

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

Public Safety Strategic Plan

Partnering for Public Safety



““ Quite often it is not a lack of resources but a disconnect between them. Through our Public Safety Strategy, we are connecting and coordinating the resources in our community to enhance public safety in HRM. ””

Superintendent Don Spicer
HRM Public Safety Officer

Table of Contents

Messages	2
Introduction	3
Public Safety Strategic Plan	6
Success Stories	8
Key Milestones	10
Linkages with Public Safety-Related Initiatives	12

Messages



In November 2006, I convened the Mayor's Roundtable on Violence and Public Safety in response to concerns regarding the perception of violent crime in Halifax Regional Municipality.

A key finding of the Roundtable was the need for a strategic plan to create meaningful partnerships with key stakeholders. I am pleased to announce that through the collective efforts of the HRM Public Safety Office and our many partners in public safety we now have a Public Safety Strategic Plan to guide us in making HRM a safe place in which to live, work, learn and play.

Much has been accomplished since the inception of the Roundtable, but we must remember that complex issues such as violent crime require a holistic long-term approach. To effectively address the root causes of crime, we will need the continued support and dedication of our public safety partners: federal and provincial levels of government, social agencies, the business community, community organizations and HRM citizens.

I thank all who have played a role in enhancing public safety in Halifax Regional Municipality. With the Public Safety Strategic Plan as our guide, I am confident we will continue to make a positive difference in violent crime and the perceptions of violent crime in HRM.



Peter J. Kelly
Mayor, Halifax Regional Municipality



After much consultation and stakeholder analysis, we are very pleased to present the first ever Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) Public Safety Strategic Plan. This strategic plan, which is

the result of the collaborative work of thirty-five people representing thirteen different municipal and provincial government departments, community groups and agencies, will serve as a road map that will lead us to a safer and more inclusive and welcoming HRM.

This plan has been carefully aligned with the HRM Corporate Plan, Community Outcome Areas and Council Focus Areas to ensure a coordinated effort in addressing the deep-rooted social causes of crime. I have long said that police alone cannot effectively address crime. Many meaningful partnerships have been forged since the inception of the Public Safety Office and the work of our community safety partners is ever evolving.

Great achievements have been realized in the fight against the root causes of crime but we recognize there is still much work to be done. We will continue to build on these successes and frequently re-evaluate our strategies to ensure we are advancing public safety in HRM.

I thank everyone who contributed to the creation of this strategic plan and I look forward to working with all the partners in the public safety equation as we continue to address the root causes of crime.



Superintendent Don Spicer
HRM Public Safety Officer

Introduction

Background

Public safety will always be of concern to the public and a challenge for the stakeholders who continue to address it. HRM, along with other key stakeholders, was already focused on public safety as a significant strategic issue when the Mayor's Roundtable on Violence and Public Safety in HRM was initiated in November 2006. Mayor Peter Kelly convened the Roundtable in response to growing concerns that violent crime in HRM was escalating. While reports indicated that violent crime had actually been trending downward for the past two years, citizens were still concerned and, in some cases, felt unsafe in their communities. Mayor Kelly engaged Professor Donald Clairmont, Director, Atlantic Institute of Criminology, to facilitate the Roundtable process. In April 2008, Professor Clairmont submitted a final report entitled *Violence and Public Safety in the HRM: A Report to the Mayor as a Result of the Roundtable*. The report outlined 64 recommendations for action (visit www.halifax.ca/council/mayor/RoundtableonViolence.html for more information).

Public Safety Strategy: Partnering for Public Safety

Halifax Regional Police Chief Frank Beazley was assigned responsibility for responding to the Clairmont Report. Chief Beazley convened a working group to conduct a comprehensive review of the Clairmont Report and other initiatives impacting policing and public safety. In February 2009, *Partnering for Public Safety: Response to the Report to the Mayor as a Result of the Roundtable* was tabled with Halifax Regional Council (visit www.halifax.ca/police/PublicSafety/documents/

[Response to the Mayors Roundtable.pdf](#) for more information). The report identified a champion, stakeholder commitment, strategies, timelines and resources for each of the recommendations included in the Clairmont Report. Within one month of tabling the *Partnering for Public Safety Report*, the Public Safety Office was created and Superintendent Don Spicer was appointed the HRM Public Safety Officer and was tasked with leading the HRM Public Safety Strategy.

HRM Public Safety Officer

The initial challenge of the HRM Public Safety Strategy was to connect, mobilize and coordinate existing resources. One of the key roles of the HRM Public Safety Officer is to strengthen existing partnerships and foster new ones with the various levels of government, social agencies, educational institutions, business associations and community/citizens' groups to ensure a coordinated and holistic approach to addressing the root causes of crime and enhance public safety.

In addition to building relationships with key stakeholders, the HRM Public Safety Officer is responsible for supervising the Public Safety Office and coordinating the implementation of an action plan. Public Safety Office staff members monitor the action plan, maintain dialogue with key stakeholders on their respective responsibilities and track the results in a public safety database. The HRM Public Safety Officer submits monthly progress reports and an annual report to the HRM Board of Police Commissioners in its capacity as the HRM Public Safety Committee (visit www.halifax.ca/police/PublicSafety to view the reports and monthly newsletter).



Key Initiatives

Stakeholder Analysis

Although there are numerous public safety initiatives being delivered by municipal, provincial and federal organizations as well as community agencies, key stakeholders recognized that there was a need for improved information sharing and coordination. The Public Safety Office undertook a stakeholder analysis to identify what was being done and by whom to better align our collective efforts.

Inter-governmental Relations

An important inter-governmental relationship has been the development of the Safer, Stronger Communities initiative. This partnership involves various municipal and provincial government departments focusing on community-based action plans aimed at reducing criminal activity and addressing the root causes of crime in specific communities.

Ad hoc Consultations

Dr. Donald Clairmont, in consultation with the HRM Public Safety Office, initiated individual ad hoc public safety consultations regarding race relations and housing.

Public Safety and Race Relations

The central purpose of the consultations was to learn more about the over-representation of young black males in the criminal justice system and assist the Public Safety Office in developing a strategic action plan which could effectively confront the underlying issues. The consultations also involved discussions and recommendations including the establishment of an advisory group on issues affecting the African Nova Scotia community, and exploration of additional options to use with Restorative Justice programs. In February 2010, the terms of an

agreement were reached between HRM and the Africville Genealogy Society, which include land, \$3 million toward the reconstruction of the Seaview United Baptist Church to serve as an Africville memorial, as well as support for future community-based improvements.

Public Safety and Housing

The Ad hoc Consultation for Public Safety and Housing was created to discuss the issues of violence and public safety in relation to housing, and more specifically to consider how to improve the availability of safe, affordable and supported housing. From a social policy perspective, the inadequacy of such housing has been shown, in virtually all research on public safety in Canada's larger urban centers, to be a crucial factor associated directly with high levels of violence and public safety concern, and, indirectly, to represent a major obstacle to getting at the root of these problems. This ad hoc consultation brought together a small group of well-informed stakeholders in the field of safe, affordable and supported housing initiatives in HRM to suggest a strategic action plan.

Communication

The Mayor's Roundtable Report made several recommendations regarding strengthening communication between HRM and citizens on the topic of public safety and crime prevention.

Halifax Regional Police and Halifax District RCMP developed a communication plan that supports the Public Safety Office. It outlines the research, target audiences, communication vehicles and key messages required to create a communications culture surrounding public safety both internally and externally.



Public Safety Strategic Planning Session

Strategic planning is a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does and why it does it. It can facilitate communication and participation, accommodate divergent interests and values, and foster orderly decision making and successful implementation.

Any strategic planning process is worthwhile only if it helps key decision makers think and act strategically. Strategic planning is not an end in itself but merely a set of concepts to help leaders make important decisions and take important actions.

The benefits of a strategic plan are:

- The worth of the strategic planning effort is likely to be widely recognized by the affected parties, leading to broad sponsorship and legitimacy.
- A well articulated initial agreement also provides a clear definition of the network that will be involved and the process by which it is to be maintained.

On June 16, 2010, the HRM Public Safety Officer convened a public safety strategic planning session of over 30 individuals from 13 municipal and provincial government departments and external agencies. The purpose of the session was twofold:

- to provide an update on the public safety initiative since the establishment of the Public Safety Office in March 2009, and
- to seek feedback from the participants on the draft public safety strategic plan that will guide key stakeholders in this collective effort.

The draft Public Safety Strategic Plan was presented to the HRM Board of Police Commissioners in October 2010.

“ The root causes of crime and victimization are addressed largely outside of the criminal justice system. A comprehensive approach to community safety and crime prevention requires leadership of governments and the inclusion of a broad range of service providers and community stakeholders. Our Public Safety Strategy is taking us in that direction. ”

Chief Frank Beazley
Halifax Regional Police

HRM Public Safety Strategic Plan

Mandate

On February 17, 2009, Halifax Regional Council approved the recommendations and action plan of *Partnering for Public Safety: Response to a Report to the Mayor as a Result of the Roundtable*.

Stakeholder Analysis

Key stakeholders from municipal, provincial and federal organizations; social agencies; the business community and community groups continue to be identified and mobilized throughout the process regarding their respective roles in public safety.

Vision

HRM is a safe, inclusive and welcoming community.

Environmental Scan

Key issues identified throughout the process:

- affordable and supportive housing
- communication
- criminal justice system
- downtown bar scene
- education
- employment
- gangs, guns and criminal sub-culture
- high-risk areas
- intergovernmental relations
- parenting
- public fear
- race relations
- random acts of violence
- recreation
- youth

Mission

To develop and implement a strategy to achieve a safe, inclusive and welcoming HRM.

Guiding Principles

- collective purpose
- collaborative decision-making
- shared accountability
- comprehensive information sharing
- commitment to sustainability

Strategic Directions and Statements of Intent

Communication

Outline the research, target audiences, communication vehicles and key messages required to address and create a communication culture surrounding public safety internally and externally.

Community Engagement

Engage citizens and community groups in playing an active role in public safety in HRM.

Diversity

Strengthen HRM's connection with diverse communities while at the same time addressing quality-of-life issues with these communities.

Partnerships

Align with all levels of government, social agencies and community partners to realize efficiencies and improve public safety programs and services in HRM.

Police Community Response

Halifax Regional Police and Halifax District RCMP must continue to implement strategies which reduce crime and enhance public safety.

Race/Ethnic Relations

Learn more about and develop strategic actions to effectively address the underlying issues of the over-representation of young black males in the criminal justice system.

Safer, Stronger Communities

Identify strategies that will enhance public safety and the perception of public safety.

Social Development

Work with partners to address the root causes of crime including but not limited to education, employment, housing, transportation, mental health and addictions.

Sustainability Initiatives

HRM as an organization must undertake a variety of initiatives to improve public safety.

Success Stories

The following success stories demonstrate that by working together, citizens, community groups, private sector partners and government agencies can address the root causes of crime and enhance public safety in HRM.

Centre Line Recording Studio

Centre Line Recording Studio, a unique community-driven initiative intended to give young teens from the neighbourhood access to professional quality recording equipment, was opened in Uniacke Square on March 31, 2010. The project, fostered by Communities And Uniacke Square Engaging (C.A.U.S.E.) and Halifax Regional Police Constables Holly Thomas and Winnell Jackson, received funding from the Nova Scotia Department of Justice and space for the studio from the Metropolitan Regional Housing Authority. Additional sponsors include Halifax Regional Municipality, Halifax Regional Police, North Branch Public Library, the Community Justice Society, Glidden Paint and IMOVE (In My Own Voice), a media-based program for at-risk youth. The community has stepped up to support the project; a qualified recording engineer has volunteered to oversee the sound studio, and area residents have helped to renovate the space. The studio was quickly put to good use. Officers in Uniacke Square partnered with community members and Centre Line Studio on a project called 'Shakespeare Raps.' Youth from the area attended the studio to write, record and perform an interpretive musical about Romeo and Juliet. Their hard work culminated with a performance at Neptune Theatre and a spot on CBC National TV in November 2010.

Gun Amnesties

In November 2009, the HRM Public Safety Office, in partnership with Henry's Camera, launched an innovative gun amnesty program called 'Pixels for Pistols' aimed at reducing the number of guns in our community. Every

citizen who turned over a functional firearm to police received a Sony digital camera and a Henry's School of Imaging Gift Card. Turning in ammunition or non-functional firearms netted citizens a Henry's School of Imaging Gift Card for photography lessons. A total of 1,074 guns and over 10,000 rounds of ammunition were turned over during the month-long amnesty program.

The RCMP and municipal police agencies partnered on a province-wide gun amnesty in April 2010. Over the course of the month-long program more than 100 firearms and several hundred rounds of ammunition were turned in to police agencies across the province.

Halifax Connects

The first Halifax Connects event was held at the Halifax Armouries on October 24, 2010. The event, which served in excess of 500 clients, was aimed at assisting homeless and marginalized people in HRM. During the day, citizens had an opportunity to receive health and dental checks, foot care, haircuts and a host of other services. There was a supply of winter clothing and comfort kits for all who needed them. The participants also received a hot lunch. This event was made possible by a compilation of several corporate, private and government partners.

HRP Sports Pals

It has been proven that youth who are engaged in sports are less likely to become involved in crime. On August 26, 2010, Halifax Regional Police officers partnered with the communities of Scotia Court and Dartmouth North to offer HRP Sports Pals, a one-day soccer camp for



25 local youth. Sports Pals not only gave these youth an opportunity to learn and have fun, but more importantly it provided a chance for police officers to interact in a positive way with youth from socially/economically stressed areas. The community pitched in to help with the initiative; First Baptist Church volunteers provided lunch for the Sports Pals program, Dollarama provided water and granola bars and Quaker Tropicana contributed Gatorade.

Integrated Service Teams

HRM Volunteer Services is working on developing Integrated Service Teams in three areas of HRM - Dartmouth East, Dartmouth North and Uniacke Square. The aim is to better coordinate services and programs, help create a voice for community members and build capacity in the community. The goal is to move from a service provider model to a community-based model, where local communities can take ownership, provide leadership and be in dialogue with other stakeholders. Meetings with HRM staff and service providers have been held in all three neighbourhoods to discover ways to engage the community and solicit input and direction from community members.

Pathways to Education

Pathways to Education, a national program aimed at helping youth stay in school and complete high school, launched its first Atlantic Canadian program site in Spryfield in fall 2010. Currently, there are 40 grade nine students participating in the program, which provides after-school tutoring and positive life experiences. The participants may remain in the program from grades nine through twelve.

Several students from Saint Mary's University and Mount Saint Vincent University have joined the program as tutors, and many community members have signed up to be mentors.

Safe, Inclusive and Welcoming Community Outcome Area

HRM has commenced an inter-departmental initiative regarding six Community Outcome Areas for the municipality. Halifax Regional Police Chief Frank Beazley was appointed as the lead for the Safe, Inclusive and Welcoming Community Outcome Area. A working group was assembled with representatives from nine business units. The working group completed its task of developing collective goals and objectives for the 2011/12 HRM Corporate Plan. Chief Beazley, along with the other five leads, presented their respective goals and objectives to Halifax Regional Council on February 1, 2011.

Step Up to Leadership

Halifax Regional Police Constables D'Arcy Hueston and Trish Kennedy, Community Response Officers for the Greystone area of Spryfield, partnered with HRM Community Development to deliver a five-week Step Up to Leadership course for area residents. Step Up to Leadership is intended to help citizens develop leadership skills and build strong communities. Seven participants graduated in December 2009 and due to its popularity, a second course was held in February 2010. HRM Community Development offers the Step Up to Leadership program on an annual basis to communities throughout HRM.

Key Milestones

- **November 2006** - Mayor Peter Kelly initiated the Roundtable on Violence and Public Safety in HRM. Dr. Donald Clairmont was engaged to coordinate the Mayor's Roundtable initiative.
- **June - November 2007** - Public consultations were held on violence and public safety in HRM.
- **November 2007** - Dr. Donald Clairmont convened a three-day roundtable session on violence and public safety in HRM.
- **April 2008** - Dr. Donald Clairmont tabled *A Report to the Mayor as a Result of the Roundtable* to Halifax Regional Council.
- **February 17, 2009** - Former HRM Chief Administrative Officer Dan English and Halifax Regional Police Chief Frank Beazley tabled *Partnering for Public Safety: Response to the Report to the Mayor as a Result of the Roundtable*. Halifax Regional Council approved the recommendations and action plan outlined in the report. The HRM Board of Police Commissioners agreed to serve as the Public Safety Committee.
- **February 2009** - Halifax Regional Police established a Public Safety Office, comprised of the Mental Health Mobile Crisis Team, the Integrated Traffic Unit, the Community Response Team and existing services and programs administered through the Community Relations and Crime Prevention Section (Victim Services, Volunteer Services, School Liaison Program).
- **March 4, 2009** - Superintendent Don Spicer was appointed HRM Public Safety Officer.
- **March 2009** - The HRM Public Safety Officer commenced implementing the action plan approved by Regional Council.
- **April 2009** - The HRM Public Safety Officer commenced tabling monthly reports to the HRM Board of Police Commissioners.
- **May 2009** - Halifax Regional Police Public Relations staff drafted an initial public safety communication plan, which later received extensive input from Halifax District RCMP and HRM Corporate Communications.
- **June 2009** - A public safety database was developed to track the action plans for the public safety strategic directions.
- **July 2009** - The Ad hoc Consultation for Public Safety and Housing was initiated.
- **September 2009** - A committee comprised of representatives from the Halifax Regional Police Liquor Enforcement Unit, Community Response Team, Taxi and Limousine Services, Nova Scotia Alcohol and Gaming Division, the Nova Scotia Restaurant and Bar Association, the Canadian Restaurant and Food Association and the Downtown Business Commission was struck to address public safety and security issues in and around the downtown bar scene.



- **September 2009** - The Ad hoc Consultation for Public Safety and Race Relations was initiated.
- **September 2009** - The Safer, Stronger Communities initiative revised its mandate to complement the HRM Public Safety initiative.
- **December 14, 2009** - Halifax Regional Police Chief Frank Beazley tabled the Public Safety Office Annual Report to the HRM Board of Police Commissioners. The report was subsequently sent to Halifax Regional Council.
- **January 2010** - The HRM Public Safety Officer engaged Dr. Donald Clairmont and Dr. Christopher Murphy to evaluate the public safety initiative.
- **June 16, 2010** - The HRM Public Safety Officer convened a public safety strategic planning session involving over 30 representatives from 13 municipal/provincial government departments and external agencies to devise a draft public safety strategic plan.
- **October 2010** - The draft public safety strategic plan was presented to the HRM Board of Police Commissioners.
- **April 2011** - The final HRM Public Safety Strategic Plan was completed and presented to the HRM Board of Police Commissioners.

Public Safety Strategic Planning Session Testimonials

I want to congratulate Supt. Spicer and the other presenters for the up-to-date presentation on the public safety initiative. Much has been accomplished in a short time. It was gratifying to me to note how much of the Public Safety Action Plan has been completed or is in progress.

*HRM Councillor Gloria McCluskey,
Former member of the
HRM Board of Police Commissioners*

The planning session demonstrated to me the great volume of work that is currently being done by the Public Safety Office. I am encouraged that the approach demonstrated a deepening commitment to a community response strategy by leveraging the assets of all municipal, provincial and private community agencies that have the ability to impact positively on public safety in our community.

*Supt. (Retired) Michael Burns
Halifax Regional Police*

The strategic planning session was informative and energetic. It was hopeful to see so many of our law enforcement personnel concerned and engaged in the process. The vision/mission statements we developed helped us to better understand our focus. It set some general direction for the group. My prayer is that we are able to implement the specific strategies now necessary to accomplish the mission and bring to life the community we all envision HRM to be.

*Rev. Rhonda Britton
Cornwallis Street Baptist Church*

Linkages with Public Safety-Related Initiatives

While meeting with staff throughout Halifax Regional Police, Halifax District RCMP and HRM, the HRM Public Safety Officer identified other public safety related initiatives with which the HRM Public Safety Strategy would have to strategically align.

The following initiatives have had a direct impact on the decision making as it relates to the HRM Public Safety Strategy:

- HRM Corporate Plan (visit www.halifax.ca/budget/corporateplan for more information)
- Mayor's Roundtable on Violence and Public Safety in HRM (visit www.halifax.ca/council/mayor/RoundtableonViolence.html for more information)
- Government of Nova Scotia Safer Streets and Communities
- Government of Nova Scotia Time to Fight Crime Together
- Government of Nova Scotia Weaving the Threads: A Lasting Social Framework
- Government of Nova Scotia Child and Youth Strategy
- The Nunn Commission and Response to the Nunn Commission
- United Way's Action for Neighbourhood Change
- Building a Safer Canada
- Making Cities Safer (International Strategies and Canadian Strategies)
- Federal Homelessness, Victimization and Crime
- Report of the Fatality Inquiry into the Death of Howard Hyde

“ Police alone cannot effectively deal with the deep rooted causes of crime. This public safety strategy takes a comprehensive approach to address the long-standing social issues that contribute to crime. Through meaningful partnerships, we can all play a role in building a safer community for HRM.”

Earl Gosse
Chair, HRM Board of Police Commissioners

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*Public safety is
everyone's responsibility.*
WHAT ROLE WILL YOU PLAY?

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