



## What is the goal of the initiative?

UPDATED JUNE 2024

In collaboration with the federal and provincial governments, as part of the continued effort to support housing supply, the municipality has made amendments to planning documents that will enable more diverse housing types across the region.

### The changes to planning documents are intended to:

- Meet the housing objectives of the municipality, as well as the Federal Government and the Province of Nova Scotia to increase housing supply and streamline approvals;
- Respond to the requirements established for the municipality under the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Housing Accelerator Fund Program;
- Create more supportive policy and regulatory conditions for building new housing, providing more housing options, and diversifying construction types;
- Build on the Centre Plan framework to further support gentle density, missing middle housing, more housing on transit routes, more housing for students and residential conversions;
- Advance suburban opportunity sites aligned with transit, and other amendments to suburban planning documents that improve regulatory conditions;
- Create more flexibility for backyard suites across the entire municipality; and
- Create additional regulatory capacity for at least 200,000 units in the Urban Service Area.

### Initiatives in HRM's Action Plan include:

- Make the permit application process more efficient and less expensive for applicants upfront
- Encourage converting non-residential (e.g. office) buildings into residential units
- Promote more dense development along proposed rapid transit corridors
- Make it easier to include housing in heritage redevelopment projects
- Work with partners to incentivize more density in residential neighbourhoods
- Partner with the private sector to speed up approvals
- Expand the Affordable Housing Grant Program
- Create a program to identify available land for affordable housing

### Additional planning changes included:

- Expand the list of permitted dwelling types in the Established Residential (ER) Zones
- Increase height in Higher Order Residential and Corridor Zones
- Increase height and Floor Area Ratio (FAR) increases in Centre Zones
- Increase density near universities
- Permit up to four-unit dwellings in all residential zones within the Urban Service Boundary
- Remove/reduce minimum parking requirements
- Increase as-of-right development approvals
- Work with the Province of Nova Scotia to discharge Development Agreements

# URGENT CHANGES TO PLANNING DOCUMENTS FOR HOUSING

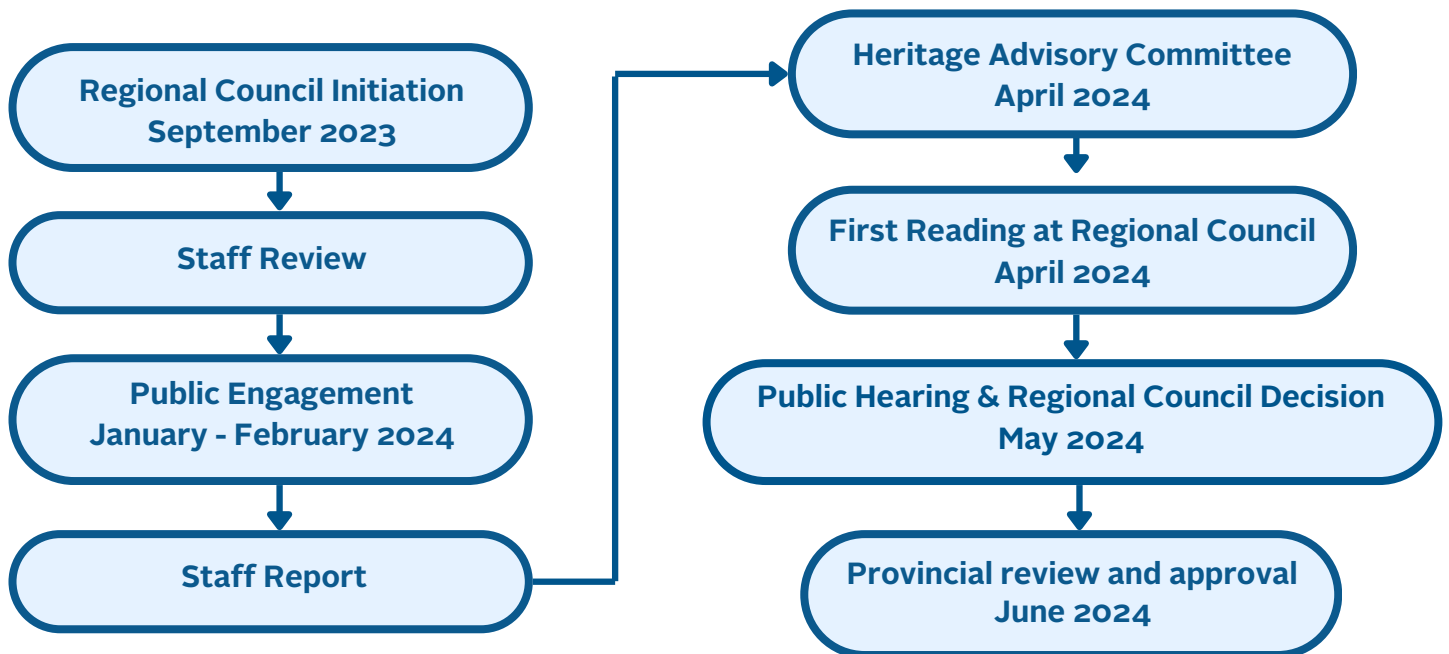
## Where did these changes occur? .....

- Key amendments were implemented in existing serviced areas, which include the Regional Centre, the Suburban Area, and Rural communities serviced by central water and sewer.
- The Regional Centre, Suburban Area and Rural Area received amendments to existing accessory structure regulations to allow more flexibility for backyard suites.
- Visit the interactive map to see what changes occurred in your area.

## How did the amendments impact existing municipal plans? .....

- The amendments were guided by the principles set out in the Regional Plan and developed using feedback from public consultation during the recent phase of the Regional Plan Review.
- The Regional Centre Plan (fully adopted in 2021) sets out policy that identifies areas for future growth based on access to services, transportation networks and infrastructure capacity. Staff made recommendations to enable greater density in residential areas within the Regional Centre based on these existing policy frameworks.
- The amendments accompany the municipality's other affordable housing initiatives, including those outlined in the HAF agreement, to help address the housing needs of current and future residents.

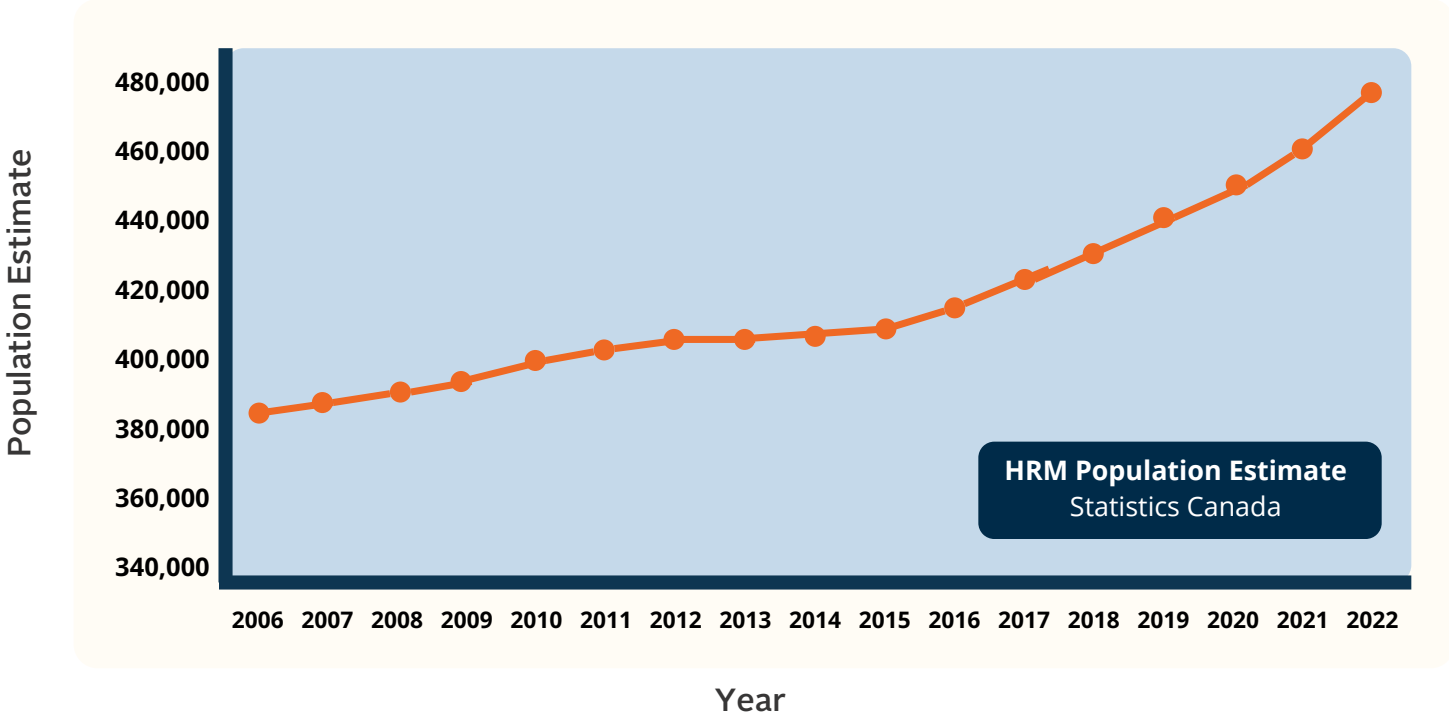
## What was the adoption process? .....



A complete timeline of the amendment process can be found on the HAF webpage.

## Why do we need more housing? .....

- Prior to 2016, HRM’s population grew at approximately 1% per year. Since then, the annual growth rate has more than doubled. Between 2021-2022, the growth rate was approximately 4.5%.
- Unprecedented growth has led to a lack of supply and high costs for renters and potential home owners. Since 2021, the vacancy rate in Halifax has remained at 1 %, while rent continues to rise (up 11.8 % between 2022-2023).
- The rate of residential construction has not been able to keep up with the demand for housing. As of 2024, the municipality is estimated to have a shortage of 20,000 dwelling units.



- Updated Regional Plan population projections predict that HRM will achieve a population of approximately 730,000 - 1,120,000 in the year 2050.
- To respond to the highest level of population growth, and to address the housing shortage, approximately 8,000 units are needed annually to keep up with population growth.
- The municipality requires not only a greater supply of housing, but also a more diverse supply with options that meet the needs of all residents.



For more information on housing affordability in Halifax, please read the Municipal Housing Needs Assessment.

## What is the Housing Accelerator Fund? .....

The Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) is a federal program that is administered by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) that aims to provide funding directly to local authorities to incentivize and support initiatives that accelerate the supply of housing. The Halifax Regional Municipality is one of 179 Canadian jurisdictions that have entered into contribution agreements to fast-track the construction of new homes.

Application Stage	<b>June 2023</b>	Regional Council <u>approved staff's recommendation</u> to move forward with the HAF application process, which included the submission of an <u>Action Plan</u> .
	<b>September 2023</b>	The Federal Minister of Housing asked the municipality to commit to four housing policy changes to receive approval of its HAF application. These changes were considered and <u>largely endorsed by Regional Council</u> .
	<b>October 2023</b>	The municipality's application was <u>approved by the Federal Minister of Housing</u> and an <u>agreement was reached</u> to deliver \$79.3 million in support of housing initiatives that will be implemented by the end of 2026.



For more information on the Housing Accelerator Fund application process, please visit the CMHC website.

## How does the HAF funding work? .....

HAF funds will be released in four equal payments, over a four years period, with installments based on whether the municipality is meeting its HAF housing target. All funding must be spent by the end of the four-year program.

In order to receive funding, the municipality must meet the conditions of the HAF agreement, including implementing the eight specific initiatives and housing supply growth targets identified in the Action Plan within two years of the start of the HAF program.

Once funding is received, municipalities can choose how to use them, as long as it meets the broad range of permitted uses under the HAF program. This can include funding the Action Plan initiatives, or broader capital investments in housing infrastructure and community-related infrastructure that supports housing.

# URGENT CHANGES TO PLANNING DOCUMENTS FOR HOUSING

## Funding Stage

October 2023

Round 1: Provided shortly after the approval and signing of the HAF contribution agreement.

October 2024

Round 2: Assessment by the CMHC of the municipality's implementation and completion of HAF initiatives.

October 2025

Round 3: Assessment by the CMHC of the municipality's implementation and completion of HAF initiatives.

October 2026

Round 4: Assessment by the CMHC of the municipality's performance meeting its housing supply growth targets.

## What is “Missing Middle” Housing and Gentle Density?

Missing middle refers to housing that is intended to fill the gap between single-unit dwellings and high-density multi-unit apartments or mixed-use residential buildings. Missing middle housing options support walkable, complete communities that meet the needs of all residents.

Examples include: Townhouses, two and three-unit dwellings, cluster housing and small multi-unit housing.



Gentle density is additional housing that has a minimal impact on a neighborhood's built form and character. The benefits of gentle density include intergenerational living spaces, aging in place and additional income for property owners.

Examples include: Backyard suites, secondary suites and internal conversions of existing single unit dwellings to create new units.