

PUBLIC COMMENTS

SUMMARY DOCUMENT

*A summary of feedback from HRM by Design's
Public Review Period - April 7-23, 2008*

Introduction

This is a summary of the issues that were identified in the written public comments received from April 7 - 23, with respect to the proposed Downtown Halifax Urban Design Plan.

HRMbyDesign has seen record participation for an HRM public consultation process, with thousands of residents attending public meetings, workshops, forums, one on one meetings, presentations and public displays. This period of public review is no exception, with 168 written submissions received through the HRMbyDesign office, Mayor's office and the Clerk's office.

These comments, suggestions, critiques and gestures of support will all be carefully considered in preparation of the final report to Council. Several of the submissions consisted of numerous pages detailing suggestions for change or improvement for each of the five volumes. These very detailed comments are not listed in this document verbatim, however their intent is captured throughout the summary of each issues. These detailed comments will be examined on a point by point basis.

Thank you to all project stakeholders that took the time to review our proposed plan for downtown Halifax. We appreciate your interest and active participation in this long term planning process.

Sincerely,

Urban Design Task Force & HRMbyDesign Project Team

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Height

Agree with height

- The height plan shows common sense.
- The height limit imposed by the Ramparts by-law is arbitrary and too restrictive. Does it make sense to sacrifice so much potential just for this one sacred issue? 20-21 stories is a very short building. The market should decide about height not a view from a fort. I love the rest of the plan. Love the Barrington Street conservation area, the form-based codes, the focus on quality design, etc.
- Height restrictions may be too restrictive and prevent development, particularly office development.
- There are many other ways that development can proceed. The issue of height in the major heritage district is extremely important. If it is not addressed it should be enough to derail the whole process. It should not come to that as we certainly need something in place.
- This plan is a very bold vision for downtown which is a long time coming. It strikes a reasonable balance with preserving the views from the Citadel (an important city landmark) and providing reasonable stepped heights and design criteria for new development in the downtown.
- It makes no sense to restrict building heights on a specific area basis as seems to be proposed. The height of the building may well be the difference between a lot being able to be developed economically and making it not worth the money. Building new buildings is an expensive thing to do so it must make economic sense to the developer to do it. If the height is restricted they do not get the floor area they need for revenues and will leave the lot vacant. Look around now at the number of vacant lots we have and you can see anything that may hurt the possible revenues adds to the problem. Uncontrolled development should not happen either but work with the developers and negotiate the heights as economics dictate. I am still not sure why Halifax is so afraid of buildings over 20 stories in the downtown anyway. Where did this magic limit come from?
- This should be the busiest city around when it comes to infill construction but due to the "NIMBY" effect and "we don't want tall buildings" attitude nothing is going on in the downtown. There are sections of buildings on Barrington Street with only the brick facade left that would make a great place to build but due to the hurdles at city hall no one wants to get tangled up in this work as it will not pay. Halifax needs to grow and do it on existing lots downtown so lets not restrict this possibility.
- What type of nonsense would ever suggest adding more squat, ugly low rise building to the capital city of Nova Scotia. We already have enough low rise buildings...its all we have..... and that's why we look more like a quaint fishing village than a proud vibrant city. Every other city would welcome tall modern structures.
- You are making these decisions based on a small minority..... the heritage societies..... most of whom are long past being receptive to change and modernization. Count me as one who would love to see some high rises and level these ugly 3 century old buildings.
- Lots of good stuff in the document, but the 215 foot limit is arbitrary. Let the market (not the ramparts) decide.

- Perhaps it is a good idea to mass lower height buildings in one area, it seemed to work for Paris, etc. Why though would we ever want to cap the height of buildings in the high building areas? If someone wants to spend their money, why not let them? Pretty old buildings are nice but perhaps more often the tall ones get the press which passes on to the rest of the city. A nice building like the Hancock in Boston wouldn't harm us would it?
- While there must be control of where high rise development should be allowed, it is flawed to approve high rise development in a location and then apply an arbitrarily height limit of 21 floors. The market will not support a 60 story building being built, so it won't happen, however the difference between a 21 story building and a 30 story could make all the difference in the world to a developer.
- If developers cannot make some profits at 15 floors or less then lets move that and change it too eighteen floors.
- There is more to downtown Halifax than just the view planes from Citadel Hill. The height restrictions have made Halifax a city for people; an enjoyable place to be in.
- Imposing height restrictions on areas which are not view plane constrained makes no sense (Cogswell interchange, Via Rail lands). Traffic congestion and urban sprawl are major concerns for all residents. Limiting building heights to a maximum of 65 metres or 20 stories is not only going to restrict the economic feasibility of developments, it will do little to curb our worsening traffic congestion and urban sprawl situation.
- Should not limit height without some degree of flexibility. Heights should be to the last floor to allow creative rooflines vs a chopped off effect.
- Penthouses and other similar features should be exempt from height limits.
- 70-foot height limit does not provide sufficient height for some properties. The corner of Bishop and Hollis, neighbouring building is 80 ft from Hollis. The corner of Morris and Hollis; the abutting property (NSPC) is 110 ft which is very close to the view plane and the only other building on the block is over 100 ft tall.
- More height (than max) can be permitted if public open space provided, public benefit, cash contribution to parks, green buildings, etc.

Disagree with height

- Heights are too high. They put the heritage buildings and views at risk.
- Very concerned about high-rises: They steal light, create wind tunnels, remove visibility of the water/sky, etc.
- The two tier height restriction program is not a good idea. Any builder will pay the extra to build up to the maximum building. 165' height on the waterfront is not my idea of a waterfront. The idea of the first max height is okay, but the second height is excessive. Builders could pay off the extra money in 5-6 years and we are stuck with an overly tall building. Stick to the low height and lose the bonus reserve.
- Height limits also are integral to sustainability. They determine how high you should be able to build, and height is the primary factor in large building sustainability in heritage preservation versus the cost of new construction in dollars and GHG emissions.
- The idea of setting specific heights is good. The low end of the maximum range of 35 feet is excellent for some areas. But none of the areas should be 210 feet. At the extreme

a few areas might be allowed to be as high as 90 feet, but the majority the areas should have maximums not exceeding 50 - 65 feet. The new strategy needs to be based on good design and human scale development.

- With regard to construction of buildings downtown-- I believe there should be strict adherence to height restrictions not only for the aesthetics but also in order to foster and encourage pedestrian traffic. Developers interests should not supercede public access and enjoyment.
- I do not support height restrictions. Going higher = greener too. Allow people to invest their money here, trust that they will make it appealing. Their investment will produce prosperity, increased immigration here as more groups are attracted to the downtown core.
- Downtown Halifax was designed in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The narrow streets are not suitable for tall buildings. There are other parts of the city more suitable to tall buildings.
- Walking around downtown makes it clear that buildings at the upper end of your mid-rise category (60-110 feet) can significantly 'chill' pedestrians. The heavy shadows cast on the street on some blocks of Hollis Street, for example, make walking unpleasant.
- Not in favour of buildings over seven stories. Twenty one stories would be okay in another part of HRM, not in the old Halifax city downtown.
- Using existing height anomalies to direct future construction of tall buildings will compound the mistakes of the past.

Specific Suggestions

- Cogswell interchange is the only area where high rise development is acceptable.
- Controlled low/mid-rise height restriction in the area defined in map 6 as the historic blocks, of about 6 storeys.
- Removing the Cogswell Interchange is a good idea, but the height must be kept down so you can see up the harbour from the hill.
- The height limits in the current land use by-law should be reinstated.
- HRMbyDesign's plan is deficient in recognizing that it places constraints, height limits and contradicts the context in which certain buildings exist. This situation presents itself with properties fronting on Granville and Sackville Streets. These properties will suffer a back alley syndrome and will become economically unfeasible. Due to the height limits being inequitably placed on these properties, and the inability to achieve bonusing by design, any new development will be difficult. This will translate into enormous loss.
- Concern with the plan for a certain block just south of Spring Garden Road. The restrictions placed on the area bordered by South Park/Brenton Street and Spring Garden/Brenton Lane are not in the spirit of the rest of the downtown plan. The height restriction of 215' for this area cannot be reconciled with statements made in the plan and surrounding height restrictions that do fit with the statements of purpose in the plan. I believe it would be a great improvement to the Downtown Halifax Urban Design Plan to at the very least consider some sort of reduction in maximum height at the corner of Brenton Street and Brenton Lane.

- It is outrageous that HRMbyDesign, designed by Toronto experts could be considered at all by HRM council - they don't know our history, not do they have any significant heritage left in their own city.
- Strong opposition to the proposed building heights for lands at the base of the northern slope of Citadel Hill between Rainnie Drive and Cogswell Street, and North Park and Gottingen Streets. The north side of Cogswell Street primarily consists of historic residential homes of a maximum height of 35'. The proposed building heights for the Centennial Pool lands and the corner of Cogswell Street and Rainnie Drive, as described in your Plan, are 75' (8-9 floors) and 50' (5-6 floors), respectively (Map 7 in the Plan).
- It is not clear if the heights given on Map 7, Volume I are the pre-bonus heights or the post-bonus heights. This should be clarified.

Precincts

- The Gottingen boundary should not be so far north. That is Gottingen, not downtown.
- Precinct 4 - bike lanes? None mentioned but would be great.
- Why has the trinity church site located on the corner of Cogswell & Brunswick street been removed from the study area?
- Excited about the development concepts for the former interchange lands and the promotion of the transition from the North end to the Downtown (where the former legion lands are located by the Citadel). The promotion of mixed use concepts in this area will be a great catalyst for further redevelopment in this area.
- **Precinct One:**
 - “Permit Tall and Slender Towers” How determined? i.e. what sized towers would be possible on Cunard block based on modeling?
 - Why are HPA's land excluded from the strategy?
- **Precinct Four:**
 - “ 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” How Integrated?
 - “ PlazasMost Significant is at the terminus of the Grand Promenade,” Please proposed define boundaries?
 - “.... Substantial new high-density residential developments will help to balance the mix of uses in the Precinct” Where is the Residential anticipated and how many units?
 - Prohibition on surface parking lots? Total prohibition or is grade level parking in support of appropriate use possible?
 - Please define “reasonable amount” of sunlight penetration?
 - “Have East West Streets continue to the harbour?” Will HRM be purchasing the land?
 - “ensure stand alone heritage properties are enhanced through complementary surrounding development” How would this be interpreted in the context of the Robertson Store and the QLP concept?
- **Precinct Eight:**
 - Why do the objectives for east-west streets differ between precinct 4 and 8?
 - Vol 1. Section 3.2.3- Pedestrian Weather Protection-

- How does the proposed draft enable pedestrian weather protection along the North-South Axis of the Harbourwalk? Critical to supporting mixed use commercial during four seasons.
- Council will enable the protection of the North End community by removing “The North End Gateway” (section nine) from this phase of implementation. Low income residents always suffer most in these big plans. To allow as-of-right construction in section nine will prevent the necessary input from this whole community. The North End is a diverse area with affordable housing. This needs to be protected and should be exempt from the first phase of HRMbyDesign.
 - Substantive concerns surrounding inequities created by the proposed Plan that affect individual properties. Need to ensure that all properties receive the proper designations and do not suffer due to any ill-conceived designation, oversight or negligence that may have been planned and discussed behind closed doors and without the input required of such an undertaking.
 - According to the LUB Fact Sheet Pre-bonus and Maximum Heights Maps (ZM-3 and ZM-4 respectively), Precinct #8 has been assigned a pre-bonus height of 160’ and its maximum height would appear to be unlimited. For reasons which are not clear on the face of either the proposed DHSPS or the Design Manual, although 1874 Brunswick St. is located in Precinct #8 it has been singled out to receive a special lower height designation. It is *not* within the Citadel viewplane. I respectfully request HRMbyDesign reconsider the 70’ limitation placed on 1874 Brunswick St. and instead make it consistent with the balance of Precinct 8 and the vision for the revitalized Cogswell area.
 - Precinct 5, the Barrington Heritage designation would become effective with the adoption of the HRMbyDesign Plan. Not only will all properties in that designation be limited to a 70’ height limit, but the Granville St. frontages and Sackville St. properties, would receive the same 70’ height limit and thus be designated to failure. The property located at the corner of George St. and fronting on Barrington St., across from Grand Parade and City Hall, the bookend on Barrington, has received a 90’ height limit.
 - Any statement or belief that the incentives provided by HRMbyDesign to the Heritage District are equivalent to bonusing is false and unfounded. HRMbyDesign is punitive in the way it deals with improvements to buildings within the precinct. Sharing in the bonus system and much greater flexibility should be shown with respect to height behind the recognized façade and 10’ setback.
 - With the large area designated as commercial in the Cogswell Street area a "nighttime dead zone" could result. I believe a pedestrian oriented "Residential Corridor" running through the centre of this area would greatly assist in creating a vibrant north/south linkage.
 - It seems to be the view of most that the key to the rejuvenation of Barrington Street is the residential use of the upper floors. There are relatively simple techniques that could be applied to deal with the current impediments of fire safety and the provision of "units for the disabled".

- Precinct 9 should be removed as a precinct of the downtown or simply slated for no more than 4 storey buildings to conform with the vision of Gottingen Street that was defined at the Gottingen Street workshops.
- Volume 1, Map 2 and Volume 2, map Section 2.8 erroneously includes the opportunity site bounded by Gottingen, Portland Place, Brunswick and Cogswell as part of the downtown. These errors should be corrected to avoid confusion.
- The realignment of Cogswell St. as illustrated on the Concept Plan misses an opportunity to have what could be a grand boulevard terminate in a view to the harbour framed by the two Purdy's Wharf towers. Why not imagine removing the Purdy's Wharf parking structure (a poor use of prime waterfront land anyway) and having Cogswell St. continue in a straight line right to the waterfront?
- The north end community will be particularly affected by this plan. The heights are way out of character in this mid-sized city and I don't see how skyscrapers will be filled - suburbanites like their big houses and lawns. This may suck the little life is left out of Gottingen Street. High towers replace one barrier (the interchange) between north and south end with another.
- It appears that the proposed magnificent waterfront development Queen's Landing which received a 98% approval rating after a 6-week open house presentation may no longer be viable under the proposed policy amendments.

3-D Model

- What we and Council need now, before we go any further, is a 3-D model of HRMbyDesign's Central Business District according to the maximum allowable and bonus-able height and mass specifications in this final plan.
- How many residential units have been modeled for the Waterfront Development Corporation's Lands to meet the growth objectives?
- A 3D representation of what the maximum build-out of the downtown could look like would be a very useful addition to the Plan documents.

Development Approvals, Appeals & Design Review

- With regard to the appeals process, I would like to see the public or a group have the right to appeal the Design Review Committee's decision.
- The proposed development approvals process through site plan review must be severed from the plan.
- There is no option to renegotiate with a development agreement? What if someone wants to build a six story gem?
- As of right heights promote economic gain, not preservation of city context. With the staff approval process and design guide we enhance this preservation but does not promote innovation. We need to develop for proper reasons not capital gain and to promote innovation in the city's design.
- The point of as-of-right development is to set standards, require developers to meet them, then either disapprove or approve their proposals based on those standards. With

as-of-right development there will no longer be public appeals to oppose or modify development proposals. However, while the “Downtown Halifax Secondary Planning Strategy is the primary policy document used to guide decision-making for development and investment within downtown Halifax” and “Five Year Review[s] shall consider amendments.” Policy I-13 explains that amendments may be considered by Council at any time regardless of the schedule for reviews. In other words, developers may appeal to Council. The public may not, except every 5 years.

- Concerns about the process that will be in place after acceptance of the plan. Who is going to decide what constitutes "good design?" What recourse will citizens have if a truly outrageous or hideous project is proposed and yet we no longer have an appeal or review process? Who is going to be in charge, and what will be their qualifications? To whom will they answer?
- Our heritage designated properties and historic sites must be protected by public input in the planning process. HRMbyDesign it would appear, removes the public input from the planning process.
- Particularly approve of the suggested by-right zoning for height and bulk, and the idea of design approval by a design committee.
- If HRMbyDesign removes the abundant red tape that is slowly killing a once vibrant downtown Halifax, then it's a step in the right direction.
- Council shall stipulate that under the new strategy, Site Plan Notification for adjacent properties of at least 30 metres will be included. Council could choose not to require notice, and this limiting of input could be rationalized by referring to the public participation that recommended the new guidelines.
- Applaud this [new approach] as little good comes out of the current system of endless appeals which serve to inhibit creativity, and polarize the communities who are for and against particular built forms. No agreement however with removing the public from the process. An appointed committee will fail to heed the desires of the public at large simply because the various components of Halifax’s citizenry being represented is highly unlikely.
- Policy I-4 deserves to be singled out for its audacious concession to any person with money. “... or where a developer is willing to make a substantial contribution beyond the incentive bonus provisions of this plan, such amendments may be considered by council at any time regardless of the schedule for reviews.”
- Disheartened that an application which proceeds by development agreement which can avoid the strict requirements of the current LUB results in favourable treatment as compared to our Brunswick St. proposal which was carefully designed to adhere to the strict requirements of the LUB. We are not grandfathered and secure no relief beyond the one year grace period contemplated in the *Municipal Government Act*.
- Address transition for currently approved development permits which offers the opportunity to obtain any future advantage, such as density transfers which may or may not be permitted under any future plans, but which may be obtained by virtue of the timing and treatment of the Armour application and other such applications. The application for development and change of land use at the Keith Brewery is another example of specialized treatment of a project. It would appear that if the Plan is adopted,

- without the assignment of maximum heights, it will result in consideration of this project without public comment and allow a building which exceeds the maximum height limitation placed on the lands by the existing land use bylaw.
- By what measure are there too many appeals to the approval process? Compared to what other jurisdictions? Appeals by whom? What were the causes for the appeals? What percentage of the cases upheld the appellants? It is inherent in the development approval process that there will be conflicting views because the interests of the stakeholders are not likely to be the same.
 - Neither the public nor council will be able to change a developers proposal in the future under these guidelines. Once a proposal has been accepted by an approval officer in it will be a done deal, with no further input. When did the planning department receive the right to eliminate feedback from public and their representatives?
 - The following aspects of the incentive/bonus proposals and the design review process (Vol 1, Section 3.3) violate the public need for transparency, clarity, and predictability, and therefore risk bringing the whole exercise into disrepute.
 - a) As-of-right (pre-bonus) height regulations are downplayed in the final report. Map 7/ZM-4 (Maximum Permitted Heights) shows only the post-bonus heights; pre-bonus height map ZM-3 is tucked away at the end of Vol. 3. Since it is map ZM-3 that shows the as-of-right heights, this should be given equal prominence in the report and equal focus in accompanying discussions. The implication is that post-bonus, maximum heights are the preferred targets for development.
 - b) The incentive/bonus process (p.63) and all other exceptions to the as-of-right provisions (including "modest exceptions", p. 64) should be subject to public scrutiny and review. The "scorecard" (p.65) should be included in the plan and open to debate before the plan is approved.
 - A criticism is that the proposed design panel will displace the responsibility of HRM councillors. It should be advisory to the Council, like the Heritage Advisory Committee.
 - The Design Review Committee must include members of the public. Undue haste on implementation will create unfortunate precedents that have the potential to derail the better aspects of plan intent. April 7-23 (2 weeks not 3) is not enough time for informed public comment.
 - More than ever before in Halifax, if this plan is approved, its success would depend on choosing people who will deeply question and challenge staff, developers and the public. People who are independent, unbiased and compassionate, and whose passion and committee meeting-endurance will be to the long-term sustainability, vitality, and grace of the city.
 - Council shall mandate that the new design review panel will be appointed with assistance from the Capital District planning department. The panel should reflect the city's diversity and talent and must include architects of record.
 - How will this committee be selected? Will this committee consider the use of the building in addition to its design? (e.g. if there are many condos for couples, would the committee direct a developer to build more family units?)

- The plan needs to be more specific about the role, structure and function of the Design Review Committee. I believe it makes sense for it to be an advisory or recommending body but there is much more to be said about it in the report.

Heritage Protection & Barrington Heritage District

- Do not proceed without significant heritage incentives to discourage deconstruction of heritage buildings - must have protection against assessment increases for improvements to heritage buildings.
- It is essential to maintain the heritage facade in a block of heritage buildings. Principles for infilling should also maintain the historic character - using the same exterior materials as the other abutting buildings.
- Heritage buildings must be protected both against destruction by developers and by encroachment as well. A two or three storey heritage building surrounded and pinched by high-rises loses its special period characteristics and makes it even more vulnerable to demolition. Where older buildings are private residences, it is extremely hostile to the light, air and outlook of residents to surround them with high, light-blocking, and often wind tunnel-producing structures.
- Heritage is our bait, so to speak. People always end up at the core, so that area has to be treated carefully. It is quite fragmented now and the impact it has suffers from this lack of continuity.
- Heights determined by viewplanes are supposed to protect the integrity and preservation of heritage buildings. Therefore, keep these buildings and make the CBD a heritage district in itself.
- The argument for heritage protection is not just to save a few museum-piece buildings, but for those buildings as models and standards for sustainable, graceful building itself and human community (which includes, but is not defined by, business success).
- I do not see any solid protection for heritage buildings. Rather, just guidelines and then, surprisingly, incentives which allow for more height and mass.
- As keen as we might be on preserving heritage, there also has to be a direction that allows the city to grow and keep up with the rest of the world to define itself as a blend of heritage and progressive thinking. What people see as they enter the downtown defines what they probably think of the area - at the moment, outside of the Waterfront, Citadel Hill and Public Gardens the city looks drab and desperately needs a makeover, lets get out the 60's and 70's and get with the future so we can attract people and business to this beautiful area.
- Another thing I would suggest is that they [heritage buildings] be given an energy audit and methods to insulate etc. be determined. Geothermal heating could be used for heating. If these houses were redone from the inside they could also be re-wired to new construction code leaving these houses safer than before. This would require patience on the part of the city and it requires that these houses increase in value.
- Abandoned, vacant, and underutilized historic buildings are being converted into distinctive, mixed-use venues combining retail, residential, and office uses. Neglected,

but once spectacular, theatres are being restored as new performance spaces. Historic residential districts and neighbourhoods are being reinvigorated. As these transformations take place, historic preservation is being seen as providing tangible benefits to communities large and small.

- Tax incentives for re-use of existing designated buildings has been talked about for some time, as has strengthening control of demolition. I support both but doubt that the political will exists to make either an effective tool. Unfortunately, many of the buildings similar in scale to designated buildings, which contribute to the 'feel' of the area and might well be candidates for designation, will not benefit and may be replaced, leaving the odd heritage building adrift.
- Support for the establishment of the proposed heritage conservation districts and the creation of incentives to help ensure the preservation of heritage buildings in the downtown and complementary development in adjacent areas. The municipality should continue to work towards strengthening protections for these irreplaceable cultural treasures that contribute so much towards making Halifax a wonderful city to live in and to visit.
- HRMbyDesign should include demolition prohibitions for structurally sound and rehabilitated municipally registered heritage buildings until the Heritage Conservation Districts are established.
- Putting high rise buildings on top of and around current heritage properties will not maintain the character of those buildings, or their neighbourhoods.
- The proposals for the Barrington Street Heritage District lack adequate protection for heritage buildings and streetscapes.
- The previously approved Barrington Street Historic District Revitalization Plan (BSHDRP) included clear new policies, stronger demolition controls, adequate stepback provisions, and financial incentives for repairs based on conservation standards. The revised plan has so many deficiencies that the historic character of Barrington Street could be readily compromised. For example, there are no clear policies, very weak stepback provisions, and no conservation standards.
- The Barrington Street Plan needs to have its own height limits.
- Additions to heritage buildings are inappropriate unless there is a large stepback from the roofline of the heritage building and it is subordinate to the heritage building. They must be designed and restored exactly as they were in the original building specifications with authentic materials.
- The Heritage Trust is deeply concerned about the direction taken by HRM by Design. The proposals circulated to the public this month put the heritage of downtown Halifax at risk. The Trust asks the Task Force to mandate a radical reworking of these proposals.
- Map 11 misses some heritage resources, such as the Rupert George House and Neptune Theatre.
- Extend the Historic Properties proposed heritage conservation district to include the northern part of the block between Duke, Hollis, Granville and George Streets, where there are four registered heritage properties, and also the western part of this block, to include the Canadian Bank of Commerce, and also to include the Barnstead Drugs building across Granville Street. The Barrington South district should be extended to

include all of the Brewery property and the BlackBinney House, both municipally registered, as well as the VIA station, which is federally recognized.

- As the city has the power to force building owners to clean up their homes, why can't heritage buildings be restored?
- If the design guidelines set out in 4.3 and 4.4 are incorporated to amend the present Regional Plan policies CH-1 and CH-2, it appears a Founders-Square type redevelopment of our heritage buildings will not be possible.

Sustainability

- Very interesting, but should consider energy conservation a little more as taller buildings ask for more energy.
- How will this help Halifax deal with energy descent?
- This plan does not comprehensively address environmental issues.
- Green, low impact architecture that supports heritage buildings.
- Tall buildings are not good, nor needed. More energy is required for everything - pumping water to sinks & toilets on the 10th floor, heating, sewage, as well as elevators.
- Are there concerns regarding servicing a higher density downtown - providing water, sewage, electricity and addressing environmental/pollution issues that go along with these?
- With climate change being such an important issue, it is good to see sustainable building practices becoming a must have for new developments.
- The higher you build, the more energy you will consume to heat, light and maintain those buildings—this in a time when the cost of fossil-fuel power is steadily rising in both price and atmospheric damage. Are there requirements for sustainable building in these documents? While the site plan approval process will require major developments to incorporate sustainable design in their plans, those plans will be measured against the intent of the sustainable design guidelines contained in the Land Use By-law.
- The plan ought not give more attention to heritage than to environmental sustainability both in terms of design of buildings, streetscapes and transportation alternatives. The plan in its final form should fully embrace and mandate standards relating to protection of existing building fabric, green building design, including LEED certification, active and public transportation systems, and energy conservation. The downtown will not reach its potential unless HRM is prepared to reign in and redirect the development energy that is currently devoted to non-sustainable commercial and residential projects outside of the core.
- HRMbyDesign talk of future plans and general guidelines is not enough; the plan must fully embrace and mandate standards relating to:
 1. protection of existing building fabric,
 2. green building design, including LEED certification,
 3. active and public transportation systems,
 4. energy conservation, and
 5. social housing initiatives.
- How will HRM be proposing to adapt the elevation of Lower Water Street to

- accommodate predicted sea level rise?
- Sustainable development is mentioned. Is tearing down existing buildings that can be restored not in keeping with our reputation as a city that recycles? Is building high rise towers with a huge carbon footprint justifiable now? Is filling our landfill with debris from old buildings sensible?
- Be bold and make developers and planners work with HRM with strong environmental standards firmly in place.
- The environmental concerns being discussed by the Ecology Action Centre in regards to the HRMbyDesign guidelines are well-considered and are worth immediate consideration. This plan makes environmental provisions and recommendations that would have been impossible a decade ago. They point us in the right direction and should be made stronger in the future.
- Silver is the third level of the LEED program, or 50% on their scale, and not a very high standard to shoot for. Additionally, how many municipal buildings are planned for the area in the next 20 years? The plan proposes to adopt a “green building scorecard” for new developments, and a high enough score may result in a height bonus for the building. What is the standard that must be reached? Will a scientific method be employed to ensure the green measures are enough to mitigate the environmental costs of adding height which include materials, and energy needed to sustain those heights in the long term? Is there a minimum standard of sustainable design for all new developments? Policy UD-17 makes reference to such a thing, but details of the standards are not revealed. A LEED platinum standard should be adopted for municipal buildings and LEED silver for all other buildings. Why allow or promote anything but the best for our downtown?
- HRM by Design provide that all new construction should have non-negotiable targets which:
 - retain existing sustainable infrastructure;
 - use low embodied energy materials;
 - use easily recycled materials and components;
 - use locally sourced materials; and
 - design with low operating energy demands.
- Will the current water, sewer, electrical and transportation infrastructure support such a dramatic increase in population or commercial use?
- All private sector projects should be required to submit an independently determined LEED score to HRM and to the proposed Design Review Committee.

Public Open Spaces

- What makes you think that any of these beautiful streets will ever be built?
- Let the new economic engine for HRM start in a new green space.
- A system of boardwalk walkways along the waterfront would be an essential and natural fit and be an organic transportation corridor.
- Waterfront access for the public and views left open of the sea.

- Great park/walk spaces but upkeep is crucial. Who is responsible? Garbage, repairs, maintenance.
- World class aquarium on the waterfront and accessibility for the public.
- Like the multi-use boardwalk around Halifax Harbour and Bedford Basin from York Redoubt to Eastern Passage (with connections to trail systems as they encounter them to the west, north and east!
- Curious on how and when the street plantings and open space plan will be done since almost all of the green space on the proposed plan already exists.
- More discussion regarding Spring Garden Rd. as a green street linking the lower downtown with the Public Gardens. Speaking of sunlight, where are the shadow studies for the Public Gardens relative to the recommendation for building height for that western edge of the downtown. Have they been done?
- Why not use this history as a guide to create visual impact in our downtowns? Don't use just statues of people, use statues of events. We have a history of being a port city so create a fountain that depicts the history of the boats for example. The Halifax explosion impacted this city tremendously, why not commemorate this event with a statue or a group of statues?
- There should be some open space and landscaping requirements including sidewalk improvements.
- The focus on encouraging and intensifying green space is sorely needed as so much of what exists is disappointing. I am referring to the pretty but uninviting Grand Parade, Cornwallis Park which is too open to the traffic to be comfortable, and of course the Public Gardens which are in reality meant mainly for tourists as evidenced by their restrictive access.

Views & Viewplanes

- Protect the harbour views at all costs. Protect harbour views whenever possible - this is what makes Halifax stand out from the other cities - you can't see the harbour in Edmonton or Calgary. The harbour is a part of the heart and soul of this city - it is therefore a cellular part of its residents. Encourage well designed new buildings around it.
- The substantial and significant view of the water from Citadel Hill should be preserved (not just glimpses between new buildings).
- Protect the remaining harbour views from the walkway around Citadel Hill which, if you have ever walked it, are few in number. Established view-planes should be considered minimal.
- Views of the water are also important at the harbour's edge. Already Purdy's towers have been allowed to deprive the citizenry of the full-scope of the waterfront.
- Maintaining and enforcing the viewplanes flows into the final and equally integral matter of what could be called compassion: 1) for the people who are affected by the viewplanes (like vulnerable North End communities 2) for the health and livelihood of people who live and will live and work in and under them; 3) for the environment itself as a living presence, the buildings that stand in it, and, in a phrase, the grace of place.

- It will be a travesty if what remains of the view of Halifax Harbour from Citadel Hill is encroached on even more. There is a big difference between a view that shows a substantial amount of water and one that shows only rooftops and Dartmouth.
- One of the best viewpoints, a spot where more than 800,000 visitors visited last year, is the Citadel. Not only is this an important historical site, it offers the best location for a spectacular look at our magnificent harbour.
- With the "by design process' in play this may be a good time to consider 'tweaking' the View Plane legislation. In this regard I believe staff should be given the authority to apply a 5' discretionary variance. With this tool I believe much more responsive and vibrant ground floors could be induced, particularly with Halifax's sloping streets.
- Pleased to note in the draft plan that current height restrictions for buildings on Sackville and Brunswick Streets have been extended to Rainnie Drive and that the recommended maximum height will remain 60 feet with a possibility of 75 feet in overall height with appropriate setbacks in accordance with section 26A of the Land Use By-law (July 2007). Encouraged by references in the plan to ensuring appropriate development framing Citadel Hill, the preservation of important views between the Citadel and the Harbour.
- Building heights in the downtown should be lessened to allow for that connection from the vantage point of the road [from the Citadel to the Harbour], wherever it is still possible, particularly in the view planes.

Design Guidelines

- Beautiful new architecture is needed.
- Improving development is key - better design, more attractive, more walkable.
- The design looks excellent. Let's stay focussed on executing the plan.
- Hope that new buildings on both sides of the harbour are beautiful - future heritage.
- Pleased that the team is in favour of beautiful buildings but would like to know how the Council would define acceptable architectural design and what sanctions would be put in place to prevent the kind of monstrosities that are currently represented by the slab-like Scotia Square towers and the oppressive Aliant building.
- Support the idea of giving developers more security that plans will be approved so long as standards are met and also strongly support more sustainable planning and design among those standards.
- Very encouraged by the consistent emphasis on design quality with so many good examples of what that really means and in particular the sections on the design of public spaces, the importance of public art and yes much progress on articulating and insisting on green building design and responsible environmental stewardship.
- We need more buildings that are exciting and interesting to define our city as growing and international. The curved building that had been designed for the area where the old Tex Park building was would be an excellent example of new and exciting design that would help to define the city as a growing cosmopolitan place to visit and live.
- Design Manual should prohibit the inclusion of flat top roofs in future building design requirements.

- HRMbyDesign should incorporate building design requirements which stipulates accessible and easily renewable service systems and infrastructure to extend the service life of buildings to the anticipated durability of structural elements.
- There appears to be very little attention to the idea of encouraging exciting modern buildings beyond the notion of there being “signature landmark buildings” .
- The diagram identified as “Full Build Out Condition”, identified at page 24 of the draft Design Manual, should be removed pending final approval of a go forward plan by Regional Council.
- The design manual needs major revision.

Built Form

- There are almost endless opportunities for tall buildings that would obscure the already limited views from the Citadel, Halifax’s character depends on its unique site, long compromised by poor planning. Setbacks above a certain height would not ensure the sense of space, views, and pedestrian friendliness that are sought. If you want people to move back into central Halifax, you must make it a full-service residential area (grocery, hardware stores) not a large scale architects model.
- It is all very well, and undeniably important, to talk about the "pedestrian experience." On the other hand, we must also consider the old city of Halifax in its entirety, and understand that there is great value in preserving what remains of its human-scale buildings. "Setbacks" of higher buildings placed on top of the old is simply not good enough.
- Setbacks from the boardwalk should be large.
- Further clarification on the proposed specific “Waterfront” provisions of the strategy relative to:
 - Lot coverage: what are the coverage restrictions?
 - Setbacks: dependent on building width by what formula? (i.e. what width or configuration of building would require a 65' setback?)
 - Building Height @ waters edge
- Why are the curtain wall restrictions on the waterfront lower than those for other public spaces?
- Why do the set back requirement for the waterfront not apply to the HRM’s Property-ferry terminal and Nathan Green Square?
- Set back and massing provisions don’t seem to consider irregular property lines on waters edge? East/west orientation of buildings may not result from proposed policies. May result in the development of wider building fronts on boardwalk interface....
- Policy UD-21 “*allow for flexibility in building forms that reinforce the east west orientation of development.*” Please elaborate on what is meant by “Flexibility”
- A 20 ft rear yard requirement would make some development unfeasible. If every project had a 20 ft rear yard setback, there would a 40 ft strip of land that would be unusable. Almost all projects have a underground parking garage and this type of setback could threaten the efficiency and capacity of a underground parking.

- Most lots in the downtown are smaller and topography is almost never flat, the rules set out may not work for smaller lots.
- Market should dictate size of dwelling units.
- Built-form regulations requiring a set-back will not work for some properties that have been designed to in the past to have the building built on the street line.
- Good design and planning always requires flexibility. A few trial projects should be completed to refine the new rules.
- On a more technical issue a 10' floor to floor height for storey count was mentioned at the information meeting. In this regard I offer the following comments:
 - For residential users the 10' floor to floor is appropriate.
 - For office space of concrete construction 13' is more realistic.
 - With new code changes and higher buildings steel construction may become more prevalent and 14' to 15' may be a more appropriate allowance.
- Have a mechanism that does not make any site in the downtown undevelopable, nor puts a heritage building at risk for the sake of 50-80 feet of better natural light or sky view at the street. This does not have to be universal. It occurs to me that there are exceptions to every rule and this should be recognized. As most of you will know, the original city lots were 40' x 60' deep with 55' wide streets. In places where there are still lots of a similar depth, usually with heritage buildings, insisting on a 10 foot set back at the 50-60 feet height above street, takes nearly 17% off the developable footprint and would make redevelopment to save these heritage buildings impossible.
- This approach also doesn't work for the former Kelly & McCara/Barnstead property behind the Royal Bank, on Granville Street . The first 20' of the Kelly site is only 20 feet deep. If there is a 10 foot setback it would be nearly impossible to develop a workable plan. The impact of the same loss of area, to the whole frontage, applies as well to the Halifax Club.
- The HRMbyDesign plan makes no provision or requirement for design specifications and construction which will positively allow for adaptive re-use. Without such provision many buildings are inevitably single-use and then 'disposable' after original design use has ended. HRMbyDesign should require building use conversion plans and reviewed adaptive reuse capacity for all new structures proposed in the regulated area.
- Please ensure that schematics provided on page 3 of the Land Use By-Law (Fact Sheet) are consistent with the proposed legislation. To our knowledge, there is no requirement to step back from the street line at 35ft. in height.
- A previous draft of the Secondary Planning Strategy document promised performance standards for wind. These were not found in the current draft. Such standards are needed.
- A number of the street wall heights on Map 8 of the SPS also do not match the heritage buildings.
- Finally, there are vacant (parking) lots waiting for development and I wonder how these gaps in the built areas will be made to contribute to a vibrant streetscape. It seems to me that these small (and large) parcels can contribute as much to the healthy and attractive look of downtown, at street level, as the signature buildings we tend to focus on. How will HRMbyDesign encourage the knitting together of gap-toothed blocks?

Land Use

- With regard to the mix of residential and ground floor bars in the Spring Garden Road and Barrington Street areas. Close noisy bars earlier than 11:00 p.m. to let people sleep.
- Mixed use and mixed demographics, affordable housing are all key.
- The architectural concepts and ideas are especially well thought out, although careful consideration on how they will be enforced should be considered. If they are done as a non-statutory guideline, then their practicality becomes questionable. Suggest caution when considering ground level commercial uses in certain corridors. Many of the concept statements talk about promoting walkable retail uses which are street oriented, however without proper provision in the Land Use Bylaw, preventing things like offices (which may not be part of the vision at grade) from creeping in becomes difficult.
- On "Primary Commercial Streets", businesses with a high degree of walk-in pedestrian traffic are required on the ground floor. What are the "Primary Commercial Streets"? What about the businesses that exist currently on the ground floor of these streets that do not have a high degree of pedestrian walk-ins?

Incentive Bonusing

- Idea of bonusing is great but making sure the quality and visibility of them is high will be key in their success.
- Public consultation is particularly important where "incentives" and "bonus" are concerned - the potential for back room abuse is enormous.
- Idea - as part of the height incentive - along with day cares - provide amenities for the other end of the age spectrum - assisted living services for elderly to stay in their homes.
- The bonus system for height restrictions must be scrapped. Developers will obviously go for the higher of the two, unless the rate is extravagant. Either way the buildings along the waterfront are too high. Having buildings 11 or 12 stories tall close the boardwalk will be totally claustrophobic and will block out all sunlight from the boardwalk.
- Except for the narrow Barrington Street Heritage Conservation District (HCD) and the potential Historic Properties and Cornwallis Square/Southern Waterfront HCD's, what surprises me throughout these documents are the incentives (but not requirements) which will allow height and mass bonuses simply for doing what's right to begin with.
- Perhaps offering opportunities for active gardening and horticultural activities could be one of the amenities in the incentive bonusing list.
- The current bonus heights criteria does not seem like it will work.
- The decision to word certain policies weakly is most obvious in policies regarding the environment, public space, and social justice. In fact, there is nothing in this plan regarding social equity. There is lip service to the possibility that a developer could, if they want, choose to incorporate affordable housing in exchange for being allowed to build higher. Of course there are a number of other, possibly more appealing options that may also be pursued.

- How much choice will a developer have with regard to density bonuses? Can the developer choose from a range of options or will they be given a specific bonus based on current community need (e.g. if there is a lack of affordable and/or family housing will a developer be required to create affordable/family units)? Would it be appropriate to create a bonus hierarchy where, for example, affordable housing receives priority over public art projects? I think public art is valuable, however I would not be comfortable seeing a developer contribute to an art project if affordable/family housing were lacking.
- There must be adequate enforcement of the incentive/bonus process to ensure that the agreed enhancements have actually been carried out.
- The draft policy should be amended to include an option for an “up-front” cash payment by a developer/builder if he or she is not in a position to reach agreement on the incentive options contained within the draft MPS. The figure should be based on a per square foot charge for each additional square foot of space to be approved above the pre-bonus height entitlement to a maximum of \$10,000 per floor.
- Better articulate what will be considered to be a “substantial” contribution along with the degree to which additional height might be considered (and where).

Transportation & Parking

- You have considered transportation as very important.
- The transportation plan is crucial - Barrington Street needs to be decongested.
- Excellent public transportation, bike lanes, etc. Demise of the car for inner city movement.
- Hopefully large truck traffic from the port will be decreased or eliminated, however definitely a difficult problem.
- Always interested in the development of a great downtown for citizens and visitors. Improvements to public transportation to bring people to and from downtown without the use of cars is an issue of interest.
- Transport: focus on getting site-specific transport for major employers. Example, medical sites could be a focus to get workers to work and pick up those coming off shift.
- Are there plans to re-orient vehicular traffic in order to allow for pedestrian only streets within the downtown core?
- The harbour is underused - the fast ferry is required now with expansion to Herring Cove and Shannon Park and Fairview/Rockingham ASAP. Get on with the fast ferry and getting the 18 wheelers out of downtown streets by a) using the rail cut even double layer where too narrow, and/or b) smaller ships to transport containers to Woodside across the harbour and onto the 18 wheelers and highway connector there. Just do it! Some larger employers could get tax breaks for operating shuttles from the Halifax Ferry terminal to place of work.
- Concerned about transportation routes into the city core, as we need to reduce the number of cars and trucks into the downtown. A city like Auckland, New Zealand has free buses in the downtown. Cut fares in half so more people will take the bus. The buses are a public utility not a profit generating operation.

- Essential to eliminate large container transport trucks from the downtown (Point Pleasant Park family) by building a depot outside the city (Hammonds Plains?). The containers would be loaded onto trains and moved to the outer facility on the existing tracks - it would eliminate all of the big truck pollution.
- Very glad to see a focus on discouraging our continued dependence on cars. Really like the ideas of eliminating open parking lots and hiding parking garages behind more pleasant streetscapes. Improving public transportation is very important, as is encouraging the public to use more active methods of transportation. Glad to hear the plan's focus is on making the downtown more walkable.
- Transportation will need to be greatly improved, its scheduling and structure to the scheduled needs of workers.
- There is a need for affordable public parking close to the waterfront. If you expect families/tourist to come downtown to use these new spaces, they have to park.
- The way truck traffic is acknowledged as a problem in precincts 1 (South Waterfront, i.e. Westin/Cornwallis Square) & 2 (Barrington South Monuments) and then disappears in precincts 4 (Lower Central, i.e., Maritime Museum neighbourhood) and 7 (Historic Properties) is simply miraculous! Not surprisingly, there is no solution to this problem in these documents. There are just measures like sound proofing to mitigate the impacts of truck traffic on downtown streets as part of a yet to be issued Downtown Halifax Transportation Functional Plan in which solutions will be sought.
- Mass transportation (motorcoach) lay bys/alcoves and motorcoach parking for visiting motorcoach tours needs to be addressed. Rail transportation into the heart of the city - albeit not as easy an undertaking, this solution to reduction of dependence on cars and reduction of traffic is paramount to our future as a productive and forward thinking city.
- What investments are being proposed by HRM to support the structured parking recommendations?
- Covered parkades, you can even have all parking in the outskirts of the area and have frequent shuttle buses bringing people around.
- The HRMbyDesign team seems to have assumed that most new jobs would be filled by new residents, who would walk to work. This is simplistic and fallacious reasoning, and is not supported by empirical studies elsewhere. Downtown housing appeals to only a small sector of the housing market, and in addition would be too expensive for most families. A majority of additional downtown employees would continue to commute by car or bus, and a large proportion of them would live outside the Regional Centre.
- No surface parking, encourage underground parking structures.
- I am encouraged by the efforts the plan makes towards active transport as I have always found the peninsula to be easy to navigate on foot and bike, although parking my bike is always a problem.
- The transportation section is filled with weak language that has the potential to result in no action being taken to further the public transit system.
- One quickly comes to the conclusion that it is the developers to whom this plan panders and not those of us who might actually take transit.
- What is the range and average amount of money that cash in lieu parking will generate?

- How will the population be served without continually driving out of the community, defeating the purpose of settling them there in the first place? The new residents will be as vehicle dependent as those in the suburban sprawl.
- HRMbyDesign should incorporate plans to divert container traffic intended for outside Metro and transshipping between Halterm and Cerescorp terminals to rail cars or rail piggy-back. HRM by Design should recommend to HRM and other stakeholders to investigate a truck - rail container marshalling yard to limit ship-truck and truck-ship transitions (e.g. in Bayer's Lake (using the existing Chester spur-line).
- The cash-in-lieu of parking provisions rely on a Transportation Functional Plan and minimum parking standards that have not yet been designed, much less approved, and which could take years to implement with no guarantee of success. Moreover, the report states that "until the parking strategy is complete, there will be no requirements in the DHLUB that new developments provide parking". This will inevitably compound the problems faced by those who work, live, and shop downtown today and could cause parking problems to spill out into surrounding neighbourhoods.

Public Consultation

- Implementation - public must be involved!
- Council is risking its credibility by pushing through an implementation plan that excludes the public and has not been subjected to sufficient scrutiny. Regardless of the consensus reached on intent, the public must be involved in implementation in general and specific aspects of particular sites.
- This is a very exciting project. The lack of student and youth representation at this presentation is disappointing and would like to encourage more diverse outreach strategies.
- Would have really enjoyed a more involved, enthusiastic and participatory presentation format, but do appreciate that there has been an effort throughout the process to incorporate certain community representatives.
- This process compared with that of Bedford where community input prevails over that of developers, is not legitimate. For example, in its recommendations, height restrictions are too generous, heritage buildings are not protected. Your premises (some) are flawed; the economy should not lead the social. This is about people and our habitat.
- Thank you for the opportunity for some input. I have attended most of the public meetings of HRMbyDesign and found the process interesting if a bit frustrating as I am not convinced that a true cross-section of HRM society has been heard.
- What is this survey on tall buildings downtown based on (Greater Halifax Partnership)? Who was surveyed? Halifax should be fixed up, and *then* go on to plans for more buildings. Some, if not all of the heritage should be preserved.
- Is there a time line for development of design ideas for other parts of HRM (downtown Dartmouth, Woodside, Quinpool, northern peninsula)? Delays could lead to the design process being overtaken by events. Thank you for the opportunity to provide input.
- From a procedural fairness perspective, the time frame provided for reading, understanding and communicating the consequences of this Plan, is extremely tight.

Considering the major changes that will result and the effect this Plan will have on so many stakeholders, it is completely unreasonable. Of particular concern is the advice that the proposed Downtown Halifax Land Use Bylaw (DHLUB) is not yet available for public review. Granting only fourteen days to comment on five volumes of documents, which are admittedly incomplete and not backed up with the requisite bylaws and design manuals, undermines the objective of the public consultation process.

- With a little more care and discussion with stakeholders, the public and especially owners of affected properties, a fair and equitable plan for the future of downtown Halifax could be designed.
- Excellent process - visionary. A win for HRM.
- This is an important process that has the potential to increase the liveability of Halifax and Dartmouth and therefore will play an important role in decreasing greenhouse gas emissions. The various HRMbyDesign sessions have been informative and I appreciated the enthusiasm of the presenters!
- In its rush to get this proposal before council, the HRMbyDesign team has chosen to not have any workshops on the topic of implementation. Such deliberations were part of the original timetable, but seem to have been dropped. They have chosen to create a whole set of implementation guidelines without so much as a word of public input.
- Please consider separating these documents into two dividends - principles and details. It is important to understand and support this plan overall but there is also significant detail that has not had public review and must be digested before detailed implementation. So two phases, general and detail. Great vision, great process.
- Well done - I know this has been a long process. I hope that many if not all of your visions will bear fruit!
- Recommend to you and to your task force that you recommend to Council that they develop a revised set of time limitations for speakers at the formal public hearing in the interest of a full public hearing – and perhaps in the light of the limited public involvement of the public during the HRMbyDesign process. Suggest that there be a process of individuals and societies and groups being permitted to book a fixed amount of time greater than five minutes by a certain date before the hearing, by providing the HRM Clerk a letter with a list of topics that they wish to address, and you might wish to suggest that the absolute limit in the size of a pre-booked spot should be 30 minutes.

Policies

- Current regulations (eg. Parking) need to remain in place until new ones are designed.
- By-law should limit empty lots to 6 months maximum. And parking at grade is not an acceptable use.
- I am in favour of preserving the existing Municipal Planning Strategy.
- Please elaborate on the municipal infilling controls referenced.
- How does this draft plan relates to regional growth allocations, regional transportation patterns, and the Regional MPS. I feel that the wider context has not been considered sufficiently, and as a consequence the draft Downtown Plan foresees and encourages too many jobs and too many people in the Halifax downtown.

- Many policies which have specifics are incomplete, inappropriate, not comprehensive, conflict with the Plan's intent as laid out in the preamble Introduction chapter or defer to the as yet theoretical results of parallel or future processes.
- The Regional Plan should not be amended except to strengthen it. Volume 5 of the package mentions the subject of seven proposed amendments to the newly adopted Regional Municipal Planning Strategy. There are no details. However, numerous provisions in the proposed new Secondary Planning Strategy and Design Manual do not live up to the commitments in the Regional Plan.
- There are many excellent policies in the existing Secondary Planning Strategies that appear to be missing in the draft.

Plan Monitoring

- Active citizenship in the monitoring and review processes, per the HRM 20/20 Vision and Values document submitted on Oct. 3, 2000 to HRM Council and citizens by the HRM 20/20 Organizing Committee.

Affordable Housing

- Where are you going to find 16,000 people who can afford \$500,000 condos? There is no program for affordable housing and doubling the height allowance on almost all buildings will drive property values sky high.
- My worry is that Halifax is becoming a city for the well-to-do only and these form the minority. Let's offer affordable housing for everyone's earning status.
- Does the plan envision strengthening building requirements to ensure buildings and public spaces are physically accessible? With an aging population, this will be key.
- The idea that apartments downtown will be affordable to all is somewhat utopian at best.
- The plan institutionalizes the gentrification of the two areas of downtown that are currently affordable: the South end of Barrington Street and its surrounding area, and the north end of Cogswell Street. Both are identified as possessing the possibility of becoming prestigious neighbourhoods, completely ignoring the fact that they currently are desirable to the working class, students, and others who cannot afford to live in any other area of downtown.
- How will the design guidelines ensure that there is adequate affordable and family housing? Is there a percentage target for all new units?

Economic Development / Funding

- Who pays for the plan - the park spaces, pedestrian space, maintenance of streetscapes and condo owners.
- The growth targets in section 5.1 Pg. 85- what percentage of the 16,000 residents and 3,000,000 ft of office space is on the waterfront?

- Pg. 88 calls for intergovernmental and coordinated approach to ensure strategic investment in public facilities. - Cost sharing? Cooperative approach after HRM unilaterally determines requirements? Province, Feds, nor Crown Corps represented on steering Committee? Why are the mandates of Provincial and federal agencies recognized?
- No reference to the funding required for redevelopment of Cogswell infrastructure.
- Support growth initiatives for the downtown core. The core is dying but people believe in it and want it to succeed.
- It is interesting that this project claims that the city is on the cusp of tremendous growth and must prepare for this by creating downtown space and encouraging people to populate the peninsula, while at the same time the Imagine Our Schools group is using population figures that say that although most of our peninsula schools are at 80%+ capacity now, we must close at least 3, since the future will not have enough children to populate them. The municipality is also saying that building a library is not a priority, nor are there any funds available to expand sports facilities for families.
- The [NSBI] evaluation showed that within five years (i.e. by 2012-13), there is an identified need of approximately 2,800 new, skilled employees in the financial services and IT sectors in the downtown Halifax core. Combined, these employees will create a requirement of 550,000 sq ft of office space, or approximately one new 22-storey office building with the same footprint as a Purdy's Tower office building. The type of office space our clients demand is very precise and includes specifications like Class "A", LEED-standard, etc.

In addition, by 2017-18 (or 10 years from now), NSBI clients are projected to create an additional 4,800 new skilled positions in downtown Halifax. These positions will create an office space requirement of 970,000 square feet or approximately 1.75 new 22-story office buildings with the same footprint as a Purdy's Tower office building.

- After a detailed review of the capacity for new modern Class A office space, it appears this Plan with the height control and heritage development control policies will not meet the reasonable requirements for capacity annual growth of 100,000 to 150,000 sq.ft annually over the next 10-15 years.

Streetscapes

- Walkability - priority routes should be planned. Do a pilot project of small car-free zones to demonstrate viability. Maintain focus on walkability. Yearly monitoring of walkability. The European experience demonstrates commercial success, ie. Munich. Halifax is most like a European city. Many side streets are just parking and then converted to pedestrian streets, so start with small pilot projects and let the public show its approval.
- Of course civic pride would help, training people to respect both new and old buildings and streets is a challenge.

- In favour of pedestrianized streets. Currently there are times when it is difficult to wend one's way along the sidewalks of Spring Garden Road's commercial area because there is so much foot traffic and Argyle is difficult in the summer for the same reason. Other cities can close off streets to through traffic making them largely pedestrian precincts. Halifax should do the same for Spring Garden and Argyle. East of the Citadel the suggestion seems to be that the north-south streets should be pedestrian friendly (or at least priority as such) and the east-west streets, with the exception of George-Carmichael, should be for traffic.
- In some cases, encourage the widening of the sidewalk. Most sidewalks in Halifax are narrow.
- The reference to keeping the existing pedways as part of HRM's marketing as a convention city should be removed, as it does not coincide with the plan's vision for vibrant streets.

Waterfront

- A wall of 160' buildings could extend along much of the waterfront in precincts 1 and 4, in an area that is now publically accessible and human in scale. There is little evidence of the "stepping-down" that is referred to repeatedly in the report. Given that this area is particularly vulnerable to sea-level rise and storm surge effects, as vividly demonstrated in September 2003, encouraging infill of waterfront lots (p.39) in those areas most at risk seems contradictory to the recognised need to mitigate these factors (Vol.1, p.18).
- Downtown precincts: Lower Central Downtown - totally opposed to the designation of this part of downtown as being open to high rise development on the land between Lower Water and the Harbour. Use of this land for high rises is rationalized by the idea that small block size does not exist there and therefore does not need to be preserved. This is not an acceptable rationale. These areas from Water Street to the waterfront must be limited to lower height limits.
- Keep the waterfront for public parks.
- There should be a ban on obstructing the waterfront both physically and visually on the adjacent streets.
- The plan references municipal capital planning to achieve open space objectives. Will HRM be contributing to the capital cost of the development of the prescribed public lands on the waterfront?
- It is recommended that the specific provisions (P-6 and P-7) of the draft pertaining to land under the control of the Waterfront Development Corporation be prefaced by a statement along the lines of "Working in collaboration with the Waterfront Development Corporation (and Halifax Port Authority?) the municipality will....."
- What is the set back from the board walk? Lots I hope.
- The sites on the waterfront, south of Bishops Landing, north and south of Morris Street, have a 25-foot as-of-right limit and a policy providing for low-rise residential or mixed

use. Buildings should be limited to seven storeys, consistent with Bishops Landing and Waterfront Place.

- The Maritime Museum site should be listed as an opportunity site- currently it is not.
- The reference to water lot infilling for public access is a red flag. Infilling is good in city blocks, not shorelines. HRM is trying to revive the health of its harbour and this is a step in the wrong direction. The map of vacant and underused lots in the downtown indicates to me that infilling the harbour is unnecessary as long as space exists on land. It also sets a bad precedent by putting the needs of developers and consumers over those of the ecosystems that we rely on.

General Comments

- Great stuff! So positive. Let's get on with it. Some highlights for me - bringing people downtown, good design standards, focus on transit.
- I am very impressed with the progress being made. I am generally in favour of the overall plan and I look forward to seeing it come to fruition.
- Images look good.
- I like what I've seen but I'll be disappointed if HRM does not commit the resources to make it happen. They should jump start in a significant way.
- I like the plan. I like that you will encourage a variety of housing costs and that our wonderful heritage will be preserved. Sounds like you have learned from the mistakes/oversights of other world cities.
- Unleash our potential. Rush forward with this please!
- It's time to make our city alive and vibrant, we are losing a lot of citizens, to go to other cities offering jobs and better places to live. Act now not later or it will cost us more than you think. Just don't raise taxes without seeing progress.
- I'm impressed by the plan.
- Clearly this plan is well thought out, I look forward to implementation. Clearly arts, people, business will be served.
- You guys are doing terrific work. I applaud your efforts and I am excited about the outcomes. I fully support this body of work and I will be at Council in June to let them know as well. Cheers!
- Interesting and positive approach to building heights and design. I feel that it would have been beneficial to mention considerations of how these plans will be impacted by winter weather. Images of beautiful foliage are nice but not realistic for all times of the year. This issue should be constantly considered in evaluations of current sites and in proposals for new ones. That said, the proposals are very pleasing and impressive.
- This plan is fantastic. Long overdue and essential to this city's future.
- To much focus on height and not enough on land economics and sustainability.
- Boards might be more educational if divided into more segments with less information per board and larger print and individual lighting for each board.

- Looks good so far. Work very hard to protect our core vision from becoming watered down.
- Have there been any proposals to provide for public restrooms (toilets) in the overall concept? For walkers and tourists these contribute to a better downtown.
- We hope that the plan will be enacted as is.
- If implemented I think this initiative will contribute to making Halifax a great(er) city. It certainly seems to put the focus on what's most important - design, streetscapes, vibrancy etc. Best of luck!
- As a 22 year old and recent grad from Dalhousie University, I get absolutely frustrated with what seems like a lack of effort to retain grads in Halifax. Only recently have we been beginning to try to retain students with quality, high paying jobs. We have to keep this momentum, but we need more floor space and better infrastructure to actually attract quality employees to Halifax. HRMbyDesign is an excellent example of how smart design along with public consultation, can work to make our beautiful city an attractive place for employers and employees alike. It promotes sustainable development and protects heritage which is what we need to keep my generation. I don't want to leave.
- Great work! Looking forward to seeing a lot of positive changes in the near future.
- I'd like to think that what you offer will take place. Sigh! Walking down tonight I felt the concrete presence of Scotia Square and opposite it on Duke, the threatening brick of the Metro Centre. It is going to take more than architectural sketches with lots of trees in full leaf and park benches to truly make Halifax more welcoming.
- My overall impression is highly favourable. The concept appears to embrace a downtown with a higher population density, mixed use, more pedestrian friendly character - in short, a more European city.
- Love the plan, fantastic work, congratulations to all involved. Good luck with implementation.
- Excellent plan - I can't wait for HRMbyDesign recommendations to become a reality. I've lived in other cities who have adopted these strategies - it works!
- I fully support HRMbyDesign's goals. Which is ultimately to achieve economic prosperity. People should understand that tall buildings are necessary in order to achieve economic growth. If we don't go up we'll go under, that's my opinion. My generation is the future of this beautiful city.
- While I like much of what I hear, I still see great potential for error.
- Plan as it stands is too general to be truly effective.
- I would like to thank the HRM by Design team for all the care and creative thinking that has gone into the development of their proposals.
- Please recycle the main branch of the library (when it is replaced) so that the HRM archives can be relocated to a pedestrian and student friendly area of HRM.
- If today's Council accepts this five-volume Final Draft of HRMbyDesign's plan for the Central Business District as is, I believe they will be enacting a design which deeply discounts and compromises both heritage and sustainability as the essential values, first, of our history and, second, of our time.

- I am very excited about the most recent version of the HRM By Design Plan and have been pleased by the process.
- I applaud your efforts on this major undertaking. It seems extremely well thought out.
- My hat is off in commending city management for the great job they have done relative to street side cafes. They really add to the experience tourists and locals alike have in Halifax.
- I hope you don't mind some comments from a former Haligonian and I am encouraged by the work your group has done. Great job!
- If I were a land developer I would think that Santa had come. The proposal does not contain the voice of the people. However it does have the sound of huge profits for a select few. I can't express my disapproval enough. Shame on the council if this is passed.
- We picked up a couple of copies of your mega-document yesterday and I had a quick skim last night. It is a truly impressive body of work and suggests a much improved future for our downtown.
- While I'm sure we, the bickering classes, will find ways to try and "improve" the final outcome, you've brought us light years ahead of where we were. Thank you for that. I'm looking forward to the upcoming presentations. Best of luck.
- As I have mentioned previously I look forward to the implementation of HRMbyDesign, I think it is an exciting possibility for our city. I just hope that it will be approved quickly so we can get on with making our city the beautiful vibrant city it has the potential to become.
- As a lifelong resident of Downtown Halifax, I'm becoming increasingly concerned with the long term viability of our city if something isn't done to limit the influence of special interest groups, specifically the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia, over future design and development. There are other voices and opinions which are being drowned out by these groups and need to chance to be heard. Acknowledging and protecting our past is important, but so is allowing our city to grow in a manner which benefits all HRM residents.
- The intent and spirit of HRM by Design overwhelms me with excitement for Halifax and its citizens in all aspects.
- I believe it is an excellent plan and will help spur development in the downtown core while maintaining a vibrant, livable space.
- At the outset I would like to both thank and congratulate you on a thoughtful and clear planning strategy prepared in a short period of time.
- The HRMbyDesign proposals incorporate many thought-provoking suggestions. Congratulations on your attempt to be open to public input and to balance conflicting interests.
- A huge amount of hard work has obviously gone into HRMbyDesign and you hope to effect beneficial changes in the downtown. But it seems telling that a project that exceeds the height limits proposed for the surrounding area (by the Brewery) is pushing ahead this week. Scotia Square and the Maritime Centre were once exciting projects; would anyone now suggest that building them was not a mistake? Intensification of use

need not mean abandoning the scale that has characterized Halifax for much of its development history.

- First let me say how pleased I am as an Architect and an advocate for good planning, since my first year in Architectural School (1971), that we are finally at the point where we may have a workable Plan to ensure good development and growth along with better Heritage protection and good Urban Design! Architectural Guidelines. It is long overdue.
- I like some aspects of proposals presented there. I want to see all the vacant lands and parking lots developed to improve the downtown streetscapes.
- Congratulations to the HRMbyDesign team. As the experiment begins, let us all watch carefully for those things that strengthen, but also weaken our community. HRMbyDesign is good. Let us accept Andy Fillmore's invitation to abandon the status quo and move forward. But let us also continue refining the plan in years to come.
- I read your document with great anticipation. Since leaving Halifax I've noticed the difficulty development, especially in the CBD, has experienced in getting through the process, specifically in relation to heritage groups.
- Please support the Ten Reasons Why HRM by Design Puts Halifax at Risk developed by the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia. Protect the view plane and the characteristics that this brings to our beautiful city.
- Committee members should reflect upon the difficult position that you have created relative to receiving meaningful comments from community and industry stakeholders.
- Hope that the document will become a positive encouragement to well designed development in the downtown, and not become a narrowly restrictive set of constraints.
- After 30 years of "contract zoning", we support the need for clarity and certainty when it comes to the development of the city core as the Atlantic regional centre for commerce and culture. It is certainly a monumental task that has been handed to the committee and their dedication to the project is indeed commendable.