



David Harrison, MCIP

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Memo To: Municipal Clerk's Office, Halifax Regional Municipality
Re: Centre Plan Public Hearing, Package A
Submission for the Public Record
Date: September 16, 2019
From: David Harrison, MCIP

I am a licensed professional planner and Member of the Canadian Institute of Planners; former urban planner with Halifax County; former Executive Director of the Dartmouth Chamber of Commerce and former Vice President of Nova Learning Inc.

I've run my own development consulting practice for the past 18 years.

I'm doing some interesting work this year – I'm helping the cities of Dieppe and St. John's establish mixed income housing strategies as the foundation for urban development.

In the context of this work, I use Dartmouth's Main Street District as a best practice example, because of its cost effective design rules and other attributes.

One of my recommendations at the outset of the Centre Plan process was to use Main Street's form-based code as the design platform for the Dartmouth side of the harbour, but this recommendation was either overlooked or rejected.

That's too bad because the Centre Plan will increase housing costs in Dartmouth.

Have a look at pages 40 to 43 of the Dartmouth Land Use By-law sometime, and consider the differences in design rules on each side of the Circumferential Highway.

Is it important to have urban design consistency over such a wide area like the Centre Plan?

I think not because urban planning needs to respond to local context.

Let's have a little more confidence in the capability of our architects; let's plan more for people, and let's be less prescriptive about what buildings need to look like.

HRM By Design – formerly Halifax By Design – may well suit Halifax but I question its suitability for Woodside, Wyse Road and North End Dartmouth.

Obviously HRM By Design wouldn't be suitable for Main Street.

Given the Centre Plan's impact on housing costs, Dartmouth needs the latitude to make changes to the Centre Plan over time, but I'm told we need a new community council and the reason is to ensure consistency in urban planning.

This is a weak argument. And there is a lack of transparency here: introducing a new political structure at the 11th hour, avoiding public consultation; and then claiming the reason is for consistency in urban planning.

What type of consistency is HRM hoping to achieve?

Consistency between North End Dartmouth and South End Halifax?

I'm opposed to this new community council and recommend it be set aside.

Thank you.