

Ms. Kathleen Fralic
Engagement Lead
Planning & Development, HRM
Regionalplan@halifax.ca

November 2, 2020

Re: Protecting Sandy Lake – Sackville River in the Regional Plan

Dear Ms. Fralic,

I write today to bring further attention to an important ecological area requiring protection in the context of the Regional Plan review and the Halifax Green Network Plan (HGPN).

Kingswood Ratepayers Association is one of 27 member groups comprising the Sandy-Lake – Sackville River Regional Park (SL-SRRP) Coalition. We fully support the efforts of SL-SRRP to ensure protection for the ecological unit which is the Sandy Lake-Sackville River watershed, including its submission to the RP+10 review (<https://www.sandylakecoalition.ca/rpsubmission>).

Issues of Interest

If you care about access to nature...

We need to “take it outside,” at Sandy Lake. The land around the lake are already used unofficially by citizens of HRM for recreational purposes through a network of existing trails. Currently, a wide variety of outdoor activities are conducted on these lands, including mountain biking, bird watching, swimming, paddling, fishing, dog-walking, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, to name a few.

More and more, cities (and health authorities) are coming to understand the extensive health benefits of providing people with access to nature. HRM is talking about the [benefits of nature](#), but here's a chance for the city to secure this piece of "green" health infrastructure. Free, easy access to nature can prevent and treat mental and physical health challenges, and make communities more attractive to live in.

We support the Sandy Lake – Sackville River Regional Park Coalition in its call to expand the Regional Park by additional 1,800 acres. An expanded Regional Park will provide more opportunities for people to access nature, yet will be big enough to keep ecological processes intact.

We understand how interconnected the entire area is from an ecological perspective. Recent studies by scientists and park planners indicate any further development within the Sandy Lake/Marsh Lake watershed will negatively impact the existing park assets through to the Sackville River, and will affect flooding conditions along the river, including the Bedford floodplains.

Now is a crucial decision-making point

We understand an application for Secondary Planning for lands immediately west of Sandy Lake is imminent by at least one developer. This creates a new urgency for us to find solutions that protect the Sandy Lake-Sackville River watershed.

We ask that:

- *The SL-SRRP be expanded by 1,800 acres (refer to Map 1 in the SL-SRRP submission). Research the SL-SRRP boundary in the RP+10 process so that new boundaries based on science are established to encompass all remaining essential watershed to be protected and managed as a regional park for all time. That would mean finding “win-win” solutions that serve both the community and present landowners needs.*
- *the Halifax Green Network Plan (HGNP) be included in its entirety in the RP+10.*
- *All requests in Sections A, B and C of the SL-SRRP Coalition submission be addressed and implemented within the RP+10 review.*

Conservation work still to be achieved

We are thankful HRM has shown leadership with the recent passing of HalifACT and for the HGNP Map 5 amendment to the Regional Plan’s conservation design development agreement.

HRM’s acquisition of 160 acres next to Marsh Lake for the park in 2015 gives us some assurance the city indeed wants to expand and secure the park area.

We look to the RP+10 to expand the existing boundary to protect and enhance the existing watershed for all time.

Sincerely,

Roger Spriggs
Chair
Kingswood Ratepayers Association
chair@mykingswood.ca

cc: Mayor Mike Savage, HRM Council members, Leah Perrin, HRM Planning, Sandy Lake - Sackville River Regional Park Coalition