

Item No. 13.1.1

Request for Consideration		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda Item (Submitted to Municipal Clerk's Office by Noon at least 5 working days prior to the meeting)	<input type="checkbox"/> Added Item (Submitted to Municipal Clerk's Office by Noon at least one day prior to meeting)	<input type="checkbox"/> Request from the Floor <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Motion
Council or Committee: Regional Centre CC		Date of Meeting: Wednesday July 12, 2023
Subject: Amendments to RCLUB for ER zones and commercial conversions		
Motion: Regional Centre Community Council request a staff report regarding options and opportunities for possible amendments to the Regional Centre Land Use Bylaw to consider: <ol style="list-style-type: none">allowing both secondary and backyard suites in ER zones, rather than allowing either/or.Updating provisions related to internal conversions in ER2 and ER3 zones to<ol style="list-style-type: none">Increasing the number of units permitted for internal conversions in ER zones up to 5 units;allow the building envelope modest increases to accommodate fire escapes/secondary egress;strengthen controls to reduce impacts on neighbouring properties including but not limited to garbage screening, landscaping, and parking placement.Enabling policy to allow affordable housing, cohousing, shared housing and similar forms of housing in a missing middle form in the ER-2 and ER-3 zones of a higher density than permitted by the Land Use By-law through a discretionary approval process, allowing limited lot consolidation while adhering to the general design standards, appearance, front, side, and back yards, with a focus of ensuring compatibility with the built form of neighbouring residential uses.Consider relaxing or removing unit type (bedroom count) requirements for buildings for the conversion of non-residential building built before 2019 to residential and consider recommendations to ease commercial conversions contained in The Case For Conversions by the Canadian Urban Institute https://canurb.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Case-for-Conversions-FINAL.pdf		
Reason: Modifications to the RC LUB can provide additional opportunities to increase housing opportunities while maintaining the intent of the ER zones in terms of preservation of character. Specifically the following changes are to be considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Many cities that allow secondary suites in both the main home and a backyard suite, for example greater Vancouver. When the general secondary suite approach for all of HRM was adopted, the approach chosen was either backyard, or in the building. The housing requirements in the regional centre may be better met by allowing both to be considered by homeowners.		

- The old Halifax Peninsula bylaws allowed internal conversions of up to 6 units, based somewhat confusing set of standards around the size of the building and the size of the lot. Some buildings could get as many as six units, some were too small to allow any. To simplify the approach and make it more understandable to residents and owners, Centre Plan changed this up to 2 units + a secondary suite across the ER2 zone. This proposal is to restore the ability to add up to five units + secondary suites in existing buildings for a total of six units, so large houses can be converted subject to building code requirements. In addition, modest modifications to the envelop may be considered as the new LUB requires internal stair cases (no external fire escapes) and will propose enhanced controls over common neighbourhood irritants, such as to garbage screening and containment, landscaping, and parking.
- The Regional Centre LUB lacks a mechanism to consider affordable, cohousing and shared housing in the ER2 and ER3 zones that is compatible with the neighbourhood but requires larger footprints and different internal configurations. In one example a developer wishes to consolidate three lots and build seniors cohousing that would look on the exterior like townhouses but the interior would have a shared corridor access to units and allow all units access to an elevator, needed to address mobility of aging residents. The intent of this request is to allow consideration of missing middle type housing for these uses while continuing to meet general design standards.
- Halifax was one of the municipalities to participate in the Canurb investigation of the challenges and opportunities of commercial conversion to residential. This resulted in the report The Case For Conversions by the Canadian Urban Institute <https://canurb.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Case-for-Conversions-FINAL.pdf>. One of the key findings is that older commercial buildings floor plates are often narrow and oddly shaped making it very difficult to include large units. Regional Centre LUB currently requires the same mix of units in conversions as in new builds. Relaxing or better removing this requirement would make facilitate commercial conversion and help ensure the embodied carbon in already built commercial structures remains captured by avoiding potential demolition.

Outcome Sought:

Staff report that brings LUB amendments for RCCC consideration

Moved Councillor Waye Mason



District 7