

WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

FEBRUARY 2021



CENTRE PLAN
PACKAGE B
HALIFAX

Prepared by

Halifax Regional Municipality

HALIFAX-DARTMOUTH
CENTRE PLAN

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	3
Background	4
1. WHAT WE DID - PACKAGE B PROCESS	6
1.1 Website and Social Media	6
1.2 Pop-Ups	6
1.3 Stakeholder Engagement	7
1.4 Survey Tool	7
1.5 Established Residential Public Virtual Meetings	9
1.6 “Ask Me Anything” Session on Reddit	9
1.7 Neighbourhood Walking Tours	10
1.8 “Places” Interactive Mapping Tool	10
1.9 St. Patrick’s Alexandra Site Consultation	10
1.10 Correspondence	12
1.11 Community Design Advisory Committee	12
2. WHO PARTICIPATED	13
3. WHAT WE HEARD	14
3.1 Overall Themes	14
3.2 Pop-Ups	14
3.3 Stakeholder Engagement	14
3.4 Online Survey Tool	15
3.5 Established Residential Virtual Meetings	20
3.6 “Ask Me Anything” Session on Reddit	21
3.7 Neighbourhood Walking Tours	21
3.8 “Places” Interactive Mapping Tool	22
3.9 Correspondence	22
3.10 CDAC Feedback	23
Summary	23
Appendices	25
A. Key Themes Table (All Sources)	
B. St. Patrick’s Alexandra Consultation Report	
C. Survey Summaries	
C1. Survey Overview	
C2. Parks and Community Facilities	
C3. Established Residential	
C4. Downtown Halifax	
C5. Entertainment District	
C6. Institutional Employment	
C7. Industrial Employment	
C8. Water Access	
C9. Coastal Elevation	
C10. Young Avenue	
C11. Package A	
D. Correspondence	
D1. Community Groups	
D2. Residents	
D3. Industry	
D4. Site Specific	

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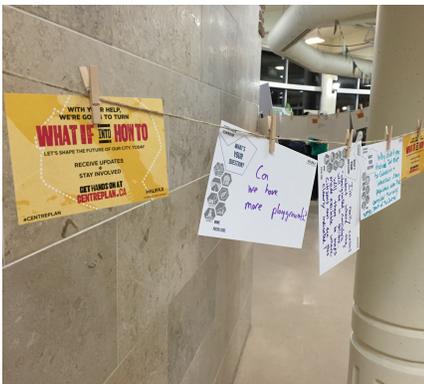
Centre Plan public meeting.

The Halifax Regional Municipality wishes to thank all residents, stakeholders, and industry representatives who took the opportunity to provide valuable feedback on the proposed policies and regulations for Centre Plan Package B. The Municipality would also like to thank the volunteers of various community organizations, in particular Walk n' Roll Halifax, for supporting municipal consultation efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our thanks are also extended to the members of the Community Design Advisory Committee for guiding the engagement and policy review process, and the Diversity and Inclusion/African Nova Scotian Affairs Office for their advice and support.

BACKGROUND

This report provides a summary of the public engagement process for the development of the new Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law (Centre Plan Package B). The report provides both a summary and the detailed comments received from various sources to help inform the Community Design and Advisory Committee (CDAC) and Council deliberation on the proposed policies and regulations. It is accompanied by key indicators of engagement, and detailed appendices that include information such as a list of public and stakeholder meetings, pop-ups, walking tours, surveys and correspondence.

The Regional Centre Plan project is part of a larger secondary plan and land use by-law simplification program initiated by Council in January 2015 along with a Centre Plan Community Engagement Strategy (2015 Strategy). The 2015 Strategy defined an overall framework for an inclusive and transparent engagement process and was implemented through more detailed engagement plans for each key stage of the process. The overall goals were:



Engagement comment cards.

- Goal 1.** Be consistent and draw on the strength of the HRM Community Engagement Strategy.
- Goal 2.** Respect the work done by staff and the public in earlier engagement.
- Goal 3.** Build trust that will enable staff and the public to engage in effective city building.
- Goal 4.** Provide a clear framework for actions and allow for all [Council] bodies to observe measured success.

In June 2017, Regional Council approved the ‘Purple Document’ framework, and a direction to adopt the Plan in two phases:

Package A to establish planning policies and land use by-law regulations for areas of mixed-use development, including Downtown Dartmouth, Centres, Corridors, Higher Order Residential Areas, and Future Growth Nodes; and

Package B to establish planning policies and land use by-law regulations for areas identified as Downtown Halifax, Established Residential Areas, Industrial and Institutional Employment Lands, Parks and Community Facilities, Water Access, and incorporating Package A lands.

Several “What We Heard Reports” on the framework document were presented CDAC. This was followed by more detailed Community Engagement Plans for Package A draft planning documents (Jan. 2018) and Package B (Nov. 2019). The overall process between 2015 and 2020 included the following, with adoption of Package B intended to take place in 2021:

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Engage and Define (Background Studies)					
Learn Together (Framework Document)					
Feedback (Package A)					
Adoption (Package A)					
Feedback (Package B)					

A summary of community engagement on Package A was presented to the Community Design Advisory Committee (CDAC) in June of 2018. CDAC played a key role in defining the community engagement process, reviewing public and stakeholder feedback, and providing strategic policy advice to staff. Staff also provided updates to Community Councils and Standing Committees of Council at key steps of the process. Given that community engagement on Package A was also relevant to the continued engagement for Package B, Table 1 provides a summary of community engagement between 2015 and 2019.

Table 1: Package A Summary of Community Engagement (2015-2019)

Type of Engagement	Number of Events/Participants
Stakeholder Workshops	10+
Road Show Presentations	50+
Public Open Houses	14
Community Workshops	8
Pop-up Meetings	15
Walking Tours	20
Survey Participation	326
Storefront	10 Weeks and 400 Visits
Correspondence	500+
Shape Your City Halifax Website	Approximately 26,500 unique visitors and 24,300 downloads.



Centre Plan storefront in downtown Halifax.

Table 2: Centre Plan What We Heard Reports (2016-2018)

What We Heard Kick-Off Open House	March 2016
What We Heard Community Workshops	May 2016
What We Heard Draft Package A	June 2018

1. WHAT WE DID - PACKAGE B PROCESS

Draft Centre Plan Package B was published on February 28, 2020 and presented to CDAC on March 4, 2020. The engagement process on the draft planning documents was guided by the Regional Centre Package 'B' Community Engagement Strategy.

The focus of the engagement and outreach effort was on sharing information and receiving feedback from all key stakeholders and residents affected by the proposed policies and regulations, including potential site-specific changes for the Saint Patrick's Alexandra former school site. The process included a variety of information materials and events, including pop-ups, workshops, stakeholder meetings and local neighbourhood meetings. Between Feb. 28th and March 8, 12 pop-up events and 10 stakeholder sessions were completed. However, with the global COVID-19 pandemic declared on March 11, 2020, eight scheduled public meetings were cancelled.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the engagement period was extended until December 31, 2020 and adapted to the evolving public health directives. This included a significant reliance on virtual consultation tools, e-mail newsletters, a website portal with an interactive map, social media, municipal message boards, calls, pop-ups, walking tours, limited mail-outs, online surveys, recorded presentations, virtual public and stakeholder meetings, and correspondence.

1.1 Website and Social Media

Building on the success of Centre Plan Package A, the project maintained a strong website, Shape Your City, and social media presence on several municipal platforms. In addition to draft planning documents, the website included Q&As, fact sheets, presentations, an interactive map, an introductory Package B video produced by PLANifax, and a link to current surveys and engagement events. Key updates were communicated through all online platforms, and the project's extensive e-mail list. The platforms enjoyed a high use with over 17, 200 visits, 17, 000 document downloads, and over 990 active participants in the website. At key points in the project, the site saw over 2,000 visits per day.

1.2 Pop-Ups

Immediately following the public release of draft Centre Plan Package B, municipal staff connected with members of the public through 12 pop-ups in different parts of the Regional Centre to raise awareness about Package B, key issues and areas covered, and how members of the public could provide feedback. The locations included farmers markets, libraries, ferry terminals, and shopping malls across the Regional Centre. The pop-ups

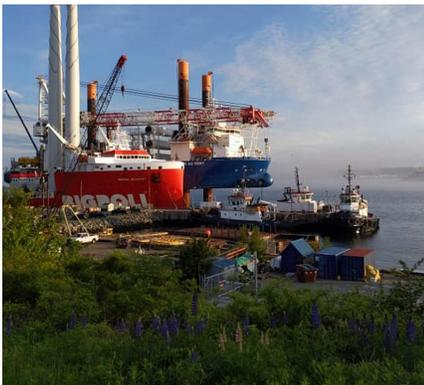


Centre Plan pop-up event.

included graphic boards, fact sheets, printed documents and access to an interactive map. Approximately 50 comment cards were received from the pop-ups on a variety of topics. In November of 2020 staff were also at two additional pop-ups at the North End Library to promote public awareness and feedback on the site-specific review of the St. Patrick's Alexandra former school site as directed by Council.

1.3 Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder outreach took place immediately following the release of the draft planning documents, and throughout the extended Package B engagement phase. Outreach included group and personal invitations, and targeted mail-outs to industrial property owners. In early March of 2020 targeted stakeholder meetings were held for the following groups:



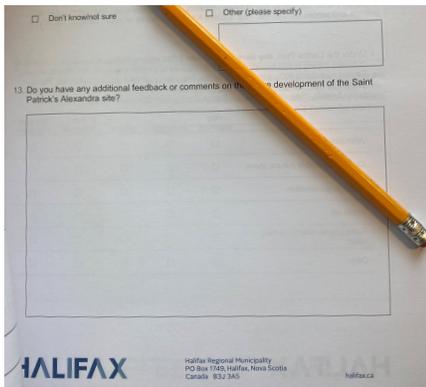
Regional Centre waterfront industry.

- Development Community
- Design Community
- Downtown Halifax Stakeholders
- Community Groups (Heritage, Environment, and Established Residential Areas)
- Community Groups (Parks and Community Facilities)
- Industrial Employment (Port Authority, DevelopNS, industrial park and other property owners)
- Institutional Employment (Universities, Colleges, Hospitals, Smaller Institutions etc.)

Staff and members of CDAC also reached out to various municipal business units, Halifax Libraries, provincial and federal departments and agencies, as well as universities and colleges, and community stakeholders such as Heritage Trust, Friends of the Halifax Common, HRM Alliance, Ecology Action Centre, Nova Scotia Health Authority, Nova Scotia Public Health and Halifax Port Authority among others.

1.4 Survey Tool

Due to public health restrictions and limits imposed on social gathering limits, the engagement program pivoted with a greater emphasis on online surveys/feedback forms. The surveys were designed around the Package B designations and key policy areas, including the site-specific consultation on the former St. Patrick's Alexandra school site. The survey tool available through Shape Your City that is frequently used for a variety of municipal policy initiatives, is not designed to be statistically representative. Rather, the survey tool was used to facilitate feedback from interested residents and targeted towards various interested groups, as an additional way for residents to engage and provide feedback. The surveys were promoted through the municipal website, social media, municipal and Council newsletters. In the case of the St. Patrick's Alexandra site they were also



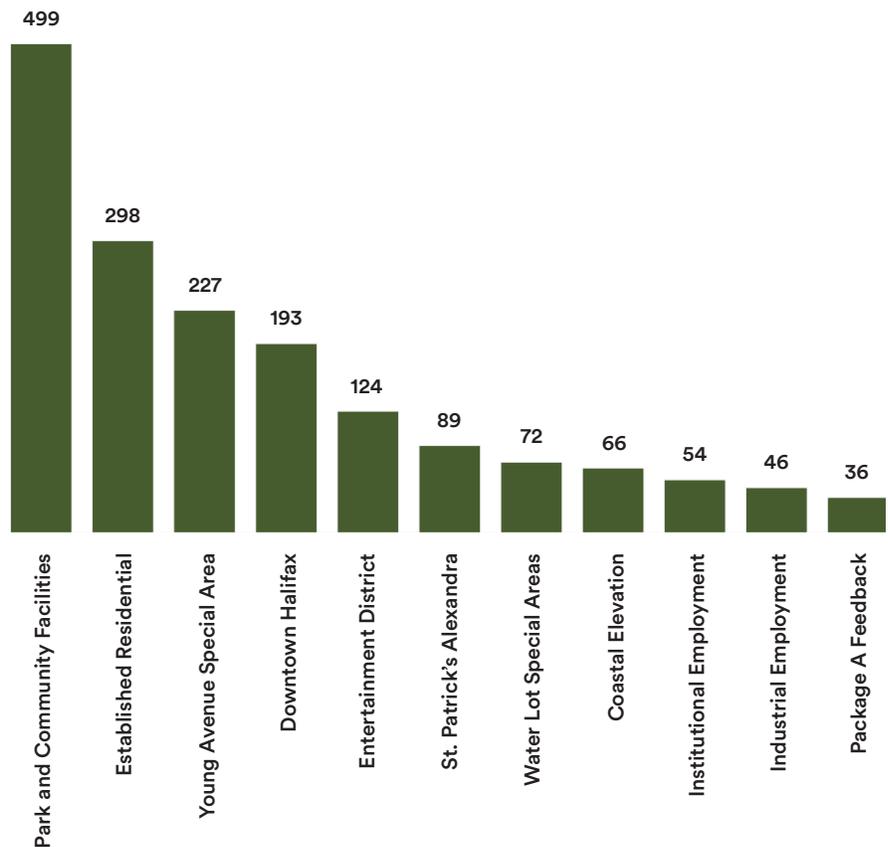
Physical copy of St. Patrick's Alexandra survey.

promoted through postcards mailed to over 2,500 addresses in the vicinity of the site, and paper copies of the survey were available for several weeks at the North End Library and during pop-ups. A recorded presentation about the engagement was also available starting in September on the SYC site, and solicited 61 views.

Each survey included background information as well as detailed questions on policy direction and regulations. Most of the Centre Plan surveys were open between June 11 and August 31, and the Saint Patrick's Alexandra site was open between October 2nd and November 30th.

Overall, 1,704 survey responses were received, with different response rates for each survey as indicated in Fig. 1 below. Overall the highest response was received on the topic of Parks and Community Facilities (499) followed by Established Residential (298), Young Avenue (227) and Downtown Halifax (193). Appendix A provides a detailed summary of each of the survey results, including information on the key demographics of respondents to each survey and Appendix B provides a summary of the St. Patrick's Alexandra survey and other engagement feedback.

Figure 1: Centre Plan Survey Responses (2020)





Screenshot of Q & A feature from virtual public meetings.

1.5 Established Residential Public Virtual Meetings

Three Virtual Public Meetings were held on the topic of Established Residential Designation through MS Teams Live Event software on November 16, 23 and December 1st, 2020 at different times of the day (morning, noon, and evening). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person public meetings were not possible, and while not a replacement for traditional in-person events, these virtual meetings were structured to engage the public as close as possible to a standard town hall meeting format.

The meetings were open to the general public and invited participants to ask questions and comment on the draft planning documents. The format included a detailed staff presentation on the proposed policies and regulations and provided an opportunity for feedback through a call-in or chat option. Staff attempted to answer all chat and call-in questions during the meeting.

Members of the public were encouraged to register in advance if they wished to speak, but they could also call-in during the meeting. A recording of each meeting was posted on centreplan.ca after the fact. Table 3 below provides information on number of participants and the number of views for each session.

Table 3: Participation in Virtual Established Residential Meetings

	November 16, 2020	November 26, 2020	December 1, 2020
Number of Participants	18	11	7
Number of Views (meeting recording) as of Feb. 11, 2021	127	100	52

While 36 people participated in the meetings, the meetings received 279 views linked to the municipal website and You Tube channel.

1.6 “Ask Me Anything” Session on Reddit

On Wednesday, December 2, from 4 pm to 8 pm the Municipality hosted an “AMA” (Ask Me Anything) on Halifax Reddit.com - a popular messaging board site. Reddit plays host to an active Halifax community which is often engaged in municipal projects and development in general. This was the first time municipal staff engaged members of the public on the platform. Staff generated a post on the website inviting questions about planning in Halifax and the Centre Plan process and responded live during the event to approximately 65 comments and questions from approximately 50 unique users. The session was positively received with several up-votes and prizes from users.



Centre Plan neighbourhood walking tour.

1.7 Neighbourhood Walking Tours

In the fall of 2020, the project team partnered with Halifax Walk n’Roll, a local voluntary organization, to organize a number of neighbourhood walking tours based on the model developed at the start of the project in 2016. The goal was to carry out between 5-10 walking tours in different parts of the Regional Centre with a maximum of 8 participants and two facilitators to respect social gathering limits and other public health recommendations. Outreach to interested residents and groups took place through the HRM and Walk n’Roll social media, e-mail lists, and personal outreach.

Walk n’Roll volunteers took a lead on neighbourhood group outreach, walking tour itineraries and topics of discussion. Three walking tours were successfully carried out with approximately 20 participants in total. Two walking tours took place in the Bloomfield and one in the Young Avenue neighbourhood. While additional walking tours were planned, new public health restrictions in late November of 2020 interrupted those plans. In addition to notes from each walk, participants had the option of leaving a comment card, and joining an e-mail list with Walk ‘n Roll for future updates.

1.8 “Places” Interactive Mapping Tool

Following the new gathering limit restrictions announced in late November and the interruption of neighbourhood walking tours, the project team developed an interactive “Places” mapping tool to invite additional feedback and questions about local neighbourhoods. The tool asked questions about what residents liked about their neighbourhoods, and what was missing. They could also tag on a map places to live, work and play. This was supported by digital “walking tour stops” write-ups by Walk n’Roll volunteers and posted on the Community Walks Facebook page and e-mail list. The tool was active between December 3 and December 31st and resulted in 22 unique individuals contributing questions and comments. Planning staff and Walk n’Roll volunteers responded to direct comments within the tool to encourage further participation.



Centre Plan Package B Community Consultation Saint Patrick’s Alexandra

Join the conversation on planning policies for the future redevelopment of Saint Patrick’s Alexandra site.
Fill out an online survey at centreplan.ca, or email your feedback to planhrm@halifax.ca.

St. Patrick’s Alexandra community consultation poster.

1.9 St. Patrick’s Alexandra Site Consultation

The Centre Plan process also offered a specific engagement opportunity on the future land use planning policies that will guide redevelopment of the former Saint Patrick’s Alexandra School site. The former school is a prominent site with a historic significance in the Mi’kmaq, African Nova Scotian, and Halifax’s North End communities. As part of the first phase of Centre Plan (Package A), Regional Council directed that during the second phase of Centre Plan (Package B) staff “explore changing the designation for PID:00148643 (St. Patrick’s Alexandra) from HR-1 to HR-2”. To fulfill Council’s direction as part of the Centre Plan (Package B), planning staff

focused consultation on the land use policies that could be adjusted to guide future redevelopment of the site. To seek feedback from the North End community, the process was supported by the Municipality's Office of Diversity and Inclusion and African Nova Scotian Affairs and Integration Office (ANSAIO). A community-based facilitator was also consulted on the initial and revised engagement methods, and supported the development of the survey, stakeholder consultation, and community virtual meeting. The engagement process had to pivot several times to adapt to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and the Black Lives Matter movement. A detailed summary of the engagement process and feedback received is included in Appendix C, but in general the process included the following:

Stakeholder Outreach – September 14 & 16, 2020

Two virtual stakeholder meetings with community and business leaders, and prominent voices in the North End community were held on September 14th and 16th, 2020. During these sessions, staff presented the background information on the Centre Plan and Saint Patrick's Alexandra planning process, including proposed community engagement, and responded to questions and comments. Feedback received included the importance of community engagement, building on previous engagement, and ensuring that the engagement is meaningful. Specific suggestions included in-person meetings where possible, virtual meetings, mail-outs, having a presence in the community, and surveys. Apart from the physical development, there was interest in exploring the potential for specific community benefits, and development process.

Pop-up Sessions – November 6 & 11, 2020

The Centre Plan Team held two pop-up sessions at the North End Branch Library to engage with community members on the Saint Patrick's Alexandra project, receive feedback, and respond to comments and questions. The pop-up sessions were held on November 6th and 11th, 2020, where community member shared thoughts and comments via dialogue and postcards and paper surveys.

Virtual Community Meeting – November 19, 2020

A virtual meeting with community members and stakeholders was held on November 19th, 2020. The meeting was facilitated by Kate MacDonald, an independent consultant and community facilitator. While the staff presentation focused on the site, Centre Plan planning context and purpose of the consultation, the land owner (Jono Developments) presented their vision for the site. Members of the public were able to ask questions by calling in, or through the chat version. A recording of the meeting was also posted online.

There were 25 attendees who joined the meeting through Teams Meeting

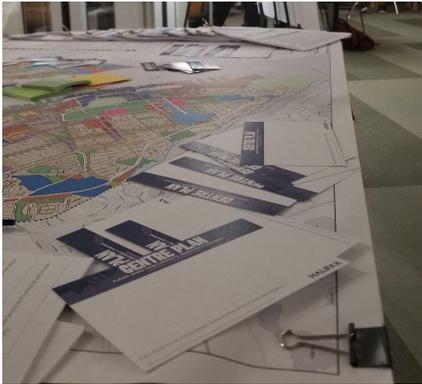


Centre Plan comment card.

platform and conference-calling, and the meeting recording received 62 views on the project website and You Tube channel.

Survey – October 2nd – November 30

A survey was developed to gather feedback on the future redevelopment of the site in collaboration with the Diversity & Inclusion Office, ANSAIO, and the community-based facilitator. The survey was available online and in hard-copies at the North End Branch Library, George Dixon Community Centre, and HRM Customer Service Centres between October 2nd and November 30th. A total of 89 survey responses were received (82 online surveys and 7 paper surveys). The survey responses included memories and stories about the former school, thoughts and ideas about the site, as well as their vision on its future redevelopment.



Centre Plan pop-up table.

1.10 Correspondence

Approximately 360 pieces of separate correspondence were received on a variety of topics, including both general and detailed comments on specific policies and regulations, as well as site specific questions and requests. Given the comprehensive nature of this planning process, this was an opportunity to point out inconsistencies, errors, and to communicate potential development opportunities not fully considered by the draft Plan. Appendix A includes an inventory of all correspondence received. Planning staff will include a response to site specific requests with the release of revised Package B planning documents, targeted for April, 2021.

1.11 Community Design Advisory Committee

The Council-appointed advisory committee was provided with a detailed overview of the draft Package B. The committee provided input through various discussions over several meetings, as well as a memo provided to staff at their August 26, 2020 meeting on proposed policies for the Established Residential Areas. Staff provided initial response to those questions at the Sept. 23, 2020 meeting, with additional deliberation planned when the revised draft of the Plan is released. Appendix A provides a summary of all key feedback themes and more fine-grained comments presented for CDAC review.

2. WHO PARTICIPATED

The following table summarizes the key engagements and levels of participation for Centre Plan Package B from Feb. 28, 2020 to Dec. 31, 2020.

Table 4: Package B Summary of Community Engagement (2020)

Type of Engagement	Number of Events / Participants	Participants / Video Views
Package B Video	1	157 Views
St. Patrick's Alexandra Introductory Video	1	62 Views
Pop-up Meetings	12	50 Comment Cards
Stakeholder Workshops	12	85+ Participants
St. Patrick's Alexandra Stakeholder Meetings	2	15 Participants
Established Residential Virtual Public Meetings	4	36 Participants
St. Patrick's Alexandra Virtual Public Meeting	1	25 Participants
Virtual Road Show Presentations	10+	
Walking Tours	3	18 Participants
Number of Online Survey Tools	11	1,700 Responses
Correspondence	360	
"Places" Mapping Tool	22 Contributors	60+ Comments
Ask Me Anything	Package B Video	50
Shape Your City Halifax Website	Total Visits: 17,200 Document Downloads: 17,000	Engaged: 990 Informed: 5,548 Aware: 8,071



Consultation comments.

Table 5: Age Group of Centre Plan Survey Respondents

Age Group	Share of Respondents
Under 18	0.6%
19 - 34	27.9%
35 - 49	25.1%
50 - 64	30.2%
65+	16.2%

Respondents to the various Centre Plan online surveys were asked to provide basic demographic information about themselves. While the surveys relied on self-selected respondents and were not designed to be statistically representative, information aggregated across the surveys provide basic insight into who participated in the feedback tools:

- 79% live in the Regional Centre
- 63% work within the Regional Centre
- 14% own a business within the Regional Centre
- 69.6% own their housing, 28% rent, and 2.3% lived in a co-op or other type of housing
- Respondents also represented different age groups as indicated in the table below.

3. WHAT WE HEARD

3.1 Overall Themes

The overall themes of feedback received from mall sources are included in Appendix A with initial comments from planning staff to help guide CDAC review of the report. The overall themes generally follow the key chapters of the Plan, including Urban Structure, Urban Design, Culture and Heritage, Mobility, Housing, Economic Development, Environment and Implementation. With respect to feedback on specific land use designations, the greatest number of comments was received on the Park and Community Facilities designation and the Established Residential designation. Comments on Package A designations were also received. In terms of general policy themes, affordable and low-income housing and urban design received the greatest number of comments.

3.2 Pop-Ups

The purpose of the pop-ups was to raise public awareness in the various neighbourhoods about release of draft Package B for consultation, and how members of the public could participate in the engagement process. However, some comments were collected with initial feedback. Themes of pop up comments included: home occupations, height concerns, shared housing, backyard and secondary suites, shadow impacts, affordable housing, density bonusing, Heritage Conservation Districts, Heritage, Parks and Green Space. Affordable housing was the most common theme in the comment cards. Key comments are included in Appendix A.



Package B pop-up at the Central Library.

3.3 Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder feedback was received through the group meetings as well as additional individual meetings. Staff also consulted with municipal business units responsible with operating various community facilities. Comments related to individual properties, approval processes, transition policies, design requirements as well as general comments related to established residential areas, heritage protection, parks and community facilities, and minor changes to Package A lands. Some of the key issues for each theme are highlighted below:

- **Parks and Community Facilities:** strong concern over maintaining, improving and expanding current parks and community facilities; appreciation for some recent investments such as Needham Park; concern over limited or no parkland dedication in high-density settings; some concern over the number of uses permitted in the park zones, while others supported more activities and uses of parks; support for more detailed needs assessments and the Regional Centre Park and Open Space Plan; support for the shadow protocol; specific comments



Sample of proposed Package B zoning in Halifax.

about the protection and possible repatriation of the Halifax Common and Dartmouth Commons and return of Africville. Support for development restrictions in proposed heritage conservation districts.

- **Established Residential Neighbourhoods:** comments on permitted uses, maximum heights, zone placement, special areas, character, and proposed heritage conservation districts; questions on non-conforming uses and structures; parking and land use permitting process; interface with industrial uses; urban agriculture, and Young Avenue development agreement policies as well as interest in heritage conservation along Young Avenue.
- **Heritage:** mostly support for the proposed heritage conservation districts, with questions over timing and some concern that they will make the areas unaffordable; concern that the heritage policies and regulations are not strong enough; questions regarding practical implications of cultural landscapes and landmark buildings.
- **Developers:** questions and suggestions related to potential changes to Package A lands and regulations, bonus zoning, Downtown Halifax and transition policies.
- **Designers:** feedback related to built form regulations, design requirements, transition policies and organization of the land use by-law.
- **Institutional Employment:** feedback related to university, college, hospital and community facility lands; key concerns around land use permissions, built form and design requirements. Requests from some religious institutions for additional land use permissions.
- **Industrial Employment:** question related to zone placement and current land uses; interface between industrial, commercial and residential lands; specific comments related to port and waterfront lands. Suggestions for a degree of mixing of residential and industrial uses.
- **Community Stakeholders:** key comments related to mobility, climate change, strategic use of municipal lands and future investments to support growth and quality of life; support for greater heritage protection, parks and open space, proposed entertainment district, revised coastal elevation proposals, and water access zone.

3.4 Online Survey Tool

Package B public consultation included 10 general surveys on Centre Plan proposed policies and regulations, and one survey specific to the St. Patrick's Alexandra former school site. Each survey is summarized in Appendices B and C. Given the detailed answers, each survey summary should be reviewed. However, Table 6 below provides a high-level summary of key items that received support from most respondents (more than 50%), and policy areas that received less than 50% of support or had negative comments. While most surveys focused on policy areas under the influence of Centre Plan, the Parks & Community Facility survey was developed in collaboration with Parks & Recreation staff and included questions related to park use and satisfaction in support of the Regional Centre Parks and Open Space Plan.

Survey Policy Area: Park and Community Facilities

Strong Support

- Water quality monitoring
- Design for parks and community facilities to support access for all ages and abilities and pedestrian experience
- More detailed needs assessments of parks and community facilities to understand community needs
- Need for new and increased facilities for activities in parks
- Need to increase facilities, amenities, land for parks, and support for pocket parks
- Improved connections to and between parks mostly by active means.
- Comments on green community development and ground level amenity space around higher density developments
- Support for access to waterfronts and protecting urban lakes

Less Support / Concern

- Concerns for development pressures near or on parks land, often specifically related the scale of development next to parks.
- Some comments related to specific uses permitted in the RPK and PCF Zones, major spectator venue in the PCF zone

Survey Policy Area: Established Residential

Strong Support

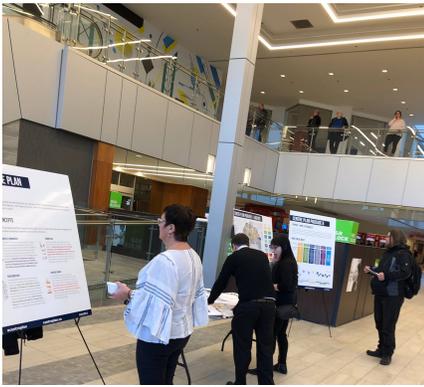
- Retaining the scale of established neighbourhoods
- Supporting the retention of heritage properties and historic neighbourhoods
- Allowing for more low-density housing options
- Support for the keeping of bees, and expanded agricultural permissions in residential neighbourhoods
- Support for broadly permitting daycares, home businesses and home occupations
- Support for permitting local commercial uses throughout the ER zones with some possible additional controls, and allowing coffee shops
- Floor area, height and locations of backyard suites

Less Support / Concern

- The proliferation of egg laying fowl



Established Residential example.



Package B pop-up at Halifax Shopping Centre.

- Short term rentals
- Shared Housing
- Noise, smells, hours of operation and traffic associated with local commercial uses
- Some comments about too much density in the ER-1 zone and proposed zone placements

Survey Policy Area: Downtown Halifax

Strong Support

- Most respondents indicated that they go to Downtown Halifax for entertainment and to access services
- Most were satisfied with the waterfront, attractions, and public spaces
- While a strong majority felt that they feel welcome downtown Halifax, 10% disagreed with the statement
- The majority agreed that new developments contribute to overall vibrancy of Downtown Halifax, while 26% disagreed
- A slight majority (51%) indicated that they liked the type and quality of new development in the area, and 36% disagreed
- There was a strong support for the proposed categories of public benefits under bonus zoning
- Some comments indicated a desire for less development in the area, while others supported increased heights.

Less Support / Concern

- There was a near even split of responses related to the adequacy of protecting heritage buildings in Downtown Halifax
- Majority disagreed that Downtown Halifax has a good range of housing options
- There was a split opinion on whether pedways should be allowed over public streets, with most indicating that they could be permitted in Downtown Halifax if they don't obstruct public views

Survey Policy Area: Institutional Employment

Strong Support

- Most responses supported policy objectives related to the presence and growth of institutions in the Regional Centre, supporting access and pedestrian environment, open space, heritage protection, and interesting architecture
- Strong support for the landmark building policy of allowing select buildings to convert to residential and commercial uses

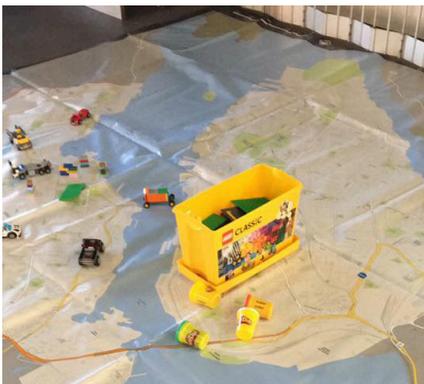
Less Support / Concern

- Concern over encroachment on the Common lands
- Comments related to the Municipality doing a better job when considering surplus property that it owns and re-use these buildings for community purposes.
- Comments on the possibility of a development agreement approach to Landmark Buildings and protecting the entire building not only the facades.

Survey Policy Area: Industrial Employment

Strong Support

- There was a strong agreement that industrial lands are an important part of the Regional Centre's economy, but opinions were mixed as to whether they can co-exist with residential uses are mixed.
- There was support for the COM zone, and support for greater built form flexibility than other mixed-use zones, although 17% disagreed with a more industrial built form



Centre Plan engagement event.



Home on Young Avenue discussed on a walking tour with residents.



Home on Young Avenue discussed on a walking tour with residents.



Young Avenue walking tour.

Less Support / Concern

- Slight majority (52%) agreed that industrial lands need to be protected from encroaching residential uses but 62% felt that some integration between industrial and residential is possible.

Survey Policy Area: Water Access

Strong Support

- Strong support for policy to limit new uses on infilled water lots
- Strong support for limiting permitted uses to parks, water access structure and historic monuments but some concern about allowing utilities and transportation facilities.
- Comments indicated concern over infilling

Survey Policy Area: Coastal Elevation

Strong Support

- Strong support among respondents to include both new commercial and institutional developments in new coastal elevation requirements (71% and 83% respectively)
- Comments included support for this regulation due to climate change and sea level rise.

Survey Policy Area: Entertainment District

Strong Support

- Most respondents were not concerned about entertainment noise in the downtown areas
- Most respondents supported the idea of establishing an entertainment district in Downtown Halifax, followed by Downtown Dartmouth

Survey Policy Area: Young Avenue

Strong Support

- Very strong support for the retention of the existing as-of-right development regulations for the Special Area

Less Support / Concern

- Very strong opposition to either development agreement option.
- Comments focused around concerns over further demolitions on the street and the desire to retain the “single family” character of the neighbourhood.
- Multi-unit buildings are incompatible with the street, including on vacant lands.

Survey Policy Area: St. Patrick’s Alexandra

Strong Support

- Strong indication of connection to the site and cultural significance for the African NS and North End communities
- Support for mixed-use development, including support for additional uses, such as grocery store and recreation
- Strong support for mid-rise development (4 to 6 storeys, maximum of 8) and public benefits
- Strong interest in integrating the development with the surrounding community
- Strong support for affordable housing and cultural spaces, pedestrian connections, parks and open spaces, followed by public art and heritage preservation on site

Less Support / Concern

- Comments indicated disappointment with the site having been sold
- Limited support for high-rise buildings

Survey Policy Area: Package A

Strong Support

- This survey received limited responses.
- While some indicated that nothing is working well about the approved Package A, others indicated faster approval processes, increased development and increased level of predictability.
- Potential improvements included height issues, ensuring adherence to the approved plan with minimal change going forward, support for pedways, support for more parking, fewer variations, changes to specific policies, information presentation, heritage policies, and disagreement with Development Agreement solutions.
- Support for certain additions to Package A lands.

Less Support / Concern

- Concern for transitions between Corridors and low-density residential areas,
- Support for increases streetwall heights
- Opinion that Package A has lowered creative potential in building design.



St. Patrick's Alexandra pop-up engagement at Halifax North Memorial Library.

Survey Policy Area: Engagement during COVID-19

Strong Support

- When asked how residents would like to be engaged on Centre Plan when in-person meetings may not be possible, a large majority expressed support for online surveys, followed by virtual meetings and presentations, webinars, online mapping and e-mail.

3.5 Established Residential Virtual Meeting

The three virtual public meetings focused on the Established Residential Designation were held on Nov. 21, 23, and Dec. 1st. The key topics of questions and comments are summarized in the table below.

November 16, 2020

Key Questions and Topics of Discussion

- Townhome units and design of townhomes
- Level of public engagement required for site plan approval
- Minimum lot requirements for established residential zones
- Non-conforming uses and their preservation through Package B
- Sign regulations
- Maximum height in ER neighbourhoods
- Commencement of the first floor of a building and whether this is something that Package B is contemplating regulating.
- Impacts of upzoning/downzoning
- Centre Plan Package B process and timeline



Established Residential neighbourhood.

November 23, 2020

Key Questions and Topics of Discussion

- Maximum gross floor area in ER zones with confirmation that GFAR is not going to be used in ER areas at this time
- Transition between Centre Plan and existing planning documents, and how long the existing documents would be in effect.
- Home based businesses and general requirements
- General ER-1 built form requirements
- Landmark buildings policy and confirmation of what it permits
- Bedroom counts proposed in Package B
- Use of accessory structures of home based businesses and occupations
- Questions over the ease of development in ER zones, compared to the current zones.
- If parkland will be expanded in the Regional Centre
- Definition of a complete community
- Consultation completed to date
- Requirements for backyard suites
- Centre Plan Package B process and timeline

December 1, 2020

Key Questions and Topics of Discussion

- Secondary suites and backyard suites general requirements
- Definition of ground floor in relation to local commercial uses proposed through the plan
- Definition of restaurant use
- Setbacks in the ER zones and special areas, and the process to determine them
- Short term rentals and whether they will be prohibited or not

3.6 “Ask Me Anything” Session on Reddit

During the AMA discussion forum on Halifax Reddit the discussion covered a range of topics including:

- Maximum building heights, and other built form requirements;
- Affordable housing, affordable rental housing;

- Parking requirements;
- The use of Centre-zoned lands for dealership uses;
- Level of change and how quickly development will occur;
- Density bonusing program and how funds will be used;
- HalifACT 2050 and municipal climate action;
- Transit and active transportation projects;
- Secondary and backyard suites; and
- Process for plan amendments, rezonings, and similar processes.

3.7 Neighbourhood Walking Tours



Centre Plan pop-up event.

During the Bloomfield walking tours key topics of conversation included neighbourhood scale and character, the proposed heritage conservation district, importance of parks and green space, support of pocket parks, parking, secondary suites and backyard suites, support for local commercial uses on corner lots, urban agriculture, development approval processes, and neighbourhood consultation. Overall, there was a sense that the neighbourhood is already very dense and has reasonable access to commercial services but there is a shortage in parks and open spaces.

During the Young Avenue walking tour the key concern was over the maintenance of the Special Area land use provisions, and concern over the proposed development agreement policies for both vacant lands and existing buildings. There was an overall desire to maintain the large lot single-unit to three or four units per lot character of the area. There was also a desire to see the heritage of the area recognized through heritage registrations or a heritage district designation. There was limited concern over specific design criteria in favour of maintaining the overall scale of development.

3.8 “Places” Interactive Mapping Tool

To continue the engagement process until the end of December, staff worked with Walk n’Roll volunteers to develop mini virtual walking tour guides on Centre Plan topics and developed the “Places” interactive mapping tool through Shape Your City. The Places Tool attracted 22 contributors and approximately 60 posts. Detailed comments are included in Appendix D but the general themes of the comments included:

- Support for additional housing options in low-rise neighbourhoods;
- Support for mid-rise buildings;
- Support for urban chickens;
- Interest in greater availability and quality of parks and open spaces;
- Support for more community gardens and more access to land for

those purposes;

- Concern over maintaining lake water quality;
- Improved pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure;
- Concern over light pollution in residential areas.

3.9 Correspondence

The over 360 pieces of correspondence received covered many topics, both general and site specific. All correspondence is provided in Appendix D, and broken into correspondence from community organizations, residents and industry. The key themes are also included in Appendix A, but key issues raised included:

- Concern over ability to maintain appropriate ratio of growth and access to parks, open spaces, and affordable community facilities;
- Questions and concerns relative to zoning permissions in Established Residential Zones;
- Concern over the adequacy and strength of policies relative to increased amount and quality of parks and open spaces;
- Concerns relative to affordable and low income housing, displacement, gentle density, built forms and heights;
- Questions and concerns relative to the site plan approval process, in particular community engagement process and purpose;
- Detailed comments and suggestions relative to built form regulations for Package A zones;
- Comments relative to the application of certain built form and design controls for institutional buildings;
- Comments relative to the proposed application of industrial zones;
- Comments relative to the negative reception for the proposed Young Avenue development agreement policies;
- Comments relative to proposed heritage conservation buildings, cultural landscapes and landmark buildings;
- Correspondence mostly supporting secondary suites, backyard suites with the exception of the Westmount special area;
- General support for egg laying fowl and urban agriculture; and
- Numerous site specific zoning and built form requests;



Centre Plan stakeholder meeting.

3.10 CDAC Feedback

CDAC feedback focused on the Established Residential Designation, including comments related to the overall potential for growth, degree of proposed change, zone placement compared to the existing zoning, and over-simplification of three-unit conversion special area.



Regional Centre boundary.

SUMMARY

Public engagement for Centre Plan Package B was a key component of the planning process. The objective was to provide for a fair, inclusive and transparent process that could inform and influence planning policies and regulations and to built on previous engagement related to the overall framework and draft Package A. Given the varied stakeholders and resident groups potentially impacted, and the challenges posed by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic which prevented most in-person engagement from taking place, the engagement program relied on a variety of tools to share information and receive feedback on proposed policies and regulations. The greater reliance on online engagement and surveys was supplemented by early pop-ups, in-person and virtual stakeholder meetings, virtual public meetings, walking tours and personal calls. While a departure from a typical engagement process, the virtual process in some cases removed barriers and provided new opportunities for engagement. The feedback received was extensive and will inform changes in both policies and regulations to support inclusive growth for the Regional Centre.

HALIFAX-DARTMOUTH
CENTRE PLAN

APPENDICES

- A. **Key Feedback Themes Table (All Sources)**
- B. **St. Patrick's Alexandra Consultation Report**
- C. **Survey Summaries**
 - C1. **Survey Overview**
 - C2. **Parks and Community Facilities**
 - C3. **Established Residential**
 - C4. **Downtown Halifax**
 - C5. **Entertainment District**
 - C6. **Institutional Employment**
 - C7. **Industrial Employment**
 - C8. **Water Access**
 - C9. **Coastal Elevation**
 - C10. **Young Avenue**
 - C11. **Package A**
- D. **Correspondence**
 - D1. **Community Groups**
 - D2. **Residents**
 - D3. **Industry**
 - D4. **Site Specific**