

# CENTRE PLAN

## Community Design Advisory Committee

2017-03-29

# PRESENTATION

## The Centre Plan

- » Our Work to Create the Plan
- » Impact of Feedback

## The Adoption Path

- » Within the Regional Plan
- » The Future of the Existing Plans
- » A Standalone Centre Plan



# CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY DESIGN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- » The Community Design Advisory Committee has met 24 times with staff from Regional Planning to advance the Centre Plan.
- » The committee effort is estimated to exceed more than 1,000 hours in preparation and participation in direct committee work, not to mention additional efforts to attend public engagement events.
- » The Committee has helped ensure the clear communication of concepts and policies throughout the process and has provided important guidance to the development of the Draft Plan.

# REGIONAL MUNICIPAL PLAN

First adopted in 2006 and updated in 2014, the Regional Plan provides a legal framework for future growth and provision of services to 2031.

Regional Planning is about strategically integrating land use planning with other municipal services and initiatives. The Regional Plan highlights:

- » Predictable, fair, cost-effective and timely decision-making
- » Development patterns that promote a vigorous regional economy
- » Regional Centre as the focus of economic, cultural and residential activities
- » Make the most effective use of land, energy, infrastructure, public services, and foster healthy lifestyles
- » Protection of open space, wilderness, natural beauty and sensitive environmental areas
- » Integrated transportation systems in conjunction with the above principles

# THE REGIONAL PLAN DIRECTION

- » RP+5 update to the Regional Plan adds enhanced direction on a new plan for the Regional Centre in Chapter 6.
- » The opportunity to encourage development that is consistent with the Regional Plan while driving capital investment in the Regional Centre is paramount to achieving goals of the Municipality
- » The direction includes a Vision Statement and Guiding Principles for the Centre Plan Project developed through consultation with the public through the original plan and the RP+5 Update.

# STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING GOALS

- » Permitting new housing inside established communities where possible and practical
- » Incentivizing development where it is desired through clear, comprehensive planning and processes
- » Improving access to public transportation in areas where population growth is expected and desired



# COST OF SERVICES

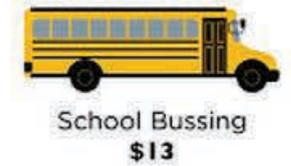
## Suburban

City's Annual Cost, per Household

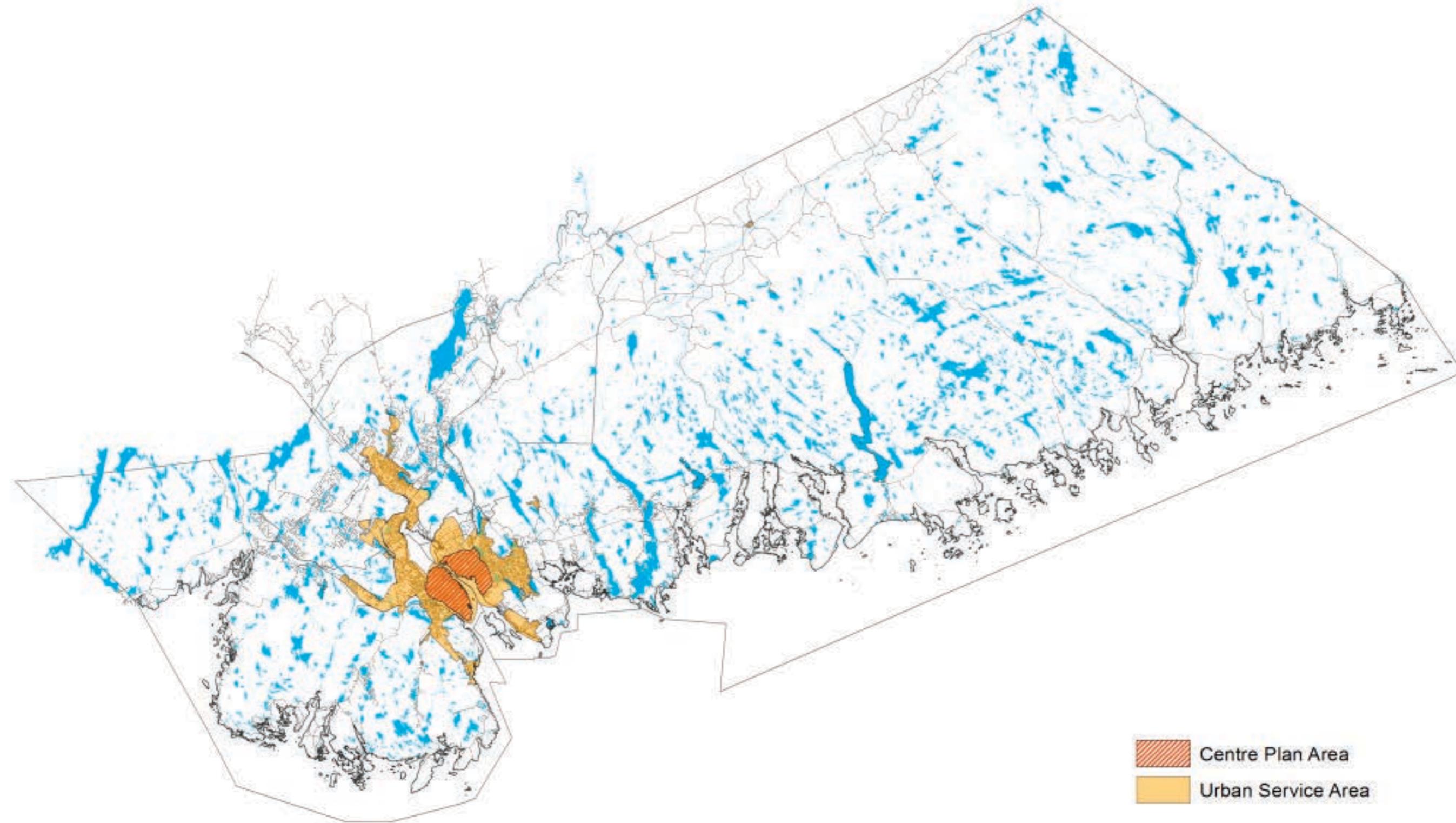


## Urban

City's Annual Cost, per Household



# GROWTH TARGETS

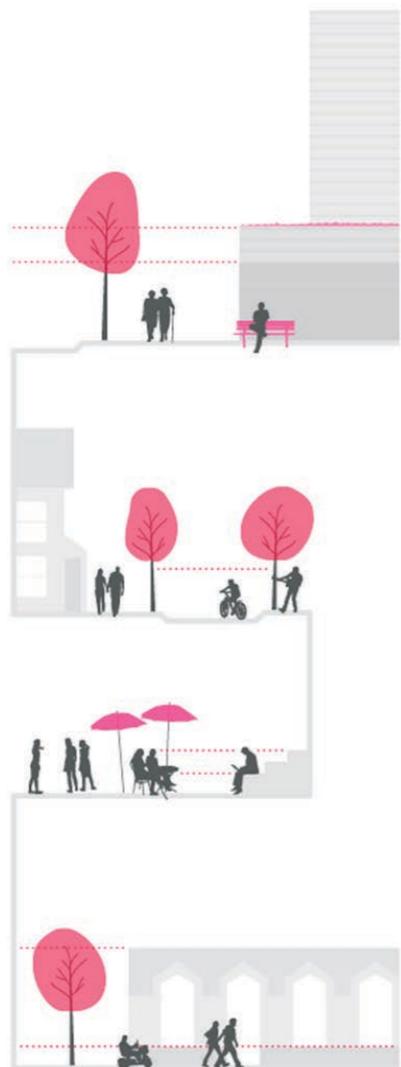


# CORE CONCEPTS

The Centre Plan is divided into four chapters that state the Goals, Objectives, and Policies that will guide staff in realizing the Core Concepts of the Plan.

The four core concepts are:

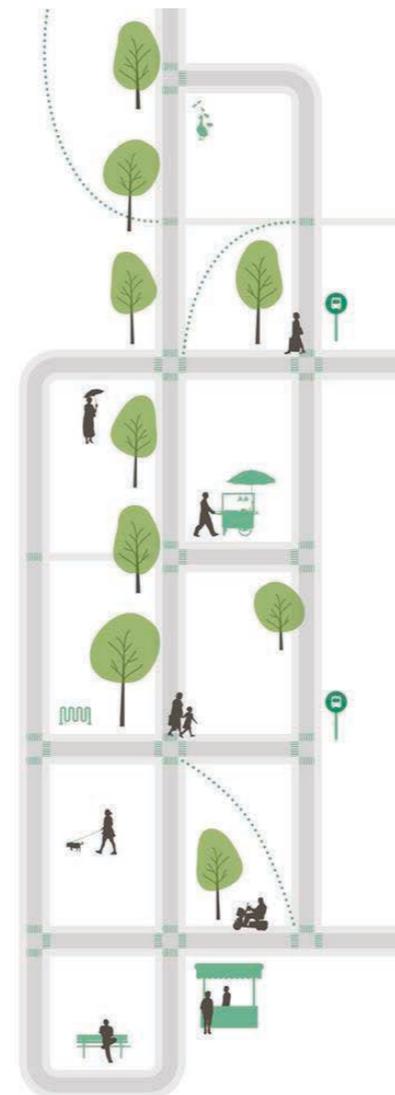
## Human Scale Design



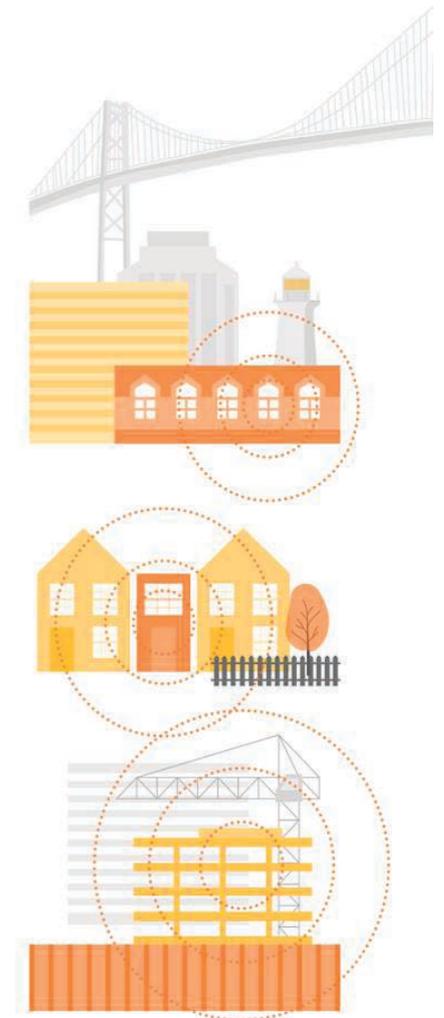
## Complete Communities



## Pedestrians First

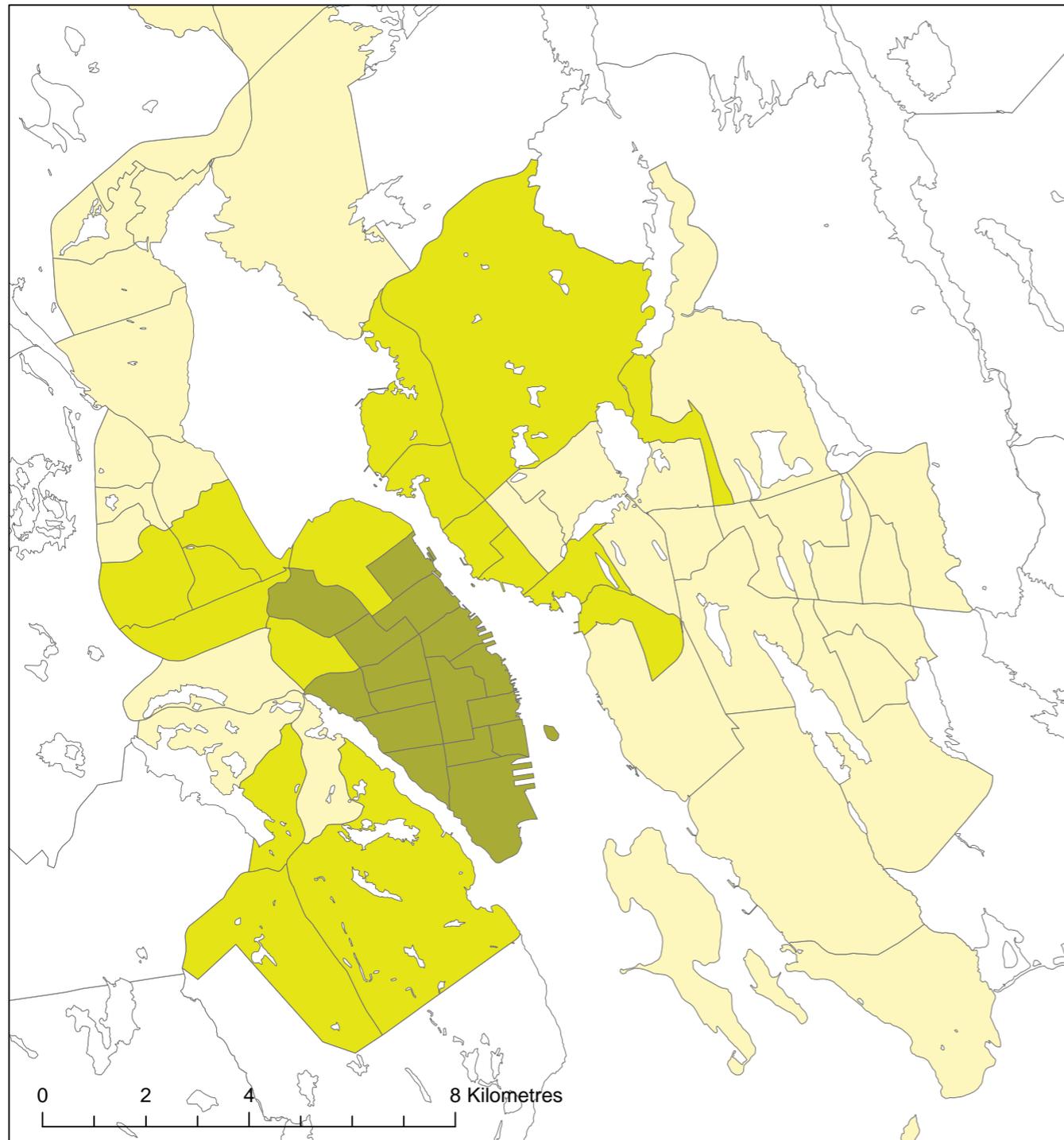


## Strategic Growth



# THINGS WE'VE LEARNED

## Transportation Methods



### Legend

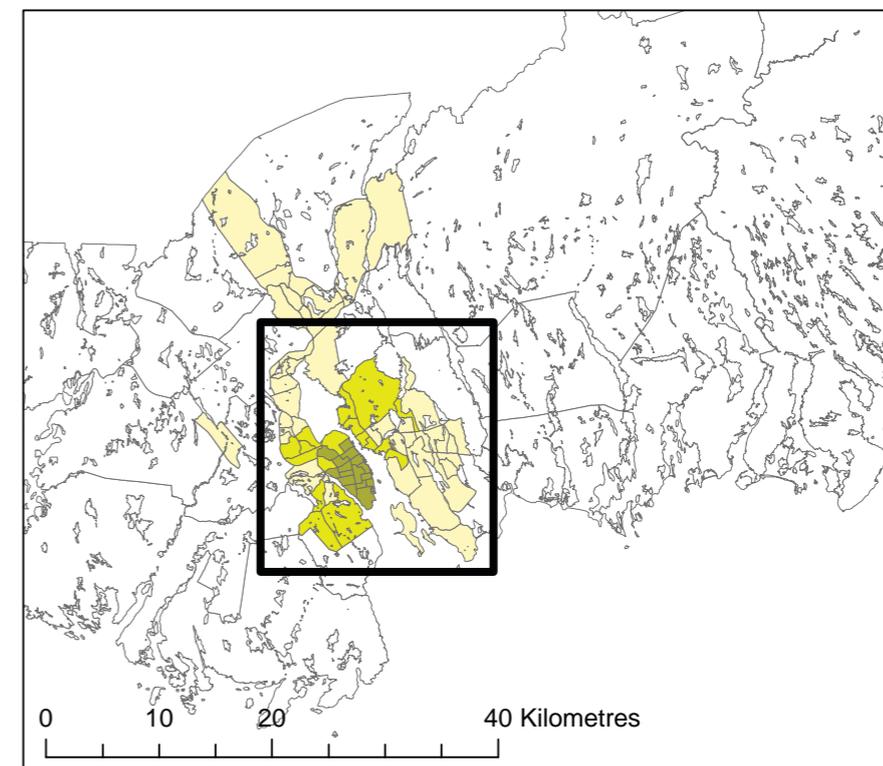
- Active Core
- Transit Suburb
- Auto Suburb
- Exurban

### Halifax

*Transportation Method T8*

Active Core: 14%  
Transit Suburb: 18%  
Auto Suburb: 44%  
Exurban: 24%

Census Tract and Population Data: 2011 Census  
Census Tract Classification: 2006



Queen's University School of Urban and Regional Planning  
Principal Investigator: David Gordon  
Research Assistant: Isaac Shirokoff



# THINGS WE'VE LEARNED

## Community Profiles & Analysis

- » There is a 63/37 split between the Halifax side & the Dartmouth side.
- » This population lives within 46,446 residential units
- » The area with the 2nd highest median household income is in the Southdale area of Dartmouth
- » Renters make up the majority of the population (62%) and in some areas as much as 80% of the population



### Green Network Plan

Using principles of landscape ecology, the Green Network Plan will identify an interconnected network of open space including areas important for sustaining wilderness and biodiversity, lands for sustainable forestry, agriculture, and resource extraction, coastal and cultural landscapes, public parks, community green spaces, and urban squares and streets.

The outcome of this work will be a strategic vision and decision-making framework for future open space protection and use.

The Regional Centre is studied within the Green Network Plan and the timeline for completion of this plan is Fall of 2016. There has been significant data and direction available for export to the Centre Plan process.

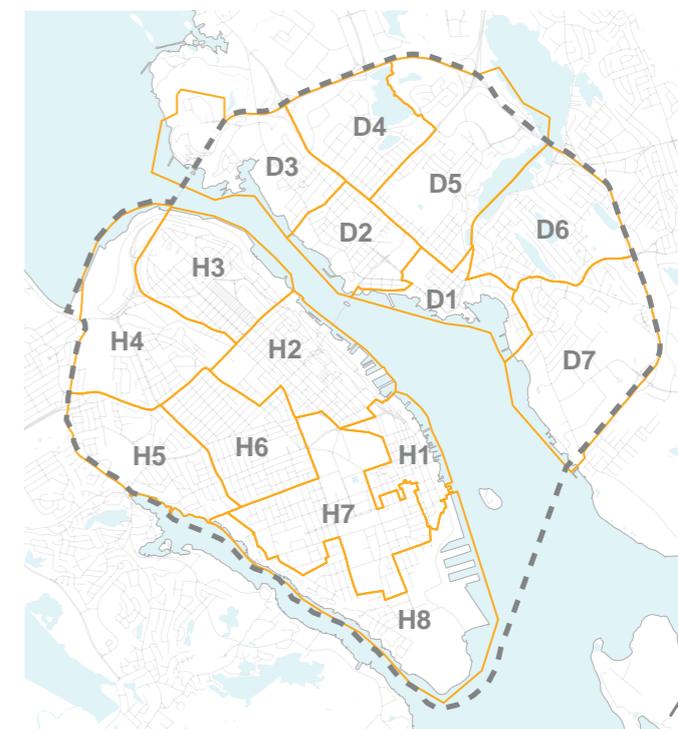


Open Space Themes used to guide the Green Network Plan

### Community Profile

A community profile has been prepared for the Regional Centre including the latest available census and other administrative data. The Regional Centre was broken down into 15 sub-geographies based on boundaries of Census geographies. The profile provides a statistical overview of the following characteristics:

- » population demographics
- » education levels
- » rate of government transfer
- » unemployment rate
- » median household income
- » rental rates
- » housing payment amounts
- » type of employment
- » transportation mode
- » distance travelled to work



Regional Centre Sub-geography study boundaries

\*more information on all studies can be found at CentrePlan.ca

# THINGS WE'VE LEARNED

## Housing Needs Assessment

The goal of this study is to identify the housing requirements in the Halifax Regional Municipality based on housing supply and demand, with a focus on the housing gaps across the CMHC housing continuum.

- » 39.7% of households in the Regional Centre spend more than 30% of their income on housing (renting or ownership)
- » 42.9% of households are 1 person households
- » In terms of the age of the stock in the different areas of the Municipality, almost three quarters of the stock in the Regional Centre (74.4%) was built prior to 1980 and only 3.5% built between 2006 and 2011 through the original plan and the RP+5 Update.

## HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Project Overview



The **Housing Needs Assessment** identifies housing requirements in the Municipality based on housing supply, demand and estimates of future supply and demand trends over five- and ten-year periods. It is also intended to inform service providers, landlords, private developers and other housing stakeholders.

What is the nature of housing in the Regional Centre?

### Population Characteristics

- » 2011 total population of 97,190 // 24.9% of HRM
- » A 2.2% population increase from 2001 // much lower than HRM's 9% growth overall
- » 13.8% senior population (aged 65+) // the only area in HRM where the senior population decreased between 2001 and 2011
- » Home to 27.5% of HRM's Aboriginal population in 2011
- » Home to 31.5% of HRM's African Nova Scotian population in 2011

 **97,190**  
total population

**2.2%** ↑  
FROM 2001

 **3.7%** ↑  
FROM 2001

**48,920**  
total households

### Household Characteristics

- » 48,920 households // representing 29.6% of households in HRM
- » 78.1% of households are one- and two-person // compared to 65% average across HRM
- » Couples with children represent 21% of households // compared to 25.3% of households throughout HRM
- » Non-family one-person households represented the largest share of household types (42.9%)
- » 9.9% of households are led by an immigrant // compared to 8.8% of all households in HRM
- » 11.0% of households contain a person with a disability // compared to 12.6% of all households in HRM
- » 35.9% of households are homeowners // compared to 62.8% overall in HRM

# THINGS WE'VE LEARNED

## Density Bonusing Study

This study reviews existing policy in the Downtown Halifax plan area and also examines the potential for new policy to allow bonusing in the Regional Centre.

- » 1,937 units are under construction in Regional Centre
- » 32,395 square meters of additional space added in Downtown Plan area
- » \$1,397,554 of value in Public Benefits in first 6 years of Downtown Plan

## THE DENSITY BONUSING STUDY

Project Overview



A *Density Bonus* is an increase in built area in exchange for public amenities or benefits that contribute to the livability and proper planning of the neighbourhood affected by the resulting increase in density. Municipal permission is given via pre-zoning or site specific agreements. The **Density Bonusing Study** reviews existing policy in the Downtown Halifax plan area and examines the potential for new policy to allow bonusing in the Regional Centre.

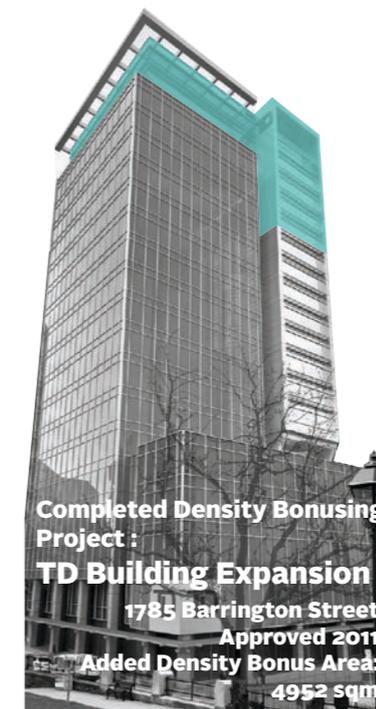
### Background

Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) has been practicing density bonusing in Downtown Halifax since 2009. Until recently this was the only area where the HRM Charter permitted density bonusing. The last round of amendments to the Charter has enabled HRM to extend this practice to the Centre Plan area that comprises the entire Halifax peninsula plus Dartmouth inside the Circumferential Highway.

**This study analyses the program to date through some simple questions:**

#### 1. Is HRM getting the best value out of density bonusing as a planning tool?

After examining seven incentive or bonus zoning agreement completed or in progress in the past five years, this study concluded that the current Density Bonusing practices are not as effective as they might be in obtaining public amenities and/or benefits that contribute to the livability of the community. The property value created by allowing increased height and density was significantly greater than the value of public benefit realized.



#### 2. What can be learned from other municipalities that have had successes and challenges using density bonusing?

A detailed assessment of density bonusing policies and practices in 14 cities in Canada, the US, the UK, Australia and New Zealand was conducted, and observations were sorted into nine categories. These observations were transformed into principles for effective density bonusing programs, and finally, recommendations were tailored to the current situation for Halifax's Downtown and Centre Plan areas.

# THINGS WE'VE LEARNED

## Local Piped Service Capacity Issues

- » Provide capacity analyses of the local sewer pipe infrastructure in the six pockets and to provide preferred solutions to the identified capacity issues.
- » This Local Wastewater Servicing Capacity Analysis (LoWSCA) analyzes the capacity of the local infrastructure within each areas and downstream to the nearest Regional Infrastructure.



# ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Direct input from stakeholders including residents, business owners and developers have made the Centre Plan stronger.

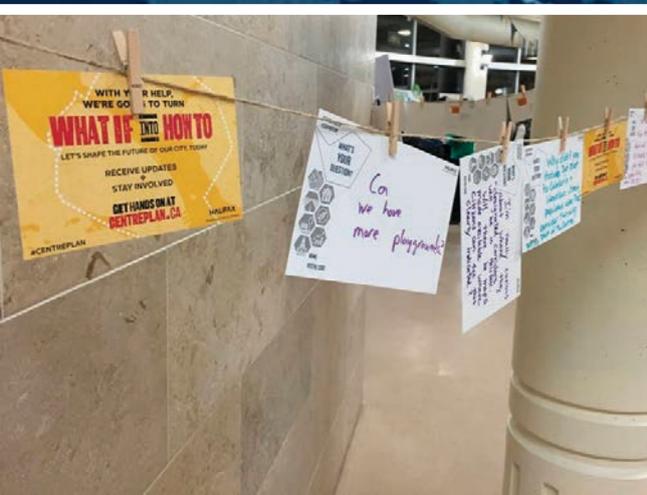
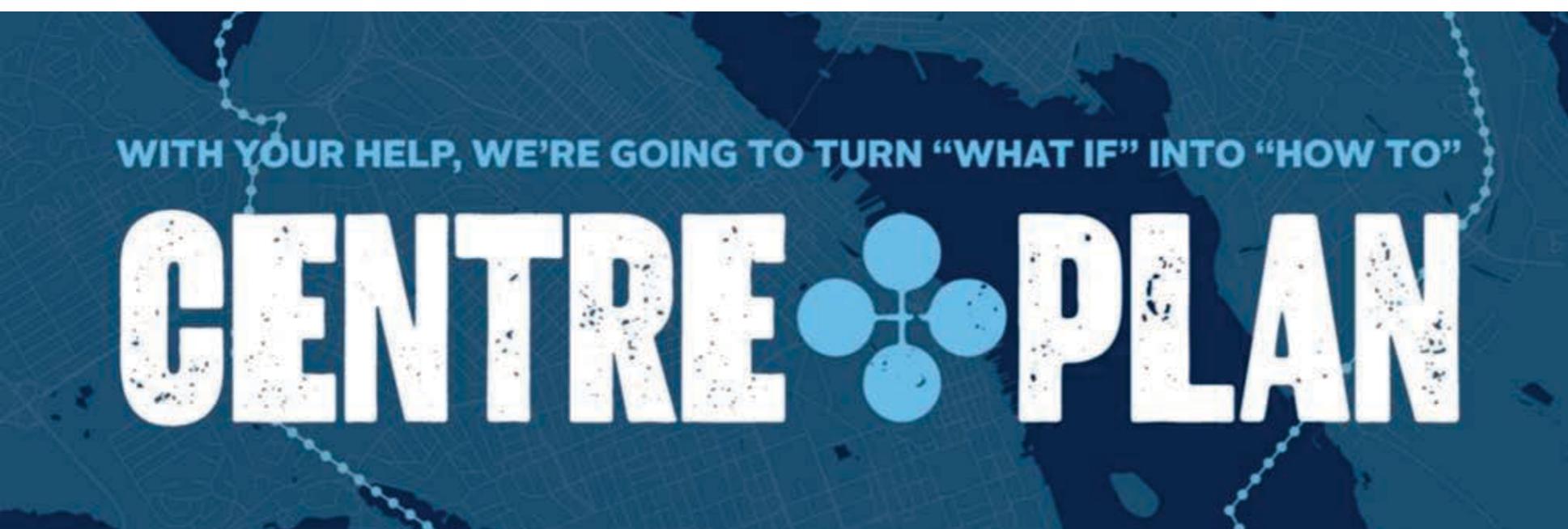
Thousands of residents and key stakeholders were reached through digital and in-person engagement including:

- » 40+ meetings with land owners
- » 30+ stakeholder update meetings
- » 10+ Centre Plan open houses and workshops
- » 10+ pop-up sessions at community events
- » 2 designer workshops
- » 1 developer update



# ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

- » CentrePlan.ca
- » ShapeYourCityHalifax.ca
- » Planifax video series
- » Social media (Facebook, Twitter)

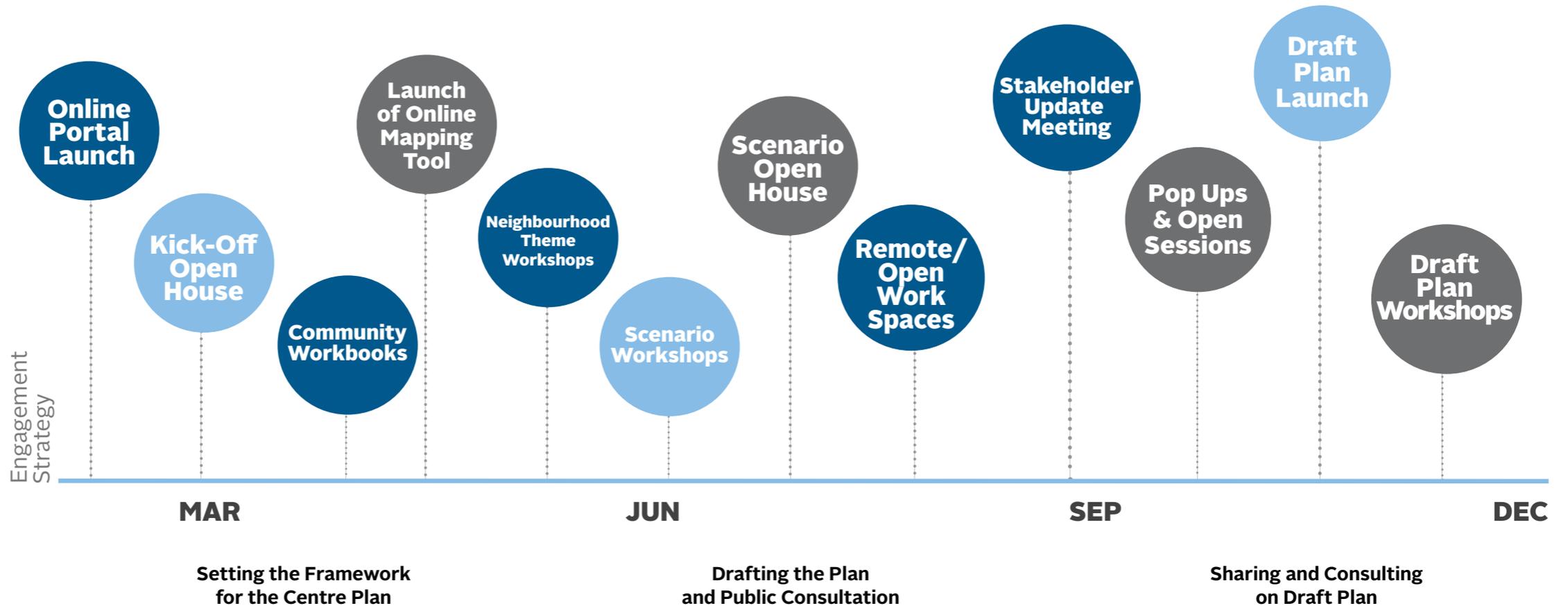


# ENGAGEMENT TO DATE

2015

Stakeholder Outreach and Technical Studies:  
Setting Centre Plan targets

2016



# THEMES



LAND USE & DESIGN



CULTURE & HERITAGE



HOUSING



JOBS & ECONOMY



MOBILITY



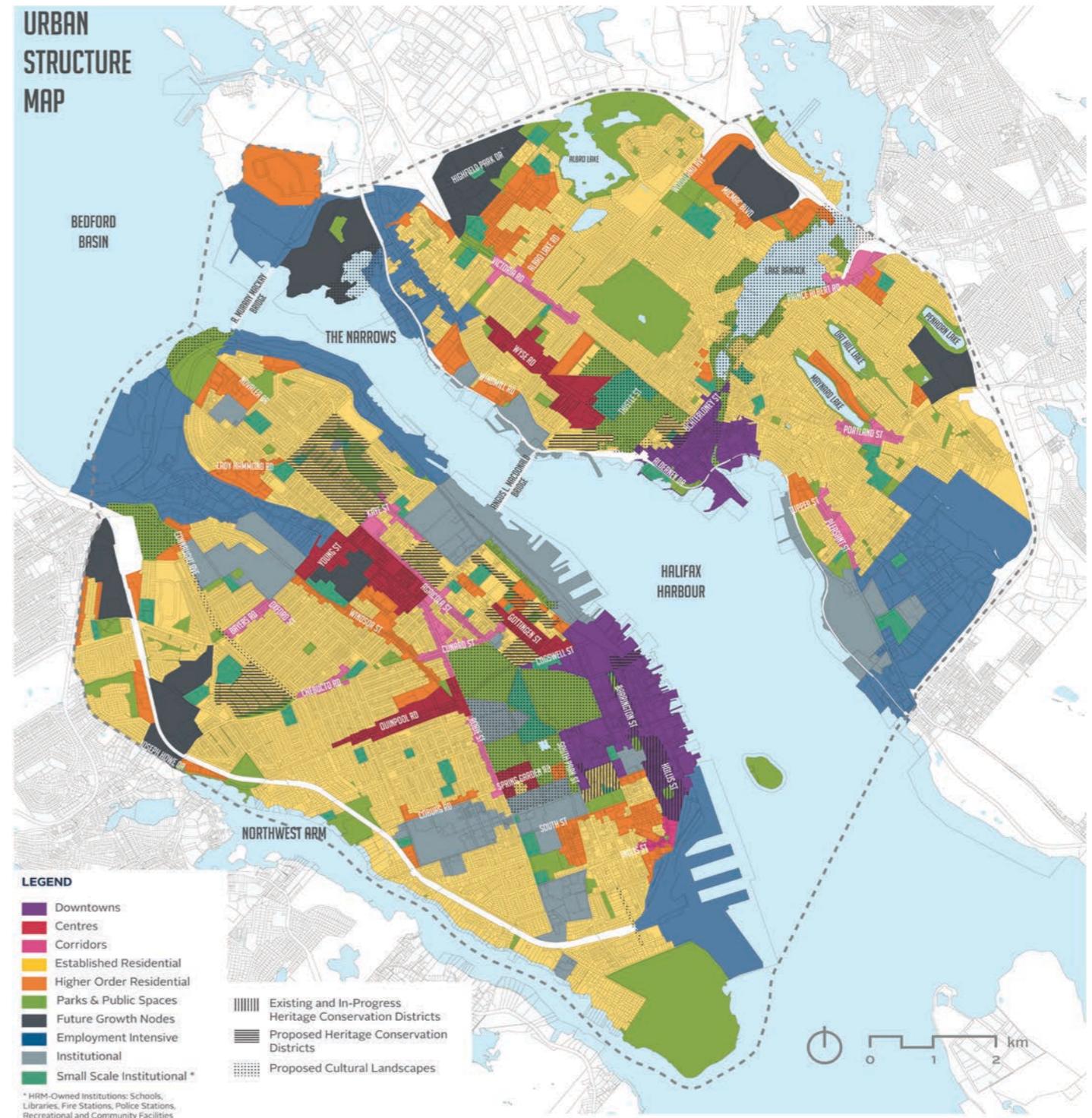
PUBLIC SPACES & PLACES



SUSTAINABILITY

# URBAN STRUCTURE

- » The current structure was created with the intention to develop a city with the right streets, buildings, parks, wharves, and other features of a successful Regional Centre. Understanding this current structure is important for making decisions about future land use and how we provide service to our residents.
- » Stakeholder input offered significant insight into 'likes' and 'dislikes' of the current structure. Centre Plan incorporates this feedback to help ensure the new structure meets the wants and needs of those who live here.

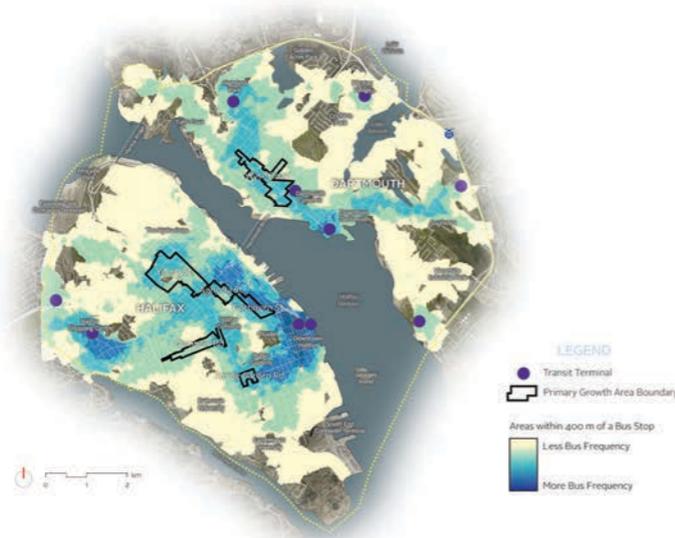


# URBAN STRUCTURE ANALYSIS

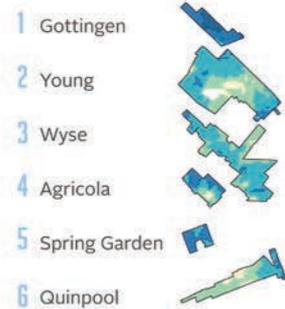
» Definition and delineation of different areas within the Regional Centre that were appropriate places for growth was based on analysis against indicators of readiness and appropriateness.

## INDICATOR 1:

### LEVEL OF TRANSIT SERVICE



#### AREA RANKING:



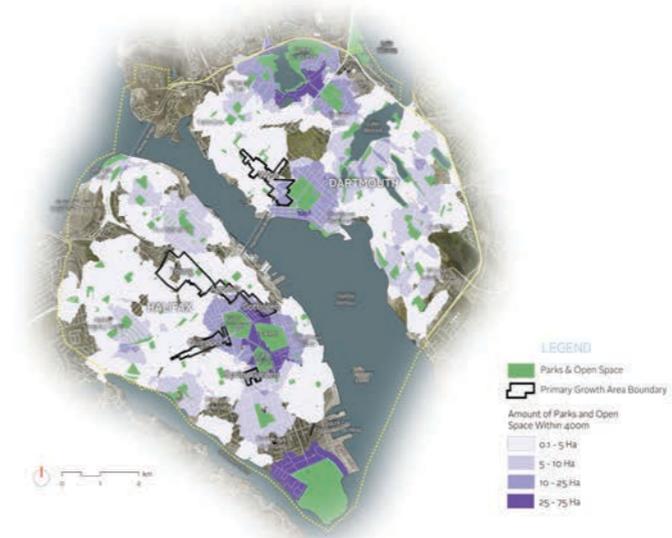
All Primary Growth Areas have above average transit service.

This map shows how well-served the Primary Growth Areas are by transit. Transit frequency at all bus stops within a 5-minute (400 m) radius was calculated. The average frequency of transit service for each area was then used to determine the ranking. Darker areas have higher levels of transit service than lighter areas.

The analysis of the level of transit service is for the whole Primary Growth Area, and not just the main streets.

## INDICATOR 2:

### ACCESS TO PUBLIC OPEN SPACE



#### AREA RANKING:



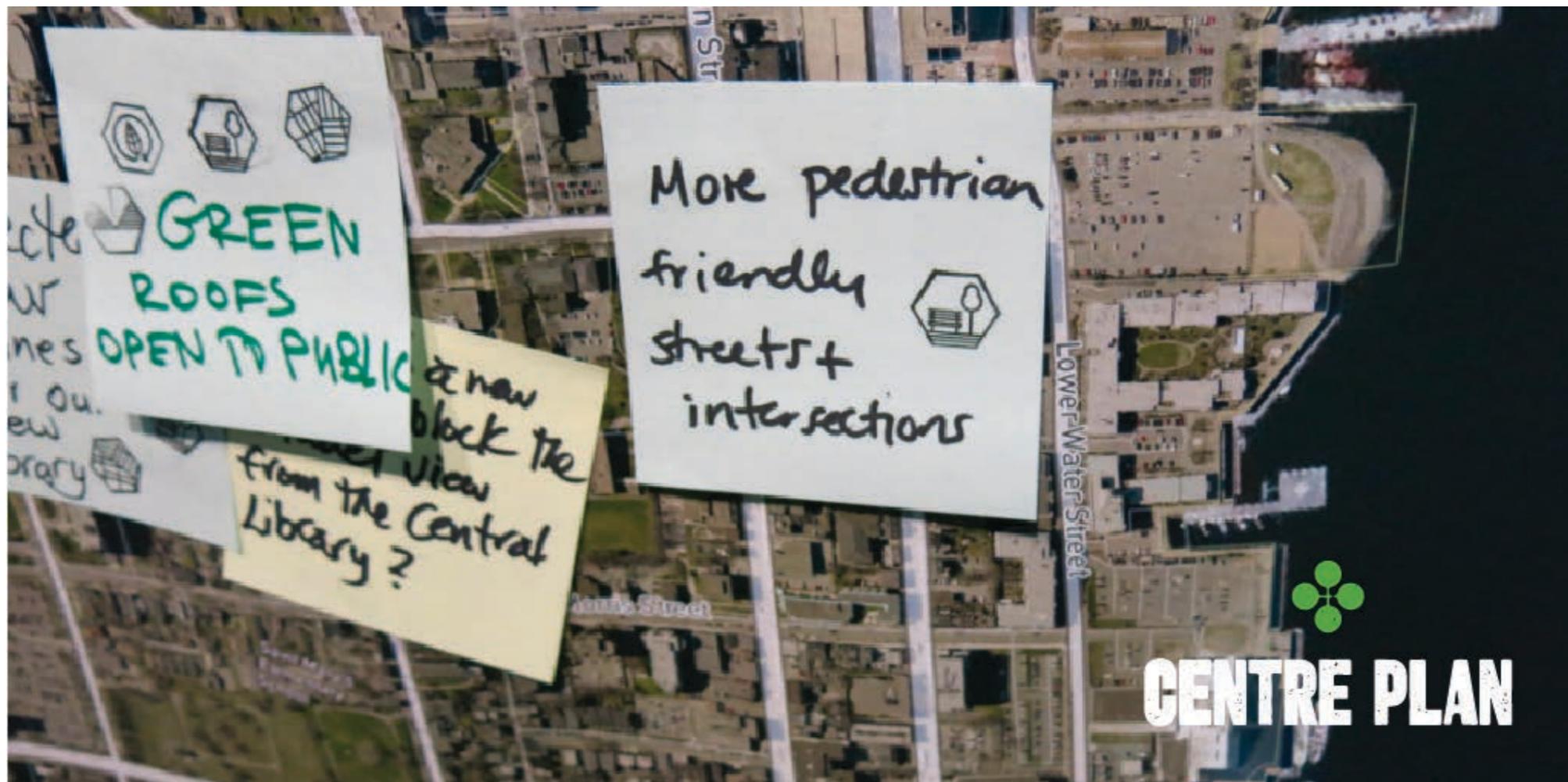
The Regional Centre has a wide selection of public parks and open spaces. However, some Primary Growth Areas are closer to more green spaces than others. This map ranks each area by the amount of public parks and open spaces that are within a 5-minute walk (400 m). The average for all locations within each area was then used to determine the overall ranking. The darker shaded areas are within walking distance to more open spaces than the lighter shaded areas.

Only public greenspaces were included in this analysis since these are the spaces HRM is able to control.

# IMPACT OF FEEDBACK

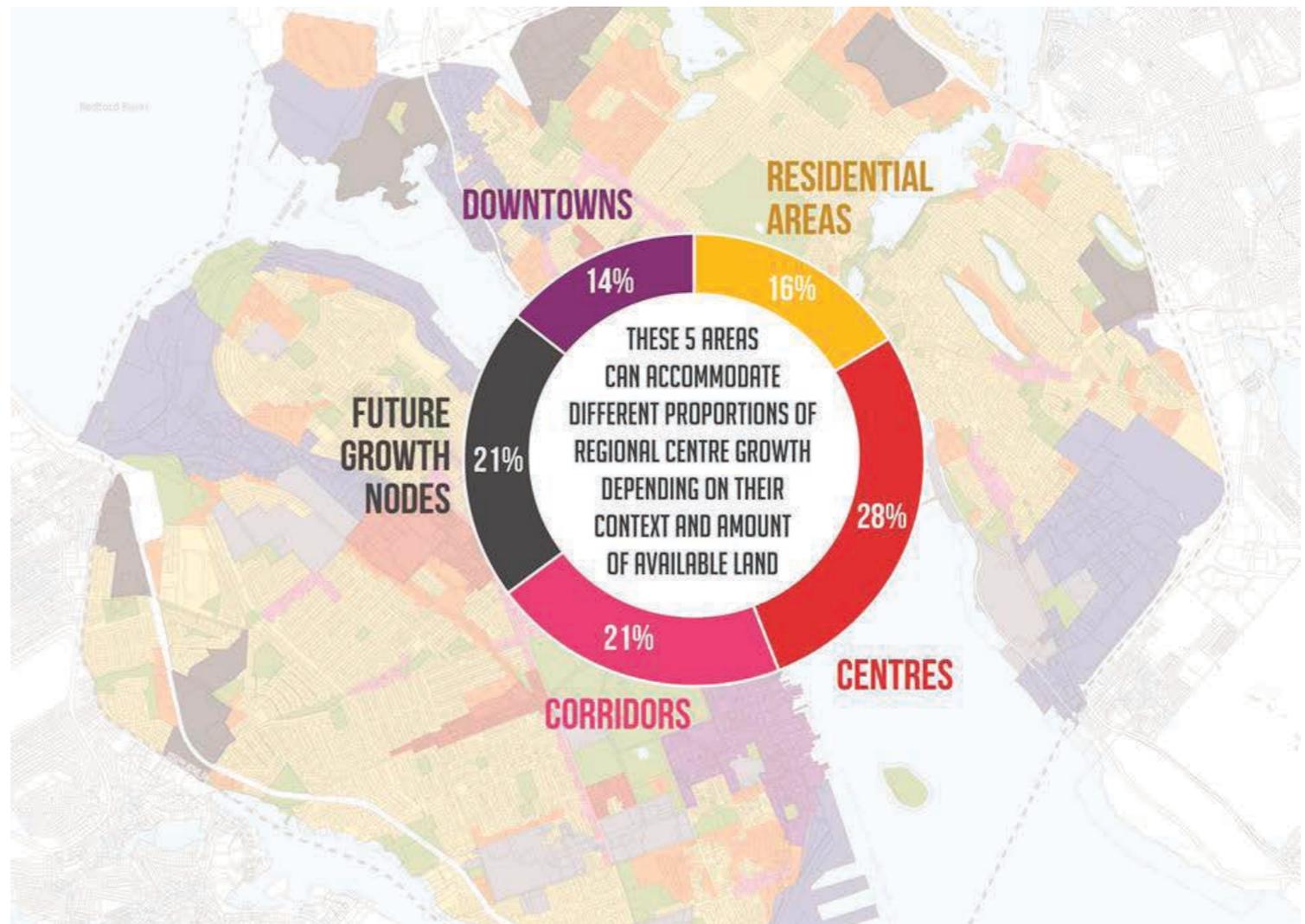
Stakeholder and resident feedback on the Draft Plan has resulted in a number of refinements and enhancements.

This presentation will provide an overview of policy enhancements



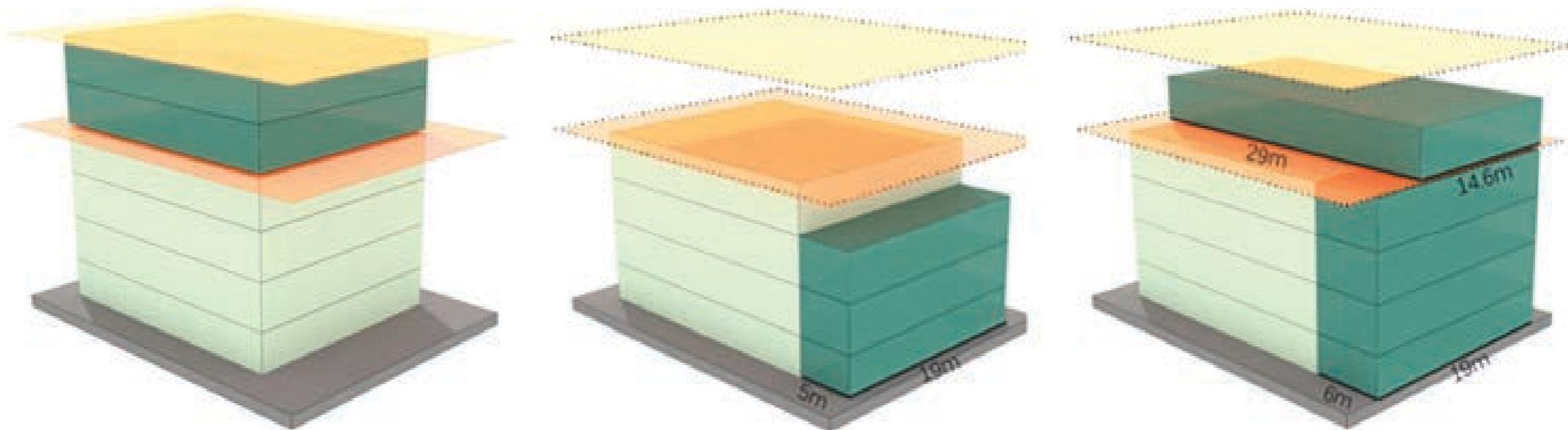
# HOUSING DISTRIBUTION

- » By ensuring that we take full advantage of the under developed areas of the Regional Centre we can spread new development throughout the area lessening the impact on any one particular area.
- » Stakeholders voiced concerns about the displacement of current residents as growth and change occur.
- » Centre Plan addresses this issue by ensuring that zoning and designations are current and representative of the populations that live in an area.



# AFFORDABILITY

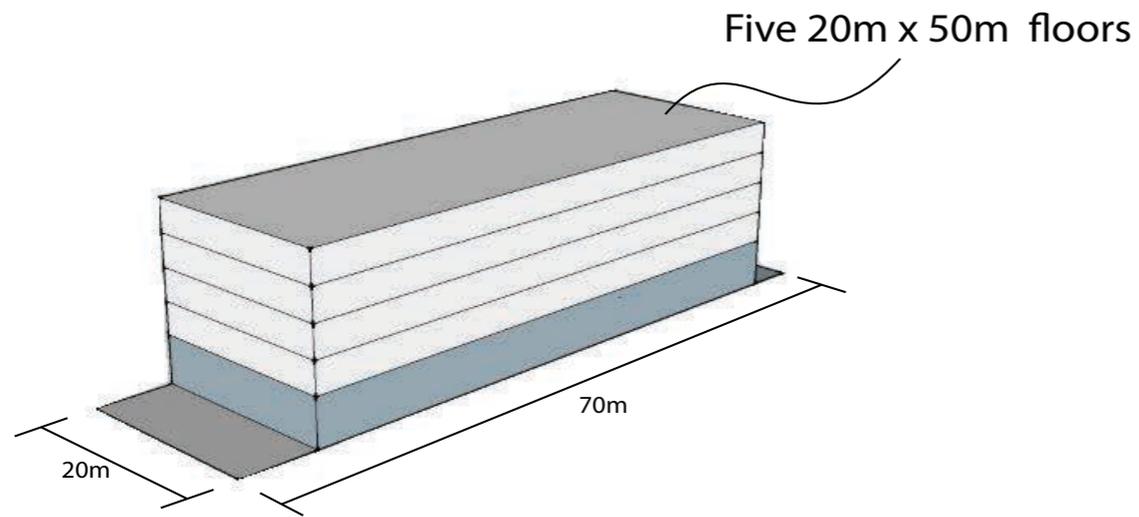
- » Stakeholders voiced significant concern about a limited number of affordable housing options and the Regional Centre becoming less affordable as we grow.
- » The Centre Plan will allow for the use of Density Bonusing policies in Centres, Downtowns, and Future Growth Nodes. This program will help reduce rents in new development.
- » In addition to affordable housing provision through Density Bonusing, the development of Complete Communities allows residents to rely on lower cost forms of Transportation.



# SCALE & MASS OF NEW BUILDINGS

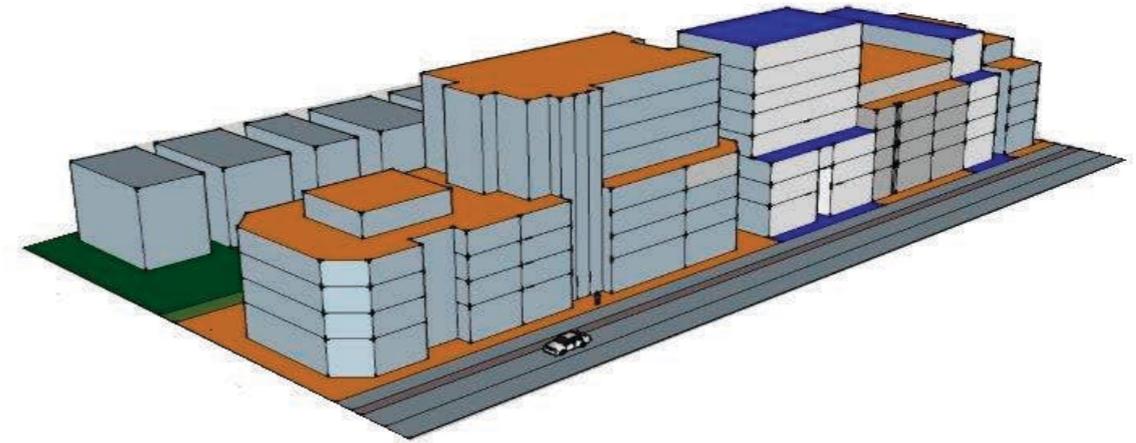
- » The scale and mass of buildings isn't strictly about height. Acceptable building size considers all dimensions that influence overall volume.
- » With the help of the design community and review of best practices, Centre Plan will control building volume through Floor Area Ratio (FAR).
- » What is FAR? The ratio of a building's total floor area relative to the size of its land. This means the more land used, the lower the building remains and vice versa.

# MID-RISE DEVELOPMENT



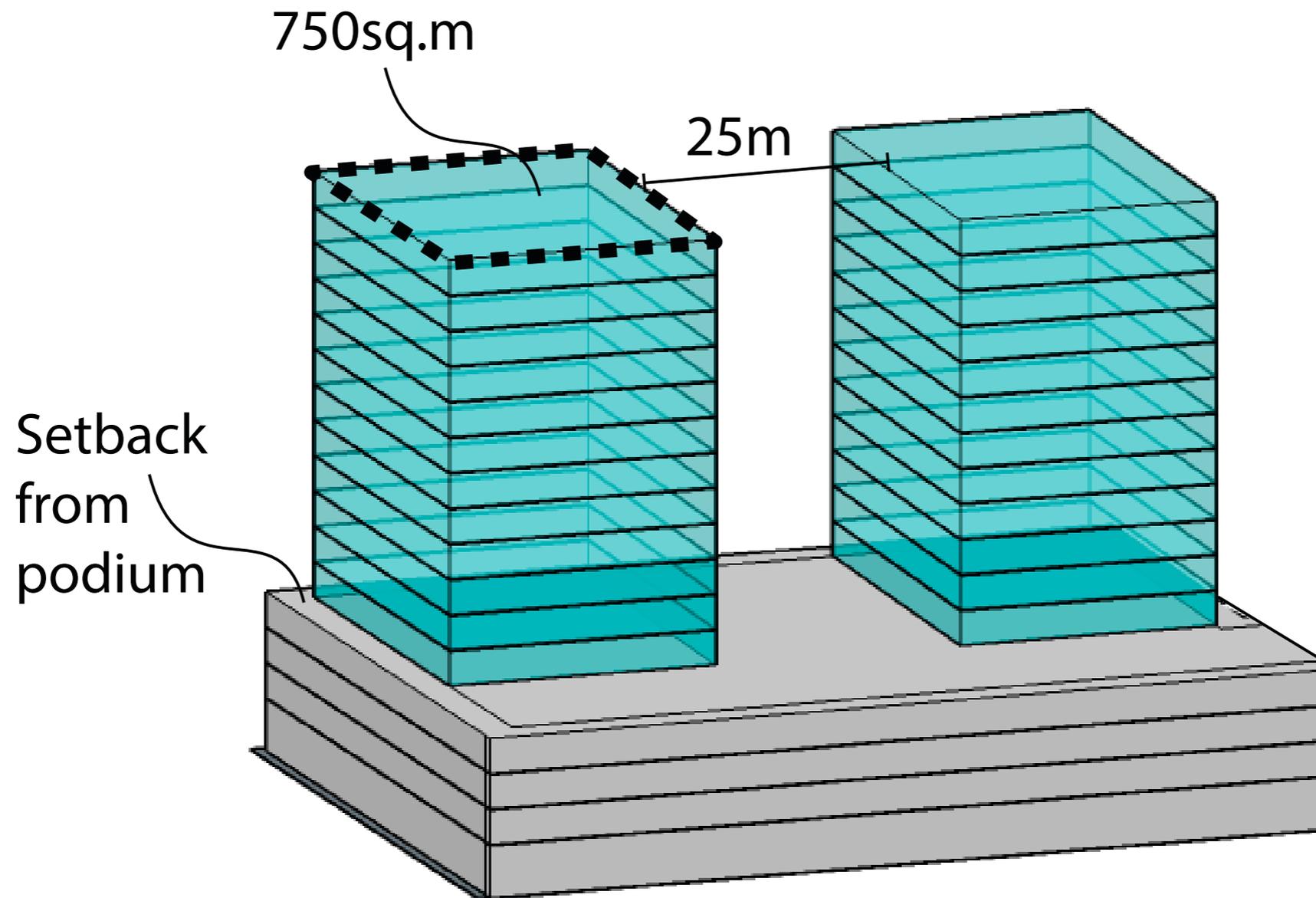
$$\text{Floor Area Ratio} = \frac{\text{Total Floor Area}}{\text{Lot Size}} = \frac{5,000 \text{ m}^2}{1,400 \text{ m}^2} = 3.57$$

What could 3.5 FAR look like?



Floor Area Ratio (FAR) = 3.5 for all these properties

# TOWERS IN A CENTRE OR FUTURE GROWTH NODE



# ECONOMICS OF DEVELOPMENT

- » Financial viability of mid-rise development forms in various locations of the Regional Centre were explored to address concerns about driving rents higher and affecting affordability of living in the Regional Centre.
- » Construction costs are relatively constant across the Regional Centre for mid-rise buildings with limited underground parking. The relative costs of land helps make more projects viable even with the variable rents that are available.
- » New mid-rise developments were projected to rent at rates slightly higher than other units built in the same areas.



# MEASUREMENT

- » Evaluating the effects of this plan are important to ensure that the big changes that are proposed are working to achieve the goals of the Regional Plan.
- » Indicators have been strengthened to make clear the relationship to performance and what can be controlled in a Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-Law.
- » Links to the Halifax Index and Regional Plan Indicators have been made clearer.
- » Evaluating the effects of the plan are important to ensure that the big changes proposed are working to achieve the goals of the Regional Plan.

**METRICS:** The following metrics will guide the Centre Plan monitoring and review process.

CORE CONCEPT	INDICATOR	UNITS
<b>Land Use &amp; Urban Design</b>		
STRATEGIC GROWTH	<b>1.1</b> Area of Regional Centre	Hectares
STRATEGIC GROWTH	<b>1.2</b> Housing Units in Regional Centre	Housing Units
STRATEGIC GROWTH	<b>1.3</b> Population of the Regional Centre	People
STRATEGIC GROWTH	<b>1.4</b> New Housing Units Starts in Regional Centre	Housing Units
STRATEGIC GROWTH	<b>1.5</b> New Housing Units Starts in Centres	Housing Units
STRATEGIC GROWTH	<b>1.6</b> New Housing Units Starts in Corridors	Housing Units
STRATEGIC GROWTH	<b>1.7</b> New Housing Units Starts in Future Growth Nodes	Housing Units
STRATEGIC GROWTH	<b>1.8</b> New Housing Units Starts in Residential Areas	Housing Units
STRATEGIC GROWTH	<b>1.9</b> New Housing Units Starts in Downtowns	Housing Units
STRATEGIC GROWTH	<b>1.10</b> New Non-Residential Space Starts in Centres	Square Feet
STRATEGIC GROWTH	<b>1.11</b> New Non-Residential Space Starts in Corridors	Square Feet
STRATEGIC GROWTH	<b>1.12</b> New Non-Residential Space Starts in Future Growth Nodes	Square Feet
STRATEGIC GROWTH	<b>1.13</b> New Non-Residential Space Starts in Residential Areas	Square Feet

# IMPLEMENTATION

- » Implementation of the Centre Plan will be supported through Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-Law changes and introduction of programs such as Affordable Housing.
- » Studies may be necessary to support programming and projects that aren't necessarily supported with the work of the Centre Plan.
- » Working with other Business Units within the municipality, the Centre Plan document has been strengthened to ensure that alignment with their work plans have been made explicit where possible.

# GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & POLICY

## GOAL:

*A Regional Centre that accommodates growth strategically while responding to the local context in terms of land use and design.*

## OBJECTIVES:

- L1** To create complete communities where residents can easily access a range of services and amenities from their homes, schools, or places of work.
- L2** To ensure that new development contributes to the surrounding context in use, form, and relationship to the public realm.
- L3** To implement human-scale design requirements for new development.
- L4** To ensure that new development incorporates all-season design strategies that maximize human comfort in all weather conditions.

## Municipally-Owned Land

- FW** f) Consider adjacent and neighbourhood land uses and zoning prior to the sale of surplus municipal property, in addition to a community needs assessment.  
*Supports Objectives L1, L2*

## Drive-Through Facilities

- LU** g) To support pedestrian oriented environments, only permit new drive-through facilities in Intensive Employment Areas. *Supports Objectives L1-L3*

## Water Lots

- LU** h) As a means of protecting the character of the Regional Centre's coastline, the Municipality shall control development and subdivision on lots and water lots along the shore. Specific measures will include limiting the type of structures that will be allowed on both infilled and non-infilled water lots, implementing setbacks, limiting the type and size of structures to be built within the setback, and preventing infilled and non-infilled water lots from being used in lot area and setback calculations. *Supports Objective L2*

## Burying Utilities

- FW** i) Overhead utilities should be buried to make additional space for pedestrians, streetscaping and active uses. As funding permits, the Downtowns should be prioritized for burying utilities, followed by the Centres, Corridors and Future Growth Nodes. *Supports Objectives L1, L3*

## Telecommunication and Broadcast Towers

- LU** j) Telecommunications and broadcast facilities should not be located within, or adjacent to, residentially-zoned areas. *Supports Objectives L2, L3*

## Equity Analysis

- FW** k) Develop an equity analysis review program for all HRM planning and land use services, and for the planning of all municipal infrastructure projects.  
*Supports Objective L1*

# SHADOWS & WIND

- » Shadows and wind effects of new buildings can be real and have a negative effect on public spaces that we all use and benefit from.
- » Quantifiable policy direction has been introduced here that helps understand what is and isn't acceptable for impact on public spaces.
- » Building volume controls also contribute to the protection of sky views within the Regional Centre.

- LU ai)** Developments 23 metres and over (7 storeys) are required to incorporate one or more of the following wind mitigation strategies:
- Buildings massing changes or alternative designs that respond to the local wind conditions
  - Podiums (single or tiered, tower setbacks, slim towers, notches and/or colonnades)
  - Canopies, wind screens, landscaping, planters, public art and/or other features that prove effective for mitigating wind conditions. Landscaping must be effective at the time of installation as well as demonstrate that it can thrive and can be maintained in the anticipated wind conditions
  - Modifications to the pedestrian usage/flow pattern (for large multi-building developments)

*Supports Objectives L2, L4*

- LU aj)** Guidance for developments and development officers:
- Developments within Centres, Corridors, Future Growth Nodes, Higher Order Residential Areas, and in the Downtowns, must demonstrate comfortable conditions for people to sit, stand and/or walk along public street frontages
  - In circumstances where the pre-development wind condition exceeds comfortable wind speeds for sitting, standing and/or walking, the applicant must employ wind mitigation strategies
  - Exceptions may be considered if the applicant can demonstrate that significant site constraints and strong existing wind conditions impede their ability to achieve comfortable wind conditions at the street level; in these circumstances the development must not significantly exacerbate wind speeds

*Supports Objectives L2, L4*

## Sunlight Preservation

- LU ak)** New buildings proposed in Centres and Corridors shall not cast shadows beyond a line measured 20m into one of the identified parks and open spaces, parallel to an exterior property between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. between March 21 and September 21. This shall apply to the following open spaces adjacent to Centres and Corridors: Camp Hill Cemetery, Dartmouth Common, Green Road Park, Halifax Common, Hydrostone Park, Kiwanis Grahams Grove Park, Maynard Lake Park, Newcastle Street Park, Northbrook Park, Victoria Park and Welsford Park.

*Supports Objectives L2, L4*

- LU al)** No development shall be permitted that would cast shadows on the Halifax Public Gardens between March 21 and September 21 between the hours of 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. *Supports Objectives L2, L4*

# CULTURE & HERITAGE

- » Identification of areas with Heritage Value was done with input from stakeholders.
- » The efforts to identify these areas, as well as specific tools has been well received.
- » By engaging stakeholders at these early stages we can further ensure that we have identified the areas where redevelopment and intensification should be.



# PRESENTATION BREAK

## The Centre Plan

- » Our Work to Create the Plan
- » Impact of Feedback

## The Adoption Path

- » Within the Regional Plan
- » The Future of the Existing Plans
- » A Standalone Centre Plan



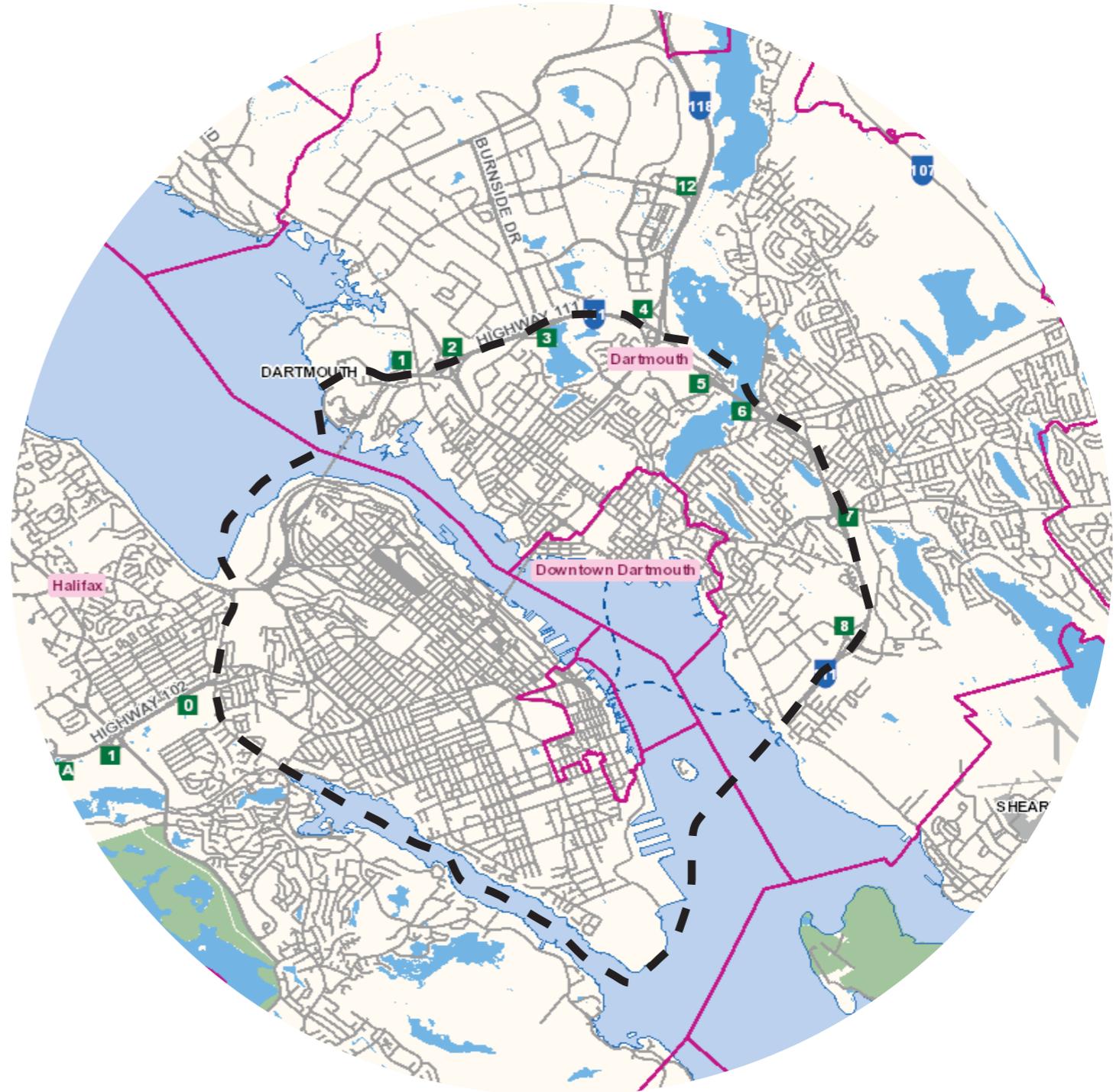
# ADOPTION

Adoption of the Centre Plan affects many current Planning Documents

- » This path allows for additional consultation with stakeholders where necessary.
- » The path allows for the work to align with other internal efforts that continue to evolve over the life of this project.
- » This path allows for clear target dates for recommendations to Community Planning & Economic Development Standing Committee of Regional Council.

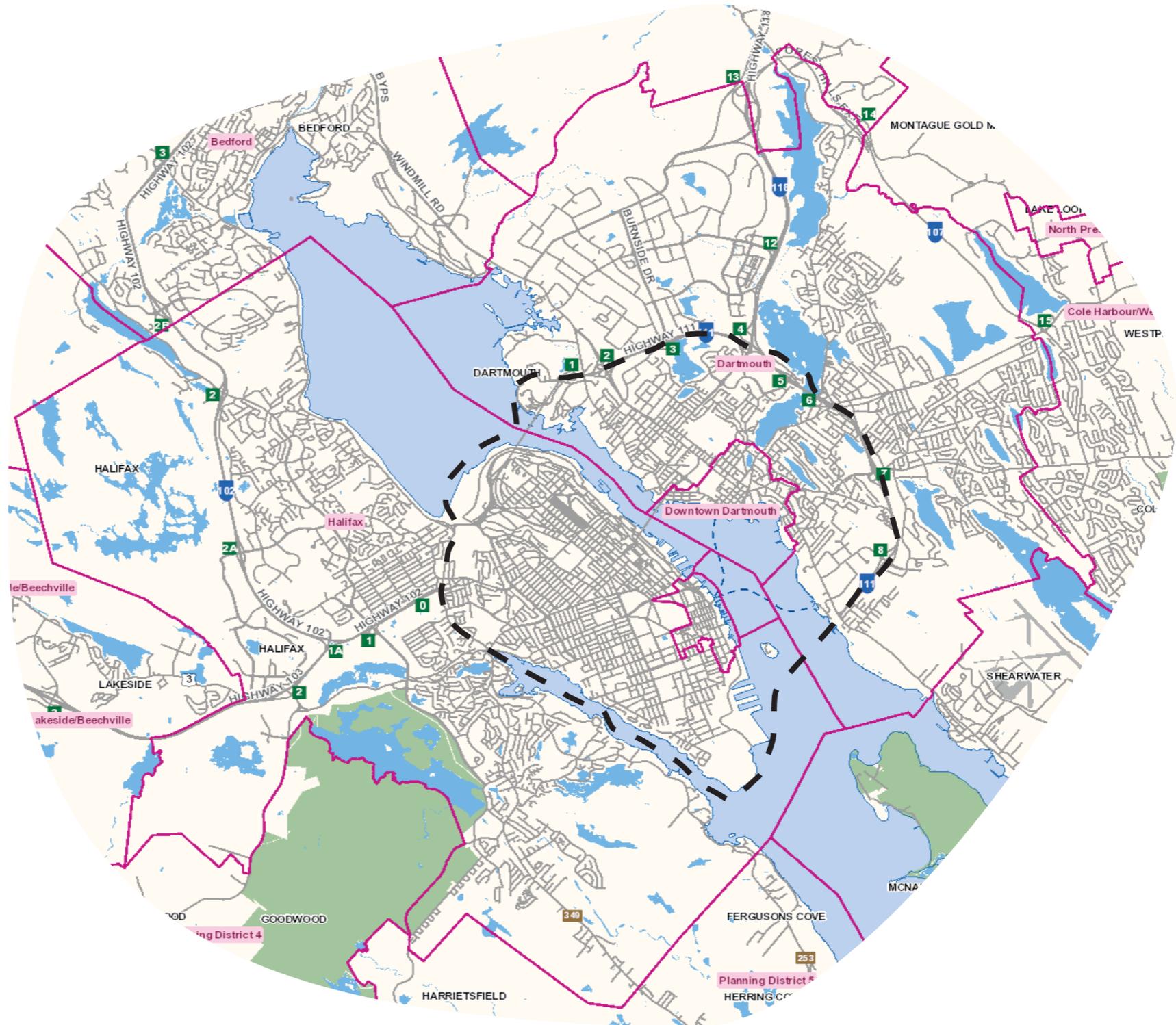
# THE REGIONAL CENTRE

- » We have been focused on this geography.
- » It is important and it is unique.
- » The boundaries are aligned with the Urban Structure.
- » It is the heart of the Regional Municipality.



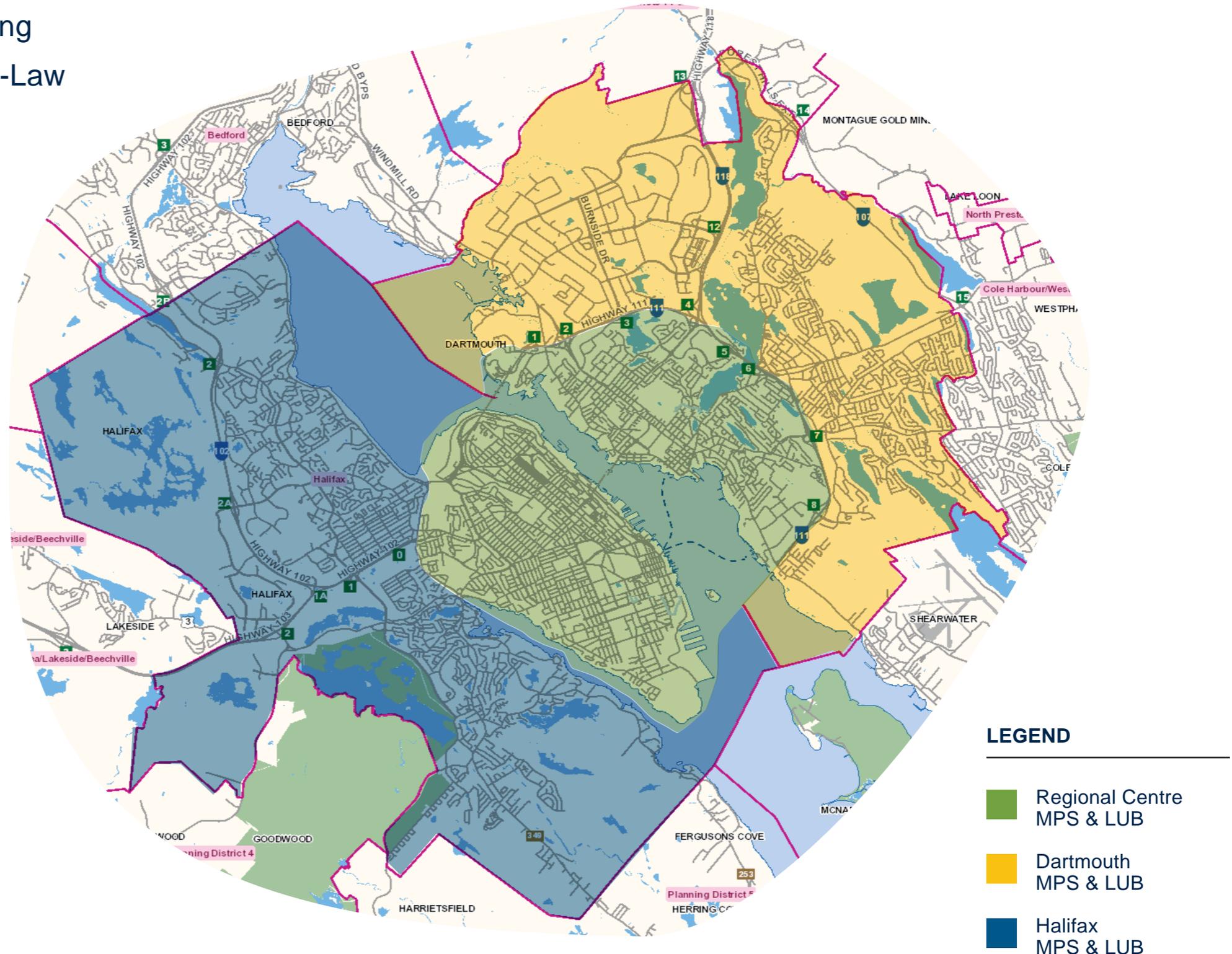
# BROADER CONTEXT

- » The Planning Documents we've been working to update are much larger than this area.
- » These boundaries predate amalgamation.

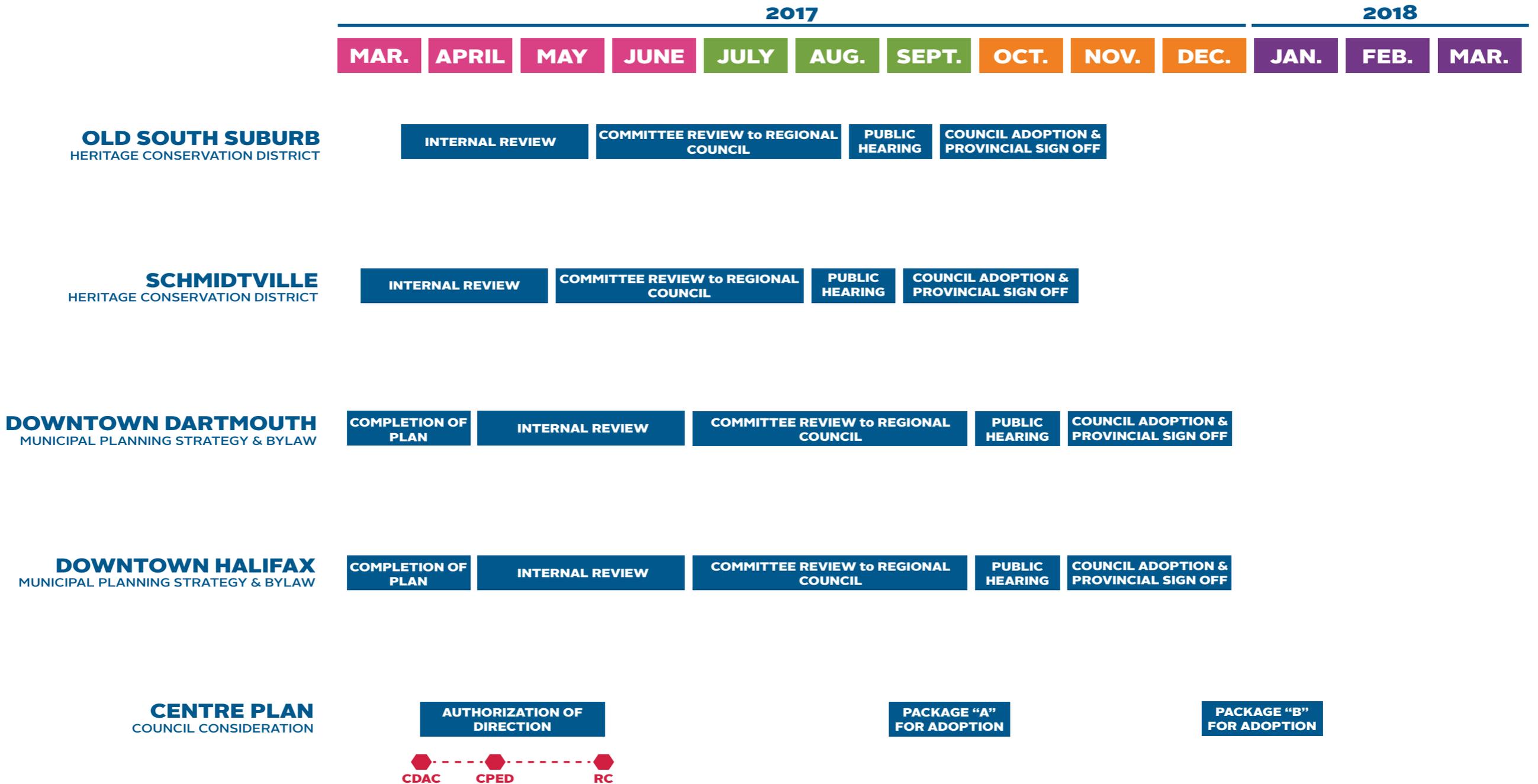


# ADOPTION PATH

- » Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy & Land Use By-Law
- » Dartmouth Municipal Planning Strategy & Land Use By-Law
- » Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy & Land Use By-Law (+ Design Manual)
- » Downtown Dartmouth Secondary Planning Strategy & Land Use By-Law



# SCHEDULE FOR PLANNING IN REGIONAL CENTRE



**CDAC** COMMUNITY DESIGN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**CPED** COMMUNITY PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**RC** REGIONAL COUNCIL

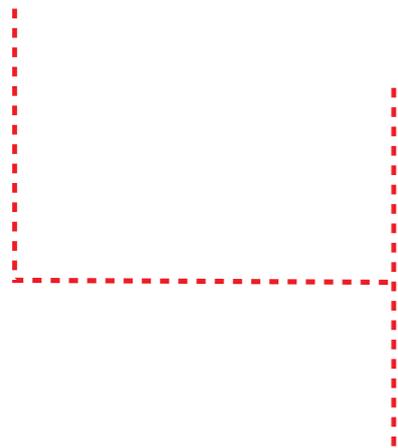
**PACKAGE "A"** CENTRES, CORRIDORS, HIGHER ORDER RESIDENTIAL & FUTURE GROWTH NODES

**PACKAGE "B"** ESTABLISHED RESIDENTIAL, EMPLOYMENT AREAS, ADDITIONAL GENERAL POLICIES

# PROCESS

March 2017

REGIONAL COUNCIL APPROVES DIRECTION OUTLINED IN THE CENTRE PLAN  
THIS INFORMS ALL FUTURE PACKAGES



PACKAGE "A"  
Sept–Nov 2017



Policies to support the Direction of the Centre Plan  
Support for the Centre Plan Land-Use Bylaw  
Urban Structure Map  
Policies to support the Implementation of the Centres, Corridors, and Higher Order Residential & Future Growth Nodes



Policies to Support the Interim Implementation of the Centre Plan in the Regional Centre Land Use By-Law



Centres Zoning  
Corridors Zoning  
Higher Order Residential Zoning  
Future Growth Nodes Zoning

PACKAGE "B"  
Dec 2017–Feb 2018



Policies to support the Implementation of the Established Residential Areas, Parks, Institutional & Industrial Areas



Established Residential Zones  
Park Zone  
Industrial Zones  
Institutional Zones