



PO Box 1749  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3J 3A5 Canada

Western Region Community Council  
April 28, 2008

**TO:** Chair and Members of Western Region Community Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Dunphy".

**SUBMITTED BY:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Paul Dunphy, Director of Community Development

**DATE:** April 18, 2008

**SUBJECT:** Urban Design - Planning Districts 1 & 3 (St. Margarets Bay)

### INFORMATION REPORT

#### ORIGIN

- March 31, 2008 Western Region Community Council meeting - Councillor Meade requested staff prepare an information report regarding alternatives to address urban design guidelines for growth areas within Planning Districts 1 & 3 (St. Margarets Bay), in particular the MU-2 Zone.
- A development permit has been issued for a Canadian Tire Corporation (CTC) store at 5152 St. Margarets Bay Road in Tantallon.
- Case # 01110 - Application by Terrain Group Inc on behalf of Canadian Tire Corporation (CTC) to amend the sign requirements of the Planning Districts 1 & 3 (St. Margarets Bay) Land Use By-law.
- February 11, 2008 Report to Regional Council on the future community visioning program.

## **BACKGROUND**

The lands along the south side of Highway #333 (St. Margarets Bay Road) leading to Exit 5 are designated Mixed Use B Designation and are primarily zoned Mixed Use (MU-2). As stated in the Municipal Planning Strategy, "The Mixed Use A & B Designation recognizes the semi-rural nature of large parts of the Planning District". As such, the Designation supports a wide range of residential, commercial, institutional and resource uses. The two designations are virtually the same except that in the Mixed Use "A" Designation, fish processing plants are permitted by right, while in the Mixed Use "B" Designation, such uses may only proceed by development agreement. The Mixed Use (MU-2) Zone of Planning Districts 1 & 3 was applied to the plan area during the early 1990's during the plan review process. At that time the residents wanted a broad range of uses permitted while not restricting as-of-right capability.

As a result of the plan review and public participation process, there are limited design guidelines established in the Land Use By-law and in the Municipal Planning Strategy for commercial development except those that are considered through the development agreement process such as: senior citizen housing, multiple unit dwellings, new mobile home parks, commercial entertainment, video arcades, campgrounds & marinas, crematoriums, extractive facilities, intensive agricultural uses. There are also some design provisions for the lands zoned Comprehensive Development District (CDD).

Case # 01110, an amendment to the sign requirements for the Planning Districts 1 & 3 (St. Margarets Bay) Land Use By-law, has been a catalyst for raising other issues for the community as it relates to the area's current commercial development pressure and the limited development controls.

## **DISCUSSION**

Currently the Plan Area is still a predominantly semi-rural area but has recently undergone significant residential growth. Since the creation of the Municipal Planning Strategy, the area around Exit 5 and in particular Upper Tantallon, has seen an above average change in population, 54% between 1996 and 2006. Through the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy, approved in 2006, the rapidly growing community was designated as a Rural Commuter Centre. This designation reflects the growth of the residential community and the new public infrastructure in the area, which includes the twinning of highway 103 completed in 2006/07, the construction of Sir John A MacDonald High School 2006 and Tantallon Public Library (2001).

Under the Regional Plan, all growth centres within the municipality are scheduled to undergo community visioning exercises, and in the case of the Upper Tantallon growth centre area, this will be preceded by a watershed management/servicing study.

On March 18, 2008, Regional Council approved a prioritized program for undertaking watershed studies and community visions. For the Upper Tantallon area, the watershed study is scheduled to commence in 2008, followed by the community visioning exercise in 2009.

The watershed management/servicing study (Policy E-17 of the Regional Plan) will help provide a basis for determining the feasibility of such services in relation to receiving waters and the amount of development. The watershed management/servicing study will provide an empirical foundation for visioning once the analysis has been completed.

With the findings of a watershed management/servicing study for Upper Tantallon, the community visioning process (expected to commence in 2009) will be used to engage residents in determining a future direction for the physical, social, environmental and economic objectives of the community. The vision will help guide Council and staff in the review of Municipal Planning Strategy policy, service delivery and capital project planning. The visioning process will also build increased citizen capacity such that the community can themselves undertake local initiatives to implement the vision.

The community visioning process will not include a comprehensive review of land use policy. Rather, a vision statement would be crafted to reflect overall objectives for future community development incorporating a wide range of community interests (physical, social, environmental, etc.). An action plan would also be created identifying community priorities to achieve the vision. The vision and action plan is likely to include an intent to carry out a review of land use policy based on the direction provided through the vision statements.

The watershed management/servicing study and community visioning program described above is the course of action staff is currently planning for, based on the direction approved by Regional Council.

#### Interim Alternative

Council may feel that the issue of the large format commercial development within the Mixed Use Designations of the Planning District 1 & 3 Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) requires more immediate action, rather than waiting for the community visioning process. In this case, Council could choose to recommend to Regional Council that it initiate the process to amend the MPS. Staff suggest this process be confined to the matter of reviewing land use policy and development control options for large commercial development, and would be viewed as an interim measure pending the commencement of the community visioning project slated for 2009. Through community visioning, a more comprehensive assessment of land use policy and regulation may be recommended, should residents feel at that time it is needed.

#### **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

None.

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.

ATTACHMENTS

None

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.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 : Maria Jacobs , Planner, 490-4405



Report Approved by Austin French, Manager of Planning Services, 490-4373