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**Item No. 4 (i)**  
**Halifax Regional Council**  
**June 15, 2010**  
**Committee of the Whole**

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

**SUBMITTED BY:**   
Wayne Anstey, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** May 27, 2010

**SUBJECT:** Proposed HRM Event Strategy

**ORIGIN**

1. November 2008 - Information Report on Draft Events Study
2. April 9, 2009 - Events Strategy presentation to Special Events Advisory Committee (SEAC)
3. October 7, 2009 - Results of Community Engagement Presentation at SEAC

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Halifax Regional Council adopt the Event Strategy as provided in Attachment 1.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This is the first of a series of three reports respecting the Event Strategy. This report is intended to inform Council of the proposed strategic direction for events over the next ten years, and seeks Council's approval.

Two subsequent reports will be tabled to address the Event Strategy's implementation. Specifically, the second report will address amendments to the 2007 Civic Event Policy and Granting Framework and Reserve Business Case required to implement the strategy. The third report will discuss a proposed Service Delivery model for both immediate and long-term implementation.

## **BACKGROUND**

The competition for events has increased significantly in the past decade as increasingly tourism, culture, economic and community development benefits accrued from events are acknowledged. Recognizing this potential, clear policy direction is required to guide HRM over the next 10 years. As such, HRM has developed its first event strategy that provides a vision for events of various categories, calibres and status.

The following report provides Council an overview of the development of the strategy, the community engagement process that informed its creation, and the strategic direction and actions contained within the document that staff will advance in coming years.

### **1. Developing the Event Strategy**

The final draft document has not been rushed, staff have taken the time required to complete the significant level of background research and analysis, stakeholder consultation and finally policy writing required. The following outlines the various stages of development.

#### **Step One: Commissioning Event Study**

In 2007, Cameron Hawkins and Associates Inc. was contracted to develop a Major Events Hosting Study. A final report was provided to HRM on October 31, 2008. The report suggests HRM is currently well positioned in the capacity of hosting major events. It also found that HRM has a number of excellent events, but suffers a low event activity rate during the shoulder and off months.

Most important, the Study acknowledges the need for much improved coordination among event stakeholders in HRM. The Study recommends a new governance model that would build on existing structures, such as the Special Events Advisory Committee, to better facilitate improved dialogue and coordination among all event stakeholders. The Study also recommends that improved service delivery is required and suggests a "one-stop service delivery model" for all major event hosting and acquisition is desirable.

### **Step Two: Initiating Stakeholder Consultation**

A stakeholder engagement exercise was launched, comprising several elements. The first aspect was a series of one-on-one interviews conducted by Cameron Hawkins and Associates Inc. The purpose of these was to draw specialized and targeted input from industry and community representatives that have specific event knowledge and expertise. Participants were drawn from the following areas:

- ☐ Professional events' managers/operators
- ☐ Venue operators
- ☐ Event service providers
- ☐ Marketing and promotions
- ☐ Tourism Developers
- ☐ Community sport associations
- ☐ Special Events Advisory Committee
- ☐ Councillors
- ☐ Other levels of government

### **Step Three: Drafting the Event Strategy**

Upon receipt of the Event Study and the results of consultation, staff created the first draft of the event strategy. The draft included a set of guiding principles, goals, objectives and actions. The draft did not include an implementation section. This was designed intentionally so that a general consensus on the strategic framework could first be reached and the more pragmatic and operational matters are addressed separately.

### **Step Four: Initiating Phase Two Consultation**

In order to generate even greater awareness, input on the strategy among industry stakeholders, staff developed and delivered a targeted stakeholder questionnaire. The questionnaire was forwarded to HRM's major event organizers (mainly HRM Hallmark events) and event service providers such as Destination Halifax, Events Halifax, Greater Halifax Partnership, and other agencies such as the Chamber of Commerce. The intention of the questionnaire was to inform these stakeholders of the strategy's direction, and to seek relevant and focussed input on the goals and objectives. The draft strategy was provided on-line to enable those surveyed an opportunity for detailed review.

### **Step Five: Revised Draft Strategy**

Upon receipt of industry input staff revised the strategy to address or clarify some of the key areas of dissension, and areas requiring clarity. Areas that were strengthened included funding/grants, expanding event rosters, the governance and service delivery model, and major event hosting.

**Step Six: Present to Special Events Advisory Committee**

A presentation on the results of Phase Two Consultation was provided to SEAC followed by a committee workshop to review and discuss the proposed strategy. Several recommendations emerged through the workshop. First, SEAC recommended the strategy be advanced to Regional Council for adoption. SEAC members unanimously supported the document, and gave it high marks for setting a clear vision for events in HRM.

There was one dissenting position among SEAC who believed more dialogue was needed on the proposed service delivery and governance models. Therefore, it was agreed that the document would be divided into two: one titled the Event Strategy (which would have the background, strategy and goals) and the other titled the Operating Plan (revised frameworks, budget and governance). The latter would be tabled as completed and required.

**DISCUSSION**

The HRM Event Strategy provides a collective vision and policy framework under which HRM and its many event partners can collaborate, enabling Council to support the growth, development and management of events in HRM over the next 10 years. The Event Strategy will ensure that event funding is allocated fairly, and that residents receive the greatest economic, cultural and social benefit for their event investment. Along with aiding HRM in developing and hosting events, the strategy clarifies the role of HRM and its partners and provides specific steps for improving overall coordination and integration of cultural, economic, sport and historic development.

The vision outlined in the HRM Event Strategy is "to promote the vibrant, active and dynamic interests of HRM citizens and visitors through a diverse calendar of signature events which complement and enhance the individual and collective experience."

A set of principles has been established to assist Council with strategic decision-making and investment in events. The Guiding Principles emphasize a commitment to excellence, and the importance of events to HRM and the broader community. Entrenched within these is a philosophy that events should inspire citizens and excite visitors, and that they should be of high-quality, and offer diversity. Most important, events are an integral component of HRM's approach to service delivery and their impacts on day-to-day operations are accepted and welcomed.

## 1. The Event Strategy Goals & Objectives

The strategy's goals and objectives include comprehensive actions and specific time frames for achieving or implementing them. The goals speak to improved coordination and collaboration among the Region's event stakeholders, as well as a need for increased partnerships, role clarity, and streamlined decision making processes.

Additionally, the strategy recognizes the importance of volunteers and quality venues and event plazas and the need for greater support in these respective areas. Expanding HRM's events calendar with high quality signature and complimentary events is also very important for our future success.

### Goal 1: Strengthen Event Leadership

Objective 1: Acknowledge the value & importance of events

Objective 2: Engage event stakeholders

Objective 3: Improve event research

Objective 4: Coordinate government assistance

### Goal 2: Enhance Event Impact

Objective 1: Increase event sector capacity

Objective 2: Improve event quality

Objective 3: Improve event infrastructure

### Goal 3: Expand HRM's Event Calendar

Objective 1: Maintain and develop existing recurring events

Objective 2: Develop new unique and complementary events

Objective 3: Host high-profile, quality international events

Objective 4: Improve event grant and contribution services

## 2. The Key Actions

There are more than 50 actions identified under the goals and objectives required to advance HRM as an event leader. Strategic objective such as acknowledging the value and importance of events will be achieved by establishing an "Event Champion" on Regional Council to advocate for events within and outside HRM. Adopting a corporate-wide philosophy that events are essential elements of HRM's economic and community development goals and that event delivery is a core service.

Furthermore, establishing three new sub-panels of the Special Events Advisory Committee will ensure stakeholders are engaged and working collaboratively.

Increasing event sector capacity by providing an information manual for organizing events, and new mentorship and training programs for volunteer event staff, will be key to HRM's long term sustainability. Developing and adopting a new evaluation framework for proposed events, and a post-evaluation process and a satisfaction survey for all events will ensure a new level of accountability and improved event quality.

Finally, expanding HRM's roster of events will be critical to our future success. This will be achieved primarily through improved supports to existing events by reducing barriers such as municipal service costs and inefficient administration, as well as investment in new events. The strategy suggests that HRM focus directing new resources toward developing and growing signature cultural and tourism events, and a "spectacle event program". Spectacle events would facilitate a scale of events not ever experienced in HRM before. Spectacle events are generally defined as astonishing shows that are huge in scale and an unforgettable piece of live street theatre, played out against the landmarks of HRM. Though ambitious and complex, spectacle events offer extraordinary shows that change the way residents look at the world. A spectacle consortium/ partnership with other major Canadian cities will be a priority for HRM as a means for securing "spectacle" event productions that would otherwise be too cost prohibitive.

Additionally, the strategy acknowledges the importance of lending support to new events that may one day have the ability to become signature or hallmark events. The strategy suggests establishing a new funding program that would provide continuous funding over an extended period of time to allow for events to incubate. The development of new major community events is also a strategic priority. The establishment of a new district event program is recommended.

Lastly, major sport event hosting is critical for HRM's success. Understanding the pace and environment of event hosting, the strategy suggests HRM procure the services of a major event hosting organization to fulfill this role on behalf of HRM. Further, that a dedicated funding program is established to support major event acquisition.

### **3. Strategy Implementation: The Operating Plan**

As with any new strategy, its ultimate success rests with how well it is integrated into the existing operational context. The strategy requires a significant departure from current operational practices, especially in the areas of funding, service delivery and governance. An Event Strategy Operation Plan has been developed to provide a basis for action. The following provides an overview of the direction considered through the Operating Plan over the long-term:

### **3.1 Funding**

Achieving the strategic goals will require HRM to amend its approach to grant funding to better align with the strategy. Such improvements will require amending the Civic Events Granting Framework and Policy which will be outlined in a subsequent staff report (**Report 3**). Implementation of the Event Strategy will require new operating funding, as well as exploration of funding opportunities from existing taxes, such as the hotel tax levy, or new revenue sources (e.g. lottery tax, parking lot surcharges, ticket surcharges), being mindful that some legislative changes may be required to enable whatever the recommended options are. A rationalization of existing funding programs will also be required to facilitate new granting capacity. The strategy outlines short, medium, and long-term funding programs, with the requirement that HRM review funding supports every three years.

### **3.2 Service Delivery**

A new service delivery model will focus on two distinct areas: community/cultural/tourism events, and major/sporting events. HRM will lead service delivery for community/cultural/tourism events, and an external entity would lead major/sport hosting events. In order to facilitate coordinated service delivery, the strategy recommends the establishment of a new centralized economic and tourism marketing/business development service. Effectively, this would reduce the number of gateways into HRM and provide a single-point of service.

### **3.3 Governance**

A renewed Special Events Advisory Committee (SEAC) will take on the primary governance role of implementing the HRM Event Strategy. With an expanded role and broader membership, the SEAC will provide opportunities for improved dialogue and coordination among stakeholders. Three new panels will report to the SEAC: the Cultural Events Panel (CEP), the Sport Hosting Panel (SHP), and the Destination Marketing and Promotions Panel (DMPP). Other governance changes include the elimination of Council-approved event committees and an enhancement of the Special Events Task Force model.

### **Conclusions:**

The competition for events will undoubtedly continue. HRM's event strategy charts a clear course of action for the next ten years to ensure we grow to be competitive and a true event leader. An annual report to Council outlining the progress will be a critical aspect of measuring success. This will ensure focus remains on the strategy and that financial and human resources are applied accordingly.

### **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

There are no budget implications for 2010/11; however, a reassignment of existing funding sources and programs will be required in order to better align funding with the strategy.

Staff will focus on realigning existing resources, specifically the Marketing Levy Special Event Reserve, and creating efficiencies through program service review. Details of funding will be provided in a future report.

The strategy will eventually require new funds, but this is not anticipated until approximately year three of implementation, and would be considered through the annual budget process in the context of HRM's overall fiscal position and Council priorities.

Within the first year, the strategy will require an additional FTE to ensure HRM is able to fulfill its new obligations respecting enhanced grant administration, public accountability, and evaluation and monitoring. A new permanent FTE would not have an implication on the general operating budget, as this position would be permanently funded through the Marketing Levy Special Event Reserve. This approach can be rationalized given the increased requirements for administration, performance management, risk management, and accountability, are in support of the programs funded through the Reserve.

### **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.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The proposed/completed community engagement process complies with the HRM Community Engagement Strategy. The completed process was primarily information sharing and consultation. The engagement was carried out through one-on-one interviews, a stakeholder questionnaire, and a facilitated workshop. The proposed recommendation(s) will potentially impact the following stakeholders

- Professional events' managers/operators
- Venue operators
- Event service providers
- Marketing and promotions
- Tourism Developers
- Community sport associations
- Special Events Advisory Committee
- Councillors
- Other levels of government

The consultation with stakeholders modified the recommended action(s) in the following ways. It strengthened the strategy in the following areas:



- funding/grants,
- expanding event rosters,
- the governance and service delivery model,
- and major event hosting.

SEAC recommended the strategy be advanced to regional Council for adoption with the document being divided into two parts (Events Strategy and Operational Plan)

### **ALTERNATIVES**


Alternative 1	Council may choose to approve the strategy, with specific amendments.
Alternative 2	Council may choose not to approve the Event Strategy. This is not staff's recommendation.


### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1	Draft Event Strategy
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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.

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Attachment 1



To promote the vibrant, active and dynamic interests of HRM citizens and visitors through a diverse calendar of signature events which complement and enhance the individual and collective experience

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the largest municipality in Atlantic Canada and a growing, sophisticated city with home-style charm, Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) is home to many exciting, entertaining and educational events each year. Whether HRM is a host, partner, funder or organizer, the municipality can be counted on to offer a wide range of offerings: from local, national and international, to sporting, cultural, community and major events, residents and visitors alike have lots to see and do in HRM.

The benefits of having a dynamic events portfolio are clear. Events contribute to HRM's overall attractiveness, foster a sense of community, lend a cosmopolitan feel to the region, and play a powerful developmental role in both community building and contemporary cultural development. Events also bring substantial economic activity including ticket sales, direct and indirect employment, increased hospitality and retail revenue, as well as sponsorship investment.

### Background

In 2007, Halifax Regional Council introduced a new civic event policy framework to address event funding and established a Special Events Advisory Committee (SEAC) to oversee and advise on the event grant process. Plans were put in place to create an overarching event strategy. Consultants Cameron Hawkins and Associates Inc. (CHA) were contracted to conduct a study that would ultimately form the basis for an HRM Event Strategy.

CHA's study showed that HRM's cultural sector is vibrant and diverse and enjoys broad support, attracting artists to the area, bringing pride to citizens and creating economic benefits for the industry and the region. While some venues in HRM are aging, a variety of our major facilities (e.g. World Trade and Convention Centre, Metro Centre, Halifax Commons, Halifax Seaport District) are meeting the needs for our current events portfolio. A new convention centre, currently in the planning phase, will enhance HRM's status as an international major event destination.

While HRM boasts an excellent track record of delivering and hosting community and major events, success in this regard has not been without its challenges. Experienced HRM event professionals, venue operators, promoters and event advisors indicated to CHA that a feasible event strategy would have to tackle such challenges as HRM's confusing licensing and regulatory process, unfocused event research, limited controls and evaluation of event grants to outside service providers, and overlapping mandates of multiple governance committees.

The CHA study identified the need for greatly improved coordination among event stakeholders and recommended a new governance model that would build on existing structures, such as the SEAC, to better facilitate dialogue and coordination among all event stakeholders. The study noted the need for improved service delivery and recommended a "one-stop service delivery model" for all major event hosting and acquisition. Further consultation led to development of this event strategy.

## The Strategy

The *HRM Event Strategy* provides a collective vision and policy framework under which HRM and its many event partners can collaborate, enabling Council to support the growth, development and management of events in HRM over the next 10 years. The Event Strategy will ensure that event funding is allocated fairly, and that residents receive the greatest economic, cultural and social benefit for their event investment. Along with aiding HRM in developing and hosting events, the strategy clarifies the role of HRM and its partners and provides specific steps for improving overall coordination and integration of cultural, economic, sport and historic development.

The **vision** outlined in the *HRM Event Strategy* is **"to promote the vibrant, active and dynamic interests of HRM citizens and visitors through a diverse calendar of signature events which complement and enhance the individual and collective experience."** The strategy's **goals and objectives** outlined below each include comprehensive actions and specific timeframes for achieving or implementing them.

<b>Goal 1: Strengthen Event Leadership</b>
Objective 1: Acknowledge the value & importance of events
Objective 2: Engage event stakeholders
Objective 3: Improve event research
Objective 4: Coordinate government assistance
<b>Goal 2: Enhance Event Impact</b>
Objective 1: Increase event sector capacity
Objective 2: Improve event quality
Objective 3: Improve event infrastructure
<b>Goal 3: Expand HRM's Event Calendar</b>
Objective 1: Maintain and develop existing recurring events
Objective 2: Develop new unique and complementary events
Objective 3: Host high-profile, quality international events
Objective 4: Improve event grant and contribution services

## Implementation

To achieve its vision for events and accomplish the goals, objectives and actions set out in its Event Strategy, HRM will change its approach to the several key areas:

- **Governance** – A renewed Special Events Advisory Committee (SEAC) will take on the primary governance role of implementing the *HRM Event Strategy*. With an

expanded role and more inclusive membership, the SEAC will facilitate opportunities for improved dialogue and coordination among stakeholders. Three new panels will report to the SEAC: the Cultural Events Panel (CEP), the Sport Hosting Panel (SHP), and the Destination Marketing and Promotions Panel (DMPP). Other governance changes include the elimination of Council-approved event committees and an enhancement of the Special Events Task Force model.

- **Resources** Implementing the Event Strategy and achieving the new roles will require both HRM and external service providers. Some resources will require new funding, while others may be achieved through a realignment of existing positions or efficiencies created by amalgamating existing service providers
- **Granting Framework** Grants and contributions are an important aspect of event development. At present, there are many deficiencies in this area of support and accountability. The strategy recommends improvements in both the type of grant and the accountability measures associated with each to address the key weaknesses.
- **Monitoring & evaluation** – The SEAC will prepare an annual report to HRM Council outlining the status of the Event Strategy's implementation. This report will present an overall quality assessment of events, criteria development and progress on the strategy, as well any resulting recommendations. The report will also evaluate events and the funding they receive from HRM against the three types of benefit to HRM: cultural, social, and economic activity and growth.

The *HRM Event Strategy* offers a comprehensive, strategic approach to building on existing strengths, addressing challenges and uncovering opportunities so that the HRM events can grow and thrive for the benefit of all HRM residents, visitors and event stakeholders.

## SECTION ONE – INTRODUCTION

With close to 400,000 residents and covering a geographic area the size of Prince Edward Island, Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) is in a unique position to offer residents and visitors alike a seemingly endless range of cultural and entertainment options. Events contribute to HRM's overall attractiveness, foster a sense of community, lend a cosmopolitan feel to the region, and play a powerful developmental role in both community building and contemporary cultural development. Events encourage residents and visitors to celebrate, promote and become part of HRM's special identity; they make HRM a more diverse, vibrant and interesting place to live, work, study and visit. HRM has earned credibility in the events field due to its excellent track record of delivering and hosting very successful community and major events.

### **Developing the Strategy**

In March 2007, Halifax Regional Council (Council) approved a new civic event policy framework to improve HRM's overall approach to the civic event granting approval process. The framework requires HRM's Civic Events Operating Budget (C760) to be used exclusively for funding festivals, celebrations and HRM civic events. The Market Levy Special Events Reserve (MLSER), which is an operating reserve funded through the hotel tax levy, is to be used to fund non-annual, commercial, tourism and sporting events of national and international calibre and Hallmark events.

At the same time, Council established a new Special Events Advisory Committee (SEAC) that is responsible for overseeing the event grant decision-making process and for providing advice and recommendations to Council on annual grant funding awards.

Given the absence of an overarching strategic policy respecting event delivery and major event hosting, HRM then launched the development of a new event strategy to provide a 10-year vision and action plan.

In 2007, Cameron Hawkins and Associates Inc. (CHA) was contracted to develop a foundation study for a major events hosting strategy. CHA conducted one-on-one interviews to draw specialized and targeted input from industry and community representatives. The interviews focused on individuals with knowledge of, or an interest in, the planning and practice of delivering major events. Participants included:

- Professional event managers/operators
- Venue operators
- Event service providers
- Marketers and promoters
- Tourism developers
- Community sport associations
- SEAC members
- Councillors
- Other levels of government



CHA's final report was delivered to HRM on October 31, 2008. The study acknowledged the need for greatly improved coordination among event stakeholders and recommended a new governance model that would build on existing structures, such as the SEAC, to better facilitate dialogue and coordination among all event stakeholders. The study also noted the need for improved service delivery and recommended a "one-stop service delivery model" for all major event hosting and acquisition.

The CHA study was used to create the first draft of the *HRM Event Strategy*. In the summer of 2009, a second phase of consultation was initiated to seek the opinions of event stakeholders who would be directly impacted by an event strategy and to gauge their overall satisfaction with the strategic directions outlined. A questionnaire was developed (see **Companion Background Report**) for key stakeholders, who were selected given their role as leaders in HRM's event industry:

- Professional event managers and operators
- Venue operators
- Event service providers
- Marketers and promoters

The survey response rate was very high at 80 per cent. All feedback from the stakeholders was analyzed and presented to the SEAC. Overall, there was strong support for the strategic directions suggested for the Event Strategy. A subsequent workshop was held with SEAC members to review and discuss the strategy.

### **The Event Study: Opportunities and Constraints**

The companion **Event Strategy Background Report** provides a detailed overview of the study's assessment of HRM's event context. Generally the report noted that HRM has many strengths and opportunities to build upon. As the largest metropolitan centre in Atlantic Canada, HRM is a magnet for artists seeking a large audience and the opportunity to engage with other creative people. From performing and visual artists to performance spaces, HRM's cultural sector is vibrant and diverse, and contributes to pride of place for HRM citizens. HRM has a propensity for supporting local cultural content, artists, traditions, innovations and ideas. HRM's large arts community's skills are often supported by HRM through event opportunities.

The economic spin-offs of events are evident in the tourism, entertainment and cultural industries, with increased local employment, and the attraction of major employers and new residents seeking a community with cultural vitality. A strong and coordinated events sector can play a key role in the ongoing "war on talent" that is being waged by municipal regions across the globe in attracting talented people to help drive economic growth.

HRM is fortunate to have a high degree of volunteerism and has successfully mobilized volunteers and technical experts for major events. Volunteers come from a range of backgrounds, providing diverse practical experience to draw on during event coordination. HRM's volunteers act as event advocates and directly participate in the

smooth execution of events through activities ranging from working on-site areas to performing on stage.

While some venues in HRM are aging, a variety of venues and related infrastructure support a broad range of events (see **Event Strategy Background Report**). Among major venues, the World Trade and Convention Centre (WTCC) offers approximately 50,000 square feet of convention and exhibition space. Renovations over the past three years have upgraded the facility to provide a more inviting and comfortable environment, allowing WTCC to remain competitive with other medium-market convention centres within Atlantic Canada. However, because of the small size of the current facility in relation to those in other Canadian centres with whom WTCC competes for national and international events, HRM and Nova Scotia are losing ground in attracting the larger meetings, conventions and trade shows that would bring greater economic benefits. A new convention centre, currently in the planning phase, will certainly enhance HRM's status as an international major event destination.

The Halifax Metro Centre is the premier venue for all major indoor entertainment and sporting events in the region. As the largest multi-purpose facility in Atlantic Canada, the Metro Centre can accommodate some of the biggest and most spectacular international acts and events. The Halifax Commons is also recognized for its strong event-hosting potential; indeed, few municipalities could offer the Commons close proximity to the downtown core (in this case to Atlantic Canada's largest urban centre) with its commercial amenities and tourism infrastructure. Likewise, as the Halifax Seaport District develops into a focal point for the creative industries and for tourism activity (including the burgeoning cruise ship industry), potential is high for a new area of focus for event staging.

HRM has several constraints to overcome for this Event Strategy to be truly successful. The most important is the issue of coordination. Beyond HRM, all levels of government and several service agencies provide event-related services. The CHA study revealed that cooperation among all levels of government and stakeholders is inconsistent, in part due to the absence of a common vision for events that has been endorsed at the political level. This lack of coordination has fostered inconsistent and uninformed decision making around alignment, priorities and funding.

HRM boasts diverse events calendar, but there are gaps during January and March and slow periods between May through June and October through December, leading to excess venue capacity and accommodation availability. Additional events could be planned for these times. Gaps are also notable respecting types of events. Given its significant artistic and heritage community, HRM is missing an opportunity to host a range of annual art- and heritage-related events. This being said, while HRM citizens demand events, they also have a general intolerance of event-related disruption and congestion.

The CHA study also found a general perception that HRM does not provide sufficient financial support for events. Specific major concerns include limited sponsorship opportunities and notable gaps in HRM's civic events granting streams. Additionally, the bureaucracy associated with event grant and regulatory approval is considered too onerous and often discourages event organizers. Event marketing is also viewed to be

lacking and is seen as inconsistent and uncoordinated.

### **HRM Event Strategy Purpose**

The *HRM Event Strategy* will provide a collective vision and policy framework under which HRM and its many events partners can collaborate, and will enable Council to support the growth, development and management of events in HRM over the next 10 years. As well as filling gaps in events policy, the strategy will ensure that events funding is allocated fairly, and that residents receive the greatest economic, cultural and social benefit for their event investment. Along with aiding HRM in developing and hosting events, the strategy clarifies the role of HRM and its partners and provides specific steps for improving overall coordination and integration of cultural, economic, sport and historic development.

Specifically, the Event Strategy addresses key deficiencies noted in the CHA study by providing:

1. An overall vision for events that strongly supports existing strategies and priorities of Council and that maximizes the positive profile of HRM for residents and for domestic and international visitor markets
2. A planned program of events that allows residents, businesses, the wider community and visitors to participate and benefit throughout the year
3. Funding criteria through which all events that are funded wholly or in part by Council can be fairly and objectively assessed
4. A governance model that facilitates improved coordination and partnerships among service providers and events organizations

## SECTION TWO – THE STRATEGY

The *HRM Event Strategy* is a municipal-wide approach to events development that incorporates several actions to be implemented over the next 10 years.

HRM has a critical leadership role to play in the successful delivery of this strategy and in advancing HRM's vision to be an event hub. The role of Halifax Regional Council (Council) will be to make decisions and provide guidance directed by the strategy's vision and underlying principles (see below).

While Council provides leadership for this strategy and is ultimately its owner on behalf of the community, the Event Strategy's success will come from all stakeholders — event organizers, service providers, venue operators, funding organizations, sponsors, businesses and citizens — participating in the development of an active and vibrant regional municipality.

### **Vision Statement:**

To promote the vibrant, active and dynamic interests of HRM citizens and visitors through a diverse calendar of signature events which complement and enhance the individual and collective experience

### **Principles:**

1. Events inspire citizens and excite visitors.
2. Citizens value and demand high-quality, diverse event experiences.
3. HRM values existing recurring events.
4. HRM supports local, original ideas and events that celebrate the unique and diverse culture of its communities and citizens.
5. HRM views community events, cultural events and tourism events as equally important. Some events bring economic benefit and international profile while others focus on building a sense of community, citizen connection to the area and cultural recognition.
6. Events are an integral component of HRM's approach to service delivery and their impacts on day-to-day operations are accepted and welcomed.
7. HRM's events sector provides significant economic benefit and is a priority area for allocation of financial and human resource supports.
8. HRM ensures thorough and conscientious fiscal planning and public accountability for events.
9. Event success results largely from collaboration with external stakeholders. HRM recognizes and supports that coordination and collaboration with other levels of government, the community, organizations and corporate partners are critical success factors in the implementation of this strategy.
10. Volunteers are the heart of HRM's event sector and are recognized as such by this strategy.

## 2.1 Goals, Objectives & Strategic Actions

Establishing HRM's position as an event leader will require a new approach to event management and service delivery. The Event Strategy provides a comprehensive set of goals, objectives and actions that HRM will implement to advance the municipality's event development. Underlying the goals and objectives is a new service philosophy based on two distinct priorities: community and cultural events; and major and sporting events.

<b>Goal 1: Strengthen Event Leadership</b>
Objective 1: Acknowledge the value & importance of events
Objective 2: Engage event stakeholders
Objective 3: Improve event research
Objective 4: Coordinate of government assistance
<b>Goal 2: Enhance Event Impact</b>
Objective 1: Increase event sector capacity
Objective 2: Improve event quality
Objective 3: Improve event infrastructure
<b>Goal 3: Expand HRM's Event Calendar</b>
Objective 1: Maintain and develop existing recurring events
Objective 2: Develop new unique and complementary events
Objective 3: Host high-profile, quality international events
Objective 4: Improve event grant and contribution services

## Goal 1: Strengthen Event Leadership

Continued success and growth for HRM's events requires proactive leadership. While Council is only one of a number of stakeholders responsible for the future of a broader municipal event program, the multiplicity of HRM's roles (policy, funder, regulator, promoter, etc.) places it in a central leadership position. HRM has, accordingly, particular opportunities and responsibilities. If it is to fulfill these effectively, HRM must provide clear and transparent objectives.

### Objective 1: Acknowledge the value & importance of events

If events are to develop to their full potential, Council must demonstrate visible support of the Event Strategy and proactively communicate the value of events. It is understood that events fulfil a number of HRM's strategic goals and objectives — cultural, social, economic development and representational (in terms of image nationally and internationally).

Council will play a critical leadership role in ensuring continued support and strategic delivery of events that facilitate community building, economic, tourism and cultural development. Council will ensure HRM events help improve and develop a sense of well-being, reduce inequalities and feelings of disadvantage, and increase sense of place. Innovative, edgy and unique cultural themed events will be a new focus of service delivery to ensure HRM remains competitive and viewed as a creative city on the international stage. Contemporary tourism and heritage themed events as well as major sporting events will remain a core component of HRM's program, fostering sustainable growth and a competitive edge over other centres worldwide.

A member of Regional Council will be formally identified as the Events Champion responsible for event advocacy, both within and outside of HRM. HRM will also aim to capitalize on — and celebrate — the strength of events. A coordinated campaign of advocacy and public relations to identify and propagate success stories could reinforce HRM's identification with its events.

Goal 1 Strengthen Event Leadership	
Objective 1 Acknowledge the value & importance of events	
<i>Year 1 2010/2011</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Adopt and communicate a philosophy of HRM's commitment to events as a core service</li><li>2. Identify an elected member of Council as the Events Champion responsible for advocating for events within and outside of HRM</li><li>3. Place events on Council's agenda at times of strategic, developmental and financial discussions, including the annual budget process</li><li>4. Review civic event programs to ensure all HRM delivered and supported civic and community events satisfy community building and development outcome generally defined as: Events that enhance the experience for residents and visitors, and are accessible and attractive to people of all ages, ethnicity, cultural background</li></ol>

	<p>and place positive attention on HRM's heritage, culture, diversity and sense of community. These events foster positive community relations through interaction between citizens, staff, politicians and communities.</p> <p>5. Review civic event programs to ensure a component of HRM delivered and supported events satisfy economic, tourism and cultural development outcome generally defined as: Distinct events that enhance the cultural experiences for residents and visitors, raise HRM's profile as a tourist and hosting destination, and a place in which to invest locally, nationally and internationally.</p>
<b>Year 2-10 2011/2020</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide an annual report on HRM's events and their positive community impact</li> <li>2. Develop web pages to promote HRM's event reputation and experience</li> <li>3. Ensure all of Council's publications acknowledge events and their importance, at every opportunity</li> <li>4. Ensure councillors' newsletters, websites and other forms of communication send a positive message about events to residents</li> <li>5. Ensure HRM's website refers and links to partner events and festivals</li> <li>6. Explore possibilities for festivals' increased use of Council-owned premises as office bases, either individually or as a group</li> <li>7. Establish a baseline approach for decorating HRM during events</li> <li>8. Develop an HRM events branding and communications strategy</li> <li>9. Identify opportunities for event organizers, business leaders and elected representatives to participate in a range of international civic activities, including trade fairs, civic visits and trade and visiting delegations to learn new and best practices.</li> </ol>

## Objective 2: Engage event stakeholders

As competition for events increases, HRM will need to refine its performance — which will require solid relationships with event organizers, service providers and other levels of government. Moreover, to remain competitive it will be vital for HRM to generate innovative, creative and exciting ideas and concepts for festivals and events. The challenge is to engage communities of interest of all forms to ensure the broadest pool of talent.

Ongoing dialogue will ensure HRM is leading the way in quality and innovative events, and has general agreement on common aims and opportunities. While some event organizers already meet collaboratively, there are many opportunities to explore. HRM will foster an environment where discussions and collaborations between festivals and between cultural institutions can occur.

<b>Goal 1</b>	<b>Strengthen Event Leadership</b>
<b>Objective 2</b>	<b>Engage event stakeholders</b>
<i>Year 1 2010/2011</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prepare terms of reference for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a new Major Events and Sport Hosting Panel (MESHP), and</li> <li>• a new Cultural Events Panel (CEP)</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<i>Year 2-10 2011/2020</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish, create terms of reference and support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the MESHP</li> <li>• the CEP, and</li> <li>• a new Destination Marketing and Promotion Panel (DMPP)</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Design and conduct annual forums to forge partnerships and opportunities for wider exchange of ideas, opportunities and challenges within the event sector</li> </ol>

### Objective 3: Improve event research

Effective event development requires comprehensive and reliable data. To date, research has been undertaken on an ad hoc and relatively piecemeal basis; as a result, event organizers and providers of funds have had to rely on a patchwork of sometimes conflicting data. Improved information and research collection is needed to ensure more dependable data is collected on a uniform, consistent basis and is a readily accessible resource (e.g. user-friendly databases, booklets, contact points, anti-clash diary, other tools, etc.). HRM will ensure a strategic approach to research is developed to better support events.

<b>Goal 1</b>	<b>Strengthen Event Leadership</b>
<b>Objective 3</b>	<b>Improve event research</b>
<i>Year 1 2010/2011</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop an information manual for use by event organizers on how to organize events, including information on services available, structures and procedures, and a range of technical areas (from booking sites to arranging street cleaning after events)</li> </ol>
<i>Year 2-10 2011/2020</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish a database on the HRM website of all current venues available for use, including advice to potential promoters, and technical and resources data for each venue</li> <li>2. Establish an annual report on statistical evidence of the economic impact of events, financial information about the real costs of events to the municipality, clear processes for internal municipal charging for events activity, market research and coordinated market intelligence on event-goer profiles</li> <li>3. Amend HRM grant program to provide for the collection of data in a consistent form as a condition of the grant, with the acknowledgement that this may have cost implications</li> </ol>



## Objective 4: Coordinate government assistance

Formal and informal partnerships need to be pursued between HRM, other levels of government and event organizations to ensure coordinated and informed decision making. Strong collaboration among governments is essential to successfully support and grow a quality event product. HRM will continue to facilitate relationships with government partners through ongoing dialogue and information sharing.

Goal 1	Strengthen Event Leadership
Objective 4	Coordinate government assistance
<i>Year 1 2010/2011</i>	1. Establish an events and culture government liaison group
<i>Year 2-10 2011/2020</i>	1. Host regular liaison group meetings 2. Identify common aims and vision for HRM among all governments 3. Identify and collaborate on strategic policy development 4. Work towards a granting program that is coordinated and has similar criteria for measuring quality events

## Goal 2: Enhance Event Impact

High quality events offer great diversity of experiences for residents and hold potential for national and international involvement both in content and publicity. HRM seeks to maintain and grow its level of support for events and the involvement of HRM's citizens and communities as organizers, participants and audience members. Regional Council recognizes that events are only as good as the facilities or venues in which they occur and is committed to improving HRM's event infrastructure.

## Objective 1: Increase event sector capacity

Throughout Canada, the quality of events varies widely. As competition increases to produce high-quality and exciting events, HRM needs to ensure innovative and quality programming is provided.

Underpinning these programming requirements is the need to provide enhanced supports, guidance and advice to meet the needs of all volunteer event organizers. HRM recognizes challenges facing volunteers are great: the laws and regulations surrounding events are complex and change regularly, and legal requirements have become so complex that they can be prohibitive. HRM will strive that volunteers have the information required for a successful event.

HRM has an abundance of skilled and experienced professional event managers. However, access to training and development for these professionals is limited. HRM recognizes that gaining access to high-quality training and professional development is vital to improve the quality and safety of events in the region. HRM will provide relevant training for both volunteers and the professionals moving into and through the ranks of

existing festivals and event organizations.

Goal 2 Enhance Event Impact	
Objective 1 Increase event sector capacity	
<i>Year 1-2 2010/2012</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop an information manual on how to organize events, including information on services available, structures and procedures, and a range of technical areas (from booking sites to arranging street cleaning after events)</li> <li>2. Consult with event organizers and promoters on what training needs and professional development opportunities are needed and what information/learning sessions would be beneficial</li> <li>3. Establish a formalized event liaison role to provide direct advice to event organizers operating in HRM</li> </ol>
<i>Year 3 2012/2013</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop mentorship and training programs to increase paid- and volunteer-event-staff knowledge</li> <li>2. Develop learning and training opportunities to increase the capacity and skills of managers, promoters, organizers and workers</li> <li>3. Develop a leadership program to improve skills across the event community (including funders, developers, organizers, deliverers and promoters) and to engender and support calculated risk taking, which could lead to exciting and inspiring events and the sharing of best practices</li> </ol>
<i>Year 4-10 2013/2020</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide ongoing training and apprenticeships for volunteers to gain experience and grow skill sets</li> <li>2. Develop and deliver an event volunteer award program</li> </ol>

## Objective 2: Improve event quality

HRM's event calendar is full of diverse events, from small community events to large internationally recognized events. However, it is not enough to simply fill the calendar with a range of events; HRM must ensure that these events are of a high quality and generate the greatest impact. Positive and extraordinary audience experiences will drive the event calendar and draw citizens and visitors.

An event's success ultimately depends on the experience it provides, its reputation and attractiveness. The event's value for time and money, and the environment in which it takes place will influence a perception of quality. HRM will commit to developing a program of high-quality events.

Goal 2 Enhance Event Impact	
Objective 2 Improve event quality	
<i>Year 2 2011/2012</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop and adopt an evaluation framework for all new events</li> <li>2. Develop a post-event evaluation process to be applied to all of the region's events and ensure that it and the costs associated with it are raised at an early stage of the event- and budget-planning process</li> <li>3. Develop a satisfaction survey and use its data to inform planning and establish indicators and targets for future events</li> <li>4. Design evaluation and performance measurement systems, including</li> </ol>

	benchmarking, stakeholder communications, community feedback and event reports to monitor and evaluate strategy success
<b>Year 3-10 2012/2020</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Implement the evaluation framework for new events</li> <li>2. Implement the post-event evaluation process</li> <li>3. Implement the satisfaction survey</li> <li>4. Implement the performance measurement system</li> </ol>

### **Objective 3: Improve event infrastructure**

The success of many festivals and events is very closely linked to the range and adequacy of their venues. Similarly, the health of a venue is, in many cases, dependent on an event's success. The Event Strategy highlights HRM's challenges regarding facilities, including the absence of a large fixed-seating venue, such as a stadium. Also, as consideration is given to new venue along the waterfront and the need to secure outdoor venues increases, there is a perceived threat of losing open space.

HRM's infrastructure needs to be formally identified and audited, and resources need to be directed towards renewing it. While any attempt to address this issue through an investment program will need to be based on a sound analysis of the tangible benefits, a possible strategy is to direct investment towards venues that can support a variety of event hosting activities.

If the cost of various infrastructure repairs and renewal is too great, but a proven need exists for a facility, alternative sites for development and cost benefit analyses should be undertaken. The Halifax Seaport and Halifax Common are two areas that may be considered for new developments. For both sites, a balance needs to be struck to ensure the sites remains accessible to the community while also developing event capacity. For example, the size and proximity of the Halifax Common to the downtown core makes it an ideal hosting location; however, there are several resource challenges (e.g. providing workable, safe space, electrical grounding and hardening of surfaces that can maintain its purpose through local inclement weather and heavy vehicle traffic). HRM residents patronize this site regularly through organized sport, recreational and social activities, and through use of the Common as a main pedestrian artery. Any development to the site must not limit, but instead enhance, community access to the site outside of event scheduling.

In terms of venues, there is a need for first-class facilities for industry delegations at trade-orientated events. Recently announced plans to develop a new World Trade and Convention Centre will address this need, if the project is approved by government funders. There is also strong support for a new performance centre/auditorium with approximately 2,500 seats. HRM will carefully evaluate proposals, taking into account the likely level of audience displacement from other venues, potential programming and year-round draw, the level of collaboration between different groups and sectors, and the flexibility and usefulness of the space for events.

The possibility of developing a stadium or arena to attract larger events may also be considered. At present, this type of larger venue would not greatly impact the activities

of most of the events addressed by this strategy (although such a facility might be used by some events on a needs basis). A stadium would, however, likely alter HRM's annual program of events. HRM will need to carefully evaluate proposals with a clear analysis of the cost and potential benefits of this type of project.

<b>Goal 2 Enhance Event Impact</b>	
<b>Objective 3 Improve event infrastructure</b>	
<b>Year 3</b> <b>2012/2013</b>	1. Conduct an audit of event infrastructure within HRM to identify and address priority areas for development; future strategic direction of the events program should be informed by this audit, including limitations on usage and requirements of current promoters, such as the need for flat city-centre space for trailer-mounted exhibitions and space to host tented villages
<b>Year 4</b> <b>2013/2014</b>	1. Develop an event infrastructure strategy
<b>Year 5</b> <b>2014/2015</b>	1. Develop regular street performance sites within the municipality to provide platforms and gathering places for displays, skill sharing and public street-level activities
<b>Year 6-10</b> <b>2015/2020</b>	1. Explore funding mechanisms to implement event infrastructure strategy 2. Establish a funding reserve for the maintenance and development of event infrastructure; consideration will be made for event diversity, target market, current use, pending developments and legacy implications

### **Goal 3: Expand HRM's Events Calendar**

The CHA study found a high level of local citizen support for year-round events in HRM, and that local events are a positive means for nurturing and supporting local talent. In fact, HRM is recognized as having a high propensity for supporting local cultural content, artists, traditions, innovations and ideas.

While there is strong support to develop a year-round program, existing event operators worry new events may weaken an already stretched funding program. Event expansion will be implemented over several years and will be sensitive to existing events. The focus of this strategy is to support and maintain existing high-quality events, while simultaneously developing new, innovative events with unique presentation. The strategy will also ensure necessary programs are in place to create a renewed focus on major event and sport hosting.

#### **Objective 1: Maintain and develop existing recurring events**

The current event calendar has several recurring events that are highly valued by HRM citizens and help to define the character of the municipality. These events have contributed directly to HRM's success and will continue to be supported. Existing recurring events have become integrated into the regular calendars and expectations of HRM citizens.

<b>Goal 3      Expand HRM's Events Calendar</b>	
<b>Objective 1    Maintain and develop existing recurring events</b>	
<i>Year 1 2010/2011</i>	1. Develop a new signature event development program to provide sustainable funding for existing events deemed to have strong potential
<i>Year 2-5 2011/2015</i>	1. Explore opportunities to reduce municipal services costs to events 2. Identify programs that can extend the year-round calendar and address gaps 3. Expand event definition to include cultural presentations 4. Develop a new cultural presentation program 5. Develop and deliver an annual seasonal launch of HRM's events to promote and mark their kickoff

### **Objective 2: Develop new unique and complementary events**

HRM direct event programming has traditionally focussed on family-oriented, children based-events developed on themes of British and naval heritage, as well as events marking civic anniversaries and/or historical events. Most major community events and celebrations delivered are not reflective of HRM's rich cultural mosaic including a growing immigrant, Aboriginal, Arab and African Nova Scotian community. Moreover, HRM event programming is typically delivered on or around civic holidays, with limited choices beyond these periods.

There is significant opportunity for HRM to refocus event programming to be more reflective of a variety of citizens and traditions. HRM event programming built on cultural themes (i.e., food, visual arts, performing arts, literary arts, digital media) as well as themes important to local immigrants, Aboriginal and African Nova Scotian's also need to be a priority. While heritage themed and commemorative events will always have place in HRM, more contemporary approaches to these events should be explored.

Finally, HRM event programs needs to target a range of demographics – in particular more events need to be developed for youth and young adults. Event programming must also change to reflect the times – with globalization and an ever evolving digital age, children, youth and adults have become more sophisticated. Citizens demand new and innovative event experiences and quality entertainment. HRM must also consider shifting its program focus from the summer months, and civic holidays, to other times of the year where gaps exist.

<b>Goal 3      Expand HRM's Events Calendar</b>	
<b>Objective 2    Develop new unique and complementary events</b>	
<i>Year 1 2010/2011</i>	1. Develop and deliver a new multidisciplinary cultural event for the Fall targeting youth/young adults based on themes of food, urban art, and hip hop dance and music

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Redesign the HRM Christmas Tree Lighting event</li> <li>3. Develop and unveil an expanded New Year's Eve event program</li> </ol>
<i>Year 2-10 2012/2020</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Annually consult the event sector to ensure the event programs remains relevant, fresh and attractive for the audience, and Council stays abreast on current issues facing the sector</li> <li>2. Support local organizations and event professionals in the delivery of new and innovative event program that take advantage of HRM's natural assets including events built on one or a combination of the following themes: Yachting, Sailing, Snowboarding, Skateboarding, Motorcross or Surfing.</li> <li>3. Deliver 3 new annual cultural events in year's four, seven and ten of the strategy implementation based on one or a combination of the following themes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Performing arts:</b> HRM's calendar of events includes limited theatre, comedy and dance festivals and events. The common indoor nature of these events makes them ideal for the shoulder seasons.</li> <li>2. <b>Literary arts:</b> A literary event geared toward youth and scheduled in late fall would satisfy the desire for youth involvement, culture and education while filling a calendar gap and providing an opportunity for internal and external partnerships.</li> <li>3. <b>Digital media arts:</b> A festival linking winter themes with local and national independent artists would ideally be developed to fill the gap in late fall and early winter.</li> <li>4. <b>Maritime Festivals</b> Celebrations of HRM's ocean, beaches and lakes with a focus on regional beaches waterfronts. This could evolve into signature series of events and would include existing and new activities such as:</li> <li>5. <b>Built Heritage:</b> In rejuvenating the events calendar, the addition of a Doors Open Halifax event to the schedule would put HRM on a national and international stage for heritage programming. Doors Open originated in Glasgow, Scotland, in 1990 as Doors Open Day, and first arrived in Canada in 2000 via Toronto's Culture Division. A similar event can attract visitors excited by the prospect of exploring HRM by travelling through its buildings, adding a cultural tourism dimension to the event."</li> <li>6. <b>Multidisciplinary:</b> Considerable opportunity for new multidisciplinary events for HRM exist including events unique to HRM that incorporate many sectors in the presentation, including a range of arts and culture, food and beverage, and even sport. A Winter Culture Fest or Winter Arts Fest is a potential large-scale event that could occur around the spring holidays (March break, Easter, etc.), focussing on local and national talent, collaboration and accessibility, and including exhibits, concerts, performances and community activities.</li> <li>7. <b>Spectacle:</b> An event that is memorable for the appearance it creates using such mediums as outdoor theatre, public art, and temporary monumental sculptures. The event style is unique, usually combining dramatized acrobatic and aerial performances on sculptural stages, laser animation, digital projections, searchlight choreography and pyrotechnics. Spectacle events create unforgettable moments of ethereal beauty.</li> <li>8. <b>Winter and New Year Festivals:</b> A renewed New years celebration and a return to focus of winter with the countdown to the 2011 Winter Games. Beyond this, new festival and events that blend traditional Canadian winter activities and other cultural celebrations.</li> <li>9. <b>Harvest, Culinary Arts and Food:</b> HRM is home to a very talented and</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

	<p>appealing food and beverage sector. Many local chefs are internationally known and their restaurants are a priority stop for tourists. New festivals and celebration of HRM's agricultural and fishing heritage, and our rich diversity of food, and excellent restaurants and ethnic groups provides great opportunity to develop a unique food festival in the off-season months.</p> <p>10. <b>Visual arts:</b> Visual art themed events predominantly occur during the summer months (July in particular). There maybe an opportunity to develop a new event in the winter.</p> <p>4. Deliver 3 new or expanded community events in years three, six and nine on themes of particular interest and relevance to: Newcomers, Aboriginal Peoples, or African Nova Scotians.</p>
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### Objective 3: Host high-profile, quality international events

Major festivals and events have the potential to make a big impact, increasing profile and bringing prosperity by attracting national and international visitors and generating media recognition from across the globe. In recent years HRM has made great strides in delivering high-profile major events. However, competition with other regions to attract events, grow capacity and raise profile is intense. If HRM is to maintain and develop new initiatives that secure a competitive advantage, a focused, coordinated approach that recognizes and overcomes areas of weakness is vital.

Bidding for festivals and events of national and international standing is costly, requiring forethought, research and planning. It is therefore imperative that the economic and social impacts of bidding for such events are understood and that consistent and regular monitoring of all festivals and events is undertaken to build a body of evidence that justifies investment in the events themselves and the infrastructure needed to support them.

The municipality has historically had an uncoordinated approach to bidding for events and limited forward intelligence in relation to pursuing future opportunities. A coordinated approach will reduce duplication, generate new partnerships and lead to greater success. Success is possible with the development of a regional events bidding strategy. This will inform future plans for investment and maximize the use of event infrastructure.

Goal 3 Expand HRM's Events Calendar	
Objective 3 Host high-profile, quality international events	
<i>Year 1-2 2010/2012</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish a new agency for major event and sport hosting</li> <li>2. Develop and adopt a bidding policy and framework which may include, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a two-year pre-bid event identification, when possible, to facilitate positive economic impact and support</li> <li>• an equitable and efficient major event evaluation framework addressing the potential and real event success</li> <li>• targeted funding supports for the maintenance, development and acquirement of major events that advance HRM values and brand</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• legacy building initiatives</li><li>• risk identification and management</li></ul>
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## SECTION THREE: IMPLEMENTATION

This section provides an overview of the conditions required to effectively implement the Event Strategy. Changes will be required to HRM's current approach to and support of events in relation to the following:

- Governance
- Resources
- Granting Framework
- Monitoring & evaluation

### 3.1 Governance

It is important that all stakeholders fully understand their responsibilities and how they relate to others. At all levels, individual stakeholder communications and contributions are essential to ensure the fluid operation of this Event Strategy and the long-term success of event acquisition and development.

#### **Special Events Advisory Committee**

While all stakeholders are important in the implementation and success of the Event Strategy, the Special Events Advisory Committee (SEAC) will take on the primary governance role in implementing the strategy. Event organizations have a range of relationships with each other, with government representatives, and with agencies; a renewed SEAC can facilitate opportunities for improved dialogue and coordination among stakeholders. Although several event organizations and government funding partners already meet with HRM and the SEAC, there is value in establishing a more formal mechanism of communication among all partners.

The Event Strategy recommends expanding the SEAC's scope beyond granting recommendations to include community engagement, event quality assessment, event hosting prioritization, marketing and strategy monitoring, and evaluation. The SEAC's membership would expand to include representatives of other levels of government, Sport Nova Scotia, TCL and HRM staff.

Reporting to the SEAC will be three new panels:

- Cultural Events Panel (CEP)
- Sport Hosting Panel (SHP)
- Destination Marketing and Promotions Panel (DMPP)

The creation of SEAC panels will provide a framework for clearer communication, coordination and planning among HRM's event stakeholders. Panels will ensure HRM has a formal line of communication with the event industry, and opportunities to facilitate and advance new ideas, event proposals and/or major issues. Panels will provide a forum for event organizers, government partners and agencies to collaborate, form strategic alliances, and inform policy and programs. Panels will play

an advisory role, actively facilitating ongoing dialogue and focusing on event policy development (cultural or sport), programming, planning and performance measurement. Panels will

- Facilitate communication between Council and other levels of government on issues pertaining to events, and between Council and local, national and international event organizers and promoters;
- Communicate and promote HRM initiatives (funding, programming, etc.) resulting in increased national and international exposure; and
- Liaise and network, keeping abreast of the broad complement of national interests and international trends, and maintaining constant and effective communication with local event organizers and promoters.

The DMPP members will play a key role in promoting the municipality's events to the immediate, national and international markets. This panel will partner with both the municipality and the province to communicate activities to a large audience. Specifically, members of the panel should represent organizations that have a direct connection to the attraction of visitors and/or have a mandate to draw visitors to the area for tourism and economic growth. This common interest and experience amongst panel members will provide grounding for the panel's model and mandate. The DMPP will also provide ad hoc support in the direct promotion of signature, hallmark, major and sporting events.

Panels will meet at least quarterly. They will advise the SEAC and Regional Council on events, local event development and strategic directions through annual reports on potential and upcoming bids, including recommended funding allocations and a proactive approach for event bidding. The success of past activities and the growth of the events calendar and sector capacity will be part of these reports and will provide benchmarks for evaluation.

All panels will communicate amongst themselves and report to SEAC, creating a triangular flow of information. Those sitting on the panel will be actively involved in and benefit from the sector as funders, organizers, promoters, business owners and government representatives, as well as other identified key stakeholders with a strong knowledge of the event sector.

### **Committees of Council**

Beyond the SEAC, HRM has established several committees of Council to manage local civic events. The current arrangement of event-related Council committees is inconsistent among events and often sends a confused message to event organizers. While the nature and scale of certain events dictate the need for volunteer committees, the rationale warranting a political relationship is limited. Moreover, given the formality of the rules and procedures that govern committees of Council, this status often proves to be more of a constraint than a benefit.

HRM Council recognizes that all events are important and that each event's organizing committee should have the opportunity to communicate directly with Council. The Event Strategy recommends eliminating Council-approved event committees. This is

not to suggest in any way a diminished role for volunteers; rather, it reflects the sentiment that all events are important, and that the formal avenue to Council will be achieved through the SEAC and proposed panels.

### Refine Special Events Task Force role

In 1996, HRM's Special Events Task Force (SETF) was established to provide assistance to event organizers in the areas of municipal services, access and use of HRM properties, and streamlining of regulatory processes. The SETF's purpose is to review potential events based on a set of accepted criteria, to assess the risk to HRM, and to make decisions on the feasibility and potential success of the event. The SETF membership includes broad representation from a number of municipal business units, provincial and federal service departments, and event-related organizations, including Community Development, Facility Bookings, Fire and Emergency Services, Finance, Metro Transit, Real Property and Asset Management, Regional Police Services and the RCMP, Risk and Insurance Services, Solid Waste Resources, Traffic Services, Transportation and Public Works, Capital Health, Emergency Health Services, Halifax-Dartmouth Bridge Commission, Nova Scotia Chief Electrical Inspector, Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture, Parks Canada, and the Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada (SOCAN).

While the SETF model has been highly effective, there are a number of ways the existing model can be enhanced. Most importantly, the strategy recommends the establishment of a SETF executive. This operational role would be well placed to help reconcile any conflicting departmental, service or policy priorities that impact events.

Governance	
<b>Year 1</b> <b>2010/2011</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify "events champion(s)" within Council to advocate the Event Strategy and its principles</li> <li>2. Position the SEAC as the recognized leader, coordinator and catalyst for all event decision making</li> <li>3. Prepare terms of reference for the Major Tourism &amp; Sport Hosting Panel (MTSHP), CEP and DMPP, which report directly to the SEAC.</li> <li>4. Amend the terms of reference for the SETF to include a special events executive management team. The new team would have the authority to assess and approve events in alignment with the principles and goals of this strategy.</li> </ol>
<b>Year 2</b> <b>2011/2012</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Implement the revised SETF terms of reference, including the special events executive management team.</li> <li>2. Establish the MTSHP, CEP and DMPP.</li> </ol>

## 3.2 Resources

Implementing the Event Strategy and achieving the new roles described in Section 3.1 will require staff resources. The chart below outlines the resources required by both HRM and external service providers based on an assumption that the roles and responsibilities identified through the strategy are supported. Some resources will require new funding, while others may be achieved through a realignment of existing positions

or efficiencies created by amalgamating existing service providers.

Resources	
<b><i>Year 1 2010/2011</i></b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Establish an event officer position focusing on volunteer capacity building, research, policy development and grant administration</li><li>2. Identify new resources for major event and sport hosting</li><li>3. Develop a staff resource plan and job descriptions that focus on developing new events, ongoing research and analysis, granting administration, governance and strategy supports</li></ol>
<b><i>Year 3 2012/2013</i></b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Establish three new community event support positions to work directly with communities throughout the municipality to deliver community events, volunteer recruitment and support, local capacity building, etc.</li><li>2. Explore the establishment of a cultural program officer to facilitate innovative cultural programming and events both as a direct service and as a partnership with HRM cultural organizations and major institutions</li><li>3. Establish a new civic event team-lead position to help direct and control staff resources and focus</li></ol>
<b><i>Year 5-10 2014/2020</i></b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Monitor resources and identify opportunities to address potential deficiencies</li></ol>

### 3.3 Event Grant and Contributions

Grants and contributions are an important aspect of event development in HRM; however, the CHA study found many deficiencies in this area of support. HRM will introduce a number of new grant and contribution programs designed to address some of the key weaknesses and to foster an environment that is conducive to successful event delivery.

#### **Proposed Gant Programs:**

The following new grant programs should be established for HRM's long-term strategic event development.

#### **Signature events grant:**

HRM will amend the granting framework to include an annual signature event category. Signature events are viewed as important events to HRM that are well positioned to develop into future Hallmark events. Many of HRM's existing Hallmark events would be reclassified as "signature events" to ensure that the Hallmark category is reserved for only those very unique events that are absolutely inseparable from HRM. The new signature event program would provide annual support to those identified community, sport, tourism and cultural events that provide a regional draw and attract tourists.

**Emerging events grants:** HRM will amend the granting framework to include a new emerging event policy to provide limited support (i.e. funding over a maximum of four

years) for new, innovative, community and cultural events. After this period, the event would either graduate to another fund or be sustainable without support. Funding will be restricted from events considered to duplicate an existing event or component in the same area of the municipality. Events will undergo an annual evaluation to assess the funded organization's delivery of specific performance objectives.

**Amateur sport competition grants:** HRM will amend the granting framework to include a new policy to provide limited funding support for annual or non-annual local and regional sporting events. Funding will be restricted from events considered to duplicate an existing event or component in the same area of the municipality. Events will undergo an annual evaluation to assess the funded organization's delivery of specific performance objectives.

**District event grants:**

HRM operates three grant programs in its operating budget that support community based or district based festival and events. For the most part these are low-value grants to assist local community festivals and events. At present, the value of these grants is inadequate to meet the local demand and to advance the community-building model entrenched in the program outcomes. HRM will eliminate these programs and introduce a new district grant program. This program will provide annual funding for each of the 23 districts that form HRM to support both annual and non-annual community events (non-regional draw). The program will establish eligibility criteria, evaluation measures etc. The program will also introduce a standard grant value for different scales of district events (i.e. \$250, \$500, \$1,000, \$2,500, \$5,000, \$10,000 and \$20,000etc.).

**Cultural presentations grants:** HRM will amend the granting framework to include a new policy to provide funding support for annual or non-annual cultural presentations. Funding will target initiatives that address known gaps in the existing event offerings, that add or enhance the programs of existing events, or that provide innovative presentations and/or experiences that have not traditionally been presented or offered in HRM.

**Performance underwriting:** At present, HRM recovers the cost of municipal services required to support events at full value. However, these costs often exceed the value of the grant provided by HRM; therefore, many of HRM's grants are not used to enhance the event's content and program, but merely to pay for the municipal services it uses. While many cities have adopted service-cost-recovery policies, these tend to exclude civic events, as well as premier or signature events. Moreover, cities are careful not to double tax — if a hotel tax exists, cost recovery is not required. In order to improve this situation, HRM will amend the granting framework to include a new performance underwriting policy. The intention of this policy is to enable HRM to provide grants to offset the costs of municipal service charges. Eligibility and the maximum permitted percentage of costs waived will be based on a pre-approved set of performance standards and criteria.

**Administrative Improvements**

The following administration programs should be integrated to ensure HRM's long-term

strategic event development goals of quality and risk management are addressed.

**Multi-year funding grants:** HRM has employed multi-year funding strategies to support large-scale events (e.g. Tall Ships, IIHF) that require significant levels of funding. HRM will amend the granting framework to include a new policy for multi-year funding options. The policy will be designed for well-established and recognized organizations that have a proven track record in managing the events and meeting the stated objectives of the funds. Multi-year funding will be generally limited to a maximum of four years. Organizations that qualify for multi-year funding will need to provide detailed information and a strategic business plan.

**Exit strategies/sunset clauses:** Very few grants or contributions provided by HRM explicitly set forth a sunset clause for HRM's support to events. Currently, the only provision that has any semblance to a sunset clause is HRM's ability to add or remove hallmark events based on their respective annual performance reviews. In some communities a "fair-warning policy" exists, whereby, if the Council believes that an event is not meeting its objectives, it will cut approximately 10 per cent of the grant and issue an explicit letter providing the applicant with precise reasons for the cut. It will also move the organization automatically from multi-year to annual funding. Should the event organization not remedy the situation, a second notice would result in an additional cut of up to 50 per cent of the municipal funding. If there is no remedy in the third year, the contribution is cancelled. HRM will amend the granting framework to include such exit strategies/sunset clauses.

**Evaluation provisions:** HRM recognizes that, at the time of application, many events are not in a position to definitively confirm programming or activities for the coming edition of the event. Consequently, HRM will amend the policy framework to include a so-called "giving forward by looking behind" provision, whereby a large portion of the evaluation is based on the past performance of the organization. This will enable decisions to be rendered in a timely manner, albeit with conditions, will allow applicants to prepare events with some assurance of funding, and, ideally, will lessen cash flow restrictions.

**Performance evaluation provisions:** To date HRM has been inconsistent in the weight it applies to performance reporting of events, but performance evaluation *must* be included for future evaluations. A performance evaluation process has been integrated into the hallmark event process, but does not exist for others (e.g. HRM's Annual Grants Program). HRM will amend the granting framework to include performance assessments for all grants. HRM will ensure that a set of quantifiable program outputs is identified for all events that receive grants and contributions, with targets established based on past achievements. Performance targets may include programming numbers, domestic content, audience levels and progress, number of locations, diversity of funds, sponsorship monies attracted, and press coverage (number of media articles, number of website hits, etc.).

Improve event grant and contribution services	
<i>Year 1-5 2010/2015</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Amend the Civic Events Granting Framework and Policy to include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an annual performance underwriting grant program</li> <li>• an emerging events (signature events) grant program</li> <li>• an amateur sport grant program</li> <li>• a cultural presentations grant program</li> <li>• multi-year funding grant program</li> <li>• a sunset-clause policy</li> <li>• a fair-warning policy</li> <li>• a risk management policy</li> <li>• an organizational performance clause</li> <li>• a policy on stratified support for different levels of events (e.g. national or regional relevance versus local, culturally specific and emerging events)</li> <li>• a requirement for review of all annual events every four years</li> <li>• standardized performance measures for all levels of events</li> <li>• standard amounts of support (percentage and/or minimum and caps) for all events</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Revise event applications to include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a standardized program objectives template</li> <li>• standard budget and reporting templates for all grant applications</li> <li>• an analysis grid and weighting table</li> <li>• a standardized reporting /performance outcome template</li> <li>• a risk management template</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Establish and implement a clear internal pathway for notification of all new events</li> </ol>

### 3.4 Monitoring & Evaluation

As a component of implementation, the goals, objectives and actions of the Event Strategy will be regularly monitored. The SEAC will prepare an annual report to HRM Council outlining the status of the strategy's implementation. This report will present an overall quality assessment of events, criteria development and progress on the strategy, as well any resulting recommendations. The quality assessment will be part of the grant monitoring and evaluation process.

The Annual Report will also evaluate events and the funding they receive from HRM against the three types of benefit to HRM: cultural, social, and economic activity and growth.

#### Cultural benefits

- Opportunities for artists
  - Enjoyment of unique experiences; access to high-quality work; exploration of own and other cultures; exposure to local, national and international artists and ideas; opportunity to learn new subjects in new ways; access to work at affordable prices; etc.
- Opportunities for audiences
  - Enjoyment of unique experiences; access to high-quality work; exploration

of own and new cultures; exposure to local, national and international artists and ideas; opportunities to learn new subjects in new ways; access at affordable prices, etc.

- Opportunities for HRM citizens
  - Participation in artistic programs and a range of other activities; the range of participants involved; quality of opportunities offered; etc.
- Contribution to cultural infrastructure
  - Impact on local and national artistic and community organizations; level of interaction with local artists; strengthening of ongoing artistic activity in HRM; etc.
- Contribution to HRM's culture and community identity
  - Reflection of HRM culture in program; encouragement of cross-cultural and international understanding and innovation; partnerships with non-cultural organizations; etc.

### **Social benefits**

- Social inclusion initiatives undertaken by events
- Training and employment opportunities for HRM citizens
- Diverse audiences targeted
- Self-esteem and socialization effects on local population
- Education components and impacts
- Regeneration of urban areas via infrastructure improvements and legacy benefits
- Improvement in HRM's quality of place and attractiveness to citizens and visitors
- Creative legacy
- Event participation

### **Economic benefits**

- Increased event attendance numbers
- Increased attraction of visitors
  - Increased hotel stays, profile and origin of visitors, quality of stay
- Increased revenue generated
  - Event revenue (tickets, merchandise, etc.), local tourism economy (direct and indirect), sponsorship, etc.
- Possibility of future partnerships
- Increased local employment