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Item No.
Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee
May 21, 2015

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

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

DATE: March 25, 2015

SUBJECT: Navigator Program

ORIGIN

October 2014 – Request for \$45,000/year from the municipality to support the delivery of services provided to homeless and street-involved individuals in the urban core made jointly by the Downtown Halifax Business Commission and the Spring Garden Area Business Association.

November 13 2014 – MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor McCluskey, that ““The Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee request a staff report, in the context of the Clairmont Report and the new Public Safety Office, regarding options for municipal funding and support for the business improvement district’s Navigator Street Outreach Program for consideration in the 2015/16 budget process.”

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, 2008, c. 39, s. 1. subclause 79 (1)(av)(v) “The Council may expend money required by the Municipality... av) a grant or contribution to for... (v) any charitable, nursing, medical, athletic, educational, environmental, cultural, community, fraternal, recreational, religious, sporting or social organization within the Province.”

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee recommend that Audit and Finance Standing Committee recommend that Regional Council give consideration to funding the Navigator Street Outreach Program in the 2015-2016 fiscal year, resulting in an increase to operating cost centre E400 – Intergovernmental Relations by \$45,000, with funding as a withdrawal from the Operating Surplus Reserve, Q328.

BACKGROUND

Navigator Program Origins and Overview: The Navigator Street Outreach program (Navigator)¹ was launched in May 2008 as a means to address homelessness and panhandling in Halifax and Dartmouth's downtown business districts. The Navigator program is designed to address a perceived need to supplement existing social services aimed at street-involved and homeless individuals. Navigator program staff have identified unsheltered and undocumented individuals as being at high risk and in need of assistance.²

The program is a proactive, positive response to individuals who struggle with securing and maintaining housing and employment due to addictions, mental health issues and homelessness. The intent of the program is to work with street-involved and homeless individuals to cultivate their potential to be engaged, healthy, contributing members of the community. The Navigator Street Outreach program provides clients with support in the following areas: income, mental health, justice system, addictions, employment and housing.

Navigator Program's Geographic Scope: The Navigator program primarily services clients within the geographic boundaries of Downtown Halifax Business Commission (DHBC) and the Spring Garden Area Business Association (SGABA). However, the target population is highly mobile. Program clients who frequent the downtown core also tend to travel outside the core as they look for shelter, use food banks, and access addiction, mental health, employment and income support services.

Office of Public Safety: In response to Don Clairmont's 2014 Roundtable Review, Council directed that the Public Safety Office be moved from the police to the administration. A new public safety office is currently being established within the administration. The direction of that office has not yet been set.

DISCUSSION

Intended Use of Funds: Navigator program staff are seeking municipal funding to facilitate work with street involved and homeless individuals on both sides of the harbour and along the entire length of the peninsula. Navigator program staff have had preliminary discussions with Downtown Dartmouth Business Commission (DDBC)³, Quinpool Road Mainstreet District Association (QRMDA) and North End Business Association (NEBA) about collaborating to better meet the needs of street involved and homeless individuals. Navigator program staff plan to work with each of these BIDs to develop business-district-specific housing, addiction, justice system, employment, income and mental health supports. The Navigator program staff also seek to increase existing supports in response to identified need this includes such supports as identification replacement; basic work tools, clothing or specialized equipment (steel-toed boots, anti-skid shoes); training; damage deposits; power, rental or phone arrears; transportation costs.

¹ Client profiles, demographics, staffing, programming, community partnership and financial details for the Navigator program are provided in Attachment 1.

² Navigator works on the street (as opposed to within the shelter system). Navigator supports unsheltered street involved and homeless individuals who are unwilling or unable to access provincially-funded support persons that work out of Halifax's shelters. Navigator staff also work extensively with clients who lack official documentation. Without documentation, street involved and homeless individuals face significant challenges in renting accommodations, finding employment and accessing government programs.

³ The DDBC subsequently chose instead to fund a similar program currently operating in downtown Dartmouth. DHBC and the Navigator will work with the Public Good Society (which serves the Downtown Dartmouth area) to minimize overlaps and gaps in that area.

A Navigator program budget for 2014 and a projected Navigator program budget for 2015 are provided as Attachments 2 and 3, respectively.⁴

Municipal Responsibility for Social Services: The municipality does not have primary responsibility for social services. However, it is in Council's purview to financially support the delivery of some social services (of the nature provided by the Navigator Program) within the authority conferred by the Charter.

Leveraged Funding: The requested increase in municipal funding would result in an increase in the municipality's relative share of funding for the program. In 2014 the DHBC dedicated \$29,000 towards the Navigator Program and applied for and received a \$29,000 municipal contribution towards Navigator through the BID contribution fund. SGABA contributed \$10,000 and applied for and received a \$10,000 municipal contribution towards Navigator through the BID contribution fund. As noted above there was a grant of approximately \$58,000 from the federal government which has been discontinued. If the requested increase is approved and the program does not seek additional funding streams, the municipality would go from an approximately one-third funder to funding over two-thirds of the Navigator program.

Potential Cost Savings: Providing transitional and affordable housing can save taxpayer money, while increasing community safety. While the extent of savings is difficult to quantify, Navigator interventions may result in cost savings relating to emergency services (ambulance, police, fire), incarceration, shelter and support services (meals, counselling, clothing and food banks).⁵

Municipal Priority Areas: The Navigator program works with street-involved and homeless individuals to cultivate their potential to be engaged, healthy, contributing members of the community. Its work touches on Council's healthy community and economic development Council-priority-areas⁶ including livability, regional centre attractiveness and public safety:

- **Housing and Liveability:** Navigator, in helping individuals to access the municipality's supply of safe, affordable housing, has the potential to advance Council's livability agenda. Access to housing is integral to livability. While the municipality is not responsible for providing subsidized housing or delivering housing-related social services, its planning documents, processes and regulations must address affordable housing, special-needs housing and rental accommodation.⁷ Currently, the municipality also supports affordable housing through (a) selling municipal properties at below market value to non-profit housing providers; (b) offering tax reduction and tax deferral programs; and (c) awarding community grants for affordable and supportive housing initiatives.
- **Regional Centre:** The Navigator program, in helping to transition street involved and homeless off the street, has the potential to advance Council's regional centre attractiveness agenda. The

⁴ The 2015 Navigator program budget shows a loss of a grant of \$58,443 from the Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia. This results from a change in federal government programming and support. DHBC advises that activities conducted under the federal grant were largely discrete and that the federal funding loss has resulted in a reduction in staff and services specific to that grant. They indicate that the request to the municipality is not intended to replace these funds but rather to expand the current services provided by the navigator.

⁵ See <http://streetohome.org/sites/default/files/file/Calgarystudy.pdf>. The Calgary Homelessness Foundation calculated the annual governmental and non-governmental cost of a transient person to be \$72,444 and the cost of a chronically homeless person to be \$134,642 – excluding volunteer hours and donations.

⁶ See <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/documents/141118cow3.pdf> for Council priority areas report. See also <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/documents/cw141118.pdf> for Council minutes.

⁷ This includes assessing the need and supply of these housing types and developing appropriate solutions See <http://www.novascotia.ca/just/regulations/reg/mgstmt.htm> for the Statement of Provincial Interest Regarding Housing.

Navigator program was originally conceived as a means to reduce panhandling within Halifax's urban core. Excessive panhandling was felt to reduce business district attractiveness for pedestrian consumers. Navigator program staff work with individuals to provide alternatives to panhandling through employment support. Facilitating access to provincial and federal income support also provides increased income stability and reduces reliance on panhandling as a primary (or exclusive) source of income.

- **Public Safety:** Supportive, safe housing is described, in Don Clairmont's 2014 Roundtable Report⁸, as critical to public safety. Homelessness or unsafe housing was characterized as a magnet for violence and those experiencing homelessness were found to be frequent victims of crime. According to the Housing First philosophy, once an individual has access to safe, secure and affordable housing, all other issues (such as mental health, addictions, income security and employability) can be appropriately addressed. As such, Navigator, in helping individuals to secure safe housing, responds to some public safety concerns. Feedback from HRP and the Public Safety Office within HRP indicates they see the Navigator as a positive undertaking in helping to address community safety in the downtown core.

Ad Hoc Funding by Way of Council Resolution: Existing grants and contributions programs, as currently configured, cannot accommodate a contribution to the Navigator program at the level requested. If Council wants to contribute to the Navigator Program, either on a one-time or multi-year basis, then staff recommend that the contribution be made by way of Council resolution.

Contribution Agreement: If Council chooses to make an ad hoc contribution to the Navigator program, staff recommend that Council authorize staff to negotiate a contribution agreement between HRM and the Downtown Halifax Business Commission⁹ (DHBC), that sets out the terms and conditions governing the municipal contribution to the Navigator program for fiscal 2015-2016, and authorize the Mayor and Municipal Clerk to execute said agreement.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Council consideration of the Navigator program funding request may result in a budgetary allocation as part of the 2015/2016 municipal budget. The budgetary impact to E400 (if any) is dependent on whether, and to what extent, a Navigator program contribution is approved by Council. In the event that Council approves a budgetary allocation, staff recommend that the funds be taken from Q328, the Operating Surplus Reserve.

Budget Summary, Q328 Operating Surplus

Proposed 2015/16 budget ending balance for March 31, 2016	\$3,936,003
Less recommendation if approved,	(\$45,000)
Revised projected balance, March 31, 2016	\$3,891,003

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community engagement has taken place.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Implications not identified.

⁸ See <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/documents/140429ca1151.pdf> for a copy of the Clairmont report.

⁹ DHBC is registered as a Society (non-profit) per the Registry of Joint Stock Companies' database (Registration Number 2550545). See <https://rjsc.gov.ns.ca/rjsc/search/viewProfile.do> Active status as of 2015-01-29 at 11:43 AM.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee could recommend that Regional Council decline to fund the Navigator Program.
2. Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee could request further information prior to making a recommendation to Regional Council.
3. Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee could recommend that Regional Council consider funding the Navigator Program contingent on the program securing additional funding from other sources.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Navigator Program Overview
Attachment 2: Navigator Program Budget 2014-2015
Attachment 3: Projected Navigator Program Budget 2015-2016

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.

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**Attachment 1
Navigator Program Overview**

Client Profile: A significant number of the Navigator Street Outreach program’s clientele have multiple addictions and/or physical or mental health concerns, putting them at higher risk of cyclical homelessness and unemployment. Often behaviours associated with mental health and/or addictions create barriers that are difficult to overcome without assistance. Low income levels and/or income instability exacerbates these problems for homeless and street-involved individuals.

Of the Navigator Street program’s clients:

- 30% have mental health concerns;
- 80% struggle with at least one addiction;
- 20% simultaneously deal with mental health concerns and addiction;
- 58% are homeless on first contact;
- 85% receive support from Income Assistance;

Since the program’s launch, the number of clients served has grown from 81 clients to 374 clients (460%). Each year, the number of new clients served represents a significant proportion of the overall client base – 130 (44%) in 2011-2012; 146 (43%) in 2012-2013; and 160 (43%) in 2013-2014 (43%). Of the current client base, 32% are women and 41% are youths.

Table 1: Client Demographic Breakdown

Year	Clients	Women	Mcen	Youth
2008-2009	81	12	69	53
2009-2010	119	13	106	48
2010-2011	300	–	–	–
2011-2012	295	62	233	154
2012-2013	340	91	249	158
2013-2014	374	118	256	153

* Data not tracked where table is blank.

Client contacts vary in terms of duration and frequency. In some instances Navigator staff work with clients over an extended period of time, advocating on their behalf with numerous public and private sector entities. In other cases, clients may be engaged only once – the client having secured housing, having left Halifax or having otherwise moved beyond needing Navigator program staff’s support.

Table 2: Client Service Outcomes

Year	Secured Employment	Received Training	Secured Housing	Secured Identification	Received Clothing
2010-2011	31	32	16	42	21
2011-2012	44	19	34	38	29
2012-2013	36	7	56	49	16
2013-2014	40	8	96	47	25
Totals	151	66	202	176	91

Community Partnerships: Navigator Street Outreach staff work in partnership with the broader community to create long-term, sustainable solutions. Community partnerships are in place with a range of organizations including outreach programs, youth-serving agencies, faith-based organizations and shelters. The Navigator Street Outreach program staff currently work cooperatively with the following key

organizations:

- Freedom Renewal Centre
- The ARK
- The Public Good Society
- Adsum House for Women
- IWK Nursing
- Nova Scotia Homelessness and Housing Network (NSHHN)
- St. Vincent De Paul
- Youth Employability Project (YEP)
- Mobile Outreach Street Health (MOSH)
- Laing House
- Out of the Cold Shelter
- Halifax Housing Help
- St. Mary's Basilica
- Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia (AHANS)
- Halifax Regional Police (HRP)
- The Provincial Ombudsman Office

Staffing: The Navigator Street Outreach program currently has one full-time employee and one part-time employee. The full-time employee (Navigator) provides clients with individualized support to address barriers to securing and maintaining employment (see above for particulars). The half-time employee (Housing Support Worker) provides clients with individualized support to address barriers to securing and maintaining housing (see above for particulars).

Funding Sources: The Navigator Street Outreach program has historically received project grants from the following public and private sector entities:

- Halifax Assistance Fund;
- Nova Scotia Department of Justice; and
- Municipality of Halifax

Grants-based funding has historically been supplemented by core operating funding support provided by the following business improvement districts:

- Downtown Halifax Business Commission (DHBC);
- Spring Garden Area Business Association (SGABA);
- Downtown Dartmouth Business Commission (DDBC); and
- Quinpool Road Main Street District Association (QRMDA).

At present, DHBC and SGABA are the only BID financial contributors.

Table 3: Funding Contribution Breakdown (2008-2010)

Period	Contributor	Amount
2008-2010	Municipal Grants Program	\$30,000/year
2008-2010	DHBC, SGABA, DDBC, Quinpool	\$24,000/year
2008-2010	NS Department of Justice	\$10,000/year
2008-2010	Halifax Assistance Fund	\$7,500-10,000/year

Table 4: Funding Contribution Breakdown (2010-2014)

Period	Contributor	Amount
2010-2014	Municipal Funding ¹	\$144,000
2010-2014	DHBC	\$29,000/year
2010-2014	SGABA	\$10,000/year
2010-2014	Halifax Assistance Fund	\$17,500
2010-2014	Homeless Partnering Strategy ²	\$153,000
2010-2014	United Way ³	\$6,000
2010-2014	Halifax/Chebucto Health Boards ⁴	\$4,500

¹ Project based funding – BID Contributions Fund (\$34k in 2011/12; \$34k in 2012/13; \$37k in 2013/14 and \$39k in 2014/15)

² Project based funding – HRDC

³ Project-based funding – Mobile Outreach Street Health

⁴ Project based funding – Freedom Renewal Centre

Program Supports

Navigation: The Navigator program provides support to individuals as they attempt to “navigate” various systems, and advocates for specific services, including addictions services, mental health supports, income assistance and legal/justice support. Navigator Street Outreach program staff often accompanies clients to appointments to ensure their attempts to access services are smooth and issue-free.

Physical and Mental Health Support: Connect clients to services for physical and mental health. Provide advocacy with health provider personnel.

Addictions Support: Assist clients to access addiction services (detox, residential treatment and counselling). Provides transportation support for clients accessing addictions programs located outside of the urban core

Income Support: Assist clients to access income supports (e.g. Income Assistance and Canada Pension Plan (CPP)). Provides advocacy with income assistance personnel.

Justice System Support: Attend court with clients, liaise with probation officers and offer options for completing community service hours.

Employment Support: Where individuals are motivated and job-ready, Navigator Street Outreach assists them in securing and maintaining employment. This employment support includes the following:

- providing bus tickets to get to a work site;
- replacing identification (in order to apply for work);
- providing secure voice mail for job search activities;
- opening bank accounts, or cashing paycheques;
- providing basic work tools, clothing or specialized equipment (e.g. steel-toed boots, anti-skid shoes);
- ensuring that individuals have options for meals while on the job site; and
- providing referrals to training programs for skill enhancement.

Some individuals may also be offered assistance to return to their home community, or relocate to another city if they have secured full-time employment.

Housing Support: The Navigator Street Outreach program offers individualized housing and eviction prevention support to individuals and families. This housing support includes the following:

- helping with housing searches;
- covering damage deposits;
- replacing identification (in order to secure housing);
- covering power and phone arrears;
- covering rental arrears;
- providing transportation to viewings; and
- assisting with securing references (in order to secure housing).

**Attachment 2
Navigator Program Budget
2014-2015**

Revenue

Downtown Halifax Business Commission	\$29,000
Spring Garden Area Business Association	\$10,000
Halifax Municipality (BID Contribution Fund)	\$39,000 ¹⁰
Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia	\$58,443
United Way	\$120
Private Donation	\$291
Mobile Outreach Street Health	\$670
Total Revenue	<u>\$137,524</u>

Expenditures

Program*	\$56,390
Wages and Benefits (1.375 FTE)	\$81,134
Total Expenditures	<u>\$137,524</u>

*Program expenditures include a variety of expenses including, but not limited to the following costs: identification replacement; basic work tools, clothing or specialized equipment (steel-toed boots, anti-skid shoes); training; damage deposits; power, rental or phone arrears; transportation (bus tickets etc.).

¹⁰ See <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/documents/140923ca1151.pdf> for BID Contribution Fund awards recommendation report to the Grants Committee. In 2014, DHBC was the recipient of a \$29,000 municipal contribution towards Navigator and SGABA was the recipient of a \$10,000 municipal contribution towards Navigator.

**Attachment 3
Projected Navigator Program Budget
2015-2016**

Revenue

Downtown Halifax Business Commission	\$29,000
Spring Garden Area Business Association	\$10,000
Halifax Municipality (BID Contribution Fund)	\$39,000
Halifax Municipality (Ad Hoc Contribution Request)	\$45,000
Total Revenue	<u>\$123,000</u>

Expenditures

Program*	\$64,800
Wages and Benefits (1 FTE)	\$58,200
Total Expenditures	<u>\$123,000</u>

*Program expenditures include a variety of expenses including, but not limited to the following costs: identification replacement; basic work tools, clothing or specialized equipment (steel-toed boots, anti-skid shoes); training; damage deposits; power, rental or phone arrears; transportation (bus tickets etc.).