

The Preferred Downtown Scenario Summary

HRM by Design Public Open House & Presentation
November 28, 6 pm - World Trade & Convention Centre, Room 200C

The Preferred Downtown Scenario is reflective of: alignment with the project's vision & principles and the 10 Big Moves for the downtown; economic viability and adequate capacity; provision of world-class heritage protection; integration with existing built form; and consistency with the policy direction of the Regional Plan.

Heritage Protection

- Adopts a holistic approach to heritage, encompassing the preservation of individual buildings, the unique heritage character and block pattern of downtown; view protection; historic streetscapes; and conservation of heritage in its historical context.
- Program for adopting up to 7 Heritage Conservation Districts (HCD), including the Barrington Street HCD in the short term (none currently exist).
- Strengthens heritage controls throughout the entire downtown.
- Showcases the integrated heritage fabric of downtown by maintaining the mid-rise building character of the area between the Citadel and the waterfront.
- Promotes reuse and revitalization of heritage buildings by filling in the gaps, including vacant and underused sites.
- Planning tools will enable the protection of heritage properties through financial grants and tax incentives (none currently exist), demolition controls and new urban design guidelines.
- Protection of historic views by upholding existing legislation protecting view planes from the Citadel to the waterfront.

Economic Development & Growth Potential

- Provides 14 million sq.ft. of office and residential development capacity over the 25-year life of the project.
- Provides over 1 million sq.ft. of immediately developable office space in the central waterfront alone.
- Greatly improves clarity and predictability through the establishment of clear direction on building heights.
- Streamlines the development approvals process.
- Encourages a variety of development opportunities spread throughout the downtown by promoting many smaller development projects rather than relying solely on one or two large projects.
- Promotes infilling of the Central Business District.
- Critical mass promotes sustainability through a pedestrian and transit friendly downtown.
- Focuses on the pedestrian experience at the street level to attract economic growth, through the revitalization of residential and commercial populations in the downtown.
- Affordable housing options will appeal to people at all life stages.
- Provides a vision for the redevelopment of large amounts of vacant or underused land including the Cogswell Interchange.

Design Guidelines & Public Spaces

- Visual and physical public access to the waterfront through stepped down buildings and open spaces at the water's edge.
- Connectivity throughout the downtown by using promenades and open spaces at the ends of streets, east to west.
- Investment in both new and existing public open spaces.
- Design guidelines to include: step backs; improved pedestrian experience at the street level; design that reduces wind and allows sunlight to penetrate at the street level; and promotion of green building design.

Downtown District Height Patterns

Northern District

(George Street, Rainnie Drive, Portland Place and the harbour)

- This district allows height due to: the larger block pattern in the area; adjacency to buildings of height in the existing financial district; it is less constrained by heritage; and through the available development potential following the removal of the Cogswell Interchange.
- In the northern waterfront, the height precinct is determined by existing view planes regulations, which will allow buildings up to 260 ft. (approximately 20 commercial storeys) depending on the site.

Central District

(George Street, Salter Street, Brunswick Street and the harbour)

- Height precinct in the central waterfront is proposed as a range of 80 - 95 ft., to maintain respect for cherished heritage resources and consistency with existing built form in the foothills area of downtown.
- Over the whole of this area, this is a tremendous increase in development opportunity that potentially more than doubles the existing by-right development height of 25 – 40 ft.
- Several sites are identified within this area for exceptions to the height precinct ranging from 115 ft. to 215 ft. due to site-specific conditions such as larger block patterns, position between the view planes from the Citadel, adjacency to existing taller buildings, and existing conditions as underused or vacant sites.
- Two of the largest sites in this area together provide in excess of 1,000,000 sq.ft. of office space available for immediate development.

Southern District

(Salter Street, Hollis Street, the Atlantic Superstore and the harbour)

- The prevailing height is set at 80 - 115 ft.
- Two sites are identified within this area for exceptions to the height precinct for up to 165 ft. and 215 ft. respectively. They qualify for an exception due to their locations between view planes, in the shadow of an existing building of height, and locations on larger city blocks, not ones of historic proportions, creating a “book ending” effect between the north and south ends of downtown.