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Item No. 15.2.1
Halifax Regional Council
October 1, 2024

TO: Mayor Savage Members of Halifax Regional Council

FROM: Councillor Paul Russell, Chair, Audit and Finance Standing Committee

DATE: September 6, 2024

SUBJECT: Discovery Centre Contribution Agreement Renewal

ORIGIN

September 6, 2024 meeting of Audit and Finance Standing Committee, Item 13.2.1.

RECOMMENDATION

The Audit and Finance Standing Committee recommends that Halifax Regional Council authorize the Chief Administrative Officer to execute a five-year Contribution Agreement with the Discovery Centre substantially in accordance with the draft agreement attached to the staff report dated July 23, 2024, with annual funding of \$200,000.

BACKGROUND

Audit and Finance Standing Committee received a staff recommendation report dated July 23, 2024 to consider the request for a new Contribution Agreement of funding the Discovery Centre.

For further information refer to the attached staff report dated July 23, 2024.

DISCUSSION

Audit and Finance Standing Committee considered the staff report dated July 23, 2024 and approved an increase to the annual funding from \$145,000 to \$200,000 for the five year Contribution Agreement with Discovery Centre beginning 2024/25 fiscal year.

Upon Audit and Finance Standing Committee direction, staff followed up with the Discovery Centre on the amended annual funding amount. In follow up discussions the Discovery centre provided a letter requesting an increase in annual funding for 2024/25 of \$200,000 and 25/26 – 28/29 of \$250,000 to cover inflationary costs and acknowledge our growing impact as well as potential for expanded services to meet the Municipality's needs in the Halifax community.

In follow up meetings with the Discovery Centre we discussed increasing the services provided to HRM through the agreement. The discussions led to the following increased services:

- Supporting HRM Parks department on moving forward on HRM as Bee City.
- Providing Gen Action: Empowering Youth for a Sustainable Future to minimum of 10 an agreed upon number of schools.

If the amount of \$200,000 is approved, the finalized services will be confirmed with Discovery Centre. The current 25% discount for HRM summer camps will continue with a new agreement.

In review of property taxation, the Discovery Centre has a lease agreement with Nova Scotia Power and this property is exempt from taxation, as confirmed by Property Valuation Services Corporation, as per the Nova Scotia Power Privatization Act. The Discovery Centre is not in receipt of tax relief through the Administrative Order 2024-001-ADM Tax Relief for Nonprofits and Charitable Organizations, the Discovery Centre is not a property owner, and their lease agreement is with a commercial entity

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Increased funding of \$55,000 (from the original staff report recommending \$145,000) in 2024/25 fiscal is unbudgeted and would require to be found within Parks & Recreation budgets, which could cause a risk of a deficit within the Parks & Recreation budget. Community Grant program (M311-8004) & Community Museums Program (M311-8004) programs have minimal (less that \$4000) uncommitted balances.

Implementing additional funding in 25/26 through 28/29 funding would be included in Park & Recreation budget envelope for approval by council. These funds would be sourced through cost centre C705 in an annual budget.

RISK CONSIDERATION

Risk consideration is outlined in the attached staff report dated July 23, 2024.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Meetings of the Audit and Finance Standing Committee are open to public attendance and members of the public are invited to address the Standing Committee for up to five (5) minutes during the Public Participation portion of the meeting. Meetings are live webcast on Halifax.ca. The agenda, reports, video, and minutes of the Standing Committee are posted on Halifax.ca.

For further information on Community Engagement refer to the attached staff report dated July 23, 2024.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Environmental implications are outlined in the staff report dated July 23, 2024.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternatives are outlined in the attached staff report dated July 23, 2024.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Legislative Authority is outlined in the attached staff report dated July 23, 2024.

Administrative Order One, *Respecting the Procedures of the Council Administrative Order*, Schedule 2 Audit and Finance Standing Committee Terms of Reference, subsection 1(1) and subsection 8(g) provide:

Purpose

1. (1) The purpose of the Audit and Finance Standing Committee is to provide advice to the Council on matters relating to audit and finance.

Other Duties and Responsibilities

8. The Audit and Finance Standing Committee shall review and make recommendations on proposals coming to the Council outside of the annual budget or tender process including:
 - (g) the creation or modification of reserves and withdrawals not approved in the approved budget.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Discovery Centre Operating Grant for Services Request 2025-2026.

Attachment 2 – Staff recommendation report dated July 23, 2024.

Report Prepared by: Dorothy Maponga, Legislative Assistant, Municipal Clerk's Office 902.478.2408
Brendon Smithson, Director, Regional Recreation Services 902.478.2086

Operating Grant for Services Request 2025-2026

Since 1985, Discovery Centre has been a Halifax destination for families, visitors to our city and school groups for educational fun and early childhood experiential learning. Delivering interactive exhibits and programming for children, youth, and families across the Municipality, Discovery Centre has established itself as a leader in the science centre community within Canada and a respected government and private sector partner on important societal issues such as healthcare, early childhood education, youth mental health, climate change, food security, and workforce development.

Since 2017, the newly built 40,000 sq. ft. facility on the Halifax waterfront has welcomed over 1.5 million visitors and delivered interactive programming to a variety of groups including schools, camps, birthday parties, corporate groups, and meeting & convention clients. Discovery Centre is well positioned for further growth and to take advantage of new opportunities to continue to help Halifax build on its world-leading research, economic growth, educational and workforce development.

The City of Halifax is one of the founding partners of Discovery Centre supporting Discovery Centre's services to families and youth across the Municipality. By encouraging local citizens and youth to become scientifically literate, Halifax has fostered one of the most important community assets one can find anywhere in Canada.

We appreciate the annual grant of \$145,000 that has been provided in exchange for community services related to Halifax's strategic pillars. During that time, we have not only expanded our reach across the province we have also expanded our services throughout a much larger municipal footprint offering free camps, installing community gardens, executing beach cleanups, supplementing in school content, and delivering much needed education on issues relevant to the Halifax community.

The Discovery Centre Board of Directors, leadership team, and stakeholders gratefully acknowledge Halifax's support and consideration of an increased annual investment of \$200k for 2024-2025 and respectfully request consideration of a further increase to \$250k annually for the 2025-2026 fiscal year through 2030 to cover inflationary costs and acknowledge our growing impact and potential for expanded services to meet the Municipality's needs in the Halifax community.

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Halifax, Nova Scotia
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Item No.13.2.1
Audit & Finance Standing Committee
September 6, 2024

TO: Chair and Members of Audit & Finance Standing Committee

FROM: Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: July 23, 2024

SUBJECT: Discovery Centre Contribution Agreement Renewal

ORIGIN

This report originates with a written request from the Discovery Centre to enter a new Contribution Agreement with the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) as the previous Contribution Agreement expired on March 31, 2024.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The existing Contribution Agreement between HRM and the Discovery Centre expired on March 31st, 2024. The Discovery Centre was advised of the expiration date on September 6, 2023, of the expiring agreement. Final payment to the Discovery Center was paid from the fiscal year budget of 2023/2024. The annual contribution amount of \$145,000 for a five-year period (April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2024) was approved by Regional Council on November 12th, 2019.

The Discovery Centre has requested a new Contribution Agreement of funding in the amount of \$145,000 beginning fiscal 2024/2025 for a period of five years. The new Contribution Agreement would commence October 1st, 2024 and end September 30th, 2029.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Audit and Finance Standing Committee recommend to Regional Council to authorize the Chief Administrative Officer to execute a five-year Contribution Agreement with the Discovery Centre substantially in accordance with the draft agreement attached to this report, with annual funding of \$145,000.

BACKGROUND

Established in 1985, the Discovery Centre is a registered not-for-profit organization. The organization's mission is to stimulate interest, enjoyment and understanding of science and technology through innovative and hands on experiences. The Centre has travelling and permanent exhibitions, science demonstrations/programming, and a digital planetarium.

The Discovery Centre has a longstanding history of funding support from HRM. In March 2014, Council

approved a \$2 million contribution to the new Discovery Centre for capital costs relation to the purpose-built facility. The new Discovery Centre, an \$18.5 million facility, located on Lower Water Street opened in December 2016. Since the grand opening in February of 2017, more than 300,000 visitors have been welcomed to the facility. This is more than three times the annual visitation at the previous location.

Since 1995, Discovery Centre has received annual operating funding of \$145,000 from HRM. This operating funding is critical to the Centre's ability to reach underrepresented communities across HRM and eliminate systemic barriers to STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, math) learning.

On November 12th, 2019, Regional Council approved a five-year contribution agreement with funding of \$145,000 each year (April 1st, 2019 – March 31st, 2024). The agreement has expired and a request from Discovery Centre for a renewal of the agreement has been received.

A submission from the Discovery Centre, dated December 18th, 2018, requested a renewal of the annual contribution agreement, as well as a request for an increase in the annual core funding amount of \$145,000 to \$250,000. The Discovery Centre's request for an increase was based on the rationale that the Discovery Centre had made a substantial reinvestment in the downtown core through the redevelopment of the centre which, in turn, contributed to HRM's overall vision of making HRM a vibrant, attractive regional centre and a cultural capital. The partnership funding from HRM supports the Discovery Centre in fostering a welcoming community and engaging the Arts and Culture community. The proposed increase in funding would match annual provincial funding. The request for increase was presented during HRM's annual Budget and Business Planning process for 2019/20 in the Parks & Recreation budget presentation to Regional Council. Regional Council did not approve the increase.

A five-year contribution agreement was approved by Regional Council in 2019 for the fiscal years beginning 2019/2020 through to 2023/2024, with continued level of annual contributions of \$145,000, subject to review and approval of funds by Regional Council through HRM's annual budget approval process.

DISCUSSION

The current Contribution Agreement expired on March 31st, 2024 and the Discovery Centre received the final payment of \$145,000 for the approved term in the 2023/2024 fiscal year. To formalize the continued financial support, a new executed agreement is required.

In 2023, the Discovery Centre launched a new five-year strategic direction which aligns key components of the HRM's 2021-25 Strategic Priorities Plan, including priorities and outcomes in such areas as climate resilience, net-zero emissions, inclusive communities, removal of systemic barriers, and talent priorities.

Due to the pending expiry of the agreement, Discovery Centre funding was not included in the 2024/2025 HRM budget. Funding to reinstate the \$145,000 would be offset in C705 for this operating budget year, but future years will require an increase in C705 in the amount of the \$145,000.

Reflected in Discovery Centre's Outcomes and Statistics report from April 1st, 2022 – March 31st, 2023 are the following highlights:

- Over 97,000 admissions
- 1,900 new memberships
- 765 Summer, March Break, and PD Day Campers
- Outreach camp highlights included a free access Digital Discovery Camp based in Spryfield
- launch of new community garden-based science camps and clubs, free for African Nova Scotian youth, hosted at the Akoma Community Garden in partnership with Imhotep's Legacy Academy.
- 320 hands-on school workshops with 9,900 students from Grades pre-primary to 12, doubling the reach of our curriculum-connected programs over the previous year
- A further 3,000 students and groups enjoyed field trips to our curriculum-connected exhibit galleries and Science on the Spot demonstrations with our staff scientists.

- Free Upcycle Racers workshops were delivered to more than 450 Grade 4 students across the province. A total of 360 students from the Halifax, Annapolis, South Shore, and Chignecto-Central Regional Centres for Education were provided with free bussing and admission to visit Discovery Centre and the Divert NS Ocean Action Zone.
- A new school workshop, Wind-Water-Waste, was developed this year with Divert NS for free delivery throughout 2023-2024.
- Free access to the popular Discovery@Home online learning series was maintained

The above indicators, coupled with the Discovery Centre's 2022/23 audited financial statements, express strong community participation and a satisfactory financial position.

The proposed agreement deliverables align with HRM's People. Planet. Prosperity Halifax's Inclusive Economic Growth Strategy 2022-2027 in the following areas:

- access to arts, culture, recreation and natural assets,
- improving the conditions for innovation and entrepreneurialism, and
- showcasing Halifax to encourage people to visit, live and work here.

The agreement continues to include financial responsibility measures. New to this agreement is a group rating discounted 25%. This additional 25% is specifically and exclusively offered to Parks & Recreation, Recreation Programming Summer Day camps.

The Discovery Centre has continued to satisfy the contribution agreement deliverables and has confirmed that they wish to enter into a new agreement with HRM.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Funding for the Discovery Centre contribution of \$145,000 for 2024/2025 is an unbudgeted expense from the Parks and Recreation operating budget. The expenditure will come from cost centre C705 – 8004. Funding for 2025/2026 operating budget will require an increase in cost centre C705 in the amount of \$145,000. Future years funding will be subject to Regional Council approval through the annual budget/business planning process.

RISK CONSIDERATION

There are no significant risks associated with the recommendation in this report. The risks considered rate Low. To reach this conclusion, consideration was given to operational, financial, strategic and reputational risks.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community members make up the Discovery Centre Board of Directors.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

No environmental implications were identified.

ALTERNATIVES

Audit and Finance Standing Committee could choose to recommend that Regional Council:

1. Change the terms and/or level of funding outlined in the Contribution Agreement or;
2. Not approve the Contribution Agreement with the Discovery Centre.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter

75 (1) The Municipality may agree with any person for the provision of a service or a capital facility that the Municipality is authorized to provide.

(2) An agreement made pursuant to subsection (1) may allow for the lease, operation or maintenance of the facility or provision of the service by a person.

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;

35(2)(d)(i) The Chief Administrative Officer may [...] subject to policies adopted by the Council, make or authorize expenditures, and enter into contracts on behalf of the Municipality, for anything required for the Municipality where the amount of the expenditure is budgeted or within the amount determined by the Council by policy [...]

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Discovery Centre Request

Attachment 2: Contribution Agreement

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.

Report Prepared by: Trish Higby, Community Facility Partnership Coordinator, Parks & Recreation, 902.456-7062

**DISCOVERY
CENTRE AND
HALIFAX
REGIONAL
MUNICIPALITY**

*Partnership Case
for Support*



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

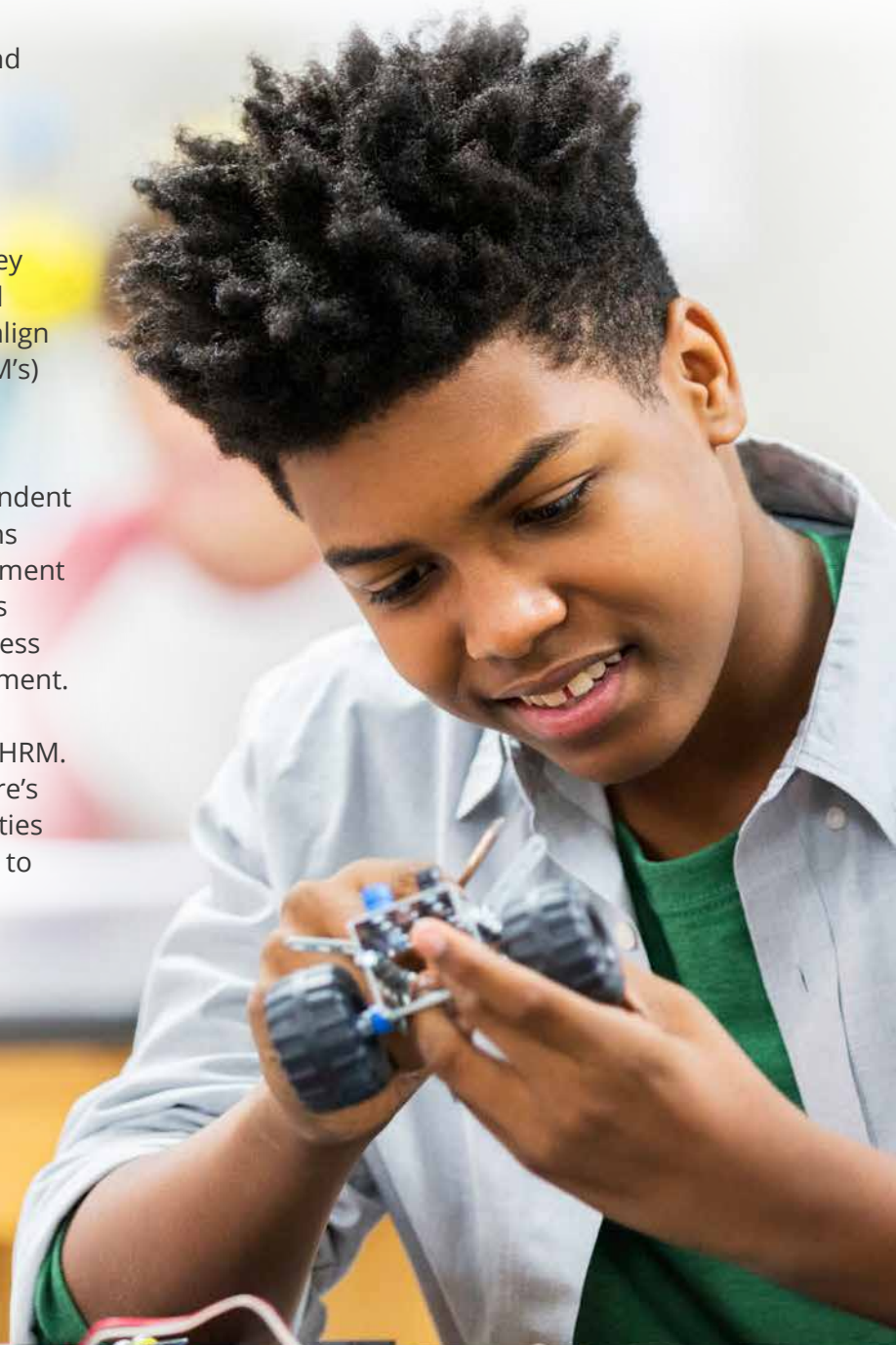
DISCOVERY CENTRE, A REGISTERED CHARITY

(charitable registration # 108076662RR0001), is Atlantic Canada's largest science centre and one of Canada's leading providers of hands-on, interactive STEAM learning (science, technology, engineering, arts, math). Each year, Discovery Centre welcomes more than 150,000 visitors, engaging children, youth, educators, and community members of all ages in impactful experiences that inspire excitement and interest in STEAM learning and careers. In addition to visitation at its Halifax waterfront facility, Discovery Centre reaches more than 30,000 youth through school workshops, camps, and outreach activities.

In 2023, Discovery Centre launched a new five-year strategic direction with a focus on evidence-based decision making, diversity, inclusion, equity & accessibility (DIEA) and key content priorities such as climate action and technological literacy – all of which directly align with the Halifax Regional Municipality's (HRM's) 2021-25 Strategic Priorities Plan.

As a registered charity, Discovery Centre's continued growth and sustainability is dependent on funding from earned revenue (admissions and memberships), fundraising, and government sources. Discovery Centre is one of Canada's most privately funded science centres with less than 10% of operating funding from government. Since 1995, Discovery Centre has received annual operating funding of \$145,000 from HRM. This operating funding is critical to the Centre's ability to reach underrepresented communities across HRM and eliminate systemic barriers to STEAM learning.

The term of the current five-year agreement will end on March 31, 2024. Discovery Centre respectfully requests renewal of \$145,000 in annual operating funding so that it can continue to fulfill its mission and foster the growth of a vibrant and inclusive HRM.





INTRODUCTION

FOR MORE THAN 38 YEARS, DISCOVERY Centre has been a leader in experiential STEAM learning (science, technology, engineering, arts, math), inspiring more than 2 million young minds to embrace the power of curiosity, gain confidence in their abilities, and fulfil their potential. From its early beginnings as a travelling science show to its current incarnation in a world-class facility on the Halifax waterfront, Discovery Centre has continuously evolved to meet the changing needs of our society, providing our community members with the tools, the inspiration, and the resolve to ensure a future of resilience and growth.

The partnership between Discovery Centre and the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) is rooted in a shared commitment to the health and prosperity of our city and our province. In 2023, the Centre launched a new five-year strategic direction which directly supports key components of the City's 2021-25 Strategic Priorities Plan. Just as HRM has established an updated vision, mission, values, and priorities to align with the challenges and opportunities facing our community, Discovery Centre has embarked on a new strategic course to address the realities of an increasingly complex world.



Discovery Centre 2023-2028 STRATEGIC DIRECTION

VISION

The vision of Discovery Centre is to advance science literacy and evidence-based decision making in Atlantic Canada while inspiring a sustainable and innovative culture.

MISSION

The mission of Discovery Centre is to bring STEAM to life through fun and interactive learning experiences. We are committed to leveraging our people, facility, and programming to create an inclusive environment that ignites a passion for science and discovery.

CORE VALUES

Excellence

- Be recognized as a one-of-a-kind, state-of-the-art leader in our industry
- Provide meaningful and relevant audience engagement
- Strive for excellence in our level of service and content delivery

Collaboration

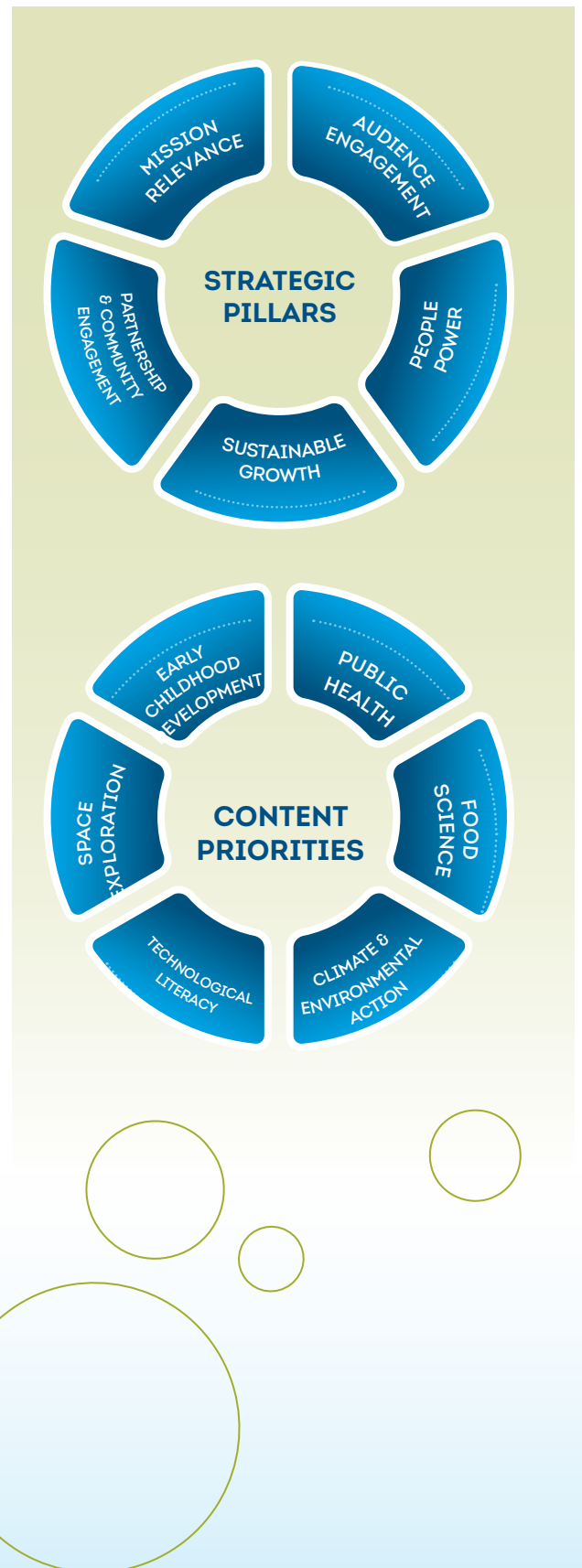
- Engage and listen to diverse communities and perspectives that enrich our knowledge and experience offerings
- Collaborate with key stakeholders who invest in our brand and mission

Diversity, Inclusion, Equity & Accessibility

- Strive to provide spaces and programs that are representative of and accessible to all abilities, incomes, languages, ethnic backgrounds, identities, genders, and geographic locations

Innovation

- Inspire creative thinking in problem solving
- Demonstrate the successful steps to implementing new ideas
- Showcase the latest in science and technology



BACKGROUND

THE ORIGINS OF DISCOVERY CENTRE DATE

back to the 1970s when Dr. Gerhard Stroink began developing interactive science exhibits and demonstrations as part of Dalhousie University's open house events. The exhibits and demonstrations were highly popular, garnering the attention of the science community and leading to a collaborative effort among Dr. Stroink, Dr. Richard Goldbloom, and local entrepreneur Liz Crocker, all of whom shared a vision for a permanent science centre in Nova Scotia.

Stroink, Goldbloom, and Crocker, along with a group of dedicated volunteers, worked together to create an array of interactive science experiences for the public. They soon launched a province-wide travelling science show, bringing unique participatory science programming to communities large and small across Nova Scotia. The travelling science show set the stage for the establishment of Discovery Centre. With growing interest and support, the burgeoning Discovery Centre registered as a non-profit society in 1985 and as a charitable organization in 1989. In 1990, with the support of government, the private sector, and the broader community, Discovery Centre was able to move into its first physical space – a 5,000 square foot location in Scotia Square, Halifax.

In 1995, Discovery Centre moved to a larger location on Barrington Street where it became a fixture of Halifax's downtown for 21 years, engaging local residents and visitors alike with interactive exhibits, facilitated programming, curriculum-based workshops, and outreach activities. During this period, visitation and school bookings continued to increase and it became clear that Discovery Centre would soon outgrow its Barrington Street location.

In 2010, Discovery Centre launched a \$25 million capital campaign to construct a new, state-of-the-art, 40,000 square foot facility on the Halifax waterfront. The new Discovery Centre opened its doors in February 2017 and has welcomed nearly 1 million visitors, not including the over 150,000 children and families reached in communities across Nova Scotia through the Centre's various outreach programs.

Discovery Centre receives less than 10% of its core operating funding from combined provincial and municipal government sources. The current agreement with HRM – the term of which is April 1, 2019 – March 31, 2024 – provides for an annual contribution of \$145,000 toward Discovery Centre's operating expenses. This amount has not changed since 1995.





OUR IMPACT

WHEN CANADIANS LOOK FOR ACCURATE, credible science, they look to science centres. Public trust surveys demonstrate that science centres rank first among Canadians' most trusted sources of reliable scientific information, ranking even above researchers and physicians. In contrast to more formal, structured settings, free-choice science centres are rich and stimulating environments designed to be joyful places in which learning can take place. Discovery Centre is well established among Nova Scotia educators, students, parents, and caregivers as the region's "go to" source for STEAM engagement. The Centre's educators, facilitators, and exhibits team are widely recognized for their expertise in the delivery of informal science education for all ages, communicating complex topics through an approach that is non-intimidating, participant-centred, and inspired.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

HRM's vision for the future is "to enhance our quality of life by fostering the growth of healthy and vibrant communities, a strong and diverse economy, and a sustainable environment." As part of this vision, HRM has updated its core values to include **Respect, Collaboration, Diversity & Inclusion, Integrity, Accountability, Sustainability, and Evidence-Based Decision Making.** HRM Council has established key priorities and outcomes in such areas as climate resilience, net-zero emissions, inclusive communities, removal of systemic barriers, and talent attraction, retention, & development – all of which directly align with Discovery Centre's current and future priorities. In fact, the respective strategic directions of HRM and Discovery Centre are seamlessly integrated to an unprecedented extent. The following pages present select examples of the many areas in which Discovery Centre is proud to support the vision, mission, and priorities of HRM.



CLIMATE ACTION

Illustrative of the direct strategic alignment is Discovery Centre's leadership in the areas of climate action and environmental literacy. Discovery Centre is the lead partner in the national \$6M **GenAction** project, which will reach over 200,000 P-12 youth, including 5,200 Indigenous youth, by 2025. GenAction improves understanding of climate change among youth across Canada, specifically raising awareness of the significance of daily actions that will help to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

In June 2020, Halifax Regional Council unanimously adopted HalifACT – a transformative plan to achieve a net-zero economy by 2050.

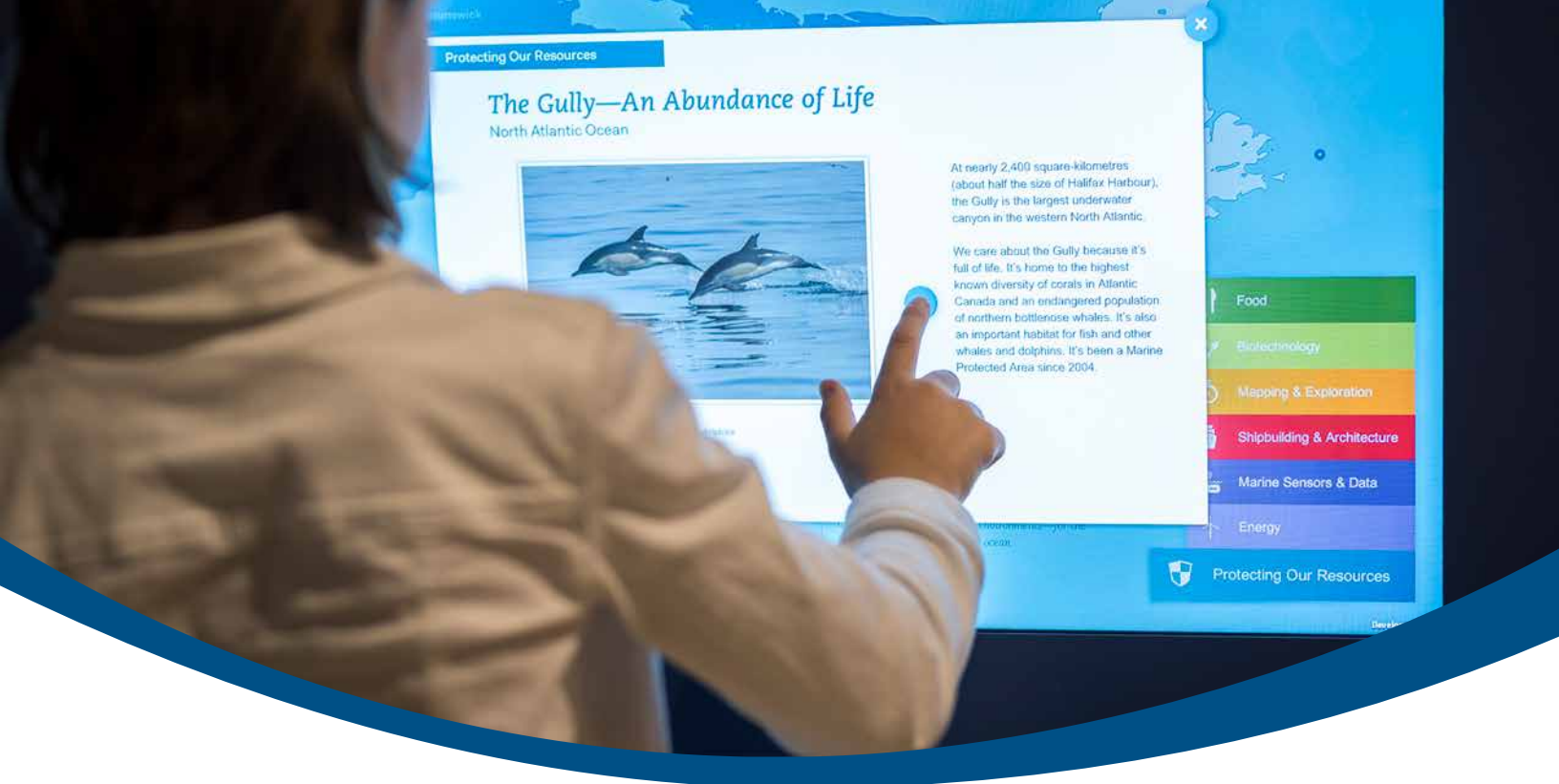
HalifACT is one of the most ambitious climate action movements in Canada, and its success will depend on the collective efforts and engagement of our community. As the GenAction lead partner, Discovery Centre is ideally suited to engaging children, youth, and families in climate action and encouraging the kinds of behavioral changes that will be critical to safeguarding our future.

Discovery Centre delivers GenAction programming through camps, community outreach events, public and school demonstrations, as well as through the development of free, bilingual GenAction Science Spotlight resources.. In summer 2022, Discovery Centre led a province-wide tour to 26 public libraries to speak with youth about climate change and the individual actions that they can take to help mitigate it. The success of this partnership led to another outreach tour to 15 public libraries in summer 2023. The Centre's GenAction team has also developed five new outreach programs ranging from how to upcycle old cloth to how to wire up solar circuits.

Over just two years, the Centre has completed more than 15 GenAction activations with local partners such as Alliance Francaise, Symphony Nova Scotia, Parks Canada, the Museum of Natural History, shopping malls, Every One Every Day, the Aviation Museum, and Neptune Theatre among many others.



Amandine
Coordinator & Educator



Also reflective of the Centre’s expertise, Discovery Centre partnered with the **Marine Environmental Observation Prediction & Response Network** (MEOPAR) in the development of the **Discover Our Climate** project. Discovery Centre produced 32 bilingual research features focusing on issues such as ocean acidification, saltwater intrusion, plastic pollution, and coastal erosion. The features enable teachers to integrate climate change research into the classroom through engaging and accessible research topics. All features include curriculum-based activities for grades P-12 to encourage youth to create solutions to the ongoing climate challenges. The features are free to the public at Nova Scotia libraries and as downloadable resources on Discovery Centre’s website.

Within its Halifax waterfront facility, Discovery Centre is reinforcing the importance of HalifACT through the development of a new permanent exhibit that will engage visitors in the science of zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs), dispelling misconceptions and increasing knowledge about connections between ZEVs and climate change mitigation.

The exhibit is scheduled to launch in March 2024 to coincide with the Centre’s high-traffic March Break period. It builds on the Centre’s past success in the fabrication of interactive environment-focused exhibits such as the Divert NS Ocean Action Zone, a highly popular permanent exhibit in Discovery Centre’s Level 1 Ocean Gallery.

“The impact of science centres extends far beyond knowledge acquisition. Today’s science centres make a proven impact in changing interests, behaviours, and beliefs.

– **“UNDERSTANDING AND ENGAGEMENT IN PLACES OF SCIENCE EXPERIENCE,”**
EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST, 49(2), 2014

DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, EQUITY & ACCESSIBILITY

Both HRM and Discovery Centre have identified Diversity, Inclusion, Equity & Accessibility (DIEA) as core values. As part of a focused initiative to advance DIEA across its facility, programming, partnerships, and human resources, the Centre began with the creation of a letter of intent which was distributed to staff and made public on Discovery Centre's website.

With the prioritization of DIEA as a core value in its five-year strategic direction, Discovery Centre identified concrete ways in which each department can activate DIEA in their own departmental plans. The next step was DIEA training for the Centre's board of directors, management, and staff with opportunities to learn about underrepresented groups and specific sessions focusing on community members of African descent, Mi'kmaq, and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities.

Discovery Centre has developed strong partnerships with organizations and groups representative of **underserved and historically marginalized communities**. Sprouting Science and Trusted Voices are two examples of these partnerships.

"More than half of the campers had never even seen the kinds of science activities and workshops we provided to them. Having the camps be boundary-free, especially financially, was a big reason why we were able to engage the kids and get them excited about science and gardening."

- **GILLES PERRINE, DISCOVERY CENTRE SCIENCE EDUCATOR AND CAMP LEADER, 2023 SPROUTING SCIENCE PROGRAM FOR AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIAN YOUTH**

Sprouting Science is a partnership between Discovery Centre, Imhotep's Legacy Academy, and Akoma Family Centre in Cherry Brook. Through Sprouting Science, Discovery Centre co-develops and co-delivers free camps and clubs for African Nova Scotian youth with the goal of inculcating a sense of ownership and accomplishment as they set up, plant, care for, and harvest produce from their very own Garden Labs. The program also includes hands-on workshops focusing on food science, plant and ecosystem biology, and climate change.



Trusted Voices is an innovative partnership wherein Discovery Centre works with organizations representing African Nova Scotians, Mi'kmaq, and the 2SLGBTQIA+ communities to enhance vaccine confidence and help increase vaccination. The Centre works with the **Africville Museum, Mi'kmaq Kina'matnewey, and The Youth Project** to co-create vaccine education resources that are customized for these communities and to deliver vaccine promotional activities in a fun and engaging way.

The strength of these partnerships and the knowledge and insights gained from the collaborations are helping not only to advance future vaccine and health science programming, but to inform Discovery Centre's science communication practices more generally, improving accessibility, cultural safety, and relevance to African Nova Scotian, Mi'kmaq, and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities.

Discovery Centre also participates in the **CANOO Program**, the only Canadian app that encourages newcomers to discover and connect with the country's best experiences and institutions. The objective is to provide transformational experiences to new Canadians so that they feel welcome and part of the community in their new home. By extension, the program helps organizations like Discovery Centre to develop meaningful relationships and engage newcomers in the importance of STEAM education.

Finally, all new employees are required to acknowledge newly developed Respectful Workplace policies. Increased human resources supports have been added to support all employees and ensure that any staff concerns are addressed in a timely and appropriate manner.

Through these initiatives, combined with further research and implementation of best practices, Discovery Centre aims to proactively address systemic barriers, biases, and enable a fully accessible and inclusive environment for all.

"Engaging students where they are is incredibly important. If something doesn't resonate with a student's life or their learning style, then there generally isn't interest or uptake. However, if programming is accessible, fun, and hands-on, providing students the opportunity to experience learning in an active way, it sticks with them throughout life. It can inform the decisions they make and the lens through which they approach future problems and solutions."

- **JILLIAN PHILLIPS, DISCOVERY CENTRE
MANAGER OF SCIENCE EDUCATION**



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Discovery Centre engages a cross section of partners across the research community, industry, government, post-secondary institutions, P-12 schools and educators, Indigenous People, racial minorities, science centres, and informal learning organizations. Discovery Centre collaborates with subject matter experts (SMEs) from Atlantic Canada universities and industry to develop content that reflects the most up to date science and relevant interpretation. The Centre takes an inclusive approach to all aspects of engagement and education, partnering with groups traditionally left out of STEAM fields to co-develop programming that respects the value and richness of these communities. Discovery Centre believes that meaningful partnerships take time, humility, and trust, and we apply these principles to our partnerships.

Examples of recent and current partners include but are not limited to:

- Africville Museum
- Akoma Family Centre
- Alliance Francaise
- Canadian Space Agency
- Centre for Local Prosperity
- Divert NS
- Every One Every Day
- Halifax Public Libraries
- Halifax Regional Centre for Education
- Imhotep's Legacy Academy
- Mi'kmaq Kina'matnewey
- Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre
- Neptune Theatre
- Nova Scotia Health
- Parks Canada
- Symphony Nova Scotia
- The Youth Project



THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP

AS ATLANTIC CANADA'S LEADING SCIENCE

centre and the most visited educational destination in HRM, Discovery Centre plays a vital role in strengthening evidence-based making, maintaining and fostering high levels of public trust in science, and ensuring equity of opportunity for children, youth, and families across HRM and beyond. As we strive to fulfil our mission and eliminate barriers to STEAM learning, the need for sustained core operational funding is critical.

With renewed funding of \$145,000 annually, HRM will help to provide the necessary resources to maintain our services and initiatives, thereby supporting access to quality STEAM education across our communities. An investment in Discovery Centre is an investment in the future – a future in which every child, regardless of social or economic barriers, can explore, innovate, and grow through the power of impactful STEAM learning.

We respectfully request your consideration and look forward to collaborating toward the continued growth of a healthy and vibrant HRM.

CONTACT:

Dov Bercovici
President & CEO
Discovery Centre
dbercovici@thediscoverycentre.ca
902.233.2167



APPENDIX A

Discovery Centre 2022-2023 Outcomes and Statistics For the Period from April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023

Discovery Centre is pleased to provide the following statistics to Halifax Regional Municipality for the year ended March 31, 2023. It is important to note that the Centre continued to be impacted by the pandemic during the first quarter of 2022 with restrictions on outreach and school visits. The Centre had another successful year on many fronts, as follows:

Over 97,000 admissions and 1,900 new memberships. Visitors enjoyed three unique featured exhibitions this year: Voyage to the Deep, Behind Racism: Challenging the Way We Think, and Dinosaurs in Motion.

Discovery Centre engaged over 5,000 families, birthdays, groups, campers, and students in a newly renovated and enhanced Immersive Dome Theatre with new expert-led planetarium shows and exciting new films with content on deep space, black holes, Backyard Wilderness (film), and climate action.

765 Summer, March Break, and PD Day Campers enjoyed hands-on STEAM programming this year. Outreach camp highlights included a free access Digital Discovery Camp based in Spryfield and the launch of new community garden-based science camps and clubs, free for African Nova Scotian youth, hosted at the Akoma Community Garden in partnership with Imhotep's Legacy Academy.

Science educators delivered over 320 hands-on school workshops with 9,900 students from Grades pre-primary to 12, **doubling the reach of our curriculum-connected programs over the previous year.**

This reach included over 4,000 students from the Halifax Regional Municipality, including HRCE, private, and home school student visits to Discovery Centre's classrooms and outreach workshops with free or discounted access. A further 3,000 students and groups enjoyed field trips to our curriculum-connected exhibit galleries and Science on the Spot demonstrations with our staff scientists.

Free Upcycle Racers workshops were delivered to more than 450 Grade 4 students across the province. A total of 360 students from the Halifax, Annapolis, South Shore, and Chignecto-Central Regional Centres for Education were provided with free bussing and admission to visit Discovery Centre and the Divert NS Ocean Action Zone. A new school workshop, Wind-Water-Waste, was developed this year with Divert NS for free delivery throughout 2023-2024.

Free access to the popular Discovery@Home online learning series was maintained, and new English and French videos were added to our suite of curriculum-connected inquiry-based Discovery@School videos, bringing the series to 16 complete classroom lessons from Grades primary to 9. The content generated over 7,400 impressions and was featured at the Halifax-based Association of Science Teachers Conference (October 2022).

Over 9,000 Discovery Centre visitors were engaged with pop-up Why Immunize? programming on vaccine education. New educational activities and health science resources were developed with partners such as the Africville Museum, The Youth Project, and Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey for free delivery to equity-deserving African Nova Scotian, 2SLGBTQIA+, and Mi'kmaq communities in Halifax and across Nova Scotia.

Nearly 10,300 Nova Scotians were engaged in hands-on community event-based outreach activities across the province, including the return of our Discovery on Demand outreach program and the launch of Winter of Discovery, which welcomed 3,166 visitors to Discovery Centre over a free access weekend and engaged 5,130 Nova Scotians at community centres with touring exhibits. Tour stops included Goodwood and Sheet Harbour in HRM.

Through ongoing partnerships, Discovery Centre provides passes and free access for the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre and Akoma Family Centre.



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Discovery Centre is proudly located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People. With respect and appreciation, we honour generations of traditions and teachings about the world we live in today.

Attachment 2
Contribution Agreement
October 1, 2024 –
September 30, 2029
Operating Contribution

Between:

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

And

THE DISCOVERY CENTRE

CONTRIBUTION AGREEMENT- OPERATING CONTRIBUTION

BETWEEN:

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY,
a municipal corporation in the Province of Nova Scotia ("**HRM**").

-and-

THE DISCOVERY CENTRE,
a society incorporated under the laws of the Province of Nova Scotia ("**TDC**").

BACKGROUND

On HRM Regional Council approved entering into an agreement with TDC to provide TDC with an annual contribution of \$145,000 towards TDC's operating expenses. HRM and TDC wish to document the terms of that agreement. HRM and TDC therefore covenant and agree as follows.

SECTION ONE DEFINITIONS

Section 1.01 Definitions

- a) "**Agreement**" means this contribution agreement (including all attached schedules) as it may be amended from time to time.
- b) "**Contribution Amount**" means the amount to be paid by HRM to TDC in accordance with section 3.01 of this Agreement.
- c) "**Fiscal Year**" means the annual period ending on March 31st each year during the term.

Section 1.02 Schedules

The following schedules are attached to form part of this Agreement

Schedule A – Rates and Services

SECTION TWO TERM

Section 2.01 Term of Agreement

- a) The term of this Agreement shall be five (5) years, effective October 1, 2024 and expiring September 30, 2029

SECTION THREE CONTRIBUTION OF FUNDS

Section 3.01 Amount of Contribution

- a) HRM shall make a contribution to TDC in the amount of one-hundred-forty-five-thousand Dollars (\$145,000) (the "**Contribution Amount**") each Fiscal Year during the term of this Agreement to be used by TDC towards its operating expenses incurred during that Fiscal Year.
- b) TDC acknowledges and agrees that the Contribution Amount for each Fiscal Year is subject to Regional Council appropriating the required funds through its annual budget approval process and is not guaranteed through the terms of this Agreement.
- c) TDC acknowledges and agrees that the Contribution Amount represents HRM's complete operating-related financial commitment to TDC and that HRM is in no way responsible for TDC's actual operating expenses nor is HRM responsible for any operating losses that may be incurred by TDC.

Section 3.02 Payment Schedule

- a) Subject to the terms and conditions of this Agreement HRM shall pay the Contribution Amount of \$145,000 in two separate installments of \$72,500 in each Fiscal Year, subject to:
 - 1) Provision of yearly outcomes as mutually discussed and agreed between HRM and TDC. Once received, TDC to invoice HRM for the first installment of \$72,500 to be paid within 30 days of receipt of the invoice
 - 2) Provision of the TDC approved audited financials at which time the second installment of \$72,500 will be paid.

Section 3.03 Restrictions

- a) No portion of the Contribution Amount is to be used for the payment of goods or services that are unrelated to the operation of TDC.
- b) The Contribution Amount may be applied to TDC's programming, operating and marketing/promotion expenses.

- c) TDC agrees that the Contribution Amount shall be used to achieve the annually set outcomes that align to the HRM's People, Planet, Prosperity, Halifax Inclusive Economic Growth Strategy 2022-2027. No portion of the Contribution Amount shall be paid to employees, volunteers, officers or directors of TDC (i.e., salary, wage, stipend, honorarium, gift, or commission).
- d) The Contribution Amount is to be fully used by TDC during the Fiscal Year in which it is received, and no portion of the Contribution Amount may be saved or rolled over by TDC into the following Fiscal Year. Any unused portion of the Contribution Amount shall be returned by TDC to HRM at the end of the Fiscal Year.
- e) HRM may cease providing and/or cancel its provision of the Contribution Amount (or any portion thereof) without notice if in HRM's sole opinion TDC breaches any term or condition of this Agreement, including but not limited to the failure of TDC to achieve the outcomes as annually set.

Section 3.04 HRM Rates and Services

- a) For the Term of this Agreement, TDC shall provide HRM the rates and services described in Schedule "A".

SECTION FOUR FINANCES, RECORDS AND INFORMATION SERVICES

Section 4.01 Registry of Joint Stocks

- a) TDC shall maintain active status as a Society pursuant to the Societies Act.

Section 4.02 Accounting Records

- a) TDC shall maintain a complete and proper set of accounting records for not for profit and charitable organizations as established from time to time by Chartered Professional Accountants Canada.

Section 4.03 Municipal Audit

- a) HRM shall have the right, at its own expense, and with reasonable notice, to audit or examine the books of account and records maintained by TDC pursuant to this Agreement and the right to make copies thereof and take extracts therefrom.

Section 4.04 Annual Reports

- a) TDC shall provide a business plan and budget to HRM each Fiscal Year of the Agreement.
- b) TDC shall provide audited financial statements to HRM no later than June 30th of each Fiscal Year of the Agreement.

- c) TDC shall provide a written report to HRM no later than June 30th of each Fiscal Year summarizing the activities funded by the Contribution Amount in the previous Fiscal Year with reference to the annual mutual agreed set outcomes.
- d) TDC understands and agrees that HRM may use any and all of the above-referenced reports in its consideration of any future funding requests from TDC.

Section 4.05 Meetings

- a) Twice per year TDC employees will meet with the HRM Liaison, Community Facility Partnership Coordinator (or agents) to discuss matters related to this Agreement or coordination of HRM and TDC's programming.

SECTION FIVE LIABILITY AND INDEMNITY

Section 5.01 Risk

- a) TDC agrees to supply at its sole cost and expense all staff, equipment and resources necessary to operate TDC.

Section 5.02 Limitation of Liability

- b) HRM is not a guarantor of TDC and in no event will HRM be liable for any direct, indirect, consequential, exemplary or punitive damages, regardless of the form of action, whether in contract, tort or otherwise.

Section 5.03 Indemnification

- a) TDC agrees that it will, from time to time, and at all times hereafter, well and truly save, keep harmless and fully indemnify HRM, its successors and assigns, from and against all actions, claims and demands whatsoever which may be brought against or made upon HRM and against all loss, liability, judgments, claims, costs, demands or expenses which HRM may sustain or suffer, resulting from or arising out TDC's operations or out of HRM's contribution of the Contribution Amount to TDC.

SECTION SIX GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 6.01 Notices

- a) All notices, demands, requests, approvals or other communication of any kind which the parties may be required or may desire to serve on each other in connection with this Agreement shall be delivered by registered mail to:

Halifax Regional Municipality

Attention: Maggie MacDonald, Executive Director Parks and Recreation
P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, NS B3J 3A5

The Discovery Centre

Attention: Mr. Dov Bercovici, President Discovery
Centre
1223 Lower Water St, B3J 3S8 Halifax,
Nova Scotia,

- b) Except in the event of a postal service strike or lockout (in which event the parties hereto agree to temporarily utilize other reasonable methods of communicating any notices), service of any notice or demand so made by registered mail shall be deemed complete on the date of actual delivery as shown by the registry receipt or at the expiration of the seventh business day after the date of mailing, whichever is earlier in time. Either party may from time to time, by notice in writing served upon the other party as aforesaid, designate a different mailing address or different additional persons to which all such notices or demand are thereafter to be addressed.

Section 6.02 Confidentiality

- a) TDC acknowledges that this Agreement is a public document and that any information, document, or record, in any form, provided to HRM by TDC pursuant to this Agreement may be subject to disclosure in accordance with Part XX of the Municipal Government Act ("Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy").

Section 6.03 Governing Law

- a) This agreement shall be governed by and interpreted in accordance with the laws of Nova Scotia.
- b) The parties hereby attorn to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of Nova Scotia to resolve any disputes arising out of this Agreement.

Section 6.04 Effective Date

- a) This agreement will become effective when both parties have signed it. The date of this agreement will be the date this agreement is signed by the last party to sign it (as indicated by the date associated with that party's signature).

Section 6.05 TDC Representations and Warranties

- a) TDC covenants that it has the full power and authority to enter into, and has taken all necessary measures to authorize the execution of this Agreement.

Section 6.06 Entire Agreement

- a) This agreement comprises the entire agreement between the parties in relation to the subject of the agreement. No prior document, negotiation, provision, undertaking or agreement has legal effect, unless incorporated by reference into this agreement. No representation or warranty express, implied or otherwise, is made by HRM to TDC except as expressly set out in this agreement.

[Remainder of page intentionally blank. Signature page to follow.]

The parties have executed this agreement through authorized representatives on the date stated opposite each respective party's signature.

THE DISCOVERY CENTRE

Date

Name:

Title:

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

Date

Name:

Title:

Schedule A - Rates and Services

- 1) The Discovery Centre on an annual basis and for the duration of this agreement will provide an additional 25% off the group rate for all HRM Recreation Programming Day Camps. These bookings cannot be extended to any other HRM affiliated groups/individuals.
- 2) Provision of yearly set outcomes as set during the bi-annual meetings between the HRM and TDC. These proposed agreement outcomes will align to the HRM's People.Planet.Prosperty. Halifax's Inclusive Economic Growth Strategy 2022-2027. These outcomes will continue to build on the success of the 2016-2021 Economic Strategy in the areas of access to arts, culture, recreation and natural assets, improving the conditions for innovation and entrepreneurialism and showcasing Halifax to encourage people to visit, live and work here.