



HRM Priority Issues

As an historic community dating back to the 1700s, Halifax faces significant pressures with regard to the age of our infrastructure relative to the rest of Canada. The region has made significant progress on a number of important nationally and internationally recognized initiatives including: Harbour Solutions, Joint Emergency Operations Center, Solid Waste Management Strategy and its ClimateSmart initiative. The following highlights priority issues for HRM where ongoing support and participation by other levels of government would be of significant benefit.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Harbour Link

- The Halifax Harbour Link, Phase 1 is approximately a \$30m project.
- Federal participation in this project would be a significant opportunity with respect to the Government's commitment to Transport, Infrastructure and Communities.
- Harbour Link will be a higher order transit service that will build on HRM's very successful Metro Link bus rapid transit program.
- A recent study confirms substantial ridership potential. HRM anticipates significant economic and environmental spin-offs from the project.
- Federal participation and support for Harbour Link is imperative.
- HRM has earmarked almost \$7m for the project.
- HRM's Harbour Link is a unique project in Canada.
- Harbour Link will be integral to the Commonwealth Games International Bid.

Stormwater and Wastewater

- At HRM's request, legislation was recently approved amending the Halifax Regional Water Commission mandate to include HRM's wastewater and stormwater and ensuring these services are regulated by the Utility and Review Board (UARB)
- Existing stormwater and wastewater infrastructure is in a deteriorated condition.
- In excess of a \$600 million in funding will be needed over the near term in order to maintain the status quo system.
- HRM has significant number of systems not in compliance with federal and provincial regulations.

- Plans have been developed to address these problems and the development of a stable funding source is underway.
- HRM has limited ability to support new growth requirements – increased investment in municipal infrastructure is imperative.
- An inventory of dams in the region, including information regarding their condition, integrity and safety is needed as a failure could negatively impact HRM citizens and infrastructure.

Recreation

- In 2004 HRM developed an Indoor Recreation Facilities Master-Plan to identify neighbourhood, community and regional recreation facility needs and a strategic decision-making process to guide their development.
- Substantial multi-sector/multi-government investment will be needed over the next several years (e.g. Provincial and Federal cost sharing received on the Dartmouth East Community Centre).
- Rapid population growth in the Western Region of HRM has put a strain on existing recreation facilities and highlighted the need for the construction of a new regional recreation facility. There is currently an \$8 million dollar funding shortfall for the Mainland Common Facility. A partnership approach to investment is key to the success of this facility.
- **Life Science Research Institute**
- A \$34m Life Science Research Institute is an important investment for the region.
- The Institute will house the Brain Repair Centre, the Transplantation Lab and an incubation floor for commercialization initiatives.
- The project is in partnership with Capital District Health Authority, IWK and Dalhousie University.
- Dalhousie has committed to \$11m via fundraising.
- The Province of Nova Scotia has committed to a \$5m contribution.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Culture

- In April 2006 HRM adopted a ten (10) year Cultural Plan to focus investment in cultural infrastructure and programs, including cultural facilities to enhance HRM's competitiveness and appeal as a cultural destination and hot spot for arts incubation.
- The short-term action plan includes identifying and planning for development of key cultural facilities. HRM will be relying on multi-sector/multi-government investment in cultural facilities that will benefit the entire HRM and provincial region.
- In support of more strategic community and economic development outcomes, HRM is exploring opportunities for creative clustering of developments and uses that enhance community and visitor access to cultural activities, and facilitate innovation and economic development.

- Innovative and sustainable partnerships to enhance Culture as a key economic development driver will be developed including a multi-sector Creative Community Task Force, National and international Sister-City Twinning relationships, and competition for the 2010 Cultural Capital of Canada.

Economy

- HRM is the economic hub of Nova Scotia and the health of the local economy is vital to ensuring long-term sustainability of the region's quality of life.
- In addition to funding and programs related to the promotion and development of municipally-owned business parks, HRM currently provides approximately \$1.2 million annually to fund programs and activities which support the retention and expansion of existing businesses, the attraction of new businesses and which support community economic development and business development in rural communities.
- The funding of economic development by HRM is used to leverage funding from other government sources, such as ACOA and NS Office of Economic Development to support projects, programs and initiatives, which help grow the local economy. Funding from these other sources is essential to the long-term sustainability of regional economic development programs.
- HRM, in collaboration with local community interests and provincial and federal government funding partners, has developed a regional strategy on Economic Development, which identifies key areas of economic focus for the next five years. Priority areas include growing Department of National Defence and Federal presence in HRM, increasing levels of immigration, supporting growth of the Halifax Gateway and supporting rural economic development through such initiatives as expanding broadband internet services to rural communities.

Department of National Defence and Federal Presence in HRM

- Cutbacks to defence and federal public sector employment have affected HRM more than any other Canadian city. Federal employment has fallen by about 6,000 since 1993, whereas other Canadian cities have benefited from added federal employment – in current dollars, this means nearly \$300 million in yearly spending on goods and services in HRM has disappeared.
- HRM wants to see our region become the successful home of DND's Standing Contingency Task Force.
- HRM would like to enter into an MOU with DND to facilitate communication around development issues and growth opportunities, and has been working with DND and other economic development partners towards this end.

Gateway

- The Halifax Gateway – comprising major facilities and infrastructure related to the Port of Halifax, Halifax International Airport, CN Rail, trunk highway systems and associated rolling stock and transport services, accounts for 16% of all economic activity in HRM and accounts for \$1 billion in wages each year. The Gateway generates over \$250 million in municipal, provincial and federal taxes,

and is strategically positioned to benefit from burgeoning economic growth occurring in Asia and India.

- Greater integration and high levels of partnership will help to stabilize and grow the Gateway as an important contributor to the economy and a significant area of economic growth.
- The Halifax Gateway needs to be recognized for its potential to make HRM the East Coast Logistics Hub for the handling and distribution of significantly increased volumes of container cargo from growing global markets.

ENVIRONMENT

- Provincial assistance and cooperation regarding the exportation of solid waste is critical. Without protection the HRM and Nova Scotia Strategies are in jeopardy and HRM's commitment to manage all its own waste and maintain a cost-effective approach to environmental protection is compromised.
- HRM has recently completed a clean air strategy. A provincial airshed management plan, legislative and policy changes are all key to improved air quality.
- HRM is moving forward with a Community Energy Plan that includes energy supply, use and demand profiles; facilitation of renewable energy opportunities; emission reduction; energy efficiency and land use planning policies. A lack of provincial legislation and a closed electrical purchase system hamper efforts relative to renewable sources of energy (i.e. wind). Changes are needed in these areas to facilitate the emerging renewable energy sector where investment and business interest is in place.
- Education and awareness of sustainable development is important and the Nova Scotia school curriculum should reflect this. HRM supports a tripartite, full community approach that will see systemic change across the Province
- Enabling legislation is required which provides for tree cutting restrictions on private property to reduce the impact of sedimentation when land is clear-cut for development.
- The manufacture and sale of cosmetic-use pesticides should be banned.
- Adoption of a risk based analysis approach to the design and permit of wastewater treatment facilities is desirable. That is, designing plants relative to the capacity of the receiving waters to receive rather than the end of pipe discharge.
- Federal financial incentives for the recycling/reuse industry sector as is provided to the raw resource industry of Canada would be an environmentally, socially and economically viable undertaking.
- Development of a program for assessing and quantifying the true benefits of reusing/recycling products such as plastic, paper, steel, aluminium in direct comparison to the electricity consumed, waste by products created and water consumed is needed.
- Federal financial assistance is critical at the local level to assist with greenhouse gas emission reduction efforts, climate change vulnerability, and risk management costs to upgrade\protect already strained infrastructure from severe weather impacts.

PUBLIC SAFETY

- Municipalities need to be at the table with the federal and provincial governments for discussion and consultation on policing, crime and public safety priorities.
- The Province of Nova Scotia has delivered on the first phase of their police officer initiative. Effective April 1, 2007, HRM will hire 32 new officers and funding for these positions will be provided by the Province. Federal funding for Police Officers remains an important issue for HRM.
- The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police should be consulted on the proposed legislative changes to the Criminal Code of Canada prior to investing funds, creating new programs or eliminating current legislation. Police urge the federal government to:
 - Revisit conditional sentences for violent and repeat offenders (i.e. house arrest).
 - Impose minimum mandatory sentencing for crimes of violence, particularly those involving firearms.
 - Revisit Canada's gun laws and consider alternatives to disbanding the national gun registry.
- With the 2004 death of Theresa McEvoy and the Nunn Commission Inquiry findings, police continue to recommend that the federal government review and revisit the Youth Criminal Justice Act to ensure the public is protected from violent and repeat offenders and that the services needed by young persons are in place in the community.
- The Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs, as the national voice of the Fire Service, continues to lobby at the federal level on matters of legislation, planning, and funding to improve safety for the citizens and firefighters of Canada.

TRIPARTITE AGREEMENT

- HRM is prepared to enter formal discussions on the development and implementation of a tri-partite agreement.
- Shared outcome areas discussed to date have included: Immigration, Strong Communities and Gateway.