

## THEME 2: HRM is VIBRANT




*Vision: Our Regional Centre holds enormous potential for new residential and commercial growth in areas that enjoy already established and paid-for infrastructure and services. New land use policies, bylaws, and design guidelines are required to ensure high quality growth of the appropriate density and scale. New incentives such as streamlined development approval processes, tax incentives, and density bonusing should be used to attract development to the Regional Centre to achieve the Regional Plan's urban growth targets. The goal is to significantly increase opportunities to live and work in the Regional Centre while providing robust new tools to protect neighbourhood character and scale.*





Key Objectives:



- Ensure high quality development of appropriate density and scale in the Regional Centre
- Provide incentives to attract growth to the Regional Centre
- Provide housing options that support complete communities with diverse populations and “aging in place”
- Celebrate and enable a rich variety of cultural and creative opportunities in the Regional Centre

**Council Focus Area:** Community Planning; Public Safety; Governance and Communications; **Community Outcome Area:** Well Planned and Engaged Communities; Diverse Lifestyle Opportunities; **Administrative Priorities:** Fiscal health.



PROPOSED POLICY DIRECTION	COMMUNITY FEEDBACK	IN SCOPE/OUT OF SCOPE	STAFF RESPONSE	RECOMMENDATION TO CDAC	RESEARCH/BEST PRACTICES
<p><b>2.1 Replace the numerous outdated secondary plans and bylaws with an updated plan and bylaw (“The Centre Plan”).</b></p> <p><i>Survey Says: Important 77% Not Important 5%</i></p>	<p>2.1.1 Follow the plans that have been created.</p>		<p><u>In scope:</u> The most effective way to ensure that a duly adopted plan is followed is to ensure that the public is thoroughly consulted during its creation, and that the Council is made fully aware of that consultation. In the case of the RP+5 project Regional Council was presented with, and approved, a very specific and thorough community engagement program. This approach is intended to maximize Council support and buy-in for the findings of the Regional Plan review.</p>	<p>Staff recommends that RP+5 include a new Regional Centre chapter, including policy directing the completion of the Centre Plan.</p> <p>The Centre Plan will replace existing plans in the Regional Centre.</p>	<p>The experience of other cities around the world shows that cities develop to the greatest advantage when a broadly accepted development plan is faithfully followed.</p>
<p><b>2.2 Through the Centre Plan, direct appropriately scaled growth and density to existing commercial corridors and opportunity sites, thereby protecting the scale and character of existing neighbourhoods</b></p> <p><i>Survey Says: Important 79% Not Important 7%</i></p>	<p>2.2.1 Density should not be accomplished at the expense of the character of the given area.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>2.2.2 Please respect the scale and character of existing neighbourhoods on the peninsula.</p>		<p><u>In scope:</u> Densification is imperative from financial, environmental and social perspectives. Densification must occur in such a way that it enhances rather than threatens existing neighbourhood character. Density should be directed to areas that can both accommodate it and benefit from it. In the HRM context this would mean the existing commercial corridors and vacant/under-utilized land.</p> <p>By directing growth, change and densification to the corridors and vacant sites, new policies will offer a greater degree of protection to adjacent neighbourhoods not possible under current policies.</p> <p>To read the HRMbyDesign Vision and Guiding Principles see:  <a href="http://www.halifax.ca/capitaldistrict/HRMbyDESIGN-VisionPrinciples.html">http://www.halifax.ca/capitaldistrict/HRMbyDESIGN-VisionPrinciples.html</a>                      The 8 Principles include: Sustainable; High Quality; Heritage &amp; Culture; Movement; Complete Neighbourhoods; Growth &amp; Change; Process; and Connected.</p>	<p>Staff recommend to establish guiding policy in the Regional Plan that will direct the HRMbyDesign Centre Plan to establish where, and to what extent, densification within the Regional Centre should occur.</p> <p>Staff recommend that RP+5 and Centre Plan continue to develop policies to encourage quality densification along commercial corridors to build complete streets and neighbourhoods. These policies shall be according to the HRMbyDesign Vision and Guiding Principles.</p>	<p>The Feb. 28 staff report (<a href="http://www.halifax.ca/PlanHRM/documents/Signedstaffreport28-Feb-12.pdf">http://www.halifax.ca/PlanHRM/documents/Signedstaffreport28-Feb-12.pdf</a>) outlined the reasons for advancing with Centre Plan Phase 1. They include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge and address the unprecedentedly high volume of development applications and inquiries within the Regional Centre on appropriate commercial corridors;</li> <li>• Capitalize on the opportunity for dense, sustainable, mixed-use urban growth presented by the Ships contract;</li> <li>• Respond to the growing demand for denser and more affordable forms of housing within the Regional Centre;</li> <li>• Meet or exceed the Regional Plan goal of 25% growth in the Regional Centre that is not currently being met;</li> <li>• Direct a greater share of growth to areas where infrastructure already exists, as opposed to building new infrastructure in undeveloped areas;</li> <li>• Fulfill the Regional Plan's goal of densifying the Mainland Halifax North-Bedford Corridor growth centre;</li> <li>• Reduce demand for new road projects by creating opportunities for residents to live close to their jobs such that they can conveniently walk, cycle or take transit; and</li> <li>• Realize significant economic development and employment Opportunities through new construction.</li> </ul>



<p>2.2.3 Shipbuilding contract promises big numbers and there is concern that people are being overly optimistic of the numbers of jobs that the contract will actually offer.</p>		<p><u>In scope:</u> The Shipbuilding contract will factor into future growth projections for HRM. This contract is one of many economic stimuli that will impact HRM. The Shipbuilding contract does not change the Regional Plan, but will likely increase the rate of densification. The centre of job creation is in the Regional Centre, which could further Regional Planning goals.</p>	<p>Staff recommends that CDAC await the results of the Sustainable Urbanism Quantification Study to determine if changes to growth targets are warranted and where densification should occur (see HRM is Prosperous, comment 5.3.2 for more details on this study). Ongoing monitoring of the implications of the shipbuilding contract will be important (see “HRM is Prosperous” 5.9.2 for more information on tracking progress)</p>	
<p>2.2.4 Concerned about development on North/Windsor. Development has increased housing costs. HRM should address problems of blocking development such as not in my backyard (NIMBY).</p>		<p><u>In scope:</u> Specific applications are addressed by HRM’s development application process. Overall however, under existing development policies, housing prices in the urban core will continue to rise. RP+5 is recommending the HRMbyDesign Centre Plan use tools like density bonusing and secondary suites to keep housing prices within reach of all residents. The authority for HRM to use density bonusing needs to be granted by the Province.</p> <p>Acceptance of diverse housing and densification can be achieved through a combination of educating residents about the importance of densification and ensuring that new policies positively impact existing neighbourhoods.</p>	<p>Staff recommends that CDAC continue with the proposed policy of encouraging appropriately scaled density along commercial corridors and on opportunity sites within the Regional Centre.</p> <p>Staff also recommends that the Housing Strategy explore how to effectively communicate on housing policies.</p>	<p><u>Regarding housing cost:</u> Development has in some areas increased housing cost while in other areas it has provided housing that is within reach of many. Good development policy ensures that all development provides housing affordability and choice through such mechanisms as density bonusing and accessory suites.</p> <p><u>Regarding NIMBY:</u> Climate change, rising energy costs, sea level rise, rising housing costs, declining public health, rising costs of municipal servicing, all point to the acute need to incentivize densification in the urban cores of our cities. Community tolerance for NIMBY-ism is waning rapidly as citizens are becoming more and more aware of the responsibility we each have in creating a sustainable future for current and future generations.</p>
<p>2.2.5 I don't see any mention of vibrant rural communities and culture.</p>		<p><u>In scope:</u> The Centre plan and the RP+5 “Vibrant” theme intentionally places an emphasis on the Regional Centre because growth targets in the urban core have not met desired levels. Policies under the other four themes address rural issues with respect to community design, water quality, vibrant economy, heritage and culture.</p> <p>The RP+5 project will also review the number, appropriate size and location of the Rural Growth Centres to reflect what has been learned over the past five years about infrastructure costs, transit feasibility and development interest. This will ensure that the rural portion of the Regional Settlement Map better reflects the realities of the rural context. In more outlying areas, less emphasis will be placed on growth, in return for more emphasis on conserving land and water quality to safeguard the economic resource base of remote centres.</p>	<p>Staff recommends that RP+5 continue with a new Regional Centre Chapter as a way to meet or exceed urban growth targets and that additional policies are developed to foster good community design and economic vibrancy in rural areas.</p> <p>CDAC may also want to consider that for the next stage of consultations, the RP+5 theme be changed from “HRM is Vibrant” to “HRM’s Regional Centre is Vibrant” to avoid confusion.</p>	<p>The distinctive character of rural places is best protected where the economic climate supports and values working lands, and the development climate values the natural landscape and seeks to conserve it. This means avoiding fragmentation of the land associated with careless development that detracts from the image of the community and the functionality of its traditional economy. The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) suggests three goals for attracting appropriate growth in the future, while maximizing rural character and quality of life:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Support the rural landscape</b> by creating an economic climate that enhances the viability of working lands and conserves natural lands;</li> <li>2. <b>Help existing places thrive</b> by taking care of assets and investments such as downtowns, Main Streets, existing infrastructure, and places that the community values; and</li> <li>3. <b>Create great places</b> by building vibrant, enduring neighbourhoods and communities that people, especially young people, don’t want to leave.</li> </ol>



<p>2.2.6 Conscientious densification, avoid displacement, provide affordable housing and keep the character of the area in mind.</p>		<p><u>In scope</u>: Densification should be directed to areas that can accommodate it and benefit from it, while protecting existing neighbourhoods from change. New development should be required to provide a range of housing affordability and unit choice. New development should respect and complement the existing scale and character of the existing neighborhood. This character includes built and social elements. Open Space, connectivity, cultural value, heritage and other assets should be factored into this. The cultural inventory will begin to identify these features and subsequent secondary plans for Regional Centre, suburban and rural areas will engage the community on identifying assets and protecting them through policy.</p> <p>Policies that promote housing diversity and affordability and cooperation with the Nova Scotia Dept. of Housing can help ensure stable neighborhoods with options for a range of income levels and lifestyles.</p>	<p>Staff recommend that RP+5 Regional Centre chapter and Centre Plan continue to develop policies to ensure that densification is directed to commercial corridors and opportunity sites including a requirement for housing mix and quality design.</p> <p>Staff recommend using the cultural inventory to identify existing built, open space, social and cultural assets which will be further identified and protected through secondary planning.</p> <p>Staff also recommend increased collaboration with the Province of Nova Scotia to increase and maintain the supply of affordable housing in HRM.</p>	<p>RP+5 will set the stage for the HRMbyDesign Centre Plan, which will update planning policy that in some cases is as old as 35, and even 60 years old. The Centre Plan will provide a Regional Centre Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use Bylaw based on leading edge urbanism practices from around the world.</p> <p>Paramount among the issues the Centre Plan will address are housing equitability and affordability, creating housing opportunities for individuals and families to live, and age, in the neighbourhoods where they grew up and where their social networks and familiar services are located.</p> <p>The Centre Plan will be a “design-based” plan that will ensure the existing character and scale of the Regional Centre’s neighbourhoods, in all their diversity, will be preserved and enhanced. It is however important to note that to achieve each of these important goals, some intensification does have to occur in some areas. The Centre Plan proposes to direct this intensification to the existing commercial corridors and larger vacant/under-utilized sites. This approach directs growth and change to areas where intensity for development already exists, while protecting adjacent neighbourhoods to a degree that is impossible under current planning policy.</p>
<p>2.2.7 Reassess the height restriction in downtown to allow for more urban growth, and encourage businesses in the downtown rather than penalizing them with higher taxes</p>		<p><u>Out of scope</u>. Addressed by the HRMbyDesign Downtown Plan.</p>	<p>No action recommended.</p>	
<p>2.2.8 Have you considered the Transition Town movement by Rob Hopkins?</p>		<p><u>In scope</u>. Much of the scope of RP+5 is centred on focusing development in areas where infrastructure and services already exist, and in this way “doing more with less”. This approach will be carried even further in the HRMbyDesign Centre Plan, Phase 1 of which is now underway.</p>	<p>Staff recommends that CDAC await the full results of the Sustainable Urbanism: Quantification Study.</p>	<p>The Rob Hopkins model speaks to introducing city planning, energy, and fiscal policy that prepares communities for reduced petroleum, energy, resource and financial inputs, as a means to creating sustainable communities. <a href="http://www.ted.com/talks/rob_hopkins_transition_to_a_world_without_oil.html">http://www.ted.com/talks/rob_hopkins_transition_to_a_world_without_oil.html</a></p> <p>To provide an empirical basis for Regional Council to make such policy decisions, an in-depth research study called “Sustainable Urbanism: Quantifying the Costs and Benefits to HRM, Residents, and the Environment of Alternate Growth Scenarios” is being carried out by Stantec. This study will allow HRM to understand the impact of different growth scenarios from the perspective of the municipal tax rate, cost to the tax payer, the environment, public health, quality of life, housing affordability, and many other such measures. This study is the primary research piece supporting the RP+5 process.</p>
<p>2.2.9 STOP Council violations of HRMbyDesign.</p>		<p><u>Out of scope</u>. The most effective way to ensure that a duly adopted plan is followed is to ensure that the public is thoroughly consulted during its creation, and that the Council is made fully aware of that consultation.</p>	<p>No action recommended.</p>	




<p><b>2.3 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.</b></p> <p><b>Survey Says: Important 83% Not Important 5%</b></p>	<p>2.3.1 <i>The language around as-of-right needs to be strengthened. An as-of-right build needs to be compatible with surrounding residential neighborhoods in height, mass and density.</i></p> <p>AND</p> <p>2.3.2 <i>as-of-right zone-based sounds like a good end goal, good design will also need consideration of public space, mobility, culture, heritage and recreation</i></p>		<p><u>In scope:</u> Detailed design standards for as-of-right development will be included in Centre Plan policies. These standards will be extensively vetted by the community, stakeholders in the development and design community and enforcement staff. Neighbourhood character is established first, in consultation with citizens and other stakeholders, and then it is determined how to protect the key elements of character through the land use policies (planning strategies and land-use bylaws). The community vision guides preparation of the zoning, not vice versa.</p> <p>While Centre Plan Phase 1 is more limited in scope, the full Centre Plan will have broader considerations including public realm infrastructure, mobility, open space, heritage and culture. See comment 2.2.6 for more detail on identifying community assets.</p>	<p>Staff recommend that RP+5 continue to focus on as-of-right provisions and clear and transparent approval processes to encourage development and densification. This should be balanced by targeting development to appropriate sites/corridors and introducing design standards to protect established neighbourhoods.</p>	
	<p>2.3.3 <i>Community engagement and 'as-of-right' are mutually exclusive.</i></p>		<p><u>In scope-</u> This comment is related to the proposed policy direction but may not be accurate. Currently, the majority of development in HRM is occurring as-of-right, based on planning documents that the community consulted on decades ago.</p> <p>When establishing as-of-right provisions, there is extensive public consultation during the creation of planning documents. This was the process for the development of the Downtown Halifax Plan. Controversial issues such as height were discussed with the community extensively during the plans' development, and maximum heights and massing were then established in the land use by-law. With this method, building height and massing is predictable and finite; citizens and developers know in advance the maximum building size for each lot in their neighbourhood.</p> <p>HRM citizens are being consulted on these types of issues through this 5 Year Review (RP+5) and through the HRMbyDesign Centre Plan project, which will see planning strategies and land use by-laws developed for each area of the municipality. The development of these strategies and by-laws will include widespread public engagement and consultation to ensure residents' views of their neighbourhood are captured in the final plan. The maximum allowable height is a key issue that will be established using input from residents during consultations. For the Centre Plan process, HRM will continue to host public consultations over the next three years as we work with the community to create the new Regional Centre Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law.</p>	<p>Staff recommend RP+5 continue to explore as-of-right planning tools for centres and strategic corridors.</p>	<p>As stated in HRM's Community Engagement Strategy, effective community engagement must have a clear purpose and outcome, and it must be part of a well-designed process. Therefore, "more" engagement does not necessarily mean a better process or better decisions. A fundamental tenet of planning and a well-functioning market system is that the community should have a say in defining early in the process desirable fundamentals such as height, massing, use and protection of open spaces in the community. Once clear outcomes and rules are in place, they should be followed and implemented. The community should not have to come out and be consulted on every single project as this would lead to uncertainty in the market place as well as community burn-out. In as-of-right processes citizens and expert panels can still have a role in ensuring that design reflects community's values and desired outcomes.</p>



	<p>2.3.4 How will information regarding new developments/proposals be made fully accessible to the public?</p>		<p><u>In scope</u> RP+5 will provide direction on how to improve current HRM processes in accordance with the Community Engagement Strategy, which requires a clear process design and communication strategy to ensure a fair and transparent process of decision making is followed. The Centre Plan has and will include neighbourhood-level consultations.</p>	<p>CDAC may choose to direct staff to explore how the 1997 Public Participation Resolution could be updated to ensure that planning processes are more accessible to the public and in line with the Community Engagement Strategy.</p>	<p>The Public Participation Resolution for Municipal Planning Strategy Amendments was adopted by Halifax Regional Council on February 25, 1997. Currently, information on all discretionary development proposals (ie development agreements or where Council may change current policy) are available on HRM website at <a href="http://www.halifax.ca/planning/PlanningAppsDetailedInfo.html">http://www.halifax.ca/planning/PlanningAppsDetailedInfo.html</a></p> <p>The overall intent of a new communications policy in the Regional Plan is to broaden the scope of tools used to communicate land use policies and regulations in HRM, including social media channels and other electronic media, thereby enabling a wider reach and increased engagement among target audiences. New policy is proposed to state that HRM shall endeavour to incorporate new media tools, including social media and other internet-based communications, with traditional methods, into all communications plans prepared with the intention of informing, engaging, or consulting HRM citizens on land use planning issues and projects.</p> <p>Government social media channels are an attractive citizen portal specifically due to the ability to instantly access and interact with the city. Municipalities and other levels of government are also beginning to understand the significant benefits of instant citizen feedback through low-cost alternatives to traditional tools such as surveys and public meetings.</p>
<p><b>2.4 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</b></p> <p><b>Survey Says:</b> <b>Important 76%</b> <b>Not Important 4%</b></p>	<p>2.4.1 Can the downtown central core be made user friendly 12 months of the year?</p>		<p><u>In scope:</u> RP+5 will introduce guiding policy directing the Centre Plan to establish mixed-use zoning along the Regional Centre's commercial corridors, and to use density bonusing to have developers contribute to streetscape improvement projects. A mix of uses ensures that communities remain lively day and night and in all seasons.</p> <p>The quality of streets and the public realm in the Regional Centre will also be considered under the new Centre Plan (and for other communities under subsequent plans.). The Centre Plan will look at design standards, complete streets, public investment and coordination with other initiatives such as active transportation, open space, public art, etc.</p> <p>HRM's Economic Strategy places a high importance on ensuring that the Regional Centre is vibrant and welcoming. RP+5 proposes to roll the economic strategy into the Regional Plan and policies.</p> <p>The Downtown Halifax Plan has policies that speak to making streets and neighbourhoods user friendly year round. These considerations will also be part of the development of upcoming secondary plans for the Regional Centre, suburban and rural communities.</p>	<p>Staff recommend that RP+5 continue to develop a Regional Centre chapter and Centre Plan, including placing priority on public space and streetscape improvements.</p> <p>"HRM is Prosperous" provides policy direction on development of incentives and incorporation of the Altus Study.</p>	<p>Downtowns and neighbourhood centres function best when they are active 7 days a week, daytime and evening. The best way to achieve that outcome is to put in place mixed-use zoning that permits ground floor retail and commercial uses along the commercial frontage, with residential uses above and behind. That approach is best complimented by investment in streetscape improvement projects.</p>





<p>2.4.2 If we did not meet our initial targets, we need to ask: 1. Did we have the right targets? 2. How do we reach the right targets?</p>		<p><u>In scope:</u> The 2006 Regional Plan envisages a balanced approach to growth across the Municipality, based on projections of housing demand at the time. Approximately 25% of growth was expected to occur on the Halifax Peninsula and in Dartmouth inside the Circumferential Highway (Regional Centre), 50% was expected in the suburban areas, and the remaining 25% within the rural areas, over the 25 year life of the Plan.</p> <p>The Regional Plan is a 25 year strategy, growth targets should be achievable over the long term. However, the distribution of growth since adoption of the plan has fallen short of the targets with only 16% of new dwelling units happening in the urban centre with the remaining 84% being built in suburban and rural areas. More aggressive planning tools may need to be adopted to address grandfathering and ensure that designated growth centres meet population densities and mixed use design.</p> <p>RP+5 and subsequent secondary plans (Regional Centre, suburban and rural) will include incentives and policies to meet the growth targets and attract growth to Regional Centre, these would include affordable housing, complete communities, and a mix of uses.</p>	<p>Staff recommend that CDAC await results of the Stantec Study and consider new approaches to achieving the desired densities.</p> <p>Staff also recommend that RP+5 commit to clear and easily tracked performance measures and a workplan of implementing the Plan in the next 5-year horizon. The Plan's performance would be measured at regular intervals and the results reported to Council and the public. For more information on performance measures, please see <b>HRM is Prosperous 5.9.2</b></p>	<p>To determine whether the growth allocations should be revised as part of the RP+5 analysis, HRM has retained consultants to assess the costs and benefits for each of four regional growth scenarios for the region (ie the Sustainable Urbanism Study).</p> <p>Achievement of any growth distribution target must be evaluated over the long term, as grandfathered subdivisions create an inertia from previous regulations until such lots have been absorbed.</p> <p>There is also a need to improve the alignment between HRM planning goals and the priorities of other agencies responsible for highways, school siting, and construction of water and sewer facilities. Significant progress has been made in developing working partnerships with the Province, School Board and Halifax Water, and efforts will continue for improving coordination.</p> <p>At the municipal level, HRM By Design and the current Centre Plan program are intended to reduce obstacles and encourage appropriately designed infill development on strategic sites and corridors within the Regional Centre.</p>
<p>2.4.3 Maintain green space</p>		<p><u>In scope:</u> Several focus areas under the Regional Plan support the need to maintain greenspace in established and new communities. The policies under the Regional Plan should be strengthened to reinforce the importance of greenspace in building complete communities, protecting the environment, and sustaining competitive cities and economies.</p> <p>The Urban Forest Master Plan has a number of recommendations to improve the forest canopy and quality of public spaces (slated for presentation to Regional Council in the Fall of 2012). RP+5 can further the UFMP through design principles that maintain the urban forest canopy and an integrated design approach for municipal infrastructure.</p> <p>The Centre Plan will incorporate the Regional Centre Open Space Plan, the first deliverable of the Open Space Functional Plan. RP+5 will address open space through linkages and support for the Active Transportation Plan and introducing open space into community design standards.</p>	<p>Staff recommend CDAC continue to support the completion of several ongoing open space initiatives and that open space systems continue to be developed as part of ongoing secondary planning and functional planning.</p>	

<p>2.4.4 Stop suburban office growth AND 2.4.5 The continuing sale of industrial land at prices which are clearly subsidized is at odds with the stated city policies of emphasizing growth in the urban centres. Selling land at low subsidized rates gives rise to a number of undesirable results <b>SEE OVER</b></p> <p>AND</p> <p>2.4.5 When land in HRM business parks is sold which directly competes with business in the urban core, this is not a very strategic use of a taxpayer asset. For one thing, it is stripping away land which could be valuable in the future, when real industrial uses are required. More importantly, it undermines the success of the urban core business – the inevitable result being that the assessments will eventually drop in the urban core</p>		<p><u>In scope:</u> RP+5 policy direction 5.7 seeks to preserve industrial lands in industrial parks and policy direction 5.8 seeks to proactively direct commercial development and new office uses to the Regional Centre.</p> <p>The Regional Plan reinforces the return to first principles of business parks with a renewed emphasis on light industrial and commercial.</p> <p>Planning policy should also reflect the needs of businesses and industries, which will be captured in the Altus Study. The RP should encourage business expansion and business recruitment activities consistent with various land types. For example, companies in the financial sector, legal, accounting, and government often prefer a downtown location. Companies in the logistics sector prefer accessible business parks with road and rail access.</p> <p>RP+5 and resulting secondary plans are based on the premise of creating incentives to target growth in appropriate areas. While the review will look at tightening the allowable uses in industrial lands to prevent the development of commercial activity more suited to the Regional Centre, this will also be strengthened by a suite of incentives to encourage growth in the Regional Centre.</p> <p><b>Comment Continued...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued movement of retail and office activity away from already developed urban infrastructure resulting in further additional servicing cost to the City.</li> <li>Continued low assessment levels and resultant tax levels in the industrial parks where cheap land and low-cost, low-rise, construction results in low taxes and less contribution to City operating costs, leaving more for the rest of us to pay.</li> <li>The movement of business activity and consequent employment to the industrial parks results in the relocation of employees to add to, expensive to service and traffic generating sub-urban growth</li> </ul>	<p>Staff recommend that CDAC continue to develop policy to preserve industrial lands for industrial uses and direct new office and commercial development to the Regional Centre.</p> <p>Additional policy directions may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure adequate supply of industrial land</li> <li>Differentiate between industrial and business park use</li> <li>Undertake Industrial Parks Master Plan</li> <li>Apply new Industrial Reserve designation</li> <li>Limit office development in HRM industrial parks with the exception of 50 acres within City of Lakes (due to proximity to Regional Centre)</li> <li>Extend Urban Service District to match Business Park sub-designation in order to avoid confusion</li> <li>Remove the ability to consider mixed residential/commercial development on HRM lands in Burnside and City of Lakes. Protect these lands for industrial use</li> </ul>	<p>Several Canadian cities, most notably London Ontario, have placed caps on the size of office projects that are permitted outside of the downtown core. Over time this has concentrated approximately 80% of London’s office stock downtown, leading to a downtown resurgence.</p> <p>The Altus Group has been retained by HRM to look at the factors that influence business location decisions within HRM. The Study will also look at how HRM may be able to influence this decision and the impact of commercial taxation. This Study is anticipated for completion in the Fall of 2012.</p>
<p>2.4.6 Raise taxes on vacant lots and surface parking lots. Incentivize residential development inside the Regional Centre.</p>		<p><u>In scope:</u> RP+5 will address vacant and under-use of lots through policies which increase their development appeal such as clear development processes and incentives. The Downtown Plan prohibits new surface parking; the Regional Centre Plan will also consider this. For information about incentives for Regional Centre growth, see above.</p>	<p>Staff recommend that the RP+5 project continue to incentivize growth in the Regional Centre and capitalize on opportunity sites such as vacant and parking lots.</p>	




<p>2.4.7 Change taxation of business in downtown core - reinvent the downtown.</p>		<p><u>In scope:</u> The Altus Study will address the role of commercial taxation and other factors in downtown's ability to attract and retain businesses (see 2.4.4 above). The findings of this study are due in the Fall of 2012 and will be factored into the Regional Plan and subsequent secondary plans, including the Regional Centre.</p>	<p>Staff recommend RP+5 continue to explore options for commercial taxation.</p>	<p>Innovative approaches to attracting and retaining businesses and employers to downtown areas have proven successful in many Canadian cities. These approaches can include tax incentives such as tax holidays, different (lower) commercial tax rate for urban areas, and many others.</p>
<p>2.4.8 Revisit the view planes and ramparts and ask the citizens of 2012 Halifax what view planes/ramparts they think are important to maintain and which ones can be removed to allow for more dense development downtown AND 2.4.9 Purchase Aliant building from its owners and tear it down or reduce height (to lessen southern view plane obstruction from the Citadel) and abandon viewplane restriction altogether for the eastern view-plane, allowing unlimited development in downtown Halifax with respect to height.</p>		<p><u>Out of scope for RP+5</u> Revisiting the viewplanes is outside of the scope of the RP+5 and the Centre Plan.</p>	<p>Staff recommend the scope not be expanded to include consideration of viewplanes in the downtown area.</p>	
<p>2.4.10 Ask downtown developers what the real barriers to developing downtown are and reduce these barriers. Listen to the downtown developers when setting new zoning requirements for height because they know what it takes to actually build a building.</p>		<p><u>In scope:</u> Many stakeholder groups have been consulted as part of the RP+5 and Centre Plan processes, including developers and architects who have a great deal of experience working in the downtown and in the Regional Centre. Their comments have been listened to and have been balanced with comments from other sectors. The built form approach that has emerged is responsive to such comments and has been designed to create economically attractive development opportunities.</p> <p>The Altus Study (see 2.4.4 above) involved many interviews with owners, both renters of space and developers of space, to gauge their business needs and the factors influencing their choice of locations.</p>	<p>Staff recommends stakeholder policy consultations as part of Phase II community engagement on RP+5.</p>	






<p><b>2.5 Reduce cost of development in the Regional Centre to realize growth target</b></p> <p><i>Survey Says: Important 65% Not Important 11%</i></p>	<p>2.5.1 Provide tax breaks for culturally sensitive development of heritage buildings.</p>		<p><u>In scope</u>- Financial incentives are an important part of the heritage conservation toolkit, and the NS Heritage Property Act gives municipalities the authority to provide financial incentives to the owners of registered heritage properties and properties in heritage conservation districts.</p> <p>Within the Barrington Conservation District, established under the Downtown Halifax Plan, HRM has already approved over 2 million in funding for heritage developments.</p>	<p>Staff recommend that work continues on the Heritage Functional Plan and creation of new Heritage Conservation Districts (see HRM is Sustainable, comment 1.7.2 for more details).</p>	<p>HRM already has three incentives programs, one of which – the Barrington Street HCD incentives program - provides a 50% matching grant for exterior restoration work and a property tax credit valued at 15% of the cost of interior rehabilitation work.</p> <p>The potential for these programs to be extended into other heritage districts will be examined as part of the Heritage Functional Plan in 2013.</p>
	<p>2.5.2 The wording is vague and non-committal. What would a pro-development policy mean? What would it look like? What are the trade-offs of a pro-development policy. How does that work with a heritage protection policy?</p>		<p><u>In scope</u>: HRMbyDesign Vision and Guiding Principles are clear that an efficient development process must not compromise quality design, heritage protection, public amenities, complete neighbourhoods, connectivity, community involvement etc.</p> <p>The Guiding Principles for Urban Design give direction to the broad cross-section of components that are the building blocks of the city and that work in concert to establish the function and the "look" and "feel" of the Regional Centre. The principles, prepared collaboratively by workshop participants, were a central focus and outcome of Forum One.</p> <p>These principles will guide decision-making according to their respective themes. Although these principles apply broadly across the Regional Centre, they can be further articulated and tailored to local area conditions and objectives when Neighbourhood or District Urban Design Guidelines are prepared.</p>	<p>Staff recommend that the Regional Centre Chapter of the Regional Plan incorporate the HRMbyDesign Vision and Guiding Principles already approved by Council.</p>	<p>To read the HRMbyDesign Vision and Guiding Principles see <a href="http://www.halifax.ca/capitaldistrict/HRMbyDESIGN-VisionPrinciples.html">http://www.halifax.ca/capitaldistrict/HRMbyDESIGN-VisionPrinciples.html</a></p> <p>The 8 Principles include: Sustainable; High quality; Heritage &amp; Culture; Movement; Complete Neighborhoods; Growth &amp; Change; Process; and Connected.</p>
<p><b>2.6 Reduce/eliminate parking requirements in areas served by transit</b></p> <p><i>Survey Says: Important 50% Not Important 18%</i></p>	<p>2.6.1 Need park n' ride</p>		<p><u>Out of scope</u>: As HRM is Vibrant is focusing on the Regional Centre, park n' rides are not appropriate as these are intended to be located on the edges of the service boundary, not within the network of the regional core.</p> <p>Following the completion of RP+5, Metro Transit will be preparing a new 5 year strategic plan, at which time the need for additional Park &amp; Rides will be evaluated.</p>	<p>Staff recommend that the scope of RP+5 not be expanded to consider park n' rides.</p>	
	<p>2.6.2 Install parking meters in Bayers Lake and Dartmouth Crossing to even the playing field for downtown businesses.</p>		<p><u>Out of scope</u>: Parking meters on public right of ways are used to control the use of public parking and allow appropriate turn over of limited parking spaces. Owners of private land may chose to place parking meters or control access to their land for parking.</p>	<p>Staff recommend that RP+5 not be expanded to consider this comment.</p>	


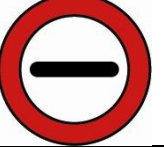
	2.6.3 On street parking on the few major corridors available for Transit in core is impeding implementation of attractive Transit service		<u>Aligns with ongoing studies-</u> The adjustment and management of on-street parking along transit corridors and parking in general for the Regional Centre will be reviewed as part of the Centre Plan. The Regional Plan and subsequent secondary plans will also look at better integration of HRM's Parking Strategy.	Staff recommend that RP+5 reflect the findings regarding adjustments and management of parking along transit corridors.  Staff recommend that RP+5 integrate recommendations of the parking strategy, where reasonable.	For more information on the Regional Parking Strategy please visit: <a href="https://www.halifax.ca/tdm/parkingstrategy/Documents/HRMRegionalParkingStrategyMainReport-FinalVersion.pdf">https://www.halifax.ca/tdm/parkingstrategy/Documents/HRMRegionalParkingStrategyMainReport-FinalVersion.pdf</a>
2.7 Require a mix of unit types in new developments  <b>Survey Says:</b> <b>Important 70%</b> <b>Not Important 8%</b>	2.7.1 Require a mix of unit types in new developments; Provide mix of low and mid-income housing to avoid areas that foster crime.		<u>In scope</u> A key objective of this review will be to select the most effective and efficient policy tools to positively affect housing options and affordability for a broad spectrum of HRM communities and income ranges.  RP+5 will look at mandating a mix of unit types for subsequent secondary plans, beginning with the Regional Centre.	Staff recommend that RP+5 continue to explore options for increasing housing diversity and affordability and will bring recommendation to CDAC for deliberation and discussion.	The Regional Plan identified the need for an Affordable Housing Functional Plan and the 5 Year Review will complete this commitment in two phases, with anticipated completion of the Housing Strategy in 2014. The first phase of the Housing Strategy will focus on ways to increase housing options and opportunities such as requiring a mix of different unit types in new developments, supportive housing, live/work, enabling secondary suites in all residential zones, and other planning tools. The strategy will also look at reducing barriers through reviewing policies and practices to reduce barriers to affordable housing such as minimum lot and dwelling sizes and will look at creating an incentives such as priority sale of HRM land for affordable housing, tax incentives, etc.  A significant focus for HRM's affordable housing will be to present opportunities and support for the Province's Affordable Housing Strategy, which should be announced shortly.
	2.7.2 Require affordable housing component as part of every development- 5%?		<u>In scope:</u> Access to suitable housing is a fundamental need for residents and is an integral component of the goal to make HRM sustainable, vibrant, prosperous, livable, and mobile. HRM will not be able to grow sustainably if residents cannot afford to live in all areas and communities will not be vibrant if they are available to only a select affluent few.	Staff recommend that RP+5 continue to explore options for increasing housing diversity and affordability and will bring recommendation to CDAC for deliberation and discussion.	A key objective of this review will be to select the most effective and efficient policy tools to positively affect housing options and affordability for a broad spectrum of HRM communities and income ranges. The Regional Plan identified the need for an Affordable Housing Functional Plan and the 5 Year Review will complete this commitment in two phases, with anticipated completion of the Housing Strategy in 2014.
2.8.Prioritize affordable housing in exchange for density bonusing (note: this will require an HRM Charter amendment, which has been requested)  <b>Survey Says:</b> <b>Important 65%</b> <b>Not Important 10%</b>	2.8.1 Affordable housing is key when granting density bonus!		<u>In scope:</u> Affordable housing is one of the public benefits permitted in exchange for increased density under the Downtown Halifax Plan.  There is currently no ability to implement density bonusing outside of the Downtown area. Affordable housing has been identified as an important consideration for density bonusing. If/when the necessary legislative amendments to the HRM Charter are in place, to enable density bonusing in the Regional Centre, staff are recommending that affordable housing and public realm improvements be the public amenity choices available in exchange for increased density.	Staff recommend that RP+5 continue to explore options for increasing housing diversity and affordability and will bring recommendation to CDAC for deliberation and discussion.	City of Port Coquitlam Density Bonusing Program <a href="http://www.portcoquitlam.ca/_shared/printpages/page5008.htm">http://www.portcoquitlam.ca/_shared/printpages/page5008.htm</a>  City of New Westminster <a href="http://www.newwestcity.ca/database/rte/DB%20Open%20House%20Boards%20FAQs(1).pdf">http://www.newwestcity.ca/database/rte/DB%20Open%20House%20Boards%20FAQs(1).pdf</a>  CMHC Incentives for Affordable Housing <a href="http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/publications/en/rh-pr/socio/socio046.pdf">http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/publications/en/rh-pr/socio/socio046.pdf</a>

	<p>2.8.2 <i>Integrated retirement communities for seniors.</i></p>		<p><u>In scope.</u> Access to suitable housing is a fundamental need for residents and is an integral component of the goal to make HRM sustainable, vibrant, prosperous, livable, and mobile. HRM will not be able to grow sustainably if residents cannot afford to live in all areas and communities will not be vibrant if they are available to only a select affluent few. While HRM cannot regulate land use based on age, where retirement communities are being built, all effort should be made to ensure that they are integrated into the existing neighbourhood.</p>	<p>Staff recommend that RP+5 continue to explore options for increasing housing diversity and affordability and developing policies that integrates retirement communities into neighbourhoods.</p>	<p>The key objective of this review will be to select the most effective and efficient policy tools to positively effect housing options and affordability for a broad spectrum of HRM communities and income ranges. The Regional Plan identified the need for an Affordable Housing Functional Plan and the 5 Year Review will complete this commitment in two phases, with anticipated completion of the Housing Strategy in 2014. The Housing Strategy and the Regional Plan are based on the premise of complete communities which are home to a diversity of incomes, ages, races, lifestyles, services and housing forms.</p>
<p><b>2.9 Consider affordable housing as a priority in the sale of HRM assets</b></p> <p><b>Survey Says:</b> <b>Important 67%</b> <b>Not Important 10%</b></p>	<p>2.9.1 <i>Inform community members for what use public land is being sold.</i></p>		<p><u>Aligns with HRM Real Estate:</u> In the last year Council has changed its reporting practices in relation to the sale and purchase of public lands. Now the rationale for purchase and sale of lands is discussed in open Council and is available to the public in the accompanying Council Report. Council has also asked for additional policy in relation to process for sale of public lands. Recommendations are expected to be brought forward for Council discussion in the next six months.</p>	<p>Staff are recommending that the scope of RP+5 not be expanded to include the process for disposal/acquisition of lands. Council will be considering policies, procedures and practices for the disposal of lands, including how the community will be informed. These policies will consider Regional Planning priorities, such as affordable housing. HRM is actively working with the Province to further their Affordable Housing Strategy; priority disposal of HRM lands for affordable housing projects may be looked at as a means of supporting the Provincial strategy.</p>	
<p><b>2.10 Use density bonusing to achieve public space improvements such as public art, street furniture and landscaping</b></p> <p><b>Survey Says:</b> <b>Important 69%</b> <b>Not Important 11%</b></p>	<p>2.10.1 <i>Drop this concept of "density bonusing". It is being used as a tool to circumvent the intentions &amp; integrity of plan policies.</i></p>		<p><u>In scope:</u> Density bonusing is a powerful but complex tool, and as such it is easily misunderstood. Contrary to the comment, it is actually a tool that strengthens the intent of planning policy. In no circumstances would development exceed suitable heights for an area. Density bonusing will not result in development that is out of scale or context with the character of an area. If the developer choses to not provide a public benefit, the project would be limited to a lower "pre-bonus" height. This way, residents and developers will know with absolute certainty what the maximum height would be.</p> <p>There is currently no authority in the HRM Charter to include density bonusing outside the downtown area. This tool will be explored in future years pending Provincial Government's amendments to the Charter.</p>	<p>Staff recommend that RP+5 continue to move forward with a policy on density bonusing and direct that the HRMbyDesign Centre Plan establish the absolute maximum heights throughout the Regional Centre on a neighbourhood-by-neighbourhood basis, based on community input, urban design best practices, and the prevailing character of each area. This would be the "post-bonus" height.</p>	<p>Density bonusing is a best practice in broad, and increasing, usage throughout Canada and the world. It is a powerful tool for relieving taxpayers from the burden of paying for expensive public benefits such as housing affordability, streetscape improvements, public art, and any other public benefits or amenities that a council sees fit to include in a density bonusing program. Under density bonusing a developer is asked to pay for or otherwise provide a public benefit in exchange for increased building height or density in appropriate areas.</p> <p>Recent review of the success of density bonusing and bonus transfer systems in Portland, OR and several other American cities suggests there may be a case for limiting the number of options for a density bonus from a public policy perspective: "The benefit of such "focused" bonus programs is that the goal(s) can be explicit, well-understood, and success easier to track. While limiting choices for the developer, it creates certainty on all sides about what the program is meant to produce". Whether focused, diluted or a hybrid, a density bonusing program needs to be well "calibrated" to the local market conditions and community desires <a href="http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/article/177368">http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/article/177368</a></p>

	<p>2.10.2 Need streetscaping plans to be enacted in the downtown area.</p>		<p><u>In Scope:</u> There have been a number of streetscaping plans developed in the past, with very little success at implementation due to lack of funds. There is currently no identified program for enacting streetscaping plans.</p> <p>Future streetscaping needs development of policy and funding commitments. RP+5 and subsequent secondary planning strategies such as the Centre Plan will include streetscaping as part of design standards for complete communities. The Regional Centre Open Space Plan will look at streetscaping and open space infrastructure priorities.</p> <p>The new “HRM Economic Strategy – A Greater Halifax” acknowledges this need and calls for the creation of a 5 year, \$50 million streetscape improvement fund.</p>	<p>Staff recommend that streetscaping be considered as part of the community design standards under subsequent secondary plans and open space planning.</p>	<p>An integrated approach is needed to address investment in streetscaping.</p>
	<p>2.10.3 Let's start making some concrete plans again for Spring Garden</p>		<p><u>Out of Scope:</u> This is out of scope for the RP+5 project.</p>	<p>No action recommended</p>	
<p><b>2.11 Reduce barriers to allow for more opportunities for home-based businesses and creative space such as artist studios</b></p> <p><b>Survey Says:</b> <b>Important 73%</b> <b>Not Important 8%</b></p>	<p>2.11.1 Emphasis should be placed on developing the Creative Economy, making good use of our wealth of talent in the cultural industries located here in the HRM. Tax incentives for businesses associated with the arts and development of policies which would incorporate a percentage of all development be dedicated to arts and cultural spaces would do much to make HRM a vibrant and relevant place to live and work.</p>		<p><u>In Scope:</u> While support for the creative economy and development/attraction of talent are important components of HRM’s Economic Strategy, tax incentives for businesses are outside the scope of RP+5 and not permitted under the HRM Charter. There are currently policies under HRM by Design which enable increased density in exchange for cultural venues.</p>	<p>Staff recommend that RP+5 continue to develop policies that reduce barriers to home-based occupations, which would include artists studios and creative space.</p> <p>RP+5 should also continue work on the inventory of cultural spaces, to inform the future Priorities Plan and policies that support these spaces. (see comment 2.12.1 below, for more information on this Plan).</p> <p>RP+5 should also further the Economic Strategy goals of retaining talent and promoting opportunities for culture.</p>	



<p><b>2.12 Make short term cultural space available in facilities, developments, and sites in transition</b></p> <p><b>Survey Says:</b> <b>Important 68%</b> <b>Not Important 9%</b></p>	<p>2.12.1 Create HRMs Social Heritage Museum and get the collection out of crisis into the public eye again.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>2.12.2 Look at the strategy for culture. We don't have a museum any longer in Dartmouth.</p>		<p><u>In scope:</u> the RP+5 workplan proposes the completion of a cultural inventory which will capture current cultural spaces and places as well as social heritage, heritage and open space assets. This inventory and subsequent gap analysis will be used to inform the Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan which will develop municipal priorities for built and social heritage and cultural facilities. The C&amp;H Priorities Plan, to be completed following the RP+5 review, will look at additional and creative ways to interpret, protect and celebrate our heritage. The role of community and regional museums, as well as the partnerships and funding necessary for their operation, will be informed by this plan.</p>	<p>Staff recommend that RP+5 continue to develop policy related to social heritage.</p>	<p>Cultural spaces are a significant consideration for the Culture and Heritage component of the RP+5 review. We will be conducting a comprehensive inventory of existing cultural spaces; the lessons learned from RP+5 engagement and a gap analysis of this inventory will be used to inform the C&amp;H Priorities Plan, slated to begin in 2013. The C&amp;H Priorities Plan will be a decision-making framework to ensure efficient use of existing cultural spaces and sound decisions when considering support for new or upgraded spaces. The C&amp;H Priorities Plan will identify gaps in provision of spaces and enable long-range planning to address these gaps and better serve HRM's cultural communities. New museums and spaces for heritage interpretation will certainly be considered under the new plan.</p>
	<p>2.12.3 Replace the convention centre proposal with a music and performing arts venue.</p>		<p><u>Out of scope:</u> The convention centre aligns with current policy adopted under the HRM by Design Downtown Halifax plan. For more information on cultural spaces, see above. An arts/ performance centre for HRM will be considered as part of the C&amp;H Priorities Plan.</p>	<p>Staff recommend no action related to the convention centre.</p>	
	<p>2.12.4 Access to public space for community groups, access to affordable life long learning opportunities through the public schools which are in all our communities, in particular where there is no HRM Rec programming any more... So as well as short term cultural space (above)...make some long term spaces for intergenerational opportunities, day care and cultural and social activities as well as health related - prevention, education, wellness in all our centres.</p>		<p><u>In scope</u> Cultural spaces are an important feature for complete neighbourhoods and are a significant consideration for the Culture &amp; Heritage and open space components of the RP+5 review. The proposed cultural inventory, gap analysis and community engagement will help to develop a decision making framework (C&amp;H Priorities Plan) for the development of new cultural space. In addition, the recently adopted Community Facility Master Plan will inform the development of community centres and recreation infrastructure.</p>	<p>Staff recommends that RP+5 continue work on the C&amp;H Priorities Plan and the Open Space Functional Plan.</p>	<p>See above for details on the C&amp;H Priorities Plan.</p> <p>For details on the Community Facility Master Plan please visit: <a href="http://www.halifax.ca/facilities/CFMP/">http://www.halifax.ca/facilities/CFMP/</a></p>

<p><b>2.13 Use open spaces, events, and programming to showcase culture and heritage</b></p> <p><b>Survey Says:</b> <b>Important 70%</b> <b>Not Important 9%</b></p>	<p>2.13.1 Permanent spaces for artistic agencies, affordable artistic venue sites, community space that is accessible, review of policy regarding accessibility and the need to only deal with accessibility when there is a change of use.</p>		<p><u>In Scope</u> Cultural spaces are a significant consideration for the Culture and Heritage component of the RP+5 review. The cultural inventory will identify gaps in spaces which will inform the C&amp;H Priorities Plan. <b>For more information, see 2.12.1</b></p> <p>The Economic Strategy, which will be rolled into the Regional Plan, proposes the following to cultivate a range of cultural opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create an inventory of cultural institutions, events and programs in the Regional Centre.</li> <li>• Create a plan to develop vacant public and private lands in the Regional Centre for cultural institutions, public spaces and private mixed uses as part of the “Opportunity Sites Task Force”.</li> <li>• Develop a strategy to create cultural public gathering places in the Regional Centre to achieve the “Bilbao Effect”.</li> </ul>	<p>Staff recommend that RP+5 continue to focus on ways to clarifying and strengthen Culture and Heritage programs.</p>	
	<p>2.13.2 Use the Citadel for large events as a civic space.</p>		<p><u>Out of scope</u>- The Citadel is a federal property. Parks Canada has implemented plans to make the fortress a more central public space in the lives of HRM citizens.</p>	<p>No further action recommended</p>	