



Introduction

Since amalgamation in 1996, Halifax Regional Municipality has experienced significant growth in terms of development and population.

As a result, there has been a requirement for rapid expansion of municipal services since amalgamation. New libraries, new recreation centres, more police officers, more firefighters, development of an excellent solid waste system, and increased transit are but a few of many examples of the service enhancements outlined in this document.

Service expansion since amalgamation: a snapshot

Infrastructure

Recreation and community infrastructure improvements have included 420 parkland parcels acquired through subdivision or acquisition, 55 new Community Parks, 70 playgrounds, 11 new natural turf fields, 4 multi-purpose artificial turf fields, 9 new baseball/softball fields, 16 skateboard/dirt jump facilities, 20 new sports courts, and 5 new

regional level park washroom facilities.

In terms of facilities, HRM has added 5 new recreation/community centres, 3 Libraries, and is investing in major infrastructure such as the Canada Games Centre and 4-Pad Arena. In addition, many facilities such as the Captain William Spry Centre and Acadia School have undergone extensive upgrades and renovations.

Water and Wastewater System Expansions have included Beaverbank water and sewer, Maplewood water, Hammonds Plains water, Lucasville water, Salmon River Subdivision water, Herring Cove water and sewer, Bedford Highway water and sewer, and the Lake Major treatment plant and transmission main.

Harbour Solutions is the largest municipal infrastructure project to date. Despite recent issues with the Halifax plant, the project is still a great example compared to other similar size projects in terms of achieving timelines and budget and will have a lasting positive impact on the Region.

Public Safety

Public safety in the Region has been significantly enhanced through the hiring of 136 new police officers.

There have been investments in new buildings to support Halifax Regional Police's focus on public safety, including the CID building on Brunswick Street, the facility at Mellor Avenue, and Northbrook School.

In terms of emergency response and emergency management, the municipality has developed the 911 Call Centre at Eric Spicer, the joint Emergency Operations Centre in partnership with the Province of Nova Scotia, and an Integrated Dispatch system.

Halifax Fire Services has acquired 129 pieces of Fire equipment worth approximately \$20 million, added 5 new fire stations, and 15 new firefighters.

Transportation

Transportation networks have been improved through the addition of 220 new km of trails and pathways, 80 new km of bike lanes, 370 km new km of roads, 480 new km of curbs, and 164 km new km of sidewalks. Upgrades to the street network include the Armdale Roundabout, Chebucto Reversing Lane, and three highway interchanges.

Metro Transit has added 111 new transit buses, which is close to double the number at amalgamation.

In addition to the new buses to support conventional Transit, Metro Link, Metro X, and new Rural Express service has been added. Building improvements include upgrades at Ilsley, a new satellite garage, and the Ragged Lake Transit Operations Centre.

Environmental Sustainability

Approximately 1500 new trees have been added to HRM's canopy.

Several innovative energy efficiency projects have been initiated including LED traffic lights, a streetlight pilot, and construction of several LEED standard buildings.

HRM has continued to reduce energy consumption costs in existing facilities, and in facilities that are approved, but not yet constructed. Of special note is the Alderney 5 Geothermal Project.

A Legacy of Responsible Management

At amalgamation in 1996, HRM's situation was similar to today. Revenues were flat, non-discretionary costs were growing, and services were squeezed. The response was the creation of the Multi-year Financial Strategy to help the Municipality be more financially sustainable. Since the implementation of the Multi-year Financial Strategy, there has been significant service expansion, Capital from Operating has increased from

\$0 to \$35.4 million, and HRM debt has declined by \$70 M, or 20.7%. Overall capital investment since amalgamation has been a staggering

Thirteen years later many things have changed, our fiscal health has improved, and we have options as we move forward. Regional Council has taken positive steps with the approval of new debt and capital from operating targets in November.

Due to some constraints such as the assessment cap, slow commercial economic recovery, inflationary pressures, and impact on decisions made regarding service expansion in the past, we are now entering an environment where we cannot expand services solely based on reliance upon revenue growth from new homes or commercial growth. We have to be prepared to consider and evaluate other options.