



Council Focus Area

**Report on Progress
2009/10 Council Focus Areas**

Public Safety

December 8, 2009

Introduction

During the 2009/10 business planning process, members of the newly elected Council identified Public Safety as one of five areas of focus for the duration of their term. Regional Council determined that the Public Safety Council Focus Area should focus on the recommendations in the Mayor's Roundtable Report. Staff undertook a number of processes to engage key stakeholders and subsequently submitted a report for Partnering for Public Safety which included an action plan with five themes. The themes and corresponding updates are outlined below:

Issue #1 - Sustainability Initiatives

In the Report to the Mayor as a Result of the Roundtable, it was emphasized that HRM play a greater role in dealing with violence and public safety. The report identified the importance of creating a full-time Public Safety Co-ordinator with a standing Public Safety Advisory Committee. It indicated the need for a strategic action plan to create meaningful partnerships with key stakeholders and bring together municipal, provincial and federal representatives to consider violence and public safety. There was a strong message to develop a communications strategy that provides pro-active, comprehensive, comprehensible, contextual and useful information to citizens on crime and violence.

More specifically, the report identified the need for a working group to address public safety and security issues in the Downtown Bar Scene including transportation related issues. It pointed out the need of available and affordable recreational facilities, especially schools, and ensuring volunteerism in HRM is well organized.

2009/2010 Progress

Board of Police of Commissioners

The Board of Police Commissioners has been serving as the Public Safety Advisory Committee effective February 17, 2009. The Public Safety Officer has been submitting reports and attending the regular monthly meetings of the Board.

Public Safety Officer

On March 4, 2009, then Justice Minister Cecil Clarke and Mayor Peter Kelly announced the appointment of Superintendent Don Spicer of Halifax Regional Police as the HRM Public Safety Officer.

Public Safety Office

Police Services established a Public Safety Office to include existing services and programs administered through Community Relations & Crime Prevention (Victim Services, Volunteer Services, School Liaison Program), Mobile Mental Health, Park Patrol, Traffic Units and the Community Response Team.

The Public Safety Officer has been conducting a program analysis of the functions performed by the units within the Public Safety Office. The analysis is providing insight on the programs being delivered and potential opportunities to make improvements in the respective operations.

Public Safety Strategic Plan

A strategic planning process commenced shortly after the establishment of the Public Safety Office. The initial step has been to review and integrate information into the process from:

- A Report to the Mayor as a Result of the Roundtable;
- Partnering for Public Safety - A Response to the Report to the Mayor as a Result of the Roundtable;
- HRP Internal Environmental Scan.

Meetings have been held with Dr. Don Clairmont and Dr. Chris Murphy of Dalhousie University regarding the development of the Public Safety Strategic Planning process. Discussions also took place about the need to lay out a Logic Model linking general actions with specific strategic directions and action plans, business practices, standards, implementation accountability and time lines. Dr. Clairmont and Dr. Murphy have prepared a proposal to conduct a formative evaluation of the Public Safety initiative.

Public Safety Database

A Public Safety Database has been developed to track activities of the action plans for the respective strategic directions evolving through the strategic planning process. The database has recently been tested and is functioning well. Staff members are in the process of populating the database with actions taken to date. As the various initiatives continue to evolve, the database will be re-engineered to track the actions.

2010/2011 Objectives

Collaborate with stakeholders to:

- Develop an HRM collective strategy for public safety.
- Develop a strategic plan and a Tripartite Forum on Justice to consider violence and public safety issues and strategies to deal with them.
- Research information on strategic issues and best practices for cities.
- Review existing programs and initiatives and develop a strategic plan regarding violence and public safety for the HRM.
- Assign an existing committee to undertake or establish a sub-committee to address the Downtown Bar Scene.
- Review and refine Taxi By-Law 108 to enhance taxi availability that is conducive to the Downtown Bar Scene.
- Review and refine location of taxi stands that are conducive to the Downtown Bar Scene.
- Review existing transportation strategy and collaborate with stakeholders regarding the Downtown Bar Scene.

- Explore options to ferry students back to their campuses.
- Enhance CPTED guidelines for informal corridors used by the students to return to campuses/ residences from downtown.
- Review and confirm role for the use of CPTED.
- Review and confirm mandate for HRM Community Response Team.
- Develop a broad social marketing campaign.
- Develop a strategy to communicate positive stories.
- Develop a corporate public safety communications strategy.
- Enhance effective use of all available media.
- Seek additional safe transportation alternatives after midnight.
- Implement the community Facility Master Plan and affordable programs and events.
- Review existing volunteer initiatives within HRM.
- Develop a collective volunteer strategy for HRM involving all stakeholders.

Medium/Long Term Outcomes

- HRM as an organization must undertake a variety of initiatives to improve public safety.

Issue #2 - Diversity

The Report to the Mayor as a Result of the Roundtable advocates that HRM demonstrate greater leadership in the public safety issues of minorities by revitalizing its Community and Race Relations committee. It stresses that HRM seek ways to be a part of the solution by building on the strengths and facilitating the involvement of the African Nova Scotian population and others. There is a need for HRM to encourage a more in-depth delivery of the restorative justice program for repeat African Nova Scotian young offenders along with youth and adult immigrants.

The report suggests that HRM consider ways to improve the quality-of-life for the disabled and other minority groupings. It also expresses that HRM nurture a relationship in symbolic ways to reduce homophobia and kindred prejudices, and it acknowledges a role for itself in facilitating acceptance and tolerance in the larger society for Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) communities.

2009/2010 Progress

An ad hoc consultation for public safety and race relations comprised of the Halifax Regional Chief of Police, HRM Public Safety Officer, Dr. Donald Clairmont, and members of the African Nova Scotian communities has been underway since the summer of 2009. The consultations involved discussions of violence and public safety in relation to race relations including how to reduce the over-representation of African Nova Scotians as offenders and victims in the criminal justice system. A key purpose of the discussions was to learn more about the underlying issues of the over-representation issue and to assist the HRM Public Safety initiative in developing strategic actions to effectively address it. Discussion points for consideration include:

- reducing the number of African Nova Scotian offenders reported at all points in the

- Criminal Justice System (CJS), from restorative justice to federal custody, to a level comparable with the general population;
- reducing the incidence of self-reported African Nova Scotian victimization as reported in the General Social Survey and other public surveys;
 - reducing the level of crime and increase perceptions of public safety in the urban core and other identified areas where racial conflict has been commonplace;
 - increasing the measure among African Nova Scotian citizens of HRM that are fully engaged as citizens, have increased sense of public safety and have the needs of their children and youth met;
 - enhancing the level of trust and mutual accountability between municipal authorities; i.e. civic administration, policing and African Nova Scotian professionals, religious, other leaders, and members of the various African Nova Scotian communities in HRM;
 - advancing a collaborative approach that would enable the HRM Public Safety Office to meaningfully coordinate the partnership of the three levels of government, the private sector and the African Nova Scotian communities in an assertive manner.

Mayor Kelly; Dan English, HRM CAO; Halifax Regional Police Chief Frank Beazley; Superintendent Darrell Beaton, Officer-in-Charge RCMP Halifax District; Superintendent Don Spicer, HRM Public Safety Officer and Dr. Donald Clairmont have also been involved in other consultations with representatives from the African Nova Scotian communities within the HRM discussing:

- ways to work together on helping youth in their respective communities;
- a diversity action plan;
- revitalizing the HRM Race Relations Committee;
- developing a process for a Restorative Justice Practice Approach in dealing with diversity issues and youth violence.

2010/2011 Objectives

- Complete review and implement Community and Race Relations Committee renewal initiative.
- Initiate involvement of diverse populations in addressing public safety related matters.
- Continue to dialogue and explore additional options for using with Restorative Justice approaches.
- Continue to collaborate and develop programs to improve the quality-of-life for diverse communities.
- Continue to collaborate with stakeholders to develop a collective strategy enhancing relationships between the Lesbian Gay Bisexual & Transgender (LGBT) community and the HRM.

Medium/Long Term Outcomes

- Strengthen HRM's connection with our diverse communities while at the same time addressing quality-of-life issues within those communities.

Issue #3 - Police Community Response

The Report to the Mayor as a Result of the Roundtable recommends the police services commit more to reassurance policing, deemed to mean police personnel in specific neighbourhoods full time and focus on reassurance policing. It encourages more visible policing presence, more crime prevention programming and information and dissemination, and assistance in dealing with local area problems. The report identifies the need to **engage citizens in high crime areas, increase the community participation in crime prevention programs and continue to mobilize volunteers in various police-assistance programs.**

Halifax Regional Police (HRP) is encouraged to improve communications with the local universities including their campus security, student organizations and better collaboration among HRP, Downtown bars and students.

Examining the experiences of other municipalities in Canada and the US with respect to best practices in dealing with the street sex trade, responses to addicted offenders and related issues is a suggestion put forward in the report.

2009/2010 Progress

Liquor Enforcement Unit

The HRP Liquor Enforcement Unit (LEU) partnered with the Provincial Alcohol and Gaming Division (AGD) in January 2009 to enhance education and enforcement efforts regarding underage sections of the Liquor Control Act (LCA) and the Liquor Licensing Regulations (LLR). Regular inspections by the LEU and AGD members have sent a clear message to the licensee and the community in the downtown core that these inspections will be a significant aspect of their daily operations.

A committee has been struck to address public safety issues in and around the downtown bar scene. The committee is comprised of representatives from HRP, ADG, Canadian Restaurant and Food Association, Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia and Downtown Business Commission.

The LEU has prepared an over-service information booklet to be distributed to downtown establishments as phase one to the 2010 initiative to address intoxication in the downtown core.

University Relations

The HRP Community Response Officer (CRO) for the South End in Central Division is a member of the St. Mary's and Dalhousie University Community Councils. As a member of both Councils, the CRO attends monthly meetings during which university and community representatives collaborate on community issues in the university area including student safety, neighbourhood quality-of-life and development.

Gun Amnesty

The HRM Public Safety Office launched Pixels for Pistols, an innovative Gun Amnesty Program. Through a community safety partnership with Henry's Camera, every citizen who turned over a functional firearm to police from November 2 - 30 received a Sony digital camera and a Henry's School of Imaging Gift Card for helping to keep our city safe. Citizens who turned in ammunition or non-functional firearms received a Henry's School of Imaging Gift Card. In total, 1,074 guns and in excess of 10,000 rounds of ammunition were turned over to police.

Taxi and Limousine Services

Staff tabled reports regarding Taxi By-Law 108. These reports address the availability of taxis in the downtown core. Staff has also been carrying out a review of location and use of the current taxi stands in the downtown core, and potential new stands more conducive to the downtown core.

2010/2011 Objectives

- Continue to clarify role and definition of existing CROs and proposed CSO concept, identify any variances and potential liability issues with CSO concept, consult Policing Services Nova Scotia and Municipal Association of Police Personnel (MAPP) of any potential concerns and determine if CSOs are required.
- Review the feasibility of the proposed Community Support Officer (CSO) concept.
- Continue to clarify, communicate and commit to HRP Reassurance Policing approach, Community Response model and Crime Reduction Strategy and RCMP Deployment, Crime Reduction and Communication strategies.

Medium/Long Term Outcomes

- Halifax Regional Police and RCMP Halifax District must continue to implement policing strategies which reduce crime and enhance public safety.

Issue #4 - Community Engagement

The Report to the Mayor as a Result of the Roundtable expresses the need to collaborate with local organizations and senior levels of government to provide safe supervised housing for youth and adults exiting custodial institutions to enhance successful reintegration efforts.

It emphasizes that HRM should encourage neighbourhood engagement in every way in the urban core and play a more significant role in issues involving troubled youth. It also suggests that HRM adopt an early intervention approach, have volunteer mentors to work with and engage at-risk youth, re-establish a Volunteer Bureau, and provide alternative opportunities for recreation.

2009/2010 Progress

Affordable and Supported Housing

The ad hoc consultation for public safety and housing has been meeting to discuss the issues of violence and public safety in relation to housing issues, basically considering how to improve the availability of safe, affordable and supported housing, and what effective advocacy could and should be exercised by the HRM Public Safety Office. From a social policy perspective, the inadequacy of such housing has been shown in virtually all research on public safety in Canada's larger urban centers to be a crucial factor associated directly with high levels of violence and public safety concern and indirectly to represent a major obstacle to getting at the root causes of these problems.

The Public Safety Office has been mandated by HRM Council to advance a strategy and program to assist the municipality in coming to grips with these housing issues. This ad hoc consultation was brought into existence to suggest a strategic action plan that could kick-start the carrying out of that mandate. It has brought together a small group of well-informed representatives in the field of safe, affordable and supported housing initiatives in HRM.

Volunteer Strategy and Initiatives

The Volunteer Coordinator, HRM Community Development, is collaborating with staff responsible for volunteer services within HRM, Halifax Regional Police, Fire and Emergency Services, and RCMP for potential coordination of the respective volunteer services. A 'Step Up to Leadership' facilitator training has already been rolled out for HRP Community Response Officers.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

The HRM Community Response Team is chairing a working group with representatives from other HRM Business Units, HRM Regional Councillors, and Dalhousie and St. Mary's Universities to assess the walking corridors to Dalhousie and St. Mary's Universities using the CPTED principles.

2010/2011 Objectives

Continue to engage the community and work with various stakeholders to:

- Encourage volunteerism in various police-assistance programs through a compelling recruitment strategy.
- Develop a strategy to address student-related security and disorder issues.
- Explore various options to encourage neighbourhood engagement.
- Facilitating community engagement regarding issues involving troubled youth.
- Enhance existing and create new volunteer initiatives within HRM.
- Develop a collective volunteer strategy for HRM involving all the stakeholders.
- collaborate with universities in the HRM to improve communications.
- Explore and implement student safety programs.
- Develop programs regarding student alcohol consumption and abuse issues.

- Enhance safety thrusts through HRM by Design and CPTED.
- Develop additional initiatives to minimize violence and student victimization.

Medium/Long Term Outcomes

- Engage citizens and community groups in playing an active role in public safety in HRM.

Issue #5 - Partnerships

The Report to the Mayor as a Result of the Roundtable stresses the importance of consultation and coordination among diverse community service providers and governmental services so that a coherent strategic plan can be developed to accommodate both the treatment and enforcement approaches. While harassment and intimidation on the street are to be dealt with under the recent amendments to the Motor Vehicle Act, the general thrust of dealing with such issues should be a social development approach. The report also identifies student alcohol consumption and abuse issues and a need to collaborate on a new targeted prevention effort aimed at developing more responsible drinking among young people.

The HRM should advocate for the Province of Nova Scotia to commit sufficient resources to enable organizations such as the restorative justice agencies to address the needs of the more troubled young offenders admitted to their programs and establish treatment facilities for ‘out of control’ youth whose serious behavioral problems cannot be addressed within group homes. Innovative approaches should be directed to dealing with certain offending young adults. Also, advocate for the Provincial Government to have the Nova Scotia Restorative Justice program provide in-depth restorative justice intervention.

There is a need to support and advocate programs that link street people, ex-inmates, ‘graduates’ from Group Homes, and others to existing social services. The municipal government should advocate for greater attention to exit planning by the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services and Nova Scotia Corrections. The HRM needs to continue supporting the creation and implementation of Speciality Courts.

The report expresses the need for better distribution of effective crime prevention strategies and information generally by both provincial and municipal bodies. It suggests system-level changes whether in policing or in the delivery and communication about alternatives to standard court processing of crimes and violence. There is a suggestion to enhance communication to the public about the role of judges and prosecutors, sentencing process and alternative justice.

2009/2010 Progress

A copy of the report, Response to the Report to the Mayor as a Result of the Roundtable was circulated to the responsibility centres identified in the Action Plan. Meetings were held with the various partners to review and firm up their respective responsibilities as agreed to during the process of compiling the report. One of the significant partnerships has been the enhancement of the Safe and Strong Communities initiative with new mandates and committees.

Steering Committee Membership

- Judith Ferguson, Co-Chair, Deputy Minister, Nova Scotia Department of Community Services
- Chief Frank Beazley, Co-Chair, Chief of Police, Halifax Regional Police
- Marion Tyson, Deputy Minister, Nova Scotia Department of Justice
- Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer, Halifax Regional Municipality

Steering Committee Mandate

- Strengthen community capacity and support continued interest in positive change through effective communications, coordination and alignment of activities.
- Identify strategies that will enhance public safety and the perception of public safety.
- Coordinate efforts, working with partners to identify and implement change for the short and long term that leads to improved safety and quality of life in communities

Advisory Committee Membership

- Superintendent Don Spicer, Public Safety Officer, Halifax Regional Municipality
- Anne Totten, Corporate Policy Analyst, Halifax Regional Municipality
- Valerie Pottie Bunge, Director, Policy, Planning and Research, Nova Scotia Department of Justice
- Gary Porter, Executive Director, Housing Authorities and Property Operations, Nova Scotia Department of Community Services
- Inspector Joanne Crampton, Royal Canadian Mounted Police

Advisory Committee Mandate

- Community Development
 - Strengthen Community Capacity and support positive change;
 - Coordinate and partner to improve quality of life.
- Enforcement
 - Reduce the impact of criminal activity;
 - Enhance public safety and perception of public safety.
- Partnerships and Collaboration.

There are three sub-committees comprised of representatives from the various stakeholders. The purpose of these sub-committees is as follows:

- Outreach – Community Development and Enforcement
 - Respond to specific geographic areas;
- Coordination – Service Delivery and Operations
 - Coordination of programs and services across organizational boundaries;
- Results – Information, Communications and Results Tracking
 - Develop and track performance for the initiative and develop information and communications plans.

A letter was sent to the National Crime Prevention Centre inviting them to participate in the Safer and Stronger Communities initiative. They have confirmed that they will be taking part in the initiative which fulfills the tri-partite government approach to crime prevention recommendations contained in the Mayor's Round Table Report.

2010/2011 Objectives

Continue to collaborate with stakeholders and develop programs to:

- Address student alcohol consumption and abuse issues.
- Refine regulations, training, and enforcement for liquor offences and establishments.
- Enhance prevention, apprehension, and prosecution initiatives, and changes to the Criminal Code to strengthen the Criminal Justice System.
- Enhance partnerships and strategies to generate permanent safe housing.
- Establish required Specialty Courts, including a Drug Treatment Court.
- Establish programs which assist clients in their transition to independence and self-sufficiency.
- Facilitate the development of a coherent strategic plan to accommodate treatment and enforcement approaches.
- Develop legislation and programs to address harassment and intimidation on the street.
- Develop exit planning options for youth and adults exiting custodial institutions.
- Examine Canadian and American best practices in dealing with the street sex trade, responses to addicted offenders and related issues.
- In consultation with other levels of government, review and refine policies and strategies for reducing the street sex trade.
- Develop exit planning options for youth and adults exiting custody of Corrections, NS Department of Justice (DOJ).
- Explore options for off-campus minor offences using Restorative Justice approaches.
- Refine regulations, training, and enforcement for liquor offences and establishments.
- Develop alternatives to standard court processing of crimes and violence.
- Enhance communication efforts to the public.
- Explore options for using Restorative Justice approaches and skills in dealing with offending youth that have different challenges.
- Receive Provincial Government approval of the business case for 211 initiative.
- Help facilitate the creation of education curriculum which responds to all youth.

Medium/Long Term Outcomes

- Align with all levels of government, social agencies and community partners to realize efficiencies and improve public safety programs and services in HRM.