

Halifax Regional Council  
October 1, 2002

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

Original Signed

**SUBMITTED BY:**

~~George McLellan, Chief Administrative Officer~~

Original Signed

~~Dan English, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer~~

**DATE:** September 18, 2002

**SUBJECT:** HRM Twinning Policy - International and Canadian Protocol

**ORIGIN**

Request by Mayor for International Twinning Policy

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that :

Halifax Regional Council approve the criteria and protocol described in this report to enable the municipality to respond to requests in a timely and professional manner from International and Canadian cities seeking to be a "twin" or become a sister city with Halifax Regional Municipality. The **HRM Twinning Policy** is one of the key components of the Municipal Cultural Policy.

## **BACKGROUND:**

Halifax Regional Municipality is frequently asked to partner or “twin” with international cities. Most requests arise from HRM hosting international economic meetings, such as the G-7 in 1995 and the G-8 in 2002. A second source of requests arises from cities that have participated in tourism events such as the International Gathering of Tall Ships in 1994 and 2001. A third source of requests are cities that see a relationship with our community history, such as the role that Halifax has played as the Centre of Naval Operations, from 1749 to today. Finally, a fourth type of request arises in conjunction with our four centuries of cultural history.

At the present time, Halifax has two “twinning” relationships- one based on Mayoral contact with Hakodate, Japan and another based on the initiative of the Greater Halifax Partnership with Campeche, Mexico. These two relationships will be retained. The form of the relationship will be reviewed in the context of the this report to better define HRM roles and responsibilities. At this time staff are bringing forward a policy to guide the future response of the municipality, based on the experience of the International Sister City organization and research conducted by staff.

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **1. Benefits of Twinning:**

The first question typically asked when a municipality considers a twinning or sister city partnership is “what are the benefits?”. To illuminate this question the International Association of Sister Cities provides the list shown below for consideration by potential members:

- a) Economic Benefits for Corporations and Businesses
  - Potential new prospects for trade and commerce
  - Leadership internships for young professionals
  - Technological, environmental and health exchanges
  - Enhanced corporate image in the community
  
- b) Educational Benefits for Educators and Organizations
  - Art, education and cross-cultural exchanges
  - Student and teacher exchanges
  
- c) Social Benefits for Community
  - Provide initiatives to address social issues and to improve the quality of life
  - Youth leadership development programs
  - Scholarship opportunities

d) Tourism Benefits for Municipality

- Participate in “Twinning” Associations
- Host “Twinning” meetings, receptions and special events
- Develop International Tourism, Culture & Heritage Markets
- Position HRM through National and International media

**2. Costs of Twinning**

A second question to consider is the cost of setting up a twinning arrangement. There is a range of costs based on the level of involvement. For example, where a potential partner seeks only document exchange the costs would be limited. On the other hand, where a partner expects that there will be a regular delegate exchange there can be significant costs for meetings, travel and shared initiatives such as publications.

**3. Authenticity of Twinning:**

In today’s tourism and cultural marketplace the question of authenticity is given the highest priority. This leads to the consideration of *“What are valid or authentic twinning themes that HRM could use to identify appropriate partners?”*

This consideration is required to establish one or more “criteria” that can be applied in a consistent manner to assess applications. Fortunately we are in the research stage of a Cultural Policy for HRM. This has enabled staff to review both the criteria of the Sister Cities International Organization and municipal practice in other Canadian cities.

**PROPOSED TWINNING CRITERIA:**

The following criteria are proposed for Halifax Regional Municipality. Staff research suggests that there are four primary criteria to consider: is the relationship economic, cultural, community based or based on a tourism event that “rings true” for Halifax Regional Municipality ?

1. Economic Based Criteria: 1.1 Regional Roles
---

Norfolk, Virginia is seeking to form a twinning partnership with HRM based on the similar Naval and Marine roles of Halifax and Norfolk. This potential partnership is being considered by the Office of the Mayor, staff and a number of agencies and institutions in HRM. At first look, there appears to be a number of potential partnerships that would be advantageous to HRM. For example, Norfolk bills itself as the Home of the US Navy. Should HRM become a twin with Norfolk, it would allow the municipality to position itself, not only as “Canada’s East Coast Navy”, but more appropriately from a civic perspective as “Birthplace of Canada’s Navy”.

### **Economic Based Criteria:**

HRM has and continues to play a number of significant economic roles as the Economic Centre of Atlantic Canada. Economic themes of significance that would support this understanding include:

- as a trading centre from pre-colonization to the present;
- a military centre since 1749;
- a shipping centre from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present;
- and a financial, insurance, and banking centre currently with origins in the 19<sup>th</sup> century;
- as an educational and hospital centre in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and at the present;
- and a high tech and offshore exploration centre in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

All of these themes could form a basis for an authentic twinning partnership with HRM. Interestingly, and unlike other cities in the Atlantic Region, HRM has retained these regional economic roles at the current time. Thus the authenticity is both historic and modern. Again, with the assistance of research and completion of the questionnaire (see Appendix A) reports would be prepared for Council, with a recommendation from staff.

1. Economic Based:
  - 1.2 Local Industries

During the development of the “One City...Many Communities” book staff investigated the possibility that the approximately 200 communities in HRM might be grouped by economic and historical commonalities. Staff conducted research into: geography, history, industry and family surnames and were able to discern 10 distinct regions. These form the chapters in the book and are now being used to assist with tourism development. For example, the HRM Visitor’s Guide now uses this system to provide a clear and concise organization of accommodations. In addition there has been general acceptance of this approach by tourists and tourism associations. The ten regions, as proposed are identified as follows:

- St Margaret’s Bay
- Bedford - Sackville Area
- Waverley to Hants County Border
- Musquodoboit Valley
- Mooseland to Liscomb Sanctuary
- Petpeswick to Debaie’s Cove
- Preston -Conrod Settlement
- Halifax- Dartmouth Metropolitan Area (includes Capital District)
- Prospect- Terence Bay Area
- Sambro - Purcell’s Cove

2. Cultural Criteria:

2.1 Founding Cultures:

A second source of requests for twinning relates to cities and countries that are aware of cultural linkages with HRM. Through staff research this summer we are proposing that there are two groups of cultures that have made a significant impact on the cultural history of HRM: Founding and Contributing cultures. *Founding* cultures are those that shaped Halifax Regional Municipality from its origins until the time of first municipal incorporation in 1841. Early census research (1861 Census of Canada) identifies eleven founding cultures:

Aboriginal  
Acadian  
African  
Ireland  
England  
France  
Germany  
Mediterranean  
Scotland  
Wales  
West Indies

A request for twinning from one of the countries noted above, and in particular a city that is directly linked to the settlement of HRM, would be an authentic twinning relationship. Twinning requests would be forwarded to staff for verification that there was a settlement link to HRM. Then HRM would ask for the completion of the Sister City questionnaire (shown in Appendix A). Staff will develop a recommendation based on the research and responses to the questionnaire and forward a report to Council.

2. Cultural Criteria:

2.2 Contributing Cultures:

Cultures that have contributed to the development of the region are another a source of requests for twinning. Research suggests that approximately 30 ethnic groups have contributed to the development of HRM (see Appendix B). Many of these cultures are celebrated today through the annual Multi-Cultural Festival and annual events, such as those hosted by the Greek, Polish and Italian communities. In the case of contributing cultures, it would be advantageous for the municipality to link the twinning request to cultural groups currently active in the local setting. Following research to determine if there is a local society that could host the partnership, the applicant will be asked to complete the Sister City questionnaire (see Appendix A) and a recommendation will be forwarded to Council for consideration.

3. Community Based Criteria:  
3.1 Significant People

Relationships between two cities that link historically significant people or accomplishments are another reason we receive requests for twinning. Many significant people, have shaped the development of this region. While it is true that European cultures have a history of researching and marking significant people with statues, monuments and annual celebrations, this approach is not typical of non-European cultures. To address this paucity of information, staff are initiating research studies with the Aboriginal and Black communities to determine people of significance. While this research is being completed, requests will be investigated on an individual basis.

3. Community Based Criteria:  
3.2 Significant Dates

Some communities seek to twin with HRM to jointly celebrate important dates, such as the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Irish Education being marked this year by St. Mary's University and University of Dublin in Ireland. In recent years HRM has focused on a celebration of dates that mark the 250 or 200 anniversary. In contrast HRM has a very limited understanding of the dates that are important within the 188 communities that form HRM. We need to conduct community and historical research to determine what community-based anniversaries are considered important. Based on the need for additional research into community and civic dates, staff developed an RFP which is currently underway and expected to be completed in December 2002.

4. Tourism Criteria  
4.1 Significant and Signature Events

At the present time HRM is presented to the world primarily through its role in responding to calamities, such as the sinking of the Titanic, the place where the Halifax Explosion occurred and the place where Swissair 111 crashed. These significant events, have created links to other cities in Canada and the World. Staff and professionals in economic, cultural and community circles share a concern with this practice of placing an emphasis on linking HRM with calamities. Staff are recommending that while not forgetting calamities, HRM should develop a more balance approach that places equal emphasis on the positive roles played by citizens, military and international agencies. Accordingly, twinning requests that relate to disasters should be examined closely to determine whether the linkage relates to relief efforts or to a calamity. A request that places the primary focus on a calamity will typically not be provided a positive recommendation. To act in a pro-active way, a second key component of the tourism research now underway is to determine if HRM can develop more appropriate economic, cultural and local events. The research is also investigating national or international events, to determine if a new "Signature" event can be developed that presents HRM in a unique way to the world.

**1. PROCESS:**

Briefly in review, the proposed evaluation process will consist of five steps:

- staff comparison with the “authenticity” criteria (in this report);
- research to verify details of authenticity and local partnering opportunities;
- completion of the questionnaire by the applicant (see Appendix A);
- staff recommendation to Council with budget implications;
- Council decision to approve, refuse or seek additional information.

**2. PROTOCOL:**

The following is the proposed protocol for correspondence:

1. Request received by Mayor’s Office
2. Formal Response from Mayor’s Office, plus referral to staff
3. Administrative response by TCH staff, plus Questionnaire (see Attachment #1)
4. Research by Qualified Consultants, directed by TCH Staff
5. Report prepared by staff
6. Report forwarded to Regional Council
7. Formal letter from Office of the Mayor with determination
8. Administrative letter by TCH with details.

**5. PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:**

The approach recommended here is to enable Council to reply to all valid requests in the affirmative, through the offering of four types of partnership opportunity. As noted below, each partnership level from “friend” to “full partner” denotes an increased depth of relationship, with increased benefit to HRM. This approach seeks to match municipal resources to benefits for the municipality through four distinct forms of partnership. This approach is recommended because the long history of this region, the comprehensive society that has developed and the position of Halifax in world contexts has created many relationships that will meet the “authenticity” criteria. What we are seeking to do with this policy is retain friendships and build stronger partnerships.

It is proposed here that the Halifax Regional Municipality will consider five twinning options:

- Friend of Halifax
- Cultural Partner
- Tourism Partner
- Economic Partner
- Full Partner

Each of these relationships will be further defined by staff research and practice, it is proposed that the following table will provide guidance in the interim:

Option:	Use of Term	Publications	Meetings	Delegate Exchange
Friend of Halifax	yes			
Cultural Partner	yes	yes		
Tourism Partner	yes	yes		
Economic Partner	yes	yes	yes	
Full Partner	yes	yes	yes	yes

### **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

Any costs will be allocated from approved existing Operating Budgets.

### **MULTI-YEAR FINANCIAL STRATEGY IMPACTS**

This report complies with the Municipalities 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**

1. Council could approve the proposed policy. **This is the recommended action.**
2. Council could seek amendments to this policy. This is not recommended.


### **ATTACHMENTS**

Appendix A: Application for Twinning with Halifax Regional Municipality

Appendix B: Founding and Contributing Cultures of Halifax Regional Municipality

Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by: Dan Norris, Manager, Culture & Heritage Programs 490-4339

Report Approved by:  Original Signed  
Lew Rogers, Director, Tourism, Culture & Heritage 490-5978



APPENDIX A:            Application for Twinning with Halifax Regional Municipality

**Section One: Your Community**

1. What is the population of your city? What is the population of the greater urban area that your city is part of?
2. Describe the physical geography of your location, including major features such as rivers, mountains, valleys, etc.
3. Describe the distance of your city from main towns or cities. What type of transportation would an international traveler have to use to go from the main point of entry in your region/country to your city?
4. Briefly, what makes your city or region unique? (Interesting, note worthy facts or characteristics of you community.)
5. Describe the characteristics of your community, providing information about the human-made physical features and ethnic or cultural base of your citizens (give a break down of your city's population).
6. What are the principal economic activities of your community (e.g.. Agriculture, local products, industries, services, tourism, etc.)?
7. What level of education is available in your community?
8. What leisure facilities and activities are present in your community (e.g. sports, cultural centers, libraries, services for youth and the elderly, societies, associations and clubs)?
9. What communications facilities are available in your community (e.g. newspapers, radio, television, telecommunications, public Internet access)?
10. What are the significant historical events or personalities of your community?
11. Briefly describe the climate pattern in your city. What is the best time of the year to visit?
12. Briefly describe how your system of local government works. (Is the mayor elected?...)

APPENDIX A:            Application for Twinning with Halifax Regional Municipality

**Section Two: Your Sister City Affiliation**

1. Why do you want to form a sister city relationship at this time?
2. What is the present level of support for a sister city relationship in your community? Is a community volunteer group established? How many and what type of members? Are local officials committed to the establishment of a sister city relationship?
3. Are you building on an existing sister city program?
4. With which U.S. foreign city, county or state is your community interested in affiliating? If you have a particular city or state in mind, please explain why you have chosen that city or state. Note: the more specific you can be in your interest or request, taking into consideration already existing contacts and resources in your city, the easier it will be for HRM to assist you.
5. If you have already made contact with a U.S. or foreign city, please name the city and describe the contact you have had up until now.
6. What are the main characteristics that you are seeking in a sister city?
7. What types of sister city activities do you envision with your new partner? What are your goals and objectives in forming a sister city relationship?

APPENDIX B: Founding and Contributing Cultures of Halifax Regional Municipality

FOUNDING CULTURES (pre 1861)

Aboriginal  
Acadian  
African  
Ireland  
England  
France  
Germany  
Mediterranean  
Scotland  
Wales  
West Indies

CONTRIBUTING CULTURES (post 1861)

American  
Belgium  
Chinese  
Denmark  
Dutch  
East Indian  
Greece  
Haiti  
Hungary  
Israel  
Italy  
Norway  
Philippines  
Polish  
Portugal  
Quebec  
Russia  
Sweden  
Ukraine