

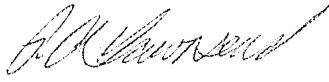


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**Executive Standing Committee**  
**February 27, 2012**

**TO:** Chair and Members of Executive Committee

**SUBMITTED BY:**   
Phillip Townsend, Director, Planning & Infrastructure

**DATE:** January 23, 2012

**SUBJECT:** Supplemental Information: Corporate Sustainability Filter

**ORIGIN**

March 9, 2011: Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee  
January 23, 2011: Executive Standing Committee

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Executive Standing Committee direct staff to adopt an Environmental Implications section as a standard requirement in Regional Council and Committee Reports.

## **BACKGROUND**

January 23, 2012, Executive Standing Committee meeting: 5.1 Corporate Sustainability Filter - Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee:

“MOVED by Councillor Sloane, seconded by Councillor Smith that the Executive Standing Committee refer the matter back to staff for further information regarding the impact and budget implications of adopting Environmental Implications as a standard requirement in Council and Committee reports. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.”

## **DISCUSSION**

At the Committee meeting, Staff was directed to provide supplementary information to the original report to the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee. Of particular note was clarification of the impact on staff resources.

The implementation of the Environmental Implications section of future Committee and Regional Council reports, should the recommendation be approved, would be acted on under the premise that:

1. There is not an additional burden to staff to complete the timely and accurate completion of Reports to Committees and Regional Council;
2. The articulation of the implications would be flexible, succinct, and brief; and
3. Regional Council has already given staff direction related to Environmental Sustainability in policy such as the Procurement Policy, Regional Plan, and other Council direction.

Therefore, the addition of this section will not impose additional budgetary costs to the operations and project delivery of the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM).

There is no new policy direction implied in this report or action.

A draft Guidelines Document, to be distributed to Report Writers on staff, is attached.

The Guideline summarily states:

- Keep it Simple;
- Keep in bullet form;
- Focus on implications identified as areas of interest under Regional Plan, namely:
  - Solid Waste Management;
  - Energy; and
  - Water Quality
- Do not try to make an implication if there isn't one;
- Effort should follow direction from other Council approved Policy (Procurement Policy, Regional Plan, etc.); and
- Energy and Environment Staff will provide support to Staff.

### **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

There are no new implications to the 2012/2013 Operating or Project Budgets. This tool is not providing any new policy direction for staff.

### **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN**

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Project and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Project and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

There has not been specific community engagement on this report, however, two local environmental NGO's, the Sierra Club and Ecology Action Centre, have requested this action in past correspondence with HRM.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

1. Staff may be directed to develop a more comprehensive filter and conduct more broad training on usage. This is not recommended as cost implications would rise.
2. Staff may be directed to not adopt Environmental Implications as a standard section in reports. Staff is already directed to consider Environmental Sustainability through other Council approved Policy.


### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment: Draft Implementation Guideline for Staff

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A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/cc.html> then choose the appropriate Community Council and meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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Financial Approval by:   
Greg Keefe, Director of Finance, 490-6308

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**Implementation Guidelines:** Environmental Implications Section of Regional Council and Committee Reports

**Preamble**

Halifax Regional Municipality is committed to incorporate Environmental Sustainability as a balanced decision making criteria in corporate decisions. Since 2005, HRM has been working with staff to better integrate Environmental Sustainability in the Corporate Culture. One of the outcomes of this effort has been the development, testing and recommended implication of a Sustainability Filter for Council and Committee Reports.

**Action**

Following the investigation and testing of various environmental sustainability filters, it has been recommended, and approved, that a simple and flexible approach be taken. This will enable continuation of development of corporate culture around environmental sustainability and the simple articulation of environmental implications in reports to Committee and Council.

**Intent**

The intent of this addition, as approved by the Executive Committee, on \_\_\_\_\_, to the standard Report Format is to very briefly articulate the Environmental Implications of the Recommended Actions of a Report. It is expected that this section be no more than a couple of bullets.

**Guidelines**

As a guideline, the primary Environmental Implications of priority to the municipality include: Water Quality, Energy Consumption, and Solid Waste Management.

Examples of Environmental Implications:

- Action reduces Community Energy Consumption
- Action risks to Water Quality which are mitigated by Policy xx and / or Action yy.
- Purchase utilized Environmental Certification: (EcoLogo , etc)
- Purchase was evaluated using Life Cycle Costing
- Contracted Item deals with end of life disposal by requiring supplier to take back at end of useful life
- Capital Projects recommended based on a tool that adopts community environmental sustainability parameters as evaluation metrics
- Project required under Regional Plan to enable achievement of Urban growth targets
- Project (ie Development Agreement) meets all Council approved Environmental Policy
- Action will help reduce corporate GHG's by xx per year
- Action / project is as per Regional Plan direction

If the context of the report requires further explanation of the Environmental Implications: that would be expected to be contained within the Discussion Section of the report. (For example a report on the Urban Forest Master Plan may include a piece, in the discussion section, articulating the ecological benefits of trees and the quantification of those benefits). In that case, it would be perfectly acceptable to simply state in the Environmental Implications section: Articulated in Discussions Section of Report.

If a report does not have a considered Environmental Implications, it is not expected that staff would reach to articulate one. For example, if purchasing a Fire Truck, or a Road Grader, there may not be a reasonable opportunity to consider Environmental Implications. In that case, simply state: Implications not identified.

It is not anticipated additional coaching or training is required for implementation of this section. You do not require an additional approval for this section. However, Energy and Environment Staff are prepared to assist Report Writers as required. We will review reports following implementation of this action to investigate where there may be opportunities to:

1. Assist staff with other environmental solutions or options in future;
2. Improve the articulation of the Environmental Implications in future reports;

For help, Energy and Environment Staff can be contacted as follows:

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The commitment to Regional Council and Executive Management is that the staff implications of this requirement will be absolutely minimal. This should be no greater than a brief pause to your report writing. Current Council approved policy, including Procurement Policy and Regional Plan, clearly direct staff to consider environmental implications when making recommendations and planning action. This is not new. As such, a brief articulation of how we considered the implications in our reports should not create a burden on staff time.

I look forward to your help in the implementation of this action.

Thank you,

Richard MacLellan  
Manager, Energy and Environment