



P.O. Box 1749  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3J 3A5 Canada

**Item No.**  
**Community Planning & Economic Development**  
**Standing Committee**  
**July 23, 2015**

**TO:** Chair and Members of Community Planning & Economic Development  
Standing Committee

**SUBMITTED BY:** Original Signed by  

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Maggie MacDonald, Managing Director, Government Relations & External Affairs

**DATE:** June 26, 2015

**SUBJECT:** Mobile Food Market Pilot Project

**ORIGIN**

June 18, 2015 Community Planning & Economic Development Standing Committee motion:

That the Standing Committee on Community Planning and Economic Development request a staff report to:

1. In support of the Healthy Communities Core Priority Area, and working with the Mobile Market Project Team, evaluate a request to provide a Halifax Transit bus in-kind for the purpose of initiating a mobile market pilot project in the communities of Spryfield, Fairview, North Preston, East Preston, Halifax North, and Dartmouth North over a 21 week period. The request is for a bus to be made available once a week on Saturday or Sunday, and to visit each selected community every second week over the duration of the pilot for a period of time up to 1.5 hours at each location.

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

*HRM Charter – Section 2 - Purpose of Act*

The purpose of this Act is to:

- a) give broad authority to the Council, including broad authority to pass by-laws, and respect its right to govern the Municipality in whatever ways the Council considers appropriate within the jurisdiction given to it;
- b) enhance the ability of the Council to respond to present and future issues in the Municipality; and
- c) recognize that the functions of the Municipality are to
  - i. provide good government,
  - ii. provide services, facilities and other things that, in the opinion of the Council, are necessary or desirable for all or part of the Municipality, and
  - iii. develop and maintain safe and viable communities.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that:

Council approve the one-time in-kind donation of a Halifax Transit bus to the Mobile Market Project Team coalition of Public Health, Ecology Action Centre and HRM, for use one day per week, for a 21 week mobile market pilot program; and

Council direct staff to develop a policy lens through which to assess municipal responses and actions to social support, health and liveability initiatives.

## **BACKGROUND**

In December 2012, Halifax Regional Council endorsed four Core Priority Areas for its four-year term. One of these priority areas is Healthy Communities. In October 2013, the Mayor hosted a Conversation on a Healthy and Liveable Community, attended by Councillors and more than 80 citizens and stakeholders, as a way of gathering community feedback on a broad range of strategic areas and initiatives that the municipality could consider undertaking to support its Healthy Communities priority area. A report went to Council on January 28, 2014 (Attachment I), recommending three activities for the 2014-15 budget year.

The report also recommended that Council and staff work with appropriate Standing Committees to determine what further opportunities exist to achieve a higher level of health and liveability in HRM, using the information gathered at the Mayor's Conversation, for the 2015-16 budget year. Three inter-related issues raised at the Mayor's Conversation on a Healthy and Liveable Community were local food production and promotion, access to healthy food, and increasing rates of obesity and chronic disease. Local food production was identified as an issue in which achievable progress could be made in the short-term. In considering what further opportunities might exist to promote a healthier community for the 2015-16 fiscal year, the January 28, 2014 Council report identified some specific initiatives for analysis, one of which was Local Food Production and Promotion.

Access to food was identified as a significant issue for residents during the RP+5 consultations, and the updated Regional Plan includes an objective "to promote community food security." HRM began work on this issue in the 2014-15 budget year by developing and implementing an urban orchard pilot project, planting fruit- and nut-bearing trees throughout the Municipality.

As a next step in municipal work around access to healthy food, the Medical Officer of Health for the Halifax region wrote to the Mayor in September 2014, asking HRM to consider a partnership with Public Health to develop a mobile health food provision service. A Mobile Market Project Team with participation from Public Health, the Mayor's Office and the Ecology Action Centre was formed to develop a proposal for Council's consideration.

## **DISCUSSION**

The purpose of the mobile food market would be to bring fresh and affordable fruit and vegetables to neighbourhoods that have limited access to healthy food. Other cities have tested the use of a mobile food market, most notably Toronto and Ottawa:

- Toronto undertook a one year pilot from April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013. The Mobile Good Food Program was a non-profit collaboration between the City of Toronto Public Health unit and several community agencies. Funding came from the Ontario Centres of Excellence (\$50,000);

United Way Toronto (\$15,000); and Toronto Public Health (\$3,000), as well as several partner organizations offering in-kind contributions of expertise and resources.

FoodShare Toronto, a non-profit organization that works with communities and schools to deliver healthy food and food education, was contracted to run the mobile program, using one of its retrofitted one of its social enterprise delivery trucks. Food was purchased from Super Select Produce Buyers, a large-scale food broker supplying numerous grocery stores and outlets across the city.

The pilot began with eight sites in neighbourhoods throughout Toronto which were identified as having few quality and affordable food retail options within easy walking distance, along with relatively poor access to public transit. The markets ran weekly at each site and averaged approximately 20 market customers per site with each customer purchasing on average \$6-7 of food. The monthly average sales varied widely between sites, from \$188 to \$888. Partway through the pilot the number of sites was reduced to five, based on low customer participation and sales.

There was a particular emphasis on providing culturally appropriate produce based on the demographic profile of the community. The pilot found that recruiting neighbourhood residents as Community Food Leaders (CFLs) was a key indicator of success. CFLs were able to access existing social networks and use their personal understanding of the local environment, which helped reach specific ethnocultural communities and seniors. The Mobile Good Food Program continues to operate out of five sites under the management of FoodShare Toronto.

- Ottawa undertook a 21 week pilot program from July to December 2014, using a chartered bus to bring fresh and affordable fruits and vegetables to four Ottawa neighbourhoods with limited access to healthy food. The Ottawa MarketMobile received support from a number of public, private and community partners including the City of Ottawa Public Health unit, Coalition of Community Health & Resource Centres, Ottawa Community Housing and Loblaws Rideau. OCTranspo provided a chartered bus, with Ottawa Public Health covering the cost for the duration of the pilot.

During the pilot phase, the MarketMobile received between 90 and 100 customers each market day. The food was purchased at cost from Loblaws Rideau and resold with a 5-10% mark-up. This represented a savings of 40% compared to retail grocery stores. The pilot brought together a number of non-traditional community stakeholders and engaged residents in addressing health and food security issues in their own lives.

With the support of the Ottawa Community Foundation, the MarketMobile has been expanded to four additional sites, and has hired a full-time coordinator, operating year-round with a designated vehicle and trailer.

Reports from Toronto and Ottawa indicate that price and convenience were the most important factors for customers of the mobile markets. Customer surveys include comments on the quality of the produce and the ability to prepare healthier meals. Stakeholder groups commented on the benefits to broader determinants of health. Nova Scotia Public Health has compiled a list of anticipated outcomes for the proposed Halifax pilot project, including:

- Increased access to fresh produce
- Increased community capacity to address issues that affect residents' lives
- Successful demonstration of non-traditional partners working together
- Increased opportunities for communities to gather and celebrate together
- Providing nutrition support, food preparation ideas and cooking classes

The Mobile Market Project Team for the proposed Halifax project has identified the communities of Spryfield, Fairview, North Preston, East Preston, Halifax North and Dartmouth North as potential sites based on data related to health and food insecurity from the *2013 Population Health Status Report* and related Community Profiles. The selection criteria included:

- Communities must be within HRM boundaries;
- Communities must be served by Halifax Transit;
- Communities with existing capacity, interest and assets that could be used to deliver a successful market
- Data from Public Health's Population Health Status Report and community indicators associated with higher levels of food insecurity, including:
  - % Seniors
  - Public & other affordable housing units per 1000 population
  - % of Population identifying as being an immigrant
  - % Lone Parent Families
  - % Low Income Families
  - Grocery store density by community

The Mobile Market Project Team undertook consultations with each of these communities throughout winter and spring 2015, to confirm the capacity of each community to host a mobile market and to develop a governance and delivery model. The Project Team is now in the process of identifying specific sites in each area for a mobile market, and is in discussions with potential food suppliers and funding partners.

The Project Team has received a \$15,000 grant from the NS Department of Health & Wellness through *Thrive! A Plan for a Healthier Nova Scotia*, to build connections with community partners and develop a governance and delivery model. The initiative has also recently received a \$5000 Community Innovation Grant, which will be used to purchase start-up supplies such as tables, chairs, baskets, cash boxes and signs. Public Health has committed to undertaking evaluation of the pilot project at the end of the 21 week duration. As its contribution, HRM is being asked to provide a Halifax Transit bus that would act as the vehicle for the mobile market. The request is to provide an in-kind bus once per week for 21 weeks as a pilot project. While Halifax Transit does not generally provide charter bus services to groups or initiatives due to resource constraints, it has provided bus service to HRM-sponsored events in the past.

Specific sites in each of the proposed communities have been identified, though they are subject to final confirmation. However a potential schedule was developed using these sites to arrive at an estimated cost for the Halifax Transit bus. If those locations change the cost could also change. These schedules are included as Attachment 2. There are two proposed schedules for the Dartmouth route: one with a market stop to sell produce at the Dartmouth North Community Centre, and the other to drop produce off at the Dartmouth North Community Centre, where a local vendor at an existing market could sell the food on behalf of the mobile market. There are two possible vendors at this Dartmouth location, both of which are non-profit societies, so any monies made would be reinvested back into the mobile market.

Using these draft schedules and routes, the cost for a Halifax Transit bus and driver is projected to be \$8200 (Halifax route plus the Dartmouth North drop-off option) or \$8700 (Halifax route plus the Dartmouth North selling option). The detailed cost breakdown is as follows:

	Daily Hours	Daily Kms	Daily Cost	Cost over Pilot
<b>Halifax</b>	7.94	37.2	\$388	\$3,879.22
<b>Dartmouth</b>	7.62	56.6	\$394	\$4,332.10
<b>Dartmouth 2</b>	8.62	56.6	\$438	\$4,816.10

These costs reflect a ten week run for the Halifax sites and an eleven week run for the Dartmouth sites, beginning in September 2015. The bus would go to the Halifax sites once every 2 weeks, and to the Dartmouth sites every 2 weeks (ie, go to each area on opposing weeks).

There are no recommendations coming out of the Healthy Communities Council report that extend past 2015-16. However it is worth noting that the Municipality has been participating in an increasing number of initiatives related to the health, well-being and quality of life for residents. These include HRM's participation on the Housing & Homelessness Partnership, the creation of a Local Immigration Partnership, development of programs for disadvantaged youth such as Souls Strong and Girls United programs, and the creation of a Diversity & Inclusion Office. Participation in a mobile food market pilot continues this trend, and the in-kind donation of a bus is an operational support that does not interfere with social policy development, which is the mandate of the Provincial government.

Given the increasing role HRM is taking in social support initiatives, it is suggested that Council direct staff to revisit the Healthy Communities conversation and develop a policy lens through which to assess future initiatives. This lens would take into account the tools at the Municipality's disposal, such as planning and land use authority, recreation programs, operational service provision, and alignment with the existing grants program. It would act as a guide to the type of role the Municipality can and should undertake in social policy. A policy lens will allow HRM to take a consistent approach to participation in these initiatives and continue the work started with the Mayor's Conversation on Healthy and Liveable Communities.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Financial implications for this report will be an estimated expense of \$8200 to \$8700, to be absorbed by Halifax Transit's existing operational budget for 2015-16.

Should the pilot program transition to a permanent mobile market, HRM will need to consider future financial implications and will return to Council for direction.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Staff from the Mayor's Office is participating on the Mobile Market Project Team, which is undertaking consultation with the communities proposed for the mobile market. Individual Councillors are also participating in these consultations.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

N/A

### **ALTERNATIVES**

Council could choose not to provide a bus for the mobile market pilot. This is not recommended given the extensive consultation and planning that has taken place to date.

Council could refer the request to the Community Grants Program for consideration under the Emergency Assistance funding category. This category includes assistance to food banks and community feeding programs. Although the sale of produce is not a 'charitable' activity (at no cost to the recipient) if the focus of the program is lower income households/affordability it might be considered comparable in intent. This action is not recommended at this time on the basis of the following:

- The sustainability of the program has not been established locally and as such would benefit from an evaluation of the pilot project prior to further municipal in-kind or financial assistance.
- To be eligible for consideration under the Community Grants Program the applicant must be a non-profit, registered twelve months prior to the application deadline, with an established volunteer Board and financial statement. The program does not fund recurring operating costs such as insurance, fuel, vehicle maintenance etc but consideration could be given to a capital grant towards the purchase of a vehicle (not a lease), equipment or program promotion. To date, however, funding has been exclusively from government sources (NS Health Research Foundation and NS Department of Health) and as such the on-going commitment/financial capacity of non-profit partners is unknown.
- Due to demand and scope of participation, the program provides project-specific funding only.
- The participation of for-profit or individual vendors requires clarification to avoid any perceived conflict with individual or small business interests.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1: January 28, 2014 Council report "Mayor's Conversation on a Healthy and Liveable Community"

Attachment 2: Proposed Mobile Market Schedule

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A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/index.php> then choose the appropriate Community Council and meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210, or Fax 902.490.4208.

Report Prepared by: Anne Totten, Intergovernmental Affairs Advisor, 902-490-5623

Original Signed by

Report Approved by:

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Maggie MacDonald, Managing Director, Government Relations & External Affairs,  
902-490-1742

Original Signed by

Report Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Eddie Robar, Director, Halifax Transit, 902-490-6720

Original Signed by

Financial Approval by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bruce Fisher, Acting Director of Finance & ICT/CFO, 902.490.6308

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P.O. Box 1749  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3J 3A5 Canada

**Item No. 11.3.1**  
**Halifax Regional Council**  
**January 28, 2014**

**TO:** Members of Halifax Regional Council

**SUBMITTED BY:** Original Signed

Mike Savage, Mayor

**DATE:** January 21, 2014

**SUBJECT:** Mayor's Conversation on a Healthy and Liveable Community

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**ORIGIN**

Healthy Communities has been identified by Regional Council as a Core Priority Area. In October 2013, Mayor Savage hosted the Mayor's Conversation on a Healthy and Liveable Community, attended by more than 80 citizens, active in healthy living initiatives, as a way in which to gather community feedback on a broad range of strategic areas under the Healthy Communities Core Priority Area. All Councillors were invited to this event, and many participated.

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

*The Halifax Regional Municipality Charter - Section 2 - Purpose of Act:*

The purpose of this Act is to:

- (a) give broad authority to the Council, including broad authority to pass by-laws, and respect its right to govern the Municipality in whatever ways the Council considers appropriate within the jurisdiction given to it;
- (b) enhance the ability of the Council to respond to present and future issues in the Municipality; and
- (c) recognize that the functions of the Municipality are to:
  - (i) provide good government,
  - (ii) provide services, facilities and other things that, in the opinion of the Council, are necessary or desirable for all or part of the Municipality, and
  - (iii) develop and maintain safe and viable communities.

Part I Powers of Council

**Recommendation on page 2**

11 (1) The powers of the Municipality are exercised by the Council.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council, as a part of the Healthy Communities Core Priority Area:

- 1) Include the following activities as a part of the 2014-2015 budget year:
  - a. In conjunction with Halifax Harbour Bridges re-decking project to be carried out in 2015 – 2017, champion the development of a solution to the cycling connectivity challenges at the Halifax end of the Macdonald Bridge Bikeway;
  - b. Develop and implement an urban orchard pilot project plan, which is to include possible sites, best practices, and a funding and process framework with the aim of establishing an urban orchard pilot project in HRM within the scope of the Urban Forestry Master Plan;
  - c. Work with Business Improvement Districts to determine what opportunities exist to improve accessibility in HRM, including consideration of the use of portable accessible ramps for entries that are not already accessible and cannot be made accessible through other means.
- 2) Direct staff to include the statement “HRM is a leader in building an inclusive and accessible community for everyone, including persons with disabilities and seniors” within the Healthy Communities Priority Outcomes, along with a Business Plan to support this Outcome, for consideration by Council in preparation for the 2015/16 planning cycle.
- 3) For consideration in the 2015-2016 budget, as a part of the Healthy Communities Core Priority Area, work with the appropriate Standing Committees to determine what further opportunities exist to achieve a higher level of health and liveability in HRM, as outlined in the Background to this report, and report back no later than September 30<sup>th</sup> 2014.

### **BACKGROUND**

The goal of creating a more healthy and liveable HRM has become more urgent in the context of many of the alarming trends in public health. Obesity levels and chronic disease rates have been climbing steadily for the past 30 years and these rates have direct links to the lack of physical activity among Canadians—over half the population 12 years and over are not physically active. In HRM, over two thirds of men and half of all women are overweight or obese (Vital Signs, 2012).

A number of initiatives in support of a healthy and liveable community are already underway in Halifax. These include THRIVE Halifax, Coalitions Linking Action and Science for Prevention (CLASP), the United Way's Healthy Living Document, and Mayor and Council Review of the Task Force on Public Safety. These formal initiatives are further supported by the actions of



organizations, businesses, neighbourhoods and individuals who work to strengthen our community.

The goal of the Mayor's Conversation on a Healthy and Liveable Community was to help create a framework for the implementation of the Mayor and Council's Healthy Communities agenda, and to recognize or create opportunities to work together for the benefit of citizens across HRM. By bringing together community stakeholders, this event allowed the Mayor, councillors and staff to listen to ideas that could contribute to a healthy and liveable community, while developing alliances between stakeholders and HRM.

### **DISCUSSION**

The Mayor's Conversation on a Healthy and Liveable Community brought together over 80 stakeholders from a wide range of backgrounds and sectors, including active transportation, local food production and promotion, accessibility, transportation, physical fitness, public safety, seniors, youth, students, business and planning.

While Regional Council has adopted Healthy Communities as a Core Priority Area, a preliminary analysis suggests that most current activities in this area may be more "operational" than "aspirational". Therefore, the purpose of the Mayor's Conversation on a Healthy and Liveable Community was to establish an understanding of the community's aspirations in establishing a healthy and liveable community.

The Mayor's Conversation on a Healthy and Liveable Community began with a visioning exercise, asking participants to imagine and share what Halifax would look like in the year 2020, as the healthiest, most liveable community in Canada. The latter part of the day focused on specific themes and objectives that would be needed to achieve this goal. Participants were free to join groups discussing themes of particular interest to them. The room also featured a "Great Works Gallery" promoting activities and initiatives currently being undertaken, including Hope Blooms, Switch Open Street Sundays, Hubbards Barn & Community Park, and The Old School Community Gathering Place in Musquodoboit Harbour.

A preliminary analysis of the results suggests that there may be opportunities to make measurable progress in the coming budget year on several of the themes that emerged, while progress in other areas may take considerably more time to achieve.

In particular, three key themes emerged whereby progress appears to be achievable over the next budget year:

- 1) Active transportation
- 2) Local food production
- 3) Accessibility

Within each of the above theme areas, staff and community stakeholders were consulted so as to determine activities that could both make a measurable impact, and which could reasonably be undertaken over the next budget year. Each of these activities is consistent with priorities,

programs and initiatives already established by Regional Council.

#### Bike Ramp at MacDonald Bridge

The most mentioned single project during the review of HRM's Transportation Strategy was to "improve the Halifax connection to the Macdonald Bridge Bikeway." With the re-decking project to be carried out in 2015 – 2017, it would appear to be timely to begin working with Halifax Harbour Bridges to champion a shared solution to this challenge. This priority was endorsed by the Active Transportation Advisory Committee at its January 2014 meeting.

#### Urban Orchard Pilot Project

Following public feedback and direction from the Community Design Advisory Committee, the draft Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (RMPS) cites "promote community food security" as one of its objectives. Moreover, the idea of planting fruit and nut-bearing trees was repeatedly raised during the community consultation on the Urban Forestry Master Plan (UFMP), and one of the objectives stated in the UFMP, unanimously adopted by Regional Council, is to "increase the amount of edibles available from the urban forest."

#### Portable Wheelchair Accessible Ramps

The idea of portable accessibility ramps was raised at the October 2013 meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC), and a motion was passed to "review options for portable ramps for existing commercial businesses in HRM and discuss opportunities for HRM to promote their use including potential linkages with Business Improvement Districts." Portable accessibility ramps were also frequently raised at the AAC's Town Hall meeting in September 2013, and at its December 2013 meeting, the AAC endorsed the Mayor's Office further exploration of this idea as a way to improve accessibility at HRM businesses.

A range of other issues were also identified by participants. These issues have been broken into identifiable themes, each of which supports 2014/15 Priority Outcomes and/or policy direction articulated by Draft 3 of the 5 year review of the Municipal Planning Strategy. Progress on these issues may be achievable over the longer-term. Specific examples of potential initiatives can be found in the background, attached to this report. This analysis should include, but not be limited to, activities in the following areas:

#### Use of Facilities

Municipally-owned facilities support a "range of choices for citizens in structured and unstructured leisure and recreation activities" (2014/15 Priority Outcomes, Healthy Communities). In addition to the formal recreation programs and facilities, municipally owned buildings offer an opportunity to work with community groups to initiate and promote activities for citizens of all ages.

#### Building Community Capacity

The municipality can support citizens in creating "an attractive, welcoming, and sought after business and residential destination" (2014/15 Priority Outcomes, Economic Development). Businesses and families are attracted to communities where strong neighbourhoods and not for profit organizations work together to ensure safe and healthy communities that encourage innovative social, recreational and cultural activities.

### Public Safety

HRM plays a key role in ensuring "citizens and visitors are safe where they live, work, and play" (2014/15 Priority Outcomes, Healthy Communities). Currently, a review is underway of the 2008 Report of the Task Force on Public Safety. It is anticipated that this report will offer direction on additional public safety priorities and initiatives.

### Local Food Production and Promotion

Local food production supports rural economic development, which is "an integral component of HRM's overall economic prosperity" (2014/15 Priority Outcomes, Economic Development). Moreover, recent RP+5 public consultations and direction from the Community Design Advisory Committee on updating the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (RMPS) illustrates that access to food is a significant issue for citizens. This feedback resulted in the introduction of an objective in the draft RMPS, to "promote community food security." The Draft RMPS states that "Community food security exists when community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice."

HRM's consideration of food security dovetails with community mobilization around food issues. The HRM Food Strategy Group is a coalition of organizations and citizens with a range of interests such as health promotion, poverty reduction and environmental and social wellbeing. The Group is working to raise awareness of food issues and develop a food strategy for HRM. Working more formally with the HRM Food Strategy Group may present greater opportunities to integrate food security considerations into the municipal planning process, leading to healthier community outcomes.

### Accessibility

The municipality is to ensure that all "HRM citizens have access to facilities and natural assets that enable a range of choices for structured and unstructured leisure and recreation activities" (2014/15 Priority Outcomes, Healthy Communities"). This can best be achieved by working with the Accessibility Advisory Committee and others to create an overarching accessibility framework for HRM;

### Active Transportation

The municipality is to promote policies that ensure "people and goods move easily from place to place using a combination of multiple transportation modes, such as auto, transit, walking and cycling" (2014/15 Priority Outcomes, Transportation). The following initiatives are to be

considered and reported back to the Transportation Committee at the same time as the review of HRM's Active Transportation Strategy:

- a) Liaising with other municipalities in Canada that have implemented protected bicycle lanes<sup>1</sup> with the goal of including protected bicycle lanes as a part of HRM's revised Active Transportation Strategy.
- b) Investigating opportunities to pilot temporary public spaces projects, with the aim of making HRM streets more animated and pedestrian-friendly.

Because HRM is currently supporting initiatives in a number of these areas, a key part of any work in further promoting healthy and liveable communities would be to take stock of current activities, including relationships with individuals and business that support this work.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The cost to develop the implementation plan for the activities to be carried out can be accommodated within the existing operating budget. Costs to complete the recommended activities in 2014/15 will be included in the proposed operating budget to be approved by Regional Council. Any additional costs will be brought back to Regional Council for approval.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The Mayor's Conversation on a Healthy and Liveable Community brought together over 80 stakeholders from a wide range of backgrounds and sectors, including active transportation, local food production and promotion, accessibility, transportation, physical fitness, public safety, seniors, youth, students, business and planning. In addition, a range of stakeholder groups, including the Accessibility Advisory Committee and the Active Transportation Advisory Committee, were consulted in the development of recommendations.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no environmental implications identified.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Backgrounder on the Mayor's Conversation on a Healthy and Liveable Community.

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<sup>1</sup> A protected bike lane is an exclusive bicycle facility that is physically separated from motor traffic and parking, and distinct from the sidewalk. Methods of separation vary and may include curbs, bollards, planters, rows of parked vehicles, or any other type of physical barrier. These are also known as "cycle tracks" or "separated bike lanes" in other jurisdictions.

**Mayor's Conversation on a Healthy Liveable Community  
Council Report**

- 7 -

**January 28, 2014**

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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.

Report Prepared by: **Joshua Bates – Senior Policy Advisor (Mayor's Office) 490-2454**

Financial Approval by: **Original Signed**  
**Greg Keefe, Director of Finance & ICT/CFO, 490-6308**

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# Mayor's Conversation on a Healthy and Liveable Community

OCTOBER 24, 2013



# Introduction

A healthy, liveable community no doubt has an efficient, responsive and compassionate health care system, but it isn't defined by it. Rather, a healthy, liveable community is one where "everyone wakes up in a warm safe place with nutritious food", where "people are working happily", where there are "intergenerational interactions and cooperation", where crime is low and graduation rates are high, where public art and green spaces draw people outside, and where a diverse population shares mixed, walkable and friendly neighbourhoods.

These are some of the descriptions of a healthy, liveable community shared by people attending the Mayor's Conversation on a Healthy and Liveable Community in October, 2013.

Some cities, such as Vancouver, have undertaken the creation of a healthy city strategy. In Calgary, a commitment to end homelessness led to the establishment of the Calgary Homeless Foundation. Other communities are working on community gardens and food sustainability; on increased physical activity; on youth engagement and senior mentoring; on creating rest spaces in urban centres, and active green belts.



## Context

In Halifax, many initiatives reflect a new recognition of the role of the municipality and citizens in creating a healthy community. These range from the recently constructed Emera Oval on the Halifax Common to the innovative community oven in Dartmouth. Community gardens thrive, and farmers markets offer a range of fresh produce—much of it grown within HRM. Entrepreneurs are finding ways to share cars. Young entrepreneurs at Hope Blooms have built a garden and have learned to market the results. A transit re-think is expected to lead to improvements in public transportation. A review underway to update the report of the Mayor's Round Table on Violence will yield recommendations to improve public safety.

Some organizations are working on more formal strategies to support citizen efforts to lead healthier lives. These include THRIVE Halifax; the Capital District Health Authority's Coalitions Linking Action and Science for Prevention (CLASP); and the United Way's Healthy Living Document.

The Mayor himself has established his personal commitment to a healthy, liveable community for all citizens. In December, 2012, Council established Healthy Communities as a core priority area for programs and services.

There are solid economic justifications for municipal involvement in healthy community initiatives. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities estimates that physical inactivity costs more than \$2.1 billion in direct health care costs annually for the treatment of chronic diseases that are largely preventable, and carries an estimated annual economic burden of \$5.3 billion.



For municipalities, healthy living initiatives, such as the creation of safe, walkable communities can reduce the burden of infrastructure construction and maintenance, as well as the cost of crime. Young people who are engaged in their communities are less likely to become involved in criminal activity and more likely to contribute through volunteer or other means of participation.

The goal of creating a healthy and liveable community in HRM has become more urgent in the context of many of the alarming trends in public health. Obesity levels and chronic disease rates have been climbing steadily for the past 30 years and these rates have direct links to the lack of physical activity among Canadians—over half the population 12 years and over are not physically active. In HRM, over two thirds of men and half of all women are overweight or obese (Vital Signs, 2012).

Clean air, the availability of fresh, healthy food, recreational opportunities, and access to safe public spaces contribute to healthy and liveable communities, and are all within the mandate of HRM. Fresh produce from community gardens can encourage healthy food choices, while bike lanes and hiking trails encourage physical activity. Projects like Solar City reduce energy consumption, creating a cleaner and healthier environment.

Indeed, the municipality has many of the policy levers to improve the health of the community. These include:

- Pedestrian friendly neighbourhoods
- Transportation
- Zoning and land use
- Parks and recreation
- Police and fire services
- Water quality
- Local food sustainability
- Green building practices
- Accessible building guidelines.



## Mayor's Conversation on a Healthy and Liveable Community

As an indication of his commitment to achieving a healthier community, and to provide some guidance as Council and staff consider budget allocations for 2014-15 and beyond, the Mayor convened a group of over 80 citizens who are actively engaged as volunteers, entrepreneurs, or professionals in healthy community initiatives. The group included senior program staff and several members of Council. The event was facilitated by Heather Hampson, an Engagement Strategy Advisor with the Capital District Health Authority.

The day began with participants collaborating to create a vision of a healthy Halifax. Participants identified the elements of a healthy and liveable community, and considered how their community could be different from today. Following that exercise, participants identified six topics to discuss ways to achieve a healthier community. These were:

- Unstructured play
- Seniors in the community
- Healthy food for everyone
- Neighbours getting to know one another
- Enabling community organizations to help move the vision forward
- Safety

The discussions identified a strong desire within the community to play an active role in creating a healthier community, and to work more closely with the municipality. Participants also saw a role for the municipality in removing regulatory barriers and working with other levels of government to achieve the goal of a healthier, more liveable community.



## Actions

A report has been prepared for Regional Council, recommending specific actions in the 2014-15 budget year to support Council's Healthy Communities Core Priority Area. These actions are:

a. In conjunction with Halifax Harbour Bridges re-decking project to be carried out in 2015 – 2017, champion the development of a solution to the cycling connectivity challenges at the Halifax end of the Macdonald Bridge Bikeway;

b. Develop and implement an urban orchard pilot project plan, which is to include possible sites, best practices, and a funding and process framework with the aim of establishing an urban orchard pilot project in HRM within the scope of the Urban Forestry Master Plan;

c. Work with Business Improvement Districts to determine what opportunities exist to improve accessibility in HRM, including consideration of the use of portable accessible ramps for entries that are not already accessible and cannot be made accessible through other means.

A second recommendation is to include the statement "HRM is a leader in building an inclusive and accessible community for everyone, including persons with disabilities and seniors" as a Priority Outcome to be considered by Council in preparation for the 2015/16 planning cycle.

The third recommendation would see HRM staff working with the standing committees of Council to identify additional Healthy Community initiatives. Suggestions from the Mayor's Conversation on a Healthy and Liveable Community are provided here for consideration in the development of recommendations to Regional Council. These suggestions have been broken into themes, each of which supports 2014/15 Priority Outcomes identified by Council.

## Use of Facilities

Municipally-owned facilities support a "range of choices for citizens in structured and unstructured leisure and recreation activities" (2014/15 Priority Outcomes, Healthy Communities).

a. Providing program space for interaction between seniors and youth to increase shared activities and learning;

b. Improving access to early childhood health and learning;

c. Increasing knowledge of nutrition and cost-effective, healthy food preparation, including reviewing the province's forthcoming healthy eating and recreation policy for possible implementation at a municipal level.

## Building Community Capacity

The municipality can support citizens in creating "an attractive, welcoming, and sought after business and residential destination" (2014/15 Priority Outcomes, Economic Development).

a. Increasing the rate of volunteer activity by all age groups in cooperation with schools and not for profit organizations;

b. Strengthening community organizations, including the possibility of a "Community Navigator" position at City Hall;

c. Encouraging neighbourhood projects and activities; d. Encouraging residents to access public spaces;

e. Identifying unnecessary obstacles to initiatives of community groups, including hosting public events;

f. Reviewing legal liability as a barrier to innovation by municipality and community organizations.

## Improving Integration and Effective Communication with Citizens:

a. Improving integration of newcomers with the community, and advancing effective communication with all citizens through civic engagement, such as voting and increasing the diversity of citizens in positions of leadership within HRM;

b. Identifying opportunities to further engage all citizens in the promotion of a healthy and liveable community, including through the use of informal citizen advisors.

## Public Safety

HRM plays a key role in ensuring “citizens and visitors are safe where they live, work, and play” (2014/15 Priority Outcomes, Healthy Communities).

- a. Increasing safety in public spaces, including through the consideration of recommendations in the Mayor and Council Review of Task Force on Public Safety.

## Local Food Production and Promotion

Local food production supports rural economic development, which is “an integral component of HRM’s overall economic prosperity” (2014/15 Priority Outcomes, Economic Development). Moreover, recent RP+5 public consultations and direction from the Community Design Advisory Committee on updating the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (RMPS) illustrates that access to food is a significant issue for citizens. This feedback resulted in the introduction of an objective in the draft RMPS, to “promote community food security.” The Draft RMPS states that “Community food security exists when community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice.”

- a. Identifying roles and opportunities in promoting local food production, including formally supporting the HRM Food Strategy Group in its development of an HRM food strategy. The HRM Food Strategy Group is a coalition of organizations and citizens with a range of interests such as health promotion, poverty reduction and environmental and social wellbeing. The Group is working to raise awareness of food issues and develop a food strategy for HRM. Working more formally with the HRM Food Strategy Group may present greater opportunities to integrate food security considerations into the municipal planning process, leading to healthier community outcomes.

## Accessibility

The municipality is to ensure that all “HRM citizens have access to facilities and natural assets that enable a range of choices for structured and unstructured leisure and recreation activities” (2014/15 Priority Outcomes, Healthy Communities).

- a. Working with the Accessibility Advisory Committee to conduct an assessment of the accessibility gaps within each department and a scan of best practices in other jurisdictions, with the aim of establishing an overarching accessibility framework for HRM.

## Active Transportation

The municipality is to promote policies that ensure “people and goods move easily from place to place using a combination of multiple transportation modes, such as auto, transit, walking and cycling” (2014/15 Priority Outcomes, Transportation). The following initiatives are to be considered and reported back to the Transportation Committee at the same time as the review of HRM’s Active Transportation Strategy:

- a. Liaising with other municipalities in Canada that have implemented protected bicycle lanes<sup>1</sup> with the goal of including protected bicycle lanes as a part of HRM’s revised Active Transportation Strategy.
- b. Investigating opportunities to pilot temporary public spaces projects, with the aim of making HRM streets more animated and pedestrian-friendly.

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<sup>1</sup>A protected bike lane is an exclusive bicycle facility that is physically separated from motor traffic and parking, and distinct from the sidewalk. Methods of separation vary and may include curbs, bollards, planters, rows of parked vehicles, or any other type of physical barrier. These are also known as “cycle tracks” or “separated bike lanes” in other jurisdictions.

# Mayor's Conversation on a Healthy and Liveable Community

List of Participants



Mayor Mike Savage

## Organizing Team

Joshua Bates  
Chris Bryant  
Dale Godsoe  
Heather Hampson  
Shaune MacKinlay  
Donna McCready  
Kathleen Patterson  
Gaynor Watson-Creed

## Councillors

Steve Craig  
Barry Dalrymple  
Darren Fisher  
Bill Karsten  
Waye Mason  
Lorelei Nicoll  
Jennifer Watts

## Staff

Heidi Boutilier  
Richard Harvey  
John Henry  
Deputy Chief Roy Hollett  
Patricia Hughes  
Chief Jean-Michel Blais  
Hanita Koblents  
Richard MacLellan  
Dave McCusker  
Sylvia Parris

Transportation & Public Works  
Community and Recreation Services  
Community and Recreation Services  
Fire & Emergency Services  
Metro Transit  
Halifax Regional Police  
Planning & Infrastructure  
Planning & Infrastructure  
Planning & Infrastructure  
African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration

## Community

Julianne Acker-Varney  
Dr. Frank Atherton

Gina Brown  
Sara Burgess  
Mark Butler  
Margaret Casey  
Miranda Cobb  
Gwendolyn Colman

Pam Cooley  
Wayne Crawley  
Debra Dickey  
Terry Dixon  
Richard Donald  
Gina Dunn  
Andy Fillmore

Sheila Fougere  
Norman Greenberg  
Barbara Hart  
Claudia Jahn

Paul Kent

Kathleen Kevany  
Katherine Kitching

FEED Nova Scotia  
Deputy Medical Officer of Health,  
Department of Health & Wellness  
Bluenose Marathon  
Common Roots Urban Farm  
Ecology Action Centre  
North End Health Clinic  
Ecology Action Centre  
Genuine Progress Index for  
Atlantic Canada  
CarShare HFX  
Unique Solutions  
Dartmouth Community Food Centre  
Community YMCA  
Dalhousie Faculty of Agriculture  
Shore Active Transportation Association  
Waterfront Development Corporation  
and Strategic Urban Partnership

Community Carrot Co-op  
Affordable Housing Association of  
Nova Scotia  
President & CEO,  
Greater Halifax Partnership

Outdoor Active

Sue LaPierre  
Geoff LeBoutillier  
Kate MacDonald  
Sarah MacKeigan  
Sarah MacLaren  
Lil MacPherson  
Roxanne Manning  
Michael/Susan McCurdy  
Jayme Melrose  
Chris Morrissey  
Jane Nauss  
Paul O'Hara  
Frank Palermo  
Lisa Roberts  
Jacinda Rudolph

Ali Shaver  
Ross Soward  
Don Spicer  
Sheila Stevenson  
Dan Troke  
Grant Wanzel

Jonathan Williams  
Marjorie Willison  
Laura Whitman

United Way  
Halifax Regional School Board  
Stepping Up Halifax  
Leave out Violence (L.O.V.E.)  
Wooden Monkey  
Dartmouth Family Centre  
Spencer House  
Common Roots Urban Farm  
Clean Nova Scotia  
Halifax Regional Police  
North End Community Health Centre  
Planning & Design Centre  
North End Community Circle  
Immigrant Settlement & Integration  
Services  
Capital District Health Authority  
Switch Halifax  
Shelter Nova Scotia

Housing Nova Scotia  
Affordable Housing Association of  
Nova Scotia  
Students Nova Scotia

Awesome Halifax

**HALIFAX**  
REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

Mayor's Conversation on a  
Healthy and Liveable Community  
OCTOBER 24 2015

**Halifax Mobile Market (Dartmouth – Drop off Dartmouth North option)**

8:30	Bus leaves Burnside Transit Centre
8:30 – 8:43	Bus travels to Braemar Superstore
8:43 – 9:28	Bus loads at Braemar Superstore
9:28 – 9:44	Bus travels to Dartmouth North Community Food Centre
9:44 – 10:14	Dropping off goods at Dartmouth North Community Food Centre
10:14 – 10:53	Bus travels to East Preston Recreation Centre
10:53 – 12:23	Selling goods at East Preston Recreation Centre
12:23 – 12:45	Bus travels to North Preston Community Centre
12:45 – 2:15	Selling goods at North Preston Community Centre
2:15 – 2:47	Bus travels to Braemar Superstore
2:47 – 3:32	Unloading of leftover goods at Braemar Superstore
3:32 – 3:50	Bus returns to Burnside Transit Centre

## **Halifax Mobile Market (Dartmouth – Selling at Dartmouth North option)**

<b>8:30</b>	<b>Bus leaves Burnside Transit Centre</b>
<b>8:30 – 8:43</b>	<b>Bus travels to Braemar Superstore</b>
<b>8:43 – 9:28</b>	<b>Bus loads at Braemar Superstore</b>
<b>9:28 – 9:44</b>	<b>Bus travels to Dartmouth North Community Food Centre</b>
<b>9:44 – 11:14</b>	<b>Selling goods at Dartmouth North Community Food Centre</b>
<b>11:14 – 11:53</b>	<b>Bus travels to East Preston Recreation Centre</b>
<b>12:53 – 1:23</b>	<b>Selling goods at East Preston Recreation Centre</b>
<b>1:23 – 1:45</b>	<b>Bus travels to North Preston Community Centre</b>
<b>1:45 – 3:15</b>	<b>Selling goods at North Preston Community Centre</b>
<b>3:15 – 3:47</b>	<b>Bus travels to Braemar Superstore</b>
<b>3:47 – 4:32</b>	<b>Unloading of leftover goods at Braemar Superstore</b>
<b>4:32 – 4:50</b>	<b>Bus returns to Burnside Transit Centre</b>

## **Halifax Mobile Market (Halifax)**

<b>8:30</b>	<b>Bus leaves Burnside Transit Centre</b>
<b>8:30 – 8:50</b>	<b>Bus travels to Joseph Howe Drive Superstore</b>
<b>8:50 – 9:35</b>	<b>Bus loads at Joseph Howe Drive Superstore</b>
<b>9:35 – 9:44</b>	<b>Bus travels to Devonshire Arena</b>
<b>9:44 – 11:14</b>	<b>Selling goods at Devonshire Arena</b>
<b>11:14 – 11:26</b>	<b>Bus travels to United Church (Dutch Village Rd)</b>
<b>11:26 – 12:56</b>	<b>Selling goods at United Church (Dutch Village Rd)</b>
<b>12:56 – 1:17</b>	<b>Bus travels to Spryfield Lions Rink</b>
<b>1:17 – 2:47</b>	<b>Selling goods at Spryfield Lions Rink</b>
<b>2:47 – 3:06</b>	<b>Bus travels to Joseph Howe Drive Superstore</b>
<b>3:06 – 3:51</b>	<b>Unloading of leftover goods at Joseph Howe Drive Superstore</b>
<b>3:51 – 4:10</b>	<b>Bus returns to Burnside Transit Centre</b>