

**Item No. 1**  
**Halifax Regional Council**  
**March 29, 2011**

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

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

**DATE:** February 24, 2011

**SUBJECT:** Service Review – Community Recreation Services (CRS)

**INFORMATION REPORT**

**ORIGIN**

At Council's budget debate session on May 21, 2010, Council approved the list of Service Review areas to be undertaken in 2010/11. Recreation Services was one of the areas identified. On August 10, 2010, Council endorsed the scope of the review which was to encompass an evaluation of CRS's key service areas:

- A. Community Development
- B. Youth Development
- C. Direct Programming
- D. Sport and Facility Scheduling

Council recommended that the Service Review:

- 1) Review the four service areas with respect to appropriate service and levels of service;
- 2) Include an evaluation of costs, revenues, pricing, and subsidization; and
- 3) Include an analysis of trend and market scans across Canada.

Staff wish to provide Council with an update on the work done to the end of February 2011.

## **BACKGROUND**

A team of staff has been selected to act as the Steering Committee for the Service Review. Co-led by the General Manager of Community Recreation Services and the Manager of Service Review, the team began work in July to plan the review. The guiding question will be:

### **ARE WE DOING THE RIGHT THINGS WELL?**

Central to the delivery of Recreation Services is the Recreation Blueprint (Appendix 1). As illustrated in Appendix 2, the team will be evaluating many factors affecting the Blueprint. The team will be focusing its efforts on evaluating four areas:

- Target groups – Upon whom should CRS expend the most resources?
- Focus type - In what areas should CRS expend the most resources?
- Alternative Service delivery - How should the services best be delivered?
- Access - How can CRS improve access to services?

## **DISCUSSION**

A detailed project plan has been developed (See Summary Project Plan – Appendix 3). The main components of the plan are:

- 1) Planning and resourcing the review.
- 2) Identifying the stakeholders and designing the consultation plan.
- 3) Gathering data, both internal and external, as well as a literature review.
- 4) A financial review.
- 5) An analysis of all the information and data.
- 6) Regularly reporting back to Council.
- 7) Implementing Council's recommendations.

Many tasks are occurring concurrently but some of the key tasks which have been largely completed to date include:

- 1) Planning and resourcing the review.
- 2) Establishment of a sub-committee responsible for the critical Community Engagement plan and process design developed.
- 3) Staff information sessions.
- 4) Review of major policy guidelines that Council has previously approved such as:
  - Community Outcome Areas
  - Council Focus Areas
  - The Regional Plan
  - The Economic Strategy
  - The Immigration Action Plan

- 5) Review of major studies and reports relative to HRM recreation facilities and community engagements such as:
  - Peninsula Facility Study – 2010
  - Dartmouth North Community Centre Operational Review - 2009
  - Community Facility Master Plan - 2008
  - Indoor Recreation Facility Master Plan - 2004
  - Arena Capacity Study – 2001
- 6) Identification of the external municipalities to be researched for best practices.
- 7) Collection of comparable service providers by geographic area for entry into GIS.
- 8) Draft financial analysis plan.

Ongoing tasks include:

- 1) Gathering of the data available internally: financial, service outputs, service volumes, demographic profiles, and other service providers.
- 2) Development and execution of external scan.

**Preliminary Recommendations:**

- 1) The Recreation Blueprint, which is the guiding document for CRS service delivery models, should be updated and presented to Council for approval.
- 2) Fee levels and cost recovery principles need to be aligned with the Blueprint and defined.
- 3) Additional specific service standards and performance measures should be created and monitored regularly.
- 4) The cost accounting system for CRS should be modified to provide for better information to assist in management decision making.

Staff intend to return to Council in June with a Committee of the Whole presentation and report, as well as a proposed process to develop an implementation plan arising from Council's direction.

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

The Service review is being completed within the existing operating budget envelope.

**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**

This is an important part of the CRS Service Review (see Community Engagement Plan - Appendix 4).

**ATTACHMENTS**

- Appendix 1: Recreation Blueprint
- Appendix 2: Service Review Overview Visual
- Appendix 3: Summary Project Plan
- Appendix 4: Community Engagement Plan

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: Original Signed by Director  
Brad Anguish, Director of Business Planning and Information Management, 490-4769

# ***Appendix 1***

## **Community Development Community Recreation Services RECREATION BLUEPRINT**

### ***INTRODUCTION***

The purpose of the Blueprint is to provide clarity and a policy framework for decision making with respect to service levels and priorities within Community Recreation Services.

### ***VISION***

*A vision for an organization is meant to be a compelling and motivating picture of what an ideal organization would look like. It is not meant to describe the current scenario or organizational environment but rather to highlight a point in time for all staff to work toward.*

Community Recreation Services is renowned as a leader in facilitating quality and inclusive recreation programs and community development services. Programs and services are accessible, affordable and promote well being and active lifestyles with emphasis on children and youth.

Community Recreation Services' programs and community development work are a reflection of the uniqueness and character of each HRM community and neighborhood. These programs and initiatives impact every HRM community where recreation, sport, physical activity, art, culture and youth services are essential to the personal, social, economic and environmental well being of all.

Successfully acting on recreation issues that affect communities, staff champion results through partnering, active citizenship and youth engagement by building on the strengths of both urban and rural communities. Staff are continuing to help build caring, vibrant, and liveable communities throughout HRM.

### ***MISSION***

*A mission is a statement of the fundamental purpose of an organization and answers three questions:*

- ▶ *Who is our primary client?*
- ▶ *Why does the organization exist?*
- ▶ *What must we do to serve our clients and to satisfy the longer term purpose of the organization?*

*The following mission has been developed to guide all of the activities, planning and evaluation in Community Recreation Services:*

Community Recreation Services enriches the lives of HRM residents and communities by providing and supporting inclusive recreation services, facilities, and programs.

## VALUES

*Values are defined as an individual's principles, standards, or judgement of what is valuable or important in life. From an organizational perspective, values are statements that summarize what is of primary value or importance to staff as a whole. The following list of values was developed by staff. It does not identify every value that is of importance to individual staff but rather highlights those values that have been identified by staff as being of primary importance to Community Recreation Services.*

- ▶ Youth engagement is our number one value. We nurture ongoing relationships with youth.
- ▶ We value the contribution and support of partnerships - primarily demonstrated at the grass roots level and through facility lease agreements and community projects;
- ▶ We are driven by the needs of the unique communities across HRM and engage citizens and communities in program planning and delivery; staff continually strive to exceed the expectations of citizens;
- ▶ We are committed to sustainability and fiscal responsibility;
- ▶ We value open dialogue and team work and believe in respectful and diverse work environments;
- ▶ We believe in universal access to recreation services with measures in place to address barriers - geography, gender, race, income, ability and otherwise;
- ▶ We support the principles of High Five and community youth development

## RECREATION BLUEPRINT SERVICE LEVEL CRITERIA POLICY

### Policy Statement

Recreation programs and services in HRM are based on specific fundamental service level criteria. These criteria (listed in detail below) encompass areas such as community scanning, partnership assessment, needs analysis/asset maps, and target group prioritization. Any potential or existing recreation program or service in HRM can be assessed based on its alignment with these criteria.

### Use of This Policy

This policy will be enacted upon staff identification of the requirement for a new recreation program or service and/or a request from a community for a new program or service. The policy may also be employed by staff of Community Recreation Services to assess the relevance of any existing recreation program or service.

### Use of Service Level Criteria

It is difficult to quantify consistent guidelines that accurately identify service levels. While guidelines to identify the level of service required in communities throughout HRM should employ data analysis, the process can also emphasize the qualitative characteristics that define communities. These characteristics include demographics, historical development patterns, culture, lifestyle trends, socioeconomic status, will of residents, partnership opportunities, and the availability of other service providers. Due to the many qualitative factors that contribute to recreation needs in different communities, it is difficult to develop and apply a standard service level formula or minimum numerical standards. Therefore, a holistic approach that assesses a combination of factors will be employed to ensure that service level guidelines apply accurately and equitably across different communities. This approach will provide a reflection of community preferences and need, will be reasonably attainable, and will be reviewed regularly. Although service level guidelines will provide direction and offer a means of evaluation, they will exhibit the flexibility required to respond to the varying recreation needs of different communities in HRM.

## ***SERVICE LEVEL CRITERIA***

To ensure their relevance, all potential and existing Community Recreation Services (CRS) programs and services must be developed and/or assessed utilizing the following service level criteria: (these are not listed in order of preference or priority):

- **Identification and Assessment of Need/Demand**

Needs, emerging needs and trends are identified by staff, the community, asset maps and other research methods. Once a need has been identified, staff assess its applicability to the CRS mission, vision, corporate, and Council focus areas to determine whether it is a potential “fit”.

- **Scan for Other Service Providers**

Staff will then assess other service agencies in their area/community to determine if a similar program or service is being provided by another agency or if the specific program or service **could** be provided by another agency in an affordable and inclusive manner. If so, the agency will be consulted about directly delivering the service or program themselves. If the identified agency needs support to be able to successfully offer the program, staff will utilize a community development approach to provide the advice and assistance, or form a partnership.

- **Sole Service Providers/“Gap Filling”**

If staff determine there is no other appropriate service provider within the geographical area available to meet the identified program need, then the program could be operated by CRS, should it fit the other criteria in the Blueprint.

CRS acts as a “gap filler”. If there is an identified lack or gap in a certain type or range of recreation (i.e. there is a void in the area of cultural or sport programs) within any given community, staff will attempt to fill the void if the resources are available and the identified gap fits the CRS criteria. Where this is the case, staff strive to ensure that the community is serviced with a basic level of programming especially in higher need areas with a higher density of children and youth.

- **Assess Partnership Opportunities**

As part of a community development approach, staff can also assess the viability of offering a program for any age group through a partnership if the need is determined. For example, instead of CRS offering a program directly, staff can assist the group with the marketing of the program, training of the staff, or program plan. The program “belongs” to the association, thereby enhancing community ownership. CRS does not receive the revenue but neither does it incur the expenditures associated with the program.

- **Program Emphasis on Children and Youth**

Needs are assessed based on priority age groups. Through trend analysis, needs identification, Council Focus Areas, and participation in several provincial and national initiatives, CRS has determined that children and youth are an area of program emphasis. To ensure emphasis is placed on this age group, a Youth Engagement Strategy was developed and is being

implemented across HRM. Community youth development and youth engagement are the preferred processes for developing any type of youth initiative. Adult programs and senior adults are no longer offered, except in high need communities, or when CRS is the sole service provider. Should this be the case, the service level criteria in the Blueprint will be assessed in relation to needs for these groups.

- **Relationship to High Need Areas**

Using available demographic information and trend analysis in their community, staff within each of the six geographies will identify high need areas. These areas are examined for their recreation requirements as well as the potential for recreation to address issues specific to the area. An example of a high need area could be a high density area with a large population of children and youth (i.e. mobile home parks or housing units). High need areas also include geographically isolated communities, areas with high vandalism or crime rates, or communities of modest means.

- **Introductory Programs**

Programs offered are at the introductory level. The philosophy is that participants should have access to learn a variety of skills at an introductory level in a quality safe setting. If participants then choose to invest in or pursue a particular skill at an intermediate or advanced level, they are encouraged to pursue the opportunity with a more specialized agency.

- **Specialized needs**

CRS ensures access to programs and services for persons who may have specialized requirements. Access is defined as the removal or reduction of barriers caused by distance, language, culture, age, gender, social and attitudinal barriers, finances, lack of skill, knowledge or ability, or physical obstacles. Needs may exist in any of these areas.

- **Cost Recovery and Revenue Formulas**

Similar to other municipalities throughout Canada, approximately one-third of the CRS budget is recovered through revenues from programs and rentals. This achievement of revenue greatly influences CRS's level of service but revenue is not the sole consideration. Although CRS strives to recover direct costs from direct programs, many programs, especially those for children and youth in high need areas, need to be further subsidized. Most high cost/low return programs have been eliminated except where they can be justified as fulfilling a social obligation or where CRS is identified as the sole service provider.

In cases where money from another source (i.e. grant money) can be leveraged to enhance new or existing programs and services, particular attention is paid to the long term financial sustainability of the new initiative or pilot program.

- **Urban, Rural and Suburban Considerations**

There are geographical variations between urban, suburban and rural areas with respect to many areas of recreation. Recreation is a community-based service and therefore these variations provide for differing levels and types of programs and services across HRM. Access to facilities is also one of these factors that can influence the level of service. For example, CRS often relies on renting schools, church halls, and community halls in rural areas because of limited access to HRM-owned facilities. The amount of access can influence decision-making in the development,

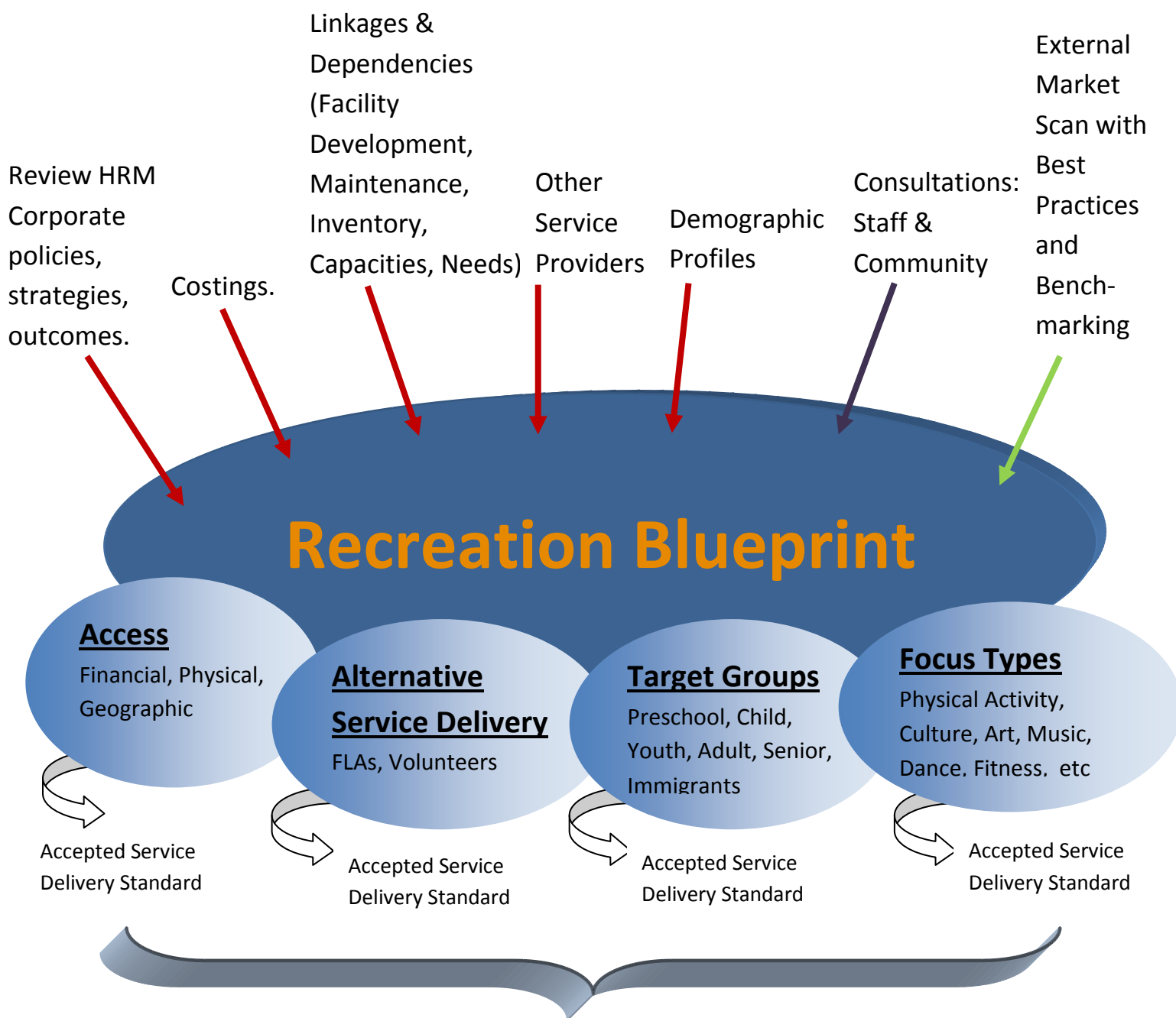


delivery, diversity and amount of recreation programs and services.

- **Facility Lease Agreements**

Many facilities in HRM are operated by volunteer boards, CRS and HRM staff provide advise and assistance to each community facility board. The number of community boards per geographical location will determine the amount of direct programming required elsewhere in the region. Community boards will seek to provide the required programs and services for their respective community.

## CRS SERVICE REVIEW 2010



Do we need to adjust service standards?

What is the return on investment?

What is the model recommendation for each of the 6 geographical areas?

## Appendix 3

STEPS	Task #	Task (& Sub-task) Descriptions	Start	End	Resources	Comments
1) Planning the Engagement		Scope Definition				
	1	Sign off Project Mini Charter	4-Jun-10	18-Aug-10	All	May be revised as further info and guidance is discovered
	2	Review of past reports	23-Jul-10	1-Sep-10	All	
	3	COW feedback	11-Aug-10	18-Aug-10	All	
	4	Detailed Project Plan developed	13-Aug-10	22-Sep-10	All	
	5	Decide on reports to be reviewed	18-Aug-10	25-Aug-10	All	
	6	Budget defined	25-Aug-10	1-Sep-10	All	\$6,000 available for resourcing from Catherine Sanderson
	7	Resources defined	25-Aug-10	15-Nov-10	All	
2) Stakeholder Consultation	8	Stakeholder Identification	22-Jul-10	19-Oct-10		
	9	PART E - Community Engagement/ Stakeholder Consu	1-Oct-10	15-Dec-10	Community Engagement Team	Lead by Annette
	10	PART F - CE/SC Plan Execution	1-Jan-11	28-Feb-11	Community Engagement Team	Aim to have majority done by Canada Games
	11	Synopsis: PARTS E & F	1-Mar-11	1-Apr-11	AV/CL/SC/CS/DR/KM/1 Rec Rep	Lead by Annette & Claudy
3) Data Collection	12	PART A - Internal Scan: Service Standards & Measuren	1-Oct-10	15-Dec-10	Internal Scan Team	<b>Why are we gathering this multitude of info?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To establish baseline info</li> <li>- To utilize for bench marking with other cities</li> <li>- Confirm congruency w other Corporate strategies</li> <li>-To feed relevant data into other parts of plan</li> <li>- To look for opportunities/gaps, efficiencies, etc.</li> <li>- GIS charges to be mid October</li> </ul>
	13	Synopsis: PART A	1-Dec-10	15-Jan-11	CS/JM/DR/DP	Lead by Catherine & Joan
	14	PART B - Internal Scan: Financial Analysis	1-Oct-10	15-Dec-10	Financial Analysis Team	Lead by Danielle
	15	Synopsis: PART B	1-Dec-10	15-Jan-11	CS/KM/DP/DJ	Rose Matthews as resource to team
	16	PART C - External Scan: Literature Review (focus on 4 themes outlined)	1-Oct-10	1-Nov-10	DR/KM/JM/CS/JA/2 Rec Reps	Lead by Catherine & Karen
	17	PART D - External Scan: Market Research/Best Practices	1-Oct-10	15-Dec-10	DR/KM/JM/CS/JA/DP/2 Rec Reps	Lead by Denise Resources required for articles/journals
	18	Synopsis : PARTS C & D	1-Dec-10	15-Jan-11	DR/CS/KM	Lead by Karen & Denise Need to ensure focussed approach – congruent approach for assumptions, questions and data collection (Denise's chart)
	19	Analysis of PARTS A-F	15-Mar-11	15-Apr-11		Lead by Denise
	20	DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS		15-Apr-11		
4) Analysis	21	Facilitated Session on Analysis - to check in on reality, conclusions, recommendations, etc. BRING IT ALL TOGETHER!!!		30-Apr-11	ALL	Lead by Karen
	22	Community Engagement Validation - return to stakeh	1-May-11	15-May-11	Community Engagement Team	Lead by Annette & Claudy
		Update: Info Report to Council (E&F)		1-Mar-11	CS/KM	
		EMT/SMT Update (A-F)		1-Feb-11	CS/KM	
5) Reports		EMT/SMT Update (prior to final council presentation)		1-May-11	CS/KM	
		Final Report		30-Jun-11	CS/KM	
6) Implementation Plan	23	Development of Implementation Plan		June		



## Appendix 4

### Recreation Service Review – Community Engagement Process Plan

