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PO Box 1749  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3J 3A5 Canada

**Halifax Regional Council**  
**November 22, 2005**

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

**SUBMITTED BY:**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan English", written over a horizontal line.

Dan English, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wayne Anstey", written over a horizontal line.

Wayne Anstey, Acting Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** November 15, 2005

**SUBJECT:** **Membership: Plus Network-International Center for Sustainable Cities**

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**ORIGIN**

At the September 9, 2005, meeting of the Energy and Underground Services Committee, it was moved by Councillor Mosher, seconded by Councillor Uteck, that the Energy and Underground Services Committee recommend to Regional Council that Halifax Regional Municipality become a member of the Plus Network- International Centre for Sustainable Cities. The motion was put and passed unanimously.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that:

The Halifax Regional Municipality become a member of the Plus Network-International Centre for Sustainable Cities

## **BACKGROUND**

The Plus Network is intended to build upon the experience of the cities involved in an international competition on long term sustainability (100 year plan), won by the Greater Vancouver area. The intent is to create a network of at least 30 cities willing to share their integrated long-term planning processes; technologies and implementation strategies; and to undertake demonstration projects. The network's purpose is to catalyze action and advance the state of thinking and practice around long term sustainability (60-100 years), incorporating research and applying the learning in demonstration projects. The Plus Network will facilitate that sharing, allowing communities to avoid costly mistakes and benefit from one another's lessons. Participating cities will document and share their experiences and tools through a web-based network, meet face to face every two years, and report on their learning. The shared experience will result in better models of long-term planning the development and application of different tools and techniques, the establishment of strategies and short term goals that enable long term plans to be implemented, and the creation of benchmarks, measureable indicators and action plans to start on the pathway to sustainability. The result will be more resilient cities able to cope with economic, ecological and social shocks and stresses.

Partners include the Greater Vancouver Regional District, the University of British Columbia, Local Governments for Sustainability. Sponsors include ALCAN, Environment Canada, Industry Canada, SaskEnergy, Real Estate Foundation of BC, and Western Diversification Canada.

Other Canadian members include: Calgary, Region of Niagara, Ottawa, Edmonton, and the National Capital Commission.

## **DISCUSSION**

HRM has stepped to the forefront of many cities in its undertaking of its 25 year Regional Plan, and in its efforts to become a more sustainable community. The experiences HRM has gained is worth sharing with other communities. As well, HRM has much to learn from efforts in other cities who have undertaken longer term sustainable initiatives, in terms of their approaches, tools, analyses, successes and lessons learned. The Plus 30 Network offers a low cost means to gain and share knowledge and experiences.

Membership in the Network is a commitment to long term sustainability; therefore a draft Memorandum of Understanding is attached which outlines HRM's commitment. The intent is for HRM to continue to plan for the longer term. As HRM is just in the process of completing its 25 year regional plan, there is no intention in the immediate future to begin a comprehensive plan for a longer time frame. However, the concept of planning for the longer term is intriguing, and HRM is interested in working with other cities to determine what would be feasible and appropriate in consideration of a longer term. It is staff's understanding that this perspective is acceptable to the Network.

Key benefits of membership are outlined below:

1. **Improved excellence and understanding of long-term urban sustainability:** Participating cities and communities collectively gain access and contribute to a shared international pool of the best urban planning expertise and tools related to sustainability.
2. **Improved investor confidence and risk management.** Long-term planning improves decision making and renders municipalities more attractive to investors, multilateral lenders, donors and federal and provincial governments. Long-term integrated planning helps cities to articulate their vision and to put requests in a development context, thus reassuring lenders/donors/investors that the city has considered a wide range of factors over a long period of time.
3. **Increased cost-effectiveness of planning processes and methodologies:** The cost of the planning process in participating cities and communities is reduced by the economies gained from sharing experiences and tools. Practical sharing allows cities to avoid costly mistakes made by others and the +30 Network encourages the development of better planning frameworks and tools. Modification of existing methods and identification of new ones occurs during professional development workshops or consultations. Efficient reuse or adaptation of tools is promoted so that development costs need not be repeated.
4. **Use of events as catalysts:** Members gain the opportunity to showcase their city or community and their planning expertise, as well as to report on results of planning and demonstration projects at high profile events such as those associated with Habitat +30: the World Urban Forum 2006. These events can often serve as useful catalysts to mobilise support and resources within cities and countries.
5. **Sharing of learning between North and South:** Developing country cities face overwhelming problems of poverty, informal settlements, HIV AIDS, security of persons and property, water and sanitation. Northern cities face problems of pollution, sprawl, traffic congestion, drugs, homelessness and an ever-increasing ecological footprint. Plus Network cities recognize these disparities and their different priorities and they move beyond stereotypes or positions to find common ground. Shared problems of decentralization without sufficient financial resources, short term thinking, departmental territoriality, complex legal mandates or structures, and the need for political and private sector support are among many commonalities that allow participants to share their experiences and learn from one another. Integrated planning with a long-term sustainability focus provides a neutral entry point to build a dialogue across the divides of income, culture and geography.
6. **Benefits to the private sector:** Benefits of the Network will accrue not only to member cities but also to industries and businesses that support the move towards a sustainable future. More liveable cities and communities attract creative and qualified personnel and help prevent the 'brain drain'. Multi-stakeholder processes will ensure that planners address the needs of developers, businesses and future residents, along with their economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts. Suppliers of professional services and planning tools used by member cities will gain access to a larger international market.

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

There is no net financial impact on the operating budgets. The annual fee for membership is \$2,000. Funding for the annual membership and related activities which are anticipated to be minimal will come from a previously approved sustainability project in the Sustainable Community (Green) Reserve, Project #CII00740.

**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**

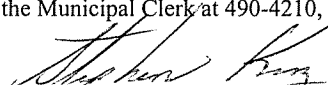
Council could choose not to join the Network, or to amend the Memorandum of Understanding attached.

**ATTACHMENTS**

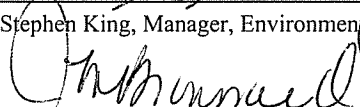
1. Draft - Memorandum of Understanding

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:

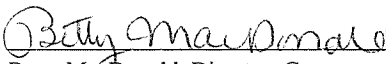
  
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Stephen King, Manager, Environmental Management Services 490-6188

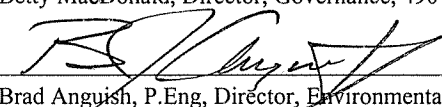
Financial Review:

  
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Barb Palmeter, Financial Consultant, 490-7122

Report Approved by:

  
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Betty MacDonald, Director, Governance, 490-4769

  
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Brad Anguish, P.Eng, Director, Environmental Management Services, 490-4825



**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
DRAFT November, 2005**

This is a Memorandum of Understanding between the International Centre for Sustainable Cities (ICSC) and the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) concerning membership in the Plus Network.

The HRM agrees to:

1. Establish a reference group (preferably to include representatives from the private, public, civil/academic sectors) to oversee its long-term sustainability plan (the “City Team”);
2. Provide evidence that it has or is willing to commit itself to a path of sustainability through its corporate themes and priorities, and sustainability analysis
3. Adapt, in time, its planning framework to incorporate a long-term time horizon of beyond 30 years
4. Use a participatory planning process involving the public, private and civil/academic sectors, or show how its’ planning process will acknowledge the interests of stakeholders from these sectors;
5. Use an integrated planning approach - incorporating environmental, social and economic well being; preferably at all levels, from the parcel and neighborhood, to city and region;
6. Share its results and data with other members of the network through events and the network Website;
7. Send at least 1 – 2 representatives of the HRM City Team to attend working meetings every two years to report on successes and failures and lessons learned in its city; the next meeting will be in Vancouver in 2006 in conjunction with the World Urban Forum.
8. Have its experiences included in reports, books, CDs, videos and documentation of the project;
9. Provide sufficient resources to participate in the network. This includes at a minimum: staff time and costs involved in HRM’s long-term planning process; local costs (ie. venue, refreshments) of Network peer exchange workshops held in its city region, dependent on HRM’s interest and subject to prior agreement; and travel for representatives to attend meetings every two years.

Agreed and Accepted: November 22, 2005

Dr. Nola Kate Seymoar,  
President and CEO,  
International Centre for Sustainable Cities

Mayor Peter Kelly  
On behalf of the Halifax Regional  
Municipality