



Our Seven Solutions

for a liveable and
sustainable
HRM



Our HRM Alliance

is a coalition of over 60 organizations from environment, community, business, and health sectors who believe in a sustainable future for Halifax Regional Municipality

Our HRM Alliance has been supporting HRM towards a sustainable, prosperous future since the coalition began in 2011. The Alliance has been heavily involved in protecting the green network and calling for complete communities.



ourhrmalliance.ca

1

Protect the Green Network

to preserve natural areas and ecosystem services
that are part of a livable city.

Details

1. Use the Halifax Green Network to guide growth, development and zoning by protecting the HGNP Map 5 in the Regional Plan,
2. Protect groundwater, lakes, rivers, wetlands, harbours and coasts through adequate buffers and stormwater management,
3. Protect wildlife corridors,
4. Foster land stewardship,
5. Plan for and support parks and a parks system,
6. Implement the water quality functional monitoring plan.

Places utilizing this solution

Victoria, BC, Province of Quebec in Montreal and Quebec City, Ottawa, Ontario as well as England, Germany, Poland, Denmark, Brazil, and many more, internationally.

Opportunities

Do the hard work to incorporate the Halifax Green Network Plan into the Regional Plan during the review so that appropriate legislation and land use designations are governing growth and development.

2

Refine and invest in growth centres

to put growth where it makes the most sense.

Increasing density and affordable living options in already-serviced areas makes use of existing infrastructure and benefits existing neighbourhoods. Investing in downtowns and town centres creates more liveable, walkable neighbourhoods where people live, work and play and where the arts and business communities can flourish.

Quick facts

- HRM currently has over 35 growth centres in the Regional Plan
- Multiple Regional growth centres directly overlap with important ecological areas identified in the Halifax Green Network Plan



➤➤ Opportunities

Rebuild the suburban and rural plans, so communities can have plans that reflect their needs and lay a blueprint to build complete communities.

Refine growth centres in the Regional Plan and direct growth to existing centres to build these areas into complete communities.

Details

1. Refine the number of growth centres to create complete communities in existing centres,
2. Invest resources and services in the downtown core and growth centres,
3. Plan for suburban and rural communities.

Invest in housing, transit, and access to nature

to build complete communities downtown and in growth centres.

3

Quick facts

- In 2020, CMHC's Rental Market Report found Halifax's vacancy rate to be 1%. The average for all census metropolitan areas across Canada was 3.2%.
- A 2019 Urban Politics and Government study found that short-term rentals had removed 740 housing units from the market.
- Nature can be a tool to minimize income-based health disparities
- HRM committed to creating and monitoring targets under the HGNP. These targets have yet to be publicly established or monitored.

Details

1. Remove barriers and provide support for affordable, accessible, age-friendly **housing**
2. Improve public and active **transit** services to and in growth centres,
3. Prioritize, evaluate and plan for access to **nature**.

» Opportunities

Properly define aging in place and create policy better enabling aging in place in the Regional Plan.

Utilize bonus zoning across the municipality to build affordable housing.

Follow the HGNP to create and measure targets for access to nature.

Adhere to Regional growth targets

to balance rural, suburban and urban settlement growth

4

» Opportunities

Take immediate action to balance inconsistencies with the Regional Plan settlement targets using annual updates of growth data including a breakdown of settlement types.

Quick facts

- Stantec Inc found that HRM could save 3-billion over 18 years by better concentrating growth.
- The Halifax Housing Needs Assessment notes that interest in residential development has shifted towards urban communities, but that "planning applications suggest that significant development is still occurring in the commuter areas,"
- HRM did not meet the one hard target set in the Regional Plan as of the 5-year review: a breakdown of residential growth.

5

Growth funds itself

evaluate development charges to ensure the Municipality is not burdened by growth

The infrastructure required to support development in established neighbourhoods and urban areas costs HRM considerably less. Development should be required to pay for its own infrastructure to incentivize growth in existing communities, where it will support local business and cost tax payers the least.

Density should be achieved using low-impact development that avoids the destruction of sensitive ecosystems. HRM has the tools to define a minimum density for development and promote infill on opportunity sites.



Quick facts

- Urban and complete communities have been proven to put the lowest burden on HRM (Stantec, Quantifying The Costs and Benefits of Alternative Growth Scenarios).
- Higher urban densities mean lower per capita fuel use.
- In a study of 21 municipalities, HRM was found to have one of the lowest rates in infrastructure charges.

Places utilizing this solution

The Capital Regional District of British Columbia, which includes Victoria, enacted a strict urban containment boundary calling for 90% of all growth to occur within the boundary. The city of Saint John has set an even stricter target, with 95% of growth set to occur within its Primary Development Area.

6

Act on climate

» Opportunities

Implement and fully resource HalifACT.

Use nature-based climate solutions and settlement types as two tools available to the municipality to act on climate.

Details

1. Invest in climate action immediately, so that the municipality can save later,
2. Use natural assets and nature-based climate solutions to act on climate,
3. Use settlement types to act on climate.

Quick facts

- If followed, the first 10-years of actions planned in HalifACT will result in 9,000 person-years of employment (full-time jobs).
- Buildings accounted for approximately 70% of total energy use in Halifax in 2016, and 77% of total emissions.

A word from HalifACT on nature-based solutions

"Areas like forests and wetlands produce oxygen, filter the air we breathe, clean our drinking water, hold flood waters, regulate climate and absorb carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas. By assigning value to things like flood control and climate regulation, these natural assets can be considered more meaningfully in cost benefit analyses and decision-making."

Provide actionable engagement and measure success

7

Planning and governance systems are complex and not easily accessible. These systems have been used to create barriers for marginalized communities. In order to realize the solutions in this book, significant, meaningful, and actionable consultation must be created, specifically focusing on communities facing historic and continued barriers.

We also ask HRM to commit to measuring successes and deficiencies of actions identified in the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy.

History of the 7-Solutions

The 7-Solutions were first released by the 34 members of Our HRM Alliance in October 2011, led at the time by Our HRM Alliance Coordinator, Jen Powley. The seven recommendations were developed to address HRM's needs at the time of the 5-year review of the Regional Plan. Many of the initial solutions were adopted during the 5-year Regional Plan review while many continue to need firm action to be realized.

The actions have since been built upon to reflect progress, evolving issues, and the current scope of the Regional Plan review yet remain true to their focus developed in 2011.

Connect



@ourhrmalliance



facebook.com/ourhrmalliance



@ourhrmalliance



kortney.dunsby@ecologyaction.ca



ourhrmalliance.ca

