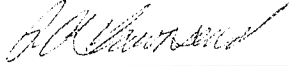




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**Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee**  
**April 7, 2011**

**TO:** Chair and Members of Environment and Sustainability Committee

**SUBMITTED BY:**   
 Phillip Townsend, Director, Infrastructure and Asset Management

**DATE:** March 4, 2011

**SUBJECT:** Fair Trade Towns

**ORIGIN**

- Motion of Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee, March 3, 2011:  
*Directing staff to provide the committee with a report outlining:*
  1. *What the Fair Trade Towns certification is;*
  2. *What the process is to becoming a Fair Trade Town; and*
  3. *What the benefits and costs are for this.*
- Motion of Regional Council, November 9, 2010:  
*It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council direct staff to support Local Agriculture through means of municipal authority and jurisdiction as demonstrated in the Discussion section of this report.*

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee:

1. Endorse staff continuing community collaboration and engagement and support of the community lead initiative of Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) achieving Fair Trade Town designation;
2. Instruct Staff to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with stakeholder community groups;
3. Upon development of the MOU, arrange a presentation to the Environment and Sustainability Committee to precede with a recommendation of endorsement to Regional Council; and
4. Include promotion of Select Nova Scotia branding with any promotion of Fair Trade branding.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **What is Fair Trade?**

Fair trade is an organized social movement and market-based approach that aims to help producers in developing countries make better trading conditions and promote sustainability. The movement advocates the payment of a higher price to producers as well as higher social and environmental standards. It focuses, in particular, on exports from developing countries to developed countries, most notably handicrafts, coffee, cocoa, sugar, tea, bananas, honey, cotton, wine, fresh fruit, chocolate, flowers and gold.



### **What is a Fair Trade Town?**

The Fair Trade Towns campaign is an initiative that allows communities to support Fair Trade at the local level. The campaign increases the availability and awareness of Fair Trade Certified. In Canada, the movement is still young. The first city to be awarded Fair Trade Town status was Wolfville, Nova Scotia, on April 17, 2007.

### **Fair Trade Towns:**

The Fair Trade Towns campaign is an initiative that allows communities to support Fair Trade at the local level. The campaign increases availability and awareness of Fair Trade Certified.

### **Why become a Fair Trade Town?**

- To distinguish your community as a leader and to confirm your commitment to supporting the principles of Fair Trade, including a fair price, respect for labour standards, environmental sustainability, and more direct and equitable trade;
- To improve the livelihoods of the millions of farmers and workers in the developing world who benefit from the Fair Trade Certification system; and
- To create awareness and encourage local citizens to make ethical and sustainable choices.

### **To become a Fair Trade Town, the community must achieve the following 6 goals:**

1. The local council uses Fair Trade Certified products and supports the Fair Trade Towns campaign;
2. Stores & restaurants serve Fair Trade Certified products;
3. Workplaces, faith groups, & schools use and promote Fair Trade Certified products;

4. Public awareness events and media coverage held on Fair Trade and the campaign;
5. A steering group created for continued commitment; and
6. Other ethical and sustainable initiatives promoted within the community.

**A little history:**

The idea of a "Fair Trade Town" was born in England in 1999, when an Oxfam group in the town of Garstang wanted to promote Fair Trade as part of a community effort. The campaign aimed to make Garstang the world's first Fair Trade Town and this goal soon attracted the interest of others throughout the community including private citizens, local businesses, and the town council. Many towns have followed the Garstang's example There are now more than 630 Fair Trade Towns in 18 countries.

**Fair Trade Towns in Canada:**

1. Wolfville, NS (April 17, 2007)
2. La Pêche, QC (November 9, 2007)
3. Port Colborne, ON (April 28, 2009)
4. Nakusp, BC (April 29, 2009)
5. Golden, BC (June 8, 2009)
6. Gimli, MB (July 1, 2009)
7. Olds, AB (November 9, 2009)
8. Revelstoke, BC (December 8, 2009)
9. Neuville, QC (March 31, 2010)
10. Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, QC (April 19, 2010)
11. Vancouver, BC (May 6, 2010)
12. Barrie, ON (May 10, 2010)
13. Sainte Anne de Bellevue, QC (May 21, 2010)
14. Canmore, AB (July 6, 2010)
15. Sherbrooke, QC (February 9, 2011)

**Overview of anticipated roles and responsibilities:**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Perceived HRM Role</b>
The local council uses Fair Trade Certified products and supports the Fair Trade Towns campaign	HRM	Complete	Adopt Catering Guidelines
Stores & restaurants serve Fair Trade Certified products	Community Groups	Believe HRM business community meets this requirement	None
Workplaces, faith groups, & schools use and promote Fair Trade Certified products	Community Groups and HRM	Future Action	Use of Website, support, etc.

Public awareness events and media coverage held on Fair Trade and the campaign	Community, media and HRM	Future Action	Press Releases, Website, nominal event costs
A steering group created for continued commitment	Community Groups	Future Action	Participate
Other ethical and sustainable initiatives promoted within the community	Community Groups and HRM	Future Action	Support with Website and Press Releases.

**DISCUSSION**

The impetus to this report was efforts from a Dalhousie Student group as outlined recently in The Coast: <http://www.thecoast.ca/RealityBites/archives/2011/02/24/can-halifax-become-a-fair-trade-town>

Following the article, the student group, HRM and Fusion met to discuss a collaboration to make this initiative happen. The intent is to develop an MOU and sign up multiple stakeholders and assign responsibilities.

**Why not Buy Local? How do we support Local Business?**

Certainly when we look at spending decisions through a sustainability lens, supporting local producers, service providers, merchants and other businesses makes sense.

The challenge in municipal government is that we are bound by international, national, and provincial trade agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement and The Atlantic Procurement Agreement. We have very little legislative ability to put up trade barriers. Non-compliance to these agreements would put HRM at a legal risk.

That being said, while we cannot put up trade barriers, there is nothing preventing the municipality from supporting local business. This is done in HRM/Nova Scotia through a variety of organizations and initiatives, including:

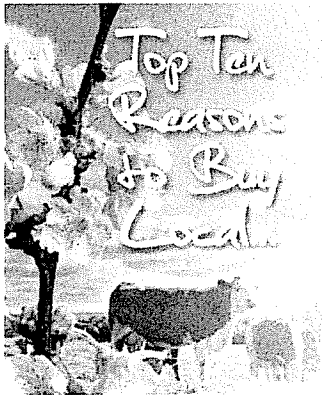
- Business Alliance of Local Living Economies or BALLENS, <http://www.ballens.ca/index.html>
- Select Nova Scotia, <http://www.selectnovascotia.ca/>
- Greater Halifax Partnership, <http://www.greaterhalifax.com/en/home/default.aspx>
- Halifax Chamber of Commerce, <http://www.halifaxchamber.com/>

Staff proposes to brand this initiative in conjunction with Select Nova Scotia. This complimentary branding would help promote local agriculture and producers. Their goal is to increase awareness and consumption of Nova Scotia produced and processed agri-food products by Nova Scotians and

visitors. The program is supported by the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture. This means that should HRM participate in a Fair Trade effort, Select Nova Scotia information and promotion would also be put on any internet or print materials to support local agriculture.

### Why does Fair Trade support Buy Local?

Quite simply, by promoting Fair Trade we are enticing residents to consider a bit more deeply their spending decisions. While supporting ethically produced coffee or chocolate is one benefit, certainly those that are considering their personal expenditures would make comparable decisions on where their dollars are going. Staff feels this initiative supports local business. Comparable to making a choice about the bag of coffee one would purchase, an enlightened consumer would also make a choice about whether to purchase a Nova Scotian apple or a Chilean apple, or a Nova Scotian bottle of wine versus a French bottle.



**1. SUN RIPE PRODUCE FRESH OFF THE VINE! DELICIOUS!**

Local produce is allowed to ripen on the vine and is offered at it's peak flavour potential

**2. SUPPORT SMALL FARMS**

Every local product comes with a local story. Your choice to buy a fresh local product supports farm families, rural communities and our provincial economy

**3. REDUCE YOUR ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT**

Think about how many "food miles" your ingredients travel to reach your plate. Local meat, dairy, produce and preserves are available in your own backyard

**4. BE SOCIAL**

Farmers' markets are a community event. While foraging for fresh herbs and farm eggs, chances are you'll strike up a conversation with a vendor, or bump into an old friend

**5. GET IN TOUCH WITH THE SEASONS**

Eating locally means eating what's in season. Heart warming foods like root vegetable soups in the winter just makes sense!

**6. EXPLORE YOUR OWN BACKYARD**

Countless adventures can be found at local farms, wineries and sugar shacks. Many local producers host festivals, tours and food samplings. Choose a destination and plan an inexpensive family adventure or a gourmet getaway

**7. TRY SOMETHING NEW**

Have you ever tried apple wine? Or maple smoked salmon? Asparagus is a great springtime treat and don't forget to boil those beet tops. Yum!

**8. BE HEALTHY**

Eating local means healthy ingredients and access to fresh food at its nutritional peak. Eating well never felt so good.

**9. CREATE FAMILY MEMORIES**

Do you remember making pickles with grandma, or picking berries for hours to make grandpa's famous freezer jam? Create a new family tradition and preserve your favourite seasonal products together. With a pretty bow your family's famous preserves will make a great Christmas gift!

**10. PRICE**

Local products are comparably priced to products produced elsewhere.

### Why does Staff recommend supporting this community initiative?

1. To take advantage of community effort into enhancing community engagement on the ethical/social aspect of sustainability;
2. To further enhance the branding of HRM as a sustainable city;
3. To support positive local community initiatives;
4. To enable alignment of effort around ethical and local community purchasing decisions; and
5. There is no cost to HRM.

### BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Staff expect this work to have minimal, if any, financial costs and require minimal staff time. Any efforts could be captured within existing operating budgets.

**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**

This report resulted from a community initiative led by a group of Dalhousie Students (Engineers without Borders) and supported by Ecology Action Centre and FUSION. It is intended to broaden the engagement through the MOU.

**ALTERNATIVES**

The committee may wish to instruct staff to not continue to support this community initiative.

**ATTACHMENTS**

None

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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.

Report Prepared by: Richard MacLellan, Manager, Sustainable Environment Management Office, 490-6056

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