

**Item No. 3(iii)**

**Community Design Advisory Committee**

**September 23, 2013**

**Heritage Advisory Committee**

**September 25, 2013**

**Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee**

**October 10, 2013**

**Halifax Regional Council**

**December 3, 2013**

**TO:** Dale Godsoe, Chair, Community Design Advisory Committee

Original signed by:

**SUBMITTED BY:**

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Jane Fraser, Director, Planning and Infrastructure

**DATE:** September 18, 2013

**SUBJECT:** RP+5: Draft Revised Regional Municipal Planning Strategy

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**ORIGIN**

- October 4, 2011 - Regional Council initiation of Regional Plan Five Year Review (RP+5); and
- February 9, 2012 - Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee (CPED) approval of revised RP+5 project schedule and Communication and Community Engagement Strategy for RP+5.

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

*Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, Part VIII, Planning and Development.*

Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (RMPS) Policy IM-7 requires the municipality to conduct five-year reviews.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Community Design Advisory Committee**

It is recommended that the Community Design Advisory Committee recommend that the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee recommend that Regional Council give first reading and schedule a public hearing to consider:

*Continued on next page*

1. repealing the existing Regional Municipal Planning Strategy; and
2. adopting the proposed Regional Municipal Planning Strategy as contained in Attachment A.

#### **Heritage Advisory Committee**

It is recommended that the Heritage Advisory Committee recommend that the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee recommend that Regional Council give first reading and schedule a public hearing to consider:

1. repealing the existing Regional Municipal Planning Strategy; and
2. adopting the proposed Regional Municipal Planning Strategy as contained in Attachment A.

#### **Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee**

It is recommended that the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee recommend that:

1. Regional Council give first reading and schedule a public hearing to consider:
  - a) repealing the existing Regional Municipal Planning Strategy and adopting the proposed Regional Municipal Planning Strategy as contained in Attachment A;
  - b) repealing and re-adopting the 2006 Regional Plan Community Plans and Land Use By-Law Amendments (as amended) as contained in Attachment D;
  - c) adopting the amendments to land use by-laws as contained in Attachment E;
  - d) adopting the amendments to the Regional Subdivision By-Law as contained in Attachment F;
  - e) adopting the amendments to secondary planning strategies contained in Attachment G; and
2. Regional Council:
  - a) repeal the existing Regional Municipal Planning Strategy and adopt the proposed Regional Municipal Planning Strategy as contained in Attachment A;
  - b) repeal and re-adopt the 2006 Regional Plan Community Plans and Land Use By-Law Amendments (as amended) as contained in Attachment D;
  - c) adopt the amendments to land use by-laws as contained in Attachment E;
  - d) adopt the amendments to the Regional Subdivision By-Law as contained in Attachment F; and
  - e) adopt the amendments to secondary planning strategies contained in Attachment G.

#### **Regional Council**

It is recommended that:

1. Regional Council give first reading and schedule a public hearing to consider:
  - a) repealing the existing Regional Municipal Planning Strategy and adopting the proposed Regional Municipal Planning Strategy as contained in Attachment A;
  - b) repealing and re-adopting the 2006 Regional Plan Community Plans and Land Use By-Law Amendments (as amended) as contained in Attachment D;
  - c) adopting the amendments to land use by-laws as contained in Attachment E;
  - d) adopting the amendments to the Regional Subdivision By-Law as contained in Attachment F; and

- e) adopt the amendments to secondary planning strategies contained in Attachment G.
2. Regional Council:
- a) repeal the existing Regional Municipal Planning Strategy and adopting the proposed Regional Municipal Planning Strategy as contained in Attachment A;
  - b) repeal and re-adopt the 2006 Regional Plan Community Plans and Land Use By-Law Amendments (as amended) as contained in Attachment D;
  - c) adopt the amendments to land use by-laws as contained in Attachment E;
  - d) adopt the amendments to the Regional Subdivision By-Law as contained in Attachment F; and
  - e) adopt the amendments to secondary planning strategies contained in Attachment G.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

On October 4, 2011, Regional Council initiated the first review of HRM's 25-year Regional Plan (the RP+5 Project). This report provides an overview of the RP+5 Project and the proposed changes to the Regional Plan, which through this process has been developed into a more concise document.

HRM's Regional Plan was adopted in 2006. It outlines a framework of how HRM is to grow, establishes policies that enable regulations that are of regional significance, and policies and directions concerning matters in the areas of housing, transportation, the environment, the economy, the Regional Centre, culture, heritage, and governance. The RP+5 Project has strengthened the main concepts and components of the original Regional Plan. The main changes are highlighted in Discussion section of the report and generally include:

- The concept of greenbelting is introduced and a commitment is made to undertake a Greenbelting and Public Open Space Priorities Plan;
- A new policy provision is made to allow Community Councils to establish land use by-law regulations needed to protect water within a watershed or ground water supply area where a public water supply has been established or is proposed;
- Policy provision is made for Council to consider a new by-law to protect trees within riparian buffers;
- Growth targets have been re-worded and the consideration of the growth targets and the need for additional lands have been added as criterion for Council to consider when requests are received to amend the service boundary and to initiate secondary planning for new serviced growth centres;
- Provision is made to consider additional serviced lands at the north end of Morris Lake and in Eastern Passage to compensate for the development potential lost due to the Shearwater air base being reacquired by the Canadian Armed Forces, conditional upon the connector road from Mount Hope Avenue to Caldwell Road being constructed;
- Sheet Harbour, Middle Musquodoboit, Hatchet Lake, Hubley, Sambro, Indian Harbour, Waverley, White's Lake, Jeddore, North Preston, Eastern Passage and Cherry Brook have been reclassified from Rural Growth Centres to Rural Centres not Identified for Growth;

- Food security, mobility needs, supporting aging in place, establishing interconnected greenbelts and open spaces, are identified as matters to be considered when preparing secondary planning strategies for growth centres;
- A new policy has been added that, when reviewing secondary planning strategies for rural areas, consideration is to be given to limiting the scale or retail development allowed outside of designated rural centres;
- The sub-section “Open Space Design Developments” in the current plan has been replaced with “Conservation Design Developments” and new criterion for approval of development agreements have been established;
- Boundaries of the Rural Growth Centres where greater opportunity is made for Conservation Design Developments have been established;
- The 2010 Parks Canada Standards & Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada has been recommended for guidance under the Heritage Property By-Law, the Downtown Halifax Plan, the Barrington Street Conservation District and future conservation districts;
- A commitment is made to undertake a Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan;
- An Urban Service Transit Boundary has been established which identifies where HRM will direct future investment in public transit services, with the exception of rural commuter express services. Council may also consider programs to encourage and assist developing community based transit services;
- The transfer of municipal wastewater and stormwater services from HRM to Halifax Water is reflected in Chapter 8 and the implications for governance and regulatory approvals;
- The policies pertaining to Council approval of service boundary extensions or growth related secondary planning strategies, have been amended to reflect the approval requirements for water, wastewater and stormwater services;
- A new requirement is made under the Regional Subdivision By-Law for a hydrogeological assessment of adequacy of water supply for all subdivision applications in which ten or more new dwelling units would be serviced by wells;
- A new requirement is made under the Regional Subdivision By-Law for underground placement of electrical and communication distribution lines from the poles to the street right-of-way, for all subdivisions where new streets are proposed;
- The Community visioning program has been incorporated into future secondary planning processes; and
- Completed Functional Plans have been recognized and commitment to complete a number of functional plans has been transferred to secondary planning and other programs. A commitment to undertake several new priorities plans is also included.

The RP+5 Project has been informed by functional plans that have been undertaken in the past five years and studies that were undertaken specifically for the review. It has benefited from oversight and input from the Community Design Advisory Committee (CDAC), a councillor and citizen committee that was formed specifically for the project, and through update reports to the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee and Regional Council. Importantly, the Regional Plan has been shaped by considerable public and stakeholder input that was gained through public information meetings, workshops, open houses, survey responses and written submissions.

The Background section of the report contains information about the *Context for the Project*, a summary of the *Background Studies and Information*, and the *Community Engagement Program*. The Discussion section of the report outlines the *Major Policy Changes to the Regional Plan* and an *Outline of Proposed Future Work*.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Context for the Project:**

On October 4, 2011, Regional Council initiated the first five year review of the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy<sup>1</sup> and directed the in-scope issues be refined and confirmed through a process of public consultation and research with direction and advice from a Community Design Advisory Committee (CDAC). The five-year review was framed around four key themes and directions that were described in the initiating staff report as follows:

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.
2. Enhancing the Regional Centre: The Regional Centre holds enormous potential for new residential and commercial growth in areas that enjoy already established and paid-for infrastructure and services. However, new land use policies, by-laws, 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.
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.
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 continued 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

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/documents/111004cow3.pdf>

active transportation options should continue to be supported, and be accelerated wherever possible.

The CDAC was appointed during the early stages of Phase 2 and was actively engaged in the review process from that point onward.<sup>2</sup> Staff and the committee reviewed all of the feedback received through Phases 1, 2 and 3 of the public process and considered this input, along with research documents to inform key policy directions. CDAC members participated in public and stakeholder group meetings, provided policy direction and reviewed several drafts of the Plan.

***Background Studies and Other Information:***

The first five-year review of the Regional Plan considered the extensive research which took place over the past five years as part of the various functional plans, watershed studies and secondary planning processes<sup>3</sup>. Some additional research was necessary to understand and take advantage of future opportunities, address emerging challenges, and inform revised policy direction. The five-year review is therefore based in part, on input from the public and other key stakeholders and, in part, on research and analysis undertaken by consultants and by project staff from various HRM departments. The findings of both the internal and external research have helped to shape the policy directives outlined in Attachment B.

***Community Engagement Program:***

These themes of the RP+5 process were considered throughout the RP+5 Project and helped to inform a program of community engagement that was organized into four phases as outlined below:

Phase	Key question / Milestone	Key outcomes
1	Where are we now?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>research &amp; analysis of issues</li> <li>internal and external information sharing</li> </ul>
2	Where do we want to go?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>initial public consultation on key policy directions</li> <li>interim approvals and policy recommendations</li> </ul>
3	What do we need to refine or change?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>public information sharing</li> <li>public feedback on proposed changes</li> <li>final review and formal recommendations</li> </ul>
4	Approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>public hearing to consider for approval of changes</li> </ul>

RP+5 involved three phases of community engagement described in more detail under “Community Engagement” (below) and in Attachment C. CDAC dedicated a considerable portion of its meetings to the review and careful consideration of the extensive public input

<sup>2</sup>Information about the CDAC, agendas and minutes:  
<http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/CommunityDesignAdvisoryCommittee.html>

<sup>3</sup> Regional Planning studies and reports <http://www.halifax.ca/regionalplanning/regionalplanstudies.html>

provided during the review process from individual citizens, property owners, businesses, community organizations, and major institutions. Public input informed many areas of proposed policy changes, including:

1. the wording of growth targets;
2. the introduction of greenbelting to the planning process;
3. community design outcomes within growth centres and in rural subdivisions;
4. focus on urban transit investment and support to community based transit service;
5. inclusion of key regional active transportation projects;
6. priorities for culture and heritage;
7. protection of potable water supply areas;
8. staged approach to undergrounding;
9. greater focus on rural economic development; and
10. revised performance measures.

***Requests for Service Boundary Extensions:***

In 2010, Council provided direction on land analysis and future secondary planning processes for sites identified in the 2006 Regional Plan as future growth areas for serviced development (Port Wallace, Sandy Lake and Highway 102 West Corridor)<sup>4</sup>. Council also directed a facilitated negotiation be undertaken for the Highway 102 corridor lands with a view of acquiring all or part of lands for a Regional Park.

Based on analysis of available land for suburban development, changes to land use designations and service boundary extensions were not in scope of the five-year review process. Three major requests for changes to land use designations and service extensions were, however, received but were not supported. They include:

- *Request by Clayton to change designation on lands off Purcell's Cove Rd. to Urban Settlement and rezone to Residential Development District* - This area presents an opportunity for growth in the future; however, ample lands for serviced development are currently available in the Western Region. Council directed that the Purcell's Cove Road Servicing Steering Committee be disbanded and that consulting study be tabled. No direction was given to proceed any further. Numerous submissions were received from community organizations and residents to re-zone those lands to parkland and this is also not recommended by staff.
- *Request by Conrad Brothers to include the entire Port Wallace area, including those lands identified as owned and operated by Conrad Brothers Ltd., in the upcoming Secondary Planning Strategy Process* – In 2010, Council directed secondary planning to commence on the Port Wallace lands following completion of the watershed study. Initial land analysis has been commenced.

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<sup>4</sup> See staff report Project 01341 - Cost of Servicing Study and Requests to Initiate Secondary Planning Strategies (Community Plan Amendment Requests) <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/documents/101116cow3-001.pdf>

- *Request by Armco to exempt certain lands from secondary planning and the requirements of Policy – secondary planning Policy SU-6 is fundamental to growth management under the Regional Plan. Further to Council direction in 2010, a watershed study for Sandy Lake is underway to inform secondary planning.*

## **DISCUSSION**

### ***Major Policy Changes to the Regional Plan:***

The RP+5 policy process considered changing conditions, research, community engagement and CDAC direction. The review, while focused on specific in-scope issues, resulted in a reformatting of the Plan to ensure clearer connection between policy objectives, policy directions and implementation. Staff are proposing that the Regional Planning Strategy, originally adopted by Council in 2006 as amended and currently in effect, would be repealed and replaced when the Revised Regional Plan is approved by Council and the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations. As part of the process, the amending by-laws will need to be re-adopted by Council to ensure their continued validity. The main changes made in the revised document are summarized as follows:

#### **Format of Regional Plan:**

- The executive summary has been removed and this summation is included as part of Chapter 1: Introduction;
- Municipal objectives are explicitly identified at the beginning of each chapter;
- Where a directive was made under the current plan to undertake a functional plan and the plan has been completed and endorsed by Council, a policy has been added identifying the plan for prioritizing programs and regulations;
- Sections on energy and climate change have been added to Chapter 2 and the title has been changed to Environment, Energy and Climate Change;
- The title of chapter 4 has been changed from Transportation to Transportation and Mobility;
- The Regional Centre has been added as a new chapter;
- The section on infrastructure charges has been moved to Chapter 5: Economy and Finance;
- The title of Chapter 8 has been changed to Municipal Water Services, Utilities and Solid Waste; and
- The chapters on governance and implementation have been consolidated into Chapter 9: Governance and Implementation.

#### **Chapter 1: Introduction:**

- The chapter begins with an overview of the first five year review and highlights the four themes of the review: Sustainable Solutions; Enhance the Regional Centre; Improve Suburban and Rural Community Design; and Make Land Use and Transportation Planning Mutually Supportive;
- The main findings of the Stantec study on the costs and benefits of alternative growth scenarios have been summarized and municipal growth targets have been refocused. The Regional Plan shall target at least 75% of new housing units to be located in the Regional



Centre and suburbs with at least 25% of new housing units within the Regional Centre over the life of this Plan;

- Population and employment data and projections have been updated; and
- Clarification is made that any functional or priorities plans identified by policy are not considered a legal part of the Regional Plan and may be amended from time to time by Regional Council without amending the Regional Plan.

Chapter 2: Environment, Energy and Climate Change:

- The concept of greenbelting is introduced and a commitment is made to undertake a Greenbelting and Public Open Space Priorities Plan (section 2.2.7; policy E-12);
- The *Urban Forest Master Plan*, *Climate Risk Management Strategy*, *Community Energy Plan*, and the *Corporate Plan to Reduce Energy* are identified for guiding priorities and work plans (policies E-10, E-25, E-26, E-27, E-28 and E-29);
- A new policy provision is made to allow Community Councils to establish land use by-law regulations needed to protect water within a watershed or ground water supply area where a public water supply has been established or is proposed (policy E-14);
- Policy provision is made for Council to consider a new by-law to protect trees within riparian buffers (policy E-19).

Chapter 3: Settlement and Housing:

- Consideration of the HRM growth targets and the need for additional lands have been added as criterion for Council to consider when requests are received to amend the service boundary and to initiate secondary planning for new serviced growth centres (policies S-1 and S-2);
- Provision is made to consider additional serviced lands at the north end of Morris Lake and in Eastern Passage to compensate for the development potential lost due to the Shearwater air base being reacquired by the Canadian Armed Forces. However, this is conditional upon the connector road from Mount Hope Avenue to Caldwell Road being constructed (Section 3.2.1);
- Sheet Harbour, Middle Musquodoboit, Hatchet Lake, Hubley, Sambro, Indian Harbour, Waverley, White's Lake, Jeddore, North Preston, Eastern Passage and Cherry Brook have been reclassified from Rural Growth Centres to Rural Centres not Identified for Growth (Table 3-2);
- Food security, mobility needs, supporting aging in place, establishing interconnected greenbelts and open spaces are identified as matters to be considered when preparing secondary planning strategies for growth centres (policy S-9);
- A new policy has been added that, when reviewing secondary planning strategies for rural areas, consideration is to be given to limiting the scale or retail development allowed outside of designated rural centres (policy S-13);
- The sub-section "Open Space Design Developments" in the current plan has been replaced with "Conservation Design Developments" and new criterion for approval of development agreements have been established in Section 3.4.1. Maps 15A to 15F have been added to the plan to identify the boundaries of the Rural Growth Centres where greater opportunity is made for Conservation Design Developments. Provision has been made to allow for

consideration of expanding the boundary for Porters Lake in the event that provision of water and wastewater services is not financially feasible (policy S-10);

- The *Community Facilities Master Plan*, endorsed by Council in 2008, is identified for guiding needs assessment, planning, management and financing of community facilities in HRM (section 3.5; policy S-28);
- The commitment to undertake an Affordable Housing Functional Plan has been replaced with the means by which HRM will support housing diversity and affordability through secondary plan reviews and other programs has been updated in Section 3.6; and
- The commitment to prepare an Opportunities Sites Functional Plan has been addressed in the Downtown Halifax MPS and LUB or will be addressed through the Centre Plan.

#### Chapter 4: Transportation and Mobility:

- The *Transportation Demand Management Functional Plan* (2010), the *Active Transportation Plan* (2006), the *Regional Parking Strategy Function Plan* (2008) and the *Five Year Transit Service Plan (2010/11 to 2014/15)*, as periodically updated, provide direction for priorities, strategies and operation plans (policies T-1, T-2, T-6 and T-13);
- A policy to support protection and development of greenways has been added under policy T-4 and priorities for active transportation projects are identified under policy T-5;
- A policy has been added to permit public transit facilities in all zones with frontage on or abutting a minor collector, major collector, arterial road or expressway. Such facilities would be exempt from zone requirements (policy T-7);
- An Urban Service Transit Boundary has been established which indicates where HRM will direct future investment in public transit services, with the exception of rural commuter express services (policy T-8). Council may also consider programs to encourage and assist developing community based transit services (policy T-11);
- Minimum targets for work trips by transit and active transportation have been updated (policy T-12);
- Prior to moving forward with road network projects presented in Table 4-1 a community consultation program will be undertaken (policy T-14); and
- The Road Hierarchy Classification Map has been deleted and a new road classification system will be developed as part of the Road Networks Priorities Plan (policy T-15).

#### Chapter 5: Economy and Finance:

- The *Greater Halifax - 2011 to 2016 - Economic Strategy* is recognized for directing economic programs and initiatives (policy EC-1);
- The *Welcoming Newcomers Action Plan*, as approved by Regional Council on June 25, 2013, has been referenced in Chapter 5 as a strategy to attract and retain talented workers (policy EC-2);
- The 2008 *Business Parks Functional Plan* is to provide guidance for the governance and management, servicing, land acquisition and rationalization of uses and development standards for HRM business parks (policy EC-4);
- The section on the Capital District and the commitments to undertake various functional plans for the Capital District have been deleted as these matters have been addressed through the Halifax by Design process or will be addressed through the Centre Plan; and

- The commitment to undertake a Halifax Harbour Functional Plan has been addressed through numerous secondary planning strategies that have been undertaken or are currently being prepared, which address harbour related issues. New policies have been added to strengthen a commitment by HRM to preserve and protect harbour front lands needed for marine dependent industrial and commercial uses under Section 5.3.4.

Chapter 6: The Regional Centre:

- The vision statement and principles endorsed by Council through the *HRMbyDesign* process have been incorporated into the Regional Plan to guide the Regional Centre Plan (policy RC-3) and are to be considered for any amendments to the Downtown Halifax Secondary Planning Strategy and Land Use By-Law (policy RC-1) or new or amendments to heritage conservation by-laws and plans (policy RC-2); and
- The recommendations of the Strategic Urban Partnership regarding programs and initiatives for the Regional Centre are to be considered with emphasis on the action plans established under the *2011 -2016 Greater Halifax Economic Strategy* (policy RC-4).

Chapter 7: Cultural and Heritage Resources:

- The 2006 *HRM Cultural Plan* is to provide strategic guidance in achieving long term cultural goals, and the *Model for Assessing Cultural Heritage Values in HRM* (2005) is to guide the identification of sites, communities, and cultural landscapes (policies CH-1 and CH-2);
- A commitment is made to prepare a Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan with the matters to be addressed outlined in subsection 7.2.2 (policy CH-3); and
- The 2010 Parks Canada *Standards & Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* has been adopted for guidance under the Heritage Property By-Law, the Downtown Halifax Plan, the Barrington Street Conservation District and future conservation districts (sub-section 7.3.5; policy CH-14).

Chapter 8: Municipal Water Services, Utilities and Solid Waste:

- The chapter has been substantially re-written due to the transfer of municipal wastewater and stormwater services from HRM to Halifax Water. Section 8.2 presents the purpose of the transfer agreement and the implications for governance and regulatory approvals;
- The policies pertaining to Council approval of service boundary extensions or growth related secondary planning strategies have been amended to reflect the approval requirements for water, wastewater and stormwater services (policies SU-4, SU-5, SU-14 and SU-15);
- The policy to undertake a stormwater functional plan has been replaced with a new policy set under Section 8.4, to reflect an appropriate role for HRM in stormwater management. This includes a commitment to bring a stormwater management and erosion and sedimentation control by-law to Council for consideration of approval (policy SU-7). Provisions are also made for Council to consider providing support to stormwater retrofits that mitigate flooding or improve water quality or allow for daylighting of watercourses (policies SU-8, SU-9 and SU-10);
- A new requirement is made under the Regional Subdivision By-Law for a hydrogeological assessment of adequacy of water supply for all subdivision applications in which ten or more new dwelling units would be serviced by wells (policy SU-21); and

- A new requirement is made under the Regional Subdivision By-Law for underground placement of electrical and communication distribution lines from the poles to the street right-of-way, for all subdivisions where new streets are proposed (policy SU-25).

Chapter 9: Governance and Implementation:

- The 2008 *HRM Community Engagement Strategy* will guide HRM in informing consulting with and engaging its citizens (policy G-1);
- Revised performance measures (Appendix A) are to be used to assist in evaluating the effectiveness of policies, programs, and investments in achieving the vision and objectives of the Plan (policy G-4);
- An implementation policy, IM-18 under the current plan, which allows Council to consider extension of uses into an abutting planning designation, has been modified to clarify that this provision is only intended to be applied on a limited scale (policy G-15); and
- A new policy is added to grandfather any completed development agreement application received by HRM prior to Council's first notification to adopt this Revised Regional Plan, in accordance with the Regional Plan policies in effect at the time the application was received. (policy G-17).

Housekeeping Amendments:

The five-year review was designed to address amendments which propose substantive changes to the 2006 Regional Plan. However, in the process of considering the larger, policy-based amendments to the plan, there was some opportunity to address some non-substantial or technical changes (Policy IM-9a under the current Plan; Policy G-11 under the revised draft Plan). Some examples of minor amendments or technical adjustments were correcting minor mapping and zoning errors, updating current zoning and land use designations based on public or conservation trust ownership, or making small clarifications to the provisions within land use by-laws or subdivision regulations.

In addition, the review process allows Council to consider amendments to address issues with development regulations which support plan policy implementation; examples include clarification on when specific studies or assessments are required to satisfy development approvals, or the relaxation of subdivision regulations requiring a connection to municipal services where service connections cannot be developed. Specific housekeeping amendments include:

- A request from Nova Scotia Nature Trust (NSNT) to designate recently purchased NSNT properties Open Space and Natural Resources (OSNR) in Shelter Cove, Purcells Cove and Musquodoboit Harbour and re-zone them to PA (Protected Area) zone to recognize their conservation status;
- The re-designation of four HRM owned properties in Purcells Cove adjacent to NSNT lands from Urban Reserve to OSNR to create open space connectivity with McIntosh Run and Long Lake Provincial Park;
- Updates to OSNR mapping and PA zoning to reflect recent purchases, disposals and conservation designations of provincial Crown Lands;
- Corrections to mapping and zoning to remove the OSNR designation and the PA or RPK (Regional Park) zoning on private properties; and

- Corrections to the Regional Subdivision By-Law to re-establish the lot frontage exemption in the HRC (Herring Cove Residential) and F-1 (Fishing Industry) zones in the Chebucto Peninsula Plan Area.

***Future Work Plans for Growth Centres:***

Council has approved a secondary planning strategy for Fall River and has directed staff to proceed with preparing secondary plans for the Regional Centre and for Port Wallace. The Regional Centre Plan will be re-commenced upon the completion of the RP+5 Project and a separate report will be brought forward to Council to present a revised approach. The Shubenacadie Lakes Watershed Study has been completed and secondary planning for Port Wallace has been commenced with land suitability analysis and broad conceptual planning.

When the transportation study for the Bedford – Mainland Halifax North Corridor is completed and tabled with Council, direction will be sought from Council on proceeding with preparing secondary plans for Bedford Waterfront and Birch Cove. Work plans are currently being developed for approval by Council for secondary planning at Porters Lake, Upper Tantallon and Middle Sackville.

***Adoption of Changes to the 2006 Regional Plan:***

Given the extensive changes to the format of the document, HRM staff recommend that Council repeal the 2006 Regional Plan and replace it with the revised draft Plan, subject to any final changes that may be directed by CPED, HAC, Council and final Ministerial approval.

A new policy G-16 states that until the new Plan becomes effective in accordance with the requirements of the HRM Charter, the Regional Plan adopted by Council on August 26, 2006, and as amended, shall remain in effect. Policy G-17 further states that where any completed development agreement application was received by HRM prior to Council's first notification to adopt this Revised Regional Plan, the application shall be considered in accordance with the Regional Plan policies in effect at the time the application was received.

***Regional Plan Implementation:***

The review process stressed the importance of timely and integrated implementation of the Regional Plan including ongoing monitoring and reporting on both accomplishments and challenges. There is a high degree of community expectation that actions identified in the Regional Plan, once approved by Council, will be implemented and that the community will be kept informed of progress and engaged in ongoing implementation.

Regional Plan implementation will include specific community planning processes, priorities plans, by-laws, business plans and several major studies necessary to inform secondary planning. Strategic approaches will need to be developed for effective collaboration with the provincial government on a number of issues.

Plans and Studies	Lead HRM Business Unit <sup>5</sup>
<b>Secondary Planning Processes</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Centre</li> <li>• Port Wallace</li> <li>• Birch Cove</li> <li>• Bedford Waterfront</li> <li>• Fall River</li> <li>• Porters Lake</li> <li>• Upper Tantallon</li> <li>• Middle Sackville</li> <li>• North Preston</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P&amp;I</li> </ul>
<b>Major Studies to Inform Secondary Planning</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Porters Lake Watershed Study</li> <li>• Tantallon Watershed Study</li> <li>• Preston Area Watershed Study</li> <li>• Sandy Lake Watershed Study</li> <li>• Shubenacadie Lakes Sub-watershed Study</li> <li>• Bedford-Mainland North Transportation Corridor</li> <li>• Regional Centre Wastewater Master Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P&amp;I</li>   <li>• P&amp;I and Halifax Water</li> </ul>
<b>Priorities Plans</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greenbelting and Public Open Space</li> <li>• Road Network Priorities Plan</li> <li>• Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan</li> <li>• Heritage Conservation Districts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P&amp;I</li> <li>• P&amp;I</li> <li>• P&amp;I and CRS</li> <li>• P&amp;I and CRS</li> </ul>
<b>By-laws</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Riparian Buffer Tree Protection</li> <li>• Growth Related Cost Recovery</li> <li>• Stormwater Management and Erosion Control</li> <li>• Residential Development within the Vicinity of Halifax International Airport</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P&amp;I</li> <li>• P&amp;I</li> <li>• P&amp;I</li> <li>• P&amp;I</li> </ul>

<sup>5</sup> P&I refers to Planning and Infrastructure; CRS refers to Community and Recreation services; GR&EA refers to Government Relations and External Affairs; MO refers to Municipal Operations; GHP refers to Greater Halifax Partnership.

<b>Protocols and Guidelines</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Water quality monitoring protocol</li><li>• Provincial protocol on rural economic development</li><li>• Provincial protocol on affordable housing</li><li>• Adoption of Standards and Guidelines for Conservation of Historic Places in Canada</li><li>• Consultation approach with Industry Canada for communication towers and antenna</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• P&amp;I</li><li>• GREA</li> <li>• P&amp;I and GREA</li><li>• CRS</li> <li>• CRS</li></ul>

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Regional Plan staff review and public consultation has been adequately funded by **Project No. CDG01283 – Regional Plan 5-year Review**.

Budgets and potential funding sources for the corresponding functional and priority plans required to carry out the strategies identified through policy development, will be brought forward in future reports.

Long-term financial implications arising from changes to the Regional Plan will be incorporated in the regular Operating and Project Budget cycles.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Attachment C describes the extensive engagement process which was part of Phases 1-3 of RP+5 review, including engagement activities, how input was collected, key issues raised by stakeholder groups and members of the public, and how the input influenced CDAC deliberations and policy development. The process was based on the CPED-approved Communication and Community Engagement Plan and as outlined in the February 9, 2012, staff report. Staff from nearly all HRM departments and staff from the Halifax Water Commission have been closely involved in the process.

**Phase 1:** The first phase included information sharing about the Regional Plan and communicated what had changed since its adoption in 2006. RP+5 website and social media channels were promoted as sources for information and platforms for feedback throughout the review process. Fact sheets and a short on-line promotional video were developed. A well-attended kick-off event on March 1, 2012, provided the necessary momentum for Phase 2 public consultation.

**Phase 2:** The second phase of community engagement was designed to re-affirm Regional Plan's guiding principles and engage the public in a dialogue on potential policy directions. Information materials focused on accomplishments (e.g. Halifax downtown plan), new

conditions (e.g. higher energy prices), and challenges (e.g. HRM not tracking to meet its growth targets). Community engagement activities included seven public meetings/open houses (550+participants), written submissions (approximately 50 were received), focus groups (3), informal stakeholder meetings and an on-line survey (460 responses). CDAC dedicated six meetings to reviewing public feedback, staff responses and providing policy direction on Drafts 1 and 2 of the Regional Plan. Draft 2 was approved by CDAC for Phase 3 public consultation.

**Phase 3:** The third phase of community engagement was focused on seeking public feedback on the fifteen (15) key areas of proposed policy change to the Regional Plan explained through visual fact sheets and poster boards. Draft 2 was made publicly available on-line on May 17, 2013. As part of Phase 3, staff provided updates to Regional Council on the proposed policy changes, the Heritage Advisory Committee and the HRM Development Liaison Group. Community engagement activities included three stakeholder meetings (June 3-6), six open houses (June 10-July 16), one regional town hall meeting (June 17), and an invitation to provide written submissions (May 17 – July 19). Approximately 600 citizens participated in stakeholder and public meetings and 200 written submissions were received from individuals, community groups, businesses and regional organizations. CDAC again dedicated six meetings to a thorough review of all public feedback and staff responses as a basis for and provide policy direction on Draft 3 of the Regional Plan.

The RP+5 process enjoyed a high level of public engagement. While different issues were raised in the urban, suburban and rural areas of the municipality, there was also a lot of mutual understanding of urban and rural areas. Public feedback consistently raised the issue of growth targets, greenbelting, revitalization of the Regional Centre, maintenance of urban reserves, efficient use of existing services, transportation road projects, rural development, protection of wetlands, and extension of riparian buffers.

There was an overall support for: the established growth targets; the efficient use of existing infrastructure; the protection of natural areas; more focused investment in transit; and revitalization of the Regional Centre. Few objections were raised about the proposed Urban Transit Service Boundary but concern was expressed regarding the list of regional road projects and the revised Road Classification Map (which has been deleted and will be addressed as part of the Road Network Functional Plan). The development community also expressed concern about the cost of mandatory undergrounding and changes to rural subdivision standards. A number of landowners requested to be grandfathered under the current open space subdivision planning process and this has been accommodated in policy.

Overall, the community engagement process was challenging given the large number of issues under consideration, yet successfully provided diverse and ongoing opportunities for informed public input. Immediate on-line access to CDAC's working documents, presentations, research studies and public submissions<sup>6</sup> was provided. Staff believe that the draft presented to CDAC

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<sup>6</sup> See CDAC website <http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/CommunityDesignAdvisoryCommittee.html> and planhrm website <http://www.halifax.ca/planhrm/index.html>



for recommendation to Regional Council remains true to the foundation of the 2006 Regional Plan but takes a step forward towards achieving its goals.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

The protection of the natural environment is one of the core principles of the Regional Plan. The Plan strives to achieve well planned and sustainable communities.

The five-year review addresses the environmental implications of growth and development through a focus on sustainable solutions, an enhanced role for the Regional Centre, improved suburban and rural community design, and ensuring land use and transit/active transportation are mutually supportive.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

The Community Design and Advisory Committee may choose to recommend that the Community Planning and Economic Development Committee recommend to Regional Council to set a date for a public hearing to consider the Plan attached to this report. This is the recommended approach.

Many possible alternative policy approaches may be considered by Council during their deliberations. A list of potential issues based on input from the community consultation process is listed below.

- 1. Increase Regional Centre growth targets** – The Plan (Chapter 1) includes growth targets for new housing units and states that at least 75% of new housing units be located in the Regional Centre and suburbs, with at least 25% of new housing units within the Regional Centre over the life of this Plan. Council could choose to direct that the growth target for the Regional Centre be increased. This is not recommended as increasing the share of growth allocated to the Regional Centre may produce significant benefits but may also necessitate imposing stringent development controls in other parts of the region, potentially creating challenges for housing choice and affordability.
- 2. Revert to the term “open space”** - The term “greenbelting” has been adapted in Chapter 2 for specific use in HRM in the context of the Land Use Designations existing in the Regional Plan adopted in 2006. While staff believes the term provides a useful policy guide for HRM’s future, Council could direct that it be replaced with the term “open space planning” and still maintain the integrity of the policy direction of the proposed Regional Plan.
- 3. Further reduce caps on rural subdivisions between centres** - The Plan seeks to focus growth in Centres as defined in Chapter 3, in a manner consistent with achieving the overall growth targets established in Chapter 1. Limited growth is permitted between rural centres and caps of 100 units and 30 units are established for Classic Conservation Design - Low Density Developments and Hybrid Developments respectively. Council

may choose to further reduce these caps, however, this is not recommended as it may also reduce choice and affordability for rural housing options.

4. **Defer undergrounding** - The proposed Plan (Chapter 8) includes mandatory underground wiring (secondary servicing only) for residential development to be established on new streets. Staff believe this is a reasonable first step towards requirements for full undergrounding. Council may choose to direct that secondary undergrounding also be deferred to a later date, however, this is not recommended as it would further prolong implementation of a program deemed to have substantial benefits for the municipality as identified in Attachment B.
5. **Increase setbacks from watercourses** - The proposed Plan (Chapter 2) includes watercourse setbacks in HRM at a minimum of 20 metres with the potential to increase these at the community planning stage as was done in West Bedford West and Russell Laker West. Council could choose to implement larger setbacks in the Regional Plan, however, this is not recommended as staff believe this approach would lack the detailed analysis which can be achieved best at the secondary planning stage.
6. **Allow congestion to increase over time** - The draft Plan (Chapter 4) includes recommended road network improvements needed to maintain traffic congestion in the municipality at current levels. Council could choose to remove one or all of the proposed improvements and thereby direct that traffic congestion be permitted to increase over time. This approach entails a level of risk associated with costs associated with travel time, fuel consumption and resulting environmental degradation.
7. **Adopt a higher standard for coastal elevation** - The proposed Plan (Chapter 2) revises the technical definition of Coastal Elevation requirements but maintains the actual elevation of residential units at essentially the same level as with the Plan adopted in 2006. Council may choose to adopt a higher standard. Staff believe this may be necessary but should be undertaken following additional scientific input anticipated to be made available later this year.

## ATTACHMENTS

### **Attachments for CDAC, HAC, CPED and Regional Council:**

- Attachment A: Revised Draft Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (Regional Plan)  
Attachment B: Summary of Research  
Attachment C: Report on RP+5 Community Engagement

### **Attachments for CPED and Regional Council:**

- Attachment D: By-Law to re-adopt the 2006 Regional Plan Community Plans and Land Use By-Law Amendments (as amended)  
Attachment E: By-Law to adopt amendments to Halifax Regional Municipality Land Use By-Laws  
Attachment F: By-Law to Amend the Regional Subdivision By-Law

Attachment G: By-Law to Amend the Secondary Planning Strategies

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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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