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**Community Planning and Economic Development
February 14, 2013**

TO: Chair and Members of Community Planning and Economic Development
Original Signed

SUBMITTED BY: _____
Chris Bryant, Government Relations and External Affairs

DATE: January 22, 2013

SUBJECT: HRM's 2005 Immigration Action Plan Update

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

May 10, 2005 Regional Council Meeting:
MOVED by Councillor Streach, seconded by Councillor Sloane, that Halifax Regional Council adopt a vision for immigration. Staff committed to develop an immigration action plan, focussed on specific tangible actions HRM would pursue to achieve the goal of a more welcoming community, and report back to Council.
MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

October 18, 2005 Regional Council Meeting:
Council was provided an Information Report and accompanying HRM Immigration Action Plan
March 31, 2009 Regional Council was provided an Information Report on HRM's Immigration Plan progress and the Newcomers' Guide

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Business and Industrial Development, 71(1)b

BACKGROUND

Despite the fact Municipalities are neither mandated nor funded to provide immigrant support services, they are key players in the successful settlement, attraction, and retention of immigrants. Immigration is vital to local economic development strategies, cultural diversity and sustainable growth. In an environment where talented workers are highly mobile, municipalities must be competitive in creating a high quality of life and welcoming environment for newcomers in acknowledgement of the value they bring to their new communities.

In May 2005, Halifax Regional Council adopted the following vision:

“Halifax Regional Municipality is a welcoming community where immigration is supported and encouraged. Halifax Regional Municipality will work with other levels of government and community partners to increase our collective cultural, social and economic diversity by welcoming immigrants to our community.”

HRM drafted its first Immigration Action Plan in an effort to operationalize that vision. It was presented to Council in September, 2005.

HRM's Community Planning & Economic Development Standing Committee Terms of Reference, section 3.2.3 states the purpose of the Committee includes the oversight of the progress of HRM's Immigration Action Plan and related initiatives.

DISCUSSION

As home to 55% of Atlantic Canadian immigrants and 80% of immigrants to Nova Scotia, HRM has a significant vested interest in providing the most welcoming environment possible for newcomers. HRM's ability to maintain and build upon the immigrant population is fundamental to our region's economic, social and cultural success.

The plan describes HRM's primary role in immigration as creating and maintaining a welcoming community and is in line with Councils' Immigration vision statement. The plan identifies broad objectives and lists specific actions for the Municipality to undertake, and focusses on internal operational changes as well as external communication improvements. Actions are prioritized into short and medium term categories.

Attachment A is a summary of the 2005 action plan objectives.

Work is currently being done between the business units and external partners to update the 2005 Immigration Action Plan. HRM remains committed welcoming immigrants to our community by undertaking a series of specific actions to address service needs within our organization. The purpose of the updated Immigration Plan is to provide an overview of the outcomes, goals and objectives and measures for HRM for the next five years, to achieve success in integrating and retaining newcomers and creating a welcoming and friendly community for all.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications as a result of this information report. The updated plan's goals and objectives will be built into the various business plans and budgets of the participating Business Units.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community engagement was required at this time.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Goals and Objectives Chart and Update

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

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