

How High Can We Go?

A Study of Urban Redevelopment in Downtown Halifax, NS

Source - @JesseMacLean on Twitter



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Executive Summary

Today, Halifax Peninsula is experiencing a development boom not seen in recent decades. In an article on major construction in Halifax, Rachel Ward (2016) states that “on the peninsula alone, the estimated value of new hotel, condominium and office tower projects, adjusted for inflation, almost tripled between 2006 and 2015.” In the same article, Professor Jill Grant of Dalhousie University notes that “developers are taking advantage of a market that started in the larger cities, earlier” (Ward, 2016). Under the supervision of Dr. Grant, this research studies high-rise developments that are coming to market within the downtown core of Halifax to determine what forces influence the pace and scale of construction.

In 2006, the Urban Design Task Force (otherwise known as HRM by Design) introduced the Regional Centre Urban Design Study, which focused on articulating new policies and tools including design guidelines tailored to regulating the built form and improved processes and incentives for good development (Regional Council, 2007). In 2009, HRM by Design implemented the Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy and Downtown Halifax Land Use By-Law. With the new Downtown Plan, came Schedule S-1: Design Manual, more site-specific guidelines to ensure downtown redevelopment projects align with policies set out in the DHSMP. It is purposed to work in conjunction with the DHSMP and the new Site Plan Approval Process (SPA) to create more “uniform procedures for debating qualitative elements of development applications” (HRM, 2015, p.1). My research explores the extent the DHSMP and SPA process facilitated high-rise construction within the Downtown Plan Area (DHSMP, Map 1). Additional objectives include understanding what additional factors may have coincided with the implementation of new policy and how they have contributed to the kinds of high-rise projects coming to market.

A mixed-method approach was established to reaching my objectives and includes a field study and comparison of the development approval process for eight sites, 11 interviews with professionals in the local development community (3 planners, 3 councilors, 3 real estate brokers, 1 developer, and 1 architect), and the review of planning policy documents and studies. Key findings point towards a cluster of integrated factors to the new development within the downtown. These include the influence of macro-economic conditions (i.e. the influence of low Interest rates on increased interests in real estate investments), changing political conditions

within the development community and the influence of new planning regimes and processes for development approvals.

Glossary

CBD: Central Business District. The central part of downtown area of the city where office buildings are expected to locate (Grant, 1994)

MPS: Municipal Planning Strategy. The 1983 Planning Act enabled municipalities to prepare plans to facilitate development (Grant, 1994).

LUB: Land Use By-Law (formerly the zoning by-law). The 1983 Planning Act required that each municipality adopt a land use by-law to implement its plan (Grant, 1994)

DHSMPS: Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy (DHSMPS, 2009)

DHLUB: Downtown Halifax Land Use By-law (DHLUB, 2009)

SPA: Site Plan Approval Process (DHSMPS, 2009)

PAC: Planning Advisory Committee. Nova Scotia planning legislation allows municipal councils to appoint PAC's to advise them on planning matters. PAC's must include at least two members of Council and Citizens from the community (Grant, 1994).

HAC: Heritage Advisory Committee

Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia: A lobby group that fights for heritage protection. It brings forward properties to the province and the city for heritage designation, and opposes projects that threaten Nova Scotia heritage. (Grant, 1994)

CPAC: Community Planning Association of Canada (Gant, 1994)

Friends of the Public Gardens: A lobby group formed to prevent the redesignation of the land at the corner of Summer Street and Spring Garden Rd (Grant, 1994).

NSUARB: Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board

High-Rise Building: a building or a portion of a building that is greater than 33.5 meters (10.15 storeys) in height (Downtown Halifax LUB)

Publicly-Sponsored Convention Centre: an establishment funded or otherwise financially supported by any or all levels of government which is used for the holding of conventions, seminars, workshops, trade shows, meetings or similar activities, and which may include dining and lodging facilities for the use of the participants as well as other compatible accessory facilities. (Downtown Halifax LUB, 2009)

Multi - Unit Dwelling: a building containing three or more dwelling units (Downtown Halifax Land Use By-Law)

Ramparts: The Citadel Ramparts pursuant to Section 26B of the Halifax Peninsula Land Use By-law and as depicted on Map ZM-17 of the Halifax Peninsula Land Use By-law, as amended from time to time (Downtown Halifax LUB).

View planes: Refer to Map 11 (views) of the Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning strategy (DHSMPSP, 2009).

Storey: that portion of a building between any floor and floor or any floor and ceiling, provided that any portion of a building partly below grade shall not be deemed to be a storey unless its ceiling is at least 2 meters above grade (Downtown Halifax LUB).

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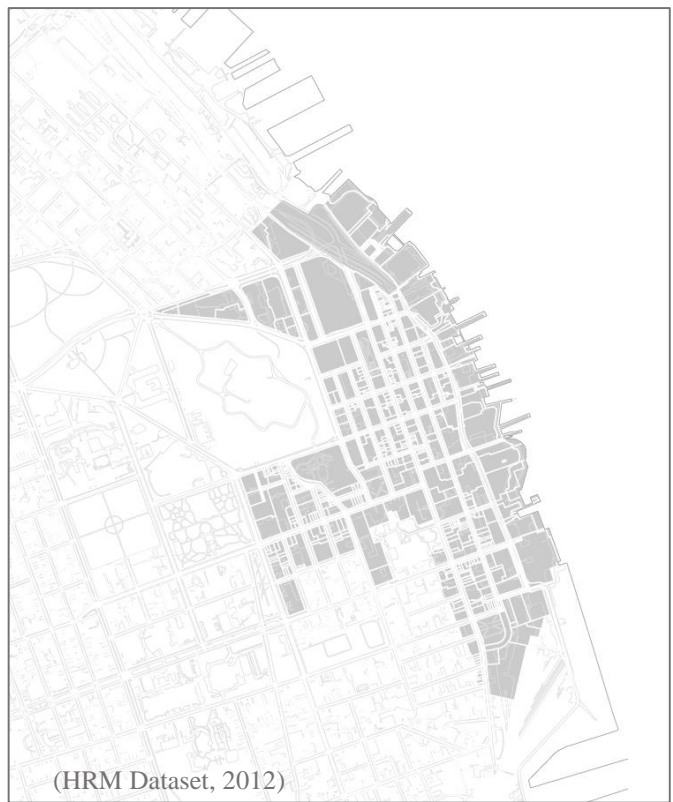
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Introduction

In recent decades, large Canadian cities like Toronto and Vancouver have experienced a great deal of growth in urban neighborhoods, most prominently in the form of high-rise residential structures. Unlike these larger urban centers, Halifax's urban redevelopment appeared to progress at a slower pace. Today, Halifax Peninsula is experiencing a development boom not seen in recent decades. In an article on major construction in Halifax, Rachel Ward (2016) states that "on the peninsula alone, the estimated value of new hotel, condominium and office tower projects, adjusted for inflation, almost tripled between 2006 and 2015." In the same article, Professor Jill Grant of Dalhousie University notes, "developers are taking advantage of a market that started in the larger cities, earlier" (Ward, 2016). Under the supervision of Dr. Grant, this research studies high-rise developments that are coming to market within the downtown core of Halifax to determine what forces influence the pace and scale of construction.

My research focuses on how the 2009 Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy (DHSMPS) and Site Plan Approval Process (SPA) have facilitated certain forms of high-rise development within the Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy (DHSMPS) plan area (See Context Map). The DHSMPS states, "the Regional MPS accommodates approximately 25,000 new residents in the Regional Centre over the next 25 years." The Downtown Plan also states, "the potential for at least three million square feet of office space and up to 16,000 new residents in the downtown over the next 15-years" (DHSMPS, 2009). Because of this expected influx in downtown development, my research compares the approval process of eight development projects (proposed both before and after 2009) to understand how planning policy set out in the DHSMPS may

Context Map: DHSMPS Plan Area



have facilitated the quantity and form of projects seen in the last five to ten years.

Buildings included are limited to those of at least eight storeys in height with the (Secondary) purpose of highlighting development applications that may conflict with Rampart and View Plane regulations to see how conflicts between proposed developments and height restricting policies influence the timeline for approvals. Although the Downtown Halifax LUB defines high-rise structures to have a minimum height of 33.5 meters (10.15 storeys), to include the ‘Dillon’ (eight storeys) and the ‘Waterside Centre’ (nine storeys), eight storeys will be considered the minimum height for ‘high-rise’ structures review within this study.

*Rampart Requirements (17) –
"Notwithstanding any provisions of this By-law, no building shall be erected, altered, reconstructed, or located in any zone so as to be visible above the ramparts as specified by Section 26B of the Halifax Peninsula Land Use By-law, as amended from time to time"
(DHLUB, 2009).*

*Policy 6.3 -
"The City shall maintain or recreate a sensitive and complimentary setting for Citadel Hill by controlling the height of new development in its vicinity to reflect the historic and traditional scale of development." (HMPS, Section II, City-wide Objectives and Policies).*

The purpose of this research is to understand what is being built within the DHSMPS Downtown Plan Area (DHSMPS, Map 1), where, and why. Research objectives include: determining if the DHSMPS and SPA process have facilitated a more reliable and streamline process for development approvals, and to understanding why projects approved before and after the emergence of the DHSMPS were never completed (e.g. 22-Commerce Square). My research also examines the density bonusing provisions for the DHSMPS Plan Area to understand if the benefits of the developers are greater than those provided to the public realm. Additional information of interest includes land-use (e.g. residential, commercial, office, or mixed-use), their tenure (e.g. condominium or rental), permitted building height and each structure’s integration to abutting and surrounding heritage buildings.

Why is this Important?

To study how planning policy facilitates development throughout the downtown, I must first understand planning theory and practice in the Halifax context. The literature tells a story of conflict between the cultural values engrained in the local context with the smart growth ideology of transforming the regional center into a world class city. The Draft Regional Centre Plan (2016) predicts 33,000 new residents will join the area by 2031; thus downtown will require new buildings for housing, businesses and services to meet daily needs, and new jobs to employ a growing population. As a result, most new development is set out in the Centre Plan to be infill development in existing communities and redevelopment and intensification of strategic growth areas such as downtown Halifax and the Peninsula as a whole (HRM, 2016, pg. 25). In the context of the Downtown Plan Area, we are seeing these boundaries being extended in the accommodation of new development projects. An example of this includes the extension of the southern boundary of the Central Business District (CBD) (1978 MPS) and the CBD Sub-Area, of the Halifax Waterfront Development Area, in 1983 from Salter Street to accommodate a proposal on the adjacent lot (located on the southeast corner of Salter St. and Lower Water St.). This same boundary was then extended further to Bishops St. to accommodate the proposal for the Alexander in 2007 (Halifax Regional Council, June 12, 2007). Although these boundary extensions are minimal, it demonstrates a change in downtown development as council makes exceptions for new proposals that do not necessarily comply with the policy or by-laws, but rather align with the city's vision for future growth. Understanding how planning policy intervention has shaped private development throughout Halifax can clarify the effect planning policy has on urban redevelopment, and may shed light on what other forces play a role in Halifax's high-rise real estate market.

Background

The Global Perspective and the 'Creative Class'

Many Canadian cities have demonstrated similar patterns of urban development, from the early 20th century to present day. Urban centers were historically occupied by economic and industrial land uses with mid-to-high income households residing on the outskirts of the city limits (Gospodini, 2006). Today, we see this trend reversing, as a larger portion of the higher income class move into areas that, in the mid-19th century, were occupied by urban slums, and

the working class in decades that followed (Stephenson's study, 1957). Gospodini (2006) relates this trend to shifts in urban economics with an increased focus on high-level financial services such as "technology-intensive and knowledge-based firms" (Gospodini, 2006, p. 313). Gospodini (2006) uses the term 'eclectic clustering' to represent how these new urban economic activities (in combination with cultural and leisure activities) emerged in the 1990s in pockets around central business districts (CBDs). During this period, a domino effect occurred in governmental hierarchies as theories argued that the strength of urban centers was an essential component to national wealth (Grant & Leung, 2016). Development of urban agendas in the federal government caused regional hubs, like the city of Halifax, to amalgamate with surrounding municipalities. This was thought to establish a competitive economy and seek out the 'creative-class' (Grant & Leung, 2016). The idea of attracting the 'creative class' aligned with new urban design strategies and acted as a marketing tactic for population growth in the urban center (Grant & Leung, 2016). We see this emerge in the Halifax context with the implementation of the S-1: Design Manual in the DHLUB. During the same period, "cities started to experience consolidation and expansion of capital focused in downtown areas by means of urban renewal policies and waterfront redevelopment programs" (Savini & Aalbers, 2015, p. 3). We see examples of this in Halifax with the development of the Halifax Waterfront Development Corporation in 1976 and the establishment of the Halifax Waterfront Development Area (HWDA) in the Downtown MPS (Nova Scotia Archives, 2017). Today we are seeing similar trends in Halifax's urban center as more leisure and cultural activities move towards the downtown core, followed by residential dwellings in areas that for several decades have been predominantly commercial and institutional uses. The Roy on Barrington St. (a 16-storey residential and commercial development) is an example of a shift to more mixed-use development along a corridor previously dominated by retail uses (Gillis, 2007). As the urban core has evolved into an environment that offers a variety of cultural and leisure amenities and a thriving business district, more individuals are attracted to these centers not only as a destination, but as a place where they can reside. In an interview with CBC, Jill Grant states that more young singles, along with retirees (whose children have moved out), are relocating downtown and are a contributing factor to this increase in development on the peninsula (Ward, 2016). Moreover, the shift towards financial activities has significantly boosted demand from finance companies searching for luxurious office space (as tenants) within the CBD (Rutland, 2010).

Globalization has also brought new strategies to the organization of real estate investments: combining local and foreign investors that are, in many ways, disconnected from ‘on-the-ground’ operations and building design processes. Savini & Aalbers (2015) use the ‘Falck’ development on the outskirts of Milan to illustrate challenges in clustering developments and the disconnect between stakeholders. In this case-study, the linking of sub-projects to bury less profitable projects into the greater investment of the site resulted in a complex web of local and foreign investors, and thus, the struggle between these actors grew as the municipality denied master plan applications (Savini & Aalbers, 2015). Once the project went bankrupt, the transfer of land ownership and consequently, its debt, resulted in pressures between investors and the municipality to perform in providing master plan approvals as well as the developers’ support to the municipality in supplying much needed infrastructure (Savini & Aalbers, 2015). Where Webber (2010) states that this disconnect between financial markets and planning policy can be interpreted as a positive, “highlighting the possibilities of local governments to used financial markets to push their own agendas” (Savini & Aalbers, 2015 p.2), Savini & Aalbers (2015) believe that most municipalities will struggle to “mobilize financial markets to their benefit” (p. 2).

Many disagreements about planning processes and urban redevelopment in Halifax reflect socio-political constraints, primarily relating to the city’s heritage context. In recent decades, the financialization of land; the growing influence of the finance sector on real estate, has emerged as a major influence in development of urban and peri-urban locations. In addition to the transition, from post-industrial cities to Gospodini’s (2006) idea of ‘eclectic clustering’, the consideration of real estate as a financial asset, has also had significant implications on urban redevelopment and has contributed to challenges found within planning processes. In 2001, Halifax saw a decline in revenues from tourism after the terror attack on the US, resulting in an increase in financial interest in real estate (Grant & Leung, 2016). During the same year, the tech-stock bubble burst, causing interest rates to decline and the market to saturate as prime property assets grew in popularity within larger investment groups (Rutland, 2010). In larger cities like Toronto, market saturation caused a rise in asset prices and decrease in yields. In 2004, this rise in asset prices directed investors searching for more lucrative opportunities to second-tier cities such as Halifax (Rutland, 2010). Correlations between an influx in downtown development in Halifax and the financial crisis are also evident. After the 2008 financial crisis, housing starts in Nova Scotia for multi-unit residential construction, experienced a decline of

approximately 1,400 starts between September 2007 and May 2009 with an increase of approximately 2,200 starts between January 2010 and January 2013 (Government of Nova Scotia, Finance and Treasury Board, 2014). Although this trend does not elude to the number of development approvals HRM saw during this period, it does contribute to the influence of the financial crisis on projects that broke ground during the recession.

The Politics of Planning and Development Disputes

Although Halifax does not stand alone, the Halifax region has experienced a great deal of turmoil over the conflicting visions of professionals and residents. Such opposition has been prominent in Halifax's political climate since the 1970s (Rutland, 2010). Most projects proposed between 2001 and 2010 were contested by activists concerned with the preservation of heritage values and local character (Rutland, 2010). Under perfect circumstances, local citizens would live in what Grant (1994) refers to as a 'democratic society', where the voices of the public are directly reflected in political decisions. This idealistic circumstance has been an ongoing struggle as Halifax's political structure and built form have evolved. In recent years, we have seen how a new form of public input is being addressed through the creation of Fusion Halifax in 2007, which Grant & Leung (2016) define as, "a formal network organization to connect young professionals and enhance their voices in the city" (p.118).

Around the mid-19th century, regional planning in Halifax consisted of a series of community driven master plans and zoning schemes (Grant, 1994). It wasn't until Stephenson's report (1957) that staff were hired to work on a redevelopment plan for an area located below Citadel Hill, otherwise known as the Central Redevelopment Area (CRA) (Grant, 1994). After several years of delays, the Scotia Square mixed-use development was constructed (in the late 1960's), followed by multi-unit apartment buildings in the same vicinity (Grant, 1994). Despite the magnitude of slum clearance in the 50's and its impact on the city, it wasn't until the construction of these high-rise projects that community concern for heritage values and interest in low-rise, small-scale development took hold. Grant (1994) refers to the 1970's as the 'participation era' where in Halifax, community residents started to protest various planning decision coinciding with an uproar from heritage trust in the protection of development pressures along the waterfront. The 1969 Planning Act and consequent 'Master Plan' received a hostile response by the community. "CPAC saw the plan as vague and ambiguous, resulting from an inappropriate planning process" (Grant, 1994, p.66). This uproar had in part resulted from an

increase in citizen interest in planning due to a changing development atmosphere from the newly constructed Scotia Square and Heritage Trusts' initiative in getting the public involved in land use disputes (Grant, 1994). Such events coincided with new high-rise-construction projects in the downtown and a new focus on preserving views from within the Citadel Hill Fortress (Grant, 1994).

The years between the late 1970's and early 80's demonstrated a transition on perception of values between actors. Grant (1994) states that in the 1970's the perception of planning consisted of cooperation between politicians, planners and the public and that the notion of perceived inclusivity in framing the 1978 Municipal Development Plan gave it legitimacy in the eyes of the public. Grant (1994) also demonstrates how during this period, a divergence of values started to appear. As citizen fought for low-rise projects, with passion for tradition and heritage, regional council saw value in an opportunity for urban development, primarily considering the implementation of planning strategies to access federal funds and to try and promote development (Grant, 1994). At this point, the relationship between the community and staff started to struggle and community members noticed close relationships forming between planning staff and developers. Grant (1994) states,

"The comments of various council members show that politicians prior to the 1974 election strongly supported urban development and put up with planning because it provided means to federal funds for local development" ... Following the election, "council accepted planning both as a means and an end: as a way to regulate and encourage the 'right kind' of development, and to limit the extent of conflict over land use" (p.73).

Despite, revolutions in Halifax's political climate, the acknowledgement of the Citadel Hill and its associated view planes as a focal city-value set the benchmark for challenges of developers proposing high-rise projects. In 1983, heritage trust hired a lawyer to gain standing in defending the city after a developer appealed for a high-rise building near the Citadel (Grant, 1994). In the mid-1980's, Council finally adopted height controls across from the Citadel in response to Heritage Trust's application for rezoning along Brunswick street to control building heights (Grant, 1994).

Grant (1994) refers to the 'summer gardens', a high-rise development proposal on a lot kitty-corner to the Halifax Public Gardens, as the most contentious case of the 80's. Originally owned by Dalhousie University, the lot was sold to a group of doctors and professionals for the construction of a high-rise condominium development. A group of garden enthusiasts and

heritage advocates opposed the project with the rationale that it would disrupt the gardens and the streetscape surrounding the park. The process took more than two years and tens of thousands of dollars before council approved the proposal (Grant, 1994). After the Friends of the Public Gardens were defeated, a precedent was set for those who sought to appeal new developments. High court fees resulted in few community groups choosing to fight decisions through appeal processes after implementation of the 1983 Planning Act. The literature demonstrates how localized planning practices have diminished as new ideals geared towards urban renewal and economic growth have emerged. We see this transition through changes in the redevelopment process as well as through the relationship between urban redevelopment and finance.

Grant (2007) uses two case studies to explain the controversy that has developed over new projects in downtown Halifax. The brewery market tower (a 2003 proposal for a 27-storey tower on the same site where the Alexander, a 19-storey residential tower, is now rising) and the Midtown Tavern Hotel (a 2004 proposal for a 17-storey mixed-use tower, where the publicly sponsored convention centre is now being constructed) became a concern for regional council about local district decision-making after the Utility and Review Board (UARB) revoked community council's decision (3:1) to approve the Midtown Tavern hotel (Grant, 2007). Although in both cases, the planning staff's report stated that the proposal did not comply with the 1993 plan requirements and recommended that Regional Council refuse the application, the real controversy stems from the level on which the decisions were made (Grant, 2007). Under the jurisdiction of the Peninsula Community Council, four local councilors were responsible for decisions implementing the vision for the downtown area. In response to a development backlash, in 2004, Halifax Regional Council voted to remove the power of Peninsula Community Council to decide matters in the downtown as they believed such matters should go before the entire Regional Council in light of regional interest in downtown growth (Grant, 2007). Grant (2007) argues, "the cases indicate that changing visions of appropriate development patterns for Halifax in the future have shaped the way in which the council constructs participatory democracy in planning processes" (p. 47).

Since 2009, all parcels within the Downtown Plan area have been subject to review by both a developer for approval of the Downtown LUB and the Design Review Committee for consideration of qualitative design elements. This new framework for development approvals therefore allows for regional interest to be considered in localized decision-making processes.

As multiple authors point to the need for an improved development approval process, my research aims to understand if new provisions to development have been successful in bridging the gap between strategic city planning and the profit-seeking objectives of financial organizations. Although this disconnect has been located within the literatures, in the local context, we can see how the financialization of land-use planning is imbedded within the Site Plan Approval process. Rutland (2010) states how, “new approaches, approved by City Council in June 2009, effectively transfer authority for development approvals from Council to an appointed committee made up of the ‘development community’ and receiving its popular input strictly through the ratified ‘form-based codes’ and ‘design manual’” (p.1175). Rutland (2010) states that this new structure will “depoliticize development approval processes, legitimized by contemporary design ideals and ‘creative city ideas’” (p.1175).

As I examine challenges in the decision-making process and controversy over the prioritization of local values, my study, in some ways, focuses on how new policies can help make downtown redevelopment more viable. In addition to understanding why projects were not approved, the literature identifies several projects approved in the downtown prior to 2009 that never got built, some of which are now under construction through the DHSMPS and include the Alexander (a 19-storey high-rise condominium development located on Lower Water St.), the ‘Twisted Sisters’ (located on the Tex-Park site), and the 9-storey Waterside Centre redevelopment project (located in the heart of the CBD) (Zaccagna 2012; Grant, & Gillis, 2012; PDC, 2016). “Between 2006 and 2009, staff continued work on an urban design strategy to govern future development downtown” (Grant, J & Gillis, C. 2012, p.31). “The new downtown plan responded directly to lessons learned from the Twisted Sisters case and others” (Grant, J & Gillis, C., 2012, p. 31). With the new Downtown Plan, came Schedule S-1: Design Manual, more site-specific guidelines to ensure downtown redevelopment projects align with policies set out in the DHSMPS. It is purposed to work in conjunction with the DHSMPS and the new SPA to create more “uniform procedures for debating qualitative elements of development applications” (HRM, 2015, p.1). My research thus sets out to determine if new policy is primarily responsible for these approvals, or if said changes are reflective of market realities.

HRM by Design and The Development of New Policy

Policies contributing to guidelines affecting modern land-use extends back to the 1978 Halifax MPS and have evolved into the current Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy (2009) and furthermore; development of the Draft Centre Plan (2014).

In December of 1994, the province amalgamated the city of Halifax, City of Dartmouth, Town of Bedford, and the Halifax County Municipality (HRM, History of Halifax, 2016). As a product of the Task Force on Local Government, amalgamation was established to allocate authorities between local and provincial government and to create a unified framework which focused on one level of decision-making for the region (Halifax, 2014). In April 1996, Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) was established with a Regional Council.

In 2006, the Urban Design Task Force (otherwise known as HRM by Design) introduced the Regional Centre Urban Design Study. Developed by Jennifer Keesmaat, a consultant at the Office of Urbanism at the time, the study was created to help implement the 2006 Regional Plan (Regional Council, 2007). The study focused on articulating new policies and tools including design guidelines tailored to regulating the built form and improved processes and incentives for good development (Regional Council, 2007). Council minutes from August 2, 2006 state, “The project scope bridged the gap between varying planning documents including changes to policies, by-laws, community plans, public improvements, capital district boundaries, and incentives to the private sector for design” (Urban Design Task Force, Minutes, 2006). During this process, constraints were recognized including needed interest in historical preservation, implementation of recommendations, needed improvements on strategies for council and public engagement, and changes to legislation regarding conflicting design criteria (Urban Design Task Force, Minutes, 2006).

In 2009, the first phase of HRM by Design was rolled out. This included a new Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law for the Downtown Plan Area. The DHSMPs and Downtown LUB included a new framework for planning regulations that separated the downtown Area into 9 precincts (DHSMPs, Map 2). Key components of the Downtown Plan consisted of view plane regulations, the Barrington Street Heritage Conservation District Revitalization Plan (corresponding with Precinct 5: Barrington Street Heritage Conservation Precinct) (BSHCDRP, 2014), a new process for developments that were not approved as-of-right, otherwise known as the Site Plan Approval (SPA) process for substantive development applications, and the inclusion of bonus zoning provisions. HRM by Design’s rationale for the

new SPA process was that it intended to improve clarity and predictability of design standards and anticipated timeline to development approvals that the development community could more closely rely on (see Figure 1) (Design Manual, 2014). In this process, applications for development first go through a review of quantitative elements pursuant to the Downtown Halifax Land Use By-Law. Once these elements have been approved by a Development Officer, qualitative elements, pursuant to the Schedule S-1: Design Manual of the Downtown Halifax Land Use By-Law, are reviewed by the Design Review Committee (DRC), made up of 10 members within the development community. If the committee then provides the Site Plan Approval and no appeals are made, a development permit and bonus zoning permit is provided and then a building permit is issued (Design Manual, 2014).

With Regional Council's approval of the DHSMPs on June 16, 2009, policies were included to allow for the 'grandfathering' of four development applications, one of which is the Roy on Barrington St. Council allowed these applications to be assessed against the previous Halifax MPS policies since the submission dates came before the advertisement of the HRM by Design public hearing. Council believed it was only fair to hold the developers accountable to the planning regime in place at the time applications were submitted (Regional Council, 2010).

In 2014, the 2006 Regional Plan was re-worked to include, "long-range, region-wide planning policies outlining where, when and how future growth and development should take place in the municipality over the life of the plan (to 2031)" ... "The Plan targets at least 75% of all new housing units to be in the regional centre and urban communities, with at least 25% of all new housing units within the regional centre by 2031" (Halifax Regional Municipality, 2017).

How Can We Achieved More Height?

One of HRM by Design's more controversial initiatives was the development of a Bonus Zoning Mechanism for the Downtown Plan Area. In June and December of 2007, the Urban Design Task Force brought ideas of amenity funds to the development agreement processes, as well as 'height bonusing' as a strategy for heritage preservation (Density Bonusing Study, 2015). Prior to 2009, height bonusing was only supported through negotiations during development agreement processes as well as through heritage preservation policies and programs. With the introduction of the HRM Charter in 2008 came permission for the use of density bonusing in the

Downtown Plan Area through policies outlined in the DHSMPs and the DHLUB (Density Bonusing Study, 2015). In the context of the Downtown Plan Area, pre-and post-bonus heights were established for 36 segments of Downtown Plan Area (see Appendix D & E). The HRM charter describes ‘Incentive or Bonus zoning’ as, “requirements that permit the relaxation of certain requirements if an application exceeds other requirements or undertakes other action in the public interest, as specified in the requirements” (Density Bonusing Study, 2015, p.16). Municipal permission is granted by site plan approval (SPA) and through entering into an incentive or bonus zoning agreement (IBZA).

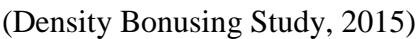
“the intent of any density bonus system is to ensure that density is accompanied by the amenities and public benefits that support successful densification.” (Density Bonusing Study, 2015, p. 16).

Density bonusing is intended to provide city centers with assurance (to the best of their ability) that the public realm will see community benefits from development pressures (Density Bonusing Study, 2015).

Once implemented in 2009, downtown Halifax saw a high-uptake on bonus-zoning. In 2009, all but one site eligible for density bonusing took advantage of the tool (Density bonusing Study, 2015). The Density Bonusing Study (2015) demonstrated how over the past five years, developers achieved bonus values that far exceed the public benefits provided to the municipality in exchange.

“This review of the Municipality’s density bonusing approach should be considered in the context of all of HRM’s funding sources and regulatory tools that are used to accommodate growing communities.” “The density bonus tool is the only tool that works specifically to fund public amenities and benefits in the neighborhoods that attract additional people. Unlike development agreement benefits, density bonus funds can be used off of the sites where development occurs” (Density Bonusing Study, 2015, p. 28).

Planning Services



Background Summary

The literature demonstrates how recent downtown redevelopment can be contributed to a variety of economic changes that appear to have coincided with major milestones in policy improvements. We can see through Gospodinis' (2006) interpretation of the transition from industrial-oriented urban centers to Grant & Leung's (2016) discussion of the 'creative class' city, how changes in local and global economic environments have influenced land use in urban centers. Through Grant's (1994) interpretation of policy intervention in downtown Halifax, we also see how planning disputes became more civilized as the municipality's planning framework became more comprehensive. As my research aims to determine how the 2009 DHSMPS and SPA process have facilitated high-rise projects coming to market, I am able to compare results from my research methods with the literature, in consideration to how the new decision-making processes weight against trends presented above. As multiple authors point to the need for improved development approval processes, my research methods are set to determine how the DHSMPS and SPA process have facilitated the construction we are seeing in the Downtown Plan Area.

Research Methods

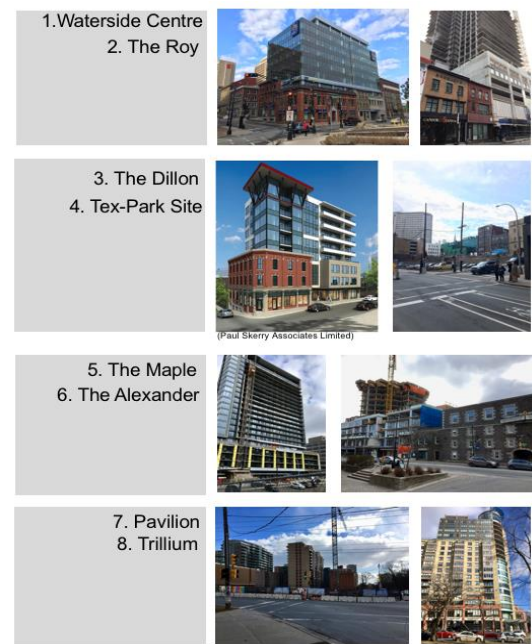
My research includes a case-study methodology that incorporates a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods. The three method types include a field study and site analysis component, 11 interviews with professionals in the local development community, and the review of planning policy documents and studies.

Method 1: Field Study and Site Analysis

This component of my methods includes the examination of the development approval process of eight development applications both from before and after 2009 and was set out to determine what influence the SPA process has had on the timeliness of development approvals (see Appendix A). A timeline comparison was established for applications to the eight developments, located within the Downtown Plan Area (DHSMPS, Map 1). The sample consists of five applications under the previous development agreement process and three applications under the 2009 SPA process. Timeframes have been established and stretch from the time applications were first submitted, to approval of development agreements or site plan approval for substantive applications. A timeline was then created for each application. Important

milestone dates were retrieved from planning documentation and include, development agreements, site plan approval applications, staff reports, council meeting minutes, and NSUARB decisions (CanLII.org). Field study methods also included photographic documentation of each site to understand the built form, design, and integration into the surrounding built environment (see Figure 2). Additional areas of interest include any major concerns associated with the planning process as well as any appeals that resulted in significant alteration to project timeline.

Figure 2: Project Sample (Methods 1)



Method 2: Qualitative Interviews and Discourse Analysis

To gain a variety of perspectives on factors driving urban redevelopment in downtown Halifax, I conducted 11 interviews with professionals in the development community that were familiar with the local market. The sample consisted of three planners, three real estate brokers, three councilors, one developer, and one architect (see table 1). My rationale was to get a series of opinions from individuals that have worked in the respective fields through the development of the DHSMPs and Downtown LUB to see what they believe is driving downtown redevelopment. In collaboration with three other honor students, a list of 11 questions were established to secure desired information. Questions were semi-structure to guide discussion rather than yield specific responses. Questions most relevant to my study include, “can you characterize the pace of development in Halifax?” and “how did the adoption of the 2009 downtown plan influence what gets built and where?” (Appendix C). After receiving approval from the Dalhousie University Research Ethics Board in January, we began to approach desired participants and conduct interviews. With consent (see Appendix B), interviews were recorded, transcribed for data management, and coded to respect the subject’s privacy.

The coding framework consisted of key themes relevant to my research question and objectives. These themes were then compared against the passages to each question to see where the individual could shed light. Relevant themes include the influence of policy intervention, view plane restrictions on development, plan compliancy, heritage context, length of approval processes, the influence of bonus zoning provisions, and any material relevant to trends in the local market.

Table 1: Interview sample broken up by profession and gender

	Planners (P)	Councilors (C)	Brokers (BR)	Developers (D)	Architect (A)
Male (M)	2	2	3	1	1
Female (F)	1	1			

Method 3: Planning Policy and Planning Document Analysis

The final component of my methods includes the review of Planning Policy and other planning related documentation including development application reports mentioned in method 1, along with the Halifax MPS and LUB, the DHSMPs and LUB and the 2015 Density Bonusing Study. The purpose of this section was to provide policy context leading up to and following the implementation of the DHSMPs in 2009 as well as to incorporate policies and Land Use By-Laws that limit height allowances for high-rise development into the study.

Scope, Limitations, Implications

The geographical scope of my study is limited to the DHSMPs Plan Area (DHSMPs, Map 1) to highlight projects that are affected by these changes executed through HRM by Design. Due to the scope and limited access to resources, certain limitations must be acknowledged. In deliberating the length of the approval process for the eight buildings examined within *Method 1: Field Study and Site Analysis*, it proved challenging to ensure that I had obtained the earliest proposal or documentation from council as well as the final date of approval for the entire project, as some case numbers may only represent a component of a larger development. Each development case number consists of numerous staff reports, council minutes, development agreements, substantial site plan approval agreements, and proposals to and responses from District 12 PAC and HAC, as well as supplementary reports. This made it easy for milestones to slip through the cracks.

The distinction between fact and opinion is another limitation that must be accounted for. When referring to comments from interviews it is important to note that they cannot be considered definitive, but rather provided expert opinions used in this study to create background context and to strengthen suspicions and trends from within the literature as well as findings from other research methods. That said, more credibility is provided to opinions noted across multiple interview subjects. Another limitation is a lack of literature on development in Downtown Halifax, more specifically focused on the influence of the provincial government funding large-scale developments that are excepted from policies and land use by-laws.

Findings and Discussion

The broad intent of my study was to explore what major influences have resulted in the quantity and scale of high-rise construction within the Downtown Plan Area (DHSMP, Map 1) over the past five to ten years. The following research findings are outlined to provide an interpretation of the forms of high-rise construction projects coming to market and rationale for the timeframe in which they emerged.

Halifax’s Development Boom

It is no secret that Halifax is experience an unprecedented boom in downtown urban redevelopment. Given their professional standing in the development community, all interview subjects were familiar with the changes that have occurred since before the implementation of the DHSMPs. As the literature provides a variety of theories to changes in economic environments and theories to the influence of new planning frameworks, the interviews were conducted to gain professional opinions to the cause and effect of this boom in downtown development. Despite differences in perspective across the five professions, common themes were detected across all transcripts (see Table 2). Major commonalities included the influence of the 2009 DHSMPs and its associated form-based code, economic factors (i.e. low interest rates and increased interest in real estate investments), and the changing demographics of urban dwellers.

Table 2: Major Themes Found Across Interview Sample
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Population change in Halifax has been as much a result migration as immigration.• Downtown landowners are seeking maximum heights in the hope of maximizing density so they can absorb higher land costs.• Heavy influence of low interest rates on interest in real estate investments. We appear to be over building in anticipation of future demand.• More recently we have seen more muti-unit residential construction projects occurring downtown.• The office market in Halifax is oversaturated after the construction of many office towers since 2009.

- Halifax is mostly developed by family-owned businesses, as it doesn't have as large of a financial market with high net worth individuals or private equity groups than larger Canadian markets.
- Banks are more likely to provide loans to developers if proposals are as-of-right (based on likelihood of council approval)
- New residential mixed-use development downtown is primarily occupied by seniors (65+), looking to downsize (P3-F) refers to the 'Roy' and the 'Maple' as higher-end units directed at seniors. (personal communication, 2017)
- The affordability of single-detached dwellings in Halifax has caused those looking to downsize, to move into rental buildings over condominiums. This, in part, has caused more recent projects to be rental tenures.
- Costs of multi-unit dwellings are currently high downtown. Anticipated vacancies are expected to balance out the market and help provide more affordable units.
- The DHSMPs was intended to set stability and allow the developers to understand what the rules are that they had to abide by, yet there still appears to be a need for more stringent regulations. many projects that do not comply in many ways have been approved. (Interview Sample, personal communication, 2017)

Economic influences

Both the literature and interview findings point towards low interest rates as a primary influence driving interest in real estate investment opportunities, and furthermore an increase of large-scale developments within the downtown area and the peninsula. Table 3 provides the opinions of one planner and one councilor on the influence of economic conditions. When planner (P2-M) was asked what the major influence has been on recent downtown construction, he believed it was a result of a combination of factors including, changes in political opinions towards promoting urban redevelopment, changing demographics and market preferences, as well as the macro-economic factors described in the literature (personal communication, 2017). A local councilor followed up on the notion that macro-economic-factors are the primary source by stating that this boom in construction didn't truly start to emerge until 2012, three years after the legislation was passed for the Downtown Plan and four years after the financial Crisis in 2008. (see Table 3). rates are a driving factor, by stating how

Table 3: Economic conditions influencing development

P2-M: “The Plan benefited with good timing in terms of changes in political opinions towards development, in terms of demographic trends and changes in market preferences, and certainly not least of all, macro-economic factors – interest rates, capital flows into different types of assets all around the financial crisis” ... “And you can see evidence of that when you compare what’s happening to other cities in Canada where there’s been big flow of money into real estate in general” (Personal communication, 2017).

C2-M: “Development didn’t really start booming until 2012 because the 2009 plan and legislation was passed right after the financial crisis, making it hard to get a commercial mortgage in the two to three years that followed.” (Personal communication, 2017).

Over-building: Have We Saturated the Market?

Table 3: Market Saturation

C1-M: “There have been some changes in the framework legislation over the last decade. And so, I would say as a result of demand for more accommodation, both residential and commercial, in HRM, along with the very important factor that interest rates are very low now, the development community has been using these years to build a lot of capacity, whether it is immediately needed or not” (Personal communication, 2017).

BR2-M: “I think the residential vacancy in downtown Halifax is below 3%, right. Office, a different story. Around 18%” (Personal Communication, 2017).

P2-M: “Office space is a big problem in Halifax. And it’s interesting because actually when you think about what’s been built in the downtown under the new Downtown Plan, a lot of it is actually office space, even though the market for office space has been pretty terrible for basically the whole time” (Personal communication, 2017).

C1-M, “Previous patterns to office development in downtown was that the city councils over the years tended to approve very large proposals that sucked up all the marketplace capacity. A small sample of

large projects in the 60s to 80s and again in the mid-80s-2000s resulted in a lack of demand” (Personal communication, 2017).

P3-F: “We’ve kind of reached our peak of office, they found.” “At the beginning of 2009, they built a couple – like the big TD tower on Barrington” (Personal communication, 2017).

P2-M: “But like 22 Commerce Square, that proposal downtown that’s on hold now, I mean I think that’s got to be largely as a result of the fact that the same builder is the one that put the addition on the TD tower, and they’ve had a hell of a time leasing up all that space” (Personal communication, 2017).

New Construction vs. New policy development

Although the findings show a strong opinion towards the influence of macro-economic factors on downtown construction, many individuals felt the implementation of the DHSMPs had a coinciding contribution to the development we are seeing. Where economic changes are expected to have resulted in an increased interest in real estate development over the past decade, new frameworks to regulating the built-form had a substantial influence on changes in building heights seen through development approvals (See Table 4).

Table 4: Influence of the DHSMPs on High-Rise construction in the Downtown Plan Area

P1-M: “I think new planning policy has facilitated the development that has occurred” (Personal communication, 2017)

P1-M: “I’m not a fan of the Nova Centre, which I don’t really think is a product of new policy...I think it basically over-road policy” (Personal communication, 2017).

P3-F: “Where some of the earlier developments were a little but more modest. Still again, looking for development agreements, looking for those added heights. But I’ve noticed there’s been an increase in the total height that people have been asking for. I don’t think there’s been a huge change over the last say five years in terms of the wealth we’ve been getting in” (Personal communication, 2017)

P3-F: "I think the large increase in height helped, as well as kind of the clarity in what you were going to get by the end of it for the developers. Also, interest rates. They line up pretty consistently."
(Personal communication, 2017)

Where P3-F states that the added heights have made a difference in attracting downtown development, she also believes the biggest struggle in controlling development is ensuring that planning policy is keeping up with development and market changes (Personal communication, 2017).

"Even when we get new policies, we're not at the finish line." "So, one of the biggest conflicts we have right now is the heritage we have and these new developments." "And until we have a strong holding of what we want to be protected, its hard on a case by case basis to protect things as they come up" (P3-F, personal communication, 2017).

The same planner also stated that in a meeting on December 7th, discussion took place around the request for MPS amendments from 18 development applications, ranging in scale from gas stations, to five storeys, to 30 storey projects (P3-F, personal communication, 2017). Even outside of the Downtown Plan Area, we are seeing height requests of substantial proportions. P3-F contributes this influx in applications for development agreements to the creation of the Centre Plan.

"And so, I think we're seeing such a large influx at this one time because they're trying to get in as we're doing the centre plan, which will obviously. It will be a little bit more fixed" (P3-F, personal communication, 2017).

How Has the SPA Process Facilitated Downtown Development?

The findings presented above paint a comprehensive picture to the factors driving high-rise construction in the Downtown Plan Area. Where the interview transcripts demonstrate that the 2009 legislation provided more certainty for the development community along with facilitating substantial height increases through the bonus-zoning provisions stated within the applications of substantial height increases, the level to which it has sped up the approval process remains to be seen. A local planner states:

“With the SPA, developers still feel the process takes too long” ... “But going from, you know a year and a half to three years, and then with the risk of appeals to the UARB that might overturn your approval, to you know, six months to year, whatever it is now” (P2-M, personal communication, 2017).

The same planner states,

“If you go from a four year to a three-year process, even if you still make the same amount of money, your return per year goes up by 30% just by reducing the time itself” ... “So that has a big incentivizing impact” (P2-M, personal communication, 2017).

In reference to the site analysis component of my methods (see Method 1), we see how the ‘Maple’ and the ‘Dillon’ (both applications assessed under the SPA process) show a duration of eight and thirteen months, respectively (see Appendix A). Although these two timelines show the projects taking multiple additional months to reach approval, differences in project scale must be considered. It is therefore unlikely that all, or even most of the applications under the SPA process will be exactly the six-month process that P2-M generalizes the expected PSA timeline to be. We do however still see a substantial decrease when compared against the ‘Roy’ (almost three years), the ‘Alexander’ (one year and three months), the ‘Twisted Sister’ (one year and nine months), and the ‘Trillium’ (two years). Outliers in the sample include the ‘RBC Waterside Centre’ (nine months) which is comparable to the ‘Dillon’ and the ‘Maple’, as well as the ‘Pavilion’ (four years and nine months). Although a larger sample would have yielded a more representative result, we can see how the comparison of these eight sites show a difference in the time endured to reach approval from Council.

Conclusions

The literature presented above demonstrates how recent changes in downtown redevelopment is a result of a variety of economic changes, coinciding with major milestones in local policy development. We can see through Gospodinis’ (2006) interpretation of the transition from industrial-oriented urban centers to Grant & Leung’s (2016) discussion of the ‘creative class’ city, how changes in local and global economic environments have influenced land use changes in urban centers. As my research aimed to determine how the 2009 DHSMPS and SPA process have facilitated high-rise construction within the DHSMPS Plan Area, I can conclude that my analysis of planning applications and policy review, in conjunction with interview

responses, demonstrate that new policy has influenced an increase in the heights of new construction. Interview findings also show how the Design Manual has caused developers to have more faith in the planning framework and approval process. Although a difference in the timeframe for development approvals were evident amongst reviewed application (see Appendix A), it is apparent that a larger sample would have provided more conclusive results to whether the SPA process is faster than applying for a development agreement under the old MPS. Results also emphasize that planning policy could not have been the sole cause to this influx in development interest. The literature demonstrates how Halifax has struggled to establish a concrete framework for land-use decision-making. Although new regimes have improved planning processes within the local context, we cannot ignore the changes to both the local and global economy, as well as changes to the political environment in accepting new ideal to urban living.

Moving Forward

Areas where this study could benefit from further research includes the exploration of the Bonus Zoning Agreements (BZA) for development applications that do not comply with provisions set out in the DHSMPs and DHLUB. Along with site analyzed in method 1, figure 3 also highlights additional sites of interest and include the application for 22 Commerce Square, and the notorious, publicly sponsored Convention Centre (otherwise known as the ‘Nova Centre’). With the emergence of the DHLUB, By-Law (15A) was established, incorporating the approval to the Nova Centre (See Figure 4). Results from the interviews demonstrate frustration towards the project as many felt it disregarded the planning process altogether (see table 4). As a result, further research regarding the Bonus Zoning Agreement for this site, along with other application would further enrich my study, demonstrating the influence of provincial agendas and funding on projects that provide extensive public benefit. In 2014, amendments to the Downtown LUB also include approval of amendments to the height allowances on the CBC radio site (Figure 5). These amendments were approved on the grounds that the development includes the YMCA recreational facility (Design Review Committee Minutes, 2016).

Figure 4: ‘Publicly-Sponsored Convention Centre’

By-Law (15A) - “Notwithstanding any provision of this By-law except subsections (14) through (18) (RC-Apr 29/14;E-May 10/14) of section 8, a publically-sponsored convention centre together with retail, hotel, residential or office, and underground parking space, may be developed on the lands (RC-Apr 29/14;E-May 10/14) bounded by Argyle Street, Prince Street, Market Street and Sackville Street in accordance with the drawings attached as Appendix "B" to this By-law. The development shall include a vehicular and pedestrian passageway extending from Prince Street to Sackville Street as set out in Appendix “B”. (RC-Apr 29/14;E-May 10/14) For the purposes of this subsection, “publically-sponsored convention centre” means an establishment funded or otherwise financially supported by any or all levels of government which is used for the holding of conventions, seminars, workshops, trade shows, meetings or similar activities, and which may include dining and lodging facilities for the use of the participants as well as other compatible accessory facilities “(Downtown Halifax LUB, 2009, p. 20)”

Figure 5: Sackville and South Park Multi-district Recreation Facility (RC-Jun 25/14;E-Oct 18/14)

By-Law (15C): “Notwithstanding Sections 8(6), 8(7), and 11(3), but subject to all other requirements of this By-law, a multi-district recreation facility, in whole or as part of a mixed-use development, shall be permitted on lands at the south-east corner of Sackville Street and South Park Street, as shown on Appendix C, pursuant to the building height requirements specified therein. (RC-Jun 25/14;E-Oct 18/14) (Downtown Halifax LUB, 2009, p. 21)”

Further review of the Municipality’s density bonusing approach could provide insight towards the trade-off of benefits between the public and developers. Other opportunities for further research includes a review of HRM’s city budget to better understand how decisions are made in providing grants to developers providing public benefits such as public facilities and the preservation and restoration of historical buildings. Additional analysis could then determine how these public benefits have allowed developers to work around requirements set out in the DHSMPS and Land Use By-Law.

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Images (Cover Page)

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Appendices

APPENDIX A: SITE COMPARISON TABLE (METHODS 1)

Project Comparison Table: Development Approval Timeline			
Project Name/Address/Developer	Approval Process (DA vs. SPA)	Important dates/Reports	Approximate Length of Approval process
The Roy on Barrington 1651-57 Barrington Street (Starfish Properties)	Development Agreement (Grandfathered in under HMPS as it existed prior to March 31, 2009) Case: 01172	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> June 25, 2008 – Application was submitted November 23/25, 2009 – District 12 PAC and HAC Notice of Approval: February 18, 2010 August 17, 2010 – Regional council approval of amendments to DHSMPs and BSHDRP which affirms that this application be considered under the policies that were in effect at the time in which this application was submitted (DA, April 12, 2011) February 12, 2011 – Notice of approval (DA, April 12, 2011) Development Agreement: March 30, 2011 	Approximately 2 years and 10 months. (from application to development agreement)
RBC Waterside Centre Duke, Hollis & Upper Water	Development Agreement Case: 0114	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> December 2007 - Pre-application meeting with HRM planners and staff and representatives from <u>Armour group (CanLI)</u> May 7, 2008 – First public information session June 16, 2008: (principal staff report) to HAC and District 12 PAC July 11, 2008 – Development Agreement October 21, 2008 – Halifax Regional Council refuses application for development agreement. NSUARB Development Approval dated March 26, 2009. 	9 Months (from first staff report to development approval)
The Pavilion 1565, 1599 and 1601 South Park Street and 5600 Sackville Street. (Southwest Properties)	Substantive Site Plan Approval Case: 20275	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> February 14, 2011 – Case 16655: Application for Amendments to increase the height allowances on the CBC Radio Site, Halifax. (Council Minute Item no. 11.1.1 March 8, 2011) (Amendments were approved on the grounds that the development includes the YMCA recreational facility (DRC, Minutes, 2016) April 21, 2011: Public Information Sessions October 31, 2011: MPS and LUB Amendments 2012 - Amendments to the RMPS, DHSMPs, DHLUB for increased height and setback allowances. (DRC, 2016) Staff recommendation report dated January 4th 2016 January 14, 2016: Substantive Site Plan Approval and Design Review Committee Approval. 	Approximately 4 years and 9 months (From first Public Information Session to SPA Approval)
The Maple (Southwest Properties)	Site Plan Approval Process Case 19148: BZA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> March 13, 2014: Pre-application presentation to DRC April 10, 2014: Design Review Committee approval of qualitative elements of substantive SPA application January 30, 2015: Staff Report for Bonus Zoning Agreement (BZA) February 3, 2015: BZA Approval from Council 	Approximately 8 Months (from pre-application to BZA approval)

The Alexander Lower Water Street and Bishop Street	Development Agreement Case 00971	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> June 12, 2007 – MPs and LUB Amendments application (Regional Council Minutes, July 3, 2007) April 2, 2008 – Staff Report: MPS/LUB Amendment and Development Agreement, April 21, 2008 - District 12 Planning Advisory Committee April 23, 2008 - Heritage Advisory Committee May 9, 2008 – Report of the HAC to Regional Council May 13, 2008 - Decision by Regional Council to schedule a public hearing. June 17/24, 2008 Public Hearing for approval of amendments to HMPS and Halifax Peninsula LUB September 9, 2008, MPS/LUB Amendment and Development Agreement Approval from council 	Approximately 1 year and 3 months (from MPs and LUB Amendment application to DA)
Tex-Park Site (Twisted Sister) (United Gulf Developments)	Development Agreement Case: 00709	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> December 16, 2005 – Staff Report to HAC and District 12 PAC Jan 19, 2006 – Public information meeting January 25, 2006 – Application for Development Agreement (HAC recommends refusal) February 28, 2006 – Public hearing date January 30, 2006 – District 12 PAC report to Regional Council. March 21, 2006 - Council approves Development Agreement included as Attachment “A” of the staff report dated December 16, 2005 (Regional Council Minutes, March 21, 2006, p. 19) April 6, 2006 – Notice of appeal to NSUARB from Heritage Interests (Supplementary report, Jun 13, 2006) September 13, 2007 - NSUARB rules that the development could proceed. United Gulf let the development Agreement expire (Taplin 2011) – From Twisted Sisters Report) 	Approximately 1 years, 9 Months
The Trillium (WM Fares Group)	Development Agreement Case 01046 Case 01301: Non-substantive DA Amendment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> October 11, 2007 – MPS amendment and development agreement application March 28, 2008 – MPS/LUB Amendments and Development Agreement, South Park Street and Brenton Place, Halifax. June 10, 2008 – Council Approval to MPS/LUB amendments (supplementary DA Report, July 14, 2008) July 13, 2009 – Staff Report August 31, 2009 – District 12 PAC meeting September 1, 2009 – Case 01301: Non-substantive DA amendments October 6, 2009 – Regional council Approval of Non-substantive DA amendments March 27, 2014 Application for Substantive Site Plan Approval – mixed use development April 2, 2015 - Staff recommendation to enter into an Inventive or Bonus Zoning Agreement April 10, 2014 – Design Review Committee approval of qualitative elements of the Substantive SPA Application. April 28, 2015 – Council Approves Bonus Zoning Agreement (Regional Council Minutes April 28, 2015) 	Approximately 2 years (from application to DA amendment approval)
The Dillon 5268 and 5262 Sackville Street and 1593 Market Street	Site Plan Approval Case 19156	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> March 27, 2014 Application for Substantive Site Plan Approval – mixed use development April 2, 2015 - Staff recommendation to enter into an Inventive or Bonus Zoning Agreement April 10, 2014 – Design Review Committee approval of qualitative elements of the Substantive SPA Application. April 28, 2015 – Council Approves Bonus Zoning Agreement (Regional Council Minutes April 28, 2015) 	Approximately 13 Months (from SPA application to BZA Agreement)

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM

By signing this consent form, you are not waiving your legal rights or releasing the investigator(s) or involved institution(s) from their legal and professional responsibilities.

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Ben Abbott, AJ Taylor, and Nick Willwerth, and Qianqiao Zhu supervised by Jill Grant of the School of Planning at Dalhousie University. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted.

I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses.

I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous.

I was informed that I may withdraw my consent to participate without penalty by advising the researcher. [Please note that after 28 February 2017 we cannot remove your data from analysis.]

This project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through the School of Planning and the Research Ethics Board at Dalhousie University. I was informed that if I have any comments or concerns resulting from my participation in this study, I may contact the Director of Research Ethics at Dalhousie University at 902-494-3423.

With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

☐ YES ☐ NO

I agree to have my interview audio recorded.

☐ YES ☐ NO

I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any report or publication that comes of this research.

☐ YES ☐ NO

Participant Name: _____ (Please print)

Participant Signature: _____

Witness Name: _____ (Please print)

Witness Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

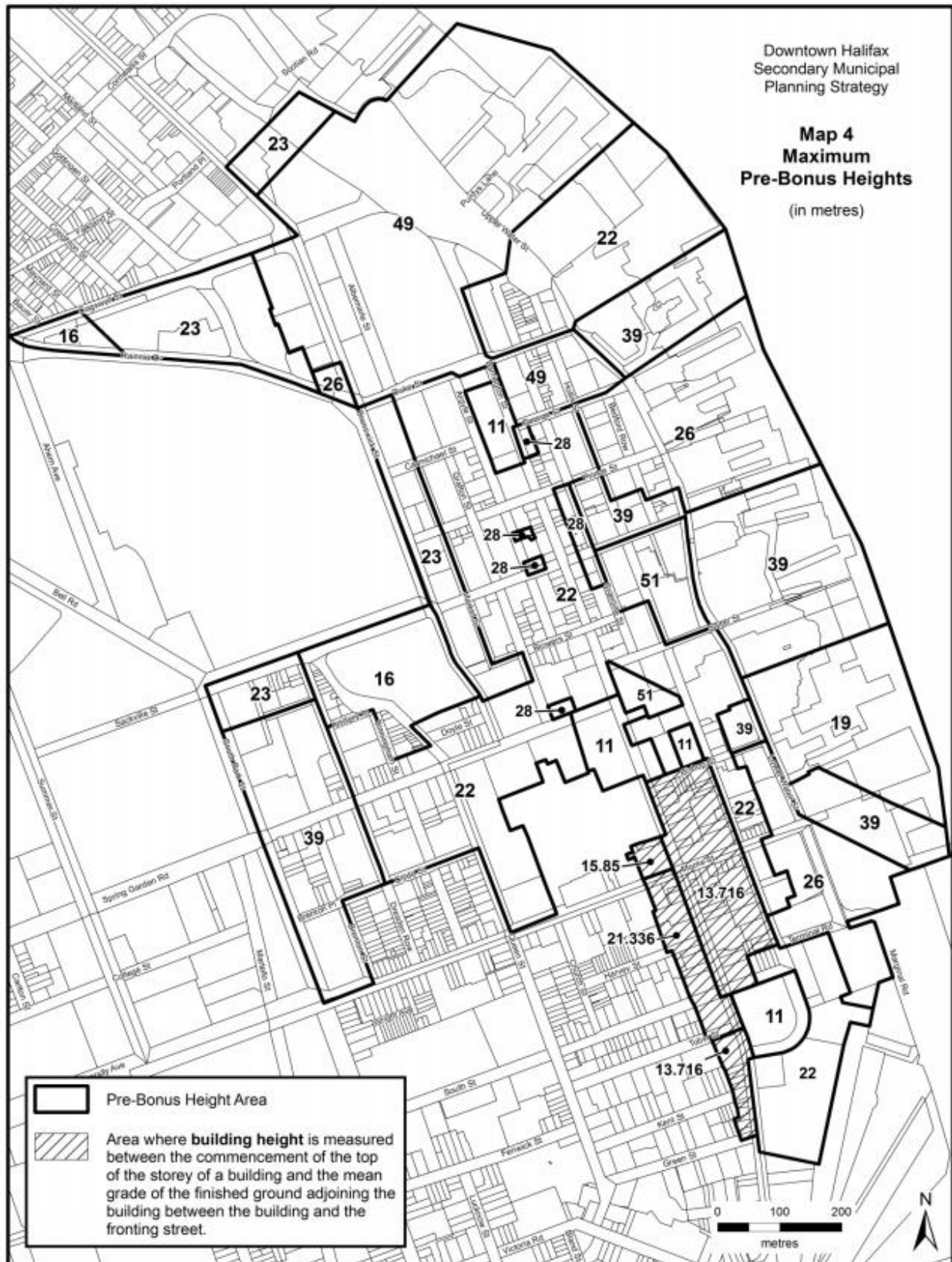
Prior to Recording:

Would you mind if we recorded this interview to ensure details are not missed?

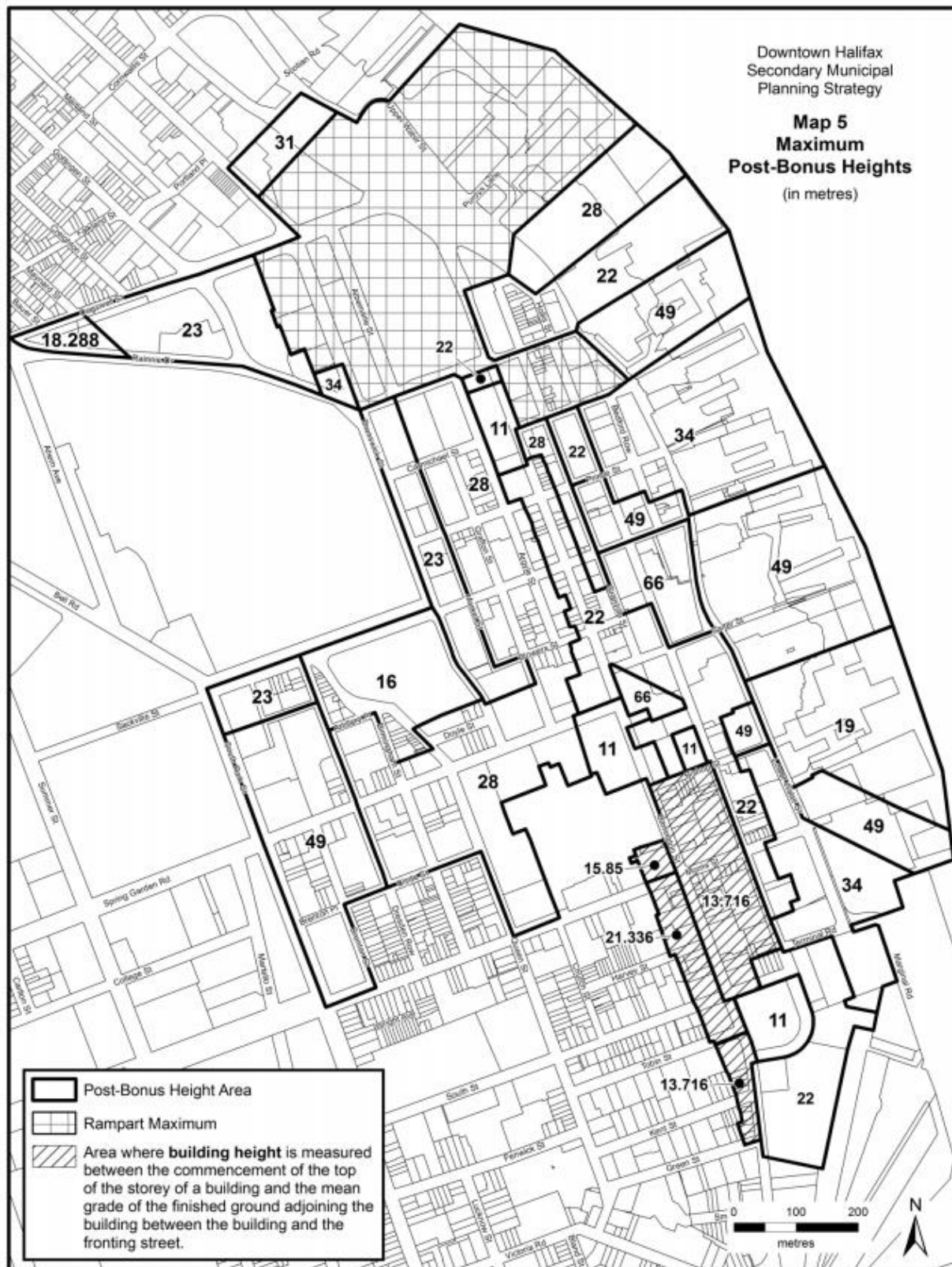
Interview Questions

1. Could you characterize your interrelation of the pace of development and construction in Halifax right now?
2. How did the adoption of the 2009 Downtown Plan Affect what gets built and where?
3. To what extent has the Downtown Plan Streamlined the approval process?
4. How do the kinds of projects getting built in the downtown differ from what's getting built in other parts of the city?
5. What factors affect the kind of uses that go into new projects?
6. What role do the regulations and the policies play for developers in determining what uses to include in a building?
7. What factors affect building tenure? For example, rentals versus condominiums.
8. What are the challenges affecting those leasing commercial space in Halifax?
9. What factors will affect the occupancy rates of new developments?
10. To what extent do you think that vacant space is an issue in Halifax?
11. What role do Institutional investors play in the real estate market in Halifax?

APPENDIX D: PRE-BONUS HEIGHTS (DHSMPS, Map 4)



APPENDIX E: POST-BONUS HEIGHTS (DHSMPS, MAP 5)



Effective: 17 August 2013

Note: Effective date does not indicate date of data creation.