

Request for Regional Council Consideration

X **Agenda Item** **Added Item** **Request from the Floor**
(Notice of Motion given
December 13, 2022)

Date of Meeting: December 13, 2022

Subject: Planning and Development Timelines, Processes, and KPI reporting

Motion for Council to Consider

TAKE NOTICE that, at a future meeting of Halifax Regional Council, I intend to move that Halifax Regional Council directs the Chief Administrative Officer to provide a staff report to:

1. Outlining current timeframes and recommendations for establishing KPIs and target timeframes for the various application and permitting processes within the Planning and Development business unit;
2. Require staff to prepare a twice-yearly report on these KPIs;
3. Prepare a list of potential Charter changes that would speed up the various permitting and approval processes for Council's consideration, and;
4. Return with a report within 120 days and include options for service delivery improvements along with any additional resourcing and legislative supports.

Reason:

The November 8th 2022 address by Minister Lohr to Regional Council served to underline how very important it is that the Province and the Municipality do not make important planning decisions based on false and incomplete information.

While HRM continues to work to increase the speed of development permit approvals without undermining the Regional Plan, there is a persistent concern in the construction industry regarding speed of issuing building permits.

Moving to by right and site plan approvals in the Downtown Plan and Regional Centre plan will result in faster building permit approvals, assuming adequate resourcing internally, and timely participation by external reviewers.

The intent of this motion is to ensure public data on both development and building permit processes, and propose benchmarks and timelines be adopted. By establishing clear, reported service standards, Council, the development industry and the public will be able gauge the effectiveness of current processes and procedures. Projects that are delayed beyond accepted timelines can be identified and reasons understood.

The report should propose to establish goals for average and maximum acceptable timelines regarding planning and permitting processes in various categories of a development permit, building permit, review of pre-application and completed application site plan approval applications, and plan amendment and major and minor rezoning.

By establishing various acceptable outcomes for these timelines, staff may make recommendations to approve, reject, or defer an MPS amendment request to a major plan review process, or to establish an acceptable timeline for a major or complex project outside of normal parameters. An alternative

timeline may be provided reflecting constraints and unique conditions, and then staff would report on progress achieving this alternative.

In addition, the report should make recommendations on staffing the process. The development industry has identified the lack of a designate municipal staffer will be designated as the lead reviewer, clarify the scope of Development Agreement review in terms of applicable policy in the LUB and RMPS and SMPS, ensuring development team reviewers' contact info are available on the website and in the review documents, and recommending options to manage staff changes (long-term leave, transfers, retirements) such that they will not impact Council-approved timelines;

A key bottleneck reported by industry and planners appears to be difficulty in ensuring both inside and especially outside reviewers participate in a timely fashion in case reviews. The report should identify what challenges and difficulties are being experienced so Council may discuss how to address those concerns with staff and external stakeholders.

Outcome Sought: report with recommendations and an Admin Order for Council consideration to establish timelines, KPIs and reporting to Council.

Councillor Waye Mason

District 7