

Open House #4
Draft 2 – Revised Regional Plan
Holiday Inn Harbourview
101 Wyse Road, Dartmouth
June 17, 2013



[On June 17th, a two-hour open house preceded a town-hall meeting. The comments below were provided by citizens during the open house portion of the evening. Minutes from the town-hall meeting will also be available.]

Comments:

- Consultation needs a more “transparent” approach. Planning Staff should post on the website their reasons for accepting or rejecting suggestions made at public meetings.
- Making plans is great, but what about implementing them? 7 years and no movement on acquiring lands for Birch Cove Lakes Regional Park, and we’re already way off our growth targets. Please update RP to include more teeth for implementation targets and deadlines.
- PLEASE – no more huge chunks of glass plopped on top of our wonderful heritage buildings!
- I am concerned about the relative lack of investment and specific planning for more advanced active transportation facilities – dedicated and separated cycle tracks and complete streets (pedestrian friendly) in the urban centres. I want to see much more done to provide facilities that people of all ages can use to bicycle and walk to daily destinations.
- I am concerned about what I heard regarding discretion in rezoning Urban Reserve via some policy by-law to adjacent designations. That effectively voids the plan. Ok, the intent may be to allow re-designation of small pockets, but leaves open the door to arbitrary changes. Needs to be addressed.

- Remove Policy G-16. Do not allow developers and councilors this “wiggleroom” to change the zoning against the wishes of HRM residents. If this area opposes the rezoning – cannot be left to the discretion of councilors.
- Make greenbelt a REALITY
- Protect urban reserves – take the discretionary loop-hole out
- Keep lakes and backlands for our children and grandchildren
- Set goals and objectives that can be used to measure progress in e.g. 5 years, 10 years...
- Have incentives (+ or -) to really direct development to growth centres as mixed-use centres. Out of the box ideas needed.
- Incorporate STANTEC report recommendations.
- Incorporate our HRM Alliance recommendations.
- Public consultation in rural HRM - Musquodoboit/Sheet Harbour. Outline potential plans/growth opportunities in these rural areas rather than focusing strictly on Halifax/Dartmouth.
- Industrial lands:
 - Could include acquisition of – or at least a partnership with CN and their rail lines
 - Heavy rail; re-furbished train cars from New Brunswick; this IS POSSIBLE for HRM
- “59% growth in suburban areas is good growth” and “[suburban growth] is transit oriented”. *Then why are we widening roads???*
 - Halifax had an incredible opportunity to hear the thoughts of Jarret Walker (Internationally sought after transit expert). He said “DON’T WIDEN ROADS”. Halifax has natural choke points (we are lucky) that regulate traffic. He also recommended a re-design of our transit “M.O.” which is consistently neglected by Metro Transit, the “Big Moves” and the Regional Plan. We also heard Toronto Transit Head Paul Bedford say “Toronto has tried for 30 years to solve its traffic problems by widening roads....and it DOESN’T work”.
- Extend the time for feedback, more time is needed to review.

- Transportation - this is not a master plan, but an action plan for a number of activities to be undertaken.
 - Where is the Master Road Plan that:
 - identifies planned arterial roadways both Province and HRM; this drives the development planning?
 - identifies the missing links on the existing arterial roadway?
 - establishes a priority for them?
 - Where is the master public transit plan?
 - Why does the action plan include all buses on Portland St. not some on P.A. Road? (*Staff note - not certain was P.A. is referencing*)
- “Live where you work” – can’t do this at Burnside.
- How do you reduce security issues with all the public paths since you have to have security at Dartmouth Bus Terminal?
- How do we become more inclusive?
- What about becoming a WiFi Community – not just in selected areas.
- Food and food security was in Draft 1 of RP+5, but is not in this second draft. This is a key issue to include. It would be great to see it back in with some clear language on food/food security and what the HRM envisions around this to support the health of the community (e.g. supporting access/addressing food deserts/supporting local agriculture, local producers, etc.)
- What about transfer of development rights for heritage districts – like they do in Vancouver?
- Dartmouth Crossing is not “walkable” – have to drive to get to the “town section” too.
- Accessory apartments –permit them outside HRM centre e.g. Sackville, Fall River – many people want to live or continue to live in their communities.
- Access buildings – no-step entries.
- Take out road work project or include the same level of detail for other forms of mobility.

- The Lake Echo Watershed was, according to the specialists commissioned by HRM, not able to accept additional development. Despite this, the new map shows a sub-watershed which omits the 3 acres currently being pushed for development. This does not pass the “smell” test.
- How about adopting Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards as essential criteria for approving future building construction and major renovation?
- Help the environment!
- Reduce energy consumption!
- Why has the Lake Echo watershed designation been changed to Lake Echo “Sub” watershed area??
- Include a policy that supports work on food security, a regional food strategy / charter and eventually a creation of a municipal food policy. This was in draft 1.0 but not draft 2.0.
- More community consultation in rural and suburban areas.
- Why is Otter Lake located adjacent to a WPA and a Regional Park?
- Why is HRM looking to extend the operational life past the Engineer designed 25 year period? NOT ACCEPTABLE!
- When HRM is taking an inventory of culture concerns are you considering writers, books and studios? It is easy/easier to inventory visual art, sculpture, film, etc. but writers are less visible.
- I lived on Mount Edward Road where the No. 62 bus runs once or twice a hour. Three buses run with only a few people on /off at peak times and are not frequent enough to use. The buses are also very loud, noisy and stinky. Although I would like to use the bus it is not efficient timing for me. I would like to see the city use smaller (20 people) quieter buses that run more frequently during off peak times. Perhaps more people would use them more if they knew they didn't have to waste 2 hours or more a day waiting for the bus.
- We need water and sewer services in Musquodoboit Harbour for various reasons to do with environmental concerns, lack of clean drinking water and development.

- We need more library hours in Musquoboit Harbour, more heritage buildings and recreational facilities. The library is open for only 20 hours and lacks programming events because of it.
- I hope that the public hearing at City Council will take place at various meetings in HRM.
- Looking for methods to increase density in residential locations and in particular “laneway” type housing for accessibility, low income, student/sewer type occupancy for inner city locations. Thanks for your consideration.
- Have you checked into transportation in Bogota, Columbia? If not, suggest you do. Poor country, poor city, but they (a progressive, forward thinking mayor mostly) have made amazing people-friendly transportation changes over a relatively short period of time. Halifax needs much more (in terms of quantity and cohesiveness) attention to bike paths, pedestrian areas/streets, etc.
- Plan does not have...
 - Reporting deadlines on the many proposals.
 - Completion dates or deadlines of the many plan undertakings.
 - Assignment of responsibility for undertaking the many proposed changes.
 - Lacking an ongoing public input strategy.
- Please put RURAL CONCERNS all in ONE area of the draft plan for those of us in rural areas. Please try to be less urban-centric!!
- I disagree with the proposed designation that Musquodoboit Harbour be a Local Centre not a District Centre. We need piped services and community trails.
- Please make Musq Hbr a District Centre. We are a hub along the Eastern Shore.
- Transit:
 - Good – integrated transit – terminals; but this means routes that integrate with one another in an efficient way, NOT routes running

parallel and duplicate routes (90, 80, 81 for example) which is what we have now.

- Bad
 - “Future new resources will go to designed urban routes” – how much will this actually amount too? Will Metro Transit get a lot of new resources???? (I doubt it)
 - Continuing to service rural routes = “spreading resources thinly”. What intro to transit of RP+5 says they don’t want to do = how our transit system is set up; does this now. Concentrate on the densest urban areas first, get the ridership and buy-in, then expand
- Why were there not more meetings along the Eastern Shore and to further rural areas?
- Why not have more meetings?
- Why only ONE town hall?
- Hybrid design looks like a good step forward.
- Regional roads
 - Priority for road development should be:
 - Public transit
 - Active transportation
 - Personal vehicle
 - Let’s get people out of their cars.
- Plan performance
 - This meeting is kind of monopolized by Haligonians & Purcell’s Cove groups with specific agendas to push.
- Shouldn’t the natural corridors be connected, instead of isolated one from another? What’s the point otherwise?
- The HRM Plan does not identify environmentally sensitive areas. This can not wait for community plans. We need to protect these areas.
- Get rid of G-16 for Urban Reserve.
- E-16 - No to min of 20m. 30m would be fine.
- Continued expansion of bike lanes.

- Save \$670 million in taxpayer dollars; follow Stantec's growth target recommendations, not the status quo.
- Where are the specifics for active transportation?
- This is more like RP-15.
- Active transportation
 - In Musq Hbr we need active transportation routes between the High School and the Musq Hbr Trail.
 - Widened street lanes more margins/walk & bicycle lanes along Hwy 7
- Extend the period for RP+5 feedback to the end of July 2013. People need time to think about what they have heard during the public engagements.
- We would like to see the deadline extended for feedback in this process.
- Servicing & Utilities
 - All construction sites – once soil is exposed the elements, should not be permitted to leave it exposed to the weather. Our lakes are suffering from siltation events.
 - HRM should allow on-site (non-septic) sewage treatment systems to lighten the loads on centralized systems.
- Do not modify Otter Lake; close it early and open a new one if it is economically better to do so.
- Housing
 - This is a bad example of how to do affordable housing.
 - It is a concentration of one demographic (single homeless men) in a bldg that has no respect for the streetscape.
 - Density bonusing only assists the developers. Housing is a human right – we do not need to coax developers to build it. We need to make it law. These are people not projects we are talking about.
 - 'More affordable units' does not mean affordable housing. Density bonusing can be a good tool to encourage a range of unit prices within buildings, but doesn't go far enough to provide housing for low income families.

Greenbelting

- Agree with changes...
 - Need to consider moving some “URBAN RESERVE” lands e.g. Purcell’s Cove Backlands to “Greenbelt” designation. This will “tighten” the Greenbelt and enable green spaces closer to the core to be preserved for public recreation and environmental use. We have a glut of land allotted to urban development, therefore “urban reserve” such as Backlands NOT NEEDED!
 - I think this is perhaps the most important part of the plan. Suburban sprawl need to stop NOW.
- Agree but...
 - Need appropriate definitions for greenbelting. Birch Cove Lakes Regional Park would be a good starting point. Plan needs to be implemented.
 - The Greenbelt idea is important to the livability of our city/region and the survival of the planet. It has been at the municipal level that the greatest progresses on environmental issues have actually been addressed. Greenbelting should be made a priority and lands protected from development. Move housing lots are not needed.
- This is not a true Greenbelt – it allows ‘leaks’ to East and West. The pieces must be connected to ensure ecological continuities. The belt should be tighter.
- Blue Mountain – Birch Cove Lakes Park
 - This park proposal is included in the draft plan, but given very “light” attention (actually one that I caught) in the presentation.
 - This park concept is of primary potential and importance, and should be moved forward as a priority. Move this proposal from broad concept, to specific action-oriented action to word implementation.
 - Follow the Province’s lead with designation of the associated wilderness area. HRM should proceed with acquisition on a priority basis, consistent with the concept reflected on Map 13.

- There are very few green spaces in HRM. There needs to be a policy on a pocket park in every neighbourhood.
- Greenbelting is a great idea but we need to consider access for all residents to a green area.
- I like the greenbelting plan but feel it is essential to move on this more quickly. If you wait land that would have been needed as part of the greenbelt will be lost to development. Need to designate areas for greenbelt NOW!

Active Transportation

- Agree with changes...
 - MacDonald Bridge, bike lane. Can be considered 'Gentrification' needs work!!
 - Trails are great but need op funds for maintenance.
 - The city not well designed for biking. It's too dangerous.
 - Crosswalks are dangerous even lit ones. Should become traffic lights.
 - 95K? Where are they. It would be great to see more of these in the downtown core. Robie? South? Summer? Lower Water?
- Watercourse Buffer
 - Looks like it is simply and idea!
 - Restoration
 - Monitoring
 - Accountability
 - Map?
 - Transparency?
- Retire the Otter Lake Landfill after 25 years operation or sooner if an alternate solution is economically more viable. A Landfill should NOT be located between a Wilderness Protected Area and an HRM Regional Park. *Talk about environment incompatibilities! *SHUT DOWN OTTER LAKE A.S.A.P.
- Wherever new development occurs, enforce regulations to STOP SILT RUN OFF from entering our watercourses!

- All stormwater run-offs from city malls & streets need treatment before entering our lakes and streams.
- Need to expand the concept to “WATERSHED Buffers”. This is more effective from an environmental perspective e.g. identify key watersheds and limit development within one entire watershed system such as McIntosh Run as well as Williams Lake.

Growth Centres

- Promoting growth in the Regional Centre is not strong enough to deter sprawl! We need stronger restrictions in these places and a clear greenbelt where no development is permitted.
- Agree but...
 - Given the overall objectives and principles which growth centres have priority? We cannot support all of these at the same time.
 - There should be more detail concerning how rural growth centres are going to benefit from the Regional Plan. *Rural Projects DO NOT get enough support.
- Disagree...
 - Would be great to save \$3billion by adhering to Stantec’s Scenario B. No matter what the target needs to stick with it and follow the RP. Plan needs to be implemented.
- Focus development where there is existing infrastructure.
- Focus development as close as possible to employment.

Growth Targets

- Cap suburban growth so we can meet urban targets.
- I think it was fairly clear at this town hall that people aren’t satisfied with the growth targets and how we are meeting/not meeting them.
 - I did not hear anyone (except Mr. French) say they were pleased with 59% growth in suburban areas.
 - I heard lots of people displeased at not meeting the 25% urban areas.
 - I also did not hear enough answer or solution to these issues

- Mr. French said (as his/HRM's solution) is to make the urban area "more attractive" (urban areas cannot be "more attractive" when suburban areas are even more attractive), when in fact HRM is doing the opposite:
 - building up the Dartmouth and Bedford Commons
 - tax breaks for suburban development
 - high property taxes on Peninsula
 - fledgling downtown
- What is there not a 5 year target for Densification Growth 25-50-25
 - How many household dwellings not the %
 - Percentages mean 0 if a base number is not detailed
 - So give us target numbers
 - Report % if you want but for each 5 year period 0-25
- We already have enough suburban lots for 30-40 years; there should be a moratorium on further suburban lot development until HRM catches up with its growth targets; this would help prevent SUBURBAN SPRAWL.
- Delete clause G-16! It favours Developers, not residents!
 - Re: HRM growth targets, status quo is not acceptable; the plan should follow Stantec's growth target recommendations.

Industrial Lands

- We need to integrate residential & commercial.
- We need to use all areas on a 24/ basis.
- Burnside is not designed for people, no sidewalks, limited transit and no beauty, same with Bayer's Lake.
- HRM gutted the cities by creating these "parks" – a mistake on the grandest scale. We can rectify this by limiting their growth.
- We need to ensue we build and develop on a HUMAN Scale. People live here. Have more green space, active transportation, affordable housing, increased density without high rises. We can do it. It takes a vision and citizens to act with politicians who think past their election term!

Culture & Heritage

- Beautifying our streets in Musq Hbr means revising & redesigning BUSINESS SIGNS & ADVERTISING.
- Musq Hbr – in terms of culture & heritage & scenic views we need to BETTER protect our coastline & beaches.
- Musq Hbr – we need to extend our library hours at the library. Halifax gets a NEW library while we have only 20 hours.
- Musq Hbr is designated as a rural commuter area but we lack commuter transit services (see map 2).
- Musq Hbr is an Eastern Shore hub community & it needs COMMUTER transit! Consider just 2 commuter routes a day along the Eastern Shore, or other un-standard ideas more carpooling – financial incentives.
- Williams Lake Backlands
 - This area should be preserved in its natural state. Once these green areas are gone – i.e. developed – they're gone! Including the delicate ecological balance – flora & fauna – and the cleansing effect green space provides. Please DO NOT underestimate the value – albeit non monetary – this (and other similar areas) area fulfills.
 - Also – why must everything be couched in terms of growth? I heard the work “sustainable” used ONCE this evening.
 - Please broaden your horizons of thinking.

Transit

- Good – integrated transit – terminals; but this means routes that integrate with one another in an efficient way NOT routes running parallel and duplicate routes (90, 80, 81 for example) which is what we have now.
- Bad
 - “future new resources will go to designed urban routes” – how much will this actually amount too? Will Metro Transit get a lot of new resources???? (I doubt it)
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transit system is set up does this now. Concentrate on the densest urban areas first, get the ridership and buy-in then expand.

- Tailored community based rural transit systems and funding support is a great initiative.
- Summer water taxi system!
- Create more specific goals and evaluate every year.