

# HALIFAX

P.O. Box 1749  
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**Item No. 15.1.5**  
**Halifax Regional Council**  
**October 5, 2021**

**TO:** Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

**SUBMITTED BY:**

Original Signed by 

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Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** September 27, 2021

**SUBJECT:** **Case 23856: Regional Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law Amendments for Property Along Highway 207, West Chezzetcook**

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## **ORIGIN**

On August 31, 2021 the following motion of Regional Council was put and passed:

*“THAT Halifax Regional Council authorize the Chief Administrative Officer to:*

- 1. Enter into the Rapid Housing Initiative Agreement with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation ("CMHC"), substantially in accordance with the draft form in Attachment A, to accept \$12,979,021 for the creation of a minimum of 43 affordable housing units by the Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia, Souls Harbour and Akoma Holdings Incorporated as further discussed in this report; and*
- 2. Negotiate and execute Contribution Agreements, and any amendments or consents arising from them, with recipients, to distribute CMHC Rapid Housing Initiative funding for approved projects.”*

## **LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

*Halifax Regional Municipality Charter (HRM Charter), Part VIII, Planning & Development.*

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to:

1. Initiate amendments to the applicable secondary municipal planning documents, including the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy and land-use by-laws, to allow the development of a shared housing use and multiple unit residential building that exceeds current density requirements for PID 40302507 along Highway 207 in West Chezzetcook; and
2. Adopt the public participation program as outlined in the Community Engagement section of this report.

## **BACKGROUND**

On [August 31, 2021](#), Regional Council directed the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to enter into the Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) Agreement with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation ("CMHC"), to accept \$12,979,021 for the creation of a minimum of 43 affordable housing units by the Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia, Souls Harbour and Akoma Holdings Incorporated. This agreement was part of the second round of the Rapid Housing Initiative, which is a federal initiative with the goal of providing new affordable housing to vulnerable populations at risk of homelessness within one year.

As part of staff's recommendation for the second round of RHI, the Souls Harbour project was allocated \$2,995,185 for the development of a 3 storey – 12-unit residential building that will provide housing for women and women with children. This development will complement an existing project on the same site that will include supportive housing for an additional 7 women/women with children. The civic address and property mapping of the lands in question is not being shared as it is anticipated that some residents may require privacy or a certain level of anonymity. The following table provides a summary of the land use planning considerations for the property.

<b>Subject Property</b>	PID 40302507, West Chezzetcook
<b>Regional Plan Designation</b>	RC (Rural Commuter)
<b>Community Plan Designation (Map 1)</b>	MU (Mixed Use)
<b>Zoning (Map 2)</b>	RE (Resource) Zone
<b>Size of Site</b>	~1.9 acres (83,956 square feet)
<b>Street Frontage</b>	~75 metres (246 feet) along Highway 207
<b>Current Land Use(s)</b>	Vacant building to be converted into supportive/shared housing
<b>Surrounding Use(s)</b>	The majority of surrounding uses are low density residential uses, however, other land uses surrounding the site include religious and community buildings as well as HRM parkland.

While the RE Zone applied to the property permits the development of a multiple unit dwelling, based on the lot area for the subject property only 8 units are permitted on the lot. As such, an amendment to the municipal planning documents are required to permit the proposed development of 12 units in addition to a shared housing use. The scoring and the award of RHI funding to the Souls Harbour project would not have changed as a result of this requirement for amendments to the secondary municipal planning documents.

### **MPS and LUB Context**

The subject property is designated Mixed Use under the Planning Districts 8 and 9 Secondary Planning Strategy (SPS) (see Attachment A). The Mixed-Use designation considers a variety of uses including multiple unit dwellings that can be supported by an on-site sewage disposal system.

The subject property is zoned RE (Rural Enterprise) under the Planning Districts 8 and 9 Land Use By-law (LUB) which permits a variety of uses including multiple unit dwellings (see Attachment B). Density for multiple unit dwellings is set at 1 unit for every 2,787.1 square metres (30,000 square feet) of lot area. This would permit approximately 8 units. The maximum permitted height for a multiple unit dwelling is 10.7 metres (35 feet).

### **Regional Plan Context**

The subject property is in the Rural Commuter designation of the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (RMPS), which supports protecting the character of rural communities including, protecting natural resources and supporting the delivery of convenience services.

Support for affordable housing is also an objective of the RMPS. Section 3.6 - Housing and Diversity speaks to the importance of supporting affordable housing through the development of policy and participating in programs with other levels of government that support affordable housing (see Attachment C).

HRM further acknowledges its role in supporting affordable housing initiatives through other region wide initiatives such as the Public Safety Strategy and Anti-Poverty Solution Strategy.

### **Housing and Homelessness Partnership**

In October 2013, Regional Council endorsed HRM's formal participation in the Housing and Homelessness Partnership. The Partnership is made up of various levels of government and organizations with the goal "to end housing poverty and homelessness in the Halifax Region". In July 2018, Regional Council directed staff to proceed with the initiatives contained in the Affordable Housing Work Plan. The Work Plan outlines how the Municipality will support the commitment to the Affordable Housing Working Group's 5 Year Strategic Plan, which was endorsed by Regional Council in December 2016 and includes the target of 5,000 affordable units in HRM by 2022.

### **DISCUSSION**

An amendment to any municipal planning strategy, especially the RMPS, is not regular practice and only considered in unique circumstances for a project of strategic importance to the municipality. While the proposed amendment to the land use planning documents is specific in relation to the site, the development has significant regional impacts as it will provide deeply affordable housing available to women and women with children throughout HRM. As the opportunity to access RHI funding is an extremely unique circumstance to meet Council's strategic priority to support affordable housing and the use is consistent with uses permitted in the area, staff recommend initiating an amendment to the RMPS and applicable Land Use By-law.

The proposed amendment would increase the allowable density for multiple unit dwellings on this site. While staff will have regard for all applicable planning policies, a major consideration will be the capacity of on-site services to support the development. While the current zone requires 2,787.1 square metres of property (30,000 square feet) for every unit, the proposed 12-unit residential development will contain a mix of dwelling units that will be smaller than a traditional household in the community. The determination of the capacity of on-site services is a key factor in this request and staff will continue to undertake consultation with the the property owner and Nova Scotia Environment in this regard through the planning process.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications associated with this report. The HRM costs associated with the planning document amendment process can be accommodated within the approved 2021/22 operating budget using existing resources.

### **RISK CONSIDERATION**

There are no significant risks associated with the recommendations contained within this report. MPS amendments are at the discretion of Regional Council and are not subject to appeal to the N.S. Utility and Review Board.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Should Regional Council choose to initiate the MPS amendment process, the HRM Charter requires that Regional Council approve a public participation program. In February of 1997, Regional Council approved

a public participation resolution, which provides broad discretion on the consultation process required for MPS amendments that are regional in nature and requires that staff recommend an appropriate public participation program. Staff recommend that Regional Council obtain stakeholder and public feedback through a region wide online survey and sharing information on HRM's website. An online survey would provide residents with the ability to provide input to the proposed amendment to RMPS and LUBs at their convenience and would be consistent with other region wide public engagement such as the recent amendments to consider secondary and backyard suites.

To meet the conditions of the Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) funding, the development must be completed within a year. While staff will be expedient in their review and preparation of a recommendation report to Council, it is important to note that this will not compromise the intended objectives of the public consultation process.

Amendments to the RMPS, SMPs and LUBs will potentially impact the following stakeholders: federal and provincial governments, the property owner (Souls Harbour) and the general public.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

This development is located next to a body of water and will be serviced by on-site specific system and an on-site well. Staff will consider the potential environmental impacts of this development in our recommendation to Council.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

1. Regional Council may choose to initiate the consideration of potential plan policy that would differ from that which is outlined in this report. Doing this may require a supplementary report and may impact the ability for the proposed development to comply with required timelines for RHI funding.
2. Regional Council may choose not to initiate the MPS amendment process. A decision of Council not to initiate a process to consider amending the Halifax MPS is not appealable to the NS Utility and Review Board as per Section 262 of the *HRM Charter*.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A: Excerpts from the Municipal Planning Strategy for Planning Districts 8 and 9  
Attachment B: Excerpts from the Land Use By-Law for Planning Districts 8 and 9  
Attachment C: Excerpts from the Halifax Regional Municipal Planning Strategy

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A copy of this report can be obtained online at [halifax.ca](http://halifax.ca) or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

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**Attachment A**  
**Excerpts from the Municipal Planning Strategy for Planning Districts 8 and 9**

**SECTION II**

**MIXED USE DESIGNATION**

Most of the lands within the Plan Area are located within the Mixed Use Designation. A distinction is made, however, between the settled and unsettled areas. This is based both on existing land use patterns and the type and intensity of development generally desired for the future. It also reflects a practical approach to dealing with the conflicting underlying issues of development and conservation.

The settled areas are located adjacent to the provincial highways. Traditional practices of land ownership over many generations have typically resulted in narrow properties running several miles back from the highway to the original land grant boundaries. This situation has created problems for effective development. Some of the development problems have already been addressed by changes in the requirements for subdivision. In terms of land use control, residents wish to see the least amount of restriction placed on development. It is felt that as market conditions will effectively determine the size and location of most such development there is, therefore, no need to predetermine such matters in the planning strategy. However, there is uncertainty about the degree to which suburban style residential development should be encouraged as such developments on a large scale are seen as interfering with the working and growth of the rural economy.

The unsettled lands are found in two separate locations: north of Highway 7 and west of the West Porters Lake Road. Although there has been some subdivision of land into strips, most landholdings are in large rectangular parcels. A large part of the lands to the north of Highway 7 are public. In contrast to the settled areas, residents accept more restriction on the uses permitted. However, as there is no clear agreement upon the boundaries between settled and unsettled lands, the application of such land use control is seen as a voluntary act upon the part of individual land owners at this time.

In general, while resource and low density residential uses and development are fully supported throughout the designation, it is considered more appropriate to locate commercial and industrial activities in the settled areas. This accomplishes two interrelated objectives: on the one hand it encourages development of the large amount of unused land in and adjacent to the communities and on the other hand, it reinforces the conservation of the natural environment in the unsettled areas.

**Settled Areas**

Much of the area adjacent to Highways 7 and 207 has been continuously settled for several hundred years. During this time, engagement in resource-based activities have been a prominent characteristic of the local economy. Although approximately 60 per cent of employed residents work in nearby Halifax and Dartmouth according to the 1981 Census, a significant number supplement their income locally by in-shore fishing, small scale farming, market gardening, clam

digging and woodcutting.

In addition to the seasonal or part-time employment provided by local natural resources, the orientation to resource-based activities also reflects a deep rooted attachment to the traditional regional lifestyle. Despite the wide range of employment opportunities provided by the nearby metropolitan area, the majority of residents still wish to retain close ties with their land. Although resource capability is not high, residents wish to take advantage of every available development opportunity unless it is shown that this would be detrimental to the surrounding natural environment, the community or the resource itself. It is felt that existing provincial environmental and resource use regulations and controls are sufficient to protect both the natural environment and resources from abuse or misuse.

Clean water is required for both domestic and agricultural purposes, and is highly desirable for many recreational activities including such popular local activities as fishing and swimming in lakes and rivers and clam digging on beaches and tidal flats. Residents are, therefore, less certain about the appropriateness of non-resource based industrial activities, especially those producing liquid wastes requiring treatment. As these can locate in the nearby East Chezzetcook Industrial Park which has facilities for waste water treatment under provincial supervision, it is not felt necessary to accommodate them within the designation. Two other industrial activities are also considered inappropriate for either environmental reasons or for the detraction from community character created by increased truck traffic, odour, noise, or vibration. These include fish waste processing plants and salvage yards.

Commercial entertainment uses which cater to the adult population and operate primarily during the evening and early morning hours such as cabarets and massage parlours are also considered inappropriate. The presence of such establishments, it is felt, would create a nuisance to the communities by reason of late night and early morning operation, intrusive signs and other outside advertising. In addition, as such uses are strictly curtailed in the nearby suburban areas, the volume of traffic in and through the communities generated by such establishments would be proportionately greater. The idea of a neighbourhood or community pub, however, has received widespread support. As long as their size and visual appearance is in keeping with the character of the community, they are acceptable anywhere.

The affinity residents feel with their land is complemented by a marked attachment to their community. Eleven of the twelve Plan Area communities are located within the designation. They are characterized by a mixture of single unit dwellings including mobile homes, wide ranging home businesses and small scale farming, general stores and service stations, and usually several community facilities. The communities are typically spread out along the highway and there is often no clear visual break between one community and the next. Small suburban style subdivisions have been developed adjacent to many of the communities. This trend is especially noticeable around the west bank of Porters Lake.

Residents have a strong attachment to the form of their community and feel the introduction of large public institutional facilities and high density housing would be detrimental. Such developments would also require sewage treatment facilities and residents are concerned about the long term consequences on the receiving waters. In addition, high density residential

developments would lead to fundamental and rapid changes in the character of the communities. The former problem is exemplified by Marina Trailer Park on Porters Lake. Problems in the past with sewage treatment have resulted in pollution of the lake.

The park, including sewage treatment facilities, has recently been upgraded. It cannot expand, however, unless abutting lake front property is consolidated with the trailer park. Residents do not support its expansion along the lake front or the construction of any new parks within the designation.

There is support however, for new multi-unit dwellings serviced by on-site sewage disposal systems. It is felt that current provincial health requirements guarantee sufficient environmental protection and provide for adequate separation of such developments from neighbouring properties. In addition, it is felt that the low financial return on such dwellings will preclude their development on a large scale. Support is also given to senior citizen accommodation serviced by either central or on-site sewage systems.

An underlying concern of most residents is their right to continue using their property as has been customary. They wish to see clear support given to all existing uses and, with the exception of the one mobile home park, to their expansion or further development. Given the continuing migration of urban dwellers into the more accessible rural areas of the Plan Area, conflicts between rural and urban or suburban values are inevitable. Within the Mixed Use Designation, recognition of the prior rights of existing uses and establishment of appropriate separation distances between conflicting uses should help to reduce conflict between rural and urban neighbours. In this regard, any new development is considered a potential nuisance to an existing use and separation requirements reflect this view of development rights.

While resource-based activity constitutes a vital and continuing base for the economy of the area, local employment opportunities are largely concerned with the provision of services for the local market. These include auto repair, home repair and renovation, and personal professional and retail services. A significant number are conducted from a dwelling or accessory building. In general, there has been little individual or community dissension arising from their presence as residents readily accept the need for neighbours to earn their living as best they can. Another important reason for this ready acceptance is that businesses have remained small and fairly responsive to local needs and concerns.

Given the marked desire of residents to maintain both traditional development rights, the existing character of the communities, and the integrity of the natural environment, it is the intent of the Mixed Use Designation to allow for a fairly complete range of uses but to restrict certain types of residential, commercial and industrial uses which will detract from the character of the community or be detrimental to the natural environment.

P-47 It shall be the intention of Council to establish the Mixed Use Designation, as shown on the Generalized Future Land Use Map (Map 1). Lands within the Designation shall constitute the priority area for employment creating development but low density residential development and general community services and facilities shall be

encouraged.

P-48 Within the Mixed Use Designation, it shall be the intention of Council to create a Rural Enterprise Zone which permits all residential uses except mobile home parks, all community uses, all industrial uses except salvage yards and any uses which produce waste that cannot be treated by an approved on-site sewage disposal system, all resource uses except the processing of fish waste, and all commercial uses except adult entertainment uses or large beverage rooms and lounges. In addition, a Rural Enterprise Zone shall not permit any construction and demolition material operations. (RC-Sep 10/02;E-Nov 9/02)

In addition, the zone shall control parking and open storage and outdoor display, and, depending on the nature of the use, provide for the adequate separation and screening of certain non-residential uses from residential uses and from watercourses.



**Attachment B**  
**Excerpts from the Land Use By-law for Planning Districts 8 and 9**

**PART 14: RE (RURAL ENTERPRISE) ZONE**

**14.1 RE USES PERMITTED**

A development permit shall be issued for all uses in an RE (Rural Enterprise) Zone except for the following:

Fish waste processing plants;  
Salvage Yards;  
Adult entertainment uses;  
Beverage rooms and lounges over one thousand and five hundred (1,500) sq. ft. (139.4 m<sup>2</sup>); Mobile home parks; and  
Any industrial or commercial use which is obnoxious  
Composting operations (refer to Section 4.26) (MC-Feb 26/96; Minister-Mar 28/96)  
C&D Materials Transfer Stations, C&D Materials Processing Facilities and C&D Materials Disposal Sites (RC-Sep 10/02; E-Nov 9/02)

**14.2 RE ZONE REQUIREMENTS: RESIDENTIAL USES**

In any RE Zone, where uses are permitted as Residential Uses, no development permit shall be issued except in conformity with the following:

Minimum Lot Area	20,000 square feet (1858.1 m <sup>2</sup> )
Minimum Frontage:	100 feet (30.5 m)
Minimum Front or Flankage Yard	20 feet (6.1 m)
Minimum Rear or Side Yard	8 feet (2.4 m)
Maximum Lot Coverage	35 per cent
Maximum Height of Main Building	35 feet (10.7 m)

**14.3 RE ZONE REQUIREMENTS: MULTI-UNIT DWELLINGS**

In any RE Zone, where multi-unit dwellings are permitted, no development permit shall be issued except in conformity with the following:

Minimum lot area	30,000 sq.ft. (2,787.1 m <sup>2</sup> ) and 10,000 sq.ft. (929.0 m <sup>2</sup> ) for each unit in excess of three (3)
Minimum frontage	100 ft. (30.5 m)
Minimum front or flankage yard	30 ft. (9.1 m)
Minimum rear or side yard	½ height of the main building
Maximum lot coverage	35 per cent
Maximum height of main building	75 ft. (10.7 m)

**14.4 RE ZONE REQUIREMENTS: FISH AND BOAT SHEDS**

Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 14.2, in any RE Zone where any fish and boat shed is permitted, no development permit shall be issued except in conformity with the following:

Minimum Front or Side Yard	4 feet (1.2 m)
Maximum Lot Coverage	50 per cent
Maximum Height of Building	25 feet (7.6 m)

#### 14.5 RE ZONE REQUIREMENTS: OTHER USES

In any RE Zone where uses are permitted other than Residential Uses and Fish and Boat Sheds, no development permit shall be issued except in conformity with the following:

Minimum Lot Area	20,000 square feet (1858.1 m <sup>2</sup> )
Minimum Frontage	100 feet (30.5 m)
Minimum Front or Flankage Yard	30 feet (9.1 m)
Minimum Rear or Side Yard	10 feet (3.1 m) (C-Sep 23/90; E-Oct 20/90)
Maximum Lot Coverage	50 per cent
Maximum Height of Main Building	35 feet (10.7 m)

#### 14.6 OTHER REQUIREMENTS: COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL USES

- (a) Where any portion of any lot in any RE Zone is to be used for commercial or industrial uses, no parking and open storage or outdoor display or sign shall be permitted within any side or rear yard where such yard abuts any lot containing a dwelling or any residential zone, except where a fence or other visual and physical barrier is provided within the abutting yard;
- (b) Notwithstanding Section 14.6(a) above, where the abutting property is under the same ownership, no fence or other visual and physical barrier shall be required within the abutting yard.

#### 14.7 OTHER REQUIREMENTS: NON-RESIDENTIAL USES

Where non-residential uses are permitted in any RE Zone, the following shall apply:

- (a) Minimum separation distances shall be as follows:

USE	DISTANCE IN FEET (METRES)				
	From any lot line	From any dwelling except a dwelling located on the same lot	From any residential zone	From any watercourse	From any well except a well located on the same lot
Buildings and structures sheltering animals	20 (6.1)	50 (15.1)	50 (15.1)	100 (30.5)	100. (30.5)
Intensive agricultural uses	300 (91.4)	300 (91.4)	300 (91.4)	300 (91.4)	300 (91.4)
Sawmills and other woodworking mills under 1,000 sq.ft. (92.9 m <sup>2</sup> ) gross floor area	20 (6.1)	50 (15.1)	50 (15.1)	300 (91.4)	300 (91.4)
Sawmills and other woodworking mills 1,000 sq.ft. (92.9 m <sup>2</sup> ) and over gross floor area	50 (15.2)	150 (45.7)	150 (45.7)	300 (91.4)	300 (91.4)
Extractive facilities	100 (30.5)	300 (91.4)	300 (91.4)	300 (91.4)	300 (91.4)
Fish processing plants 1,000 sq.ft. (92.9 m <sup>2</sup> ) and over gross floor area	50 (15.1)	300 (91.4)	300 (91.4)	0 (0.0)	50 (15.1)
Commercial and industrial buildings and structures 2,000 sq.ft. (185.8 m <sup>2</sup> ) and over gross floor area	15 (4.6)	20 (6.1)	20 (6.1)	25 (7.5)	25 (7.5)
Outdoor commercial recreation uses Entertainment uses and kennels	20 (6.1)	50 (15.2)	50 (15.2)	100 (30.5)	100 (30.5)

(C-Sep 24/90;E-Oct 20/90)

- (b) Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 14.7(a) above, where a sawmill or other woodworking mill on an existing lot cannot meet the separation requirement from a watercourse, the minimum separation distance may be less than three hundred (300) feet (91.4 m) but shall not be less than one hundred and fifty (150) feet (45.7 m); and
- (c) Notwithstanding Section 14.7(a) above, fish and boat sheds, marinas, or any building or structures related to the fishery or to boat building or repair may be located within the required separation distance from a watercourse.

14.8 OTHER REQUIREMENTS: SERVICE STATIONS

Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 14.5, where any service station is erected in any RE Zone, the following shall apply:

- (a) The minimum lot area shall be 30,000 square feet (2787.1 m<sup>2</sup>) and the minimum frontage shall be 200 feet (61.0 m);
- (b) No portion of any pump island shall be located closer than twenty (20) feet (6.1 m) from any street line.
- (c) The minimum distance between ramps or driveways shall not be less than thirty (30) feet (9.1 m).
- (d) The minimum distance from a ramp or driveway to a road intersection shall be fifty (50) feet (15 m).
- (e) The minimum angle of intersection of a ramp to a road line shall not be less than forty-five (45) degrees.
- (f) The width of a ramp shall be a minimum of twenty (20) feet (6.1 m) and a maximum of twenty-six (26) feet (7.9 m).

14.9 OTHER REQUIREMENTS: SECOND DWELLING ON A LOT

In addition to the requirements of Section 4.6(b), where a second dwelling is erected on a lot in any RE Zone, the second dwelling and any accessory buildings shall be located on the lot in accordance with all the applicable requirements of this by-law, and a plot plan, certified by a Nova Scotia Land Surveyor, shall be submitted before a Development Permit is issued.

14.10 RE ZONE REQUIREMENTS: OPEN SPACE USES

In any RE Zone where uses are permitted as Open Space Uses, no development permit shall be issued except in conformity with the following:

Minimum Frontage or Flankage Yard	30 feet (9.1 m)
Minimum Rear or Side Yard	30 feet (9.1 m)

14.11 OTHER REQUIREMENTS: RECYCLING DEPOTS (C-Jul 9/90; E-Aug 4/90)

In any RE Zone, where recycling depots are permitted, no open storage related to the

operation of a recycling depot shall be permitted.

14.12 OTHER REQUIREMENTS: CANNABIS PRODUCTION FACILITIES (RC-Sep18/18; E-Nov 3/18)

- (a) A cannabis production facility shall comply with the requirements of Section 14.5 and 14.6.
- (b) Where a lot containing a cannabis production facility abuts a lot
  - (i) zoned or used for residential purposes, or
  - (ii) that is used for a daycare, community centre, school, religious institution, public park or playground,

such facility, including any building or outdoor area used as a cannabis production facility, shall be set back a minimum 230 feet (70 metres) from the abutting lot line.

**Attachment C**  
**Excerpts from the Halifax Regional Municipal Planning Strategy**

**CHAPTER 3: SETTLEMENT AND HOUSING**

**3.0 INTRODUCTION**

HRM seeks a balanced approach to growth and will direct much of its investment to a series of centres where services such as transit, wastewater and water distribution services can be economically provided.

**3.1 OBJECTIVES**

4. Design communities that:
- (a) are attractive, healthy places to live and have access to the goods, services and facilities needed by residents and support complete neighbourhoods as described in 6.2.2A (v) (RC-Sep 18/19 ;E-Nov 30/19) of this Plan;
  - (b) are accessible to all mobility needs and are well connected with other communities;
  - (c) promote energy efficiency and sustainable design;
  - (d) protect neighbourhood stability and support neighbourhood revitalization;
  - (e) preserve significant environmental and cultural features;
  - (f) promote community food security;
  - (g) provide housing opportunities for a range of social and economic needs and promote aging in place;
- .....
8. Support housing affordability.

**3.2.3.1 RURAL COMMUTER DESIGNATION**

S-5 The Rural Commuter Designation shall be established on the Generalized Future Land Use Map (Map 2) to encompass those areas within commuting distance of the Regional Centre that are heavily influenced by low-density residential development. The intent for this designation is to:

- to protect the character of rural communities and conserve open space and natural resources by focussing growth within a series of centres, as shown on Settlement and Transportation Map (Map 1);
- support the delivery of convenience services to the surrounding settlement area;
- control the amount and form of development between centres; and
- protect the natural resource base and preserve the natural features that foster the traditional rural community character.

**3.6 HOUSING DIVERSITY AND AFFORDABILITY**

In Nova Scotia, the Provincial Government is the leader in the provision of social services and subsidized housing and is moving forward with mixed market, mixed tenure developments in HRM and elsewhere. HRM can also play an important role in supporting housing affordability and social inclusion through policies and regulations. Opportunities may also arise through participating in partnerships or programs with housing organizations, the Province or the Government of Canada.

- S-30 When preparing new secondary planning strategies or amendments to existing secondary planning strategies to allow new developments, means of furthering housing affordability and social inclusion shall be considered including:
- a) creating opportunities for a mix of housing types within designated growth centres and encouraging growth in locations where transit is or will be available;
  - b) reducing lot frontage, lot size and parking requirements;
  - c) permitting secondary and backyard suites in all residential areas; (RC-Sep 1/20; E-Nov 7/20)
  - d) permitting homes for special care of more than three residents of a scale compatible with the surrounding neighbourhood;
  - e) permitting small scale homes for special care as single unit dwellings and eliminating additional requirements beyond use as a dwelling;
  - f) introducing incentive or bonus zoning in the Regional Centre;
  - g) allowing infill development and housing densification in areas seeking revitalization; and,
  - h) identifying existing affordable housing and development of measures to protect it.
- S-31 Where Provincial strategies or programs are made in support of affordable housing, HRM may consider means to further or complement such strategies or programs through its programs, policies or regulations.
- S-32 HRM may consider partnerships or financial support for housing organizations.
- S-33 HRM shall monitor housing and demographic trends to assist in determining future housing needs.
- S-34 HRM shall investigate other means of supporting affordable housing including reducing or waiving of fees.