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**Item No. 6**  
**Halifax Regional Council**  
**June 15, 2010**

**TO:** Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

**SUBMITTED BY:**

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dan English".

Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** June 7, 2010

**SUBJECT:** Economic Strategy Review Process

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## **INFORMATION REPORT**

### **ORIGIN**

Follow up to an Information Report submitted to the November 24, 2009 Regional Council session which advised Council that preparatory work had commenced on a process to review and update "*Strategies for Success*" - HRM's Economic Development Strategy 2005-2010 and to align Strategy's goals with HRM's corporate direction for the next five years.

### **BACKGROUND**

The November, 2009 information report was the first in a series of progress updates to Council on the Strategy renewal process. Plans to undertake a series of stakeholder consultations in the upcoming weeks as part of the review process have prompted a further update to Council on the review process.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Overview**

HRM's Economic Strategy - *Strategies for Success* - is nearing the end of its five-year implementation term. Late 2009 marked the commencement of a review process that is intended to produce a new economic strategy for HRM - one that is rooted in the vision of HRM as an economic hub for the Atlantic region.

The process is underway with a goal of gaining a clear understanding of the success of the current Strategy, the relevance of its targets and to set out actions for the next five years which reflect public and private sectors needs around economic development. Conditions in the Municipality and the economy have changed since the original Strategy was adopted in 2005 and it is appropriate to have these changes considered with the sun-setting of the current Strategy.

### **Project Concept**

The objective is to develop a new five-year strategy. It is anticipated that the new strategy will comprise two parts.

Part 1: An outline of challenges/opportunities, along with a vision, priority areas and strategic goals for economic development policy and programming initiatives through 2016 and;

Part 2: Specific action plans to support the implementation of each strategy goal. Action plans will spell out roles and responsibilities of the three levels of government and the private sector; tasks, timing, costs, and anticipated financial contributions; and the measures that will be used to track progress and measure results. The focus on developing action plans is intended to be more comprehensive than the current economic strategy which is non-specific in this area of implementation.

### **Project Governance**

As in the case of the current strategy, it is proposed that HRM Council will own the strategy and the strategy review process on behalf of the broader community. The development of the Strategy is being led by Greater Halifax Partnership under the direction of a Steering Committee comprising representatives of all three levels of government, the Greater Halifax Partnership, Halifax Chamber of Commerce, NS Business Inc and the Mayor's Economic Advisory Committee. The Steering Committee directs a Project Management Office residing in the Greater Halifax Partnership which receives advice from the Mayor's Economic Advisory Committee, and includes subject matter experts and a dedicated project manager. Regional Council will be engaged throughout the process and updated at regular intervals - ultimately with the responsibility for approval of a new strategy in March, 2011

### **Project Phases**

The review and renewal process has been designed to occur in four phases:

- Phase 1 - April 15 - July 15: Comprising a critical, third-party assessment of the current strategy undertaken by the International Economic Development Council (IEDC), along with a local review and a first round of stakeholder consultations.
- Phase 2 - July 15 - Sept 15: Comprising detailed planning on challenges, opportunities, vision and drafting of action and implementation plans and outcome measures.
- Phase 3 - Sept - Dec 20: Comprising consultations on the action plans, outcome measures and implementation plan as well as on how to ensure on-going stakeholder engagement.
- Phase 4 - Jan - March 31: Adoption by Regional Council and launch of the new Economic Strategy and agreement for on-going engagement to 2016.

### **Guiding Principles**

The Steering Committee has adopted overarching principles to guide the work of this project. These principles are around the following themes:

- Transparency
- Collaborative and consultative
- Research driven
- Alignment to, and furtherance of the priorities, plans, responsibilities and policies of all three levels of government and the private sector.

### **Update on Current Initiatives**

The overall strategy review process is proceeding on schedule and the first phase is well underway with a third-party assessment of the current strategy by IEDC nearing completion. GHP is in the process of conducting a series of facilitated stakeholder consultations in the upcoming weeks.

One of the key distinctions between the current and former process is that additional focus will be placed this time on key economic sectors. The upcoming facilitated consultations have been organized in order to gain insight into challenges and opportunities associated with the following economic sectors:

- Digital Industries;
- Finance, Insurance, Real Estate;
- Property and Infrastructure Development;
- Aerospace and Defense;
- Advanced Manufacturing;

- Transportation and Distribution;
- Education and Knowledge;
- Oceans Technology;
- Life Sciences;
- Green Technology;
- Young and Emerging Professionals;
- Volunteer Sector; and
- Tourism, Culture and Hospitality.

To complement the work in these sectors, the Halifax Chamber of Commerce will be holding other sessions that focus more specifically on economic enablers (such as research and development, demographic challenges and talent issues, etc.) and their impact on several sectors.

In order to maintain interest and active engagement by key individuals and stakeholder groups GHP, supported by HRM Communications staff, has developed a communications strategy in order to communicate regularly with stakeholders and citizens. The strategy includes ways to:

- Tailor messages to key stakeholders based on their area(s) of focus;
- Build mechanisms for two-way communication using in-person consultations;
- Provide regular project updates; and
- Utilize on-line and other media tools to solicit input and feedback from all citizens.

### **Council Input and Direction Sought**

It is expected that a number of findings and themes will emerge as a result of the IEDC peer review and the upcoming sector consultations. Prior to proceeding in detail with Phase 2 of the work plan, it is important for the project team to receive input and possible further direction from Council. In support of Council's key role as strategy owner, the plan is to present the findings of the Phase 1 work along with an indication of what Phase 2 work will entail in terms of detailed planning on challenges, opportunities, vision and drafting of action and implementation plans and outcome measures in August, September and October.

### **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

Resource support is being provided to the project management office by HRM predominately by way of staff support. However, as owner of the Strategy, HRM will endeavour to support the development and implementation of the 2011-2016 strategy where appropriate. For the fiscal year 2010-2011, any resources will be drawn from within existing envelopes. Any budget implications for future years will be brought back to Council for approval.

### **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES/BUSINESS PLAN**

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

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The proposed stakeholder engagement process for the review of the Economic Strategy complies with the HRM Community Engagement Strategy. The process outlined above primarily comprises a consultation with key economic development partners and stakeholders who were either actively involved in the preparation and/or implementation of HRM's 2005-2010 Economic Strategy or have been identified through consultation with the Strategy Review Steering Committee as playing a key role in the preparation and/or implementation of a new strategy. In addition to direct consultation with HRM Council and with individual representatives from government, private and not-for-profit sector stakeholders, representatives of various HRM business units and individual citizens will be consulted. The process outlined in this report also entails broader-based consultation with HRM citizens through the use of web-based processes and social media tools. Consultation with the Steering Committee has confirmed the recommended approach.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

N/A

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/agenda.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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