

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

Original Signed by 

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: March 3, 2020

SUBJECT: Social Policy

ORIGIN

December 12, 2017 Regional Council resolution:

That Regional Council request a staff report and recommendations with respect to developing a social policy lens through which to assess future initiatives by:

1. Assessing municipal responses and actions to support; health and livability initiatives, planning and land use policy/by-laws, recreation program delivery, operational services, and other Halifax initiatives.
2. Explore options for enhanced service delivery, not limited to departmental expansion, dedicated resources, partnerships, etc.)
3. Research what other jurisdictions are doing regarding municipal social policies

On September 18, 2018 an Information Report was developed for Regional Council to outline the proposed approach to the above resolution.

On April 16, 2019 a second Information Report was developed for Regional Council to provide a further update on the development of a Social Policy. A presentation was requested based on this report and was given to Regional Council on April 30, 2019.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter

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.

s. 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.

s.34(3) The Council shall provide direction on the administration, plans, policies and programs of the Municipality to the Chief Administrative Officer.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council approve the Social Policy Administrative Order 2020-002-GOV attached to this report.

BACKGROUND

On several occasions in recent years, Regional Council has expressed a desire to have a Social Policy developed for the municipality. Information Reports were provided to Regional Council on September 18, 2018 and April 16, 2019 to update Council on the progress of the development of a Social Policy. The most recent Information Report provided Council with an overview of the work that was underway, an outline of the proposed approach for positively impacting social policy issues, along with a jurisdictional scan of other municipalities. This report can be found in Attachment 1.

A Social Policy formalizes a way of thinking about and responding to the social impact of changes in a community. It can guide decision making, set future direction, identify important connections, and support the alignment of policies and practices both inside and outside an organization. In doing so, a Social Policy defines the role of the municipality in responding to current and future social issues.

Legislation for municipalities in some other provinces provides them different responsibilities and roles than those conferred on Halifax under the HRM Charter. As a result, social policies vary and often reflect the social development priorities of their communities. However, common themes exist in many municipal social policies. Most identify priorities, clarify roles for addressing issues, and provide a foundation for a more integrated, coordinated, and sustainable approach to social policy. This information was included in

the jurisdictional scan that was completed for the April 16 Information Report, which is attached to this report (Attachment 1).

Context

Although the primary responsibility for health and social services in Nova Scotia rests with the province, local governments have the potential to significantly affect the health and wellbeing of citizens at the community level. As the World Health Organization (WHO) has pointed out, municipalities are well-placed to influence the social determinants of health and social inequality. Municipalities have a responsibility to support and advocate for the health and wellbeing of residents. Through tools, ranging from policy and regulation to planning, research, and direct services, cities can have significant effects on the health and well-being of their residents.

While HRM is not mandated to deliver health or social services directly, it has an important role to play in building healthy, inclusive and vibrant communities and creating the conditions for citizens to thrive by working with partners to promote health and well-being. Social policy strives to strengthen communities by enhancing the quality of life for all residents, which in turn contributes to attracting and retaining youth, promoting tourism and business development, and creating places where everyone belongs. At the local level, social policy extends beyond the delivery of traditional social services by focusing on the social determinants of health to address the root causes of issues, such as poverty.

Municipalities routinely make decisions and allocate resources for services like roads, sidewalks, land use, public gathering places, housing, public transit, parks and recreation. Many municipalities adopt policies on issues such as food security and tobacco use in public areas. These decisions can impact the health and well-being of citizens, and many of the tools required to do this are within HRM's mandate. The below table indicates potential ways municipalities can influence social policy. It is important to note this is not an exhaustive list and some components may be interchangeable across dimensions.

Table 1:

Dimension	Components	Municipal Mandate
Built	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of infrastructure • Amenities: parks, street lighting, roads, footpaths, community gardens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land use planning and housing • Transport and traffic management • Recreation facilities • Neighbourhood design • Library facilities • Transit trails and parks/open space • Accessibility
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of place and belonging • Community participation • Perceptions and incidents of public safety • Inclusion/barrier free access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community support services • Art and cultural development • Library services • Recreation services • Land use regulations that influence affordable housing • Public safety • Community events
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic policy • Industrial development • Employment equity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community economic development • Access and equity

Natural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water quality • Native vegetation • Climate change • Natural disasters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water quality • Waste management • Energy consumption • EMO • Access to Green Space
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Several strategies, programs and initiatives that are linked to social policy are already underway at HRM and are helping to advance HRM's Council Priority Outcomes. For example, HRM's Economic Growth Plan 2016-2021 focuses on social issues as part of the strategic goal to make Halifax a better place to live and work. HRM's Public Safety Strategy has a focus on social issues and encourages the municipality and its partners to think upstream to address the root causes of fear of crime, crime, and victimization. The United Way Building Poverty Solutions Report provides several proposed actions to address poverty in HRM. Some of these actions have already been implemented, such as the municipality's Affordable Access Program which offers residents in need deeply discounted or free access to municipal recreation programs and options to defer property tax.

A Social Policy is a framework that will coordinate and highlight existing programs and initiatives, which will allow the municipality to communicate both internally and externally what work is already occurring to support the health and well-being of all residents. The below list provides a non-exhaustive overview of the many programs and initiatives underway across the organization.

Table 2:

HRM Strategies and Plans	Integrated Mobility Plan
	HalifACT 2050
	Affordable Housing Work Plan
	Diversity and Inclusion Framework
	Food Policy Strategy
	Halifax Food Charter
	Public Safety Strategy
	Halifax Economic Growth Strategy
	Youth Services Plan
	United Way Building Poverty Solutions Report
	Regional Plan
	Centre Plan
HRM Programs and Initiatives	Youth Live
	Youth Advocate Program
	Community Grants Program
	Rural Transit Funding Program
	Low Income Transit Pass
	Department of Community Service Transit Pass
	Free Transit for Youth Under 12 Pilot
	Welcomed in Halifax
	Tax Relief for Non-Profit Organizations
Navigator Outreach Program	

	Community Mobilization Teams
	Inclusive Library Programs
	Library Community Navigator Program
	Food Programming at Libraries
	Affordable Access Program
	Parks and Recreation Inclusion Programs
	Mobile Food Market
	Participation in Healthy Communities Working Group
	Participation in Halifax Food Policy Alliance
	Participation in Housing and Homeless Partnership

*For a more detailed list and description of HRM strategies, plans, programs, and services that relate to social policy, please refer to the inventories that have been developed as part of updates to Council on the [Public Safety Strategy](#) and [United Way Building Poverty Solutions Report](#).

DISCUSSION

Social Policy Roles

Municipalities are the closest level of government to people and therefore see and face issues most directly. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (2006) advocates that "cities and communities are the keys to Canada's well-being and prosperity. They are the main drivers of economic growth for the country. They are where most Canadians live, and they set the markers by which our success as a nation is measured". Based on Statistics Canada data, approximately 65% of Nova Scotians that are living below the Market Basket Measure (MBM) poverty line live in HRM. Furthermore, at 18.8%, Halifax has the 7th highest child poverty rate among the 25 large Canadian cities. As such, there must be a "shift" in the way the community organizations and government work together to respond to social policy issues.

The United Way Building Poverty Solutions Report states that if social issues, such as poverty, are going to be addressed, the barriers faced by many in the community require systemic change. The report highlights the need to approach the work holistically and comprehensively. Complex issues such as poverty do not have a single, clear, or correct solution. If these were simple problems, then a single individual or organization could easily identify and implement a solution that would work. Therefore, the role of HRM in collaboration with others is critical and the complexity of social issues requires the involvement of all sectors and engagement of those most affected. A list of the primary stakeholders who are informing the development of HRM's Social Policy is below.

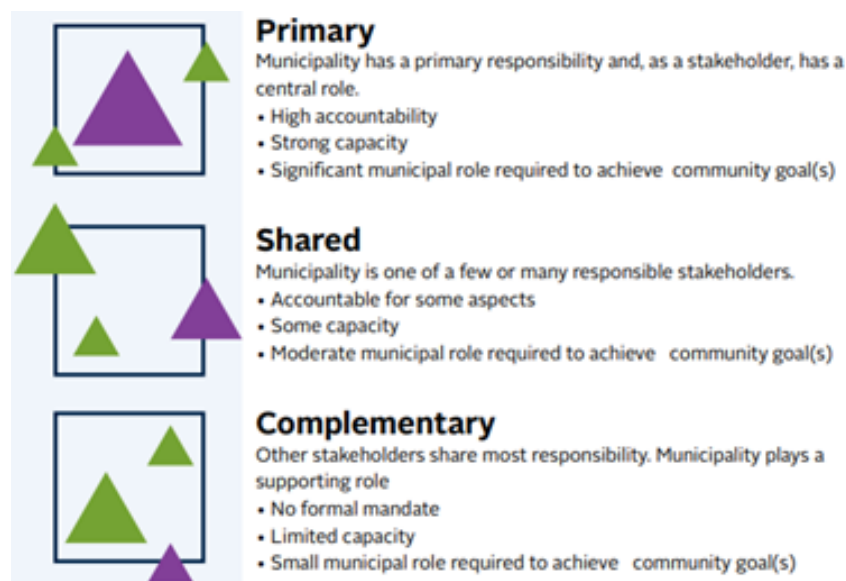
Table 3:

HRM Business Units / Partners	Parks and Recreation
	Public Safety Office
	Office of Diversity and Inclusion
	Planning and Development
	Finance and ICT
	Halifax Transit
	Halifax Public Libraries
	Halifax Partnership and Halifax Innovation District

Other Levels of Government and Agencies	Department of Health and Wellness
	Nova Scotia Health Authority
	Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing
	Department of Community Services
	Develop Nova Scotia
	IWK Health Centre
Community Partners	United Way Halifax
	Between the Bridges
	Inspiring Communities
	Participatory City Foundation
	Common Good Solutions
	Engage Nova Scotia
	Ecology Action Centre

*These are a list of selected stakeholders that have been engaged to date, however, as the Social Policy evolves, this list will shift and grow to reflect the direction of the framework.

Building healthy communities is complex and, as indicated above, involves many institutions, organizations, government agencies and individuals. All partners have a role to play and no single partner can do it alone. It is therefore important for HRM to be strategic and collaborative in its social policy efforts, both internally and externally. The roles outlined in the image below from HRM's Public Safety Strategy align with the roles for HRM in social policy. For any given social policy issue, the municipality may have a primary, shared or complementary role to play.



Within these three categories, the municipality can have multiple roles that are listed below. The municipality may act in one or more of these roles at a given time and can coordinate roles.

Provider: Provide services directly to clients.

and the actions of others.

Planner/Regulator: Develop plans, policies and regulations that affect municipal actions

Capacity builder: Improve the ability of other organizations to deliver and partner on shared goals.

Convener: Draw people and organizations together to explore, strategize and work through opportunities and challenges.

Partner: Work collaboratively with other sectors, levels of government, First Nations, groups and community to accomplish shared goals.

Coordinator: Help individuals and organizations to coordinate initiatives, programs and funding.

Knowledge mobilizer: Communicate, support and develop knowledge and understanding.

Funder: Provide funding to other organizations to do their work (using existing funding mechanisms).

Advocate: Influence decisions and effective policy through an organized effort.

Some roles involve funding and/or resource allocations from the municipality, while other roles involve more limited support, such as advocating to other levels of government for policy or legislative changes. The Social Policy will help to specify the roles that HRM (and other partners) should play with respect to current and future social policy initiatives. In addition to providing clarity for future implementation purposes, the articulation of roles will help in managing expectations.

Draft Social Policy

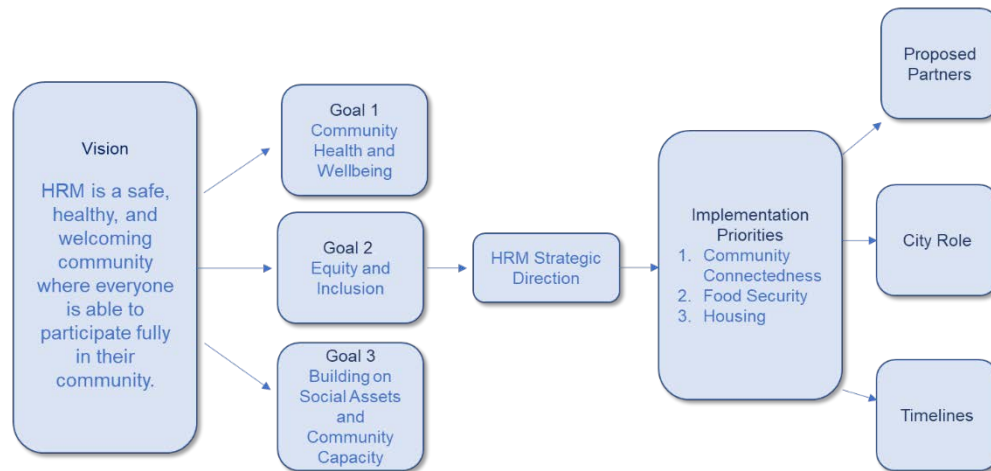
The purpose of HRM's Social Policy is to provide a clearly defined, consistent, and collaborative approach to social policy. This is outlined in Attachment 2, which is the Administrative Order on Social Policy. The Social Policy is a framework intended to guide decisions, activities and outcomes that are compatible with the vision, strategic directions, and principles that have been informed by HRM's Strategic Plan and are outlined below.

The objectives of the Social Policy include:

- Identify social policy areas of focus;
- Provide a foundation for a more integrated, coordinated, and sustainable approach for social policy in HRM;
- Clarify the roles of HRM, in conjunction with other stakeholders, in addressing social policy issues; and,
- Increase internal capacity to understand and influence social policy.

Given the wide scope of social policy and the strategies and actions that already exist, the Social Policy will not develop specific solutions, policies, or targets for any one issue or sector. Rather, the Social Policy will provide a framework for collaboration to occur that contributes to the vision and goals, which are outlined in the structure below.

The framework includes four phases starting with formalizing the areas of focus, followed by the development and implementation of a plan for collaboration and partnerships with stakeholders that outlines proposed partners, roles, and timelines (see infographic below). In areas where this is already occurring, the current work underway will not be duplicated, but rather will be built upon, and will be replicated in other areas where applicable to ensure success. The third and fourth phase will include the development and implementation of internal resources for staff to build and enhance organizational capacity around social policy. These tools are discussed in further detail in the Information Report in Attachment 1.



The vision and strategic directions for the Social Policy reflect the priorities from HRM's Strategic Plan 2017-2021. The areas of focus for the Social Policy, which include community connectedness and mobility, food security, and housing, have been informed through conversations with internal HRM staff, external community partners, provincial agencies, and public engagement sessions that have been conducted for existing strategies and action plans, such as the Building Poverty Solutions Report. Subject to refinement, the following draft vision, goals, areas of focus, and principles are recommended for the Social Policy.

Vision

HRM is a safe, healthy, and welcoming community where everyone is able to participate fully in their community.

Goals

1. Strengthen Community Health and Wellbeing

Strategic Directions

- HRM citizens and visitors are safe where they live, learn, work, and play
- HRM builds resiliency by providing leadership in energy management, sustainability and environmental risk management both as an organization and in the community
- HRM shall be an active partner in supporting community wellbeing programs, such as food security initiatives

2. Enhance Equity and Inclusion

Strategic Directions

- HRM is a leader in building an accessible community where everyone can participate fully in life
- HRM is a leader in fostering partnerships that provide access to a full range of quality, affordable housing options in safe and vibrant neighborhoods
- HRM is a diverse and inclusive community that supports everybody

3. Build on Social Assets and Community Capacity

Strategic Directions

- HRM citizens have access to facilities and natural assets that enable a range of choices for structured and unstructured leisure and recreation activities
- HRM communities, families, youth and seniors have access to social infrastructure that enables them to participate fully in their community
- HRM will implement an integrated mobility strategy that supports growth, development and the transportation of goods and people of all ages and abilities, using all modes including walking, cycling, transit, and motor vehicles, consistent with the Regional Plan

Guiding Principles

The following principles are suggested to guide the implementation of the Social Policy:

1. **Support HRM's Corporate Strategic Direction:** Taken collectively, the Social Policy will contribute to and support the city's corporate strategic plan and existing internal strategies and plans.
2. **Enhance Social, Environmental, and Economic Sustainability:** The Social Policy will address current and future social needs while also being financially viable, environmentally focused, and equity based.
3. **Complement Interests, Policies, Programs, Services and Funding Priorities:** In addition to setting direction for Halifax, the Social Policy will aim to complement other key initiatives, policies, programs, services and funding priorities as well as leverage work underway within other levels of government and within communities and the non-profit sector.
4. **Focus on Assets and Recognize Social Capital:** The Social Policy will build on Halifax's social capital, strengths, and initiatives (ie residents' knowledge and capabilities and connections within and among social networks).
5. **Be Flexible and Resilient:** While providing direction for HRM, the Social Policy will be flexible and adaptable as implementation proceeds and as social context and trends change over time.

Areas of Focus

Strategies that have been developed as identified in Table 2 list several actions that relate to social policy. It is recognized that all these action items are important. However, to ensure work progresses and resources are allocated in a strategic manner that reflect the priorities of HRM and the community, focus areas must be formalized through the Social Policy. As indicated earlier, these areas have been informed through conversations with internal HRM staff, external community partners, provincial agencies, and through public engagement sessions that have been conducted for strategies and action plans linked to social policy. The three key areas that have emerged are: Connected Communities and Mobility, Food Security, and Housing.

The United Way Building Poverty Solutions Report will be used initially to guide the implementation of the Social Policy. As outlined in the in Social Policy Administrative Order (Attachment 2), the CAO will establish an internal social policy working group. The Social Development Outcome team which currently exists as part of HRM's corporate strategic planning process will take on the role of this working group. It is comprised of representatives from most Business Units across the organization. Using this internal team will allow for greater collaboration across the organization for social policy issues, while also helping to support and advance the annual corporate strategic planning process.

The first phase will be to update and maintain an inventory of current work within each of the three focus areas. Common indicators of progress will be used to report on progress, ensure transparency and enable evidence-based decision-making in social policy. As this work is occurring, the Social Development Outcome team will be used as a vehicle to ensure coordination and collaboration for social policy initiatives. The second phase of this work will involve using data to identify gaps and determine next steps for action in collaboration with partners to help further advance the three focus areas:

1. Connected Communities and Mobility

Connectedness and a sense of belonging are important for healthy communities and are essential to help solve larger problems like social isolation. Enhancing community cohesion and engagement builds resiliency in communities and is a priority objective from HRM's Public Safety Strategy. Initiatives at HRM already underway are aiming to help address these issues. For instance, community mobilization teams which help to build community capacity to support community response and recovery from the experience

of a traumatic incident. The Affordable Access Program is helping to make transit more affordable for people, while improving their quality of life and enhancing social inclusion. The Recreation Funding Access Program provides recreation opportunities to children, youth and adults in financial need to ensure they can participate fully in activities in their community.

2. Food Security

Facilitating food security has taken on increased significance and is now recognized as a critical element in supporting the health and well-being of residents. Food security is one of the seven focus areas for change from United Way's Building Poverty Solutions Report and is included in both the Economic Growth Strategy and the Public Safety Strategy. HRM recently endorsed the HRM Food Charter and affirmed HRM's membership on the Halifax Food Policy Alliance, which is committed to addressing food security. In 2016, HRM partnered with the NS Health Authority and Ecology Action Centre to pilot a mobile food market utilizing a Halifax transit bus with the goal to increase access to affordable, high quality, fresh fruit and vegetables in communities with limited access to healthy food. Other areas within HRM, including Parks and Recreation and Halifax Libraries, are helping to address food security through recreation programming related to food, community gardens, and the Food Smart Project which provides healthy snacks and food literacy programs at six library branches.

3. Housing

Like food, housing is a fundamental human need and a determinant of health. Without core housing needs that allow for affordable, suitable, and adequate shelter, it is challenging for individuals and their families to reach their full potential. With HRM seeing increases in its population growth, along with increasing real estate prices, and decreasing rental vacancies, responding to housing need across the municipality for all income levels is a key focus area. In May 2007, the Navigator Street Outreach Program was established to address homelessness and panhandling in downtown business districts. The program assists those in need with securing and maintaining housing and employment. Furthermore, on October 2013, Regional Council endorsed HRM's formal participation in the Housing and Homelessness Partnership. The Partnership is made up of various levels of government and organizations with the goal "to end housing poverty and homelessness in the Halifax Region". The Partnership is organized around the Homelessness Working Group and Affordable Housing Working Group. In July 2018, Regional Council directed staff to proceed with the initiatives contained in the Affordable Housing Work Plan.

Key Assumptions

Ongoing work on the Social Policy will be based on three key assumptions:

1. Building on a foundation and forging new territory — HRM already has many policies, strategies, and initiatives that pertain to social policy (Table 2). The Social Policy will be guided by the Building Poverty Solutions Report and strives to strike a balance by focusing on meeting immediate need (alleviation) while also addressing underlying root causes.
2. Collaborating and clarifying roles — In addressing current and future social policy concerns, HRM needs to be strategic, set priorities, and work in collaboration with other levels of government, First Nations, community partners, and key stakeholders.
3. Ensuring adequate resources are allocated — HRM staff are already working on social policy matters. Having defined areas of focus, along with clear connections and linkages to existing strategies, will ensure work is prioritized appropriately. Furthermore, enhanced collaboration, partnerships, and information sharing have the potential to create more efficiencies and reduce the likelihood of scaling back important work.

Next Steps

The process outlined to finalize and implement the Social Policy includes four main phases listed below:

Phase 1 (Spring- Fall, 2019: Complete)

- Research, analysis, and draft Social Policy preparation

Phase 2 (Fall 2019- Spring 2020)

- A Social Policy Administrative Order will be developed.
- An updated inventory of existing work under the three focus areas will be completed, along with the creation of a Terms of Reference for the Social Development Outcome Team to understand how coordination and collaboration of social policy issues will occur across the organization, along with external partners.
- Common indicators of progress will be used to report on progress, ensure transparency and enable evidence-based decision-making in social policy.

Phase 3 (Spring- Fall 2020)

- Development of social policy tools and resources to build staff capacity across the organization. This includes the creation of a social policy lens to assist in the consideration of social, economic, and environmental aspects when assessing or developing policies and programs.

Phase 4 (Fall, 2020- Winter 2021)

- Implementation, training, and monitoring of social policy tools and resources in the organization.
- Ongoing monitoring and evaluation and identification of gaps within the areas of focus

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Currently, there are no financial implications as a direct result of this report. As workplans are developed, financial implications will be identified and brought forward during the Council budget process if required.

RISK CONSIDERATION

There are no significant risks associated with the recommendation in this report. The risks considered rate low.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In preparing this report, staff have held discussions with key internal and external stakeholders outlined in Table 3. Should Council identify any stakeholders not engaged to date, further engagement can be requested.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None identified at this time.

ALTERNATIVES

Regional Council may recommend that the Social Policy Administrative Order be revised, and further engagement conducted.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Information Report to Regional Council on April 30, 2019: Update on Development of a Social Policy Framework

Attachment 2: Social Policy Administrative Order

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: Mary Chisholm / Senior Policy Advisor / 902.476.4327



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Item No. 14.1

Halifax Regional Council

April 16, 2019

April 30, 2019

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

Original Signed by 

John Traves, Director of Legal

Original Signed by 

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: March 20, 2019

SUBJECT: Update on Development of a Social Policy Framework

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

December 12, 2017 Regional Council resolution:

That Regional Council request a staff report and recommendations with respect to developing a Social policy lens through which to assess future initiatives by:

1. Assessing municipal responses and actions to support; health and livability initiatives, planning and land use policy/by-laws, recreation program delivery, operational services, and other HRM initiatives.
2. Explore options for enhanced service delivery, not limited to departmental expansion, dedicated resources, partnerships, etc.)
3. Research what other jurisdictions are doing regarding municipal social policies.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

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s. 2 The purpose of this Act is to:

- a) enhance the ability of the Council to respond to present and future issues in the Municipality; and
- b) recognize that the functions of the Municipality are to
 - i. provide good government,
 - ii. 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
 - iii. develop and maintain safe and viable communities.

BACKGROUND

As per the Origin section of this report, Regional Council has requested that staff explore the development of a social policy lens. The intent of this report is to provide an interim update for Council on work currently underway, and includes a jurisdictional scan and outline of the proposed approach for dealing with social policy issues. A recommendation report will be provided to Regional Council in the Fall, which will provide Council with a proposed social policy framework.

Council has had an interest in exploring several social policy issues in recent years. One of these issues was a motion to provide options for incorporating social economic benefit, living wage and environmental impact into procurement policy and processes: the work toward developing a social policy approach will inform possible municipal programs and initiatives in the area of social policy, including procurement.

DISCUSSION

Social Policy

Policy formation is the process by which social problems are identified, defined, and assessed and recommendations are made to address them. Policy formation spans from the identification of an issue, through its definition and assessment of available options, to the final decision reached to address the issue. Policy processes can occur in a linear fashion (Fig.1), or in a non-linear fashion which occurs when each stage of the process feeds back to previous stages, where appropriate (Fig. 2).

Fig.1 Linear Policy Process

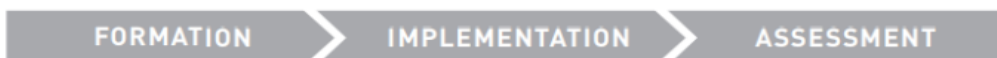


Fig.2 Non-Linear Policy Process



The linear process in Fig.1 does not accurately reflect how most social policy processes proceed in the real world. Social policy is complex, and political, economic, environmental and health events are creating new kinds of policy problems and challenges at the global and local level. Among many definitions of “social policy”, the description from Alberta’s Social Policy Framework¹ is a useful starting point.

“What is social policy?”

Social policy determines the kind of society that Albertans want for themselves, their families, and their communities. It expresses how we care for (and about) one another, and it influences our development as people and a society. As a result, social policy extends beyond a narrow definition of social services and supports: it is about how we work, live, and spend our time, and it helps determine how we come together to meet human needs like housing, employment, education, recreation, leisure, health, safety, and the care of children.”

Over the past decades, social policy efforts have focused on addressing specific deficiencies and filling gaps; the result has been programs that address single issues or needs (e.g., specifically targeting child

¹ <http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/documents/spf-full-report.pdf>

care, income support, labour shortages, or supports for seniors). To achieve results that both reflect current needs and solve persistent, complex social challenges, innovative approaches have emerged, including the development of social policy frameworks or lenses.

Policy frameworks are tools that can guide decision making, set future direction, identify important connections, and support the alignment of policies and practices both inside and outside an organization. They are blueprints or roadmaps to help guide an organization. A social policy framework formalizes a way of thinking about and responding to the social impact of changes in a community. In doing so, the framework defines the role of the municipality in responding to current and future social issues.

Service Exchange

Whether, and how, Halifax should support social policy initiatives is linked to some decisions about which governments should be responsible for certain activities, called the “service exchange.”

In 1996 when the provincial government amalgamated Halifax, Dartmouth, Bedford and Halifax County, the Task Force on Local Government report noted that “from the standpoint of equity, services of province-wide concern should not be provided or financed locally, nor should the Province provide or pay for service of local concern”. The Task Force recommended the Province assume responsibility for all aspects of justice administration, social services financing and delivery, and municipal boards of health. Municipalities in turn would become responsible for all local police services and local streets and roads. This “service exchange” essentially removed municipalities, including the new Halifax Regional Municipality, from directly delivering social assistance. The province-wide single tier system for community services became effective April 1, 1996.

Two agreements cover the main elements of service exchange for Halifax. Agreement No. HRM-01 – Halifax Regional Municipality covered the conditions under which highways and their maintenance were transferred from the province to the Municipality. The Social Services Exchange Agreement – April 9, 1996 spelled out the ground rules for delivery of social services.

Service exchange did change the rules about some aspects of service delivery but it did not mean that HRM, or any other municipality in Nova Scotia, could not have a role in social policy issues. The agreement stipulates that the Province is responsible for setting social policy, but it does not prevent Halifax from taking “actions to social support, health and liveability initiatives.” Many “traditional” municipal roles have significant impact, directly or indirectly, on social issues.

Current “social” programs in Halifax Regional Municipality

Some Halifax by-laws, administrative orders and policies already deal with social issues to a certain extent. Two of Council’s current priorities relate to social development:

- (1) HRM’s communities have access to social infrastructure that supports all segments of the community and Healthy, Liveable Communities; and
- (2) HRM is a safe, livable and sustainable community that encourages public engagement and participation in civic life.

HRM’s Economic Growth Plan 2016-2021 focuses on social issues as part of the strategic goal to make Halifax a better place to live and work². HRM’s Public Safety Strategy also has a focus on social issues, and encourages the municipality and its partners to think upstream, or systemically and holistically about the complex, multiple, and interconnected roots of social problems such as crime³. The social policy work currently underway at HRM has been inventoried in both the Public Safety Strategy Update⁴ and the Building Poverty Solutions- Ideas for Action Report⁵.

² <https://www.halifax.ca/business/economic-development/economic-strategy>

³ https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/Public_Safety_Strategy.pdf

⁴ <https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/190115rci04.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/190129rc1431.pdf>

Examples of social programs and initiatives underway in HRM include:

- Low Income Transit Pass Pilot Program
- Community Mobilization Team Pilot Program
- Establishment of the African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office
- Creation of a Diversity & Inclusion Office
- Promoting community food security (mobile food market)
- Creation of the Community Street Outreach Program
- Participation in the Housing & Homelessness Partnership
- Collaboration with United Way on the Building Poverty Solutions Ideas for Action
- Creation of a Local Immigration Partnership
- Programs for disadvantaged youth (Youth Advocate Program and Youth Live, Multi Service Youth Centre Pilot)
- Development of an Accessibility Framework
- Navigator Street Outreach Program

Halifax also has many tools and policy levers that can support social policy activities. A few examples include:

- Planning and Development
 - Pedestrian friendly neighbourhoods
 - Zoning
 - Building guidelines
 - Removing obstacles and encouraging accessibility
- Transportation
 - Active transportation
 - Transit
- Parks and Recreation
 - Access to programs
 - Use of facilities
 - Grants programs
 - Encouraging more volunteering
 - Strengthening community organizations

Jurisdictional Scan

Across Canada, different governments have varying rules and customs about what they do or don't do with respect to social policy and important social issues. The field changes regularly as citizens press their governments for action on issues considered important. There are examples of various levels of government implementing social policy frameworks, including the province of Alberta, as well as the UK and New Zealand.

As mentioned previously, the province of Alberta developed and adopted a social policy framework in 2012⁶. The framework has three goals, which include: 1) clarify what the province is trying to achieve, and the roles and responsibilities of different actors and participants; 2) coordinate within and between government departments, to harmonize work between government and other stakeholders, and to ensure that there is policy alignment and consistency; and 3) influence and guide the work of the province to provide overall direction to planning and decision making. Other elements of the framework include a vision, desired outcomes, principles, roles and responsibilities, and policy shifts.

The UK government uses a formalized impact assessment system for all policy interventions and reforms. While not a social policy framework, the impact assessment system has led to many of the policy process

⁶ <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/e269764d-e3ed-431c-9db3-b65073cc6e51/resource/998e15a5-c992-4a61-b6b4-2957eb6227d6/download/6214203-2013-albertas-social-policy-framework-2013-02-28.pdf>

changes that come from a social policy framework⁷. In New Zealand, a similar tool is used called a health impact assessment, which assesses the impact of policies on health, wellbeing and equity⁸. It helps facilitate policymaking that is based on evidence and focused on outcomes, and encourages collaboration between a range of sectors and stakeholders.

Legislation for municipalities in other provinces often gives them different responsibilities than those conferred on Halifax under the HRM Charter. Regardless of legislative authority, many municipalities have undertaken extensive work developing social policies and social policy frameworks. The below table outlines how cities across Canada have identified their role in social policy.

Comparator City	Role of Social Policy in Municipality
City of London	In 2006, the City of London developed a social policy framework to identify issues related to well-being and quality of life and to establish the role that the City of London would take in addressing those issues ⁹ . London adapted successful models developed in other jurisdictions to meet their local needs and context. The social policy framework defines guiding principles and a model outlining the key social issues to be addressed. The role of the municipality, as well as other community stakeholders, is defined.
City of Red Deer	In 2015, the City of Red Deer developed a social policy framework for helping to sustain the social-wellbeing of the community ¹⁰ . The framework was developed as a learning system, which may over time be adjusted as the organization learns through implementation. The main components include: 1) a mechanism for evaluating and addressing community needs; 2) a foundation for coordinating strategic actions; 3) a lens that helps to identify what the community wants to achieve and how to get there, and 4); a system to consider complex social goals across the municipal business units.
City of Brampton	The City of Brampton’s 2040 Vision, Living the Mosaic, was released in 2018 ¹¹ . While the City of Brampton does not currently have a social policy framework, this document highlights the need for one. One of the main areas Brampton hopes to target with a social policy framework is poverty. Another component highlighted as part of the framework, is the development of a Social Advisory Council. The Council will provide ongoing input and advice into the local social agenda of Brampton. The plan is to have this as a citizen based group, and it will therefore offer the

⁷ <https://www.hra.nhs.uk/planning-and-improving-research/policies-standards-legislation/uk-policy-framework-health-social-care-research/>

⁸ <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/health-impact-assessment>

⁹ https://www.london.ca/About-London/community-statistics/social-issues/Documents/social_policy_framework.pdf

¹⁰ <http://www.reddeer.ca/city-government/plans-and-projects/ongoing-plans-and-projects/social-policy-framework/>

¹¹ <https://www.brampton.ca/EN/City-Hall/Documents/Brampton2040Vision/brampton2040Vision.pdf>

	user perspective to ensure policies and programs are user-centric.
City of Victoria	The City of Victoria's draft strategic plan (2019-2023) includes the following priority areas: Reconciliation and Indigenous Relation, Affordable Housing, Prosperity and Economic Inclusion, Health, Well-Being and a Welcoming City, Climate Leadership and Environmental Stewardship, Sustainable Transportation, Strong Liveable Neighbourhoods. Many of the outcomes associated to the priority areas relate to social development ¹² . There are measures for each outcome area that are reported on.
City of St. John's	The City of St. John's has an initiative called Healthy City St. John's, which involves making changes in neighbourhoods to promote mental and physical health, strengthen capacity and create a sustainable healthy future for all ¹³ . They also have a 10-year affordable housing plan.
Quebec City	Quebec has developed a vision for community and social development that is outlined in a detailed document. Their goal is to enable every citizen to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participate actively in social life; • fully develop its potential; • get its fair share of the collective enrichment¹⁴.
Regional Municipality of Waterloo	The Region of Waterloo's strategic plan for 2019-2023 is currently under development. However, in 2012 they published a report focusing on the social determinants of health in certain neighborhoods. The report helped to identify what programs and services should be available in those areas ¹⁵ .
City of Regina	The City of Regina does not have a social policy framework, but indicate they are committed to providing inclusive, affordable services and programs for all residents. They outline all of these programs and services online under a page dedicated to social programs ¹⁶ .

Lessons learned from policy frameworks in other jurisdictions include, but aren't limited to the following:

- expectations must be managed, so that all parties understand the process and their roles;

¹² <https://www.victoria.ca/assets/City~Hall/Mayor~Council/Documents/City%20of%20Victoria%202019-2022%20Draft%20Strategic%20Plan.pdf>

¹³ <http://stjohns.ca/living-st-johns/your-city/healthy-communities>

¹⁴ <https://www.ville.quebec.qc.ca/apropos/planification-orientations/developpement-communautaire-et-social/index.aspx>

¹⁵ https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/regional-government/resources/Reports-Plans--Data/Public-Health-and-Emergency-Services/2012SDOH_ValidationReport.pdf

¹⁶ <https://www.regina.ca/residents/about-regina/social-programs/index.html>

- horizontal processes are needed for cross communication and collaboration amongst business units, other levels of government, non-governmental organizations, and the public;
- social policy frameworks should connect to environmental and economic plans;
- multiple modes of engagement in the consultation process are needed and consultation must be broad and create feedback loops with participants;
- shared indicators and reliable data must exist or be developed.

Proposed Approach

Any lens or framework needs a foundation of values or principles to guide how it is used and ensure coordination of programs and policies with social components. In the absence of a formal social policy, these values/principles arise from the by-laws, administrative orders, and policies adopted and implemented by Regional Council. The development of a social policy framework will clarify what the municipality is trying to achieve, along with defining the roles and responsibilities for different actors and participants. The framework will coordinate existing and new activities within and between business units and harmonize work between government and other stakeholders to ensure there is policy alignment and consistency.

The resulting framework will consist of six core components. A draft version is provided for the vision and goals, which have been informed by HRM's Strategic Plan 2017-2021, including Council's existing Priority Areas. The remaining four components will be developed through feedback and input from internal networks.

- a clear vision for the future of social policy in HRM;
 - *HRM is a safe, healthy, and welcoming community where everyone has access to the social infrastructure that enables them to participate fully in their community.*
- a statement of goals that establishes the foundation and purpose of social policy in HRM;
 - *reduce inequality;*
 - *protect vulnerable people;*
 - *create a person-centered system of high-quality services; and*
 - *enable collaboration and partnerships.*
- a list of the desired outcomes (or measurable results) to be achieved through social policy;
- an expression of key principles to guide collective efforts in working towards these outcomes;
- a description of the roles and responsibilities of those involved with making the outcomes a reality; and
- a core set of actions—priority commitments where HRM has pledged to play a leading role.

Policy Shift

Councillors, staff, residents and others interested in seeing the municipality improve bring a wide variety of ideas to Regional Council that impact social development. Until now, Council has managed those ideas by assessing them against the legislation, by-laws, administrative orders, policies, strategies and other guiding documents that have been adopted over the years. The current structures and processes are perfectly designed to achieve the outcomes that currently exist.

To achieve new outcomes, a "shift" in the way the organization responds to social policy issues is necessary. The United Way Building Poverty Solutions Report stated that if social issues, such as poverty, are going to be addressed, the barriers faced by many in the community require systemic change. The report highlighted the need to approach the work holistically and comprehensively¹⁷. Complex issues, such as poverty do not have a single, clear, or correct solution. If these were simple problems, then a single individual or organization could easily identify and implement a solution that would work.

¹⁷ <https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/standing-committees/180326cped1031.pdf>

The development of a social policy framework will take a systems approach, which recognizes that all social organizations and the individuals within them are connected and form a complex whole. To increase the odds of impacting change, the shifts listed in the table below have been identified as a series of principles and innovative ways of thinking and working together. As the shifts occur, research indicates there will be a higher commitment to action, more relevant and effective solutions, more effective use of resources, and a focused application of knowledge and expertise¹⁸.

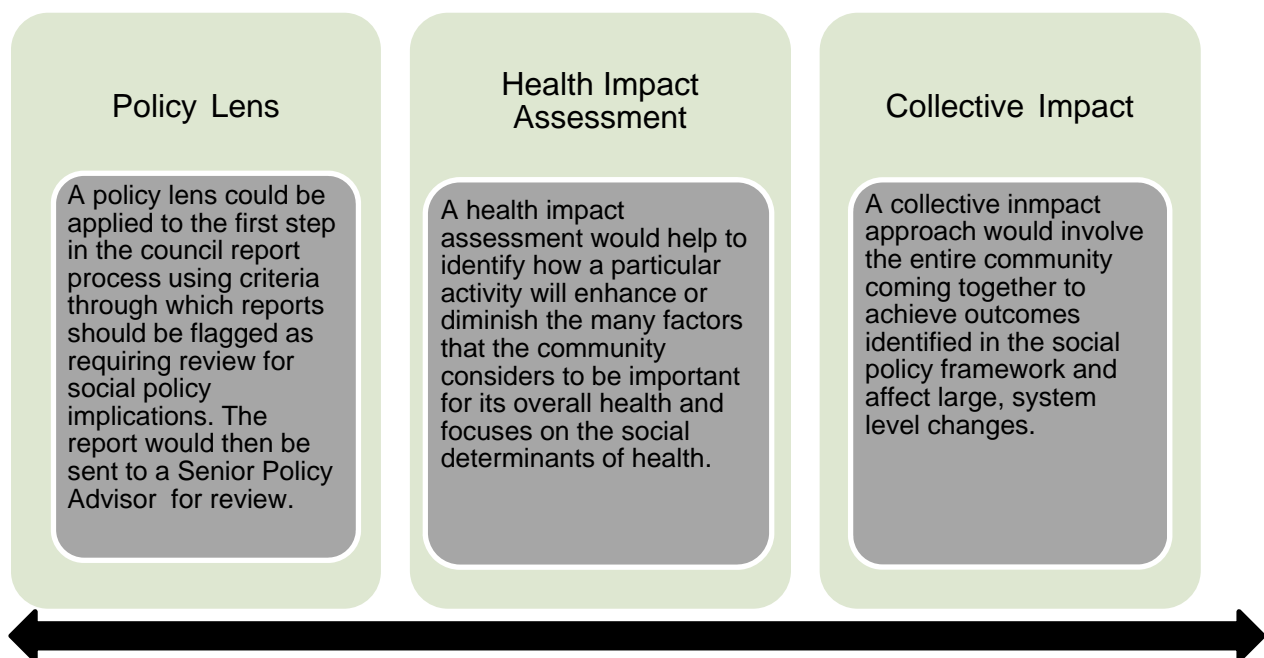
FROM	TO
Programmatic responses	Systemic thinking
Do for people	Do with people
Incremental, organizational level outcomes	High aspiration community-wide outcomes
Working in silos	Collective Ownership
Focus on symptoms	Focus on root causes

Tools

The social policy framework will develop and evolve over time. While it is intended as a resource to guide efforts in social policy for HRM, it will be a living document that can respond to complex and changing issues. The framework is not a substitute for decision-making, but a resource to guide thinking and discussion. The framework will provide a structured method and tools to assist decision-makers in assessing how well an existing or new policy, program or practice is working or might work. Depending on the type and impact of the decision, there will be different tools available.

If the decision is more routine, a series of questions may be considered internally to understand the social impact. These questions may include the impact of a decision on the availability of social / recreational activities, people’s sense of safety and physical security, etc. If the decision has a larger impact, a higher level of engagement with community, other levels of government, and relevant stakeholders may be required. The process of when and how to apply these tools will be outlined in the framework.

The image below outlines the spectrum of tools available and possible examples where each could be used.



¹⁸ https://www.strathcona.ca/files/files/at-fcs-social_framework_for_strathcona_county.pdf

The City of Strathcona has recently implemented a Social Policy Framework that leans toward the collective impact end of the spectrum. Strathcona has used their framework to help develop community hubs. They are currently exploring a 'community hub' model of services to better meet the community's needs. It will be a "one stop shop where social support and information will be available to citizens when and where they need it"¹⁹. They are also exploring areas related to affordable housing, and mental health.

In Antigonish County, the health impact assessment tool was used in 2008 for a proposed development of a large-scale (\$27 million), four-season recreation project (Kepoch-Beaver Mountain)²⁰. There was significant controversy in the community, so the local government agreed to have a community health impact assessment carried out. Fourteen citizens, representing all regions of the community and both sides of the controversy, were brought together to assess the project. The results of the assessment were presented as an additional source of information for council's decision-making. The process helped to build the capacity of community members to become active participants in the decisions that affect the health and well-being of their community.

It is important to note the development of public policy involves many variables, and it is not as easy to judge the effect of these tools on the subsequent decisions of the local government. While it is possible to identify numerous indirect links between social policy tools and decision-making, there is often little evidence to show how these tools directly inform the decision-making process. This may also be caused by the lack of measurable outcomes associated with social policy frameworks, which indicates the need to have measurable outcomes defined from the outset.

Engagement

Developing a social policy framework will be an inclusive process that addresses the perspectives of the public, community leaders, service delivery partners, business units, and other levels of government. Meaningful public dialogue that balances a diverse range of viewpoints will be integral to developing a useful framework. To date, engagement has occurred with the following:

- HRM councillors and business units
- Academic institutions
- Province of NS
- Nova Scotia Health Authority
- Other municipalities across Canada

The results of previous engagement sessions related to social policy will be used to inform the development of the social policy framework. This includes drawing from HRM's Public Safety Strategy, the Building Poverty Solutions Report, and the Municipal Children's Charter Council Report. Moving forward, targeted engagement will happen with those that represent the unique needs of various populations, including minorities, those facing disabilities or living in poverty, as well as the indigenous community, non-profit and business sector. Where possible, partnerships will be established with organizations already engaging these community members. For example, the municipality's Diversity and Inclusion unit has well established networks that can be accessed for this purpose.

Achieving and Measuring Success

A successful social policy framework will enable a common foundation for HRM to evaluate, measure, and report progress in achieving the desired outcomes. The framework will include measurable outcomes to ensure HRM can meet its' current priorities related to social development. A monitoring and reporting process will be outlined in the framework.

¹⁹ <https://www.strathcona.ca/council-county/plans-and-reports/strategic-documents/community/social-framework/>

²⁰ <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.622.4286&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

Next Steps

Activity	Date
Internal network will be developed to advise on the social policy framework. This group will help to encourage horizontal collaboration across business units on social issues.	March- April, 2019
Finalize list of external community stakeholders for targeted consultation, and prepare all necessary material.	March- April, 2019
Work collaboratively with Public Safety Advisor on the development of measures and indicators as part of the community well-being index to ensure this information can be used as part of the measures for the social policy framework.	April, 2019
Submit interim report on proposed approach to social policy framework to Regional Council.	April, 2019
Develop advisory committee for the development and implementation of the social policy framework. This committee membership may include the provincial government, senior management from HRM, and the university, non-profit, and business sector.	May, 2019
Targeted consultation with external stakeholders will occur. A summary of this consultation will be prepared as part of the development of the social policy framework.	May- June, 2019
Final social policy framework will be submitted to Community Planning and Economic Development for review (CPED). Proceed to Regional Council after feedback has been received from CPED.	August- September, 2019
Begin implementation and subsequent monitoring of social policy framework after Council approval.	October, 2019
Hold information sessions for HRM staff on what the social policy framework will mean for them.	October, 2019

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This report has no immediate financial implications, however, depending on the method selected to collect and measure data, there could be financial implications for 2019-2020 and beyond. If funds are required for the 2019-2020 year, GREA has capacity in its existing budget.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As mentioned above, one on one meetings were held with key stakeholders throughout the preparation of this report. During the development of the social policy framework, further targeted community engagement will occur. Previous engagement conducted will also inform the development of the framework, as noted above.

ATTACHMENTS

None

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**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NUMBER 2020-002- GOV
SOCIAL POLICY ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER**

BE IT RESOLVED, as an Administrative Order of the Council of the Halifax Regional Municipality, as follows:

Short Title

1. This Administrative Order may be cited as Administrative Order Number 2020-002-GOV, the *Social Policy*.

Purposes

2. The purposes of this Administrative Order are to:

(a) provide a clearly defined, consistent and collaborative approach to social policy;

(b) endorse Social Policy Areas of Focus;

(c) provide a foundation for a more integrated, coordinated, and sustainable approach for social policy in HRM;

(d) clarify the roles of HRM, in conjunction with other stakeholders, in addressing social policy issues; and

(e) increase internal capacity to understand and influence social policy.

Interpretation

3. In this Administrative Order,

(a) “CAO” means the Chief Administrative Officer of HRM;

(b) “Council” means Halifax Regional Council;

(c) “HRM” means Halifax Regional Municipality;

(d) “Social Policy Working Group” means the working group established by the CAO pursuant to section 7 of this Administrative Order;

(e) “Social Policy Areas of Focus” means the social policy focus areas endorsed by Council and set out in section 6 of this Administrative Order;

(f) “Social Policy Goals” means the social policy goals endorsed by Council and set out in section 5 of this Administrative Order.

(g) “Social Policy Vision” means the social policy vision endorsed by Regional Council and set out in section 4 of this Administrative Order.

Vision

4. Council hereby endorses the following Social Policy Vision:

“HRM is a safe, healthy, and welcoming community where everyone is able to participate fully in their community.”

Goals

5. Council hereby endorses the following Social Policy Goals:

- (a) Strengthen community health and wellbeing;
 - (i) HRM citizens and visitors are safe where they live, learn, work, and play;
 - (ii) HRM builds resiliency by providing leadership in energy management, sustainability and environmental risk management both as an organization and in the community;
 - (iii) HRM shall be an active partner in supporting community wellbeing programs, such as food security initiatives;
- (b) Enhance equity and inclusion;
 - (i) HRM is a leader in building an accessible community where everyone can participate fully in life;
 - (ii) HRM is a leader in fostering partnerships that provide access to a full range of quality, affordable housing options in safe and vibrant neighborhoods;
 - (iii) HRM is a diverse and inclusive community that supports everybody;
- (c) Build on social assets and community capacity;
 - (i) HRM citizens have access to facilities and natural assets that enable a range of choices for structured and unstructured leisure and recreation activities;
 - (ii) HRM communities, families, youth and seniors have access to social infrastructure that enables them to participate fully in their community; and
 - (iii) HRM will implement an integrated mobility strategy that supports growth, development and the transportation of goods and people of all ages and abilities, using all modes including walking, cycling, transit, and motor vehicles, consistent with the Regional Plan.

Areas of Focus:

6. Council hereby endorses the following Social Policy Areas of Focus for the Municipality:

- (a) Connected communities and mobility;
- (b) Food security; and
- (c) Housing.

Roles and Responsibilities

7. The CAO shall:

- (a) establish a Social Policy Working Group, consisting of representatives of HRM Business Units;
- (b) appoint a member of senior management to sponsor and oversee the work of the Social Policy Working Group; and
- (c) seek opportunities to engage and partner with external stakeholders on initiatives addressing the Social Policy Areas of Focus.

8. The Social Policy Working Group shall meet at least quarterly to:

- (a) discuss the implementation and advancement of the Social Policy Vision and Social Policy Goals;
- (b) maintain an inventory of ongoing and completed projects related to the advancement of Social Policy Areas of Focus;
- (c) discuss opportunities to collaborate with other levels of government, First Nations, community partners and other key stakeholders; and
- (d) develop and guide the implementation of social policy tools and resources for HRM staff.

Reporting/Monitoring

9. The CAO (or designate) shall report to Council at least annually on the progress of the Social Policy Working Group, the achievement of the Social Policy Goals, and the advancement of the Social Policy Areas of Focus.