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MEMORANDUM

TO: Fred Morley, Chair and Members of Community Design Advisory Committee
FROM: Bob Bjerke, Director and Chief Planner, Planning & Development
DATE: March 24, 2017
SUBJECT: Centre Plan Adoption Path

The Centre Plan creates a blueprint for growth in the Regional Centre; directing high-quality development to areas where it can best be accommodated and providing enhanced protection for established neighbourhoods. The goal of the Centre Plan is to create complete communities that meet the needs of a diverse population while accommodating growth in a strategic manner.

The Centre Plan document is the direct result of feedback received through a significant public engagement program, input and guidance from the Community Design Advisory Committee and Regional Council, and a strong commitment by the Planning and Development team to modernize development rules that reflect the vision citizens have for their communities. A more detailed overview of the process can be found in Section 1.2 of the Centre Plan.

Arriving at this milestone of the Centre Plan project is a shared achievement; we thank you for the hours you have invested as volunteer citizens on behalf of HRM and Regional Council to help us build better communities. You have provided important guidance in the development of the Centre Plan.

Where We Are Today

As we discussed at our last CDAC meeting, the Centre Plan team undertook in-depth and thoughtful analysis of feedback received during each phase of the public engagement to make the Plan stronger. After the fall 2016 release of the Draft Centre Plan, improvements to the following policy directions and themes were incorporated to respond to what the community said was most important to them:

- Stronger protection for residential neighbourhoods, complete communities & heritage
- Design requirements to minimize impact of new development on existing communities
- Regulations to ensure balanced distribution of housing and population density
- Priority for pedestrians
- Access to parks & public amenities
- Affordable housing
- Stronger requirements for sustainable design & building practices
- Regulations that will enable a strong economy

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In charting a path for growth, the Centre Plan will deliver direction for businesses, developers, organizations, community groups and residents regarding the future of the Regional Centre. Regional Council and municipal staff will use the Centre Plan as a tool guiding corporate and cross-departmental decision-making surrounding planning, potential investments in capital projects and municipal initiatives.

CDAC's Next Steps

The Centre Plan document will now be reviewed by CDAC, the Community Planning & Economic Development Standing Committee (CPED), and Regional Council. If the Centre Plan direction is authorized by Regional Council, staff will proceed with formal implementation by finalizing detailed policy and land use regulation for council to consider adopting through a future public hearing process.

In order to provide the Committee with sufficient time to establish their recommendation, we are scheduling two meetings with CDAC. In addition to the regularly scheduled March 29th meeting, we will follow this with a meeting on April 10th. During our first meeting, the focus will be a presentation explaining the core improvements to the Centre Plan, the steps required for implementation, and CDACs role in providing a recommendation to CPED. Following this, staff will provide the committee with a formal staff report which they will use to establish their recommendation to CPED, during the April 10th meeting.

Moving Forward

It has been expressed by citizens and the committee alike that it is important to establish our shared commitment to the ideas contained in the Centre Plan document. At the same time, it is not possible to implement the land use components of the plan in full without finalizing the land use regulations. Staff has evaluated a series of options and decided that the best way forward is an incremental adoption path.

Our first step in this adoption path will be to authorize the direction contained in the Centre Plan. This is similar to authorizing the document as a strategic plan guiding the remainder of the work program. Following this, a series of packages will come forward for formal adoption to CPED and Regional Council, and will include a public engagement component and a public hearing. Attached is a high level outline of the remaining process required for formal implementation of the land use policies and regulations in the Regional Centre. We will review this in more detail next week.

This adoption path will allow us to move more expediently to create policy and regulations in the areas facing the greatest development opportunity. This will allow us to enable development that aligns with the Centre Plan, and provide confidence that we will finalize the policy and regulations for the core strategic growth areas contained within the plan.

We look forward to meeting with you next week.

Bob