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**Item No. 3**  
**Halifax Regional Council**  
**October 12, 2010**

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

**SUBMITTED BY:** Original Signed by Director  
Paul Dunphy, Director of Community Development

**DATE:** September 16, 2010

**SUBJECT:** Community Action on Homelessness Presentation

### **INFORMATION REPORT**

#### **ORIGIN**

August 17, 2010 motion of Regional Council (item 10.3.1)

MOVED by Councillor Sloane, seconded by Councillor Blumenthal, that Regional Council accept the Halifax Report Card on Homelessness and the presentation on Development of Affordable Housing that staff prepare a staff report to Council in response to the report.

#### **BACKGROUND**

On August 17, 2010, representatives of Community Action on Homelessness (CAH) made a presentation to Regional Council on their work, the issue of homelessness, and broader housing issues facing HRM. CAH's Homelessness Report Card listed several measures that could be undertaken at the municipal level to reduce homelessness, including ensuring policies are aligned with senior levels of government initiatives, committing resources to support community housing projects, and fast tracking affordable housing applications. This information report describes HRM's initiatives related to housing issues and in particular, affordable housing in the Region.

## **DISCUSSION**

Decent housing is the foundation of a healthy, vibrant and prosperous community. Most households in HRM live in adequate housing that is in good shape and, on average, affordable compared to other cities across the country. The private sector satisfies the housing needs of most of the residents in HRM. Certain segments of the population, however, are either poorly housed or living in housing that consumes a significant portion of their income. Still others in HRM are homeless or living in precarious situations and at risk of being homeless.

The delivery of housing follows a continuum, from emergency shelters through to supportive housing, then subsidized housing and finally, market housing delivered by the private sector. While direct support for housing is not within HRM's jurisdiction, the Region nonetheless has a role to play in making sure its residents are adequately housed. To that end, HRM undertakes a number of housing related initiatives, such as providing tax relief for non-profit organizations and low income homeowners, providing grants to non-profit housing groups through the Community Grants Program, and making surplus lands available at less than market cost for affordable housing projects. Staff also works with Community Action on Homelessness and other housing groups in an advisory and collaborative capacity on projects such as the Homelessness Report Card.

One of HRM's most important involvements in housing is to ensure conditions are right for the private sector to deliver a wide range of affordable housing to residents of the Region. The Regional Plan provides guidance for housing development by ensuring, for example, sufficient development opportunities exist for new housing, a mix of housing types are available, especially in larger developments through the Master Planning process, and the creation of an affordable housing functional plan.

This functional plan, now underway, will include several elements such as a housing needs assessment, a definition of affordable housing, and measures to encourage, create and maintain more affordable housing in the Region. The Affordable Housing functional plan will also address the issues raised by CAH in its presentation, and staff assures Council that representatives of CAH will be included as a stakeholder in the process. The first element, the needs assessment, is nearing completion. Once complete, staff will present its findings and more detailed information concerning the Affordable Housing Functional Plan in an interim report to Regional Council this fall.

## **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

There are no budget implications.

## **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES/BUSINESS PLAN**

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Project and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Project and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

No community engagement is required as this report is only providing Council with information.

**ATTACHMENTS**

None.

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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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Report Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_  
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