November 15, 2023

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Sharing Our Stories
The Halifax Regional Municipality's Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan

Supporting Culture and Heritage

Sharing our Stories is an action-oriented plan that will directly inform the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy and will direct cultural and heritage policy, investment and programming for the next decade.

The plan will identify projects, actions and timelines to guide internal operations, prioritize the work of the municipality, support creative industries and ensure that region's unique stories, art, cultures and histories are preserved and celebrated.

1

Supporting Culture and Heritage

The Plan will:

- Support strengthening Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in municipal policy and programming

- Coordinate cultural and heritage initiatives across municipal business units

- Support long range strategic planning and provide direction for cultural and heritage initiatives, programs & budget decisions for the next decade

2

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Engagement

Targeted engagement focused on traditionally under-represented communities, and groups involved in arts, culture and heritage. In person meetings and workshops were held stakeholders, rights-holders and communities including:

- Mi'kmaw & Indigenous
- African Nova Scotian
- Acadian & Francophone
- Immigrants & Newcomers
- 2SLGBTQIA+
- Persons with Disabilities
- Heritage & Museums
- Professional Arts

- ➢ **40 in-person and virtual meetings**

- ➢ **46 organizations engaged**

- ➢ **Dozens of 1-on-1 interviews**

- ➢ **Public survey and interactive website**

3

Engagement

Quotes from engagement meetings:

"HRM cannot sit down and make programing for people without including them. The people need to be part of the process"

"Land is integral to our culture – if we lose our land, we lose our culture"

"More engagement with diverse, local communities and grassroots leaders/cultural memory holders, not just professional consultants!"

Sharing Our Stories – HRM's Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan

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Developing the Plan's Structure

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Plan Structure

Vision:
Culture is what connects us to our ancestors, our past, each other and the future of the municipality. Culture also connects people to places through arts, expression, stories, traditions, language, craft and architecture.

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Developing the Plan's Actions

In developing the Plan's actions, a culture and heritage developmental lens was used to ensure that actions can become a reality in practice. This lens served as a final test to evaluate action suitability.

CULTURAL PLANNING RESEARCH

Best Practice and Jurisdictional Scans

- Existing Policies and Legislation
- Previous Council Direction
- Business Planning Priorities

LEGISLATION & POLICY CONTEXT

WHAT WE HEARD

Results of internal, stakeholder and public consultation

7

Implementation

Engagement Categories

Actions are Organized into one of four categories based on how communities will be engaged as part of action implementation:

- **Empowering Communities**
- **Co-creation**
- **Collaboration**
- **Informing**

Prioritization

A priority level is assigned to each action to denote its anticipated timeline for implementation:

1. **Rapid Implementation**
2. **Short-Term Actions**
3. **Mid-Term Actions**
4. **Long-Term Actions**

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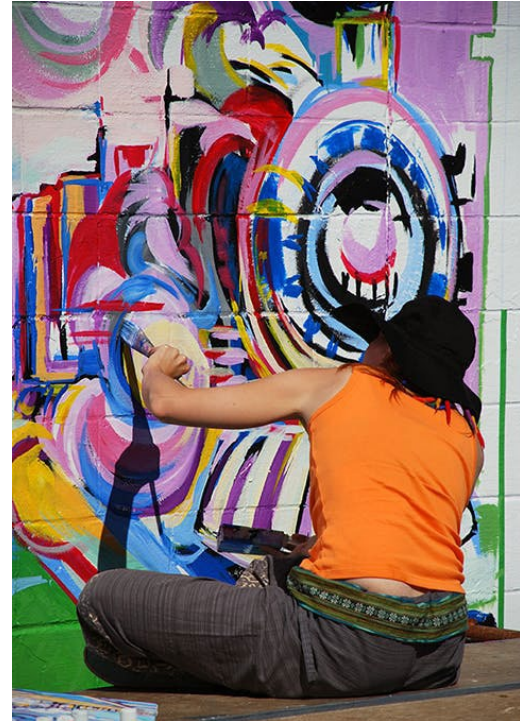
Action Highlights by Category

Empowering Community

These actions are community-directed, and HRM plays a support role. HRM may support communities by providing in-kind contributions, expertise, funding, or by being an advocate to other levels of government.

Action Highlights

- Explore the development of a Regional Archaeology strategy;
- Identify and conserve areas of historic and cultural significance in partnership with communities;
- Support community-led projects for identification, celebration, interpretation, and protection of sites in HRM.

9

Action Highlights by Category

Co-Creation

These actions are about involving communities in action planning and implementation from the beginning. Decisions will be made by consensus between HRM and the community and will require close working relationships between action leaders and communities.

Action Highlights

- Improve municipal heritage conservation protection and support for a more diverse range of cultures and time periods within the region;
- Develop a Friendship Accord with Mi'kmaq communities;
- Strengthen the role of Municipal Archives in being stewards of our civic history;
- Work towards community action plans and advocating for the legislative authority.

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Action Highlights by Category

Collaboration

The appropriate community partners or the public will be given an opportunity to provide input. This may be a close collaboration with a specific group, or broader public engagement.

Action Highlights

- Develop an Interpretive Master Plan to guide investment in commemorative and interpretive initiatives;
- Amend Administrative Order 46, Respecting Asset Naming Policies, to promote the increased reflection of Mi'kmaq, Acadian, and African Nova Scotia history and culture;
- Implement the HRM Accessibility & Inclusion Strategy when planning civic events;
- Create a Public Art Master Plan to guide the administration of HRM's public art collection.

11

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Action Highlights by Category

Informing

These are actions that have limited community engagement and are focused on internal policy and workflow. These actions will be reported on regularly and that information will be made publicly available.

Action Highlights

- Develop conservation management plans for all HRM-owned heritage properties;
- Support inclusive digital access to municipal cultural and heritage assets;
- Strengthen HRM's commitment to diversity and inclusion by embedding inclusion advisors within all business units;
- Conduct a review of municipal grant programs related to culture, art, and heritage.

Actions

2.0 CO-CREATION

ACTION		RATIONALE	GOAL	PILLAR	TIMELINE	LEAD
2.1	Improve municipal heritage conservation protection and support for a more diverse range of cultures and time periods within the region by: a) Diversifying the municipal inventory of heritage properties by working with communities to identify and protect significant assets; b) Developing a framework to guide heritage property, heritage conservation district and cultural landscape programs, which ensure the diversity of our communities is represented; and c) Reviewing and updating the heritage property and heritage site evaluation criteria to better reflect diverse communities, different time periods and intangible cultural value.	On May 14, 2019, Regional Council directed staff to review and update municipal heritage evaluation criteria to better reflect different eras and traditionally underrepresented communities, including African Nova Scotian communities. The evaluation criteria used in property registrations since 2006 contains few provisions to recognize diverse communities. A review of this criteria provides an opportunity to engage with stakeholders and communities to better reflect their unique cultures and expand our understanding of heritage and cultural value.	**Express culture through place**	**Stewardship**	**SHORT-TERM**	**Planning & Development**

13

Approval Process

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Recommendations

It is recommended that the Heritage Advisory Committee recommend that Regional Council:

1. Endorse the direction contained in Sharing our Stories: HRM's Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan as provided in Attachment A to this report as a framework for amending the existing Regional Plan and Secondary Planning Strategies and developing new planning documents and other municipal policies and programs as may be necessary to implement the Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan direction;

2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to include funding options for actions contained in Sharing our Stories: HRM's Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan for consideration in the 2024/25 budget; and

3. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to provide progress reports every two years on the implementation of the Plan.

Sharing Our Stories – HRM's Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan

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