

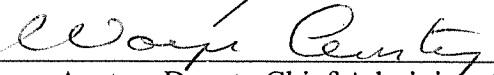


PO Box 1749  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3J 3A5 Canada

**Halifax Regional Council  
October 24, 2006  
Committee of the Whole**

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

**SUBMITTED BY:**   
Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer

  
Wayne Anstey, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer - Operations

**DATE:** October 17, 2006

**SUBJECT:** *HRM by Design:*  
**Strategies for Public Consultation and Council Approval**

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**ORIGIN**

- **November 8, 2005:** Regional Council approved cost sharing for the Regional Centre Urban Design Study between HRM, the Province of Nova Scotia, and ACOA.
- **March 7, 2006:** Regional Council awarded RFP # 05-05-073 (Regional Centre Urban Design Study) to the highest ranking proponent, Office for Urbanism, Inc.
- **May 9, 2006:** Regional Council approved the Terms of Reference for the creation of the Urban Design Task Force to ensure broad public representation and participation.
- **June 27, 2006:** Council appointed members to the new Urban Design Task Force.
- **August 1, 2006:** Council received a project update in the form of an Information Report.
- **September 12, 2006:** Council received an Information Report discussing the public participation strategy to accompany a presentation. The presentation was deferred until October 24, 2006. The current October 24 report combines the deferred presentation with new recommendations.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

It is recommended that Regional Council:

1. Approve *HRM by Design's* public participation strategy as outlined in this report.
2. Approve the methodology and schedule, as described in this report, of Council's incremental adoption of *HRM by Design's* findings at key project milestones.

## **BACKGROUND**

### Purpose

*HRM by Design* (formerly known as the “Regional Centre Urban Design Study”) will articulate a design strategy to foster quality development and vibrant public spaces through the creation of new policies and tools such as design guidelines, improved processes, and incentives for good development. The study will address issues such as building height, heritage preservation, open space, residential infill, downtown development, architectural design guidelines, and a review of the development approval processes currently in use. The approach is intended to reinforce current community plans and values related to heritage, viewplane protection and neighbourhood stability. The study is mandated in the Regional Plan, and is further supported by key policies in the Cultural Plan and in the Economic Development Strategy.

The *HRM by Design* study area is the Regional Centre as defined by the Regional Plan which includes the Halifax Peninsula and Dartmouth within the Circumferential Highway. A key focus will be the Capital District and its relationship to surrounding neighbourhoods, employment centres and transportation/transit routes.

### Public Consultation

Robust and thorough public consultation is the backbone of *HRM by Design*. It is critical to the success of the project, and the credibility of its findings, that there be broad support and public ownership of the final report. Toward achieving this goal the project team, with the input of the Urban Design Task Force, has designed a comprehensive and innovative public participation strategy. The primary component of the strategy is the concept of the **Public Forum** - a consultation tool that is on the leading edge of community engagement and is in broad usage throughout North America and Europe.

### Regional Council

Also critical to the project’s success is the involvement and support of HRM Regional Council throughout each stage in the study process. *HRM by Design*, as with the Regional Plan, will shape our built environment to ensure harmonious development, beautiful buildings, vibrant and well-used public spaces, and an enhanced sense of pride in our downtown and neighbourhoods. Frequent interaction with Council at key stages of the project will help validate and set direction for future consultations. **This report therefore recommends a methodology wherein Council is asked to incrementally approve the project’s findings at key milestones.**

## **DISCUSSION**

### **1. Public Consultation Strategy:**

Major public consultation for **HRM by DESIGN** will occur over the course of 6 Phases, as illustrated in Attachment #1: “Overall Project Schedule,” and will be led by the Urban Design Task Force. As discussed above, the primary component of the consultation strategy is the **Public Forum**. As an example, please see Attachment #2 for the weekly program for Forum 1 that was held in

September. Each of the project's four Forums takes place over the course of four days during which time the following consultation events are held:

- An evening-time interactive public workshop in Halifax.
- An evening-time interactive public workshop in Dartmouth.
- A full-day working session for staff and the consultant team.
- Two full-days of intensive workshop sessions attended by the Urban Design Task Force, the Project Steering Committee, and key stakeholders.
- Two lunch-time public viewing sessions where the public is invited to view the ongoing work of the project team and to offer input.
- A final evening-time interactive presentation of Forum findings for public verification.

The four Public Forums will take place over the course of *HRM by Design's* six project phases. Forum 1 was held September 11-14, and Forum 2 will be held December 4-7. The Project's six phases are summarized here:

- **Phase 1:** *Reconnaissance and Analysis.* This included indepth interviews with strategic stakeholders including major landowners (DND, Parks Canada, Province of NS, HRM, Port Authority, etc.), community groups, design professionals, heritage groups, development industry, business commissions, residents, and others. It also included reviewing existing background materials, analyzed existing conditions, and conducted SWOT analyses.
- **Phase 2:** *Vision, Principles, and Framework.* Intensive public workshops and interactive open houses were the format of **Forum 1**, held over the course of four days in September, 2006, which yielded an enormous amount of input. More than 300 residents and stakeholders logged over 1,600 hours of consultation during that period. The intent of Forum 1 was to report on the findings of Phase 1, and to develop the community's overarching, high-level urban design goals.
- **Phase 3:** *Residential Infill Case Studies.* **Forum 2** will be held from December 4-7, 2006, and will follow the same successful four-day format of workshops and open houses undertaken in Forum 1. The intent of Forum 2 is to identify the challenges faced by the Regional Plan's forecasted residential growth (21,000 people in the Regional Centre over the life of the Plan, equivalent to 25% of the Region's total growth in that timeframe) and to determine policy improvements and design guidelines that will ensure such growth is compatible with our existing neighbourhoods. Case studies will include low, medium and high density residential examples with a range of affordability. Forum 2 will commence with a recap and "check-in" of the findings of Forum 1.
- **Phase 4:** *Development Opportunity Sites.* In this phase (in approximately March/April, 2007), **Forum 3** will identify several key sites within the Regional Centre that exemplify the challenges currently faced by development, both in terms of process and design. Conceptual designs will be developed for these sites. The

sites will be drawn from the great store of vacant and under-utilized land, in public and private ownership, identified in the Regional Plan. Forum 3 will also follow the four-day intensive consultation model used in the other phases. Forum 3 will commence with a recap and “check-in” of the findings of Forum 2.

- **Phase 5:** *Implementation Strategies and Tools.* Critical to ensuring that this project is well used after its completion is a successful, highly proactive implementation strategy. **Forum 4** will occur in June, 2007, and will focus on implementation. Key deliverables include urban design guidelines, a development design handbook, recommended policy amendments, a capacity building strategy for both HRM staff and residents, and a long term schedule with projected budget requirements. Forum 4 will commence with a recap and “check-in” of the findings of Forum 3.
- **Phase 6:** *Final Report.* Here the final report and all deliverables are produced, a final interactive **Public Open House** is held in which the project team “checks in” with the public and stakeholders on the results of the preceding Forums, resulting amendments to the report are made, and a final presentation is made to Council. The project is expected to be complete by December of 2007. It should be noted that implementation of some aspects of the project will require amendments to various planning documents and these will require subsequent public hearings.

Public consultation tools that are ongoing throughout the life of the project include:

- A regular (monthly) schedule of Urban Design Task Force meetings and workshops;
- Ongoing work with the Urban Design Task Force to explore opportunities to network with and outreach to community organizations throughout the study area;
- The maintenance of a dedicated project website ([www.hrmbydesign.ca](http://www.hrmbydesign.ca));
- The production of a project Newsletter that accompanies each project phase (Issues #2 has recently been published);
- The maintenance of a dedicated project telephone line and voicemail box (490-1679);
- Promotion and advertisement for the project’s consultation events through newspaper ads, postering efforts, bus-mounted advertisements, direct e-mailing, and direct calling;
- Maintaining a high level of public awareness about the project by regular articles in the print media and occasionally on the radio.

## **2. Council's Incremental Adoption of Project Findings:**

As discussed above, *HRM by Design* will occur over the course of 6 Phases (see Attachment #1: "Overall Project Schedule."). It is proposed that Council adopt, in principle, the findings of each Phase in a way that incrementally establishes Council's support.

It is proposed that these adoptions will occur via recommendation reports from the Urban Design Task Force, to be submitted to Council at times that are midway between consultation forums. The requests for adoption will not come immediately after a Forum, but rather will lag by two Forums. The intent of this lag is to ensure that the recommendations being brought forward for adoption have benefited from maximum consultation. In this way, the recommendation will have been before the public both at the Forum in which it was produced, and at the subsequent Forum when it is read back to the public at the "check-in." By this method all recommendations brought to Council will have been before the public twice, as well as vetted by the Urban Design Task Force.

The proposed timeline for incremental adoption is as follows (**adoption dates shown in bold**):

- Sept. 11-14: Forum 1: Vision, Principles and Framework.
- Oct. 24, 2006: Council adopts Public Participation Strategy.**
- Dec. 4-7, 2007: Forum2: Residential Infill Case Studies.
- Feb., 2007: Council adopts Vision, Principles, Framework (Forum 1 recommendations).**
- Apr., 2007: Forum 3: Development Opportunity Sites.
- May, 2007: Council adopts Residential Infill Case Studies (Forum 2 recommendations).**
- Jun., 2007: Forum 4: Implementation Strategies and Tools.
- July, 2007: Council adopts Development Opportunity Sites (Forum 3 recommendations).**
- Sept., 2007: Council presentation and final public open house for Draft Final Report.
- Oct., 2007: Council Adopts Implementation Strategies (Forum 4 recommendations).**
- Autumn, 2007: Project team finalizes Final Report.
- Dec., 2007: Council adopts Final Report.**

It should be noted that the proposed adoption methodology does not preclude subsequent amendments to Project findings either by Council or by the project team (with Council's approval).

## **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

There are no budget implications at this time. Project funding has already been approved by Council, and includes cost sharing from provincial and federal governments.

**FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN**

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

**ALTERNATIVES**

Council could choose to modify the public consultation approach and/or the program for Council adoption.

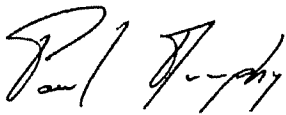
**ATTACHMENTS**

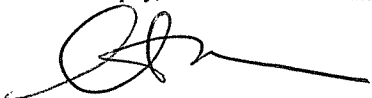
1. Overall Project Schedule.
2. Forum 1 schedule (week of September 11-14, 2006)

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

Report Prepared by: Andy Fillmore, Capital District Urban Design Project Manager, 490-6495

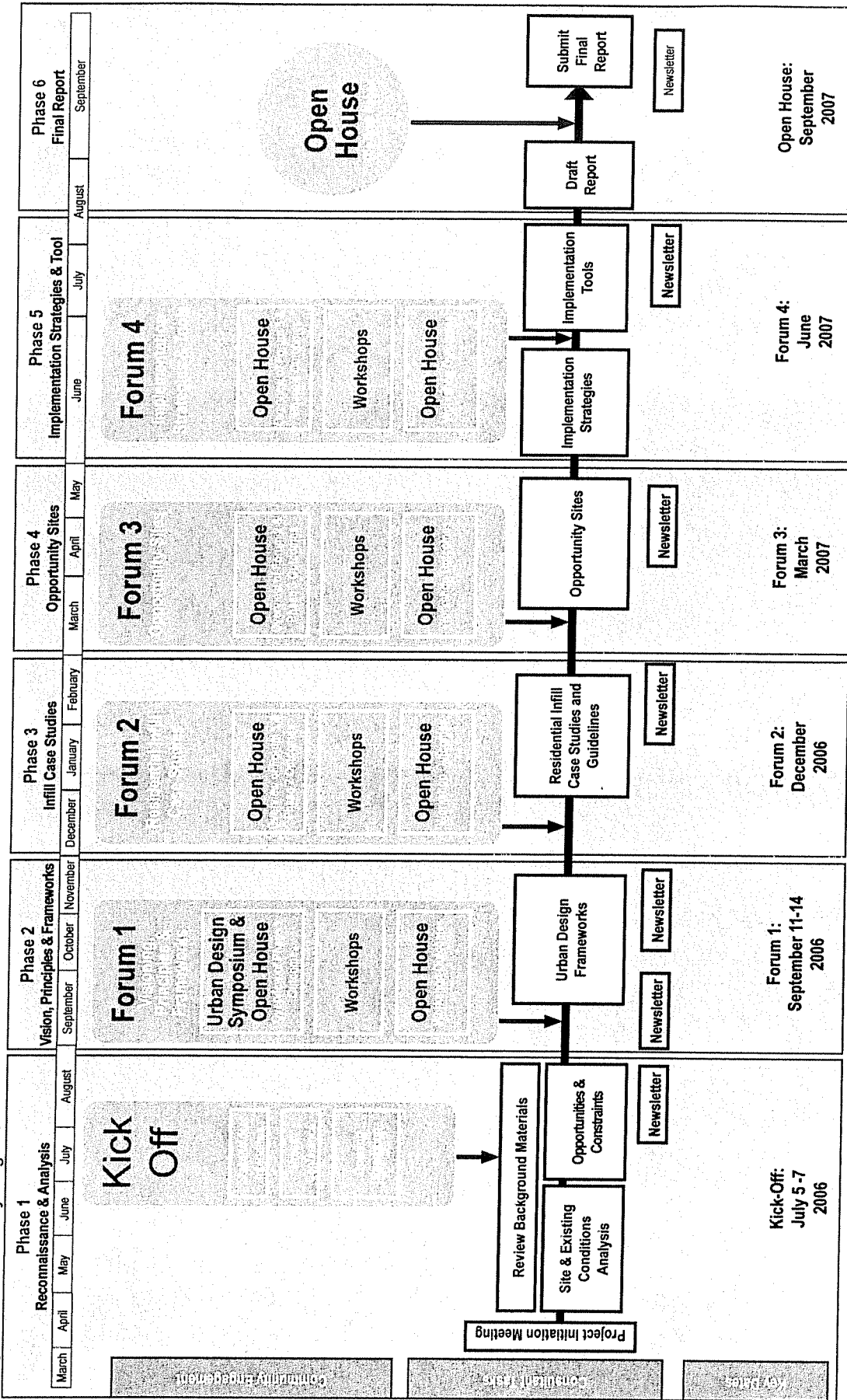
Report Approved by: Jacqueline Hamilton, Capital District Manager

Report Approved by:   
Paul Dunphy, Director of Community Development

Report Approved by:   
Catherine Sanderson, Sr. Manager, Financial Services, 490-1562

# ATTACHMENT #1 - Overall Project Schedule

Study Process Summary Diagram



# URBAN DESIGN FORUM 1 - VISIONING AND FRAMEWORK

DAY 0 - SEPT 11 DAY 1 - SEPT 12 DAY 2 - SEPT 13 DAY 3 - SEPT 14

MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY

Art Gallery of Nova Scotia - Seminar Room (Halifax)

Art Gallery of Nova Scotia - Seminar Room (Halifax)

Time to be confirmed  
For more information on date and time please contact the Municipal Clerks Office at (902)490-4210 or clerks@halifax.ca

Council Committee of the Whole Meeting (COW)  
• Introductory Presentation to council

830 AM to 930 AM  
Presentation  
• Vision Statement + Guiding Principles

930 AM to 1200 PM  
WORKSHOP  
• Urban Design Framework/ Infrastructure Plan  
• Design Principles  
• Design Objectives  
(Character Statement)

900 AM to 1000 AM  
Presentation  
• Findings + Objectives

1000 AM to 1200 PM  
WORKSHOP  
• Opportunities and Constraints

1200 PM to 130 PM  
LUNCH PUBLIC VIEWING  
• Report back to larger group  
• The public is invited to view the consultants at work.

130 PM to 400 PM  
WORKSHOP  
• Vision statement + Guiding Principles

1200 PM to 130 PM  
LUNCH PUBLIC VIEWING  
• Report back to larger group  
• The public is invited to view the consultants at work.

130 PM to 400 PM  
WORKSHOP continuation  
• Urban Design Framework/ Infrastructure Plan  
• Design Principles  
• Design Objectives  
(Character Statement)

200 PM to 330 PM  
Urban Design Task Force Meeting

Editorial Board Meeting

Time to be confirmed

## AREA 1 - URBAN DESIGN SYMPOSIUM AND PUBLIC FORUM

Maritime Museum of the Atlantic (Halifax)

545 PM to 730 PM  
Presentations  
• City Building/ Great Cities  
• Principles of Urban Design

730 PM to 900 PM  
Interactive Public Visioning Workshop

The program on Monday night (Sept. 11) is the same as the program on Wednesday night (Sept. 13). Please feel free to attend whichever evening is more convenient.

## AREA 2 - URBAN DESIGN SYMPOSIUM AND PUBLIC FORUM

Alderney Theatre + Rotunda (Dartmouth)

530 PM to 730 PM  
Presentations  
• City Building/ Great Cities  
• Principles of Urban Design

730 PM to 900 PM  
Interactive Public Visioning Workshop

## PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE - URBAN DESIGN FORUM 1 CLOSING

Potter Auditorium, Rowe Management Building  
Dalhousie University on University Ave.  
(Halifax)

600 PM to 900 PM  
Closing Presentations  
• Wrap up of forum 1 outcomes.