

Halifax Regional Municipality Budget 2011-12 Snapshot INFRASTRUCTURE

As one of HRM's Council Focus Areas, Infrastructure is essential to sustained, future growth and the ongoing provision of municipal services. The total gross capital budget proposed in 2011/12 is slightly less than \$145 million, a decrease of 7.6% from 2010/11. This decrease is for the most part a reflection of the decreasing funds available to the municipality in the upcoming year from other levels of government. This includes funds for recapitalization of existing infrastructure, as well as new projects to support the needs of the communities within the region. A significant part of the infrastructure budget in 2011/12 is 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 in the past two years was among the best in Canada during a recessionary period.

The opportunities afforded here and across the country by the infrastructure programs 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 soon to be constructed 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. Moving forward with this long-awaited project in 2011 is expected to be a major impetus for further development in the downtown.

New Infrastructure Growth

Working within our means and using funding secured from other sources, major new capital projects are continuing to move forward in 2011-12. In addition to the Central Library, some of these projects, which are in various stages of development, include:

- Construction of the permanent Commons Skating Oval;
- Transit Expansion through ten new Accessible Low Floor (ALF) articulated buses;

- Construction of the Nantucket (Dartmouth) Transit Terminal;
- Capital investments for Recreation Centres;
- Planned contribution for the proposed Convention Centre project.

Maintaining Assets

As with many jurisdictions, HRM faces significant pressure in terms of addressing all new infrastructure needs while maintaining existing assets. As a result, the municipality faces a continued 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 need to move the funding focus back toward Council’s stated priority of recapitalizing and maintaining existing assets.

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 will follow the significant public investments made by the municipality in our infrastructure.

Capital (Project) Budget Funding

The proposed 2011/12 net capital budget is funded through the following means:

Capital from operating	\$40,354	Through the Operating Budget, including Transit Rates
Debt	\$30,361	As per Council's Debt Policy
Gas Tax	\$24,000	From the Federal Government
Capital Surplus Reserve	\$1,282	Funds in reserve from sales of assets
Crespool	\$3,690	Projects under budget or to be closed
Total 11/12 Net Budget	\$99,687	