

RP+5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Report on Phases 1, 2 & 3 (March 2012 - July 2013)

This document describes the process and findings of public consultation on the first five-year review of HRM's Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (RMPS). The process, known as RP+5, was initiated by Regional Council in October 2011 and delivered under the guidance of the Community Design Advisory Committee (CDAC).



RP+5
Regional Plan 5 Year Review

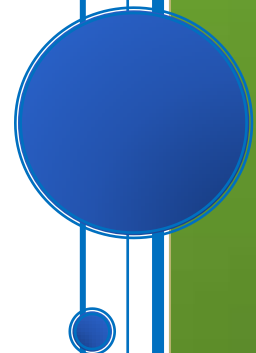


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INTRODUCTION

Planning, including regional planning, is a key responsibility of HRM as a local government. HRM's first Regional Plan, approved by Regional Council in 2006, includes a shared vision to "enhance our quality of life by fostering the growth of healthy and vibrant communities, a strong and diverse economy, and sustainable environment".

In October 2011 Regional Council approved the initiation of the first formal Regional Plan Five-Year Review, known as RP+5¹ as mandated by policy IM-7. The Community Design Advisory Committee (CDAC), Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee of Council (CPED) and Heritage Advisory Committee (HAC) were established as the sole deliberative bodies to provide recommendation to Regional Council on RP+5. A Communication and Community Engagement Strategy was subsequently approved by (CPED)².

CDAC was established as a working committee of citizens and Councillors in February of 2012 to guide community engagement and policy development related to the review, thus providing an ongoing platform for citizen and stakeholder input into the review process. Final approval of a revised Regional Plan is the prerogative of Regional Council and the Minister Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

The purpose of this report is to describe the process by which the community was engaged in the review of the Regional Plan, the level engagement, the input received, and how this input informed and shaped key Regional Plan policy changes. Some reflection on the process and recommendation for future reviews will also be provided. This report, along with a formal staff report and draft revised Regional Plan completes phases 1-3 of the RP+5 review process.

Organization

The RP+5 review process lasted approximately two years and resulted in a significant volume of material presented to the Community Design Advisory Committee (CDAC)³. To ensure readability and to prevent duplication, on-line links will be provided to key documents important to the process.

The report is organized around three main themes: how the community was engaged in the process; what we heard in terms of key issues and themes; and, how staff responded and addressed community input in key policy areas. CDAC will provide its account of community engagement to CPED and Regional Council.

¹ HRM Oct. 4, 2011 staff report
<http://www.halifax.ca/regionalplanning/documents/RP5ReviewScopeWorkplan.pdf>

² See Feb. 4, 2012 staff report <http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/documents/RP5.pdf>

³ CDAC members are listed in Appendix 1.

ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The RP+5 process has been framed as a review, not a re-write, yet the number of large issues identified for the review meant that the process was complex, involved the consideration of a number of large studies and functional plans conducted in the first five years of the Plan's implementation, and extensive public engagement. The process was designed in four inter-related phases⁴:

- Phase 1 (Oct. 2011-Feb. 2012): Where are we now?
- Phase 2 (March 2012-May 2013): What do we want to change?
- Phase 3 (June – August 2013): What do we need to refine or change?
- Phase 4 (Sept. – Nov. 2013): Approval (anticipated)

The first phase included research and information sharing about the key accomplishments, challenges and issues identified for the review. The second phase included initial public consultation and the development of the first two drafts of the Regional Plan. The focus of Phase 3 was to gather more focused feedback on Draft 2 of the Regional Plan approved by CDAC for consultation. This report presents a summary of Phases 1-3 of public engagement, which formed the basis of the final draft of the Regional Plan to be presented to Council for consideration of approval. A formal public hearing will be the final opportunity for public input.

Objectives

CDAC members and staff strived through the RP+5 community engagement process to fulfill the Council-approved principles of community engagement which include among others respect, clarity, transparency, inclusivity and fairness⁵. The purpose of RP+5 community engagement (as stated in the Feb. 9, 2012 staff report has been):

1. To develop a fair, transparent and inclusive public engagement process that will inform the Regional Plan review by providing a variety of opportunities for HRM citizens to shape and define changes to the Regional Plan;
2. To develop clear, transparent and timely communication on:
 - the origin of the Regional Plan;
 - its ongoing implementation;
 - the rationale, scope and timelines for the review;
 - its critical importance to the long term impact on our shared long term future; and
3. To ensure that through the review process, the Community Design Advisory Committee (CDAC), Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) Standing Committee, Regional Council and other HRM departments have a full understanding of public feedback, facts, policy options and their implications.

⁴ Phase 3 and 4 timelines were extended.

⁵ HRM Community Engagement Strategy (2008).

<https://www.halifax.ca/crca/CommunityEngagement/documents/CommunityEngagementStrategy.pdf>

This report addresses how these objectives have been fulfilled and how public input shaped policy development process.

The RP+5 process was designed around four phases with two key opportunities for public feedback during Phases 2 and 3. The purpose of community consultations was to ensure that the draft Plan reflected as much as possible, public vision and feedback, and to provide this information to Regional Council. The RP+5 review was framed around four key themes which included approximately 20 policy issues and several parallel projects identified by staff (Table 1):

- Sustainable Solutions
- Regional Centre
- Community Design
- Transportation and Land Use

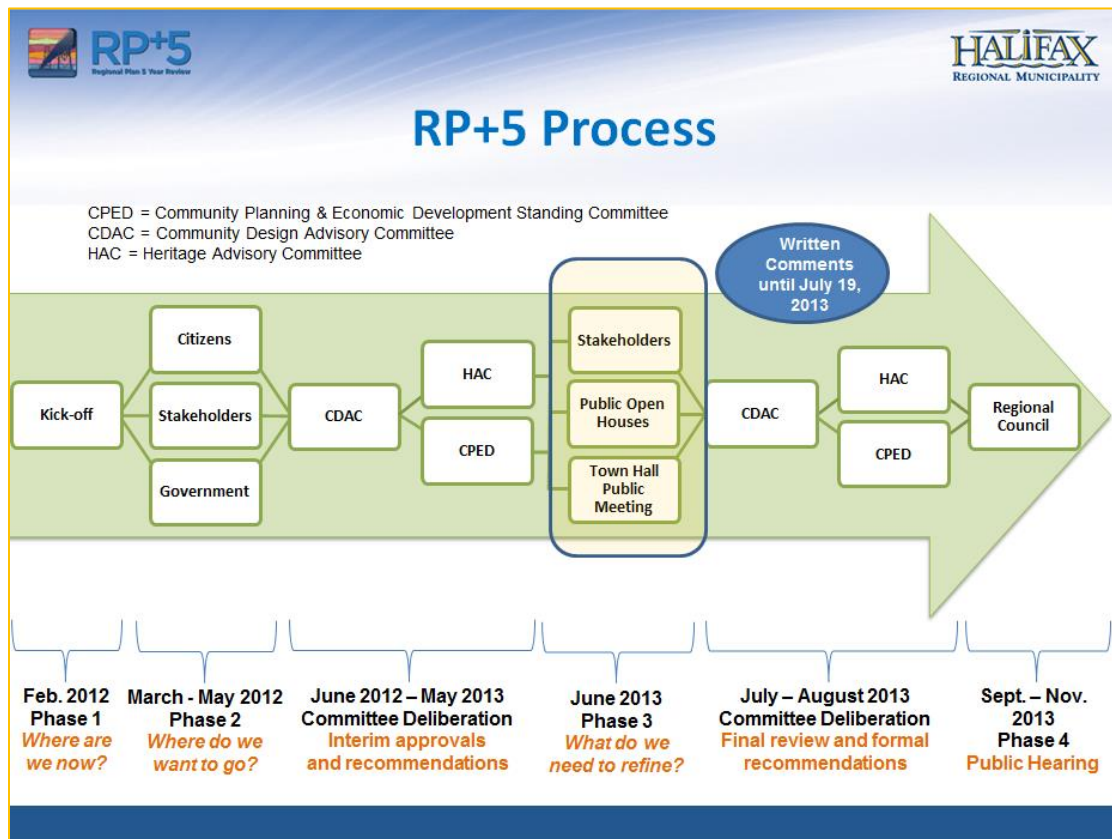


Fig. 1 RP+5 Process

Although the scope of the review included a number of important policies, the central assumption was that the foundation of the Regional Plan (based on the guiding principles, Generalized Future Land Use Map, growth centres and growth targets) was sound and would remain in place.

Table 1: Scope of RP+5 Review (Oct. 2011)

SCOPE: Regional Plan 5 Year Review

Attachment #2

| Deliverable | Theme | | | |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| | 1. Focus on Sustainable Solutions | 2. Regional Centre Focus | 3. Improved Communi- ty Design | 4. Transit Supports Land Use |
| Chapter 1: The Environment | | | | |
| 1.1 Policy direction for Sustainable Suburban and Rural Community Design | • | | • | • |
| 1.2 Rural Groundwater Mapping & Hydrogeological Assessments | • | | • | |
| Chapter 2: Settlement & Housing | | | | |
| 2.1 Policy direction for Improved Suburban & Rural Community Design | • | | • | • |
| 2.2 Policy direction for review of Open Space Subdivision standards | • | | • | |
| 2.3 Review "Visioning" Program for Growth Centres | | | • | |
| 2.4 Review growth potential and central servicing for Growth Centres | • | | • | |
| Chapter 3: Transportation | | | | |
| 3.1 Transit Service Supports Desired Land Use Patterns | • | • | • | • |
| 3.2 Support for Regional Transportation Authority | | • | • | |
| 3.3 Coordination of Transit & Active Transportation Initiatives | • | • | • | • |
| 3.4 Policy direction for improved Rural Road Standards | • | | • | • |
| 3.5 Policy direction for review of Red Book standards | • | • | • | • |
| Chapter 4: Economy and Finance | | | | |
| 4.1 Embed Economic Strategy in Regional Plan | • | • | • | • |
| 4.2 Policy direction for expansion of CCC program | • | • | | • |
| 4.3 Potential Business Park Expansion | | | | • |
| Chapter 5: Culture and Heritage | | | | |
| 5.1 Regional Centre is a focus of the Regional Plan Review | • | • | • | |
| 5.2 Enhanced and Clarified Heritage & Culture programs | • | • | • | |
| Chapter 6: Water, Wastewater, Utilities & Solid Waste | | | | |
| 6.1 Policy direction for underground utilities (subdivision bylaw amendments) | • | • | • | |
| 6.2 Review Central Servicing of Rural Growth Centres | • | | | • |
| 6.3 Wastewater Management Districts (maintenance) | • | | • | |
| Chapter 7: The Regional Centre (NEW CHAPTER) | | | | |
| 7.1 Policy enabling creation of new Regional Centre MPS & LUB (Greenprint) | • | • | • | • |
| 7.2 Other Regional Centre policy (i.e. design related, sustainability related) | • | • | • | • |
| Parallel Projects (to be delivered as ongoing stand-alone initiatives) | | | | |
| <i>Greenprint:</i> Neighbourhood Greenprint guiding document | • | • | • | • |
| <i>Greenprint:</i> Regional Centre MPS & LUB | • | • | • | • |
| <i>Greenprint:</i> Housing affordability and choice in Regional Centre | • | • | • | • |
| <i>Greenprint:</i> New financial, policy & legislative tools to support Regional Centre | • | • | • | • |
| <i>Ongoing Functional Plans:</i> (e.g. The Harbour Plan, Regional Centre Open Space | • | • | • | • |
| Review of Service Boundary (suburban lands available for development) | • | | | • |
| Additional Suburban Masterplans if necessary | • | | • | • |
| Suburban/Rural MPS/LUB amendments | • | | • | |
| Red Book Review and Revision | • | • | • | • |
| Legislative Amendments to support HRM Strategic Initiatives | • | • | • | • |

Phase 1: Information Sharing – Where are we now?

Purpose: To increase public awareness of the Regional Plan, its key issues, challenges and opportunities and to inform the public about the scope of the review process.

The first phase of the review was focused on research of the key in-scope issues and developing the tools to clearly and effectively communicate the project to the community at large, as well as external and internal stakeholders. The themes of the review were re-framed as:

- HRM is sustainable (sustainable solutions)
- HRM is vibrant (Regional Centre)
- HRM is livable (community design)
- HRM is mobile (transportation and land use)
- HRM is prosperous (integration with the Economic Strategy)

The RP+5 project brand was developed along with a new website, a blog site, facebook and twitter presence. A simple Q&A and presentation materials were developed for Phase 2 consultations, along with a marketing plan for a kick-off event and public meetings. Recruitment and orientation of the newly established Community Design Advisory Committee was also completed.

RP+5 website and social media channels were promoted as sources for information and platforms for feedback throughout the review process. A high-profile kick-off event on March 1, 2012 with guest speaker Calvin Brook and a panel of local decision makers and community leaders provided another opportunity to members of the public to get informed and engaged in the process.

Outcomes: CPED and Regional Council approved the Communication and Public Engagement Strategy and revised timelines. Public awareness campaign through HRM communications channels, the RP+5 list-serve and mass media included information on the scope of the review process, past accomplishments, key challenges, opportunities and how to become engaged.



Fig. 2 RP+5 Kick-off, March 1, 2012

Phase 2: Consultation – What do we want to change?

Purpose: To affirm the foundation of the Regional Plan; engage and inform the public on possible policy options; and test initial policy choices.

The purpose of second phase of community engagement was to re-affirm the Regional Plan's guiding principles and engage the public in a dialogue on potential policy directions. Information materials focused on accomplishments (e.g. Halifax downtown plan), new conditions (e.g. higher energy prices), and challenges (e.g. HRM not tracking to meet its growth targets). Public engagement was structured around public meetings, written submissions, several focus groups, informal stakeholder meetings and an on-line survey described in more detail below.

Public Meetings/Open Houses: In March 2012, seven meetings and a kick-off event were attended by over 500 citizens. Another 61 citizens participated on-line during two live-streamed events. The meetings were held in various HRM communities to discuss what has changed since the 2006 Regional Plan was adopted and how key policies need to address current challenges and future opportunities. Public consultation sought both broad feedback on the five themes (ie "What is your vision for vibrancy?") as well as more specific feedback on potential policy directions. Public feedback was invited through a series of open houses and a Q&A town-hall session. HRM staff were available to answer questions and engage in individual conversations.

The public sessions commenced and concluded with a 30 min open house where members of the public could speak to individual staff and provide comments on interactive posters or comment forms. A staff presentation⁶ and a moderated Q&A period provided another opportunity for discussion. Sixty nine (69) evaluation forms were completed (representing 12% of participants). The majority of participants expressed a very positive opinion of the meetings and the opportunities to provide input.



The poster for the RP+5 Regional Plan 5 Year Review Public Consultation features the logos for RP+5 and the Halifax Regional Municipality. It states that the Halifax Regional Council has initiated a 5-year review of the 2006 Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (Regional Plan). The review will focus on how HRM can become more Sustainable, Vibrant, Liveable, Mobile and Prosperous.

Public Consultation
Public engagement is vital to the review as it will shape recommendations presented to Council. The consultations will focus on what has changed and how key policies need to address current challenges and future opportunities. Each meeting will begin with a 30 minute Open House, followed by a presentation and community discussion. All are welcome!

| Meeting Location | Date | Time |
|--|-----------|-------------------|
| St. Margaret's Centre (Rooms 1 & 2) 12 Westwood Blvd, Upper Tantallon | March 19 | 6:30 pm – 9:00 pm |
| Atlantica Hotel (Guild Hall) 1980 Robie Street, Halifax | March 21 | 6:30 pm – 9:00 pm |
| Millwood High School (Cafeteria) 141 Millwood Drive, Lower Sackville | March 22* | 7:00 pm - 9:30 pm |
| Oyster Pond Academy 10583 Hwy# 7, Oyster Pond | March 26* | 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm |
| Mount Saint Vincent University - Rosario Student Centre 166 Bedford Highway, Halifax | March 26 | 6:30 pm - 9:00 pm |
| Black Cultural Centre 10 Cherry Brook Road, Cherry Brook | March 28 | 6:30 pm – 9:00 pm |
| Holiday Inn Harbourview (Harbourview Terrace) 110 Wyse Road, Dartmouth | March 29* | 6:30 pm – 9:00 pm |

*Indicates live web-streaming

Get Involved!
These events are some of the many public engagement opportunities planned for HRM citizens and key stakeholders over the course of the project. For more information on the RP+5 project, visit www.halifax.ca/PlanHRM, follow @PlanHRM on Twitter, or visit www.facebook.com/PlanHRM.

What matters to you and your community?
Help shape the Regional Plan!

Written submissions
Email: PlanHRM@halifax.ca
Mail: Halifax Regional Municipality
Regional Planning Office
2nd Floor, 60 Alderney Drive
PO Box 1769
Halifax, NS B3J 3A5



⁶ A copy of the presentation is available at <http://www.halifax.ca/planhrm/documents/RP5PresentationMar19-29.pdf>

Focus groups: Two focus groups were held with international newcomers through Immigration Settlement and Integration Services (ISIS) language training program. Another focus group was held with community members involved in Community Visioning processes as part of Community Visioning program review mandated by RP+5.

- ISIS ESL Class AM, St. Andrew's Community Centre, April 25, 2012 (15 participants)
- ISIS ESL Class PM, ISIS, April 25, 2012 (20 participants)
- Community Visioning Review Focus Group, Findlay Community Centre, May 25, 2012



Stakeholder meetings: Staff met on several occasions with stakeholder groups such as the Our HRM Alliance and Heritage Trust to discuss specific issues. Introductory letters were also mailed to First Nation governments (Acadia, Millbrook and Shubenacadie) and to organizations serving the urban Aboriginal community such as the Halifax Friendship Centre. As a result, one meeting was held with Millbrook First Nation on June 7, 2012.

Online Survey: 460 residents participated in an online survey from April 13th – May 15th 2012 on the Halifax website which included detailed responses to potential RP+5 policy directions. A summary is available at <http://www.halifax.ca/planhrm/documents/SurveySummaryMay27.pdf>.

Written submissions: Approximately 50 written submissions were also received through the planhrm e-mail, facebook and twitter account. A compilation of the submissions is available at <http://www.halifax.ca/planhrm/documents/Allcomments-July-Webversion.pdf>.

Outcomes: At the end of Phase 2, all comments and written submissions were presented to CDAC and were published on-line. Comments were organized in detailed tables according the themes, specific topics, being “in scope”, “addressed by another initiative” or “out of scope”. In-scope comments were provided with a staff response supported by research and CDAC direction. CDAC dedicated six meetings (July 4 – Oct. 6th, 2012) to reviewing the community feedback tables and providing staff with policy direction on Draft 1 of the Plan. All tables and committee minutes are available on-line at <http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/CommunityDesignAdvisoryCommittee.html>

Phase 3: Consultation – What do we need to refine or change?

Purpose: To seek feedback on proposed Regional Plan policy changes.

The third phase of community engagement was focused on seeking public feedback on fifteen (15) areas of proposed policy change to the Regional Plan. Three key questions were asked during this phase of engagement:

- What do you like about proposed changes?
- What needs to be refined or changed?
- What does successful implementation look like?

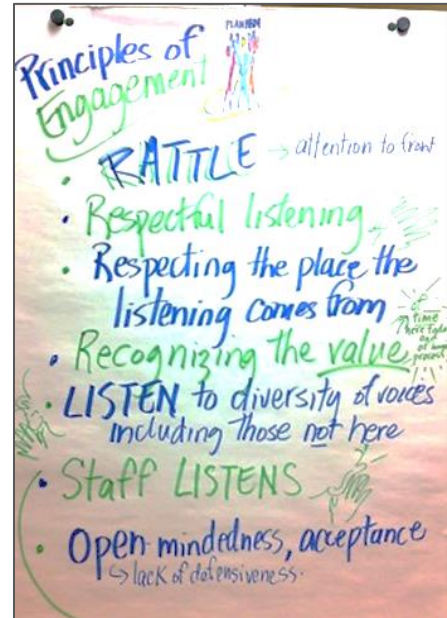
Draft 2 was available on-line on **May 17th, 2013**. Community engagement activities included three stakeholder meetings (June 3-6), six open houses (June 10-July 16), one regional town hall meeting (June 17), and an invitation to provide written submissions (May 17 – July 19).

As part of Phase 3, staff provided updates to Regional Council on the proposed policy changes, the North West Community Council, the Heritage Advisory Committee, and the HRM Development Liaison Group.

Stakeholder meetings: There was a stronger emphasis on stakeholder consultation in addition to public consultation. Three meetings were facilitated by outside consultants⁷:

Table 2: RP+5 Phase 3 Stakeholder Meetings

| | | |
|--|--|--------|
| Environment, Health, Transportation | St. Mary's Boat Club Halifax | June 3 |
| Culture, Heritage, Arts | Art Gallery of Nova Scotia Halifax | June 5 |
| Development Industry | Mic Mac Amateur Aquatic Club Dartmouth | June 6 |



In addition to notes, graphic facilitation was used to capture the input from stakeholder meetings. A list of participating organizations is listed in Appendix 2. Stakeholder meeting notes were sent to participants, were also posted on-line at <http://www.halifax.ca/planhrm/Phase3Comments.html> and circulated to CDAC members for their June 19, 2013 agenda.

Open houses: Given the large number of issues under consideration, open houses were selected as the format of the public sessions to provide an opportunity for information sharing and an inclusive setting for feedback. Proposed policy changes were presented through fact sheets and posters. “Dotmocracy” was used to informally gauge public support for various policy directions⁸. Both stakeholders and members of the public were invited to provide detailed written comments following the conclusion of the public meetings.

⁷ Robert Zeigler, Jeanie Cockell and Susan MacLeod

⁸ See policy fact sheets <http://www.halifax.ca/planhrm/FactSheets.html>. Dotmocracy involved placing dot stickers around “agree, agree but with these changes and do not agree” on each of the key policy topics. See results in section below.

Town Hall meeting/Open House: One regional Town Hall was held at the Dartmouth Holiday Inn to provide an opportunity for members of the public to comment publicly and raise concerns about proposed policy changes, or any gaps in policy. The town hall included an open house component, a detailed staff presentation and approximately 2 hour town hall. Minutes of the town hall are available on-line at <http://www.halifax.ca/planhrm/Phase3Comments.html>. Some feedback was received that more town-hall styled consultations should have been held, but most participants reacted positively the open house format.

Table 3: Phase 3 Public Sessions





| Meeting Location | Date |
|---|---------|
| North Preston Community Centre North Preston | June 10 |
| Canada Games Centre Halifax | June 12 |
| Gordon Snow Community Centre Fall River | June 13 |
| Holiday Inn Harbourview Dartmouth | June 17 |
| Gaetz Brook Legion Gaetz Brook | July 10 |
| Lion's Centre Sheet Harbour | July 16 |



Written submissions: Approximately 200 written submissions were received as part of Phase 3 from individual citizens property owners, organizations and networks. All comments received were promptly circulated to CDAC (see Appendix 3), and posted on-line: <http://www.halifax.ca/planhrm/Phase3Comments.html>.

Outcomes: CDAC dedicated six meetings to reviewing public feedback (June 19 to August 7, 2013). Staff provided responses to public input as a basis for CDAC discussion on further required changes to the Regional Plan.

Table 4: Summary of Community Engagement Activities (Jan. 2012 – Aug. 2013)

| RP+5 Phases 1, 2 & 3 | Engagement and Communication Activities | Ongoing Activities Website  Blog  Facebook  Twitter  Written Submissions |
|---|--|--|
| Phase 1 Jan – Feb 2012 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CE Strategy approved by CPED and Regional Council • Kick-off: 250+ participants • New website launched • E-mail updates (over 5,000 on list-serve) • Facebook and Twitter pages launched • RP+5 brand (business cards, banner, public advertisements) | |
| Phase 2 Mar 2012 – May 2013 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CDAC Established • Marketing campaign (local and regional print media; social media); • 7 regional public (550+ attendees and numerous comments provided on open house posters and comment cards); • Focus groups: newcomers (two ESL classes, 35 participants total) and Community Visioning past and current members; • Group stakeholder meetings (e.g. Millbrook First Nation, Our HRM Alliance, Heritage Trust, Halifax Water etc); • On-line survey (460 responses); • 70+ individual written and group submissions; • Studies completed (Stantec and Altus); • Staff response to public input; • CDAC Policy Direction on Draft 2. | |
| Phase 3 June – Aug. 2013 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy fact sheets and posters; • Mayor promotional video; • Marketing campaign (print and radio advertising; social media); • 3 stakeholder meetings on Environment & Health; Development and Business, Culture, Heritage and Arts (approx.. 100 participants) • 6 Public Open Houses and one Regional Town Hall Meeting (approx. 500 participants) • Written Submissions (200) • Staff response to public input • CDAC direction on Draft 3 • Update to Regional Council, CPED, NWCC, HRM Development Liaison Group, HAC | |

RESULTS - WHAT WE HEARD

Phase 2: Consultation – What do we want to change?

As indicated above, public input during phase 2 included public meetings, focus groups, written submissions and an online survey. The format included an open house with highly visual materials and participant handout, a presentation and question and answer period. Over 500 participants attended the meetings, 460 filled out the on-line survey and 50 written submissions were received. Table 3 (below) highlights some of the key comments received from urban, suburban and rural communities.

Table 5: Phase 2 Community Feedback from Public Meetings and Focus Groups (some selected quotes are highlighted in italics)

| Meeting Location | Key Issues |
|---|---|
| Urban (Halifax, Halifax Mainland Dartmouth) <i>“More equitable tax structure. Downtown businesses need a level playing field with business parks – why not install parking meters in Bayers Lake and Dartmouth Crossing?”</i> <i>“Ensuring that community/neighbourhood green space is maintained”</i> <i>“Income inequality isn’t just a federal or provincial issue—it has impacts on Halifax’s streets”.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet urban growth targets • Manage growth through greenbelting • Increase residential and commercial development in the Regional Centre • Direct more development to the Regional Centre • Address cost of land and development in urban areas • Improve urban design and place making • Support culture and heritage • Provide opportunities for affordable housing • Promote green space and urban gardens • Introduce incentives and consider commercial taxation and development costs • Protect local neighbourhoods • Place priority on transit and active transportation in the urban core • Stop infilling Bedford Basin • Measure results • Ensure high quality design |
| Suburban (Lower Sackville, Cherrybrook) <i>“Trails that link school, home and workplace in safe, green, sustainable manner”.</i> <i>“Promote/incentive sustainable building design. Zero net emissions “showcase” building, “Eco business parks”, tangible projects inspire people!”</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve community design and place-making • Invest in transportation infrastructure and active transportation • Improve transit • Limit retail development on industrial lands • Address stormwater and drainage • Promote open space • Implement a greenbelting strategy |
| Rural (Upper Tantallon, Oyster Pond) <i>“How is our area going to be prosperous?”</i> <i>“Why is it that we were left out of any future planning?”</i> <i>“Happy to hear that the Plan has shifted from a growth model to a densification model”</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet/adjust growth targets • Improve transportation and transit • Develop and maintain public roads, private roads and sidewalks • Regulate waste-water management • Address storm-water and drainage • Invest in rural growth centres and rural economic development • Develop more public gathering places |

| Meeting Location | Key Issues |
|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue and implement community visioning |
| Community Visioning Liaison Committees <i>"We started out on this venture with much enthusiasm and slowly gained support from community members when they realized that we seriously wanted their input. However, this support is starting to wane due to the slowness of enacting the bylaws and regulations that are needed to enforce what the residents want"</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for residents to be actively engaged in their communities. • Build on the success of community visioning by strengthening implementation • Revise committee structure to include the various community interests. • Clarify expectations • Be clear in policy on the difference between community visioning vs community planning |
| Newcomer Focus groups <i>"Enough open space but make it more attractive and colourful!"</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newcomers like HRM for its safety, friendliness, access to nature, recreation facilities, nice housing and support services. • Key issues include affordable housing, employment, recognition of qualifications, education, transit (including transit to recreation opportunities outside the city), and activities for children, youth and family, growing own food. |

On-line survey:

The on-line survey was open to the public from April 13th – May 15th, 2012 on the Halifax.ca website. The survey attracted 460 complete responses with 57% completion rate. Only complete surveys have been included in the analysis⁹.

The survey was modeled on policy goals and proposed actions presented at the public consultations sessions held in HRM between March 19th and March 29th. Given the focused nature of the review process, the survey was used to confirm policy proposals rather than to test a number of divergent options.

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of the proposed actions from "very important" to "important", "neutral", "not important" and "no opinion/don't know". Each section of the survey included an opportunity to provide written comments and resulted in 80 to 150 written comments per section. The survey on average took 20 minutes to complete. Individuals were also asked to identify their community, age range and gender for statistical purposes. Responses were received from all areas of the municipality. The following actions received the highest level of support (based on % of answers for "very important" and "important"):

- **Improve transit service in the Regional Centre and along strategic corridors** to support walkable, compact, mixed-use development (complete neighbourhoods) – 89% support
- **Encourage green building construction and operation** (e.g. solar orientation in new developments, green roofs, etc.) – 87% support
- **Encourage a mix of shops, services, residences and jobs** within walking distance of each other and transit in growth centres – 85% support.
- **Through the Centre Plan, introduce as-of-right form-based zoning** in the Regional Centre that requires good design and quality construction, builds vibrant streetscapes, and protects local neighbourhoods (83% support).

⁹ Incomplete surveys were not included in the tabulation to ensure consistent statistical analysis.

- **Through the Centre Plan, direct appropriately scaled growth and density to existing commercial corridors** and opportunity sites to protect the scale and character of existing neighbourhoods (79% support).
- Introduce a variety of financial, legislative, and regulatory tools to help **achieve growth targets in the Regional Centre** (i.e. improved development policies and processes, financial incentives, density bonusing , etc.) (76% support)
- **Develop a Regional Open Space Plan** that ensures that parks, open space corridors, environmentally sensitive lands, urban and natural forests, waterways, cultural landscapes and active transportation pathways are properly provided and managed (90% support);
- Adopt planning practices and policies that **support active living** in the planning design and development of the built environment (87% support);
- Improve and expand transit services in areas with high potential ridership (86% support)
- **Direct growth and increase opportunities to live, work, and play in areas with existing transit services** (85% support).
- **Improve the livability and attractiveness of our urban core** (e.g. beautification, affordable housing, public art, open spaces, infrastructure improvements, etc.) (86% support)

Phase 2 public consultation largely confirmed the initial proposed policy directions and placed emphasis on specific issues, including:

- meeting urban growth targets & investing in Regional Centre
- introducing greenbelting for the purpose of growth management and “eco-services”
- improve community design & housing affordability
- support culture and heritage
- limit retail development on industrial lands
- address stormwater and drainage
- protect rural character
- improve performance and reporting measures

One of the key issues raised was a concern with HRM not tracking to meet its urban growth targets. Our HRM Alliance, a regional coalition of community groups, advocated for greenbelting as a way to clearly distinguish between “desirable” and “un-desirable” areas of growth. While the Alliance’s proposal challenged the Regional Plan’s approach shaping new development as opposed prohibiting it through land use designations and service boundaries, both staff and CDAC saw value in incorporating greenbelting in the revised draft Plan as an enhancement to current open space planning.

Phase 3: Consultation – What do we need to refine or change?

Phase 3 saw a continued high level of engagement among the public with approximately 600 people taking part in stakeholder and public sessions. In addition, over 200 written submissions were received from organizations and individual citizens. The large volume of feedback was centred on several key topics, not surprisingly, with some strong opposing views. For example, the development community expressed concern with the cost of some of the proposed measures for undergrounding and rural subdivision standards, while some community groups continued to push for greater growth control in rural areas of HRM and a definite halt to any development in the urban reserve areas.

In addition, community consensus has been reached on the definition of greenbelting. There was a strong support for the Centre Plan although some heritage groups questioned the whole-sale replacement of current policies and regulations with a new plan. Likewise, there was little opposition to the Urban Transit Service Boundary as long as HRM continues to support rural community transit. There was an overall sense that timely and effective implementation is critical to addressing many of the region's critical issues. Table 4 lists key issues, comments and results of informal "Dotmocracy" scores.



Table 6: Key themes of Phase 3 Public Consultation and “Dotmocracy” results

| Topic | Agree | Agree, but | Do not agree | Key Comments |
|------------------------------|-------|------------|--------------|---|
| Active transportation | 23 | 27 | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key active transportation projects should be included in the Plan |
| Culture and heritage | 18 | 17 | 0 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize importance of arts and distinguish between arts, culture and heritage • Maintain both American and Canadian heritage standards • Quieting of titles for the North Preston, East Preston and Cherrybrook communities desired • Strengthen heritage policies • Improve performance measures (e.g. heritage, investment) • More recognition of the value of culture and heritage in community identity and vibrancy |
| Greenbelting | 13 | 27 | 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition needs to be clear • Use it for growth management, not only for open space connectivity • Abandon the term – uncertainty for development • Urban Settlement Designation should be applied comprehensively to contain development |
| Growth targets | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure growth targets are met • Increase growth targets to 50% in the Regional Centre • Consider increasing Regional Centre growth target after year 10 of the Plan • Include commercial growth targets as well as residential ones • Consider denying building permits in areas where growth targets have been exceeded |
| Growth Centres | 9 | 25 | 20 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add policy supporting sustainable suburban and rural community design • Limit development between growth centres • Prioritize growth centres • Ensure that only transit oriented development happens in growth centres |
| Urban Reserve lands | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain urban reserve • Eliminate policy G-15 • Place holding zone on urban reserve lands |

| Topic | Agree | Agree, but | Do not agree | Key Comments |
|--|-------|------------|--------------|--|
| | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban reserve designation is overly restrictive • Add lands to urban reserves • Preserve Purcell's Cove lands by including them in the greenbelt • Change lands off Purcell's Cove to Urban Settlement and re-zone to residential development district • Request to add various Armco lands to urban reserve • Retain policy IM-18 • Delete policy IM-18 |
| Housing affordability | 18 | 21 | 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove barriers to special needs housing • Focus on secondary suites and density bonusing • Improve transit service • Add a principle related to not unduly affecting housing affordability through regulations • Ensure neighborhood resiliency |
| Industrial Lands | 6 | 6 | 11 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit retail development in industrial parks • Policy EC-6 encourages "sprawl" and erodes health of existing business districts |
| Plan performance | 6 | 13 | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt and report on detailed performance measures • Include heritage performance measures |
| Regional Centre | 20 | 8 | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre Plan is needed • Maintain policies from the current plans that work • Too much emphasis on Regional Centre vs suburbs • Limit commercial development between centers • Provide clear framework for Centre Plan • Objection to the removal of Opportunity Sites Map • Conduct a residential location study • Identify impacts of new development on existing commercial districts |
| Regional Road Works and Active Transportation | 7 | 16 | 12 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove Third Bridge and Bayers Rd. widening • Map 8 (road Classification) requires |

| Topic | Agree | Agree, but | Do not agree | Key Comments |
|---|--|------------|--------------|---|
| | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> consultation; defer to Centre Plan • Emphasize Mount Hope Ave. to Caldwell • Add specifics related to Active transportation • Need a n integrated mobility plan • Accept more congestion |
| Rural development and community design | 12 | 14 | 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural active transportation development tool • Should be able to include riparian buffers and other open space on parkland dedication requirement • Increase the number of units permitted on private driveways • Caps of 100 or 30 units between centres is arbitrary and too restrictive • Eliminate rural conservation development between centers • Increase density for classic Open Space developments |
| Servicing and Utilities, development charges | 10 | 8 | 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development charges are too lenient to discourage growth outside of Regional Centre • Mandate wastewater management Districts • Mandate septic tanks to be pumped out • Remove policy SU-15 • Adjust taxation and development charges to encourage development on existing services |
| Transit | 13 | 28 | 11 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree with focused investment in the urban service area • Need to support rural transit |
| Undergrounding | 21 | 8 | 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern over cost of mandatory undergrounding • Concern over mandatory undergrounding in rural areas • Eliminate requirement for underground wiring |
| Watercourse buffers | 19 | 42 | 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase minimum watercourse buffers to 30 m |
| Additional topics | | | | |
| Bedford Basin infilling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop the infilling | | | |
| Food security | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HRM needs a food security strategy that supports local farmers | | | |
| Governance/Implementation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site-specific plan amendments should not be considered • Re-tool secondary planning processes to make them relevant to rural growth | | | |

| Topic | Agree | Agree, but | Do not agree | Key Comments |
|----------------------------|-------|---------------|-----------------|--|
| | | | | centres |
| | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specify timelines for secondary plans for growth areas under S-2 and S-9 |
| Green development | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More encouragement for green building standards More consideration for solar energy District energy |
| Harbour lands | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern over densification of Harbour Lands and storm surge damage |
| Island development | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More stringent development regulations for islands |
| Regional Parks | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement Regional Parks (Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes) Acquire necessary lands for the BMBCL |
| Sea level elevation | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the 2.5 m elevation to 4 metres |
| Wetland protection | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include smaller wetlands in the Wetlands Schedule (as small as 100 m2) HRM has no jurisdiction over protection of wetlands – delete policy E-16 Do not exempt Halifax Harbour and Bedford Basin from watercourse buffers Do not relax requirements for lots in existence prior to 2006 |

RESPONSE TO COMMUNITY INPUT


As indicated above, community engagement, including a careful review of all feedback and written submissions, was a major component of the RP+5 process. CDAC dedicated twelve meetings to review and discuss the extensive public input provided during the process from individual citizens, property owners, businesses, community organizations, and major institutions. Following phase 2 and phase 3, staff organized comments in “community response tables”, linking comments to specific issues and research and CDAC policy direction. Selected images of feedback from stakeholder consultations and community feedback tables are illustrated below. Key changes to the Plan due to public feedback include the following:

Public input directed many areas of policy changes, such as:

- Municipal objectives are explicitly identified at the beginning of each chapter.
- The main findings of the Stantec study on the costs and benefits of alternative growth scenarios have been summarized and municipal growth targets restated. Whereas the current plan targets 25% of new housing units to the Regional Centre, 50% to the suburbs and 25% to the rural areas, the targets are restated as The Regional Plan shall target at least 75% of new housing units to be located in the Regional Centre and suburbs with at least 25% of new housing units within the Regional Centre over the life of this Plan.
- The concept of greenbelting is introduced and a commitment is made to undertake a Greenbelting and Public Open Space Priorities Plan.
- Consideration of the HRM growth targets and the need for additional lands have been added as criterion for Council to consider when requests are received to amend the service boundary and to initiate secondary planning for new serviced growth centres.
- Boundaries have been established for rural growth centres and “caps” on maximum number of lots have been set for developments between growth centres.
- Food security, mobility needs, supporting aging in place, establishing interconnected greenbelts and open spaces are identified as matters to be considered when preparing secondary planning strategies for growth centres.
- A new policy has been added that, when reviewing secondary planning strategies for rural areas, consideration is to be given to limiting the scale or retail development allowed outside of designated rural centres.
- The Road Hierarchy Classification Map, has been deleted and a new road classification system will be developed as part of the Road Networks Priorities Plan.



- Several housekeeping map changes resulted in more crown lands conservation areas being designated as Open Space Natural Resource.
- A commitment is made that none of the road network projects presented in Table 4-1 will be constructed unless a community consultation program has been undertaken.
- A new requirement is made under the Regional Subdivision By-law for underground placement of electrical and communication distribution lines from the poles to the street right-of-way for all subdivisions where new streets are proposed.
- Key regional active transportation projects have been added to Chapter 4.
- Revised performance measures are to be used to assist in evaluating the effectiveness of policies, programs, and investments in achieving the vision and objectives of the Plan.
- An implementation policy, IM-18 under the current plan, which allows Council to consider extension of uses into an abutting planning designation, has been modified to clarify that this provision is only intended to be applied on a limited scale.



Phase III Response to Public Input. Page | 1

Response to Written Public Submissions (Received July 6-19, 2013)* - Supplementary**

*Refer to Submissions Packages 3 and 4 - <http://www.halifax.ca/planhrm/Phase3Comments.html>

This series of responses is provided as supplementary information to that tabled with the CDAC on July 31, 2013. New issues, not previously included in the responses tabled on the 31st are **highlighted in BOLD text in the supplementary table.

| POLICY AREA - GREENBELTING | | | |
|----------------------------|---|---|----------------|
| SUBMISSION REFERENCE # | COMMUNITY FEEDBACK (The issues and comments received have been summarized below. Please refer to full submission for more detail) | STAFF RESPONSE | CDAC DIRECTION |
| 4.12 | Designate potential open spaces and corridors on maps; then negotiate with landowners/developers via land swapping, parkland dedication, purchase using the parkland reserve account, and partnerships with the Province. | This will be done at the community planning level, informed by the Greenbelting and Public Spaces (GPS) Priorities Plan. | |
| 4.12 | List Old Growth Forests in Tables 2-1 and Table 3-2. | The GPS will address this. | |
| 3.54 | Update Map 13 to reflect the work done on Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes Regional Park since the last RP, including the watershed study. Table 2-3 should read NSE and DNR/HRM. | Council has directed a facilitated negotiation take place towards acquiring lands for the regional park. Maps will be changed following this process. | |
| 3.54 | Provide a Glossary, and include an explanation of the term "Greenway". | Agreed, the term will be defined. A glossary of planning terms can be found on the PlanHRM website, but it is not included in the Regional Plan. | |
| 3.54 | Add "Greenway" to Table 2.2. | Agreed. | |

1 CDAC – Aug 2, 2013

1 CDAC – Aug 2, 2013

Fig. 4 Sample Respons Table, Phase 3

CONCLUSION

Overall staff feel that the community engagement process for Phases 1-3 met its objectives as stated in the Feb. 4, 2012 staff report. The process provided extensive opportunities for public input and feedback. The comments in some cases were beyond the scope of the RP+5 review and many expressed a desire to see detailed implementation strategies in the Plan, and may inform future processes. For example, budgets and specific timelines are not typically addressed by a regional municipal planning strategy. Where staff did not agree with a comment or suggestion, a rationale was provided for not changing the policy direction. The final report to Council will provide Council with the opportunity to consider policy alternatives that can further address public input.

The RP+5 process enjoyed a high level of public engagement and ongoing input. Staff and CDAC members were grateful for the diversity and caliber of public submissions. While urban, suburban and rural areas of the municipality continue to face different issues, there appeared to be more understanding and genuine appreciation for the inter-dependency of urban and rural areas and how growth management can affect the quality of life of all areas of HRM.

There was overall support for meeting and exceeding growth targets, for the efficient use existing infrastructure, protection of natural areas, more focused investment in transit, limiting retail development in business parks and revitalization of the Regional Centre. At the root of divergent opinions was the appropriateness and definition of greenbelting, the current growth targets, the overall approach to growth management and the possible impact of regulations on housing affordability. Food security and protection of urban reserves were other key issues raised in public consultations.

Staff and CDAC made every effort to accommodate public input while staying true to the fundamentals of the Plan. Future reviews may consider a more focused scope, and perhaps an early public engagement process when determining the actual scope of the review. The Regional Plan continues to be relevant and important to the community and continued engagement, reporting and communication are critical to its success.

Appendix 1 Members of the Community Design Advisory Committee (Sept. 2013)

| Sector / Role | Name |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| Chair | Dale Godsoe |
| Arts | Joanne Macrae |
| Environment | Geoff LeBoutillier |
| Business | William Book |
| Economy/Vice Chair | Fred Morley |
| Health | Gaynor Watson-Creed |
| Development | Eric Burchill |
| Citizen at large | Peter Moorhouse |
| Councillors | Watts, Jennifer |
| | Mason, Waye |
| | McCluskey, Gloria |
| | Nicoll, Lorelei |

Appendix 2 Organizations Participants of Stakeholder Meetings

| Environment, Housing, Mobility, Health June 3, 2013, St. Mary's Boat Club | |
|--|--|
| Chebucto Transportation | Halifax North West Trails Association (HNWTA) |
| Ecology Action Centre | Metro Community Housing Association/St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association |
| Five Bridges Wilderness Heritage Trust | MusGo Rider |
| Halifax Cycling Coalition | Our HRM Alliance |
| Halifax Field Naturalists | Public Health, Capital District Health Society |
| Halifax Water | Sackville River Association |
| Halifax Water | Shubenacadie Watershed Environmental protection Society |
| HCC/Planning and Design Centre/CEU | William's Lake Conservation Company |
| Heart and Stroke | Woodens River Watershed Environmental Organization |
| Culture, Heritage and Arts June 5, 2013 Art Gallery of Nova Scotia | |
| Association of NS Museums | Dept. of Communities Culture and Heritage |
| Canadian Museum of Immigration Pier 21 | Heritage Trust of NS |
| Cole Harbour Heritage Society | Irondale Ensemble Project |
| Dance NS | Neptune Theatre Foundation |
| Dartmouth Business Commission/Chamber of Commerce | Neptune Theatre/Halifax Chamber of Commerce Colour.ca |
| Development and Business Stakeholder Group June 6, 2013 Mic Mac AAC | |
| Annapolis Group Inc | Lavalin |
| Armco | North End Business Association |
| Atlantic Developments Inc. | Nova Scotia Business Inc. |
| Centennial Group Limited | NSLS/Brunello Estates |
| Clayton Developments Limited | QRMDA |
| Conrad Brothers | Ramar |
| Cresco | Seven Lakes Developments Ltd. |
| Downtown Dartmouth Business Commission | Sobeys |
| Downtown Halifax Business Commission | Southwest Properties Ltd./ CDAC |
| Genivar | Spring Garden Area Business Association |
| Halifax Chamber of Commerce | Strategic Urban Partnership/CDAC |
| Halifax Water | Urban Development Institute |
| Heritage Gas | Waterfront Development Corporation Ltd. |
| KNA | |

Appendix 3– List and location of Phase 3 Accompanying Documents

Written Public Submissions:

<http://www.halifax.ca/planhrm/Phase3Comments.html>

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|--|
| Written Submissions Pkg. I (to June 25th) |
| Written Submissions Pkg. II (June 26th to July 5th) |
| Written Submissions Pkg. III (July 6 to July 19th) |
| Written Submissions Pkg. IV (July 19th) |

Engagement Session Notes:

<http://www.halifax.ca/planhrm/Phase3Comments.html>

| Date: | Engagement Session: |
|----------------------|--|
| June 3, 2013 | Stakeholder Group Consultation - Transportation, Environment, Health |
| June 5, 2013 | Stakeholder Group Consultation - Culture, Heritage, Arts |
| June 6, 2013 | Stakeholder Group Consultation - Development Industry, Business |
| June 10, 2013 | Open House - North Preston Community Centre |
| June 12, 2013 | Open House - Canada Games Centre |
| June 13, 2013 | Open House - Gordon Snow Community Centre |
| June 17, 2013 | Open House & Town Hall Meeting -Holiday Inn Harbourfront |
| July 10, 2013 | Open House - Gaetz Brook Legion |
| July 16, 2013 | Open House - Sheet Harbour Lions Club |

Public Input Staff Response Tables - CDAC Agenda Links

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| June 19, 2013 | http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/June192013agendaforCommunityDesignAdvisoryCommittee-HRM.html |
| June 29, 2013 | http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/June28CDACAgenda-HRM.html |
| July 3, 2013 | http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/July32013AgendaforCommunityDesignAdvisoryCommittee-HRM.html |
| July 17, 2013 | http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/July172013AgendaforCommunityDesignAdvisoryCommittee-HRM.html |
| July 31, 2013 | http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/July312013CommunityDesignAdvisoryCommittee-HRM.html |
| Aug. 2, 2013 | http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/130807CDACAgenda.html |