



## **Halifax Regional Municipality Budget 2010-11 Snapshot INFRASTRUCTURE**

As one of HRM's Council Focus Areas, Infrastructure is essential to sustained, future growth. The total gross capital budget proposed in 2010/11 is slightly more than \$157 million, an increase of 10.9% from 2009/10. This figure includes recapitalization for existing infrastructure, as well as new capital projects to support the needs of the communities within the region. The primary area of infrastructure development in the 2010/11 budget is in facility development, but this area also includes construction and maintenance of streets and sidewalks, community beautification and improvements to playgrounds, parkland and gardens.

### **Infrastructure Improvements Leverage Economic Growth**

HRM has been successful in partnering with both the Provincial and Federal governments as it continues to encourage economic growth. According to the Greater Halifax Partnership's Halifax Performance Index, HRM's economic performance was among the best in Canada during a recessionary period.

The opportunities provided here and across the country by the infrastructure programs offered during the last two years have provided HRM with significant opportunities to move forward on projects that require support from all three levels of government. One prime example is the recently approved Halifax Central Library project. This new facility, which has been funded almost entirely outside of the municipal tax rate, is an important investment in the downtown core, the economic heart of this municipality. The approval to move forward with this long-awaited project in 2010 is one impetus for more development in the downtown area.

### **New Infrastructure Growth**

Working within its means and using funding secured from other sources, major capital projects are continuing to move forward in 2010-11. In addition to the Central Library, some of these projects include the Four Pad Arena in Bedford, the Ragged Lake Transit Garage, Prospect Community Centre, and the Canada Games Centre.

The Canada Games Centre is being built in time for this region to serve as host for the Canada Winter Games in February 2011. Not only is the building a boon for the construction industry, the Games will generate an estimated \$90 million in economic spin-offs, and HRM citizens will have a tremendous new recreational facility for their daily use as a lasting legacy.



## **Maintaining Assets**

As with many jurisdictions, HRM faces significant pressure in terms of addressing all infrastructure needs and maintaining existing assets. As a result, the municipality has an annual infrastructure funding gap in upcoming years. As work is completed on the unprecedented development of new infrastructure made possible by funding from other levels of government, HRM will increasingly move the focus back toward Council's stated priority of recapitalizing and maintaining existing assets.

## **Decreases in Spending**

With the need to close a gap of approximately \$35.5 million in the 2010/2011 budget, there are areas where capital spending will be slowed or eliminated. The main examples of these spending retractions include:

- A deferral of spending on new trails and support to trails;
- A suspension of some streetscaping and underground wiring projects;
- An adjustment to Transit capital funding;
- Elimination of some funding for new Public Art projects.

## **Private Investment Follows Public Investment**

There is strong evidence that growing confidence within the development community will soon translate into significant new construction, especially in the downtown core and Bedford West. It is firmly believed that private investment in infrastructure will follow the significant public investments made by the municipality.

