



Our HRM: Planning for Liveable Communities

What sets Halifax Regional Municipality apart? What makes it a place we want to call home? We believe that what makes HRM special is that our beaches and shorelines are not crowded with development, outdoor recreational opportunities are close at hand, and many of us can still walk to work or school. Can we be sure that these same opportunities will be there for our children and our children's children?

Our HRM is an alliance of groups from across the municipality. The Alliance wants to ensure that the municipality is a place we are proud to call home.

Vision: The Alliance envisions HRM as a collection of vibrant places that protect the environment, foster the health of their citizens and attract sustainable economic opportunities. The Alliance sees HRM as a place people desire to live.

Context: In 2006, HRM adopted the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy to direct development within the region over the next quarter century. It is a good document that addresses many sustainability concerns, but it does not provide the type of leadership required to take Halifax into a future rife with the challenges of depopulation and climate change. The Alliance believes that the Plan could and should be made better.

Objectives: *Our HRM* wants to realize five key objectives that are fundamental for a liveable, sustainable HRM.

1. **Healthy and active population.** Communities must be walkable and developed on a human scale.
2. **Robust transportation systems.** Active transportation and transit must be prioritized.
3. **Sustainable development.** Capital Cost Contributions (CCCs) and other development charges should pay for all present and foreseeable infrastructure and servicing costs. The municipality should not have to cover the costs of road or sewer/storm water infrastructure.
4. **Protected and connected blue and green areas, as well as the primacy of green practices.** The blue areas refer to water resources and the green areas to ecologically and culturally significant land. Green practices bring the concept of the greenbelt into urban and suburban developments, such as rooftop gardening and green building principles.
5. **Vibrant community centres across the entire municipality, including urban, suburban and rural.** Community centres across HRM must be empowered to develop as compact neighbourhoods that respect their community visions.

Means: *Our HRM* is committed to establishing permanent, non-negotiable development boundaries around communities in HRM to control sprawl, increase density, reduce servicing and infrastructure costs, and build on one of the municipality's greatest assets - its network of green spaces and coastal access. The establishment of a greenbelt would achieve these ends. The boundaries will allow for directed growth within commercial and residential sectors in keeping with our community visions. The boundaries will recognize the fundamental importance of planned, controlled and sustainable development. By expanding on our 25-year Regional Municipal Planning Strategy, HRM *can* achieve all five objectives and contain sprawl with its associated environmental and financial burdens.

The Alliance: *Our HRM* includes members from organizations in urban, suburban, and rural HRM. At present, the Alliance is comprised of the following groups:

1. Atlantic Chapter – Canada Green Building Council
2. Beechville, Lakeside, Timberlea Trail
3. Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Nova Scotia Chapter
4. Canoe Kayak Nova Scotia
5. Chezzetcook - Musquodoboit Trail Association
6. Cole Harbour Parks and Trails Association
7. Community Coalition to End Poverty in Nova Scotia
8. Dalhousie Office of Sustainability
9. Downtown Dartmouth Business Commission
10. Downtown Halifax Business Commission
11. Eastern Shore Forest Watch
12. Ecology Action Centre
13. Five Bridges Wilderness Heritage Trust
14. Friends of Hemlock Ravine
15. GPI Atlantic
16. Halifax Field Naturalists
17. Halifax North West Trails Association
18. Halifax Regional Trails Association
19. Halifax Urban Greenway Association
20. Heart and Stroke Foundation of Nova Scotia
21. Hike Nova Scotia
22. McIntosh Run Watershed Association
23. North End Community Health Centre
24. Preston and Area Trails Association
25. Rural Coastal Communities Network
26. Sackville Business Association
27. Sackville Rivers Association
28. Shubenacadie Watershed Environmental Protection Society
29. Spring Garden Area Business Association
30. St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association
31. Woodens River Watershed Environmental Organization
32. YWCA – Halifax
33. Save the Bedford Basin Reef

Becoming a member:

Becoming a member of the Alliance is a statement that the organization supports the five principles outlined in the vision. It does not require a financial commitment from the group or organization. The time your organization wants to devote to the Alliance will vary depending on the time your association can spare from its other work and how closely the goals of the Alliance match your objectives. Membership does not hamper an organization's ability to operate independently.

What the Alliance hopes from its members:

- A link to the www.ourhrmalliance.ca website from its own site
- Attendance at the Our HRM Alliance meetings (approximately one every six months, if physical attendance is not possible, your opinions can be expressed via telephone and email)
- Attendance at media events
- Provide feedback through phone or email on key policy matters
- Connect with the local Council person to express support for the vision of the Alliance
- Submit a letter to the editor on an issue of relevance for the member group where the vision of the Our HRM Alliance can be supported
- Allow your organization to be listed as a member group on the www.ourhrmalliance.ca website
- If possible, provide your organization's logo

If you have any questions about the Alliance, please contact Jen Powley, the HRM Coordinator at hrm@ecologyaction.ca or 429-0924.