

**Excerpt from the Sept. 18, 2013 Staff Report
Re: Proposed Revisions to the Regional Plan**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On October 4, 2011, Regional Council initiated the first review of HRM's 25-year Regional Plan (the RP+5 Project). This report provides an overview of the RP+5 Project and the proposed changes to the Regional Plan, which through this process has been developed into a more concise document.

HRM's Regional Plan was adopted in 2006. It outlines a framework of how HRM is to grow, establishes policies that enable regulations that are of regional significance, and policies and directions concerning matters in the areas of housing, transportation, the environment, the economy, the Regional Centre, culture, heritage, and governance. The RP+5 Project has strengthened the main concepts and components of the original Regional Plan. The main changes are highlighted in the discussion section of the report and generally include:

- The concept of greenbelting is introduced and a commitment is made to undertake a Greenbelting and Public Open Space Priorities Plan;
- A new policy provision is made to allow Community Councils to establish land use by-law regulations needed to protect water within a watershed or ground water supply area where a public water supply has been established or is proposed;
- Policy provision is made for Council to consider a new by-law to protect trees within riparian buffers;
- Growth targets have been re-worded and the consideration of the growth targets and the need for additional lands have been added as criterion for Council to consider when requests are received to amend the service boundary and to initiate secondary planning for new serviced growth centres;
- Provision is made to consider additional serviced lands at the north end of Morris Lake and in Eastern Passage to compensate for the development potential lost due to the Shearwater air base being reacquired by the Canadian Armed Forces, conditional upon the connector road from Mount Hope Avenue to Caldwell Road being constructed;
- Sheet Harbour, Middle Musquodoboit, Hatchet Lake, Hubley, Sambro, Indian Harbour, Waverley, White's Lake, Jeddore, North Preston, Eastern Passage and Cherry Brook have been reclassified from Rural Growth Centres to Rural Centres not Identified for Growth;
- Food security, mobility needs, supporting aging in place, establishing interconnected greenbelts and open spaces, are identified as matters to be considered when preparing secondary planning strategies for growth centres;

- A new policy has been added that, when reviewing secondary planning strategies for rural areas, consideration is to be given to limiting the scale or retail development allowed outside of designated rural centres;
- The sub-section “Open Space Design Developments” in the current plan has been replaced with “Conservation Design Developments” and new criterion for approval of development agreements have been established;
- Boundaries of the Rural Growth Centres where greater opportunity is made for Conservation Design Developments have been established;
- The 2010 Parks Canada Standards & Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada has been recommended for guidance under the Heritage Property By-Law, the Downtown Halifax Plan, the Barrington Street Conservation District and future conservation districts;
- A commitment is made to undertake a Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan;
- An Urban Service Transit Boundary has been established which identifies where HRM will direct future investment in public transit services, with the exception of rural commuter express services. Council may also consider programs to encourage and assist developing community based transit services;
- The transfer of municipal wastewater and stormwater services from HRM to Halifax Water is reflected in Chapter 8 and the implications for governance and regulatory approvals;
- The policies pertaining to Council approval of service boundary extensions or growth related secondary planning strategies, have been amended to reflect the approval requirements for water, wastewater and stormwater services;
- A new requirement is made under the Regional Subdivision By-Law for a hydrogeological assessment of adequacy of water supply for all subdivision applications in which ten or more new dwelling units would be serviced by wells;
- A new requirement is made under the Regional Subdivision By-Law for underground placement of electrical and communication distribution lines from the poles to the street right-of-way, for all subdivisions where new streets are proposed;
- The Community visioning program has been incorporated into future secondary planning processes; and
- Completed Functional Plans have been recognized and commitment to complete a number of functional plans has been transferred to secondary planning and other programs. A commitment to undertake several new priorities plans is also included.