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Item No. 15.1.8
Halifax Regional Council
April 4, 2023

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed

Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: March 28, 2023

SUBJECT: **Endorsement of 2023-26 ANS Road to Economic Prosperity Plan**

ORIGIN

Staff-initiated.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, S.N.S. 2008, c. 39, section 7A, subsections 70(1)(b)(c), 71(1) and 79A (1)(a) provide:

7A The purposes of the Municipality are to

- (a) provide good government
- (b) provide services, facilities, and other things that, in the opinion of the Council, are necessary or desirable for all or part of the Municipality; and
- (c) develop and maintain safe and viable communities

70 (1) The Municipality may

- (b) pay grants to a body corporate for the purpose of promoting or beautifying a business district and for airport, wharf, or waterfront development;
- (c) identify and promote a business district as a place for retail and commercial activity;

71 (1) 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.

79A (1) Subject to subsections (2) to (4), the Municipality may only spend money for municipal purposes if

- (a) the expenditure is included in the Municipality's operating budget or capital budget or is otherwise authorized by the Municipality;

RECOMMENDATION ON PAGE 2

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council:

1. Endorse the 2023-26 African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity Plan (REPP) as set out in Attachment A of this staff report;
2. Endorse the CAO's inclusion of \$365,000 (net HST included) in each of the 2023/24, 2024/25, and 2025/26 annual budget processes, as part of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion budget, to fund the Halifax Partnership to manage Years 3-5 of the REPP's implementation; and,
3. Direct the CAO to develop and execute a services agreement with the Halifax Partnership to ensure accountability.

BACKGROUND

For generations, African Nova Scotians have advocated for unity and prosperity, and have remained committed to building and maintaining their community by carrying each other's challenges and solving them together.

Developed and led by community, the African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity Plan (REPP) is a five-year economic development strategy that aims to address systemic issues and improve the economic and quality of life outcomes for African Nova Scotians. The Halifax Partnership (the Partnership) and the African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office (ANSAIO) undertook two years of focused community engagement to develop the plan. Regional Council endorsed the [Road to Economic Prosperity for African Nova Scotian Communities: Summary Report and Action Plan](#) on September 22, 2020.

The Road to Economic Prosperity Advisory Council (REPAC), with the Elder and Youth Councils and the REP working groups, provide leadership, oversight, and strategic guidance in developing and implementing the Plan. The councils and working groups are comprised of representatives from each Black community in the Halifax Region and organizations involved in economic development or capacity building in the community.

REPP has three strategic priorities and six objectives as outlined below.

1. Build unity and capacity among African Nova Scotians.	
1.1 Increase alignment and collaboration among African Nova Scotian communities and partners to create transparency and collective success.	1.2 Build community to mobilize and lead the implementation of the Road to Economic Prosperity Action Plan.
2. Establish land ownership, develop infrastructure, and attract investment.	
2.1 Address historic and current issues related to land ownership and environmental racism.	2.2 Revitalize ANS communities through investment and development.
2.3 Explore international economic and cultural opportunities.	
3. Increase participation in education, employment, and entrepreneurship.	
3.1 Increase labour force attachment for African Nova Scotians.	3.2 Increase entrepreneurship opportunities in ANS communities.

These priorities and objectives are supported by 30 actions to be implemented in 2021/22 and 2022/23.

Each action is led by HRM, the Partnership, the Province of Nova Scotia, REPAC, the Black Business Initiative (BBI), or ANS communities themselves.

Council disbursed \$182,500 (net HST included) in 2021/22 and \$182,500 (net HST included) in 2022/23 to the Partnership to implement the Plan.

HRM staff reported updates on the plan's implementation to Regional Council in [June 2021](#) and [May 2022](#). In [September 2022](#), ANSAIO and Halifax Partnership staff, with REPAC co-chairs, Irvine Carvery and Dolly Williams, presented an update to the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee. [A summary progress report to community](#) was released in October 2022.

Recent REP highlights include: the hosting of the second annual Community Summit in October; the unanimous Regional Council approval zoning changes for Upper Hammonds Plains; Regional Council approval in November for the Mayor to write to the Minister of Municipal Affairs requesting that the power to develop, enter into and enforce Community Benefit Agreements be added to the HRM Charter; creation of a community-based Upper Hammonds Plains Strategic Plan; an updated community-based Beechville Strategic Plan; and, updates to the [ANS Well-being and Prosperity Index](#).

Another update to Regional Council on the plan's implementation is planned to coincide with this staff report.

DISCUSSION

As mentioned, the REPP includes three goals and five objectives, all of which are in effect for the entire five years of the plan (2021-26). Years one and two of REPP included 30 actions.

Attachment 1 lists the proposed 31 actions for years three-to-five, of which 24 are either unchanged or only slightly modified. Added actions include:

1. Create a community-focused, five-year governance plan, based on Afrocentric principles, for capacity development and reporting for the Advisory, Elder, and Youth Councils and Working Groups.
2. Explore and consider options for a longer-term, sustainable operating model/structure that best serves ANS communities and ensures effective and efficient implementation of this Plan post 2026.
12. Work with the Municipality to consider and, where possible, incorporate Community Benefits Agreements (CBA) as part of infrastructure, capital or development projects impacting or occurring in ANS communities.
13. In collaboration with HRM's Planning & Development Team and ANSAIO, create Community Action Plans for ANS communities to support them in organizing around municipal infrastructure, land use, and legislative changes.
14. Collaborate with the Black Housing Council on the provincial ANS Housing Needs Assessment and Strategy.
15. Support the work of the National Black Community Housing Technical Resource Centre which will be housed in Nova Scotia.
22. Advocate for the Africville Heritage Trust's acquisition or use of additional lands near Africville Park.

HRM contributed \$182,500 (net HST included) to implement the REPP in each of years one and two. An annual funding request of \$365,000 (net HST included) to implement REPP in 2023/24, 2024/25, and 2025/26 is being recommended to implement REPP.

This funding will enable the Halifax Partnership to hire a 1.5 full-time equivalent staff resources to work directly with Beechville, Cherry Brook, Lake Loon, East Preston, Upper Hammonds Plains, Lucasville, and North Preston. These new resources will support REP, be actively involved in community engagement, and work closely with HRM Planning and Development staff and Office of Diversity & Inclusion/ANSAIO on Community Action Plans. Funding will help advance REP's broader community capacity and land ownership and development priorities.

With Council's approval, the CAO will develop a REPP-specific services agreement with the Partnership to ensure accountability.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The implementation of the proposed actions for Years 3-5 of REPP would cost \$365,500 in each of the 2023/24, 2024/25, and 2025/26 fiscal years. The funds have been included in the proposed 2023/24 operating budget in E401-8001.

RISK CONSIDERATION

There are no risks associated with approving the recommendation since the ANS REP Plan is a strategic initiative identified by Regional Council in its 2021-25 Strategic Plan and the proposed Years 3-5 Action Plan does not pose any additional risks. The Years 1-2 Action Plan that was approved by Council in 2020.

If the recommendation is not approved, there is a high risk that the expectations and mandate of Regional Council would not be met and that HRM would not provide the sound decision-making and adequate resources needed to address issues in African Nova Scotian communities as identified by community. It would also weaken HRM's reputation in the African Nova Scotian communities it serves.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

All proposed actions were developed in consultation with The Halifax Partnership, REP representatives, ANSAIO, and constructed upon years 1-2 action plan that was built with community.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The ANS REP has five five-year objectives, one of which is Objective 2.1, "Address historic and current issues related to land ownership and environmental racism." It is supported by an HRM and Partnership commitment to, "identify and prioritize the remediation of government-owned contaminated sites in ANS communities" (action #17 in the 1-2 Year Action Plan and proposed 3-5 Year Action Plan).

ALTERNATIVES

Regional Council could choose to:

1. Not endorse Years 3-5 of the ANS REP Plan and not provide funding.
2. Endorse Years 3-5 of the ANS REP Plan and support its implementation with a different budget amount.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Proposed 2023-2026 REPP Actions

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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STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1 – BUILD UNITY AND CAPACITY AMONG AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIANS

5 Year Objectives	Years 3-5 Actions	Lead(s)	Expected Outcomes
<p>1.1 Increase alignment and collaboration among African Nova Scotian communities and partners to create transparency and collective success</p>	<p>1. Create a community-focused, five-year governance plan, based on Africentric principles, for capacity development and reporting for the Advisory, Elder, and Youth Councils and Working Groups. (NEW)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity (ANS REP) (includes Advisory Council, Youth Council and Elder Council) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Five-year Capacity Building Governance Plan approved, and progress tracked Regular reporting to HRM, Province of Nova Scotia, sponsors, and ANS communities
	<p>2. Explore and consider options for a longer-term, sustainable operating model/structure that best serves ANS communities and ensures effective and efficient implementation of this Plan post 2026. (NEW)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANS REP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By 2025, recommendations for longer-term operating model shared with community and funders Results incorporated in post 2026 plans
	<p>3. Bring ANS communities together to celebrate and share best practices and lessons learned.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANS REP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing at the Annual Community Summit and Conference
	<p>4. Report annually on the Road to Economic Prosperity Action Plan, assessing progress and success against outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANS REP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Progress Report presented at Annual Community Summit & Conference
	<p>5. Recognize and promote the historic legacy and value of ANS communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANS REP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legacy brochure and interactive online resources updated
	<p>6. Develop, and publish annually, <i>The African Nova Scotian Prosperity and Well-being Index – an information source of annual data on the state of African Nova Scotian economic and community progress.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANS REP and Halifax Partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual ANS Prosperity and Well-being Index developed and shared with community
<p>1.2 Build community capacity to mobilize and lead the implementation of the Road to Economic Prosperity Action Plan implementation</p>	<p>7. Work with ANS communities to develop an informed understanding and action plan to address the gaps and/or needs that exist within each community and their impacts upon the community’s members.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANS REP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action Plans developed for >5 African Nova Scotian communities outside of HRM
	<p>8. Connect ANS communities to training and resources to develop leadership, facilitation, and resiliency skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANS REP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership, facilitation, and resiliency skills program for ANS communities developed ANS communities connected to capacity-building programs and opportunities led by HRM and Halifax Partnership
	<p>9. Host round table conversations to connect all people of African descent.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANS REP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the connection between African Nova Scotians (African and Caribbean countries)
	<p>10. In partnership with RBC continue to implement The Spark – Igniting Conversations Speaker Series to discuss innovative ideas focused on increasing ANS participation in education, employment, and entrepreneurship.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANS REP, RBC, and Halifax Partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thought leadership events held with ANS communities Increased awareness of the common themes and connections relating to economic development amongst local communities of African descent and those across the globe
	<p>11. Ensure ANS communities are aware of, and understand, the impacts of legislation and municipal by-laws affecting their communities and the avenues to provide feedback to government on necessary changes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANS REP and HRM Planning and Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information sessions on legislation and municipal by-laws held Information shared with ANS communities through relevant and effective communications channels Increased awareness in ANS communities of legislation and by-laws impacting their communities and ways to engage and provide feedback

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: ESTABLISH LAND OWNERSHIP, DEVELOP INFRASTRUCTURE, AND ATTRACT INVESTMENT

5-Year Objectives	Proposed Years 3-5 Actions	Lead(s)	Expected Outcomes
<p>2.1 Address historic and current issues related to land ownership and environmental racism</p>	<p>12. Work with the Municipality to consider and, where possible, incorporate Community Benefits Agreements (CBA) as part of infrastructure, capital or development projects impacting or occurring in ANS communities. (NEW)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANS REP and HRM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANS Community Benefits Agreement included in African Nova Scotian Community Plans
	<p>13. In collaboration with HRM's Planning & Development Team, create Community Action Plans for ANS communities to support them in organizing around municipal infrastructure, by-law, and legislative changes. (NEW)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANS REP and HRM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANS communities actively engaged in providing input • Community Actions Plans developed. • Recognition and reestablishment of historic ANS community boundaries • Increase in land base/mass for ANS communities • Infrastructure development opportunities identified and prioritized; projects initiated • Increased capacity in ANS communities to identify vacant spaces for development, and placemaking • Inventory of vacant lands developed • Increase in heritage and historical awareness
	<p>14. Collaborate with the Black Housing Council on the provincial ANS Housing Needs Assessment and Strategy. (NEW)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANS REP and Black Housing Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a provincial Black Community Needs Assessment and housing strategy • Increase in opportunities for housing development
	<p>15. Support the work of the National Black Community Housing Technical Resource Centre which will be housed in Nova Scotia. (NEW)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANS REP and CMHC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of National Black Housing issues and a national conference to share strategies.
	<p>16. In partnership with the Province and with Regional Council approval, develop an approach to resolve outstanding taxation issues related to properties that obtain clear title.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANS REP and HRM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased opportunities for land and home ownership
	<p>17. In partnership with the Province, develop an approach to resolve ownership and planning issues on residential and community-owned properties without clear title.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANS REP and HRM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased opportunities for land and home ownership
	<p>18. Identify and prioritize the remediation of provincially- and federally-owned contaminated sites in ANS communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANS REP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contaminated sites identified and prioritized for remediation, to stop and prevent environmental damage in ANS communities • Increase in clean and green spaces in ANS communities

Road to Economic Prosperity for African Nova Scotian Communities Action Plan - Years 3, 4, and 5

5-Year Objectives	Proposed Years 3-5 Actions	Lead(s)	Expected Outcomes
2.2 Revitalize ANS communities through investment and development	19. Work with HRM and local ANS communities to increase awareness of ANS community surplus properties throughout the Municipality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANS REP and HRM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased opportunities for greater community capacity and infrastructure development
	20. Work with ANS community to help prevent properties in ANS communities from proceeding to tax sale.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANS REP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in the number of ANS community properties proceeding to tax sale
	21. Support the Akoma-led master plan and the needed environmental, transportation, and infrastructure studies to inform future planning and development decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANS REP and Akoma 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased development opportunities in the areas of affordable housing, entrepreneurship, and sports
	22. Advocate for the Africville Heritage Trust's acquisition or use of additional lands near Africville Park. (NEW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANS REP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased development opportunities for greater community capacity and infrastructure development.
2.3 Explore international economic and cultural opportunities	23. Pursue sister city and international trade and development relationships with African countries with ancestral ties to African Nova Scotians.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANS REP, HRM, and Halifax Partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal sister city relationship established within the first year Develop cultural and historical links between ANS communities and West African Countries
	24. Attract international investors into the African Nova Scotian communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANS REP and Halifax Partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationships with potential investors developed

PRIORITY 3: INCREASE PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Year Objectives	Proposed Years 3-5 Actions	Lead(s)	Expected Outcomes
3.1 Increase labour force attachment for African Nova Scotians	25. Continue the ANS Connector Program that connects ANS graduates to the networks and resources needed to build a career in Halifax.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANS REP and Halifax Partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track and increase the number of ANS Connectees and Connectors each year
	26. Identify and share existing programs and services supporting the workforce attachment of African Nova Scotians.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANS REP and Halifax Partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track and increase ANS employment rates
	27. Connect ANS-owned businesses to corporate supply chains and government contracts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANS REP and Halifax Partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Representation of ANS businesses within corporate and government supply chains increased and improved Participation of ANS businesses in government contracts encouraged
	28. Develop a mentorship program to engage and support the development of ANS youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANS REP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in youth connected to mentorship programs
3.2	29. Explore cooperative ('co-op') models and assess their potential use for ANS communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANS REP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in opportunities for business development
	30. Connect ANS entrepreneurs to business development programs and services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANS REP and Halifax Partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track and increase the number of ANS entrepreneurs referred to business development programs and services

Road to Economic Prosperity for African Nova Scotian Communities Action Plan - Years 3, 4, and 5

Year Objectives	Proposed Years 3-5 Actions	Lead(s)	Expected Outcomes
<p>Increase entrepreneurship opportunities in ANS communities</p>	<p>31. Support the growth of ANS business in the Arts and Culture sector.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANS REP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist in the development of a strategy for growth of ANS Arts and Culture businesses