

Management of Halifax Regional Municipality's development approval processes needs significant improvement, Evangeline Colman-Sadd said in her report released today, July 18<sup>th</sup>.

The audit found planning application review processes are inefficient and lack consistency among planning staff, contributing to lengthy delays. There is a lack of guidance on which parties should review planning applications, poor communication with developers, and no clear deadlines. Additionally, application review files were sometimes incomplete. "HRM needs to develop a planning application procedure manual to promote efficiency and consistency in reviews," the auditor general said.

Planning and Development's file management system also needs improvement. "There are data quality issues, such as errors and blank fields, that should be addressed to provide management with better information to make decisions," Colman-Sadd said.

Key strategic initiatives, such as simplifying the planning regulatory framework, are behind schedule. "There are 21 municipal plan areas within HRM with separate land use bylaws and municipal planning strategies. Requirements can be quite different for areas next to each other."

The auditor general made 10 recommendations, all of which HRM management said it will implement. The report is available on the auditor general's website at <https://www.halifax.ca/city-hall/auditor-general/published-reports>.

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In her report released today, Auditor General Evangeline Colman-Sadd said management of HRM development approvals requires significant improvement.

Inefficient processes and different approaches among staff lead to lengthy delays. A procedure manual is needed to promote efficiency and consistency in application reviews. Planning and Development's file management system also needs improvement to provide better information to make decisions.

There are delays in implementing Planning and Development's strategic plan which is meant to improve its operations.

The report contains 10 recommendations, all of which HRM management said it will implement. It is available on the auditor general's website at <https://www.halifax.ca/city-hall/auditor-general/published-reports>.

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