


**Item No. 3(i)**

Committee of the Whole

December 3, 2013

**TO:** Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

**SUBMITTED BY:**

Original signed by 

Richard Butts, Chief Administrative Officer

Original Signed by 

For/Mike Labrecque, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** November 25, 2013

**SUBJECT:** Regional Plan Review

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**ORIGIN**

- Staff report to the Community Design Advisory Committee (CDAC), dated September 18, 2013, with Draft 3 of the revised Regional Plan attached.
- At the October 10, 2013, meeting of the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee (CPED), a motion was passed to request staff, through the CAO, to design (in consultation with the Chair of the Community Design Advisory Committee) and engage in a process with CDAC to identify the Committee's remaining areas of concern in each of the four regional plan themes identified in the July 2011 staff report – sustainable solutions, enhancing the regional centre, improved suburban and rural design, land and transit/active transportation – and work to resolve these issues through further revision to the draft plan and/or alternative policy for consideration by Council that, if possible, addresses those issues and report back to Committee of the Whole on or before November 28, 2013.

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

Sections 227 to 229 of the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Committee of the Whole:

1. accept the amendments recommended by staff in the discussion section of this report;
2. direct staff to prepare a supplementary report and amendment package for referral to the Heritage Advisory Committee and the Design Review Committee; and
3. direct staff to bring the amendment package back to Regional Council for Notice of Motion to start the adoption process.

## **BACKGROUND**

After the October 10, 2013, meeting of the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee (CPED), staff and the Community Design Advisory Committee (CDAC) agreed to have a facilitator assist CDAC in its deliberations. The committee met on three occasions and prepared a list of recommendations that are organized by the RP+5 Themes. Staff has considered CDAC's recommendations and, in the Discussion section that follows, has responded to each with a recommendation to Regional Council.

## **DISCUSSION**

***CDAC Recommendation 1: The Community Design Advisory Committee recommends that Halifax Regional Council incorporate the recommendations contained in this Appendix [refers to Appendix A of the CDAC report, dated November 15, 2013] into Draft 3 of RP+5.***

Staff has considered all the CDAC recommendations presented in the following discussion and have prepared a response.

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### **Focus on Sustainable Solutions**

***CDAC Recommendation 2: The Regional Plan needs to contain a clear policy which states that there is a sufficient supply of land currently within the urban growth settlement area and current service boundary to meet the development requirements of the Region for the next 30-35 years and that consideration of development and planning must occur within that context.***

Staff concurs that there is sufficient supply of serviced land within the Urban Service Area boundary established under the Regional Subdivision By-Law. In response to three requests to initiate secondary planning for three future growth areas designated by the Regional Plan, staff undertook an inventory of suburban land and estimated that, as of September 2009, under a baseline growth rate scenario and the growth targets established for the suburbs, there was

sufficient suburban supply for 31 to 42 years<sup>1</sup>. The Regional Plan states that “HRM also seeks to support a competitive housing market by maintaining a 15 year supply of serviced lands”.

With one exception, staff had recommended that Council not initiate secondary planning processes to increase the supply of suburban land as this would be inconsistent with the Regional Plan principle to manage growth in a cost effective manner. Staff recommended that planning only for the Port Wallace area to be initiated, as supply of suburban land on the east side of the harbour was constrained. Council adopted this recommendation.

As requested by CDAC, staff recently updated the suburban inventory. The results are presented in Attachment A. As of November 2013, staff estimate that the suburban supply as estimated is sufficient for at least 28 to 35 years, based on a suburban growth rate of 1,200 households per year. Staff maintains the position that the supply is more than adequate for the foreseeable future but should be monitored on an on-going basis<sup>2</sup>.

Where requests are received to initiate secondary planning for any of the suburban growth areas identified by the Regional Plan, Policy S-2 requires that Council consider:

- the need for additional lands;
- the fiscal implications; and
- the implications for achieving the HRM growth targets.

Staff feels that this policy sufficiently addresses the issues while maintaining flexibility in the event that circumstances change.

**Staff Response to #2:            Already addressed. No amendments required.**

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***CDAC Recommendation 3: In addition to the clear policy statement, as much detail as possible in regard to the nature, type, location of development (as outlined in Table 1.1) should be expanded to provide clear definitions of the defined development areas under the plan and the boundaries of those areas. (pg. 16 of Plan document); and***

***CDAC Recommendation 4: To better represent the policy statement in recommendation 3, CDAC recommends that Table 1.1 be expanded (or an additional table added) to detail how much capacity is projected in each area type, where in HRM (west or east side of the harbour and***

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<sup>1</sup> The supplementary staff report, dated June 10, 2010 can be found at: <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/101116cowAgenda> under item 3. Reference is made to pages 15 and 16 and attachment L and M of the report.

<sup>2</sup> According to Statistics Canada census data, the number of households in HRM grew by 10,015 from 2006 to 2011 – an average of 2,003 per year. If this growth rate was assumed to continue in the future and 50% of this growth was assigned to the suburbs (1,003 households per year), the available supply would be estimated to last 33 to 42 years without any consideration given to the potential for redevelopment, infilling or auxiliary dwelling units. Staff applied a more conservative estimate of 1,200 dwelling units per year in the suburbs based on a previous projection undertaken for HRM by Altus in 2009. Stantec (see Table 1 of the draft Regional Plan) projects a significant increase in growth in dwelling units between 2016 and 2021.

*specifics in the urban, suburban, rural growth areas); along with qualitative analysis/statement as to how long the supply carries development (intensification strategies). (pg. 16 of the Plan document)*

Staff has provided CDAC with information pertaining to potential residential growth over HRM (number of new dwelling units) for illustrative purposes. This includes:

- the potential distribution of growth by growth centre for the Regional Centre, Suburban areas and Rural Commutershed (presented as Attachment B);
- approved and in process “Conservation Design Developments” (Attachment C); and
- “grand-fathered subdivision lots” yet to be developed in unserviced areas of HRM (Attachment D).

These are estimates based on the best information currently available. There is no evident advantage of including this level of information in the Regional Plan. These are not predictions of what will or should happen in each community but rather represent an overall level of growth. Investment decisions by the private sector and community review of development proposals will obviously have significant determination of the outcome.

The Regional Plan has identified growth centres and has established broad growth targets of at least 25% to the Regional Centre and at least 75% to the Regional Centre and suburbs. Staff maintains that this is an appropriate strategic approach with the outcome monitored and reported to Council on an annual basis.

**Staff Response to #3, #4: No amendments recommended.**

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***CDAC Recommendation 5: The Regional Plan should contain a clear policy statement that the Regional Plan and definitions contained in the Plan (such as urban growth settlement areas, etc.) shall take precedence over all other strategic plans, including the Transit Service Boundary and those of Halifax Water, and that all strategic plans must align with the Regional Plan as approved by Council.***

The Regional Plan is the context under which HRM makes decisions about where growth is to occur. Section 232 (1) of the HRM Charter states: “The Municipality may not act in a manner that is inconsistent with a municipal planning strategy.” With the exception of Halifax Water, the budgets and work plans of HRM business units are evaluated against the Regional Plan. As outlined in Section 8.2 of the revised Regional Plan, Halifax Water is a public utility that reports to a Board of Directors and is regulated by the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board.

**Staff Response to #5: Already addressed. No amendments required.**

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**Recommendation 6:** *In regard to policy G15 (Governance pg. 106), the Regional Plan should include a policy statement that clearly outlines that the service boundary and urban growth area boundary, as outlined in the Plan, are to be considered hard boundaries meant to ensure the growth targets are achieved in a fiscally responsible and sustainable way, and that changes to those boundaries may only be considered under extraordinary circumstances as provided for in the plan; and*

**Recommendation 7:** *That policy G-15, in regard to extraordinary circumstances for consideration of expansion of the service boundary (see recommendation 6) should state that expansion would only be considered for “minor lot adjustments or boundary additions provided they do not create a separate lot for residential dwellings” or similar wording as provided for under Ontario’s green belting laws.*

Policy G-15 currently allows Council to consider extending serviced development into the abutting designation “provided other policies of this plan are satisfied and the proposed development is limited in scale”. It is the understanding of staff that CDAC feels that this wording offers too much discretion. However, staff maintains that some limited discretion is necessary, as boundaries drawn on the Generalized Future Land Use Map on a regional scale cannot take local situations into account. Council could choose to specify a specific maximum number of lots to be created under this policy, but it would have to be an arbitrary number.

It is reiterated that there are strong policies in the Regional Plan which must be addressed before new growth areas to develop. Policy S-2 requires consideration of:

- the need for additional lands;
- the fiscal implications to HRM and Halifax Water; and
- the implications for achieving HRM growth targets.

**Staff Response to #6, #7:** **Already addressed. No amendments required.**

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**CDAC Recommendation 8:** *CDAC recommends that the Regional Plan contain policy controls that substantially minimize growth/settlement on local and trunk roads between designated rural growth centres. (section 3.4.5 pg. 53). CDAC noted that this will require substantial reduction from the 100 allowable subdivision currently in the plan (suggestion of 30) and a new or expanded policy mechanism (beyond current policies of non-acceptance of roads by HRM and prohibition of development in open space/resource designation) to achieve this outcome. The policy direction should not eliminate division of lots for purposes of family residences.*

The revised plan has adopted several measures to encourage development within centres:

- In areas outside of Rural Growth Centres, the revised plan proposes to allow for a maximum of 100 dwelling units for Lower Density Classic Conservation Design Development and 30 dwelling units for Hybrid Conservation Design Developments.
- In growth centres, densities of 2.5 dwelling units per hectare may be considered or higher where a secondary planning strategy has been adopted whereas, between centres, the allowable density is reduced to 1 unit per hectare.

A further reduction in the number of lots outside of Centres would not necessarily reduce total development between centres but may lead to a larger number of smaller developments with more fragmented non-disturbance areas. This would be contrary to a more comprehensive, integrated approach to open space land management advocated by the Greenbelting and Public Open Space Priorities Plan. Further, an increased number of smaller developments could add to costs of providing municipal services.

If HRM prefers to limit residential development outside of centres, a more effective approach would be to prohibit developments on new public roads. Under the proposed policies for Conservation Design Developments, up to twenty dwelling units on a shared private driveway could still be considered (policy S-17, clause (f)).

This approach would further a stated settlement and housing objective to focus new growth in centres where supporting services and infrastructure are already available (section 3.1.3 of the draft plan) and may help reduce future municipal costs for snow plowing and road maintenance. However, it could reduce life-style choice. Another stated objective is to direct growth so as to balance property rights and life-style opportunities with responsible fiscal and environmental management.

At this point, staff is of the opinion that a more stringent approach to rural growth management is not merited. From the time of adopting the Regional Plan until the end of 2012, cumulative housing starts in rural areas has represented 23.6% of the total for HRM, which is within the target proposed (growth in housing units outside the urban service area not to exceed 25% of the total over the life of the plan). Staff believes that growth should be monitored and policy adjustments made, in the future, if warranted.

CDAC also recommended that HRM not eliminate subdivision of lots for family residences. The HRM Charter does not allow for municipal approvals to be based on family relationships. However, the Regional Plan does allow for subdivision approvals to be granted for up to eight lots on lands designated Rural Commuter or Rural Resource and approval for one lot on lands designated Open Space and Natural Resources.

**Staff Response to #8:           No amendment recommended.**

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***CDAC Recommendation 9: That the Plan policy position in regard to riparian buffer should be 30 metres (as compared to the proposed 20 metres) to better align with provincial policy (Department of Environment) and***

*provide enhanced environmental protection. (section 2.3.3 pgs. 32-33) Policy consideration could be given to allowing a waiver to 20 metres when appropriate to consider and does not compromise environmental protection. A minority position was put forward that stated that the expansion to 30 metres is not required.*

The Province has established a minimum 20 metre riparian buffer for forestry operations with a formula for an increased buffer based on the slope of the land. This formula has been adopted in the Regional Plan and community land use by-laws.

The proposed policy E-16 maintains this minimum standard but allows for a higher standard where secondary planning strategies have been adopted. This has been done in the Morris-Russell Lake, Bedford West and River – Lakes secondary plan areas.

This tactic allows for a more tailored approach where more detailed information has been made available through watershed studies and deliberation with local communities.

**Staff Response to #9:        No amendments recommended.**

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***CDAC Recommendation 10: Policy EC-3 (section 5.3.1 pg. 67) should be worded to make it clear that no stand-alone commercial or any residential (R) uses will be permitted in HRM Business Parks (BI designation) and, if adopted by Council, the policy should override current SMPS and LUBS designations.***

The Business Park Functional Plan recommended that HRM should allow the private sector to take the lead on developing land for retail and office space while HRM business parks should focus on general and light industrial developments. Policy EC-4 commits HRM to the recommendations of this Functional Plan.

Staff has interpreted the functional plan recommendation to apply on a go-forward basis to future business park developments. Eliminating retail and office uses under the zoning provisions applied to developed portions of HRM business parks would render many existing developments as non-conforming uses and would likely raise concerns of devaluation in the event that they want to sell their property.

Staff, however, would recommend that the land use by-law provisions for Aerotech Business Park be reviewed in consultation with the Airport Authority to determine whether the provisions are consistent with the recommendations of the Business Parks Functional Plan.

**Staff Response to #10:        (1) Insert a policy to identify the Burnside Business Park Expansion Area (illustrated on Map 10 of the Revised Regional Plan) with a statement that these lands are to be reserved for general and light industrial uses, as well as accessory office and retail uses, and that the Dartmouth**

**Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-Law be amended accordingly as part of the amendment package; and (2) Have Council instruct staff to initiate a review of the land use by-law provisions for Aerotech Business Park.**

**Enhancing the Regional Centre**

***CDAC Recommendation 11: The Regional Plan should include a policy statement that specifically states policies related to the Plan objectives of: 1) incenting development in the Regional Centre; 2) streamlining development approvals in the Regional Centre 3) density bonusing in the Regional Centre shall be addressed in the policies of the Centre Plan. (sections 6.4 and 6.5 pgs. 76 & 77).***

A policy framework has already been established in the Regional Plan. Policy EC-1 states that the *Greater Halifax Economic Strategy: 2011 – 2016* is to “provide the direction and form the framework for economic programs and initiatives of HRM” and policy RC-4 states that “HRM shall consider the recommendations of the Strategic Urban Partnership....emphasis shall be given to the objectives and action plans established for the Regional Centre in the *Greater Halifax Economic Strategy: 2011 – 2016*”.

An excerpt of the Economic Strategy outlining 5 year objectives and action plans for the Regional Centre is presented in Table 1. The matters raised by CDAC are specifically addressed with the lead agency identified and with a commitment to implementation within a two year time frame. However, staff believes greater clarity would be achieved by adding wording as recommended by CDAC.

**Staff Response to #11: Accept CDAC recommendation.**

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***CDAC Recommendation 12: CDAC recommends that work on the Centre Plan be commenced immediately and that a timeline be established for submission of the Centre Plan to Regional Council; and***

***CDAC Recommendation 13: CDAC recommends that policy work in regard to incenting development in the Regional Centre be initiated immediately and in parallel with the Centre Plan and explore the reduction and/or removal of development fees and charges, and that early implementation of incentives be considered.***

Work has commenced on the Regional Centre Plan and a staff report will be forthcoming with a timetable for completion.

**Staff Response to #12, #13: Already addressed. No amendments required.**

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**Improved Suburban and Rural Community Design**

***CDAC Recommendation 14: Policy 6.2.2 (RC subsection 5 pg. 75) regarding complete communities should be extended to include ALL communities in HRM, not just urban.***

The requirement to design complete communities is already set out in the objectives for Settlement and Housing under Section 3.1 and specifically under sub-section 3.1.4. These objectives apply to all communities of HRM. Specific design requirements are also established in Tables 3-1 and 3-2, and policy S-9 which require these criteria be adhered to in preparing secondary planning strategies.

**Staff Response to #14:      Already addressed. No amendments required.**

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***CDAC Recommendation 15: Policy 9.2.1 (pg. 103) CDAC recommends that the length of time a community planning process should take from initiation to completion, under the legislative planning process, be set out in policy in the Regional Plan; and***

***CDAC Recommendation 16: CDAC recommends that Regional Council establish a target for the completion of community plans (how many- over what time frame- in what priority) and a measurement and reporting framework to measure progress against those target.***

In the report to CDAC dated September 18, 2013, staff recommended the communities for which community planning processes be undertaken over the next five years. These are:

- the Regional Centre
- Port Wallace
- Birch Cove
- Bedford Waterfront
- Fall River
- Porters Lake
- Upper Tantallon
- Middle Sackville
- North Preston

The Regional Plan cannot commit Council to a timeframe for adopting any planning document as the Charter requires Council to conduct a public participation program and hold a public hearing. In the event that Council is not satisfied that the proposed amendments are adequate or are in the public interest, it should not be bound by policy to render a decision when a better alternative may be to refer the matter back to staff for modification.

However, when initiating a planning process and establishing a public participation program, it may be beneficial to also establish a timeline for bringing the plan back to Council for consideration, and to require a report where the timeline cannot be met.

Council could establish a priority list for undertaking community plans by policy under the Regional Plan. It would create greater certainty but could reduce flexibility as a decision to vary the order would require an amendment to the Regional Plan, which would entail a public participation program and public hearing.

**Staff Response to #15, #16: Include a policy under Section 9.4: Secondary Planning Strategies that requires Council, at the time of initiating a planning process to establish a target date for bringing the matter back to Council for consideration of approval and, if the target date cannot be achieved, require that a report be submitted with the reasons.**

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***CDAC Recommendation 16A: It is recommended that Community Plans be consistent with the Regional Plan.***

Policy G-9 states as follows:

When new secondary planning strategies or amendments to existing secondary planning strategies are brought forward for approval, HRM shall consider whether the proposed objectives and policies are consistent with or further achieve the objectives and policies of this Plan.

**Staff Response to #16A: Already addressed. No amendment required.**

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***CDAC Recommendation 17: CDAC recommends that, for clarity, a link or appendix outlining the Community Engagement Policy, as approved by Regional Council, be included in the Regional Plan.***

The Regional Plan identifies a number of functional plans and strategies (including the Community Engagement Strategy) which have been endorsed by Council with a corresponding policy that the plan/strategy is to provide guidance in Council decision making. Staff concurs that a link to the location where this information can be found should be made in a footnote to the paper copy of the Regional Plan and included as a hyper-link in the digital version so that the reader can easily find these documents.

**Staff Response to #17: Establish links to all functional plans and strategies referenced by policy in the Regional Plan.**

**Land Use and Transit/Active Transportation are Mutually Supportive**

**Recommendation 18:** *CDAC recommends that Policy T14 Read: Table 4-1 and Map 6 represent the road network projects that may be required to meet future vehicle demands. No projects shown on this table shall be approved for construction until the Road Network Functional Plan is prepared that has included a public consultation process that provides rationale for the projects as they relate to one another, to growth targets as outlined in this plan, and to sustainable transportation initiatives and provides projected capital and operating costs for road construction projects.*

Staff concurs with the thrust of this recommendation but feel that the term “public consultation process” should be changed to “public information sharing process”. As stated, a public consultation process could imply that the HRM is seeking to obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions on the growth targets established by the Regional Plan, sustainable transportation initiatives and projected capital and operating costs or road construction projects. Based on a clearly established public participation goal of information sharing, Regional Council would commit to providing the public with balanced and objective information to assist the public in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions. The promise to the public would be to keep them informed by placing emphasis on explaining the rationale for the plan. The public could be informed using techniques such as fact sheets, web sites, open houses and social media, as examples.

**Staff Response to #18:** **Amend policy T-14 to state that none of the projects presented on the table are to be constructed until HRM has informed the public on the Road Networks Priorities Plan and the Plan has been endorsed by HRM.**

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**CDAC Recommendation 19:** *Move Policy T-3 (Section 4.2.2 pg 59) “street shall be designed to support pedestrian, bicyclists and public transit and to improve public health and safety” to the Objectives section to show the policy is intended to impact all transportation decisions.*

Staff agrees that T-3 is broader than just Active Transportation. Its overall importance is reflected in the objective statements. A more logical place for this policy is in Section 4.3: Street Design.

**Staff Response to #19:** **Move policy T-3 to Section 4.3 (Street Design)**

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**CDAC Recommendation 20:** *To assist in understanding, CDAC recommends that, in conjunction with policy T-12 (pg. 61) clear definitions of the areas for modal split targets be provided, perhaps through*

*mapping and accompanying text. Definitions should include: 1) outlining the definitions of the Regional Centre/inner suburban/suburban/rural edge; 2) the boundaries of those areas and 3) where those boundaries are in regard to other boundaries outlined the plan (such as the service boundary); and*

**CDAC Recommendation 21:** *Modal Splits. Policy T-12 with accompanying figure (pg. 61). Recognizing that; modal split targets in the plan have shifted from 2026 to 2031 (+5 yrs.); and, that targets should be both realistic and aspirational; and, that target will form the basis of Council's future budget decisions; and, that aging, work-from-home and other demographic shifts will occur as we move towards 2031; and that a strong focus on shifting modes in the suburban communities will have the greatest impact on community health indicators; and acknowledging that "trips" as defined in the plan are from home to work (wherever that is), not just from home to the regional centre.*

*The Committee recommends the following adjustments to the modal split targets to 2031 in the Regional Plan (based on the opinion of the Committee):*

***Regional Centre (modal shift target to 2031)***

<i>Transit</i>	<i>Active Transportation</i>	<i>Car</i>
<i>28%</i>	<i>37%</i>	<i>35%</i>

***Inner Suburban (modal shift target to 2031)***

<i>Transit</i>	<i>Active Transportation</i>	<i>Car</i>
<i>30%</i>	<i>8%</i>	<i>62%</i>

***Suburban Edge/Rural (modal shift target to 2031)***

<i>Transit</i>	<i>Active Transportation</i>	<i>Car</i>
<i>10%</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>86%</i>

The modal split percentages in T-12 are better described as "projections". They are a realistic expectation of future use of transit and active transportation, based on planned infrastructure and service investment and reflect all elements of the regional plan including the Urban Transit Service boundary. Increasing the percentage of trips using transit and active transportation is supported by the transportation objectives of the Regional Plan. Modeling of the overall network demands and the infrastructure needed to support that demand, will continue to be done on realistic projections of modal split. This ensures that we are positioned to build needed road infrastructure if and when the demand is demonstrated. Should a shift to alternative modes

exceed projections, resulting in reduced vehicle demand, construction of road infrastructure can be avoided or delayed.

It should also be noted that the plan currently states that “HRM shall strive to achieve or exceed the 2031 targets...by transit and active transportation.

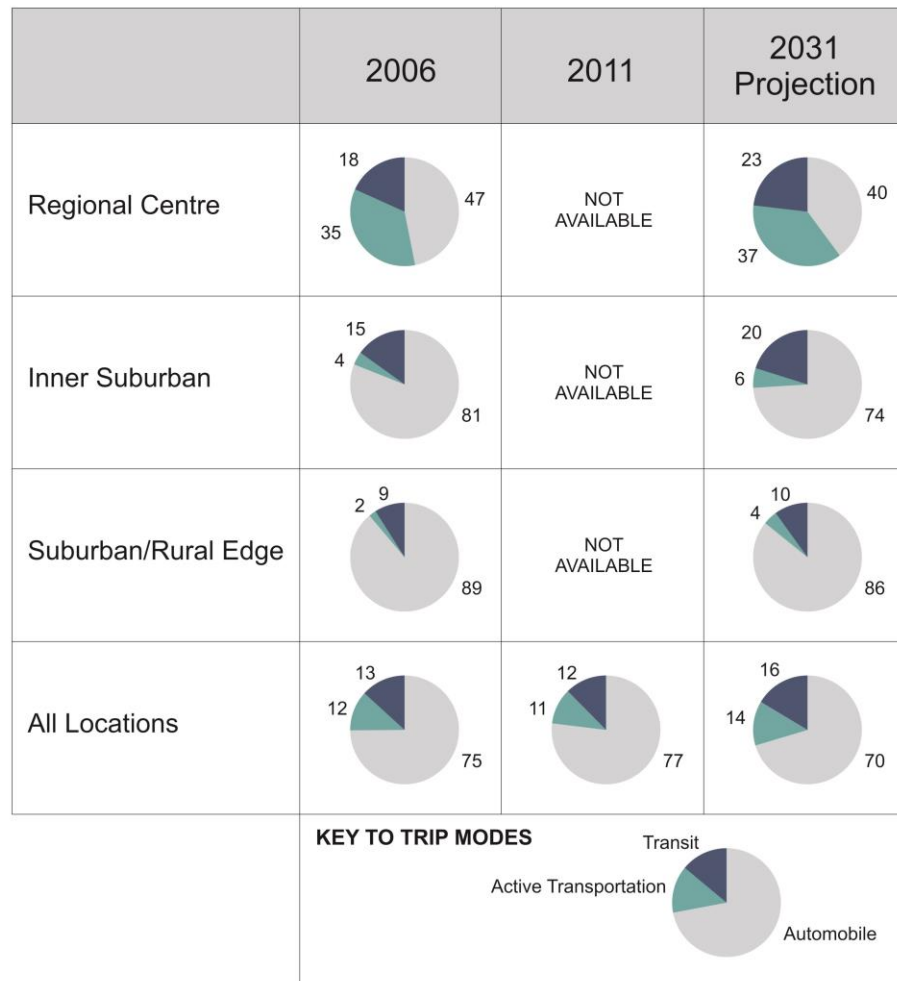
Policy T-12 will be changed to indicate that modal splits shown, are projections, and that we should aspire to exceed those. By adding a preamble to this policy, the transit modal split projections and the areas to which they apply are explained. A map showing transit area boundaries is included as Attachment E.

**Staff Response to #20, #21: (1) Add the following text to the Plan preceding Policy T-12:**

**“Modelling of transportation network demands requires a projection of what percentage of trips will be made by transit. This is referred to as “transit modal split”. Although the regional demand model contains different transit modal split percentages by area, based on Statistics Canada data, there is a reasonable commonality to modal splits throughout four larger zones:**

- Regional Centre**
- Inner Suburban**
- Rural/Suburban Edge**
- Rural”**

**(2) Change the wording in Policy T-12 to replace the word “targets” with the word “projections”.**



**CDAC Recommendation 22:** *That, irrespective of the modal shift targets adopted by Council that table T-12 (pg. 61) provide information on the baseline splits in all areas from 2006 (approval of the plan); current 2013; and targets out to 2031 so that measurement against the baseline, current and projected targets can be reviewed.*

The modal splits are prepared by Statistics Canada with every census. While region-wide data has been released for 2011, a breakdown by traffic zones has not. Staff is developing a field-count method to measure modal splits more reliably, more frequently, and with less dependence on the census.

**Staff Response to #22:** **Region-wide data will be added. Should further data be released by Statistics Canada for 2011 in time for inclusion in the plan, it will be added.**

***CDAC Recommendation 23: That wording in Policy T-10 (pg. 60) is changed from “shall consider mixed use residential and commercial areas designed to maximize access to public transit (transit oriented development)... ” to “shall require mixed use residential and commercial areas designed to maximize access to public transit (transit oriented development)... ”***

Policy T-10 states as follows:

“HRM shall consider mixed use residential and commercial areas designed to maximize access to public transit (Transit Oriented Development) within the Urban Transit Service Boundary through secondary planning strategies, land use by-law amendments, development agreements and capital investments.”

The intent of this policy is to support and encourage transit oriented mixed use developments in HRM planning documents. The problem with changing the wording from “shall consider” to “shall require” is that no discretion is afforded and there are many instances on a site specific basis where mixed use transit oriented developments are not applicable or appropriate. For example, where a development agreement approval is sought for a day care facility or an addition to a heritage building, it may be difficult to incorporate terms to address this policy

**Staff Response to #23: Amend policy T-10 to state as follows:**

**HRM shall consider mixed use residential and commercial areas designed to maximize access to public transit (Transit Oriented Development) within the Urban Transit Service Boundary through secondary planning strategies and shall strive to achieve the intent of this policy through land use by-law amendments, development agreements and capital investments.**

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**Measurement and Review**

***CDAC Recommendation 24: CDAC generally agrees with the measures and indicators as currently outlined in the Plan Appendix A (pg108).***

**Staff Response to #24: No amendment required.**

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***CDAC Recommendation 24A: CDAC recommends that targets (where appropriate) and baselines for the performance measure in Appendix A be added; and***

***CDAC Recommendation 25: CDAC recommends that Council direct an annual progress review of the Plan in the form of a report to Council outlining achievement against Plan measures and objectives (section 9.3 pg. 104).***

Staff agrees that targets could be developed for many of the performance measures presented in Appendix A to the Plan. Staff is committed to continuing the work necessary to identify targets for consideration by Regional Council.

**Staff Response to #24A, #25: Amend policy G-4 to commit to developing targets, where appropriate and also commit to an annual report to Council.**

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**General (to be checked against plan):**

***CDAC Recommendation 26: Section 9.7 Discretionary approvals. CDAC recommends that an additional reason be added to policy G.14 (a) (pg. 105) which would read: “vi) provided the proposal does not contradict targets for growth as outlined in the Regional Plan.”***

Policy G-14 articulates the decision criteria for developments which require approval of development agreements being considered for approval pursuant to the policies of the Regional Plan. There are three types of developments:

- conservation by design developments (policies S-14 to S-17);
- island developments (policy S-18); and
- residential developments in Middle Sackville (policy SU-6).

When these developments are being evaluated, policy G-14 already requires that consideration be given to all other criteria as set out in the policies of this plan. Consideration would therefore have to be given to the housing targets presented in section 3.1 of the Revised Plan.

However, CDAC recommended condition “provided the proposal does not contradict targets for growth” raises concerns regarding practicality and interpretation. For example, it could be interpreted that, when entertaining an application for a 70 lot Conservation by Design Development application, that a Community Council would have to be advised of the status of



HRM housing starts relative to targets on the date that a decision is being made. This is not practical as starts will be updated on an annual or semi-annual basis.

Similarly, if residential growth targets for the rural areas exceed the 25% target by one or two percent, would a Community Council be expected to reject an island development agreement application for two dwelling units?

**Staff Response to #26: No amendment recommended.**

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***CDAC Recommendation 27: CDAC recommends that a “Strategic Implications” section be added to the template for Council reports to ensure strategic objectives, as outlined in the Regional Plan, are before Council with all recommendations.***

If directed by Council, a section entitled “Regional Plan Implications” could be added to each staff report containing recommendations.

**Staff Response to #27: No amendment required.**

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***CDAC Recommendation 28: While CDAC supports the staff recommendation in regard to undergrounding utilities as found in the Plan. A minority position was presented that undergrounding should be supported and encouraged but not mandated in the Plan until such time as the effect on housing affordability is better determined.***

**Staff Response to # 28: No amendment required.**

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***CDAC Recommendation 29: For purposes of clarity, Policy E12 (pg 29&30) be expanded to read: HRM shall prepare a Greenbelting and Public Open Space Priorities Plan “to protect and preserve connectivity between natural areas and open resource lands, to enable their integration into sustainable community design, to help define communities, to benefit the Municipality’s economy and the physical health of its people, and to reflect and support the overall purposes of this Plan.”***

Staff agrees that this statement carries out the intent of this Priorities Plan.

**Staff Response to #29: Adopt this recommendation.**

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There will be financial implications to projects identified by the revised Regional Plan, if implemented by Council. It should be noted, however, that Section 232(2) of the HRM Charter states that the adoption of a municipal planning strategy does not commit the Council to undertake any of the projects suggested in it.

Where projects are brought forward for approval, the financial implications will be addressed in a staff report.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

An extensive public engagement program was undertaken in preparing the revised Regional Plan. A summary of this program is included in September 18, 2013, staff report<sup>3</sup>. Details can also be found at <http://www.halifax.ca/planhrm/RP5.html>

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

The principles of the revised Regional Plan include :

- Preserve and promote sustainability of natural assets.
- Manage development to make the most effective use of land and energy.
- Ensure opportunities for the protection of open space, wilderness, natural beauty and sensitive environmental areas.

These principles are enshrined in policies throughout the document. The most detailed are found in Chapter 2: Environment, Energy and Climate Change.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

Council could:

1. Direct staff to incorporate the amendments, recommended by staff in the discussion section of this report, into the revised regional plan and prepare an amendment package for first reading. This is the staff recommendation;
2. Adopt some or all of the CDAC recommendations not supported by staff; or
3. Direct staff to undertake further work.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/documents/AttachmentC-RP5CEReportFinal.pdf>

**ATTACHMENTS**

Table 1: Excerpt from the Greater Halifax Economic Strategy: 2011 - 2016

Attachment A: Inventory of Suburban land as of November 2013

Attachment B: Potential Distribution of Household Growth by Growth Centres: 2011 – 2031

Attachment C: Conservation by Design Developments: Approved and in Process

Attachment D: Subdivision Lots Approved or in Process Pursuant to Grandfather Provisions

Attachment E: Transit Area Boundaries

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

Report Prepared by: Paul Morgan, Planner, Planning & Infrastructure, 490-4482

Report Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Austin French, Manager, Planning Services, Planning & Infrastructure, 490-6717

Report Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jane Fraser, Director, Planning & Infrastructure, 490-7166

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Table 1: Excerpt from the Greater Halifax Economic Strategy: 2011 - 2016

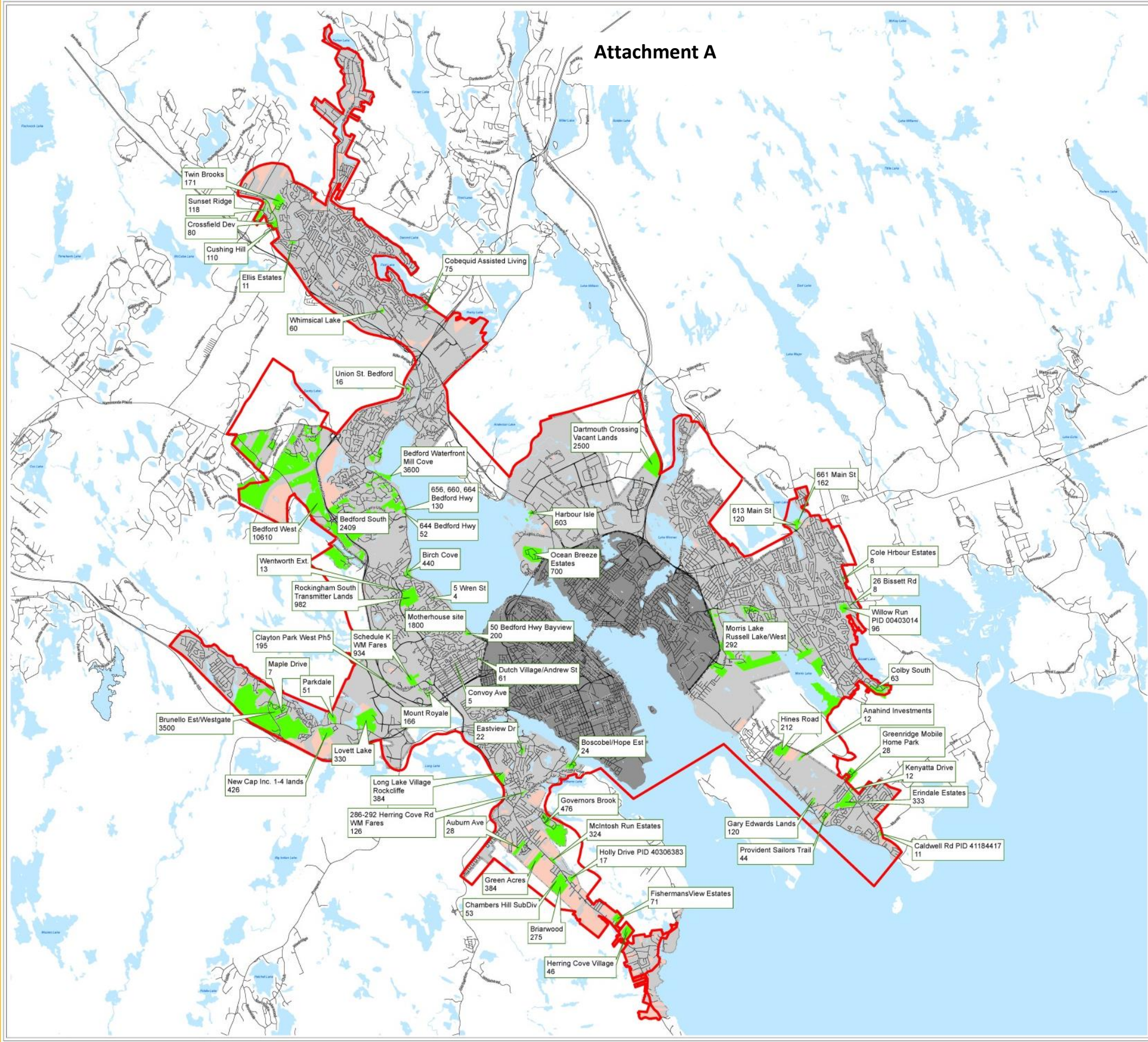
FIVE-YEAR OBJECTIVES	SHORT-TERM ACTIONS (YEARS 1-2)	LEAD	BUSINESS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
Direct and oversee a pro-development policy environment within the Regional Centre.	Review HRM's and Province's regulatory, tax and development fees and processes to make private land development inside the Regional Centre more attractive.	SUP	MEDIUM
	Rebalance the Regional Plan's current population distributions to be more sustainable so as to increase density in the urban core.	HRM	LOW
	Adopt incentives to encourage development of privately owned vacant and under-utilized land in the Regional Centre.		HIGH
	Raise awareness of the availability and location of public parking in the Regional Centre .		MEDIUM
	Develop a 5-year Carbon Rebate Program as an incentive to purchase new homes in the Urban Core.	SUP	MEDIUM
	Redesign public consultation approach and development approval criteria to decrease limitations to urban development and intensification.		
	Provide density bonuses and other incentives for increasing density along transit corridors and at neighbourhood centres in the Regional Centre.		
Further the liveability and attractiveness of our urban core.	Adopt a comprehensive 5-year, \$50 million Intergovernmental capital improvement campaign to repair and enhance the public realm in the Urban Core.	SUP	MEDIUM
	Establish an ongoing dedicated "Strategic Urban Reserve" fund for Urban Core beautification, "pole-free area," public art and infrastructure improvements.		
	Progress the plan to implement a downtown Halifax district heating/cooling network.		
Reinvent current approach to mobility in the Regional Centre.	Create a new transportation model that conveniently connects goods with their destinations while not interfering with residents' safe enjoyment of the Urban Core.	HRM	MEDIUM
	Implement the Active Transportation Plan with a priority on Regional Centre bike lanes.		
Celebrate and enable a rich variety of cultural and creative opportunities in the Regional Centre.	Increase public investment and funding for cultural institutions, programs, and public gathering spaces.	SUP	MEDIUM
	Activate Regional Centre public spaces with public art, culture, educational, and democratic activity through formal and informal programming.		
	Develop a plan to improve inter-modal connection of Regional Centre cultural spaces by bus, ferry, car, car-sharing, taxi, bike, walking, etc.		
	Create an inventory of cultural institutions, events and programs in the Regional Centre.		
	Create a plan to develop vacant public and private lands in the Regional Centre for cultural institutions, public spaces and private mixed uses as part of the "Opportunity Sites Task Forces".		
	Develop a strategy to create cultural public gathering places in the Regional Centre to achieve the "Biltco Effect".		



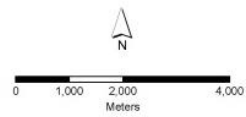
Attachment A

Inventory of Suburban Serviceable Lands

- Urban Transit Service Boundary
- Regional Centre Boundary
- Urban Settlement Designation
- Active Subdivision and/or Planning Applications 2013
- Vacant Lands 2013
- Label & dwelling unit count



October 2013



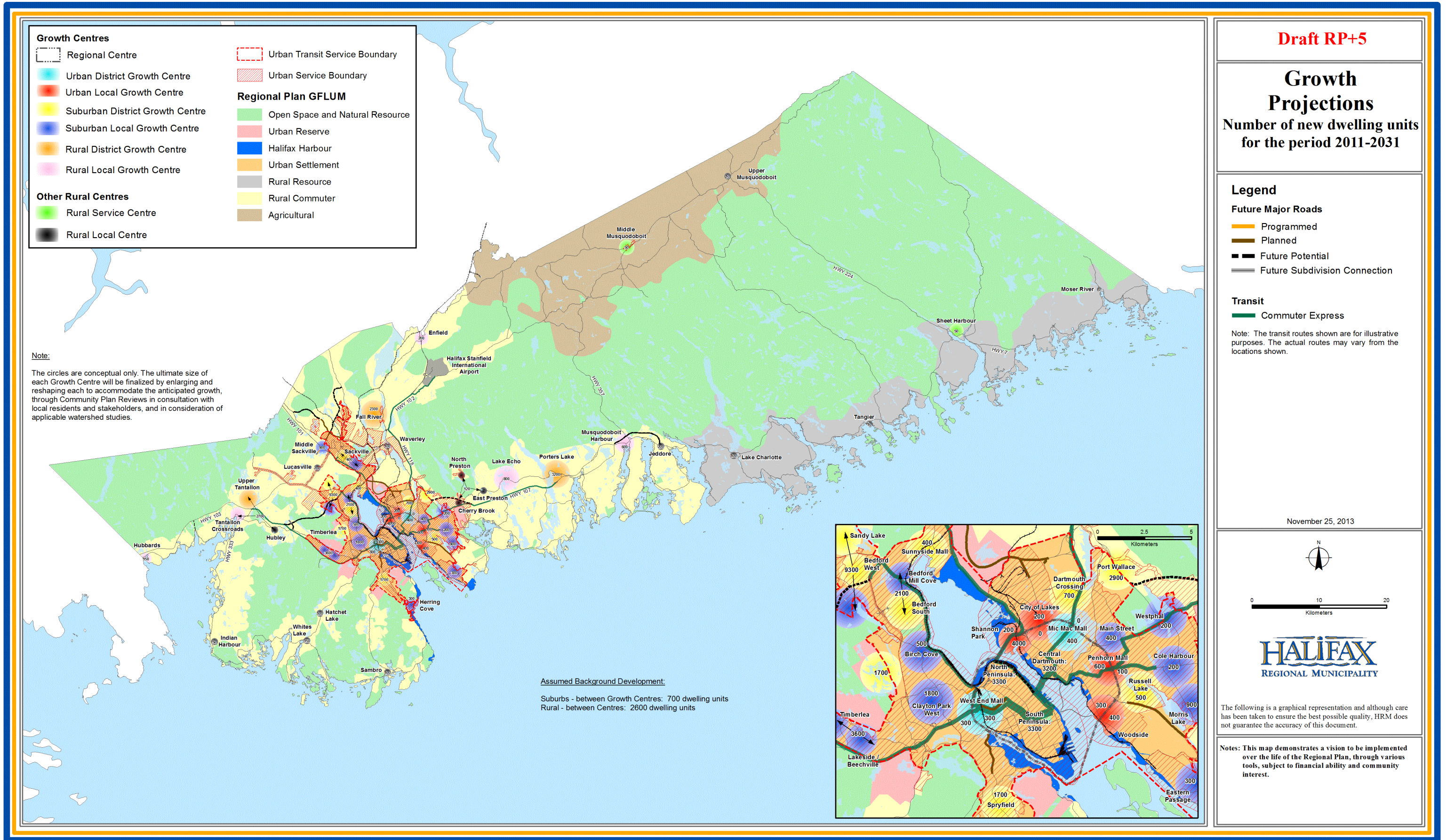
The following is a graphical representation and although care has been taken to ensure the best possible quality, HRM does not guarantee the accuracy of this document.

The information presented in this map is intended to provide an illustration of projected build out capacity based upon master plan projects, potential large infill projects and potential vacant serviceable lands within the urban service area, excluding the regional centre.

This information was compiled from various sources and is as accurate as possible; however, it should be used as a general reference only for summary purposes.



## Attachment B





Attachment C

# Open Space Subdivisions

Current to: November 7, 2013

Urban Transit Service Boundary

Fall River Secondary Plan Area

Rural District Growth Centre

Rural Local Growth Centre

Other Centres (RP+5)

Rural Local Centre

Harbour Industrial

Business / Industrial Park

Open Space and Natural Resource

Urban Reserve

Halifax Harbour

Urban Settlement

Rural Resource

Rural Commuter

Agricultural

Secondary designations (RP+5)

Harbour Industrial

Business / Industrial Park

Urban Transit Service Boundary

Fall River Secondary Plan Area

Rural District Growth Centre

Rural Local Growth Centre

Other Centres (RP+5)

Rural Local Centre

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Urban Reserve

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Agricultural

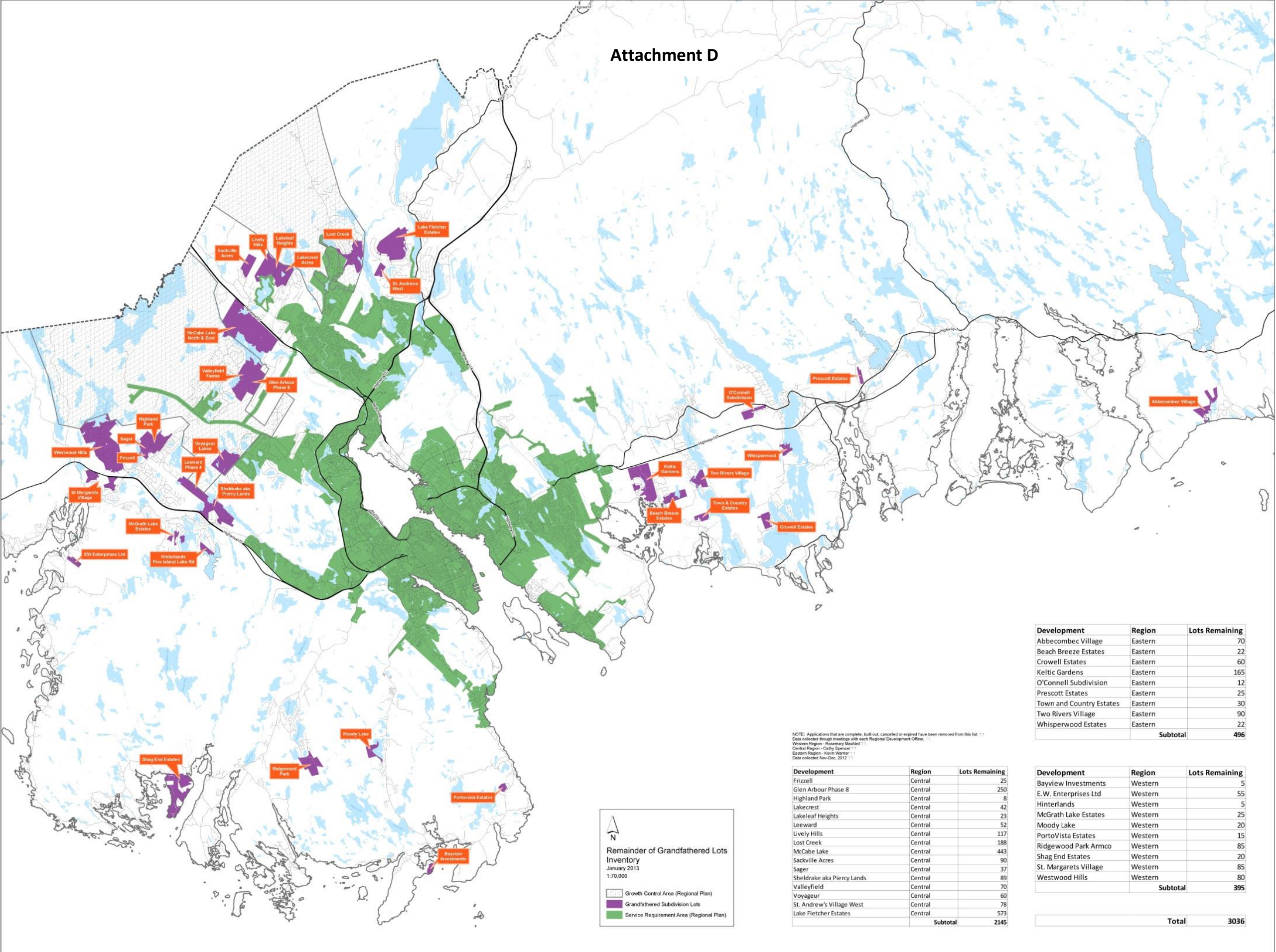
Secondary designations (RP+5)

Harbour Industrial

Business / Industrial Park



Attachment D





## Attachment E

