

10.1.3

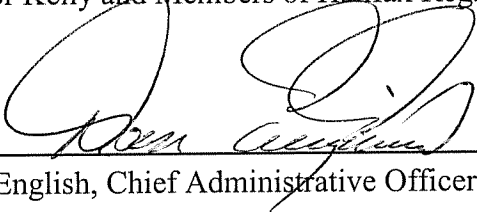


PO Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Halifax Regional Council
October 3, 2006

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:



Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: September 8, 2006

SUBJECT: Government Relations and Strategic Partnership Development

ORIGIN

Improving intergovernmental relations and liaising with other community organizations were discussed as priority issues during the September 15-16, 2005 Council Workshop.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that :

1. Halifax Regional Council approve the attached Government Relations and Strategic Partnership Development Policy.
2. Halifax Regional Council approve the attached Government Relations and Strategic Partnership Development Priority Action Areas 2006/2007.

BACKGROUND

During the September 2005 Council Workshop, Council indicated a desire to promote cooperative relations with other agencies – government, not-for-profit and private sector. At that time, a government relations framework for HRM was reviewed and agreed upon. The government relations framework has been expanded to include strategic partnership development.

Discussed at the session were ideas regarding establishing a Council agenda for dealings with the Province to ensure that Council speaks with one voice; and setting up an inter-agency task force to build and sustain a positive working relationship with the Province.

During discussions, Council also asked that the Chief Administrative Office consider coordination of an ongoing and targeted agency liaison program. Through such a program, Council would be provided timely reports on agency liaison activities and would be kept informed on meetings with other organizations. The program would represent the interests of Council based on existing policies, budget and strategic plan. Council direction would also be sought whenever possible on significant issues not covered by existing policies, budget and strategic plan.

DISCUSSION

To respond to issues raised by Council, and to ensure HRM is proactively pursuing strategic opportunities to work with government and non-government partners to achieve community goals, several initiatives are being undertaken:

- Government relations and strategic partnership development function moved to Chief Administrative Office to enable a regular liaison mechanism to pursue a proactive strategy, resolve arising issues and maximize service delivery to citizens.
- Government relations and strategic partnership policy developed, with input from Councillors, for Council approval.
- Specific actions undertaken simultaneously to address ideas expressed by Council including:
 - Development of government relations agenda (see attachment C - HRM Initiatives Spring/Summer 2006)
 - Establishment of HRM/NS joint working groups (such as Strategic Joint Regional Transportation Planning Committee)
 - CAO proactively approaching government and community agencies to develop partnerships, initiate collaborative activities and/or advocate HRM priority issues. For example: development of MOU with NSCC; presentation on HRM priorities to NS Deputy Minister Committee, resulting in various joint initiatives being considered; meeting with Federal officials to highlight HRM funding priorities for upcoming programs.
 - Regular reporting to Council on relevant liaison activities undertaken with topics or outcomes agreed upon.

Government Relations and Strategic Partnership Development

The attached policy (for discussion and approval) articulates principles and goals for HRM with respect to improving relationships with other government and community partners. Based on research undertaken, it is believed that no other Canadian municipalities have formalized (or publicly available) government relations policy or strategy documents. HRM is a leading municipality in this regard.

The attached policy does not detail specific activities that will be undertaken as flexibility to manoeuvre within a constantly changing external environment is required. Rather, adherence to the policy will help to highlight issues that require action and assist in the establishment of solid relationships with other levels of government and community partners to achieve municipal priorities. The yearly areas of priority will provide focus and direction to implementation. As priority action areas are fully articulated, a yearly work plan will be developed (for internal purposes) to monitor and track success. Council will receive annual reports and opportunity to provide direction on the action areas.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

None.

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.

ALTERNATIVES

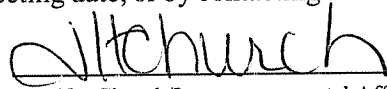
Council could choose to alter any aspect of the policy.
Council could choose to add/edit action area.

ATTACHMENTS

- A - HRM Government Relations and Strategic Partnership Development Policy
- B - 2006/2007 Government Relations and Strategic Partnership Areas of Focus
- C - HRM Initiatives Spring/Summer 2006

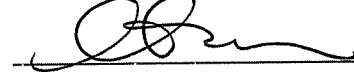
A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.html> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by:



Jennifer Church/Intergovernmental Affairs

Finance Approval:



Catherine Sanderson, CMA, Senior Manager, Financial Services 490-1562

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 in meeting citizen needs and providing effective and efficient public service.

There is only one citizen, one taxpayer, 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

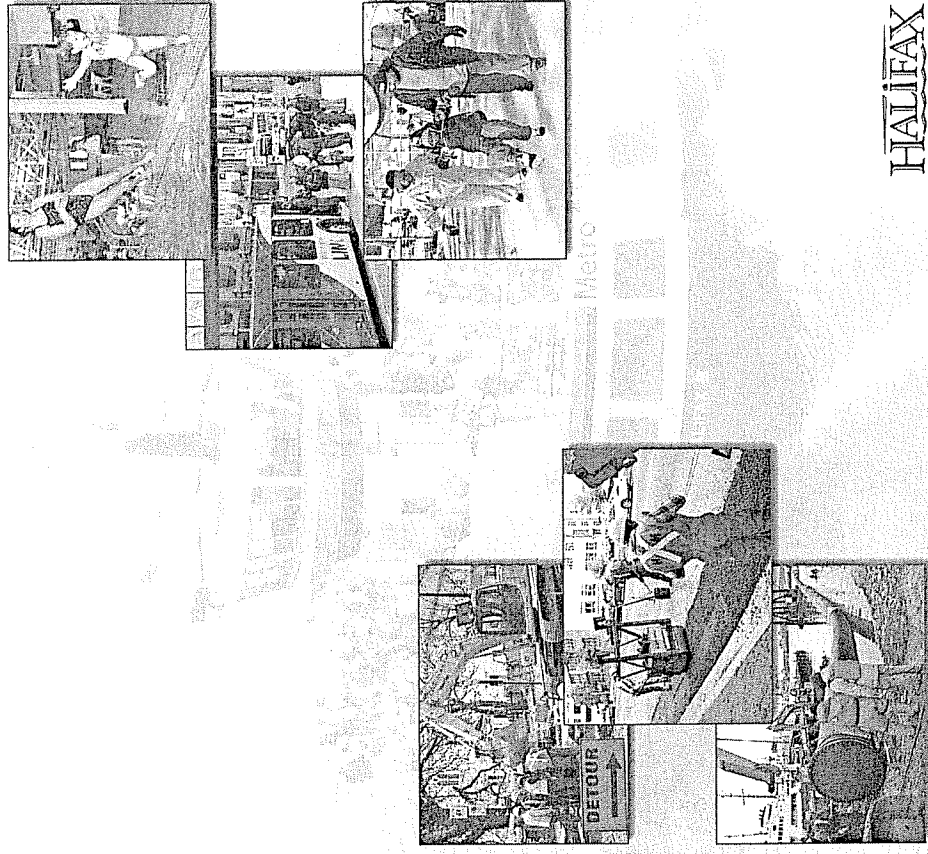
There are three key long-term outcomes of government and partner relationship development. These outcomes are maintained cross issue or initiative, and are not focused towards any one specific area. Over time, the following outcomes should be realized and maintained through ongoing commitment:

- 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

Working together for a stronger community



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 news 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 narratives 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.

For more information contact HRM Intergovernmental Affairs, 490-3677



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

Infrastructure funding

- continue to work with government partners to negotiate funding programs and criteria to benefit HRM (including MRIF, 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.



HRM Initiatives Spring/Summer 2006

HRM Initiatives Spring/Summer 2006 will be restructured for consistency with the Government Relations and Strategic Partnership Development Policy and content will be updated.



HRM Priority Issues

HRM receives very little by way of Transfers from other levels of government compared to other Canadian municipalities. As an historic community dating back to the 1700s, Halifax is at a financial disadvantage 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 the Federal and/or Provincial levels of government would be of significant benefit.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Harbour Link

- Halifax Harbour Link is approximately a \$20m project, a fitting project for consideration under the Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund.
- 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 significant 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 \$5m for the project.
- HRM's Harbour Link is a unique project in Canada.
- Harbour Link will be integral to the Commonwealth Games International Bid.

Stormwater and Wastewater

- Existing stormwater and wastewater infrastructure is in a deteriorated condition.
- In excess of a \$500 million funding need over the near term in order to maintain the status quo system.
- HRM has significant number of systems out of compliance with many 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.

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.
- There is currently a funding shortfall of approximately \$5.4 million for recreation facility capital.

Broadband Infrastructure

- Re-funding of BRAND Program imperative to rural economy.
- Broadband is essential to closing the digital divide between rural and urban HRM.
- The discontinuation of CAP combined with lack of BRAND funding means that rural communities are losing ground.

ENVIRONMENT

- Community Energy Project announcement made December 2005 – a formal contribution agreement is now required.
- Manufacture and sales 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. (Designing plants relative to the assimilative capacity of the receiving waters 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.
- Development of 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 ghg emission reduction efforts, climate change vulnerability, and risk management costs to upgrade\protect already strained infrastructure from severe weather impacts.
- An airshed management approach involving HRM, Province of NS, Government of Canada, industry and community is desirable.

CULTURE

- In April 2006 HRM adopted a 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.

POLICE & 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 Conservative Party committed to funding additional municipal police officers throughout Canada, particularly for inner cities experiencing high levels of violent crime. This new funding should be discussed with municipalities, who are aware of the current crime issues and directly responsible for policing and public safety, prior to its implementation. This is particularly important given that HRM has the highest rate of violent incidents among Canadian census metropolitan areas, according to November 2005 Statistics Canada data.
- 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 (ie. 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 ongoing Nunn Commission Inquiry, police recommend that the federal government reviews and revisits 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.
- As is illustrated in the above points, police require legislative change to allow the justice system to be able to respond in a way that takes, and keeps, criminals off the streets.

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.

Department of Natural Defence and Federal Presence in HRM

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

Gateway

- Halifax Gateway accounts for 16% of all economic activity in HRM and accounts for \$1billion in wages each year. The Gateway generates over \$250 million in municipal, provincial and federal taxes.
- Greater integration and high levels of partnership will help to stabilize and grow the Gateway as an important contributor to the economy.
- Halifax Gateway needs to be recognized and promoted as the East Coast Logistics Hub.

Life Science Research Institute

- Community is building a \$34m Life Science Research Institute.
- It will house brain repair center and other economic incubation projects.
- 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.
- There is an \$18m request to the Government of Canada for support. Atlantic Investment Fund and Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund are potential funding opportunities.

TELECOMMUNICATION ACCESS TO MUNICIPAL RIGHTS OF WAY

- The final report of the Telecommunications Policy Review Panel recommends greater CRTC regulatory oversight and control with respect to municipal rights of way.
- This recommendation departs from the Panel's position with respect to other general communications issues where reliance more on market forces and less on CRTC regulation is advocated, in order to promote economic efficiency in the telecommunications sector and resulting benefits to the consumer.
- By not allowing municipalities to manage and charge for the use of municipal property, the Panel is in effect, advocating that municipal governments subsidize the telecommunications industry.
- The end result is that taxpayers, both locally and nationally, are subsidizing private, for-profit telecommunications companies.
- HRM asks that this Panel recommendation not be adopted.

COMMONWEALTH GAMES BID

- On December 15, 2005, Commonwealth Games Canada (CGC) announced Halifax as the domestic bid winner for the 2014 Commonwealth Games (CWG). Halifax successfully competed against Hamilton, Ottawa, and the Regional Municipality of York.
- The first Federal partnering opportunity will be related to the CWG International bid costs.
- A multiparty agreement for the 2014 Commonwealth Games will be negotiated with the Federal and Provincial governments.
- Should HRM be the successful bidder and be awarded the 2014 Commonwealth Games, the games would attract people from all over the world and the legacy left behind would serve the people of this region well, i.e., new community facilities and world-class training centres in Atlantic Canada, and the promotion of healthy, active lifestyles.
- The Commonwealth Games is one of the many competitive opportunities for Canadian youth. The Games involve providing the planning and support necessary for athletes to develop through a continuum of opportunities with sophisticated programs and services, and will enable the recruitment and training of the next generation of high performance athletes to represent Canada at subsequent Commonwealth Games.

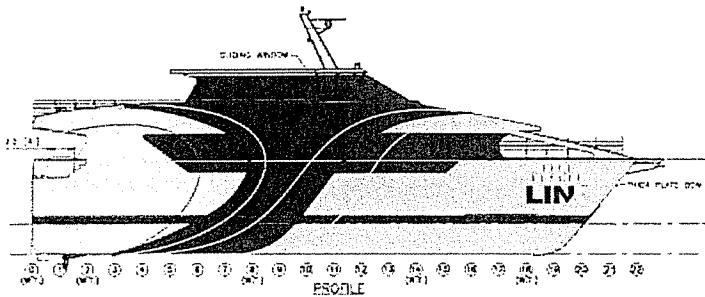
TRIPARTITE AGREEMENT

- 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 Halifax HarbourLink Project

February 2006

The Project

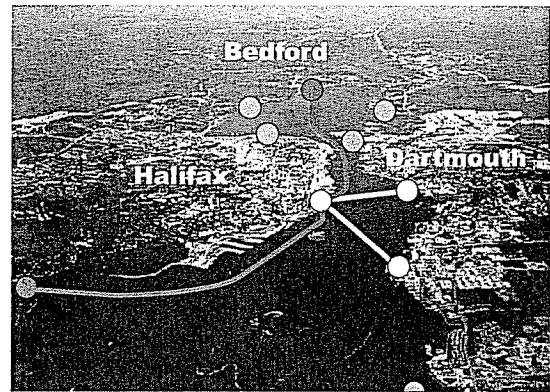


The evolution of high-speed, low-wake catamaran ferries for urban commuter travel means that longer routes within our harbour may now be serviced efficiently and reliably. Halifax Regional Municipality is currently considering a commuter high-speed ferry link between the existing Downtown Halifax Ferry Terminal and Mill Cove in Bedford. Purcell's Cove will be explored as a possible next stop for ferry service.

The preliminary service plan is for a 15 minute trip from Bedford to the downtown ferry terminal and a 10 minute trip from Purcell's Cove. The new terminals would be accessible from park-and-ride lots and be well connected to bus routes.

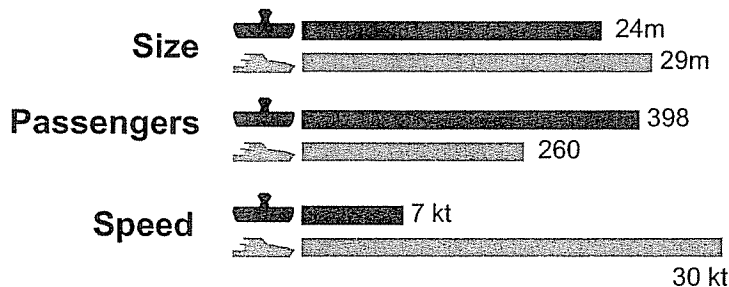
The Ferry Network

In addition to our existing network (shown in yellow), consideration is being given to developing two other routes (red). Other possible locations for future terminals (green) exist around the harbour.



- | Existing | Proposed | Longer Term |
|-------------|------------------|-------------------|
| ○ Halifax | ● Mill Cove | ● Birch Cove |
| ○ Dartmouth | ● Purcell's Cove | ● Wright's Cove |
| ○ Woodside | | ● Shannon Park |
| | | ● Fairview Cove |
| | | ● Eastern Passage |

How the New Ferries Compare to our Current Ferries



Fast Ferry Demonstration

In October, 2005, we brought the Whaling City Express to Halifax Harbour from Massachusetts for some trial runs. 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. The four runs that were available to the public were filled to capacity.

The Market Potential:

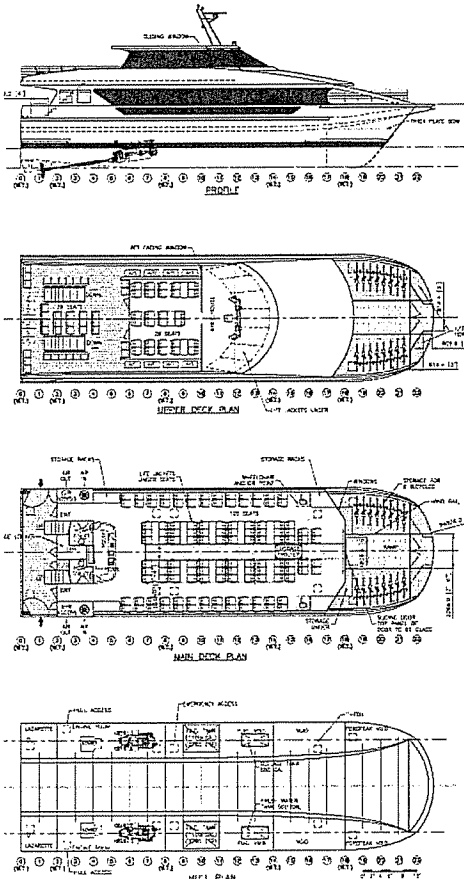
We've learned a number of interesting things from focus groups and market surveys conducted in 2005:

- The average Bedford resident makes three round trips to downtown Halifax every week
- Seven out of ten Bedford residents expressed interest in using a fast ferry regularly
- Six out of ten residents in Hammonds Plains and Sackville expressed the same interest

The Vessels:

The vessel shown below is a 29m catamaran designed in Australia by Crowther Design. Although this design may not ultimately be the one selected for use in Halifax Harbour, it does have the size and features we are looking for.

Although the vessel can operate at speeds of up to 30 knots, it is planned to be run at speeds of 26-27 knots. At that speed, it can come to a dead stop in two boat lengths. It has a maximum draft of 1.7 metres. The vessel can carry between 200 and 260 seated passengers depending on design features. There is inside seating on two decks and 38 seats outside at the rear of the upper deck. Up to 18 bicycles can be stowed on the bow.



The Benefits:

Halifax Regional Municipality's Regional Plan includes the goal of supporting alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle trips and implementing opportunities for enhanced transit service.

With their quick trip times, ferry routes from Mill Cove and Purcell's Cove both have great potential to attract people who currently make commuting trips downtown by car through congested areas such as the Bedford Highway and the Armdale Rotary.

For a new ferry route to thrive, the terminal must attract a number of walk-up customers in addition to park-and-ride, passenger drop-offs and transfers from bus routes. At Mill Cove, potential for high volumes of walk-up traffic would be created by the current phase of the proposed Bedford waterfront development plan.

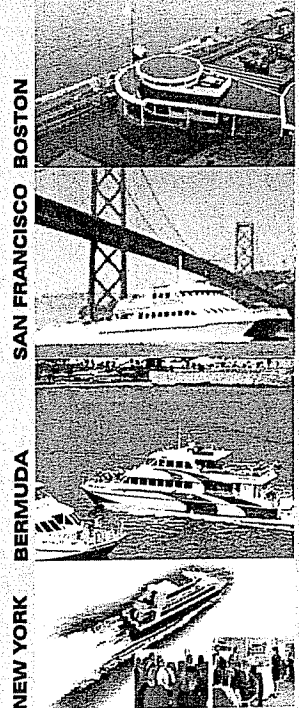
An expanded ferry network provides a unique opportunity to develop high-speed, high-capacity transit links without the concern or cost of leasing rail lines or managing schedule delays inherent with commuter rail or bus transit.

Other features of an expanded ferry network include:

- Bringing development and activity to the waterfront
- Providing an important link in emergency situations or when weather conditions close or damage land routes
- Delivering the safest mode of urban transit

In other cities...

Fast ferry networks are becoming increasingly popular.



Metro Transit
HALIFAX
REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

For information on the HarbourLink Project contact:
Brian Taylor, Project Manager
taylorb@halifax.ca
or 490-1665



HRM Fast Facts

Demographics

- Geographically largest municipality in Canada
- 44% of Nova Scotia's total employment
- 40% 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 20 years
- Half of HRM's population is under the age of 37, 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.
- Received a bond rating of "A Stable" from Standard & Poor's
- Total Debt down \$58M or 16.7% over five years from \$347.5m to \$289.4m
- Debt levels remain high for Canadian cities

Fiscal Pressure

- HRM is dependent on property tax for 83% of its revenue—among the highest in Canada
- HRM receives 1.5% of total revenue from the provincial government, less than any other major Canadian city
- HRM is required to collect provincially-mandated expenditures that account for 15.7% of its total revenue
- Annual infrastructure funding gap of nearly \$50m
- 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.

Economy

- HRM is a \$10 billion economy, dominated by service sector activities
- Regional center of business and finance, hospital/medical services, research facilities, public administration and transportation
- HRM has strong per capita income and GDP
- HRM generates 47% of provincial GDP - \$11,100m
- 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 tones or organic composted since 1999
- 100,000+ green organic collection carts

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
- 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 215,500
- 70% participation over last 15 years
- 5.6% 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.

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



Halifax Regional Municipality Issues and Initiatives

For More Information Contact
Dan English
Chief Administrative Officer
englisd@halifax.ca
490-6430

Table of Contents

Introduction	Page 3
Council Focus Areas	Page 4
Finance	Page 5
Regional Plan	Page 8
Infrastructure Planning	Page 11
Environmental Snapshot	Page 12
Cultural Plan	Page 14
Economic Strategy	Page 16
Immigration Action Plan	Page 18
Conclusion	Page 20

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 5.6% 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 11, 2005 Council approved a list of 12 areas of focus. Staff have reported to Council on activities to date (per area of focus) and potential actions to address the issues raised in each focus area. Direction is being taken as to how to move forward on each item and the resulting information is being incorporated into business plan and budget process.

The 12 Council Focus Areas are:

- By-law Enforcement
- Community Development
- Community Recreation
- Community Relations
- Economic Development
- Infrastructure
- Public Safety
- Regional Plan
- Taxation
- Traffic
- Transit
- Youth

The goal of the process was to have Council identify and articulate the areas they are most concerned with and to ensure staff understand Council's priorities. The key areas of focus and the specific needs articulated in each will then be reflected in the HRM business plan and budget. This will require a balancing of the priorities with the capacity of the organization. Choices will be made and new approaches will be considered.

All Council Focus Area staff reports finished to date are available on the web at: www.halifax.ca/council

Finance

HRM continues to face increasing operating pressures. For example, in 2005/2006 operating pressures were up \$27m over the previous year. For 2006/07 another increase in operating pressures of \$32 million is projected, on a gross operating budget of approximately \$620 million. The increases are due to a number of factors:

Starting point – 2005/06 budget	\$588m
Additions required:	
Provincial Property Tax Increase (Mandatory Education, Other)	\$9.2m
Municipal Services	
Operating costs to deliver existing services	\$12.7m
New Services approved in 2005/06	\$1.9m
"Pay as you go" increase	<u>\$8.2m</u>
Sub-total	\$22.8m
Total Projected Increases and Pressures	<u>\$32.0m</u>
2006/07 Projected Costs	\$620m

Provincial Costs - Under Provincial legislation, HRM is required to fund Mandatory Education costs (ie a share of the School Board's budget) which for HRM is one of the fastest rising costs. If the mandatory education rate is not decreased, HRM's contribution to education costs will rise by \$7.6 million to a total \$85.9 million. The cost to HRM of the Provincial assessment system is expected to rise by \$ 1.3 million (from a budget of \$4m to \$5m). The cost of the corrections system is expected to rise by \$340,000 from \$7.2m to \$7.6m.

Municipal Services - Operating Costs to deliver existing services is predominantly made up of inflation and compensation. New services approved in 2005/06 include bus rapid transit and police dispatch and officers. "Pay as you go" (capital from operating) is used to fund the capital budget. This amount is expected to increase to deal with a larger capital budget.

Transfers from other levels of Government continue to be minimal. Compared to other major municipalities, HRM receives very low transfers. In 2005/06 HRM received approximately \$3.9m in provincial grants in lieu (property tax payments) and approximately \$3.5m in unconditional grants from NS (library grant, HST

rebate). HRM receives approximately 1.5% of revenue from transfers, compared to a 14 Canadian city average of 16% of revenues from transfers.

Property Tax revenues are estimated to increase by \$37.8 million if the property tax rates are not reduced. (This includes the cost of the Provincial cap on assessment and the extension of HRM's temporary tax credit). Maintaining the tax rate will lead to an average increase in property taxes of \$171. HRM has reduced general tax rates in four of the last six years.

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

HRM's debt, which is supported by the property tax rate, continues to steadily decline. Our debt this year is forecast at \$281. At its peak in 1999, debt reached \$348million. Despite this, our total debt level is considered high, compared to other Canadian municipality standards.

HRM has recorded small budget surpluses for each of the past six years, and Council has lowered the General Tax Rate slightly in four of the past six 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.

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 corresponding increase in services. It's important to point out that HRM has among the highest dependencies on property taxes as its primary source of revenue of any municipality in Canada. We are currently reviewing our property tax system to make it more sensitive to growth issues and more equitable in general. This process will include public consultation and cooperation with the Province. During the upcoming year HRM plans to undertake public consultations on property tax reform and would be pleased to work cooperatively with Province on this matter. HRM is also very interested in reviewing the recent initiative in Toronto whereby the Province agreed to provide that City with broader powers.

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 has risen just over 20%. The cost to re-surface a kilometer of street, however, has risen over 100%. Sidewalk renewals are up to 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.

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.

Regional Plan

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.

The Regional Plan is a culmination of more than three years of research, background study and analysis, combined with an extensive public consultation and public outreach program.

Many residents have asked how the Regional Plan will affect them - their home, their neighbourhood, and their community. While the Regional Plan will provide general direction on how growth and development will occur in the region as a whole, we should expect it to have some effect on our individual lives. For example, a key initiative of the Regional Plan is to improve the protection of the natural environment by restricting development in much of the region's natural resource and environmentally sensitive areas. Additionally, the Regional Plan will promote walkable communities, provide greater access to transit and support active transportation. Healthy growth translates into healthy living. From this... we all benefit.

People living in pedestrian-friendly neighbourhoods lower their risk of obesity by 35%. Even a 10% improvement in our level of physical activity would yield a savings to the province of \$4.75 million. - Heart and Stroke Foundation (2004)

Anticipated Growth Over 25 Years

It is anticipated we will have an additional 90,000 people living in HRM in 25 years' time. This will bring the total population up to about 455,000 from about 370,000 (an increase of approximately 20%). We will see an even greater proportion of dwelling units created since our average household size is declining (nearly a 30% increase). In all, we will add nearly 60,000 dwelling units, bringing our total up from around 155,000 units to about 215,000.

Four Pillars of Growth

The four pillars of growth under the Regional Plan include strategies to:

1. protect the natural environment and community heritage
2. encourage growth in a series of mixed use centres
3. link communities through investment in transit, roads and active transportation systems
4. build fiscally sustainable communities and a strong economy

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.

Immediate Changes

With the approval of the Regional Plan, some changes to how land is developed will happen right away. A few of the key changes are:

- New 20 metre minimum building setback and tree buffer from all watercourses
- New residences must be 2.5 metres above the high water mark in most coastal areas
- More park land required in new subdivisions
- More protection for built heritage
- New requirements for rural subdivision development with more open space protection

Community Visioning, Watershed Studies and Community Plan Reviews

After the Regional Plan is approved, HRM will consult with local communities on how their existing community planning strategies and land use by-laws can be enhanced by the new policies and objectives contained in the Regional Plan. Within the overall framework of the Regional Plan, communities will have the opportunity to determine how the new regional policies can be tailored to their particular areas.

Watershed studies and **Community Visioning** will be the first steps in the Community Planning Review Process. Afterwards, communities may then consider elements such as:

- boundaries of the Centres
- community design guidelines
- new sewer and water service boundaries
- appropriate locations for various forms of housing
- measures to address affordable housing
- protection of significant cultural landscapes and scenic views
- appropriate locations for residential care facilities in residential areas

Implementation & Project Scheduling

Implementing the Regional Plan requires leadership, support and cooperation

between the public and private sectors. A number of key actions will be completed in the short-term (1 to 5 years) to implement the Regional Plan. A few examples include:

- placing power lines underground in new developments
- monitoring water quality
- implementing new community design guidelines for development

Taking action...

Draft #2 of the Regional Plan calls for the preparation of "Functional Plans". Some, like the Active Transportation Plan and Cultural Plan, are underway already. Functional Plans 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	Potential Hazards to Development
Affordable Housing	Open Space
Business Park Development	Opportunity Sites Redevelopment
Capital District Public Infrastructure	Public Transit
Communication & Public Education	Regional Parking Strategy
Communication Tower/Antenna	Road & Road Network
Community Energy <i>*includes Wind Energy</i>	Storm Water Management
Cultural	Transportation Demand Management
Economic Development	Urban Forest Master Plan
Emission Reduction	Urban Streetscape
Finance	Wastewater Management
Halifax Harbour	Water Quality Monitoring
Heritage	Underground Utilities

Next Steps...

At the regular evening session of Regional Council on Tuesday, April 25, 2006, the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (Regional Plan) and Regional Subdivision By-law were given First Reading. A Public Hearing to consider formal adoption of the Regional Plan, Regional Subdivision By-law and amendments to the Municipal Planning Strategies and Land Use By-laws of Halifax Regional Municipality is the next step.

The Regional Plan, Subdivision By-law, amending by-laws, maps and Regional Planning Committee report are available on compact disc by calling the Regional Planning office at 490-5857 or by email at regplan@halifax.ca

Draft #2 of the Plan is available in PDF at: www.halifax.ca/regionalplanning

Infrastructure Planning

Within HRM's boundaries, infrastructure spending has not been what it should be. HRM has been able to increase its capital budget because of increasing tax revenues and because of restraints in operating expenditures. Increases in capital assets bring with it increasing operating costs. Exacerbating the problem is inflation, while CPI is projected to be 1.8% in 2006-07, HRM is projecting the cost of infrastructure to increase 11%.

Nationally, municipalities have been struggling to maintain and invest in new infrastructure, a situation that has led to the sharing of the federal gas tax revenues. Like many older Canadian cities, HRM is striving to keep its aging infrastructure in decent working condition. Water systems, wastewater collection and treatment facilities, streets and roads - such infrastructure is the foundation of all cities, and in order for cities to function and grow, this infrastructure must be maintained in a sustainable manner. Further, water and wastewater systems which are not kept in good working order consistent with today's standards and today's regulations will inevitably have an impact on public health and on the environment. The federal and provincial governments' commitment to municipal infrastructure is imperative. Enhanced municipal funding will go a long way toward achieving improved infrastructure for all citizens. HRM has an annual infrastructure gap of nearly \$50m.

HRM is working towards an infrastructure plan for the region. A short term infrastructure pressures list has been developed (in working draft form). The draft list indicates a need of over \$1 billion in capital infrastructure over the next few years. While this is not an achievable target in the short term, HRM is undertaking a planning process to guide infrastructure investment. Last fall Council approved a set of General Infrastructure Criteria. The criteria is intended to provide a framework for a systematic and objective approach to prioritizing infrastructure projects. The criteria include: Strategic Importance; Risk; Fiscal Considerations; Capacity and Success Likelihood. The Regional Plan, for example, is a significant input into the development of the infrastructure plan. The criteria are being used in selecting projects for consideration as infrastructure funding opportunities become available – such as the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund, Gas Tax and Transit Funds.

Environmental Snapshot

HRM plans to strategically move forward on a number of clean air, land, 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.

Corporate Scope:

Healthy, Sustainable, Vibrant Community

- Fiscal, social cultural and environmental sustainability

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

Priority Issues Include:

- Major waste and stormwater 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 , ie, 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 ,ie-Climate SMART initiative
- Environmental regulatory and policy information sharing opportunities
- Data collection and information sharing, ie 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

The HRM Cultural Advisory Committee was established by Regional Council in March 2005 to develop HRM's first Cultural Plan. The Plan was approved by Council in April 2006.

The Cultural Plan policies and actions establish a stronger and more focused cultural mandate for HRM and a more integrated approach to policy and service delivery. The Plan's phased actions will and will help direct the needed investment to achieve that mandate over the long-term. The Cultural Plan is directly linked to the draft HRM Regional Plan, Economic Development Strategy and Immigration Action Plan. The Plan will be implemented over a ten-year span.

There are five strategic directions to guide the Plan's implementation.

Strategic Direction 1:

Focused Service Delivery & Partnerships

Goals:

- To be a leader in cultural planning & development through a strong cultural mandate and integrated policy and service delivery
- To be a leader in cultural planning & development through sustainable partnerships and collaborations with other government levels, agencies and community and private sector organizations
- To achieve sustainable cultural development through a community-based model of planning, investment and support

Strategic Direction 2:

Cultural Access & Equity

Goals:

- To enhance the role of community facilities as hubs for cultural program delivery and cultural opportunity
- To develop an accessible inventory and network of cultural assets and information
- To build a greater understanding of the cultural character and identity of HRM and its communities through promotion and awareness
- To develop opportunity for all residents to experience culture through a fair and balanced approach to cultural service delivery

Strategic Direction 3:

Promote & Reinforce Community Character

Goals:

- To develop a comprehensive program for the conservation , preservation and promotion of HRM's municipal and community heritage resources
- To establish a high level of design quality in the development of buildings, spaces and infrastructure to build on the context and character of neighbourhoods and communities
- To develop and maintain a municipal Public Art Program to enhance HRM's cultural identities and establish the importance of art in community-building
- To develop the vibrant and diverse cultural identities of HRM as defined by its many communities, cultural assets and people
- To build a regional and community network of public and civic spaces to enhance HRM's cultural identity and provide cultural opportunity for residents and visitors
- To offer a range of leisure and entertainment activities to encourage celebration and appreciation of HRM's cultural authenticity

Strategic Direction 4:

Life-Long Learning & Creative Development

Goals:

- To grow HRM's capacity and reputation as a city and region of learning opportunities through education and innovation
- To build the conditions, infrastructure and networks needed to develop HRM's reputation and status as a creative community and centre for design excellence
- To enhance infrastructure, programs and policies to enable professional artists in all media to successfully live, exhibit and perform in HRM
- To develop HRM as a place of opportunity and creative development for its children and youth

Strategic Direction 5:

Investment & Promotion

Goals:

- To position HRM as a globally competitive "Creative Community" and destination for skilled workers, visitors, and business
- To invest strategically in culture for the long-term social and economic well-being of the HRM Region and its communities
- To develop a region-wide system of cultural infrastructure that builds on community and cultural assets

More information on the Cultural Plan is available on the web at:
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, 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 Cost logistics hub.

More information on the Economic Strategy is available on the web at:
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"> ◦ Host citizenship ceremonies. ◦ Provide welcome letters to newcomers from the Mayor and Councillors. ◦ Website improvements. ◦ Develop a "Newcomers' Guide to HRM". ◦ Create an advisory group of staff and citizens to identify the challenges and needs of diverse communities. ◦ Utilize HRM access centres to link immigrants with existing services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Fulfill HRM's diversity mandate to ensure employees represent the population they serve. ◦ Develop a list of potential interpreters within the HRM workforce. ◦ Establish a "Where in the World" section in the HRM News employee newsletter.
Phase II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Work with community partners to provide HRM service information in multiple languages. ◦ Develop additional versions of the "Newcomers' Guide to HRM" in Arabic, Mandarin, Spanish, Farsi and Russian and French. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Enhance cultural diversity training for customer service and front-line public facing employees. ◦ Encourage appropriate behavior and create staff performance accountabilities for recognizing diversity. ◦ Enhance emergency service protocols for dealing with diverse languages.

Action Plan Summary	Communications - External Focus	Organizational - Internal Focus
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Increase diverse community representation on municipal committees and in policy & event planning. ◦ Improve staff training in communications, in particular in providing plain language correspondence. ◦ Explore opportunities for the three levels of government to co-locate service centres. ◦ Collaborate with Halifax Regional School Board to provide information to students on civics and by-laws. ◦ Promote culture in 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.



Notes for an Address by

Mayor Peter J. Kelly

Halifax Regional Municipality

to the

House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance

Fall 2005

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Thank you Mister Chairman and Committee Members.

I am very pleased to have the opportunity to discuss Halifax Regional Municipality's current economic and financial situation and our new growing relationship with the Government of Canada.

As you may know, H-R-M 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 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 worlds 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.

H-R-M is currently developing an Economic Strategy, which will serve as a blueprint for our economic future. Growth predictions are expected to be slow and steady over the next 25 years. We have spent the last two years undertaking an extensive Regional Plan to ensure that our growth over the next 25 years is sustainable, environmentally friendly and that it is supported by the development of a new and exciting transportation system. The Regional Plan will direct the growth in a manner that is financially sustainable and makes economic sense, helping to manage and guide any new infrastructure needs.

On the financial side, we continue to make progress against the difficult issues that the Halifax Region and most other Canadian municipalities face.

The debt, which is supported by the property tax rate, continues to steadily decline. Our debt this year is forecast at \$281 million or 2.7% of Real Domestic Product. Despite this, our total debt level is considered high, compared to other Canadian municipality standards. Our \$330 million Harbour Solutions Project, which will be the largest clean-up of any saltwater body of water in Canada, is well underway. When completed in 2008, the water quality in most parts of the harbour and adjacent waters will be suitable for recreational uses, such as swimming. The Harbour Solutions Project is supported by a comprehensive H-R-M Pollution Prevention Program, which has been put in place to further protect our wastewater infrastructure and our water resources.

H-R-M has recorded small budget surpluses for each of the past six years, and Council has lowered the General Tax Rate slightly in four of the past six years. As the 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.

Like many municipalities, HRM is also experiencing tremendous pressure on the property tax system. It's important to point out at this time the H-R-M has among the highest dependencies on property taxes as its primary source of revenue of any municipality in Canada. We are currently reviewing our property tax system to make it more sensitive to growth issues and more equitable in general. This process will include public consultation and cooperation with the Province.

We have made considerable progress on reducing our infrastructure deficit. Three years ago, we estimated it would cost about \$70 million a year just to maintain our existing asset base. That's without building any new services. Today, through careful financial planning and good budgeting, we have reduced that figure to \$50 million.

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 has risen just over 20%. The cost to re-surface a kilometer of street, however, has risen over 100%. Sidewalk renewals are up to 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.

One of the truly bright spots in the last two years has been the growing positive relationship between H-R-M and the other Canadian municipalities with the Federal Government. We appreciate greatly the relief that has been provided from the 7% Federal GST and the sharing of a portion of the Federal gasoline revenues.

Relief from the GST provides H-R-M with \$5 million a year in new revenues. The Gas Tax agreement will provide nearly \$8 million in the first year. These funds are all at the margin. With only \$70 million of unconditional capital funding this year, funds such as this are critical. We want to ensure that these funds go towards dealing with our infrastructure gap, environmental and green issues and expanding our transit fleet.

HRM welcomes the opportunity today, and would appreciate any further opportunities to discuss in more detail specific municipal priorities with you before funding decisions are finalized. Some of HRM's biggest pressures are being felt in the areas of environmental sustainability, transportation and the continued support economic, social and cultural infrastructure.

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. H-R-M, 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 the Federal government 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.

Like many older Canadian cities, H-R-M is striving to keep its aging infrastructure in decent working condition. Water systems, wastewater collection and treatment facilities, streets and roads - such infrastructure is the foundation of all cities, and in order for cities to function and grow, this infrastructure must be maintained in a sustainable manner. Further, water and wastewater systems which are not kept in good working order consistent with today's standards and today's regulations will inevitably have an impact on public health and on the environment. The federal governments' commitment to municipal infrastructure is imperative. Enhanced municipal funding will go a long way toward achieving improved infrastructure for all citizens.

Within the last few weeks, H-R-M's first Bus Rapid Transit system, the "Metro Link" went into service. The buses run on biodiesel fuel--which is a mixture of fish oil and diesel fuel. The new service has reduced the commute time from the Cole Harbour area of Dartmouth into the downtown core in half or down to about 20 minutes in total. This service would not be possible without the Federal Transportation Showcase initiative.

Within the next several years, we hope to expand the "Metro Link" fleet and service area. A priority project we are pursuing is an expansion of our ferry fleet through the addition of a high-speed ferry service in Halifax Harbour and beyond. The HarbourLink Project supports a strategic approach to linking future settlement patterns with transportation investment. We expect a positive environmental and economic impact from the addition of the service and related facilities, but Federal support of this project is critical to its success.

As I mentioned, H-R-M is home to a very successful port operation. However, having an active container port located in the midst of our busy downtown core has resulted in freight movement delays, increased greenhouse gas emissions/impacts and risk to the community. Working with the Halifax Port Authority and Transport Canada, we have developed some inter-modal solutions and we look forward to working with those same partners in implementing those solutions.

Our goal is to modernize our transportation system, reduce the number of vehicles on the road, avoid costly and unnecessary road construction and protect our environment. Therefore, I cannot tell you how timely the new transportation infrastructure program is to us. Every cent of it and more can be used to help push our community forward and allow us to make an even greater contribution to the Canadian economy. In combination with the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (MRIF), these programs will enable us to make progress on some of the significant infrastructure issues being faced throughout our region.

Investments in social and cultural amenities are also imperative to ensuring a strong economy. In the past investment in this kind of infrastructure has been minimal. There is today a recognition of the need to invest in the urban heart of our community. It is imperative to our regions' success to focus on quality of life and to reinvest in the social side of the community. Increased collaboration between all levels of government, and commitment, is necessary for more effective and sustained investment in arts, culture and heritage.

HRM is working toward attaining the federal Cultural Capital designation by 2007. This is an important federal program, and can provide significant opportunities for municipalities with goals toward improved cultural amenities. HRM is also working to have sites in our community recognized as part of the Historic Spaces program. This collaboration with the federal government is critical for the continued protection of these important heritage resources. Increased federal support for programs such as these is imperative to a community's continued growth and success.

A significant economic issue in H-R-M's rural areas is the availability of high-speed Internet access. In an age of worldwide instant communications, many rural communities throughout Canada continue to be disadvantaged without affordable access to broadband network services. Through the success of BRAND (Broadband for Rural and Northern Development) e-learning, e-health, e-government, and e-business projects have been able to be delivered in rural and northern Canadian communities. Federal initiatives, such as the BRAND program, have a direct impact on minimizing the digital divide between rural and urban communities. The BRAND program continues to increase the productivity of Canadians and, as a result, to improve the quality of life and equality of opportunity. I want to impress on the members of the Standing Committee, as outlined in the Report of the National Broadband Task Force entitled "The New National Dream: Networking the Nation for Broadband Access," the need for immediate and ongoing funding to continue support of this very successful initiative for all Canadians.

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 and green infrastructure

Contact:
Jennifer Church
Coordinator, HRM Intergovernmental Affairs
(902) 490-3677