

# White Paper

## Packaging Chapter 6: A Backgrounder for the Centre Plan Project

**Prepared by:**

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## Executive Summary

The Regional Plan Vision for Halifax Regional Municipality is to enhance our quality of life by fostering the growth of healthy and vibrant communities, a strong and diverse economy, and sustainable environment. In our planning work at Halifax Regional Municipality we seek to address the needs and views of all sectors, recognizing the diversity of citizens, community and geography. This short white paper is intended to introduce the reader to the Regional Centre in Halifax Regional Municipality and provide a brief history of our efforts to unify policy within that geography.

### A Long Standing Desire to Recognize the Regional Centre

With the adoption of the 1<sup>st</sup> Regional Plan in 2006 municipal staff were set on the path to create an administrative boundary for the Regional Centre and complete an Urban Design Study to guide future growth in the Regional Centre.

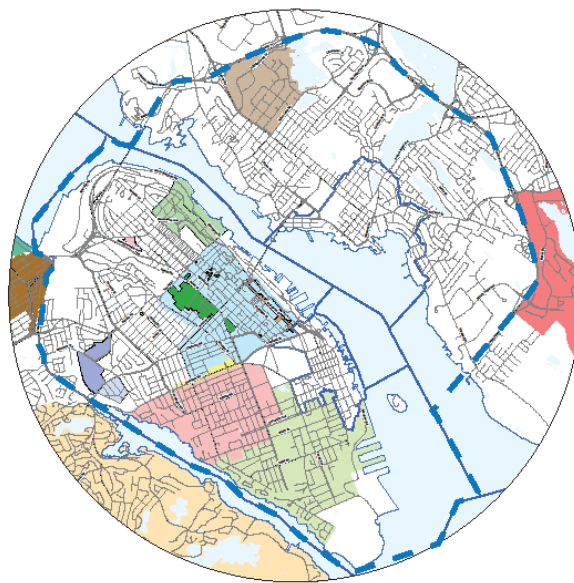


Figure 1 - The Regional Centre, existing Administrative Boundaries

This direction, including the conception of the HRMbyDesign process and subsequent policy work, has shaped positive and certain change in the Downtown area. Residential development and commercial rehabilitation / development have reintroduced construction cranes to the Downtown while protecting the character of the Barrington Street Heritage Conservation District.

Following from the successful Downtown Plan staff were directed by Regional Council in 2011 to initiate a Centre Plan for the entire Regional Centre area. The intent was to complete a Neighbourhood Greenprint and create a new Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning

Strategy and Land Use By-law to replace the Municipal Planning Strategies and Land Use By-laws for Halifax and Dartmouth within the Regional Centre.

Efforts by staff to broaden the applicability of new planning tools and unify policy have been ambitious but - due to a multitude of circumstances – they have not resulted in the full completion of the Neighbourhood Greenprint, or the adoption of a new Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy, or adoption of a new Regional Centre Land Use By-Law.

Development has continued to proceed in the context of site specific plan amendments, carrying forward uncertainty with respect to growth and development in the Regional Centre.

### **The 2014 Regional Plan**

Armed with the renewed focus and community direction provided in the 2014 Regional Plan municipal staff have worked to define a Centre Plan project that can achieve many of the outcomes suggested as being imperative to the success of the Region while remaining true to the Regional Centre Vision and Guiding Principles.

This white paper aims to explain the process that has led to the current definition of the Centre Plan while providing a summary of the work completed to date on the project, stretching back to the original Urban Design Study completed in 2007. It will provide the reader with an understanding of how the Regional Plan will be used a guide through the process of developing a new Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy for the Regional Centre.

## Defining the Regional Centre

The Regional Centre is defined as the urban core of the Halifax Regional Municipality. It is composed of the Halifax Peninsula and Dartmouth within the Circumferential Highway on either side of Halifax Harbour, and has a total land area of 33 square kilometres.

The Regional Centre is the focus of commerce, business, government, health care, post-secondary education, and cultural and entertainment sectors for not only HRM, but for the entire Atlantic Region. As the seat of government for both the Province of Nova Scotia and Halifax Regional Municipality, the Regional Centre contains a large concentration of provincial and municipal government departments. From a provincial / institutional perspective, it possesses the highest concentration of post-secondary educational institutions in Atlantic Canada, and is a major healthcare referral center for the Atlantic Region. In addition, several regional offices of the Government of Canada are located in the Regional Centre, which is also home to the Maritime Forces Atlantic fleet of the Royal Canadian Navy, and various related facilities of the Department of National Defence.

From a business perspective, the Regional Centre contains important cargo handling facilities for the Port of Halifax and is home to the Halifax Shipyard. The Regional Centre also contains a large concentration of head offices and regional offices for both local and multinational firms. Important sectors represented include financial, banking, insurance, legal and engineering consulting services. Finally, the Regional Centre also contains a substantial portion of the Municipality's hospitality industry and retail base. The clustering of economic activity facilitates creativity, exchange of ideas, ease of business transactions and spin-off activities.

From a cultural perspective, the Regional Centre is home to important museums and art galleries, television, radio and internet media production facilities, theatrical and music performance venues, and artist studios. The Regional Centre also contains various heritage resources, including registered heritage buildings, National Historic Sites, and major regional parks and open spaces. Beyond its other roles, the Regional Centre is also an important center of residential concentration within the Municipality. The 2011 Census of Canada identified a residential population of 94,330 people, which represents a population density of 35 persons per square kilometre. The residential population is distributed across a variety of unique residential and mixed use neighbourhoods.

## Need for a Unique Geography

The Regional Centre is currently segmented into no less than four Secondary Municipal Planning Strategies (SMPS) areas with four accompanying Land Use By-Laws (LUB). The planning documents, with the exception of those for Downtown Halifax, are in need of significant analysis and consideration to ensure that they are enabling the goals of the Regional Plan and the community.

Some identified issues with the current MPSs and LUBs include:

- Many of the existing policies and regulations do a poor job in protecting the special qualities of unique neighbourhoods;
- Some of the current policies and regulations present barriers to acceptable forms of development, thus impeding growth and densification of the Regional Centre; and,
- The lack of a standardized approach among the various MPSs and LUBs often results in confusion within the development community, which can lead to potential project delays and added costs.
- With the exception of the Downtown Planning documents, the plan policies in force in the Regional Centre date back to the late 1970s and have not benefitted from regular “housekeeping” or review.
- Inconsistency and duplication in the policies due to pre-amalgamation origins leads to confusion in implementation.

The notion that these issues could be resolved through amalgamation of planning policy areas was introduced in the 2006 Regional Plan. The need remains today and though much work has been completed by staff and the community to date, significant efforts are in line to allow for the creation of the Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy for the Regional Centre.

## Chapter 6 in the 2014 Regional Plan

The Regional Centre has a unique Vision and set of Guiding Principles for development and growth. These important strategic ‘trail markers’ for Planning staff are further supported by additional objectives in the Regional Plan, including:

- Adopt a Regional Centre Plan which achieves the vision statement and guiding principles endorsed by Regional Council.
- Adopt heritage plans and programs that further preserve and enhance the viability of heritage properties, streetscapes, and districts.

- Prepare capital and operating expenditure programs that enhance development within the Regional Centre, with emphasis of resources on downtown Halifax and Dartmouth, and take advantage of opportunities to strategically leverage other public and private sector investments.
- Create financial and regulatory incentives to stimulate desired growth.

The Regional Municipal Planning Strategy also provides policies in order that HRM, in cooperation with senior levels of government, citizens and stakeholders, can support and strengthen the critical economic function of the Regional Centre by:

- Supporting key economic drivers;
- Investing in public infrastructure to attract businesses and residents to the area;
- Striving to ensure that new development complements the unique urban fabric of the Regional Centre; and,
- Establishing an efficient and effective way to move people and goods within and to the Regional Centre.

This direction in the Regional Plan is augmented by the inclusion of specific and strong reference to integration with various other Regional and Sub-Regional plans. Specific reference is made to the Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan, the Green Network Plan, the Economic Strategy, the Transportation and Demand Management Plan, the Active Transportation Plan, the Transit Services Plan, the Regional Parking Strategy, and the Road Networks Priorities Plan.

## Direction

The effect of this direction is to ensure that the Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy (the Centre Plan) is a **Comprehensive Plan**. This is a shift from the origins of the project within the Regional Centre Urban Design Framework. In this framework - and subsequent definitions of scope prior to the 2014 Regional Plan - the Centre Plan had been conceived as an **Urban Design Plan**.

Urban Design Plans traditionally are prepared for area specific needs and are created with relatively short time frames. Through the work of an interdisciplinary team these plan are created to consider existing development, proposed development, infrastructure, streets, open spaces, and sustainable development principles and lead to a framework that helps the community, developers, and policy makers understand the relationship between built form, the public realm, and community needs for open space.

A Comprehensive Plan addresses a broad range of interrelated topics in a unified way for a large geographic area. These plans are completed with the assistance of a larger community and in the context of a wider region. Comprehensive plans allow municipalities to understand



the bigger picture affecting an area, they provide guidance to the development community, they help establish a basis of evidence based practice in land use decision making, and they can build an informed constituency.

Both of these types of plans require an incredible knowledge of the context in the area being planned for and require significant background study and preparation before the drafting of a policy set for public consumption and eventually approval. We are fortunate to have the components of this background already completed based on work since implementation of the 2006 Regional Plan.

In making this adjustment from an Urban Design approach to a Comprehensive Plan approach there is an opportunity to create a wonderful plan for our Regional Centre. There has been a long held desire for Halifax to be at the leading edge of Canadian urbanism and in many respects we are very much have been there for the past decade. The adoption of form based code in the Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy, the use of density bonusing in Land Use By-Laws, and the planning for removal of Urban Renewal era infrastructure (Cogswell Interchange) all represent unique implementation of planning tools for mid-sized Canadian municipalities.

The identification of the Centre Plan as a Comprehensive Plan with underpinnings based on the Urban Design Framework for the Regional Centre will be a unique opportunity to further this progress while achieving the goals set forth in the Regional Plan and in earlier planning exercises for the Regional Centre.

## The Centre Plan

The Centre Plan will be a comprehensive plan with a deep understanding of the Urban Design Framework for the Regional Centre. The project will work to define policies that will fit within the Guiding Principles and achieve a shared understanding of the future for the Regional Centre among Regional Council, the community, developers, institutions, and other interested parties.

### Guiding Principles

The broad guiding principles will serve as a framework for the outputs of the Centre Plan. The eight guiding principles are as follows (from the Regional Plan):

Principle	Notes	Related Elements of the Centre Plan
1. Sustainable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Design, plan and build with respect for economic, environmental, social and cultural sustainability.</li><li>Create resilient communities that adapt to evolving opportunities and needs.</li></ul>	Community, Environmental, Cultural, Land Use, Implementation
2. High Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>New development should be of high quality and compatible with other high quality developments.</li><li>Promote high quality architecture and urban design that respects great heritage resources, including neighbourhoods.</li></ul>	Urban Design, Community, Housing, Land Use, Implementation
3. Heritage & Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Heritage resources, including heritage districts, buildings, landscapes and cultural heritage, should be recognized, used, protected and enhanced.</li><li>Ensure lasting legacies (buildings, open spaces and streets) are maintained, and new ones are created.</li></ul>	Heritage, Community, Land Use, Implementation

Guiding Principles, continued ...

Principle	Notes	Related Elements of the Plan
4. Movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 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.</li> <li>▪ All streets should present an inviting barrier-free environment that considers the comfort, convenience, safety and visual interest of pedestrians.</li> <li>▪ 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.</li> </ul>	Transportation, Streets, Implementation
5. Complete Neighbourhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 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.</li> <li>▪ Ensure the necessary public services and amenities to support quality of life, cohesive communities and creative places.</li> </ul>	Land Use, Housing, Public Realm, Implementation

Guiding Principles, continued ...

Principle	Notes	Related Elements of the Plan
6. Growth & Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure that new developments respond to the natural, cultural, historical, and urban character of their context.</li> <li>▪ Direct change and intensification to areas that will benefit from growth.</li> <li>▪ Every new building should contribute to the betterment of the public realm.</li> <li>▪ Design should support accessibility, active transportation and transit.</li> </ul>	Urban Design, Heritage, Infrastructure, Public Realm, Transportation, Implementation
7. Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Foster a culture of support for the building/ construction of quality urban design.</li> <li>▪ Recognize and reward design excellence.</li> <li>▪ Involve neighbourhood communities in local planning matters.</li> <li>▪ Maintain opportunities for public participation.</li> <li>▪ Foster predictable outcomes that have been tested to be achievable and fair.</li> </ul>	Urban Design, Community, Implementation
8. Connected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prominent views to prominent natural and built features should be recognized, protected and enhanced</li> <li>▪ Enhance safe and appealing connections within the Regional Centre including to and from the waterfront, open spaces and neighbourhoods.</li> </ul>	Public Realm, Streets, Urban Design, Implementation

The elements of the Centre Plan provided in describing the Guiding Principles give a sense of the expected delineation of the comprehensive plan and the themes along which the Centre Plan will be aligned.

### **The Community Design Advisory Committee**

In October of 2014 the Community Design Advisory Committee (CDAC) was reengaged after a brief hiatus following the completion of their efforts on the 5 year review of the Regional Plan. CDAC's mandate is to report Project progress to the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee of Regional Council at key milestones, and it makes ongoing recommendations to staff regarding areas of strategic importance to the development and implementation of the Centre Plan project. The CDAC will provide a key communication and working link between Regional Council and the community, and will advise on the delivery of a public participation program for the Centre Plan.

The CDAC website can be found within the halifax.ca website at the following address:  
<http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/communitydesignadvisorycommittee.php>

### **Public Consultation**

In addition to the input from CDAC, direct community participation will occur throughout the project. A complete report of the Engagement Strategy for the Centre Plan can be found through the Community Design Advisory Committee public website. That website also contains record of meetings where periodic reports on progress are provided to the Community Design Advisory Committee.

The first step of the Engagement Strategy has been incredibly fruitful in preparing this white paper and supporting the assembly of the project plan and the Urban Design team within the Municipality.

## Progress to 2015

As detailed in previous sections, significant work has been completed by municipal staff toward the creation of a unified direction for the Regional Centre. The Centre Plan will draw significantly on previously completed studies and ongoing technical investigations into the current state of the Regional Centre.

In 2007 work was initiated on a Regional Centre Urban Design Study that produced an Urban Design Framework for the Regional Centre as well as the Design Guideline work that would eventually inform the development of the current Downtown Halifax Land Use By-Law Schedule S-1 (Design Manual). The Framework provides valuable understanding of the structure of the Regional Centre.

Following from the development and approval of the Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy significant effort was put into the development of a Greenprint for the Regional Centre that was, at its core, an attempt to complete an Urban Design Plan for the entire area. Work on this project through to 2011 provides substantial input to the development of the Centre Plan through the extensive development of Built Form Guidelines, Urban Structure Analysis, Streets Framework, and Implementation plans for Urban Design objectives.

Pressures on the project in 2012 led municipal staff to move forward with an advanced, development focused initiative that would allow for better development applications process and outcomes in 11 commercial “corridors” within the Regional Centre. The work to prepare for changes in these corridors has furthered staff understanding of applicability of Built Form Guidelines and Policy outside of the Downtown plan area. Additionally, successful efforts were made in parallel with the corridors work to alter the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter to allow for the use of necessary tools such as Design Guidelines, Design Review, Density Bonusing and Site Plan Approval throughout the Centre Plan area.

While working on the Regional Plan 5 Year Review in 2013 staff commissioned a study quantifying the Costs and Benefits of Alternative Growth Scenarios. This study allocated residential growth in HRM consistent with four prescribed scenarios and the effects of such allocations on the use and requirement for public and private services within the region. The final report includes economic and environmental analysis of the impacts of alternative growth scenarios as well as a high level health impact assessment. This helped inform the goals for population growth within the Regional Centre.

In 2014 the Urban Design Team shifted focus in response to the new Regional Plan. The specific direction to include a more comprehensive focus has led to significant policy and research that has helped situate the Centre Plan among ongoing policy and planning work within the Municipality. The following projects have been undertaken by the Urban Design Team or other departments within the municipality are underway (or complete) as of June 2015:

1. Local Piped Service Capacity Issues

It makes sense to concentrate development in areas where there is existing municipal infrastructure. However, in some cases, particularly on the Peninsula, local sanitary sewer and combined sanitary and storm water pipes may not be adequately sized to accommodate some of the larger scale development that may be desirable in certain underutilized commercial areas and corridors. As Regional Centre development is not the same as “greenfield development”, typical tools to pay for upgrades, such as capital cost contributions, may not be appropriate. To fully understand the scale of the issue, and to consider how to most appropriately address this matter, a study is being undertaken with Halifax Water and a 3<sup>rd</sup> party consultant. The timeline for completion is December 2015 with significant data available for export to the Centre Plan process at various points throughout the study before the final report.

2. Downtown Dartmouth Policy Changes

With the changes to the Dartmouth view planes and the changes to the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, there are opportunities to update the Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy in Downtown Dartmouth to allow consideration of development within a similar framework as Downtown Halifax. This matter has been considered and will be enabled through amendments to the Downtown Dartmouth Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-Law. This work is already underway with an expected completion in the fall of 2015. This project is informing staff as to how tools such as Site Plan Approval are able to be deployed outside of the Downtown Area.

3. Dartmouth Cove Plan

A master plan study for Dartmouth Cove was commissioned by HRM and the Waterfront Development Corporation Limited calling for high density development in Dartmouth Cove with new streets and open space. The plan was endorsed by the Harbour East Community Council. It is currently being assessed with regard to fundamental matters such as the retention of harbour-related industrial lands, transportation, and open space requirements. If potential development does not result in a negative impact on these, amendments to the Downtown Dartmouth Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-Law would be considered in order to enable the mixed-use development that is envisioned in the master plan. Development of the area may be technically challenging

due to the need to coordinate development among various property owners and consider infrastructure improvements, which the plan amendment process would attempt to overcome.

#### 4. Heritage Conservation Districts

A Heritage Conservation District is a defined area of historic or architectural value that is protected by regulations governing such things as demolition, exterior alteration and new development, and where incentives may apply to encourage private architectural conservation and programs that enhance public amenities. The Halifax Regional Municipality currently has one Heritage Conservation District in place, the Barrington Street Heritage Conservation District, which is valued for its character and evolution as Halifax's principal downtown commercial street.

In addition to Barrington Street, there are concentrations of heritage resources in many areas throughout the region. The municipality has formally initiated a process to designate two of these areas as heritage conservation districts: the Old South Suburb and Schmidtville. Both are expected to be ready for consideration by Council within the Centre Plan timeframe and will form part of the implementation strategy for the Centre Plan.

#### 5. Plan Dutch Village Road

Regional Council recently requested that staff develop new allowances for commercial and residential development in the Fairview commercial district. Although this area is not technically part of the Regional Centre, it is on the immediate edge of the boundary and currently is included in the Peninsula Halifax Land Use By-Law. Based upon Regional Council's initiation of this project, staff has proceeded to engage the local community and develop amendments to the Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy and the Mainland and Peninsula Land Use By-Laws. As a benefit to the Centre Plan project, this work will rationalize the Halifax Peninsula Land Use Bylaw Boundary and allow staff to begin public knowledge sharing with respect to Municipal Planning Strategies and Planning Tools generally.

#### 6. Five Year Review of the Downtown Halifax Plan

The Downtown Halifax Plan was adopted in 2009. The Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy (DHSMPS) calls for annual housekeeping reviews and a more complete review of the plan every five years. In 2015 staff have undertaken a complete five year review and anticipate bringing this to council in Fall 2015. This project will improve the implementation of administration and addresses matters such as the approval of smaller projects so that they are not subject to the full substantive site plan approval process.



## 7. Community Profile

A community profile has been prepared for the Regional Centre including the latest available census and other administrative data. Work with Dalhousie University's school of Planning is allowing municipal staff to build indicators looking at matters such as household size and composition, and distance travelled to work – and other demographic details. These indicators and the Regional Centre profile will help to inform the existing conditions analysis and policy direction in the Centre Plan.

## 8. Lot Block Typology

A comprehensive study of existing building lots in the Regional Centre, and the lot composition of existing city blocks, within potential mixed use and multi-family residential areas of the Regional Centre. The study looked at building lot and city block characteristics such as: size (area), orientation, lot shapes, topography, abutting uses, block composition, zoning, and existing uses to provide an exhaustive inventory of typical existing building lots and typical city blocks. This typology supports a built form framework containing combinations of criteria related to: building heights, setbacks, lot coverage and transitions. This study is complete and contributes to the understanding of implementation tools that will be useful in the Centre Plan where significant redevelopment of sites is considered.

## 9. Density Bonusing Policy Study

This study reviews existing policy in the Downtown Halifax plan area and also examines the potential for new policy to allow bonusing in the Regional Centre. This study will produce recommendations for amendments to the existing bonusing policy in Downtown Halifax as well as recommendations to guide new bonusing policy for the Centre Plan. The timeline for the study to be complete is Summer 2015.

## 10. Housing Needs Assessment

The goal of this study is to identify the housing requirements in the Halifax Regional Municipality based on housing supply and demand and estimate future housing supply and demand over a five and ten year period at regional and lower level geographies, with a focus on the housing gaps across the CMHC housing continuum. This project uses the Regional Centre as a sub-geography of the Region and as such provides to the Centre Plan project a complete assessment of housing needs to be considered within the development of the comprehensive Centre Plan. The project was completed in May 2015.

## 11. Green Network Plan

Using principles of greenbelting and landscape ecology, an interconnected network of open space will be identified including areas important for wilderness and biodiversity, lands for sustainable forestry, agriculture, and resource extraction, coastal and cultural landscapes, public parks, community green spaces, and urban squares and streets important to the Regional open space network.

The outcome of this work will be a strategic vision and decision-making framework for future open space protection and use. The Plan will not contain new zoning or regulation but rather it will provide the necessary land evaluation, public policy direction, and implementation tools and priorities to shape future community planning process. The Regional Centre is a geography used within the Green Network Plan and the timeline for completion of this plan is Fall of 2016. There will be significant data and direction available for export to the Centre Plan process at various points throughout the study before the final report.

## 12. Road Network Plan Update

The Road Network Functional Plan details the transportation modeling work that supports Regional Planning in Halifax Regional Municipality. The update to the 2011 plan will provide detail and analysis on modeling in response to the population targets of the 2014 Regional Plan. This project will be complete in Fall of 2015 and will provide significant input into the Land Use and Transportation considerations in the Centre Plan.

## 13. Moving Forward Together

The draft Moving Forward Together Plan proposes the largest overhaul of the transit system ever done in Halifax, and aims to make our transit network simpler, smarter and more efficient. Preliminary results were shared with the public in March of 2015, the final plan is expected to be released in 2015 and will feed directly into the consideration of Urban Design, Streets, Transportation, and Implementation within the Centre Plan.

## 14. Community Facilities Master Plan Update

The update to the Community Facilities Master Plan is expected to be able to provide continued strategic direction for the required investment, resources and decision-making processes related to provision of community recreation facilities. Organized by inventory type and structured into short, medium and long term recommendations, the updated document will build on the recommendations in the 2008 Plan and will include several inventory types not previously considered. The update will verify values and expectations of citizens along with other measurable aspects to the provision of services including a detailed review of deliverables in the 2008 Plan.

## 15. Active Transportation Priorities Plan

This Active Transportation Priorities Plan provides a review and update to HRM's 2006 Active Transportation Functional Plan and proposes priority initiatives for the five year period from 2015-2019. The purpose of the plan is to identify the means by which the municipality will work to double the number of residents who chose to walk or bicycle for trips to work, school, shopping, and services. This objective is tied to overarching objectives in the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy to increase the number of walking and cycling trips and to develop complete communities. This plan has been approved by Regional Council and provides direct input to the Centre Plan in terms of the Community, Urban Design, Transportation, Streets and Implementation elements.

## 16. Urban Forest Master Plan

The overall goal of the UFMP is to ensure a sustainable future for our urban forest. The multiyear community engagement process and research initiatives that led to the development of the Plan resulted in an integrated social, ecological, and economic strategy that strives to incorporate the values of HRM citizens. This plan has been approved by Regional Council and provides direct input to the Centre Plan in terms of the Community, Environment, Urban Design, Streets and Implementation elements.

This impressive body of work helps provide confidence that municipal staff will be able to, with necessary support, lead the successful completion of the Centre Plan project in an acceptable time frame and achieve the comprehensive coverage envisioned in the Regional Plan.

## Centre Plan Next Steps

In 2015 & 2016 the Urban Design team will lead the effort to move the past work, and future studies, forward toward contributing to a comprehensive Centre Plan that will help us understand the bigger picture affecting the Regional Centre, provide guidance to residents and the development community, help establish a basis of evidence based practice in land use decision making, and build an informed constituency with respect to land use and the effects of land use.

In addition to continuing to lead the projects outlined above, and continuing to work with the Community Design Advisory Committee, immediate next steps for the project focus on procuring consulting support to help build out and communicate the elements of the Centre Plan. A Request for Proposals focusing on obtaining core Centre Plan consultant services defined as both (i) the “lead consultant” to provide overall project support, content production, and expertise in comprehensive planning, and (ii) a public engagement and communications consulting support to ensure the effective implementation of the Engagement Strategy for the Centre Plan.