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> Halifax Regional Council September 19, 2006

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: All conformal

Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer

Wayne Anstey, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer - Operations

**DATE:** August 30, 2006

SUBJECT: Community Visioning - Pilot Project

#### **ORIGIN**

- January 17, 2006 Council directed staff to undertake a community visioning pilot project for the 06/07 business cycle upon adoption and approval of the Regional Plan, including identification of pilot visioning communities;
- January 17, 2006 Council approved a set of draft community selection criteria
- June 27, 2006 Council adopted the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy
- August 26, 2006 Regional Plan came into effect following Ministerial approval and public notice.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

## It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council:

- a) Initiate a Community Visioning Pilot Project, as set out in this report, for the communities of Musquodoboit Harbour, Fall River and Bedford-Mill Cove/Waterfront:
- b) Approve performance measures generally outlined in this report as the basis of evaluating the pilot project.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report describes the key aspects of the Community Visioning Pilot Project recommended for implementation in three HRM communities. The report describes proposed measures of success, length of the pilot project, issues to be addressed, selection of pilot communities, support to other communities, and the link to secondary planning and business operations.

The community visioning process, as laid out in this report, is intended to allow a community to determine its own priorities; priorities which will guide the community into the future. The visioning process would not only focus on land use or planning issues, but would respond to a broader range of community concerns and opportunities crossing over many of HRM's areas of program and service. The visioning process would therefore foster more meaningful problem solving and action planning.

#### **BACKGROUND**

## What is Community Visioning?

Community visioning is a very effective and widely-used community consultation tool appropriate for long-range planning, to develop consensus when dealing with a large number of issues, to develop community capacity and foster public buy-in. A vision must represent the consensus of a group of people drawn from every neighbourhood, age group and interest in a community.

#### Deliverables

The key product of the process is a **community vision** - a mental picture of what residents want their community to look and feel like in 20 years. Accompanying a community vision is an **action plan** - a detailed list of actions needed to accomplish the vision, including priority ranking and who will lead the action. While many of the actions will be linked to HRM services, some will require the leadership or cooperation of other levels of government, community and private sector players. (Refer to Attachment 1 for general project organization; Attachment 2 for a list of issues within project scope; and Attachment 3 for an example of action plan)

In addition to producing its own deliverables, Community Visioning provides a foundation and a segue into both regulatory and operational action planning by identifying key issues and potential approaches at solving them. HRM's new Regional Plan prescribes community visioning as a key tool in ensuring the Plan's implementation, specifically planning for centres.

There are some limits on the scope of the process, however. While community visioning should be informed by the opportunities and limitations of Council discretionary financial decisions,

budgetary decisions will not be made. Secondly, while the process should provide direction on the desired outcomes of policies and regulations, the actual policies and regulations will be developed through community planning processes.

## Role of Mayor, Regional and Community Council

## a) Mayor/Regional Council

Approves staff's direction for community visioning pilot project; approves budget and staff resources required to undertake the Vision pilot project; approves establishment of a regional Visioning Community Committee; receives and offers direction to staff on the pilot; endorses the community Visions; and approves initiatives to implement the Visions.

## b) Community Council

Members may sit on the Community Liaison Group (CLG); identify community contacts to be involved; assist with the overall consultation plan; and review and recommend local community visions to Regional Council.

## **DISCUSSION**

## What is a Pilot Project?

The purpose of the pilot project is to test the new Community Engagement process in three different communities. Each of the three communities, assisted by staff, would develop a "community vision" and an action plan that incorporates a wide range of community interests and describes common ground for moving in HRM policy directions.

A pilot project is a *time-limited research inquiry to clarify problems and test solutions*. The pilot project is intended to provide Council and staff a greater understanding and appreciation of what will work and what will not at the community level. Staff and Council will learn by doing, all along building knowledge and new skills.

## Pilot Project Measures of Success

The following products and results are proposed to be used to determine the success of the community visioning pilot processes:

## The following products will be delivered to Regional Council:

3 community visions
3 community action plans
a pilot project summary, evaluation and recommendations

# The following general performance measures are recommended to be used for the pilot project evaluation:

The pilot communities will be tested using a variety of methods, including community surveys, key stakeholder interviews, number and variety of groups and individuals participating, media exposure, and number of submissions received. At a minimum, the Community Liaison Group (CLG) in each pilot community and key community stakeholders will be polled at the end of the process to rank each performance measure and the results will be presented to Council.

#### Performance measures:

Majority of people in the pilot community are aware of the community visioning process;
Number of hits on the Community Visioning website and in the media;
Community stakeholders feel they gained greater understanding of the economic,
environmental, social and cultural aspects of their community;
Community stakeholders feel they gained greater understanding of local government;
Majority of people think the process was open and transparent;
Majority of people think the process was representative (including interest, neighbourhoods,
gender, age, tenure, culture, income levels);
Vision statement is representative of desired community future and endorsed by Community
Liaison Group;
Community stakeholders think the action plan represents an achievable and financially
feasible blueprint for realizing the community's vision, a framework for community planning
and HRM business planning;
A number of the small and/or short term issues have been resolved;
Appropriate business units actively participated at critical stages of the project;
The process fostered development of community capacity and creative partnerships which did
not exist before;
Participants feel they had the opportunity to contribute to the design of the process and to
make meaningful decisions about their community;
Majority of participants would like to continue to be involved in future community planning
and action plan implementation.

As a separate but integrated component of the pilot project, an analysis of HRM's existing community engagement processes and their effectiveness (including community visioning pilot project), will be undertaken. The information gained from this analysis will provide Council a sound basis for measuring the success of the pilot, as well as highlight specific components of the pilot project's community engagement aspects that require improvement before the community visioning program is operationalized on a long-term basis.

## How long will the pilot project take?

The pilot project will be a one year project. Although each community visioning process is estimated to last 3-5 months, a 4 month planning phase needs to happen in advance. Upon conclusion of the visioning process, an analysis phase will review results and detail the goforward plan.

## What issues could the community vision pilot project address?

A visioning process is a public engagement process intended to allow a community to determine its priorities which will guide the community into the future.

Unlike traditional land use planning processes that may be constrained in scope by the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA), the community visioning process will be guided and framed by the vision, goals and policies contained in the Regional Plan. In other words, these processes will not only focus on land use or planning issues, but will respond to a broader range of community concerns and opportunities crossing over many of HRM's areas of program and service. The visioning processes will foster much more meaningful problem solving and action planning. (See Attachment 2 for an example of broad issues)

## What are the community vision pilot selection criteria?

At the February 2006 Council session, staff outlined an extensive list of criteria Council could use to identify priority communities for community visioning and secondary planning. Staff applied these criteria to each Regional Plan community centre to identify priority communities. In addition, the following criteria have been developed specifically to reflect certain conditions deemed necessary for a successful pilot:

expressed willingness and/or interest by a community group
community is organized
community has a network of communications (notice boards, web-pages, newspapers)
an urban community setting (1)
a rural community setting (1)
a commuter community setting (1)
a planning/land use issue(s) or trigger
a community development issue(s) or trigger

Given the nature of a pilot project, it is important to choose three very different communities - each demonstrating their own unique qualities, pressures, and opportunities. For this reason, there will likely be differences in the content of the visions, how each community addresses the regional policy directions, and the level of detail on some topics. Regional Centre neighbourhoods have not been selected to be part of the pilot project because they are already

Fall River

engaged in the Urban Design Study, which includes an intensive community visioning component and requires extensive community input.

The visioning process will be guided by HRM in collaboration with three Community Liaison Groups (CLG). As a first step in the process, the scope, responsibilities and expected deliverables of the process would be mutually agreed upon. Upon conclusion of the project Council will have a clear understanding of community visioning applicability in different communities.

## What are the proposed community visioning pilots?

Bedford-Mill Cove/Waterfront

Based on the above analysis, the following communities are recommended to Council for the pilot project:

Musquodoboit Harbour

## What if a community has not been selected as a pilot but would like to move forward?

Staff recognize there is a lot of interest and energy in communities across HRM to initiate community visioning and secondary planning, but only three communities can be fully supported at this time. However, staff believe is important to provide limited support to those communities not selected for the initial pilot project, but which are ready and willing to lay the groundwork for future engagement. It is believed this approach will provide mutual benefit, as communities will develop capacity, learn from the ongoing pilot projects, and potentially produce products (eg. community profiles, housing needs assessment) that could jump-start a subsequent visioning program.

If a community is serious about pursuing the community visioning preparation process, HRM staff will collaborate with the community to ensure their outcomes are consistent with the expectations of a community visioning process. The idea here is to ensure the process and products meet the requirements of community visioning. The details of an outreach support program are still being developed and will be shared with Council at a future date.

#### What will be the relationship between visioning and existing community plans?

The vision exercises have been designed on the basis of geographic centres established in the Regional Plan. These boundaries will be used as a guide to identify stakeholders and potential Community Liaison Group (CLG) members, but the boundaries may be refined as the process moves forward. Where there is an existing community plan in place, community plan policy directions will be considered in addition to Regional Plan policies and any new issues that may

emerge. For example, the visioning process will consider options for diverse forms of housing and will facilitate discussion on where, how much and what type of housing should be encouraged or accommodated. It will not however, set a specific minimum or maximum density as this aspect would be addressed through regulatory land use planning.

## **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

Funding for this project which is currently **estimated** at about \$150,000 is available in the approved 2006/7 Capital Account No. CDV00738, Centre Plans/Design. Financial Services at this time, confirms budget availability (cumulative unspent budget) of \$500,000 in this account.

## 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) It is recommended Regional Council initiate the Community Visioning Pilot Project, as set out in this report, for the communities of Musquodoboit Harbour, Fall River and Bedford-Mill Cove/Waterfront. It is also recommended Council approve the performance measures generally outlined in this report as the basis for evaluating the pilot project.
- 2) Alternatively, Council may choose different communities than those being recommended. This course of action is not recommended.
- 3) Alternatively, Council may choose to include additional communities in the pilot project. This course of action is not recommended as it would potentially impact on allocated resources and could impact the success of the Community Visioning and Regional Plan implementation process.

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

**Attachment 1: Proposed Community Visioning Process** 

Attachment 2: Project Scope

Attachment 3: Sample Action Plan

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <a href="http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.html">http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.html</a> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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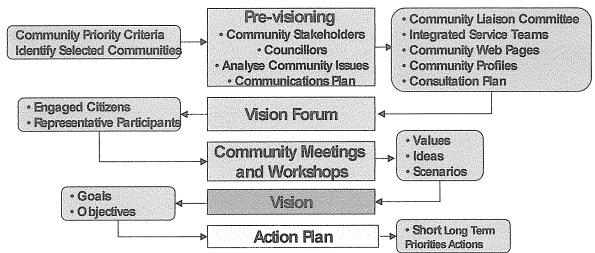
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Approved by:

Paul Dunghy, Director, Planning and Development Services

Bob Nauss, Acting Director, Culture and Economic Development

# Attachment 1: Proposed Community Visioning Process and Roles (Source: Council Focus Area Community Relations January, 2006 and Project Charter)



#### PROJECT GOVERNANCE

Mayor / Regional Council - Approves staff's direction for community visioning pilot project, approves budget and staff resources required to undertake the Vision pilot project, approves establishment of regional Visioning Community Committee, receives and offers direction to staff on the pilot, endorses the community Visions, and approves initiatives to implement the Visions.

**Community Council -** Members may sit on Community Liaison Committee, identify community contacts to be involved, assist with overall consultation plan, and reviews and recommends local community visions to Regional Council.

**Community Liaison Groups** - CLC will be established for each local community vision process. It will include representatives from a wide-range of community interests, it will bring continuity and a "watch-dog" perspective to the process and provides a core group of participants and contacts. This group may also take on priority-setting, monitoring, and action roles after completion of the Vision.

**Community Stakeholders** - Includes residents, property owners, workers, business owners, and community organizations within the community, generates the ideas, issues, and solutions that create the Vision options and directions. They also select preferred Vision directions.

**CV Pilot Project Management Team** - Comprised of Manager of Community Planning, Community Development, and staff leads for regional visioning and each individual community vision project.

**CV Staff Team(s)** - Reports directly to the management team; 3 staff will be responsible for carrying out all aspects of their assigned local community vision process. They will be responsible for day to day management of their processes, managing time lines, identifying risk and troubleshooting, reporting on issues.

**All Business Unit Staff -** Staff from all departments will be called upon at times to provide information or advice in the Vision process.

## **<u>Attachment 2: Community Visioning Project Scope</u>**

(In and out) Scope Deliverables Local Community Visioning Processes			
In Scope		Out of Scope	
0000 0000	Community Profiles Community Vision Statement Community Goals Vision Directions (ie. Existing Policy including regional plan, cultural plan, economic development etc.) Action Plans Community Priorities Resolution of short term local issues Community Capacity Building Community Boundaries	000000	Community Secondary Planning Strategies Plan Amendments New policies Community Design Standards Community Development Initiatives Resolution of long term/complex community issues New business processes

<u> </u>				
<u> </u>	(In Scope) Community Visioning Directions for Consideration			
	HRM Services  Access to Services Service Centres Services to Low Income People Service for Special needs Paying for Services		New Housing Types  ☐ Housing Types (Multiples, Townhouses,	
	Community Services and Facilities  Community Centres  Recreation Facilities  Library  Schools  Activities Programming  Youth Services and Involvement  Paying for Services  Special Needs  Drug and Alcohol Services  Health services  Home Support	٥	Existing Residential Areas  Single Dwelling Areas  Apartment Buildings Building height Design Character Residential Conversions  Shopping Areas Pedestrian Safety Pedestrian Comfort Appearance Storefronts	
O <sub>1</sub>	Safety Community Safety Vandalism Graffiti Youth Homelessness Community Crime Prevention Community Policing & Centres		Transit Big Box Stores Shopping Malls Parking Business Associations	

٥	Civic Pride & Quality of Life  Community Cleanliness  Community Upkeep  Building Quality  Community Involvement	] [	Mixed Use Development  ☐ Design ☐ Variation in Housing Form ☐ Height ☐ Street Level
	□ Cultural Identity □ Graffiti control □ Noise Control □ Bylaw enforcement	(	Greening, Parks, Streets and Lanes  ☐ Parks ☐ Street trees By-law ☐ Landscape Controls
	Traffic and Transportation  □ street width  □ pedestrian crossings  □ traffic speeds/calming  □ traffic Trouble Spots  □ truck access for moving goods	[	Greening on Private Sites Preserving Existing Private Greenery Usable Parks and School Grounds Public Views Waterways
	commuter trips signals medians sidewalks trees and other plantings public art noise barriers on street parking Bike Routes and Greenways		Environment  Energy Conservation  Water Conservation  Water Quality  Water Quantity  Recycling  Conservation  Waste Collection
٥	Public Transit  bus stops, bus shelters, and boarding areas  bus frequency  community mini-buses  access-a-bus  express buses  routes  rapid transit  ferry	( ( ( ( ( ( ( (	Economic Development  Business Attraction  Redevelopment  Workforce  Business Centres  Infrastructure Investment  Enterprise  Community Involvement  Public Engagement  Decision Making
٥	Community Development  Community Organization  Partnerships  Collaborations  Leadership  Mentoring  Civic activism  Community service projects		Community Boundaries

## Attachment 3: Sample Action Plan (City of Dunbar, BC)

## **Community Vision Action Plan (Example)**

## **Community Vision Action Plan - Example**

	Action	Lead Dept(s) Board & Community	Priority Ranking
Crime	Prevention		
	Continue and expand community policing initiatives including Block Watch (Dir 16.1) Establish Community Policing Centre in Community Centre (Dir 16.1)	KOMCPC 717-3434 CSG/ Police	
Comn	nunity Building and Community Involvement		
	Encourage and support community initiatives to strengthen community spirit Identify through existing City partnership programs such as public art, BIA, parks improvement. (Dir 19.1)	All Depts/ All Boards	
	Implement Public Involvement Review recommendations	Planning/ All Departments:	
	Multi-cultural outreach and communication improvements; public process guidelines Civics manual for grade 11 Social Studies students Improve Development Review Process, including communication and public involvement (Dir 20.1)	Planning Planning	
Comn	nercial		
	Do comprehensive plans for all 3 shopping areas which address Vision directions on pedestrian comfort and safety, appearance, parking, store fronts, amenities. (Dir 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.5, 1.7, 1.9, 1.10; 2.1; 10 all; 11.1)		
	Negotiate some shopping area amenities and improvements through the development review process (Dir 1.2)	Planning	
	Retain parking, both on and off-street, in shopping areas (Dir 1.5)	Engineering	
	Encourage and support local improvement initiatives, e.g. beautification projects, street banners, public art, planting, through existing City partnership programs (Dir 1.2, 1.9, 1.10)	Planning	
Mixed	Use Building Design		
	Review and revise C-2 zoning (Dir 2.1) Develop C-2 area specific design guidelines (Dir 2.1)	Planning Planning	

#### **Existing Single Family Areas** Design: **Planning** Complete monitoring of RS-5 zoning to identify concerns and adjust zoning if needed (Dir. 3 - all). Review single family zoning in Dunbar to address issues of design control for all Planning new houses, design diversity, yard size, house size and orientation, character retention (Dir 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5; 4.1; 6.2R) Rental suites Do a city-wide review of zoning and building by-laws and guidelines to improve feasibility of rental suites in single family areas. (Dir 5.1) Conduct a community survey to see if/where rental suites to be legalized (Dir 5.2) CSG **New Housing Types** Infillina Housing/ Planning Housing Demonstration Project: consider rezoning proposal for an infill or rowhouse/2-4-6 plex project only if proposal fits Vision and meets Housing Demo Project Guidelines including community support (Dir 6.2R 7.1 7.4R) Prepare Rowhouse/2-4-6 plex Plan and zoning that fits Vision, in consultation with Planning community including review of impacts, location, design (Dir 9.1, 9.2) Soc Plan/ Planning/ Seniors Housing Consider rezoning proposal for seniors housing if proposal comes forward that fits Housing Vision (Dir 9.1, 9.2) **Traffic & Transit** Arterial Traffic Engineering Prepare Dunbar Street traffic management plan giving higher priority to pedestrians, cyclists, transit and restricting traffic to the existing two lanes (Dir 10.1 10.2 10.3 10.4)