

**STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2018**

**REGIONAL SERVICE COMMISSION 8**

**June 2017**

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## **1. Introduction and Executive Summary**

In order to articulate its vision, establish priorities and so that everyone would work together with clear goals, the Regional Service Commission 8 decided to complete a strategic plan. It is important that every Board member and the entire staff are working together to move the Region forward for the betterment of the people they represent. To this end, a clear vision and set of agreed upon priorities is a necessity.

In order to complete this task, the Commission formed a strategic planning committee comprised of two Board Members and the Executive Director in order to hold a planning session and ultimately adopt and support a strategic plan. The committee met several times to discuss a plan of action and presented their plan to the Board. On February 28, 2017, the Executive Director gave a presentation to the RSC8 Board at the regular monthly Board meeting, outlining the elements of a strategic plan and confirming the mandate of Regional Service Commission 8. The strategic planning committee felt this presentation was necessary, prior to the strategic planning session, in order to ensure all Board members had a clear understanding of the mandate of RSC8 and understood the importance of completing a strategic plan. Always mindful of costs and trying to minimize expenses, the committee felt the best path forward was for the committee members to facilitate the discussion at the strategic session and not hire an external consultant.

Keeping in mind, that the purpose of the Commission is to advocate and improve the quality of life of citizens in Region 8 through regional collaboration and cohesion, a strategic planning session was held at the Norton Municipal Building on May 17, 2017. The session was facilitated by Board members Mark Flewwelling and Mary Ann Coleman and through engaged and collaborative discussions, the board identified the following six priorities; 1. Creating a Brand and New Name; 2. Optimizing Solid Waste Collection and Disposal; 3. Enhancing Collaborative Services; 4. Improving Board Governance and Policies; 5. Economic Development and Economic Security; 6. Improve Relationships and Political Influence of RSC8.

## **2. Mission Statement**

Regional Service Commission 8 is committed to providing and facilitating regional service delivery in an open and transparent way.

We will look for ways to collaborate to find efficiencies in delivering those services that benefit the Region as a whole, while respecting local interests.

We will be respectful of each other and our member communities as we work to build collaboration in our region so we can become stronger together.

### ***Values***

Being respectful

Holding ourselves accountable for results

Working collaboratively

Making a difference

## **3. Organizational History**

The Regional Service Commission 8 (RSC8) started its operations on January 1, 2013. Pursuant to the Regional Service Delivery Act, the RSCs are required to provide six services. In 2013, these services included regional and local planning, solid waste management, regional policing collaboration, regional emergency measures planning, recreational and cultural infrastructure planning and cost-sharing.

During its first four years of operation, the efforts of the Commission have focused mainly on planning services and solid waste management. These services have seen significant reductions in costs through internal cost saving measures. In 2013, the operating budget of RSC8 was \$ 2,685,718 and has been reduced, to the benefit of our members, to \$ 2, 202,452 in 2017. To the benefit of those availing of the service, the planning service has been reduced by 40% since 2013. The solid waste service has also seen reductions through RSC8 assuming operations of the transfer station, reducing the tipping fee from \$120.08/ tonne to \$101.70/ tonne. With the

exception of Hampton Leisure Services, RSC8 has not been able to move forward on any regional collaborative services. The costs associated with adding extra services seems to be the main deterrent and the development of this strategic plan should assist by identifying the Board's priorities, making the right decisions and allocating associated costs to move the Region forward. The strategic plan will provide direction to the board and staff of RSC8 in order to allow our region to grow and reach its full potential, to the benefit of our families and neighbors that call it home.

#### **4. Critical issues and recommended strategies**

Taking into consideration all the ideas and suggestions put forward during the strategic planning session held in Norton, we have been able to draw a list of six priorities that should be addressed by the Commission during the coming years.

##### **i) Creating an RSC8 Brand and Name.**

The Regional Service Commissions were established on January 1, 2013 and all 12 commissions were given numbers to distinguish each commission and establish regional boundaries. Since that time, 10 of the 12 commissions have adopted name changes and only Regional Service Commission 11 (Fredericton) and Regional Service Commission 8 have continued to operate under the numbered system. This numbered system was intended to be a temporary tag and continuing to operate using RSC8 as the name of the commission has failed to create a brand and identity for the area and the commission. Having a strong brand gives any business or service provider (which is what we are) a sense of identity and awareness and increases public awareness and support from the residents that we serve. The Board of RSC8 has made this a priority and adopting a name change that reflects the values and history of our Region is of utmost importance. This name change will also enhance the need for a new brand and logo and the creation of these will be equally important in the overall strategy of having a new name, brand and logo.

Once the new name, brand and logo are adopted by the Board of RSC8, a clear and concise communication strategy will need to be developed in order to communicate the brand to the residents of Region 8. A strong and recognizable brand is one of your most valuable assets. The benefits of building and maintaining a strong brand are endless: customer recognition, word of mouth, customer loyalty, enhanced credibility and public support. Your brand is one of your most valuable assets and must be sold and communicated throughout the Region.

### ***Recommended strategy***

It is recommended to take the required steps to adopt a new name, new logo, create a brand and implement a communication strategy. The Board through its strategic planning session identified the following process to ensure a successful outcome:

1. Hold a public competition through schools and the community at large to request suggestions for a new name in the fall of 2017.
2. Review suggestions and make recommendations to the Board for new name early in 2018. Choose a desired name from suggestions and create a new logo prior to AGM in April of 2018.
3. Unveiling of new name and new logo at AGM in April of 2018.
4. Hire a consultant to create brand and new website around new name during summer of 2018.
5. Hire a consultant to create communication strategy to promote new brand during spring of 2018.

In order to fulfill the financial commitments of this process, appropriate funds will have to be allocated in the 2018 operating budget.

## **ii) Optimizing Solid Waste Collection and Disposal**

Regional Service Commission 8 is responsible for solid waste disposal but the Municipalities and the Province (on behalf of the LSD's) are responsible for solid waste collection. The Kent Regional Service Commission and the Acadian Peninsula Regional Service Commission have taken over the solid waste collection service and have found savings and efficiencies through this process. The Board of RSC8 would like to explore the taking over of solid waste collection and optimizing collection routes in the Region 8 service area and direct haul options. In terms of solid waste disposal, the Board would like to ensure that we are offering the best level of service for the least possible cost to the residents of our Region. A solid waste disposal operation's review will be completed following the 2017 fiscal calendar year.

### **Recommended Strategy**

It is recommended to take the required steps to explore optimizing solid waste collection and direct haul options. The Board through its strategic planning session identified the following process to ensure a successful outcome:

1. Inquire into other commissions that have already undertaken solid waste and direct haul initiatives and use their best practices in this process.
2. In order to work with the willing, determine the member communities that would like to be part of this optimization exercise.
3. Work with DELG and participating Municipalities to determine routes that best optimize collection and to explore direct haul options.
4. Create 3 possible recommendations for optimized collection to be presented to the board.
5. Board Motion to proceed with best optimization of collection and direct haul efficiencies.
6. Publish an RFP for bids to take over solid waste collection using optimized collection routes.
7. Take over solid waste collection based on the bids received from RFP.

### **iii) Enhancing Collaborative Services.**

Regional Service Commission 8 has had very little success in the areas of collaborative services. It has been difficult to get Board members to all agree and fully support initiatives that would involve offering new services to our Region in order to help the region grow and prosper. The main deterrent seems to be cost as new services have to be paid for through the tax base. Having looked at many areas such as tourism and economic development, not all Board members are supportive of adding collaborative or additional services. At our strategic planning session in Norton, improving collaboration and seeking opportunities to add collaborative services was identified as a priority. There are many areas for additional services and the Board recognizes that this will be an ongoing process and identifying communities of interest will be an important step to ensure success. The Board, through its strategic planning session, has identified one collaborative service that they would like to explore in 2018. The Hampton Regional Leisure Service's Committee (HRLSC) has had great success with the hiring of their Leisure Service's Coordinator and enhancing the lives of their citizens through leisure and recreation. At present, this is a sub-regional initiative with approximately 50% of our member communities contributing to this project and the board has indicated that they are willing to explore the opportunity to transition this into a fully regional, rather than sub-regional service, with all member communities funding the cost of this service.

#### **Recommended Strategy**

1. Develop an operational budget for this service.
2. Determine the proportionate cost to each member community for the service.
3. Determine the level of community interest in this service.
4. Present the opportunity and associated costs to the Board of RSC8 requesting a motion (simple majority) to pursue this opportunity.
5. Seek out and exhaust all funding opportunities through various government

departments to cover all or a portion of the cost of this opportunity.

6. Write letters to municipal councils and DELG requesting support for the project.

7. Determine communities of interest and those willing to participate in the program.

8. Present final proposal with all associated costs, external funding and proportional member community (willing communities) costs to RSC8 Board requesting a motion (2/3 majority) to fund and execute this initiative.

#### **iv) Improving Board Governance, Policies and Fiscal Sustainability**

The Board through their planning session also identified the need to improve board governance and policies. There are two significant documents in this regard that provide legislative and board oversight. The Regional Service Delivery Act, 2013, is the enabling legislation and the Regional Service Commission 8 has its own by laws that also provide guidance for governance and policy direction. Development of board policies is ongoing as needs arise and the RSC8 reviews its by-laws through a by-law review committee to ensure that these by-laws are meeting the ever changing needs of the commission. The board recognizes the need for ongoing reviews and modifications to ensure that the board of RSC8 has adequate policies and procedures to allow for effective governance. The Board has also recognized that some governance matters need immediate attention and should be a priority over the next year. The board has identified two particular areas that involve the development of policies addressing gaps in areas of financial risks and human resources. In particular, the 2016 financial audit identified some financial risks and the need for policies to mitigate these risks. A second immediate gap was identified in the area of performance evaluation of the board's sole employee, the Executive Director. The board should develop financial policies and human resource policies to address these immediate concerns.

#### **Recommended Strategy**

1. It is recommended that the finance committee review the 2016 financial audit report and its recommendations. The finance committee based on this review would develop, in collaboration with the Executive Director, a policy or policies to mitigate these identified risks and make a recommendation to the board.

2. It is recommended that budget and financial reporting for the Planning Department to be done with planning revenue and expenses as separate line items from inspection revenue and expenses to better inform decision-making for the 2018 fiscal year.
3. It is recommended that through the human resources committee that a formal evaluation process for the Executive Director be recommended for adoption to the board of RSC8, for adoption in the 2018 fiscal year.

#### **v) Economic Development and Economic Security**

The Board of RSC8, through its planning session, recognized the importance of economic development in our Region and the role that RSC8 can play in economic development. The Board also noted, that the need to provide economic security for the citizens of our Region is the desired outcome of this identified priority. Region 8 is predominately rural and the need for rural or community economic development is extremely important. The recent closure of the PCS potash mine further enhances the need for economic development in order to improve economic security. A recent proposal from Opportunities New Brunswick (ONB) presents an opportunity to have a fully funded economic development executive in our Region and the Board felt that this is an opportunity worth exploring.

#### **Recommended Strategy**

1. Board members will be brought up to speed on the ONB proposal by reading the material provided (MOU, Job Description, Economic Development Strategy).
2. Board members will provide information to their respective councils and LSD advisory committees through a RAC meeting.
3. Once all member communities are informed on the proposal, a vote will be held at an RSC8 Board meeting.
4. If the board of RSC8 wishes to proceed with the ONB proposal, a Regional economic development committee will be formed to sign an MOU with ONB.
5. This committee will meet regularly with the ONB employee and foster a positive working relationship for our Region.
6. If the board of RSC8 wishes not to accept the ONB proposal, the board and the Executive Director will pursue other options in order to fund costs associated with fostering economic development in our Region.

## **vi) Improve Provincial Relationships and Political Influence of RSC8**

Since the inception of the Regional Service Commissions in 2013, it has been challenging to create an understanding, both of the public and government departments, as to the role and mandate of RSC8. The board felt that it was important to remind government departments of our mandate and the possible partnerships that we could form to move the Region 8 area forward. This will be an ongoing priority as we can never be satisfied with the status quo. However, the board has identified a short term actions to help in this regard.

### **Recommended Strategy**

1. Letters will be sent to all Government Departments to form partnerships and express a willingness to work with Government officials in order to move this Region forward in 2018.

### **5. Conclusion**

The completion of a strategic plan will provided guidance and direction to the Board and staff of Regional Service Commission 8. This plan must be fully supported and endorsed through a resolution of the Board. Once approved by the board, it will be up to the staff of RSC8 to ensure that they focus on these priorities and complete the necessary work to move these files forward. If all members of the Board and staff are pulling in the same direction, the Region and Commission will be able to move forward.

Thanks to the Board and staff of RSC8 for their contributions to this strategic plan as it was truly a team effort, our Region will benefit from your continued hard work and dedication.