

Sharing Our Stories: Executive Summary

Sharing Our Stories (formally known as the Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan, or *CHPP*) outlines a strategic direction for the municipality to support culture, arts, and heritage throughout the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM). It provides policy direction to make coordinated decisions in guiding the work of the municipality over the next ten years, while also managing our culture and heritage resources to advance HRM as a creative center.

The CHPP will ensure that commitments to diversity and inclusion are prioritized in the Regional Plan and future policy documents. It is a tool to support and enhance HRM's work on Reconciliation, Anti-Black Racism, and Diversity & Inclusion.

Engagement for *Sharing our Stories* has been ongoing since 2019. During that time, HRM has conducted four rounds of engagement with members of the region's numerous diverse communities, community partners, and organizations to review and reconsider our priorities to culture and heritage.

Out of those rounds of engagement, we have co-created 50 actions with external stakeholders that address priorities identified across HRM. These actions cover a variety of categories, including internal policy and workflow, external legislation and regulations, projects and collaboration, and coordination with other levels of government, community organizations, and cultural groups.

Sharing Our Stories identifies central goals, pillars, objectives, and actions to enhance and protect culture and heritage in the municipality. All the actions in this Plan contribute to four central pillars.

THE FOUR CENTRAL PILLARS ARE:

- 1 **Stewardship:** Protecting our culture and heritage assets.
- 2 **Connection:** Repairing trust and working toward an inclusive vision of the future.
- 3 **Celebration:** Celebrating the people who live here and welcoming newcomers as we continue to grow and change.
- 4 **Access:** Providing opportunities for everyone to participate in and enjoy culture and heritage in the HRM.

Along with the pillars, *Sharing Our Stories* also includes a set of goals with approaches to how the municipality develops and supports culture and heritage.

THE THREE GOALS ARE:

- 1 **Expressing Culture Through Place:** Identifying and telling the stories of specific communities, people, and places.
- 2 **Developing Cultural Capacity:** Replenishing, renewing, or developing our cultural services.
- 3 **Valuing Creativity:** Developing a platform for creativity by showcasing our culture and heritage.

VISION

What we want to see for the future, including the qualities and elements needed to make this future a reality. Our vision is the driving force behind the Plan; every outcome will contribute to achieving this vision

We will value culture and heritage:
Protect, grow and express

PILLARS

Core values of the plan, essential to success, and factored into all decisions

STEWARDSHIP

CONNECTION

CELEBRATION

ACCESS

GOALS

Aspirational, defines our role and the approach for achieving the vision

EXPRESS CULTURE

THROUGH PLACE

DEVELOPING CULTURAL
CAPACITY

VALUE CREATIVITY

OBJECTIVES:

Using a matrix of the pillars and goals, objectives represent high-level direction and policy statements for leading the work of the municipality

ACTIONS:

Each action describes a commitment from the municipality, a project, policy, collaboration, or initiative to enhance culture and heritage.

Actions take direction from the pillars and goals: good actions contribute to achieving this vision

These pillars and principles form the framework of the Plan and are designed to guide the protection of our diverse cultures and historic places. They will help diversify and enhance HRM's existing support for culture and heritage while increasing its public accessibility. The actions offer guidance for future policy and investment decisions by the Municipality and will be considered when engaging with Indigenous groups and communities, implementing future projects or updating older policies.

While the *CHPP* contains an extensive list of actions, those actions still require validation from the public and our many stakeholder groups. [Take our 10-minute survey](#) to provide feedback on our current actions.

PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The *Sharing Our Stories* actions list is organized by four different types of engagement based on how residents and communities will participate in implementing the actions:

Empowering Communities These actions are community-directed, and HRM plays a support role. HRM may support communities by removing red tape, providing funds for projects, or being an advocate to other levels of government.

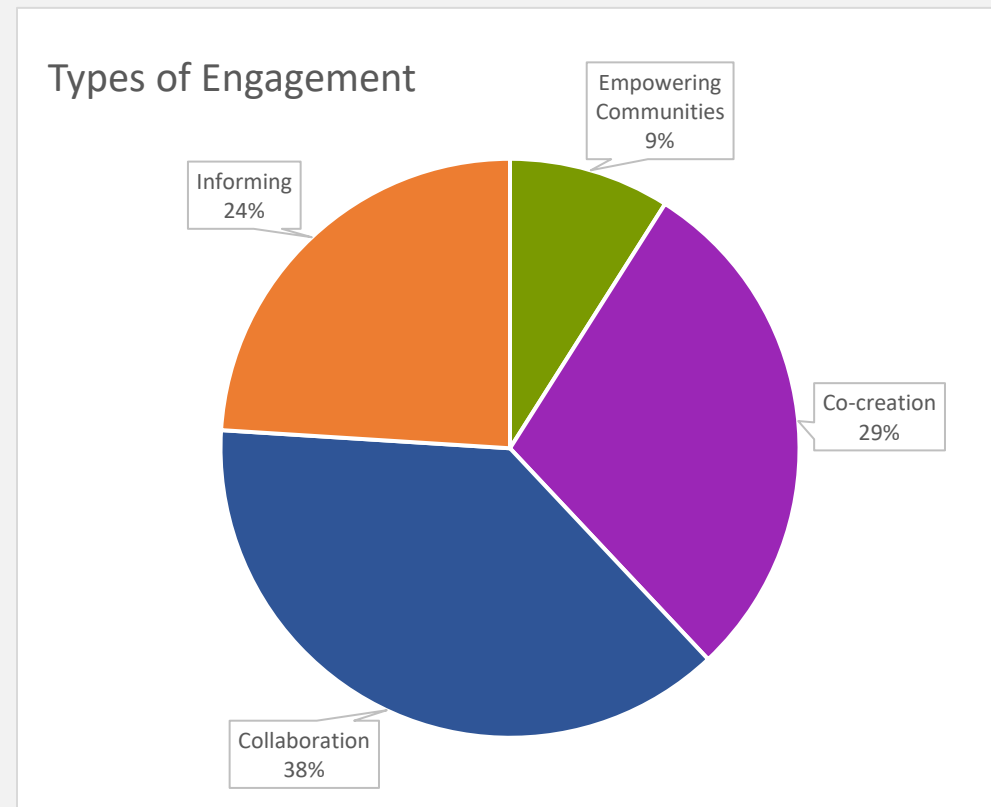
Co-creation: These actions are about involving communities in action planning and implementation from the beginning. Decisions will be made by consensus between HRM and the community and will require close working relationships between action leaders and communities.

Collaboration: The appropriate community partners or the public will be given a meaningful opportunity to provide input. This may be a close collaboration with a specific group, or broader public engagement. The scope of this engagement is higher-level, collaborators will be communicated with as required, and decisions will ultimately be made by HRM.

Informing: These are actions with the most limited level of engagement. Many of these are focused on internal policy and workflow. These actions will be reported on regularly and that information will be made publicly available. In cases where there are specific groups or

individuals that may be impacted by these actions, information will be communicated by HRM to inform them of the change.

The graphic below provides a visual representation of the four types of engagement used in the action list. Of the 45 actions, four are empowering community, thirteen are co-creation, seventeen are collaboration, and eleven are informing.



SHARING OUR STORIES ACTIONS:

1.0: EMPOWERING COMMUNITY

Action 1.1: Explore the development of a Regional Archaeology strategy with the Province, Kwi'mu'kw Mawklusuaqn Negotiation Office (KMKNO), Band Councils from the Region, African Nova Scotian communities, and Acadian Communities.

Action 1.2: Identify and conserve areas of historic and cultural significance by:

- a) Working with the Province to advance proposed amendments to the *Heritage Property Act* to allow for the designation of cultural landscapes;
- b) Exploring opportunities to support or collaborate on community-led mapping, conservation, and asset naming projects;
- c) Supporting community-led land use planning in areas of cultural significance and value; and
- d) Expediting the identification and designation of heritage conservation districts and cultural landscapes (once enabled) and ensuring that the built and cultural heritage of both rural and urban communities are conserved.

Action 1.3: Support and implement community-led projects for identification, celebration, interpretation, and protection of sites in HRM including initiatives supporting the following:

- a) Identify, commemorate, and celebrate the history and significant events and stories of the founding cultures including, but not limited to Mi'kmaq Nations, African Nova Scotian, Acadian, and Gaelic communities, in collaboration with those communities/Nations;
- b) In consultation with Africville stakeholders, explore means to improve interpretation, commemoration and public access to Africville and Africville Lookoff Park through the Africville Visioning process;
- c) Identification, commemoration, and celebration of the significant history of human rights & accessibility milestones, events, landmarks, and history;
- d) Identification, commemoration, and celebration of 2SLGBTQ+ history and landmarks; and
- e) Identification, commemoration, and celebration of other under-represented groups including but not limited to immigrant and newcomer groups.

Action 1.4: Include programming that highlights the diversity of the Municipality. (e.g. African Heritage Month, Asian Heritage Month, Mi'kmaq History Month, Halifax Pride Festival, and other cultural acknowledgments)

2.0: CO-CREATION

Action 2.1: Improve municipal heritage conservation protection and support for a more diverse range of cultures and time periods within the region by:

- a) Diversifying the Municipal inventory of heritage properties by working with communities to identify and protect significant assets;
- b) Developing a framework to guide heritage property, heritage conservation district and cultural landscape programs which ensure the diversity of our communities is represented; and
- c) Reviewing and updating the heritage property and heritage site evaluation criteria to better reflect diverse communities, different time periods, and intangible cultural value.

Action 2.2: Work with Develop Nova Scotia to co-Create a Mi'kmaw truckhouse (similar to a trading post including space for Mi'kmaq merchants) on the Halifax waterfront boardwalk.

Action 2.3: Create a central and prominent space dedicated to African Nova Scotian history and culture.

Action 2.4: Review, update as needed and implement the Point Pleasant Park Masterplan to commemorate the importance of these lands to the Mi'kmaw people.

Action 2.5: Develop a Friendship Accord with Mi'kmaq communities, organizations, Band Councils, and Grand Council, to enhance communication, explore areas for collaboration, opportunities to develop joint projects, and funding proposals to outline the government-to-government relationship.

Action 2.6: Develop a corporate policy to outline Indigenous community engagement, collaboration, celebration, and recognition protocols.

Action 2.7: Strengthen and expand the role of Municipal Archives in being stewards of our civic history. Specific measures to consider include:

- a) Reflect the diversity of the Municipality by actively acquiring community records or supporting stewardship in communities through shared storage and access arrangements;
- b) Strengthen the Municipal Archives mandate through revision of the Administrative Order respecting Information Management;
- c) Consider providing better physical access to the archives including reviewing location and hours of operation;
- d) Provide mentorship and internship opportunities for under-represented Youth; and
- e) Partner with other archives, museums, libraries to preserve and share documentary heritage from our communities in public spaces.

Action 2.8: Partner with KMKNO and Band Councils by completing staff exchanges to support work on collaborative projects, sharing information and educating municipal staff.

Action 2.9: Explore a property transfer to support the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Society's new Centre at 1940 Gottingen Street (former Red Cross Building).

Action 2.10: Explore opportunities for 'land-back' investments through the transfer of parcels of HRM-owned lands to Indigenous entrepreneurs or organizations to develop cultural and creative businesses on that land.

Action 2.11: Work towards community action plans and community benefit agreements with the African Nova Scotian community, in accordance with the direction of the ['Road to Economic Prosperity'](#) report.

Action 2.12: Support and co-create culturally relevant programming including day-camps, events, and programming with community, particularly showcasing diverse cultures, food, sport, and traditions. Consider initiating a call for proposals for instructors and engaging community members as leaders and instructors for this programming.

Action 2.13: When reviewing, updating, or creating policies, procedures, and strategic plans within the Parks and Recreation Business Unit, increase engagement with traditionally under-represented communities

“HRM needs to protect this community to ensure that we don't lose the heritage of our people”
— Participant at African Nova Scotian Engagement

3.0: COLLABORATION

Action 3.1: Develop an Interpretive Master Plan to guide HRM's role and investment in commemorative and interpretive initiatives, artifact and digital collections, and cultural and heritage program delivery.

Action 3.2: Amend Administrative Order 46, Respecting Asset Naming Policies, to promote the increased reflection of Mi'kmaq, Acadian and African Nova Scotian history and culture on municipal assets.

Action 3.3: Enhance signage at all major entry points to HRM to recognize Mi'kmaki as the ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaw people including entry by land, air, and sea.

Action 3.4: Develop an equity lens for transit, active transportation and transportation planning that enhances access to geographically marginalized cultural & heritage sites. Prioritize access to Africville as an initial pilot implementation project, as part of the Africville Visioning Process.

Action 3.5: Complete a Regional Museum Strategy, which will guide the municipal role and support of museums.

Action 3.6: Enhance awareness and support for events commemorating Indigenous History Month, Treaty Day, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, and other significant events.

Action 3.7: Support Discover Halifax's implementation of the Halifax Regional Integrated Tourism Master Plan strategic initiatives, by:

- a) Supporting the development of increased analytical capacity to ensure tourism impacts of proposed investments are accurately identified; and
- b) Continuing the prioritization of new Heritage Conservation Districts and implement a revised public participation program to support the development of heritage conservation districts.

Action 3.8: Continue to strengthen the relationship between the Municipality and the Acadian and Francophone community by implementing the [French Services Strategy's](#) actions on Meaningful Partnerships and Accessible Information & Communication.

Action 3.9: Complete the Cultural Facilities Plan to provide HRM with a strategic Plan that guides the capital investments in, and the development of, cultural facilities.

Action 3.10: Enhance access to community gardens throughout HRM, and partner with cultural communities to create community kitchens and deliver cooking and agricultural support programs, including youth programming.

Action 3.11: Support the attraction and hosting of annual and non-annual events in the region through funding from the Marketing Levy Special Events Reserve and logistical support from the Special Events Task Force.

Action 3.12: Include accessibility considerations when planning civic events, including ensuring social and cultural accessibility, introducing quiet and low-sensory environments, developing accessibility standards for parking and public transportation, providing described

events, and promoting the HRM's accessibility framework, among others.

Action 3.13: Ensure culturally appropriate services and programs are available when organizing engagement and collaboration sessions (e.g., providing food, inviting Elders).

Action 3.14: Adopt a diversity and inclusion lens when creating, amending, or updating all public and stakeholder engagement policies and protocols.

Action 3.15: Undertake the development of a Public Art Masterplan to better integrate the Municipality's Public Art Policy within Municipal planning and operations.

Action 3.16: Consider piloting the creation of both urban and rural arts districts and explore potential to provide incentives to creative industries within these districts to enhance the creative economy.

Action 3.17: Provide in-kind municipal support for arts, culture, and heritage by:

- a) Providing some grounds maintenance at heritage sites, museums and rural community halls to reduce operating costs;
- b) Considering support for organizations to provide interpreters during events; and
- c) Continuing to provide staff resources for major event planning and logistics through the role of SETF (eg, event and transportation planners).

***“We need to build up
relationships so we have
people excited & interested
in having these discussions”
— Participant at Mi’kmaq
Engagement***

4.0: INFORMING

Action 4.1: Through the Regional Plan review and other major projects where policies are amended or reviewed (e.g., secondary plan reviews, priorities plans, AO Amendments), staff shall consider:

- a) Encouraging the adaptive re-use of registered heritage properties and culturally significant buildings through land-use and financial incentives;
- b) Working with community groups to identify opportunity sites for community development projects. Pre-designate areas that are important to communities, or that support cultural development and access; and
- c) Developing policies to encourage the conservation and re-use of culturally or architecturally significant educational and religious institutional buildings.

Action 4.2: Develop conservation management plans for all Municipally owned heritage properties and assets to ensure appropriate levels of conservation, maintenance, and upgrades are achieved to meet accessibility, environmental and heritage conservation standards.

Action 4.3: Develop cultural and heritage impact assessment requirements and criteria within planning documents and municipal by-laws to support the evaluation of new development in heritage contexts, including comprehensive development applications such

as large development agreements, community master planning or secondary plan amendments.

Action 4.4: Support and expand inclusive digital access to municipal culture, art, and heritage.

Action 4.5: Promote the Municipality's event Accessibility Strategy and Special Events Planning Guide when planning civic events.

Action 4.6: Increase access to municipal services in other languages including Mi'kmaq, French, Arabic, and others. Re-establish print communications for rural areas without reliable internet access.

Action 4.7: Enhance Municipal support for privately owned registered heritage properties and properties within heritage conservation districts and cultural landscapes.

Action 4.8: Strengthen organizational commitment to diversity and inclusion by embedding advisors within all business units.

Action 4.9: Enhance the procurement of diverse suppliers for cultural services including food, craft or entertainment.

Action 4.10: Conduct a review of municipal grant and assistance programs related to culture, art and heritage, with the goal of enhancing access to opportunity, inclusivity, efficiency, accountability and transparency.

Action 4.11: Consolidate heritage grant programs under a single incentives program.

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

— Participant at North-End Community Engagement