

UPDATE:

# QUALITATIVE RESPONSES SUPPLEMENT TO THE 2023 HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY MUNICIPAL HOUSING NEEDS REPORT

Halifax Regional Municipality

May 29, 2025

Prepared by:



# PREAMBLE

According to Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada:<sup>1</sup>

*Housing Needs Assessments (HNAs) provide data to support evidence-based decision making at the local and community level. Having this data helps all levels of government make informed decisions about their infrastructure and housing investments in order to build the most suitable housing for their communities. An assessment helps a community gather critical housing data to guide decisions on the type and location of housing to build, as well as the infrastructure needed to support community growth.*

*The federal government is taking an integrated approach to housing and infrastructure. Communities with a population of 30,000 or greater will need to complete an HNA to be eligible for federal funding under infrastructure programs. Communities of all sizes with agreements to receive funding through the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) will need to complete an HNA.*

*The federal government has developed a standard HNA template. The federal approach has been inspired by what provinces and municipalities are already doing with respect to HNAs and included consultation with provinces, territories and other stakeholders, including housing experts and academics.*

*An HNA is a report informed by data and research that describes the current and future housing needs of a municipality or community. It includes both:*

- *Quantitative research such as economic data, population and household forecasts; and*
- *Qualitative research such as interviews, policy analysis and stakeholder engagement.*

**NOTE:** In February 2025, per an agreement between the Province of Nova Scotia and Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada, municipalities within the province must only complete the attached qualitative questions in order to meet the HNA requirement for the purpose of meeting Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada (HICC) program requirements. As such, this document is a supplement to the 2023 Halifax Regional Municipality [Municipal Housing Needs Report](#).

---

<sup>1</sup> Government of Canada. (2025, March 4). Housing Needs Assessments. [housing-infrastructure.canada.ca/housing-logement/hna-ebml/index-eng.html](https://housing-infrastructure.canada.ca/housing-logement/hna-ebml/index-eng.html)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Each document section (excluding the appendix) represents a response to a question identified by HICC as required for HRM's complete HNA submission.

Municipal housing policy (Q2.1) .....	1
Municipality history (Q5.2).....	7
Labour conditions (Q3.5).....	13
Incidence of homelessness (Q4.2).....	15
Factors contributing to homelessness (Q4.3).....	23
Loss of affordable housing (Q5.3) .....	26
How HNA informs local policies (Q7.1a).....	28
How HNA data will help direct plans and policies (Q7.1b).....	30
Anticipated growth pressures (Q7.1c) .....	31
Appendix A: Key Policy Milestones .....	35
Appendix B: Support Services.....	38

## Municipal housing policy (Q2.1)

Please detail the existing municipal housing policy and regulatory context, such as approved housing strategies, action plans and policies within Official Community Plans.

Housing in Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) encompasses multiple layers of policies and regulations from every order of government. Provincial legislation governs the powers of the Municipality and outlines strategic goals that municipal planning documents must adhere to. The Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (the Regional Plan) establishes long-term planning objectives for the Municipality and provides direction for key planning documents. Regional Council adopts policy and regulation that is consistent with the goals and objectives defined by the Province and the Regional Plan. Programming administered through the Federal Government augments the Municipality's capacity to meet its housing goals and address the region's most urgent needs.

*Table 1: Provincial Legislation*

Legislation	Description
HRM Charter	Outlines Council authority to enact policy and regulation.
Statements of Provincial Interest	Policy and regulation enacted by Council must be consistent with SOPI.
Minimum Planning Requirements	Establishes mandatory content related to housing supply for municipal planning strategies.
NS Housing Supply and Services Act	Outlines provincial responsibility for the provision of public housing, and provincial actions and authorities related to improving and increasing housing stock in NS.
Housing in HRM Act	Enables Minister to establish Special Planning Areas and assume authority for planning approvals in those areas.
Municipal Housing Corporation Act	Allows municipalities to establish non-profit housing corporations.

### HRM Charter

The [Constitution Act](#) grants provincial governments exclusive jurisdiction over municipalities and municipal affairs. Municipal housing policy in HRM therefore flows through the authority granted by the Province. This authority is outlined in the [HRM Charter](#) which enables Regional Council to enact policy and regulation, provided that they are consistent with Statements of Provincial Interest and Minimum Planning Requirements. The *HRM Charter* also establishes the parameters around Regional Council's capacity to enact policy and regulation, including those relevant to the provision of housing.

### Statement of Provincial Interest Regarding Housing

The Province of Nova Scotia (NS) has adopted a number of [Statements of Provincial Interest](#) under the [Municipal Government Act](#) to address issues related to the future growth of

communities. The *HRM Charter* stipulates that planning documents must be reasonably consistent with the policy direction put forward in these statements.

While the Province is presently undergoing an update to the Statements of Provincial Interest, the statement regarding housing presently requires municipalities to adopt policies to address affordable housing, special needs housing, and rental accommodation, and to assess the need and supply of these housing types. It also requires new planning documents to consider enabling higher densities, smaller lot sizes, and reduced yard requirements. Additional language is included that instructs municipalities to consider manufactured housing when drafting planning documents and plan for the diversity of various group home settings.

### **Minimum Planning Requirements**

Nova Scotia's [Minimum Planning Requirements](#) establish mandatory content related to housing supply for municipal planning strategies. This regulation directs HRM to prioritize increasing housing supply over other interests identified in the Regional Plan and implement policy directives related to municipal zoning requirements. These include actions such as: permitting residential uses in all zones except areas zoned for industrial, military, park, transportation reserve and utility uses, and zones intended to protect the environment, water supply, floodplains or similar interest; eliminating unit mix requirements and mandatory parking minimums; reducing ground floor commercial space requirements; and enabling greater use of manufactured housing. Some of these directives, including those on ground floor commercial requirements and unit mix requirements, are in effect until April 1, 2027, while others will remain indefinitely.

### **Housing Supply and Services Act**

The [Nova Scotia Housing Supply and Services Act](#) outlines the Provincial responsibility for the provision of housing. The Act establishes the [Nova Scotia Provincial Housing Agency](#) for the purposes of maintaining, managing, and operating subsidized housing, providing tenant services, managing applications, and delivering programs. Each municipality is required to pay an annual contribution to the Province to offset the net operating losses incurred through the provision of public housing. Furthermore, the Act governs the Department of Growth and Development's housing related programs and initiatives. Powers of the Act are vested in the Minister of Growth and Development.

### **Municipal Housing Corporations Act**

The [Municipal Housing Corporations Act](#) allows municipalities, either individually or jointly, to establish non-profit housing corporations. These corporations are empowered to manage and develop housing projects within their respective municipalities. The Act outlines the powers and duties of these municipal housing corporations, including the ability to acquire, manage, and dispose of property, as well as to collaborate with various entities to address local housing needs.

### **Housing in the Halifax Regional Municipality Act**

In 2021, the Government of Nova Scotia introduced the [Housing in the Halifax Regional Municipality Act](#). This Act grants broad authority to the Minister of Growth and Development, make decisions in Special Planning Areas. The Special Planning Area enables the Minister to amend or repeal land-use bylaw, subdivision by-law, and municipal planning strategies at their discretion within a Special Planning Area. The Minister also has the authority to approve or amend

development agreements within Special Planning Areas. There are 15 designated Special Planning Areas within HRM. These are listed in Table 2.

*Table 2: Designated Special Planning Areas*

Designated Special Planning Areas	
<a href="#">Former Penhorn Mall lands</a>	<a href="#">Sandy Lake</a>
<a href="#">Southdale/Mount Hope</a>	<a href="#">Musquodoboit Harbour</a>
<a href="#">Bedford West 10</a>	<a href="#">Fall River Site C</a>
<a href="#">Bedford West 12 and 1</a>	<a href="#">Fall River Site B</a>
<a href="#">Port Wallace</a>	<a href="#">Paper Mill Lake</a>
<a href="#">Indigo Shores</a>	<a href="#">1226 Cole Harbour Road</a>
<a href="#">Morris Lake Expansion (Eastern Passage)</a>	<a href="#">Westphal Urban Reserve Lands</a>
<a href="#">Dartmouth Crossing</a>	

## Policy Direction in the Regional Plan

The current Regional Plan was adopted in 2014 and outlines the Municipality's objectives related to housing and population growth. This Plan contains a host of policies aimed at concentrating growth in strategic areas, creating greater diversity within the local housing supply, and identifying opportunities to promote social inclusion and affordability. These include:

- **Strategic Growth:** The Regional Plan encourages concentrating future population growth in areas where supporting services and infrastructure are readily available. It set the target of locating 75% of new housing units within the Urban Area and identifies growth centres and opportunity sites that could support future urban settlement.
- **Affordability and Social Inclusion:** While it is recognized that the provincial government is responsible for the provision of social services and subsidized housing, the Regional Plan introduced policies to foster greater affordability and social inclusion within the housing market. Direction is provided for future secondary planning strategies to enable a greater variety of housing types and incentivize affordable housing.

Policy directions included in the 2014 Regional Plan include:

- Creating opportunities for a mix of housing types;
- Encouraging growth in locations where transit is available;
- Reducing lot frontage, lot size, and parking requirements;
- Permitting greater use of secondary and backyard suites;
- Permitting a wider range of shared housing uses;

- Introducing incentive/bonus zoning;
- Allowing infill and greater density in areas seeking revitalization; and
- Identifying existing affordable housing and developing measures to protect it.

## Regional Plan Review (2020-2025)

HRM is currently conducting a [review of the Regional Plan](#). Finalized changes made through this review still need to be adopted by Regional Council as of the writing of this Housing Needs Assessment Supplement. No updates are being proposed for strategic growth targets, housing diversity policies, and housing affordability policies. The Draft Regional Plan proposes:

- Planning for a population of one million people, with most growth (up to 90%) where existing services (water, wastewater, transit) are available or planned;
- Diversifying housing types (including tiny homes, mobile dwellings, adaptive reuse, and cluster housing);
- Reducing or eliminating parking requirements;
- Regulating of short-term rentals;
- Partnering with other levels of government, non-profit housing organizations, and private developers; and
- Exploring new tools to improve the supply and affordability of housing across HRM.

## Municipal Policies and Regulations

### Bonus Zoning

The adoption of the Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy introduced Bonus Zoning for the purposes of supporting affordable housing. Most new developments in the Regional Centre that exceed 2,000 m<sup>2</sup> in floor area are required to pay a density bonusing contribution. This funding is used to support various public benefits, with the majority being used to support affordable housing projects through the Affordable Housing Grant Program (AHGP). In 2023, an Interim Bonus Zoning program was introduced for development outside the Regional Centre but within the service boundary (the municipality's Suburban area). Until 2024, bonus zoning was collected at the building permit stage of a project; amendments in 2024 changed the collection of bonus zoning contributions to the occupancy permit stage.

### Affordable Housing Grant Program

The [Affordable Housing Grant Program \(AHGP\)](#) utilizes funding from the Bonus Zoning reserve and other sources to support affordable housing projects in HRM. The AHGP makes funding available to non-profit organizations for the purposes of constructing new affordable housing, acquiring housing, repairing existing affordable housing units, and conducting pre-development studies. Through 5 rounds of the AHGP, HRM has allocated \$14.05M in funding to non-profit housing providers. Funds have supported construction, acquisition, or repair for 610 units of housing and 123 rooms of affordable shared housing.

## **Surplus Land**

In October 2020, amendments to [Administrative Order 50 – Respecting Disposal of Surplus Real Property](#) were adopted, enabling Regional Council to sell surplus property at below-market value to be used for affordable housing. Properties that are deemed suitable for affordable housing by Regional Council would be subject to a call for submissions or direct sale to eligible non-profit organizations.

## **Waiving of Municipal-Related Construction Fees**

In November 2020, the Municipality approved the [waiving of municipal-related construction fees](#) for residential development by registered non-profits that include the provision of affordable housing as a part of their mandate. These fees include construction permit related fees (such as development permits, plumbing permits and encroachment permits/fees); subdivision and variance application fees; site plan approval fees; discretionary approval fees; and other services such as zoning confirmation letters.

## **Tax Relief for Non-Profits**

The Municipality administers the [Tax Relief for Non-Profit Organizations Program](#) which reduces the annual property taxes paid by non-profits and charitable organizations. Eligibility criteria for this program includes non-profit organizations that provide affordable housing.

## **Residential Rental Registry**

As of June 2023, residential rental property in HRM is required to be registered. The [Residential Rental Registry](#) enables greater transparency with regard to the housing landscape and provides a basis for proactive inspections to ensure all rental units meet minimum standards for occupancy, building, and fire safety. In doing so, the Residential Rental Registry helps ensure that rental housing being supplied in the Municipality is safe and secure.

## **Short-term Rentals**

In February 2023, Regional Council approved amendments to municipal plans and land use by-laws to establish consistent region-wide policies and regulation for short-term rentals (STRs). The amendments clarify where STRs are permitted and lay out permit requirements. HRM policy now distinguishes commercial and residential STRs, as well as whether an STR operates out of a whole dwelling or individual bedrooms. STR operators must also register with the Residential Rental Registry and with [Nova Scotia's Short-term Rentals Registry](#).

## **Enabling Density**

In 2024, HRM adopted regulatory amendments in response to requirements for participating in the Housing Accelerator Fund. A central aspect of this work involved increasing the number of permitted units per lot in low-density residential area within the Regional Centre and suburban planning areas. The Municipality now permits 4 to 8 units per lot on most sites within the Regional Centre, and 4 units per lot within the suburban planning areas. Height and density limits were also increased along rapid transit corridors and near post-secondary institutions.

## **Enabling Housing Diversity**

In addition to enabling greater density, recent amendments have been made to key planning documents that make it easier to build a greater variety of housing types within HRM. Adaptive reuse projects within the Regional Centre are now exempt from bedroom unit mix and amenity

space requirements. Changes were made to maximum height precincts to enable greater use of wood and timber construction. Parking requirements have been greatly reduced throughout the Municipality, and additional flexibility in built form requirements was adopted for mid-rise, high-rise, back yard suites, and secondary suites. Land use by-law adjustments to enable shared housing use were adopted in August 2022.

## Federal Funding Programs

### Rapid Housing Initiative

The [Rapid Housing Initiative \(RHI\)](#) is a federally funded program with the aim of developing new permanently affordable housing across Canada. To date, HRM has participated in three rounds of RHI funding. Through this program, the Municipality has funded 7 projects to create 167 new deeply affordable housing units and repair 10 existing units.

### Housing Accelerator Fund

In October 2023, HRM entered into an agreement with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) to access the [Housing Accelerator Fund](#). This agreement includes commitments to make a wide range of policy amendments that support increased density, transit-oriented housing, adaptive reuse, secondary and backyard suites, wood and timber construction, and affordable housing. Regional Council also approved an action plan to increase the overall supply of housing in HRM. Initiatives within this action plan include:

1. Streamlining operational processes and customer support services for permitting;
2. Reducing costs for permit applications;
3. Incentivizing non-residential to residential conversion;
4. Encouraging development along bus rapid transit corridors;
5. Reducing approval time for heritage development agreements;
6. Incentivizing small scale residential construction;
7. Pre-approved building plans;
8. Expand Affordable Housing Grant Program;
9. Resource Surplus Land for Affordable Housing Program;
10. Complete a Housing Needs Assessment; and
11. Enact Regulatory Changes to Support Housing.

For a list of the Halifax Regional Municipality's key milestones in housing policy development, please refer to **Appendix A: Key Policy Milestones**.

## Municipality history (Q5.2)

Please provide a brief history of how housing in the community has been shaped by forces such as employment growth and economic development, infrastructure, transportation, climate impacts, and migration. Please include any long-term housing challenges the community has faced.

### Physical Changes

Halifax is the largest urban centre in Atlantic Canada. Originally inhabited by the Mi'kmaq people, the region was valued for its natural resources and waterways, which supported fishing, trade, and settlement. The British founded Halifax in 1749 as a military and naval stronghold, strategically positioned around its deep natural harbour. This harbour became the foundation for Halifax's maritime economy, driving early growth through shipbuilding, trade, and defense. Over time, Halifax also became a key centre for governance, finance, education, and transportation, solidifying its role as the economic and cultural hub of the region.

### Early History

At the time of the 1871 Census, only about half of the region's population lived in Halifax or Dartmouth, with many still relying on farming and fishing in rural areas. The arrival of railroads, telephones, and automobiles gradually shifted economic activity toward the urban centres, increasing Halifax and Dartmouth's populations. By the 1920s, nearly 70% of the region's residents lived in these two cities, driven by expanding employment opportunities and improved access to goods and services.

Economic development and settlement patterns in the urban and suburban parts of the Municipality, and particularly Halifax, Dartmouth, and Bedford, were affected and shaped by conflicts such as the Napoleonic Wars (1793-1815), the American Revolutionary War (1775-83), World War I (1914-18), and World War II (1939-45). This resulted in direct military investment that supported many associated shipbuilding and military supply businesses. Wartime activity maintained the local economy in the region.

The development of the railway system in the late 1800s and early 1900s also opened new lands for development, and improved connections to communities in Nova Scotia and Canada. As such, economic growth based on privateering, international shipping, and trade expanded wealth and population, which resulted in the prosperity of the region in the mid- to late-1800s. The commercial prosperity continued until the Halifax Explosion in 1917, which had significant impacts on many businesses and industries, as well as development patterns. The Halifax Explosion levelled many areas in the North End of Halifax and portions of Dartmouth. This destruction, in part, led to the realignment of various street grids in Halifax and Dartmouth.

During World War II (1939-45), Halifax became a critical military hub, leading to a population surge and increased demand for housing. In the post-World War II years, most of the region's housing stock was built to accommodate returning servicemen and their families. With the advent of the automobile, construction of the highway system, popularity of suburban shopping malls, and extension of trunk water supply lines, development spread outward from Halifax and Dartmouth and began to connect to existing smaller towns, villages and communities, such as

Bedford, Fairview, Armdale, Beechville, Spryfield, Cole Harbour, and others, as well as in largely undeveloped or formerly rural areas like Clayton Park, Woodside, and Hammonds Plains. The steady development and economic growth since the 1950s mostly stemmed from wholesale distribution, transportation, and specialized institutions. By the end of the 1950s, most lands within the Regional Centre were developed and the Suburban Area had begun to grow significantly in both population and geography.

Planning and development in the Regional Centre included a number of urban renewal projects in the 1960s and 1970s. These resulted in large-scale re-developments of various blocks in Downtown Halifax; the acquisition of land for social housing under the *National Housing Act*, and the demolition of Africville and the displacement of the African Nova Scotian community to clear lands for industrial uses and the construction of A. Murray MacKay Bridge.

During the latter half of the 20th century, residential, commercial, and industrial growth continued in the Regional Centre and expanding into suburban areas. This was guided by geographic and topographic limitations as well as land use planning and investment in highways, bridges and infrastructure. There was an increasingly regional approach as parts of Halifax County were annexed to become parts of the cities of Halifax and Dartmouth. During this time, commercial and industrial growth expanded in the suburban areas with the introduction and expansion of the Burnside Park in Dartmouth in the 1970s and of the Bayers Lake Business Park in Halifax in the 1980s. As major employment centres, Burnside and Bayers Lake influenced the growth of nearby suburban communities and these communities saw increasingly urban residential typologies, but the infrastructure tended to continue to be focused on the private vehicle.

The formation of the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) in 1996 merged Halifax, Dartmouth, Bedford, and Halifax County under a single governance structure to coordinate urban, suburban, and rural policies.

The 21st century has seen a focus of planning policy to direct growth in population and jobs to the municipality's Urban Area. Recognizing the environmental, social, and economic importance of growth management, in 2006, the first Regional Plan was adopted by Halifax Regional Council. It provided region-wide policies and defined an Urban Service Boundary. The Regional Plan and several subsequent planning documents and adjustments, notably including the Downtown Halifax Plan (2009) and the Centre Plan (2019, 2021), encouraged densification in the Urban Area. During the same period, the adoption of several heritage conservation districts recognized the importance of a connection to historical neighbourhoods and structures. These policy changes have been accompanied by strong mixed-use development activity in the Urban Area since 2010. Since 2015, the municipality's population has grown significantly faster than anticipated, and the construction of housing has fallen behind demand. This has led to an unprecedented housing, homelessness, and affordability crisis.

### **Rural Settlement**

Rural development in the Municipality has been diverse in terms of geography, population density, and proximity to the urban core. Economic development and settlement patterns in the rural area have been influenced by the same drivers that led to the expansion of the urban area – notably, naval expansion and immigrant and refugee settlement. As well, railway and highway expansion in the 20th century has led to continued growth and change in the rural area. As settlement

expanded out from the urban area, linear development in the rural area along routes to the Regional Centre became more common, comprised of large estate lots, long farm lots and smaller lots along watercourses, the coast, and the highways.

Many rural communities have been uniquely shaped by their local industry, including farming, fishing, and resource activities. In the rural area, many communities are still strongly driven by these traditional industries, like farming in the Musquodoboit Valley, fishing and coastal industry in Sambro, or mining in Moose River. Communities also continue to be shaped by existing protected wilderness areas and parks, and other natural areas that offer important ecological services to the entire municipality. Many historical African Nova Scotian communities are in the Rural Area and maintain a strong connection to land, culture, and history.

Throughout the 20th century, population expansion in the municipality has led to population growth in existing rural centres. Much of this development has continued the pattern of rural character, driven by new rural housing settlement, while maintaining ecological, economic, social, and cultural values of these areas. However, during the 1980s and 1990s, some rural areas within commuting distance of the urban core experienced significant residential development due to the pre-amalgamation subdivision regulations which allowed dispersed development patterns. In some instances, these developments have led to concerns around the availability of services and infrastructure, emergency response and egress, environmental impacts, and the maintenance of private roads.

### **Current Challenges**

Like many communities in Canada, HRM has faced significant housing demand over the past decade, with population growth outpacing new construction. This imbalance has worsened due to pandemic-related disruptions, which slowed housing development while accelerating demand (largely through increased levels of in-migration). As a result, Halifax is experiencing a pronounced housing shortage, with rising prices and limited availability placing pressure on both renters and homebuyers. While recent policy efforts have sought to expand housing supply and encourage density in key areas, challenges remain in keeping pace with demand and ensuring affordability. For context regarding the housing shortage:

- A healthy vacancy rate typically falls between 3% and 5%. However, HRM's rental vacancy rate has remained below 3% since 2016, indicating sustained high demand relative to supply;<sup>2</sup>
- Since 2016, the median rent in HRM, according to CMHC, has increased by an average of 9.5% per year. This rate jumps to over 11% when considering only the period after 2020;
- Home purchase prices also saw significant growth. Between 2016 and 2019, prices rose by 17%, averaging nearly 6% annually. From 2019 to 2022, prices surged by 67%, equivalent to a 22% annual increase; and

---

<sup>2</sup> Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2025). Housing Market Information Portal: Halifax, RGM. [https://www03.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/hmip-pimh/en/TableMapChart#TableMapChart/1209034/4/Halifax%20\(RGM\)%20\(Nova%20Scotia\)](https://www03.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/hmip-pimh/en/TableMapChart#TableMapChart/1209034/4/Halifax%20(RGM)%20(Nova%20Scotia))

- These substantial increases in both rental and homeownership prices are attributed to several factors, most notably a shortage of 17,500 market-rate housing units across HRM as of 2022.

Overall, Halifax's housing market is shaped by historical settlement patterns, evolving land use policies, and modern infrastructure needs. While downtown Halifax and Dartmouth remain high-demand areas, a significant share of population growth has shifted to suburban and commuter communities. As Atlantic Canada's largest municipality, Halifax serves as a key centre for governance, trade, and economic activity while also playing an important cultural role within the region. However, the legacy of displacement and exclusion continues to inform conversations about housing policy, affordability, and social justice in Halifax.

CMHC's 2023 Social and Affordable Housing Survey identified that almost 90% of Halifax's total affordable housing stock was built pre-1987, much of which is made up of the public housing inventory. As of January 2023, HRM's public housing stock was 3,750. About 68% of the stock is apartment units and most commonly have one bedroom (60%). Province wide, about two-thirds of households were female-led, 77% were single people, and about 30% had been living in public housing for 10 or more years. On average, the typical public housing household in HRM earned \$19,500 annually.

## Policy Changes

The Province of Nova Scotia has assumed responsibility for the direct provision of public housing within the Halifax region since 1995. After the formation of the Halifax Regional Municipality in 1996, the municipality primarily targeted its affordable housing policy actions in five aspects, as indicated in a 2005 Council information report on homelessness. These five aspects are still relevant in the municipality's current affordable housing policies:

- Affordable policy research;
- Tax and fee exemption for affordable housing providers;
- Land donation to affordable housing providers;
- Grants towards affordable housing projects; and
- Partnerships with the federal and provincial governments.

The year 2008 marked the first addition in the municipality's approach in supporting affordable housing by incentivizing developers' affordable housing provision through land use policies. In this year, *HRM Charter* authorized establishing density bonusing approach within Downtown Halifax Plan Area. Density bonusing later expanded to additional areas through the Regional Centre Plan.

The municipality began partnering through the Housing and Homelessness Partnership with non-profit organizations such as Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia (AHANS) and United Way in 2013. Two years later, the Housing and Homelessness Partnership released a five-year strategic plan on affordable housing in the Halifax region between 2015 and 2020, outlining 3 main policy goals in affordable housing, aiming to create 3,000 new and preserve 2,000 existing affordable homes:

- Increasing the supply of affordable housing options that meet people's needs;
- Reduce the number of residents living in core housing need; and
- Foster a strong housing sector.

The municipality further elaborated six priority policy areas to support this plan through the *Affordable Housing Work Plan* in 2018:

- Density Bonusing;
- Registration and/or Licensing of Residential Rental Units;
- Policy and Regulatory Barriers;
- Municipal Funding Incentives;
- Surplus Municipal Lands; and
- Vulnerable Neighbourhoods (Dartmouth North).

The 2018 *Affordable Housing Work Plan* laid the foundation of many current municipal policies on affordable housing through administrative orders and by-laws, including:

- *By-Law M-201* amendments provisioning residential rental registration (2019);
- Disclosure of By-Law respecting residential occupancy standards violations (2019);
- Planning policy amendments permitting secondary and backyard suites (2020);
- Municipal construction fee (AO 15) and property tax (AO 2014-001-ADM) reliefs (2020);
- Affordable Housing category for municipal surplus land disposal (AO 50) (2020);
- Affordable Housing Grant Program (AO 2020-008-ADM) (2020); and
- Planning policy amendments permitting shared housing (2022).

### **Partnership with other levels of government**

*The National Housing Strategy Act*, passed in 2019 by the Parliament, affirmed the right to adequate housing as a fundamental human right. This led to a series of federal housing initiatives, including the Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) and the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF). The municipality has participated in both of these federal housing programs.

Following the 2021 election, the Government of Nova Scotia adopted legislation to help accelerate and increase the supply of housing. Examples included the establishment of the Executive Panel on Housing in the Halifax Regional Municipality (the Panel), aiming to accelerate housing development in certain special planning areas. The provincial government tasked the Panel with recommending projects to designate as special planning areas and regulate development within these areas, superseding existing municipal planning regulations and processes.

The provincial government released its *Five Year Housing Plan* in 2023, targeting 26,000 new units approved and a 12-month reduction in housing approvals processing time through the actions of the Panel in the Halifax region. The *Five Year Housing Plan* focuses on the following 3 strategic housing solutions:

- Increasing housing supply;
- Growing and sustaining affordable housing; and

- Delivering programs people need.

The municipality's actions on housing since have aimed to align with other levels of government's policies in accelerating housing supply. The municipality has entered into an agreement with the federal government in the participation of the HAF program in 2023, aiming to accelerate provision of an additional 2,600 housing units by 2026.

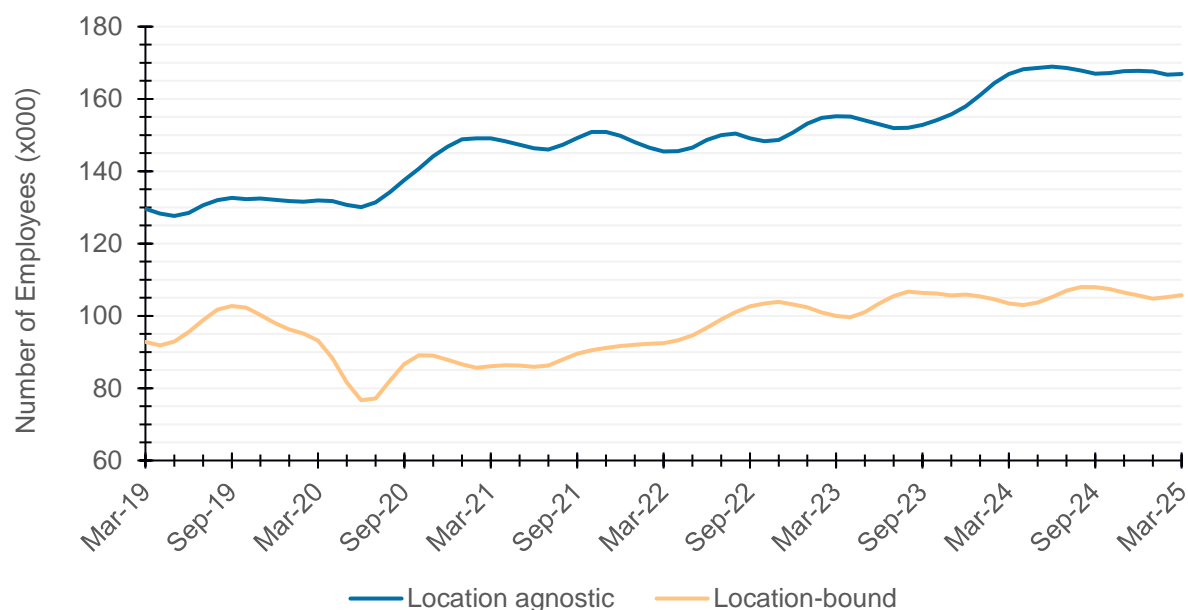
## Labour conditions (Q3.5)

How have labour conditions (e.g., prevalence of precarious employment, temporary or seasonal workforces, reliance on sectors such as natural resources, agriculture, tourism, etc.) in your community impacted housing supply and demand?

Halifax's labour market has played a key role in shaping the relationship between housing supply and demand. As Atlantic Canada's major economic hub, the city boasts a diverse industrial base, including strong public sector employment, technology, education, and defence. However, like many cities, Halifax also has a high concentration of workers in health care, retail, and food services – sectors disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. While some of these workers faced overwork and burnout, others saw reduced hours or job losses, dampening demand for market housing and increasing the need for affordable housing options.

The pandemic deepened a divide in Halifax's labour market between high-paying, location-agnostic jobs and low-paying, location-bound jobs. The former – often in sectors like tech or finance – grew rapidly and maintained momentum in the years following the pandemic. The latter – jobs requiring in-person interaction – suffered considerable losses and have struggled to return to pre-pandemic levels.

Figure 1: Employment by industry, 3-month moving average, Halifax March 2019 to March 2025



**Note:** Industry Group 1 includes: Transportation and warehousing [48-49], Finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing [52-53], Professional, scientific and technical services [54], Business, building and other support services [55-56], Educational services [61], Health care and social assistance [62], Other services (except public administration) [81], Public administration [91]; and Industry Group 2 includes: Construction [23], Manufacturing [31-33], Wholesale and retail trade [41, 44-45], Information, culture and recreation [51, 71], Accommodation and food services [72]  
Source: Statistics Canada & Turner Drake

Location-agnostic workers, typically higher earners, have been able to afford market housing. In contrast, location-bound workers, despite being essential to the economy, are increasingly priced

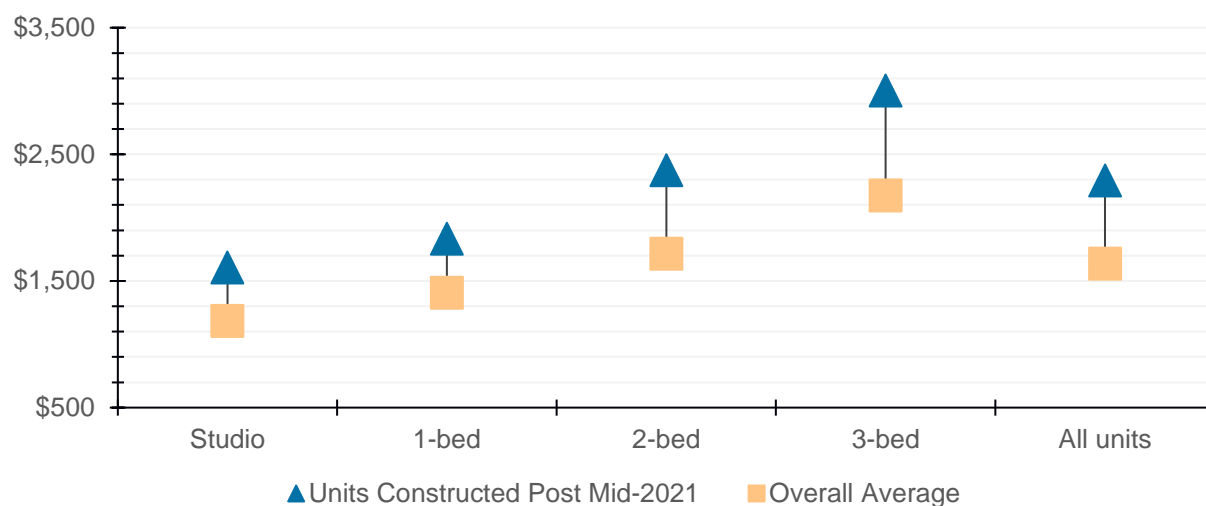
out of the city. Many have been forced to relocate to areas with lower housing costs – often further from transit, services, and amenities.

At the same time, in-migration from other provinces surged, particularly among higher-earning dual-income families in remote-friendly industries. This placed additional pressure on Halifax’s housing market, driving up demand for limited affordably priced housing and pushing lower-cost options farther from the urban core.

In response, Halifax’s recently adopted Regional Centre Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law provided regulatory flexibility to boost housing supply. However, global supply chain disruptions and a shortage of skilled construction labour created significant bottlenecks. Material costs increased, labour remained scarce, and overall construction capacity could not meet demand. As a result, even in a policy environment supportive of new housing, supply remained constrained – driving up prices in both the rental and ownership markets.

Because of high development costs, new housing supply prioritized higher-margin products, such as luxury units. The chart below shows that all newly built units in Halifax – regardless of bedroom count – rent for at least \$400 more than the average for similar units.

*Figure 2: Average rent in Halifax by period of construction*



Source: Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation

The shortage of affordable housing, combined with a rising cost of living, has pushed more individuals and households into core housing need, and in some cases, into homelessness. Housing instability often leads to employment instability, creating a cycle of precarious work and insecure housing. This cycle has intensified Halifax’s social and economic challenges and underscored the urgent need for more affordable and supportive housing solutions.

## Incidence of homelessness (Q4.2)

Please describe the incidence and severity of homelessness in your community, including an estimated number of individuals and/or families experiencing homelessness (hidden, visible, chronic, living in encampments, and episodic). If available, please include recent Point-in-Time counts.

In conjunction with housing market pressures, HRM is experiencing a worsening homelessness crisis. The incidence of homelessness has increased drastically in recent years, with more people sleeping both in emergency shelters and in unsheltered public locations. As of the November 2024 Point-in-Time (PiT) count, at least 1,132 individuals were experiencing homelessness.

In HRM, data on homelessness is primarily tracked through PiT counts and a By-Name List (BNL). PiT counts are typically completed every 2-3 years and are intended to provide a detailed snapshot of the homelessness situation on a given night. They include surveys of those experiencing homelessness to provide insights into the causes of homelessness.

The BNL is a list of all individuals and families in the community who are known to be experiencing homelessness based on their contact with service providers in HRM. It is updated in real time by using information collected and shared with each individual's informed consent, and is maintained by the [Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia](#) (AHANS). The BNL is intended to track the flow of people in and out of experiencing homelessness, such as the number of people newly attaining housing, losing their housing, returning to homelessness, or gaining/losing access to shelters.

### **2024 Point-in-Time Count**

The most recent PiT count for HRM was completed during the week of November 25 to 29, 2024. To complete the PiT count, 95 staff across 42 sites representing 23 agencies participated in both the PiT Count enumeration and survey process. A total of 1,132 people experiencing homelessness were counted (1,009 adults and 123 children). This was a significant increase in homelessness since 2022, when that year's count identified 586 people.

The full report on the 2024 Point-in-Time count report can be accessed on the AHANS website at <https://www.ahans.ca/statistics>. In the Report's introduction, AHANS writes that "the rise in chronic homelessness across all populations in HRM underscores the reality that people are not only at risk of housing loss but are often unable to exit homelessness once it begins. Their pathways into homelessness frequently reflect structural disconnections, systemic discrimination, as well as ongoing inequities – including severe poverty, intergenerational trauma, gender-based violence, unmet health concerns and limited access to safe, affordable housing."

PiT counts express only a minimum number, as they generally count those who struggle to manage their homelessness and are in contact with a service provider. Additionally, the methodology changed between 2022 and 2024 PiT counts in the following ways:

- The 2022 PiT count included those sheltered in correctional facilities with no access to a home (This data was not available in 2024);
- In alignment with changes to provincial definitions, some transitional housing options were considered housing in 2024 but were not in 2022; and

- The 2022 count took place in April, while in 2024 it took place in November. The change in season may have impacted the numbers of people sheltering in different locations.

Of the 1,132 people experiencing homelessness in November 2024, 596 were surveyed during the count, responding to questions on their location, duration of homelessness, reasons for homelessness, identity and background. All survey respondents were aged 16 or older. Of those surveyed, Table 3 below provides the current location of individuals surveyed for the November 2024 PiT Count:

*Table 3: November 2024 Point-in-time Count – Current location of survey participants (N=596)*

Current location	% of survey participants
Homeless or violence-against-women (VAW) shelter	66.8%
Encampment	10.2%
Unsheltered in a public space	6.2%
Someone else's place	5.7%
Shelter via motel/hotel	3.5%
Unsure (likely homeless)	4.9%
Transitional housing with an allied system	1%
Vehicle	1%
Hospital	0.5%
Motel/hotel paid for by self	0.2%

Homelessness has become an increasingly visible issue to the public as the number of people sleeping outdoors and in encampments has risen sharply. However, this represents only a portion of those experiencing homelessness. The large majority of those experiencing homelessness are sheltered in homeless or violence-against-women (VAW) shelters.

Along with those in emergency shelters and unsheltered in public spaces, some individuals are experiencing hidden homelessness. Hidden homelessness includes those who may have a temporary place to stay, such as a hospital, correctional facility, or with friends or relatives, but do not have a stable home, and those who seek shelter in non-public spaces such as abandoned buildings. In many cases, hidden homelessness also contributes to higher volumes of overcrowded dwellings, impacting not only those without stable housing, but also those within the stable home offering support. People may remain in an intimate partner violence situation in order to maintain housing where other options for housing are lacking.

These temporary locations may or may not be safe for the individuals using them. While some people experiencing hidden homelessness are counted in the 2024 PiT count, there are likely many more who have not been counted due to the hidden nature of this issue. Those who can resolve their homelessness without accessing help from service providers or care systems are generally not included in homelessness data.

Another form of hidden homelessness that may not be accurately reflected is vehicular homelessness, which includes people sheltering in vehicles and RVs who have no stable place to go. Some vehicular homelessness is included in the counts of unsheltered homelessness. However, this is another form of homelessness that may be undercounted. Space has been made available in Shubie Park for those sheltering in RVs during winters (2023-24 and 2024-25). Funding support was provided by the Department of Community Services, and HRM provided snow removal, garbage collection, and sewage services.

Table 4 provides the length of time individuals have been homeless in the past year and three years as of the November 2024 PiT count:

*Table 4: November 2024 Point-in-time Count – Length of time homeless in past year*

Length of time homeless in past year	% of survey participants
Less than 6 months	23.5%
More than 6 months but less than 12 months (chronic)	23%
The entire year (chronic)	52%
Don't know/decline to answer	1.5%
Length of time homeless in past 3 years	% of survey participants
Less than 1.5 years	41.7%
More than 1.5 years but less than 3 years (chronic)	29.1%
All 3 years (chronic)	19.7%
Don't know/decline to answer	9.5%

HRM has a high rate of chronic homelessness, which refers to those who have experienced homelessness for at least 6 months within the past year (75% of respondents) or at least 18 months within the past three years (48.8% of respondents). The majority of respondents had been experiencing homelessness for the entire year prior to November 2024, indicating that many are facing serious difficulty accessing any housing or the inability to successfully remain housed. This is a consequence of low vacancy rates, a lack of deeply affordable options, and a lack of supports to access housing, among other factors.

Table 5 identifies groups that are overrepresented in the incidence of homelessness (compared to their representation in the broader population).

*Table 5: November 2024 Point-in-time Count – Groups experiencing homelessness*

Groups experiencing homelessness	2024 PiT	% of HRM population (2021 Census)
Indigenous Identity	16.4%	3.8%
African NS, Black, Caribbean, or African	19.3%	4.7%
Former Youth in Care	23.2%	N/A
2SLGBTQ+	14.7%	N/A
People Experiencing Mental Health Challenges	59%	N/A
People with Substance Use Concerns	48%	N/A

Racialized groups are overrepresented among those experiencing homelessness, particularly those identifying as Indigenous or of Black/African descent. Sector service providers have indicated discrimination in the housing market impacts access to housing. It is also noteworthy that homelessness may present differently across cultures. For example, in some cultures or communities, it may be more common to stay with friends or family when experiencing homelessness, which would result in a higher proportion of hidden homelessness.

People who were previously in foster care or at a youth group home are also highly overrepresented. These are often individuals who are released from youth care systems when they reach the age of majority and are left with nowhere to go, ending up in the shelter system or sleeping rough.

People with substance-use concerns or mental health challenges make up a high proportion of those experiencing homelessness. This is compounded by the negative impact of experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity on an individual's mental and physical well-being.<sup>3</sup> Individuals experiencing homelessness are at a higher risk of developing substance use concerns or mental health challenges.

The length of time an individual experiences homelessness increases the likelihood of developing co- and tri-morbidities. Co- and tri-morbidity refers to if a person faces two or three personal barriers to housing, respectively. Barriers can include physical health problems; mental health problems and substance use concerns. For many individuals who experience co- and tri-morbidities that impact their ability to become and remain housed, there is a need for greater support to address health concerns and to access housing that meets their needs.

### **By-Name List**

AHANS has maintained a BNL of those experiencing homelessness in HRM, updated weekly, since 2019. Through 2019 to 2021, the total number of actively homeless persons remained under 500 in HRM. The BNL saw a significant rise in active homelessness from 2022 to 2025.

As of April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025, there were 1,201 people actively homeless, including those in shelters, correctional or other facilities, encampments, and those with no shelter. This is a significant

<sup>3</sup> Government of Canada. 2025. Homelessness data snapshot: Mental health, substance use, and homelessness in Canada. <https://housing-infrastructure.canada.ca/homelessness-sans-abri/reports-rapports/mental-health-substance-use-sante-mentale-consom-substances-eng.html>

increase since February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, when 492 people were actively homeless. The increase generally aligns with the increase shown in PiT counts between April 2022 and November 2024. Data from the BNL may be impacted by methodology changes over time and efforts to clean up unreliable data, but a high level of growth is shown nonetheless, reinforcing the growth reflected in PiT count data.

### **Available Resources**

Resources available for those experiencing homelessness include emergency shelters, integrated health and social shelter, shelter villages, transitional housing options, and support services such as those which provide food and supplies. Even if there are resources with capacity, available resources may not necessarily meet the needs of some individuals experiencing homelessness. Some individuals experience limitations in accessing services, such as location and ability to address specific challenges such as active mental health conditions and addictions. The following section will detail available resources in the municipality.

#### **Emergency and Transitional Shelter Resources**

[CMHC](#) defines emergency housing (shelter) as “facilities providing temporary, short-term accommodation for homeless individuals and families.” CMHC defines transitional housing as “housing that is intended to offer a supportive living environment for its residents, including offering them the experience, tools, knowledge and opportunities for social and skill development to become more independent.” Transitional housing is “an intermediate step between emergency shelter and supportive housing and has limits on how long an individual or family can stay.” While transitional housing may be more stable than emergency shelter, it is intended to be temporary and is generally not considered to be a long-term housing solution. The Government of Nova Scotia refers to these shelter and housing options slightly differently.<sup>4</sup> Some shelters, including shelter villages funded by the Government of Nova Scotia, are also considered to be transitional.

Throughout HRM, there are various emergency shelter options available for those experiencing homelessness. Each shelter is unique and has different eligibility requirements. It is not only the number of beds available in the community that is important, but also which people those beds are available to. Many shelters target a specific population group or operate with requirements or restrictions on who can use the shelter. Eligibility requirements and privacy concerns in current resources can be barriers to people accessing shelter and result in some people sleeping rough even if there are shelter spaces available. These barriers are exacerbated by a need for support for persons struggling with substance abuse disorder.

The following table summarizes the shelter resources in HRM counted during the November 2024 PiT count, including shelters for those experiencing homelessness and victims of domestic abuse.

---

<sup>4</sup> The Government of Nova Scotia refers to emergency shelters as a temporary option for people experiencing homelessness, and transitional shelters as a housing solution for people experiencing homelessness. (Government of Nova Scotia. 28 May 2025. Action On Homelessness. [novascotia.ca/action-on-homelessness/](https://novascotia.ca/action-on-homelessness/))

*Table 6: Shelter resources in HRM (Source: AHANS / Homeless Individuals and Families Information System)*

Organization (Operator)	Beds
902 Man Up – The Forum	94
902 Man Up – North Park	40
902 Man Up – Windmill	90
Atlantic Community Shelter Services – Senior Pallet Village	41
Adsum Association for Women and Children	17
Archdiocese of Halifax-Yarmouth – Scattered Micro Shelters	10
Beacon House – Shelter	24
Beacon House – Pallets	19
Beacon House – Micro Shelters	8
The Bridge	178
Bryony House	14 rooms
Phoenix Youth Programs	20
Shelter Nova Scotia – Barry House	17
Shelter Nova Scotia – Metro Turning Point	30
The Salvation Army – Centre of Hope	57
The Salvation Army – Rapid Rehousing Program	20
Total	665 beds, 14 rooms

As of November 2024, there were a total of 665 beds and 14 rooms which make up the current capacity of emergency shelters in the municipality. A total of 462 of these 665 beds are funded by the Government of Nova Scotia and operated by non-profit organizations. This includes The Bridge (178 beds), shelters operated by 902 Man Up (224 beds), and pallet villages operated by Atlantic Community Shelter Services (41 beds) and Beacon House (19 beds). The Bridge is a health and social integrated shelter with onsite health supports, including a clinic. It is a collaborative initiative between four Nova Scotia departments and Nova Scotia Health and is staffed and operated by Adsum Association for Women and Children, and Welcome Housing & Support Services.

Since the November 2024 PiT count, the Province of Nova Scotia has opened two additional shelter village sites in Halifax and Dartmouth with 85 additional shelters,<sup>5</sup> as shown in Table 7.

<sup>5</sup> Government of Nova Scotia. 13 January 2025. News Release: Shelter Villages Open in HRM. <https://news.novascotia.ca/en/2025/01/13/shelter-villages-open-hrm>

For winter 2024-2025, the Government of Nova Scotia opened two temporary shelters, providing an additional 53 beds operated by non-profit organizations, and 35 additional emergency shelter beds available during extreme weather and storm events. Service providers have indicated that the availability of winter shelter beds has reduced the number of those sheltering in encampments. Old School Community Gathering Place in Musquodoboit Harbour also operates a temporary winter shelter with a capacity of up to 20 beds.

*Table 7: Shelter village sites*

Organization (Operator)	Beds
Atlantic Community Shelters Society – Bancroft Lane	45
Atlantic Community Shelters Society – Thomas Raddall Drive	40
Total	85

As of February 2025, there are 145 shelter villages provided by the province in HRM, which includes those operated by Atlantic Community Shelters Society and Beacon House. Service providers who operate the shelter villages are on-site to provide wraparound services and support.

In addition to shelters counted in the tables above, there is a variety of transitional housing options throughout HRM operated by non-profit organizations, offering varying levels of independence and housing security. These are not considered to be emergency shelters. Transitional housing options are often targeted to specific groups of people such as those fleeing domestic violence, being released from incarceration, or requiring substance use disorder treatment.

Halifax Regional Municipality is in a housing and homelessness crisis, and it may be more difficult for some groups of people to find suitable options. Some groups of people encounter limited shelter and transitional housing options that respond to high acuity needs, provide safe storage for belongings, mental health support, Housing First principles, or accommodation for families. There are also significant concerns in the community regarding personal privacy and safety in shelters. People who are 2SLGBTQ+ or Indigenous do not necessarily feel safe, comfortable, or welcomed in shelters that are not primarily focused or designed for their needs, even if they are eligible to access it. The geographic distribution of shelter beds is also an important factor to consider. Emergency shelter beds are largely located in the Regional Centre, and there are very few options for those who are experiencing homelessness in rural areas of the municipality.

#### *Municipally Designated Encampments*

The municipality has several designated municipal locations where sheltering in tents is permitted. As of February 2025, there are five designated locations, as detailed below. Additionally, there are nine potential designated locations. The total proposed occupancy of the currently designated locations is 40 tents across all designated sites.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Note: On May 28, 2025 HRM de-designated the Geary Street green space, with individuals having until Sunday, June 22 to relocate to an indoor option or, if necessary, to another of the municipality's designated locations. (Source: Halifax Regional Municipality. Municipal statement regarding Geary Street green space de-

The Municipality and the Government of Nova Scotia work in collaboration with frontline non-profit organizations to fund outreach services, and to provide Street Navigators, who provide direct client supports and services to individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness. These organizations provide emergency supplies, connect clients to resources and support transitions to shelter and housing. In 2024, the Government of Nova Scotia signed a bi-lateral agreement with the federal government to initiate a Community Encampment Response Plan with measures to address unsheltered homelessness, including prevention and outreach, from 2024 to 2026.

*Table 8: Municipally designated encampments*

Designated location	Proposed maximum occupancy	Occupancy (May 2, 2025)
Barrington Greenway	12 tents	4 tents
Cogswell Park	8 tents	3 tents
Geary Street green space	8 tents	4 tents
Green Road Park	8 tents	6 tents, 4 trailers
Lower Flinn Park	4 tents	19 tents
Total	40 tents	36 tents, 4 trailers

As of May 2, 2025, there were 36 tents and 4 trailers in the five Municipally Designated Encampment locations. There may not always be space in emergency shelters or transitional options for those sheltering in encampments, or the options that are currently available may not be suitable for those residing in encampments. In addition to Municipally Designated Encampment locations, there are people sleeping rough and sheltering in encampments in undesignated locations.

### Support Services

Many organizations throughout the HRM provide support services to those experiencing homelessness, including food, basic supplies, clothing, laundry and shower facilities, phone/computer services, and other services (such as employment support, social workers, emergency supplies, etc.). Support services are key to assisting those experiencing chronic homelessness to access and then to successfully maintain housing. For a list of service providers in the municipality in each category, please refer to **Appendix B: Support Services**. This list may not be exhaustive, and services provided may change over time or differ based on the time of year.

It is difficult to determine if support services in the community are commensurate with need as each program varies in capacity and resources provided. It is clear that support services are concentrated in Halifax, Dartmouth, and Lower Sackville, coinciding with the location of many of the emergency shelters. There is a gap in services which serve those in rural and some suburban areas. Additionally, there are gaps in certain services, such as laundry and shower facilities, that fewer organizations operate.

---

designation. May 28, 2025. <https://www.halifax.ca/home/news/municipal-statement-regarding-geary-street-green-space-de-designation>)

## Factors contributing to homelessness (Q4.3)

Please describe local factors that are believed to contribute to homelessness in your community (e.g., the closing of a mental health facility, high numbers of refugee claimants, etc.).

Much of HRM's homelessness crisis is directly connected to the housing crisis being felt at a local, provincial, and national scale. HRM's population has grown at an unexpectedly high rate since 2016, and the pressure is being felt by residents through diminishing affordability and housing options. There is a pressing need for more deeply affordable housing, as housing that was once affordable is increasing in price and becoming unaffordable to many. Some housing deemed 'affordable' (e.g., subsidized units offered for below-market rent, 'naturally occurring affordable housing' in older buildings) is still unaffordable to many households with low to moderate incomes.

Public housing construction across Canada slowed significantly after the federal government ended its funding partnership with provinces in 1993. In Nova Scotia, responsibility for housing provision was transferred primarily to the Province, with financial contributions from HRM through a service exchange agreement. There has since been Provincial support for rent supplements and the development and acquisition of non-market housing by the non-profit and for-profit sector.

As of January 2023, Nova Scotia had approximately 11,200 public housing units, with an average building age of 42 years. According to Nova Scotia Open Data, Halifax Regional Municipality has 3,763 public housing units (1,546 for families and 2,217 for seniors). The last major public housing development was completed in 1995. By 2023, the provincial public housing waitlist had grown to 4,790 applicants. HRM likely represents a significant portion of this waitlist, though applicants can select multiple communities in their applications for public housing.

### Survey Findings

The 2024 PiT Count surveyed 596 people actively experiencing homelessness and included a question about the reason for their most recent housing loss. Participants were able to select multiple reasons to reflect multiple contributing factors to their housing loss. The most common reasons for housing loss included:

- *Not enough income (39%);*
- *Conflict with spouse/partner (14%);*
- *Unfit/unsafe housing condition (12%);*
- *Substance use issue (10%);*
- *Conflict with landlord (10%);*
- *Building sold or renovated (9%);*
- *Mental health issue (8%); and*
- *Abuse by spouse/partner (7%).*

The survey indicated that inability to afford rent was the most common reason for housing loss. In recent years, service providers have seen an increase in people who are unable to secure housing only because they cannot afford rent. The survey results also reflect other local factors contributing to homelessness, including an aging housing stock, an epidemic of domestic violence and conflict, and a lack of mental health and addiction supports.

## Local Factors Relating to Homelessness

The following local factors relating to the incidence and experience of homelessness were identified through [public engagement](#) in April 2022 and PiT count surveys.

- *Affordability and supports:* A shortage of appropriate housing options and increasing poverty are core issues of the homelessness and housing crisis. This includes a lack of various types of housing, including supportive housing and public housing. Service providers have seen an increase in people who are homeless/precariouly housed whose only need is financial, indicating a worsening affordability crisis.
- *Housing stock:* The lack of housing construction in the private market in recent decades may be partially explained by restrictive zoning and development regulations, making it difficult for developers to build housing at high densities. In HRM, this is being addressed in part through the reduction of regulatory barriers in land use by-laws.
- *Private housing market:* Some landlords are concerned about the loss of affordable housing in the community and would like to be part of the solution. However, the nature of the private rental market means that it is unable to provide below-market priced housing without some form of public subsidy. The private rental market is for-profit, so landlords will continue to charge enough rent to cover costs and make a profit, especially in a low-supply and/or high-demand market where asking rents are accepted by prospective tenants who are competing against others.
- *Barriers to accessing shelter:* Some people experiencing homelessness cannot or choose not to access shelter, and instead sleep outside, in encampments or on the streets. Some people do not feel safe in a shelter setting, sometimes due to trauma or mental health challenges, and prefer to sleep rough, while some people have been banned from shelters due to behaviour issues and have no other option.
- *Persons in care:* People coming out of various care systems are particularly vulnerable to homelessness, as they are often left with no place to go and few resources. Many of these people are forced into the shelter system. Former persons in care are highly overrepresented among those experiencing homelessness. This group includes:
  - Youth transitioning out of care at the age of 19-21;
  - People released from incarceration; and
  - People released from inpatient mental health care.
- *Mental health and substance use:* Some people experiencing homelessness are also struggling with mental health issues or addictions. Engagement undertaken in 2022 noted that the mental health system often fails to meet the needs of those who are homeless. Those with substance use issues often face additional barriers to homelessness supports, as many shelters in HRM operate with substance-free requirements, and there is a lack of spaces for people to safely use substances.
- *Intimate Partner Violence:* The 2024 Point-in-Time Count survey indicated that abuse, conflict, or discrimination by a spouse or other family member was the top cause for homelessness among families, with 80% of family respondents citing this as one of the reasons for their housing loss. Nova Scotia has excessively prevalent cases of intimate partner violence across Canada, and women are especially vulnerable to domestic

violence. The Province of Nova Scotia adopted [a bill declaring intimate partner violence an epidemic](#) in 2024.

- **Discrimination:** Some community members experience blatant examples of racism, classism, ableism and sexism while trying to find housing. This disproportionately impacts Indigenous and Black community members, among other groups, and results in higher vulnerability to housing insecurity and homelessness for these groups.

## **Analysis**

Since 2016, the rental vacancy rate for primary market units in HRM has remained below 3%, the lower threshold of the "healthy" vacancy range of 3% to 5%. In a low-vacancy market, increased demand pressures drive rental prices upward, as tenants compete for a limited supply of available rental units.

A persistently low vacancy rate, combined with subsequent opportunities for landlords to increase rents, leads to a steady decline in affordable housing options – particularly, in markets with limited government intervention, such as Canada's rental sector over the past several decades. In the HRM, the result is a shrinking supply of affordably priced units, which has intensified local competition and has pushed many lower-income households towards homelessness. According to CMHC's 2023 Rental Market Report, as of October 2023, only 3% of HRM rental units were affordable to households in the lowest 20% of the income distribution. By October 2024, this figure had fallen to as low as 2%. While the overall vacancy rate increased from 1% to 2.1% within a year, the vacancy rate for units affordable to the lowest-income households remained below 0.5%, leaving 21% of tenant households (estimated based on 2021 Census data) struggling to find suitable housing.

The recent increase in the vacancy rate (which has occurred since the 2023 HNA report release) reflects several factors, including higher unit completions (spurred by improved local regulations and a stabilizing market for materials, labour, and financing) and new immigration policies related to students and non-permanent residents that decreased in-migration. If the vacancy rate continues to trend upward, there is still a high probability that only a portion of tenants will benefit.

While increasing the housing supply is widely regarded as a key strategy to stabilize housing prices, it most often falls short of meeting the needs of the most vulnerable. When more dwellings are available, competition among buyers and renters typically decreases, which can help slow price growth and, at sufficiently high volumes, even bring prices down. However, many individuals and households in the healthiest of markets cannot obtain adequate housing. When compounded with stagnant or slowly growing incomes relative to shelter costs, this means that those in need of deeply affordable housing will likely continue to face considerable barriers to securing stable shelter.

## Loss of affordable housing (Q5.3)

In the last five years, how many affordable units for low and very low-income households have been built, and how many have been lost? If data is not available, please describe how the loss of affordable housing units may have impacted your community.

It is challenging to obtain reliable data for the construction and loss or demolition of affordable housing in Halifax Regional Municipality, as the municipality does not track rents as part of its permitting process.

Nevertheless, the loss of affordable housing in HRM has been widespread, particularly affecting lower-income households. While precise data on lost units is unavailable, the impact to the housing market is clear. Over the past five years, housing prices have steadily risen across all types of housing, from small apartments to single-detached homes, with particularly sharp increases during the pandemic due to heightened demand and supply chain issues. Furthermore, although the rental vacancy rate has improved slightly since the 2023 [HNA report](#) release, it remains below the healthy 3% threshold, which means continued competition among tenants and rising rental prices.

Although the total share of low-income residents has remained relatively stable (according to the University of British Columbia's Housing Assessment Resource Tool – HART – definitions), the income range considered infeasible to attain housing has broadened. Even moderate-income earners now struggle to compete in the housing market, further deepening the affordability gap.

A direct consequence of a housing shortage and considerable competition is the dramatic rise in homelessness. While it is only possible to account for some of the HRM's unhoused population, often concentrated in the urban core, it is highly probable that the total visibly homeless is only a fraction of those affected. Hidden homelessness, such as couch surfing or temporary housing arrangements, is widespread across HRM.

For those with lesser earnings but are fortunate enough to secure affordable housing, limited financial resources make it difficult to maintain their homes, increasing the chance of deteriorating living conditions. Many renters, unable to find alternatives, are forced to accept substandard, unsafe housing – units with mold, pest infestations, structural hazards, or a lack of proper heating and plumbing. The fear of losing housing altogether often deters tenants from reporting these issues, creating a cycle where poor housing conditions remain unaddressed, and renters continue to be at risk. Furthermore, tenants may choose to live in overcrowded conditions (relative to the rooms available), whether with family or roommates, to better afford their shelter.

The lack of affordable housing also contributes to higher rates of domestic violence, as many individuals facing abuse cannot afford to leave their homes. Shelters and transitional housing options are frequently at capacity, leaving victims with few alternatives. In situations where financial dependence or the inability to secure independent housing forces people to remain in violent environments, the housing crisis becomes a direct threat to personal safety and well-being.

Further exacerbating this crisis are renovictions. While renovations are sometimes necessary for aging buildings, many tenants are displaced with no viable alternatives, especially when newly

renovated units are priced at market levels. Renovictions have become a common method for intentionally increasing rents, resulting in a reduced affordable unit inventory. This practice disproportionately affects lower-income residents, seniors, and long-term tenants who have relied on stable, affordable housing for years.

As suggested, the housing crisis extends beyond low-income individuals, affecting people across the socioeconomic spectrum, from those in need of temporary or affordable housing to students, seniors, individuals with disabilities, and seasonal workers. A 2022 Nova Scotia-wide public survey (conducted as part of the provincial HNA project) found that 94% of respondents living in HRM believed they would struggle to find a suitable alternative if their housing situation changed unexpectedly. While respondents were more likely to be in precarious housing circumstances relative to the overall population, the magnitude of the results suggests there is a clear challenge for residents to lead healthy, stable lives and remain in their communities.

The ongoing housing shortage is also forcing many skilled workers to leave HRM due to limited availability and affordability. While there has been a labour market recovery since the COVID-19 pandemic, some industries remain strained and are expected to remain so over the next decade, particularly in skilled trades. Additionally, while many tradespeople live outside HRM, they commute to the city where wages are higher. The lack of local housing options is also a deterrent to industries beyond construction. For instance, the healthcare sector, under immense post-COVID-19 strain, struggles to find housing for employees, preventing qualified professionals from filling critical job vacancies.

## How HNA informs local policies (Q7.1a)

How will the HNA inform your official community plan, housing policies and/or actions going forward? For example, if the HNA identifies specific needs in your community across the housing spectrum – such as housing needed for priority populations, units for large households in denser form factors, more diverse structural types such as missing middle housing, or more affordable and higher-density housing near transit - how could actions and changes in policy and planning help address those needs?

This document offers primarily a qualitative assessment of the housing market across HRM. To see the data-focussed document, originally published in 2023, please follow this [link](#).

Municipal policy statements are established through the Regional Plan and various Community Plans. They include actions such as ensuring a mix of housing, providing missing middle housing, and focusing growth in areas that have central water, wastewater and transit service. The Regional Plan aligns land use with transit service and focuses growth in areas well served by transit. Some priorities include:

- Supporting zoning to better accommodate diverse housing types (e.g., increasing density, permitting additional units on a lot, and incentivizing mixed-use development);
- Guiding decisions on urban expansion vs. infill development, ensuring efficient land allocation for housing. This includes helping manage urban sprawl by directing growth to areas with existing services, reducing the need for costly new infrastructure;
- Supporting Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) by identifying opportunities to integrate housing near higher-order transit areas or networks;
- Ensuring water, sewer, and transportation infrastructure investments align with projected housing demand;
- Helping to prioritize infrastructure spending by directing funds to areas experiencing rapid residential growth or in need of upgrades to support increased density; and
- Working with service providers (such as Education and Early Childhood Development) to prioritize the delivery of services and programs in response to changing demographics and development trends, especially in fast-growing communities.

The HNA works in combination with the HAF Action Plan to inform and support related initiatives. The Municipality is also developing a Housing Strategy to guide municipal initiatives towards supporting diverse and affordable housing options. The Strategy will build on the HNA and other research and engagement to support evidence-based housing policies. The Strategy may also include taking an inventory of existing affordable housing in HRM. Programs would need the flexibility to adapt to changing housing market conditions, economic shifts, and evolving needs.

Additional actions include:

- **Engaging Property Owners on their Development Rights:** Land use planning affects everyone, yet many residents are unaware of how it works or what development is allowed on their property. Housing targets cannot be met by large developers alone; the active participation of everyday residents is also crucial to increasing the supply of housing in the municipality. The Province and Municipality each provide financial incentives for the construction of new secondary or backyard suites. An information campaign aimed at educating, incentivizing, and supporting residents in small-scale development is being delivered. Outreach efforts include advertising, social media, and a dedicated website to engage a broad audience. To further encourage participation, the campaign would highlight incentives, such as grants, streamlined approvals, and pre-approved design templates to simplify development. This approach would mean residents are both informed and empowered to contribute to local housing solutions.
- **Reviewing Provincial Legislation:** HRM and the Province of Nova Scotia regularly review the *HRM Charter* and other relevant legislation to identify administrative hurdles that may limit its ability to incentivize housing development. These reviews assess both restrictive existing provisions and gaps in legislative authority that prevent HRM from taking a more proactive role in supporting housing projects. The HNA is a valuable dataset that provides evidence to support identifying and studying barriers to housing supply.
- **Continuing to review housing incentives and programs:** Affordable housing programs include Bonus Zoning, the Affordable Housing Grant Program, Surplus Land for Affordable Housing, Tax Relief, and Permit Fee Waivers. Related programs for housing include the Residential Rental Registry, Short Term Rentals, Shared Housing, and Trusted Partners. These programs are continuously reviewed with regard for the HNA, along with other inputs and feedback. The HNA will guide the consideration of potential housing programs, such as Inclusionary Zoning.
- **Supporting and championing non-profit housing providers:** While all housing development must navigate approval processes, non-market and affordable housing projects face even greater complexity due to the need for and availability of additional incentives and support programs. Municipalities can play a crucial role in advancing non-market housing projects by taking a more pro-active approach. Beyond their typical responsibilities and jurisdiction, they can actively guide projects through municipal and external approval processes, leveraging their resources, expertise, and relationships. Taking a project-centered perspective, municipalities can identify all opportunities to accelerate processes and alleviate the burden on proponents. This could include prioritizing projects across internal reviews, coordinating with other authorities, and facilitating access to support programs. Implementing this approach may require internal policy and process changes, establishing frameworks or agreements with other entities to coordinate programs and reduce duplication and potential legislative amendments as described above (e.g., allowing municipalities to directly pay fees on behalf of proponents, transferring approval authority to the municipality). Additional dedicated staff resources may be considered in order to continue this work.

## How HNA data will help direct plans and policies (Q7.1b)

How will data collected through the HNA help direct those plans and policies as they aim to improve housing locally and regionally, and how will this intersect with major development patterns, growth management strategies, as well as master plans and capital plans that guide infrastructure investments?

The HNA is one of many tools the municipality uses to shape its municipal planning strategies, housing policies, and future actions. The HNA provides a data-focused report that informs long-term housing goals and helps assess both future demand and current shortages. While it serves as an objective document, the results of the HNA (particularly projections) should not be treated as absolute facts. They reflect trends within a specific economic, social, and political context, and should be viewed as guiding information. The HNA shapes policies and actions by providing information based on historical data, acknowledging that projections may evolve and need adjustment in future assessments.

HNAs provide a structured framework for monitoring housing trends over time. Given that HNAs should be frequently updated, there are more opportunities for new data to be found or new trends to be observed. When these additions or adaptations occur, it is best to assess how they might improve on existing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

By using this HNA and future updated HNAs with updated data, HRM can refine its housing targets, strategies, and policies to reflect real-time data rather than relying on outdated assumptions. This iterative process means that KPIs remain dynamic and responsive, allowing for course-corrections when housing challenges persist, or new trends emerge.

Data from HNAs then informs regular updates of the Regional Plan, which is the strategic document guiding settlement patterns across the municipality and is a major driver in infrastructure and service delivery. Through the Regional Plan, the municipality sets growth targets and directs growth towards areas supported by existing infrastructure and services.

The HNA provides a data-driven foundation for future land use regulations and policies. For housing, this is by specifically identifying current and projected housing demand, gaps in the supply of housing, and the unit size (i.e., number of bedrooms) and price model housing needs of different demographic groups (where possible).

HRM is already taking steps to expand as-of-right development opportunities across the municipality, first through the Regional Centre Plan and now through the forthcoming Suburban Plan. These efforts aim to make development more efficient, predictable, and responsive to housing needs.

HRM regularly evaluates policies, zoning regulations, and approval timelines so they align with evolving market conditions. Increased flexibility will enable the market to respond dynamically to changing demand across all areas of the municipality, ensuring that housing supply keeps pace with growth and community needs.

## Anticipated growth pressures (Q7.1c)

Based on the findings of the HNA, and particularly the projected housing needs, please describe any anticipated growth pressures caused by infrastructure gaps that will need to be prioritized and addressed in order to effectively plan and prepare for forecasted growth. This can relate to any type of enabling infrastructure needed for housing, including fixed and non-fixed assets, as well as social, community or natural infrastructure that your local government has identified as a priority for fostering more complete and resilient communities.

The findings of the original HNA [report](#) (particularly, the projection work) generally identifies targets that are created within a vacuum. Meaning, the targets do not consider the real-world implications or constraints that might exist in meeting supply targets. Relatedly, an HNA is a high-level document that assesses local housing market health, from which more detailed analysis and corresponding decisions surrounding infrastructure and regulations follow. Key growth pressures are anticipated to be:

### **Physical infrastructure**

Sustained housing demand continues to put pressure on urban and rural communities in HRM to contribute to addressing the housing crisis, even as policies aim to concentrate new housing within urban areas. However, as more residents move outside the Regional Centre the strain on HRM's transportation network and public transit system grows, further exacerbating accessibility challenges. This is particularly important for low-income residents, seniors, and newcomers who rely on frequent and reliable transit, but may be increasingly priced out of locations where these systems exist. The slow expansion of transit infrastructure means that HRM remains largely car-dependent, leading to increased traffic congestion, longer commute times, and higher household transportation costs for many residents. HRM may work with partners to expand transit networks, including bus rapid transit, ferries, and active transportation infrastructure to improve mobility and reduce congestion.

Achieving residential development goals requires sufficient water and wastewater infrastructure. For growth outside the urban core, HRM must either provide these services directly or partner with developers to expand serviced areas and infrastructure capacity. Within the urban core, the focus must be on monitoring and upgrading aging underground infrastructure to accommodate higher-density development, while coordinating these projects with other necessary right-of-way upgrades to minimise disruption. Climate change will continue to increase wildfire risks, which, combined with heightened development pressure in areas rural will increase the need for fire service infrastructure where watermains/hydrants do not exist and cannot reasonably be provided. Similarly, stormwater management will become an increasingly pressing issue, as climate change heightens the severity of rainfall and storm surge events, overwhelming current system design capacity, and increasing flood events. Aging or inadequate stormwater systems will need to be upgraded, or on-site capture solutions implemented to protect public and private properties from damage. HRM may work with partners to promote sustainable urban drainage solutions, such as green roofs, permeable pavement, and on-site retention systems, to manage stormwater effectively.

HRM's large geographic area includes urban, suburban, and rural communities, and while rural development is limited in many Canadian cities, demand for housing in outlying areas is increasing as remote work becomes more common. However, limited high-speed internet access in these rural regions hinders HRM's ability to attract and retain remote workers and businesses. Facilitating the expansion of broadband infrastructure is critical for ensuring that rural communities remain viable and competitive in a changing economy.

Lastly, as HRM expands its housing supply, energy demand will also rise. Much of Nova Scotia's energy infrastructure is aging and increasingly vulnerable to severe weather disruptions. While energy infrastructure falls outside the HRM's jurisdiction, it may experience an increased administrative burden in order to adequately manage its areas of responsibility and coordinate with the utility as expansions and upgrades to the grid are undertaken. Ensuring a reliable and sustainable expansion of the power grid – including the transition to cleaner energy sources – remains a key challenge in supporting long-term housing and economic growth. HRM may also work with partners to promote net-zero and green building initiatives to enhance energy efficiency and environmental sustainability.

### **Social & community infrastructure**

While population growth in Atlantic Canada has historically been driven by an increasing senior population, recent trends have seen more families relocating to Nova Scotia, particularly to Halifax Regional Municipality. As a result, demand for family-oriented neighbourhoods – with schools and childcare services – has risen considerably. Nova Scotia Education and Early Childhood Development coordinate with Regional Centres for Education, and the municipality, to address population growth as it relates to education. Schools in high-growth suburban areas use modular classrooms to respond to enrollment growth. Planning and building for increased enrollment will allow providers to address growth pressures in targeted fast-growing communities. Education and Early Childhood Development has also developed an approach to assess new public schools and new public buildings to determine if a licensed early learning and childcare center should be included in the scope of the project. This assessment would include HNA data, consider child care demand in the area and, in the case where the project is not a school, if the building is appropriate for child care. The quality and capacity of existing schools in central locations may be inadequate for the demand created by new incoming families that occupy densified development, or replace older, childless households in existing neighbourhoods as demographic transitions continue. Without proactive planning, school capacity shortages could make these areas less attractive to young families and place long-term strain on educational resources.

As HRM's population continues to grow, demand for hospitals, clinics, mental health services, and long-term care facilities increases. Without expanded healthcare infrastructure, residents may face longer wait times and reduced access to essential care, particularly in suburban and rural areas.

Like many cities, HRM is shifting toward higher-density housing to improve affordability and infrastructure efficiency. However, this transition means fewer residents will have access to private green space. As denser housing development increases, so does the need for parks, community centres, public gathering spaces, and a higher quality public realm in general, to support residents' well-being. In rapidly growing areas, a lack of recreational infrastructure can lead to social isolation and reduced community engagement, particularly for families and seniors who rely on

accessible green spaces for health, recreation and social interaction. It may also serve as a headwind against strategic growth goals, as demand from households unsatisfied with the quality of urban neighbourhoods flows to suburban or rural locations where their private property may better meet their preferences.

Many rural communities in HRM are experiencing a demographic and cultural shift that may also change demands for social infrastructure in outlying locations. With, or without, new development in these areas, population growth and housing affordability pressures are leading many new households to move into previously stable or declining communities. Though the established, and often multi-generational residents of these areas may be satisfied with the services that exist, new residents may not have the same rural lifestyle expectations,

Priorities for Social and Community Infrastructure may include:

- Collaborate with the Province to expand or build new schools and early learning centres in growing communities;
- Advocate for new community health centres in underserved areas to improve access to essential medical services;
- Strategically locate new fire, police, and paramedic services in expanding neighbourhoods to improve emergency response;
- Incorporate green spaces, sports facilities, and cultural hubs into new housing developments to support community well-being;
- Encourage mixed-use development that integrates housing with public amenities, fostering more connected and accessible communities; and
- Locate affordable housing in proximity to transportation networks and social and community infrastructure to require less reliance on private vehicles.

### **Natural infrastructure**

HRM's broad geographic area includes a significant amount of natural land that is both vital for sustainability and increasingly at risk. The challenge lies in balancing the stewardship of these areas with the demand for housing, particularly in areas close to the urban core where large-scale developments could leverage social, transit, and underground infrastructure. While growth is necessary, it must be balanced with environmental protection and the maintenance of natural areas and corridors. The long-term benefits of safeguarding the environment are crucial for the well-being of all residents and can create unique amenities for future generations which would otherwise be lost.

The increased use of non-permeable materials in development contributes to higher flooding risks, which threatens both existing and future housing as well as critical infrastructure. With rising sea levels and more frequent extreme weather events, HRM's coastal and low-lying areas are under considerable pressure, making it important to integrate flood resilience into planning and development.

Key priorities may include:

- Continuing to strengthen coastal protection measures and flood-resilient policies;
- Promoting environmental stewardship and nature-based flood solutions, such as wetland restoration and green infrastructure, to mitigate flooding risks while preserving natural resources; and
- Identifying areas for preservation in locations experiencing development pressure and mitigating the rationale and pressure for their development by ensuring there is a clear and adequate plan that enables growth in other less sensitive locations.

## Appendix A: Key Policy Milestones

### *Key milestones in housing policy development*

Year	Development	Link
1995	Province assumes responsibility for the direct delivery of public housing in HRM under the terms of the provincial-municipal Service Exchange Agreement	
2004	Council receives Homelessness in HRM: Portrait of Streets and Shelters report detailing the scope and characteristics of the municipality's homeless and at-risk population	<a href="#">Report</a>
2008	HRM Charter amended to allow for density bonus program within the Downtown Halifax Plan Area	
2008	Council receives an information report outlining the municipality's affordable housing functional plan and providing an overview of housing affordability	<a href="#">Report</a>
2012	Halifax Report Card on Homelessness produced by the Nova Scotia Housing and Homelessness Network	
2013	Council endorses HRM's formal participation with the Housing and Homelessness Partnership (HHP)	<a href="#">Report</a>
2013	HRM Charter amended to allow for density bonus program within the entire Regional Centre - Provisions of affordable housing is required form of public benefit	
2015	Council receives Housing Needs Assessment	<a href="#">Report</a>
2015	HHP's Affordable Housing Working Group develops a 5-year affordable housing Strategic Plan	
2016	Council approves in principle HHP's 5-year affordable housing targets and directs staff to develop an implementation framework to meet the targets	<a href="#">Report</a>
2017	Council requests that staff prepare a report assess options for requesting the transfer of the provincial responsibility to operate and deliver housing programs and services within the boundaries of Halifax	<a href="#">Report</a>
2017	Council approves Public Safety Strategy identifying housing/homelessness as public safety priorities	<a href="#">Report</a>
2017	Council directs staff to consider amendments to municipal planning strategies and land-use by-laws to simplify, consolidate and remove barriers to the development of special care facilities	<a href="#">Report</a>
2017	Council approves amendments to Building By-law to remove building permit fee for affordable housing developments	<a href="#">Report</a>
2018	Council approves Affordable Housing Work Plan	<a href="#">Report</a>
2019	Council receives Building Poverty Solutions report	<a href="#">Report</a>
2019	Federal Government adopts the National Housing Strategy Act which recognize that the right to adequate housing is a fundamental human right affirmed in international law	<a href="#">Act</a>
2019	Council directs staff to amend By-law M-201 to include provisions for mandatory registration of residential rental accommodations	<a href="#">Report</a>

Year	Development	Link
2019	Council directs staff to disclose/make-public residential occupancy standards violations (per the terms of AO 2011-006-ADM)	<a href="#">Report</a>
2020	Council approves Social Policy identifying housing as a focus area	<a href="#">Report</a>
2020	Council adopts planning amendments to allow secondary suites and backyard suites	<a href="#">Report</a>
2020	Council directs staff to develop planning policies to enable clustered tiny home developments	<a href="#">Report</a>
2020	Council directs staff to explore potential approaches to leveraging surplus municipal land for affordable housing	<a href="#">Report</a>
2020	Council adopts AO 2020-008-ADM to facilitate grants for affordable housing	<a href="#">Report</a>
2020	Council directs staff to develop short-term rental registration requirements	<a href="#">Report</a>
2020	Council adopts amendments to By-law M-201 to require registration of residential rental accommodations	<a href="#">Report</a>
2020	Council adopts amendments to AO 15 and several by-laws to waive municipal related construction fees for affordable housing developments	<a href="#">Report</a>
2020	Council adopts amendments to AO 50 to create a municipal surplus land category specific for properties for affordable housing purposes	<a href="#">Report</a>
2020	Council adopts amendments to AO 2014-001-ADM to provide streamlined and predictable multi-year property tax relief for registered non-profits or charitable housing groups	<a href="#">Report</a>
2020	Council authorizes the less-than-market-value sale of two (2) surplus municipal properties to facilitate the development of affordable housing projects	<a href="#">Report</a>
2020	Council receives affordable housing work plan update outlining progress and next steps	<a href="#">Report</a>
2020	Council receives information report providing an overview of rent control	<a href="#">Report</a>
2020	Council directs staff to create an investment plan and enter into Agreements with housing providers and CMHC to finance/build three (3) Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) projects (Round 1)	<a href="#">Report</a>
2020	The Province announces the creation of the Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Commission including representation from HRM	
2021	Council requests staff report regarding sale or long-term lease of land to Shelter NS for the development of a mixed-use community service centre, emergency shelter and affordable housing development	<a href="#">Report</a>
2021	The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives releases Keys to a Housing Secure Future for all Nova Scotians	<a href="#">Report</a>
2021	The Nova Scotia Housing Commission releases the Charting a new course for affordable housing in Nova Scotia report	<a href="#">Report</a>
2021	Council directs staff to enter into Agreements with housing providers and CMHC to finance/build (3) Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) projects (Round 2)	<a href="#">Report</a>

Year	Development	Link
2021	Council directs staff to explore options for increased municipal support and partnerships for provincial housing program delivery	<a href="#">Report</a>
2021	Province of Nova Scotia establishes the Executive Panel on Housing in HRM	<a href="#">Act</a>
2022	The Affordable Housing Grant Program (AHGP 2021/22) awards funds to 3 projects to support the construction of 81 affordable units and the rehabilitation of 4 affordable units	<a href="#">Website</a>
2022	Shared Housing Use is adopted HRM-wide in all Land Use Bylaws	<a href="#">Report</a>
2022	Province announces nine special planning areas in HRM to be designated for housing	<a href="#">Release</a>
2023	Council adopts amendments to land use by-laws to consistently regulate short-term rentals and protect long-term rental housing stock	<a href="#">Report</a>
2023	Council directs staff to enter into Agreements with Society of Saint Vincent de Paul and CMHC to finance/build a Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) project (Round 3)	<a href="#">Report</a>
2023	The Affordable Housing Grant Program (AHGP 2022/23) awards funds to 8 projects to support the construction of 9 affordable units, the rehabilitation of 146 affordable units, and pre-development studies for one project	<a href="#">Website</a>
2023	The Province releases Nova Scotia 2022-2025 National Housing Strategy Action Plan	<a href="#">Report</a>
2023	Draft Regional Plan engagement took place over the summer with a chapter dedicated to Housing	<a href="#">Draft Plan</a>
2023	Province releases Our Homes, Action for Housing A Five Year Housing Plan	<a href="#">Report</a>
2023	Province releases provincial Housing Needs Assessment Report and Municipal Housing Needs Reports for all municipalities, including HRM	<a href="#">Report</a>
2023	CMHC and HRM announce agreement under the Housing Accelerator Fund to fast track 2,600 housing units over the next three years.	<a href="#">Release</a>
2024	Council approves the amendments for urgent changes to planning documents for housing allowing a minimum of four units per lot in all residential zones within the urban service boundary	<a href="#">Report</a>
2024	Council passes the Suburban Housing Accelerator Plan Area	<a href="#">Website</a>
2024	The Affordable Housing Grant Program (AHGP 2023/24) awards funds to 10 projects to support the construction of 115 affordable units, the purchase of 6 existing affordable units, and the rehabilitation of 160 affordable units	<a href="#">Website</a>
2024	Province changes regulations to require all short-term rentals to be registered under the Short-term Rentals Registration Act	<a href="#">Website</a>

## Appendix B: Support Services

*Support Services (Compiled by HRM from 211 and other sources)*

Organization	Program(s)	Location
<b>Food</b>		
Adsum Association for Women and Children	Alders Drop-In	North End Halifax
	107 Drop-In	North End Dartmouth
Bread of Life Ministries Association	Street Connection Mobile Soup Kitchen	Mobile
Brunswick Street Mission	Breakfast Program	Downtown Halifax
Chebucto Connections	Produce Packs	Spryfield
Chebucto Family Centre	Chebucto Family Centre	Spryfield
Dalhousie University	The Loaded Ladle	South End Halifax
Dartmouth Seventh-Day Adventist Church	Our Daily Bread Soup Kitchen	Westphal Dartmouth
Encounter Community Church of Salvation Army	Sackville Office	Lower Sackville
	Dartmouth Office	Woodside Dartmouth
	Encounter Street Outreach	Mobile
Feeding Others Dartmouth Society	Margaret's House	Downtown Dartmouth
Society of Saint Vincent de Paul	Hope Cottage	North End Halifax
Knox United Church	Freedom Kitchen and Closet	Lower Sackville
Mulgrave Park Caring and Learning Centre	Community Programs	North End Halifax
Old School Community Gathering Place	Musqui Comfort Centre	Musquodoboit Harbour
Phoenix Youth Programs	Phoenix Centre for Youth	South End Halifax
Presbyterian Church of Saint David	David's Place	Downtown Halifax
Saint George's Anglican Church	Saint George's Soup Kitchen	Downtown Halifax
Shelter Nova Scotia	The Hub	North End Halifax
Souls Harbour Rescue Mission	Halifax Drop-In Centre	North End Halifax
	Mobile Mission	Mobile
	Lower Sackville Drop-In Centre	Lower Sackville
St. Andrew's United Church	Sunday Suppers	South End Halifax
St. Matthew's United Church	Breakfast Program	Downtown Halifax
St. Paul's Anglican Church	The Rector's Lunch	Downtown Halifax
St. Paul's Family Resources Institute	Food Bank	Spryfield
	Soup's On Lunch Program	Spryfield
Stella Maris Parish	Twelve Baskets Meal Program	Spryfield
Stepping Stone Association	Street Outreach Program	Mobile
The North Grove	Community Food Centre	North End Dartmouth
The Salvation Army	Spryfield Breakfast Program	Spryfield
<b>Basic supplies</b>		
Chebucto Family Centre	Chebucto Family Centre	Spryfield
Encounter Community Church of Salvation Army	Sackville Office	Lower Sackville
	Dartmouth Office	Woodside Dartmouth
	Encounter Street Outreach	Mobile
Knox United Church	Freedom Kitchen and Closet	Lower Sackville
Phoenix Youth Programs	Phoenix Centre for Youth	South End Halifax

Organization	Program(s)	Location
Souls Harbour Rescue Mission	Halifax Drop-In Centre	North End Halifax
	Mobile Mission	Mobile
	Lower Sackville Drop-In Centre	Lower Sackville
Stepping Stone Association	Street Outreach Program	Mobile
<b>Clothing</b>		
Encounter Community Church of Salvation Army	Sackville Office	Lower Sackville
	Dartmouth Office	Woodside Dartmouth
	Encounter Street Outreach	Mobile
Knox United Church	Freedom Kitchen and Closet	Lower Sackville
Phoenix Youth Programs	Phoenix Centre for Youth	South End Halifax
	Phoenix Youth Shelter	South End Halifax
Souls Harbour Rescue Mission	Sackville Office	Lower Sackville
	Dartmouth Office	Woodside Dartmouth
	Encounter Street Outreach	Mobile
Stepping Stone Association	Street Outreach Program	Mobile
<b>Shower facilities</b>		
Adsum Association for Women and Children	Alders Drop-In	North End Halifax
Old School Community Gathering Place	Musqui Comfort Centre	Musquodoboit Harbour
Phoenix Youth Programs	Phoenix Centre for Youth	South End Halifax
Shelter Nova Scotia	The Hub	North End Halifax
Souls Harbour Rescue Mission	Souls Harbour Halifax Drop-in Centre	North End Halifax
<b>Laundry facilities</b>		
Adsum Association for Women and Children	Alders Drop-In	North End Halifax
	107 Drop-In	North End Dartmouth
Phoenix Youth Programs	Phoenix Centre for Youth	South End Halifax
Shelter Nova Scotia	The Hub	North End Halifax
<b>Phone / computer use</b>		
Adsum Association for Women and Children	Alders Drop-In	North End Halifax
Chebucto Family Centre	Chebucto Family Centre	Spryfield
Phoenix Youth Programs	Phoenix Centre for Youth	South End Halifax
Stepping Stone Association	Community Drop-in	North End Dartmouth
<b>Other (e.g. employment support, social workers, emergency supplies)</b>		
Adsum Association for Women and Children	Alders Drop-In	North End Halifax
Chebucto Connections	Oral Health Care Project	Spryfield
Chebucto Family Centre	Chebucto Family Centre	Spryfield
Dalhousie University	Dalhousie Legal Aid	North End Halifax
Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia	Dartmouth Office	Downtown Dartmouth
Encounter Community Church of the Salvation Army	Sackville Office	Lower Sackville
	Dartmouth Office	Woodside Dartmouth
	Encounter Street Outreach	Mobile
Welcome Housing	Halifax Housing Help	Downtown Halifax
	Dartmouth Housing Help	Downtown Dartmouth

Organization	Program(s)	Location
Mulgrave Park Caring and Learning Centre	Community Programs	North End Halifax
Downtown Halifax Business Commission	Navigator Street Outreach Program	Downtown Halifax
Nisa Foundation	Nisa Homes	Remote
North End Community Health Centre	Mobile Outreach Street Health	Mobile
	Community Health Clinic	North End Halifax
Old School Community Gathering Place	Musqui Comfort Centre	Musquodoboit Harbour
Phoenix Youth Programs	Phoenix Centre for Youth	South End Halifax
Shelter Nova Scotia	The Hub	North End Halifax
Souls Harbour Rescue Mission	Halifax Drop-In Centre	North End Halifax
	Mobile Mission	Mobile
	Lower Sackville Drop-In Centre	Lower Sackville
Stepping Stone Association	Community Drop-In	North End Dartmouth
	Street Outreach Program	Mobile
The Halifax ARK Outreach Association	ARK Outreach	North End Halifax
The North Grove	Community Advocacy Programs	North End Dartmouth
The Youth Project	Housing Support Program	Remote
Veterans Emergency Transition Services (VETS) Canada	Drop-In and Support Centre	Downtown Dartmouth
YWCA Halifax	Employment Skills Program	Spryfield