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Item No. 12.1.2
Environment & Sustainability Standing Committee
January 14, 2016

TO: Chair and Members of the Environment & Sustainability Standing Committee

ORIGINAL SIGNED

SUBMITTED BY:



Bob Bjerke, Chief Planner and Director, Planning & Development

DATE: January 5, 2016

SUBJECT: Presentation of Findings from the EU-Canada Urban Policy Cooperation

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

In the spring of 2015, HRM was invited to apply for participation in the European Union (EU)-Canada Urban Policy Cooperation by ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, the world's leading network of over 1,000 cities, towns and metropolises committed to building a sustainable future.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

HRM Charter, Purpose of Act, 2 (c) (iii) recognize that the functions of the municipality are to ...develop and maintain safe and viable communities.

BACKGROUND

Halifax is participating in a 3-phased European Union (EU)-Canada Urban Policy Cooperation, collaborating and sharing best practices with Tallinn, Estonia on environment and energy related urban planning projects.

The EU is a leader in climate change adaptation and sea level rise strategies and mitigation. Halifax's participation in this project provided an excellent opportunity to showcase our sustainable policies and projects on the world stage.

Organized and funded by the EU-Canada Commission, the project unites partner cities across the globe, and focuses on three themes: climate adaptation, low carbon development and biodiversity. Halifax and Tallinn were joined by other paired Canadian municipalities and European cities, including: Ottawa with Hannover, Germany; Saanich with Almada, Portugal; and Edmonton with Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain.

DISCUSSION

Tallinn and Halifax share similar cold climates, comparable natural geographies, and are both coastal cities with populations of approximately 400,000 residents.

Following an initial working group meeting in July, a delegation from Tallinn visited Halifax. Highlights of the visit included a welcome from Halifax Mayor Mike Savage, presentations from many professionals and key stakeholders in the municipality, and field trips to Point Pleasant Park and Cow Bay.

In October, delegates from all EU-Canada Urban Policy Cooperation cities travelled to Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain. The Halifax delegation - comprised of municipal staff and external partners specialized in planning, environmental management and emergency preparedness – then visited its partner city, Tallinn, Estonia to learn firsthand from their experts and stakeholders, and visit relevant places and projects.

The partnership will wrap up in spring 2016, with a final joint session to review achievements. The final meeting is anticipated to be held in Ottawa in April.

The EU-Canada Urban Policy Cooperation is a municipal exchange project and a section of the larger World Cities: EU-Third Countries Cooperation on Urban Development, which facilitates municipal government dialogues between European cities and partnering countries' cities. World Cities aims to apply the tenets of local and regional cooperation that make up EU regional policy on an international scale; as part of this larger measure, the EU-Canada Urban Policy Cooperation intended to bring Canadian and European cities together to discuss and collaborate on actions related to topics of mutual interest.

This cooperation was a unique opportunity for cities to share expertise and gain insight from other municipalities working in areas of mutual interest. Canadian and European project cities cooperated based on similarities between their thematic areas, experiences, and goals; communication with all cities in the exchange provides additional opportunities for collaboration and potential for new ideas.

Topics for dialogue and action fell into three overarching project themes:

Resilience/Adaptation

- Initiating a resilience/adaptation process of planning
- Scoping local climate impacts
- Conducting vulnerability and risk assessments
- Developing resilience/adaptation plans, setting goals, identifying options
- Implementation tools, maintaining momentum, tracking indicators
- Monitoring, measuring and communication techniques

Ecosystem services

- Defining urban biodiversity, understanding multi-jurisdictional roles and responsibilities
- Biodiversity assessments, policies and indicators
- Local action mechanisms – urban planning & design, regulation, etc.
- Green infrastructure opportunity identification and development
- Strengthening the connections between ecosystems and resilience planning

Low carbon development

- Low carbon development strategies, policies and plans
- Sustainable public procurement for low carbon cities
- Innovative finance mechanisms
- Political targets
- Implementation tools, maintaining momentum, tracking indicators
- Monitoring and verification processes

- Stakeholder engagement

The trip to Spain and Estonia was very educational and strengthened Halifax relationships not only with Tallinn, but also with other participating Canadian and European cities. A PowerPoint presentation will be given at the January meeting of the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee to illustrate some of the key findings and possible opportunities from this initiative.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement was not required for the completion of this report.

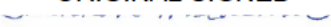
ATTACHMENTS

None.

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

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