

**HALIFAX**

# **Centre Plan “Package A”**

Community Planning and Economic  
Development Standing Committee

May 16, 2019

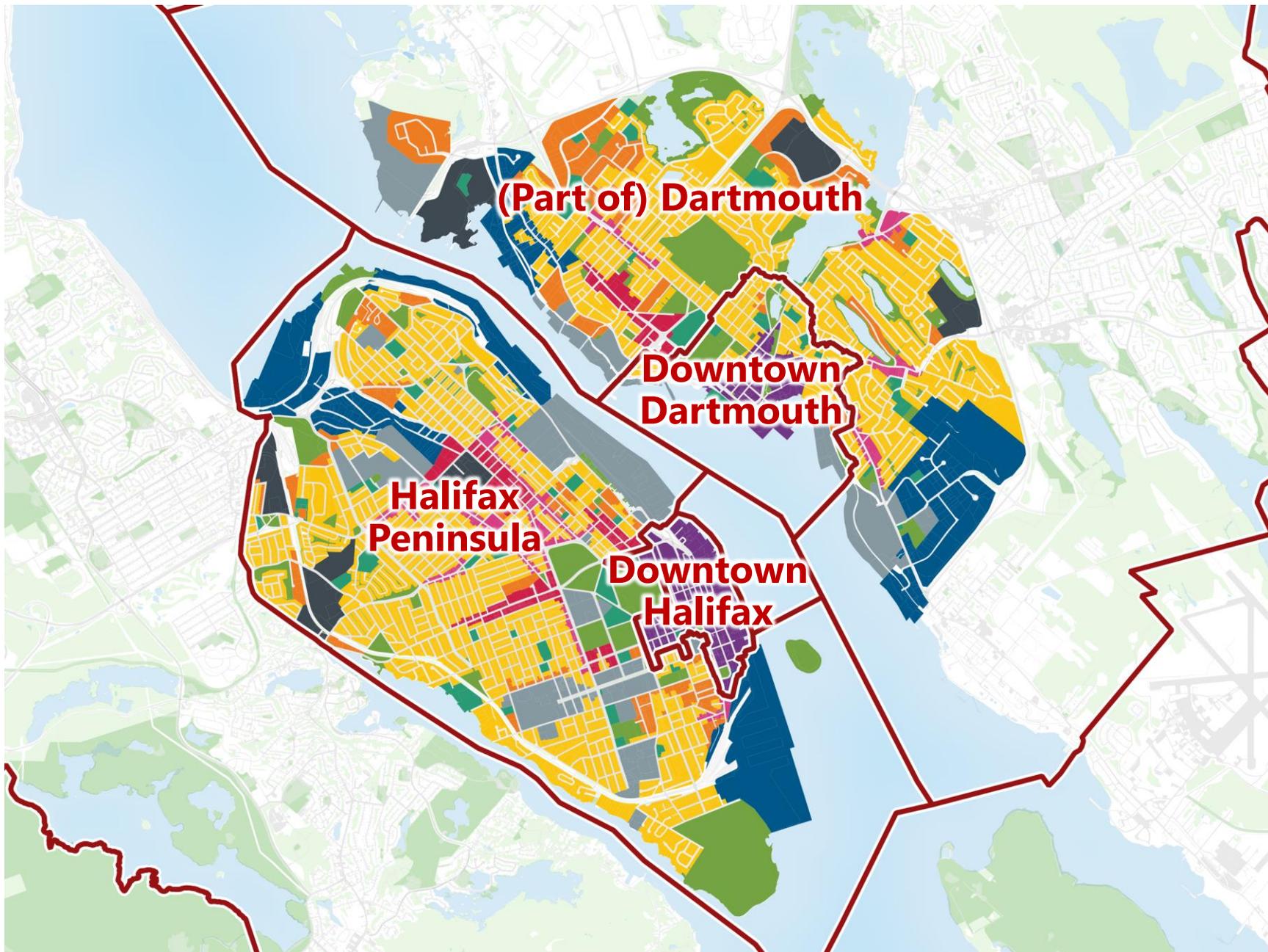
# Purpose

- Present Centre Plan Package 'A' overview
- Highlight:
  - Recommendations from Committees and Community Councils
  - Amendments to existing Municipal Planning Documents
  - Adoption Path + Timeline
  - Next steps of the Package 'A' Process + Package 'B' Process

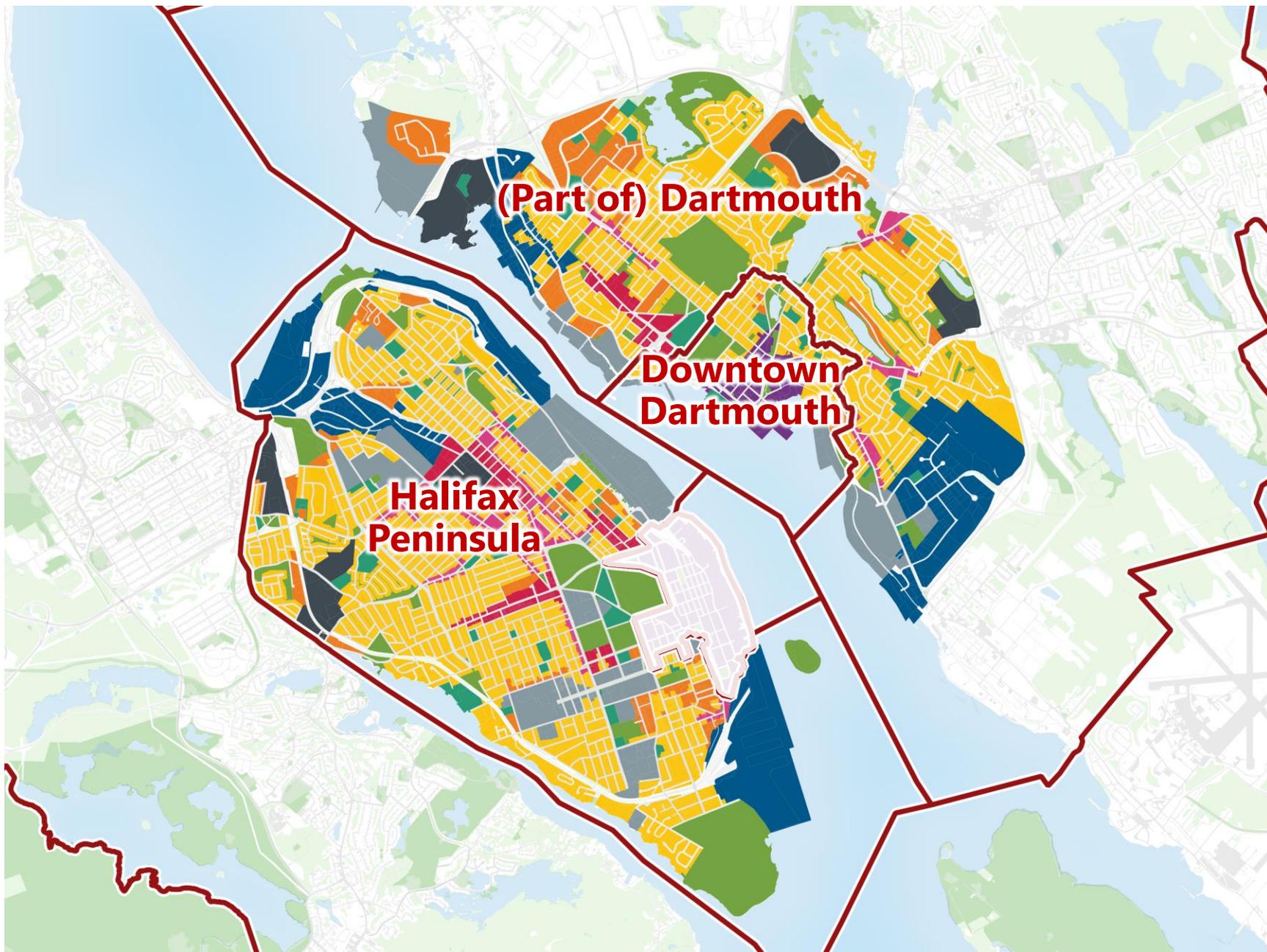
# The Regional Centre



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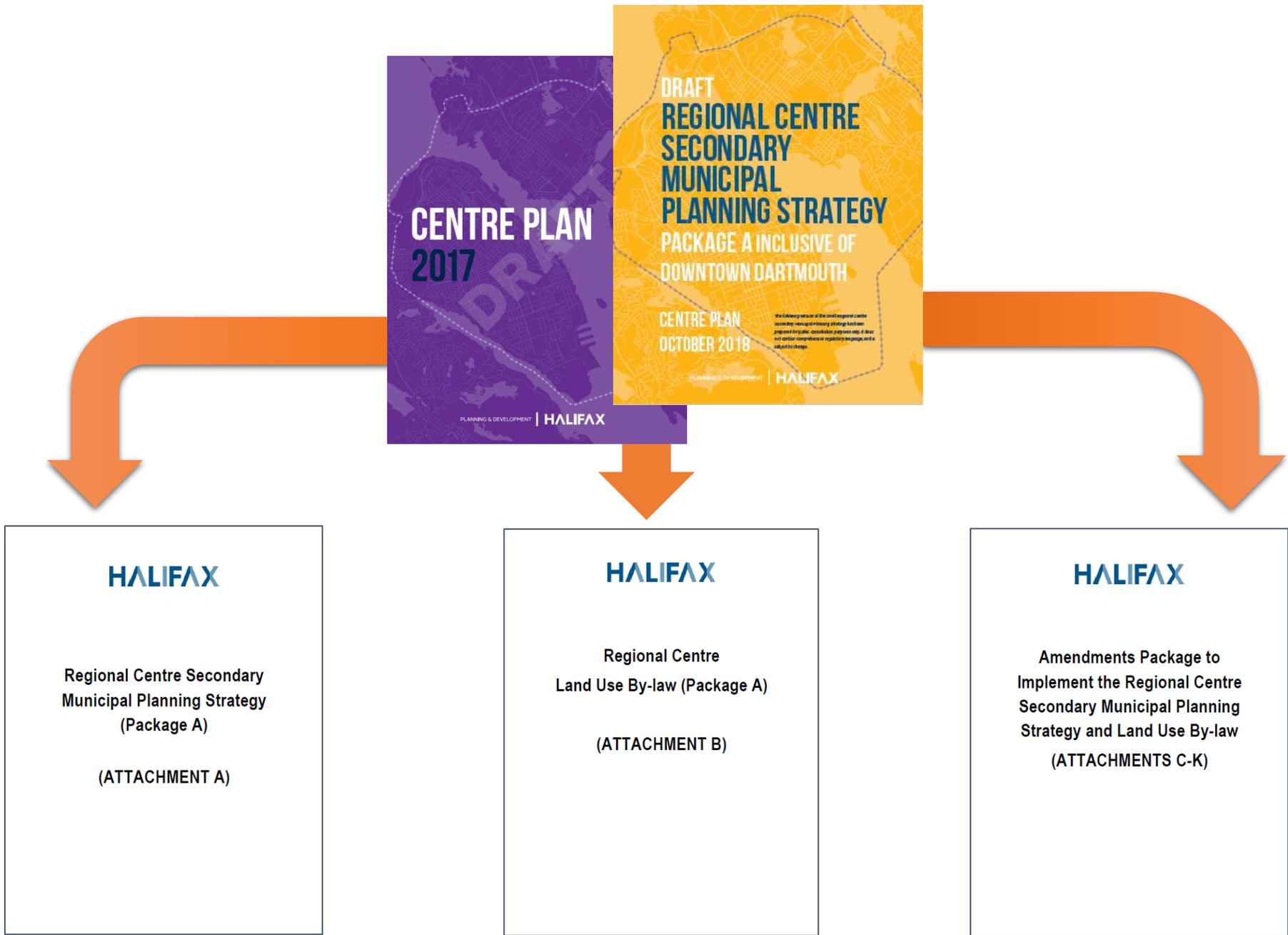


# Regional Plan

targets at least 25% of growth to Regional Centre

1. **Adopt a Regional Centre Plan**, which achieves the vision statement and guiding principles endorsed by Regional Council;
2. **Adopt heritage plans and programs** that further preserve and enhance the viability of heritage properties, streetscapes, and districts;
3. **Prepare capital and operating expenditure programs** that enhance development within the Regional Centre, with emphasis of resources on downtown Halifax and Dartmouth, and take advantage of opportunities to strategically leverage other public and private sector investments; and
4. **Create financial and regulatory incentives** to stimulate desired growth.

# Draft Documents



# Engagement



**March 2016 to November 2018**

**14** Public Open Houses

**15** Pop-up Meetings

**141** Survey Participation

**10+** Stakeholder Workshops

**8** Community Workshops

**20** Walking Tours

**326** Survey Submissions

**50+** Road Show Presentations

**Shape Your City Halifax Website:** ~26,500 unique visitors with 24,300 Downloads

**Storefront:** 400 visits over 10 weeks

# Key Changes (2018-2019)

- Addition of Downtown Dartmouth Designation & Downtown Zone
- Revised general policies (e.g. Urban Structure, Built Form, Housing, Heritage)
- More nuanced regulations based on the local context
- Stronger heritage policies, and 9 new Future Potential Heritage Conservation Districts
- Built form regulated in Downtown (D) & Centre (CEN) Zones by maximum Floor Area Ratios (FAR) and a maximum overall 90 m height limit
- Built form regulated in Corridors (COR) & Higher Order Residential (HR) Zones by maximum heights (FAR removed)
- Changes to built form regulations

# Key Changes (2018-2019)

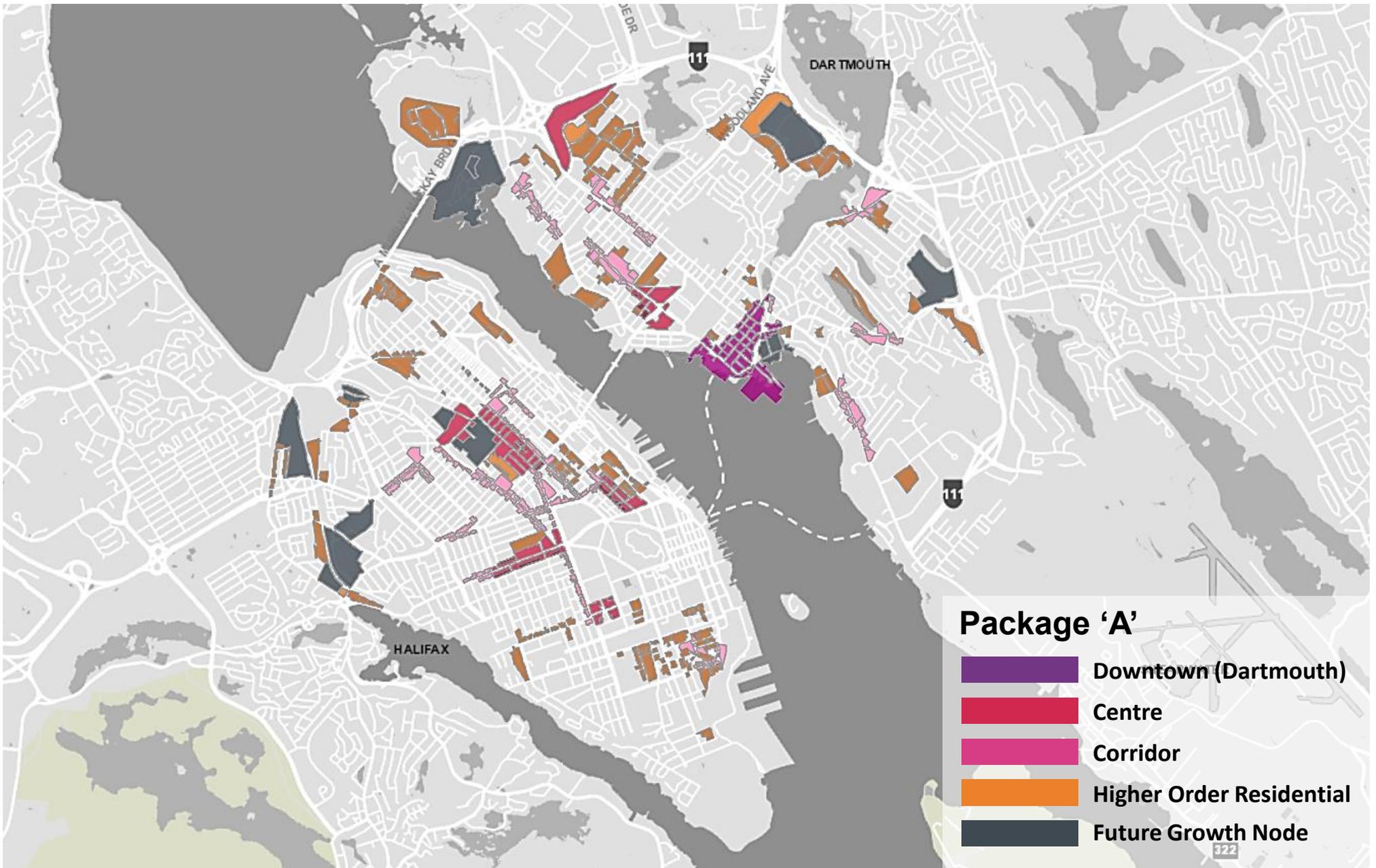
- Special Area policies and regulations for Waterfront, Portland Street and Argyle Street
- New design requirements in the Land Use By-law
- Urban Structure changes
  - more compact Centres, additional Corridors, and Higher Order Residential areas
  - one new Centre (Highfield Park Road, previously HR)
  - three new Future Growth Nodes (Dartmouth Cove, Kempt Road, Strawberry Hill)
- Revised Bonus Zoning framework
- Removal of the Large Lot (1 Ha) Development Agreement Policy

# Vision

***The Regional Centre is the civic, cultural, and economic heart of the Halifax Regional Municipality. It is a prosperous and resilient community that supports the needs, health, and well-being of a diverse and growing population. New growth is located strategically to support the creation of complete communities, human scale design, and pedestrian comfort. The Regional Centre is the core of the best mid-sized municipality in Canada. It welcomes all who want to live, work, play and learn here.***



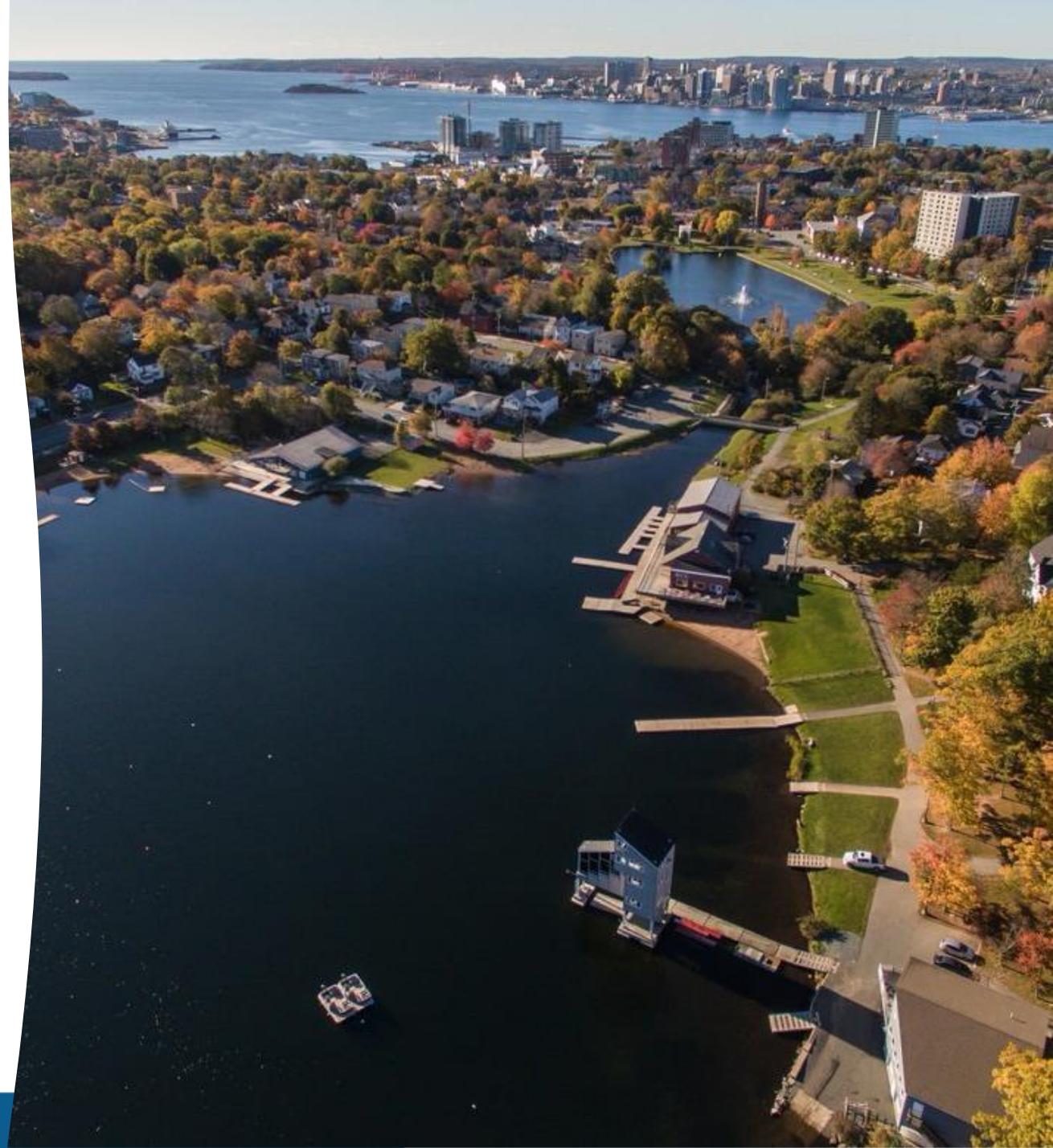
# Urban Structure



# Environmental Regulations

The following environmental regulations from the Regional Plan have been incorporated into the Land Use By-law:

1. Coastal area elevation requirement
2. Watercourse buffer
3. Wetland protection



# Sustainability

- Focus of growth in areas best served by transit
- Focus on food security and urban agriculture uses including:
  - local commercial and grocery uses
  - community gardens and urban farms
  - chickens (hens only) and
  - bees (two hives for most properties)
- Requirements for 'Green Roofs'
- Landscaping to reduce stormwater runoff
- Open Space policies to support Green Network Plan



# Economic Development

- Development certainty and streamlined processes
- Opportunity for large and smaller-scale property owners
- Focused areas for commercial activity and knowledge economy
- Waterfront Special Area
- Widely-permitted home offices, home occupations, work-live units
- Urban design and heritage protection supports tourism industry
- Support for the maintenance and expansion of key institutions, supporting enclaves of innovation, incentives and partnerships
- Plan enables Council to consider one or more Commercial Development Districts and investments to support growth
- Industrial lands protected and addressed in Package B



# Supporting Growth

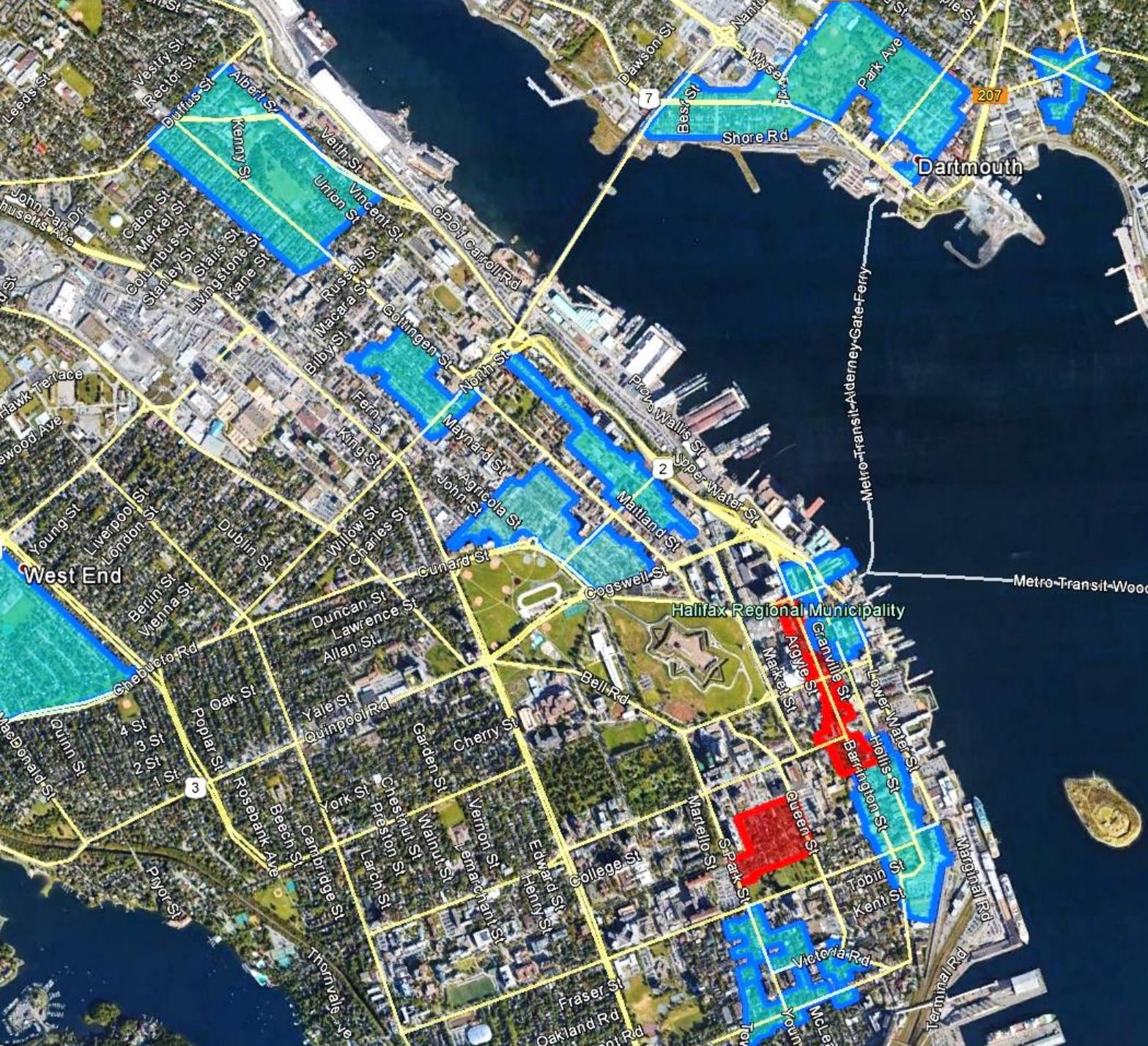
- Investments in the public realm
- Incentives to support the preservation of cultural and heritage resources
- Inter-governmental and community partnerships that support social, cultural and economic development
- Needs assessments and master plans for parks, recreation, and cultural facilities
- Street and streetscaping programs
- Infrastructure needs



# Heritage

- Continued identification and registration
- Low-rise built form over:
  - registered heritage properties; and
  - nine proposed Heritage Conservation Districts (HCDs)
- Development Agreement options on registered heritage properties
- Incentive or bonus zoning for heritage conservation
- Heritage design requirements for registered heritage and abutting properties
- Additional incentives may be considered





# Proposed Heritage Conservation Districts

## Regional Centre

# Housing

- New and infill developments concentrated in areas served by transit
- Range of built form enabled
- Mix of unit types required in high-density developments but no maximum unit counts
- Secondary suites and backyard suites for low-density dwellings
- Shared housing permitted, work/live units, home offices
- Majority (60%) of density bonus targeted to affordable housing money-in-lieu
- Policy support for partnerships and other municipal tools to address affordable housing targets and the Affordable Housing Workplan



# Transportation & Mobility

- Modernized bicycle parking requirements
- Reduced car parking requirements
- Growth focused near current and proposed high frequency transit
- Mixed-use zones can reduce the need for travel
- Policies and design requirements to encourage traditional street-grid and pedestrian connections



# Pedestrian Oriented Commercial Streets

- Required active ground uses
- Fine-grained storefronts & ground floor design requirements
- Examples: Gottingen Street, Quinpool Road, Robie Street, Portland Street, Alderney Drive
- Additional streets can be added



# Accessibility

- Permitting accessibility ramps in required setbacks
- Site Plan requirements for accessible open spaces
- Requirements for barrier free at grade private open spaces and parking areas, where provided
- Direct connection from sidewalk to building entrances must be provided



# Incentive or Bonus Zoning

- Regional Plan direction
- Goal is to support quality of life, and successful densification
- Accompanied by an overall increase in development rights and certainty
- Predictable post-bonus framework set in policy





# Incentive or Bonus Zoning

- Standard 2,000 sm pre-bonus floor area
- 20% of the remainder total floor area used to calculate value of bonus and public benefits
- Seven bonus rate areas based on 60% of average market rates
- Proposed framework spreads out the public benefit across the Regional Centre, with less per development cost
- 60% of value targeted to affordable housing as money-in-lieu
- Shift to money-in-lieu to leverage other investments
- Recent studies indicate minimal impact on development potential (*Turner Drake & Partners, 2018; Turner Drake & Partners, 2019*)

# Incentive or Bonus Zoning

The Land Use By-law includes a list of public benefit options as follows:

- affordable housing (money-in-lieu)
- heritage conservation
- public art
- improvements to municipal parks
- community or cultural indoor spaces
- money-in-lieu
- other public benefits that may be set out in the Land Use By-law, and



# Incentive or Bonus Zoning

**Table 2: Potential Public Benefits - Mid-Rise Example**

Bonus Rate District	Bonus Rate (2019)	Floor Area subject to Bonusing	Public Benefit (\$CAD)
South End Halifax	\$258	623 square metres  (5,119 sm – 2,000 sm) * 0.2	\$160,734
North End Halifax	\$180		\$112,140
Woodside	\$66		\$41,118
Downtown Dartmouth, Mic Mac, Penhorn	\$144		\$89,712

Total Floor Area Subject to Bonusing: 12%

# Planning Tools

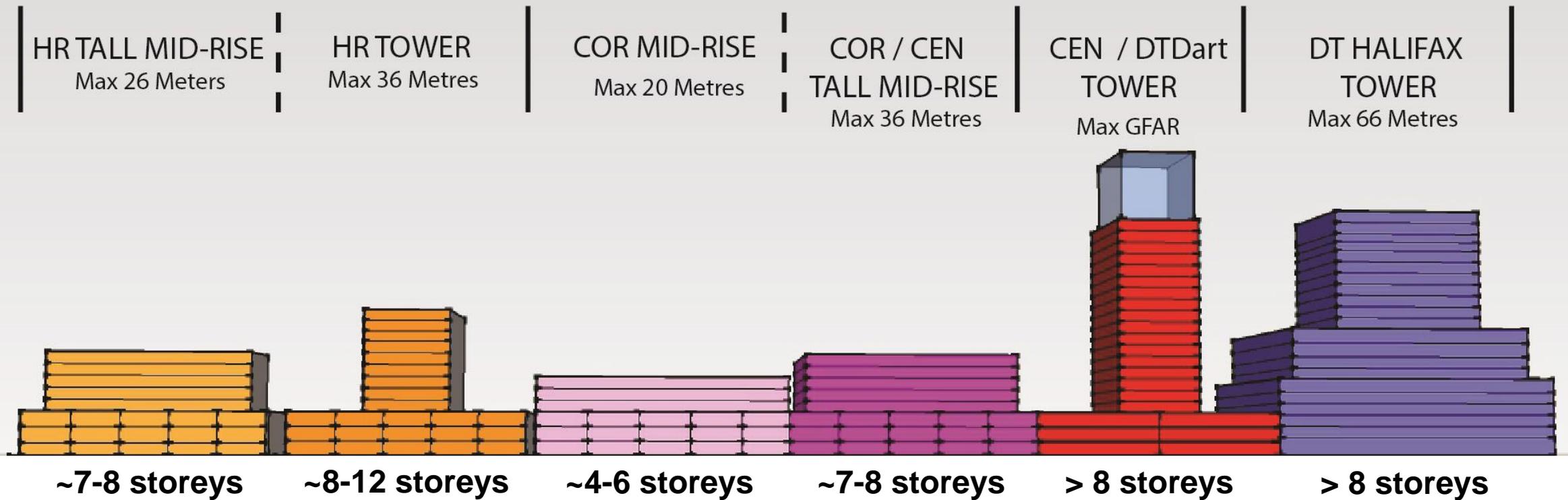
1. Development permit (DP)
2. Site plan approval (SPA) – Exemptions & Process (3 levels)
3. Variation to Land Use By-law requirements by SPA
4. Variance
5. Development Agreement (DA)
6. Incentive or Bonus Zoning
7. Performance Standards

# Development Agreement Options

1. Development of a registered heritage property
2. Expansion of non-conforming uses
3. Change to less intensive non-conforming uses
4. Development in the King's Wharf (KW) Special Area
5. Development in a Comprehensive Development District (CDD) Zone within the Future Growth Node Designation

# Built Form Transect

## REGIONAL CENTRE BUILT FORM TRANSECT

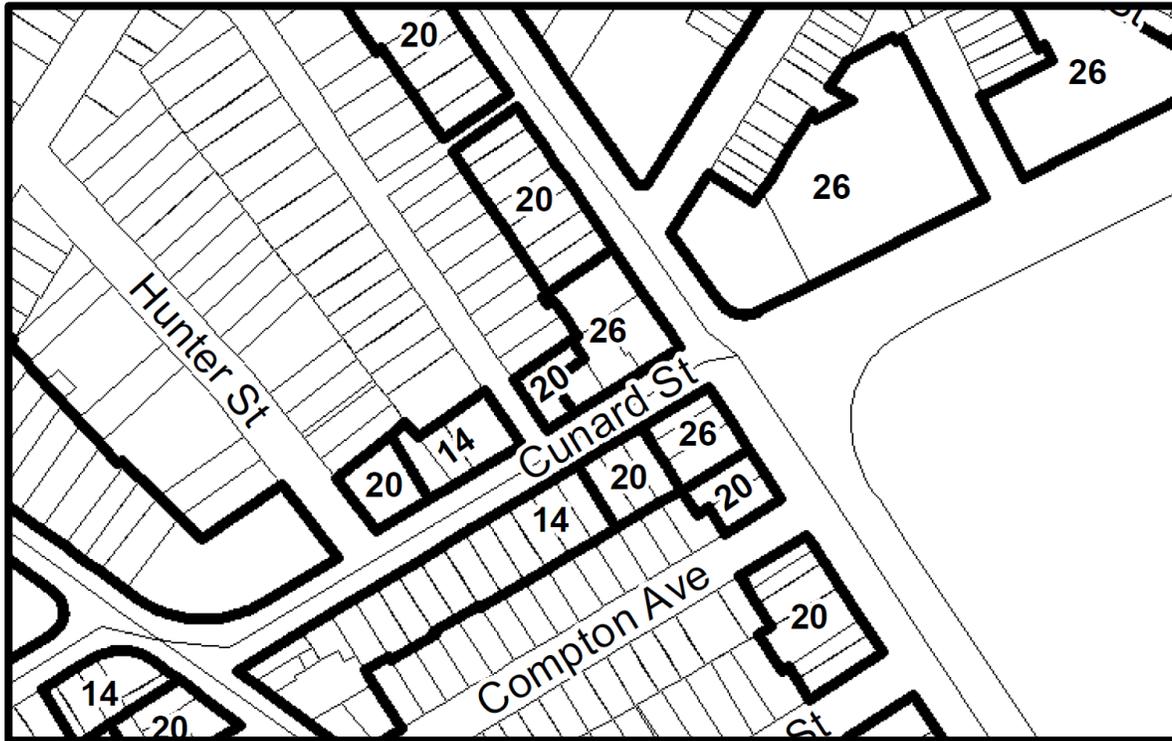


# Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR)



- Schedule 8 of LUB provides maximum FAR values
- FAR is applied only in Centres and Downtown Dartmouth
- Subject to maximum height of 90 metres (295 feet)
- FAR cannot be increased by consolidating lots
- Some exemptions to FAR

# Maximum Building Height

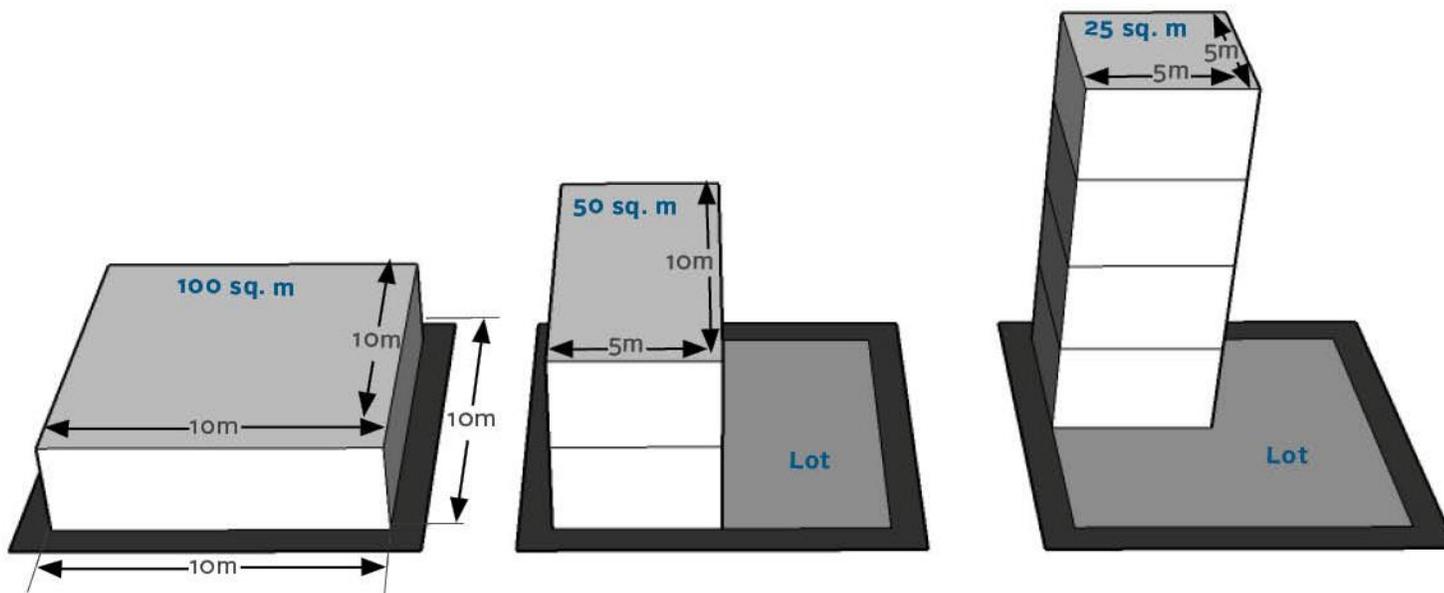


- Schedule 7 of LUB provides maximum building heights in metres
- Corridors, and Higher Order Residential have height limits and do not have FAR

# Floor Area Ratio (FAR)

$$\text{FAR} = \frac{\text{Floor Area}}{\text{Lot Area}} \quad \text{or} \quad \frac{\text{Total square meters of all floors in a building}}{\text{Total square meters of a lot}}$$

All of these buildings have a Floor Area Ratio of 1.



**Floor Area Ratio (FAR)** means the total floor area of all main buildings within a FAR precinct on a lot, divided by the area of the lot within that FAR precinct.

# Transition to Low-Rise Neighbourhoods

- 6.0 metres setback from a transition lines as shown on Schedule 26



*HR-1 and 2 abutting low-rise residential*



*COR abutting low-rise residential*

# Built Form Requirements

- Streetwall heights and setbacks
- Ground floor requirements (height, glazing, privacy)
- Grade oriented premises (min. number and width of units or storefronts, and min. depth)
- Front and flanking yards
- Side and rear setbacks
- Maximum building dimension
- High-rise tower dimension and tower separation distance
- Landscaping
- Amenity space



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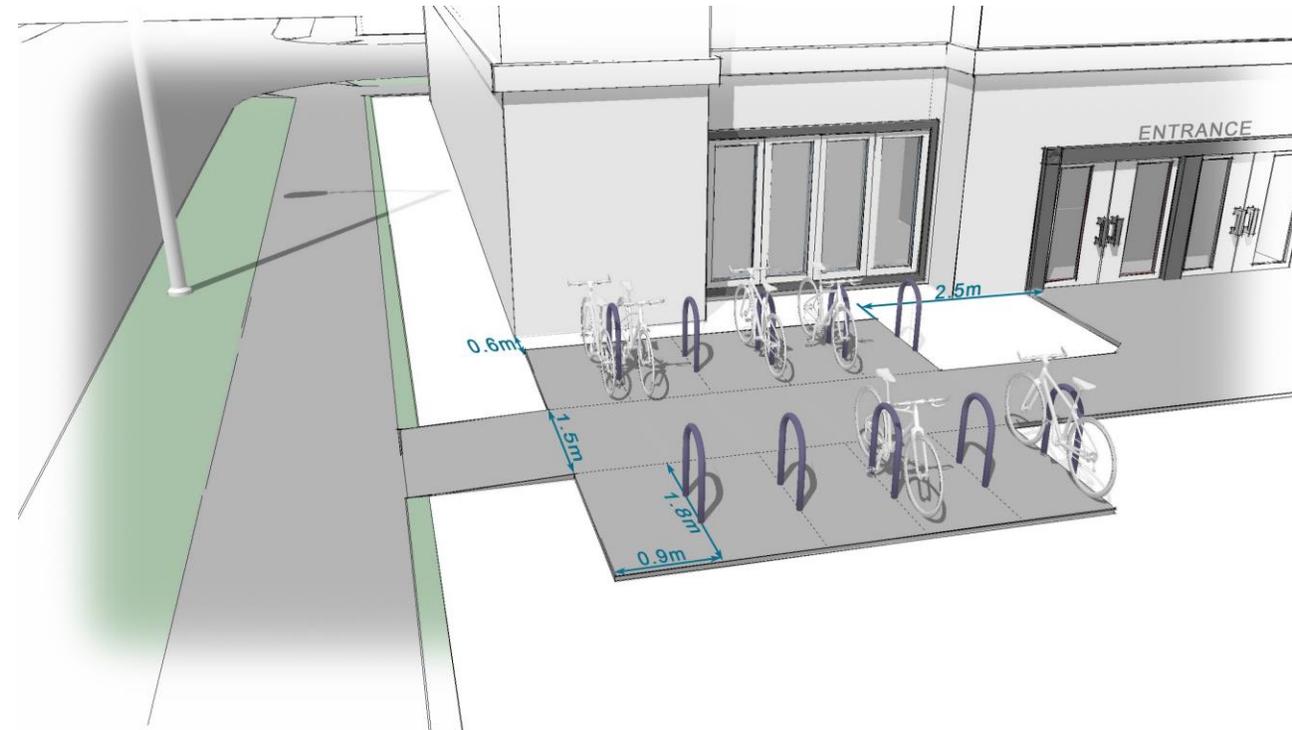
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# Parking Requirements

- Reduced or no parking requirement for multi-unit dwellings, and most other housing forms
- Downtown, Centre and CDD zones have no parking requirements for any use
- Enhanced bicycle parking requirements



# Flexibility within LUB Requirements

## Examples

1. Max. height exemptions
2. Max. FAR exemptions
3. Minimum and maximum yards
4. Streetwalls
  - Up to 20% of the width of the streetwall, to a maximum of 8.0 metres, may be reduced in height to 3.5 metres
  - Up to 20% of the width of a building along either a front or flanking lot line permitted to have no streetwall setback
  - Up to 30% of streetwall width permitted to have cantilevered and recessed portions

# Site Plan Approval Variations to LUB Requirements

1. Roof edge setbacks of height-exempted rooftop features
2. Location of a structure on a lot respecting maximum front and flanking yards
3. Minimum streetwall height
4. Side and rear setbacks for portions of a high-rise building above the streetwall
5. Side and rear setbacks for portions of a tall mid-rise building above the streetwall
6. Side yard setback for pedestrian access

Additional variations are being evaluated

# Variation Example

## **Variation: Minimum Streetwall Height**

- 160 The minimum streetwall height for one streetline may be varied by site plan approval to a minimum of 3.5 metres, where the variation is required on an excessive slope in order to achieve the required streetwall along all other streetlines.

## **Variation: Side and Rear Setbacks for Portions of a High-Rise Building Above the Streetwall**

- 161 Side and rear setback requirements for a high-rise building above the streetwall may be varied by site plan approval where view plane restrictions would not permit the abutting property to have a high-rise form.

# Design Requirements

- 41 site and building design requirements, including 9 heritage design requirements, are now contained within the Land Use By-law
- A Design Advisory Committee is proposed to make recommendations to the Development Officer on all Level II and III site plan approval applications
- The Development Officer will have the final approval to ensure all quantitative and qualitative requirements are met

# Open Space

## Privacy for Grade-Related Units

Private open spaces which are 2.5 metres deep or greater, as measured perpendicularly from the streetline, and which are located between the streetline and a grade-related unit, shall provide privacy for the residential units by using a minimum of one of the following elements per grade-related unit:

- a) a deciduous tree that is not a shrub with a minimum base caliper of 50 millimetres;
- b) a minimum of two shrubs, no less than 1.0 metre in height;
- c) planters ranging in height from 0.25 to 1.0 metres; or
- d) masonry walls ranging in height from 0.25 to 1.0 metres.

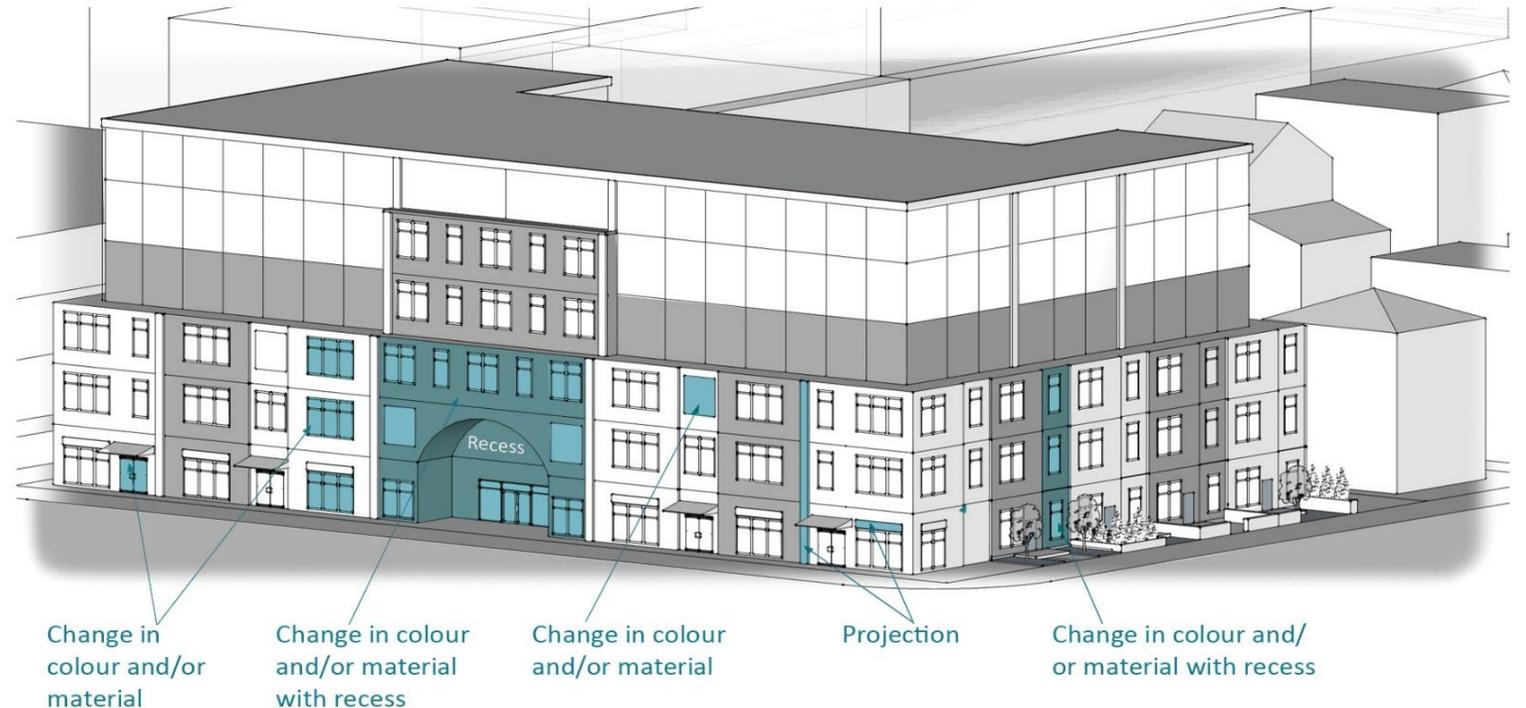


# Building Design

## Streetwall Articulation

Streetwalls shall be divided into distinct sections no less than 0.3 metres in width and not exceeding 8 metres in width, from the ground floor to the top of the streetwall, with each section differentiated by using at least two of the following

- a) colour(s);
- b) recessed entrances of abutting façades;
- c) material(s); or
- d) projections and recesses not less than 0.15 metres in depth.



## Urban Design Awards

### Urban Design

Urban design plays an important role in enhancing the quality of life for residents of the Halifax Regional Municipality.

Urban design helps build better communities by improving the functionality, sustainability and overall appearance of the public and private spaces. Done well, design makes a lasting positive impact for residents now and in the future.

### The Awards

The 2018 Halifax Urban Design Awards were held on Friday, May 4, 2018. Congratulations to all the winners and thanks to everyone who submitted a project.



# Companion Urban Design Document

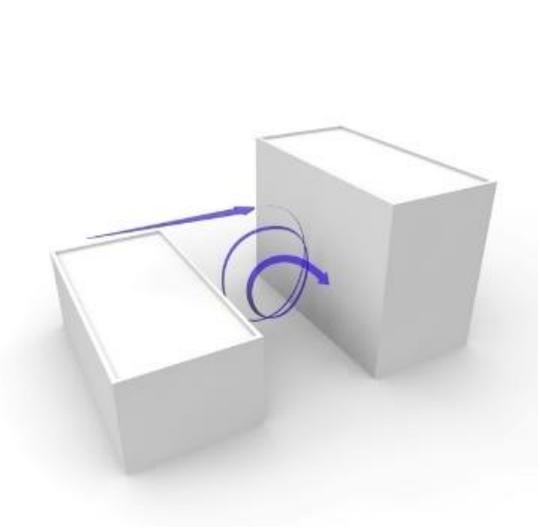
## How it will be used:

- To encourage and reward design excellence.
- Elevate urban design dialogue among planning staff, Design Advisory Committee, Council, the public, property owners, designers and other stakeholder groups.
- May be used to assess submissions to Urban Design Awards program

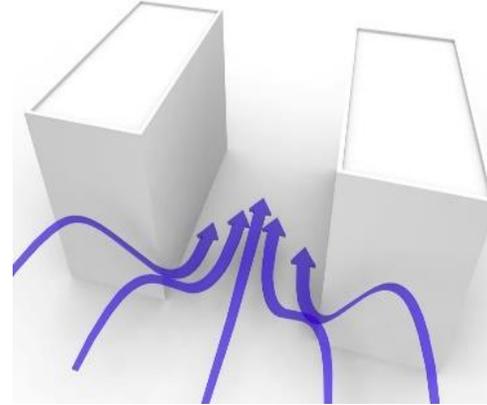
## Legal Status:

Not to be used to approve or refuse development applications.

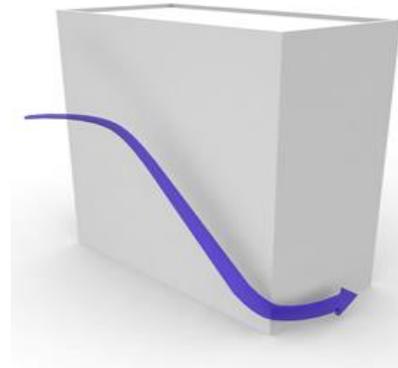
# Pedestrian Wind Impact Assessment Protocol



Strong upper level winds are directed to grade level by taller buildings.



Winds can be channelled between buildings.



Winds tend to accelerate around exposed building corners.

# Shadow Impact Assessment Protocol and Performance Standards

- Required for any new building or addition to a building:
  - located within 100 metres of any area (key parks) identified on Schedule 27, or
  - higher than 26 metres outside 100 metres
- Within the identified park boundaries development must not result in:
  - less than 6 hours of sunlight, and
  - does not result in any point within that property being in shade for more than 4 continuous hours between 8:00 am and 6:00 pm on September 21

# Amendments Package

- Removes all areas, including site specific policies, covered by Centre Plan Package A
- Remaining areas will continue under current plans and by-laws until the adoption of Package B

**HALIFAX**

**Amendments Package to  
Implement the Regional Centre  
Secondary Municipal Planning  
Strategy and Land Use By-law  
(ATTACHMENTS C-K)**

# Transition Policies

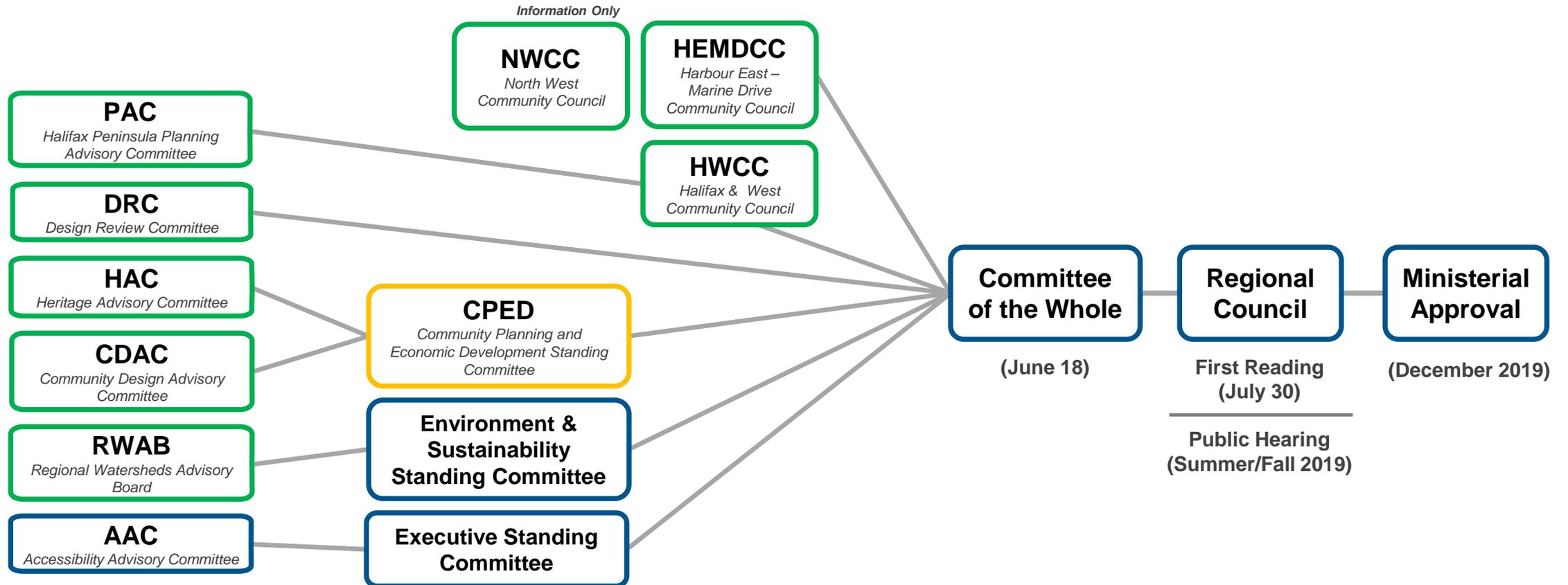
Policies 3.9, 10.25-10.28

- Complete development agreement (DA) applications on file on the date of First Notice of Intention:
  - 24 months to proceed to First Reading
  - 3 years to start, 6 years to complete
  - 10 years to amend King's Wharf DA, and 20 years to complete
- Applications to extend timelines
  - max one year to start project, two years to complete
- Amendments to existing DAs can be considered under policies in effect DA was approved

# Plan Amendments within Regional Centre

- 4 – approved
- 9 – expected to reach public hearing before notice of Council's intention to adopt the Centre Plan on July 30 2019
- 11 – will not reach public hearing before July 30 2019, and will come forward to Regional Council for further direction in June

# Adoption Path



# What We Heard – Adoption Path

- Positive recommendation with no changes from HAC and RWAB
- Positive recommendation from the HPPAC with additional considerations
- Local urban structure changes from HEMDCC & HWCC
- Positive recommendation from CDAC with additional considerations

# CDAC Review

1. Regional Plan direction for predictable, fair, cost-effective and timely decision making
2. Quick and efficient completion of Package B
3. Return of the large lot development agreement policy as an option
4. Some members' concern over the density bonusing framework and its effect on affordability
5. Additional variation criteria through site plan approval and Design Manual
6. Stronger articulation of economic development principles
7. **Clarification on how Centre Plan will improve fair, timely development processes**
8. Infrastructure and other municipal investments must accompany the Plan and include strong policy language
9. Business plans should show connection with Centre Plan
10. Governance issues are important to the implementation of the Plan
11. Value of the Keesmaat report

# Centre Plan Development Processes

- New Plan that represents current context, best practices and has community support
- Package A lands to be governed by one Plan and one Land Use By-law vs. three
- Model for Plan and By-law Simplification
- Site plan approval process vs. development agreements will result in:
  - shorter approval path
  - more predictable results through clear by-law requirements
  - three levels of site plan approval tailored to the size and complexity of projects
  - overall greater development rights

# Next Steps

- CPED recommendation
- Three remaining Committee reviews
- Staff Supplementary Report
- Committee of the Whole and Regional Council
- First Reading and Public Hearing at Regional Council
- Ministerial Approval
- Staff return with additional implementation tools (e.g. bonus zoning fund spending)
- Commence community engagement on Package B

# Recommendation

It is recommended that the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council:

1. Give First Reading and schedule a public hearing to consider the Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy, and the Regional Centre Land Use By-law, as contained in Attachments A and B of this report.
2. Give First Reading to consider the proposed amendments to the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy, the Regional Subdivision By-law, the Dartmouth Municipal Planning Strategy, the Dartmouth Land Use By-law, the Downtown Dartmouth Municipal Planning Strategy, the Downtown Dartmouth Land Use By-law, the Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy, the Halifax Peninsula Land Use By-law, and the Downtown Halifax Land Use By-law as contained in Attachments C to K of this report.
3. Schedule a public hearing to consider the planning documents, as contained in Attachments A and B, as well as the proposed amendments to existing planning documents, as contained in Attachments C to K of this report.
4. Adopt the proposed Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy, and the proposed Regional Centre Land Use By-law as contained in Attachments A and B of this report.
5. Adopt the proposed amendments to the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy, the Regional Subdivision By-law, the Dartmouth Municipal Planning Strategy, the Dartmouth Land Use By-law, the Downtown Dartmouth Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy, the Downtown Dartmouth Land Use By-law, the Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy, the Halifax Peninsula Land Use By-law, and the Downtown Halifax Land Use By-law as contained in Attachments C to K of this report.

**Thank you**  
**centreplan.ca**

The logo features the words "CENTRE PLAN" in a bold, white, distressed font. The text is set against a dark blue background that contains a faint, light blue map of a city street grid. The overall design is clean and professional.

**CENTRE PLAN**