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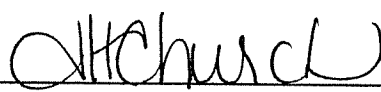


PO Box 1749  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
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**Halifax Regional Council**  
**May 29, 2007**

**TO:** Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

**SUBMITTED BY:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jennifer Church, Intergovernmental & Corporate Affairs

**DATE:** May 17, 2007

**SUBJECT:** HRM Initiatives, Spring 2007

## **INFORMATION REPORT**

### **ORIGIN**

October 6, 2006 Council Approval of Government Relations and Strategic Partnership Development Policy.

### **BACKGROUND**

The attached "HRM Initiatives, Spring 2007" was developed as a background briefing to share with internal and external stakeholders highlighting some of HRM's corporate initiatives and priorities.

## **DISCUSSION**

“HRM Initiatives” is a document produced internally on a semi-annual basis to provide background information on HRM and current corporate initiatives and priorities. The Spring edition includes a review of HRM priority issues, fast facts about the region, a briefing on various corporate initiatives, a copy of the 2006/07 submission to the Federal Finance Standing Committee and a copy of the Government Relations and Strategic Partnership Development Policy & Action Plan. Future editions will include updated information as appropriate, or other related advocacy documents.

“HRM Initiatives” has been shared by the CAO with Nova Scotia Deputy Ministers and various community stakeholders. It is as well available to the Mayor and Members of Council for circulation on request. Any feedback on the document, or suggestions on items for inclusion in future editions are welcome. In the future all of the information contained in the package will be publicly available electronically.

## **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

None. Information only.

## **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN**

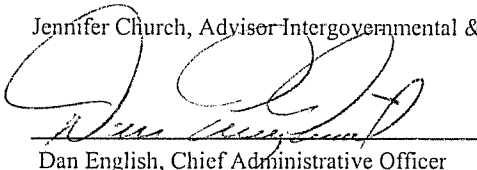
This report complies with the Municipality’s Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

HRM Initiatives, Spring 2007

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

Report Prepared by : Jennifer Church, Advisor Intergovernmental & Corporate Affairs 490-3677

Report Approved by:  Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer



# Halifax Regional Municipality

*Working together for a stronger community*

## HRM Initiatives Spring 2007



## HRM Priority Issues

As an historic community dating back to the 1700s, Halifax faces significant pressures with regard to the age of our infrastructure relative to rest of Canada. The region has made significant progress on a number of important nationally and internationally recognized initiatives including: Harbour Solutions, Joint Emergency Operations Center, Solid Waste Management Strategy and its ClimateSmart initiative. The following highlights priority issues for HRM where ongoing support and participation by other levels of government would be of significant benefit.

### HRM Priority Issues

#### INFRASTRUCTURE

- Harbour Link
- Stormwater and Wastewater
- Recreation
- Life Science Research Institute

#### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- Culture
- Economy
- Department of Natural Defence and Federal Presence in HRM
- Gateway

#### ENVIRONMENT

#### PUBLIC SAFETY

#### TRIPARTITE AGREEMENT



## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **Harbour Link**

- The Halifax Harbour Link, Phase 1 is approximately a \$30m project.
- Federal participation in this project would be a significant opportunity with respect to the Government's commitment to Transport, Infrastructure and Communities.
- Harbour Link will be a higher order transit service that will build on HRM's very successful Metro Link bus rapid transit program.
- A recent study confirms substantial ridership potential. HRM anticipates significant economic and environmental spin-offs from the project.
- Federal participation and support for Harbour Link is imperative.
- HRM has earmarked almost \$7m for the project.
- HRM's Harbour Link is a unique project in Canada.

### **Stormwater and Wastewater**

- At HRM's request, legislation was recently approved amending the Halifax Regional Water Commission mandate to include HRM's wastewater and stormwater and ensuring these services are regulated by the Utility and Review Board (UARB)
- Existing stormwater and wastewater infrastructure is in a deteriorated condition.
- In excess of a \$600m in funding will be needed over the near term in order to maintain the status quo system.
- HRM has significant number of systems not in compliance with federal and provincial regulations.
- Plans have been developed to address these problems and the development of a stable funding source is underway.
- HRM has limited ability to support new growth requirements – increased investment in municipal infrastructure is imperative.
- An inventory of dams in the region, including information regarding their condition, integrity and safety, is needed as a failure could negatively impact HRM citizens and infrastructure.

### **Recreation**

- In 2004 HRM developed an Indoor Recreation Facilities Master-Plan to identify neighbourhood, community and regional recreation facility needs and a strategic decision-making process to guide their development.
- Substantial multi-sector/multi-government investment will be needed over the next several years (e.g. Provincial and Federal cost sharing received on the Dartmouth East Community Centre).
- Rapid population growth in the Western Region of HRM has put a strain on existing recreation facilities and highlighted the need for the construction of a new regional recreation facility. There is currently an \$8m dollar funding shortfall for the Mainland Common Facility. A partnership approach to investment is key to the success of this facility.

### **Life Science Research Institute**

- A \$34m Life Science Research Institute is an important investment for the region.
- The Institute will house the Brain Repair Centre, the Transplantation Lab and an incubation floor for commercialization initiatives.
- The project is in partnership with Capital District Health Authority, IWK and Dalhousie University.
- Dalhousie has committed to \$11m via fundraising.
- The Province of Nova Scotia has committed to a \$5m contribution.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### Culture

- In April 2006 HRM adopted a ten (10) year Cultural Plan to focus investment in cultural infrastructure and programs, including cultural facilities to enhance HRM's competitiveness and appeal as a cultural destination and hot spot for arts incubation.
- The short-term action plan includes identifying and planning for development of key cultural facilities. HRM will be relying on multi-sector/multi-government investment in cultural facilities that will benefit the entire HRM and provincial region.
- In support of more strategic community and economic development outcomes, HRM is exploring opportunities for creative clustering of developments and uses that enhance community and visitor access to cultural activities, and facilitate innovation and economic development.
- Innovative and sustainable partnerships to enhance Culture as a key economic development driver will be developed including a multi-sector Creative Community Task Force, National and international Sister-City Twinning relationships, and competition for the 2010 Cultural Capital of Canada.

### Economy

- HRM is the economic hub of Nova Scotia and the health of the local economy is vital to ensuring long-term sustainability of the region's quality of life.
- In addition to funding and programs related to the promotion and development of municipally owned business parks, HRM currently provides approximately \$1.2 million annually to fund programs and activities which support the retention and expansion of existing businesses, the attraction of new businesses and which support community economic development and business development in rural communities.
- The funding of economic development by HRM is used to leverage funding from other government sources, such as ACOA and NS Office of Economic Development to support projects, programs and initiatives, which help grow the local economy. Funding from these other sources is essential to the long-term sustainability of regional economic development programs.
- HRM, in collaboration with local community interests and provincial and federal government funding partners, has developed a regional strategy on Economic Development, which identifies key areas of economic focus for the next five years. Priority areas include growing Department of National Defence and Federal presence in HRM, increasing levels of immigration, supporting growth of the Halifax Gateway and supporting rural economic development through such initiatives as expanding broadband internet services to rural communities.

### Department of Natural Defence and Federal Presence in HRM

- Cutbacks to defence and federal public sector employment have affected HRM more than any other Canadian city. Federal employment has fallen by about 6,000 since 1993, whereas other Canadian cities have benefited from added federal employment – in current dollars, this means nearly \$300m in yearly spending on goods and services in HRM has disappeared.
- HRM wants to see our region become the successful home of DND's Standing Contingency Task Force.
- HRM would like to enter into an MOU with DND to facilitate communication around development issues and growth opportunities, and has been working with DND and other economic development partners towards this end.

## Gateway

- The Halifax Gateway – comprising major facilities and infrastructure related to the Port of Halifax, Halifax International Airport, CN Rail, trunk highway systems and associated rolling stock and transport services, accounts for 16% of all economic activity in HRM and accounts for \$1 billion in wages each year. The Gateway generates over \$250 million in municipal, provincial and federal taxes, and is strategically positioned to benefit from burgeoning economic growth occurring in Asia and India.
- Greater integration and high levels of partnership will help to stabilize and grow the Gateway as an important contributor to the economy and a significant area of economic growth.
- The Halifax Gateway needs to be recognized for its potential to make HRM the East Coast Logistics Hub for the handling and distribution of significantly increased volumes of container cargo from growing global markets.

## ENVIRONMENT

- Provincial assistance and cooperation regarding the exportation of solid waste is critical. Without protection the HRM and Nova Scotia Strategies are in jeopardy and HRM's commitment to manage all its own waste and maintain a cost-effective approach to environmental protection is compromised.
- HRM has recently completed a clean air strategy. A provincial airshed management plan, legislative and policy changes are all key to improved air quality.
- HRM is moving forward with a Community Energy Plan that includes energy supply, use and demand profiles; facilitation of renewable energy opportunities; emission reduction; energy efficiency and land use planning policies. A lack of provincial legislation and a closed electrical purchase system hamper efforts relative to renewable sources of energy (i.e. wind). Changes are needed in these areas to facilitate the emerging renewable energy sector where investment and business interest is in place.
- Education about and awareness of sustainable development is important and the Nova Scotia school curriculum should reflect this. HRM supports a tripartite, full community approach that will see systemic change across the Province
- Enabling legislation is required which provides for tree cutting restrictions on private property to reduce the impact of sedimentation when land is clear-cut for development.
- The manufacture and sale of cosmetic-use pesticides should be banned.
- Adoption of a risk based analysis approach to the design and permit of wastewater treatment facilities is desirable. That is, designing plants relative to the capacity of the receiving waters to receive rather than the end of pipe discharge.
- Federal financial incentives for the recycling/reuse industry sector as is provided to the raw resource industry of Canada would be an environmentally, socially and economically viable undertaking.
- A program for assessing and quantifying the true benefits of reusing/recycling products such as plastic, paper, steel, aluminium in direct comparison to the electricity consumed, waste by products created and water consumed is needed.
- Federal financial assistance is critical at the local level to assist with greenhouse gas emission reduction efforts, climate change vulnerability, and risk management costs to upgrade/protect already strained infrastructure from severe weather impacts.

## **PUBLIC SAFETY**

- Municipalities need to be at the table with the federal and provincial governments for discussion and consultation on policing, crime and public safety priorities.
- The Province of Nova Scotia has delivered on the first phase of their police officer initiative. Effective April 1, 2007, HRM will hire 32 new officers and funding for these positions will be provided by the Province. Federal funding for Police Officers remains an important issue for HRM.
- The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police should be consulted on the proposed legislative changes to the Criminal Code of Canada prior to investing funds, creating new programs or eliminating current legislation. Police urge the federal government to:
  - ♦ Revisit conditional sentences for violent and repeat offenders (i.e. house arrest).
  - ♦ Impose minimum mandatory sentencing for crimes of violence, particularly those involving firearms.
  - ♦ Revisit Canada's gun laws and consider alternatives to disbanding the national gun registry.
- With the 2004 death of Theresa McEvoy and the Nunn Commission Inquiry findings, police continue to recommend that the federal government review and revisit the Youth Criminal Justice Act to ensure the public is protected from violent and repeat offenders and that the services needed by young persons are in place in the community.
- The Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs, as the national voice of the Fire Service, continues to lobby at the federal level on matters of legislation, planning, and funding to improve safety for the citizens and firefighters of Canada.

## **TRIPARTITE AGREEMENT**

- HRM is prepared to enter formal discussions on the development and implementation of a tri-partite agreement.
- Shared outcome areas discussed to date have included: Immigration, Strong Communities and Gateway.



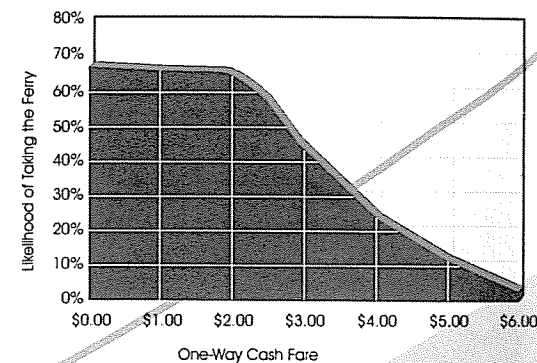
The Fast Ferry Cultivation Study included a detailed analysis of the proposed ferry service and included the following:

- Market Analysis
- Case Studies
- Cost Model for Alternative Service Delivery
- Sensitivity Analysis
- Preliminary Vessel Design and Operating Plan Recommendations
- Wake Wash Analysis
- Safety Analysis
- Emissions and Travel Efficiency Analysis
- Terminal and Docking Recommendations
- Revenue Strategies

The full study is available online at:  
[www.halifax.ca/metrotransit/documents/FastFerry-Final.-August2006.pdf](http://www.halifax.ca/metrotransit/documents/FastFerry-Final.-August2006.pdf)

## Market Survey Results

A telephone survey was conducted in June, 2005 to gain an understanding of the characteristics and scale of potential ferry ridership in Bedford, Sackville and the Hammonds Plains Road area. A sampling of the results is shown here.



This graph is used to determine the sensitivity of potential customers to the fare charged for travelling on the ferry. Although ridership can be expected to decrease with fares greater than \$2.00, higher fares may be needed to manage demand and/or to ensure that operating costs are better covered.

## Economic Model Results

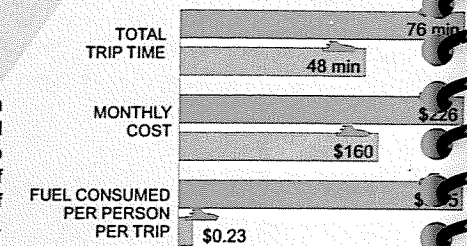
The economic model constructed for the analysis tested the following variables:

- Ferry Capacity (206 and 350 passengers)
- Ferry Speed (28 and 35 knots)
- Number of Ferries in Operation at Peak (2 and 3)
- Bedford Parking On-site of Off-site with Shuttle
- Downtown Shuttle Buses (yes or no)

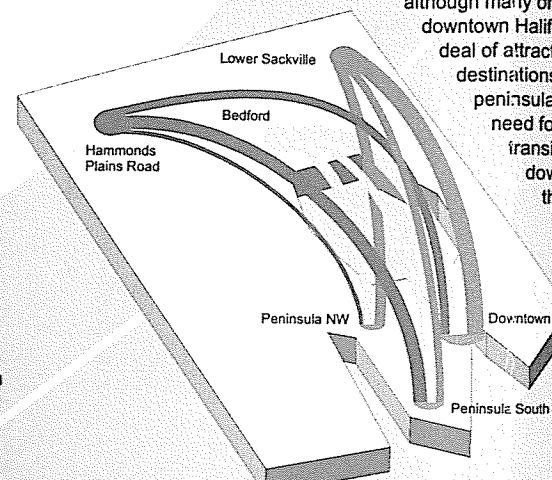
Bedford Parking	Downtown Shuttle	Profit (\$M/yr)
On-Site	Yes	-\$1.0
with Fee	No	-\$5.6
Off-Site	Yes	\$6.9
Free w/Shuttle	No	-\$0.7
None	Yes	-\$4.4
	No	-\$32.9

Profit is revenue less operating and capital costs and is expressed as millions of dollars per year. The green box represents a profit and the red box indicates increasing debt. All other results demonstrate some contribution to achieving return

The chart to the right shows the economics of ferry travel (green bars) versus automobile travel (blue bars) for a typical commuter travelling from a residence near Mill Cove to Purdy's Wharf downtown. It compares the cost of driving to and parking in downtown with the cost of taking the ferry and walking to the office.



This map shows the commuting patterns of the 472 people surveyed within the market area. In this diagram, wider bars indicate more people making the trip. This plot shows that, although many of the trips are destined for downtown Halifax, there is still a great deal of attractiveness to other destinations on the Halifax peninsula. This underlines the need for establishing good transit connections from the downtown Ferry Terminal throughout the Regional Centre.



The market survey asked respondents what they would like to see onboard the ferries. At right are the top suggestions.

OUTDOOR SEATING	95%
NEWSPAPERS	72%
ONBOARD CAFÉ	58%
CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA	43%
WORK TABLES	38%
LAPTOP PORTS	34%
TELEVISION	33%

Similarly, there were a number of suggestions for features to be included in the ferry terminal.

PARKING	97%
SEATING	94%
COFFEE SHOP	89%
MONITORS WITH UP-TO-DATE SCHEDULE INFO	88%
CONVENIENCE STORE	58%
CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA	54%
DAY CARE CENTRE	50%



## Preliminary Specifications for the Vessel and the Service

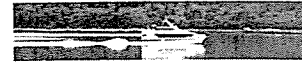
- Two catamaran ferries operating at 35 knots
- Estimated cost - \$8 million per vessel
- Passenger capacity of 350
- Four diesel engines at 4,200 hp
- Low wake design with waterjet propulsion
- Full speed to dead stop in two boat lengths
- Fuel consumption of 0.63 tons/hour at full speed
- One-way trip time of 15 minutes, dock to dock
- Departures every 20 minutes during peaks
- Service all day and weekends

## Key Features of Fast Ferry Service

- Ferry routes are integrated with the HRM Regional Plan settlement strategy to minimize future transportation demands
- Supports HRM's bid for the 2014 Commonwealth Games by providing high capacity transit service directly to the Games site
- Contributes substantially to reduction targets for greenhouse gas emissions

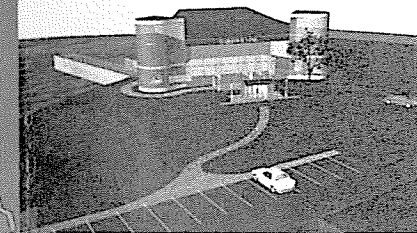
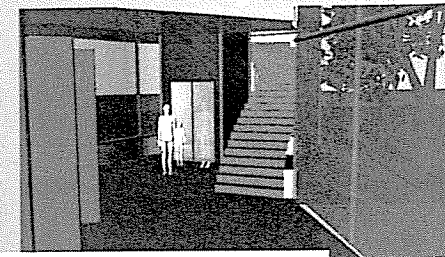
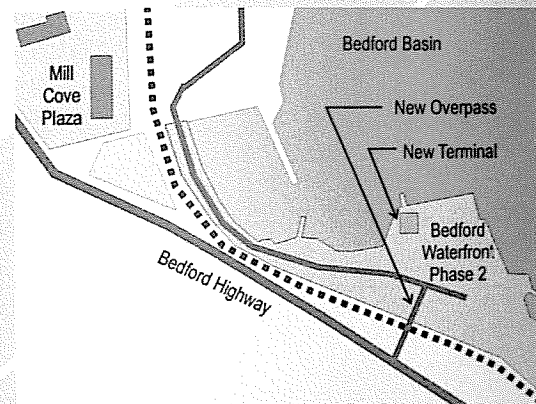
## Fast Ferry Demonstration

In October, 2005, Mayor Peter Kelly hosted a demonstration of fast ferry service. The Whaling City Express was brought to Halifax Harbour from Massachusetts for several trial runs over a period of two days. With both invited guests and the general public on board, the vessel proved capable of making the trip from Bedford in under 15 minutes and demonstrated its low wake generation and exceptional manoeuvrability. The demonstration generated tremendous enthusiasm with the public and the media.



## A New Terminal in Bedford

Although very preliminary, these sketches give an indication of where the Bedford terminal is expected to be located and what it might look like.



The

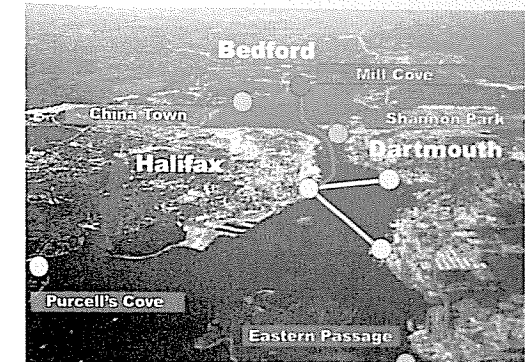
## Halifax HarbourLink Project Update

October 2006

The evolution of high-speed, low-wake catamaran ferries for urban commuter travel means that longer routes within our harbour may now be serviced efficiently and reliably.

TDV Global Ltd. and Halifax Regional Municipality have recently completed the Halifax/Bedford Fast Ferry Cultivation Study. This project evaluated the market, the financial metrics, and the operating criteria for a high speed commuter ferry service between Mill Cove in Bedford and downtown Halifax.

This study provided encouraging projections for the success of the service and, in July of 2006, Halifax Regional Council endorsed the findings and directed that, not only should the project proceed, but that consideration should be given to other fast ferry routes within Halifax Harbour.



Metro Transit

**HALIFAX**  
REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

For information on the  
HarbourLink Project contact:  
Brian Taylor, Project Manager  
btaylor@halifax.ca  
or 430-1665





## HRM Fast Facts

### Demographics

- Geographically largest municipality in Canada
- 46% of Nova Scotia's total employment
- 41% of Nova Scotia's total population
- Total population 381,000
- 10% of HRM's population is rural
- HRM's population is expected to continue its steady growth, adding an additional 100,000 residents over the next 25 years
- Half of HRM's population is under the age of 40, youngest in Atlantic Canada

### Finance

- HRM adheres to an effective multi-year financial strategy that includes a debt management plan - retiring more debt each year
- Total debt, excluding Harbour Solutions and refinancing of long-term leases, is down by 21% – from a high of \$347.5 million in 1999 to \$273.2 million in 2007
- Although debt per capita has dropped by 25% in 8 years, debt levels remain high for Canadian cities
- HRM received an “A Positive” bond rating from Standard & Poor's

### Fiscal Pressure

- HRM is dependent on property tax for 76% of its revenue—among the highest in Canada
- HRM receives 1.7% of total revenue from the provincial government, less than most other major Canadian city
- HRM is required to collect provincially-mandated expenditures that account for 25% of its total revenue
- Compared to other Canadian cities HRM has: low total property tax per dwelling unit, low operating expenditures per dwelling unit, low operating revenue per dwelling unit and a high dependence on property tax
- HRM has an annual infrastructure funding gap of nearly \$50m

## Economy

- HRM is a \$10 billion economy, dominated by service sector activities
- HRM is the regional center of business and finance, hospital/medical services, research facilities, public administration and transportation
- HRM has strong per capita income and Gross Domestic Product (GDP)
- HRM generates 47% of provincial GDP - \$11,100m
- Culture contributes \$490 million (2003) in GDP to HRM
- One of lowest cost cities for business compared world wide – KPMG 2004
- 2nd largest natural ice-free harbour in the world
- Halifax International Airport Authority (HIAA) and Halifax Port Authority (HPA) gateways account for 28,000 jobs and 16% of all economic activity
- 53% of province's building permits
- Home to more than half the province's businesses: information & culture; technical, management and educational services; waste management; finance and insurance
- HRM has six degree-granting universities and an extensive Community College network
- 5 main economic drivers: universities; defense; hospitals; public administration; banking and insurance
- 7 significant industries: port/shipping; air transportation; rail/truck transportation; professional services; tourism; information and culture; admin and support services

## Environment

- International leader in environmental sustainability i.e. Solid Waste Management strategy
- Harbour Solutions project- largest clean-up of a saltwater body in Canada
- 15 billion litres of wastewater treated per year
- 242 tonnes of paper products and 2,730,000 beverage containers diverted from waste stream
- First major urban area in Canada to reach the 50% waste diversion target
- 100,000 tonnes of organic material composted since 1999
- 100,000+ green (organic) collection carts

## Governance

- 1996 amalgamation of Halifax, Dartmouth, Bedford and Halifax County to form Halifax Regional Municipality
- 23 Councillors, each represent one district
- 1 Mayor, elected at large

## Livability

- Talent Index – 14th in North America (over 18, bachelors degree or higher)
- Techpole Index – 20th in North America (size and concentration of high tech economy)
- Bohemian Index – 7th in North America (employment in artistic and creative occupations)
- Mosaic Index – 15th in North America (proportion of population foreign born)
- HRM is the Atlantic regional cultural cluster
- 57% of Nova Scotian artists reside in HRM
- 6 universities, 3 community college campuses
- University enrollment – 30,887
- Joint Emergency Measures Operations Center - tremendous success for 3 levels of government - received national attention and recognition as an effective model

## Labour

- Total labour force of 217,700
- 70% participation over the last 15 years
- 5.3% unemployment rate, lower than national average
- Heavily reliant on in-migration to support population growth, reliance will increase significantly in near future
- To meet projected employment requirement over next 25 years, immigration has to rise to 3,500 per year
- Employment growth out paces population growth
- Within 20 years, 40% of NS population will be 55 years or older
- 63% of labour force has completed university, college or trade school
- Working-age population of HRM has the highest proportion of graduates from a trade school, college, or university in Canada.
- Strongest employment prospects in the country – 2004 Employment Outlook Survey
- HRM has stable labour relations, including 12-year collective agreements with Halifax Regional Fire and Halifax Regional Police Services
- 8500 people in HRM are employed in the Culture Sector (2003) with 20% being self-employed
- Between 1991 and 2001 the arts labour force in HRM grew by 34% (over four times the overall labour force growth rate)



# Halifax Regional Municipality

*Working together for a stronger community*

## Halifax Regional Municipality Issues and Initiatives Spring 2007



For More Information Contact  
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490-6430

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## Introduction

The following document highlights some of Halifax Regional Municipality's current initiatives and issues.

HRM came into existence in 1996 as the result of the amalgamation of the former cities of Halifax, Dartmouth, the Town of Bedford and the former County of Halifax. Ours was one of the first of the many municipal amalgamations that took place across the country, beginning in the 1990s.

As a regional municipality, we have a rich history and culture. We are unique in many respects. We are Canada's largest municipality, covering more than 5,600 kilometres, an area larger than the Province of Prince Edward Island. Unlike many other urbanized municipalities, we have a very large rural area.

Halifax continues to serve as the capital city of the Atlantic Provinces. Its economy is strong and diverse. It has one of the largest deepwater, ice-free ports in the world and is one of the top three ports in Canada in terms of traffic, which it handles through its inter-modal facilities. It is the regional centre for government, post-secondary education, research and development, medical and health services and the financial and business community. Despite a lack of growth in the public sector, employment continues to grow. The unemployment rate of 5.3% is among the record lows, and is well below that of most major Canadian cities including Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal and Ottawa.



## Council Focus Areas

On October 3, 2006 Council approved a list of four areas of focus:

- Infrastructure
- Community Development
- Public Safety
- Tax Reform

The Council Focus Areas are a regional strategic priority setting exercise and an articulation of the areas Council believes require specific and focussed attention.

The focus areas represent multi-year issues and they will not necessarily be resolved within one single budget year, rather indicate the direction of Regional Council on those key topics. However, each year, specific needs and priorities within a focus area will be reflected in budget and business plans. This will require a balancing of the priorities with the capacity of the organization. Choices will be made and new approaches will be considered.

## Finance

HRM continues to face increasing budgetary pressures. The \$630.9 million budget for 2006/07 is approximately \$42 million (7% higher) than seen the prior year. These increases are due to several pressures.

- **Provincial Costs:** Under provincial legislation, HRM is required to fund Mandatory Education costs (i.e. a share of the School Board's budget), which for HRM is one of the fastest rising costs. Over the past five years, mandatory education payments have increased from \$59.6 million (actual, 2001-02) to \$83.0 million (budgeted, 2006-07), a 39.3% increase – a rate almost 1.6 times the growth of funding for municipal services. The cost to HRM of the provincial assessment system will rise by \$1.3 million (from \$4.4m to \$5.7m). Corrections system costs will increase by \$370,000, from \$7.2m to \$7.6m this year. In total, about 25% of the general tax rate goes toward mandatory provincial expenditures.
- **Inflationary Pressures:** Inflationary pressure on construction costs is significant, growing far more rapidly than our revenues. For instance, in the last 10 years, the local Consumer Price Index (CPI) has risen just over 20%. The cost to re-surface a kilometre of street, however, has risen over 100%. Sidewalk renewals are up by 150%. Insurance costs have more than doubled. There is a growing gap between CPI and the cost to do municipal services. Pressure such as this makes it even more challenging to slow the growth of the infrastructure deficit. Adding to this pressure is the dramatically rising cost of fuel, and the subsequent impact it has on municipal operations.
- **Service Improvements:** New services approved for 2006/07 include bus rapid transit, police dispatch and officers.
- **Debt Reduction:** HRM's debt, which is supported by the property tax rate, continues to steadily decline. At the end of the 2006/07 fiscal years, our debt is projected to be \$273 million. At its peak in 1999, debt reached \$348 million. Despite this, our total debt level is considered high, compared to other Canadian municipality standards. To reduce the debt, more capital projects are funded "pay as you go" (capital from operating). To deal with the larger capital budget, "pay as you go" has increased \$4.1 million over the past year.

Transfers from other levels of Government continue to be minimal. Compared to other major municipalities, HRM receives very low transfers. In 2006/07 HRM expects to receive approximately 1.7% of its revenue from provincial transfers. Another 1.0% is received from the provincial government and its boards and agencies, through grants in lieu and tax agreements.

Most of the increased budget is funded from property tax revenues, which are estimated to increase by \$24.7 million this year. This is after an overall rate reduction of 5.1%. Some of this current increase is the result of new properties or new developments in HRM. On average, total property taxes for a single-family home increased by about \$100 in 2006.

HRM also provides both rebates and deferrals for low-income households. Those with family income under \$27,000 can receive rebates up to \$700 and the remainder of tax owing can be deferred.

HRM has recorded small budget surpluses for each of the past six years, and Council has lowered the General Tax Rate slightly in five of the past seven years. As a result of strong growth in both the economy and the population base, we have seen substantial growth in our tax base. However, such growth also brings with it the need for new services, which translate into additional costs.

HRM would appreciate any opportunities to discuss in more detail specific municipal priorities as budget and funding decisions are being discussed. Some of HRM's biggest pressures are being felt in the areas of environmental sustainability, transportation and the continued support of economic, social and cultural infrastructure.

Like many municipalities, HRM is also experiencing tremendous pressure on the property tax system, as residents in some areas are seeing substantial increases in assessment without any increase in services or any clear relationship to ability to pay. Regional Council has established a Tax Reform Committee (TRC) to review the foundations of the property tax system. It is based upon the premise that there needs to be a consensus on "what we want our tax system to do for us?" Tax reform is intended to provide a very broad review of the taxation system including the relevance of the market value system and by implication the many components of the system including the relationship of the tax system to economic competitiveness and population growth. This process will include public consultation and cooperation with the Province.

## Regional Plan Implementation

HRM's first Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (Regional Plan) was adopted by Regional Council on June 27, 2006. Following a review by Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, the Regional Plan came into effect on August 26, 2006.

The Regional Plan is a first step to establishing a shared vision of the future of HRM; a vision of healthy, vibrant and sustainable communities, a strong economy and a healthy and sustainable environment. The Regional Plan will direct growth and development in HRM over the next 25 years.

### Directing Future Growth

New growth will be directed to a series of Centres located throughout HRM. These Centres will be compact, well-designed, mixed-use communities with access to services and amenities. They will be linked to one another through an integrated transportation system of improved transit service (such as bus rapid transit and high speed ferry), active transportation corridors and new or expanded roadways. An open space system of parks and trails, wilderness areas and wildlife corridors, and natural resource areas will serve and support the Centres and help to define their boundaries.

### Community Visioning

Now the Regional Plan is approved, the work to implement it begins. Key to implementation is a new Community Visioning program to be piloted in three of HRM's distinct communities – Bedford, Fall River and Musquodoboit Harbour – in 2006/07. Regional Council approved the visioning project in September and over the fall and winter, residents in each of these communities will come together to create a vision and action plan.

### Functional Plans

The preparation of "Functional Plans" is also key to the Regional Plan's implementation. Some, like the Active Transportation Plan and Cultural Plan, are complete, while functional plans for Community Energy and Open Space, as two examples, are gearing up to begin. Each Functional Plan will contain specific actions to be taken by HRM to ensure the municipality's programs are consistent with the Regional Plan. Functional Plans called for in the Regional Plan include:

- Active Transportation
- Affordable Housing
- Business Park Development
- Capital District Public Infrastructure
- Communication & Public Education
- Communication Tower/Antenna
- Community Energy *\*includes Wind Energy*
- Cultural
- Economic Development
- Emission Reduction
- Finance
- Halifax Harbour
- Heritage

- Potential Hazards to Development
- Open Space
- Opportunity Sites Redevelopment
- Public Transit
- Regional Parking Strategy
- Road & Road Network
- Storm Water Management
- Transportation Demand Management
- Urban Forest Master Plan
- Urban Streetscape
- Wastewater Management
- Water Quality Monitoring
- Underground Utilities

### **Capital Cost Contribution (CCC) Program**

HRM has recently completed an assessment of the feasibility of expanding its Capital Cost Contribution (CCC) Program. Integral to the research was coming to an understanding of how these infrastructure charges relate to the regulatory setting in other cities and housing affordability in the local setting. The main purpose behind infrastructure charges is to cover growth-related costs of new development.

The newly completed study: [http://www.halifax.ca/regionalplanning/documents/HRMInfrastructureChargesStudy\\_FinalReport\\_Oct24\\_06.pdf](http://www.halifax.ca/regionalplanning/documents/HRMInfrastructureChargesStudy_FinalReport_Oct24_06.pdf) provides policy guidance on possible changes to municipal policy and regulations concerning infrastructure charges. (An infrastructure charge (also known as a development charge) is a specific dollar value per lot or per hectare or acre that a municipality imposes on a developer to finance the offsite capital costs associated with new development. It is not a charge to finance ongoing maintenance or operational costs.)

### **Open Space Development**

Enabled under the new Regional Plan, Open Space Development is a creative form of subdivision designed to conserve open space. The basic principle of the design is to locate homes on the portion of the site where the soils are best suited for development while retaining the remainder of the site as open space.

A new Guide <http://www.halifax.ca/regionalplanning/OpenSpaceGuide.html> provides an introduction to the concepts, application process, information and studies required to carry out two forms of open space design development in Halifax Regional Municipality.

### **Groundwater Assessment and Reporting**

A new guide to Groundwater Assessment and Reporting in HRM <http://www.halifax.ca/regionalplanning/Groundwater.html> provides general administrative and technical guidance to Subdividers applying for subdivision approval. The guide prescribes a set of minimum requirements for preparing Groundwater Assessment reports. These Guidelines are not intended to provide detailed methodologies for conducting a Groundwater Assessment, as there are a number of acceptable methods. The methodology should be developed and justified by the Qualified Person on a site-specific basis.

### **To Get More Information...**

To get more information about the Regional Plan, Community Visioning and the work underway on Functional Plans, visit: [www.halifax.ca/regionalplanning](http://www.halifax.ca/regionalplanning) or [www.halifax.ca/VisionHRM](http://www.halifax.ca/VisionHRM)

## Infrastructure Planning

HRM is currently working towards the development of a long-term infrastructure strategy for the region. This strategy will guide infrastructure investment to address asset deterioration and deficiencies through recapitalization while balancing new capability projects required to support the areas of growth. HRM faces significant infrastructure challenges to support the requirements and objectives of several strategic plans including the Regional Plan, Cultural Plan, Indoor Facility Master Plan and the Transportation Plan as well as consideration of several opportunities. A funding balance will need to be determined in order to meet the needs of both these areas. Last fall Council approved a set of General Infrastructure Criteria that are used to develop systematic and objective recapitalization and capability plans for infrastructure. This approach is coupled with the Asset Management projects which will provide the linkage between municipal strategic plans, available capital and operational resources in order to provide cost effective core service delivery. The information provided through both of these initiatives, Long-term Infrastructure Strategy and Asset Management, will support improved decision making through the provision of well planned, reliable, accurate and timely information regarding HRM's infrastructure.



## Environmental Snapshot

HRM plans to strategically move forward on a number of clean air, land, and water and energy initiatives. Although not municipal mandates in many cases, they represent very important human health and environmental protection issues impacting the quality of life for HRM residents where more than 40 % of the provincial population live.

### Community Benefits:

Environmental Sustainability

- Clean air, land, water, energy options

Fiscal Benefits

- Cost avoidance, life cycle costing, new products and services

Social, Cultural Enhancement

- Through the Regional Plan and Cultural Plan

Local, National, International Recognition and Branding

- Naturally Green, awards/recognitions

### Integrated Approach to Clean Air, Land, Water, Energy (examples):

Air	Land	Water	Energy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean Air Strategy</li> <li>• Climate SMART</li> <li>• GHG Emission Reduction</li> <li>• Bus Rapid Transit</li> <li>• Reduced Idling</li> <li>• Methane Capture</li> <li>• Bio-Fuels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Plan</li> <li>• Solid Waste Mgt.</li> <li>• Sustainable Practices</li> <li>• Sustainable Land Use</li> <li>• Pesticide By-Law</li> <li>• Pollution Prevention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harbour Solutions</li> <li>• Strategy for Wastewater/ Storm water</li> <li>• Road Salt Mgt.</li> <li>• Wastewater Discharge By-Law</li> <li>• Water and Sewer Ext.</li> <li>• Septic Stewardship</li> <li>• Bio-Solids Program</li> <li>• Upgrade WWT facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District Energy</li> <li>• Natural Gas Synergy</li> <li>• Wind Power</li> <li>• Energy Performance Contracts</li> <li>• Community Energy Planning</li> <li>• LED lights</li> <li>• Solar Power</li> </ul>

**Priority Issues Include:**

- Major waste and storm water infrastructure funding deficiencies
- Protection of the natural environment and human health
- Severe weather impacts on an already strained infrastructure
- Collaborative approaches to issues
- Community based stewardship

There are some excellent collaborative and cost sharing opportunities with numerous mutual benefits. Some examples include:

- Preservation of Water Quality, i.e., water quality monitoring and guidelines related to sedimentation, eutrophication, bacterial contamination, etc. and related issues such as septic system maintenance and regulations
- Clean Air Strategies and comprehensive Airshed Management Plans
- Community Energy Plans and related renewable energy opportunities
- Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation, i.e.-Climate SMART initiative
- Environmental regulatory and policy information sharing opportunities
- Data collection and information sharing, i.e. LIDAR mapping of vulnerable areas
- P2 public education and awareness shared opportunities
- Signature Environment Event for 2006-collaborative opportunity
- Public infrastructure renewal, protection, upgrading Fiscal, cultural and social sustainability through a sustainable environment

Sustainability is a key issue facing every Canadian municipality. According to the Federal 2005 Project Green, climate change is the greatest sustainability issue facing Canada today. Greenhouse gas emissions are the leading contributor to climate change/global warming. HRM, like other progressive Canadian cities, has made a commitment to be a healthy, sustainable, vibrant community -- with clean air, land, water and energy options for our citizens. This includes greenhouse gas emission reductions. Enabling funding from other government partners will help dramatically move forward many of the related public transportation, infrastructure, planning and related activities to reduce greenhouse gases and meet the federal, provincial and local goals and mandates.

## Cultural Plan

In April of 2006 HRM Council approved the Municipality's first Cultural Plan; a comprehensive policy and action plan to guide investment and support for Culture over the next ten years. The Cultural Plan links directly to HRM's growth management, economic development and community development strategies. Culture is recognized within HRM's policy framework as a key pillar of sustainable and healthy growth.

### The Pillars of Culture:

- Arts
- Heritage
- Community Design
- Life long Learning
- Diversity
- Leisure & celebration

The Cultural Plan establishes five strategic directions for which detailed policy development, program and investment will be framed:

### Strategic Direction 1: Focused Service Delivery and Partnerships

- integrated service delivery
- partnership development
- community development

### Strategic Direction 2: Cultural Access and Equity

- cultural infrastructure
- asset and information management
- promotion and awareness
- equity and diversity

### Strategic Direction 3: Community Character and Heritage

- heritage conservation
- community and urban design
- public art
- building community identity
- public and civic spaces
- leisure and entertainment

## Strategic Direction 4: Life Long Learning and Creative Expression

- a “Learning” City and Region
- Creative Community
- arts development
- children and youth

## Strategic Direction 5: Investment and Promotion

- competing globally
- cultural investment

Implementation of the Plan will be driven by a cultural mandate that emphasizes the Municipality’s role as:

### HRM as Programmer:

direct delivery of recreation and culture programs and services, facility management and community management and service delivery partnerships

### HRM as Investor:

direct and indirect investment in cultural and community facilities, community cultural organizations, public and civic spaces, public art, streetscaping and urban design

### HRM as Facilitator:

of partnerships, community development and capacity building, economic development, and heritage and cultural stewardship, and effective governance

### HRM as Manager:

of civic heritage and cultural assets, information management, fiscal resources and land use and infrastructure planning and investment

## SHORT TERM IMPLEMENTATION:

### Highlights: 2006 2007

#### Priority # 1:

#### Enhanced Community Cultural Development:

- cultural asset mapping and service(s) inventory
- community and public art policy development and art investment
- enhanced arts programs for children & youth; HRM Community Centres
- review of financial support programs for cultural organizations
- community visioning exercises (Regional Plan implementation)

**Priority # 2:****Cultural Infrastructure & Cultural Sector Investment:**

- Multi sector Creative Community Strategy (including creative cluster development)
- Cultural Facilities Master Plan and financing strategy
- Cultural facility/space investment through community centres and HRM owned property
- establish program for community management of HRM culture & heritage facilities
- develop Major Events Hosting Strategy

**Priority # 3:****Build Partnerships & Leverage Resources**

- establish multi sector Cultural Advisory Committee
- leverage Federal Cultural Spaces Funding for Urban Arts Cluster
- develop investment proposal for 2010 Cultural Capital of Canada designation
- establish inter government cultural investment committee

More information on the Cultural Plan is available on the web at: [www.halifax.ca/culturalplan](http://www.halifax.ca/culturalplan)

## Economic Strategy

HRM is the economic hub of Atlantic Canada. The region accounts for 40 percent of Nova Scotia's GDP and one fifth of all the economic activity in Atlantic Canada. In late fall 2005; HRM released the region's first economic strategy – Strategies for Success. The strategy is an essential component in defining our future and ensuring that future is within our grasp. The strategy sets out 5 goals and 11 priority actions for implementation.

### Economic Strategy Goals:

- HRM's bustling job market will stop our young and ambitious from leaving and make our community a magnet for highly trained immigrants and expatriates.
- HRM's investments in social and cultural infrastructure will enhance the city's persona as one of the most vibrant and unique communities on the continent.
- HRM will possess the best business climate in Canada, one able to kick-start and grow ambitious new enterprises and attract exciting companies from anywhere on the globe.
- HRM's renown as one of the continent's great cities — a beautiful, immensely liveable place that teems with history and creativity — will draw top-drawer companies and people to our community.
- Each partner in HRM's future will work in sync to propel our economy forward in a way that improves the quality of life for every citizen.

### Economic Strategy Priority Actions:

- Work with businesses and existing ethnic, cultural communities and recent immigrants to attract and retain new immigrants.
- Develop and promote a compelling community business case for retention, expansion and attraction of DND facilities and other federal government offices.
- Support rural economic development by encouraging and providing support services to those individual and organizations establishing or maintaining businesses in rural areas.
- Build support and work to fast track social investment projects that are already well advanced.
- Establish a Quality of Place Council to review existing brand equity in HRM and develop a multi partner approach to marketing HRM.
- Benchmark tax, regulation, and development permit approval/timing against competing cities.
- Bring infrastructure spending up to appropriate comparable standards.
- Work with Nova Scotia trade partners to inform and educate HRM business about exporting. Identify and assist trade-ready companies to enter new markets.
- Establish new and enhanced maintenance initiatives and standards with a focus on year-round, 24/7 accessibility in the downtown. Engage through a public/private approach that emphasizes individual and business responsibility and stewardship.
- Work with our partners to identify common values and vision around growing our community. Create an "alignment of strategic intent" and "rules of engagement" to implement this vision.
- Work to develop the Halifax Gateway as the East Coast logistics hub.

More information on the Economic Strategy is available on the web at: [www.halifax.ca/economicstrategy](http://www.halifax.ca/economicstrategy)



## Immigration Action Plan

In spring 2005, Halifax Regional Council adopted a vision for immigration in our region. “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.” Subsequently in early fall 2005 the HRM Immigration Action Plan was developed. The Action Plan sets out a series of tasks that HRM will undertake in providing services to our citizens to create and maintain a more welcoming community.

The following is a summary of the initiatives HRM has committed to undertake:

Action Plan Summary		
	Communications - External Focus	Organizational - Internal Focus
Phase I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host citizenship ceremonies</li> <li>• Provide welcome letters to newcomers from Mayor and Councillors</li> <li>• Website improvements</li> <li>• Develop a “Newcomers’ Guide to HRM”</li> <li>• Create an advisory group of staff and citizens to identify the challenges and needs of diverse communities</li> <li>• Utilize HRM access centres to link immigrants with existing services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fulfill HRM’s diversity mandate to ensure employees represent the population they serve</li> <li>• Develop a list of potential interpreters within the HRM workforce</li> <li>• Establish a “Where in the World” section in the HRM News employee newsletter</li> </ul>

Action Plan Summary		
	Communications - External Focus	Organizational - Internal Focus
Phase II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with community partners to provide HRM service information in multiple languages</li> <li>• Develop additional versions of the “Newcomers’ Guide to HRM” in Arabic, Mandarin, Spanish, Farsi and Russian and French</li> <li>• Increase diverse community representation on municipal committees and in policy &amp; event planning</li> <li>• Improve staff training in communications, in particular in providing plain language correspondence</li> <li>• Explore opportunities for the three levels of government to co-locate service centres</li> <li>• Collaborate with Halifax Regional School Board to provide information to students on civics and by-laws</li> <li>• Promote culture in HRM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance cultural diversity training for customer service and front-line public facing employees</li> <li>• Encourage appropriate behavior and create staff performance accountabilities for recognizing diversity</li> <li>• Enhance emergency service protocols for dealing with diverse languages</li> </ul>

Implementation of the Immigration Action Plan is ongoing. Significant progress has been made in a number of areas including:

- Mayor Kelly hosted citizenship ceremonies on October 18, 2006. 35 new Canadians took their citizenship oath. Each new citizen received a welcome package including information about HRM services.
- The official launch of the immigration website was held during HRM’s 2006 Diversity Week Kick off.
- HRM has been awarded \$14,000 grant from the Provincial Office Of Immigration to assist HRM in the promotion and welcoming of newcomers to our city and educate the public on the importance of newcomers to HRM.

A copy of the Immigration Action Plan is available on the web at:

<http://www.halifax.ca/communications/ImmigrationActionPlan.html>

## Conclusion

As a municipal government, it is our responsibility to maintain and expand the collection of municipal services and infrastructure within our boundaries. However, we also have broader responsibilities towards the environment, the economy and the nation, as a whole. We have made considerable progress towards achieving many of our goals. Along with our Federal and Provincial partners, we hope to continue to move forward and look for new tools and funding where our issues converge, such as in sustainable planning, environmental management, economic growth, culture and green infrastructure.



**Submission by:  
Halifax Regional Municipality**

**Submission to:  
House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance**

**Tuesday October 24, 2006**



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## Introduction

Halifax Regional Municipality is geographically the largest municipality in Canada. It has long been the business and financial capital of the Atlantic region. While it has roughly 40% of the population it accounts for nearly half of the provincial GDP. The 5.3% unemployment rate is below provincial and national averages. HRM has exhibited steady population growth. HRM is a \$10 billion economy and is home to six degree-granting universities and three community college campuses.

The Halifax Region is home to one of the largest deepwater, ice free ports in the world. It is in the top three of Canadian ports in terms of annual traffic, which moves through its modern inter-modal facilities. The Halifax International Airport is the largest and busiest in Atlantic Canada and has recently been granted pre-clearance status for flights into the United States.

HRM is a Canadian leader in environmental sustainability, having implemented many successful clean air, land, water and energy initiatives, including significant greenhouse gas emission reduction; implementation of one of the first pesticide by-laws in Canada; construction of the \$330 million Harbour Solutions Project which, when completed, will represent the largest clean-up of a saltwater body in Canada; and community energy planning. The municipality is also home to Canada's first joint emergency operations centre, which was a highly successful model during Hurricane Juan in 2003 and White Juan (the record-breaking blizzard in 2004.)

Halifax Regional Council has undertaken a process to set strategic priority areas of focus for the coming year, which include infrastructure, community development, public safety and municipal tax reform.

## Fiscal Imbalance

During the past year, much has been said about the fiscal imbalance that exists in Canada today. The Council of the Federation recently argued there is a “vertical fiscal imbalance,” in the country, with the Federal Government having more fiscal resources than it requires relative to its spending responsibilities, and the Provinces having the reverse. This situation has become even more difficult at the municipal level. For most Canadian municipalities, there is only one source of taxation: the property tax. Property tax is one of the most controversial and difficult of all taxes permitted under the Canadian Constitution. Moreover, municipal expenditures are often driven by decisions made by other levels of government: regulatory and financial. Municipalities have neither the flexibility in their revenues nor strong control over their cost drivers.

HRM has struggled to maintain competitive taxation systems. Residential taxes are low compared to other major Canadian cities, but services have often suffered as a result. We are constantly reviewing the balance between taxes, services and competitiveness.

In a province such as Nova Scotia, the difficulties become compounded. Nova Scotia suffers from the effects of fiscal imbalance with the Federal Government. While HRM is the fastest growing municipality in the region, it is simply not large enough to function without strong links to the Federal and Provincial Governments. Other major cities have the benefit of other types of taxation (eg transfers of fuel taxes) and greater cost-sharing from their respective provincial governments. Halifax is often being forced to do without.

## HRM Initiatives

Halifax Regional Municipality has taken on many initiatives of strategic importance for our community.

- For a decade, HRM has had one of the leading solid waste collection systems in the world.
- In partnership with the Provincial and Federal Governments, we have undertaken the Harbour Solutions Project.
- Since 1998-1999, HRM has decreased outstanding debt by 20%, exceeding the goals of our Debt Reduction Plan.
- HRM has an 'A' rating with Standard and Poor's and continues to adhere to its Multi-year Financial Strategy.

HRM plans to build on our success and continue to move forward. The recently adopted Regional Plan lays out an integrated approach to development over the next 25 years in a sustainable and environmentally-friendly manner. It is estimated that the Regional Plan will have a financial benefit of approximately \$250 million in cost-avoidance over that time period.

HRM's new Tax Reform Initiative is designed to lead to greater community dialogue about how we raise money for the services that we provide.

HRM has recently adopted several new guiding strategies: The Cultural Plan establishes a stronger and more focussed cultural mandate for HRM, and a more integrated approach to service delivery. It is intended to help direct the needed investment to achieve that mandate over the long term.

As the Economic Hub of Atlantic Canada, HRM has developed an Economic Strategy collaboratively with the community and government partners. It is the blueprint for our economic future.

Halifax Regional Council has adopted a "vision for immigration" in the community and a subsequent Immigration Action Plan articulates specific actions HRM can undertake as an organization to help ensure our region is more welcoming to all.

An Infrastructure Planning Process is underway to guide infrastructure investment within the region. Like many Canadian cities, HRM is striving to keep its aging infrastructure in adequate working condition. Water systems, wastewater collection and treatment facilities, recreation facilities, streets and roads are the foundation of all cities. In order for cities to function and grow, infrastructure must be maintained in a sustainable manner.

## Considerations for 2007/2008 Federal Budget

### *2014 Commonwealth Games:*

The Canadian bid for the 2014 Commonwealth Games will propel HRM and the Atlantic Region forward in sport and other areas. Continued all-government support, both politically and financially will be key to our success.

### *Infrastructure Funding Support:*

HRM has an annual infrastructure gap of \$50 million. Continued reinvestment in Federal infrastructure funding programs (such as: Gas Tax Revenue Sharing, MRF, CSIF, Strategic Transit) are of paramount importance to HRM and other Canadian cities. Without such funding, municipalities would not be able to make many of the investments that have been made to date in aging municipal infrastructure. Much more work remains to be done.

### *Halifax/Atlantic Gateway Support:*

Canada is the bridge between the economies of Asia, Europe and the United States, and we are determined to develop Nova Scotia as North America's Atlantic Gateway, the link to Asia via the Suez Canal. Halifax Regional Municipality continues to support the Gateway concept. The Halifax Gateway accounts for \$1 billion in wages each year. Greater investment, integration and partnership is required to grow the Gateway and to ensure it is recognized and promoted as the East Coast logistics hub.

### *Community Energy Project Support:*

A unique opportunity exists in HRM to make a significant impact on cleaner air, as well as enhance energy security through the Community Energy Project. It will generate electricity, using clean-burning natural gas rather than sulphur-heavy Bunker C. The heat co-generated will provide steam and hot water heating for government and university buildings. Federal support to implement the project is imperative. To match the Provincial commitment, \$20 million in federal funding, is required to bring this project and its substantial environmental, financial and social benefits to fruition.

### *Federal Funding for Law Enforcement Officers:*

HRM continues to look forward to the Federal funding for additional law enforcement officers for municipal police agencies that was announced with last year's Federal Budget.

### *DND Standing Contingency Task Force:*

HRM continues its long-standing support of the military in our community. As the Department of National Defence continues to progress towards the establishment of a Standing Contingency Task Force, HRM will remain supportive and urge the financial support to ensure its success.

### *Recreation Facilities:*

The benefits of recreation include improved physical and mental health, development of strong families and communities, prevention of crime and anti-social behavior, protection of the environment and ecological stewardship, and improved quality of life. HRM is faced with the combined challenge of aging infrastructure, population growth, increased demand for services, and changing trends and demographics. Investment is required to fund the development and expansion of community recreation facilities.



## Key Infrastructure Challenges in HRM

Transit and Ferry Service are key objectives of HRM's 25- year Regional Plan. By investing today, it is expected that there will be significant environmental benefits in the future. For example, further reducing greenhouse gas emissions and the pressure to expand road construction. Over 25 years, this saves a critical \$75 million in Capital expenditures, as well as reducing the pressure on Operating costs by about \$90 million. Significant front-end investment is required proceed.

Through MetroLink (bus rapid transit), a successful jointly- funded project, HRM has reduced more than 400 car trips per day on its major traffic corridors. Without programs like the Transportation Showcase, this success could not have been realized. HRM urges continuation of this funding to further support strategic transit usage. While the tax incentive given to transit passengers is positive, the greater need is for investment in transit capacity to respond to increasing ridership.

Direct Federal support of strategic transportation projects, such as the Halifax HarbourLink high-speed ferry service, is a significant and unique opportunity. HarbourLink is a higher order transit service that will build on HRM's very successful bus rapid transit program. Significant environmental and economic benefits are anticipated. HRM remains positive that the HarbourLink will be a successful project for funding through the Highways and Border infrastructure funding program.

Existing stormwater and wastewater infrastructure in HRM is in deteriorated condition. In excess of \$500 million is required just to maintain the status-quo. Increased Federal investment in this important community infrastructure is key. Water and wastewater systems not kept in good working order and consistent with today's standards will inevitably have an impact on public health and on the environment.

## Conclusion

As a municipal government, it is HRM's responsibility to maintain and improve the collection of municipal services and infrastructure within our boundaries. However, we also have broader responsibilities towards the environment, the economy and the nation as a whole. We have made considerable progress towards achieving many of our goals and, in partnership with the Federal and Provincial governments, HRM hopes to continue to move forward and look for new economic tools and funding opportunities where our issues converge.

HRM looks forward to increased investment in municipal infrastructure. It is imperative to our ability to maintain existing infrastructure and expand to accommodate our rapid growth.



For more information:  
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Governance

Government Relations and Strategic Partnership Development will be administered across the organization. Mayor, Council and all staff have a role to play in ensuring its success.

The focus is on matters of public policy, corporate strategy and/or Council direction. Implementation will be representative of HRM’s organizational priorities and needs.

A fundamental role of Halifax Regional Council is to discuss and approve key areas of focus requiring attention. Coordinated and consistent political influence will be required to effectively achieve desired results in areas such as relationship building, new program development, accessing funding and seeking legislative change.

Political participation focuses on arising issues; on issues that have potential to impact on HRM and the citizens of the region. New items requiring action will be brought forward through Council. Emerging issues or areas with significant media and political attention may be identified for action. In such cases, staff support will be provided to initiatives as directed by Council to ensure continuity and resolution.

Halifax Regional Council has ultimate authority in approving any agreements with other agencies that involves sharing the authority and resources of the organization.

Administration and support is provided through the Chief Administrative Office. Responsibility and corporate coordination is within the Chief Administrative Office. As well, strategic and corporate relations will remain with the Chief Administrative Office and Senior Staff as directed by the CAO. Relationship building and partnership development will be carried out by all staff, on an on-going basis. The policy statement and outcomes will guide all interaction with other government and community partners.

This administration’s role is based on two key areas of need: strategic and operational.

The strategic focus is based on the direction provided by Council, and encompasses areas of common interest, goals and objectives between HRM and the partner organizations. The strategic focus is led by the CAO.

The operational focus is based on key issues or needs from an operational or day to day functioning perspective. The operational focus is led by the business units, in conjunction with the Chief Administrative Office.

Priority Action Areas

Yearly priority action areas, for government and partnership relations are developed for Council review and approval. Areas identified will be based on Council direction, business plan priorities and CAO goals and objectives. Other specific activities will be incorporated as required for the implementation of Corporate Strategies or Plans (such as the Regional Plan, Economic Strategy or Cultural Plan).

Work Plan

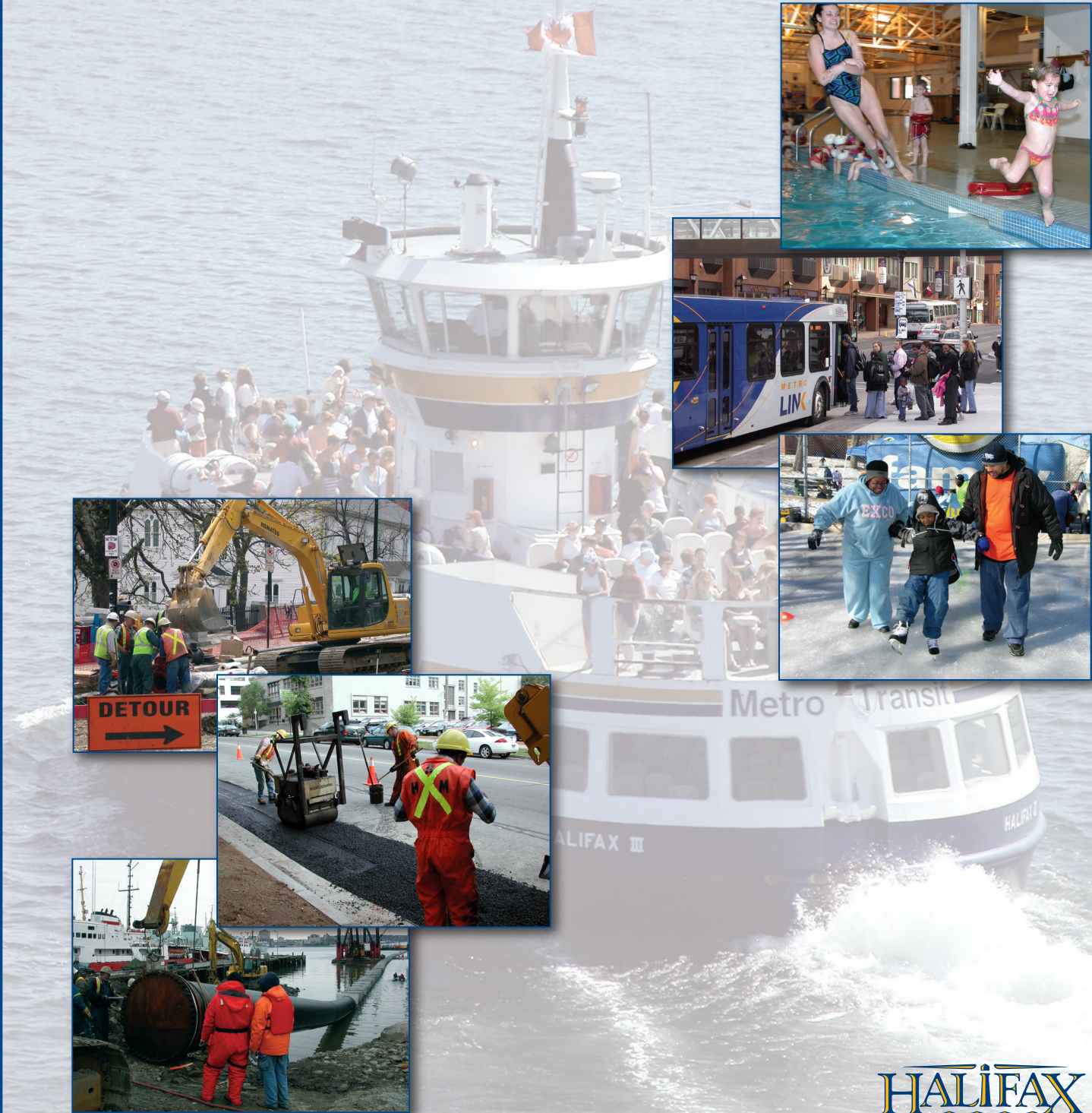
A work plan will be developed and monitored yearly to assist in implementation and tracking. The work plan will consist of key tactics to enable the achievement of outcomes and priority areas noted. A yearly review will be completed to comment on activity undertaken and success of implementation.

————— Approved by Regional Council October 2006 —————

For more information contact HRM Intergovernmental Affairs, 490-3677

# Government Relations & Strategic Partnership Development

*Working together for a stronger community*





# HRM Government Relations & Strategic Partnership Development

## Background

Cooperation and partnerships with provincial and federal governments and community partners will enable HRM to better achieve community goals.

Today more than ever there is a strong linkage required and developing between municipal, provincial and federal governments. Intergovernmental and partner cooperation and relationship building is key to ensuring success at meeting citizen needs and providing effective and efficient public service.

There is only one citizen, one tax payer, and governments have a shared accountability for public service to the citizen. However, each level of government maintains a different responsibility and mandate for specific services and methods of provision. As well, nongovernmental organizations have an important role to play.

Understanding the authority and responsibility of each level of government is key to understanding how to effectively implement government relations and to developing effective intergovernmental relationships. The level of authority and jurisdiction sets the parameters under which each partner can participate. Maximizing the benefits of the different responsibility areas and coordinating the activities around each will enhance service to the public.

Municipal governments are at the closest point of intersection to the community and the citizen. In Nova Scotia, the municipal mandate, roles and responsibilities are set out in the provincial Municipal Government Act (MGA). Municipalities have no legislative or legal authority beyond the MGA. However, the growing significance of local governments and their connection to citizens is being recognized.

Federal and Provincial governments are adapting to the growing significance of municipalities as is evidenced by various recent programs and initiatives. Municipalities need to capitalize on the opportunity and work together with our government (and non-government) partners to further common objectives.

There will continue to be interdependence between the three levels of government, however the form of the relationship between the levels, and the amount of focus on municipal interests will continue to be fluid. Local governments must make every effort to articulate their views in a respectful, consistent and assertive fashion.

Strong intergovernmental relationships provide an opportunity to develop mutually-beneficial partnerships and to shape public policy for the benefit of the citizen. Flexible and cooperative partnerships, based on trust, are required. Accountability and jurisdiction are a reality, but do not have to be a barrier to effective relationships.

## Introduction

HRM's Government Relations and Strategic Partnership Development Policy is intended to advance relationship building and outcome achievement. The policy sets out guiding principles for interaction with key partners. The policy focuses on other government and non-government partners who all have a role in achieving results for the benefit of HRM's citizens. Actions are identified and forwarded based on Council direction and corporate strategies.

Effective government relations requires: understanding the process of how government decisions are made; being proactive; participating; educating; and building relationships with individuals who will impact the outcome. To achieve a goal, it is important to deliver the right message, to the right person, at the right time.

HRM's Government Relations and Strategic Partnership Development Policy articulates the roles and responsibilities of Mayor, Council and staff in intergovernmental affairs and strategic partnership development. The outcomes are toward: relationship and partnership building, advancing key priority issues and issue resolution.

## Policy Statement

In developing government and partner relationships, HRM is committed to a series of principles that will guide all actions and activity undertaken with respect to achieving results.

In HRM, Government Relations and Strategic Partnership Development will:

- be consistent with the vision and goals of HRM
- be consistent with corporate strategies
- support integration and facilitate communication
- foster consistent messaging throughout HRM
- understand and respect jurisdictional boundaries

In undertaking actions related to government and partner relations, HRM will:

- be open, honest, and transparent
- provide credible, reliable, factual information
- be proactive
- seek collaborative solutions and approaches; and
- utilize media opportunities effectively and appropriately
- agree to shared goals with partners

## Outcomes

There are three key long-term outcomes of government and partner relationship development. These outcomes are maintained cross issue or initiative, and are not focused towards any one specific area. Over time, the following outcomes should realized and maintained through ongoing commitment:

- Relationship and partnership building
- Advancement of HRM's priority issues
- Collaborative issue resolution

On a more regular basis, specific issue driven goals will be developed. These goals will be more specific and have a shortened time frame for realization. Such goals will relate more to specific actions to be carried out on an annual basis. Goals such as increased access to infrastructure funding, or legislative changes to meet HRM's needs may be articulated. Items such as these are articulated in the annual Priority Action Areas.



# Government Relations & Strategic Partnership Development

## Priority Action Areas 2006/2007

**“Relationship building is key to ensuring success at meeting citizen needs and providing efficient and effective public service.”**

Following HRM’s Government Relations & Strategic Partnership Development Policy, Priority Action Areas are developed and reviewed yearly based on: Council direction, business plan priorities and CAO goals and objectives. As required for implementation of Corporate Strategies or Plans (such as the Regional Plan, Economic Strategy or Cultural Plan), other specific activities will be incorporated. All activity will be consistent with the Government Relations and Strategic Partnership Development Policy. The areas noted below are organized by HRM Business Unit for implementation and tracking purposes. The following does not prioritize actions, initiatives or requirements; rather it provides a sense of the areas requiring attention from a corporate coordination perspective.

## HRM Focus: Provincial/Federal Governments

### **Chief Administrative Office**

#### Commonwealth Games

- collaborative approaches to a successful international bid

#### Economic Strategy implementation

- work with relevant agencies and funding partners to develop an appropriate model for economic development within HRM
- work with government and community partners to implement the actions identified in the Economic Strategy

#### Federal revenue sharing

- through FCM, participate in revenue sharing advocacy initiatives

#### HST on new home construction

- encourage the Province of Nova Scotia to reduce the amount of HST on new home construction

#### Infrastructure funding

- continue to work with government partners to negotiate funding programs and criteria to benefit HRM (including MRF, Public Transit Funding, Gas Tax, CSIF)
- pursue strategic opportunities for federal/provincial funding of wastewater/stormwater infrastructure
- pursue strategic opportunities for federal/provincial funding for rural Broadband
- pursue strategic opportunities for federal/provincial funding for recreation facilities

#### Opportunities for plan alignment

- identify and implement opportunities for bilateral or trilateral alignment of operational or strategic planning (eg. Strategic Joint Regional Transportation Planning Committee)

#### Partnership approach to infrastructure investment

- where feasible work with Federal and Provincial partners to align priorities regarding investment in capital infrastructure within the region

#### Tripartite agreement development

- as identified by the Gas Tax Agreement, work with Provincial and Federal governments to develop a tri-partite agreement on areas of shared priority

**“Municipalities need to... work together with our government (and non-government) partners to further common objectives.”**

**“Cooperation will enable the achievement of community goals.”**

## **Community Culture and Economic Development**

Cultural priority setting and investment planning

- work collaboratively with Provincial partners to set joint priorities regarding cultural infrastructure and investment within the region

## **Environmental Management Services**

District Energy Project

- advocate for funding confirmation to enable the District Energy Project to proceed

Halifax Regional Water Commission

- secure provincial authorization to regulate HRM wastewater services via UARB

Joint sustainability office

- establishment of a tri-level Joint Sustainability Office

Sewage treatment plants

- federal and provincial support for Risk Based Management Approach

Solid waste exportation

- advocate for the Province of Nova Scotia to provide legislation ensuring that waste can only be exported to another region through an inter-municipal agreement

Solid waste resources

- work with the Province and HRM composting partners for a tripartite agreement on the implementation process of the new NS Composting Guidelines, pursue strategic opportunities for Provincial/RRFB/private sector funding
- extended producer responsibility for solid waste

**“...specific actions and tactics... undertaken in keeping with outcomes and principles.”**

## **Finance**

Fair and equitable funding

- support the recommendations of the Fair and Equitable Funding Implementation Plan

Municipal tax reform

- establish intergovernmental working relationship respecting approach to municipal tax reform

Non-discretionary transfers to Province of Nova Scotia

- initiate conversations, advocate for adherence to advance notice requirements and reduction of portion of tax capacity for funding of provincial responsibilities

Supplementary education funding

- support provincial funding for education such that Supplementary Funding is no longer required

**“Coordination will enhance service to the public.”**

## **Halifax Regional Fire and Halifax Regional Police**

Fire Protection

- complete a Hazard Assessment of Halifax harbour in conjunction with Halifax Port Authority, DND and EMO Nova Scotia
- develop a plan to identify the resources, facilities and equipment that will be required to deliver services to the HIAA and Aerotech Park

Public safety and emergency preparedness

- advocate to have municipalities recognized as a full partner during federal/provincial discussions
- work to ensure access to new federal and provincial funds committed for police officers in inner cities



**“Mayor, Council and all staff have a role to play in ensuring [partnership] success.”**

## **Legal**

Municipal court

- pursue ability to implement municipal court within HRM

Pension solvency

- adoption of regulations pursuant to the Pension Benefits Act which would exempt HRM in particular and perhaps Nova Scotia municipalities generally from the requirement to fund pension plan solvency deficiencies

Regional plan

- work with Provincial partners to enable legislation required for successful implementation of Regional Plan

## **Planning and Development/Transportation**

HarbourLink

- pursue strategic opportunities for federal/provincial funding of Harbourlink

## **HRM Focus: Strategic Partnership**

Areas of strategic partnership focus, for the current year, will include:

- Implementation of MOU with Metro University Presidents Consortium with priority focus on recreation and transit.
- Development of an MOU with Nova Scotia Community College.
- Development of a strengthened and collaborative relationship with DND in Halifax Regional Municipality.
- Participation in Halifax Gateway Council and advancement of Gateway concept to benefit of region.
- Enhanced engagement of community partners including (but not limited to):
  - o Canada Post
  - o Canadian Federation of Independent Business
  - o Canadian National Railway
  - o Community Energy MOU
  - o External utilities
  - o Halifax Chamber of Commerce
  - o Halifax International Airport Authority
  - o Halifax Port Authority
  - o Halifax Regional School Board
  - o Waterfront Development Corporation Limited
  - o Workers Compensation Board

In all cases, strengthening relationships, and ensuring a solid foundation on which specific initiatives can be built is key.

For more information contact HRM Intergovernmental Affairs, 490-3677

