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**Halifax Regional Council**  
**May 16, 2006**

**TO:** Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

**SUBMITTED BY:**

  
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Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer

  
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Wayne Anstey, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** May 8, 2006

**SUBJECT:** Public Hearing Process for the Regional Plan

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### **SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT**

#### **ORIGIN**

- On April 25, Regional Council gave First Reading to the Regional Plan.
- Staff initiated this report in order to assist Council with the public hearing process and subsequent debate.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Regional Council adopt the procedures outlined in this report for the Regional Plan public hearing and subsequent debate.

## **DISCUSSION**

Public consultation on the Regional Plan has been lengthy and covered a broad range of topics. It is anticipated that a varied and potentially lengthy set of questions will arise during this final phase of public input into the plan.

### **Process**

Given the complexity and anticipated duration of this public hearing process, the following procedures are recommended.

- Reserve all questions for staff until the public hearing is closed. This will ensure that the time set aside for hearing from the public can be used to maximum effect.
- Once the public hearing is closed, staff will attempt to provide verbal answers to Council's questions.
- Some questions will be more complex or may require an in depth answer. In these cases, Council may wish a written response from staff. To ensure clarity with respect to which questions Council expects a written response, it is recommended that Council provide this direction in the form of a motion. Staff will attempt to respond to these questions in a report to the May 30 session of Council.
- In answering any questions related to possible amendments to the proposed Regional Plan, staff will provide advice as to whether or not the amendment would be "a substantial amendment." Substantial amendment will require a new public hearing.
- It is also recommended that motions to amend the Regional Plan not be entertained until all Council questions have been answered. This will ensure that Council has accurate and relevant information on the issue prior to spending time debating the motion.

### **Timing**

In the section above, it was stated that a supplementary staff report answering Council's questions could be provided for the May 30 Council meeting. In order to achieve this, it is recommended that:

- Council reconvene the Public Hearing at 1:00 pm on the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>;
- If the Public Hearing is completed on May 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup>, that Council immediately begin debate.

The next opportunity to begin debate would be May 30<sup>th</sup>. If Council waits until May 30<sup>th</sup>, the staff report cannot be submitted until June 13<sup>th</sup>, which is the next scheduled Council meeting. This would be three and half weeks after the public hearing. In addition, June 13<sup>th</sup> is the proposed date for the beginning of Operating/Capital Budget discussions.

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

Endorsement of this planning strategy does not represent a budget commitment.

**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.

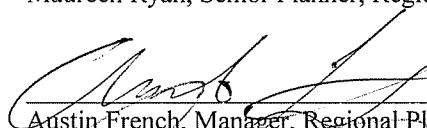
**ALTERNATIVES**

Council could wait until May 30 to initiate its debate. This is not recommended as it would mean that the staff response could not be presented until June 13. There is no Council session on June 6. If a second public hearing is required to deal with substantive issues, this would be further delayed until July.

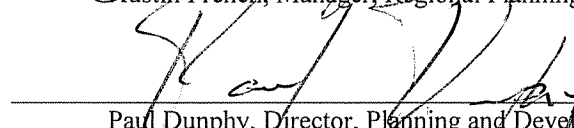
Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210 or Fax 490-4208.

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