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Halifax Regional Council  
December 6, 2005

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

**SUBMITTED BY:** *H. Millward*  
Hugh Millward, Chair, Regional Planning Committee

**DATE:** November 23, 2005

**SUBJECT:** **Regional Plan Update - Report on Community Council Sessions**

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**ORIGIN**

Community Council Meetings - October 24<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and November 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>. Update provided on Draft #1 of the Regional Plan, including highlights of spring/summer 2005 public consultation and resulting changes to May 2005 version of draft Regional Plan.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that:

1. Regional Council approve the tabling of Draft #2 of the Regional Plan as submitted on December 6, 2005.
2. Regional Council approve a further period of public review until January 17, 2006.
3. The Regional Planning Committee receive and consider all written public submissions made through a period of public review and submit a final report to Regional Council on February 7, 2006 for final debate and First Reading.

**BACKGROUND**

At its July 5, 2005 session, Regional Council agreed a Regional Plan update be provided at all Community Council meetings following a review of the spring/summer consultation. The sessions were to take place prior to the tabling of the next draft of the Regional Plan documents. At the Committee of the Whole meeting, October 18, 2005, the Regional Planning Committee was authorized to proceed with the Community Council information sessions to highlight proposed changes to Draft #1 of the Regional Plan.

**DISCUSSION**

Six (6) information sessions at Community Councils were recently conducted as follows:

- October 24, 2005 – Western Region Community Council
- October 26, 2005 – Marine Drive, Valley and Canal Community Council
- October 27, 2005 – North West Community Council
- November 3, 2005 – Harbour East Community Council
- November 7, 2005 – Chebucto Community Council
- November 7, 2005 – Peninsula Community Council

At each Community Council session an overview of public feedback on Draft #1 of the Regional Plan was presented. Staff explained how the May 2005 draft of the plan was being changed in response to this feedback. Twenty-three (23) individual district fact sheets were used to illustrate changes made to the earlier draft. The public was advised of the next steps towards adoption of the Regional Plan and an estimated time frame for the formal Public Hearing process to begin.

At each session, Community Council provided an opportunity for public comments. A record of these comments, documented by Regional Planning staff, is attached to this report (Attachment "A").

Overall, feedback was focussed on understanding the details of the revisions to Draft #1 of the Regional Plan and how it affects specific areas/communities. Many of the issues raised should be dealt with during Visioning and Community Planning processes following the approval of the Regional Plan. Consistent with feedback from the spring and summer consultation, residents supported the need to move on with the Regional Plan and begin visioning at the local level. Some concern was expressed about HRM having adequate resources to undertake visioning in a timely fashion and questions were asked about how priorities would be set in this regard.

Several landowners continued to express concern the number of lots for as-of-right (small scale) subdivision may not be sufficient to make it feasible. Others sought clarification on the opportunities for larger scale rural subdivision.

The Regional Plan was complimented for its protection of watercourses and provision of buffers, regional park lands and open space. In response to feedback, it was agreed to give consideration to the possibility of varying buffer requirements where an engineered solution was proven. Additionally, it was agreed to consider agriculture beyond the traditional farming area of Musquodoboit Valley as it relates to food production opportunities. The Regional Planning Committee will consider the comments from the recent Community Council sessions as the Regional Plan moves towards a final draft to be tabled with Regional Council.

#### Period of Public Review of Draft #2 of the Regional Plan

Individuals and organizations have expressed the desire for an additional period of review or “reading period” of the revised documents prior to First Reading. Groups such as the Ecology Action Centre wish to prepare their own document in response to a final draft. The Urban Development Institute of Nova Scotia (UDI) made a formal request (Attachment “B”) on November 14, 2005 for a 4-8 week reading period for Draft #2 and recommended holding off First Reading. UDI wishes to use this additional time to prepare a position paper on the revised draft.

The decision on whether or not to accommodate these requests for a further period of public review rests with Regional Council. The Regional Planning Committee expects to table Draft #2 of the Regional Plan with Council on December 6<sup>th</sup>. Council may decide to proceed with First Reading at that time. The Regional Planning Committee (RPC) recommends Council support the requests for a further period of public review to begin on December 6<sup>th</sup>. The RPC recommends there be a period of public review of Draft #2 and that it receive and consider all written public submissions up until January 17, 2006 and that it submit its final draft to Regional Council for debate and First Reading on February 7, 2006.

#### **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

Costs associated with the completion of the Regional Plan will be allocated from the resources of the Governance and Strategic Initiatives business unit.

#### **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**

Regarding the first recommendation, Council may determine it wishes to table the final Regional Plan at a later date.

Regarding the second and third recommendations, Council may choose to increase/decrease the time allotted for an additional period of public review. Alternatively, Council may decide against a period of review prior to First Reading and proceed directly to First Reading upon receipt of the final draft. Under this alternative, public review of the final draft would take place following First Reading and leading up to the Public Hearing.

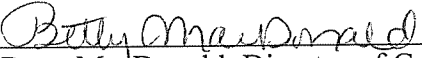
**ATTACHMENTS**


Attachment "A"      Meeting Notes from Community Council Sessions, October 24 -  
November 7, 2005

Attachment "B"      Letter from UDI, dated November 14, 2005

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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Report Approved by:   
Betty MacDonald, Director of Governance and Strategic Initiatives

  
Austin French, Manager, Regional Planning

**ATTACHMENT "A"**  
**Meeting Notes**  
**Community Council Sessions - Regional Plan Update**  
**October 24 - November 7, 2005**

**Regional Plan Update**  
**Western Region Community Council**  
**Keshen Goodman Library**  
**October 24, 2005**

Presentation by Regional Planning Staff:

Regional Plan staff presented proposed changes to the draft Regional Plan arising from public consultations that took place in the spring and summer of 2005. About 50 people attended. The audience was invited to provide comments after the presentation.

Comments:

E. Pettipas, Sambro Head - Concerning allowances for 8 new lots on a new road off an existing road, Mr. Pettipas was encouraged to see compromises had been made for developments in rural areas. He asked if 8 lots was a total or if 8 lots would be allowed annually.

Regional Planning (RP) staff replied 8 lots was the total. Councillor Rankin added there was no time limit on lot creation. RP staff added road extensions would be allowed.

Mr. Pettipas asked if larger areas could be developed (greater than 8 lots). RP staff replied larger developments would be permitted but they would require a development agreement. Two options would be available. Conventional open space conservation design or a hybrid conservation design approach with 2.5 acre lots. Both designs were intended to preserve the natural environment by maintaining interconnected open space. Both designs would be adaptable to the natural features of the development but for the hybrid design the minimum lot size would be 2.5 acres. Mr. Pettipas asked if the development could be phased over several years. RP staff confirmed that it would be possible.

W. Rogers, Lacewood Drive - Mr. Rogers was encouraged to see the first pillar of the Regional Plan was protecting the natural environment. He questioned why the Regional Plan did not specifically mention the Western Common. He added the Plan was also silent on public access to the coast.

RP staff replied the Western Common is designated as a Regional Park in the Plan. There would be follow up studies for regional parks through an Open Space Functional Plan outlined in the

draft Regional Plan. The Open Space Functional Plan would also investigate issues of public coastal access. It would provide more detail. Councillor Rankin asked if the 20 metre riparian buffer applied to coastal areas. RP staff responded the 20 m buffer applied to all watercourses including the ocean.

S. Williams, Tantallon Area - Mr. Williams asked for clarification on the revised provisions for 8 lots on a new road off an existing road and the open space conservation design options. He asked if lot size could vary. An example was given for a development of 100 acres (40 units/100 acres). Would 1 acre or 1.5 acre lots be considered? RP staff answered it would be possible if the developer opted for the conventional open space conservation design. Developments would be considered based on gross density. The main consideration would be for sensible design.

L. Camp, Tantallon - Mr. Camp asked if a conventional open space subdivision design with shared septic systems would require a change in provincial legislation. RP staff responded no amendments would be required. NSEL regulations call for the creation of responsible management entities for the operation of shared septic systems. This could be accomplished through the creation of a condominium corporation or alternately, the system could be HRM-owned. The Plan identifies several growth centres where HRM-owned systems could be developed. Shared septic systems in growth centres will be considered at the community planning level. The Province provides for the Municipality to manage these systems through the creation of Wastewater Management Districts.

Councillor Rankin asked about the status of HRM's request that the Province amend the MGA to allow for the Municipality to require that developers conduct hydrological studies to ensure water quality and water quantity prior to subdivision approvals. RP staff responded discussions with the Province were ongoing but the necessary legislative changes would not be considered in the Fall sitting of the Legislature. Existing authorities under the MGA provide HRM with the right to require hydrological studies for development agreements but by right development can proceed without these studies. Development agreements can require remedial actions to address water supply issues but the Province will have to amend the MGA to extend municipal authority to by right subdivisions. The Plan could therefore include a general policy requesting the Province consider this amendment. Councillor Rankin asked if this requirement would be imposed on 4-8 lot developments. RP staff responded it would not be a requirement.

T. Swanson - Mr. Swanson commented he was a developer and was also representing the concerns of many developers in the western region of HRM. He questioned the Plan's requirements for riparian buffers between 20 - 60 metres from watercourses. He asked why HRM was taking on this initiative and stated most homeowners want to build within 30 metres of a watercourse. He also questioned why it was necessary to keep trees when homeowners wanted to have views of the water. He felt HRM should leave the enforcement of environmental protection to the Province. RP staff responded the MGA gives authority to HRM to protect watercourses. It was agreed all citizens were not in favour of this initiative but during public consultations, however, there had been a great deal of public support for preserving the health of

our lakes, rivers and ocean. RP staff added there had been some requests to increase riparian buffer widths.

Councillor Rankin asked what definition was being used in the Plan to identify watercourses. RP staff responded the MGA definition of a watercourse (generally, lake, river, ocean or other waterbody) was being used in the Plan. Councillor Rankin also asked about riparian buffer widths. RP staff responded riparian buffer widths would be determined based on slope and soil conditions. The minimum width was 20 metres but with extreme slopes and poor soils the buffer could extend to 60 metres in order to protect watercourses from sedimentation.

Mr. Swanson asked if a riparian buffer variance would be granted to reduce riparian buffer widths if an engineered solution was possible. RP staff responded the HRM Water Resource Management Study surveyed riparian buffer research across Canada and the US and had concluded buffers were the most effective means to protecting watercourses. The study recommended HRM adopt existing NS forestry guidelines for riparian buffers. In response, the Plan has followed the direction of the Province and adopted a 20-60 metre riparian buffer based on slope and soil conditions. Mr. Swanson commented if an engineered solution was proven to be possible the Plan should allow a variance. RP staff responded they would consider this suggestion.

B. McGee, Seabright - Ms. McGee questioned the new draft policy concerning island developments. RP staff responded island developments would be considered through a development agreement process that would include provisions for the concerns of coastal communities regarding such issues as shore-based parking lots for island residents and other impacts of island developments. Ms. McGee also asked if the 20 metre riparian buffer would apply to island developments. RP staff responded that they would.

J. Abati, Halifax - Mr. Abati asked if Plan policies respecting riparian buffers would apply to the removal of trees in transportation and utility corridors bordering waterbodies. He pointed to the values of these areas in preserving water quality, wildlife habitat and migration routes. RP staff responded HRM has no authority to restrict activities on provincially-owned land. HRM has limited authority to regulate tree removals on privately-owned land. The MGA permits HRM to require the preservation of vegetation and riparian buffers for activities related to development applications.

L. Camp, Tantallon - Mr Camp commented proposed allowances for 8 new lots on a new road off an existing road would not be economical for developers when the cost of a new road was factored into the overall cost of development. RP staff responded the Plan's intent was to provide an incentive for developers to enter into a development agreement that provided options for open space design subdivisions for larger developments. Mr. Camp commented this was an approach to development that had not been proven in the local housing market. RP staff agreed there were not many local examples but the new Glen Arbour and Voyageur developments had been received enthusiastically. Mr. Camp commented many consumers wanted larger lots. RP

staff responded the hybrid approach would allow for large lot development while ensuring the preservation of open space. Mr. Camp asked who would protect this open space from ATVs and other intrusions. RP staff responded private landowners will protect their land but public education should also be considered. Mr. Camp concluded large landowners should appeal their tax assessments. He added the location of the meeting was inappropriate for the size of the audience.

M. Messa (sic) - Ms. Messa asked if the cost of land and affordable housing options were considered in the Plan. RP staff responded the allocation of land available for development would be based on projection studies and ongoing reviews of development demands. The intent of the Plan is not to force people to move from one area to another. Instead, the Plan's intent is to supply an ample amount of serviced and unserviced land over the life of the Plan. This would include provisions for mixed-use developments that would provide a strong mix of affordable housing types. Proposed developments such as the Morris-Russell Lake community in Dartmouth will have transit stops thereby reducing automobile-associated costs and higher densities that will allow for different income levels.



**Regional Plan Update  
Marine Drive, Valley and Canal Community Council  
Gaetz Brook Junior High School  
October 26, 2005**

Presentation by Regional Planning Staff:

Regional Plan staff presented proposed changes to the draft Regional Plan arising from public consultations that took place in the spring and summer of 2005. About 65 people attended. The audience was invited to provide comments after the presentation. It was noted Regional Council will receive a report back on any comments received through the Community Council sessions by mid-November.

Comments:

Councillor Streach commented this was the first meeting where he did not have a big knot in his stomach. He noted two key words – “options” and “alternatives”. He noted he was encouraged development agreements will offer discretion. He stressed the need to understand what opportunities are provided for Sheet Harbour. He asked for clarification on issues of “affordable housing” and the 2.5 metre (vertical) coastal setback. Councillor Streach commented he was encouraged by what he sees.

Lawrencetown Liberal Candidate - Why was the vertical coastal elevation setback reduced from 5 metres to 2.5 metres? When will the hazard assessment be completed and presented? Regional Planning (RP) staff replied it will require detailed mapping using laser technology. The cost will be several \$100,000. The Functional Plan shows an intent to do specific tasks. The onus will be on private landowners to identify hazards.

P. Richards, East Chezzetcook - Jeddore is designated as a centre. Now what will happen? The Regional Plan is looking to extend municipal water to Fall River. Will HRM identify, through local land use bylaws, where development can occur? Each centre will be transit oriented – immediate change. Can development in centres occur only by development agreement?

C. Cameron, West Petpeswick - Each new subdivision is required to have street lights – can’t see stars. How many street lights have gone in, in the last 5 years? What is HRM going to do about it? Engage the community in design driven plan. Look to new road standards. Will HRM be looking at street lighting requirements? Urban planners are not looking at proper lighting for safety purposes. Can there be some form of standard for street lights so that they do not detract from rural areas?

A. Giles, Cole Harbour - Are there any plans for the provision of a link between Porter’s Lake and the airport? Transportation around Bedford/Sackville - will there be a ring road outside the

perimeter? We're focusing on capacity constraints. Don't have Federal/Provincial support for new roadways.

Councillor Hendsbee - Connect 207 to 108, Cherrybrook bypass, toll road to Sackville, reserve corridor for Beaverbank and encourage MetroLink service.

A. Conrad, Porters Lake - Can the transportation portion of the Plan include a shuttle service from Musquodoboit Harbour and Sheet Harbour to the city centre? A Metro Transit garage in Musquodoboit Harbour and express bus service is in the plan as short term goals. Federal funding is becoming available for transit projects. The timeline is hopefully very quickly.

Councillor Streach - Bus service along #7 Highway was to be discontinued. HRM is now providing a bus free of charge to new service provider.

Jennifer Tsang, on behalf of Jan Jachomovich - She sent a letter on August 29<sup>th</sup> asking how the Regional Plan affects his lands? There has been no response. Aerotech has significant servicing issues. Will the lands of Aerotech Business Park be developed and what are the plans for expanding services?

Jan Jachomovich - His lands are under unique circumstances. The lands need to open up through this process. Benefactor of providing ¾ land for watershed protection. Banked on promises. Not treated openly & fairly. This situation should be discussed – owns land that can't be developed. Provides 120 to 350 jobs. There will be no property in HRM left with development rights.

J. Young, Porters Lake - Will communities that want to start implementing community visioning have to stand back and wait until the ones identified have been implemented? How will community visioning be implemented? There is confusion on committees & structures. A community that wants to get on with community visioning shouldn't have to wait. In the absence of community planning, we will be tripping over each other. It should be up to the communities to decide if they are ready for visioning. RP staff replied, community planning will take time to complete, however, visioning process allows more flexibility and can happen quickly. Regional Council will establish priorities.

Councillor Hendsbee - The municipal planning strategy in former County Districts 8 & 9 is 20 years overdue for a review. All community plan reviews are on hold until the Regional Planning process is complete.

J. McInnis, Musquodoboit Harbour - The 107 Highway is busy. Has there been any consideration for twinning the highway between Eastern Shore & Halifax? What is being considered with regards to bringing water and sewer to Musquodoboit Harbour?

L. Cook, Musquodoboit Harbour - Council should look at ramping up for community visioning as soon as this plan is approved. Need to give serious consideration to linking communities in the active transportation plan – don't have safe areas to walk. There is not a lot of detail about Visioning on website.

Councillor Streach - Momentum is on for visioning – we need to get on with it. We as council need to provide people power. Musquodoboit Harbour – sewer and water - funds approved for study – don't want any misconceptions. Focus on first study – local health issues. No longer looking at just local health issues – still have work we can do. We are not as far as we could be.

J. Kerr, Lower Ship Harbour - We want to be proactive. We have lots of ideas and we want to go. We are not waiting for direction. We should not be told to wait. Contingent on staff resources available . There are technical requirements that need to be met first i.e. watershed studies. Nothing in plan to discourage people from starting. How many public meetings have been held to date? People for rules or rules for people? Its been top down rather than bottom up. Lets talk to real people about real issues – why can't we just do it?

R. Gammon, Sheet Harbour - Water problem – required water to be trucked in to Sheet Harbour. Prime Minister addressed on National TV – are you hearing us? Why is Sheet Harbour not on the draft? Sheet Harbour as a district centre – not reflected in fact sheets? Bus service – while donation of a bus in an asset, there is not enough money to make it work. Need to have Metro Transit help enhance community bus service. Encourage Council to work with HRM to ensure we don't lose the service. Loss of \$2,500 in first 3 weeks. Service will not sustain itself. Does being a district centre mean we get water & sewer?

D. Cole, Middle Musquodoboit - Setbacks for intensive livestock. Inaccuracies between metric & imperial measurements.

C. Cook, Porters Lake - Rural commuter designation. Map delineating open space – larger scale map. Maximum number of building lots – 8 seems low. Regional Plan contains criteria for Development Agreements. How does this relate to existing subdivisions? Feel eight lots on a new street under the rural commuter designation seems low.

T. Shires, Moser River - Discontinued bus service. Why are meetings set by Utility and Review Board always at 10:00 in the morning when people work?

P. Akers, Ostrea Lake - Vertical setback clarification. Property is 8 feet from Ordinary High Water Mark – talked with Mike Morgan about building up – are there exceptions? A 60 metre setback is proposed with no variances allowed. How do we define watercourse? Does DOE have ultimate authority? Natural occurring? Ocean is considered a watercourse.

G. Martin, Moser River - How will we factor in sustainability as communities do visioning? What should be protected? Will lands be purchased by HRM? How will sustainability issues be kept front and centre?

Mr. Donovan, Moser River - Sustainability is related to demographics. Age and income distribution is necessary to be healthy. Where will municipal investment go?

L. Cook - What is meant by vibrant community? Community visioning – flesh this out better on the website. Steering committee – contact person for community visioning. Workbook for visioning - suggestions to think about.

P. Richards - Community visioning initiated at the community level. What is the process to initiate it - through Regional Council?

J. McInnis - Process is good – nice to see input. Amalgamated over 10 years ago, why has this process taken so long?

Resident - Coastal strategy and buffer zones. Verbiage on Tourism is only related to Halifax Harbour. Eastern Shore has more seacoast than whole province. Why doesn't the plan say more? Access to beaches – transportation - economic generation for tourism potential. Loss for tourism, economic growth and citizens.

Councillor Streach - two companion documents approved by HRM (economic & immigration).

Councillor Hendsbee - Cultural plan looking at strategy. Need for transit service along 207.

J. Young - Community development versus economic development. Culture - not only economic driver. Community Council understating the role they can play. Ground level visioning for council so they can represent their interests.

**Regional Plan Update**  
**North West Community Council**  
**LeBrun Centre, Bedford**  
**October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2005**

Presentation by Regional Planning Staff:

Regional Plan staff presented proposed changes to the draft Regional Plan arising from public consultations that took place in the spring and summer of 2005. About 50 people attended. The audience was invited to provide comments after the presentation.

Comments:

Councillor Goucher - Watershed Management Plan – keep going ahead; Density bonusing – impact on the character of the communities; What is affordable housing? This is a local plan issue; The more restrictive policy will override the less restrictive.

D. Barrett - Does the Regional Plan affect logging/lumbering operations? What is the wide frontage? RP staff replied, 150 to 200 feet wide. Will vary in less developed areas. Mr. Barrett noted this should be defined in the fact sheet. RP staff replied 8 lots on new roads, 20 lots per year in Upper Sackville/Beaver Bank; (Beaver Bank) only on existing roads and Hammonds Plains too. Not 8 lots per year – one shot deal but then go to Development Agreement.

Councilor Harvey - Is this from day one or when infrastructure improved on Beaver Bank Road? RP staff replied option not until upgrading occurs for new roads along Beaver Bank.

D. Barrett - Why isn't a copy of plan available for review tonight? Staff replied copies of May plan available. Using Fact Sheets to explain changes because more helpful than full document. The blue sheet that was sent out is a 2 page summary of plan. Full draft will be available at first reading.

Councillor Goucher - Won't be driven by time line but by content (as per Mayor and Council).

Councillor Johns - Staff very good about meeting with community groups. But can people submit name for hard copy of next version of the plan? Staff replied, will make them available to the public. Ensure that Mr. Dave Barrett gets a copy of the new plan as soon as available.

Walter Reagan - 20 metre setback should be publicly-owned buffer. Staff replied, non-disturbance on private lands expensive to buy. In future this will be through development agreement – setback could be publicly owned. Freely Lake – proposed new park. Little Lake headwaters of Little Sackville River – acquire at all costs.

Dick Antoff - protect existing areas and roadways from changing designation, over development and application of roads. Staff replied, follow up to regional plan is a transportation master plan issue and we will be completing a classification of the road network. Observation of uses, volumes etc. Performance criteria but difficulties when traffic loading exceeds abilities and will need to manage loading. Will design roads to meet classifications in the future.

Councillor Johns - Referring to other side of Beaver Bank Road.

Dick Antoff - Middle Sackville and Beaver Bank Extension – need to minimize the impact on existing areas and protect neighbourhoods. When Beaver Bank extension crosses 101 initially 4 lanes with 80 km/h speed limit – interchange north of Lucasville Road. Will level of traffic impact Waterstone Subdivision coming off of the 101? Reduce dramatic changes to road classification that could impact roadways that weren't designed for that (higher traffic loading). Staff replied road will be higher than subdivision roads but will not take regional levels (traffic volumes) and measure to prevent exceeding roadway loads will be used. Need to guarantee this in policy so that communities are not affected. 2 to 4 lane roads crossing Highway 101 – what will prevent the speeds and volumes continuing into subdivisions? We can sever existing conditions. Staff replied will take measures to stop connections to roads that are not able to handle higher volumes. What mechanisms to protect areas? Staff replied community visioning or special consultation on roadway connections.

B. Ford - Pleased that this level of planning is being done for the future. Four areas: 1) Buffer zone - Nottingham and Rutledge – Little buffer between Highway 102 and back of homes – will new plan prevent this? Staff replied, these are watercourse buffers, but through development agreement, other buffers can be negotiated. 2) Traffic Flow – how will congestion on Bedford Highway between Mill Cove and Sunnyside be handled or will the BRT help alleviate traffic? Staff replied, difficult to solve – not many opportunities. Will rely on increased transit trips. Currently low ridership from Bedford and low service, but future transit services such as the Fast Ferry and the BRT will increase transit use. 3) Rail Transit – not feasible within the next 25 years but from Bedford to Halifax – is this possible? Has a study been done? Staff replied, yes a study has been done. Rail transit works on high volume but we don't have volumes yet to make it work. 4) Affordable Housing – elaborate in plan and how do we consider housing for street people and low income? Staff replied, we have limits, but support this. Affordable housing is a provincial and federal responsibility. Mixed uses, land and focus on transit oriented development – therefore need for car ownership goes down – housing more affordable. The plan will define the municipal role with regards to affordable housing.

Resident - Nothing in the plan about agriculture. We can grow more than we do here in HRM. Urban forest to include fruit trees? Protect agriculture land in rural commutershed. Can disturbance areas be gardens and if more than 20% will it be allowed? Staff replied, dominant agricultural soils identified in the GFLUM. Non-disturbance area flexible and will allow gardens etc. Should ponder agriculture uses outside designation and not looked at enough.

Gloria Lowther - 1) Urban Centre for Bedford? Compact, secondary units and density bonusing not for Bedford. Won't have the area. Community visioning, quality of life and neighbourhood stability will be affected. Not be overridden by the regional plan. Staff replied, intention – to identify what is of value to and in the community through community visioning process. There are two growth centres in Bedford – Mill Cove and Sunnyside. Will be accomplished within existing land use policies. Visioning – community values and implementation policies. 2) Congestion along Bedford Highway. Staff replied, interchange at Bedford South and collector road – alleviate traffic. In Master Planning strategy – interchange will be built when 2000 units built – up to 2009m but looks like it will occur soon. 3) Affordable Housing – clarified, but will it be defined? No it won't be because too many different definitions. Will clarify municipality's role with affordable housing and try not to raise false expectations. Avoid escalating prices; options for housing prices in Bedford West.

R. Barrett - GFLUM cuts through properties – can this be adjusted at community level? Staff replied yes.

Councillor Johns - Roadways – generalized not property specific.

R. Barrett - How will corridors will be protected? Staff replied HRM will buy land. How far out front? Staff replied, establish reserves 5 years to buy land. Holding zones – Beaver Bank Road and Hammond's Plains Road – how will they work and how fixed are the boundaries? Staff replied, will be fixed once brought to council – limited. Up to then, not fixed.

**Regional Plan Update  
Harbour East Community Council  
Dartmouth Council Chambers  
November 3, 2005**

Presentation by Regional Planning Staff:

Regional Plan staff presented proposed changes to the draft Regional Plan arising from public consultations that took place in the spring and summer of 2005. The audience was invited to provide comments after the presentation.

Comments:

Councillor Younger asked about the Spider Lake Community Planning process. He expressed concern tonight's presentation gave information that conflicts with what is contained in the Fact Sheet.

A resident asked if the Development Agreement process for residential subdivisions would allow for the combination, on one site, of the principles of Open Space design and the principles of the Hybrid subdivision design. Staff responded this would be possible, design solutions will reflect what is best suited to the characteristics of each site.

A representative of the Ecology Action Centre asked if HRM would be offering incentives to encourage Open Space subdivision design, and will HRM be willing to work with developers on the 'marketability' of Open Space subdivisions? Staff replied incentives will include: the provision of piped services in some areas, a reduction of parkland dedication from 10% in standard subdivisions to 5% in Open Space subdivisions.

A resident asked, if a 5 or 10 year review of the Regional Plan indicated that Open Space subdivisions were successful, could the mechanism allowing them/requiring them be strengthened?

A resident complimented staff on their hard work, and on the successful incorporation of public comment into the document. He then asked: Is there a legal requirement/mechanism that will ensure that the Regional Plan will be followed? Will it be possible to amend the Plan in the future? What is the strategic interrelationship of the Regional Plan with all of the other Plans that HRM currently has underway (cultural plan, harbour plan, etc.)?

A resident asked if the existing Area Plans/Community Plans will remain in effect until the adoption of the Regional Plan, and what is the schedule for the creation of the new Community Plans called for in the Regional Plan. Staff replied, yes, the existing plans remain in effect. Staff responded that the Regional Plan contains criteria for guiding decisions on the order in which



communities will have their new Plans undertaken, and how such priorities will be set. Further stated that the Community Plan effort is starting in the Capital District/Regional Centre with the upcoming Regional Centre Urban Design Plan.

A resident complimented staff for the effectiveness of past Plan efforts like the Downtown Dartmouth Plan. He admonished residents to be patient with what can be a lengthy but worthwhile process.

A resident asked for an explanation in the changes she has seen in the way the Regional Plan addresses the issue of Affordable Housing. Staff replied that the Regional Plan's stance hasn't changed, but rather, has been clarified to remove confusion. The Plan doesn't define Affordable Housing, but does clarify HRM's role, in relation to other levels of government, in the provision of housing options.

Councillor McInroy stated that while he certainly appreciates the importance of the active transportation, transit, and fast ferry components of the Regional Plan, he would like to emphasize the importance of the future road construction projects. He said the Plan made a good start on road projects, but that there is a lot more to do in that area.

Councillor McInroy asked what impact the proposed new piped water supplies will have on the Water Utility. Staff responded with a discussion about 'satellite systems.' McInroy then asked to see the reduced cost of roads offset against the increased cost of piped/shared services in the cost comparisons for Open Space subdivision. Staff responded that this offset is already reflected in the costing.

Councillor Kent expressed concern that, contrary to the public comments asking for public access to the Harbour in the NS Hospital area, the Regional Plan advocates for the continuation of Marine Industrial uses in the area - she said the public feedback seems to not be represented here. Staff responded that the RPC has recommended that the Marine Industrial designation that has been in place since the 70's stay in place, but the RPC also exhorts the Province to study alternative uses, access, etc. Staff also clarified that the Regional Plan will be adopted first with its 'high level' policies, and will be followed by the Harbour Plan later with its detailed policies. Councillor Kent entreated staff to make it extremely clear to residents how their comments have been handled, how they appear in the Plan, or there will be difficulty.

Councillor Kent asked about the status of the 'Shearwater Connector Road' shown on one of the slides. Staff responded that the road is discussed in the Morris/Russell Master plan, and that it is planned for in the future but is not currently budgeted.

Councillor McCluskey asked when the adoption hearing for the Regional Plan will occur. Staff responded that it would occur in January. She then expressed concern that the Harbour Plan will come after the RP, instead of before, and said she wasn't comfortable endorsing the RP before the HP is adopted. Staff explained that the two Plans go hand-in-glove to set policy direction,

and that it is typical throughout the RP process that more detailed plans follow the adoption of the RP. Staff indicated the Economy chapter of the RP sets policy for the HP.

Councillor Kent asked about the legal disposition of the land/water lot in front of the NS Hospital. Is it pre-confederation? Post? Staff stated it would be researched ASAP and an answer provided to the councillor.

**Regional Plan Update**  
**Chebucto Community Council**  
**November 7, 2005**  
**Keshan Goodman Library**

Presentation by Regional Planning Staff:

Regional Plan staff presented proposed changes to the draft Regional Plan arising from public consultations that took place in the spring and summer of 2005. The audience was invited to provide comments after the presentation.

Comments from Councillors/Staff:

Councillor Adams - The Spryfield community servicing strategy is a model for a visioning exercise for the community plans.

Councillor Hum - Asked for an update Birch Cove/Blue Mountain Regional Park and Harbour Plan. John Charles replied work is underway on the park and submissions on the Environmental Assessment process for Hwy 113. Staff replied the Harbour Plan project is looking at a Bedford Basin Waterfront study to be completed in the next 5 - 6 months.

Comments:

Resident - Transit links need to be improved. For example, it takes only 5 minutes to drive to Bayers Lake Park by car from Clayton Park but 1 hour by bus.

Resident, Spryfield Business Commission - What effect will the Regional Plan have on the Herring Cove Study? Staff replied street-scaping is an important part of development and will be part of the visioning process.

Rep, Woodens River Environmental Association - Management by watershed is better than by community planning area. Is it possible to reconcile the Regional Plan's land use designations with those of the Department of Natural Resources land use classifications? Staff replied DNR uses three classifications for Crown land: C-3 is the most protected, C-2 is mixed resource land, including recreational, and C-1 is primarily land with resource potential. HRM has worked closely with DNR and the province is in support of the Regional Plan. DNR will be preparing a more detailed plan for the Chebucto Peninsula.. As mentioned in the presentation, watershed studies will precede community visioning and community planning programs.

Resident, Fergusons Cove - Why are centres focused on shopping centres? There should be more attention paid to the social aspects of communities rather than only the economic/commercial activity in centres. Shopping centres are only oriented to cars. Staff replied there were a number

of criteria used to choose centres. For example, the presence of schools and community facilities like libraries. There will be a long term shift toward more pedestrian oriented and human scale development. Public parks and squares will also be more prominent as focal points in centres.

Resident - There is a lot of emphasis in the regional centre on residential development. Eventually we may find that commuting patterns are reversed - more people will commute out of the regional centre.

Rep, Canadian Paraplegic Association of Nova Scotia - There needs to be more emphasis in the Regional Plan on accessibility.

Other members of the public who did not get a chance to speak were encouraged to contact staff directly to discuss their concerns.

**Regional Planning Update  
Peninsula Community Council  
Halifax City Hall  
November 7, 2005**

Presentation by Regional Planning Staff:

Regional Plan staff presented proposed changes to the draft Regional Plan arising from public consultations that took place in the spring and summer of 2005. The audience was invited to provide comments after the presentation.

Comments:

Councillor Murphy - Correspondence was received from the Friends of Public Gardens and from the Rhododendron Society with regard to the lack of urban public green spaces. Does the Plan currently include a comprehensive plan addressing public green spaces in the urban areas? Staff replied, yes, this will be addressed by the Urban Design Plan. It will address how architectural design should relate to both current and future public open spaces.

Councillor Murphy - Have you considered including a Public Open Space Board to oversee urban issues? We do need a plan for the urban areas - I hope it is considered. In May 2005 during the Regional Council deliberation an item was put on the parking lot saying that the rail option shall be fully looked at. Is Rail Dead? Staff replied, it is not completely but while we are preserving the needed corridors we do not foresee it as a viable option in the next 25 years.

Councillor Murphy - The Plan speaks to the widening of Bayers Road. Will there be public neighbourhood consultation on this issue? Staff replied, this project is likely to occur within the next 25 years but beyond the 3 year planned forecast. It does not necessarily mean a road widening. It could mean lane reversal, active transportation etc to address capacity.

Councillor Sloane - Concerned about brownfields and vacant lots. They were not mentioned in any detail in this presentation. Do we have any kind of vision on how we can proceed in this regard? Staff replied, there was not much change in the policies from the previous draft. This clearly represents an exciting opportunity with numerous redevelopment opportunities in areas such as unprofitable commercial spaces. This will be addressed in detail in the Urban Design Study and the Brownfields Functional Plan.

Sloane - Should look at bold opportunities. Hamilton changed one of its worst brownfield into a park and another area was turned into slab construction. Are we looking into engaging universities who can access grants and provide us with new ways of dealing with these sites?

Sloane - Are we looking into intermodal, smaller transit in the urban areas [to promote the concept of urban village/walkable urban core]? Staff replied, currently paratransit is considered for the rural areas. In the urban areas we are focussing on higher order transit but smaller transit can be considered in the future.

Sloane - Walking - what about an Urban Multi-purpose trail to allow those who bike safely move throughout the Peninsula? Staff replied, the Active Transportation Plan has been underway for 5 months now. Public workshops on the Draft Network are scheduled for later this month.

Councillor Murphy - Is it true that we are going to increase parkland dedication from 5% to 10%? Staff replied, yes, through the subdivision process the amount will be increase from 5% to 10% although as an incentive if the open space subdivision design concept is used (By development agreement) only 5% will be required.

Murphy: Are we requiring a contribution of public art as part of te subdivision process? Is there anything binding at the moment? Staff replied, the Cultural Plan will address this in more detail. There is nothing binding at the moment.

Councillor Fougere - There are many neighbourhoods and existing plans on the Peninsula. How will communities be geographically determined for the purpose of Community Visioning? Staff replied, as soon as the Regional Plan is adopted a detailed workplan will be presented to the Regional Council on options to proceed with community visioning. This will include watershed analysis, centre analysis, priority areas etc. The Regional Centre Urban Design Study is a pre-requisite for neighbourhood planning. It will not proceed without t and many take a couple of years. Local community plans will not see much deviation because this analysis is required.

Resident - What was the theoretical reason behind starting with a regional plan and ending with Community Visioning? Density issues have become a problem in the last 5-6 years. Several neighbourhood R1/R2 zoning petitions have been put on hold. What will happen to them?

Staff replied, we needed a growth and transportation framework first. We do not believe that the population projections will place an undue pressure on local communities. Density issues can also be addressed through design. In the interim existing plans will remain in effect. The Urban Design Study will present a number of case studies in neighbourhoods with development pressures to bring forward design solutions. Some issues (eg. Rooming house issue) is already being addressed by Planning and Development.

Resident - Point of order - as a point of order this meeting should have only been dedicated to the Regional Plan. It should have been about urban issues, not rural lots. The last Regional Plan was much more participatory. We are still dealing with the May Draft, are we not? The new draft has not been tabled yet? Should we assume that the fact sheets deal with FACTS? Why is Halifax Harbour and Sheet Harbour excluded from the 2.5 m setback? Do we not expect storm surge events in those areas? Good to see the use of “high water mark” but “higher water mark”

is also a legal term can could be used. The 10% parkland dedication is a good idea but the value should be calculated on the basis of CURRENT assessment of value, not some old assessment. Further, the fact sheets should tell us exactly which secondary plans in each district will be trumped by the Regional Plan.

Staff replied, a detailed Halifax Harbour plan is being prepared. The Fact sheets do highlight all significant changes.

Resident - The current wave of rises in gas prices has already caused some behaviour changes. Projections may reach \$4/L which may put a dent in several development plans, perhaps devalue properties on the outlying areas. Are we considering these potential changes?

Resident - Parking - the ugliest buildings that have been built in the last couple of years have been the parkades. We need a strategy to reduce parking in HRM - parking should be priced at a market value (see a book "The High Cost of Free Parking". Price it at cost and put the revenue back in the communities.

Resident - We need a plan to address open space on the Peninsula. There is too much emphasis on the rural areas. I worry that "Urban Design" has become a buzzword, a cover-up for development, a development program. A number of recent and proposed road widening programs (Bayers Rd., Dartmouth) violate every principle of the Plan in terms of transit, walkability etc. The "District specific Fact Sheets" are not specific at all. They are exactly the same and say nothing at all. The May Draft says two things - that Secondary Plans will remain in force but that where more stringent provisions are in force they will prevail. How can we have both things. Will it [the Regional Plan] or will it not have an impact on local communities? Because developers can have a wonderful time arguing these things in front of appeal boards. Exactly how can both of these provisions co-exist and be effective?

Resident - Want to express a strong opposition to any new and expanded road projects that are meant to bring traffic in from the outside and increase traffic in the downtown area. Secondly, are there still plans to turn the rail line into a highway?

Staff replied, no decision has been made yet. The need to move traffic out of the port is being studied, will likely include multi-modal transport and will consider effects on local neighbourhoods.

Attachment "B"



URBAN DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE  
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November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2005

**Mr. Austin French**  
Regional Planning Manager  
*Halifax Regional Municipality*  
P.O. Box 1749  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3J 3A5

Re: Halifax Regional Planning Review.

Dear Mr. French:

As previously discussed, the Urban Development Institute of Nova Scotia (UDI) appreciates that HRM made a prior commitment to the Development Community that the Regional Plan process would be completed or near completion in the fall of 2005 with the goal of removing Interim Growth Controls to be replaced by formal HRM Regional Council Policies as contained within the Regional Plan. UDI respects the tremendous hard work HRM and in particular its staff has shown in being in a position to meet this goal and recommend to Regional Council first reading of the Regional Plan.

This being said UDI has worked very closely with HRM on the Regional Plan and through our joint leadership have spearheaded the creation of the Implementation Working Group (IWG) and Development Industry Committee (DIC). Both Committees have worked hard in 2005 to ensure the Regional Plan had the benefit of significant input from the Development Community and other major stakeholders. UDI has promised to HRM for the past nine months it would prepare and submit to HRM staff its position paper on the Regional Plan once the second draft is prepared, the purpose being to continue to work in 'good faith' with HRM and allow staff the benefit of our comments as the 'recognized voice and leader' of the Development Community before they prepare their final draft and proceed to public hearing.

Proceeding to first reading at the December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2005 Regional Council meeting will not provide HRM staff and UDI the opportunity to review our position paper on the second draft prior to a public hearing date being set. We believe it is in everyone's best interests to take an extra 4-8 weeks and hold off recommending first reading until HRM staff has had





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the opportunity to review our position paper. In return UDI needs some time to review the second draft in order to finalize its position paper. This approach would still see HRM in a position to recommend a first reading to Regional Council sometime between January 17<sup>th</sup> and February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

UDI understands this extension would mean Interim Growth Control measures would remain in effect an extra 4-8 weeks while our position paper is being reviewed. As the recognized voice and leader of the Development Community in HRM we support this measure. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you for consideration of this request.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin W. Riles', written over a horizontal line.

*Kevin W. Riles*  
President

CC: Mike Hanusiak, Vice President – UDI of Nova Scotia  
UDI Board of Directors