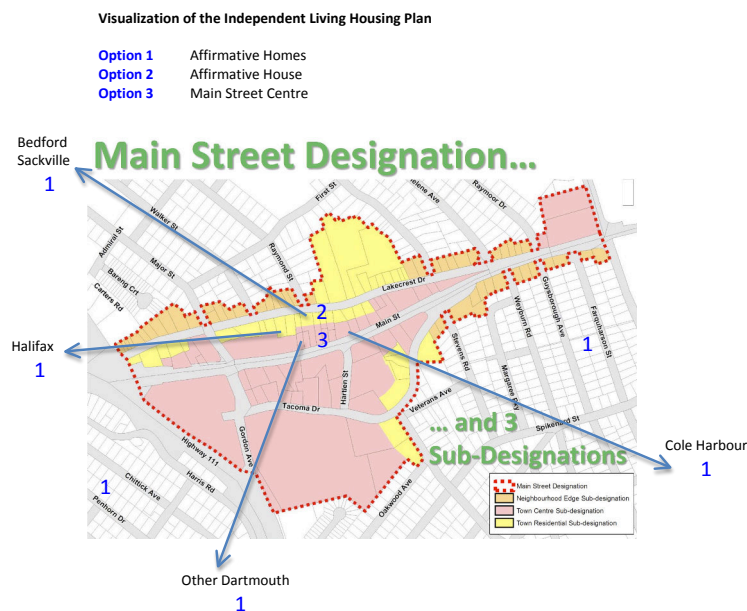


## October 2019 Update

Hello, as a stakeholder interested in our community's affordable housing needs, you've been selected to receive occasional updates on the Main Street Centre: Affirmative Ventures' new affordable housing project being planned on Main Street in Dartmouth.

We're calling it the Main Street Centre because it is in the centre of Main Street; it is also being planned as a centre for social enterprise development and a centre for independent living options for mental health consumers. If you are interested in receiving the Development Vision for the Main Street Centre, or would like to be removed from our mailing list, please contact David Harrison ([dh@davidharrison.ca](mailto:dh@davidharrison.ca)).



We've decided to provide occasional updates on the Main Street Centre to communicate how challenging it is to develop affordable housing. This includes challenges working with 3 levels of government, not to mention realities such as the cost of construction. Speaking of costs, whenever cost factors present a risk to affordability, we'll be identifying those with a **(\$)**. When you add up all the risk factors, some of the challenges and complexities will hopefully become clearer.

There's a lot of information to cover, so we'll try to provide some insight into a couple of topic areas at a time.

## Our Schedule

The project team has just approved design ‘schematics’ that will allow us to generate our first cost estimate (\$) for the building. Subject to financing and other approvals, the Main Street Centre will have five residential floors constructed over a social enterprise ground floor. We are planning 45 units of affordable housing, to be divided between AV’s qualifying tenants as well as housing for older adults.

Halifax Regional Municipality donated vacant property for “Affirmative House” in 2004 and this award winning mental health housing project opened in 2007. Part of the donated land fronting on Main Street remained vacant with little development potential, leading the Association to purchase 139 Main Street (\$) in 2010. AV’s land holdings represent equity for the development of a new building, but may not be enough to secure assistance from at least one affordable housing program (\$). 139 Main St. will need to be demolished (\$) and AV’s offices and social enterprises will need to be relocated (\$) while Main Street Centre is under construction.

A previous development effort stalled in 2015; our current planning effort has been underway for about 2 years now. Our work is supported by a CMHC ‘SEED’ contribution; but we are carrying a \$100K deficit (\$) in our planning budget. Since 2007, permit fees have escalated 1000%. HRM has agreed to waive permit fees for non-profit housing projects; efforts are underway to deal with Halifax Water fees (\$).

A piece of the Affirmative House property (in blue) needs to be severed in order to create the Main Street Centre development lot (in pink). In order to do this, we had to discharge the Affirmative House development agreement (\$) and we will be submitting an application (\$) to consolidate the properties.

One important goal is to try to get the new building ‘closed in’ by December 2020 in order to avoid winter construction costs (\$). The next 6 months will be critical for securing financing, advancing design of the building and completing our project plan.

We will use a construction management approach, which has some schedule advantages, but the main reason is to negotiate product contributions from the trades. With Affirmative House we were able to reduce the capital costs by 10% this way. All of the risk factors (\$) identified above need to be managed to help secure the most affordable rents possible.

