



2705 Fern Lane · Halifax · Nova Scotia · Canada · B3K 4L3
t: 902-429-0924 · f: 902-405-3716 · e: hrm@ecologyaction.ca

Our HRM: Planning for Liveable Communities

What sets Halifax Regional Municipality apart? What makes it a place we want to call home? We believe that what makes HRM special is that our beaches and shorelines are not crowded with development, outdoor recreational opportunities are close at hand, and many of us can still walk to work or school. Can we be sure that these same opportunities will be there for our children and our children's children?

Our HRM is an alliance of groups from across the municipality. The Alliance wants to ensure that the municipality is a place we are proud to call home.

Vision: The Alliance envisions HRM as a collection of vibrant places that protect the environment, foster the health of their citizens and attract sustainable economic opportunities. The Alliance sees HRM as a place people desire to live.

Context: In 2006, HRM adopted the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy to direct development within the region over the next quarter century. It is a good document that addresses many sustainability concerns, but it does not provide the type of leadership required to take Halifax into a future rife with the challenges of depopulation and climate change. The Alliance believes that the Plan could and should be made better.

Objectives: *Our HRM* wants to realize five key objectives that are fundamental for a liveable, sustainable HRM.

1. **Healthy and active population.** Communities must be walkable and developed on a human scale.
2. **Robust transportation systems.** Active transportation and transit must be prioritized.
3. **Sustainable development.** Capital Cost Contributions (CCCs) and other development charges should pay for all present and foreseeable infrastructure and servicing costs. The municipality should not have to cover the costs of road or sewer/storm water infrastructure.
4. **Protected and connected blue and green areas, as well as the primacy of green practices.** The blue areas refer to water resources and the green areas to ecologically and culturally significant land. Green practices bring the concept of the greenbelt into urban and suburban developments, such as rooftop gardening and green building principles.
5. **Vibrant community centres across the entire municipality, including urban, suburban and rural.** Community centres across HRM must be empowered to develop as compact neighbourhoods that respect their community visions.

Means: *Our HRM* is committed to establishing permanent, non-negotiable development boundaries around communities in HRM to control sprawl, increase density, reduce servicing and infrastructure costs, and build on one of the municipality's greatest assets - its network of green spaces and coastal access. The establishment of a greenbelt would achieve these ends. The boundaries will allow for directed growth within commercial and residential sectors in keeping with our community visions. The boundaries will recognize the fundamental importance of planned, controlled and sustainable development. By expanding on our 25-year Regional Municipal Planning Strategy, HRM *can* achieve all five objectives and contain sprawl with its associated environmental and financial burdens.

The Alliance: *Our HRM* includes members from organizations in urban, suburban, and rural HRM. At present, the Alliance is comprised of the following groups:

- Ecology Action Centre
- St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association
- Halifax Field Naturalists
- Friends of Hemlock Ravine
- Five Bridges Wilderness Heritage Trust
- Rural Coastal Communities Network
- Dalhousie Office of Sustainability
- Hike Nova Scotia
- Eastern Shore Forest Watch
- Atlantic Chapter – Canada Green Building Council
- Halifax North West Trails Association
- Halifax Regional Trails Association
- Heart and Stroke Foundation of Nova Scotia
- Sackville Rivers Association
- Beechville, Lakeside, Timberlea Trail
- Woodens River Watershed Environmental Organization
- Downtown Halifax Business Commission
- McIntosh Run Watershed Association
- Friends of First Lake
- Halifax Urban Greenway Association
- Shubenacadie Watershed Environmental Protection Society
- YWCA – Halifax
- Canoe Kayak Nova Scotia
- Spring Garden Area Business Association