

Item No. 3(iii)

Community Design Advisory Committee

September 23, 2013

Heritage Advisory Committee

September 25, 2013

Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee

October 10, 2013

Committee of the Whole

December 3, 2013

December 10, 2013

TO: Dale Godsoe, Chair, Community Design Advisory Committee

Original signed by:

SUBMITTED BY:

Jane Fraser, Director, Planning and Infrastructure

DATE: September 18, 2013

SUBJECT: RP+5: Draft Revised Regional Municipal Planning Strategy

ORIGIN

- October 4, 2011 - Regional Council initiation of Regional Plan Five Year Review (RP+5); and
- February 9, 2012 - Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee (CPED) approval of revised RP+5 project schedule and Communication and Community Engagement Strategy for RP+5.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, Part VIII, Planning and Development.

Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (RMPS) Policy IM-7 requires the municipality to conduct five-year reviews.

RECOMMENDATION

Community Design Advisory Committee

It is recommended that the Community Design Advisory Committee recommend that the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee recommend that Regional Council give first reading and schedule a public hearing to consider:

Continued on next page

1. repealing the existing Regional Municipal Planning Strategy; and
2. adopting the proposed Regional Municipal Planning Strategy as contained in Attachment A.

Heritage Advisory Committee

It is recommended that the Heritage Advisory Committee recommend that the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee recommend that Regional Council give first reading and schedule a public hearing to consider:

1. repealing the existing Regional Municipal Planning Strategy; and
2. adopting the proposed Regional Municipal Planning Strategy as contained in Attachment A.

Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee

It is recommended that the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee recommend that:

1. Regional Council give first reading and schedule a public hearing to consider:
 - a) repealing the existing Regional Municipal Planning Strategy and adopting the proposed Regional Municipal Planning Strategy as contained in Attachment A;
 - b) repealing and re-adopting the 2006 Regional Plan Community Plans and Land Use By-Law Amendments (as amended) as contained in Attachment D;
 - c) adopting the amendments to land use by-laws as contained in Attachment E;
 - d) adopting the amendments to the Regional Subdivision By-Law as contained in Attachment F;
 - e) adopting the amendments to secondary planning strategies contained in Attachment G; and
2. Regional Council:
 - a) repeal the existing Regional Municipal Planning Strategy and adopt the proposed Regional Municipal Planning Strategy as contained in Attachment A;
 - b) repeal and re-adopt the 2006 Regional Plan Community Plans and Land Use By-Law Amendments (as amended) as contained in Attachment D;
 - c) adopt the amendments to land use by-laws as contained in Attachment E;
 - d) adopt the amendments to the Regional Subdivision By-Law as contained in Attachment F; and
 - e) adopt the amendments to secondary planning strategies contained in Attachment G.

Regional Council

It is recommended that:

1. Regional Council give first reading and schedule a public hearing to consider:
 - a) repealing the existing Regional Municipal Planning Strategy and adopting the proposed Regional Municipal Planning Strategy as contained in Attachment A;
 - b) repealing and re-adopting the 2006 Regional Plan Community Plans and Land Use By-Law Amendments (as amended) as contained in Attachment D;
 - c) adopting the amendments to land use by-laws as contained in Attachment E;
 - d) adopting the amendments to the Regional Subdivision By-Law as contained in Attachment F; and

- e) adopt the amendments to secondary planning strategies contained in Attachment G.
- 2. Regional Council:
 - a) repeal the existing Regional Municipal Planning Strategy and adopting the proposed Regional Municipal Planning Strategy as contained in Attachment A;
 - b) repeal and re-adopt the 2006 Regional Plan Community Plans and Land Use By-Law Amendments (as amended) as contained in Attachment D;
 - c) adopt the amendments to land use by-laws as contained in Attachment E;
 - d) adopt the amendments to the Regional Subdivision By-Law as contained in Attachment F; and
 - e) adopt the amendments to secondary planning strategies contained in Attachment G.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On October 4, 2011, Regional Council initiated the first review of HRM's 25-year Regional Plan (the RP+5 Project). This report provides an overview of the RP+5 Project and the proposed changes to the Regional Plan, which through this process has been developed into a more concise document.

HRM's Regional Plan was adopted in 2006. It outlines a framework of how HRM is to grow, establishes policies that enable regulations that are of regional significance, and policies and directions concerning matters in the areas of housing, transportation, the environment, the economy, the Regional Centre, culture, heritage, and governance. The RP+5 Project has strengthened the main concepts and components of the original Regional Plan. The main changes are highlighted in Discussion section of the report and generally include:

- The concept of greenbelting is introduced and a commitment is made to undertake a Greenbelting and Public Open Space Priorities Plan;
- A new policy provision is made to allow Community Councils to establish land use by-law regulations needed to protect water within a watershed or ground water supply area where a public water supply has been established or is proposed;
- Policy provision is made for Council to consider a new by-law to protect trees within riparian buffers;
- Growth targets have been re-worded and the consideration of the growth targets and the need for additional lands have been added as criterion for Council to consider when requests are received to amend the service boundary and to initiate secondary planning for new serviced growth centres;
- Provision is made to consider additional serviced lands at the north end of Morris Lake and in Eastern Passage to compensate for the development potential lost due to the Shearwater air base being reacquired by the Canadian Armed Forces, conditional upon the connector road from Mount Hope Avenue to Caldwell Road being constructed;
- Sheet Harbour, Middle Musquodoboit, Hatchet Lake, Hubley, Sambro, Indian Harbour, Waverley, White's Lake, Jeddore, North Preston, Eastern Passage and Cherry Brook have been reclassified from Rural Growth Centres to Rural Centres not Identified for Growth;

- Food security, mobility needs, supporting aging in place, establishing interconnected greenbelts and open spaces, are identified as matters to be considered when preparing secondary planning strategies for growth centres;
- A new policy has been added that, when reviewing secondary planning strategies for rural areas, consideration is to be given to limiting the scale or retail development allowed outside of designated rural centres;
- The sub-section “Open Space Design Developments” in the current plan has been replaced with “Conservation Design Developments” and new criterion for approval of development agreements have been established;
- Boundaries of the Rural Growth Centres where greater opportunity is made for Conservation Design Developments have been established;
- The 2010 Parks Canada Standards & Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada has been recommended for guidance under the Heritage Property By-Law, the Downtown Halifax Plan, the Barrington Street Conservation District and future conservation districts;
- A commitment is made to undertake a Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan;
- An Urban Service Transit Boundary has been established which identifies where HRM will direct future investment in public transit services, with the exception of rural commuter express services. Council may also consider programs to encourage and assist developing community based transit services;
- The transfer of municipal wastewater and stormwater services from HRM to Halifax Water is reflected in Chapter 8 and the implications for governance and regulatory approvals;
- The policies pertaining to Council approval of service boundary extensions or growth related secondary planning strategies, have been amended to reflect the approval requirements for water, wastewater and stormwater services;
- A new requirement is made under the Regional Subdivision By-Law for a hydrogeological assessment of adequacy of water supply for all subdivision applications in which ten or more new dwelling units would be serviced by wells;
- A new requirement is made under the Regional Subdivision By-Law for underground placement of electrical and communication distribution lines from the poles to the street right-of-way, for all subdivisions where new streets are proposed;
- The Community visioning program has been incorporated into future secondary planning processes; and
- Completed Functional Plans have been recognized and commitment to complete a number of functional plans has been transferred to secondary planning and other programs. A commitment to undertake several new priorities plans is also included.

The RP+5 Project has been informed by functional plans that have been undertaken in the past five years and studies that were undertaken specifically for the review. It has benefited from oversight and input from the Community Design Advisory Committee (CDAC), a councillor and citizen committee that was formed specifically for the project, and through update reports to the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee and Regional Council. Importantly, the Regional Plan has been shaped by considerable public and stakeholder input that was gained through public information meetings, workshops, open houses, survey responses and written submissions.

The Background section of the report contains information about the *Context for the Project*, a summary of the *Background Studies and Information*, and the *Community Engagement Program*. The Discussion section of the report outlines the *Major Policy Changes to the Regional Plan* and an *Outline of Proposed Future Work*.

BACKGROUND

Context for the Project:

On October 4, 2011, Regional Council initiated the first five year review of the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy¹ and directed the in-scope issues be refined and confirmed through a process of public consultation and research with direction and advice from a Community Design Advisory Committee (CDAC). The five-year review was framed around four key themes and directions that were described in the initiating staff report as follows:

1. Focus on Sustainable Solutions: There will be an increased focus on optimizing the environmental, economic, social and cultural sustainability of our future growth and development. This will include standards for low impact “green” development, ensuring that new development pays its fair share in order to protect the tax rate, expanded tools for the provision of housing affordability and heritage protection, and support for cultural programs.
2. Enhancing the Regional Centre: The Regional Centre holds enormous potential for new residential and commercial growth in areas that enjoy already established and paid-for infrastructure and services. However, new land use policies, by-laws, and design guidelines are required to ensure high quality growth of the appropriate density and scale. Additionally, new incentives should be used to attract development to the Regional Centre in order to achieve the Regional Plan’s urban growth targets. These new incentives may include such tools as streamlined development approval processes, tax incentives, and density bonusing.
3. Improved Suburban and Rural Community Design: Suburban areas have enjoyed enormous prosperity and growth over the past several decades. Because this growth is expected to continue, the Plan review will focus on improving community design standards. These new design standards will lead to more attractive and sustainable “green” communities than we have seen in the past, and will result in more beautiful, walkable and complete communities. Rural areas will similarly benefit from new design standards.
4. Land Use and Transit/Active Transportation are Mutually Supportive: The primary consideration is directing growth to appropriate areas based on existing infrastructure and services (i.e. growth centres and corridors). The growth areas must then be supported and reinforced by an appropriately designed transit service and active transportation infrastructure. There must be a continued focus on improving the experience of transit users, expanding the transit service in appropriate areas with the appropriate equipment, and maximizing ridership while minimizing single-occupant vehicle commuting. Investment in

¹ <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/documents/111004cow3.pdf>

active transportation options should continue to be supported, and be accelerated wherever possible.

The CDAC was appointed during the early stages of Phase 2 and was actively engaged in the review process from that point onward.² Staff and the committee reviewed all of the feedback received through Phases 1, 2 and 3 of the public process and considered this input, along with research documents to inform key policy directions. CDAC members participated in public and stakeholder group meetings, provided policy direction and reviewed several drafts of the Plan.

Background Studies and Other Information:

The first five-year review of the Regional Plan considered the extensive research which took place over the past five years as part of the various functional plans, watershed studies and secondary planning processes³. Some additional research was necessary to understand and take advantage of future opportunities, address emerging challenges, and inform revised policy direction. The five-year review is therefore based in part, on input from the public and other key stakeholders and, in part, on research and analysis undertaken by consultants and by project staff from various HRM departments. The findings of both the internal and external research have helped to shape the policy directives outlined in Attachment B.

Community Engagement Program:

These themes of the RP+5 process were considered throughout the RP+5 Project and helped to inform a program of community engagement that was organized into four phases as outlined below:

Phase	Key question / Milestone	Key outcomes
1	Where are we now?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">research & analysis of issuesinternal and external information sharing
2	Where do we want to go?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">initial public consultation on key policy directionsinterim approvals and policy recommendations
3	What do we need to refine or change?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">public information sharingpublic feedback on proposed changesfinal review and formal recommendations
4	Approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none">public hearing to consider for approval of changes

RP+5 involved three phases of community engagement described in more detail under “Community Engagement” (below) and in Attachment C. CDAC dedicated a considerable portion of its meetings to the review and careful consideration of the extensive public input

²Information about the CDAC, agendas and minutes:

<http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/CommunityDesignAdvisoryCommittee.html>

³ Regional Planning studies and reports <http://www.halifax.ca/regionalplanning/regionalplanstudies.html>

provided during the review process from individual citizens, property owners, businesses, community organizations, and major institutions. Public input informed many areas of proposed policy changes, including:

1. the wording of growth targets;
2. the introduction of greenbelting to the planning process;
3. community design outcomes within growth centres and in rural subdivisions;
4. focus on urban transit investment and support to community based transit service;
5. inclusion of key regional active transportation projects;
6. priorities for culture and heritage;
7. protection of potable water supply areas;
8. staged approach to undergrounding;
9. greater focus on rural economic development; and
10. revised performance measures.

Requests for Service Boundary Extensions:

In 2010, Council provided direction on land analysis and future secondary planning processes for sites identified in the 2006 Regional Plan as future growth areas for serviced development (Port Wallace, Sandy Lake and Highway 102 West Corridor)⁴. Council also directed a facilitated negotiation be undertaken for the Highway 102 corridor lands with a view of acquiring all or part of lands for a Regional Park.

Based on analysis of available land for suburban development, changes to land use designations and service boundary extensions were not in scope of the five-year review process. Three major requests for changes to land use designations and service extensions were, however, received but were not supported. They include:

- *Request by Clayton to change designation on lands off Purcell's Cove Rd. to Urban Settlement and rezone to Residential Development District* - This area presents an opportunity for growth in the future; however, ample lands for serviced development are currently available in the Western Region. Council directed that the Purcell's Cove Road Servicing Steering Committee be disbanded and that consulting study be tabled. No direction was given to proceed any further. Numerous submissions were received from community organizations and residents to re-zone those lands to parkland and this is also not recommended by staff.
- *Request by Conrad Brothers to include the entire Port Wallace area, including those lands identified as owned and operated by Conrad Brothers Ltd., in the upcoming Secondary Planning Strategy Process* – In 2010, Council directed secondary planning to commence on the Port Wallace lands following completion of the watershed study. Initial land analysis has been commenced.

⁴ See staff report Project 01341 - Cost of Servicing Study and Requests to Initiate Secondary Planning Strategies (Community Plan Amendment Requests) <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/documents/101116cow3-001.pdf>

- *Request by Armco to exempt certain lands from secondary planning and the requirements of Policy – secondary planning Policy SU-6 is fundamental to growth management under the Regional Plan. Further to Council direction in 2010, a watershed study for Sandy Lake is underway to inform secondary planning.*

DISCUSSION

Major Policy Changes to the Regional Plan:

The RP+5 policy process considered changing conditions, research, community engagement and CDAC direction. The review, while focused on specific in-scope issues, resulted in a reformatting of the Plan to ensure clearer connection between policy objectives, policy directions and implementation. Staff are proposing that the Regional Planning Strategy, originally adopted by Council in 2006 as amended and currently in effect, would be repealed and replaced when the Revised Regional Plan is approved by Council and the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations. As part of the process, the amending by-laws will need to be re-adopted by Council to ensure their continued validity. The main changes made in the revised document are summarized as follows:

Format of Regional Plan:

- The executive summary has been removed and this summation is included as part of Chapter 1: Introduction;
- Municipal objectives are explicitly identified at the beginning of each chapter;
- Where a directive was made under the current plan to undertake a functional plan and the plan has been completed and endorsed by Council, a policy has been added identifying the plan for prioritizing programs and regulations;
- Sections on energy and climate change have been added to Chapter 2 and the title has been changed to Environment, Energy and Climate Change;
- The title of chapter 4 has been changed from Transportation to Transportation and Mobility;
- The Regional Centre has been added as a new chapter;
- The section on infrastructure charges has been moved to Chapter 5: Economy and Finance;
- The title of Chapter 8 has been changed to Municipal Water Services, Utilities and Solid Waste; and
- The chapters on governance and implementation have been consolidated into Chapter 9: Governance and Implementation.

Chapter 1: Introduction:

- The chapter begins with an overview of the first five year review and highlights the four themes of the review: Sustainable Solutions; Enhance the Regional Centre; Improve Suburban and Rural Community Design; and Make Land Use and Transportation Planning Mutually Supportive;
- The main findings of the Stantec study on the costs and benefits of alternative growth scenarios have been summarized and municipal growth targets have been refocused. The Regional Plan shall target at least 75% of new housing units to be located in the Regional

Centre and suburbs with at least 25% of new housing units within the Regional Centre over the life of this Plan;

- Population and employment data and projections have been updated; and
- Clarification is made that any functional or priorities plans identified by policy are not considered a legal part of the Regional Plan and may be amended from time to time by Regional Council without amending the Regional Plan.

Chapter 2: Environment, Energy and Climate Change:

- The concept of greenbelting is introduced and a commitment is made to undertake a Greenbelting and Public Open Space Priorities Plan (section 2.2.7; policy E-12);
- The *Urban Forest Master Plan*, *Climate Risk Management Strategy*, *Community Energy Plan*, and the *Corporate Plan to Reduce Energy* are identified for guiding priorities and work plans (policies E-10, E-25, E-26, E-27, E-28 and E-29);
- A new policy provision is made to allow Community Councils to establish land use by-law regulations needed to protect water within a watershed or ground water supply area where a public water supply has been established or is proposed (policy E-14);
- Policy provision is made for Council to consider a new by-law to protect trees within riparian buffers (policy E-19).

Chapter 3: Settlement and Housing:

- Consideration of the HRM growth targets and the need for additional lands have been added as criterion for Council to consider when requests are received to amend the service boundary and to initiate secondary planning for new serviced growth centres (policies S-1 and S-2);
- Provision is made to consider additional serviced lands at the north end of Morris Lake and in Eastern Passage to compensate for the development potential lost due to the Shearwater air base being reacquired by the Canadian Armed Forces. However, this is conditional upon the connector road from Mount Hope Avenue to Caldwell Road being constructed (Section 3.2.1);
- Sheet Harbour, Middle Musquodoboit, Hatchet Lake, Hubley, Sambro, Indian Harbour, Waverley, White's Lake, Jeddore, North Preston, Eastern Passage and Cherry Brook have been reclassified from Rural Growth Centres to Rural Centres not Identified for Growth (Table 3-2);
- Food security, mobility needs, supporting aging in place, establishing interconnected greenbelts and open spaces are identified as matters to be considered when preparing secondary planning strategies for growth centres (policy S-9);
- A new policy has been added that, when reviewing secondary planning strategies for rural areas, consideration is to be given to limiting the scale or retail development allowed outside of designated rural centres (policy S-13);
- The sub-section "Open Space Design Developments" in the current plan has been replaced with "Conservation Design Developments" and new criterion for approval of development agreements have been established in Section 3.4.1. Maps 15A to 15F have been added to the plan to identify the boundaries of the Rural Growth Centres where greater opportunity is made for Conservation Design Developments. Provision has been made to allow for

consideration of expanding the boundary for Porters Lake in the event that provision of water and wastewater services is not financially feasible (policy S-10);

- The *Community Facilities Master Plan*, endorsed by Council in 2008, is identified for guiding needs assessment, planning, management and financing of community facilities in HRM (section 3.5; policy S-28);
- The commitment to undertake an Affordable Housing Functional Plan has been replaced with the means by which HRM will support housing diversity and affordability through secondary plan reviews and other programs has been updated in Section 3.6; and
- The commitment to prepare an Opportunities Sites Functional Plan has been addressed in the Downtown Halifax MPS and LUB or will be addressed through the Centre Plan.

Chapter 4: Transportation and Mobility:

- The *Transportation Demand Management Functional Plan* (2010), the *Active Transportation Plan* (2006), the *Regional Parking Strategy Function Plan* (2008) and the *Five Year Transit Service Plan (2010/11 to 2014/15)*, as periodically updated, provide direction for priorities, strategies and operation plans (policies T-1, T-2, T-6 and T-13);
- A policy to support protection and development of greenways has been added under policy T-4 and priorities for active transportation projects are identified under policy T-5;
- A policy has been added to permit public transit facilities in all zones with frontage on or abutting a minor collector, major collector, arterial road or expressway. Such facilities would be exempt from zone requirements (policy T-7);
- An Urban Service Transit Boundary has been established which indicates where HRM will direct future investment in public transit services, with the exception of rural commuter express services (policy T-8). Council may also consider programs to encourage and assist developing community based transit services (policy T-11);
- Minimum targets for work trips by transit and active transportation have been updated (policy T-12);
- Prior to moving forward with road network projects presented in Table 4-1 a community consultation program will be undertaken (policy T-14); and
- The Road Hierarchy Classification Map has been deleted and a new road classification system will be developed as part of the Road Networks Priorities Plan (policy T-15).

Chapter 5: Economy and Finance:

- The *Greater Halifax - 2011 to 2016 - Economic Strategy* is recognized for directing economic programs and initiatives (policy EC-1);
- The *Welcoming Newcomers Action Plan*, as approved by Regional Council on June 25, 2013, has been referenced in Chapter 5 as a strategy to attract and retain talented workers (policy EC-2);
- The 2008 *Business Parks Functional Plan* is to provide guidance for the governance and management, servicing, land acquisition and rationalization of uses and development standards for HRM business parks (policy EC-4);
- The section on the Capital District and the commitments to undertake various functional plans for the Capital District have been deleted as these matters have been addressed through the Halifax by Design process or will be addressed through the Centre Plan; and

- The commitment to undertake a Halifax Harbour Functional Plan has been addressed through numerous secondary planning strategies that have been undertaken or are currently being prepared, which address harbour related issues. New policies have been added to strengthen a commitment by HRM to preserve and protect harbour front lands needed for marine dependent industrial and commercial uses under Section 5.3.4.

Chapter 6: The Regional Centre:

- The vision statement and principles endorsed by Council through the *HRMbyDesign* process have been incorporated into the Regional Plan to guide the Regional Centre Plan (policy RC-3) and are to be considered for any amendments to the Downtown Halifax Secondary Planning Strategy and Land Use By-Law (policy RC-1) or new or amendments to heritage conservation by-laws and plans (policy RC-2); and
- The recommendations of the Strategic Urban Partnership regarding programs and initiatives for the Regional Centre are to be considered with emphasis on the action plans established under the *2011 -2016 Greater Halifax Economic Strategy* (policy RC-4).

Chapter 7: Cultural and Heritage Resources:

- The 2006 *HRM Cultural Plan* is to provide strategic guidance in achieving long term cultural goals, and the *Model for Assessing Cultural Heritage Values in HRM* (2005) is to guide the identification of sites, communities, and cultural landscapes (policies CH-1 and CH-2);
- A commitment is made to prepare a Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan with the matters to be addressed outlined in subsection 7.2.2 (policy CH-3); and
- The 2010 Parks Canada *Standards & Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* has been adopted for guidance under the Heritage Property By-Law, the Downtown Halifax Plan, the Barrington Street Conservation District and future conservation districts (sub-section 7.3.5; policy CH-14).

Chapter 8: Municipal Water Services, Utilities and Solid Waste:

- The chapter has been substantially re-written due to the transfer of municipal wastewater and stormwater services from HRM to Halifax Water. Section 8.2 presents the purpose of the transfer agreement and the implications for governance and regulatory approvals;
- The policies pertaining to Council approval of service boundary extensions or growth related secondary planning strategies have been amended to reflect the approval requirements for water, wastewater and stormwater services (policies SU-4, SU-5, SU-14 and SU-15);
- The policy to undertake a stormwater functional plan has been replaced with a new policy set under Section 8.4, to reflect an appropriate role for HRM in stormwater management. This includes a commitment to bring a stormwater management and erosion and sedimentation control by-law to Council for consideration of approval (policy SU-7). Provisions are also made for Council to consider providing support to stormwater retrofits that mitigate flooding or improve water quality or allow for daylighting of watercourses (policies SU-8, SU-9 and SU-10);
- A new requirement is made under the Regional Subdivision By-Law for a hydrogeological assessment of adequacy of water supply for all subdivision applications in which ten or more new dwelling units would be serviced by wells (policy SU-21); and

- A new requirement is made under the Regional Subdivision By-Law for underground placement of electrical and communication distribution lines from the poles to the street right-of-way, for all subdivisions where new streets are proposed (policy SU-25).

Chapter 9: Governance and Implementation:

- The 2008 *HRM Community Engagement Strategy* will guide HRM in informing consulting with and engaging its citizens (policy G-1);
- Revised performance measures (Appendix A) are to be used to assist in evaluating the effectiveness of policies, programs, and investments in achieving the vision and objectives of the Plan (policy G-4);
- An implementation policy, IM-18 under the current plan, which allows Council to consider extension of uses into an abutting planning designation, has been modified to clarify that this provision is only intended to be applied on a limited scale (policy G-15); and
- A new policy is added to grandfather any completed development agreement application received by HRM prior to Council's first notification to adopt this Revised Regional Plan, in accordance with the Regional Plan policies in effect at the time the application was received. (policy G-17).

Housekeeping Amendments:

The five-year review was designed to address amendments which propose substantive changes to the 2006 Regional Plan. However, in the process of considering the larger, policy-based amendments to the plan, there was some opportunity to address some non-substantial or technical changes (Policy IM-9a under the current Plan; Policy G-11 under the revised draft Plan). Some examples of minor amendments or technical adjustments were correcting minor mapping and zoning errors, updating current zoning and land use designations based on public or conservation trust ownership, or making small clarifications to the provisions within land use by-laws or subdivision regulations.

In addition, the review process allows Council to consider amendments to address issues with development regulations which support plan policy implementation; examples include clarification on when specific studies or assessments are required to satisfy development approvals, or the relaxation of subdivision regulations requiring a connection to municipal services where service connections cannot be developed. Specific housekeeping amendments include:

- A request from Nova Scotia Nature Trust (NSNT) to designate recently purchased NSNT properties Open Space and Natural Resources (OSNR) in Shelter Cove, Purcells Cove and Musquodoboit Harbour and re-zone them to PA (Protected Area) zone to recognize their conservation status;
- The re-designation of four HRM owned properties in Purcells Cove adjacent to NSNT lands from Urban Reserve to OSNR to create open space connectivity with McIntosh Run and Long Lake Provincial Park;
- Updates to OSNR mapping and PA zoning to reflect recent purchases, disposals and conservation designations of provincial Crown Lands;
- Corrections to mapping and zoning to remove the OSNR designation and the PA or RPK (Regional Park) zoning on private properties; and

- Corrections to the Regional Subdivision By-Law to re-establish the lot frontage exemption in the HRC (Herring Cove Residential) and F-1 (Fishing Industry) zones in the Chebucto Peninsula Plan Area.

Future Work Plans for Growth Centres:

Council has approved a secondary planning strategy for Fall River and has directed staff to proceed with preparing secondary plans for the Regional Centre and for Port Wallace. The Regional Centre Plan will be re-commenced upon the completion of the RP+5 Project and a separate report will be brought forward to Council to present a revised approach. The Shubenacadie Lakes Watershed Study has been completed and secondary planning for Port Wallace has been commenced with land suitability analysis and broad conceptual planning.

When the transportation study for the Bedford – Mainland Halifax North Corridor is completed and tabled with Council, direction will be sought from Council on proceeding with preparing secondary plans for Bedford Waterfront and Birch Cove. Work plans are currently being developed for approval by Council for secondary planning at Porters Lake, Upper Tantallon and Middle Sackville.

Adoption of Changes to the 2006 Regional Plan:

Given the extensive changes to the format of the document, HRM staff recommend that Council repeal the 2006 Regional Plan and replace it with the revised draft Plan, subject to any final changes that may be directed by CPED, HAC, Council and final Ministerial approval.

A new policy G-16 states that until the new Plan becomes effective in accordance with the requirements of the HRM Charter, the Regional Plan adopted by Council on August 26, 2006, and as amended, shall remain in effect. Policy G-17 further states that where any completed development agreement application was received by HRM prior to Council's first notification to adopt this Revised Regional Plan, the application shall be considered in accordance with the Regional Plan policies in effect at the time the application was received.

Regional Plan Implementation:

The review process stressed the importance of timely and integrated implementation of the Regional Plan including ongoing monitoring and reporting on both accomplishments and challenges. There is a high degree of community expectation that actions identified in the Regional Plan, once approved by Council, will be implemented and that the community will be kept informed of progress and engaged in ongoing implementation.

Regional Plan implementation will include specific community planning processes, priorities plans, by-laws, business plans and several major studies necessary to inform secondary planning. Strategic approaches will need to be developed for effective collaboration with the provincial government on a number of issues.

Plans and Studies		Lead HRM Business Unit ⁵
Secondary Planning Processes		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Centre • Port Wallace • Birch Cove • Bedford Waterfront • Fall River • Porters Lake • Upper Tantallon • Middle Sackville • North Preston 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P&I
Major Studies to Inform Secondary Planning		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Porters Lake Watershed Study • Tantallon Watershed Study • Preston Area Watershed Study • Sandy Lake Watershed Study • Shubenacadie Lakes Sub-watershed Study • Bedford-Mainland North Transportation Corridor • Regional Centre Wastewater Master Plan 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P&I • P&I and Halifax Water
Priorities Plans		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenbelting and Public Open Space • Road Network Priorities Plan • Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan • Heritage Conservation Districts 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P&I • P&I • P&I and CRS • P&I and CRS
By-laws		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Riparian Buffer Tree Protection • Growth Related Cost Recovery • Stormwater Management and Erosion Control • Residential Development within the Vicinity of Halifax International Airport 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P&I • P&I • P&I • P&I

⁵ P&I refers to Planning and Infrastructure; CRS refers to Community and Recreation services; GR&EA refers to Government Relations and External Affairs; MO refers to Municipal Operations; GHP refers to Greater Halifax Partnership.

Protocols and Guidelines	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Water quality monitoring protocol• Provincial protocol on rural economic development• Provincial protocol on affordable housing• Adoption of Standards and Guidelines for Conservation of Historic Places in Canada• Consultation approach with Industry Canada for communication towers and antenna	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• P&I• GREA• P&I and GREA• CRS• CRS

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Regional Plan staff review and public consultation has been adequately funded by **Project No. CDG01283 – Regional Plan 5-year Review**.

Budgets and potential funding sources for the corresponding functional and priority plans required to carry out the strategies identified through policy development, will be brought forward in future reports.

Long-term financial implications arising from changes to the Regional Plan will be incorporated in the regular Operating and Project Budget cycles.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Attachment C describes the extensive engagement process which was part of Phases 1-3 of RP+5 review, including engagement activities, how input was collected, key issues raised by stakeholder groups and members of the public, and how the input influenced CDAC deliberations and policy development. The process was based on the CPED-approved Communication and Community Engagement Plan and as outlined in the February 9, 2012, staff report. Staff from nearly all HRM departments and staff from the Halifax Water Commission have been closely involved in the process.

Phase 1: The first phase included information sharing about the Regional Plan and communicated what had changed since its adoption in 2006. RP+5 website and social media channels were promoted as sources for information and platforms for feedback throughout the review process. Fact sheets and a short on-line promotional video were developed. A well-attended kick-off event on March 1, 2012, provided the necessary momentum for Phase 2 public consultation.

Phase 2: The second phase of community engagement was designed to re-affirm Regional Plan's guiding principles and engage the public in a dialogue on potential policy directions. Information materials focused on accomplishments (e.g. Halifax downtown plan), new

conditions (e.g. higher energy prices), and challenges (e.g. HRM not tracking to meet its growth targets). Community engagement activities included seven public meetings/open houses (550+participants), written submissions (approximately 50 were received), focus groups (3), informal stakeholder meetings and an on-line survey (460 responses). CDAC dedicated six meetings to reviewing public feedback, staff responses and providing policy direction on Drafts 1 and 2 of the Regional Plan. Draft 2 was approved by CDAC for Phase 3 public consultation.

Phase 3: The third phase of community engagement was focused on seeking public feedback on the fifteen (15) key areas of proposed policy change to the Regional Plan explained through visual fact sheets and poster boards. Draft 2 was made publicly available on-line on May 17, 2013. As part of Phase 3, staff provided updates to Regional Council on the proposed policy changes, the Heritage Advisory Committee and the HRM Development Liaison Group. Community engagement activities included three stakeholder meetings (June 3-6), six open houses (June 10-July 16), one regional town hall meeting (June 17), and an invitation to provide written submissions (May 17 – July 19). Approximately 600 citizens participated in stakeholder and public meetings and 200 written submissions were received from individuals, community groups, businesses and regional organizations. CDAC again dedicated six meetings to a thorough review of all public feedback and staff responses as a basis for and provide policy direction on Draft 3 of the Regional Plan.

The RP+5 process enjoyed a high level of public engagement. While different issues were raised in the urban, suburban and rural areas of the municipality, there was also a lot of mutual understanding of urban and rural areas. Public feedback consistently raised the issue of growth targets, greenbelting, revitalization of the Regional Centre, maintenance of urban reserves, efficient use of existing services, transportation road projects, rural development, protection of wetlands, and extension of riparian buffers.

There was an overall support for: the established growth targets; the efficient use of existing infrastructure; the protection of natural areas; more focused investment in transit; and revitalization of the Regional Centre. Few objections were raised about the proposed Urban Transit Service Boundary but concern was expressed regarding the list of regional road projects and the revised Road Classification Map (which has been deleted and will be addressed as part of the Road Network Functional Plan). The development community also expressed concern about the cost of mandatory undergrounding and changes to rural subdivision standards. A number of landowners requested to be grandfathered under the current open space subdivision planning process and this has been accommodated in policy.

Overall, the community engagement process was challenging given the large number of issues under consideration, yet successfully provided diverse and ongoing opportunities for informed public input. Immediate on-line access to CDAC's working documents, presentations, research studies and public submissions⁶ was provided. Staff believe that the draft presented to CDAC

⁶ See CDAC website <http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/CommunityDesignAdvisoryCommittee.html> and planhrm website <http://www.halifax.ca/planhrm/index.html>

for recommendation to Regional Council remains true to the foundation of the 2006 Regional Plan but takes a step forward towards achieving its goals.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The protection of the natural environment is one of the core principles of the Regional Plan. The Plan strives to achieve well planned and sustainable communities.

The five-year review addresses the environmental implications of growth and development through a focus on sustainable solutions, an enhanced role for the Regional Centre, improved suburban and rural community design, and ensuring land use and transit/active transportation are mutually supportive.

ALTERNATIVES

The Community Design and Advisory Committee may choose to recommend that the Community Planning and Economic Development Committee recommend to Regional Council to set a date for a public hearing to consider the Plan attached to this report. This is the recommended approach.

Many possible alternative policy approaches may be considered by Council during their deliberations. A list of potential issues based on input from the community consultation process is listed below.

1. **Increase Regional Centre growth targets** – The Plan (Chapter 1) includes growth targets for new housing units and states that at least 75% of new housing units be located in the Regional Centre and suburbs, with at least 25% of new housing units within the Regional Centre over the life of this Plan. Council could choose to direct that the growth target for the Regional Centre be increased. This is not recommended as increasing the share of growth allocated to the Regional Centre may produce significant benefits but may also necessitate imposing stringent development controls in other parts of the region, potentially creating challenges for housing choice and affordability.
2. **Revert to the term “open space”** - The term “greenbelting” has been adapted in Chapter 2 for specific use in HRM in the context of the Land Use Designations existing in the Regional Plan adopted in 2006. While staff believes the term provides a useful policy guide for HRM’s future, Council could direct that it be replaced with the term “open space planning” and still maintain the integrity of the policy direction of the proposed Regional Plan.
3. **Further reduce caps on rural subdivisions between centres** - The Plan seeks to focus growth in Centres as defined in Chapter 3, in a manner consistent with achieving the overall growth targets established in Chapter 1. Limited growth is permitted between rural centres and caps of 100 units and 30 units are established for Classic Conservation Design - Low Density Developments and Hybrid Developments respectively. Council

may choose to further reduce these caps, however, this is not recommended as it may also reduce choice and affordability for rural housing options.

4. **Defer undergrounding** - The proposed Plan (Chapter 8) includes mandatory underground wiring (secondary servicing only) for residential development to be established on new streets. Staff believe this is a reasonable first step towards requirements for full undergrounding. Council may choose to direct that secondary undergrounding also be deferred to a later date, however, this is not recommended as it would further prolong implementation of a program deemed to have substantial benefits for the municipality as identified in Attachment B.
5. **Increase setbacks from watercourses** - The proposed Plan (Chapter 2) includes watercourse setbacks in HRM at a minimum of 20 metres with the potential to increase these at the community planning stage as was done in West Bedford West and Russell Laker West. Council could choose to implement larger setbacks in the Regional Plan, however, this is not recommended as staff believe this approach would lack the detailed analysis which can be achieved best at the secondary planning stage.
6. **Allow congestion to increase over time** - The draft Plan (Chapter 4) includes recommended road network improvements needed to maintain traffic congestion in the municipality at current levels. Council could chose to remove one or all of the proposed improvements and thereby direct that traffic congestion be permitted to increase over time. This approach entails a level of risk associated with costs associated with travel time, fuel consumption and resulting environmental degradation.
7. **Adopt a higher standard for coastal elevation** - The proposed Plan (Chapter 2) revises the technical definition of Coastal Elevation requirements but maintains the actual elevation of residential units at essentially the same level as with the Plan adopted in 2006. Council may choose to adopt a higher standard. Staff believe this may be necessary but should be undertaken following additional scientific input anticipated to be made available later this year.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachments for CDAC, HAC, CPED and Regional Council:

Attachment A:	Revised Draft Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (Regional Plan)
Attachment B:	Summary of Research
Attachment C:	Report on RP+5 Community Engagement

Attachments for CPED and Regional Council:

Attachment D:	By-Law to re-adopt the 2006 Regional Plan Community Plans and Land Use By-Law Amendments (as amended)
Attachment E:	By-Law to adopt amendments to Halifax Regional Municipality Land Use By-Laws
Attachment F:	By-Law to Amend the Regional Subdivision By-Law

Attachment G: By-Law to Amend the Secondary Planning Strategies

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

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Attachment B – Summary of RP+5 Research

Internal Research

The *RP+5* core staff team have undertaken research for each in-scope topic (issue). The staff team included expertise in planning, urban design, community development, citizen engagement, communication, and mapping. The project also had access to staff expertise from HRM Finance, Legal Services, Community and Recreation Services, Planning and Infrastructure, Government Relations and External Affairs, Metro Transit and Halifax Water. Existing policies and best practices have been examined, and options for HRM, looking longer term, have been identified. The internal research was used to develop the proposed policy. A key factor considered in the review process has been that in the first five years of the Plan HRM is not tracking to meet its 25-year urban growth targets as indicated in Fig. 1.

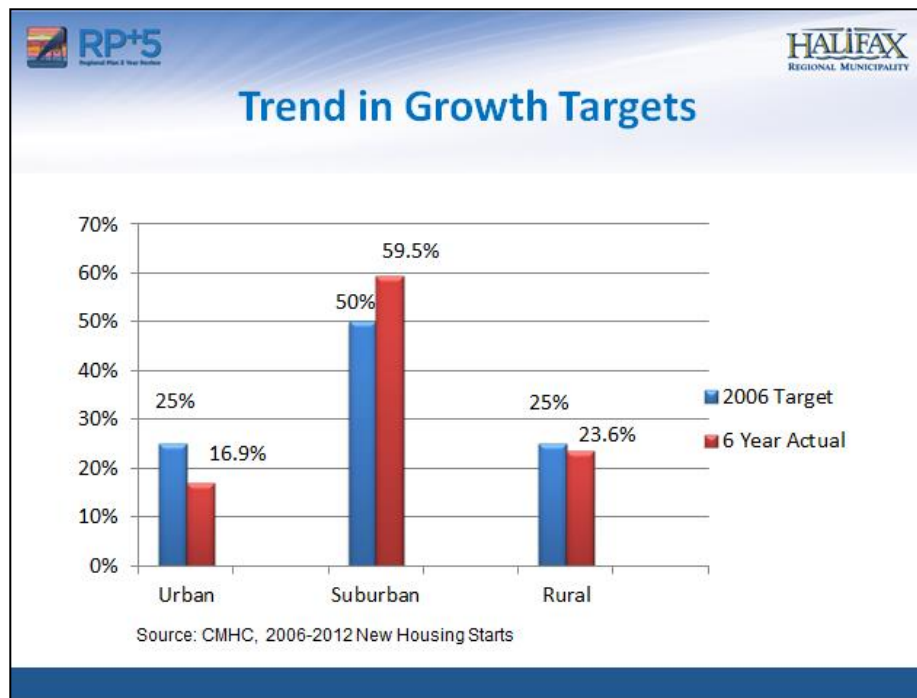


Fig. 1 HRM's growth compared to Regional Plan's growth targets (2006-2012)

Greenbelting

In response to public input, staff also conducted a review of greenbelting policies in other jurisdictions. The review found that HRM's system of open space under the Open Space and Natural Resources designation compares very favourably with other jurisdictions. For example, the Greater Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt Plan includes a 1.8 million acre band of land that encompasses the rural and agricultural land surrounding the Greater Toronto Area, Niagara Peninsula, and parts of the Bruce Peninsula. HRM's Regional Municipal Planning Strategy designates 890,000 acres of its 1.4 million acre land base (64%) as Open Space and Natural

Resource. This designation extends throughout the rural area of HRM extending from Hubbards in the west to Ecum Secum in the eastern part of the Municipality.

HRM's Regional Plan protects open space through establishing land use designations in policy as shown on the Generalized Future Land Use Map (GFLUM). The Open Space and Natural Resource Designation is the overarching Designation that encompasses the natural network of HRM consisting of federal parks, habitat and wilderness protected areas designated by provincial and federal statutes, regional parks, provincially designated parks, provincial park reserves, provincially designated wilderness reserves, resource lands, conservation areas, saltmarshes, beaches and other environmentally sensitive areas, trails and greenways and cultural landscapes. This designation was created to preserve and interconnected system of open space and minimize fragmentation and to promote an approach to environmental management and economic development that supports a sustainable future.

The proposed plan includes the requirement that HRM undertake a *Greenbelting and Public Open Spaces Priorities Plan* for the purpose of delineation and greater protection of natural corridors and connectivity. The revised Plan also proposes to further focus rural development within rural growth centres, and to designate additional Crown and conservation areas as Open Space and Natural Resources.

External Research

A number of external studies have been important to the review process and are summarized below. Population and housing projections have been updated by Altus in 2009 and Stantec in 2013.

Altus Group. 2009. Employment, Population and Housing Projections Halifax Regional Municipality: An Update

HRM had relatively stable population growth over the last 25 years and has grown 3.3 % between 2006 and 2011. The population growth of HRM over the 25-year period between 2011 and 2031 is projected to be approximately 73,000 persons, using a base case scenario. Two thirds of net migration is expected to come from international sources, while the remainder is expected from other parts of Canada.

HRM's population is aging, and by 2031 there will be more than twice the number of people over the age of 65 than in 2001 (163% increase) while the number of school aged children is expected to level off. This shift in age distribution will have significant implications on the demand for housing and types of services provided in HRM. Using the base case scenario over the period 2011 to 2031, HRM is now expected to add 61,000 new dwelling units and 12,500 new commuters.

Stantec. April 2013. Sustainable Urbanism: Quantifying the Costs and Benefits to HRM, Residents and the Environment of Alternative Growth Scenarios

The 2006 Regional Plan estimated \$250M in cost savings as a result of more compact development pattern¹. RP+5 expanded this economic analysis through a central piece of research by Stantec called *Sustainable Urbanism: Quantifying the Costs and Benefits to HRM, Residents and the Environment of Alternative Growth Scenarios*.

HRM sought to quantify the costs and benefits of municipal growth under a range of potential densities and development patterns. Four scenarios were evaluated:

<u>2006 Regional Plan Growth Goals:</u>	25% urban, 50% suburban, 25% rural
<u>Actual Observed Growth Since 2006²:</u>	16% urban, 56% suburban, 28% rural
<u>Hypothetical Growth Scenario A:</u>	40% urban, 40% suburban, 20% rural
<u>Hypothetical Growth Scenario B:</u>	50% urban, 30% suburban, 20% rural

The first scenario reflects the Plan's goals for growth in designated urban (Regional Centre), suburban, and rural areas of the region. The second reflects actual growth patterns since 2006 while the third and fourth generally explore greater concentration of growth in the core of the region.

The study compared public, private, and social costs and benefits anticipated from these scenarios over the period from 2011 to 2031. The consultants have worked with HRM and Water Commission staff and other organizations to develop a modelling framework that would estimate both capital and operating costs of different growth patterns. The Stantec Study also provides an analysis of HRM's past and current growth patterns and how it compares to other similarly sized Canadian and US cities. Key study finding include:

- Adhering to the Regional Plan growth targets is estimated to save \$670 million over the current pattern of development. The savings come from avoiding costs related to the provision and maintenance of more extensive infrastructure as well as reduced travel costs.
- Significant additional cost savings could be achieved by increasing growth in the Regional Centre.
- Municipal savings may range from \$65 million (meeting growth targets) to \$715 million (under Scenario B).
- More concentrated development can reduce locally generated greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

¹ According to the HRM Settlement Pattern and Form Cost Analysis (2005), the cost of providing local road service to a rural estate form of development, at a density of 1 unit per 10,000 m² (1 unit per ha), is 41% more per unit than the cost of providing the service to a more compact form of rural development, at a density of 1 unit per 5,500m² (1 unit per 0.6 ha).

² 16% urban share of new housing starts from 2006 – mid 2012 when the study was commenced. Data which includes the end of 2012 shows that 16.9% new housing starts occurred in the Regional Centre.

The projected savings do not include localized water and wastewater infrastructure upgrades that may be needed to re-develop opportunity sites and commercial corridors in the Regional Centre. Staff are aware of potential capacity issues, and are planning to undertake a Regional Centre Water and Waste Water Master Plan as part of the Regional Centre Plan project to investigate these issues in more detail.

The Regional Centre Plan will address both land use regulation and investment required to facilitate ongoing revitalization of the urban core. The draft Regional Plan proposes a new wording for growth targets where “at least” 25% of new growth should take place in the Regional Centre and “at least” 75% should take in combined urban and suburban areas. This means that if growth targets in urban core are exceeded, this will be consistent with the Plan.

Altus Group. Feb. 2013. Study of Commercial Taxes as a Driver for Business Location Decisions Phase I&II

The second key piece of research to inform RP+5 was the *Commercial Location Study* undertaken by Altus Group to examine whether commercial taxes, as a component of business costs, are discouraging retail or office tenants from locating in the Regional Center. This project was developed through partnership with the Strategic Urban Partnership in two phases. Phase I identified factors influencing the location decisions of business owners and managers in HRM, particularly in the office and retail sectors and identified the recent movement of growth and/or decline in businesses in the downtown areas and other parts of the Regional Centre. Phase II focused on best practices and possible solutions that could lead to revitalization. Based on 100 interviews and best practice research the study concluded the following:

- Taxes are not the primary factor for location decisions or development motivation within HRM. On its own, the overall level of taxation is not a significant role in choosing a suburban versus downtown location within HRM.
- Key decision factors for downtown tenants include preferences of the employer, image/profile and perception, and proximity to clients and customers.
- Key decision factors for suburban tenants include parking availability and cost, commute time and availability of appropriate space.
- Increasing population living in or near downtown areas would create demand for downtown office and retail space.

The study recommended that the most promising measures to revitalize commercial growth in the downtown areas and Regional Centre should include:

- Bring People Downtown and to the Regional Centre to Live
- Explore Residential Tax Incentives.
- Improve Transportation
- Improve Parking

- Government Investment (public improvement projects, redevelopment of vacant lands such as Cogswell Interchange, and consolidation of government offices in Downtown Areas).

Watershed Studies

Since the adoption of the Regional Plan in 2006 HRM completed four watershed studies for the areas of Musquodoboit Harbour, Lake Echo, Birch Cove Lakes and Hubbards. Five studies are currently near completion or underway in Porters Lake, Shubenacadie Lakes, Tantallon, Sandy Lake and the Preston areas. The completed watershed studies have found that:

- some lakes are at risk of significant degradation without remediation or the use of low impact development approaches to future development³;
- available groundwater supplies have limited capacity to support additional development in some areas;
- the provision of central municipal water and wastewater management services to many rural communities may be cost prohibitive.

HRM seeks to address these issues through enhanced growth management and rural subdivision conservation standards for rural developments in Chapter 3 and, potentially new by-laws, as outlined in Chapter 8. Watershed study findings will also be an important consideration in future secondary planning processes.

Undergrounding Studies

HRM is the only community of its size in Canada where utilities in new subdivisions are still permitted overhead and along streets⁴. With increasing global average temperatures, the frequency and intensity of extreme storm events is expected to increase, in many estimates by up to two-fold, posing increased risk to utility poles⁵. Undergrounding makes for more attractive streetscapes, more urban forest cover, and more reliable service. Overhead wires reduce street tree leaf cover of by 35%⁶. Over the last number of years, HRM conducted a number of studies, consulted with the development community and polled the public on the issue of undergrounding. The process concluded that:

- While there is public support (91% of HRM general public surveyed in 2011 - 300 participants) completely agree/mostly agree with undergrounding for new residential

³ Assimilative capacity is an indication of the amount of additional loads of various pollutants a waterbody may receive without exceeding water quality objectives.

⁴ Marbek Resources Consultants. Economic Implications of Buried Electric Utilities. March 21, 2007

⁵ Marbek Resources Consultants. Economic Implications of Buried Electric Utilities. March 21, 2007.

⁶ Halifax Regional Municipality. Urban Forest Master Plan. August, 2012 (Section 1.1 pp. 3-4)

subdivisions⁷⁾ for full undergrounding, it would be prudent to introduce an underground initiative in a staged approach.

- The cost of implementation for full undergrounding depends on new home size and design, and is estimated at \$8,800 for 40 ft lot⁸ Costs would be higher for rural areas.
- A staged approach will allow the development community to work with utilities to update underground design standards. Nova Scotia Power and Bell Aliant support the concept of undergrounding and have participated in several common trench design applications.
- While many of the benefits of full undergrounding will not initially be realized, (reliability improvement, aesthetics, expanded urban forest, property value⁹⁾ this approach will broadly introduce undergrounding to residential subdivisions and eliminate a significant amount of overhead infrastructure.

The policy respecting new subdivision development will, therefore, focus on the undergrounding of secondary service connections, from the power pole to the property line, with a consideration for future amendments to the Subdivision By-law to require undergrounding of all power and telecommunications cable on new local streets. The cost of this level of servicing is estimated at between \$2,500 and \$3,000 for a typical residential lot.

Gardner Pinfold June 2013. Economic Impacts of Growth Related Infrastructure Costs Development Charges

This study investigated whether increases associated with anticipated charges for HRM and Halifax Water infrastructure requirements, combined with the costs associated with underground wiring, would increase house prices to the point where HRM's growth targets would not be met. The study found that:

- Development charges on their own, account for about 1.1% of the median price of a new single detached house in HRM, among the lowest impact of the cities surveyed.
- Overall, fees in HRM account for 17.2% of the house price of \$380,000, with provincial and federal sales taxes accounting for almost 80 per of the impact.

Therefore, development charges represent a minor component of overall housing costs when compared with construction, land and sales taxes. In practice, the relatively small impact on monthly mortgage created by an additional \$5,000 to \$10,000 on house prices in the \$350,000 to \$450,000 range could be readily mitigated. Consequently, increases in this range are unlikely to materially affect affordability in the new house market or location choice. Cost increases in the \$15,000 - \$20,000 range may impact location choice.

⁷ Nextbus - Thinkwell Research Inc. Sept. 2011. See <http://www.halifax.ca/undergroundwiring/>

⁸ Stantec Engineering. Engineering Study of Joint Gas, Power and Communications Trench. April 2008 (2012 Update of the Joint Trench Installation Costs. March 2013). See <http://www.halifax.ca/undergroundwiring/>

⁹ Report of the Putting Cables Underground Working Group to the Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, Australia. Putting Cables Underground.1998.

RP+5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Report on Phases 1, 2 & 3 (March 2012 - July 2013)

This document describes the process and findings of public consultation on the first five-year review of HRM's Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (RMPS). The process, known as RP+5, was initiated by Regional Council in October 2011 and delivered under the guidance of the Community Design Advisory Committee (CDAC).



RP+5
Regional Plan 5 Year Review

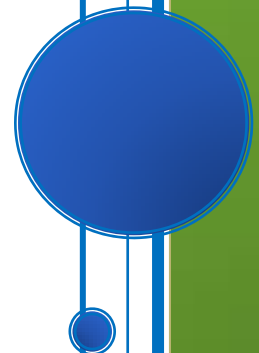


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INTRODUCTION

Planning, including regional planning, is a key responsibility of HRM as a local government. HRM's first Regional Plan, approved by Regional Council in 2006, includes a shared vision to "enhance our quality of life by fostering the growth of healthy and vibrant communities, a strong and diverse economy, and sustainable environment".

In October 2011 Regional Council approved the initiation of the first formal Regional Plan Five-Year Review, known as RP+5¹ as mandated by policy IM-7. The Community Design Advisory Committee (CDAC), Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee of Council (CPED) and Heritage Advisory Committee (HAC) were established as the sole deliberative bodies to provide recommendation to Regional Council on RP+5. A Communication and Community Engagement Strategy was subsequently approved by (CPED)².

CDAC was established as a working committee of citizens and Councillors in February of 2012 to guide community engagement and policy development related to the review, thus providing an ongoing platform for citizen and stakeholder input into the review process. Final approval of a revised Regional Plan is the prerogative of Regional Council and the Minister Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

The purpose of this report is to describe the process by which the community was engaged in the review of the Regional Plan, the level engagement, the input received, and how this input informed and shaped key Regional Plan policy changes. Some reflection on the process and recommendation for future reviews will also be provided. This report, along with a formal staff report and draft revised Regional Plan completes phases 1-3 of the RP+5 review process.

Organization

The RP+5 review process lasted approximately two years and resulted in a significant volume of material presented to the Community Design Advisory Committee (CDAC)³. To ensure readability and to prevent duplication, on-line links will be provided to key documents important to the process.

The report is organized around three main themes: how the community was engaged in the process; what we heard in terms of key issues and themes; and, how staff responded and addressed community input in key policy areas. CDAC will provide its account of community engagement to CPED and Regional Council.

¹ HRM Oct. 4, 2011 staff report
<http://www.halifax.ca/regionalplanning/documents/RP5ReviewScopeWorkplan.pdf>

² See Feb. 4, 2012 staff report <http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/documents/RP5.pdf>

³ CDAC members are listed in Appendix 1.

ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The RP+5 process has been framed as a review, not a re-write, yet the number of large issues identified for the review meant that the process was complex, involved the consideration of a number of large studies and functional plans conducted in the first five years of the Plan's implementation, and extensive public engagement. The process was designed in four inter-related phases⁴:

- Phase 1 (Oct. 2011-Feb. 2012): Where are we now?
- Phase 2 (March 2012-May 2013): What do we want to change?
- Phase 3 (June – August 2013): What do we need to refine or change?
- Phase 4 (Sept. – Nov. 2013): Approval (anticipated)

The first phase included research and information sharing about the key accomplishments, challenges and issues identified for the review. The second phase included initial public consultation and the development of the first two drafts of the Regional Plan. The focus of Phase 3 was to gather more focused feedback on Draft 2 of the Regional Plan approved by CDAC for consultation. This report presents a summary of Phases 1-3 of public engagement, which formed the basis of the final draft of the Regional Plan to be presented to Council for consideration of approval. A formal public hearing will be the final opportunity for public input.

Objectives

CDAC members and staff strived through the RP+5 community engagement process to fulfill the Council-approved principles of community engagement which include among others respect, clarity, transparency, inclusivity and fairness⁵. The purpose of RP+5 community engagement (as stated in the Feb. 9, 2012 staff report has been):

1. To develop a fair, transparent and inclusive public engagement process that will inform the Regional Plan review by providing a variety of opportunities for HRM citizens to shape and define changes to the Regional Plan;
2. To develop clear, transparent and timely communication on:
 - the origin of the Regional Plan;
 - its ongoing implementation;
 - the rationale, scope and timelines for the review;
 - its critical importance to the long term impact on our shared long term future; and
3. To ensure that through the review process, the Community Design Advisory Committee (CDAC), Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) Standing Committee, Regional Council and other HRM departments have a full understanding of public feedback, facts, policy options and their implications.

⁴ Phase 3 and 4 timelines were extended.

⁵ HRM Community Engagement Strategy (2008).

<https://www.halifax.ca/crca/CommunityEngagement/documents/CommunityEngagementStrategy.pdf>

This report addresses how these objectives have been fulfilled and how public input shaped policy development process.

The RP+5 process was designed around four phases with two key opportunities for public feedback during Phases 2 and 3. The purpose of community consultations was to ensure that the draft Plan reflected as much as possible, public vision and feedback, and to provide this information to Regional Council. The RP+5 review was framed around four key themes which included approximately 20 policy issues and several parallel projects identified by staff (Table 1):

- Sustainable Solutions
- Regional Centre
- Community Design
- Transportation and Land Use

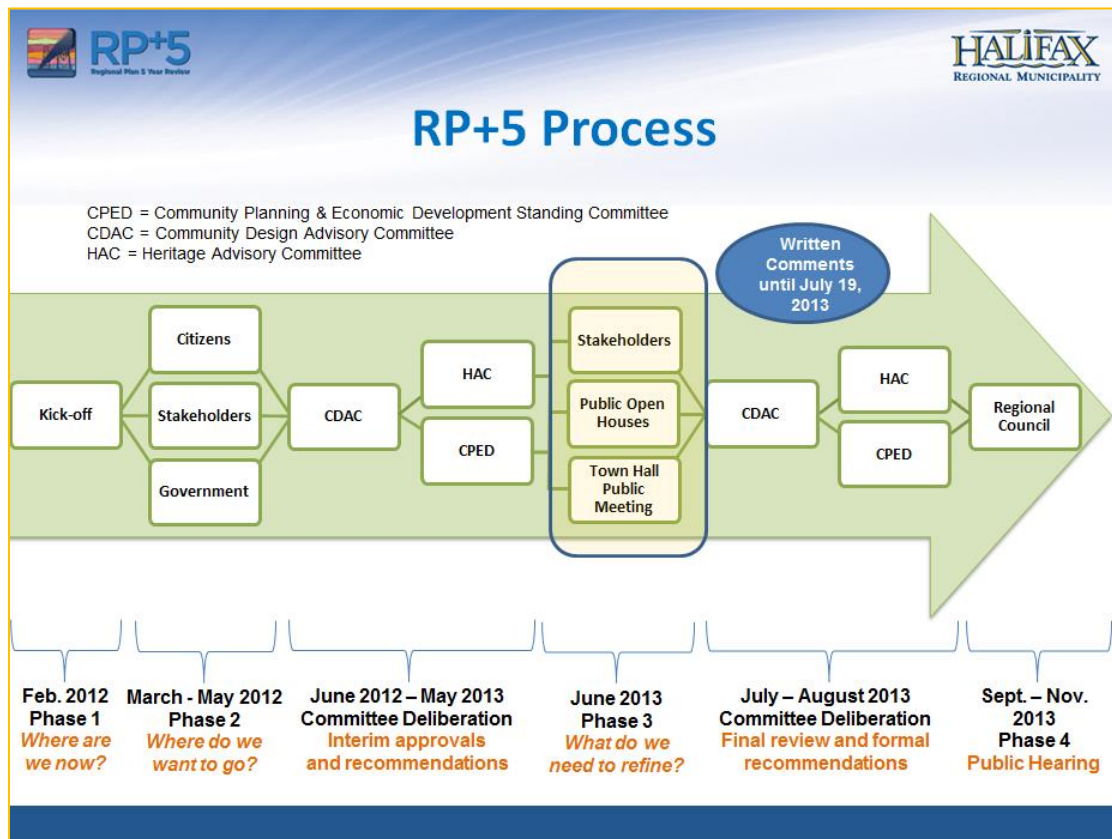


Fig. 1 RP+5 Process

Although the scope of the review included a number of important policies, the central assumption was that the foundation of the Regional Plan (based on the guiding principles, Generalized Future Land Use Map, growth centres and growth targets) was sound and would remain in place.

Table 1: Scope of RP+5 Review (Oct. 2011)

SCOPE: Regional Plan 5 Year Review

Attachment #2

Deliverable	Theme			
	1. Focus on Sustainable Solutions	2. Regional Centre Focus	3. Improved Communi- ty Design	4. Transit Supports Land Use
Chapter 1: The Environment				
1.1 Policy direction for Sustainable Suburban and Rural Community Design	•		•	•
1.2 Rural Groundwater Mapping & Hydrogeological Assessments	•		•	
Chapter 2: Settlement & Housing				
2.1 Policy direction for Improved Suburban & Rural Community Design	•		•	•
2.2 Policy direction for review of Open Space Subdivision standards	•		•	
2.3 Review "Visioning" Program for Growth Centres			•	
2.4 Review growth potential and central servicing for Growth Centres	•		•	
Chapter 3: Transportation				
3.1 Transit Service Supports Desired Land Use Patterns	•	•	•	•
3.2 Support for Regional Transportation Authority		•	•	
3.3 Coordination of Transit & Active Transportation Initiatives	•	•	•	•
3.4 Policy direction for improved Rural Road Standards	•		•	•
3.5 Policy direction for review of Red Book standards	•	•	•	•
Chapter 4: Economy and Finance				
4.1 Embed Economic Strategy in Regional Plan	•	•	•	•
4.2 Policy direction for expansion of CCC program	•	•		•
4.3 Potential Business Park Expansion				•
Chapter 5: Culture and Heritage				
5.1 Regional Centre is a focus of the Regional Plan Review	•	•	•	
5.2 Enhanced and Clarified Heritage & Culture programs	•	•	•	
Chapter 6: Water, Wastewater, Utilities & Solid Waste				
6.1 Policy direction for underground utilities (subdivision bylaw amendments)	•	•	•	
6.2 Review Central Servicing of Rural Growth Centres	•			•
6.3 Wastewater Management Districts (maintenance)	•		•	
Chapter 7: The Regional Centre (NEW CHAPTER)				
7.1 Policy enabling creation of new Regional Centre MPS & LUB (Greenprint)	•	•	•	•
7.2 Other Regional Centre policy (i.e. design related, sustainability related)	•	•	•	•
Parallel Projects (to be delivered as ongoing stand-alone initiatives)				
<i>Greenprint:</i> Neighbourhood Greenprint guiding document	•	•	•	•
<i>Greenprint:</i> Regional Centre MPS & LUB	•	•	•	•
<i>Greenprint:</i> Housing affordability and choice in Regional Centre	•	•	•	•
<i>Greenprint:</i> New financial, policy & legislative tools to support Regional Centre	•	•	•	•
<i>Ongoing Functional Plans:</i> (e.g. The Harbour Plan, Regional Centre Open Space	•	•	•	•
Review of Service Boundary (suburban lands available for development)	•			•
Additional Suburban Masterplans if necessary	•		•	•
Suburban/Rural MPS/LUB amendments	•		•	
Red Book Review and Revision	•	•	•	•
Legislative Amendments to support HRM Strategic Initiatives	•	•	•	•

Phase 1: Information Sharing – Where are we now?

Purpose: To increase public awareness of the Regional Plan, its key issues, challenges and opportunities and to inform the public about the scope of the review process.

The first phase of the review was focused on research of the key in-scope issues and developing the tools to clearly and effectively communicate the project to the community at large, as well as external and internal stakeholders. The themes of the review were re-framed as:

- HRM is sustainable (sustainable solutions)
- HRM is vibrant (Regional Centre)
- HRM is livable (community design)
- HRM is mobile (transportation and land use)
- HRM is prosperous (integration with the Economic Strategy)

The RP+5 project brand was developed along with a new website, a blog site, facebook and twitter presence. A simple Q&A and presentation materials were developed for Phase 2 consultations, along with a marketing plan for a kick-off event and public meetings. Recruitment and orientation of the newly established Community Design Advisory Committee was also completed.

RP+5 website and social media channels were promoted as sources for information and platforms for feedback throughout the review process. A high-profile kick-off event on March 1, 2012 with guest speaker Calvin Brook and a panel of local decision makers and community leaders provided another opportunity to members of the public to get informed and engaged in the process.

Outcomes: CPED and Regional Council approved the Communication and Public Engagement Strategy and revised timelines. Public awareness campaign through HRM communications channels, the RP+5 list-serve and mass media included information on the scope of the review process, past accomplishments, key challenges, opportunities and how to become engaged.



Fig. 2 RP+5 Kick-off, March 1, 2012

Phase 2: Consultation – What do we want to change?

Purpose: To affirm the foundation of the Regional Plan; engage and inform the public on possible policy options; and test initial policy choices.

The purpose of second phase of community engagement was to re-affirm the Regional Plan's guiding principles and engage the public in a dialogue on potential policy directions. Information materials focused on accomplishments (e.g. Halifax downtown plan), new conditions (e.g. higher energy prices), and challenges (e.g. HRM not tracking to meet its growth targets). Public engagement was structured around public meetings, written submissions, several focus groups, informal stakeholder meetings and an on-line survey described in more detail below.

Public Meetings/Open Houses: In March 2012, seven meetings and a kick-off event were attended by over 500 citizens. Another 61 citizens participated on-line during two live-streamed events. The meetings were held in various HRM communities to discuss what has changed since the 2006 Regional Plan was adopted and how key policies need to address current challenges and future opportunities. Public consultation sought both broad feedback on the five themes (ie “What is your vision for vibrancy?”) as well as more specific feedback on potential policy directions. Public feedback was invited through a series of open houses and a Q&A town-hall session. HRM staff were available to answer questions and engage in individual conversations.

The public sessions commenced and concluded with a 30 min open house where members of the public could speak to individual staff and provide comments on interactive posters or comment forms. A staff presentation⁶ and a moderated Q&A period provided another opportunity for discussion. Sixty nine (69) evaluation forms were completed (representing 12% of participants). The majority of participants expressed a very positive opinion of the meetings and the opportunities to provide input.



The poster features the RP+5 logo and the Halifax Regional Municipality logo. It announces a 5-year review of the 2006 Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (Regional Plan). The review will focus on how HRM can become more Sustainable, Vibrant, Liveable, Mobile and Prosperous. It details public consultation opportunities, including a table of meetings and open houses.

Meeting Location	Date	Time
St. Margaret's Centre (Rooms 1 & 2) 12 Westwood Blvd, Upper Tantallon	March 19	6:30 pm – 9:00 pm
Atlantica Hotel (Guild Hall) 1980 Robie Street, Halifax	March 21	6:30 pm – 9:00 pm
Millwood High School (Cafeteria) 141 Millwood Drive, Lower Sackville	March 22*	7:00 pm - 9:30 pm
Oyster Pond Academy 10583 Hwy# 7, Oyster Pond	March 26*	7:00 pm – 9:30 pm
Mount Saint Vincent University - Rosario Student Centre 166 Bedford Highway, Halifax	March 26	6:30 pm - 9:00 pm
Black Cultural Centre 10 Cherry Brook Road, Cherry Brook	March 28	6:30 pm – 9:00 pm
Holiday Inn Harbourview (Harbourview Terrace) 110 Wyse Road, Dartmouth	March 29*	6:30 pm – 9:00 pm

*Indicates live web-streaming

Get Involved!
These events are some of the many public engagement opportunities planned for HRM citizens and key stakeholders over the course of the project. For more information on the RP+5 project, visit www.halifax.ca/PlanHRM, follow @PlanHRM on Twitter, or visit www.facebook.com/PlanHRM.

What matters to you and your community?
Help shape the Regional Plan!

Written submissions
Email: PlanHRM@halifax.ca
Mail: Halifax Regional Municipality
Regional Planning Office
3rd Floor, 400 Arsenault Drive
PO Box 1749
Halifax, NS B3J 3A5

⁶ A copy of the presentation is available at <http://www.halifax.ca/planhrm/documents/RP5PresentationMar19-29.pdf>

Focus groups: Two focus groups were held with international newcomers through Immigration Settlement and Integration Services (ISIS) language training program. Another focus group was held with community members involved in Community Visioning processes as part of Community Visioning program review mandated by RP+5.

- ISIS ESL Class AM, St. Andrew's Community Centre, April 25, 2012 (15 participants)
- ISIS ESL Class PM, ISIS, April 25, 2012 (20 participants)
- Community Visioning Review Focus Group, Findlay Community Centre, May 25, 2012



Stakeholder meetings: Staff met on several occasions with stakeholder groups such as the Our HRM Alliance and Heritage Trust to discuss specific issues. Introductory letters were also mailed to First Nation governments (Acadia, Millbrook and Shubenacadie) and to organizations serving the urban Aboriginal community such as the Halifax Friendship Centre. As a result, one meeting was held with Millbrook First Nation on June 7, 2012.

Online Survey: 460 residents participated in an online survey from April 13th – May 15th 2012 on the Halifax website which included detailed responses to potential RP+5 policy directions. A summary is available at <http://www.halifax.ca/planhrm/documents/SurveySummaryMay27.pdf>.

Written submissions: Approximately 50 written submissions were also received through the planhrm e-mail, facebook and twitter account. A compilation of the submissions is available at <http://www.halifax.ca/planhrm/documents/Allcomments-July-Webversion.pdf>.

Outcomes: At the end of Phase 2, all comments and written submissions were presented to CDAC and were published on-line. Comments were organized in detailed tables according the themes, specific topics, being “in scope”, “addressed by another initiative” or “out of scope”. In-scope comments were provided with a staff response supported by research and CDAC direction. CDAC dedicated six meetings (July 4 – Oct. 6th, 2012) to reviewing the community feedback tables and providing staff with policy direction on Draft 1 of the Plan. All tables and committee minutes are available on-line at <http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/CommunityDesignAdvisoryCommittee.html>

Phase 3: Consultation – What do we need to refine or change?

Purpose: To seek feedback on proposed Regional Plan policy changes.

The third phase of community engagement was focused on seeking public feedback on fifteen (15) areas of proposed policy change to the Regional Plan. Three key questions were asked during this phase of engagement:

- What do you like about proposed changes?
- What needs to be refined or changed?
- What does successful implementation look like?

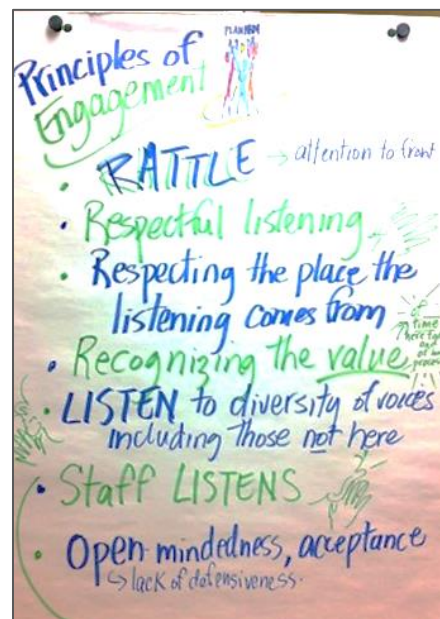
Draft 2 was available on-line on **May 17th, 2013**. Community engagement activities included three stakeholder meetings (June 3-6), six open houses (June 10-July 16), one regional town hall meeting (June 17), and an invitation to provide written submissions (May 17 – July 19).

As part of Phase 3, staff provided updates to Regional Council on the proposed policy changes, the North West Community Council, the Heritage Advisory Committee, and the HRM Development Liaison Group.

Stakeholder meetings: There was a stronger emphasis on stakeholder consultation in addition to public consultation. Three meetings were facilitated by outside consultants⁷:

Table 2: RP+5 Phase 3 Stakeholder Meetings

Environment, Health, Transportation	St. Mary's Boat Club Halifax	June 3
Culture, Heritage, Arts	Art Gallery of Nova Scotia Halifax	June 5
Development Industry	Mic Mac Amateur Aquatic Club Dartmouth	June 6



In addition to notes, graphic facilitation was used to capture the input from stakeholder meetings. A list of participating organizations is listed in Appendix 2. Stakeholder meeting notes were sent to participants, were also posted on-line at <http://www.halifax.ca/planhrm/Phase3Comments.html> and circulated to CDAC members for their June 19, 2013 agenda.

Open houses: Given the large number of issues under consideration, open houses were selected as the format of the public sessions to provide an opportunity for information sharing and an inclusive setting for feedback. Proposed policy changes were presented through fact sheets and posters. “Dotmocracy” was used to informally gauge public support for various policy directions⁸. Both stakeholders and members of the public were invited to provide detailed written comments following the conclusion of the public meetings.

⁷ Robert Zeigler, Jeanie Cockell and Susan MacLeod

⁸ See policy fact sheets <http://www.halifax.ca/planhrm/FactSheets.html>. Dotmocracy involved placing dot stickers around “agree, agree but with these changes and do not agree” on each of the key policy topics. See results in section below.

Town Hall meeting/Open House: One regional Town Hall was held at the Dartmouth Holiday Inn to provide an opportunity for members of the public to comment publicly and raise concerns about proposed policy changes, or any gaps in policy. The town hall included an open house component, a detailed staff presentation and approximately 2 hour town hall. Minutes of the town hall are available on-line at <http://www.halifax.ca/planhrm/Phase3Comments.html>. Some feedback was received that more town-hall styled consultations should have been held, but most participants reacted positively the open house format.

Table 3: Phase 3 Public Sessions





Meeting Location	Date
North Preston Community Centre North Preston	June 10
Canada Games Centre Halifax	June 12
Gordon Snow Community Centre Fall River	June 13
Holiday Inn Harbourview Dartmouth	June 17
Gaetz Brook Legion Gaetz Brook	July 10
Lion's Centre Sheet Harbour	July 16



Written submissions: Approximately 200 written submissions were received as part of Phase 3 from individual citizens property owners, organizations and networks. All comments received were promptly circulated to CDAC (see Appendix 3), and posted on-line: <http://www.halifax.ca/planhrm/Phase3Comments.html>.

Outcomes: CDAC dedicated six meetings to reviewing public feedback (June 19 to August 7, 2013). Staff provided responses to public input as a basis for CDAC discussion on further required changes to the Regional Plan.

Table 4: Summary of Community Engagement Activities (Jan. 2012 – Aug. 2013)

RP+5 Phases 1, 2 & 3	Engagement and Communication Activities	Ongoing Activities
Phase 1 Jan – Feb 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CE Strategy approved by CPED and Regional Council • Kick-off: 250+ participants • New website launched • E-mail updates (over 5,000 on list-serve) • Facebook and Twitter pages launched • RP+5 brand (business cards, banner, public advertisements) 	Website  Blog
Phase 2 Mar 2012 – May 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CDAC Established • Marketing campaign (local and regional print media; social media); • 7 regional public (550+ attendees and numerous comments provided on open house posters and comment cards); • Focus groups: newcomers (two ESL classes, 35 participants total) and Community Visioning past and current members; • Group stakeholder meetings (e.g. Millbrook First Nation, Our HRM Alliance, Heritage Trust, Halifax Water etc); • On-line survey (460 responses); • 70+ individual written and group submissions; • Studies completed (Stantec and Altus); • Staff response to public input; • CDAC Policy Direction on Draft 2. 	 Facebook  Twitter  Written Submissions
Phase 3 June – Aug. 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy fact sheets and posters; • Mayor promotional video; • Marketing campaign (print and radio advertising; social media); • 3 stakeholder meetings on Environment & Health; Development and Business, Culture, Heritage and Arts (approx.. 100 participants) • 6 Public Open Houses and one Regional Town Hall Meeting (approx. 500 participants) • Written Submissions (200) • Staff response to public input • CDAC direction on Draft 3 • Update to Regional Council, CPED, NWCC, HRM Development Liaison Group, HAC 	

RESULTS - WHAT WE HEARD

Phase 2: Consultation – What do we want to change?

As indicated above, public input during phase 2 included public meetings, focus groups, written submissions and an online survey. The format included an open house with highly visual materials and participant handout, a presentation and question and answer period. Over 500 participants attended the meetings, 460 filled out the on-line survey and 50 written submissions were received. Table 3 (below) highlights some of the key comments received from urban, suburban and rural communities.

Table 5: Phase 2 Community Feedback from Public Meetings and Focus Groups (some selected quotes are highlighted in italics)

Meeting Location	Key Issues
Urban (Halifax, Halifax Mainland Dartmouth) <i>“More equitable tax structure. Downtown businesses need a level playing field with business parks – why not install parking meters in Bayers Lake and Dartmouth Crossing?”</i> <i>“Ensuring that community/neighbourhood green space is maintained”</i> <i>“Income inequality isn’t just a federal or provincial issue—it has impacts on Halifax’s streets”.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet urban growth targets • Manage growth through greenbelting • Increase residential and commercial development in the Regional Centre • Direct more development to the Regional Centre • Address cost of land and development in urban areas • Improve urban design and place making • Support culture and heritage • Provide opportunities for affordable housing • Promote green space and urban gardens • Introduce incentives and consider commercial taxation and development costs • Protect local neighbourhoods • Place priority on transit and active transportation in the urban core • Stop infilling Bedford Basin • Measure results • Ensure high quality design
Suburban (Lower Sackville, Cherrybrook) <i>“Trails that link school, home and workplace in safe, green, sustainable manner”.</i> <i>“Promote/incentive sustainable building design. Zero net emissions “showcase” building, “Eco business parks”, tangible projects inspire people!”</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve community design and place-making • Invest in transportation infrastructure and active transportation • Improve transit • Limit retail development on industrial lands • Address stormwater and drainage • Promote open space • Implement a greenbelting strategy
Rural (Upper Tantallon, Oyster Pond) <i>“How is our area going to be prosperous?”</i> <i>“Why is it that we were left out of any future planning?”</i> <i>“Happy to hear that the Plan has shifted from a growth model to a densification model”</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet/adjust growth targets • Improve transportation and transit • Develop and maintain public roads, private roads and sidewalks • Regulate waste-water management • Address storm-water and drainage • Invest in rural growth centres and rural economic development • Develop more public gathering places

Meeting Location	Key Issues
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue and implement community visioning
Community Visioning Liaison Committees <i>"We started out on this venture with much enthusiasm and slowly gained support from community members when they realized that we seriously wanted their input. However, this support is starting to wane due to the slowness of enacting the bylaws and regulations that are needed to enforce what the residents want"</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities for residents to be actively engaged in their communities. Build on the success of community visioning by strengthening implementation Revise committee structure to include the various community interests. Clarify expectations Be clear in policy on the difference between community visioning vs community planning
Newcomer Focus groups <i>"Enough open space but make it more attractive and colourful!"</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newcomers like HRM for its safety, friendliness, access to nature, recreation facilities, nice housing and support services. Key issues include affordable housing, employment, recognition of qualifications, education, transit (including transit to recreation opportunities outside the city), and activities for children, youth and family, growing own food.

On-line survey:

The on-line survey was open to the public from April 13th – May 15th, 2012 on the Halifax.ca website. The survey attracted 460 complete responses with 57% completion rate. Only complete surveys have been included in the analysis⁹.

The survey was modeled on policy goals and proposed actions presented at the public consultations sessions held in HRM between March 19th and March 29th. Given the focused nature of the review process, the survey was used to confirm policy proposals rather than to test a number of divergent options.

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of the proposed actions from "very important" to "important", "neutral", "not important" and "no opinion/don't know". Each section of the survey included an opportunity to provide written comments and resulted in 80 to 150 written comments per section. The survey on average took 20 minutes to complete. Individuals were also asked to identify their community, age range and gender for statistical purposes. Responses were received from all areas of the municipality. The following actions received the highest level of support (based on % of answers for "very important" and "important"):

- Improve transit service in the Regional Centre and along strategic corridors** to support walkable, compact, mixed-use development (complete neighbourhoods) – 89% support
- Encourage green building construction and operation** (e.g. solar orientation in new developments, green roofs, etc.) – 87% support
- Encourage a mix of shops, services, residences and jobs** within walking distance of each other and transit in growth centres – 85% support.
- Through the Centre Plan, introduce as-of-right form-based zoning** in the Regional Centre that requires good design and quality construction, builds vibrant streetscapes, and protects local neighbourhoods (83% support).

⁹ Incomplete surveys were not included in the tabulation to ensure consistent statistical analysis.

- **Through the Centre Plan, direct appropriately scaled growth and density to existing commercial corridors** and opportunity sites to protect the scale and character of existing neighbourhoods (79% support).
- Introduce a variety of financial, legislative, and regulatory tools to help **achieve growth targets in the Regional Centre** (i.e. improved development policies and processes, financial incentives, density bonusing , etc.) (76% support)
- **Develop a Regional Open Space Plan** that ensures that parks, open space corridors, environmentally sensitive lands, urban and natural forests, waterways, cultural landscapes and active transportation pathways are properly provided and managed (90% support);
- Adopt planning practices and policies that **support active living** in the planning design and development of the built environment (87% support);
- Improve and expand transit services in areas with high potential ridership (86% support)
- **Direct growth and increase opportunities to live, work, and play in areas with existing transit services** (85% support).
- **Improve the livability and attractiveness of our urban core** (e.g. beautification, affordable housing, public art, open spaces, infrastructure improvements, etc.) (86% support)

Phase 2 public consultation largely confirmed the initial proposed policy directions and placed emphasis on specific issues, including:

- meeting urban growth targets & investing in Regional Centre
- introducing greenbelting for the purpose of growth management and “eco-services”
- improve community design & housing affordability
- support culture and heritage
- limit retail development on industrial lands
- address stormwater and drainage
- protect rural character
- improve performance and reporting measures

One of the key issues raised was a concern with HRM not tracking to meet its urban growth targets. Our HRM Alliance, a regional coalition of community groups, advocated for greenbelting as a way to clearly distinguish between “desirable” and “un-desirable” areas of growth. While the Alliance’s proposal challenged the Regional Plan’s approach shaping new development as opposed prohibiting it through land use designations and service boundaries, both staff and CDAC saw value in incorporating greenbelting in the revised draft Plan as an enhancement to current open space planning.

Phase 3: Consultation – What do we need to refine or change?

Phase 3 saw a continued high level of engagement among the public with approximately 600 people taking part in stakeholder and public sessions. In addition, over 200 written submissions were received from organizations and individual citizens. The large volume of feedback was centred on several key topics, not surprisingly, with some strong opposing views. For example, the development community expressed concern with the cost of some of the proposed measures for undergrounding and rural subdivision standards, while some community groups continued to push for greater growth control in rural areas of HRM and a definite halt to any development in the urban reserve areas.

In addition, community consensus has been reached on the definition of greenbelting. There was a strong support for the Centre Plan although some heritage groups questioned the whole-sale replacement of current policies and regulations with a new plan. Likewise, there was little opposition to the Urban Transit Service Boundary as long as HRM continues to support rural community transit. There was an overall sense that timely and effective implementation is critical to addressing many of the region's critical issues. Table 4 lists key issues, comments and results of informal "Dotmocracy" scores.



Table 6: Key themes of Phase 3 Public Consultation and “Dotmocracy” results

Topic	Agree	Agree, but	Do not agree	Key Comments
Active transportation	23	27	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key active transportation projects should be included in the Plan
Culture and heritage	18	17	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize importance of arts and distinguish between arts, culture and heritage • Maintain both American and Canadian heritage standards • Quieting of titles for the North Preston, East Preston and Cherrybrook communities desired • Strengthen heritage policies • Improve performance measures (e.g. heritage, investment) • More recognition of the value of culture and heritage in community identity and vibrancy
Greenbelting	13	27	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition needs to be clear • Use it for growth management, not only for open space connectivity • Abandon the term – uncertainty for development • Urban Settlement Designation should be applied comprehensively to contain development
Growth targets				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure growth targets are met • Increase growth targets to 50% in the Regional Centre • Consider increasing Regional Centre growth target after year 10 of the Plan • Include commercial growth targets as well as residential ones • Consider denying building permits in areas where growth targets have been exceeded
Growth Centres	9	25	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add policy supporting sustainable suburban and rural community design • Limit development between growth centres • Prioritize growth centres • Ensure that only transit oriented development happens in growth centres
Urban Reserve lands				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain urban reserve • Eliminate policy G-15 • Place holding zone on urban reserve lands

Topic	Agree	Agree, but	Do not agree	Key Comments
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban reserve designation is overly restrictive Add lands to urban reserves Preserve Purcell's Cove lands by including them in the greenbelt Change lands off Purcell's Cove to Urban Settlement and re-zone to residential development district Request to add various Armco lands to urban reserve Retain policy IM-18 Delete policy IM-18
Housing affordability	18	21	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove barriers to special needs housing Focus on secondary suites and density bonusing Improve transit service Add a principle related to not unduly affecting housing affordability through regulations Ensure neighborhood resiliency
Industrial Lands	6	6	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limit retail development in industrial parks Policy EC-6 encourages "sprawl" and erodes health of existing business districts
Plan performance	6	13	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt and report on detailed performance measures Include heritage performance measures
Regional Centre	20	8	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centre Plan is needed Maintain policies from the current plans that work Too much emphasis on Regional Centre vs suburbs Limit commercial development between centers Provide clear framework for Centre Plan Objection to the removal of Opportunity Sites Map Conduct a residential location study Identify impacts of new development on existing commercial districts
Regional Road Works and Active Transportation	7	16	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove Third Bridge and Bayers Rd. widening Map 8 (road Classification) requires

Topic	Agree	Agree, but	Do not agree	Key Comments
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consultation; defer to Centre Plan • Emphasize Mount Hope Ave. to Caldwell • Add specifics related to Active transportation • Need a n integrated mobility plan • Accept more congestion
Rural development and community design	12	14	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural active transportation development tool • Should be able to include riparian buffers and other open space on parkland dedication requirement • Increase the number of units permitted on private driveways • Caps of 100 or 30 units between centres is arbitrary and too restrictive • Eliminate rural conservation development between centers • Increase density for classic Open Space developments
Servicing and Utilities, development charges	10	8	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development charges are too lenient to discourage growth outside of Regional Centre • Mandate wastewater management Districts • Mandate septic tanks to be pumped out • Remove policy SU-15 • Adjust taxation and development charges to encourage development on existing services
Transit	13	28	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree with focused investment in the urban service area • Need to support rural transit
Undergrounding	21	8	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern over cost of mandatory undergrounding • Concern over mandatory undergrounding in rural areas • Eliminate requirement for underground wiring
Watercourse buffers	19	42	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase minimum watercourse buffers to 30 m
Additional topics				
Bedford Basin infilling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop the infilling 			
Food security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HRM needs a food security strategy that supports local farmers 			
Governance/Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site-specific plan amendments should not be considered • Re-tool secondary planning processes to make them relevant to rural growth 			

Topic	Agree	Agree, but	Do not agree	Key Comments
				centres
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specify timelines for secondary plans for growth areas under S-2 and S-9
Green development				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More encouragement for green building standards More consideration for solar energy District energy
Harbour lands				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern over densification of Harbour Lands and storm surge damage
Island development				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More stringent development regulations for islands
Regional Parks				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement Regional Parks (Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes) Acquire necessary lands for the BMBCL
Sea level elevation				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the 2.5 m elevation to 4 metres
Wetland protection				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include smaller wetlands in the Wetlands Schedule (as small as 100 m2) HRM has no jurisdiction over protection of wetlands – delete policy E-16 Do not exempt Halifax Harbour and Bedford Basin from watercourse buffers Do not relax requirements for lots in existence prior to 2006

RESPONSE TO COMMUNITY INPUT


As indicated above, community engagement, including a careful review of all feedback and written submissions, was a major component of the RP+5 process. CDAC dedicated twelve meetings to review and discuss the extensive public input provided during the process from individual citizens, property owners, businesses, community organizations, and major institutions. Following phase 2 and phase 3, staff organized comments in “community response tables”, linking comments to specific issues and research and CDAC policy direction. Selected images of feedback from stakeholder consultations and community feedback tables are illustrated below. Key changes to the Plan due to public feedback include the following:

Public input directed many areas of policy changes, such as:

- Municipal objectives are explicitly identified at the beginning of each chapter.
- The main findings of the Stantec study on the costs and benefits of alternative growth scenarios have been summarized and municipal growth targets restated. Whereas the current plan targets 25% of new housing units to the Regional Centre, 50% to the suburbs and 25% to the rural areas, the targets are restated as The Regional Plan shall target at least 75% of new housing units to be located in the Regional Centre and suburbs with at least 25% of new housing units within the Regional Centre over the life of this Plan.
- The concept of greenbelting is introduced and a commitment is made to undertake a Greenbelting and Public Open Space Priorities Plan.
- Consideration of the HRM growth targets and the need for additional lands have been added as criterion for Council to consider when requests are received to amend the service boundary and to initiate secondary planning for new serviced growth centres.
- Boundaries have been established for rural growth centres and “caps” on maximum number of lots have been set for developments between growth centres.
- Food security, mobility needs, supporting aging in place, establishing interconnected greenbelts and open spaces are identified as matters to be considered when preparing secondary planning strategies for growth centres.
- A new policy has been added that, when reviewing secondary planning strategies for rural areas, consideration is to be given to limiting the scale or retail development allowed outside of designated rural centres.
- The Road Hierarchy Classification Map, has been deleted and a new road classification system will be developed as part of the Road Networks Priorities Plan.



- Several housekeeping map changes resulted in more crown lands conservation areas being designated as Open Space Natural Resource.
- A commitment is made that none of the road network projects presented in Table 4-1 will be constructed unless a community consultation program has been undertaken.
- A new requirement is made under the Regional Subdivision By-law for underground placement of electrical and communication distribution lines from the poles to the street right-of-way for all subdivisions where new streets are proposed.
- Key regional active transportation projects have been added to Chapter 4.
- Revised performance measures are to be used to assist in evaluating the effectiveness of policies, programs, and investments in achieving the vision and objectives of the Plan.
- An implementation policy, IM-18 under the current plan, which allows Council to consider extension of uses into an abutting planning designation, has been modified to clarify that this provision is only intended to be applied on a limited scale.



Phase III Response to Public Input. Page | 1

Response to Written Public Submissions (Received July 6-19, 2013)* - Supplementary**

*Refer to Submissions Packages 3 and 4: <http://www.halifax.ca/planhrm/Phase3Comments.html>

This series of responses is provided as supplementary information to that tabled with the CDAC on July 31, 2013. New issues, not previously included in the responses tabled on the 31st are **highlighted in BOLD text in the supplementary table.

POLICY AREA - GREENBELTING			
SUBMISSION REFERENCE #	COMMUNITY FEEDBACK (The issues and comments received have been summarized below. Please refer to full submission for more detail)	STAFF RESPONSE	CDAC DIRECTION
4.12	Designate potential open spaces and corridors on maps; then negotiate with landowners/developers via land swapping, parkland dedication, purchase using the parkland reserve account, and partnerships with the Province.	This will be done at the community planning level, informed by the Greenbelting and Public Spaces (GPS) Priorities Plan.	
4.12	List Old Growth Forests in Tables 2-1 and Table 3-2.	The GPS will address this.	
3.54	Update Map 13 to reflect the work done on Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes Regional Park since the last RP, including the watershed study. Table 2-3 should read NSE and DNR/HRM.	Council has directed a facilitated negotiation take place towards acquiring lands for the regional park. Maps will be changed following this process.	
3.54	Provide a Glossary, and include an explanation of the term "Greenway".	Agreed, the term will be defined. A glossary of planning terms can be found on the PlanHRM website, but it is not included in the Regional Plan.	
3.54	Add "Greenway" to Table 2.2.	Agreed.	

1 CDAC – Aug 2, 2013

Fig. 4 Sample Respons Table, Phase 3

CONCLUSION

Overall staff feel that the community engagement process for Phases 1-3 met its objectives as stated in the Feb. 4, 2012 staff report. The process provided extensive opportunities for public input and feedback. The comments in some cases were beyond the scope of the RP+5 review and many expressed a desire to see detailed implementation strategies in the Plan, and may inform future processes. For example, budgets and specific timelines are not typically addressed by a regional municipal planning strategy. Where staff did not agree with a comment or suggestion, a rationale was provided for not changing the policy direction. The final report to Council will provide Council with the opportunity to consider policy alternatives that can further address public input.

The RP+5 process enjoyed a high level of public engagement and ongoing input. Staff and CDAC members were grateful for the diversity and caliber of public submissions. While urban, suburban and rural areas of the municipality continue to face different issues, there appeared to be more understanding and genuine appreciation for the inter-dependency of urban and rural areas and how growth management can affect the quality of life of all areas of HRM.

There was overall support for meeting and exceeding growth targets, for the efficient use existing infrastructure, protection of natural areas, more focused investment in transit, limiting retail development in business parks and revitalization of the Regional Centre. At the root of divergent opinions was the appropriateness and definition of greenbelting, the current growth targets, the overall approach to growth management and the possible impact of regulations on housing affordability. Food security and protection of urban reserves were other key issues raised in public consultations.

Staff and CDAC made every effort to accommodate public input while staying true to the fundamentals of the Plan. Future reviews may consider a more focused scope, and perhaps an early public engagement process when determining the actual scope of the review. The Regional Plan continues to be relevant and important to the community and continued engagement, reporting and communication are critical to its success.

Appendix 1 Members of the Community Design Advisory Committee (Sept. 2013)

Sector / Role	Name
Chair	Dale Godsoe
Arts	Joanne Macrae
Environment	Geoff LeBoutillier
Business	William Book
Economy/Vice Chair	Fred Morley
Health	Gaynor Watson-Creed
Development	Eric Burchill
Citizen at large	Peter Moorhouse
Councillors	Watts, Jennifer
	Mason, Waye
	McCluskey, Gloria
	Nicoll, Lorelei

Appendix 2 Organizations Participants of Stakeholder Meetings

Environment, Housing, Mobility, Health June 3, 2013, St. Mary's Boat Club	
Chebucto Transportation	Halifax North West Trails Association (HNWTA)
Ecology Action Centre	Metro Community Housing Association/St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association
Five Bridges Wilderness Heritage Trust	MusGo Rider
Halifax Cycling Coalition	Our HRM Alliance
Halifax Field Naturalists	Public Health, Capital District Health Society
Halifax Water	Sackville River Association
Halifax Water	Shubenacadie Watershed Environmental protection Society
HCC/Planning and Design Centre/CEU	William's Lake Conservation Company
Heart and Stroke	Woodens River Watershed Environmental Organization
Culture, Heritage and Arts June 5, 2013 Art Gallery of Nova Scotia	
Association of NS Museums	Dept. of Communities Culture and Heritage
Canadian Museum of Immigration Pier 21	Heritage Trust of NS
Cole Harbour Heritage Society	Irondale Ensemble Project
Dance NS	Neptune Theatre Foundation
Dartmouth Business Commission/Chamber of Commerce	Neptune Theatre/Halifax Chamber of Commerce Colour.ca
Development and Business Stakeholder Group June 6, 2013 Mic Mac AAC	
Annapolis Group Inc	Lavalin
Armco	North End Business Association
Atlantic Developments Inc.	Nova Scotia Business Inc.
Centennial Group Limited	NSLS/Brunello Estates
Clayton Developments Limited	QRMDA
Conrad Brothers	Ramar
Cresco	Seven Lakes Developments Ltd.
Downtown Dartmouth Business Commission	Sobeys
Downtown Halifax Business Commission	Southwest Properties Ltd./ CDAC
Genivar	Spring Garden Area Business Association
Halifax Chamber of Commerce	Strategic Urban Partnership/CDAC
Halifax Water	Urban Development Institute
Heritage Gas	Waterfront Development Corporation Ltd.
KNA	

Appendix 3– List and location of Phase 3 Accompanying Documents

Written Public Submissions:

<http://www.halifax.ca/planhrm/Phase3Comments.html>

Written Submissions Pkg. I (to June 25th)
Written Submissions Pkg.II (June 26th to July 5th)
Written Submissions Pkg. III (July 6 to July 19th)
Written Submissions Pkg. IV (July 19th)

Engagement Session Notes:

<http://www.halifax.ca/planhrm/Phase3Comments.html>

Date:	Engagement Session:
June 3, 2013	Stakeholder Group Consultation - Transportation, Environment, Health
June 5, 2013	Stakeholder Group Consultation - Culture, Heritage, Arts
June 6, 2013	Stakeholder Group Consultation - Development Industry, Business
June 10, 2013	Open House - North Preston Community Centre
June 12, 2013	Open House - Canada Games Centre
June 13, 2013	Open House - Gordon Snow Community Centre
June 17, 2013	Open House & Town Hall Meeting -Holiday Inn Harbourfront
July 10, 2013	Open House - Gaetz Brook Legion
July 16, 2013	Open House - Sheet Harbour Lions Club

Public Input Staff Response Tables - CDAC Agenda Links

June 19, 2013	http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/June192013agendaforCommunityDesignAdvisoryCommittee-HRM.html
June 29, 2013	http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/June28CDACAgenda-HRM.html
July 3, 2013	http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/July32013AgendaforCommunityDesignAdvisoryCommittee-HRM.html
July 17, 2013	http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/July172013AgendaforCommunityDesignAdvisoryCommittee-HRM.html
July 31, 2013	http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/July312013CommunityDesignAdvisoryCommittee-HRM.html
Aug. 2, 2013	http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/130807CDACAgenda.html