



**Item No. 3(ii)**

**Council Focus Area 2008/2009**

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## **Community Development**

**November 13, 2007**

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## **Introduction**

During the 2006/07 business planning process, Council identified several areas which it wanted to focus on in the coming years. These issues became the basis for the following four (4) strategic focus areas within the Community Development focus area.

- Regional Plan Implementation
- Youth
- Community Building

This report on the Community Development focus area builds on the direction Council set in 2007/08 and provides an update on the progress to date and proposes the next steps for 2008/09.

## **Issue - Regional Planning**

Following the adoption of the HRM Regional Plan in August 2006, implementation of the plan is a priority, with implications for all aspects of work undertaken by HRM on behalf of its residents.

### **Outcome**

#### **1. Improved Governance**

### **Progress**

#### *Regional Plan Advisory Committee*

- Regional Plan Advisory Committee (RPAC) established April 2007
- responsible to advise Council on the progress of major projects undertaken under the Plan
- plan provides HRM's framework for monitoring growth and change

#### *Public Debate & Decision Making*

- plan frequently cited in Council debate and public consultations as providing relevant guidance for decisions
- The Provincial government designated 3,300 acres of land as wilderness park on October 30, 2007 which compliments the Plan's direction to create a regional park in that area

#### *Functional Plans*

- The main focus for Plan implementation is through the undertaking of 21 functional plans. Many are underway

### **Next Steps**

- Regional Planning Advisory Committee to send first annual report on the implementation of the Regional Plan to Regional Council in December 07.
- A detailed implementation schedule on functional plans will be part of the Regional Planning Advisory Committee annual report.

## **2. Coordination of Growth and Infrastructure Investment**

### *Capital Investments*

- The Plan establishes the long range growth pattern for HRM allowing capital investments for a broad spectrum of facilities and infrastructure to be strategically located to achieve maximum benefit and avoid waste.

### *Master Plans*

- The Plan designates six Master Plan areas for suburban growth
- Three master plan areas are under construction and detailed planning has begun in the Morris Lake area
- This program is a fundamental planning piece needed to recover infrastructure invested through the Capital Cost Contribution program.
- The master plan areas under construction will contribute more than \$40,000,000 for wastewater and transportation infrastructure development over the next twenty years.

### *Capital District*

- The Plan establishes the Capital District as the key area for economic growth and directs investment in new transit and road upgrades.
- Delivery of a number of streetscape improvement projects now visible throughout the downtown and regional business districts.
- Over \$1,000,000 has been invested in various beautification projects over the past year.
- The Plan has identified key lands for industrial development on Halifax Harbour.

### *Community Facility Master Plan*

- Community Facility Master Plan for indoor/outdoor sport, recreation and culture commenced and multi-party steering committee established.

## **Next Steps**

### *Master Plans*

- An analysis of the community, infrastructure and financial implications of proceeding with any or all of the remaining three potential master plan areas will be undertaken. These areas are Port Wallace, Birch Cove Lakes area, and Sandy Lake.
- Capital Cost Charges for Bedford West Master Plan area to be finalized and regional charges for solid waste and transportation to be developed.
- Complete Community Facility Master Plan

## **3. Community Design**

### *Urban Design*

- HRM by Design focuses on urban design in the Regional Centre, specifically the type, quality, scale, priorities and procedures for public and private development.
- The current focus is on downtown Halifax which will set the pattern for neighbourhoods across the Halifax Peninsula and central Dartmouth.
- Joint Public Lands Studies with the Province completed for Spring Garden Rd/Queen St and Province House Grand Parade.

## **Next Steps**

- Proceed with the implementation of HRM by Design for downtown Halifax establishing new development policies, regulations and review procedures - Spring 2008
- Proceed with HRM by Design visioning program for the remainder of the Capital District neighbourhoods.
- Develop implementation plans for Joint Public Lands Strategies

## **Issue - Community Building**

Building communities that are self supporting and equipped to address opportunities and challenges are key to HRM's success. Furthermore, many community challenges have underlying social issues which must be addressed in partnership with other agencies and levels of government. Recognizing the important function communities can play in their respective development has required HRM to reconsider its approach to service delivery and shift towards a community-based service delivery model. Specifically, a community based model places greater emphasis on empowering and organising community, building relationships and facilitating community networks and ensuring systems, processes and institutions are in place for communities to be successful. The model focuses on the positive assets of each community, and less on needs. It emphasizes the importance of community being involved in setting its own priorities and being part of the solutions.

The essential ingredients of community building is a healthy volunteer base that is engaged and active in community life and is proud of their community and its cultural diversity.

### **Outcome**

#### **1. Community Visioning**

### **Progress**

#### *Community Visioning*

- The community visioning process is an important aspect of implementing the Regional Plan
- Community driven visions for Musquodoboit Harbour, Fall River and the Bedford Waterfront were approved in principle by Council in October 2007
- The visions included action plans which will be useful to guide both near term service delivery, community planning needs, and long range investments
- They form the basis for a strong collaboration between HRM and the community for achieving desired outcomes.

### **Next Steps**

- Report to Council from Regional Planning Advisory Committee recommending new multi-year visioning program for growth centres.

#### **2. Engaging HRM's Residents in**

*Active & Informed Community*

### **Active Civic Life**

- An active and informed community that is directly involved in local decision making is essential for building strong communities.
- Three Community Visioning Pilot Projects and HRMbyDesign have incorporated community engagement best practices.
- A new program entitled Good Neighbours Great Neighbourhoods has been developed. The program encourages residents to take positive actions in their respective communities. The program also ensures that resident action is supported by well defined business processes from HRM.

#### *Community Engagement Strategy*

- A draft Community Engagement Improvement Strategy is being developed and outlines strategic areas for improvement.

### **Next Steps**

- Implementation of Good Neighbours, Great Neighbourhood Program
- Submit Community Engagement Improvement Strategy to Regional Council

### **3. Growing HRM's Volunteer and Community Capacity**

#### *Building new strategic partnerships and solidifying the old*

- The issues facing community are complex and often require focussed and coordinated effort involving many service providers, partners and agencies.
- Established HRM Community Building Service Providers Networking Circles, HRM Youth Services Network and continue to partner with the United Way, Metro Universities, Capital Health Districts, HRP and RCMP on volunteer initiatives.
- Recognizing the importance of newcomers, staff have also placed significant emphasis on working with local agencies such as Metropolis, MISA and GHP on advancing

HRM's Immigration Action Plan.

*Building Capacity*

- Staff assisting community groups with recruiting and training community volunteers, strategic planning and board development.
- Volunteer Management Strategy was completed to assist staff in defining priorities for volunteer management.
- A key element of the strategy was the establishment of a Volunteer Resource Centre.
- Support being provided to approximately 200 community groups.

**Next Steps**

- Maintain existing community partnerships and develop new strategic partnerships
- Host 2008 Immigration Conference
- Update Immigration Action Plan
- Continue volunteer training and recruitment
- Enhance Volunteer Resource Centre and volunteer recognition
- Assist 2011 Canada Games Host Society

**4. Governance and Policy**

*Policy Framework*

- Development of Civic Events Policy Framework and Marketing Levy Reserve to improve and focus support to event community.
- Establishment of Special Events Advisory Committee to oversee Policy Framework and to advise Council on strategic event spending.
- Launching of the Major Events Hosting Strategy to improve HRM's position as a world class event region.
- Management agreements and funding approved for 23 HRM owned and community managed community facilities.
- Municipal program mandate for Captain William Spry affirmed and renovation/planning commenced.



*Community Grant Framework*

- A review of HRM's Community Grant Program has been undertaken to ensure the program is aligned with community outcomes.
- The proposed changes have been reviewed and supported by the Grants Committee.

**Next Steps**

- Further review of Cultural Funding Framework
- Continue program and funding review of community management HRM facilities
- Finalize recapitalization plans for Captain William Spry Community Centre

**5. Fostering HRM's Community  
Pride and Appreciation of Culture and  
Diversity**

*Cultural Capital Designation*

- The cultural advisory committee is preparing an application for a Cultural Capital of Canada designation and funding.

*Community Art*

- The Cultural Advisory Committee is developing a Public Art Policy.
- Important to community building is a sense of pride and community. The Community Art and Community proud programs have been very successful at advancing this outcome. This year 14 community art projects were completed, and staff are in the process of creating 30 new murals for HRM Traffic Control boxes. In total, 27 new pieces of Public Art have been created.
- A total of 14 Community Proud Events were held throughout the region attracting upwards of 2,000 residents. More than 350 youth directly participated in the community art program.
- Continue to collaborate with the NS Department of Justice, PW&GSC, the WDCL, as well as the school board to advance

various community art initiatives including the youth restorative justice community art program, and the Bedford Row and Maitland Street Mural projects.

*Community Events*

- An important aspect of community pride and appreciation of diversity is events.
- 95 community events and celebrations which attracted more than 400,000 residents were delivered.
- Essential to the success of these events is the volunteer structure. Approximately 1,300 resident volunteered this year to support community events and festivals.

**Next Steps**

- Completion of Major Event Hosting Strategy
- Completion of Public Art Policy
- Implementation of Canada Cultural Capitals Application, should HRM be successful
- Continue Community Art program
- Continue Traffic Control Mural Box Program

**Issue - Youth**

The youth engagement process will continue to be used to plan, develop and deliver youth services to ensure an appropriate range of programs in sport, arts, leisure and leadership are available.

An increased focus will continue to be placed upon disengaged or marginalised youth and pre-teens. Diversified programs and access to programs for these youth has begun and need to continue.

**Outcome**

**1. Active partnerships and collaboration with other youth services providers**

**Progress**

*McConnell Project*

- Three year youth engagement project initiated with Heartwood, the McConnell Foundation and 15 youth group service providers.
- The project will identify opportunities for improved coordination and delivery of youth programs as well as opportunities and need for youth inclusive facilities.
- Steering Committee established

*Physical Activity Strategy*

- The Regional Physical Activity Strategy for youth was initiated with partners including Heart & Stroke, Capital Health, Dalhousie, Provincial department of Health Promotion and Protection.
- Environmental scan and stakeholder consultation undertaken.

**Next Steps**

- The Heartwood/McConnell project will conduct an environmental scan of youth services across HRM to assess strengths and gaps.
- Continue participation in the Regional Physical Activity Strategy.

**2. Increase youth programming for 10-12 year old pre-teens**

*Programming*

- Assessed the baseline of direct program offerings for 10 to 12 year olds. Over 500 programs offered with over 8000 registrants.
- Over 75 new initiatives implemented including leadership development opportunities, residential camps and training sessions, festival days, rock shows, mentoring programs, floating cafes, urban art programs, all age music venues, radio pilots, etc.

**Next Steps**

- Continue evaluating gaps and opportunities in programs for 10-12 years old and adjust accordingly.
- Ensure a balance of program opportunities sport, arts, culture and leisure for HRM youth.

**3. Youth Governance**

*Youth Advisory Committee*

- New mechanisms for youth to participate in governance where established including the development of an HRM wide Youth Advisory Committee, new community based or functional based youth action teams and some ad hoc action teams.

**Next Steps**

- Continue to utilize the youth engagement process both at a community level and HRM wide level.

**4. Opportunities for youth facing barriers**

*Youth Opportunities*

- Proposals have been developed and submitted to fund youth at risk initiatives in communities across HRM.
- 1100 youth received financial assistance for activities through combined funding of Canadian Tire Jump Start program (jointly administered by HRM).

**Next Steps**

- Review and assess opportunities to assist participation of financially disadvantaged youth in youth activities.
- Implement enhanced youth at risk programs pending approval of project funding from federal government.