

PO Box 1749 Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 3A5 Canada

Halifax Regional Council July 31, 2007

TO:	Mayor Peter Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council		
SUBMITTED BY:	Original Signed		
	Dale Godsoe, Urban Design Task Force		
DATE:	July 18, 2007		
SUBJECT:	Approval of Urban Design Framework Concepts and Strategies.		

ORIGIN

At its July 18,2007 meeting, The Urban Design Task Force made a recommendation to Regional Council to approve the Urban Design Framework Concepts and Strategies.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council approve the proposed themes and strategies as outlined in the attached report dated July 23, 2007.

DISCUSSION

The Regional Center Urban Design Framework is comprised of a series of physical plans that illustrate desirable urban design objectives over the long term–20 to 50 years or more. The strategies provide a framework for decision-making to reinforce the Urban Design Vision Statement and Guiding Principles. The proposed Framework addresses the fundamental components of urban design that shape a city: Neighborhoods and Districts, Open Spaces, Streetscapes, Civic Design, and Urban Character. Through a process of public consultation, a series of forums (Forums 2 & 3) were held to gage public attitudes around particular outcomes. After gathering appropriate feedback from the public, stakeholders and the Urban Design Task Force; A consultant team from The Office for Urbanism and HRM staff have complied proposed concepts and strategies for Council approval.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

N/A

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.

ATTACHMENTS

Staff Report Dated July 23, 2007

Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208. Report Prepared by: Chrissy White, Legislative Assistant



PO Box 1749 Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 3A5 Canada

Halifax Regional Council Committee of the Whole July 31, 2007

TO:	Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council		
	Original Signed		
SUBMITTED BY:	Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer		
	Original Signed		
	Paul Dunphy, Director of Community Development		
DATE:	July 23, 2007		
SUBJECT:	HRM By Design Public Forums 2 and 3 - Concepts and Strategies		

ORIGIN

- Regional Council initiated the HRM By Design Regional Centre urban design study in November 2005;
- HRM by Design was publically launched, July 1, 2006.
- Regional Council approved the results of Public Forum 1 and the project Vision and Principles on February 27, 2007;
- Staff and the Urban Design Task Force (UDTF) present the results of Public Forums 2 and 3 for Council's approval.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Regional Council approve the proposed concepts and strategies as outlined in this report and as recommended by the Urban Design Task Force

BACKGROUND

HRM by Design is a program to encourage quality development, vibrant public spaces, and improved HRM processes in the Regional Centre. The study area (the Regional Centre) includes the Halifax peninsula and central Dartmouth inside the Circumferential Highway. The key deliverables are a set of urban design guidelines and implementation tools which will guide future planning, development, and investment decisions. Importantly, the project will provide Council a clarified policy framework within which solid development decisions can be made. The study is supported by key policies in the Cultural Plan, Economic Development Strategy, Open Space Master Plan, Harbour Plan, Active Transportation Plan and Council's Community Development focus area.

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Program management is provided by a team made up of Capital District staff, an external consultant group led by the Office for Urbanism, and a Project Steering Committee made up of key HRM staff from across the organization as well as representatives from the Provincial and Federal levels of government. Advice to the project team and Council is provided by the Urban Design Task Force (UDTF), a body of 15 community volunteers including three HRM Councillors. Appendix "A" is a list of the members of the project team, Steering Committee and UDTF.

The HRM By Design project schedule is divided into seven phases, as shown in Appendix B, for which Council has adopted a system of incremental approval. Phases 1 and 2 produced the high level guiding Urban Design Vision and Principles which were approved by Council on February 27, 2007. Expanding upon those approved guiding Principles, Phases 3 and 4 then created high level Concepts and Strategies designed to realize the approved Urban Design Vision. These Concepts and Strategies will be further refined during future Phases 5, 6, and 7 to create detailed Urban Design Guidelines and implementation tools which will address specific policy, regulatory and investment changes.

<u>This report seeks Council's approval of only the concepts and strategies developed during Phases</u> <u>3 and 4</u>. This approval will allow the project team to move through Phases 5, 6, and 7 with confidence the program is proceeding in a manner consistent with Council's informed direction. Consideration of detailed elements such as specific design guidelines and detailed implementation tools is not requested at this time. This level of detail will be presented to Council during the future implementation phases of the program. The recommendations made to Council in this report have been the subject of multiple public consultations, have been reviewed and approved by the Steering Committee, and have been formally deliberated upon and approved by the UDTF. They are brought forward for Council's adoption with a high degree of confidence that they reflect the public's views.

DISCUSSION

The *Discussion* section of this staff report will serve as an executive summary of the consultant team's draft report, attached as Appendix "C."

Process

The Public Consultation Forums associated with Phases 3 and 4 were held from Dec 4-7, 2006 and April 16-19, 2007. The consultant team has prepared a draft summary report which includes the recommended concepts and strategies required to carry out the approved Urban Design Vision. That report is attached as Appendix "C". The report has been reviewed and endorsed by the UDTF, Capital District Staff, and the HRM By Design staff Steering Committee.

The attached report is a work in progress and should not be considered as a detailed plan for changes to the Regional Centre. It outlines high level concepts and strategies which will inform the implementation stages of the program. In some cases, these concepts are described and/or illustrated with relatively detailed examples. These examples are not detailed recommendations for specific areas of HRM and are intended for illustrative purposes.

Concepts

Eight high level concepts are presented as a summary of the themes embodied in the more detailed strategies outlined in this report. Components of these concepts are woven throughout the various strategies:

- Defining a Heritage Priority Area
- Reinforcing Distinct Local Area Identities and Built Characteristics
- Making Streets the Primary Public Open Space
- Identifying New Potential Open Spaces and Connections
- Defining Areas Where the Pedestrian Environment is a Priority
- Extending the Existing Civic Infrastructure
- Encouraging Growth to Where it is Needed and Can be Supported
- Cultivating a Network of Mixed-Use Centres Connected by Transit Corridors

The concepts are consistent with the previously approved Urban Design Vision and Principles and are also consistent or complimentary to existing policies as set out in the Regional Plan, Cultural Plan, Economic Development Strategy, Open Space Master Plan, Harbour Plan and Active Transportation Plan. These Concepts were the basis for the preparation of the five detailed Strategies presented below.

Strategies

Reinforce Unique Local Identity by Defining Distinct Neighbourhoods and Districts

The program identifies that the Regional Centre is comprised of distinct neighbourhoods, mixed-use districts, and special-use districts. Each of these components is defined by unique characteristics, and model urban design guidelines will be developed for them as part of HRM by Design. Future place-specific refinement of these model guidelines will entail significant involvement of key community stakeholders and will include also the following elements.

Council Report	- 4 -	July 31, 2007
 Confirmation of Boundaries 		• Guidelines for Public Realm Excellence
 Identification of unique Character Sub-Areas 		• Guidelines for Built Form Excellence
• Urban Structure Plan		• Site Specific Guidelines for Prominent Sites

A sample map highlighting some initial study areas is included on page 8 of Appendix "C," and is titled "Neighbourhoods & Districts."

Enhance the Quality of the Public Realm Through the Creation of New, and Improvement of Existing Prominent Open Spaces

The program acknowledges the importance of the development of prominent open spaces in the Regional Centre. Significant emphasis on the acquisition, improvement and integration of such open spaces is proposed. This strategy includes a number of objectives relating to the following open space components (see sample maps - pg. 18 to 28 of Appendix "C"):

• public parkland

• institutional open spaces and cemeteries

• green streetscapes

- off street cycling and trail routes
- open spaces such as landscaped areas associated with freeways, rail lines and utility corridors

A considerable portion of this strategy involves publicly owned or managed property. It must be acknowledged that treatment of public land and infrastructure will be a key component of the success of this strategy. As a result, a future increase in the level of public investment will be required to ensure long term success. This strategy is being closely integrated with a number of existing initiatives in the Open Space Master Plan, Active Transportation Plan and Harbour plan to address open space connectivity, harbour access and the use of the harbour as a prominent open space feature.

Enhance the Quality of the Public Realm Through the Development of Prominent Streetscapes

The program identifies streets as the most significant land area in public ownership, and the primary way in which the Regional Centre is experienced. This is particularly true of our most prominent streetscapes, and the proposed strategy recognizes the multi-functional role of street corridors. A shift in conventional thinking is recommended to include greater consideration of character, sense of place and pedestrian movement in addition to the typical considerations of vehicular traffic movement.

Appendix B includes an example of a street hierarchy along with sample cross sections that serve to illustrate the type of streetscape that could be considered in the implementation stage of the program. That hierarchy includes the following and is shown on the sample map on page 32 of Appendix "C".

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- Parkway Boulevards
 Urban Boulevards
 Neighbourhood and District Connectors
- Civic Boulevards

• Avenues

- Pedestrian Priority Areas
- Sample street cross sections for each of the above street types are included on pages 36, 37, 39, 41, 43 and 45 of Appendix "C". These samples are included to demonstrate concepts only. They are not intended as specific cross sectional designs for streets in HRM at this time.

Similar to the previous strategy regarding open space, this section also relates primarily to the public realm. Therefore, policies and guidelines developed under these strategies will require an increased level of public investment.

This strategy has the greatest potential to impact essential transportation services like transit and emergency vehicle movement. Impacts on these elements will be closely coordinated with relevant HRM departments as the program moves into the implementation stages.

Enhance the Quality of the Public Realm Through Improvements to Civic Design

This strategy is related to improvements in Civic Design in order to expand on existing and unique assets in both the built and natural environment. In this context, the term Civic Design represents a combination of physical elements that generate civic pride, pleasing surroundings, and the creation of an appealing and memorable experience in the Regional Centre. The elements include such things as architectural quality, architectural scale, open space design, prominent views and landmarks, and design and use of the public realm. This strategy is focussed on the following:

- Prominent Civic Heritage and Cultural Resources (sample map pg. 52 Appendix "C")
- Prominent Civic Gateways and Intersections (sample map pg. 54 of Appendix "C")
- Prominent Civic Views and Landmark Sites (sample map pg. 56 of Appendix "C")
- Prominent Civic Streets and Frontages (sample map pg. 58 of Appendix "C")

In the attached report, these four strategic focus areas are described and illustrated with examples from the existing Regional Centre.

Develop Urban Character and Shape Growth and Urban Structure Through Re-urbanization

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While all of the concepts and strategies outlined in this report are significant and important parts of the overall program, the proposed re-urbanization approach is the element most directly connected to the crucial implementation phases. The re-urbanization approach identifies that the Regional Centre can be understood and developed in a orderly and structured manner based on land use, built characteristics, street patterns, building forms, open space and, most importantly, the interrelationship between all these components.

The program proposes giving structure to the development of the Regional Centre by creating priority areas for development opportunity and establishing a hierarchy of urban character based on varying densities, scales and land use intensities. Directing growth in designated centres and corridors within the Regional Centre will add predictability to the development industry and allow for the maintenance and stability to existing established neighbourhoods. The proposed hierarchy is broken down and summarized on a sample map page 62 of Appendix "C".

This urban character hierarchy concept is further augmented through creation of re-urbanization strategies and the establishment of building types that are seen as appropriate for each of these urban character areas. Those sample building types are shown graphically on page 64 of Appendix "C".

Summary

Council approval of the urban design strategies outlined in this report is recommended by Capital District Staff, the HRM By Design Steering Committee and the Urban Design Task Force. Detailed Urban Design Guidelines and implementation tools will be presented to Council for consideration following the conclusion of the next round of public consultations.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

All work associated with this project is funded within the existing approved budget.

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.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the proposed and strategies as outlined in this report and as recommended by the Urban Design Task Force allowing the project team to develop the next levels of detail with confidence that the program is proceeding in accordance with Council's informed direction. This is the recommended alternative;

2. Instruct the project team to re-assess and alter the proposed concepts and strategies in accordance with Council's direction.

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ATTACHMENTS

"A" - Team Member Lists

"B" - Project Schedule

"C" - Consultant Report

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <u>http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.html</u> 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:	Steven Higgins - Project Implementation Coordinator / Community Development / 490-1546
Report Approved by:	Original Signed Jacqueline Hamilton - Manager, Capital District / 490-5330
Financial Approval by:	Original Śigned
	Catherine Sanderson - Senior Manager, Financial Services, 490-1562

HRM By Design Steering Committee

Jacqueline Hamilton	HRM Manager of Capital District
Dave McCusker	HRM Manager Regional Transportation Planning
Ken Reashor	HRM Traffic Authority Manager, TPWS
Holly Richardson	HRM Regional Coordinator, Culture & Heritage
Jan Škora	HRM Coordinator, Real Property Planning
Paul Dunphy	HRM Director, Planning & Development
Austin French	HRM Project Manager, Regional Planning
Barry Yanchyshyn	HRM Capital District Senior Landscape Architect
Denise Schofield	HRM Manager Development Engineering
Bill Plaskett	HRM Heritage Planner
Stephen King	HRM, Manager, Environmental Performance
Kurt Lutes	Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (federal
John Mersereau	Province of Nova Scotia, Planner (provincial rep)

Urban Design Task Force

Dale Godsoe, Chair	Regional Centre Resident
Margot Young	Regional Centre Resident
Cathy Carmody	Regional Centre Resident
Paul Shakotko	Regional Centre Resident
Linda Garber	Regional Centre Resident
Kendall Taylor	Resident at Large
William Hyde	Resident at Large
Frank Palermo	Professional Design Community
David Garrett	Professional Design Community
Bernie Smith	Business Community
Paul MacKinnon, Vice-chair	Business Community
Kevin Riles	Development Community
Stephen Terrauds	Heritage Advisory Committee Representative
Adriane Abbott	Cultural Advisory Committee Representative
Dawn Sloane	Regional Council Representative: Halifax
Jim Smith	Regional Council Representative: Dartmouth
Mary Wile	Regional Council Representative: At-Large

Capital District Staff Team

Andy Fillmore	HRMbyDESIGN Project Manager
Steve Higgins	HRMbyDESIGN Project Implementation
Chrystiane Mallaley	BRMbyDESIGN Project Communications

APPENDIX B

Work Plan Summary Chart

Phase 1 Reconnaissance & Analysis	Phase 2 Urban Design Principles	Phase 3 Infill Case Studies	Phase 4 Opportunity Sites	Phase 5 Downtown Districts	Phase 6 Implementation Tools + Strategies	Phase 7 Production of Final Reports
March April May June July August Team Building Event Statenotice Statenotice Urban Design Tak Force Selection Statenotice Statenotice Selection Statenotice Staten	September October November Public Forum 1 Intractice (bin end Guild ing France work Uppen House Study Introduction 8 Work to date UDTF Day 2 Visioning Workshop: Area 1 Principles, Vision 8 Intrastructure Plan Bay 2 Open House Day 3 Visioning Workshop: Area 2 Principles, Vision 8 Intrastructure Plan Day 3 Open House Day Sopen House	December January February Putalite Fostum 2 Residential Infill Gato Studies UDBA Design Framework Plan UDTF Day 2 Visioning Workshop Residential Infill Case Studies Day 3 Visioning Workshop Residential Infill Case Studies Day 3 Open House Residential Infil Case Studies Day Bay 3 Open House Residential Infil Case Studies Day Bay 3 Open House Residential Infill Case Studies Day Bay Bay	Aws Day 1 Day 1 Day 1 Day 1 Day 1 Day 2 UDTF: UDTF: Day 2 Visioning Workshop Opportunity Sites Day 3 Visioning Workshop Opportunity Sites Day 4 Day 3 Visioning Workshop Opportunity Sites Day 4 Opportunity Sites Day 4 Opportunity Sites Day 5 Opportunity Sites Day 5 Opportunity Sites Day 4 Opportunity Sites Day 5 Opportunity Sites Day 5 Opportunity Sites	June July August September Public Forum 4 Downtown Districts Day 1 Open House Opportunity Districts UDTF Day 2 Visioning Workshop Day 3 Visioning Workshop Day 3 Visioning Workshop Day 3 Open House Opportunity Day 2 Visioning Workshop Day 3 Open House Day 1 Open Day 2 Visioning Workshop Day 3 Open House Day 1 Open Day 2 Visioning Workshop Day 3 Open House Day 2 Visioning Workshop Day 3 Open House Day 3 Open House Day 2 Visioning Workshop Day 3 Open House Day 3 Open House	Oct Nov Dec Jan Public Forum 5 Implementation Strategies & Tools Day 1 Open House Opportunity Sites UDTF Day 2 Implementation Workshop Sc Strategies Downtown Development Framework	Feb Mar HRM by Design Open Houso The Draft Report UDTF SC SC Report
Newsletter Newsletter	Newsletter	Newsletter	Newsletter	Newsletter	Newsletter	Newsletter
Start Up Stakeholder Interview Brief Site & Existing Conditions Analysis Newsletters	Forum 1 Urban Design Principles Long Term Vision Urban Design Framework Plan Newsletter	Forum 2 Precinct Specific Design Principles Infill Guidelines Infill Case Studies	Forum 3 Opportunity Site Guidelines Opportunity Site Case Studies Newsletter	Forum 4 Downtown Districts Analysis Newsletter	Forum 5 Implementation Strategy Implementation Tools Newsletter	Draft Repo Public Open Hou Final Repo Newslet
Team Buldling Event May 25 Kick-Off: July 5-7, 2006	Forum 1: Sept 13-15, 2006	Newsletter Forum 2: Dec 6-8, 2006	Stakeholder Interviews: Mar 28-30, 2007 Forum 3: April 16-19, 2007	Forum 4: September 10-13, 2007	Forum 5: january, 2008	HRM by Desig Open Hou Mat, 20



Regional Centre Urban Design Framework

Regional Centre Urban Design Strategies

The Regional Centre Urban Design Strategies is primarily comprised of a series of physical plans that illustrate desired urban design objectives to be realized over the long term -20 to 50 years or more. In doing so, they provide a guiding framework for policy, investment and development decisions which are consistent with, and give shape to, the Urban Design Vision Statement and Guiding Principles.

The Urban Design Strategies provide direction on the fundamental components that shape the city: neighbourhoods and districts, open spaces and streetscapes, civic infrastructure, and the urban structure. Collectively, these strategies serve to reinforce local distinction and identity; enhance the quality of the public realm; and, shape growth and development in a sustainable coherent and predictable manner.

The Strategies encompasses the entire Regional Centre and are broad in scope and conceptual by nature. Their primary purpose is to guide and coordinate high-level and detailed decisionmaking with consideration of the broader urban design objectives for the Regional Centre. This is to make certain that as implementation takes place incrementally and in various areas over many years, the sum of all these changes will contribute to a city that has a seamless, integrated and coherent urban design quality and character.

The Urban Design Strategies that are proposed are not meant to be considered as precise, rigid or a matter of policy. They define preferred strategies that can become goals to work towards and should be acted upon when and if the opportunity arises. There may be additional strategies or alternatives to achieving similar objectives that may arise with more detailed study, such as the Neighbourhood/ District or site-specific level.

While a specific idea proposed may not be realized, the inherent objective and intent should remain relevant and other solutions explored when the time is appropriate. The objective is to set one vision, which is not policy, but is a hoped-for outcome that the Regional Municipality will seek to achieve through a variety of resources. This vision will establish goals that can trigger further studies, align efforts, guide change and generate momentum accordingly.

Overview of the Regional Centre Urban Design Strategies

The following eight key urban design objectives provide an overview and summary of the significant themes embodied in the Regional Centre Urban Design Strategies.





DRAF

1. Defining a Heritage Priority Area

With growth and change being directed into the Regional Centre, now is the time to think about how heritage will not only be protected but how it will become an integral part of defining the area's future.

The Civic Design strategy identifies existing acknowledged or studied areas for potential Heritage Conservation Districts that should be pursued. It also defines a Heritage Shed Priority Study Area that encompasses the most significant concentration of heritage resources in the Regional Centre and where guidance respectful of all identified heritage elements will be a priority in any new development. What these guidelines entail and how they are implemented is a central objective of the overall urban design strategy for the Regional Centre.

2. Reinforcing Distinct Local Area Identities and Built Characteristics

Pockets of the Regional Centre are well defined neighbourhoods and districts with strong identities and, in some instances, have their own area-specific planning policies. The Regional Centre in its entirety should be understood to be comprised of unique and distinct neighbourhoods and districts.

The Neighbourhoods & Districts strategy demarcates areas of common distinguishing identities, qualities and characteristic. This plan also defines logical boundaries for area-specific urban design guidelines that will ensure change and new development reinforce the desirable qualities that define these locales.

Regional Centre Urban Design Strategies





3. Making Streets the Primary Public Open Space

Central to any urban design vision is the quality of the streetscapes where civic life unfolds and where the aesthetic quality of the city is most defined. The Prominent Streetscapes strategy identifies the key streets which should eventually form the "backbone" of the open space network for the Regional Centre. These streets should be priorities for 'greening' and for improvements to the pedestrian infrastructure as they connect neighbourhoods and districts, public open spaces, civic functions and other destinations.

In addition to their vehicular function, these prominent streetscapes should also be designed to balance their combined pedestrian, retailing and civic functions. The strategy classifies them according to potential Streetscape Types to guide the appropriate streetscape design, including relationships to adjacent buildings. For example, while a "boulevard" will generally have a primary function of connecting major open spaces, an "Avenue" will serve as a primary retailing street. Streetscapes can reinforce these characteristics through the framing buildings, sidewalk design and landscaping features.

4. Identifying New Potential Open Spaces and Connections

The Prominent Open Spaces strategy identifies potential new open space opportunities that may be considered. Most of these correspond to possible new development areas such as Shannon Park or to areas where redevelopment may occur such as the several malls that ring the Regional Centre.

Consistent with the Active Transportation Plan, a number of potential off-street cycling and trail routes have been identified. Additional potential routes have also been proposed to "complete" the network including a route along the Circumferential Highway. Key potential off-street pedestrian crossings are identified in a number of locations to bridge significant barriers such as rail lines and freeways, and to connect important open spaces to adjacent neighbourhoods.





DRAF

5. Defining Areas Where the Pedestrian Environment is a Priority

There are areas in the Regional Centre that function as environments where pedestrian movement is the primary mode of transportation and where the character of the area hinges on pedestrianism. Currently, these areas generally correspond to the Halifax and Dartmouth downtowns.

The Prominent Streetscapes strategy identifies a potential Pedestrian Priority Area where the comfort, safety, convenience and amenity for pedestrians are paramount when making decisions about land uses, built form and public realm improvements. Special consideration for shadowing and sun penetration to the street; land uses with transparency and animation at the sidewalk; and, a splendid pedestrian-oriented infrastructure, including seating, lighting, crosswalks, signage, and weather protection, should be required in these areas.

6. Completing, Leveraging and Extending the Existing Civic Infrastructure

The Regional Centre already has a tremendous civic infrastructure including beautiful boulevards, majestic bridges and impressive parks. A significant focus of the Urban Design Framework is to reinforce and leverage these assets. Of particular importance will be to enhance and extend the design characteristics of important civic streets such as University Boulevard and Young Avenue.

The Civic Design strategy identifies prominent existing and potential streets that deserve special consideration because of their connection to important civic open spaces and landmarks, or because they serve as primary approaches into the Regional Centre. The quality of the design of these streets, and the building and landscapes that frame them, should be of the highest design quality. It is this infrastructure that will leave the most lasting impression for visitors.

Regional Centre Urban Design Strategies





7. Directing Growth to Where it is Needed and can be Supported

Most areas in the Regional Centre will not experience significant growth or change. Most of the growth and development will be directed to areas and sites where change is needed and where growth can be accommodated and supported by transit. For example, the two downtown areas and major commercial streets will continue to attract growth and evolve overtime.

There are existing areas and neighbourhoods that have significant underutilized or vacant sites. Some of these places have experienced a significant decline in population, such as the Gottingen area. Sensitively designed residential intensification can serve to "repair" the urban environment and fill in the "gaps" to assist in the revitalization of these areas. As the Urban Character & Structure strategy illustrates, over the long-term there are other potential areas where unique and distinct places to live, work and play can be nurtured. This is especially true of potentially obsolete or underutilized single-use areas such as the existing malls and automotive-oriented commercial strips.

8. Cultivating a Network of Centres and Corridors for Great Urbanism

The downtowns will continue to receive the greatest mix and intensity of uses in the Regional Centre. It is here that the most important commercial, social and cultural exchanges will take place in the region. The urban design infrastructure must continue to reinforce and nurture these crucial functions.

The Urban Character & Structure strategy also identifies other existing and potential "centres" and "corridors" of various scale and intensities that can serve the surrounding communities and neighbourhoods. If adequately supported by public transit, these potential mixed-use areas can provide for significant new residential opportunities alongside places to shop, play and meet. They are natural locations for public uses, services and amenities. This overall structure encourages active transportation, reinforces a viable transit network and ensures a coherent and well organized city.

Regional Centre Urban Design Strategies

Neighbourhoods & Districts

Neighbourhoods & Districts

Neighbourhoods & Districts





Strategy Description

Distinct Neighbourhoods and Districts are the fundamental building blocks of great cities. A "sense of place" that is enjoyed in cities is most often derived from the city's well-defined parts that offer a unique and authentic experience. The Neighbourhoods and Districts strategy helps to understand the Regional Centre as a collection of areas, each with its own identity and, in many instances, distinguishing built characteristics.

The purpose of this strategy is to guide change and growth in a manner that is sustainable, respects local identity and reinforces desired future built qualities and characteristics. It also identifies the important aspects that support complete and vibrant neighbourhoods such as public amenities. The boundaries of these neighbourhoods and districts ought to correspond to more detailed urban design guidelines that may be prepared in future.

Preparation of Neighbourhood & District Urban Design Guidelines

A key outcome of HRMbyDesign is to put into place a template and model for the preparation of area-specific urban design guidelines. While not all neighbourhoods and districts may require tailored guidelines, other areas that are in transition may require greater guidance to shape change. Furthermore, Neighbourhood or District guidelines may vary in their focus and scope depending on the unique needs and circumstances of any given area. Neighbourhood or District Guidelines should involve the community stakeholders in their preparation and should, at a minimum, provide the following components:

- 1.Confirm Boundaries and Shed of Influence – affirm boundary lines to correspond with local identities and determine the extent of area appropriate for services and amenities to support the existing/potential population.
- 2. Character Areas and Statements- identifying unique sub-area characteristics, and include what should be protected and what should change.

- 3. Urban Structure Plan an overall vision and the relationship between the pubic realm and built form quality.
- 4. Public Realm Plan and Guidelines concepts and standards for public realm elements such as streets and blocks, streetscapes, open spaces, gateways, views, landmarks and heritage resources.
- 5. Built Form Guidelines standards and benchmarks for development including site design, massing, heights, typologies, orientation, fenestration, rooflines and, possibly, architectural and material quality.
- 6. Site-Specific Guidelines concepts and guidelines for special sites that require further exploration or guidance due to their prominence or scale.

Additional Supporting Materials/Details to be prepared:

• SUPPORTING IMAGES AND FIGURES

Neighbourhoods & Districts

Neighbourhoods





Neighbourhoods

A Neighbourhood is an existing or potential identifiable area with a prevailing residential character. As demonstrated in the Urban Character & Structure strategy, Neighbourhoods in the Regional Centre vary in character. They may include suburban areas that are exclusively single-family dwellings or apartments as well as more urban areas comprised of a fine-grained mix of housing types and other uses, including commercial centres or streets.

Priority areas for Neighbourhood Urban Design Guidelines include:

Bloomfield Gottingen Highview Old South End Shannon Park Woodside Village

Key Urban Design Objectives

- To reinforce existing distinct and desirable built qualities.
- To ensure the necessary amenities and services to support stable, diverse and cohesive communities.
- To ensure an appropriate range of housing choices within each neighbourhood.
- To support all modes of movement while encouraging a pedestrian culture.
- To ensure safe, accessible and appealing living environments.

Additional Supporting Materials/Details to be developed:

General Urban Design Principles

Preformance Criteria for Complete Neighbourhoods

SUPPORTING IMAGES AND FIGURES

Neighbourhoods & Districts

Mixed-Use Districts





Mixed-Use Districts

A Mixed-Use District is an existing or potential identifiable area with a prevailing character that includes a mix of uses alongside residential. Mixed-Use Districts in the Regional Centre vary in character and include the existing Halifax and Dartmouth Downtowns. They may also include areas identified as potential mixed-uses areas, such as the Micmac and Halifax shopping centres. As demonstrated in the Urban Character & Structure strategy, the mix of uses and intensity will not occur uniformly within Mixed-Use Districts as they may include existing stable residential areas. Accordingly, guidelines will need to consider these as distinct 'character areas' within the District.

Primary priority areas for District Urban Design Guidelines include:

Downtown Halifax Spring Garden Road Cornwallis Park Downtown Dartmouth

Secondary priority areas for District Urban Design Guidelines include:

Quinpool Road Wyse Road

Key Urban Design Objectives

- To reinforce a full mix of uses inclusive of residential, commercial, public, employment and open space.
- To nurture walking environments through connected and animated streets, and multiple destinations.
- To enhance visual and physical connections within and between districts and neighbourhoods for all modes of movement.
- To ensure high quality amenities to cultivate attractive higher density living environments.
- To provide vibrant, safe and appealing public places.

Additional Supporting Materials/Details to be developed:

General Urban Design Principles

SUPPORTING IMAGES AND FIGURES

Neighbourhoods & Districts

Special-Use Districts





Special-Use Districts

A Special-Use District is an existing or potential identifiable area with a prevailing character or function that is distinct from residential or mixeduse areas. Special-Use Districts in the Regional Centre vary in character and function and include areas such as ports and business parks; university and hospital campuses; and, the Canadian Forces bases.

Key Urban Design Objectives

- To ensure important employment, institutional and economic functions to the region are supported and enhanced with the necessary infrastructure.
- To ensure the integration of Special-Use Districts through visual and physical connectivity.
- To ensure Special-Use Districts harmoniously interface with surrounding neighbourhoods and districts.

Additional Supporting Materials/Details to be developed:

General Urban Design Principles

SUPPORTING IMAGES AND FIGURES

Regional Centre Urban Design Strategies



Prominent Open Spaces

Open Space

Prominent Open Spaces





Strategy Description

Open spaces that are successful can have a tremendous influence on the image, appeal and economic development of an area. They are also fundamental to attracting and retaining a residential population in the Regional Centre. How these spaces are designed, programmed and interface with surrounding streets and land uses is crucial to their ability to attract and delight a broad spectrum of users, and ensure that they are places where people feel safe and comfortable.

The Prominent Open Spaces strategy illustrates the character of the existing and potential "green" infrastructure and public open spaces, including parks and streets. This strategy is central to the Regional Centre Urban Design Framework as it guides the most "public" and visible aspects of the city and its relationship to important pedestrian infrastructure and destinations. The purpose of this framework is to ensure a network of public spaces and connections that will enhance the liveability, aesthetic quality and pedestrian environment in the Regional Centre.

Additional Supporting Materials/Details to be developed:

SUPPORTING IMAGES AND FIGURES



Open Space

Public Parks





Public Parks

Existing public parks define the network of park lands that are in public ownership and which the HRM Regional Planning Strategy (RPS) classifies into Neighbourhood Parks, Community Parks, District Parks and Regional Parks. General locations for new public parks are identified as strategic opportunities to provide additional amenity to an area, to complete the park network, or to serve a potential future development area.

Key Urban Design Objectives

- To ensure parks serve the broad interests of a population of all ages; and, that active as well as passive forms of leisure and recreation are accommodated.
- To ensure well-connected and accessible parks within walking distance of most residences.
- To ensure parks are safe and inviting at all times and seasons by fostering activity and casual observation at all times.
- To introduce and encourage a greater diversity of public open space types at the neighbourhood or district level.

Additional Supporting Materials/Details to be developed:

SUPPORTING IMAGES AND FIGURES

General Urban Design Principles

Other Open Space Types to be considered

CPTED Principles

Open Space

Institutional Open Spaces & Cemeteries



Institutional Open Spaces are publicly accessible "green" areas or open spaces that are associated with a public or institutional use such as a school, hospital or university. These areas can contribute to the green amenity of an area and can serve to strengthen the overall open space network.

Key Urban Design Objectives

- To ensure publicly accessible institutional open spaces that are safe and well connected.
- To ensure institutional open spaces of a high quality design that contributes to the public realm.
- To reinforce the desirable qualities of institutional contexts with appropriate design responses

Additional Supporting Materials/Details to be developed:

SUPPORTING IMAGES AND FIGURES

General Urban Design Principles
Open Space

Other Open Spaces





Other Open Spaces in the Regional Centre are existing areas that contribute to the green infrastructure, but which may not necessarily be intended for public access. These include landscaped areas associated with freeways, utility corridors and rail lines.

Key Urban Design Objectives

- To ensure these open spaces contribute to the visual quality and appeal of the Regional Centre
- To make better use of these spaces as part of the larger interconnected open spaces and trail network

Additional Supporting Materials/Details to be developed:

SUPPORTING IMAGES AND FIGURES

General Urban Design Principles

Open Space

Off-Street Cycling & Trail Routes





Off-Street Cycling and Trail Routes

Consistent with the HRM Active Transportation Plan, Off-Street Cycling and Trail Routes describe the major leisure and recreational path network that is independent of the road network. These existing and potential routes generally correspond to major natural features such as the waterfront and opportunities along continuous linear open space systems such as the highway corridors.

Key Urban Design Objectives

- To provide an integrated, continuous and extensive trail network that serve both active transportation, commuting, and recreational use.
- To encourage active transportation choices through safe, convenient and appealing offstreet trails.
- To enhance accessibility to major natural features and attractions such as the waterfront and regional parks.

Additional Supporting Materials/Details to be developed:

SUPPORTING IMAGES AND FIGURES

General Urban Design Principles

Open Space

Green Streetscapes





Green Streetscapes

Streets serve as the primary and most extensive open space network. Accordingly, priority streets for Green Streetscapes are identified that serve as existing or potential "green spines" that can link neighbourhoods, districts, major open spaces, and other destinations in the Regional Centre. Further guidance for the intended character of important streetscape in the Regional Centre is described in the Prominent Streetscape strategy.

Additional Supporting Materials/Details to be developed:

SUPPORTING IMAGES AND FIGURES

General Urban Design Principles

Regional Centre Urban Design Strategies



Prominent Streetscapes

Streetscapes

Prominent Streetscapes





Strategy Description

Streets comprise the most significant land area in public ownership and are the primary way in which the city is experienced. To support a critical population density, vibrant retail corridors, transit use and inviting walking environments, important streets must balance the needs of all users in thriving urban areas.

Having the most significant impact on the quality of urban design in the Regional Centre, streets must be recognized for their multi-functional role in creating a 'sense of place' and as spaces for the unfolding of everyday life. Accordingly, a shift in conventional thinking about road design must take place which considers their 'character' as important as their 'capacity' for traffic.

This Framework provides a hierarchy of streetscape characteristics for prominent streets that supports the urban design Vision for the Regional Centre. It also works in concert with and reinforces the Prominent Open Space Framework (for connectivity) and Urban Character and Structure Framework (for land use and urban intensity). This Framework will assist in guiding the quality of the pedestrian environment (sidewalks, crosswalks, landscaping) and the appropriate relationship of the buildings to the street to reinforce the intended land uses and streetscape character.

A prototypical cross-section for each streetscape type is provided to illustrate the general intended character of the street and its relationship to adjacent buildings. As the widths of right-of-ways and the adjacent built relationships vary greatly along a given street and between streets, these sections are intended to serve as a general guide until such time that more detailed Neighbourhood or District Urban Design studies are undertaken and/or when these streets are considered for improvement or reconstruction.

Additional Supporting Materials/Details to be developed:

SUPPORTING IMAGES AND FIGURES



Streetscapes

Boulevards





Boulevards

The defining characteristic of Boulevards is a distinctive and significantly landscaped quality that may be achieved through a centre median, broad building setbacks and/or frontage onto major open spaces or natural features.

Boulevards will vary in their transportation, land use, and pedestrian function, but in general they serve as the Regional Centre's primary "green" spines to connect neighbourhoods & districts, major open spaces and key public destinations. The most effective example of the use of the boulevard type as a civic design idea is evident on the streets that surround and frame the Halifax Commons.

Three general types of Boulevards are evident in the Regional Centre:

- 1. Parkway Boulevards regional roads that serve as important cross-city connections or local road in less urban or park settings
- 2. Urban Boulevards narrower regional or local roads in more urban settings
- 3. Civic Boulevards roads distinctly designed as an organizing civic gesture

Additional Supporting Materials/Details to be developed:

SUPPORTING IMAGES AND FIGURES

RAF

Parkway Boulevards

Parkway Boulevards are generally streets with broad public right-of-ways that function as important city-wide vehicular connections such as Connaught Avenue. Parkways are generally characterized by centre medians or landscaped boulevards. Parkways can also include streets that frame major open spaces which lend to the street's park-like setting. Due the significant vehicular function or relative isolation, Parkways generally do not have on-street parking and when framed by buildings, the setbacks tend to be generous. These streets can accommodate transit routes and on or off-street cycling lanes.

Key Urban Design Objectives

- To maintain and improve the quality of existing Parkway Boulevards and where possible, extend the streetscaping to link to important city-wide destinations.
- To apply the Parkway Boulevard streetscape to other streets of comparable function with broad public right-of-ways, particularly on important 'gateway' streets leading into the Regional Centre.

Additional Supporting Materials/Details to be developed:

SUPPORTING IMAGES AND FIGURES

General Urban Design Principles



Regional Centre Urban Design Framework Hallfax Regional Municipality



Urban Boulevards

Urban Boulevards are streets with generally narrower public right-of-ways than Parkways and function as city-wide or local connections for cars as well as pedestrians. These streets are generally characterized by a landscaped centre median, onstreet parking, and framed by buildings of varying setbacks depending on the urban context and land uses. Existing examples of Urban Boulevards are Robie Street and Young Avenue.

Key Urban Design Objectives

- To maintain and improve the quality of existing Urban Boulevards, and where possible, provide extensions to the streetscaping to link to important destinations.
- To apply the Urban Boulevard streetscape to other streets of comparable function.

Additional Supporting Materials/Details to be developed:

SUPPORTING IMAGES AND FIGURES

General Urban Design Principles







Civic Boulevards

Civic Boulevards correspond to distinctive streets that serve as formal organizing elements and amenities to a specific area. For example, University Avenue has a broad right-of-way and functions as a ceremonial corridor that links a number of important public institutions and visually terminates at Dalhousie University. Other examples include the north end of Agricola Street and Prince Arthur Avenue in Dartmouth. Civic Boulevards generally have broad landscaped centre medians, on-street parking, and are generally framed by uniformly placed and scaled buildings that reinforce the formal design intent of the streetscape.

Key Urban Design Objectives

- To maintain and improve the quality of existing Civic Boulevards and where possible, extend the streetscaping to link to important destinations.
- To apply the Civic Boulevard streetscape to other streets of comparable function.

Additional Supporting Materials/Details to be developed:

SUPPORTING IMAGES AND FIGURES

General Urban Design Principles



Streetscapes

Avenues





Avenues

Avenues correspond to mixed-use corridors that have continuous street-oriented retail frontages. Avenues serve as 'main streets' for the surrounding neighbourhoods and districts and function as primary pedestrian, transit and vehicular routes that are of city-wide importance. The streetscape of an Avenue includes broad sidewalks, on-street parking and continuous retail storefronts placed close to or at the front property line.

Key Urban Design Objectives

- To provide streetscape designs for Avenues that can nurture vibrant mixed-use environments that balance pedestrian, transit and vehicular needs.
- To strengthen the vitality of retail uses by ensuring pedestrian comfort, convenience, safety and amenities.
- To implement Avenue streetscapes along other streets that may serve as potential mixed-use corridors.

Additional Supporting Materials/Details to be developed:

SUPPORTING IMAGES AND FIGURES

General Urban Design Principles



Streetscapes

Main Streets





Main Streets

Main Streets are characterized by pockets of continuous retail in addition to residential and other uses and generally serve the immediate neighbourhood or district. Main Streets generally function as pedestrian and vehicular connections for surrounding neighbourhood or district and may include public transit routes. The streetscape includes on-street parking with varying building setbacks and sidewalk widths depending on the intensity of land uses.

Key Urban Design Objectives

- To provide streetscape designs for Main Streets that accommodate higher density residential uses and nurture pockets of vibrant mixed-use environments.
- To strengthen the vitality of retail uses by ensuring pedestrian comfort, convenience, safety and amenities.
- To implement Main Street streetscapes along other streets that may serve as potential mixeduse corridors for neighbourhoods and districts.

Additional Supporting Materials/Details to be developed:

SUPPORTING IMAGES AND FIGURES

General Urban Design Principles



Streetscapes

Neighbourhood & District Connectors





Neighbourhood & District Connectors

Connectors generally serve at collector streets for neighbourhoods or districts and function as important "green" streetscape connections for pedestrians. Although Connectors may vary in their transportation function, land use and urban context, their common attribute generally includes linking key neighbourhood or district destinations (such as schools and parks), continuous street trees and onstreet parking.

Key Urban Design Objectives

- To provide streetscape designs for Connectors that enhances their role as important visual and physical links through and between neighbourhoods or districts.
- To ensure streetscapes that reinforces local character and identity.

Additional Supporting Materials/Details to be developed:

SUPPORTING IMAGES AND FIGURES

General Urban Design Principles



Streetscapes

Pedestrian Priority Areas





Prominent Streetscapes Pedestrian Priority Streetscapes

Pedestrian Priority Streetscapes

Pedestrian Priority Streetscapes corresponds to streets that are in areas where volumes of pedestrian traffic are significantly high and relatively constant. Although currently these areas are generally in or adjacent to Halifax and Dartmouth downtowns, future pedestrian priority areas may emerge associated with the development of other mixed-use Urban Centres throughout the Regional Centre. The intensity of mixed-uses and concentration of employment, public and cultural destinations generates continuous pedestrian movement in these areas. Accordingly, all streets within these areas should be design with pedestrian comfort, safety and convenience as the paramount concern.

Objectives

- To accommodate and encourage walking as the primary mode of movement by ensuring high quality pedestrian-oriented streetscapes.
- To strengthen the vitality of retail uses by ensuring pedestrian comfort, convenience, safety and amenities.

Additional Supporting Materials/Details to be developed:

SUPPORTING IMAGES AND FIGURES

General Urban Design Principles

Regional Centre Urban Design Strategies





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Strategy Description

The Civic Design strategies identifies priority areas for existing and potential opportunities to enhance the civic design quality and distinction of the Regional Centre. The purpose of this Framework is to leverage the existing unique natural and built assets and strengths to create an appealing and memorable city.

The components of the Civic Design strategy include:

Prominent Civic Heritage & Cultural Resources

Prominent Civic Gateways & Intersections

Prominent Civic Views & Landmark Sites

Prominent Civic Streets & Frontages

Additional Supporting Materials/Details to be developed:

SUPPORTING IMAGES AND FIGURES

Civic Design

Prominent Civic Heritage & Cultural Resources



Prominent Civic Heritage & Cultural Resources

As a central defining aspect of the Regional Centre and its distinction, heritage and cultural resources play a pivotal role in setting the Civic Design context. The Civic Design Framework identifies the existing prominent heritage and cultural resources including structures and landscapes. It also defines a priority area that will require further guidance specific to heritage.

A 'Heritage Shed Priority Study Area' is generally defined as where the greatest concentration of heritage resources in the Regional Centre exist. This area identifies where additional study for the management, preservation and enhancement of heritage resources is a priority. Potential Heritage Conservation District study areas are also identified and more may emerge as area-specific urban design studies and guidelines are undertaken. Neighbourhood and District Urban Design Guidelines may consider guidelines specific to heritage to ensure the appropriate scale, massing and material quality for adjacent development.

Key Urban Design Objectives

- To develop a heritage management plan for the Regional Centre.
- To identify and designate additional significant heritage structures, sites, landscapes and districts.
- To conserve designated heritage and cultural resources through meaningful use and adaptive re-use.
- To ensure new development respects the form, scale and character of designated heritage and cultural resources and districts.

Civic Design

Prominent Civic Gateways & Intersections





Prominent Civic Gateways & Intersections

Prominent Gateways and Intersections identify important points of entry and crossings. Clearly defining these areas helps to enhance orientation, a 'sense of place' and can instill civic pride.

Primary Gateways are highly visible locations that can serve to mark entry into the Regional Centre, while Secondary Gateways can serve to mark entry into important districts such as the downtowns. These locations provide key opportunities where the coordinating of the design of landscapes, signage, public art and buildings can potentially create a sense of entry and orientation.

Prominent Intersections are key street intersections that should be acknowledged in the design of the streetscapes and buildings. Corner buildings at these intersections should reflect their civic prominence in their massing and in their material and architectural quality.

Key Urban Design Objectives

- To create gateway experiences that reflects the unique culture, history and environment of the Regional Centre or key districts.
- To create a significant sense of scale and identity to gateway experiences that act as both thresholds to and landmarks within the Regional Centre or for key districts.
- To ensure the gateway experience is wellintegrated locally as well as marking a sense of entry for visitors.
- To enhance the built form and public realm of key intersection while reinforcing the distinct identity of the host district or neighbourhood.

Civic Design

Prominent Civic Views & Landmark Sites







In addition to the existing protected view, there are numerous other types of prominent views throughout the Regional Centre that provide an opportunity to enhance civic design and orientation. This Framework also identifies existing and potential locations for landmarks that can reinforce important views and serve as civic building sites and/or public art locations.

Three types of prominent civic views have been identified:

- · Prominent Panoramic Views Dramatic sweeping views of the city or natural feature afforded by the edges of large open spaces, waterfronts or high elevations.
- Prominent Window Views Key views to the ends of streets that frame a prominent natural feature or open space.
- Prominent Terminus Views Generally prominent axial views along streets that terminate on an existing or potential landmark building or structure.

Key Urban Design Objectives

- To reinforce views and create landmarks to enhance orientation create a 'sense of place' within the Regional Centre.
- · To ensure identified views are protected and enhanced by developments that frame views.
- · To identify and reinforce new potential views and landmarks to enhance visual and physical connectivity across the Regional Centre within neighbourhoods and districts.

Additional Supporting Materials/Details to be developed:

SUPPORTING IMAGES AND FIGURES

General Urban Design Principles



Prominent Terminus Vie

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Civic Design

Prominent Civic Streets & Frontages




Civic Design Prominent Civic Streets & Frontages

Prominent Civic Streets & Frontages

Prominent Civic Streets and Frontages identifies streets, open spaces and natural features of citywide civic importance due to their unique design and/or visual prominence. These streetscapes, edge conditions to open spaces features and the buildings that frame them should be of the greatest priority in the Regional Centre for the highest possible design and material quality.

Prominent Gateway and Landmark Streets are the primary approaches into the Regional Centre and streets that link key civic destinations, landmarks and/or open spaces. Prominent Civic Open Space Frontage defines highly visible open spaces and waterfronts of city-wide importance. The design quality of the streetscapes and the adjacent buildings should reinforce the visual prominence and civic importance of these streets and open space frontages.

Key Urban Design Objectives

- To create an armature of continuous high quality civic design experienced along the primary routes into and through the Regional Centre.
- To reinforce visual and physical connections between key existing and potential landmarks and destinations.
- To enhance and reinforce the built and public edge conditions of key open spaces and natural features.

Additional Supporting Materials/Details to be developed:

SUPPORTING IMAGES AND FIGURES

General Urban Design Principles



Existing & Potential Prominent Civic Landmark

Regional Centre Urban Design Strategies



Urban Character & Structure

Urban Character & Structure





Strategy Description

After decades of unabated sprawl, the Regional Planning Strategy sets a course for a more balanced approach to managing growth in the Region. 'The Regional Plan anticipates future growth to the Regional Centre that, at the very least, translates into 15,000 new housing units or approximately 21,000 new people over the next twenty-five years. Given that the Regional Centre has lost more than 30,000 people over the last fifty years, this policy is less about 'intensifying' than is it about 'repopulating'.

'Reurbanization' defines this process of reintroducing a critical mass of people living once again in the Regional Centre. This approach to new development also affords exciting new prospects for engaging in a process of sorely needed 'urban repair', which is about 'filling' in the 'gaps' in the urban environment and improving areas that have fallen into decline over the years. Reurbanization is no less than about beginning to define a renewed, distinctive, contemporary and invigorating urbanism for HRM.

The Regional Centre is comprised of areas that are established and stable; areas that are dynamic and ever-changing; and, areas that are underutilized and in need of revitalization. While directing growth to existing urban areas is a fundamental means for achieving a sustainable region, reurbanization will not occur uniformly across the Regional Centre. The Urban Character & Structure strategy serves to provide a level of predictability with respect to where change ought to be directed and in what shape and form.

Although complex in nature, the Regional Centre should be understood as a hierarchal and ordered structure defined not only by land use, but also by its built characteristics as defined by the pattern of streets and blocks, the forms of buildings and the interrelationship between all these components.

The Urban Character & Structure strategy defines the inherent order to the Regional Centre which can guide decisions regarding growth and development so as to ensure that changes reinforce the desired built quality and character of a given area. This hierarchy also serves to guide appropriate transitions between areas of varying densities, scales and land use intensities.

The Urban Character & Structure strategy identifies the following urban categorizes for the Regional Centre, ordered from least to most urban in character:

General Neighbourhood Urban Neighbourhood Neighbourhood Corridor Neighbourhood Centre Urban Corridor Urban Centre Urban Core

Additionally, a number of Special-Use Districts are identified and include:

Civic Districts CFB Districts Marine/Industrial Districts

This defining urban structure for the Regional Centre and the strategy for reurbanization appropriate to each urban category is described further below. Together with the previous strategies outline in the Regional Centre Urban Design Framework provides the direction and an organizing structure for the preparation of the necessary supporting tools and strategies for implementation, including urban design guidelines for the Downtown Halifax area and the Model Urban Design Guidelines for Reurbanization.





Regional Centre Urban Design Framework Halifax Regional Municipality



Urban Character & Structure

Appropriate Forms of Reurbanization

In general, the "form" of reurbanization refers to the scale and types of buildings. Not only must the form of development and its design be mindful of 'fitting' on the site, but also 'fitting' into the surroundings, reinforcing local identity and contributing to the enhancement of the public realm. The appropriate form will in large part depend on where in the Regional Centre the development is taking place – and specifically in which applicable category defined in the Urban Character & Structure strategy.

As demonstrated in the "Urban Character Organizational Structure" and "Appropriate Building Typologies" diagram, the appropriate form for development ought to be consistent with the intended built character of the urban category in which the development takes place. For example, while multi-storey mixed-use buildings may be appropriate for "Urban Corridors", only house-forms will be appropriate in "General Neighbourhoods". Furthermore, the form of reurbanization will transition in scale and building typology between urban categories.

Appropriate Sites for Reurbanization

Reurbanization in the Regional Centre will emerge in many forms, in a variety of scales, and may be employed in a multitude of possible locations. Some sites will be obvious for development; some will be more obscure and less apparent; and, some will have to be found.

Whether replacing an obsolete use on a large 'brownfield'site along the waterfront, or redeveloping a modest 'greyfield' site containing an outdated commercial plaza, or the infilling of a vacant lot concealed deep within a historic neighbourhood, each development opportunity will have to be mindful of their surroundings while being consistent with the Urban Character & Structure category in which they are located.

Brownfield Sites

Brownfields are generally former or obsolete industrial areas. In some instances, these lands may have real or perceived environmental contamination issues. Generally, brownfield sites exist along rail corridors and in waterfront areas. Small brownfields may also be found throughout the Regional Centre, such as sites that were once gas stations.

Greyfield Sites

Greyfields generally describe sites that are underutilized or obsolete commercial areas. They are often associated with older automobile-oriented commercial strips, plazas and shopping malls. Unlike brownfields, greyfields typically are not contaminated and do not require remediation in order to redevelop.

Regeneration Sites

Regeneration refers to the redevelopment of existing uses that may be dysfunctional, dilapidated, or incompatible. Regeneration sites may vary greatly in scale and locations, from a condemned house in an established neighbourhood, to the enhancement of an entire public housing neighbourhood through redevelopment that introduces mixed-incomes and mixed-uses.

Adaptive Re-Use

Adaptive re-use is the process of adapting existing structures into intensified and/or new uses. This can occur to a variety of building structures and in a range of scales, from the conversion of a single-family house into multiple units to a historic warehouse converted into offices and/or residential loft units.

Infill

Infill sites can vary greatly in scale and are generally vacant sites found within existing urban areas. Infill sites may include undeveloped parcels of land as well as existing developments on large underutilized properties that may afford further intensification and/or severance into smaller development parcels.

General Neighbourhoods



RAF

General Neighbourhoods have a prevailing low-rise residential character. The built form is predominantly 3-4 storey, single detached houses with generous setbacks from the street and often including front porches. Parking is either in front, side or to the rear, accessed by driveways.

Convenience retail, places of worship and schools are generally located along Corridors and in Centres, often within walking distances of most residences. The interconnected network of streets are abundantly landscaped with trees, serve mostly local traffic and include on-street parking. They are traditionally family-oriented environments including schools and playgrounds and are served by roads designed for slow-moving local traffic.

Types of General Neighbourhoods in the Regional Centre include:

Traditional Neighbourhoods (prior to 1940's)

Irregular grid pattern of streets with short block lengths, developed incrementally extending the historic street and block pattern, with a mix of uses, housing eras and styles.

Early Fully Planned Neighbourhoods (1940's-60's)

Planned developments with either a grid or curvilinear pattern of streets and blocks, parks and schools, and often with standardized housing types and styles.

Contemporary Tract Housing and Subdivisions (1960's+)

Automobile-oriented, characterized by a broken or curvilinear road pattern with long block lengths, segregated land uses and standardized housing.

Reurbanization Strategy

Ensuring the protection and stability of existing General Neighbourhoods is critical for maintaining a diverse population base within the Regional Centre that includes families and more passive lifestyle preferences. Existing built-out General Neighbourhoods will experience little visible change. General Neighbourhood Corridors and Centres may see modest changes that reinforce these qualities while enhancing the viability of local public uses, such as schools and transit.

Additional Supporting Materials/Details to be developed:

SUPPORTING IMAGES AND FIGURES



Urban Neighbourhoods



Urban Neighbourhoods, Corridors & Centres

Typically with higher densities and more varied building forms than General Neighbourhoods, Urban Neighbourhoods vary from predominantly low-rise forms, a mix of low and higher-rise forms, or one consistent form. They house the broadest demographic profile, from families to young couples to seniors. They are walkable, with amenities such as public services, parks, shopping areas, and sometimes employment uses, integrated within or close by. Streets are usually highly interconnected, well used by pedestrians, and have on-street parking.

Urban Neighbourhood Corridors and Centres may serve a number of neighbourhoods and have a concentration of mixed-uses and higher densities in association with bus stops, public uses and/or civic spaces.

Types of Urban Neighbourhoods in the Regional Centre include:

Traditional Low-Rise Neighbourhoods (prior to 1940's)

Irregular grid pattern of streets with short block lengths, developed incrementally along historic street and block patterns with a variety of finely mixed low-rise housing types and architectural styles, and including non-residential land uses (e.g. Gottingen Neighbourhood).

Traditional Mixed-Rise Neighbourhoods, (1960's+)

Similar forms and patterns to low-rise urban neighbourhoods, but contemporary intensification pressures due to desirable central location also led to broad range of higher building forms and apartments (e.g. Old South End and Austenville neighbourhoods)

Contemporary Apartment Neighbourhoods (1960's+)

Automobile-oriented broken grid or curvilinear roads, standardized apartment block developments of varying heights (but predominantly less than 6 stories), resulting from large-scale social housing developments (e.g. Uniacke complex and Highfield Park area).

Reurbanization Strategy

Urban Neighbourhoods are dynamic areas that are continually evolving, providing for a variety of lifestyle and housing needs. They will continue to intensify to varying degrees depending on context and desirable built character qualities, ensuring transitions in scale and intensity to adjacent General Neighbourhoods. Most change will be directed to underutilized sites along Urban Neighbourhood Corridors and within Urban Neighbourhood Centres.

Additional Supporting Materials/Details to be developed:



SUPPORTING IMAGES AND FIGURES

Urban Corridors





Urban Corridors

Urban Corridors are major streets that are framed by a significant intensity of mixed-uses and continuous retail frontages. Generally, these streets link citywide destinations such as downtowns and other urban centres, and they function as important circulation routes for cars, transit, cyclists and pedestrians.

Within Urban Corridors, people can shop, work, live and interact, and they are often destinations in their own right. Commercial and public uses serve the population within the corridor as well as the surrounding neighbourhoods and districts, which are linked by a fine-grained network of streets and mid-block connections. Streetscaping is high quality and inviting to pedestrians. Multi-storey buildings are close to the street with at-grade retail and offices and/or apartments above.

There is currently no existing Urban Corridor in the Regional Centre that can serve as a precedent and model for the quality and character envisioned. Types of future Urban Corridors include:

Traditional Main Street

Historic, street-oriented, mixed-use corridors characterized by multi-story buildings with retail atgrade (e.g. Gottingen Street between Cogswell and Gerrish Streets).

Urban Commercial Strips

Post-war, mainly commercial streets that include a mix of street-oriented and automotive oriented uses and buildings (e.g. Quinpool Road between Robie and Oxford Streets).

Suburban Commercial Strips

Contemporary commercial streets characterized by automotive-oriented and large-format commercial uses with large surface parking areas (e.g. Wyse Road between Nantucket Avenue and Symonds Street).

Reurbanization Strategy

There is tremendous opportunity for growth and revitalization in Urban Corridors. Directing significant residential developments to these areas is critical to sustainability by ensuring the vitality of retail, transit and public services and by serving surrounding neighbourhoods with amenities within walking distances. The scale and amount of intensification will vary from one Urban Corridor to another, based on sensitive and appropriate transitions to adjacent neighbourhoods and ensuring appealing environments for walking.

Additional Supporting Materials/Details to be developed:



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New Urban Centres





Urban Character & Structure New Urban Centres

New Urban Centres

New Urban Centres define contemporary, fully planned, pedestrian and transit-oriented, mixed-use areas outside of the historic core areas of the Regional Centre. They are future transit hubs that will function as regional shopping and civic destinations and be designed as living communities with a variety of housing choices, offices, and public amenities such as libraries and hospitals. They will be compact pedestrian-oriented environments characterized by a high quality public realm, a fine-grained network of streets and mid-block connections and strong linkages to the surrounding neighbourhoods and districts.

New Urban Centres correspond to significant areas in the Regional Centre that hold tremendous potential for transforming into appealing mixeduse environments in the future. These sub-centres correspond to major transportation corridors and existing or future transit hubs planned for the Regional Centre. Potential sites include:

Shopping Malls

Although some of these shopping areas are healthy and continue to draw from a wide region, others are in decline and in need of redefining.

Transitioning Commercial/Industrial Areas

Older strip commercial and/or industrial areas that have or are becoming obsolete in their current use, such as the intersection of Robie and Young Streets, Wyse Road and Nantucket Avenue, or the underutilized transit hub at Woodside Ferry Terminal.

Reurbanization Strategy

There is tremendous opportunity to accommodate growth in new Urban Centres to meet sustainability objectives, including making efficient uses of existing infrastructure, discouraging automobile traffic, and for enhancing walking and transit use. They offer opportunity to introduce a range of appealing higher-density housing that can meet the life-style and affordability needs of a diverse population.



Existing Urban Centres





Existing Urban Centres

Existing Urban Centres define the traditional mixeduse areas that are not within the Urban Core, of which there are three: the Cornwallis Park and Spring Garden Road areas adjacent to Downtown Halifax, and Downtown Dartmouth. These are identified as Urban Centres because they have historically and continue to serve as areas for higher density living, employment and important city-wide destinations for shopping and public services. They are places that currently serve as public transit hubs, are well connected to the surrounding neighbourhoods and districts, and are pedestrian-oriented in character.

The existing Urban Centres are comprised of complex urban environments that include a wide variety of densities, building types, uses, public spaces and institutions as well as concentrations of heritage and cultural resources. They should continue to function as regional shopping and civic destinations that include a wide variety of housing choices, public amenities, open spaces and employment opportunities.

Reurbanization Strategy

All three of the existing Urban Centres are in transition with tremendous opportunities for additional growth and revitalization. Centrally located with significant transit and civic infrastructure already in place, these areas are well suited for additional growth in the immediate term. Accordingly, they are identified as priorities for area-specific urban design guidelines. The scale and amount of development will vary and will need to be carefully considered to ensure sensitivity to heritage resources and to providing appropriate transitions in scale and intensity to low-rise residential areas within and adjacent to the Urban Centre.

The defining characteristics of existing Urban Centres that Reurbanization should reinforce include:

 major commercial and civic destinations that serve a broad community including shopping facilities, offices and key public uses such as libraries, hospitals and transit hubs;

- a mixed built character that is generally comprised of narrow traditional streets, historic and contemporary architectures, a wide variety of building scales and densities that may include high-rises as well as low-rise residential areas;
- a wide variety of housing choices within compact pedestrian-oriented environments characterized by a high quality public realm; and,
- a fine-grained network of streets and midblock connections and strong linkages to the surrounding neighbourhoods and districts.

Additional Supporting Materials/Details to be developed:

SUPPORTING IMAGES AND FIGURES

Urban Core





Urban Core

The Urban Core corresponds to the Downtown Halifax area which historically and presently functions as the central business district, cultural heart and civic seat of the Halifax Regional Municipality. The Urban Core contains the Regional Centre's greatest mix and intensity of uses, as well as the greatest scale and density of development. It is also the most complex urban environment framed by the citadel and waterfront and comprised of the historic settlement's original compact block and street pattern, numerous heritage and cultural landmarks and buildings, and steep slopes.

In addition to consisting of a wide variety of building types, styles, scales and heights, it is also an environment that has been highly fragmented. Significant deadening intrusions into the urban fabric have resulted from large areas of surface parking, the Cogswell Interchange and poorly designed large scale buildings and consolidated block developments such as Scotia Square.

In spite of these shortcomings, the Urban Core is the most intensely used pedestrian environment throughout the day and seasons. This is in part due to its mix and concentration of uses; close proximity to the surrounding dense neighbourhoods, major academic and medical institutions; and its central function as the primary intermodal transit hub and destination. Heritage landmarks, the waterfront, as well as the concentration of employment, services, cultural, and entertainment uses continue to draw people daily from across the region, in addition to tourists.

Reurbanization Strategy

As a consequence of suburbanization coupled with major single-use developments, the Urban Core currently struggles to retain its draw as a shopping destination and has experienced the greatest proportional decline in residential population over the decades. However, improvements that bring clarity and predictability to the planning framework will enable HRM to benefit from a reurbanization trend recently seen in downtowns of other similarly scaled cities. The central location, numerous opportunity sites and exceptional in-place supporting infrastructure renders the Urban Core as most appropriate for directing the greatest intensification of uses and residential growth in the Regional Centre. Not only will this greatly serve broad sustainability objectives, this growth can in turn assist in greatly enhancing the vitality and vibrancy of the downtown.

With careful guidance, significant new developments can be shaped to 'repair' past mistakes, fill the glaring 'gaps' in the streetscapes, aid in the refurbishment of heritage resources, and contribute to the improvement of the public realm. However, the success of the Urban Core hinges on retaining its distinct assets which includes major heritage landmarks and buildings, natural features and adjacent residential neighbourhoods. Accordingly, the Urban Core is identified as a priority for a greater level of urban design direction that will build upon this urban design framework and include area-specific guidelines and supporting policies.

The defining characteristics of the Urban Core that Reurbanization should reinforce include:

- the primary employment, commercial, cultural and civic destination for the entire region
- the primary intermodal transportation hub including bus, train, and ferry connections;
- a mixed built character that is generally comprised of narrow traditional streets, historic and contemporary architectures, a wide variety of building scales and densities that may include high-rises as well as low-rise mixed-use and residential areas;
- a wide variety of housing choices within compact and generally dense pedestrian-oriented environments;
- a high quality public realm that includes inviting streets for pedestrians and a variety of formal and informal open spaces for passive and active use; and,
- a fine-grained network of streets and midblock connections and strong linkages to the surrounding neighbourhoods and districts.

Transit Infrastructure Priorities





Transit Infrastructure Priorities

Transit is fundamental to creating a sustainable city that is compact, walkable and well designed. Public transit that is efficient, easily accessible and well used needs to be planned in concert with the desired urban structure. Higher densities and a mix of uses in close proximity to public transit make it more convenient and encourage ridership by generating higher volumes of pedestrian traffic. Locating transit along Corridors and serving Neighbourhood and Urban Centres where there is a mix of residential, employment and retail uses helps to ensure a more a more viable transit network by generating trips throughout the day and not only during the peak morning and afternoon rush hours.

Transit is best served in areas that support and generate pedestrian traffic. The primary user group for transit is pedestrians, since all transit trips begin and end with a pedestrian trip component. Ensuring that transit is centred along higher density and mixed-use corridors that are pedestrian-oriented is vital to the success of public transit, as it creates safe, walkable and vibrant areas that which can enhance the overall experience of using public transit. As transit is integral to a successful reurbanization strategy, the purpose of this plan is to integrate transit amenity with the Urban Character & Structure strategy for the Regional Centre.

Priority Transit Streets

Primary and Secondary Priority Transit Streets have been identified throughout the Regional Centre that should be served by local transit routes. These routes reinforce the Urban Character and Structure Framework by corresponding to streets that have been identified as potential higher-density and/or mixed-use corridors, and centres. These corridors link centres, both potential and those identified in the Regional Planning Strategy. Priority Transit Streets do not necessarily include all streets that will have transit service or correspond to actual routing; rather they intend to identify priorities for local and frequent service to ensure appropriate levels of service are directed to where the densities exist or are planned.

Planned Transit Hubs/Potential Transit Hubs

Transit Hubs include those identified by the Regional Planning Strategy as well as other potential sites. They are located throughout the Regional Centre at key destination points such as the Downtowns, major shopping centres or public institution such as a university. Transit Hubs are generally transfer points between different modes of transit, such as bus to ferry, or different levels of transit service, such as local transit to regional transit. Several of these hubs are located along the periphery of the Regional Centre, strategically located to connect to the region wide transit infrastructure.

As major pedestrian traffic generators, Transit Hubs provide an opportunity to create a distinct 'place' that transforms a utilitarian purpose into an exciting and unique destination that acts both as a community gateway and a vibrant mixed-use node. For Transit Hubs located within already established neighbourhoods and districts, enhancing the Transit Hub can be used as a catalyst for revitalization.

The location of these Transit Hubs reinforces the Urban Character & Structure Framework by locating significant transit infrastructure at major mixed use destinations, primarily in the Urban Core and in Urban Centres. The majority of these Transit Hubs are already situated in well established commercial and employment areas within the HRM Regional Centre, ensuring that new development will provide for a range of different uses that are oriented towards the pedestrian.

Transit Nodes

Transit Nodes generally correspond to Neighbourhood Centres and/or an intersection of Priority Transit Streets. These local centres and intersections are key locations where transit users can also served by neighbourhood amenities such as shops and services. As Neighbourhood Centres serve a broader community within walking distances, these locations are well suited for key transit stops and transfer points. Transit Nodes should ensure an appropriate level of transit infrastructure and amenities that at a minimum will include well designed transit shelters and adequate seating.