



P.O. Box 1749  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
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## **Item No. 14.1**

**Halifax Regional Council**  
**February 10, 2026**  
**February 24, 2026**

**TO:** Mayor Fillmore and Members of Halifax Regional Council

**FROM:** Councillor Janet Steele, Chair, Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee

**DATE:** January 22, 2026

**SUBJECT:** **Halifax Green Network Progress Report, up to December 2024**

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### **INFORMATION REPORT**

#### **ORIGIN**

January 22, 2026 meeting of Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee, Item 13.1.1.

#### **BACKGROUND**

Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee received a report dated December 30, 2025 and a received a staff presentation.

For further information refer to the attached staff report dated December 30, 2025.

#### **DISCUSSION**

Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee considered the report dated December 30, 2025 and approved a recommendation to forward the presentation to Halifax Regional Council for information purposes.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Financial implications are outlined in the attached staff report dated December 30, 2025.

#### **RISK CONSIDERATION**

Risk consideration is outlined in the attached staff report dated December 30, 2025.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Meetings of the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee are open to public attendance and members of the public are invited to address the Standing Committee for up to five (5) minutes during the Public Participation portion of the meeting. Meetings are live webcast on Halifax.ca. The agenda, reports, video, and minutes of the Standing Committee are posted on Halifax.ca.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

Environmental implications are outlined in the staff report dated December 30, 2025.

### **LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee – Terms of Reference

#### **Other Duties and Responsibilities**

6. The Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee shall have an active interest in the Agencies and Initiatives that support Community and Economic development throughout the municipality by:
  - 1) promoting and encouraging the development of programs, policies in initiatives in the municipality that support Community and Economic development throughout the municipality;
  - 2) engaging, at a governance level, the agencies, boards and committees funded by the Municipality and under the mandate of the Standing Committee to ensure they meet community needs and expectations including:
    - i. the Greater Halifax Partnership
    - ii. Destination Halifax

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 – Staff report dated December 30, 2025.

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Report Prepared by: Simon Ross-Siegel, Legislative Assistant, Municipal Clerk's Office 902.292.3962

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**Item No. 13.1.1**  
**Community Planning & Economic Development Standing Committee**  
**January 22, 2026**

**TO:** Chair and Members of Community Planning & Economic Development Standing Committee

**FROM:** Bill Moore, A/Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** December 30, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Halifax Green Network Progress Report, up to December 2024

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### **RECOMMENDATION REPORT**

#### **ORIGIN**

On August 14, 2018, Item 14.3.1:

THAT Halifax Regional Council: ...

6. Request that staff provide annual progress reports on the implementation of the Green Network Plan, to Regional Council through the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Halifax Green Network Plan is the Municipality's strategy to care for the region's open spaces. This progress report acknowledges the growing recognition of the value of open spaces for nature and for people while also noting several external factors that challenge its implementation. With improved program coordination to support plan delivery, this report identifies that 14 actions are completed, 55 are underway, and 10 did not progress during 2023 and 2024. Key results have been achieved across all of the Green Network Plan's Themes through the various HRM Business Units working on the Plan's implementation. Improved coordination for the year ahead will help the next steps for each action be achieved.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Community Planning & Economic Development Standing Committee forward this report to Regional Council as an information item only.

## **BACKGROUND**

The purpose of the Halifax Green Network Plan (Green Network Plan) is to define an interconnected open space system for the entire municipality (the “Green Network”), highlight ecosystem functions and benefits, and outline strategies to manage open space. Specifically, the Plan 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 Green Network Plan identifies 32 objectives and 79 actions that are required to establish its vision:

1. The Halifax Region will benefit from an **interconnected open space network** with multiple ecological, recreational, socio-cultural and economic functions to shape sustainable resilient human and ecological communities
2. The Halifax Region’s open space success is rooted in **public involvement and multisector collaboration** to ensure long-term enjoyment, ecological stewardship and regional vitality
3. The Halifax Region’s open space will continue to offer citizens **healthy, productive beautiful and enjoyable spaces** for future generations.

These objectives and their actions are organized around the 5 themes that define the importance of the region’s open space: Ecology, Working Landscapes, Community Shaping, Outdoor Recreation and Cultural Landscapes. Many of these actions require extensive and effective collaboration with other levels of government, businesses, communities and residents as well as involving multiple HRM Business Units. Some of the actions chart new ways of working or areas of work for the Municipality.

On August 14, 2018, Halifax Regional Council approved the Green Network Plan. This approval included direction to use the Green Network Plan as a framework for amending the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (Regional Plan) and Secondary Planning Strategies and to carry out the actions contained in the Green Network Plan through the multi-year budgeting and business planning process. The plan’s implementation framework envisaged a 7-year time-frame for its implementation.

The Green Network Plan supports, is supported by, and is coordinated with several other strategic plans including the Regional Plan, HalifACT, Urban Forest Management Plan, Sharing Our Stories: HRM’s Culture & Heritage Priorities Plan, the Integrated Mobility Plan, Active Transportation Priorities Plan and the Cole Harbour Basin Open Space Plan.

As requested by Council, this report provides a progress update on the implementation of the Green Network Plan.

## **DISCUSSION**

This report outlines progress on the Green Network Plan implementation since the last update, [published in 2022](#). As approved by Council in the 2023-24 Budget & Business Plan, a project manager position was created and hired in Spring 2024 to better coordinate the plan’s implementation.

Up to the end of this report period, December 2024, several external factors have emerged that affect the implementation of the Green Network Plan.

### **Growing Urgency for Nature Conservation**

Since the plan was approved, the urgency of the global biodiversity crisis has become apparent. The approach the Green Network Plan takes to promoting the region’s biodiversity has become seen by

international policymakers as increasingly urgent and relevant. The biodiversity crisis is caused by the loss or degradation of habitat, pollution, climate change, over-exploitation of resources and invasive species. The recent Kunming-Montreal conference, COP15 to the Convention on Biological Diversity, concluded the response to this crisis requires a “whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach”. Many of COP15’s targets are pertinent to the region, but Target 12 is particularly relevant to the Green Network Plan:

*“Significantly increase the area and quality and connectivity of, access to, and benefits from green and blue spaces in urban and densely populated areas sustainably, by mainstreaming the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and ensure biodiversity-inclusive urban planning, enhancing native biodiversity, ecological connectivity and integrity, and improving human health and well-being and connection to nature and contributing to inclusive and sustainable urbanization and the provision of ecosystem functions and services”*

The Green Network Plan provides an important policy and program framework to enable the Municipality to play its part in responding to this crisis. In December 2023, [Regional Council directed the Mayor](#) to write a letter of support to the City of Montreal to become a signatory to the Montreal Pledge - Cities United in Action for Biodiversity. The [Montreal Pledge](#) commits the Municipality to integrate biodiversity into regulatory planning, along with 14 other measures to reduce the threats to biodiversity and share the benefits of biodiversity.

### **Understanding the ‘Healing Gift of Space’**

Like much of the Municipality’s work, the Green Network Plan’s implementation was disrupted by the pandemic. Pandemic restrictions exposed the often overlooked yet crucial role that open spaces play in supporting human health and wellbeing.

Since the Plan was developed, researchers have also made advances in our understanding of the healing gift of space. As well as having a better understanding of the specific health benefits that access to open space can help provide, scientists have also found biodiverse spaces provide greater wellbeing benefits than green spaces with low biodiversity. The health and wellbeing benefits of open space are greatest among lower income and minority ethnic groups. This research<sup>1</sup> has implications for how and where we provide parks and open spaces across the region. Advances have also been made in natural capital accounting, with some municipalities starting to recognise the significant economic benefits that parks and open spaces provide urban areas. The Green Network Plan is collaborating with NS Health to keep up to date with these advances in understanding and using them to help inform its practical implementation.

### **External Challenges**

Several external factors have presented challenges for the Plan’s implementation. Addressing the needs of a growing population changes the demands on open space: Increased housing density increases the need for open space and puts increased pressure on the region’s existing natural assets. However, the policy tools available to the Municipality are limited by the provisions of the *HRM Charter*, and further responsibilities for the natural environment fall under the jurisdiction of the provincial *Environment Act*. To address this challenge, the Green Network Plan recognizes and envisions that a “multifunctional” green network approach - rather than a blanket green belt – will provide the flexibility and nuance needed to allow the development of complementary environmental protection and housing policies that work together. Full implementation will consider a range of regulatory and non-regulatory approaches.

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<sup>1</sup> Mitchell, R., Richardson, E., Short, N. & Pearce, J. (2015). Neighborhood environments and socioeconomic inequalities in mental well-being. *Am J Prev Med.* 49(1): 80-4.  
World Health Organization, & Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. (2015). *Connecting Global Priorities: Biodiversity and Human Health*. WHO Press, June 2017. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.1.3679.6565>  
WHO Regional Office for Europe. (2021). *Nature, biodiversity and health*.

At the same time, the climate emergency's impacts have begun to be felt more clearly, with more frequent and more impactful hurricanes, wildfires, drought and flooding events. This adds strain on the Green Network and on the communities that depend on it. The HalifACT plan was passed after the Green Network Plan, and sets out a program to adapt and mitigate these issues. Funding and implementing the Green Network Plan alongside HalifACT is an important action in tackling our climate challenge.

### **Building Internal Capacity & Capability**

Following Council's approval to hire a Green Network Coordinator position, the Municipality has been able to strengthen its capacity to implement the Plan. The coordinator was hired in the spring of 2024 and began a review to identify how to strengthen plan implementation. A governance model has been identified. This would include a program board comprising Directors from the Business Units most involved in the Plan's implementation (Planning & Development, Property, Fleet & Environment, Parks & Recreation and Public Works). This would formalize senior management-level coordination on Green Network Plan deliverables and help ensure resource needs can be considered. A technical working group facilitates coordination across Business Units and supporting plan implementation.

Some actions already had a clear process for their effective implementation. The strengthened coordination of the Plan means work plans are under development for implementing remaining actions. As well as aiding effective delivery, this also allows consideration of resource implications posed by some of the more complex parts of the plan.

### **2023 and 2024 Progress Overview**

An overview of the progress of each of the Green Network Plan actions is provided in Attachment A.

Of the 79 actions, 14 are now completed. Their impact will be evaluated, and in some cases some successor activity may begin. 55 actions are in progress. In the last year, no or minimal progress was made on 10 actions.

Highlights from this progress report include:

- Preparing fresh policy that addresses seven plan actions that will now be considered further in Phase 5 of the Regional Plan review process. These include updates to watercourse buffers, and setting future regional and community planning direction for protecting agricultural lands and other working landscapes.
- Reviewing and drafting a revised Urban Forest Management Plan
- Drafting of regulations for Sackville Rivers floodplain based on updated flood modelling
- Completing the pilot Natural Assets Inventory for the Nine Mile River watershed
- Re-naturalising the Lake Banook shoreline in Birch Cove Park
- Installing a bioswale installation at East Preston Recreation Centre
- Collaborating with the Province to complete an ecological connectivity study to assess the barriers to connectivity between the Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Area and the Chebucto peninsula for different species
- Purchasing 46 hectares of land adjacent to Shaw Wilderness Park

Progress varies on actions for a number of reasons. For many actions, the delivery of actions is programmed into work which will occur over time. For example, one action will be implemented when the Rural Community Plan is completed. Many actions with little or no progress are identified in the Green Network Plan as projects or partnerships. In several cases, these actions are partnerships that also require capital investment by one or more partners to implement – for example, the installation of wildlife crossings on transportation corridors (i.e. Provincial highways). Four actions require regulatory or legislative action by the Province to progress further; these include amendments to the *HRM Charter* to expand the policy tools available to support park and environmental land acquisition, and proclaiming legislation to protect Cultural Landscapes.

The 79 actions in the Plan are designed to achieve the Plan's 32 objectives. The Plan's monitoring section recognized the importance of measuring progress to fulfilling these objectives, but stopped short of establishing these indicators.

### **Next steps**

In the next year, staff will focus on further strengthening governance and coordination of the Plan as well as improving delivery of program actions. The next steps for each action are detailed in Attachment A.

The following represent key next steps for the Green Network Plan implementation:

- Adopting a program charter to guide governance and support progress tracking;
- Working with the technical working group to:
  - ensure all actions have practical workplans and success measures that lead to objectives and actions being fulfilled, with any additional resource needs being identified; and
  - evaluate the impacts of plan implementation to date;
- Developing a timetable and plan to review the Green Network Plan to ensure the direction and implementation of the Green Network aligns with current needs;
- Reporting on progress made during 2025 to the Community Planning & Economic Development Standing Committee.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications associated with this report. Financial implications of implementing Plan Actions will be evaluated and considered as part of the annual Budget & Business Planning process.

### **RISK CONSIDERATION**

Delivery risks are considered as part of the management of the Plan. No risk considerations were identified in the recommendation of this report.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The Halifax Green Network Plan was informed by three phases of extensive engagement with residents from urban, suburban and rural communities, provincial government departments and stakeholder groups. Those consultations provided valuable insight to inform the vision, principles, objectives, and actions within the Green Network Plan. Additional public engagement will be carried out for individual Green Network Plan action items as appropriate on a case-by-case basis.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

Environmental implications are outlined in the Discussion section of this report.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

Community Planning & Economic Development Standing Committee could refuse to forward the report to Regional Council for information purposes. This is not recommended given the Origin motion of this report.

## **LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

*Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, S.N.S. 2008, c. 39*

7A The purposes of the Municipality are to

- (a) provide good government;
- (b) provide services, facilities and other things that, in the opinion of the Council, are necessary or desirable for all or part of the Municipality; and
- (c) develop and maintain safe and viable communities.

79A (1) Subject to subsections (2) to (4), the Municipality may only spend money for municipal purposes if

- (a) the expenditure is included in the Municipality's operating budget or capital budget or is otherwise authorized by the Municipality;

229 (1) A municipal planning strategy must include statements of policy respecting

- [...]
- (e) any other matter prescribed by the regulations.

### *Minimum Planning Requirements Regulations*

6 A municipal planning strategy may include statements of policy on the use, content, development, and administration of the following:

- [...]
- (g) studies to be carried out before undertaking specified developments or developments in specified areas;

8 A municipal planning strategy may include statements of policy on any of the following:

- (a) municipal investment for public and private development and coordinating public programs relating to the economic, social and physical development of the municipality;

9 A municipal planning strategy may include statements of policy on any of the following:

- [...]
- (f) stormwater management and erosion control;
- [...]
- (h) identifying, protecting, using and developing any of the following:
  - (i) lands subject to flooding,
  - (ii) steep slopes,
  - (iii) lands susceptible to subsidence, erosion or other geological hazards, and

### *Administrative Order One, the Procedures of the Council Administrative Order, Schedule 3, Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee Terms of Reference*

3. The Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee shall provide oversight of the Municipality's Regional Plan and Regional Planning Initiatives, as follows:

- (a) overseeing the Municipality's Regional Plan and Regional Planning Initiatives;
- [...]
- (e) overseeing the priority setting relative to the Community Visioning Program, Functional Plan Implementation and major planning projects.

7. The Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee shall perform such other duties and responsibilities as may be determined by the Council.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A – Green Network Plan 2024 Progress

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Report Prepared by: David Hodd, Green Network Project Manager, Planning & Development. 902.497.1769

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## Attachment A

### Halifax Green Network Plan Progress Report: January 2023 - December 2024

This report summarizes the progress that has been made towards each action listed in the Halifax Green Network Plan and reflects activity from January 2023 to December 2024.

In reviewing the progress of these actions, it is important to recognize that there is high degree of variation in size, scope, complexity and cost among the actions, and they will each face different challenges to their implementation.

A summary of progress for each action is shown in the following table. More detail on the progress of each action comes after this table. The definitions of the icons and colours used in the table and action lists are:

#### Progress

The state of progress towards completing the actions with an identified timeline is defined according to the following:



**Complete.** This action in the Halifax Green Network Plan is now complete. Successor or evaluation activities may take place, and will continue to be recorded. All completed actions will be monitored and evaluated for success.



**In Progress.** Progress was made on this action during 2023 and 2024.



**Minimal or No Progress.** No significant progress has been made on this action. If progress on an action is dependent on completion of another action, or is dependent on other organizations, such as the Federal or Provincial Governments, this has been classed as Minimal or No Progress.

#### Progress Tracking for Guidance Actions

27 of the plan's actions have been described as "Guidance". Some Guidance Actions operate as a policy to be applied to operational activities. Other Guidance Actions may require staff to develop procedures or programs to fully implement the action. For the purposes of tracking these actions in this Progress Report, if the identified work to progress a Guidance Action is complete and in use, then it is marked as **Complete**. If there is further work needed to develop the guidance and fully implement its use, the Guidance Action has been marked either **Minimal or No Progress** or **In Progress**.

# THEME 1: ECOLOGY

## Objective 1: Maintain wildlife habitats, biodiversity and landscape connectivity

### Action 1: 2-7 Years | Land Use Planning

Refine and incorporate the Green Network Ecology Map (Map 5 on page 35) into the Regional Plan and use it to guide regional planning decisions related to the location and shape of:

- Urban service boundaries
- Rural centres
- Nature parks
- Conservation design developments

#### Summary of recent activity



The Draft Regional Plan (Phase 4, June 2025) process which identified how this action might be addressed. (See also Action 29)

#### Next steps planned

Regional Plan Phase 5 will further consider the long-term growth and settlement patterns in the region and will consider an ecological lens as part of that work.

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Regional & Community Planning*

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### Action 2: Guidance | Land Use Planning

Consider the following design and management guidelines when planning, maintaining and restoring essential and important corridors (Map 5 on page 35) through Municipal Planning Strategies and Land Use By-laws:

- Essential corridors should ideally be greater than 1km wide and composed of intact natural habitat, wherever possible
- The width of essential corridors should increase in proportion to its length (i.e. the longer the corridor, the wider it should be)
- Where a 1km width is not possible for essential corridors, maintain what remains, seek opportunities to restore disturbed areas and mitigate the impacts of nearby human activity
- Maintain a minimum corridor width of 100m for important corridors to connect natural habitats
- Where intact important corridors are unavailable and/ or not possible to restore, maintain the largest possible remnant patches and encourage best management practices in intervening areas to provide opportunities for wildlife movement between patches

#### Summary of recent activity



The Draft Regional Plan (Phase 4, June 2025) process identified how this action might be addressed (See also Action 32). Collaborated with the Province on a study on the ecological

connectivity between the Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes area and adjacent lands, including the Chebucto Peninsula. This will help inform design guidelines for corridors.

### Next steps planned

Further detailed study of the approach to corridors will be undertaken, proposed in Planning & Development's 2025-26 Budget & Business Plan. This study will define corridor function and develop a level of service needed to facilitate the movement needed within a corridor, explore a range of potential regulatory and programmatic approaches and potential land use planning approaches.

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Regional & Community Planning*

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## Objective 2: Conserve and manage steep slopes, easily disturbed soils and other land forms that are vulnerable to erosion and degradation

### Action 3:

*2-7 Years | Land Use Planning*

Amend Municipal Planning Strategies to clarify and ensure that environmental sensitive areas are identified and considered during the review of all discretionary planning applications (i.e. rezoning and development agreement applications).

### Summary of recent activity



The 2014 Regional Plan requires environmental features to be identified and planned for as part of secondary planning strategies, including a range of policies that require assessments of environmentally sensitive areas, which are being used for the Future Serviced Communities study (E-16, E-21, E-23, S-2, G-9A). Policy G-9A requires that new or amended secondary municipal planning strategies shall organize land use or management of land in a manner that considers the environmental and cultural features. The Draft Regional Plan (Phase 4, June 2025) process identified how this action might be addressed. This would include clearly identifying that Land Suitability Analyses be required in advanced of planning for Future Serviced Communities, and information on environmental features be included in all discretionary planning applications. (See also Actions 4, 30)

### Next steps planned

Work with the Province to further refine policy in this area. Evaluate and monitor the policy approach through the Phase 5 Regional Plan.

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Regional & Community Planning*

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### Action 4:

*2-7 Years | Land Use Planning*

Amend the Regional Plan to emphasize the importance of identifying and protecting environmental sensitive areas during master neighbourhood planning exercises (secondary planning).

### Summary of recent activity



The Draft Regional Plan (Phase 4, June 2025) process identified how this action might be addressed. Land use suitability analyses for the Future Serviced Communities study has also

considered environmentally sensitive areas, consistent with 2014 Regional Plan policy (E-16, E-21, E-23, S-2, G-9A). (See also Actions 3, 30)

### Next steps planned

Regional Plan Phase 5 will further consider the long-term growth and settlement patterns in the region and will consider approaches to master planning as part of that work. Evaluate and monitor the policy approach as the Future Serviced Communities planning processes proceed.

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Regional & Community Planning*

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### Action 5:

*2-7 Years | Land Use Planning*

Amend Municipal Planning Strategies and Land Use By-laws to consolidate environmental protection zones, which prohibit most forms of development, and apply these zones to areas with significantly sized vulnerable landforms, such as ravines and bluffs.

### Summary of recent activity



The Regional Plan includes a Protected Area Zone that is applied to publicly-owned parcels of land and private conservation land where requested by the property owner. For Future Serviced Communities, the Regional Plan includes policies that require assessments of environmentally sensitive areas (E-16, E-21, E-23, S-2, G-9A), and the new or amended secondary plans for these areas will apply appropriate zoning to any areas not suited for development. A similar approach is used as part of Conservation Design Development Agreements, which require environmentally sensitive areas to be identified and development clustered away from these features.

### Next steps planned

This action will primarily be implemented as part of the Community Planning Programs (Suburban and Rural Plans), which will consolidate and update the various environmental protection zones across the Municipality's 22 Secondary Municipal Planning Strategies and Land Use By-laws. Detailed (ground-truthed) information on "vulnerable landforms" may be required before zoning could be considered.

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Regional & Community Planning*

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## Objective 3: Protect riparian corridors and wetlands from degradation, pollution and other threats.

### Action 6:

*2-7 Years | Land Use Planning*

Amend Municipal Planning Strategies and Land Use By-laws to consolidate, clarify and refine the Municipality's variable approach to watercourse buffers. Specific measures to consider include:

- Consolidating environmental protection zones and applying these zones to sensitive riparian areas and wetlands, such as coastal marshlands, floodways and large wetland complexes, based on detailed mapping and analysis

- Increasing the minimum required riparian buffer around drinking water supply sources, established under the Protected Water Supply Zone, from 30.5 to 100 m
- Establishing a consistent watercourse buffer requirement for industrial zones and uses, which currently range from 20 to 100 m for some zones and specific uses
- Increasing the standard watercourse buffer requirement from 20 to 30 m for watercourses that are greater than 50 cm wide
- Maintaining a watercourse buffer requirement of 20 metres for watercourses that are intermittent or less than 50 cm wide
- Maintaining special watercourse buffering requirements established for vulnerable areas, such as the special requirements that apply to Cow Bay
- Removing the formula to increase the buffer requirements based on slope for inland watercourses (not marine coast), as the requirement is rarely applicable and adds unnecessary complexity to the permitting process

### Summary of recent activity



The Draft Regional Plan (Phase 4, June 2025) process identified how this action might be addressed.

### Next steps planned

Work with Council, the Province, the development industry and the public to further refine policy in this area, as part of Phase 5 of the Regional Plan Review.

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Regional & Community Planning*

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## Objective 4: Maintain and enhance the urban forest

### Action 7:

*Guidance | Current & Future Projects*

Continue to implement the Urban Forest Master Plan.

### Summary of recent activity



A planting program was completed for the first 10 years of the plan, and various ongoing operational programs borne from the Plan. The Municipal Design Guidelines were updated in 2021 regarding standards for street trees. A comprehensive review and update of the Urban Forest Management Plan was undertaken in 2024.

### Next steps planned

Council approved a revised UFMP in 2025, with implementation to follow. Creation of a review group and review process to update Design Standards annually regarding which species are invasive (linked to integrated pest strategy).

*Action Lead: Public Works - Infrastructure Maintenance & Operations*

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**Action 8:***2-7 Years | Land Use Planning*

Update the landscaping requirements in the Land Use By-laws to support the implementation of the Urban Forest Master Plan by prohibiting the use of invasive species.

**Summary of recent activity**

Update completed for the Regional Centre and Suburban Housing Accelerator Land Use By-Laws.

**Next steps planned**

Further work to update Land Use By-Laws will be completed as part of the Suburban Plan project.

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Regional & Community Planning*

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**Action 9:***1-2 Years | Current & Future Projects*

Consider the adoption of a private trees by-law to manage the removal of trees on private property within serviced (urban) areas. Specific direction to consider includes:

- Focusing on large properties with development potential while minimizing impacts on small properties
- Prioritizing the protection of trees and vegetation within the watercourse buffer
- Developing an educational campaign to promote tree stewardship on private property

**Summary of recent activity**

In December 2023, a staff report titled [Evaluation of Regulatory Approaches to Tree Protection](#) was presented at Environment & Sustainability Standards Committee. This report outlined the key considerations for the Municipality in regulating private trees, including legislative abilities and potential approaches. The appropriate way forward will be considered an action for the updated Urban Forest Management Plan program.

**Next steps planned**

Establishing the cross-business unit team to implement this task, developing work plan success measures for this action, as part of UFMP.

*Action Lead: Public Works - Infrastructure Maintenance & Operations*

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**Action 10:***1-2 Years | Current & Future Projects*

When updating the Municipal Design Guidelines (Red Book) consider requiring developers to install street trees in front of developments located on existing streets that do not currently contain street trees.

### Summary of recent activity



Municipal Design Guidelines for street trees were updated in 2021 with requirements for developers to install new trees in front of development located on existing streets that do not contain trees, when the development requests to use, or reconstruct the street.

### Next steps planned

Continue to monitor and implement this action through the Urban Forest Management Plan. Evaluate whether additional efforts to support installation of street trees would be beneficial, and what policy mechanisms might encourage this.

*Action Lead: PW - Transportation Design & Construction Services*

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## Objective 5: Coordinate efforts to manage water quality and quantity while expanding the Region's Green Network

### Action 11:

*2-4 Years | Partnerships*

Work with Halifax Water and Nova Scotia Environment to establish stormwater management guidelines to improve the quality of stormwater runoff.

### Summary of recent activity



The Administrative Order [Respecting Stormwater Management Standards for Development Activities](#) was completed in 2020. Development Engineering now enforces this.

### Next steps planned

Action completed, but further improvements have been identified to build on this action to improve submission quality and streamline the review process. Next steps may include creation of a Stormwater Administrative Order guidance document for developers, with some form of submission checklist, standard spreadsheet, stormwater management plan report template, and minimum requirements for approval, including SWM hierarchy report, as needed;. Working with Halifax Water, develop the Integrated Stormwater Management Policy based on the Draft Integrated Stormwater Management Framework document approve by Regional Council.

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Development Engineering*

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### Action 12:

*4-7 Years | Partnerships*

Work with Halifax Water and Nova Scotia Environment to promote green infrastructure, such as naturalized stormwater retention ponds and bioswales, as the preferred approach to managing stormwater.

### Summary of recent activity



Development Engineering is actively working on establishing guidelines and standard specifications for both naturalized stormwater ponds, and for green infrastructure on public property, for inclusion in the HRM Municipal Design Guidelines. These projects recently gained staff resources, however currently have no funding support for work like CAD or consultants.

### Next steps planned

Developing work plan and success measures for further progress on this action.

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Development Engineering*

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### Action 13:

*2-4 Years | Partnerships*

Work with Halifax Water to develop a green infrastructure specification document to guide and promote the use of low-impact design approaches to manage stormwater on private property for multi-unit residential, commercial and industrial developments.

### Summary of recent activity



The Administrative Order [Respecting Stormwater Management Standards for Development Activities](#) was completed in 2020, and green infrastructure approaches are recommended for new Multi-Unit / Industrial / Commercial / Institutional (MICI) developments, but are not required. New MICI developments are required to meet some minimum requirements for SW retention on site. Development Engineering now enforces this.

### Next steps planned

Staff will evaluate whether effects of enforcement are sufficient. The stormwater management plan submissions received to date have not been to the quality staff anticipated. Development Engineering is working with Environment & Climate Change to explore opportunities to create a standardized application template/reporting framework for these sites to streamline submissions and reviews.

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Development Engineering*

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## Objective 6: Prioritize the preservation of open spaces as a low cost and sustainable approach to both mitigating and adapting to climate change impacts

### Action 14:

*Guidance | Current & Future Projects*

Continue to update the Region's flood scenario mapping and, through individual project work, prioritize the preservation and restoration of riparian areas and shoreline vegetation as an effective method for mitigating flood impacts.

### Summary of recent activity



Detailed flood modelling completed for the Sackville River Watershed, and the Shubenacadie Lakes Watershed, and land use regulations for the [Sackville Floodplains](#) were drafted and put forward for public engagement. High level pluvial, fluvial and coastal flood hazard mapping has also been so completed for the municipality. Development Engineering are now able to provide input and guidance to other staff to help prioritize and preserve areas.

### Next steps planned

- Developing work plan and success measures for this action.
- Musquodoboit River Watershed Field Data Collection Program (MFLM) - Project Awarded - to be completed by September 2025.
- Tangier River Watershed Field Data Collection Program (Municipal Flood Line Mapping) RFP in progress - will need to be completed by september 2025.

Action Lead: Planning & Development – Development Engineering

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**Action 15:** *Guidance | Current & Future Projects*  
Consider municipal efforts to protect and expand the Green Network when assessing municipal contributions to mitigating green house gas emissions, including protection of land-based green carbon sinks and intertidal areas (e.g., saltmarshes) that act as blue carbon sinks.

**Summary of recent activity**



The Natural Asset Inventory project and subsequent work with Asset Management has been exploring how these might be incorporated. Since HalifACT was adopted after the Green Network Plan, HalifACT actions address this action in various ways, and staff have discussed how to adapt this action and the related Objective given that context. For example, a Nature Based Solutions working group was established to support HalifACT, which supports the municipal portfolio on protecting, restoring, maintaining, and expanding HRM natural areas and green infrastructure assets to support climate change mitigation, adaptation, and environmental sustainability objectives.

**Next steps planned**

A review of what further effort is required to fulfill the intent of this action will be undertaken. Future work on this action will likely be tracked through the HalifACT program.

Action Lead: PFE – Environment & Climate Change

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**Objective 7: Use the Green Network Database to inform future land use and infrastructure planning initiatives**

**Action 16:** *1-2 Years | Current & Future Projects*  
Make the Green Network Database available to all Municipal departments, as well as freely available to the public through HRM’s Open Data Catalogue.

**Summary of recent activity**



[Halifax Green Network Plan data](#) continues to be available through HRM’s [Open Data Catalogue](#).

**Next steps planned**

Further work to document the detailed methodology underpinning the dataset would support its ongoing use. Staff will work to develop guidance on use and interpretation of HGNP datalayers.

Action Lead: Planning & Development – Regional & Community Planning

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**Action 17:** *Guidance | Current & Future Projects*  
Explore opportunities to develop on-going partnerships with Provincial Government departments, universities and non-profits to refine, maintain and update the key datasets needed to understand the health of the Region’s ecosystems, wildlife

populations and wildlife movement corridors, including the spread of invasive species.

### Summary of recent activity



Discussions with Atlantic Conservation Data Centre about possible data partnership, in relation to Species at Risk Data.

### Next steps planned

Staff will undertake an evaluation and prioritization of data needs and opportunities for data sharing. Following this assessment, staff will work with identified partners to establish the necessary data partnerships.

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Regional & Community Planning*

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## Objective 8: Work with the Province to expand the tools available to the Municipality to protect and manage the natural environment

### Action 18:

*1-2 Years | Partnerships*

Formally request that the Province amend the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter to enable the Municipality to acquire sensitive environmental lands (e.g. riparian areas, wetlands, steep slopes, etc.) as an environmental reserve through the land development and subdivision process, in addition to existing parkland dedication provisions.

### Summary of recent activity



A letter from the Mayor outlining this request was sent in 2018. Regional Planning staff met with Provincial staff to discuss this request in July 2022. There has not been resolution from the Province on this request.

### Next steps planned

As opportunities arise, staff will engage with the Province on this request. Staff will consider alternative opportunities and strategies to progress this objective within the Municipality's existing legislative abilities.

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Regional & Community Planning*

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## Theme 2: Working Landscapes

### Objective 1: Provide sufficient space and opportunities for resource extraction and forestry uses

### Action 19:

*2-7 Years | Land Use Planning*

Amend Municipal Planning Strategies and Land Use By-laws to direct residential uses away from areas suitable for resource extraction and forestry uses.

### Summary of recent activity



The existing Regional Plan designates a large portion of the municipality as Rural Resource, and limits subdivision in rural areas where there are no existing public roads, so that lands can continue to be used for resource purposes. The Draft Regional Plan (Phase 4, June 2025) process identified how this action might be addressed. This would include guidance for the Rural Community Planning program, including protection for working landscapes.

### Next steps planned

This action will be developed and fully implemented as part of the Rural Community Planning program. Further information on the best areas suitable for resources and forestry may be required before any changes to land use policy or regulations are considered.

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Regional & Community Planning*

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### Action 20:

*2-7 Years | Land Use Planning*

Amend Municipal Planning Strategies and Land Use By-laws to provide more opportunities for uses that support primary resource industries, such as aggregate and wood processing facilities in locations with high value working landscapes (Map 7 on page 43). Specific measures to consider include providing as-of-right development opportunities (without a lengthy rezoning or development agreement process) for resource developments that locate in areas that are buffered from nearby residential areas, wildlife corridors and core areas shown on the Green Network Ecology Map (Map 5 on page 35).

### Summary of recent activity



Existing planning documents in many rural areas permit a mix of uses, including resource uses. The Draft Regional Plan (Phase 4, June 2025) process identified how this action might be addressed. This would include guidance for the Rural Community Planning program, including protection for working landscapes.

### Next steps planned

This action will be developed and fully implemented as part of the Rural Community Planning program. A detailed inventory of existing zoning permissions will be undertaken to determine whether there are restrictions in existing land use by-laws. Further information on the best areas suitable for resource industries may be required before any changes to land use policy and regulations are considered.

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Regional & Community Planning*

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## Objective 2: Protect and promote the sustainable use of high valued agricultural lands

### Action 21:

*2-7 Years | Land Use Planning*

Amend the Regional Plan to limit or prohibit conservation design developments in the Agricultural Designation.

### Summary of recent activity



The Draft Regional Plan (Phase 4, June 2025) process identified how amending the Conservation Design Development agreement policy could address this action.

### Next steps planned

Consider the policy approach as part of the Phase 5 Regional Plan.

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Regional & Community Planning*

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### Action 22:

*2-7 Years | Land Use Planning*

Amend Municipal Planning Strategies and Land-Use By-laws to encourage agricultural developments and supportive uses to locate and expand in agricultural areas. Specific measures to consider include:

- Ensuring setback and separation distance requirements are reasonable and do not unduly restrict the development or expansion of processing facilities or agricultural structures
- Reducing the size and extent of non-agricultural uses in agricultural areas to limit the loss of high quality soils to non-agricultural developments
- Ensuring permitted agricultural-related uses are inclusive of changing business practices and opportunities

### Summary of recent activity



The existing Regional Plan applies the Agricultural designation to lands in the Musquodoboit Valley. The Draft Regional Plan (Phase 4, June 2025) process identified how this action might be addressed. This could include policy to guide the Rural Community Planning program, including protection for working landscapes such as agricultural lands.

### Next steps planned

This action will be developed and fully implemented as part of the Rural Community Planning program. Further information on the best areas suitable for agriculture may be required before any changes to land use policy and regulations can be considered.

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Regional & Community Planning*

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## Objective 3: Provide greater opportunities for small-scale agriculture

### Action 23:

*Guidance | Park Network Management*

Balanced with other open space uses, support community gardens and other forms of food production in public parks and other Municipally-owned properties.

### Summary of recent activity



These are active programs. Community gardens, supported by Parks and Recreation's Community Developers, continue to be highly successful. The [JustFood Action Plan](#) provides further guidance for community food production.

### Next steps planned

Enhancements of the community gardening and food production programs are being considered in alignment with the emphasis that the municipality and partners have placed on food security through the JustFood Action Plan. (See also Action 25 below).

*Action Lead: Parks & Recreation*

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### Action 24:

*2-7 Years | Land Use Planning*

Amend Municipal Planning Strategies and Land Use By-laws to encourage small-scale agriculture on private properties. Specific measures to consider include:

- Removing barriers to appropriately-scaled urban agriculture and food retail on private property including, road side stands and animal husbandry
- When reviewing landscaping requirements, ensure that edible landscaping, such as fruit trees and herb gardens, are permitted types of vegetation

### Summary of recent activity



The approach to small-scale agriculture on private properties has been reviewed as part of the Regional Plan Review. The Draft Regional Plan (Phase 4, June 2025) process identified how this action might be addressed, and included policy that would allow a range of local food production, processing and sales across the region at a scale appropriate to the surrounding context. This includes removing barriers to and enabling the sale of plants and food products produced on-site by the property owner or occupant in residential zones; permitting Farmers' Markets in commercial zones, industrial zones, and residential zones (excluding low-density residential areas); permitting accessory beekeeping across the region, and allowing rooftop greenhouses and landscaping.

### Next steps planned

Further work to enable small-scale agriculture and promote food security will be undertaken as part of the Suburban and Rural Community Planning projects. Staff will monitor feedback received from the public on these topics in considering any further changes.

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Regional & Community Planning*

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### Action 25:

*Guidance | Park Network Management*

Consider community gardens, fruit trees, and food supportive amenities, when preparing master plans for public open spaces.

### Summary of recent activity



Community gardens, fruit trees, and other food supportive amenities are regularly considered in planning of parks.

### Next steps planned

In addition to regularly considering food supportive amenities, emerging work from the municipality's food security initiatives and programs are being considered for integration in the planning of parks. An update and action plan from the JustFOOD program is expected in 2025, which will further inform and support park planning.

## Objective 4: Support eco-tourism and the protection of scenic landscapes

**Action 26:** 2-7 Years | Land Use Planning  
Amend Municipal Planning Strategies and Land Use By-laws to ensure that rural industrial developments are adequately screened from scenic roads and trails.

### Summary of recent activity



The Draft Regional Plan (Phase 4, June 2025) process identified how this action might be addressed. This could include policy intent to consider appropriate uses and mitigation measures for development along highways and scenic routes.

### Next steps planned

This action will be developed and fully implemented as part of the Rural Community Planning program. Work on this action will need to be coordinated with Actions 19 and 20, regarding protection for working landscapes and resource industries, and Action 27.

Action Lead: Planning & Development – Regional & Community Planning

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**Action 27:** 2-7 Years | Land Use Planning  
Review Municipal Planning Strategies and Land Use By-laws to maintain and, where needed, increase lot size and frontage requirements to prevent dense “ribbon development” along scenic routes located between rural centres.

### Summary of recent activity



The Draft Regional Plan (Phase 4, June 2025) process identified how this action might be addressed. It could include policy intent to consider appropriate uses and mitigation measures for development along highways and scenic routes.

### Next steps planned

This action will be developed and fully implemented as part of the Rural Community Planning program. Work on this action will need to be coordinated with Actions 19 and 20, regarding protection for working landscapes and resource industries, and Action 26.

Action Lead: Planning & Development – Regional & Community Planning

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**Action 28:** 2-7 Years | Land Use Planning  
Amend Municipal Planning Strategies and Land Use By-laws to encourage both small- and large-scale tourism related uses in rural areas. Specific measures to consider include:

- Relaxing restrictions for home-based businesses that cater to tourists, such as bed and breakfast operations, accessory cabins, tour operations, arts and crafts, farms stays, and commercial recreation (such as kayak rentals, etc.)

- Where not already permitted, considering the development of large-scale resorts, campgrounds, spas and hotels by rezoning or development agreement in rural areas that balance tourism opportunities with impacts on the environment and nearby residents
- Enabling the development of resource-based and eco-tourism opportunities, including fishing, wildlife viewing, hunting, agriculture and forestry focused tours and experiences

### Summary of recent activity

The Draft Regional Plan (Phase 4, June 2025) process identified how this action might be addressed and work on the action can occur as part of the Rural Community Planning program.



Following the adoption of region-wide regulations for short-term rentals, staff have been considering a revised approach to regulating [short-term rentals in rural areas](#). Existing land use by-laws permit a range of small- and large-scale tourism operations. Some plan areas permit additional uses by development agreement. Individual proposals can be brought forward to Community Council (for policy-enabled applications) and Regional Council (for plan amendments) and considered on a case-by-case basis.

### Next steps planned

This action will be developed and fully implemented as part of the Rural Community Planning program. Staff will undertake a review of existing regulations and identify opportunities and barriers to tourism operations. Public engagement will be required.

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Regional & Community Planning*

## Theme 3: Community Shaping

### Objective 1: Consider the Green Network when reviewing the location of urban development and service boundaries.

#### Action 29:

*2-7 Years | Land Use Planning*

Amend the *Regional Plan* to ensure that the Green Network map (Map 5 on page 35), is considered when reviewing changes to the Urban Service Area boundary, Urban Settlement Designation, Urban Reserve Designation, and when preparing Secondary Planning Strategies.

### Summary of recent activity



The Draft Regional Plan (Phase 4, June 2025) process identified how this action might be addressed. (See also Action 1)

### Next steps planned

Regional Plan Review Phase 5 will further consider the long-term growth and settlement patterns in the region and will consider an ecological lens as part of that work.

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Regional & Community Planning*

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## Objective 2: Preserve natural corridors and sensitive natural features when planning the development of new urban neighbourhoods and business parks.

### Action 30: 2-7 Years | Land Use Planning

Amend the *Regional Plan* to clarify the purpose and scope of land suitability assessments, which identify vulnerable landforms and other ecological features, as base information needed to inform the design of new mixed-use neighbourhoods and business park developments.

#### Summary of recent activity



The Draft Regional Plan (Phase 4, June 2025) process identified how this action might be addressed. The existing Regional Plan includes a range of policies that require assessments of environmentally sensitive areas, which are being used for the Future Serviced Communities study (E-16, E-21, E-23, S-2, G-9A). (See also Actions 3, 4)

#### Next steps planned

Regional Plan Phase 5 will further consider the long-term growth and settlement patterns in the region and will consider approaches to master planning as part of that work. Evaluate and monitor the policy approach as the Future Serviced Communities planning processes proceed.

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Regional & Community Planning*

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### Action 31: 2-7 Years | Land Use Planning

Amend the *Regional Plan* to prioritize the redevelopment of brownfield sites and other underdeveloped urban infill sites ahead of undisturbed greenfield sites.

#### Summary of recent activity



The 2014 Regional Plan targets at least 75% of growth within the existing Urban Settlement designation area and uses growth management policies to limit the amount of greenfield expansion and directs most growth to the existing serviced area. The Regional Centre Plan, adopted in 2021 permits significant infill development both as of right and through comprehensive planning in future growth nodes. The adoption of the Suburban Housing Accelerator Plan and Land Use By-law has permitted infill development on specific sites in the suburban area.

#### Next steps planned

Staff regularly monitor building permits issued by sub-region, which will provide an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the approved policy approach. Further opportunities for urban infill will be considered as part of the Suburban Plan process.

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Regional & Community Planning*

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### Objective 3: Maintain and improve natural connections between the Chebucto Peninsula and Mainland Nova Scotia, as well as those within the Peninsula itself.

#### Action 32: 2-7 Years | Land Use Planning

Amend the *Regional Plan* and Municipal Planning Strategies to prioritize the preservation and creation of natural connections to the Chebucto Peninsula (Map 9) from the Mainland when reviewing development proposals and updating planning policies and zoning in the area. Specific connections to review and prioritize are highlighted on Map 9.

#### Summary of recent activity



The Draft Regional Plan (Phase 4, June 2025) process identified how this action might be addressed. (See also Action 2)

#### Next steps planned

Further detailed study of the approach to corridors will be undertaken, proposed in Planning & Development's 2025-26 Budget & Business Plan. This study will define corridor function and develop a level of service needed to facilitate the movement needed within a corridor, explore a range of potential regulatory and programmatic approaches and potential land use planning approaches.

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Regional & Community Planning*

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#### Action 33: Guidance | Current & Future Projects

Consider the preservation and creation of natural connections to the Chebucto Peninsula when planning the development of the Ragged Lake Business Park.

#### Summary of recent activity



Studies to inform the future of Ragged Lake Business Park are ongoing. During this reporting period, the Land Suitability Analysis was completed, and a watershed study was nearly complete. These studies will contribute to informing potential ecological corridors through Ragged Lake. The treatment of any corridors will be determined through a future planning process should Council initiate secondary planning.

#### Next steps planned

Following completion of the required background studies, an initiation report will be brought to Council with recommendations for how secondary planning for the Ragged Lake Business Park lands should proceed.

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Regional & Community Planning*

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#### Action 34: Guidance | Partnerships

Work with the Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, as opportunities arise, to identify opportunities to construct wildlife crossings under Highway 103 and the planned Highway 113.

### Summary of recent activity



Staff have discussed opportunities for wildlife crossings when reviewing potential roadway projects in the region. (See also Actions 39, 40)

### Next steps planned

Further work to develop a coordinated approach with the Province to this action is needed and underway. There are opportunities to discuss wildlife crossing infrastructure with the Joint Regional Transportation Agency and NS Public Works as roadway projects are being contemplated. Green Network Plan mapping can be provided to JRTA and NSPW for planning purposes.

*Action Lead: Strategic Transportation Planning*

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## Objective 4: Encourage rural residential development to locate within rural centres.

### Action 35:

*2-7 Years | Land Use Planning*

Amend the *Regional Plan* to better define the size, shape and location of all rural centres in relation to natural corridors and valued open spaces.

### Summary of recent activity



The Draft Regional Plan (Phase 4, June 2025) process identified how this action might be addressed. It could include intent to revise Rural Growth Centre locations and boundaries in relation to a range of factors, such as valuable natural areas, through the Rural Community Planning Program. The boundaries of the Enfield Rural Growth Centre could be adjusted to reflect overlap with lands within the water supply for the Municipality of East Hants. A regional groundwater assessment study is underway, which will help to support decision-making related to potential development densities in rural centres. (See also Action 2)

### Next steps planned

This action will be further considered as part of the Phase 5 of the Regional Plan review and the Rural Community Planning Program.

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Regional & Community Planning*

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### Action 36:

*2-7 Years | Land Use Planning*

Amend the *Regional Plan* by updating the conservation design development policies to streamline the planning process for proposed developments located within rural centres. Specific planning approaches to consider include:

- Site plan approvals, which can direct development to suitable areas, without involving the lengthier development agreement process
- Enabling as-of-right developments within carefully selected pre-zoned areas

### Summary of recent activity



Work on this action is dependent on Action 35.

### Next steps planned

This will be further considered as part of the Phase 5 of the Regional Plan Review and the Rural Community Planning Program.

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Regional & Community Planning*

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## Objective 5: Limit and carefully control rural residential development located between rural centres.

### Action 37:

*2-7 Years | Land Use Planning*

Amend the Regional Plan conservation design development agreement policies to:

- Further focus development within rural centres
- Avoid conflicts with working landscapes
- Direct development to the edges of the core areas shown on the Green Network Ecology Map (Map 5 on page 35)
- Preserve the essential and important corridors shown on the Green Network Ecology Map (Map 5 on page 35)
- Take a cautious approach to development within areas of high environmental value (Map 5 on page 35) by ensuring the underlying values are investigated and conserved and any impacts from development are mitigated

### Summary of recent activity



The existing conservation design development agreement policy requires detailed site analysis to identify primary and secondary conservation areas, and cluster development in a manner that mitigates impact on important natural features. (See also Actions 1, 2, 29, 35)

### Next steps planned

This will be further considered as part of the Phase 5 of the Regional Plan Review and the Rural Community Planning Program.

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Regional & Community Planning*

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## Objective 6: Consider opportunities to support the Green Network when constructing, repairing and developing transportation and utility corridors.

### Action 38:

*Guidance | Partnerships*

Work with the Province and utility companies when opportunities arise to locate trails within existing and planned transportation and utility corridors.

### Summary of recent activity



Recent relevant work undertaken by the Municipality includes:

1. Sackville Lakes Provincial Park - Beech Hill segment was officially opened this past summer.
2. Sawmill Creek collaboration with Halifax Water (in progress: segments are being built currently other segments are at 90% design)

3. Wayfinding in collaboration with Provincial Blue Route and with Trans Canada Trail (we are in contact and aware of each others proposed routes and are currently looking at how to collaborate on the installation of signage.)
4. Dartmouth Crossing to Shubie Park to Port Wallace - discussions continue on route and facility type.

**Next steps planned**

Further progress on above projects will include:

1. Work with Province on next segments of the extension of the Sackville Lakes Beech Hill Trail.
2. Sawmill Creek - Completion of segments and 100% Design of those that are at 90%
3. Wayfinding - Collaboration with provincial Blue Route options and working with Trans Canada Trail to identify routes to sign.
4. Shearwater Flyer connection – conducting additional engagement in April 2025 and will then proceed to Council.
5. Agree on the route type and facility. Design and installation of Sawmill Creek. Further work includes Midtown and Commons, Alderney and Dartmouth Common. Dartmouth Crossing to Shubie to Port Wallis.

*Action Lead: Public Works - Project Planning & Asset Management*

**Action 39:**

*Guidance | Partnerships*

Work with the Province to mitigate the impacts on essential and important corridors and valued ecological open spaces when designing new regional transportation projects.

**Summary of recent activity**



Recent example is the request for egress / community connector roads in the Tantallon / Upper Hammonds Plains area, for which staff [advised council](#) on the ties to the Green Network Plan. (See also Actions 2, 34, 40)

**Next steps planned**

There are opportunities to discuss wildlife crossing infrastructure with Link NS and NS Public Works as roadway projects are being contemplated. Green Network Plan mapping can be provided to JRTA and NSPW for planning purposes.

*Action Lead: Strategic Transportation Planning*

**Action 40:**

*Guidance | Partnerships*

Work with the Province to reconnect fragmented landscapes with crossing structures (wildlife overpasses and underpasses) when repairing or expanding existing roads and linear infrastructure.

**Summary of recent activity**



Planning for future roads has included consideration of the key corridors in the GNP. Recent example is the request for egress / community connector roads in the Tantallon / Upper Hammonds Plains area, for which staff [advised council](#) on the ties to the Green Network Plan. (See also Actions 2, 34, 39)

### Next steps planned

There are opportunities to discuss wildlife crossing infrastructure with Link NS and NS Public Works as roadway projects are being contemplated. Green Network Plan mapping can be provided to JRTA and NSPW for planning purposes.

*Action Lead: Strategic Transportation Planning*

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### Action 41: 1-2 Years | Current & Future Projects

When updating the *Municipal Design Guidelines* (Red Book) consider and accommodate wildlife crossings when impacts on essential and important corridors cannot be avoided.

### Summary of recent activity

 Future work on this action depends on progress toward Action 2.

### Next steps planned

Further to Action 2, Public Works will work to improve awareness of wildlife crossing design methods, and identify the places or species where their consideration is needed. It is anticipated that pilot projects could be developed to test efficacy and value, before deciding on extending the practice region-wide.

*Action Lead: Public Works - Transportation Design & Construction Services*

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## Theme 4: Outdoor Recreation

### Objective 1: Recognize the importance of parks for community health and well-being.


### Action 42: Guidance | Park Network Management

Promote parks and open spaces for health, well-being, sense of community and overall quality of life through improved public communication, such as through HRM's website.

Guidance

Park Network Management

### Summary of recent activity

 The municipality's website identifies municipal [parks and trails](#) and a specific '[benefits of nature](#)' webpage that identifies the physical and mental benefits of parks. A relationship with Nova Scotia Health has also been established to consider ways to further promote health and wellbeing.

### Next steps planned

This action will continue to be advanced through regular updates to the municipality's webpages and social media initiatives to regularly push out the general promotion of health and wellbeing. Programs to promote any community group led hikes and nature appreciation events will be considered. The

collaboration with Nova Scotia Health will be continued and any possible partnerships with other similar organizations will also be considered.

*Action Lead: Parks & Recreation*

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**Action 43:** *Guidance | Park Network Management*  
Through Halifax's Community Engagement Strategy, formalize a public engagement program for the planning and stewardship of parks.

**Summary of recent activity**



Community engagement has been included as an important part of the municipality's park planning programs and projects. An update to HRM's Community Engagement Strategy was [approved by Council in April 2024](#).

**Next steps planned**

The approach to public engagement for the planning and stewardship of parks will be updated in line with the Community Engagement Strategy through 2025.

*Action Lead: Parks & Recreation - Strategic Planning & Design*

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**Action 44:** *Guidance | Park Network Management*  
Incorporate year-round recreational infrastructure, including winter-oriented activities, when planning parks.

**Summary of recent activity**



Year-round recreational infrastructure, including winter-oriented activities, are now regularly considered and incorporated in planning parks. A recent example is Regional Council's adoption of the Park Lighting Strategy that places an emphasis on lighting outdoor facilities such as sport courts to extend their use in darker seasons.

**Next steps planned**

The incorporation of year-round recreation infrastructure will continue to be planned and developed in the municipality's parks. Further to Park Lighting Strategy, a capital implementation plan for prospective lighting projects is expected in 2025.

*Action Lead: Parks & Recreation - Strategic Planning & Design*

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**Action 45:** *Guidance | Park Network Management*  
Enhance existing standards for the design of parks with a focus on versatile and flexible space, based on the nature of different park types and situations, that encourages participation of all ages and abilities.

**Summary of recent activity**



Park plans are used to regularly emphasize the development and use of versatile and flexible space. In addition, the municipality's Regional Subdivision By-law contains standards that call for the identification and acquisition of parkland which can serve a wide variety of purposes.

Parks and Recreation are developing approaches to better define the purpose and use of different types of parks. This includes, for example distinctions between local parks that are to serve a multitude of recreation uses and more specialized parks that may serve a specific outdoor facilities needs. Work is underway to support the development of the Parks and Outdoor Facilities Plan.

### Next steps planned

An emphasis will continue to be placed on using standards to ensure that parkland is flexible and able to be developed for different uses. The development of a Parks and Outdoor Facilities Plan is further identified in the municipality's 2025-26 Business Plan.

*Action Lead: Parks & Recreation - Strategic Planning & Design*

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### Action 46:

*Guidance | Park Network Management*

Include culture and education programs and projects, such as the inclusion of public art within parks and nature interpretation programs when planning for parks.

### Summary of recent activity



History and culture as components of a sense of place in parks are important elements in park planning and development. Parks & Recreation's Public Art Program has resulted in the installation of public art within streetscapes, municipality facilities, and parks. Recent park projects include *Float* that consists of five replicas of pool floatations in bronze-cast that were installed in 2023 within the the Halifax Common's aquatic facility. Pop-up public art has also occurred in parks as part of Nocturne. The municipality's new Naturalization Program introduces the naturalization of park areas with native plants through projects that include community participants. A prominent project in 2024 included the naturalization of a shoreline area of Lake Banook.

### Next steps planned

Prominent public art is expected to be installed in the Cogswell Districts parks in 2025 and the projects being undertaken as part of the Naturalization program are expected to expand. There is a desire to obtain additional resources to expand these and other programs.

*Action Lead: Parks & Recreation*

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### Action 47:

*Guidance | Park Network Management*

Ensure there is a clear and consistent communication system related to accessibility and wayfinding to and within parks.

### Summary of recent activity



Accessibility and wayfinding communications are regularly implemented within parks. The most prominent example of this is emphasis that has been placed on the replacement and installation of new municipally-branded uniform park identification signs. These clearly identify park names, regulations, civic number and street and other safety information. In addition, wayfinding and other information signs in parks follow the same uniform municipal branding.

### Next steps planned

The installation of uniform-branded signs in parks will be continued. Consideration is to be given towards applying this approach to signs within parks that are the subject of partnerships with community groups to improve communications and wayfinding.

*Action Lead: Parks & Recreation*

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### Action 48:

*1-4 Years | Park Network Management*

Encourage social gathering and animation of municipal open spaces by allowing such things as limited private and not for profit commercial initiatives.

### Summary of recent activity



Commercial initiatives are enabled within designated parks and other open spaces through the Vending By-law and special events.

### Next steps planned

Programs that enable commercial initiatives within parks will continue to be monitored and evaluated.

*Action Lead: Parks & Recreation*

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## Objective 2: Adopt a multi-jurisdictional parks network planning approach that supports both recreation service delivery and natural systems protection

### Action 49:

*2-7 Years | Park Network Management*

During the next Regional Plan review introduce the Park Spectrum (Figure 6), which recognizes the municipal role in providing the full range of outdoor recreation and ecological conservation functions and experiences of public open spaces together with Federal and Provincial parks and school grounds.

### Summary of recent activity



The Draft Regional Plan (Phase 4, June 2025) process identified how this action might be addressed.

### Next steps planned

Evaluate and monitor the policy approach as part of Phase 5 Regional Plan. The Park Spectrum concept will be advanced through the planned Parks and Outdoor Facilities Priorities Plan.

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Regional & Community Planning*

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**Objective 3: Develop new park network service delivery standards based on the settlement patterns and natural influences identified with the Regional Plan (refer to Appendix A)**

**Objective 4: Evaluate service needs and overlap to guide parkland acquisition, disposal and management decisions.**

**Action 50:** *1-2 Years | Park Network Management*  
Develop service level targets for the Regional Plan settlement types to provide public access to the spectrum of recreation experiences (e.g. sportsfields, playgrounds, nature trails), within the Halifax park system.

**Action 51:** *1-2 Years | Park Network Management*  
Revise travel time/distance tolerance targets and standards to the nearest park based on the designations in the Regional Plan to account for HRM's varied settlement patterns and residential densities.

**Action 52:** *1-2 Years | Park Network Management*  
Revise public park area per capita targets and standards based on designations in the Regional Plan to account for HRM's varied settlement patterns.

**Action 53:** *1-2 Years | Park Network Management*  
With the development of new parkland targets and standards, amend the Regional Plan and Regional Subdivision By-law to direct the acquisition, development and management of Municipal Parkland.

**Action 54:** *1-2 Years | Park Network Management*  
Determine service delivery gaps and overlap based on established travel time and park pressure targets (above objective) that considers the distribution of Municipal Parks together with Provincial and Federal Parks, and school grounds.

### **Summary of recent activity**



Actions 50 to 54 are related. The Municipality has done benchmarking data gathering and comparisons with many other municipalities in Canada, including metrics such as the number of outdoor facilities types per capita, along with travel distances. In addition, standards for the amount and type of parkland and various outdoor facilities have been developed and applied within the municipality. This information has been used to consider the needs for parks and outdoor facilities in capital planning and various park planning projects with prominent examples being the Bedford West Park Facilities Plan (December 2022) and parkland analysis for the Halifax Forum (July, 2023).

### **Next steps planned**

The continued development and use of park and facility standards will continue through the proposed Park and Outdoor Facilities Priorities Plan that has been identified within the municipality's 2025/26 Business Plan and in preparation of the Draft Regional Plan. The Plan is intended to identify a system of park types and expected outdoor facilities, which in turn may require subsequent updates to the Regional Subdivision By-law.

**Objective 5: Evaluate the functional performance of existing and proposed Municipal Parkland to guide parkland acquisition, disposal and management decisions.**

**Action 55:** 1-2 Years | Park Network Management

Use the Land Capability Analysis Tool (Appendix B) to evaluate existing and proposed parks for their land capability in terms of:

- Identity (sense of place)
- Heritage conservation
- Recreation land use
- Natural systems conservation
- Connectivity

**Summary of recent activity**



The Land Capability Analysis Tool has been used and expanded in the evaluation of parkland, with particular regard to the parkland acquisitions.

**Next steps planned**

The Land Capability Analysis Tool may be evaluated to consider its full applicability to parkland that is intended for specific singular uses such as Wilderness Parks.

Action Lead: Parks & Recreation - Strategic Planning & Design

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**Action 56:** 1-2 Years | Park Network Management

Develop a park performance monitoring program to regularly gather park usage data from park and recreation staff, the public, and new technology to count users.

**Summary of recent activity**



The municipality obtained park counter equipment to enable physical counts across trails and park entrances, however, more sophisticated technology to gather data on park usage has yet to have been employed.

**Next steps planned**

Gathering data from sources such as cellular phone is a highly useful means to understand park usage but can be expensive and will require budgetary planning.


Action Lead: Parks & Recreation - Strategic Planning & Design

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**Action 57:** 1-4 Years | Park Network Management

Use information gathered through the park performance monitoring program and the Land Capability Analysis Tool (Appendix B) to develop an inventory of low, moderate and high performing parks.

### Summary of recent activity

 This Action is largely dependent on Action 56.

### Next steps planned

Some analysis of the performance of parks may occur independent of Action 57, otherwise the emphasis will be on developing park usage information.

*Action Lead: Parks & Recreation - Strategic Planning & Design*

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**Action 58:** *1-4 Years | Park Network Management*  
Prepare policies and procedures concerning parkland maintenance to incorporate naturalization and green infrastructure (ie. rain gardens and bioswales).

### Summary of recent activity

 Naturalization projects implemented at 7 open space sites during 2024, including the Birch Cove Re-Naturalization project. A Naturalization Coordinator role was filled in 2023.

### Next steps planned


Staff will be developing communications materials about Naturalization work; developing a monitoring and evaluation framework to demonstrate impact, and establishing a business case for a naturalization program beyond 2026.

*Action Lead: Parks & Recreation - Parks*

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**Action 59:** *Guidance | Park Network Management*  
In cases of significant service overlap and low scoring from the Land Capability Analysis Tool (Appendix B), consider the disposal of identified low performing parkland.

### Summary of recent activity

 The municipality has not initiated a program to strategically dispose of parkland using the Land Capability Analysis Tool or other methods. Administrative Order 50, Respecting the Disposal of Surplus Real Property, sets out the process by which municipally-owned properties are reviewed and approved surplus to the Municipality's requirements.

### Next steps planned

Attention will be placed on other Actions until a parkland disposal program is devised.

*Action Lead: Parks & Recreation - Strategic Planning & Design*


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## Objective 6: Use and expand available park planning policy tools to address parkland and facility needs as demands arise from new development.

### Action 60: 1-2 Years | Current & Future Projects

Continue to study and consider the adoption of infrastructure charges to support the development and improvement of parks and recreation facilities that are needed to support new development.

#### Summary of recent activity

 Section 284 of the HRM Charter permits the Municipality to include, within a municipal planning strategy, provisions for infrastructure charges in a subdivision by-law for “new or expanded parks, playgrounds, trails, bicycle paths, swimming pools, ice arenas, recreation centres and other recreational facilities”. This is limited in application to developments that include subdivision of property (i.e. can not apply to infill developments where no new lots are created). Section 29 of the HRM Charter permits the Municipality to levy area rates to recover costs for services approved by Council. However, Provincial Bill 329 amended the HRM Charter to include Section 236A, prohibits any change to fees “that would have the effect of increasing the cost to applicants for development approvals beyond the cost that would have been chargeable immediately prior to the coming into force of this Section”. This provision is in effect until November 9, 2025 unless otherwise amended by the Provincial legislature.

#### Next steps planned

Consider the range of infrastructure and services that will be required for the municipality’s long-term growth as part of the Strategic Growth & Infrastructure Priorities Plan. The scope of work of this project is expected to include consideration of the range of financial tools available to the Municipality.


*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Regional & Community Planning*

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### Action 61: 1-2 Years | Partnerships

Formally request that the Province amend the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter* to enable a greater range of legislative abilities, such as the ability to enact parkland dedication requirements based on density to address development that does not include the subdivision of lots.

#### Summary of recent activity

 A letter from the Mayor outlining this request was sent in 2018. Regional Planning staff met with Provincial staff to discuss this request in July 2022. There has not been resolution from the Province on this request. (See also Action 60)

#### Next steps planned

As opportunities arise, staff will engage with the Province on this request. Staff will consider alternative opportunities and strategies to progress this objective within the Municipality’s existing legislative abilities. See also Action 60 regarding the Strategic Growth & Infrastructure Priorities Plan.

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Regional & Community Planning*

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## Objective 7: Support the establishment of a Nature Park Network in cooperation with Provincial and Federal governments and conservation groups.

### Action 62: 2-7 Years | Land Use Planning

During the next *Regional Plan* review, amend the Regional Plan concerning Regional Parks to differentiate Regional Park types with particular regard to Nature Parks - which are specially designed to protect an area of land and/or water, support natural processes, species and habitat; and where human activities are primarily passive (e.g. hiking, nature interpretation and appreciation), and do not compromise ecological function.

#### Summary of recent activity



The Draft Regional Plan (Phase 4, June 2025) process identified how this action might be addressed.

#### Next steps planned

Revisit this policy as part of the Phase 5 Regional Plan.

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Regional & Community Planning*

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### Action 63: Guidance | Partnerships

As opportunities arise, coordinate with Provincial and Federal governments and conservation groups to establish a Nature Park Network.

#### Summary of recent activity



Collaboration has been occurring with the provincial and federal government, and the Nova Scotia Nature Trust on the Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes (BMBCL) park planning and candidate National Urban Park project.

#### Next steps planned

Work to continue on the BMBCL project.

*Action Lead: Parks & Recreation - Strategic Planning & Design*

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## Objective 8: Continue to place an emphasis on planning and establishing the future Regional Parks that are identified within the Regional Plan.

### Action 64: Guidance | Park Network Management

During the next *Regional Plan* review assess the establishment of future Regional Parks, as identified in the Regional Plan, and their boundaries, through the Land Capability Analysis Tool (Appendix B) and other criteria that includes:

- a. The location of any existing conceptual park boundary
- b. Relationship to adjacent lands and community
- c. The landform, ecological attributes, and cultural features of the lands including connectivity to other lands

- d. The presence or potential for recreational features such as existing trails and their usage
- e. Existing and possible access to the lands and the ability to accommodate primary or secondary trailheads
- f. The planning, zoning, and development potential of the lands
- g. The interest of competing development plans and the impact that Municipal Parkland acquisition would have on them
- h. Acquisition models such as outright purchase or other alternatives
- i. Financial and budget factors

**Summary of recent activity**



The Land Capability Analysis Tool and other guidelines have regularly guided the acquisition of lands and the planning for Regional Parks. This has included the acquisition of lands for Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes, Sandy Lake, and Shaw Wilderness Park.

**Next steps planned**

The municipality will continue to acquire lands and plan for Regional Parks. As these parks are more fully advanced, they will be able to more fully be identified within planning documents such as the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy.

*Action Lead: Parks & Recreation - Strategic Planning & Design*

**Action 65:**

*Guidance | Partnerships*

For other future Nature Parks and other open spaces that are already largely in public ownership, continue to work with the Province and other stakeholders respecting their delineation of boundaries, planning and programming.

**Summary of recent activity**



Collaboration has been occurring with the provincial and federal government, and the Nova Scotia Nature Trust on the Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes (BMBCL) park planning and candidate National Urban Park project..

**Next steps planned**

Work will continue with partners on the Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lake project.

*Action Lead: Parks & Recreation - Strategic Planning & Design*

**Objective 9: Recognize new Nature Parks and open space areas.**

**Action 66:**

*2-7 Years | Land Use Planning*

During the next *Regional Plan* review amend the Regional Plan to recognize recent land acquisitions (pending) within the Purcell’s Cove Backlands as Regional Park and consider open space planning for the remainder of this area.

### Summary of recent activity



Shaw Wilderness Park consists of 153 hectares (379 acres) that were acquired since the current version of the Regional Plan. In 2024, additional lands were obtained by the municipality, largely to add to the park.

### Next steps planned

Recognition and appropriate designation and zoning will be applied to Shaw Wilderness Park when the Regional Plan is updated. Further work will be undertaken as part of Phase 5 of the Regional Plan Review.

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Regional & Community Planning*

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### Action 67:

*2-7 Years | Land Use Planning*

During the next *Regional Plan* review amend the Regional Plan to recognize community land conservation initiatives as part of the 100 Wild Islands.

### Summary of recent activity



A process exists to recognize any private conservation lands as such in the Regional Plan at the landowner's discretion. The [Halifax Regional Integrated Tourism Master Plan](#) also recognises 100 Wild Islands.

### Next steps planned

No further action is proposed.

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Regional & Community Planning*

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### Action 68:

*Guidance | Partnerships*

In conjunction with any Provincial initiative consider open space and parkland opportunities in the Wrights Lake area as they arise.

### Summary of recent activity



There have been no Provincial initiatives to consider open space and parkland opportunities in the Wrights Lake area.

### Next steps planned

No additional steps are anticipated.

*Action Lead: Parks & Recreation - Strategic Planning & Design*

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## Objective 10: Continue to implement the recommendations of major open space studies that have been undertaken.

### Action 69:

*1-7 Years | Current & Future Projects*

Continue to implement the approved *Cole Harbour Basin Open Space Plan*.

## Summary of recent activity



[The Rehab Lands Park Plan](#) was a significant project that was approved by Regional Council in 2023. The park plan is now in an implementation stage with an initial phase identified in the municipality's proposed 2025-26 capital plan.

## Next steps planned

An assessment of the Cole Harbour Basin Open Space Plan to inform future programs and projects.

*Action Lead: Parks & Recreation - Strategic Planning & Design*

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## Objective 11: Connect parks and open spaces areas for recreation and mobilities purposes.

### Action 70:

*Guidance | Current & Future Projects*

Use the HGNP and other municipal plans, including the AT Priority Plan and Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP) to establish linkages between parks, Provincial Wilderness Areas, crown lands, fresh waterbodies and ocean fronts that are used for recreation purposes.

## Summary of recent activity

Recent relevant work undertaken by the Municipality includes:



1. Connections between Midtown AT route and Halifax Commons
2. Connection between Alderney Drive AT project and Dartmouth Commons
3. Wayfinding signage for cyclists to connect to Parks outside of Regional Centre
4. Identify "Short" Connections - ie Bayers Road MUP and Colta, COLTA trail to Long Lake, Barrington Greenway to Cogswell District, Dartmouth Harbourfront to Shearwater Flyer.

## Next steps planned

Further progress on projects listed will include:

1. Approval of facility type and recommendation report to council
2. Internal Technical meeting and report to Council . Wayfinding within Regional Centre
3. Develop sign templates and time table for installation.
4. Receive agreement on facility route and type.

*Action Lead: Public Works - Project Planning& Asset Management*

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## Theme 5: Cultural Landscapes

### Objective 1: Develop a cultural landscape program

#### Action 71:

*2-4 Years | Current & Future Projects*

Use the *Cultural Landscape Framework Study* as the guiding document for the consideration of potential cultural landscapes and the basis for a future cultural

landscape program to be advanced through the *Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan*.

### Summary of recent activity



The Province has not proclaimed the necessary amendments to the Heritage Property Act, so there has been no opportunity to engage with the Province on the registration of cultural landscapes. The [Culture & Heritage Priorities Plan](#) has further contemplated an approach to potential cultural landscapes.

### Next steps planned

Developing work plan and success measures for this and related actions. This will include engaging with the Province on the legislation, and developing alternative strategies for moving forward if this legislation is not proclaimed.

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Strategic Projects*

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### Action 72:

*2-7 Years | Partnerships*

Engage with the Province as they update the *Heritage Property Act* to include policies on the registration of cultural landscapes.

### Summary of recent activity



The Province has not proclaimed the necessary amendments to the Heritage Property Act, so there has been no opportunity to engage with the Province on the registration of cultural landscapes. Municipal staff have met with Province to discuss this matter.

### Next steps planned

Developing work plan and success measures for this and related actions. This will include engaging with the Province on the legislation, and developing alternative strategies for moving forward if this legislation is not proclaimed, such as expanding the use of existing provisions in the Act (including registration and HCDs).

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Regional & Community Planning*

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## Objective 2: Identify, preserve and celebrate valued cultural landscapes in the design and management of open spaces and developments.

### Action 73:

*2-7 Years | Land Use Planning*

Amend the *Regional Plan* to clarify the scope and purpose of cultural landscape studies, based on the *Cultural Landscape Framework Study*, as an integral component of master neighbourhood and business park planning initiatives and the identification, preservation and celebration of these landscapes.

### Summary of recent activity



The Draft Regional Plan (Phase 4, June 2025) process identified how this action might be addressed. This could include policy intent that requires consideration of areas of cultural

significance as part of land suitability assessments. The action is also supported by existing Regional Plan policy CH-8.

### Next steps planned

Next step is pending the adoption by the Province of the regulations under the Heritage Property Act. Until then, staff will investigate and implement options to protect landscapes of cultural significance.

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Regional & Community Planning*

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### Action 74:

*2-7 Years | Land Use Planning*

Amend the *Regional Plan* to include cultural landscapes as elements that must be considered when preparing conservation design development agreements.

### Summary of recent activity



Existing conservation design development agreement policy in the Regional Plan requires archaeology sites to be identified as primary conservation areas/features, and other features of high cultural value must be identified and considered as secondary conservation areas. Amending the policy to specifically consider “cultural landscapes” would require Provincial amendments to the Heritage Property Act.

### Next steps planned

Any further action is pending the adoption of the regulations under the Heritage Property Act. Until then, areas of high cultural value will continue to be considered as secondary conservation areas through the conservation design development agreement process.

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Strategic Projects*

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### Action 75:

*Guidance | Current & Future Projects*

Maintain and enrich the inventory of potential cultural landscapes identified in the *Cultural Landscape Framework Study* through planning initiatives, community engagement and other municipal initiatives.

### Summary of recent activity



The Regional Centre Plan identifies “Landscapes of Cultural Significance”, which are to be considered when amending or adopting policy for future growth nodes. The Centre Plan also calls for working with other orders of government and diverse cultures and communities to recognize and commemorate cultural landscapes as opportunities arise.

### Next steps planned

The approach used in the Regional Centre Plan is expected to be expanded to the Suburban Plan area, through that process.

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Strategic Projects*

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**Action 76:***Guidance | Park Network Management*

Identify, preserve and celebrate cultural landscapes and resources when preparing master plans for publicly-owned open spaces.

**Summary of recent activity**

History and culture as components of a sense of place in parks are important elements in park planning and development. Such features have been prominently recognized within park plans such as the Halifax Common Master Plan and Rehab Lands Park Plan.

**Next steps planned**

Ensure that all major planning initiative and projects such as the Suburban Plan address the issue of significant cultural landscapes - similar to Centre Plan

*Action Lead: Parks & Recreation - Strategic Planning & Design*

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**Action 77:***2-7 Years | Partnerships*

Work with the Province to update the accuracy and use of the Areas of Elevated Archaeological Potential Map contained in the *Regional Plan*.

**Summary of recent activity**

No recent activity. The Culture & Heritage Priorities Plan identified an action to: “Explore the development of a regional archaeology strategy with the Province, Kwilmu’kw Mawklusuaqn Negotiation Office (KMKNO), Band Councils from the region, African Nova Scotian communities and Acadian communities.”

**Next steps planned**

Need to work with the Province to determine the best approach to proceed with the project. This work to be tracked through the Culture & Heritage Priorities Plan.

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Strategic Projects*

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**Objective 3: Ensure that all perspectives and voices are heard when identifying cultural landscapes and carrying out initiatives that may impact values cultural features.****Action 78:***2-4 Years | Current & Future Projects*

Proactively engage and expand the inventory of cultural landscapes of interest to African Nova Scotian, Mi’kmaq, Acadian and immigrant communities.

**Action 79:***Guidance | Current & Future Projects*

Engage groups that have traditionally been underrepresented in planning initiatives, including African Nova Scotian, Mi’kmaq, Acadian, and immigrant communities, when developing cultural landscape plans and policies.

**Summary of recent activity**

Actions 78 & 79 are related, and are now addressed by the Culture & Heritage Priorities Plan which includes an action to “identify and conserve areas of historic and cultural significance in

partnership with communities.” Regional Council has committed to working with African Nova Scotian communities through the [African Nova Scotian Community Action Program](#). Staff have undertaken engagement with Kwiłmu’kw Maw-klusuaqn Negotiation Office.

**Next steps planned**

Heritage staff will work with Diversity & Inclusion staff to establish a program and approach to engage various underrepresented groups. Future work on Actions 78 and 79 to be tracked through the Culture & Heritage Priorities Plan.

*Action Lead: Planning & Development – Strategic Projects*

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