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**Item No.**  
**Community Planning and Economic  
Development Committee**  
**January 21, 2016**

**TO:** Chair and Members of Community Planning and Economic Development

**SUBMITTED BY:** Original Signed

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Maggie MacDonald, Managing Director, Government  
Relations and External Affairs

**DATE:** January 5, 2015

**SUBJECT:** Economic Strategy Renewal -- Update

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**ORIGIN**

May 21, 2015: MOVED by Deputy Mayor Nicoll, seconded by Councillor Fisher that the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee recommend Regional Council authorize staff to develop an updated Economic Strategy in collaboration with the Halifax Partnership in accordance with the approach set out in the April 14, 2015 staff report.

June 2, 2015: MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor McCluskey that Halifax Regional Council authorize staff to develop an updated Economic Strategy in collaboration with the Halifax Partnership in accordance with the approach set out in the April 14, 2015 staff report.

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

The Halifax Regional Municipality Charter 2008, c. 39, s. 1. permits the municipality to undertake a variety of economic development activities.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) Standing Committee receive this report and forward it to Regional Council for information.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Current Economic Strategy**

The Halifax Regional Municipality (the municipality) undertakes economic development activities in order to increase the economic and social well-being of its citizens. In March 2011, Regional Council endorsed *AGreaterHalifax*, the municipality's economic strategy for 2011-2016.

The current strategy has five goals:

- **Regional Centre** – Build a vibrant and attractive Regional Centre that attracts \$1.5B of private investment and 8,000 more residents by 2016;
- **Business Climate** – Promote a business climate that drives and sustains growth by improving competitiveness and by leveraging our strengths;
- **Talent** – Create a welcoming community where the world's talent can find great opportunities, engaged employers and resources for advancement;
- **International Brand** – Create a unique international city brand for Halifax; and,
- **Maximize Growth Opportunities** – Capitalize on our best opportunities for economic growth.

Since its release, municipal staff and representatives from the Halifax Partnership have updated CPED on the strategy's ongoing implementation. In the last economic strategy update to CPED on October 15, 2015, municipal staff outlined specific progress the municipality and the Halifax Partnership have made in fulfilling the 48 actions planned for Years 3-5 of the strategy. Municipal staff also reported on the key measures to gauge economic progress more broadly in Halifax – population, employment and income levels, and the commercial tax base.

The municipality's current Economic Strategy for 2011-2016 is entering its final year.

### **Economic Strategy Renewal**

On June 2, 2015, Regional Council authorized staff to develop an updated five-year economic strategy in collaboration with the Halifax Partnership (the Partnership). In September 2015, KPMG was awarded the contract to develop the economic strategy, as well as a strategy to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to the municipality. The economic strategy is being partially funded by the Nova Scotia Department of Municipal Affairs, and the FDI strategy is being financed in part by the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development's Invest Canada-Community Initiatives Program.

The economic strategy process will include development of a vision, main areas of focus and actions based on input from key stakeholders and the broader community. Given the extensive consultations that took place during the development of the 2011-16 economic strategy, the One Nova Scotia Commission and the Halifax branding exercise, consultations for the new economic strategy have been more focused.

The strategy is being guided by an Economic Strategy Advisory Committee (ESAC) that includes representatives from the private sector, military, universities, the provincial government, HRM and the community at large. ESAC has been tasked to refine the vision and goals, generate new ideas, build consensus and communicate results. ESAC is chaired by Matt Hebb, Dalhousie University's Assistant Vice-President of Government Relations, and supported by a smaller working group of KPMG, the Partnership, HRM staff, and provincial representatives.

The renewed strategy will be presented to Regional Council for final approval by April 2016.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Progress to Date**

The working group's first meeting was held in September 2015. To inform subsequent discussions, KPMG undertook a best practices review of economic development strategies from elsewhere, and it assessed how HRM's current economic strategy aligns with related plans and other strategies, including the One Nova Scotia Report, the 2013 Municipal Auditor General's Economic Development Governance Review and the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy.

On October 16<sup>th</sup>, ESAC met for the first time and discussed the strategy's potential areas of focus, such as infrastructure development, the needs of small business and entrepreneurs, population growth and talent attraction.

A staff report, dated November, 6, 2015, outlining progress on the strategy's development was submitted to the CPED Standing Committee for discussion on November 19, 2015.

Since late November, 17 of 19 planned engagement sessions have been held (a list of these sessions and their status is attached). As directed by Regional Council, engagement has focused on gathering input from a cross-section of persons from different sectors, geographic areas and communities of interest.

### **Next Steps**

The working group continues to refine the proposed vision, mission, themes and objectives which will be presented at ESAC's second meeting, scheduled for January 11, 2015.

A detailed draft strategy will be presented to the CPED Standing Committee for endorsement by the end of the fiscal year, with the intention of submitting a final draft for Regional Council approval by April 2016.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Funding for the renewed economic strategy was approved by Regional Council through the 2015/16 operating budget.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

There was no community engagement in the preparation of this report.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no environmental implications from this report.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

**ATTACHMENT 1:** Economic Strategy Renewal Engagement Sessions (draft as of January 5, 2015)

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A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/index.php> (select the appropriate Community Council and meeting date) or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at (Tel) 902.490.4210 or (Fax) 902.490.4208.

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**ATTACHMENT 1:  
Economic Strategy Renewal  
Status of Planned Engagement Sessions (as of January 5, 2015)**

Theme/Stakeholder Group	Status
Aboriginal Stakeholders	Planned
Population and Talent (includes universities and immigration stakeholders)	Planned
HRM	Separate engagement plan developed
Aerospace and Defence Sector	Completed
African Nova Scotian Stakeholders	Completed
BIDs & Business Associations	Completed
Business Climate	Completed
Cultural Community (includes Creative Industries)	Completed
Destination Halifax & Halifax Convention Centre	Completed
Development & Construction	Completed
Energy	Completed
Entrepreneurship	Completed
Finance & Insurance	Completed
Government of Nova Scotia	Completed
Halifax Partnership Investors	Completed
ICT	Completed
Not for Profit & Community Organizations	Completed
NSCC & University Presidents	Completed
Oceans	Completed
Transportation and Logistics	Completed