

**Downtown Halifax
Secondary Municipal
Planning Strategy**

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 OVERVIEW

This Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy (DHSMPS) reflects the vision that Halifax Regional Council and the citizens of Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) have for the downtown core of Halifax. The DHSMPS encompasses the commercial heart of HRM's Regional Centre and Capital District. The DHSMPS plan area boundary is shown on Map 1 and includes the business districts of downtown Halifax and Spring Garden Road. This is the same area defined as the "HRM by Design Downtown Plan Area" in the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*. The DHSMPS plan area functions as the central business district, cultural heart and civic seat of HRM, and possesses the greatest mix and intensity of land uses within the region. Framed by the Halifax Citadel National Historic Site and the Halifax waterfront, the DHSMPS plan area consists of the historic settlement's original block and street pattern, and numerous heritage and cultural landmarks in a distinctive landscape setting.

The DHSMPS seeks to provide a coherent structure that respects and builds upon these existing elements of the downtown. Most importantly, a downtown 'precincts' approach helps to co-ordinate, focus and direct land uses, development, public investments, and cultural planning strategies. It is intended to provide guidance on the 'look and feel' of the downtown for the next 25 years and identify where change ought to occur and where it ought to be managed carefully.

This Plan provides a vision for the distinct character and growth aspirations for downtown Halifax, replacing former policy and regulation in the Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy and the Land Use By-law for Halifax Peninsula. The Barrington Street Heritage Conservation District Plan provides a companion document regulating the heritage aspects of this heritage conservation district as enabled under the regulatory framework of the Nova Scotia *Heritage Property Act*. The DHSMPS is intended to be read in conjunction with the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy, which defines areas of regional interest with respect to the Capital District and downtown Halifax, as well as relevant citywide policies in the Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy.

1.1 TRENDS SHAPING DOWNTOWN HALIFAX

Over the past several decades, downtown Halifax has been shaped by forces in the regional economy, major demographic trends and changing consumer preferences. The key changes affecting the DHSMPS are discussed in the following sections related to population, housing and the economy.

Population & Housing Trends:

- (a) Downtown Halifax and the remainder of the peninsula have experienced a significant loss in population over the past three decades (a loss of 25,000 people) due to smaller family and household sizes and growth of suburban communities.

- (b) The downtown population has stabilized with 4.3 percent growth over the last five years attributed to a renewed interest in urban living.¹
- (c) Market analysts anticipate a sustained high demand for multi-family housing over the next few years, due to changing demographics, household formation, lifestyle choices, an aging population and the rising cost of single-detached houses.²
- (d) This Plan seeks to target mixed use housing in downtown Halifax to attract a diverse community including families with children. The plan will target families by encouraging larger apartment units and related amenities (schools, parks, shopping) to support family living.
- (e) Housing affordability in and around downtown Halifax is a challenge in view of the strong demand for central locations. HRM is undertaking an analysis of housing affordability issues, together with homelessness and related social concerns. This Plan encourages a mix of housing types targeting housing affordability as part of the bonus zoning provisions discussed further in chapter 3 of this Plan.
- (f) Capitalizing on these trends, this Plan targets downtown Halifax for significant residential growth, building on the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy goals of promoting walkable, transit-oriented & complete neighbourhoods.

Economic Trends:

- (g) Being the location of almost half of the region's jobs, downtown Halifax is the dominant employment center and is the single largest focal point for HRM's office supply, thus providing a centrally located economic cluster at the convergence of major public transit routes. Growth in the employment sector has been evident in the last five years with more jobs and a tighter market for office space. However, this share of growth has not kept pace with expansion in suburban centres.³
- (h) The financial services sector, largely concentrated in downtown Halifax has been growing over the past few years and is projected to experience future growth as new

¹ Nova Scotia Community Counts - Halifax Citadel (Community).

² Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Housing in a Changing Environment - Metro Halifax Housing Market Outlook. CMHC Housing Outlook Conference. 2008.

³ The downtown Halifax core employs approximately 20,000 people. In 1998, the Halifax CBD accounted for 58% of HRM's total office space, but by 2007 this had declined to 48%. As of 2007, downtown Halifax accounted for 4.9 million square feet of total office inventory, compared with 5.2 million square feet for suburban locations. The gap was narrower for class A office space, with downtown accounting for 1.9 million square feet, only slightly below the 2 million square feet in the suburbs.

companies relocate to HRM. This will cause downtown rents to continue to surge higher as prime space continues to get more difficult to find.⁴

- (i) There has been a decline in downtown retail occupancy due to competition from suburban malls and outlying “big-box” retail areas. There has also been a shift toward shops and services that cater primarily to tourists and office workers, as well as a trend toward higher-end personal services and “experience” shopping. Spring Garden Road remains a favoured location for retailing as a specialized downtown shopping niche. A critical mass of population and employment is needed to support the continued growth of the downtown retail sector.
- (j) Four Halifax universities are located within walking distance of the downtown, attracting a student enrollment of nearly 25,000. The large student population on the Halifax Peninsula supports many downtown shops and services.
- (k) The downtown entertainment sector remains strong, with opportunities to sample the work of local artists and numerous bars and restaurants offering live entertainment.
- (l) Downtown Halifax is an important centrepiece of the image of HRM as a whole, not only for tourists - including the 727,000 visitors to HRM heritage sites in 2007⁵ but also for convention organizers, business people and potential investors. The importance of downtown in branding HRM has been repeatedly demonstrated through the hosting of world class events such as the G-7 Summit, Tall Ships festivals, Halifax International Busker Festival, Atlantic Jazz Festival, Royal Nova Scotia International Tattoo, the Juno Awards, and many downtown sports events. The global knowledge-based economy values not only economic efficiency, but also quality of life factors and cultural authenticity. Both are important assets offered by downtown Halifax.

1.2 HOW THIS PLAN WAS CREATED

In 2006 Council initiated a Regional Centre Urban Design Study (HRMbyDesign) as called for in the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy. HRMbyDesign is intended to 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 development approval processes, and incentives for high quality development particularly within the downtown Halifax core. The first phase of the process focused on the entire Regional Centre, which includes the area of Dartmouth located inside the Circumferential Highway, and the Halifax Peninsula. That work, and the public consultation it entailed, yielded the Council-approved Regional Centre Urban Design Vision and Principles, Framework, and Reurbanization Strategy. Taken together, these

⁴ *Colliers International. Halifax, North American Office Highlights Report Summary. 2007.*

⁵ *HRM Regional Planning & Capital District Project - Capital District Case Study. 2003. Citing Millward and Winsor, 1997.*

three project components embody a shared vision for the Regional Centre for the next 25 years, and provide the basis for a new planning framework for this area. The second phase of the project was focused on downtown Halifax in recognition of the economic and cultural importance of this area and the need for a clear urban design vision to guide development and public investment. A consultant study entitled “Downtown Halifax Urban Design Strategy”⁶ provided the basis for much of the DHSMPS policy directions.

HRMbyDesign has been championed by a Council appointed 17-member Urban Design Task Force, which includes three Councillors. This group is made up of community volunteers who represent residents and community leaders in business, development industry, heritage, community development, architecture and design fields. Council’s Regional Plan Advisory Committee (RPAC) and the Heritage Advisory Committee (HAC) have also reviewed the project recommendations as they relate to areas of regional interest, amendments to the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy and heritage.

1.3 WHY WE NEED A DOWNTOWN PLAN

The overall goals of this Plan include fostering a positive downtown development climate, making a beautiful public realm, improving heritage protection, investing in public spaces, promoting high quality architecture, and well-designed streetscapes. These objectives are taken into consideration and balanced among each other at all times in the planning process. This Plan will:

- (a) improve heritage protection and heritage assistance;
- (b) create clarity and predictability in the development approval process so that quality development can occur more efficiently and with fewer appeals;
- (c) acknowledge that it is people (residents and workers) that make a lively, vibrant downtown and to achieve that we need design standards to improve the beauty of downtown’s architecture and public spaces;
- (d) bring more people to live and work in the Regional Centre, by directing a mix of quality residential and commercial development to areas that can both accommodate it and benefit from it; and
- (e) further HRM’s regional goals related to sustainability, economic competitiveness and walkable, and cycle and transit-oriented communities.

⁶ *Office for Urbanism. Downtown Halifax Urban Design Strategy. 2008.*

1.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF SUSTAINABILITY

A sustainable city is one that is growing smartly through three scales of development: city-wide, neighbourhood, and building site. At the city-scale, a sustainable city is densifying to use existing infrastructure and is investing to make walking, cycling and transit appealing alternatives for commuting. At the neighbourhood scale, a sustainable city is one that strives to ensure its neighbourhoods are walkable and complete by locating amenities such as parks, schools, and commercial uses within walking distance of residences. At the building scale, a sustainable city is one that promotes sustainable building design to reduce resource and energy consumption. And finally, a sustainable city is one that recognizes that to be truly sustainable at any scale, development must meet the test and principles of the triple bottom line: socially and culturally sustainable, economically sustainable and environmentally sustainable.

Sustainability is a fundamental underpinning of the design approach to the Regional Centre and downtown Halifax. In recognition of its importance, the theme of sustainability is woven throughout several sections of this Plan including: Introduction, Vision, Built Form, Economic Development, Public Realm and Transportation. HRM is committed to the concept of sustainability by facilitating greater densities and intensities of use, showing leadership in the sustainable design of public buildings and spaces, and investing in public transportation. This Plan will address environmentally sustainable design by encouraging project proponents to design, construct, and operate buildings and landscapes in an environmentally responsible manner through the bonus zoning system.

The Sustainability Functional Plan discussed in chapter 3 of this Plan and the Community Energy Functional Plan directed by the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy, will comprehensively address matters of environmental responsibility and stewardship in the DHSMPS plan area, including public and private development, and encompassing streets, parks, and buildings.

1.5 FUNCTIONAL PLANS

The purpose of a functional plan is to guide the management of the Municipality as set out in the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*. They do not represent land use policy but rather HRM's intent to create detailed management guides for setting budgets for programs, services and facilities consistent with the implementation of this Plan. Functional plans will also guide HRM in the ongoing management of strategic initiatives, partnerships and demonstration projects useful to seeing the full potential of the Plan realized over time.

CHAPTER 2: DOWNTOWN HALIFAX URBAN DESIGN VISION AND PRINCIPLES

The DHSMPS articulates a compelling vision for downtown Halifax looking forward 25 years and beyond. The vision is described through the following sections in this chapter: (1) overall vision statement for downtown Halifax, (2) guiding principles, (3) ten big moves, and (4) precinct visions. These four components of the vision for downtown Halifax are intended to support and guide the implementation of this Plan in terms of the design of development and public spaces.

2.0 OVERALL VISION FOR DOWNTOWN HALIFAX

In the next 25 years downtown Halifax will become a thriving urban environment with a strengthened historic heart. Many more people will live in downtown Halifax's mixed use neighbourhoods enjoying splendid public spaces and human scale streetscapes. A mix of housing types will increase living and working opportunities for all people and will appropriately transition in scale and design to surrounding neighbourhoods and cultural destinations. The streetscape experience will be improved through redevelopment which incorporates active street level shops and activities. Infill development and redesigned streetscapes will encourage a culture of walking.

Pedestrian and visual connections will unify the downtown through beautifully designed Citadel to Harbour streets (Duke, George, Prince and Sackville Streets), thereby linking the Harbour with Citadel Hill. Downtown Halifax will define its' character by distinct precincts that celebrate and reinforce the downtown as a civic, cultural, and economic destination. High-quality public plazas, forecourts, courtyards and promenades will complement and visually connect every precinct, adding valuable public amenities and performance spaces throughout the downtown. The Halifax Harbourwalk will celebrate the best attraction of downtown Halifax, featuring a new Halifax ferry terminal as a landmark waterfront destination. Furthermore, the Esplanade Plazas will properly celebrate the significance and importance of Citadel Hill with design features that demand respect.

Barrington Street will be defined as the historic heart of the downtown through its immediate designation as a heritage conservation district. Halifax's history will further be preserved through the establishment of two additional heritage districts in the area surrounding Barrington Street south and Historic Properties.

The Cornwallis Park area will become the southern gateway into the downtown, with a revitalized park to include public art. Once infill development on vacant sites in the central downtown is underway in the short to mid term, the Cogswell Interchange will be transformed in the mid to long term into a new mixed-use precinct functioning as the northern gateway into the downtown, and will feature a restored surface street grid. Visitors arriving at the transit terminals will immediately feel welcomed and connected to downtown Halifax as a result of the

enhancement of these gateways. Much greater emphasis will be placed on walking, cycling and transit in the downtown.

2.1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

There are six overarching principles that represent the major themes carried forward in this Plan. These high level principles set the stage for the policies and strategies that follow:

- (a) **A Sustainable Downtown:** The promotion of a compact, intensified and walkable downtown is a central ingredient in HRM's regional sustainability objectives and a major focus of this Plan. This Plan features strategies to promote sustainable building design and environmentally sustainable development practices.
- (b) **A Living Downtown:** Create a living downtown through distinct neighbourhoods while supporting the creation of new residential opportunities including desirable high-density neighbourhoods with a variety of housing choices that are supported by high quality community, streetscape and open space amenities that are open year round.
- (c) **A Distinct Downtown:** Maintain a distinctive downtown by preserving and reinforcing the elements that impart a sense of history, culture and a unique natural setting.
- (d) **A Beautiful Downtown:** Restore the pursuit of longevity, civic pride, visual appeal, and inspiring qualities to the design, improvement and construction of streets, open spaces and buildings.
- (e) **A Connected Downtown:** Strengthen the visual and physical connections between historical and natural assets, and civic and open space destinations in the downtown. In addition, create similar connections to surrounding districts and neighbourhoods outside the downtown, in particular along major transit nodes and corridors.
- (f) **A Vibrant Downtown:** Create a vibrant downtown by developing policies and procedures that encourage an urban environment with a broad mix of land uses, the required infrastructure and the necessary critical mass to support a creative and exciting economic, cultural and social community.

2.2 THE TEN BIG MOVES

Collectively, ten aspirations constitute a shared and widely agreed upon vision of what we want downtown Halifax to look like in the next 25 years. The ten big moves represent a summary of the key strategies established in this Plan:

1. Defined and distinct downtown precincts

Downtown Halifax features nine distinct precincts with varying characters, functional identities and building forms. The objective of defining these precincts is to help focus and direct land

uses, define appropriate character for development, protect heritage, and guide public investment. The precincts are shown on Map 2, with the vision statements described in the next section of this chapter.

2. Increase live and work opportunities in the downtown

The future vibrancy and economic growth of the downtown depends on many more people living and doing business there. The Regional Municipal Planning Strategy accommodates an increase of approximately 25,000 new residents in the Regional Centre over the next 25 years. Building on that figure, this Plan has identified the potential for at least three million square feet of office space and up to 16,000 new residents in the downtown over the next 15 years. Importantly, this capacity accommodates a variety of new residential and commercial development in the short and long term. While this amount of growth may not occur within the 25-year study window, it is nonetheless important to identify that there is capacity for it without negative impact on the open space, heritage protection and urban vibrancy goals of the project.

3. A protected and vibrant historic heart

Halifax's rich heritage assets are a main attraction for tourists and locals, increasing the economic prosperity of the downtown. The protection and preservation of these heritage resources is a key pillar of this Plan. The Barrington Street Heritage Conservation District will implement stronger methods of heritage protection than currently exist, along with a preservation incentive program. Future study is also recommended in the Barrington Street South and Historic Properties areas to implement similar programs. Design guidelines and incentives will protect heritage resources outside of heritage districts.

4. Integrate the Cogswell and Cornwallis Park Gateways

The transformation of the Cogswell Interchange and Cornwallis Park gateways will serve as catalysts for revitalization and the attraction of new residents and businesses to downtown. Public support for the redevelopment of the Cogswell Interchange and rejuvenation of Cornwallis Park is tremendous, particularly in the Cogswell area due to opportunities to provide more public open space and amenities, and new residential and commercial development.

5. Provide a variety of new and improved open space anchors and connections

The amount and quality of public open space and amenities must increase in parallel with the increase in residents and workers downtown. A variety of high quality open space types are proposed to complement adjacent uses, to provide signature destinations downtown, ensure amenities for high-density residential living and to stimulate the downtown revitalization. Visual and physical connections along the east-west streets that terminate in outdoor public open spaces on the waterfront are important in reestablishing the link between the Citadel and the Harbour, and are a key component of the downtown Halifax vision.

6. Great streets that support a culture of walking

Improved streetscapes are intended to enhance the downtown experience, supplement the open space network, promote a culture of walking, support street level retail operations, and strengthen precinct identities. Beautiful, well-designed, pedestrian-friendly streets will inspire

more people to explore downtown shops, restaurants and entertainment venues. Great streets connect local neighbourhoods and precincts, increasing downtown vibrancy around the clock. A key principle in support of great streets is promoting the infill of vacant and underutilized lands and at-grade parking lots with high-quality development.

7. Improve the quality of existing buildings & structures

As part of the urban design objectives for downtown Halifax, this Plan will encourage, assist and enable the improvement and transformation of existing buildings and infrastructure. Strategies include the retrofitting of undesirable street level conditions, updating and enhancing existing towers and parking structures through façade improvements, and improved lighting.

8. Reinforce visual connections & civic pride

Visually prominent sites provide unique opportunities to define areas, strengthen visual connections, animate open spaces, and to orient and stimulate pedestrian movement. These sites are appropriate for urban design features such as public art, monuments, attractions, landmark architecture, and civic or cultural facilities. Potential opportunity sites include: Granville Mall, the Halifax ferry terminal, waterfront open spaces at the foot of east-west streets, the Cogswell and Commons Gateway, and the north & south ends of Barrington and Hollis streets.

9. New developments designed to be well-mannered & pedestrian friendly

The approach to guiding new development is focused on ensuring a vital, inviting pedestrian environment that will attract residents, enhance retail uses at street level, encourage active transportation choices, and resonate with visitors to the downtown. Proposed strategies to achieve these objectives include: enhancing existing heritage with complementary design, directing height to where it is appropriate, ensuring sun penetration on sidewalks and minimizing wind impacts, promoting a coherent relationship between neighbouring buildings, and ensuring the pedestrian experience is comfortable, safe and visually appealing. This includes the idea that tall buildings have the greatest civic obligation to be appropriately located, and to feature high quality materials, roof treatments, and overall architectural excellence. New towers will aspire to become landmark buildings as part of the renewed downtown Halifax skyline.

10. A transit and active transportation friendly downtown

Building on the goals of the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy, this Plan promotes access to downtown and the Capital District primarily through investment in public transportation, providing alternatives to the dependence on the automobile. Development in turn should be provided at appropriate densities to support continued transit use and much greater emphasis shall be placed on walkability and cycling in the downtown. Public transportation must progress into a whole new level of public acceptability by making its use vastly more convenient and with much improved levels of service. This Plan aspires to make transit use a universally acceptable and accessible means of transportation.

2.3 DOWNTOWN PRECINCT VISIONS

Downtown Halifax features nine distinct precincts as shown on Map 2, each with varying characters, functional identities and building forms. The objective of defining these precincts is to help focus and direct land uses, define appropriate character for development, protect heritage, and direct public investment. The following precinct-specific vision statements articulate long-term goals for these areas that support guidelines for development and public spaces established in the Design Manual and through future functional plans outlined in this Plan.

2.3.1 Vision for Precinct 1: Southern Waterfront

Centred on the southern end of Lower Water Street and anchored by the Halifax Harbourwalk, Cornwallis Park, and the seawall, the southern downtown waterfront is poised to become one of the downtowns's most desirable neighbourhoods. Building on the existing residential area, significant residential intensification alongside a mix of other compatible civic and commercial uses can serve to create both a great new destination and a splendid place to live overlooking the Harbour and within enviable proximity to all the amenities that downtown living has to offer.

New mixed-use, mid-rise buildings and strategically placed signature point-towers will be the emphasis of the new infill, which will serve to introduce a significant critical mass of people while closing the gaps in the southern waterfront streetscape. These developments will solidify the link between the central downtown and its southern extent anchored by the train station. Building on the existing residential character and heritage resources, new developments will create an integrated and harmonious high density neighbourhood with an exceptional street-level vibrancy including convenience retail outlets, sidewalk cafes, specialty shops, end of street plazas and grade-access residential units.

Defining landmark developments and improvements will include the adaptively reused and integrated power plant facility, a landmark development of signature architectural quality at the southern terminus of Lower Water Street, and new waterfront plazas framed by new potential cultural attractions at the foot of Morris Street and Marginal Road. In concert with open space and streetscape improvements, a strong linkage will be established between the Halifax Harbourwalk and Cornwallis Park to complete the connection between the downtown's southern destination anchors and further stimulate pedestrian movement throughout the area. The southern waterfront is a precinct defined by the Harbour, with open spaces along the Halifax Harbourwalk, at the end of the streets leading to the Harbour. New buildings will fill in existing gaps along the streetscape. Lower Water Street will have great sidewalks, landscaping and a streetwall that emphasizes its meandering qualities. Pedestrian-oriented retail shops and services will frame open spaces.

2.3.2 Vision for Precinct 2: Barrington Street South

Centred on the historic south Barrington Street spine and anchored by Cornwallis Park, this precinct serves as downtown's southern gateway comprised of an eclectic mix of small to mid-

sized specialty retail, restaurant and professional office uses. This precinct will serve as a renewed community focus for the surrounding neighbourhoods, while providing for a transition in scale and intensity between the downtown and the established low-rise residential areas to the south and west. The low to mid-rise heights, concentration of impressive historic buildings and the formal public square are defining qualities that lend to this precinct's traditional 'European' charm and character.

Improvements to Cornwallis Park and its framing streetscapes will enhance the image and prestige of the park and serve as a catalyst for revitalizing the area. This will occur through the creation of a traditional urban square framed by continuous at-grade commercial uses, cafes, hotels and key civic destinations, including the train station. Speciality shops, restaurants and services will be drawn to the distinct architectural character of south Barrington and Hollis Streets, providing the local and surrounding residential population with convenience and complementary amenities. Infilling of vacant lots combined with streetscape improvements will greatly strengthen the precinct's role as a link between the south end, the Spring Garden Road area, the waterfront and the central downtown.

Defining landmark developments and improvements will include the enhancement of Cornwallis Park to establish and formalize its civic function as the third anchor point in the triangle of downtown public squares, which includes the Grand Parade and Public Gardens. The park's signature paving and landscape treatments will extend onto the surrounding streets and to the fronts of the framing buildings. The framing of Cornwallis Park will be completed with a signature development at its south face, which can integrate the existing grocery store function while providing a compelling architectural landmark and public art installations to terminate the Barrington and Hollis view corridors.

2.3.3 Vision for Precinct 3: Spring Garden Road Area

This precinct is one of downtown's most appealing and vibrant mixed-use areas centred on the lively Spring Garden Road commercial corridor. With proximity to major health and academic institutional complexes, and surrounded by tremendous green amenity, the Spring Garden Road precinct will play a leading role in defining the image of downtown as a livable, enriching and sustainable place to live, work and play. Intensified small-scale commercial uses and enhancements to the streetscapes will further strengthen the precinct's critical pedestrian function as a link between the downtown and the institutions and neighbourhoods to the west and east.

Residential, office and mixed-uses in mid to high-rise buildings will continue to ensure the critical density of people and activity that lend to the precinct's vitality while providing for greater utility and physical enclosure to the surrounding open spaces. New, large scaled developments will be carefully designed to ensure that pedestrians on Spring Garden Road continue to enjoy sunlight for significant periods throughout the day. Infill opportunities along Clyde Street, adjacent to the historic Schmidtville neighbourhood, will reinforce its residential character while providing for buildings along Clyde Street that transition in height from the mid-

rise buildings permitted along Spring Garden Road, to the existing low-rise buildings of Schmidville to the south. The mixed use nature of the new buildings along Clyde Street will also provide a transition in intensity of use from the active retail required along Spring Garden Road to the primarily residential uses in Schmidville. Infill developments along Spring Garden Road to the east of Queen Street will reinforce the area's distinct qualities characterized by historic civic monuments with generous landscaped setbacks.

Defining landmark developments and improvements will include the enhancement of Spring Garden Road as the key east-west downtown pedestrian connection that links the Public Gardens to the Barrington Street Heritage Conservation District. The former Halifax Infirmity property and sites on the north side of Clyde Street will be infilled with a mix of uses that will serve to fill the major 'gaps' in the precinct while complementing the adjacent established and historically significant neighbourhoods.

2.3.4 Vision for Precinct 4: Lower Central Downtown

Fronting on the central waterfront, and containing a large concentration of downtown office towers, hotels and major regional attractions, this precinct will continue to serve as the primary regional hub for commerce, culture and tourism. The gaps along the waterfront will be infilled with a mix of uses that integrate parking facilities and are focused around a series of distinctly designed waterfront plazas at the ends of the streets leading to the Harbour. Most significant of these plazas is at the terminus of the Grand Promenade, which serves as a splendid east-west spine that links the waterfront, Grand Parade and the Citadel. The design of the Grand Promenade will provide an appealing route for pedestrians to traverse the steep slope to access many downtown attractions and destinations.

New mid and high-rise developments along the waterfront will step down in height to ensure a low-rise frontage along the Halifax Harbourwalk, while infill within the historic block and street pattern will be massed to ensure that buildings have proportional relationships to the shallow depths of the blocks and narrow widths of the streets. In addition to major new office complexes, substantial new high-density residential developments will help to balance the mix of uses in the precinct and ensure a vibrant street life throughout the day and in all seasons.

Defining landmark developments and improvements will include the infill of major vacant sites to the south and along the waterfront, the redevelopment of the ferry terminal to create an identifiable civic landmark, and major enhancements to the public realm that include key streetscape improvements, new plazas and key public art installations.

2.3.5 Vision for Precinct 5: Barrington Street Heritage Conservation District

The Barrington Street Heritage Conservation District is the downtown's heritage heart and soul, and serves as the central retail spine that connects to all but one of the downtown's precincts. Building on its exceptional assets, which include great accessibility, traditional 'main street' charm, and an extraordinary assembly of historic resources, this precinct will transform into one

of the downtown's key destinations for shopping, dining, galleries, entertainment and cultural attractions. Sensitive adaptive re-use, additions and infill will help to revitalize the corridor while reinforcing its historic character. A residential population and small-scale businesses in the creative sector will be drawn to the loft spaces and prestigious character associated with the grandeur of the historic buildings.

The heritage value of the Barrington Street Heritage Conservation District lies in the historic and architectural significance of its buildings and civic open spaces, and its evolution as Halifax's principal downtown commercial street for the past 260 years. The open spaces, churches, and historic government buildings at the northern and southern ends of the precinct provide tangible reminders of the downtown's social, civic, and religious development in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, and the continuation of these functions in the present day.

The northern and southern ends of the precinct are characterized by historic government buildings and churches with a high order of architectural design set in landscaped open spaces, and defined by formalized paths, perimeter walls, and public monuments. The old commercial part of the precinct between these historic open spaces has a dense urban form based on the original block pattern of sixteen, 12.2m x 18.3m lots per block. Some buildings occupy single lots; others occupy double lots or larger lot consolidations. Buildings vary in width and height, from two to six storeys, with most in the three or four storey range, giving the streetscape a varied skyline and block profile. Some buildings are low and narrow, others higher and wider, in many cases with a projecting cornice or parapet at the roof-line. This varied profile is an important character-defining element of Barrington Street and contributes both to the architectural variety and human scale of the street and the varied sunlight and shadow conditions.

2.3.6 Vision for Precinct 6: Upper Central Downtown

Fronting on the Citadel, anchored to the north and south by major civic destinations, and in close proximity to Barrington Street, this precinct has enhanced appeal as a location for the hospitality and entertainment industry. The fine-grained historic block and street pattern lends well to the concentration of pedestrian-oriented alternative shops, restaurants, bars, night clubs, sidewalk cafes and cultural venues such as performing arts theatres. Infill and redevelopments will continue to intensify this area's distinct function as the downtown's arts and entertainment district by accommodating complementary uses such as hotels, small-scale offices for creative related ventures, galleries and artist studios.

New, low to mid-rise buildings will be designed to ensure proportional relationships to the shallow depths of the blocks and narrow widths of the streets. Streetscape improvements will accommodate the area's high pedestrian volumes and support spill out activities, including a grand esplanade along the base of the historic Citadel. The Metro Centre's facade on the Grand Promenade will be readapted to provide a positive frontage. To provide a new civic focus to the precinct, the Sackville Promenade is a potential catalyst for revitalizing the area and serve as a new community gathering space framed by cafes and restaurants. Designed into the steep grade,

the Sackville Promenade may be designed as a series of steps, which will lend well to the staging of outdoor events and festivals.

2.3.7 Vision for Precinct 7: Historic Properties

This contiguous and intact heritage environment will continue to serve as a major attraction and hub of social and commercial activity in the downtown. Anchored by the waterfront and the Granville Street Pedestrian Mall, this precinct's character is defined by low-rise buildings and the intimate spaces they frame. The convergence of small-scale retail uses, a market, restaurants, bars, NSCAD University, galleries, and hotels, creates a charming and vibrant 'urban village' in the heart of downtown. This unique function will be further strengthened with the transformation of the Cogswell Interchange, which will place this precinct in a central position to serve as an area focus and primary pedestrian linkage to newly developed areas to the north.

Sensitive adaptive re-use, additions and infill will help to revitalize the precinct while reinforcing its historic character. The Granville Street Pedestrian Mall will be further enhanced by the development of the site to its north, which will reinforce the low-rise street wall and provide a complementary landmark feature to mark its north view terminus. Enhancements to the streetscapes and crosswalks, as well as a potential plaza to the north, will help to strengthen east-west pedestrian connections and links to the waterfront.

2.3.8 Vision for Precinct 8: Cogswell Area

Over the mid to long term of the 25-year life of this Plan, the dismantling of the Cogswell Interchange will enable the transformation of this area into a coherent and appealing mixed-use precinct that will serve to reconnect the downtown with the north end, provide a compelling northern gateway, and accommodate a significant density of office, commercial and residential uses. The development of contemporary landmark towers of signature architectural quality will enhance and update the downtown skyline and potentially redefine its image. These high densities will be supported by a network of pedestrian-scaled blocks framed by high-quality streetscapes and public spaces. Existing buildings and structures that were once inward looking will be readapted to provide positive street frontages with retail use at-grade.

New streets and improved alignments will enhance pedestrian connections to the waterfront and to the north end neighbourhoods. Towers will sit on low-rise podiums that reinforce human-scaled streetscapes while accommodating rooftop gardens and amenity spaces for their inhabitants. Building heights will step down toward the neighbourhoods to the north and the Harbour while further enhancing the shape of the skyline. The approach and entry into the downtown from Barrington and Cogswell Streets will be greatly enhanced through ceremonial quality streetscaping and clearly defined gateways with landmark public art installations.

Before the redevelopment potential of the Cogswell Interchange area is realized, the vacant and under-utilized sites in the other downtown precincts should commence. Additionally, a detailed Cogswell Interchange Area Masterplan should be undertaken. These two important steps will

ensure that the livability of the central downtown will improve in the short term, and that when redevelopment of the Cogswell area does begin in the mid to long term, it will follow a rational plan that yields optimal functionality and vibrancy.

2.3.9 Vision for Precinct 9: North End Gateway

Fronting onto the Citadel and interfacing with the existing historic neighbourhoods of the north end, this precinct will become one of the downtown's most desirable residential neighbourhoods afforded with tremendous views of the Harbour and proximity to the Commons and the services and shops of Gottingen Street. This area's role as a major gateway into the downtown will be signified by a high quality open space and public art installation and signature architecture at the prominent corner framed by Cogswell Street and Rainnie Drive. The transformation of Cogswell into a ceremonial boulevard and the esplanade treatment of Rainnie will serve to provide this precinct's residents, businesses and visitors with tremendous amenity, while enhancing these important pedestrian connections into the downtown from the surrounding areas.

Existing civic and recreational facilities will be integrated into new, mixed-use developments that frame the streets while providing architectural features to enhance important north-south view corridors from the areas to the north. The low to mid-rise buildings will provide interior courtyard gardens accessed through mid-block connections. Their massing and material quality will provide for a complementary transition to the distinct character of the neighbourhood to the north. Gottingen's intersection with Cogswell and its link to Rainnie will become an important civic focus for the area that will extend the 'main street' character to a celebratory terminus at the Citadel Esplanade.

Policy 1 HRM shall, through the applicable provisions contained in the Land Use By-law and Functional Plans, implement the vision for downtown Halifax as outlined in this chapter to guide future development and investment in public space in downtown Halifax. This vision consists of the following components:

- (a) Downtown Halifax Vision Statement;
- (b) Guiding Principles;
- (c) The Ten Big Moves; and
- (d) Downtown Precinct Visions.

CHAPTER 3: BUILT FORM AND PRECINCT FRAMEWORK

3.0 BUILT FORM FRAMEWORK

Built form generally refers to the shape, pattern and configuration of buildings and structures that frame streets and open spaces. Built form also refers to architecture; that is, the height of buildings, the articulation of their form, and the quality of their materials and construction. The distinct built form identity of downtown Halifax, as with most historic centres, is closely linked to its human-scale and the fine-grain rhythm of uses and buildings.

The Built Form Framework for downtown Halifax builds on the Urban Design Vision and Principles outlined in Chapter 2 of this Plan to guide decisions regarding growth and development such that the desired scale, function, quality and character of new development are consistent with the vision and principles. The Built Form Framework ensures that development maintains appropriate relationships with streets and open spaces, that there are appropriate relationships between buildings, and that there are appropriate transitions between areas of differing scale and intensity of use. Although the Built Form Framework is considerate of land uses, its central focus is on the character, shape, scale and design of buildings; it is therefore said to be a form-based approach to development regulation, consistent with the direction of the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy.

The Built Form Framework establishes and is supported by the following objectives:

- (a) Shaping and guiding new development to respond to the unique context and potential of downtown Halifax.
- (b) Clarity of urban design intentions and a reasonable level of predictability of outcomes in the form, scale and intensity of new development.
- (c) Flexibility for a variety of development responses that may be shaped by land uses, market forces, and the complex and organic nature of existing building, property and block patterns in downtown Halifax.
- (d) Securing meaningful public benefits from the private sector through the carefully considered use of bonus zoning as enabled under the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*.
- (e) Enhancing the pedestrian environment by ensuring appropriate interfaces between buildings and sidewalks.
- (f) Maximizing sun and sky exposure by introducing appropriate controls for building massing and the relationships between buildings.

- (g) Reinforcing distinct precinct character by identifying desirable unique built form characteristics and guiding new developments to reinforce and enhance those defining qualities.
- (h) Ensuring feasible and viable forms of development by providing a framework in which a variety of uses and functions can be accommodated with consideration for necessary functions such as servicing and parking, and access to light and privacy.
- (i) Attention to civic design and architectural quality by providing guidance for building articulation, material quality, sustainable design, and for reinforcing the visual prominence of special sites.

The Built Form Framework recognizes the inherent complexity of downtown Halifax with respect to property ownership, property size and configurations, block and street patterns, land uses, as well as existing building types, densities and heights. Therefore, the approach taken for shaping new development focuses on defining a set of parameters and standards concerned with ensuring the appropriate building form. Accordingly, the Built Form Framework is comprised of the following four sections:

- (a) Downtown Precincts – established to focus and direct context-specific land uses, appropriate development character, heritage protection, and public investment in accordance with existing and desired precinct character.
- (b) Land Use – provides guidance for directing certain uses and supporting amenities, services and programs to reinforce existing or desired land use characteristics.
- (c) Building Height, Massing & Character - provides guidance for consideration of the unique qualities of the different streetscapes and precincts that make up the downtown, and guidance for the appropriate height and massing of new development.
- (d) Development and Design Review – sets out the site plan approval process that will govern downtown development, and introduces detailed design guidelines relating to heritage, built form, streetwall character and sustainable building design.

These four sections are interrelated components of the Built Form Framework, and all four are to be considered in concert when determining the appropriate development scale, character and design on any given site.

- Policy 2 HRM shall adopt a Built Form Framework for the DHSMPS plan area as shown on Map 1 and establish a Land Use By-law that includes provisions for downtown precincts, land use, building envelopes and streetwall characteristics, development, and design review.

3.1 DOWNTOWN PRECINCTS

Downtown Halifax features nine distinct precincts as defined on Map 2 each with varying characters, functional identities and building forms. The objective of identifying these precincts is to define appropriate character for development, protect heritage, and direct public investment.

Each precinct is governed by vision statements contained in Chapter 2 and implementing provisions in the Land Use By-law and Design Manual that address the following: precinct character and identity, building height, building massing and upper storey setbacks, heritage protection considerations, detailed urban design guidelines, open space recommendations and other guidelines and requirements.

This precinct-based approach brings clarity and predictability to downtown Halifax development while retaining the context-specific detail required to direct appropriate treatment of heritage resources, prescribing the maximum building envelopes of new development, and insisting upon vibrancy and excellence of design in the public realm. This approach promotes the filling-in of vacant lots, new development at a variety of scales, styles and uses, and it ensures that new development is appropriate to its location based on existing and desired precinct character.

Policy 3 HRM shall adopt the downtown precincts shown on Map 2 and establish provisions in the Land Use By-law that regulate:

- (a) height and built form of development;
- (b) detailed urban design guidelines;
- (c) open space;
- (d) parking; and
- (e) other requirements in each of the precincts.

3.2 LAND USE FRAMEWORK

3.2.1 Land Use Mix

In support of the diverse urban character of downtown Halifax, a broad range of residential, commercial, and cultural uses are permitted and encouraged throughout the downtown with few restrictions. The importance of downtown Halifax as an employment centre will continue to be recognized and supported. The components of the Built Form Framework discussed in section 3.3 provide for varied forms of development in low, mid, and high-rise buildings to accommodate the future employment growth needs for downtown. This Plan also supports more people living in downtown Halifax and establishes population targets to support this growth. Residential growth will be encouraged by removing previous density limitations and

encouraging a broad mix of unit types, housing affordability, and amenities to support downtown living. These strategies are further discussed in section 3.2.3.

Policy 4 HRM shall establish in the Land Use By-law a Downtown Halifax Zone (DH-1) which permits a mix of residential, commercial, institutional, cultural and open space uses.

3.2.2 Primary Pedestrian-Oriented Commercial Streetscapes

Primary pedestrian-oriented commercial streetscapes are those downtown Halifax streetscapes with a critical mass of at-grade retail or other commercial uses that animate the sidewalk, and that should be encouraged and enhanced. These streets typically feature streetwalls with continuous retail uses characterized by close placement to the sidewalk, narrow shop fronts, high levels of glazing, and frequent entries. New developments along primary pedestrian-oriented commercial streetscapes will be required to provide active at-grade uses consistent with preexisting built form characteristics. Examples of such active uses include, but are not limited to: retail outlets, restaurants and cafes, banking, and other services.

Policy 5 HRM shall designate Barrington Street and Spring Garden Road as primary pedestrian-oriented commercial streetscapes and establish requirements for retail and other commercial uses at street level.

Policy 6 HRM shall designate primary pedestrian-oriented commercial streetscapes through the Land Use By-law and establish requirements for active ground floor uses along these streets.

3.2.3 Provision of a Mix of Housing Types

This Plan sets a goal of increasing residential density in downtown Halifax with individuals and families at all stages of their lives, and from across the demographic and economic spectrum with a variety of housing needs. The following policies address two key aspects of downtown housing related to housing type and affordability.

Housing type: To achieve the vibrant downtown that this Plan sets out to provide, the lack of downtown housing opportunities for households of two or more people must be addressed. Downtown housing is currently dominated by studio and one-bedroom apartment units. The existing downtown housing stock must therefore be augmented with an increased number of two or more bedroom dwelling units through requirements established in the Land Use By-law that specify minimum ratios for dwelling unit types. Furthermore, provisions are set out in the bonus zoning section of this Plan that encourage developers to provide three or more bedroom dwelling units, and that incorporate amenities such as daycares and outdoor spaces. Design considerations for housing are set out in the Design Manual introduced later in this section, including requirements for landscaped open space for residential uses in certain precincts in recognition of their predominantly medium density residential character.

Housing Affordability: To achieve the vibrant downtown that this Plan sets out to provide, housing opportunities for residents with a variety of income levels must be accommodated. Therefore, housing affordability, as defined in the Land Use By-law, shall be encouraged through the bonus zoning provisions of this Plan. The external appearance of affordable units should be indistinguishable from market units. These and other design considerations for such housing are set out in the Design Manual.

Beyond the regulatory provisions of the Land Use By-law, there is a significant opportunity for municipal, provincial and federal departments and agencies to lead the way in increasing housing affordability with the redevelopment of publicly owned lands in downtown Halifax. Policies in Chapter 5 of this Plan encourage governments to formalize an agreement to collaborate in the development of a full spectrum of housing affordability as part of the redevelopment of government-owned lands in downtown Halifax.

Policy 7 HRM shall establish provisions in the Land Use By-law to encourage a mix of housing types in downtown Halifax including requirements for landscaped open space for residential units.

Policy 8 HRM shall encourage the provision of affordable residential units in downtown Halifax through the bonus zoning provisions of this Plan. Further, it shall be the intention of HRM to collaborate with other levels of government to encourage leadership in the provision of housing affordability in the redevelopment of publicly owned lands in the downtown pursuant to Policy 49.

3.3 BUILDING HEIGHT AND MASSING

Downtown Halifax is comprised of areas that are established and stable, areas that are dynamic and ever-changing, and areas that are historic. While accommodating future growth is a fundamental objective of this Plan, development will not occur uniformly, in scale or in character, over time. This section serves to provide predictability with respect to important characteristics that development must observe depending on location, adjacencies, distinct areas or streets and desired land uses. Building heights and massing are discussed under the following headings:

- (a) Heights Framework
- (b) Building Envelopes
- (c) Streetwall Character
- (d) Heritage Character

3.3.1 Heights Framework

For the sake of ensuring clarity and predictability in the desired height and building pattern for downtown Halifax, this Plan establishes a maximum heights framework for development. For developments to achieve the maximum heights as shown on Map 5, developments must (1) conform with the built form and design provisions of the Land Use By-law and (2) provide public benefits in accordance with the bonus zoning provisions discussed in this Chapter. Except for minor architectural features, the maximum heights framework can only be modified through an amendment to this Plan.

The maximum heights framework provides a rational and balanced height pattern resulting from the synthesis of a complex set of urban design considerations tailored to the downtown Halifax context including:

- (a) protection of the pedestrian street level experience with a height-to-width ratio of approximately 1:1 which promotes skyviews and sunlight penetration to the street;
- (b) reinforcing the existing and desired character of the nine downtown precincts;
- (c) the introduction of Heritage Conservation Districts;
- (d) respecting the modestly scaled historic block and street pattern;
- (e) a transition in heights to the Citadel, heritage areas, low-rise neighbourhoods and the waterfront;
- (f) reinforcing a distributed and varied height pattern by directing taller buildings to areas where they already exist; and
- (g) upholding the Citadel View Planes and Ramparts requirements from the Land Use By-law for Halifax Peninsula;

Policy 9 HRM shall adopt the building heights shown on Map 5 as the maximum building heights permitted in the DHSMPS plan area subject to the bonus zoning provisions of this Plan.

3.3.2 Building Envelopes

The envelopes establish the height and massing of new developments in the downtown. These envelopes were derived from a comprehensive process of exploration and testing and embody a complex and layered set of urban design considerations. As a result, the building envelopes:

- (a) reinforce 'human-scaled' streetscapes through proportional street wall heights;

- (b) provide transitions in scale to low-rise areas and the waterfront;
- (c) define appropriate standards for bulk, above grade setbacks, and separation distances of buildings to ensure adequate street-level conditions with respect to minimizing wind and maximizing sun penetration and sky exposure; and
- (d) balance height and massing relationships to prevent a canyon effect on streets where taller buildings are appropriate.

The envelopes organize all possible building heights into the following categories:

- (a) Low-Rise Building Envelope;
- (b) Mid-Rise Building Envelope; and
- (c) High-Rise Building Envelope.

The envelopes are categorized in this way to reflect the differing set of urban design standards that are applicable for each of the three ranges of heights. Although the guidance provided in this Chapter with respect to matters such as heritage and streetwall conditions are consistently applied to all three envelopes, the massing standards will differ among them. This is because buildings have different effects as they get taller, and can have compounding impacts on the public realm that need to be mitigated with corresponding controls on massing, floor plate size and separation distances.

Policy 10 HRM shall adopt in the Land Use By-law building envelopes for low, mid, and high-rise buildings for the purposes of establishing desirable building streetwall heights and massing requirements.

3.3.3 The Design Manual

The Design Manual will form part of the Land Use By-law, establishing comprehensive design guidelines for development addressing matters related to external design, precinct and streetwall character, heritage, building articulation and materials, lighting, landscaping, parking, signs, and sustainable design. This Manual will be the primary reference used in the design review process for both non-substantive and substantive site plan approvals.

Policy 11 HRM shall adopt a Design Manual as part of the Land Use By-law to provide design guidance in the site plan approval process. The Design Manual shall include provisions related to external design, precinct and streetwall character, heritage character, building articulation and materials, lighting, landscaping, parking, signs, and sustainable design and other similar matters.

3.3.4 Streetwall Character

Streetwall character is primarily concerned with providing guidance for how buildings should interface with the sidewalk and the quality of the enclosure they provide to the street. The placement, scale and design quality of the building's streetwall determines the nature and character of the streetscape and reinforces desired pedestrian or broader public realm objectives. This Plan, therefore, provides direction on streetwall height and on streetwall setbacks:

- (a) Streetwall height refers to the height of the base of a building rising from the sidewalk level. To ensure a comfortable human-scaled street enclosure, street walls should be generally no less than three storeys, and generally no greater than a height that is a 1:1 ratio of the width of the street as measured from building face to building face. Accordingly, maximum streetwall heights will change in accordance with the varying widths of downtown streets – generally 15.3 m to 21.4 m. This enables a range in streetwall heights that can accommodate as much as a two-storey discrepancy on steep sloping sites with frontages on streets of differing elevations. Consistent with the principle of providing a comfortably scaled public realm enclosure, streetwalls not within heritage contexts may be permitted to exceed the general height suggested by the 1:1 ratio, where fronting onto significant public open spaces such as Cornwallis Park, and when appropriately set back from the property line.
- (b) Streetwall setback refers to the location of the front face of a building relative to the street line. While retail and commercial streets are framed by buildings uniformly placed at the sidewalk with no setback, other areas that are more residential or institutional in character are framed by buildings that vary in their setback from the street. To reinforce existing and desired streetscape and land use characteristics, streetwall setbacks are categorized into a hierarchy of setback standards, which are set out in the Design Manual section of the Land Use By-law.

Policy 12 HRM shall implement provisions in the Design Manual section of the Land Use By-law relative to streetwall character, how buildings should interface with the sidewalk, and the quality of the enclosure they provide to the street.

3.3.5 Heritage Character

Heritage character identifies the variety of heritage resources and contexts that currently exist in the downtown that should have priority consideration where impacted by a new development. These resources are a legacy of the area's rich and proud history and comprise the most significant aspect of the downtown's distinction. Heritage policies in Chapter 4 govern heritage conservation, and distinct from those policies the purpose of this section is to:

- (a) ensure heritage streetscapes and potential Heritage Conservation Districts are reinforced with compatibly scaled and designed developments; and

- (b) ensure development abutting heritage resources provides appropriate transitions based on the significance of the heritage resource.

One of the defining elements of the urban design character of downtown Halifax is the historic grid of the blocks that define much of the original settlement block pattern, designated as Central Blocks on Map 3. On these blocks, the scale of new developments ought to be proportional to the modest depths of the blocks and narrow street widths. Special built form provisions will be established in the Land Use By-law in consideration of the historic block pattern.

Policy 13 HRM shall adopt the term Central Blocks in the Land Use By-law as shown on Map 3 and establish in the Land Use By-law appropriate building form provisions for these blocks.

Policy 14 HRM shall include heritage guidelines in the Design Manual section of the Land Use By-law to be used in evaluating development proposals that are on or abutting registered heritage properties.

3.4 DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS

3.4.1 Site Plan Approval

Site plan approval is a development approval process enabled under the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter* that will replace the use of development agreements in downtown Halifax. This process will help to improve clarity, predictability and timeliness in the development approval process. Under site plan approval, the approval of any development application shall occur in two parts:

- (a) the quantitative elements of an application are subject to approval based on the prescriptive criteria in the Land Use By-law;
- (b) the qualitative elements of an application are subject to approval resulting from a design review process. In the case of non-substantive site plan approval, which includes building repairs, window and door replacements, and minor increases in building height, design review will be conducted by staff. In the case of substantive site plan approval, which includes the development of new buildings and most building additions, design review will be conducted by a Design Review Committee (see section 3.4.2).

Policy 15 HRM shall adopt the site plan approval process in the Land Use By-law to ensure high quality design for downtown development. The site plan approval criteria shall be defined in the Land Use By-law and shall address the following matters:

- (a) conformance with the Design Manual addressing matters such as architectural and site design, heritage compatibility, and sustainable design; and

- (b) provisions for non-substantive and substantive site plan approval.

The *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter* enables Council to require a notification area for approved site plans larger than the standard 30 metre radius prescribed by the legislation. In recognition of the importance of public awareness of major developments within downtown Halifax and to ensure an integrated design approach across precincts, a notification area for substantive site plan approvals that is inclusive of the boundary of the DHSMPS plan area will be established. Notification will be in the form of a notice published in the local newspaper. For non-substantive site plan approvals, notification will be provided in writing to all assessed property owners as per the requirements of the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*.

Policy 16 HRM shall, through the Land Use By-law, establish a notification area for substantive site plan approvals within which the Development Officer shall give notice of the approved site plan through advertisement in a newspaper circulating in the Municipality. The notification area for non-substantive site plan approvals shall be as per the requirements of the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*.

3.4.2 Design Review Committee

The site plan approval provisions of the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter* enable the establishment of a design review committee to ensure that the design of proposed developments meets the intent of this Plan. The Design Review Committee will be established through the Land Use By-law to administer the Design Manual section of the Land Use By-law, and variances to the Land Use By-law.

Policy 17 HRM shall establish a Design Review Committee through the Land Use By-law to evaluate substantive site plan approval applications in conformance with the Design Manual section of the Land Use By-law and variances to the Land Use By-law. Council shall determine an appropriate composition for the committee.

3.4.3 Bonus Zoning

Subject to the provisions of the Land Use By-law, View Planes and Citadel Ramparts regulations, a bonus in height is offered as an incentive for specific public benefits in excess of the minimum development requirements set out in this Plan. The maximum achievable building height as shown on Map 5 can only be achieved through the bonus zoning provisions of this Plan. The pre-bonus heights as defined on Map 4 will in all cases be approximately 30% lower than those shown on Map 5. To encourage redevelopment and to provide further incentive for the conservation and re-use of heritage resources, the bonus zoning provisions shall not be applied within the Barrington Street Heritage Conservation District (precinct 5), the two potential Heritage Conservation Districts (precincts 2 and 7), or to low-rise building forms.

Policy 18 HRM may consider a variety of public benefits when assessing site plan approval applications seeking a height bonus in exchange for the provision of public benefit, in accordance with the bonus zoning provisions of the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*. HRM shall establish provisions in the Land Use By-law to guide negotiations of appropriate public benefits including:

- (a) the preservation or enhancement of a heritage building;
- (b) the provision of publicly accessible amenity space;
- (c) the provision of residential units at a subsidized cost to contribute to housing affordability in the DHSMPS plan area in accordance with the definition of housing affordability in the Land Use By-law;
- (d) the provision of three and four bedroom dwelling units with direct access to outdoor amenity space;
- (e) the provision of rental commercial space made available at a subsidized cost for arts and cultural uses or child care centres;
- (f) the provision of public art;
- (g) the provision of public parking facilities;
- (h) investment in public transit or active transportation infrastructure; and
- (i) the provision of exemplary sustainable building practices.

3.4.4 Exceptions to Building Heights and Massing

Where all other conditions are met, and subject to certain design conditions, variations to building heights and massing may be considered in exceptional situations to allow for improved building design. It is the intention of these exceptions to avoid rigid interpretations of policy that would compromise quality of building design.

Policy 19 HRM may permit variances of building envelopes in accordance with the variance criteria in the Design Manual part of the Land Use By-law to enable improved building design.

3.4.5 Sustainable Building Design

Sustainable design is defined as architecture, landscape and engineering that establishes the conservation of energy, materials, and natural resources and systems, as a primary consideration in their planning, design, construction and life cycle. This includes public as well as private

development, and encompasses streets, parks, and buildings.

This Plan supports principles of sustainable building design as part of the design program for downtown Halifax development by encouraging the use of sustainable design practices. While there are many initiatives promoting and developing standards for sustainable design, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED™) is the most highly recognized system currently being used in North America. There are four possible levels of LEED certification: certified, silver, gold, and platinum. The rating achieved by a given project depends on the number of points it earns as scored on a range of sustainability measures. LEED standards exist for new construction, major renovation, multi-unit residential buildings, campuses, and other project types. HRM is committed to the concept of sustainable design and construction, and has therefore adopted the requirement that all new municipal buildings across the Municipality must achieve a minimum rating of LEED silver. This requirement will build LEED capacity amongst the local design and construction community. As this capacity grows, it is expected that the minimum requirement will be raised to gold and ultimately to platinum.

At the writing of this Plan, mandatory requirements for energy conservation and sustainable design standards such as LEED are not enabled under the provincial Building Code Regulations, which regulate construction practices throughout the province. The Province, under the leadership of the Department of Energy, is currently reviewing its policies and legislation in this area. It is HRM's intent to undertake a Sustainability Functional Plan that will coordinate work with the Province in strengthening existing municipal and provincial regulation in the areas of energy conservation and sustainable building and site design. In the interim, the Land Use By-law will include requirements to maximize sunlight penetration and minimize wind impacts on sidewalks, particularly in relation to high-rise developments. Beyond these requirements, HRM and other levels of government can lead the way in achieving sustainable and energy efficient design in tendering of development projects for publicly owned lands.

- Policy 20 HRM shall consider undertaking a Sustainability Functional Plan to coordinate work with the Province in strengthening existing municipal and provincial regulation in the areas of energy conservation and sustainable building and site design.
- Policy 21 HRM shall in the Land Use By-law establish provisions to mitigate the impacts of development by including requirements to maximize sunlight penetration and minimize wind impacts on sidewalks, particularly in relation to high-rise developments. HRM shall through the Land Use By-law require all proposed developments for buildings taller than 20 metres to be subject to a wind impact assessment. Rooftop landscaping shall also be required.
- Policy 22 It shall be the intention of HRM to ensure that all new municipal facilities within downtown Halifax are designed to show leadership in sustainable building design and at minimum achieve a LEED silver standard in the LEED or an equivalent certification system.

Policy 23 It shall be the intention of HRM to negotiate an agreement with provincial and federal levels of government and agencies including the Waterfront Development Corporation Limited, to establish LEED standards for the development of public lands throughout downtown Halifax pursuant to Policy 49 of this Plan.

3.4.6 Pedestrian Weather Protection

Through design review, this Plan will encourage development that incorporates provisions for weather protection such as canopies or awnings at the street level. Throughout downtown Halifax a system of pedways provides year round interior connections between major downtown destinations such as shopping districts, office towers, hotels, and convention facilities. Although future pedestrian connections will be encouraged at the street level, this Plan enables the continuation of the pedway system in conjunction with major developments provided the design conforms with the design guidelines set out in the Land Use By-law, and that they do not obscure east-west window views of the Harbour.

Policy 24 HRM shall establish provisions in the Design Manual section of the Land Use By-law to encourage development to incorporate features such as canopies and awnings to provide weather protection for pedestrians at the street level.

Policy 25 HRM may permit pedways to be constructed in conjunction with development projects provided they meet the guidelines set out in the Design Manual.

3.4.7 Signage

Signs are an important facet of the external design of development and the overall image of the downtown. Accordingly, the Land Use By-law and Design Manual will regulate aspects of signage related to the size, placement, and design of signs associated with development to ensure they contribute to the quality of individual buildings and the public realm.

Policy 26 HRM shall establish provisions in the Land Use By-law to regulate the size, placement and design quality of signs in downtown Halifax.

3.4.8 Existing Street Grid and Blocks

In the past, streets have been closed and blocks have been consolidated to enable large scale development projects. The traditional street grid provides a high level of connectivity and is an important characteristic of the downtown. It shall not be subject to further consolidation. The Cogswell Interchange, where HRM intends to reestablish a network of smaller streets and new blocks, presents an opportunity to reestablish this desirable pattern of smaller scaled streets and blocks.

- Policy 27 Except for the network of streets associated with the Cogswell Interchange, HRM shall not close streets to permit blocks in the downtown to be consolidated for development.
- Policy 28 HRM shall not undertake substantial street widenings in the DHSMPS plan area shown on Map 1 that would materially alter the character of the street grid.

3.4.9 Waterfront Development

The Halifax waterfront includes lands extending from the east of Lower and Upper Water Streets to the water's edge. These lands are a significant public resource and define the image and identity of downtown Halifax. The majority of undeveloped lands within this area are owned by the Waterfront Development Corporation Limited (WDCL), the provincial crown corporation responsible for purchasing, consolidating, redeveloping, and revitalizing lands around Halifax Harbour. WDCL works with private sector developers to facilitate investment in public infrastructure and amenities to further reinforce the waterfront as a vibrant place to live, do business, invest and visit.

The waterfront is uniquely characterized by an organic and diverse built form with many opportunities for intensification and redevelopment. A higher degree of design discretion is required to respond to this unique development pattern and ensure future waterfront development responds to public interests and objectives in relation to the water's edge. The water's edge and the terminus of the east-west Harbour streets are fundamental components of the open space network for downtown, as are the goals of public and visual access to the water. The east-west orientation of buildings as typified by Historic Properties is an established character to be reinforced through the design review process anticipated by this Plan. HRM is undertaking a mapping study through the development of the Halifax Harbour Functional Plan, which is a directive of the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy, to examine the effects of anticipated sea level rise and storm surge as a result of climate change. It is critical for public safety reasons that new development along the Halifax waterfront include design measures to mitigate the impacts of climate change in accordance with these findings. These considerations will be addressed as part of the design review program anticipated by this Plan.

In recognition of the shared mandate for planning the public use of these lands, HRM shall seek to negotiate an agreement with WDCL, with appropriate capital and operating cost sharing strategies, that will guide the following design objectives for the waterfront:

- (a) Encourage low, medium, and high-rise development at appropriate locations and massing that will enhance the waterfront experience through well-designed architecture and public spaces.
- (b) Ensure visual and public access to the water's edge and views of the Harbour through the extensions of east-west streets as public open space, and a continuous public boardwalk along the water's edge.

- (c) Establish appropriate funding arrangements for capital public realm improvements.
- (d) Ensure a continuous, pedestrian scale streetwall along the east side of Lower Water Street.
- (e) Encourage linear building forms perpendicular to Lower Water Street that step down in height as they approach the water's edge.
- (f) Encourage the redevelopment of surface parking lots and restrict future surface parking.
- (g) Ensure development mitigates the impacts of climate change and where possible, incorporates sustainable design principles.

Policy 29 HRM shall establish provisions in the Land Use By-law to apply to lands along the Halifax waterfront east of Lower Water Street. The Land Use By-law shall include special provisions for site plan approval within this area to address the following matters:

- (a) provide a higher degree of discretion over the design and form of development;
- (b) ensure appropriate transitions in heights stepping down to the water's edge;
- (c) maximize skyviews, sun penetration to public spaces and streets, and visual and public access to the water;
- (d) allow for flexibility in building forms that reinforce the east-west orientation of development;
- (e) when water lots are to be infilled, the development shall ensure public use and access to the water's edge; and
- (f) incorporate provisions to ensure development considers measures to mitigate the effects of sea level rise and storm surge events.

Policy 30 In accordance with Policies 49 & 58 of this Plan, HRM may seek to negotiate an agreement with Waterfront Development Corporation Limited to further implement the development and public realm objectives for the Halifax Waterfront.

3.4.10 Spring Garden Road Precinct

Spring Garden Road is an important pedestrian and retail corridor connecting major employment, open spaces and cultural destinations. In recognition of this function, special built form provisions will be established to ensure development is further stepped back on the south side of Spring Garden Road between Queen Street and South Park Street to provide adequate sunlight penetration to the street. Increased stepbacks will also be required on the east side of South Park Street between Spring Garden Road and Sackville Streets adjoining the Public Gardens.

In 2007, Council adopted the findings of the Spring Garden Road/Queen Street Area Joint Public Lands Plan⁷ which was completed with the Province of Nova Scotia to provide recommendations regarding the redevelopment of municipally and provincially-owned lands in the Spring Garden Road area. The recommended design principles from the study are carried through in the Design Manual section of the Land Use By-law and will form an important part of the design review program and the redevelopment of these lands.

Policy 31 HRM shall through the Land Use By-law establish special built form requirements for development on the south side of Spring Garden Road between Queen Street and South Park Street, and along the east side of South Park Street between Sackville Street and Spring Garden Road, to ensure adequate sunlight penetration to the street and the adjoining Public Gardens.

Policy 32 It shall be the intention of HRM to ensure through its control of the disposition of the Clyde Street parking lots, that their development is beneficial to the commercial well-being of the Spring Garden Road area and the design complements adjacent neighbourhoods. HRM shall initiate a call for proposals for the redevelopment of these lands consistent with the intent of this Plan and the Spring Garden Road/Queen Street Area Joint Public Lands Plan⁸. The following criteria shall be considered in the design review of development for those sites:

- (a) the provision for mixed commercial and residential uses with active ground floor uses;
- (b) the redevelopment shall positively contribute to the streetscape in accordance with the provisions of the Design Manual section of the Land Use By-law; and

⁷ *Environmental Design and Management Limited and Urban Strategies Inc. Spring Garden Road / Queen Street Area Joint Public Lands Plan. 2006.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

- (c) public parking in support of Spring Garden Road shall be incorporated within the redevelopment, which at minimum replaces the public parking spaces currently provided on these sites.

CHAPTER 4: HERITAGE CONSERVATION

4.0 INTRODUCTION

Protection of heritage assets is a key component of the urban design vision and principles that underpin this Plan. Within the DHSMPS plan area there are more than 120 municipally registered heritage properties, 15 provincially registered properties, and 10 National Historic Sites. Many of these buildings and sites are recognized landmarks and occupy a prominent place in the urban fabric. In addition, there are approximately 100 other older buildings, many of which would qualify for individual registration and would contribute to the distinct heritage character of the streetscapes and precincts of which they are a part.

Concentrations of contiguous registered and contributing buildings exist on Barrington Street, both in the old commercial area between Duke Street and Spring Garden Road, and in the south Barrington area between Bishop Street and Cornwallis Park, as well as in the Historic Properties area. The cohesive heritage character of these areas makes them readily identifiable as potential heritage districts. In addition, the historic street grid and block pattern in the central part of the downtown reflects the origins of the city and underpins its historic built form. These heritage resources and potential heritage districts are illustrated on Map 6 and Map 7 respectively.

The heritage conservation strategy has several components:

- (a) Using the legislative authority of both the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*, for planning policy, zoning and development control, and the *Heritage Property Act*, for heritage property registration, heritage district designation, demolition control, and financial incentives.
- (b) Establishing heritage conservation districts with strong demolition control, guidelines for alterations, and financial incentives to encourage conservation and enhancement of district character.
- (c) Conserving registered heritage resources outside heritage districts by means of strengthened demolition control and improved heritage incentives, and by means of built form guidelines for new development next to, or integrated with the heritage resource.
- (d) Updating the inventory of all potential heritage resources in the downtown and encouraging new individual heritage property registrations and heritage district designations.
- (e) Implementing a bonus zoning program and a grants and tax incentives program to leverage actions in support of heritage conservation.
- (f) Enhancing heritage districts by means of complementary public realm improvements to streets and open spaces.

4.1 DOWNTOWN HALIFAX HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

A Heritage Conservation District (HCD) recognizes that there is a heritage character and heritage attributes that emerge from a collection of properties, including buildings, structures and landscapes (i.e. a street or a neighbourhood) where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. HCDs enable the Municipality to conserve the broader context of heritage resources. For example, about one half of the buildings on Barrington Street are registered heritage properties while the others are not. But together, all properties along the street constitute a broader context of heritage significance that is worth conserving. By focusing on the district as a whole, HRM can prescribe policies and guidelines and establish programs that over time, are able to link together heritage resources in a tangible way to ensure that the evolution of the area reinforces key heritage attributes. As such, HCDs ought to be considered not only as environments that already display a continuous heritage character, but should also be understood as a tool that can link together fragmented areas through the sensitive evolution of a district.

The legal process for establishing a Heritage Conservation District occurs through the adoption of a heritage conservation district plan and by-law under the *Heritage Property Act*. A heritage conservation district plan and by-law will include, but not be limited to:

- (a) a heritage character statement – which sets the general parameters to which new buildings and alterations ought to contribute;
- (b) a list of the character defining elements of the district – which is essential when designing new buildings in and around the district and to understand what is being conserved;
- (c) demolition policies;
- (d) policies and guidelines respecting the design of alterations and new buildings; and
- (e) financial incentives to encourage retention and restoration of buildings within the district.

The *Heritage Property Act* also requires that any heritage conservation district plan be preceded by background studies that address a range of issues including:

- (a) the heritage value and character defining elements of the proposed district;
- (b) the rationale or justification for heritage conservation measures, including development regulations, demolition control, and financial incentives;
- (c) the rationale for the boundaries of the district;
- (d) the relationship of the proposed conservation plan and by-law for the district with the municipal planning strategy and land use by-law; and

- (e) the social and economic implications of establishing the district as these relate to the proposed conservation measures.

In addition, in 2003, HRM adopted a procedure for public participation in the heritage conservation district planning process which includes input from a Stakeholder Steering Committee, property owners, and the public through required public meetings and a public hearing.

It is important to recognize that demolition protection for registered municipal heritage properties outside of heritage conservation districts is limited to a one-year demolition delay. It is only by designating a heritage conservation district, under the authority of the *Heritage Property Act*, wherein municipal councils are able to establish their own stronger policies, that improved demolition control can be achieved for registered municipal heritage resources. It should be noted that provincially registered properties are permanently protected from demolition, which suggests that an important conservation tool for heritage resources outside of conservation districts is to seek provincial registration. The designation of heritage districts and the ongoing registration of resources at the municipal and provincial level is a key pillar of HRM's heritage conservation strategy for the downtown.

4.2 BARRINGTON STREET HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

In the case of Barrington Street, several background studies were completed between 1998 and 2003, addressing the heritage value and heritage character of the district, analyzing its economic and functional issues and the need for revitalization, and advocating its formal designation as a heritage conservation district. The draft Barrington Street Heritage Conservation District Revitalization Plan was prepared after significant public consultation. That plan was integrated with the Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy (this Plan), with the heritage district defined as a precinct in its own right within the larger downtown precinct framework, and the adoption of both plans to be considered in parallel.

Policy 33 HRM shall adopt a Barrington Street Heritage Conservation District Revitalization Plan and By-law under the *Heritage Property Act*. The Plan and By-law shall include provisions respecting strengthened demolition control and financial incentives for heritage conservation, and regulations and design guidelines governing development in the district.

4.3 POTENTIAL HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

In addition to Barrington Street, there are cohesive concentrations of heritage resources in Precinct 7 (Historic Properties Area) and Precinct 2 (Barrington Street South Area) that warrant consideration for formal designation as heritage conservation districts.

Historic Properties Area

The Historic Properties area has long been recognized as one of the most cohesive heritage environments in Halifax. The late 18th century waterfront warehouses were designated as a National Historic Site in 1963 and by the mid 1980s, all of the buildings in the three block area bounded by Duke and former Buckingham Street between the Harbour and Granville Street had been registered as municipal heritage properties. Also, in 2006 the entire “Granville Block” between Hollis Street and Granville Street was designated as a National Historic Site. Securing strengthened protection for this precinct through formal heritage conservation district designation, is a key objective of this Plan.

Barrington Street South Area

The Barrington Street South area, between Bishop Street and Cornwallis Park and including the parallel blocks along Hollis Street, also has a distinct character influenced by the many heritage buildings within it. As described in Chapter 2, this area is envisioned as a district that “will serve as a renewed community focus for the surrounding neighbourhoods, while providing for a transition in scale and intensity between the downtown and the established low-rise residential areas to the south and west.” At the same time, given its proximity to the downtown core, the area is under pressure for redevelopment. In this context, it is important that ongoing heritage preservation and strengthened protection through heritage district designation be considered through a formal background study and public consultation.

The designation of these potential heritage conservation districts will be considered in accordance with the formal process outlined in section 4.1. In addition:

- (a) background studies shall consider the role of existing building forms, heights, and rooflines in defining the historic character of the district, and the effect that regulations respecting the maximum height and stepbacks of permitted additions may have on historic character;
- (b) HRM shall require new developments to reinforce the distinct built form qualities that define the character of each district, subject to the analysis of these defining qualities through background studies; and
- (c) HRM should support Heritage Conservation Districts by undertaking high quality public realm improvements that will strengthen and enhance their distinct identities.

Policy 34 HRM shall consider undertaking background studies and developing policies, strategies, and programs for potential heritage conservation districts in the Historic Properties area and the Barrington Street South area as shown on Map 7.

4.4 CONSERVATION OUTSIDE HERITAGE DISTRICTS

4.4.1 Strengthening of Demolition Controls

Under the *Heritage Property Act*, registered municipal heritage properties are protected from demolition for only one year, pursuant to the provisions of section 18 of the Act. The Province of Nova Scotia is undertaking a comprehensive review of the legislation within the framework of the recently released Heritage Strategy for Nova Scotia (2008-2013)⁹, which will consider changes to demolition controls as part of a larger package of amendments. HRM will seek to collaborate with the Province of Nova Scotia in this effort.

Policy 35 HRM shall continue to encourage the Province of Nova Scotia to amend the *Heritage Property Act* to strengthen demolition control for registered municipal heritage properties through formal input into the *Heritage Property Act* review process.

4.4.2 Co-ordination with Provincial Heritage Strategy

The Heritage Strategy for Nova Scotia¹⁰ is structured around three strategic directions (Co-ordination of Efforts, Sustainable Management, and Increased Recognition) and eleven key initiatives encompassing stewardship, communication, preservation, prioritization, service delivery, legislation, funding, awareness, promotion, programming, and education. It will be implemented over the next five years.

The adoption of the Strategy affords HRM the opportunity not only to pursue strengthened demolition control but also to pursue improved funding for heritage incentives and other co-operative initiatives. The adoption of the Strategy is timely and creates opportunities for municipal and provincial cooperation in the creation of future Heritage Conservation Districts and ongoing strengthening of heritage protection.

Policy 36 HRM shall pursue opportunities to work co-operatively with the Province of Nova Scotia in accordance with the strategic directions and key initiatives identified in the Heritage Strategy for Nova Scotia (2008-2013)¹¹, and in particular to secure strengthened heritage protection and improved funding for heritage, including tax incentives.

⁹ Nova Scotia Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage. *A Heritage Strategy for Nova Scotia (2008-2013)*. 2008.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

4.5 HERITAGE REGISTRY

Downtown Halifax will continue to grow and evolve with the construction of new buildings as well as the renovation and adaptive re-use of older buildings. Key to managing the ongoing transformation of downtown in keeping with the overall vision, is a clear understanding of existing heritage resources, their value, and the proper tools for their conservation.

The former City of Halifax established a Registry of Municipal Heritage Properties in 1981 following passage of the *Heritage Property Act* in 1980. The first registrations were based on a 1978 inventory of the City's more prominent heritage buildings, streetscapes and sites. Most of the buildings in that original inventory were registered by the mid-1980s. Since that time, a number of other buildings have been registered, but there are numerous other buildings of heritage value that are not inventoried, are unregistered and are unprotected from substantial alteration or demolition.

In preparing this Plan, a preliminary review of potential heritage resources was undertaken to determine the extent of buildings of heritage interest in the downtown. While not an exhaustive analysis, it was possible to discern the broad extent of potential heritage resources based on prior inventories, historic maps, and visual surveys of apparent age and contextual integrity. In some instances, the heritage value identified lies in the significance of individual properties, while in others it is their contribution to the character of streetscapes or potential heritage conservation districts.

This information provides a starting point for developing a new inventory of potential heritage properties. In updating the Registry of Heritage Properties and establishing the new inventory, it is important to fully understand the heritage values and character defining elements that must be protected. In the same vein, heritage attributes may include the entire front facade, the entrance, or the landscaped portions of a property. All of these can potentially inform the design of new buildings and alterations.

Policy 37 HRM shall continue to maintain a Registry of Heritage Properties which shall include information on all properties registered as Municipal Heritage Properties and shall:

- (a) continue to update the registry by developing statements of significance, heritage value, and character defining elements for each property so registered; and
- (b) establish an inventory of properties which have potential for registration as municipal heritage properties or inclusion in municipal heritage conservation districts.

Policy 38 HRM may proactively encourage new heritage property registrations by means of public education through publications, workshops, registration campaigns, and direct contact with potential heritage property owners.

4.6 HERITAGE BUILDING CONSERVATION STANDARDS

HRM currently uses a set of Heritage Building Conservation Standards based on those used by the United States Secretary of the Interior (36 CFR 67) (1991), which is in keeping with internationally recognized conservation principles and is similar to the Federal Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada. The HRM Heritage Building Conservation Standards are used to assess all applications for alteration of registered heritage properties and are also incorporated into the Barrington Street Heritage Conservation District Revitalization Plan and By-law. The intent of these standards is to protect and conserve the heritage value, character defining elements, and historic integrity of heritage resources. They are also consistent with the Heritage Design Guidelines included in the Design Manual section of the Land Use By-law.

Policy 39 HRM shall through amendments to the Heritage By-law continue to apply the Heritage Building Conservation Standards to registered heritage properties and properties in heritage conservation districts in parallel with the Design Manual section of the Land Use By-law.

Policy 40 HRM shall monitor the combined effectiveness of the Heritage Building Conservation Standards and the Built Form Framework in the Design Manual section of the Land Use By-law in protecting and conserving the heritage value, character defining elements, and historic integrity of heritage resources, in accordance with the Plan Monitoring Program outlined in section 8.4 of this Plan.

4.7 FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

The *Heritage Property Act* enables municipalities to “provide financial assistance in respect of municipal heritage property or property located in a heritage conservation district to any person to assist in the restoration or renovation of such property upon such terms and conditions as . . . council . . . deems fit.”

HRM has a Heritage Incentives Grant Program that is available to residential or commercial heritage properties throughout the Municipality. HRM also provides grants to churches and other registered properties owned by non-profit organizations through its Community Grants program. In addition, through the process of establishing the Barrington Street Heritage Conservation District, HRM may provide a financial incentive package for Barrington Street consisting of grants, tax credits and permit fee waivers for eligible restoration and renovation work, with the intention of triggering significant private investment in the district.

Policy 41 It shall be the intention of HRM to provide financial incentives for the restoration and renovation of municipally registered heritage properties and properties in heritage conservation districts subject to availability of funds and the annual budget process.

4.8 GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPMENT IN HERITAGE CONTEXTS

The Design Manual section of the Land Use By-law includes heritage guidelines for developments that are integrated with or abutting registered heritage properties. The intent of the guidelines is to ensure complementary development beside or surrounding registered heritage buildings.

Policy 42 HRM shall require any development that is integrated with or abutting a registered municipal heritage property, or that is located in a heritage conservation district to conform with the heritage guidelines as set out in the Design Manual and other applicable sections of the Land Use By-law.

4.9 HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENTS

A heritage impact statement is a statement that determines how a heritage resource will be impacted by a specific proposed development. It can also demonstrate how the heritage resource will be conserved in the context of redevelopment or site alteration. Mitigative or avoidance measures, or alternative development or site alteration approaches may be included.

A heritage impact statement contains, but is not limited to the following information:

- (a) Identification of Heritage Value and Character Defining Elements - based on information available in the HRM Registry of Heritage Properties or Inventory of Potential Heritage Properties, supplemented by additional research, site analysis, or evaluation as necessary.
- (b) Description of the Proposed Development or Site Alteration - this description details the rationale and purpose for the development or site alteration, the proposed works and graphical layout, and how the development or site alteration fits with the objectives of the Municipality as expressed in planning documents.
- (c) Measurement of Development or Site Alteration Impact - any impact of the proposed development or site alteration must be identified, whether it is direct or indirect, physical, or aesthetic.
- (d) Consideration of Alternatives, Mitigation and Conservation Methods - where an impact on a heritage resource is identified, the heritage impact statement may include alternatives to proposed conservation or mitigative measures.

- (e) Implementation and Monitoring - this is a schedule and reporting structure for implementing the recommended conservation or mitigative or avoidance measures, and monitoring the heritage resource as the development or site alteration progresses.
- (f) Summary Statement and Conservation Recommendations regarding:
 - (i) The heritage value and character defining elements of the heritage resource.
 - (ii) The identification of any impact that the proposed development will have on the heritage resource.
 - (iii) An explanation of what conservation or mitigative measures, or alternative development or site alteration approaches are recommended to minimize or avoid any impact on the heritage resource.
 - (iv) If applicable, clarification of why some conservation or mitigative measures, or alternative development or site alteration approaches are not appropriate.

Policy 43 HRM may require applicants for development to provide a Heritage Impact Statement for the following types of development applications:

- (a) any addition to, or new development integrated with, a registered heritage property located outside a heritage conservation district; and
- (b) any addition to, or new development integrated with, a building located in a heritage conservation district.

CHAPTER 5: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

5.0 INTRODUCTION

Among its many region-wide goals, the HRM Economic Strategy¹² calls for a vibrant, healthy and attractive downtown as a key ingredient in making our region a world-class urban centre. A major focus of the Capital District, downtown Halifax is the showroom for HRM given its prominence as the regional employment centre, the setting for major events, and the physical and symbolic centre for municipal and provincial governments.

The vision for downtown Halifax builds on HRM's reputation as a great and competitive Municipality. Downtown development policies must seek to promote growth and investment while protecting the heritage and human scale that attracts employees and residents to the city centre. During the HRMbyDesign process, both developers and citizens have expressed the need for greater certainty in plan policies and regulations, to reduce financial risk on the one hand and ensure attractive development and heritage conservation on the other. For this reason, more attention is being given to resolving downtown urban design, community form and approval process issues at a strategic level through in-depth public participation and a regulatory shift toward design rather than land use.

The ideas in this Plan related to economic competitiveness and sustainability are fundamental to the goals of attracting and keeping a talented work force, which is critical to the future of downtown Halifax and the region as a whole. This emerging workforce, the next generation that will fill the jobs of retiring baby boomers, looks for quality of lifestyle when making location choices, and more and more that means a quality downtown. Excitement, vibrancy and a full suite of cultural, social and recreational amenities, choices in housing and diversity in all things will define successful cities moving forward.

There are four basic interconnected components of a successful downtown and a living, authentic and a dynamic city which are embodied in this Plan:

- (a) Liveability, which relates to the walkability and experience at the street level.
- (b) Critical mass of buildings and people living, working, shopping and moving about downtown.
- (c) Prosperity of the economy: when a critical mass and liveable downtown are achieved, there is an upward spiral whereby prosperity is increased.
- (d) Culture: with increased prosperity comes opportunity for cultural undertakings such as art, theatre, music, and heritage preservation. The more these are funded and supported,

¹² *Halifax Regional Municipality's Economic Development Strategy. Strategies for Success. 2005.*

the more liveable the downtown.

5.1 ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

This Plan promotes varied opportunities to accommodate the critical mass required to support the optimal growth for downtown Halifax. The economic capacity research¹³ in support of this Plan identifies significant opportunity to grow within downtown Halifax by filling in the gaps, which includes many vacant or underutilized lands where future growth could be directed within the capacity of existing municipal services (refer to Map 8). Also there are many heritage resources which are candidates for reuse and revitalization.

This Plan provides for short, medium and long-term development growth targets. Within the next 15 years, this Plan provides capacity for at least 16,000 residents, 15,000 jobs, and up to three million square feet of office development within downtown Halifax. Over the course of this Plan, full realization of the build out of the downtown vision could yield upwards of 15 million square feet of development. This capacity is intended to achieve the following outcomes:

- (a) Ensure the viability of the traditional Central Business District (precincts 4, 5, 6, and 7) as a major employment location for the region.
- (b) Support related commercial, institutional and residential development needed to sustain employment growth.
- (c) Infilling and intensifying vacant or underutilized properties, in particular, along the waterfront and traditional Central Business District.
- (d) Support the eventual redevelopment of the Cogswell Interchange lands (precinct 8) after the vacant and underutilized lands in the traditional Central Business District (precincts 4, 5, 6, 7) have been developed.

Providing sufficient and varied opportunities for development particularly in the central area of downtown Halifax is a major underpinning of this Plan. Recognizing that demand for development may change over time in response to market forces, the Plan calls for a periodic review and monitoring program to be undertaken at five year intervals to monitor its growth targets.

Policy 44 HRM shall encourage applicants for development to efficiently use downtown land by consolidating primary development parcels with remnant abutting parcels where possible.

¹³ *Office for Urbanism. Downtown Halifax Urban Design Strategy. 2008.*

Policy 45 It shall be the intention of HRM to:

- (a) ensure a critical mass of development to support future growth by providing for adequate development capacity and varied forms of development to accommodate the commercial and residential targets of this Plan;
- (b) provide clarity and predictability for downtown development;
- (c) promote high quality design, the revitalization of heritage resources, and encourage the redevelopment of vacant and underutilized lands in downtown Halifax;
- (d) develop a capital investment program to implement the desired improvements to the public realm;
- (e) implement regional transportation and parking strategies to facilitate a higher order transit service for downtown Halifax; and
- (f) encourage growth of office development and related supportive uses particularly in the central business district (precincts, 4, 5, 6, and 7) to ensure downtown Halifax maintains its position as the dominant employment centre within the region.

As a short term priority of this Plan, HRM has conducted a Demand, Capacity and Baseline Indicators Study¹⁴ to refine the growth targets and establish baseline data related to the monitoring of economic capacity, demand and land use ratios for office and supportive commercial, institutional and residential development. This study provides benchmarks for measuring the effectiveness of the Plan during the five-year plan monitoring program and provides a framework for adjustments as needed. This study was completed in advance of the adoption of this Plan as the downtown office market is in a period of transition with an influx of jobs anticipated in the financial and information technology sectors over the course of the next five years.

Policy 46 HRM shall establish benchmarks for monitoring economic growth through the results of the Demand, Capacity and Baseline Indicators Study¹⁵. Further, as part of the plan monitoring program, HRM shall consider amendments to this Plan to reflect any required adjustments to the capacity targets and the regulatory framework of this Plan.

¹⁴ *Turner Drake & Partners Ltd. Market Survey Downtown Halifax (Demand, Capacity & Baseline Indicators). 2008.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

With a clear and compelling vision articulated for the growth of downtown Halifax, there is greater certainty over the desired form of development. This Plan therefore includes form-based policies to support the timely implementation of this vision. The Plan will streamline the development approvals process for downtown Halifax to facilitate greater levels of development investment in the downtown core and employ bonus zoning to secure key public benefits as identified in Chapter 3 of this Plan. The proposed design review program for downtown development together with a capital investment plan, will create the desired image of downtown Halifax as a vibrant and liveable place and a magnet for future growth.

Policy 47 In accordance with the goals of this Plan related to achieving clarity and predictability in development, HRM shall implement in the Land Use By-law a height framework for downtown Halifax.

Policy 48 HRM shall streamline the development approvals process for downtown Halifax by implementing a site plan approval process for downtown development.

5.2 PUBLIC LANDS & FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT

In 2004, HRM completed the Capital District Facilities Needs and Opportunities Strategy¹⁶, which provides a high level strategic plan for the development of public facilities and lands within the Capital District area. This includes downtown Halifax as well as surrounding business districts in Halifax and downtown Dartmouth. The study identifies a significant proportion of vacant land holdings in downtown Halifax which are owned by municipal, provincial, and federal levels of government and agencies such as the Waterfront Development Corporation Limited. It also highlights future needs with respect to investment and development of major public facilities such as expanded and new facilities for conventions, culture and recreation. This Plan presents an opportunity for government, in partnership with the private sector, to lead in the strategic development of these lands and facilities as demonstration projects for implementing the urban design vision for downtown Halifax. This Plan, therefore, supports an intergovernmental and co-ordinated approach to ensure strategic investment in public facilities and redevelopment of key public lands.

Policy 49 HRM shall work in cooperation with other levels of government to encourage the strategic redevelopment of public lands and investment in public amenities and support the implementation of this Plan. It shall be the intention of HRM to pursue agreements with the federal and provincial governments as appropriate to further goals related to sustainable building design and housing affordability in the tendering of projects for public lands pursuant to Policies 8 and 23 of this Plan.

¹⁶ *Cantwell & Co. and Plaskett, Bill. Public Facilities Needs and Opportunities Strategy. 2004.*

5.3 COGSWELL INTERCHANGE LANDS

The Cogswell Interchange lands present a significant opportunity for transforming the downtown at its northern gateway. Repeatedly, throughout project consultations, the community has been nearly unanimous in requesting that the Cogswell Interchange be removed and a grid of city blocks and new development parcels be restored; an approach that is consistent with the Ten Big Moves. However, this redevelopment requires careful planning to ensure the timing and land use mix optimizes and supports the strategies laid out in this Plan related to filling-in of vacant or underutilized lands in the traditional CBD (precincts 4, 5, 6, and 7). A master plan is needed to give consideration to:

- (a) Land use and long-term economic functions for downtown Halifax.
- (b) Appropriate transition in form and land use to nearby neighbourhoods.
- (c) Special attention to the design of the street network to ensure it meets the urban design objectives of the plan related to extension of the street grid pattern.
- (d) The timing of bringing Cogswell Interchange lands into the development market once vacant and underutilized lands in the traditional CBD are developed.

This Plan reflects HRM's commitment to move forward with the planning and design work related to the redevelopment of the Cogswell Interchange lands. This approach will capitalize on the momentum of the this Plan, and will enable sound decision-making on the future use of these lands.

Policy 50 HRM shall consider undertaking a Cogswell Interchange Functional Plan as a priority to ensure the future use and urban design of these lands.

CHAPTER 6: PUBLIC REALM

6.0 INTRODUCTION

The public realm framework contained in this Plan will guide the preparation of a functional plan for the implementation of the downtown Halifax urban design vision with respect to the existing and potential elements of downtown that are primarily in public ownership. This includes public uses, all public open spaces and streetscapes. This aspect of the Plan is central to the overall strategy as it shapes the most prominent and visible aspects of the urban environment and therefore makes the greatest impact on the image and impression presented by the downtown.

Consistent with the vision for downtown Halifax, the purpose of this framework is to ensure that the quality and character of the public realm and how it is experienced will enhance downtown's liveability, economic vitality, aesthetic quality and pedestrian environment. The key objective of the public realm framework is to cultivate and nurture a legible, cohesive and appealing physical environment by identifying and coordinating aspects of the public realm for improvement and strengthening, which will lead to a coherent structure for downtown Halifax.

By articulating the objectives for the public realm that are necessary to bring the long-term vision to fruition, this framework serves as the primary guide for informing and making decisions with respect to capital improvement strategies.

The components that comprise the public realm framework are:

- (a) Streetscapes
- (b) Open Spaces & Connections
- (c) Gateways
- (d) Views & Visual Character
- (e) Public Art
- (f) Pedestrian Amenity & Comfort
- (g) Street Festivals
- (h) Sustainable Public Spaces

6.1 STREETS CAPES

Streets are the primary component of the public realm in downtown Halifax. As such they must be designed to promote a culture of walking through widened sidewalks along major pedestrian corridors, to provide much needed public amenities, and to feature undergrounded electrical and telecommunications utilities wherever possible.

The Streetscape Typologies contained in Appendix A have been developed to provide the Municipality with a framework for distinguishing the unique character of downtown streetscapes and their urban design function with respect to land use, level of pedestrian use, and their visual and physical connectivity to natural features, landmarks and destinations. The Streetscape Typologies direct how the pedestrian qualities of the streetscape are to be enhanced in future capital investment. They work in concert with the Street Network Plan as shown on Map 13, which will inform the traffic function of the street. The resulting streetscape classifications are shown on Map 9, and shall inform the Transportation & Streetscape Design Functional Plan to be conducted following the adoption of this Plan. The main streetscape classifications are as follows:

- (a) Avenues
- (b) Civic Avenue
- (c) Grand Promenade
- (d) Harbour View Streets
- (e) Harbourfront Streets
- (f) Esplanades
- (g) Pedestrian Priority Streets
- (h) Supporting Streets

The Streetscape Typologies provide a conceptual framework for guiding future public improvements. A Transportation & Streetscape Design Functional Plan for downtown Halifax will be required to develop design plans to implement the public realm objectives for these typologies including designs for wider sidewalks and increased pedestrian and active transportation amenities. The Transportation & Streetscape Design Functional Plan will also identify necessary amendments to the Municipal Service Systems Design Guidelines, also known as the “HRM Red Book.”

- Policy 51 HRM shall consider undertaking a Transportation & Streetscape Design Functional Plan to carry out specific design plans for designated streetscape corridors and to undertake changes to the Municipal Service Systems Design Guidelines (HRM Red Book) in support of the Streetscape Typologies contained in Appendix A. The Transportation & Streetscape Design Functional Plan shall also consider amendments to temporary street closure procedures, enhancements to the downtown transportation network, overall improvements to public transit services for downtown Halifax, funding mechanisms to support alternate modes of transportation, and measures to mitigate the impacts of truck traffic on downtown streets, as outlined in S.7.5 of this Plan.
- Policy 52 In accordance with Policy 51, HRM shall recognize east-west streets as having a special function in connecting the downtown to its waterfront. These streetscapes will receive a detailed level of design in the Transportation & Streetscape Design Functional Plan.
- Policy 53 HRM shall recognize the “Grand Promenade” along George and Carmichael Streets as the primary east-west pedestrian connection linking major civic and cultural attractions to one another. The Transportation & Streetscape Design Function Plan shall ensure that the design quality of these streets reinforce their role as the symbolic historic and civic axis of downtown Halifax.
- Policy 54 HRM shall recognize streetscapes adjoining the Citadel as “Esplanades” and ensure the design and quality of the streetscapes reinforce their civic and landmark importance.
- Policy 55 HRM shall designate “Pedestrian Priority Streets” along Argyle, Albemarle, Granville and Bedford Row, as shown on Map 9, in recognition of their important pedestrian function. HRM shall support these streets primarily as destinations for sidewalk cafes, street performances, and other street-oriented uses and shall discourage vehicular through traffic along these streets.

6.2 OPEN SPACES & CONNECTIONS

Map 10 of this Plan includes a framework of various open space types. The framework is intended to:

- (a) complement adjacent land uses and provide a focus for the precincts identified in this plan;
- (b) ensure public amenity for high density living; and
- (c) serve as catalysts for downtown revitalization.

The framework provides guidance for future capital investment in terms of upgrading the quality of existing open spaces and creating opportunities for new public spaces throughout downtown Halifax. A Downtown Halifax Open Space Functional Plan will establish design parameters to ensure the scale, function, and amenities of these spaces reflect their intended function and use, and will address existing gaps and future opportunities for expanding on the parks system. Existing documentation such as the 2000 Waterfront Open Space Plan¹⁷ will be consulted in the creation of the Downtown Halifax Open Space Functional Plan. Provisions in the Land Use By-law will secure the open spaces at the terminus of east-west streets for public access. HRM shall seek to work in cooperation with the Waterfront Development Corporation Limited and other relevant agencies and property owners to ensure a continuous public access is maintained along the Harbour as a key component of the open space network.

Policy 56 HRM may implement a system of interconnected, high quality open spaces as generally shown on Map 10. HRM shall consider undertaking a Downtown Halifax Open Space Functional Plan to establish design parameters to ensure the scale, design and level of amenities of these open spaces reflect their intended function and use.

Policy 57 In accordance with Policy 56, it shall be the intention of HRM to ensure new open space plazas are constructed in particular where east-west streets terminate at the water's edge and where they terminate at Citadel Hill. Plazas should be designed to accommodate a variety of civic gatherings, performances and outdoor cafes, and ensure surrounding uses are public, highly visible and serve to animate the plazas including retail, sidewalk cafes and cultural attractions.

Policy 58 It shall be the intention of HRM to establish an agreement with the Waterfront Development Corporation Limited and other relevant agencies and property owners to ensure collaboration in the development of the open space system along the Halifax waterfront including a continuous trail system along the waterfront connecting the Halifax waterfront to other areas along the Halifax Harbour and open spaces at the terminus of east-west streets.

Policy 59 HRM shall consider opportunities for open spaces in conjunction with major redevelopments to incorporate forecourts, courtyards and mid-block pedestrian connections on larger development blocks to enhance the pedestrian permeability and connectivity of downtown Halifax.

6.3 GATEWAYS

As identified in the Ten Big Moves in Chapter 2, clearly defined gateways enhance orientation, define a sense of place and contribute to civic pride. This Plan identifies two primary gateways

¹⁷ *Environmental Design and Management, Ltd & Sasaki Associates Inc. Halifax Waterfront Open Space and Development Plan. 2000.*

into the downtown, the Cogswell Interchange lands and Cornwallis Park to the north and south respectively. Investing in and transforming these areas will create distinct and memorable entry points into the downtown. The ferry terminal also marks an important entry to downtown Halifax. Provisions for transformation of this site are discussed in the transportation Chapter of this Plan.

Policy 60 HRM shall designate the primary north and south gateways of downtown Halifax as Cogswell Interchange lands and Cornwallis Park. HRM shall consider supporting the transformation of these areas in accordance with the Transportation & Streetscape Design Functional Plan. HRM shall develop a comprehensive design plan for redevelopment of the Cogswell Interchange lands in accordance with Policy 50.

6.4 VIEWS & VISUAL CHARACTER

As recognized by the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy, views from the Citadel to the Harbour are a cherished part of HRM's heritage. They have defined and shaped the urban form and skyline of downtown Halifax. In recognition of their value, the Land Use By-law will continue to maintain the protection of the Citadel View Planes and Rampart views. In addition to these views, there are other important public views and views of prominent visual terminus sites that deserve protection and consideration in the context of the design review requirements outlined in Chapter 3 of this Plan. These views are illustrated on Maps 11 and 12, and include:

- (a) Window views along east-west streets from the Citadel to the Harbour, which shall be protected as public corridors through the transportation reserve provisions in the Land Use By-law.
- (b) Framing views where there are sweeping views of the downtown or Harbour as afforded by higher elevations where buildings will be required to contribute to the image of the downtown and its skyline through appropriate architectural response and well-designed roof treatments.
- (c) Views of Prominent Visual Terminus Sites, including views of landmark sites where existing or potential landmark buildings, structures, public spaces or public art provides a termination of a view.

Policy 61 HRM shall through the Land Use By-law, protect designated views from the Citadel including the Citadel View Planes and Ramparts views. HRM shall further protect designated window views along east-west streets from the Citadel to the Harbour as defined on Map 11 through the transportation reserve provisions of the Land Use By-law.

Policy 62 HRM shall consider the following views as part of the design review provisions contained in the Land Use By-law:

(a) framing views, as designated on Map 11, and

(b) views of prominent visual terminus sites, as designated on Map 12.

6.5 PUBLIC ART

HRM's Public Art Policy¹⁸ calls for installation of public art to celebrate Halifax's cultural identity and showcase local arts and culture, particularly in high profile locations in downtown Halifax and the Capital District. Public art will help reinforce the unique identity of the precincts and can enhance the overall quality and experience of the public realm. In downtown Halifax, public art should be considered at a variety of scales and contexts including:

- (a) Larger installations at visually prominent locations such as the terminus of view corridors, at gateways on prominent corners, or in public open spaces.
- (b) Smaller installations along streetscapes, walkways, and interior courtyards, and in association with buildings.

Public art is broadly defined in the Public Art Policy¹⁹ and may include memorials, sculptures, water features, murals, lighting, or individual art installations, and may combine with building and landscape design. It may also include traditionally functional elements such as street furniture and utility boxes. HRM shall support the installation of public art through its capital investment programs and in partnership with the private sector through the bonus zoning provisions of this Plan.

Policy 63 To implement the objectives of HRM's Public Art Policy²⁰, HRM shall support the installation of public art at appropriate locations in downtown Halifax through its capital investment programs and through the bonus zoning provisions of the Land Use By-law.

6.6 PEDESTRIAN AMENITY & COMFORT

How the public realm is designed, programmed and interfaces with surrounding spaces and land uses is crucial to its capacity to attract and support a broad spectrum of users and to ensure that there are places where people feel comfortable and safe. HRM has adopted streetscape guidelines, plans and a wayfinding program for the Capital District that reinforce the principles of safety, universal design, public amenity and accessibility for its commercial corridors. The Design Manual contained in the Land Use By-law and the Transportation & Streetscape Design

¹⁸ *Halifax Regional Municipality. Public Art Policy. 2008.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

Functional Plan will provide further guidance on how these principles may be tailored through the downtown Halifax context in terms of guiding further investment whether by HRM, or through private sector contributions.

- Policy 64 HRM shall consider using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Strategies in accordance with the Transportation & Streetscape Design Functional Plan to enhance safety in the design of public spaces in downtown Halifax.
- Policy 65 HRM shall consider universal design principles in the design of public spaces in downtown Halifax to promote accessibility for all users in accordance with HRM's Capital District Streetscape Guidelines²¹ and the Transportation & Streetscape Design Functional Plan.
- Policy 66 HRM shall consider special design treatments for identifying pedestrian corridors in downtown Halifax in accordance with the Transportation & Streetscape Design Functional Plan.
- Policy 67 HRM may implement a wayfinding signage system for downtown Halifax as recommended in the Capital District Urban Design Project Visual Identity and Wayfinding Signage Guidelines.²²
- Policy 68 HRM shall incorporate into the Transportation & Streetscape Design Functional Plan a co-ordinated system of site furnishings and amenities throughout downtown Halifax as directed by the Capital District Streetscape Guidelines.²³

6.7 STREET FESTIVALS

Regular street closures for community, cultural and festival events are a hallmark of dynamic and successful cities. An important aspect of strengthening downtown Halifax is therefore the establishment of an interdepartmental protocol that encourages temporary street closures to boost vibrancy and sense of community. Recommendations for changes to HRM's temporary street closure procedures will be provided through the Transportation & Streetscape Design Functional Plan.

²¹ Gordon Ratcliffe Landscape Architects, et al. *HRM Capital District Urban Design Project, Vol. 1: Streetscape Guidelines and Plans. 2004.*

²² Gordon Ratcliffe Landscape Architects, et al. *HRM Capital District Urban Design Project, Vol. 2: Visual Identity and Wayfinding Signage Guidelines. 2004.*

²³ *Ibid.*

Policy 69 HRM shall consider through the Transportation & Streetscape Design Functional Plan amendments to its temporary street closure procedures to streamline the process by which such closures are obtained by community groups and other interests for street related festivals and events.

6.8 SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC SPACES

This Plan is founded on principles of sustainability and promotes sustainable practices at all scales: regional, downtown, and site level both in terms of building and public space design. HRM can and is leading in the demonstration of sustainable practices in the design of public spaces through a variety of ways: use of alternative energy such as geothermal energy and district heating concepts, the provision of active transportation infrastructure and facilities for organics and recycling, tree planting, use of local materials in public space design, and use of solar and energy efficient lighting systems. Guidance for sustainability in public space design will be provided through the Transportation & Streetscape Design Functional Plan, the Sustainability Functional Plan, and the Downtown Halifax Open Space Functional Plan.

Policy 70 It shall be the intention of HRM to demonstrate leadership in implementing sustainable design for public spaces in accordance with the Transportation & Streetscape Design Functional Plan, the Sustainability Functional Plan, and the Downtown Halifax Open Space Functional Plan.

CHAPTER 7: TRANSPORTATION

7.0 INTRODUCTION

Transportation and traffic movements within downtown Halifax require the integration of sustainable transportation practices and land use. Within the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy, transportation policy addresses how built form and transportation impact one another, while reducing the environmental impacts of growth. The same holds true for downtown Halifax. To create an area where the built form encourages pedestrian activity and develops an efficient system of moving people throughout, in and out of the downtown, requires sustainable transportation options and a strong vision.

7.1 DOWNTOWN STREETS

The basis for any transportation policy is the network within which it functions. The street network is a key component to moving people and goods. Therefore, it is important that the changes and improvements to the streets within the downtown core be addressed in two ways. One will develop a network of use that defines the streets with higher traffic volumes and those that will be more focused on transit, and still others that will be more pedestrian-oriented. The other is the design of streets in accordance with the Streetscape Typologies as laid out in Chapter 6 of this Plan. While they may seem distinct in the traditional sense, the two can be intertwined so that downtown Halifax becomes a vibrant area. The Streetscape Typologies have been defined in Appendix A. These matters will be considered as part of the Transportation & Streetscape Design Functional Plan.

7.1.1 Street Network Plan

The downtown street network has been studied to determine the best way to move traffic. Even cities with a pedestrian and transit focus require methods of moving vehicles efficiently from one place to another. In Halifax, it has been recognized that providing one-way flow on the narrow streets can be beneficial in reducing the needed width for traffic flow and optimizing on-street parking, cycling infrastructure, and sidewalk extension opportunities. This allows for one travel lane where two lanes would be required for two-way streets. The downtown street network works best when a hierarchy of traffic bearing roles is defined. Streets designated for higher-order traffic flow are Lower Water, Hollis, Prince, Sackville, Duke and Brunswick. With those streets handling the bulk of traffic, other streets in the network can assume roles focused on transit (Barrington and Spring Garden) or pedestrian (Bedford Row, Granville, Argyle, Market, Albemarle, George and Carmichael, Bishop, Salter, Blowers, and Grafton). The changes to the downtown streets will occur once consultation for traffic flow alterations has been undertaken.

Policy 71 HRM shall implement the downtown Street Network Plan as shown on Map 13 through its capital investment programs. The Street Network Plan sets out a hierarchy of streets to encourage vehicular traffic to utilize specific streets and enable the development of other streets to be more pedestrian and transit-oriented.

7.2 ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

The culture of walking is prevalent throughout the downtown. As a compact area, it is already possible to walk easily from one place to another. The Streetscape Typologies add to the walkability of the area by ensuring the amenities are in place to encourage walking. However, walking is not the only mode of active transportation that is used within the core of the region. Other modes such as cycling need to be considered and the infrastructure to support these modes are required to ensure that choice is available. The Active Transportation Plan²⁴ adopted by Council in 2006 examined where infrastructure should be developed. Therefore, it is important to use these documents to ensure that the required infrastructure is built (including on road facilities, bike racks and lockers).

Policy 72 HRM shall consider opportunities to install active transportation infrastructure in downtown Halifax to encourage the use of all modes of active transportation. HRM shall consider the Active Transportation Plan²⁵ in determining appropriate locations for such infrastructure.

7.2.1 Waterfront Trail

The Harbourwalk waterfront trail is a significant component in the development of a network of active transportation infrastructure in downtown Halifax. This trail not only connects communities to one another, but also enables connections to be made to other parks, open spaces and natural areas. However, with restrictions to access in some areas along the Harbour, it is important to note that the trail may veer away from the water at specific locations, such as through the HMC Dockyard.

Policy 73 HRM shall consider opportunities to extend and improve the continuous Harbourwalk waterfront trail through the DHSMPs plan area, acknowledging that at certain points, it will be necessary for the trail to diverge from the waterfront.

7.3 PUBLIC TRANSIT

Building on the goals of the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy, access to downtown should be significantly enhanced through investment in public transportation, which will provide a real alternative to the dependence on the automobile. Development in turn should be provided at appropriate densities to support continued transit use. Public transportation must progress into a whole new level of public acceptability by making its use vastly more convenient and treating users as customers with much improved levels of service. Transit should become a universally acceptable and accessible means of transportation.

²⁴ *SGE Acres Limited, et al. HRM's Active Transportation Plan. 2006. Halifax.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

To accomplish this, the development of new services such as a downtown shuttle and a high speed ferry service are required. New services will provide more public transportation options to commuters and decrease the desire to use private vehicles for commuting.

Ferry service in HRM has been successful for over 250 years. However, the cross-harbour ferries to Dartmouth and Woodside serve specific markets and with increased pressure on the road networks from other areas, the service requires expansion to serve the growing communities around the Bedford Basin. A fast ferry service will enable residents living in and around Bedford to have a fast, reliable service to the downtown, reducing the number of cars on the downtown streets. To ensure this happens, a new terminal building will be required to meet the needs of the ferry and its users, while still accommodating the existing cross-harbour service to Dartmouth and Woodside. Existing policies in the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy support this as a regional transportation priority.

7.3.1 Downtown Shuttle

Creation of a frequent, high-capacity shuttle service in the downtown, with connections to nearby destinations such as hospitals and universities, has several benefits. First, it can expand the reach of express transit services and ferries that stop at a single location downtown. It can also improve connectivity within the downtown for visitors, shoppers, and employees alike. Using hybrid diesel-electric buses, the service can also reduce the impacts of buses on the downtown by reducing noise and emissions, and allowing some routes to transfer passengers and turn around before entering the downtown.

Policy 74 HRM shall implement a downtown shuttle program that will service the needs of the downtown enabling connections to employment, shopping and cultural areas of the downtown for residents and visitors.

7.3.2 Downtown Transit Terminal

Accommodating new services and the associated increase in the number of passengers will result in changes to the major downtown transit terminal. A new terminal, or an upgraded Scotia Square terminal, should become a major transit station that will meet the needs of the users and allow for increased capacity so that new services can be incorporated into the system.

Policy 75 HRM should consider the development of a new major transit terminal in the DHSMPs plan area.

7.4 PARKING

Key to encouraging the use of alternative modes of transportation, including active modes and public transit, is providing disincentives to drive. The cost is often cited as a motivator to switch from driving to work to other modes, as is the lack of available or convenient parking. Parking is required at the end of every trip and if it is too expensive or unavailable, commuters will choose

other options. However, for a downtown to be vibrant and continue to thrive, parking is required and should be developed to encourage short-term trips.

A Regional Parking Strategy Functional Plan is underway that will provide guidance on appropriate parking ratios. Until that strategy is completed and implemented through amendments to this Plan, provisions will be established in the Land Use By-law to exempt downtown developments from the requirement to provide on-site parking in order to encourage alternative forms of transportation. The design guidelines will encourage the provision of short term public parking integrated within a development project and the development of parking structures rather than surface parking lots. Design guidelines will address the proper integration of these facilities along downtown streets.

Development of commercial surface parking facilities within downtown Halifax is prohibited in precincts 1, 2, 8 and 9, except where they are accessories to a permitted use and designed in accordance with the Design Manual. In precincts 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7, all new surface parking lots are prohibited. This is to ensure that the needs of the land owners, tenants, customers and residents are met, to promote the use of alternative modes of transportation (such as cycling, walking, transit, carpooling), and to create pedestrian-friendly neighbourhoods. Structured parking will be permitted subject to the location and design criteria set out in the Design Manual.

Policy 76 HRM shall through the Land Use By-law, exempt development within downtown Halifax from requiring on-site parking to encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation.

Policy 77 HRM shall through the Land Use By-law establish design criteria related to location, design and layout of parking facilities that are intended to limit surface parking and encourage appropriately designed parking structures.

7.5 TRANSPORTATION & STREETScape DESIGN FUNCTIONAL PLAN

An overall transportation plan is required to implement this Plan's transportation objectives for the downtown core of Halifax. The transportation plan will be addressed in the combined Transportation & Streetscape Design Functional Plan to ensure that both of these issues are studied in consideration and in cooperation with one another. The transportation aspect of the functional plan will promote enhanced transit service for downtown Halifax and address the following matters:

- (a) designation of corridors for transit;
- (b) the Street Network Plan as designated on Map 13;
- (c) provisions for funding mechanisms to support alternate modes of transportation; and
- (d) measures to mitigate the impacts of truck traffic on downtown streets.

Further amendments to this Plan and the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy will be required to implement the findings of the Transportation & Streetscape Design Functional Plan. Policy 51 of this Plan indicates that HRM shall consider undertaking this proposed functional plan.

7.5.1 Transit Corridors

Designation of transit corridors will provide a focus for land use, urban design and the public investment strategy laid out in this plan. The Regional Municipal Planning Strategy designates regional transit corridors that must be implemented at the local planning level. The Transportation & Streetscape Design Functional Plan will support the full integration of the regional transportation vision with the objectives of this plan.

7.6 FREIGHT MOVEMENT

Freight movement is a significant component of the volume of traffic on downtown streets. There are few alternative routes for trucks to access the port in south-end Halifax other than Barrington, Hollis and Lower Water Streets. However, with this truck traffic comes noise, vibration, exhaust and the potential for collision and spills. Solutions to reducing or eliminating the need to use downtown streets for freight movement will be sought, although previous work has shown that these solutions are expensive and must avoid adding time penalties to the delivery of freight. As part of the Transportation & Streetscape Design Functional Plan, HRM with other levels of government will continue to study alternative routing for the movement of freight, including the use of the rail cut to mitigate the negative impacts of truck traffic through downtown Halifax.

7.7 TRANSPORTATION RESERVES

To maintain the road and open space system, as well as to accommodate alternative means of transportation within existing corridors, it is essential to identify and retain corridors significant to the integrity of the public realm. The continuation of the east-west streets onto the waterfront lands preserves the views to the Harbour as well as provides links to waterfront amenities such as plazas and open spaces located at the foot of the corridors. Therefore it is important to preserve the corridors as they have been identified in the Land Use By-law through the creation of transportation reserves.

Policy 78 Further to Policy 61, HRM shall identify in the Land Use By-law transportation corridors as shown on Map 13 as areas to preserve for future public access. HRM shall, through the Land Use By-law, establish Transportation Reserves over the portions of the corridors it plans to acquire within the next five years or protect through an agreement with the property owner.

CHAPTER 8: IMPLEMENTATION

8.0 INTRODUCTION

This Plan is the primary policy document used to guide decision-making for development and investment within downtown Halifax. It provides a vision for land use, built form, design, heritage preservation and public investment, and it sets out general strategies and approaches to be used by HRM and all of its citizens and partners to achieve that vision. The Plan shall be implemented through the adoption and enforcement of its Land Use By-law and other by-laws of Council, and through Council's annual capital and operating budgets.

Key to effective implementation is a program of monitoring and adjustment to ensure that the desired outcomes are realized. This Chapter outlines regulatory, investment and monitoring policies that will ensure the effective implementation of this Plan.

8.1 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS

The intent of this document is to create a plan unique to downtown Halifax that clearly articulates its values and attributes. To provide a link to broader community issues such as commercial development, open space and transportation, consideration must also be given to how this Plan fits within the hierarchy of existing planning documents affecting the area; the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy and the Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy. Together, these planning documents address regional, community and local interests. On matters specific to local downtown needs, it is intended that the policies in this Plan take precedence. On broader regional or community matters, the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy and the Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy are to be referenced.

Policy 79 HRM shall adopt this Plan as the Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy for the area shown on Map 1. In the event of conflict between this Plan, the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy or the Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy, the more stringent shall prevail.

8.2 REGULATORY TOOLS

8.2.1 Land Use By-law

HRM shall adopt a Land Use By-law for the purpose of carrying out the intent of this Plan. The Land Use By-law is the principal mechanism by which land use policies shall be implemented and as such shall set out zones, permitted uses, development standards, building height and massing requirements and detailed design guidelines, which shall reflect the policies of this Plan. Most notable among the Land Use By-law's regulatory structure is the application of the site plan approval process for development in downtown Halifax.

The Land Use By-law is comprised of the following five key components that work together to regulate and guide new development:

- (a) Precincts: The Downtown Precincts Map, as shown on Map 2, provides the framework for implementing the policy objectives contained within this Plan. Each precinct will include discrete built form and design requirements for development which will be reflected in the Land Use By-law.
- (b) Built Form & Height Framework: These requirements constitute the development envelope and form the quantitative elements that new buildings must achieve. The Land Use By-law accomplishes this through the establishment of standards for building height, massing, streetwall height and setbacks within each of the precincts.
- (c) Site Plan Approval and Design Review: Within all areas under this Plan, new development is to be reviewed and approved through the site plan approval process. The approval will address both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the development with the built form and height framework in accordance with the specifics of the By-law being administered by the Development Officer, and the qualitative aspects of the design being subject to review by the Design Review Committee in accordance with the Design Manual.
- (d) Design Manual: The Design Manual forms part of the Land Use By-law and is the primary reference document to be used in designing and reviewing new development proposals for the downtown. It contains the detailed architectural guidelines and principles to be followed in each of the precincts.
- (e) Bonus Zoning: The Land Use By-law contains two building height regimes; a lower, pre-bonus height which may be achieved without the contribution of certain public benefits, and a post-bonus height where public benefits in excess of the minimum development requirements are achieved. The post-bonus height program is also undertaken through the site plan approval process.

Policy 80 HRM shall adopt the Downtown Halifax Land Use By-law for the purposes of implementing the regulatory framework of this Plan. The Land Use By-law shall include provisions for site plan approval as the mechanism for approval of development within downtown Halifax, height and built form regulations, precincts, design manual, permitted land uses and a bonus zoning system.

8.3 DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE

The establishment of a Design Review Committee to oversee the administration of the Design Manual is a significant component of the new governance model instituted by this Plan for development in downtown Halifax. This governing body will be established through the Land

Use By-law as per Policy 17, with the mandate of ensuring quality design in all new developments within the downtown.

8.4 CO-OPERATION WITH EXTERNAL AGENCIES

HRM works with many other organizations and agencies including other levels of government, to increase the quality of services and facilities it provides to residents. This Plan relies on a strategic, co-operative approach on many local issues with a variety of external agencies including the Halifax Regional School Board, the Halifax Port Authority, the Waterfront Development Corporation Limited, the Halifax-Dartmouth Bridge Commission, and the provincial and federal governments. Schools, transportation and the development of publicly owned lands are key issues that will shape the future of the downtown and that will require the attention and co-operation of many partners including HRM. In particular, the retention of schools in and around the downtown is essential in achieving the goals of this Plan. The concept of complete and walkable neighbourhoods with residents, businesses and public amenities in close proximity to one another is unattainable if existing downtown or peninsular schools are consolidated or closed. The Plan aims to attract 16,000 new residents to the downtown area over the next 25 years and neighbourhood schools will be required to accommodate the expected increase of school aged children.

Policy 81 In accordance with Policies 30, 49, and 58 of this Plan, HRM may seek to negotiate agreements with the Halifax Regional School Board, the Halifax-Dartmouth Bridge Commission, and the Waterfront Development Corporation Limited to improve co-ordination with external agencies on the issues of neighbourhood school retention, transportation, and the development of publicly owned lands.

8.5 PUBLIC INVESTMENT

Chapters 6 and 7 outline primary areas where future public investment is needed to support the objectives of this Plan. The importance of the public realm is critical to the downtown and improvements to streetscapes, open spaces, gateways and other public spaces are needed to achieve the overall vision. These spaces frame the most prominent aspects of the urban environment, particularly in relation to heritage conservation districts, and provide the greatest impact on the image and impression of the downtown.

To bring the ideals of this Plan to fruition, HRM must provide leadership in undertaking capital investment and funding programs that exemplify a high quality and attractive public realm, support heritage restoration and renovation, and reinforce active transportation and a transit-oriented transportation system. To demonstrate HRM's commitment to making these investments a reality, a multi-year capital investment strategy that prioritizes this work shall be prepared.

Policy 82 HRM shall consider undertaking a Downtown Halifax Capital Investment Functional Plan that outlines and prioritizes all of the areas where future public investment is necessary to support the goals and objectives of this Plan. The Plan shall include a multi-year implementation schedule.

8.6 PLAN MONITORING PROGRAM

This Plan sets a clear direction for development and investment within downtown Halifax over the next 25 years. To implement this new direction, the co-operation of numerous agencies and initiatives will be needed, both within and outside the municipal government. This Plan will be reviewed periodically to determine the degree of success in achieving its intent and address any changes in underlying assumptions or economic conditions. Central to the effective implementation of the many aspects of this Plan is the establishment of an effective monitoring program. This program will be conducted through regular and five-year reviews as outlined under section 8.6.1, as well as through a mandatory ten-year review as outlined in the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*. The Plan Monitoring Performance Measures outlined in Appendix B may be used to monitor the effective implementation of this Plan on an ongoing basis.

Council has appointed the Regional Plan Advisory Committee (RPAC) to advise them on specific matters as they pertain to the implementation of the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy for HRM, of which the DHSMPS is a part. The RPAC convenes on a regular basis with staff to review the progress and effectiveness in achieving the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy's recommendations, and the recommendations of its subsidiary plans. As such the RPAC will be the citizen-based group responsible for advising Council on the implementation and subsequent amendments to this Plan, as well as plan performance and evaluation. It is recommended that the RPAC terms of reference be amended to add representation from the Urban Design Task Force (UDTF) during the critical first five years of this Plan's implementation, to ensure that expertise developing during the drafting of this Plan is carried forward into implementation. The RPAC will then have representation from Council, the UDTF, the Chief Administrative Officer, and residents drawn from urban, suburban, and rural communities including a range of knowledge and interest in areas of the environment, economics, and development.

Policy 83 HRM shall establish a program, including appropriate criteria and benchmarks, to monitor success in implementing the policies of this Plan.

Policy 84 HRM shall conduct a ten-year review of this Plan as required by the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*.

Policy 85 HRM shall amend the terms of reference of the Regional Plan Advisory Committee to include two representatives from the Urban Design Task Force during the first five years of this Plan's implementation.

8.6.1 Amendments to this Plan

In the process of implementing this Plan, there may be a need for amendments to address emerging land use and regulatory issues. HRM will establish a process to enable the public, community groups, adjacent municipalities, boards, commissions, government agencies, and others to propose changes to this Plan and its implementing by-laws. This process provides for a continuous and systematic review of this Plan and associated regulations in response to changing conditions and circumstances impacting growth and development throughout HRM.

The amendment process may include an annual review and a five-year review. The annual review generally is limited to those amendments resulting in non-substantive technical changes. The five-year review is designed to address amendments which propose substantive changes. This amendment process, based on a defined cycle, provides sufficient time to measure the effects of new land use initiatives, and provides predictability to determine when new land use initiatives may be introduced. The five-year review shall include the monitoring of growth targets as referenced in Policy 46 of this Plan. With the annual review, the amendment process also has sufficient flexibility to accommodate technical adjustments or minor amendments which do not affect the overall intent of this Plan. The process requires early and continuous public involvement and dialogue.

- Policy 86 HRM shall adopt an amendment process that provides for regular review and evaluation of the policies contained in this Plan and development regulations.
- Policy 87 Further to Policy 86, it shall be the intention of HRM to conduct an annual review to consider proposed amendments that do not require substantive changes to this Plan or the Land Use By-law.
- Policy 88 Further to Policy 86, it shall be the intention of HRM to conduct a five-year review to consider amendments:
- (a) that could be considered in the annual review as well as those outside the scope of the annual review;
 - (b) that relate to substantive changes to this plan and corresponding development regulations; and
 - (c) that relate to the monitoring of growth targets and Plan Monitoring Performance Measures as set out in Appendix B of this Plan.

Development projects with highly significant benefits for the downtown and HRM at large that exceed the maximum height or building mass may be proposed from time to time. Currently the Province of Nova Scotia and HRM are calling for proposals for construction of a new downtown

convention centre. Projects of this scale and status merit special consideration by the community and Council.

Policy 89 Notwithstanding the forgoing policies, where a proposed amendment addresses unforeseen circumstances, or is deemed by Council to confer significant economic, social, or cultural benefits to HRM beyond the bonus zoning provisions of this Plan, such as a new downtown convention centre or other significant cultural infrastructure, such amendments may be considered by Council at any time regardless of the schedule for reviews.

Policy 90 HRM shall establish public participation programs for amendments to this Plan that describe opportunities for public input based upon the scope and intent of the amendment.

8.7 FUNCTIONAL PLANS

The purpose of a functional plan is to guide the management of the Municipality as set out in the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*. They do not represent land use policy but rather HRM's intent to create detailed management guides for setting budgets for programs, services and facilities consistent with the implementation of this Plan.

Capital improvements are important components of functional plans. Capital facilities and spending on improvements and new facilities are closely linked to availability of funds. Functional plans specific to the downtown Halifax area may identify costs and services of needed facilities and services. This Plan provides the framework for the establishment of the following five new functional plans for downtown Halifax:

- (a) the Sustainability Functional Plan as per Policy 20;
- (b) the Cogswell Interchange Functional Plan as per Policy 50;
- (c) the Transportation & Streetscape Design Functional Plan as per Policy 51;
- (d) the Downtown Halifax Open Space Functional Plan as per Policy 56; and
- (e) the Downtown Halifax Capital Investment Functional Plan as per Policy 82.

Policy 91 HRM shall consider undertaking functional plans to address the downtown's facility and service needs and recommended means of funding, consistent with this Plan.