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Item No.

Marine Drive, Valley & Canal Community Council  
March 26, 2008

**TO:** Chair and Members of Marine Drive, Valley & Canal Community Council

**SUBMITTED BY:** Cathie O'Toole  
Cathie O'Toole, Director, Infrastructure and Asset Management

**DATE:** March 1, 2008

**SUBJECT:** Sullivans Pond Banook Masterplan Report

**ORIGIN:**

Staff undertook a public masterplanning exercise for the public properties around Sullivans Pond and Lake Banook. Of special consideration was the 09 World Canoe Championships to be held on Lake Banook in August of 2009.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Marine Drive, Valley & Canal Community Council:

- 1) Approve the Sullivans Pond and Lake Banook: Masterplan Report in principle as the preferred direction for the public lands and park properties in this area.
- 2) Forward the study information to Regional Council for capital consideration in support of the 2008 Nationals and the 2009 World Canoe Championships

## BACKGROUND

The Shubenacadie Canal Lakes Waterway is a unique resource which winds its way from the Minas Basin to the Halifax County Line at Grand lake through Wellington, Fall River, Waverley and the core of Dartmouth to Halifax Harbour. It is a unique natural resource available for the daily use and enjoyment of a great many HRM residents and visitors alike. The Dartmouth chain of lakes, beginning with Sullivan's Pond and ending at Grand Lake, is home to an international caliber canoe/kayak course, innumerable historic and cultural assets, a historic canal and portage route, freshwater for swimming and boating, skating, as well as an array of parks, playgrounds, and the Trans Canada Trail. All of this is surrounded by a diverse pattern of urban, residential, suburban, rural and natural landscapes. While these water bodies are an invaluable resource to our community, the land-based public facilities supporting activities on and around the lakes are in need of repair, renewal, or redesign to take advantage of new opportunities and to ensure their long term by the community. A comprehensive approach to masterplanning the area has never been completed.

The Halifax Regional Municipality is undertaking a series of detailed masterplans focussing on the public uses of the waterway and associated public lands. Each masterplan examines a particular geographic portion of the waterway. Together they will form a comprehensive direction for the entire length of the system within HRM. The aim is to safeguard, promote appropriate use and develop public opportunities along its length. The municipality has completed the first in the series of studies in 2006 with the Canal Greenway. That plan examined the waterway from the harbour through the Starr Property to just below Sullivans Pond. The second study, Sullivans Pond Banook Masterplan is aimed at continuing up the waterway through Sullivans Pond and Lake Banook. This study pays special emphasis to;

- a) Sullivans Pond as a special feature in the downtown area.
- b) Lake Banook as an international caliber paddling basin and the home to many sporting and special event activities.
- c) Minimizing the impact and maximizing any benefits of the North Dartmouth Trunk Sewer Project which is slated to run between the north end of Banook and Brookdale Park.

Future studies will concentrate on Lake MicMac through Shubie Park, to the north end of Lake Charles and from there through the remainder of the lakes to Shubenacadie Grand Lake.

### *Sullivans Pond Banook Masterplan Study Purpose*

The purpose of the study is to comprehensively examine a range of **municipal issues** pertaining to **Sullivans Pond** and **Lake Banook** (see study map area page 12 of attachment A). The area is high profile and recognized for its passive qualities within an urban context. These municipal locations include Sullivans Pond Park, Birch Cove Park, Findaly Park, Hawthorn Street, Lions Beach, Brookdale Park, Silvers Hill and Grahams Grove. Of particular importance is Lake Banook itself and its use as a international caliber paddling basin producing high caliber regional, national and international athletes. The goal of the plan is to **develop a common vision that HRM and its partners can work towards in making the most out of this exceptional resource.**

Of particular consideration is the Canadian Canoe Championships to be held at Lake Banook in 2008 and the 2009 World Senior Canoe Championships which will be held at Banook. A special emphasis was to **identify capital improvements** that can be **completed in time** to enhance the community's ability to host these important events and leave a legacy for the public and the continued success of paddling in this region.

## DISCUSSION

### *Executive Summary*

The study was carried out by Ekistics Planning and Design. The process and draft study was vetted by an advisory committee of stakeholder organizations and representatives from the local community as well as the local Councillor. The process involved three well attended public meetings, sessions and interviews with stakeholder groups including the paddling community, local business interests, first nations and government agencies. A steering committee of HRM staff from Community Development, Capital District and Transportation and Public Works guided the project.

### Introduction

The study area is important from a Regional Planning perspective owing to its role in the provision of public access to water, areas suited to passive and active recreation, active transportation linkages, and areas of outstanding scenic, historical and cultural value. Its position within the Shubenacadie Canal Lakes Waterway gives it regional significance. As an international caliber racing and training basin it is extremely important however it should be understood that as a high quality venue it is unique. Most paddling basins are single purpose manmade facilities. Banook is a natural water body set in the centre of a community. This makes Banook desirable as a venue but also presents some limitations. A number of case studies carried out under this study demonstrate the duality of this unique situation. Banook's clean water and available public lands offer many opportunities to improve the course at much lower costs than the investments which have been made to develop manmade courses which often suffer from poor water quality and are often far removed from local support infrastructure and amenities. There are, however, limitations around Banook owing to private residential and commercial properties as well as the multi-use role required of the public lands surrounding the lake and race course. This unique area is filled with historical and cultural sites, residential community considerations, and high recreational, environmental, transportation, and elite sport values all which require consideration.

### General Plans

Identification and Interpretation - The area must be understood to be part of the Shubenacadie Canal and will rely upon a common language in signage, interpretive materials and strong seamless connections to the Canal Greenway to the South and Shubenacadie Trail and Park to the north. This will enable users to understand that they are part of a much larger entity which shapes our community. A series of major and minor gateways, specialized signage, street furniture and places for public art allow users to understand that they are in a place of importance within the community. Themes include;

- The Shubenacadie Canal
- Mi'kmaq history and culture
- Home of Hockey (combined with the Starr Site to the south)
- Ecology and the Environment
- Regional, national, international, canoe/kayak and rowing centre

Active Transportation and Trails - Active transportation trails are very important to the public. The community expressed a strong desire for a trail system completely around Lake Banook, improved connections to Sullivans Pond and Downtown Dartmouth and north to Shubie Park. These elements are very achievable within this plan and are indicated within each detail area. The trail system must be understood as part of a region wide system connecting many different communities and destinations as well as for its local recreation value.

Water Quality - Without touchable water, the value of the study area is immensely diminished. The public was very singular in its ranking of water quality as the most important value for the area. The study identified warm storm water flow from parking lots into the lake systems where they can encourage algal growth leading to depleted oxygen levels. Recommendations for deep water cooling ponds are included in the report as one means of ensuring a high level of water quality for Lake Banook and Sullivans Pond. Other means, such as the introduction of a floating fountain at Grahams Grove to assist with aeration, are also recommended. However, water quality can only be assured through diligence in regards to the impact of development within the entire watershed and educating people about how we should manage human impact upon the lakes. The Dartmouth Lakes Advisory Committee is recognized as a leading partner in ensuring that the water quality of the lakes system is not compromised.

North Dartmouth Trunk Sewer - The North Dartmouth Trunk Sewer project had been previously identified as a project which was necessary but could have potential negative impacts upon the north end of Lake Banook. This study recommends ways to minimize impacts upon the lake and surrounding public properties. It also recommends ways in which the sewer alignment can be used for a public trail. A route for the pipe was selected to minimize the impact upon parkland, tree stands and the race course. The details for the North Dartmouth Trunk Sewer have already been presented to Regional Council and have been approved to proceed.

Parking - Banook and Sullivans Pond represent a unique combination of public uses within a largely residential community. With hundreds of users daily during the paddling season and thousands during regattas and special events all contained within a narrow valley largely occupied by a lake and a busy arterial roadway there is not much land left for surface parking. Parking is one of the toughest challenges to increasing public use. There is a definite shortage of available affordable lands for which might be dedicated for parking in association with the various parks. There are existing lots parking areas which should be improved, however during special events these often are utilized as event venues. During events people do walk on the trails and sidewalks from home, take transit, park at shopping malls or park several streets away and walk the remainder of the way. Any contemplated changes to, not only the public lands but also private lands, must take the parking shortage into account. This includes densification of residential areas and increased commercialization.

### Individual Sites

Detailed plans were developed for seven public sites which contribute to the public use and enjoyment of the area. Again, special attention was paid to how those sites might be used for national and international Canoe events and how they can leave a legacy for all levels of paddlers and rowers, other special events and daily use by citizens.

Sullivans Pond - The Sullivans Pond detail area includes the small area of municipal land at the corner of Ochterloney and Prince Albert Road as well as the Cenotaph area at the corner of Crichton Ave. and Ochterloney. Plans for the area include creating the means to provide a safe trail crossing between Sullivans Pond and a new corner plaza at Prince Albert and Ochterloney. Improvements to the Cenotaph area to make it more useable and accessible for ceremonies of remembrance and other public events such as the Christmas Tree Lighting. The active transportation trail which follows from the Dartmouth Waterfront through the Starr Property runs on both sides of Sullivans Pond to Hawthorn Street. One route is intended to be a more direct for commuters linking along Prince Albert Road to the existing trail at Nowlan Street. The other is more passive path wanders through the west side of the park, across Hawthorn to Findlay Park where it too joins the existing alignment near Nowlan Street. Improvements to the bandstand, park furniture, pathways, transit stops and plantings are intended to enhance Sullivans Pond as a focus for passive activity in the area. Repairs to existing infrastructure are required as well as some strategic changes in order to better manage waterfowl issues while still providing habitat for wildlife which urban dwellers appreciate. Enhancements to "Charman's Corner" help direct people into the park and let those passing in vehicles know that Sullivans Pond is a desirable destination.

Hawthorn Street - The goal in improving Hawthorn Street is to provide a strong and very pleasant connection between Sullivans Pond to the south and Findlay Park and Lake Banook to the North. This is important to the continuous greenway theme extending the entire length of the waterway from Harbour to Grand Lake. Simple improvements to paving, sidewalks and park entrances signal that this is part of the larger park system and signal to drivers that there is a flow of park users

between the two areas. Enhancements to the bus stop are planned. The existing views across Sullivans Pond to downtown Dartmouth and the Harbour to the south and to Findlay Park and Lock 1 will be enhanced. This section of Hawthorn Street has a great deal of potential and is one of the uncovered gems of the masterplan.

Findlay Park/Lions Beach/ Patterson's Corner - This area is one of the most under utilized public areas of park within the study area. Simple enhancements, revegetation, interpretive signage and improvements to the infrastructure will make these areas function for passive and active use as well as special events and regattas. A few key improvements are;

- Cleanup of the natural pool and shoreline below lock 1,
- Paving of the Knowlan Street parking lot,
- Floating pedestrian connection for circulation between the three boat clubs
- Repair to shorelines at the south end of the lake and the lions beach
- Public washrooms
- Gateway entrance at "Pattersons Corner".
- Installation of one of three electronic information kiosks allowing passerby to know of upcoming events on the lake and in the area parks
- Installation of interpretive materials relating to the lake and the connection between this area and the early beginnings of hockey.

Future opportunities for improvements include an informal expansion of the beach area between Micmac and Senobe Boat Clubs to provide better opportunities for regular club users as well as providing a location for visiting clubs to locate during mid-size regattas.

Silvers Hill - The area including Silvers Hill and the municipal lands associated with Prince Albert Road next to the lake have long been regarded as an opportunity for spectator viewing of and hosting of special events. This is a traditional Natal Day site. However, to date the supporting infrastructure have been less than satisfactory or temporary in nature. The plan suggests permanent opportunities to provide good spectator seating as well as ceremonial and entertainment space to accommodate larger regattas and civic events. During non-use times these improvements would function as daily passive spaces and provide utilitarian needs such as open space, parking and active transportation routes. The current need for closing the street would still be a central requirement for larger events. The street level improvements will be named Boosenech Plaza (the Mi'kmaq one word sentence for "let us journey over water by canoe") as part of the efforts to recognize the traditional use of this waterway by aboriginal people and their gift of the canoe to the world.

Grahams Grove - Long being a passive recreation area, Grahams Grove offers opportunities for greater use for recreation paddlers and learn to paddle classes. It is also an important location for area triathlons at the local and regional level. With improvements the aim is to make it suitable for international races. Formalization and paving of the parking lots and construction of new washrooms and recreation support buildings will make the park more attractive and useable. A fountain to help

aerate stagnant water (caused by the infilling for the Parclo and highway) should help improve water quality. There is a second opportunity for an additional beach.

The provincial ambulance service has been looking for a location for a small ambulance station in the area for a number of years. The plan demonstrates how that may be accommodated on an adjacent parcel of provincial land. EMC has also offered to accommodate municipal police on site if desired. Not only would this provide a satellite location for emergency services but would also help by having a 24 hour presence in the park and a base for these services during large special events.

Turtle Creek - The area on the western side of Banook was formerly known as Turtle Creek prior to it being damned and flooded for the canal. Lacking a better name, the area between Oakwood House and the private lands to the North is becoming known by that old time name. This area, while public, predominantly is utilized for paddling and rowing purposes. Presently it contains the North Star Rowing docks, the judges tower and the Atlantic Canoe Association Annex building which supports the Banook race course. During local regattas the area is the site where clubs from other lakes and communities set up their team tents and boats. Improvements include paving of high traffic paths and areas along the shoreline as well as landscaping and increased maintenance of landscape areas to better accommodate the intense use during training events and races. Formalization of the parking area adjacent to North Star Rowing and investigating its redesign may be required in light of a possible siting of a national training centre in the area behind the Annex.

Birch Cove - The area at Birch Cove requires improvements to meet the needs of the general public who use it as its passive park and swimming area. Tucked in a residential neighbourhood it is intended to stay as a local park. However, it would benefit from several upgrades which would benefit the regular users but also enhance our ability to host large national and international regattas. For the 09 Worlds the area is to be used as a daytime "village" where athletes will rest relax and prepare for their races (athletes will be housed at Saint Marys University). General upgrades include repairs to retaining walls, paving of the parking area and pathways. New additions include setting up temporary wharves, "camp sites" for daytime tents for each country, electrical and water services, washrooms/showers and recreation support buildings.

### Implementation

The plan is intended to be implemented over a fifteen years. Obviously the upcoming paddling championships will drive certain work ahead of others, however, once past those requirements projects can be structured to take advantage of other work or initiatives in the area. Special emphases should be placed however on completing the trail connections as they are part of a larger system with a great deal of existing investment. Sullivans Pond is a particular focus as it can be enjoyed by a wide range of citizens and is a focus for the community owing to its location and by the number of people who travel by it each and every day. Improvements made in flowers, fountains and lights prior to this plan have been well received to date. The masterplan identifies a proposed phasing for the entire project.

### Priority Approach - 09 World Championships

Plans for the 09 and to a lesser extent the 08 championship events require the use of municipal property to host an event involving almost 100 countries and over 3000 athletes and coaches. Support for the event is widespread. After the experience of the Commonwealth Games bid it is widely recognized that HRM lacks many facilities to properly host larger events and to develop its own citizen athletes at the elite or at the lower levels. One obvious aim in trying to correct this is to improve on existing successes. Arguably, there is no more successful regional, national and international program than the paddling programs across HRM. The centre of that success and support is Lake Banook. Staff have had a number of meetings with Canoe Atlantic Members and the 08 and 09 organizing committees to examine which projects from the study would be required in order to successfully host these two events. Detail appears in Appendix A. At this point the priority projects are;

- Lions Beach - End of basin is a key connection for spectators, athletes and officials.
- Turtle Grove - Center of Officials, Judging.
- Boosenech Plaza - Opening and Closing Ceremonies, Medal Ceremonies, Spectator Area, some broadcast facilities.
- Birch Cove - Athletes area for race preparation, training and athlete services
- Race Course Improvements - Infrastructure associated with the course must be replaced/improved

The benefit of this approach is that by working with the Canoe Championships these projects potentially attract funds from other levels of government and leave a legacy which improves the communities ability to;

- provide higher level training and competition facilities
- provide a suite of flexible facilities which can be used to scale up or down for local, regional, national or international events
- provide for daily passive and active recreation training and competition for a variety of sports, pastimes and activities
- give all of the public better access to the unique features and activities at Banook and Sullivans Pond

### Development Time Horizons

Approvals in the spring of 08 will allow two construction seasons to complete the works. However, it must be understood that these sites will continue to be functioning during these construction



periods which will present some limitations. Survey and planning work for projects associated with the championship events is underway at this time as the lateness of approvals would not allow for adequate lead time to take advantage of the 08 construction season.

### **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

The total estimated costs (class C estimates) for the entire project is \$8.5 million dollars. The plan is divided into several distinct projects which allow it to be implemented over fifteen years. The highest priority projects at this time are those associated with the 08/09 paddling championships. Those projects amount can be found in appendix A. They amount to approximately \$5.1 million dollars over two years, however a second bare necessity budget was produced which amounts to \$4 million dollars over two years. It represents those portions of the projects which are most necessary. At this point HRM is looking at a \$2 million dollar investment in its own properties. Application has been made through to the federal and provincial levels of governments to cost share for infrastructure improvements associated with the events on municipal lands. At this point plans are awaiting pending government announcements and will be subject to HRM Regional Council discussing its role as part of the upcoming 08/09 budget deliberations.

Approval of this report in no way constitutes approval of HRM capital funds prior to budget deliberations of Regional Council.

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

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

### **ALTERNATIVES**

- 1) Community Council could choose not to adopt the plan in principle and direct staff to pursue other directions for the municipal lands associated with the project
- 2) Community Council could approve in principle but direct staff to pursue other near time priorities than those associated with the upcoming paddling championships.

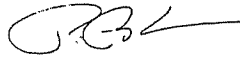
### **ATTACHMENTS**

Sullivans Pond and Lake Banook Masterplan Report

08 Nationals and 09 World Canoe Championships Paddling Legacy Project Schedule

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

Report Prepared by: Peter Bigelow



Report Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Financial Approval by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Catherine Sanderson, Senior Manager, Financial Services, 490-1562



Report Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Cathie O'Toole, Director, Infrastructure and Asset Management,

## 08 Nationals and 09 World Canoe Championships Paddling Legacy Projects

	*Full Applicable Cost	Phase I (08)	Phase II (09)	Later Phases	Scaled Back Version	Phase I (08)	Phase II (09)
Findlay Park	\$280k	\$280k			\$250k	\$200k	\$50k
Lions Beach	\$250k	\$250k			\$250k	\$250k	
Pattersons Corner	\$256k		\$120k	\$136k	\$120		\$120k
Silvers Hill	\$1,900k	\$730k	\$1,177k		\$1,300k	\$550k	\$750k
Turtle Grove	\$430k	\$430k			\$320k	\$320k	
Birch Cove	\$1,100k	\$550k	\$5,50k		\$750k	\$350k	\$400k
**Race Course Improvements	\$1,000k	\$500k	\$500k		\$1,000k	\$500k	\$500k
<b>Totals</b>	\$5,216k	\$2,740k	\$2,347k	\$136k	\$3,990	\$2,170	\$1,820k

\*Note - Full Applicable Costs are those which are attributable to incremental costs associated with function in and around the Paddling Basin either on a day to day level, local and regional regatta level, and national and international regatta levels. The aim is to make Banook a better, scalable facility to accommodate each of these levels of function.

## Council Report Sign-Off Sheet

**Subject:**

Meeting Date: \_\_\_\_\_  Regular Council  COW  In Camera  Information Report  
 Community Council

Prepared by \_\_\_\_\_ Name & Business Unit \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

First Draft for Information Only  Consultation  Approved By  Approval

	Stakeholder -Internal	Approved By	Date & Time	Time spent on report (min)	Revised Date	Initial
✓	Not Required (unique to originating Business Unit)					
	By-Law Rationalization					
	BPIM					
	CD					
	EMS					
	Finance - FinTrack - Accounts - Financial Consultants - Procurement - Manager					
	Fire					
	H R					
	Legal					

	Police						
	TPW						
	Library						
	RCMP						
	Water Commission						
	Councillor (s)						
	<b>Stakeholder - External</b>						

