A Place for Everyone:
A Formative Evaluation of the Halifax Regional Municipality Immigration Action Plan

A report for the Atlantic Metropolis Centre for Excellence
Report prepared by Karin Kronstal
Graduate Candidate, Master of Planning
Dalhousie School of Planning

Technical Advisor: Dr. Ather Akbari
Principle Investigator and Project Supervisor: Dr Jill Grant

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Executive Summary

Immigration is key to the social and economic sustainability of Canadian cities. In 2008, the Dalhousie School of Planning initiated a formative evaluation of the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) Immigration Action Plan with funding from the Atlantic Metropolis Centre pilot grant program. Created in 2005, the Immigration Plan aims to create and maintain a welcoming community for new and existing residents. In July 2009, I conducted interviews with 27 stakeholders from a diverse selection of private and public agencies working with newcomers. Report recommendations reflect their feedback and draw on best practices from other Canadian cities. This report defines a 'welcoming community' in the context of HRM to assess how effectively the existing Plan meets this objective. The body of the report identifies where the Immigration Plan has been successful, suggests potential improvements and makes recommendations for plan review. This executive summary highlights four 'lessons learned' from the project and suggests eight dimensions of a welcoming HRM for consideration during plan review.

Lesson #1: Many people come to HRM for the high quality of life and to raise families; thus, concerns about public safety directly impact the attraction and retention of new residents. As American social theorist John McKnight noted during a recent lecture in Nova Scotia, "Many studies show that there are two major determinants of our local safety. One is how many neighbours we know by name. The second is how often we are present and associate in the public outside our houses" (McKnight, 2009, 2-3). HRM encourages friendly and inclusive neighbourhoods through programs like 'Good Neighbours, Great Neighbourhoods,' and can use these resources to achieve the objectives of the immigration plan. In the longer term, the 2008 report *Violence and Public Safety in HRM* provides valuable insight on how to the City can work to resolve underlying issues of racism and discrimination.

Lesson #2: All HRM programs, plans and services, not just those targeting newcomers, require regular revision to reflect changing community needs. As one NGO staff member asked, "What is our vision in terms of inclusion and being welcoming, and how does each city plan of these support or advance that goal?" (NGO staff member, Interview 15). The Immigration Action Plan proposes staff use 'plain language' in public documents, but effective communication remains the tip of the iceberg. The municipality can go much further by prioritizing 'diversity and inclusion' in all its areas of activity. Feedback from respondents indicates core areas of municipal responsibility such as public transportation as not just poorly communicated but actually designed in ways that exclude certain groups of residents.

Lesson #3: A plan is only as effective as the human and financial resources supporting it. Other municipalities with similar diversity and immigration goals, such as Edmonton and Saskatoon, invest significantly more time and money than HRM in research, staff and programs for newcomers. As the Cultural Plan adopted by HRM Council in 2007 makes clear, achieving strategic goals requires allocating effective resources (HRM Cultural Plan, 2007, 56). While respondents praised the municipality for taking proactive steps to welcome newcomers, they also expressed frustration with a perceived lack of leadership. The absence of a clearly defined lead department or Plan coordinator compromises stakeholder relationships and limits potential partnerships.

Lesson #4: By adopting an asset-based approach that draws on institutional knowledge and community experience, HRM can build on success and address concerns early on. While only a few staff members work on the immigration file, ideas for improving services for newcomers can be drawn from across the organization. Many respondents spoke of HRM Public Libraries as an outstanding example of a welcoming public space with excellent and inclusive services. Cultural organizations, settlement services and international students likewise hold a wealth of experience that HRM can use to inform its approach to diversity management. Building relationships with the international student community is an opportunity for the City to invest in its future. Approximately one-third of international students

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Eight Dimensions of a Welcoming HRM

A welcoming HRM is **safe**. Many people move here with young families or to go to school: Along with employment and education, safety is their primary concern.

A welcoming HRM **uses existing public spaces, community programs and civic events to support increasing diversity,** while continuing to fund special events that introduce newcomers to the city and provide opportunities to meet locals.

A welcoming HRM **adopts an inclusive approach to new plans, policies and infrastructure**, from public art to swimming pools, based on ongoing consultation with community groups.

A welcoming HRM **leads the pack as an employer and promoter of corporate diversity**.

A welcoming HRM acknowledges **attaining equal satisfaction in customer service provision requires meeting distinct needs** based on linguistic and cultural differences, and allocates sufficient resources to meet those needs.

A welcoming HRM communicates with residents in language that **ensures everyone can understand how basic municipal services work and has equal access to them**.

A welcoming HRM **engages and supports multicultural and ethnic communities as well as settlement service providers as critical partners** in newcomer integration.

A welcoming HRM **provides newcomers with opportunities for political participation and volunteerism** and connects them to their community representatives.

1.0 Introduction

Evaluation, the process of critical assessment based on defined criteria, is an essential step in effective community planning. Different types of evaluations meet varying planning objectives: Formative evaluation differs from summative evaluation in its focus on how plans might be improved rather than if they "worked" (Patton, 2002, 220). The American Planning Association (APA) regards formative evaluation as "the foundation for the evaluation phase of the next planning cycle" (APA, 2007, 21).

In November 2008, the Atlantic Metropolis Centre provided a pilot grant for a formative evaluation of the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) Immigration Action Plan (the 'Plan'). HRM Regional Council adopted the Plan in September 2005 as part of a regional effort to attract, retain and integrate new immigrants. Proposed areas of investigation for the study were to identify which one-year ('short-term') actions of the Plan HRM has implemented; determine what impact, if any, plan implementation had on immigrants' access to municipal services; and identify emerging issues for consideration during plan review.

As I gained new information about the Plan, I added questions to the research agenda. For example, I investigated the Plan objective of making HRM a 'welcoming community' after it became clear that a formative evaluation requires a clearly defined goal. Overall, the study focus remained on how the Plan has impacted newcomers' experiences with the HRM community and access to local government services.

This report has at least three potential uses. First and foremost, findings may serve as a resource for municipal staff as they consider the next steps for HRM immigration strategy. While the Plan proposed annual review of long-term objectives, it attached no resources for an evaluation. Several HRM staff participated in this research and indicated to Regional Council their intention to use study results during HRM's upcoming plan review. Ensuring that HRM staff have access to the findings is important to project ethics, as those who participated in the study did so with the expectation that their contribution may influence municipal policy.

A wide range of stakeholders from government and non-governmental agencies serving newcomers and diverse communities participated in the study. Many expressed a feeling of disconnection from current municipal activities and/or the NGO community; those working in settlement agencies face particular challenges finding resources for networking. All study participants expressed the desire to receive a copy of the final report. I hope it proves useful to them in identifying common concerns and potential partnerships.

My report may contribute to further research on immigrant retention in the Atlantic region. The last decade has seen rising interest in municipal immigration policy as cities engage in a global competition for talent (Peck, 2005). A 2009 report from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) suggests immigration holds the key to social and economic sustainability of Canadian cities, making integration a "vital but unfunded" role for local government (FCM, 2009). Halifax continues to lag behind other

Canadian cities of comparable size in terms of immigrant attraction and retention (Gertler and Vinodrai, 2004), though recent statistics suggest the tide may be turning (Akbari, 2009). Many other cities in the Atlantic region struggle to retain their newcomer population. Researchers may wish to use feedback from service providers in Halifax as an indicator of potential issues for investigation in other Atlantic communities.

Section 2 ('Context') explains the evolving municipal role in immigration. I establish regional context by summarizing provincial action on immigration since the opening of the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration in 2004. I show how these events shaped the municipal response and briefly review the Plan document. I outline which actions HRM has taken from the Plan since 2005 and highlight related municipal documents referred to in later sections. I close the section by highlighting recent census data that suggests changes in the socio-economic profiles of recent immigrants to Halifax.

Section 3 ('Design and Method') provides a detailed discussion of my method, including the types of data collected, the data collection tools used and approach to analysis. As this is primarily a qualitative study, most information concerns the interviews I conducted with community stakeholders in July 2009. I present a typology of respondents and explain why I chose to classify them by sector and position (e.g., government and non-government).

Section 4 ('Findings') presents the analysis of respondents' feedback from the qualitative interviews. I categorize findings into four themes that reflect the organization of the Plan document. The first section speaks to the Plan objective of making HRM a welcoming community. The second provides respondent comments and suggestions on the short-term ('Phase One') actions in the Plan; the third considers medium-long term ('Phase Two') actions. The fourth section presents respondents' thoughts on and suggestions for HRM plan review. I conclude by suggesting possible next steps for HRM as the municipality moves forward into planning for Phase II of the HRM Immigration Action Plan.

Section 5 ('Recommendations') suggests eight dimensions of a welcoming HRM. I provide a summary table linking these qualities to each Plan action item and respondents' related recommendations. Appendix C offers comparative best practices from the municipalities of Edmonton and Saskatoon, both cities with innovative approaches to immigration and diversity management.

2.0 Context

Municipal Immigration Planning in Canada

Canada is known worldwide as a nation built on immigration, but Canadian municipalities only recently began to take an interest in immigration planning. While most immigrants still choose to settle around the three major centers of immigration (Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver), small and medium cities increasingly seek to attract and retain a larger share of new Canadians. The editors of a recent special edition of *Plan Canada* on diversity planning attributed this trend in part to a demographic shift. "Smaller communities have become active participants in seeking to attract new residents with the skill sets these communities desperately need to grow and prosper" (Agrawal, Andrew and Biles, 2009, 4).

Despite the economic and demographic benefits of retaining new residents, cities struggle to find resources to meet the challenges of integration. As municipalities weigh a range of pressing demands against limited resources, immigration may not be an obvious priority. Canadian cities remain largely dependent on their federal and provincial counterparts to finance local integration efforts. Despite the importance of immigration to local futures, leadership struggles to prioritize an issue for which they have neither a mandate nor resources. Thus while many municipalities have official policies on diversity and immigration, reactive rather than anticipatory practices prevail. As one article in the *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* observed, "In the face of diversity, municipal policies range from accommodation of specific needs of an ethnic group to a universal approach or 'one size fits all.' In reality, most municipalities have adopted an ad hoc case-by-case approach, or no policy at all" (Carter et al., 2006, iv).

Recent federal-provincial agreements provide resources and an immigration mandate to many provincial governments, including the Province of Nova Scotia. As immigration remains a federal concern under the Canadian constitution, local governments may not participate in policy discussions that affect them most directly. Although "it is at the local level that emerging issues associated with the local settlement of immigrants is most clearly felt, [and] city level authorities are not yet effectively included in higher level planning and policy activities" (OECD, 2006, 136). In spite of political and resource constraints, municipalities across Canada have adopted immigration plans. Many recent plans, particularly in smaller communities, use the goal of becoming a 'welcoming community.' Though welcoming newcomers has become the dominant discourse in local immigration strategies, no universal definition exists in the Canadian literature. The Rural Development Institute in Brandon, Manitoba suggests a policy for developing a welcoming community "includes discussions related to ethnocultural diversity, civic participation, equal access to services, and meaningful employment" (Brandon University Rural Development Institute, 2009).

The Director of the Centre for Governance, Dr. Caroline Andrew, suggests that the terms of reference created by the Government of British Columbia's Welcome BC project provide the closest approximation of a 'universal' Canadian definition to date:

"A welcoming and inclusive community embraces multiculturalism, offers resources and support for newcomers, and engages all sectors of the community in committing to the long-term social and economic prosperity of the community" (Welcome BC Website).

Statistics show most immigrants prefer to settle in large urban centres, leaving medium-sized Canadian cities struggling to draw newcomers or keep those they have. While many of the larger Canadian cities have adopted some kind of immigration strategy, approaches to developing and implementing immigration plans vary considerably across regions. While Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver allot the greatest resources on settlement, several 'second-tier' centres have taken innovative approaches to diversity management.

In Appendix C, I provide case examples of best practices from the cities of Edmonton and Saskatoon. While demographic and economic pressures facing each differ considerable, both municipalities demonstrate a long-term commitment to progressive policy and practices. The history of the Race Relations committee at Saskatoon City Hall shows local leaders situating the concerns and opportunities brought by increased immigration within a broader context of population diversity.

City staff created an intergovernmental task force on attraction and retention: it worked together to produce the 2009 Saskatoon Immigration Action Plan. In terms of internal policy, Edmonton's Office of Diversity and Inclusion exemplifies municipal commitment to providing equitable employment opportunities while supporting a progressive and positive working environment for all employees. Political leaders in both cities made significant resource investments in research that laid the groundwork for proactive and comprehensive municipal plans. Together these plans model alternative approaches to immigration planning and corporate diversity policy.

Development of Provincial Strategy

In the spring of 2003, the Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA) and the Province of Nova Scotia organized a conference for stakeholders concerned about diminishing levels of immigration to the province. Representatives from provincial and federal governments came together with settlement service providers and the business community to share ideas and strategies for attracting and retaining more newcomers. Attendees included the Federal Immigration Minister, who highlighted Canada's interest in settling new Canadians outside the traditional 'MTV' (Montreal-Toronto-Vancouver) regions.

The following September, Premier John Hamm tasked the Ministers of Education, Economic Development and Culture, Tourism and Heritage to collaborate on a provincial immigration strategy. By August 2004 the Provincial Government opened the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration and released the Office's first document: *A Framework for Immigration.* The *Framework* set clear targets for attracting and retaining immigrants to the province while promising further consultation before making policy commitments. *What We Heard: The Immigration Strategy Consultation Report* documents data gathered from

stakeholders during in the fall of 2004. With over 45 groups and individuals consulted, *What We Heard* remains the most comprehensive survey of community views on immigration held in Nova Scotia to date. In January 2005, the Province published Nova Scotia's Immigration Strategy for 2005 to 2010.

The opening pages of the *Strategy* present immigration primarily as a means for Nova Scotians to "continue to support the way of life that we enjoy" (*Nova Scotia's Immigration Strategy*, 2005, 1). It proposes a grassroots approach to integration involving the whole community: "Welcoming immigrants has a specific, local dimension, requiring the support not only of the public, but also of the various groups and organizations that operate within a particular community" (2005, 8).

Though the *Strategy* does not explicitly mention municipalities as partners in integration, it does refers to local government as closest to people in communities. The *Strategy* commits the province to including municipalities in campaigns for attracting immigrants and enhancing service delivery capacity (2005, 23). HRM Mayor Peter Kelly currently sits on the provincial Minister's Immigration Advisory Council, established to provide strategic advice to the Minister of Immigration on immigration-related policies and programs in Nova Scotia.

"We are facing a number of demographic and economic challenges—slow population growth, an aging population, low birthrate, out-migration of our young people, urbanization, low immigration numbers—all of which may lead to labour shortages, slowing demand for goods and services, and increasing fiscal pressures in the years to come… immigration is one way by which Nova Scotia can help meet our long-term population, economic, and labour force needs."

- Nova Scotia's Immigration Strategy, 2005, Page 1

Plan History

Prior to the current Plan, HRM did not have an official policy detailing the municipal role in immigration. Following the opening of the provincial Office of Immigration, City leadership took an active interest in developing a strategy for attracting and retaining newcomers to Halifax. In May 2005, Mayor Peter Kelly hosted an Atlantic Mayor's Conference on immigration at Pier 21; the following month then-CAO George McLellan led a regional municipal immigration forum for local stakeholders. In July 2005, the Greater Halifax Partnership (GHP) released the Halifax Region Immigration Strategy, which increased the profile of immigration in HRM's economic development strategy.

May 2005 saw HRM Regional Council adopt a vision statement of HRM as a welcoming community "where immigration is supported and encouraged. Halifax Regional Municipality will work with other levels of government and community partners to increase our collective cultural, social and economic diversity by welcoming immigrants to our community." Following the June forum, an interdepartmental task force met regularly to create an HRM immigration strategy, which HRM Regional Council unanimously adopted in September 2005. Though the ten-page Plan does not fall under the purview of any single administrative group, the Departments of Human Resources and Community Relations and

Cultural Affairs have been the most active units during implementation.

Plan Content

The opening paragraphs of the Plan define HRM's primary role in immigration as creating and maintaining a welcoming community and repeat the Vision Statement adopted at Regional Council. The Plan presents document content as directly reflecting concerns and ideas raised at the regional immigration conference held in June 2005. The Plan identifies broad objectives and lists specific actions for the municipality to take (e.g. increasing newcomer involvement in civic life by distributing information on the municipality at citizenship ceremonies). The Plan distinguishes between internally focused organizational goals and externally focused communications goals and prioritizes actions into Phase 1 (short term actions for implementation within 12 months) and Phase 2 (medium-long term actions). **Table 1** provides a summary of the Plan schedule; the original Plan can be found in **Appendix A.**

While the Plan does not mention a budget or timeline for implementation, it does present Phase 2 actions as subject to annual review following "regular discussions forums with representatives from business, government, not-for-profit organizations, immigrant settlement organizations and immigrants on issues of significance related to municipal services and ease of settlement in HRM" (HRM 2005, 8).

External/Communications Actions

HRM Cultural Affairs staff delivered two progress reports in the last calendar year to Regional Council on the external/communications objectives of the Plan. Council received the first report on March 31, 2009 following the publication of *A Newcomer's Guide to HRM*. The Guide was jointly developed with the GHP and funded by the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration. Staff reported sending copies to settlement agencies throughout HRM, and described the planned distribution strategy as including "a mail-out to all of the key agencies and organizations working with new immigrants, universities and colleges, distribution through HRM libraries, customer service centres and the HRM call centre." The progress report committed staff to delivering a recommendation report regarding the implementation of the Immigration Action Plan Phase 2 deliverables to Council 'in the near future' (HRM, March 31, 2009).

A second progress summary in June 2009 reported the successful launch of the Newcomer's Guide to the HRM. Staff distributed the Guide to some HRM locations and settlement service agencies with an online version available for downloading. The Guide provides information for newcomers to the city on programs, services and resources, with the secondary goal of promoting HRM as a destination for new immigrants (HRM, June 12, 2009, 2). Other reported activities in 2009 included Cultural Affairs and Community Relations staff involvement in the annual Welcoming Communities barbeque and potluck by providing the Halifax Commons and resources to help organize the event.

Table 1: Action Plan Summary

	Phase One	Phase Two
	Host citizenship ceremonies Provide welcome letters to newcomers from Mayor and Councillors employees Improve website Develop a "Newcomers' Guide to Halifax" Create an advisory group of staff and citizens to identify the challenges and needs of diverse communities Utilize HRM access centres to link immigrants and existing services	Work with community partners to provide HRM service information in multiple languages Develop additional versions of the "Newcomers' Guide to HRM" in Arabic, Mandarin, Spanish, Farsi, Russian and French Increase diverse community representation on municipal committees and in policy and event planning. Improve staff training in communications, in particular in providing plain language correspondence. Explore opportunities for the three levels of government to colocate service centres. Collaborate with Halifax Regional School Board to provide information to students on civics and bylaws. Promote culture in HRM.
Organizational/ Internal Focus	Fulfill HRM's diversity mandate to ensure employees represent the population they serve Develop a list of potential interpreters within the HRM workforce. Establish a "Where in the World" section in the HRM News employee newsletter.	Enhance cultural diversity training for customer service and frontline public facing employees Encourage appropriate behavior and create staff performance accountabilities for recognizing diversity Enhance emergency service protocols for dealing with diverse languages

Source: HRM Issues and Initiatives, 2006-2007

Organizational/Internal Actions

Internal actions fall largely within the purview of Human Resources as a continuation of a corporate diversity mandate that predates the Plan. The Plan commits HRM to "ensuring employees represent the population they serve." The June update to Regional Council reported HRM efforts to encourage applicants of diverse backgrounds to apply for municipal positions (i.e., attending career fairs to recruit newcomers). Though Human Resources does not currently keep statistics on staff diversity, staff have indicated they are in the process of adding self-identification data to their information system, though individuals will have the option of not identifying as belonging to a minority group.

Human Resources currently offers five cultural competency and diversity training workshops to staff. Staff recently developed a sixth course, Diversity for Leaders, as part of the Diversity Action Plan. In summer 2009, Human Resources formed a monthly interdepartmental Diversity Working Group to brainstorm ideas for promoting corporate diversity. The Working Group organized a half-day diversity fair featuring community groups for the 2009 HRM Corporate Diversity Week. The Human Resources unit adopted "valuing diversity" as a core competency for all HRM postings/job interviews, and has collaborated with MISA on two work placements during the current calendar year. On the immigration front, Human Resources recently compiled a list of potential interpreters within HRM staff, though the list is not yet ready for circulation.

Plan Update

While some short-term actions such as website improvements took place immediately, progress has been slowed by the lack of resources attached to the Plan. While other staff may become involved in the file as time permits, Cultural Affairs officially dedicates about 20% of one community development position to working with newcomers. Cultural Affairs has been given an annual operating budget of five thousand dollars for newcomer-related activities. For any additional expenses, staff must obtain external funding (e.g., the Provincial Office of Immigration sponsored the Newcomers' Guide to the HRM).

Anecdotal evidence suggests HRM workforce diversity has increased in recent years as a result of improved policies (though still not proportionally reflective of the composition of the community); this cannot be confirmed without statistical information that Human Resources is currently unable to collect. Respondents suggested the strong unionization of the HRM workforce (approximately 90% of positions fall under one of five unions) makes it difficult for newcomers to apply for many HRM positions as union policies prioritize candidates with HRM experience. The potential conflict between union objectives and those of the immigration and diversity plans may pose a barrier to achieving a representative workforce.

Supporting Plans and Policies

The Immigration Plan cites the HRM Regional Plan, Economic Strategy and Cultural Plan as supporting

plans placing strategic importance on immigration. With its overt interest in immigration, the Greater Halifax Partnership actively collaborates with HRM on areas of shared interest (for example, GHP staff also participated in the Welcoming Communities BBQ). The HRM Cultural Plan, approved by Regional Council (2006), explicitly ties implementation of the Immigration Plan to cultural objectives. Two subsequent documents, the Community Engagement Strategy (2008) and Human Resources Diversity Team Plan (2009), do not mention the Immigration Plan but share complementary objectives.

The HRM Cultural Plan refers to the HRM Immigration Action Plan as a 'supporting plan' and contains statements linking plan objectives. Policy 2.12 establishes a program for implementing the Halifax Region Immigration Strategy and the HRM Immigration Action Plan. Policy 5.1 mentions strategic investment in programs and initiatives "to build creative capital and economic and community vitality," as achieved through project identification and coordination between the Cultural Plan, HRM Economic Development Strategy and HRM Immigration Action Plan (HRM Cultural Plan, 2007, 54).

"Statistics show HRM residents come from a predominantly Northern-European ethno-heritage. This influences the activities and settlement of other peoples... HRM must balance its existing heritage with an acceptance of new ethno-cultural experiences and traditions."
- HRM Cultural Plan, 2007, Page 17

Some areas of the Cultural Plan directly overlap with the Immigration Plan without making a clear linkage: for example, the goal of allowing all residents the opportunity to experience culture through a fair and balanced approach to cultural service relates to the immigration goal of accessible services. Other policies specifically target immigrant concerns: For example, Policy 4.13 suggests HRM's Immigration Action Team develop a program that gives young newcomers the opportunity for job shadowing (HRM Cultural Plan, 2007, 54). The Cultural Plan describes immigrants as a valuable resource for "revitalizing neighbourhoods and regions, and to maintaining healthy social, economic and cultural resources…. Visitors and citizens value the warm, friendly, and culturally diverse people who make HRM unique" (HRM Cultural Plan, 2007, 14).

More broadly, the Cultural Plan calls for HRM to embrace diversity by adopting a "greatly expanded view of culture" beyond "largely European 'high arts and heritage'" (HRM Cultural Plan, 2007, 19). As immigration plays a key role in creating diversity, considered "an essential component of a growing and vibrant economy and community," the Cultural Plan asserts "a strong cultural mandate and development strategy will ensure cultural development is linked to broader economic and community development goals, including a positive and prosperous environment for immigrants" (HRM Cultural Plan, 2007, 21). The Cultural Plan makes explicit the relationship between immigration and global competitiveness, stating "People are drawn to places with a vibrant cultural community" (HRM Cultural Plan, 2007, 17).

The Cultural Plan touches on the internal goals of the Immigration Plan by establishing the HRM Corporate Diversity Plan implementation as a short-term, immediate action, the highest priority category (HRM Cultural Plan, 2007, 66). The Cultural Plan includes continued work on HRM's Community and

Race Relations Policy, and makes developing a Community Diversity Plan to help HRM services meet the needs of its diverse communities a short-term priority (HRM Cultural Plan, 2007, 69).

One of the ten principles for community engagement in the Community Engagement Strategy (2008) speaks directly to the goals of the immigration plan. The principle states "Barriers to access [must be] recognized and overcome to ensure diverse, inclusive and balanced participation" (Community Engagement Strategy, 2008. 20). To this end, the Strategy proposes developing a community engagement inclusion guide and educational workshop that would look at potential barriers to participation.

Though it does not refer to the Immigration Plan, the Diversity Team Plan (2009) presents complementary objectives. The Diversity Team Plan is an internal work plan rather than a policy document, and lays out the Human Resources approach to integrating immigration into its broader diversity mandate of achieving a representative workforce. Most of the actions in the Diversity Team Plan are noted in the 'Plan Update' section of this report.

> *"Many divisions reach out to diverse groups in their engagement exercises; however, there is no consistent approach for addressing diversity in public outreach. The Community Engagement review process identified this lack of coordination as often contributing to a less representative participant base than desired.... More inclusive processes must include multiple and appropriate opportunities for involvement."*
> - HRM Community Engagement Strategy, 2008, Page 20

Demographic Trends

The Nova Scotia Immigration Plan set a target of attracting 3,600 newcomers a year to the province by 2011. Statistics indicate Nova Scotia attracted 2585 new immigrants in 2006: A 34 percent increase over 2005 and a 152 percent increase over 2001. The province has nearly reached the secondary goal of attaining a 70 percent retention rate for the 2006–2011 census period. The retention rate rose from 48 percent in 2001 to more than 63 percent by 2006, the largest rise for all of Atlantic Canada (Province 2006; Akbari 2008a).

In 2002, Nova Scotia signed the Nova Scotia Nominee Program (NSNP) with the federal government. The NSNP allows the province to nominate potential immigrants to the federal government for expedited entry to the province. The policy enables the province to target potential newcomers on the basis of skills, education and economic resources. The NSNP provides five possible streams of entry: Skilled Worker, Family Business Worker, International Graduate, Non-Dependent Children of Nominees and Community Identified.

A socio-economic profile of immigrants to HRM indicates recent newcomers as younger and more educated those arriving prior to 2001. Most of those who arrived during the last census period were between the ages of 25 and 44. Over half of recent newcomers arrived with at least one university degree,

a substantial increase over the 1996 to 2001 period when only 40 percent of arrived with a university degree. The number of nominees accepted under the family class stream during the 2001-2006 period increased from previous periods. This trend will likely continue following the introduction of the Non-Dependent Children of Nominees stream in August 2009.

The profile observes higher than average levels of education and wealth found among the collective immigrant population that arrived between 1991 and 2006 (which includes all residents born outside of Canada). A breakdown of the data shows lower than average earning among recent immigrants (those who have arrived within the past five years). Though recent immigrants earn less than non-immigrants, those who arrived during the last census period (2001-2006) narrowed the earnings gap with non-immigrants more quickly than those who came during the previous five-year period (1996-2001). This partially results from the higher levels of education attained by recent immigrants and a decline in average resident income, but improved social dynamics may also play a role. As Akbari and Rankaduwa note, "Systematic research should also analyze the effects of other possible factors, such as greater acceptance of immigrants in the labour force and faster settlement, which may have helped to narrow this gap" (Akbari and Rankaduwa, 2008b, vii, 22).

Census data reveals changes in immigrants' country of origin over the past ten years. In the most recent census, China, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom were the top five source countries. China's rise to become the most common country of origin has been rapid: Kuwait, Jordan, Korea, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan were the five top source countries during the previous period. The increase of Chinese migrants is likely associated with rising numbers of family class immigrants as China was the most common source country for this category of immigrant to the province between 2002 and 2006 (Nova Scotia Immigration Trends, 2006, 3). Egypt, the top source country for immigrants to Halifax during the 1991 to 1996 census period, no longer ranks in the top five (Akbari and Rankaduwa, 2008b, 12).

In conclusion, census data suggests recent immigrants to HRM as generally younger and better educated than those arriving more than five years ago. Shifts in provincial policy led to immigrants arriving to HRM from non-traditional source countries such as China and Korea. That recent immigrants exhibit greater ability than earlier arrivals to obtain the same earnings level as residents may reflect more effective integration, but income disparities persist despite immigrants' high levels of human capital. This finding is consistent with the recent Statistics Canada that immigrant wages generally lag behind those of Canadian-born workers with similar qualifications (Gilmore, 2008, 5).

3.0 Design and Method

Project Design

As applied research, formative evaluations typically focus on a specific policy or program rather than seeking general knowledge: "No attempt is made in a formative evaluation to generalize beyond the setting in which the evaluation takes place…Findings are context specific" (Patton, 2002, 220). Yet interpreting the local context demands a solid understanding of the broader concepts at play. I began my study with a literature review of how Canadian planners and policymakers define a 'welcoming community' in theoretical terms while seeking to connect these to identified 'best practices' in immigration planning from other local governments.

The context-specific nature of formative evaluations means researchers often rely on qualitative data (Patton, 2002, 22). While I initially intended to use a mixed-method approach that incorporates quantitative data, HRM has either limited or no quantitative data available for of the most Plan objectives. For example, the Client Services unit was unable to provide statistics on service access by newcomers. I chose to interview individuals rather than conduct focus groups in order to allow respondents the confidentiality to express their views freely. Pursuant to the qualitative data collection process described below, I coded transcribed interviews thematically. Themes continued to evolve during and after the process of data collection. The cycle ended when no new categories emerged from the data, at which point thematic revision ended and data analysis commenced (Ryan, 2006).

Qualitative Data Collection

In May 2009, the Dalhousie Social Sciences and Humanities Human Research Ethics Board granted the project ethics approval. In June and July 2009, I conducted 23 semi-structured interviews with 27 respondents who work on behalf of or with newcomers to HRM. The initial draft of potential respondents came from a list of participants in the 2003 MISA forum on immigration. During the first week of interviews, I asked respondents for recommendations of community groups or individuals who might wish to participate in the study. I selected respondents with the objective of attaining a wide variety of perspectives on newcomers' needs and experiences, subject to their willingness to participate. Using this approach, respondents' defining attribute was whose interests they advocated (e.g. international students, immigrants and/or refugee claimants), whether professionally or in a volunteer capacity.

Initial contact with respondents usually involved a telephone conversation where I explained the project and offered to send more details by e-mail. Respondents received a letter with details on project objectives, a consent form and a copy of the interview guide. Only two of the people contacted declined to participate; one (a NGO volunteer) did not feel able to speak to the needs of recent newcomers, and

the second (a municipal staff) was unavailable. All persons interviewed signed the consent form; two declined to be recorded and one asked that direct quotations not be used in this report.

Table 2 indicates the majority (15) of respondents employed by a non-governmental organization (NGO); of these, most offered immigration settlement services. A few respondents worked for organizations serving international students and refugees. Ten of the remaining twelve respondents were employed by or elected to one of the three orders of government, and two were private citizens working on behalf of immigrants in a volunteer capacity. I used three guides during interviews: one oriented for government service providers, one oriented for settlement service providers and one oriented for non-professionals (attached in **Appendix B**).

Table 2: Interview by respondent type [n = 27]

Sector	Elected	Employee	Volunteer	Total
Government	3	7	0	10
Federal	1	1	0	2
Provincial	1	1	0	2
Municipal	1	5	0	6
NGO	0	15	2	17
Manager	0	8	0	8
Staff	0	7	0	7
Total	**3**	**22**	**2**	**27**

While interviews varied substantially in length (between 25 and 120 minutes), all addressed the three research questions:

> 1) Evaluation of Plan Objective: The stated objective of the 2005 Halifax Regional Municipality Immigration Action Plan is to create and maintain a welcoming community. What are the possible meanings of 'welcoming community', and what role does municipal government have in these concepts?
> 2) Evaluation of Plan Action Items: To what extent, if any, have actions taken under the 2005 Halifax Regional Municipality Immigration Action Plan achieved its objective of creating and maintaining a welcoming community?
> 3) Plan Review: What revisions, if any, would make the Plan more effective?

Study Limitations

The small sample size of respondents significantly limits the findings. Twenty-three interviews was

the maximum possible given the scope of the project study, so I was unable to interview all advocates and interested parties. One unanticipated limitation was respondents' lack of familiarity with the Plan document. Early in the interviews I realized many respondents were unable to answer questions about specific Plan content without seeing a copy of the document. Though this may have skewed findings slightly by providing respondents with new information (thus potentially 'cueing' feedback), I brought the Plan to interviews for reference. Respondents displayed greater familiarity with the Newcomers' Guide to the City, which I also brought to interviews.

Given the limited project scope, I believed it appropriate to interview stakeholder agencies familiar with program evaluation. I recognize that limiting respondent groups to immigration advocates, bureaucrats and professionals means findings represent a somewhat 'elite' perspective. Many respondents, including those who had immigrated or work directly with immigrants, considered themselves unable to speak on behalf of recent newcomers. Additional investigation on the needs of recent immigrants could mitigate this study limitation.

4.0 Findings

Plan Objective

In opening pages of the Plan, then-CAO George McLellan describes HRM's primary role in immigration as creating and maintaining "a welcoming community."

"We must never forget that immigration is about people. In order to increase the number of individuals and families who move to our region and stay in the long term, we must create a welcoming environment. HRM is committed to providing the best possible services to its residents. As we work towards creating a more inviting community for newcomers, I believe that any action we undertake as a municipality will be supported by our residents." (HRM Immigration Action Plan, 2005, 2)

The Plan thus defines its objective as creating a welcoming and more inviting community for the benefit of immigrants, 'newcomers,' and all residents. I asked respondents for feedback on four aspects of the plan objective:

1) What is a welcoming community? Is this the appropriate objective for the Plan?
2) The Plan does not specify whether 'newcomers' must be Canadian citizens. Are any community members or groups excluded from the Plan?
3) What challenges do non-immigrants in HRM face creating a welcoming community?
4) In your experience, why do newcomers come to and stay in HRM?

What is a welcoming community? Is this the appropriate objective for the Plan?

As not all respondents were familiar with HRM Immigration Action Plan, interviews typically began with an introduction to the Plan objective of creating and maintaining a welcoming community. When asked how they interpret this term, most saw welcoming newcomers as part of the larger goal of fostering a diverse, inclusive and vibrant place. One saw this as going "beyond the threshold" of mere tolerance to "understanding, curiosity and acceptance" (NGO staff, Interview 18) of cultural and ethnic difference, but also race, gender and socio-economic difference. Inviting new people into our community means not only acknowledging their presence but including them in our daily lives: "Really striking up friendships with people, inviting them to our homes, or going the extra mile to enable them to integrate into the labour force" (NGO staff, Interview 20). Many respondents saw integration as a two-way process where a sense of belonging results from opportunities to participate in and give back to the community. Most found the term 'welcoming' does not capture the foundational purpose of a municipal immigration plan. HRM can go "beyond the hello – to a community that is integrative, inclusive, engaged and informed" (Municipal employee, Interview 7).

Are any community members or groups excluded from the Plan?

The Plan clearly speaks to newcomers who have already immigrated to Canada, but does not mention two other international communities residing in HRM: international students and refugee claimants. Feedback from international student advocates highlighted the difficulties of assessing the needs of newcomers to the city when significant portions of that population are not technically immigrants. International students arrive by the thousands every year in Halifax: 2001 to 2006 data indicate China, Korea, United States, Japan and Germany as the top five countries of origin (Akbari, 2006).

"I'm sure the City is proud to claim that there are so many international students here. But if you claim something you have to be able to support it."
- NGO manager, Interview 9

Anecdotal evidences suggests roughly one-third of international students choose to immigrate to Canada at the end of their studies, yet HRM does not recognize this community in the Plan nor does it extend settlement support to the students. One respondent noted, for example, that there is often confusion among international students as to whether they can access English as a Second Language (ESL) courses through institutions such as the Public Library. She observed that the exclusion of international students "doesn't give welcoming impression" (NGO Manager, Interview 9). HRM can clarify this situating by deciding whether international students count as newcomers: many respondents believed HRM would benefit greatly as a community by welcoming the students.

"I believe that we can play a significant role in helping better transition international students into the local community. By virtue of doing that, if they are made to feel genuinely welcome, our ability to retain more of those international students as permanent residents would grow."
- NGO manager, Interview 10

What challenges do non-immigrants in HRM face creating a welcoming community?

While most characterized local residents as friendly, many believed the larger community lacks confidence when interacting with immigrants. A NGO manager observed "a vicious circle because there are fewer immigrants here so people have less exposure to immigrants and different cultures, which in turn makes it much more difficult for people to become part of the culture" (Interview 13). One respondent thought lack of cross-cultural knowledge generates anxiety about inadvertently causing offense; another noted how lack of experience with other cultures manifests in subtle ways, such as making less effort to learn to say names properly (NGO manager, Interview 17; NGO staff, Interview 13). Some respondents reported experiencing or witnessing entrenched racism among local residents. One NGO staff member recalled her first impression had been that locals need to be "more open to other cultures and to really learn. There's a need for more education about other cultures: A lot of racism issues have their roots in ignorance and fear" (NGO staff, Interview 18).

"You are reminded very often that you're from away in different ways. Either you have an accent or your resume looks different… It's as if all of a sudden your past life doesn't count."
- NGO staff, Interview 18

Some newcomers may feel less comfortable confronting racist behaviour; international students, for example, might not complain due to their temporary visa status. One NGO staff member recounted the discrimination she felt when dealing with a student affairs officer while an international student. At the time she felt reluctant to confront prejudice, but "when you become an immigrant, it's your daily life and you have to face it. I can say that 'Well, I'm Canadian too. I'm not an outsider'" (Interview 22). A municipal employee wondered what resources and training the host community might require to become more comfortable interacting with immigrants.

"A big barrier facing newcomers preventing Halifax from becoming a welcoming community is racism and xenophobia… for this to become a welcoming community we need to start by educating the folks that already live here."
- Federal elected official, Interview 23

Many respondents thought HRM could make better use of its communication tools to educate the general public about the importance of immigration and diversity to the city. Several respondents stated that the public remains generally unaware of the contribution newcomers make to Halifax's economic and cultural wealth. One NGO volunteer argued that the public could play a greater role in promoting Nova Scotia as a destination for international students and skilled immigrants if given more information on the available opportunities (Interview 21).

"We are used to responding the same way all the time, but that may not be what somebody who is new to this province would expect or feel welcomed by."
-Municipal employee, Interview 3

Respondents applauded the ongoing public awareness campaign administered by Greater Halifax

Partnership to promote immigrant employment. Several suggested ways HRM could continue to spread this message through existing services and publications. Simply representing a more diverse representation in public documents that are not directly linked to immigration, such as the recreation guide or calendar, can make a difference. "It's those little things where changes could be made to increasing the sense that there is the opportunity for you here. You may not look like me, but we want you here nonetheless" (NGO staff, Interview 15).

Why do newcomers come to and stay in HRM?

Much of the literature on immigration to the 'MTV' regions (Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver) focuses on the advantages these three cities have in attracting immigrants on account of the large number of established ethnic groups. Respondents acknowledged the less diverse population of HRM as a problem in creating a welcoming community, but more often framed this in terms of the impact on local residents than on newcomers' expectations. Immigrants seeking a highly cosmopolitan city would likely not choose Halifax in the first place: Most come here seeking a comfortable place to raise a family.

Public safety is a primary concern for new residents as many arrive with or intend to bring their families. One respondent recalled sitting on a committee where the intention was to discuss immigrants' settlement needs: "Inevitably, the immigrants would talk about very specific issues, like violence in downtown Halifax and how their children weren't safe at night" (Provincial employee, Interview 1). Several respondents who had themselves immigrated to Halifax mentioned the size and safety of Halifax as key to its appeal.

"Halifax, Nova Scotia is a great place to be based on quality of life. And what is quality of life? It's not sunshine everyday: Quality of life is the community you live in. It is when you send your teenagers to university and if they're missing classes, some of the professors will call you. All of that is very welcoming."
-NGO volunteer, Interview 21

"Without a doubt, the newcomers that I speak to are here largely for the opportunities that their family and their children will have."
-Provincial employee, Interview 1

The 2008 report to the Mayor 'Violence and Public Safety in the HRM' cites community activists as stating the presence of immigrants in HRM housing projects has increased the sense of community and reduced the level of violence and crime (Clairmont, 2008, 20). While these newcomers are doing their part to improve safety, the Report observes the Mayor's office has done little to deal with systemic issues of violence stemming from racial tension in the community. City Council's Community and Race Relations committee has ceased to meet; as one HRM elected official noted, the committee had "no funding and no real mandate" (Interview 5). Yet the report stresses the importance of political leadership in this area; the Mayor's Office in particular is "seen to be by immigrants [as significantly] facilitating their sense of inclusion in HRM" (Clairmont, 2008, 80).

When discussing why people leave Halifax, respondents most often spoke about newcomers' inability to find meaningful employment. For many, the availability of economic opportunity clearly took

precedence over the civic or social aspects of integration. As a provincial employee noted, "It is like Maslow's theory: If you can't work, you can't feed your children – food, shelter, and clothing are the basics. One immigrant said to me, 'If I can't find a job then this is not a welcoming community.'" (Interview 1). Other respondents emphasized the quality of employment as many newcomers fail to find jobs that reflect their professional qualifications or work experience.

"Having a good life for most of us, first and foremost is having a job that is meaningful...It's a job that is also a door to other opportunities: to making friends, having a professional network, finding recreational opportunities and so on."
- Interview 18, NGO staff

Statistics indicate the economic performance of recent immigrants to the HRM improved during the 2001 to 2006 period over the previous decade. Respondent feedback reflected this shift, with many expressing that while the situation remained far from ideal, opportunities for immigrants have improved in recent years. "Ten years isn't a long time for us to consider a change, I see huge changes from where we were even five years ago. Folks are being educated on ways to feel more comfortable hiring people that don't fit the mould" (NGO manager, Interview 17).

Improvement in the economic integration of recent newcomers, most of whom are young and highly educated, should not obscure that many older and less privileged immigrants struggle with integration. Those with the means can move on to other places and often do, as demonstrated by the hundreds of 'economic class' provincial nominees who left a few years ago when they arrived and found there were no employment opportunities for them. But not everyone who wishes to leave has that opportunity. For example, several respondents noted a significant part of the community that arrived fifteen years ago as refugees from the former Yugoslavia remains socially and economically segregated. Statistical data, while useful for tracking trends, requires complementary strategies of community engagement to fully explore the challenges facing all immigrants.

Summary of Findings on Plan Objective

1. Welcoming newcomers is positive, but it is only a first step. HRM can expand its vision for the community by revising the objective to include concepts such as inclusion and integration.
2. International students and refugee claimants are members of our community and potential Canadian citizens. **If HRM defines international students and/or refugee claimants as newcomers to the city, include strategies to address their specific information and service needs.**
3. **Lack of experience with newcomers may intimidate some non-immigrant residents, leading to negative social behaviour such as racism.** HRM can address this barrier through political leadership and public education.
4. Economic integration often precedes and enables social integration. **HRM can support the Plan objective by coordinating with agencies that help newcomers find meaningful employment and by employing newcomers.**

Evaluation of Phase One

Most of the 'Phase One' (short-term) action items have been completed. Respondents offered feedback on each item, as well as suggestions for other further actions HRM could take to meet its objectives.

Communication/External Actions

Action Item #1: Host citizenship ceremonies

Comments: HRM regularly hosts federal citizenship ceremonies at city facilities. Respondents appreciated the accessibility of city facilities for these and similar events; one respondent recalled enjoying a graduation ceremony for a settlement agency hosted by City Hall (Provincial employee, Interview 1). The attendance and participation of municipal councillors at citizenship ceremonies was also seen favourably.

Suggestions: The popularity of the Canada Day ceremony held at Pier 21 suggests all ceremonies could be promoted to non-immigrants as an opportunity to renew citizenship vows and meet new people. "It's quite a formal ceremony and family members often come. The general public doesn't often come and that's really quite a shame. Maybe that's something that we can strive for – to have them more open" (Municipal elected official, Interview 5).

"Once we had a tour of city hall where we met the Mayor and people had their picture taken. He very generously gave us 15 minutes and said, "Are there questions?" There were great questions: One of the first questions, a guy from Columbia said through a translator, "What is the process that I need to follow to become a councillor?"

- NGO staff, Interview 19

Action Item #2: Provide letters of welcome to newcomers from mayors and councillors

Comments: No respondent mentioned hearing about or seeing the letter of welcome from the Mayor currently posted on the HRM website.

Suggestions: A more direct means of greeting new residents than a letter of welcome on the website would likely prove more effective. Respondents noted welcoming messages could provided as soon as people land at the airport: "Even if it's just a sign that says, "Welcome to Halifax" in four or five different languages" (NGO staff, Interview 15). Most respondents saw 'meet and greet' events between elected representatives and newcomers as the best way of communicating newcomers' value as members of the community. Such events may encourage continued participation in the political process by showing HRM leaderships recognizes how newcomers contribute to the richness and growth of the city.

Action Item #3: Website Improvements

Comments: Website improvements included adding welcoming messages in multiple languages, providing links to some key organizations and government services, and making the immigration section accessible from the main HRM site. Respondents noticed and commended the changes; many expressed concern about the accessibility of the updated site. Critical information, including emergency contacts, is only available in English. Some reported finding the entire HRM site difficult to navigate.

"Most newcomers who come through the independent category with their family get immigration information from ethnic community associations, websites, or their friends or relatives."
-NGO staff, Interview 22

Suggestions: Areas for further improvement include providing links to other government services that newcomers use (e.g. Access Nova), developing a more comprehensive list of ethnic and cultural contacts and indicating where to find interpretation and translation services. One group of respondents suggested adding short audio clips in multiple languages with critical information such as emergency phone numbers would greatly increase site utility for recent newcomers with limited English.

Action Item #4: Develop a 'Newcomers' Guide to HRM'

Comments: Respondents found the publication of the Guide a positive first step in community relations, but many expressed concern about accessibility. Most in settlement services found the level of English too advanced for recent newcomers with the most urgent need for information. Some service providers use the Guide for reference when working with recent immigrants; these respondents noted that newcomers often prefer to go through written documents with assistance. Many found the Guide is too long and contains unnecessary detail about the background and history of HRM.

"Where we fall down in making it welcoming to all is our ability to get things out in languages other than English"
-Municipal employee, Interview 3

Suggestions: Despite concerns about accessibility, respondents expressed optimism that HRM will continue work to translate and update the Guide. Respondents suggested making the Guide available at all transportation nodes (e.g. bus stops, airports) in addition to traditional settlement services and HRM units. HRM could also distribute the Guide through ethnic organizations and grocery stores.

In the future, HRM may wish to reconsider the 'one-size-fits-all' approach of the Guide. As one respondent said, "The first rule of communication is: Who are you directing this at? HRM is trying to hit every single person who may want to step foot into the province and stay here" (NGO staff, Interview 15). By focusing on producing a general Guide that can also serve to promote the province to tourists and investors, HRM has not met the immediate information needs of new residents most likely to face barriers accessing services.

Action Item #5: Create an advisory group of staff and citizens to identify the challenges and needs of diverse communities

Comments: Though HRM has not yet formed the diversity advisory committee, Human Resources has hired a diversity coordinator with a mandate to fulfill internal objectives such as increased staff training. Respondents liked the idea of creating an advisory committee that would work with immigrant communities to focus on isolation reduction and overcome barriers to service access and expressed hope this would happen.

"If you spent a little money on translation and go out to some of the cultural associations or cultural councils, there will probably be quite a few people who are willing to give their time and get their voices heard [on committees]."
-NGO staff, Interview 15

Suggestions: Possible recruitment strategies for the new committee could include advertising in multiple languages and through media outlets that target newcomers. As one NGO employee noted, "Most immigrants that have gone through so much to get here in the first place that I would say they're the 'go getter' personalities. They jumped through enough hoops to get here, they might be quite interested in being on a committee" (NGO staff, Interview 19).

Though family demands may constrain broad-based participation in committees, HRM can mitigate by holding meetings and information sessions in convenient locations and by providing refreshments and childcare. "It's not just immigrants that may be finding their access to participating difficult...In any kind of recruitment, you've got to be intentional" (NGO staff, Interview 19).

Action Item #6: Utilize HRM access centres to link immigrants with existing services

Comments: Respondents emphasized that newcomers use the same government services as other residents and share the same primary concerns (e.g., public safety, affordable housing, education). Yet newcomers also face specific barriers accessing to municipal services such as recreation, transportation and waste disposal.

In terms of transportation, some newcomers with private vehicles find the city difficult to navigate because roads are not well marked and often missing signage. Those relying on public transportation face even greater challenges: "Those who aren't able to purchase their own transport immediately they say the transportation in this city is terrible – and many of them come from less developed countries " (NGO manager, Interview 14).

As many people immigrate with their families, newcomers value access to family-oriented recreation. Many respondents thought recreational activities could play a bigger role in social integration, particularly activities such as youth team sports and public swimming. The municipality does not provide sufficiently detailed information about how local recreation programs operate; for example, that "if you don't register your children three months before recreation programs start, the first day the telephones

open there won't be space" (NGO staff Interview 13).

Cultural and linguistic barriers currently comprise access to composting and recycling services: Respondents indicated even longtime residents find the current system confusing. One respondent noted that waste removal systems vary across cultures and long-standing practices may not be self-explanatory.

Respondents from the NGO community reported frequent requests from smaller or emerging ethnic communities to use their offices to meet. Even more established communities struggle to find space; one respondent noted that the Korean community meets at Tim Hortons (NGO staff, Interview 22). In seeking to connect newcomers to services, respondents from the NGO sector affirmed the importance of partnering with agencies and community groups to support new and existing programs. HRM should not overlook the role of key players in the business community such as the Chamber of Commerce (NGO staff, Interview 19).

Respondents recognized certain HRM access centres for their excellence in connecting newcomers to the broader community. All three elected officials specifically mentioned the library system, and many respondents echoed their view that local libraries are "excellent community facilities that are welcoming no matter who you are" (Municipal elected official, Interview 5). The North End Family Resource Center and Bayers Westwood were also mentioned as places where newcomers access information and resources about existing services.

Suggestions: As linguistic and cultural differences may create barriers to services, effective immigration planning requires looking at all policies and practices through what one respondent called "the lens of immigrants." "Immigrants are people too. They live in our community. So the same way we look through a lens of people with disabilities, seniors or children, let's look at it through the lens of immigrants" (NGO staff, Interview 13).

Non-immigrant and immigrant communities alike find transportation and waste disposal services poorly communicated. For example, bus stops provide a phone number to call for information rather than posting a route map or schedule. To successfully use this system the user must know the bus routes in advance, be familiar with the system, own a cell phone or have access to a payphone, and speak sufficient English to understand an automated voice messaging service. HRM may wish to examine whether these are reasonable requirements for access to a core municipal service. Displaying the HRM official diversity policy prominently in existing service centres would also contribute to a more welcoming atmosphere; for example, a copy of this policy could accompany the current notice displayed in HRM bus entrances stating the drivers' right to refuse service.

Providing clear information in a few common languages on how and when to dispose of recycling and compost would greatly assist many newcomers to effectively use this service. HRM could provide the brochures via settlement providers, ethnic organizations and at municipal service centres.

Planning experts across Canada have recognized recreation programming as "an ideal means of integrating immigrants" (Poirier, Germain and Billette, 2006, 39). Ensuring equal opportunity and encouraging participation requires developing and marketing accessible programs that accommodate diverse interests. Including newcomers could involve recruiting them to teach recreation programs through city. "There could be weaving, basket making or language classes where the instructor is an immigrant" (NGO staff, Interview 18). HRM could consult with immigrant communities to identify new sports or cultural activities to add or replace existing programs.

Respondents considered Halifax Public Libraries a highly successful example of an institution that models and supports community diversity. Opportunity exists for HRM to extend its support of growing ethnic communities by creating more public meeting spaces. The new city hall in Edmonton serves as an example of a municipal building with public space made available to registered local organizations free of charge. HRM could collaborate with existing arts and cultural organizations, such as the Multicultural Association, to come up with creative solutions for the increasing demand for public meeting space.

Organizational/Internal Actions

Action Item #1: Fulfill HRM's diversity mandate to ensure employees represent the population

Comments: The Plan lists several actions to help the HRM meet its diversity mandate: Setting standards to improve on designated and targeted recruitment of diverse communities, recognizing international work experience, writing job descriptions that recognize job experience as well as credentials and when possible including a practical component to job interviews.

"HRM across the board needs to be welcoming not just in service provision but 'work with us, work for us.' It would be really nice to see more immigrants in positions because that is a visible representation [of community diversity]"
-NGO manager, Interview 17

Respondents from both government and NGO sectors saw municipal employment of immigrants as critical to the success of the Plan. The Federal elected official noted that by opening its own hiring policies HRM encourages other employers to view diversity as opportunity (Interview 23). A municipal employee stated that giving internationally educated professionals careers within the HRM would make "a huge impact" (Interview 7).

Suggestions: Though HRM staff was unable to provide statistics on changes to municipal workforce characteristics since 2005, the common sentiment among respondents was that the municipality has made some progress in this area but that more can be done to open its workforce to immigrants. For example, adding capacity in newcomer languages as an essential qualification for certain positions would help newcomers overcome challenges posed by lack of Canadian experience and improve in-house translation capacity.

Human Resources has been active in promoting MISA work placements, and the newly appointed diversity coordinator could continue to market the benefits to all HRM business units. Setting interdepartmental targets for participation rates (e.g. committing to take a minimum of X number of placements per annum) may help HRM increase participation. Respondents noted newcomers come from many backgrounds and may welcome the opportunity to learn from HRM staff on a professional level. For example, service providers would welcome participation by senior HRM staff in MISA's mentorship program or in the professional training provided through Pier 21's Welcome Home to Canada work placement.

> *"There are so many people in the city that have lots of different experiences and could offer advice. They could volunteer to give talks, they could volunteer as mentors and that's only a few hours a month."*
> -NGO staff, Interview 18

Action Item #2: Develop a list of potential interpreters with the HRM workforce

Comments: The Plan recognizes accommodation of diverse language needs as an essential component of accessible municipal services. One HRM employee stated, HRM can consider services accessible "when, as a person who doesn't speak English as a first language, I can get service in my language. Maybe the person standing in front me of can't help me, but they can put me on a phone line to someone who can and can be a mediator in between" (Interview 3).

Suggestions: In ideal circumstances HRM would employ a sufficiently diverse workforce to meet requests for translation and interpretation in languages most commonly spoken by newcomers, such as Arabic and Farsi. Achieving sufficient in-house language capacity could take years as the unionized hiring system values HRM staff seniority. In the meantime, providing accessible services requires contracting an on-call private translation service. (A similar arrangement would address the Phase 2 goal to "enhance emergency services protocols for dealing with diverse languages.") Several respondents noted Capital Health already has this kind of contract with Nova Scotia Translation Services, it seems to work well. Service Canada uses the Winnipeg-based service CanTalk, which offers over two hundred languages.

> *"Arabic is the second most spoken language in the HRM: This isn't some small number of people, this is significant."*
> -Provincial elected official, Interview 2

Many respondents requested HRM create and distribute an updated list of cultural and ethnic organizations with contact information, especially current phone numbers. This is information that several service providers would like to have but lack the resources to assemble, update and circulate themselves.

Action Item #3: Establish a "Where in the World" section in the HRM News employee newsletter

Comments: No respondent commented on this action item, and the update from Human Resources did not mention it.

Suggestions: HRM promotes corporate diversity most effectively when it shares its success with the general public; making a public commitment to diversity generates excitement and corporate pride. For example, in October 2008 the community was invited to take part in a 'Diversity Extravaganza' event as part of HRM's annual Week of Corporate Diversity. This celebration continued in 2009 with a half-day event at which community groups could display information. Diversity Week could expand to become a celebrated event that promotes HRM as both an employer and supporter of diverse communities.

Evaluation of Phase 2

Most of the 'Phase 2' (medium-long term) actions have not been implemented. Respondents offered general comments on the objectives of these items, as well as proposing revisions for Plan review.

Communication/External Actions

Action Item #1: Work with community partners to provide HRM service information in multiple languages

Comments: Respondents stressed that providing documents in other languages would send a strong welcoming message. The presence of non-English languages would affirm for residents the significance of the newcomer population. Official HRM recognition of non-English languages in public documents and services may increase public awareness of diversity.

> *"Ethnic communities can provide things for newcomers who are from the same country. So I think HRM should approach them [for information about community needs]."*
> -NGO staff, Interview 22

Respondents indicated that staff members at the Metropolitan Immigration Settle Agency (MISA) act as an unofficial translation service for the province and the municipality, particularly for documents such as driving permits. NGO respondents did not see reliance on MISA for translation as a sustainable solution to the increasing number of languages spoken in HRM. Demands for translation or interpretation place additional strain on MISA staff; moreover, the availability of translation depends on who happens to work at MISA at any given time.

Suggestions: HRM requires an official protocol for translation and/or interpretation requests. Contracting a translation service on an as-needed basis, while seeking to increase internal capacity by placing language skills requirements on some positions, likely provides the best interim solution. Ethnic and cultural organizations can serve as valuable resources, but HRM cannot depend exclusively on these groups, particularly for the translation of individuals' personal information (e.g., financial issues).

Action Item #2: Develop additional versions of the "Newcomers' Guide to HRM" in Arabic, Spanish, Farsi, Russian and French

Comments: The Plan states that HRM will translate sections of the Newcomers Guide into the five languages commonly spoken by new immigrants to HRM (identified in the Plan as Arabic, Mandarin, Spanish, Farsi and Russian), with community consultation to identify priority sections for translation.

"HRM can't do it by themselves. They need to act in collaboration with other partners and I think the partners are ready to do that"
-NGO manager, Interview 13

Some NGO respondents expressed concern at the lack of consultation on the first version of the Guide, with a few pointing out outdated or erroneous information about their organizations. One NGO staff member recalled attempting to provide input on early drafts of the Newcomers' Guide, but believed her feedback was lost during periods of staff turnover. A few had requested copies of the Guide but had not yet received them, though most has been invited to the Guide launch.

Suggestions: Respondents noted newcomers cannot necessarily distinguish between municipal and provincial areas of responsibility; HRM would best address their information needs by providing information on the core services provided by both levels. Many respondents offered suggestions as to how HRM might proceed with Guide translation and reformat information to increase usability.

Three common suggestions included translating the following items:

1) A multi-lingual list of cultural and religious organizations with updated contact information;
2) A bookmark or small brochure with basic description and contact information on municipal and provincial services. "When it comes to hospital services in particular, there needs to be a separate little brochure on hospital services" (Municipal employee, Interview 3). HRM could seek funding for a joint brochure from the Provincial Office of Immigration.
3) The section of the Guide entitled, 'What to do when you first arrive.' "If you're going to translate anything, translate that checklist into 10 languages" (NGO staff, Interview 19).

Given the pace at which such information changes, HRM might consider converting the Guide into an online document. An e-document would be cheaper to update; service providers could print it off themselves rather than waiting for the next version to come out. NGO respondents requested that HRM base future revisions to the Guide and other document related to settlement services on consultation with stakeholders instead of information from website and existing print material, which is frequently outdated.

Action Item #3: Increase diverse community representation on municipal committees and in policy and event planning

As respondents offered a large volume of feedback on this action item, I divided comments and suggestions into three sub-categories: increased diversity community representation on municipal committees; inclusive policy making; and inclusive civic events.

Increase Diverse Community Representation on Municipal Committees

Comments: Respondents applauded the objective of seeking more diverse representation on existing municipal committees. Beyond representation on committees, the Plan does not specifically mention representing newcomers' interests in the municipal political process. A provincial elected official wondered why municipal councillors have yet to create a committee that looks at newcomers' issues: "They have committees on disability, youth, seniors so why wouldn't they have a committee on immigration?" (Interview 2).

Often newcomers do not know they can bring problems to their councilor; HRM can help connect newcomers with municipal politicians. Linking newcomers with local political institutions plays a key role in creating civic pride and identification. As one municipal elected official noted, even those unable to vote deserve to have their voices heard: "Everybody in the community should be represented by an elected official" (Interview 5).

Suggestions: Respondents pointed to several opportunities the city has to promote the political integration of newcomers: Suggested strategies included: 1) providing information to newcomers through settlement agencies on how to access their local representative, 2) promoting town hall meetings and public participation sessions through diverse mediums, and 3) ensuring translators are available at city meetings when appropriate.

> *"Cultural competency isn't just information about different ethnic groups: You have to change your communication skills to accommodate different cultures."*
> -NGO employee, Interview 22

Inclusive Policy Making

Comments: Many respondents felt too limited in their perspective speak to newcomers' experiences with the city, and saw opportunity for HRM to increase efforts to engage newcomers in a dialogue about their needs and views. One respondent called for 'creative consultation' with newcomers to engage newcomers in non-traditional settings, such as potlucks.

Suggestions: While direct consultation with newcomers is vital, respondents stressed that multicultural and ethnic organizations can play a similar role to other settlement service providers. Including smaller service providers in discussions may prove critical as the smaller organizations often target pockets of the population with specific concerns (e.g. youth). Consulting segments of the population not generally

targeted by HRM planning, such as international students, would also provide a fresh perspective on newcomers' needs. Settlement service staff emphasized trust-building as the first step, as some newcomers may not be familiar with the municipal community engagement process.

Inclusive Event Planning

Comments: Respondents reported that many newcomers express the desire to participate in family-friendly and free social occasions where they can meet native Nova Scotians. Many believed Halifax is a difficult city to break into, as adult social networks are often based on long-standing or familial relationships. By supporting events that bring together new and longtime residents, the City can effectively improve community relations.

Respondents saw opportunity for HRM to promote existing events to newcomers as a means of including them in community life. Lack of familiarity with the city may compromise access to parks and participation in local festivities. Respondents familiar with the city-sponsored bus tours for newcomers noted the great enthusiasm generated by this program. Respondents argued that if HRM made the bi-annual tours bi-monthly, tours would still fill to capacity. Many spoke to the success of the quarterly SupperNova potluck and annual Welcoming Communities BBQ and hoped HRM increases support for these two events in the coming years.

Suggestions: Respondents encourage HRM to continue with the SupperNova series and the Welcoming Communities BBQ and seek opportunities to support similar, smaller-scale events. HRM could provide funding for such events through the 'Good Neighbours, Good Neighbourhoods' strategy. Events such as MISA's Multicultural Health Fair and Pier 21's annual reverse job fair would benefit from greater support and promotion by the municipality.

"Civic events build community because they're for everybody: If we invite more diverse groups to participate it would change the nature of those events"
-Municipal employee, Interview 7

"The MISA bus tour is a really great idea. It's amazing how newcomers have been here for one or two years and they've never been to the Public Gardens. There are a lot of different things that they don't know because they don't know where to go"
-NGO staff, Interview 22

"Encourage neighbourhoods to welcome immigrants and to have welcoming events. In our little community we have a neighbourhood BBQ every year"
- Provincial employee, Interview 1

The HRM-supported bus tours could expand to include the international student community by offering a special tour for the new students arriving every September. Most students are not eligible for settlement services and so cannot access the MISA-administered tours, but all newcomers benefit from an orientation to the City.

Given the high numbers of newcomers with children, family-oriented events may prove more attractive than functions geared towards adults. Extending invitations for ethnic and cultural groups to participate

in the annual Naval Day parade would likely attract interest from newcomers with children. Inviting newcomers to volunteer could creating a sense of belonging.

Action Item #4: Improve staff training in communications, in particular in providing plain language correspondence

Comments: Many respondents observed an 'information disconnect' between HRM and newcomers, particularly on complicated issues such as urban planning decisions. Several mentioned the new swimming pool in Clayton Park as an instance when newcomers expressed their needs yet felt ignored by city staff. Concerns about pool design focused on whether the new design would allow private, 'women-only' swim times, primarily for members of the Muslim community. Despite the concerns, the City opted for a design with large windows that allow the public to see into the swim area.

Respondents suggested using a variety of communication tools and styles when reaching out to diverse communities. "Like many things, it's not just putting up a poster. It may take more than that. It may take personal contact and making sure that there aren't barriers for people" (NGO staff, Interview 19).

> *"People wanted to talk about the design of the Canada Games pool in terms of how it might accommodate private swim times for women. They were told that they could go to the old Needham pool. The pools in this city are all old; when building a new one why wouldn't HRM consider the multicultural aspect of the community?"*
> -Provincial elected official, Interview 2

Suggestions: The Clayton Park pool experience illustrates the importance of clearly explaining the justification behind municipal planning decisions to newcomer communities, particularly when the City chooses not to accommodate requests. In this example, HRM failure to communicate the rationale behind the decision not to accommodate the needs expressed by some newcomers may have discouraged future participation in civic activity. Several respondents proposed social and alternative media as effective channels of communication with diverse communities. The publication 'Touchbase' (both a website and printed newspaper) serves as a key resource for many newcomers. Alternatively, HRM communications staff could administer its own a listserv for newcomers that publicizes City events and posts HRM employment opportunities.

Action Item #5: Explore opportunities for the three levels of government to co-locate service centres

Comments: Given that the Provincial Office of Immigration does not directly provide integration services to newcomers, co-locating centres may not be an appropriate focus for collaboration. One respondent cited the Greater Halifax Partnership (GHP) immigration strategy as an example of successful collaboration between the three levels of government and the business community. Respondents commented positively on the public awareness campaign from the GHP promoting the value of immigrants to the community.

Suggestions: Rather than shared service sites, respondents saw opportunities for the three levels of government to partner on community consultation and planning. HRM and the Province of Nova Scotia could collaborate on creating a more welcoming gate of entry at the airport. HRM could work on providing welcoming signage and the Newcomers' Guide, while the Province ensures guides at the tourist information booth have appropriate language skills and/or cultural training.

Action Item #6: Collaborate with Halifax Regional School Board to provide information to students on civics and by-laws

Comments: HRM has not yet contacted the Halifax Regional School Board on this item. Respondents working with youth saw great opportunity to coordinating the Plan with the HRM Youth Engagement Strategy.

"When you're talking to immigrants and they're saying, 'These are our problems,' they're going to span all three levels of government…There's bound to be a fair amount of repetition between the municipal plan and the provincial strategy, because we're talking to the same people and trying to identify what works. It would be better to have done that as a consulting project for the whole area."
-Provincial elected official, Interview 2

Suggestions: HRM could provide support to immigrant youth by expanding the mandate of the existing 'Diversity Management Team' to include working with the school system to address newcomer-specific challenges. Revising the youth portion of HRM website to target immigrant youth would provide increased supported for youth integration, and could offer newcomers another means of finding out about HRM recreational programs. The HRM youth website could also link local and newcomer youth by publicizing volunteer opportunities and welcoming events.

Action Item #7: Promote culture in HRM

Comments: The Plan offers five actions HRM will take to 'promote culture' in HRM: Supporting the Cultural Plan in cultural inclusion initiatives, working with local media to promote cultural events and celebrate diverse holidays, including these dates in the HRM corporate calendar, undertaking a diversity campaign to promote HRM as a diverse community, and ensuring fair representation of the population in public documents. As staff did not mention this item in their update to Council, it remains unclear to what extent these actions have been taken.

"Encourage volunteerism at cross-cultural events: Not just for the Multicultural festival but at things like pancake breakfasts…HRM can do a lot to promote the fact that we actually do have a diverse city. You can go to the library and celebrate Ramadan!"
-Federal elected official, Interview 23

Suggestions: Overall, respondents offered supportive comments on all proposed actions, particularly the representation of ethnic diversity in HRM publications. At the same time, respondents believed HRM could do much more to support existing diverse communities. "There is the vast diversity of cultures that choose

to live in the HRM. There's the perception that there is only one when it's really infinite!" (NGO staff, Interview 15).

Some noted successfully coordinating Immigration Plan and the Cultural Plan objectives involves more aspects of the Cultural Plan than those specifically speaking to 'cultural inclusion,' as the Immigration Plan suggests. One municipal employee pointed to the example of public art: "How well does our public art represent the diverse cultures in our city?' (Municipal employee, Interview 3). HRM could take a concrete step towards supporting cultural diversity by providing guaranteed annual funding to the Multicultural Festival, currently required to re-apply every year.

Organizational/Internal Actions

Action Item #1: Enhance cultural diversity training for customer service and front-line public facing employees

Comments: HRM Human Resources recently requested the CAO to make the cultural sensitivity training course, 'Respect in the Workplace,' part of annual staff professional development. Most respondents saw mandatory diversity training as crucial to changing HRM corporate culture; some argued mandatory training would have been more appropriate as a Phase 1 goal. Newcomers in the process of learning English generally prefer face-to-face interactions when accessing services, yet are sometimes referred to settlement agencies for non-immigration related issues (this was more commonly noted in relation to provincial services, e.g. tenancy). Enhanced cultural diversity training will help HRM staff lacking confidence in cross-cultural communication to meet these challenges and avoid making inappropriate referrals.

"[Diversity is] a revolving door … it changes within hours. We as an organization have to keep up with the changes around us."
-Municipal employee, Interview 8

Suggestions: Once 'Respect in the Workplace' becomes mandatory for all staff, HRM could institute a requirement that new staff members receive training within a set period of commencing work (e.g. six months) and that all staff update their training on an annual or semi-annual basis. Other HRM units could follow the example of HRM police force, which requires staff take the specialized courses 'Dimensions of Diversity' and 'Bias-Free Policing' on an annual basis. Respondents thought emergency, recreation and transit staff would particularly benefit as staff frequently come into contact with newcomers. These three sectors may gain the most from specialized training to help them to meet challenges of accommodating diversity in their workplaces.

Action Item #2: Encourage appropriate behaviour and create staff performance accountabilities for recognizing diversity

Comments: The Plan aims to encourage 'appropriate behaviour' by staff in responding to increasing diversity in the HRM workforce and the general community. Steps include creating performance accountabilities for recognizing diversity, ensuring supervisors model appropriate behaviour, and holding employees accountable. None of these actions have been acted on to date.

Suggestions: While respondents appreciated that HRM wishes to create an accommodating workplace, suggestions focused more on creating an inclusive and accepting work environment than employee assessment or punishment. One HRM employee thought recognizing diversity comes down to basic respect for fellow human beings. Grossly inappropriate staff behaviour requires disciplinary action; however, HRM could prevent such incidents through greater investment in staff cultural diversity training and by employing a representative workforce.

Tools exist to help municipal staff develop a more inclusive workplace. An appendix in Edmonton's Diversity and Inclusivity Framework provides a series of six 'inclusion lenses' (Employee, Leadership and Supervisory, Planning and Policy, Program Development and Services, Communication Services and Human Resources). HRM could adapt such tools for their own use or develop their own based on existing policies.

Action Item #3: Enhance emergency service protocols for dealing with diverse languages

Comments: HRM does not currently having an emergency services protocol for dealing with diverse language needs. One municipal employee noted HRM Police have for years relied on settlement agencies for language support (Interview 8). While the respondent perceived this system as effective, mandate of settlement agencies does not include resources or training for emergency translation. Moreover, reliance on this 'ad-hoc' system may comprise public safety as the availability of translation depends on the backgrounds of individual employees at local settlement agencies.

Suggestions: As discussed above, HRM can fill this service gap most effectively in the short-term by contracting an independent translation service on an as-needed basis.

Plan Review

The Plan does not stipulate requirements for evaluation or review, but speaks to HRM's "ongoing commitment" to fulfilling the recommendations of the Plan. In a recent update to Regional Council, HRM staff indicated interest in revising the Plan as it moves into Phase 2. Respondents primarily spoke to what they saw as important elements missing from the current Plan, stakeholders interest in Plan review and the importance of clearly designating responsibility within the organization.

Though respondents characterized the current HRM Immigration Action Plan as a move in the right direction, most saw the need for substantial revision. Respondents observed three critical shortcomings of the current Plan. First, the document lacks specific, measurable objectives; it is difficult to assess the success or failure of 'soft targets' such as being welcoming. Second, not all of the short-term actions have been taken, and there is no defined timeframe for the long to medium-term actions. Third and most critically, senior management has allocated insufficient resources for implementation.

Respondents from various public and private agencies expressed interest in participating in the upcoming Plan review. HRM business units with diversity strategies such as the police force and library also expressed interest in participating in a review process. Respondents highlighted the importance of including elected leadership and senior staff in the ongoing discussion. Many saw value in giving immigration a higher profile: "We need members of the council that will take up the charge and speak out a little bit. Just bring it up at council and talk about it" (Provincial elected official, Interview 2).

While the respondents interviewed provide the perspective of service providers, only newcomers themselves can answer whether HRM currently provides accessible, sufficient or appropriate services for their communities. HRM consultation with newcomers concerning their experiences with the City would complement the findings of this report and provide a solid grounding for the review process. While engaging recent immigrants still in a period of intense transition may not be appropriate, respondents indicated most newcomers would welcome the opportunity to speak to the City about their experiences and aspirations.

> *"Initially, because it was the first time it was done, they could only skim the surface…[T]here has to be a second part to the immigration strategy. It needs to be included in our strategic directions. If it's an HRM strategic direction then that means that every single business unit has to identify this as part of their strategic directive. That goes from transit, to planning and development, to libraries, to all of our business units."*
>
> -Municipal employee, Interview 3

Designating Responsibility

As Plan objectives cut across departments, it remains unclear which department bears responsibility for plan implementation, evaluation and circulation. The absence of a clear mandate may compromise the ability of staff in departments other than Cultural Affairs and Human Resources to integrate Plan objectives with their own departmental concerns. One municipal employee who had been involved in the initial stages of the Plan had never seen the final version, and wondered how or if it had been internally circulated (Interview 3). HRM has several options for designating responsibility.

Option 1: Continue with the status quo of tasking individual staff members within Cultural Affairs with the external plan objectives, with Human Resources covering the internal objectives under its diversity mandate. Should the City pursue this strategy, it may wish to consider the relationship between staff and financial resources and plan success. At minimum, implementing the external goals of the Immigration

Plan requires a part-time position within Cultural Affairs; significantly more could be achieved with a full-time position. Council may wish to consider increasing the annual operating budget from its current level of $5,000/year, a far smaller investment than many other Canadian municipalities with immigration strategies.

Option 2: Create an Immigration Coordinator position responsible for reporting on Plan implementation across HRM departments. The position could be housed within Cultural Affairs and work with the Human Resources diversity coordinator on internal goals. The Coordinator would have a mandate to link the Action Plan with departmental objectives and other community program, similar to the Immigration Recruitment and Retention Strategy Coordinator at the City of Saskatoon. (For more information on immigration planning in Saskatoon, see **Appendix C**).

Option 3: Establish a unit at City Hall dedicated to diversity and immigration modeled on the Diversity and Inclusion branch of the Deputy Mayor's office in the City of Edmonton. This option would require greater internal reorganization and resourcing, but may better serve the City's long-term interests by fostering a corporate culture of diversity that would enable other units to use the 'lens of inclusivity' in policy making and service provision. (For more information on immigration planning in Edmonton, see **Appendix C**).

"It was hard for us as organizations to establish ongoing relationships with people within HRM to help them because the people would change"
-NGO staff, Interview 13

"Tens of different people work in silos on topics related to diversity…if we collaborated we could come up with a corporate plan for respect, inclusivity and diversity that could include immigration."
-HRM employee, Interview 6

"[Without] senior level to lead their efforts, nobody is accountable for delivering results"
-NGO staff, Interview 20

Summary of Findings on Plan Review

1. The current Immigration Action Plan **lacks essential components including measurable objectives, a clear timeframe and attached resources for implementation.**
2. Settlement service providers want to help HRM achieve its vision of being a welcoming community by participating in the Plan review. **Directly engaging newcomers** would complement their feedback and provide another perspective on. **Inviting staff from HRM units that deal directly with newcomers** (transportation, the library, policing and recreation) to participate in Plan review process would help build on their successes and address concerns particular to specific units.
3. **Creating a position for an immigration plan coordinator and ensuring existing staff have sufficient resources for implementation** would greatly assist HRM staff in achieving the vision presented by City Council, and would help community stakeholders to build and maintain relationships with City staff.

5.0 Recommendations

University of Melbourne professor Carolyn Whitzman proposes managing social change at the local level requires four types of leadership: Political, administrative, community, and research. With these 'four legs' in place, she argues, "the table can carry a lot of weight" (Whitzman, 2008, 2). Increasing diversity in HRM presents an administrative and political challenge; even defining the terms can prove tricky. In this section, I propose eight dimensions of a 'welcoming HRM,' based on the literature and definitions proposed by respondents. While far from comprehensive, this list can serve as a starting point for greater discussion.

1. A welcoming HRM is **safe**. Many people move here with young families or to go to school: Along with employment and education, safety is their primary concern.

2. A welcoming HRM **uses existing public spaces, community programs and civic events to support increasing diversity,** while continuing to fund special events that introduce newcomers to the city and provide opportunities to meet locals.

3. A welcoming HRM **adopts an inclusive approach to new plans, policies and infrastructure**, from public art to swimming pools, based on ongoing consultation with community groups.

4. A welcoming HRM **leads the pack as an employer and promoter of corporate diversity**.

5. A welcoming HRM acknowledges **attaining equal satisfaction in customer service provision requires meeting distinct needs** based on linguistic and cultural differences, and allocates sufficient resources to meet those needs.

6. A welcoming HRM communicates with residents in language that **ensures everyone can understand how basic municipal services work and has equal access to them**.

7. A welcoming HRM **engages and supports multicultural and ethnic communities as well as settlement service providers as critical partners** in newcomer integration.

8. A welcoming HRM **provides newcomers with opportunities for political participation and volunteerism** and connects them to their community representatives.

Most of the existing actions under the Plan can be linked to one of these characteristics. In **Table 3**, I identify which Plan actions support each characteristic and summarize respondent recommendations on each action item.

Table 3: Summary of Recommendations (Page 1 of 2)

A Welcoming HRM…	Phase I Actions	Phase II Actions	Recommendations
1. Prioritizes public safety	None	None	Follow-up on the recommendations of the 2008 Report "Violence and Public Safety in the HRM"
2. Uses existing public spaces, community programs and civic events to support increasing diversity	Host citizenship ceremonies		Continue municipal support of citizenship ceremonies through provision of venue and participation of Council; Promote ceremonies to non-immigrants as an opportunity to renew citizenship vows and meet new people
	Utilize HRM access centres to link immigrants with existing servicesw		Actively communicate to settlement service providers and cultural groups about how to register in HRM recreation programming; Evaluate accessibility of transit system; the bus system is confusing and roads are often missing signage. Provide brochures with clear information in a few common languages on how and when to dispose of recycling and compost via settlement providers, ethnic organizations and at HRM service centres; Consult with immigrant communities to identify new sports or cultural activities that might be added to existing recreation programming; Extend support for growing ethnic communities by creating more public meeting spaces; Display the HRM official diversity policy in existing service centres
		Explore opportunities for the three levels of government to co-locate service centres	Work with local authorities and the provincial government to provide welcoming signage and the Newcomers' Guide at the HRM Airport Tourism Office
3. Adopts an inclusive approach to new plans, policies and infrastructure		Improve staff training in communications, in particular in providing plain language correspondence	Use plain language and a variety of communication tools and styles when reaching out to diverse communities; Employ social and alternative media such as Touchbase to publicize local events and HRM employment opportunities
		Promote culture in HRM	Coordinate Immigration Plan and the Cultural Plan to promote the vast diversity of cultures that live in the HRM
4. Leads the pack as an employer and promoter of corporate diversity	Fulfill HRM's diversity mandate to ensure employees represent the population they serve		Track statistics on employee diversity; Market the benefits of MISA work placements to all HRM business units and set interdepartmental targets for participation rates; Encourage staff to volunteer with professional development programs for immigrants
	Establish a "Where in the World" section in the HRM News employee newsletter		Make HRM's annual Corporate Diversity into a celebratory event that promotes the City as both an employer and supporter of diverse communities
5. Offers respectful customer service to everyone		Enhance cultural diversity training for customer service and front-line public facing employees	Advise HRM staff to avoid making inappropriate referrals to settlement service providers; Make 'Respect in the Workplace' mandatory for all staff, required by new staff within a set period of commencing work (e.g. six months), and updated on an annual or semi-annual basis; Require emergency, recreation and transit staff be given training to help them meet challenges specific to accommodating diversity in their work
		Encourage appropriate behaviour and create staff performance accountabilities for recognizing diversity	Focus on creating an inclusive and accepting work environment by investing in staff cultural diversity training and by employing a representative workforce
6. Provides information about municipal services in accessible	Website Improvements		Provide critical information such as emergency contacts in languages other than English, either in text or short audio clips

A Welcoming HRM...	Phase I Actions	Phase II Actions	Recommendations
6. Provides information about municipal services in accessible manner (continued)	Develop a 'Newcomers' Guide to HRM'		Provide Newcomers' Guide at all transportation nodes
			Ensure revised Guide reflects a more appropriate level of English for ESL newcomers
		Develop additional versions of the "Newcomers' Guide to HRM" in Arabic, Spanish, Farsi, Russian and French	Provide translated information on the core services required by newcomers at all levels of government
			Consider alternative methods of updating and distributing the Guide, such as putting the Guide online in the form of an e-document.
			Engage service providers and community groups earlier and more consistently when revising the Guide (and other document related to settlement services) to ensure the correct information is included
	Develop a list of potential interpreters with the HRM workforce	Enhance emergency service protocols for dealing with diverse languages	A contract with independent translation service to fill this gap on an as-needed basis should be created within the next six months
			No comments as this document has been create but has not yet been made public
7. Actively engages all community partners involved in the settlement process		Work with community partners to provide HRM service information in multiple languages	Contract a translation service on an as-needed basis, while seeking to increase internal capacity by placing language skills requirements on some positions.
8. Provides newcomers opportunity for political participation and volunteerism	Provide letters of welcome to newcomers from mayors and councillors		Hold regular 'meet and greet' events between elected representatives and newcomers
		Increase diverse community representation on municipal committees and in policy and event planning	Connect newcomers to local politicians and political processes through creative mechanisms such as offering classes on urban citizenship at the settlement agencies
			Ensure translators are available at city meetings when required
			Include smaller service providers in discussions about settlement
			Consulting segments of the population not generally targeted by HRM planning such as international students
			Provide funds for neighbourhoods to welcome immigrants by holding welcoming events
			Expand support for the MISA bus tours and offer a similar tour for the international student community arriving every September
			Extending invitations for ethnic and cultural groups organizations to participate and volunteerism at traditional as well as culture-themed events (e.g. Natal Day parade)
		Collaborate with Halifax Regional School Board to provide information to students on civics and by-laws	Expand the mandate of the 'Diversity Management Team' to include working in the school system to address challenges specific to newcomer youth
			Revise the youth portion of the website to target newcomers
			Provide increased supported for youth integration through mainstream recreational programs
			Use social networking site to link local and newcomer youth and publicize volunteer opportunities

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Appendix A: Halifax Regional Municipality Immigration Action Plan

HALIFAX
REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

IMMIGRATION ACTION PLAN

Message from the Mayor

Many regions of Atlantic Canada are experiencing significant population declines. This has serious implications for the future - economically, socially and culturally. Although federal and provincial governments have primary responsibility for immigration, the Atlantic Mayors' Congress believes that our communities can play an important role in attracting, welcoming, integrating and retaining newcomers to Atlantic Canada.

The current statistics are staggering. Atlantic Canada receives less than two percent of all immigrants to Canada -- and almost 50 percent of those immigrants eventually choose to settle in other parts of the country. We must significantly improve these numbers.

It is only through better information sharing and a collective commitment by all levels of government and interested organizations that we will be able to improve Atlantic Canada's immigration record. For example, immigration should be a significant component of the formal tripartite agreement that is part of the Federal agreement to share gas tax revenues with municipalities.

At the Atlantic Immigration Conference held in Halifax in May, 200 representatives from three levels of government, community groups and a number of recent immigrants identified ways for communities in Atlantic Canada to make our region more attractive and welcoming to immigrants. A resulting report will provide innovative ideas and suggestions for improving immigration in our region.

Individual municipalities can follow-up on these high level ideas by determining what specific actions they can take in their own communities to make our region more attractive and welcoming for newcomers. The HRM Immigration Action Plan does just that.

I am confident that by working together, we can make a difference.

Respectfully, I remain

Peter J. Kelly
Mayor

Message from the CAO

Halifax Regional Municipality's primary role in immigration is to create and maintain a welcoming community. We must never forget that immigration is about people. In order to increase the number of individuals and families who move to our region and stay in the long term, we must create a welcoming environment.

HRM is committed to providing the best possible services to its residents. As we work towards creating a more inviting community for newcomers, I believe that any action we undertake as a municipality will be supported by our residents. It will instill pride in our region and strengthen the relationship between residents and government.

In June, I hosted HRM's immigration forum to discuss specific initiatives we could undertake as an organization to move HRM towards becoming a more welcoming community. With input from representatives of business, government, not-for-profit organizations, immigrant settlement organizations and immigrants themselves, we developed this Immigration Action Plan.

I am confident that by implementing the recommendations put forth in this Action Plan, we can make significant progress.

George McLellan
Chief Administrative Officer

2

Background

In May 2005, Halifax Regional Council adopted the following vision: "Halifax Regional Municipality is a welcoming community where immigration is supported and encouraged. Halifax Regional Municipality will work with other levels of government and community partners to increase our collective cultural, social and economic diversity by welcoming immigrants to our community."

As home to 55% of Atlantic Canadian immigrants and 80% of immigrants to Nova Scotia, HRM has a significant vested interest in providing the most welcoming environment possible for newcomers. HRM's ability to maintain and build upon the immigrant population is fundamental to our region's economic, social and cultural success.

In August 2004, the Province of Nova Scotia released *A Framework for Immigration*, a discussion paper seeking input for the development of a Provincial Immigration Strategy, a process in which HRM participated. **Nova Scotia's Immigration Strategy** recognizes the important role that municipal government plays in educating citizens about the benefits of immigration and developing specific, community-level strategies. The strategy states that the Province will "assist municipalities interested in attracting immigrants by engaging them in marketing and promotional efforts and developing service delivery capacity."

The **Atlantic Immigration Conference** hosted by the Atlantic Mayor's Congress in May 2005 sought to identify ways for communities across Atlantic Canada to work together and share best practices in terms of attracting, welcoming, integrating and retaining newcomers to the region.

The Greater Halifax Partnership has led the development of a community-based **Halifax Region Immigration Strategy**. The strategy will serve as a roadmap for the successful implementation of a community partnership model consisting of business, government, economic development and settlement-providing organizations. The strategy will also include an approach to increasing the attraction and retention of new immigrants, in addition to a logical approach to addressing immediate short-term actions and medium to long-term initiatives.

Several HRM initiatives, including the **Regional Plan, Economic Strategy** and **Cultural Plan**, identify immigration as playing a significant role in addressing our region's economic, social and cultural realities in years to come. HRM will work collaboratively with our diverse communities, the Province and within the Federal regulatory framework to further our vision of HRM as a welcoming community where immigration is supported and encouraged.

Considering all opportunities currently available and those which can be created, we commit to enhancing the experiences of immigrants in our community by undertaking a series of specific actions to address service needs within our organization.

HRM Immigration Action Plan

HRM's Immigration Action Plan will compliment the Nova Scotia Immigration Strategy, while recognizing the municipal mandate and supporting the key components of the Halifax Region Immigration Strategy. Because of the level of diversity in our region, HRM is unique and prepared to undertake positive changes that will allow us to more effectively serve our diverse community. HRM currently has in place a Community Race Relations policy that will assist us in providing services to diverse communities. We are committed to ensuring that our service delivery meets new and differing needs.

What we heard:

At the HRM Immigration Forum hosted in June 2005 participants shared ideas as to how we can become a more welcoming community. Participants discussed several areas for improvement and provided both immediate (to be implemented over the next 12 months) and medium to long term recommendations (to be reviewed yearly).

Two priority areas were identified:

- **Communications** (external focus): Improving how we communicate with and serve residents of diverse cultures and backgrounds.

- **Organizational** (internal focus): Re-considering our organizational structure. In particular how we recruit, train and utilize employees.

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Communications - External Focus

HRM is currently examining methods for increasing the accessibility of municipal programs and services to diverse communities. Many programs, such as recreation, solid waste, library, police and fire must be more accessible to newcomers. The provision of better and more culturally mindful information is necessary to communicate how newcomers may participate and increase their involvement in our community.

Phase I - Short Term Actions

Over the next year, HRM will:

Use communications tools to make newcomers feel welcome and share important information about HRM.

- Work with Citizenship and Immigration Canada to hold citizenship ceremonies in HRM facilities and provide information on municipal services following the sessions.

- Provide welcome letters from Mayor and Councillors to newcomers.

- Website improvements, including:

  - post welcoming remarks for various ethnic communities in their own language on the HRM website.

  - front page portal for newcomers with web links to key organizations of interest such as settlement and cultural associations.

  - work with other levels of government and community organizations to provide coordinated information and links.

- Work with our diverse communities and community partners to develop a "Newcomers' Guide to HRM", a printed and electronic directory of services available in HRM. An English language version will be developed in Phase I. Specific services and information to highlight will be determined in consultation with the community, but may include:

  - Public transportation

  - Recreation and Libraries

  - Property taxes

  - Garbage and recycling

  - Snow removal schedule

  - Water and sewer

 - Building a house

  - HRM contact information

Work to better understand our challenges and improve information sharing of HRM services with citizens.

- Develop an advisory group of staff and citizens to identify specific challenges, concerns and needs of diverse communities in accessing HRM services and programs. Focus on isolation reduction and ensure adequate access for diverse communities.
  - HRM will work with immigrant communities to determine specific challenges and to improve service provision.
- HRM access centres will be utilized where appropriate to link immigrants with existing services. Customer service centres, library & recreation facilities and programs will be used to provide information that will assist new immigrants with settlement in our region.
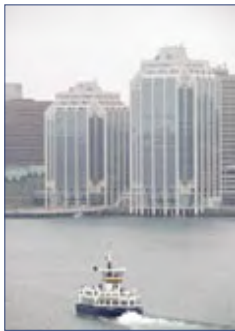
## Phase II – Medium and Long-Term Actions

Following the completion of Phase I activities, HRM will expand upon those initiatives and:

- Seek opportunities to partner with settlement organizations and universities (a strong resource through their language faculties) to provide HRM service information in multiple languages to address the needs of immigrant communities.

- Work with our diverse communities and community partners to produce additional versions of the "Newcomers' Guide to HRM" in French and the five most common languages spoken by new immigrants to HRM, including:
  - Arabic
  - Mandarin (China)
  - Spanish
  - Farsi (Iran)
  - Russian

Specific services to be highlighted will be determined in consultation with the community. Upon completion of the guide, HRM will explore opportunities to build upon the "welcome wagon" approach to providing information to newcomers.
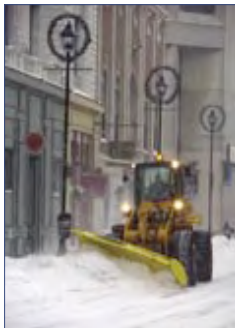
- In conjunction with the advisory committee, HRM will increase efforts to involve diverse communities on municipal committees and in policy and event planning.

- Provide staff training to increase awareness of the importance of communicating clearly and concisely with citizens. Provide plain language correspondence. Explore opportunities to direct citizens to HRM staff with various language abilities.

- Explore opportunities for the three levels of government to co-locate service centres.

- Work collaboratively with Halifax Regional School Board to provide information to students on civics and by-laws.

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- Promote culture in HRM.
  - Support the aspects of the HRM Cultural Plan that deal with cultural inclusion.
  - Work with local media to promote and celebrate cultural events and important dates.
  - Include important cultural events and dates in HRM's annual corporate calendar.
  - Undertake a diversity campaign involving the promotion of HRM as a culturally diverse community and representation of the ethnic diversity of HRM in our publications.

ORGANIZATIONAL - INTERNAL FOCUS

The HRM Employment Equity Policy states that the municipality will represent the diverse community it serves. HRM is currently reviewing its recruitment strategy and working to reduce or eliminate any barriers newcomers may encounter when trying to secure employment with the municipality. Specifically, we will be looking at our employment and recruitment system, work placement opportunities as well as credential assessment and recognition.

PHASE I - SHORT TERM ACTIONS

Over the next year HRM will:

- Consistently fulfill HRM's diversity mandate to ensure employees represent the population they serve by:
  - Setting standards to improve on designated and targeted recruitment of our diverse communities to reflect the population.
  - Leveraging existing pools of international students by educating them on career choices and available opportunities in the region.
  - Recognizing international work experience and writing job descriptions that recognize job experience as well as credentials.
  - Consider the addition of a practical component to job interviews where feasible.

- Begin the development of a list of potential language interpreters in the HRM workforce.

- Develop and promote, through staff and public education/awareness, the interactions and positive contributions that immigrants make to our society.
  - Establish a "Where in the World" section in the HRM News employee newsletter to provide an opportunity for employees to share stories about their country of origin.

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Phase II – Medium and Long-term Actions

Following the completion of Phase I activities, HRM will work to expand these initiatives and:

- Support and enhance diversity training and understanding with:
  - Enhanced cultural diversity training for customer service and front-line public facing employees such as training in cultural competencies.

- Encourage appropriate behaviour:
  - Create performance accountabilities for recognizing diversity. Ensure supervisors model appropriate behaviours and hold employees accountable.
  - Enhance emergency services protocols for dealing with diverse languages.

Ongoing Commitment

HRM is making a long-term commitment to fulfill the recommendations of this Action Plan. Over the next few years, HRM will host regular discussions forums with representatives from business, government, not-for-profit organizations, immigrant settlement organizations and immigrants on issues of significance related to municipal services and ease of settlement in HRM to ensure that we are able to continually progress toward our goal of making Halifax Regional Municipality a warm, welcoming community for newcomers.

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ACTION PLAN SUMMARY

	Communications - External Focus	Organizational - Internal Focus
Phase I	• Host citizenship ceremonies. • Provide welcome letters to newcomers from the Mayor and Councillors. • Website improvements. • Develop a "Newcomers' Guide to HRM". • Create an advisory group of staff and citizens to identify the challenges and needs of diverse communities. • Utilize HRM access centres to link immigrants with existing services.	• Fulfill HRM's diversity mandate to ensure employees represent the population they serve. • Develop a list of potential interpreters within the HRM workforce. • Establish a "Where in the World" section in the HRM News employee newsletter.
Phase II	• Work with community partners to provide HRM service information in multiple languages. • Develop additional versions of the "Newcomers' Guide to HRM" in Arabic, Mandarin, Spanish, Farsi and Russian and French. • Increase diverse community representation on municipal committees and in policy & event planning. • Improve staff training in communications, in particular in providing plain language correspondence. • Explore opportunities for the three levels of government to co-locate service centres. • Collaborate with Halifax Regional School Board to provide information to students on civics and by-laws. • Promote culture in HRM.	• Enhance cultural diversity training for customer service and front-line public facing employees. • Encourage appropriate behavior and create staff performance accountabilities for recognizing diversity. • Enhance emergency service protocols for dealing with diverse languages.

Photos:
HILC - Halifax Immigrant Learning Centre

MISA - Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association

Halifax Regional Municipality

Design and Printing:
HRM, Corporate Communications

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Appendix B: Draft Interview Guides

We are trying to understand the impact that the Halifax Regional Municipality Immigration Action Plan is having on the community. We're hoping that you can help us learn more about this topic by sharing your knowledge and experiences (direct or indirect) of being a newcomer to the HRM from outside of Canada.

Guide # 1 for Semi-Structured Interview (Public Sector Respondents)

What kinds of programs or services does your department deliver to new immigrants?

How does your organization define its strategic goal (as it relates to immigrant populations)?

To the best of your knowledge, what programs and services does the HRM offer for new immigrants? What, if any, impact do these programs and services have on the settlement experience? (For HRM: Do you have a means of measuring their impact?)

Speaking from observation or experience, to what extent are most newcomers able to access municipal services and get information about the municipality? What are the opportunities or barriers?

Speaking from observation or experience, how effective is the HRM's current approach to creating a welcoming city for newcomers?

What, if any, are the barriers or challenges to Halifax becoming a more welcoming community?

Have you observed any changes to immigrant settlement patterns (for example, new communities choosing Halifax as their first destination)? If so, what implications do they have for demands for municipal services?

What opportunities do you see, if any, for increased collaboration between the HRM and community organizations and/or other governmental institutions that work on immigration issues?

How does the goal of creating a welcoming community compete with, conflict with or complement other planning objectives?

If you had the ability to make any changes you wanted to the current strategy, what would you change (if anything)?

To what extent, if any, do you find the existence of diverse communities in the Halifax Regional Municipality enables the social integration of newcomers from the same country of origin? Economic integration?

To what extent, if any, do you find the existence of diverse communities in the Halifax Regional Municipality enables the social integration of newcomers from different countries of origin? Economic integration?

Guide # 2 for Semi-Structured Interview (Settlement Service Providers)

What kind of programs or services does your organization deliver to its members?

Speaking from observation or experience, how would you characterize Halifax as a city in terms of its attitudes towards new immigrants?

To what extent are you familiar with the municipal role in immigration?

Speaking from observation or experience, how effective is the HRM's current approach to creating a welcoming city for new immigrants?

Speaking from observation or experience, to what extent are most newcomers able to access municipal services and get information about the municipality? What are the opportunities or barriers?

What do you think the goal of an immigration Plan should be? Who should be involved in its implementation?

What opportunities do you see, if any, for increased collaboration between the HRM and community organizations and/or other governmental institutions that work on immigration issues?

How does the HRM Plan compete with, conflict with or complement the strategic directives of your organization? (Follow-up: What impact, if any, has the Plan had your organization's strategy?)

From your organization's perspective, how does the Immigration Plan compete with, conflict with or complement the immigration strategies of other levels of government?

To the best of your knowledge, how does the HRM's approach to creating a welcoming community compare with that of other Canadian municipalities?

Are there any 'moving targets' that the HRM staff should be aware of in terms of settlement service to include in a revised Plan (i.e., new communities moving to Halifax that may require special services)?

If you could give one piece of advice to the HRM about its immigration strategy, what would it be?

To what extent, if any, do you find the existence of diverse communities in the Halifax Regional Municipality enables the social integration of newcomers from the same country of origin? Economic

integration?

To what extent, if any, do you find the existence of diverse communities in the Halifax Regional Municipality enables the social or econimic integration of newcomers from different countries of origin?

Guide # 3 for Semi-Structured Interview (Newcomers)

How long have you lived in Canada/Nova Scotia/Halifax?

Speaking from observation or experience, how would you characterize Halifax as a city in terms of its attitudes towards newcomers?

Speaking from observation or experience, to what extent are most newcomers able to access municipal services and get information about the municipality? (What are the opportunities or barriers?)

To the best of your knowledge, what actions have been taken by the HRM during the past few years to welcome newcomers to the community? What, if any, has been the impact of these actions?

What opportunities do you see, if any, for increased collaboration between the HRM and community organizations and/or other governmental institutions that work with immigrants?

What do you think the primary purpose of a municipal immigration Plan should be? Who should be involved in its implementation?

How does the way the HRM treats newcomers compare to other cities that you are aware of or have lived in?

If you could give one piece of advice to the HRM about the way it services its new immigrant population, what would it be?

To what extent, if any, do you find the existence of diverse communities in the Halifax Regional Municipality enables the social integration of newcomers from the same country of origin? Economic integration?

To what extent, if any, do you find the existence of diverse communities in the Halifax Regional Municipality enables the social integration of newcomers from different countries of origin? Economic integration?

Appendix C: Best Practices

Case Example: *Saskatoon, Saskatchewan*

While Saskatoon's immigration strategy was only released this year, City efforts in the areas of race relations and diversity management span the past two decades. In 1989 Saskatoon City Council created the Race Relations Committee (RRC) in response to feedback from community groups and a recommendation from its Legislation and Finance Committee. Over the next few years the RRC expanded its mandate from a policy and public education focus to include a subcommittee on Aboriginal Affairs, deemed a topic of special concern. In 1991 City Council approved the creation of a permanent Race Relations Program Coordinator position, and five years later established a small Race Relations office with a second employee.

During the same period Saskatoon City Council began evaluating municipal policy on diversity, adopting an Equity and Anti-Racism Policy that provided a guiding vision for more specific existing policies on workplace harassment and employment equity. In 1996, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities awarded Saskatoon the First Annual Race Relations Award in recognition of progress and commitment to social equity. The City continued to make strides by expanding the mandate and membership of the RRC, now called the Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Committee (CDRR). The CDRR appointments include community members as well as city officials and half the membership must belong to a visible minority group (Garcea and Garg, 2009, 150-151).

In 2004 the CDRR turned its attention to Saskatoon's growing immigrant population. The 2006 census showed eight percent of residents were 'foreign-born,' while First Nations peoples comprise about one-tenth of the population. The Committee recommended the City carry out a comprehensive review of the needs of newcomers and gauge local capacity for increased immigration. It further recommended the City investigate opportunities for funding from the Federal and Provincial governments to support local immigration initiatives. In 2005 City officials formed a tri-governmental steering committee to undertake the community consultations with the objective of producing a guiding vision for immigration to the region.

Released in 2006, Building Saskatoon to Become a Global City: A Framework for an Action Plan outlined what needed to be done for Saskatoon to be a leader in the promotion, attraction and integration of immigrants. In addition to looking at the needs of immigrants, the report considered the needs of settlement agencies, government agencies and community at large. The report assessed Saskatoon's performance in five areas (planning and coordination of immigration and integration initiatives; newcomer recruitment; reception upon arrival; economic integration; and community integration) and offered options to increasing capacity (Garcea and Garg, 2009, 153).

Building Saskatoon aimed to provide the municipality with options for developing a clear direction. The report noted the void of municipal leadership and proposed creating an office within City Hall with the

mandate for implementing the immigration plan. Concerned that focusing on newcomers might detract from policies supporting First Nations communities, the report advised developing an immigration action plan that would support existing diversity initiatives. Further recommendations included establishing a permanent tri-governmental council, and establishing coordinating and consultative mechanisms within and between sectors working on behalf of immigrants. City administration responded in 2007 with a five-point action plan that was followed many of the suggestions made in the report. A major step forward was achieved in 2008 when municipal officials successfully obtained funding from the provincial and federal governments and hired an immigration community resource coordinator (Garcea and Garg, 2009, 153).

In 2008 the City of Saskatoon hired a consulting group to undertake more extensive research on best practices, community needs and existing services. The resulting *Immigration Action Plan Gap Analysis Report* proposed 28 recommendations and ranked them in order of community-identified priorities. Out of the Gap Analysis, six areas of primary concern were targeted: policing/justice; health; education; economic integration/employment; settlement and housing (City of Saskatoon, 2009).

Recognizing that these issues extend far beyond the municipal mandate, Saskatoon officials continued to work with representatives from other levels of government and local community organizations. Following another of the report recommendations, the City created a position for an Immigration Community Resource Coordinator to promote immigration to Saskatoon and coordinate settlement needs. In late 2008, the City hosted a series of six stakeholder forums themed around the priority areas (Garcea and Garg, 2009, 154). Municipal Community Development staff used session feedback and the Gap Analysis report to produce Welcome Home: Saskatoon Immigration Action Plan (City of Saskatoon, 2009). The Action Plan spans all three levels of government responsibility in the six identified areas of concern to itemize current initiatives, identify community opportunities and present items for future action.

While the effectiveness of Saskatoon's Action Plan remains to be seen, its trajectory illustrates the critical role of political leadership, resource expenditure and intergovernmental cooperation in effective planning. Saskatoon began work on becoming a more inclusive community two decades ago when it recognized and acted to address racial tension in the community. Over the years, Saskatoon City Council adopted recommendations from the Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Committee, some of which required significant investment. The City continues to commit new resources to immigration, most recently through the creation of an Immigration Recruitment and Retention Strategy Coordinator position. Saskatoon recognized the importance of intergovernmental cooperation, and staff actively included other government officials in the planning process rather than as a funding body.

Case Example: *Edmonton, Alberta*

In the spring of 2005, Edmonton's newly elected mayor presented attracting and retaining a greater proportion of new immigrants as one of his top priorities. Political will came out of economic woes: Alberta at that time had the tightest labour market in the country and the federal government showed no sign of increasing immigration caps to ease the pressure. Lucrative jobs in the oil and gas industry drew increasing numbers to nearby Calgary, while Edmonton's immigrant figures had flatlined (Derwing and Krahn, 2008, 188). Council supported the Mayor by approving the Immigration and Settlement Initiative, led by Councillors Michael Phair and Terry Cavanagh. The city approached the Prairie Metropolis Center, a regional research on immigration and integration, to request a study identifying immigration actions for the municipality to take. Citizenship and Immigration Canada provided funding for the study, and Metropolis researchers submitted the report to Council in November 2005 (Reilly, 2009, 156).

Drawing on the current literature, survey data and information gathered at focus groups, *The Attraction and Retention of Newcomers to Edmonton* made 27 recommendations to the Council. Four of the recommendations aimed at promoting Edmonton as a destination for new immigrants, while the majority focused on how the City could support the development of a more welcoming community for existing residents and newcomers. The report point out making 'workplaces, classrooms and neighbourhoods' more inclusive serves the dual purpose of greater attraction and retention of newcomers. Many immigrants rely friends or family in Canada for advice on which city to arrive in; thus, cultivating an inclusive community that retains people is also the most effective strategy for increasing the number of new immigrants to the city (Derwing, Krahn, Foote and Deipenbroke, 2005, 4).

Three recommendations spoke specifically to municipal staffing practices and employee training. The report advised that any staff member in contact with the public receive cultural sensitivity training, that the City ensure staff adequately reflect the diverse population, and that managers be evaluated on their ability to integrate immigrants in the workplace. These recommendations proved timely: 2006 Statistics Canada data showed visible minorities comprising 22.9 percent of Edmonton's population, while the City's 2006 Employee Diversity Survey showed just 13 percent of staff identifying as non-white. Minority underrepresentation was especially surprising given that foreign-born residents in Edmonton (22.9 percent of the population) are generally in their prime working years and more qualified than their non-immigrant counterparts (Reilly, 2009, 156).

Aware of long-standing concerns about corporate diversity, in 2005 the City Manager established the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI). The ODI, which replaced the Diversity Initiatives Office that had closed in 1997, aims to "to initiate, support and sustain proactive strategies that will ensure a diverse City of Edmonton workforce and municipal services that are increasingly accessible and responsive to the citizens of Edmonton" (City of Edmonton website, 2009). In 2007, the ODI is charged with carrying out a new municipal policy on immigration and settlement. The policy is a brief document that commits

the City to seven values based on the recommendations from the Metropolis report; it does not provide actions but guiding values such as affirming the importance of economic integration (City of Edmonton Policy C529, 2007).

As well as developing and implementing strategies to increase corporate diversity, improving service delivery to diverse populations and equipping staff with diversity training, the ODI works as a connecting agency between community groups and city departments. Staff consults with other departments on diversity initiatives and supports the Edmonton Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee (EAUAC). The ODI is housed in the Corporate Services Department and reports through the Manager, Office of Diversity and Inclusion to the General Manager of Corporate Services (City of Edmonton website, 2009).

A new guiding document for the ODI, the *Diversity and Inclusion Framework and Implementation Plan*, was approved by the City Manager in March 2009. The plan identifies the following four 'diversity and inclusion goals':

1) Having a workforce that is broadly reflective of the community;
2) Identifying and addressing barriers to employment and service barriers within organizational systems;
3) Attracting and retaining a talented workforce skilled at working in an inclusive and respectful manner with one another and with the community; and
4) Creating processes, policies, plans, practices, programs and services that meet the diverse needs of those we serve.

Recognizing these goals require a long-term shift in organizational culture, in 2008 the Senior Management Team took responsibility for overseeing ODI initiatives. The ODI ensures regular evaluation by conducting an annual employee survey and tracking statistics on changing employee diversity. The Office provides these numbers in an annual progress report to council. The most recent progress update from May 2009 indicates increased workforce diversity overall, though minorities continue to be underrepresented in management. The report indicates the ODI intends to supplement quantitative data collection with qualitative tools for long-term evaluation (City of Edmonton DCMO41 2009).