



P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Item No. 15.1.4
Halifax Regional Council
November 18, 2025

TO: Mayor Fillmore and Members of Halifax Regional Council

FROM: Brad Anguish, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: October 9, 2025

SUBJECT: **MPSREV-2025-02389 Update on Missing Middle Housing, Mass Timber and other Amendments in the Regional Centre SMPS & LUB**

ORIGIN

Staff-initiated, and addressing the following motions:

April 23, 2024 Halifax Regional Council motion (Item No. 15.1.1):

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Cleary

THAT Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to provide request a staff report that will review the common space, living space or non-habitable room requirements within a small-scale multi-unit dwelling use in the ER zones and return to the Council for consideration.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

August 5, 2025 Halifax Regional Council motion (Item No. 15.4.5):

MOVED by Mayor Fillmore, seconded by Councillor Cuttell

THAT Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to prepare a staff report that:

1. Considers amendments to the Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-Law to further reduce built form barriers to mass timber construction to expedite innovative construction methods for housing including the potential to increase the height of the tall mid-rise built form requirements from 10 storeys to 12 storeys for mass timber construction; and
2. Return to Regional Council with an initiation report in the Fall of 2025.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

RECOMMENDATION ON PAGE 2

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To ensure planning documents remain current and responsive to emerging trends and issues in the Regional Centre, staff recommend the initiation of a planning process to address the items identified in this report, which include a review of missing middle housing design requirements in the Established Residential (ER) zones, an assessment of built form requirements to support mass timber construction, manufactured housing and other innovative construction methods, and an overview of administrative changes identified as part of an annual review.

Although recent zoning changes under the *Urgent Changes to Planning Documents for Housing* process have been successful in allowing a broader range of housing in more neighbourhoods, ongoing community feedback and a detailed technical analysis of issued permits has uncovered opportunities for improvements to zoning regulations. This review will ensure new development better aligns with policy objectives of the Regional Centre Plan area, including development that positively contributes to streetscapes at a scale that is compatible with existing neighbourhoods. While staff are not recommending revisiting the density allocations (4 to 8 units per lot, depending on lot size) within the ER Zones, it is expected that stronger urban design requirements will help address public concerns that have arisen from new missing middle housing.

Initiating a planning process to undertake the work described in this report would enable staff to comprehensively review the impacts of any potential changes to planning documents, engage with residents and key interest groups and draft amendments for Regional Council's consideration at First Reading. There are no financial implications for this report.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to:

1. Initiate a process to consider amendments to the Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy and the Regional Centre Land Use By-Law to:
 - a) review urban design requirements for missing middle housing;
 - b) review built form requirements for mass-timber construction and identify opportunities to further support the construction of manufactured housing; and
 - c) undertake administrative changes to improve the administration of the Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-Law.
2. Follow the public participation program as set out in the Community Engagement section of this report.

BACKGROUND

The Regional Centre plan area, which is guided by the Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy (SMPS) and Land Use By-Law (LUB), continues to experience a high level of development activity. To ensure planning documents remain current and responsive to emerging trends and issues, staff conduct annual reviews, informed by ongoing feedback from residents, developers, industry professionals, and internally from development officers and planners.

This initiation report focuses on:

- A review of urban design requirements for new missing middle housing in the Established Residential zones. In this report, 'missing middle' refers to a range of housing units that includes duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, townhouses, and small multi-unit dwellings (5 – 8 units);

- A review of built form requirements to provide additional flexibility for mass timber construction; and
- Administrative changes to the SMPS and LUB to ensure the planning documents remain up to date.

Regional Plan, Priority Plans, and Legislative Context

The Discussion section of this report is informed by existing legislative context, including the 2014 Regional Plan, the Halifax Regional Municipality Interim Planning Area, the proposed changes to the 2014 Regional Plan, the Regional Centre SMPS, and Priority Plans of Council, including the Integrated Mobility Plan, the Halifax Green Network Plan, HalifACT, and the Halifax's Inclusive Economic Strategy 2022-2027.

The proposed items in this initiation report are aligned with the Regional Plan and Regional SMPS policies on housing. Efforts to streamline mass timber construction is also supported by environmental policies in the plans. For a full list of policies that align with the proposed work, please see excerpts of relevant policies in Attachment E.

DISCUSSION

Review of Missing Middle Housing Trends in the Regional Centre

In May 2024, Halifax Regional Council [approved zoning changes](#) to streamline housing approvals as part of the municipality's [Housing Accelerator Fund](#) (HAF) initiative. Following provincial approval in June 2024, these amendments took effect, creating regulatory capacity for approximately 210,000 new units within the Urban Service Area, including an additional 71,000 units in the [Regional Centre Planning Area](#). A comprehensive overview of the project can be found on the [Urgent Changes to Planning Documents for Housing webpage](#).

To advance the development of **missing middle housing** - a priority shared across municipal, provincial and federal levels of government¹ - significant changes were introduced to the Established Residential (ER) Zones in the Regional Centre Plan. The updated zoning framework permits a minimum of four units on every serviced lot, with up to eight units allowed in the ER-3 zone depending on lot size. Further opportunities for housing were introduced in the ER-2 and ER-3 Zones through internal conversions, rear additions and backyard suites.

To support these changes, [new urban design and built form controls](#) were introduced to promote infill development that fits within the broader neighbourhood context without significantly limiting density. Most of these provisions target new development in the ER-3 Zone, with additional design requirements for multi-unit dwellings (defined as dwellings that contain 5 or more units) intended to foster streetscapes that are active and welcoming to pedestrians. Key changes to the Regional Centre Land Use By-law (LUB) included:

- Increased building height (+3 metres) for sloped roofs (section 104);
- Increased lot coverage for dwellings with two or more units (section 231);
- Requiring pedestrian entrances facing the street for multi-unit dwellings (section 231.5);
- Maximum building dimensions for multi-unit dwellings (section 233);
- Minimum glazing requirements for multi-unit dwellings (section 366.5);
- Streetwall articulation (balconies, façade recessions, bay window projections or covered porches) for multi-unit dwellings (section 366.5);
- Solid waste screening requirements for dwellings with three or more units (section 424); and
- Front and flanking yard parking restrictions (section 435).

Permitting Review – One Year In

Staff have monitored development in the ER zones since the HAF *Urgent Changes to Planning Documents for Housing* amendments took effect in June 2024. Data from building permits issued between June 2024

¹ See item 18.1 in the [September 26, 2023 Regional Council minutes](#) and the [October 4, 2023 letter](#) from the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities to Mayor Mike Savage.

and August 2025 suggests there has been an increase in the development of small-scale multi-unit dwellings.

Some of the key findings from permitting data include:

- 28 building permits for 4 + unit dwellings have been issued or completed, creating 125 new dwelling units in the ER Zones that were previously not permitted;
- 64% of the permits were for new construction, while 36% were for rear additions or internal conversion; and
- The majority of the permits issued are for 4 to 6-unit dwellings, with only 5 permits issued for 8-unit dwellings or greater (which is permissible through internal conversion or rear addition).

A more detailed breakdown of permitting data is included in Attachment A.

Observed Design Trends

A detailed review of all missing middle housing permits issued in the ER Zones was completed by undertaking a technical and qualitative analysis of approved plans, conducting site visits, and listening to concerns that were brought forward by community members. Some key trends include:

- New missing middle housing is larger, taller, and occupies more lot area than the existing housing stock, resulting in more housing but also leading to concerns from neighbors about privacy, neighborhood compatibility, and other impacts equated to increases in neighbourhood density (e.g. traffic, servicing capacity, etc.);
- While many observed trends, including larger buildings in neighbourhoods, were expected and formed a part of the engagement and discussion when the *Urgent Changes to Planning Documents for Housing* went through Council, where several exemptions and encroachments are used on a single property, significantly increase in the massing of a new building relative to its neighbors has been observed; and
- The increase in lot coverage has led to challenges in providing soft landscaping which can impact storm water retention and overall aesthetic.

A detailed review of key urban design trends was performed for all ER-3 issued or completed permits from June 2024 – August 2025. For more details, please see expanded discussion in Attachment B.

Staff Review

Although the current ER Zone regulations have been successful in permitting a wide variety of housing types, observed trends and early community feedback indicate that improvements to urban design requirements are needed to ensure new development better aligns with policy objectives, including new infill development that remains compatible with existing neighbourhoods.

While staff are not proposing to revisit the density allocations within the ER Zones, it is expected that stronger urban design requirements will help address concerns that have arisen from new missing middle housing. Some examples of changes that will be explored include:

- Reducing or removing the 3 metre height exemption for peaked roofs;
- Reducing lot coverage for multi-unit dwellings;
- Reviewing non-conforming setbacks and permitted encroachments;
- Reviewing the inclusion of common space in new multi-unit (5+ unit) dwellings;
- Increasing requirements for soft landscaping; and
- A broad review of design regulations, including maximum building dimensions, façade articulation, and more.

To support this review, an architecture firm has been engaged to provide modelling and technical advice to inform regulatory changes. This will include a review of Building Code requirements, including requirements for a second egress that is also being explored in more detail in a separate report. These findings will inform staff's recommendations to Council and may also be used to build public understanding of the proposed changes and gather feedback through engagement.

While the scope of this work is limited to the Regional Centre plan area, the technical advice being provided will help inform future regulations for suburban communities. This work will be undertaken during the Suburban Plan process.

Assessment of Built Form Requirements to Support Mass Timber Construction

On [August 5, 2025](#), Halifax Regional Council directed the Chief Administrative Officer to prepare a staff report that considers amendments to the Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy (SMPS) and Land Use By-Law (LUB) to further reduce built form barriers to mass timber construction to expedite innovative construction methods for housing, including the potential to increase the height of the tall mid-rise built form requirements from 10 storeys to 12 storeys for mass timber construction.

Mass timber is an emerging building method that uses prefabricated engineered wood products for load-bearing construction. As an alternative to common methods such as cast-in-place concrete, mass timber provides benefits such as a lower carbon footprint, shorter onsite building timelines and support for the Canadian forestry industry. Recent actions taken to enable mass timber construction in Nova Scotia include:

- Nova Scotia's adoption of the 2020 National Building Code in April 2025, allowing encapsulated mass-timber construction up to 12 storeys (an increase from the previous 6 storey limit); and
- Conditional approval of \$10 million in federal support for Mass Timber Company (MTC) to build a \$215M facility in Elmsdale, the first fully integrated mass timber manufacturer in Atlantic Canada.

HRM has recently advanced adjustments to the Regional Centre SMPS in support of mass timber construction, including the following changes approved as part of the [Housing Accelerator Fund project](#):

- Changing height regulations from metres to storeys in primarily residential and mixed-use areas (i.e. Centre, Corridor, and Higher-Order Residential zones) to better accommodate taller floor to floor heights required for mass timber construction;
- Relaxing streetwall requirements in Higher-Order Residential zones for wood-frame construction; and
- Increasing the tall mid-rise built form from 8 to 10 storeys.

Further changes to storey-based height regulations were approved by Regional Council as part of the [2025 Regional Plan Review](#), which was refused by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. A revised approach to implementing Provincial Minimum Planning Requirements for Housing has been initiated by Council on October 7, 2025.

Jurisdictional Scan

To date, a limited number of Canadian municipalities have introduced zoning regulations to support mass timber buildings. However, Vancouver and Calgary have introduced or are proposing flexibility for mass timber design. Noticeably, this includes height increases for mass timber construction, which is not relevant to the Regional Centre plan area as height is already measured in storeys instead of metres. A full jurisdictional scan is included in Attachment C.

Centre Plan Built Form

The original Council motion includes specific direction to consider increasing the permitted height of tall mid-rise buildings from 10 to 12 storeys when using mass timber construction.

Tall mid-rise is one of the four different built form (building) regulations established by the Regional Centre SMPS, based on the height of the building as shown below in Figure 1. The built forms have varying requirements (e.g. setbacks to property lines, building stepbacks, building dimensions, etc.), based on the general premise that taller buildings need more space to reduce impacts such as wind and shadow. The building requirements established in the Centre Plan include:

- Low-rise (buildings up to 4 storeys);
- Mid-rise (buildings between 5 and 7 storeys);

- Tall mid-rise (buildings between 8 and 10 storeys); and
- High-Rise (buildings that are 11+ storeys).

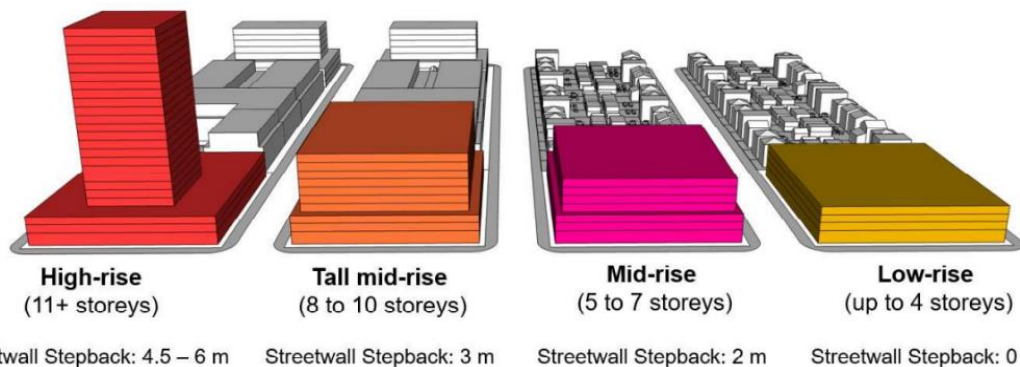


Figure 1: Built Form Regulations in the Regional Centre SMPS and LUB.

Regulations for **High-Rise** buildings emphasize tower placement, size, floor plate dimensions, and spacing, generally requiring towers over 10 storeys to be thinner and further set back from streets and other buildings. Tower massing is a critical aspect of city building, helping to reduce negative impacts on the public realm and neighbouring properties such as adverse shadowing, pedestrian-level wind, and blockage of sky view. Creating more space between towers can also maximize the environmental quality of building interiors, including daylighting, natural ventilation, and privacy for building occupants. In contexts with many underutilized lots, massing may not seem like an issue today; however, with many future high-rise buildings enabled in the Regional Centre, greater separation between buildings and narrower floorplates will become increasingly important in areas undergoing rapid densification.

Staff Review

Recent publications on the opportunities and challenges of mass timber construction in Canada highlight how certain zoning requirements can create barriers to developing tall mass timber buildings.² Historically, zoning regulations have been formulated around conventional construction methods and materials, such as steel and concrete. The additional structural considerations associated with mass timber can make it more challenging to comply with built form standards related to building height, massing and articulation, balconies, floor plates and podiums. Requiring mass timber structures to conform to standard built form requirements may reduce their cost-effectiveness compared to traditional materials, limiting competitiveness.

While staff note concerns that allowing bulkier towers could impact the public realm by influencing wind conditions, shadows, views and overall pedestrian experience, proceeding with initiation will allow a detailed analysis to be undertaken to assess the extent of potential impacts alongside the benefits of mass timber construction. Review will also consider whether the change should be made as an exception only for buildings constructed with mass timber, and whether additional flexibility could be made available through a discretionary process such as Site Plan Approval.

Efforts to Support Manufactured Housing and Opportunities for Further Engagement

Manufactured housing, also referred to as prefabricated or modular housing, has been recognized by multiple levels of government and industry experts as an affordable and efficient means to accelerate housing supply. This construction method expands access to diverse, small-scale, cost-effective housing options, fostering gentle density and missing middle infill development in alignment with the complete community objectives of the Regional Centre Plan and the Regional Plan.

² See [Design Solutions to Prefab Mass Timber Construction](#) (Simon Fraser University, 2024) and [Technical Guide for the Design and Construction of Tall Wood Buildings in Canada](#) (FPInnovations, 2022).

In addition to planning changes to support missing middle housing and as-of-right zoning discussed above, the municipality has undertaken several initiatives to reduce barriers to manufactured housing to ensure that these forms of development are enabled across the region. These efforts include:

- Amending policy S-41 of the 2014 Regional Plan to permit tiny homes, inclusive of mobile dwellings, as a form of residential use (2022);
- Supporting the addition of new policy to the Provincial Municipal Planning Requirements that permit manufactured housing, including modified shipping containers converted into housing, in all residential zones (proposed in 2025). Amendment to the Regional Centre SMPS Cluster Housing (CH) Zone to permit the clustering of dwellings containing up to six units per building on the same lot (2025);
- Collaborating with the CMHC to develop region-specific, standardized designs for various housing types for inclusion in the publicly accessible [Housing Design Catalogue](#); and
- Engaging in ongoing discussions with industry members and technical experts.

As part of this broader Regional Centre Plan review, staff recommend further engagement with industry to address remaining barriers to manufactured housing. Staff also welcome feedback on opportunities to enable other innovative construction methods that support housing delivery.

Regional Centre Administrative Review

In addition to the changes being explored through missing middle housing and mass timber, staff have identified other sections of the Regional Centre SMPS and LUB to be updated as part of routine housekeeping. As the Regional Centre plan area is experiencing significant development activity, ensuring the planning documents are in good working order and reflect emerging trends is important for a streamlined approvals process.

The changes being considered for initiation were identified through feedback from residents, developers, industry professionals, and internally from development officers and planners. The key topics proposed to be reviewed are described in Attachment D, and include updates to various technical and design requirements.

Staff recommend Regional Council initiate the planning process to undertake a review and prepare proposed updates to the Regional Centre SMPS and LUB. Initiation will enable staff to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the existing regulatory framework, identify and address inconsistencies, improve clarity, and enhance the overall administration of the By-law. The review will also include public participation as outlined in the community engagement section of this report.

Conclusion

Staff are recommending that Regional Council proceed with initiation for changes to the Regional Centre SMPS and LUB. This includes changes that are intended to refine urban design requirements for missing middle housing, add flexibility for mass timber, manufactured housing and other innovative construction methods, as well as other administrative review items. Initiating these changes together will allow a holistic review of the plan and detailed public engagement.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The costs associated with undertaking the review of the initiatives as outlined in this report can be accommodated within the approved 2025/26 operating budget for Planning and Development. There are no financial implications at this time.

RISK CONSIDERATION

No risk considerations were identified. This project involves proposed SMPS amendments. Such amendments are at the discretion of Regional Council. If Council does not proceed with initiation, there may

be missed opportunities to introduce greater flexibility for emerging construction methods, as well as not addressing public concern related to new missing middle housing construction which can hinder the overall success of this emerging and important housing form.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In 2023, Council adopted Administrative Order 2023-002-ADM that outlines certain requirements to be met when conducting a public participation program for planning documents, certain planning applications, and when engaging with abutting municipalities. In addition, Policy IM-1 of the Regional Centre SMPS directs the Municipality to use the HRM Community Engagement Strategy as a guide when reviewing, amending, and implementing the SMPS. The HRM Community Engagement Strategy also contains a Community Engagement Playbook that was developed to assist staff in developing an approach to engagement for policies, programs and services that reflects the needs of the project and the community it impacts. The Engagement Strategy and the Playbook were used to guide the proposed level of engagement.

In this case, should Regional Council choose to initiate the changes to the Regional Centre SMPS and LUB, staff recommend that Regional Council adopt a public participation program that is different from the standard approach set out by the Administrative Order. Staff are proposing the following engagement activities:

- An online survey;
- One or more open houses and pop-ups; and
- Workshops with industry/developers.

In addition, staff will be available for meetings with community members in small groups, by request. Staff will also be available to answer questions and concerns by email, phone, and mail.

The *HRM Charter* also requires a public hearing to be held before Regional Council can consider approval of any plan amendments.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

No environmental implications were identified at this time.

ALTERNATIVES

Regional Council could choose not to initiate a process to consider amendments to the Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy. A decision of Council not to initiate a process to consider amending the Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy is not appealable to the Nova Scotia Regulatory and Appeals Board as per Section 262 of the *HRM Charter*. This alternative is not recommended as it would prevent a regular update of the Regional Centre planning documents designed to respond to community and industry concerns, and improve administration.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter (HRM Charter), Part VIII, Planning & Development.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A: Permitting Statistics in the Established Residential Zones
- Attachment B: Design Trends in the ER Zones in Regional Centre
- Attachment C: Jurisdictional Scan - Mass Timber

- Attachment D: Regional Centre Administrative Review
 - Attachment E: Relevant Policies
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Report Prepared by: Joshua Adams, Principal Planner, Community Planning, 902-478-4056
Taylor MacIntosh, Planner III, Community Planning, 902-219-0836
Justin Smith, Planner III, Community Planning, 902-497-2579
Eleanor Fierlbeck, Planner II, Community Planning, 902-237-6413
Dillon McKenna, Planner I, Community Planning, 902-719-7839

Attachment A
Permitting Statistics in the Established Residential Zones

Permitting Review – One Year In

Staff have monitored development in the ER zones since the HAF *Urgent Changes to Planning Documents for Housing* amendments took effect in June 2024. Data from building permits issued or completed between June 2024 and August 2025 is summarized below.

Key Findings

1. 28 applications for **missing middle housing** were completed or issued within the ER-2 and ER-3 Zones within the Regional Centre from June 2024 to August 2025. These permits created 125 new dwelling units in the ER Zones.
2. Of the application types reviewed, 64% were for new construction buildings, 25% were for internal conversion within an existing building and 11% were for a rear addition to an existing building, as shown in Figure 1 below. Additional development permit applications have been received but are not included in these results as the building permit has not been issued at the time of writing this report.

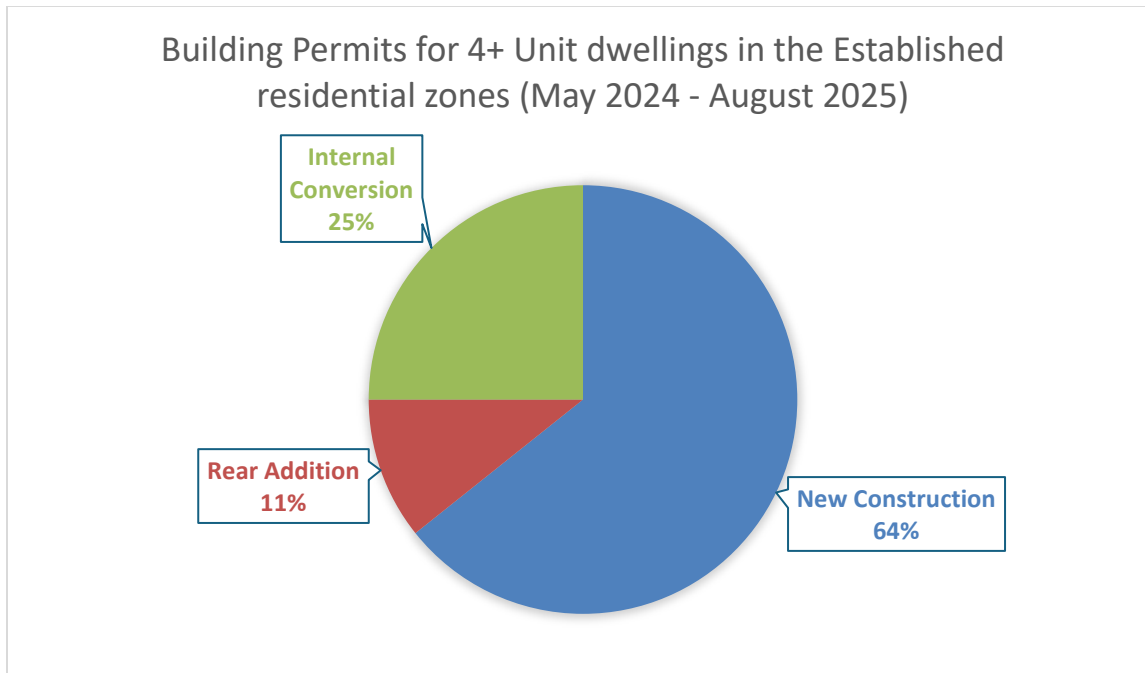


Figure 1: Building Permit Type for ER-2 and ER-3 Zone Missing Middle Housing.

3. All building permits for new construction in the ER Zones were for the maximum number of units permissible on the lot. However, only 3 permits reached the maximum number of bedrooms permitted.
4. To date, the majority of issued or completed permits are for 6 dwelling units total or less, as shown in Figure 2 below.

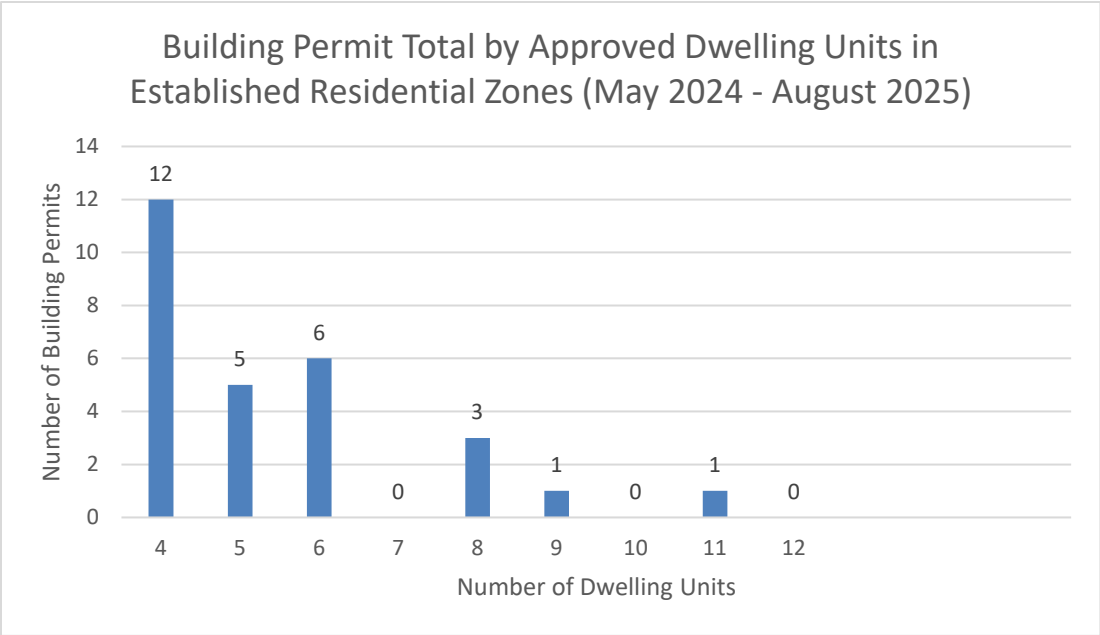


Figure 2: Building Permit Total by Approved Dwelling Units.

5. District 7 (Halifax South Downtown) and District 8 (Halifax Peninsula North) had the most permits for missing middle housing (58% combined), followed by District 5 (21%) and Districts 3 and 9 (21% combined), as shown in Figure 3 below.

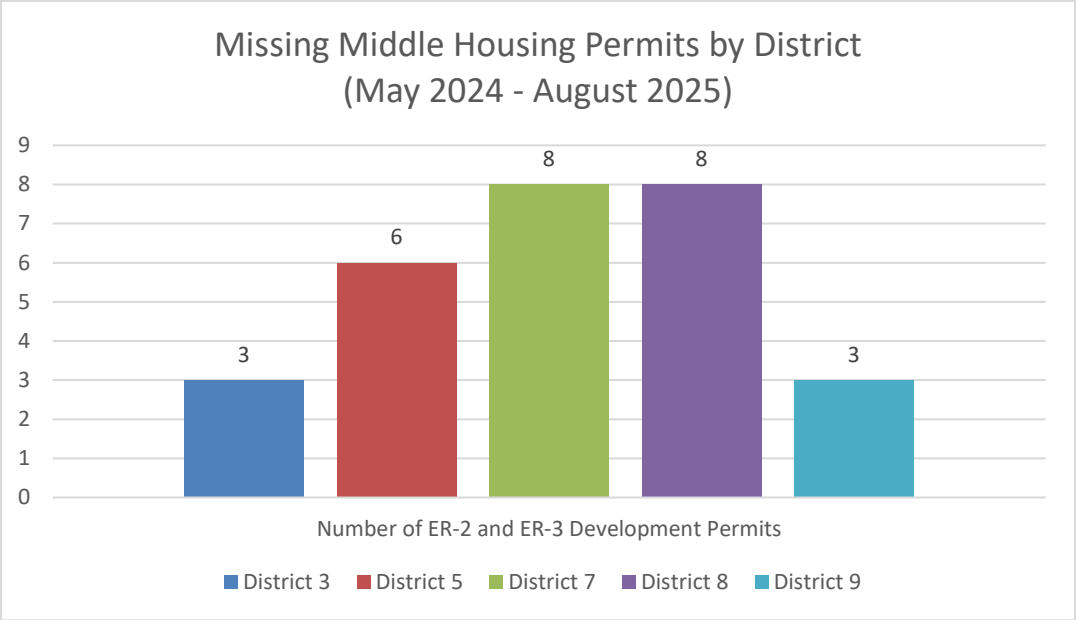


Figure 3: Missing Middle Housing Permits by District.

Attachment B

Design Trends in the ER Zones in Regional Centre

Design Trends

A detailed review of all missing middle housing permits issued in the Established Residential (ER) Zones from June 2024 to August 2025 was completed by undertaking a technical and qualitative analysis of approved plans, conducting site visits, and listening to concerns that were brought forward by community members. Several key trends are highlighted below:

Dwelling Units and Number of Bedrooms

The Regional Centre Land Use By-Law (LUB) controls the amount of density on a lot through unit counts and bedroom counts. These controls are tied to lot area, with larger lots allowing more units.

All building permits in this review maximized the number of dwelling units permitted on the lot. This means that each application proposed the maximum number of dwelling units that were permitted on each individual lot. This suggests that there is latent demand for more housing in many neighbourhoods across Regional Centre.

However, only three permits maximized the total number of permitted bedrooms within the entire building. This suggests that the maximum bedroom count requirements in Regional Centre are not onerous but still help to provide density control within the neighbourhoods.

Sloped Roof Exemption

The maximum permitted height in the ER-3 Zone is 11 metres with up to 14 metres permitted for a sloped roof. This exemption permits habitable space within the sloped roof portion of the building. The sloped roof exemption was used in 50% of applications for new construction.

Intended to create flexibility with new construction and additions to achieve new dwelling units under missing middle housing, this exemption does increase the discrepancy in scale of a new infill building when compared to the abutting properties. New missing middle housing generally ranges from 3 – 4 storeys, while the existing abutting properties in these areas are generally 1 – 2 storeys.

Non-conforming Setbacks

Non-conforming setbacks are designed to permit a building that existed prior to the Regional Centre LUB legally. However, relaxed rules in the LUB compared to the HRM Charter means that a building can be reconstructed with increased density if the non-conforming setback is not further worsened. 32% of the observed building permits utilized a non-conforming setback, meaning taller buildings are built closer to the property line than would otherwise be permitted. This proximity, in conjunction with the larger heights as noted above due to the sloped roof exemption, has led to privacy concerns from neighbours and general concerns that new development is not aligned with existing neighbourhood character.

Yard Encroachments

Yard encroachments refer to a portion or feature of a building that is permitted to be within a required minimum setback. This may refer to a front, flank, side or rear yard. Examples of permitted encroachments are eaves, sills, gutters and staircases. An encroachment is only permitted to go a certain distance into the required yard, and not the entirety of the yard. Permitted encroachments in the side yard were used in 43% of all permit applications, and in the rear yard of 29% of all permits.

Through site visits, building permit reviews, and public comments, staff determined the permitted encroachment that is most visible are exterior staircases. Exterior staircases may be placed within a required side yard or a required rear yard. Where each unit has individual entrances, staircases may have multiple levels with entrance landings that are then used as balconies. Considerations to permitted encroachments are important as it places building features closer to abutting buildings and has the potential to create the feeling of an increased scale to the structure. Additionally, outdoor space within a property's boundaries may also be reduced with permitted encroachments, creating a reduction in usable outdoor space.

Building Dimensions and Lot Coverage

The ER designations are applied to longstanding neighbourhoods within the Regional Centre. The lot fabric of these communities has long been established and can often be viewed as narrow, deep lots in the existing street blocks. Without consolidating properties, the existing fabric cannot often support multi-unit buildings that are wider than they are deep in length. Width is also constrained by minimum setback requirements. Generally, new missing middle housing is about as wide as the existing housing stock as infill is occurring on narrow lots.

Building depth, measured from the front wall to the rear wall of a building provided much different results than building width. The depth of new buildings and rear additions is noticeably larger compared to the existing housing stock. The length of the buildings means that they are more prominently visible from the rear yards of abutting properties. Additionally, access to individual dwelling units may be gained from the side yard or rear yard, which directs people to pass along the side yard of the building to get into their home, which has led to privacy concerns.

Increased lot coverage for missing middle housing has also resulted in new developments that are noticeably larger than abutting properties and has added challenges of reducing areas for common use by building residents and for providing soft landscaping.

Rear Additions

An addition to the rear of an existing building that is no wider than the existing building and no larger in footprint than the existing building is permitted as a means to add additional housing units. This means the street front retains the existing building and appearance, with additional massing created in the rear yard. The height of the addition is permitted to be above the existing building and up to 14 metres with a sloped roof. The resulting massing puts a lot of height and density in the rear yard, which is again the source of concerns regarding privacy and scale.

Multiple Application of Exemptions, Encroachments and Non-Conforming Setbacks

While many of these observed trends were expected given the regulatory changes that occurred, there have been unexpected challenges where multiple exemptions (i.e. non-conforming setbacks, yard encroachments, and sloped roof height exemption) are used for one building permit. This has the result of increasing building massing that is closer to neighbours than otherwise anticipated and reduces the ability to provide soft landscaping on the site.

Common Space

At the first reading of the *HAF Urgent Changes to Planning Documents* on April 23, 2024, staff were directed to review common space requirements for small-scale multi-unit dwellings in the ER zones and return to Regional Council for consideration. Since the Regional Centre LUB does not currently require dwelling units or small scale multi unit dwellings to contain a minimum amount of uninhabitable common space (i.e.,

shared space that is not used, designed or intended for sleeping), staff will explore the feasibility of introducing such a requirement as part of this broader review of missing middle housing requirements in the ER Zones.

Attachment C Jurisdictional Scan – Mass Timber

Interest in mass timber has grown rapidly in Canada in recent years, driven by new products and innovative building systems, increasingly affordable materials, expanding expertise, and a shift toward low carbon construction methods. Progressive changes to building codes have also played a major role: in addition to the 2020 National Building Code enabling mass timber buildings up to 12 storeys, provincial codes in Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia have recently been updated to allow up to 18 storeys.

To date, a limited number of Canadian municipalities have introduced zoning regulations to support mass timber buildings. This is likely attributable to the relatively recent adoption of mid- and high-rise mass timber construction in Canada, as municipalities continue to assess how existing zoning frameworks can be adapted to accommodate the unique qualities of this building material. This jurisdictional scan identifies two municipalities that have either implemented or proposed policies intended to provide additional flexibility and incentives for mass timber development.

Vancouver

The city of Vancouver has been a national leader in mass timber construction. The city adopted the following strategies in 2024 to provide additional flexibility for mass timber projects:

- *Additional height through rezoning* – the [rezoning policy](#) offers a pre-defined incentive of 2 additional storeys for sites where 8-11 storeys are already enabled, and 3 additional storeys for sites where 12 or more storeys are already enabled. Projects are evaluated on a case-by-case basis, with proposals evaluated alongside public realm impacts and urban design considerations (e.g. view corridors and shadow impacts).
- *10% additional height for buildings 7 storeys or more* – mass timber buildings are eligible for an additional 10% increase to the maximum permitted height, as measured in metres, if the building is 7 or more storeys. This enables greater flexibility for buildings in districts where the maximum height is measured in metres instead of storeys. A rezoning is not required to acquire this incentive; it can be [administered outright](#).
- *Mass timber variances* – the zoning by-law enables a [discretionary variance](#) for yards, setbacks (including upper-level setbacks), site coverage, building depth, and external design of mass timber buildings. Through the rezoning policy, dimensional limits such as floor plate sizes or upper-level setbacks may also be varied to facilitate mass timber construction.
- *Specialized support for mass timber projects* – staff provide applicants with additional support at the pre-application stage to mitigate the uncertainty and complexity around building with a relatively new form of construction.

Calgary

Calgary's [Draft Zoning By-Law](#), released in May 2025, proposes a “Green Building Exemption” for mass timber buildings of 7 storeys or more. The policy would permit mass timber buildings to exceed the maximum building height of the applicable zone by 0.18 metres per floor. Like Vancouver, building height is generally measured in metres, meaning this exemption would enable greater flexibility for mass timber buildings. It is important to note that this provision is not yet in effect and is subject to change; the Draft Zoning By-law is expected to be brought to Council during the second quarter of 2026. In Alberta, the building code currently limits mass timber construction to 12 storeys.

Both jurisdictions provide incentives for mass timber construction by permitting additional height for buildings with 7 or more storeys. These policies do not appear to relax other built-form requirements such as setbacks or stepbacks as-of-right, however, Vancouver's discretionary variance option allows for the relaxation of several massing and design requirements to improve the viability of mass timber projects.

Attachment D
Key Topics – Regional Centre Administrative Review

Main Topics	What is It?	Proposed Scope of Changes
Pedestrian Wind and Shadow Protocol	Relates to requirements for wind studies for tall buildings to mitigate wind impacts on the pedestrian realm, as well as shadow performance standards near certain identified shadow parks	Technical update to wind and shadow protocol informed by a consultant specializing in this field.
Amenity Space	Requirement for common space for residents in new and expanded multi-unit dwellings	Add clarification for what uses qualify as amenity space, and introduce requirement for amenity space to be provided above grade.
Bicycle Parking	Requirements to provide safe and secure bicycle parking in new developments	Review section to clarify intent
On-Site Public Art	Through Bonus Zoning, 40% of the public benefit can be dedicated to on-site public art	Allow for a combined public art contribution in a phased development
Site Plan Approval	Discretionary process enabled by the HRM Charter that allows for site-specific exemptions of certain rules	Review opportunities for additional Site Plan Approval options and criteria
Waterfront View Corridor	Protects important waterfront views for public benefit	Review Waterfront View Corridor for Duke Street
Rooftop Uses and Permitted Encroachment	The rooftop of a building has certain uses and required setbacks from the roof edge	Clarify permitted rooftop uses, setbacks, and permitted encroachments
Bay Window Encroachments	A permitted encroachment into a required setback for a bay window	Remove bay window encroachments for portions of a building above the streetwall
Permitted Uses and Definitions	Definitions and various terms used throughout the by-law	Housekeeping changes for some definitions and new uses to capture evolving trends
Design Requirements for Additions	Provides rules for design requirements when an existing building is undergoing an addition	Provide clarity on what design requirements apply when a building undergoes renovation or re-cladding
Ground Floor Uses on Non-Pedestrian Oriented Commercial Streets	Lists permitted uses on the ground floor where the property is not located on a Pedestrian-Oriented Commercial Street	Expand list of permitted uses, including institutional uses (e.g. daycares)
View Terminus Requirements	Important sites are identified as a view terminus where additional design requirements apply	Add flexibility and more options to meet view terminus requirements
Other Housekeeping Amendments	Various amendments to improve administration of the By-Law	Includes addressing various errors, missed references, diagrams, typos, and other matters

Attachment E: Relevant Policies

REGIONAL MUNICIPAL PLANNING STRATEGY (2014)
Mass Timber
Chapter 2: Environment, Energy and Climate Change
2.1 Objectives
2.1.1: <i>Promote an approach to environmental management and economic development that supports a sustainable future through cooperation with other levels of government, government agencies, residents, and non-governmental organizations;</i>
2.1.4: <i>Conserve energy and respond to climate change.</i>
Chapter 3: Settlement and Housing
3.1 Objectives
3.1.4: <i>Design communities that: (c) promote energy efficiency and sustainable design;</i>
Chapter 6A: The Regional Centre
6.2.2A Guiding Principles
<p><u>I Sustainable</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Design, plan and build with respect for economic, environmental, social and cultural sustainability.</i> • <i>Create resilient communities that adapt to evolving opportunities and needs.</i>
6.2.3A Core Concepts
<p><u>Human Scale Design</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Foster high-quality architecture and urban design that is designed to a human scale.</i> • <i>Adopt land use policies that result in designs that are interesting and comfortable for people at street level.</i>
<p>Minimum Planning Requirements Regulations: <i>In addition to the requirements prescribed in subsection 229(1) of the Charter and Section 4, a municipal planning strategy must do all of the following to address the issue of housing supply:</i></p> <p><i>(g) not impose maximum height restrictions in a manner that negatively affects the density of residential buildings using mass timber or any other construction method;</i></p>
Missing Middle Housing
Chapter 1: Introduction
1.1 The First Five Year Plan Review
<p><i>The Regional Plan shall target at least 75% of new housing units to be located in the Regional Centre and urban communities with at least 25% of new housing units within the Regional Centre over the life of this Plan.</i></p>

1.3 Objectives: Settlements and Housing

- 1. Direct growth so as to balance property rights and life style opportunities with responsible fiscal and environmental management;*
- 2. Focus new growth in centres where supporting services and infrastructure are already available;*
- 3. Target at least 75% of new housing units to be located in the Regional Centre and urban communities with at least 25% of new housing units within the Regional Centre over the life of this Plan;*
- 4. Design communities that:*
 - (a) are attractive, healthy places to live and have access to the goods, services and facilities needed by residents and support complete neighbourhoods as described in 6.2.2A (v) (RC-Sep 18/19;E-Nov 30/19) of this Plan;*
 - (b) are accessible to all mobility needs and are well connected with other communities;*
 - (c) protect neighbourhood stability and support neighbourhood revitalization;*
 - (d) preserve significant environmental and cultural features;*
 - (e) promote community food security;*
 - (f) provide housing opportunities for a range of social and economic needs and promote aging in place;*
- 4. Maintain the integrity of rural communities;*
- 5. Preserve agricultural and resource lands;*
- 6. Provide opportunities to establish a network of interconnected greenbelts and open spaces; and*
- 7. Support housing affordability.*

1.5.2 Populating and Housing

HRM had relatively stable population growth over the last 25 years. In 1976, the population was less than 280,000, rising to approximately 384,778 by 2006 and to over 409,510 by 2011. This growth has not occurred uniformly across HRM, but has instead been focused mainly in the urban communities and rural areas within commuting distance of the Regional Centre.

The population growth of HRM over the 25-year period between 2011 and 2031 is projected to be approximately 73,115 persons, using a base case scenario⁹. Two thirds of net migration is expected to come from international sources, while the remainder is expected from other parts of Canada¹⁰. HRM's population is indeed growing increasingly diverse, with over 11,000 new immigrants arriving in HRM since 2006, comprising 76% of provincial in-migration¹¹. HRM is also becoming a magnet for foreign students, who numbered 3,000 in 2002 and 6,000 in 2011¹². The Aboriginal and African

Nova Scotian communities are also growing at a faster pace than the rest of the population, presenting significant economic and cultural opportunities.

With respect to an aging population, by 2031 there will be more than twice the number of people over the age of 65 than in 2001 (163% increase), and the number of school aged children is expected to level off (see Fig. 1-2). This shift in age distribution will have significant implications on the demand for housing and types of services provided in HRM.

Potential household growth, and ultimately housing demand, is a function of the projected population by age and the number of people in each age group who are expected to head up a household. As indicated above, using the base case scenario over the period 2011 to 2031, HRM is now expecting a total of almost 39,160 new dwelling units (see Table 1-1)¹³ and 42,239 new commuters.

Chapter 3: Settlement and Housing

3.1 Objectives

- 1. Direct growth so as to balance property rights and life-style opportunities with responsible fiscal and environmental management;*
- 2. Target at least 75% of new housing units to be located in the Regional Centre and urban communities with at least 25% of new housing units within the Regional Centre over the life of this Plan;*
- 3. Focus new growth in centres where supporting services and infrastructure are already available;*
- 4. Design communities that:*
 - (a) are attractive, healthy places to live and have access to the goods, services and facilities needed by residents and support complete neighbourhoods as described in 6.2.2A (v) (RC-Sep 18/19;E-Nov 30/19) of this Plan;*
 - (b) are accessible to all mobility needs and are well connected with other communities;*
 - (c) promote energy efficiency and sustainable design;*
 - (d) protect neighbourhood stability and support neighbourhood revitalization;*
 - (e) preserve significant environmental and cultural features;*
 - (f) promote community food security¹⁵;*
 - (g) provide housing opportunities for a range of social and economic needs and promote aging in place;*
- 5. Maintain the character of rural communities;*
- 6. Preserve agricultural and resource lands;*

7. Provide opportunities to establish a network of interconnected greenbelts and open spaces; and

8. Support housing affordability.

3.6 Housing Diversity and Affordability

S-30 When preparing new secondary planning strategies or amendments to existing secondary planning strategies to allow new developments, means of furthering housing affordability and social inclusion shall be considered including:

- a) creating opportunities for a mix of housing types within designated growth centres and encouraging growth in locations where transit is or will be available;
- b) reducing lot frontage, lot size and parking requirements;
- c) permitting secondary and backyard suites in all residential areas; (RC-Sep 1/20;E-Nov 7/20)
- d) permitting shared housing uses of a scale compatible with the surrounding neighbourhood in all areas where residential uses are permitted and minimizing additional requirements beyond those for residential uses; (RC-Aug 9/22;ESep 15/22)
- e) Deleted (RC-Aug 9/22;E-Sep 15/22);
- f) introducing incentive or bonus zoning in the Regional Centre;
- g) allowing infill development and housing densification in areas seeking revitalization; and,
- h) identifying existing affordable housing and development of measures to protect it.

S-33 HRM shall monitor housing and demographic trends to assist in determining future housing needs.

S-35 HRM shall, through the applicable land use by-laws, permit accessory dwelling units such as(RC-May 23/24;E-Jun 13/24) secondary suites and backyard suites in all zones that permit low density residential uses, including single unit, two-unit, and townhouse dwellings. Land use by-law requirements shall ensure that the secondary suite and backyard suite remain accessory to the main dwelling. (RC-Sep 1/20;E-Nov 7/20)

Chapter 6A: The Regional Centre

6.2.2A Guiding Principles

V Complete Neighbourhoods

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

MPRs

Settlement and Housing

1. Rapidly increase the supply of housing by prioritizing safe, sustainable and affordable housing through approaches to land use planning, regulations and development approvals;

3.1A INCREASING HOUSING SUPPLY

The Province and, in particular the HRM, is experiencing a housing shortage crisis. and it is currently the most urgent priority in municipal land use planning, regulations and development approval to rapidly increase the supply of housing.

S-0(a-n) Due to the housing shortage crisis the most urgent priority in municipal land-use planning, regulation and development approval is to rapidly increase the supply of housing. 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. When preparing new secondary planning strategies or amendments to existing secondary planning strategies to allow new developments, the Municipality shall prioritize the increased supply of safe, sustainable, and affordable housing, and furthering housing choice by:

a) creating opportunities for a mix of housing types within designated growth centres and encouraging growth in locations where transit is or will be available;

f) allowing infill development and housing densification in areas seeking revitalization;

REGIONAL CENTRE SECONDARY MUNICIPAL PLANNING STRATEGY
Mass Timber
1.4.2: Core Concepts
<p>Human-Scale Design: <i>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.</i></p> <p><i>This Plan provides direction for the built environment that respects the human scale. While human scale is typically associated with low-rise and mid-rise buildings, taller buildings can also provide a human-scale experience through design that provides stepbacks for the upper storeys, low streetwalls with architectural detailing, weather protection, and frequent entrances.</i></p>
<p>Policy UD-1</p> <p><i>The Land Use By-law shall establish built form regulations and design requirements that implement the Vision, Core Concepts, Urban Design Goals, and objectives of this Plan.</i></p>
3.2.2 Building Envelope
<p><i>Buildings of different heights and scale have varying impacts on their surroundings and the public realm as their heights increase, which may require different standards, depending on the local context. Specific building envelope controls include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>implementing interior setbacks, streetwall stepbacks for mid-rise buildings, tall mid-rise buildings and high-rise buildings, to mitigate impacts from wind and shadow at the street level;</i>
<p>Policy UD-9</p> <p><i>The Land Use By-law shall establish building envelope regulations that support context-specific, human-scaled and pedestrian-oriented environments by:</i></p> <p><i>n) establishing minimum streetwall, side, and rear stepback requirements for mid-rise, tall midrise, and high-rise buildings where the building typology is enabled by the zone, as follows:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>(i) streetwall stepback of 2.0 metres for a mid-rise building, 3.0 metres for a tall midrise building, and between 4.5 metres and 6.0 metres for a high-rise building in the DD, CEN-2, CEN-1, HR-2, HR-1, COR, CLI, INS, UC-2, and UC-1 Zones;</i> <i>(ii) streetwall stepback of 3.0 metres for any portion of the main building less than 33.5 metres in height, and 4.5 metres for any portion of the main building greater than 33.5 metres in height in the DH Zone;</i> <i>(iii) side and rear stepback of 2.0 metres for a mid-rise building, and 6.0 metres for a tall mid-rise and high-rise building in the DD, CEN-2, CEN-1, and COR zones;</i>

(iv) side setback of 2.0 metres for a mid-rise building, between 2.5 metres and 6.0 metres for a tall mid-rise building, and 6.0 metres for a high-rise building in the HR-2, HR-1, INS, UC-2, and UC-1 Zones; and

(v) rear setback of 2.0 metres for mid-rise building, between 4.5 metres and 6.0 metres for tall mid-rise building, and 6.0 metres for a high-rise building in the HR-2, HR-1, INS, UC-2, and UC-1 Zones.

3.2.3 Building and Streetwall Design

The placement, scale, and design quality of the building’s streetwall determines the character of the streetscape and reinforces the importance of a pedestrian-oriented environment and human-scale design. The streetwall is the most prominent and visible portion of a building upon which a tower, tall mid-rise or mid-rise portions of buildings sit, and it is also created by the continuity of adjacent buildings facing a street.

The following outlines the key components of streetwall design that impact pedestrian experiences:

- *Streetwall Height: traditional streetwalls in the Regional Centre typically range from two to four storeys along commercial street frontages, with taller buildings stepping their upper elevations back from the top of the streetwall. Streetwall height requirements are important because height is directly linked to human scale and what pedestrians can comfortably observe and enjoy from the sidewalk.*

Policy UD-10

The Land Use By-law shall establish streetwall requirements to support human-scale design. The streetwall requirements shall:

e.5) in the HR-2 and HR-1 Zones, establish a maximum streetwall height of 6 storeys for a building constructed using a wood-frame construction or encapsulated mass timber construction.

g) establish minimum streetwall setbacks for mid-rise buildings, tall mid-rise buildings and high-rise buildings to mitigate impacts of wind and shadow on the street;

Missing Middle Housing

Part 1: Introduction

1.2 Regional Centre: Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities

The 2014 Regional Plan sets a target for at least 25% of the Municipality’s new housing units to be constructed in the Regional Centre. However, based on recent development trends and a study conducted by Stantec on the costs and benefits of various development patterns¹⁸, and the Integrated Mobility Plan (2018), up to 40% of regional growth is now encouraged to occur in the Regional Centre. The increased emphasis on accommodating population growth in the Regional Centre responds to a shift in urban living and housing preferences, and the economic and environmental benefits that can be attained by strategically focusing growth around existing services and amenities.

Based on 2017 population growth and development projections, it is estimated that 18,000 new residential units or approximately 33,000 new residents will be housed in the Regional Centre by 2031. This will increase the Regional Centre's population from 97,000 in 2016, to approximately 130,000 by year 2031. To ensure sufficient capacity and support the higher than average population growth observed in recent years, this Plan identifies areas that can accommodate the development of new complete communities beyond 2031, in addition to developments enabled by this Plan.

1.2.1 People

Affordable Housing: Housing affordability has become an increasingly widespread issue across the Regional Centre and the Municipality more broadly. While the provincial government provides services to support those in need of housing, the Municipality plays a significant role in determining where and how housing can be developed. To help improve housing affordability, planning policies can support diverse housing options that meet the needs of a variety of households.

1.4.2 Core Concepts

In support of the guiding principles and vision, this Plan focuses on the following four Core Concepts which were established through the extensive public consultation:

Complete Communities Complete communities support people of all ages, backgrounds, abilities, and incomes to sustainably live, work, shop, learn, and play near one another. This diversity of people and activities helps communities to be physically, socially, and economically vibrant. This Plan provides land use and design policies to promote pedestrian supportive, mixed-use developments that allow safe and convenient access to transit, and the goods and services needed in daily lives that are located within walking distance.

The Regional Centre is comprised of many distinctive neighbourhoods, some of which are already complete communities, and others with some components of complete communities in place. It is the intent of this Plan to strengthen existing communities, and enhance the elements that make a community complete. This will be accomplished by establishing higher density mixed-use areas, and by encouraging infill and a range of housing forms. Directing growth close to established commercial community nodes and existing schools can help support a variety of businesses, community centres and parks. When these amenities are located close to where people live and work, people are more likely to walk, cycle, and use public transit

Part 2: Urban Structure

2.8 Established Residential Designation

The Established Residential Designation, shown on Map 1, is intended to retain the scale of existing lowrise(RC-May23/24;E-June13/24) residential neighbourhoods while providing opportunities for additional housing units. The Designation is applied to areas that predominantly contain low-rise(RC-May23/24;E-June13/24) residential uses.

This Designation makes up a substantial portion of the Regional Centre's land area. Neighbourhoods within this Designation are supported by parks, schools, transit, places of worship, minor and major institutions, and local commercial uses. Although many of these neighbourhoods are currently characterized by low-density residential uses, including single-unit dwellings and concentrations of registered heritage properties, heritage assets, small-scale multiunit dwellings and cluster housing in some areas, it is anticipated that these neighbourhoods will be able to accommodate larger concentrations of residential density in the future. (RC-May23/24;EJune13/24)

In recognition of the increased growth in population and recognized housing shortage in the Municipality, the Established Residential Designation will allow for greater flexibility in housing form and density. This will be achieved with a more permissive framework that allows a variety of ground-oriented forms of housing, including low-density uses, backyard suites, townhouses, and low-rise multi-unit dwellings. This will provide substantially more choice and diversity to the housing stock which is needed to support a rapidly growing population. Built form and urban design controls will support the preservation and adaptive reuse of heritage properties and ensure new developments are pedestrian-oriented, reflecting the human-scale and pedestrian first core concepts established in this Plan. Areas that have been identified as having heritage resources will be encouraged to develop in a way that is compatible with the existing building stock. (RCMay23/24;E-June13/24) Shared housing will also be allowed to provide a wide range of housing options for individuals with housing needs or preferences that cannot be met by independent living. To support complete communities, a range of compatible uses will be permitted within this designation including home occupations, urban agriculture, small-scale institutional uses, and other related uses. In addition, local commercial uses may be permitted by development agreement on corner lots to provide opportunities for small-scale commercial and community facility uses to locate in residential areas.

The Established Residential Designation establishes five (5) zones to recognize the diverse character of established residential neighbourhoods, the value of heritage assets, and control the location of different low-rise residential housing forms, and related land uses. The following describes these five (5) established residential zones. (RC-May23/24;E-June13/24)

The established Residential 3 (ER-3) Zone is applied broadly throughout the designation due to general walkability and connection to transit, except in areas that have been zoned as ER-2. This includes areas that permitted townhouses in former planning documents, as well as areas that were previously limited to single-unit dwellings and two-unit dwellings. The ER-3 Zone permits a range of low-rise residential uses, including low-density residential uses, townhouses, low-rise multi-unit dwelling use up to 8 units for new construction depending on a lot size, with more units permitted through internal conversion. Built form and design requirements in the ER-3 zone will ensure that townhouse and small multi-unit dwellings will provide additional housing options while respecting the context of existing neighbourhoods. (RC-May23/24;E-June13/24)

The Established Residential 2 (ER-2) Zone is applied to areas that are proposed Heritage Conservation District study areas on Map 20, and registered heritage properties in the Established Residential Designation. To retain the character and scale of these existing neighbourhoods including the preservation and adaptive reuse of registered heritage properties, the ER-2 Zone permits single-unit and two-unit dwellings for new construction and allows internal conversion to three-unit, four-unit, and multi-unit dwellings. (RC-May23/24;E-June13/24)

Objectives:

- 1. Provide for a diverse range of housing options to meet different lifestyle needs and encourage affordable housing and housing for vulnerable populations. (RC-May23/24;E-June13/24)*
- 2. Support opportunities for new housing units through backyard suites, infilling and, where appropriate, townhouses, three-unit, four-unit, and low-rise multi-unit dwellings and internal conversions. (RC-May23/24;E-June13/24)*
- 3. Support complete communities, access to food through urban agriculture uses, and opportunities for home occupations and local commercial uses.*

Part 5: Housing

5.1 Introduction

Access to suitable and affordable housing is fundamental to the health, dignity, and quality of life for all people. This can be supported by providing opportunities for new housing in strategic locations, enabling residents to age within their neighbourhoods, and accommodating a variety of housing choices.

The Regional Centre's population has been shifting with an increase in senior, one-person, renter, immigrant and youth-led households, and is expected to continue to include a large post-secondary student population. These demographic trends impact housing needs with respect to the size, form, and desired location of housing units. While new residential developments are responding to changing market demands with a move towards more multi-unit dwelling developments, the aging housing stock, and a limited supply of modestly priced and accessible housing can limit housing choices. In addition, the availability of emergency and supportive housing will continue to be important to addressing the needs of those who are experiencing housing vulnerability and homelessness.

For the Regional Centre to remain economically competitive and support a high quality of life, a diversity of housing types, sizes, and tenures need to be available. This includes (RC-May23/24;E-June13/24)backyard suites, grade-related units, work-live units, and a range of multi-unit dwelling types. Shared housing, where facilities are shared for health, lifestyle, and economic reasons, are also important for supporting an aging population and diverse housing needs. Streamlined development approval processes, a strong

focus on affordable housing in incentive or bonus zoning requirements, and continued support for community and inter-governmental partnerships can all contribute to a more sustainable housing system.

Objectives:

- 1. Increase housing choices that support aging in place, meet diverse needs and have access to transit, services and amenities.*
- 2. Enable a range of housing options for people of all ages, abilities, and income levels including emergency housing, shared housing, cluster housing, multi-unit housing, and grade-related dwelling units.*
- 3. Increase the number of housing units that are affordable in the low to moderate income range.*
- 4. Support neighbourhood planning through community and stakeholder partnerships to support the housing and community development goals of this Plan.*
- 5. Create regulatory and financial incentives, as well as partnerships to maintain and increase the stock of housing that is affordable to a wide range of households, including low to moderate income households.*

Policy H-1

To support quality and inclusive residential environments and increased housing options for diverse households, the Land Use By-law shall:

- a) permit a variety of housing forms and types in the DD, DH, CEN- 2, CEN-1, COR, HR-2, HR1, ER-3, ER-2, ER-1, CH-2 and INS Zones to enable residents to live near commercial areas, employment, active transportation facilities, and transit;*
- b) permit a mix of housing options within various zones to meet the range of housing needs, including multi-residential, semi-detached, backyard suites, shared housing, single and two-unit dwellings, and three- unit dwellings, four-unit dwellings, (RC- May23/24;EJune13/24) townhouses, cluster housing, grade-related dwelling units, low-rise buildings, mid-rise buildings, tall mid-rise buildings and high-rise buildings;*

STRATEGIC PLAN

Mass Timber

Strategic Lens: Environment and Climate action

The municipality integrates environment and climate action in all corporate and community planning, policies, infrastructure, investments and services to achieve success in addressing the climate crisis and protecting the environment. Achieving net-zero emissions, safeguarding communities and infrastructure and protecting ecosystems are paramount in the municipality's decision-making.

Enabling Prosperity: The municipality prioritizes sustainable, inclusive growth that strengthens the economy, builds resilient infrastructure and expands housing options.

Potential Goal Focus Areas:

- Housing supply and housing options

Strengthening Communities: The municipality prioritizes safe and inclusive places and activities that enhance the quality of life for residents.

Potential Goal Focus Areas:

- Reduce community carbon emissions

Missing Middle Housing

Enabling Prosperity

The municipality prioritizes sustainable, inclusive growth that strengthens the economy, builds resilient infrastructure and expands housing options.

Potential Goal Focus Areas

- *Housing supply and housing options*
- *Growth and development towards complete communities*
- *Infrastructure resilience against impacts of climate change*
- *Investments to grow the economy*
- *Attraction and retention of businesses and talent*

INTGRATED MOBILITY PLAN
Mass Timber
1 Introduction
1.7.2 Principles
<i>Complete Communities: When higher density communities incorporate pedestrian-oriented design, create inviting public spaces and sensitively transition to the surrounding established neighbourhoods, walking and bicycling become more comfortable and enjoyable.</i>
2 Foundational Policies
2.2.5 Policies & Actions
<i>e) Require pedestrian-oriented site design and human scaled massing at street level for all new multi-unit housing, commercial and office buildings.</i>
<i>Action 26: Amend the municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws as needed to include requirements for pedestrian-oriented and human-scale design.</i>
Missing Middle Housing
1 Introduction
1.2.2 Regional Centre
<i>Planning for Improved Mobility within the Regional Centre</i>
<i>The Regional Centre offers the highest potential for walking, bicycling and transit use due to its relatively contiguous and dense mix of housing, shops, schools, employment and services. Closing gaps in the active transportation network, including completing the All Ages & Abilities bicycle network, will make it easier and more enjoyable for people to move actively between destinations. Reducing the impacts of truck traffic in the downtown will complement these efforts.</i>
<i>Another key initiative includes implementing additional Transit Priority Measures to improve the reliability and speed of buses in downtown traffic. Directing more growth to the Regional Centre and ensuring that it includes affordable places to benefit from these improved mobility options.</i>
2 Foundational Policies
2.2.3 Background
PLANNING TARGETS
<i>Where will growth be encouraged?</i>
<i>This IMP recognizes the strategic advantages of encouraging population and employment growth within the Regional Centre. The IMP aligns with the growth targets outlined in the Centre Plan (see Figure 6 in Section 1.5 Creating the IMP) and seeks to accommodate up to 40% of new housing units within the Regional Centre.</i>
2.2.5 Policies & Actions
<i>Action 15: When planning and implementing transit oriented development and Park & Ride lots, pursue opportunities to reduce housing costs through such measures as</i>

reduced parking requirements, optional parking for each residential unit, bonus zoning, partnerships, land transactions and innovative technologies.

e) Require pedestrian-oriented site design and humanscaled massing at street level for all new multi-unit housing, commercial and office buildings.

Action 26: Amend the municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws as needed to include requirements for pedestrian-oriented and human-scale design.

A Glossary

Complete Communities: Communities that include a range of uses and housing options to accommodate people in all stages of life and at a variety of income levels. Complete communities provide a place for residents to live, work, shop, learn and play. These communities contain mixed uses and compact development that enables people to safely and conveniently access the goods and services they need in their daily lives, all within a short journey and without the need to depend on a personal motor vehicle.

HALIFACT: ACTING ON CLIMATE CHANGE TOGETHER

Mass Timber

3. Guiding Principles

Integration: The transition to a low carbon future requires embedding the low carbon objective in all aspects of community planning, policy, and infrastructure investments.

Innovation: Energy and emissions planning is an evolving field and the need for innovation is urgent in order to develop and secure pathways to deep GHG emissions reductions. Innovation requires a willingness to take risks, to fail, and to learn.

5.2.1 Efficient Buildings

Action 1: Develop, adopt and apply a standard for net-zero and climate resilient new construction

5.2.8 Planning

Action 23: Integrate climate into land use planning policies and processes

**PEOPLE. PLANET. PROSPERITY. HALIFAX'S INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC STRATEGY
2022-2027**

Mass Timber

Grow the Green Economy

Halifax is well positioned to advance a green innovation, infrastructure, and jobs agenda that builds on industry, post-secondary, and innovation strengths. Such an agenda will largely be driven by private sector investment, innovation, and partnerships.

Policy changes from the federal, provincial, and municipal governments, like the \$19 million investment in rebates to encourage EVs and energy efficient homes, are beginning to incentivize the economy to be more environmentally sustainable. The private sector has a role to play in this transition, especially as it relates to providing and adopting cleantech solutions and services, and showing leadership in reducing emissions and environmental impacts, adopting renewable energy, and committing to being environmentally responsible.

Encouraging and supporting existing businesses to shift toward a more sustainable growth path will provide the infrastructure and evidence of success needed for new businesses to enter the Halifax market, thereby diversifying areas of specialization, and filling supply chain gaps.

Promote and Maximize Inclusive and Sustainable Growth

Strategic Objectives:

1.4. Accelerate innovation and entrepreneurship.

1.6 Increase housing stock.

Make Halifax a Better Place to Live and Work

Strategic Objectives:

3.1 Increase Halifax's environmental sustainability and resiliency.

Missing Middle Housing

What We Have Learned

- Ensuring residents have access to a range of affordable housing options is critical for current and future inclusive economic growth.

Inclusive Economic Growth is Paramount

In the simplest sense, inclusive growth is about enabling everyone to contribute to and benefit from economic growth, delivering greater prosperity and equity across the Halifax region. Engagement on inclusive economic growth identified diverse perspectives on its meaning and on the actions that could be taken to improve and increase inclusion. Common themes included increasing housing stock and options for people at various

income levels and stages of life; increasing training and access to jobs for underrepresented groups; taking advantage of climate action plans to create new opportunities for more people; increasing housing density while also maintaining green spaces and access to parks; and improving access to places and services. Making Halifax a more welcoming community for newcomers and eliminating systemic barriers were also highlighted. As well, continuing support for existing strategies and plans, and working with Indigenous, African Nova Scotian, immigrant, and other communities to develop new economic programs were identified as critical for inclusive economic growth. What was consistently clear is that making inclusive economic growth a foundational aspect of the economic strategy is more important than ever

Increase Access to Housing Options

The urgent need for more housing throughout the municipality was one of the dominant themes through nearly every conversation and contribution to the strategy's development. Residents identified that homelessness is a concern that reflects on who and what is valued across the municipality while increasing affordable housing options (for both rent and ownership) is a necessary part of the quality of life people desire and expect. Business owners and associations also identified the availability of affordable housing options as a key element for attracting and retaining talent. The Attainable Housing Working Group said that skilled trades shortages in the home-construction industry continue to be an issue and are impeding the speed of making new housing available. This group also discussed the provincial mandate for housing and the more limited and specific roles of the Halifax Regional Municipality. The connection between housing, attracting more people to the region, development of complete communities with amenities within a walkable distance, and good transportation links between communities were also discussed.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1.6 Increase housing stock.