



Council Focus Area 2007/2008

Public Safety

December 5, 2006

Introduction

Public Safety has been identified as a top priority for HRM from the beginning and in the development of outcomes, citizens have identified safety as a primary concern. Citizens expect:

- timely an appropriate emergency response;
- a feeling of safety when in their neighbourhoods or elsewhere in HRM; and
- buildings properties and infrastructure in HRM to be safe, healthy and well maintained.

The umbrella of Public Safety consists of By-Law Enforcement, EMO, Fire, Integrated Emergency Services, Police/RCMP Services. However, all of the Council Focus areas are inter-related when it comes to Public Safety and are collaboratively working together to ensure that our communities are safe, healthy, and well maintained for the citizens of HRM. In the area of youth, the development of the Youth Strategy will be address in the Community Development focus area discussion.

Council's approval of the 06/07 budget directed Public Safety to develop effective long term resource strategies and service level reviews to address public safety needs.

Part 1 - Update from Previous Year's Council Focus Areas and Current Initiatives

Last year, Council identified a number of issues /concerns/opportunities related to safety. It should be noted that all the issues identified are complex, related to social conditions, and are not easily addressed. Solutions will require both short and long term initiatives. In many areas, HRM's mandate is limited, thereby, requiring strong working relationships with business units, other stakeholders and service delivery organizations. For example: A project has been initiated to explore and implement best practices and opportunities which will broaden the use of GIS in support of the operational and strategic requirements of Emergency Management, Fire and Police Services.

By-Law

Last year Council agreed that the status quo was unacceptable and they raised concerns with vacant buildings, snow/ice, dangerous and unsightly properties, animal control, blasting, land use, litter, off-road dumping, care of public property, lack of enforcement, noise, and public right of way issues.

Council Direction

Council approve a service level review in conjunction with a more detailed analysis of the data available regarding requests for services.

Correct civic address problems in the urban core areas of HRM impacting the delivery of 911 services and other municipal services.

Minimum Standards - M100 By-Law

Progress

Service Level review for Bylaw Enforcement, Community Projects has begun. Target completion Spring, 2007.

Community Projects Group and Parks Patrol restructured to HRP. A new Animal Control model developed and implementation is ongoing. 7 Animal Control Officers to be hired in near future.

CRM Accountability Project - Hanson Customer Service underway for all stakeholders. Project will enhance access to requests for service, provide accurate, meaningful performance reporting all levels.

The final phase of Civic Address Corrections project has commenced in the urban core. Target completion is Fall, 2007.

Realigned to Community Development from Fire and performance to date being reviewed to ensure service effectiveness.

Public Safety: Policing

During the Council Focus Area discussion last year, Policing represented an issue with Council and the main concern was with determining adequacy of police resources and having effective outcomes.

Council Direction

Council requested the Board of Police Commissioners to review HRM Policing Services with a view to developing an effective, long-term police resource strategy; assess the impact of any changes to the service delivery model of policing resulting from upcoming negotiations of the Provincial Police Contract.

Requested the Board of Police Commissioners to report to Council regarding the need to increase police resources and police funding to ensure an effective level of policing which meets public expectations and addresses the complex environment of the police service delivery model.

Progress

This initiative is underway and staff are currently developing Terms of Reference.

RCMP Halifax District assigned Darrell Harvey to work with HRP and HRM Board of Police Commissioners to complete the reviews - ongoing.

24 Police Officers hired October, 2006 (16 - 05/06 & 8 - 06/07).

RCMP - 4 Communities Liaison Officers hired.

1.5 FTE hired for RCMP's for North Central area of HRM.

Implemented Community Response Model - Beat Patrols & Community Liaison Officers.

32 - New Police Officers funded by the Province of NS to be hired for 2007.

Public Safety - Fire & EMO

During discussions, Council identified concerns about volunteer capacity, recruitment, implications of 24 hour service, adding career firefighters to areas serviced by volunteers, stations/equipment and pandemic capacities, the need to identify strategic property acquisition, the need for community consultation and the need to lobby for federal dollars in support of emergency preparedness and added Fire Station Life Safety issues.

Council Direction

Progress

Concerns about volunteer capacity, recruitment, implications of 24 hours service adding career firefighters to areas served by volunteers.

8 Firefighters hired, October, 2006 from the funding received.
Ongoing volunteer recruitments in identified areas.

Concerns about stations - life safety issues and equipment.

1 FTE hired October, 2006.
Long range maintenance and preventative maintenance plans to be developed.

Concerns about pandemic planning.

Draft Operational Infectious Disease Plan developed, awaiting approval.
Business Continuity team established to develop contingency plans for the provision of municipal services in the event of a pandemic.

Need to identify strategic property acquisition.

Comprehensive Review of Fire Stations has begun for future planning and alignment with the Regional Pan. BPIM providing GIS support; TPW involved with land acquisition & the development of long term Capital Planning.

Need for community consultation.

Community consultation to be conducted prior to service delivery changes.

Need to lobby for federal dollars in support of emergency preparedness.

Federal Funding: Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) 75/25 funding formula.
Joint Emergency Preparedness Program (JEPP) application to be submitted seeking 50/50 funding as projects are identified in the 5 Year Plan Infrastructure Recapitalization Plan.

Part 2 - Issues, Risks and Recommendations

Issue - Long Term Strategic Planning

Council's approval of the 06/07 budget directed Public Safety to develop effective long term resource strategies and service level reviews to address public safety needs. Council recognized that it will take time to prepare and develop implementation strategies.

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Risks of not Doing</i>
<p>To continue with the direction, as set by Council, during the Council Focus Area discussions and the approved 06/07 Business Plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Long Term Police Strategy- By-Law & Enforcement Service level review- Fire Service Strategies aligned with the Approved Service Delivery Standard. <p>The 07/08 Business Plan will see further development of these long term strategic and operational goals to ensure proper planning, identify improvements and efficiencies to service delivery, identify requirements for resources, equipment, and properties are safe and well maintained in collaboration with the other Business Units.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Delays in mitigating events will decrease the citizens sense of safety and well being in HRM.- Health and safety risk to all members of the community with a negative impact on a community vision of being safe.- Impacts to service delivery will result in residents not feeling safe in their communities and HRM.