

**REGION OF QUEENS MUNICIPALITY  
REGULAR COUNCIL  
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2014  
9:00 A.M.**

**PRESENT:** Mayor Christopher Clarke, Chair  
Councillor Darlene Norman  
Councillor Bruce Inglis  
Councillor Brian Fralic  
Councillor Susan MacLeod  
Councillor Raymond Fiske  
Councillor Jack Fancy  
Councillor Peter Waterman  
Kathleen Rafuse, Chief Administrative Officer  
Jennifer Keating-Hubley, Director of Finance  
Bobbi Jo Goulden, Recording / Management Secretary

**1.0 CALL TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

**2.0 CHANGES / APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

It was moved by Councillor Inglis and seconded by Councillor Waterman that the Agenda be approved with the following addition:

Item 17.1 Public Security

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

**3.0 PRESENTATION(S):**

**3.1 RCMP Monthly Report**

Constable Andrew Windsor was welcomed the meeting where he reviewed the RCMP Report for the month of October, 2014.

Mayor Clarke requested that a category for littering be listed on future reports. Const. Windsor advised that there was one littering charge enforced last month.

Some comments and concerns from Council included:

1. Youth Programs in local schools;
2. Holiday Awareness Campaign to keep vehicles locked - The Insurance Bureau of Canada is assisting with creating pamphlets and signage; and
3. Mobile Speed Sign Display - Currently in Bridgewater and hope to have it in the community before the weather gets bad.

Constable Andrew Windsor was thanked for his presentation and he left the meeting at 9:16 a.m.

**3.2 South Shore Housing Action Coalition**

Nancy Green, Health Promoter, South Shore Health, and William Thorburne, Councillor with the Town of Bridgewater, were both welcomed to the meeting.

Nancy Green provided a power point presentation which included some of the following topics:

- Vision – Healthy affordable housing options for all, at every stage of life.
- Current Coalition Members
- Guiding Principles
- Goal - As community members we will work collaboratively to build awareness and facilitate action on the need for quality, safe and affordable housing in Lunenburg and Queens Counties in particular, and Nova Scotia in general.
- Timeline
- Awareness through Newsletter, Website: <http://sshac.wordpress.com/> & Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/SouthShoreHousingActionCoalition>
- Needs Assessment - A South Shore Collaborative Housing Needs Assessment will assist SSHAC, community stakeholders, and the municipalities of Lunenburg and Queens Counties to identify, understand and respond collaboratively to housing needs of priority populations.
- Expected Results
- Resolution at UNSM - Re: Rental Housing Standards Passed

Councillor William Thorburne spoke of his involvement with South Shore Housing Action Coalition and his beliefs in having safe, affordable housing in the communities and how Municipalities have to work together to press the provincial and federal governments to assist with housing funding needs. He noted that Housing Nova Scotia has provided \$20,000 in funding to assist with the housing needs assessment for the entire South Shore area and added that every community has different needs which will be noted in the assessment.

Questions and comments from Councillors were replied to pertaining to such things as: need for all types of housing in the communities, lack of homeless shelters, need to make the public more aware of the housing programs that are available, federal government cutting funding for housing issues.

Mayor Clarke noted that Council will support all efforts put forth to create safe affordable housing for the area and thanked the presenters for speaking to Council. They left the meeting at 9:50 a.m. A copy of their presentation is attached at the end of the minutes.

#### **4.0 TABLING OF PETITIONS:**

There were no petitions to come before this meeting.

#### **5.0 PUBLIC QUESTION / COMMENT SESSION:**

**Bill Cox**  
**121 Bog Road**  
**White Point**

Mr. Cox asked about the news lately regarding the former Bowater woodlands, now owned by the Crown, being protected depriving harvesters the opportunity to access the land to harvest, as well as the Region not receiving tax income on this property since the property was purchased by the province.

Mayor Clarke stated that the Region of Queens has expressed in the past not to have any more productive land protected unless it is to protect an endangered species or other significant reasons, as there is already 19% of land protected in the Region.

He noted that the province does have to pay grants in lieu of taxes to the Region for the former Bowater lands. He added that the Crown has allocated some of the forest in the area to wood companies so it is being used productively. He stated that there is no reason for alarm right now.

Kathleen Rafuse, CAO, added that grants in lieu of taxes received by the Region is equivalent to our tax rate, and is charged at the same rate as it would have been if Bowater still owned the land as long as the assessment classification has not changed.

Jennifer Keating-Hubley, Director of Finance, added that the Region received approximately \$350,000 to \$400,000 in taxes this year from former Bowater property, now owned by the province.

**Heather Kelly**  
**37 Wolfe Street**  
**Liverpool**

Heather Kelly wanted to remind everyone that the Privateer Days Committee, AGM meeting is this evening and invited the public to attend. She added that following this year, the entire executive committee is stepping down.

Heather Kelly spoke of the importance of having an event in the community which draws visitors to our area, she noted that it will be a disappointment should no one come forward to continue on with Privateer Days or a similar event.

Councillor Norman asked what happens if a group of interested persons come forward to take on organizing Privateer Days, but not in the way that it has been done in the past as done by the current committee.

Heather Kelly stressed the importance of having interested persons shadow the 2015 event to see how certain things are done, and how process are followed. She noted that they don't have to do the event the exact same way, but certain items will still have to be done the same way, such as applying for grants, licenses that are needed, pre-booking groups for the parade, and some other behind the scenes activities.

**Leon Robertson**  
**45 College Street**  
**Liverpool**

Mr. Robertson commented on the South Shore Housing Action Coalition presentation and hopes that something happens soon to accommodate the housing needs that are required in the community.

Mr. Robertson spoke on item 16.1 – Communication Strategy and noted that not all seniors use a computer or have access to one and there should be a way to make information accessible to them.

**David Dagley**  
**9 Meadow Pond Lane**  
**Liverpool**

Mr. Dagley requested for an update on the Town Hall renovations.

Mayor Clarke added that staff will be providing an update on the Town Hall later in the meeting.

**Bev Davidson**  
**35 Shore Road**  
**Brooklyn**

Mr. Davidson thanked Council and Staff for their work on the Markland Distribution System.

## **6.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

### **6.1 Regular Council Minutes – November 12, 2014**

It was moved by Councillor Fiske and seconded by Councillor Norman:

THAT the minutes of the Council meeting held on November 12, 2014, be approved as circulated.

**MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

6.2 Public Hearing Minutes – November 12, 2014

It was moved by Councillor Fancy and seconded by Councillor MacLeod:

THAT the minutes of the Public Hearing held on November 12, 2014, be approved as circulated.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

**7.0 DANGEROUS OR UNSIGHTLY PREMISES:**

There were no Dangerous or Unsightly Premises issues discussed at this meeting.

Councillor MacLeod wanted to thank Kelley Anne Hurley for her work on the Dangerous and Unsightly properties and her great relationships that she has with the property owners.

**8.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:**

8.1 Economic Development Monthly Report

Jill Cruikshank, Director of Economic Development, reviewed the Economic Development report which was included with the Council agenda package.

Some topics discussed were:

- Immigration Attraction - Staff met with Ian MacGillivray, Rural Counsellor for Immigration Settlement and Integration Services and Tina Mirchandani, Settlement Outreach staffer for YREACH to find out how to promote Queens County to prospective immigrants and what issues exist in the retention of immigrants who choose to live here.

A discussion was held on Diversity Week and that Region of Queens should offer to host future Diversity Week activities as there are many in the community who could contribute to a successful event. The South Shore Multicultural Association will be contacted regarding events being held outside of Lunenburg County.

- Mersey Forum - speaker series planned to raise awareness of ocean technology and clean energy opportunities for the South Shore. The first event in series was held earlier in the month with over forty people in attendance. This series will continue through the winter months.
- Agriculture - Staff attended an information session identifying high-yield agriculture production investment opportunities. Staff will be meeting with Department of Agriculture and economic development staff of Lunenburg and Chester municipalities to plan a repeat of this year's successful Agriculture Day in early 2015. Jill Cruikshank was asked to propose to this group, the offer of hosting Agriculture Day in the Region of Queens in 2015.

**9.0 CORPORATE SERVICES:**

9.1 Amendment to Operational Policy No. 18

It was moved by Councillor Fiske and seconded by Councillor Inglis:

THAT the Council of the Region of Queens approve the amendment to Operational Policy No. 18 - Holidays that adds the third Monday in February-Heritage Day, as a statutory holiday.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

## 10.0 ENGINEERING AND WORKS:

### 10.1 Nova Scotia Lands - Markland Water Distribution System

It was moved by Councillor Waterman and seconded by Councillor MacLeod:

THAT the Council of the Region of Queens Municipality approve the Water Supply Agreement between the Region of Queens Municipality and Nova Scotia Lands Incorporated and that the Mayor and Director of Finance be authorized to sign the agreement.

Brad Rowter, Director of Engineering and Works, provided various details on some of the clauses found in the agreement between Nova Scotia Lands Incorporated and the Region of Queens for the provision of a water delivery system for residents of Markland Avenue and a portion of Dexter Avenue, Brooklyn.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

At this time, Brad Rowter provided to Council an update of the renovations which are taking place at the former Town Hall.

## 11.0 FINANCE:

### 11.1 Approval of Municipal Gas Tax Fund Agreement

It was moved by Councillor Inglis and seconded by Councillor Norman:

THAT the Council of the Region of Queens Municipality approve the Municipal Funding Agreement For The Transfer of Federal Gas Tax Funds between Her Majesty the Queen and the Region of Queens Municipality, and authorize the Mayor and Director of Finance to sign.

Jennifer Keating-Hubley, Director of Finance, in answer to a query from council, clarified that the sale of a capital asset that had been funded with gas tax no longer requires repayment of the gas tax portion. If you sell an asset that was funded using gas tax before 5 years has passed, the gas tax does not have to be repaid; however, any profit realized from the sale will have to be invested in another gas tax eligible project. Not new, is a requirement that after ten years, upon the expiration of this agreement, any gas tax being held in reserves that has not been spent on or allotted to, eligible projects must be repaid. (However, this past year there was an allowance made for the old agreement where permission to carry a balance forward could be requested.)

Some stronger wording has been included in this agreement, at the request of the federal government, around default for reporting and repayment for ineligible. Of the many reports that are required to be submitted annually by Municipalities to the Province, they have said gas tax payment will be withheld pending satisfactory submissions. This is not new, they had been withholding the 1<sup>st</sup> installment until all requirements for reporting had been met, but now it is in writing. Ineligible projects funded with gas tax will not require repayment, but will require an amount equivalent to those gas tax funds used to be spent on a project that is eligible in the following year. Federal government also added stronger words around the requirement to use gas tax for incremental investing in assets. This is in an attempt to make sure that municipalities are not using only gas tax for their capital investments, but are also planning for and using their own resources. All municipalities with less than 250,000 in population will be pooled for this calculation. This benchmark has been met for many years, and will continue to be met unless substantial number (more than 75%) of municipal units change the way they currently invest in capital infrastructure.

Mayor Clarke left the meeting at 10:55 a.m. and turned the chair over to Deputy Mayor Norman.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously with one absent.

## 12.0 RECREATION AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES:

There were no items to be discussed at this meeting for the Recreation and Community Facilities Department.

## 13.0 PLANNING:

There were no items to be discussed at this meeting for the Planning Department.

Mayor Clarke returned to the meeting and resumed as Chair at 10:58 a.m.

## 14.0 QUEENS PLACE EMERA CENTRE:

### 14.1 Queens Place Emera Centre Monthly Report

Steve Burns, General Manager, briefly reviewed the regular monthly report that was included in the Council agenda package and spoke on the following topics:

- Ice rentals and Product sales
- Queens Place Steering Committee - good meeting with some members of the public in attendance. A lot of valuable discussions took place regarding different items at the facility.
- Upcoming events – visit [www.queensplace.ca](http://www.queensplace.ca)
- Preparing for the third year anniversary of the opening of Queen Place Emera Centre.
- Free public skates and holiday activities taking place at the facility leading up to the holiday season.

Councillor Norman suggested a need for policies to be created for the use of the lobby area of the facility to assist with use of the building.

## 15.0 REPORTS:

The following reports were included in the agenda package for information purposes:

- 15.1 Bylaw Enforcement Officer's Report
- 15.2 Building Inspector's Report

The meeting recessed at 11:05 am and resumed at 11:15 a.m.

## 16.0 OTHER:

### 16.1 Region of Queens Municipality - Communications Strategy

Heather Cook, Community Development Coordinator, provided to Council a power point presentation on the draft Region of Queens Municipality Communications Strategy which will be brought forward to Council for consideration at the December 9, 2014, Council meeting.

Mrs. Cook explained that in 2013, National Public Relations on behalf of Council was retained to review the communication processes taking place at the Region of Queens and noted that the communications plan from 2001 provided a solid foundation and direction, and suggested additions to enhance the communications approach. She noted that the new draft strategy is based on the one created in 2001 along with the recommendations made by National Public Relations.

Heather Cook added that one of the goals for this new strategy is to make the Region of Queens Municipality the first and best source of information about the Region's plans, priorities, growth, and progress; and to ensure communications are planned and proactive.

Mrs. Cook's presentation which is attached at the end of these minutes included the following topics:

- Overall Communications Goal
- Communications Objectives
- Audiences
- Social Media Strategy
- Online Communications Goal
- Social Media & Online Presence Objectives

Following the presentation, each Councillor provided their comments on the draft strategy, what they liked and where they felt changes needed to be made, but most agreed that the goal of the Region is to have an engaged and active social presence that will ensure that the public has information to reinforce the Region's overall vibrancy and development. This aligns directly with the broad communications objective of attracting and retaining business to the region.

**17.0 IN-CAMERA ITEMS:**

It was moved by Councillor Fancy and seconded by Councillor Fiske that the proceedings go "In-Camera" at 12:04 p.m. to discuss the following:

17.1 Public Security

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

It was moved by Councillor Inglis and seconded by Councillor Norman that the proceedings come out of "In-Camera" at 12:25 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

**Trestle Trail Bridge**

It was moved by Councillor Waterman and seconded by Councillor Inglis:

THAT the Council of the Region of Queens Municipality approve the following resolution:

**WHEREAS** AMEC Americas Ltd. was engaged to conduct an inspection and provide a report assessing the structural integrity of the Trestle Trail Bridge.

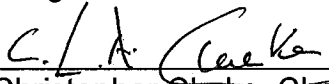
**AND WHEREAS** the engineering consultants have provided a recommendation to immediately close the trail bridge to pedestrians and all types of vehicles until further detailed investigations and engineering analysis has been completed.

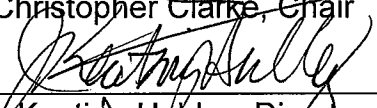
**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** in the interest of public safety the Council of the Region of Queens Municipality accept the recommendations to close the Trestle Trail Bridge immediately.


MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

**18.0 ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor Christopher Clarke, Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jennifer Keating-Hubley, Director of Finance

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Bobbi Jo Goulden, Recording / Management Secretary

Date approved: December 9, 2014

# SOUTH SHORE HOUSING ACTION COALITION

PRESENTATION TO REGION OF QUEENS COUNTY  
COUNCIL  
NOVEMBER 25, 2014



*Healthy affordable housing options  
for all, at every stage of life*

Nancy Green (SSH) & Wayne Thorburne (Town of  
Bridgewater)

## About SSHAC

Public Health staff identify housing as an increasingly more challenging issue for young families

Asked, what can we do to improve things for families?

Learning Journey to better what is happening in Lunenburg and Queens Counties with respect to safe, quality, affordable housing

In 2009 invited community stakeholders to session with Dal Legal Aid on Tenants Rights

In 2010 SSHAC was formed

## Current Coalition Members

- Second Story Women's Centre
- South Shore Transition House Association
- Inn from the Cold
- Aspotogan Heritage Trust
- Bridgewater Family Support Centre
- Queens County Community Health Board
- Mahone Bay Seniors Project
- South Shore District Health Authority
- Western Regional Housing Authority
- Lunenburg County Community Health Board
- Community Links
- Town of Bridgewater
- Municipality of the District of Lunenburg
- Municipality of the District of Chester
- Region of Queens Municipality
- Town of Lunenburg
- Town of Mahone Bay
- Community members

## Vision



*Healthy affordable housing options  
for all, at every stage of life*

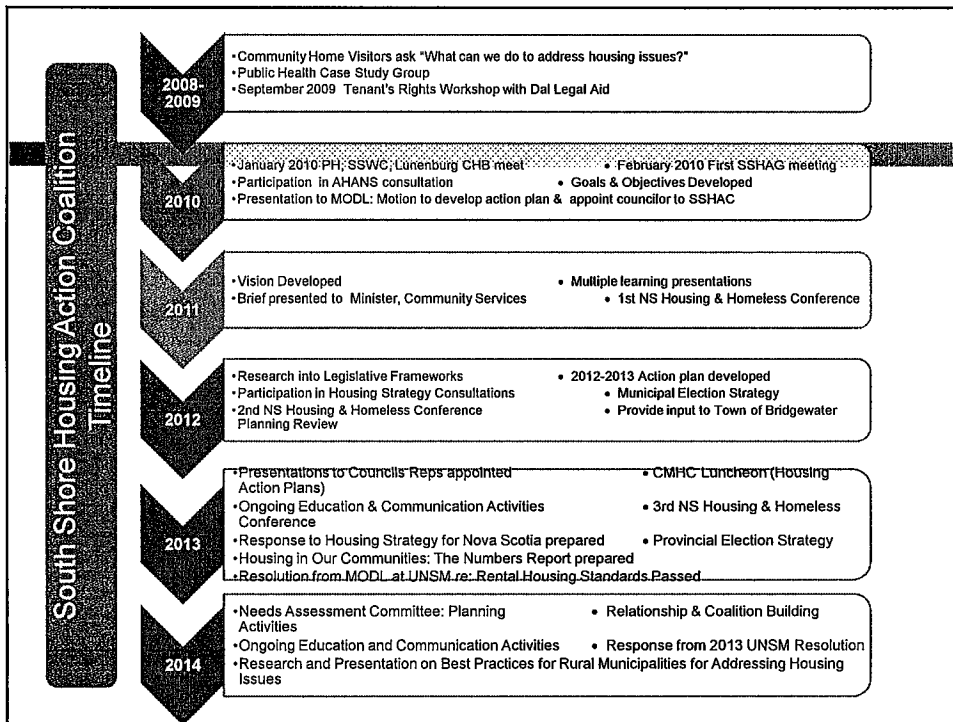
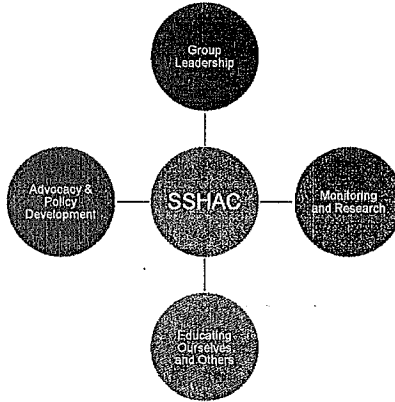
## Guiding Principles

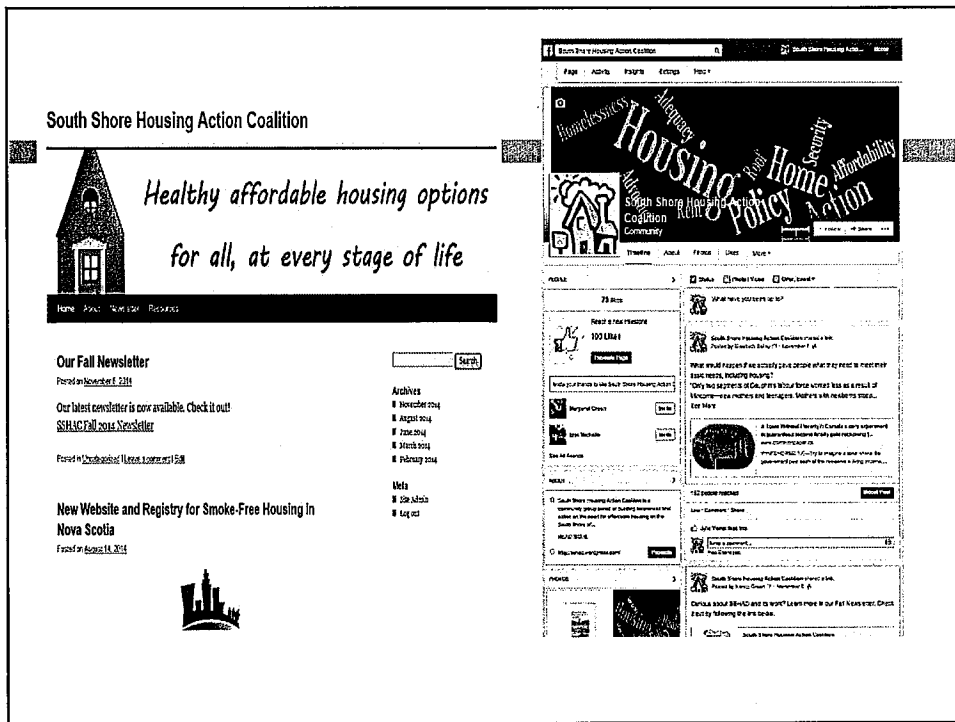
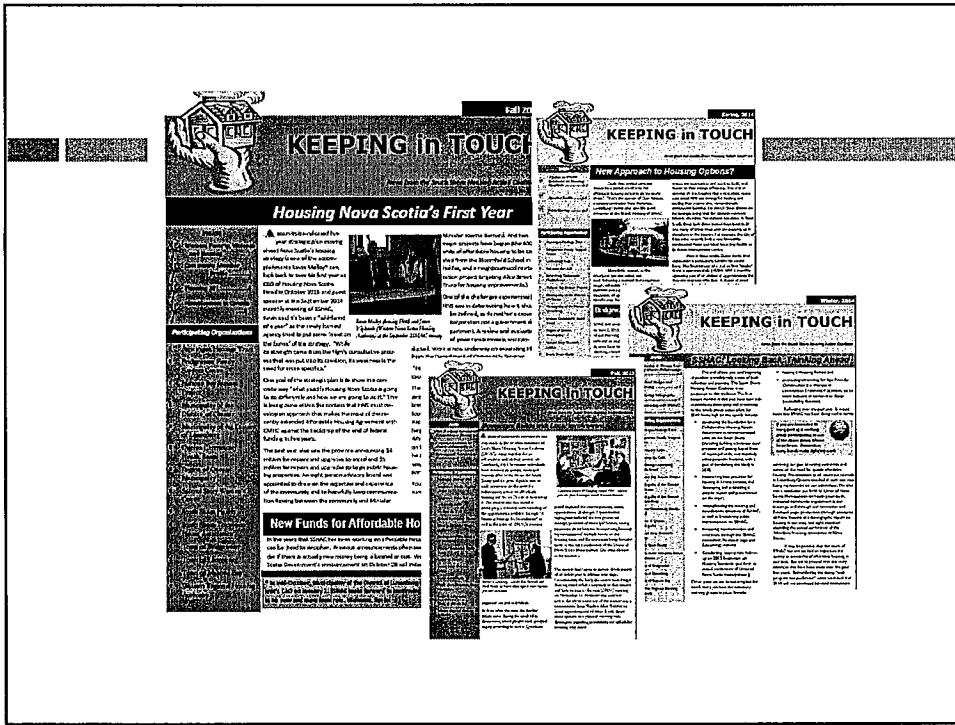
- Our coalition is comprised of persons/groups/organizations interested in working in partnership to achieve our common vision of *“healthy, affordable housing options for all, at every stage of life”*.
- We support the vision of a vibrant and diverse community with a range of affordable, accessible and safe quality housing.
- We welcome diversity in our membership.
- We work towards consensus in decision-making.
- We listen respectfully to all voices, and support each other in continuous learning and action.
- We commit (whenever possible) to regular attendance at Coalition meetings.
- We promote the work of the Coalition within our organizations and in the community.

## Goal

As community members we will work collaboratively to build awareness and facilitate action on the need for quality, safe and affordable housing in Lunenburg and Queens Counties in particular, and Nova Scotia in general.

# Build Awareness & Facilitate Action





# Municipalities have expressed concern over housing standards

Resolution 6A Published on November 13, 2013

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

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the real estate industry work to address the authority of the Building Code Act assistance or rental to indicate rental to the SM. on] availability for the provincial housing and fire codes under the terms of the Fire Marshall, supports the Provincial Statement on Housing and the associated Provincial Strategy on Housing through the adoption of minimum standards for the construction, renovation, and alteration of housing in the Province under the Building Code Act, and a system of inspection for housing under the Fire Safety Act may be carried out by municipalities.

(Response from Service Nova Scotia & Municipal Relations (Residential Tenancies)

The purpose of the Residential Tenancies Act is to provide landlords and tenants with an efficient and cost-effective means for settling disputes. While the Act does provide tenants with an avenue that may lead to landlords being required to address standards of health, safety and housing as a lease obligation, it was never intended to establish the standards for consideration

WHEREAS the basis provide housing opp that adequate shells

WHEREAS it is the ides provincial governme that is reasonably or

WHEREAS the Provi formation of Housing among the private s

WHEREAS the provi including safe and a recently released Ho

WHEREAS renters s face challenges - our associated problems

WHEREAS fire safe capacity to undertake Municipal Governme across local jurisdic and

WHEREAS the Province has existing authority under the Residential Tenancies Act to concern itself with ensuring that all shelters in Nova Scotia are fit for habitation; and

WHEREAS the mandate of Housing Nova Scotia, as identified in the new Provincial Housing Strategy, includes "engagement, innovation, investment partnership, and accountability" as a means to improve housing conditions;

WHEREAS the mandate of Housing Nova Scotia is to establish minimum provincial standards for all rental housing stock; and to expand the role and resources of those agencies enforcing the Residential Tenancies Act, so as to effectively maintain standards in all communities, for all residents, across the Province.

While the town of New Glasgow does have bylaws regarding dangerous and unsightly premises, those bylaws deal with the exterior appearance and safety of a building and do nothing to address the concerns of poor standards such as were brought out a recent article in The News about a housing unit on Marsh Street that appears to have mould throughout and is according to a resident is infested with bed bugs.



© ADAM MACINNIS - THE NEWS  
This picture was taken in a housing unit on Marsh Street where mould appears to have spread throughout the building. A resident says it's infested with bed bugs.

for the provincial housing and fire codes under the terms of the Fire Marshall, supports the Provincial Statement on Housing and the associated Provincial Strategy on Housing through the adoption of minimum standards for the construction, renovation, and alteration of housing in the Province under the Building Code Act, and a system of inspection for housing under the Fire Safety Act may be carried out by municipalities.

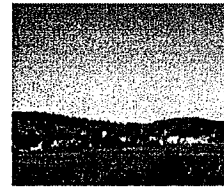
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## Region of Queens Municipality

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS in 2005

Population:	11,177
Unemployment Rate (15 years and over):	12.2%
Prevalence of Low-Income Status of Households (After-Tax):	8.9%
Median Household Income, After-Tax:	\$35,084
Median One-Person Household Income, After-Tax:	\$19,772



### HOUSING IN OUR COMMUNITIES: THE NUMBERS



3/10/2014 South Shore Housing Action Commission (SSHAC)

How Owned

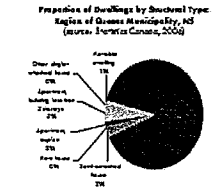
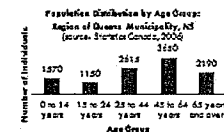
Average Value of a Dwelling:	\$118,344
Percentage of Dwellings Owned:	85.5%
Average Owner Major Payments:	\$519
Value of Dwellings Increased (1994-2006):	77.1%

How Rented

Percentage of Dwellings Rented:	14.5%
Average Monthly Rent:	\$563

Percentage of Households

(%) Core Housing Need (renters):	38.2%
Percentage of Low-Income Families	
(%) Core Housing Need (renters):	57.1%
Percentage of One-Person Households	
(%) Core Housing Need (renters):	58.7%
Percentage of Rental Units Requiring Minor or Major Repairs:	44.9%
Percentage of Rental Units 45 years or older:	54.6%



## Province puts money in public housing

By Mick Moase  
THE ADVANCE  
NovaNewsFlow.com

The province is investing \$52-million in rental supplements, co-ops, seniors housing and upgrades to public housing in Nova Scotia.

"These investments will help more Nova Scotians find a good home that they can afford," said Premier McNell. "By preserving existing public housing, investing in new projects, and using innovative approaches such as rent supplements, we will help more people find a place to call home."

In Western Nova Scotia there are 2,162 housing units. Families occupy about 25 per cent of those, while 75 per cent are seniors.

On a Queens County level, there are 120 housing units with roughly the same distribution between families and seniors as Western Nova Scotia.

There is a waitlist for housing in Queens County, with 13 families and 21 seniors on the list, as well as four that are single and non-senior.

## Man commits crimes to get place to sleep

Twenty-one-year-old rode through Bridgewater

By LISA BROWN  
brown@southshorenova.ca

BRIDGEWATER — Feeling so desperate for a place to eat and sleep that he stole a bicycle and rode it through a Bridgewater grocery store on a winter

New homeless shelter planned for Bridgewater

Space expected to house

*More supports needed for vulnerable youth*

A group of volunteers in our area are working together to tackle an issue that is most often invisible — rural homelessness.

Joyes River Community Outreach, a local non-profit, is in the process of creating a safe haven for those in need of short-term support. The new Bridgewater shelter is expected to support up to 15 clients on a coming and going basis.

Organizers have indicated the need for a service such as this in our community and that although

they also raised their concerns, protesting the closure of the shelter in a letter and identifying their support for Ms Hoare, a fellow member and friend.

As the committee pointed out, many of its members didn't have to worry about finding a safe place to live while attending school, but not everyone is as fortunate. Whether it's escaping an abusive situation, dealing with mental health problems, economic challenges or addictions, there are various reasons youth can end up without a safe place to live. A lack

## Needs Assessment

The activities of the South Shore Collaborative Housing Needs Assessment will assist SSHAC, community stakeholders, and the municipalities of Lunenburg and Queens counties to identify, understand and respond collaboratively to the short-, mid-, and long-term housing needs of priority populations.

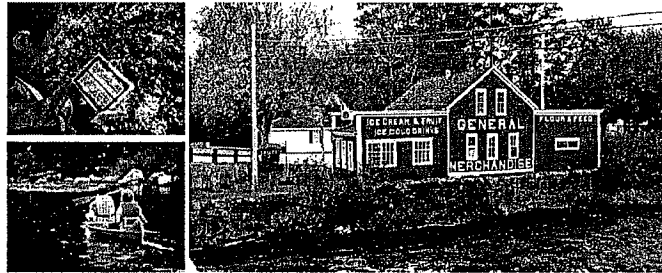
## Needs Assessment...

- Collect, analyze and report data based on best practice housing indicators and community consultation.
- Identify strategic opportunities to strengthen collaborative community action on housing issues.
- Make recommendations for action.
- Describe a process to support ongoing monitoring and evaluation of housing needs in the community and develop appropriate tools to support the process.

## Expected Results

- Enhanced knowledge of and understanding in the community concerning housing issues in Lunenburg and Queens Counties
- A description of the local housing situation, to support community planning
- Comprehensive and current data about housing in Lunenburg and Queens Counties
- A list of relevant and appropriate housing indicators for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of action
- A process for ongoing monitoring of housing needs in Lunenburg and Queens Counties
- A process for ongoing evaluation of housing needs in Lunenburg and Queens Counties
- Identification of opportunities for enhanced collaboration across municipalities and with community stakeholders
- Recommendations for action on the affordable housing issues identified by the Needs Assessment

# Queens Attraction Strategy



QUEENS COUNTY ATTRACTION STRATEGY  
FINAL REPORT

February 2013

<b>Objective: Develop an assisted living facility and strategy for a campus approach that supports aging in place.</b>	
<b>Action #2</b>	Conduct a feasibility study, which will include a needs assessment, identification of a champion, preliminary costing and site recommendations for an assisted living project to be developed as part of an aging-in-place campus.
<b>Connection to goal/objective</b>	Many stakeholders have identified a need for an assisted living facility. This is directly linked with the Health and Wellness Goal and the efforts in Action #3 to qualify the local market. The facility will help support attraction efforts for healthcare specialists, including physiotherapists and continuing care assistants.
<b>Validation of action</b>	Seniors are leaving Queens County to obtain assisted living accommodations elsewhere. Addressing gaps in the housing/service continuum can help seniors age in place. Opportunities exist for a private / non-profit partnership approach for establishing independent and enhanced living together with assisted living options. (See Appendix 2)
<b>Recommended Champion</b>	TBD
<b>Definition of audience</b>	This Action Step is to conduct a feasibility study, which will be conducted BEFORE an audience is defined.
<b>Cost of reaching target</b>	If approved, the feasibility study would be funded by CMHC.
<b>Time frame to reach target</b>	Complete feasibility study by August 31, 2013.
<b>Lead generation</b>	The feasibility study will serve as a lead generation tool; it will assess all available financing and investment options.
<b>Identification of leads</b>	TBD
<b>Promoter assistance</b>	Financing and investment options may determine one or more promoters.
<b>Investor search</b>	Private investment options or partnerships will be explored as part of the feasibility study.
<b>Market survey assistance</b>	Data to be identified, developed, assessed as part of the feasibility study and in concert with any demand statistics available through Action Step #3.

Objective: Establish Queens County as a Centre of Healthcare Excellence.	
Action #3	Build Queens County's capacity to promote Health and Wellness.
Connection to goal/objective	This is a potentially wide-ranging action that starts with a survey of Queens County residents. The primary goal is to qualify the demand for housing within RQM itself, and quantify demand changes anticipated within the next 5 years; not only by surveying the need for seniors' housing, but also to identify champions and other volunteers who might be interested in helping the Steering Committee with other aspects of the Attraction Strategy. Select aspects of the Community Health Plan might be surveyed at the same time. If the data is supportive, then an investor attraction strategy for new housing could be developed.
Validation of action	Housing needs for seniors, health professionals and researchers have been identified by stakeholders. If confirmed, housing needs within the community itself could be linked to vacant properties, a seniors housing strategy, and housing for health professionals and researchers. Communities across North America are emphasizing healthy communities and 'Smart Growth.' Defining Queens County as a healthy community, and focusing on Smart Growth principles, can then be tied directly with Action #1.
Recommended Champion	The Region of Queens Municipality.
Definition of audience	The primary audience is OC residents themselves.
Cost of reaching target	If designed and administered by the Region of Queens staff, the only costs would be Survey Monkey registration (\$250) plus hard copy materials and travel to reach residents who do not have computers / on-line access.
Time frame to reach target	6 months for the on-line survey and quantify local demand.
Lead generation	If local data is supportive, lead generation and identification would be identified as part of an investor attraction strategy.
Identification of leads	
Promoter assistance	TBD
Investor search	Implement once lead strategy is developed.
Market survey assistance	On-line survey of residents needed to qualify and quantify local demand. Use survey to probe interest in other aspects of the Attraction Strategy - volunteering for events, or selected long term actions such as the home stay program, etc.

**Thank-You!**

Our municipal units are key members of our  
Coalition!

## REQUEST FOR DECISION

Topic: Approval of Municipal GTF Agreement

Meeting Date: November 25, 2014

Department: Finance

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### OVERVIEW OF THE MUNICIPAL FUNDING AGREEMENT AS PRESCRIBED UNDER THE NEW CANADA-NOVA SCOTIA ADMINISTRATIVE AGREEMENT ON THE FEDERAL GAS TAX FUND 2014-2024

#### **Preamble**

The Department of Municipal Affairs is administering the new Gas Tax Fund on behalf of the Federal Government. The Canada-Nova Scotia Administrative Agreement on the Transfer of Federal Gas Tax Revenues under the New Deal for Cities and Communities 2014-2024 was approved by

The Federal Government of Canada and the Province of Nova Scotia entered into an Administrative Agreement for the Federal Gas Tax Fund (GTF) effective April 1, 2014. This agreement outlines the roles and responsibilities of Canada and Nova Scotia for the administration of the GTF. Canada's Gas Tax Fund transfer has provided \$13 billion to Canadian communities to date. Over the 10-year life of this New Building Canada Plan from 2014 to 2024, the Gas Tax Fund will provide close to \$22 billion in funding for municipalities. The Region of Queens allocation for the 2014/2015 fiscal year is approximately \$657,000.

#### **Provincial-Municipal Funding Agreement**

The new Agreement provides predictable, stable funding for public infrastructure across the province of Nova Scotia in that it gives municipalities the flexibility to choose and plan infrastructure projects based on their specific priorities.

### Municipal Criteria/Conditions to Access Funding

Municipalities shall agree to the following criteria/conditions in order to access the gas funding:

Due by July 31<sup>st</sup> each year, the Municipality will use the online template as provided by Nova Scotia to submit an Annual Expenditure Report, in respect of the prior Fiscal Year.

The Municipality will provide to Nova Scotia a 5 year Capital Investment Plan by September 1<sup>st</sup> of each year, which will include a list of planned capital projects along with required project-specific information as well as funding sources for each.

A Municipality shall submit an outcomes report to Nova Scotia on each completed project. Reporting guidelines with respect to outcome measures will be determined by the Province of Nova Scotia and subject to change periodically.

All reporting that is requested by the department of Municipal Affairs must be received in a form satisfactory to Nova Scotia prior to their GTF allocations being sent. These reports include, but are not limited to, all reports mentioned in Schedule D (listed above), as well as Audited Financial Statements, Statements of Estimates and Financial Information Returns.

The eligible project categories, from the last agreement are public transit, water systems, waste water systems, solid waste, community energy systems and capacity building. And new to this agreement are highways, regional and local airports, short-sea shipping, disaster mitigation, broadband connectivity, brownfield redevelopment, as well as infrastructure projects for tourism, sport, cultural, and recreation. The agreement also lists a number of ineligible costs such as feasibility and planning studies, engineering and architecture fees as well as land costs, legal fees, etc.

Employee and equipment costs are ineligible **with the exception** that the eligible recipient **has determined it is not economically feasible to tender a**

**contract**, employees or equipment are employed directly in respect of the work that would have been the subject of the contract and that the arrangement is **APPROVED IN ADVANCE AND IN WRITING BY NOVA SCOTIA.**

The Municipality must retain title to and ownership of the infrastructure acquired under this program for at least 5 years. If at anytime prior to 5 years the infrastructure is sold or disposed of, any profit **must** be re-invested in another eligible capital project.



**Recommendation:**

That the Council of the Region of Queens Municipality approve the Municipal Funding Agreement For The Transfer of Federal Gas Tax Funds between Her Majesty the Queen and the Region of Queens Municipality, and authorize the Mayor and Director of Finance to sign.



**Costs:**



**CAO's Initials:** \_\_\_\_\_ krr \_\_\_\_\_

# Region of Queens Municipality Communications Strategy

November 25, 2014

## Communications

*Great communications is all about doing a few simple things right, every single time: creating a simple narrative message, supporting the person who is to do the telling, knowing who to tell it to, through channels by which they want to receive it, and then compelling them to ... pass it on.*

- ▶ Fall of 2013 - NATIONAL Public Relations (NATIONAL) was retained to review communications activities and plans, and guide a process through a series of workshops and planning sessions with a committee of Council and staff to arrive at a new narrative that will support a proactive and managed approach to communications.
- ▶ This presentation summarizes the priority areas the group agree upon.

- Communications Strategy from 2001
  - solid foundation
- The 2001 Strategy was written in a different economic situation and in a different time re: technology
- Points from the 2001 strategy have been incorporated into the new strategy

## We are Already Moving Forward

- We have been enacting actions recommended since the workshops began
  - Ensure communications and issues management is always a part of decision-making and business planning
  - Activate proactive direct-to-stakeholder approach to communications.
  - Ensure protocols for media relations, and social media are understood and supported.

## Overall Communications Goal

- ▶ To make the Region of Queens Municipality the first and best source of information about the Region's plans, priorities, growth, and progress; and to ensure communications is planned and proactive.

## Communications Objectives

- ▶ *To make RQM a key source of information for stakeholders seeking positive and proactive information about growth, planning, and operations in the municipality*
- ▶ *To integrate communications within RQM and at Council towards a planned, proactive strategic model*

Inform

Strategic

## Communications Objectives, cont.

- *To augment the internal communications environment*

**Inclusive**

## Audiences

### **Internal**

- Mayor and Councillors
- CAO
- Dept. Heads
- All staff
- Members of agencies, boards and committees

**Voice and face in community**

### **External**


- Residents of RQM
- Other government organizations
- Media
- Businesses
- Age groupings – youth, middle age, seniors
- Online users
- Community groups
- Visitors

**Encourage dialogue, accountability and innovation**


# Messages & Narrative

## “We’re reinventing our future here.”

- ▶ We’re in the middle of a transformation in the Region of Queens.
- ▶ We’re moving from a single large employer to a diversified economy of small and large businesses built upon our entrepreneurial people, our natural resources and our community assets.
- ▶ We know that this transition requires making the right investments at the right time.
- ▶ This reinvention won’t happen overnight. But we’re on our way, building on the strengths of our past while innovating for the future, in forestry, healthcare, education and more.
- ▶ And living our lives connected to our rich community and the natural world.
- ▶ In Queens County, we’re reinventing our future.
- ▶ We’re ready for business. We’re innovative. And we’re living well.



Building on the strengths of our past while innovating for the future

 **We're reinventing our future here.**  
Region of Queens Municipality

**READY FOR BUSINESS**  
Our region is built upon our entrepreneurial people, our natural resources and our community assets.

- Talented labour force
- Shared industrial resources
- Efficient municipal government

**INNOVATIVE**  
We are a community of innovators.

- The future of resource technology
- Advanced healthcare and research initiatives
- Pioneering technology in schools

**LIVING WELL**  
Living here gets you more.

- Pristine beaches and wilderness
- Rich arts and culture
- Connected to community

Our Vision

## Communications Methods

- › *Align communications with management decision-making*
- › *Use proactive media relations*

Make it a regular part of daily business

Positive or negative, get the issues out before speculation

## Communications Methods

- › *Correct errors, misquotes and misinformation to ensure the public knows the facts and reduce the duration of "bad press"*
- › *Develop augmented and segmented stakeholders list*

Ensure that the truth is out there

Target key audiences who want specific messages

## Communications Methods, cont.

- ▶ *Establish a macro-agenda for communications*
- ▶ *Broaden message of "Annual Year in Review and Future Direction" address*

Anticipate what's coming and when to promote it

Direct messaging to people in their own communities

## Communications Methods, cont.

- ▶ *Implement and communicate media relations policy*

Formalize the roles and expectations in media relations

## Social Media Strategy

## Online Communications Goal

➤ Ensure that the public has information to reinforce the Region's overall vibrancy and development

## Social Media & Online Presence Objectives

▶ *To attract, grow and develop the business community in the Region of Queens.*

▶ *To attract people to the Region to live, work and play.*

## Audiences

- ▶ Business and investors
- ▶ Constituents
- ▶ Government, media and other stakeholders

## Channel Considerations

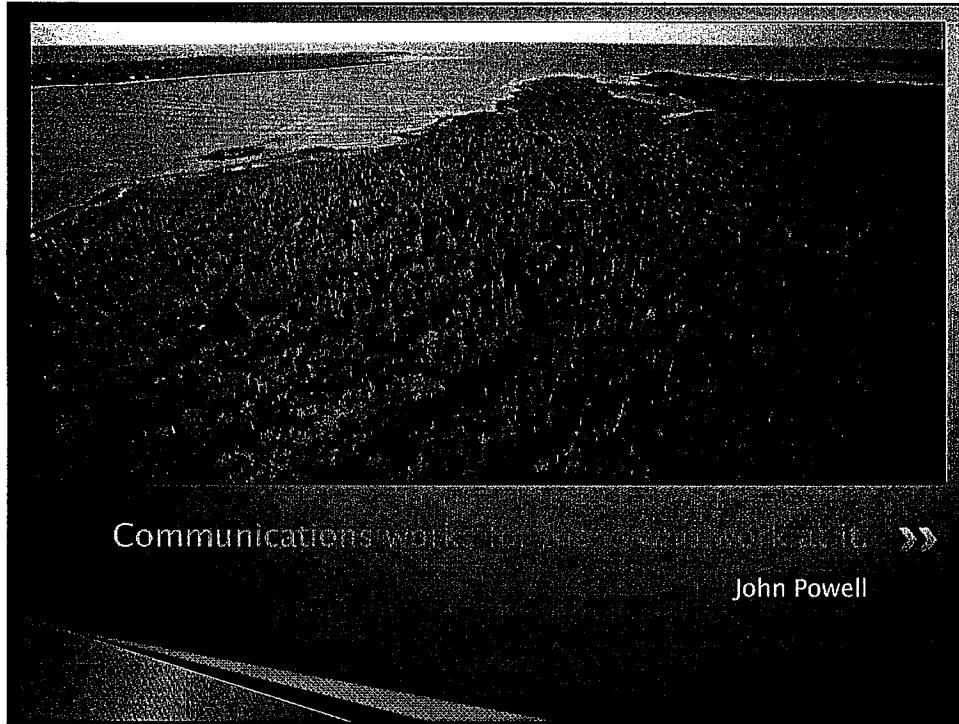
- ▶ **Current**
  - Website
  - Facebook
- ▶ **Secondary channels**
  - Councillors active on social media

Posts from Councillors that highlight events, community groups or other non-political issues should be shared and leveraged. Both the Councillor and Region should post regarding successes to demonstrate both the unified perspective, and the Councillors specific perspective.

## How to do it? Make it authentic!

- ▶ **Stock Content**
- ▶ **Flow Content**
- ▶ **Themes**
  - *Innovative*
  - *Ready for Business*
  - *Living Well*
- ▶ **Editorial Calendar**
- ▶ **Style and Tone**

Participating in online communications is a method to genuinely connect with our audiences. To be successful online, be responsive, courteous and authentic. Questions or concerns from the public must be dealt with in a timely way.



Communications works for who you work at. >>

John Powell

## FEEDBACK on PROVINCIAL-MUNICIPAL FISCAL REVIEW

The Region of Queens Municipality still endorses the position that was submitted in 2012 regarding the Town Task Force Report, that amalgamation would be the solution for many municipal entities in the province. As outlined in the One Nova Scotia Report, goal 18 states that Reform of Municipal and Regional Service Structures is required with the main aim of this goal being improvement of efficiencies, cost effectiveness for Municipal Units and greater engagement of communities with regard to economic development planning which would be accomplished is amalgamation was explored by units.

It is not possible at this point in time for the Region of Queens to give a full endorsement of the concepts that have been delivered in this document. There are too many unknowns at this point in time:

- a) The province has not fully endorsed the report or the financial commitments in the document.
- b) Due to the non-endorsement by the province we are cautious as to the outcome of the recommendations, will the report be adopted in its entirety or will only certain sections be adopted and how will that effect operations as well as financial stability.
- c) If fully adopted the Region of Queens is still uncertain of the outcome of the equalization grant. This report only states a guarantee of the equalization funding for a three year term. This does not present enough fiscal stability for our area. This needs to be fully examined and presented before this could be endorsed. We do understand that if the province is to input an additional \$21.1 million to replace the equalization funding currently taken from the NSPI grant would mean approximately \$600,000 more in fiscal funding for our unit. The other point is if this is adopted by government the equalization section needs more qualifications such as if there is a change creating a +/-10% variance in funding, this should be phased in over a 5 year period. The review committee stated that they wanted to develop a formula based on population density, is this fair, is the formula being changed to an equitable formula or is this being changed to disburse the funds to more urban instead of rural areas.

## STRUCTURE

*Is the proposed process reasonable? Recognizing the review does not necessarily lead to amalgamation, do you support the use of the FCI as a method to trigger a constructive review?*

We agree that the FCI have been created as tool, and that they can be used both to reinforce that a municipality is effective and viable, as well as alert administration to possible issues and areas that may need work.

- Not singling out one red area over consecutive years, but instead following up on those showing multiple red indicators (6 or 7 seems reasonable) for three years in a row seems fair.
- Provided that a review will be triggered if satisfactory explanation cannot be provided, and given that those municipalities wanting a review regardless may request so at anytime.
- Perhaps the FCI could be weighted if they are to be used as triggers...obviously some are more important as an alert to fiscal problems than others...also those indicators that are "beyond a

municipality's control" need to be eliminated as triggers (ie. assessment value increase over three years)

*Is there anything that we think should change respecting the proposed review process?*

Those that are responsible for the completion of these reviews need to be carefully selected. In order for the process to be meaningful and add value, this panel/group/committee will need to have a specific set of skills. Going forward, there should be templates established and the initial interview process with questions and information gathering needs to be consistent. If the right professionals are assembled in the beginning, templates for fiscal review, general considerations and solutions/suggestions can be made available so that the application of this fiscal review going-forward is consistent for all. This information, that will form the general template, should be accessible by everyone. Solutions, suggestions and results, should also be made available, so that everyone has an opportunity to initiate informal review on their own.

Village commission recommendations are not applicable to us.

## ROADS

*Do the proposed recommendations create a more level playing field? If not, suggest alternatives.*

The increase from \$4989 to \$6700 pertains to service exchange roads.

The capital improvement piece where they charge \$13,500 per km is for very specific type roads (G,H,I & J - class paved local roads (as defined by NSTIR) or municipal Class A roads (as per NSTIR Policy PO1004) located in rural municipalities and constructed after 1995). This is not applicable to RQM roads.

Arterials and collectors grant of \$9000 per km applies to the former cost-shared Arterial and Collector and trunk routes, often used as through-ways and highways passing through Towns.

Rural Municipalities do not have Arterials & Collectors roads. And they will be required to pay \$1700 more per kilometer for their service exchange roads.

Towns can apply for a grant of \$9000 for their arterials and collectors. The value of this grant is intended to alleviate the burden of certain roads that serve both a municipal and provincial interest.

Currently as recommended in the report, RQM is classified as Regional, and therefore not included in this option if we remain classified as Regional.

## GRANTS

This review contains many valid, reasonable and economically beneficial recommendations; however, ultimately there is very little value to municipal units if the province cannot afford to contribute the additional 20 million to the grants fund.

*The additional PCAP money is an application based process, appropriate or not?*

The PCAP program should be more accessible, if this is the way additional provincial money is to be filtered through to municipalities. Cost sharing still means that units will have to find the resources for their portion (currently that means 50%), preference would be for these funds to be administered in a manner similar to gas tax.

*From a provincial viewpoint, do you feel these recommendations enhance fairness?*

Yes, in that the province will be able to justify the allotment with more concrete calculations...that is, provide more concise reasons for allotment of provincial money. There are however, many unknowns associated with equalization, NSP, education, etc and these need to be finalized before the report can move forward. UNSM have asked that this report be considered to ensure fiscal viability of most units, but is this a reasonable approach or should some units start to consider the amalgamation process regardless.

*Using a municipal perspective, what do you see as challenges or opportunities arising from the recommendations?*

These recommendations need to be easily accessible and accurate. What we mean by that is, median income is only accurate if it is current. Density as a suggestion for part of the equalization calculation may not be relevant...with all the regulatory requirements (sewer/water/landfills) how do you weight service provision with population density? Assessment growth may be more relevant in the calculation for equalization.

Elimination of the HST offset grant will not impact many units other than Halifax who receives the largest allocation generally as they do the most capital construction. (Especially if the majority of the capital work undertaken in municipal unites is funded with gas tax, as it decreases your HST offset allotment substantially)

Lastly, this additional funding (increase in provincial money) needs to have more of a promise behind it, I won't use the term guarantee, but there needs to at least be legislation to back it up for 10 years or more. The equalization distribution grant needs to be finalized and any +/- 10% variances phased over this period of 10 years or more.

*Current NSPI GIL calculated using traditional grants formula...proposal is to shift to the rate x assessment in order to bring contribution in line with other taxpayers. Do we support this principle?*

Yes, the NSPI grant allocated by calculating rate time's assessment seems fair, and using a rate which is an average of all municipal units holding real property, is adequate. However, PVSC must be held accountable for maintaining current valuations on assessments. There should also be some guarantee that when established this methodology of distributing the grants remain in place for a period of years.

## REVENUE

*What types of flexibility or changes would you like to see with respect to #27 and #28?  
(will be helpful in guiding MGA review discussion)*

*#27...recommends the province and its municipal partners review the finance powers provided in the MGA and the HRM charter to provide broader authority to establish fair and effective property taxation and revenue regimes*

*#28...special tax legislation that restricts property taxation for revenue will be reviewed to determine appropriateness*

...different scenarios were discussed at the committee level, not the least of which was province separately billing for the municipal transfer payments.

In the end, we are all (municipal and provincial) generating revenue from the same ratepayer. Charging rate payers for municipal taxes (to cover provincially imposed expenses) through provincial income tax reporting fails to source those that own land or property in Nova Scotia, but live outside of Canada.

In our current economy, where we are aggressively pursuing new businesses (employment), the autonomy to provide tax breaks, or offer periods of taxation forgiveness (1<sup>st</sup> year free or first two years free) sounds like it would be beneficial in this battle to attract commercial assessment.

To give municipalities more freedom regarding special tax legislation sounds good, in theory. But this recommendation may in itself require a review and sub-committee to be formed. Without proper guidance units may cause themselves more harm than good, especially as we all start competing amongst ourselves. And too, those with the most financial fortitude, HRM for instance, would be able to offer very compelling incentives.

*Until the province is fiscally sound, municipalities will need to continue contributing to mandatory contributions. #29 provides a compromise ...do you support #29*

Agree that provincial transfers should be combined as one amount. Municipalities can then better justify large percentage of taxation that is beyond their control. Separation for billing purposes I see working only if direct billed by the province. If municipalities have to separate on annual billings there is a greater chance that taxpayers choose amounts NOT to pay, and also calls into question validity of tax sale of a property for provincial transfer portion that may, or may not, be deemed real property tax. (I think this might be questionable enough for legal counsel to argue/dispute.)

## COLLABORATION

*#30 calls for a better process for municipalities to work with the province in establishing regulations, how do you envision this process?*

We agree, if regulations are not performing as they should or providing efficiencies as they were intended to do, they need to be eliminated. Before new regulations are put in place, existing regulations and guidelines that are directly affected by the new recommendations will need to be analyzed. Right now, all the existing regulations that have costs to municipalities associated with them, need to be reviewed.

When new regulations are proposed that have substantial costs associated with their implementation, the province or other regulatory body making the recommendation needs to have a plan in place, or a fund accessible, to affected municipal units. Too often these new regulations are suggested without regard for how a municipal unit is expected to fund. And many times there is no regard for the way new regulations will exponentially affect costs when compounded with those already in place.

An analyses, review and study of how new regulations (both in and of themselves and when combined with those already in existence) will affect costs to municipalities will need to be performed by those with access to all pertinent information and expertise for performing calculations...simply setting up a town/rural municipal task force would not be sufficient. This will require a particular skill set. (Just as we mentioned earlier, for the fiscal review committee, these too are expertise not necessarily in existence within regular municipal administration.)

*Are there areas in RQM where we could benefit from Municipal Affairs assistance? explain.*

We are aware of the resources that MA can provide and we do not hesitate to contact them when required.

Due to the multiple reporting requirements of the Province, it would greatly benefit all units, if Municipal Affairs could consider a more streamlined reporting process. Every municipal unit has to create a budget, prepare a statement of estimates, a financial information return, an annual expenditure report (both an interim and a final), an audited financial statement, five year capital plan and (new) a description of capital projects and outcomes upcoming. Because we will all interpret things a little differently, when keying our financials into the templates provided, the staff of Municipal Affairs must then make adjustments. This again takes many hours of municipal staff time to verify these modifications. It would better serve municipal units if a standardized financial statement could be prepared by which Municipal Affairs could manipulate the information into the various formats to meet all their reporting requirements. We are frequently asked to provide information that has already been filed with other provincial departments, just in a different format.