

# **Housing Task Force Terms of Reference January 11, 2023**

## **1. Establishment and Operation of Panel**

The Executive Panel on Housing in Halifax Regional Municipality (Panel) is established under the Housing in the Halifax Regional Municipality Act (Act) and is structured and operates as prescribed by the Act.

## **2. Purpose**

Housing is a complex sector of many parties, public and private. The powers and duties of the Panel, if exercised together with partners and stakeholders, have the potential to add significant momentum to the development of housing in HRM - both short term and for the longer term, after its tenure has expired.

The purpose of the Panel is set out in section 2 of the Act as follows:

- 2 The purpose of this Act is to establish
  - a) a body with provincial and municipal representation to recommend ways to accelerate an increase in supply of housing of all types and at all income levels in the Municipality; and,
  - b) a temporary mechanism to accelerate planning and development to address current and future housing demand within the Municipality.

In addition, the Panel has the duties set out in section 6 of the Act. The Panel reports through the Chair to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

## **3. Operating Scope and Principles**

Subject to the Act, and with the approval of the Minister, the Panel adopts the following operating principles:

- A. The Panel recognizes that the shortage of available housing has reached crisis proportions in HRM and throughout Nova Scotia, as in many other jurisdictions. The Panel is committed to helping accelerate the availability of housing of all types with the urgency warranted by the crisis and by the fact that the tenure of the Panel is short and effective action in the short term is imperative.
- B. The Panel aspires in its work to follow a collaborative approach between the parties (the Province and HRM) to the fullest extent possible. While some cases may require deciding

by majority vote, the Panel will attempt to proceed by consensus. The Chair will be guided by these principles in the conduct of meetings and administration of the Panel's activities.

For 2023, the Panel will engage primarily in further action on the issues identified in # 4 below. The Minister and the Panel believe they are where the critical opportunities lie for the Panel to make a difference in accelerating the availability of housing in HRM.

If there is to be continued effective action by the Panel, focus is critical with a clear understanding of what the Panel does and what it doesn't do. In this regard, the Panel does not replace HRM as the primary jurisdiction for land use planning in HRM; and it is not a body that entertains "appeals" from HRM decision-making on specific matters or replaces the role of the UARB to adjudicate on such matters. What the Panel does welcome from stakeholders in housing development is a robust relationship of advice and consultation.

#### **4. 2023 Agenda**

With the approval of the Minister, the Panel will address the following outcomes as matters of priority for action in 2023:

- A. Acceleration of development within ten existing special planning areas and consideration of additional special planning areas where warranted and consistent with criteria established by the Panel in 2022.
- B. Acceleration of the Regional Plan update; this would address 7 of the Deloitte report recommendations.
- C. Develop "trusted partner" programs for both development and building permitting.
- D. Evaluation of development fees and charges and tax regime applicable to residential construction.
- E. Additional legislative action to further simplify planning and development process (building on changes made in spring 2022)
- F. Remove remaining credentialing barriers to building trades entry to Nova Scotia, prioritizing trades in highest demand.
- G. Based on housing needs survey by Turner Drake, establish mandatory legislative targets for housing availability based on projected population growth.
- H. Implement Deloitte recommendations.

#### **5. Implementation Team**

A joint implementation team of technical professionals dedicated to carrying the above objectives into action will be established. It will be chaired by the Panel Chair and report to the Panel.

## **6. Records**

- A. This document shall be posted to the Panel's website.
- B. The Minutes shall record, at a minimum:
  - (a) the place, date and time of meeting;
  - (b) the names of the attendance of the Members;
  - (c) the correction or adoption of the Minutes of prior meetings;
  - (d) all motions moved, or moved and seconded; and
  - (e) the total number of votes for and against a motion and the Chair shall declare whether the motion is carried or lost.
- C. After the Minutes have been adopted, they shall be posted to the Panel's website.