
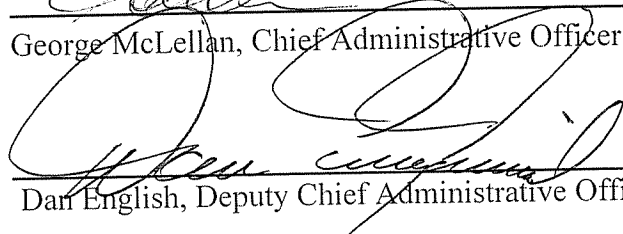

Halifax Regional Council
December 3, 2002

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:


George McLellan, Chief Administrative Officer


Dan English, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

DATE:

SUBJECT: Regional Planning: Phase II Action Plan

ORIGIN

At the In Camera session of Regional Council on July 16, 2002, staff committed to reviewing the approach to Regional Planning and reporting back to Council with an action plan.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council approve the establishment of the Regional Planning Community Stakeholder Committee as described in this report, to make recommendations to Council on the development of an HRM Regional Plan.

BACKGROUND

Work began on HRM's Regional Plan a year ago, with the official launch in February 2002. The goal of the project was to develop a physical land use plan providing strategic guidance for investment in infrastructure and long term service delivery to the region in the areas of growth and development, transportation and mobility, open space and community amenities, and environmental assets. The project was to be undertaken with existing resources, as far as possible, in a manner that was collaborative and integrated the involvement from key business units.

Phase I of the three year project has been underway, concentrating on the collection of information needed to develop vision, principles and growth options. A number of research areas have been or are being developed:

- public consultation (citizen survey, position papers, workbook, 9 case studies)
- population and economic projections
- cost of servicing analysis
- greenfield report (cost to develop currently large undeveloped areas) (external)
- transportation conditions and trends
- industrial/commercial land and parks potential
- water resource management study (external)
- open space plan
- brownfield/greyfield opportunities (land currently developed but underutilized)
- issue identified.
- information about the processes used in other communities in their Regional Planning efforts.

Further work was planned to build and cost out alternative growth scenarios for public discussion. Phase I was to conclude with Council choosing a preferred direction for growth. Phase II would then develop the necessary policies and specific plans and Phase III would implement the plan.

In the early summer concerns were raised by Council regarding the project. There was a significant degree of confusion around the project, with some questioning the need for it, others expressing uncertainty as to what the project would accomplish, and still others suggesting there was bias in the way the plan was being developed. There were also questions around the appropriate and necessary use of resources in the undertaking of the work, and the impact it was having on other initiatives.

A steering committee of Directors met throughout the summer, exploring the issues, identifying the benefits, and assessing the approach. As a result, the Committee has reaffirmed the need to undertake the development of a Regional Plan, and a revised approach is being proposed.

DISCUSSION

The Steering Committee of Directors concluded that a Regional Plan is needed now.

- ◆ In essence, a Regional Plan is needed to maintain the integrity of what makes us uniquely HRM. It has to direct growth, and at the same time take into consideration the values of the entire community. The plan will aim to maintain our quality of life by determining how we are going to grow.
- ◆ There is no question urban Halifax is growing at a faster rate than any other area of Nova Scotia, and that growth is having immediate impacts on existing services. We have to ensure that this growth is managed in a wise and thoughtful manner. It must be in harmony with growth in other areas of HRM. The physical, community and environmental impacts have not been adequately considered.
- ◆ We must ensure we grow in a manner that provides the most efficient use of tax dollars in providing services to all areas. The overall cost of growth is shared amongst all taxpayers - all taxpayers will benefit if costs are managed efficiently.

The Regional Plan is a document containing the principles and policies to guide the future physical development of HRM over the next two-and-a-half decades. Such principles and policies will serve to implement the values of HRM Vision 20/20 and the four themes of the Corporate Scorecard - Safe Communities; Healthy, Sustainable, Vibrant Communities; Excellence in Service Delivery; and Excellence in Governance. The Goals of the Plan include:

- ◆ to support the development of a vibrant economy
- ◆ to build sustainable, healthy, safe communities
- ◆ to increase efficiency in the use of municipal infrastructure and the delivery of services
- ◆ to support sustainable management and enjoyment of valued environmental assets
- ◆ to provide predictability and transparency in terms of future service provisions
- ◆ to ensure the existing MPSs are guided by a common vision, principles and goals, and that impacts on other neighbourhoods are addressed
- ◆ to build civic pride and stature. Public participation is an integral component of the Regional Planning process.

Over the years, communities have vested a great deal of time and effort into developing a plan for their own area. It is NOT the purpose of the Regional Plan to negate this effort nor deny community personality. In fact, the intention is to support community character and identify, and strengthen life at the community level. A Regional Plan will focus on the needed transportation opportunities between communities; address environmental issues such as open space, water availability and waste water disposal; and address the quality of living in the various areas, such as recreation and heritage stewardship.

In short, a Regional Plan will encompass existing plans and set the direction for our municipality to grow in a responsible and affordable manner for the next 25 years.

Proposed New Approach

With the experience of the past year, and with the conclusion of Phase I, the original thoughts around Phase II have been revised and a different approach to Phase II is being proposed.

A Community Stakeholder Committee will be established to champion the Regional Planning process to Council, the public, and staff. The deliverables for this next phase will be more focused and are as follows:

- 1) to propose principles to Council around which the Regional Plan will be developed
- 2) to develop a community consultation plan for approval by Council, and to implement the plan
- 3) to focus the discussion in the context of the principles agreed to by Council, around the solutions to three primary issues:
 - a) traffic and transportation
 - b) the level of environmental protection required to protect our safety and quality of life
 - f) the serviceable boundaries within which certain services such as centralized water and sewer will be provided, and the level of services one might reasonably expect from the municipal government in rural, suburban and urban communities.
- 4) to produce a report on recommended solutions for deliberation by Council.

The Committee will be comprised of three Councillors (representing urban, suburban and rural communities); five community members (selected on the basis of vision, expertise and knowledge of the business, environmental and social needs of the communities), and the CAO. Members will be expected to attend biweekly meetings of 3 hours, for six months; a one day workshop at the beginning of the process; and to attend public meetings and Council meetings as determined by the Committee. The Committee may establish sub-committees involving other members of the public and staff to assist it in its work. The Committee will determine next steps required at the end of six months. The information gathered in Phase I has proven to be very useful and will provide a strong backdrop to the discussions of the Committee around Regional Planning.

The Committee will be supported by a Regional Planning Project Office, to be staffed on a full time basis, providing expertise on planning issues and processes, environmental impacts, transportation planning, economic development, and technical skills. The Project Office will be open to the public, providing information about the Regional Plan. A lot of useful background information, analysis and studies have been collected by the Project Team over the last year.

Please see the Status of Research and Consultation which is attached.

The CAO will be supported by a Directors Consultation Committee, comprised of the Directors of Planning and Development: Public Works and Transportation, Environmental Management, Recreation, Culture and Heritage, Finance, Real Property & Asset Management, and Transit Services. This group will ensure the organization can respond to the issues of the Committee.

Following the work of the Community Stakeholder Committee, a work plan will be developed to deal with further aspects required in a Regional Plan.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

No change to 2002/3 budget.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES/BUSINESS PLAN

ALTERNATIVES

- 1 Council may decide to forego any further public consultation and instruct staff to prepare a set of growth principles for approval by Council, and then to draft a plan in support of those principles. A public consultation process may be undertaken at that time to provide feedback to Council before approval of the plan. Should the public not agree with the principles adopted by Council, or the options developed by staff, a significant amount of work may have to be redone.
2. Council may decide not to undertake a comprehensive planning process and deal with issues as they arise. This will not allow Council to address deficiencies in the existing plans and may result in Council having to make significant financial decisions without the benefit of good information concerning the implications and downstream effects. The public will continue to make housing decisions without a clear understanding around service expectations. This alternative is contrary to the recommendations of the HRM 20/20 and the Chamber of Commerce.
3. Council may decide to proceed with the existing process, participating in a workshop in the next few months to consider the aspects of the various possible directions growth may occur. Council will select one scenario, after which staff will develop and recommend principles and policies for growth management.

ATTACHMENTS

- 1) Status of Phase I workplan.

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

Report Prepared by: Betty MacDonald, GM Governance & Strategic Initiatives, 490-4769

Report Approved by:

Regional Planning Report

Status of Research and Consultation

End of Phase One

Context of this Report

As part of the HRM realignment being implemented as of January 1st, 2003, the structure of the Regional Planning project will be revised, and Phase I of the project will be concluded as of January 1st, 2003. This report presents an annotated summary list of the studies, analysis and consultation that has been undertaken under the Regional Planning project (Phase 1) since September 2001, and also other related projects being undertaken by HRM business units and other agencies that will provide important information as the project proceeds.

The *Healthy Growth for HRM* (Regional Plan) Project was conceived to have four component strategies:

- Growth Management
- Integrated Transportation/Mobility
- Vibrant City/Healthy Communities
- Environmental Asset Management

The process was designed to draw primarily on existing HRM resources; to promote and build interdepartmental cooperation within HRM; and to strengthen relationships with provincial and federal partner agencies. The issue identification stage had two main streams: the professional perspective (HRM and partner agencies working in Task Groups), and the public perspective (using a variety of consultation methods).

Section I of this report lists the Regional Planning Phase I projects that are

- a) completed or substantially completed,
- b) at the Terms of Reference (TOR) stage and proposed to be undertaken as funds become available.

Unless otherwise stated, the deliverables listed will be available on **January 1st, 2003**.

In **Section II** are listed the additional deliverables originally proposed as part of Phase I of the Project. These will be subject to a confirmation, and if they proceed, will become part of a new Phase 2 of the Project.

Section III includes a list of studies initiated prior to the start of the Regional Planning process that make a substantial contribution to the overall base of information and analysis for the Project.

The TPA is responsible for the management, collection and enforcement of off-street parking on TPA parking lots, as well as for the management and collection of on-street meter parking in the City of Toronto.

Report submitted to Council as part of the 2001 Budget which outlines the mission and budget for this authority (attached).

Montreal Parking Authority

Mission is to ensure optimal management of both on and off street paid parking thereby promoting the economic development of the areas served within the nine burroughs of the former Ville de Montreal.

2001 Annual report attached.

SECTION I - A - Studies Completed or in Progress

1. Public Consultation Report

Leads: Anne Muecke/Cathy Mellett

Deliverables:

- Summary Report
- Individual summaries of consultation activities
- Power Point Presentation

This report and associated individual summaries draws together the key issues that have been identified in the public consultation activities undertaken in 2002. They include findings from the HRM survey, nine community/industrial park Case Studies, Position Papers submitted by interest groups, the Workbook, and Townhall meetings.

2. Growth and Transportation Task Group

Leads: Austin French/Ken O'Brien

Deliverables:

- Full report of Issues (January 15th, 2003)
- Summary report of Issues and Options
- Preliminary goals
- Power Point presentation

The Task Group included representatives from HRM departments and provincial agencies. The product represents a synthesis of individual discussion papers prepared by sub-committees. These papers identified and analyzed issues arising from the relationship between growth in urban, semi-urban and rural communities; the use of Open Space; roads network improvements and freight movement; the transit system; water supply and wastewater management; and community form.

3. Vibrant City/Health Communities Task Group

Lead: Cathy Mellett

Deliverables:

- Full report of Issues
- Summary report of Issues and Options
- Preliminary goals
- Power Point presentation

The Task Group was organized into sub-committees organized under themes identified through HRM 20/20. The committees drew together representatives of HRM departments, provincial agencies, and industry and community groups to hold focus groups and prepare individual discussion papers in the following areas; vibrant city (Capital District case study); community culture, community safety; community diversity; community heritage; community health; active citizenship; and on how best to incorporate performance indicators into the Regional Plan.

4. Environmental Assets Task Group

Leads: Tony Blouin/Anne Muecke

Deliverables:

- Full report of Issues
- Summary report of Issues and Options
- Preliminary goals
- Power Point presentation

The Task Group included representatives from HRM departments, and selected provincial and federal agencies with responsibility for natural resource management. The Issue Paper provides a synthesis of discussion papers prepared by individual authors. The papers cover water resources and watershed management, open space conservation, urban forestry and vegetation, heritage, climate change, and hazard lands.

5. Classification of Pressing Transportation Issues

Lead: Inter departmental Working Group (HRM)

Deliverable:

- Report to Council on June 17th, 2002

An Integrated Transportation Strategy working group developed a decision-making framework to address the implementation of transportation projects and studies prior to Regional Plan completion. In the proposed framework, criteria were used to define three categories of projects - Local Modifications; Strategic Additions, and Major Regional Undertaking. A sample list of projects in each category was appended. These categories clarify which projects have a strategic significance and which do not, and the circumstances which can allow strategic projects to proceed as an early deliverable of Regional Planning.

6. Baseline Report on Population, Development and Economic Trends and Projections

Leads: Austin French/Maria Jacobs/Erica Tiffany/Marcus Garnet/Betty MacDonald

Deliverables:

- Report (January 15th, 2003)
- Map of imminent and long term residential development

A summary report covering population growth trends and projections; housing trends and projections; economic investment and employment projections; transportation demand; and an inventory of commercial and industrial-zoned lands and demand projections. The analysis covers the next five years of predictable growth, and provides general estimates of long term growth (25 years). The report draws on data from Statistics Canada and the Conference Board of Canada. The development map draws on development statistics and professional knowledge of development trends. A workshop will be needed early in January to get input into the economic projections from other sectors.

7. Greenfield Study

Leads: Austin French/Ken O'Brien

Deliverables:

- Opportunities and Constraints Analysis of 10 Greenfield Sites (January 15th, 2003)

- Updated QRSII Transportation Model (updated to 2001)
- Final report (Spring 2003)

The Greenfield Study is undertaking a comparative analysis of ten (10) Greenfield Development Areas adjacent to the existing serviceable area in order to assist HRM to decide where growth should occur, when, and in what order, while keeping capital cost contributions low and minimizing financial risk to the Municipality. Step One of the study, will produce an Opportunities and Constraints Analysis which will provide important information for the Regional Planning process.

8. Brownfield Study

Leads: Austin French/Andrew Whitemore

Deliverables:

- Final report

Brownfield redevelopment has become increasingly recognized as an important tool in managing new growth and for creating new opportunities to reduce the overall consumption of greenfield land in rural and semi-rural areas. The purpose of this study is to determine what options and opportunities may exist for HRM, and whether or not brownfield redevelopment program would be an effective growth management tool for HRM.

9. Rural Communities Analysis

Leads: Austin French and Community Planning Staff

Deliverables:

- Preliminary Analysis
- Final Report (January 30th, 2003)

This analysis will examine the issues arising from the encroachment of urban development into rural areas. It will identify the opportunities and constraints associated with promoting growth in rural and semi-rural communities.

10. Overview of Existing Conditions and Trends in the Transportation Network

Lead: Ken O'Brien

Deliverable:

- Paper

The purpose of this paper is to identify and summarize the trends in the existing transportation system. The main focus of the analysis is the urban area, its access corridors, the entry points to the Peninsular, and the relationship between the road network and the employment centres they serve. Traffic growth on roads, transit (bus and ferry), and the harbour bridges will be discussed.

11. Transit and Land Use - A Paper on Inter-relationships

Lead: Erica Tiffany

Deliverable:

- Paper

This paper summarizes research on the relationship between population density, urban form, and transit ridership. This information can be used to confirm how developments need to be designed

and interconnected with a transit network if enhanced transit ridership is established as a goal of the Regional Plan.

12. Land Use Change Analysis using Remote Sensing Data (1989, 2001)

Lead: Anne Muecke/Chris Hamilton (summer student)

Deliverable:

- Analytical structure for land use analysis of digital imagery
- Digital analysis of two satellite photos showing land use in 1989 and 2001.
- Sub-pixel analysis (summer 2003)

Further analysis of the 1989 and 2001 images will be required to achieve the level of detail required for confident “change analysis”. This is proposed for the summer of 2003. Once this work has been completed, land use change analysis can be undertaken rapidly and inexpensively, and used as a tool to track the success of the regional plan.

13. GIS Maps (Various)

Lead: John Charles

Deliverables:

- Digital and hard copy maps of natural features, ownership, sensitive areas etc in HRM
- The digital files used to create these maps can be used in a process of suitability analysis which is described in Section I - B (#20). This analysis will provide the basis for determining the suitability of land to support new development in HRM, and will contribute to an analysis of the sustainability of development in rural greenfield areas.

14. Condition of Urban Area Lakes (Trophic Status)

Lead: Tony Blouin/Consultant

Deliverables:

- Map and table assigning a ‘trophic status’ (indicator of water quality) to selected lakes in the urban, suburban and rural areas of HRM (January 2003)

HRM has defined a study area encompassing the urban, suburban and rural areas surrounding Halifax-Dartmouth. Within this area, a list of lakes has been developed. Each lake will be assigned a trophic status which will be determined using available recent or historic data on lake water quality already in the possession of the Contractor (specifically, phosphorus, chlorophyll and/or secchi disk depth). This project should be initiated by December 15th, 2002.

SECTION I - B - Proposed Studies at the TOR Stage Proposed for 2003

15. Development Suitability Analysis

Lead: Consultant (TBD)

Deliverables:

- GIS mapping and report

This analysis will use existing data bases on geology, soils, environmentally sensitive areas, hazard lands, slopes, ownership etc., supplemented by an analysis of on-site septic failures, to

prepare an analysis of the suitability of rural greenfield areas to support development. It will focus particularly on groundwater quantity and quality and on-site sewage disposal opportunities and constraints, but will also identify areas that for other reasons present severe impediments to development. Terms of Reference for this study are under development.

16. Transit Alternative Costing Analysis

Lead: Erica Tiffany

Deliverable:

- Report

This report will be designed to identify the alternative ways of delivering enhanced transit service in selected corridors in the urban developed area. It will examine bus-based systems, commuter rail, Light Rapid Transit, and ferry alternatives, and will include a review of opportunities, constraints, planning implications and costs.

17. Halifax South End Transportation Study

Lead: Consultant (TBD)

Deliverables:

- Report

This study will examine the implications for the South End transportation network of proposed future land use proposals and projects such as the strategic investments in the container port, seawall and cruise ship terminal; the proposed Commonwealth Games site; residential and commercial development on the Halifax waterfront; and other changes in the Capital District. It will compare future demand to existing capacity; examine options for responding to future demand for passenger transportation and freight; and develop some preliminary high level cost estimates of alternatives.

18. Design Standards Analysis

Lead: Consultant (TBD)

Deliverable:

- Report

Terms of reference have been developed for a study to consider the question of implementing Community Design Standards related to community character in the policies, by-laws and programs related to land use and community planning in HRM. The scope of the proposed work is, by using the values expressed in the existing municipal planning strategies and the community case studies undertaken for Regional Planning, to:

- a) review the current practices of HRM
- b) carry out a scan of best practice opportunities for HRM in this area and, finally
- c) to a proposal for interim design guidelines that could be implemented under existing frameworks if so desired.

In the interim an HRM staff group have undertaken a review of the engineering and community design standards currently in the subdivision by-law to evaluate opportunities for revisions or further research necessary to support appropriate community design.

19. Review of Principles and Goals from Other Regional Planning Processes

Lead: Staff at Community Planning

Deliverables:

A review of the Principles and Goals adopted in Regional Planning processes from selected locations in Canada and the United States as a briefing document for the Stakeholder Committee.

SECTION II - Additional Elements of the Original Project Plan for Phase 1

The following activities and deliverables were included in a **Phase 1** Work Plan (revised June 2002):

Analysis:

1. Cost of Servicing Analysis
2. Alternative Growth Scenarios
 - Develop Scenario-building Methodology
 - Develop Evaluation Methodology and Criteria
 - Compile and Assess Scenarios

Consultation:

1. Partnership Committee
2. Public Symposium
3. Neighbourhood Focus Groups

A **Harbour Plan** was identified as a deliverable in **Phase 2**.

SECTION III - Supporting Studies and Analysis

1. Phase 1 Transit Study (IBI Group)
2. Bicycle Master Plan (EDM Ltd)
3. Industrial Park Study (Real Property, HRM)
4. Water Resource Management Study (Dillon Consulting Ltd.)
5. Open Space Plan (Recreation and Parkland Planning, HRM)
6. Integrated Servicing Study (CBCL Ltd)
7. Harbour Solutions Reports
8. Wastewater Treatment and Pumping Studies
 - modelling to be undertaken in 2003

Prepared by:

Anne Muecke