SMBSA SMBCC SMBRTDA

Our Beautiful Bay

How to sustain the environment, culture, and lifestyle

Village Forum IV Briefing Notes

June 25, 2011
St.Luke's United Church Lower Church Hall
5374 St. Margaret's Bay Road, Upper Tantallon

How to Use This Workbook

Forum IV brings the St. Margaret's Bay community together to share thoughts and perceptions on the state of our Bay. Each of us has a special bond with the Bay, and a personal way of noticing how things change—from sediment clouding the shoreline and development of the islands, to sub-divisions and villages in transformation. We stop and ask ourselves, "Who is watching over the Bay?"

The Forum IV Workbook presents a short briefing on 11 *markers* indicative of the health of the Bay and one *proposal* on how to manage change. The modules or discussion groups present an opportunity to discuss issues and solutions that grow out of the briefings.

Taken as a whole, the Forum IV gathering is a first step in bringing community and government together on a made-in-SMB plan to manage our Bay.

Participants are asked to glance through the workbook and to choose the four topics that most interest them. There will be 12 stations, one for each topic, and four half-hour discussion periods, with a half hour break in between. Participants can then rotate through discussion groups in four areas.

Overview: the need to change how we plan, manage, and govern our Bay

I. *Sea Level Rise*
II. *Storm Water Management*
III. *Water Quality*
IV. *Tourism*
V. *Signage*
VI. *Transportation*
VII. *Active Transportation*
VIII. *Septic Systems*
IX. *Land Use*
X. *Islands*
XI. *Coastal Villages*
XII. *Coastal Development Advisory Board*

Overview A NEED FOR CHANGE

Whether we live on or close to St. Margaret's Bay, this familiar coast and its ecology are major factors in our quality of life - how we live, work, and play. The Bay defines us. When people ask where we're from, and we say St. Margaret's Bay, it means a lot. We love the Bay. We cherish it. And it falls to us, the citizens of the Bay, to protect it.

But how? Many of our laws are outdated and inconsistent and leave serious gaps between licensing and enforcement on pressing issues. Sound management of our valuable resource is often hamstrung by a maze of regulators. At the provincial level alone, over 14 government departments and agencies are responsible for the coastal zone; municipal and federal government departments compound the puzzle. Developer, environmentalist, politician, fisher, or just plain citizen—no matter who we are, the jurisdictional tangle can be mind-boggling. Under this system, bad development is inevitable. We all pay the price.

Here's what we know: The Bay is changing faster than our current means of managing change allow. We know sea-level will rise at least one meter over the next hundred years. We know big storms and storm surges have increased on average for nine of the last eleven years. We know the pressures on coastal habitats are huge, our wetlands and salt marshes are disappearing, and the Bay is losing its natural ability to protect itself. In a vain attempt to stop erosion, we reshape the shoreline causing current shifts and new problems elsewhere. Beaches disappear. Headlands disappear. And the costs are astronomical – after Hurricane Juan 27% of Halifax homes made insurance claims, and after Noel, one aquaculture firm alone claimed over $1m, their entire stock of farmed salmon lost to interbreed with wild stocks and dilute the indigenous gene pool.

These stories are now the norm - negative trends which are both unsustainable and unacceptable. We must act now before it's too late.

* We need substantive community involvement in the management process. We're the ones on the front line. It's our Bay, and these are our communities.
* We must be able to make transparent, consistent, and timely decisions.
* The jurisdictional tangle must be sorted and coordinated. When permits are sought, the review process must be clear, and we, the people of the Bay, must play a part.
* We need effective planning and clear land use regulation including measures tooled for climate change
* We need ongoing research, monitoring, and education.

Managing the Bay means working with dynamic forces – our people, our economy, our government, and the beautiful natural world which surrounds us.

I. *Briefing on* **SEA LEVEL RISE (SLR)**

Global sea level rise (SLR) is influenced by two major processes, thermal expansion as ocean temperatures rise and the transfer of water from snow and ice reservoirs e.g. glaciers to the ocean. In addition as seen on the map in purple hatching, in almost all of Atlantic Canada, regional sea level is influenced by submergence.

In recent years there has been considerable change in the level of future global sea level researchers have been projecting:

- *One of the most recent reports (October 2009) published by the Government of New South Wales in Australia, estimates an increase in global sea level of 30 cm by 2050 and 59 cm by 2100. If the impact of potential accelerated ice melt is included the 2100 number increases by 20 cm.*
- *Batterson and Liverman (2010) project between 30 and 40 cm rise in sea level in Newfoundland and Labrador by 2049 and 70 cm to more then 100 cm on the Avalon Peninsula by 2100.*
- *The Province of Nova Scotia's State of the Coast report states "Researchers expect an additional increase [in sea level] from 70 to 140 cm over the next century.*

A substantial amount of the St. Margaret's Bay coast is susceptible to erosion, and features valued by the community are at risk of flooding from rising sea levels and storm surges. Development is prevalent along the coast; this alters the coastline and can conflict with natural coastal processes, ultimately putting people and properties at risk. Current municipal policy and regulations have the capacity to address and mitigate many of the risks but municipalities have not fully implemented regulations, especially those that could control problematic development. Development not directly related to marine based activities should be moved back from the shoreline.

The ongoing challenge faced by the provincial and municipal governments is to ensure, with assistance from the federal government, that economic growth and development in coastal areas proceeds in a manner that minimizes the threat to people, property and infrastructure from SLR and storm events. Residents of the Bay area need to learn about the potential impacts of SLR in order to adapt their land use and development practices to the changing coastal environment conditions. There is a need for public education on the subject of SLR, and advocacy for improved geographic and geologic information about the St. Margaret's Bay coastal area and watersheds. This information is needed for better planning and management of St. Margaret's Bay coast, in a future that includes rising sea levels.

Where are the hot spots on SMB where SLR will make the most impact?

How is SLR starting to affect my coastal property or that of my neighbors?

How will I deal with SLR?

How do I guard against the erosion and septic contamination that may result from SLR?

II. *Briefing on* **STORMWATER MANAGEMENT**

River and Stream Flooding Increase

Stormwater runoff, and thus flooding, increases with the creation of more impervious (does not allow water to penetrate, such as paved parking lots) surfaces. In addition to more impervious surfaces from future development, more stormwater runoff could also occur with climate change. Predictions call for more severe storm events to happen more frequently, and in more intense, short bursts. When stormwater flows in streams and reaches the Bay, it can exacerbate coastal flooding and sedimentation.

- Reduce stormwater runoff by regulating impervious surfaces
- Increase the amount of precipitation that recharges groundwater
- Reduce sedimentation
- Reduce polluted stormwater runoff

Ground water Recharge Decrease

More runoff from impervious surfaces means less recharge of precipitation to groundwater. Certain shallow dug wells, drilled wells in dense locations, and streams could periodically dry up.

Sediment Deposition Increase

Although erosion is a natural process, human activities, especially during the earth-disturbing or excavation stage of construction can cause accelerated erosion and sedimentation of surface waters and the Bay. This changes the shape of streams to be broader and shallower, which increases flooding and decreases fish habitat quality. Sediment also clogs fish gills, and oceanfront boat moorings can become too shallow. On the positive side, more salt marshes are created at ocean stream discharge points, and in coves down-Bay. Sediment in Whynacht's Cove in Tantallon has increased one metre over 10 years.

Water Pollution Increase

Pollutants in overland runoff cling to sediment particles, and during heavy rainstorms are transported to surface waters and the Bay. This problem is increased by drainage ditches discharging to surface waters, and road sanding. Toxins, pathogens, and nutrients from stormwater runoff decrease the water quality of inland and coastal waters. This, in turn, impacts wildlife, and can also decrease well water quality. In general, greater than 15% impervious surfaces in a sub-watershed, or less than 50m stream setbacks cause pollution in the drainage network. Recent water studies have shown a fecal coliform (benign digestive bacteria as an indicator of harmful e-coli bacteria) hot spot at the head of Whynacht's Cove in Tantallon.

III. *Briefing on* **WATER QUALITY**

Groundwater, surface water, wetlands (including salt marshes), and marine coastal (salt) water, are all linked in the hydrologic (water) cycle. Contamination of water quality in the watershed upland of rivers, streams, and bays can spell contamination downstream.

Surface water is water that is found in lakes, rivers, streams, ponds, and other natural watercourses. It is also found in marine bays, estuaries, and oceans. Groundwater is water that is found below the ground surface. It is the source of water for wells and springs and helps to sustain water flow in surface water bodies, such as lakes and streams. Surface water and groundwater are both used as drinking water resources in Nova Scotia.

In the St. Margaret's Bay area most residents rely on private wells for drinking water and are not part of a public drinking water system. Drinking water quality and treatment is a concern especially where new development resulting in increased density of homes is taking place.

Most coastal water pollution results from non-point sources that are not confined to discrete locations; such pollution results from water travelling over or percolating through large areas on land before entering a waterway, estuary or coastal area. There are many non-point sources of contamination that threaten our coastal waters which include agricultural and forestry activities, urban runoff and atmospheric deposition. The majority of pollutants from non-point sources enter the coastal waters via the province's river systems, which drain into the ocean. In St. Margaret's Bay's rivers, streams, coves and bay, this could be anything washed down a drain, and applied to a garden or lawn.

The Province of Nova Scotia's State of the Coast report states: "There has been no systematic, planned monitoring of coastal water quality that would enable a spatial or trend analysis to be undertaken of the quality coastal marine waters around the province. The database is, at best, geographically sporadic and often dated." Very little is known about the water quality of St. Margaret's Bay and its tributary watersheds. However, the closure of shellfish harvesting areas is often looked at as a marine environmental quality indicator. Shellfish are highly sensitive to the quality of the marine environment and, if the water is contaminated with bacteria, toxic algae or chemical pollutants, these substances will accumulate in the flesh of the crustaceans making them hazardous to human health.

There has been an increase in the size of shellfish closure areas in St. Margaret's Bay in recent years. From 1995 to 2001 the total shellfish closure area in SMB stayed relatively the same at 138 acres. However, since 2002, the closure area increased to 2752 acres, and has stayed at that size, suggesting that the increase could be due to cumulative environmental impacts.

These 'cumulative environmental impacts' may be the results of increased development in the watershed increasing non- point source pollution. Good governance, planning and management coupled with public education and engagement can improve water quality and keep it at its best but we have work to do to reach this goal.

What can I do personally to protect the water quality of the St. Margaret's Bay Watershed?

How can my community contribute to freshwater and saltwater water-quality monitoring?

What should be included in public education and engagement program for water quality in St. Margaret's Bay?

IV. *Briefing on* **TOURISM**

Our coastal environment is an integral part of the quality of life valued by residents, and a key attraction of this region as an inviting destination. Provincial tag-lines try to capture the mystique of our seacoast—*Canada's Ocean Playground / So Much to Sea / Shaped by the Sea*….

The Issues

- Lack of infrastructure to capitalize on natural beauty, coastal environment (no bicycle lanes, no scenic pull-offs, limited public access to the Bay, few park areas)
- No significant public investment in Peggy's Cove, a provincial icon (federal divestiture of lighthouses to unfunded communities/groups; deterioration of lighthouse, deGarthe property and buildings, church; no safe walkways, traffic management problematic); tourism experience fails to meet expectations
- Signage proliferation and clutter – no attractive signage identity
- Beautification initiatives isolated: no *Bay as an integrated community* approach
- Discontinuation by HRM Council of visitor services
- Lack of public awareness of tourism as a key driver of the rural economy

- Steward the environment and natural resources
- Attend to roadways and maintenance, signage, pull offs, safe walkways and/or boardwalks, infrastructure issues in Peggy's Cove.
- Heighten the profile of tourism as an economic generator
- Seek marine conservancy status for St. Margaret's and Mahone Bays.

Moving Forward:

- Recent incorporation of Tourism in Dept. of Economic and Rural Development
- Coastal strategy under development by the province (expected autumn, 2011)
- Active involvement and support of HRM Councillors Rankin and Lund
- Bluenose Coast Association is working with SMB Tourism, Chamber, and other stakeholders to implement a signage/wayfinding plan to complement a range of tourism projects over the past several years. These have had a powerful social impact in bringing together diverse communities to meet common objectives.
- RECAP group on the Aspotogan is working on a bicycle lane for Hwy 329.

V. *Briefing on* **SIGNAGE IN THE BAY**

Consultant Roger Brooks writes: "There are two primary signage issues that are critical to the success of any community: gateway and directional (or wayfinding) signage. Gateways introduce the visitors to the community and/or the downtown districts and provide a sense of arrival. Directional signs help visitors and residents navigate the area, telling them what attractions and amenities are available and where to find them. If visitors can't find what they are looking for they will simply head on down the road."

1. ISSUE DEFINED
    - Reduce visual pollution, sign clutter
    - Clear, directional, consistent, Visitor Wayfinding needed

2. WHY THE ISSUE NEEDS ATTENTION:
    - Current by-laws do not adequately reflect needs – need new by-laws
        - Wayfinding / tourism
        - HRM business signage by-laws not clear
        - Road signage not addressed
        - Address new provincial legislation that allows municipalities to regulate
    - Enforcement needs to be addressed in new by-laws – need for compliance with all by-laws

Background Information - Notes from Bay Chamber:

The St. Margaret's Bay area is one of Atlantic Canada's most scenic areas. People travel from all over to visit its natural beauty and take in the scenic drive that surrounds it. These *visitors* and the *'experience'* they derive play a significant role in the lives of businesses and residents that make up the surrounding communities.

Recent public hearings, particularly those in response to 'by-law' changes by local development, have served to highlight significant issues with respect to that scenic beauty. One of these issues is *sign pollution*! There is a proliferation of signs, put up mainly by local businesses that, in a percentage of the public's view, detract from that experience. With continued development in the area this can only get worse! This issue is heightened by the lack of adequate and enforced signage by-laws.

In response to this, the *St. Margaret's Bay Chamber of Commerce Beautification (Signage) Committee* is reviewing the signage options available to our local businesses and, with the input and help of all interested parties, will try to provide recommendations that meet the often conflicting needs regarding the whole issue.

The *St. Margaret's Bay Chamber of Commerce (SMBCC)*, as a member of the St. Margaret's Bay community, is primarily a focus of 'local' businesses, individuals, and associations whose objective is to promote and improve trade and commerce and the economic, civic, and social welfare of the area. *(Note)*

As growth & development continues in our rural, scenic and prosperous community, the nature of this growth, and how it affects our 'local' businesses and the economic community in general, becomes a major concern for our members. Where Upper Tantallon, specifically at the 'crossroads', has been designated as the "commercial centre" for the Hammonds Plains and St. Margaret's Bay areas and that HRM's Visioning Process for our community is happening in the very near future, the SMBCC has decided to assist in the process and co-facilitate a series of public meetings (community forums) along with the St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association and the St. Margaret's Bay Regional Development Tourism Association. The goal of this 'coalition' is to articulate the community's values and to help ensure that these are implemented in HRM's Visioning and Development Planning for our area. Part of the values arising from the community forums to date are to support green spaces, alternative transportation links (bike & walking paths), maintain a "coastal village" character, to sustain local businesses and services, and to minimize the type of 'large scale development' that will detract from the appeal and nature of the area.

Position

The SMBCC feels that the nature and quality of any development, when done with careful planning, consideration and, most importantly, the community's input could potentially provide our area with the type of development that encourages greater economic success for local residents and businesses alike. We believe that such development will encourage developers and businesses to provide more of the products and services the community wants, and provide it in the form that is desirable to the majority. It is therefore the position of the SMBCC to support the community in its visioning and planning efforts and to maintain representation within the 'coalition' to facilitate these efforts.

(Note: As per Article II, Sect 2 of the SMBCC By-Laws)

Notes from Bluenose Coast:

Directional Wayfinding Signage Plan

- Recently approved and soon to be released and presented in regional public forums
- Responds to needs of residents and visitors
- A direct response to recommendations by Roger Brooks
- Provides clear, direct directional wayfinding for visitors and residents
- Provides a visual recognition, consistent look, feel and theme to the region
- Provides clear delineation of destinations
- Intuitive wayfinding – correlation to each community in area
- Consistent look and feel of signage relates to promotional materials, map, kiosks, websites, Facebook, smart phone apps…etc.
- Will eliminate signage clutter and provide a signature theme to region
- Design aspect will enhance visitor experience and beautify region for visitors and residents

VI. *Briefing on* **TRANSPORTATION**

Transportation literally connects many aspects of our lives, and it is a focal point for many decisions that are made about *how* we are to live: decisions about residential and commercial development, public transportation, fuel-efficient vehicles; and choices about whether to walk, ride a bicycle or drive, etc. As a rural/suburban community, St. Margaret's Bay is wedded to the private vehicle, to the oil economy, and to a road system tailored for private vehicles.

Issues

All future transportation and development decisions and investments should in the process support sustainable modes of transport, and should anticipate potential disruptions due to extreme weather events.

- Almost all transportation planning – at the federal, provincial and municipal levels – is focused on making travel faster and safer. As desirable as these goals might be, they create the conditions that encourage costly and unsustainable modes of transportation (i.e. private vehicles), and discourage sustainable modes of transportation (i.e. public transit, bicycles, shared vehicles and walking).
- The direct costs of private vehicle travel – estimated to be annually about $3,000 per capita in Nova Scotia – do not include costs paid through taxes and other means. When *all* the costs of road passenger transportation – much of which is exacted in the form of taxes, borrowing from the future, and compromised health and well-being – the total cost is approximately $7,600 per capita.
- As a coastal community, St. Margaret's Bay faces significant risks associated with sea-level rise. Coastal roads are vulnerable to extreme weather events, and may cause disruption of transport for short or protracted periods.

Specific Recommendations

- We would like to see less need for private vehicles by developing public transit and/or shared transport to the internal hubs within the Bay area.
- All future road upgrading should provide for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Commercial development should be concentrated, to support the cost effective development of public transit and active transportation infrastructure.
- Indirect costs should be calculated and taken into account for all transportation and development decisions.
- Communities located on coastal roads should identify vulnerable locations and work with municipal and provincial transportation authorities to develop short and long-range protection against severe storms, flooding and sea level rise.

VII. *Briefing on* **ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION**

Active Transportation (A/T) incorporates a variety of self-propelled modes of transportation, which utilize on and off-road facilities. These modes of transportation include in-line skating, walking, jogging, cycling and skateboarding. Also included, but not as commonly, are manual wheelchairs, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Active transportation should be available year round for all members of the community.
The four categories of Active Transportation as defined in HRM's Active Transportation Strategy are:

1. *Active Commuting* - involves journeys to and from work.
2. *Active Workplace Travel* - includes trips during working hours to carry out activities such as delivering materials or attending meetings.
3. *Active Destination Oriented Trips* - includes trips to and from school, shops, visiting friends and running errands.
4. *Active Recreational Transportation* - involves the use of an A/T mode for fitness or recreational pursuits, such as hiking or cycling

The infrastructure to support Active Transportation includes: off-road multi-use trails, sidewalks, signed bicycle routes, bicycle lanes, and paved shoulders on arterial and higher volume collector roads or rural roads. Safe, well-connected routes, with end of trip facilities encourage A/T.

Issues

- We live in a society where people are less active and this change in our lifestyle has led to significant levels of obesity and related health concerns. Physical activity provides proven health benefits, protects against a number of diseases, and decreases health care costs. By providing a variety of A/T options to the general public we can encourage a more active lifestyle and decrease the reliance upon the automobile.
- 70% of greenhouse gases come from the transportation sector, with 45% from cars and light trucks. Short distance trips generate more pollution per km and it is these trips that A/T could replace. Active Transportation alleviates air pollution, noise pollution, and water quality issues.

Specific Recommendations

- Install bike lanes on highways 333, 3, and 329 modeled on the recommendations of the Route Enhancement Committee of the Aspotogan Peninsula (RECAP) Active Transportation Strategy.
- Install bike path on the Hammonds Plains Road.
- Create a bus transfer station at the Tantallon crossroads by the Atlantic Superstore.
- Require that new sub-divisions provide an A/T corridor.
- Create more developed bike and walking links to and from area schools to encourage A/T amongst children and adolescents

VIII. *Briefing on* **DOMESTIC SEPTIC SYSTEMS**

Should people who access the Bay be concerned?

Direct outfalls (untreated septic discharge) to the Bay were constructed without regulations prior to the 1980s. Fewer people lived on the Bay or near the streams in its catchment area. Pollution was local, and was managed locally. In theory, development since the 1980s has been regulated and should have no impact on the marine environment.

But shellfish sampling and analysis in the early 2000s resulted in a number of closures to shellfish harvesting. Was this the result of better information (prior to reductions in federal monitoring programs), greater stress on the marine environment, or higher standards and expectations? All three.

We need to **understand our community standards and expectations**. We may have to accept very localized pollution from accidental or legacy conditions, but be wary of conditions which cause widespread, persistent pollution. What are the desired outcomes? There are limits to shoreline development and boating if we want to eat mussels from the coves and inlets.

To control pollution of the various coves around the Bay, we need to **manage the environmental stresses caused by development**. These stressors include sewage out-falls, land clearing, runoff sediment, agricultural/hinterland drainage, pets, chemicals from fertilizers, boat sewage discharges, boat exhaust discharges, and seepage from septic systems. The health of our on-site sewage disposal systems has a major influence on maintaining community standards.

We need to **be engaged and informed** if we wish to understand whether our expectations are being addressed, and what the priorities are for achieving these expectations. World-wide, communities—with the help of their scientific establishments—have used shellfish sampling programs to educate, monitor general conditions and trends, and evaluate local questions.

Should all owners of on-site sewage disposal systems be concerned? Yes. Septic systems are significant investments. We are responsible for ensuring they work. They have to be replaced if they are not maintained properly. They are not complicated, but owners who are not familiar with them need to learn and apply some basic information.

Nova Scotia Environment has three useful publications for homeowners with on-site sewage Disposal Systems (www.gov.ns.ca/nse/wastewater/pubs.asp):

Maintaining a septic system

Nova Scotia Environment has three useful publications for homeowners with on-site sewage Disposal Systems (www.gov.ns.ca/nse/wastewater/pubs.asp):

Taking Care of Your Home Sewage Disposal System is a two-page publication which describes the main components of a system - a septic tank, a disposal field, and the soil surrounding the disposal field.

IX. *Briefing on* **LAND USE**

The coast of St. Margaret's Bay (SMB), and the watershed lands that drain into it, span two municipalities: Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) along the north and east coasts, and the Municipality of the District of Chester (District of Chester) along the west coast of SMB.

Growth

In both of these municipalities, new development in the SMB area is occurring primarily along the coast. In HRM, the Upper Tantallon area is one of the fastest growing in Atlantic Canada. In the District of Chester, the SMB coast is also growing, but more slowly. This growth will continue as residential lots are developed and commercial uses to serve them expand.

"Smart growth" should be encouraged by channeling development to the most suitable locations, and protecting environmental resources by regulating appropriate land uses and densities. Primary tools for implementing smart growth include: regional and district plans, land use and subdivision bylaws, green space protection, and sewer and water services limits.

Governance

Since there are two municipalities flanking the SMB coast, their strategic plans and land use bylaws differ. However, they are both subject to certain provincial and federal laws that impact land uses, e.g., the Nova Scotia Environment Act, the Nova Scotia Condominium Act, and the laws of Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

- Encourage "smart growth" that is planned for suitable land uses, locations and densities.
- Support a multi-nodal development pattern of distinct village identities, not sprawl.
- Accelerate green space protection before it is too late.
- Implement a more detailed Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use Bylaw for the "General Land Use Area" of the District of Chester.

HRM Land Use Controls in SMB

The HRM Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (Regional Plan) designates the SMB coastal corridor area as "Rural Commuter" land use. (See "HRM Generalized Future Land Use Map" in reference material.) This is a low to mid density development area, where large "Open Space" subdivisions are permitted, with clustered dwellings. This area is not intended for urban core densities and heavy industry. If such uses were proposed, they would need to go through the development agreement process, and would not necessarily be approved due to their potential adverse impacts on this sensitive rural/suburban coastal area.

Current land use bylaws in the SMB coastal corridor zone this area as predominantly mixed use, with some residential and minor amounts of other uses. (See "HRM Zoning Map in SMB"in reference material.) Mixed use zoning ***does not***: (1) distinguish village centres; (2) prohibit land uses inappropriate for coastal areas; (3) encourage a village aesthetic character; (4) promote sustainable development; or (5) protect green space. In other words, it does not encourage the type of coastal village that residents at previous forums said they desire.

Smarter growth can be encouraged through amendments to district planning strategies and land use bylaws, or sub-areas within them, as was done for the Tantallon at the Crossroads. This proposed bylaw amendment fosters a more coastal village character with revised land. Proposals land uses not permitted as-of-right can still be evaluated through the development agreement process.

Once complete, the Tantallon at the Crossroads land use bylaw amendment can serve as a model for the rest of the SMB coastal corridor area. It is important to retain the multi-nodal development pattern that has emerged in HRM, with distinct village identities, not just undifferentiated suburban sprawl. A hierarchy of development nodes is part of the HRM Regional Plan, and several such nodes are designated in the SMB coastal corridor. The proposed Rte. 103 exit and connector at Ingramport may have land use planning impacts on development nodes and green space.

Green Space

The most important green spaces in the SMB coastal corridor, and connections between them, should be protected before it is too late. Connectivity supports biodiversity by giving wildlife access to habitats they need to survive and flourish, and it facilitates trails. Protecting green spaces provides many environmental and recreational benefits. It also helps manage sprawl.

District of Chester Land Uses and Controls in SMB

As in HRM, in the District of Chester there are a number of small communities that have a village identity along the coastal corridor. Unlike the HRM side of the Bay, there are still some large undeveloped tracts abutting Highway 329, which circumscribes the Bay.

The District of Chester faces the challenges of an aging and somewhat diminishing year-round population. At the same time, there is development pressure from developers wishing to attract retirees, vacationers, and summer visitors, as well as year round residents, especially along the coast. A 550 acre golf subdivision is proposed for the area near Mill Cove. It will extend inland from existing multi-family and elementary school development near the coast, and form a new village.

Land Use Regulation

Land use regulation in the District of Chester outside of Chester Village, is controlled by the Municipal Planning Strategy, Land Use Bylaw, and Subdivision Bylaw. Outside of Chester Village, most of the Municipality is in the General Business (GB) Zone. The intent of the GB zone is to regulate very large or potentially disruptive commercial or industrial developments. Such developments require an Environmental Assessment under the NS Environment Act, and would be subject to the Development Agreement Process. It also regulates some multi-unit residential development.

In the SMB area, the Mill Cove Park area has specific detailed zoning (see "Mill Cove Park Zoning Map" in reference material). In 2000 Aspotogan Heritage Trust (the Trust) requested zoning in Mill Cove Park in order to implement a Land Use Development Plan that was commissioned by the Trust in 1999. The Land Use Development Plan included a conceptual plan for future development and land use. Council adopted the zoning scheme in 2002 to help the Trust ensure that future development by the private sector would be carried out in accordance with the Trust's vision for the site.

An updated and more detailed Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use Bylaw for the "General Land Use Area" that covers the majority of the Municipality is needed, especially for the SMB coastal corridor. The Municipality has recently appointed members to a new Municipal Planning Advisory Committee (PAC), with one representative from each electoral district. The first major undertaking for the new PAC is to complete a review of the Municipal Planning Documents, including the Land Use Bylaw and the Municipal Planning Strategy.

This would also help facilitate smart growth, and coordination with HRM, to better protect the waters of the Bay, and the SMB coastal village character that residents in both the District of Chester and HRM cherish.

X. *Briefing on* **ISLANDS**

St. Margaret's Bay has close to 30 islands that have enriched the lives of residents and visitors alike over many generations. They provide a unique viewscape for those traveling around the bay by road or by water. They accommodate recreation in the form of a place to picnic or camp for boaters. They also act as a breakwater and shelter from weather for recreational and commercial boaters. Their habitats support unique flora and fauna and are home to nesting osprey, eagles, herons and more.

Troop Island in particular holds one of the only remaining old growth coastal forests on any island along Nova Scotia's South Shore; part of the island remains undisturbed for hundreds of years. The islands also hold a heritage dating back thousands of years to the M'iqmaq and early European settlers who would live there in the summer, often with their livestock. Some islands have also been used as a resource base with trees being harvested and rock being quarried. The privately owned islands provide a sanctuary for seasonal residents.

The islands range in size from small rock outcroppings to the largest, Shut In, at close to 85 acres. Nine are provincially owned, with the remainder being in private hands. The status of the crown islands is currently being reviewed by the provincial government as part of a province wide plan to protect coastal lands. The remaining private islands can be grouped into three categories: developable, undevelopable, and developed.

- Protect **developable islands** from development.
- Work with owners of **undevelopable islands** to create binding protections (e.g. easements, covenants, "Ecogifts").
- Work with owners of **developed islands** to better steward their ecology.

Given the high rate of residential growth and development in the area, there is need to develop a strategy to protect these important coastal island habitats and wilderness areas. Islands in the Bay need to be protected from the intensifying development pressures before it is too late. Frank's George Island is a prime example of large-scale development impacting the ecology of the Bay. The 44-acre island has been subdivided into 15 lots, power brought to the island and clear cutting begun. By contrast the SMBSA has worked with the province and community to steward Micou's Island for the benefit of current and future generations. The opportunity is to develop a long-term view of the island and encourage stewardship and protection of these unique resources to residents and visitors of the Bay.

XI. *Briefing on* **COASTAL VILLAGES**

A garland of coastal villages rings St. Margaret's Bay. Each has a distinctive character, history, streetscape, mix of businesses, traffic, and social cohesion. Up to now, each village has preserved a sense of scale that is personal and feels like home. We identify with our village and are proud to present warmth and local color to visiting tourists.

The twinning of Highway 103 and designation of Exit 5 as a population hub has had a profound effect on our coastal villages. They are becoming not only a focus of new population growth but of development, which includes the larger chains and box stores. Exit sprawl spills down from the exits into the towns, creating a loss of intimacy, relaxation, personalized shopping, and charm. Our villages are in danger of losing their identity.

> We need to protect the coastal villages of St. Margaret's Bay which are changing due to urban sprawl and uncontrolled development.

Tantallon at the Crossroads and Hubbards, the two largest coastal villages, have experienced the most impact. Concerned citizens in both towns have launched visioning and planning exercises with HRM to adapt the current Districts 1 and 3 Municipal Planning Strategy to individual circumstances. Tantallon at the Crossroads has just completed a three year community driven process to develop amendments to the Districts 1 and 3 Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use Bylaws. These new amendments will help make development conform to community values by creating a special sub-area as a secondary planning district, with its own municipal planning strategy and land use bylaws.

(Details of the proposed Land Use Bylaw amendment for Tantallon at the Crossroads are available from the HRM web site: http://www.halifax.ca/planning/Case16424Details.html)

How does the community view our changing villages—what do we reject and what do we encourage?

How do we manage change?

XII. *Briefing on* A **COASTAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD**

St. Margaret's Bay straddles two municipal administrations: Halifax Regional Municipality and the Municipality of the District of Chester. Any integrated management solution will ultimately require both jurisdictions to coordinate their land use policies and bylaws.

Form a Coastal Development Advisory Board, as an organ of HRM, to facilitate coastal development decisions.

At present, most of St. Margaret's Bay is zoned as "mixed use". This means that almost any form of development is permissible. As a result, we have a mostly residential Bay, but it is intermixed with some commercial, light industrial, schools, churches, fishing, aquaculture, small farms, forestry, tourism related businesses, and so on. Every so often, a significant new development is proposed, such as a shopping mall, a large residential subdivision, or an interchange on a provincial thruway. Many of these new developments cause Bay residents a great deal of stress and discomfort as they try to cope with change, and reorganize their perceptions of where they live. Residents feel victimized by changes they had no idea could happen.

Land use bylaws can help control development by regulating what can happen where and under what conditions. Ideally these bylaws should be based on a consensus, framed through a cooperative effort involving community input, businesses, elected councilors, and municipal planners.

Sometimes making decisions about larger developments can be complex, and involve broader jurisdictions, such as the NS Department of Environment and the Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans. It takes time to make these complex decisions, and they must go through an appropriate consultation process.

In some parts of the world, such as California, local coastal boards have much wider permitting powers, and, in addition to involving communities and municipalities in the process, they also incorporate other levels of government.

Proposed Pilot Project: The formation of a Coastal Development Advisory Board (CDAB), as an organ of HRM, may be a way to facilitate some of the difficult development decisions that impact the lands and waters of St. Margaret's Bay.

A properly selected and representative board, with roots in the community and an ear to community values, could make recommendations to HRM councilors and planning staff and approximate a community consultation process.

The ideal CDAB should streamline and coordinate coastal management in SMB, cut down time frames, and close dangerous gaps in the process.

HRM was chosen as a pilot for a SMB Coastal Development Advisory Board as a precedent has already been established – the Herring Cove Advisory Steering Committee. A successful initiative for SMB will find a way to link this mechanism to the Municipality of the District of Chester.