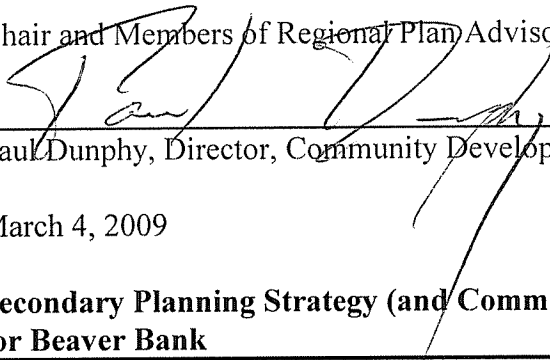




PO Box 1749  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3J 3A5 Canada

**Regional Plan Advisory Committee**  
**April 15, 2009**

**TO:** Chair and Members of Regional Plan Advisory Committee

**SUBMITTED BY:**   
Paul Dunphy, Director, Community Development

**DATE:** March 4, 2009

**SUBJECT:** **Secondary Planning Strategy (and Community Visioning)**  
**for Beaver Bank**

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**ORIGIN:**

October 29, 2008 Motions of Marine Drive, Valley and Canal Community Council:

12.1 Secondary Planning Strategy for Beaver Bank

MOVED By Councillor Snow, seconded by Councillor Streach, that Regional Planning Advisory Committee give consideration to moving Beaver Bank higher up in queue for visioning. MOTION PUT AND PASSED

10.2.2 Councillor Snow - Development in South Beaver Bank Area

MOVED BY Councillor Snow, seconded by Councillor Streach, that Marine Drive Valley and Canal Community Council request a staff report that HRM to consider a freeze or slow down of development in South Beaver Bank area until the Community can establish a secondary planning strategy. MOTION PUT AND PASSED

**RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the Regional Plan Advisory Committee recommend to Marine Drive, Valley and Canal Community Council:

1. That it defer consideration of a formal community visioning exercise and subsequent preparation of a Secondary Planning Strategy until the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy undergoes its 5 year review in 2011;
2. That it not consider additional growth management controls in the South Beaver Bank area at this time.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **The Regional Plan, Growth Centres and Community Visioning**

The Regional Plan, approved in 2006, provides a guide for future development within HRM through integrated land use planning, sustainable growth, environmental preservation, efficient transportation and a strong economy. In achieving these objectives, future residential growth is directed to the Regional Centre and a series of compact mixed-use Growth Centres throughout the suburban and rural areas of the municipality. This represents a fundamental change to our traditional settlement pattern, which has been characterized by ribbon-type development spreading out along our suburban and rural roadways, commonly referred to as urban sprawl.

By channeling growth into a series of Growth Centres, with focus on compact development, walkability, provision of transit, local employment opportunities and services, over time these centres will develop as small but complete communities. The Plan further directed that in order to guide future development in these centres, each would undergo a citizen-based Community Visioning exercise.

Council approved in excess of forty growth centres under the Regional Plan. The Regional Plan Advisory Committee (RPAC), as one of its first major tasks, prepared a Community Visioning Program, which prioritized the visioning of these centres based on an extensive list of criteria. This program was approved by Regional Council in March, 2008. To date, three growth centres have completed their community visioning exercise and three are in progress.

With respect to two specific areas within HRM, namely Hammonds Plains and Beaver Bank, the Regional Plan indicates that, for the time being, these communities should not be designated as growth centres (see Sections 3.5.3 and 4.1.1.4 of the document and Policies S-25 through S-29 and Policy T-3, Attachment A). This is primarily due to current infrastructure constraints, notably existing roadway capacity. The Hammonds Plains Road and Beaver Bank Roads are nearing or at their design capacity, and as such, growth in these areas should be restricted until such time as new road connections are provided. These areas are therefore subject to increased growth controls under the Subdivision By-law, where for example, infill development on existing streets is permitted, but no new residential subdivisions are permitted (see Map 1, Growth Control Area, Beaver Bank).

Because Beaver Bank is a growth control area under the Regional Plan, it was not designated as a growth centre and is not included on the list of areas to undergo community visioning under the approved visioning program.

## **DISCUSSION**

Regional Council has placed growth controls on the Beaver Bank area until such time as a connecting roadway system is realized. Staff feels the existing growth control mechanisms are adequate and that there is no need, at this time, to further restrict development in the south Beaver Bank area as per the motion of Community Council.

Alleviation of the road capacity constraints on the Beaver Bank Road will be realized with the construction of the Beaver Bank By-pass (Margeson Drive). This is scheduled as a long term 'future potential project', Table 4.2 and Map 7 of the Regional Plan. This new road will connect the Beaver Bank Road with a new interchange currently under construction on Hwy. 101 in Middle Sackville. The timing for construction of Margeson Drive is not known, but it could take many years to complete.

For these reasons (existing growth controls and timing of Margeson Drive) staff recommends that moving Beaver Bank higher in the queue for community visioning is not necessary at this time. Staff suggests that this matter be re-visited as part of the five-year review of the Regional Plan, scheduled to be undertaken in 2011.

Alternatively, HRM staff is in a position to provide a degree of out-reach assistance to the Beaver Bank community in helping it organize itself to undertake a community visioning exercise on its own. There appears to be interest and momentum in the community to do this, and staff (primarily Community Relations) can provide assistance and guidance in this regard if requested. By undertaking an independent yet compatible visioning exercise, the community will be well positioned when the time comes to commence the 'formal' HRM community visioning project.

### Community Consultation

The information contained in this report was presented by HRM staff at the Annual General Meeting of the Beaver Bank Community Awareness Association, held on April 1, 2009. There were in excess of 100 residents in attendance as well as the District Councillor, MLA and the Mayor. Staff believes it is accurate to report that the information and recommended course of action was understood and acceptable.

### **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

There are no budget implications associated with this report.

### **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. The RPAC could choose to recommend that Beaver Bank be immediately included in Community Visioning Program and prioritized. This is not recommended for reasons described in the report.

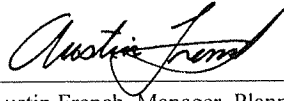
2. The RPAC could choose to recommend that additional development controls (freeze) be imposed in the South Beaver Bank area. This is not recommended as staff advises that sufficient growth control mechanisms are currently in place under Regional Plan legislation.

### ATTACHMENTS

Map 1: Growth Control Area, Beaver Bank  
Attachment 1: Regional Plan Excerpts

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.

Report Prepared by : Roger Wells, Supervisor, Regional/Community Planning, Community Development, 490-4373



Report Approved by: Austin French, Manager, Planning Services, 490-6717



**Growth Control Area**

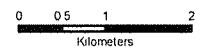
**MAP 1**

**Beaver Bank**

April 3, 2009

**Legend**

- Major Routes
- Local Streets
- + Active Rail Lines
- ▭ Growth Control Area (Beaver Bank)
- Property Boundaries
- Lakes



The following is a graphical representation and although care has been taken to ensure the best possible quality, IRM does not guarantee the accuracy of this document.



## Attachment A

### Excerpts From Regional Municipal Planning Strategy

#### Section 3.5.3 Other Growth Management Mechanisms (Portion)

An analysis of two-lane commuter highways within HRM has indicated that high traffic volumes on two highways, Beaver Bank Road and Hammonds Plains Road, are nearing a safety threshold. In both cases, new links in the roadway network have been proposed that would reduce traffic loading to a point where safe highway access could be provided. The significant cost of these new roadway links (the Beaver Bank Bypass in the case of Beaver Bank Road and Highway 113 in the case of Hammonds Plains Road) can be delayed if development controls limit the amount of additional traffic that will be added to these two commuter highways.

Through the subdivision process, new development has a role in helping to fund required traffic solutions through capital cost contributions. This approach may be viable and warrants further analysis through comprehensive master planning at the secondary planning level.

Until a substantive change is made in the infrastructure capacity within the Hammonds Plains and Beaver Bank areas, due to the safety concerns stated in section 4.1.1.4, it is appropriate to limit all further residential subdivision activity involving new public roads in these areas. As provided for by the *Municipal Government Act*, existing plans of residential subdivision, at the tentative or final plan of subdivision stage on or before the effective date of this Plan, shall be permitted to proceed through to completion.

Residential development will be encouraged where adequate transportation facilities are made available and transit oriented centres established such as at each end of the Hammonds Plains Road as shown on the Settlement and Transportation Map (Map 1).

- S-25 HRM shall, through the Subdivision By-law, limit development within portions of the Hammonds Plains and Beaver Bank communities to prohibit residential development on new roads.
- S-26 To determine the feasibility of new development funding additional traffic infrastructure in the Hammonds Plains and Beaver Bank communities, HRM shall, through the secondary planning process, consider comprehensive master planning in accordance with the capital cost contribution policy.
- S-27 Notwithstanding Policy S-25, HRM shall, through the Subdivision By-law, provide for infill subdivision within the identified portions of Hammonds Plains and Beaver Bank, where in the opinion of the Traffic Authority, new roads would promote the intent of this Plan by enhancing traffic safety.
- S-28 In recognition of on-going residential subdivisions within the approval process on lands outside of the portions of the Hammonds Plains and Beaverbank communities identified

pursuant to Policy S-25 and within the Beaver Bank, Hammonds Plains and Upper Sackville Secondary Planning Strategy, HRM shall, through the Subdivision By-law, restrict future development resulting from concept applications which were filed prior to Council's first notice of its intention to adopt this Plan. Subdivision pursuant to any completed concept plan application on file prior to Council's first notice of its intention to adopt this Plan, shall be permitted to proceed through to completion on the basis of the approval of a maximum of 25 lots per year. Where a completed tentative or final subdivision application, for the initial phase of subdivision construction, pursuant to a completed concept application has not been filed within one year of Council's first notice of its intention to adopt this Plan, the subdivision may proceed as per Policies S-15, S-16, S-18 or S-23.

As stated in section 2.1.1 for the Open Space and Natural Resource Designation, given the similar inability to create frontage through the construction of new public roads within the portions of Hammonds Plains and Beaver Bank identified under Policy S-25, it is also appropriate to create an alternative means by which the limited traditional subdivision of lots for kinship purposes is possible. The Subdivision By-law contains provisions which are designed in part to ease the development constraints of lands with minimal road frontage. Those provisions permit the creation of an additional lot which does not meet the minimum road frontage requirements provided the area of land being divided was in existence prior to August 1, 1987. Many properties have been created since that date so, to be equitable to all landowners within these areas, it is appropriate to adjust this date forward to coincide with the effective date of this Plan.

S-29 HRM shall, through the Subdivision By-law, provide for the creation of one additional lot from any area of land, within the portions of Hammonds Plains and Beaver Bank identified under Policy S-25 and in existence prior to the date of Council's first notice of its intention to adopt this Plan, which does not meet minimum road frontage requirements.

#### **Section 4.1.1.4 Threshold for Commuter Roads**

Safety concerns arise on commuter highways with frequent access points, as steady traffic on the highway results in very few gaps for drivers to safely enter or exit traffic. Widening the highway, while making it easier for through traffic, will only make it more difficult for those turning movements to be safely made. Similarly, improvements to the highway geometry, while improving safe flow along the highway, provide no benefit for safe access. A service road to collect driveway traffic and deliver it to well-spaced signalized intersections along the highway is a possible solution, but prohibitively expensive. A more cost-effective solution is to add a new link to the roadway network that will divert some of the traffic from the problem roadway. Adding or enhancing transit service may also help to manage traffic volumes.

Throughout the implementation of this Plan the need may arise to place limitations on subdivision of land for residential housing development where there is insufficient capacity in the adjacent roadway network to safely accommodate additional travel demand. This situation is already the case in portions of the Hammonds Plains and Beaver Bank communities as outlined

in section 3.5.3. The Municipal Transportation Engineer (Traffic Authority) may determine that a commuter road cannot support additional traffic and therefore determine that no new subdivision activity should be permitted which would worsen traffic problems.

- T-3 Further to clause 280(1)(c) of the *Municipal Government Act*, the Development Officer shall not grant approval for any subdivision of land for development of residential uses where, in the opinion of the Engineer, the subdivision would produce traffic loads exceeding the safe travel capacity of the adjacent road network.



### Council Report Sign-Off Sheet

**Subject:** Secondary Planning Strategy for Beaver Bank

Meeting Date: April 15/09  Regular Council  In Camera  Information Report  
 Community Council  Board/Committee

Prepared by: Roger Wells, Community Development Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name and Business Unit

√	Stakeholder - Internal	Reviewed By	Date/Time	Time Spent on Report	Initial/Signature
	Not Required (unique to originating BU)				
	BPIM				
	CD				
	Finance - FinTrack - Accounts - Financial Consultants - Procurement - Manager	<i>Dean Nordqvist</i>	<i>Apr 8/09</i>		<i>Dean</i>
	Fire				
	HR				
	IAM				
	Legal - By-Laws - Admin Orders - Other				
	Police				
	TPW				
	Library				
	Halifax Water				
	Councillor(s)				
	Regional Youth Advisory Committee (RYAC)				
	<b>Stakeholder - External</b>				

Revised: March 2008