



PO Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Item No. 5

**Halifax Regional Council
October 27, 2009**

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brad Anguish".

Brad Anguish, Director, BPIM and Harbour Solutions Project

DATE: 21 October, 2009

SUBJECT: 2009 HRM Citizen Survey

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

This report stems from the Municipality's commitment in the 2009/10 business plan to conduct a Citizen Survey.

BACKGROUND

As part of the commitment to citizen-centred service delivery, staff are preparing to coordinate an HRM Citizen Survey. Regular surveying of its residents is a best-practice of leading cities and municipalities. The survey is designed to solicit citizen expectations and satisfaction regarding HRM services, and will provide Councillors and staff with valuable feedback as we move into this year's planning cycle.

The Citizen Survey is an important element of the Corporate Planning Framework that was reviewed with Council at COW on December 16, 2008. The survey asks questions related to HRM's Community Outcomes, namely:

- A Safe and Welcoming Community;
- Affordable Transportation and Mobility Options;
- Diverse Recreation, Leisure and Cultural Choices;
- Well Planned and Engaged Communities;
- Respect for the Environment; and
- Economic Prosperity.

Benefits of Doing a Citizen Survey:

There are a number of benefits associated with conducting a Citizen Survey:

- Best-practice of leading cities and municipalities to solicit feedback from a random and representative sample of citizens region-wide;
- Enables identification of the variable(s) with the most influence on citizen's perception of HRM, and identification of the main themes most affecting residents quality of life;
- Establishes a performance baseline that will be used to evaluate ongoing HRM performance;
- Provides an assessment of community priorities and need(s), identifies broad community issues, and enables Council and staff to align service delivery to meet specific community and planning needs;
- Results will provide valuable feedback and trends over time to gauge satisfaction with HRM's services;
- Results will help to inform discussions during the 2010/2011 business planning cycle, enabling better allocation of resources for maximum community benefit and improved policy decision-making;
- Fulfills a commitment made as part of HRM's Economic Strategy to undertake a citizen survey on a regular basis.

DISCUSSION

A draft citizen survey has been developed in-house, in consultation with HRM business units, and our partners at the Halifax Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Halifax Partnership. HRM released an RFP to conduct the survey on Wednesday September 16th, and closed the RFP on October 9th. Staff is completing final review of the submitted bids and preparing to award a contract to the successful proponent.

Proposed Methodology:

While the final process will be subject to discussion with the successful proponent, it is anticipated that a Region-wide survey will be conducted. The results will provide feedback and priorities of citizens that is representative of the general population of HRM. It is estimated that for this Regional survey approximately 2,400 residents across HRM will be surveyed, which would provide HRM with data that is accurate to within +/- 2%, 19 times out of 20.

It is expected that this survey will be conducted via several modes: mail, online, and where required, telephone. This methodology has been selected to reduce the environmental impact associated with doing a large-scale, mail-based survey, as well as to expedite the surveying process.

Survey Schedule:

It is estimated that the engagement will take approximately ten weeks to complete, depending on the final methodology, with results presented to Regional Council in January 2010. A draft time line is shown below. The actual surveying of the residents should take approximately four weeks to complete.

Task	Completion Date
Project start-up meeting	October 27
Pre-survey development	November 3
Survey pre-test / Finalize survey	November 17
Survey distribution and administration	December 15
Data analysis / Final report	January 5, 2010

Communication Plan:

HRM has developed a comprehensive communications plan to accompany the survey and build broad awareness for this initiative and motivation on the part of HRM citizens to participate in the survey.

The communications plan is intended to raise awareness of the survey before, during, and after the survey, and to communicate results to citizens in a timely fashion. It should also raise the confidence of citizens that the Municipality will use the results to improve services and further engage them in helping shape their community.

Task	Timing
News Release	10 days before survey to public
Newspaper Ad	5 days before survey to public
Public Service Announcement (PSA)	Weekly during survey duration
Reminder Postcard	10 days after survey goes out
Thank you ad to those who participated	Once survey period is complete
Media Release Results of Survey	When analysis is complete

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

A review of the associated costs have indicated that the full cost of conducting the survey would be approximately \$75,000. This would include contracting of the survey firm to refine the questions being asked, conducting the survey and analysing the data, as well as the administrative costs associated with producing and distributing the survey.

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

None

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 : Michael Pappas, Business Planning Coordinator, BPIM, 490-5534



Report Approved by: Brad Anguish, Director BPIM & Harbour Solutions Project, 490-4769