Item No. 3

Halifax Regional Council
November 25, 2008
Committee of the Whole

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

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Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer

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Wayne Anstey, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer - Operations

DATE: September 24, 2008

SUBJECT: **HRM Community Engagement Strategy - Improving HRM's public involvement practices**

ORIGIN

1. At the January 17, 2006 Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting, Regional Council endorsed establishing an HRM Community Engagement model/program.

2. On September 19, 2006 an Information Report was tabled outlining the terms of reference for an assessment and evaluation of HRM's past and present engagement exercises.

3. On April 10, 2007 an Information Report indicated that a strategy for improving HRM's public engagement practices would be tabled with Council.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council adopt the Draft Community Engagement Strategy in Appendix One.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recognizing the importance of effective community engagement, in January 2006, Council affirmed the need to develop a new framework for community engagement and public consultation. Since then, staff coordinated a detailed review of HRM's community engagement practices and researched successful approaches used locally and by other municipalities. This report seeks Council's endorsement of a new Community Engagement Strategy which provides a policy and strategic direction for improving HRM's community engagement.

BACKGROUND

Since amalgamation, the Municipality has been involved in many community engagement processes and while some have been successful, others attracted criticism. Currently, the only existing policy that speaks to community engagement is the 1997 Resolution Regarding A Public Participation Program for Municipal Planning Strategy Amendments. There is a lack of consistent and coordinated approach to engaging the public.

In the 2003 Community Development Business Plan, Council endorsed a staff proposal to develop a Community Development Framework for improving HRM's service delivery at the community level. The Community Development Framework was developed and has since been operationalized. It is comprised of three key strategies: Community Engagement; Community Capacity Building; and Governance and Service Delivery. Community Engagement is considered key to building informed, cohesive, organized, welcoming and safe communities (see Fig. 1).
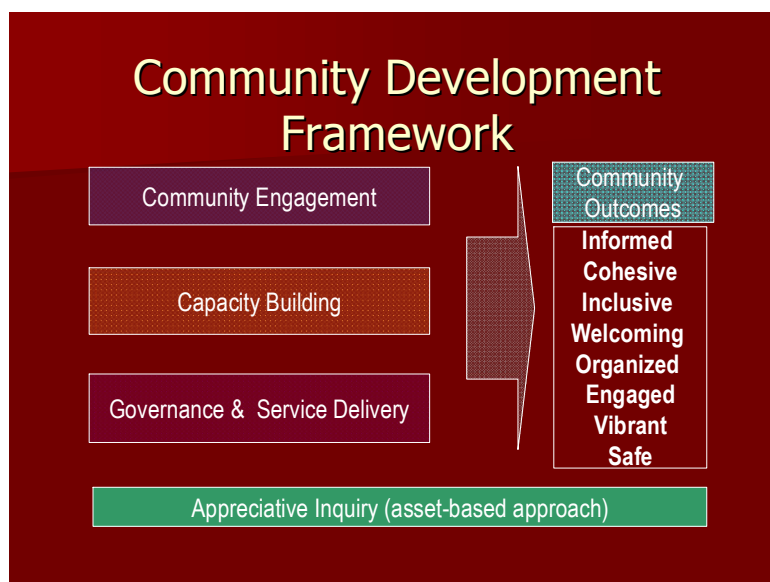

Fig. 1 Community Development Framework

HRM Community Engagement Strategy -
Improving HRM's public involvement practices
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In January 2006, Council affirmed the need to develop a new framework for community engagement and public consultation. Since then a detailed review of HRM's community engagement practice has taken place as well as best practice research. The process of developing the Community Engagement Framework was organized around the following questions:

> **1) What key values and principles should inform all of HRM's community engagement initiatives?**
> **2) How can HRM ensure a strategic and consistent approach to community engagement?**
> **3) How can HRM coordinate its community engagement?**
> **4) How can HRM ensure broad and representative participation?**
> **5) What processes, tools and techniques can HRM use to ensure meaningful and effective participation?**
> **6) What training and support does staff need to carry out effective community engagement?**
> **7) How do we evaluate and ensure accountability for community engagement?**

The assessment of HRM's current engagement practices identified many strengths but also the need to improve and coordinate HRM's community engagement practices. This report seeks Council's endorsement of a new Community Engagement Strategy which will implement new tools and processes across HRM to help ensure that community engagement is conducted in a meaningful, effective and professional manner.

It should be noted that work on implementing many of the actions identified in the strategy is already underway or in some cases has been completed. For example, key tools such as the Community Engagement Checklist, Dictionary, Evaluation Guide and Technique Guides have been developed. Work is also underway on developing an on-line Corporate Calendar. Several business units are already looking at revising their processes and developing improvement plans using principles of good community engagement.

DISCUSSION

The following discussion provides an overview of the proposed Community Engagement Strategy and highlights some of the strategic actions. The discussion is organized around the seven questions listed above to demonstrate how the various elements will work together to meet the desired outcomes.

1.0 Community Engagement Policy and Improvement Strategy Overview

The HRM Community Engagement Strategy provides policy direction and an action plan that will move HRM towards more meaningful, inclusive, effective and efficient community engagement. It is based on a common Definition, Continuum of Community Engagement, 10 Principles and Five

Strategic Approaches. The Strategy is not prescriptive in nature. Rather, it seeks to inform and educate staff, Councillors, external consultants and the public about good principles, effective practices and strategic approaches to planning and conducting public engagement. It also seeks to strengthen internal and external capacity and increase accountability. The implementation tools and processes will be periodically evaluated and improved based on staff, Council and public feedback. An annual report will be presented to Council to report on progress.

1.1) What key values and principles should inform all of HRM's community engagement initiatives?
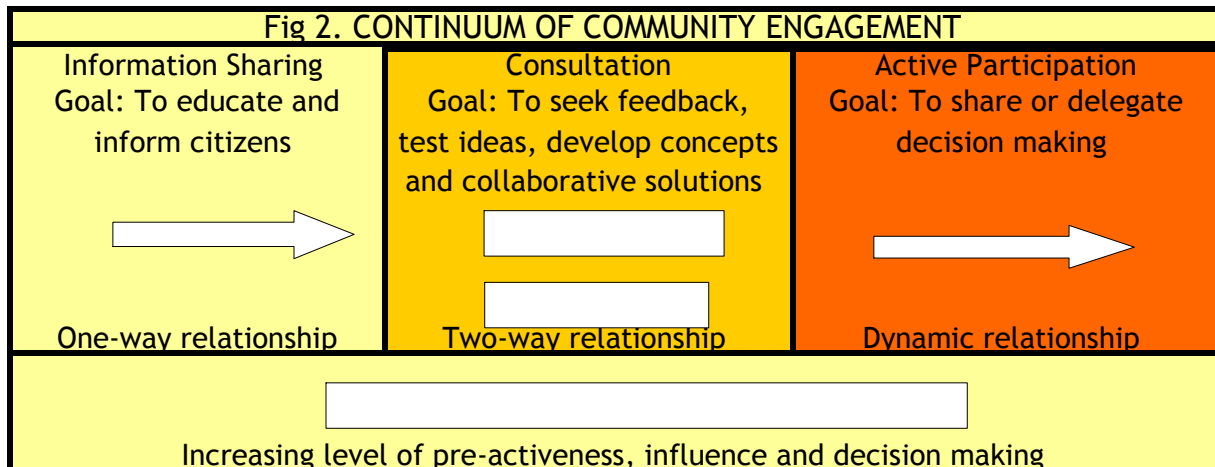HRM has already embraced community engagement as a key component of sound local democracy. We realize the importance and value of placing residents and communities at the centre of our municipal activities. A set of principles are proposed to guide future practice and to communicate to the public as well as those acting on HRM's behalf the municipality's commitment to community engagement. It is proposed that HRM adopts the following set of Community Engagement Principles:

> *1. Citizen participation is recognized as an asset, is valued and encouraged*
> *2. The purpose and the process are clear to all participants*
> *3. Everyone potentially affected by the process has an opportunity to become involved*
> *4. Barriers to access are recognized and overcome to ensure diverse, inclusive and balanced participation*
> *5. The process is respectful, fair, effective and transparent*
> *6. Communication is clear, timely and effective*
> *7. Public involvement is adequately resourced*
> *8. Participants are informed of outcomes of community engagement*
> *9.The public has an opportunity to provide feedback at the various stages of the process*
> *10. Community engagement will be evaluated and improved*

1.2) How can HRM ensure a strategic and consistent approach to community engagement?
A consistent approach should begin with adopting a common vocabulary and a strategic approach to developing and implementing community engagement.

Community engagement is the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people to enact positive action. It includes information sharing, consultation and active involvement in decision making. It is proposed that HRM adopts the "Continuum of Community Engagement" model in mandating, designing and implementing its community engagement initiatives (Fig.2).

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Fig 2. CONTINUUM OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT		
Information Sharing Goal: To educate and inform citizens	**Consultation** Goal: To seek feedback, test ideas, develop concepts and collaborative solutions	**Active Participation** Goal: To share or delegate decision making
One-way relationship	Two-way relationship	Dynamic relationship
Increasing level of pre-activeness, influence and decision making		

Information sharing – involves sharing information to build awareness of issues that may affect the public or specific communities.

Consultation – is typically part of a regulatory process by which the public's input on matters affecting them is sought. Its main goals are to improve the efficiency, transparency and public involvement in projects, laws and policies. It may include simple testing of ideas or concepts to build knowledge or it may include a two-way collaboration to develop solutions and build community buy-in.

Active participation – involves sharing decision making to build ownership or delegating decision making to build community capacity and responsibility.

The following actions support a consistent approach to community engagement:
C *Develop community engagement dictionary*
C *Develop and implement Community Engagement Checklist and Readiness Test (to be used by all parties planning community engagement, including coordination with other HRM initiatives)*
C *Educate staff and Councillors on the new Community Engagement framework*
C *Develop a "Process Improvement Program" for individual Business Units*

1.3) How can HRM coordinate its community engagement?
Currently various divisions may post notices of meetings in newspapers and on their individual websites but there is no coordinated approach either internally or externally to notify staff and public of upcoming meetings. As a result more than one HRM meeting may take place in the same community on the same day or several meetings may occur in one week. This results in confusion, poor attendance, and community burn-out. It also means that internally opportunities are missed to coordinate a more efficient approach to community engagement. The following actions support a coordinated approach to community engagement:

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• *Develop Community Engagement staff Steering Committee*

• *Develop a Community Engagement Calendar (to be used for posting and checking for conflicts with other community engagement initiatives)*

• *Include a mandatory Community Engagement staff section in all staff reports*

1.4) How can HRM ensure broad and representative participation?
HRM recognizes the importance of informed and active residents, and will continue to provide training and support to build community through volunteerism and active participation. HRM is also committed to representative participation in its community engagement processes and will take steps to improve public outreach to under-represented groups and those that experience barriers to participation. To this end, the municipality will continue to explore new and innovative ways to initiate and sustain the involvement of the broadest range of participants in its engagement processes. The following actions support an inclusive approach to community engagement:

• *Improve public knowledge of HRM's processes and structures*

• *Improve HRM's website (to facilitate e-particiaption)*

• *Develop a community contact database solution*

• *Develop a Community Engagement Inclusion Guide & Workshop*

• *Develop a new volunteer management strategy*

• *Develop a revised and enhanced notification process*

• *Allocate resources to support inclusive participation in HRM processes*

1.5) What processes, tools and techniques can HRM use to ensure meaningful and effective participation?
To assist staff with designing engagement exercises and making decisions about public processes, a CE toolkit will be developed. The kit will include key HRM community engagement documents such as the Guiding Principles, Checklist, Dictionary, Risk Assessment, Communication Guide and Evaluation Guide. It will also provide explanations of both traditional and innovative engagement techniques, the goals and circumstances under which each is most appropriate, as well as the contact information of relevant support staff. The kit will be available in hard copy and on line and will also be made public on HRM's website to support community-driven engagement processes. It will also draw on existing resources, such as the Youth Engagement Tool-Kit. Community Relations staff will also be available to other staff as a resource in designing their engagement processes.

• *Develop a 'Community Engagement Tools and Resources Kit'*

• *Develop a "Community Engagement Resource Group" (CERG)*

• *Develop a "Process Improvement Program" for individual Business Units*

• *Develop a strategic communications plan for business units and their divisions*

1.6) What training and support does staff need to carry out community engagement?
Many staff members are comfortable working with the public and bring substantial skill and expertise to HRM's community engagement projects. The HRM community engagement review process found, however, that our performance lacks professional consistency. Expanded opportunities for staff training will support the implementation of the community engagement framework and allow staff to explore innovative opportunities as well as some of the challenges associated with engaging the public. Programs should focus on the Community Engagement strategy itself, process facilitation, pubic speaking and presentation style, community engagement tools, diversity training, planning inclusive events and processes, conflict resolution, and media relations among others.

• *Expand and promote HRM's staff training programs*

• *Develop a Community Engagement Newsletter*

• *Develop appropriate budget and resource allocation for community engagement*

• *Develop a plan to address needs for technology, equipment, facilities, and meeting spaces*

1.7) How do we evaluate and ensure accountability for community engagement?
All engagement initiatives should incorporate public feedback and evaluation as part of the process. The Community Engagement Tool-Kit will include evaluation templates. <u>It is important to note that while community engagement is an important component of HRM decision making, it is only one component of the process and ultimately the Regional Council and Community Councils are responsible for making governance decisions on behalf of all of their residents. The success of community engagement therefore cannot be judged solely on the outcome of council decisions but rather on the integrity of the process and its adherence to the Ten Principles of Community Engagement</u>.   Was the process transparent? Was it inclusive and representative? Did everyone potentially affected have the opportunity to become involved? Were all participants clear on the purpose and outcomes of the process?

Evaluation should not be onerous and should correspond to the length and complexity of the engagement process. It can be completed by staff, an outside consultant or the participating public and it should be used to improve and revise future processes.

• *Institute the "Community Engagement Checklist" as part of planning for all community engagement*

• *Introduce a new mandatory "Community Engagement" section in staff reports*

• *Revise HRM contract templates to ensure external consultants use the new Community Engagement Framework*

• *Require regular evaluation of completed engagement processes*

• *Develop a program to recognize excellence in community engagement*

• *Annually report to Council on progress made with the Community Engagement Strategy*

2.0 Governance
HRM's Community Engagement Strategy will be governed by Community Development's Community Relations and Cultural Affairs Division. Specifically, within this section a Community Engagement Resource Group (CERG) has been established to support the implementation of the strategic directions across the organization. The will serve as a go-to group providing advice and guidance for all Business Units as the strategy rolls out.

Within this context, the Community Engagement Resource Group will convene a Community Engagement Steering Committee. The Committee will work collaboratively to ensure the recommendations are flexible and suitable to the requirements of their divisions, as well as oversee the implementation and evaluation of the strategy over time.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS
Community Relations is in the process of building a budget in its role as lead on the support and monitoring of the implementation of the Community Engagement Strategy. This budget will come from D710 and is currently estimated at $20,000.

Additionally, the implementation of the strategy will require that the operating budgets of relevant Business Units be adjusted to adequately account for the cost associated with community engagement processes they happen to be leading.

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.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Adopt the Draft Community Engagement Strategy in Appendix One.
2. Council may choose to require specific amendment to the Strategy.
3. Council may choose not to approve the Strategy. This is not recommended by staff.
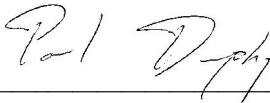
ATTACHMENTS

Attachment One - Community Engagement Framework

A copy of this report can be obtained online at http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.html then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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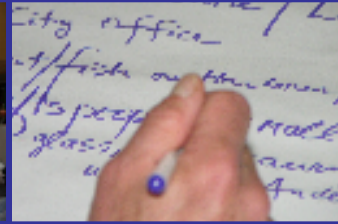
Community Engagement Strategy

HALIFAX
REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

DRAFT Last updated October 7, 2008

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Overview

The Halifax Regional Municipality recognizes the importance of involving residents in the development of policy, programs and services. Community engagement is also the basis for building healthy, strong and inclusive communities.

In January 2006, Regional Council identified the need to develop a new framework for community engagement across HRM. Community Engagement was designated as a key goal of the Council Focus Area on Community Relations. This **HRM Community Engagement Strategy** provides a policy and strategic action direction which will guide how the municipality will inform, consult with, and engage the public in developing and implementing its programs and services. The strategy builds on municipal and community strengths while addressing key areas in need of improvement.

The strategy is based on a Definition, Continuum of Community Engagement, Ten Principles of Community Engagement, a Checklist and 5 Strategic Approaches which will ensure that the new framework is implemented across HRM.

The Strategy does not mandate specific community engagement formats to be used at specific times. Each situation demands its own approach and process. Rather, the Strategy seeks to institute a strategic approach to every community engagement process hosted by HRM. The Strategy will not address all of the challenges of managing the complex issues of community engagement, yet by introducing a consistent, strategic approach it will equip HRM with the tools needed to move towards more meaningful, inclusive and effective public involvement.

What is community engagement?

Community engagement is the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people to enact positive action. It includes information sharing, consultation and active involvement in decision making.

While engagement is often led by government, engagement may also be led by the community with government support. The level of community involvement and influence evolves over time and increases along a 'continuum of community engagement'. While HRM may follow some standard processes to satisfy legislative requirements, in many cases a tailored approach will have to be developed. The onus on HRM is to honour local values and traditions, to use a strategic approach to community engagement, to facilitate effective engagement and to clearly communicate to the public the purpose and scope of engagement. It is important to recognize that in the majority of cases the final decision rests with the elected municipal representatives – the HRM Regional Council.

HRM's Commitment

HRM is committed to supporting an engaged community across HRM by ensuring there is a range of opportunities for residents to be knowledgeable about local government and actively involved in the cultural and civic life of their community.

The following Principles of Community Engagement will guide all future HRM activities:

HRM's Commitment to Principles of Community Engagement

1. Citizen participation is recognized as an asset, is valued and encouraged
2. The purpose and the process are clear to all participants
3. Everyone potentially affected by the process has an opportunity to become involved
4. Barriers to access are recognized and overcome to ensure diverse, inclusive and balanced participation
5. The process is respectful, fair, effective and transparent
6. Communication is clear, timely and effective
7. Public involvement is adequately resourced
8. Participants are informed of outcomes of community engagement
9. The public has an opportunity to provide feedback on the process
10. Community engagement is evaluated and improved

A New Community Engagement Strategy for HRM

Since identifying community engagement as a Council Focus Area in January 2007, HRM staff coordinated a detailed review of its community engagement practice as well as successful approaches taken by other municipalities. The review identified a lack of consistency in HRM performance and identified a need for a coordinated approach to community engagement. Based on the findings of these reviews, five strategic approaches are recommended to guide future actions:

1. **Adopt an HRM Community Engagement Framework**
2. **Improve Engagement Practices of Individual Divisions and Business Units**
3. **Increase Training and Internal Support of HRM Staff**
4. **Invest in Public Education, Outreach and Capacity Building**
5. **Ensure Accountability and Promote Excellence in Community Engagement**

Implementation and Governance

HRM's Community Engagement Strategy will be championed by the Senior Management team (SMT) and governed by Community Development's Community Relations and Cultural Affairs Division. A primary role of this Division is to provide a comprehensive community development and cultural framework, and operationalize key municipal strategies including Immigration, Youth Development, Community Engagement, Cultural Planning and Community Grants. Council, all business units and all parties acting on HRM's behalf will be bound by this Strategy, the 10 Principles of Community Engagement and the Community Engagement Checklist. All staff reports to Council will now contain a new "Community Engagement "section. An Operating Action Plan will be implemented through an internal Community Engagement Steering Committee.

Program delivery

The implementation of the ***Community Engagement Strategy*** will move forward in a phased approach, with different actions within each strategic approach being prioritized in the short-term, medium-term, and long-term.

Short-term focus will be placed on the development and adoption of the HRM Community Engagement Framework by Council, including the guiding principles and checklist. Community Engagement Tool-kit, promotional materials and E-Newsletter will be launched. Councillors and key business units will be introduced to the framework in 2008. An HRM Community Engagement Steering Committee will also be established. The development of an overall (internal and external) inclusion strategy for HRM will commence.

Medium-term focus will be placed on the collaborative initiation of tailored community engagement improvement programs in relevant Business Units and staff training. An emphasis will be placed on community capacity building and improved outreach and educational materials, including maximizing HRM's use of its website and the Internet to enhance opportunities for public information, consultation, and participation. Work will also commence to changing the notification process, community calendar and launching a community database solution.

Long-term focus will be placed on, and the evaluation and monitoring of the improvement efforts of relevant Business Units and Divisions and developing a recognition program.

The ***Community Engagement Steering Committee*** will further identify priority areas (i.e. for specific Business Units, facilitate centralized database) and monitor and evaluate the implementation of the strategy over the next Business Cycle.

Evaluation of the implementation of the strategy will be conducted both in an ongoing way (formative) by Community Relations staff and the Steering Committee, and yearly (summative)

with each Business Cycle to measure outcomes and ensure progress is in alignment with Council priorities. Annual progress reports will be tabled with Regional Council.

Budget and Resources

To effectively carry out meaningful community engagement initiatives, distinct resources must be allocated in the operating budgets of individual Business Units. To date, most HRM Business Units have not had dedicated budgets to support community engagement as described in this strategy with the notable exception of major corporate initiatives such as the Regional Plan, Community Visioning, and HRM by Design.

The Community Engagement Resource Group (CERG) is currently in the process of allocating funds for research, professional development / training, and equipment, in order to ensure it is well equipped to respond to inquiries and requests for support and guidance from across municipal Business Units.

This strategy emphasizes the importance of creating the right conditions for improved engagement. The real costs of engagement need to be considered by all Business Units and integrated into all existing and future engagement programs.

PART I

Building the Strategy: Review of Community Engagement in HRM

In the 2003 Community Development Business Plan, Council endorsed staff proposal to develop a Community Development Framework for improving HRM's service delivery at the community level. The Community Development Framework was developed and has since been operationalized. It is comprised of three key strategies: Community Engagement, Community Capacity Building, and Governance and Service Delivery. Community Engagement is considered key to building informed, cohesive, organized, welcoming and safe communities All three are implemented using an Appreciative Inquiry and Asset-based approach (Fig.1).
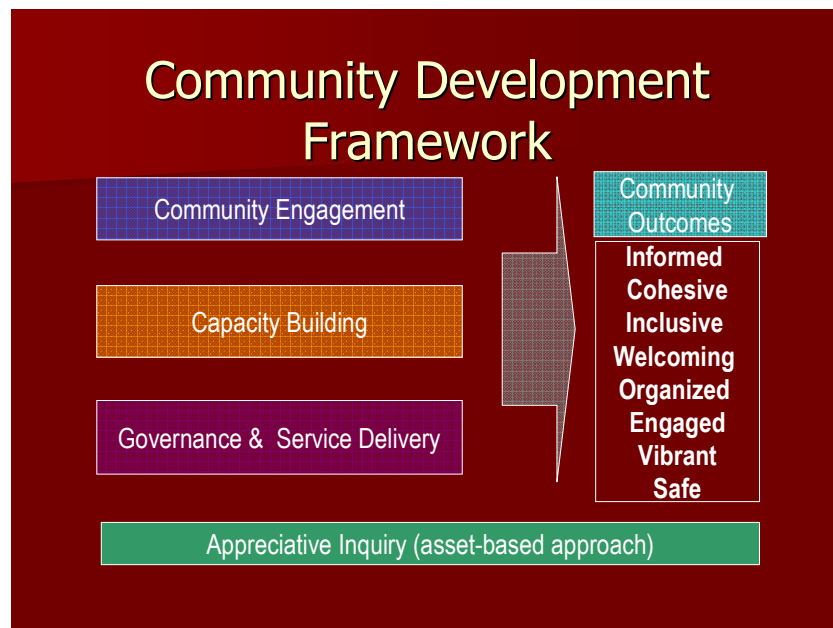
Fig. 1 HRM's Community Development Approach

Community Engagement as one of the three key pillars of the HRM Community Development Framework will facilitate capacity building, governance and service delivery enhancement which will in turn lead to more informed, cohesive, inclusive, vibrant and safe communities. Recognizing the importance of effective community engagement, Council affirmed the need to develop a new framework for community engagement and public consultation. The process of developing the framework included:

1. **January 2007**: Council declares Community Engagement a Focus Area
2. **May 2007:** Assessment of HRM's Community Engagement
3. **August 2007:** Internal Survey and best practice research

Assessment of HRM's Public Engagement Exercises

In May 2007 the MacDonnell Group Consulting and One World Inc. were commissioned by HRM to conduct an assessment of a variety of HRM's public engagement exercises. The objective was to understand HRM's strengths and weaknesses in terms of how we engage the public as a municipality. The consultants evaluated ten past community engagement projects based on a set of indicators of good practice.[1] The process was overseen by an internal staff steering committee comprised of staff from Community Relations, Human Resources, Real Property, Police, Recreation and Planning.

1.1 Focus Groups & Case Study Research

The consultants conducted seven focus groups held throughout the HRM with residents, HRM staff, and Councillors who had participated in one or more of the ten community engagement exercises. Along with the focus groups, they reviewed documentation for each case study. Considering the collected data, as well as relevant policies, legislation, and applicable models of public engagement from other jurisdictions, the consultants identified a number of key findings and recommendations.

Findings

The key challenges identified by the report include clarity on the goals and objectives of engagement, lack of feedback and evaluation at different stages of the process, staff training and support and internal coordination. The recommendations are based on "getting the foundation right for meaningful engagement", including:

- Improving internal consistency and communication;
- Developing a coordinated HRM-wide approach to community engagement, including plans for all processes;
- Developing guiding principles for engagement;
- Reviewing of existing policies and procedures to ensure consistency with the new approach;
- Enhancing staff engagement skills and capacities with appropriate training and through developing mechanisms for shared learning;
- Demonstrating that engagement is important and valued with appropriate venues, proper equipment, and by only seeking involvement when feedback will be used;
- Improving external communication and outreach by using clear language and diverse tools;
- Ensuring the goals of engagement activities are clear and reach a wide and diverse audience;
- Increasing the range of engagement methods used to enhance inclusion, ensuring they match the purpose of engagement and the stakeholders and communities impacted;

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[1] Please see the final consultants' report for a list of the case studies and evaluation criteria.

- Establishing clear mechanisms of feedback and evaluation for each engagement initiative.

1.2 Internal Community Engagement Survey

Complementing the findings of the consultant's report staff conducted an internal survey of all HRM business units. The purpose of this additional survey was to determine which units regularly engage the public, to recognize best practices, and identify opportunities for improvement. There were 24 surveys completed by relevant division and project managers. The survey asked questions about general practices, engagement goals and methods, and invited respondents to identify three wishes with respect to HRM's community engagement practices.

Findings

The survey revealed that 85% of HRM's divisions engage the public and over a quarter do it on a daily basis. Most engagement exercises are staff-driven, and while the majority of managers see their staff as being comfortable with public engagement facilitation they also identified a need for better training and internal support, particularly with respect to communication.

1.3 Best Practice Research

The consultant report provided initial research on community engagement tools and techniques, This was supplemented by staff research from various jurisdictions and professional associations. In general, best practice research pointed out the need for a framework, guiding principles, clarity on the continuum of engagement and selecting appropriate approaches to engaging the various segments of the public on specific issues. There is also a general agreement that in order to be effective investment must be made to strengthen internal government capacity. The *Community Engagement Improvement Strategy* is guided by the above findings.

PART II

Community Engagement Strategy Framework

The ***Community Engagement Framework*** (the Framework) includes a policy direction regarding common definition, adoption of the continuum of community engagement, and the Ten (10) Principles of Community Engagement. The ***Community Engagement Strategy*** (the Strategy) will be operationalized through Five (5) Strategic Approaches and actions contained in them.

> *Policy 1: HRM will adopt a Community Engagement Framework which will guide all of its public involvement, including initiatives led by Council, staff, external consultants and community.*

2.1 Defining Community Engagement

Community engagement can be defined as *"the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people to enact positive action. It includes information sharing, consultation and active involvement in decision making"*.

Residents expect to be involved in the decisions that affect them, and citizen involvement in deliberations about what is important to them, how their community grows and develops is crucial to more informed government decisions and better service delivery. Effective public engagement taps into the collective knowledge and wisdom of residents and contributes to building more connected, harmonious and resilient communities. When people are involved in initiating and promoting change, the resulting solutions tend to be more successful and lasting.

Community engagement is fundamental to local representative democracy; "Exclusion, however, "is the shadow of public engagement"[2] and engagement that is too numerous, poorly designed and poorly executed can discourage or even silence significant portions of the community. Each situation requires a tailored approach to engagement. The onus on HRM is to honour local values and traditions, to use a strategic approach to community engagement, to facilitate effective engagement and to clearly communicate to the public the purpose and scope of engagement. It is important to recognize that in a vast majority of cases the final decision rests with the elected municipal representatives – the HRM Regional Council.

> *Policy 2: HRM will adopt a common definition of community engagement, including definitions contained in the Community Engagement Dictionary accompanying the Strategy.*

2.2 Continuum of Community Engagement

Community Engagement covers a wide range of processes and government-community connections include information sharing, public consultation and active participation. While engagement is often led by government, engagement may also be led by the community with government support. The level of community involvement and influence evolves over time and increases along this 'continuum of community engagement'.[3] Once a mode of engagement is chosen, the decision must be clearly communicated to the public. Clear, timely and accessible information sharing and communication are part of all stages of the continuum (see Fig. 2).
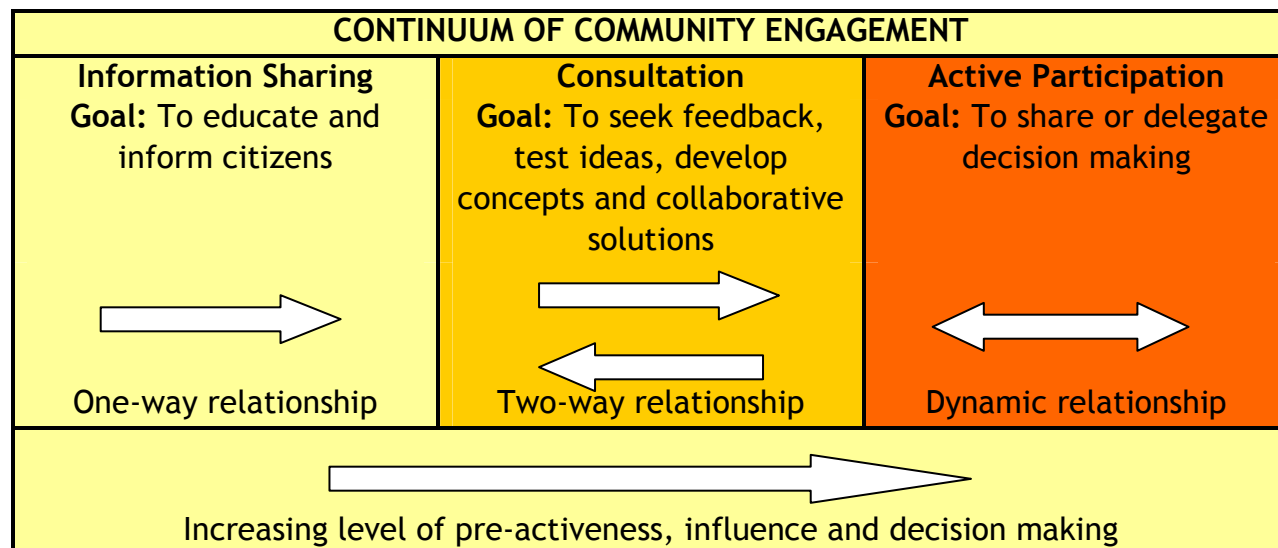
CONTINUUM OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT		
Information Sharing **Goal:** To educate and inform citizens	**Consultation** **Goal:** To seek feedback, test ideas, develop concepts and collaborative solutions	**Active Participation** **Goal:** To share or delegate decision making
One-way relationship	Two-way relationship	Dynamic relationship
Increasing level of pre-activeness, influence and decision making		

Fig. 2 Continuum of Community Engagement

Information sharing – involves sharing information to build awareness of issues that may affect the public or specific communities. HRM's responsibility here is to provide objective, reliable, timely, easy to find and easy to understand information. Open houses, public announcements, publications such as HRM's "Naturally Green", the Annual Report and the Budget are all examples of information sharing tools.

Consultation – is typically part of a regulatory process where the public's input on matters affecting them is sought. Its main goals are to improve the efficiency, transparency and public involvement in projects, laws and policies. It may include simple testing of ideas or concepts to build knowledge or it may include a two-way collaboration to develop solutions and build community buy-in. HRM's responsibility is to define goals and processes, clearly state the purpose and limits of engagement and how the information collected will be used in decision

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[2] Social Planning Research Council of BC. Nov. 2005. Policy Spotlight on Diversity and Civic Engagement. www.inclusivecities.ca
[3] The HRM has adopted and adapted the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (www.oecd.org) engagement model to reflect the range of engagement initiatives in which the HRM is involved.

making. Examples of consultation include Police Town Hall meetings, various Council public advisory committees, public hearings, etc.

Active participation – involves sharing decision making to build ownership or delegating decision making to build community capacity and responsibility. HRM's responsibility is to provide support, time and flexibility to facilitate dialogue between the public, HRM representatives and other partners. HRM should also define a process for integrating input of active engagement in decision making. Community Visioning, community MOUs and facility management agreements are forms of active participation.

> *Policy 3: HRM will adopt the Continuum of Community Engagement in developing, implementing and communicating public involvement initiatives.*

2.3 HRM's Principles of Community Engagement

HRM has already embraced community engagement as a key component of sound local democracy. We realize the importance and value of placing residents and communities at the centre of our municipal activities. The *Community Engagement Strategy* recognizes the dedication and hard work of residents, staff, and Council in past and present engagement projects.

This strategy aims to build on that good work by coordinating the municipality's approach to community engagement in order to maximize the benefits to all involved parties. HRM wishes to serve residents in an effective, efficient, and legitimate way. We want to better understand the expectations, strengths, and concerns of residents. With this strategy, we strive to make HRM's community engagement processes more coherent, transparent, and accessible to all. The following Principles of Community Engagement will guide all future community engagement activities led by HRM and those acting on HRM's behalf. They represent an HRM commitment to the public.

HRM's Commitment to Principles of Community Engagement

1. Citizen participation is recognized as an asset, is valued and encouraged
2. The purpose and the process are clear to all participants
3. Everyone potentially affected by the process has an opportunity to become involved
4. Barriers to access are recognized and overcome to ensure diverse, inclusive and balanced participation
5. The process is respectful, fair, effective and transparent
6. Communication is clear, timely and effective
7. Public involvement is adequately resourced
8. Participants are informed of outcomes of community engagement
9. The public has an opportunity to provide feedback at the various stages of the process
10. Community engagement will be evaluated and improved

Policy 4: HRM will adopt the Ten Principles of Community Engagement and use them to guide the development and implementation of all HRM community engagement processes.

2.4 Community Engagement Checklist

Community engagement is an important but only one component of government decision making. It may not always appropriate to engage the public, and when a decision is made to engage the process must be planned for to ensure the public involvement is meaningful, effective and results in positive results for the community.   The Continuum of Community Engagement along with the Ten Principles provide a framework for planning any public engagement exercise. Community engagement must take place within a strategic and deliberate decision making process to help ensure that an appropriate level of engagement (see Fig. 3).

To assist staff, Councillors and external parties hosting community engagement on HRM's behalf a 'Readiness Checklist' has been developed to assess the level of readiness to engage the public (Appendix 1). The expectation is not to achieve a perfect score, but to cover as much as possible all of the key aspects prior to engagement to ensure a meaningful and effective exchange between HRM, its residents and stakeholders. A longer version of the Checklist focussed on the key stages of planning community engagement (see Fig. 4) has been developed and will also be provided in the Community Engagement Toolkit.

Each level of engagement along the continuum can be implemented through a range of engagement tools and techniques. In the past, HRM used both traditional techniques, such as advisory committees and public meetings, as well as more innovative processes such as

community visioning, asset mapping and appreciative inquiry. The complexity of the issues at hand, the desired outcomes of the process, and the timeline, all help to determine which methods are most appropriate. The Community Engagement Tool-Kit will provide a guide to the various techniques.
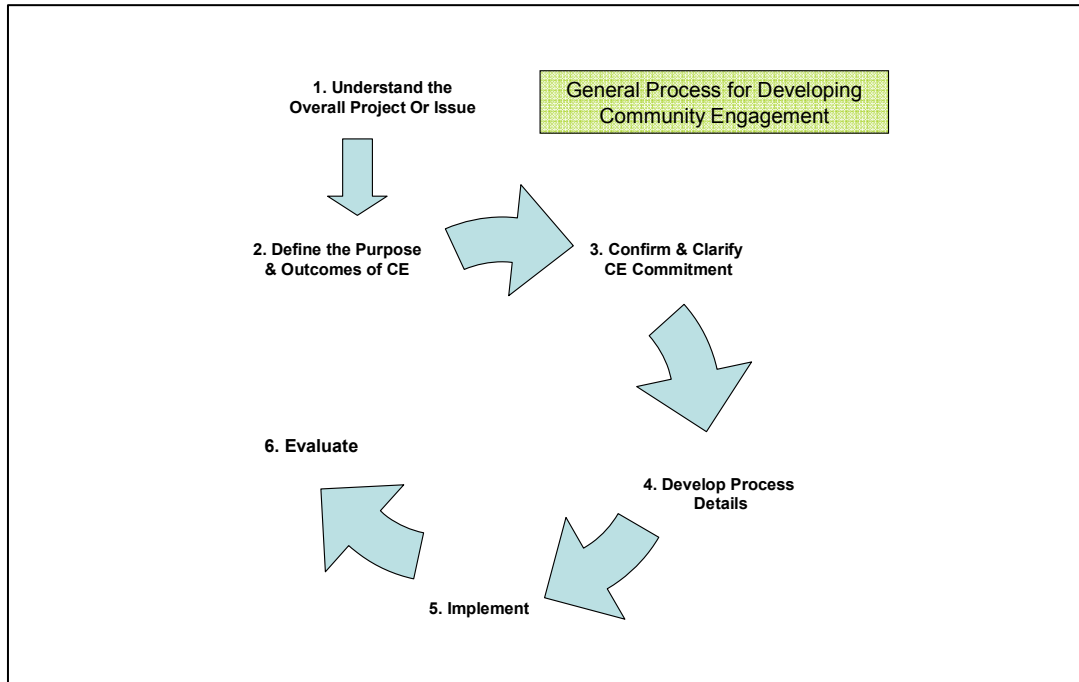

Fig. 3 General process for developing Community Engagement processes

Policy 5: HRM will adopt the Community Engagement Checklist in the development and implementation of its community engagement initiatives.

PART III

The Strategy: Improving Community Engagement in the HRM

The assessment of HRM's current engagement practices identified many strengths but also the need to improve and coordinate HRM's community engagement practices. Further best practices research has augmented these studies and together form the basis for the five strategic approaches and accompanying actions set forth in this strategy. An administrative Action Plan was also developed and it details the governance, costs, and timelines associated with theses actions.

Strategic Approach 1: Adopt an HRM Community Engagement Framework

A community engagement framework will shape and direct HRM's community engagement (CE) practices. It will help staff make decisions about when engagement is appropriate, how processes should be designed and implemented, and who should participate. This framework will also enhance both staff and public understanding of community engagement goals, methods, tools, and techniques.

Action 1.1 Develop a community engagement dictionary
There are many terms used to describe community engagement, many of which are not used consistently. To ensure expectations are accurate for any given process, HRM will use the Continuum of Community Engagement and the terms in the Community Engagement Dictionary. Regardless of what terms are used by others agencies, HRM will consistently use these terms and definitions to ensure clarity and avoid misunderstanding. A draft community engagement dictionary has been developed by Community Relations staff and will be provided as part of a Community Engagement Tool-Kit.

Action 1.2 Develop and implement Community Engagement Checklist & Readiness Test
To assist staff and those acting on HRM's behalf with designing engagement processes and making decisions about public processes, a community engagement checklist has been developed. The checklist identifies the typical stages in any engagement process, and allows staff to "check off" key actions along the planning process. A short checklist focused on "readiness" confirms that community engagement is ready to proceed. Public communication should regularly reiterate the process and the checklist may also be used as a basis for public monitoring and evaluation. A short and along version of the checklist will be provided. A short version of the checklist is appended to this strategy (Appendix I).

Action 1.3 Develop a 'Community Engagement Tools and Resources Kit'
To assist staff with designing engagement exercises and making decisions about public processes, a Community Engagement Toolkit will be developed. The kit will include key HRM community engagement documents such as the Guiding Principles, Checklist, Dictionary, Risk Assessment, Communication Guide and Evaluation Guide. It will also provide explanations of both traditional and innovative engagement techniques, the goals and circumstances under which each is most appropriate, as well as the contact information of relevant support staff. The kit will be available in hard copy and on line and will also be made public on HRM's website to support community-driven engagement processes.

Strategic Approach 2: Support Improved Community Engagement Practices of Individual Divisions / Business Units

To facilitate the integration of the new community engagement framework across HRM, it is proposed that Community Relations staff support each Business Unit in the development of its own program for improvement. The *Community Engagement Strategy* champions will work as a team and actively engage staff in the implementation of this new direction.

Action 2.1 Develop a 'Community Engagement Resource Group' (CERG)
HRM has a number of staff with substantial knowledge and experience in community engagement. These staff members will comprise Community Relations Resource Group (CERG) who will focus on skill development and relevant research (i.e. developing the toolkit). This group, comprised of Community Relations staff to begin with, will be available for guidance and consultation in regards to the design, implementation and evaluation of all of HRM's engagement exercises. The group will also help build capacity amongst staff and provide peer-to-peer mentoring. Over time, Community Engagement expertise will grow throughout the organization as staff becomes familiar and confident with community engagement principles and techniques.

Action 2.2 Develop a Community Engagement Steering Committee
A Community Engagement Steering Committee will guide and support each relevant HRM division to tailor the community engagement framework to fit its own requirements. CERG will work with the Senior Management Team to identify appropriate staff. The Steering Committee will monitor, evaluate and guide revisions to the Community Engagement Strategy.

Action 2.3 Educate staff and Councillors on the new Community Engagement Framework
The new Community Engagement Strategy will need to be communicated clearly to staff, Councillors, and contractors acting on HRM behalf and the public. The Community Engagement Framework will be shared with staff and Councillors through workshops, presentations, written materials, on the web, intranet and open discussions. A special effort will be made to incorporate community engagement as part of new staff and Council orientation sessions. Templates will also be developed to clearly communicate where specific processes are

on the Continuum of Engagement. Community Relations will work with Corporate Communications to develop promotional materials.

Action 2.4 Develop a 'Process Improvement Program' for individual Business Units
Community engagement should align with Council Focus areas and Corporate priorities but it can also inform those priorities. Some HRM business units and divisions have already moved forward with community engagement improvement plans, while others still need to initiate such a process. Community Relations staff will provide support and foster an environment where divisions can easily adapt and apply their improvement programs consistent with the HRM Community Engagement Framework. The goal is to initially assess the three top community engagement processes in each business unit or division and develop a standardized plan that complies with the Principles of Community Engagement.

Action 2.5 Develop a Community Engagement Calendar to improve coordination
Currently various divisions may post notices of meetings in newspapers and on their individual websites but there is no coordinated approach either internally or externally to notify staff and public of upcoming meetings. As a result more than one HRM meeting may take place in the same community on the same day or several meetings may occur in one week. This results in confusion, poor attendance, community confusion and burn-out. It also means that internally opportunities are missed to coordinate a more efficient approach to community engagement. Community Relations staff will work with Corporate Communication, Clerk's Office, Web Services and all the business units to develop and promote the use of an interactive Community Engagement Calendar for internal and external use.

Strategic Approach 3: Increased Training and Internal Support of HRM Staff

It is essential that staff have the appropriate skills, tools, and supports to engage the public in an effective, efficient, and meaningful way. The HRM community engagement review process identified the need for more comprehensive staff training, which may include both community engagement processes and techniques. Internal support should place emphasis on internal and external communication and allocation of appropriate resources. It may include developing new staff competencies related to community engagement.

Action 3.1 Expand and promote HRM's staff training programs
Many staff members are comfortable working with the public and bring substantial skill and expertise to HRM's community engagement projects. The HRM community engagement review process found, however, that our performance lacks professional consistency. Expanded opportunities for staff training will support the implementation of the community engagement framework and allow staff to explore innovative opportunities and gaining comfort with engaging the public. Programs should focus on the Community Engagement strategy itself, process facilitation, pubic speaking and presentation style, community engagement tools,

diversity training, planning inclusive events and processes, conflict resolution, and media relations among others.

Action 3.2 Develop a Community Engagement Newsletter
In addition to staff training, a quarterly electronic newsletter will be developed by Community Relations staff in conjunction with Corporate Communication. The objective will be to share information on ongoing initiatives, best practice research in facilitation and community engagement, and to provide staff with practical tips on how to effectively engage the public.

Action 3.3 Develop a strategic communications plan for business units and their divisions
The HRM community engagement review process revealed that strategic communication, both between business units and with the public, is often lacking. Emphasis should be placed on timely, clear, concise, objective communication free of technical jargon. Communication materials may also address history of the issues, relevant policy and procedures, and alternative approaches to addressing issues. Communication should also regularly reiterate the basics of the process such as schedule, milestones, decision making points, progress and opportunities for feedback. Business Units and Divisions should work in cooperation with Corporate Communications to develop their own strategic communications plan to improve their exchanges with the public and with one another.

Action 3.4 Develop appropriate budget and resource allocation for community engagement
The review process revealed that while traditional engagement processes are relatively well resourced, there is little budget support for Community Engagement processes that are innovative, that go beyond the status quo dictated by policy or legislation, or that focus on reaching more diverse participants. Additionally, staff is often forced to play a dual role of both an expert and a facilitator, a situation that creates a perception of bias, public confusion, and staff burnout. In order to promote effective and representative engagement, dedicated resources to support defined community engagement roles as well as inclusive and more innovative processes should be prioritized. All business units will be encouraged to incorporate realistic plans for community engagement as part of their business planning.

Action 3.5: Develop a plan to address needs for technology, equipment, facilities, and meeting spaces
The HRM community engagement review process revealed that logistics and technology often pose a challenge in delivering effective engagement initiatives. Inconsistent access to updated audio-visual technologies, appropriate facilities and meeting spaces, and other equipment has on occasion resulted in less-effective processes. Business Units and Divisions should assess their inventory of technology and equipment. Priority should be placed on ensuring that equipment is updated and maintained in working order. All business units should work collaboratively to inventory community meeting spaces and facilities that meet basic standards of quality and accessibility. They should also ensure resources, if needed, are available to secure appropriate locations.

Strategic Approach 4: Invest in Public Education, Outreach, and Capacity Building

HRM recognizes the importance of informed and active residents, and will continue to provide training and support to build community through volunteerism and active participation. HRM is also committed to representative participation in its community engagement processes and will take steps to improve public outreach to underrepresented groups and those that experience barriers to participation. To this end, the municipality will continue to explore new and innovative ways to initiate and sustain the involvement of the broadest range of participants in its engagement processes. HRM will value and respect citizens' input and participation through appropriate and varied opportunities for involvement.

Action 4.1 Improve public knowledge of HRM's processes and structures

For many, government structures and practices are confusing and unclear. HRM should promote a higher level of awareness amongst public and private sectors about how the municipality works and what opportunities exist for participation. Community engagement can inform how these processes can be modified to create a better fit and easier access for local communities. In addition, HRM "how-to" guides (print and web-based) should outline municipal structures, services provided and how to access them, and how to participate in municipal processes. Materials should be translated to increase access by linguistically diverse groups. Workshops should be developed on specific topics, i.e. volunteering, getting permits, getting involved in planning and development processes. Tours of City Hall and informal meet-and-greets between municipal Councillors, staff and community leaders should also be encouraged and promoted.

Action 4.2 Improve HRM's website

HRM's website is an efficient and relatively low-cost way to reach out to the public. At a minimum, the website is an easy way to share information. However, the interactive nature of the Internet provides many opportunities for innovation in community engagement (i.e. on-line forums such as the one used in Vision HRM; an interactive calendar of Community Engagement events; audio and vide-streaming). HRM should explore how it can maximize the benefits of the web, keeping in mind that online Community Engagement is dependent on public access to computers and the Internet. HRM recently announced an expansion of high-speed Internet access to rural areas. More public access terminals with well-advertised locations would also broaden the accessibility of on-line Community Engagement. The revision of Halifax.ca provides an opportunity for a higher level of service.

Action 4.3 Develop a community contact database solution

HRM should coordinate a centralized database solution for maintaining community contact information that would be accessible to all divisions. The database would arrange and cross-reference the contact information of concerned residents and community groups, based on areas of interest, geography, past participation in training or public processes, etc. The database would help to ensure that all the appropriate residents and community groups are informed about

participation opportunities. New contact forms will be developed to incorporate consent for internal sharing of contact information.

Action 4.4 Develop a Community Engagement Inclusion Guide & Workshop
Many divisions reach out to diverse groups in their engagement exercises; however, there is no consistent approach for addressing diversity in public outreach. The Community Engagement review process identified this lack of coordination as often contributing to a less representative participant base than desired. HRM should draw on current expertise within HRM Human Resources and Community Relations as a first step to developing a Community Engagement Inclusion Guide. Such a strategy would develop contact and media lists, consider potential barriers to participation (based on age, language, literacy, economic status, gender, race, ethnic or cultural background, newcomer status, communication style) and develop strategies for addressing these barriers. More inclusive processes must include multiple and appropriate opportunities for involvement.

Action 4.5 Develop a new volunteer management strategy
HRM recognises that an empowered and organized community sector is the main aim of community development, which enables residents to assess, communicate, and act on their diverse needs and concerns more effectively. HRM currently provides training to community members and groups in facilitation, leadership and board development in order to promote volunteerism, build capacity and help community develop the skills and confidence necessary to act as significant stakeholders in the municipality. Similar training could be offered to all HRM citizen committees to ensure a clear understanding of purpose, decision making scope and effective group dynamics. The annual HRM Volunteer Conference provides an opportunity to connect with volunteers and exchange expertise. The development of a coordinated Volunteer Management Strategy is currently underway and will contribute to stronger and more legitimate community engagement.

Action 4.6 Develop a revised and enhanced notification process
Current notification practices for most HRM Community Engagement processes primarily rely on formal newspaper notifications as well as mail outs, website notification and placards on properties. In order to reach a broader range of participants, an enhanced notification process should be developed that will go above and beyond notification mandated by legislation and utilize a combination of traditional and innovative communication vehicles (i.e. community-based networks such as notice boards and church bulletins, television spots, internet communication such as e-mail and Facebook, door-to-door campaigns, etc). Special attention will be paid to considering the need for clear language, translated materials, and amount of time notice is given in advance of events. Community Relations will work with Clerk's Office, Corporate Communication, Web Services and other Business Units to enhance the existing process.

Action 4.7 Allocate resources to support inclusive participation in HRM processes
Inclusive processes require resources to remove barriers to participation. This may include communication resources to broaden advertising in community newspapers, assisting volunteers with transportation costs, childcare, interpreters and ensuring accessible meeting spaces. It is imperative that HRM allocates resources to broaden its base of engaged citizens.

Strategic Approach 5: Improved Accountability and Promotion of Excellence

The goal of this strategy is to empower and enable HRM as an organization to demonstrate its commitment to public involvement by increasing the level of staff professionalism, increasing internal resources and coordination. The Strategy invites each business unit to take ownership of reviewing and improving their respective activities. To this end, it is proposed that all engagement initiatives use the "Community Engagement Checklist" as part of engagement planning, and that staff reports include a new "Community Engagement section". In addition to regular evaluation it is recommended that a corporate program to recognize excellence and innovation in community engagement be recognized in HRM.

Action 5.1 Institute the "Community Engagement Checklist" as part of planning for all community engagement
Appendix I includes a checklist for planning community engagement activities. The completion of this checklist is mandatory for any staff or Council driven community engagement exercise, as well as any exercise led by a third party acting on behalf of HRM (i.e. consultant). This checklist has been developed in accordance with HRM's Community Engagement Guiding Principles and is intended to help staff design effective and accessible community engagement processes.

Action 5.2 Introduce a new mandatory 'Community Engagement' section in staff reports
A new "Community Engagement" section will become a mandatory requirement of staff reports. It will include a mandatory description of a Community Engagement process including how internal and external stakeholders were engaged on a given initiative (i.e. how they were informed, consulted or actively engaged). Staff may also wish to append more detailed description of the process to staff reports (e.g. meeting minutes, key issues and how they were addressed). In the event that stakeholders or the wider community were not engaged, the new section will provide a brief rationale for that decision. Community Relations will work with SMT and Clerk's Office to institute this change.

Action 5.3 Revise HRM contract templates to ensure external consultants use the new Community Engagement Framework
The new Community Engagement Framework will apply to all parties representing HRM. It is therefore important that Request for Proposal templates include a requirement that any public involvement abides by the Community Engagement Principles and Framework. Community Relations will work with Procurement staff to institute this change.

Action 5.4 Require regular evaluation of completed engagement processes

All engagement initiatives should incorporate public feedback and evaluation as part of the planning process. Evaluation should not be onerous and should correspond to the length and complexity of the engagement process. It can be completed by staff, an outside consultant or the participating public. All evaluation should be shared with the CERG to help assess need for training, coordination and to share "lessons learned" across the municipality.

Action 5.5 Develop a program to recognize excellence in community engagement

The improvement of community engagement practice at HRM will initially require additional staff resources. This effort and innovation should be recognized and celebrated by the municipality. It is recommended that these successes be shared among business units through an annual community engagement recognition program. Community Relations will work with Corporate Communication and the DCAO Office to implement the program.

Implementation and Governance of the Strategy

Governance

HRM's Community Engagement Strategy will be championed by the Senior Management team (SMT) and governed by Community Development's Community Relations and Cultural Affairs Division. A primary role of this Division is to provide a comprehensive community development and cultural framework, and operationalize key municipal strategies including Immigration, Youth Development, Community Engagement, Cultural Planning and Community Grants.

A Community Engagement Resource Group (CERG) has been established to support and coordinate the implementation of the Community Engagement strategic directions across the organization. The Community Engagement Resource Group will convene a Community Engagement Steering Committee comprised of representatives of all business units involved in community engagement work. The Committee will work collaboratively to ensure the recommendations are flexible and suitable to the requirements of their divisions, as well as oversee the implementation and evaluation of the strategy on annual basis.

Program delivery

The implementation of the *Community Engagement Strategy* will move forward in a phased approach, with different actions within each strategic approach being prioritized in the short-term, medium-term, and long-term.

Short-term focus will be placed on the development and adoption of the HRM Community Engagement Framework by Council, including the guiding principles and checklist. Community Engagement Tool-kit, promotional materials and E-Newsletter will be launched. Councillors and key business units will be introduced to the framework in 2008. An HRM Community Engagement Steering Committee will also be established. The development of an overall (internal and external) inclusion strategy for HRM will commence.

Medium-term focus will be placed on the collaborative initiation of tailored community engagement improvement programs in relevant Business Units and staff training. An emphasis will be placed on community capacity building and improved outreach and educational materials, including maximizing HRM's use of its website and the Internet to enhance opportunities for public information, consultation, and participation. Work will also commence to changing the notification process, community calendar and launching a community database solution.

Long-term focus will be placed on, and the evaluation and monitoring of the improvement efforts of relevant Business Units and Divisions and developing a recognition program.

The ***Community Engagement Steering Committee*** will further identify priority areas (i.e. for specific Business Units, facilitate centralized database) and monitor and evaluate the implementation of the strategy over the next Business Cycle.

Evaluation of the implementation of the strategy will be conducted both in an ongoing way (formative) by Community Relations staff and the Steering Committee, and yearly (summative) with each Business Cycle to measure outcomes and ensure progress is in alignment with Council priorities. Annual progress reports will be tabled with Regional Council.

Budget and Resources

To effectively carry out meaningful community engagement initiatives, distinct resources must be allocated in the operating budgets of individual Business Units. To date, most HRM Business Units have not had dedicated budgets to support community engagement as described in this strategy with the notable exception of major corporate initiatives such as the Regional Plan, Community Visioning, and HRM by Design.

The Community Engagement Resource Group (CERG) is currently in the process of allocating funds for research, professional development / training, and equipment, in order to ensure it is well equipped to respond to inquiries and requests for support and guidance from across municipal Business Units.

This strategy emphasizes the importance of creating the right conditions for improved engagement. The real costs of engagement need to be considered by all Business Units and integrated into all existing and future engagement programs.

Community Engagement Action Plan

Strategic Direction/ Action	Progress	Short Term (2008-2010)		Medium Term (2011-2013)		Long Term (2014-2016)	
		Staff	Budget	Staff	Budget	Staff	Budget
Strategic Approach 1: Adopt an HRM Community Engagement Framework							
1.1 Develop a community engagement dictionary	Completed	CRCA	N/A				
1.2 Develop and implement Community Engagement Checklist & Readiness Test	Completed	CRCA, All BUs	N/A				
1.3 Develop a 'Community Engagement Tools and Resources Kit'	Completed	CRCA	$5,000			CRCA	$5,000
Strategic Approach 2:Support improved CE practices in Divisions/BUs							
2.1 Develop a "Community Engagement Resource Group" (CERG)	Completed	CRCA	N/A				
2.2 Develop a Community Engagement Steering Committee	Started	CRCA/All BUs	N/A				
2.3 Educate staff and Councillors on the new Community Engagement Framework	Started	CRCA, CC	N/A	CRCA, CC	N/A	CRCA, CC	N/A
2.4 Develop a "Process Improvement Program" for individual Business Units	Started with P&D	CRCA. All BUs	Individual operating	CRCA. All BUs	Individual operating	CRCA. All BUs	Individual operating
2.5 Develop a Community Engagement Calendar to improve coordination	In progress – Web Services	CRCA, CC, WS, All	WS operating				
Strategic Approach 3: Increase training and internal support to staff							
3.1 Expand and promote		CRCA, HR	$5,000	CRCA, HR	$5,000	CRCA, HR	$5,000

Strategic Direction/ Action	Progress	Short Term (2008-2010)		Medium Term (2011-2013)		Long Term (2014-2016)	
		Staff	Budget	Staff	Budget	Staff	Budget
HRM's staff training programs							
3.2 Develop a Community Engagement Newsletter		CRCA, CC	$ 1,000	CRCA, CC	$1,500	CRCA, CC	$1,500
3.3 Develop a strategic communications plan for business units and their divisions		All BUs, CC, CRCA	Individual operating	All BUs, CC, CRCA	Individual operating	All BUs, CC, CRCA	Individual operating
3.4 Develop appropriate budget and resource allocation for community engagement		All BUs	Individual operating	All BUs	Individual operating	All BUs	Individual operating
3.5 Develop a plan to address needs for technology, equipment, facilities, and meeting spaces	CRCA – Started	CRCA, All BUs	$5,000	CRCA, All BUs	$5,000	CRCA, All BUs	$5,000
Strategic Approach 4:Invest in public education, outreach and capacity building							
4.1 Improve public knowledge of HRM's processes and structures		CRCA, CC, All BUs	$5,000	CRCA, CC, All BUs	$5,000	CRCA, CC, All BUs	$5,000
4.2 Improve HRM's website	Started – Web Services Halifax.ca	WS					
4.3 Develop a community contact database solution	Started	CRCA, All BUs					
4.4 Develop a Community Engagement Inclusion Guide & Workshop	CRCA, CC			CRCA, HR	$3,000		
4.5 Develop a new volunteer management strategy	Started	CRCA					
4.6 Develop a revised and enhanced notification process				CRCA, CC, All BUs	Individual operating	CRCA, CC, All BUs	Individual operating
4.7 Allocate resources to support inclusive participation				CRCA, All BUs	Individual operating		

Strategic Direction/ Action	Progress	Short Term (2008–2010)		Medium Term (2011-2013)		Long Term (2014-2016)	
		Staff	Budget	Staff	Budget	Staff	Budget
in HRM processes							
Strategic Approach 5: Improved Accountability and Promotion of Excellence							
5.1 Institute the "Community Engagement Checklist" as part of planning for all community engagement	Started – SMT approval	CRCA, All BUS	N/A				
5.2 Introduce a new mandatory "Community Engagement" section in staff reports	In progress	CRCA, Al BUs, Clerk's Office	N/A				
5.3 Revise HRM contract templates to ensure external consultants use the new Community Engagement Framework		CRCA, Finance	N/A				
5.4 Require regular evaluation of completed engagement processes		CRCA, All BUs	N/A				
5.5 Develop a program to recognize excellence in community engagement				CRCA, DCAO's Office	$500	CRCA, DCAO's Office	$500
Total			$20,000		$20,000		$22,000

Appendix I – HRM Community Engagement Readiness Checklist

Introducing the Checklist

This "Readiness Test" is a short form of a longer Checklist available in the Community Engagement Tool-Kit. It is designed in a form of questions to help those who lead community engagement to check their level of readiness to engage the public. It is accompanied by a point system which allows one to assess relative readiness. While one may never be completely ready, the more bases are covered through the planning process the greater the probability that an engagement process will be meaningful, effective and efficient.

The completion of this checklist is mandatory for any staff driven community engagement exercise, as well as any exercise lead by a third party acting on behalf of HRM (i.e. consultant). This checklist has been developed in accordance with HRM's Community Engagement Guiding Principles and is intended to help staff design effective and accessible community engagement processes. Additional templates to help staff work through the Checklist will be provided in the Community Engagement Toolkit.

The checklist has been developed and revised based on feedback from HRM staff experienced in developing a variety of community engagement processes. Each community engagement process is unique. In most cases, the essential activity areas in each of the phases will inform one another and be worked on simultaneously, rather than sequentially.

Introducing Community Engagement Resource Staff

Community Relations Staff are available to assist staff in the development of community engagement initiatives including:

- Process design and troubleshooting
- Advice on innovative community engagement techniques
- Assistance with community contacts
- Assistance with addressing inclusion in community processes
- Assistance with revising existing business unit processes to align with community engagement framework

Current Staff Contacts are:

Kasia Tota	**Phil Hammonds**
Community Developer	Community Developer
Community Relations and Cultural Affairs	Community Relations and Cultural Affairs
Tel. 490-5190	Tel. 490-6577
E-mail totak@halifax.ca	E-mail hammonp@halifax.ca

Community Engagement Short Checklist/Readiness Test

READINESS STATEMENT	NO	SOME WHAT	YES
1. We can confirm that a decision has not been made and there is a purpose for the involvement process beyond education and information sharing			
2. We know what information the decision makers are looking for and how they will use it			
3. We have clear understanding of what we need to know from the public and how we will facilitate input			
4. We selected appropriate engagement strategies to reach our objectives			
5. There is adequate time for meaningful involvement			
6. We have project budget and have identified resources to sponsor an effective process			
7. We have identified potential stakeholders, their level of engagement			
8. We have developed an inclusion strategy to address potential barriers to participation including training and support			
9. We have developed project plan including key milestones, decision making points and timing			
10. We identified and analyzed risk			
11. We developed an effective communication plan			
12. We have identified project spokesperson			
13. We have coordinated our process with other HRM processes			
14. We have a plan on how to collect and report public input back to participants and decision makers			
15. We developed an evaluation plan as part of the process			
16. Our process clearly aligns with the HRM Principles of Community Engagement			