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Item No. 8.1

Halifax Regional Council
July 8, 2008
August 5, 2008

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Cathie O'Toole".

SUBMITTED BY: _____
Acting for: Cathie O'Toole, Director, Infrastructure and Asset Management

DATE: July 2, 2008

SUBJECT: Corporate Sustainability Filter - Pilot Project

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Staff is providing an update to Regional Council regarding progress towards a corporate Sustainability Filter.

BACKGROUND

As noted on the attached Power Point presentation entitled, "Sustainable HRM", one of the four corporate operating themes established by Regional Council centred around "healthy, sustainable, vibrant community".

To help determine gaps and opportunities a Corporate Sustainability Analysis was carried out. Flowing from this Analysis were 12 high level corporate wide recommendations, including a need to link initiatives. Staff identified three immediate priorities emanating from this list which included green buildings, green procurement and green corporate culture. A number of initiatives are underway in each of these areas.

HRM has also taken an integrated systems approach to clean air, land, water and energy that helps link the various initiatives which was a recommendation of the Corporate Sustainability Analysis.

DISCUSSION

At the present time and as part of greening the corporate culture, corporate wide sustainability training, including action focussed workshops is ongoing.

Several related activities are ongoing as well including the development of a corporate sustainability filter.

Corporate Sustainability Filter

The attached presentation provides an overview on what a sustainability filter is; why HRM needs such a decision making mechanism; and the benefits. In essence, a planning and management tool that will help determine/ predict the social and environmental impacts and related costs of major decisions before they are made, a method of back casting.

Pilot Projects

The corporate sustainability filter will integrate science based principles of sustainability and the back casting process of The Natural Step.

To develop a robust sustainability filter, HRM will pilot the application of a sustainability filter in three areas: Procurement, Infrastructure and Asset Management, and Community Visioning.

It is planned to carry out the pilots later this year, commencing in the early fall.

A report will be prepared for the HRM Senior Management Team with recommendations on how to proceed with a corporate sustainability filter after the pilot phase has been reviewed and assessed.

The proposed filter to be used with the pilot projects is attached. A number of staff including those who will work directly on the pilots have taken initial training on The Natural Step.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The cost to develop the filter, provide additional training, roll out the pilot projects, and measure and report on results is anticipated to cost approximately 20 thousand dollars. These funds were approved in the 2007/08 budget and are available within capital project CII00740 - Whole Systems Methodology.

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.

Regional Plan and Sustainability

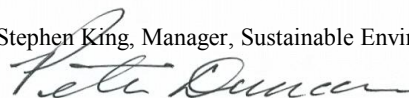
The development of a sustainability filter - decision making tool supports the intent of the Regional Plan. Further, it provides a mechanism to determine/ forecast social and environmental impacts and costs before major decisions are made.

ATTACHMENTS

- Power Point Presentation - Sustainable HRM
- Sustainability Filter - Pilot Project

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.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 : Stephen King, Manager, Sustainable Environment Management Office, 490-6188



Report Approved by: _____ Acting for: Cathie O'Toole, Director, Infrastructure and Asset Management, 490-4825

Sustainable HRM

Background

In early 2000's HRM Regional Council established four corporate themes; safe community; excellence in governance; excellence in service delivery; and a healthy, sustainable, vibrant community.

Sustainability Links

The four pillars of sustainability include: fiscal; environmental; cultural; social.

HRM has taken an integrated systems approach to clean air, land, water and energy under the environmental pillar.

All four pillars of sustainability are inter-linked.



Corporate Sustainability Analysis

- 12 High Level corporate wide recommendations
- 3 Immediate Priorities
 - Green Corporate Culture**
 - Green Buildings**
 - Green Procurement**
- Numerous initiatives underway in each of these priority areas
- **Direct Link with Bill #146 Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act**



Present Activities Include

- Corporate wide Sustainability Training
(Building the rigor and understanding behind the sustainability systems approach)
- Specialized/ focused workshops
- Continuing to build critical mass internally/ externally
- **Green Building** Policy Workshops; LEED Construction; Eco-Trust; Energy Efficiency Initiatives
- **Green Procurement**; Eco-Labeling; Training; etc.
- **Green Corporate Culture** – Training; Transition Team; etc.
- **Sustainability Filter**

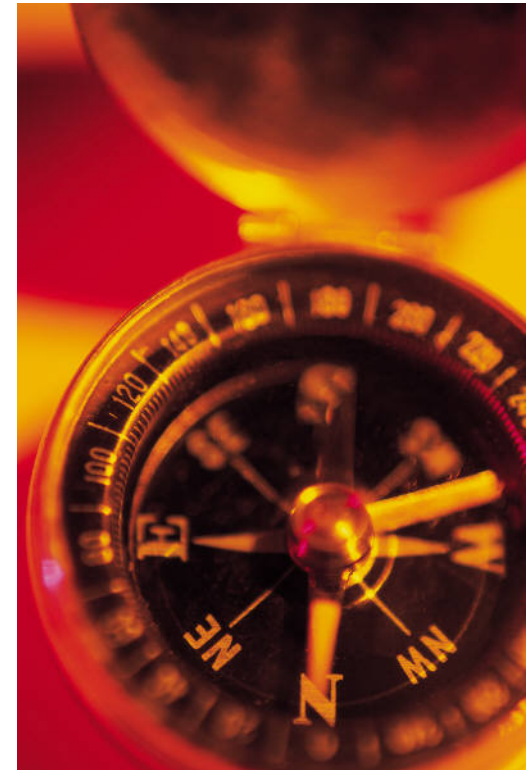


Developing and Using a Sustainability Filter



What is a sustainability filter?

- An improved **basis for selection** of projects and resources
- **Includes** long term goals and priorities
- **Assesses** the environmental, social and economic impacts
- A support tool for **making informed decisions** at different levels with departments within an organization.



Why does HRM need a sustainability filter?

- HRM is committed to a healthy, **sustainable**, vibrant community
 - Wise use of our resources, reduces waste and creates a healthy environment
- In order to achieve this commitment, we need to assess our decisions measure our progress
 - The filter helps us **measure the impact** our decisions has on the environment people in the community and our bottom line.
 - The filter helps us **evaluate different options** for each decision



What are the benefits of a sustainability filter?

- **Informed** decisions
- **Enhanced** corporate wide culture (sustainability thinking and practices)
- Ensure that individual decisions in the short-term are **taking HRM towards it's long-term sustainability goals** (e.g. environment, economic, social and cultural)
- **Empowered** staff

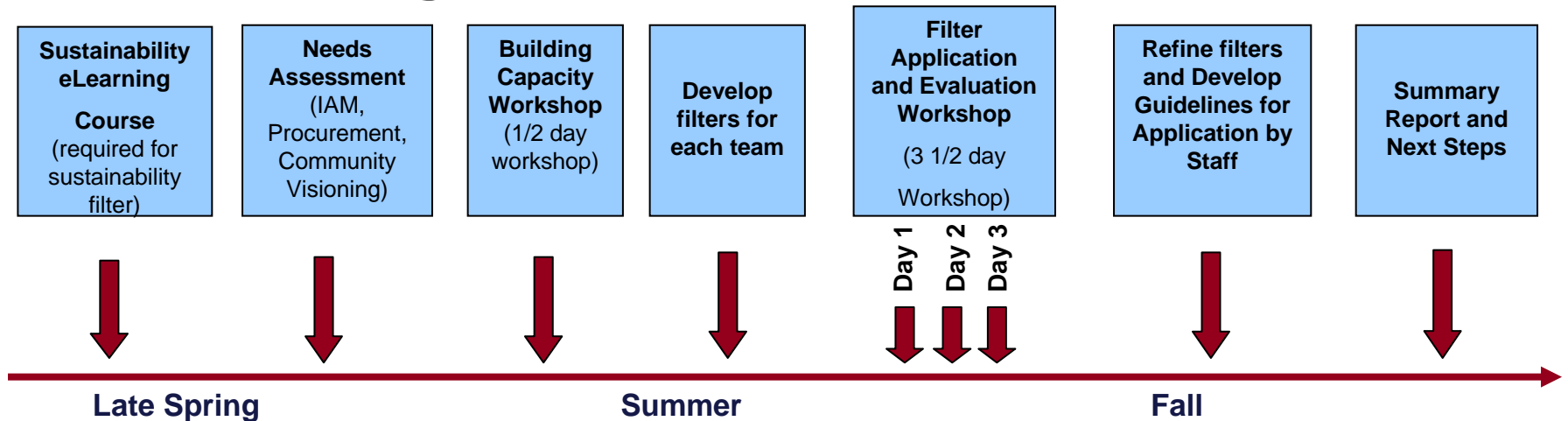


How will HRM develop the sustainability filter?

- To develop a rigorous sustainability filter we will integrate **science based principles of sustainability** and backcasting process of The Natural Step into HRM's draft sustainability filter;
- In order to ensure consistency with existing strategic priorities the sustainability filter will demonstrate which **HRM strategic priority** it works towards;
- To develop a complimentary and robust sustainability filter HRM will **pilot** the application of a sustainability filter in three areas: (Procurement, IAM, Community Visioning)
- Staff (who have already taken the sustainability training) from the groups noted above will participate in **interviews** to ensure that the filter is designed to meets their needs;
- A customized **sustainability filter** and **guide for team leaders** will be prepared.
- A **workshop** to enhance the sustainability filter will be conducted with staff from each department;
- A report will be prepared for SMT with **recommendations on how to proceed** with the sustainability filter after the pilot phase.



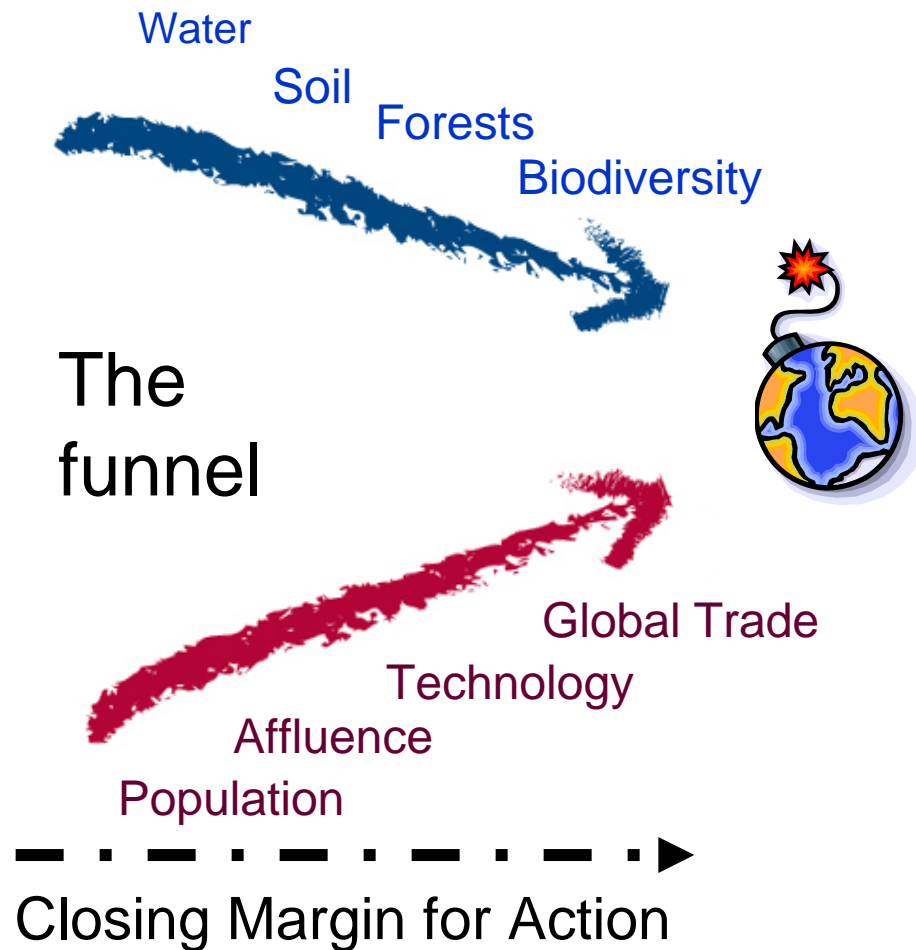
HRM Training Timeline 2008



Deliverables:

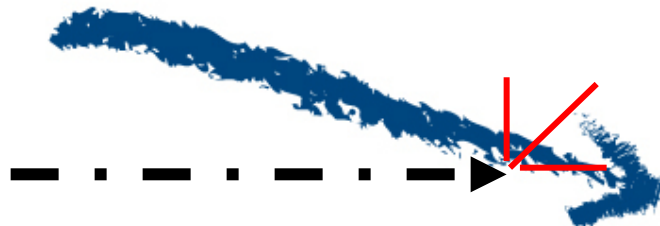
1. Scope needs through interviews with 5-8 managers and staff from each of the teams (IAM, Procurement, Community Visioning);
2. Provide additional sustainability training to staff who were not able to participate in the April 'Building Capacity Workshop' (Community Visioning group);
3. Enhance current tool and people's ability to apply it based on the needs assessment and develop a guidance form for each team;
4. Meet with the three teams to apply and evaluate the tool (three 1/2 day workshops plus prep time);
5. Capture and prepare notes from meetings;
6. Refine and develop guidelines for application of sustainability filters; and
7. Prepare a summary report with recommendations.

Our Sustainability Situation



Declining
natural resources and
ecosystem services

Increasing
demand for natural
resources and
ecosystem services



Increased costs

- Energy, fuel
- Waste disposal
- Hazardous waste
- Municipal services

Public Health Issues

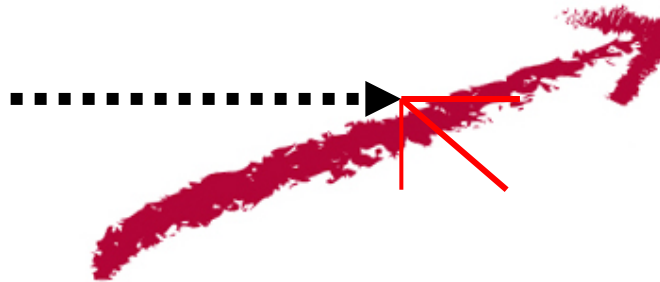
- Poor air quality
- New diseases

Unexpected Costs

- Contamination
- Sick buildings

Quality of Life Issues

- Traffic congestion
- Social stratification
- Affordable housing
- Recreational opportunities & experience



Regulatory Compliance

- Emissions Standards
- Waste management
- Stormwater management

Public Credibility



Sustainable HRM - Halifax Regional Municipality is committed to a healthy, sustainable, vibrant community. This includes wise use of our resources, reducing waste and a healthy environment.

NAME OF ACTION/PLAN/PURCHASE: _____

1. DOES THIS ACTION/PLAN/PURCHASE MOVE HRM TOWARDS OUR COMMITTED VISION OF A HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE, VIBRANT COMMUNITY?

Indicate the top three (or all if appropriate) HRM Council Focus Areas and/or strategic initiatives/EMT priorities that the action supports:

Council Focus Areas		EMT Priorities		Plans & Strategies	
Tax Reform	9	Fiscal	9	Regional Plan	9
Infrastructure	9	Employer of Choice	9	Cultural Plan	9
Public Safety	9	Service Delivery	9	Immigration Action Plan	9
Community Development	9			Economic Strategy	9
				Environmental Sustainability	9
				Gateway	9

2. HRM HAS TAKEN AN INTEGRATED SYSTEMS APPROACH TO SUSTAINABILITY.

Does this action/plan/purchase move HRM toward sustainability?

To reduce and eventually eliminate HRM's contribution to:	Toward Quickly	Toward Slowly	Neutral	Away	If 'away' how could you avoid or minimize this negative impact?
Ongoing build-up of substances taken from the earth's crust (or use less or different stuff).	9	9	9	9	
Ongoing build-up of substances produced by society (or make less or different stuff).	9	9	9	9	
Ongoing degradation of natural systems by physical means (or reduce our impact on life-sustaining ecosystems).	9	9	9	9	
Undermining the ability of people to meet their human needs (or meet human needs fairly and efficiently).	9	9	9	9	

Have other costs/ considerations been taken into account; i.e. life cycle costs, pollution mitigation, ghg emissions, etc. been considered in the decision _____
