



## **COUNCIL FOCUS AREA**

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## **COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

**January 10, 2006**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Community relations is really synonymous with community engagement. Community engagement refers to the manner in which the public is consulted, who is participating, the way information is gathered, and how information is shared. Community engagement is about understanding the community, its challenges, and ensuring policy and programs assist a community achieve its vision. Effective community engagement will focus on partnership in the community and facilitating community action. A positive community relations environment at the local government level is greatly influenced by our effectiveness at engaging the public in the institutions of civic life.

## **2. COUNCIL CONCERNS**

Council has identified several concerns with the state of HRM's community relations. For the most part, these concerns relate to the effectiveness of HRM's approach to public engagement, as well as the symptoms of HRM's existing approach to community engagement.

### **A) Effectiveness of Community Engagement**

- the public is not participating
- non-representative or diverse participation
- wrong tools/techniques
- inconsistent
- public burn out
- minimal coordination across Business Units
- perceived as staff driven

### **B) Symptoms of Poor Community Engagement**

- lack of public buy-in
- low participation in civic functions
- alienation of rural communities
- uninformed public
- high customer service expectations
- declining community identity
- low community pride
- declining social conscience
- declining sense of inclusion & belonging to communities
- low public awareness of Council and its work
- mistrust of government
- declining participation in civic elections
- public disillusionment and resentment for all concerned
- general public apathy

### 3. CURRENT INITIATIVES

The following highlights some of HRM's current initiatives that will help improve HRM's effectiveness at engaging the community, and ultimately eliminate some of the symptoms Council has identified.

- ***Best practices research on public consultation tools and techniques*** is completed. This research will help staff tailor consultation and use appropriate tools and techniques that have been found to be extremely effective at engaging community.
- A draft ***Diversity Strategy*** is underway which aims to ensure a wide variety of individuals are engaged in civic processes and are made to feel valued as members of HRM.
- ***Customer Service Improvements*** - HRM is investing in some infrastructure and projects that could enhance the manner in which we share information and engage communities
  - One central CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system is in place to intake, track and monitor requests for service. Centralized intake (490-4000) moving to 311 and 911 services
  - By-law project
  - Integrated Service Contract Strategy (multi-channel) adopted
  - Customer Service Strategy to be rolled out shortly
  - Work Order project TPW
  - Reviewing performance standards with BU in Hansen
- ***Technology Improvements*** - HRM is investing in technological infrastructure and projects that could enhance the manner in which we engage communities. These include
  - Web Portal Technology
  - Web Forum technology (1<sup>st</sup> used for Regional Planning)
  - Rural Broadband as an MRIF project.
  - Fiber build - to carry hi-resolution imaging.

### 4. PROPOSED INITIATIVES

In order to improve HRM's community relations environment a much greater focus needs to be placed on the manner in which the public is engaged. The following outlines proposed recommendations that Council should consider to improve HRM's effectiveness at engaging the community. A more complete listing of potential options is outlined in **Appendix A** (Table 1).

#### A) Public Engagement Coordination

**Option 1- Adopt a community engagement model for HRM.** At present community engagement lacks coordination. Many of HRM's business units are engaging communities now in much of the work they do, however, because it is not well coordinated with the work of other business units, the public is being pulled in many directions. The public are

expected to dedicate their time and energy to a number of processes which is contributing to volunteer burnout. Feedback has also shown, the public may not be participating because the tools/techniques are being used are not adequate to achieve the level of engagement being sought. The approach to community engagement is sometimes inconsistent, and the process perceived as staff driven. **Appendix B** provides an example of what a HRM Community Engagement Model might look like. This model demonstrates how a more systematic approach to community engagement will achieve better coordination and enable Council and the public to understand the type of engagement exercise that will occur depending on the particular initiative.

**Implications:** HRM does not have a staff position currently dedicated to coordination of public engagement activities for the organization. To achieve better coordination and overall effectiveness of an HRM community engagement program, a new position would be required, or an existing position realigned.

## **B) Consultation Tools and Techniques**

### ***Option 2 - Develop and Implement a Corporate Guide for Community Engagement***

This guide would provide both a theoretical framework for common understanding and a dictionary to facilitate the dialogue necessary for successful participation. The guide would also provide practical advice on tools and techniques that can be used, and examples and templates for consideration when designing an engagement program.

**Implications:** Although HRM has a great deal of staff expertise in public consultation, no staff position is completely dedicated to assisting the organization in this manner. Production of the guide could be achieved by realigning an existing staff position(s).

## **C) Consultation Techniques**

**Option 3 - Adopt Community Visioning as the cornerstone of HRM's new community engagement model.** The best practices' research indicates community visioning is especially suited for engaging community. The technique has been used successfully by communities across Canada to set the stage for short-range and longer-range planning activities and for setting new directions in policy, reviews of existing policy, and for initiatives requiring integration between issues. Through community visioning a wide variety of ideas can be heard and a range of potential solutions developed with the community. **Appendix C** provides a detailed overview of the visioning process, and a draft process for prioritizing the delivery of visioning programs in HRM.

It is important to note community visioning would not replace other forms of engagement HRM has traditionally practised, rather it would enhance and compliment the overall engagement program. As Public Engagement Coordination highlights, the real benefit

would be the coordination of all of HRM's engagement programs, both old and new be coordinated.

***Implications:***

Community visioning would be a new community engagement program requiring a significant commitment on the part of the organization to ensure it is properly resourced. It has been the experience of communities elsewhere, the initial commitment in resources ultimately pays-off over the long term as capacity in the community develops and the community becomes more adept at resolving its own local issues. Nonetheless, at this time, it is difficult to anticipate the level of resourcing required. Should Council decide to pursue a community visioning program, staff recommends an initial first year dedicated to pilot projects (number to be determined by Council). The success of the program would be measured and an assessment provided to Council on whether or not the program has long-term potential. The resources necessary to execute the pilot program could be achieved by realigning existing staff positions.

**D) Representative/Diverse Participation**

***Option 4 - Develop and Implement a Community Participation Outreach Program***

This program would ensure HRM is engaging a diversity of residents throughout HRM, and that HRM is actively assisting those that do not know how to participate or are uncomfortable with participating, to develop necessary, participatory skills to affect formal and informal processes of governance in the community

***Implications:*** Although the Clerk's Office and Diversity Office have implemented some positive change in this regard, a staff position solely responsible for this function does not presently exist. Assistance to other Business Units is also necessary to achieve the goal of representative and diverse participation. This function could be achieved by realigning an existing staff position(s).

**E) Information Gathering and Sharing**

***Option 5 - Develop and maintain a centralised data base of community issues and trends.***

This data base could be used to target community stewardship initiatives and education programs, and to tailor design community engagement programs based on known issues and trends. Such an approach would be proactive to community problem solving. (See **Appendix D** for an Overview of Information Gathering)

***Implications:*** Although all business units currently gather community based information, a staff position responsible for gathering, analysing, and monitoring this information, and reporting on emerging community trends does not exist. If such a position were to exist, staff could alert Business Units and Council of emerging issues and conditions within their

respective districts. Achieving this function would require establishing a new position or realigning an existing staff position. Ongoing liaison with Council, collectively and individually, would be critical to successful use of a centralized database of the sort described above.

Appendix A

Table 1 - OPTIONS FOR IMPROVING COMMUNITY RELATIONS

ISSUE	PROPOSED PROGRAM INITIATIVES	IMPLICATIONS
<p><b>ISSUES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• declining involvement in the institutions &amp; process of community life</li> <li>• declining sense of inclusion &amp; belonging to communities</li> <li>• low public awareness of Council and its work</li> <li>• mistrust of government</li> <li>• declining participation in civic elections</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Initiate a <i>Civic Education and Community Orientation Project</i></li> <li>2. <i>Collaborate with the School Board to reexamine the formal curriculum</i></li> <li>3. <i>Create an Administrative Review Program for HRM</i></li> <li>4. <i>Develop Promotional Campaign (ie. Adopt Your Block) on the importance of civic participation</i> through televised public forums, print media, and public service television announcements.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Will provide HRM innovative methods and models for encouraging civic-mindedness and the skills that strengthen communities.</li> <li>2. Will allow staff to determine the adequacy and effectiveness of the education programs and <i>identify joint actions to strengthen the formal curriculum</i> to instill a sense of civic-mindedness and civic skills.</li> <li>3. Provides an opportunity for the public to have the actions of the HRM's administration and staff reviewed to ensure that everyone is treated fairly, professionally and courteously</li> </ol>
<p><b>ISSUES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• decreasing public involvement with the institutions and processes of community life</li> <li>• time consuming and wasteful dead-ends</li> <li>• public disillusionment and</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Adopt a set of core guiding principles for all consultation exercises in HRM based on a philosophy of TQM (Total Quality Management) and update Consultation resolution</i></li> <li>2. <i>Create a corporate guide for participation.</i></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. TQM is a philosophy that emphasizes it is more cost effective to get it right first time than correct mistakes later. This would mean that consultation programs will be well thought out, developed by staff experts, designed in conjunction with the community, and facilitated by experienced and qualified staff.</li> <li>2. This guide would provide both a theoretical framework for</li> </ol>

ISSUE	PROPOSED PROGRAM INITIATIVES	IMPLICATIONS
resentment for all concerned	<p>3. <i>Develop and implement a community participation outreach program</i></p> <p>4. <i>Implement and coordinate a Community Visioning Program</i></p>	<p>common understanding and a dictionary to facilitate the dialogue that can lead to successful participation. The guide also provides practical advice on tools and techniques that can be used</p> <p>3. Will engage a diversity of residents throughout HRM, and provide assistance, especially to those that do not know how to participate or are uncomfortable with participating, to develop necessary participatory skills to affect formal and informal processes of governance in the community</p> <p>4. Community Visioning is a consultation technique that allows communities to explore individual needs, aspirations and to generate visions which reflect these. It incorporate new ways of bringing a wide range of participants into the process of creating individual community visions.</p>
<p><b>ISSUES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>large segments of the public are not participating</li> <li>staff's understanding and knowledge about communities is limited.</li> <li>knowledge about diversity in our communities is limited</li> </ul>	<p>1. <i>Develop participatory education program for citizenship</i></p> <p>2. <i>Develop community profiles for each District in HRM</i></p> <p>3. <i>Develop an implementation action plan for the Diversity Strategy</i></p>	<p>1. Will provide the public with the necessary skills to become more informed, effective, and responsible participants in the political process and in civil society.</p> <p>2. Will provide Council and staff a better understanding of the community</p>
<p><b>ISSUES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>high public expectations of Council</li> <li>limited understanding of Council powers</li> <li>limited understanding of</li> </ul>	<p>1. <i>Finalize Government Relations Plan</i></p>	<p>1. Will improve the working relationship between the 3 levels of government, and should foster greater provincial and federal accountability. It is uncertain what impact a Government Relations Plan will have on managing the public's expectations of Council.</p>

ISSUE	PROPOSED PROGRAM INITIATIVES	IMPLICATIONS
jurisdictional responsibilities	2. <i>Develop a intergovernmental communication plan</i>	2. Will provide an analysis of current public environment and the factors which might affect the success or failure of the plan, communication objectives, key target audiences, and roll-out plan.
<u>ISSUES</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Citizens do not understand what HRM is doing for them-and feel HRM is not working in their interest</li> <li>the public is not well educated on their role local government, the services available, and why HRM offers one program and not another</li> <li>lack of understanding of laws has lead to decreased compliance with Council regulations</li> <li>Citizens do not understand the work of Council and what Council is doing for them</li> </ul>	1. <i>Increase community stewardship/development function within all Business Units</i>  2. <i>Develop and maintain a centralised data base of community issues to use as a basis for targeting community stewardship and education programs.</i>	1. Will place more emphasis on education and defining the community roles/responsibilities in resolving community issues  2. Will be a more proactive approach to community problem solving. Will increase community engagement and accountability, and allow bylaws services to focus on more complex issues.
<u>ISSUES</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>more attention is needed on the way in which HRM is messaging/ sharing information</li> <li>not communicating well the role of public, the services available, and why HRM offers one program and not another</li> </ul>	1. <i>Amend staff report format to include new section entitled. "Communications" and require a communication strategy be developed for all new policy and program initiatives and their implementation</i>  2. <i>Develop an annual communication strategy for Council re: its intended activities for the</i>	1. Will ensure communication is an integral component of all policy and program development initiatives. It provides Council an overview of the communication strategy regarding the particular subject/initiative. It will provide an opportunity to highlight activities and results upon conclusion of the initiative. Will require that staff become better skilled in communications.  2. Will highlight Council accomplishments in the past years, its focus areas for the coming year, and implications to the

ISSUE	PROPOSED PROGRAM INITIATIVES	IMPLICATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>communication is not considered as a component of all policy /program development</li> <li>residents are more trusting of information provided through media versus directly from HRM</li> <li>HRM communications is sometimes more reactive than proactive</li> </ul>	<p><i>coming business year</i></p> <p><b>3. Develop an annual external communication strategy for each Business Unit to publically share intended activities for the coming business year.</b></p> <p><b>4. Increase information dissemination at the web-page and call centre level</b></p>	<p>community.</p> <p>3. Will provide an analysis of current public environment and the factors which might affect the success or failure of the plan, communication objectives, key target audiences, and roll-out plan.</p> <p>4. Will increase the amount of upfront information provided to citizen, encourage more citizen engagement and accountability, and free-up capacity to focus on more complex issues</p>
<p><b>ISSUES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lack of coordination among BUs, Council and Mayor's office respecting the recording, identifying and anticipating community issues, and acting proactively to address these</li> <li>lack of accountability or standards at every step in the service delivery chain for all services</li> <li>the majority of day-to-day services are seen by communities as reactive rather than proactive</li> </ul>	<p><b>1. Develop and maintain a centralised data base of community issues and opportunities, by district.</b></p>	<p>1. Will provide avenue for Mayor/Council to identify issues with in their respective community. Will provide staff an ability to track community based issues, monitor trends, and facilitate more proactive responses to emerging community issues.</p>

## Appendix B

### A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MODEL for HRM

In order to become more effective at public engagement, HRM would employ a new model consisting of 4 categories. Specifically, the model would include **Community Capacity Building Engagement, Strategically Initiated Engagement, Legislatively Dictated Engagement, and Ad Hoc, Issue Driven Engagement**. It is important to realise that all four streams of engagement would occur concurrently. However, to ensure that future engagement exercises have a consistent look and feel, be tailored to individual community needs and wants, involve leading edge consultation techniques, and have clearly defined roles for the councillor, public and staff, all engagement activities will need to be better coordinated and integrated across business units. The following table outlines examples of the types of activities or initiatives that will determine the category of community engagement.

Draft HRM Community Engagement Model	
Type of Community Engagement	HRM Processes and Projects Triggering Community Engagement (this is a sample listing, not exhaustive)
<b>Community Capacity Building Engagement (ie. Visioning)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secondary Plans (new, amalgamated)</li> <li>• Master Plans</li> <li>• Major Plan Amendments</li> <li>• Neighbourhood Revitalization Strategy</li> <li>• Neighbourhood Stability Plans</li> <li>• Community Development Strategies</li> <li>• Large Community Development Significant Opportunity Sites</li> <li>• Large Community Facilities</li> <li>• Regional Parks</li> <li>• Sale of HRM Owned Major Land Holdings</li> <li>• Redevelopment of HRM Owned Major Land Holdings</li> <li>• Community Cultural Development Plans</li> </ul>
<b>Strategically Initiated Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Plan 5 Year Review</li> <li>• Regional Plan Annual Review</li> <li>• New Landfill Siting</li> <li>• Revenue Strategy</li> <li>• <b>Functional Plans</b> (may lead to visioning)</li> </ul>
<b>Legislative(Obligated) Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rezonings</li> <li>• Development Agreements</li> <li>• Bylaw Amendments</li> <li>• Local Improvement Charges</li> </ul>
<b>Ad Hoc, Issue Driven Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Response</li> <li>• Town Hall Meetings</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX C

### DRAFT COMMUNITY VISIONING PROGRAM

Community visioning is recommended as the cornerstone of HRM's proposed community engagement program. The process is a powerful engagement technique in that it brings people together with varying view points to develop shared goals while moderating the leverage of special interests and stakeholders, and *engaging "ordinary" residents*. The visioning process aims to facilitate thoughtful, rational and productive deliberation, and equal participation in the work to craft the vision and action plan for a community's future.

*Before broadly rolling-out the vision program out, it is recommended a visioning pilot program be launched (beginning this new business cycle). The pilot project could consist of different communities throughout HRM.*

#### A) THE VISIONING PRODUCTS

A community vision process will produce a vision statement and a community action plan that establishes community priorities, roles and responsibilities. (See **Attachment 1** for an example) Moreover, the visioning process itself is as important as the vision and action plan in that it will facilitate community capacity building, community organizing, and leadership.

#### B) THE VISIONING PROCESS

The Community Visioning program has two interconnected streams: a region-wide process and a community-based process.

#### I. VISION COORDINATION

Before any community visioning process occurs, a region- wide coordinating staff team will be established. This team will be responsible for the overall delivery of the visioning program and ensure coordination and integration across all business units. This team will coordinate the integrated service teams, provide a region-wide perspective on the visioning, develop a sense of mutual accountability and fair share among communities, provide inspiration, share ideas, develop tools, and improve general public awareness. Specifically, the regional visioning team will:

- organize a visioning forum conducted annually before each community visioning process is launched
- conduct sessions to identify or discuss tools for implementing or financing Visions
- coordinate news stories, news releases, internet information, a regular cable t.v. program, and a series of speakers to make the general public aware of the Program, report on the progress being made in community visions, and provide information about issues and ideas.
- work with a regional steering committee to seek input comments on each community vision from a regional perspective
- coordinate events that bring together communities concurrently involved in Vision processes

in order to share ideas, get inspiration, etc.

- develop information packages and kits for community Visions that include Regional Plan directions and community information, as well as ideas and examples from other places.
- coordinate consultation with groups that represent region- wide interests or communities of interest to explore ways for these interests to be part of community visioning.

#### **INTEGRATED STAFF SERVICE TEAM (ISST)**

In support of the process an *Integrated Staff Service Teams (ISST)* will be established. These teams will comprise of staff from a variety of business units who have been identified as “go-to-people” and will be called upon to provide information or advice during the vision process. The ISST will also collaborate to solve short term community problems throughout the duration of the process. The ISSTs will provide a vehicle for the coordination of many cross departmental functions, it will serve as a resource for not only individuals in neighbourhoods but for non-profit agencies and organizations serving local areas. Establishing such teams is not expected to require any new resources given it is essentially a re-focus of HRM’s existing network of staff working in these communities.

#### **VISION STAFF LEADS**

Each vision exercise will be lead by a staff member who will oversee the process. The staff lead will work directly with an Integrated Staff Service Team. Depending upon the type of activity or initiative driving the vision process (ie. secondary plan versus community development strategy) staff leads may vary (ie. planner vs. community developer). However, where the vision exercise is driven by several different initiatives (secondary plan, water service district, neighbourhood stability plan, and a community development strategy) a planner will lead the vision exercise. A community developer will play a major supporting role in the community engagement and capacity building aspects. Again, establishing team leads is not expected to generate the need for new resources, rather existing resources will need to be re-focussed at communities undergoing a visioning process.

#### **II. COMMUNITY VISION STEPS**

Annually, selected visioning communities will simultaneously participate in separate community visioning processes, each concentrating on the local perspective. The region-wide process and overall coordination will serve to link these communities, provide a region-wide perspective, and coordination at the staff level.

##### **STEP 1: GET IN TOUCH WITH COMMUNITY**

- Meet with Councillor to discuss program, opportunities for their involvement and benefit, identification of key people, collect perceptions of community issues, hopes, ideas, needs
- Contact key people and meet all organizations in the community, including multi-cultural organizations. Introduce Program, opportunities for their involvement and benefit, collect perceptions of community issues, hopes, ideas, needs
- Develop community profile
- Recruit and brief the Community Liaison Group.

- With the Community Liaison Group customize outreach, communications, and events strategy.
- Create a newsletter or other form of communication introducing the Program to all households, businesses, owners within community
- Identify additional information and resources people want when working on Visions.

**STEP 2: CONDUCT A VISION FORUM**

- Conduct a "Vision Forum" before launching individual community visioning process to generate interest, ideas, and to provide inspiration. Invite all community CLCs, members of Integrated Service teams, members of Council, media and general public to attend.
- Ensure community group and student participation.
- Organize and provide visioning training, exhibits, speakers, activities, and interactive displays.
- Provide information package on visioning and expected outcomes, contact information etc.
- Sign people up to "interested people" mailing list.
- Work out details with each CLC concerning the official launch of each community visioning process, the visioning workshop scheduling, and the community outreach.

**STEP 3: CREATE A VISION**

- host a series of topic-focussed workshops throughout community
- host "mini" workshops for multi-cultural residents [and other hard-to-reach groups] at their usual meetings or classes.
- facilitate community residents to create the ideas and possibilities for the future that will be turned into Vision options and directions. Generate maps, photos, drawings, and words to summarize discussions.
- facilitate process of transforming issues, ideas and information into a variety of alternative visions.
- seek public feedback on Vision options and directions developed out of the workshop results (ie. surveys, web page, and outreach program including ads, newspaper/media coverage, and travelling displays.)
- seek broader regional perspective on the Visions options and directions from Regional Committee.

**STEP 4: FINALIZE AND ENDORSE VISION**

- Review and analyse public responses to determine the preferences of the community for the Vision directions and options. Identify areas of uncertain or ambiguous results, or of geographically divergent opinion.
- Review and finalize results with the CLC.
- Draft a final Vision summary for distribution to all households, businesses, and owners. Produce the final Vision document.
- Present the final Vision to Regional Committee
- Present Final Vision to Council for endorsement.

**STEP 5: DEVELOP ACTION PLAN**

- community, including CLC members work with staff to develop a strategic action plan for implementing the endorsed Vision
- actions can include capital expenditures, more detailed planning, rezonings, and redirecting many existing programs to make the Vision a reality
- identify timing and priorities for the next steps and detailed actions to make Vision directions happen, based on response of the broad community to the direction; the city of community resources available; and the opportunities that arise.
- forward action plan for review and endorsement by Council

**III: DETERMINING PRIORITIES FOR COMMUNITY VISIONING**

A draft decision-making framework is outlined in Table 2. It is intended for Council's consideration for prioritizing vision exercises. In developing the framework staff assumed there are limited resources to fully dedicate to the visioning program, and towards implementing the action plan created through the process. Therefore, community visioning processes have been limited to 5 each year. *It is important to note that the other types of engagement strategies - Strategically Initiated, Legislatively Dictated, and Issue Driven - would still occur throughout HRM.*

**A. DRAFT DECISION-MAKING PROCESS**

Council will decide annually which communities will undergo a community visioning exercise. Priority will be determined based on a two tier system of decision making criteria.

**I) TIER ONE CRITERIA REVIEW**

Tier one criteria are outlined in column one of table 2. These are designed to place more weight on those communities which have existing commitments and initiatives underway, and where strategic policy has identified specific directions and actions. For instance, Fall River scores high in the tier one review as the community: 1) is identified as a centre under the draft regional plan (strategic direction); 2) requires a new secondary plan (strategic direction); 3) is scheduled for a water service boundary extension requiring a major plan amendment (existing commitment); 4) has a new recreation centre and fire hall underway (existing commitments); and 5) is situated in close proximity to a proposed regional park (strategic direction).

**II) TIER TWO CRITERIA REVIEW**

Upon completion of the tier one review, communities scoring the highest would go through a tier two review process to narrow the number of potential communities to five (5). The 2<sup>nd</sup> column of Table 2 outlines these detailed criteria. This level of review requires more detailed analysis of the conditions that exist in each community and an understanding of what is driving a particular initiative. For instance, assume that two communities have scored equally high in the first review. When each of these communities is analysed using the detailed tier two criteria (ie. age of community plan, inconsistency with the Regional Plan, wide range of planning issues, and strategically important to rural economic development potential), one community will score higher than the other.

Draft Decision Making Criteria for Prioritizing Community Visioning (For Demonstration Purpose - not exhaustive)		
Community Name:		
Tier One Criteria: (Type of HRM Initiative)	Tier Two Criteria	Score
Secondary Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>existing policy is inconsistent with Regional Plan</li> <li>community identified as a centre for future growth</li> <li>community facing wide range of planning issues</li> <li>community strategically identified as regionally important</li> <li>community identified as strategically important to rural economic development potential</li> <li>age of existing community plan</li> </ul>	
Master Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>community needs to address growth pressure</li> <li>community needs to plan infrastructure</li> <li>community need plan for strategic redevelopment of opportunity sites</li> <li>need to plan for large developments</li> </ul>	
Major Plan Amendments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>strategic redevelopment of opportunity sites</li> <li>dwindling amount serviceable lands</li> <li>new opportunity</li> <li>change in market conditions</li> <li>significant change in circumstances</li> <li>resolution of traffic issues (Beaver Bank &amp; Hammonds Plains)</li> <li>major capital projects (Capital Cost Contribution)</li> <li>health and safety concerns</li> </ul>	
Neighbourhood Stabilization Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>decreasing percent of owner occupancy</li> <li>increasing residential infill</li> <li>declining physical condition of infrastructure</li> <li>declining housing conditions;</li> <li>declining resale value of homes;</li> <li>declining median household income;</li> <li>declining property values;</li> <li>increasing community crime</li> <li>declining visual conditions (landscaping, property maintenance, vacant, deteriorated structures, junk etc)</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• new and/or rehabilitated housing</li> <li>• criminal activity/security</li> <li>• educational and recreational opportunities for youth</li> <li>• access to public transportation</li> <li>• access to retail and other services</li> </ul>	
<b>Neighbourhood Revitalization Strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other resources available to leverage funds in the neighbourhood</li> <li>• Neighbourhood organization capacity and level of activity</li> <li>• Potential for success of revitalization efforts</li> <li>• Owner occupancy rate</li> <li>• Incidence of blighted conditions and substandard houses</li> <li>• need for redevelopment, reuse or reinvestment to stem decline</li> <li>• need for public facilities, public services, and infrastructure</li> <li>• need for coordinated human, social, and family support services</li> <li>• need for economic development assistance and opportunities to small businesses and to persons of low and moderate income</li> <li>• need to enhance the physical environment of principally low-to-moderate income neighbourhoods</li> <li>• need for economic development, land use and commercial revitalization</li> <li>• Human and social services needs</li> </ul>	
<b>Community Development Strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighbourhood organization capacity and level of activity</li> <li>• Effectiveness of code enforcement/demolition</li> <li>• Availability of youth/family programs</li> <li>• Capacity building/education for neighbourhood groups</li> <li>• Availability of Employment training for the disadvantaged</li> <li>• Availability of Small Business Assistance</li> <li>• Availability of Senior Services</li> <li>• Availability of Homeless Support Services</li> </ul>	
<b>Significant Opportunity Sites</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extent and level of contamination</li> <li>• Regulatory/legal barriers</li> <li>• Availability of financing</li> <li>• Appropriate zoning</li> <li>• Land tract size</li> <li>• Costs associated with redevelopment</li> <li>• Site location</li> <li>• Strategic end land-use</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job creation</li> <li>• Potential tax revenues</li> <li>• Aesthetic improvements</li> </ul>	
<b>Large Community Facilities Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreation Centre</li> <li>• Cultural Centre</li> <li>• Library</li> <li>• Health Facilities</li> <li>• Senior Centres</li> <li>• Youth Centres/ facilities</li> <li>• Neighbourhood Centres</li> <li>• Parks</li> <li>• Other Public Facilities (ie. non-profit organization facilities)</li> </ul>	
<b>Planning for Regional Parks</b>		
<b>Sale of HRM Major Holdings</b>		
<b>Other</b>		

**APPENDIX D**  
**CENTRALISED INFORMATION GATHERING PROCESS**

