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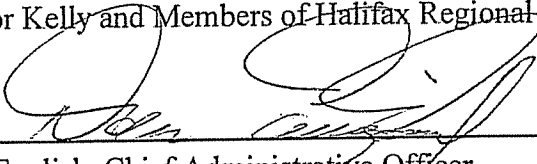


PO Box 1749
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Halifax Regional Council
February 27, 2007
Committee of the Whole

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:



Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer



Wayne Anstey, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer - Operations

DATE: February 19, 2007

SUBJECT: ***HRM by Design: Urban Design Vision and Principles and
Increase to Contract***

ORIGIN

On November 8, 2005: Regional Council approved cost sharing for the Regional Centre Urban Design Study between HRM, the Province of Nova Scotia, and ACOA and on March 7, 2006: awarded RFP # 05-05-073 (Regional Centre Urban Design Study) to the highest ranking proponent, Office for Urbanism, Inc.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that Regional Council:

1. Approve *HRM by Design's* statement of "Urban Design Vision and Principles" as outlined in this report and recommended by the Urban Design Task Force.
2. Authorize an increase to the original contract with The Office for Urbanism in the amount of \$205,823.71 (net HST included) with funding from accounts CDV00738-Centre Plans/Design, C779-6919-Capital District Operating, and CPG00899-Halifax Common Master Plan as indicated in the Budget Implications Section of this report.
3. Approve a capital budget increase to allow external cost-sharing for the project scope expansion as outlined in this report, in the amount of \$41,372, net HST included.

BACKGROUND

HRM by Design is the name given to the Regional Centre Urban Design Study that is mandated in the Regional Plan. The Regional Centre is the geographic region that includes the Halifax peninsula and Dartmouth within the Circumferential Highway. This project, which has been underway since July 2006, will articulate a design strategy to foster quality development and vibrant public spaces through the creation of new policies and tools such as design guidelines, improved processes, and incentives for good development. The study will address issues such as building height, heritage preservation, open space, residential infill, downtown development, architectural design guidelines, and a detailed review of the development approval processes currently in use. Importantly, the project will provide Council a clarified policy framework within which solid development decisions can be made. The approach is intended to reinforce current community plans and values related to heritage, viewplane protection and neighbourhood stability. The study is supported by key policies in the Cultural Plan, the Economic Development Strategy, and Council's Community Development focus area.

The project is being managed by Capital District staff and a consultant team led by the Office for Urbanism. Advising Council and the project team is the Urban Design Task Force (UDTF), a body of 15 volunteers that includes three HRM councilors. The UDTF was established to make key recommendations to Council and to advise the project team throughout the life of the project. The project has also convened a Project Steering Committee comprised of professional staff from key HRM departments, and includes representation from our funding partners at the provincial and federal levels of government. All recommendations made to Council regarding HRMbyDESIGN have been reviewed by the Steering Committee and have been formally deliberated upon and approved by the UDTF.

The purpose of this report is to secure Council approval of the Urban Design Vision and Principles, and to secure Council approval of an amended project scope and budget increase for deliverables relating to urban design guidelines and heritage protection.

DISCUSSION

1. Urban Design Vision and Guiding Principles

Genesis of the Vision and Principles: On October 24, 2006 Council adopted a process, similar to what was successfully employed with the Regional Plan, wherein project findings will be incrementally approved at key milestones. The first of these milestones was Public Consultation Forum #1, held over the course of four days in September, 2006, and which yielded an enormous amount of valuable input. More than **300** residents and stakeholders logged over **1,600** hours of consultation during that period. The intent of Forum 1 was to develop the community's overarching, high-level urban design goals. Since the conclusion of Forum #1, the UDTF and the project team have worked to refine the public input into clear and concise **Urban Design Vision and Guiding Principles**. These are included as Attachment #1 to this report and at this time the UDTF is seeking Council's adoption of them.

Public Consultation on the Vision and Principles: It should be noted that the Urban Design Vision and Guiding Principles have been before the public twice, first, at Forum #1 in September, 2006 during which they were produced and at the end of which they were presented back to the public for verification, and, second, at Forum #2 in December, 2006 when they were presented to the public again, at which time they received resoundingly positive endorsement. They have also been posted on the project website for comment since September, 2006, and have had the benefit of extensive study by the UDTF and the entire project team. They are brought forward for Council's adoption with a high degree of confidence that they reflect the public's views.

Content of the Vision and Principles: The Urban Design Vision and Principles statement is contained in its entirety in Attachment #1 under three main headings which are summarized here:

- Urban Design Vision Statement: The Urban Design Vision Statement provides a broad mission for the function, look and feel of the Regional Centre. It builds on the area's inherent assets and potential strengths to set the overarching intent and objective for urban design. It is an important direction setting tool that is the basis for all subsequent urban design initiatives.
- Guiding Principles: The Guiding Principles for Urban Design give direction to the broad cross-section of components that are the building blocks of the city and that work in concert to establish the function and the "look" and "feel" of the Regional Centre. The principles were a central focus and outcome of Forum One and were prepared collaboratively by workshop participants.
- Five Campaigns for a Great City: The urban design approach for bringing the Vision Statement to fruition is organized around five key "Campaigns for a Great City." These Campaigns serve as the broad yet tangible objectives for shaping future growth in a manner and character that is desired for the Region Centre. These Campaigns are the themes that emerge from the Guiding Principles.

Council's adoption of this statement of Urban Design Vision and Principles will be the first of a series of incremental adoptions at key project milestones. The next such adoption is scheduled to occur in May, 2007, when the findings of Public Consultation Forum #2 (held in December, 2006) will be presented.

2. Project Scope and Contract Increase

One of the most important intentions of HRMbyDESIGN is to provide a clear articulation of the vision that HRM residents have for the 'look and feel' of their downtown, which is to say, the quality of its architecture, the nature of its public spaces, and the type and intensity of activity it accommodates. That vision emerged from the project's Forum #1 consultations in September, 2006, and has since been refined by the UDTF. HRMbyDESIGN will now employ that vision in the creation of new and amended MPS policies and development approval processes that will provide an alternative to the current development climate, which is often contentious, and that often leads to appeals and counter-appeals of Council decisions. This addition of clarity and predictability in the development process is highly important in order to avert negative impacts

on HRM's economic development potential, our goals of increased residential density, our ability to meaningfully protect our heritage resources, and to some degree our ability to create and maintain a vibrant public realm. This project is the opportunity to significantly enhance our development policies.

HRMbyDESIGN is now at its approximate halfway point, and it has become clear to the Urban Design Task Force and project team that for this project to provide the improved downtown policies and processes mentioned above, and for this project to achieve its maximum value and impact, then some amendment of its scope will be required. When this contract was awarded to Office for Urbanism (RFP 05-073, Regional Centre Urban Design Study) in March, 2006, it included within its ambitious work plan deliverables relating to downtown urban design analysis, to the protection of heritage resources, and to the production of three dimensional virtual modelling. It is in these three areas that the need for a scope amendment has been identified. It is noted that this scope expansion would apply only to the geographic area that is currently facing the greatest development pressure, namely downtown Halifax and the Spring Garden Road corridor. However the methodology and tools could then be adapted to apply to other areas of the Regional Centre and HRM-wide. The proposed amendment to the project scope is best thought of in the three parts mentioned above, namely:

1. Urban Design Analysis: a much more detailed block-by-block urban design analysis than previously anticipated is required. It must provide explicit direction on all possible future building massing, including heights and rudimentary architectural form (base, middle, top, upper-story setbacks, etc.) that will ensure beautiful and appropriate development while still allowing full creative expression. The design guidelines will also give direction on appropriate materials, signage, lighting, streetscape presence and landscaping/surface treatment. These urban design guidelines will be presented both graphically and in writing. That is, 3-dimensional diagrams will be presented as a "form-based code" and will be supported by textual descriptions. Once completed these guidelines will be ready for direct adoption into our plans and bylaws.
2. Heritage Resources: The urban design analysis will take into account protection of existing built heritage resources in a much more thorough way than previously planned. This will include an inventory of currently registered properties, as well as likely candidates for future registration. HRMbyDESIGN will review the existing criteria for heritage registration and will suggest possible enhancements. This project scope increase will also provide a downtown Heritage Management Strategy that will increase the stock of registered structures, and that will give direction the creation of heritage districts as discussed in the Regional Plan. This heritage work will require significant additional consultation, a great deal of detailed analysis, and the addition to the project team of a local heritage architect.
3. 3-D Virtual Model: To deliver the two project components above, the creation of a comprehensive computer-based 3-dimensional virtual model of the downtown/Spring Garden area is required. While this was a requirement in the original RFP, it is now

understood that this model must be much more complex than originally thought. Upon HRMbyDESIGN's completion, all development applicants will be required to provide a 3D model of their building proposal to plug into our model, and in this way the model will be continually updated as each new building is built or existing buildings are modified. The 3D model will be used by Council and Community Development staff to evaluate conformance to HRM's policies, urban design guidelines, height limitations, and heritage policies; to conduct sun and shadow analyses, and; to prepare animated drive-bys and fly-overs. The 3D model will also be available for use by any business unit, for which there is significant interest. The model will include all existing topographic features, roadways, curbs, sidewalks, form and massing of existing buildings, open spaces, water's edge, street trees, utility and light poles, and any other information deemed necessary to accurately conduct urban design analyses. This model is a capital investment that will pay dividends well beyond its cost, and it will give HRM the most important tool that other heritage-rich cities, such as Boston and San Francisco, use to such great effect.

Rationale for the Scope Expansion

The Urban Design Task Force and the project team appreciate that this request represents a significant expansion of scope and project budget. From the outset of HRMbyDESIGN, all involved were prepared for a high degree of complexity in resolving the current downtown development issues relating to heritage, height and architectural quality. However it was not until recently, at the project's approximate halfway point, that the depth of that complexity has become fully apparent. The Urban Design Task Force feels, as does HRM senior staff, that HRMbyDESIGN is one of the most important initiatives that HRM currently has underway, and there is strong feeling that to get it done right, this extra work is required.

This amendment of scope is an elaboration of project deliverables already in the current consultant's work plan. Our current consultant team is intimately familiar with our issues and is in fact largely responsible for framing them and identifying solutions. Through this work they have also created and nurtured numerous valuable personal relationships amongst key stakeholders; the scope expansion will build upon those relationships and upon the public consultation strategy already in use by the project.

This elaboration of the work plan will better advance the Regional Plan's goals around heritage, and around clarity and predictability in the development process. It will deliver tools essential to resolving existing tensions between the heritage and development communities, which will encourage new development and redevelopment thereby furthering the goals of the Economic Development Strategy. It is also noted that time is of the essence. The project is now approximately 50% complete and has excellent momentum that it would be best to maintain.

Funding

The work identified above as the “Urban Design Analysis” (Point #1) and “Heritage Resources” (Point #2) has already been identified in the existing Community Development capital budget. This proposal simply requests that the work be done now, as part of HRMbyDESIGN, to capitalize on synergies that have become apparent through the project work.

The work identified above as the “Three-Dimensional Virtual Model” (Point 3) has been recognized throughout the community as being critically important. As a result pledges for external funding have been secured by which staff expects that \$40,000 will be raised. Additional internal funding is sought for the remaining \$10,000, for a total 3-D model cost of \$50,000. Capital District has tentative funding commitments for as-yet unspecified amounts from the following external organizations, which are expected to total \$40,000.00:

- The Downtown Halifax Business Commission
- The Spring Garden Area Business Association
- The Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia
- The Greater Halifax Partnership
- The Urban Development Institute
- The Nova Scotia Association of Architects.

It is felt that the unanimous interest amongst these groups shown in this expansion of HRMbyDESIGN’s scope is a clear indication of the work’s importance.

The full cost to HRM of the proposed amended scope is as follows:

Original Contract Amount (Mar. 2006)	\$192,984.00 + HST =	\$199,601.42
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<u>Amended Scope (Feb. 2007):</u>		
Part 1 - Urban Design Analysis:	\$75,000.00 + net HST =	\$77,571.75
Part 2 - Heritage Resources:	\$74,000.00 + net HST =	\$76,537.46
Part 3 - Three-D Virtual Model:	\$50,000.00 + net HST =	\$51,714.50
SUBTOTAL	\$199,000.00 + net HST =	\$205,823.71
New Contract Value**	\$391,984.00 + net HST +	\$405,425.13
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Less External Funding for 3-D model	\$40,000.00 + net HST =	\$41,371.60
TOTAL (subject to external funding)	\$351,984.00 + net HST =	\$364,053.53

**This represents a 103% increase above the original contract value.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Funding in the amount of \$205,823.71 including net HST for the increase to contract (PO # 2070293311) is available from the following cost centres

CDV00738 - Centre Plans/Design

Cumulative Unspent Budget:	\$500,000.00
Less Increase to Contract	\$174,795.01 net HST incl. (\$55,000 Part 1 + \$74,000 Part 2 + 40,000 Part 3)
Uncommitted Budget:	\$366,576.59

C779-6919-Capital District Operating

Cumulative Unspent Budget:	\$122,500.00
Less Increase to Contract	\$ 20,685.80 net HST incl. (\$20,000 Part 1)
Uncommitted Budget:	\$101,814.20

Halifax Common Master Plan CPG00899

Cumulative Unspent Budget:	\$60,000.00
Less Increase to Contract	\$10,342.90 net HST incl. (\$10,000 Part 3)
Uncommitted Budget:	\$49,657.10

Budget availability has been confirmed by Financial Services.

The balance remaining in each of the foregoing accounts will be used to fund other projects contemplated in Business Plans approved by Council.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation. If approved, this report will increase the 06/07 Capital Budget.

ALTERNATIVES

Council could approve the recommendations with changes.

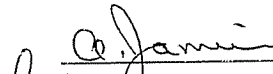
ATTACHMENTS

1. Statement of Urban Design Vision, Principles, and Campaigns for a Great City.
2. Terms of Reference for project scope increase, as issued to consultant team.
3. Consultants proposed workplan for project scope increase.

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/agenda.html> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

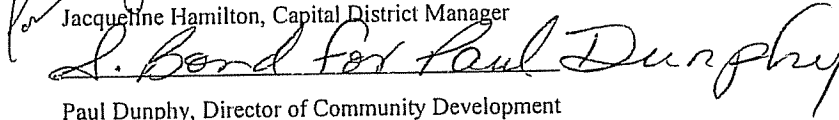
Report Prepared by: Andy Fillmore, Capital District Urban Design Project Manager, 490-6495

Report Approved by:



Jacqueline Hamilton, Capital District Manager

Report Approved by:



Paul Dunphy, Director of Community Development

Report Approved by:



Catherine Sanderson, Sr. Manager, Financial Services, 490-1562



1. Urban Design Vision Statement

The Urban Design Vision Statement provides a broad mission for the function, look and feel of the Regional Centre. It builds on the area's inherent assets and potential strengths to set the overarching intent and objective for urban design. The Urban Design Vision Statement was prepared in the context of Forum 1 and was derived from workshop outcomes. It is an important direction setting tool that is the basis for all subsequent urban design initiatives.

- The Regional Centre is the symbolic, historic and functional heart of the Halifax Regional Municipality. It is distinguished by its rich past as is evident in: its historic architecture, traditional neighbourhoods and national landmarks; its natural features as shaped by its grand parks, harbour, lakes, waterways and rolling hills; and its regional importance as an economic hub, capital district, educational centre, health focus and cultural heart.
- The Regional Centre will build on its distinctions and assets to nurture an urban context that enhances quality of life, enriches urban living and becomes a global destination.
- The Regional Centre will assert and affirm a legible and ordered urban structure that will reinforce the best qualities and characteristics of its unique neighbourhoods and districts.
- The Regional Centre's cultural vitality is rooted in its diverse population and accordingly it will strive to be an open, safe, affordable, accessible and welcoming place to people of all walks of life.
- The Regional Centre's vibrancy, animation and economic health will be strengthened through the cultivation of a compact, civic inspired and human-scaled urban fabric of streets, blocks and buildings.

2. Guiding Principles

The Guiding Principles for Urban Design give direction to the broad cross-section of components that are the building blocks of the city and that work in concert to establish the function and the "look" and "feel" of the Regional Centre. The principles, prepared collaboratively by workshop participants, were a central focus and outcome of Forum One.

These principles will guide decision-making according to their respective themes. They reinforce the Vision Statement and are the ‘backbone’ to the Campaigns for a Great City. Although these principles apply broadly across the Regional Centre, they can be further articulated and tailored to local area conditions and objectives when Neighbourhood or District Urban Design Guidelines are prepared.

1. Sustainable
 - Design, plan and build with respect for economic, environmental, social and cultural sustainability.
 - Create resilient communities that adapt to evolving opportunities and needs.
2. High Quality
 - New development should be of high quality and compatible with other high quality developments.
 - Promote high quality architecture and urban design that respects great heritage resources, including neighbourhoods.
3. Heritage and Culture
 - Heritage resources, including heritage districts, buildings, landscapes and cultural heritage, should be recognized, used, protected and enhanced.
 - Ensure lasting legacies (buildings, open spaces and streets) are maintained, and new ones are created.
4. Movement
 - Integrate land use planning with transportation planning in such a way that alternatives to driving become an easy choice. Transportation options should be efficient, pleasant and readily available.
 - All streets should present an inviting barrier-free environment that considers the comfort, convenience, safety and visual interest of pedestrians.
 - The Regional Centre, in all ways, should be conducive to, and supportive of, active transportation movement. It should provide people with choices that are viable alternatives to driving.
5. Complete Neighbourhoods
 - Support safe, mixed-use and diverse neighbourhoods, including:
 - Affordable housing and a variety of tenures;
 - Residential, commercial, employment uses; and
 - Visually and physically accessible amenity space, including schools and parks, within walking distance.
 - Ensure the necessary public services and amenities to support quality of life, cohesive communities and creative places.
6. Growth and Change
 - Ensure that new developments respond to the natural, cultural, historical, and urban character of their context.

- Direct change and intensification to areas that will benefit from growth.
 - Every new building should contribute to the betterment of the public realm.
 - Design should support accessibility, active transportation and transit (i.e. streets, land uses, neighbourhoods, open spaces, circulation systems).
7. Process
- Foster a culture of support for the building/ construction of quality urban design.
 - Recognize and reward design excellence.
 - Involve neighbourhood communities in local planning matters.
 - Maintain opportunities for public participation in the implementation of HRM by Design.
 - Foster predictable outcomes that have been tested to be achievable and fair.
8. Connected
- Prominent views to prominent natural and built features should be recognized, protected and enhanced.
 - Enhance safe and appealing connections within the Regional Centre including to and from the waterfront, open spaces and neighbourhoods.

3. Five Campaigns for a Great City

The urban design approach for bringing the Vision Statement to fruition is organized around five key “Campaigns for a Great City”. These Campaigns serve as the broad yet tangible objectives for shaping future growth in a manner and character that is desired for the Region Centre. These Campaigns are the themes that emerge from the Guiding Principles and became evident in the Urban Design Framework for the Regional Centre.

As the historic, cultural and economic heart of the Halifax Regional Municipality, the urban quality and character of the Regional Centre touches the lives of most residents and makes the greatest impression on the image of this “city” to visitors. Hence, in many ways, these Campaigns are not just about the Regional Centre, they are also relevant and meaningful to the entire urban area and the communities that comprise the Halifax Regional Municipality – a potential next Great City.

1. A SUSTAINABLE CITY

“We thrive and survive on planet earth as a single human family. And one of our main responsibilities is to leave to successor generations a sustainable future.”

-UN Secretary-General, Kofi A. Annan

Sustainability acknowledges the interrelationship of the economic, social and environmental aspects of the human and non-human environments, and seeks to ensure the best outcomes for human and natural environments into the indefinite future. Sustainable development is about configuring urban areas and human activity in a way that citizens and economies are best able to meet their needs and achieve their greatest potential in the present-day, without compromising that ability of future generations to also meet their own needs and realize their full potential.

The Regional Municipal Planning Strategy seeks to guide urban growth in the Halifax Regional Municipality in a manner that achieves sustainable objectives. By directing growth to existing urban areas, the Plan sets in motion a strategy to make more efficient use of existing infrastructure and public services; encourage active transportation choices including transit; strengthen the viability of existing commercial centres; and, discourage the encroachment of urban sprawl into surrounding natural and rural areas.

Fundamental to the success of intensified growth in the Regional Centre is an urban design strategy that provides a coherent framework to guide development in a manner that reinforces the Region's sustainable planning objectives. Sustained economic, social and environmental health should be an inherent outcome of a comprehensively considered urban design strategy where the all the fundamental building blocks of the city - neighbourhoods, streets, open spaces and buildings - are coordinated, configured and designed to reinforce sustainable land use, transportation and built relationships and patterns.

These sustainable relationships and patterns operate at all scales of urban design, whether in the design of healthy neighbourhoods that offer the stability, housing choices, services and amenities to support cohesive and walkable communities; or in the design of intensified mixed-use centres that will enable the expansion of a viable and well used transit network; or in the design of inviting streets that encourage a pedestrian culture and strengthen the vitality of existing retail areas; or in the design of buildings that are constructed for permanence, adaptability and energy efficiency. These and many more urban design strategies should work in concert to ensure a sustainable city with enduring benefits.

2. A CITY OF LIVABLE AND COMPLETE NEIGHBOURHOODS

"In a neighbourhood, everything that is needed is there and everything that is there is needed". -Lewis Mumford

Ensuring a high quality of life for existing and future residents is about creating identifiable neighbourhoods that are walkable and appealing which provide the necessary services and amenities to support a sense of community. Complete neighbourhoods accommodate a diverse population, offer places to gather, and ensure schools and transit are within waking distance.

An urban design strategy should seek to maintain and enhance existing healthy and stable neighbourhoods. Growth and development in these areas should fit harmoniously by reinforcing the prevailing scale and built character of the neighbourhood.

Many neighbourhoods in the Regional Centre have experienced a significant decline in population and quality of life over the last fifty years. Well-designed residential intensification affords the only likely opportunity to revitalize these areas. Re-populating and intensifying the Regional Centre will provide the critical density necessary for the vitality of all neighbourhoods, whereby retail streets, transit, schools and other essential amenities and services remain viable.

3. A DISTINCT AND UNIQUE CITY

"We make our buildings and afterwards they make us. They regulate the course of our lives." -Winston Churchill

The Regional Centre has an exceptional existing urban context that is distinct and unique in its own right. The defining natural assets include the topography, the harbour, and the lakes. This informs the unique morphological characteristics of the Regional Centre and is evident in the historic road, block and building patterns.

This underlay is a cultural urban tapestry that is accentuated by the Citadel, both Commons, Point Pleasant Park, the commercial and military port and one of Canada's most outstanding assemblages of heritage buildings and structures. It is further enriched by the sometimes less evident but significant history of the countless people and events that have shaped this place, including the Halifax Explosion and Africville.

An urban design strategy for the Regional Centre should not only pay homage to these distinctions, it must enhance and build on them, evolving the city to become a contemporary urban centre and capital district with a continued unique sense of place -- the success of both are intrinsically linked.

In doing so, seemingly incompatible values can coexist harmoniously with good urban design. Heritage will be protected because of its inherent value to new development. New buildings will be designed with intentions of becoming future heritage. The functioning port will become a source for thriving districts and provide the opportunity for universities and institutions to revitalize neighbourhoods and retail streets.

4. A CITY OF VIBRANT AND EXCITING PLACES

"A good city is like a good party. People don't want to leave early." -Jan Gehl

Being a great city is as much about culture, arts, night life, and a diverse social demographic, as it is about nice neighbourhoods and a healthy economy. Not only must a city accommodate these aspects, it must provide an infrastructure to nurture and cultivate them. These characteristics enhance a city's distinction; assist in retaining a young, creative and talented workforce; and are the basis of tourism and economic development.

An urban design strategy for the Regional Centre should reinforce the vitality of both downtowns by continuing to direct concentrations of civic and cultural attractions to these areas; by improving the quality of the civic infrastructure; and most importantly, through a targeted strategy of residential intensification. The best and most enduring urban destinations are living and breathing communities that are dense with activity and people at all hours and seasons – a community that theme parks, museums, stadiums and casinos alone cannot build.

There are many existing areas and potential opportunities to create vibrant and exciting places at the community-wide or neighbourhood level. More traditional retail streets such as Spring Garden Road, or neighbourhood centers such as that in Hydrostone, are examples of existing urban “focal areas” where there is a vibrant mix of uses, public amenities and places for people to meet - be it a cafe or civic open space.

The urban design strategy should seek to identify and reinforce vibrant areas across the Regional Centre. This strategy can begin to cultivate the transformation of unimaginable places such as Wyse Road and all the shopping malls along the periphery into areas that can become as vibrant and exciting as Spring Garden Road.

5. A BEAUTIFUL CITY

“When I'm working on a problem, I never think about beauty. I think only how to solve the problem. But when I am finished, if the solution is not beautiful, I know it is wrong.” -Buckminster Fuller

An enviable natural setting, great historic architecture and protected unobstructed views alone do not make for a beautiful city. Attractive and appealing spaces and buildings that are enjoyed by all citizens that live and work in this city are fundamental to good urban design.

A city designed with splendid civic spaces, great streets and inspiring architecture can lift spirits, generate civic pride, create economic value and resonate with visitors. Although there are parts of the Regional Centre that are beautiful places, there are many others that leave much to be desired. As buildings and spaces of previous eras clearly demonstrate, this city has a proud history of civic-inspired design. The public and private sector and all citizens have a role and civic

obligation to work towards creating a beautiful city.

Striving for a beautiful city requires recognizing streets as significant public open spaces and the primary way in which we experience and formulate our impression of urban places. Correspondingly, an urban design strategy for the Regional Centre should focus on the quality of streetscapes and the manner in which buildings frame and interact with these public spaces.

Streetscapes should provide a coherent and cohesive experience that balances all modes of movement, reinforces retail streets, ensures sun penetration, and reinforces visual and physical connections to important civic destinations.

Alongside great streets are tremendous opportunities to enhance the environmental quality and attractiveness of the Regional Centre. The urban design strategy should also be about identifying visually prominent sites and gateways for public art and landmark architecture; reinforcing continuity by filling in “gaps” in the urban fabric; and, creating new public spaces at a variety of scales and for all interests.

Buildings, like streets, have civic obligations to contribute to the quality of the public realm which they frame. The urban design strategy should ensure new buildings are appropriately designed and well “mannered” with respect to their fit in context; their relationship to heritage and adjacent properties; and their impact on the pedestrian environment. These strategies, among others, work in concert to create a liveable and beautiful city.

End.



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MEMORANDUM

TO: Jennifer Keesmaat & Harold Madi, Principals,
Office for Urbanism

CC: Paul Dunphy, Director, Community Development
Jacqueline Hamilton, Manager, Capital District
Austin French, Manager, Planning Applications
Dale Godsoe, Chair, HRM Urban Design Task Force

FROM: Andy Fillmore, Capital District Project Manager, Urban Design

DATE: 13 February, 2007

SUBJECT: **Expansion of Scope - HRMbyDESIGN**

Jen and Harold,

As you know, the HRMbyDESIGN project team, which includes the consulting team, the Urban Design Task Force, and the HRM staff Steering Committee, has identified the immediate need to enhance the project deliverables relating to the downtown core and the Spring Garden Road area, specifically as they pertain to built heritage protection and the interrelated issues of contemporary architecture and tall buildings. At a recent meeting of senior Community Development staff (Paul Dunphy, Austin French, Jacqueline Hamilton and me) the following brief for the expanded project scope was developed:

1. Geographic Limit of Scope Increase: The project scope expansion will be geographically limited to downtown Halifax, which for these purposes includes the Spring Garden Road area. The actual boundary line for this area will be established in response to the work as it unfolds. It is expected that within this boundary, character sub-areas will recommend themselves. The exact number is not predetermined, nor are boundaries; such information will emerge from consultation and from discussions with HRM staff. Certain sub-areas have recently been studied in detail and, barring compelling reasons for modification, will be excluded from the HRMbyDESIGN scope. These are the Barrington Street Conservation District, the study area for the recently completed Grand Parade/Province House Public Lands Plans, and the study area for the recently completed Spring Garden/Queen Street Public Lands Plan.
 2. Urban Design Analysis: Fundamental to this work in the downtown core is a block-by-block urban design analysis that must provide explicit direction on all possible future building massing, including heights and rudimentary form (base, middle, top, stepbacks, etc.). Once completed these guidelines should be ready for adoption into our plans and bylaws. The design guidelines should also discuss appropriate materials, signage, lighting, streetscape presence and landscaping/surface treatment. These urban design guidelines should be presented both graphically and in writing. That is, 3D diagrams will be presented as a "form-based code" and will be supported by textual descriptions. For more detail on the 3D model please see point #4 below.
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Attachment #2

3. Heritage Resource: The urban design analysis must thoroughly take into account protection of existing built heritage resources. This should include an inventory of currently registered properties, (much of which already exists) as well as likely candidates for future registration. HRM currently has in place criteria for heritage registration, although there is thought that they could be improved by supplementing them with so-called “values-based” criteria that takes into account community sentiment. Recommendations for other amendments that emerge should also be made. What is seen as currently missing in HRM, and what this project should provide, is clarity in the *process* of registration. This process could be captured in a Heritage Management Plan. Because this effort must be focused on the primary deliverable (urban design guidelines), this heritage work will be conducted from the ground-up, rather from a high level of theory working down. The heritage work will require the addition to the consultant team of a local heritage architect who will be in continuous contact with the Office for Urbanism, and who will conduct the day-to-heritage business of the project in HRM.
4. 3-D Virtual Model: This expanded project scope will necessitate the creation of a comprehensive 3D computer-based virtual model of the downtown/Spring Garden area. This model will be used by the HRMbyDESIGN project team in the delivery of the project, and after project completion it will be a critical tool for the evaluation of future development applications. The following criteria will apply to the model:
 - ▶ whoever produces the model must work very closely with the Office for Urbanism. The model is a tool to get the project completed.
 - ▶ it will not be a “rendered model,” rather it will be a simple “line drawing” model;
 - ▶ it must incorporate, at a high degree of accuracy, all existing topographic features, terrain elevations, roadways, curbs, sidewalks, form and massing of existing buildings, open spaces, water’s edge, street trees, utility and light poles, and any other information deemed necessary to accurately depict streetscapes and conduct urban design analyses;
 - ▶ the model will be used as the base for the “form-based code” being developed by the project.
 - ▶ at the conclusion of HRMbyDESIGN this model will be actively used by HRM staff and development applications. Therefore it must be .dwg based, and be manipulatable/editable in AutoCAD, such that existing buildings can be modified and new buildings can easily be added as they are built and;
 - ▶ it must be possible to use the model to conduct sun and shadow analyses, and drive-thru/fly-over animations, and;
 - ▶ it may include other traits determined to be necessary during the course of the study.
5. To the greatest extent possible this expansion of scope should not interfere with established project time lines. However if it becomes clear that the project will become rushed to the point that there would be a negative impact on the deliverables, then the project schedule will be adjusted accordingly.

Please provide a proposed workplan and budget as soon as possible. It would be helpful if the 3D modeling piece was broken out as a separate line item in the budget.

With great thanks,

Andy Fillmore
Capital District Project Manager, Urban Design

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Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5

February 16, 2007

To: Andy Fillmore, HRM Urban Design Project Manager:

From: Office for Urbanism

Subject: HRM by Design Expansion of Project Scope

As per your request, Office for Urbanism is pleased to provide you with a proposed work plan and the tasks which will be undertaken for the expansion to the project scope for HRM by Design.

The following work plan tasks allocate the following amounts including all disbursements and fees, exclusive of taxes as follows:

Urban Design Analysis:	\$75,000
Heritage Resources:	\$74,000
Three-Dimensional Virtual Model:	\$50,000

These fees are based on the following tasks and deliverables:

PHASE 1: Downtown Heritage and Urban Design Background and Analysis

Background review and data collection

heritage related and downtown related plans studies, base mapping etc.

Base mapping and overlaying

Preparing more detailed base mapping for the downtown area and overlaying concurrent plans, the Regional Centre Urban design Framework and other applicable policies and guidelines, heritage areas etc.

Existing Conditions 3D Modeling

A 3D massing model of the Downtown study area including the terrain and shoreline, streets, open spaces, and massing of existing buildings (colour coded to identify listed, public and proposed buildings). This will be on-going to be completed in time for Forum 4.

Photographic Survey (trip for two support)

Block by block elevation photographs to be used in the modeling, heritage assessment, urban design and hard/soft site analysis. To be completed in time for the Heritage Resource Analysis and Assessment.

Prepare for Stakeholder Interviews

Stakeholder Interviews (trip for 2 partners)

Interviews with identified stakeholders to identify downtown related heritage issues and opportunities including the defining of 'value-based' criteria for supplementing the existing selection criteria for identifying candidates for future heritage registration.

Prepare Summaries of Stakeholder Interviews

Phase 2: Downtown Heritage and Urban Design Framework

Prepare and Confirm Criteria for Heritage Assessment

Following interviews, prepare a complete criteria incorporating a 'value-based' approach for assessing heritage resources including the identification of additional resources for future registration. This may require some iteration before final agreement on the assessment criteria.

Heritage Resource Analysis and Assessment:

Heritage resources in the Downtown area including existing and potential registration will be identified utilizing the block-by-block photographic survey and on-site surveying. Each resource will be assessed according to the approved upon criteria to ensure consistency and a transparent standard for analysis.

Heritage Resource and Urban Design Analysis Mapping

Identified resources will be mapped and identified according to approved upon criteria. This mapping will be utilized in the workshop and in the preparation of the Downtown Urban Design Framework, as well as providing a foundation for future heritage registration and district studies. In addition, the identification of heritage resources will assist in determining all potential 'soft' sites where future development can be anticipated and which may require the preparation of site-specific building envelopes.

Prepare for Management & Strategies Workshop

Heritage Management & Strategies Workshop

An additional day of workshops will be added to Forum 3 to identify strategies for addressing heritage in the Downtown so as to inform the subsequent workshops in Forum 4 where urban design in the Downtown will be addressed more comprehensively. Questions that may be addressed include:

- What is the role, function and value of heritage resources?
- What are the priorities for heritage?
- What are the heritage districts boundaries and how are they to be managed?
- What constitutes harmonious and compatible new development?
- What are the applicable standards, guidelines, benchmarks, parameters etc.?

Prepare Draft Heritage Strategies and Guidelines

Further refinement of strategies for heritage resources will be prepared including applicable guidelines. This will be an important framework to guide decision-making in the Forum 4 workshops so as to ensure clarity of intentions for how heritage ought to be dealt with in the preparation of all other urban design strategies and guidelines.

Prepare for Forum 4

Forum 4 -- Downtown Urban Design Framework (trip for 3 partners, 2 associates and 2 support)

The Forum will begin with presentations specific to the Downtown and the outcomes of the heritage analysis. With heritage strategies and guidelines defined and with the support of the 3D model of the existing downtown, the workshops will focus on preparing more area-specific urban design principles, strategies and guidelines. Aspects to be address include:

- Precincts and/or character areas
- New and improved open spaces
- Streetscaping, signage, build-to-lines and street wall conditions
- Approaches to parking siting and design
- Built form massing and height for blocks and/or specific sites

The 3D model may be utilized in the workshop by setting up a computer station. This may provide for an effective tool for testing massing options on-site.

Refine Downtown Urban Design Framework and prepare Draft Downtown Urban Design Guidelines

Following the direction provided in Forum 4, the urban design framework including urban design guidelines for the public realm and for built form in general will be refined and developed. This will consolidate all work to-date to form the basis of area-specific Urban Design Guidelines for the Downtown, Spring Garden and Cornwallis Park districts. This process and outcome will also serve as a template for area-specific urban design studies for other neighbourhood and districts in the HRM.

Phase 3: Implementation

Prepare and Test a draft Downtown Development Framework for Implementation

As a supplement to the Urban Design Guidelines will be the preparation of a Development Framework document that will provide more site-specific guidance to development including recommendations for a new or amended policy framework. Approved upon key 'soft' sites that can anticipate new development will be subject to site-specific building envelopes that are consistent with the area-specific urban design guidelines and that are the basis of a 'form-based' code that may be implemented as a binding mechanism. This task will likely involve several iterations where massing options are explored and tested before they are finalized. The implementation will also explore how the development permissions inherent to a 'form-based' code ought to be tied to achieving other urban design and planning objectives.

Consolidate with HRMbyDesign

The draft Urban Design Guidelines for the three districts, including the Development Framework will be presented and discussed in the context of Forum 5 dealing with implementation. At this point the HRMbyDesign process carries on as originally defined with an open house following Forum 5 to present the draft and a final submission of the study by December 2007

Prepare final District Urban Design Guidelines and Development Framework documents

The final materials will be prepared as autonomous stand-alone documents.

Based on process to-date we need to factor into this work plan and budget the following additional expenses:

- Bi-monthly meetings with the UDTF
- 4 presentations to the COW
- additional expenses relating to panels and preparation of presentation materials