

10.1.16




PO Box 1749  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3J 3A5 Canada

Halifax Regional Council  
June 10, 2003

**TO:** Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

**SUBMITTED BY:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
George McLellan, Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** June 4, 2003

**SUBJECT:** **Regional Planning Principles**

---

**ORIGIN**

December 3, 2002 - Regional Council endorsed "Regional Planning Phase II: Action Plan", which recommended the establishment a Regional Planning Committee to propose principles to Regional Council around which a regional plan will be developed.

May 21, 2003 - Regional Planning Committee finalized Regional Planning Principles and agreed upon an approach to communicate these principles to citizens of Halifax Regional Municipality.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that:

- (1) Regional Council endorse the Regional Planning Principles (Attachment #1) as set forth by its Regional Planning Committee;
- (2) approve the communication of said Principles to the citizens of the Halifax Regional Municipality as outlined in this report; and,
- (3) amend the Council report format to include a new section, "Compliance with Regional Planning Principles".

## BACKGROUND

The Regional Planning Committee (RPC) has drafted seven (7) principles to guide regional planning for Halifax Regional Municipality (Attachment #1). These principles are intended to form the foundation for the creation of a new regional plan for HRM and will serve throughout the regional planning process as the focus for the regional planning public consultation program and, ultimately, in the creation of a regional plan in the delivery areas of economy, settlement, transportation, and environment.

Accompanying the regional planning principles is a sketch of how (tools) and when the new principles will be communicated to the citizens of HRM.

The RPC is seeking endorsement of the regional planning principles from Regional Council, and is recommending approval of its proposed approach for communication of these principles. Additionally, the RPC is recommending that Council's report format be amended to include a new section, "Compliance with Regional Planning Principles".

## DISCUSSION

There are a number of outcomes (results) which Regional Council should expect to achieve from a communication program designed around the regional planning principles. These outcomes should include:

- Heightened citizen awareness of the regional planning principles, including an understanding of the purpose of the principles and what they represent, and an understanding as to how the principles will be used throughout the regional planning process;
- A general understanding by HRM citizens of how/where HRM is currently achieving the principles;
- A general understanding by citizens of what opportunities and choices for change exist;
- A general acceptance by citizens of the need for change (towards achieving the principles); and,
- The foundation laid for public participation in goal setting, identifying opportunities and constraints.

For the purposes of undertaking communication related to the principles, the RPC is advocating a **communication approach** wherein the principles created and accepted by the RPC/Council would be communicated to the citizens of the region in order to facilitate the immediate launch of an awareness campaign designed to achieve the desired outcomes (above). This approach would promote the principles as a direct product of Phase I regional planning public consultation and lay the foundation for consultation on goals and objectives, and opportunities and constraints within the topic areas.

While there may be a risk of being accused of not taking the principles “out to” the public<sup>1</sup>, there are advantages to employing an approach whereby the principles are accepted first, by Council, and then communicated to the citizens of HRM:

- Promotion of the principles can begin immediately; building on/summarizing the work completed to date without revisiting it again;
- An opportunity to get “the word out” and for citizen “buy-in” is provided; and,
- Focussed public attention/participation on the next steps - goals, objectives, opportunities and constraints is enabled.

To circulate/distribute the regional planning principles, it will be necessary to “package” the principles in some form. It is recommended this be achieved using a pamphlet or brochure type format produced in both hard copy and electronic versions. The communications expert assigned to the regional planning process will design this package to include:

- Why the regional planning principles are important and necessary;
- What the principles represent (e.g. views expressed during phase I consultation, the corporate priorities, and a foundation for the regional plan);
- How the principles will be used throughout the planning process; and,
- How the citizens of HRM can get involved in an awareness campaign to be initiated this summer wherein focussed public consultation and participation can feed into the creation of regional planning goals, objectives, and opportunities.

Communication of the regional planning principles shall include focussed public communication with identified stakeholder groups, including community groups and organizations, using direct mailing/E-mail, and council committees, including the planning advisory committees and watershed advisory boards by circulation with committee agendas.

A brochure/package, as described above, should also be made available to the citizens of HRM through some or all of the following means:

- HRM customer service centers and information kiosks
- HRM Website
- Media
- Insert with Halifax Regional Water Commission water bills
- Insert with Naturally Green (Summer 2003 issue)
- Insert with HRM News (internally to staff)

Regional Planning staff will be continually updating Council on the specifics of communication and public participation.

---

<sup>1</sup> Note: As with all Regional Planning work, our contact information is provided and citizens can always comment and/or contact the Regional Planning Office.

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

Costs associated with printing and distribution of a brochure communicating the regional planning principles will be borne by the Regional Planning Project Office.

**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) Change the draft regional planning principles and/or the proposed approach for communication of principles prior to endorsement/approval.
- 2) Reject the RPC recommendation to amend the Council report format to include a new section, "Compliance with Regional Planning Principles".
- 3) Endorse the draft regional planning principles, approve the proposed approach for communication of the principles, and amend the Council report format to include a new section, "Compliance with Regional Planning Principles". (Recommended)

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment #1                      Regional Planning Principles

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:                      Susan Corser, Planner II, Community and Regional Planning

Report Approved by:                      Betty MacDonald  
Betty MacDonald, Director of Governance and Strategic Initiatives

Carol Macomber  
Carol Macomber, Project Manager, Regional Planning

Attachment #1

**Regional Planning Committee  
Vision & Principles - 2nd Draft**

Introduction: The following regional vision and principles have been developed to guide future planning efforts in HRM. The vision and principles address our four themes of Regional Planning: Economy, Settlement Pattern and Community Form, Transportation and Environment. The vision and principles represent a clear, articulate vision of HRM's future stemming from the thoughts and ideas expressed by citizens. The placement of the principle statements is not intended to connote their order of importance.

**Vision**

HRM will adopt a broad Regional Plan which, throughout the next 25 years, will guide its physical development in a way that promotes healthy, vibrant, sustainable communities.

**Principles**

**Guiding principle: The Regional Plan will seek to address the needs and views of all HRM recognizing the diversity of its citizens, community and geography.**

- Provides a framework that leads to predictable, fair, cost effective decision making.
- Support development patterns that promote a vigorous regional economy.
- Preserve and promote sustainability of cultural, historical and natural assets.
- Support appropriate roles for the Halifax/Dartmouth central business district and local business districts as a focus for economic, cultural and residential activities.
- Manage development in a way that will make the most effective use of land, energy, infrastructure, public services and facilities and considers healthy lifestyles.
- Ensure opportunities for the protection of open space, wilderness, natural beauty and sensitive environmental areas.
- Develop integrated transportation systems in conjunction with the above principles.