



**Draft Regional Plan
Tantallon Workshop - May 25, 2005
St. Margaret's Centre - Upper Tantallon Arena
~ Notes ~**

Discussion Table: Economy / Municipal Services

Burning Questions

1. Where does the small developer/landowner fit into the Regional Plan?
 - Problems with proposed provisions:
 - all growth directed toward centres
 - open space design s/d requirements for contiguous development might not be possible in all cases.
 - 4 lots on existing roads will not provide enough opportunity
 - Suggestions:
 - Balance opportunities with costs incurred by developers and the municipality
 - Proposed provisions are overly restrictive - frontages should be reduced
 - allow some flexibility for small developers
 - provide some options for private roads

Conclusion/Summary

- More flexibility and opportunities are required for small landowners, developers and builders.
2. What is HRM's plan for power lines in new and existing developments?
 - HRM is considering underground lines in new suburban subdivisions. The question will be who will pay for them. (The cost is estimated to be 3 times more than conventional above ground service).
 - Suggestions:
 - Urban trees should be protected.

Conclusion

- When considering whether to install underground wiring, more weight must be given to reliability and safety.
3. What level of protection is expected from the volunteer fire department?

Comments

- Is it realistic to rely on a volunteer service considering the loss in volunteer base?
- The lack of fire protection has implications for insurance coverage.
- HRM should conduct an assessment of the service levels for fire departments in the urban vs rural areas to determine value for money.
- Fire department districts should be rationalized to improve response times.
- Developers/homeowners should be informed of the risk resulting from reduced fire protection or be required to install sprinkler systems.

Conclusion

- When considering services and taxes, we need to answer the question, are we getting good value for our taxes.
4. What type of public transportation will be available to Hubley and when will it be in place?
- Options proposed in the Regional Plan include subsidized private commuter vans, shared taxis and express bus service from interchanges/park and ride lots to the regional centre.

Suggestions/Comments

- Incentives required to encourage transit use.
- Car pool parking lots need to be built.
- Improved bus service on the Hammonds Plains Rd. is required.
- Parking lots and bus stops could be part of the 10% open space requirement for new subdivisions.

Conclusion

- The Hubley area should have priority for express buses and rural transit.
5. How will HRM support local recreation?

Comments

- Schools are costly to use for community recreation purposes.
- There are opportunities to coordinate efforts among various groups: schools, HRM, province; and to tap into existing community structure.
- It may be possible to use recreations facilities as an incentive and to establish partnerships.

Conclusion

- Since resources are scarce, we should use existing networks and partnerships to develop and deliver local recreation opportunities.
6. Why use hydro-geological assessments for new development in rural areas when the Dept. Of Environment abandoned its use several years ago?
- Hydrogeological assessment of potential rural development areas requires an amendment to legislation to enable HRM to implement the requirement.

Conclusion

- For development between centres, the use of hydrogeological assessment to determine the level of development activity needs more study.
7. Where will small builders have opportunities in 3-5 years and in the longer term?

Comments

- Vacant, available and affordable rural lots are required for small builders.

Conclusion

- Lots availability needs to be monitored closely to ensure an adequate supply of lots are available to small builders and that there is not a monopoly in the home building sector.

General Comments about the workshop process

- There were not enough answers available.
- There needs to more opportunity for community participation.
- After having participated in the workshop, there is more confidence in the planning process.
- Missing from the discussion are the implications of major crises like an energy shortage.

Burning Questions

1. What is the criteria for defining the centre?
2. Where will Development be in Tantallon and how?
3. Why is the Interim Growth applied to District 23?
4. Will Tax rates be effected by the services we will receive?
5. Where are the Centre boundaries?
6. What are the stop/start areas of the boundaries? How are they determined?
7. What type of development will be allowed in the centres?
8. How is the definition of settlement going to be equitable?
9. What is considered low, medium, and high density?
10. Why isn't Beaver Bank a centre?
11. Why build a house in HRM when someone can go into the next municipality were it is cheaper?
12. Are people in Tantallon looking for water?
13. What rules/regulations will be put in place for Peggy's Cove Road?
14. Where will HRM save \$250 million?
15. Why not permit private roads?
16. How flexible will development agreement be?

Discussion

1. What is the criteria for defining the centre?
 - why not designate Peggy's Cove as a centre - this led to a discussion on the criteria for designating centres (ie. whether or not it functions as one now and what uses need to be present)
2. Where will Development be in Tantallon and how?

- questions arose over where in Tantallon is HRM expecting new growth
 - reviewed the proposed new growth controls and the group agreed that they are to restrictive
 - growth controls need to be revised - 20 lots over a certain number of years and allow for more than one lot on a new road
 - group did not agree that lot prices are not going up
 - discussed the open space subdivision approach and how it could be implemented
 - Is HRM going to be able to require water assessments - seeking change to *Municipal Government Act*
 - open space approach should consider a combination of compact lots and large lots and development should not be limited to open space subdivisions
3. Why is the Interim Growth applied to District 23?
- Tantallon is experiencing limited amount of development: an average of 181 units per year
 - IGM controls are to restrictive and not necessary
 - proposed new controls are not needed
4. Will Tax rates be effected by the services we will receive?
- concern was expressed that if new services are provided to the area , taxes will increase
 - taxes do not reflect the services received
 - what services are proposed for Tantallon?
5. Where are the Centre boundaries?
- concern was expressed that all the centres have not been defined
 - only three centres are defined now- Regional Centre, Fall River, and Tantallon
 - why these centre, especially Tantallon?
6. What are the stop/start areas of the boundaries? How are they determined?
- centre boundaries are to be defined at the Secondary Planning process stage - not under the Regional Plan
 - centres would be defined in consultation with residents and would not have to follow a circular

pattern

- criteria for secondary planning strategies is outline in the Regional Plan
7. What type of development will be allowed in the centres?
- how will development occur within and outside of centres
 - upon adoption of the Regional Plan, most centres will develop based upon the regulations for growth between centres until the centres are defined
 - development options: open space subdivisions by development agreement, 4 lots per area of land on existing roads and one lot on a new road.
 - concern was expressed that the as-of-right development was too restrictive
8. How is the definition of settlement going to be equitable?
- if restrictions are necessary (group agreed they are not), they need to be applied equitably across HRM
 - communities should be allowed to protect those aspects of their community that make them different (no standard approach).
 - restricting development rights is not fair
9. What is considered low, medium, and high density?
- HRM needs to clearly define what is low (large lots), medium (Sackville), and high (skyscraper) density for urban and rural areas
 - past examples used by HRM (as stated above) do not reflect the rural context
 - in rural areas: development higher than townhouses is unlikely
10. Why isn't Beaver Bank a centre?
- community needs to grow to stay alive
 - if the roads are an issue, why doesn't HRM upgrade the roads?
 - need to initiate the construction of the Highway 113 and Beaver Bank By-pass
11. Why build a house in HRM when someone can go into the next municipality where it is cheaper?
- concern was expressed that the Regional Plan will force people to move outside of HRM (less

taxes and regulations)

- how will HRM prevent this action from occurring?
 - Are people in Tantallon looking for water?
 - concern was expressed that the proposed water service district boundary only applies to West Wood Hills
 - have the people in West Wood Hills requested water?
 - HRM should consider other areas- Haliburton Hills
 - unlikely that water will be provided to Tantallon within the next 25 years
13. What rules/regulations will be put in place for the Peggy's Cove Road?
- under the Regional Plan, the Peggy's Cove Road will be subject to those development provisions specified for development between centres
14. Where will HRM save \$250 million?
- \$250 million is not a lot of money over 25 years
 - where are the saving coming from? (HRM needs to produce a fact sheet outlining, in detail, the cost savings)
15. Why not permit private roads?
- if HRM wants to save money, it should allow for private roads
 - private roads provides flexibility to developers and land owners
 - public roads are to expensive to build
16. How flexible will development agreement be?
- criteria for development agreements must be clear and evenly applied
 - process needs to be open to the public for input
 - development agreements needs to provide for flexibility in the creation of new subdivisions

Burning Questions

1. How can we pass on to future residents the benefits we've had from this community?
2. Who initially decided and successfully led Halifax City Council to accept the Goals and Objectives when none of them understood what they were buying into?
3. Identify how exactly limiting growth in identified rural areas will save HRM money?
4. Development in the St. Margaret's Bay area has to be controlled due to the reciprocal effect on roads, schools, infrastructure environment and [in] keeping with the overall community?
5. How do people in this area respond to the designation of Tantallon as a growth area? Does it seem like a natural evolution or an unwelcome change?
6. How will limits/boundaries of community centres be established? What will incentives be for rural commuter centre development? What will restrictions be for Bay area outside?

What did you come here to accomplish?

- More understanding of the plan-to-date
- Observe
- Develop a better understanding of the regional plan and give my input.

[no response]

- I want to hear the opinions of people who live in the rural commuter-belt.

[no response]

What will make you happy you came here?

- Seeing people respect each other. Experiencing later some results.
- When I am shown backup information for the info given to us.

[no response]

[no response]

- If there is a lively & varied discussion including a variety of opinions.

[no response]

What can you do [to] ensure that this workshop is a success?

- Listen
- I really believe public input is not going to be used in the process.

[no response]

[no response]

- Engage in the discussion

[no response]

VERBAL PARTICIPATION

Discussion

- The political system is faulty because rural Councillors are outnumbered. In the old County the suburban and rural councillors tried to accommodate each other.
- Now money is the predominant issue and HRM is going to extremes.
- Will HRM really save money?! Taxes are going up. Assessments are rising, but that's a provincial matter. When we were the County we were told we were being subsidized by the other parts of the County. It's the same now. So people call for more housing.
- But housing doesn't bring in net tax revenue, businesses do.
- As for maintaining wells and septic - we do it ourselves and we pay the same taxes.
- [Bruce Fisher clarified that sewer and water charges are billed separately and are not included in the general tax bill.]
- Cluster septic and cluster subdivision won't work.

What is it that makes a community?

- cluster subdivisions don't make a community.
- a community is made by the schools, the churches, the hospitals, and the recreation facilities.
- How best to build [rural] communities?
- Include a variety of age groups

- employment opportunities?
- This plan is an effort to build “communities” not just “subdivisions”.
- Schools & hospitals might better be smaller and spread out in more locations.
- The Regional Plan will require new schools in the urban areas.
- Old schools should be recycled for other uses.
- School catchments should avoid the need for people to move as their children progress through the primary and secondary education levels.
- You have to be able to plan for the schools by knowing where the people will live.
- Integrate all aspects of school planning.
- Missing the boat on issues of rural development.
- Are some “rural” problems already solved in new developments and current (2005) standards?
- Will the Regional Plan actually save money?
- I am not convinced that more concentration is the right way to go.
- What services does HRM give rural residents - most come from the province or feds.
- Retirement housing needs should be considered.
- Age should not force you out of your community.
- [Facilitator: A diversity of housing should cater to all ages.]
- That is a community.
- This area has not drawn industry. If a company decided to come to St. Margaret’s Bay, what infrastructure would they have?
- [Facilitator: but a twinned highway is coming, which will bring unprecedented development.]
- The water pipes from Pockwock are nearby, so why limit development?
- Road costs - For one of my developments I entrusted private roads to a homeowner association, and I put \$60,000 into a fund to help them toward maintenance costs. Lots are selling and people aren’t bothered.

- Private roads - we pay for them. Where's the cost to HRM?
- [Bruce Fisher explained that HRM tries to service even private roads with garbage pick-up. Also pressure arises for HRM to take over private roads, at which point HRM incurs major expense.]
- As a developer I like clusters - but people should have choice.
- The Red Book [municipal standards] regulations address the problems of the past. The past 20 years' changes to the standards have already addressed the problems you are bothered by now.
- [Facilitator: Are these standards acceptable to you as a developer?]
- Yes. They're not excessive. If the market cannot bear the resulting costs, it will move to the city. That's the market at work.
- You have to say what the limits of municipal service are.
- Is water quality testing a good thing?
- Yes. But the consumer usually won't pay to drill a well before they buy.
- Manage expectations about future municipal services. Just say, "You can't have it."
- When you move to a rural area, you program yourself to the situation.
- Today's septics have to be designed by an engineer.
- We have put in 50-60 septics a year, and we have very few call-backs. And there's a lack of knowledge about how to use septics. They're a living system. People don't realize that when they flush things down.
- The installer should inform the buyer.
- Why have clusters? We have so much land for people to use already. Just stop using cash-in-lieu and take the 5% land dedication. Why do we need 70% of the land as open space, as per the cluster subdivision concept?
- Not all of us around this table oppose clusters!
- [Facilitator: Clusters are not needed but should be an option?]
- Yes.
- Is natural gas coming to this area? If so, when they trench for natural gas lines, couldn't they make it a bigger trench and include utility pipes?

- The province has started saying we need immigration to stop the population from declining.
- Where are all these immigrants going to live?
- Who is living in all those new apartments alongside Highway 102? Probably many of them are immigrants. Where are they going to move when they leave those apartments and want a single family house?
- But we're not anticipating a large amount of population growth over the next 25 years.
- We need some balance between cluster subdivisions and regular, large rural residential lots.
- The circle for Tantallon should be larger, because of the highway twinning and the park-and-ride express bus service that is proposed.
- We need a small footprint for development.
- Don't use up all the land now for development, save some for future generations' needs.
- But people aren't trying to use up all the land.
- There is a huge supply of land. Take a flight over the Chebucto Peninsula and you'll see how much land is still left in between the roads.
- What about loss of land development rights? Shouldn't land ownership have some benefits/rights?

Discussion Table: Housing

Burning Questions

1. How were the centres chosen and how will the new proposed development standards affect housing affordability?
2. How will the regional plan build not only diverse but inclusive communities?
3. What does the draft regional plan mean by affordable housing – ie will an average household be able to afford a home?
4. How will incentives such as density bonusing be used?

Discussion

1. How were the centres chosen and how will the new proposed development standards affect housing affordability?

- Concern that major centres such as Bedford West and Morris-Russell Lake are designated where high-end developers have holdings – will concentration of developable land affect affordability? What options will exist for smaller developers building more affordable product.
 - Will there be too much development pressure on some areas?
 - Why is water extension proposed to only Westwood Hills and not to Beaverbank where the distance appears to be shorter?
 - Water service should be extended to the areas outside the centres within a certain radius of the main line.
 - How much development will there be in St. Margaret's Bay area?
 - Clusters and open space subdivision development are an excellent idea – they will make subdivisions more interesting, increase greenbelts etc.
 - Don't like the condo/shared ownership idea of septic systems.
 - Concern over the size of the lots in cluster subdivisions and their impact on the water table.
- How are we going to maintain the “Nova Scotian lifestyle” – ie development usually more affordable in outlying areas.
- How do we balance density vs. quality of life?
- Concern over how new centres will ensure that housing options will be incorporated – not just single unit dwellings. Suggestion: Need development criteria, mixed density zoning, allow secondary units.
- Concern over the extent of community consultation over large-scale developments, and access to information about development proposals such as environmental impact studies. Suggestion: could post all development applications on-line at HRM website.
- Will infill development be in fact more affordable?

What the Draft Regional Plan says: Draft Plan proposes a number of development options for development within the regional centre, suburban and rural areas. For example, a mix of high to medium density residential, commercial, institutional and recreational uses will be encouraged on identified opportunity sites in the Regional Centre and low to medium density housing types will be encouraged in existing neighbourhoods. A mix of housing development within centres will also be encouraged (high density in urban district centres, medium to high density in suburban district centres and medium density convenience commercial uses in suburban local centres). Development in designated rural centres will proceed by development agreement until Community Planning Strategies are completed and adopted by Council.

Open space subdivision design will be permitted outside the centres and up to 4 lots through traditional subdivision design and 1 lot per year thereafter. Options for ownership and maintenance of shared septic systems are being discussed with the province. The open space subdivision design is proposed to be considered by means of development agreement, and this process will determine the suitability of the design in terms of soils, waste water management, groundwater, topography, traffic, and so on. The draft plan proposes that all development occur on public rather than private roads, so municipal services (snow plowing, garbage collection, etc.) will be provided.

While development standards may be higher in some areas (ie HRM is seeking legislative amendments to incorporate hydro-geological testing as part of the approval process), these measures will reduce risk and long-term maintenance costs to property owners. The draft Regional Plan also proposes to alter

development standards to better reflect the required need for infrastructure (eg reducing public right-of-way) – this should realize considerable savings to developers that can be passed to homeowners.

2. How will the regional plan build not only diverse but inclusive communities?

- Average price of a home and average rent levels do not match the average cost of housing – need to address incomes as well.
- The policy should address the goal of building inclusive, not just diverse communities. This implies access and includes not only housing affordability, but housing quality, access to services, lifting restrictions on small options homes and groups homes, daycares in residential areas, opportunities to “age in place.”
 - Seniors should be able to stay in their community if they choose to;
 - Accessibility should not stop at the front door – accessibility should extend to the entire community.
 - Mortgages/charges should be lower on houses that can show that they can be easily adaptable.
 - Lift restrictive zoning (eg. any development of more than 3 units currently has to go by Development Agreement in some areas) and use tools such as site plan approval process for high density opportunity parcel development;
 - Older and smaller households are a growing trend – need housing options for this type of household.
 - Granny suites and secondary suites will be provide a solution to some seniors and will make home ownership more affordable, but they are not the solution to all senior housing problems.
 - Westwood allows secondary suites (some people opt to have them and are very well designed; Haliburton does not permit them under R1 zoning but they are known to occur – owners put them in for their children and then go into hiding!).

What the Draft Regional Plan says: The Draft Plan speaks to the importance of housing to the overall quality of life and identifies components of housing choice – ie location, dwelling type, design and accessibility, tenure, living arrangements, and support services. The plan’s overall policy is to include more integration between residential, commercial , institutional and recreational uses within centres and to improve and extend the reach of public transportation. The current policy (H-1) proposes that with the adoption of the Regional Plan all existing secondary planning strategies and by-laws be amended to permit residential care facilities of up to six residents operated or funded by organizations as defined by the Nova Scotia Homes for Special Care Act. Also effective immediately upon the adoption of the Regional Plan it is proposed that existing development agreement policies be amended to permit seniors housing by a private sector developer in rural areas.

3. What does the draft regional plan mean by affordable housing – ie will an average household be able to afford a home?

- The definition and provision of affordable housing is extremely difficult in complex – HRM can’t do it alone. Need to partner and use a variety of tools.
 - Need to look at modest income households, the working poor not just those on income assistance.

- What is affordable now? A \$230,000 home?
- Will development in centres and new development standards make housing less affordable?
- Will houses in the cluster system be on smaller lots?

What the Draft Regional Plan says: The Draft Plan currently defines affordable housing as housing that does not consume more than 30% of household's gross annual income. This definition will be further refined in the Affordable Housing Functional Plan to reflect a range of income levels across the region, and it will most likely have an income cut off – ie projects applying for municipal incentives will have to be affordable to households with average or lesser income levels. The Plan also commits HRM to ongoing monitoring of land and house sale prices in all areas of the region, and to maintaining adequate supply of serviced and developable land.

4. How will incentives such as density bonusing be used?

- Density bonusing generally a good idea, but need to balance quality of life and liveability with density – also need affordable housing in rural areas.
- Deed Transfer Tax should be waived on affordable housing developments
- Need to invest in and encourage good design
- Need to provide incentives for accessible and adaptable housing, as well as ecologically sustainable housing construction to reduce environmental impacts and ongoing operating costs (eg. energy expenditures)
- More as of right zoning can reduce costs but needs to be well designed
- Cash in lieu option should be spent on housing and should not lead to concentrating development.
- NIMBY is a big issue - those who do not need subsidized housing need to know what's in it for them (when it comes to their area).

What the Draft Regional Plan says: The draft Plan requires that all secondary plan review processes consider adopting measures related to density bonusing policy for affordable housing which will define conditions and circumstances under which a public or private developer may exceed base allowable density in exchange for the development of affordable housing – height and other zoning variances may be included for the construction or rehabilitation of affordable housing units. The plans are also required to consider the impact of new standards and fees on affordable housing. The Housing Functional Plan will provide further guidance to secondary plan review processes with regard to the issues of definition, targets, meeting a range of needs, development incentives, community education and facilitation and innovative design.

Discussion Table: Transportation

Burning Questions

- 1 Can we advance actual construction of new transportation facilities now that our Rural Commuter Centre has been identified?
- 2 Why can't the Department of Highways (TPW) and HRM get together on the overall plan for the whole areas?
- 3 What will be done to ensure our current roads/intersections that are already bulging at the seams are properly enhance to deal with increasing population, traffic, etc?
- 4 What are the plans for public transit, especially for changing demographic, particularly seniors?
- 5 If/when/why not HWY 113? By-pass busy areas, ie Bedford?
- 6 Clarify BRT/Express Bus/Rural Transportation?

Discussion

1. Construction of Transportation Facilities (includes discussion of Question 4)
 - Facilities for express bus service required, as they don't want to see the population grow beyond what it is now with out facilities. Facilities for the express bus should be built now.
 - Residents don't want to wait because the current bus service is inadequate. The service that exists now is not convenient, takes a long time. Like the idea of the Calgary shuttle service to park and ride - works on a load and go system.
 - Residents said that Western Regional Council told the express bus would be out to exit 5 along Hwy. 103 in 2006.
 - Express Bus would help alleviate traffic and people would use it.
 - Would like to see a shuttle service running around the 333 loop.
 - Park and ride lots and express bus would be used if well run and convenient. Residents want this service to come through faster. IF HRM provides lousy service - no one will use it.
 - Where will the park and ride be built - is there enough land at the Sobey's plaza?
 - Worry over this being a pipe dream and not happening - because not enough money, not enough buses
 - Petitions for additional bus services - to exits 4 and 5 on 103, to extend route 21 to White's Lake.
 - Would like to see more bus service fo Hammond's Plains area.
 - Group reluctant to come to a consensus on some issues because only a few people at the meeting and don't want to speak for entire area.

- The services shown on the map is a problem - bus service goes to Whites Lake and goes to Indian Harbour, but the two don't join - can't go to Peggy's Cove with disconnected service. The rural transportation service should connect and have a circular route.
 - What can be done to change the priority for the express bus to Tantallon from beyond 3 years to sooner?
 - Rail transit service was raised - why is it not possible or being considered.
 - Is it based on population that we don't have better transit service in this area?
 - Economic and legislative changes to make plan happen - limit access to core to encourage less car use. Need viable alternatives to the car. How do we get people out of their cars?
 - Bedford West and South - before they are built, transportation infrastructure should be built.
 - People feel they are not listened to when it comes to transit service/facilities. People want to be heard!
 - Park and ride will not help residents get around - particularly students.
 - Good bus service will help take cars off of Hammond's Plains Road - transit service/facilities are both major concerns for residents.
2. Cooperation between Province and HRM
- The province and HRM never seem to be working together
 - It doesn't appear that the two entities agree - this includes snowplowing
3. Enhancement of intersections/roads that are bulging at the seams.
- Fox Hollow/French Village Station Road - could pedestrian signals be improved.
 - Could lights be installed at French Village/Hammonds Plains that could be activated during peak times only?
 - Provincial officials won't come out because the intersection doesn't meet the warrants.
 - For all of Hammond's Plains Road - speed limit should be reduced to 70 km/h since it is 90 between Haliburton and Yankeetown Road.
 - HRM and the Province need to get together and coordinate work and communicate with each other
 - Transportation planning needs to be organized - basically do whatever works!

- Is TPW involved in subdivision planning? Safety issues because one way in and one way out of subdivisions, especially along Hammond's Plains Road.
- Can highways be built before subdivisions go in?
- 5. If/when/why not Hwy. 113?
 - Highway 113 would be an alternative route for traffic and help alleviate congestion along Hammond's Plains Road.
 - Would like to see comparison of facts and figures of Highway 113 and traffic off of Hammond's Plains Road and costs of putting in transit service.
 - Is public transit cheaper than building roads in the Tantallon area (incrementally transit service will be established - money for this)
 - How do we know that traffic will decrease along Hammond's Plains Road with new transit service?
 - Traffic needs to go through the city. Hard to get from Dartmouth to Halifax West by bus.
 - Doesn't seem that Hwy 113 will take traffic off Hammond's Plains Road.
 - Highway 113 will allow Kingswood residents and residents of other residential areas to get in and out of their subdivisions and not use Hammond's Plains Road.

Discussion Table: Environment

Burning Questions

1. What are the implications of the Regional Plan for the area?
2. Concerned about settlement pattern.
3. Concerned about how development is going to take place in St. Margaret's Bay (e.g. proposed townhouses in Ingramport, marinas, etc.)
4. Why is the economy (housing development, settlement pattern) given more priority than the environment under the Regional Plan?
5. Why can't we go all the way and create a mandate for achieving environmental sustainability, real environmental sustainability, in a verifiable way? (e.g. ensure new construction is fully sustainable and plan to renew/restore sustainability where it has been lost.)

6. Concerned about proposed water infill development project in Ingramport and how that will impact the ecology of Webber's Cove.
7. Concerned about the impact of development on the environment. Two questions raised:
 - Are we doing enough to protect the natural environment?
 - How much growth is enough?
8. Concerned that HRM plan might not be respected by provincial government agencies (e.g. highway construction projects such as the proposed Highway 113).
9. Will HRM have the vision, courage and commitment to follow-up on peoples wishes by taking the extra step to put the needed programs in place that are controversial?
10. Interested in preservation and conservation of environmental resource.
11. Interested in seeing if the Five Bridges Wilderness Area is preserved as a conservation area.
12. What is the planning for the Western Common and the lands south of the Otter Lake Landfill site?

Agreed upon Focus Questions for Discussion

- Will HRM take the lead role and champion all three levels of government, NGOs and others to work together to achieve what people want?
- Settlement impact on environment in small communities (densities, etc.)
- Why does the economy (development proposals) have more priority over the environment?
- How can we stop it from happening and make real environmental sustainability a priority?
- What parts of the Regional Plan can we live with and can't live with?

Main Points of Discussion

Parts of the Plan we can't live with

- The rural commuter designation is inherently unsustainable given the large distances people have to travel by automobile.
- The transportation proposal is unsustainable and not viable now or in the future.
- Fossil fuels are very expensive currently and prices will rise as supplies become increasingly limited in the future.
- The Plan provides sufficient protection for crown land but not private land.
- It takes courage to stand up to the private land owner's rights to do what they want with their land (e.g. clear cutting)
- Should have a rural planning board that has a final say on how land is used.
- The Ingramport proposed development project, for example, will violate the Riparian Buffer requirements under the proposed Regional Plan.
- Community groups should have the right to be more restrictive.
- Need to end by-right development.
- Small streams (6 inches wide) are not covered by the riparian buffer requirements.
- If we don't pay attention to all components of the tributary system we can kiss drinking water and fish good-bye.
- Various government agencies pointing fingers at each other saying its not my problem.

- We must maintain optimal water temperatures to sustain aquatic life.

Parts of the Plan we can live with

- Need baseline studies to measure changes overtime.
- Give incentives for proper kind of development (e.g. energy efficient housing design, composting toilets, grey water systems).
- Things always evaluated by market pricing (\$\$\$) but we must include real cost replacement for loss of environmental services (trees, water, wetlands).
- HRM could/should be a model for environmentally sustainable development (develop a model project).
- You can live comfortably without the lawn.
- Must mandate and fully support a verifiable sustainability in all new construction and renovations and must implement a plan to repair/restore all sustainability already lost.
- Need political will and collaboration among all levels of government, community and NGO's to make it work.
- Community must have much stronger say.
- Want to see all environmental policies in the environmental chapter of the proposed Regional Plan adopted even if the Regional Plan is not.
- Need to repair the damage that's been done (e.g. shellfish closure of our ocean inlets and bays, St Margaret's Bay is now an ecological dessert).
- Governments responsible for septics (NSDEL) needs to enforce its regulations.
- Governments should underwrite cost of septic systems to ensure sustainability.
- Establish a moratorium on all development in St. Margaret's Bay until its cleaned up.
- All developers undertaking development and all governments allowing it should be accountable to remediate problems when damage is done.
- Bonds should be posted by contractors, developers or by governments contracting work.
- DFO continuously allowing approvals but no fish left and its DFO's mandate to protect fish habitat.
- Need more notice of Western Region Council Community meetings.
- Need to have names of Political District 23 and Planning District 1 and 3 in sync.

- Need to ensure that the Rural Commuter Designation on Map 2 for lands close to Otter Lake and Nine Mile River do not conflict with the Western Commons Plan.
- What is the land use plan for the lands below/south of the Western Commons?
- Need to place a limit on the number of ATVs per capita in a given area and a limit on the number of boats on lakes.
- Traditional right-of-ways and trails should be preserved and ATVs should be banned from these areas.
- Need to preserve viewplane and waterfronts.
- Need to have bike paths in rural areas.
- Developers should have to demonstrate that their development will result in greater ecological integrity.
- Group was also strongly opposed to the proposed Highway 113 Bypass since it will destroy wild land, ruin a designated wildlife corridor and it is not needed.

Additional Comments Received Since the Workshop

- Thank you for the email and very thorough synopsis of a far ranging and intensive few hours of discussion.
- I'd just like to reiterate the importance of providing incentives (not only restrictions) for developers and individuals who plan to build or those who wish to renovate when it comes to issues surrounding the environment.
- In the same way as the Federal Gov't (Natural Resources) offers grants to homeowners investing in energy upgrades thru the Energuide for Houses programme, there should be more such incentives for developers and individuals for all kinds of environmentally sustainable projects.
- For instance, why not provide subsidies for individuals/developers who build solar homes, go off grid or retrofit their houses to use solar/ thermal/ windpower and other renewable energy sources as opposed to the traditional non-renewable ones?
- Why not reward developers who work with the natural landscape and try to save existing trees and natural environs instead of tearing and blasting the land to smithereens? etc etc
- I realise that such subsidies are not necessarily within the political and financial jurisdiction of HRM. However, if HRM is truly interested in preserving the natural wonders within its boundaries, its leaders must use their clout to urge both the provincial and federal governments to come to the table and work with the municipality to provide realistic and workable solutions for sustainable development.

- Incentives have to be remunerative, financially and otherwise.
- Money and resources are available. The Feds say they are committed to the Kyoto Accord. It's time to deliver. HRM is a big enough city with enough regional clout to press the issue. However, such action requires leadership, courage and vision on the part of our elected representatives.
- The other issue is one of education. In the same way as government has shown leadership in educating the public about the health hazards of smoking and the importance of nutrition and exercise, it is time to bring environmental issues to the public's attention. This is not such a daunting task.
- There are many successful and enthusiastic organisations who are already out there trying to raise awareness about environmental issues and to change attitudes. They would be happy to partner with gov't (at all levels) to get the message out in a positive and effective way.
- However, this too will require leadership and putting bureaucratic egos aside to work together effectively.
- I would like to challenge our elected representatives in HRM to take a leading role in this country by declaring us to be a city and region that puts environmental issues at the forefront when it comes to planning and development. This does not mean discouraging development or putting up all kinds of rules, regulations and restrictions to prevent individuals and developers from building and dreaming. It simply means changing our mindset and raising our awareness about what is possible. We can start with one simple mindset change. Why do we all have to have lush, green golf-course type lawns which are costly to maintain in every respect? Why can't we be more imaginative? There are all sorts of alternative, interesting and less destructive ways (groundcovers, mosses, low bushes, Swiss lawns etc) of covering a front or back yard. Why not explore a different kind of development more in harmony with nature and less demanding on our natural surroundings? There is money to be made in sustainable development, just as plenty of money is being made in the production of organic (natural?) foods. You get my drift...
- It will be interesting to see if HRM will rise to the challenge...
- Thank you for allowing me a chance express some of my thoughts.
- One thing I forgot to mention that might or might not be in the purview of this process is to examine the many tools we might use to actually restore the ecology of St. Margaret's Bay. One tool that has been proposed is the idea of promoting the "Twin Bays" of St. Margaret's Bay and Mahone Bay as a National Marine Conservation Area. . . . This is a specific initiative I am extremely interested in. Within that, we could also have areas that are Marine Protected Areas or Marine Parks.
- Please include this into the planning process at this stage.

Burning Questions

1. St. Margaret's Bay is not specifically referenced on pages 36 or 37 of the Working Draft of the Regional Plan yet it's HRM's largest watershed. Why wasn't it included? The St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association is undertaking a comprehensive watershed management plan for the Bay. How can we coordinate our efforts with yours in the development of Community Plans?
 - The Working Draft of the Regional Plan is a document for the entire Region that sets a watershed-based planning framework for the future. The Draft points to the importance of maintaining healthy watersheds and signals an intent to conduct watershed studies in conjunction with all subsequent Community Plans. This intent is further detailed on page 151 of the Draft. Policy IM-6 refers to the potential for communities to establish planning strategy boundaries based on watersheds. Further on in the Draft, on pages 173 to 178, is Section 10.2, Public Participation and Communication, that outlines how stakeholder groups, communities and individual citizens throughout the Region will have input in future decision making.
2. Along the shores of St. Margaret's Bay what can we do to maintain the things like older homes, fish stores and wharves that tourists have come to see in our area for years? How can we relieve these property owners of some of the financial burdens associated with maintaining the heritage values of these properties.
 - Preserving the heritage of our coastal communities is a concern for everyone. Although the heritage features of this area are not specifically referenced, policies regarding the need to promote, enhance and protect heritage areas throughout the Region are contained in the Draft. Policy CH-4 (page 126) proposes the development of a detailed Heritage Functional Plan that would include heritage preservation incentives related to tax exemptions, financial incentives, credits and loans. The Heritage Functional Plan could also include non-financial incentives such as heritage awards, building code alternatives and zoning adjustments. Regulatory incentives could include community and neighbourhood design guidelines to encourage the retention of an area's architectural heritage.
3. How can we develop better zoning for culture and heritage protection? What can be done about the NS Heritage Property Act?
 - The Heritage Functional Plan proposed in the Draft Plan could consider heritage district designations and other types of heritage planning that could include heritage zoning. Policy CH-5 (page 127) recommends that HRM encourage the Province to amend the NS Heritage Property Act to enable the Municipality to strengthen some of its heritage protection provisions and to provide better incentives to owners of heritage properties.
4. How else can we protect scenic sites, views and heritage properties?

- In the Draft Plan, Policy CH-4 (pages 127-12) establishes a planning framework for identifying and preserving scenic sites, views and significant cultural landscapes through the proposed adoption of a Cultural Heritage Model to assist in local community planning. The model was developed with assistance from the Heritage Division of the NS Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage. It is an inventory of current information concerning the cultural heritage of the Region that will be built on and enhanced with the help of local knowledge during future community planning exercises. The Draft Plan (pages 128-131) also contains additional policies intended to preserve scenic lookouts, significant views, heritage districts, and archaeological resources.

- 5. With regard to environmental protection is the Draft Regional Plan stronger than, or equal to, the existing Prospect District 4 Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS)?

- In most cases the Draft Plan is equal to the Prospect MPS however environmental policies contained in Sections 2.2.4. ,Riparian Buffers, and 2.2.5 ,Vegetation, (pages 26-28) outline more effective measures to ensure the maintenance of water quality and erosion reduction in areas that will be developed in the future. The relationship between a Community MPS and the Regional MPS is outlined in Section 9.1.3, Secondary Municipal Planning Strategies of the Draft Plan (page 151). In the future, community plans throughout HRM will be reviewed to ensure that they are consistent with the Regional MPS however where a community has adopted more stringent provisions in a Community MPS then those provisions will prevail (Policy IM-6).