



P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Item No. 9.1.1
Environment & Sustainability Standing Committee
April 2, 2015

TO: Chair and Members of Environment & Sustainability Standing Committee

SUBMITTED BY: **Original signed**

Bob Bjerke, Director, Planning and Development

DATE: February 5, 2015

SUBJECT: **Tantallon, Musquodoboit and Porters Lake Watersheds**

ORIGIN

At the July 3, 2014 meeting, the Environmental & Sustainability Standing Committee (ESSC) requested that staff review the Tantallon Watershed Servicing Report, the Porters Lake Watershed Servicing Study Report and the Musquodoboit Harbour Watershed Studies Report and prepare one report integrating the recommendations of the three reports, and that the report be brought back to the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Section 25 of the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter outlines the powers and duties of a community council, to include "monitoring the provision of services to the community and recommending the appropriate level of services, areas where additional services are required and ways in which the provision of services can be improved".

Section 346 of the Halifax Charter enables Council, by by-law, to establish a requirement for homeowners to maintain private on-site septic systems.

Section 352 of the Halifax Charter enables Council, by by-law, to establish Wastewater Management Districts.

Section 353 of the Halifax Charter enables Council, by by-law, to set standards and requirements respecting stormwater management.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Environment & Sustainability Standing Committee recommend to Regional Council that the Tantallon Watershed Servicing Report, the Porters Lake Watershed Servicing Study Report and the Musquodoboit Harbour Watershed Study Report be accepted as background for future planning in these communities.

BACKGROUND

The communities of Upper Tantallon, Tantallon Cross Roads, Porters Lake and Musquodoboit Harbour are identified as Rural Growth Centres by the Regional Plan. To accommodate growth, the Plan directs that watershed studies first be prepared to provide background information for more detailed community planning. The matters that the watershed studies are to address are set out in the Regional Plan (policy E-17 of the 2006 Plan and policy E-23 of the revised Plan).

At the July 3, 2014 meeting, this Committee received watershed study reports for Tantallon, Porters Lake and Musquodoboit Harbour with accompanying recommendation reports from staff, the Regional Watersheds Advisory Board (RWAB), Harbour East – Marine Drive Community Council and the North West Community Council. RWAB accepted the staff recommendation that these studies be accepted by Regional Council as background for future planning in these communities and also made the following additional recommendations:

- HRM adhere to the best management practices specified in the watershed reports regarding wastewater and stormwater management;
- Discharges from all constructed wastewater treatment plants and stormwater management systems be routinely sampled and tested;
- Each of the three areas be considered as a candidate for a Wastewater Management District;
- HRM develop controls ensuring a plan for regular maintenance of on-site septic systems, to include a schedule for mandatory septic tank pump-outs;
- HRM re-instate surface water quality monitoring;
- HRM conduct floodplain mapping in areas of high risk;
- Septic testing be repeated for specific residential properties in the Tantallon area; and
- HRM request the Province to upgrade water systems on its properties to meet current standards.

Both Community Councils recommended that ESSC request a staff report to consider the additional recommendations made by RWAB including identifying any policy changes that would be required, financial implications associated, or jurisdictional issues that may arise from these recommendations.

DISCUSSION

As subject matter experts with respect to watershed management, the mandate of the Regional Watershed Advisory Board includes advising this Committee on municipal policy projects, as required under the HRM Charter by the Regional Planning Strategy. Accordingly, the watershed studies were referred to RWAB for review with regard to soundness of methodology and completeness in terms of the matters to be addressed by the Regional Plan.

The Board recommendation that these studies be accepted as background for future community planning is consistent with its mandate. Staff would therefore recommend that this recommendation be forwarded to Regional Council for adoption.

Many of the additional recommendations made by RWAB originate from the consultants' recommendations or issues arising from the study findings. However, these recommendations are beyond the Board's mandate and, at this point, staff are not in a position to advise on required policy amendments, fiscal implications or jurisdictional issues, as requested by the Community Councils. Notwithstanding, many of the additional recommendations are consistent with the Watershed Studies and will be assessed through subsequent planning for these communities.

The studies found varying degrees of constraints and opportunities to new development in each watershed and there were instances where water quality objectives established by the Regional Plan or

desired by area residents were not being achieved. Recommendations were made to consider a variety of remedial measures for existing development and measures to accommodate new development. These included:

- Establishing public education and stewardship programs
- developing with clustered water and wastewater treatment systems
- ensuring routine maintenance and monitoring of wastewater treatment systems
- establishing wastewater management districts
- requiring advanced stormwater treatment systems for new developments and retrofitting existing systems
- developing with municipal water or wastewater systems.

The Regional Plan provides policy support to consider all of these measures. This Committee has requested staff to prepare one report integrating the recommendations of the three reports, and that the report be brought back. However, the successfulness and viability of each measure, as well as the manner in which each might be applied, would be expected to vary in each community and many of the consultants servicing recommendations are unique to the community. It is for this reason that staff has recommended that each study be accepted in support of planning for each community.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not required for this report.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None associated with this report

ALTERNATIVES

This Committee could:

1. Recommend to Regional Council that the watershed studies be used as background for future community planning. This is the staff and RWAB recommendation.
2. Direct staff to investigate any or all of the other RWAB recommendations and report back to the Committee. This directive is not recommended by staff as resources would be diverted from other higher priority planning initiatives and many of the matters raised by the RWAB recommendations will be addressed through community planning initiatives.

ATTACHMENTS

None.

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/index.php> [or other appropriate Committee link] then choose the appropriate [Community Council/Board] and meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210, or Fax 902.490.4208.

Report Prepared by: Paul Morgan, Senior Planner 902.490.4482
