

Environment & Sustainability Standing Committee
April 4, 2013
Community Planning & Economic Development Standing Committee
April 11, 2013

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

Original Signed

SUBMITTED BY: _____
Jane Fraser, Director, Planning & Infrastructure

DATE: February 14, 2013

SUBJECT: Gas Tax Requirement: Municipal Climate Change Action Plan

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

As a requirement for the 2010-2014 Federal Gas Tax Extension Agreement and the Municipal Funding Agreements (MFAs), municipalities will be required to prepare and submit to Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations (SNSMR) a Municipal Climate Change Action Plan (MCCAP) by December 31, 2013.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

2010-2014 Federal Gas Tax Extension Agreement and the Municipal Funding Agreement.

BACKGROUND

As a prerequisite to Gas Tax eligibility, of which HRM receives approximately \$25 million annually, the municipality must complete a Municipal Climate Change Action Plan. The Guidebook for the work can be viewed at: <http://www.nsinfrastructure.ca/pages/Municipal-Climate-Change-Action-Plan-Guidebook1.aspx>.

DISCUSSION

Following release of the Guidebook, and review of the objectives and requirements, staff confirmed with Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations staff that the planned HRM project approach meets and exceeds the requirements.

The HRM submission will:

1. Overview how existing policy, planning, and administrative activities meet the MCCAP requirements;
2. Overview how Climate Change is embedded in the Regional Plan;
3. Overview the operationalized work related to climate change adaptation; and
4. Demonstrate how adaptation is engrained in municipal activities.

The 2006 ClimateSMART project, coupled with the Regional Plan and a number of the Functional Plans, provides the foundation for the HRM submission.

Below is the draft administrative revision in the Regional Plan:

2.4.4 Climate Change Adaptation

As a permanent feature of Gas Tax Funding, all municipalities in Nova Scotia are required to complete a Municipal Climate Change Action Plan prior to December 2013. The Halifax Regional Municipal Planning Strategy complies with this planning requirement and this chapter section specifically entrenches the requisite policy statements. The December 2007 ClimateSMART (Climate Change Risk Management Strategy) and the December 2013 submission to the Canada Nova Scotia Infrastructure Secretariat will inform the municipal policy direction with respect to Climate Change adaptation.

The municipality has identified the following climate change risks as municipal priorities:

- *Stormwater management*
- *Sea Level Rise*
- *Forest Fire Risk*
- *Extreme weather events*

E-21 All municipal projects that are funded with Gas Tax monies shall comply with the policy direction of the Halifax Regional Municipal Planning Strategy; (note this is a Gas Tax requirement and needs to be embedded clearly in policy)

Integration with EMO

Emergency Management consists of five activities: Planning, preparation, mitigation, response, and recovery. In order to best align resources and support, the EMO framework informs the municipal approach to adaptation.

E-22 The municipality shall update the 1996 Hazard and Risk Vulnerability Assessment to inform municipal service delivery activities. This work, housed by the Municipal EMO, will inform municipal policy, planning and service delivery.

Asset Management

The municipality stewards a large asset class. Vulnerability assessments on municipal infrastructure shall be employed through Enterprise Asset Management.

Corporate Risk Management Strategy

The ClimateSMART project produced a Corporate Climate Change Risk Management Strategy in 2005 to provide corporate awareness and assist municipal departments with the long term planning required to manage the increasing risks to the community and organization with respect to Climate Change.

E-23 The municipality shall update the 2005 Corporate Climate Change Risk Management Strategy.

As presented to the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee on November 14, 2011, (<http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/swrac/documents/InfoRptUpdatePotentialHazardstoDevelopmentFunctionalPlan2011.pdf>) the intention is to revise the current Hazards to Development Functional Plan policy set to meet the Climate Change Action Plan requirements.

Fundamentally, in addition to the work completed to date under ClimateSMART, Halifax Harbour Plan/Sea Level Rise, Regional Plan, the Corporate GHG Emissions Reduction Functional Plan, the Community Energy Plan, and the work contained within RP+5, the following work is currently in progress or about to be initiated prior to the assembly of the submission:

- Supporting EMO review of the 1996 Community Hazard and Vulnerability Risk Assessment (to be initiated, not completed prior to December 2013);
- Vulnerability assessments from the Rural Fire Stations and Fire Chiefs;
- Completion of the project with Dalhousie, assessing the Forest Fire risk associated with predicted climate change;
- Updating the 2006 ClimateSMART corporate climate change risk assessment; and
- Potentially, a joint project delineating Invasive Species impacts on the municipality (subject to intergovernmental partnership/funding).

The HRM work meets and exceeds the mandatory requirements prescribed in the MCCAP Guidebook. HRM has been working with Climate Change mitigation and adaptation from a policy and strategy perspective for approximately a decade, and the approach to review and align the Gas Tax requirements with the Regional Plan is preferable to deconstructing the existing policy set to simply achieve format objectives.

From a practical standpoint, HRM is well into implementation of Climate Change adaptation activities within its operations. Examples include:

- The current focus and efforts related to stormwater management (the most pressing climate change impact in the community);
- Ongoing Emergency Preparedness efforts with EMO;
- Response to emerging invasive species pressures;
- Progressive engineering and design practices;
- Infrastructure and Asset Management practices;
- Operational service delivery management; and
- Adoption of setback requirements in policy set to address sea level rise.

A very specific collaboration in this activity is the integration with EMO and the five defined activities of Emergency Management:

1. Planning
2. Preparation
3. Mitigation
4. Response
5. Recovery

The Canada Nova Scotia Infrastructure Secretariat has laid out mandatory content. Much of the submission shall demonstrate how completed and ongoing municipal work satisfies the requirements. Of particular note, for the sake of this report, the first requirement is the identification of an Adaptation Committee. The Terms of Reference of the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee, in particular, and the Community Planning & Economic Development and Community Design Advisory Committee, meet this objective.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This report does not impact the current 2012/13 or 2013/14 Operating or Project Budget as activities described are being completed within existing operating envelopes.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

There has been substantial engagement and outreach on Climate Change adaptation carried out by HRM since 2005, which influences the future assembly of the submission to the Province of Nova Scotia.

ATTACHMENTS

None

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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