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## **Our HRM Alliance Releases Seven Solutions for a More Sustainable, More Liveable HRM**

Our HRM Alliance is urging HRM staff and politicians to consider and adopt its seven recommended solutions heading into the five year review of the regional plan. At today's press conference, Alliance members put together a giant puzzle in the shape of HRM; seven puzzle pieces representing the seven solutions.

"The solutions were developed with 33 groups and with the needs of urban, suburban and rural residents and taxpayers in mind," says Jen Powley, Alliance Coordinator. The seven solutions are as follows:

1. Use greenbelting to concentrate growth and preserve natural areas and eco-services
2. Invest in the downtown core and growth centres
3. Prioritize and increase investment in transit and active transportation
4. Adhere to residential growth targets
5. Evaluate development charges to ensure that the municipality is not burdened by growth
6. Protect water resources
7. Commit to measuring successes and deficiencies of actions identified in the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy

"Here in St. Margarets Bay we are on the frontlines of poorly planned development," says Geoff Le Boutillier of St. Margarets Bay Stewardship Association. "These seven recommended solutions, if implemented, would direct growth and greatly improve the quality of life in St. Margarets Bay."

"HRM is blessed with lakes and rivers which provide so many services, yet we see poorly planned development adversely affecting water quality including the Sackville River," says Walter Regan, Sackville Rivers Association. "Greenbelting, charging the full cost of development, increasing setbacks from waterways, these and the other recommended solutions, if implemented, will protect our waterways and the recreational opportunities that go with them."

"The Business Commission joined the Alliance because we realized that revitalizing downtown Halifax and Dartmouth and town centres such as Spryfield or Cole Harbour requires a two pronged approach," says Paul MacKinnon, Downtown Halifax Business Commission. "You need to encourage growth downtown and discourage it areas where municipal services are sparse and costly to install."



“How we design our communities, how we get around has a big influence on our health,” says Janet Barlow of Hike Nova Scotia and Ecology Action Centre. “We need denser and pedestrian-friendly communities and more access to trails.”

“HRM has not met the population targets it set out for urban, suburban and rural areas in the 2006 regional plan,” says Mike McFadden, Cole Harbour Parks and Trails Association. “Going forward the municipality needs to meet and even exceed these relatively modest population targets if we want to have a sustainable, liveable city.”

“Measurement and accountability are key,” says John Cascadden, Five Bridges Wilderness Heritage Trust. “Too often municipalities will approve a good plan but slip on implementation. We want to make sure this doesn’t happen with the amended plan coming out of this review.”

Alliance members will fully participate in the regional plan review and are looking forward to more details on the review which began in October 2011 and will wrap up in September 2012 ahead of municipal elections. During this period the Alliance will release more details including a draft plan for greenbelting.

The Our HRM Alliance consists of 33 community-based organizations representing urban, suburban, and rural parts of the Municipality. The groups represent business, environmental, and social sectors.

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