



HRM Housing Development
Barrier Review
Executive Panel on
Housing in HRM

October 2022

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1. Preface



Preface

We understand that a review of the housing development process and barriers is a critical component of work of the Executive Panel on Housing in HRM to address the housing deficit in the Halifax Regional Municipality.



Project context

While Nova Scotia has been growing quickly, housing supply in the province has not kept pace. This has created an urgent need to build more housing units. In response to the urgent need in the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), the Executive Panel on Housing in the Halifax Regional Municipality (also referred to as the Task Force) was created as a joint effort between the Province of Nova Scotia and HRM. The Task Force has been mandated to address the shortfall in HRM housing options by facilitating changes in the processes, planning, and approvals of housing developments within HRM.

With anticipated increases in demand for housing units in HRM fueled by population growth, coupled with an existing housing deficit, HRM must drive the completion of many more additional housing units than historical volumes. Specifically, it is estimated there has been an under-supply of new housing units in HRM of approximately 17,000 units between 2016 and 2021. To address that deficit and prepare to meet the 2027 HRM population target of 525,000, HRM would need to complete ~7,600 units per year between now and 2027, compared to the historical rate of only ~3,000 per year. After 2027, an estimated 5,600 units would need to be completed each year to meet HRM's 2037 population target of 650,000. It will be critical to make immediate changes to address the backlog, and then **sustainable** changes that will **accelerate and maintain** significant increases in housing development.

Deloitte was retained by the Chair of the Task Force on behalf of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to identify barriers to efficient and effective housing development in HRM and provide advice to address the key barriers. Deloitte was asked to identify barriers at all tiers of government as well as within the development community. This document summarizes the advice to the Chair and the analyses that support that advice. See Appendix A for an overview of the objectives and scope of the review and the approach undertaken by Deloitte.



Advice to the Chair and Minister

On the pages that follow we provide advice to the Chair of the Task Force and the Minister in the form of 15 recommendations. We appreciate the complex environment within which housing development takes place and the efforts undertaken by HRM to improve processes and speed up approvals and completions of housing units. Some of the recommendations contained herein build on work undertaken or underway at HRM while others are net new. In every case there are issues, complexities, and risks associated with each recommendation and implementation must be done thoughtfully and over time. We believe implementation of the full suite of recommendations will create real and sustained change in the medium- and long-term.

In the short-term, we appreciate the urgent need to address the housing backlog. For that reason, Recommendation #1 involves the creation of a parallel planning team to be established immediately with the primary objective of addressing the existing housing supply backlog. It will also be a useful vehicle to pilot many of the other recommendations and to implement quick wins identified later in this document.

We believe the full set of recommendations will address HRM's housing supply needs in the short- medium- and long-term.

2. Advice to the Chair of the Executive Panel on Housing in HRM and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing



Recommendations – Parallel planning team (page 1 of 1)

Recommendation	Description	Key benefits
1. Create parallel planning team to support Task Force to address backlog, implement quick wins & pilot other recommendations contained herein	<p>Create a parallel planning team to assist HRM in clearing up the backlog of planning applications, piloting many of the recommendations as described herein and implementing solutions for quick win barriers identified during this process.</p> <p>The team should report directly to the HRM Housing Task Force and be strongly aligned with the HRM team in sharing learnings.</p> <p>We recommend an evaluation of the team's effectiveness and the ongoing need after 12 months.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assistance in reducing current planning backlog• Increases the impact of Housing Task Force• Provides a dedicated team to pilot initiatives• Provides a dedicated team to address quick win barriers

Recommendations – Regulation and zoning (page 1 of 2)

Recommendation	Description	Key benefits
2. Increase allowable as-of-right density along HRM's transit priority corridors	Expand increased density (i.e. multi-unit development) "as-of-right" along the existing and potential future transit corridors throughout HRM (beyond Regional Centre), where there is or could be sufficient water supply and wastewater capacity, other infrastructure, and subject to building and fire code requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces volume of development agreements, freeing up time of HRM staff and eliminating need for Council involvement • Immediately increases housing capacity on same supply of land • Grows density near transit services
3. Eliminate single unit zoning within Municipal Service Boundaries, allowing as-of-right multi-unit housing	Up-zone land previously reserved for single unit housing, allowing multi-unit buildings up to 3-4 units, ensuring there is sufficient water supply and wastewater capacity and considering heritage property protection. This may be considered an expansion of HRM's implementation of secondary suites throughout municipality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces volume of development agreements, freeing up time of HRM staff and eliminating need for Council involvement • Immediately increases housing capacity on same supply of land
4. Remove parking requirements for new developments	<p>As was done for Regional Centre, remove minimum parking requirements that force developers to set aside valuable land and increase construction budgets to create vehicle parking for residential and commercial buildings alike, making it difficult to build more multi-unit buildings within urban boundaries.</p> <p>We note that a growing number of jurisdictions have reduced or eliminated parking requirements citywide (not just downtown).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides more choice to consumers • Enables more affordable housing • Allows more space for other uses such as housing • Removes costly underground parking structures • Reduces carbon footprint
5. Reduce minimum lot sizes to enable more affordable housing	<p>Large minimum lot sizes reduces the number of possible housing units, encouraging car dependency and the segregation of land uses between residential and commercial. Consideration will need to be given to the environmental impact of increased density and avoidance of sprawl.</p> <p>HRM has reduced lot sizes in Regional Centre and is considering reduction of lot sizes in other areas pending Suburban Plan development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enables smaller, more affordable housing, including rowhouses, thereby immediately increasing housing capacity on same supply of land • Reduces environmental impact from lawns, groundwater pollution, deforestation • Produces more tax revenue, acre-for-acre, to fund local government services

Recommendations – Regulation and zoning (page 2 of 2)

Recommendation	Description	Key benefits
6. Simplify and streamline Municipal Planning Strategies, Land Use By-laws and Regional Subdivision By-law in HRM	<p>Continue and expand on the work of the HRM by-law project to simplify and consolidate Municipal Planning Strategies, Land Use By-laws and Regional Subdivision By-law, all of which are viewed by HRM staff and the development community as complex and difficult to follow. Consideration should be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediately revisiting 25-lot limit per year in subdivision by-law, acknowledging infrastructure requirements. • Simplifying and clarifying land use regulations, zoning and policy documentation. • Consolidating by-law regulations, zoning topics and permits across communities. • Standardizing interpretation of laws and codes. • Assessing and simplifying requirements for rezoning and deferring detailed elements to the development permit stage, as has been done in Victoria, Vancouver and elsewhere. • Keeping the revised documents as simple as possible, limiting conditions to essential only. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces time spent by HRM staff to determine applicability of exemptions • Reduces complexity for applicants • Increases housing capacity
7. Accelerate completion of Regional Plan	<p>Accelerate timeframe for revising HRM Regional Plan inclusive of aggressive indicators and measures of success. It is recommended the Plan be completed as soon as possible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides clarity of vision to development community, allowing them to do medium- and long-range planning
8. Provincially legislate HRM to be accountable for the setting of targets for minimum land supply for housing development	<p>The Province should legislate HRM (and possibly all NS municipalities) to be accountable for setting and meeting targets for minimum land supply (i.e. lands which have been granted planning permissions) and development approvals based on Housing Needs Assessment projections.</p> <p>Establish development and housing goals that would focus on the total spectrum of housing including various housing formats.</p> <p>Building on the Regional Planning work that currently includes forecasts of population and housing growth, develop a standardized measurement approach for housing targets and measure results against targets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures adequate supply of land available to meet long-term housing needs • Provides visibility of land supply to the development community

Recommendations – Process, organization and governance

(page 1 of 3)

Recommendation	Description	Key benefits
9. Establish Trusted Partner Program, including enhanced fast-lane service for applicants with track record of high-quality submissions	<p>Establish a Trusted Partner Program whereby developers who meet set criteria (including a proven track record) will have an enhanced relationship with HRM. Elements of the Program will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast-track line for approvals. • Trusted Partners are 'brought to the table' to help develop solutions to macro issues (e.g. innovate to help solve supply chain issues, pilot new programs to attract immigrant workers). • A customer relationship manager (single point of contact) from HRM will be assigned to each Trusted Partner, and will be responsible for ensuring timelines are met and communication is frequent and up-to-date. • External auditors of the planning process will be responsible for auditing the files of Trusted Partners. <p>We note that HRM has been exploring variations of this type of program with a pilot program in place for the Development Engineering stream.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shorter wait times for applicants • Incentive for quality applications • Reduction of staff workload • Co-design of innovative ideas to solve macro problems
10. Establish single point of contact for each application, to drive customer service improvements	<p>For applicants who are not Trusted Partners (see #9), establish a single point of contact for each application who will be accountable for delivering to set timelines and communicating regularly with applicants.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves customer service • Increases accountability • Improves file management
11. Develop Trusted Professional Program to reduce rework and grow trust of industry professionals	<p>Partner with professional firms and/or associations to audit work of approved professionals (i.e. engineers, architects), rather than perform a detailed review of each deliverable. This 'Trusted Professional' designation could be revoked if work does not meet minimum standards. Currently a variation of this is under development in HRM with a pilot program to roll out in the Development Engineering stream.</p> <p>A number of jurisdictions have introduced this type of reverse onus approach, which should be explored for implementation within HRM.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces staff workloads • Faster turnarounds • Improves relationships with industry • Incentive for quality applications

Recommendations – Process, organization and governance

(page 2 of 3)

Recommendation	Description	Key benefits
12. Set clear timelines for applications	<p>HRM should set clear and reasonable timelines for application approvals, for those elements of the approval process that are within the control of accountable parties. The single points of contact or customer relationship managers within HRM should be responsible for ensuring the timelines (which are within their control) are met for the applications/developers for which they are responsible.</p> <p>Minnesota has introduced a deemed approval process whereby applications are deemed to be approved under standard conditions when a decision does not meet the mandated timelines. A similar process should be explored in HRM if established timelines are not being met.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forces level of efficiency to ensure timely review of application • Increases predictability for applicants
13. Clarify roles of Council and staff, delegating more authority to staff	<p>Consider reframing legislation for opportunities to delegate Council's approval to staff; and remove Council's ability to withdraw delegation. (We note that earlier recommendations increasing as-of-right development will reduce the need for Council's involvement in many developments.)</p> <p>Increase the level of authority among HRM staff to effectively and efficiently move files through the development approval process (e.g. development variance permits, minor variance approval). Matters that are straightforward and technical in nature should fall within the purview of staff. Although HRM has made significant changes in Regional Centre and is reviewing other areas pending completion of by-law simplification work, consideration should be given to making additional changes to Regional Centre and beyond.</p> <p>Adjust statutes to only require Council decisions on Municipal Plan adoption and amendments.</p> <p>Consider having UARB require someone with land use development experience to serve on the board.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases role clarity • Frees up Council time to focus on strategic priorities • Frees up HRM staff time preparing detailed Council reports on routine approvals • Avoids unnecessary delays on planning applications that implement Council-approved policies and regulations • Faster turnaround times for decisions

Recommendations – Process, organization and governance

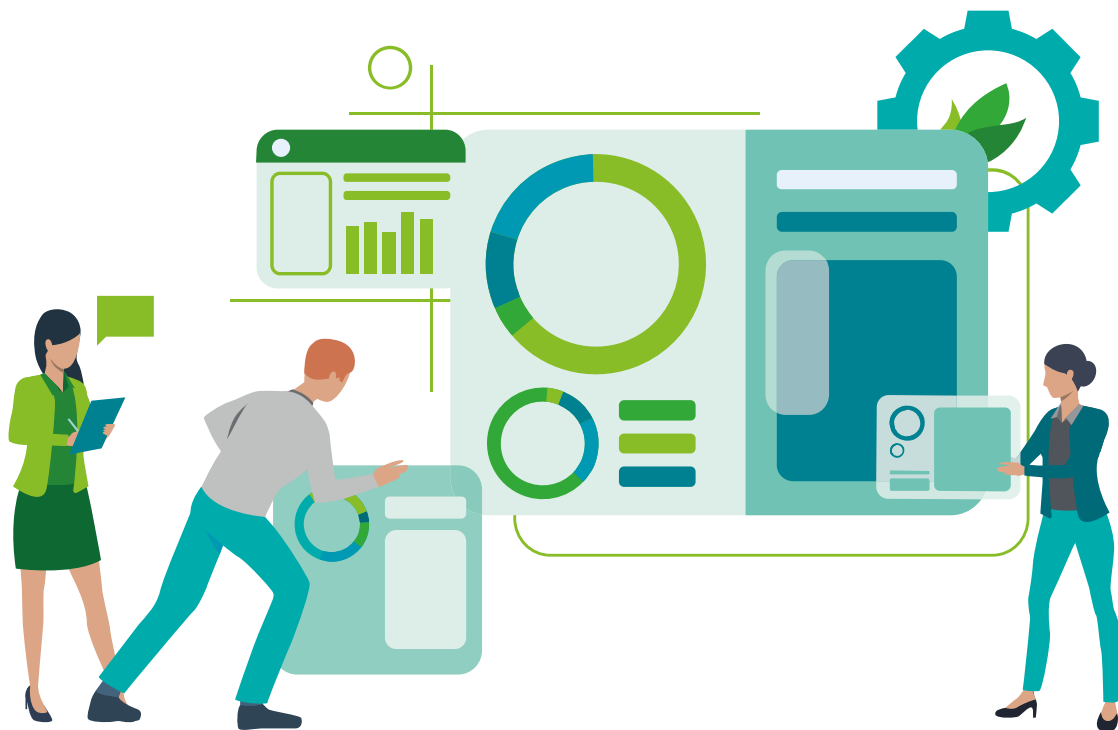
(page 3 of 3)

Recommendation	Description	Key benefits
14. Review and clarify purpose of public input and appeals	<p>There is an overreliance on public hearings to make land use decisions, which tends to favour certain voices over others and rarely affects outcomes.</p> <p>Review and clarify the purpose of public input, at each stage in the development process, specifying rationale and potential limitation, combination, or alternatives for more meaningful and effective public input. Specific recommended changes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit public meetings to those required by legislation. • Exempt from public consultation all projects ten units or less that conform to the Regional Plan (e.g. rezoning, development agreements, site plan approvals). • Reduce the number of times applications/projects are reviewed by an advisory board or combine reviews where possible. • Consider exempting from public input if a development has a minimum (e.g. 30%) affordable housing component. <p>HRM has updated public engagement policy and is awaiting Council review in August. Consideration should be given to including specific recommendations above, if not included in pending update.</p> <p>For appeals, create more permissive land use, planning and approval systems thereby reducing the circumstances under which appeals would be allowed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces number of public meetings • Reduces number of appeals • Faster approval process • Reduces drain on staff and Council time/energy

Recommendations – External (page 1 of 1)

Recommendation	Description	Key benefits
15. Support access to tradespersons through a variety of mechanisms	<p>Rapidly expedite immigration and necessary supports of builders and skilled tradespersons to Nova Scotia from Ukraine and elsewhere.</p> <p>Reduce/eliminate restrictions related to tradespersons moving from province to province.</p> <p>Consider making trades training free for a period of time (or indefinitely).</p> <p>Work with Trusted Partners to advance this recommendation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increases labour supply• Enhances relationship with Trusted Partners

Sequencing of recommendations

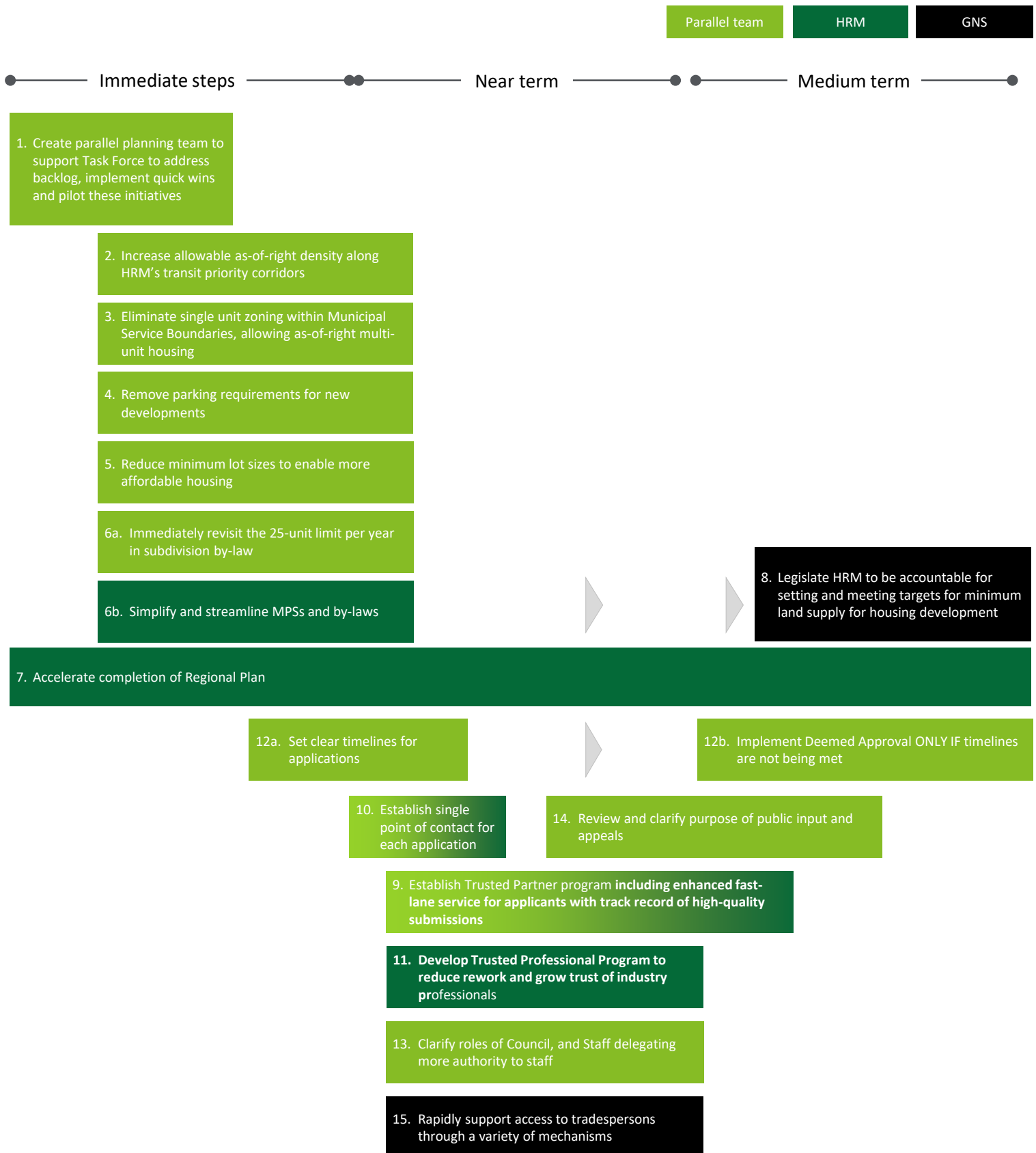


We believe the 15 recommendations contained herein, when taken together, will result in a significant and sustainable increase in housing development in HRM.

There is a logical sequencing of the recommendations, beginning with some foundational elements, and moving forward from there. We appreciate the urgency of the housing situation in HRM and have, therefore, proposed an implementation roadmap on the next page that classifies recommendations as immediate, near term or medium term. Timelines for each classification should be decided by the Task Force with the help of the Steering Committee and parallel planning team.

The roadmap also identifies, through colour-coding, which party should drive the implementation of the recommendation: the parallel planning team (the creation of which is the first recommendation to be implemented), HRM, or the Province. The critical role of the parallel planning team to create the foundation elements is clear.

Proposed implementation roadmap



3. Analyses in support of advice to Chair and Minister



Analyses

Following the approach proposed by Deloitte, as shown in Appendix A, Deloitte undertook reviews of documents and consultation of stakeholders to identify the barriers that get in the way of accelerated approvals and housing completions in HRM. Barriers were then prioritized to guide Deloitte's efforts in learning from other jurisdictions. The culmination of these analytical efforts resulted in the advice contained herein.

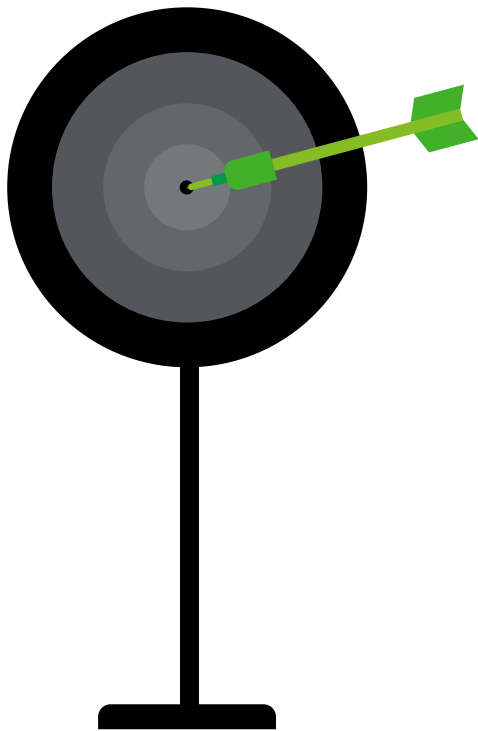
On the pages that follow we summarize the results of the barrier identification and prioritization processes as well as the jurisdictional scan.

Analysis: Identification and prioritization of barriers



Advice to the Chair of the Executive Panel on Housing in HRM and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

On the following pages we provide advice to the Executive Panel on Housing in HRM and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing in the form of recommendations that we believe will significantly increase housing development in HRM.



We are making 15 recommendations:

- The first recommendation, as mentioned previously, is to create a **Parallel Planning Team** to work alongside current processes and people in HRM to urgently address the backlog in housing supply.
- The next seven recommendations relate to **Regulations and Zoning** – increasing as-of-right development and thereby reducing reliance on discretionary Council/staff approvals; and increasing density to allow more development within available land.
- The next six recommendations relate to **Process, Organization and Governance** – transforming the relationship between the private development sector and HRM.
- The final recommendation relates to **External** factors – focusing on increasing the supply of tradespersons.

As can be seen on the pages that follow, implementing this set of recommendations should free up the time of HRM staff, Council and applicants; allow more housing units to be developed on available land; and encourage HRM to work in partnership with the private sector development community to achieve a common goal of more housing units.

Identification of barriers

With help from the Steering Committee to identify stakeholders involved in the housing development process, over 35 interviews were conducted. Stakeholders included key staff from HRM and the Province as well as a mix of large and small developers, consultants, builders, and industry and professional associations. (See Appendix B for a list of stakeholders interviewed.)

In an effort to understand the barriers that stakeholders believe get in the way of housing development in HRM, Deloitte asked open-ended questions about the key barriers causing delays in creating housing supply and activities believed to provide low-value and/or create duplication of effort. A high-level depiction of the housing development journey (provided in Appendix C) was used during the interview to encourage stakeholders to consider the end-to-end process – from the planning framework through construction and occupancy. Through that open-ended consultation process, in addition to the review of documentation, 57 barriers were identified. (We note that some of the barriers may be perceptions, some may be statements of dissatisfaction; we believe they are an important collection of issues that get in the way of accelerated housing development. The full list of barriers is provided in Appendix D.)

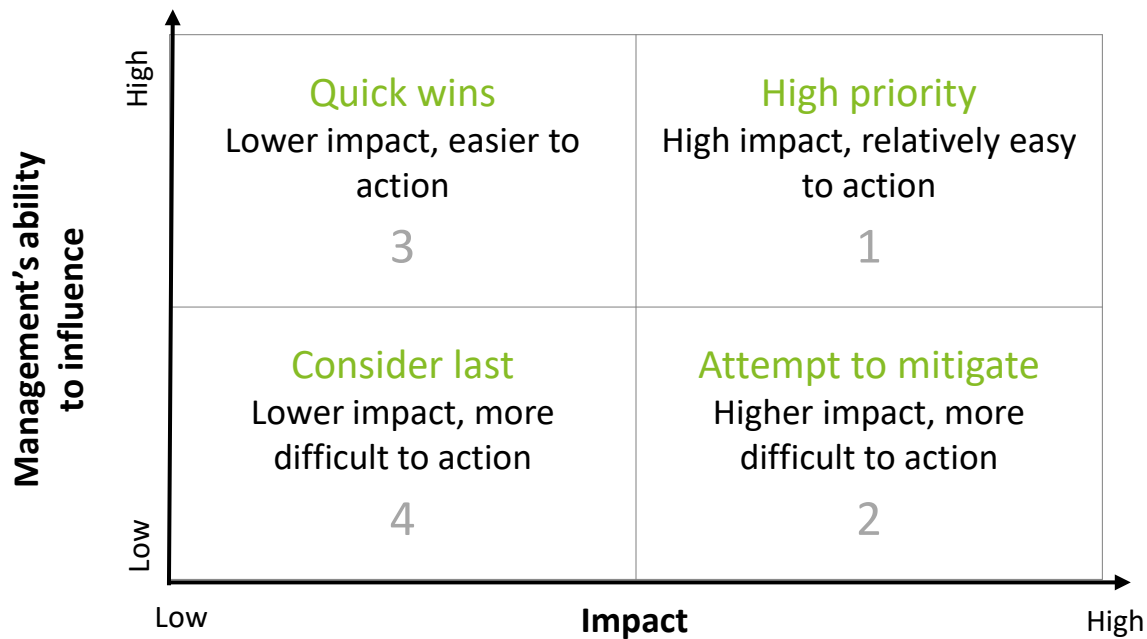
Categorization of the barriers into ten themes is shown below.

Theme	Description	Theme	Description
1. Governance	Issues related to oversight, direction and decision-making.	6. Regulation	Issues relating to current legislation and planning documents.
2. Consistency	Inconsistent approaches to approval processes and rule interpretation.	7. Complexity	Complexity within by-laws, application processes and Development Agreements.
3. Case Management	Lack of a single point of contact for files.	8. Industry	Issues related to availability and cost of labour and supplies.
4. Process	Tasks, actions or steps within the approval process.	9. Financial	Issues related to increasing interest rates and cost of borrowing.
5. Technology	Issues related to use and understanding of existing technology.	10. Staffing	Issues related to number and consistency/retention of HRM staff.

On the page that follows we organize the various barriers by priority.

Prioritization of barriers

We appreciate that not all barriers are created equal. In partnership with the Steering Committee, we prioritized barriers based on **level of impact** (i.e. what would be the impact on housing supply if this barrier were removed/addressed?) and **management's ability to influence** each barrier. The resulting four quadrants influence the barriers on which the Task Force should focus, i.e. the Task Force should focus on addressing those barriers that will have the greatest impact on housing supply. Positioning in the quadrants also influenced the focus of our jurisdictional scan.



Think about number of units, time (days, weeks, months), and cost

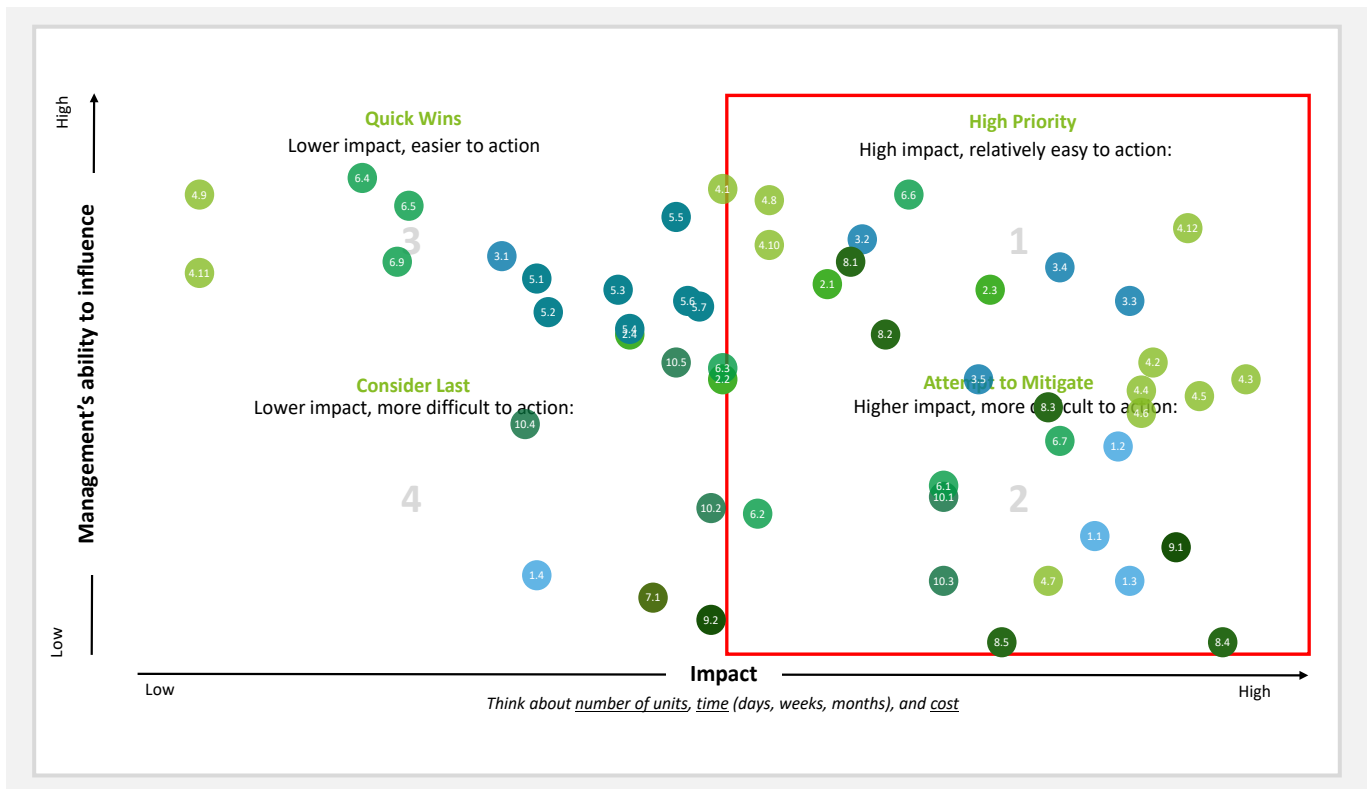
For each quadrant in the matrix, we identified a course of action based on the prioritization of barriers.

1. Addressing **High Priority** barriers is expected to have a high impact on housing supply and is believed to be relatively easy to action.
2. Addressing **Attempt to Mitigate** barriers is also expected to have a high impact on housing supply but is believed to be more difficult to action.
3. Addressing **Quick Win** barriers is expected to have a lower impact on housing supply, but is believed to be relatively easy to action.
4. Addressing barriers classified as **Consider Last** is expected to have a low impact on housing supply, and is believed to be more difficult to action.

Prioritization of barriers – results

The results of the prioritization exercise are shown at the right and in detail in Appendix E. The key observations are:

- The majority of the barriers fall into the High Priority and Attempt to Mitigate quadrants. This is a positive outcome, as addressing these barriers should result in significant increases in housing supply.
- The High Priority barriers are generally related to process and case management. This is not unexpected. It aligns with the June 2022 CMHC report 'Canada's Housing Supply Shortage: Restoring affordability by 2030' that identified process challenges as a key hurdle that needs to be overcome to address the housing supply shortage.
- The Attempt to Mitigate barriers are generally related to factors within HRM and the Province, i.e. governance and regulation, as well as some external factors related to industry and financial matters. Again, these findings align with the CMHC report that identifies external hurdles including skill shortages and supply-chain challenges as well as the cost of construction.
- The Quick Wins barriers relate primarily to HRM's POSSE software system. While addressing these barriers is not expected to have a significant impact on housing supply, it can alleviate frustration of HRM staff and developers alike.



Due to the potential to have a significant positive impact on housing supply, the barriers in the High Priority and Attempt to Mitigate quadrants became the focus of Deloitte's jurisdictional research and the focus of our recommendations to the Task Force.

Analysis: Jurisdictional scan



Jurisdictional scan

A jurisdictional scan was completed focusing on leading practices that were aligned with the High Priority and Attempt to Mitigate barriers.



This activity leveraged jurisdictional reviews previously completed by the Task Force. This was supplemented with desktop research completed by Deloitte, reach-outs to Deloitte's national and global subject matter advisors, as well as direct consultations with selected Canadian jurisdictions. Our research led us to learn about leading and interesting practices in jurisdictions such as Ontario, British Columbia, and various US cities and states (e.g. Minneapolis, California, Houston, Oregon) and New Zealand.

Our research clearly showed the housing development process is complex and the barriers facing HRM are not unlike those being experienced in other jurisdictions. Many jurisdictions indicated they also have not kept pace with the increasing demand for housing supply.

The following page outlines some key leading practices that have helped to overcome the housing supply shortage in other jurisdictions.

Learnings from jurisdictional scan

Focusing on the High Priority and Attempt to Mitigate barriers, we identified many changes in process, policy, regulation and governance being introduced in other jurisdictions. We note that HRM has implemented, is about to implement, or is considering implementing a number of these initiatives.

A more detailed description of some leading practices can be found in Appendix F, and a few key examples are shown below:

- Ontario and Minneapolis increased as-of-right density along transit corridors allowing for 6-20 storeys and reducing/removing previous discretionary rules. This immediately increased housing capacity and reduced the volume of complex development agreements.
- Several jurisdictions such as Minneapolis, Vancouver, California and Oregon up-zoned land previously reserved for single unit housing allowing for multi-unit buildings. In Minneapolis, this was deemed as the single most important initiative the city had undertaken to increase housing supply.
- Houston introduced very low minimum lot sizes (1,400 sq ft) which prompted a housing boom. Reducing lot sizes enabled smaller, more affordable housing reaching the middle market.
- British Columbia established a fast-track Nexus-like line for applicants with a track record of submitting quality applications providing them with faster turnaround times and creating an incentive for improved quality applications by other developers.
- Both New Zealand and Ontario are now requiring municipalities and districts to ensure they maintain sufficient development capacity to meet expected demand over the medium- and long-term.
- In April of 2022, Victoria, B.C. approved a new policy that abolishes the need for public hearings for affordable housing development proposals.
- In Ontario, appellants are required to demonstrate an appeal has merit, relying on evidence and expert reports before it is accepted.

These and other learnings from national and global jurisdictions influenced the recommendations to the Chair of the Task Force and Minister.



4. Concluding remarks



Concluding remarks

Insufficient volume of housing development in recent years to meet historical demand, combined with current and anticipated population growth, has created a growing housing deficit across the province, most notably in HRM. Many barriers have been identified that contribute to the issue. The barriers include micro and macro issues, some related to the way things are done in Nova Scotia and HRM, and some related to global supply and labour issues.

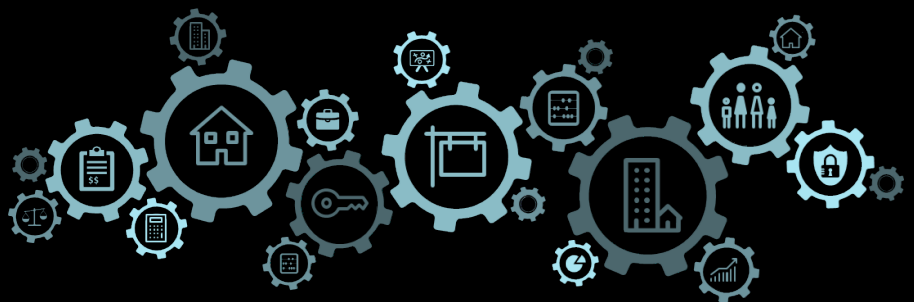


Much has been done and more is being done to address the issues, both within HRM and the Province. Much remains to be done. What is promising is the clear and shared desire among officials to modernize and improve approval processes, regulation, governance, and more.

The review and recommendations laid out in this document set forth an ambitious vision for the future of housing development in HRM. We believe the roadmap of recommendations, once fully implemented, will change the landscape of housing development to meet the current and future housing needs of Haligonians.

Appendix A

Review objectives, scope and approach



Review objectives and scope

We understand that a review of the housing development process and barriers is a critical component of the work of the Executive Panel on Housing in HRM to address the housing deficit in HRM.



Review objectives

- Determine which HRM, Provincial and/or Developers' policies, processes, legislation, and/or practices are creating barriers to efficient and effective housing development.
- Gather and analyze any relevant best practice(s) which could expedite housing supply both in the short- and long-term in HRM.
- Identify potential actions and/or new initiatives, within both levels of government and the development community, that could remove barriers, reduce approval and/or development timelines, and overall enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of housing development within HRM.



Review scope

- Housing development processes and procedures related to HRM's applications, site plan approvals, development agreements, comprehensive development districts, building and other permits.
- Provincial legislation, processes and procedures related to housing development.
- Process, practices, and other barriers related to developers in HRM.

Out of scope: detailed legislative/regulatory review.

Deloitte's approach and methodology

This review was conducted under the direction of a Steering Committee comprised of representatives of the Province of Nova Scotia and HRM (see Appendix B for the Steering Committee composition). The below six steps were undertaken in completing the review.

Step 1. Understand current state

- Reviewed **relevant documentation** to inform Deloitte's overall understanding of planning context.
- Met with key members of **HRM's Planning & Development team** to understand their role in the approval process and how applications are prioritized today.

Step 2. Identify barriers

- Working with the Steering Committee, identified **key stakeholders** to interview.
- Conducted over **35 targeted interviews** with key stakeholders from the Province, HRM, and the development community to identify **key issues/barriers** with planning processes and policies, throughout the housing development journey.
- Developed a preliminary list of **barriers** for review.

Step 3. Complete prioritization of barriers

- Conducted a **workshop** with Steering Committee to review and prioritize barriers.
- **Prioritized barriers** based on level of impact and management's ability to action.

Step 4. Complete jurisdictional scan

- Focusing on the key barriers, analyzed **literature and case studies** for housing supply improvements from jurisdictions selected by the Steering Committee and subject matter experts.
- Leveraged the **jurisdictional work** already completed by the Steering Committee.
- The review focused on Ontario, British Columbia, New Zealand, Minneapolis, and other parts of United States.

Step 5. Plan for the future

- Catalogued **leading practices** and used findings to inform the development of advice to the Chair of the Task Force.
- Drafted **high level roadmap** of recommendations, identifying recommended sequencing of activities.

Step 6. Prepare advice

- Prepared this document containing **advice** to the Chair of the Task Force and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.
- **Presented** draft advice to the Task Force.

Appendix B

Stakeholders consulted



Stakeholders consulted (1 of 2)

Name	Title	Representing
Steering Committee Members		
Kathy Cox-Brown	Co-Chair Steering Committee	Housing Task Force Secretariat
Jeff Garber	Co- Chair Steering Committee	Housing Task Force Secretariat
Kelly Denty	Executive Director, Planning and Development	Halifax Regional Municipality
Peter Duncan	Director Infrastructure Planning	Halifax Regional Municipality
Christina Lovitt	Director of Planning (formerly Manager Asset Transportation & Development)	NS Dept of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Alan Howell	Senior Planner	NS Dept of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Emily Pond	Director Partnerships	Office of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness
Other stakeholders consulted		
Gordon Smith	Strategic Lead, Community Climate Action (formerly Director of Planning)	NS Dept of Environment & Climate Change
Doug MacKenzie	Fire Marshal	NS Office of the Fire Marshal
Joe Rogers	Building Code Coordinator	NS Office of the Fire Marshal
Fred Crooks	Deputy Minister	NS Office of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness
Kevin Barrett & Susan Jeffries	Heritage Property Program Coordinator	NS Dept of Communities, Culture, Tourism & Heritage
Jonathan E MacDonald	Regional Director, Environment & Climate Change	NS Dept of Environment & Climate Change
Norma Bennett	District Manager, Environment & Climate Change	NS Dept of Environment & Climate Change
Michael Balsom	Development Engineers - Area Manager	NS Dept of Public Works
Vincent Paige	Development Engineers - Area Manager	NS Dept of Public Works
Robyn Holmans	Development Engineers - Area Manager	NS Dept of Public Works
Sergio Grbac	Building Standards Program Manager	Halifax Regional Municipality
Ashley Blissett	Development Engineering Program Manager	Halifax Regional Municipality
Erin McIntyre	Director, Current Planning; Planning & Development	Halifax Regional Municipality
Peter Nightingale	Planner	Halifax Regional Municipality
Tanya Snair	Supervisor Regional Licensing, (formerly Operations Supervisor)	Halifax Regional Municipality
Stephen Adams	Executive Director	Urban Development Institute of Nova Scotia

Stakeholders consulted (2 of 2)

Name	Title	Representing
Duncan Williams	President & CEO	Construction Association of Nova Scotia
Crystal Ingram	Operations Manager	Canadian Homebuilders Association Nova Scotia Chapter
Justin Johnson	President	Canadian Homebuilders Association Nova Scotia Chapter
Grant Feltmate	Executive Director /Workforce Chair	NS Road Builders Association
Lola Doucet	Chair	Real Estate Lawyers Association of Nova Scotia
Paige Hovelling	Government Relations	NS Association of Realtors
Kevin Kneatt	Developer	Clayton Developments
Marc Ouellet	Developer	Armco Group
Alex Halef	Developer	Banc Investments
Greg Zwicker	Planning Consultant	ZZap Architecture & Planning
Jennifer Tsang	Planning Consultant	Sunrose Consulting
Jeff Marchand	Builder	Marchand Homes
Trevor Adams	Developer	Marchand Homes
Ron Paschal	Builder	Vision 7 Developments
Glenn Clarke	Builder	Vision 7 Developments
Cesar Saleh	Developer	Fares Group

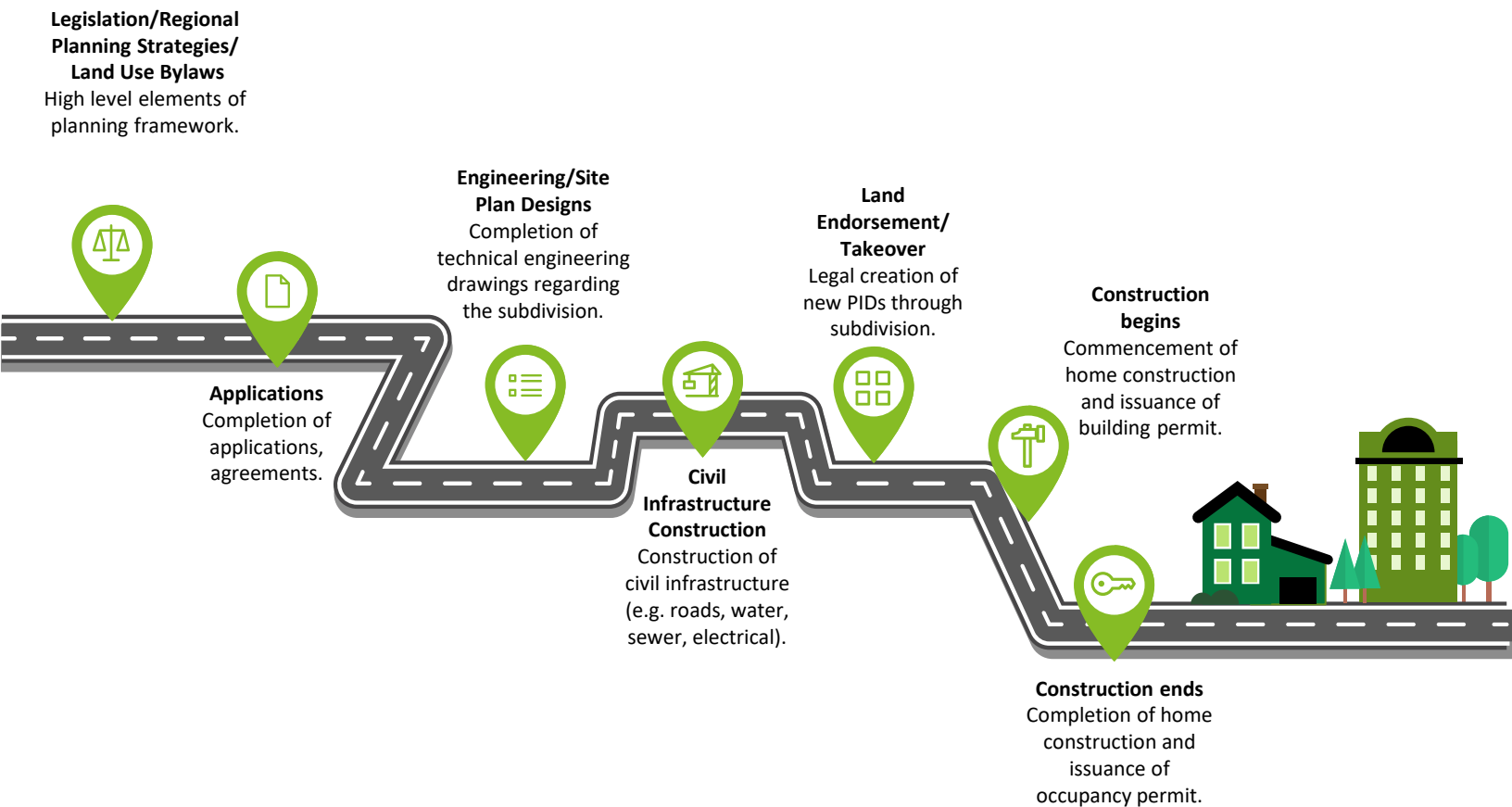
Appendix C

Overview of housing development journey



Overview of housing development journey

During the consultation process, stakeholders were asked to think about the housing development journey and identify barriers at any/all stages along the housing development journey.



Appendix D

List of identified barriers



What we heard

Key barriers identified through engagement interviews (page 1 of 4)

1. Governance	1.1	Conflicting interests between HRM, the Public, and Developers leads to conflict and delays.
	1.2	Public appeals process can slow down processes considerably, particularly when the appeal is based on general dislike of project rather than rule variance.
	1.3	In certain cases, HRM staff do not have adequate authority to make decisions, resulting in files that meet all the requirements reverting back to Council, extending overall timeframes.
	1.4	Council can prioritize aesthetic concerns or other issues over the need to add housing stock.
	1.5	While public engagement in early stages of development is valuable, consultations can sometimes delay and halt the construction of housing, even if the development meets HRM requirements.
2. Consistency	2.1	Rule interpretation by junior planners can vary, making it challenging for applicants to determine what will be approved/not approved, resulting in additional review cycles.
	2.2	Variability in reviews and approval timelines depending on the Planner assigned to the file.
	2.3	Inconsistency in approach between Province and HRM in assessing traffic impacts, where provincial roads intersect with municipal roads.
	2.4	Planner rotation removes potential to become familiar with developers (project manager) creating inefficiencies. The lack of a consistent point of contact for larger applications leads to inconsistencies in file management (e.g. knowledge transfer with staff turnover).
3. Case management	3.1	Perception that certain application types are processed on a first-come first-served basis whether a small or large-scale application.
	3.2	Linear senior staff review in some application types creates lengthy review timelines.
	3.3	Large volume of enforcement files require attention of reviewers, delaying application reviews.
	3.4	Lack of clear timelines for approvals and comments to be provided back to the applicant.
	3.5	Planners not consistently following up with external agency reviews, leading to delays and applicants doing their own outreach to external agencies.

What we heard

Key barriers identified through engagement interviews (page 2 of 4)

4. Process	4.1	Incomplete planning documents or applications submitted to provincial departments slows down overall approval process.
	4.2	Insufficient time or personnel to focus on updating and streamlining business processes within departments.
	4.3	Tendency among staff to not approve unless permit application is perfect, rather than employing conditional approvals.
	4.4	NS Power approval and payment process is confusing, arduous, and creates delays in obtaining inspections.
	4.5	In recent months, subdivision applications have experienced delays while waiting for documents to come back from Provincial Land Registry Office.
	4.6	Engineering cannot approve an application until all information is back from Department of Environment and Land Registry Office, leading to delays.
	4.7	Competing interests and feedback between different review departments can lead to conflicting feedback for applicants, delaying process.
	4.8	Although plans are developed by a licensed engineer, there is still a long, scrutinized review of plans usually resulting in delays and in some cases insignificant and costly changes.
	4.9	Design Advisory Committee in the Centre Plan adds an extra layer of review, is seen to provide little value and is time-consuming; whereas a peer review could accomplish the same more effectively and timely.
	4.10	Reliance on paper-based submissions and correspondence by some provincial departments and offices (e.g. Land Registry Office, Environment and Climate Change) creates inefficiencies.
	4.11	Lack of development guide for many application types leaves applicants unfamiliar with development processes.
	4.12	Written reports from Public Information Meetings (PIMs) can take several months to be circulated regardless of the number of issues raised or number of people at the meeting.

What we heard

Key barriers identified through engagement interviews (page 3 of 4)

5. Technology	5.1	Some users of the POSSE permitting system find it difficult to navigate resulting in incomplete applications, or submission of the wrong application type.
	5.2	High volume of smaller applications from general public require significant staff time. Many applicants do not set up an account on POSSE system, leading to staff having to walk them through the process.
	5.3	Although POSSE permitting system provides an option for users to sign up for notifications, many users do not, thus are not aware of requests for further information, stalling their application.
	5.4	Lack of staff training on POSSE permitting system extends review times.
	5.5	Delays occur when incomplete information is entered into POSSE by internal reviewers.
	5.6	Configuration of POSSE permitting system creates communication errors with applicants causing confusion and leads to additional steps/phone calls.
	5.7	The POSSE permitting system does not provide managers access to workload data of team members, preventing optimal workload management and balancing.
6. Regulation	6.1	Outdated by-laws outside of core HRM (e.g. Bedford, Sackville) and lack of Suburban Plan means little as-of-right development. This leads to substantial manual effort through amendments, discretionary approvals/Development Agreements which are arduous for applicants and staff.
	6.2	Development Agreements do not grant flexibility to Planners in certain areas, preventing them from identifying creative solutions. Lack of ability to be innovative/flexible due to specifics in language.
	6.3	‘Lack of teeth’ in enforcement process leads to large number of escalating steps, eating up significant staff time.
	6.4	Province requires application fees be paid by cheque to Minister of Finance in order to conduct an electronic review of a subdivision file. Appetite to address this, but parties cannot seem to get right people in on the conversations to make the changes.
	6.5	Municipal legislation requires provincial Department of Environment & Climate Change to comment on early-stage development; however, comments are standardized in a form letter, and are not seen to provide value.
	6.6	Certain regulatory processes at Environment and Climate Change are not designed to handle certain condominium corporation application types, causing delays in processing and approving applications within Department.
	6.7	Applications under active review are subject to changes in legislation and rules mid-way through adjudication (grandfathering is not standard).
	6.8	Fragmented approach between Province and HRM in assessing environmental studies/impacts.
	6.9	Current regulation in Department of Natural Resources and Renewables requires Cabinet approval to move a Utility Pole that is near water.

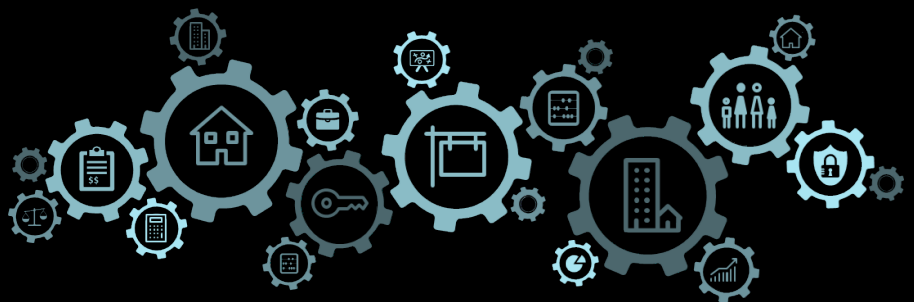
What we heard

Key barriers identified through engagement interviews (page 4 of 4)

7. Complexity	7.1	Subdivision by-laws contain substantial number of exemptions which creates complex web of rules and longer compliance reviews.
	7.2	Time required to bring complex applications to Regional Council Initiation has increased significantly (up to a year), due to internal processes and requirement for multiple reviews.
	7.3	Level of design for applications has grown in detail and complexity when compared to other Canadian municipalities. (e.g. Development Agreements).
8. Industry	8.1	Labour shortages within the subtrades are causing delays within the construction industry, extending timeframes for construction up to 3-5 months.
	8.2	Builders find it difficult to navigate immigration process to fill labour requirements.
	8.3	Recruiting out of province for labour is time consuming, costly, and if successful, there is little to no vacancy for accommodation.
	8.4	Significant increases in supply costs, shipping and availability of product are extending timelines for housing completion up to 6-8 months, particularly for custom homes.
	8.5	Land banking by developers can hinder construction, as developers sit on land indefinitely.
9. Financial	9.1	Interest rate increases are impacting borrowing leverage and starting to delay or postpone construction projects.
	9.2	Capital gains tax impact on landlords discourages selling buildings that could be available for repurposing for housing development in already zoned areas.
10. Staffing	10.1	Lack of experienced, empowered staff to effectively and efficiently manage complex files and keep them moving through application process. This can result in files staying on staff desks for weeks with limited movement.
	10.2	Lack of planners for special projects (e.g. Special Planning Areas, Centre Plan, etc.) leads to resource shortages in processing applications and completing reviews as well as deferred special projects.
	10.3	Periodic cycles of high turnover in certain departments at HRM contributes to inexperienced staff.
	10.4	Inconsistent industry staff creating and managing applications in POSSE system (HRM planning has moved to a new application software (POSSE) and is intending to replace Hansen, their existing software) creates errors, omissions and inefficiencies, leading to additional time and effort.
	10.5	Planners may not understand the financial impact of certain decisions, and can provide feedback that creates significant delays or rework in applications.

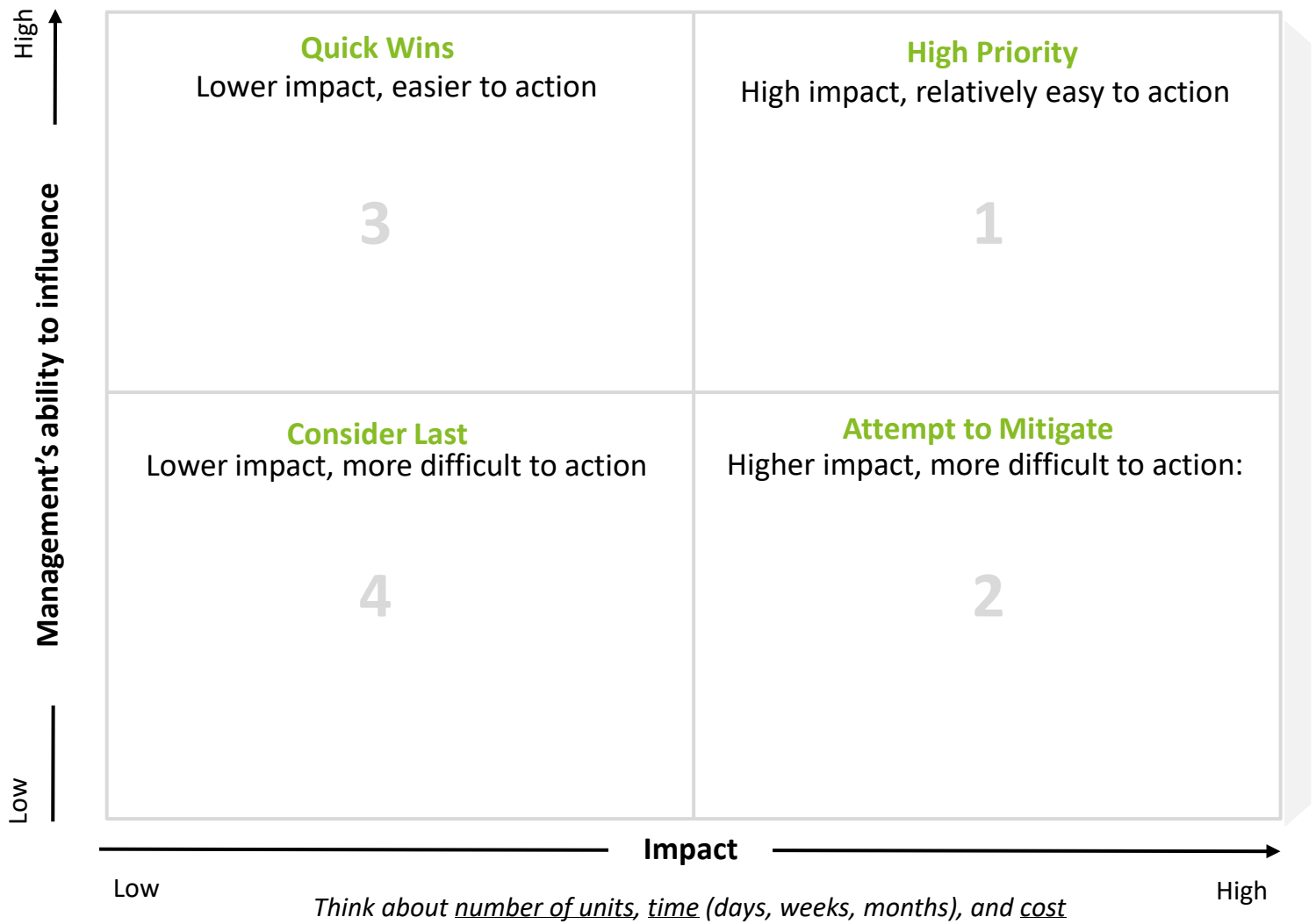
Appendix E

Prioritization of barriers



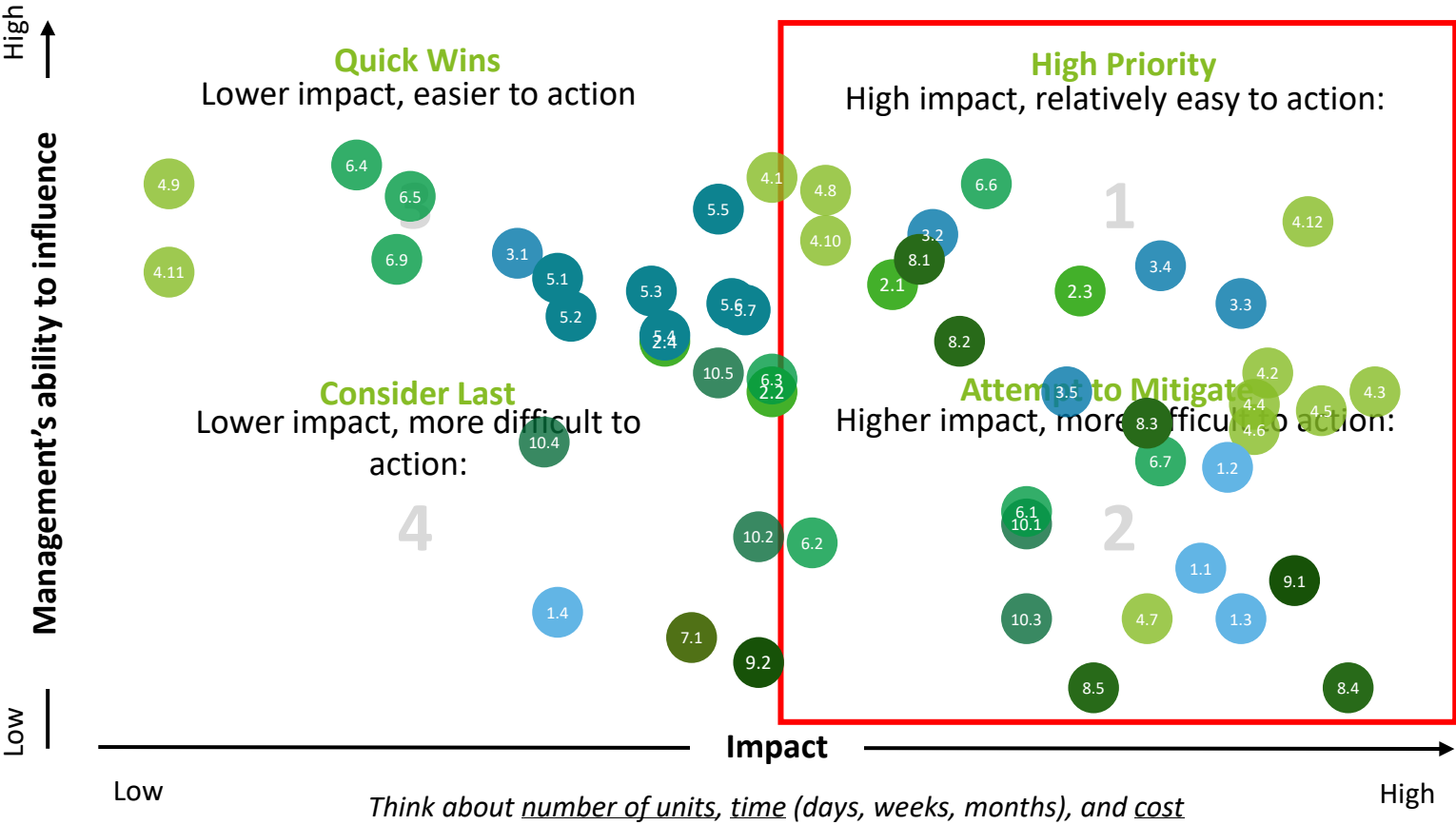
Prioritization

Working with the Steering Committee, we reviewed and prioritized barriers by level of impact and management’s ability to influence each barrier. For each quadrant in the matrix, we identified a course of action to help prioritize barriers.



Prioritization

The barriers in High Priority and Attempt to Mitigate quadrants identified in yellow were the focus of the jurisdictional scan and the recommendations. It is recommended that barriers identified in Quick Wins would be implemented by the Parallel team.



High priority barriers

These barriers were identified by the Steering Committee as High Priority, barriers that should be easy to action and have a significant impact on improving housing development.

2. Consistency	2.1	Rule interpretation by junior planners can vary, making it challenging for applicants to determine what will be approved/not approved, resulting in additional review cycles.
	2.3	Inconsistency in approach between Province and HRM in assessing traffic impacts, where provincial roads intersect with municipal roads.
3. Case management	3.2	Linear senior staff review in some application types creates lengthy review timelines.
	3.3	Large volume of enforcement files require attention of reviewers, delaying application reviews.
	3.4	Lack of clear timelines for approvals and comments to be provided back to the applicant.
4. Process	4.1	Incomplete planning documents or applications submitted to provincial departments slows down overall approval process.
	4.2	Insufficient time or personnel to focus on updating and streamlining business processes within departments.
	4.8	Although plans are developed by a licensed engineer, there is still a long, scrutinized review of plans usually resulting in delays and in some cases insignificant and costly changes.
	4.10	Reliance on paper-based submissions and correspondence by some provincial departments and offices (e.g. Land Registry Office, Environment and Climate Change) creates inefficiencies.
	4.12	Written reports from Public Information Meetings (PIMs) can take several months to be circulated regardless of the number of issues raised or number of people at the meeting.
6. Regulation	6.3	'Lack of teeth' in enforcement process leads to large number of escalating steps, eating up significant staff time.
	6.6	Certain regulatory processes at Environment and Climate Change are not designed to handle certain condominium corporation application types, causing delays in processing and approving applications within Department.
8. Industry	8.1	Labour shortages within the subtrades are causing delays within the construction industry, extending timeframes for construction up to 3-5 months.
	8.2	Builders find it difficult to navigate immigration process to fill labour requirements.

Attempt to mitigate barriers

These barriers were identified by the Steering Committee as Priority 2 – Attempt to Mitigate. These barriers although a bit harder to action will still have a significant impact on improving housing development.

1. Governance	1.1	Conflicting interests between HRM, the Public, and Developers leads to conflict and delays.
	1.2	Public appeals process can slow down processes considerably, particularly when the appeal is based on general dislike of project rather than rule variance.
	1.3	In certain cases, HRM staff do not have adequate authority to make decisions, resulting in files that meet all the requirements reverting back to Council, extending overall timeframes.
4. Process	4.3	Tendency among staff to not approve unless permit application is perfect, rather than employing conditional approvals.
	4.4	NS Power approval and payment process is confusing, arduous, and creates delays in obtaining inspections.
	4.5	In recent months, subdivision applications have experienced delays while waiting for documents to come back from Provincial Land Registry Office.
	4.6	Engineering cannot approve an application until all information is back from Department of Environment and Land Registry Office, leading to delays.
	4.7	Competing interests and feedback between different review departments can lead to conflicting feedback for applicants, delaying process.
6. Regulation	6.1	Outdated by-laws outside of core HRM (e.g. Bedford, Sackville) and lack of Suburban Plan means little as-of-right development. This leads to substantial manual effort through amendments, discretionary approvals/Development Agreements which are arduous for applicants and staff.
	6.2	Development Agreements do not grant flexibility to Planners in certain areas, preventing them from identifying creative solutions. Lack of ability to be innovative/flexible due to specifics in language.
	6.7	Applications under active review are subject to changes in legislation and rules mid-way through adjudication (grandfathering is not standard).
	6.8	Fragmented approach between Province and HRM in assessing environmental studies/impacts.
7. Complexity	7.1	Subdivision by-laws contain substantial number of exemptions which creates complex web of rules and longer compliance reviews.
	7.2	Time required to bring complex applications to Regional Council Initiation has increased significantly (up to a year), due to internal processes and requirement for multiple reviews.
	7.3	Level of design for applications has grown in detail and complexity when compared to other Canadian municipalities. (e.g. Development Agreements).
8. Industry	8.3	Recruiting out of province for labour is time consuming, costly, and if successful, there is little to no vacancy for accommodation.
	8.4	Significant increases in supply costs, shipping and availability of product are extending timelines for housing completion up to 6-8 months, particularly for custom homes.
	8.5	Land banking by developers can hinder construction, as developers sit on land indefinitely.
9. Financial	9.1	Interest rate increases are impacting borrowing leverage and starting to delay or postpone construction projects.
10. Staffing	10.1	Lack of experienced, empowered staff to effectively and efficiently manage complex files and keep them moving through application process. This can result in files staying on staff desks for weeks with limited movement.
	10.3	Periodic cycles of high turnover in certain departments at HRM contributes to inexperienced staff.

Quick wins

Singularly, these would have a low impact, but combined will make a significant contribution to shortening timelines and approval processes. These barriers will be implemented by the parallel team.

2. Consistency	2.2	Variability in reviews and approval timelines depending on the Planner assigned to the file.
	2.4	Planner rotation removes potential to become familiar with developers (project manager) creating inefficiencies. The lack of a consistent point of contact for larger applications leads to inconsistencies in file management (e.g. knowledge transfer with staff turnover).
3. Case management	3.1	Perception that certain application types are processed on a first-come first-served basis whether a small or large-scale application.
4. Process	4.9	Design Advisory Committee in the Centre Plan adds an extra layer of review, is seen to provide little value and is time-consuming; whereas a peer review could accomplish the same more effectively and timely.
	4.11	Lack of development guide for many application types leaves applicants unfamiliar with development processes.
5. Technology	5.1	Some users of the POSSE permitting system find it difficult to navigate resulting in incomplete applications, or submission of the wrong application type.
	5.2	High volume of smaller applications from general public require significant staff time. Many applicants do not set up an account on POSSE system, leading to staff having to walk them through the process.
	5.3	Although POSSE permitting system provides an option for users to sign up for notifications, many users do not, thus are not aware of requests for further information, stalling their application.
	5.4	Lack of staff training on POSSE permitting system extends review times.
	5.5	Delays occur when incomplete information is entered into POSSE by internal reviewers.
	5.6	Configuration of POSSE permitting system creates communication errors with applicants causing confusion and leads to additional steps/phone calls.
	5.7	The POSSE permitting system does not provide managers access to workload data of team members, preventing optimal workload management and balancing.
6. Regulation	6.4	Province requires application fees be paid by cheque to Minister of Finance in order to conduct an electronic review of a subdivision file. Appetite to address this, but parties cannot seem to get right people in on the conversations to make the changes.
	6.5	Municipal legislation requires provincial Department of Environment & Climate Change to comment on early-stage development; however, comments are standardized in a form letter, and are not seen to provide value.
	6.9	Current regulation in Department of Natural Resources and Renewables requires Cabinet approval to move a Utility Pole that is near water.
10. Staffing	10.5	Planners may not understand the financial impact of certain decisions, and can provide feedback that creates significant delays or rework in applications.

Consider last

Priority 4 barriers usually have a much lower impact on overall improvements and are considered last to implement.

1. Governance	1.4	Council can prioritize aesthetic concerns or other issues over the need to add housing stock.
9. Financial	9.2	Capital gains tax impact on landlords discourages selling buildings that could be available for repurposing for housing development in already zoned areas.
10. Staffing	10.2	Lack of planners for special projects (e.g. Special Planning Areas, Centre Plan, etc.) leads to resource shortages in processing applications and completing reviews as well as deferred special projects.
	10.4	Inconsistent industry staff creating and managing applications in POSSE system creates errors, omissions and inefficiencies, leading to additional time and effort .

Appendix F

Leading practices from jurisdictional scan



Leading practices from other jurisdictions

Zoning/Regulation – Increasing as-of-right development and thereby reducing reliance on Council/staff approvals

Leading practice	Description	Examples	Potential benefits
Increase allowable as-of-right density along transit priority corridors	Allow dense, 4-6-storey, multi-family development “as-of-right” along transit corridors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minneapolis upzoned land near transit corridors to enable development from 6-20 stories, encouraging density near transit. By removing previous discretionary rules, this reduces ability of council to say ‘no.’ • Ontario permitted six to 11 storeys with no minimum parking requirements on any streets utilized by public transit (including streets on bus and streetcar routes). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced discretionary approvals. • Reduced volume of complex. Development Agreements. • Immediately increases housing capacity on same supply of land. • Eliminate significant volume of files on planners’ desks, allowing them to focus. on larger scale developments. • Grows density near transit.
Eliminate single family zoning within Municipal Service Boundaries, increasing as-of-right multi-family development	Upzone land previously reserved for single family housing, allowing multi-family buildings up to 3-4 units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2019, Minneapolis became first jurisdiction to end Single Family Zoning. Deemed ‘single most important single initiative’ city has done to increase the housing supply. • Ontario expanded “as of right” rules to permit more multi-unit housing such as permitting housing up to four units and up to four storeys on a single residential lot. • In 2018, Vancouver introduced the <i>Making Room Housing Program</i>—rezoning the majority of the city’s low-density neighbourhoods to allow duplexes, “upzoning” most of the city’s low-density areas. This meant allowing the owners of 67,000 lots (representing more than half the city’s landmass) currently zoned for single-family housing to subdivide or rebuild their homes as duplexes, should they choose to. • State of California ended single family zoning Jan 1, 2022. • State of Oregon has also phased on single family zoning. • HRM has implemented secondary suites throughout municipality. • Queens County MPS/LUB has RI zone allowing for triplexes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediately increases housing capacity on same supply of land. • Reduced volume of complex. Development Agreements. • Reduced discretionary approvals. • Eliminate significant volume of files on planners’ desks, allowing them to speed up review of larger scale developments.

Leading practices from other jurisdictions

Zoning/Regulation – Increasing density to allow more development within available land

Leading practice	Description	Examples	Potential benefits
Reduce or remove parking requirements	<p>Minimum parking requirements force developers to set aside vast amounts of valuable land and construction budgets to create vehicle parking for residential and commercial buildings alike, making it difficult to build more multi-family homes within urban boundaries.</p> <p>A growing number of jurisdictions have reduced or eliminated parking requirements citywide (not just downtown).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Jan 2017, Buffalo, NY, became first major U.S. city to eliminate parking minimums citywide. In Dec 2017, Hartford, CT, joined Buffalo in eliminating minimums. In 2018, Cincinnati, OH eliminated minimum parking requirements on new development. In 2021, California introduced Assembly Bill 1401, eliminating parking requirements for new buildings near public transit/walkable neighborhoods. In Jan 2022, South Bend, Ind. removed minimum parking requirements citywide. Days later, Sacramento, CA, voted unanimously to eliminate the its remaining minimums. HRM has removed parking requirement in Regional Centre and will monitor/mitigate as needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides more choice to consumers. Enables more affordable housing. Allows more space for other uses such as housing. Removes costly underground parking structures. Reduced carbon footprint. Broad political support across left and right (Fraser Institute).
Reduce minimum lot size	<p>Large minimum lot sizes reduce the number of possible housing, encouraging car dependency and the segregation of land uses between residential and commercial. Where sewer/water is available.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 1998, Houston, TX, introduced very low minimum lot sizes (1,400 sq ft), prompting a housing boom. Many neighborhoods, such as Shady Acres and Rice Military, have been completely transformed. In many cases, this has involved the subdivision of conventional post-war 5,000 square foot lots into three townhomes, effectively tripling population densities. In HRM, lots serviced with piped sewer and water required a lot area of ,4000-6,000 square feet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enables smaller, more affordable housing. Connecticut study projected increase of supply of single-family homes by 25-122% Reduced environmental impact from lawns, groundwater pollution, deforestation. Increase in density where services exist (increasing units per acre up to 15x). Allow for rowhouses. Produce more tax revenue, acre-for-acre, to fund local government services.

Leading practices from other jurisdictions

Zoning/Regulation – Increasing density to allow more development within available land

Leading practice	Description	Examples	Potential benefits
Simplify and streamline Municipal Planning Strategies, Land Use By-laws and Regional Subdivision By-laws in HRM	<p>Simplify and consolidate Municipal Planning Strategies, Land Use By-laws and Regional Subdivision By-Laws.</p> <p>By-laws are viewed as complex and difficult to follow. Consider the following during review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplify and clarify land use regulations, zonings and policy documentation. • Consolidation of bylaw regulations, zoning topics and permit across communities. • Standardize interpretation of laws and codes. • Assess and simplify requirements for rezoning and defer detailed elements to the development permit stage. • Limit recommendations/ conditions to essential and specific only. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City of Victoria and city of Vancouver's Subdivision by-laws range between 12-14 pages plus supporting schedules. An example of Victoria's bylaw can be found here, while Vancouver's can be found here. • British Columbia simplified its subdivision by-laws using plain language and prepared enhanced communication materials and checklists that could be easily understood by elected officials and the public. • HRM by-law simplification project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces time of staff reviews in determining applicability of exemptions. • Reduced complexity for applicants.

Leading practices from other jurisdictions

Governance and organization – Transforming the relationship between private sector and municipality

Leading practice	Description	Examples	Benefits
Enhanced service for applicants with track record of high-quality submissions... Trusted Partner	Establish a fast-track line for applicants with prior application and approval and 'penalty box' for applicants with history of lower quality applications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> British Columbia established a 'Nexus' line for applicants with prior application and approval; also created a "penalty box" for applicants with history of lower quality applications that affect local government's capacity to process other application. HRM has been exploring options of this type of program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faster turnarounds. Triage. Incentive for quality applications.
Case management/ Single point of contact	Single point of contact for trusted partner or individual file, accountable for delivering for set timelines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most professional services firms appoint a staff or team to be the key point of contact for key customers to maintain and improve the customer relationship . E.g. Professional service firms 'Lead Client Service Partner' appointed as primary health care sector contact, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved customer service. Increased accountability. Faster turnarounds.
Deemed approvals	Development applications can be deemed to be approved under standard conditions when a decision does not meet mandated timelines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minnesota has deemed approval legislation for applications (incl. zoning reviews, building permits, variances, subdivision requests, etc.). The municipality has 15 days to decide whether the application is complete. If no letter is sent within 15 days, the application is deemed complete. Once a completed application is received, the local government has 60 days to render a decision (that's 60 days for all staff reviews, committee hearings, public comment and any other part of the approval process). The statute reads: <i>"Failure of an agency to deny a request within 60 days is approval of the request."</i> Ontario is considering legislating timelines at each stage of the provincial and municipal review process, including site plan, minor variance, and provincial reviews, and deem an application approved if the legislated response time is exceeded. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forces level of efficiency to ensure timely review of application. Increased predictability for applicants.

Leading practices from other jurisdictions

Process – Public engagement/Minimum supply

Leading practice	Description	Examples	Benefits
Change default for public meetings to reduce overall volume	<p>There is an overreliance on public hearings to make land use decisions, which tends to favour certain voices over others (public meetings reflective of the public) and rarely affect outcomes.</p> <p>By changing the default, HRM would have to 'opt-in' to holding public meetings for individual developments, reducing overall volume of public meetings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2021, British Columbia removed the default requirement for local governments to hold public hearings for zoning bylaw amendments that are consistent with the official community plan. This means staff and council will opt-in rather than default to public hearings. <i>Note: Public hearings will still take place to discuss development applications that seek changes that are different from current bylaws and inconsistent with the municipality's Community Plan.</i> In April 2022, Victoria, BC unanimously approved a new policy that abolishes the need for public hearings for affordable housing building development proposals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced number of public meetings. Faster approval process. Reduce drain staff and council time/energy.
Requirement to have minimum supply of land to meet long-term demand	<p>Governments may require a minimum supply of residential development potential or designated lands at the municipal level to help to avoid future shortages of supply, and ensure that housing supply is sufficient to meet future demand.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Provincial Policy Statement in Ontario requires that municipalities maintain "at all times" the ability to accommodate residential growth and provide a range of housing options/densities for a minimum of 10 years. In New Zealand, Tier 1 & 2 districts must prepare and make public their plan to ensure there is sufficient development capacity to meet expected demand for housing and for business land over the short term, medium term, and long term. Halifax does Regional Planning, which includes forecasts of population and housing growth, but does not set targets for development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures adequate supply of land available to meet needs. Medium- and long-range planning.



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