



## UDI Press Release

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For Immediate Release

### UDI cautiously endorses RP+5

The Urban Development Institute of Nova Scotia is cautiously supporting adoption of the RP+5 Regional Development Plan.

After a thorough review UDI finds that the RP+5 Plan strikes a reasonable balance relative to future settlement patterns for the urban, suburban, and rural areas of the municipality. The current framework of the Regional Plan will heavily influence where development takes place; however, UDI believes there is still a need and desire to have choice in the market place. To this end HRM should collectively plan for good and affordable development throughout the region.

While on the whole UDI supports the Plan, its members are concerned with the increase in processing times for all aspects of development, be they simple building permits or more complicated discretionary approvals such as plan amendments and development agreements. At the time of adoption of the Regional Plan in 2006, UDI cautioned Council that the Plan places greater emphasis on development agreements than as-of-right opportunities through the various land-use by-laws. As such, it was suggested that senior management along with regional council ensure that the internal business processes are sufficiently rationalized to handle the additional logistics which accompany the discretionary approval process.

Unfortunately, the industry *has not experienced an improvement in approval times* from the simplest of development applications to the most complex applications involving large acreage projects; UDI members report that planning approvals are taking longer in almost every situation and in many cases the timeline delays are material. HRM by Design was the first attempt to expedite the approval process while providing some level of predictability, but there remain shortfalls in this system. UDI hopes that further refinement will provide better timeframes and more efficient use of staff resources.

UDI remains concerned that the cost of development continues to rise throughout the municipality at a time when the housing and development industry is struggling through a 30-year contraction of the market. Now is not the time to be adding unduly to the cost of new housing, in particular the added expense of total *mandatory* underground wiring in every new development. UDI will continue to question and challenge new charges that unduly add to the ever-increasing costs associated with new development and that will ultimately be paid for by the homeowners and tenants of HRM.

UDI wishes to express its gratitude to the volunteer members of the Community Design Advisory Committee for its role in overseeing the RP+5 review. Next time, it is hoped that the process will be shortened and that industry input is sought as early as possible in the review process. UDI is committed to working with the applicable bodies to ensure that responsible and interesting development occurs in HRM. Through consultation, and our members' diverse developments, UDI can be part of the movement to position HRM as one of the best cities to reside in.

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