

Halifax Regional Council
September 20, 2005

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:



George McLellan, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: September 16, 2005

SUBJECT: HRM Immigration Action Plan

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Immigration and HRM's role in immigration has been raised at council several times over the last few years.

- In December 2003, the Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association and the Greater Halifax Partnership presented to Council on the Immigration Partnership Initiative, Council subsequently requested a staff report, which was delivered in May 2005.
- In May 2005, Council adopted an immigration vision for HRM.
- Also in May 2005, HRM hosted the Atlantic Mayor's Congress, Conference on Immigration. In June 2005 HRM hosted the HRM Immigration Forum.
- The Regional Plan and the Gardner Pinfold have confirmed the need for increased immigration from an economic, social and cultural perspective.
- Staff committed to council to develop an immigration action plan, focussed on specific tangible actions HRM would pursue to achieve the goal of a more welcoming community, and to report back to council. (See May 10, 2005 report to Council)

BACKGROUND

The development of an HRM Immigration Action Plan evolved out of the various initiatives and discussions that have occurred over the last several years. Recognizing the importance of immigration to our region, HRM has undertaken and participated in several initiative to help ensure HRM is a welcoming community.

HRM was consulted on the development of the NS Immigration Framework, released August 2004. HRM hosted the Atlantic Mayor's Conference on Immigration, which will result in a report that will provide innovative ideas and suggestions for improving immigration in Atlantic Canada. HRM was represented via members of council and staff on the Greater Halifax Partnership advisory body to develop a community based immigration strategy for our region. The HRM Immigration Action Plan was developed within this context and to be supportive of these initiatives within our community.

DISCUSSION

In May 2005 Council adopted the immigration vision: "Halifax Regional Municipality is a welcoming community where immigration is supported and encouraged. Halifax Regional Municipality will work with other levels of government and community partner so to increase our collective cultural, social and economic diversity by welcoming immigrants to our community." To integrate the vision into operations, the attached action plan has been developed. In June, an HRM Immigration Forum was held. Participants included: provincial and federal government representatives, community organizations, immigrant settlement organizations and individual immigrants. The objective of the session was to get broad feedback on specific actions HRM could undertake to create a more welcoming community. The HRM Immigration Action Plan considers all such feedback.

The HRM Immigration Action Plan will act as a guide for staff. The focus of the action plan is on, from an external perspective, how we provide service to diverse communities, and from an internal perspective, how we recruit, hire and train employees. The Action Plan will also be shared with stakeholders in our community who are interested in working towards the shared goal of welcoming people to our region.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

None - any budgeting requirements associated with the implementation of the action plan will be identified through the yearly budget process.

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.

ALTERNATIVES

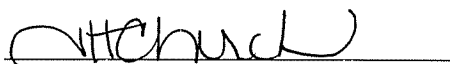
None - information item.

ATTACHMENTS

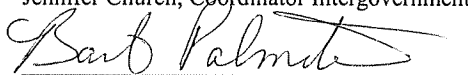
HRM Immigration Action Plan

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.

Report Prepared by :



Jennifer Church, Coordinator Intergovernmental Affairs, 490-3677



Financial Review :

Barb Palmeto, Financial Consultant, 490-7221