April 2017 – Regional Council directed and funded collaboration with United Way and others on a poverty reduction strategy

Mayor Savage co-chaired Poverty Solutions Advisory committee with United Way CEO Sara Napier

Councillors Streatch and Cleary participated on advisory committee

HRM political and administrative staff also supported HRM’s participation
Engagement

129 Ideas for Action

BUILD FROM EXISTING COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE, RESEARCH AND DATA
- United to Reduce Poverty Consultations (117 participants)
- United Way Halifax Agency & Community Partners
- Policy and Literature Review

INITIATE DATA COLLECTION AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING
- Low income data collected and analyzed for 1000+ census tracts in HRM using 2016 Statistics Canada data
- Participate in a community data working group

CONSULTATIONS TO ENGAGE COMMUNITY AND IDENTIFY BARRIERS AND IDEAS FOR ACTION
- Solutions Task Teams (6 teams / 48 members)
- Focus Groups (13 engagements / 184 participants)
- Business Alliance (18 members)
- Online Consultations (621 participants)

PUBLIC REVIEW AND INPUT
- Ideas for Action Open House
- Public Gallery of Solutions – 80 attend in person and 1,391 views online

ADVISORY COMMITTEE
- Stewarded by a diverse cross section of 22 members of our community – Poverty Solutions Advisory Committee

WE LEARNED FROM...
- First voice – experts by experience
- Non-profit agencies and service providers
- Community advocates
- Government agencies and departments
- Faith-based communities
- General Public
- Business community
- Academic and Poverty Researchers
- Cities reducing poverty and other groups leading and supporting municipal poverty strategies
7 Themes

- Quality Jobs and Livable Incomes
- Transportation
- Food Security
- Homelessness and Housing
- Service Access for Health and Well-being
- Education and Learning
- Systemic Change
129 Ideas for Action

ADDRESS IMMEDIATE NEEDS

1. Improve the quality of and access to income supports.

1.1 Advocate and work with the provincial and federal governments to raise social assistance rates and other income supports and benefits (e.g.: tax credits).

1.2 Advocate and work with the provincial government to ensure income supports and services meet residents’ needs by reducing barriers and increasing supports (e.g.: allowing individuals to retain greater earned income, while maintaining eligibility; reviewing the special needs list to reflect actual cost and needs).

1.3 Better assist low-income and marginalized residents to access childcare spaces and fee subsidies.

1.4 Improve access to health benefits, including dental, pharma, and vision care, for those transitioning to employment from Employment Services and Income Assistance (ESIA) and Nova Scotia Disability Support Program.

1.5 Work with all levels of government and community partners to complete a feasibility study looking in detail at how to implement a basic income.

47 (36.4%) In Progress

25 (19.4%) In Scope

57 (44.2%) Out of Scope
Poverty Solutions (In Progress)

- free or low-cost recreation programming (72,000+ participants);
- low-income transit pass program (1,000+ enrolled);
- transit pass program with the Department of Community Services (6,700+ enrolled);
- creation of a Diversity and Inclusion section and framework;
- participation in the Housing and Homelessness Partnership; and
- work with the United Way on approaches to poverty reduction.
Poverty Solutions (In Scope)*

- Day Care Centres in Municipal Facilities;
- Expand nutrition programs for children and youth;
- Prioritize community-based affordable housing options for people with disability, seniors, and people with mental health conditions;
- Expand density bonusing and inclusionary zoning throughout the HRM.
- Support the creation of community land trusts, and non-profit development resource and management groups.

* Within the municipality’s existing authority/capacity. Does not reflect a staff recommendation to pursue the idea.
Social Policy Lens

Work on the social policy lens has begun and will include:

- assessment of current social development activity;
- cross-jurisdiction research and analysis;
- legislative framework; and
- consideration of the various policies, procedures, programs and activities through which municipalities support implementation of a social policy.
Recommendation

That Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee recommend that Regional Council direct the CAO to:

- continue to work collaboratively with United Way Halifax on the development and implementation of anti-poverty solutions for the municipality;

- include a strategic response to the United Way report “Building poverty solutions: Ideas for Action” in the development of a Social Policy Lens; and

- incorporate updates on federal/provincial poverty reduction action plans and basic income projects when reporting on the Social Policy Lens and poverty reduction solutions.