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Item No. 11.1.2
Halifax Regional Council
October 19, 2010

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

Original Signed by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Wayne Anstey".

SUBMITTED BY:

Wayne Anstey, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

Original Signed by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Mike Labrecque".

Mike Labrecque, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: October 6, 2010

SUBJECT: 2010-11 Government Relations Priority Areas

ORIGIN

On October 10, 2006, Regional Council approved HRM's Government Relations and Strategic Partnership Development Policy, along with a set of priority action areas (moved by Councillor Mosher and seconded by Councillor Younger).

In addition to annual updates, on August 11, 2009, Regional Council approved the current annual government relations priority areas for 2009-10 (moved by Councillor Mosher, seconded by Councillor Blumenthal)

On March 23, 2010, Regional Council received an information report entitled "Government Relations Priority Areas Update," outlining the progress made on government relations priorities under the heading of each Council Focus Area and Corporate Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council approve the 2010-11 Government Relations Priority Areas.

BACKGROUND

On October 10, 2006, Council approved HRM's first "Government Relations and Strategic Partnership Development Policy"(Appendix A), designed to increase the effectiveness of the municipality's relations with other levels of government and community partners. Its' three aims were relationship and partnership building; advancing HRM's priority issues, and collaborative issue resolution. The Policy Statement does not change from year to year; however, specific action areas are periodically updated to reflect progress made and shifting Council priorities.

The 2009-10 Government Relations priority areas were approved by Council in August 2009. In March 2010, an information report went to Council describing the progress made on the 2009-10 government relations priority areas. A further update is included in this report in the Discussion section below, following the recommended priority areas for 2010-11.

DISCUSSION

In the past, Government Relations (GR) priority areas were grouped either by business unit or by Council Focus Area. However with the adoption of the Corporate Plan, HRM now has a strategic map that encompasses the priorities of Council, the work of all business units, and the corporate goals of the organization. The Corporate Plan is organized around Community Outcome Areas. Accordingly, the GR priority areas will also be organized under the six Community Outcome Areas, and will support the attainment of its goals through relationship-building with other government partners.

The GR priority areas put forth below are not prioritized, but rather provide a sense of the issues which should be coordinated with the Provincial and Federal governments. In addition to the approved priority areas, other issues and initiatives sometimes arise due to external factors and the actions of Federal and Provincial governments.

PART I: 2010-11 GR Priority Areas:

1) Safe & Welcoming Communities

- Leadership of Safe & Strong Communities, a joint initiative between HRM, HRP, and the Departments of Community Services and Justice to address the root causes of crime in specific communities
- Work towards sustainable funding from the province and federal government for the continuation of the Youth Advocate Program
- Partner with Dalhousie's Committee for Safe Student Drinking and Capital Health's Addiction, Prevention and Treatment Services to identify ways to modify harmful drinking practices among young adults

- Obtain financial support for an Atlantic region HUSAR team from other Atlantic Provinces
- Continue a leadership role at intergovernmental roundtable under development with Citizenship & Immigration (CIC), NS Departments of Immigration and Labour & Workforce Development, GHP, NSRDAs and UNSM. The roundtable is intended to focus on population and workforce issues facing Nova Scotia in the coming years.
- Work with the Province towards the establishment of an MOU that sets out Provincial funding support for the HRM Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) response team, and a cost recovery formula if the HRM team is deployed outside of municipal boundaries.
- Finalize a Memorandum of Understanding between Department of Natural Resources and HRFE, defining the mutual working relationship on brush fires within the former city limits.

2) Diverse Recreation, Leisure and Cultural Choices

- Work with Provincial and Federal partners to consider a private sector proposal for a new downtown Convention Centre
- Work with Provincial and Federal partners to support HRM's Event Strategy and improved governance model for Convention Centre, tourism, destination marketing and major events hosting
- Participation on the Provincial Government Central Region CAYS (Child and Youth Action) Committee which oversees implementation of the Provincial Child & Youth Strategy.
- Leadership of the Physical Activity Strategy with Health Promotion and Protection, to guide HRM's involvement in the priority action items for the next 3 years
- Advocate for increased support for cultural and recreational initiatives and facilities
- Update the Service Exchange Agreement with Halifax Regional School Board to determine that it adequately represents current needs and responsibilities.

3) Well-Planned & Engaged Communities

- Achieve support from government and community stakeholders for "Capital Ideas"
 - Create and establish the Strategic Urban Partnership as a forum for the three levels of government and major urban stakeholders to discuss and coordinate major urban investments and capital improvement projects.
 - Develop the Opportunity Sites Task Force to deal with the number of vacant lots and brownfields in the Regional Centre (i.e. bring them to market for development to create economic opportunities, foster private sector investment, and improve the attractiveness of the city.)
 - Identify and implement new financial, policy and legislative tools to remove barriers to private sector investment in the urban core, and promote private sector investment

in the core. One such tool would be receiving the ability (via legislative amendment) to implement Density Bonus zoning in the Regional Centre (HRMbyDesign area), which is in place throughout the rest of the province

- Develop Memorandum of Understanding between Nova Scotia Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs and HRM.

4) Clean and Healthy Environment

- Work towards achieving Provincial support for District Energy systems throughout HRM (particularly downtown)
- Secure the 100 MW currently set aside for municipal/community projects under the Feed-In Tariff program, in Provincial regulations
- Collaboration with Provincial departments and other municipalities on Quest initiative, to foster collaborative approach to research & development of integrated energy systems.
- Work with UNSM, FCM and federal government to develop a fair and sustainable funding plan to implement the CCME wastewater regulations
- Enhanced collaboration surrounding governance of protection and promotion of Clean Water Resources (Lakes, Coasts, Rivers, etc).

5) Integrated and Affordable Transportation Networks

- Continue to advocate for increased funding for public transit
- Explore opportunities for commuter transit into HRM with the Provincial government
- Promote and encourage discussions around the establishment of a Capital Transportation Authority
- Work with DND to develop an alignment with a connector road to improve transportation patterns in the Portland Hills/Russell Lake area
- Advocate for funding assistance for a fourth harbour ferry
- Develop an agreement with the Province on mixed-use provincially-owned trails
- Continue to work with Province to develop “Yield-to-bus” legislation

6) Economic Prosperity

- Strengthen partnerships to increase alignment of economic development efforts to support economic prosperity goals for the region
- Develop implementation plans for the new Economic Strategy that clearly define roles and responsibilities for all government and community partners
- Align Economic Goals & sustainable Prosperity Act (EGSPA) goals with redeveloped HRM Economic Strategy

- Develop the Strategic Urban Partnership terms of reference so that all three levels of government and major stakeholders are engaged and supportive, thus ensuring the viability and success of the Regional Centre and HRM's role as the economic hub of Atlantic Canada
- Work towards greater alignment and understanding of HRM's role in support of the Atlantic Gateway initiative with government partners and industry stakeholders
- Work with government and community partners to undertake a review of current governance structure and delivery of economic development services and programs in HRM.

PART II: Update on 2009-10 GR Priority Areas:

Following on from the March 23, 2010 Information Report, below is a further update on activities and achievements on the previous year's GR priority areas, organized by Council Focus Area.

Transportation

The Strategic Joint Regional Transportation Planning Committee (SJRTPC) continues to be a productive mechanism for collaboration and information-sharing. Some items under discussion include:

- Options for a future Ragged Lake/Bayers Lake Interchange concept and associated improvements to the Prospect Road/St. Margarets Bay Road intersection;
- Potential for HRM's support for extending Hwy 107 (Burnside/Sackville Expressway) as quickly as possible;
- Continuing feedback on the one way conversion of Lower Water Street and widening of Joseph Howe Drive;
- Ongoing discussion on the results of recent studies for transportation infrastructure such as a third harbour crossing and the Hwy 102/ Bayers Rd Corridor.

After the Province signalled its willingness to undertake discussions on establishing a Capital (Regional) Transportation Authority, the SJRTPC began considering the possible direction and structure of a CTA. The issue continues to be a priority for the Committee.

HRM worked with the Province to secure the needed legislative amendments to proceed with the Dartmouth Bridge Bus Terminal. As part of the agreement, a definitive map of the Dartmouth Common boundaries is being drafted so as to assist with future planning in the area.

In response to stakeholder discussions, HRM developed a new bus route, #8, which began service in August 2010 along Upper Water Street. The route was developed in partnership with NSPI, NSCAD and the Port Authority to accommodate the growing number of people frequenting the area for work, school, shopping, events and tourism.

Council Report

HRM continues to raise the issue of increased, sustainable funding for public transit at every opportunity with the Province. Using \$16.6 million in funding assistance from the Public Transit Capital Trust, HRM opened the Ragged Lake Transit Centre in August 2010, to facilitate the expansion in Metro Transit's operations as envisioned in the Five-Year Plan.

Infrastructure

As noted in the March update, HRM secured \$22.4 million in funding from the Infrastructure Stimulus Fund for a variety of projects; \$31.3 million from the Building Canada Fund for the Central Library; \$24 million for the Canada Games Centre; \$5 million from ecoTrust; \$1.9 million from the Recreational Infrastructure Canada (RInC) program; and \$1.5 million through the National Historic Sites Program.

HRM has strongly advocated for flexibility around the March 31, 2011 deadline for stimulus fund projects. It has made representations to the federal and provincial governments, as have the FCM and UNSM. On September 20, 2010, the federal Finance Minister indicated that the federal government will be "fair and reasonable" and show some flexibility around the deadline for municipalities facing hold-ups that were not under their control. HRM continues to advocate for the Province do the same.

HRM is a member of Quality Urban Energy Systems of Tomorrow (QUEST), an initiative started by the NS Department of Energy in January 2010. QUEST is a forum of senior decision-makers from government and industry that share best practices and align efforts around energy systems. QUEST has evolved over the past several months and partners are now working on an MOU that would see a pilot project related to the Parks at Bedford West get underway - information on which will be brought forward to Council in the near future. In addition to participation in QUEST, HRM meets regularly with staff from the NS Department of Energy to explore ways in which they can mutually achieve renewable energy targets and support energy efficiency projects in the region.

Public Safety

The Safer & Stronger Communities initiative with the Departments of Justice and Community Services continues to develop community-based programs to address the root causes of crime. Halifax Regional Police took on leadership of the Steering Committee for the initiative in summer 2010.

HRM has benefitted from two initiatives that aim to streamline court processes, thus improving efficiency and savings costs. One is a legislative amendment request HRM had made around Summary Offence arraignments, which the Province passed in the Spring 2010 session. The other is a pilot project on Electronic Summary Offence Tickets (ESOTs) which got underway with a \$350,000 Provincial contribution.

There are several collaborative efforts underway in regards to transportation-related safety, including consideration of "Red light cameras" for red light running to address collisions; the possibility of reduced speed limits in school zones; and installing photo radar at intersections to issue for speeding tickets

Community Planning

Council unanimously approved the "Capital Ideas" approach in July. Since then, staff has been introducing the Strategic Urban Partnership concept to federal and provincial colleagues, with positive feedback. This initiative will likely play a major role in the new Economic Strategy being developed (outlined below).

HRM led the initiative to revisit Canadian Council of Ministers of Environment (CCME) wastewater regulations and implementation. Federal, Provincial and Territorial Environment Ministers approved a Strategy with goals for treated wastewater in February 2009; however when the draft regulations were released they differed in several ways from the approved Strategy. The regulations also did not outline any sort of cost-sharing or funding strategy for implementation. HRM was a leader on this issue for the FCM. The federal government is now meeting with provinces and municipalities to discuss both the regulations and a cost-shared funding program.

There have been a number of collaborative issues with the Province on environmental issues. NSE consulted with HRM in the development of province-wide pesticide legislation to ensure complementary regulations. With support from the Province and NSPI, LED streetlights are being installed throughout the municipality as a way of reducing energy consumption and realizing cost savings.

Governance & Communications

HRM has shared information on its Capital Ideas approach and economic development initiatives with Provincial officials. Meetings with each of the three party caucuses on HRM priorities took place prior to the spring session of the Legislature, in accordance with HRM's annual government relations plan actions.

In a similar vein, ten of HRM's legislative amendment requests were passed during the Spring 2010 session of the Legislature - approx one-quarter of the outstanding number of requests.

HRM and the HRM Pension Committee made a submission to the Superintendent of Pensions regarding Provincial Pension Review. The Province released its regulations in September 2010, and while it eased the requirement for municipalities to fund solvency valuation deficits (HRM's key request), it introduced interest payments based on the level of deficit in the plan. The HRM Pension Committee is still studying the regulations to determine the impact on HRM.

Economic Strategy

A comprehensive process is underway to develop an Economic Strategy for 2011-16. A Steering Committee led by GHP and including members from HRM, NS Economic & Rural Development, ACOA, NSBI, Mayor's Economic Advisory Committee and the Chamber of Commerce, is overseeing the work. There have been extensive consultations done with numerous community stakeholders, and GHP and HRM are working closely with the Province in developing priorities for economic development in the region. The Strategy includes recognition of HRM as the "hub city" for Atlantic Canada and there appears to be growing support for this fact throughout the community (e.g., the Premier's Economic Advisory Panel and Donald Savoie's report both support HRM in this role).

Closely related to work on the Economic Strategy are discussions HRM is having with the Province around an improved economic development governance model, and the downtown Convention Centre proposal.

Cultural Plan

HRM Cultural Affairs meets regularly with the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Canada Council, NS Department of Tourism, Culture & Heritage, and ACOA to discuss existing and future cultural initiatives. Securing federal and provincial funding for the new Central Library was a major success as such significant funding is not often available for cultural infrastructure.

Immigration Action Plan

As noted in the March update Council report, HRM and ISIS (Immigrant Settlement & Integration Services, formerly MISA) signed a service agreement to mutually support SupperNova events and Neighbourhood Bus Tours for newcomers.

HRM was invited to participate in consultations around the development of a new Provincial Immigration Strategy during spring 2010. In addition, an intergovernmental roundtable on population/workforce issues is being considered with representation from HRM, the Provincial Office of Immigration, Labour & Workforce Development, UNSM, CIC, and other relevant stakeholders. With "Talent" emerging as one of the main priority areas in the new Economic Strategy, this issue is likely to become prominent over the coming year.

Translation of the Newcomers Guide into French and Arabic is well underway. There is a working draft of the French version being overseen by Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse (FANE). HRM staff consulted with the Arabic community prior to commencing the translation process into Arabic, and is working on design and translation of that version.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

No budget implications at this time. Any future budget needs would be articulated through the 2011-12 business planning and budget process.

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

Community consultation was not required as government relations priorities deal with synergies between Provincial priorities and HRM business plans.

ALTERNATIVES

None

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A: HRM Government Relations and Strategic Partnership Development Policy

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

Report Prepared by: Anne Totten, Corporate Policy Analyst, 490-5623

Report Approved by: _____
Jennifer Church, Managing Director, External & Corporate Affairs, 490-3677

HRM Government Relations and Strategic Partnership Development

Background

Cooperation and partnerships with provincial and federal governments and community partners will enable HRM to better achieve community goals.

Today more than ever there is a strong linkage required and developing between municipal, provincial and federal governments. Intergovernmental and partner cooperation and relationship building is key to ensuring success at meeting citizen needs and providing effective and efficient public service.

There is only one citizen, one tax payer, and governments have a shared accountability for public service to the citizen. However, each level of government maintains a different responsibility and mandate for specific services and methods of provision. As well, nongovernmental organizations have an important role to play.

Understanding the authority and responsibility of each level of government is key to understanding how to effectively implement government relations and to developing effective intergovernmental relationships. The level of authority and jurisdiction sets the parameters under which each partner can participate. Maximizing the benefits of the different responsibility areas and coordinating the activities around each will enhance service to the public.

Municipal governments are at the closest point of intersection to the community and the citizen. In Nova Scotia, the municipal mandate, roles and responsibilities are set out in the provincial Municipal Government Act (MGA). Municipalities have no legislative or legal authority beyond the MGA. However, the growing significance of local governments in an urbanized country is slowly being recognized.

The Provincial and Federal governments are adapting to the growing significance of municipalities as is evidenced by various recent programs and initiatives. Municipalities need to capitalize on the opportunity and work together with our government (and non-government) partners to further common objectives.

There will continue to be interdependence between the three levels of government, as such; the final form of the relationship between the levels and the amount of focus on municipal interest will continue to be fluid. Much depends on the senior governments, but local governments must also make every effort to articulate their views in a respectful, consistent and assertive fashion.

Strong intergovernmental relationships provide an opportunity to develop mutually-beneficial partnerships and to shape public policy for the benefit of the citizen. Flexible and cooperative partnerships, based on trust, are required. Accountability and jurisdiction are a reality, but do not have to be a barrier to effective relationships and arrangements.

Introduction

HRM's *Government Relations and Strategic Partnership Development Policy* is intended to advance relationship building and outcome achievement. The policy sets out guiding principles for interaction with key partners. The policy focuses on other government and non-government partners who all have a role in achieving results for the benefit of HRM's citizens. Actions are identified and forwarded based on Council direction and corporate strategies

Effective government relations requires understanding the process of how government decisions are made, being proactive, participating, educating, and building relationships with individuals who will impact the outcome. To achieve a goal, it is important to deliver the right message, to the right person, at the right time.

HRM's *Government Relations and Strategic Partnership Development Policy* articulates the roles and responsibilities of Mayor, Council and staff in intergovernmental affairs and strategic partnership development. The outcomes are toward: relationship and partnership building, advancing key priority issues and issue resolution.

Policy Statement

In developing government and partner relationships, HRM is committed to a series of principles that will guide all actions and activity undertaken with respect to achieving results.

In HRM, Government Relations and Strategic Partnership Development will:

- be consistent with Vision and Goals of HRM
- be consistent with corporate strategies
- support integration and facilitate communication
- foster consistent messaging throughout HRM
- understand and respect jurisdictional boundaries

In undertaking actions related to government and partner relations, HRM will:

- be open, honest, and transparent
- provide credible, reliable, factual information

- be proactive
- seek collaborative solutions and approaches
- utilize media opportunities effectively and appropriately
- agree to shared goals with partners

Outcomes

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

- Relationship and partnership building
- Advancement of HRM's priority issues
- Collaborative issue resolution

On a more regular basis, specific issue driven goals will be developed. These goals will be more specific and have a shortened time frame for realization. Such goals will relate more to specific actions to be carried out on an annual basis. Goals such as increased access to infrastructure funding, or legislative changes to meet HRM's needs may be articulated. Items such as these are articulated in the annual *Priority Action Areas*.

Governance

Government Relations and Strategic Partnership Development will be administered across the organization. Mayor, Council and all staff have a role to play in ensuring its success.

The focus is on matters of public policy, corporate strategy and/or Council direction. Implementation will be representative of HRM's organizational priorities and needs.

A fundamental role of Halifax Regional Council is to discuss and approve key areas of focus requiring attention. Coordinated and consistent political influence will be required to effectively achieve desired results in areas such as relationship building, new program development, accessing funding and seeking legislative change.

Political participation will focus on arising issues; on issues that have potential to impact on HRM and the citizens of the region. New items requiring action will be brought forward through Council. Emerging issues or areas with significant media and political attention may be identified for action. In such cases, staff support will be provided to initiatives as directed by Council to ensure continuity and resolution.

Halifax Regional Council has ultimate authority in approving any agreements with other agencies that involves sharing the authority and resources of the organization.

Administration and support is provided through the Chief Administrative Office. Responsibility and corporate coordination is within the Chief Administrative Office. As well, strategic and corporate relations will remain with the Chief Administrative Office and Senior Staff as directed by the CAO. Relationship building and partnership development will be carried out by all staff, on an on-going basis. The principles and goals will guide all interaction with other government and community partners.

This administration role is based on two key areas of need: strategic and operational.

The strategic focus is based on the direction provided by Council, and encompasses areas of common interest, goals and objectives between HRM and the partner organizations. The strategic focus is led by the CAO.

The operational focus is based on key issues or needs from an operational or day to day functioning perspective. The operational focus is led by the business units, in conjunction with the Chief Administrative Office.

Priority Action Areas

Yearly priority action areas, for government and partnership relations are developed for Council review and approval. Areas identified will be based on Council direction, business plan priorities and CAO goals and objectives. Other specific activities will be incorporated as required for the implementation of Corporate Strategies or Plans (such as the Regional Plan, Economic Strategy or Cultural Plan).

Work Plan

A work plan will be developed and monitored yearly to assist with implementation and monitoring of Council directions. The work plan will consist of key to enable the achievement of outcomes and priority areas noted. A yearly review will be completed to comment on activity undertaken and success of implementation.

Approved by Regional Council October 2006

For more information contact HRM Intergovernmental Affairs, 490-3677