

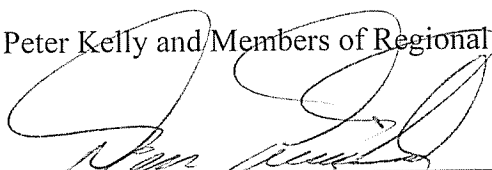


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Halifax Regional Council
December 5, 2006

TO: Mayor Peter Kelly and Members of Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:



Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: November 29, 2006

SUBJECT: First Year Activities - "*Strategies for Success*"

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

1. On October 18, 2005, Halifax Regional Council adopted a 5-year Strategy on Economic Development entitled "*Strategies for Success*".
2. The Economic Strategy sets out 94 activities, including 11 priority actions, to be undertaken over a 5-year period and recommends that overall progress on goals and objectives be monitored and reported on an annual basis.

BACKGROUND

The need for an HRM wide economic strategy was identified in 2003 during discussions at Regional Council about how activities and programs delivered by the Greater Halifax Partnership and the Halifax Regional Development Agency could be delivered strategically and cost-effectively. The need for an economic strategy was also identified during the preparation of the Regional Plan.

Consequently, the Halifax Chamber of Commerce held an Economic Summit in November, 2004 and an advisory committee was struck by Council to develop a regional strategy on economic development. In consultation with various economic stakeholders and partners, the Advisory Committee produced; "*Strategies for Success*", the region's first strategy on economic development. The strategy, adopted by Council on October 18, 2005, sets out 94 individual strategies, including 11 priority actions to be carried out over a five year period of implementation along with a provision that progress on its implementation be reported.

DISCUSSION

The attachment to this report provides a summary overview of progress during the first year of implementation of HRM's Economic Strategy. The report provides an overview of the work undertaken by HRM, its funding partners and other stakeholders to implement the Economic Strategy. It focuses primarily on the status of eleven priority actions that are identified in the Economic Strategy and their linkages with municipal operations and policies related to other regional strategies, such as the Regional Plan, the Immigration Strategy and HRM's Cultural Plan¹.

Overall, and as evidenced by the various activities undertaken during the first year described in the attached report, the implementation of the Economic Strategy appears to be on track for achieving the outcomes of the five-year strategy. It is anticipated that additional detail in respect to areas where more or less focus should be placed in respect to next year's activities will be provided from the Chamber of Commerce's scorecard and annual report on the economy event. Additionally, it is hoped that further advice from the former Advisory Committee that developed the strategy will result in the identification of any new priorities that should be undertaken next year and ways in which outcomes should be measured.

Most of the priority actions discussed in the attached report link to or support the other strategic actions contained in the Economic Strategy. As such, much of the efforts in the upcoming year will continue to build on this year's accomplishments. The new entity emerging from the consolidation of the GHP and HRDA is developing an implementation plan to form part of a service agreement with HRM. The mandate of the new entity has been developed specifically to enable it to effectively implement the Economic Strategy.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The implementation of the Economic Strategy is being carried out using existing budget allocations, service agreements and staff resources. There are no budget implications associated with this report.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN:

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

¹A complete copy of the Economic Strategy containing all 94 strategy is available on the HRM website at:
<http://www.halifax.ca/economicstrategy/documents/EconomicStrategies.pdf>

ALTERNATIVES

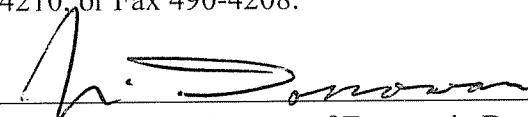
N/A

ATTACHMENTS

Report On First Year Implementation Of HRM's Economic Strategy: "*Strategies For Success*"

Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared and Approved by:



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Phone: 490-1742

Financial Review by:

Catherine Sanderson, Senior Manager
Financial Services

Attachment
**REPORT ON FIRST YEAR IMPLEMENTATION OF HRM'S ECONOMIC
STRATEGY: "*STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS*"**

BACKGROUND

The need for an HRM wide economic strategy was identified in 2003 during discussions at Regional Council about how activities and programs delivered by the Greater Halifax Partnership and the Halifax Regional Development Agency could be delivered strategically and cost-effectively. The need for an economic strategy was also identified during the preparation of the Regional Plan.

Consequently, the Halifax Chamber of Commerce held an Economic Summit in November, 2004 and an advisory committee was struck by Council to develop a regional strategy on economic development. In consultation with various economic stakeholders and partners, the Advisory Committee produced; "*Strategies for Success*", the region's first strategy on economic development. The strategy, adopted by Council on October 18, 2005, sets out 94 individual strategies, including 11 priority actions to be carried out over a five year period of implementation along with provisions that progress on its implementation be reported.

In adopting the economic strategy, members of Regional Council observed that:

- The strategy is not HRM's, but rather the community's - the cooperation of all economic interests, including the federal and provincial government and the business community, is required for successful implementation;
- Implementation requires new approaches to doing things;
- Economic growth must include both urban and rural aspects of the Municipality and foster a sense of pride in community; and
- Council must put in place measures that ensure the various actions set out in the strategy can be implemented effectively.

The first year of implementation saw many economic-related activities and initiatives carried out under these and other themes expressed in the Economic Strategy.

This report will provide Council with a snapshot view of progress made during the first year of strategy implementation. As elaborating on all 94 of the strategy actions is beyond the scope of this report, the focus is on identifying linkages and actions taken in respect to the 11 priority actions of the strategy and summarizing general progress towards achievement of Strategy outcomes. It should be noted that of the 94 actions identified in the strategy, 76 of them are already underway, either as new initiatives or as part of the ongoing operations of various stakeholders and partners. Additionally, the priority actions identified in the Strategy were identified for immediate action and as in the case of the other actions, are to be completed over the five year implementation period.

Full implementation of the Economic Strategy is a broader community responsibility. HRM however, has two significant roles to play in terms of implementation:

1. Leadership – HRM Council, in representing the broader community, sets the priorities and general policy direction for strategy implementation.
2. Municipal Operations and Budget – Of the 94 strategy actions, HRM plays either a lead or strong collaborative role in approximately 40 as part of municipal operations.

As a means of tracking progress towards strategy goals and objectives, the Economic Strategy identifies measurable targets within five broad economic categories related to our: people; creative community; awareness of our “quality of place”; business climate; and partnerships. The Halifax Chamber of Commerce, whose role it is to monitor progress of the economic strategy and advocate action on behalf of business, is undertaking an independent review of the strategy implementation in conjunction with an annual “state of the economy” event being planned for early in 2007.

The Chamber’s review will include a “scorecard” that evaluates progress made towards the specific performance measures identified in the Economic Strategy. Staff and the Chamber have consulted towards the preparation of the Chamber’s scorecard and annual event. It is the intention of the Chamber to present its report to Council prior to its release and the convening of a public event on the Economic Strategy. Additionally, members of the Advisory Committee which developed the strategy will be consulted in order to assess progress and recommend priority actions for the upcoming year.

DISCUSSION

The Economic Strategy aligns with other regional policy initiatives which have been adopted by Regional Council during the past year, including:

- HRM’s Regional Plan
- Regional Immigration Strategy and HRM Action Plan
- HRM’s Cultural Plan

Consequently, many of the actions identified in the Economic Strategy link with policies and actions of these other regional policy initiatives. The strategy also aligns with the Province’s Economic Growth Strategy and with economic development objectives of federal partners, such as ACOA. In addition to the Chamber of Commerce, staff consulted with provincial and federal funding partners and with staff of the GHP, HRDA and municipal business units in the preparation of this report.

Of the eleven priority actions identified in the Economic Strategy for implementation in the short term, HRM plays a direct role in at least seven and plays a significant role in the remaining four. The following provides a high level summary of the eleven priority actions, identifies linkages to HRM policy and operations, provides a brief description of progress and activities undertaken during the first year of implementation and identifies whether or not current activities are tracking towards outcomes identified in the Strategy.

Priority Action 1:

Work with businesses, existing ethnic, cultural communities and recent immigrants to attract and retain new immigrants.

Link to HRM Policy/Operations: Implementation of this priority relates to the Regional Immigration Strategy. HRM has adopted an Immigration Action Plan to implement those aspects of the Immigration Strategy which are related to municipal operations. Other related actions are being led by the Halifax Regional Development Agency and the Greater Halifax Partnership in conjunction with an Immigration Leadership Council comprising immigration agencies and stakeholders. HRM Council has appointed a representative to the Leadership Council which meets on a quarterly basis. The provincial Office of Immigration and ACOA are also ex-officio members of the Leadership Council.

Summary of First Year Activities: During the past year, HRM has worked to implement the first phase of an Immigration Action Plan. HRM's Action Plan is supported by in-house resources and coordination among various business units. First year activities included promoting immigration awareness through such activities as the first citizenship ceremony to be held at Halifax Hall, development of a newcomers' link to the HRM website and increasing employee awareness of cultural diversity and immigration matters. The next phase of the Action Plan includes strategies to broaden awareness of immigration and cultural diversity within communities and develop a newcomers' guide to link newcomers with programs and services provided by other community-based organizations.

Through the GHP and HRDA, work was also undertaken with the NS Office of Immigration and the Leadership Council to develop programs and strategies to support linkages among immigration service agencies, HRM and economic partners to make HRM businesses and communities more welcoming to newcomers. A task force on retaining and attracting international students, formed by the Leadership Council, was instrumental in a recent decision by the Province to eliminate a \$5,000 fee charged to international students applying to the Provincial Nominee Program under the skilled workers category. An award-winning print immigration awareness campaign using business networking events and local print media was also undertaken and sessions aimed at matching international students with prospective employers and businesses were also held. Additionally, the Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA) and the Canada Nova Scotia Business Service Centre produced a guide for immigrants on how to start a business entitled "Connections".

Progress to Strategy Outcomes: On the basis of the above, first year activities are tracking towards achieving a five-year strategy outcome to attract and retain new immigrants.

Priority Action 2:

Develop and promote a compelling business case for retention, expansion and attraction of DND and other federal government offices.

Link to HRM Policy/Operations: This priority links to HRM's Government Relations Plan and with HRM land use planning, including the Harbour Plan which is currently underway. Various aspects of this priority action are being led by the Greater Halifax Partnership.

Summary of First Year Activities: The federal government recently announced plans to construct a new regional headquarters for the RCMP in Burnside which will result in growth of the existing

federal presence. However, the expansion of DND and other federal office presence in HRM has been limited so continued effort will be focused on this priority next year as well. At the request of DND, the Greater Halifax Partnership convened two roundtables of stakeholder interests, including HRM, in support of preparing a strategy that will prioritize opportunities respecting:

- Future use of lands at Shearwater that are surplus to DND needs (with appropriate linkages to Canada Lands Company and Morris-Russell Lake Master Plan process);
- Advancement of the concept of a Standing Contingency Force for Halifax (a proof of concept project was recently conducted as part of a recent US Navy visit and exercises);
- Public-private partnership opportunities with DND for capital projects;
- Advancement of an aerospace and defence cluster within HRM.

Overall benefits derived in the first year of implementation relate to consistent messaging among the various Nova Scotia stakeholders in relation to DND and a better understanding of challenges and opportunities on the part of all concerned parties.

Progress to Strategy Outcomes: Based on the above, first year activities are tracking towards achieving a five-year strategy outcome of developing a compelling business case for DND and federal office expansion.

Priority Action 3:

Establish new and enhanced maintenance initiatives and standards with a focus on year-round, 24/7 accessibility. Engage through a public/private approach that emphasizes individual and business responsibility and stewardship.

Link to HRM Policy/Operations: This priority relates to various initiatives and programs undertaken by HRM, primarily in the Capital District and includes efforts to develop urban design guidelines, undertake comprehensive land use planning, and improve public safety and security measures as in the case of the Mayor's recent public security initiative, in conjunction with Business Commissions and other stakeholders.

Summary of First Year Activities: An enhanced maintenance plan for the Capital District was undertaken. It includes a new program for graffiti cleanup on private property delivered in partnership with area business commissions. The Capital District project will continue to address litter through additional receptacles, including opportunities for waste separation. A civic pride program to engage the community in stewardship is under development for spring implementation. Operations will address sidewalk snow removal on arterial streets for 2006-7. The Mayor's initiative on public safety was also launched in response to public security issues in the Capital District.

The Capital District's streetscape investment program resulted in several areas of improvement in downtown areas, including:

- Portland Streetscape construction;
- Various sidewalks upgraded to new standards,
- Oxford Theatre Park,
- Next phase of Public Gardens enhancements,

- Lighting projects in Victoria Park, Sullivan's Pond, and Dartmouth waterfront.
- New streetscape furniture to be installed this fall at various locations;
- Participating with government partners on public land plans for Grand Parade/Province House and Spring Garden/Queen area to coordinate interests and investigate potential new public facilities.

Additionally, the HRM by Design Project was launched to develop an urban design strategy for the Capital District and surrounding urban core area. The first round of public consultations for the strategy was completed.

Progress to Strategy Outcomes: Based on the above, first year activities are tracking towards achieving a five-year strategy outcome to establish new and enhanced maintenance initiatives in partnership with other stakeholders.

Priority Action 4:

Build support and work to fast track social investment projects that are already well advanced.

Link to HRM Policy/Operations: This priority links to HRM's Cultural Plan and land use planning in support of projects that promote community vitality and pride of place. The reference to fast tracking projects that are already underway is in recognition of the Halifax Port Authority's plans to develop a cultural district along the Seawall portion of the Halifax waterfront in conjunction with growing the cruise ship industry and tourism.

In addition to the Cultural Plan, this individual project links to the Regional Plan and the Harbour Plan which is underway. The priority also links with recent efforts associated with Halifax being Canada's bid city to host the 2014 Commonwealth Games. In addition to the construction of major facilities in which to host events, the games are also a celebration of cultural diversity and the arts. Activities and facilities and events associated with this aspect of the games link directly with Economic Strategy objectives

Summary of First Year Activities: HRM has adopted a Regional Plan and a Cultural Plan. The Cultural Plan serves to guide decision making in respect to prioritizing HRM investment in facilities and activities related to public art, cultural diversity, heritage and cultural events. Policies of the Cultural Plan also guide and support the development of a Creative Communities Strategy called for in the Economic Strategy. The Creative Communities Strategy is intended to integrate cultural, immigration, capital district, university and global strategies in order to create and maintain HRM as a place of opportunity and interest for creative people and foster pride of place. The development of a Creative Communities Strategy has the potential to have good synergy with planning and events associated with the 2014 Commonwealth Games. The Halifax Port Authority's Seawall project is progressing, with the recent construction of the Cunard Centre along with plans for an expanded campus for Nova Scotia College of Art and Design.

Progress to Strategy Outcomes: Based on the above, first year activities are tracking towards achieving a five-year strategy outcome to build support and fast track social investment projects well

that are well underway.

Priority Action 5:

Benchmark tax, regulation and development permit approvals/timing against competing municipalities.

Link to HRM Policy/Operations: This priority relates to two distinct aspects of municipal policy and operations - property tax levels and approval times for major construction projects. Specifically, the Economic Strategy seeks to determine how current tax levels and approvals processes impact economic growth and HRM's ability to compete with other jurisdictions in attracting and retaining business growth and development. HRM is benchmarked against Victoria, BC; London, ON; St. John's, NL; Regina, SK; and Quebec, PQ by the Greater Halifax Partnership. Under the Tax Reform Project, benchmark cities were expanded from the GHP list to include Canadian "Hub Cities", major Maritime centres and abutting municipalities.

Summary of First Year Activities: The work entails a two-step approach for each of the two elements identified - the first to assess current municipal tax levels and approvals timing and benchmark these to other jurisdictions in order to determine whether HRM's practices serve to enhance or deter its competitive position in relation to other jurisdictions. Should this prove to be the case, the second step is take appropriate responsive action. This which would likely entail making changes to current policies and perhaps legislation in a manner determined appropriate by Regional Council.

In addition to the usual taxation measures -- such as tax rates, total taxation per person, residential taxation per dwelling, or corporate taxation per employee -- work has progressed on identifying the differing tax burdens of various business sectors. As well, a study is underway to identify how municipal taxes and service benefits are shared by residential, commercial, institutional and exempt properties. Once these benchmarking/burden projects are complete, work will need to be done to determine what effects differing tax burdens have on the economy.

Over the past several years, in partnership with the development community, business processes and staff assignments have been adjusted to be more responsive to large "as of right" development applications. These efforts have proven very successful and Community Development is now turning its attention to the more complex and lengthy applications requiring public participation (Rezoning and Development Agreements). In partnership with the development community, it is anticipated that improvements to such non "as of right" (discretionary approval) processes will be realized within the next reporting cycle.

Progress to Strategy Outcomes: Based on the above, first year activities are tracking towards a five-year strategy outcome to benchmark taxes and processes, although additional emphasis may be required in subsequent years to meet overall targets for competitiveness.

Priority Action 6:

Bring infrastructure spending to appropriate comparable standards.

Link to HRM Policy/Operations: This priority links to HRM's capital budget, the Regional Plan and the ability to leverage funding from other sources such as the Federal and Provincial governments to address identified deficiencies in municipal infrastructure to support new economic growth and maintain existing infrastructure to appropriate standards.

Summary of First Year Activities: Investment in municipal infrastructure has been and continues to be a municipal priority in the face of challenges related to expanding physical growth and limited sources of funding. In respect to piped services, HRM is developing a stormwater/wastewater revenue strategy to ensure financial sustainability and is considering plans to consolidate this aspect of infrastructure operations with the Halifax Regional Water Commission. The pending completion of the Harbour Solutions project represents a significant investment in needed municipal infrastructure.

In respect to transportation, 25-year infrastructure requirements are identified in the Regional Plan and requests for new roads are considered as part of the business planning cycle. HRM buildings and other facilities such as fire stations and community centres are part of a major project aimed at inventorying all aspects and conditions of built infrastructure in support of a long term capital plan that is intended to set out funding aimed at reversing the current trend of infrastructure deterioration. A successful bid for the Commonwealth Games represents an opportunity to significantly increase investment in above-ground infrastructure and facilities beyond current levels.

Progress to Strategy Outcomes: Based on the above, first year activities are tracking towards a five-year strategy outcome to bring infrastructure spending to appropriate levels, although additional emphasis may be required in subsequent years in order to meet overall target of bringing HRM per capita investment on par with that of competing jurisdictions.

Priority Action 7:

Work with Nova Scotia trade partners to inform and educate HRM business about exporting. Identify and assist trade-ready companies to enter new markets.

Link to HRM Policy/Operations: There is no link to specific HRM policy or operations in respect to this priority action.

Summary of First Year Activities: The Provincial Office of Economic Development (OED) and Nova Scotia Business Inc. (NSBI) are leading various initiatives in respect to trade and expansion. These include: work by the Provincial Trade Committee on a new provincial trade strategy; the launch of a Service Export Program; piloting of an Export Expansion program; and establishment of EduNova along with federal and other partners to develop export markets for NS universities and colleges. A strategy to identify ways in which local and regional businesses can derive maximum benefit from the Commonwealth Games is currently being developed and will likely include identification of trade and export opportunities.

Progress to Strategy Outcomes: Based on the above, first year activities are tracking towards five-year strategy outcome related to trade and investment.

Priority Action 8:

Establish a Quality of Place Council to review existing brand equity in HRM and develop a multi-partner approach to marketing HRM.

Link to HRM Policy/Operations: This priority relates to how the Halifax region is marketed for activities like tourism and business marketing and the degree to which various stakeholders, including HRM, are able to communicate key messages around brand-related aspects of the name, image, values and benefits of our region. The strategy seeks collaboration among key stakeholders, including, Tourism Nova Scotia, Destination Halifax, Events Halifax, the GHP and others in taking a multi-partner approach to marketing HRM. The Commonwealth Games bid represents a unique opportunity to gain consensus around branding of the region in promoting the Games event.

Summary of First Year Activities: No significant action has been taken during the first year of strategy implementation to either establish a Quality of Place Council or to develop a regional approach to branding HRM. The GHP has suspended some of its marketing plans in anticipation of leading in the development of a regional brand strategy. Communications Nova Scotia and OED have assumed the activities of Brand Nova Scotia and there is potential to work with the Province and other partners to develop a regional brand strategy. This may include opportunities associated with branding of HRM in conjunction with hosting of the 2014 Commonwealth Games.

Progress to Strategy Outcomes: Based on the above, first year activities are currently not tracking towards five-year strategy outcome to establish a Quality of Place Council and develop a regional strategy on branding HRM. Additional emphasis will be required in subsequent years in order to meet the strategy target.

Priority Action 9:

Support rural economic development by encouraging and providing support services to those individuals and organizations establishing or maintaining businesses in rural areas.

Link to HRM Policy/Operations: Although there is some linkage of this priority to HRM policies and actions related to the Regional Plan and municipal service to rural communities, this action relates primarily to business counselling, referrals and other programs undertaken by the Halifax Regional Development Agency.

Summary of First Year Activities: HRM led a recent initiative to procure a service provider for the installation of high-speed internet service in rural areas on the basis that this infrastructure is critical to fostering economic development, community development and connectivity within the region. The project was championed at the local community level through the HRDA who also worked with community organizations and individuals to advance other projects related to tourism and heritage promotion, community networking, streetscape improvements and worked with the Sheet Harbour Chamber of Commerce to develop a business action plan. Additionally, the HRDA was selected as lead agency for Make Way for Youth, a two-year pilot program to attract and retain

skilled youth workers to rural communities and has partnered with ACOA to fund a dedicated staff resource to undertake community economic development programming in the Preston communities. The Canada Nova Scotia Business Service Centre established a Community Business Resource network resource in Sheet Harbour to provide information to entrepreneurs on how to start or expand a business.

HRM also commissioned a Rural Transit Services study and there are plans to put a rural express transit route into operation in 2008. Although the primary objective is to bring rural commuters into the city, it could provide an important service to rural businesses in terms of accessibility for employees and clients and possibly frequent, reliable parcel delivery. The GHP's Smart Business program conducted 126 visits to rural-based business. NSOED supported a network of sector, regional and community organizations and held an Innovative Communities event to foster information exchange.

Progress to Strategy Outcomes: Based on the above, first year activities are tracking towards a five-year strategy outcome to support rural economic development. However, additional clarification of strategy goals and metrics on achieving them may be required in order to ensure that overall strategy objectives related to rural economic development are met.

Priority Action 10:

Work with all of our partners to identify common values and vision around growing our community. Create an “alignment of strategic intent” and “rules of engagement” to implement this vision.

Link to HRM Policy/Operations: This priority links with all economic funding partners and stakeholders and seeks to identify common values and vision around community and economic growth. Recent activities related to the merging of the HRDA and GHP in order to provide clarity around vision and intent on implementing the Economic Strategy stem from this priority. HRM has invested in provides direct support towards efforts to consolidate operations of the Greater Halifax Partnership and the Halifax Regional Development Agency. Additionally, there is opportunity, with the adoption of the Regional Plan, Cultural Plan and Immigration Strategy to align HRM budget and business activities more closely with the Economic Strategy and vice versa.

Summary of First Year Activities: This GHP/HRDA merger initiative is a first step towards bringing all economic development interests closer to developing an overall alignment strategy that is based on collaboration and networking around a common vision of implementing the Economic Strategy. With a new economic development entity, based on the strengths of the GHP and HRDA now legally incorporated, and with staff transition and operations plans well advanced, the merger process is nearing completion. The new entity is on target for launch under its new mandate on April 1, 2007 and will take a lead role in advancing future initiatives in support of this and other priority actions.

Progress to Strategy Outcomes: First year activities, particularly related to merger of the GHP and HRDA, are tracking towards five-year strategy target of developing and implementing an “alignment of strategic intent”.

<http://www.halifax.ca/economicstrategy/documents/EconomicStrategies.pdf>

Priority Action 11:

Work to reduce congestion on the landside movement of container traffic in HRM by exploring alternatives like an inland terminal and using the rail cut for truck traffic.

Link to HRM Policy/Operations: This priority links to HRM Regional and Transportation Planning and to another strategy objective to develop the Halifax Gateway as an East Coast logistics hub. As a member of the Halifax Gateway Council, HRM engages directly with other Gateway partners such as the Halifax International Airport, Halifax Port Authority, CN Rail, Provincial and Federal Transportation partners and various transport carriers in various aspects of growing the Halifax Gateway.

Summary of First Year Activities: The Halifax Gateway Council has adopted a strategic plan for growing the Halifax Gateway. The Gateway Strategy contains specific recommendations aimed at growing the distribution of container cargo as well as other aspects of the Gateway, such as ways to increase visitation by passenger cruise ships. In reference to the identified priority of reducing congestion on the landside movement of containers, HRM and its Gateway partners completed a feasibility assessment for the development of an inland terminal which, through direct rail access, would link to the container terminals on the Halifax peninsula, thereby reducing landside congestion and truck traffic. The development of a detailed operating plan and site layout are now underway. A recent announcement by Consolidated FastFrate Ltd to construct a major transload distribution centre in Burnside is a direct result of a priority identified in the Gateway Strategy.

Progress to Strategy Outcomes: Based on the above, first year activities are tracking towards achieving a strategy outcome of reducing landside container congestion. However, additional emphasis on implementation in subsequent years will be required in order to meet the overall strategy target.

CONCLUSIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR NEXT YEAR

Overall, and as evidenced by the various activities undertaken during the first year described above, the implementation of the Economic Strategy appears to be on track for achieving the outcomes of the five-year strategy. It is anticipated that additional detail in respect to areas where more or less focus should be placed in respect to next year's activities will be provided from the Chamber of Commerce's scorecard and annual report on the economy event. Additionally, it is hoped that further advice from the former Advisory Committee that developed the strategy will result in the identification of new priorities for next year and a means to measure outcomes.

Most of the priority actions discussed in the preceding section of this report link to or support the other strategic actions contained in the Economic Strategy. As such, much of the efforts in the upcoming year will continue to build on this year's accomplishments. The new entity emerging from the consolidation of the GHP and HRDA is developing an implementation plan to form part of a service agreement with HRM. The mandate of the new entity has been developed specifically to enable it to effectively implement the Economic Strategy.