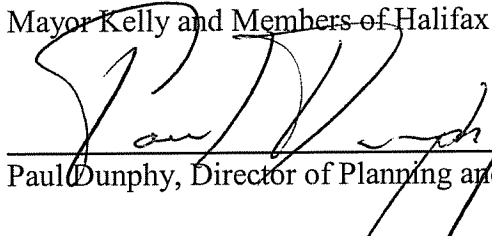


Halifax Regional Council
December 13, 2005

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: 
Paul Dunphy, Director of Planning and Development Services

DATE: December 5, 2005

SUBJECT: **Amendment - Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-Law Re: Height Precincts**

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN:

- Motion 10.2.2(II) from the November 8, 2005, meeting of Regional Council requesting staff to provide a report regarding the timing and implications of amending the Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) and Land Use By-Law (LUB) to institute height precincts within the Halifax Central Business District.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:

Existing Policy

Both as-of-right and discretionary development applications are controlled by height restrictions in the Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS), Area Plans and the Land Use By-Law (LUB).

The Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) for Peninsula Halifax and the Halifax Central Business District Area Plan include policies which deal with building scale, massing and compatibility with the neighbourhood. There are policies which control height for the purpose of protecting views through the establishment of:

- A series of ten view planes to preserve views of the harbour from certain points around the Citadel in Halifax;
- Limitations on the heights of all structures so that they cannot be seen above the ramparts from vantage points within the parade square of the Citadel in Halifax (Citadel Ramparts);
- Controlling the height of new development in the vicinity of Citadel Hill to seek harmony and order among building heights in the foreground view from the Citadel (Band "A");
- Protection of views of and from the harbour along east-west streets in the Central Business District in Halifax.

The Land Use By-Law (LUB) reflects the policies established in the MPS and Area Plan and impose limits through the use of:

- Zone requirements;
- Height Precincts;
- Band “A”;
- Citadel Ramparts;
- Schedules (specific areas where restrictions are applied in addition to those of the Zone);
- Angle Controls; and
- Population Density which controls the number of habitable rooms which then restricts the size and height of the building to some degree.

In locations where none of the above apply, there are general policies related to building scale and massing in conjunction with compatibility with the surrounding neighbourhood which can be used to negotiate building height.

Regional Centre Urban Design Study

Staff have recently issued an RFP in search of a highly qualified urban design consultant team to conduct the Regional Centre Urban Design Study. This Study will look at many aspects of urban design. These include researching community values, heritage protection, building height, building design, views and relationship to open space. The consultants will also conduct a public outreach program. The study will also provide new tools for qualitatively analyzing the architecture of new development proposals toward protecting the health of our existing communities, and ensuring that new living environments are vibrant, liveable, and of the highest possible quality.

Time Line

The Regional Centre Urban Design Study RFP was issued on November 17, 2005. The tender will close on January 19, 2006, and the contract award will be brought forward to Council in February. Once the project is underway it is expected to run for approximately eighteen months, and will set the stage for future policy amendments and regulatory amendments to the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law. No time frame for this work can be established at this time.

ALTERNATIVES:

None at this time

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:

None at this time

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES/BUSINESS PLAN:

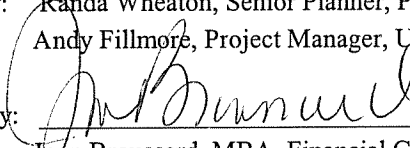
This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

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.

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