



**Draft Regional Plan  
Halifax West Workshop - May 30, 2005  
Halifax West High School  
~ Notes ~**

Discussion Table: Governance & Implementation / Economy

Burning Questions

1. What are the time-lines, policies and procedures for implementation of the Regional Plan?
  - Priority for the update/review of community plans will be based on those areas where growth pressure is the greatest, like for example, the Tantallon and Fall River areas. This will begin once the Regional Plan is adopted.
  - There will also be focus on the Capital District and on business parks in HRM. (Review of the Aerotech Park is already underway.)
  - Capital Cost Contribution (requiring additional funds from a developer to contribute to upgrading truck systems) can be required for “hard services” - sewers, water supply and roads. HRM has requested a change in legislation to add transit services to the Capital Cost contribution requirements.
  - It may be possible to save public expenditures on infrastructure by reducing the need to move people and goods (by having residents closer to where they work and shop).
2. How do we make the process easier?
  - To make the planning process easier, HRM should have an architect on staff to help residents and developers with design issues.
  - Solar energy opportunities including “right to light” requirements, should be considered in developments in HRM.
  - There should be more consideration of solar energy compatible design in the Regional Plan.
3. Who is responsible for the Regional Plan?

- Regional Council ultimately is responsible for approving or amending the Regional Plan.
  - The term “flexibility” needs to be clarified. Can the Regional Plan be changed without input from the public?
  - What will happen if there is a conflict between the Regional Plan policies and the local community plan. The community planning process needs to ensure the character of a neighbourhood is protected and there needs to be more community involvement.
4. How is the Health sector represented on the Regional Planning project to improve health outcomes?
- Ongoing consultation is required.
  - There needs to be a representative from the Capital Health Board on the implementation committee.
  - Health considerations need to be incorporated into design of public and private infrastructure, e.g. accessible sidewalks, recreation facilities to promote healthy lifestyles.
5. Why locate the financial and insurance sector in the Capital District?
- HRM should explore opportunities for the financial and insurance sector in suburban areas to find the right balance between the Capital District and other employment centres.
  - HRM should consider opportunities for satellite university campuses and primary health care facilities outside the Capital District.
6. How will tax reform impact the Regional Plan for business and home owners?
7. What about an aquarium for Halifax?
- Studies to date have indicated there is insufficient population/potential visitors in HRM to support an aquarium. However, a further study will be commission to determine whether another option for an aquarium is feasible.
8. Where are “appropriate” locations for residential development around Halifax Harbour?
- Sites for potential residential development around Halifax Harbour were pointed out.
  - There is an opportunity for future residential development in the Kempt Rd. Area.
9. What are our social attributes and have there been studies to determine them as well as updates to those studies?
- If any studies have been done to determine the attributes that attract people to HRM, these studies

should be updated with current information.

10. New, varied sources of revenue are required for HRM to reduce dependency on property taxes.
- HRM needs to be more creative in its revenue generation.

Discussion Table: Settlement
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### Burning Questions

1. What is the criteria used to distinguish between the designated community centres?
2. Would like to learn more about Rural Commuter Centres and how they relate to sewer and water services - Which ones will be designated for extension of municipal services?
3. Where will new roads be built? (Connector roads between communities)
4. Inherent contradictions in the Plan - Bayers Lake Business Park and Burnside Business Park and future expansions may be defeating the purpose of Mixed Use Centers.
5. Rural Local Commuter Centre, e.g. Hatchet Lake - we can only get 4 lots out of a 47 acre parcel of land that we own. Prospect Road is a tourism attraction in the area and that community shouldn't pay for the entire cost for that stress on roadways that serve a province-wide function.
6. Transit oriented development - how is it addressed in the Plan - how are the policies going to be used to encourage settlement to meet the transit objectives of the Plan.
7. How will this plan affect me as a large landowner in a rural area? (There are people who need/want larger lots - need room for parking large vehicles/ desire to live on a large lot close to the city.)
8. What is the significance of the Community Designation? Where are these designations defined? What is the community going to look like? What types of infrastructure will be provided? What types of densities will be permitted? What environmental restrictions will apply to a designation?

### Discussion

- District Centres - already developed - what about areas that are undergoing a great deal of development right now? The centres are more working around the transit system rather than the other way around. Key element of the plan.
- Why is Bedford identified as a suburban centre? Suburban centres are outside the urban area.
- Facilitator explained that suburban and urban areas are both serviced with sewer and water and that there are only slight differences between them in terms of design.

- How do you identify what these centres are? We don't know what these designations mean.
- Facilitator explained that suburban communities are primarily residential centres. Urban areas like Halifax have higher density and a greater range of land use but the urban and suburban areas are very similar in form.
- What other key priorities are there besides Transit and Environment. One of the main purposes of the plan is to conserve land for your children's children. You have a lot of empty land. Why do you need to save land?
- Facilitator explained that a large scale estate lot subdivision can consume large tracts of land for few people when compared to the more efficient form of land development for in a suburban community like Sackville that accommodates about 25,000 people. If everyone wants to develop on the basis of large lots, the land is consumed much more rapidly.
- Don't you want Halifax to grow? Too much traffic. Also taxes. Also in the country, you have to drive to get your groceries. All that traffic gets tied up. No way that busses can run efficiently in areas like that. Has to be subsidized. Alternatively, people do want to live in rural settings. It all comes down to a balance.
- Population projection is roughly 84,000 if the trend continues. If you have one developer building 5 homes on one septic, that will control the cost of those homes - keep them roughly the same cost. The people who have larger lots areas are going to expect to pay more.
- Don't think that one road (the Peggy's Cove Road) which brings in thousands of tax dollars and leads to a cultural centre - don't think that this road should be penalized - that area has to foot the bill to upkeep the road that is used regionally.
- Facilitator explained the concept of Conservation design.
- If we are going to allow only four lots - we need to be fair - why can the people in Upper Tantallon go ahead, where other areas cannot?
- Facilitator explained that the Tantallon area is an area where HRM is proposing to encourage growth to build on an existing centre. Water is going to be extended to the Upper Tantallon area. There will be an opportunity to have an express bus.
- Prospect - the generations of people are getting older. People don't want to change how they do things at their age. (e.g. taking a bus)
- I've been to several meetings. You haven't yet really answered my questions. The plan will be implemented over the next five years. There will be community visioning that will take place in each individual area?
- Staff (responds to question regarding where are the roads planned). Connecting communities is not a priority. The road connections will be determined via the development of specific subdivision

areas.

- Questions re the 113 - huge elevation - environmental concerns. The salt will drain down. The length has been reduced to 9.9 km to avoid having to do an environmental impact assessment. Concern that governments don't appear to have to meet the requirements that the general public have to meet. Concern regarding development coming in on land designated as to be park. If we're concerned about our next generation, why aren't we doing proper assessments for the big projects like this?
- HRM needs to be stepping up against it. The whole plan is based on where growth should go. If you let the Highway 113 go, you'll... (encourage development - people will build where the roads are built).
- Staff explained that we're currently building an interchange at Highway 118. No one is talking about development of those lands (at Shubie Park). The land around the proposed 113 - a portion is park and the other side is already developed.
- Right now there'll be no new access, but that can change in 10 years.
- Staff explained we have a requirement for the highway. But we could take it off. Council could put it back on in 10 years.
- What about the cost of this road? 9-10 mile road only for traffic? Is that economically feasible?
- Staff - yes - we have many already - the 101, 102, 103, 107, 111 and 118. The interchange will go in one direction only. The TLB one goes on both sides but one is only for access to the waste handling area.
- This doesn't seem very economical. You're not getting taxes from anyone on either side.
- Facilitator- the Province is planning to provide this road. We're planning around it.
- Facilitator brought the group back to the main questions for discussion concerning settlement:
  1. How will the plan affect one as a large landowner in a rural area?
  2. What policies in the plan conspire against the concept of Mixed Use Centres (How do we achieve the mixed use centres when there seem to be contradictions with creation of Business Parks.)

#### Discussion - large land owners in rural areas

- I would like to see planned development - well thought out rather than helter skelter - and presented to the municipality for approval. Some lots should be open space design - don't disagree with that totally, but I think there should be options in there for people to consider what we know now as traditional rural development.

- Maximum of four lots from an area of land on an existing public road - Four conventional large lots per existing area of land with frontage on an existing road. If you want to go beyond that, you can go at a rate of one lot per year on a new public street. Open space design is the other option.
- Four lots - say 3 acres each - then go back to the estate lots and conservation design all at once? Is it possible to run all of those options at the same time?
- Facilitators thought it might be possible to integrate the large as of right lots with a conservation design subdivision if all the conditions were right - the area of land has to be eligible - there are criteria that would need to be met to do the Conservation design.
- If you could integrate some controls for large lots and conservation design to run at the same time, that would be a help. Allow opportunities for individual estate lots to be proposed within the Conservation Design. Could there not be some relief for landowners who have held land for say more than 10 years - they've paid taxes for a long time, but may not have been (or be) ready to develop.
- Page 10 of the booklet states that stakeholders want to be involved, yet there appear to be inconsistencies, because it talks about reducing the area plans. Discussion explaining that there are more than 18 land use by-laws and possibly they might someday be pared down to larger geographic plan areas - fewer documents - but still this would require community input.
- Mix of options for large landowners for conservation design. Larger landowners who have held their lands for many years and who have not had the resources to do something with it - you don't get to do anything with it if you didn't have your application in by a certain date. That's a slap in the face for someone who's paid taxes for the last 20 years.
- Facilitators explained that concept plans submitted prior to January 2004 are grandfathered for a period of 2 years.
- So if I don't complete within 2 years you'd have to develop under the regulations of the day.
- Explanation of final s/d application versus concept approval. Facilitators explained that once a lot is created it can not be de registered.
- Tantallon - I can't in my heart see the fairness. Some people have land that's not in Tantallon. That's not very fair. What about people that owned land say for more than 10 years?
- Is it not about maximizing HRM's dollars? Put them where they can work best? It's an ugly environment for those folks.
- Prospect Road has to be maintained no matter what in order for people to get to Peggy's Cove, so why not let things happen there?
- Building in centres that are already there. The concept is to save money for the HRM taxpayer over the long term. Will my taxes be lower now than Tantallon and Fall River? Want to talk about the big picture for Hatchet Lake and Spryfield.

Question - there was a density table available online - is there a hard copy of that available for people to have?

- Facilitator went over the various densities envisioned for the various centres under the plan. Higher mixed use densities in the centre of each centre near the transit facility with densities gradually tapering off toward the edge of the centres.
- The last Regional Plan Burnside was designated as an Industrial Park. Over time, because it was easier, industry moved to those areas. Other areas like Bayers Lake, became big box - where they were supposed to be industrial. What incentives (would need to provide cash incentives) are being provided to the Mixed Use Centres? Right now, the business parks are draining development from areas like the West End Mall area. One way to keep business there is through restriction in other areas. Same in Bayers Lake. HRM owns the land and is planning to add an overpass to Ragged Lake and an interchange because of the congestion at the 102. Those are things that HRM has control over. The retail would migrate to where the people are. Once you put retail in those areas, it gets sucked out of the mixed use centres like Quinpool Road and West End Mall and into the retail zones in the park.
- Transit - 80 to 100000 people are projected. There need to be strong policies to direct that growth to these transit centres. This plan is starting in this direction, but with only 80 to 100000 people, most of that will have to be directed to the transit centres. All the issues about market demand - There need to be stronger policies to direct development to the transit centres.

### Summary

- Provide options to combine all three possibilities for rural landowners to be able to develop their lands.
- Establish some incentives to prevent the contradiction that seems to exist between Urban Districts and the Business Parks to try to draw development opportunities to the District centres. Right now, the Business Parks seem to be drawing the life out of these centres.
- Need strong policies to support transit-based communities. Given that there is a prediction for 80 to 100000 people, there needs to be strong policy to guide most of this population to the transit centres.

NOTE: Suggestion that there should be some concessions made for long-time landowners who (perhaps 10+years) have paid taxes for a long time, but were not ready to develop at this time.

Discussion Table: Settlement
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What's your burning question about the Regional Plan policies?

- What is your plan for the ownership, maintenance of shared "on site septic fields"?

- Is there a protocol currently in use and where does the Provincial Dept. of Labour & Environment come into picture?
- Protection of neighbourhoods?

#### Example of Open Space/Cluster System Rural S/D Design

- Will existing DOE Regs support this concept?

#### Expansion of Service Boundaries

- Is there a mandate for HRM to do so to allow growth on the fringe with Municipal Services?
- The requirement for hydrogeological studies. Groundwater is hard to predict as it varies from place to place.
- How will the plan guide major development while encouraging local initiatives and neighbourhood character?
- How will the Regional Plan balance environmental interests with development pressures?
- Will plan restrict housing development in Ketch Harbour etc.?
- Future of Portuguese Cove? & Suburbanization?
- How is a centre defined?
- What happens to people not in a centre?
- Is there enough infrastructure to support urban intensification - e.g., Bedford Hwy.?
- How can existing single-unit-dwelling neighbourhoods on the Peninsula be preserved and absorb density?
- How can existing housing in urban areas be preserved (eg., road widening plans)?

#### What did you come here to accomplish?

- To get facts instead of general principles.
- Learn about how the Regional Plan will affect Development.
- Become better acquainted with Regional Plan & contribute my perspectives.

#### What will make you happy you came here?

- Dump the Regional Development Plan and start off with a new direction.
- If our concerns will be considered in revisions to the plan.
- Feel confident that future settlement will respect environment.

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

- Respect others views whether I agree with them or not.
- Continue to have input into the plan, and make changes. I don't think the existing plan as written is in the best interest of the citizens for HRM.

VERBAL PARTICIPATION

Discussion

- It was agreed to distill the many Burning Questions into three underlying issues:
- 1. Urban density and traffic in existing neighbourhoods
- 2. Rural clustered (shared septic/open-space) subdivision
- 3. Rural development between the centres

Issue 1: Urban Density & Existing Neighbourhoods

- considerable backlash on Peninsula Halifax towards conversion of single unit dwellings to apartments and student housing. Many additions are being made which are out of character with existing neighbourhoods. Can you add 17 units to a single family house?! There are loopholes for conversion.
- HRM is playing both ends of the stick. If you can't grow out, you have to grow upwards. Making new development in rural areas more difficult will force more people to live on the Peninsula.
- Don't demolish homes for apartments.
- Development on Quinpool Road and Spring Garden Rd. is too dense and too high.
- But those new people provide a market attracting new stores to Spring Garden Road.
- Is it possible to make homogenous rules and have consistent enforcement?
- There is a need to control volumes of vehicles coming onto the Peninsula. How will the new suburbs affect traffic through your neighbourhood? The Municipality should focus on measures to reduce demand by focusing on alternative transportation modes instead of widening streets. Examples cited

included bus and bicycle lanes.

- Should consider distributing employment centres throughout the region instead of concentrating employment on the Peninsula.
- Change is inevitable. It's how we channel it that matters. We have to find a balance.
- Development is occurring rapidly beyond HRM.
- They demolished single family houses for towers on Tower Road and Wellington.
- Where will the intensification end?!
- If you don't go out, you have to intensify.
- It's change, and most of us don't like change.
- This lifestyle is wearing us out!
- We need a level playing field.
- We need public gathering space.

#### Issue 2: Clustered Subdivisions

- concept generally supported by Nova Scotia Homebuilders Association, but only if HRM establishes proper protocols regarding ownership and maintenance.
- Will HRM have to step in if problems arise?
- If HRM assumes ownership, will residents take care of the systems?
- Will D.O.E. & L accept waster water management districts or ownership by condominium corporations? With condos you don't own the lot itself.
- Another approach is homeowners' associations with a regulation.
- There needs to be a capital reserve fund for eventual rehabilitation or replacement.
- It could be politically impossible to keep HRM from being dragged in.
- What about insurance?
- HRM should do it and have a pot of money from the owners.
- This is a wastewater management district for all the places between the centres.

- This amounts to an area rate.
- There would be demand for smaller lots in a cluster subdivision. It was the failed septic and resulting provincial requirements that made the lots big.
- A septic system has a 15-20 year life.
- There should be a fee if something goes wrong.
- There will be a need to educate residents regarding system maintenance regardless of ownership model.
- Let's think outside the box, to things like recycling and effluent meters.
- Need for top soil by-law to require minimum depth of soil to promote healthy lawns without the need for excessive application of fertilizers.

### Issue 3: Development between Centres

- Will HRM have enough staff to process CDD applications that will result from the plan?
- Development agreements are appealable.
- How will communities such as Herring Cove maintain identity and not become washed over by new development?
- People living between the centres will have no say as to the future of their communities.
- You could have a peripheral toll for vehicles entering the city.
- Public transit is not convenient and will not be used by most. Everyone supports public transit but most are unwilling to use it. They want others out of their cars so they can drive with less traffic.
- There is a lack of sewer/water/transportation service between the centres
- Villages are really linear.
- If you widen Bayers Road you will welcome more cars.
- I'd love to be in an area where you don't have to have a car.
- The draft plan is too restrictive on the use of wind energy.
- Do you believe in density for design?
- It isn't really a case of growing "out or up". Medium density is the answer. Montreal has many

examples. I have no car and live in Montreal.

- How would neighbourhood and community rules help - eg., keep the waterfront open to the public.
- design and quality of development cannot be ignored.
- plan proactively. Lake Michigan is a good example of good public access.
- need to balance change and coherence.
- the Halifax Common is being encroached upon.
- but we should recognize the Common that we have already. It really contributes to the image of Halifax.
- single-family exclusive zoning should still be available.

#### Conclusion - Notes for Presentation

- We have a theme, two dilemmas and a vision.
- **The theme** is “Balance”.
- **Dilemma No. 1:** The rural people are nervous about being left out, but the urban people are nervous of being swamped.
- for the rural areas, shared septic systems are a good idea but we must ensure proper management
- for the urban areas, there is a tension between being inclusive and exclusive. Medium density is seen as part of the answer, but some feel the single family house is under fire.
- **Dilemma No. 2:** The quality of development has been ignored, but we cannot have every project appealed.
- development agreements give discretionary power but are appealable.
- **The vision:** Be pro-active with a vision for what we do want.

Discussion Table: Housing
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#### Burning Questions

1. Is there a plan to protect the Character of HRM? As exemplified by: trees, appropriate scale and

house/lot size ratio, urban design, density, zoning and height

2. How can neighbourhood character be maintained in established neighbourhoods?
3. Will Regional Plan policy limit development and decrease flexibility? (I.e need balance between protecting neighbourhood character and not putting undue restriction on development)
4. Will the Regional Plan encourage well located housing developments for Seniors close to amenities?
5. How will affordable and diverse housing be integrated into each neighbourhood and access to natural/open space be ensured?
6. Should HRM be encouraged to grow without limit? Should HRM encourage growth to occur outside of HRM?
7. Is there a need for a moratorium in established neighbourhoods until the Regional Plan is adopted?

## Discussion

What tools can HRM use to protect community/neighbourhood character and encourage developers to provide diverse, inclusive, affordable housing?

- Authentic and substantive community participation in planning critical
- Incentives for accessible, barrier-free housing, diverse Seniors housing and affordable housing:
  - Infrastructure to encourage preferred settlement pattern and approach: transit stops and service, sewer, water, green space
- Development Standards:
  - Design Guidelines
  - Performance Standards
  - Visual design workshops at the community level
- Targets for affordable housing, housing mix and demographic mix
- Secondary units (permitted after community consultation) to promote affordable housing choices for seniors and young people, first time home buyers
- Increased density, in the right areas, done right (appropriate density and design, suited to particular community)

Discussion Table: Transportation
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## Burning Questions

1. Complaints from tourists about signage.
2. Is this policy (in the MPS) really going to happen or will HRM become a metropolis like Montreal or Toronto?
3. Planning for the Northwest Arm bridge is important.
4. Concerned about transportation in the rural areas. AT and cycling is very dangerous in HRM.
5. Improvement for local traffic with one lane as merge/exit onto Highway 102. Need better partnership with the province.
6. Will Larry Uteck Drive connect to the 102? Why wasn't this included in the plan?
7. How will transit routes be prioritized? For example Hatchett Lake vs. Mooseland.

8. How does the plan impact transit and growth patterns?
9. How will options be encouraged to the Single occupant vehicle?
10. Can we change TPW's decision about the trail underneath Hwy 103?

### Discussion

- Questions were grouped into three areas - Transportation Planning, Transit and AT/Alternative modes of transportation.
  - Transportation Planning - Covered questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5,6, 10
  - Transit - Covered questions 4, 7, 8
  - AT/Alternative Modes of Transportation - Covered questions 4, 9, 10 (trails issues)

### Transportation Planning

- Signage needs to be improved in a variety of areas - such as signage to direct pedestrians and cyclists to trails from the road and identify the trails.
- Tourists have a hard time finding their way around due to poor signage.
- Rotary - will it be improved when the changes are made. There was some skepticism that making the changes would help improve traffic. One suggestion was to leave it as it is, including making no changes to Chebucto Road.
- Could the rail cut be used for commuter rail service.
- 25 years ago, the plan had identified the corridor for the Northwest Arm Bridge from Northwest Arm Drive over the Arm and into the southend. It isn't there anymore. Residents would like to see something in the plan to accommodate traffic. If growth continues in Spryfield will need some type of corridor.
- Would like to see corridor maintained as an option because there is a lot of potential development in the Spryfield area. It is a concern as to how people will move from Spryfield to the downtown areas.
- Residents won't take a ferry across the arm - not an option.
- If development in Spry field is planned, then plan for bridge to be built, even if 100 years away. However, if there is never going to be a bridge, then don't allow growth.
- Some of the land that was reserved has been sold off. Don't sell off any more land - maintain transportation corridor to create bridge. The bridge may be required in the future.
- Why isn't Larry Uteck part of the plan - would help alleviate traffic on Bedford Highway if it was

built to the 102.

- Herring Cove Road Streetscape Study Consultants have talked about putting on-street parking along Herring Cove Road.
- HRM can work with the province and make requests to have changes made to the ramps.

### Transit

- Transit system needs to be improved. Don't want to be on a bus for 1.5 hours to get to work and then the same time home again.
- No connections between places such as Bayers Lake and Mainland South. All routes seem to go downtown first.
- Large park and ride lots need to be developed for transit. More parking is required at transit terminals
- Sambro transit does not go where people want it to.
- Prioritize transit improvements - how, criteria to be used, timelines etc.
- Hatchett's Lake will be much cheaper for express bus service than Tangier.

### AT/Alternative Modes of Transportation

- One resident lives on the peninsula and has noted that there are a lot of people driving alone.
- Can we curb the number of people coming onto the peninsula in single occupant vehicles (SOV) through AT/carpooling/transit
- AT and HOV lanes need to be included in the plan.
- Seems like there is a lot of space on some roads to accommodate HOV lanes.
- How wide will trails be?
- What about lighting along trails.
- Need to encourage other modes of transportation - SOV's are the problem.
- With road widening, can more emphasis be given to High Occupant vehicle (HOV) lanes (on the bridges or Barrington Street)?
- Carpooling/ride matching in HRM? What about taxi carpooling
- Cycling in HRM needs a major project similar to MetroLink. For example, shoulder paving on the Bedford Highway or improvements to the Fairview Overpass.

- AT is in the policy, but there are no specific projects identified in the future.
- Can we (residents) and HRM change TPW's decision on the trail underneath Hwy 103?

Discussion Table: Culture & Heritage
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Burning Questions

1. What tools are available to HRM to ensure that its culture and heritage resources are protected?
- 2.a How can HRM increase its knowledge and awareness of its own culture and heritage resource?
- 2.b How can this awareness then be reflected/represented in the Regional Plan?
3. How can we be absolutely sure that our regionally significant view planes will be protected? (i.e. Citadel Hill, Bedford Basin, Dartmouth, etc.)
4. How can residents be assured that Council, staff and the community members are cooperating and collaborating on the production of the plan?

Discussion

Question 1 - Available tools for protection:

- The group wanted to know what tools the Draft Regional Plan employs that will ensure protection of our culture and heritage assets.
- There is a stronger, more inclusive and more proactive Culture and Heritage policy in the new Regional Plan than has previously existed. Additionally, the Plan calls for amendments to the Nova Scotia Heritage Property Act in order to strengthen such protection. Any development that potentially impacts any culture/heritage resource (i.e. historic structure, archaeological site, view plane, etc.) will undergo a higher level of scrutiny that currently exists. For example, any development coinciding with archaeological assets will be referred to the Province for review under the Special Places Act.
- It was suggested that there should be some kind of an incentive program to encourage developers/property owners to embrace, protect and celebrate these resources. Incentives could include tax breaks, grants, rebates, an awards program, etc.
- The Draft Regional Plan contains a number of incentives for the protection of these assets. Financial incentives include: grants, tax exemptions, credits and loans. Non-financial incentives include: permit fast-tracking, complementary public works, permit fee reductions or waivers, building code alternatives, plaques and recognition awards, zoning adjust, density bonuses, variances. Regulatory incentives include: conservation easements, heritage district designations, heritage plans, sub-area

plans, urban design standards, and community design guidelines.

- The question was asked: Who makes heritage designations (city? Province?) And how are the decisions made?
- HRM has its own ranking system for identifying heritage buildings in which point values are assigned for the various characteristics of a candidate structure (age, location, valued architectural features, noteworthy historic residents, noteworthy builder/architect, etc.).
- The group wanted to know what, beyond individual historic structures, is included in the definition of Culture and Heritage Assets.
- Under the heading of Culture and Heritage, the new Regional Plan discusses not only single buildings/structures, but also entire districts, streetscapes, corridors and “cultural landscapes.” This can include entire districts of architecturally significant structures, view planes, cemeteries, public art, archaeological sites, and so on.
- Concern was expressed that in both the “Culture and Heritage” map and the “Archaeological Resources” there were important omissions. For example, the granite that was quarried from what is now Quarry Lake was used to build Halifax - yet the quarry does not appear on the Culture/Heritage mapping.
- The Culture and Heritage map in the Draft Regional Plan was a technical exercise based only upon currently documented resources (i.e. the map is only as good as the available data). The Regional Plan will rely on residents to help fill in the missing pieces, which highlights the great importance of the neighbourhood planning process in documenting the bountiful local knowledge.

#### Question 1 Summary:

- Stronger Culture and Heritage policy at the Regional Plan level should be backed up by the community planning process, wherein the important undocumented local knowledge will be revealed.

#### Question 2a - Increase awareness of assets:

- The statement was made that education is the basis for the entire Culture and Heritage plan. If no one knows what exists then the importance of the assets is irrelevant. “Activism follows awareness!” was the meaningful message that was heard.
- Greater awareness of these assets will be accomplished through the Community Planning process, wherein culture and heritage issues will be discussed in the libraries and gymnasiums of individual communities.
- It was stated that the Regional Plan must document and reflect the fragile body of local history/knowledge (often an oral) of cultural and heritage assets so it is not forgotten. The group emphasized that the only way to make an accurate record of existing culture and heritage assets

(and with enough detail) is to get out into the communities and hear about them from the residents.

- A community-based approach to identifying cultural and heritage assets is needed wherein local memory and history will be cultivated and the results incorporated into the Regional Plan. Further, after the Regional Plan is adopted, the secondary process of community planning will be undertaken, which will provide a great opportunity for this local knowledge to be shared. In this way the community planning process will add to the data set on Cultural and Heritage resources.
- The suggestion was made for HRM to embark upon a program of erecting place markers with story boards (similar to Boston, for example) at historically/culturally significant locations throughout HRM.
- There is a “Markers and Monuments” program under the Department of Recreation, Tourism and Culture that draws attention to various significant locations. This is a fledgling program could be expanded. Specific proposals will be sought as part of the Community Planning process.

Suggestion:

- For each annotation on a Regional Plan map that indicates a culture and heritage or archaeological resource, there should be a document/study available to the public about that particular asset.

Suggestion:

- The Regional Plan maps are available on-line which is good, but they are limited in their interactivity. While recognizing the labour involved, would it not be possible to include on-screen pop-up meta-data concerning each asset notation?
- This suggestion will be passed on to the web-based mapping group.

Comment:

- Cemeteries are a vital part of HRM’s history. HRM needs to work with the Province to ensure their protection. To this end, the Regional Plan discusses the creation of a cemetery inventory.

Comment:

- HRM currently has a Culture Plan underway that calls for community-based committees to aid in defining various cultural resources and goals.

### Question 2b - Incorporate knowledge into Plan:

#### Statement:

- The work described in 2a) above should be codified into the Regional Plan
- The regional Planners will be taking all public input into account and making sure the final Plan reflects it. In the case of this cultural and heritage discussion, many of the suggestions are already in place in some form or another, but they will be enhanced to better reflect the points raised at the public workshops.

#### Statement:

- The Plan should clearly tell the average person how culture and heritage planning, and the protection of culture and heritage assets, will benefit them directly (i.e. what are we trying to protect, and why?).
- The process of Community Planning that will follow the adoption of the Regional Plan will attempt to meet this need. This process will bring the relevant portions of the Plan to residents, whereas during the current Regional Plan process, interested residents are hearing and commenting upon a much broader version of the plan.

#### Statement:

- HRM needs to do more to heighten the profile of culture and heritage in the Regional Plan as it is a key piece (similar to natural environment) in defining community identity.

### Question 2 Summary:

- Activism follows knowledge, so we first have to identify our Cultural and Heritage assets, and then explain clearly how their preservation will benefit each of us

### Question 3 - Protection of Regionally Significant view planes:

- The group wanted to know how residents can be absolutely certain that our regionally significant view planes will be protected. (i.e., Citadel Hill, Bedford Basin, Dartmouth, etc.) There is great concern, for example, that property on the basin side of the Bedford Highway will be developed, perhaps by-right, with inappropriate multi-story structures that will impact the views of the basin from the roadway and from adjacent properties. What is HRM doing to protect other views?
- The Regional Plan discusses the Council's role in protecting regionally significant view planes, and it suggests that view plane protection must be expanded throughout the region. Also, the Community Planning process will provide residents the opportunity to discuss the addition of new view planes or the bolstering of existing view planes. For example, The Capital District Urban Design Plan, about to get underway, will be addressing the issue of view planes within the Capital District. View plane treatment in this study will be a model for other areas to follow.

- The group wanted to know whether HRM has the authority to control development on provincial or federal lands, as such development could negatively impact view planes.
- No, the HRM has no jurisdiction over such lands. Federal and provincial lands can be developed without mandatory Regional Plan oversight.

Suggestion:

- The creation of a Capital Commission (perhaps similar to Ottawa's National Capital Commission) would help to rationalize the multi-jurisdictional nature of much of the land within HRM, and would promote co-operation between the three levels of government. Such a Commission would be instrumental in ensuring that federal and provincial development did not violate the spirit of the Regional Plan.

Question:

- The group wanted to understand the process by which a culture and heritage resource, such as a view plane, is determined to be of regional or community significance.

Question 3 Summary:

- Participants wondered what criteria is used to determine whether a cultural and heritage resource, such as a view plane, is of regional or local significance, and the participants also emphasized the importance of strong leadership and advocacy in the development review process.

Question 4 - Cooperation and collaboration:

- The group was concerned that at times it has appeared that staff and Council have been at loggerheads over some Regional Plan issues, and that perhaps the community's interests could be overlooked. How can the public be sure that Council, staff and the communities are all cooperating and collaborating on the production of the Regional Plan?
- It was observed that we will know the process is working if the ideas we discussed tonight make their way into the final Regional Plan.

Statement:

- Transparency in the Planning process and in the Development Approval processes is absolutely essential. HRM needs strong and capable leadership to oversee development applications toward protecting residents interests.

Question 4 Summary:

- The comment that best summed up the groups feelings on the idea of cooperation and collaborations was, "Just do it!"



### Other Discussion:

- How about an HRM-wide tree by-law that requires that every tree cut down by a developer must be replaced with a new tree.
- Does the Regional Plan's Culture and Heritage section discuss the contribution of Mi'kmaq and black settlers within HRM?
- Who controls/oversees/approves the issue of harbour filling? The answer is that the oversight is complex and multi-jurisdictional, involving all three levels of government. There is an active Harbour Steering Committee that deals with these issues.
- How can we protect view planes from on-site and off-site bonusing?

Discussion Table: Environment
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### Burning Questions

1. Parks like the Mainland Common need to have protection from land uses that are not in keeping with typical park uses. A park should be a park. How will the Draft Regional Plan protect our parks?
  - The Draft Regional Plan has outlined the many types of open space in HRM and has classified a range of parks that include: neighbourhood, district, community and regional parks. Each type of park serves a different need and population. The Draft Plan identifies the primary purposes of parks. These purposes include recreation activities and preservation of the natural environment. For regional parks, activities such as environmentally sustainable forestry are permitted, providing they do not undermine the environmental integrity of the park.

### Comments

- Parks should be reserved for recreational activities and preservation of the natural environment. Other uses should not be permitted.
2. How do we keep local parks open for unstructured play activities? Local parks need to be retained for general use. What will the Draft Regional Plan do to protect local parks from specialized uses (e.g. horseshoe pits) that only serve a small segment of the population and restrict other users from the enjoyment of their local park?
    - Although the Draft Regional Plan establishes guidelines related to the size, siting and general purpose of local parks it does not specifically include plans for all local parks in HRM. However, the Draft Regional Plan does propose an Open Space Functional Plan that will address park needs at a local scale. In addition, the Draft Plan also proposes that Community Plans establish a community visioning process where park uses will be considered.

### Comments

- Our children need neighbourhood parks where they can experience open and unstructured play activities.
- 3. The policy for the 20 metre setback from watercourses in the Draft Regional Plan allows for the removal of trees in order to provide watercourse views for landowners. This shouldn't be allowed. Why does the Draft Plan allow for tree removals?
- The proposed policy seeks to balance the desires of property owners for water views with the need to retain vegetation to preserve water quality and habitats for fish and other wildlife.

### Comments

- If people want to enjoy water views they should leave their homes and take a walk to the shore.
- This policy can't be enforced. People will remove trees after development.
- The Draft Plan needs to focus more on stewardship and public education about the value of protecting our watercourses.
- HRM should enforce this policy through fines and by-law enforcement officers.
- 4. Why was a standard 20 metre setback from watercourses chosen when science shows that buffers based on ecological science often exceeds this standard?
- The standard was adopted from studies commissioned by HRM that recommended that the Municipality consider using standards similar to those approved by the Province for forestry practices. The standards are considered to be defensible because they are sanctioned by the Province. In addition the proposed standards can be extended from 20 metres based on local soil and slope conditions. Also, community plans conducted after the Regional Plan can, with community consensus, adopt more stringent standards based on local needs.

### Comments

- Climate change has resulted in frequent and severe weather events that include high winds. The proposed 20 metre vegetated buffer from watercourses will not be sufficient to prevent the blow down of trees. The buffer will therefore be ineffective in the protection of watercourses.
- 5. How will the Draft Regional Plan ensure that HRM works cooperatively with the NS Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to protect wildlife habitat? Species such as the Mainland Moose are threatened with extinction on the Chebucto Peninsula.
- The Draft Regional Plan makes specific mention of the need to protect the habitats of endangered species. It includes habitat maps and seeks to avoid development in these areas. The Draft Plan also includes policies concerning the need for more cooperative management and planning activities

with senior government agencies with jurisdiction concerning the protection of wildlife habitat. Although HRM has no jurisdiction concerning the protection of wildlife habitat the Draft Plan points to the need for all levels of government to engage in habitat protection.

#### Comments

- The Chebucto Peninsula wildlife corridors in the Draft Plan point north to south. There are corridors that likely travel in other directions. More work needs to be done to identify these corridors.
- 6. When will the Western Commons Stewardship Committee be established and what will the terms of reference be for that committee?
- The Draft Regional Plan does not contain specific policies concerning management of this area however, the Draft Plan does include it as one of five new proposed regional parks. The Draft Plan also includes policies concerning an Open Space Functional Plan that would address detailed planning issues related to this area. If the policies related to the Open Space Functional Plan contained in the Draft Regional Plan are approved by HRM Council then it is likely that the committee could be formed.

#### Comments

- This committee has been proposed for many years and there has been no action to create this group. The concept plan for the Western Common was adopted by HRM Council several years ago.
- 7. Is the Regional Plan strong enough to protect and enhance public access to watercourses, especially the ocean?
- Less than 2% of Nova Scotia's ocean coastlines are in public ownership. In addition, the cost of coastal properties is constantly rising. The Draft Regional Plan proposes closer cooperation with senior levels of government to achieve many of its objectives. One of the objectives identified in the Plan is the retention of citizen water access. The proposed HRM Subdivision By-law also contains provisions related to requirements for water access for parkland dedications arising from subdivision.

#### Comments

- There are many areas of HRM where water access has been lost due to development. This situation should not be allowed to continue.
- 8. How will HRM protect and enhance its parks?
- The Draft Regional Plan sets general guidelines for the protection and enhancement of parks. Detailed planning concerning parks in HRM will be contained in the Draft Plan's proposed Open Space Functional Plan. This plan will consider the number of parks in HRM, their functions, costs

and needs in order to provide adequate services for the active and passive recreational needs of HRM citizens. Community Plans will also consider the need for local level parks.

#### Comments

- You should consider the needs of future generations, not just those of us who are presently using the parks.
  - Island developments have been ignored by HRM. In St. Margarets Bay a subdivision on Troop Island resulted in no parkland being dedicated. HRM took a cash in lieu of settlement instead of accepting parkland. Local citizens need to be involved in these decisions.
9. What measures will be put in place through the Draft Regional Plan to ensure that the natural environment is protected and that there is compliance with these requirements?
- The Draft Regional Plan contains many policies concerning the protection of the natural environment. The Draft Plan includes provisions for the retention of vegetated watercourse buffers and for new subdivisions, requirements for native vegetation to be preserved.

#### Comments

- A key element of the Draft Plan should be to increase manpower for enforcement and timely responses to infractions.
  - Stewardship and public education needs to be emphasized.
  - Tax benefits through provincial assessments should be considered for citizens donating land for environmental preservation.
10. How will HRM convince developers to respect the natural environment during development?
- The Draft Regional Plan contains provisions for the protection of watercourses and native vegetation during development.

#### Comments

- Enforcement will be necessary to ensure that these policies are maintained.
10. What will the improvements be to playgrounds and equipment? How will communities be involved in decisions concerning parks?
- The Draft Regional Plan proposes that parkland dedications from the development of new subdivisions be increased from 5% of the total area of the subdivision to 10%. This measure will allow for a greater amount of open space to be retained in new developments. In addition, the Draft Plan proposes an Open Space Functional Plan that will survey all existing parks in HRM to determine improvements necessary for park amenities. Also, the community planning processes

recommended by the Draft Plan would address parkland needs at a community level with provisions for community stakeholder committees.

### Comments

- There should be better cooperation between HRM and the School Board when new schools are constructed. It's important that playgrounds and parks be included then.

Discussion Table: Environment
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### Burning Questions

1. What does “regional park” mean and how will regional parks be designated and zoned (and integrated with other levels of government)?
2. How will the regional plan address the wildlife remaining in HRM and address issues of health and safety for both the wildlife and the residents?
3. How will staffing policies be adjusted to meet the needs of a growing population and the necessary maintenance and enhancement of parkland areas to accommodate this growth?
4. When will residents see concrete results from the regional plan?
5. The regional plan establishes an underlying principle, natural areas will be a priority. How will the regional plan address conflicts such as transportation corridors through these natural areas?
6. The regional plan must contain appropriate development policies with environment as the number one priority.
7. How will the regional plan address urban sprawl? (and specifically, on islands?)
8. How will water quality monitoring objectives be achieved and inter-municipal cooperation, in this regard, achieved?
9. What will be the role of the existing municipal planning strategies, the process for their review, and the time line for these reviews? (As a specific example, what happens with the Halifax Parkland Strategy?)

### Discussion

- The regional plan would serve to reinforce the habitat value of the Birch Cove Lakes/Blue Mountain area and protect it through special designation and zoning. Where privately owned lands are contained within the proposed regional park areas, the province and HRM would work with land owners to realize this objective. Protection as a regional park, as defined under the proposed

plan, would provide greater protection for threatened species and valued natural areas. During discussion of the proposed Blue Mountain/Birch Cove Lakes Regional Park, it was suggested by HRM staff that the park could 'co-exist'.

- The Draft Regional Plan makes specific mention of the need to protect the habitats of endangered species. It includes habitat maps and seeks to avoid development in these areas. The draft plan also includes policies concerning the need for more cooperative management and planning activities with senior government agencies with jurisdiction concerning the protection of wildlife habitat. Although HRM has no jurisdiction concerning the protection of wildlife habitat the draft plan points to the need for all levels of government to engage in habitat protection.
- HRM has limited municipal jurisdiction for the protection of natural areas such as forests and watercourses but it does have responsibilities with regard to land use and development. The Province is responsible for most of Nova Scotia's environmental protection although it shares jurisdiction with the Government of Canada for coastal areas and fish habitat protection. Policies contained in Chapter 2: Environment deal with environmental protection issues such as watercourse setbacks, vegetation retention, and erosion controls that the municipality can require during and after new developments. Policies contained in Chapter 10: Governance call for greater levels of intergovernmental cooperation to establish new mechanisms and agreements regarding environmental protection. HRM does not have any direct jurisdiction regarding provincial responsibilities concerning the protection of wildlife habitat but HRM will seek to cooperate with the Province to protect wildlife. In addition, the Draft Regional Land Use By-law recognizes territories such as provincial Wilderness Areas with municipal zoning that corresponds to the habitat protection intent of Nova Scotia's Wilderness Protection Act.
- Residents and wildlife come into conflict with one another as development moves further into wilderness areas and areas home to bears, deer, etc. Animals are drawn to the odors of garbage, barbecues, etc. and can become a nuisance to residents. Their interaction with people often leads to their demise. The open space subdivision concept for rural subdivision offers an approach where some level of land development outside the urban areas may still occur, but such development is contained on a smaller footprint and away from highly sensitive and valued natural areas. By retaining a minimum of 70% of the land parcel as undisturbed area, and in combination with other large tracts of open space, it is possible greater areas of wilderness will be available for natural processes.
- The Draft Regional Plan proposes that parkland dedications from the development of new subdivisions be increased from 5% of the total area of the subdivision to 10%. This measure will allow for a greater amount of open space to be retained in new developments. The draft plan also proposes an Open Space Functional Plan that will survey all existing parks in HRM to determine improvements necessary for park amenities. The community planning processes recommended would address parkland needs at a community level with provisions for community stakeholder committees.
- Ensuring HRM has sufficient staffing resources will be essential to the implementation of the regional plan in terms of creating the functional plan and managing an appropriate public consultation program to deliver this functional plan. The regional plan will provide the basis for the HRM

budgeting process in terms of delivering on the actions contained in the plan. The budgeting process will deal with staffing resources and the maintenance and enhancement of park land and open space areas. (Maintaining what we have now seems to be a real challenge for HRM, never mind what we may have in 10 years - hence the question)

- The Generalized Future Land Use Map contains an Open Space and Natural Resource Designation that applies mainly to the publicly owned lands and provides for an interconnected system of open space. Use of land within this designation would be limited to the traditional resource industries (agriculture, forestry and mining) and protective zoning will be placed on regional parks, wilderness and conservation areas that are to be preserved and used in their natural state, such as Birch Cove Lakes and Blue Mountain.
- The Draft Regional Plan establishes a good balance between development, environmental protection and the preservation of open space. In 2003/04 Regional planning staff conducted a review of the environmental assets of the Region and consulted with a variety of stakeholder groups. Draft Regional Plan maps such as the Generalized Future Land Use Map (Map #2) show an extensive network of interconnected open space. Other maps ( #3,#4, and #5) depict the Region's parks, trails, natural corridors and significant habitats. Regional planning staff conducted environmental research first before identifying future settlement areas. The Draft Regional Plan proposes new protective measures for watercourses and wetlands and greater cooperative efforts with senior levels of government with environmental protection mandates. With all three levels of government working together there would be more opportunities to pursue integrated management approaches to protecting our environmental assets.
- The Regional Plan doesn't anticipate "packing" people anywhere. It's a question of regaining a balance between settlement and open space. Presently the average size of our homes and lots are 400% larger than they were in the 1960s. Combine that with smaller families and it translates into a much greater impact on the land. The draft Plan supports a range of housing types from low density up to high density with many choices in between. People are happiest when they have chosen to live in a place that fits their lifestyle. Regardless of the density of new or existing settlement areas, green spaces are a priority in the Draft Plan.
- Policies in the draft plan deal with water quality monitoring, the naturalization of channelized watercourses and the protection of wetlands to ensure their habitat, water filtering, and storm water retention values are maintained. Although the new watercourse setback provisions will only affect new developments, residents should see improvements in lake water arising from the proposed activities of the Plan's proposed Storm Water Management Functional Plan. The Plan also supports community education and stewardship for water quality protection.
- The Draft Plan recommends the development of a Storm water Management Functional Plan to ensure that storm water discharges are not harmful to the environment. With the assistance of Environment Canada, impervious surfaces in HRM's watersheds were mapped using satellite imagery. Scientific research indicates that when the area of impervious surfaces (roads, buildings, parking lots) exceed 10% of the total area of a watershed significant declines in water quality become evident. This research will be used in future watershed studies. Policy of the draft plan fosters stewardship with a proposed public education program concerning the harmful effects of

unauthorized materials discharged into storm water and sanitary sewers.

- 0 The 20 metre standard for watercourse protection was adopted from the Water Resource Management Study commissioned by HRM. The study recommended the Municipality consider using standards similar to those approved by the Province for forestry practices. The standards are considered to be defensible because they are sanctioned by the Province. In addition the proposed standards can be extended from 20 meters based on local soil and slope conditions. Also, community plans conducted after the Regional Plan can, with community consensus, adopt more stringent standards based on local needs.
- A program and time line to undertake community visioning and community planning, and to update and review existing municipal planning strategies, will be outlined in the regional plan before it goes to Council. This process will begin once the Regional Plan is adopted. In many instances, the objectives of existing MPS', where they are consistent with the regional plan, will be strengthened by regional policies. Priority for the update and review of community plans will be based on those areas where growth pressure is the greatest, such as the Tantallon and Fall River areas.
  - The Halifax Parkland Strategy remains an important piece of information to be considered as a part of the process to create the Open Space Functional Plan.
  - Environment is an over-arching theme which needs to be captured in all things - Cultural, Economic, Housing, etc. For example, design elements that encourage walking in a safe, environmentally pleasing and friendly site, be it housing or shopping or school or all three close at hand! This will give a value added feature to both settlement and commercial developments. These elements need to be integrated in all future development without question - in other words 5 or 10% green space is not what we want in an isolated corner of the development - it is needed throughout the development so that all users are respective and aware of this positive effort - it is part of our culture. Trees need to be saved on all lots - none of this clear-cutting and plant one tree/lot on the HRM fringes.
  - A 'MATRIX' or "interaction table" was mentioned. A series of linked or overlapping themes could incorporate preservation of the environment at the core and give top status to its importance to all planning initiatives - "influence on"(across the top of the matrix); "influence of" (down the left column of the matrix).
  - < Business Parks were mentioned. There needs to be a new thinking about this aspect of the economy. Currently they are all 'car' focussed and do not serve the walking or public transportation user. This needs to change, and the environment features in this, strongly. Linear parks, natural corridors or pathways and/or sidewalks encourage active transportation. Remediation of lost habitat or native species - trees, shrubs - will create a more culturally acceptable environment - Bayers Lake could be a model for this improvement. People will end up staying longer and spending more money while enjoying a positive experience at picnic tables, pathways, etc. Currently, they are always in a rush to leave!

#### Other questions and comments

1. What did you come here tonight to accomplish?
  - to learn more about the plan as related to natural areas policies and if we can really make a difference.
  - to become better informed.
  - to learn more about how the plan will incorporate new and existing trails.
  - to meet people with similar interests.
  - to support the HRM regional plan and learn how to lobby for the preservation of parks and natural corridors.
  - to try and get a sense of HRM's will to do what the plan suggests.
  - to catch up with the process and see where I might contribute.
  - to gather awareness on the regional plan and its impact on residents.
  - to understand how regional parks will protect the environment
  - to understand what a "regional park" zone means.
  - to understand the weaknesses/strengths of a regional park land use zone
  - to understand how regional park policies will be integrated with provincial levels
  - hope to assist in molding a plan that protects the environment without undue regulation of human activity.
2. What will make you happy you came here this evening?
  - my questions addressed
  - go away knowing that the regional parks are a "go" without highways criss-crossing them, i.e. Highway 113 through Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Regional Park - public consultation open and transparent re whether or not there is a need for this road!
  - good discussion, new ideas, resolution
  - the natural environment, i.e. parks and corridors remain a priority and survive competing interests
  - three hours of fruitful discussion and excellent input from HRM
  - if I can participate and gather an understanding of the principles of the regional plan and how it will

be implemented

- assurances a regional park designation will result in “real” protection for the landscape
- assurances the Birch Cove Lakes Regional Park will be established and will be large enough to protect the wilderness
- -assurances conflicts between transportation policies and regional park strategies will be treated openly and fairly
- to see our community’s views reflected in the final regional plan as enacted

3. What can you do to ensure this workshop is a success?
- participate
  - we create some goals that are realistic and immediate
  - that highway 113 is taken off the map - this highway is only relevant to bypass the city - we want to focus on building roads that help with city traffic, i.e. service roads alongside major areas
  - participate and give feedback to other members of the public who maybe could not attend or have specific interests
  - participate
  - issues brought up by the participants are looked at and addressed as appropriate
  - listen, think, participate
  - participate where I can add value