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Item No. 12.1.1
Community Planning and Economic Development
Standing Committee
February 17, 2022

TO: Chair and Members of the Community Planning and Economic Development
Standing Committee

-Original Signed-

SUBMITTED BY:

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: February 7, 2022

SUBJECT: People. Planet. Prosperity. Halifax's Inclusive Economic Strategy 2022-27

ORIGIN

March 9, 2021 Halifax Regional Council motion (Item 9.3.2)

MOVED by Councillor Blackburn, seconded by Councillor Mason

THAT Halifax Regional Council authorize the Chief Administrative Officer to develop a 2022-2027 Economic Strategy in collaboration with the Halifax Partnership, in accordance with the approach set out in the February 8, 2021 staff report and the related Halifax Partnership presentation.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

October 5, 2021 Halifax Regional Council motion (Item 15.1.1)

MOVED by Councillor Cuttell, seconded by Councillor Russell

THAT Halifax Regional Council endorse the continued development of the 2022-27 Economic Strategy in accordance with the approach outlined in the staff report dated September 9, 2021 and related Halifax Partnership presentation.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter 2008, c. 39

RECOMMENDATIONS ON PAGE 2

Area improvement and promotion

70 (1) The Municipality may

- (a) beautify, improve and maintain property owned or leased by the Municipality;
- (b) pay grants to a body corporate for the purpose of promoting or beautifying a business district and for airport, wharf or waterfront development;
- (c) identify and promote a business district as a place for retail and commercial activity;
- (d) establish or maintain parking facilities.

Business and industrial development

71 (1) The Municipality may

- (a) solicit and encourage the establishment and development of new, and the establishment, development and expansion of existing institutions, industries and businesses in and around the Municipality;
- (b) publicize the advantages of the Municipality or any part of the Municipality and the surrounding areas as a location for the establishment and expansion of institutions, industries and businesses;
- (c) pay grants to a body corporate for the purpose of promoting the Municipality or any part of the Municipality and the surrounding areas as a location for institutions, industries and businesses;
- (d) prepare and disseminate information about the Municipality or any part of the Municipality and the surrounding areas for the assistance of institutions, industries and businesses intending to locate or expand in the Municipality or the surrounding area.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee recommend that Regional Council:

1. Adopt *People. Planet. Prosperity. Halifax's Inclusive Economic Strategy 2022-27* as Halifax's new five-year economic strategy; and,
2. Amend the Services Agreement with the Halifax Partnership to reflect the new economic strategy actions as identified in the final six pages of attachment A.

BACKGROUND

From a policy perspective, economic development entails government and community efforts to improve the economic well-being and quality of life in their respective jurisdictions. This is often accomplished by attracting, retaining, and growing talent, investment, and jobs, and by increasing incomes and tax bases. The Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) is a significant economic development stakeholder in the Municipality. It manages six business and industrial parks, regulates businesses and land development, invests in major infrastructure, establishes and supports Business Improvement Districts, and collaborates with other levels of government and agencies on economic development issues.

HRM also provides financial and in-kind support to community organizations and special events, and it fosters public and private sector innovation at the Halifax Innovation Outpost at VOLTA. HRM provides operational support to three key organizations to further its economic development objectives: Discover Halifax, which promotes Halifax as a destination for business and leisure travelers; Events East Group, which operates the Scotiabank Centre, the Halifax Convention Centre, and Ticket Atlantic; and the Halifax Partnership (the Partnership), which provides professional economic development expertise and services to HRM and oversees much of the implementation of HRM's economic strategy. As a public-private economic development organization, the Partnership leverages funding from private investors and other levels of government as well. In 2021-22, the municipality's operational grant to the Partnership is \$1,918,400 (net HST included).

Partnership deliverables to the Municipality are outlined in a service level agreement. They include the creation and implementation with HRM of the Municipality's economic strategy.

In July 2020, Regional Council endorsed the Halifax COVID-19 Economic Response and Recovery Plan (ERRP) that outlines how HRM, and the Partnership would help businesses and citizens weather the urgent health crisis, prepare to restart and rebuild the economy when conditions allow, and chart a path forward for a stronger, more resilient Municipality. The ERRP replaced the 2016-21 economic strategy ([Halifax Economic Growth Plan 2016-21](#)) as the Partnership's core reporting document to Council.

In March 2021, Regional Council authorized the Chief Administrative Officer to develop a 2022-2027 Economic Strategy in collaboration with the Halifax Partnership, in accordance with the approach set out in the February 8, 2021 [staff report](#). In October 2021, Council endorsed the continued development of the strategy in accordance with the approach outlined in the [staff report](#) dated September 9, 2021.

DISCUSSION

As the Executive Summary of *People. Planet. Prosperity. Halifax's Inclusive Economic Strategy 2022-27* (Inclusive Economic Strategy) states, Halifax has undergone a great deal of change since the 2016-21 economic strategy was developed. Halifax has experienced record population growth, more young people are staying, immigration is increasing, start-ups and scaleups are energizing innovation, and Halifax's skyline has been transformed. Even during the uncertainty of a global pandemic, and despite the accompanying economic challenges, the Municipality has entered a period of growing prosperity.

Beyond the economic challenges of the pandemic, there are other challenges facing HRM. For example, more people in Halifax means an increased demand for housing, which has led to very tight markets and rising costs for both home ownership and rental accommodations. As confirmed by surveys of both residents and businesses conducted in early 2021, addressing growing pains like the rising cost of housing is a critical issue for Halifax now and in the coming years. Key municipal responsibilities like transit and transportation networks are tightly intertwined with housing issues. Managing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as economic and population growth increase, and simultaneously capitalizing on business opportunities created by policies and activities focused on minimizing and mitigating climate change are also key issues to be addressed.

As Halifax enjoyed great success overall in recent years, some residents and communities have not shared in this increased prosperity. This new strategy includes greater attention to the distribution of gains, the condition of those at the lower end of the income and wealth spectrum, and the population's overall well-being, beyond commonly cited economic metrics like GDP.

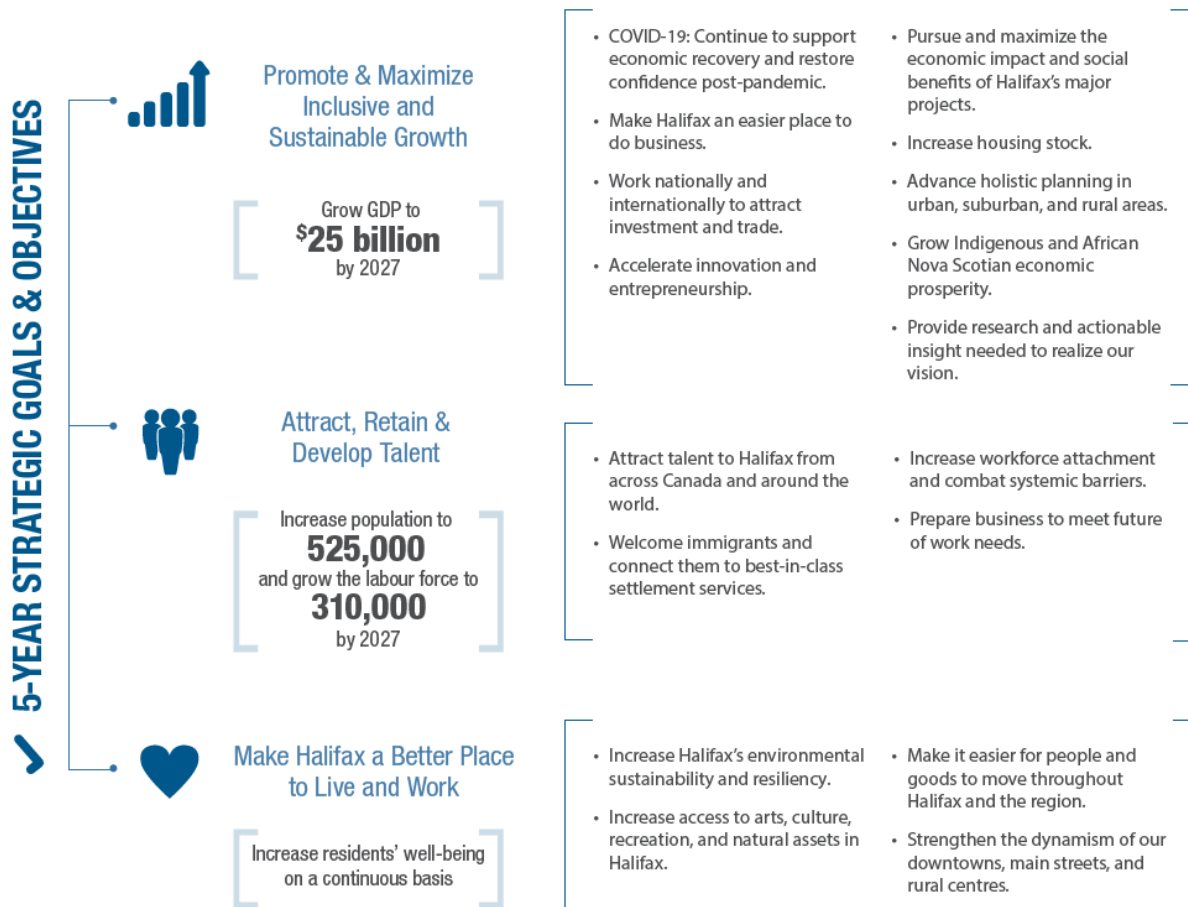
Moving into the next five years, formulating an overarching economic strategy requires careful consideration of the issues facing Halifax and new opportunities to drive inclusive economic growth and prosperity for all. The vision of the Inclusive Economic Strategy is, "A prosperous, growing Halifax that puts the wellbeing of people and planet first." It is supported by a quantitative vision of growing Halifax's GDP to \$32 Billion and its population to 650,000 by 2037.

The Inclusive Economic Strategy has three five-year strategic goals: 1) Promote and Maximize Inclusive and Sustainable Growth; 2) Attract, Retain, and Develop Talent; and 3) Make Halifax a Better Place to Live and Work. As outlined in Graphic 1 on the next page, these strategic goals are supported by 17 five-year objectives that are, in turn, supported by 73 actions (outlined in the last six pages of Attachment A). Thirty-nine actions would be implemented by HRM, 25 by the Partnership, and 9 co-led by both organizations. These actions will be reviewed by Partnership and HRM staff in 2024 or 2025 (any changes will be submitted to Regional Council for approval).

The Partnership, with HRM Corporate Communications, will ensure that the economic strategy and related messaging is communicated to the public and private, post-secondary and community partners and organizations.

Periodic updates on the Inclusive Economic Strategy's implementation will be provided to Regional Council.

Graphic 1.



FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The new economic strategy can be implemented within current budgets. Any actions that require unanticipated budget allocations will be brought forward to Regional Council for approval.

RISK CONSIDERATION

There are no significant risks associated with the recommendations in this Report. The risks considered rate Low.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

An engagement process designed to ensure the strategy charts a course for a more inclusive, sustainable, and prosperous Halifax is complete. Engagement included 30 face-to-face discussions and group consultations, input from more than 200 residents on Halifax Partnership's website, and more than 2,000 responses to HRM's 2021 Resident Survey. Participants were asked to identify barriers and challenges that may be limiting economic inclusion and business growth and prosperity; how they could be addressed; and what is working well to grow the economy in individual communities and Halifax as a whole.

At Halifax Partnership's 2020 annual general meeting, attainable housing, transportation and logistics, and opportunities in the green economy were identified as emerging themes for consideration in this economic strategy. Working groups that included Halifax Partnership investors, business and community leaders, subject matter experts, and HRM and Halifax Partnership staff were struck to research, assess, and recommend actions on these themes.

Inclusive economic growth was also identified as a priority. The objectives and actions that promote and drive inclusive economic growth were informed by insights from outreach led by the Municipality's Office of Diversity & Inclusion/ANSAIO and supplemented with community engagement to hear diverse views, voices, experiences, and leadership from communities, groups, and individuals. Discussions and engagement with diverse groups and communities throughout the Municipality depend on fostering strong relationships built on trust, and progress is made at the pace set by these groups. Ongoing engagement will continue to be a fundamental part of the further development and implementation of actions that will shape a more inclusive Halifax over the next five years and beyond.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

As its title indicates, the new economic strategy recognizes Halifax's overall growth objectives must be aligned with environmental policy measures. The strategy is aligned with HaliFACT: Acting on Climate Together, and it includes a five-year objective to "increase Halifax's environmental sustainability and resiliency". Five actions will be undertaken over the next two years to meet this objective:

- establish and seek private sector endorsement of a CEO Charter for Climate Action (Action # 53);
- help business adapt to provincial and federal government carbon pricing programs and policies (#54);
- Work with financial institutions, other levels of government, and other stakeholders to design and launch a program that incentivizes energy retrofits, renewable energy technologies, and climate resilience measures (#55);
- decarbonize public transit (#56);
- with partners, assess and upgrade critical infrastructure to withstand current and future climate impacts #57);
- manage and protect Halifax's ecosystems (#58); and,
- implement HRM's Electric Vehicle Strategy, including working with partners to increase electric vehicle charging infrastructure throughout Halifax (#59).

These actions are complemented by two other environment-focused actions included elsewhere in the new economic strategy: implement Halifax's Green Economy Investment Attraction Strategy with Nova Scotia Business Inc. and others (#11); and develop prototypes to tackle the climate change emergency and address other complex social issues through the Halifax Innovation Outpost (#14).

ALTERNATIVES

1. That Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee revises portions of the Inclusive Economic Strategy before recommending its approval by Regional Council.
2. That Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee does not recommend that Regional Council adopt Attachment A as the new five-year economic strategy for the Municipality.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: *People. Planet. Prosperity. Halifax's Inclusive Economic Strategy 2022-27.*

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

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People. Planet. Prosperity.

Halifax's Inclusive Economic Strategy 2022-2027

Acknowledgments

The Halifax Regional Municipality is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and traditional lands of the Mi'kmaq people. The municipality acknowledges the Peace & Friendship Treaties signed in this Territory and recognizes that we are all Treaty People.

Economic Strategy Advisory Committee

- Cory Bell, Chair, President and CEO, Lindsay Construction
- Donna Alteen, CEO, Time + Space Media
- Rob Carruthers, Partner, Deloitte Canada
- Jacques Dubé, CAO, Halifax Regional Municipality
- Ron L'Esperance, Principal and Co-founder, Group ATN
- Winston Morton, Chief Technology Officer, SimpTek Technologies

Economic Strategy Working Groups and Vision Contributors are listed in Appendix 3

Lead Organization



Partner



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Messages

Messages will be included in the published document.

Executive Summary

Halifax has undergone a great deal of change since the last economic plan. We are growing, more young people are staying, immigration is increasing, startups and scaleups are energizing innovation, and our skyline has been transformed. Even during the uncertainty of a global pandemic, and the accompanying economic challenges, Halifax has entered a period of growing prosperity, and with prosperity come challenges – and opportunity.

This marks an important turning point: how can we ensure that this prosperity benefits the many and not the few, and how do we harness it to create the kind of city we want future generations to inherit? Because prosperity isn't our only priority, putting the needs of our people and planet first will shape the way we think about prosperity: inclusive, holistic, and focused on well-being as much as the bottom line.

We can make a real difference in our collective prosperity if we act now and in the coming years. It's an incredibly exciting, generational opportunity to energize Halifax and build a more equitable city.

This document isn't the operational plan for Halifax, it's the economic strategy to make our ambitions possible. Every great city meets its place in time – this is Halifax's chance to rise to the occasion and help all our people, businesses, and communities thrive.

WHERE WE WERE

Halifax developed its first five-year economic strategy in 2005. The most recent strategy, covering the period 2016-2021, was intentionally titled a “growth plan”, a name with a double meaning.

First, the plan sought to boost economic growth, a standard objective for economic developers, governments, and politicians. A growing economy, typically gauged by increases in gross domestic product (GDP), is generally associated with increased employment, income, wealth, living standards, and well-being.

The second focus was on population and labour force growth. These areas were chosen in response to concerns over long-term demographic issues, as identified by the ONE Nova Scotia initiative, among others. Existing trends at the time suggested that within a decade or two Nova Scotia would face stagnant – if not negative – population growth; a shrinking labour force and thus a shrinking tax base; and a rapidly expanding older population that tends to consume higher levels of expensive public services like health care. References frequently were made to looming demographic, fiscal, and economic “cliffs” we were destined to drive off if things did not change.

The logic underpinning the growth plan was that more people would lead to more workers (a larger labour force). This would help local businesses attract the employees needed to start, expand, and prosper; it would entice investment from outside as companies faced tightening labour markets throughout the developed world; and it would expand the tax base and generate the revenues that governments need to provide public services. All these factors would propel economic growth (GDP) more broadly. All other goals, themes, and actions in the plan essentially rolled up to support the growth of the population, the labour force, and the economy (as represented by GDP).

Since 2016, several conclusions about the focus on growing Halifax's GDP, population, and labour force have become apparent.

1. Halifax has made considerable progress. Each year from 2016 through 2020, Halifax broke a new record for population growth, and even though COVID-19 impeded travel over 2020 and 2021, Halifax still grew by more than 9,200 people in 2021 (July 2020 to July 2021) – the third-highest annual increase ever.
2. Over the six years from 2016 through 2021, Halifax's labour force grew by more than 27,000 people. This is in contrast to growth over the 2011-2015 period: only 100 (or an average of 20 people per year). Aside from the pandemic-induced recession of 2020, GDP growth was positive each year, reaching 2.6% annual growth in 2019. Halifax also had the best performance among Canada's big cities in terms of GDP decline experienced in 2020.
3. Pursuing population, labour force, and GDP growth in the new five-year economic strategy must be key priorities. Despite the progress made over 2016-21, longer term concerns about demographics are far from resolved. To avoid future labour shortages and fiscal crises, sustained population and labour force growth are required. An expanding GDP remains a standard and desirable objective for economic development.
4. Given that a) the high-level goals of the 2016-21 growth plan remain relevant and b) significant success was achieved, many of the actions from the past plan should be carried over into the new one, albeit with modifications to account for changed and current circumstances and new opportunities. Halifax should build on its recent success.
5. Halifax sought growth and achieved growth, but with growth comes challenges. For example, more people in Halifax means an increased demand for housing, which has led to very tight markets and rising costs for both houses and apartments. As confirmed by surveys of both residents and businesses conducted in early 2021, addressing growing pains like the rising cost of housing is a critical issue for Halifax now and in the coming years. Other key municipal responsibilities like transit and transportation networks are tightly intertwined with housing issues. Managing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as economic and population growth increase, and simultaneously capitalizing on business opportunities created by policies and activities focused on minimizing and mitigating climate change are also key issues to be addressed.
6. As Halifax enjoyed great success overall, some residents and communities have not shared in this increased prosperity. This new strategy includes greater attention to the distribution of gains, the condition of those at the lower end of the income and wealth spectrum, and the population's overall well-being, beyond commonly cited economic metrics like GDP.

Moving into the next five years, formulating an overarching economic strategy requires careful consideration of the issues facing Halifax and new opportunities to drive inclusive economic growth and prosperity for all.

WHERE WE ARE

Halifax is taking its place alongside the best cities in the world thanks to the ongoing collaboration, hard work, and investment of engaged companies, organizations, and all orders of government. As Halifax emerges from the global pandemic, we will build on the city's incredible momentum, energy, and excitement for the future.

Over the past year, Halifax Partnership has led the development of Halifax's economic strategy for 2022-27 in collaboration with the Halifax Regional Municipality and our many private, public, post-secondary, and not-for-profit partners, and in consultation with residents and communities throughout the municipality. This work has been done in tandem with implementing Halifax's *COVID-19 Economic Response and Recovery Plan* to support Halifax businesses and residents in responding to and weathering the impacts of the pandemic.

In developing this economic strategy, we reviewed municipal, provincial, federal, and private sector priorities and strategies as well as business and resident surveys.

Foundational research, strategies, and plans include:

- African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity Action Plan
- BBI Strategic Plan 2019-22
- Develop Nova Scotia, 2021-22 Business Plan
- Discover Halifax, Integrated Tourism Master Plan
- Federal government mandate letters
- Halifax Chamber of Commerce 2019-2023 Strategic Plan
- Halifax Partnership, Business Confidence surveys
- Halifax Partnership, City Matters surveys
- Halifax Partnership, Halifax Index
- Halifax Regional Municipality Accessibility Strategy
- Halifax Regional Municipality Framework for Anti-Black Racism Strategy Action Plan
- Halifax Regional Municipality Centre Plan
- Halifax Regional Municipality Green Network Plan
- Halifax Regional Municipality HalifACT: Acting on Climate Together
- Halifax Regional Municipality Integrated Mobility Plan
- Halifax Regional Municipality Regional Plan
- Halifax Regional Municipality Resident Survey 2021
- Halifax Regional Municipality Strategic Priorities Plan 2021-25
- Halifax Regional Municipality and United Way Halifax, Building Poverty Solutions: Ideas for Action Report
- Nova Scotia Business Inc. 2021-22 Business Plan
- Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Commission Report
- Provincial government mandate letters
- Task Force on the Commemoration of Edward Cornwallis and the Recognition and Commemoration of Indigenous History
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report

In addition to reviewing existing strategies and research, we also engaged and brought together businesses, partners, residents, and communities throughout the municipality to deepen our understanding of key emerging themes - affordable housing, the green economy, and transportation and logistics - and to share ideas, insights, and actions to build a more inclusive, sustainable, resilient, and prosperous Halifax for all. In total, more than 700 contributors have helped shape the 2022-27 economic strategy.

Imagine, it's 2027 and Halifax is recognized as the most inclusive city in North America. What would be different from today?

What We Have Learned

- The *Halifax Economic Growth Plan 2016-2021* provides a solid foundation to build upon.
- Increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion is fundamental to Halifax's economic growth and success.
- We must capitalize on Halifax's strengths in the pursuit of inclusive, sustainable growth.
- More than ever, we need to increase our focus on delivering programs and services in collaboration with the three orders of government, business community, post-secondary institutions, and industry partners that will help businesses recover, thrive, and build for a future so all residents of Halifax can contribute to and benefit from a strong economy.
- There are shared goals and commonalities across partners' plans and strategies.
- There is a continued need for alignment and collaboration among the private, public, post-secondary, and not-for-profit sectors.
- Halifax continues to be a great place to live and work according to residents' ratings of several quality-of-life measures.
- Well-being (happiness/quality of life satisfaction) should be a key measure of inclusive growth.
- Ensuring business-friendly tax and regulatory regimes, sound infrastructure, and high-quality public services are fundamental to business and economic growth.
- Addressing existing and future labour market demands will require a more proactive and collaborative approach.
- Ensuring residents have access to a range of affordable housing options is critical for current and future inclusive economic growth.
- Greening of business and growing the green economy are major thrusts that require careful planning and transition.
- Innovation-driven entrepreneurs will play a significant role in economic recovery and growth. A strong innovation ecosystem attracts and develops young and highly educated talent, entrepreneurs, and new capital.
- Major projects and transportation and logistics will continue to be transformational.

The issues facing Halifax are complex and interconnected. Understanding and assessing how diversity, equity, and inclusion; the labour market; housing; the green economy; and transportation issues are related is critical. Addressing these challenges requires investment, support, and action by all three orders of government, the private sector, post-secondaries, organizations, and communities.

Halifax's economic strategy focuses on priorities, actions, and targets that are within the mandate of the Halifax Regional Municipality and Halifax Partnership and can be delivered in collaboration with partners.

WHERE WE ARE GOING

Everyone has a role to play in driving Halifax's inclusive economic growth and prosperity. Collectively, the 2022-27 economic strategy is ours to own and implement to achieve our shared vision for Halifax.

Vision

A prosperous, growing Halifax that puts the well-being of people and planet first.

By 2037 grow GDP to \$32 billion and population to 650,000.

Value Proposition

Halifax will leverage its ocean advantage, build on its educated and innovative community, invest in climate action and the green economy, and showcase and strengthen its excellent urban, suburban, and rural lifestyle.

Strategic Goals

This strategy identifies three five-year strategic goals, each with measurable objectives that are critical to achieving the long-term vision.

1. *Promote and Maximize Inclusive and Sustainable Growth*: make it easier to do business in Halifax and capitalize on strategic opportunities for inclusive, sustainable growth.
2. *Attract, Retain, and Develop Talent*: ensure Halifax has a skilled, diverse, and inclusive workforce to grow the economy now and in the future.
3. *Make Halifax a Better Place to Live and Work*: improve and showcase Halifax's quality of life to attract and retain residents, workers, businesses, and visitors.

2027 Growth Targets

- Grow Halifax's GDP to \$25 billion.
- Increase Halifax's population to 525,000 and grow the labour force to 310,000.
- Increase residents' well-being on a continuous basis.

This strategy aligns with and aims to support the Halifax Regional Municipality in achieving its long-term *HalifACT* goal to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

Guiding Principles

These guiding principles reflect shared values that were reinforced during the engagement process and have informed the development of the strategy. They will continue to guide implementation.

- *Collaborative:* We work together on shared plans and a common agenda to maximize impact and efficiency.
- *Global:* We look globally for new investment, talent, and growth opportunities.
- *Welcoming:* We welcome new people and businesses into our communities and support them in growing and succeeding.
- *Inclusive:* We are committed to diversity, equity, transparency, and ongoing relationship building and engagement to build a better Halifax for all.
- *Innovative:* We foster innovation and entrepreneurship to drive economic growth and address social, civic, and environmental challenges in the pursuit of a more livable, inclusive, prosperous, and sustainable Halifax.
- *Sustainable:* We believe in a sustainable approach to economic growth that takes into consideration all the factors that influence the well-being of a community including economic, environmental, social, and cultural aspects.
- *Accessible:* We strive to create a municipality where everyone, regardless of their ability or disability, has equal access to programs, services, and opportunities. Accessibility is an issue which concerns all Nova Scotians.

Alignment, Collaboration, and Engagement

Halifax's 2022-27 economic strategy will be a shared roadmap for economic development over the next five years, founded on the values of alignment, partnership, engagement, and inclusion. It will inform and shape municipal plans and decision-making and guide the activities of Halifax Partnership and other economic development and business agencies.

Halifax Partnership will lead the economic strategy implementation and be the coordinating body responsible for tracking, monitoring, and reporting on progress against goals and objectives. The Partnership's Board of Directors will provide oversight and strategic guidance on the ongoing implementation of the plan.

The Mayor and members of Halifax Regional Council and the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee will provide oversight and ensure alignment with the municipality's programs, plans, and economic priorities.

As Halifax's public-private economic development organization, Halifax Partnership will continue to convene economic leaders and diverse groups to ensure collaboration, alignment, and engagement that will lead to integrated, long-term solutions to complex economic and social issues. Relationship building with and among diverse groups and communities will shape and be critical to Halifax's inclusive growth. Ongoing engagement is required, and we will move at the pace of those with whom we are building relationships.

ECONOMIC STRATEGY FRAMEWORK



VISION

A prosperous, growing Halifax that puts the well-being of people and planet first.

By 2037 grow GDP to \$32 billion and population to 650,000



VALUE PROPOSITION



Ocean Advantage



Commitment to Climate Action



Educated & Innovative



Excellent Urban, Suburban, Rural Lifestyle



5-YEAR STRATEGIC GOALS



Promote & Maximize Inclusive and Sustainable Growth



Attract, Retain & Develop Talent



Make Halifax a Better Place to Live and Work

5-YEAR STRATEGIC GOALS & OBJECTIVES



Promote & Maximize Inclusive and Sustainable Growth

Grow GDP to **\$25 billion** by 2027

- COVID-19: Continue to support economic recovery and restore confidence post-pandemic.
- Make Halifax an easier place to do business.
- Work nationally and internationally to attract investment and trade.
- Accelerate innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Pursue and maximize the economic impact and social benefits of Halifax's major projects.
- Increase housing stock.
- Advance holistic planning in urban, suburban, and rural areas.
- Grow Indigenous and African Nova Scotian economic prosperity.
- Provide research and actionable insight needed to realize our vision.



Attract, Retain & Develop Talent

Increase population to **525,000** and grow the labour force to **310,000** by 2027

- Attract talent to Halifax from across Canada and around the world.
- Welcome immigrants and connect them to best-in-class settlement services.
- Increase workforce attachment and combat systemic barriers.
- Prepare business to meet future of work needs.



Make Halifax a Better Place to Live and Work

Increase residents' well-being on a continuous basis

- Increase Halifax's environmental sustainability and resiliency.
- Increase access to arts, culture, recreation, and natural assets in Halifax.
- Make it easier for people and goods to move throughout Halifax and the region.
- Strengthen the dynamism of our downtowns, main streets, and rural centres.

Global and Local Context

Global Context

While many of the factors influencing the previous economic growth plan remain unchanged, the pace of global change has been dramatic. The world is a different place to live and work, do business, and invest than it was five years ago.

The trends of urbanization and accelerated technological advancement and adoption, combined with a global pandemic, the urgent climate crisis, and the emergence and growth of social justice movements have impacted the entire world. We must consider these conditions, and the uncertainty they create, as Halifax continues to compete for business, talent, and investment.

A Global Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has reshaped how the world operates – at least for the time being. Halifax and Nova Scotia have managed the pandemic comparatively well which has allowed the city to recover from the initial and dramatic impact on businesses and the labour market. However, the pandemic will likely have profound long-term effects on the economy. It has rapidly accelerated an ongoing shift towards a more digital world. It has stress-tested global logistics and supply chains. It has forced businesses to question their need for commercial real estate. It has even redirected global investment flows. Fundamentally, the pandemic has demonstrated that businesses need to be prepared for the risk of disruptions to their operations.

Supply Chains and Inflation

The pandemic and a host of other factors have intersected to make it more difficult to move goods from place to place. This disruption to global supply chains has caused sudden increases in prices. Even sectors that were not expected to have difficulties securing goods have experienced knock-on effects from other industries struggling with their own supply chains. The lessons that can be learned from this are unclear. It is unknown whether this will be a temporary disruption, a long-term problem that will take years to resolve, or a shift towards a new normal. More so than in previous strategies, there is uncertainty, especially around the cost of goods and services.

Competition for Talent

Nova Scotia has seen firsthand the effects of an aging population on its workforce. Our older population has meant that we are experiencing issues sooner than other cities and the demographic crisis still looms on the horizon. As labour shortages intensify across the country, the search for talent will become increasingly competitive. More cities will be competing for sparser and sparser talent. We should expect it will become more difficult to attract and retain talent, and we must double down on efforts to address this growing challenge.

Trade and Investment Uncertainty

The last five years have shown us that globalization will not increase forever, and some markets will become less accessible. Canada has had to work hard to hold onto its trade deals with the United States, has experienced hurdles expanding trade with the European Union, has faced trade repercussions from China and Saudi Arabia, and has watched the United Kingdom separate from the European Union. More so than in years past, individual events can unravel trading partnerships that have formed the bedrock

of global commerce. The trade and investment sources we relied on in the past may be less dependable and more uncertain than ever before.

Sustainability and Climate

As climate conditions worsen across the globe and predictions become more dire, there will be increasing pressure to act, and the solutions required to mitigate impacts will become more drastic and urgent. In Canada's context, some form of carbon pricing – either the carbon tax or cap and trade systems – has become the norm. The price of carbon is scheduled to ratchet up considerably in the coming years as Canada tries to reach its climate targets. Further, regulatory changes require an increasing share of the province's electricity production to come from renewable sources. These trends mean more change for business and residents, but also new opportunities to help build a sustainable future and grow the green economy.

Technological Change

The COVID-19 pandemic has propelled us suddenly into an economic and technological future that few expected. Companies are increasingly embracing different modes of doing business, such as hybrid and fully remote work, and are using new technologies to manage this change. This has increased opportunities for small businesses - and the barriers to entry. As new technologies become more normalized in the workplace, innovation will become increasingly necessary to compete. For small businesses, this means additional requirements to invest and learn new skills, and a greater possibility of being left behind.

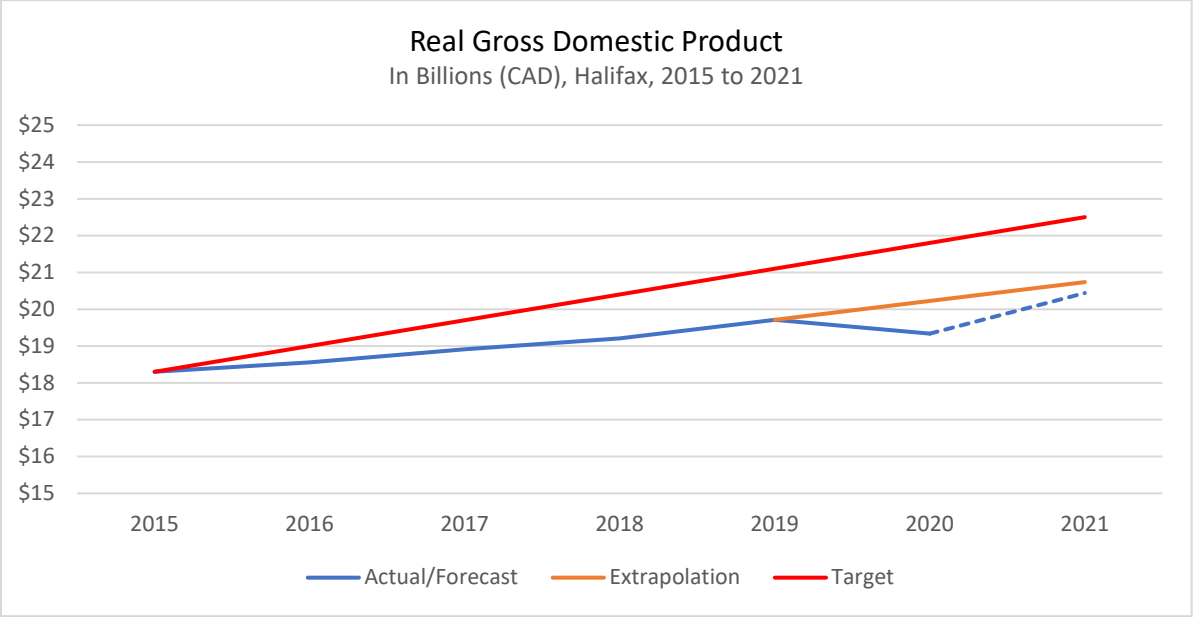
As labour gets scarcer, businesses will use technology to compete for talent – getting the most value from their employees and being able to offer higher compensation in turn. For workers, this means more technology in the workplace, new modes of doing business, new and evolving job opportunities, and the potential for increased compensation.

Local Context

Population and GDP growth continue to make sense for Halifax. Despite the economic contraction caused by COVID-19, strong GDP predictions for 2021 suggest Halifax is set to restore its upward growth trends. There has also been a marked difference in Halifax's population outlook in the past five years. The work of the 2016-21 growth plan and many partners demonstrates that it is possible to significantly change our city's economic trajectory, and many actions designed to grow Halifax's GDP and population continue to make sense in this new strategy.

GDP Growth

The period prior to the development of the 2016-21 growth plan featured annual economic growth that was generally tepid. Accelerated GDP growth was established as a key goal in the 2016-21 plan, with aspirational and ambitious targets of \$22.5 billion and \$30 billion (both figures in real 2007 dollars) set for 2021 and 2031, respectively. The necessary compound annual growth rate for these targets when they were set in 2016 was 2.9%.



From 2016 through 2019, GDP growth in Halifax was positive each year, with annual growth ranging from a low of 1.4% in 2016 to a high of 2.6% in 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic led to a contraction in 2020 of 1.9%; however, in that year, Halifax posted the smallest GDP loss of all major Canadian cities. Halifax’s rebound from COVID-19 is forecasted at 5.7% for 2021.

Pandemic-induced effects aside, Halifax’s economic structure has not changed dramatically over the 2016-2021 period. It remains heavily weighted to the service sector with a significant public sector component, it is broadly diversified across industrial sectors, and it contains many small businesses.

Business Recovery

The immediate impacts of COVID-19 in Halifax were severe and widespread, but similar to what other Canadian cities experienced. The spring of 2020 saw widespread shutdowns, a massive shift to working and learning from home, and a 10% loss in total employment between January and May. Industries that by their nature required on-site staffing – bars, restaurants, hotels, tour operators, retail operations, cleaning services, artistic and cultural venues, etc. – were hit hardest. As younger, female, and lower-paid workers were predominant in these sectors, they bore the brunt of the downturn.

From summer 2020 through late 2021, however, the pandemic was largely held at bay in Halifax due to the public health rules enacted and the exemplary way in which residents adhered to them. By September 2020 aggregate employment had fully recovered and a large portion of the economy was fully back in business, albeit from remote locations in some cases.

The arrival of the Omicron variant has once again driven many workers back home and has again made the situation dire for those in the food, accommodations, and entertainment sectors. Beyond the financial supports that will be required from the provincial and federal governments, effort will be required to encourage customers back into these businesses, including assuaging health and safety concerns.

Due to the initial impact on employment, it also is the case that many workers have left these industries to seek further education, upgrade skills, and move on to new opportunities in other sectors. As the hardest-hit industries reopen for business, labour shortages may affect them in a particularly acute manner. Initiatives to expand the labour force and match workers to opportunities also will be critical.

Finally, no one knows at this point what the longer-term outcome will be in terms of the shift to hybrid and remote work. If many office workers continue to spend significant amounts of time working from home, this may have major impacts on commuting patterns, downtown businesses (e.g., lunch restaurants), and consumer expenditures (e.g., business attire). Understanding these trends and reacting appropriately also will be key to successful recovery from the pandemic.

Population Growth

Issues related to population, migration, and demographics were prominent in the 2016-21 growth plan because Halifax's performance in the years leading up to 2016 was weak and the long-term outlook at the time was worrying. These issues were discussed extensively in the ONE Nova Scotia work that began in 2012, sounding a province-wide alarm for the need to boost our population and labour force.

Halifax's 2016-21 growth plan explicitly aligned itself to the ONE Nova Scotia analysis and recommendations. Goals – again described as aspirational – for a 2021 population of 470,000 and a 2031 population of 550,000 were established.

Halifax's population growth trajectory has improved significantly over the past five years, with a clear inflection point visible in 2016. While actual population growth has not met the 2021 goal, it might have done so if not for the damper that COVID-19 put on international migration. If the average growth rate over the 2016-2021 period is used to extrapolate out to the 2031 goal of 550,000, we would achieve it one year early in 2030. The 2031 population would be over 560,000.

While increased immigration and a growing population have begun to address the looming demographic crisis, the issue is far from resolved. The share of those aged 65 years and older has grown steadily from 11% of the total population in 2001 to 17% in 2021. An increasing share of retirees will put pressure on both the revenue and expense side of the government ledger. As the ONE Nova Scotia reporting identified, it will become more difficult to offer the same level of public services with a shrinking tax base. While the median age in Halifax increased consistently from 36.4 years in 2001 to 40.5 years in 2015, concerted efforts on youth retention and immigration attraction are beginning to reverse this trend. The median age has decreased since 2015 to 39.8 years in 2021.

We have proven that an aging demographic shift is not an insurmountable issue; however, the economic effects cannot be understated. We have only begun to address this looming crisis and continued efforts are necessary.

ECONOMIC INDICATORS (2020) AND AVERAGE ANNUAL PERCENT CHANGE (2016 to 2020)			
	HALIFAX	NOVA SCOTIA	REST OF NS
Population (July 1, 2021)	460,274	992,055	532,117
Avg. annual percent change (2016-2021)	2.1%	0.9%	0.1%
Real GDP (2007 \$ millions) *	\$19,336	\$34,162	\$14,826
Avg. annual percent change	1.0%	0.0%	0.1%
Real GDP per capita (2007 \$)	\$42,040	\$34,436	\$27,862
Avg. annual percent change	-0.8%	-0.9%	1.3%
Employment	227,400	439,700	212,300
Avg. annual percent change	0.8%	0.0%	-0.8%
Unemployment rate (%)	8.7%	9.8%	9.2%
Commercial taxable property (\$ millions)	8,600	12,787	4,187

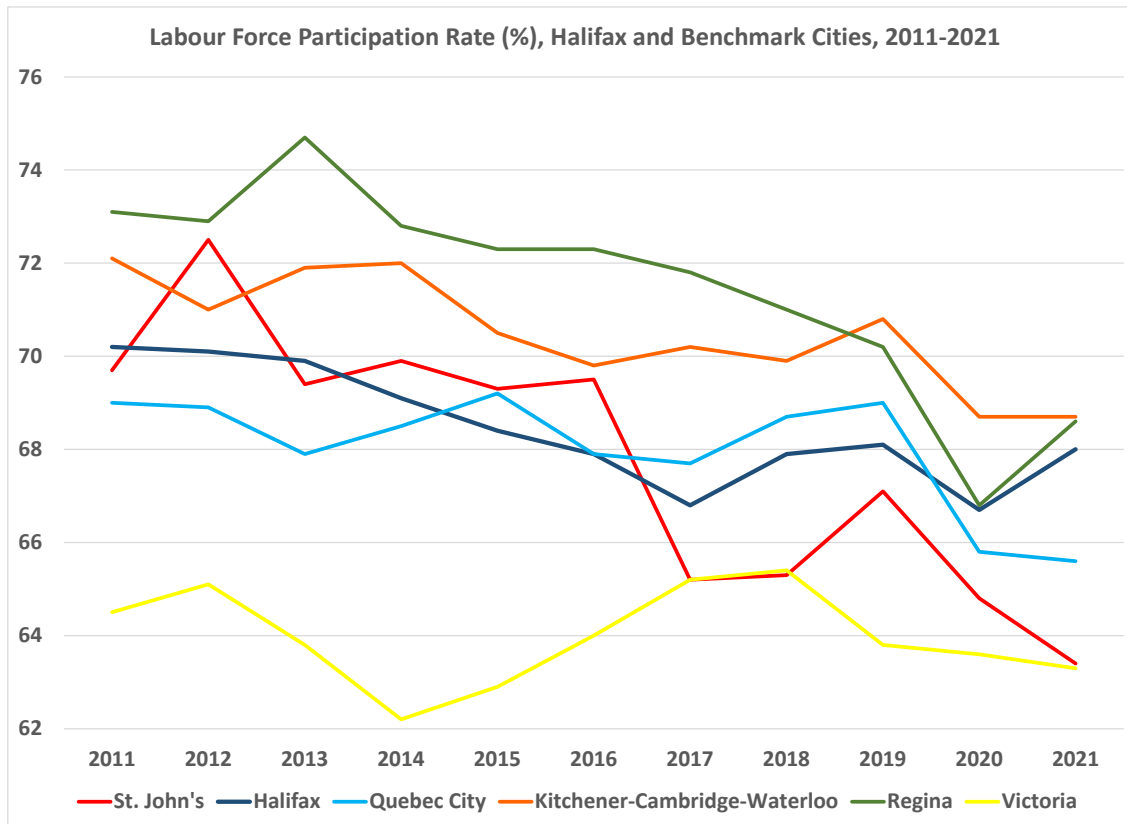
Source: Statistics Canada, The Conference Board of Canada, Halifax Regional Municipality.

*The latest year for GDP data (2020) is based on Conference Board forecasts.

Labour Force

Halifax is far enough along in its demographic transition that we are feeling the effects of our aging population on the labour force. Labour markets are tightening, and competition from other cities and countries will make it increasingly difficult to attract and retain talent.

Over the past five years, we have seen a simultaneous rise in Halifax's total employment and the job vacancy rate. This has been coupled with the reversal of a downward trend in the labour force participation rate and a narrowing of the gap with Halifax's benchmark cities on this statistic. Even in the face of record high employment, 59% of local businesses expected to hire more staff in 2021. This figure has been trending upward since 2015, except during the pandemic.



Source: Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0385-01.

After robust growth in 2019, the labour force participation rate dropped to its lowest level in a generation. The most affected sectors were service industries connected to travel, those requiring close contact, and those serving downtown office clients. Overall, 84% of the jobs lost were in the service sector. However, on a more optimistic note, Halifax led all Canadian cities in employment growth in early 2021 and the labour force participation rate rebounded nicely. As vaccines are rolled out, borders reopened, travel restrictions eased, and employees return to workplaces, Halifax should resume its pre-pandemic trend of strong labour market progress.

Businesses are consistently impressed by the quality of Halifax’s labour force according to results from Halifax Partnership’s annual Business Confidence survey. Seventy percent of businesses consider the quality of workers to be an advantage Halifax has over other cities, a share that has been consistently rising. However, only 48% of businesses consider the availability of labour to be an advantage, with nearly as many considering it a disadvantage. It is clear that the attraction and retention of workers is a concern and top priority for businesses. Record immigration levels and strong interprovincial migration to Nova Scotia have helped, but clearly local businesses have a larger appetite for workers. It makes sense to stay the course and continue attracting, developing, and retaining more workers in Halifax.

As we attract more talent to the city, we will need to continue welcoming and supporting newcomers to become successful. This means getting a handle on how well newcomers attach to and perform in the local labour market. Initiatives that focus on supporting newcomers’ attachment to the labour market, such as the Halifax Partnership’s Connector Program, will be ever more relevant as competition for talent increases.

It will be more important than ever to examine outcomes for newcomers themselves. Initial evidence suggests that the gap between newcomers and locals is closing, but it still takes more than four years for landed immigrants to reach the median income in Nova Scotia. The fact that this gap is closing is positive, but significant work remains if we want to attract and keep the best and brightest talent.

Increased alignment and collaboration between the public, private, and post-secondary sectors would be a boon to attracting and retaining more immigrants and post-secondary students and graduates each year, building a labour force to meet future of work needs, and strengthening the research and innovation culture in the city and province.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Along with the ONE Nova Scotia call for a focus on population growth came the recognition that international immigration would need to be central to this growth. Success in attracting and retaining immigrants could come only with changes in local attitudes and practices to be more open, welcoming, and inclusive. The sharp uptick in immigration numbers suggests that we are making progress on these issues. Corroboration also comes from survey results showing steady improvement in opinions about whether increased immigration is a good thing and how important it is for Halifax to become a better place.

However, there remain systemic differences in economic and social outcomes for underrepresented and equity seeking groups and communities at risk of exclusion. Developments over the course of the previous strategy, including in Halifax, have heightened the awareness and the urgency of addressing these disparities. Examples include the *Me Too* and *Black Lives Matter* movements, the arrival of large numbers of refugees from Syria and Afghanistan, and reconciliation with Indigenous communities.

While aggregate economic growth has been attained over the past five years, not everyone in Halifax has reaped the same rewards and success. Groups such as African Nova Scotians (ANS), Indigenous peoples, rural Halifax communities, those in underrepresented groups, and those experiencing poverty have not attained the same levels of growth and prosperity as others. For example, African Nova Scotians in Halifax earn wages between 65% and 90% of their non-minority counterparts across various education levels. Similarly, 22% of the ANS population earns less than \$10,000 in annual income, compared to 12% of non-minority population.

The five-year *African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity Action Plan* (an outcome of the 2016-21 economic growth plan) and the ANS Index demonstrate that there are still large gaps in the economic outcomes between the ANS community and other Nova Scotians. The action plan is focused on three key priorities to address systemic issues and improve economic and quality of life outcomes for African Nova Scotians: 1) building unity and capacity among African Nova Scotians; 2) establishing land ownership, developing infrastructure, and attracting investment; and 3) increasing participation in education, employment, and entrepreneurship. As stated in the Road to Economic Prosperity, improving the lives of African Nova Scotians will require a long-term and increased commitment and investment from private, public, post-secondary, and community partners.

There are also other dimensions to inclusion that are necessary to address if we want to truly achieve inclusive growth. Income inequality is especially concerning in Halifax, where poverty rates remain above the national average. While the rate of poverty has declined over the past decade, much work remains to be done.

Halifax's overall success and the well-being of our residents are best reflected by how widely prosperity is shared among diverse groups and communities throughout the municipality. Ensuring more of the benefits of economic growth flow to the poorest segments of the population will help foster more inclusive economic growth.

This new economic strategy seeks not only to propel growth in Halifax, but also to be more cognizant of how increasing prosperity is shared – or not shared – among different groups within our society and to take action to increase inclusive growth. As well, the degree to which Halifax embraces these principles is an important litmus test for people and businesses as they choose whether to locate here or settle somewhere else.

Quality of Life

The primary goal of economic development is to increase the economic well-being and quality of life for a community and make people's lives better. We want to grow the economy so that more people can enjoy an excellent and prosperous life in Halifax. But economic growth does not come without consequence. Higher incomes can lead to higher prices, inequality, economic disparity, and an unequal quality of life for residents.

The previous strategy managed to propel our economy forward; however, measures of quality-of-life factors were inconsistent. Prior to the pandemic, many of these indicators showed little to no change. This appears to be as much an issue with the indicators as it is with the underlying conditions in Halifax. New approaches will be required to better assess quality of life in Halifax.

An important pillar of this new economic strategy will be the challenging work of mitigating some of the consequences of growth and ensuring that rising living standards and prosperity can be enjoyed by all. One means to track progress on this front is the development of a well-being measure that can be assessed and reported regularly.

Affordability

As our city continues to grow, it attracts new business, investment, and residents. All these factors put upward pressure on prices, and as in other cities this will degrade affordability over time in Halifax. The COVID-19 pandemic and global supply chain issues have also been an emerging source of inflation. Looking at the next five years, there is increasing uncertainty over whether inflation will be a major or minor issue. However, we must be prepared: issues around inflation could take centre stage.

Inflation is often reflected in affordability, especially housing affordability. As part of the previous strategy, surveys of Halifax residents were conducted to gather their assessment of factors related to Halifax's quality of life. In these surveys, ratings of housing affordability fell from 6.1 out of 10 in 2015 to 4.2 out of 10 in 2020. Housing price increases have accelerated dramatically in 2020 and 2021. Rising prices also highlight a key dimension of inclusion as those who are priced out of living here, who must live in sub-optimal housing due to high rents, or who must work multiple jobs and excessive hours to pay their bills, are not equally benefitting from Halifax's rising prosperity.

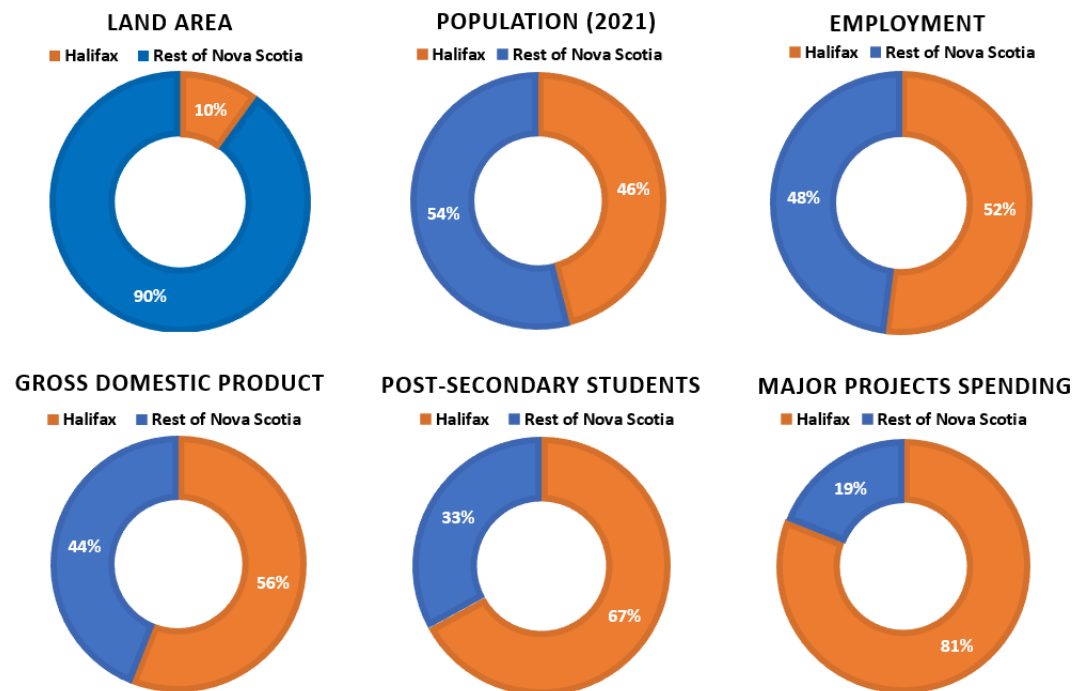
Maintaining our affordability advantage over other cities is also important to Halifax's economic success. Affordability will give Halifax an edge in attracting both businesses and new residents. If we want to continue growing our economy and providing an excellent quality of life, we must address affordability challenges.

Halifax's Relationship to Nova Scotia

Halifax is not only Nova Scotia's capital but also the centre for commerce, healthcare, education, and professional and public services for the province and Atlantic Canada. Halifax accounts for 46% of the provincial population and 56% of Nova Scotia's GDP.

It is critical to recognize that Halifax and the rest of Nova Scotia are not two parts of a zero-sum game. Halifax's success is in many ways driven by the success of other regions in Nova Scotia and, equally, those regions reap benefits when Halifax is successful. When employment and incomes grow anywhere in the province, including Halifax, so do provincial tax revenues which fund services enjoyed by all Nova Scotians. Merchandise exports from across Nova Scotia – tires, forest products, seafood, agricultural products, wine and beer, and manufactured goods, etc. – very often move through the Port of Halifax or the Halifax Stanfield International Airport. Legal, financial, and other services utilized by businesses from Cape Breton to Amherst to Yarmouth are frequently provided by Halifax firms. Inputs and labour from outside the municipality contribute to goods and services produced, consumed, and exported from Halifax. Post-secondary institutions based in Halifax have mutually beneficial relationships with businesses and communities across the province. Many tourists are drawn to Nova Scotia to experience all our province has to offer, including Halifax.

Halifax as a Share of Nova Scotia, Select Indicators, 2020



Source: Statistics Canada, The Conference Board of Canada, Atlantic Provinces Economic Council, Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission

The demographic pressures that are driving the need for Halifax to grow are present and even more pressing in many other parts of Nova Scotia. In contrast to the situation in 2015, however, population growth is now occurring much more broadly across the province, with Statistics Canada reporting our crossing of the one-million population threshold in mid-December 2021. In fact, the flow of people from elsewhere in Nova Scotia into Halifax is trending downward. Halifax's recent growth has been based on

people in other provinces and other countries being drawn to our city, while simultaneously other regions of Nova Scotia have been successful in attracting migrants as well.

Rural and Suburban Halifax

In any discussion regarding the economic and social development of Halifax, it is imperative to keep in mind that Halifax Regional Municipality has the largest proportion of rural citizens among census metropolitan areas in Canada and the largest rural population of any county in Nova Scotia.

These rural regions of our municipality have a different industrial composition than the urban core, with a larger share of businesses in primary industries and construction. Suburban Halifax is home to the largest industrial park in Atlantic Canada and has a higher share of goods-producing businesses.

Like urban Halifax, rural and suburban areas have experienced sharply rising home prices, and housing affordability is a key concern especially as incomes are generally lower than in the urban core. Furthermore, growth in some rural and suburban areas continues to be impeded by inferior connectivity in both the physical sense (transit) and the virtual sense (broadband and cellular phone service).

More so than other major cities in Canada, our economic strategy must address the issues and concerns of our rural residents and communities and look for opportunities to drive growth in these areas.

The Role of Major Projects

Major project activity has been a key driver of economic growth over the past several years. Using the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council’s (APEC) Major Project Inventory, it is estimated that more than 80% of the province’s current major project spending takes place in Halifax.

These projects are a considerable source of investment, driving growth in construction and manufacturing, and helping to build new infrastructure. This infrastructure makes it easier for businesses to operate more effectively in Halifax and across the province.

The following chart provides a rough picture of the five-year timeline for larger major projects greater than \$200 million (>\$500 million are bolded) as catalogued in APEC’s 2021 Major Project Inventory.

START DATE	END DATE	
	COMPLETE BY 2027	CONTINUE BEYOND 2027
UNDERWAY	Halifax Shipbuilding - AOPS Vessels	Halifax Shipyard - Combat Vessels
	The Parks of West Bedford	Port Wallace Development
	Canada Community Building Fund	Cogswell Interchange Redevelopment
	Frigates Upgrades	Shannon Park Redevelopment
	Five-year School Capital Fund	King's Wharf Waterfront Redevelopment
	Indigo Shores Subdivision	Mainland Common Development
TO START BEFORE 2027	Spring Garden West	Atlantic Gold Expansion
	Seton Ridge Development	

Note: We do not have the necessary data to depict specific project spending across individual years. Some of the projects identified above may already have completed the bulk of their investments; others with timelines that stretch beyond 2021 may have minimal expenditures until 2022 and beyond. Start and/or end dates may also have changed since the APEC report was published. Also, many projects still require further steps in terms of approval, development, and review, or are simply at the proposal stage.

Sustainable Growth

In Halifax, all three orders of government are taking active steps to address climate change and the risks of environmental degradation. From an economic standpoint, this means new opportunities and a shift in priorities. The Government of Canada is raising its carbon tax benchmark, which will mean that Nova Scotia's cap-and-trade system will become more stringent. In parallel, the Government of Nova Scotia is requiring that an increasing share of the province's electricity production comes from renewable sources and the Halifax Regional Municipality has committed to a net-zero emissions economy by 2050.

For the new economic strategy, the implication is clear: change is on the horizon. As an economic development leader, we can help businesses prepare for change, understand and comply with new regulations, and create new opportunities to build a sustainable future. This means assisting local businesses in new ways and attracting businesses to address industry and supply chain gaps. With more renewable energy development, businesses being incentivized to seek greener solutions, and a changing regulatory landscape, we will need to attract companies with new technologies and expertise to help smooth and improve our transition to a greener economy.

Trade and Investment

As we continue to create opportunity and wealth in Halifax, it will be even more necessary to sell our goods abroad. As we look to the future, we cannot become reliant on any single trading partner to maintain success. It will not be enough to simply grow overall exports; we must also diversify the destinations for those goods. This will help make Halifax's economy more resilient to future uncertainty.

Investment attraction has been a key pillar of Halifax's economic success. The abundance of talent in Halifax and the city's openness to business have made it an attractive place for businesses to establish and expand their operations. Continuing these efforts will help grow our economy and provide new opportunities for people across the province. Several major Canadian and global companies including Cognizant, Amazon, Wattpad, Axis Capital, and Virtusa have made headlines with the opening of new operations in Halifax. These are marquee successes worthy of celebration. However, like trade, if we want to build a truly robust and stable economy, we must diversify our sources of investment and look to new markets for opportunities aligned with Halifax's economic strategy.

Productivity

To raise living standards in Halifax, it is not enough to simply overcome the demographic crisis. To truly prosper, we must not only grow larger, but also become more efficient. In terms of the global marketplace, Canada, and especially Nova Scotia, have lagged in terms of productivity. If we want quality of life to improve, we cannot just grow. We must also encourage productivity increases throughout the economy.

Halifax, like other major cities in Canada, has a diverse economy with many sectors contributing to growth and wealth creation. Improving how we do business and how we develop into the future will not be a question of finding the right sector to focus on. It will require the proliferation of technology into the many sectors that comprise Halifax's economy. Productivity improvement is not about building a single successful sector, nor about convincing the right company to open its doors in Halifax. Our approach must encourage all businesses in all sectors to find ways to work more productively.

Even the services sector, which employs 87% of Halifax’s workforce, is only part of the puzzle. Sectors like construction, shipbuilding, and goods production are all part of the larger picture.

As we work towards greater innovation, technological improvement, commercialization, and productivity, focusing on just a few key sectors hamstrings efforts from the outset. No sector has a monopoly on opportunity.

Entrepreneurship and Innovation

Over the past five years, Halifax has established a connected and collaborative innovation ecosystem rich with startup incubators and accelerators; innovation hubs and living labs; thousands of businesses large and small; and seven post-secondary institutions – all supported by mixed-use housing, office, and retail, and a vibrant food, arts, and culture scene.

The Halifax Innovation District is a technology and research-dense area and entrepreneurial community with a concentration of assets on both sides of the Halifax harbour. The district provides a platform to connect local and global startups, scaleups, and established companies to Halifax’s innovation assets and growth opportunities, while fostering meaningful connections and collaborations between private, public, and post-secondary partners. The district has become known a testing ground to pilot and evolve new technology, and is drawing more innovation-driven businesses, entrepreneurs, and talent to the city each year.

As reported in the 2021 Halifax Index, the city is home to over 285 startups (40 new companies started their operations in 2020) with a combined annual revenue growth of 67%. There were fewer new startups in 2020 than the previous year due to the impacts of the global pandemic, yet still more than 2018 levels. Halifax-based startups make up 39% of all Atlantic Canadian startups, having generated \$121.8 million in total funding in 2020, of which \$55 million was raised through the stock market. Startups employed 2,897 people in 2020, up 14% since 2019 and 103% since 2016.

The pandemic has unleashed energy and creativity in Halifax’s innovation community, generating economic growth and helping society cope with the global crisis. Both the information technology and life sciences sectors in Halifax have grown with many businesses and governments focusing on digital transformation and health care. Life sciences companies rallied to develop products to address the COVID-19 crisis. These efforts helped Halifax biotech companies raise a record \$55 million in stock market funding.

The biggest event of 2020 was the venture capital funding by CarbonCure Technologies Inc., with investors such as Amazon.com Inc., Microsoft Corporation, and Breakthru Ventures (whose backers include Mike Bloomberg and Jeff Bezos, among others).

The innovation community and ecosystem continue to grow as more startups develop at Halifax’s incubators and innovation hubs, more companies scale and new ones move to the city, and new assets and opportunities emerge.

Community Engagement

An important component of the development of the 2022-27 economic strategy was hearing from diverse groups, partners, and communities whose perspectives have helped identify and inform the emerging themes, strategic goals, objectives, and actions. An engagement process designed to ensure the strategy charts a course for a more inclusive, sustainable, and prosperous Halifax was developed and implemented.

Engagement included 30 face-to-face discussions and group consultations, input from more than 200 residents on Halifax Partnership's website, and more than 2,000 responses to the Halifax Regional Municipality's 2021 Resident Survey. Participants were asked to identify barriers and challenges that may be limiting economic inclusion and business growth and prosperity; how they could be addressed; and what is working well to grow the economy in individual communities and Halifax as a whole.

At Halifax Partnership's 2020 annual general meeting, attainable housing, transportation and logistics, and opportunities in the green economy were identified as emerging themes for consideration in this economic strategy. Working groups that included Halifax Partnership Investors, business and community leaders, subject matter experts, and Halifax Regional Municipality and Halifax Partnership staff were struck to research, assess, and recommend actions on these themes.

Inclusive economic growth was also identified as a priority. The objectives and actions that promote and drive inclusive economic growth were informed by insights from outreach led by the municipality's Office of Diversity & Inclusion/ANSAIO and supplemented with community engagements to hear diverse views, voices, experiences, and leadership from communities, groups, and individuals. It is important to note that discussions and engagement with diverse groups and communities throughout the municipality depend on fostering strong relationships built on trust, and progress is made at the pace of those with whom we are building relationships. Ongoing engagement will continue to be a fundamental part of the further development and implementation of actions that will shape a more inclusive Halifax over the next five years and beyond.

What We Heard

Inclusive Economic Growth is Paramount

In the simplest sense, inclusive growth is about enabling everyone to contribute to and benefit from economic growth, delivering greater prosperity and equity across the Halifax region. Engagement on inclusive economic growth identified diverse perspectives on its meaning and on the actions that could be taken to improve and increase inclusion. Common themes included increasing housing stock and options for people at various income levels and stages of life; increasing training and access to jobs for underrepresented groups; taking advantage of climate action plans to create new opportunities for more people; increasing housing density while also maintaining green spaces and access to parks; and improving access to places and services. Making Halifax a more welcoming community for newcomers and eliminating systemic barriers were also highlighted. As well, continuing support for existing strategies and plans, and working with Indigenous, African Nova Scotian, immigrant, and other communities to develop new economic programs were identified as critical for inclusive economic growth. What was consistently clear is that making inclusive economic growth a foundational aspect of the economic strategy is more important than ever.

Progress African Nova Scotian Economic Prosperity

Implementation of the five-year *African Nova Scotian (ANS) Road to Economic Prosperity Action Plan*, is led by the Road to Economic Prosperity Advisory Committee in partnership with the Halifax Regional Municipality and Halifax Partnership and with support from private and public sector sponsors. Since launching the plan, working groups have been advancing each of the three priorities: building unity and capacity among African Nova Scotians; establishing land ownership, developing infrastructure, and attracting investment; and increasing participation in education, employment, and entrepreneurship. Progress on several of the 30 actions that deliver on these strategic priorities has been steady and was shared during a community engagement summit in October 2021.

Among the actions to build ANS unity and capacity is the development of the first-ever African Nova Scotian Prosperity and Well-being Index, modeled after the Halifax Index. The ANS Index has been created to help define the economic realities African Nova Scotians currently face and to identify priority areas that need to be addressed to close the gap between ANS communities and the rest of the province. The index creates an objective measurement that the ANS community can use to show the impact of legislation, policies, and programs from all orders of government.

Work has begun to redefine the relationship with the Halifax Regional Municipality, private developers, and other stakeholders to improve the current and future state of land ownership, development, infrastructure, and investment within ANS communities. Engaging the community in defining and implementing policies and processes that will positively impact and shape African Nova Scotian communities is resulting in the development of community action plans that will inform the municipality's planning and development strategy. This will be a major step in ensuring that Halifax's growth is inclusive and beneficial to ANS communities.

Reconnecting African Nova Scotians with opportunities in education, employment, and entrepreneurship is essential, especially in the current constrained labour market. Programs that support ANS youth in developing their business network, connecting them to employment opportunities in a range of industries, and providing opportunities for skills training and professional development have been launched. Promoting and developing supports to help spur the growth and development of Black businesses in collaboration with the Black Business Initiative (BBI) and other organizations is in progress, as are efforts to help Black-owned businesses integrate into public and private supply chains and attract and retain talent to boost their competitiveness and success. BBI and Halifax Partnership work together to support ANS economic development, entrepreneurship, and business growth.

In addition to continuing to focus on the specific actions of the Road to Economic Prosperity Plan, community engagement identified needs that are consistent with those identified by other groups and communities: improved public transportation that connects workers in suburban and rural Black communities to their jobs in other parts of the municipality; increased housing within communities to attract and retain families (note that this is deeply tied to the issue of land ownership); increased access to employment training, services, and social programs within communities; better infrastructure (e.g., roads, sidewalks, lighting) that improves safety for residents; and, development of natural assets within communities for the benefit of residents and to attract visitors.

Achieving African Nova Scotian economic prosperity requires the ongoing commitment and active participation of community, the Halifax Regional Municipality, Halifax Partnership, the Province of Nova Scotia, and other partners.

Increase Access to Housing Options

The urgent need for more housing throughout the municipality was one of the dominant themes through nearly every conversation and contribution to the strategy's development. Residents identified that homelessness is a concern that reflects on who and what is valued across the municipality while increasing affordable housing options (for both rent and ownership) is a necessary part of the quality of life people desire and expect. Business owners and associations also identified the availability of affordable housing options as a key element for attracting and retaining talent. The Attainable Housing Working Group said that skilled trades shortages in the home-construction industry continue to be an issue and are impeding the speed of making new housing available. This group also discussed the provincial mandate for housing and the more limited and specific roles of the Halifax Regional Municipality. The connection between housing, attracting more people to the region, development of complete communities with amenities within a walkable distance, and good transportation links between communities were also discussed.

Support Business Recovery and Growth

Halifax Partnership and the Halifax Regional Municipality continue to lead economic recovery efforts through the Halifax *COVID-19 Economic Response and Recovery Plan*. Together with private, public, and post-secondary partners we have been working to help businesses weather the waves of impacts from COVID-19 while also focusing on restoring Halifax's positive long-term growth trend.

While economic recovery has been strong, the pandemic continues to impact Halifax businesses. Discussions with nearly 800 businesses and organizations across the municipality identified that efforts must continue to support businesses in their recovery. Specifically, that includes helping them to navigate and access programs, services, and tools to help them build business resiliency and recover more quickly, while also boosting consumer and business confidence to reignite the economy.

At the same time, we continue to support business growth through initiatives such as Halifax Partnership's SmartBusiness business retention and expansion program so businesses can take advantage of current and future growth opportunities and manage the accelerated shift to a more digital and green economy.

Grow the Green Economy

Halifax is well positioned to advance a green innovation, infrastructure, and jobs agenda that builds on industry, post-secondary, and innovation strengths. Such an agenda will largely be driven by private sector investment, innovation, and partnerships.

In 2019, Halifax declared a climate emergency, joining countries and major cities around the world, including nearly 500 Canadian municipalities. *HalifACT* is Halifax's response to that declaration and is one of the most ambitious climate action plans in Canada with a goal to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. The Green Economy working group noted that *HalifACT* offers significant opportunities to grow Halifax's green economy. The transition to a low carbon economy will require the public and private sectors to invest more than \$22 billion over 30 years in building retrofits, renewable energy, energy storage, transit systems and active transportation infrastructure, while also preparing employees, businesses, and infrastructure for climate impacts. In 2021, Halifax Partnership collaborated with NSBI

and the Halifax Regional Municipality to develop Halifax's Green FDI strategy aimed at attracting companies and investment to grow Halifax's cleantech sector and support the implementation of *HalifACT*.

Policy changes from the federal, provincial, and municipal governments, like the \$19 million investment in rebates to encourage EVs and energy efficient homes, are beginning to incentivize the economy to be more environmentally sustainable. The private sector has a role to play in this transition, especially as it relates to providing and adopting cleantech solutions and services, and showing leadership in reducing emissions and environmental impacts, adopting renewable energy, and committing to being environmentally responsible.

Encouraging and supporting existing businesses to shift toward a more sustainable growth path will provide the infrastructure and evidence of success needed for new businesses to enter the Halifax market, thereby diversifying areas of specialization, and filling supply chain gaps.

Support the Growth of Startups and Scaleups

There is a significant role for the private and public sectors to play in supporting the growth of startups and scaleups. This includes piloting and using locally developed technologies, products, services, and partnering with startups and scaleups to advance corporate and government innovation.

Halifax's post-secondary institutions, incubators, and innovation hubs are planning new developments and expansions, and creating new programming, to enrich the ecosystem and meet the increasing demand and needs of startups, scaleups, corporations, and governments.

A key initiative within the Halifax Innovation District is the Halifax Innovation Outpost, a partnership between the Halifax Regional Municipality and Halifax Partnership with support from the Province of Nova Scotia. Housed at Volta, the Innovation Outpost aims to support the growth of startups and scaleups by helping founders access municipal and corporate leaders and assets. The Outpost also works to address social, civic, and environmental challenges in the pursuit of a more livable, inclusive, sustainable, and innovative Halifax.

Companies and organizations within Halifax's ecosystem have identified the search for talent, especially those with sector-specific tech and entrepreneurial skills, as one of the biggest challenges for continued business growth. Attracting and retaining specialized talent depends on companies' ability to offer competitive and flexible compensation packages, and on Halifax meeting quality of life expectations. This includes providing a range of housing options (home ownership or rentals at reasonable costs); bike and pedestrian friendly ways to access food, services, and entertainment; and accessible and reliable transportation to beaches, parks, and other lifestyle amenities.

Innovation players and partners agree that continued strategic alignment and collaboration are required to continue driving growth within Halifax's growing innovation district and ecosystem.

Revitalize Mainstreets and Downtowns

Engagements with and by Halifax's downtown Business Improvement Districts (Downtown Dartmouth, Quinpool Road, North End, Spring Garden Road, and Downtown Halifax) identified priorities and programs which could revitalize the downtown urban core so that these areas continue to attract and grow businesses (which grows the commercial tax base) and provide the amenities, services, spaces, and entertainment that contribute to the quality of life for residents and attract visitors. Input from these

groups recommends the continuation of some of the actions from the 2016-21 economic growth plan and the establishment of new programs and initiatives focused on infrastructure and development, placemaking, and governance.

Infrastructure recommendations include increased transportation options (BRT, shuttle, and ferry) that ensure efficient movement to, from, and around the urban core; development of a long-term plan for the continuation of the commercial streetscaping program; and the development of both an urban core parks strategy and a public washroom strategy. Planned redevelopment projects could contribute to the revitalization of the urban core including the Cogswell District Project, reinvigorating the former Central Library, and downtown Dartmouth waterfront plans to revitalize Alderney Landing and the Alderney Gate Library. Enhancing the Alderney projects to add vibrant public spaces and provide affordable housing options for the downtown workforce as part of the development of Dartmouth Cove should also be assessed.

Placemaking initiative recommendations that focus on meeting and enhancing the everyday needs and experiences of local communities and attracting visitors were identified. They include development of a multi-year downtown events strategy and sustained funding for open streets events (e.g., Switch). Continued investment to make spaces more attractive and accessible for pedestrians and cyclists was also recommended, including introducing district-specific wayfinding signage and implementing a strategy to increase the vibrancy of ground floor commercial spaces (occupied and vacant).

Governance input identified funding and policy options to support continued cooperation among public and private sector partners. Possible actions include undertaking a public engagement/visioning exercise and reconstituting a forum for continued and renewed collaboration on complex urban initiatives (as a successor to the Strategic Urban Partnership). Development of both a downtown parking strategy and a land asset strategy are recommended to facilitate development and improve transportation within the urban core. To incentivize business development, recommendations include adoption of Tax Increment Financing (TIFs) and introducing differentiated commercial tax rates for the urban core and traditional commercial main streets across the city.

Grow Rural Halifax

Halifax's rural communities along the Eastern Shore and St. Margaret's Bay area identified several barriers and opportunities for economic growth in their communities. Business owners and organizations state that staffing issues present the greatest challenge, both in terms of availability of skilled full-time and seasonal workers, and the rising cost of minimum wages for small businesses. Jobs are available in rural communities, especially in the resource sectors, but there isn't sufficient talent to fill roles.

The ability to attract and retain people and talent, including immigrants and trade school and university graduates for rural jobs depends on access to housing and transportation. Few rural areas have apartment buildings or multi-family homes for rent in their communities, at a time when affordable rentals could offer an alternative to the current high cost of buying a home. Contributors identified that there is land available within their communities that could be developed for housing but access to both funding and development services (permitting, for example) has been challenging. Providing safe transportation infrastructure (roads and sidewalks) and accessible, reliable, and efficient transit service are also critical. Public transportation ends at hubs within rural areas (Porter's Lake and Tantallon),

requiring that residents own cars to reach their homes or jobs past those points. Community-based transportation services to shuttle people within and between communities is seen as helpful but not sufficient.

Broadband internet service was also identified as “absolutely essential” to attracting people, especially those who may want to operate a home-based business or work remotely. Rural communities have many of the quality-of-life elements that seem to be attracting remote workers to Halifax, especially during the pandemic, but rural communities are unable to capitalize on that without reliable, high-speed internet.

Rural community discussions included reference to the difficulty accessing Halifax Regional Municipality services to support rural business development and growth. Contributors identified specific examples of delays in inspections and obtaining permits, lack of clarity in the requirements needed to complete applications and approvals, and less access to funding than in other parts of the municipality. Reference was made to resources within the municipality that were previously available to help resolve some of these issues and an overall desire to make it easier to do business was also expressed.

These communities all identified economic opportunities presented by the natural beauty of their coastal geography, including the 100 Wild Islands, Taylor’s Head Provincial Park, Martinique Beach and one of Nova Scotia’s most iconic tourist attractions, Peggy’s Cove. In addition, these areas have an abundance of accessible forests, rivers, and lakes that are attractive to those seeking an escape from urban areas and looking for outdoor adventures. Further development to enhance access for residents and visitors alike requires infrastructure improvements including roads, washrooms, services, and amenities, all of which require funding. Coordination among funding partners from all three orders of government and continued alignment with the Halifax Integrated Master Tourism Plan is required.

Advance Major Projects and Transportation and Logistics Infrastructure

The importance of cost-effective, efficient, and accessible transportation that connects people to places and spaces for both work and recreation was raised by the Transportation and Logistic Working Group and several other interested parties. This includes a combination of vehicles, infrastructure, and accessible and convenient routes and schedules for public transportation. Sustainable transportation, including the electrification of buses and cars, as well as infrastructure that supports increased personal mobility options (bike-friendly and walkable communities) were identified. Discussions related to logistics identified the importance of carbon-friendly practices as key infrastructure continues to grow and develop (e.g., international airport, global cargo port, and cruise ship facilities). Some of Halifax’s most significant major projects, including the new Cogswell District Project and Windsor Street Exchange redesign, were recognized as both transformative and disruptive; gaining a better understanding of the possible impacts of these projects was discussed in several sessions.

Recognize the Interconnectedness of Issues and Opportunities

Contributors spoke broadly about their areas of interest and identified that many of the factors impacting growth are interconnected. Attracting and keeping talent is critical; however, the limited supply of affordable housing options close to where people work means many are living some distance away from their workplace. Transportation links, including schedules to meet the needs of shift workers, may not always be available, making it challenging for people to get to and from where they can afford to live and where they work. Contributors noted that increased transportation and housing options could create access to a larger talent pool for many employers, and while this is true for many parts of

the municipality, it was particularly important in rural and suburban areas. Similarly, discussions on green economy opportunities were linked to labour force, transportation, and quality-of-life opportunities. There was interest in ongoing engagement to address these issues and to support implementation of the strategy over the next five years.

Economic Strategy Framework

Vision

A prosperous, growing Halifax that puts the well-being of people and planet first.

By 2037 grow GDP to \$32 Billion and population to 650,000.



2027 Growth Targets

- Grow GDP to \$25 billion by 2027.
- Increase population to 525,000 and grow the labour force to 310,000 by 2027.
- Continuously increase Halifax's well-being (to be benchmarked in year one).

This strategy aligns with and aims to support the Halifax Regional Municipality in achieving its long-term *HalifACT* goal to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

Halifax's Value Proposition

Good economic development leverages and builds on existing strengths and assets. It calls for pursuing growth opportunities that are aligned to a shared vision, values, and principles.

As the vibrant capital and economic hub of Canada's east coast, Halifax offers the talent, location, cost, innovation, and quality-of-life advantages global businesses and talent desire and require to be competitive and successful. A global transportation and logistics hub, Halifax is one of Canada's main gateways for moving goods in and out of North America; traveling to and from international destinations; and delivering services across European, North American, and Caribbean time zones.

Halifax is one of Canada's oldest cities and the largest major city by land mass at 5,500 km². Residents and tourists alike enjoy its distinct east coast lifestyle, its blend of history and modern amenities, and its naturally beautiful urban, suburban, and rural communities. Halifax has one of the largest concentrations of post-secondary institutions and among the best educated workforces in North America, providing a diverse and innovative talent pool to support entrepreneurship and business growth.

Ocean Advantage

Given Halifax's strategic location on North America's east coast, the focus of its universities and community colleges, and the depth of its defence and science-based workforce, it is no surprise that the city is a world leader in the ocean sector. Halifax is Canada's ocean city, offering local and global ocean innovators and companies access to a deep and diverse ecosystem of customers, partners, and suppliers.

Ocean technology is one of the region's largest advanced technology industries with high levels of R&D and innovation, highly skilled talent, and an export focus. Ocean-related industries generate approximately \$6.0 billion, or 13.5%, of Nova Scotia's GDP and account for about one third of total R&D spending by Nova Scotia businesses. More than \$500 million in strategic investments have been made to accelerate the growth of the ocean economy over the past five years.

There are over 500 ocean-sector companies in the province – from startups to global corporations. Halifax's ocean sector is broad and diverse. It includes goods and services providers engaged in oceans technology; fisheries and aquaculture; life sciences; shipbuilding (Irving Shipbuilding \$70 billion naval defence contract); ocean observation; marine-centric defence and security; transportation; energy; and coastal tourism. Companies within the sector often play in two or more of these niches. The city is becoming Canada's ocean-tech startup hub with 55 of the 101 ocean-tech startups in Atlantic Canada that Entrevestor tracks.

The Bedford Institute of Oceanography is Canada's largest centre for oceans research and innovation, with 600 scientists, engineers, and technicians engaged in marine science and R&D. The city is also home to Canada's East Coast Navy (Maritime Forces Atlantic), Dalhousie University, Defence Research and Development Canada Atlantic, and the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC), among others.

Located along Halifax Harbour, the Centre for Ocean Ventures and Entrepreneurship (COVE) is a collaborative facility for innovation in the ocean sector. COVE brings together people, ideas, industry, and research to create the world's next practical, commercial, and revolutionary ocean tech advances. Canada's Ocean Supercluster is also contributing to the growth of Halifax's ocean economy.

The Ocean Supercluster is an industry-led cluster model that is driving cross-sectoral, cross-Canada collaboration and accelerating ocean innovation in a digital, sustainable, and inclusive way.

Halifax's ocean advantage continues to offer major opportunities to strengthen the city's reputation as a world leader in ocean science and innovation, technology, and security and defence, while boosting growth in several key industries.

Commitment to Climate Action and Cleantech

Halifax is becoming a hub for cleantech innovators and collaborations between research centres, post-secondary institutions, incubators, businesses, and government focused on harnessing the potential of renewable energy and clean technology.

Halifax's ecosystem is supporting the growth of companies like homegrown CarbonCure Technologies which was named Cleantech Company of 2020 and won the NRG COSIA Carbon XPRIZE in 2021 for its low-carbon concrete technology. World-class battery technology research is being conducted at Dalhousie University through a partnership with Tesla, as well as by NOVONIX which develops anode materials produced through an environmentally friendly process.

Halifax's, and more broadly Nova Scotia's, energy future holds exciting possibilities and growth opportunities. The uptake of electric vehicles and rising investments in renewable energy generation will require an expanded and modernized electric grid and storage systems. Moreover, the high potential for green hydrogen in Canada and Halifax will require a smarter energy grid with greater capacity. Nova Scotia Power is developing opportunities for more wind and solar generation, battery storage, electric vehicles, and smart grid technology which will be developed and provided by the private sector.

The global expansion of charging services for electronic vehicles is also well on its way, supported by a rise in government initiatives and the growing production and adoption of EVs. Halifax is on the cusp of this revolutionary change with the region already being home to over 200 electric charge points – a number that is expected to grow rapidly.

There is also increasing demand to make homes and businesses more energy efficient and to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. The Halifax Regional Municipality offers property owners access to its innovative Solar City program, while the Province of Nova Scotia has committed more than \$100 million in rebates to encourage the uptake of EVs, solar energy, and energy efficiency improvements.

Educated and Innovative

Halifax is fast becoming one of Canada's most exciting technology and innovation hubs – a striking combination of drive and discovery, technology and talent, curiosity, and culture – with an innovation district that has the potential to fuel significant growth of viable startups and scaleup companies in our city, province, and region.

Located in the heart of Halifax on both sides of the harbour, the Halifax Innovation District is a technology and research-dense area and community where people, firms, post-secondary institutions, entrepreneurs, startups and scaleups and innovation hubs are collaborating to generate and accelerate ideas and develop and evolve products and services. It is home to most of Halifax's post-secondary institutions, multiple startup incubators and innovation hubs, and over 2,100 companies in the IT, life sciences, financial services, cleantech, and ocean tech sectors.

Halifax's universities and three community college campuses enrol over 35,000 students annually and produce a highly skilled and diverse workforce for the city's knowledge-based industries. In fact, 70% of Halifax's workforce has post-secondary certification. Enrolment numbers for both international students as well as students from other provinces increased at Halifax's universities in 2020. International student enrolment reached its highest-ever level with 7,588 students, a growth of 9.7%. This is the twelfth consecutive record high for international student enrolment in Halifax. At NSCC, the international student share of total enrolment across the province increased from 7.3% to 7.5%. Also encouraging is the general trend in the international student retention rate over the course of the last plan. One of the 19 goals established in the ONE Nova Scotia initiative was to double the share of foreign students who stay in Nova Scotia after graduation from a benchmark of 5% to 10% by 2024. In fact, this goal was achieved in 2018 and maintained in 2019 at levels just under 13%. Due to restrictions imposed by COVID-19 the share fell to 7.1% in 2020, but as Nova Scotia continues to emerge from the pandemic's shadow, we should quickly get back to pre-pandemic levels. The now permanent Atlantic Immigration Program is a unique advantage for our city and region to attract and retain immigrants and international students and will continue to be boon for population growth.

Halifax serves as a healthcare hub for the Atlantic region. The sector includes a growing life sciences cluster with major research centres, leading hospitals, and an innovative post-secondary sector that supports R&D and commercialization. Halifax is home to Dalhousie University, the IWK Health Centre, the Queen Elizabeth Health Sciences Centre, the Life Sciences Research Institute, the Brain Repair Centre, and the Canadian Centre for Vaccinology, among other notable life science centres.

Excellent Rural, Suburban and Urban Lifestyle

Halifax is no longer Canada's best kept secret and offers many compelling reasons for people across the world to call our city home. This has become more evident during the global pandemic as we welcomed over 9,200 new residents from July 2020 to July 2021, the third-highest annual increase in Halifax's history.

Halifax offers the amenities and opportunities of a modern, urban centre combined with rural charm, natural beauty, and an abundance of recreational opportunities. Residents enjoy life and work in more than 200 rural, urban, and suburban communities that boast a variety of businesses, dining, nightlife, and arts and entertainment options.

Halifax's excellent quality of life continues to be a considerable advantage and key driver of attracting new residents, businesses, and visitors. Now is time to capitalize on this advantage and continue building momentum to grow our economy.

Municipal Owned Parks and Recreation Assets

- 21 ice surfaces
- 7 indoor pools
- 4 outdoor pools
- 7 spray pads
- 2 outdoor competition running tracks
- 89 water assets in parks (floating docks, wharves, boat launches)
- 2 greenhouse complexes
- 1,212 beds, baskets, and planters
- 921 parks
- 19 supervised beaches
- 370 courts
- 7 all-weather fields
- 17 bike parks
- 16 skate parks
- 4 lawn bowling greens
- 250 public art installations
- 13 outdoor fitness sites
- 406 playgrounds
- 335 sports/ball fields
- 287 km of trails within parks

Strategic Goals

The 2022-27 economic strategy includes three five-year strategic goals, each with between 4-9 objectives. A 1-to-2-year action plan summarizes what needs to be done to achieve each objective, the lead organization(s), and the outcome measures.

Strategic Goals:

1. Promote and Maximize Inclusive and Sustainable Growth
2. Attract, Retain, and Develop Talent
3. Make Halifax a Better Place to Live and Work

Promote and Maximize Inclusive and Sustainable Growth

Grow GDP to \$25 billion by 2027

What is clear from the previous strategy is that fast-paced economic growth is not only possible, but it is a reality for Halifax. The city has achieved strong annual population and GDP growth and has become more vibrant than many believed possible. However, in Halifax we are not interested in growth for growth’s sake. Some residents and communities have been left behind as the economy blazed forward. The pandemic also has exacerbated inequality and continues to impact our businesses and residents. Both will need ongoing support to recover, grow, and succeed in the near and long term.

This goal focuses on making it easier to do business in Halifax and capitalizing on the city’s best opportunities for inclusive growth for all businesses and residents. Actions are aimed at continuing to support economic recovery from COVID-19; improving regulatory and service efficiency; making it easier to start and grow a business; helping companies compete here and abroad; supporting investment in innovation; and finding the best way to leverage Halifax’s competitive advantages and growth opportunities. This strategy also puts greater emphasis on addressing the need for more affordable housing options.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	MEASUREMENT
1.1 COVID-19: continue to support economic recovery and restore confidence post-pandemic.	Through tools, including the <i>Halifax Index</i> and the <i>Halifax Economic Dashboard</i> , track metrics for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GDP growth • Household income, purchasing power, and debt • Retail sales • Consumer and business confidence • Business opinions on local business climate and regulatory environment • Residential and non-residential investment • Office and industrial space rental costs and vacancy rates • Halifax Gateway traffic • Tourist visits • Startup numbers, growth, employment, and funding • Housing starts and sale prices • Apartment rents and vacancy rates • Labour, income, and other statistics for Indigenous and African Nova Scotian residents
1.2 Make Halifax an easier place to do business.	
1.3 Work nationally and internationally to attract investment and trade.	
1.4 Accelerate innovation and entrepreneurship.	
1.5 Pursue and maximize the economic impact and social benefits of major projects.	
1.6 Increase housing stock.	
1.7 Advance holistic planning in urban, suburban, and rural areas.	
1.8 Grow Indigenous and African Nova Scotian economic prosperity.	
1.9 Provide research and actionable insight needed to realize our vision.	

Attract, Retain, and Develop Talent

Increase population to 525,000 and grow the labour force to 310,000 by 2027

Talent is the foundation of Halifax’s growth and success. The city has benefitted immensely from our ability to train and retain the next generation of workers and attract new skilled talent.

Having a highly skilled workforce is not only critical to existing businesses but also those that want to grow in Halifax. We must continue to encourage labour force attachment and participation in the economy. As newcomers continue to flock to the city and Halifax’s youth graduate from its educational institutions, it only makes sense to find the most productive ways to develop their skills and careers.

This goal focuses on making sure we have the diverse, deep, and inclusive workforce needed to fuel business and economic growth now and in the future. Actions focus on attracting, retaining, and developing talent; bridging the gap between industry, education, and talent; and removing systemic barriers to employment.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	MEASUREMENT
2.1 Attract talent to Halifax from across Canada and around the world.	Through tools, including the <i>Halifax Index</i> and the <i>Halifax Economic Dashboard</i> , track metrics for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population growth • Population demographics • Migration • Labour force growth • Labour force characteristics (employment, participation, etc.) • Post-secondary enrolment, including international students • P-12 educational attainment • Labour, income, and other statistics for Indigenous and African Nova Scotian residents
2.2 Welcome immigrants and connect them to best-in-class settlement services.	
2.3 Increase workforce attachment and combat systemic barriers.	
2.4 Prepare business to meet future of work needs.	

Make Halifax a Better Place to Live and Work

Increase residents’ well-being on a continuous basis (to be benchmarked in year one)

The ultimate objective of economic development is to make people’s lives better and ensure residents have equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from a city’s prosperity and quality of life. While population and GDP growth are critical to Halifax’s success so are improved measures of well-being for our residents.

Halifax continues to be a great place to live and work according to several quality-of-life measures including public transit, sense of community, and environmental sustainability. However, we must continue to invest in cultural and recreational amenities; safe, inclusive, resilient, and complete communities; family-friendly policies and services; and active and efficient transportation options.

This goal focuses on improving and highlighting our quality of life to attract and retain residents, workers, and visitors. Actions focus on increasing Halifax’s environmental sustainability and resiliency; improving cultural assets, mobility, and inclusiveness; and promoting a strong, clear, and consistent message about Halifax’s excellent quality of life.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	MEASUREMENT
3.1 Increase Halifax’s environmental sustainability and resiliency.	Through tools, including the <i>Halifax Index</i> and the <i>Halifax Economic Dashboard</i> , track metrics for:
3.2 Increase access to arts, culture, recreation, and natural assets in Halifax.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents’ sense of well-being • Business sentiments regarding quality-of-life factors
3.3 Make it easier for people and goods to move throughout Halifax and the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resident (urban, suburban, and rural) sentiments regarding quality-of-life factors • Costs of living (e.g., housing, childcare, food, transportation, etc.)
3.4 Strengthen the dynamism of our downtowns, main streets, and rural centres.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste diversion • Share of energy supply from renewable sources • Workplace safety

Implementation and Engagement

Halifax's 2022-27 economic strategy focuses on priorities, actions, and targets that are within the mandate of the Halifax Regional Municipality and Halifax Partnership and can be delivered in collaboration with partners. The strategy will inform and shape municipal decision-making and activity over the next five years and guide the activities of Halifax Partnership and other economic development and business agencies. It will also influence and align key players and partners to support Halifax's inclusive economic growth.

An action plan outlines the goals, objectives, years 1 to 2 actions, lead organization(s), and how success will be measured. Complex initiatives will have their own implementation plans developed by lead organizations with support from partners, and some activities will require additional financial and human resources from public and private sector partners.

Business leaders and all orders of government agree that there is strength in partnership and working together to achieve our goals. For economic development strategies to work, our city and province need to be strategically aligned, understanding that there is a role for everyone to play. We will build on progress by working as a team to grow the economies of Halifax and Nova Scotia. For a look at who is involved, see Appendix 1.

Engaging the broader community is also critical to success. Halifax Partnership and the Halifax Regional Municipality will also work closely with partners to build relationships with and engage diverse groups and communities across the municipality in evolving and implementing the strategy.

Halifax Partnership will host an annual Inclusive Economic Development Summit to report on progress and engage the community in advancing inclusive economic growth.

Adapting the Economic Strategy

Going forward, this strategy will need to be flexible enough to accommodate change. That is why it has a rolling framework. While the high-level elements from the vision to the goals and objectives will remain constant, the actions can be adapted as needed to reflect lessons learned and new considerations and circumstances.

Governance

Halifax Partnership Board of Directors

Halifax Partnership's Board of Directors will provide oversight and strategic guidance, keeping the strategy focused and ensuring coordination.

Halifax Regional Council and Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee

The Mayor and members of Halifax Regional Council and the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee will provide oversight and ensure the strategy's goals are aligned with the municipality's programs and economic priorities.

Implementation Roles

Halifax Partnership

Halifax Partnership will be the coordinating body responsible for tracking and monitoring progress against goals and objectives. The Partnership will also lead many of the actions defined in the strategy in collaboration with its private, public, post-secondary, and community partners. It will prepare an annual progress report and present findings at an annual economic summit.

The Halifax Regional Municipality

The Halifax Regional Municipality will use the economic strategy as a guide for making decisions and leading initiatives in support of the goals and objectives as outlined in the implementation plan. The municipality is the lead on many of the actions defined in the strategy.

Contributors and Partners

The Halifax Regional Municipality and Halifax Partnership will engage with a variety of partners to implement the plan. These include:

- Private Sector
- Provincial Government
- Crown Corporations
- Federal Government
- Municipal Government
- Regional Enterprise Networks
- Business Improvement Districts, Chambers of Commerce, and other business and industry associations
- Tourism Agencies
- Universities, Nova Scotia Community College, and private colleges
- Communities at risk of exclusion / equity seeking groups
- Not-for-Profit Sector
- Arts and Culture Sector

See Appendix 1 for a detailed overview of economic players and contributors.

Measurement

The Halifax Index

The *Halifax Index* was launched in 2012 to measure Halifax's economic and community progress. It is a tool for tracking progress on Halifax's economic strategy and serves as an annual call to action on key challenges and economic opportunities. The Halifax Index, as well as the Partnership's Halifax Economic Dashboard, will measure and report on progress against the 2022-27 economic strategy, provide insight on new challenges and opportunities, and act as a tool for course correction and adjustment as needed. The Halifax Partnership releases the *Halifax Index* publicly each spring.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Economic Players and Contributors

PRIVATE SECTOR

The private sector drives economic growth. It is the primary source of all economic activity, generating jobs and income, exports, and tax revenues. A robust and growing private sector provides the economic capacity to afford a high quality of life, including public and non-profit services. In addition to building the province's productive capacity, the private sector also makes investments that enhance quality of life.

Over 100 private sector companies invest in Halifax Partnership to support economic development and growth in Halifax. Partnership Investors, industry associations, and business leaders from across the municipality were actively engaged in developing this strategy. Continued – and increased – private sector engagement and investment in economic growth will be key to successfully implementing the strategy and achieving the vision.

BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS

Business Associations

Halifax's business community is supported by a variety of industry, business, and professional associations, including many located in suburban and rural communities across the municipality. Halifax Partnership works closely with the Halifax Chamber of Commerce, BBI, and other business and industry associations to support the ongoing growth and development of Halifax's businesses, workforce, and economy.

Business Improvement Districts

There are nine Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) in Halifax: Downtown Dartmouth; Main Street Dartmouth; Spring Garden Road; Downtown Halifax; Quinpool Road; North End; Spryfield; Sackville and Porters Lake. The BIDs are special assessment districts where businesses work together to promote and improve the economic vitality of the area. In Halifax, BIDs work closely with elected officials and municipal staff and partner organizations to voice their collective concerns, monitor business regulations, and obtain support for their business development projects.

TOURISM ORGANIZATIONS

Discover Halifax

Discover Halifax is the dedicated tourism marketing organization for Halifax and is a partnership of the Hotel Association of Nova Scotia, the Halifax Region, and Tourism Nova Scotia. Halifax has tremendous potential for economic growth through tourism. Pre-pandemic, Halifax typically welcomed 5.3 million overnight stays each year and visitors spent an estimated \$1.3 billion a year. Additionally, approximately 34,000 people worked in tourism at 4,000 businesses throughout Halifax that all contribute to the local economy.

Tourism Nova Scotia

As a division of the Nova Scotia Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage, Tourism Nova Scotia works with communities and industry to attract visitors to the province and increase tourism revenues through experience and sector development, business coaching, marketing, and visitor servicing.

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT AND CROWN CORPORATIONS

Provincial Departments

The departments of Economic Development; Labour, Skills, and Immigration; Infrastructure and Housing; Education and Early Childhood Development; and Municipal Affairs and Housing all play important roles in growing Halifax's economy – from funding economic development activities, to attracting and retaining talent, to supporting business growth. The provincial government also sets the legislative framework in which the Halifax Regional Municipality operates.

Nova Scotia Business Inc. (NSBI)

NSBI is the province's business development agency responsible for attracting global investment to the province and working with Nova Scotia companies to increase exports. NSBI and Halifax Partnership work closely together to attract new investment and help existing companies grow their operations.

Events East

Events East operates, maintains, and manages the activities of the Halifax Convention Centre, Ticket Atlantic and the Scotiabank Centre to promote and develop economic development, tourism and industry in the province and the municipality.

Develop Nova Scotia

Develop Nova Scotia is a provincial crown corporation responsible for leading the sustainable development of economic and social infrastructure to advance inclusive economic growth in Nova Scotia, including delivering internet to an additional 90K homes and businesses in Nova Scotia. It has a province-wide mandate to capitalize on Nova Scotia's wealth of waterfront assets, and ensure residents, visitors and entrepreneurs have access to the spaces in a well-planned and inclusive manner.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The federal government recognizes the significant role cities play in growing Canada's economy and invests in cities to accelerate growth. Global Affairs Canada provides funding to support foreign direct investment in Halifax, while Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada funds programs such as the Partnership's National Connector Program. The Partnership also works with Invest in Canada, ACOA and other federal partners to advance economic development in the region.

Through the Investing in Canada Plan, launched in 2016, the Government of Canada committed more than \$180 billion over 12 years for infrastructure that benefits Canadians through bilateral agreements with provinces and territories – for public transit, green infrastructure, and community, cultural and recreational infrastructure. Recent federal government investments in Halifax include \$112 million to expand the Ragged Lake Transit Centre and start the electrification of the Halifax transit fleet and \$13 million for the Rapid Housing Initiative to create affordable homes.

TRANSPORTATION AND LOGISTICS

Halifax Port Authority

The Halifax Port Authority is a strategic port manager, with a mission to connect with global markets to create value for customers, partners, visitors, and community. The Port Authority takes a leadership role in developing business for the Port of Halifax in collaboration with its partners. The Port of Halifax is a deep, ice-free port with Super Post-Panamax vessel handling capabilities and the deepest container berths on the East Coast of North America. The Port of Halifax connects trade to 150 countries and many of the world's leading shipping lines.

Port of Sheet Harbour

Located on the Eastern Seaboard and operated by the Halifax Port Authority, the Port of Sheet Harbour is a deep-water terminal with a 152-metre wharf and the capability of handling vessels up to 214 metres. It is ideal for the storage and assembly of wind components. This wind logistics and transshipment park is capable of handling multiple configurations of break bulk and special project cargo. It is uniquely positioned with easy access to major highways, meaning cargo can be delivered anywhere in North America, by truck or vessel.

PSA Halifax

PSA Halifax offers container terminal services in Halifax and is owned and operated by PSA International. PSA Halifax offers Super Post Panamax cranes that service the largest ships (16,000TEU) of any port in Canada with no effective navigational or nautical restrictions and at the same time deliver for the smaller coastal connectors that provide a network throughout Eastern Canada and into USA.

Ceres Halifax Inc.

Ceres Halifax Inc. offers container terminal services at the Fairview Cove Container Terminal in Halifax. The terminal has 11,000 feet of on-dock, double-stack rail and four gantry cranes, including three super post-Panamax cranes, and (650,000 TEU) throughput capacity.

Halifax Stanfield International Airport Authority

Halifax International Airport Authority (HIAA) is a locally controlled, non-share capital corporation which manages Halifax Stanfield International Airport. Halifax Stanfield offers the largest choice of direct destinations and only US preclearance in Atlantic Canada, as well as ample cargo handling capacity and easy transport of perishable and non-perishable products worldwide. Facilities include a 40,000 square foot multi-tenant cargo facility with direct airside access that includes a 7,000 square foot temperature-controlled space. Consistently ranked among the best airports in the world, Halifax Stanfield is a recognized innovator in the global airport industry.

CN

CN is a leading North American transportation and logistics company. CN provides daily cargo rail service to central Canada and the US Midwest across its 19,600- mile network, transporting goods for a wide range of business sectors, ranging from resource products to manufactured products to consumer goods. CN offers direct, on-dock rail service at the Port of Halifax, and double-stack trains move daily, seven days a week from the Port of Halifax to CN's rail terminals in Toronto, Montreal, and Chicago. The CN owned Autoport located in Halifax is one of North America's largest vehicle processing and transshipment facilities.

Atlantic Gateway - Halifax Logistics Park

The Atlantic Gateway-Halifax Logistics Park is located next to five 100-series highways and 10–15 minutes from downtown Halifax, Halifax International Airport, and the Port of Halifax. The park is a multi-phased real estate development project dedicated to logistics and warehousing activity (distribution, transload, warehouse, cold storage, etc.) which supports the transportation sector with direct road links to the rest of Canada and North America and streamlined trucking regulations.

POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

Halifax's post-secondary education sector continues to produce a highly educated workforce and is becoming increasingly diverse. It consists of Halifax's seven universities – Dalhousie University, Saint Mary's University, University of Kings College, Mount Saint Vincent University, the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, the Atlantic School of Theology, and Université Sainte-Anne – and Nova Scotia Community College's three Halifax campuses.

COMMUNITIES AT RISK OF EXCLUSION / EQUITY SEEKING GROUPS

Communities at risk of exclusion and underrepresented and equity seeking groups include African Nova Scotian communities, urban Indigenous peoples, new immigrants, and persons living with disability. These communities and groups have a greater risk of being excluded from educational and economic growth opportunities and having less access to health, education, housing, income, employment, and leisure activities. Also, these communities and groups tend to be negatively affected by inadequate social participation and lack of cultural and educational capital to attain acceptable standards of well-being. The economic disadvantages experienced at the individual, community, and societal levels also limits these communities and groups from attaining full and meaningful economic participation which impacts their quality of life.

Halifax Partnership and the Halifax Regional Municipality are partnering with underrepresented and equity seeking groups and communities, such as the African Nova Scotia Road to Economic Prosperity Advisory Committee, to increase economic development, growth, and prosperity for all residents of Halifax.

NOT-FOR-PROFIT SECTOR

The not-for-profit sector is a significant contributor to the economies and culture of Halifax and Nova Scotia. It employs thousands of Nova Scotians and helps build vibrant, sustainable, and welcoming communities. Halifax Partnership and the Halifax Regional Municipality work with many not-for-profit partners such as the United Way to support community development and well-being for all residents.

ARTS AND CULTURE SECTOR

Arts, culture, and recreation are at the heart of any vibrant community. Arts and culture organizations are both employers of artists and producers of art and culture that contribute to our city's diversity and quality of life. A strong creative community and a variety of recreational facilities and activities are important in promoting a healthy and enjoyable lifestyle. They make Halifax an attractive place to live and work.

Appendix 2: Alignment Matrix

5-Year Strategic Goals	5-Year Objectives	African Nova Scotian Prosperity Action Plan	Discover Halifax, Integrated Tourism Master Plan	Halifax Chamber of Commerce 2019-2023 Strategic Plan	Halifax Economic Response and Recovery Plan	HRM Anti-Black Racism Framework	HRM Centre Plan	HRM Green Network Plan	HRM Halifax: Acting on Climate Action Plan Together	HRM Integrated Mobility Plan	HRM Regional Plan	HRM Strategic Priorities Plan 2021-25	Halifax partnership 2019-22 Strategic Plan	Building Poverty Solutions: Ideas for Action Report	Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Commission Report	Provincial Government Mandate Letters	Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report
<p>Promote and Maximize Inclusive and Sustainable Growth</p> <p><i>Grow GDP to \$25 Billion by 2027</i></p>	1. COVID-19: continue to support economic recovery and restore confidence post-pandemic.		X		X							X				X	
	2. Make Halifax an easier place to do business.			X			X				X	X	X			X	
	3. Work nationally and internationally to attract investment and trade.			X					X			X	X			X	
	4. Accelerate innovation and entrepreneurship.								X			X	X			X	
	5. Pursue and maximize the economic impact and social benefits of major projects.	X						X	X	X	X	X					
	6. Increase housing stock.						X				X	X		X	X	X	
	7. Advance holistic planning in urban, suburban, and rural areas.						X	X	X	X	X	X					
	8. Grow Indigenous and African Nova Scotian economic prosperity.	X					X						X			X	X
	9. Provide research and actionable insight needed to realize our vision.	X	X					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X

5-Year Strategic Goals	5-Year Objectives	African Nova Scotian Prosperity Action Plan	Discover Halifax, Integrated Tourism Master Plan	Halifax Chamber of Commerce 2019-2023 Strategic Plan	Halifax Economic Response and Recovery Plan	HRM Anti-Black Racism Framework	HRM Centre Plan	HRM Green Network Plan	HRM Halifax: Acting on Climate Action Plan Together	HRM Integrated Mobility Plan	HRM Regional Plan	HRM Strategic Priorities Plan 2021-25	Halifax partnership 2019-22 Strategic Plan	Building Poverty Solutions: Ideas for Action Report	Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Commission Report	Provincial Government Mandate Letters	Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report
Attract, Retain, and Develop Talent <i>Increase population to 525,000 and grow the labour force to 310,000 by 2027</i>	10. Attract talent to Halifax from across Canada and around the world.	X		X								X	X			X	
	11. Welcome immigrants and connect them to best-in-class settlement services.			X								X	X			X	
	12. Increase workforce attachment and combat systemic barriers.	X		X		X							X			X	
	13. Prepare business to meet future of work needs.	X		X		X						X	X			X	
Make Halifax a Better Place to Live and Work <i>Continuously increase Halifax's wellbeing</i>	14. Increase Halifax's environmental sustainability and resiliency.							X	X	X	X	X	X				
	15. Increase access to arts, culture, recreation, and natural assets in Halifax.		X													X	
	16. Make it easier for people and goods to move throughout Halifax and the region.						X	X	X	X	X					X	
	17. Strengthen the dynamism of our downtowns, main streets, and rural centres.		X				X	X	X	X	X	X					

Appendix 3: Working Groups and Vision Contributors

Attainable Housing Working Group:

Co-Chairs:

- Cory Bell, President & CEO, Lindsay Construction
- Ian Munro, Chief Economist, Halifax Partnership

Members:

- Chelsea Berriman-Saulnier, Community Advisor, Halifax Regional Municipality
- Roger Boutilier, CEO, Nova Scotia Association of Realtors
- Jessica Bradley, Special Assistant to Mayor Savage, Halifax Regional Municipality
- Jason Brunt, President, Clayton Developments
- Kelly Denty, Executive Director, Planning and Development, Halifax Regional Municipality
- Matthew Honsberger, Owner/Partner, Royal LePage Atlantic
- Jeremy Jackson, Vice President, Marketing, Killam Apartment REIT
- Louis Lawen, President & CEO, Lawen Group
- Eric Lucic, Director, Regional Planning, Halifax Regional Municipality
- Ron Lovett, President, Founder & Chief Community Officer, VIDA Living
- Wendy Luther, President & CEO, Halifax Partnership
- Sara Napier, President & CEO, United Way Halifax
- Tim Richardson, Operations Manager, Jonas Software
- Rustum Southwell, CEO, Black Business Initiative (BBI)

Green Economy Working Group

Co-Chairs:

- Winston Morton, Chief Technology Officer, SimpTek Technologies Inc.
- Miriam Zitner, Independent Consultant

Members:

- Hari Balasubramanian, Founding Managing Partner, EcoAdvisors
- Sarah Buckle, Executive Director & Chief Climate Investment Officer, EfficiencyOne
- Shawn Connell, Director of Customer Solutions, Nova Scotia Power
- Chuck Faulkner, Director, Engineering & Planning, EfficiencyOne
- Alain Joseph, Director, Applied Research, NSCC
- Ramzi Kawar, Director, Greening and Sustainable Business Practices, NS Department of Infrastructure and Housing
- Peter Porteous, VP Business Development, Steele Auto
- Shaune MacKinlay, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office, Halifax Regional Municipality
- Waye Mason, Councillor, Halifax South Downtown, Halifax Regional Municipality
- Shannon Miedema, Energy & Environment Program Manager, Halifax Regional Municipality
- Scott Skinner, President & CEO, Clean Nova Scotia
- Wendy Luther, President & CEO, Halifax Partnership

Transportation Working Group:

Co-chairs:

- Joyce Carter, President & CEO, Halifax International Airport Authority
- Captain Allan Gray, President & CEO, Port of Halifax

Members:

- Jennifer Angel, President & CEO, Develop Nova Scotia
- Donna Alteen, President, Time + Space Media
- Ryan Burrowes, Founder & CEO, Warehouse Transport Group
- Peter Duncan, Manager, Infrastructure Planning, Halifax Regional Municipality
- Tiffany Edwards, Manager Public & Government Affairs - Eastern Canada, CN
- Nancy Phillips, Vice President, Investment & International Partnerships, Halifax Partnership
- Tim Robbins, Market Vice President, Commercial Banking, CIBC

Vision Contributors:

- Donna Alteen, President, Time + Space Media
- Chris Atwood, Executive Director, CBDC Bluewater
- Cory Bell, President & CEO, Lindsay Construction
- Rob Carruthers, Partner, Deloitte, Chair, Halifax Partnership Board of Directors
- Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer, Halifax Regional Municipality
- Matt Hebb, Vice-President, Government and Global Relations, Dalhousie University
- Ross Jefferson, President & CEO, Discover Halifax
- Tracey Jones-Grant, Diversity Manager, Halifax Regional Municipality
- Wendy Luther, President & CEO, Halifax Partnership
- Jane McKay-Nesbitt, Chair, Women's Advisory Committee of Halifax
- Winston Morton, Chief Technology Officer, SimpTek Technologies
- Sara Napier, President & CEO, United Way Halifax
- Pat Sullivan, President & CEO, Halifax Chamber of Commerce
- Jennifer Watts, CEO, ISANS
- Jake Whalen, Senior Advisor, Economic Policy & Development, Halifax Regional Municipality
- Capt(N) Sean Williams, Base Commander, CFB Halifax

Glossary of Terms

- **African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity Action Plan:** Launched in January 2021, the African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity Action Plan (REPAP) is a five-year plan developed and owned by the African Nova Scotian (ANS) community to advance economic development and community priorities in collaboration with the Halifax Regional Municipality, Halifax Partnership, and other private, public, and community partners.
- **APEC Major Projects Inventory (MPI):** APEC produces an annual project-by-project inventory of the major investment activity ongoing and proposed for Atlantic Canada. A major project is defined as any capital project valued at \$25 million or more (\$10 million or more in Prince Edward Island) that adds to the capital stock of the region.
- **Atlantic Provinces Economic Council (APEC):** APEC is an independent, non-partisan research and educational institution formed to promote the economic development of the Atlantic region of Canada.
- **Building Poverty Solutions Ideas for Action Report:** Led by United Way Halifax in collaboration with HRM, the *Building Poverty Solutions: Ideas for Action Report* (2018) aimed to provide a comprehensive overview of poverty in the Halifax region. It included 129 ideas for action.
- **Business Confidence Survey:** Halifax Partnership's Business Confidence Survey, conducted by Narrative Research, gathers views on Halifax's economy from business owners. The Business Confidence Index (BCI) is calculated on a scale from -100 to +100 based on questions that cover the past, current, and future performance of Halifax's economy as well as its performance relative to other cities.
- **Carbon Pricing:** The Government of Canada introduced a price on carbon pollution across Canada in 2019 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and drive innovation. Canada's approach is flexible: any province or territory can design its own pricing system tailored to local needs or can choose the federal pricing system.
- **Centre Plan:** HRM's Centre Plan is a planning process for the Regional Centre, including Peninsula Halifax and Dartmouth inside the Circumferential Highway. The Centre Plan was developed in two phases, Package A - approved by Council in September 2019, and Package B approved by Regional Council in October 2021.
- **City Matters Survey:** Halifax Partnership commissions an annual City Matters Survey, conducted by MQO Research. It asks Halifax residents to rate the city on a number of quality-of-life indicators.
- **Cogswell District Project:** The Cogswell District project is the biggest city-building project in the history of Halifax. The HRM-led project will convert 16 acres of road infrastructure into a mixed-use neighborhood, extending the entrance of the downtown northwards and reuniting communities separated by the interchange lands. The construction phase of the project is expected to take up to four years to complete.
- **Framework for Anti-Black Racism Strategy Action Plan:** HRM is committed to addressing anti-Black racism in its workplaces and communities. In 2020, the Anti-Black Racism Steering Committee was formed to develop and implement an action plan. In June 2021, HRM Regional Council approved the anti-Black racism framework, which will guide the development of the strategy and action plan.
- **Gross Domestic Product (GDP):** GDP is the market value of all finished goods and services produced within a region in a given period.
- **HalifACT: Acting on Climate Together:** In June 2020, Halifax Regional Council unanimously adopted *HalifACT*, a community response to the climate crisis, a plan for a healthy and resilient future, and a commitment to a net-zero community by 2050.
- **Halifax Connector Program:** The Connector Program is Halifax Partnership's networking program that connects newcomers and international and local graduates to employers and community leaders in Halifax so they can build a solid network, join the workforce, and settle successfully in our community.

- **Halifax Economic Growth Plan 2016-21:** Halifax’s five-year economic strategy for 2016-2021 developed and implemented by the Halifax Partnership in collaboration with the Halifax Regional Municipality and private, public, post-secondary, and community partners.
- **Halifax Green Network Plan (HGPN):** The Halifax Green Network Plan approved in 2018 by Halifax Regional Council describes an interconnected open space system for the municipality, highlights ecosystem functions and benefits, and outlines strategies to manage open space.
- **Halifax Index:** Halifax Partnership releases an annual Halifax Index to report on the city’s economic and community progress. It is a tool for tracking progress on the strategy and serves as an annual call to action on key challenges and economic opportunities.
- **Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM):** For the purposes of this economic plan, HRM refers to Halifax’s municipal government. Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) is the legal name for Halifax. The regional municipality consists of four former municipalities that were amalgamated in 1996: Halifax, Dartmouth, Bedford, and the Municipality of Halifax County. The regional municipality was rebranded in 2014 and is now called Halifax.
- **HRM 2021-25 Strategic Priorities Plan:** The Strategic Priorities Plan reflects the municipality’s vision, mission, and values, and establishes key areas of focus now and into the future.
- **HRM Resident Survey:** HRM’s resident survey gathers information from a diverse range of Halifax residents about their priorities, service experience, and expectations. The results of the survey guide HRM’s strategic and business planning and budgeting decisions and provide Regional Council and administration with valuable insight into what matters most to residents. The *2021 Resident Survey* was conducted in September 2021.
- **Inclusive Economic Growth:** Inclusive growth is economic growth that is distributed fairly across society and creates opportunities for all. It includes economic development planning and practice driven by values of equity, transparency, sustainability, and community engagement.
- **Integrated Mobility Plan:** The Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP) guides HRM’s investment in active transportation, transit, transportation demand management, goods movement, and the roadway network in Halifax. The vision of the IMP is to create connected, healthy, affordable, and sustainable travel options.
- **Integrated Tourism Master Plan:** Led by Discover Halifax, the *Halifax Regional Integrated Tourism Master Plan* (ITMP) launched in March 2021 provides a vision for tourism in Halifax. The plan helps drive and prioritize the efforts and investments that will lead to recovery and future sustainable economic growth from the region’s tourism economy.
- **Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Commission:** In November 2020, the Province of Nova Scotia established the Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Commission (NSAHC) to examine the current state of housing and recommend new ideas, partnerships, efficiencies, and actions to ensure better affordable housing options and quality of life for all. The commission released its summary report in spring 2021.
- **Nova Scotia Cap-and-trade Program:** Nova Scotia’s cap-and-trade program started in January 2019 and sets annual caps that limit how many tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions are allowed from certain activities in the province each year.
- **ONE Nova Scotia:** ONE Nova Scotia is a group of local, economic-focused representatives, individuals, and academics that formed at the Government of Nova Scotia’s request in 2016 to develop a 10-year plan to help achieve the ambitious goals set out in the report prepared by the Nova Scotia Commission on Building Our New Economy – commonly known as the Ivany Report.
- **R&D:** Research and development
- **Regional Centre:** The Regional Centre is defined as the urban core of the Halifax Regional Municipality. It is composed of the Halifax Peninsula and area of Dartmouth within the Circumferential Highway on either side of Halifax Harbour. It has a total land area of 33 square kilometres.

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- **Regional Plan:** HRM's *Regional Municipal Planning Strategy* establishes long-range, region-wide planning policies outlining where, when, and how future growth and development in Halifax should take place between now and 2031.
 - **The Conference Board of Canada:** The Conference Board of Canada is an independent, evidence-based, applied research organization in Canada specializing in economic trends, organizational performance, and public policy issues.
 - **Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC):** The Truth and Reconciliation Commission provided those directly or indirectly affected by the legacy of Canada's residential school system with an opportunity to share their stories and experiences. In 2015, the TRC presented the summary of its findings, including 94 calls to action (or recommendations) to further reconciliation between Canadians and Indigenous peoples.

Promote and Maximize Inclusive and Sustainable Growth Grow GDP to \$25 Billion by 2027			
5-Year Objectives	Actions: Years 1 - 2	Lead	Measurement
1.1. COVID-19: continue to support economic recovery and restore confidence post-pandemic.	1. Launch business and consumer confidence campaigns and continue deploying Halifax Partnership programs to help companies fully return to business.	HP	Through tools, including the Halifax Index and the Halifax Economic Dashboard, track metrics for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GDP growth • Household income, purchasing power, and debt • Retail sales • Consumer and business confidence • Business opinions on local business climate and regulatory environment • Residential and non-residential investment • Office and industrial space rents and vacancy rates • Halifax Gateway traffic • Tourist visits • Startup numbers, growth, employment, and funding • Housing starts and sale prices • Apartment rents and vacancy rates • Labour, income, and other statistics for Indigenous and African Nova Scotian residents
	2. Maintain essential services and move HRM business services online.	HRM	
	3. Help prepare businesses for future disruptions.	HP	
1.2. Make Halifax an easier place to do business.	4. Implement three-year commercial tax assessment averaging to mitigate against sudden spikes in property values and assess tiered tax relief and other options for small commercial properties.	HRM	
	5. Continue both HRM's Performance Excellence Program and Regulatory / Policy Modernization processes to improve service to business and support economic development.	HRM	
	6. Seek legislative changes from the Province as required to grow Halifax's economy.	HRM	
	7. Continue Halifax Partnership's Business Retention, Expansion and Aftercare Program (SmartBusiness) to connect businesses in Halifax with the services and programs they need.	HP	
	8. Establish full-time resources dedicated to economic development and tourism in rural HRM.	HP	
1.3. Work nationally and internationally to attract investment and trade.	9. Continue the Sell Halifax Program with the Mayor that includes presentations and sales meetings in key markets.	HP	
	10. Leverage regional, national, and international partnerships to increase trade and investment.	HP/HRM	
	11. Implement Halifax's Green Economy Investment Attraction Strategy with NSBI and others.	HP	
	12. Strengthen and raise awareness of the Halifax Gateway.	HP	
1.4. Accelerate innovation and entrepreneurship.	13. Manage the Halifax Innovation Outpost and facilitate Outpost clients' access to programs and services.	HP	
	14. Develop prototypes to tackle the climate change emergency and address other complex social issues.	HP/HRM	

Promote and Maximize Inclusive and Sustainable Growth Grow GDP to \$25 Billion by 2027			
5-Year Objectives	Actions: Years 1 - 2	Lead	Measurement
	15. Help create piloting opportunities and joint ventures between established businesses/organizations and startups/scaleups.	HP	
	16. Work with the Port and its PIER initiative to address transportation and logistics issues in Halifax.	HRM	
	17. Leverage federal and private-sector funding to bolster Outpost work.	HP	
1.5. Pursue and maximize the economic impact and social benefits of major projects.	18. Begin constructing the Cogswell District and ensure socio-economic benefits to the surrounding community.	HRM	
	19. Redevelop the Windsor Street Exchange.	HRM	
	20. Secure federal funding to undertake key Infrastructure projects.	HRM	
1.6. Increase housing stock.	21. Create a public dashboard that tracks housing supply key performance indicators.	HP/HRM	
	22. Develop a housing strategy that outlines HRM's role in housing, identifies immediate regulatory reforms to grow the supply of market housing, and supports the Province of Nova Scotia in its delivery of shelters, supportive housing, subsidized housing, and long-term care for seniors.	HRM	
	23. Convene HRM/HP/private sector working groups to exchange information and recommend policy changes to accelerate the supply of housing.	HP/HRM	
	24. Assess potential municipal/provincial policy changes to encourage housing affordability and first-time home ownership.	HP/HRM	
	25. Identify and implement internal process changes to quicken housing approvals and starts.	HRM	
	26. Consider establishing a municipal housing corporation or a community land trust to create affordable housing in Halifax.	HRM	
1.7. Advance holistic planning in urban, suburban, and rural areas.	27. Ensure an adequate supply of industrial lands for near- and long-term growth.	HRM	
	28. Review the Regional Plan that outlines the vision, principles and long-range policies guiding future growth throughout the municipality.	HRM	
	29. Amend municipal planning documents and develop a short-term rental registration by-law which will include a focus on reducing the impact of short-term rentals on the long-term rental market.	HRM	
	30. Continue the long-term modernization of HRM land use by-laws, including the completion of revised suburban and rural planning strategies.	HRM	

Promote and Maximize Inclusive and Sustainable Growth Grow GDP to \$25 Billion by 2027			
5-Year Objectives	Actions: Years 1 - 2	Lead	Measurement
	31. Develop and implement a management framework for residents and businesses in rural Halifax.	HRM	
1.8. Grow Indigenous and African Nova Scotian economic prosperity.	32. Consider and, where possible, incorporate community benefits as part of the development approval process in HRM communities.	HP/HRM	
	33. Host the North American Indigenous Games.	HRM	
	34. Support the development of Wije'winen, the reimagined Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre.	HRM	
	35. Work with Millbrook, Acadia, Sipekne'katik First Nation and Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre on joint economic development priorities.	HP/HRM	
	36. Implement the ANS Road to Economic Prosperity Action Plan to advance ANS community and economic development priorities.	HP/HRM	
1.9. Provide research and actionable insight needed to realize our vision.	37. Provide the most up-to-date economic information on Halifax to help business locate, stay, and grow in Halifax.	HP	
	38. Monitor and communicate the economic strategy's progress to stakeholders and adapt actions as required.	HP	
	39. Develop and publish the Halifax Index - a single information source of annual data on the state of Halifax's economic and community progress.	HP	
	40. Provide companies with industry-specific salary and labour market information.	HP	

2. Attract, Retain, and Develop Talent			
Increase population to 525,000 and grow the labour force to 310,000 by 2027			
5-Year Objective	Actions: Years 1 - 2	Lead	Measurement
2.1. Attract talent to Halifax from across Canada and around the world.	41. Help employers recruit international talent through the Atlantic Immigration Program, Global Talent Strategy, and other federal initiatives.	HP	Through tools, including the Halifax Index and the Halifax Economic Dashboard, track metrics for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population growth • Population demographics • Migration • Labour force growth • Labour force characteristics (employment, participation, etc.) • Post-secondary enrolment, including international students • P-12 educational attainment • Labour, income, and other statistics for Indigenous and African Nova Scotian residents
	42. With industry partners, undertake targeted on-the-ground recruitment efforts in other Canadian and international cities.	HP	
2.2. Welcome immigrants and connect them to best-in-class settlement services.	43. Leverage the Newcomers Canada Network and Electronic Platform to connect Canadian newcomers to jobs in Halifax.	HP	
	44. Review and implement HRM's Immigration Strategy and manage the Local Immigration Partnership to create a welcoming and inclusive community for newcomers.	HRM	
2.3. Increase workforce attachment and combat systemic barriers.	45. Continue the Connector Program that connects local and international graduates to the networks and resources needed to build a career in Halifax.	HP	
	46. Increase enrolment in the ANS and Mi'kmaq/Indigenous streams of the Halifax Connector Program.	HP	
	47. Leverage HRM's Social Value Framework (Procurement Administrative Order - Appendix B) to strengthen workforce and supplier diversity.	HRM	
	48. Establish and seek private sector endorsement of a DEI Charter – one that outlines businesses' commitment and path to creating a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive workforce.	HP	
	49. Connect newcomers, African Nova Scotians/persons of African descent, Mi'kmaq/Indigenous Peoples, youth and persons with disabilities to employment opportunities at HRM.	HRM	
2.4. Prepare business to meet current and future work needs.	50. Determine immediate and future skilled labour market needs and proactively communicate and resolve them with post-secondary education partners.	HP	
	51. Work with the business community to create, identify, and promote experiential learning opportunities for post-secondary students.	HP	
	52. Determine how to attract workers back to the tourism, restaurant, retail, and other sectors hardest hit by the pandemic.	HP	

3. Make Halifax a Better Place to Live and Work			
Continuously increase Halifax's Well-being			
5-Year Objective	Actions: Years 1 - 2	Lead	Measurement
3.1. Increase Halifax's environmental sustainability and resiliency.	53. Establish and seek private sector endorsement of a CEO Charter for Climate Action – one that outlines major employers' commitment to reduce GHG emissions and prepare for climate impacts.	HP	Through tools, including the Halifax Index and the Halifax Economic Dashboard, track metrics for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents' sense of well-being Business sentiments regarding quality-of-life factors Resident (urban, suburban, and rural) sentiments regarding quality-of-life factors Costs of living (housing, childcare, food, transportation, etc.) Waste diversion Share of energy supply from renewable sources Workplace safety
	54. Help business adapt to provincial and federal government carbon pricing programs and policies.	HP	
	55. Work with financial institutions, other levels of government, and other stakeholders to design and launch a program that incentivizes energy retrofits, renewable energy technologies, and climate resilience measures.	HRM	
	56. Continue decarbonizing public transit.	HRM	
	57. With partners, assess and upgrade critical infrastructure to withstand current and future climate impacts.	HRM	
	58. Manage and protect Halifax's ecosystems.	HRM	
	59. Implement HRM's Electric Vehicle Strategy, including working with partners to increase electric vehicle charging infrastructure throughout Halifax.	HRM	
3.2. Increase access to arts, culture, recreation, and natural assets in Halifax.	60. Increase low-income groups' and individuals' access to recreation programs and other municipal services.	HRM	
	61. Ensure HRM's culture investments and commemoration reflect Halifax's geography and diversity.	HRM	
	62. Work with Discover Halifax to implement the Halifax Regional Integrated Tourism Master Plan.	HP/HRM	
3.3. Make it easier for people and goods to move throughout Halifax and the region.	63. Improve parking in the downtown core by identifying the ideal number and placement of on-street and off-street spaces, making signage improvements, and supporting parking validation programs.	HRM	
	64. Continue implementing the Rapid Transit Strategy which includes establishing new ferry routes and developing bus rapid transit service connecting the Regional Centre and suburban growth nodes.	HRM	
	65. Continue implementing Integrated Mobility Plan recommendations to make HRM more connected, sustainable, affordable, and healthy.	HRM	
	66. Prepare a new Halifax Transit service plan to align service with demand, growth, and development.	HRM	

3. Make Halifax a Better Place to Live and Work			
Continuously increase Halifax's Well-being			
5-Year Objective	Actions: Years 1 - 2	Lead	Measurement
3.4. Strengthen the dynamism of our downtowns, main streets, and rural centres.	67. Finalize and implement a plan for the former Memorial Library that maintains Grafton Park as a green space.	HRM	
	68. Implement an entertainment program to reattract people to the downtown.	HRM	
	69. Create and implement a plan to redevelop downtown Dartmouth infrastructure that builds on plans to revitalize Alderney Landing and renovate Alderney Gate Library.	HRM	
	70. Continue working with Halifax Water and Halifax Parks to complete the daylighting of the Sawmill River through downtown Dartmouth to Dartmouth Cove.	HRM	
	71. Develop a 15-year commercial streetscaping and beautification plan (with a priority framework, schedule, and budget) for the Regional Centre, suburban main streets, and village centres.	HRM	
	72. Enhance green spaces and programming opportunities in green spaces in the Regional Centre.	HRM	
	73. Continue with placemaking and beautification efforts.	HRM	