



# Memorandum

To: Municipal Council - Argyle

Alain Muise, CPA, CA

RE: Update – Regional planning initiative

## ***Background:***

The Regional Planning concept was initiated by administrators at the Association of Regional Administrators' regional meetings. A small party including CAO Muise developed a concept and applied for provincial funding under the Municipal Innovation Program (Municipal Affairs program). The application was successful, and we received approval for \$180,000 – to hire a consultant to recommend the appropriate way to create an Intermunicipal Agreement to provide a tri-county planning initiative.

The case for establishing the RPI is strong. It is based on (quoting consultants):

- *Several participating municipalities have indicated challenges in delivering quality / timely planning and development services based on historical modes of operation. The RPI will provide for greater operational efficiency and scalability.*
- *The NS Government introduced changes to the Municipal Government Act (Bill 58) in 2018 making planning mandatory for all land within municipal boundaries. Tri-County municipalities will struggle to meet these requirements including the capacity to address the 10-year. comprehensive review requirements (MPSs & LUBs). The RPI will enhance the ability to do so.*
- *Municipalities are also faced with managing compliance risk related to legislative requirements under the Nova Scotia Coastal Protection Act, the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act, and the Federal Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA). A joined-up approach through the RPI makes sense.*
- *An RPI will signal that the Tri-County Area is 'open for businesses, while also positively influencing talent and business attraction. The province sees this approach as an innovative model.*
- *It will help address important cross-cutting issues that defy geography, things like drought and climate change management and mitigation.*

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- An RPI will set the stage for smart growth that's well planned and effectively managed.
- The RPI will create a higher-profile opportunity for planning and development professionals, supporting talent recruitment and retention at the staffing level.

**Where are we now:**

CAO's have met multiple times to discuss governance, funding, and other matters. AFN Consultants were hired to lead that process. They collected lots of data on how each unit operates and deals with planning services. We have recommendations from the consultants, seen below. We are currently negotiating the financial aspect of the proposal, and it would be appropriate to bring this information to Council now to discuss, debate and ask questions.

**PROPOSED GOVERNANCE MODEL – DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION**

The RPI would operate largely as an administrative unit implementing decisions already approved by Councils. Proposed governance, represented in **Appendix A**, includes a Regional Oversight Committee comprised of elected officials, operating under specific *terms of reference*. A CAO Planning Leadership Group would provide ongoing administrative oversight for the RPI. This would, in effect, function as a board of directors for the RPI. With an initial five-year mandate, the RPI would grow and scale over time. Governance features would be noted in the proposed Intermunicipal Agreement and *Project Charter*.



