



Community Design Advisory Committee

Presentation: Proposed Policy Changes

February 18, 2013







Settlement and Transportation HALIFAX





Generalized Future Land Use









- The purpose of today's workshop is to:
 - present proposed policy changes
 - receive endorsement in principle
- The Draft Revised Regional Plan will be tabled with the CDAC on March 6th





The process for the workshop:

- PART 1
 - Staff presentations on each policy topic/issue
 - Questions for clarification
 - Identify and record "bike rack" issues
- PART 2
 - Discuss issues/proposed policy changes
 - Provide endorsement of policy changes or other direction





- 1. Revised Community Design program
- 2. New Regional Centre Chapter
- 3. Review of transportation projects to ensure alignment with growth pattern
- 4. Preserve and expand industrial land holdings
- 5. Measure the Plan's performance



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Policy Fact Sheets





FACT SHEET Draft 1 – Date

[Template for Fact Sheets]

ISSUE: (DESCRIBES THE KEY POLICY DIRECTIVE)

DOCUMENT REFERENCES: (REFERENCES THE POLICY #/ CHAPTER/SECTION OF THE REGIONAL PLAN)

WHAT IS THE ISSUE? (PROVIDES AN SSESSMENT OF THE ISSUE)

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT? (PROVIDES THE RATIONALE WHY THE ISSUE IS IMPORTANT TO THE REVIEW)

WHAT CHANGE TO THE PLAN IS NEEDED? (DESCRIBES THE NEW POLICY DIRECTION NEEDED)

WHAT IS GOING TO CHANGE? (DESCRIBES THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE CHANGE IN POLICY DIRECTION)

HOW DO WE IMPLEMENT THE CHANGE? (DESCRIBES THE IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM TO BE USED)

HOW WILL WE KNOW THE CHANGE IS WORKING? (LISTS SPECIFIC INDICATORS TO BE MEASURED)



Policy Fact Sheets



14 Fact Sheets:

Each presents a summary of major policy changes proposed to the Regional Plan.

Policy Topic
Watercourse (Riparian) Buffers
Greenbelting
Growth Centres
Rural Subdivision Standards
Housing Affordability
Regional Road Works
Transit
Active Transportation
Industrial Lands
Regional Centre [Centre Plan)
Culture and Heritage
Servicing and Utilities
Undergrounding
Plan Performance



Watercourse Buffers



WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

- Treed buffers along watercourses may be clear-cut before development takes place affecting water quality and wildlife habitat.
- Currently, watercourse buffers are not protected from clearcutting prior to the initiation of the development approval process.
- A recent change to the HRM Charter now gives HRM the ability to regulate the alteration of land levels and the removal of vegetation within a watercourse before any development takes place.



Watercourse Buffers



BEFORE

AFTER





Watercourse Buffers



WHAT IS GOING TO CHANGE?

- A new policy will establish protection against tree and vegetation removal within riparian buffers regardless of whether or not development is proposed.
- Tree removal will require a municipal permit.
- The existing requirement for a minimum 20 metre wide riparian buffer along all watercourses throughout HRM will remain in place.





Greenbelting



WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

- Important natural areas continue to be endangered and fragmented.
- Much of HRM's natural open space is either provincially or privately-owned.
- HRM owned public spaces represent the single largest and most valuable asset owned and managed by the municipality.
- The original scope of RP+5 did not include greenbelting but public consultation identified it as an important issue for the current review.
- A comprehensive planning framework to achieve open space goals remains to be done.







Greenbelting and Public Spaces Priorities Strategy (GPS)





Landscape Patterns







Landscape Pattern Systems





Regional Wedges Contain Growth





Halifax Peninsula - Open Space Context



2006 RMPS - Map 4

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY























Greenbelting



WHAT IS GOING TO CHANGE?

- Use greenbelting as part of an open space planning framework
- Complete a *Greenbelting and Public Spaces Priorities Plan (GPS*) to develop research, effective open space policies, conservation strategies, public realm improvements, and associated changes to land use and subdivision by-laws.
- Designate specific natural corridors following the completion of **GPS** for the purpose of secondary planning and land management;
- Acknowledge the social and urban forest function of HRM's road network;
- Require all secondary planning to conduct an open space plan as a first step in community design, including identification of opportunities for natural corridor connectivity, location and function of public spaces.
- Connect new developments, parks and open spaces to existing and proposed Greenways and Active Transportation network routes.



Growth Centres



WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

- Prohibitive costs and municipal risks of financing piped services and transit to rural Growth Centres.
- Loss of Suburban Centre at Morris Lake due to DND decision to retain Shearwater runway.
- Long lead times for Community Visioning and Plan Reviews, and a need to facilitate development proposals that mix complementary uses in well-designed, pedestrian supportive buildings that define a vibrant public realm.
- Lack of authority in HRM Charter to undertake architectural design control through site plan approval outside downtown.



Growth Centres



WHAT IS GOING TO CHANGE?

• Community Design program to include changes to the number and classification of growth centres to reflect new information on the cost and potential for servicing.



Classification & Design of Growth Centres



WHAT IS GOING TO CHANGE?

- Replace 17 Rural Growth Centres with Rural Centres and Service Centres (limited growth)
- Remove rural local bus routes and update MetroX links
- Expand Fall River Growth Centre and up-rate from Commuter to District
- Replace Morris Lake Suburban Local Growth Centre with a new Growth Centre at Port Wallace
- Replace Upper Tantallon Rural Commuter Growth Centre with two new centres – Upper Tantallon Rural District Growth Centre at Exit 5 and Tantallon Crossroads Rural Local Growth Centre to the south



Classification & Design of Growth Centres



WHAT IS GOING TO CHANGE?

- Initiate a secondary planning process for Port Wallace
- Sequentially initiate secondary planning for Middle Sackville, Porters Lake-Lake Echo, Upper Tantallon, Highway 102 Corridor (Birch Cove Lakes), and the Rockingham Motherhouse lands
- Complete the Birch Cove Community Plan and the Bedford Waterfront Plan following adoption of the Mainland North-Bedford Servicing Strategy
- Provide criteria which must be met before considering any proposal to add new Growth Centres



Table 3.3 Rural Designations – Centres Identified for Limited Growth

Centre Type	Centre Name	Land Uses	Services	Transit and Parking
Rural Service Centre	Sheet Harbour Middle Musquodoboit	 mix of low to medium density residential, commercial, institutional and recreational uses 	 individual on- site sewage disposal systems existing central wastewater & water 	 potential for cost-shared, community- based public transportation shared side or rear parking access to AT routes short block connectivity



Rural Local Centre Hatchet Lake Hubbards Hubley Sambro Indian Harbour Waverley Whites Lake Jeddore North Preston East Preston Cherry Brook / Lake Loon Lake Charlotte **Moser River** Tangier Upper Musquodoboit

 mix of low to medium density residential, convenience commercial, institutional and recreational uses

- individual onsite sewage disposal systems
- potential for cost-shared, communitybased public transportation in some locations
- shared surface parking
- access to AT routes
- short block connectivity



Classification & Design of Growth Centres







Rural Subdivision Standards

WHAT & WHY?

- Standards first adopted with the 2006 Regional Plan
- The policy is part of a larger conservation strategy
- The aim is to protect larger landscape open spaces from encroachment of urban development





WHAT & WHY?

- Requires the landowner to set aside the environmentally sensitive and culturally significant lands
- Development is sited on the portion of the site with the least impact
- Currently, Open Space Design Subdivisions may be considered by development agreement in Rural Commuter, Rural Resource, and Agricultural Designations



Land Use Designations

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY





Rural Subdivision Standards



WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

- Residential growth in rural areas has exceeded growth target
- Existing policy too extensive
- Certain provisions have not been established wastewater management districts; rural road standards; off-lot septic field systems
- Requirement for small lots not feasible in all areas
- Province will not allow off-lot systems on common lands; larger lot sizes required to maintain individual on-site systems
- Discretionary Approval process causes uncertainty with development industry



Rural Subdivision Standards

WHAT IS GOING TO CHANGE?

- Revised policy and regulations to permit open space design subdivisions primarily as-of-right
- Three options proposed to provide flexibility in design while limiting the scale outside growth centres
 - Option 1: Basic Conservation Design
 - Option 2: Rural Estate Conservation
 Design
 - Option 3: Rural Centre Developments




Maximum Density: 1 unit per 2.5 acres





Maximum Density: 1 unit per 4 acres





Maximum Density: 1 unit per acre



Option 1 Basic Conservation Design

Maximum Density: 1 unit per 2.5 acres



Option 2 Rural Estate Conservation Design

Maximum Density: 1 unit per 4 acres



Option 3 Rural Centre Developments

Maximum Density: 1 unit per acre





Traditional Subdivision Lots

















- Current planning policies provide limited direction for improving housing affordability yet this has been identified as a significant issue during public consultations;
- Affordable housing is integral to complete communities and sustainable growth through densification in serviced areas;
- HRM has 2nd highest % of citizens in core housing need.







WHAT IS GOING TO CHANGE?

 HRM will pursue a formal agreement with the Province outlining how HRM will support **mixed market housing** initiatives and how the Province will administer and support HRM's incentives (i.e. density bonusing).







WHAT IS GOING TO CHANGE?

- Ensuring that secondary planning strategies enable secondary suites to improve the stock of affordable units, generate income for homeowners, support aging in place and the student population, and increase housing safety. Provisions will include design elements to enable this "hidden density"
- Using municipal tools and community design principles to increase volume, quality, and housing options for communities.









WHAT IS GOING TO CHANGE?

- Implemented through high level policy in regional plan (RP+5) and requiring secondary planning process to develop suite of options to increase housing affordability at the community level.
- Impact measured through analysis of development trends and housing costs relative to income



Regional Road Works



WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

- Building new roadways and expanding existing ones has social, economic and environmental costs;
- The Plan promotes higher usage of transit and active transportation but it also includes roadway capacity projects.
- A greater emphasis is needed on the explanation of how the recommendation of road projects fits into an evaluation of overall demand for mobility and the infrastructure and program investment that support how mobility choices are made.



Regional Road Works



Capturing Mobility Demands





Road Network Projects



COMPLETED/UNDERWAY	PLANNED	FUTURE
Fairview Interchange	Bayers Road	Barrington Street
Mount Hope Ave	Burnside-Sackville Connect	Beaver Bank Bypass
Armdale Rotary/Chebucto	Herring Cove Road	Highway 113
Bedford South Interchange		Cherry Brook Bypass
Margeson Drive/Interchg		Third Harbour Crossing
Wright Avenue		
Burnside Drive		







WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

- HRM is diverse and is made up of many types of communities with a variety of transit needs.
- The delivery of transit services in urbanized areas is central to achieving growth in the Regional Centre, Urban Growth Areas, and Suburban Growth Centres, while reducing the need to add capacity to the road network.
- The provision of a conventional urban transit system in low density rural areas is both inefficient and expensive.
- Resources must be focused on the areas with a population density that supports transit investment.







WHAT IS GOING TO CHANGE?



Urban Service

Rural Support



Transit - Urban



WHAT IS GOING TO CHANGE?

• Urban Transit Service Boundary







Transit - Urban



WHAT IS GOING TO CHANGE FOR URBAN TRANSIT?

- Transit Priority Measures (TPM)
- Transit Oriented Design (TOD)
- Permit Transit Facilities







Transit - Rural



WHAT IS GOING TO CHANGE FOR RURAL TRANSIT?

- Community-led
- Supported by HRM





Transit - MetroX







Route 370 Porters Lake – November 2013



Active Transportation



WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

- Active Transportation has many benefits including the reduction of automobile traffic, personal cost savings, as well as the promotion of both mental and physical health.
- Focus on improving connections between existing AT routes, will improve AT mobility.
- A well connected AT network in the Regional Centre and leading to major employment centres is essential meeting regional Plan's goals.
- RP+5 coincides with Active Transportation Plan Review





Active Transportation



WHAT IS GOING TO CHANGE?

- Maintain goal of doubling users
- Design AT infrastructure for 8-80 year olds
- Prioritize projects for the next 5 years
- Recognize AT Greenways
- Connect what we already have
- Focus on connecting those routes that lead to/from the Regional Centre
- In other growth centres focus on local destinations





Proposed Greenways







Active Transportation





Correction to Proposed Greenway Corridors Map



AT Proposed Projects*



- Bicycle network in the Regional Centre
- Bridges (3) connecting mainland to peninsula
- Sackville Urban Greenway
- Halifax Urban Greenway
- Burnside Greenway

- Connect Shearwater Flyer to Woodside Ferry terminal
- Connection of Mainland linear greenway to Chain of Lakes Trail
- Connection to the Porter's Lake MetroX terminal





AT Proposed Projects







AT Proposed Projects







Industrial Lands



WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

- Industrial land in 2006 RP not adequate for future needs
- Burnside can supply development for about 10 years
- All other industrial parks in HRM are developed/sold





Industrial Lands



WHAT WILL CHANGE?

- Implement Business Park Functional Plan
 recommendations:
 - 1. HRM focus on industrial and light industrial development
 - 2. Commercial (office and retail) and residential development to be done by private sector
 - 3. HRM to acquire new land for industrial development
 - 4. HRM to protect developed industrial areas from commercial and residential encroachment



Industrial Lands



WHAT IS GOING TO CHANGE?

- HRM's Industrial land holdings will equal 10 to 20 years supply
- Municipality, as primary supplier, will ensure steady supply of industrial lands
- Publicly developed Industrial Parks will retain their industrial focus and economic vibrancy







WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

A new Regional Centre chapter is being introduced to provide an up-to-date policy context for the **Regional Centre Plan project** and other initiatives that place an emphasis on planning, development, and investment in the Regional Centre.





Existing Policies



WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

- Regional Centre Urban Design Study EC-3
 - 2007 RC Adoption of Regional Centre Vision & Principles
 - 2009 RC Adoption of Downtown Halifax Plan
 - Originally intended as an Urban Design Study for Capital District major corridors.
- Opportunity Sites Functional Plan S-39
 - RMPS Map 6 of vacant & underutilized lands
- Capital District Emphasis EC-4
 - Investment and attention





WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?

- Enabling policy for the Regional Centre Plan and future initiatives
 - Create "complete" neighbourhoods, whose scale and character is protected.
 - Promote well-designed densification through improved development policies and processes.









Inclusive Mobility

Complete Streetscapes

Engagement





WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?

Economic Strategy & Capital Ideas

- Coordinated & strategic investment in Regional Centre
- Strategic Urban Partnership

GOALS

REGIONAL <u>CENTRE</u>

Build a vibrant and attractive Regional Centre that attracts \$1.5 billion of private investment and 8,000 more residents by 2016

BUSINESS CLIMATE

Promote a business climate that drives and sustains growth by improving competitiveness and by leveraging our strengths

TALENT

Create a welcoming community where the world's talent can find great opportunities, engaged employers and resources for career advancement

INTERNATIONAL Brand

Create a unique, international city brand for Halifax

MAXIMIZE GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

Capitalize on our best opportunities for economic growth





WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?

- Capital District Emphasis
 - Broader RC focus
 - Infrastructure reinvestment
 - Distinct streetscaping standards remain




Culture and Heritage



WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

- RP+5 scope highlighted the need for an enhanced role for culture & heritage
- Enhancing culture & heritage is important as they define HRM's distinct character and are integral to "Placemaking"
- Adoption of Cultural Plan, changes in heritage conservation best practices and progress in cultural development supports the need to identify assets and establish priorities for investment





Culture and Heritage



WHAT IS GOING TO CHANGE?

- More robust heritage conservation and preservation of community character
- Developing Priorities "Culture & Heritage Priorities Plan"
 - 1. Inventory
 - 2. Analysis
 - 3. Implementation
- Strengthening interim cultural programs





Culture and Heritage



WHAT IS GOING TO CHANGE?

- Project Plan for Culture & Heritage Priorities Plan, including actions, target dates, budget, staff allocations, and departmental commitments;
- Success = completion, adoption and embracing of Culture & Heritage Priorities Plan.





WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

- Responsibility for wastewater & stormwater management has been transferred to Halifax Water subsequent to adoption of the Regional Plan
- Halifax Water is a regulated public utility that is supervised and regulated by N.S. Utility and Review Board.





WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?

- Regional Plan needs to be revised to reflect new relationship and implications for growth management
- Municipal approvals for service boundary extensions or growth areas contingent upon notification that water & wastewater charges have been approved or are not required.







WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?

- **Stormwater by-law** that would apply to private property;
- Enabling municipal financial contribution for daylighting of watercourses and retrofitting of existing stormwater systems to improve water quality or mitigate flooding;
- Cooperating with the Province to establish water quality standards for stormwater entering watercourses;
- **Supporting efforts by Halifax Water** to create a rate structure that creates incentives for the on-site retention of stormwater.







WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?

 Revised Policies reflect additional powers granted through amendment to the HRM Charter and study recommendations undertaken.





WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

- **1977:** downtown Halifax was designated "pole-free" and, through cost sharing with utilities, about 90% of the area was undergrounded over a 20 year period.
- 2003 and 2004: Severe weather events and extended power and telecom outages in HRM
- Studies commissioned concluded that costs to underground exceeded measurable benefits by 5 to 15 times
- 2005: HRM expanded the pole free zone and established a reserve to participate in undergrounding projects which could be tied to development or streetscape improvements.





WHAT IS GOING TO CHANGE?

Focus #1: Streetscape improvements

- Council consider underground utilities where streetscape improvements are proposed.
- Consider incentives for undergrounding of utilities within the urban core.









WHAT IS GOING TO CHANGE?

Focus #2 - New Subdivisions

- Undergrounding can add as little as 0% and as much as 5% to the value of a property
- The ability to develop treed lots can add 3% to 7% to the value of residential property
- Cost adds 1.5% -2.5% to the property price (based on 2010 average new home price of \$350k)
- <u>Implement Change</u> Amend Subdivision By-law to require underground utility installation for any subdivision in which a new street is proposed.





- 21 of the 23 municipal jurisdictions require undergrounding of wires utilities in new residential subdivisions
- Common financial model is for developers to assume costs and pass on to the purchaser
- Benefits include improvements to reliability, safety, environment, aesthetics, property value







Gatineau



St John



Undergrounding Benefits



Urban Forest Master Plan approved by Regional Council (September, 2012) to ensure Sustainable future for our urban forest

Value/Benefits

- Air Quality
- Carbon Sequestration
- Energy Reduction
- Hydrological Benefits
- Noise Reduction
- Road Benefits



















Undergrounding Stakeholder Feedback



• **General Public Survey** (300 residents)

- 91% completely Agree/Mostly Agree with undergrounding of new residential subdivisions
- 59% indicated they would be prepared to pay more for a home with underground utility wires.
- 61% completely Agree/Mostly Agree HRM should require new residential subdivisions to have undergrounded utilities.

<u>NS Home Builders Survey</u> (30 members)

- 93% Agree/Strongly Agree undergrounding of overhead wiring should be considered for new residential subdivisions
- 90% Agree/Strongly Agree undergrounding adds value to residential properties.
- 79% Disagree/Strongly Disagree the purchaser should be required to pay the cost for undergrounding





WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

- RMPS Appendix A indicators too cumbersome and vague to measure
- Data releases vary
- Geographies vary
- Need to identify key indicators of **direct impact**
- Other sources may compliment key indicators (e.g. Halifax Index, HRM Citizen Survey, Vital Signs, Census, Stantec Study, Community Counts)





WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

- Shows us how well we are doing
- Shows us if we are meeting our goals
- Shows us if HRM residents are satisfied
- Tells us if and where improvements are necessary
- Shows accountability













5515

Source: Halifax Index



- Office space vacancy rate between 2006 and 2011
 - Downtown 5.8% to 10.6%
 - Dartmouth, Bedford, Sackville 2.6% to 6.8%













Metres of New Roads Accepted by HRM









% of people in HRM 2006







6 Kilometres of AT and Transit (Express Bus) Infrastructure

Total AT infrastructure in 2012



KM of express bus routes

6 new express bus routes 216 km3 Community Transit















Number of Permits and Prosecutions Issued for Tree Removal

17,300 ha of riparian buffer





Cost of Housing Relative to Income

A total of 10% of families in Halifax Regional Municipality had low income status in 2006, compared with 14.5% in 1996













Thank you!







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