

Feasibility Study of the *Centre de l'Acadie et de la francophonie de Halifax*

Presented to:

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Thanks

We would like to thank the management of the Conseil communautaire du Grand-Havre for entrusting us with the mandate of conducting a feasibility study of a Centre de la francophonie in Halifax. This study was made possible thanks to the collaboration of local stakeholders, community members and leaders of similar centres in Canada who agreed to answer our questions. These telephone communications and participation in an online consultation contributed greatly to a better understanding of the scope, challenges and development paths of a Centre de la francophonie. We cannot overlook the cooperation of Mr. Victor Tetrault, who provided important information throughout our mandate. THANKS TO ALL OF YOU.

Mandate

The Conseil communautaire du Grand-Havre (CCGH) has created an Action Committee of the Centre de la francophonie in downtown Halifax. One of the mandates of this Action Committee is to carry out a feasibility study to better understand the challenges, issues and highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the project.

Following a call for tenders, the Action Committee hired a resource person to carry out this feasibility study mandate.

Introduction

This feasibility study is divided into eight main sections, the first of which describes the method used to obtain documentation, data and opinions from different individuals and groups. A second section is devoted to the context of a Centre de la francophonie in downtown Halifax. The third section presents a brief demolinguistic profile of the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) and downtown. The community's needs are addressed in the fourth section, while the fifth section identifies the components of a Francophone centre. The last three sections deal with costs, challenges and recommendations.

All of these sections identify the needs, interests, advantages, challenges and issues as well as the operation of a Francophone centre.

The content is based on documentation from work done over the past two years as well as conversations with leaders from the community and elsewhere, in addition to an online consultation with several citizens of the region.

1. Methodology

The data collection method for the preparation of this feasibility study required four steps.

A first step was to consult all the documents held by the Action Committee on the Centre's project.

A second phase involved telephone discussions with 23 community, economic and social leaders and stakeholders in the Halifax area. These interviews, each lasting about 30 minutes, explored in greater detail the needs, interests, governance, operation and challenges of such a centre.

The third stage consisted in learning about the situation and operations of four Francophone centres elsewhere in Canada through telephone interviews with their respective directorates general, in addition to the documentation provided by these centres. The purpose of this step was to identify the contours (see Appendix I for profiles of these centres) and to compare them with the Halifax project and to obtain advice.

The fourth step was to conduct a web-based consultation through an online survey during the last two weeks of January 2018. A total of 324 respondents completed the questionnaire. These respondents received an invitation to participate in this consultation from a list of Francophones and Francophiles in the Halifax area, maintained by a member of the Action Committee. In addition, messages in social networks made it possible to publicize this form of consultation. The results are presented according to the place of residence of the people, namely Halifax, Dartmouth, suburbs and others .

The profile of respondents can be found in Appendix II.

A final step was a working session with the members of the Action Committee to discuss the process and content of this feasibility study.

All qualitative and quantitative data serve as interpretations and foundations for the different sections of the study. This is an exploratory (and prospective) approach to examine the feasibility of such a project. The reader will note that quantitative data confirm some qualitative data and vice versa. Ultimately, it is up to the reader, and especially the decision makers, to interpret these data, from their points of reference and positions, within the framework of the Centre de la francophonie.

1 In order to ensure the confidentiality of these stakeholders is not reflected in this study. However, the author of the study can provide more information, without breach of confidentiality, to the interested reader.

2 This distribution is based on identifiable sectors to the region. Halifax corresponds to the respondents who have responded Halifax as did Dartmouth. Respondents under "suburban" were from Bedford, Cole Harbour, Eastern Passage, etc..

others" are for example to Clare, By - of - Low, Truro, etc., and they appear to be students who live in HRM, but who have indicated their place of family residence.

2. Context

One of the first formal initiatives towards the creation of a Centre de la francophonie took place on May 3, 2016, when representatives of some 20 Acadian and Francophone organizations headquartered in Halifax, as well as numerous Francophone entrepreneurs, met at the invitation of the CCGH.

This meeting served as a consultation to find out whether they supported the creation of a Centre de la Francophonie in Halifax. The report of this meeting bears witness to a resounding YES. The identification of their needs laid the foundation for the next steps in the current feasibility study. Among these, the main idea is that the Centre should be located on the Halifax Peninsula to ensure a high visibility for the Francophonie and enable it to take its place in today's and tomorrow's society. This influence is important for Acadians and Francophones already residing in HRM, as is the impact it could have on newcomers by fostering their integration in the city and among the Acadian and Francophone community.

Subsequent stakeholder discussions led to possible components of this Centre, namely:

- a. public educational functions with the Halifax Campus of Université Sainte-Anne;
- b. public functions: cafe-bistro, auditorium, art gallery, cultural shop and others; social enterprise workshops for young people;
- c. administrative functions: offices of regional and/or provincial organizations; other offices offering services in French (translation service, for example);
- d. an office to provide joint services in French from HRM and the Province of Nova Scotia;
- e. creation and production spaces: workshops, artists' studios, etc.

The idea of a Centre de la francophonie differs from the current Maison acadienne de Dartmouth in that it is intended as a place for programming, promoting and animating cultural and community activities for the Francophonie. It would not only be a purely rental building.

The feasibility study is based on this work while further exploring some aspects from section 4 below after drawing a demolinguistic portrait of HRM.

³The information in this section is taken from major excerpts from the Application for Funding from the Government of Canada a (Appendix B) provided by the Project Authority.

3. Demolinguistic Profile

Tableau 1
Profil demolinguistique des geographies de la Municipalite regionale de Halifax du Recensement de 2011 et 2016.

	2011	2016	Ecart 11-
Population totale	390 086	403 131	3,3
Connaissance des langues officielles			
Anglais seulement	338 245	347 190	2,6
Frangais seulement	380	340	-11,7
Anglais et frangais	46 385	49 575	6,9
<i>Total de la connaissance de la langue frangaise</i>	<i>46 756</i>	<i>49 915</i>	<i>6,7</i>
Premiere langue officielle parlee			
Anglais	374 250	386 095	3,2
Frangais	9 775	9 895	1,3
Anglais et frangais	1 045	1 210	15,8
<i>Total de la premiere langue officielle parlee - frangais</i>	<i>10 820</i>	<i>11 105</i>	<i>2,6</i>
Langue maternelle			
Anglais	348 515	353 165	1,3
Frangais	10 155	10 140	-0,1
Origine ethnique⁴			
Acadienne	n/d	10 120	
Frangaise	n/d	66 380	
<i>Total de l'origine ethnique - francophone</i>		<i>76 500</i>	

Table 1 shows the vitality of growth in the Halifax area. This growth is part of a global urbanization phenomenon since large urban centres are increasingly becoming hubs of the economy. Some authors observe that "it is not the population or size of a territory that gives the city its status "nationally or globally, but its economic weight. It was concluded that

Size doesn't matter and it's the radiation that counts.

A total of approximately 50,000 people know French and English in HRM. This total represents a growth of 6.7% between 2011 and 2016. Of these, 10,140 indicated in 2016 that French is their mother tongue.

Overall, 80% of Francophones in the greater The Halifax area is home to Statistics Canada areas that touch the Halifax Peninsula. It should be noted that in HRM as a whole, there are over 76,000 residents of Acadian or French origin (19% of the HRM population), and nearly 50,000 people who know French and English (12.4%).

Table 2 presents HRM's profile in comparison with the four communities in which we studied a Francophone centre. Apart from Moncton, Halifax is comparable with Winnipeg, Vancouver and Edmonton for first official language spoken and mother tongue French. It should be noted that 12.4% of the HRM population indicate that they know both official languages.

Table 2

Comparing demolinguistic profile between different Canadian communities with a Centre for the francophones in Halifax based on the 2016 Census.

	Winnipeg	%	Vancouver	%	Edmonton	%	Moncton	%	Halifax	%
Population total	705,244		2,463,431		932,546		144,810		403,131	
First official language spoken (French and French-English)	25,033	3.6	40,180	1.6	25,130	2.7	50,710	35.0	11,105	2.8
French Mother Tongue	22,390	3.2	25,005	1.0	17,705	1.9	48,735	33.7	10,140	2.5
Knowledge of Official Languages (French and English)	70,245	9.96	172,140	6.9	66,575	7.1	71,330	49.3	49,915	12.4

4 Community's Needs

The community's needs for a Centre de l'Acadie et de la Francophonie were identified through interviews with stakeholders and online consultation, always based on the initial project. Other needs were also addressed during the consultations.

We will examine cultural and community participation patterns before measuring the level of interest in travelling to downtown Halifax.

a. Participation Habits

The online consultation provides an indication of cultural and community participation patterns in downtown Halifax.

Table 3 shows that the people who took part in this consultation moved downtown for a show or a film in the order of 77.8% with peaks at 88.9% for respondents in Halifax (not surprisingly) and 82.8% in the case of Dartmouth. The further away from the city centre, the fewer participants there are in this type of activity.

It should be noted that approximately one respondent out of ten precise did not participate in any of these activities.¹

Table 3

Downtown Halifax visitation patterns during the last 12 months by place of residence⁷.

	Halifax (n=135)	Dartmouth (n=58)	Suburbs (n=92)	Others (n=39)	Total (n=324)
% of respondents 4 or 5 on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being not important 5 very important)					
A show or a movie	88.9	82.8	69.6	51.3	77.8
A meeting					
(other than for work)	51.9	39.7	40.2	51.3	46.3
A visit to an art gallery	54.8	44.8	33.7	17.9	42.6
A training activity	42.9	39.7	34.8	35.9	39.2
No visit for this type of activity	9.6	13.8	9.8	25.6	12.5

⁷ This distribution is based on identifiable sectors in the region. Halifax corresponds to the respondents who responded to Halifax as they did to Dartmouth. Respondents under "suburb" are from Bedford, Cole Harbour, Eastern Passage, etc. Those under "others" are from Clare, Par-en-Bas, Truro, etc., and they appear to be students who live in HRM but have indicated their place of family residence.

Table 4 explores the mobility of respondents on their participation patterns in different sectors of HRM. Dartmouth (54.3%) and Bedford (37.7%) are visited for cultural or recreational activities by the people who took part in this consultation.

Table 4

Level of participation in cultural or community activities in four communities in the past 12 months.

<i>Location of activity</i>	Halifax (n=135)	Dartmouth (n=58)	Suburbs (n=92)	Others (n=39)	Total (n=324)
			%		
Dartmouth	40.7	94.8	54.3	41.0	54.3
Bedford	35.6	27.6	53.3	23.1	37.7
Lower Sackville	2.9	8.6	14.1	10.3	8.0
Chezzetcook	1.0	5.2	16.3	12.8	7.7

b. Some stakeholders consider it a major challenge to attract Francophones from other parts of the city to downtown.

c. Level of interest in the city centre

In order to find out the level of interest in the project as it currently stands, we first asked stakeholders and in the online consultation if people had ever heard of the Centre's (project) and to what extent they knew details about it.

A total of 65.1% of respondents had heard of the project. The percentage varied between Dartmouth (70.7%), the suburbs (66.3%), other areas (64.1%) and Halifax (62.2%). Not surprisingly, due to the preselection of stakeholders, all had a fairly accurate level of knowledge of the Centre. The only difference was whether there was a school in the centre or not. Some stakeholders thought that the project included a school.

Table 5 shows the level of importance given to an activity at a Centre de la francophonie in downtown Halifax. All of the reasons proposed are important to respondents in a proportion of 70.9% (simply to experience a cultural or community activity in the downtown core) to a high of 86.9% (quality activity programming).

Table 5

Level of importance to get downtown for an activity at the Centre de l'Acadie et de la Francophonie in downtown Halifax.

	Halifax (n=135)	Dartmouth (n=58)	Suburbs (n=92)	Others (n=39)	Total (n=324)
% of respondents 4 or 5 on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being not important and 5 very important)					
Quality activity programs	84.2	87.0	88.9	89.8	86.8
Programs with a variety of activities	72.1	94.5	81.1	79.5	79.5
A variety of French-Language services	73.6	76.3	82.0	92.1	78.9
To socialize with other Francophones in the region	66.7	76.4	75.0	74.4	71.8
To simply live a cultural or community event downtown	69.3	72.7	67.1	82.1	70.9

When asked about this aspect, stakeholders mainly mentioned that this project is different from that of a school community centre and that it represented an interest in itself, in addition to being located downtown. Some stakeholders would like this Centre to be attractive to francophones and Acadians aged 20 to 35 who do not have a meeting place.

Some speakers stressed the importance of distinguishing Francophones and Acadians from Francophiles in the sense that programming can be attractive to one group and less so to another. Essentially, they say that the needs and interests of Francophiles are different from those of Francophones and Acadians in general, even though all groups are attracted to the French language.

5. Components of a Centre

This section on the components begins with a validation of its mission, proposed by the Action Committee, and then explores the unifying concept, services and activities as well as potential tenants. It ends with the location and parking in addition to the building and operations.

a. Mission

The Centre's Action Committee proposes a mission (rationale) which reads as follows:

"To create a unifying place in the centre-viiiie of the capital that promotes greater visibility for the Acadian, Francophone and Francophile community, meetings and exchanges with the public, collaboration between regional and provincial Francophone institutions and organizations, and increased availability of their products and services.

Table 6

Perception of the mission of the Centre de l'Acadie et de la Francophonie de Halifax

	Halifax (n=135)	Dartmouth (n=58)	Suburbs (n=92)	Others (n=39)	Total (n=324)
%					
An excellent idea	71,9	72,4	63,0	74,4	69,8
A good idea	25,9	22,4	35,9	23,1	27,8
A bad idea	0,7	0	1,1	2,6	0,9
A useless project	1,5	3,4	0	0	1,2

The data in Table 6 clearly indicate that those who participated in the online consultation felt that it was either "an excellent idea" or "a good idea" at 97.6%.

The stakeholders share the same opinion regarding the Centre's mission, with a few nuances. Some consider important the notion of "unifier" both within organizations and among Francophones. The only comments less favourable to this mission were directed at provincial agencies and there was some concern that HRM should be limited to regional agencies.

b. Concept of connecting members of the community

In the same spirit as the above mission, the notion of bringing together organizations, services, Francophones, Acadians and Francophiles downtown is shared by many.

Beyond the visibility for the Francophonie with such a centre, the functions suggested by the Action Committee receive strong support

As in section 2 (Background), these functions are:

- a. public education with the Halifax Campus of St. Anne's University;
- b. public: cafe-bistro, auditorium, art gallery, cultural boutique and others; social enterprise workshops for youth;
- c. Administrative: offices of regional and/or provincial organizations; other offices offering services in French (translation services, for example);
- d. an office to provide joint services in French from HRM and the Province of Nova Scotia;
- e. creation and production spaces: workshops, artists' studios, etc.

These functions will be translated into specific services (which will be discussed below). For now, let us retain the comments of the speakers on this reading of the functions.

One in five mentioned that all of these functions are too ambitious and believe that the project is too big. The same proportion makes similar comments, adding that we must dream and do everything to make ga a reality.

The presence of the Université Sainte-Anne (US-A) Campus is perceived as an obvious advantage for this project. Stakeholders see benefits for both the Centre and US-A as there will be positive synergy.

The comments made by several speakers suggest that the Centre should not be a rental building. On the contrary, it must be given a cultural and community life that attracts Francophones, Acadians and Francophiles.

c. Services and activities

The relevance of the services and activities is evaluated according to a list drawn up by the Action Committee following various meetings it held before proceeding with this feasibility study. These ideas were submitted for online and stakeholder consultation and compared with the four other centres observed.

Table 7

Services or activities that should be offered by the Centre de l'Acadie et de la Francophonie de Halifax.

	Halifax (n=135)	Dartmouth (n=58)	Suburbs (n=92)	Others (n=39)	Total (n=324)
%					
Multipurpose room	78,5	81,0	82,6	79,5	80,2
Boutique of cultural Offices for Acadian organizations	68,2	84,5	85,9	76,9	77,2
Offices for French services of HRM and Province of NS	73,3	82,8	77,2	79,5	76,9
Small cafe (bistro)	76,3	79,3	77,2	66,7	75,9
Meeting rooms	65,9	79,3	77,2	74,4	72,5
Campus de l'Université Sainte-Anne	60,7	62,1	68,5	82,0	65,7
Small art gallery	56,3	60,3	63,0	79,5	61,7
Workshops for artists	45,2	67,2	50,0	56,4	51,9
	40,7	51,7	44,6	61,5	46,3

The results in Table 7 indicate that the multipurpose room (80.2%) is an important service for respondents to the online consultation followed by a French-language cultural products boutique (77.2), offices Acadian organizations and Francophone (76.9%) offices, offices HRM and the province for services in French (75.9%) and a small coffee–bistro (72.5%).

The other proposals are under the sweep of 70 % avec les salles of réunion (65,7 %), le Campus de l'US-A (61,7 %), la petite galerie d'art (51,9 %) and the creation workshops for artists (46,3 %).

Some respondents (n=56) suggested other services or activities: one school (9), a library in French (8), a cinema in French, Quebec and international (6), a Francophone daycare centre (4), the radio Quebec and international (6), Francophone daycare units (4), her radio and community television, French

language courses available, a bookstore and units Francophone health clinic (3 each).

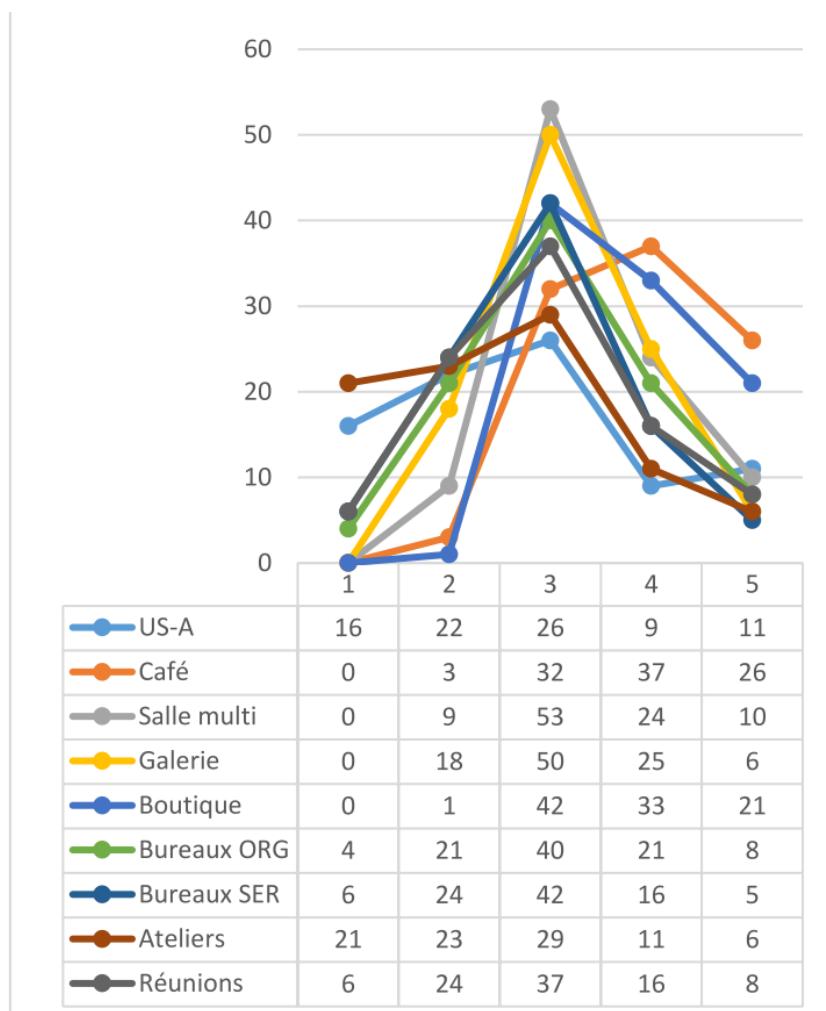
The following suggestions were made by one person each: historical museum, Acadian genealogy centre, service centre for new Francophone immigrants, space where people can talk, study, read a book, etc., printing and internet service, green spaces with a shared garden, urban painting wall, climbing wall, chapel, pastry shop, training room, yoga and Zumba.

Respondents to the online consultation were asked to answer a question about their rate of use of these services. These rates are shown in the graph to the left where 1 means "never", 2 means "rarely, once a year", 3 means "occasionally, 2 to 5 times a year", 4 means "regularly, about 10 times a year" and 5 means "often, 12 times or more a year".

For all potential users, the frequentation rate is "occasionally, 2 to 5 times per year" except in the case of the cafe-bistro for which the rate is higher with "regularly, about ten times a year".

From the stakeholders' point of view, the comments collected suggest going cautiously while keeping the dream of a Centre de la francophonie anime. Some stakeholders are not convinced of the presence of HRM and provincial French language services offices. Some stress the importance of not harming the Acadian House. In the same vein, others indicate that time will probably favour a gathering under the same roof of several Francophone and Acadian organizations.

Level of frequentation by potential users



The presence of an art gallery is interesting and stakeholders are wondering if there are enough Francophone and Acadian artists to support an annual exhibition program? After reflection, some speakers said that such an art gallery, while encouraging and promoting Francophone artists, should not close the door to artists from other cultures and languages. The openness to other cultures, which are also not very visible in the city centre, is a comment made by several speakers. They indicate that the success of the Centre may rest, in large part, on the inclusion of these English language cultures and activities, on occasion.

Overall, the stakeholders consulted believe that the Centre will be able to attract Francophones and Francophiles.

The profile of the four centres consulted shows similar components with notably the importance of a multifunctional room. In fact, three of the four houses a professional French-language theatre that occupies the space for much of the year. In the case of the Moncton Aberdeen Centre, this room is very popular with different groups in the community.

The presence of a restaurant also seems very important in all four cases. The managers mention that these restaurants are profitable and have an advantage on the visibility and the frequentation of their center.

Apart from the Maison de la Francophonie in Vancouver, the other three centres offer significant cultural and community programming. For them, it is the key to success both in terms of traffic and financial. These officials specify that offering cultural (and community) activities is part of their mission to develop the Francophonie in their community. These centres do not want to limit themselves to playing the role of an owner who rents spaces to groups or companies.

Apart from the Winnipeg MFCC which has a programming team, the Moncton and Edmonton centres have limited resources for this work, but they are finding ways to collaborate in providing programming.

The person in charge of the Aberdeen Centre in Moncton insists on the benefits of having a daycare centre in the building. Artists, cultural entrepreneurs, organizations and children are, according to him, an extraordinary mix to create a lively life in the center.

d. Rentals

The various stages of consultation with organizations and individuals made it possible to measure the interest in using the future Centre, either as a tenant or by renting short-term spaces.

In a first series of letters sent to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage by 22 organizations supporting the project, a total of eight groups indicated their interest in becoming permanent tenants of the Centre. In one of these letters, a passage specified the value of such a centre:

"... for the vitality of our organizations and our community in the central region, but also for the other regions of Nova Scotia who will be able to take advantage of this common space to come and meet us all, (...) this centre will facilitate and promote the exchange of ideas, but also the sharing of human resources, materials and skills to finally positively increase our impact on our community". Les entretiens avec les intervenants ont permis de confirmer ces appuis (du moins aupres des personnes qui representent certains de ces groupes) en plus d'apprendre que trois autres organismes pourraient etre interesses selon le cout de location et leurs ressources financieres disponibles.

Both the letters and the interviews identify six other groups that could rent space (including the multifunctional room) for short periods of time.

Conversations with stakeholders and other centres consulted allowed further exploration of certain elements:

- Private businesses run by Francophones are in favour of the Centre, but do not consider renting space because they want to break into the city's Anglophone "big market";
- It is desirable to have a variety of tenants in order to reach a large number of potential users with varying interests and needs;
- The cost of renting (see section 6) will be crucial for many organizations; the most reluctant people to this project doubt the long-term viability of the eventual tenants of this Centre.
- Private businesses run by Francophones are in favour of the Centre, but do not consider renting space because they want to break into the city's Anglophone "big market";
- the people most reluctant to this project doubt the long-term viability of the potential tenants of this Centre.

e. Location and parking

The Centre's Action Committee has identified a probable location in the city centre, namely the former municipal library. Table 8 shows that 83.9% of online consultation participants consider this location an "excellent idea" or a "good idea". This proportion of eight in ten is similar for each HRM sector. In the other responses, people mainly indicated Bloomfield or Dartmouth as well as strong concerns about downtown parking.

Stakeholders share this view since there is some form of consensus on downtown (the likely location of the former library). They mention the great visibility for the Francophone and Acadian community in addition to the services and activities available in this neighbourhood of the city.

Table 8
Perception of the likely location of the former municipal library of the Centre de l'Acadie et de la Francophonie de Halifax.

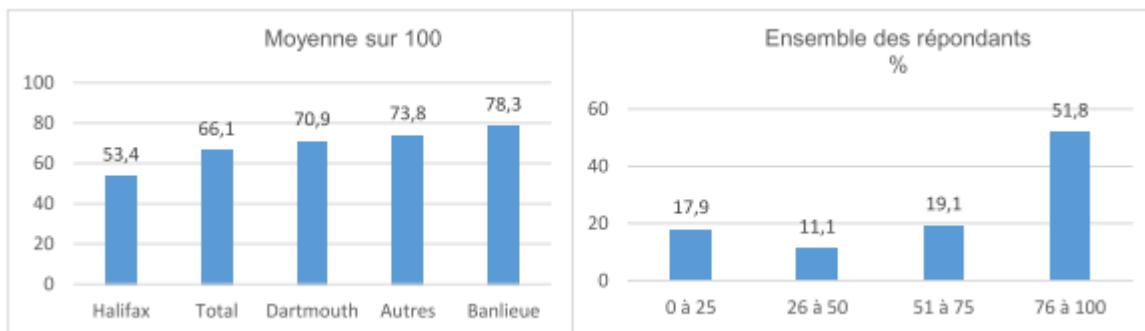
	Halifax (n=135)	Dartmouth (n=58)	Suburbs (n=92)	Others (n=39)	Total (n=324)
	%				
An excellent idea	51,9	56,9	37,0	43,6	47,5
A good idea	32,6	25,9	47,8	38,5	36,4
A bad idea	1,5	5,2	1,1	2,6	2,2
Others	14,0	12,0	14,1	15,3	13,9

The parking challenge was identified by most stakeholders, but they felt that this one (challenge) is not insurmountable with comments such as "this is the reality of a city centre", "public transit is good", and that "the motivation to take part in an activity largely offsets the difficulty of finding parking".

Moreover, participants in the online consultation were asked to indicate on a scale of 1 to 100 (1 not important and 100 very important) the level of importance given to parking in their decision to participate in a cultural or community activity in downtown Halifax.

The two graphs below present these results. On the left, there is a difference from the average (out of 100) according to place of residence, ranging from 53.4% for Halifax to 78.3% in the suburbs. The average was 66.1%.

The graph on the right groups the proportion of all respondents according to the level of importance given to parking. More than half (51.8%) of respondents indicated a response between 76 and 100 compared to less than one in five (17.9%) a response of 0 to 25.



Beyond this probable site, downtown remains an important choice for the location of a Centre de l'Acadie et de la Francophonie.

f. Building and Operations

Since the beginning of the reflection work on a Francophone Centre project in Halifax, it has been determined that the US-A Campus would be the sole occupant and owner of the spaces (approximately 50%) and the remainder should be the property of the community.

The stakeholders consulted would still see a good rail system if US-A owned the entire building, including the rental and community programming space (services and organizations). They consider that US-A is sustainable and will provide great stability to the Centre. It should be noted that US-A has no interest in becoming the owner of this type of community space.

In the same spirit, both the speakers and the management of US-A are aware that the operations of the Community side cannot be financed by this institution (US-A). This project must be financed, both at the construction or renovation stage and at the operations stage, by income from tenants, activities and other sources (see section 6).

Stakeholders expressed the general view that the building (including the Campus and the community part) could be managed by US-A, i.e. maintenance, etc. but that management should be the responsibility of a different entity.

These stakeholders do not want the creation of a new Francophone organization for this work. They would see that the CCGH assumes the management (of operations) of the Community side. The Centre's success relies on programming, promotion and community animation to attract Francophones, Acadians and Francophiles to the building. The CCGH can play such a role provided it has the human and financial resources to do so.

Normally, operations should generate sufficient revenues to maintain a minimum level of financial resources to build human resources to organize, promote and animate cultural and community programming. This management would also include other facets of the operation such as long-term and short-term leases.

Three of the four other centres consulted have this operations management model. Since all these centres also own their building, the question of co-management for the building does not arise. However, it is easy to understand that this complete management offers great flexibility and total control over the success or otherwise of the centres.

In the case of a different owner (here US-A), this can create delicate situations unless the whole is included in a co-management agreement. Some stakeholders consulted mentioned that the community component of school-community centres suffers from a lack of space on the school side. This happens for short-term rental of common spaces or the school part recovers space or time from the community part.

The Vancouver, Edmonton and Winnipeg centres are governed by a Board of Directors made up of members of the Francophone community. The management of these centres feel indebted to the community they represent since they are important and significant buildings for all Francophones in the city and even in the province. The presence of the community on their Board of Directors guarantees this accountability.

Moncton Centre is different because it has kept its co-op roots and its members are its tenants. Thus, the presence of the CCGH in the management of operations will ensure that the community will have a voice in the programming, promotion and animation of the Centre de la francophonie.

It will therefore be necessary to find a precise, simple and flexible formula for the co-management of the building between the US-A and the community party (probably the CCGH).

This precise formula must delimit the commitment of human and financial resources in the management of the building which could be the responsibility of US-A. For example, the building maintenance staff would be part of US-A and its services would be purchased by the community party.

This precision would confirm the responsibility of the exclusive use of each one his part of the building to avoid a encroachment of one on the other in matter of space, unless a mutual agreement.

The simplicity of the formula must limit its "governance" in the sense that it would take the form of a co-management team composed of a member of US-A management and a member of CCGH management.

This team would enforce and respect the co-management agreement on a more day-to-day basis. In summary, US-A would own approximately 50% of the building, all operational, financial and programming responsibilities, including promotion and animation of the community portion would be the responsibility of the CCGH.

6. Cost exploration

It is necessary, at this stage of the project, to consider an exploration of the costs in order to have a better idea of the financial viability with the available information and following the various consultations.

Stakeholders and those consulted online seem to believe that Francophones and Acadians will support the activities of a Centre de l'Acadie et de la Francophonie. They are also optimistic about the chances of attracting organizations that will rent space in the long term or use space in the short term.

a. Implementation cost

The cost of acquiring a building and renovations or building a new building is not part of the present mandate. We are talking here at the very least about 10 to 25 million dollars for a 50 000 to 60 000 ft² building, whether it is an acquisition, a renovation or a construction.

It should be noted that the four centres consulted received substantial subsidies for their construction, expansion or renovation. These centres have also taken out mortgage loans for part of their building financing.

Steps have already been taken to find out whether it is possible to acquire the old library or another place in the city centre. At the time of preparing this feasibility study, no one was in a position to specify the site of the possible centre at all.

This does not preclude the assumption that, regardless of the site or building, developers will have to rely on significant subsidies from different levels of government and perhaps negotiate a mortgage loan with a financial institution.

b. Operating costs

In order to evaluate the possible operating cost, the level of interest of possible tenants and the data of the other centres presented in annex and which are expressed in table 9 will be retained.

We see that the ratio of expenses per square foot is around \$22.50 to \$25.96. The main source of revenue comes from permanent tenants for three of the four centres.

The Winnipeg MFCC relies on grants from the

Government of Canada (44%) and the Government of Manitoba (12%) for its operations. The share of revenue from the multi-purpose room varies between 11.1% for the Moncton Aberdeen Centre (this amount includes bar revenue) and 3% for the CCFM.

It should also be noted that the various centres offer rental rates under or equivalent to the market value in their respective cities. It should be recalled that the rental rate has been mentioned on several occasions both among stakeholders and organizations that have expressed a desire to become a tenant of the Centre de la francophonie.

Table 9
Financial performance based on operating and building criteria of the Francophone centres in Winnipeg, Vancouver, Edmonton and Moncton.

	CCFM Winnipeg	Maison Vancouver	Cite Edmonton	Centre Moncton
Dimension of the building (ft ²)	65,000	30,000	104,000	40,000
Operating Costs	\$1,500,000	\$700,000	\$2,700,000	\$900,000
<i>Ratio expenses per ft²</i>	<i>\$23.08</i>	<i>\$23.33</i>	<i>\$25.96</i>	<i>\$22.50</i>
Frequentation annuelle	70,000	n. disp.	60,000	30,000
% of revenue from permanent tenants	9 %	88 %	52 %	29 %
% of revenue from multi-purpose room	3 %	6,1 %	4 %	11,1%

Taking into account the situations of these centres, Table 10 presents financial scenarios based on different rental rates per square foot, namely \$15, \$20, \$25 or \$30. Stakeholders consulted estimate that the Halifax market varies between \$15 and \$20 per square foot, depending on the type of space.

Thus, the characteristics of the project studied by the Action Committee are that the edifice has a dimension of 58 000 ft², of which 31 000 ft² is occupied by the US-A. The remaining 27,000 square feet would be available for the community portion. Approximately one third of this area would be used for common areas (10,000) including a multifunctional room that can accommodate approximately 300 to 400 people. The remaining 17,000 square feet would accommodate permanent tenants.

To achieve self-financing, operating expenses must be met by revenues. These expenses are estimated at \$24 per square foot over the entire 27,000 square feet for a total of \$648,000.

Since the Centre would not be affiliated with a theatre company, as is the case in Moncton, it is possible to generate at least 10% of rental and sales revenues of all kinds (bar, etc.) for a total of \$65,000. The four scenarios of renting 100% of the space result in a shortfall of \$328,000 (\$15 per square foot), \$243,000 (\$20 per square foot), \$158,000 (\$25 per square foot) and \$73,000 (\$30 per square foot).

Table 10
Financial exploitation performance scenarios for the Centre de l'Acadie et de la Francophonie de Halifax.

Total building size (ft ²)	58,000	31,000 occupied by US-A		
Community Space (ft ²)	27,000			
Long-term rental space (ft ²)	17,000	Common space including a multipurpose room (ft ²)	10,000	
Operating Costs @ \$24 ft ² (27,000 x 24)		\$648,000		
10 % in revenues from multipurpose room		\$65,000		
Long term rental rate (17,000 ft ²)	\$15	\$20	\$25	\$30
Long term rental revenues	\$255,000	\$340,000	\$425,000	\$510,000
Total rental revenues (including the room)	\$320,000	\$405,000	\$490,000	\$575,000
Shortfall	\$328,000	\$243,000	\$158,000	\$73,000

Other scenarios are presented in Appendix III by modifying the community space to 20,000 ft² or 15,000 ft².

In the case of 20,000 square feet at 100% occupancy, the shortfall is \$222,000 (\$15 per square foot), \$152,000 (\$20 per square foot), \$82,000 (\$25 per square foot) and \$12,000 (\$30 per square foot).

For an area of 15,000 square feet at 100% occupancy, the shortfall is \$174,000 (\$15 per square foot), \$124,000 (\$20 per square foot), \$74,000 (\$25 per square foot) and \$24,000 (\$30 per square foot).

Rental rates are determining in the decision for organizations to choose office space. The market value being around \$20 and organizations wishing to pay as little as possible, around \$10 to \$15, it can be difficult to reach a fair balance to ensure a rental rate of about 100%.

Renting approximately 17,000 sq. ft. is a challenge in itself since it would mean having between 25 and 30 tenants occupying an average of 500 to 1,000 sq. ft.

Rental profitability only and with income from the multifunctional room is not possible unless other income such as subsidies and activities generating income that would be used to pay part of the operating expenses is added.

7. Challenges

One facet of the stakeholder consultation identified the challenges of planning, implementing and operating the Centre de la francophonie de Halifax. These challenges are:

- Obtain financing for the acquisition, renovation (or if necessary, construction) of the Centre with government subsidies. While recognizing this challenge, stakeholders noted that it is not insurmountable in the medium term.
- Securing funding for the operation of the Centre is more problematic for stakeholders. They doubt the economic viability of a model based on the presence of Francophone and Acadian organizations. They mention the difficulties of gathering organizations, their willingness to pay a rental rate below or equal to the market value. Some doubt that attendance is sufficient to generate adequate revenues due to the dispersion of the Francophone community in HRM.
- Presenting attractive programming for Francophones, Acadians and other cultures could contribute greatly to the popular (attendance) and financial success of this centre. Stakeholders insist that this Centre be Francophone, but inclusive of other cultures including Anglophones. The more other cultures come to the Centre, the better the visibility of the Francophone community will be.
- Have an independent community management while being in partnership with the US-A. Remember that the stakeholders see a very good railroad the presence of a Campus of the US-A, but they are convinced that the community part must be managed as an independent fagon. The quality and dynamism of management will be a guarantee of the Centre's success.
- Find ways to create a truly inclusive community while avoiding being "by us, for us".

8. Recommendations

It is clear that a Centre de l'Acadie et de la Francophonie is a delicate financial adventure. However, by taking inspiration from the situations in Winnipeg, Edmonton and Moncton, it may be possible to improve this model by generating additional revenues through the Centre's presence in HRM's Francophone cultural and community programming.

Here are the recommendations for the CCGH:

1 - Reason to be

Adopt the principle of a centre dedicated to bringing together Francophone and Acadian organizations and organizing cultural and community activities.

Every effort must be made to ensure that the Centre's project is truly recognized (and perceived) as a gathering place through the organization and presentation of cultural and community activities while being a place that brings together Francophone and Acadian organizations.

Avoid being (and being perceived) as a rental building.

2 - Create a Centre Implementation Committee

Transform the Action Committee into a Centre Implementation Committee whose main tasks would be:

- Initiate discussions with US-A on collaborative opportunities to identify and confirm a site as well as develop a draft co-management agreement for the building;
- to solicit organizations to become permanent tenants;
- identify possible sources of funding for part of the operation of the Community strand, at least for the first years;
- to propose a business model for the programming, promotion and animation of the Centre in collaboration with potential (or confirmed) tenants.

This committee of approximately 6 to 10 members, reporting to the CCGH, will be composed of people with skills in business development, community development, financing, programming, buildings, etc. This committee should obtain administrative support from the CCGH.

2 - Components of the Centre

Ensure that the Centre has, among other things, the following components:

- have between 20 000 and 27 000 ft² for the community component;
- approximately 30% of common spaces, including an art gallery;
- a multifunctional room that can accommodate approximately 300 to 400 people;

- a restaurant-cafe-bistro that could be rented or managed by the Centre, depending on the preferred business model;
- a boutique for Francophone and Acadian cultural products (which can be used as a ticket office) managed by the private sector or a social enterprise;
- permanent rental space for Francophone and Acadian organizations;
- creation spaces for artists who will have the same status as a permanent tenant;

The presence of offices for French-language government services is not excluded, but it is not necessarily consistent with the reality of a cultural and community programming centre. Efforts to convince the provincial government and HRM should be focused on attracting organizations and developing programming. There is a fine line between wanting and playing the role of a programming centre or a rental centre.

3 Communication

Keep the HRM Francophone community informed of the Centre de l'Acadie et de la Francophonie file.

There is a thirst to be informed of the revolution in this issue among HRM Francophones and Acadians. Those responsible must take advantage of this to promote the mission and usefulness of the Centre.

9. Conclusion

The project for a Centre de l'Acadie et de la Francophonie de Halifax is ambitious and exciting. The work already done on this file over the past two years has borne fruit despite changes in the components. Francophones and Acadians are relatively well informed about this project without knowing the details.

The actions of US-A in identifying a site or building are important in the success of this Center. Fortunately, there is a willingness to work with the community to provide the HRM peninsula with a centre to improve the daily lives of Francophones and Acadians as well as the general visibility of this community.

This Centre de la francophonie will also be an asset for HRM, which will continue to rely on a dynamic and visible Francophone community.

This project does not escape the risks and challenges. However, it is together that the community will be able to overcome them and establish a Centre de l'Acadie et de la Francophonie in downtown Halifax.