

Item No.
Community Design Advisory Committee
November 8, 2013

TO: Members of Community Design Advisory Committee

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed

Waye Mason, Councillor

DATE: November 1, 2013

SUBJECT: Survey of CDAC members regarding RP5 Draft 3.

ORIGIN

A result of the October 9, 2013 Community Design Advisory Committee (CDAC) meeting was an interest in polling committee members for their views on Regional Plan Five Year Review 3rd Draft (RP5 3.0). Members were asked to submit a two page letter outlining five key points of concern, focusing on the four theme areas outlined in the staff report to Regional Council which enabled the RP5 review in October 2011.

RESULTS:

Ten of the twelve members of the committee responded to the request for a five point summary of their concerns regarding RP5 3.0

The submissions were reviewed and key points from each recorded, creating a ranked list of key issues based on number of submissions that raised the issue. Any issue raised by two or more contributors was included in the last attached as Appendix A. The results were then grouped under each of the four themes that were outlined in the staff report of October 2011 and passed by Council. A summary of outstanding concerns is followed by representative quotes and finally by some possible actions.

The Possible Action sections that end each analysis does not present an exhaustive list of remedies that the concerns raised by CDAC may demand. A volunteer advisory committee could never, nor should it, get to that level of detail in positing solutions. It will be Council's direction that guides which actions shall be addressed by staff and/or committee. Council will also add its own changes and actions during the upcoming COW discussion.

1. Focus on Sustainable Solutions:

There will be an increased focus on optimizing the environmental, economic, social and cultural sustainability of our future growth and development. This will include standards for low impact "green" development, ensuring that new development pays its fair share in order to protect the tax rate, expanded tools for the provision of housing affordability and heritage protection, and support for cultural programs.

Summary: A majority of the respondents (6/10) believe that the RP5 3.0 lacks sufficient means to ensure that HRM meets proposed growth targets. Throughout committee submissions there was a clear theme that the plan lacks "teeth" and is not a sufficient change from MPS 2006 to ensure growth targets are met.

Common concerns that help articulate include concern that there is too much "wobble room" allowed under G-15 (5/10); that Green belting should be implemented in the rural commuter designation between settlements (4/10); felt the 30 metre riparian buffer should be implemented, and that that Halifax Water/Transit/Planning and Transportation are not sufficiently aligned with the plan and each other. (2/10)

Representative quotes:

- "too much flexibility in G-15"
- "make rules clearer"
- define "limited in scale"
- "greenbelting must be added to this list."
- "can't wait for the centre plan."
- "have too far more secondary plan's [then Toronto]"
- "HRWC, Metro Transit, HRM planning and HRM transportation services are not well aligned"
- "open space conservation design is confusing"
- "does not contain measurement monitoring and accountability provisions sufficient to ensure proscribed targets are met."
- "the Urban Settlement boundary needs to be absolutely tight and urban reserve untouchable"
- "how [does] the plan allow for addition action if the development trends continue between now and the next official review"

Possible Actions:

1. Reduce or eliminate development between rural centres, through reduction of allowable subdivision from 100 to 30, or elimination of subdivision.
2. Control for new roads between growth centres – language that reduces potential for strip development and/or keeps development adjacent to current towns and villages that are not formal growth centres.
3. Clear language introduced to define G-15 "limited in scale". Look to Ontario Greenbelt laws for language such as: "Means the creation of no more than three units or lots through either plan of subdivision, consent or plan of condominium" or "Minor lot adjustments or boundary additions, provided they do not create a separate lot for a

residential dwelling”

4. Discuss strengthen policy to requiring Halifax Water, Metro Transit, Planning and Transportation to conform to the objectives of the plan where appropriate.
5. The riparian buffer should default to a 30 meter buffer. Options for allowing waivers to 20 metres when appropriate could be considered.
6. EC-3 should be worded in a way that it makes clear no stand alone C or any R uses will be allowed in the future. EC-3 should apply to Burnside as soon as RP5 is adopted by council, overriding current SMPS and LUBS.

1. Enhancing the Regional Centre

The Regional Centre holds enormous potential for new residential and commercial growth in areas that already established and paid-for infrastructure and services. However, new land use policies, bylaws, and design guidelines are required to ensure high quality growth of the appropriate density and scale. Additionally, new incentives should be used to attract development to the Regional Centre in order to achieve the Regional Plan's urban growth targets. These new incentives may include such tools as streamlined development approval processes, tax incentives, and density bonusing.

Summary:

A many respondents (5/10) believe that the RP5 3.0 should contain policy requiring incentives for Regional Centre, pointing out that this was clear direction from Council. It is recognized that the Centre Plan will contain much of this, but that could be two to three years away (or never happen). Strong statements now would set the table for the Centre Plan and other work of council that is already underway concerning Development Charges and tax incentives. Some members were concerned that industrial zones may still allow R & C uses (3/10).

RP5 should commit HRM to these things, with language that then would become the objectives for future policy and the Centre Plan.

Representative quotes:

- “stronger language around CCCs and infrastructure charges.”
- “timidity and insufficient clarity around development costs and incentives”
- “Incentives in core, in downtowns”
- “forbid office development in industrial zones (ever)”
- “how will plan lead to a change in the existing metrics and market conditions that will incentivize additional investment within the regional centre and/or locational decisions”
- not making substantive change to policies – “why would we expect a change of outcomes
- use up existing inventories of lots “before services are extended” in the urban designation
- “ensure development pays its fair share”
- “weak link to economic plan”

Possible Actions:

1. There should be broad policy statements committing HRM to incenting the regional centre and providing tax incentives.
2. The intention to streamline development approvals in the regional centre should be expressed.

3. Density bonusing in the regional centre should be recognized and committed to as a matter of policy.

3. Improved Suburban and Rural Community Design

Suburban areas have enjoyed enormous prosperity and growth over the past several decades .. Because this growth is expected to continue, the Plan review will focus on improving community design standards. These new design standards will lead to more attractive and sustainable ("green") communities than we have seen in the past, and will result in more beautiful, walkable and complete communities. Rural areas will similarly benefit from new design standards.

Summary: A majority of committee members (6/10) felt that the description of complete communities is not clear and policy will not change the style or substance of suburban design. Some (3/10) were concerned that undergrounding had been removed.

Representative Quotes:

- “rural growth centres must be [fully] defined”
- “secondary planning process take far too long” and are the “very basis of the plan’s rural growth strategy”
- “limit growth between rural centres”
- “plan does not give sufficient protection to suburban and rural quality of life through adequate green space protection.” - “30 metre buffer”
- “[don’t allow] development between rural growth centres”
- “allowing 100 units between growth centres.... Defeats the purpose of having growth centres in the first place.”
- we are currently building “high density un-walkable neighbourhoods of poor design”
- plan should ensure a development “proposal does not contradict the targets for growth outlined in the regional plan.” “mandate design standards, override secondary plans”
- “mixed use commercial districts not business parks”
- “smaller frontages, tighter communities, walkable”
- “we have not seen a cost benefit analysis of HRM’s real suburban growth in rural designations”
- “do we really understand what is happening in the urban settlement designation”
- “this is the whole ball game... need to encourage growth to get on the right track.”

Possible Actions:

1. Policy stating that all development must meet the objectives of 3.1.4 regarding community design.
2. Policy could be imposed on top of existing SMPS and LUB to allow for immediate override and allow for tighter, smaller footprint, mixed use communities.
3. Language needs to be in the RP5 that clearly states what is allowed while introducing language around not allowing outmoded curvilinear development with cul de sacs and old fashion suburban street plans.

4. Land Use and Transit/Active Transportation are Mutually Supportive

The primary consideration is directing growth to appropriate areas based on existing

infrastructure and services (i.e. growth centres and corridors). The growth areas must then be supported and reinforced by an appropriately designed transit service and active transportation infrastructure. There must be a focus on improving the experience of transit users, expanding the transit service in appropriate areas with the appropriate equipment, and maximizing ridership while minimizing single-occupant vehicle commuting. Investment in active transportation options should continue to be supplied, and be accelerated wherever possible.

Summary: The overwhelming majority (8/10) of the committee felt that Chapter 4 – Transportation & Mobility does not clearly align with land use, nor outline policies that will allow HRM to meet the objective of reducing reliance of single occupant vehicles.

The committee feels that the plan does not adequately meet the objectives outlined in this theme. Ties between Land Use and Transit/Active Transportation are not clear. Priority of road network plans to support modal shift is not clear, and the road network list has been changed since 2006 without adequate public or council consultation. The Road Network Priority Plan should be subject to consultation; clearly place priority on projects that support modal shift; and the road network projects table should be deleted.

Representative quotes:

- “Chapter 1 says Plan ‘develops integrated transportation systems’ but I don’t see it in Chapter 4”
- “car centric”
- modal split targets are “absurdly low”
- “single road consultations don’t give residents big picture”
- “rewrite T14 to require public consultation on the road network functional plan”
- “remove road list”
- “implement transit services outside transit boundary ONLY after extensive assessments as to economic viability”
- “auto centric”
- “roads come first” rather than clear links between roads, transit and AT
- “does nothing to change our reliance on car travel”
- “role of pedestrian commuting” is not clear
- “priority for use in all modes as described in objectives”
- “road network projects should be removed from the plan.”
- “road network seems to be given significant weight in plan compared to street design and active transportation or public transit.”

Possible Actions:

1. Move T-3 to be in the general section before the Active Transportation section to show how the policy impacts all transportation decisions.
2. Increased demand on transportation network created by new rural and suburban development is not clearly shown. Transportation impacts of 2700 new homes in Upper Tantallon, 1800 in Fall River, 1600 Porters Lake, 3200 at Exit 3 on the 103 should be explicitly laid out.
3. Modal split targets in T-12 be increased, especially to reflect focus provided by proposed

Transit Service boundary.

4. Modal split target date to remain 2026 as per RMPS 2006 rather than moved to 2031.
5. Second sentence of T-14 struck the words “The Road Network Priority Plan will be developed in consultation with the public and other stakeholders” be included.
6. T-15 be amended to state Road Network Functional Plan will accommodate all types of road planning and section C added “assign priority to projects that best support the provision of choice of integrated and connected travel modes as outlined in objective 1 of this chapter”
7. Remove Table 4-1 and suggest for inclusion, after consultation, in the Road Network Priority Plan.

Other Significant Issues:

Summary: Some committee members (4/10) of the committee felt that the tools to measure results were still weak or unconnected. Some felt that the region had too many functional plans (3/10). There was a general theme of concern around measurement and reporting. Across all themes and issues there was concern that surrounding the public consultation, its efficacy and whether it was adequately listened to. There were similar concerns regarding the late arrival of the research reports and whether they were sufficiently considered.

Representative quotes:

- “too many plans”
- “find better way to define and articulate all these interconnected plans and strategies”
- “lack of clarity”
- “does not contain measurement, monitoring and accountability provision to ensure targets met.”
- “does not set table for required alignment” of municipal units

Possible Actions:

1. Consider combining functional plans (ie goal of Mobility plan rather than 3-4 related functional plans).
2. RP5 needs clearer articulation of goals & objectives by which each plan will be measured as successfully supporting the regional plan.
3. Measurements must measure outcomes, some still do not.
4. Timelines for yearly reporting should committed to.
5. Each staff report could have a “Strategic implications section” or RP5 could commit HRM to Triple Bottom Line reporting, so each and ever staff report shows how it supports RP5 and other strategic documents.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Issues Ranking

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.

Original Signed

Report Prepared by:

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Attachment A - CDAC ISSUES RANKING

Ranking based on 10 respondents.

Mobility	8
Complete Coms	6
Will Not meet goals	6
Incentives in Core	5
Urban Wiggle Room	5
Green Belting	4
Measures	4
Too Many Plans	3
Industrial Only	3
3 metre buffer	3
Undergrounding	2
Remove Road	2
Halifax Water/Transit/HRM alignment	2
Change Targets	2