



SHAPING OUR FUTURE
in the CAPE BRETON
REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY



A Reorganization Plan
for Positive Change

MAYOR CECIL CLARKE



GUIDING PRINCIPALS

Municipal leaders will set the tone for our community, creating the spark and being the catalyst for significant, positive community change. The CBRM will demonstrate a positive tone; one of collaboration, advancement, focused energy, partnering and future promise.

The Cape Breton Regional Municipality will demonstrate transparency and strict reporting in the strategic business of its government.

Decisions will be made that will empower the CBRM's over 850 employees, to ensure they have the benefit of working in one of Canada's best-run municipalities.

Front-line service to our residents and our businesses will be maintained and enhanced.

The CBRM will be the most business and development friendly municipality in Atlantic Canada.

The CBRM will be a community that leads, implementing a minimum standard of care philosophy and pursuing opportunities that will advance our region.

Our government will be inclusive and will regularly consult with our stakeholders, including the residents, business leaders, organizations and partners.



THE CBRM CHARTER ACT

It is vitally important that the CBRM respond directly to our own challenges and opportunities in a timely and flexible way. A Charter Act will allow us to function more effectively and efficiently by giving us the tools that we need, legislatively and financially, to address economic shifts and to take full advantage of opportunities as they arise.

The CBRM faces challenges with declining population and double-digit unemployment, yet it is the second largest municipal government in Nova Scotia. A Charter will allow us to address the public works, planning, economic development and needs of our urban and rural communities. In short, a Charter will allow us to once again be the economic engine of Eastern Nova Scotia.

Immediate Action:

Strike a motion to pursue a Charter Act for the CBRM - a positive and progressive path forward that will build on the Municipal Government Act, and give Council legally binding control.

Short-term Action:

Establish a working committee to draft legislation for presentation to the House of Assembly in 2013 – 2014.

Long-term Action:

Upon Royal Assent and Proclamation, establish a legislative and regulatory committee to address needed amendments to the CBRM Charter Act.



CONSULT, COLLABORATE & COMMUNICATE

Effective governments engage their stakeholders through consultation in order to make fact-based decisions. Through this process, key operational adjustments can be identified, services can be prioritized, community priorities established and a focus on the future can be put forward.

Immediate Actions:

In collaboration with the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities, the Halifax Regional Municipality and the Province of Nova Scotia, discover ways to facilitate discussion on a strategic, consistent basis.

Play a leadership role within the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

Establish and build communications capacity for both legislative and operational requirements.

Short-term Actions:

To provide for the maximum flow of information, and to engage council in key strategic areas, formalize and implement a committee structure of council.

Formalize the role of Deputy Mayor.

Commit to meeting with community organizations on an ongoing basis.

Develop and distribute a quarterly newsletter outlining district and regional news, issues and opportunities.

Make public, through the CBRM website, all copies of reports, studies and information related to major projects such as port development.

Long-term Action:

Formalize and measure the governance protocol of the CBRM.



DEAL WITH CBRM'S FINANCIAL REALITY

The CBRM faces a substantial debt burden, unfunded pension liabilities, labour agreements and operational requirements. As a team, and with our partners, we will face these responsibilities in a balanced, fair and affordable way.

Immediate Action:

Endorse and establish an Organizational Operating Review Task Force with business, labour and community representatives.

Short-term Action:

Act on the recommendations put forward by the Task Force in 2013 – 2014.

Long-term Action:

Negotiate a Community Fund, as part of the CBRM Charter, to provide the CBRM with the necessary financial resources and tools to address our fiscal demands.



FOCUS ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Successful economic development strategies rely on partnerships with government, community organizations, development agencies and industry leaders. Skills development relies on partnerships and collaboration with Cape Breton University, Nova Scotia Community College and the Canadian Coast Guard College. The CBRM is in immediate need of infrastructure improvements and job-creating business opportunities.

Immediate Actions:

Further support the Cape Breton County Economic Development Authority, or its successor, in its economic development role and service delivery.

Convene a two-day Community Port Summit for Mayor and Council to receive presentations, information and requests concerning responsible port development. The Summit will be open to the public, port stakeholders and government partners.

Work in an open and transparent manner with Sydney Ports Corporation, port business stakeholders and provincial and federal representatives to ensure consensus on a port structure that works, creates jobs and attracts new investment.

Short-term Actions:

Strike a Transportation Committee to explore opportunities and address challenges relating to the Port of Sydney, the Sydney Airport, transit, roads and rail service.

Coordinate positive economic growth through cooperative partnerships with CBRM's First Nations communities.

Long-term Actions:

Build convention, meeting and events capacity within the CBRM by supporting infrastructure enhancements of Centre 200 and other strategic facilities.

Work with partners to develop a comprehensive events strategy for the CBRM.

Champion the ongoing efforts to attract, secure and achieve an ocean container terminal and other incremental port opportunities.

Work to achieve maximum benefit through the Lower Churchill Hydro Development and the associated Maritime Link.

Work to ensure that the CBRM will be the single largest recipient of 100% green energy so to position our port for value-added processing and manufacturing associated with bulk commodities.

Expand further economic opportunities through Marine Atlantic, as an Atlantic Gateway initiative, to increase commercial traffic, building on the recent investments to maintain and grow good, valuable and valued, jobs.

Foster new and expanded partnerships to realize benefits from the national shipbuilding strategy, ensuring Cape Breton is fairly treated in procurement and contract opportunities.

Develop working strategies to build on community-based ideas for metal recycling, ship repair, maintenance and marine supply services.

Pursue short-sea shipping opportunities capitalizing on port capacity challenges and problems in the Northeastern U.S. and the growing Newfoundland and Labrador marketplace.

Pursue the extension of the Sydney Marine Terminal pier to allow additional vessels to be dockside at one time.

Improve the Sydney Marine Terminal facility, site and visitor amenities at the Port of Sydney, positioning it as an international destination of choice.

Work with industry, labour and community partners to realize major economic projects such as Donkin Mine as well as resource, processing and manufacturing opportunities.



BUILD A COMMUNITY THAT LEADS

The Cape Breton Regional Municipality must become a modern community that implements a minimum standard of care and performance, in an effort to meet the needs of its citizens and provide leadership for the future.

Immediate Actions:

Explore and implement best governance practices.

Create a Senior Policy Advisor position to the Mayor.

Complete an organizational review to ensure a revitalized, engaged, experienced and professional team is in place leading the day-to-day affairs of the municipal government.

With partners, develop a Recreation Master Plan to asset map current infrastructure (physical and volunteer base), develop a strategy to accomplish a minimum standard of care for recreational areas and identify opportunities with the greatest potential for success.

Short-term Action:

Work in partnership with the Province of Nova Scotia to create Nova Scotia's first one-stop shop for development permits, approvals and filing/reporting.

Long-term Action:

Incorporate any governance and financial management amendments into the Charter Act.



REFORM THE BUDGET PROCESS

Consultation with communities is an integral part to determining priorities and subsequently, allocating dollars to infrastructure and other projects.

Immediate Actions:

Hold individual consultation sessions in each district, prior to budget process.

Hold a two-day, CBRM-wide formal public session at the conclusion of the district sessions.

Share the findings of district and public consultations with CBRM departments for review and feedback.

Short-term Action:

Review and implement appropriate recommendations from the Task Force report.

Long-term Actions:

Establish clearly defined consultation forecasting and reporting criteria as part of a transparent, open and accountable government.

Consider the establishment of a municipal auditor general function.



FOCUS ON PUBLIC WORKS

Roads, sidewalks, sewers, water systems and other municipal services need a modern approach to getting the job done. A planned approach to public works will lead to greater accomplishment and reporting protocols for our community.

Immediate Action:

Utilize a “worst first” standard to create a five-year works plan.

Short-term Action:

Develop a reporting system to allow ratepayers to track when, where and what work is taking place.

Long-term Action:

Use the proposed Community Fund to plan and deliver major public works projects through negotiated provincial and federal agreements.



FOCUS ON ACTIVE COMMUNITIES

Active communities are vital to the overall health of a community. The CBRM has the benefit of beautiful physical surroundings, creating an exceptional backdrop for active living.

Immediate Action:

With our partners, support enhancements to regional transit, including Handi-Trans service, by increasing access and controlling costs.

Long-term Actions:

Work with our partners including the federal and provincial governments, Velo Cape Breton, local businesses and private landowners to develop a walking and cycling trail system.

Establish a standard of care requirement for all municipal parks and beaches, with maintenance checklists.

Encourage and support our volunteer base to take an active role in the maintenance of parks and beaches.

Integrate our communities through the development of dynamic trails, such as linking the Sydney Tar Ponds site to the Sydney waterfront, Wentworth Park, the community of Membertou Nature Trail and the proposed Sydney Harbour Trail.



FOCUS ON NEWCOMERS

Newcomers enrich our community in many ways. International students and immigrants enhance the cultural fabric of our region, and contribute economically to our community. It is our responsibility to welcome them to the CBRM and to support their integration, maximizing the chance for long-term residency within our region.

Immediate Actions:

Welcome students to the CBRM as they relocate here to study at Cape Breton University, Nova Scotia Community College, the Canadian Coast Guard College and second language learning institutions.

Short-term Actions:

Establish an annual CBRM appreciation day for international students, newcomers and Cape Bretoners who relocate back home.

Champion CBCEDA's Newcomer and Connector programs as they are fundamental services within our region.

Long-term Action:

Establish the CBRM as the #1 community of choice for skilled immigrants and newcomers.



FOCUS ON SAFE, SECURE COMMUNITIES

Safe and secure communities are vital to the health and growth of the CBRM. Public safety and emergency service providers require an integrated, fair and fully supported management and service delivery commitment.

Immediate Action:

Establish an official Emergency Services Appreciation Day within the CBRM to recognize all service providers, volunteers and crew.

Short-term Actions:

Work with Cape Breton Regional Police Service and Fire Services, volunteer fire departments, search and rescue providers, First Nations and the RCMP to identify and address gaps in the safety and security of our communities.

Hold a series of public meetings with citizens and community groups in all rural regions to identify gaps and highlight areas for policing patrol services enhancements.

Connect and support safe community, progressive programs such as Whitney Pier Youth Club, Lighthouse Community Church, Louisbourg Youth Club, Community Cares Outreach, Talbot House, Transition House, Harvest House, YMCA, Youth Inclusion Program, CATCH and Restorative Justice.

Establish an integrated CBRM Regional Fire Service.

Support addiction treatment programs to help individuals overcome dependency and successfully re-integrate into our community.

Support an annual operating fund of \$25,000 for Cape Breton Ground Search & Rescue so that it may prepare and respond to community requirements.

Long-term Actions:

Work with the Province to establish a CBRM-specific allocation under the province's Emergency Services Provider Fund. Leveraging federal and municipal dollars will increase and accelerate local outcomes for much-needed equipment.

Work with all levels of government to realize a modernized command centre through the expansion of police headquarters on Grand Lake Road.

Develop standardized community police command posts in urban areas so that they are modern and capable of serving the needs of officers on patrol. These posts must also address volunteer requirements.

Work with the Police Commission to ensure that rural policing is enhanced.

Access additional resources through the National Crime Prevention Program and the provincial Department of Justice and associated departmental service providers to better address community policing, crime prevention and intervention programs.

Maintain career firefighter positions within the CBRM, ensuring that these positions provide the necessary supports to the volunteer service throughout the region.

Standardize equipment provided throughout the region, both for purchasing savings and consistency of service delivery. This will benefit those instances where shared equipment is required.

Examine current communications system to develop a business case for a system-wide communications system for fire, police and search and rescue.

Develop a volunteer and career fire service training facility.

Explore a needs-based funding formula for fire departments.

Open the doors of under-utilized municipal space and provide recovery groups access to this space.

Conduct consultation with Cape Breton Ground Search & Rescue in relation to its requirement for a permanent command base. Support the establishment of such a base within an existing, underutilized facility.

Work with partners to establish Emergency Support Centres in the North, Central and East Divisions to provide for community safety and comfort during times of stress or emergency.



FOCUS ON YOUTH

Youth engagement and participation will sustain and grow the CBRM.

Immediate Action:

Dedicate council meeting time for youth and youth-related issues.

Short-term Actions:

Establish youth service areas in North, Central and East Divisions to provide the support and resources necessary for youth sport, recreational and program delivery throughout the region.

Advocate for a public transit access-pass for youth enrolled in established programs for active, healthy lifestyles and learning.

Consult with major employers and academic institutions on bus routing and schedules to best accommodate user requirements.

Conduct an HR review in relation to the CBRM government's internal requirements for skills in the upcoming years. Communicate the skills and the shortages so that youth may plan for such opportunities.

Long-term Actions:

Establish a funding mechanism for youth projects to meet youth, family and community priorities.

Work with the provincial government to increase summer student employment opportunities creating additional jobs through partnerships with local not-for-profits, the private sector and community-based initiatives.

Establish a mentoring program for students to gain on-the-job training and experience following graduation.



FOCUS ON ARTS AND CULTURE

A modern community and a vibrant arts and culture sector go hand-in-hand. Our artistic talent within the CBRM is a valuable asset to building capacity, growing the economy and attracting visitors.

Immediate Activity:

Consult with the arts and culture sector to determine short and long-term requirements for the economic sustainability of the sector.

Short-term Activity:

Inventory all CBRM arts and culture facilities and document physical, structural and operating needs.

Long-term Activities:

Support activities that will transform the region into a four-season, vibrant and modern community.

Support and encourage the development of our arts and culture organizations and entities including the Cape Breton Centre for Craft and Design, Celtic Colours International Festival, Cape Breton Music Industry Cooperative, Cape Breton Island Film Series, CB Locals, CBU Art Gallery, Savoy Theatre, Next Big Thing Talent Company, Boardmore Playhouse, Louisbourg Playhouse, the Old Sydney Society, Joan Harriss Cruise Pavilion, and all CBRM music venues.