

HRM's Review and Renewal of the Economic Strategy 2011 – 2016

Volunteer Consultation

Wednesday, June 30, 2010

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Location: Compass Room, Four Points by Sheraton

Champion: Leslie Brown, MSVU

Facilitator: Paula Gallagher, Deloitte

Participants

- Leslie Brown, MSVU
- Rachel Brown, ACOA
- Norman Greenberg, Connections Clubhouse
- Merek Jagielski, ISIS
- Darren Hirtle, HRM
- Darlene Maclean, Boys and Girls Club of Spryfield
- Grant MacDonald, College of Continuing Education
- Veronica McNeil, Federation of Community Organizations
- Peter Mortimer, United Way
- Sandra Murphy, Community Links
- Anne Perigo, Department of Health Promotion and Protection
- Miia Soukonautic, Phoenix Youth Programs
- Wendy Bye-Stephens, Board of Directors, Federation of Community Organizations
- Linda Wills, Grandmothers to Grandmothers campaign, Stephen Lewis Foundation

Observers

- Allan Cocksedge, Greater Halifax Partnership
- Fred Morley, Greater Halifax Partnership
- Sandra Wood, Greater Halifax Partnership
- Karen Fraser, Greater Halifax Partnership

Session Recorder

- Krista Hall, Greater Halifax Partnership

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Introduction - Leslie Brown

1. Project Overview
2. Participant Introductions

Consultation Overview – Paula Gallagher

1. Meeting Flow
2. Data Collection Overview
3. Ground Rules

Participant Feedback

Opportunities and Challenges

1. **What is your overall reaction to the opportunities and challenges?**
 - Hub City Strategy
 - Hub City misses a huge portion
 - Assumption in the document that growth in Halifax will benefit the region. Growth in Halifax may well impoverish the region and rural areas.
 - Lens with which this document views value discounts most marginalized communities.
 - Marginalized communities are not included in this material. Where are the clients as a central player in this process?
 - High Value Jobs
 - High-value sector – what does this mean? Child care workers, non-profits, they are high-value jobs.
 - Statement about high-value sectors needs work. Volunteer sector is an economic driver not an economic drain.
 - Need to rewrite the entire list to better reflect the sector
 - The categories are relevant but can be interpreted differently. The category description could better reflect the voluntary sector perspective
 - Opportunity for voluntary sector to work with other sectors. Want more opportunities for cross-sectoral interaction.
 - Key thing missing is the relationship between social and economic capital. Social capital is a key issue and opportunity. Linked to social networks, diversity, public places, etc. Needs stronger focus on geographic communities
 - Bit of arrogance to this document
 - Other municipalities are doing planning. We should look at partnerships with other municipalities (e.g. transportation planning)

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- Agency to agency level – traditional competition among agencies for resources (human and financial). Some of this is due to policies. Whenever there is an economic squeeze, there are opportunities for agencies to work more collaboratively.
- GDP trickle down
- Is this the real list of opportunities and challenges?
- Recognition that immigration policy has a big impact
- Alignment of high value sector is important
- List is boring
- List is surprising
- Not community-oriented, lack of community thought - too business oriented (e.g. business investment in downtown)

2. Is the list complete? If not, what is missing?

- NPOs need to be included
- Volunteer Sector Value
 - Recognition of contribution of the voluntary sector is missing. More employees in the voluntary sector than there are in the government and manufacturing, yet it's not seen as a high-value sector
- Talent (demographic shift, high education level)
 - Highly-educated workforce but the wage isn't competitive in the sector. Need to retain motivated, talented people working in the sector
 - Importance of non-profit training – aligning university and college education to non-profit job requirements
 - High number of retirees. This is an opportunity. Silver Economy Summit. Seniors as economic opportunity for business. Seniors as employees and the need for flexibility in how we design jobs.
- Nature of volunteerism is changing
- Income and wealth disparity is a challenge. Growing wealth disparity has an impact on the community.
- Lack of information about the statements in the materials. Was anyone from the volunteer sector involved in developing the material? Feeling is no they weren't.
- Gap between social economy and social capital – how can we identify the measures of the value of the sector
- Housing
- Immigration and diversity
- Competition between agencies
- Very different image of our city for the volunteer sector
- Opportunity – not-for profit social enterprise
- Challenge – NPO need formal education / awareness etc.
- Maybe need for economic impact analysis related to NPO / voluntary sector in HRM

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3. Is the list accurate? If not, what revisions would you propose and why?

- List isn't that relevant to the sector
- Doesn't represent the sector
- Sector isn't recognized as being high value

4. Which opportunities and challenges are the most important/least important and why?

****Note:** There were three tables of participants. Not every table completed the checklist. One table checked only high priority items. Each table = x

| From the Point of View of your sector, which opportunities and challenges are the most/least important and why? | Most Important | | | | Least Important |
|---|----------------|---|---|---|-----------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Hub City Strategy | | | | | x |
| High Value Jobs | x | x | | | |
| Alignment | xx | | | | |
| High Education Level | x | | | | |
| Concentration of Post-secondary institutions | xx | | | | |
| Demographic Shift | x | | | | |
| Population Growth | | x | | | |
| Taxation | x | | | | |
| Regulation | | | | x | |
| Inertia/resistance | x | | | | |
| Missing the Green Wave | x | x | | | |
| Productivity Growth | | x | | | |
| Partnership and Alignment | xx | | | | |
| International Focus | x | | | x | |
| Myths on Growth Drivers Need Correcting | xx | | | | |
| Overdue Public and Private Investment in the Downtown Core | | | x | | |
| High Carbon Dependence | x | x | | | |
| Other: Focus on neighbourhoods / communities | xx | | | | |
| Other: Decreasing disparity between rich and poor | x | | | | |
| Other: investing in children and youth | x | | | | |

Plenary Comments

- Least important
 - Hub city
 - Population growth
 - Regulation
 - Productivity/ growth
 - Public / private investment in downtown core

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- High-carbon dependence
- Added three items
 - Focus on neighbourhoods and communities
 - Decreasing disparity between rich and the poor
 - Investing in children and youth
- Alignment
 - Alignment is important – sectors need to talk and agree on common things. See the community in a common way
 - Many sectors within the sector – push for alignment within the sector is an opportunity for HRM
 - If the list reflects what's important to other sectors, then work needs to be done on alignment between the private and voluntary sector

Vision Statements

1. What is your first reaction to the draft vision statements?

- Don't like either
- Doesn't represent rural HRM
- Vision statement should not include measures
- Need a vision statement that is high level; inclusive statement that captures social and economic aspects of community
- Omit "recognized by"
- GDP shouldn't be a measure of a good place to live
- Vision #1
 - Debate on hub city idea. Does a hub city create wealth or collect wealth?
 - Initially didn't like it. Focus on "being" not being "recognized by"
- Vision #2
 - Dismissed – measures end up usurping vision and mission statements. You will never be able to include all measures so leave them out.
 - Don't like – hard edge. A city isn't a product.
 - It's too long and shouldn't include measures
- Should capture social and economic elements of the community
- Feeling that both of these statements have a strong urban bias

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Questions 2, 3 and 4 - **Note: There were three tables of participants. Not every table completed the checklist. Each table = x

| Vision | | | |
|--|-----|----|-------|
| | Yes | No | Notes |
| Do the statements describe what we want to be in HRM? | | xx | |
| Are the statements valid? | | x | |
| Do you see your sector's future represented in the statements? | | x | |

5. If not, what changes would you propose?

- Environmental
- Balanced
- Social
- Equitable
- Neighbourly
- Social fabric is strong
- People are connected
- People want to live in communities and work here
- Invest in our people – city values the social
- City where no one will live in poverty
- Social determinants of health is a good lens to look at the vision
- Needs to include Triple Bottom Line
- Needs actions and outcomes
- Include social determinants of health
- Alternate Vision
 - “Halifax is a creative, internationally competitive and community-oriented (hub) city”
 - “Halifax is a creative, inclusive, innovative, internationally competitive, and globally-oriented diverse city.”
 - “Halifax is a place people want to live”
 - “Halifax is a city that is diverse, just, green and creative and where...
 - Residents have a sense of connectedness to community and each other.
 - Resources are shared and utilized equitably.
 - The community continually engages in the democratic process.
 - There is a triple bottom line economy.”

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Priority Areas and Strategic Goals

1. Do you agree with the areas and goals? If not, what do we need to add, revise or remove?

****Note:** There were three tables of participants. Not every table completed the checklist.
Each table = x

| Priority Areas & Strategic Goals: Do you agree with the areas and goals? If not, what do we need to add, revise or remove? | | | | | | |
|--|-------|----------|-----|--------|--------|--|
| | Agree | Disagree | Add | Revise | Remove | Comments |
| More and better qualified people for high wage and more productive jobs | | | | xx | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add - Employer investment in training Add - Support job creation through green jobs |
| Development of a vibrant and attractive urban core as the primary economic driver | | x | x | xx | | |
| Development of an "ecosystem" of entrepreneurship to reduce commercial risk and improve productivity | | x | | xx | x | |
| Market and enhance assets of Halifax as a "Global City" | | | | x | x | |

Plenary Comments

- Volunteer sector – need to create awareness about the value and economic impact of the sector
 - Yes, we are looking for people, productive and high-wages
 - We can't compete in the area of wages and benefits in this sector. Talent retention is an issue.
 - We are always looking for qualified people.
 - Sector acts as a training ground
 - Difficult to access to training and development. There are barriers in place. Not as many employers are investing in professional development for employees. We're losing a lot of qualified, productive people.
 - Work being done in sector is high-value but we don't value it as we should
- Priority #1
 - Yes it should be a priority but it needs revision.
 1. All those who are working can meet their needs and have a good quality of life
 2. For all those who are willing to work, they have the opportunities and supports to contribute to the best of their ability.
 - Take issue with "more"
 - Provide students with career path opportunities here
 - Increase access and participation – all 3 sectors. Recognition of the NPO labour force and drawing in and retaining – inclusivity

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- New - jobs recognized for the value they bring
- Goal #1 - Re-skill / education not the issue – money issue only
- Goal #2 - The sector doesn't have the economic capacity or resources to recruit nationally. Look local rather than externally to recruit. Reinvesting internally
- Goal #3 - There is something here
- Goal #4 - Good, but wording needs revision. Similar to access and participation priority area.
- Priority #2 - not just focus on downtown area but also the nodes
 - Look at it through a community-economic and social development lens
 - No qualms with looking at the downtown core, but it needs to have mixed housing (Agricola and North and condominiums), mixed use buildings
 - More balanced development – not urban core focus. Revisit regional nodes, cluster development. Smaller footprint.
 - Community economic development lens should be included
 - some question around if the urban core is an economic driver
 - Disconnect between some of the regional planning in HRM and the assumptions made in the economic strategy materials
 - Want active transportation - linking rural downtown
 - Community as the primary driver
 - Goal #1
 - “urban”, no.
 - Partner with all three sectors to reduce 20% of all vacant land to 10% in a five year period. Partnerships between all three sectors to share space, including non-traditional partnerships.
 - Goal #2
 - Does infrastructure in this document mean roads?
 - Add private infrastructure. (e.g. co-location)
 - Goal #3
 - issue around the word “renowned”. Rest is ok.
- Priority #3
 - Supportive of entrepreneurship but it needs a broader context to support and include marginalized populations.
 - Add social and economic development initiative led by HRM (versus reliance on the province)
 - It's really about increasing risk
 - Create an environment and develop a strategy that values and supports increased risk in community economic development
 - Encouraging private, public and non-profits to take investment risks
 - Importance of social and collective entrepreneurship
 - Plan should provide and support three forms of entrepreneurial activity (e.g. local Farmer's markets, taking over a vacated building and doing something with it)
- Priority #4
 - Not a huge priority. Doesn't resonate.
 - Changed. “Build on opportunities provided by business activity that is focused on delivery of goals and services in local markets ”
 - removed and added to include area on affordability of the city
 - Affordability was not included in HRMbyDesign
 - Living in urban core is unattainable for many
 - Accessibility is also an issue. If people have to live outside the core for affordability it's challenging to access services in the core (e.g. transportation costs)

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- Social and economic development working together
- We need to look at the role of HRM in sustainability for the residents and the province
- Opportunities in the area of fair trade for the city and the province. Gets us into the global arena.
- Attracting more international students. A lot of them go back home. Opportunity for international linkages.

2. Which areas and goals are the most/or least important to the future of your sector and why?

****Note:** There were three tables of participants. Not every table completed the checklist.

Each table = x

| Priority Areas & Strategic Goals: Which areas and goals are the most/lest important to the future of your sector and why? | Most Important | | | | Least Important | Notes |
|---|----------------|---|---|---|-----------------|-------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| More and better qualified people for high wage and more productive jobs | x | | | | | |
| Development of a vibrant and attractive urban core as the primary economic driver | | x | | | | |
| Development of an "ecosystem" of entrepreneurship to reduce commercial risk and improve productivity | | | | x | | |
| Market and enhance assets of Halifax as a "Global City" | | | | | x | |

Plenary Comments

- Given what's there, #1 is most important
- Added #1 priority - links between social and economic development. Community as primary economic driver.
- Marketing – wariness around marketing. Could this money be better spent in the community?
- Marketing is least important
- Marketing not as important

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3. Which areas and goals should we focus on right away in order to give momentum to the implementation stage?

| Priority Areas & Strategic Goals: Which areas and goals should we focus on right away in order to give momentum to the implementation stage? | | | |
|--|---------------------|----------|-------|
| | Focus on Right Away | Comments | Notes |
| More and better qualified people for high wage and more productive jobs | x | | |
| Development of a vibrant and attractive urban core as the primary economic driver | | | |
| Development of an "ecosystem" of entrepreneurship to reduce commercial risk and improve productivity | x | | |
| Market and enhance assets of Halifax as a "Global City" | | | |

4. Do you have any thoughts on how we organize to achieve these goals?

- HRM needs to have their vision that is owned by the city. The Mayor and Council needs to own the vision. A lack of ownership leads to accountability challenges.
- Leadership – is there a lack of leadership? Our city doesn't have coordinated leadership
- Alignment between private, public and non-profit
- More unified voice in the sector and between sectors.
- Good to have many voices. Sustaining a unified voice is an artificial goal. We need issues around which we can organize.
- There are common issues within the sector where collective action can be taken
 - Liability insurance for events
 - Attracting talent
 - Professional development (e.g. mentoring developing career opportunities and career paths. People need opportunities to build capacity so they can move horizontally within the sector.)
- Having ongoing, cross-sectoral conversations. Plan shouldn't be the only outcome.
- Need to retain importance of the sector throughout the process. It needs to be included in the plan.
- There is lots of existing leadership and networking, but it could be better coordinated. Improve productivity of networking.

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Comments / Questions

Is there an existing economic footprint for the sector?

There are pieces but not a complete analysis. There has been some cost-benefit analysis done but they are usually issue or population specific (e.g. homelessness)

Some research has been done in the US.

Wrap-up

- Today's results will be sent back to the group.
- People can continue to contribute via the website.
- Over the summer and fall, the Partnership will be drafting the next version of the materials and the action plans
- There will be a second round of consultation to develop the action plans
- Final product by the end of December
- Early 2011, the plan will be approved and launched

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APPENDIX – Descriptions & Questions

SECTION 1: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Thinking about the opportunities and challenges below:

- What is your overall reaction to the opportunities and challenges?
- Is the list complete? If not, what is missing?
- Is the list accurate? If not, what revisions would you propose and why?
- From the point of view of your sector, which opportunities and challenges are the most important/least important and why?

OPPORTUNITIES

Hub City

- Conference Board identifies Halifax as one of 9 Canadian Hub Cities
- Halifax is Atlantic Canada's economic hub.
- Economic growth in Halifax drives an even faster rate of growth in the province and region
- Overall, the region benefits from growth in Halifax

High Value Jobs

- Halifax has critical mass in high-value sectors like Finance, Insurance and Real-estate, Digital Industries, Oceans, Life Sciences, Aerospace and others

Alignment

- Fiscal and economic challenges provide a motivation to realign priorities and spending....to focus on growth in high wage jobs and high value sectors

High Education Levels

- Halifax has among the highest post-secondary education levels of any city in Canada
- Education levels drive economic growth -Research by the US based CEOs for Cities shows that education levels in cities accounts for almost 60% of economic growth

Concentration of Post Secondary Institutions

- Halifax has among the highest concentration of post secondary education institutions and students in Canada
- The sector's value relates to its high wage direct jobs, its ability to act as a hub of research and innovation, and its role as a talent magnet
- As enrolment of Nova Scotia-born students declines because of demographics and high costs, the ability of these institutions to attract and retain international students has significant potential

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CHALLENGES

Demographic Shift

- A demographic profile close to the Canadian average within a province that has the oldest population in Canada
- Over 45,000 Nova Scotians will retire from the labourforce and another 9,500 new jobs, all within the broader Halifax area, will be created by 2014
- Thus, 55,000 job openings between 2009 to 2014
- With population growth stagnant it is likely that wage pressure and the need for productivity investments will increase dramatically

Population Growth

- Up until the recent recession Nova Scotia had been battered by outflows of young professionals and skilled workers headed to areas of better economic growth and higher wages
- The population growth rate of Halifax dropped below the pace of major cities in neighbouring provinces
- Immigration has been limited, slower than past trends and slower than in neighbouring provinces

Taxation

- Personal taxation is higher in Nova Scotia than every Canadian province, with the largest differential at the high wage –high skill end of the spectrum
- Corporate taxation is the highest in Canada. Nova Scotia remains one of the last provinces to remove investment inhibiting capital tax
- Nova Scotia needs new investment to boost productivity and retain key companies (If a company is not investing it is dis-investing)

Regulation

- Major regulatory reform usually takes place without full consideration of the economic and business costs
- Regulatory costs affect business climate and ultimately the fiscal health of governments

Inertia/Resistance

- Sectors and groups benefiting from existing programming and current sector focus tend to resist change
- Some members of our elected leadership, the public sector, and implementing organizations may resist necessary change

Missing the Green Wave

- Nova Scotia is among Canada's most carbon dependent provinces
- Tidal energy is an area where Nova Scotia seems to have a competitive advantage

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Productivity Growth

- Nova Scotia has one of the worst productivity performances in Canada and Canada is among the worst in the G20
- A policy focus that put jobs growth ahead of quality jobs and a fiscal regulatory climate hostile to productivity improvement has hurt productivity growth

Partnership and Alignment

- There is little strategic alignment of economic development resources among federal, provincial and municipal governments and between agencies and departments of individual governments
- Lack of consensus in areas like gateway, infrastructure priorities, labour force policies and other areas has stalled progress

International Focus

- Nova Scotia has among the worst export growth of any province in Canada over the last decade
- Most business activity is focused on delivery of goods and services in local markets
- The value of externally oriented business and organizations as the key economic generators in our economy is not well understood by policy makers or business organizations

Myths on Growth Drivers Need Correcting

- “Last mile” efforts at a fully “wired” province will have limited economic benefits
- Political and economic policies that emphasize geographic balance over economic opportunity constrain growth
- Traditional areas of government policy attention often focuses on low wage, low growth, seasonal, low skill, low productivity, but vocal industries
- Nova Scotia has missed most of the early stage green-tech opportunities. Most government efforts have been on the regulatory side which often have economic costs. Government investment in Green-tech industry has been limited
- Old style politics, which features urban rural divisions hurt economic growth
- It is likely that net new growth in Nova Scotia will be in the region surrounding and including Halifax

Overdue Public and Private Investment in the Downtown Core

- About 20% of land in the downtown core is vacant land
- Beyond basic maintenance, HRM has not invested in the Core since amalgamation in the mid-90s

High Carbon Dependence

- Adds cost burden to both individuals and companies
- Contributes to greenhouse gas problems

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SECTION 2: VISION

Thinking about the vision statements below:

- What is your first reaction?
- Do the statements describe what we want to be in HRM?
- Are the statements valid?
- Do you see your future reflected in the statements?
- If not, what changes would you propose?

Vision – Alternative 1

Halifax is recognized by the rest of the world as a more creative, innovative, internationally competitive, and globally-oriented hub city providing:

- Increased economic and social well-being not only to people in the HRM but also to Nova Scotia and the Atlantic region;
- More high value and sustainable jobs that will attract highly qualified people of diverse backgrounds and;
- A quality of life that is the “envy of the world”.

Vision –Alternative 2

Halifax is recognized around the world as a smart, international and competitive city where:

- X% of the 25-45 year-old population has completed post-secondary education;
- X% of the city's GDP is driven by international business;
- Is found the most competitive business environment in Eastern Canada and;
- X number of high-value jobs have been created.

SECTION 2: PRIORITY AREAS AND STRATEGIC GOALS

Thinking about the list of priority areas and strategic goals below:

- Do you agree with the areas and goals? If not, what do we need to add, revise or remove?
- Which areas and goals are the most/or least important to the future of your sector and why?
- Which areas and goals should we focus on right away in order to give momentum to the implementation stage?
- Do you have any thoughts on how we organize to achieve these goals?

Priority Area #1: More and better qualified people for high wage and more productive jobs.

Strategic Goals:

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1. Development and implementation of a comprehensive learning strategy to re-skill workers to a level that allows them to compete for high wage and more productive jobs.
2. Development and implementation of an enhanced external recruitment and retention strategy to attract and retain high skilled workers from the rest of Canada and internationally.
3. Design and implement an engagement strategy with the young professional community to ensure their active involvement with the design and implementation of economic development initiatives
4. Design and implement a “talent” strategy to ensure that all elements of the population participate actively in the labor market.

Priority Area #2: Development of a vibrant and attractive urban core as the primary economic driver.

Strategic Goals:

1. Develop and implement an aggressive strategy to attract significant private investment to the urban core to address the issue of downtown office and residential stock
2. Implement a 5 year public infrastructure improvement program including targeted service and maintenance improvements.
3. Develop a plan for the building of renowned cultural institutions.

Priority Area #3: Development of an “ecosystem” of entrepreneurship to reduce commercial risk and improve productivity.

Strategic Goals:

1. Undertake a regulatory and tax review to identify and advocate the changes to the policies and regulations at all levels of government that impede economic growth in HRM.
2. Design an engagement strategy between the economic development organizations and the college, university and technical school community to identify and act in partnership on initiatives to support economic development, improve productivity and promote entrepreneurialism.
3. Develop and deliver a strategy for business attraction and retention that targets the creation of highly skilled jobs and limiting the exit of skilled and educated young people.

Priority Area #4: Market and enhance assets of Halifax as a “Global City”

Strategic Goals:

1. Develop and implement an enhanced trade and investment strategy that builds on the current international market development activities underway.
2. Continue the development of an internationally competitive transportation system covering all modes that supports the efficient movement of goods and people.

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3. Design and deliver a wide-reaching public relations and communications program designed to change the awareness and perception of the players in the HRM regarding the growth potential and opportunities in the international marketplace.