

**Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee
December 6, 2012**

TO: Chair and Members of Environment and Sustainability Standing
Committee

Original Signed

SUBMITTED BY: _____
Peter Stickings, Acting Director, Planning & Infrastructure

DATE: September 13, 2012

SUBJECT: Municipal Wood First Policy

ORIGIN

Item 6.3.1 Maritime Lumber Bureau Program Overview of Atlantic Wood WORKS! re:
fostering a wood culture in the Atlantic Region

MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Hum, that the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee request staff to prepare a report with the intent to make a recommendation to Regional Council to:

- 1. Adopt a wood first resolution; and**
- 2. Provide subsequent policy adoptions, including procurement policy, comparable to Ontario and British Columbia Wood First Act and be based on the Atlantic Canada Municipal Wood First template.**

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee recommend to Regional Council the following Administrative Guideline:

“That the Halifax Regional Municipality give wood first consideration, subject to financial and performance feasibility, for structural and material options when designing new and recapitalization facility projects.”

BACKGROUND

Established in 2007, the North American Wood First is a Natural Resources Canada program aimed at increasing the use of wood in non-residential construction (schools, health care facilities, retail establishments, etc.) throughout Canada and targeted areas of the United States. Since 2007, Regional and Local Wood First programs have emerged across Canada. In our region, Atlantic Wood Works is a program of the Maritime Lumber Bureau.

Across Canada, Provinces and Municipalities have adopted Wood First policies and legislation.

Provincial

Ontario Bill 61, Wood First Act (currently in process):

http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/bills/bills_detail.do?locale=en&Intranet=&BillID=2606

British Columbia Bill 9, Wood First Act (passed in 2009):

http://www.leg.bc.ca/39th1st/1st_read/gov09-1.htm

Atlantic Canada Municipalities:

Kedgwick, New Brunswick;

Macadam, New Brunswick;

Wolfville, Nova Scotia;

Kings County, Nova Scotia; and

Parrsboro, Nova Scotia

DISCUSSION

Information on Atlantic Wood Works can be viewed at: <http://www.atlanticwoodworks.ca/>

There are two prevailing benefits to supporting wood:

1. Economic; and
2. Environmental

Economic

The forestry and lumber are mainstays to the Nova Scotia economy, according to the 2008 State of Forest Report “The contribution of the forest industry to the Nova Scotia economy remains very significant with the total impact of \$700 million to the provincial GDP, providing employment to approximately 11,000 people employed and generating exports exceeding \$1 billion or 17per cent of Nova Scotia export trade”.

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/forestry/reports/State-Of-Forest-Report-April-2008.pdf>

Environment

Wood has a low carbon footprint (in fact it sequesters carbon); it is a renewable product; and it has lower comparable impact than other building materials on air, energy consumption, and water quality.

National Building Code

When discussing wood as a building material, the question of compliance to building code often emerges. Wood is a suitable material for many building designs and concepts that are covered by the building code. The building code differentiates between wood as a structural and aesthetic material. There are, however, structures that dictate other materials requirements for code compliance (for example for buildings exceeding certain heights or uses). The recommended guideline does not advocate for any building code changes, it positions wood for consideration where it is a suitable construction or finishing material meeting National Building Code.

Certification

A point of discussion when considering a wood first policy is the sustainability certification. With respect to forestry, FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) and SFI (Sustainable Forestry Initiative) are common. Both of these certifications are potentially desirable. However, in Nova Scotia, the Natural Resources Strategy – A Framework for Forestry - prevails as meeting these long term sustainability forestry objectives. The framework can be viewed at:

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/strategy/framework-update.asp>

Policy Implementation

The functional implementation of this policy will be through incorporation in the standard solicitation document terminology for building design Request for Proposal templates.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Adoption of this administrative guideline does not impact the 2012/2013 Operating or Project Budget. Future projects may have budget impacts with respect to usage of wood materials. However, the guideline instructs staff to consider the material usage; it does not mandate the usage. As such, it is expected such a guideline would be practiced within logical reason.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

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

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The genesis of this motion and guideline is an industry presentation to Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

As per the discussion section, wood building materials have lower energy, water and air quality impacts than alternatives.

ALTERNATIVES


1. Committee may choose not to recommend a wood first guideline.
2. Committee may recommend a mandatory requirement to use wood.

ATTACHMENTS

None

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

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