

HALIFAX

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Item No. 9

Halifax Regional Council
September 1, 2020

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed by 
Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: August 6, 2020

SUBJECT: Halifax Covid-19 Economic Response and Recovery Plan Update

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

April 2, 2020: Moved by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Cleary, that Halifax Regional Council directs that:

1. Halifax Partnership be designated to lead the development of a plan to address post COVID-19 economic recovery in Halifax Regional Municipality, and;
2. This plan will be presented via the Chief Administrative Officer to Regional Council for consideration, and;
3. A staff report is prepared to determine a source of funding and a regular reporting schedule in consultation with Halifax Partnership and municipal staff.

May 12, 2020: MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Nicoll, that Halifax Regional Council approves the Halifax COVID-19 economic response and recovery plan presented by Halifax Partnership May 12, 2020, and further directs that \$75,000 be approved to fund the Halifax Partnership's response and recovery plan activities.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The Halifax Regional Municipality Charter 2008, c. 39, s. 2:

The purpose of this Act is to (a) give broad authority to the Council, including broad authority to pass by-laws, and respect its right to govern the Municipality in whatever ways the Council considers appropriate within the jurisdiction given to it; (b) enhance the ability of the Council to respond to present and future issues in the Municipality; and (c) recognize the purposes of the Municipality set out in Section 7A.

Under Section 71, Business and industrial development, the Municipality may:

- (a) solicit and encourage the establishment and development of new, and the establishment, development and expansion of existing institutions, industries and businesses in and around the Municipality;
- (b) publicize the advantages of the Municipality or any part of the Municipality and the surrounding areas as a location for the establishment and expansion of institutions, industries and businesses;
- (c) pay grants to a body corporate for the purpose of promoting the Municipality or any part of the Municipality and the surrounding areas as a location for institutions, industries and businesses;
- (d) prepare and disseminate information about the Municipality or any part of the Municipality and the surrounding areas for the assistance of institutions, industries and businesses intending to locate or expand in the Municipality or the surrounding area.

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

In May 2020, at Regional Council's direction, the Halifax Partnership began developing a Halifax COVID-19 Economic Response and Recovery Plan (ERRP). Created in consultation with key economic development stakeholders, the plan outlines 38 actions HRM and the Partnership will undertake to weather the urgent health crisis, prepare to restart and rebuild the economy when conditions allow, and return to Halifax's long-term growth trend and chart a path forward for a stronger, more resilient municipality.

Partnership CEO Wendy Luther and the CAO presented an update on the plan's development on April 2, 2020. Regional Council approved the plan on July 7, 2020. The ERRP replaces the Economic Growth Plan 2016-21 as the Partnership's core reporting document to Council.

The following are some highlights the Partnership has undertaken to respond to the urgent needs of residents and businesses during the crisis:

- **COVID-19 Business Supports and Virtual Advisor Program.** Since March, the Partnership's Business Retention and Expansion team has connected one-on-one with more than 500 businesses to offer help in navigating private and public sector COVID-19 resources. It also began adding COVID-19 resources and support information to the [Halifax Partnership website](#) which was updated daily as new funding programs and services were announced. As of June 30, the COVID-19 Resources, Economic Response & Recovery Plan, and Reopening Your Business webpages had been viewed more than 6,000 times by 3,800 unique visitors. The organization continues to add and promote resources for businesses including a newly-created COVID-19 Prevention Plan template to help businesses safely resume operations. It and HRM also sit on weekly calls of the Halifax Chamber of Commerce-chaired Nova Scotia Business Labour and Economic Coalition that identifies and addresses pandemic-related business issues.

The Partnership launched the Virtual Advisor Program in May. Powered by employment technology provider Boomers Plus, the program will match up to 25 companies with a seasoned professional to help solve a unique COVID-19-related business challenge. Fourteen companies are currently enrolled in the program.

- **Connector Program and Other Labour Supports.** The Connector Program, funded by the Province of Nova Scotia and RBC, has transitioned exclusively to online. The Connector Team also delivered practical digital networking skills sessions to more than 120 individuals through the ISANS Engineer Bridging Program, EduNova's current Study and Stay Cohort, and Dalhousie's School of Management.

The Partnership launched the 2020 edition of the *Guide to Hiring Youth* on the Partnership's website to promote incentive and development programs to employers hiring youth. The Guide is being promoted through digital marketing with the Partnership's media partner, Saltwire, and through the Partnership's communications channels. The Partnership also created an online article promoting the 100 per cent funding available for hiring summer co-op students.

- **Buy Local.** Halifax Partnership's Marketing and Communication team is working closely with the Halifax Regional Municipality, Discover Halifax, Develop NS, the Halifax Chamber of Commerce, and the Province of Nova Scotia to boost consumer and business confidence through initiatives such as the "Heart. Soul. Halifax" and "Buy Halifax" marketing campaigns.
- **Halifax Index.** On June 23, the Halifax Partnership launched the [Halifax Index 2020](#) to measure and report on progress made in 2019 and to identify the initial economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Up-to-date labour and economic statistics can be found on the Partnership's [Economic Dashboard](#).
- **Investment Attraction.** The Partnership's Business Development team continues to sell Halifax as a location for business expansion. Between April 1 and July 30, in partnership with Nova Scotia Business Inc., the team had nine "wins" for Halifax. They include: Shopify, currently ranked by RBC as Canada's most valuable company, which is hiring 100 employees to work remotely from Nova Scotia; Arcurve, a software development company headquartered in Calgary with offices in Houston and Vancouver; and, NorthBay Solutions, a Boston-based technology company.

The following are some highlights HRM has undertaken to respond to the urgent needs of residents during the crisis:

- **Assistance to vulnerable communities.** HRM is assisting vulnerable communities by maintaining and enhancing support for programs and initiatives that address food security, discrimination, substance mis-use, homelessness, and domestic abuse.

Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency's Emergency Management Division (EMD) is working with Joint Emergency Management Teams and Community Mobilization Teams to support public health measures. Masks are being provided to homeless shelters and outside water resources are being provided to vulnerable populations in partnership with Halifax Public Libraries and Halifax Water. Meanwhile, the African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office (ANSAIO) is part of the North Preston Pandemic Response Committee which provides pandemic-related outreach and communications. ANSAIO's work with this group is supported by HRFE/EMD, Public Safety Office (PSO), and Corporate Communications.

HRM developed an emergency food response and redeployed YouthLive to the Mobile Food Market to address the loss of market volunteers. Since March 23, 2020, the market has distributed: 4,200 produce packs; 1,100 emergency food hampers with enough food for a week for a family of four; and, \$32,500 in grocery gift cards.

PSO is working with the Nova Scotia Health Authority and the IWK to scope the development of a municipal drug strategy, and it is assessing the feasibility of establishing Managed Alcohol Programs and Sobering Centres in the municipality, as per a Council motion approved earlier this year.

An internal social policy working group at HRM has been established to coordinate this work.

- **Parking.** In March, the municipality waived parking fees at all its meters and suspended the enforcement of hourly and monthly permit parking. Collections resumed on June 1, 2020. Staff has also worked with businesses to provide for short-term loading and parking to accommodate the shift in mobile food orders and deliveries.
- **Interim tax bill.** In April, the municipality provided immediate relief to both residential and business taxpayers by moving the interim tax bill due date from April 30, 2020 to June 1, 2020 and lowering the interest rate on late payments. Staff continue to work with individuals and businesses who are

having difficulty paying property taxes. This may include creating payment plans to make tax payments more manageable.

- **Recast budget.** Regional Council's revised 2020-21 municipal budget, approved in June, is meant to strike a balance between stimulating the economy and being fiscally responsible. The total operating budget is \$955 million. The budget increases the average tax bill by 1.4% -- in line with Regional Council's intention prior to the Coronavirus pandemic. With carry-over projects from last year, \$208 million in capital spending will take place in 2020-21.
- **Sidewalk patio fees.** Regional Council waived sidewalk patio fees to help restaurants and cafes – businesses that have been hit particularly hard by the pandemic.
- **Mobility Response Plan.** The municipality launched its Mobility Response Plan to adapt public spaces and municipal transportation networks in order to safely move residents and goods as the municipality re-opens. Sidewalks have been expanded, streets have been closed to vehicles to accommodate larger sidewalk patios, and 16 km of “slow streets” have been installed to create more space for people to walk, roll, and cycle.
- **Online services.** Planning and Development, with ICT support, created a process which allows businesses and residents to apply and pay for their permit, subdivision and planning applications online. The review and approval process is completely digital and approved permits are issued electronically. HRM has also added the same technology and business processes for zoning confirmation requests. This new electronic submission process is considered interim until the implementation of the new Permitting, Planning, Licensing & Compliance software solution (PPLC Project), expected in late fall 2020.

Meanwhile, Parks and Recreation has launched “Rec at Home” – a suite of online programs from arts and crafts to at-home workouts to help residents of all ages to stay active while following public health measures – and Regional Council has approved procedures for Virtual Public Hearings. The procedures for Virtual Public Hearings are outlined in Schedule 1 of Administrative Order 2020-009-ADM Respecting COVID-19.

- **Re-opening of municipal sites and services.** All HRM parks, trails, and park assets (e.g. sport fields, ball diamonds, playgrounds, public washrooms) are open to the public. HRM recreation centres and indoor pools are being re-opened in phases and day camps are being offered at some sites. Halifax Transit is increasing service levels in a phased approach while continuing to follow public health guidelines. From the outset, many safety measures have been initiated to keep operators and passengers safe on buses and ferries. In July, Halifax Transit began installing temporary polycarbonate shields next to operators on conventional buses to help reduce the spread of the virus. Fare collections on buses and ferries, which had been suspended since March 18, 2020, resumed on August 1, 2020.
- **Infrastructure.** HRM is working with the province and the federal government regarding the need for cost-sharing shovel-ready infrastructure projects. In addition to proceeding with Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) capital projects approved prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, HRM has submitted ICIP applications for four separate infrastructure projects: Rapid Transit Strategy, Electric Bus Proposal, East Preston Active Transportation Facility, and Mineville Road Shoulder Paving.
- **Communications.** In support of efforts to mitigate the health crisis and promote economic recovery, HRM's Corporate Communications team developed and delivered extensive communications initiatives to inform residents and staff about municipal efforts in response to the impacts of COVID-19. Efforts included:

- Launched halifax.ca/coronavirus webpage on March 13, 2020 which continues to be updated regularly with the latest information about the status of municipal services, public health messaging, etc. (231,127 total pageviews; 197,431 unique pageviews)
- “Apart. Together.” awareness campaign with ads on buses, dailies and community papers, social media, digital screens, etc.
- Hosted 10 media briefings with Mayor Mike Savage, Chief Administrative Officer Jacques Dubé, Assistant Chief of Emergency Management, Erica Fleck and other senior staff at the Emergency Operation Centre between March 16 to May 25, 2020
- Internal communications efforts range from regular all-staff messages from the CAO and updates via the employee intranet to support for HRM’s COVID-19 Task Force focused on employees returning to work.
- Participation on the Halifax Economic Recovery Marketing Working Group, with partners including Halifax Partnership, Discover Halifax, Develop Nova Scotia, Halifax Chamber of Commerce and the Province of Nova Scotia

The Partnership presentation accompanying this report will provide additional information, including the state of Halifax’s economy.

Attachment 1 provides detailed updates on the implementation of each of the ERRP’s actions.

NEXT STEPS

The Partnership and HRM staff will provide ongoing updates to Regional Council on the plan’s implementation. HRM and Partnership staff will seek direction from Regional Council regarding the development of a new five-year economic strategy.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The \$75,000 funding for the Halifax COVID-19 economic response and recovery plan activities is available in the approved operating budget in account E121 – 8004.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Economic development stakeholders and HRM business units were engaged in the plan’s creation. There was no community engagement in the development of this report.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Halifax Economic Response and Recovery Plan: Updates by Action

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

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Halifax COVID-19 Economic Response and Recovery Plan

Help the Halifax economy and community to:


- Weather the crisis during its current phase
- Prepare to restart and rebuild when conditions allow
- **Get back to our long-term growth trend and chart a path forward for a stronger, more resilient City.**


Guiding Principles:

- Follow the advice of our healthcare experts
- Leverage our teams, expertise, data, and networks
- Pursue alignment among all three orders of government
- Work with the Nova Scotia Business Labour Economic Coalition (NSBLEC)
- Engage and collaborate with our local stakeholders
(HRM staff, Halifax Partnership Investors, Discover Halifax, Events East, BIDs, chambers, associations, universities and colleges, etc.)
- Act nimbly and creatively with clear purpose
 - Build resiliency

Phase	Context	Proposed Actions (some actions will carry over Phases)	Lead
 <p>Phase 1: Current Urgent Health</p> <p>Objective: Follow public health directives and respond to the urgent needs of businesses and residents</p> <p>Timing: Safely move to Phase II based on Public Health Directives from the Province of Nova Scotia</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lockdowns here and across much of the world Case counts still rising; major concern over disease spread Business shutdowns, mass layoffs, liquidity and income crisis Real possibility of severe operational impacts on critical operations Historic economic stimulus required and now available 	<p>1. Ensure Municipal financial liquidity.</p> <p>To address the COVID-related shortfall in revenues, HRM's budget was adjusted and approved in June. After being reduced by \$45 million, the total operating budget is now \$955 million. The capital work plan was decreased by about \$100 million resulting in a new capital budget of \$150 million. Considerable uncertainty remains and in order to remain liquid, it is recommended that HRM borrow up to \$130M from the Nova Scotia Municipal Finance Corporation's short-term borrowing program designed to assist municipalities with cashflow during Covid.</p> <p>2. Protect residents by supporting Public Health Authority measures through outreach, communications, support, services, and penalties.</p> <p>Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency's Emergency Management Division (EMD) is working with Joint Emergency Management Teams (JEMS) and Community Mobilization Teams (CMTs) to communicate COVID-19 precautions as well as working with homeless shelters to provide masks. Also partnering with Halifax Public Libraries and Halifax Water to provide outside water sources for vulnerable populations during COVID-19 and the hurricane season.</p> <p>African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office (ANSAIO) has been working with various ANS groups to build stronger outreach across the community. Specifically, the ANSAIO has been involved with the North Preston COVID Response Team (which has now evolved into the North Preston Pandemic Response Committee) to provide community information with the support of HRFE/EMD, Public Safety Office (PSO) and Corporate Communications. Collaborative efforts included the development and distribution of COVID-19 awareness postcards and driving around the North Preston community in a firetruck to communicate public health information.</p> <p>3. Maintain essential services.</p> <p>From the outset of the pandemic, all essential services of the municipality – including 311, fire and police – remained operational and adhered to the most updated guidance and precautions from health officials. On March 27, 2020, the Province of Nova Scotia designated Halifax Transit an essential service under the provincial state of emergency. The municipality committed to delivering the highest level of public transit service that can be reasonably provided – while also continuing to take steps that help minimize the spread of COVID-19 and make buses and ferries as safe an environment as possible under the circumstances.</p> <p>4. Ensure prompt payment to vendors and suppliers to help with immediate cashflow needs.</p> <p>HRM continues to ensure prompt payment to vendors and suppliers to help with immediate cash flow needs.</p> <p>5. Assist vulnerable communities by maintaining and enhancing support for programs and initiatives that address food insecurity, discrimination, substance mis-use, homelessness and domestic abuse.</p> <p>HRM is assisting vulnerable communities by maintaining and enhancing support for programs and initiatives that address food security, discrimination, substance mis-use, homelessness, and domestic abuse.</p> <p>EMD is working with JEMS and CMTs to support public health measures. Masks are being provided to homeless shelters and outside water resources are being provided to vulnerable populations in partnership with Halifax Public Libraries and Halifax Water. Meanwhile, ANSAIO is part of the North Preston Pandemic Response Committee which provides pandemic-related outreach and communications. ANSAIO's work with this group is supported by HRFE/EMD, PSO and Corporate Communications.</p> <p>PSO led the inventory and mapping of HRM (and Halifax Public Libraries) washroom facilities. This information is available on the Public Safety Office webpage on halifax.ca. A widget on the map also enables users to locate the washroom nearest to them. Plans are underway to release these data sets via Open Data. HRM also facilitated the provision of two temporary public washrooms (one accessible) and a handwashing station at the Halifax Central Library from May 19-July 5. Menstrual products, naloxone kits and snack packs were available to patrons.</p> <p>HRM is leveraging its work on the CMTs to maintain support for vulnerable communities by providing resources, public health messaging, PPE, food security. CMT work to date includes: bi-weekly CMT meetings for community check-ins; connecting those in need to resources and services through CMTs; a physical distancing contest in the Prestons; creation of community profiles and a pandemic asset map; Mobile Food Market support; and, a digital storytelling pilot project in Mulgrave Park to maintain social connection.</p> <p>HRM developed an emergency food response and redeployed YouthLive to the Mobile Food Market to address the loss of market volunteers. Since March 23rd, 2020, the market has distributed: 4,200 produce packs; 1,100 emergency food hampers with enough food for a week for a family of 4; and, \$32,500 in grocery gift cards and have reach 39 of the 42 Metro Regional Housing Authority seniors buildings. In June 2020, HRM supported residents in growing food at home through distributing veggie seeds, garden packs, container gardens and simple planting guides to more than 700 households throughout the municipality. These supports were distributed in partnership with FeedNS and HRM's YouthLive, Parks & Recreation, Halifax Public Libraries and CMTs. The gardening supports were a soft launch of JustFOOD: action plan for the Halifax region, introducing residents to the plan and inviting them to a survey and storytelling campaign to share their food experiences during COVID-19. This will inform the plan's implementation and future emergency responses.</p> <p>PSO is working with the Nova Scotia Health Authority and the IWK to scope the development of a municipal drug strategy and is assessing the feasibility of establishing Managed Alcohol Programs and Sobering Centres in the municipality, as per a Council motion approved earlier this year. PSO continues to liaise nationally with members of both the Canadian Municipal Crime Prevention Network and UN Women Safe Cities to understand how pandemic exacerbates existing vulnerabilities, and generate evidence on best practices on municipal responses to heightened vulnerabilities.</p> <p>In May 2020, HRM Regional Council approved HRM's Social Policy. Due to the current COVID crisis, the initial implementation of the social policy has shifted to focus on coordinating a municipal response to social issues resulting from the COVID crisis. A social policy team consisting of internal staff from multiple business units has been created to guide and organize this work, assist with decision making, provide future direction, identify important connections with partners, and support the alignment of programs and services both internally and externally during the pandemic and its after effects.</p> <p>6. Facilitate /advocate for rapid testing among vulnerable communities and HRM essential staff.</p> <p>EMD works daily with Nova Scotia Public Health and 811 to obtain rapid testing for all essential employees in HRM. EMD continues to work with vulnerable communities on messaging for COVID-19. HRM has produced an ad in multiple languages encouraging people to use 311 to access the latest information about municipal services.</p> <p>ANSAIO worked with the North Preston COVID-19 Response Team, the Health Association for African Canadians and the Association of Black Social Workers to continue to bring awareness to the community about the need for testing, promoting the community testing centres, ensuring that quarantine and isolation regulations are maintained. Through the support of EMD, community members were also transported safely to designated isolated sites outside of the community.</p> <p>7. Offer virtual opportunities for recreation and promoting well-being.</p> <p>Virtual opportunities have been ongoing since the onset of the pandemic and HRM will continue to offer into the future even as traditional programming resumes. "Rec at Home" initiative – includes activities for families and children, summer virtual youth programs, fitness classes via Sackville Sport Stadium, etc.</p> <p>8. Move core HRM business services online (e.g. permit applications and approvals online).</p> <p>Planning & Development, with ICT support, created an electronic application submission process which utilizes online, email and telephone components. This process allows businesses and residents to apply and pay for their permit, subdivision and planning applications. The review and approval process is now completely digital and approved permits are issued by electronically. The process was implemented and published via halifax.ca on March 25, one week after the State of Emergency was announced and HRM in-person customer service counters closed. Shortly after the initial process was launched, HRM added the same technology and business processes for zoning confirmation requests. This new electronic submission process is considered interim until the implementation of the new Permitting, Planning, Licensing & Compliance software solution (PPLC Project), expected in late fall 2020.</p> <p>Parks & Recreation has launched "Rec at Home" initiative, a suite of online programs from arts and crafts to at-home workouts to help residents of all ages to stay active while following public health measures.</p> <p>As part of the collective effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19, Regional Council has approved procedures for Virtual Public Hearings. The procedures for Virtual Public Hearings are outlined in Schedule 1 of Administrative Order 2020-009-ADM Respecting COVID-19.</p>	<p>Halifax Regional Municipality</p>

Phase	Context	Proposed Actions (some actions will carry over Phases)		Lead
		9. Communicate COVID-19 assistance programs, services, and other resources available to business through the Partnership's website and other channels.	In mid-March, Halifax Partnership began adding COVID-19 resources and support information to the website which was updated daily as new funding programs and services were announced. As of June 30, the COVID-19 Resources, Economic Response & Recovery Plan, and Reopening Your Business webpages have been viewed more than 6,000 times by 3,800 unique visitors. The organization continues to add and promote resources for businesses including a newly-created COVID-19 Prevention Plan template to help businesses safely resume operations.	Halifax Partnership
		10. Consult with companies one-on-one and connect them to resources to address their most pressing needs.	Halifax Partnership's team directly connected one-on-one with 500+ businesses to offer assistance to navigate private and public sector COVID resources. It launched a Virtual Adviser program with 14 companies now working directly with business experts to resolve COVID-related business issues.	
		11. Create an online COVID-19 Government Assistance Tool for business to determine their eligibility and communicate how they can access government supports.	An online tool for businesses was launched on the Halifax Partnership's COVID-19 Resources webpage on April 29 connecting those with questions to the organization's SmartBusiness team. A link to this resource has been provided on HRM's webpage regarding municipal efforts to address the impacts of COVID-19 (halifax.ca/coronavirus).	
		12. With partners, match employers' urgent employment needs with students, immigrants and others looking for work (e.g. refocus the Halifax Connector Program and the mobile Connector App to respond to needs).	The Connector Program, funded by the Province of Nova Scotia and RBC, has transitioned exclusively to online and demand remains high. The Connector Team also delivered practical digital networking skills sessions to more than 120 individuals through ISANS Engineer Bridging Program, EduNova's current Study and Stay Cohort, and Dalhousie's School of Management.	
		13. Create an online tool for job seekers to determine willingness and eligibility to work in sectors across Nova Scotia that are experiencing immediate labour demand (e.g. agriculture, fish processing).	On May 20, the Partnership launched a labour market initiative to connect businesses in agriculture, fish processing, and transportation and logistics with access to a pool of job seekers. Twenty-three submissions from job seekers were received.	
		14. Promote summer jobs to students looking for work and the new 100% wage incentives for businesses looking to hire a summer student.	The Partnership launched the 2020 edition of the Guide to Hiring Youth on the Partnership's website to promote youth hiring incentive and development programs to employers. The Guide is being promoted through digital marketing with the Partnership's media partner, Saltwire, and through the Partnership's communications channels. The Partnership also created an online article promoting the 100% funding available for hiring summer co-op students (launched May 25, received 300 views).	
		15. With BIDs, Discover Halifax, rural partners, and others, help develop a Buy Local program to boost consumers' willingness to spend.	Halifax Partnership's Marketing and Communication Team is working closely with a number of partners to boost consumer and business confidence through initiatives such as the Heart. Soul. Halifax and Buy Halifax recovery campaigns which encourage residents and visitors to vacation here, buy here and enjoy Halifax. Participating partners on the Halifax Economic Recovery Marketing Working Group include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discover Halifax • Halifax Regional Municipality • Develop Nova Scotia • Halifax Chamber of Commerce, and the • Province of Nova Scotia 	
		16. Celebrate and share good news stories of local companies responding to the crisis.	Halifax Partnership efforts include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participated in national #CanadaResilient campaign through partner Invest in Canada, showcasing stories of resiliency and innovation in Halifax. The hashtag #CanadaResilient was shared 47 times by Halifax Partnership and Halifax Innovation District on Twitter. These posts resulted in a total of 41,768 impressions. • Profiled Halifax Partnership investors with four written good news stories focused on reopening operations in Halifax (Beaumont & Co., Halifax Chamber of Commerce, Workers Compensation Board and Cox & Palmer have been featured). • Amplification of six written good news stories on the Partnership's LinkedIn channel resulting in 3327 impressions. • Creation of two written good news stories featuring SmartBusiness clients who have shown resiliency and innovation during COVID-19. • Featured in two profiles by the Global Institute of Innovation Districts and Brookings Institute, a global leader in innovation on web and social. • Published a monthly Innovation District roundup covering April, May and June featuring good news stories from startups, scaleups, support organizations and corporates in the District during COVID-19. • Followed RFQ process for creation of video success stories, with creative concept finalized. Expecting a fall content distribution date. 	
		17. Identify and address with partners the immediate economic development issues of traditionally marginalized groups.	Halifax Partnership's Director of Capacity Building & Strategic Initiatives, African Nova Scotia Communities, worked with several community groups during the crisis phase to support and help navigate available resources and connections.	
		18. Monitor and report on economic and labour market statistics.	On June 23, the Halifax Partnership launched the Halifax Index for 2020 to measure and report on progress made in 2019 and to identify the initial economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Index can be found here: https://halifaxpartnership.com/research-strategy/halifax-index-2020/ Up to date labour and economic stats can be found on the Economic Dashboard at https://halifaxpartnership.com/research-strategy/economic-dashboard/	

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		19. Advise all orders of government on policy changes that could assist businesses during the crisis.	Halifax Partnership and HRM sit as members of the Nova Scotia Business & Labour economic Coalition (NSBLEC). Established in mid-March, it is a forum for all three orders of government, businesses, employee organizations, and industry associations to identify and address COVID-related issues. NSBLEC meets weekly. This group represents over 10,000 organizations and 200,000 employees.	
 <p>Phase 2: Stabilization Getting Back to Business</p> <p>Objective: Support business planning for reopening or resuming full operations; prepare for Public Health restrictions if COVID-19 surges</p> <p>Timing: Safely move to Phase III based on Public Health Directives from the Province of Nova Scotia</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with governments and other stakeholders on possible reopening scenarios. Share governments' communications with businesses to help them do their own planning. Collaborate with under-served community leaders and organizations to assess business and consumer needs and develop plans for reopening. Work with other economic development organizations to align plans, initiatives and resources: Discover Halifax, Events East, the Business Improvement Districts, Dept. of Business, Develop NS, NSBI, BBI and others. 	<p>20. Temporarily adapt transportation networks in high pedestrian areas, where feasible, to respond to provincial health directives</p> <p>21. Re-assess, advocate for, and proceed with key infrastructure projects that stimulate the economy and address climate change.</p> <p>22. Take advantage of provincial and federal stimulus funding opportunities that align with the Municipality's priorities.</p> <p>23. Identify and address immediate and critical regulatory needs so businesses can resume operations.</p> <p>24. Re-open and adapt municipal sites, buildings, and non-essential services in accordance with emergency and public health measures, changing fiscal circumstances, municipal climate change targets, and new user needs.</p> <p>25. Provide companies with a diagnostic tool to develop detailed plans for returning to work based on key considerations: virus spread, guidance from public health authorities, workforce readiness to return to work, and legal liability.</p> <p>26. Address the gap of temporary foreign workers and connect the students, immigrants, unemployed and underemployed with companies needing workers.</p> <p>27. Re-examine Halifax's value proposition for investment in light of COVID-19 impacts.</p> <p>28. Continue initiatives under the Halifax Innovation District Project and the Halifax Innovation Outpost to support startups and scaleups.</p> <p>29. Work with the BIDs to restore the dynamism of main streets.</p>	<p>As the need for physical distancing will remain in place for the foreseeable future, and as transportation patterns evolve throughout the recovery phase, the municipality is identifying required adaptations to the use of its streets, sidewalks and bike lanes. Municipal staff are actively engaged in planning temporary measures that can be deployed quickly, while also considering what will be needed over the coming months in response to Public Health directives.</p> <p>The Mobility Response Plan (www.halifax.ca/mobilityresponse) includes short, medium, and long-term actions to adapt the use of public space and municipal transportation networks. The municipality will focus on the following key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> maintaining transportation systems to safely move all residents and goods as the city reopens; keeping front-line workers safe, and actively managing and supporting both operational and remote office workforces; accommodating delivery & pick-up needs (e.g. restaurants' new delivery models); relieving crowded areas (e.g. parks and narrow sidewalks) to support health department guidance for physical distancing; and, creating clear messaging of the recovery effort as it relates to transportation. <p>Some recent actions that we have made include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> creating space to support business, loading, queuing and moving; working with the Business Improvement Districts to help find additional loading space and expanded patio space; closing Argyle Street temporarily from Blowers to Prince to vehicles and allow for expanded patios than are typically allowed; working on closing a portion of Bedford Row temporarily between Sackville and Prince to allow for restaurants to spill out into the street to expand their patios; converting Grafton from Prince to Carmichael to one way temporarily to allow for restaurants to expand their patios into the street; installing 16km of slow streets (Halifax/Dartmouth) to create space for people to move (walk, roll, cycle); temporarily expanding a sidewalk on Spring Garden to allow for more space to queue and move; creating a weekly data summary to track changes in the transportation network with respect to vehicles, pedestrians, goods movement, collisions, and cyclists; and, working on some demand management messaging to encourage the continuation of working from home, spreading the peak hour, flex hours, return to transit, cycling, etc., in alignment with the Integrated Mobility Plan. <p>In addition to proceeding with Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) capital projects approved prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, HRM has submitted ICIP applications for four separate infrastructure projects: Rapid Transit Strategy, Electric Bus Proposal, East Preston Active Transportation Facility, and Mineville Road Shoulder Paving. Staff continue to work with the province to identify and prioritize potential shovel ready ICIP projects.</p> <p>HRM has submitted several infrastructure projects for joint ICIP funding, as noted above. HRM has additionally received its portion of the Federal Gas Tax Fund for 2020/21 in one accelerated payment received in June 2020. This will allow HRM to quickly move forward with planned infrastructure projects utilizing Gas Tax funding. Staff continue to monitor new funding opportunities as they are announced.</p> <p>In summer 2020, the Joint Project for Regulatory Modernization Business Advisory Panel began consulting stakeholders to identify immediate municipal and provincial regulatory barriers to business re-opening during the COVID-19 recovery period. A rapid business impact evaluation is in development to help incorporate regulatory modernization objectives, including red-tape reduction, into short-term decision-making where efficiency and rapid analysis is needed.</p> <p>HRM recreation centres and indoor pools are being re-opened in phases and day camps are being offered at some sites. Fitness Centres: Sackville Sports Stadium Fitness Centre – July 6, 2020; Captain William Spry Fitness Centre - July 6, 2020; North Preston Fitness Centre – July 6, 2020; Musquodoboit Harbour Fitness Centre - July 6, 2020. Indoor Pools: Sackville Sports Stadium Pool – July 27, 2020; Captain William Spry Wave Pool – August 10, 2020; Needham Centre Pool – September 8, 2020. Sites offering day camps – not open to general public: Bedford Hammonds Plains Community Centre; Chocolate Lake Community Centre; Citadel Community Centre; Dartmouth North Community Centre; Tallahassee Community Centre; Gordon R Snow Community Centre; George Dixon Community Centre; Lakeside Community Centre; Needham Community Centre; Sackville Sports Stadium; Shubie Park; Captain William Spry Community Centre. Beaches (as of July 6, 2020): Birch Cove Beach, Kinap Beach, Albro Lake Beach, Lake Echo Beach, Oakfield Beach, Kearney Lake Beach, Shubie Beach, Springfield Lake Beach, Long Pond Beach, Pleasant Beach, Chocolate Lake Beach, Penhorn Beach, Cunard Beach, Saunder Beach, Campbell Point Beach, Kidston Lake Beach, Commons Pool, Sandy Lake Beach, Webbers Beach. HRM also facilitated a process to support HRM owned and community operated recreation facilities to reopen.</p> <p>The Connector Program, funded by the Province of Nova Scotia and RBC, has transitioned exclusively to online and demand remains high.</p> <p>Halifax Partnership has delivered practical digital networking skills sessions to more than 120 individuals through ISANS Engineer Bridging Program, EduNova's current Study and Stay Cohort, and Dalhousie's School of Management.</p> <p>To be developed.</p> <p>A refresh of Halifax's value proposition and Sell Halifax marketing is underway and will be completed in Q2.</p> <p>In July, the Partnership held a corporate readiness event with approximately 35 established corporates and led by the former lead for Innovation at Matel and in partnership with Volta to discuss barriers to corporate innovation and how best to connect corporates into our startup ecosystem. This will be an ongoing program. The Partnership also held a "Future of Work" session, in partnership with Manulife and Volta, to discuss our current employment landscape and the skills needed to progress. The Partnership has convened the Green Economy Action group three times to discuss how best to collaborate to build capacity and move to action around Halifax's green economy opportunities, including potential submission for federal funding under https://novascotia.ca/infrastructure-projects-reduce-greenhouse-gas-emissions/. Subsequent to confirmation from ACOA on additional funding, the Partnership is developing a path forward to help local retailers deliver products during COVID (as they have stated that delivery is a challenge). The Partnership is developing a digital storefront strategy in collaboration with startup VLIFF and has engaged with Nordicity and an advisory team to advance the music city strategy.</p> <p>Municipal staff have worked with the Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) on a range of mobility response projects including the following: (a) expanding sidewalks; (b) reducing the wait times for people to cross major streets; (c) creating temporary loading spaces for businesses; (d) closing streets to vehicular traffic; (e) designating 'slow streets' which are only open to local traffic; and (f) temporarily converting streets for one-way traffic. Details regarding these projects can be viewed at: https://www.halifax.ca/about-halifax/regional-community-planning/transportation-planning/mobilityresponse.</p> <p>The parking technology project continues and is on track to launch early fall. In the interim, and as part of the project, as meters are removed, parking is converted to temporary un-restricted parking.</p>	<p>Halifax Regional Municipality</p> <p>Halifax Partnership</p> <p>Halifax Regional Municipality & Halifax Partnership</p>

Phase	Context	Proposed Actions (some actions will carry over Phases)		Lead
 <p>Phase 3: Recovery Open for Business</p> <p>Objective: Support businesses in resuming full operations; build local business and consumer confidence; ramp up national and international investment attraction</p> <p>Timing: Ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People are once again free to work, study, socialize, buy, sell, and travel • Investors are ready to once again deploy capital • While their finances will need some repairs, governments have moved beyond fiscal and monetary crisis mode • Some degree of normalcy returns to other jurisdictions; exports, imports, tourism, etc. begin to resume 	<p>30. Identify, maintain, and enhance municipal processes adopted during the crisis that are both viable and of benefit to businesses and residents in the long-term.</p>	<p>P&D Building and Compliance division worked with industry to create an on-site process where buildings under construction would be cleared of workers to ensure physical distancing while inspections took place. As a result, the division was able to continue to provide building-related services, including mandatory inspections. The construction industry provided input to site practices and was kept apprised through regular conference calls with staff. HRFE Fire Prevention continues to prioritize requests from the business community. This includes applications for liquor licenses, occupant loads and sidewalk cafés, which have increased due to the opening of outdoor venues.</p>	Halifax Regional Municipality
		<p>31. Address the climate change emergency in the context of COVID-19, taking advantage of the opportunity to transition to a carbon-neutral economy by 2050.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On June 23, 2020, Regional Council unanimously approved HalIFACT 2050, Halifax's climate strategy from now until 2050. This approval included a commitment to net-zero municipal operations by 2030. • Staff continue to work with provincial partners to understand possible green economic recovery funding opportunities. 	
		<p>32. Identify and address new regulatory challenges and opportunities for active government response given the changed business landscape.</p>	<p>Beginning in fall 2020, HRM will conduct targeted stakeholder engagement to further align Regulatory Modernization objectives with ERFP outcomes by identifying regulatory issues for medium- and longer-term economic recovery and growth, and establishing a priority regulatory change action plan for delivery in 2021-2022.</p>	
		<p>33. Launch business and consumer confidence campaigns.</p>	<p>See action #15.</p>	Halifax Partnership
		<p>34. Accelerate Investment Attraction and FDI.</p>	<p>Halifax Partnership's Business Development Team continues to Sell Halifax as a location for business expansion. Between April 1 and July 30, in partnership with Nova Scotia Business Inc., the team had nine wins for Halifax. Three examples include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shopify - currently ranked by RBC as Canada's most valuable company. Although not setting up a bricks and mortar operation at this time, they are hiring over 100 employees to work remotely from Nova Scotia. 2. Arcurve - a software development company, Headquartered in Calgary with offices in Houston, Vancouver and now Halifax. 3. NorthBay Solutions – A Boston based tech company. 	
		<p>35. Consolidate lessons learned from our initial responses to the pandemic to help prepare businesses for future shut-downs.</p>	<p>To be developed.</p>	
		<p>36. Re-assess how best to grow Halifax's population based on changes in migration (international students, newcomers) patterns.</p>	<p>To be developed.</p>	
		<p>37. Identify and capitalize on specific sector initiatives, opportunities and projects that have emerged as a result of the crisis.</p>	<p>To be developed.</p>	
		<p>38. Update long-term economic projections for the private sector's and HRM's planning purposes.</p>	<p>To be developed.</p>	Halifax Regional Municipality & Halifax Partnership