

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

Young and Emerging Professionals Consultation

Thursday, June 24, 2010

1:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Location: Admiral North, Four Points by Sheraton

Champion: Cheryl Stewart, Fusion

Facilitator: Janet MacMillan, MT&L

Participants

- Cindy Dean, Greater Halifax Partnership
- Kim West, MT&L
- Chris Cowell, East Coast Connected
- April MacLeod, Consultant
- Lynn Coveyduck, Junior Achievement
- Susan Eldridge, Mount Saint Vincent University
- Don Mills, CRA
- Cathy Jacob, Fire Inside Leadership
- Brian Watson, NSDERD
- Caroline McGrath, Service Canada
- Nadia Hinds, MT&L (Fusion)
- Suzanne Rix, Cox & Palmer
- Joanne McCrae, The Hub
- Kelly Wilson, Canadian Cancer Society
- Rachel Derrah, Breakhouse
- Alex Farrell, RBC Royal Bank
- Geoffrey Milder, United Way of Halifax
- Scott Coleman, NSBI (Fusion)
- Michelle Wood-Tweel, Institute of Chartered Accountants
- Jim Donovan, Greater Halifax Partnership
- Robyn Webb, Greater Halifax Partnership

Observers

- Allan Cocksedge, Greater Halifax Partnership

Session Recorder

- Krista Hall, Greater Halifax Partnership

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

Introduction - Cheryl Stewart

1. Project Overview
2. Participant Introductions

Consultation Overview – Janet MacMillan

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?**
 - Language is not reflective of the reality of 130+ communities
 - We need to pick winners
 - Niche sectors – pick assets and leverage strengths
 - Need to market our aspirations and ambitions
- 2. Is the list complete? If not, what is missing?**
 - Discussion about governance
 - Good to target graduates right out of university but we might need to make the pitch even earlier on. Graduates decide in their first semester if they want to stay here or not. There is an opportunity to reach out students early on
 - Investment in transportation infrastructure. Some cities have shifted their entire economies by changing their transportation infrastructure.
 - Diversity – Kevin Stolarick (research director for Richard Florida) talks about the 3 T approach – Talent, Technology, Tolerance.
 - None of us would consider ourselves intolerant but we do tend to run in the same circles all the time.
 - Two types of social capital - bridging and bonding. We tend to be high on the bonding social capital (church, social circles) but it tends to be exclusionary. We're not as good at bridging. Let's celebrate the weird. Diversity is key. Anyone who comes here needs to feel that they can be successful.
- 3. Is the list accurate? If not, what revisions would you propose and why?**
 - Business incentives around investing in young people – grants to hire new grads (payroll rebate for new grads)

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

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

**** Note:** There were three tables of participants. 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	xx				
High Value Jobs	xx				
Alignment	x			x	
High Education Level			x	x	
Concentration of Post-secondary institutions	x		x		
Demographic Shift	x	x			
Population Growth	xx				
Taxation	x		x		
Regulation	x		x		
Inertia/resistance	xx				
Missing the Green Wave	x		x		
Productivity Growth	xx				
Partnership and Alignment	xx				
International Focus	x		x		
Myths on Growth Drivers Need Correcting	x				x
Overdue Public and Private Investment in the Downtown Core	xxx				
High Carbon Dependence	x	x			

Plenary Comments

- Themes (from one table)
 - High value jobs. As a young person, in theory, you could build your entire career here.
 - Inertia and attitudinal issues (generational divide) getting in the way of moving forward
 - Municipality can definitely invest more in the downtown core
- Hub City Strategy
 - If we do the other pieces we will become the hub
 - Make the hub city strategy and investment in downtown the focus and the rest will follow
 - What is a hub city? We can't be all things to all people.
 - Do this and invest in the downtown core and the rest will follow
 - We need a marketing strategy
 - Atlantic Gateway transportation units gives easy access

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

- High Value Jobs
 - What are they?
 - Knowledge based jobs and cultural industries (creativity, innovation, entrepreneurs, music, art, film, multi-cultural community, etc.) are up and coming. Cultural industry can be massive drivers.
 - Include entrepreneurs and support them.
 - New grads say you can only go so high here – Toronto 1-3, Halifax 11-1. YEP's feel they can't move their careers forward in Halifax. They feel they have to go away to get experience. Halifax should be a city where you can start, grow and have your entire career in one place.
 - We need to strategize to shift to high value jobs
 - We need to make room for mid to senior level jobs – high quality mid-range salaries
 - Match jobs to education levels. Find out what companies need and create education programs to match high value jobs. NSCC has done a good job at this.
 - Finishing school for say the IT sector. We could shift our whole economy based on what we are doing in IT.
 - We don't need jobs as much as we need people. We need to capture those grads so they will put down roots here.
- High Education Levels
 - Focus on retention and research
 - Move students from Arts to other programs
 - Universities need to provide better career services - perception / reality that jobs are easier to get elsewhere
 - IBM to come to campus – traditional recruitment is not working
 - Focus on / push to further education in order to grow in your career
 - We need support for students who go away and come back
- Talent (Population Growth, Demographic Shift)
 - Come From Away (CFA) – we need to get away from this attitude
 - There is a disconnect between graduates and job opportunities.
 - It's very difficult to break into the job market. Very difficult for mid and senior professionals to find jobs
 - Need to focus on our assets – graduates, talent
 - Graduates feel like they have to leave to do important work.
 - At the universities we need active career coaching – connecting education and jobs
 - Get rid of 3-5 years experience requirement. Businesses need to be educated that 3-5 years experience is not necessarily required. Minimize barriers to getting the first job.
 - Connector program and other mentorship programs are a step in the right direction
 - Municipality could give incentives to businesses to hire and support young professionals so they can develop their careers here.
 - NSBI gives training money to establish jobs. Why wouldn't we give every graduate the same grant to get their first job? Vast majority of businesses are small to medium here. These businesses take a big risk on investing young graduates who are likely to leave their business. Why wouldn't the province give graduates the

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

- same funds - payroll rebate for companies who hire new grads and immigrants. Service Canada did it 15 years ago. Put the focus on the person seeking the job rather than on the employer.
- Great thing about shortages is that companies will adapt.
- Young professionals want more vacation and higher salaries. Larger companies don't understand why young people have high expectations.
- Younger people don't have a clue as to what they want to do. There are opportunities to attract, train and retain these professionals.
- Less than 4% chance of securing a job through ad posting. Most jobs aren't posted.
- Regulation
 - There is too much red tape
- Productivity and Growth
 - Focus on innovation
- Inertia and Resistance
 - Need to empower people to get involved
 - Is a major challenge to grow
- Downtown Core
 - Owning a business downtown is like "being kicked in the teeth every single day"
 - We need to prioritize development in the downtown core
 - We want a vibrant downtown. Energy perpetuates more energy.
 - Set the vision of a vibrant downtown core and the rest will follow
 - Densification is important. We need to populate the downtown. Portland, Oregon example of redensification.
 - \$35-million in taxes in downtown core that is subsidizing rural HRM. How is that contributing to vitality in the urban core of the Hub City?
 - Need affordable housing – zoning to allow for 2-3 bedroom so we can have families
 - Lifestyle - cost of living is too high, especially in downtown
 - Vancouver has done a fantastic job in their downtown core
- Alignment
 - Need alignment between all levels of government and economic development agencies
 - We need to do a better job to break down silos and barriers between all levels of government, academia, community, non-profit, etc.
- Halifax – What Do We Want?
 - We need to figure out what kind of city we really want. How many people do we want here? Figure out the vision and work backwards from that.
 - Poverty of aspiration. We need to define what we are as a city and promote it. We spend a lot of time saying what we're not - "We're not Toronto, Vancouver, etc"
 - Need to reconcile the urban versus rural issue. We need to stop "us versus them". Separation of municipal units – urban and rural
- Governance
 - We need to seriously look at HRM's municipal structure.

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

- If we can't change HRM's governance then we need to influence the province. "We Expect More"
- Strategy Development and Implementation
 - Many items on the list cannot be addressed by the municipality. Whatever goes in the strategy should be measurable and be able to be done by the municipality. We need to be able to realistically influence key indicators
 - The strategy needs to be tied to what the municipality does
- Missing the Green Wave
 - Lost opportunity here
- Taxation
 - Tax reform is needed (affordability of land). It could be a lever for growth.
- Development
 - We need to start to ask, Who benefits from new infrastructure projects? If so, who should pay?
- Leadership
 - We need people who can/will act on issues (attracting and retaining YEPs, high value jobs, etc.)

[Vision Statements](#)

What is your first reaction to the draft vision statements?

- Don't care for the visions - they don't say a lot.
- "Smart-city" is vague. What is the experience of the city?
- Want a practical vision
- Keep it simple
- It should be a guiding beacon A vision statement is supposed to give you something to aspire to.
- Let's measure it with things HRM can actually influence
- "more creative"? Let's just be creative
- Visions are confusing and sound elitist
- Too long. Need to be more direct, short, concise and easily understandable.
- Why can't we "just be" – let's not worry about being recognized by others
- Really did not like "envy of the world" "best" - let's stop comparing ourselves.
- Liked #1 better than #2
- "Recognized by rest of the world" should be taken out

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

Questions 2, 3 and 4

Vision			
	Yes	No	Notes
Do the statements describe what we want to be in HRM?	x		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of life, friendly-city, creative – these are the things we want to be/have
Are the statements valid?	x		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Like #1 better than #2 Yes - “creative” and “innovative”
Do you see your sector's future represented in the statements?	x		

If not, what changes would you propose?

- Get rich or have fun trying
- Fake it till you make it
- “Halifax, Love the Way We Live” (G7 1998 slogan).
- “We work to live, not live to work”
- “a touch of cosmo”
- “If you lived here you’d be home by now”
- Add “Supportive, business friendly environment helping businesses to grow and expand”
- Add “retaining” to bullet #2 in Vision #1
- Revise bullet #3 in Vision #1 – “a quality of life that supports your lifestyle.”
- Add a bullet - “Connecting internationally through business travel and the global economy.”
- Livability – let’s make Halifax an exceptional livable city.
- Look at Rebecca Ryan’s research. There were 7 points of livability.
 - Earning – business
 - Learning
 - Vitality – environment and green implications here
 - After hour
 - Cost of lifestyle
 - Around town – transportation
 - Social capital
- Think Big, Look Big.
- If you can get the words “Halifax” and “city” in a vision statement passed by the Mayor we’ll be very surprised.
- Alternate Visions
 - “My Halifax is a creative, innovative, internationally competitive and globally connected hub city.”
 - “Halifax is one of the most exceptionally livable cities in the world.” (This includes taxes, transit, green, regulation, population growth)
 - “Halifax is....
 - Open
 - Fun

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

- Safe
- Balanced
- Edgy
- Home
- A place where you can Make Your Ideas happen
- A place with Strong Roots
- A small big city”

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?

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	x			xx		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise to include “retention”. Better connection to employers.
Development of a vibrant and attractive urban core as the primary economic driver	xx					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no changes • Revise “downtown” to include Dartmouth and other areas
Development of an "ecosystem" of entrepreneurship to reduce commercial risk and improve productivity	xx			x		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focus is good but wording needs to be changed. Creating a better “climate” to do business • Revise to promote small and medium size business
Market and enhance assets of Halifax as a "Global City"	xx			x		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • condense to “market Halifax”

Plenary Comments

- Mixed on some of the priorities.
- Consensus that priority #2 and #4 are more important
- Priority #1
 - provincial policy feel. Needs to be a focus on young grads and immigrants, value add junior level jobs
 - Providing incentives for new grads (payroll rebate)

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

- Need strategy to help foreign students to stay and work
- Top priority – keep our young people who are here (foreign students, homegrown, newcomers to Canada)
- Establish a provincial agency – brings business, government, non-profit, academia together to focus on talent attraction and more importantly retention
- **Priority #3**
 - Top priority is #3 – from a grassroots level, the sense of being an entrepreneur teaches next generation about financial management and dreaming. Helps Halifax build confidence if we aren't so dependent on larger companies that may leave.
 - Collaboration of not-for-profits that can help grow entrepreneurship
- **Priority #4**
 - Agreed on this point

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

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		x				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● not as important because we already have graduates
Development of a vibrant and attractive urban core as the primary economic driver	xx	x						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● very important
Development of an "ecosystem" of entrepreneurship to reduce commercial risk and improve productivity	x x		x					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● very important ● Growing our Entrepreneur community is most important. They are more invested in Halifax. ● This captures it all
Market and enhance assets of Halifax as a "Global City"	x	xx						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● call it a "city"

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

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
More and better qualified people for high wage and more productive jobs	#4
Development of a vibrant and attractive urban core as the primary economic driver	#2, #1
Development of an "ecosystem" of entrepreneurship to reduce commercial risk and improve productivity	#3, #1
Market and enhance assets of Halifax as a "Global City"	#1

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

- Keep in mind all the demographics
- We need an implementation that encourages connection and collaboration and accountability across the board.
- Make it easy for young professionals to access existing services
- Need gel and glue to make it easier for people to access jobs
- Look to Newfoundland – “collective ambition”
- It may be different for youth and an older demographic – need to take this into consideration
- Implementation encourages and enables connection and collaboration and shows accountability across the board

Comments / Questions

- Focusing too narrowly on entrepreneurs may alienate
- Nova Scotia is the worst province to deal with to get things done
- Business climate is not as favorable as it used to be
- Children of entrepreneurs are twice as likely to start a new business
- We can't underestimate the influence of parents on children's career choices
- The Partnership should be brave. It needs to stand up and do the right thing. Council is only one of the clients and funders. Private business is also a big supporter. Put in front of Council the right things to do and stand up for it. We need the organization to be independent. This is not the council's organization. They support it but so does the private sector. They have as much to say as to

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

what gets included in the strategy as the council does. Tired of the council minimizing the role and authority of the Partnership.

When this goes to council, is there a time when the general public can be part of approving it or not?

- Councilors are very interested in this subject. One of the subjects is how do we go public with this.
- We want it to be transparent
- Interact when you have some time

Wrap-up - Cheryl Stewart

We're teetering on the edge of greatness. We all need to challenge ourselves as leaders and challenge the Partnership to be bold.

We need focus.

We can't be all things to all people. We need to hone in on the things that are most important and execute the plan.

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

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

CHALLENGES

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

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 labour force 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

Productivity Growth

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

- 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

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

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:

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.

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

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.
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.