

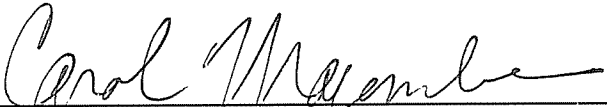
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**Halifax Regional Council
Committee of the Whole
December 6, 2005**

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: 
Carol Macomber, Acting Director, Recreation, Tourism & Culture

DATE: November 30, 2005

SUBJECT: Council Focus Area: Youth

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN:

On October 11, Council approved a list of Council Focus Areas. Staff committed to return to Council with status report on each item and a suggested approach to further action on the item. Discussion was to include an analysis of current initiatives, issues, options for resolution, capacity and implications.

BACKGROUND

Council has recently indicated focus areas it wishes to address. These include (in no particular order):

Regional plan
Transit
Infrastructure
Traffic
Public safety
Tax Reform
By-law enforcement

Community relations
Youth
Community recreation
Community development
Economic development

Staff committed to preparing a document on each of these focus areas for Council discussion and direction at a Committee of the Whole meeting. Specifically, staff committed to describing its understanding of Council's concerns, what is currently being done in each of these areas, the issues impacting these areas, options for addressing these issues, and the implications of pursuing these options.

DISCUSSION

Issues related to youth are significant and varied, and there is not enough funding available to address all the concerns raised by Councillors, the public and staff. The discussion paper attached highlights the issues and options Council may wish to consider in addressing the issues. It is recognized that these issues will not be resolved quickly. Staff will work under Council's direction to address the issues as appropriate.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct budget implications as a result of the material discussed herein.

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

There are no recommended alternatives

ATTACHMENTS

Council Focus Area: Youth Background and Discussion Paper

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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COUNCIL FOCUS AREA

YOUTH

Background and Discussion Paper

December 6, 2005

1. INTRODUCTION

Community engagement is recognized as a valuable tool to influence positive behavior patterns and reduce risk for young people. Through community activities and leadership development youth learn important life skills that improve their ability to participate in community life. All youth are exposed to some degree of risk. At one end of the spectrum is a large percentage of youth who face relatively low levels of risk, such as disobeying curfew or skipping school. At the opposite end of the spectrum, there is a small percentage of youth involved in chronic antisocial behavior, serious drug abuse, risky sexual behavior, or at risk of suicide.

According to the 2001 Census, close to 18% of HRM's total population of 359,180 was between the ages of 12 and 24. At 21%, the percentage of youth to total population on the Halifax Peninsula was slightly above the HRM average. The areas which experienced the most significant population growth for this age range between the 1996 Census and 2001 Census were the Halifax Peninsula (19%) and the Cole Harbour / Musquodoboit Valley / Eastern Shore region (19%).

Physical inactivity among young people is an issue. A high percentage of Canadian children are not active enough for optimal development and become less active as they age. Statistics show that only 11% of HRM youth are active enough to achieve health benefits by Grade 11 (NS Office of Health Promotion).

One in eight school-aged children in Canada lives in a family with income below \$20,000 per year. More than 60 percent of children from homes in this income bracket "almost never" participate in supervised sports. (Canadian Council on Social Development).

According to recent statistics, the crime rate for youth in HRM, especially in the area of violent crime, has increased to the highest rate per capita in Canada. Studies show that expenditures on services such as recreation, parks and library programs directly correlate to decreased rates of homicide, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, and auto theft. It has been well documented that recreation, sports and arts/culture reduce crime, self-destructive behaviour, and negative social activity in youth (The Benefits Catalogue - Canadian Parks and Recreation Association). Proactive investment in youth development, especially in the early stages of life, saves money in policing costs in the long term.

Through research, trend analysis, needs identification, Council requests, and participation in several provincial and national initiatives, RTC has determined that children and youth are priority target groups. To ensure emphasis is placed on this target group, a Youth Engagement Strategy has been developed and will be implemented.

The themes that youth identified in the development of the RTC Youth Engagement Strategy were: Changes to Direct Program Delivery, Communications, Leadership Development, Governance, Community Development/Partnerships, Community Events, and Youth Friendly Facilities and Neighbourhoods.

In October 2005, HRM hosted a Youth Dialogue with external service providers from throughout the municipality. The main themes which emerged from this process were: Governance/Youth Engagement, Facility Access, Networking, Transportation, Social Marketing, and Funding/Resources.

2. COUNCIL CONCERNS

During Council's workshop, concerns were raised around:

- youth crime and the Young Offenders Act
- need for a youth strategy
- affordability of / access to recreation
- youth / library facilities
- upgrades of parks and playgrounds
- School Board/Council relations and issues

3. CURRENT INITIATIVES

Youth Engagement Strategy: An HRM-wide initiative led by RTC which used a community youth development framework to elicit feedback from more than 6,000 youth and develop plans for delivering "youth friendly" programs and services.

Youth Facilities and Infrastructure: Some examples of youth focussed facilities in HRM include the Pavilion in Halifax Peninsula, the Box in Cole Harbour, the Firehouse in Bedford, and several Skateboard / Bike Parks and Outdoor Rinks.

Recreation Programs: RTC has established youth programming as an area of high priority. Specific examples of programs and initiatives designed for youth include Leadership Training, Adventure Earth Centre, Youth Element, Youth HEAT, Girls Alive, and Active Kids/Healthy Kids.

Youth Funding Programs: RTC has established the HRM Kids program which provides subsidized recreation opportunities for children and youth and a Youth Development Fund to support youth initiatives. Since its inception in 2001, HRM Kids has assisted close to 1500 youth and leveraged over \$90,000 in partnership funding and donations.

Safe Communities: Police and Fire Services provide a variety of leadership development, work experience, and volunteer based programs for approximately 100 young people in HRM. HRP's Community Relations / Crime Prevention (CR / CP) Unit works in partnership with the community and is responsible for developing awareness and educational programs to foster safer communities and reduce the opportunities of crime.

Library Programs: Halifax Public Libraries provide a variety of programs and services for youth including drop-in programs, author visits, free computer access, and youth collections. The Library Youth Services Strategy, focussing on youth-at-risk, has placed Teen Workers in 3 branches, involves youth in service planning and activities and has cultivated community partnerships and grants including funding from the National Crime Prevention Strategy's Community Mobilization Program.

Youth Employment: RTC hires, develops and trains approximately 500 young people annually and trains over 500 youth volunteers. Youth LIVE, Police, Fire, and Library services provide structured employment and volunteer opportunities for approximately 60 additional "at risk" youth. Youth employment opportunities are closely linked with HRM's Economic Strategy.

Consultation / Governance: In addition to the 6,000 youth who participated in the RTC Youth Engagement Strategy, RTC has established a successful Youth Advisory Council in Sackville and a Youth Service Provider Network in Spryfield. Regional Planning developed a consultation program for youth when seeking resident and community input on planning issues.

4. SUMMARY

Issues and opportunities facing youth in the municipality are varied and have implications which affect many disciplines and service providers. As a result, several HRM Business Units have some role to play in supporting youth. Therefore, it is important to develop a more integrated municipal approach to providing programs, services and initiatives for youth. (See Current Initiatives section of this paper and attached HRM Youth Programs and Service inventory for more information)

5. ATTACHMENTS

HRM Youth Program and Service Inventory

COUNCIL FOCUS AREA: YOUTH

ISSUE	OPTIONS	IMPLICATIONS
<p>Requirement for a Youth Strategy to refine HRM's approach to youth engagement and provision of programs and services for youth</p> <p><u>CURRENT INITIATIVES</u></p> <p>A) RTC Youth Engagement Strategy</p> <p>B) Youth Consultation initiatives (Youth Engagement Strategy, HRM staff session, dialogue session with external stakeholders)</p> <p>C) HRM Youth Inventory</p> <p>D) Library Youth Services Strategy</p> <p>E) Spryfield Youth Service Provider Network</p> <p>F) Sackville Youth Council</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement a Community Youth Development Model to employ new ways of delivering HRM programs, services, and information to youth. 2. Implement the priority goals, objectives, and recommendations of the RTC Youth Engagement Strategy, including area action plans. 3. Stage a major youth conference in Spring 2006 to build on previous work. 4. Research the feasibility and potential models for ongoing youth engagement (i.e. Youth Councils, Youth Advisory Bodies) and implement best practices. 5. Build research and policy capacity to more effectively identify trends and address the needs of youth. 6. Roll out Library Youth Services Strategy to other designated branches and expand access to facilities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is a need to change organizational structure and some processes to accomplish this goal - i.e. refocusing of the Corporate Scorecard toward Council Focus Areas. In addition, there will be some need to revise or develop policy, job descriptions, staff training programs, and communications tools to reflect new approach. 2. Implementation of all priority goals, objectives, and recommendations would cost an estimated \$150,000 in 2006/2007. 3. A maximum of \$40,000 to host the conference, a portion of which may be received from the Province. In addition, staff time is required to plan and deliver the event. 4. Need to re-direct existing staff and/or create a new position to dedicate to this project - estimated cost of \$60,000. Further funding implications / staff time to implement and support, depending on the model(s) or approach(es) selected. 5. New staff or reassignment of existing staff resources to build this capacity.

<p>Issues related to youth crime and the Young Offenders Act</p> <p><u>CURRENT INITIATIVES</u></p> <p>A) Safe Communities Theme Team</p> <p>B) Community Response</p> <p>C) HRP Police Youth Program</p> <p>D) Community Relations / Crime Prevention (CR / CP) Unit</p> <p>E) Youth LIVE</p>	<p>1. Dedicate staff resources to create integrated HRM action teams and/or develop new approaches to service delivery to address youth and community issues in identified marginalised communities (i.e. those with high youth crime rate)</p> <p>2. Based on recent information such as crime statistics and trends in youth crime, lobby for changes to the Young Offenders Act</p> <p>3. Build capacity to use research and data related to the benefits of recreation and crime prevention to plan programs and services for youth and measure performance</p> <p>4. Develop a social marketing campaign to highlight the achievements and successes of youth in HRM</p>	<p>1. Staff time for the development and implementation of a new approach to service delivery. Some funding for staff and/or reassignment of staff. HRM may be able to leverage some or all of the required resources from other levels of government - i.e. federal funding to support youth action and crime prevention - to employ community outreach workers in targeted communities.</p> <p>2. Staff time to analyse statistics and trends, prepare an action plan, etc.</p> <p>3. New staff or reassignment of existing staff resources to build this capacity</p> <p>4. New funding or reassignment of existing funding to develop campaign - i.e. target marketing, Web Site development, etc.</p>
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<p>Affordability of and/or Access to Recreation Programs and Services for youth</p> <p><u>CURRENT INITIATIVES</u></p> <p>A) HRM Kids</p> <p>B) Management agreement review</p> <p>C) Community Youth Development Fund (Pilot)</p> <p>D) Recreation Fee Policy</p> <p>E) Partnering initiatives with Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCA, and other service providers</p>	<p>1. Continue to refocus and refine recreation service delivery to ensure a focus on community development, developmental asset building, and youth as a priority</p> <p>2. Develop a new access policy and revise the existing fee policy for recreation programming</p> <p>3. Ensure provisions for youth access are included when developing management agreements or providing operational aid for volunteer groups that operate community facilities</p> <p>4. Review the transportation needs of youth in rural areas to improve access to HRM programs and facilities.</p>	<p>1. Continued focus on youth and community development may lead to a decrease in programming for adults and will affect recreation revenues.</p> <p>2. May result in a drop in revenue if fees are reduced for youth. Possible increase in rental costs to make more facilities accessible to youth (i.e. schools and other community owned facilities)</p> <p>3. Will result in increase costs to HRM if access or costs concessions for youth are negotiated in management agreements.</p> <p>4. Required linkage to the regional Plan implementation and Transit Council Focus Area.</p>
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<p>Ensure that HRM facilities are prioritized, planned, designed, and operated in a “youth friendly” manner</p> <p><u>CURRENT INITIATIVES</u></p> <p>A) Indoor Recreation Facility Master Plan</p> <p>B) Management agreement review</p> <p>C) New community centres in Fall River, Mainland Common, Dartmouth East, Prospect</p>	<p>1. Assess existing facilities and recommend options to improve their attractiveness and accessibility to youth</p> <p>2. Ensure youth are consulted and involved in the development of new facilities.</p> <p>3. Work with youth to inventory and identify capital upgrades for indoor and outdoor facilities</p> <p>4. Develop a skate park / bike park strategy</p>	<p>1. May lead to a change in hours of operation and subsequent increase in operating costs for facilities, especially if more evening hours are provided.</p> <p>2. Changes to the consultation process implemented by the Indoor Recreation Facility Master Plan</p> <p>3. Change in process of developing the annual capital budget and long term capital planning</p> <p>4. Staff time and budget needs to be dedicated to development of the strategy. It would be most efficient to roll this initiative into the creation of an Outdoor Facility Master Plan. In addition to the strategy, initial investment to pilot a mobile skate park program could cost as much as \$70,000.</p>
<p>Need for enhancements and upgrades of HRM Parks and Playgrounds</p> <p><u>CURRENT INITIATIVES</u></p> <p>A) Capital Budget - Pre-approval of 06/07 capital budget</p> <p>B) Long Term Capital Plan</p> <p>C) Regional Plan</p>	<p>1. Refocus capital budget dollars to enhance capability to build and maintain parks and playgrounds</p> <p>2. Develop an Outdoor Facility Master Plan to complement the Indoor Recreation Facility Master Plan</p> <p>3. Enhance partnership development to increase involvement of communities and other organizations in identifying needs and fund raising for capital projects</p>	<p>1. An increase in capital funding to parks and playgrounds program will decrease other categories of the capital budget. In the context of youth, it may be necessary to direct more money toward youth based parks categories (i.e. skate / bike parks, outdoor rinks) at the expense of other categories within the parks and playgrounds capital budget.</p> <p>2. At least one full time staff and budget needs to be dedicated to this project (approximately \$100,000 in 2006/2007). The result would change policy and structure by establishing a formal ongoing process to identify and prioritize community requirements.</p> <p>3. May result in increased priority toward those communities which present cost sharing scenarios for parks capital projects</p>

<p>Issues and opportunities in School Board / Council relationship</p> <p><u>CURRENT INITIATIVES</u></p> <p>A) Supplementary funding for education</p> <p>B) HRM / HRSB service exchange agreement</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to build the relationship between HRM Council and the Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB) 2. Analyse the intention and use of supplementary education funding and recommend new approaches if necessary and/or appropriate 3. Review and revise HRM / HRSB service exchange agreement to ensure optimal access to school facilities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integration with Community Relations Council Focus Area and Governance Business Unit 2. Approximately \$25 million in supplementary funding is transferred annually to the HRSB 3. Dedicated staff time to review the service exchange agreement and work with School Board staff to address issues and gaps.
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HRM Youth Program and Service Inventory

Business Unit	Direct Program Delivery	Employment	Leadership Development	Facilities - Indoor & Outdoor	Advocacy & Governance	Community Dev. & Partnerships
Environmental Management Services (Community Projects)	Youth LIVE - Work experience program for “at risk” youth ages 16 to 30. 18 participants, intake on a continual basis. Serving all HRM.	18				
Fire and Emergency Services	Emergency Services Achievement Program (ESAP) - A Youth Employment Program HRDC - provides the funding for this program and it is managed by Fire. Fire also provides in kind support for this program (10) ten priority youth participants. Program Objective: To help youth gain personal and professional growth experiences towards the goal of finding and maintaining long term employment.	10	Junior Fire Fighter Program On-going. In various stations. Involving approximately 50 youth (aged 14-18). 1. Provides youth opportunity to learn fire fighting skills. 2. Provides opportunity to develop leadership skills. 3. Fosters pride in community service.			
Governance (Community Response)	Graffiti & Vandalism Education Presentations in schools to youth on vandalism and graffiti.					Community Clean Up Projects Opportunities for youth in conflict with the law to fulfill community service requirements. Have completed 12 community clean up projects in HRM parks and cemeteries.

Business Unit	Direct Program Delivery	Employment	Leadership Development	Facilities - Indoor & Outdoor	Advocacy & Governance	Community Dev. & Partnerships
Governance (Regional Planning)					RP Consultation Program - Involving youth in planning, seeking their input on community planning issues and solutions. Working with youth to develop interactive workshops for young people addressing regional planning issues. Conducting youth focus groups. Integrating regional planning in high school curriculum	
Halifax Regional Police and RCMP	School Programming Each school in HRP jurisdiction and High School in RCMP jurisdiction has a liaison officer who addresses school and student issues. Educational and safety programs taught by officers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dating Violence • School/ Youth Violence • Traffic Safety • Law Awareness • Fatal Vision • Safe Grad • Drug Education for Youth Kids & Cops Camp Weekend camp for at risk youth 12 - 14. Goal to bridge gap between police and youth. Joint HRP / RCMP initiative.	Action/Work (RCMP) In place at 5 detachments.	HRP Police Youth Program Volunteer based, non-profit program for youth 14-19 interested in policing. Offers a structured learning atmosphere and teaches citizenship with an emphasis on leadership and voluntary service to the community. Activities consist of, but are not limited to: Bike Patrol, Volunteer Services, Personal Development and Recreational Activities. 30 youth currently registered.			

Business Unit	Direct Program Delivery	Employment	Leadership Development	Facilities - Indoor & Outdoor	Advocacy & Governance	Community Dev. & Partnerships
Halifax Public Libraries	<p>Collections (2003-04): Books, Magazines, CDs, Videos, DVDs: -69,751 items for 13-15 year olds -circulation of this collection was 220,879 - youth have access to the whole collection of over 1 million items</p> <p>Databases: 17 different databases on website for research</p> <p>Demographics-2001: 18,100 youth in catchment</p> <p>Registrations: 53.67% of youth age group</p> <p>Expenditures(03-04): \$79,000 for youth collection \$1,600,00 for total collection</p> <p>Computers: free internet access, word processing to 13-19 year olds</p> <p>Programs (free): author visits, African Heritage Month quiz, special topics, monthly drop-in for young teens (Dartmouth North), monthly Open Mic (Keshen Goodman)</p>	17 employed in permanent positions as shelvers at various branches		<p>Reading/study spaces dedicated specifically to teens in 7 branches</p> <p>265 Computer stations in 14 branches</p>	<p>Free access to information and ideas to all citizens</p> <p>Computer access available to all ages</p> <p>Free access to Library programs for all ages</p>	Partnership with Halifax West High School (Keshen Goodman Branch)

Business Unit	Direct Program Delivery	Employment	Leadership Development	Facilities - Indoor & Outdoor	Advocacy & Governance	Community Dev. & Partnerships
<p>Recreation, Tourism & Culture</p>	<p>Recreation programs (sport, active, aquatics, fitness, cultural, arts, dance, leadership, outdoor recreation) delivered at sites within six recreation areas. Participation in the 2004 calendar year was 3500 in youth programs (ages 13-18), 6200 in preschool programs (ages 3-5) and 15,300 in child programs (ages 6-12). HRM Kids provides recreational opportunities for children who would be otherwise unable to participate. RTC and other partners contribute funding to ensure that spaces in programs are donated or discounted. To address physical inactivity among children and youth in HRM, current program tools include the Active Kids / Healthy Kids project, the creation of the Active Halifax community partnership, and an internal Physical Activity Team. An official site for High Five quality program assurance - program evaluation tools for preschool, child, and youth recreation programs and services have been implemented Each recreation area has developed a youth action plan with the assistance of local youth</p>	<p>Approximately 500 youth hired annually as Recreation Program Instructors and Aquatics staff Four seasonal Civic Events and Festivals Assistants hired annually</p>	<p>Several Junior Leadership and Leader in Training programs offered through recreation facilities Babysitter training courses offered at several sites Lifeguard and Aquatics instructor programs Earth Adventure Centre (Outdoor Recreation) provides several youth leadership programs, several of which are delivered by junior leaders. Many programs are delivered in conjunction with local schools.</p>	<p>Youth programs delivered through 20 HRM operated recreation facilities / offices, three indoor pools, one outdoor pool, and four arenas Programming and/or supervision provided at 23 beaches Specialized HRM owned youth facilities include outdoor basketball courts, ground hockey pads, several skate parks, several outdoor rinks, Earth Adventure Centre, St Mary's Boat Club, Firehouse Youth Centre in Bedford Facility Scheduling Division schedules coordinates bookings and manages customer service for over 30,000 outdoor sports fields users, approximately 140 Halifax Regional School Board operated facilities, and four arenas (a percentage of total facility usage is youth programming)</p>		<p>Reciprocal agreement with Halifax Regional School Board regarding school usage for recreation programs (a percentage of total facility usage is youth programming) Partnerships with a wide variety of community groups and organizations to deliver recreation programs to youth, obtain space to deliver programs, and/or receive funding assistance for youth programs Working in partnership with Heartwood, a youth leadership organization, to implement a process and obtain required support for development of an HRM-wide youth engagement process.</p>