

**REGIONAL PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
Wednesday, January 16, 2008**

**PRESENT:** Mr. Fred Morley, Chair  
Councillor David Hendsbee, Vice-Chair  
Councillor Gloria McCluskey  
Ms. Cheryl Newcombe  
Ms. Bonnie Ryan  
Ms. Margo Grant  
Mr. Robert Batherson

**REGRETS:** Councillor Brad Johns  
Mr. Paul Pettipas  
Ms. Heather Bown  
Ms. Susan Corser, Senior Planner

**STAFF:** Mr. Roger Wells, Supervisor, Regional & Community Planning  
Ms. Melody Campbell, Legislative Assistant  
Ms. Sandra Riley, Legislative Assistant

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 3:10 pm in the Helen Creighton Room, Alderney Gate Library.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

**MOVED by Councillor Gloria McCluskey, seconded by Mr. Robert Batherson, that the minutes of November 21, 2007 be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**3. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS**

The Chair, Mr. Fred Morley amended order of business stating that the Transportation Functional Plan Update presentation would be first, followed by the HRM By Design Update presentation.

**MOVED by Councillor McCluskey, seconded by Ms. Margot Grant, that the order of business as amended be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES - None**

**5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS - None**

**6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS - None**

**6.1 Correspondence - None**

**6.2 Petitions - None**

**6.3 Delegations - None**

**7. REPORTS/PRESENTATIONS**

**7.1 Transportation Functional Plan Update (including the Rural Express Transit study)**

Mr. David McCusker, Manager, Regional Transportation gave a presentation on the Transportation Functional Plan Update stating it was previously presented to the Committee of the Whole prior to Christmas. He advised the presentation would introduce the new business unit and what is presently being addressed. The slides were as follows:

- Components of Strategic Transportation Planning
- Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Overview
- TDM Projects Underway
- Explore Opportunity Downtown TDM Reserve
- Active Transportation (AT) Overview

- AT Projects Underway
- Transit Overview
- Transit Projects Underway
- Transit Projects Upcoming
- Focus on Downtown Shuttle
- Focus on HarbourLink (3 slides)
- Road Network Overview
- Road Projects Underway
- Road Projects Upcoming
- Strategic Direction
- Monitoring the Network
- February Regional Plan Advisory Committee

Following the presentation, these clarifications were made:

- Costs for the Lacewood Fairview Interchange are no longer in the five-year plan, however, the third and fourth phase would be the widening of Lacewood Drive;
- The site for the DistriPark would be in Burnside not Rocky Lake;
- Councillor McCluskey enquired as to whether downtown street network referred to both Dartmouth and Halifax downtowns. Mr. McCusker responded that it only referred to the Halifax downtown and explained the reasoning behind this;
- The Ride Matching Program's purpose is to match users for commuting to work and will be typically run online;
- Construction of Park 'n' Ride lots are in the process as part of the Rural Express Transit Service and the lot will not only be for Park 'n' Ride but for car-pooling opportunities;
- Strengthening core services was clarified as increasing surface frequency and extension of routes;
- The HUGA Trail is the Halifax Urban Greenway, an active transportation trail that goes along the top of the CN Rail Cut. He stated that the tracks, themselves, are down in the cut and CN owns land at the top of the cut that is undeveloped.

Mr. Batherson requested clarification on the Staff rationale for going for trail option vs bus option vs rail maintenance option. Mr. McCusker advised that the roadway or a commuter train corridor is not a good use as it is not a direct straight line, and the geometry of the track is designed for a 15 mile per hour speed limit. He stated that the track would have to be completely rebuilt and the geometry would need to be realigned. He commented that the roadside geometry is fine but dedicated transit lanes can be put on Highway 102 and Bayer's Road that are more in line with the routes wanted to run and still get the same effect of what is trying to be done with the newer system. He pointed out that it runs through a residential neighborhood where the backyards are very close to the line and there are two trains a week that go through there. However a steady stream of buses or a high speed train would be quite a difference. He advised that the Community would not like it.

Councillor Hendsbee inquired as to what kind of environmental cleanups are required in the Chester Lakeside Spur Line. Mr. McCusker advised that CN is required to do an

environmental assessment.

Mr. Morley inquired as to whether light rail was ever considered. Mr. McCusker advised that it was considered extensively, however, the Consultants are against light rail as it cannot run with CN's heavy rail. He added that most cities that do take advantage of light rails do so on either abandoned rail corridors or ones that are very wide.

Mr. Wells advised on the connection from Mill Cove and Chinatown, as far as Bedford stating that a consultant study has just been completed in regards to land use opportunities and land use planning in regards to that corridor. He stated that there is a slight benefit in the fact that one track has been torn up, making it now possible to have enough room for an active transportation corridor along that section of the Bedford Basin Waterfront. The plans are to construct a 4 metre wide commuter active transportation recreational trail along the waterfront on the Basin side of the tracks that will connect Chinatown through to the Bedford Waterfront and the development of the visioning of an active transportation trail circumventing all of Halifax Harbour. He added that there are talks with CN regarding trying to get expended use out of the corridor for things like walking and cycling as well.

## **7.2 HRM By Design Update**

Mr. Andy Fillmore, HRMbyDesign Project Manager, Regional Transportation, introduced himself and Jacqueline Hamilton, HRM Manager of Capital District. He stated that the end of the project schedule is near. He commented that the project began by focusing on the entire regional center, both Halifax and Dartmouth, putting aside the downtown core. He stated recent focus has been on the Halifax downtown core with a high level of detail because of specific issues faced in regards to the public. The Project Recap follows:

- Overview: Where are we in the Process: Phase 1 - 7 outlined
- The Urban Structure Plan
- Building Typologies
- Neighbourhoods & Districts
- Neighbourhoods & Districts - Mixed-Use Districts
- Character & Structure - Transit Infrastructure Priorities
- Building Typologies

The Downtown Plan:

- A Vision for Downtown Halifax

Creating a Successful Downtown - The 10 Big Moves:

1. Increasing Residential and Office Space in the Downtown
2. Defined & Distinct Downtown Precincts
3. A Protected & Vibrant Historic Heart
4. Integrate the Cogswell & Cornwallis Park Gateways
5. Provide a Variety of New & Improved Open Space Anchors & Connections
6. Great Streets that Support a Culture of Walking

7. Remediating the Interface & Quality of Existing Buildings & Structures
8. Reinforce Visual Connections & Civic Pride (2 slides)
9. New Developments Designed to be well Mannered & Pedestrian Friendly
10. Enhance the Downtown Skyline

The Preferred Downtown Scenario:

- The Interrelated Components of a Successful Downtown
- The Downtown Program
- Realizing the Vision
  - Five Components of the Preferred Downtown Development Scenario:
    - Good Urbanism
    - Height Patterns - Areas 1 - 4
      - Existing Conditions - Overview of Downtown Halifax
      - Scenario 1: Consolidated Height Pattern - Northern Waterfront
      - Scenario 2: Bookended Height Pattern- North & South Waterfront
      - Scenario 3: Distributed Height Pattern - Framing the View Planes
      - Preferred Downtown Height Scenario - A Balanced Approach
    - Heritage Protection
    - Economic Development & Growth Potential
    - Design Guidelines for Architecture and Public Spaces

The Downtown Plan:

- Lower Water Street at Terminal Road - Looking North
- Lower Water Street at Bishop Street - Looking North
- Cogswell Street at Gottingen Street - Looking East
- Above Cogswell Interchange - Looking West
- Lower Water Street at Cogswell - Looking North
- Province House North Yard - Looking Northwest
- George Street at Lower Water Street - Looking East
- Duke Street at Hollis Street - Looking East

The Committee discussed the presentation with the following questions and suggestions for Staff:

Mr. Morley requested clarification on whether there is a difference between a residential seven storey building and an office seven storey. Mr. Fillmore advised that seven storeys residential would be 80 feet tall, whereas a commercial building would be about 95 feet tall.

Mr. Wells advised that staff is still looking at options on how to treat extra density - Is it as of rights or does the development agreement as an option kick in for the bonus part of the development. He advised this has become discretionary for Council, but only on those aspects of the development. He added that the whole project is not up for debate, only the density part of the development. He commented that those are the kinds of issues that will be brought back to Council.

Councillor Hendsbee expressed concern regarding density of parking capacity for extra height. His suggestion was underground parking for public benefit; go down rather than up. Taking the parking meters away would open up the streetscape. Mr. Fillmore responded that parking is a very important factor to consider but it would be premature to answer at this point.

Councillor Hendsbee raised the issue of whether the power lines will be buried and not butchering trees. Mr. Fillmore responded that Council has approved for the wires underground.

Councillor McCluskey enquired as to when the work would carry to Dartmouth. Mr. Fillmore clarified that the HRMbyDesign project is a big one for the entire Regional Structure and the first three or four phases included downtown Dartmouth, but they stepped back to concentrate on downtown Halifax and then go back to the rest. Mr. Fillmore added that public forums were held in Dartmouth however, the Regional Plan directs staff to take a closer look at downtown Halifax. He added that direction from the Regional Centre Urban Design study was to pay particular attention to downtown and the Spring Garden Road area.

Ms. Hamilton stated that there are Urban Design guidelines developed. She advised that the focus now is to get policy amendments expedited to address the issues of developmental pressure. She commented that the pressure regarding Spring Garden Road is at a much higher level and that is why the focus has been there. She added that Downtown Dartmouth has a fairly recent plan frame adopted in 2000 which will be brought forward shortly.

Mr. Wells advised that the first phase of the HRMbyDesign project did cover both Dartmouth and Halifax. He stated that there were case studies on both sides of the harbour, but as a matter of resourcing, trying to focus the remainder of the consultants' contract in working with the vast resources now, the decision was made to do the downtown Halifax because it can not be done all at once.

A discussion ensued regarding press coverage and opinions vs. reality. Is the reporting accurate.

Mr. Morley advised it would be helpful to educate the debaters out there. He suggested an analysis be done on the economic side. Mr. Fillmore agreed to have this done. He suggested that the Urban Design Task Force collaborate with the Regional Plan Advisory Committee in a workshop.

Mr. Fillmore described the makeup of the Urban Design Task Force to the Regional Plan Advisory Committee. He then clarified the project schedule.

**8. NEW BUSINESS**

**9. ADDED ITEMS:**

Mr. Morley raised the issue of lack of attendance of some members of the Regional Plan Advisory Committee and suggested he, as Chair, contact the members who have had difficulties with attending to find out their intentions regarding the committee.

**MOVED by Mr. Batherson, seconded by Ms. Newcombe that the Chair would contact absentee members of the Regional Plan Advisory Committee. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - February 20, 2008**

The next meeting of the Regional Plan Advisory Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, February 20, 2008.

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 5:38pm.

Sandra T. Riley  
Legislative Assistant