

Sharing Our Stories: Supporting Culture and Heritage in HRM

What We Heard Report: HRM's Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan

September 28, 2022



INTRODUCTION

Land Acknowledgement

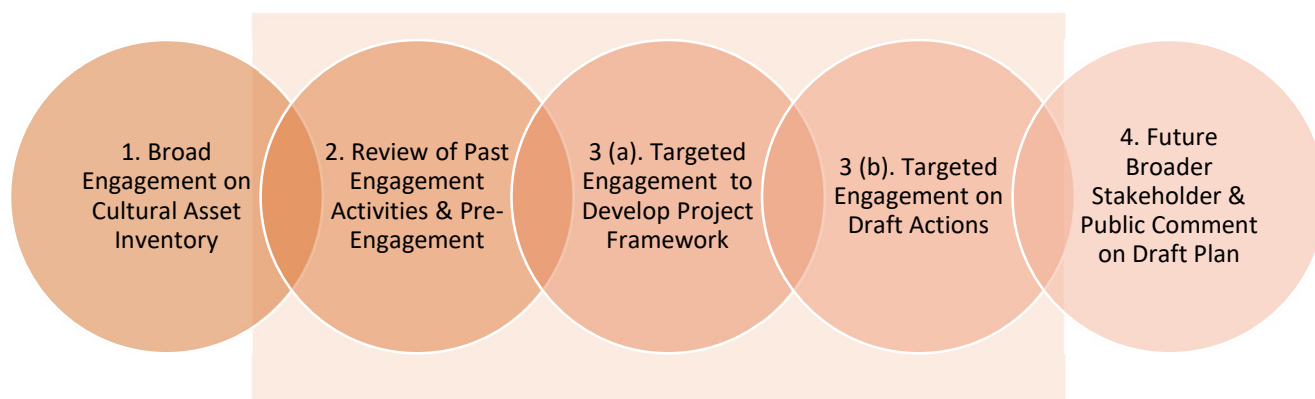
The Halifax Regional Municipality is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and traditional lands of the Mi'kmaq people. The municipality acknowledges the Peace & Friendship Treaties signed in this Territory and recognizes that we are all Treaty People.

What is the Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan (Plan)?

HRM is developing a municipal Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan entitled “*Sharing our Stories*”: a strategic policy document that will direct the creation of municipal policies and guide Council and administrative decisions. Sharing Our Stories will establish clear priorities and identify tangible actions that improve Municipal supports for culture and heritage in the region. It will assist Council and staff when developing official planning documents, annual budgets and investment decisions over the next 10 or more years. The ultimate goal of the Plan is to improve access to culture, promote diversity & inclusion, support cultural development and strengthen the creative economy.

ENGAGEMENT APPROACH AND PROGRESS

Work on Sharing Our Stories has been underway for the past two years and has followed the four phases depicted below. The scope of engagement was tailored to the scope of actions that could be completed and targeted towards co-creation of the fundamental principles of the Plan.

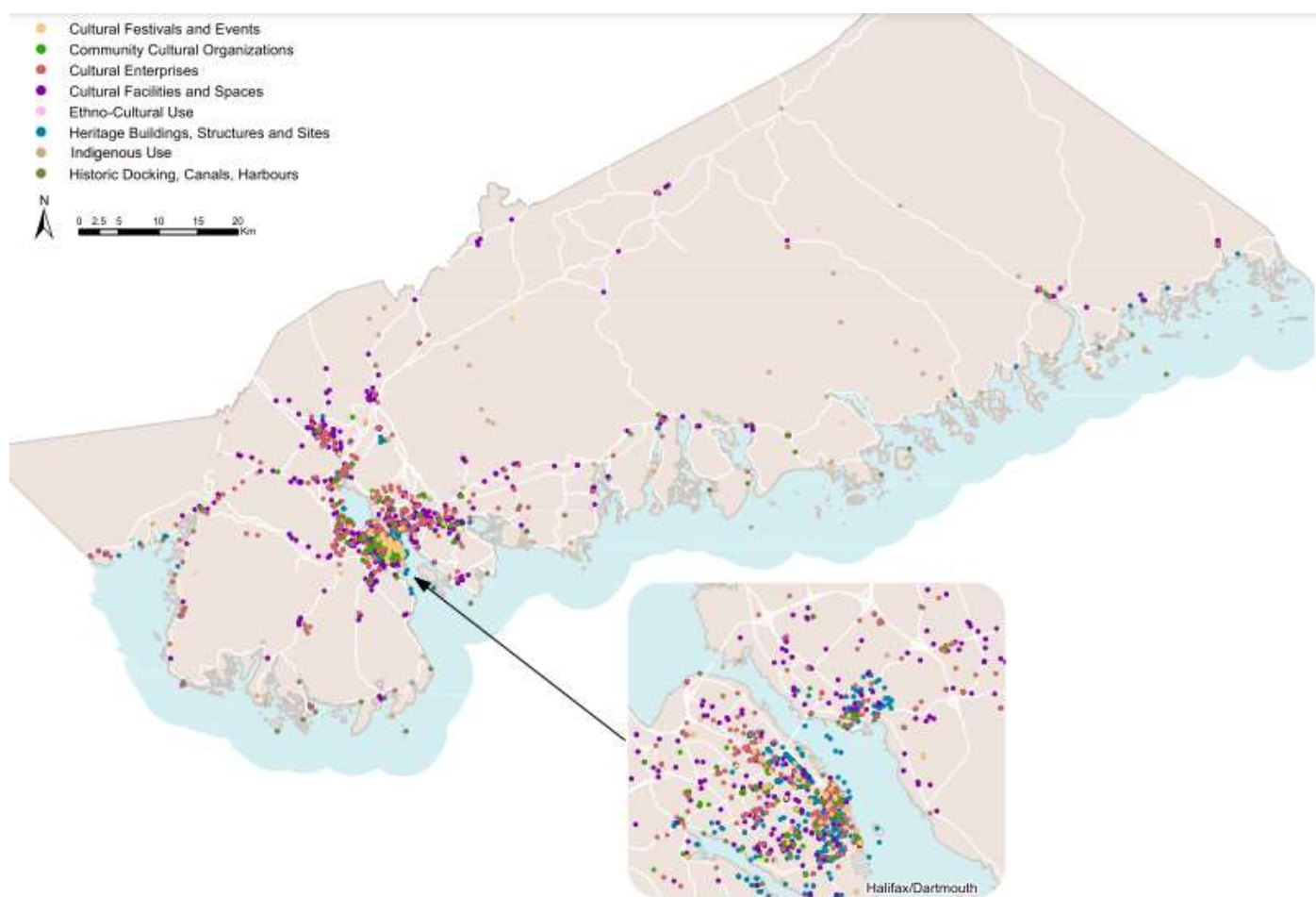


Results which are discussed and presented in this report.

Engagement Phase 1: Developing a Cultural Asset Inventory

An inventory and map of cultural assets was completed in 2018, in partnership with the NS Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage. Stakeholder groups were consulted to identify cultural spaces and facilities. This information was used to form a baseline cultural asset inventory for the region. It has both a database and map listing heritage buildings and sites, landscapes of cultural significance, museums, cultural infrastructure, ethno-cultural facilities, landscapes of cultural significance, and areas of archaeological potential. The Cultural Inventory has over 10,000 cultural assets identified with various levels of information and detail, as indicated on the map below.

Map 1: Cultural Assets in HRM



Engagement Phase 2: Reviewing Previous Engagement Results and Developing Approach

Throughout 2018 and 2019 HRM staff conducted background research on best practices in other jurisdictions, demographic trends, and the results of past engagement activities. The results of this, and the review of engagement related to culture and heritage that has occurred over the past ten years, are summarized within the report. Engagement was completed through a number of means within these previous initiatives including surveys, targeted youth engagement, interviews, focus groups, and open houses. This information was used to identify themes, potential actions, and help define gaps in and to supplement the targeted engagement as part of the Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan. This review also allowed us to find insights with new engagement material that emphasize community priorities.

At the same time, a process was underway to table recommendations specifically for the professional arts community in Halifax. In 2013 Council established a Special Arts and Culture Advisory Committee (SACAC), with membership from the professional arts and culture sector, to consult with stakeholders and advise Council on administrative processes in support of the cultural and arts sector in HRM. Recommendations approved by Council in 2014 included establishing the Arts Halifax Advisory Committee, a professional arts and culture sector advisory committee, to continue ongoing consultations. Arts Halifax brought a final report to Council in 2018. This coincided

with the start of the Plan engagements, so rather than undertake further consultation with the professional arts sector, the work of SACAC and Arts Halifax was used to inform the Plan. The professional arts sector will be re-engaged, along with the broader community, during Phase 4 of the Plan engagement process.

Engagement Phase 3:

Engagement was identified as a key component of Sharing Our Stories, to reach diverse voices and ensure the final Plan is reflective of the community. Given the importance of diversity in the Plan, a targeted engagement program was developed to connect with specific stakeholders and traditionally underrepresented groups. Each of these groups have a specific role in informing how culture and heritage is accessed, maintained, and preserved in the region which is described below:

- **Mi'kmaw and Indigenous Communities:** As the original inhabitants of this land, engagement with Band Councils, cultural guardians, Grand Council members, and the urban Indigenous community were prioritized. HRM has made a commitment to Reconciliation, and many opportunities for actioning this commitment were identified within this engagement process.
- **African Nova Scotian Communities:** HRM is prioritizing conversations and support for historic African Nova Scotian communities that have been here for hundreds of years. Deepening the conversation with these communities will support reparations and identify targeted actions to enhance participation in the municipal realm.
- **Acadian and Francophone Communities:** As descendants of the 17th and 18th century French settlers of Acadia, collaboration with Acadian and Francophone communities is critical to telling the story of the region. Concerns and opportunities raised by Acadian and francophone communities also support francophone immigrants and newcomers.
- **Immigrants and Newcomers:** Culture transforms. Some aspects are retained, some are lost, while others are renewed. Newcomers and immigrants help diversify, invigorate, and enhance culture and heritage assets in the region to make HRM a welcoming and expressive place for everyone. These communities have specific needs and illustrate barriers to accessing existing municipal programs and supports.
- **2SLGBTQ+ Community:** Inclusion and expression of all identities is critical to creating universal access for all residents. Targeted engagement with two-spirited, lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, trans, queer, asexual, allies, and questioning folks illustrates how we can celebrate our diverse identities, create safe spaces, and inclusive investments.
- **Persons with Disabilities:** We want to create cultural facilities, celebrations, and programs that are inclusive to everyone. HRM is in the process of developing an Accessibility Plan, as per the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act, to provide standards around infrastructure, transportation, goods and services. From neurodiversity to physical barriers, this engagement target helped our team understand opportunities for universal design in policy and planning initiatives.
- **Heritage and Museum Stakeholders:** HRM staff have ongoing and close relationships with organizations and individuals that steward our heritage. Interviews with key collaborators help HRM to evaluate ongoing municipal support and identify areas for improving programs, funding, and relationships that contribute to the stewardship of heritage resources.
- **Arts and Culture Stakeholders:** A significant amount of engagement around arts and culture had taken place in previous years, and this feedback helped shape the vision and pillars of the Plan. More specific engagement will be completed once concrete actions can be shared and a draft of the plan is complete.

Engagement rolled out in two distinct phases: initial engagement to build relationships, shape the Plan's framework, and develop the vision and pillars; and follow up engagement to confirm the plan's direction and solicit feedback on actions. Overall, there were 38 meetings with stakeholder groups during both phases of engagement. These took the form of in-person meetings and, after March 2020, virtual meetings, with staff presentations followed by open discussion.

As noted above, the community has been consulted extensively on several related initiatives and expressed a desire to be engaged once concrete plan details were available. Therefore, we drew on the results of past engagements to help inform this initial stage of plan development, including:

- HRM Social Heritage Strategy (2011)
- HRM Traditions Writing & Art Contest, Ages 5-11 (2011)
- Halifax Regional Plan Review (RP+5) Community Engagement (2012-2013)
- Special Advisory Committee on Arts and Culture Report to HRM Staff (2014)
- Halifax Green Network Plan (2015)
- Centre Plan, What We Heard Report (2017)
- Halifax Local Immigration Partnership (HLIP) Stakeholder Consultation Summary (2017)
- French-Language Services Focus Group Report (2017)
- Recommendations on the Structure of the Successor Committee by ArtsHalifax Advisory Committee (2017)
- Accessibility and Inclusion Framework Public Consultation (2018)
- Halifax Higher Education Partnership (HHEP) - Working Group on Higher Education, Arts and Culture in Halifax (2018)
- HRM Task Force on the Commemoration of Edward Cornwallis and the Recognition and Commemoration of Indigenous History (2020)

a) Initial Targeted Engagement

There was an emphasis on proactively engaging historically underrepresented groups to ensure the final Plan reflects the municipality's commitment to diversity and inclusion. As noted above, targeted consultation was directed to prioritize Mi'kmaw and Indigenous peoples, descendants of historic African, Acadian and Francophone communities, emerging and new cultures arriving through immigration to Canada, and to support anti-racism and anti-discrimination considerations when developing inclusive and equitable policy throughout the planning process.

Within each group, youth perspectives were specifically sought out to enhance the depth of the engagement. Initial pre-engagement was undertaken with historically underrepresented groups to help shape the engagement process in a way that brings equity and considers diverse perspectives. These preliminary meetings, interviews, focus groups, and participation by HRM staff in community events provided the team with insight into priorities and potential actions, as well as scoping opportunities and methods of engagement. The outcomes of this initial engagement were:

- Prioritizing Co-creation of goals, actions and priorities of the Plan through initial exploratory conversations'
- Clarifying the role of HRM in supporting Culture and Heritage;
- Bringing the conversation to the community and continuing to find better ways to engage; and
- Being mindful of micro-communities with unique needs, such as language and accessibility.

Throughout 2019, HRM staff developed a framework for Sharing Our Stories built off the feedback to this point that included a Vision, Pillars, Goals and Principles. These were shared at a presentation to the municipality's Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee (CPED) in December 2019, available [here](#).

b) Targeted Engagement to Confirm Plan Framework and Co-create Actions

HRM Staff were in the process of developing policy objectives and action items to be shared with stakeholders for feedback in winter and spring 2020. While this work was impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, staff re-initiated engagement opportunities by continuing the targeted engagement program over the winter and spring of 2021. During this time, additional targeted meetings were held with a variety of communities and organizations, to deepen the conversation and follow-up on initial discussions. The engagement results were used to:

- Confirm feedback that was already heard and address any gaps;

- Confirm the vision and principles of the Plan;
- Identify potential actions and specific thoughts on implementation pathways;
- Gather input on priorities; and
- Build relationships to support implementation of the Plan.

The outcomes of this engagement process are more detailed and reach deeper. The engagement results for phase 3 (a) and (b) have been summarized by group as there were specific and targeted requests and information presented. This feedback enabled the planning team to prepare and finish a full draft of *Sharing Our Stories* in early 2022.

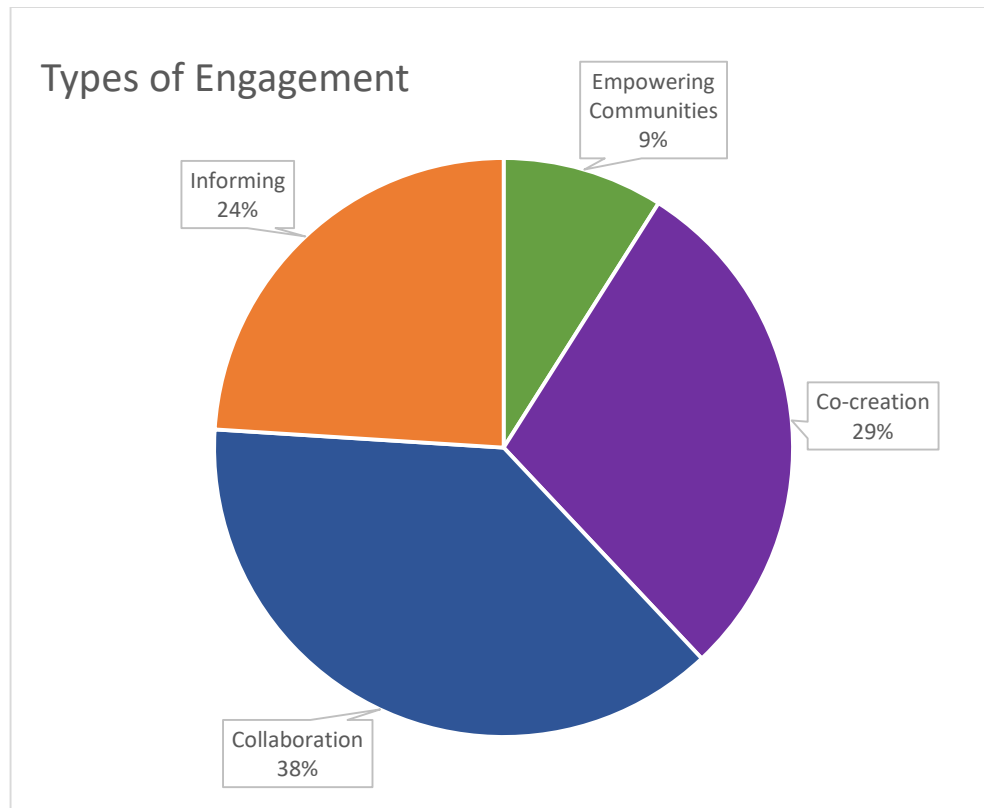
Engagement Phase 4: Draft actions, targeted engagement for feedback on actions

After compiling the results of the previous engagement phases, HRM staff developed a draft action plan for Sharing our Stories. Staff co-created 45 draft actions with external stakeholders that address the priorities identified in the previous engagement sessions. These actions cover a variety of categories, including external regulations and legislation, internal policies and workflow, and coordination with community organizations, cultural groups, and other levels of government on culture and heritage projects throughout the HRM.

The Sharing our Stories draft 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.



Once the draft actions were compiled, HRM staff conducted a fourth round of engagement to elicit feedback on the draft action list in the spring and summer of 2022. The purpose of this round of engagement was to ensure that the draft actions embodied the feedback HRM staff received in the previous three engagement cycles. Overall, there were 12 sessions with stakeholder groups. These took form through in-person and virtual meetings, with staff presentations followed by open discussions.

HRM staff also developed a survey to gather public feedback for the draft action plan. This survey ran from August 22nd to September 19th and garnered 81 visitors and 33 responses from the public. It was advertised through external stakeholders, HRM social media channels, and Halifax's Shape Your City webpage. The outcomes of both the stakeholder meetings and public survey for phase 4 are detailed further in this document. This feedback will enable the planning team to solidify their draft actions and prepare a staff report that will be presented to Regional Council.

WHAT WE HEARD: General Themes and Summary

The information below is based on the individual meetings, conversations or focus group sessions and the summary notes prepared from those meetings. Participants shared a variety of practical ideas about how to improve the ways that HRM supports culture and heritage. The points raised have been consolidated into this report and provided in detail in the following pages, and the following key themes emerged:

- Make participation in cultural activities more accessible, affordable, inclusive and reflective of HRM's diverse population
- Recognize historically underrepresented communities, their stories, identities and community boundaries
- Facilitate Culture-led Economic Development in communities
- Broaden and develop the Municipality's role in cultural tourism and build partnerships in Arts, Culture and Heritage
- Promote cultural literacy and awareness opportunities through cross-cultural experiential learning, interaction and exchange
- Establish inclusive central cultural hubs and creative spaces at Community centres, public libraries and schools to offer arts and culture programs, to bring people together to exchange ideas, encourage participation in cultural activities, and to provide resources and training in support of artists and arts and culture organizations
- Foster more partnerships and strengthen collaboration with communities on sustainable community cultural festivals and celebrations – food, music, dance etc.
- Invest in arts and culture through accessible financial supports and equitable grant application processes by exploring needs-based approaches
- Diversify engagement methods used by HRM and adopt a cultural lens in engagement practices
- Invest in development of transportation infrastructure to marginalized cultural and heritage sites
- Provide targeted support for digital transformation in the culture and heritage sectors, such as technology that offers a multitude of opportunities for supportive marketing, communications and increased visibility of underrepresented culture and heritage
- Develop community-specific and culturally relevant programming for children and youth
- Break down silos and facilitate collaboration across sectors, large and small organizations, municipalities and departments to help strengthen the sector and, in turn, enhance creative and economic benefits for the region
- Provide sustained, reliable funding for artists and small cultural organizations
- Increase access to and awareness of traditionally under-represented cultural content, programming, and signage

The following sections of the report summarize specific feedback reviewed from previous sources, focus groups, surveys, and targeted meetings and interviews throughout the initial development of the project. We have captured all of the feedback, even if it does not relate to municipal jurisdiction or programming, or if it is not applicable to this project, but offers input into other areas of municipal operations. Targeted engagement activities were developed for specific stakeholders with specialized expertise and interest in the development of the Plan. Engagement activities were structured around receiving comments on the draft Plan document and actions that directly impact those stakeholder groups.

WHAT WE HEARD: MI'KMAQ & INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Engagement & Project Path

- Co-creation should be considered when implementing projects in the Plan.
- HRM should better coordinate and align engagement to reduce burden on individuals and organizations.
- Provincial and Federal governments have set a precedent in recognizing First Nations as an independent level of government. First Nations groups must be consulted when proposed activities have the potential to impact Aboriginal rights. Three First Nations groups hold reserve lands within HRM and are therefore impacted by HRM policy and planning initiatives.
- Don't lump Mi'kmaw and Indigenous people with other underrepresented communities. While the region is now a patchwork quilt of cultures, Mi'kmaq are original title-owners of the land. HRM must pay significant attention to the history reflected in the Plan.
- Engagement should include follow-up. Some ideas get talked about over and over again and never actioned.
- The Grand Council is often an afterthought and deserve the same respect as elected Chiefs. Traditional decision-making is consensus based, not based on democratic process like Band Councils which were a creation of the *Indian Act*.
- Consider meeting with Grand Council from all 7 districts to discuss space for collaboration and to get community direction. Many of the hereditary chiefs (Keptins) are also elected members of councils across Nova Scotia.
- Explore development of a Friendship Accord to lay out relationship commitments and relationship between HRM's council and Mi'kmaq communities. Consider community and cultural protocols when holding completing engagement including opening and closing prayers.

Stewardship

- River systems and watersheds are important and reflect traditional land use as well as uphold traditional governance systems.
- There is an opportunity to collaborate with community leaders on protection of Shubenacadie River.
- Protection of the night sky is important for Mi'kmaw Astronomy and Navigation.
- HRM's role in controlling land use is important for protecting Mi'kmaq archaeological resources.
- Develop a process for protecting land and sharing information on new or proposed developments to allow communities to respond to proposals and identify potential cultural resources at-risk.
- Our history was oral, not written so language is hugely important. It encompasses all our faith, medicines, and history. Our words are powerful and descriptive. If you are trying to compile stories, they will lose context if translated. Translation into English results in loss of texture, and detail.
- Language is the fabric of how we communicate and understand the world. If language is going to be represented, we need to be sure that it is fully represented for future generations.
- There are opportunities for HRM to support community cultural resurgence of oral tradition and language through collaborative interpretation, events, and signage.

Previous Engagement Results

- Social Heritage Strategy, Meetings with Urban Indigenous Community, 2011

Pre-Engagement Meetings and Interviews at Nationhood Conference, Kijiputuk:

- Executive Director and Board Member of Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre
- Chief Deborah Robinson – Chief of Acadia First Nation, Assembly of NS Chiefs, Portfolio Urban Indigenous and Women
- Chief Wilbur Marshall, Potlotek First Nation, Assembly of NS Chief, Portfolio Culture & Heritage
- Elders and Historians
- Chief & Band Council members for Sipekne'katik FN
- Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nation Chiefs
- Unama'ki College – Indigenous Affairs
- Chief & Councillor for Millbrook FN
- Several Grand Council meeting members

- Dedicated space for Mi'kmaq businesses and artists on Halifax waterfront and Peggy's Cove would support economic development. After the Halifax Explosion the Mi'kmaw were promised land on the water, near Halifax, but instead they were moved away to Shubenacadie and Millbrook. Dedicated land would honour the original promise.
- Mi'kmaq culture is ever-evolving and adapting to new influences and technologies throughout time and should be supported in a manner that is flexible to change.
- Traditional objects and artifacts have voice, consciousness and emotion and must be protected with that understanding.
- Mi'kmaw street names or correction of incorrect street names would increase reflection of history and Mi'kmaq presence.

Connection

- There should be an Indigenous seat on HRM council (and youth council) to have better representation in decision-making.
- Engage with Mi'kmaq communities beyond HRM because as the economic centre of the province, HRM is important to all Mi'kmaq communities.
- There is a real opportunity for hiring Indigenous people into HRM's workforce. An Indigenous employment strategy should be developed with community.
- Need to recognize the needs of all Indigenous people including those from other parts of Canada, while respecting Mi'kmaq as treaty holders.
- Community would like to establish guidelines and share with HRM on when and how to photograph and film Elders, performers, and regalias. Not always appropriate, need to educate people. When discussing and developing these guidelines we should consider intellectual property rights of content shared by Mi'kmaw.
- Should consider how you hire/work with elders and dancers in a way that best supports them.
- HRM needs to educate their staff and council on Indigenous culture and treaty education. Consider collaborating with band councils and experts identified by community to provide support on this education.
- The HRM should explore opportunities for land back initiatives and support Indigenous entrepreneurs to develop businesses on that land.
- All vacant HRM owned land should be transferred back to Mi'kmaq communities.
- The land transfer from HRM to Friendship Centre for site of new Friendship Centre should be made at no cost.
- HRM should promote and support development of Indigenous tourism of harbourfront/downtown.
- Explore incorporation of two-eyed seeing, which means balancing traditional knowledge with western science, particularly on land use projects with ecological focus.
- Work with other municipalities and Mi'kmaq communities to support development of a Consultation Terms of Reference that is directly applicable to municipalities.
- Increase dialogue with band councils and commit to relationship building by enhancing information exchange on events and by ensuring invitations are sent to Chief and Councils for all civic events.
- Create regular times for communicating with band councils on projects and initiatives.
- Consider supporting other businesses and organizations in receiving Diversity and Inclusion training by collaborating with the Halifax Partnership and organizations like the Chamber of Commerce.

Celebration

- It is critically important that Mi'kmaq are telling Mi'kmaq stories. HRM can support, but the stories need to come from and be told by community.

Mi'kmaq and Indigenous Communities- Organizations and Groups Engaged

- Sipekne'katik Band Council
- Acadia Band Council
- Millbrook Band Council
- Mi'kmaw Grand Council members from Sipekne'katik District
- Assembly of Mi'kmaw Chiefs
- Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn Negotiation Office (KMKNO)
- Tripartite Committee on Culture and Heritage
- Elders/Storytellers
- The Nova Scotia Museum
- Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre
- Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre Youth Group

Key Documents

- Cornwallis Task Force Report

- Consider co-creating an interpretive nature trail with medicinal plants.
- Place has specific meaning. HRM has more place names than just Kijipuktuk which just refers to the harbor and it is important to reflect these names and places. There is an extensive interactive place name project that has been completed that can give guidance.
- Follow through on design and implementation of community-led Interpretation of Point Pleasant Park.
- Support the development of a truckhouse (trading post) on the waterfront.
- After the Halifax Explosion, the Mi'kmaw were promised land on the waterfront to sell crafts, but they were slowly moved out. Establishing a waterfront truckhouse would keep that promise. There is no place currently on peninsular Halifax to find Mi'kmaw wares.
- Commemorate significant locations and events to Mi'kmaw history like the site of burying the hatchet, treaty signings.
- Upon entering every visitor should see recognition and public signage that this is Mi'kmaki.
- HRM should do a better job of recognizing and declaring Orange Shirt Day.
- Indigenous History Month should include more engagement, celebration, events, lights, and public art.
- More resources need to be put into Mi'kmaq History Month to make it attractive to the whole municipality. Other cities have huge events where the entire municipality is decorated in Indigenous art for these events and all times of year.
- Interpretation should be respectful, and the correct historians and knowledge needs to be reflected. There is a lot of false history and information needs to be validated through the correct channels.
- Celebrate Mi'kmaq culture, particularly women through streetscaping, naming, and sculpture.
- There should be an Indigenous sculpture garden at the Public Gardens or another downtown park.
- Potential to collaborate on a project that will build visibility of Mi'kmaq people – possibly around the new Acadia Council office in Hammonds Plains.
- Opportunity to honor and commemorate Chief Membertou who developed the Peace & Friendship Treaties.
- Consider development of a walk around the Public Gardens telling the story of how spring came to Mi'kimaki.

Access

- Seeing symbols and icons of cultural traditions (ie. Medicine wheels, sweet grass, images) can help create culturally safe spaces within HRM facilities. Some work on creating safe spaces for Indigenous youth were completed by North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) team. Formalizing those spaces and increasing distribution within HRM owned facilities could be the next step.
- Contributions from HRM to education should require cultural awareness for non-Indigenous educators to create inclusive support and service for Indigenous children.
- We need to connect both financial and human resources. There could be opportunities for mentorship and capacity building- especially around events.
- Create an Office of Indigenous affairs and continue to support a full-time HRM Diversity & Inclusion position.
- Diversity advisor position needs to have more flexibility and budget to work collaboratively with community.
- Urban Indigenous community is growing and changing all the time, and many Indigenous people who are new to HRM are not made aware of resources available to Indigenous residents. Consider better communication of resources available through media and website.
- Develop public awareness campaigns to support anti-racism work, reflecting the range of Mi'kmaq and Indigenous appearances and identities in a public area such as the bus. Cultural awareness campaigns and corporate photography should depict range of Indigenous Identities and Appearances.
- Work with band councils and Mi'kmaq communities within HRM to develop and prioritize routes to connect to culturally-appropriate supports and services such as the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre.
- Prioritize investment in shelters, emergency, or affordable housing for Mi'kmaw and urban Indigenous community.

WHAT WE HEARD: AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIAN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Engagement & Project Path

- Develop community-specific and culturally responsive community engagement models that include ‘closing the loop’ and providing results and next steps of what is heard.
- HRM is becoming more and more of a hub for immigration which should be reflected in this document. Emphasize and complete deeper engagement with Immigrants and Newcomers in next consultations.
- Consider more partnerships with organizations to complete engagement in underrepresented communities.
- Recognize that HRM policies have not all been inclusive of ANS communities. Using the Regional Plan, consider Community Benefit Agreements which communicate your level of intention with resources.
- HRM is developing an Anti-Black Racism strategy that will also align and inform the Plan.
- Consider better communication of the jurisdiction of HRM in heritage and cultural properties, investments, and initiatives. It is confusing to the public which elements are managed by the municipality versus the province. Co-ordinate with other levels of government to enhance impact of work.
- General agreement that those engaged want to see the actions and draft Plan once timelines and priorities are more established.
- Participants were open to continued engagement and supporting on implementation.
- Consider your selection of images, photographs, and language when creating engagement materials to create more inclusive materials that reflect the communities being engaged.

Stewardship

- Rededicate some African Nova Scotian spaces and work with HRM on municipal heritage properties and provide funding to support preservation of heritage sites and structures.
- Ensure traditional ANS community boundaries are preserved in land use planning and identify these boundaries with community signage.
- Explore process for HRM’s African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office (ANSAIO) to assist in circumventing and expediting the natural process of a land development application to make it equitable for African Nova Scotian applicants.
- There should be a mechanism to give their communities preference in the tender and procurement process, specifically disposal of surplus properties in historic black communities. The surplus property disposal process should use a cultural lens.
- Support community in completing a mapping exercise of ANS graveyards to protect cultural resources and artifacts.
- Support community in developing virtual or multimedia accessible representation of cultural sites to provide universal access to heritage sites and stories.

Past Engagement Results

- Social Heritage Strategy, Targeted African Nova Scotian Engagement, 2011

African Nova Scotian-Organizations and Groups Engaged

- African Nova Scotian Community Focus Group that included residents, community groups and the North End Business Association (Pre- engagement)
- Nova Scotia Decade for People of African Descent (NSDPAD)
- Delmore “Buddy” Daye Learning Institute (DBDLI)
- Black Business Initiative (BBI)
- African United Baptist Association
- Community Focus Groups from Beechville and Cherrybrook
- African Nova Scotian youth focus groups (sessions held in partnership with DBDLI)

Key Documents

- African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity

Connection

- There needs to be ongoing and inclusive engagement and decision-making processes on matters of culture and heritage.
- Consider working with community to develop a definition of 'African Nova Scotian'.
- Work with tourism partners to develop more support for tourism initiatives including information dissemination on African Nova Scotian cultural attractions.
- Promote ANS community celebration days throughout the region (including Taste of East Preston, Beechville Days, Upper Hammond Plains Can Jam, etc.).
- Connect and build better awareness between ANS organizations and HRM's community developers. The community developers have been successful in proactively working with community to enhance culture and arts such as through calls for artists.
- Consider proactive approach to collaboration with community instead of expecting community to be reactive to HRM and create more opportunities for community-led projects. Opportunities should be shaped collaboratively with community, rather than community responding to RFPs.
- Consider how contracts and procurement are scoped on projects that impact ANS communities and develop opportunities at a reasonable scale and scope for community members to respond to RFPs and Tenders. For example, break down contracts to allow for community engagement to be completed by someone from the community.
- Explore methods of diversifying the supply chain and HRM hiring related to arts, heritage and culture by working with suppliers, developers, and black businesses to ensure diversity in employment opportunities.
- Develop a grant targeted to training ANS community historians and archivists to enable capacity development and enhance stewardship of cultural resources.

Celebration

- The Plan should prioritize connection to the 50+ historic African Nova Scotian communities that have been here for 400+ years, while acknowledging African Canadians and communities of the African diaspora to capture the diversity of the region.
- HRM should increase recognition and encourage sharing African Nova Scotian history and culture by:
 - Supporting community-led interpretation and commemoration projects at important African Nova Scotian sites (including sites like the New Horizons Baptist Church, or by commemorating the 1796 the recruits for Sierra Leone who were housed on the Halifax waterfront, Black Loyalist refugees in Preston, or Preston baptismal river). HRM needs to understand ANS cultural history is often word of mouth and community engagement is required to complete interpretation.
 - Recognize "Notable Nova Scotians" materials displayed in HRM facilities including Rocky Jones, Buddy Daye, James Robinson Johnston and the lawyers who followed in his legacy should be equally remembered.
 - Protect rural ANS culture and heritage including stories and sites.
 - Develop partnerships between the archives, museums, or libraries to develop photo sharing initiatives that preserve and share the wealth of photographic memories in the community.
 - Enhancing support for events such as an annual African Nova Scotian festival, Black Arts festival, or event honouring Viola Desmond in North End Halifax, want a permanent legacy piece.
- Consider support for the development of "Black Memory Lane" or project that would capture 'what communities are known for' past and present, building off of <https://blackhalifax.com/learning-tools/>.
- Support 'sites of black learning and cultural preservation' especially those that produce intergenerational cultural transmission that might not fall into funding criteria such as family reunions and story circles.
- When completing interpretation or commemoration projects consider community consultation including talking with family of any historical figures and relevant community groups to fact check and provide input.

- Develop community-specific and culturally relevant programming using inclusive engagement & decision-making. This could include collaboration with local cultural associations to provide programming for youth such as day camps or African dance program.
- Cultural programming could also provide meaningful employment opportunities and a platform for exposure for cultural custodians from underrepresented groups in the creative cultural industry and an opportunity to share and interact with the public.
- Establish an artist cooperative/ contemporary space or space within HRM facilities dedicated to creativity for non-traditional artists and consider use of this space for displaying community and youth projects.

Access

Quotes from Meetings:

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

“When financial resources are put behind projects, it makes a big difference”

“If you allow people to practice their culture without the pressure of economic benefit, it can actually have an economic spin off to it”

“We are losing our physical identity”

“We need to have a sign that says “Preston Township” the oldest Black Community in Canada and we don't have to fight for it”

“Through the current zoning and planning system, HRM is systematically re-arranging the boundaries of our communities”

“HRM needs to protect this community to ensure that we don't lose the heritage of our people”

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

Consider the following changes to the municipal grant programs and supporting website or documentation to simplify and tailor the process:

- Targeted grant (proposal) writing orientation workshops for community organizations to learn how to navigate the grant application process.
- Targeted engagement to create realistic deadlines as well as development of a mechanism for advance notification of opportunities.
- Consider a needs-based approach to awarding grants.
- Simplify the application process or support for community organizations applying for grants (capacity building, grant-writing support or budget for hiring support).
- Consider multi-year funding for established events to reduce administrative burden for both HRM and applicants including community day events.
- Consider allowing applicants from religious communities because culture and spirituality are deeply connected.
- Consider having a ‘point-person’ to support navigation of programs available.
- Provide publicly available grants reporting to enhance public accountability and transparency.
- Consider developing an appeals process for the grants program and post information on debriefing and appeals for those that don't receive funding.
- Broaden grant requirements or develop budgets for discretionary support for small or new community organizations that have not yet achieved charitable status.

- Improved access to ANS cultural sites such as Africville both by promoting and increasing their visibility, and enhanced transportation connections.
- Consider more representative photography and information on programming and services within municipal facilities and media.
- Have a Neighbourhood Improvement-type program (e.g., NIP of the 1980's) that assigns a coordinator in particular communities (e.g. Uniacke Square, the Prestons) to work with the community to advance community-led planning and opportunities.

WHAT WE HEARD: Acadian and Francophone Community

Engagement & Project Path

- The Acadian and Francophone community doesn't feel well represented or considered within HRM.
- Consider the Acadian and Francophone community when completing engagement of all kinds and when making municipal decisions.

Stewardship

- Continue to protect and promote significant historical sites that reflect Acadian culture and history such as Georges Island.
- Provide interpretation, commemoration, and public art to reflect the stories such as the deportation of Acadians in public areas and not just at historic sites.
- Reflect the diverse traditions and folklore of the many Acadian and Francophone communities and protect objects and cultural resources that reflect this heritage.
- When planning lands, consider unique heritage and character of Chezzetcook as the only Acadian community within HRM.
- Consider renaming and removal of names on public assets that can be considered toxic and harmful. For example, Lawrencetown is named after Charles Lawrence was the lieutenant governor that ordered the deportation of the Acadians, which consisted of a cultural genocide.
- Create space for francophone conversation and connection, e.g., cafes.
- Community gardens- important. Consider supporting enhancements to community garden at Dartmouth Commons- there is no access to water.
- Ensure the maintenance of the removed Acadian Monument at the waterfront.
- Recognize local and community heroes: e.g. Georges Cottreau, Claude Renaud.

Connection

- Concern around the disconnect between the municipality and the community which results in underrepresentation of the community in Regional Council and within the municipal workforce. Explore opportunities to employ and retain Acadian and Francophone community members.
- Consider that Regional Council have a designated seat for the Acadian and Francophone community and promote participation on committees.
- Consider partnering with organizations to better identify businesses that offer service in French within high traffic areas such as the waterfront. Also consider creating space for Acadian and Francophone retail, business, and merchandise.
- Offer brochures in French about the HRM and a catalogue of services in French at the airport for tourists.
- Support connection by establishing a partnership between francophone groups to conduct a tour to Chezzetcook.
- Attract francophone immigrants to settle here by providing more targeted support and services.
- Involve the Francophone community in all cultural festivals, not just the big events like Canada 150.

Celebration

- Support celebration and awareness of Francophone diversity and increase the visibility of the Francophone community.
- Consider supporting celebrations for Tintamarre (Acadian festival) on August 15th.

Acadian and Francophone- Past Engagement Results Reviewed

- French-Language Services Focus Group Report, 2017 (43 people engaged in 4 focus groups)

Acadian and Francophone- Organizations and Groups Engaged

- Acadian and Francophone Partnership of Halifax
- Conseil Communautaire du Grand Havre (CCGH)
- Students and Staff of Ecole du Sommet (x2)
- Members of L'Acadie de Chezzetcook
- Students and Staff of Ecole du Carrefour (x2)

- Consider more targeted support for Acadian and Francophone theatre and live performance artists, dancers, and musicians.
- Support development of a Francophone gathering space or cultural centre to provide gathering space and cultural programming to enhance sense of belonging.
- Advocate for the development of an Acadian school in Chezzetcook.
- Create sustainable partnerships for development and support community in developing more festivals and events such as Grou Thyme, Tintamarre, and the Acadian Games.
- Celebrate strong Acadian food culture (i.e. Rappie pie) through support for community events and festivals and by promoting food businesses and restaurants. Consider supporting cultural resurgence through youth cooking classes of traditional recipes in community facilities.
- Host different municipal francophone cultural celebrations, performances and events in Grand Parade square (City Hall).
- Create opportunities for Youth to tell stories similar to the previous competition honoring Joseph Howe.
- Celebrate the use of the Acadian Flag and Acadian Star as symbols in municipal facilities. The raising of the flag at the Grand Parade is a great example of opportunities.
- Prioritize funding and grant opportunities directed to the Acadian and Francophone community.

Access

- Increase access to and awareness of Acadian cultural content, Francophone programming, signage and language services.
- Enhance quality of French materials and translation services by developing corporate policies to ensure consistent financial and human resources are dedicated to French-language services. This may include a policy on French-language services establishing basic standards for French-language services delivery in HRM, a French version of the HRM website, 311, and communication guidelines.
- When providing French services protect and promote regional dialects specific to the area rather than standard French to help preserve linguistic heritage.
- Increase availability of municipal information in French (e.g., on HRM website, flyers and brochures, etc.) to support inclusion and access.
- Consider enhancing French language collections and enhancing French programming through recurring events (i.e. Monthly) at the public library.
- Collaborate with community, such as the Conseil Communautaire du Grand, to develop French language recreation programming such as swimming lessons. This programming should be distributed within the region, as the population is dispersed throughout HRM.
- When recruiting employees, consider French language as an asset as well as consider ways of supporting francophone youth in summer or co-op positions. Develop human resource strategy targeted at building French-language capacity within HRM through equitable hiring and retention.
- Use existing communication avenues to promote and identify Acadian and Francophone events. For example, promote a calendar of events and links to organizations on the HRM website.
- There are no French classes for Francophile immigrants. Immigration Service Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) only offers English classes. It's a gap in French services.
- Continue to support the French Services Diversity & Inclusion Advisor, this position has enhanced connection with the community.

WHAT WE HEARD: Immigrants & Newcomers

Engagement & Project Path

Stewardship

- Develop community kitchens as part of the cultural and community facilities managed by HRM.
- Consider developing or supporting the development of a multicultural centre and a community kitchen to support cultural activities and cultural organizations.

Connection

- HRM should partner with non-profit cultural organizations to explore ways to recognize the value of what immigrants bring and have to offer.
- Consider developing targeted public workshops (meeting people at organized gatherings and events) to educate groups about what grants are available and co-create a system that reduces barriers.
- Better connection with cultural communities and organizations will create more authentic celebrations.
- Consider appropriate reflection of the diversity of cultures when developing festivals and events. For example, an “African Festival” is problematic, Africa is a continent and should be represented as such by individual countries.
- Expand and diversify culturally relevant programming and offer activities created and instructed by members of diverse communities.
- A model UN-style program could allow youth to learn about and represent other countries in an educational competition.
- Consider increased engagement from the local immigrant and newcomer community in developing learning experiences and training for HRM staff around positive aspects of diverse communities.
- Promote connection between cultural communities (ie. Newcomers and Mi’kmaw) on creative or cultural projects.

Celebration

- The budget for community grants should increase- it should be expanded as HRM grows to reflect the diversity of our cultures.
- Immigrants would like to have a sustained visible presence – HRM should work towards enhancing the sense of pride and belonging in physical public spaces and the provision of language services and multilingual HRM signage (e.g., Arabic and French).
- Consider hosting more multicultural events and festivals in the winter to better disperse events throughout the year and to support communities (particularly for those from warmer climates) with social connection through the harsh winter.
- Community gatherings and traditional practices need a visible platform and promotional support through marketing. Consider developing a common platform for multicultural businesses to be marketed and made accessible especially for newcomers.
- Enhance communication of services and opportunities for newcomers through information packages about municipal services and opportunities distributed through partner organizations.
- Increase opportunities to creatively celebrate cultures in the public realm (i.e., through art).

Previous Engagement Results Reviewed

- Halifax Local Immigration Partnership (HLIP) Stakeholder Consultation Summary, 2017
- Social Heritage Strategy, Focus Group with Immigrants and Newcomers, 2011

Immigrants and Newcomers- Organizations and Groups Engaged

- Focus Group including representatives from the YMCA, Dalhousie international student associations, the Muslim community, and African Diaspora Association of the Maritimes.

- Explore opportunities for indoor and outdoor public gathering spaces for collective sharing of traditions and culture e.g. international markets or a regional cultural centre or museum to display cultural objects from different cultures.
- Consider developing a community garden to connect and share agricultural heritage and culinary traditions (i.e. farming and planting tips, recipe exchange).
- Use stories to tap into cultural commonalities and continue to host 'Sharing our Stories' events.
- Work with cultural communities and museums to tell stories of ethnic communities and display cultural assets, artifacts, and cultural expressions including performances.
- Consider creating an HRM cultural month to celebrate the diversity of cultures present in the region.

Access

- Condition that grant applicants must be an association/ non-profit organization excludes many individuals, relevant initiatives, and small organizations.
- The grant process is normally handled by volunteers and the process is a burden. Grant amounts do not currently cover administrative costs. One option would be corporate sponsorship instead of an application-based process for some smaller grants.
- Funds should be directed to small and new organizations and should be monitored for repeated awards. In particular, small or emerging cultural organizations should receive support for providing culturally centred food as well as venues.
- The grants application process should be transparent; have frequent intake periods; evaluation should be needs-based and equitable; and people should be aware of the process and resources available.
- Reports on municipal investments into culture and arts should be easily and transparently accessible. Investments should be evaluated on performance (ie. How successful was the event or project completed by the applicant? How many people did it reach?)
- Consider developing navigator staff positions and centralized information portals to help newcomers and those experiencing barriers to access HRM's services, business opportunities and to participate in municipal committees and opportunities.

WHAT WE HEARD: Persons with Disabilities

Engagement & Project Path

- Seek input from community to help HRM ensure that communication and documents (all media types) with citizens is more accessible and inclusive.
- There should be ongoing opportunities for engagement.
- Need more engagement with Immigrants and Newcomers.
- Consider providing detail on jurisdiction of culture and heritage assets (i.e. Which buildings are protected by the province vs. the municipality) to create clearer understanding of roles and responsibilities for citizens and to reduce barriers to providing feedback.

Persons with Disabilities: Previous Engagement Results

- Accessibility and Inclusion Framework Public Consultation (2018)

Persons With Disabilities- Organizations and Groups Engaged

- HRM Accessibility Advisory Committee (2 Meetings)
- Nova Scotia League of Equal Opportunity (NSLEO)
- Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)
- Canadian Paraplegic Association (CPA)

Stewardship

- The region has a significant history of human rights champions and significant milestones in accessibility history. Consider collaborating with community to develop interpretation and commemoration expressing the history of the accessibility community.
- When adapting heritage buildings and sites consider lighting, obstructions, signage and tactile features that exceed minimum standards.
- Consider developing virtual tours of heritage buildings that are not accessible as well as visual descriptors for those with vision loss.

Guiding Documents

- HRM's Accessible Events Guidelines
- Nova Scotia Accessibility Act

Connection

- Collaborate with accessibility organizations to create targeted and accessible recreation programming.
- Collaborate with accessibility organizations to identify acceptable standards and guidelines (i.e. CSA, Rick Hanson) to be utilized and reviewed by HRM staff when designing programs, buildings, spaces, and events.

Celebration

- Consider Tactile Sculptures and interactive public art that provide multi-dimensional experiences for all residents.
- Within HRM there has been a long history of disability advocacy and milestones that should be celebrated – for example, the first Canadian school for the blind following the Halifax Explosion.
- During celebrations and events provide free passes to support workers for persons with disabilities to reduce financial burden. Consider requiring this as part of criteria for receiving events grants.
- Consider collaboration with CNIB and other organizations to create training module for HRM event volunteers and staff to improve guiding experience for residents requiring assistance.
- Seek input from accessibility organizations when completing interpretation and commemoration strategy to develop standards and solutions that work for those with low or no vision including larger type, high-contrast signage, and audio recordings.
- Consider providing described events for those with low vision at parades or highly visual events.
- Include quiet or low-sensory environments or areas during crowded events and functions to support neuro-diverse residents.

Access

- Consider providing support for culture and heritage organizations to provide interpreters during events.
- Consider accessible parking and transit access when planning events and create opportunities for accessible routes to and from event sites.
- Provide advance notice on accessibility features for events so residents can make informed decisions on whether to attend.
- Continue to provide accessible online opportunities for participation in events, heritage, and cultural celebrations, and learning from the pandemic experience.
- Consider translation services through QR codes on interpretation materials as well as frequency of spoken languages such as Arabic when creating cultural interpretation.
- Consider developing a cultural service navigator to support those that have challenges navigating policies and programs.
- Consider developing quiet spaces and low-sensory spaces at community, cultural, and heritage facilities managed by HRM.
- Provide grants specifically to ensure events and infrastructure are accessible.

WHAT WE HEARD: 2SLGBTQ+ Community

Engagement & Project Path

- There should be more engagement with 2SLGBTQ+ community on this project going forward and we should be informed of projects regarding culture and heritage in the initiation stages.
- Consider using an intersectional lens when completing engagement.

Organizations and Groups Engaged

- Halifax Pride
- Youth Project

Stewardship

- Consider supporting a collaborative project for a queer interactive and audio walking tour as a placemaking project.
- Consider enhancing interpretation and protection of the Khyber and turret which are critical cultural assets to the queer history of Halifax.
- Many queer social and cultural spaces have shuttered, and HRM should consider how to support businesses providing accessible safe spaces.

Connection

- There needs to be space for community-led celebrations, projects, and programs. This means HRM would take a support role and provide mentorship, experience, and resources for youth to lead.
- Youth would like to work with HRM in a more pro-active manner and there should be more opportunities for youth leadership through better communication and co-creation.
- There should be better links between school events and celebrations and HRM events to create a better sense of belonging for youth and enhance participation.
- Consider creating program officers or enhancing communication and relationship-building. There should be someone to call to discuss collaboration and opportunities.
- Enhance communication with event organizers about large construction or street projects which might interrupt or cause a need for re-routing parades and celebrations. Consider providing in-kind staff donations such as transportation planners or events staff to support the 3-4 months ahead of events such as Halifax Pride to enhance collaboration and reduce operating costs for non-profits.

Celebration

- The Plan should look at ways to create safe spaces to celebrate diversity. Safe spaces need to be developed by community, with support from HRM.
- Youth should have ownership of the spaces they utilize which could include youth participation in mural making, storytelling, or place-making projects.
- Consider in-kind donations for festivals and celebrations to meet provincial requirement for costly police services for street closures.

Access

- Expansion of the grant program should include better access and connection to youth, including better searchability by theme and criteria and regular communication with organizations about the criteria and opportunities available.
- De-silo the grants applications and allow organizations to partner on applications including development of categories that support organizations that are not yet registered as non-profits.

- In support of community-led and youth-led programs, the language, application requirements and communication of opportunities should be youth-friendly and accessible.
- Willingness for support and collaboration with HRM on volunteer training to promote diversity and inclusion including provision of described events (i.e., verbally describing visual experiences), and support for persons with disabilities.
- The lack of accessible spaces is an issue for events and organizations trying to be sustainable.

WHAT WE HEARD: Heritage Organizations

Engagement & Project Path

Stewardship

- Heritage sites and museums should be seen as catalysts for cultural renewal as they provide educational opportunities, gathering space, and programming that encourages sustainable cultural transmission.
- There is a gap between what is considered for collections at provincial museums vs. community museums. This may support the need for a regional museum. HRM provided limited support in the past but the establishment of the municipal archives has resulted in some improvement.
- There is some inconsistency between the level of maintenance support that HRM provides for various municipally owned properties.
- Consider providing in-kind support for grounds and garden maintenance at heritage properties and museums.
- Protect the built and natural heritage within their community and especially along the Bedford Highway. Birch Cove Lakes, Hemlock Ravines, and views into the Basin along the Bedford Highway should be protected.
- Continue to implement the cultural landscape program and consider additions of Hemlock Ravines as a designated Cultural Landscape as one of only two English Landscapes in Nova Scotia. Mount Uniacke is the other one.
- The Bedford Highway and Basin should be considered as a cultural landscape (roadway and seascape).
- HRM Archives provides in-kind donation of storage for some heritage and arts organizations to reduce insurance costs.
- Fort Sackville was established in 1749 on the same site as the Scott Manor House which was constructed 30 years later. A portion of the Pissiquid Trail leading to Windsor passed through this site. Moirs Mill, the Fish Hatchery, and Paper Mill Lake are all testament to the story of Bedford as one of the first industrial areas of HRM. They believe that these sites should be part of cultural landscapes in the Bedford area and invite municipal programs and policies to interpret and protect the industrial and recreational heritage of these areas.
- Idea to create a Heritage Conservation District in “Olde Bedford” but feel that the boundary should extend to First Avenue, “Irishtown” (area around Scott Manor House), Fish Hatchery Park, and several other areas.
- 10 Mile House is a very important heritage resource but not registered as a heritage property.

Previous Engagement Results

- Halifax Green Network Plan
- R 5+ Engagement

Organizations and Groups Engaged

- Dartmouth Heritage Museum
- Rockingham Heritage Society
- Mainland South Heritage Society
- Waverley Heritage Society
- Cole Harbour Heritage Society / Cole Harbour Farm Museum
- Fort Sackville Foundation

Connection

- HRM can be a more proactive partner in helping to achieve reliable and stable operating grants, capital grants for building maintenance and repair, help in attracting volunteers, and help with communications and marketing.

- HRM's Office of Diversity and Inclusion/ANASIO is a very helpful resource for supporting initiatives and events and this support should grow.
- Heritage organizations seek support in connecting with Mi'kmaq communities as well as cultural communities, and HRM could support this connection and relationship building.
- There should be public awareness in the area of the opportunities available through heritage registration and Heritage Conservation Districts.
- There should be more money directed towards heritage and heritage programming.

Celebration

- Place names are eroding with new development and should be protected through signage. For example, Bedford Highway has a great deal of historical significance, and HRM has just committed to expressing that through signs placed to identify neighbourhoods along the Bedford Highway including Rockingham, Birch Cove, Kearney Lake, and others.
- Consider more interpretation signage in public parks, and not just specifically at historical sites.
- Heritage sites and museums can fill social programming needs through gatherings and events that address social isolation and bring people together.
- Focus new investments on continuing to use technology to tell stories to create more accessible experiences within the municipality.
- Create an easily accessible website dedicated to festivals and events in the region and creating a platform.
- Continue to acknowledge and celebrate heritage groups and projects through heritage awards.
- Municipal facilities, including recreation centres, should include heritage programs and activities for community gatherings where diverse cultural groups can share common experiences.

Access

- Consider streamlining the grants process. Much of the time of volunteers and board members is spent applying for grants and funding through three levels of government. Funding applications are onerous and take time away from programming.
- Admissions fees cover only a portion of operating expenses and heritage organizations, museums and sites rely heavily on grants and funding.
- It is difficult to determine who to contact at the municipality. Consider assigning program navigators to community groups.
- Consider accessibility when developing heritage events and making investments.
- HRM could support heritage organizations in creating a travelling heritage museum that could be transported and installed in different venues around the region.
- Community- and volunteer-led heritage organizations find it difficult to keep up with the increasing professionalization standards in the Province.
- Recipients of interim museum program funding cannot receive further grants from the HRM Community Grants Program.
- Consider multi-year grant applications for property tax exemptions, particularly for organizations operating out of municipal heritage assets.
- Requirement for property ownership and volunteer capacity is a barrier to receiving museum grants.

WHAT WE HEARD: Arts and Culture Organizations

Engagement & Project Path

Stewardship

- Consider increasing funding levels for grant programs to achieve levels consistent with the national averages for similarly-sized Canadian municipalities consistent with the recommendations of the Special Arts and Culture Advisory Committee (2014).
- Consider the development of a multi-year funding program for operating assistance to professional arts organizations.
- Consider centralizing all funding decisions pertaining to professional arts in the municipality under a single municipal unit (grants to professional arts organizations, tax relief, capital and small capital grants) with commensurate transfer of funding from existing programs.
- Develop a gap analysis for arts and cultural facilities to determine priorities for upgrade, replacements and new facility construction further to the development of a cultural facilities masterplan for the Municipality.
- Continue to consider ways in which the municipality might adopt an arms-length arts council model (or similar, e.g. ArtsNovaScotia) as the governance and administration model for provision of funding to the professional arts sector.

Previous Engagement Results

- Halifax Higher Education Partnership Arts and Culture sub-committee Engagement Report (2018)

Organizations and Groups Engaged

- Special Arts and Culture Advisory Committee (SACAC) 2014
- Arts Halifax 2015-2017

Connection

- HRM could support broadening the reach of the arts and culture community in the area of event ticket sales: if tickets do not sell out, is there some way HRM could support the cost of those unsold tickets so that tickets could be given away as a means of encouraging involvement?
- Work to develop formal links with and further its engagement activities with current and emerging youth networks including HRCE arts-in school programs in order to cultivate artistic interest in youth and a framework to develop youth audiences for local arts and cultural organizations.

Celebration

- Consider makerspaces at other institutions, as well as more publicly accessible spaces to do any sort of work (like the spaces available at libraries).
- Consider ways in which the municipality can, through its practices, promote the work of local artists by:
 - Ensuring all gifts from HRM are made by local artists/artisans and considering a 'by local' policy for artistic product;
 - Using local music in municipal campaigns, as 'hold music', etc;
 - Naming streets and places after significant artists and culturally important events/people.
- Consider ways in which the Office of the Mayor might develop formal recognition programs to celebrate the contribution of the arts to the quality of life in HRM (i.e. the Municipal Poet Laureate Program).
- Consider ways in which the Municipality can identify opportunities to incorporate the diversity of the municipality's arts and cultural offerings into marketing and promotional activities that support tourism, business and recreation sectors.

Access

- Support creation of a mobile gallery, perhaps on buses, showcasing artwork and local artists.

- Mentorship might be offered to artists applying for grants, or a forum organized for young artists to meet and work on their applications together.
- Consider the development of grants programs for individual artists; programs currently only accessible to registered not-for-profit professional arts organizations.
- Consider the establishment of a new and easy-to-navigate art municipal arts website that will include:
 - Information regarding funding programs;
 - Links to applications forms and guidelines;
 - Information about artist opportunities within HRM;
 - A comprehensive, centralized online events calendar; and
 - A gallery of the municipality's public art collection.

WHAT WE HEARD: Fourth Round Engagement

Engagement Sessions

- Consider making access to Africville a priority, since it has been often identified multiple times in previous engagement sessions.
- Consider improving transit services to ANS Communities. Improved transit can be beneficial for both residents and tourism.
- Consider developing a clear lead for CHPP implementation. HRM Staff need to ensure the plan is resourced if it is to deliver results.
- Grand Council should be notified about engagements/consultations first, before Band Councils, as protocol. Same with Friendship Accord – Grand Council should review and provide input first.
- HRM should consider looking for ways to support businesses' awareness of tax exemptions. Could involve BIDs, the Chamber of Commerce, and other organizations/government bodies.
- Consider a grant program review to expand/improve outreach. This item was also a Cornwallis Task Force recommendation.
- Consider working on a social procurement strategy. Examples of this are already underway, including Cogswell, which has a social benefit agreement with representation from the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre.
- Consider tax and development incentives for heritage properties in Downtown Halifax and Dartmouth.
- Consider wayfinding, historical signage, and connecting communities to heritage initiatives in the North End.
- Consider connecting to heritage organizations for downtown Halifax and Dartmouth Heritage Conservation districts.

Fourth Round Communities-Organizations and Groups Engaged

- Sipekne'katik Band Council
- Acadia Band Council
- Millbrook Band Council
- Mi'kmaw Grand Council members from Sipekn'ekatik District
- Assembly of Mi'kmaw Chiefs
- Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn Negotiation Office (KMKNO)
- Tripartite Committee on Culture and Heritage
- Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre
- NS Decade for People of African Descent (NSPAD)
- Delmore Buddy Daye Learning Institute (DBDLI)
- HRM Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Regional Business Improvement District Directors

Survey Responses:

"Where is the Municipal Archaeological Management Plan? Where is the virtual and physical civic museum required by the Cornwallis Task Force Report?"

"Work with newcomer/immigrant communities to showcase their culture in HRM facilities or at park events, i.e. the Arabic or African communities in Clayton Park"

"Funding levels for grants to artist programs need to be increased (both operating assistance and project)."

"Museums and heritage... There is so much potential for growth and accessibility, but a large lack of funding and support to achieve this."

"Once a CHPP Accessibility Standard has been set, apply it as a condition to all organizations."

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

"Community-based events held in culturally significant spaces such as parks, museums and historic sites. The HRM should improve funding for the organizations which host programs and events in such facilities."

Next Steps

The amount of feedback received is substantial. Many organizations and individuals have ideas and experiences working with HRM that influenced direct and specific feedback on actions. Some ideas require the participation of external partners, including other levels of government, but provide good starting points for discussion. There are more ideas than can be implemented within the first iteration of the Plan and this feedback should provide guidance for other projects, plans, and policy work going forward.

Some ideas are already underway, such as: developing a Friendship Accord with Mi'kmaq communities; support for an affordable housing project run by the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre; community engagement on an Anti-Black Racism (ABR) Strategy and Action Plan; reviewing municipal street and asset names through a cultural lens; and developing a French version of HRM's website at www.halifax.ca.

Input received through engagement is being used to develop and refine action items that will define the Plan's implementation. Once those action items are analyzed with the feedback from phase 4, staff will develop a staff report and final plan that will go to Regional Council by the end of 2022.

