



The Coast's candidate questionnaire

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Perfect! Here you go :)

1. Some big factors that explain why Halifax's municipal budget keeps getting stretched tight, particularly this year, are as follows:

Inflation/Cost of Living: From construction to the cost of living, there's a rise in inflation in almost every sector. Projects that were budgeted a few years ago are much more expensive to complete today. The increased costs for basic infrastructure, such as roads, transit, and housing, put pressure on the overall budget.

Growing Population and Urban Expansion: Halifax is suddenly growing rapidly, especially in suburban areas such as District 16. Growth means opportunity, but growth also encompasses increased needs for city services such as waste management, road maintenance, and emergency services. All these new demands stress already-existing resources.

COVID Economic Recovery: The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted many revenue streams for municipalities, from reduced transit fares to lower property tax collection, along with the increasing costs related to pandemic services. We're in recovery mode, but it's still being felt in the budget.

Climate Change and Infrastructure Costs: Adapting our infrastructure to cope with the impacts of climate change--such as reinforcing shorelines, improving stormwater systems, and creating sustainable public spaces--requires significant investment. While essential, these changes come with high costs that compete with other higher-order services.

Affordable Housing Crisis: The fact that the housing crisis is ongoing means the city has increasingly had to invest more and more in affordable housing initiatives and social support services. This is important to make sure that all residents have access to safe, stable housing, but it just adds to further stress on an already tight budget of the city.

It's about striking a balance between the short-term needs and long-term investments, prioritizing spending based on community needs, and working closely with both the provincial and federal governments to make sure Halifax gets the support it needs to meet these challenges.

- 2) **Infrastructure Asset Management Administrative Order:** Passing in June of this year, the AO will serve to enhance the way Halifax plans, manages, and maintains its public infrastructure. This AO formalizes a framework for tracking, assessing, and prioritizing the city's assets--everything from roads, bridges, and sidewalks to parks and public buildings. It ensures that

Halifax can make informed and data-driven decisions about where to invest in maintenance and new infrastructure projects based on the condition and lifecycle of each asset.

Why it's needed:

Long-term Planning and Efficiency: This would give Halifax the ability to better plan for long-term infrastructure maintenance, avoiding costly emergency repairs in which a structured asset management plan could be ensured. It can extend the life span of the assets of the city and thus save money for the taxpayers in the long run.

Maximize Budget Efficiency: The municipal budget is tight, and this AO helps make sure resources go to the most critical infrastructure needs. This prioritizes for the city based on asset condition, risk of failure, or community needs.

Accountability and Transparency: In having an official directive in place, decisions on infrastructure investments are thus transparent and accountable. Residents will have more clarity regarding why certain projects are being prioritized and where the money of the taxpayers is going.

Resilience and Adaptation to Climate Change: The AO will help in making the infrastructure of Halifax resilient because of the impacts brought about by climate change; this also covers ensuring the roads and stormwater drains can withstand extreme weather events, fortifying coastal infrastructure, and modernizing green spaces to deal with increased usage.

Is it needed?

I absolutely believe this is necessary. To me, this is infrastructure priority-one that needs to be put on a plan and configured regarding how it is managed inside the municipality of Halifax. If not, we continue to fall behind in repairs and upgrades of the infrastructure, with major service disruptions, and will be far more costly at a future date.

It is clear that as Halifax continues to grow, maintenance and upgrading of infrastructure are the keys that our communities remain livable, safe, and economically viable. The AO provides a roadmap in managing our assets responsibly-to make sure we are prepared for current needs and future challenges.

3) The Regional Plan Review is one of the more significant planning processes on the go in Halifax, and it will have a very long-lasting impact on how the city grows and develops. Originally adopted in 2006, the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy-or Regional Plan-sets out a vision and framework for growth in the municipality over a 25-year period. It focuses on where and how new development should be accommodated, along with main issues such as housing, transportation, infrastructure, environmental protection among others. This ongoing review is developed to update this Plan on current realities, new challenges, and evolving community priorities, based on the core areas being addressed, some of which include:
Now, looking ahead and considering the populations' rapid growth in Halifax-especially suburban and rural areas like District 16-review is looking toward the endorsement of population

growth. This will involve the identification of preferred locations for new residential and commercial development in a manner that is sustainable without overwhelming the existing infrastructure.

Affordable Housing: The review is also intended to examine ways in which to deal with the ongoing housing affordability crisis in Halifax. This might include policies that promote a variety of housing types-more mixed-use developments-and the provision of truly affordable housing units throughout the city.

Transportation and Mobility: Ensuring that transportation systems keep pace with growth is critical to success. That includes options such as improving public transit, enhancing active transportation like cycling and walking, and reducing car dependency. Developing more efficient and accessible public transit options is crucial for the suburban communities that make up District 16, where residents rely heavily on commuting. It follows the protection of natural areas, enhancement of green spaces, and resiliency of the city from the impacts of climate change, including wetlands protection, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, or the inclusion of green building standards into new development and adaptation to climate change.

Equity and Inclusion: The draft updated plan also emphasizes equity and inclusivity, aiming to create communities where opportunities and services would be accessible for everyone regardless of income, background, or ability. This encompasses increased access to affordable housing, public services, and spaces for recreation in areas with greater need.

Why It's Important

This is especially important in my mind as a councillor candidate: I see the Regional Plan Review as critical to setting the trajectory for the future of Halifax. This refreshed plan will guide the priorities of our municipality for many years to come, influencing how we handle growth, take on the housing crisis, protect our environment, and create vibrant, equitable communities. Therefore, I will stand for the interests of District 16 and fight for its sustainable growth, improved means of transportation, and affordable solutions for housing. 4) The following are some

of the proposed changes to municipal governance that really jumped out at me in this current draft of the Regional Plan Review. Because of their focus on efficiency, equity, and community engagement, here is a selection of some of my favourite proposed changes and why I believe they're so critical for the future of Halifax and District 16:

1. Decentralization of Decision Making

It is one such change that has been proposed-the decentralization of certain decision-making powers by giving more say and authority to the community councils. They will have their local representatives, which in turn can make faster decisions as well as in tune with the local needs rather than wait for approval from the higher municipal levels. Why it is important: Being a suburban area, District 16 differs from urban Halifax in many ways.

In times of further decentralization of decision-making, it would, where necessary, have the option to direct more time and energies to local issues around infrastructure projects,

community services, or local development approvals. This would also lead to the further empowerment of communities with more say in decisions directly concerning them.

2. Streamlining of Development Approvals process

The draft proposes reforming mechanisms with regard to the approval of new developments to favor increased streamlining. Simplifying and speeding up these processes will contribute, among others, to less bureaucracy without giving up on strong community input and scrutiny.

Why it's important: This would serve to alleviate Halifax's housing crisis by paving the way for the quicker construction of more affordable and varied housing options. For District 16, where development pressure continues to mount, this could translate into getting the right mix of housing and commercial developments approved sooner, in a better effort to keep pace with population growth while maintaining community character.

3. Improved Public Consultation Processes

Another important deviation is the recommendation for widening and improving the quality of the public consultation process. A draft plan intends to include more digital methods of engagement and make consultations more inclusive, covering groups that are usually excluded in decision-making processes.

Why it's important: Public engagement should be inclusive in nature and an indispensable prerequisite so that municipal policies reflect the voices of all residents, not just those who usually are more inclined to get engaged. That would mean that, for District 16-a real melting pot decisions actually represent and reflect everybody's needs and concerns, from youth to seniors, from newcomer to longtime residents. By making consultations more accessible and inclusive, we build stronger, more engaged communities.

4. Focus on Regional Collaboration

The plan is also committed to reinforcing cooperation between Halifax Regional Municipality and nearby municipalities and the provincial government on common interests in transportation, environmental sustainability, and economic development.

Why it matters: As Halifax continues to grow, regional co-operation is central. Most of our major challenges, from moving forward with transit infrastructure, to affordable housing, to climate resilience, don't cease at the city limits. For District 16, surrounded on three sides by rural areas, the better co-operation with our neighbours will yield dividends in a co-ordinated growth process that enables transportation networks to function as they should, and green space to be protected across the region.

5. Climate Resilience in Governance

The plan weaves climate action into municipal governance; planners would have to consider the impact of climate on infrastructure investments and land-use planning decisions. This would need the city to continually reassess climate risks and make adaptive policies to reach the same ends.

Why it matters: This is important because District 16 brings one closer to an urban and rural landscape, with the growing effects of climate change, no matter what development or

infrastructure project should be resilient to the challenges one will see in the future. Protecting our environment, building sustainable neighborhoods, preserves our quality of life in this community.

Why These Changes Matter

Taken in its entirety, these changes proclaim an intent for more responsive, inclusive, and sustainable governance in Halifax. They acknowledge that the imperatives of efficiency and the imperatives of equity need to form part of a praxis in municipal decision-making and foster empowerment in local communities such as District 16 through having a strong voice in shaping their futures.

5) This is a paper I am writing as a candidate for Halifax City Councillor: while I welcome many of the proposed changes in the Regional Plan Review, there are several areas I feel need improvement or refinement to better serve our community. What follows are some of the proposals that I feel I would make changes to, and why.

1. Affordable Housing Targets: Be More Ambitious

While the current draft plan includes things to tackle the housing crisis, I really do not believe that the targets it sets for affordable housing are ambitious enough. Though the city takes steps to encourage the development of more affordable housing, the crisis is serious, and we need a stronger, more concrete commitment if we really want to see progress.

What I would change:

Higher Proportion of Affordable Units in New Developments: I would definitely support increasing the proportion of units required to be affordable in new developments, especially in areas where growth is foreseen, like District 16.

Increased Incentives for Affordable Housing: The city can incentivize with more substantial financial perks and quicker approvals for those developments that incorporate a considerable rate of affordable and social housing.

Why: This is the housing crisis that disproportionately burdens low-income families, young professionals, and seniors alike. Unless we have more aggressive targets and incentives, we are sure to fall behind this very critical need, especially in the suburban districts when demand is growing.

2. Public Transit and Transportation Network: Increased Scope

Whereas the plan does propose improved public transit, I don't believe this goes quite far enough in terms of fully addressing what is required to support the growth of Halifax, let alone suburban districts like District 16.

Things I would change:

More emphasis on suburban transit: The plan should emphasize improving public transportation more in the suburbs and rural areas than in the core of the city. This can be accomplished through expansion of bus routes, increased frequency, and park-and-ride facility improvements.

Increased investment in active transportation: More resources should be dedicated to establishing safe, linked walking and cycling infrastructure, particularly in suburban neighborhoods that are more car-dependent.

Why: The District of 16 is continuing to grow, yet its residents are highly car dependent with limited options for moving people without relying on cars. Suburban transit and active transportation networks reduce congestion, carbon emissions and improve the quality of life for daily commuters into the city.

3. Community Benefits from Development: Improving Accountability

The draft plan does provide for community benefit agreements, which force the developer to invest in community amenities, be it parks, community centers, or even below-market-rate housing. Provisions for such are fairly nebulous, with enforcement of CBAs not always clear.

Changes I'd make:

Stronger rules and mechanisms that guarantee developers do not backslide on commitments related to community benefits.

Community input in CBAs: I would support much more formalized community input into the negotiation of CBAs so that residents could have a direct say in what benefits are most needed in their area.

Why: It's important to me that new developments coming into District 16 bring real, positive change to the community. Stronger accountability for CBAs ensures development serves local interests in creating more vibrant, well-supported neighborhoods.

4. Climate Action: Accelerate Timelines

The plan embeds climate action at the heart of every decision, which is great; however, net-zero emission and climate-resilient infrastructure timelines are too long considering the urgency of the climate crisis.

What I would change:

Moving Faster on Net-Zero: I would also push for an accelerated net-zero target in Halifax from 2050 to 2040, or earlier, to align with international best practices.

Enacting Green Building Standards: More aggressive energy-efficient, green building standards in new construction and retrofitting of existing buildings need to be brought into the plan.

Why: Climate change isn't a future problem—it's happening now. Halifax, especially coastal areas such as parts of District 16, faces the risk of sea-level rise and extreme weather.

Accelerating climate action not only protects our environment but readies our city for the challenges ahead.

5. Zoning and Density: More Flexibility for Mixed-Use Development

The draft plan places emphasis on the concentration of growth in specific areas, notably urban centers. However, I feel that it does not go far enough to allow flexibility in mixed-use development outside these areas, such as suburban and rural communities like District 16.

What I'd change:

Suburban areas: I would support the incorporation of more mixed-use zoning within suburban areas to accommodate an integrated residential, commercial, and community space that better serves the balance of daily needs for a person. This will make neighborhoods walkable and vibrant, which cuts down on lengthy commutes.

More density options within transit-oriented areas: I support allowing higher densities along key transit stations.

Why: Amenities like shops and services and parks are limited in suburban communities to a large part, further promoting car dependence and long commutes. With increased mixed use and density around transit nodes, District 16 communities can be more self-sufficient and sustainable.

6. Digital Infrastructure and Smart Cities: Improved Tech Integration

While the plan somewhat touches on infrastructure, it is silent on how to go about improving digital infrastructure, or investing in smart city technologies-the things that would make Halifax more efficient and future-proof. Things I would change: Invest in digital infrastructure to ensure that high-speed internet and digital services reach all parts of Halifax, including suburban and rural districts, in support of businesses, education, and healthcare.

Pilot smart city initiatives: Utilize such things as smart city technologies like smart traffic systems, energy-efficient street lighting, and digital public services aimed at improving the efficiency and sustainability of cities.

Why: Good infrastructure is identified as critical to both economic and social prosperity in an ever-digitally-connected world. The suburban/rural makeup District 16 means improved digital services are indeed pressing for this district.

6) The Housing Accelerator Fund By-laws, just passed by the city this year, are targeted to ramp up new housing development in Halifax so that the present housing crisis is dealt with. These bylaws will eliminate barriers and simplify the approval process so more housing can be built quicker by private developers, including a mix of affordable units. This is of particular significance since Halifax has been experiencing rapid population growth, thereby increasing demand for housing that has greatly outpaced the supply of new homes.

Key Highlights of the Housing Accelerator Fund Bylaws:

Simplified Zoning Regulations: By streamlining rezoning processes for residential purposes, especially in areas with infrastructure in place to support the influx of citizens, it reduces both time and complexity in getting new housing projects approved.

With the approvals being fast-tracked, it reduces the bureaucratic headaches to those who apply for building permits, therefore allowing developers to break ground much sooner. This, in turn, is true both for new developments and the reuse of other buildings as residences.

Affordable Housing Incentives: The by-laws promote the inclusion of affordable housing units in new development through incentives given to developers. Some incentives include a decrease in fees or expedited processing when projects attain a certain percentage of housing units

classified as "affordable".

Increased Density: The by-laws further allow higher density development along certain areas, especially in the transit corridors, since maximum land is utilized for more housing in those key areas. This aligns with the city's goal of creating compact, walkable neighbourhoods.

Do I agree with it?

Yes, I do agree with the Housing Accelerator Fund By-laws, though, in my view, there is a room for strengthening them. Here's why I endorse this policy:

Now that the housing crisis needs to be resolved urgently, Halifax faces extreme shortage in its supply of housing, and these proposed by-laws are one of the proactive steps toward rapidly accelerating that supply. In removing these unnecessary barriers and layers of bureaucracy, it will be easier to respond quickly to rising demand for homes, especially for more affordable ones.

Encourage Affordable Housing: The incentives that they give toward affordable housing are of utmost importance. As a candidate, I strongly support that new developments should embed in themselves affordable units, hence giving an assurance that in our growing city, a place could be found by all our residents regardless of income.

Balanced Growth: By allowing high-density developments in key areas, such as near transit and urban centers, the by-laws contribute to smart sustainable growth. Outright, this prevents sprawl, reduces car dependency, and helps people walk their communities, which is good for the environment and enhances quality of life for the residents.

Areas of Improvement:

Stronger Affordability Requirements: While the given incentives toward affordable housing are good, I would go further and advocate for stronger requirements that guarantee a higher percentage of units in new developments are affordable, especially in areas of high demand like District 16.

Community Engagement: In these accelerated processes, community involvement is of great importance to ensure that developments align with local needs and character. Any streamlining of approvals mustn't come at the price of adequate community input, and I would like to see a more formal process in respect of making sure resident voices are heard.

This policy is necessary and comes at just the right time for Halifax to take up the challenge of moving faster to build more houses. In sum, though there are certain areas related to affordability and community input in the By-laws of the Housing Accelerator Fund that might need some improvement, this policy provides a foundation for addressing key housing challenges but needs work to follow it through so that growth will be equitable and sustainable.

7) If elected as a councillor, I would vote in support of the HAF By-laws as a sound platform from which to take action on the housing crisis in Halifax. There are, however, a number of very specific changes I would move to better make the bylaws effective, equitable, and responsive to

the needs of all people in our community. Here is what I would move:

1. Mandatory Affordable Housing Requirements

While the current bylaws of HAF incentivize affordable housing through voluntary incentives to developers, I strongly believe that the requirement for affordable housing in all new developments is the need of the hour.

Proposed change: This would involve my proposal of a provision stipulation that any development over a particular threshold-for example, 50-plus units-must have a minimum of 20 percent of its units set aside as affordable, especially in areas of high demand and close to transportation.

Why: Offering a set of incentives cannot work to ensure adequate affordable housing supply. A binding requirement would make each new project contribute to the need for affordable housing, not more market-rate units only. It would balance the community and prevent the displacement of low-income people.

2. More Effective Enforcement with Sanctions for Non-Compliance

The by-laws should contain a more robust enforcement mechanism that ensures developers comply with the requirements for affordable housing and other commitments, such as community benefits.

Proposed Change: Impose non-compliance penalties to the developer for failure to comply with affordable housing targets and community benefit agreements. It shall also be designated as a mandatory reporting; it shall be mandatory that the developer periodically reports on the progress made toward the attainment of affordability targets.

Why: Accountability is thus necessary so that the commitment towards affordable housing is realized. Where there's no strong enforcement, it's the easiest thing for these targets to be flouted or delayed. Penalties would encourage compliance and ensure that the pledged dose of affordable housing is delivered as promised.

3. Increasing Housing Types and Inclusivity

While the HAF bylaws target high-density developments, Halifax also needs to diversify the types of houses available, particularly in suburban areas such as District 16.

Proposed Change: The bylaws need to be revised to include more diverse types of housing, like duplex, triplex, townhouse, co-op, and apartment buildings. I would also suggest adding special provisions that state a certain percentage of new developments should include accessible units for people with disabilities.

Why: Increasing the variety of housing types will make more inclusive and diverse communities. Not everyone wants or needs an apartment; some families or individuals might prefer smaller-scale, lower-density housing options that fit suburban settings. Accessible housing also speaks to making sure all have equal opportunity for homes, including those with mobility challenges.

4. Strengthening Community Engagement

Whereas the HAF bylaws strive for streamlined development approvals, I would argue taking

speed in consideration versus meaningful community involvement. My Motion: Provide a standardized process of community consultation on all developments over a threshold size. This could include provisions for public meetings, digital platforms for community input, and guaranteed minimum periods for feedback from the residents-especially those in neighbourhoods directly impacted by new projects.

Why: Community engagement ensures development is not only accelerated but also in tune with local needs and values. In case this does not take place, there is a certain alienation of the residents from the decision-making process, meaning that resistance or dissatisfaction to new development may be shown.

5. Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Bonus Incentives

One of the major concerns facing suburban regions like District 16 is the need to promote public transportation. I am of the view that HAF by-laws can be utilized for encouraging developments which would facilitate and stimulate the use of public transit methods and reduce dependence on cars.

TOD Bonus: Propose a policy where any development along transit corridors or near future transit projects, like bus rapid transit, would get more incentives than those without such proposals, especially with an element of affordable housing and active transportation infrastructure such as bike paths, pedestrian walkways, and car-sharing facilities. Why: The transportation-linked mixed-use development will reduce traffic congestion, result in lower carbon emissions, and ensure feasible urban growth. New residential construction must be rendered accessible, through the use of TOD, to elementary services and job areas.

6. Green Building Standards

While the current HAF bylaws do not address environmentally sustainable building practices, this should have been a concern in light of the climate emergency.

Proposed Change: Include stipulations that all new developments of housing will be built to green building standards such as LEED certification or its equivalent in energy-efficient benchmarks. Additional incentives may be given if developers could exceed such standards, particularly those projects featuring affordable housing. Why: Green buildings reduce long-term energy costs for residents, mitigate the environmental impact of new construction, and contribute to Halifax's climate goals. Affordable housing, in particular, should be built to high energy-efficiency standards to ensure that low-income residents benefit from reduced utility bills.

7. More Flexibility for Adaptive Reuse

The HAF by-laws could do more to incentivize adaptive reuse of existing buildings-converting vacant or underutilized commercial buildings into residential units. Proposed Change: Dramatically incentivize the retro-fitting of office buildings, malls, and other commercial spaces into affordable housing or a mix of both. Other than that, rezone with

ordinances that will make it far easier for developers to repurpose those buildings into housing, especially in areas where demand for commercial space has flopped.

Why: There are numerous unoccupied or underutilized buildings throughout Halifax that could easily be adapted for much-needed housing. Adaptive reuse is often healthier than new construction and would further contribute to helping meet demand for housing and revitalize areas of economic depression.

8. Ongoing Monitoring and Adjustments

Last but not least, a way to provide ongoing monitoring and evaluation for assurance that the bylaws of HAF continue to function effectively given that conditions change in the housing and market.

Proposed Change: A Housing Policy Review Committee would be established to review, in a sustainable manner, the impact created by the HAF bylaws regarding the production of affordable housing, community benefits, and timelines in development. Such a committee would recommend adjustments based on changing market conditions and actual community needs to keep the bylaws flexible and responsive.

Why: Housing markets and community needs are dynamic, and policies need to evolve over time. A periodic review process would help ensure the by-laws within HAF continue to serve their intended purpose and make course corrections if necessary, rather than waiting for a complete policy change to take place.

Summary:

Accordingly, these changes would make HAF bylaws even more effective in the delivery of affordable housing, sustainability, community engagement, and lastly, equitable growth. Refine policies to ensure new housing meets the needs of all residents while helping Halifax reach its long-term growth and sustainability goals.

8) It means that the suburbs in Halifax are also part of dramatic changes in the larger push to meet housing needs and the challenges associated with urban growth. Several key drivers are identified as to why such suburbs must change, including but not limited to the following:

1. Rapid Population Growth

The suburbs in Halifax have grown greatly due to big population increases, and this is foreseen to go on. With a greater number of people, there would be a greater need for housing, infrastructure, and services.

Need for Change: The suburban plan review aims to ensure that development is well-managed, with housing and infrastructure suitable to meet the needs of the new coming population. If it were not for these changes, suburbs would be faced by issues such as burgeoning schools, insufficient transportation, and an overload on public services.

2. Crisis in Affordable Housing

High living costs and problems with housing unaffordability are not exclusive to urban centers;

suburban areas also grapple with the same level of high housing cost measures that are influencing families' searches for housing affordability.

Need for Change: Halifax can inspire a revolution in suburban areas when it comes to implementing more affordable housing through plans and revisions. This involves the density of new development and a mix of housing types that include multiple income brackets.

3. Sustainable Development and Environmental Concerns

Most suburban towns indeed face challenges as far as environmental sustainability is concerned, such as increased dependency on cars, loss of green space, and inefficient land use.

Need for Change: Suburban plan review mainly involves the promotion of sustainable development practices such as the incorporation of green building standards, conservation of natural areas, and designing walkable neighborhoods with access to transit. The change would minimize environmental impacts and improve living qualities.

4. Improvement to Infrastructure and Services

Suburbs, in turn, should be growing, and their infrastructures and services need upgrading, such as transportation, utilities, and community facilities amongst others, to keep pace with the increase in demand.

Need for Change: The suburban plan review has been hastened in order to start identifying and addressing infrastructure needs, thus making improvements in developments that ensure that those developments are served by adequate services; to study and plan transportation improvements; and to include more public transit with an improved road system.

5. Encourage Mixed-Use and Transit-Oriented Development

Traditionally, most suburbs have been characterized by low-density developments, often single use in nature, which naturally give way to dependence on cars and contribute to sprawl.

Need for Change: Revised plans are needed to accommodate the integration of residential, commercial, and recreational use. It allows the approach for a better-melded, walkable environment that minimizes long commutes and thus helps in building up healthier, livelier communities.

6. Adapting to Changing Demographics and Lifestyles

Demographics and lifestyles are changing, yielding changes in the preferred and needed housing types. An example would be higher demand for a range of housing types, such as multi-generational homes, smaller units, and rentals.

Need for Change: The suburban plan review responds to these needs, which are changing in nature. It promotes a mix of housing types and configurations. This will ensure that the new development is carried out in such a way that it aligns with current and future demographic trends, offering suitable choices to keep up with different family size and living arrangements.

7. Economic Development and Employment Opportunities

Suburbs are no longer perceived as bedroom communities, but as thriving motors of economic growth. Mindful integrated development of these areas will stimulate local economies, jobs, and businesses in Halifax.

Supporting Economic Growth through Suburban Plan Review: Approving Commercial and Employment Uses within the Suburban Plan review process assists to realize a balanced and Complete Communities where residents have access to local jobs and services.

8. Federal and Provincial Pressures

As already alluded to, both federal and provincial governments have indicated that Halifax must address housing and development issues more urgently. Indeed, this external pressure helped to accelerate any need for suburban plan reviews and updates.

Need for Change: Speeding up the suburban plan review aligns with those priorities above because it will ensure that Halifax can use the available funding and continue to meet the expectations of the regulator. It also assists the city in leveraging support and resources at both levels of government to implement necessary changes.

Conclusion

Such reformist changes in Halifax's suburbs are brought about due to growing population pressures, housing affordability, environmental sustainability, and infrastructure that keeps on evolving day in and day out. Addressing such aspects through expediting reviews of plans to update them accordingly strategically, Halifax stands in a better position to develop resilient, equitable, and well-planned suburban communities to contribute towards overall success and livability in the city.

9) Following is a draft for a suburban plan for Halifax; some of the proposed changes are involved to improve the quality of life, sustainability, and growth management of suburbs. Following are some of my favourite proposals and the reasons that make them so promising to me:

1. Mixed-Use Developments

Proposal: To include mixed-use developments-the ones that blend spaces for residential, commercial, and recreational purposes.

Why I Like It:

Walkability and Convenience: Mixed-use development places shops, services, and recreational facilities in easy reach of residents, reducing the need to make long commutes. It can lead to more vibrant and walkable communities.

Economic Growth: By creating both residential and commercial spaces side by side, it may activate local economies, support small businesses, and create opportunities for job creation to be built right into the community.

2. Increased Density Near Transit Hubs

Proposal: Encourage higher-density development around transit hubs and along transit corridors.

Why I Like It:

Sustainable Growth: By concentrating density around transit hubs, it reduces urban sprawl and helps in attaining more sustainable land use practices. It also makes systems of public transit more efficient by increasing ridership.

Car Dependence Lowered: Higher-density areas with good access to transit can let residents rely less on cars, reducing traffic congestion and lowering carbon emissions.

3. Green Building Standards and Sustainability Measures

New development must adhere to green building standards and take steps toward sustainability.

Why I Like It:

Environmentally Conscious: Green building standards reduce natural footprints from new constructions through the employment of better energy efficiency, minimized waste, and increased utilization of sustainable materials.

Long-term Savings: Energy-efficient buildings can mean lower utility bills for our residents and will help reach the city's goals on climate.

Recommendation: Expansion and enhancement of public parks and green spaces in suburban areas.

Why I Like It:

Quality of Life: Access to enough well-designed parks and green spaces can be a significant booster of quality of life for the residents as these are often used for recreational and relaxing activities and may serve various community events.

Health Benefits: Green spaces not only allow exercise but also quiet time for residents to stabilize their minds, a very important health dimension.

5. Affordable Housing Initiatives

Proposal: Include requirements for below-market-rate housing in new development projects and incentives to stimulate proposals that include a substantial number of below-market-rate units.

What I Love About It:

Equity and Inclusion: Adding below-market-rate housing into new development projects would help to alleviate the housing crisis and foster more diverse and inclusive communities.

Housing Stability: Increasing available supplies of below-market-rate units offers greater

housing stability for low- and moderate-income families.

6. Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Incentives

Proposal: Provide incentives for transit-oriented development, including easy public transport access and pedestrian-friendly design features.

Why I Like It:

Efficient Use of Land: TOD achieves better prospects for development in the best-served areas of transit, hence optimizing one's available land and reducing the need for extensive car travel.

Community Connectivity: These kinds of developments connect a lot of communities, where residents can easily access public transport to workplaces and amenities.

7. Better Infrastructure Planning

Proposal: Improve the infrastructure such as roadways, utilities, and public services to meet new growth in development. Why I Like It:

Support for Growth: When infrastructure is growing along with expansion, congestion, utility shortages, and delays in services can be avoided. Improved Living Conditions: Properly laid out

infrastructure makes suburban living far more enjoyable and practical for residents.

8. Community Involvement and Input

Proposed: Inclusion of structured community consultation processes in new developments and planning changes.

Why I Like It:

Inclusive Decision-Making: Planning the developments in the neighborhood with the community will ensure satisfaction because the needs and preferences of the community are catered for, hence belonging.

Better Outcomes: The identification of issues well in advance through the input of the community leads to projects that are more successful and supported more often.

These changes represent a thoughtful approach to suburban development with a focus on sustainability, affordability, and quality of life. By incorporating these elements, Halifax will be able to create resilient, dynamic, and inclusive suburban communities. 10) The following are some

of the proposals that I would consider revising in the current suburban plan draft and, in detail, the reasons behind the changes:

1. Affordable Housing Percentage Requirements

Current Proposal: The plan can include general incentives for affordable housing but does not

contain specific percentage requirements that would be required in new developments.

What I would change:

Increase Mandatory Affordability Requirements: The ordinance will mandate that at least 25% of units in all major new residential developments over a certain threshold size—for instance, over 50+ units—must be reserved as affordable housing.

Inclusivity of Income Levels: Affordability targets should be inclusive of a range of income levels to create a genuinely diverse community, from the lowest end right through the middle and upper ranges.

Why:

Increased Severity of Housing Crisis: The higher the percentage, the better it will address the housing crisis in that new development will significantly help to solve the problem.

Diversity in Communities: We will incorporate a myriad of income levels so that it would be more inclusive towards a wide range of needs with a minimum amount of socioeconomic segregation.

2. Density and Height Restrictions

Current Proposal: Very restrictive density and height limits could be there in the suburban areas to keep the particular character of it.

What I Would Change:

Density and Height Limit Flexibility: Consider a dramatic increase in density and height limits at strategic locations but, particularly along key transit nodes and commercial districts, with sensitivity to the underlying character of the community.

Flexibility: Develop a flexible approach based on site conditions and community input for adjusting density and height limits.

Why :

Efficient Use of Land: Greater densities around key places increase the supply of housing within a reasonable distance from workplaces, supporting public transportation and minimizing sprawl.

Sensitive Development: Flexibility in development allows for balanced solutions between growth, the character of the neighborhood, and concerns of the local community.

3. Green Space Requirements

Current: This could contain the minimum green space requirement but not explain the quality and accessibility.

What I would change:

Improve the Quality of Green Space: Incorporate standards on the quality and accessibility of green space, not just quantity, to ensure it is safe and accessible to all residents.

Green Infrastructure: Provide incentives for incorporating various elements of green infrastructure into the design, including rain gardens, green roofs, and urban forests.

Why:

Community Well-being: High-quality green spaces promote the physical and mental health of residents, enhancing livability.

The environmental benefits will be that it enhances stormwater management, reduces the impact of urban heat islands, and improves biodiversity.

4. Community Engagement Processes

Current Proposal: May provide for community consultation processes but may be restricted in scope and/or frequency.

What I'd Do Differently:

Extend Consultation Requirements: Provide for a number of rounds of community consultations during the time of planning and development: physical and Web-based.

Ensuring Representation: Institute measures that will ensure wide representation from various community groups, especially the most marginalized and under-served.

Why:

Inclusive Decision-Making: Wider and more inclusive consultations can better ensure that diverse community perspectives are taken into consideration for better outcomes and greater public support.

Early Issue Identification: Continuous engagement will make it easier to spot issues that can arise early in the process and resolve them, lowering opposition and increasing successful projects.

5. Transportation and Infrastructure Planning

Current Proposal: Most of the emphasis can be given to the expansion of roads rather than prioritizing other modes of transport.

Changes I Will Make:

More Emphasis on Multi-Modal Transportation: Give more priority to multi-modal transportation planning with bike lanes, pedestrian pathways, and better alternatives to public transit.

Integrate Land Use and Transport Planning: Land use and transport planning should go together; any new development/redevelopment should support and be supported by efficient transits and active transportation infrastructure.

Why:

Sustainable Mobility: Providing a variety of transport options diminishes car dependence, lessens the level of emissions, and maintains an ecologically more compatible urban setting.

Better Access: Land use that is combined with transport planning increases access and makes connectivity more practical for residents to navigate inside their neighborhood.

6. Affordable Housing Incentives for Developers

Current Proposal: General incentives could be provided to developers for the inclusion of affordable housing in the plans but without specifying targets or conditions.

What I Would Change:

Clearly define the criteria on increased density allowances or reduced fees, in direct relation to the proportion of affordable units included. Provide additional support to those developers that exceed the minimum through things like expedited approvals or tax benefits. This is because clear criteria and extra support could mean more housing than minimum requirements are built, as it serves to incentivize developers to go beyond what is required.

Balance Incentives: The strategy squares incentives against well-set affordability targets to ensure that contributions by the developers reflect the benefit accruing to them.

7. Adaptive Reuse of Existing Buildings

Current Proposal: The focus of the plan is but on new construction and doesn't have regard for utilizing full capacity through their repurposing.

What I Would Change:

Encourage Adaptive Reuse: Policies and incentives can be provided that directly encourage adaptive reuse of older commercial and industrial buildings for residential or mixed-use purposes.

Streamline Zoning for Reuse: Streamline zoning and permitting processes for projects involving the reuse of existing buildings, especially in underutilized areas.

Why:

Sustainable Development: Adaptive reuse is generally more environmentally sensitive than new construction because it reduces demolition waste and conserves many existing building materials.

Revitalize Underused Areas: Reusing existing buildings in areas that might be down on their economic luck provides new housing and can spur the local economies.

Conclusion

The changes accordingly proposed improve the efficiency and fairness of the suburban plan by responding to specific needs for affordable housing, community involvement, sustainability, and infrastructure. Based on this, Halifax is going to respond better to the growth management, support diverse forms of communities, and ensure suburban development supports the overall city vision or goals.

11) The Integrated Mobility Plan for Halifax will address current transportation challenges through more efficient, sustainable, and user-friendly transportation. Here's a breakdown of what the plan sets out to do, and how it hopes to achieve those goals:

Goals of the Integrated Mobility Plan

Improve Transportation Efficiency:

Objective: Reduce traffic congestion and make travel within the city more predictable and less frustrating.

How: By optimizing the flow of traffic, using better road designs, and smart traffic management systems that can adjust in real time to actual conditions.

Improve Public Transportation:

Objective: Public transportation should be an attractive option and reliable enough for residents so that there is less need to use personal vehicles.

How: Increased transit route expansion, more frequent services, better accessibility to transit stops, and modern, efficient vehicles.

Promote Sustainable and Active Transportation:

Objective: To be able to encourage walking, cycling, and the use of environmentally friendly modes of transport that will contribute to reducing the carbon footprint of the city.

How: It shall be done by creating continuous bike lanes, pedestrian-friendly streets, promoting green infrastructure to support sustainable travel choices.

Integrate Various Modes of Transport:

Objective: To come up with a connected transport network system where modes interlink and complement each other flawlessly such as cars, buses, and bicycles.

How: By better coordination of schedules and routes between disparate transit systems, improved connections, and providing integrated payment options for users.

Enhance Safety:

Goal: Enhance safety for all users of roadways whether they be driving, walking, or bicycling.

How: Focus on improved roadway design; improve traffic signage and illumination; enhance enforcement of all traffic-related laws in a manner to work to reduce collisions and injuries.

Ensure Economic and Community Development:

Goal: Ensure that transportation improvements support the City's broader goals for economic growth and community development.

How: Transportation projects should be aligned with development plans, as well as support access to businesses and services. The livability of neighborhoods needs to be enhanced.

How To Achieve These Objectives

Invest In Infrastructure Improvements:

Widen existing roads to add new roadways and enhance intersections to facilitate movement conditions that are quite friendly for the present and future traffic needs.

Expand And Improve Transit Services:

Increase the frequency and coverage of public transport services, both for bus and ferry transport. Invest in newer, smarter systems of transit, such as BRT and electric buses

Allocate Space for Active Transport:

Provide a fully integrated network of bicycle lanes and trails, with adjacent pedestrian paths, that guarantee safe and convenient travel for non-motorized users

Bring Intelligence into the Traffic Management Systems:

Smarter use of technology in traffic flow management would involve an adaptive system of traffic lights, real-time updates on road conditions, and an intelligent transportation system.

Encourage TDM: Encourage strategies that will reduce congestion during rush hour time, such as carpooling, flexible working hours, and working from home. Engage the Community: Provide them with consultations, along with other means of receiving feedback, so that they would feel

their ideas and opinions are being taken into consideration and put into transport solutions that meet their needs and preferences. Integrate Land Use and Transportation Planning: Ensuring that new developments have good service from the transport infrastructure and that land-use plans support efficient transport patterns.

Conclusion

Efficiency, sustainability, integration, and safety are the foci of the Integrated Mobility Plan in structuring for Halifax a better and more sustainable transport network. The core objective of the IMP is to solve present and future transportation challenges through investment in infrastructure, modernization of transit systems, promotion of active transportation, and traffic management with technological support.

12) If the Integrated Mobility Plan is a good plan that has not been quite as successful, here is why it may not be working and how I would fix these problems:

Possible Reasons for Limited Success

Lack of Coordination and Integration:

Problem: The goals of the plan can be adversely affected due to lack of coordination among various modes of transport or due to the lack of coordination between city departments/agencies.

Solution: There is a need to enhance interdepartmental collaboration and establish a centralized oversight body that ensures that all the various aspects of the IMP work as one in a harmonized manner.

Inadequate Funding and Resources:

Problem: Budget constraints or shortage of funds will hamper the execution of major projects and improvements in infrastructure.

Solution: Lobby for more funding allocation, while looking at other project financing options such as PPPs or grants, which can further accommodate the various needs of the plan.

Resistance or Lack of Community Buy-in:

Problematic issues may arise, especially in cases where residents and businesses are not well informed or involved in planning. Solution: More frequent consultation, clear communication of benefits from the plan, and feedback sensitivity.

Implementation Challenges: There are problems when implementing technical or logistical projects included in the plan.

Solution: Address implementation concerns by making the project management practices robust, timelines realistic, with flexibility to meet unforeseen challenges.

Partial or Uneven Strategies/Project Implementation:

Problem: Strategies or projects may be inconsistently applied or unrealized in their entirety, leaving certain gaps in the overall effectiveness of the plan.

Solution: Have regular review and assessment of the various undertakings so that objectives set shall be realized and changes, if necessary. How to Improve Integrated Mobility Plan -

Improve Coordination and Oversight: in-depth oversight body to oversee implementation of the IMP with coordination of various transportation projects/activities from different stakeholders;

Have Appropriate Funding:

Continue to seek other sources of financing from higher levels of government and private sector partners, invest in highly bankable projects exploring new models of financing.

Improved Community Outreach:

Offer more openness to the residents and involve them in decision-making processes through town hall meetings, questionnaires, and workshops. This would assuage concerns and change plans around their understanding.

Address Challenges in Implementation:

Draw up detailed project plans with clear milestones and timelines. Ensure mechanisms for troubleshooting and adjusting such plans in response to issues that may arise.

Ensure Consistent Application:

Periodical auditing and review of projects under the plan, to ensure they will be implemented as planned; necessary adjustments shall be made in case of inconsistencies.

If the IMP is considered a bad plan, here is another approach that should be contemplated, to wit:

Preferred Alternative Plan

Concentrate on immediately high-impact projects.

Alternative: Concentrate on high-impact projects instead of one general big plan. Examples include focusing on major congestion hotspots and building up transit services in under-served areas.

Institutionalize the following phased implementation strategy.

This would mean an implementation plan in phases, starting with pilot projects or smaller initiatives that could be tried and then improved upon before scaling up. This also provides an opportunity to make changes according to practical results and response received in the actual environment.

Integrate Multi-Modal Transportation:

Alternative: Create a multi-modal integrated transportation system that quickly and seamlessly links various transits, such as public buses, bike-sharing programs, and ride-sharing. Assure coordination between modes, and make the transfers easy.

More Focus on Active Transportation Infrastructure:

Alternative: Add so much more infrastructure for walking and cycling. Create a far-reaching network of bike lanes, pedestrian pathways, and greenways to improve active transportation and reduce car dependency.

Improve the Community Engagement and Feedback Loops:

Instead, regular mechanisms for feedback would be established to take continuous input from the residents and other stakeholders. This shall provide substantive input to formulate and adjust transportation strategy and projects.

Harness the Power of Technology for Smart Solutions in Mobility:

Instead, the investment should be made in smart mobility technologies that would enhance traffic management, leak real-time information to users, and overall system efficiency. This might be in the form of smart traffic lights, real-time tracking of transit, and mobile apps for easy

travel planning.

Encourage Transit-Oriented Development:

Alternative: Align land use and transportation planning in a manner that encourages transit-oriented development. Increase density around large transit centers or along transportation corridors to better support ridership and minimize car dependence.

Conclusion

Whether it is refining the current IMP or considering an alternative direction, what is key is a focus on implementation, community involvement, and prioritization. As efforts are made to resolve these issues, alignment of the plan with community needs and pragmatic considerations would be essential for serious strides toward improving Halifax's transportation system.

13) The "managed encampment" is one approach to the homelessness crisis that many cities are considering for people living outside in public spaces. Below is an overview of how city staff might present why the managed encampment approach is recommended:

Why the Managed Encampment Approach is Recommended

Safety and Health:

Objective: To offer safety and health by allowing homeless individuals to remain in designated areas.

How: Managed camps typically offer some standard amenities, including bathroom facilities and access to clean water, that eliminate some of the health concerns of unsanitary living conditions.

Stabilization and Supportive Services:

Goal: To make homeless individuals living out-of-doors lives a little more stable by creating an overall environment of being more secure and supportive.

How: These sites are managed and often supervised; support services can be provided on site to include case management, healthcare, and social services to link people with resources to help them obtain more permanent housing.

Mitigation of Public Health and Safety Concerns:

Goal: Mitigate public health and safety concerns involving unauthorized encampments in public spaces.

How: Move people into managed encampments to minimize risk associated with unauthorized encampments since unauthorized encampments present serious fire hazards, unsanitary conditions, or the opportunities for criminal activities/ violence.

Quick Fix w/ Transitional Pathways:

Goal: To provide alternative temporary solutions in an ongoing effort toward permanent housing.

How: Managed encampments are temporary, only alleviating the immediate need while city staff develop strategies for transitioning people into more permanent housing.

Displacement and Community Disruption Reduced:

Goal-approach to avoid unintended/negative consequences associated with forcefully relocating people from their existing living sites without suggesting an alternative:.

How: With the help of managed encampments, cities can avoid chaotic and traumatic

procedures of dismantling an encampment without providing a safe alternative that would fail to keep them in a safer condition.

Controlled Environment and Better Oversight:

Objective: A controlled environment where conditions could be monitored and managed more effectively was established.

How: Managed encampments are managed either directly by city staff or by partner organizations themselves to ensure basic needs being met, rules adhered to, and support services provided.

Why This Approach Might Be Recommended

Pragmatic Solution: Given the urgency of need from persons experiencing homelessness, managed camps offer a workable solution whereby safety and support can be offered for now.

Efficiency of Resources: It allows cities to concentrate resources in the short term, while at the same time working on more long-term solutions.

Preventative: It prevents worsening conditions and diseases from a lack of the most basic needs for survival that living outdoors often entails.

Considerations

Although operation of a managed encampment offers some immediate relief and support, it is not a long-term solution. Some considerations and possible issues which may be associated with this approach include:

Temporary Nature: Consecutively, managed encampments should not be permanent but a temporary measure. Efforts need to be directed or taken towards permanent housing and comprehensive support services.

Community and Resident Concerns: There might be concerns within the community and from the residents on putting up managed encampments. In this case, communication and engagement will help in listening to and acknowledging their concerns.

Integration into Larger Strategies: Camps of care must also form part of a larger strategy, which should consist of the development of affordable housing, mental health and addiction services, and employment support.

14) If allowed to provide recommendations on ways to better improve the strategy of managed encampment from the perspective of municipal powers, I would do the following in order to further its efficacy and bridge possible gaps. What I would do differently and how:

1. Better Integration with Support Services

What I Would Do: Establish a more comprehensive on-site support network within the managed encampments that includes specialized case management for mental health and addiction.

How:

Partner with Local Organizations: Partnering with nonprofits, health services, and social workers will provide a variety of support services directly to the encampments.

On-site health clinics provide mobile health clinics or permanent facilities where medical care, mental health counseling, and addiction treatments can be conducted. This may include:

2. Transition Pathways to Permanent Housing What I Would Do: Create and build specific pathways from managed encampments into permanent housing options. How: Housing Assistance Programs: Work with affordable housing developers and utilize rental assistance programs to facilitate smoother transitions into permanent housing. Housing Access Priority: Guarantee priority access to current and future available housing units, application processing, as well as supports for said individuals in the managed encampments.

3. Improved Community Engagement and Communication

What I Will Do: Improve community engagement about, and communication concerning, the managed encampments to reduce misunderstanding and miscommunication.

How:

Public Meetings and Updates: Public meetings will be held regularly to provide updates regarding the encampments, discuss community concerns, and receive feedback.

Community Liaison Roles: Hire community liaisons who would help assuage community concerns and develop communication between the individuals living in the encampment and the larger community.

4. Greater Safety and Sanitation Measures

What I would do: Ensure that safety and sanitation measures are improved inside a managed encampment to make certain the area is clean and safe.

How:

Regular Inspections and Maintenance: Regular inspections to ensure that standards of sanitation are upheld and all safety considerations adhered to.

Safety Personnel: Deploy trained security personnel or outreach workers to respond to the conditions that compromise safety and facilitate conflict resolution.

5. Greater Outreach and Engagement

What I Would Do: Expand outreach to those who are resistant to entering managed encampments in an effort to engage them with information and incentives. How:

Outreach Teams: Outreach teams that can engage with the unsheltered to inform them about the encampments and provide transportation to the location.

Incentives to Participate: Individual personal supplies, food, or other forms of support as incentives to encourage individuals to decide on living in the managed encampments.

6. Data

Collection and Evaluation

What I would do: I would install the most robust data collection and evaluation system in place, as it concerns monitoring effectiveness and making improvements based on evidence in managed encampments. How:

Tracking Systems: Create systems that will track the individual's progress within the managed encampments, including into permanent housing and utilization of support services.

Regular Reviews: Constitute regular reviews in the effectiveness of the managed encampments, taking residents' input for further improvements and modification in strategies

where required.

7. Co-ordination with Regional and Provincial Authorities

What I Would Do: Besides these steps, increasing regional and provincial government coordination would be essential in getting alignment and support for the strategy concerning managed encampments.

How:

Joint Efforts: Undertake joint efforts with regional and provincial authorities on larger issues related to homelessness. Ensure coordination in this respect.

Shared Resources: Make use of the shared resources and funding opportunities to maximize the enhancement of support and infrastructure for managed camps.

Conclusion

Enhancing support services, well-defined pathways to permanent housing, better community engagement, and keeping safety and sanitation a priority can make a managed encampment approach more effective in seeking to address homelessness. Municipal powers, through these moves, would hence work to create a setting that is more holistic and supportive for persons experiencing homelessness until longer-term solutions can be developed.

15) Halifax is in the midst of seismic police reform, driven largely by the community's demand to reconsider what police are for and what they should be doing. It began with a motion from Councillor Wayne Mason seeking to investigate transferring some non-core duties-such as responding to mental health crises and traffic enforcement-to civilian teams. This reflects the wider trend of "detasking," which would relieve the police from duties that other organizations or services could handle more effectively.

Underpinning this reform is the attempt to address structural issues - including racism in policing - identified in the Wortley Report on street checks. The approach of the city has been one of better defining what the police 'should' and 'should not' be responsible for, shifting away from a purely reactive, enforcement-based model. There is discussion around how social services like mental health care and addiction support could be provided with the police burdened less.

So far, it's still early in the process: recommendations are written and reviews are being done, but it's got a long way to go. It's supposed to be comprehensive reform; that means coordination with provincial authorities all the more so because some of the responsibilities-like the one concerning mental health care-lie beyond municipal authority.

The police reform of Halifax pursues a not-so-enforcement-oriented, more community-centered approach to public safety through detasking and resource shifting to more specialist services.

16) With regard to Halifax Police Reform, what would I emphasize in a different way? Emphasis here would be that I place, with a view to the concerns of the public being better addressed, community safety improved, and accountability:

1. Expanding Civilian-Led Responses

Current Trend: The city has started "detasking" the police from certain responsibilities such as mental health crises and traffic enforcement, Global News.

What I Would Do: Support the full implementation of civilian-led crisis intervention teams in

mental health response, building on successful programs like CAHOOTS in Eugene, Oregon. The teams would be sent to non-violent calls and mental health emergencies; this would reduce calls that require the presence of the police during instances when they are not the most suited or trained responding agency.

Why: Mental health interventions should be left to specially trained and educated professionals in methods of de-escalation that do not involve physical force. It would also better serve the individual in crisis while releasing the police to work on the prevention and investigation of crimes.

2. Investing in Community-Led Safety Initiatives

Current Direction: The reforms seek to take a bottom-up approach to public safety, says The Coast Halifax.

What I would do: Invest more in the community-led initiatives like neighbourhood safety programs, youth outreach, and restorative justice models.

Why: Programs like this address root causes of crime-poverty and lack of opportunity-while empowering communities to be more active participants in their own safety. It can also build trust between residents and law enforcement by lessening the perception of police as outsiders.

3. Better Oversight and Discipline Mechanisms

Current Direction: Reform aims at reforming police oversight and discipline, but all in the exploration phase today

What I Would Do: Push for an independent civilian oversight body with greater powers to investigate complaints, review police behavior, and impose discipline.

Why: More transparency regarding police activities is one of the significant ways to rebuild public trust in communities that have been overpoliced or targeted. This makes sure that officers are held accountable for their misbehavior and gives the public an increased view into police activities and decisions.

4. Better Resource Allocation

Current Trend: Of course, some police forces are reviewing budgets and taking away certain responsibilities, but detasking doesn't inherently shrink the police budget.

What I Would Do: Fully audit the police budget for waste and inefficiency, then reinvest that money into underfunded social services. For example, housing and addiction treatments.

Why: By managing our resources more effectively, we will be able to invest in the root causes of crimes through preventive services. This would minimize the economic burden on the police department and contribute to better community well-being.

5. More Community Involvement in Decision-Making

Current Direction: Reports and consultations in Halifax pave the way for a decision to defund and reform the police. What I would do: In-depth and very inclusive community consultations are done with the Indigenous, Black, and low-income communities. Ideas from them feature directly in the reforms.

Why: Lacking community involvement and investment from the very communities who most endure police practices, reform cannot succeed. This will ensure any reforms are reflective of

community needs and aid in reducing policing disparities.

Conclusion:

While Halifax heads in a good direction with reforming its police, the reforms could be much stronger, placed heavier with civilian responses, stronger oversight, and community-driven safety programs. That would let there be a safer, more equitable city, thus taking care of long-standing concerns with police accountability and effectiveness.

17) If elected, my number one priority will be to improve affordable housing and address homelessness in Halifax. Of all the issues our city is battling, housing stands right at the fore; its increasing cost is making many of its residents precariously live, and at times not have homes at all. The proposed solutions for Halifax must be multidimensional in nature: letting people have access to housing that is truly affordable and determining long-lasting solutions to homelessness.

How I Plan to Do It:

Increase the Pace in Affordable Housing Development:

Plan: Collaborate with developers, nonprofits, and all levels of government to streamline the approval processes for projects that can be considered affordable housing. This would include revising zoning laws to allow more mixed-use developments and increasing density where appropriate.

Action: Leverage the recently proposed Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) to ramp up the rate of construction for more units of affordable housing, encouraging inclusionary zoning so that new construction reflects a mix of income levels in those buildings.

Increase Funding for Housing Assistance Programs:

Strategy: Increase municipal funding toward rent subsidies and housing support programs. This would help low-income families access market-rate housing while we work on the longer-term solution.

Action: Start partnering with both the provincial and federal governments to access funds from housing initiatives to ensure that those funds are properly utilized in targeting the most vulnerable.

Homeless Population Support:

Strategy: Advance the expansion of Halifax's managed encampment strategy into more permanent, safe, and sanitary accommodations that provide access to services. This would also include further supportive housing options where shelter is integrated with mental health, addiction, and employment services.

Action: Collaborate with local non-profits and shelters for the integration of such services within housing strategies. I would also urge the municipality to make more investments in transitional housing programs.

Innovative Solutions to be Promoted:

Strategy: Incentivize the use of innovative housing models, such as modular homes, tiny home villages, and co-operative housing. These new models can be done more quickly and for less cost than traditional models. Immediately help to alleviate the housing crisis by:

Action: Through partnerships with local developers and community groups, pilot these new models in various neighbourhoods in Halifax to assess their effectiveness.

Why This Goal Matters:

Affordable housing is a basic human right and the backbone of a dynamic, equitable city. We can effectively act on housing crisis as a means of building economic security, reducing poverty, and enhancing quality of life for all Haligonians.

I believe that, together with residents, developers, and all orders of government, we can create a Halifax where everyone is housed affordably and safely. Doing so will have a profound effect on building a more diverse and resilient city for generations to come.