



# PLANNING WORKBOOK

Learning Together  
Spring 2016

# HALIFAX

CENTRE PLAN



Thank you for taking  
the time to help us turn  
**'what if' into 'how to'**

Please feel free to get in touch with our team if you have questions  
about this workbook or the Centre Plan.

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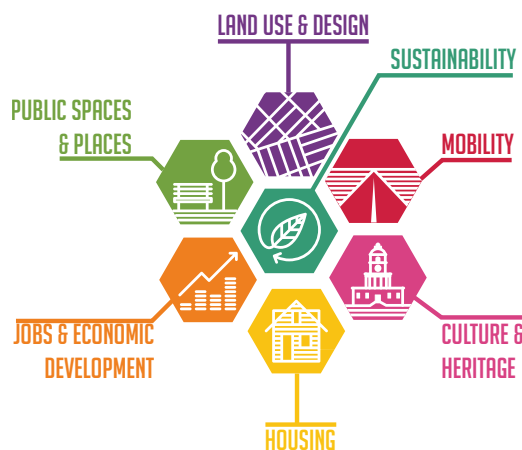
# ABOUT THE CENTRE PLAN

The Centre Plan will consolidate existing Municipal Planning Strategies and Land Use By-Laws into a new Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy (SMPS) for the Regional Centre. Where necessary, updated planning policies will protect the scale and character of existing neighbourhoods while removing barriers to well-designed and appropriately scaled development to help reach the goals of our Regional Plan.

Additionally, confusion caused by lack of policy standardization and concurrent (sometimes contradictory) plans will be eliminated.

## Our Themes

In completing this Centre Plan we will consider impacts through 7 important themes:



- (1) Land Use & Design,
- (2) Mobility,
- (3) Public Spaces & Places,
- (4) Culture & Heritage,
- (5) Housing,
- (6) Sustainability, and
- (7) Jobs & Economic Development.

## Process

While the population and growth goals of the Regional Plan are clear, there is a need for the Centre Plan to articulate exactly how we will reach those goals in our communities.

Through 2015 our team worked on a series of background research and policy projects that set us up for success in 2016. We have a website where you can view those projects: <http://www.centreplan.ca>.

Through this spring we are sharing our work and reaching out to the public through a series of Open Houses, Workshops, and other consultations. In trying to assess how to grow in the Regional Centre, the feedback we get from the public in these early phases is crucial to ensuring the plan heads in the right direction.



# ABOUT THIS WORKBOOK

## You Are Experts

While we have worked hard to understand the nature of the communities within the Regional Centre, and while many staff live, work, and play in the area, the community members and organizations who live here every day are the experts.

We want to learn about your experiences, and these workbooks are intended to facilitate that. Through these tools we hope to learn from the community and share a bit about how we craft policy and regulations for land use in HRM.

## We Did Some Research

Included with this workbook are a collection of information pages summarizing the background studies which have been completed over the last year, and will inform the Centre Plan. We have also provided mapped data for your consideration. These resources will help to ensure that everyone has an ability to participate fully, by providing a base of knowledge that we hope will help facilitate good discussion.

## The Layout

The first part of this workbook will begin a process to identify the topics and issues that are important to you.

Consider: **What must the Centre Plan do to help my community?**

The second part asks you to draw on the maps to identify where you experience the impact of the topics that have been brought up in the first half of the workbook. Show us where the issues are, and where you see opportunities for change.

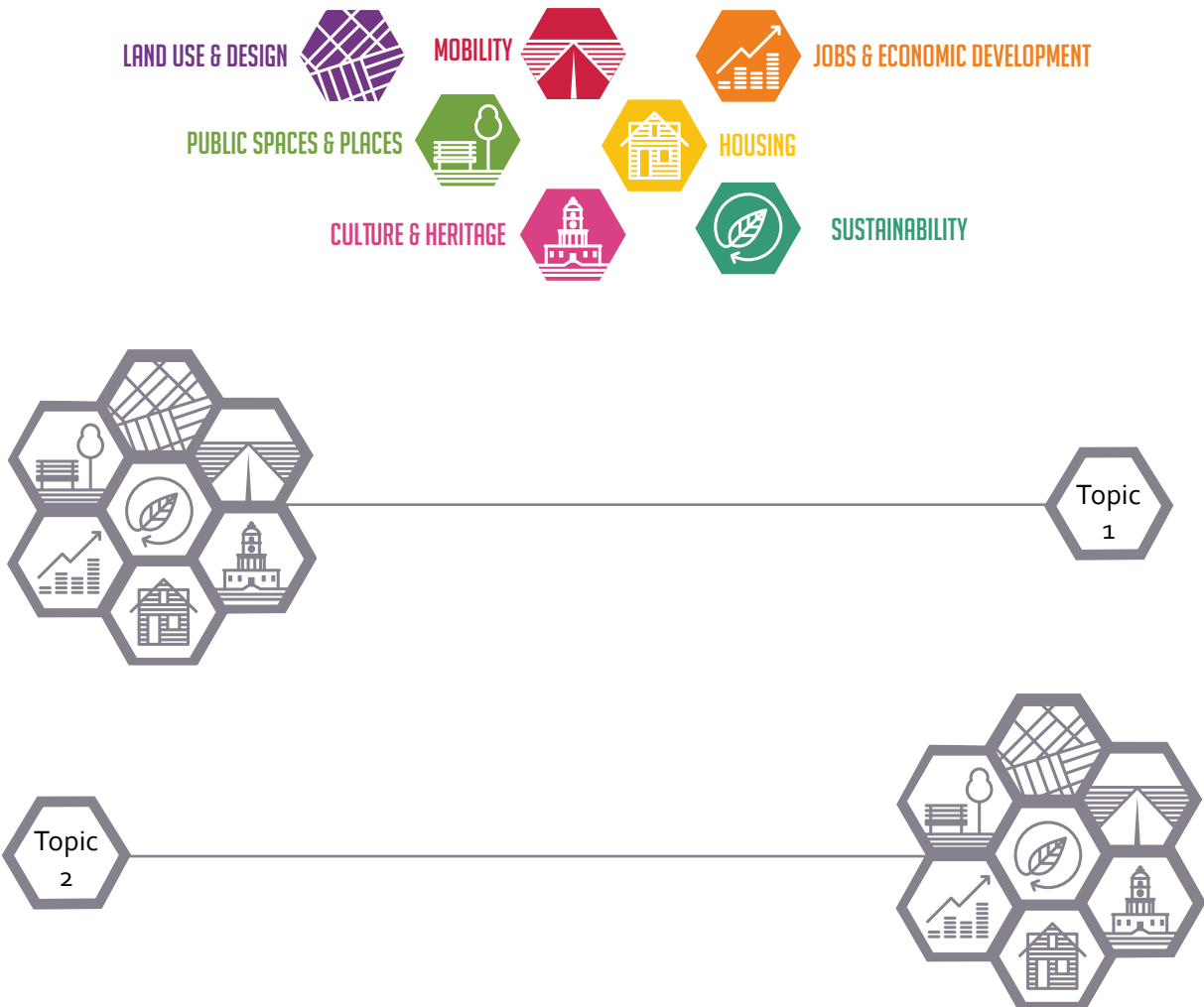
Following these questions, we have provided the information pages and maps for your reference. The final pages of the workbook include some additional questions about your experience in the Regional Centre, as well as your personal information and instructions on how to return the workbooks to us.

# YOUR PRIORITIES

## What must the Centre Plan do to help my community?

We want to know what you think the Centre Plan should do to make our Regional Centre a great place. We want you to define the most important topics for discussion in the creation of a great place to live and work. In this section of the workbook we have purposely given few constraints, so that you can give us direction on what these topics should be. In the next section, we will ask you to map out where these topics play out in your community. With the mapping complete we will ask you to attempt to link these topics to the themes of the Centre Plan.

Thinking about your values and priorities, please write on the lines below the top two things you want to see the Centre Plan tackle. Colour in or circle any of the theme icons that you think your topic relates to.



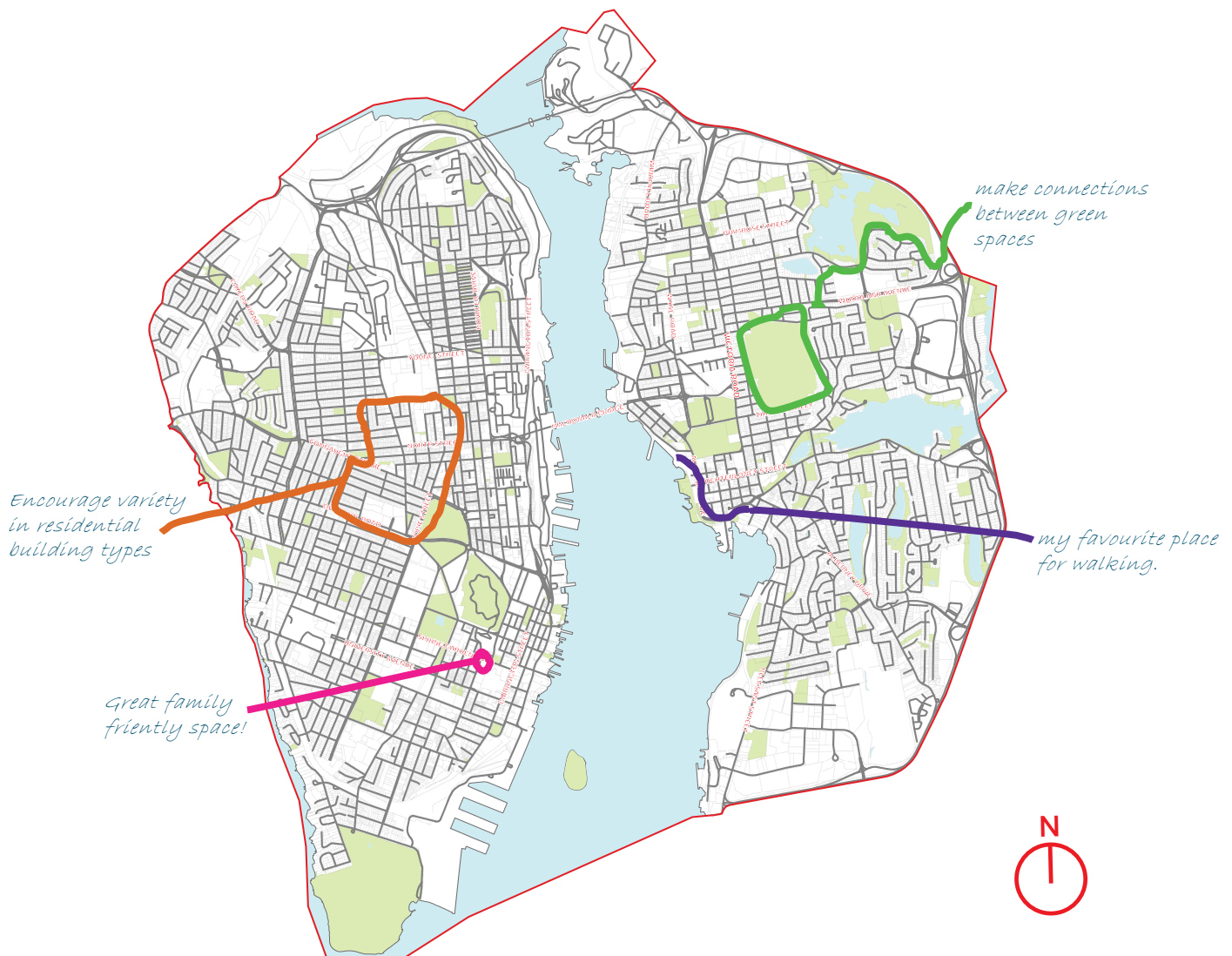
# MAP IT

## Show us the areas we need to consider.

We want to know how your top three topics currently impact the Regional Centre and where you encounter them your everyday life. To facilitate your mapping, we've attached two 2'x3' base maps for your consideration. Please pull those out of the envelope before starting this section.

This exercise will help us understand how policies and regulations should be written to ensure that new growth and development are of an appropriate scale. Specifically, if you choose, you can tell us what areas need to be better protected, and what areas could be helped by new development. These inputs will help make these things happen.

Thinking about your community, please use the blank base maps in the envelope to map out your experience of each of your topics. Make comments directly on the map, but also use the blank pages in the workbook to elaborate on your thoughts and feelings about place and community in the Regional Centre.





Use Base Map 1 from the envelope to draw out and comment on your experience of your first topic. Please also use the space below to describe why this topic is important and how it affects your community.



Use Base Map 2 from the envelope to draw out and comment on your experience of your second topic. Please also use the space below to describe why this topic is important and how it affects your community.

# HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

## Project Overview

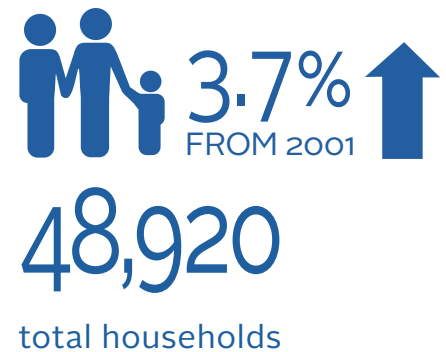
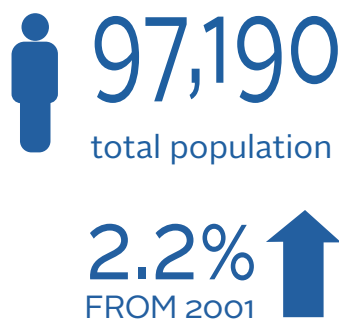


The **Housing Needs Assessment** identifies housing requirements in the Municipality based on housing supply, demand and estimates of future supply and demand trends over five- and ten-year periods. It is also intended to inform service providers, landlords, private developers and other housing stakeholders.

## What is the nature of housing in the Regional Centre?

### Population Characteristics

- » 2011 total population of 97,190 // 24.9% of HRM
- » A 2.2% population increase from 2001 // much lower than HRM's 9% growth overall
- » 13.8% senior population (aged 65+) // the only area in HRM where the senior population decreased between 2001 and 2011
- » Home to 27.5% of HRM's Aboriginal population in 2011
- » Home to 31.5% of HRM's African Nova Scotian population in 2011



### Household Characteristics

- » 48,920 households // representing 29.6% of households in HRM
- » 78.1% of households are one- and two-person // compared to 65% average across HRM
- » Couples with children represent 21% of households // compared to 25.3% of households throughout HRM
- » Non-family one-person households represented the largest share of household types (42.9%)
- » 9.9% of households are led by an immigrant // compared to 8.8% of all households in HRM
- » 11.0% of households contain a person with a disability // compared to 12.6% of all households in HRM
- » 35.9% of households are homeowners // compared to 62.8% overall in HRM

### Jobs & Economy

- » A 9% unemployment rate // compared to a 7% unemployment rate overall in HRM (2011 Census)
- » An average household income of \$63,860 (\$12,333 lower than Nova Scotia's average) and a median household income of \$44,827

**37.9%**  
of households

**SPENDING > 30%**  
**OF INCOME ON**  
**HOUSING**

**AVERAGE ANNUAL**  
**HOUSEHOLD INCOME**

**\$63,860**

### What is the current housing gap in the Regional Centre?

- » 37.9% of all households are spending 30% or more of their household income on housing costs // compared to 25.3% of all HRM households
- » Average monthly rent was \$933 (in 2014)
- » Average house price was \$330,556 (in 2014)

#### Households in Income Deciles 1 and 2

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| ▪ 40.1% of households with a person with a disability | ▪ 30.6% of non-family households with two or more people |
| ▪ 46.8% of recent immigrant households                | ▪ 49.5% of one-person households                         |
| ▪ 27.5% of immigrant households                       | ▪ 37.2% of lone parent households                        |
| ▪ 44.5% of households led by an Aboriginal person     |  |

### What will the housing market look like in the next five and ten years?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| » The share of the non-senior population is increasing and will require appropriate housing options          | » The demand for ownership housing will be at a lower rate than in the rest of HRM                            |
| » Has a much larger proportion of smaller households than HRM overall and this trend is expected to continue | » The need for non-market housing options is greatest in the Regional Centre and this is expected to continue |



# THE DENSITY BONUSING STUDY

## Project Overview



A *Density Bonus* is an increase in built area in exchange for public amenities or benefits that contribute to the livability and proper planning of the neighbourhood affected by the resulting increase in density. Municipal permission is given via pre-zoning or site specific agreements. The **Density Bonusing Study** reviews existing policy in the Downtown Halifax plan area and examines the potential for new policy to allow bonusing in the Regional Centre.

### Background

Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) has been practicing density bonusing in Downtown Halifax since 2009. Until recently this was the only area where the HRM Charter permitted density bonusing. The last round of amendments to the Charter has enabled HRM to extend this practice to the Centre Plan area that comprises the entire Halifax peninsula plus Dartmouth inside the Circumferential Highway.

**This study analyses the program to date through some simple questions:**

#### 1. Is HRM getting the best value out of density bonusing as a planning tool?

After examining seven incentive or bonus zoning agreement completed or in progress in the past five years, this study concluded that the current Density Bonusing practices are not as effective as they might be in obtaining public amenities and/or benefits that contribute to the livability of the community. The property value created by allowing increased height and density was significantly greater than the value of public benefit realized.



#### 2. What can be learned from other municipalities that have had successes and challenges using density bonusing?

A detailed assessment of density bonusing policies and practices in 14 cities in Canada, the US, the UK, Australia and New Zealand was conducted, and observations were sorted into nine categories. These observations were transformed into principles for effective density bonusing programs, and finally, recommendations were tailored to the current situation for Halifax's Downtown and Centre Plan areas.



# 1. How can density bonusing be improved in order to achieve more/better public benefits? How should density bonusing be expanded and implemented within the Centre Plan Area?

- » Adopt a Land Values Area Map for the Regional Centre as a first step for establishing value created through the density bonusing program.
- » Each value area would have a clearly established rate to be charged for additional density (measured in gross buildable square meters), representing a significant increase in value achieved
- » Once the value of the additional density is established, the associated public benefit(s) would be determined from a list of available options.
- » In most cases within existing zoning, senior staff within HRM would use the rate and establish the form of public benefit. For most projects, the development

community would be able to reliably forecast the financial implications of seeking additional density.

- » For some projects processed through a discretionary approvals process, such as by Development Agreement, the additional density and value may be negotiated through an appraisal and assessment system, and approved by Regional Council.



Table of Potential Flat Rate Value Options by Proposed Value Areas

Value Areas	Rate / 0.1 sqm at 67% of value
1. South End Halifax	\$26.80
2. Cogswell	\$26.80
3. North End Halifax	\$17.40
4. Shannon Park	\$14.70
5. North Dartmouth	\$5.40
6. Dartmouth	\$16.10
7. Woodside	\$5.40

Map showing Potential Land Value Areas in the Regional Centre

\*more information on all studies can be found at CentrePlan.ca

# QUANTIFYING <sup>THE</sup> COSTS & BENEFITS OF ALTERNATIVE GROWTH SCENARIOS

## Project Overview



The Stantec Quantifying Study was a key study guiding the Regional Plan Five Year review. The study considered public, private and social costs and benefits of various growth scenarios over the remaining span of the Regional Plan (to 2031). In addition, the study asked questions about how the way we grow may affect the environment, our health and social well-being. It also compared HRM to other Canadian and US municipalities, providing a useful benchmark for ongoing evaluation.

## Background

Reducing sprawl is important to city building. Limiting the extent of urban development reduces the length of infrastructure networks and the requirement for attendant elements such as pumping stations and interchanges. Reduced networks also allow reduced maintenance and energy consumption costs (e.g., less pumping of wastewater and substantial reductions in fuel use for commuting). A smaller

urban footprint also reduces encroachment of development into wildlife habitat. This increases the land available for natural drainage and filtration, storm water retention, groundwater recharge, flora and fauna habitat, and human enjoyment, while increasing access choices and mobility by sustainable transportation modes such as transit, cycling, and walking.

The current Regional Plan objective of locating at least 25% of new residential development in the Regional Centre with 50% in the Suburban Area and 25% in the Rural Area has positive outcomes for infrastructure costs when compared to the trend of development that was present in the first five years of the Regional Plan. The continuation of that trend by which only 16% of new residential development has located in the Regional Centre provides the worst outcome in all cases except for wastewater improvements.

Unlike the other measures, parkland requirements will cost significantly more due to the increased pressure for more parks in the Regional Centre where land costs are the highest.

	Regional Centre	Within Service Boundary	Rural
Regional Plan Goals	25%	50%	25%
Observed 2006	16%	56%	28%
Scenario A	40%	40%	20%
Scenario B	50%	30%	20%

However, the supply of parks can be balanced by the better access to recreation opportunities through community facilities under the more condensed scenarios as well as improving existing parkland in the Regional Centre and Suburban Areas.

Assessment of GHG emissions suggests that concentration of development will reduce locally generated greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to a small degree.

The economic costs associated with continuing to build new infrastructure

past existing opportunity sites are significant. Nearly \$700 million in savings can be achieved when by moving from a continuation of observed patterns from 2006 to the Regional Plan Goal. Taking into account the densest alternative considered for this study (Scenario B), modelling suggests more than \$3 billion in reduced costs.

**Table 8.1 Summary of Scenario Comparisons, HRM, 2031 Scenarios**

Service	Measure				Percentage of Trend or Rank			
	RMPS Goals	Post RMPS Trend	Scenario A	Scenario B	RMPS Goals	Post RMPS Trend	Scenario A	Scenario B
<b>Water, Wastewater, and Stormwater</b>								
- All improvements (\$000s)	\$1,602,853	\$1,549,469	\$1,382,235	\$1,058,255	103.4%	100.0%	89.2%	68.3%
<b>Transportation</b>								
- Local Road Construction (\$000s)	\$1,698,837	\$1,736,524	\$1,382,557	\$1,079,829	97.8%	100.0%	79.6%	62.2%
- Regional Road Improvements (\$000s)	\$211,680	\$239,940	\$198,360	\$172,320	88.2%	100.0%	82.7%	71.8%
- Additional Vehicle Trip Time (hours)	31,745	33,443	30,581	29,038	94.9%	100.0%	91.4%	86.8%
- Additional Vehicle Trips Distance (km)	1,073,352	1,118,371	1,065,543	1,030,784	96.0%	100.0%	95.3%	92.2%
- Transit Use Change (work trips from 2009)	1,009	743	2,029	2,209	135.8%	100.0%	273.1%	297.3%
- Active Transportation Change (work trips from 2009)	9,530	9,255	9,828	9,970	103.0%	100.0%	106.2%	107.7%
<b>Other Public Services</b>								
<b>Solid Waste Management</b>								
- Municipal Solid Waste Haulage (hours)	19,585	20,655	15,363	12,606	94.8%	100.0%	74.4%	61.0%
- Private Solid Waste Haulage (hours)	9,327	9,252	11,711	13,969	100.8%	100.0%	126.6%	151.0%
- Municipal Compost Haulage (hours travel)	23,663	24,251	18,988	16,268	97.6%	100.0%	78.3%	67.1%
- Private Compost Haulage (hours travel)	10,885	10,885	13,575	16,017	100.0%	100.0%	124.7%	147.2%
- Municipal Recyclables Haulage (hours travel)	19,226	20,389	15,150	12,501	94.3%	100.0%	74.3%	61.3%
- Private Recyclables Haulage (hours travel)	8,530	8,524	10,783	12,901	100.1%	100.0%	126.5%	151.3%
- Recycling Depots (hours travel)	8,076	8,221	7,369	7,149	98.2%	100.0%	89.6%	87.0%
Fire and Emergency (hours travel)	7,095	7,640	6,804	6,562	92.9%	100.0%	89.1%	85.9%
Police	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Community Facilities and Parks</b>								
- Community Facilities (hours travel)	7,095	7,640	6,804	6,562	92.9%	100.0%	89.1%	85.9%
- Parkland Supply (\$000s to address shortfalls)	\$309,418.9	\$199,892.5	\$523,704.7	\$715,858.6	154.8%	100.0%	262.0%	358.1%
<b>Libraries</b>								
- User Travel Distance (km to branches)	11,317	12,262	9,926	9,399	92.3%	100.0%	80.9%	76.7%
- Catchments Classified A/B/C/U	5/1/1/7	5/1/1/7	4/3/0/7	5/2/0/7	3	3	2	1
<b>Schools</b>								
- User Travel Time (hours to all school types)	30,127	31,653	26,546	25,697	95.2%	100.0%	83.9%	81.2%
- Elementary (% under/over capacity)	18/18	19/20	15/19	14/23	3	1	4	3
- Junior High School (% under/over capacity)	7/4	5/5	5/7	7/8	3	1	2	3
- High School (% under/over capacity)	3/2	3/3	3/2	1/2	2	1	2	4
Health Care (hours travel)	11,225	12,549	9,357	9,158	89.4%	100.0%	74.6%	73.0%
<b>Private Utilities</b>								
Electricity and Communications (\$000s)	\$21,275	\$23,451	\$16,533	\$15,412	90.7%	100.0%	70.5%	65.7%
Natural Gas (potential DUs connected)	43,583	39,917	50,201	55,276	109.2%	100.0%	125.8%	138.5%

\*more information on all studies can be found at CentrePlan.ca



# ONGOING & RELATED WORK

## Project Overview



Additional work has been done to inform our understanding of the Regional Centre, information on these projects can be found at [CentrePlan.ca](http://CentrePlan.ca) but a brief synopsis is provided here for your information.

### 1. The Local Wastewater and Servicing Capacity Analysis

is an ongoing project that will provide foundational information regarding the ability of the infrastructure in the Regional Centre to handle increased development.

2. **The Green Network Plan** will inform the Centre Plan with foundational information on the Regional Centre's natural environment.

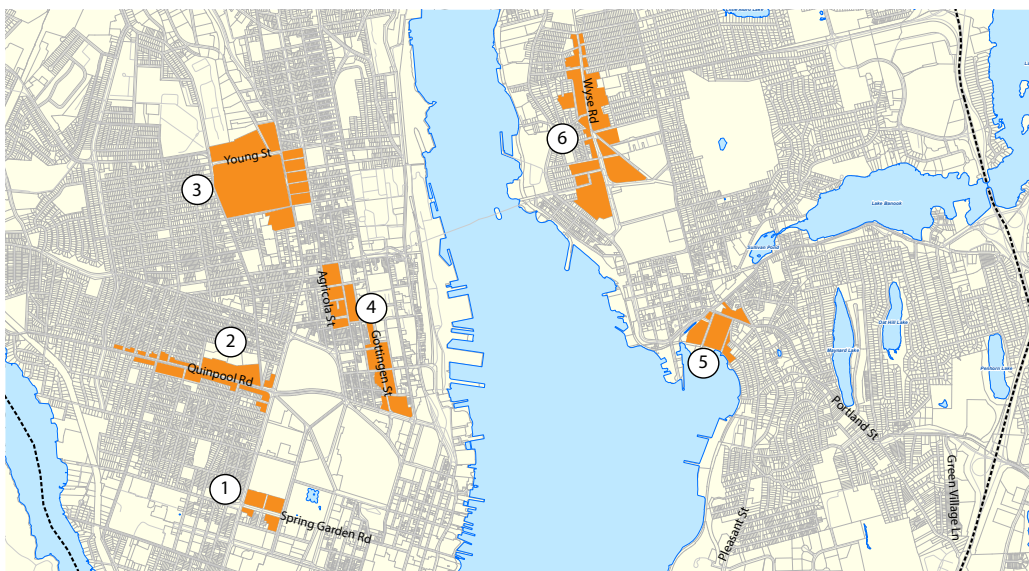
3. **Community Profiles** have been completed to help us understand who lives in the Regional Centre.

### Local Wastewater & Servicing Capacity Analysis

The Halifax Regional Water Commission (Halifax Water) has recently completed a Regional Wastewater Functional Plan which provides Halifax Water with a wastewater servicing master plan for regional infrastructure to support existing and future growth areas in the Municipality. However, recent development applications within the Regional Centre indicate that the “local” collection infrastructure,

which convey wastewater to the regional infrastructure, is limited in some areas.

HRM Planning & Development staff are working with Halifax Water to complete a study highlighting servicing and infrastructure issues occurring within the Regional Centre. The study will review servicing capacity at six sites where significant constraints were expected (map below) throughout the study before the final report.



The six study areas for local pipe capacity.

## Green Network Plan

Using principles of landscape ecology, the Green Network Plan will identify an interconnected network of open space including areas important for sustaining wilderness and biodiversity, lands for sustainable forestry, agriculture, and resource extraction, coastal and cultural landscapes, public parks, community green spaces, and urban squares and streets.

The outcome of this work will be a strategic vision and decision-making framework for future open space protection and use.

The Regional Centre is studied within the Green Network Plan and the timeline for completion of this plan is Fall of 2016. There has been significant data and direction available for export to the Centre Plan process.



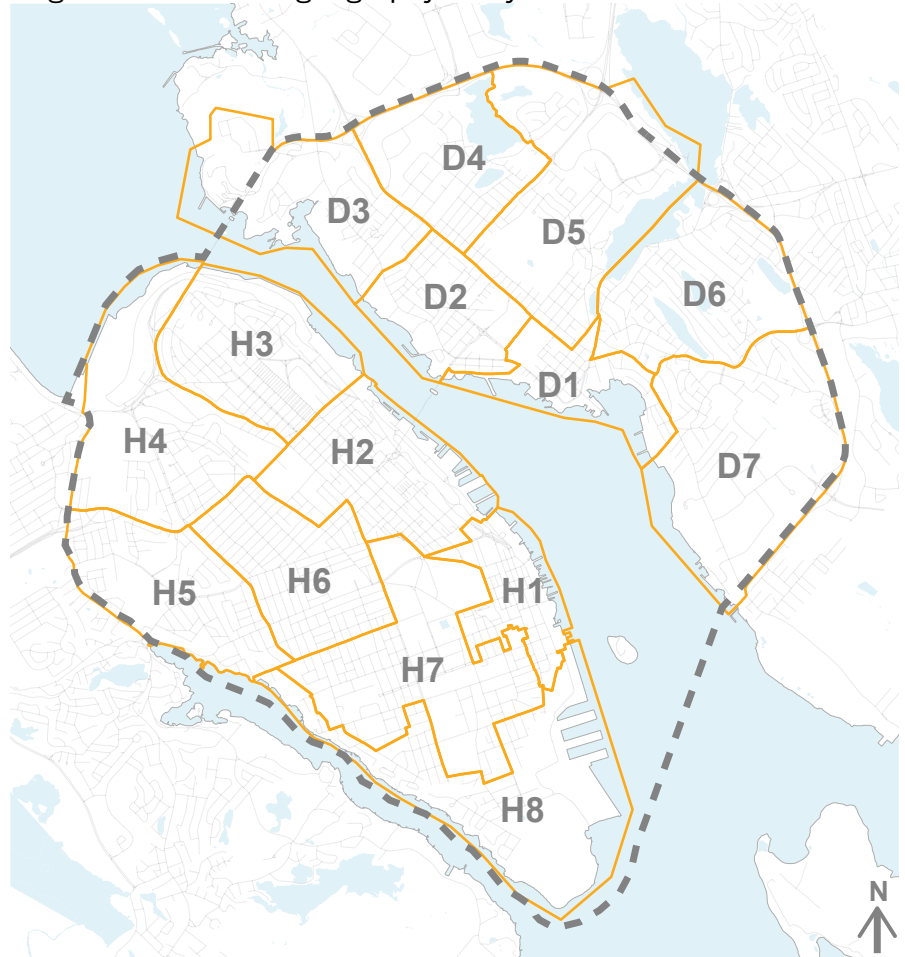
Open Space Themes used to guide the Green Network Plan

## Community Profile

A community profile has been prepared for the Regional Centre including the latest available census and other administrative data. The Regional Centre was broken down into 15 sub-geographies based on boundaries of Census geographies. The profile provides a statistical overview of the following characteristics:


- » population demographics
- » education levels
- » rate of government transfer
- » unemployment rate
- » median household income
- » rental rates
- » housing payment amounts
- » type of employment
- » transportation mode
- » distance travelled to work

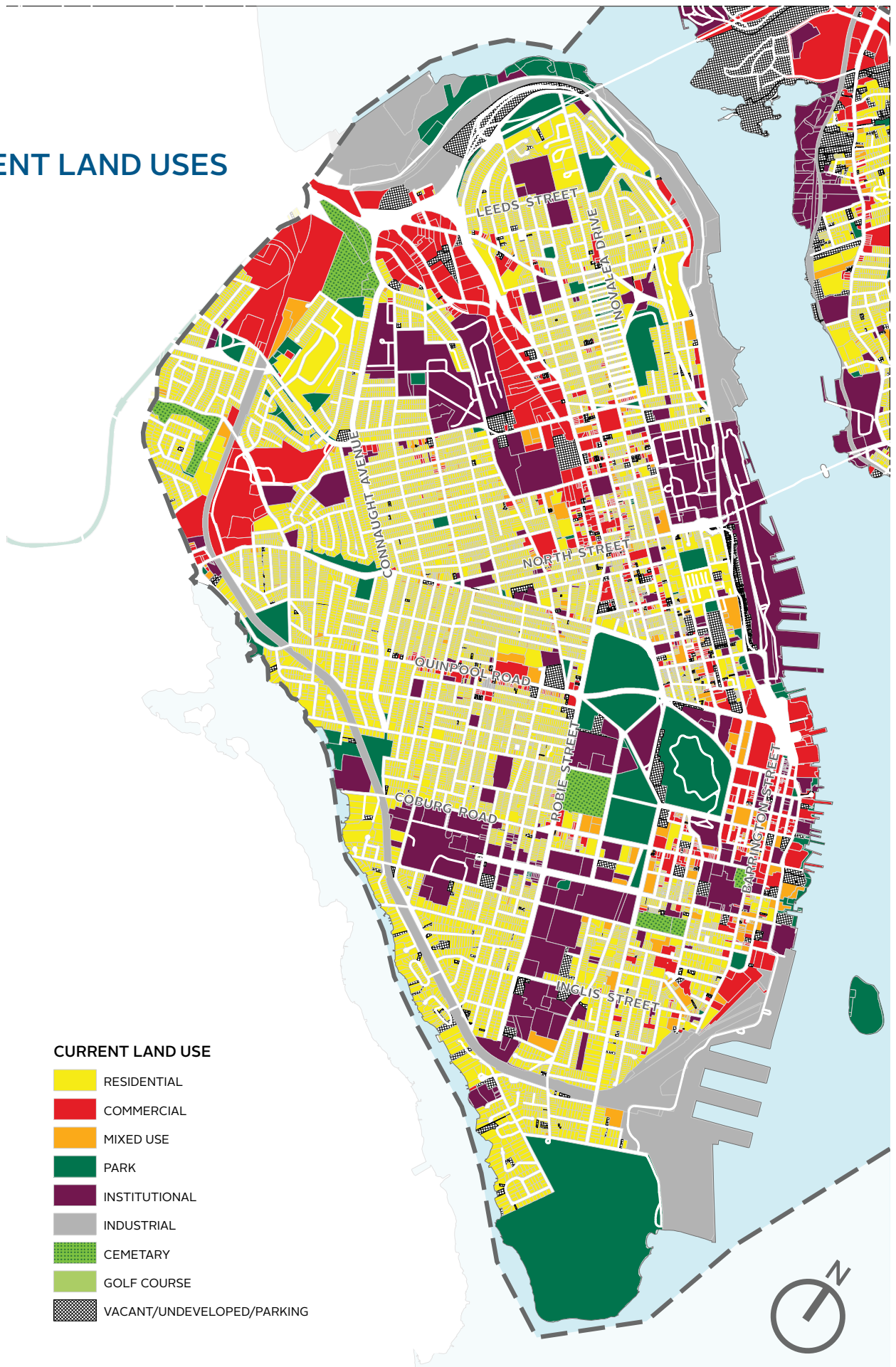
Regional Centre sub-geography study boundaries



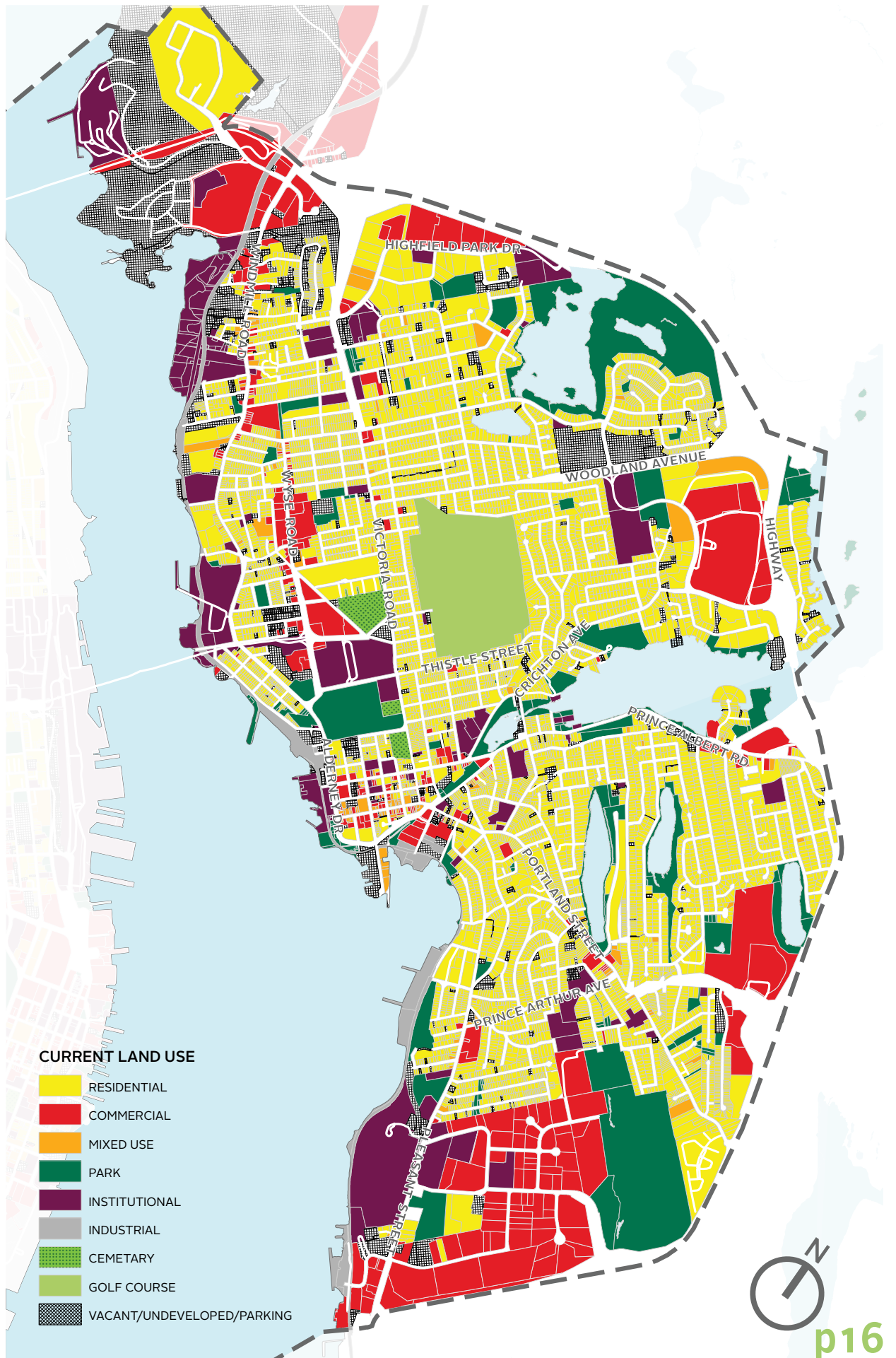
## CURRENT LAND USES

### CURRENT LAND USE

-  RESIDENTIAL
-  COMMERCIAL
-  MIXED USE
-  PARK
-  INSTITUTIONAL
-  INDUSTRIAL
-  CEMETARY
-  GOLF COURSE
-  VACANT/UNDEVELOPED/PARKING

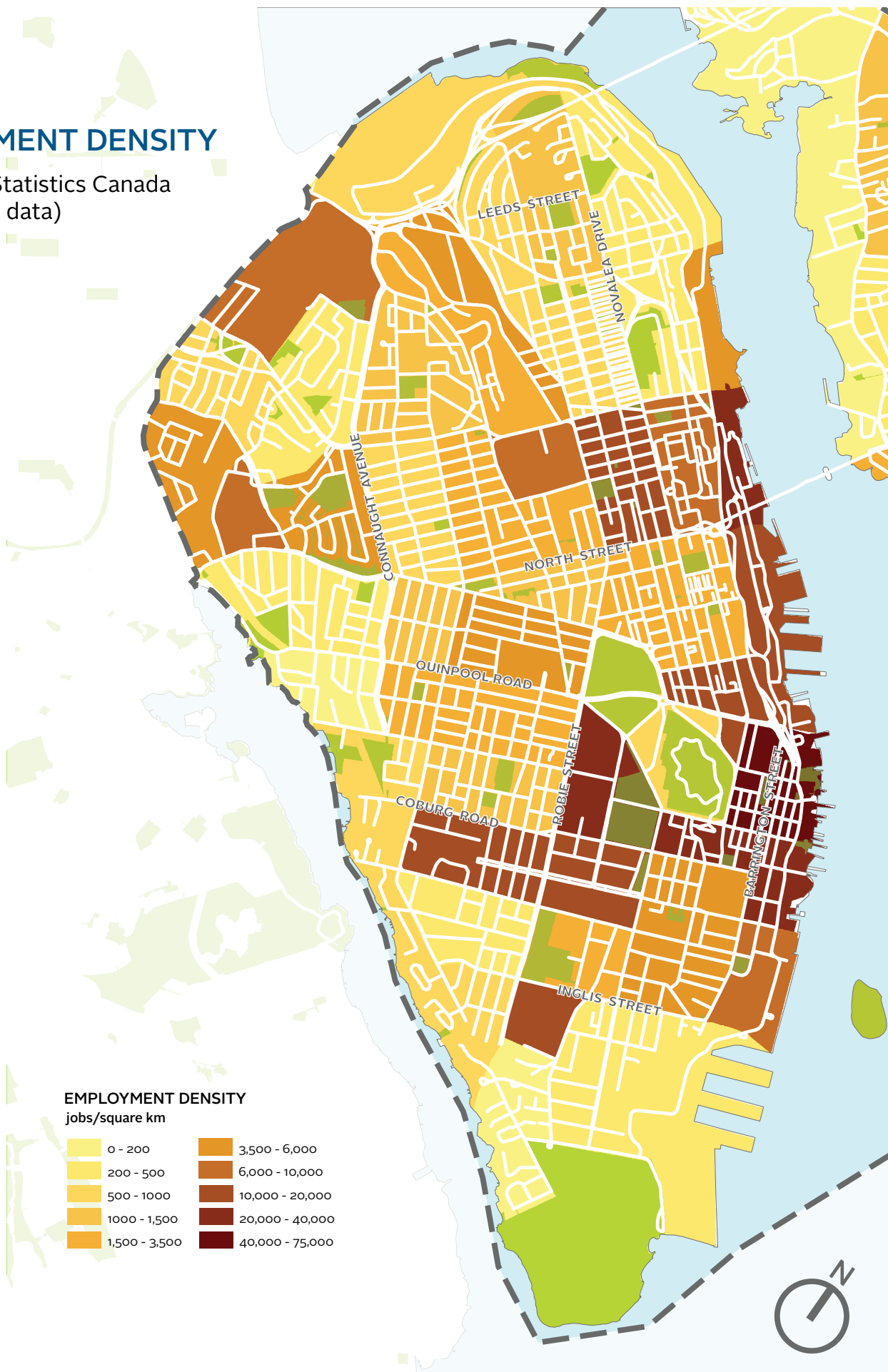




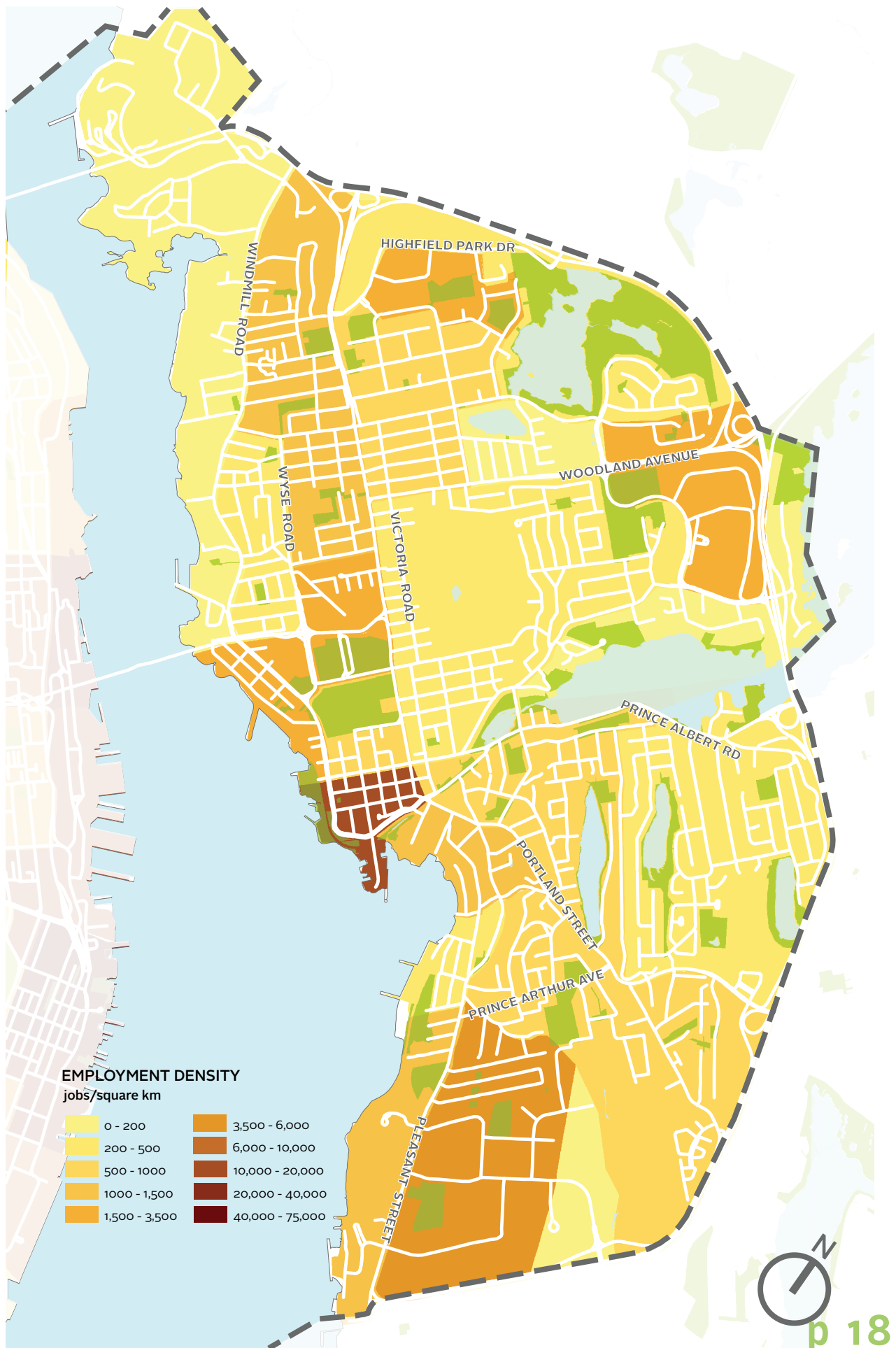


## EMPLOYMENT DENSITY

(Using 2011 Statistics Canada  
Census Tract data)

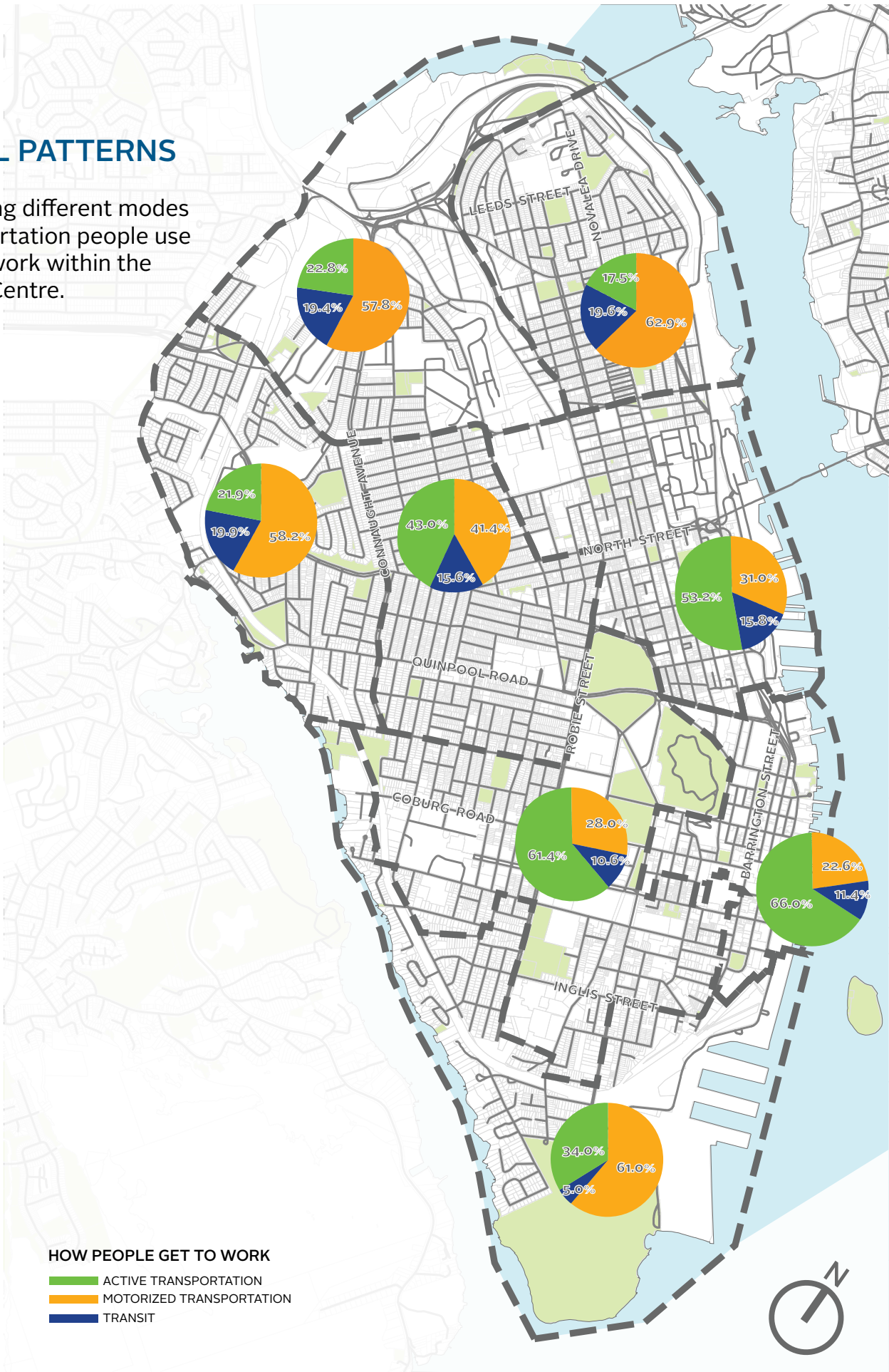


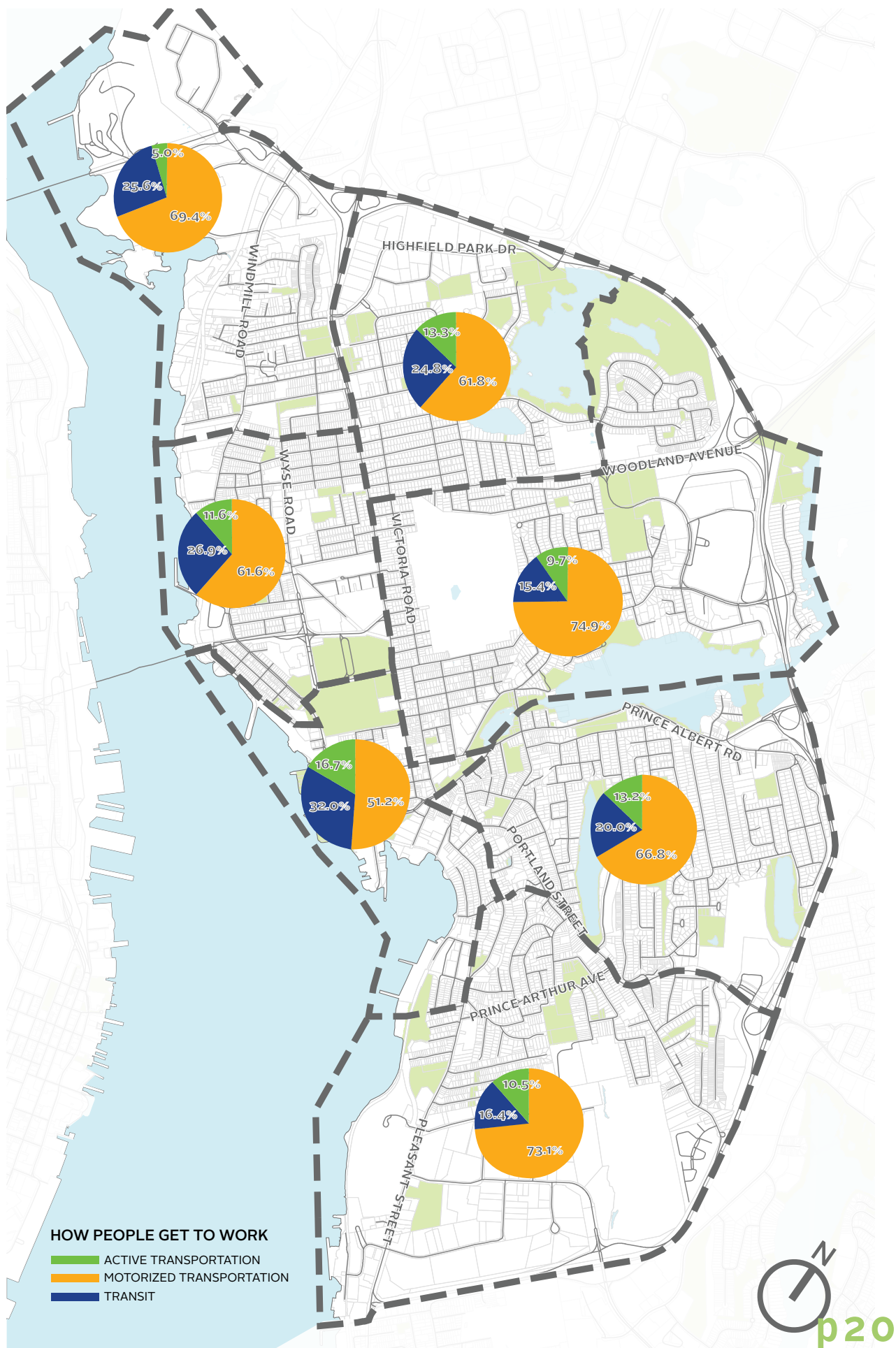




# TRAVEL PATTERNS

Highlighting different modes of transportation people use to get to work within the Regional Centre.







## 2014 Active Transportation Plan

Proposed and current routes as shown in the 2014 Active Transportation Plan.





**PLANNED\* ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE**

- EXISTING BIKE LANE/ PAVED SHOULDER
- PROPOSED BIKE LANE/ PAVED SHOULDER
- PROPOSED LOCAL STREET BIKEWAY
- BIKEWAY DESIRED (TYPE TBD)
- TRAILS

\* In the 2014 Active Transportation Plan

# ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

1. What would improve how the Regional Centre looks and feels?

2. What would enable you to walk, bike or take transit more often?

3. What are the best public spaces currently in the Regional Centre? What would make them even better?

# TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF

1. Has the workbook met your expectations for information? (circle one)

1

2

3

4

5

Did not meet expectations

Met expectations

Exceeded expectations

2. What information helped you participate effectively? What additional information might you still need?

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3. How are you completing this workbook?

☐

As an individual

☐

With a group

If with a group, how many people participated?

---

If with a group, does the group represent an organization and if so, which one?

---

4. Please tell us your postal code(s)

---

5. Do you or any of your group want to be added to our contact list? If yes, please provide the following information for each group member. (Include additional contacts on the back of this workbook)

Name: 

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Email Address: 

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Phone Number: 

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Name: 

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Email Address: 

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Phone Number: 

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Name: 

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Phone Number: 

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Thanks again, for taking  
the time to help us turn  
**‘what if’ into ‘how to’**

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR RETURNING THIS WORKBOOK

Please enclose the maps and any written notes or comments in the envelope this came in. Seal it, and do one of the following **BY MAY 31st, 2016**

1. Drop off the envelope at your nearest public library
2. Mail it to us at:  

**PO Box 1749  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
Canada B3J 3A5**
3. Scan the maps and your notes & submit to us via email at [planhrm@halifax.ca](mailto:planhrm@halifax.ca)

(Feel free to keep the information sheets!)