategy 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Porters Lake and Lake Echo (Planning Districts 8 and 9) Municipal Planning Strategy 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lake Major, North Preston, Lake Loon/Cherry Brook and East Preston Municipal Planning Strategy 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shubenacadie Lakes (Planning Districts 14 and 17) Municipal Planning Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> River Lakes Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beaver Bank, Hammonds Plains and Upper Sackville Municipal Planning Strategy 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> St. Margaret's Bay (Planning Districts 1 and 3) Municipal Planning Strategy 	

• Prospect (Planning District 4) Municipal Planning Strategy	
• Chebucto Peninsula (Planning District 5) Municipal Planning Strategy	
• Eastern Shore (East) Municipal Planning Strategy	
• Eastern Shore (West) Municipal Planning Strategy	
• Musquodoboit Valley – Dutch Settlement Municipal Planning Strategy	

APPENDIX C: LANDS SUBJECT TO POLICY IM-74





HALIFAX

Regional Municipal Planning Strategy

Map 1
Regional Land Use Structure

Legend

Primary Designations

- Urban Settlement
- Urban Reserve
- Rural Commuter
- Rural Resource
- Open Space and Natural Resource
- Agricultural

Sub-Designations

- Business / Industrial Park
- Halifax Harbour

HRM Boundary

Notes: This map demonstrates a vision to be implemented over the life of the Regional Plan, through various tools, subject to financial ability and community interest.

Effective:

0

3

6

12

18

24

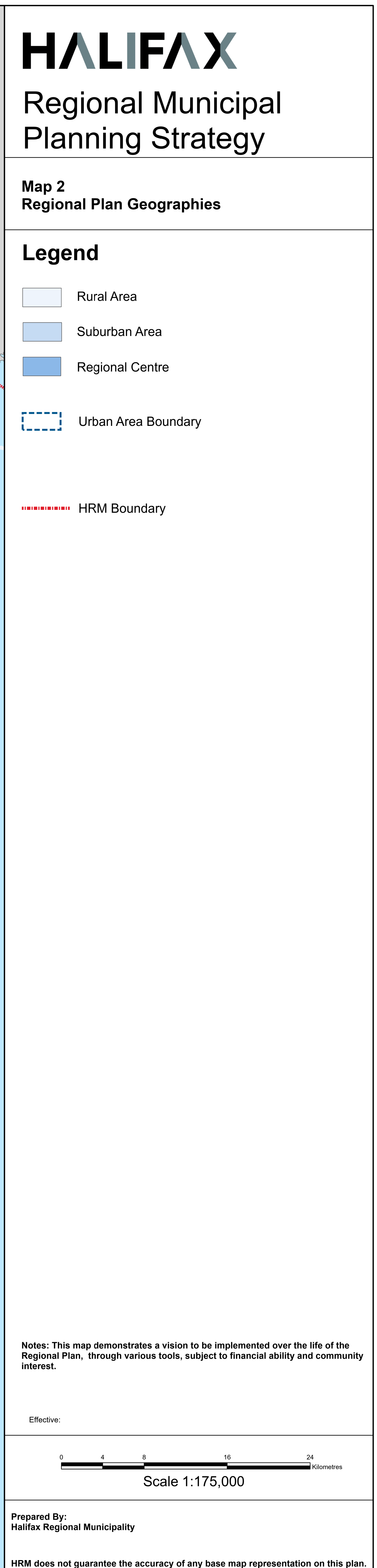
Kilometers

Scale 1:175,000

Prepared By:
Halifax Regional Municipality

HRM does not guarantee the accuracy of any base map representation on this plan.

Document Path: \\township\mnp\BES_Corridor\ESR_Proposed\SRM2020\Regional Plan Review\Final Plan_Proposed\Regional Plan 2020.aprx



Map 3 Urban Growth Areas

Regional Plan



Mixed Use Neighbourhoods

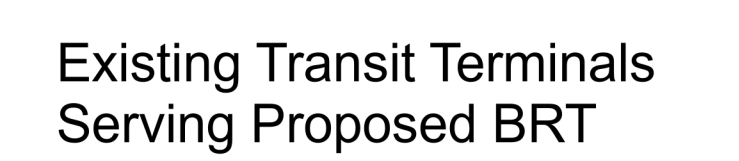


Downtown Designation



Future Growth Area (Potential)

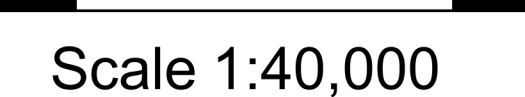
Planned Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Routes



HRM Boundary



Effective:



HRM does not guarantee the accuracy of any base map representation on this plan.

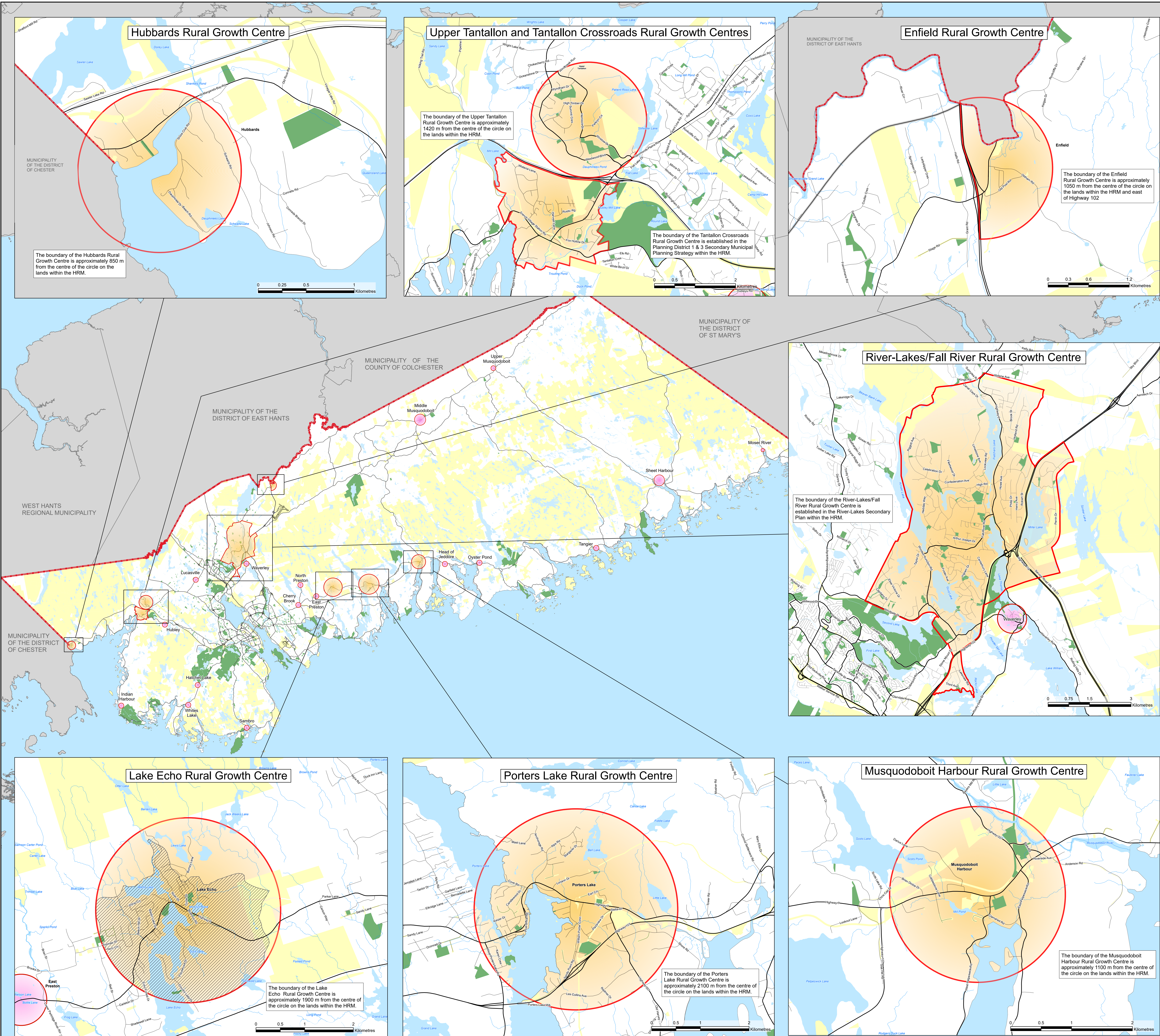
HALIFAX

Regional Municipal Planning Strategy

Map 4
Rural Centres

Legend

- Major Routes
- Local Roads
- Rural Growth Centres
- Rural Local Centres
- Lake Echo Subwatershed
- Government Owned Lands
- Parks
- HRM Boundary



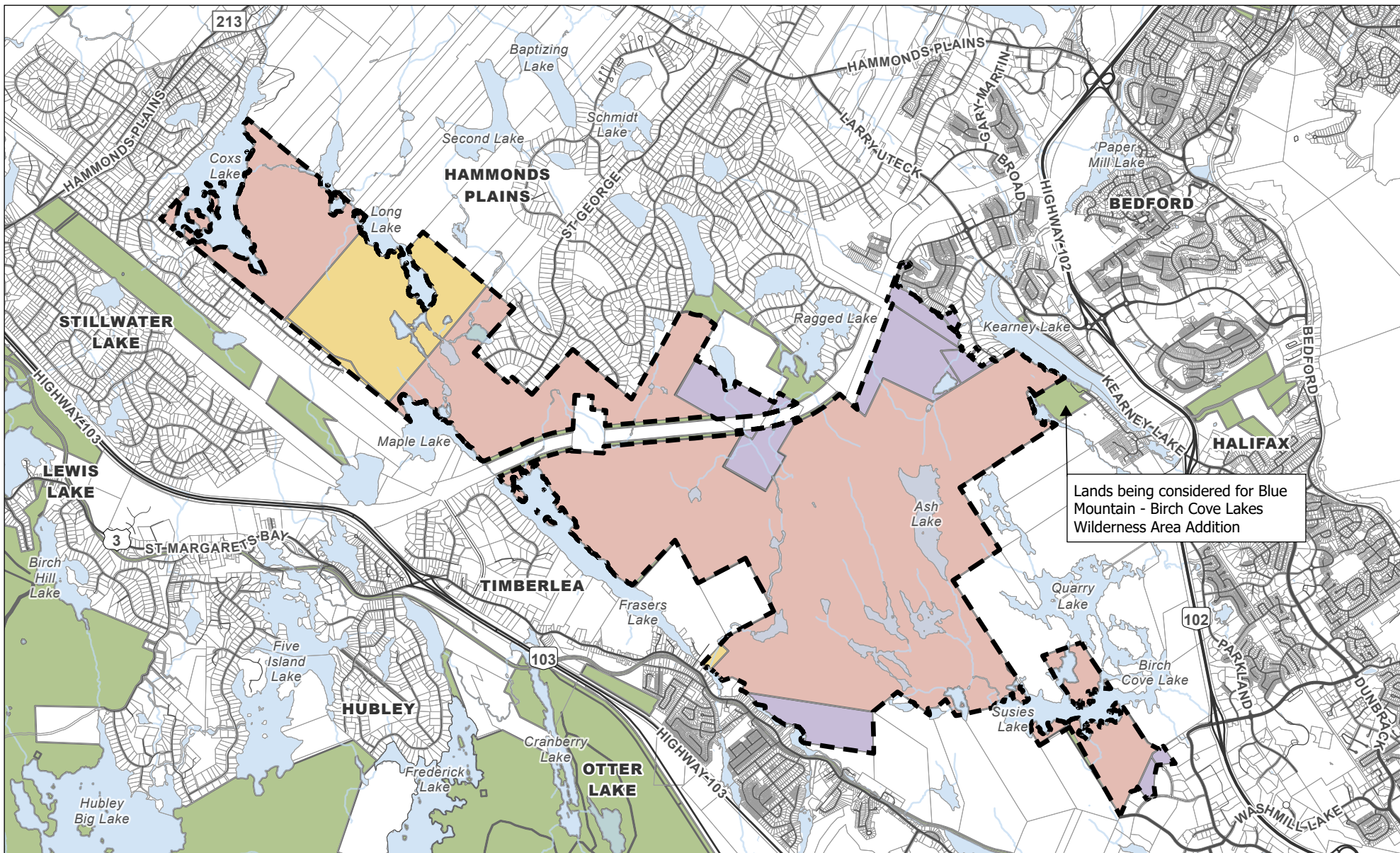
Notes: This map demonstrates a vision to be implemented over the life of the Regional Plan, through various tools, subject to financial ability and community interest.

Effective:





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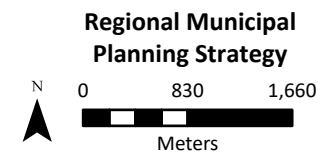
Prepared By:
Halifax Regional Municipality

HRM does not guarantee the accuracy of any base map representation on this plan.



Map 5: BMBCL Partnership Lands

-  Partnership Lands Boundary
-  Nova Scotia Nature Trust Lands
-  Province of Nova Scotia Designated Wilderness Area
-  HRM Lands
-  Other Provincial Crown Lands





Date: 3/8/2023

HALIFAX

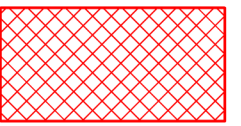
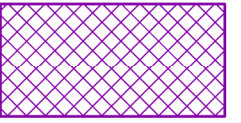
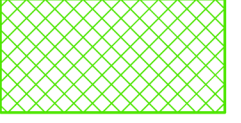
Regional Municipal Planning Strategy

Map 6
Source Water Protection Areas

Legend

-  Water Treatment Plant
-  Water Treatment Plant (Back-Up)



Prov. Designated Water Supply Areas

-  Bennery Lake Watershed
-  Lake Major Watershed
-  Pockwock Lake Watershed




Future Water Supply Area

-  Tomahawk Lake Watershed

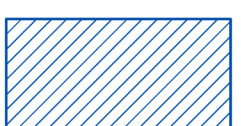
Emergency Supply Areas

-  Lemont Lake Watershed
-  Chain Lakes Watershed

Small Water Supply Watersheds

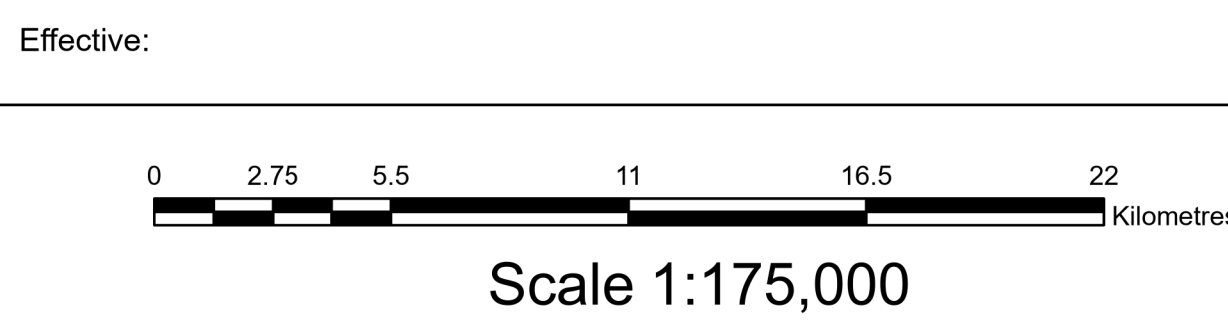
-  Collins Park - Shubenacadie River Watershed
-  Middle Musquodoboit Watershed
-  Bomont - Shubenacadie River Watershed

East Hants Water Supply Watershed

-  Grand Lake Water Supply Watershed (Near Zone)

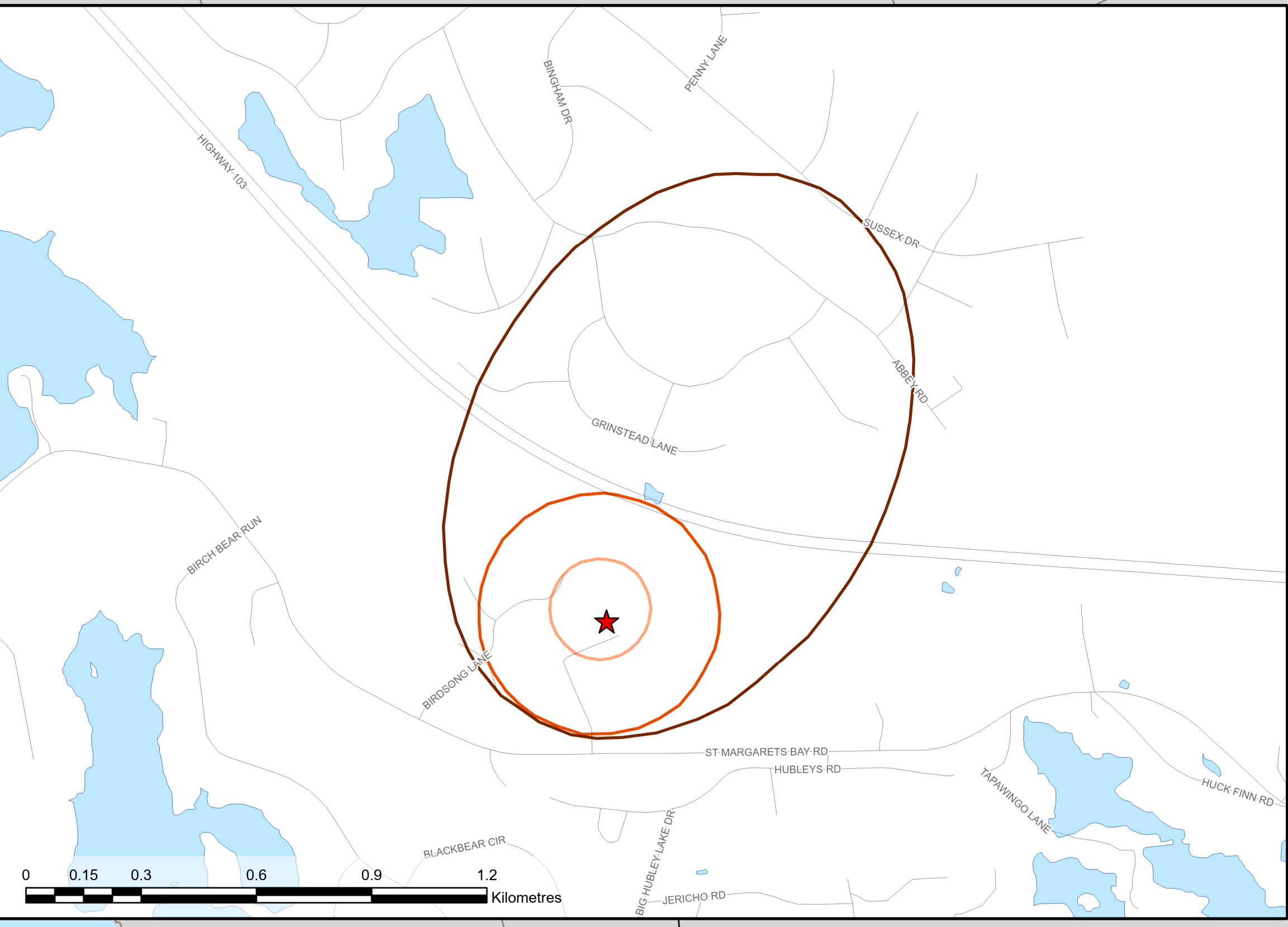
 HRM Boundary

Notes: This map demonstrates a vision to be implemented over the life of the Regional Plan, through various tools, subject to financial ability and community interest.






Prepared By:
Halifax Regional Municipality

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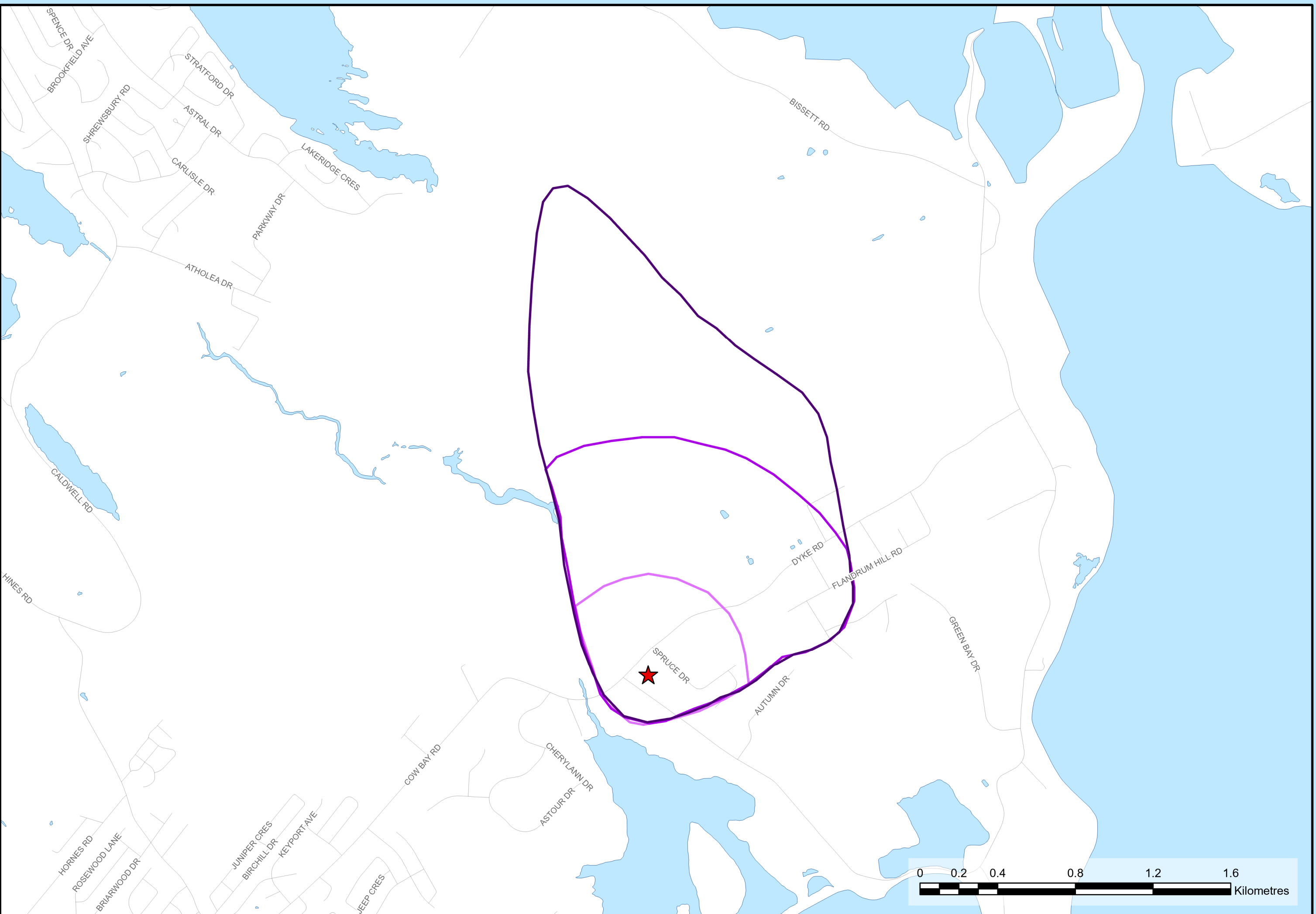
**HRM Wellheads:
Time of Travel (TOT) Zones**

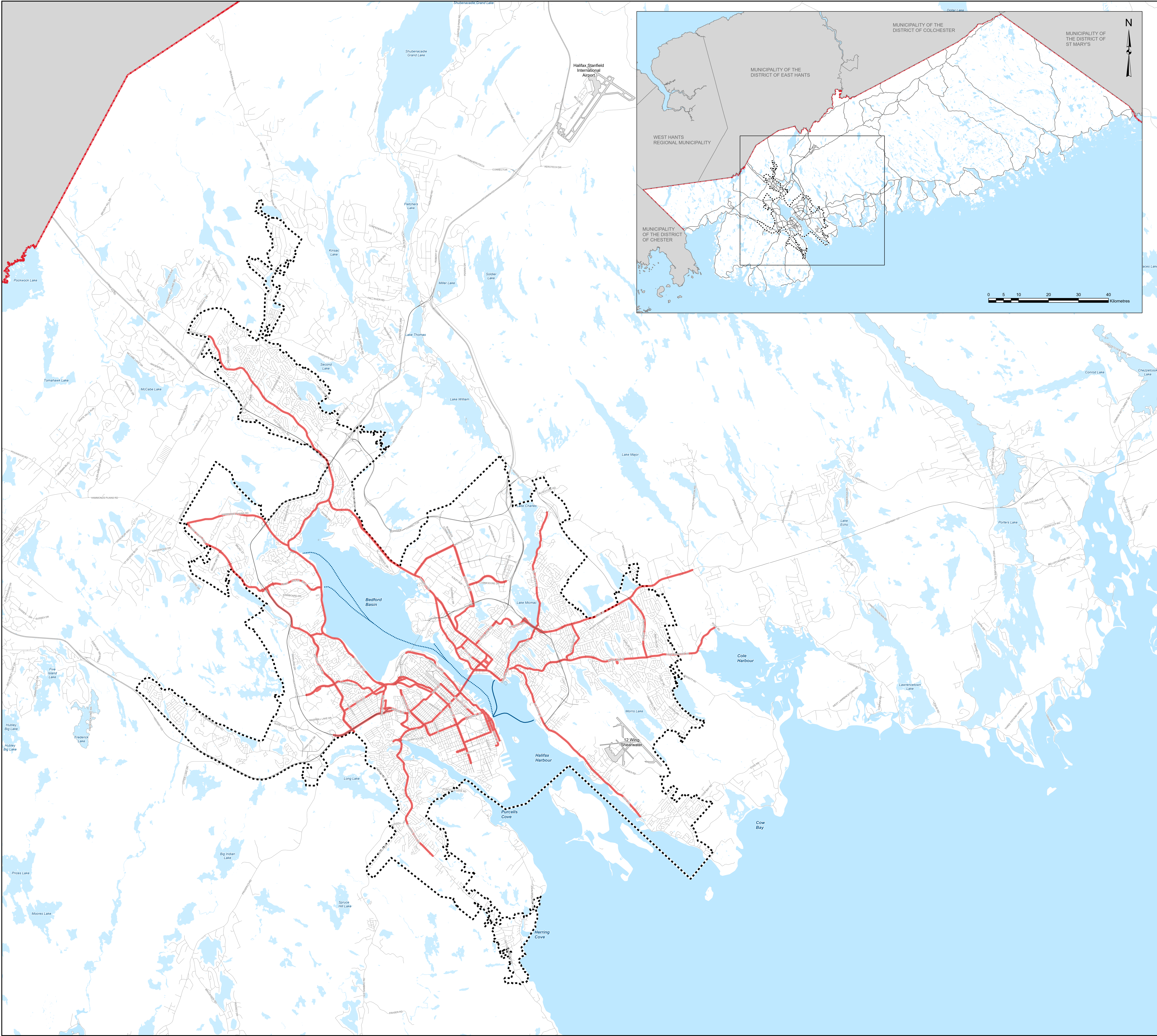
**Silver Sands Wellhead
Protection Area**

-  2 yr TOT
-  5 yr TOT
-  Recharge Area

**Five Islands Wellhead
Protection Area**

-  2 yr TOT 125m
-  5 yr TOT 300m
-  20 yr TOT 1200 m





HALIFAX

Regional Municipal Planning Strategy

Map 7 Strategic Corridors

Legend

- Strategic Corridors
- Existing Ferry Routes
- Planned Ferry Routes
- Urban Area Boundary
- HRM Boundary

Notes: This map demonstrates a vision to be implemented over the life of the Regional Plan, through various tools, subject to financial ability and community interest.

The transit routes shown are for illustrative purposes. The actual routes may vary from the locations shown.

Effective:

0 0.75 1.5 3 4.5 6 kilometres

Scale 1:50,000

Prepared By:
Halifax Regional Municipality

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HALIFAX

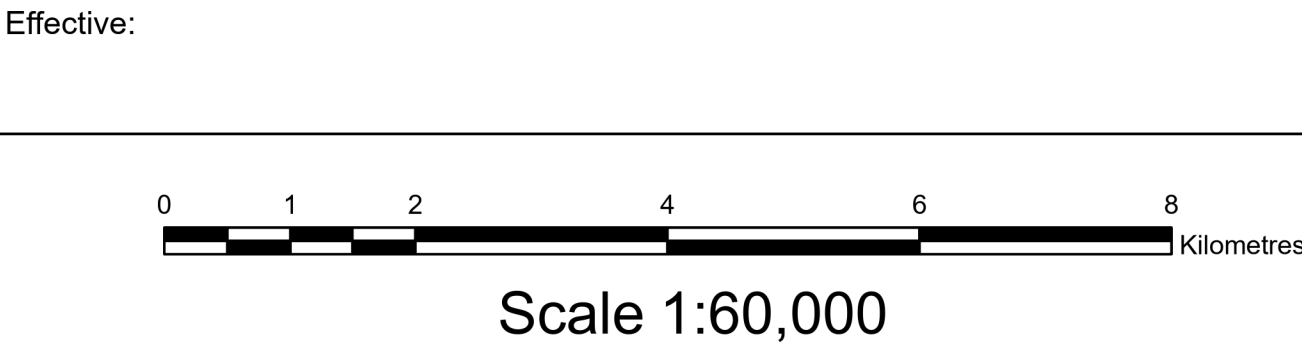
Regional Municipal Planning Strategy

Map 8
Urban Transit Service Boundary

- Legend**
- Urban Transit Service Boundary
 - Existing Bus Routes
 - Existing Ferry Routes
 - Planned Ferry Routes
 - Urban Settlement Designation
 - HRM Boundary

Notes: This map demonstrates a vision to be implemented over the life of the Regional Plan, through various tools, subject to financial ability and community interest.

The transit routes shown are for illustrative purposes. The actual routes may vary from the locations shown.



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