



Council Focus Area 2007/2008

Community Development

December 5, 2006

INTRODUCTION

Last year in advance of the 2006 business planning process, Council identified several areas which it wanted to focus on in the coming years. These areas of focus included facility development and management; youth and youth crime; community pride; growth management; economic development; community engagement; accessibility of HRM's recreation programs; and community capacity building. These issues ultimately became the basis for the following six strategic focus areas for setting priorities.

- Community Relations
- Community Development
- Economic Development
- Regional Planning
- Youth
- Community Recreation

On October 3, 2006, Council adopted a motion to reduce the number of focus areas. The six areas identified above were amalgamated into one new focus area identified as "*Community Development*".

The purpose of this report is twofold:

- It reviews and summarizes progress on the original six focus areas; and
- It makes recommendations for advancing the new "*Community Development*" focus area.

PART 1

REVIEW AND PROGRESS ON SIX FOCUS AREAS: 2006/07

Part 1 of this report provides an update on each of the six Council Focus Areas that now fall within the “Community Development” Focus Area”.

- Initiatives which are identified as “Commitments” are initiatives for which Council approved additional funding in the 2006/07 budget.
- Initiatives which are identified as “Direction” did not receive additional funding but were highlighted by Council as areas of particular significance in advancing the Focus Area.

Community Relations - Council indicated that improvement is needed in the area of community engagement/consultation. \$260,000 was committed to developing a new community engagement/consultation framework and to initiate a new form of community consultation known as Community Visioning.

Commitment

Develop a new model/framework for community engagement/consultation

Progress

RFP issued to hire consultant to carry out independent review of existing practices and recommend new model

Project to commence in January 2007 and be completed July 2007

Hire 3 Community Developers for Community Visioning

Position to be filled by year end

Council Direction

Develop Community Visioning pilot project

Progress

Pilot project has been designed and 3 pilot communities have been selected:
Bedford Waterfront, Musquodoboit Harbour and Fall River

Council Direction

Develop Internet mapping site to provide access to data and information about HRM communities

Implement corporate document/records management system to provide linkage between mapping site and other information about communities

Ensure that information and services are easy for the citizen to find

Progress

A preliminary site is under development. Staff are working with the Community Visioning Project team to identify tools that can be used by communities relative to the mapping site

A tender for the document/records management system has closed, implementation is anticipated to begin in January 2007

New information and services are continually being added to the web site and the site is increasingly used as the most up-to-date source of information for HRM

Community Development - Council was concerned that HRM's volunteer structure was not adequately supported. Staff were directed to place more emphasis on volunteer management, community based service delivery and community grant programs.

Council Direction

Progress

Coordinated service delivery

An assessment of specific communities is underway for purposes of developing a coordinated service delivery model.

Provide resources to stabilize volunteer community groups

Continue to provide regular community board development and training programs to support local volunteers and groups

Review and restructure support to community events and cultural initiatives

Pending. Preliminary review of funding options and opportunities to reallocate resources/priorities

Economic Development - Economic Development - Two key priorities were established:

- Implementation of the Regional Economic Strategy; and
- Identifying/maximizing the economic impact of the Commonwealth Games (approximately \$100,000 subject to matching funding by federal/provincial funding partners).

Commitment

CWG Economic Impact Analysis

CWG Business Benefits Maximization

Progress

Consultant retained and project underway. Completion is timed with the completion of bid document for CWG in May 2007.

Terms of reference drafted and currently under review by government funding partners

Council Direction

Implementation of Economic Strategy

Creation of new economic development agency

Progress

A plan by the GHP and HRDA to jointly implement the Economic Strategy was developed. The plan was abandoned in favour creating one agency responsible for economic development.

The new economic development entity will become fully operational on April 1, 2007.

Regional Planning - Adoption of the Regional Plan was the first priority within this Focus Area, followed by the initiating steps to further implement the Plan. \$334,000 was assigned to hire four new Planners to aid in implementing the Regional Plan. The funding was also allocated to initiate a Water Quality Sampling program.

Commitment

Progress

Hire 4 new Planners to support the implementation of the Regional Plan

Recruitment currently underway

Implement water quality sampling program

Water sampling and analysis services contracted and initial results will be reported in the HRM Sustainability report

Council Direction

Progress

Adopt Regional Plan

Plan adopted.

Several implementation projects initiated (Harbour Link feasibility, wind energy, regional capital cost charges, Community Visioning model, Bedford West Master Plan adopted, Active Transportation Plan)

Adopt Cultural Plan

Plan adopted

Cultural Advisory Committee established to assist in reviewing performance in the area of culture and heritage as well as to recommend priorities

Council Direction

Urban Design

Progress

HRM by Design project initiated to develop urban design policies, regulations, development review process and capital priorities. First round of public consultation complete. Second round beginning December

Urban Design studies for Queen/Spring Garden Road and Grand Parade/Province House areas initiated. Consultant's reports complete. Recommendations winter/spring 2007

Youth - HRM's recreation programs serve a diverse population. Council directed that a greater emphasis be placed upon services which focus upon youth. \$250,000 was assigned to support the Youth Focus Area .

Commitment

Progress

Increased affordability and access to HRM programs

On-going. Enrollment in HRM Kids program increased by enhancing partnerships (*SMU, Canadian Tire Jump Start etc*). 752 participants sponsored in 2005/06, 1100 participants to date in 2006/07

Host major Youth conference

Youth Conference held in September with over 300 participants from across the Region

Establish mobile skate park

Purchase of skate park equipment is now in the procurement process. Analysing options for potential locations and operational support

Establish youth development initiatives

Ongoing youth initiatives (community council(s), art/mural projects, website, leadership camp and community youth development tool kit)

Establish 2.5 additional youth positions in libraries at Keshen Goodman, Captain William Spry and Cole Harbour Public Libraries

Positions filled at Keshen Goodman, Captain William Spry and Cole Harbour libraries

Developing service objectives & programming pilots at these libraries.

Council Direction

Progress

Standardize recreation program service delivery

Underway with continuous roll out of operational criteria ("*High Five*" quality control program) to ensure consistent safety, training and staff development etc

Council Direction

Increase partnerships

Progress

New partnerships established with Boys & Girls Club, YMCA and universities

Community Recreation - Two key priorities were established:

- Financial support for community groups operating in HRM owned facilities (\$250,000 was assigned to provide an operational aid program for these groups provided they are delivering services consistent with HRM's mandate); and
- Increased HRM access to facilities operated by other agencies in the community.

Commitment

Develop a financial operating assistance program and management agreements for groups in HRM owned facilities

Progress

Program criteria established and funds allocated to those meeting criteria. Additional review being conducted of groups who do not meet criteria

Council Direction

Improved access to schools for recreation purposes

Progress

Service Exchange Agreement with School Board have been implemented with provision for annual reviews.

Joint use agreement for Citadel High community facilities being developed

PART 2 - Issues, Risks and Recommendations

Community Development: Advancing a New Focus Area: 2007/08

Part 2 of this report addresses the new Focus Area known as “*Community Development*”. The following discussion identifies four high level themes or issues which build upon the six Focus Areas which have been rolled-up into the new Community Development Focus Area. Each theme/issue includes “recommended” priorities and identifies “risks” associated with not proceeding with these priorities. The new themes under the Community Development Focus Area are:

1. Regional Plan Implementation
2. Youth
3. Community Building
4. Community Spaces and Facilities

It should be noted that several of the themes or issues within the Community Development Focus Area also relate to themes and issues within Council’s Public Safety and Infrastructure Focus Areas.

ISSUE # 1

REGIONAL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Adoption of the Regional Plan has established a policy framework which provides greater predictability for managing growth and infrastructure in our communities. Ongoing implementation of the Regional Plan remains a priority.

<i>Recommendations</i>		<i>Risks of not doing</i>
1A	Provide opportunities for the community to actively participate in the long term implementation of the Regional Plan, through the establishment of a Regional Plan Advisory Committee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• loss of community ownership of the Regional Plan
1B	Operationalize the plan through four key initiatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• functional plan development (<i>Wind Energy, Open Space</i>);• Infrastructure plans (<i>Capital Cost Charges, Service Boundaries & Transportation</i>);• Urban Design (<i>HRM by Design, Public Lands, Capital District and streetscapes, Barrington Street Heritage District</i>); and• Community Visioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• regional perspective would be compromised

ISSUE # 2

YOUTH

A focus on youth remains a priority. The youth engagement model for recreation is proving effective and will be continued. An increased focus needs to be placed upon disengaged or marginalised youth and pre-teens. HRM “youth” recreation programs currently focus on youth aged 13-18. Engaging marginalised youth beginning at the age of thirteen is too late to be effective in many cases. “Youth” programming will begin to focus on preteens (10-13) as well as the teenaged youth (13-18).

There are numerous community and government agencies with youth services and strategies. HRM must increase partnerships with these groups and agencies in order to ensure coordinated and effective youth programming. In addition to ensuring that there are no service gaps or duplications this strategy is intended to maximize effective use of limited Municipal resources.

<i>Recommendations</i>		<i>Risks of not doing</i>
2A	Develop programs that better address the specific needs of marginalised youth including preteens (10,11,12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• increased number of disengaged youth• increased social and justice issues• youth not supported to becoming active and involved adults
2B	Increase coordination of existing youth strategies/services by establishing a multi level partnership (Recreation, Library, Police, RCMP, School Board, NS Community Services, Fire, community groups/ agencies and universities etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• inefficient and uncoordinated approach to service delivery, priority-setting and minimal impact• conflicting service initiatives• opportunities to leverage resources

ISSUE #3

COMMUNITY BUILDING

Many community building initiatives undertaken by HRM (e.g. Uniacke Square, CANB, Dartmouth North, and Bayers Westwood) are responding to complex social challenges. While HRM does not have a social services mandate, communities and their underlying social issues impact local government more than any other level. At the same time, HRM services (e.g. recreation and police) can only have limited effectiveness by themselves. In order for HRM's community building initiatives to be effective, other agencies, community groups and levels of government need to actively participate in these projects. Under this model, HRM assumes a "coordinating" role but does not expand its mandate or service responsibilities.

Reviewing HRM's community engagement practices continues to be a critical initiative and the review begun in 2006/07 will continue in 2007/08. As important as community engagement is to many areas of HRM's mandate, it is critical to HRM's success in the community building initiative.

<i>Recommendations</i>		<i>Risks of not doing</i>
3A	Continue the independent review of HRM's community engagement practices; and Continue to develop a new community engagement framework/model	<ul style="list-style-type: none">maintaining status quo will only increase scepticism of HRM's sincerity and our overall effectiveness at community engagement
3B	Prioritize community building initiatives; Coordinate partnerships with other levels of government, agencies and community groups to address community social issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none">continue to invest resources with limited impact on root causeslack of community ownership and accountability will lead to increased expectations of HRM

ISSUE # 4

COMMUNITY SPACES & FACILITIES

Community facilities and spaces are essential for developing community character and establishing a sense of place. They are focus points for community gathering, recreation and celebration. They also contribute to community image and pride. Numerous competing initiatives/strategies make it difficult to establish short and long term funding priorities. Strategic categories for prioritization include:

- maintenance, recapitalization and decommissioning;
- development of new facilities and spaces; and
- access to a variety of existing facilities within the community (universities, schools, churches etc).

Adoption of the Regional Plan's growth patterns as well as demographic trends must influence these decisions. HRM also has several strategic planning documents and initiatives (e.g. Indoor Recreation Facility Master Plan, Cultural Plan, Streetscape Plans, Capital District, Libraries, Canada Games facilities and Commonwealth Games facilities). All of these require coordination and prioritization and some such as the Indoor Recreation Facility Master Plan are scheduled for review/updating.

<i>Recommendations</i>		<i>Risks of not doing</i>
4A	Development of a strategic facility/spaces plan which addresses HRM's need to make decisions regarding maintenance, recapitalization, new construction, and decommissioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• lack of strategic focus will lead to poor investment decision making• inability to respond and meet community expectations• appropriate integration and consistency with other municipal projects and priorities i.e. Canada Games, Commonwealth Games would be jeopardized
4B	Prioritize the recapitalization and investment of existing facilities for 07/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• further deterioration of existing facilities
4C	Undertake a facility condition survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• facility deficiencies will be overlooked resulting in access disruptions and increased maintenance and operating costs

<i>Recommendations</i>		<i>Risks of not doing</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> financial investments in the wrong things at the wrong time
4D	Improve delivery of Capital District capital projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of confidence in the Municipality's ability to deliver on high profile projects Lack of confidence that the capital District is a priority
4E	Ongoing review of Service Exchange Agreement with School Board, (e.g. improved access for community groups, access to P3 schools and monitoring agreed upon access for HRM's Recreation programs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School buildings will be underutilized Community groups