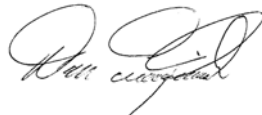


TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council



SUBMITTED BY: _____
Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: July 22, 2008

SUBJECT: **2008-09 Government Relations and Strategic Partnership
Development Priority Action Areas**

ORIGIN

- On October 10, 2006, Regional Council approved HRM's Government Relations and Strategic Partnership Development Policy and 2006-07 Priority Action Areas.
- Many of the priority action areas in the existing "Government Relations and Strategic Partnership Development Policy" have been achieved or made significant progress. This report reviews the status of the original priority areas, and submits updated priority action areas for Council's approval.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council approve the 2008-09 Government Relations and Strategic Partnership Development priority action areas.

BACKGROUND

On October 10, 2006, Council approved HRM's first "Government Relations and Strategic Partnership Development Policy," designed to increase the effectiveness of the municipality's relations with other levels of government and community partners. Its' three aims were relationship and partnership building; advancing HRM's priority issues, and collaborative issue resolution. The Policy Statement is as follows:

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

The Policy Statement does not change from year to year. The specific action areas are being updated to reflect progress made. Since implementing the Government Relations Policy, HRM has seen a growing number of collaborative projects and improved communication between its officials, the provincial and federal governments, and community stakeholders. Some examples of the benefits to HRM include a number of legislative amendments, increased funding for public safety and police officers, a greater voice in infrastructure and environmental consultations, and the development of Memorandums of Understanding with a number of community partners such as the universities, Nova Scotia Community College and Capital Health. Overall, 95 collaborative initiatives with the Province alone are in progress.

DISCUSSION

Updated priority action areas are needed to continue to effectively implement Council's vision. The collaboration over the past two years has built a solid base which allows more focused and strategic work to proceed. Appendix B, "Intergovernmental Relations Plan 2006-07: Achievements," gives a summary of the accomplishments HRM has made in the areas identified in the 2006-07 plan. Staff

will continue to work on additional achievements in these areas; however the new 2008-09 policy priority areas represent where HRM would like to move forward with its intergovernmental and community partners. These are based on the four Council Focus Areas and the strategic goals of HRM.

The proposed new priority action areas have the same philosophy but are in a different format, in that they move away from grouping initiatives by business unit and instead concentrate on work related to Council's four Focus Areas and HRM's Strategic Initiatives. It also includes a continued focus on strategic partnerships with community stakeholders.

Staff plan to give a presentation to Committee of the Whole in September 2008 specifically on the legislative amendments HRM is requesting for the Fall 2008 Legislature sitting, as that is a major intergovernmental initiative currently underway.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

No budget implications at this time. Any budget needs would be articulated through the 2009/10 business planning and 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

Council could revise the priority action areas to include other key areas. This would result in the addition of priorities outside of the existing Council Focus Areas and HRM Strategic Initiatives.

Council could choose not to approve the updated priority action areas. Staff would then continue to use the existing action areas; however as many of these initiatives have been achieved, the effective results that could be gained are limited. It might also lessen the priority given to Council Focus Areas and HRM Strategic Initiatives during intergovernmental discussions.

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A, "Government Relations and Strategic Partnership Development: Priority Action Areas 2008/2009"

Appendix B, "Intergovernmental Relations Plan 2006-07 Achievements"

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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Halifax Regional Municipality



Government Relations and Strategic Partnership Development

Priority Action Areas 2008 / 2009

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Table of Contents

Government Relations & Strategic Partnership Development

Priority Action Areas	1
Community Development	2
Infrastructure	3
Tax Reform	4
Public Safety	5
Cultural Plan	6
Economic Strategy	7
Immigration Action Plan	8
Atlantic Gateway	9
HRM Charter	10
Strong Neighbourhoods	10
HRM Focus: Strategic Partnerships	11
Memorandums of Understanding with Community Partners	11
Good Neighbours Great Neighbourhoods	12



Priority Action Areas 2008/2009

Following HRM's Government Relations & Strategic Partnership Development Policy, Priority Action Areas are developed and reviewed regularly based on: Council direction, Corporate Strategies or Plans, CAO goals and objectives, and business plan priorities.

The areas noted below are organized by strategic initiative and include steps underway to implement each initiative, from an intergovernmental perspective. The following does not prioritize actions, initiatives or requirements; rather it provides a sense of the areas that are being or need to be coordinated with other levels of government. The priority action areas are not an all-inclusive account of necessary activities. Focus will be added in different areas as required.





Halifax Wastewater Treatment Facility, Upper Water Street



BioSolids Processing Facility, Aerotech Park, 2007



HRM Focus: Provincial/Federal Governments

Community Development

Community Development encompasses a range of key areas, including youth, environment, transportation, and urban planning and design. It also includes Regional Plan implementation – the plan that will direct growth and development in HRM over the next 25 years.

Current Focus:

Environment

- Advance HRM's input re: Provincial Energy Strategy renewal
- Working towards establishment of a new provincial Climate Change Strategy
- Establish HRM as a major stakeholder in the development of the provincial water resources management strategy, which will focus on identifying, protecting and monitoring sustainable use of water resources
- Continue to liaise with the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment to seek pragmatic solutions around implementation of new federal wastewater legislation (the municipal wastewater effluent strategy)
- Increased focus on provincial Airshed Management initiative (overall collaborative planning approach to clean air), and the need for transparent reporting / information-sharing
- Work with the province to maintain the effective legislation and regulations currently in place around biosolids.

Urban Planning and Design

- Advance legislative changes around the HRMbyDesign downtown planning program
- Strategic Land Acquisitions between HRM and the Department of Natural Resources
- Development of an MOU for land transfer around Capital District Public Lands.



Grand Promenade looking west towards the Clock Tower

One of the 10 “Big Moves” of the Downtown Halifax Vision - #6. Great streets that support a culture of walking



Burnside transportation infrastructure completed, 2007/08



Central Library open house presentation, June 2008



Infrastructure

HRM is currently working towards the development of a long-term infrastructure strategy for the region. This strategy will guide infrastructure investment to address asset deterioration and deficiencies through recapitalization, while balancing new capability projects required to support areas of growth.

Current Focus:

- Continue to work with government partners to negotiate funding programs and criteria to benefit HRM (such as MRIF, Public Transit Funding, Gas Tax, CSIF, Building Canada)
- Pursue strategic opportunities for federal/provincial funding for recreation facilities and libraries (e.g., the Mainland Common recreation centre and Central library construction)
- Continue the intergovernmental working relationship around the 2011 Canada Winter Games
- Work with Federal and Provincial partners to align priorities regarding investment in capital infrastructure within the region, where feasible
- Complete a cooperative assessment and review of ownership and condition of bridges and dams in HRM
- Federal revenue sharing - through FCM, participate in revenue sharing advocacy initiatives
- Implement opportunities for joint land-use planning
- Identify and implement opportunities for energy efficiency projects
- Pursue strategic opportunities for investment in active transportation and public transit which furthers environmental sustainability objectives
- Engage and collaborate with province on the assessment of projects for P3 partnerships (e.g., trunk mobile radio services)
- Work with the province and related third parties around the development of a proposal for a new convention centre.



"How Your Municipal Tax Dollars Are Spent", 2008

Tax Reform

In January of 2007 Regional Council established its Tax Reform Committee to review the current property tax system as one of the Council Focus Areas. A Mission Statement with seven principles and 29 objectives has been created for a possible new property tax system. The Committee has created a draft tax model for public feedback. Public consultations will be ongoing.



Current Focus:

- Joint discussions with Canada Revenue Agency regarding the administration of a low income rebate or circuit breaker
- HRM to communicate regularly with province on municipal tax reform
- Possible legislative changes required as final tax reform recommendations are finalized.



Tax Reform public consultation meeting, 2008



Public Safety

The umbrella of public safety includes by-law enforcement, Emergency Measures (EMO), Fire Services, Integrated Emergency Services, HRP and RCMP. HRM Fire and Police are striving to develop new partnerships and enhance existing ones through community and government participation and engagement.

Current Focus:

Fire Protection

- Volunteer recruitment & retention. HRM is represented on a provincial committee established to study and look at ways to retain and recruit volunteer firefighters across the province
- Firefighter Training. The Nova Scotia Fire Service Training Committee identified a requirement for \$34 million in capital spending spread over several years to address training needs across the province. HRM will continue to work with the Committee and the Government of Nova Scotia to address the training needs in HRM and the province
- Development of a service provision agreement with HIAA that delineates responsibilities and jurisdiction of HRM and HIAA fire services.

Policing

- Advocate to have municipalities recognized as a full partner during federal/provincial discussions regarding public safety and emergency preparedness
- Safer Streets & Communities Task Force – program expansion to include new neighbourhoods in HRM
- Continued advocacy for funding of Police Officers.



Mock Emergency Exercise



Lake Echo/Porter's Lake Fire, June 2008





"Show Your Culture, HRM's Cultural Plan for Everyone"

Cultural Plan

The Cultural Plan is a comprehensive policy and action plan to guide investment and set priorities for Culture over the next ten years. The Cultural Plan links directly to HRM's growth management, economic development and community development strategies, and it is a key pillar of healthy and sustainable growth for the region.

Current Focus:

- Historic Places Initiative - ensure our municipal registry of heritage buildings is included in the Federal Historic Places Program Registry, and work to demonstrate need for the federal registry to be maintained and updated beyond the funding expiration of 2011
- Work with provincial and federal government in developing HRM's new Cultural Expo initiative
- Advocate for Halifax to receive a 2010 Cultural Capital of Canada designation.



Registered heritage property, North Street, Halifax



A vibrant and unique community - Multi-Cultural Festival



Halifax Waterfront Boardwalk



Hakodate twin-city anniversary celebrations

Economic Strategy

HRM's Economic Strategy identifies ways in which the city can attract and retain immigrants and expatriates; create a competitive business environment; increase exports; benchmark tax, regulation and development approvals and timing; and work with partners to identify common values and vision. The Strategy has five goals to achieve these aims:

- Increase HRM's labour force by generating upscale, high-salary jobs in growth industries that will retain graduates from our universities, attract well-educated immigrants, and entice expats to return
- Leverage the creative community by investing in social and cultural infrastructure to enhance HRM's reputation as a vibrant and unique community
- Develop the best business climate in Canada, one able to start and grow ambitious new enterprises and attract companies from around the world
- Capitalize on HRM's reputation as a beautiful, immensely liveable place with history and creativity, to attract companies and people
- Ensure all partners in the community are working towards common goals to fully leverage their efforts. These include government agencies, non-profit organizations, post-secondary institutions and the business community.

HRM works diligently in collaboration with all levels of government, as well as with key economic partners such as the Halifax Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Halifax Partnership, to implement the strategy goals and priorities.

Current Focus:

- Participation on Economic Strategy Advisory Committee for strategy oversight
- Continued work with government and community partners to implement the actions identified in the Economic Strategy
- Work with federal and provincial partners to ensure appropriate funding for regional economic development agency
- Develop a service agreement with Destination Halifax
- Work with partners to identify major gaps in skills and training in HRM's labour market and focus on ways in which to address the shortfall and knowledge gap.



Accessible playground



Intergovernmental working relationship regarding new entrepreneur immigration program



Immigration Action Plan

The Action Plan sets out a series of tasks that HRM will undertake in providing services to our citizens to create and maintain a more welcoming community. HRM's Immigration Plan will complement provincial immigration initiatives, while recognizing the municipal mandate and supporting the key components of the Halifax Region Immigration Strategy.

Current Focus:

- Develop an intergovernmental working relationship with the province regarding its new entrepreneur immigration stream and the Provincial Nominee Program
- Identify linkages between the federal, provincial and municipal programs and explore ways to better connect with arriving immigrants to inform them of community programs and services
- Work with government partners, businesses, existing ethnic and cultural communities and recent immigrants to attract and retain newcomers
- Collaborate with Greater Halifax Partnership to develop a "Welcoming Communities" marketing campaign.



Metro Transit Bus Ad



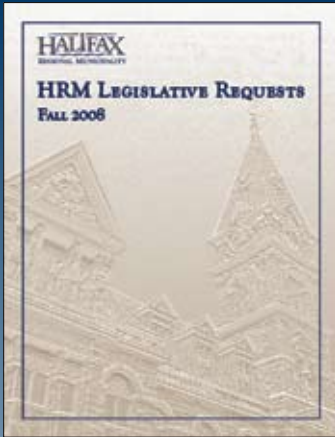
Atlantic Gateway

HRM is well positioned to expand its role as a key hub in the Atlantic Gateway for the shipment of goods both to and from North America. The transportation sector represents a significant driver in the municipal economy and we must work with our stakeholders collaboratively to build and strengthen the sector. The proposed vision is Canada's Atlantic Gateway as the premiere integrated transportation network on the East Coast of North America. The general role of HRM is one of strategic support in key priority areas related to the municipal mandate.

Current Focus:

- Alignment of Gateway partners, including municipal, provincial and federal, to ensure agreement on key priorities
- Advancement of Gateway concept to benefit of region
- Working with partners to develop a long range land use plan for Halifax Harbour
- Maximize opportunities to leverage infrastructure funding for Gateway-related initiatives
- Engagement with Halifax Port Authority and Halifax Robert L. Stanfield International Airport Authority, particularly on land needs and acquisitions
- Marketing and planning for Burnside Phase 12 and 13 as the Atlantic Gateway Logistics Park.





HRM Charter

HRM is the economic and population hub of Nova Scotia. Its population and commercial and residential developments continue to grow each year. In order to manage local issues effectively, HRM's evolution calls for innovative policy design, regulatory flexibility and the ability to secure legislative amendments in a timely manner.

All municipalities in Nova Scotia are governed by the Municipal Government Act. Under the MGA, municipal powers are limited in scope and require frequent administrative amendments. For a city of HRM's size, the need to wait for these amendments affects Regional Council's ability to respond to local issues. A Charter will provide HRM with the flexibility to deal with municipal issues in an innovative and timely manner, and it will recognize the unique needs and relative scope of HRM.

Current Focus:

- HRM continues to advocate for the implementation of a Charter for the Halifax Regional Municipality.

Strong Neighbourhoods

Originally a proposed tripartite agreement between federal, provincial and municipal governments as identified by the Gas Tax Agreement, HRM has proposed a renewed focus on shared priority areas.

Current Focus:

- Work towards a bilateral/trilateral agreement around the Strong Neighbourhoods theme, such as youth, housing and crime prevention
- Increased emphasis on HRM's designation as one of Canada's Safe Communities, an initiative that has private and public sectors working to promote a culture of safety and improve the health and safety of workers and people in the community. HRM has an injury and crime reduction strategy that focuses on key areas such as fall prevention, reducing motor vehicle injuries and self-inflicted injuries.

HRM Focus: Strategic Partnerships



Metro University Presidents Consortium



Dan English, CAO; Chris Power, Capital District Health Authority

■ Memorandums of Understanding with Community Partners

Areas of strategic partnership focus, for the current year, will include:

- Continued implementation of MOU with Metro University Presidents Consortium with priority focus on four areas:
 - Research-sharing
 - Volunteer opportunities
 - Funding Application support
 - Youth engagement
 - Public Safety
- Implementation of MOU with Capital District Health Authority with priority focus in three areas:
 - Integration of project-specific communications initiatives
 - Partnerships around wellness centres in new recreation facilities
 - Joint work and information-sharing around employee wellness initiatives
- Finalization of an MOU with Nova Scotia Community College
- Development of MOUs with Halifax Robert L. Stanfield International Airport Authority, Halifax Port Authority, Halifax Regional School Board, and Department of National Defence.



Youth engagement -
www.hrmyouth.ca

Good Neighbours Great Neighbourhoods

HRM has commenced a social marketing campaign that aims to increase civic pride; improve the local environment; and encourage residents to participate in community life. Focus areas include reducing graffiti, pollution and litter, and increasing voluntarism, stewardship, participation, civic pride, acceptance of newcomers, youth engagement, and awareness of HRM/councils works. The initiative will seek key external partners and provide resources for neighbourhoods to mobilize from within.



Metro Transit bus board



www.myhrm.ca



Reducing graffiti - community artists paint murals along the Harbour Front Trail, Downtown Dartmouth



CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

Intergovernmental Relations Plan 2006-07 Achievements

The following update is formatted to be consistent with the structure of the original Priority Action Areas of the Government Relations Plan. Over the course of implementation many other successes were achieved because of the focus on partnerships, including the Youth Advocate Program, Broadband, BizPal, Joint Emergency Exercise, and the Strategic Joint Regional Transportation Planning Committee.

Chief Administrative Office

Economic Strategy implementation is ongoing. It is a prominent achievement with many of the goals underway, and progress is reviewed annually by the Chamber of Commerce's scorecard. Governance for the Economic Strategy was streamlined with the merger of the Greater Halifax Partnership and Halifax Regional Development Agency.

The focused advocacy and relationship-building efforts by HRM has led to its having a greater voice in provincial, and to some extent federal, policy and funding decisions. There is an increased awareness at all levels of government of the challenge municipalities face in infrastructure renewal in particular, and many funding programs reflect that. HRM now has increased federal and provincial funding in several areas, such as a permanent Gas Tax transfer, the Building Canada fund, and the Municipal Rural Infrastructure monies.

There is now regular communication between HRM and the province, at all levels, aimed at maintaining awareness of upcoming initiatives and possible shared priorities. This has led to benefits for HRM in diverse areas, including public safety, community development, transportation, culture & heritage, and land-use planning.

Community Culture & Economic Development

HRM and the province have been working together to set joint priorities around cultural infrastructure and investment. A policy and decision-making criteria to evaluate cultural infrastructure funding requests is underway and the Community Infrastructure Partnership Fund is expected to come to Council in late summer or early fall 2008.

Environmental Management Services

There have been several successful initiatives under environmental services. Funding was received for energy efficiency projects, and also for the Harbour Solutions project.

HRM liaises regularly with the NS Department of Environment around policy direction and changes. As a result, HRM had significant input into provincial legislation around solid waste systems.

There were major changes with water supply and management, with Council approving the transfer of HRM's wastewater and stormwater assets to the Halifax Regional Water Commission.

As a result wastewater services are now regulated by the Utility and Review Board.

Finance

The most significant success over the past year has been the agreement reached between UNSM and the province around Fair and Equitable Funding. The new agreement will phase out municipal contributions to Corrections and social housing, and caps mandatory contributions for Education at annual CPI increases. This agreement demonstrates a growing awareness at a provincial level of the financial issues facing municipalities.

Halifax Regional Fire and Police

HRM has developed a strong partnership with the federal government around public safety, and its relationship with the province has improved with more frequent discussions between the two governments. HRM has received funding from both sources to support additional police officers and urban search and rescue initiatives. HRM also has a regular opportunity to discuss issues related to firefighting as a member of several committees related to fire service standards.

Legal

HRM has had an increasing number of discussions with the province around legislation and amendments that assist the municipality in delivering programs and services more effectively. Some amendments that have been enacted to the benefit of HRM include:

- Extension of Notification Distances for Variances - Increasing the notification distance from 30 meters (2008)
- Retention of Trees - Preventing clear cutting before development process triggered and gaining bylaw power to regulate removal of trees in the urban core (2008)
- Amending the MGA to implement Supplementary Funding Agreement with the School Boards (2007)
- Controlled Access to streets - granting a municipality the power to regulate controlled access to streets (2006)
- Transit and Solid Waste Development Charges - Broadening power to impose charges including capital cost charges, for solid-waste facilities, transit facilities and new or expanded streets (2006)

Planning and Development / Transportation

HRM has a greater involvement in urban and rural planning undertaken by the province, and has also involved the province in its own Cost of Servicing study.

Through participation on the Strategic Joint Regional Transportation Planning Committee, HRM has received funding for four major road and intersection improvement projects, on a cost-shared basis.

With the \$13 million in federal funding announced in March 2008, Council was able to approve

a five-year capital plan for Transit. This plan will include a new transit garage, downtown shuttle service, expanded rural transportation service, MetroLink expansion, upgrades to transit terminals, new fare payment options, added security, and a high-speed ferry service (HarbourLink).

Engagement of Community Partners

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Metro Universities has led to completed work on transit and recreation, and new work is underway in four focus areas: research-sharing, student volunteer opportunities, funding application support, and youth engagement.

An MOU was signed with Capital Health in December 2007 and work is underway in three areas: communications, wellness centres in recreation facilities, and employee health and wellness initiatives.

A public event to mark the signing of an MOU with the Nova Scotia Community College is being planned. Much work has already been done with NSCC informally, and the MOU will build on it, concentrating on HRM's training and recruitment needs.

Preliminary MOUs have been drafted by HRM staff between HRM and the Halifax Regional School Board, the Halifax International Airport Authority, Halifax Port Authority and DND. In each case drafts have been shared and discussions are underway.

HRM continues to pursue strengthened relationships with all community partners.

Atlantic Gateway

HRM's Gateway policy was developed in conjunction with federal and provincial departments, as well as the Halifax Gateway Council and Greater Halifax Partnership. Implementation has begun, continuing this collaborative approach to handling infrastructure needs and funding requests.