

FAQ - Response to IMPACT Presentation to Council – August 18, 2009

The community group, IMPACT, raised some important points in their presentation to the Executive Committee of Council today (August 18, 2009). The members of IMPACT were kind enough to provide their key concerns in advance. The issues raised by this group (environmental, social, and business case concerns) are important, and they are issues that are being considered by the Municipality.

The following questions and answers will be added to the FAQ document found on the Municipality of East Hants website.

Environmental:

***Q1/** What will be done to prevent (a) risk to the Shubenacadie River System, (b) loss of habitat for wildlife and aquatic life, (c) risk of infestation of foreign insects, (d) removal of working agricultural lands, and (e) noise and light pollution?*

A1/ These are issues that are already being addressed by the Community Consultative Committee. Before any project goes forward, a full environmental assessment will be undertaken and mitigation of any risks (if they exist) will be incorporated into the development plan before approval is given to proceed.

- (a) “Run off” into the Shubenacadie River System was noted as a concern. Any run off water would be captured and cleaned. In an inland port in Rochelle, IL, the retention pond serves as a home for geese and turtles.
- (b) Many steps can be taken to protect wildlife and their habitats. Any wetlands moved can be replaced in environmentally sensitive areas, and design of the facility and surrounding area can incorporate a means for wildlife to move safely between areas. For instance, in Rochelle, IL, turtle tunnels were created to allow them to safely cross the tracks.

In general, the development of a rail facility is an environmentally sensitive effort, since trains have far less impact than trucks in terms of air emissions, fuel consumption and carbon efficiency.

- (c) All new facilities are built to the highest environmental standards. The Municipality of East Hants can greatly reduce the risk of infestations of foreign insects by controlling design and building standards and specifications, and can ensure that enforcement of standards occurs at the local level.
- (d) Farming is important to the economy and culture of East Hants. An Agriculture Impact Study will be commissioned to consider potential impact on the agricultural sector. The inland port could improve the competitiveness of some farms by providing better and more cost effective

access to supplies and markets. In some areas it was also found that existing environmental issues (such as flooding in Rochelle, IL) were actually greatly improved through features built into the design of the facility.

- (e) Experience in areas where inland port facilities have been developed (such as Rochelle, IL) indicate that noise and light pollution can be addressed through a combination of new lighting technologies and specific focused beams, facility design (including specific landscaping and planting) and policies.

Social:

Q2/ What will be done to address (a) increased highway traffic in the “Corridor Area”, (b) the affect of increased rail traffic on railroad crossing safety, (c) the risk of organized crime, and (d) concern for the Woodworth families and other landowners (particularly retirees) who live in or near the area being considered for the inland port facility.

A2/ The Gateway Committee is currently looking at the terms of reference for a Social Impact Study to consider the potential impacts (both positive and negative) of an inland port facility on the social aspects of life in Milford Station and surrounding areas.

We must recognize that our communities are always changing and this will continue with or without an inland port. Economic growth is necessary in order to improve infrastructure and create jobs. Without economic growth, we will continue to lose our young people to communities with better infrastructure and more opportunities.

- (a) All residents would benefit from improved roadways. As a key component of the development, a new interchange and access road between Highway #2 and Highway 102 will be built. This will serve to decrease traffic on Highway #2. In addition, it will give local residents better access to Highway 102. Ancillary business development is expected to take place on the north side of Highway 102 and should not impact the community centred around Highway #2.

Planners have the opportunity to implement traffic calming and state of the art designs for on- and off-ramps that would result in the separation of freight traffic from other traffic.

- (b) Rail traffic will not increase over that which is required to serve the needs of the Port of Halifax. As the Port of Halifax grows, rail traffic could increase, but this will happen whether or not a facility is built in Milford.

Improved crossings for local residents (such as under or over passes) can be built into the development plan. This benefit will flow from the development and is not currently available to local residents.

- (c) We have not seen any evidence of a correlation between international crime and the development of new terminals. Crime is typically linked to unemployment or underemployment. Security issues would be carefully monitored and managed.

In designing the facility from the ground up, the opportunity will exist to incorporate the latest in security design and technology in order to effectively deal with any issues.

- (d) The Woodworth families located at the end of the Woodworth Road should not be directly affected by the development. The land beyond the footprint of the development to the river will be left in its current state.

Efforts will be made to ensure that the peace and security of the community is protected. In fact, community benefits from the facility could improve the quality of life for residents.

Business Case:

Q3/ (a) *How is the economic viability of an inland port in Milford impacted by increased capacity at the Port of Halifax and increased investments in Burnside as part of the Atlantic Gateway?*

The group has also expressed concern about (b) the spending of tax dollars on research to move the opportunity forward.

A3/ This project is about meeting the needs of intermodal clients that can't currently be met in HRM. An inland port in Milford Station would complement the Port of Halifax.

The purpose of an inland port is to provide an area where shipping clients can take part in value-added activities before sending their products to market. For example, the business park could include a manufacturing plant where parts are sent and assembled, or facilities where painting or packaging is done before the product is shipped to its destination. This doesn't currently exist in Nova Scotia so it would provide the Port of Halifax with something new to offer new and existing shipping customers.

- (a) The Milford Station opportunity supports development at the Port of Halifax and in Burnside. The two areas are not in competition. An inland port is seen as a required development over the next 5-15 years as international traffic patterns evolve and Halifax and the Atlantic Gateway are positioned as a major North American entry point.

- (b) Much of the investment in research can be used to support and stimulate business attraction to the municipality in general and is consistent with the Municipal Economic Development Strategy.

Perceived Conflict:

Q4/ (a) *Is there a conflict of interest relating to Councillor Versteeg's ownership of property in the proposed development area?*

A4/ Councillor Versteeg has an interest in common with a number of his constituents – he owns property in Milford Station.

- (a) According to section 5(1)(j) of the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, this doesn't represent a conflict of interest or interfere with his ability to discuss this project and vote on various aspects of it as a municipal Councillor.

If specific issues are discussed in Council that could lead to a conflict of interest (such as the possibility of compensation for property owners in the foot print) Councillor Versteeg would remove himself from the discussion and not vote on any motion in relation to that subject.

Thank you to IMPACT for bringing the concerns of their members to the Executive Committee of Council. This is an important opportunity for the people of the Municipality of East Hants and Council wants to hear about the benefits and the concerns in order to make an informed decision that considers the needs of residents and the business community.