



April 6, 2018

Dear Members of the Smart Cities Challenge Jury,

On behalf of the Halifax Food Policy Alliance, we are pleased to provide this letter of support for Halifax Regional Municipality's proposal for the Smart Cities Challenge.

Formed in 2013, the [Halifax Food Policy Alliance](#) (HFPA) is a partnership of individuals and organizations representing different sectors related to the food system. Food systems represent the activities and relationships that shape our food experiences. Using this systems thinking, the HFPA works to:

- Build awareness of existing and emerging food system opportunities at the municipal level;
- Connect and foster dialogue with diverse people and organizations to strengthen collaboration and advance action across the food system; and
- Inform and support food related policies and initiatives that benefit residents of Halifax.

The HFPA commends Halifax Regional Municipality for recognizing the severity of food insecurity and limited food access in the region. This competition presents an exciting and unique opportunity to fill gaps in our understanding of individuals' food experiences across HRM and improve infrastructure to increase the availability and accessibility of healthy food in our communities.

Over the past few years, the HFPA has developed a draft Food Charter for HRM, with input from community members and groups. Food Charters offer a common vision and the guiding principles for a community's food programs and policies. They serve as a call to action for local governments, community organizations and businesses to create healthy and sustainable food systems. While Food Charters

define the vision, Food Strategies map the pathways required to achieve that vision.

Effective, sustainable solutions to improved food security will require a comprehensive Food Strategy that leverages existing resources and assets, harmonizes policies and programs, and helps to connect and coordinate efforts across the region. The Smart Cities Challenge will support the development of a Food Strategy for HRM by providing systems and tools to enable our partners to work better together. This opportunity also builds on the momentum within HRM to support food-related initiatives, such as the [May 2017 Standing Committee Motion](#) investigating a Food Strategy and support for the HFPA, as well as ongoing initiatives such as the Mobile Food Market and Poverty Solutions Strategy.

HRM's focus on improving food security for the Smart Cities proposal demonstrates commitment and leadership to address these issues in partnership with key stakeholders and community members. A successful bid will allow HRM to join other Canadian cities tackling this common and persistent challenge and to become a leader in modelling successful approaches. The HFPA is well-positioned to support the Smart Cities Challenge by participating in expert advisory committees, connecting our leaders in food security policy and programs and leveraging partnerships with researchers to use existing data on local experiences of food insecurity. We look forward to being an active contributor to next steps and the development of the full proposal.

Sincerely,



Madeleine Waddington  
Co-Chair



Nancy Anningson  
Co-Chair