

Item No. 2
Halifax Regional Council
October 25, 2011

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed by Director
Jennifer Church, Managing Director, Government Relations & External Affairs

DATE: September 20, 2011

SUBJECT: 2011-12 Government Relations Priority Areas

INFORMATION REPORT

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 October 19, 2010, Regional Council approved the 2010-11 annual government relations priority areas (moved by Councillor Nicoll, seconded by Councillor Sloane).

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 to assist in achieving our corporate priorities. The policy's three aims are:

- 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. HRM intergovernmental affairs staff also carries out an annual schedule of regular activities (Appendix B) to focus on communicating our corporate priorities.

Since the adoption of the Government Relations (GR) policy, HRM has built a closer relationship with the Provincial and Federal governments and community stakeholders. There is regular contact between senior officials and HRM has increased consultation and input into external policies and programs. In addition, officials from other levels of government and community organizations have participated in HRM initiatives such as the new Economic Strategy and the Strategic Urban Partnership, leading to greater alignment between organizations.

DISCUSSION

In the years since the GR Policy has been adopted, HRM has continued to progress in its sophistication with regards to government relations. There is a more coordinated approach and regular tracking of all intergovernmental initiatives. A coordinated approach will ensure that HRM's priorities are clearly communicated to other levels of government and community partners, and that common messages are being delivered. This builds upon the GR Policy which seeks to undertake effective government relations and deliver the right message to the right person at the right time.

The GR priorities outlined below will represent key strategic priorities of HRM with a long-term focus. In the past GR priority areas tended to be specific actions under each Council Focus Area, Corporate Plan Outcome Area or Business Unit. As required, these issues will continue to be dealt with on a day-to-day operational basis. These ongoing, operational issues will support the high level, strategic priorities presented here, which will have a broader focus on achieving HRM goals with maximum benefit for citizens. There are also opportunities for administrative efficiencies that would lead to more cost-effective service delivery for HRM. Joint initiatives would lead to streamlined work and cost savings. These include opportunities such as joint procurement, Better Regulation Initiative, service agreements or joint ventures with MOU partners, district energy systems, and streamlined administrative processes for police and justice.

Council has several aligned strategies and complementary policies which together set the long-term vision and direction for the Municipality. Strategies such as the Corporate Plan, Regional Plan, Economic Strategy and Cultural Plan all speak to common themes:

- economic growth and prosperity
- sustainable and healthy communities
- a strengthened Regional Centre
- efficient and integrated transportation networks
- diverse, mixed-use communities
- a competitive business climate

Similarly, each of HRM's strategies note the importance of alignment with government and community partners in achieving their common objectives. In order to make progress on the underlying themes in each of Council's strategies, it is necessary to work with partners who share responsibility for aspects of each issue. Accordingly, the GR priority areas outlined in this report were chosen based on their relevance to Council's strategic objectives, particularly the Regional Plan, Corporate Plan and Economic Strategy.

I) 2011-12 GR Priority Areas

Halifax Regional Municipality is unique within Nova Scotia. Consider the following facts:

- With 403,000 residents, HRM is home to 42% of Nova Scotia's population
- 80% of immigrants to Nova Scotia are in HRM
- HRM has steady population growth – increasing 8% since 2005
- HRM has a \$13 billion economy annually, producing 48% of Nova Scotia's GDP
- 35% of Nova Scotia's jobs are within 5km of City Hall
- HRM has a stable and diversified economy, with dynamic & defined clusters of business concentration
- 68% of HRM's workforce has post-secondary education, making it one of the best-educated labour forces in Canada

The Provincial government has recognized that HRM is unique by granting it separate governing legislation from the *Municipal Government Act*; the *HRM Charter*. In 2008, the Conference Board of Canada named HRM as the economic engine of Nova Scotia, and all of Atlantic Canada, due to the influence its population and economy have over communities throughout the region.

As Elizabeth Beale noted in the Premier's Economic Advisory Council report in 2009, "*the prospects for Nova Scotia are now inextricably linked to the success of its largest urban area.*" Accordingly, a focus for HRM's Government Relations strategy and priorities is to build on HRM's strengths so that it can reach its full economic potential. HRM's strategic GR priority areas are intended to emphasize that Halifax is unique and that through collaboration, Halifax is uniquely positioned to support provincial, regional and federal goals:

- Regional Centre
- Economic Development
- Transportation
- Public Safety

These are areas which reflect HRM's key corporate priorities and Council Focus Areas and are also areas where we could have the greatest impact on common objectives throughout the region. Details of each are outlined below.

A) Regional Centre

In July 2010 Council approved the "*Capital Ideas*" approach to growing HRM's urban core. Its underlying theory is that focusing investment in the urban core is the most reliable and expeditious way to create prosperity for the entire region. The goal is to involve all major stakeholders in the Regional Centre in identifying and implementing ways to revitalize the urban core – particularly focusing on public investments that will catalyze private investments and attract people and businesses to the core.

HRM has the largest urban core east of Montreal. It is a magnet for business, education, government, leisure, and tourism. Positioning the Regional Centre as a key strategic asset is vital to expanding the economy in HRM, Nova Scotia, and Atlantic Canada as a whole. To do this, alignment between all stakeholders is needed on key priorities and actions. HRM has begun this process by initiating the Strategic Urban Partnership.

The GR strategic focus around Regional Centre is to ensure HRM has the tools to strengthen its regional centre in the areas of planning and development, economic prosperity, and legislative authorities. These issues are reflected in many legislative amendment requests HRM has before the Province, in HRM Community Outcome Areas, and in Council Focus Areas. Progress can be measured by looking at initiatives such as:

- Strategic Urban Partnership
- Opportunity Sites Task Force
- Legislative requests passed

A focus on aligning government and stakeholder interests and priorities will set the foundation to support density and investment in the downtown core will in turn will spur the regional economy.

B) Economic Development

HRM's Corporate Plan aims to solidify Halifax's position as "the economic engine of our region, driving sustainable growth that creates global opportunities and vibrant communities for our people and businesses." In support of this there have been several economic development initiatives recently undertaken by HRM and many community stakeholders, such as:

- New Economic Strategies were adopted by HRM and the Province
- The emphasis on Regional Centre that positions the Centre as a key strategic economic asset
- Work on the economic development governance review project
- Large infrastructure projects with significant economic spinoff (eg, Convention Centre, Central Library)

HRM is the economic hub of Atlantic Canada. Its contribution to the economy and the population give HRM significant influence over economic development outcomes in the region, more than any other single municipality. At the same time, HRM requires collaboration with community partners to achieve many of its economic goals as outlined in the Corporate Plan and Economic Strategy. Similar to the Regional Centre work, the GR strategic focus is on alignment of goals, priorities and actions among all stakeholders, so that improved economic outcomes can be achieved for all. Progress may be measured by tracking the following initiatives:

- Continued collaboration on an economic development governance review that will deliver a recommendation to Council on the optimal structure of economic development governance in our region
- Progress on Economic Strategy action plans
- Level of stakeholder participation in the implementation of the HRM Economic Strategy
- Development of the Strategic Urban Partnership

There is one Provincial economic initiative in particular that represents an opportunity for HRM: the Better Regulation Initiative (BRI). The Province initiated the Better Regulation Initiative in 2005; while that work concluded in 2010, the spirit and intent of making it easier for business to interact with government has been re-profiled under jobsHere. This project focuses in three areas: Regulatory Excellence, Service Excellence, and Compliance Excellence. Each of these three pillars serve to preserve the benefit of regulation while making it easier for business to interact with government. The BRI mirrors HRM's Economic Prosperity outcome area objective of streamlined and client-focused regulatory frameworks. There are several opportunities for collaboration on these goals which would reduce and rationalize regulations/requirements/forms/applications, align provincial and municipal regulatory frameworks, minimize compliance costs for businesses and help them be more competitive.

C) Transportation

Transit services are a key component of a sustainable, green city. Transit is a key factor in attracting people and businesses to the region, which would enhance our economic sustainability.

Metro Transit is the largest public transit system in Atlantic Canada. Council has expanded HRM transit services by 32% since 2006. The Five Year Approach to Transit adopted in 2008 will see service levels increase by a further 25% by 2013, which HRM is on target to achieve. This will require more than \$150 million in new capital for buses, terminals and infrastructure to support increased ridership and service coverage.

Public transit is one of the biggest budget expenditures for HRM. Metro Transit's 2011-12 operating budget is \$78.7 million – over 10% of HRM's total operating budget of \$757.9 million. It has been one of the largest growth areas in recent years. Nova Scotia has the lowest investment in public transit in Canada: \$3.72 per capita vs. a provincial average of \$19 per capita. Of that \$3.72, HRM receives only occasional operational grants for studies and operational initiatives.

Transit initiatives such as frequency increases on established Conventional Core routes, Urban Express, MetroLink and MetroX demonstrate that residents will use transit services that are convenient and accessible. Consider the following:

- Conventional Core routes that receive service increases and adjustments, such as increased trip frequency during midday and peak hours, have experienced ridership increases. Established core routes that service universities, NSCC, hospitals and other downtown employers in particular have experienced ridership growth, with six of the routes (Routes 1, 10, 14/61, 60, 63, and 80) representing a total weekday ridership increase of 3930 passengers from 2009 to 2010.
- In the first year of MetroLink operation, transit experienced a 9% increase attributable to the MetroLink Program
- The 2006 MetroLink survey of users indicated that almost 30% of MetroLink riders were formerly automobile drivers or passengers.
- The 2009 MetroX survey of uses indicated that 75% of MetroX riders were formerly automobile drives or passengers.
- MetroX underwent further service adjustments after the first year of operation and experienced a 24% increase in ridership, with a daily ridership from 278 to 344 passengers.

There are on average 97,500 passengers per day using Metro Transit bus and ferry services. This translates to 24.2% of the HRM population utilizing transit services – and 10.3% of Nova Scotia's population. These numbers are significant in representing the amount of emission reductions achieved through public transit. HRM is seeking support in developing a robust transit system that meets the needs of its residents and commuters. Public transit comes with long-term benefits to environmental and health issues, which in turn alleviate pressures on the Provincial budget for healthcare, road maintenance, etc. It supports the *Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act*, which has legislated targets to meet emission reduction. Improved transit service would go even further towards achieving those goals.

HRM is committed to pursuing external partnerships to improve transportation services and patterns. Increased support could take the form of shared Gas Tax funds, elimination of bridge tolls for transit buses, new government grants for transit, and Capital Cost Contributions.

D) Public Safety

The root causes of crime cross all levels of government. Working on solutions to public safety

issues involves many stakeholders in a multi-jurisdictional process. HRM has already made significant progress in engaging the Provincial government and community partners in implementing the recommendations from the Mayor's Roundtable Report on Violence. Issues such as improving safety in and around the downtown core speak to HRM's focus on strengthening the Regional Centre and attracting people and business.

HRM has developed a unique and successful pilot project to combat some of the root causes of crime. The Youth Advocate Program (YAP) began in 2008 as a federally-funded pilot project to prevent youth from engaging in anti-social and criminal behaviours that lead to involvement in gang related and criminal activities. It focuses on the 1-2% of youth and families who require intensive intervention by government and social service agencies.

An independent evaluation of the program was undertaken by Dr. Michael Unger at the Resilience Research Centre at Dalhousie. He found the program to be "a national model for at-risk youth." The evaluation found that delinquent behavior and risk levels have fallen; there is less risk-taking behavior including substance abuse; attitudes towards aggression, guns, violence and gangs are less permissive; and attachment to family relationships and school has increased.

The federal pilot funding for YAP expires in 2012. In March 2011, Council endorsed the program and its continuation. Council also emphasized the importance to seek funding partners. The annual budget for YAP is \$690,000. The YAP is of great importance to all community partners, a fact recognized by the Child & Youth Strategy (CAYS) committee, a multi-stakeholder group that includes Provincial departments, HRM, HRP, and Capital Health. CAYS has identified YAP as a priority and indicated a commitment to reviewing their regional budgets to identify opportunities to contribute.

The average YAP cost per youth is \$27,758 per year. In comparison, the cost per youth per year to receive services from the Department of Community Services ranges from \$79,935 to \$208,050. The Youth Advocate Program is an important and worthwhile initiative that benefits all community stakeholders. Crime reduction strategies and improved social outcomes are important to everyone in the community. The YAP is a prime example of a community-based success story in these areas; however funding support is necessary to ensure its continuation.

II) Engagement Strategy

As noted above and outlined in Appendix B, HRM carries out a number of activities aimed at communicating key priorities to partners and stakeholders. These include several opportunities for Council to engage partners and advocate for HRM's GR priorities. At the Provincial level in particular, there are opportunities for the Mayor and Councillors to speak with HRM-based MLAs, to present to Law Amendments Committee, to meet with Provincial party caucuses, and to work through the UNSM resolution process to put forward HRM priority issues.

HRM's new Standing Committee structure facilitates such advocacy efforts as Standing Committee members will be well-positioned to speak on amendments that come under the

purview of their respective committees. HRM staff will provide updates to all standing committees on issues under the GR priorities that relate to their mandates and ensure briefing materials are available when required. Standing Committee chairs will also be informed of opportunities to meet with colleagues from other governments and organizations and discuss/advocate for priority issues.

III) Update on 2010-11 GR Priority Areas

HRM undertakes regular activities in support of its government relations priorities and emerging issues. Its advocacy work over the past year included federal and provincial budget submissions, presentations to all provincial party caucuses, a presentation to the federal Standing Committee on Energy, resolutions submitted to UNSM, and regular meetings with federal and provincial representatives and community partners. These were circulated to Council and are available online at <http://www.halifax.ca/IntergovernmentalAffairs/AdvocacySubmissions.html>

The past year has seen a great deal of work accomplished around economic development and the Regional Centre. Perhaps most noteworthy was federal approval for a new downtown Convention Centre, announced in August. The establishment of the Strategic Urban Partnership was also a significant step forward in creating a forum for major community stakeholders to discuss initiatives related to the Regional Centre and begin aligning priorities. The Strategic Urban Partnership will be one of the primary mechanisms to implement the work of the 2011-16 HRM Economic Strategy, approved in March 2011. The development of the Economic Strategy was overseen by a multi-stakeholder steering committee, and over 300 groups and individuals from the business, non-profit, and post-secondary sectors were consulted in its creation.

HRM received several of its legislative requests in the Fall 2010 and Spring 2011 session of the Legislature, including one drafted on short notice that enabled the Solar City project to proceed – making HRM a leader among Canadian cities to encourage and implement solar energy. HRM has also worked closely with energy stakeholders on Quality Urban Energy Systems of Tomorrow (QUEST), which achieved a Memorandum of Understanding regarding efficient and sustainable energy systems in the Bedford West development. HRM was also invited to present recommendations to the federal Standing Committee on Energy regarding energy opportunities facing municipalities, and share information on its initiatives.

The 2011 Canada Winter Games focused significant attention on sports facilities in HRM. The unprecedented popularity of the skating Oval saw an outpouring of support from the community and several offers from community organizations to work with HRM in creating a permanent Oval, which is now underway. Similarly, growing interest in the feasibility of a stadium brought together many stakeholders into a steering committee, with phase 1 financial support from the Province, to investigate the business case and public support for a potential stadium.

HRM was a national leader in revisiting the Canadian Council of Minister of Environment (CCME) regulations around new standards for wastewater and sewer systems. The original draft regulations had a lack of clarity and appeared to depart from the CCME-approved Strategy in

several areas. HRM worked closely with the FCM to advocate to the federal government on revising the regulations. The federal Environment Minister struck a federal-provincial-municipal working group, of which Halifax Water is a part, to develop mutually acceptable regulations which are being released this fall. Work continues on developing a costing strategy to implement the new regulations.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

None

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 was undertaken in the development of this report. It outlines an administrative approach to achieving some key community outcome areas via government relations. However, each of the four areas outlined above has incorporated community engagement in their policy development, including HRMbyDesign, Economic Strategy stakeholder consultation, public meetings with regard to transit services, and the Mayor's Roundtable on Violence.

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A: Government Relations and Strategic Partnership Development Policy

Appendix B: Intergovernmental Activities Calendar

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: Jennifer Church, Managing Director, Government Relations & External Affairs, 490-3677

Appendix A

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

Appendix B

Intergovernmental Activities Calendar

Timeline	Tactic
December	Budget submission to Province
Spring	Begin legislative amendments strategy for fall session (see separate document)
Spring	Resolutions for FCM conference in June
Summer	Annual GR priority areas to Council
August	Budget submission to federal Standing Committee on Finance
August	UNSM Resolutions for annual conference in November
September	Response to Chamber of Commerce's <i>Annual Update to Municipal Government</i>
Sept/Oct	Meeting with Provincial caucuses on HRM priorities, before fall Legislature session
Fall	Presentations to Law Amendments Committee

Other:

- Regular (3-4 times per year) meetings between CAO and key Deputy Ministers (SNSMR, TIR, Policy & Priorities, Energy), and ACOA Vice President
- Meeting between EMT and Deputy Ministers when possible
- Presentations to federal standing committees that travel to Halifax
- Semi-regular (1-2 times per year) meetings with the heads of our Corporate MOU partners. These include:
 - Metro University Presidents
 - Capital District Health Authority CEO
 - Nova Scotia Community College President
 - Halifax International Airport Authority President
 - Halifax Regional School Board Superintendent
 - Department of National Defence – CFB Halifax Base Commander