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**Item No.**

**Community Planning and Economic  
Development Committee  
November 19, 2015**

**TO:** Chair and Members of Community Planning and Economic Development

**SUBMITTED BY:** Original Signed by  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Maggie MacDonald, Managing Director, Government  
Relations and External Affairs

**DATE:** November 6, 2015

**SUBJECT:** Economic Strategy Renewal -- Update

**ORIGIN**

May 21, 2015: MOVED by Deputy Mayor Nicoll, seconded by Councillor Fisher that the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee recommend Regional Council authorize staff to develop an updated Economic Strategy in collaboration with the Halifax Partnership in accordance with the approach set out in the April 14, 2015 staff report.

June 2, 2015: MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor McCluskey that Halifax Regional Council authorize staff to develop an updated Economic Strategy in collaboration with the Halifax Partnership in accordance with the approach set out in the April 14, 2015 staff report.

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

The Halifax Regional Municipality Charter 2008, c. 39, s. 1. permits the municipality to undertake a variety of economic development activities.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Community Planning and Economic Development committee receive this report and forward it to Regional Council for information.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Current Economic Strategy**

The Halifax Regional Municipality (the municipality) undertakes economic development activities in order to increase the economic and social well-being of its citizens. In March 2011, Regional Council endorsed *AGreaterHalifax*, the municipality's economic strategy for 2011-2016.

The current strategy has five goals:

- **Regional Centre** – Build a vibrant and attractive Regional Centre that attracts \$1.5B of private investment and 8,000 more residents by 2016;
- **Business Climate** – Promote a business climate that drives and sustains growth by improving competitiveness and by leveraging our strengths;
- **Talent** – Create a welcoming community where the world's talent can find great opportunities, engaged employers and resources for advancement;
- **International Brand** – Create a unique international city brand for Halifax; and,
- **Maximize Growth Opportunities** – Capitalize on our best opportunities for economic growth.

Since its release, municipal staff and representatives from the Halifax Partnership have updated CPED on the strategy's ongoing implementation. In the last economic strategy update to CPED on October 15, 2015, municipal staff outlined specific progress the municipality and the Halifax Partnership have made in fulfilling the 48 actions planned for Years 3-5 of the strategy. Municipal staff also reported on the key measures to gauge economic progress more broadly in Halifax – population, employment and income levels, and the commercial tax base.

The municipality's current Economic Strategy for 2011-2016 is entering its final year.

### **Economic Strategy Renewal**

On June 2, 2015, Regional Council authorized staff to develop an updated five-year economic strategy in collaboration with the Halifax Partnership (the Partnership). In September 2015, KPMG was awarded the contract to develop the economic strategy, as well as a strategy to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to the municipality. The economic strategy is being partially funded by the Nova Scotia Department of Municipal Affairs, and the FDI strategy is being financed in part by the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development's Invest Canada-Community Initiatives Program.

The economic strategy process will include development of a vision, main areas of focus and actions based on input from key stakeholders and the broader community. Given the extensive consultations that took place during the development of the 2011-16 Economic Strategy, the One Nova Scotia Commission and the Halifax branding exercise, consultations for the new economic strategy will be more focused.

The strategy is being guided by an Economic Strategy Advisory Committee (ESAC) that includes representatives from the private sector, military, universities, the provincial government, HRM and the community at large. ESAC has been tasked to refine the vision and identify the goals, generate new ideas, build consensus and communicate results. ESAC is chaired by Matt Hebb, Dalhousie University's Assistant Vice-President of Government Relations, and supported by a smaller working group of KPMG, the Partnership and HRM staff.

The renewed strategy is to be developed for final approval by Regional Council by the end of the 2015/2016 fiscal year.

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **Progress to Date**

The working group has developed an approach to the review and renewal of the economic strategy, and is developing a plan to gather input from stakeholders. It has prepared draft vision statements for the economic strategy, and proposed guiding principles and themes.

On October 16<sup>th</sup>, ESAC met for the first time and discussed the strategy's potential areas of focus, such as infrastructure development, the needs of small business and entrepreneurs, population growth and talent attraction.

To inform ESAC and Working Group discussions, KPMG has undertaken a best practices review of economic development strategies from elsewhere and an assessment of how HRM's current economic strategy aligns with related plans and strategies, including the One Nova Scotia Report, the 2013 Municipal Auditor General's Economic Development Governance Review and the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy.

The Partnership and municipal staff are currently finalizing a communications plan with key messages and an engagement strategy that outlines key stakeholders and how they should be engaged. In line with Regional Council's direction, engagement will be focused while including a representative cross section of persons from different sectors, geographic areas, and communities of interest.

#### **Next Steps**

Throughout November and December, KPMG, Partnership and municipal staff will engage key internal and external stakeholders. A list of anticipated external consultation sessions is attached.

ESAC will refine and endorse the new economic strategy's vision, mission and themes. Staff will then bring forward the vision, mission and themes for endorsement by CPED and Regional Council. Using the inputs gathered through internal and external consultations, and with advice of the ESAC, a draft strategy will then be prepared for presentation to Regional Council by fiscal year end 2015/2016.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Funding for the renewed economic strategy was approved by Regional Council on June 2, 2015 through approved operating budget in M310 Other Fiscal Services.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

There was no community engagement in the preparation of this report.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no environmental implications from this report.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

**ATTACHMENT 1:** Economic Strategy Renewal Engagement Sessions (draft as of November 6, 2015)

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

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**ATTACHMENT 1:  
Economic Strategy Renewal  
Engagement Sessions (draft as of November 6, 2015)**

Theme/Stakeholder Group	Approach
Halifax Partnership Investors	HP Investor Briefing Session General Invite to 125+ investor companies to provide opportunity for input
Aerospace and Defence Sector	Roundtable Discussion w/ 10 Key Stakeholders
Oceans & Energy Sector	Roundtable Discussion w/ 10 Key Stakeholders
ICT, Finance & Insurance	Roundtable Discussion w/ 10 Key Stakeholders
Development & Construction	Roundtable Discussion w/ 10 Key Stakeholders
Transportation and Logistics	Roundtable Discussion w/ 6-10 Key Stakeholders
Cultural Community (includes Creative Industries)	Roundtable Discussion w/ 6-10 Key Stakeholders
Not for Profit & Other	Roundtable Discussion w/ 6-10 Key Stakeholders
African Nova Scotian Stakeholders	Roundtable Discussion w/ 6-10 Key Stakeholders
Aboriginal Stakeholders	Roundtable Discussion w/ 6-10 Key Stakeholders
Population and Talent (includes universities and immigration stakeholders)	Session w/ approx. 20 key stakeholders
Business Climate	Roundtable Discussion w/ 6-10 Key Stakeholders
Entrepreneurship	Roundtable Discussion w/ 10 Key Stakeholders
NSCC & University Presidents	TBD
BIDs & Business Associations	Session w/ approx. 20 key stakeholders
HRM	Separate engagement plan developed
Province of NS	Discussions
Destination Halifax	Discussion
Halifax Convention Centre	Discussion