

**Community Planning & Economic Development
Standing Committee
September 15, 2011**

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

SUBMITTED BY:



Mike Labrecque, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Operations

DATE: June 28, 2011

SUBJECT: HRM as an “entertainment centre”; an update on HRM’s Event
Strategy & other Corporate Initiatives

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

March 22, 2011 MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee that Halifax Regional Council request that the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee clarify the definition and approach to developing HRM as an “entertainment centre” and how entertainment events will be developed in a transparent and sustainable way.

April 19, 2011 MOVED by Councillor Sloane, seconded by Councillor Lund that it be referred to the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee to request an update on implementation of the Events Strategy, specifically, the new regional scaled events that have been advanced since its implementation, and what if any budget implications this has.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is designed to address two distinct motions of Regional Council. In particular, the report aims to provide the Community Planning & Economic Development (CPED) Standing Committee with an overview of the plans and policies that envision HRM as an “entertainment centre” and what this entails at an operational level. It also serves to provide Committee members with an update on the Event Strategy’s implementation since its adoption last summer, and to provide an overview of staff’s efforts to advance improvements around public accountability, transparency and sustainability.

BACKGROUND

The concept of HRM as an “entertainment center” is not new to Regional Council. This philosophy is entrenched in several of HRM’s existing strategic documents including: The Cultural Plan, The Economic Strategy, and HRMbyDesign. Each of these suggests a strong commitment at a corporate policy level. Beyond these, both HRM’s 2011 Draft Corporate Plan, and the approved Event Strategy support this vision:

A) HRM Corporate Outcomes

HRM’s newly endorsed Corporate Outcomes clearly emphasize the importance of HRM as an “entertainment center”, as emphasized in Table 1 below:

TABLE 1 – EXCERPTS FROM HRM’S DRAFT 2011 CORPORATE PLAN
The Regional Centre is HRM’s culture, leisure and entertainment capital
Strategically invest in local creative and entertainment sectors to enhance the Regional Centre
Ensure the Regional Centre has a range of cultural, entertainment and leisure facilities
Create an arts, culture, and entertainment policy and strategic plan for the Regional Centre
HRM has a thriving event, cultural, and creative industry that supports HRM as one of Canada’s top cultural and event destinations
Lead and support the development and attraction of arts, sports, and entertainment events that position HRM as a cultural destination
HRM invests in its local creative sector to build its reputation and image as a creative city and to retain and attract its creative class and newcomers
HRM will partner with community groups and institutions to pursue events which have a positive economic impact and create legacies
HRM has attractive and vibrant downtown and business districts
Market HRM as a region open to new people and opportunities

B) The Event Strategy

HRM’s Event Strategy highlights the importance of HRM as an event and entertainment centre. The Strategy provides a collective vision and policy framework to support the continued growth,

development and management of events in HRM. The vision is “to promote the vibrant, active and dynamic interests of HRM citizens and visitors through a diverse calendar of signature events which complement and enhance the individual and collective experience.” Specific goals and objectives, as outlined in Table 2, will ensure HRM’s success. Of significant importance is the need for HRM to change its approach to the several key service delivery areas:

- **Governance** – A renewed Special Events Advisory Committee (SEAC) will take on the primary governance role of implementing the *HRM Event Strategy*. With an expanded role and more inclusive membership, the SEAC will facilitate opportunities for improved dialogue and coordination among stakeholders.
- **Granting Framework** - Grants and contributions are an important aspect of event development. At present, there are many deficiencies in this area of support and accountability. The strategy recommends improvements in both the type of grant and the accountability measures associated with each to address the key weaknesses.
- **Monitoring & evaluation** – An annual report will be prepared for the CPED Standing Committee outlining the status of the Event Strategy’s implementation. This report will present an overall quality assessment of events, criteria development and progress on the strategy, as well any resulting recommendations. The report will also evaluate events and the funding they receive from HRM against the three types of benefit to HRM: cultural, social, and economic activity and growth.

TABLE 2 – HRM EVENT STRATEGY GOALS & OBJECTIVES	
Goal 1:	Strengthen Event Leadership
Objective 1:	Acknowledge the value & importance of events
Objective 2:	Engage event stakeholders
Objective 3:	Improve event research
Objective 4:	Coordinate government assistance
Goal 2:	Enhance Event Impact
Objective 1:	Increase event sector capacity
Objective 2:	Improve event quality
Objective 3:	Improve event infrastructure
Goal 3:	Expand HRM’s Event Calendar
Objective 1:	Maintain and develop existing recurring events
Objective 2:	Develop new unique and complementary events

Objective 3:	Host high-profile, quality international events
Objective 4:	Improve event grant and contribution services

DISCUSSION

The following discussion is divided into two sections to reflect the very distinct nature of Council’s motions of March 22, 2011 and April 19, 2011. Specifically, part one of the discussion addresses the manner in which HRM is advancing the concept of an “entertainment center”, while the second part speaks to the Event Strategy, and the implementation status, specifically as it relates to new regional events, and the integration of principles of accountability and transparency.

PART ONE: HRM AS AN ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE

Strategies are often approved in the absence of deliberate and well considered operating plans to guide its long-term implementation. In the absence of detailed consideration for the resources required to implement the strategy, and/or an unwavering political and administrative commitment to the vision, results are often less than spectacular. Fortunately, in the case of HRM as an “entertainment centre”, this has not been the case. While public expectations to provide more investment is always present, the following analysis would suggest that HRM has stayed true to its commitment, and is making relatively sound strides towards advancing the vision as an “entertainment centre”. For ease of analysis, staff have elected to use the Corporate Outcomes goals as the basis for organizing the information. Table 3 outlines the results of staff’s analysis.

TABLE 3 – ANALYSIS OF HRM’S CORPORATE OUTCOMES	
Corporate Outcome Goals	Action & Results
The Regional Centre is HRM’s culture, leisure and entertainment capital	
Strategically invest in local creative and entertainment sectors to enhance the Regional Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Establishment of Cultural Affairs core operating budget b. Establishment of Public Art budget c. Development of event grant funding policy d. Establishment of hallmark event program e. Establishment of Community Partnership Investment Fund
Ensure the Regional Centre has a range of cultural, entertainment and leisure facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ongoing consideration of new convention centre b. Ongoing consideration of new Stadium c. Approval of new central library and plaza d. Investment (\$1,000,000) in the new farmer’s market e. Approval of permanent Oval and Common event plaza f. Approval of a new Art Incubator facility on Barrington Street g. Continuance of operating grant to Alderney Landing
Create an arts, culture, and entertainment policy and strategic plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. New Municipal Planning Strategy and Regional Centre Land Use By-law underway

TABLE 3 – ANALYSIS OF HRM’S CORPORATE OUTCOMES	
Corporate Outcome Goals	Action & Results
for the Regional Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Cultural Facility Master Plan underway a. HRM’s first Social Heritage Strategy underway b. New Sidewalk Café Policy & Program underway c. Regional Plan 5 Year Review process 2011/12
HRM has a thriving event, cultural, and creative industry that supports HRM as one of Canada’s top cultural and event destinations	
Implement the Event Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. New draft Funding Policy Framework for implementation of Event Strategy under review by Regional Council b. Planned & delivered new heritage themed event c. Planned & delivered new urban youth event d. Facilitate local surfing event as strategic opportunity
Lead and support the development and attraction of arts, sports, and entertainment events that position HRM as a cultural destination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Pursued & hosted 2011 Canada Winter Games b. Pursuing NA Aboriginal Games c. Hosting 2011 National Truth & Reconciliation Event d. Hosting Maw iom’l Halifax International Pow Wow e. Pursued & hosted 731 meetings, conventions, concerts and sporting events (Metro Centre/WTCC) f. Developing formal Service Agreement for major event hosting services g. New draft Funding Policy Framework for major events hosting under review by Regional Council
HRM invests in its local creative sector to build its reputation and image as a creative city and to retain and attract its creative class and newcomers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Establishment of artist in residency program that supports all disciplines including dance, visual, and theatre b. Establishment of Contemporary Visual Art Award c. The establishment of HRM’s Opportunity Public Art Program to support unsolicited art projects by artists d. The establishment of permanent public art capital program, this year valued at approximately \$500,000 e. The establishment of temporary public art program valued at approximately \$60,000 f. Implementation of Artist Studio Spaces Program (Seawall, Bloomfield, Khyber Building)
HRM will partner with community groups and institutions to pursue events which have a positive economic impact and create legacies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Formal Management Agreement with TCL to manage Metro Centre
HRM has attractive and vibrant downtown and business districts	
Market HRM as a region open to new people and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide annual operating grant (\$400K) and levy allocation (\$1.8 million) for destination marketing
Implement good urban design and artistic opportunities to develop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Approved capital programs for reviving Granville Mall as “arts and event plaza”

TABLE 3 – ANALYSIS OF HRM’S CORPORATE OUTCOMES	
Corporate Outcome Goals	Action & Results
interactive and inclusive public places.	b. Installation of Fallen Peace Officer Memorial at Grand Parade c. Installation of new public art work at Greenvale School

PART TWO: THE EVENT STRATEGY

In 2010, Regional Council adopted its first Event Strategy. Predating the strategy was the *Civic Event Grant Funding Framework Policy* and *an interim process for hosting major outdoor concert events*. Both of these were important as up until this time, HRM had not approved a policy and/or process to guide grant decision-making. Both of these documents were presented to Regional Council as interim solutions to be replaced upon adoption of the Event Strategy.

2.1 Public Accountability & Transparency

In terms of Council’s question respecting public accountability and transparency, the new Event Strategy outlines several actions. Of most importance is a **Revised Civic Event Grant Funding Policy Framework**. The new policy framework has been developed, vetted and approved by the Special Events Advisory Committee (SEAC), and now tabled for review with the Audit & Finance Standing Committee. The revised policy addresses several amendments outlined in the Strategy to improve HRM’s level of accountability and transparency respecting events. The following highlights the key areas of change in the revised policy framework:

1. Multi-year funding grants:

The new Framework includes provisions for multi-year funding options. The policy will be designed for well-established and recognized organizations that have a proven track record in managing the events and meeting the stated objectives of the funds. Multi-year funding will be generally limited to a maximum of four years.

2. Exit strategies/sunset clauses:

Very few grants or contributions provided by HRM explicitly set forth a sunset clause for HRM’s support to events. The new framework incorporates a sunset clause providing Council with the ability to add or remove events based on their annual performance reviews.

3. Performance evaluation provisions:

The revised framework includes performance assessments for all grants. This is to ensure that a set of quantifiable program outputs is identified for all events that receive grants and contributions, with targets established based on past achievements.

4. General Conditions:

The revised framework includes a significantly enhanced section on general conditions, process, eligibility, and accounting.

5. Program Definition:

The revised framework includes a significantly expanded section related to program definition. This includes several new programs to advance the directions of the Strategy. Programs include: a **Signature Event Program** to support events that are well positioned to develop into future Hallmark; an **Emerging Events Program** that provides limited support (i.e. funding over a maximum of four years) for new, innovative, community and cultural events; a **Council District Event Program** designed to replace three existing grant programs to improve support to community-based festival and events; a **Performance Underwriting Program** that provides grants to offset the cost of municipal services required in support major tourism events; and a **new Marketing Sponsorship Program** that provides funding to support major events that draw significant tourism.

2.2 Sustainability

Respecting the issue of sustainability, the Strategy states that in order to support the long term development of events, HRM must provide visible support to events. The Strategy also emphasizes the importance of developing new and expanded event markets, innovative, edgy and unique events. Further, major sporting, tourism and entertainment events are recommended as core components of HRM’s program.

In terms of major sporting, tourism and entertainment events, HRM’s success will require forethought, research and planning. A regional event bidding strategy is needed to pave the way to a sustainable major event hosting program, outlining Council’s future plans for investment and maximizing our potential. Moreover, it is imperative that the economic and social impacts of major events are understood, and that consistent and regular monitoring of such events is undertaken to build a body of evidence that justifies investment in the events themselves and the infrastructure needed to support them.

2.3 Event Strategy Status

Table 4 provides an overview on the implementation of the Event Strategy. In terms of budget current implications, it is anticipated that amendments will be required upon adoption of the *Revised Civic Event Grant Funding Policy Framework*.

TABLE 4 – EVENT STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE		
ACTION	TIMING	STATUS
1. Develop and deliver a new urban art, hip hop music multidisciplinary event targeting youth	2010:	Completed: In partnership with local community, HRM developed and delivered a new annual Hopscotch Event.
2. Redesign HRM Christmas Tree Lighting event, and an expanded New Year’s Eve event program	2010:	Completed: Event redesigned to feature headline children performers, as well as to integrate community art and newcomer themes. NYE redesigned to feature headline performers, and expanded family celebration at Oval.

ACTION	TIMING	STATUS
<p>1. Maximize and promote HRM's natural assets through new and expanded event programming</p> <p>2. Deliver 3 new annual cultural events by 2013 based on one or a combination of the art and heritage themes</p> <p>3. Deliver 3 new or expanded annual community events by 2013 of particular relevance to Aboriginal, African Nova Scotians, and newcomers</p>	<p>2011</p>	<p>On-going: Staff assisting local surfing event organizers with fall event. Local sand-sculpting event expanded. Council awarded grants in support of various yachting events.</p> <p>On-going: Hopscotch: a new multidisciplinary cultural event has been delivered in partnership with the community. Nocturne: Art at Night expanded art event to include new anchor sites (Grand Parade, Citadel Hill, and Alderney Landing) and presentation of HRM's Contemporary Visual Art Award. Heritage Quest: a new heritage themed event delivered in partnership with local community.</p> <p>On-going: Mawio'mi Pow Wow: supporting new multidisciplinary cultural event celebrating Aboriginal culture. HRM newcomer BBQ: expanded event designed to welcome newcomers to HRM. Natal Day: An annual gospel & urban music concert celebrating African Nova Scotian artists.</p>

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES/BUSINESS PLAN

This report complies with the Municipality’s Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Project and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Project and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

There is no community engagement.

ATTACHMENTS

None

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.html> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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