Executive Panel on Housing in HRM Minutes

October 8, 2026

Present: Vicki Elliott, Micah Richardson, Dawn Sutherland, Erin MacIntyre, Peter Duncan, Brandon Umpherville, Peter Nightingale, Jill MacLellan, Kenda MacKenzie, Tanya Davis.
Regrets: Kristin O'Toole Scott, Mark Peachey.
Guests: Christa Korens, Andrew Merrill, Jen Richardson, Kate Greene, Melissa Eavis, Nalini Naidoo, Jacqueline Hamilton

Agenda Items:

1. **PRELIMINARIES**
   1.1. Welcome & Call to Order
   - The Chair called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.
   - The Chair informed the Panel that Kristin O'Toole Scott will be unavailable for a period of time and Dawn Sutherland has been appointed as one of the Provincial representatives on the Executive Panel in her place. This is a temporary appointment until O'Toole Scott returns.

   1.2 Approval of Agenda
   - Agenda was circulated electronically prior to the meeting. No amendments were made.

     Motion: Peter Duncan
     Second: Micah Richardson
     Carried: Chair, Vicki Elliott
     VOTE: Aye (4) Nay ( ) Abstain ( )

     Next steps: Agenda for October 8, 2026 to be posted on the Executive Panel website.

   1.3 Approval of Minutes
   - Minutes for September 24, 2026, were circulated electronically prior to the meeting.
   - No amendments were made.

     Motion: Micah Richardson
     Second: Erin MacIntyre
     Carried: Chair, Vicki Elliott
     VOTE: Aye (4) Nay ( ) Abstain ( )

     Next steps: Minutes for September 24, 2026, to be posted on the Executive Panel website.

2. **PRESENTATIONS**
   2.1. Update on Regional Plan / Suburban Plan – HRM

- HRM gave a presentation on the current status of the Regional Plan and Suburban Plan.
- Please Appendix A – HRM Policy Program Update

3. SPECIAL PLANNING AREA UPDATES

3.1. Sandy Lake

HRM gave an overview of the interim development agreement and what activity is authorized by the agreement. The Panel discussed requirements for municipal, provincial, and federal approvals and permitting before certain work can begin on site, as well as what safeguards and environmental controls are required during site work.

Motion

THAT the Executive Panel on Housing recommend that the Minister of Housing approve the development agreement for the Sandy Lake Special Planning Area, which shall be substantially of the same form as set out in Attachment A of the memo dated August 26, 2026.

Motion: Micah Richardson
Second: Dawn Sutherland
Carried: Chair, Vicki Elliott
VOTE: Aye (4) Nay ( ) Abstain ( )

Next steps: Ministerial Order to be drafted and sent to Minister of Housing for consideration, along with the Executive Panel's recommendation.

3.2. Former Penhorn Mall

HRM gave a presentation on the proposal for the Former Penhorn Mall lands, including a summary of public engagement related to the proposal.

Motion

THAT the Executive Panel on Housing recommend that the Minister of Housing:

1. *Approve the amendments to the Regional Centre Municipal Planning Strategy as set out in Attachment A of the memorandum dated September 29, 2026; and*
2. *Approve the amending development agreement for the Former Penhorn Mall Special Planning Area, which shall be substantially of the same form as set out in Attachment B of the memorandum dated September 29, 2026.*

Motion: Erin MacIntyre
Second: Micah Richardson
Carried: Chair, Vicki Elliott
VOTE: Aye (4) Nay ( ) Abstain ( )

Next steps: Ministerial Orders to be drafted and sent to Minister of Housing for consideration, along with the Executive Panel's recommendation.

4. ROUNDTABLE

- The Panel discussed various development matters, including project-specific and broader process-related issues, with a focus on removing barriers, improving timelines, and identifying opportunities for more efficient review and progression.

5. NEXT MEETING

5.1. November 5, 2026

6. ADJOURNMENT

- Meeting adjourned: 2:32 p.m.

October 8 2026

HALIFAX

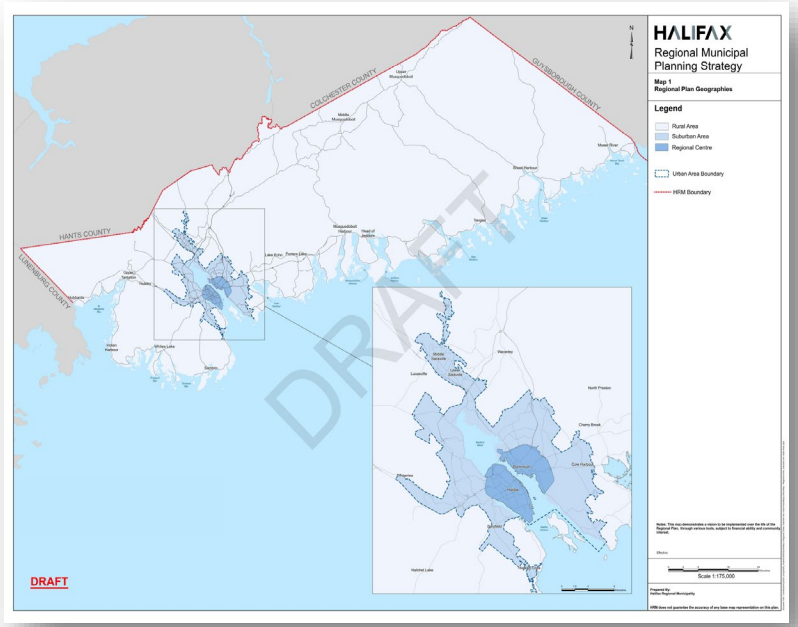
Housing Panel - Policy Program Updates

Regional and Community Planning

Overview

- Regional Plan
- Suburban Plan
- Centre Plan

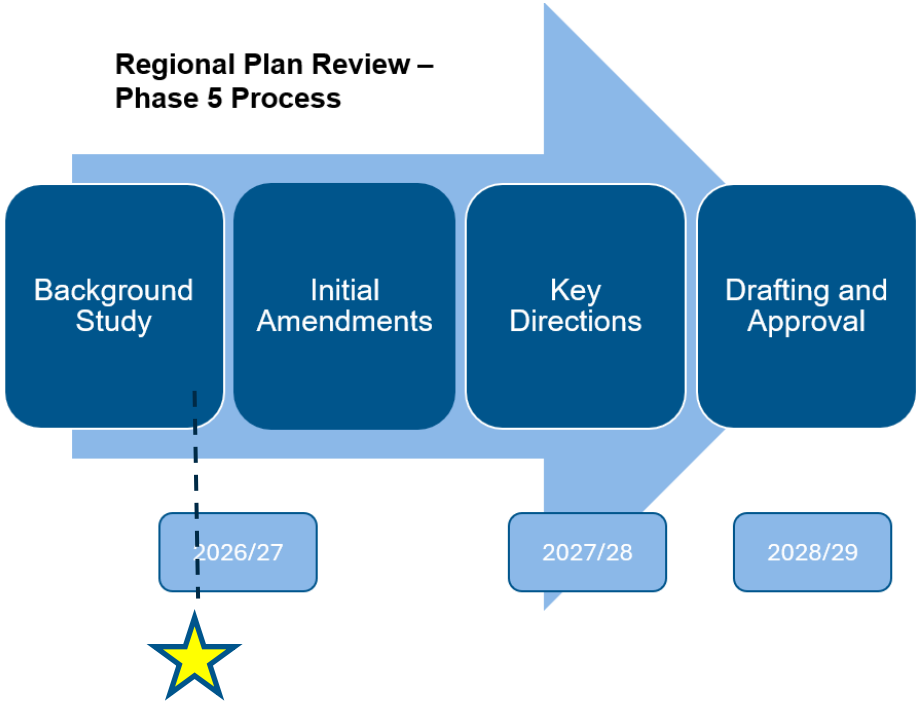
Regional Plan Phase 5 - Objectives



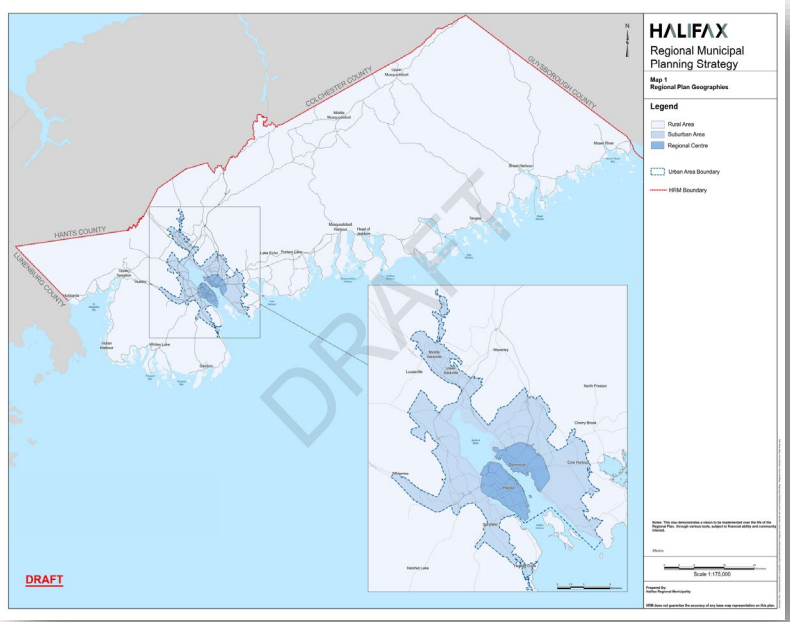
Major Review (2026-2029)

- Plan for long-term growth to one million people.
- Identify where new homes and jobs should go and the infrastructure needed to support them.
- Set a clear planning approach for urban, suburban, and rural community planning.
- Modernize how we plan for rural development
- Simplify and update the Regional Subdivision By-law to improve administration
- Make sure the Regional Plan supports Council priorities and aligns with other major municipal plans

Regional Plan – Timeline



Regional Plan - Studies



Studies

- Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Priorities Plan
- Rural Lot Size and Density
- Private Roads and Shared Private Driveways
- Coastal and Watercourse buffers

Suburban Plan – Objectives



Major Review (2025-2028)

- The Suburban Plan will refresh and modernize land-use policies and regulations.
- The project is organized into three phases running generally between 2025 and 2028.
- Phase 1 is underway in 2026 and represents the most significant engagement period.
- Industry workshop held April 15, 2026
- Next major opportunity to engage: Early 2027 - summarize what was heard and present initial policy directions for feedback.

Suburban Plan- Timeline

We are here:



2023-2025

Lead-up & background work



2026 – Phase 1

Listen, learn and confirm key directions



2027 – Phase 2

Share the draft Suburban Plan



2028 – Phase 3

Council Approval of the Suburban Plan

Suburban Plan



Studies

- Main Street Visioning (complete)
- Commercial Market Analysis (complete)
- Inclusionary Zoning (complete)
- Culture and Heritage Identification
- Bonus Zoning Methodology for Large Sites

Suburban Plan – Engagement



Early Engagement Participation

Event Type	Attendance
Kick-off Open Houses	426
Pop-ups	136
Main Street Workshops	315
Other meetings and workshops	86
General Correspondence	78
Surveys	1005 (241+764)
Interactive Maps	104
Grand Total	**2150**

+ ~900 newsletter subscribers

Industry Workshop – April 15, 2026

Centre Plan



Missing middle, gentle density and infill development

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. This type of housing hasn't been built much in recent years, which is why it's considered "missing."

Why it's important: When designed well, missing middle housing integrates into neighbourhoods, is relatively inexpensive and fast to build, provides a range of housing options and encourages complete communities. Learn more about how missing middle housing can impact your community with the fact sheet: Benefits of missing middle housing.

Gentle density refers to low density forms of missing middle housing that have minimal impacts on the look and feel of a neighbourhood.

Why it's important: These ground-oriented, small scale housing types provide opportunities for accessible, affordable, multi-generational living in communities.

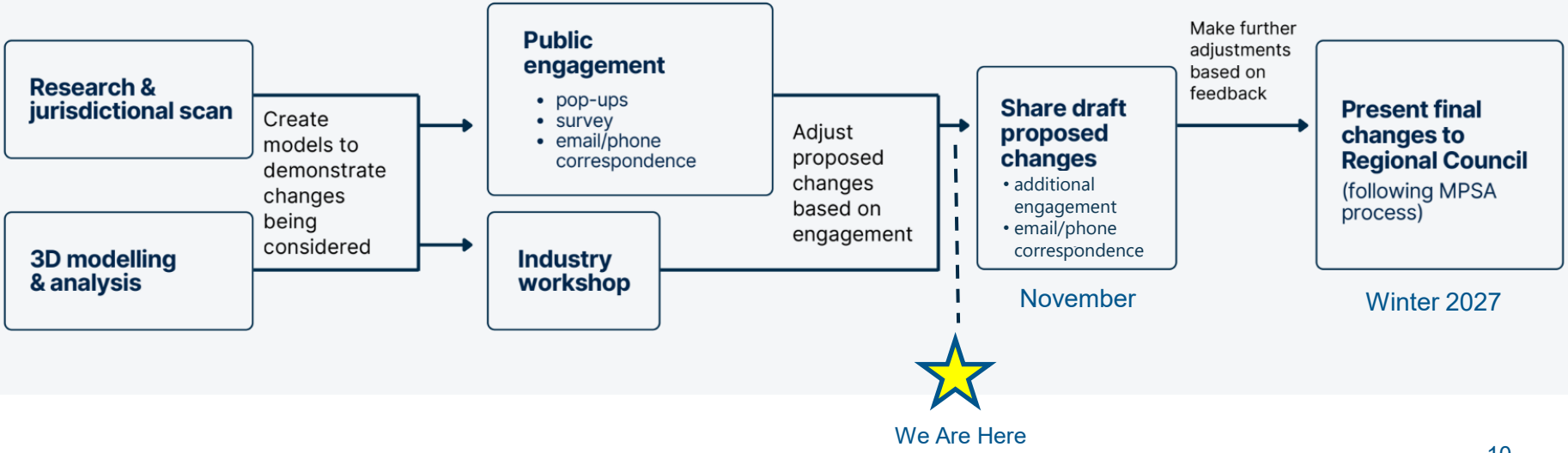
Residential infill development is when dwellings are developed on a lot located within an existing neighbourhood block, instead of expanding into undeveloped land.

Why it's important: Infill development is important because it helps to direct development away from natural areas, reduces the need for costly new infrastructure and services, and supports vibrant, accessible neighbourhoods.

Annual Review (2025-2026)

- Missing middle housing
- Further support for mass timber
- Further support for modular
- Identified housekeeping matters

Centre Plan - Timeline



HALIFAX

Centre Plan – Engagement



Missing middle, gentle density and infill development

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. This type of housing hasn't been built much in recent years, which is why it's considered "missing."

Why it's important: When designed well, missing middle housing integrates into neighbourhoods, is relatively inexpensive and fast to build, provides a range of housing options and encourages complete communities. Learn more about how missing middle housing can impact your community with the fact sheet: Benefits of missing middle housing.

Gentle density refers to low density forms of missing middle housing that have minimal impacts on the look and feel of a neighbourhood.

Why it's important: These ground-oriented, small scale housing types provide opportunities for accessible, affordable, multi-generational living in communities.

Residential infill development is when dwellings are developed on a lot located within an existing neighbourhood block, instead of expanding into undeveloped land.

Why it's important: Infill development is important because it helps to direct development away from natural areas, reduces the need for costly new infrastructure and services, and supports vibrant, accessible neighbourhoods.

- Community Survey
- Councillor/Community Walks
- Industry Workshops/Presentations
  - May 4 – Missing Middle
  - June 17 – Development Liaison Group
  - Sept 17 – Mass Timber
  - Sept 24 – Modular

Thank you!

Scan to learn more or visit:

halifax.ca/SuburbanPlan

Email: suburbanplan@halifax.ca

Phone: (902) 499-0607