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Halifax Regional Council
May, 13, 2003

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "G. Kaiser".

SUBMITTED BY: _____
Geri Kaiser, Director of Shared Services

DATE: May 12, 2003

SUBJECT: Data Sharing Agreement with CBRM & Province of NS

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

For the past twelve months, HRM, and CBRM have been negotiating a new data sharing agreement with the Province of Nova Scotia. The interests of HRM in this exercise have been represented by the Shared Services business unit; the interests of the Province have been represented by the Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations. The three party agreement, which replaces past bilateral agreements between the two municipal units and the Province, represents a more comprehensive and equal approach to the sharing of data between the two levels of government.

The agreement covers basic property related data such as civic addressing, building permit data, property mapping, assessment data, and voters lists. The purpose of the agreement is to streamline the sharing of data, eliminate duplication in the collection and maintenance of property information, and improve data quality. The data sharing agreement will be signed by the three parties on Thursday afternoon, May 15, 2003. A joint press release will be issued which highlights the benefits of the new agreement. As well, the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations intends to announce the signing of the agreement at a meeting with the UNSM in Sydney on Friday, May 16, 2003.

BACKGROUND/ DISCUSSION

The original data sharing agreement between HRM and the Province was signed on June 29, 1998. The agreement provided for the one way transfer of property related data from the Province to the Municipality. It did not include the exchange or transfer of municipally generated data to the Province.

The new draft agreement is more comprehensive in that it provides for the bilateral exchange of data between the Municipal and Provincial levels and includes more data sets than the original document. The agreement explicitly sets out provisions for the sharing and exchange of nine data sets with a commitment to amend the agreement over time to include other data sets that are of mutual interest and use to the parties. The nine data sets include: civic address data, mailing address data, municipal voters list, building permit data, administrative boundaries, property records, topographic data, assessment data, and Provincial voters lists. Future data sets which may be exchanged include Nova Scotia Registry of Motor Vehicles data, thematic mapping layers, and building footprint/ point information.

Principles & Objectives of the Agreement

The basis for the new agreement is a set of principles and objectives which have been agreed to by all three parties. The principles which form the basis of the agreement are:

- a) creating data at source and sharing it many times;
- b) taking a corporate approach to the creation, management, dissemination and use of geographic data and information;
- c) adhering to mutually agreed upon standards for data;
- d) ensuring data will be easily accessible;
- e) data integrity, whereby each party agrees to strive to improve the data accuracy, timeliness and reliability;
- f) where possible, timeliness of data sharing must align with the needs of all parties
- g) where possible, information services and data sharing will be delivered electronically and in a mutually compatible format;
- h) clients are served in the most expedient and effective manner possible;
- i) compliance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPOP) Act.

The specific objectives to be achieved by the data sharing agreement are:

- a) to establish a framework of cooperation between SNSMR, HRM, and CBRM respecting the management and exchange of information,
- b) to provide a single point of contact through SNSMR for management and exchange of Provincial information,
- c) to provide a single point of contact through HRM and CBRM respectively for

management and exchange of Municipal data, and
d) to provide a framework where the parties can mutually agree to proceed with specific projects related to the collection or enhancement of data.

The agreement provides that the parties will work collaboratively to establish a plan and course of action within 12 months of signing the agreement which outlines how and when the aforementioned objectives will be achieved. The plan also will include respective lists of clients to be served by the parties, definition and agreement of public and private information, FOIPOP requirements, and minimum and target standards for data exchange and updating frequency requirement between the parties.

Development of the plan will involve consultation and participation from those stakeholders who are custodians of the various data sets outlined in the agreement as well as other stakeholders deemed necessary to the development of the plan. A stakeholder committee shall be formed which includes, representatives from HRM, CBRM, SNSMR (Registry and Information Management Services, Assessment Services, and Registry of Motor Vehicles), Emergency Measures Organization (E911), NS Department of Transportation and Public Works, NS Department of Natural Resources, and Elections Nova Scotia. Donna Davis, Project Manager- Civic Address Data Project, has been asked to chair this multi-stakeholder implementation committee. Upon completion of the initial implementation plan, the agreement also requires the parties to set out a second plan and process to expand the responsibility of SNSMR to include acting as a coordinating body for the management and exchange of information between the Municipal, Provincial and Federal levels of government.

Benefits

The tripartite negotiations has lead to the creation of stronger ties and relationships with our sister regional municipality, Cape Breton Regional Municipality, as well as with Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations. Numerous other tangible benefits are expected from implementation of the new agreement:

1. **Efficient and streamlined exchange of data between three of levels of government (eventually) which will eliminate duplication of effort and resources.** The agreement envisages establishing single points of contact at the Municipal and Provincial levels for the management and exchange of data. When this is in place, data will no longer be provided to multiple Provincial departments by the Municipality. The Province in turn will not supply data to multiple departments within HRM and CBRM. Data will be created at source and “shared many times”.

With the current situation, many resources are involved in supplying the same data to multiple divisions/ departments within the respective organizations. For example, HRM currently supplies five Provincial departments with civic address data. This will be reduced

to one under the data sharing agreement. The Province currently supplies two HRM departments with property and assessment data with varying schedules for updates. The current situation means a lot of staff resources at both levels are involved in handling the same data numerous times.

The above mentioned efficiency and streamlining will be extended to the Federal government level as the Province has agreed to act, eventually, as a central point of contact for the exchange of data between the Municipal and Federal government levels. A considerable amount of time and resources is currently spent in HRM trying to supply Federal Government departments (often multiple divisions within the same department) with data.

2. **The agreement provides a framework under which specific projects related to the collection or enhancement of data can be undertaken by the parties.** This may include mapping projects or data enhancement projects involving mailing addresses or property identification (PID)/ assessment account number (AAN) linkages.
3. **Data accuracy will be greatly enhanced since data will be created at source and shared.** Data custodianship rights and responsibilities will be acknowledged and respected. At present, some data sets are being maintained by multiple divisions/ departments in both organizations. This leads to both inaccurate data and duplication of effort and resources. This duplication will be eliminated under the provisions of the new agreement.
4. **Customer service will be improved as business processes at all levels utilize more accurate and timely data.** More accurate and timely data will result from the proposed data sharing agreement. Mistakes resulting from inaccurate or out of date data will be greatly reduced. This will improve service to all customers and reduce wasted effort.
5. **Reduced liability because accurate and more timely data is being utilized by all parties.** In particular, the provision of more accurate civic address data to 911 related agencies will reduce our current liability risks. At present, all 911 agencies do not utilize the most accurate and complete civic address data. Delays in emergency response have resulted from incomplete and out of date civic address data.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

In the long term, all three parties expect to realize cost savings as a result of “creating data once and sharing many times”. Staff plan to quantify these cost savings as the agreement is implemented. These findings will be reported to Regional Council.

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

N/A

ATTACHMENTS

N/A

Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by:

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490-4417