

**Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee  
November 14, 2011**

**TO:** Chair and Members of Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee

**SUBMITTED BY:**   
Phillip Townsend, Director, Infrastructure and Asset Management

**DATE:** October 5, 2011

**SUBJECT:** Update: Potential Hazards to Development Functional Plan

**INFORMATION REPORT**

**ORIGIN**

September 8, 2011, Functional Plans.

**BACKGROUND**

Policy E-21, Regional Plan: *HRM shall prepare a Potential Hazards to Development Functional Plan to seek measures to mitigate risks to life and property associated with development.*

## **DISCUSSION**

The September 8<sup>th</sup> report to the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee (ESSC) outlines that this Functional Plan is “ongoing”. This update is intended to broadly inform the committee on what that means.

According to Regional Plan, The Potential Hazards to Development Functional Plan should consider:

1. Identifying areas such as the location of contaminated sites, abandoned mines, pits and quarries, and areas at high risk for radon exposure through cooperation and collaboration with the Province;
2. Preparing an Historical Land Use Map to identify sites that may have been contaminated through former land uses;
3. Developing guidelines to protect the public from potential hazards, as listed above;
4. Developing guidelines to educate the general public about potential hazards to human life and property; and
5. Developing management plans for climate change, coastal inundation and storm surge events, wildland/urban interface fires and emergency preparedness for dam failure.

The lead in Planning and Infrastructure for this Functional Plan is the Manager of Energy and Environment.

Work to-date includes the ClimateSMART project (<http://www.halifax.ca/climate/>) which is an award winning collaboration between the private sector and multiple levels of government, academia, and others.

Some outcomes of ClimateSMART are:

- Community Climate Change Action Guide
- Developers Guide to Climate Change (for which the Province refined a tool this year)
- Initiation of Community Climate Change Action Plans

In 2011, staff initiated a Vulnerability Mapping Project in Eastern Passage in collaboration with Emergency Measure Organization (EMO). The Information Report on that work can be seen at: <http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/swrac/documents/InfoReportClimateChangeWorkshopEasternPassageCowBay.pdf>.

Following the first public engagement, staff learned a number of things, one of which is that the initial plan to perform four Community Climate Change Action Plans per year was much too ambitious within existing resources. In the fall of 2011, staff expects to return to Eastern Passage to continue the vulnerability mapping work, and to likely conduct a winter/spring 2012 session.

Staff of the Energy and Environment office is continuing to work with EMO staff on ensuring that efforts are effective in gathering information and data that can be used for future HRM asset/infrastructure and planning decisions. The Eastern Passage work is enabling staff to

continue to establish the effective process of this long term planning and decision making support project. A key component in this effort is the empowerment of residents and communities around mitigation and adaptation to various identified vulnerabilities.

Future Work is envisioned to be a continuation of the community vulnerability mapping and climate change action planning at a community level. It is anticipated that based on current available resources, this long term work will prioritize locations by willingness of residents to participate and identify emergency service delivery and planning risk. Specifically, it is envisioned that Community Climate Change Action plans will be developed for the next decade or so. Staff will report to Regional Council on completed Community Climate Change work as it progresses to completion.

Much of this work, and the execution thereof, will be performed in a manner to ensure compliance to Infrastructure Secretariat Gas Tax Funding requirements. Staff believe that HRM's work meets these requirements. However, should requirements be defined to meet compliance that require a different plan of work delivery, staff would need to respond by adjusting the workplan and budget accordingly.

Further, it is anticipated that staff will recommend a narrowing of the scope of the plan to eliminate work called for that is:

- expensive or difficult to obtain;
- the value of obtaining does not appear to justify the work; and
- not providing this work does not disrupt any development or create any risks.  
(examples of this would be the identification of contaminated sites, radon, etc.)

Should the anticipated work plan for this requirement be deemed appropriate following the Regional Plan Review Project (to ensure there are no other collateral impacts) and clarification of Gas Tax funding requirements, staff will be seeking approval from Regional Council for a revised policy or preparing the appropriate documents to ensure the completed and ongoing operational work satisfy completion of the Regional Plan requirement.

## **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

There are no implications to the 2011/2012 Operating or Capital Budget.

Current levels of planning are captured within existing departmental operating budget levels. Expedited work and work related to the items staff is considering the value of completing, would be additional costs requiring an increase to budget or adjustment to workplan.

The Canada Nova Scotia Infrastructure Secretariat (<http://www.nsinfrastructure.ca/index.aspx>) administers the Federal Gas Tax Fund. HRM received approximately \$20 million from this source in 2011/2012: It is a major source of capital funding. The types of projects funded under the program include:

- ***Environmentally sustainable municipal infrastructure projects:*** community energy systems, public transit infrastructure, water infrastructure, wastewater infrastructure, solid waste, local roads and bridges, capacity building, and active transportation infrastructure; and
- ***Public transit infrastructure projects:*** rapid transit infrastructure, rolling stock, intelligent transit systems, accessible transit, and related capital infrastructure.

As a qualifier of receiving Gas Tax Funding, each Municipality must have an Integrated Community Sustainability Plan. The HRM Regional Plan qualifies as this requirement. A supplemental requirement of the plan (and the funding) is the development of a Climate Change Action Plan. The work that HRM has undertaken under ClimateSMART and other climate change work, would be the basis of HRM meeting this requirement. It is important that HRM ensure that our planning and implementation projects meet the requirements of this substantial funding source.

## **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**

Reference: Eastern Passage Climate Change Workshop:

<http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/swrac/documents/InfoReportClimateChangeWorkshopEasternPassageCowBay.pdf>

## **ATTACHMENTS**

None

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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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