

Halifax Regional Council
May 24, 2005

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Betty MacDonald
Betty MacDonald, Director, Governance & Strategic Initiatives

DATE: May 19, 2005

SUBJECT: Regional Planning Workshops

INFORMATON REPORT

ORIGIN

Staff committed to updating Council on the Regional Planning Workshops. This is an initial update, further updates will follow.

BACKGROUND

One element of the public participation program for the Regional Plan included a series of 9 workshops. Other aspects of the public participation program includes meetings with stakeholder groups throughout the summer, an electronic bulletin board on the HRM website, access to the Regional Planning documents on the website, through Access Centres, libraries, booths at festivals and events, etc.

The Regional Planning Committee will consider the suggestions made through these processes, and through committees such as the Implementation Working Group. The draft regional plan will be amended to reflect these views, keeping in line with the principles, goals and objectives for the plan approved by Council. A revised plan will be presented to Council in the fall for consideration and approval to begin the formal hearing process. This formal process will allow residents and stakeholders to make their views known directly to Council. Based on this input, Council will debate the Plan, make necessary changes, and, if appropriate, approve the Plan.

DISCUSSION

The workshops have been designed to allow small group discussions on specific topics related to the plan. People planning to attend are asked to register, so that they can be provided with documentation on the plan, including a guidebook and the list of questions Council identified for further consultation through the parking lot process during the Committee of the Whole Discussions on the draft policies (which is attached for your information). People who have not registered, but attend the meeting, will be invited to join a table, as long as space permits. If there is insufficient space, they will be provided with the information, including the guidebook and parking lot items, and invited to participate in another meeting.

At the workshop, people are invited to sit at tables which focus on specific chapters of the plan. A trained facilitator at each table leads the discussion through the chapter and notes comments by those at the table. Regional Planning staff are available to answer questions. After reporting to the group at large, the facilitator checks with the table to ensure they are satisfied with the recording and reporting of their comments. As each table presents, others in the room are invited to comment, thereby allowing individuals to comment on more than the topic at the table. The facilitator invites the table to add to the comments made by the presenter, allowing further opportunity for individuals to correct the reporting. After the meeting, the facilitator at each table drafts the notes from the table discussion, sends it to those at the table for validation all views expressed at the table have been recorded. The report will be posted on the website as a draft. It will be updated and reported to Council once participants have responded back. The report will identify the comments from each of the workshop.

Council's parking lot items have been formed into a questionnaire. This questionnaire is distributed at meetings, mailed out to those who pre-registered, and will be available for an on-line response within days. Staff are drawing attention to the questionnaire and asking for a response. The questionnaire is currently being edited and improved. **Council is encouraged to contact the Regional Planning Project Manager if there are suggestions for clarification in the questionnaire.**

At the first meeting held May 16, 60 people had registered, and 50 attended. Registration as of May 19 for the meetings is as follows:

Enfield -	50 attended
Cole Harbour -	40 registered
Tantallon -	38 registered
Tangier -	28 registered
Halifax West -	55 registered
East Preston -	7 registered
Dartmouth -	50 registered
Pier 21 -	60 registered
Sackville -	28 registered

Registration tends to increase the closer it is to the date of the meeting. Staff will closely monitor the registration and will report to Council on the demand for additional meetings.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

No budget implications. Specific activities undertaken may have some budgetary implications, but will be submitted through the budgetary process.

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.

REGIONAL PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

This report is in compliance with regional planning principles.

ALTERNATIVES

Council could choose not to adopt the recommended vision, however, doing so might suggest that Halifax Regional Municipality is not supportive of efforts to increase immigration and make Halifax a more welcoming community. This alternative is not recommended.

ATTACHMENTS

Folder attached including Guidbook for the Regional Plan; parking Lot Items; 3 Fact Sheets, all of which are available on the HRM Regional Planning Website (www.halifax.ca/regionalplanning)

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 Approved by: Betty MacDonald

Betty MacDonald/Director, Governance & Strategic Initiatives/490-4769