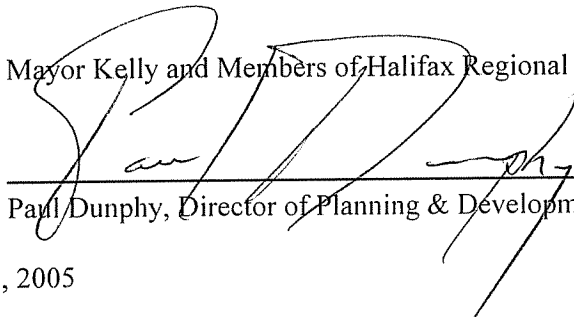


**Halifax Regional Council**  
**March 22, 2005**

**TO:**

Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

**SUBMITTED BY:**

  
Paul Dunphy, Director of Planning & Development Services

**DATE:**

March 17, 2005

**SUBJECT:**

Municipal Activities In Facilitating The Disposal of Surplus Federal Lands For Affordable Housing

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## **INFORMATION REPORT**

### **ORIGIN**

December 7, 2004 Regional Planning motion that staff provide a report as to what action this municipality can take, in facilitation with the Federal and Provincial government, regarding the provision of federal housing and further that the intent not be the provision of capital dollars, but such things as the examination of permit fees for affordable housing, the relaxation of taxes during construction, in-house services with planning, as well as, possible vacant or surplus lands held by the federal government.

### **BACKGROUND**

The issue of municipal initiatives that support the development and maintenance of affordable housing was reported to Council on February 10, 2004 and January 18, 2005. The focus of this report is therefore municipal initiatives as related to the use of surplus Federal and Provincial lands for mixed income affordable housing development.

### **DISCUSSION**

It is important to stress that surplus federal lands represent a significant opportunity for future residential development and therefore involvement in discussions pertaining to their future use is called for. Staff already has an established link with the Federal government and Canada Lands Company, as well as the provincial government and a number of its departments with regard to land and property issues.

The federal government, in particular owns significant tracts of land in HRM, some of which is expected to become surplus in the near future. Surplus federal lands are transferred to Canada Lands Company Limited whose mandate is to purchase surplus strategic properties at fair market value from the federal government, then improve, manage or sell them. As part of this process HRM can offer its regulatory, community planning and technical expertise.

Canada Lands has in the past supported a mixed use and mixed housing redevelopment of land. For example the award winning Garrison Woods development in Calgary, Alberta re-developed former military housing lands into a very successful "urban village". The development included 1,600 new and 400 refurbished residential units. A mixture of single/ multi-family, high end/ affordable, and owner/ rental units were included in the development.

The federal government has significant land holdings in the vicinity of Halifax Harbour, several of which have or are expected to be declared surplus. For example, while numerous competing interests for these lands exist, a recent report (July 5, 2004 Planning Strategy for Halifax Harbour - Preliminary Recommendations) identified Shannon Park and lands north of the Bedford Institute of Oceanography to Wrights Cove as appropriate sites for multi-unit residential development. In addition, Shannon Park contains 421 existing apartment units, two schools, two churches, and a variety of recreational facilities. This area represents a great potential for integrated community planning, including a range of housing choices in an area that is already serviced by a range of public infrastructure. Minister Fontana recently publicly stated that the DND Shearwater area is yet another area of great opportunity.

HRM recently issued a Request for Proposals for a Land Use and Transportation Study of the area from Wrights Cove to North Dartmouth. The study will analyse and make recommendations concerning future land uses, transportation and servicing. This will help HRM coordinate future development and redevelopment opportunities for the area. The study will advance HRM's understanding of community and stakeholder interests in these lands, including a range of housing options, redevelopment potential and the need for capital investment. This knowledge can be brought to the table when the disposition of lands is being considered and should help inform the decision making process encouraging affordable residential development on these sites.

### **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.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

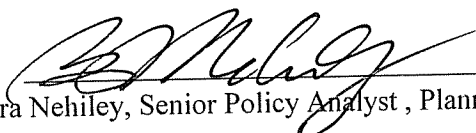
None

### **ATTACHMENTS**

None

Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by:

  
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