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Item No. 13.1.1
Community Planning and Economic
Development Standing Committee
November 16, 2023

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: **-Original Signed-**

John Traves, K.C., Acting Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: October 31, 2023

SUBJECT: Update – People. Planet, Prosperity: Halifax’s Inclusive Economic Strategy

ORIGIN

Staff initiated.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter 2008, c. 39

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 forward the staff report dated October 30, 2023 to Regional Council for information.

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 is a significant economic development stakeholder in the city. It manages six business and industrial parks; regulates businesses and land development; invests in major infrastructure; establishes and supports nine Business Improvement Districts (BIDs); collaborates with other levels of government and agencies on economic development issues; and provides financial and in-kind support to community organizations and special events.

HRM also provides operational support to three key organizations to further its economic development objectives. These organizations are:

- 1) **Discover Halifax**, which promotes Halifax as a destination for business and leisure travelers.
- 2) **Events East Group**, which operates the Scotiabank Centre, the Halifax Convention Centre, and Ticket Atlantic; and
- 3) **Halifax 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. Partnership deliverables to the municipality are outlined in a service level agreement that is reviewed and amended annually.

DISCUSSION

On March 22, 2022, Regional Council approved [People. Planet. Prosperity. Halifax’s Inclusive Economic Growth Strategy 2022-27](#), as the new five-year economic strategy for Halifax. It includes various actions that the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) and the Halifax Partnership (the Partnership) will undertake to attract, keep, and grow talent, business, and investment in Halifax for the benefit of all. This report highlights strategy implementation from January 1 to September 30, 2023, along with an engagement plan with stakeholders to confirm year 3-5 actions for the economic strategy.

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.

These strategic goals are supported by 17 five-year objectives that are, in turn, supported by seventy-three (73) actions. Thirty-nine actions (39) are implemented by HRM, twenty-five (25) by the Partnership, and nine (9) co-led by both organizations.

Below are highlights of Partnership and HRM activities from January to September 2023 to advance the economic strategy’s goals.

1. Promote and Maximize Inclusive and Sustainable Growth

The Inclusive Economic Strategy intends to promote and maximize inclusive and sustainable growth by making it easier to do business in Halifax, supporting the economic recovery and restoring confidence postpandemic, growing Indigenous and African Nova Scotian economic prosperity, increasing housing stock, working nationally and internationally to attract investment and trade, helping companies compete both locally and abroad, supporting investment in innovation, and capitalizing on strategic opportunities like major infrastructure projects. The target is to grow our GDP to \$25 billion by 2027.

Highlights January 2023 to September 2023 related to promoting and maximizing inclusive and sustainable growth include:

- **African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity**

On September 22, the African Nova Scotian Road to Prosperity (ANSREP) held their annual Community Summit themed "Our Communities, Our Future, Our Prosperity". Members of the ANS community and representatives from private, public, post-secondary and community sectors gathered to learn about and celebrate progress made on the ANSREP Plan over the past year (October 2022-September 2023). The African Nova Scotian Prosperity and Well-being Index was presented during the Summit which reports on economic outcomes for Nova Scotia’s black population, including population growth, housing, education, employment, and income. On September 23, the ANSREP hosted their inaugural International Conference in Dartmouth, providing an opportunity for ANS community members to delve deeper into pan-African approaches to economic development, learn about community-building work in Black communities and spaces in Canada and the US, and bring lessons from the work of the Road to Economic Prosperity in Nova Scotia to the international stage. ANSREP is collaborating with HRM and other stakeholders to address historic and current issues related to development and land use in ANS communities. By-law and zoning changes made this year impacting the communities of Beechville and Upper Hammonds Plains are helping to address issues and advance community priorities.

- **Business Retention and Expansion**

Halifax Partnership’s SmartBusiness team met face-to-face with 260 companies between January 1 and September 30, with 196 referrals made to SmartBusiness Action Team members and other partners. Most referrals were related to wildfire and flood disaster support. During the wildfires, the SmartBusiness team stood up a Wildfire Disaster Response team to support impacted businesses. This was a collaborative initiative with Discover Halifax, HRM, and Invest Nova Scotia. The Partnership did direct outreach to 300 businesses that self-registered through HRM 311 and connected those impacted to resources such as grants, temporary space, mental health resources, government programs, and business services. The Disaster Recovery Business Support page is now a permanent part of the Partnership’s website, providing disaster response and recovery resources and connection to the SmartBusiness team. The Partnership’s Business Recovery and Continuity Toolkit helps small and medium-sized businesses plan for change, opportunities, and unexpected crises — whether it is a pandemic, natural disaster, or another type of disruption. During the reporting period, the toolkit was downloaded 839 times, showing the continued and increasing demand and need for this resource as more businesses become aware of the need to plan for disasters and disruptions to their operations.

- **Rural Economic Development**

In May 2022, with additional funding from HRM, the Partnership hired a new Account Executive solely focused on supporting businesses in rural parts of HRM. With HRM support, Discover Halifax also hired an Account Executive focused on rural tourism. Both are supporting tourism-based and other businesses throughout rural parts of HRM. During the reporting period, Halifax Partnership’s Account Executive met with 114 rural-based businesses and provided 87 referrals to SmartBusiness partners who can help address business challenges or support growth opportunities. Outreach to businesses affected by wildfires accounted for most of the businesses supported. Rural employers’ greatest challenges continue to be labour shortages and finding housing for newcomers.

- **Cogswell District Redevelopment Project**

The Cogswell Redevelopment Program entails the conversion of 22 acres of road infrastructure into a mixed-use neighbourhood, extending the entrance of the downtown northwards and reuniting communities presently separated by the existing interchange lands. Construction of the District began in March 2022. To date, four detour roads have been implemented within the District along with the creation of with a multi-use path for pedestrian and cycling access. Three ramps and one overpass have been removed while new underground infrastructure continues to be installed.

Excess soil removed from the southern portion of the site has been relocated to the north end of the project to build up grades for the new roundabout. The project will enter Phase 2 in mid-October which will see the removal of the Cogswell ramp and the Barrington bridge and the retaining walls. A fifth detour will be implemented in two phases. This will enable completion of the on-street transit hub one year earlier than originally planned.

- **Investment Attraction**

Halifax continues to be a sought-after location for business expansion and relocation. Between January 1 and September 30, Halifax Partnership supported the attraction of 11 new companies to Halifax, which will create an expected 194 jobs, and provided aftercare to twelve companies. The Partnership also supported businesses with talent attraction and retention by sharing its *Living in Halifax Toolkit*, a suite of marketing materials promoting Halifax as a place to live and work.

- **Halifax Innovation Outpost**

Halifax Partnership and HRM jointly launched the Halifax Innovation Outpost in 2019 with support from the Province of Nova Scotia, with the aim of expanding opportunities for start-ups and scale-ups to develop their products and services, as well as addressing complex social, environmental, and civic issues. The Halifax Innovation Outpost, in collaboration with the National Zero Waste Council and Guelph-Wellington’s COIL, have developed and will run a Circular Food Solution Challenge in November 2023 which will provide funding and support for Nova Scotia-based for-profit businesses and not-for-profit organizations to pilot and test circular food solutions that either launch new, or deepen, action on food waste and climate change.

- **Housing in HRM**

On October 12, 2023, the Government of Canada and the Halifax Regional Municipality announced that they have reached an agreement to fast track 2,600 housing units over the next three years. This work will help spur the construction of over 8,866 homes over the next decade. The agreement, under the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) will provide over \$79.3 million to eliminate barriers to building much needed housing faster. Through its Action Plan, Halifax will improve permitting processes, reduce upfront costs for permitting, and incentivize the use of pre-approved building plans. It will also develop an incentive program for conversions from commercial to residential and create incentives for small scale residential. Halifax will also encourage development along transit corridors, expand the current Affordable Housing Grant program, update its heritage preservation policy and resource a program to identify surplus land for affordable housing. Bill #329 was introduced to the Nova Scotia Legislature, was brought forward to Law Amendments Committee on October 16, 2023, and then reported to the House on October 17, 2023. This bill amends the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter and the Housing in the Halifax Regional Municipality Act. Staff are reviewing the impact of these changes.

- **Halifax Economic Index and Other Research**

The [2023 Halifax Index](#) presented by TD was launched on June 1st at an event with private, public, post-secondary and community leaders. The Index provides an overview of Halifax's economic and community progress, measuring the municipality's growth across a wide range of key indicators compared to 10 benchmark Canadian cities. It includes a [“scorecard”](#) to track progress on goals set in Halifax’s economic strategy for 2022-27. The Halifax Economic Atlas, an interactive map-based tool providing in-depth data about Halifax Regional Municipality and Nova Scotia’s economy and population, was also launched in June. Regular updates to the Economic Dashboard are made as data become available.

The Conference Board of Canada’s most recent estimates have Halifax's GDP growing by 6.9% in 2021 and 2.2% in 2022. Annual growth rates out to 2027 are forecasted to be in the range of 0.7% to 2.2%. In order to achieve the 2027 and 2037 GDP goals of, respectively, \$25 billion and \$32 billion (in real 2007 dollars) to be met, annual growth rates of 3.3% and 2.8% are required. This is significantly above current forecast levels.

2. Attract, Retain, and Develop Talent

The economic strategy intends to grow HRM’s population to 525,000 and increase the labour force to 310,000 by 2027 by: attracting workers to Halifax from across Canada and around the world; welcoming immigrants and connecting them to best-in-class settlement services; removing systemic barriers to employment; and, preparing business to meet future of work needs.

Recent Partnership and HRM workforce development highlights are:

- **Halifax Connector Program**

Halifax Partnership’s Connector Program continues to help newcomers and local and international graduates (called Connectees) connect with local business owners and community leaders (called Connectors) that work in the same or similar field. Connectors help Connectees learn about the local labour market, build their professional networks, and discover potential career opportunities. During the reporting period, the Halifax Connector Program worked with 380 new Connectees, with 155 jobs found.

- **Recruitment of International Workers**

Halifax Partnership’s labour market team continues to help Halifax employers hire skilled talent through the Atlantic Immigration Program (AIP), the Nova Scotia Nominee Program (NSNP) and the Global Talent Stream. From January 1st to September 30th, Halifax Partnership supported 80 employers, resulting in 21 AIP/NSNP referrals and 10 Global Talent Stream referrals. With support from Halifax Regional Municipality, Halifax Partnership has developed and is executing the Halifax International Recruitment Pilot which is focused on attracting skilled international talent to Halifax – particularly those working in the construction sector to address critical labour shortages impacting housing supply. The Partnership will participate in national and international recruitment fairs to identify candidates for open positions with Halifax-based employers, primarily those in the construction sector, and will support businesses throughout the hiring process. In collaboration with Destination Canada, the Province of Nova Scotia and industry associations, the Partnership will attend four recruitment fairs scheduled for November/December 2023: London, England; Rabat, Morocco; Paris, France; and Toronto, Ontario. The Partnership recently welcomed a licenced recruiter and immigration specialist to support this initiative.

Halifax posted its biggest population growth ever (4.5%) between 2021 and 2022, bringing its total population to 480,582. Annual growth in the three prior years ranged from 2.0% to 2.3%. If the population growth rate remains above 2.0%, the 2027 and 2037 population goals will be reached. Over eleven-thousand jobs were added in and 2022, while the labour force expanded by a little over five thousand (2.0%). To meet the labour force goal of 310,000 in 2027, annual growth of 3.1% would be required. Setting aside the anomalies of the shutdown of 2020 (+0.3%) and the rebound of 2021 (+4.0%), in recent years the annual labour force growth rate has been as high as 3.1% and as low as 0.4%. Thus, the recent maximum would have to be maintained for the goal to be met.

3. Make Halifax a better place to live and work

The economic strategy intends to make Halifax a better place to live and work by increasing Halifax’s environmental resiliency and access to arts, culture, recreation; making it easier to move throughout Halifax and the region; and, strengthening the dynamism of the downtown, main streets, and rural centres. HRM action highlights under this “quality of life” goal are:

- **Climate Action Charter**

In March 2023, HRM and Halifax Partnership announced the launch of the CEO Climate Action Charter with 18 organizations becoming founding signatories. The Charter encourages signatories to take meaningful climate action using the unique operational levers of their respective organizations, while demonstrating leadership to our community.

- **Streetscaping, Placemaking and Beautification**

The municipality continues to identify opportunities to integrate streetscaping elements with recapitalization projects and development led projects. There are several streetscaping enhancements completed and in progress throughout the municipality. Neighbourhood Placemaking accepts up to five resident led projects each year. HRM Community Developers work closely with neighbourhood organizers to plan, guide, and train volunteer teams to succeed with their project vision. In March 2023 the Neighbourhood Seeds program, provided seed kits to neighbourhood volunteers. Project leaders then shared edible plant seeds with their neighbours to connect the neighbourhood through the shared activity of vegetable gardening.

- **Program and Services focused on our environment**

To date, the *Solar City program* has 757 Solar City Participant Agreements executed, totaling \$20.1 million in financing committed to the installment of solar energy technologies. These systems are expected to save property owners a total of \$1.43 million annually in utility costs and reduce annual greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the community by approximately 6,080 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e).

Significant progress was made towards the first phase of *bus fleet electrification*, including testing of a demo bus in February 2023 and installation of the first bus charger. Additionally, construction of the expanded Ragged Lake Transit Centre began, which is creating space and infrastructure for the 60 new E-Buses that have been ordered.

The *Electric Vehicle Strategy* is under implementation. A multi-year RFP for the supply and install of public charging infrastructure at up to 18 sites in HRM has closed and it is anticipated that the first 8 sites will be completed by the spring of 2024.

The implementation of the *Rapid Transit Strategy* continues which includes the establishment of new ferry routes and developing bus rapid transit service. The first phase of the Rapid Transit Strategy focuses on the implementation of the Mill Cove Ferry service. Preliminary planning and design work is complete, and external funding is being sought after. This project will see the construction of a new Mill Cove Ferry Terminal; replacement of the Halifax Ferry Terminal; and the introduction of five new electric ferries.

In the transition from the 2016-21 economic strategy to the 2022-27 economic strategy, top-tier goals for GDP, population, and labour force growth were continued. However, a well-being metric was added, specifically one that focused on reducing the share of the population reporting low levels of well-being. The 2022 City Matters survey set the benchmark with 14.4% of respondents reporting a low level of well-being. The results of the 2023 City Matters survey are positive, indicating that the share of people who reported low well-being has dropped to 12.8%.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No financial implications at this time.

RISK CONSIDERATION

No risk considerations were identified.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Year 3-5 Action Plans: Engagement

The next update for the People, Planet, Prosperity: Halifax’s Inclusive Economic Strategy 2022-2027 will provide an action plan on Years 3-5 of the strategy (2025-2027). A stakeholder engagement plan will be implemented in November 2023 with an engagement process designed to ensure the strategy continues to chart a course for an inclusive, sustainable, and prosperous Halifax.

Engagement will include discussions and group consultations with various stakeholder groups involved in implementing actions including:

- HRM and Halifax Partnership business units
- Business Improvement Districts
- African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity Advisory Council
- Discover Halifax

Participants will be 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. 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 remaining strategy years (2025-2027)

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

No environmental implications were identified.

ALTERNATIVES

The Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee could choose not to forward this report to Regional Council for information.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Economic Strategy: Year 1-2 Action updates

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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Progress Update: People. Planet. Prosperity. Halifax's Inclusive Economic Strategy, 2022-2027.

GOAL 1 - Promote & Maximize Inclusive and Sustainable Growth Grow GDP to \$25 billion by 2027

YEARS 1 & 2 ACTIONS	Business Unit Lead	STATUS UPDATE January 1 - September 30, 2023
#1 Launch business and consumer confidence campaigns and continue deploying Halifax Partnership programs to help companies fully return to business	HP	<p>In addition to everyday support of companies through the SmartBusiness Program (see #7 below), Halifax Partnership undertook the following:</p> <p>Now in its fourth year, Halifax Partnership continues to offer the Virtual Adviser Program to Halifax businesses in partnership with SeasonedPros. This free program matches a minimum of 25 qualified companies a year to experienced professionals who give short-term and immediate advice or counsel on a specific issue or challenge a business faces. Over 75 companies have completed the program to date. Intake for the 2023-24 cohort began in Q2. This year, the plan is to support businesses with business transition, scale-up challenges, and continuity planning.</p> <p>The Halifax Partnership SmartBusiness team stood up a Wildfire Disaster Response Team to support businesses disrupted by wildfires. This was a collaborative initiative with Discover Halifax, HRM, and Invest Nova Scotia. The Partnership team reached out to 300 businesses that self-registered through HRM 311. The Disaster Recovery Business Support page is now a permanent part of the Partnership's website where businesses impacted by disasters can access resources and support from the SmartBusiness team. (https://halifaxpartnership.com/how-we-help/halifax-disaster-recovery-business-support/)</p>
#2. Maintain essential services and move HRM business services online.	HRM	<p>An internal launch of Permitting, Licensing & Compliance Solution Implementation - Phase 3, took place in December 2022 followed by a public launch in February 2023. This release brought Subdivision Applications, Zoning Confirmation Letters and Planning Application processes like development agreements, rezonings, by-law amendments, variances, and site plan approvals online. With the full system now online, P&D in conjunction with IT, have been able to share more information publicly via HRM's Analytics Hub; Six new permit-based datasets were added in the last 12 months; A new webpage highlighting permit and housing/unit data was launched in Spring'23 and internal dashboards were created for workflow tracking and decision making. Improvements to our business processes, application processes and data availability will continue in 2023/24, as well as an additional dynamic public facing dashboard. This dashboard will provide a more user-friendly interface to access construction, planned development and housing information.</p>
#3. Help prepare businesses for future disruptions.	HP	<p>In 2021, Halifax Partnership developed and launched a Business Recovery and Continuity Toolkit for small and medium-sized businesses to plan for changes, opportunities, and unexpected crises — whether it is a pandemic, natural disaster, or another type of disruption. It provides simple and helpful guidance on planning for, responding to, and recovering from a business disruption. Between January 1 and September 30, the toolkit was downloaded 839 times, which shows continued demand and need for this tool. (https://halifaxpartnership.com/how-we-help/business-recovery-continuity/)</p>
#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	<p>The tiered commercial tax has been implemented and all commercial properties have been individually notified of its impact on their 2023 tax bill. Assessment averaging is on hold.</p>
#5. Continue both HRM's Performance Excellence Program and Regulatory / Policy Modernization processes to improve service to business and support economic development.	HRM	<p>HRM staff have assessed issues and opportunities using lessons learned and successes from the 2018 – 2023 Joint Project for Regulatory Modernization. This information will be used to refine year 3-5 actions under the economic strategy to help prioritize HRM's regulatory modernization initiatives and red-tape reduction activities. Efforts will focus on corporate priorities around housing, climate action, and corporate planning and continuous improvement. This will include improving collaborative policy development and project delivery with the Province and enhancing HRM's capacity to drive policy-driven decision-making. Corporate Performance representation has been added to the Regulatory Modernization Staff Committee to become more engaged and aware of process improvement opportunities to support businesses.</p>
#6. Seek legislative changes from the Province as required to grow Halifax's economy.	HRM	<p>Municipal Electric Vehicle Strategy: Council put forward a 2021 legislative request for the province to prescribe additional standards under the Building Code Act to require "EV Ready" parking stalls for the construction of new buildings within the Halifax Regional Municipality. In response, the province indicated that HRM will be relying on its existing by-law making authority to mandate EV charging stations in parking areas, with no legislative amendments being required. The request has been removed from the list of outstanding legislative requests as a result. Additionally, Council approved three new legislative requests to the Province to date in 2023, with the two most relevant being: 1) Requested amendments to the HRM Charter to require accommodation market platform operators, such as AirBnB, to directly collect and remit the Marketing Levy to the Municipality on behalf of their clients. The change was requested to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Marketing levy program, which supports local tourism initiatives. 2) Requested amendments to the HRM Charter to grant the CAO greater authority to discharge Development Agreements. This change is being sought in response to, and to support HRM's involvement in the federal Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF), which will see the Municipality receive federal funding to support the accelerated development of new housing units. 3) HRM is currently engaged in negotiations with the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing (DMAH) regarding updating an HRM-Province service exchange agreement. The negotiations are ongoing but the resulting agreement will have significant implications for HRM service delivery and its relationship with the province.</p>
#7. Business Retention, Expansion and Aftercare Program.	HP	<p>Halifax Partnership's SmartBusiness Program team met face-to-face with 260 companies between January 1 and September 30 -- 196 referrals were generated (87 referrals were for rural companies). Most referrals made were related to wildfire and flood disaster response outreach. The Partnership activated a disaster response team which did direct outreach to businesses affected by wildfires and floods, connecting them to resources such as grants, temporary space, mental health resources, government programs, and business services.</p>
#8. Establish full-time resources dedicated to economic development and tourism in rural HRM.	HP	<p>From January 1 to September 30, the Partnership team met with 114 rural-based businesses. Outreach to businesses affected by wildfires accounted for most of the businesses supported. Shortly after the start of the wildfires, Halifax Partnership activated a Business Disaster Response Team to reach out to and support affected businesses. With the help of our research and labour market teams, and partner organization Discover Halifax, over 300 businesses that self-registered through HRM 311 were contacted. Just as the outreach and follow-up work was wrapping up we shifted to supporting businesses affected by flooding, some of which were the same businesses affected by wildfires. Outside of disaster response and recovery, rural HRM businesses' greatest challenges are labour shortages and finding housing for newcomers. On July 31, Halifax Partnership hired Lindsay Morley as the new Account Executive focused on supporting businesses in rural HRM.</p>
#9. Continue the Sell Halifax Program with the Mayor that includes presentations and sales meetings in key markets.	HP	<p>Halifax continues to be a sought-after location for business expansions and relocations. Between January 1 and September 30 2023, Halifax Partnership helped attract 11 new companies to Halifax which will create an expected 394 jobs. Twelve companies have been provided aftercare support.</p> <p>The team has also supported businesses with talent attraction and retention by sharing the Partnership's Living in Halifax Toolkit, a suite of marketing materials promoting Halifax as a place to live and work.</p>
#10. Leverage regional, national, and international partnerships to increase trade and investment.	HP	<p>On January 19, 2023 Mayor Savage signed a formal international partnership agreement with the Lord Mayor of Portsmouth in the United Kingdom. The agreement focuses on building business and trade opportunities in shipbuilding, oceanology, satellite applications and for maritime small businesses. In September 2023, Halifax Partnership and the Halifax Regional Municipality hosted a delegation from Portsmouth to develop and strengthen business and innovation ties between private, public and post-secondary leaders in our cities. The visit included meetings with the Port of Halifax, the PIER, COVE, Nova Scotia Health Innovation, the Canadian Navy, and with Halifax businesses.</p> <p>Halifax Partnership's business development team actively promotes Halifax's green economy to national and international cleantech, climate tech and other green economy related companies interested in locating or expanding their operations in Halifax. From October 15-17, 2023, Halifax Partnership will attend the Global Affairs Indo-Pacific Investment and Innovation Roadshow in South Korea with Invest Nova Scotia (formerly NSBI) to pitch Halifax and Nova Scotia as a location for green economy innovation and business development.</p>
#11. Implement Halifax's Green Economy Investment Attraction Strategy with NSBI and others.	HP	<p>Halifax Partnership continues to work with Halifax Gateway partners to sell Halifax's multi-modal transportation advantages to key clients. The Partnership worked with the Port of Halifax and PSA terminals to showcase Halifax's multi-modal assets to the Port of Portsmouth, UK.</p>
#12. Strengthen and raise awareness of the Halifax Gateway.	HP	<p>Halifax Partnership continues to work with Halifax Gateway partners to sell Halifax's multi-modal transportation advantages to key clients. The Partnership worked with the Port of Halifax and PSA terminals to showcase Halifax's multi-modal assets to the Port of Portsmouth, UK.</p>

#13. Manage the Halifax Innovation Outpost and facilitate Outpost clients' access to programs and services.	HP	Halifax Partnership and Volta collaborated to provide a comprehensive support system for CleanTech startups in Nova Scotia. Six selected startups participated in the Volta residency program where they benefited from one-on-one support, domain-specific advisors, performance coaching, and community connections. The Partnership is supporting these startups in building business relationships and navigating and connecting with relevant resources, funding, and programs to accelerate their development and growth.
#14. Develop prototypes to tackle the climate change emergency and address other complex social issues.	HP/HRM	Halifax Partnership and HRM jointly launched the Halifax Innovation Outpost in 2019 with support from the Province of Nova Scotia, with the aim of expanding opportunities for start-ups and scale-ups to develop their products and services, as well as addressing complex social, environmental, and civic issues. The Halifax Innovation Outpost, in collaboration with the National Zero Waste Council and Guelph-Wellington's COIL, have developed and will run a Circular Food Solution Challenge in November 2023 which will provide funding and support for Nova Scotia-based for-profit businesses and not-for-profit organizations to pilot and test circular food solutions that either launch new, or deepen, action on food waste and climate change.
#15. Help create piloting opportunities and joint ventures between established businesses/organizations and startups/scaleups.	HP / HRM	Halifax Partnership and HRM's Climate Action team plan to run two climate challenges in the January to April 2024 time period. From January 1 to September 30, Halifax Partnership connected more than 20 innovative startups/scaleups to piloting and/or joint venture opportunities.
#16. Work with the Port and its PIER initiative to address transportation and logistics issues in Halifax.	HRM	HRM does not intend to renew its annual PIER membership in November. Instead, focus is being placed on advancing large-scale projects of shared interest through the recently created Joint Regional Transportation Agency and addressing other issues (e.g. Lower Water Street congestion, Halifax Grain Elevator) with HRM's CAO, Government Relations and External Affairs unit, and other business units.
#17. Leverage federal and private-sector funding to bolster Outpost work.	HP	Through the work of the Halifax Innovation Outpost, \$20,000 has been secured from national partners at COIL and the City of Vancouver to run the Circular Food Solution Challenge in November 2023.
#18. Begin constructing the Cogswell District and ensure socio-economic benefits to the surrounding community.	HRM	Four detour roads have been implemented along with a multi-use path for pedestrian and cycling access. Three ramps and one overpass have been removed. Installation of new underground infrastructure is complete in the southernmost portion of the project while installation of same continues in the northern and central sections of the project. Excess soil removed from the southern portion of the site has been relocated to the north end of the project to build up grades for the new roundabout. Upper Proctor Street is complete as is the area in front of the Marriott Hotel and Baton Rouge. Work continues on Granville Square with half of the park expected to be completed by end of year. The project will enter Phase 2 in mid-October. Phase 2 will see the removal of the Cogswell ramp and the Barrington bridge and the retaining walls. A fifth detour will be implemented in two phases. This will enable completion of the on-street transit hub one year earlier than originally planned.
#19. Redevelop the Windsor Street Exchange.	HRM	A value engineering study was completed in February 2023. In summer 2023, the contract with a new consulting team was retained. Staff are now working to develop a preferred functional design that will be presented to Regional Council for approval in fall 2023. In parallel, staff are also working on detailed planning and scheduling for construction and developing a project delivery strategy that is expected to include a progressive design-build framework.
#20. Secure federal funding to undertake key infrastructure projects.	HRM	The Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) bilateral agreement for Nova Scotia was announced in 2018 and commits \$828 million in federal funding for NS infrastructure projects over a 10-year period. HRM has submitted numerous proposals under the ICIP program, a number of which are still under review. Eleven (11) of HRM's ICIP applications have been approved for intergovernmental funding to date. Collectively, these projects represent approximately \$187 million in combined federal and provincial ICIP funding for HRM. In 2023, HRM was approved for \$3 million in federal funding under the Natural Infrastructure Fund (NIF) for the "Building with Nature: Implementing a Green Shores Approach for Shore Rd project." <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HRM has also submitted a number of applications to receive federal funding under the 2023 call for submissions under the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund (DMAF) program. The applications are under review at the time of writing. During 2023, HRM worked with the CMHC to develop an application to participate in the federal Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF). The HAF provides significant funding directly to municipalities for committing to initiatives that will accelerate the development of new housing units. HRM staff have been actively engaging with the federal government on the development of a suite of new federal infrastructure programs targeted towards municipalities, such as the new Permanent Transit Fund (PTF). These programs are expected to roll out in the coming years and will have impacts on capital planning processes. <p>The following is a non-exhaustive list of other notable Federal infrastructure programs under which HRM has received, has applied to receive, or is preparing applications to receive federal funding under: Canada Community Building Fund (CCBF) – formerly Federal Gas Tax Fund, Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI), Green and Inclusive Community Buildings (GIBC) Initiative, Zero Emission Transit Fund (ZETF), Active Transportation Fund (ATF), Green Municipal Fund (GMF) – administered by FCM, Deep Retrofit Accelerator Initiative (DRAI), and, National Trade Corridors Fund.</p>
#21. Create a public dashboard that tracks housing supply key performance indicators.	HP/HRM	The Halifax Economic Dashboard, hosted on the Halifax Partnership website, contains a wide range of housing data. Additionally, HRM has produced a public dashboard that portrays housing data relevant to their internal processes.
#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	On October 12, 2023, the Government of Canada and the Halifax Regional Municipality announced that they have reached an agreement to fast-track 2,600 housing units over the next three years. This work will help spur the construction of over 8,866 homes over the next decade. The agreement, under the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) will provide over \$79.3 million to eliminate barriers to building much needed housing faster. Through its Action Plan, Halifax will improve permitting processes, reduce upfront costs for permitting, and incentivize the use of pre-approved building plans. It will also develop an incentive program for conversions from commercial to residential and create incentives for small scale residential. Halifax will also encourage development along transit corridors, expand the current Affordable Housing Grant program, update its heritage preservation policy and resource a program to identify surplus land for affordable housing. Bill #329 was introduced to the Nova Scotia Legislature, was brought forward to Law Amendments Committee on October 16, 2023, and then reported to the House on October 17, 2023. This bill amends the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter and the Housing in the Halifax Regional Municipality Act. Staff are reviewing the impact of these changes.
#23. Convene HRM/HP/private sector working groups to exchange information and recommend policy changes to accelerate the supply of housing.	HP/HRM	HRM staff continue to regularly meet with private sector counterparts on housing issues as part of their normal course of business. Additional meetings among HRM, Halifax Partnership, and private sector representatives will be convened on specific topics as the need arises.
#24. Assess potential municipal/provincial policy changes to encourage housing affordability and first-time home ownership.	HP/HRM	HRM continues to liaise with the Province on housing policy and issues, including membership of two senior staff members on the Executive Panel on Housing (Housing Task Force) in the Halifax Regional Municipality. On October 22, 2023, Bill #329 was introduced to the Nova Scotia Legislature, was brought forward to Law Amendments Committee on October 16, 2023, and then reported to the House on October 17, 2023. This bill amends the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter and the Housing in the Halifax Regional Municipality Act. Staff are reviewing the impact of these changes.
#25. Identify and implement internal process changes to quicken housing approvals and starts.	HRM	The Planned Growth Section has been created within the Strategic Projects Division, with a focus on Future Growth Nodes, Regional Growth Centres, Future Serviced Communities and Provincial Special Planning Areas. Policy work, including public engagement is underway or has been completed on a number of these communities. Provincial Special Planning Areas are governed by the Provincial Minister of Housing under the guidance of the Housing Task Force.
#26. Consider establishing a municipal housing corporation or a community land trust to create affordable housing in Halifax.	HRM	HRM continues to support this work through participation in monthly community advisory meetings led by the United Way Halifax. The United Way has been identified as an interim CLT operator, and will run a workshop with interested community groups/housing providers to further develop the model in November 2023.
#27. Ensure an adequate supply of industrial lands for near- and long-term growth.	HRM	The 2020 Industrial Employment Lands Strategy (IELS) provides a forward-looking assessment and forecast for industrial employment land supply requirements in HRM. Together, with the ongoing work being undertaken by Corporate Real Estate (CRE) and Planning & Development through the second five-year review of the Regional Plan to support planning for HRM's industrial employment land supply, the IELS is the long-term management framework to ensure HRM's industrial land supply is healthy. The industrial land demand (absorption) is forecasted at an average of 53 net acres per year. To that end, HRM plans to provide a balanced inventory of shovel-ready and zoned developable vacant industrial employment lands sufficient to meet market that demand. The timely planning and buildout of Burnside, Aerotech, and Ragged Lake, as outlined in both PFE and P&D Business Plan Deliverables will allow Council to meet and exceed its industrial land supply goal of up to 50-100 acres per year.
#28. Review the Regional Plan that outlines the vision, principles and long-range policies guiding future growth throughout the municipality.	HRM	The draft Regional Plan review was released to Regional Council June 20, 2023. The public engagement program began in July 2023 and will close on October 27, 2023. The What We Heard Report will be brought to Council in December 2023 and the full amendment package will be brought forward for Council approval in Spring 2024.
#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	This action is complete and amendments and registrations for short-term rentals have been made. See #6.
#30. Continue the long-term modernization of HRM land use by-laws, including the completion of revised suburban and rural planning strategies.	HRM	Hired a dedicated resource for Rural Community Planning in August 2023. Released guiding principles for the Rural Community Planning program as part of the draft Regional Plan in June 2023, for public feedback until October 2023. Drafting a RFP to study for technical background (groundwater, wastewater, mobility) to be released Fall 2023. Suburban Plan initiated by Council in July 2023. \$200k in funding received from the Province of NS for background study and engagement. Suburban RFP issued and closing in October 2023. Coordinated guiding policy and early community engagement through the Regional Plan Review, released for consultation June - October 2023. Currently advancing early deliverables under the Housing Accelerator Fund (e.g. 4 units per lot) and suburban opportunity sites. More detailed workplan and community engagement expected to be delivered to Council in Dec. 2023.
#31. Develop and implement a management framework for residents and businesses in rural Halifax.	HRM	A dedicated Planner III for Rural Community Planning was hired in August 2023. The guiding principles for the Rural Community Planning program were released as part of the draft Regional Plan in June 2023, for public feedback until October 27/23. An RFP is being drafted for a technical background study (groundwater, wastewater, mobility) to be released Fall 2023.

<p>#32. Consider and, where possible, incorporate community benefits as part of the development approval process in HRM communities.</p>	<p>HP/HRM</p>	<p>The July 12, 2022, Regional Plan Review – Phase 3 Report to Halifax Regional Council, noted the ANS REP and Halifax's Inclusive Economic Strategy 2022-27 have goals to consider and, where possible, incorporate community benefits in the development approval process. The report noted the work with the Beechville Community Development Association on the Beechville Community Action Plan has provided an example for how this type of work can be undertaken with historic African Nova Scotian communities as part of the community planning process. Attachment A includes an amendment to the Regional Plan that recognizes and supports this ongoing work.</p> <p>The Upper Hammonds Plains community is a historic African Nova Scotian community established in 1815. In response to the growing concerns within the community about the amount, pace, and type of recent land use development occurring in the area, Regional Council initiated a process in 2021 to review the land use policies and regulations. HRM staff undertook the review in consultation with the residents and landowners of the Upper Hammonds Plains community. On January 10, 2023, Halifax Regional Council approved the motion that Halifax Regional Council adopt the proposed amendments to the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law for Beaver Bank, Hammonds Plains, and Upper Sackville, as set out in Attachments A and B of the staff report dated November 17, 2022, to amend the Upper Hammonds Plains Designation and the GU-1 (General Use) Zone, and to rezone a portion of lands within the designation from the GU-1 Zone to the R-1 (Single Unit Dwelling) Zone.</p> <p>On July 11, 2023, Halifax Regional Council approved amendments to the Timberlea/Lakeside/Beechville Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law which included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt the proposed amendments to the Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy and the Land Use By-law for Timberlea/Lakeside/Beechville as set out in Attachments A and B of the staff report dated April 28, 2023. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Rezone I-1 (Light Industrial) properties along the south side of St. Margarets Bay Road in Beechville to C-1 (Local Commercial) as identified on Schedule A of Attachment B, Permit the continued use and expansion of boat building operations at 1248 St. Margarets Bay Road without requiring a development agreement, and Create a Beechville Comprehensive Development District Zone that requires a master planning process by creating site-specific development agreement criteria informed by community goals and objectives, and apply it to the properties identified on Schedule B of Attachment B. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to work with African Nova Scotian communities throughout HRM to review zoning and consider developing a zone that acknowledges historic development patterns in African Nova Scotian communities, taking into consideration the lot fabric and unique circumstances in each community. Adopt the amended Public Participation Program for Beechville Planning Strategy Review and Beechville Community Benefit Action Plan to allow for the consideration of site specific Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law amendments as required as set out in Attachment D of the staff report dated April 28, 2023.
<p>#33. Host the North American Indigenous Games.</p>	<p>HRM -P&R</p>	<p>The North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) were held successfully in the Municipality and Millbrook First Nation from July 15-23, 2023. Approximately 5000 athletes, coaches, and staff from 756+ Indigenous Nations across Turtle Island/North America travelled to the Municipality for the event. 128 Municipal Employees volunteered for the event, the cost of which is included as part of \$1.4 million in value in kind provided by the Municipality to the Games. Additional services provided as value in kind included providing a dedicated Project Manager from HRM, Transit Loops for participants, Facility Rentals, Parks maintenance fees, support for the Youth Cultural Performers Program, transportation for medical staff to venues, and a NAIG 2023 sacred fire pit which HRM Civic Events will have available for future events. Municipal staff were provided with positive feedback from athletes and coaches about their experiences and noted the cleanliness and welcoming nature of Municipality. Discover Halifax is in the process of calculating the economic impact of the Games.</p>
<p>#34. Support the development of Wije'winen, the reimagined Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre.</p>	<p>HRM</p>	<p>HRM continues to partner with the Friendship Centre on the development of the new facility. Work is ongoing to support Every One Every Day initiative.</p>
<p>#35. Work with Millbrook, Acadia, Sipekne'katik First Nation, and Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre on joint economic development priorities.</p>	<p>HP/HRM</p>	<p>Discussions are ongoing with Mi'kmaw/Indigenous communities regarding economic development priorities led by and for the community and ways in which Halifax Partnership and the Halifax Regional Municipality can support.</p>
<p>#36. Implement the ANS Road to Economic Prosperity Action Plan to advance ANS community and economic development priorities.</p>	<p>HP/HRM</p>	<p>Launched in 2021, the African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity Plan is a five-year economic strategy developed and owned by ANS communities to address systemic and historic barriers and improve economic and quality of life outcomes for African Nova Scotians. The first plan of its kind, the Road to Economic Prosperity is delivered in partnership with the Halifax Regional Municipality and Halifax Partnership, with support from Halifax Partnership Investor RBC and the Province of Nova Scotia.</p> <p>January 1 - September 30 results and progress highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> January 10, 2023, Halifax Regional Council approved the motion that Halifax Regional Council adopt the proposed amendments to the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law for Beaver Bank, Hammonds Plains, and Upper Sackville, as set out in Attachments A and B of the staff report dated November 17, 2022, to amend the Upper Hammonds Plains Designation and the GU-1 (General Use) Zone, and to rezone a portion of lands within the designation from the GU-1 Zone to the R-1 (Single Unit Dwelling) Zone. (see Action #32 above for details) April 4, 2023, Halifax Regional Council endorsed the African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity 3-5 Year Plan. July 11, 2023, Halifax Regional Council approved amendments to the Timberlea/Lakeside/Beechville Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law (see Action #32 above for details) September 21-23, The African Nova Scotian Road to Prosperity Community Summit and International Conference was held to share and celebrate progress with the ANS community and private, public, post-secondary and community partners and representatives. African Nova Scotian Prosperity and Well-being Index was presented at the Community Summit including ANS population, education, employment, income and housing data. <p>Visit www.ansconomicprosperity.com for more information on the African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity.</p>
<p>#37. Provide the most up-to-date economic information on Halifax to help business locate, stay, and grow in Halifax.</p>	<p>HP</p>	<p>Halifax Partnership continues to provide the most up-to-date economic information on Halifax through the development and publication of data products as well as through responses to specific requests for information.</p> <p>The 2023 Halifax Index presented by TD was launched on June 1, 2023 at an event with private, public, post-secondary and community leaders. The Halifax Economic Atlas, an interactive map-based tool providing in-depth data about Halifax Regional Municipality and Nova Scotia's economy and population, was also launched in June. Regular updates to the Economic Dashboard are made as data become available.</p> <p><u>Links to Halifax Economic Data Products:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Halifax Index - www.halifaxindex.com Halifax Economic Dashboard - https://halifaxpartnership.com/research-strategy/economic-dashboard/ Economic Data Atlas - https://halifaxpartnership.com/research-strategy/economic-data-atlas-landing/
<p>#38. Monitor and communicate the economic strategy's progress to stakeholders and adapt actions as required.</p>	<p>HP</p>	<p><i>People. Planet. Prosperity. Halifax's Inclusive Economic Strategy 2022-27</i> was approved by Regional Council on March 22, 2022 and was officially launched on April 11, 2022.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2023 Economic Strategy Scorecard was published as part of the 2023 Halifax Index and was presented to the community at the Index launch event on June 1. (Economic Strategy Scorecard is available at https://halifaxpartnership.com/research-strategy/halifax-index/strategy-scorecard/) On July 11, 2023 Halifax Partnership presented an economic strategy update to Halifax Regional Council. Halifax Partnership and HRM are currently co-leading the development of the Economic Strategy 2-5 Year Action Plan. <p>The Halifax Index provides an overview of Halifax's economic and community progress, measuring the municipality's growth across a wide range of key indicators compared to 10 benchmark Canadian cities. It also reports on progress towards Halifax's Inclusive Economic Strategy goals.</p>
<p>#39. Develop and publish the Halifax Index - a single information source of annual data on the state of Halifax's economic and community progress.</p>	<p>HP</p>	<p>Halifax Partnership launched the 2023 Halifax Index presented by TD on June 1, 2023 at an event with over 100 private, public, post-secondary and community leaders in attendance. (The Halifax Index is available at www.halifaxindex.com)</p>
<p>#40. Provide companies with industry-specific salary and labour market information.</p>	<p>HP</p>	<p>Halifax Partnership provides companies with business, salary, and labour market information on an ongoing basis.</p>
<p>GOAL 2 - Attract, Retain, and Develop Talent - Increase population to 525,000 and grow the labour force to 310,000 by 2027</p>		
<p>YEARS 1 & 2 ACTIONS</p>	<p>Lead(s)</p>	<p>STATUS UPDATE April 1 to June 30th, 2023</p>
<p>#41. Help employers recruit international talent through the Atlantic Immigration Program, Global Talent Strategy, and other federal initiatives.</p>	<p>HP</p>	<p>Halifax Partnership's labour market team continues to help Halifax employers hire skilled talent through the Atlantic Immigration Program (AIP), the Nova Scotia Nominee Program (NSNP) and the Global Talent Stream. From January 1-September 30, Halifax Partnership supported 80 employers, resulting in 21 AIP/NSNP referrals and 10 Global Talent Stream referrals.</p>

#42. With industry partners, undertake targeted on-the-ground recruitment efforts in other Canadian and international cities.	HP	<p>With support from Halifax Regional Municipality, Halifax Partnership has developed the Halifax International Recruitment Pilot which is focused on attracting skilled international talent to Halifax – particularly those working in the construction sector to address critical labour shortages impacting housing supply. This initiative involves participating in national and international recruitment fairs, in collaboration with our provincial and federal government partners, with job postings from Halifax-based employers in hand. The Partnership recently welcomed a licenced recruiter and immigration specialist to its team to support this initiative.</p> <p>Halifax Partnership will attend the following international and national recruitment fairs scheduled for Nov/Dec 2023:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • London, England (London Build Expo) • Paris, France (Destination Canada recruitment event) • Rabat, Morocco (Destination Canada recruitment event) • Toronto, Ontario (Buildings Show Recruitment Fair)
#43. Leverage the Newcomers Canada Network and Electronic Platform to connect Canadian newcomers to jobs in Halifax.	HP	Halifax Partnership is focusing international talent recruitment efforts on the Halifax International Recruitment pilot (see update in action #42 above).
#44. Review and implement HRM's Immigration Strategy and manage the Local Immigration Partnership to create a welcoming and inclusive community for newcomers.	HRM	Immigration strategy is in its second year of implementation. The municipality is currently working on developing new training to support the strategy and an Advisor to support Immigration services has been hired.
#45. Continue the Connector Program that connects local and international graduates to the networks and resources needed to build a career in Halifax.	HP	<p>Halifax Connector Program continues to help connect newcomers and young local and international graduates (called Connectees) with local business owners and community leaders (called Connectors) that work in the same or similar field. Connectors help Connectees learn about the local labour market, build their professional networks, and discover potential career opportunities.</p> <p>From January 1 - September 30, the Connector Program worked with 380 new participants (Connectees) with 155 jobs found.</p>
#46. Increase enrolment in the ANS and Mi'kmaq/Indigenous streams of the Halifax Connector Program.	HP	<p>The establishment of the ANS Connector Program stream is an action within the <i>African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity Plan (ANSREP)</i> and <i>People. Planet. Prosperity. Halifax's Inclusive Economic Strategy 2022-2027</i>. From January 1 - September 30, the African Nova Scotian Connector Program stream supported 10 new ANS Connectees - recent graduates, young professionals, skilled trades, and individuals looking to pursue pathways to apprenticeship - in building their professional network. Since 2021, 45 Connectees and 21 new Connectors have participated in the program with 12 jobs found by Connectees. A review of the ANS Connector stream will be undertaken to align with data from the ANS Prosperity and Well-being Index as well as lessons learned in implementing the program to date.</p> <p>Discussions are ongoing with Mi'kmaq/Indigenous communities regarding how best to support economic development led by and for communities. Increasing talent retention and workforce attachment and the Connector Program model's suitability for the community are part of these discussions.</p>
#47. Leverage HRM's Social Value Framework (Procurement Administrative Order - Appendix B) to strengthen workforce and supplier diversity.	HRM	Municipality continues to incorporate the Social Value Framework in its Procurement activity. RFP processes include the evaluation of workforce development, diversity of ownership, diversity of employment and environmental considerations. Tenders may include questionnaires related to socially responsible business practices and/or mandatory contract requirements related to supply chain diversity, employment opportunities for local communities of interest, and community engagement.
#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	Upon further exploration of DEI frameworks and resources available to the private sector, it was determined that the spirit of the DEI Charter is reflected in the federal government's 50/30 challenge which challenges Canadian organizations to increase the representation and inclusion of diverse groups within their workplaces. As such, the creation of a new DEI Charter is not required. Halifax Partnership is a signatory to the 50/30 challenge and promotes the initiative to its private sector investors and the broader Halifax business community to encourage adoption and participation.
#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	HRM continues to support community engagement sessions around employment.
#50. Determine immediate and future skilled labour market needs and proactively communicate and resolve them with post-secondary education partners.	HP	Halifax Partnership continues to gather and assess data and research reports on labour market trends and needs. Pertinent findings are shared with post-secondary partners through such means as the CEO's participation in the Halifax Higher Education Partnership.
#51. Work with the business community to create, identify, and promote experiential learning opportunities for post-secondary students.	HP	Halifax Partnership is working to secure funding to advance this action.
#52. Determine how to attract workers back to the tourism, restaurant, retail, and other sectors hardest hit by the pandemic.	HP	Halifax Partnership supports talent attraction and retention initiatives directed by the Hospitality Association of Nova Scotia and Discover Halifax. The Partnership does proactive outreach to employers in this sector to promote and support participation in provincial immigration programs including the Atlantic Immigration Program and the Nova Scotia Nominee Program.
GOAL 3 - Make Halifax a Better Place to Live and Work		
YEARS 1 & 2 ACTIONS	Business Unit Lead	STATUS UPDATE April 1 to June 30, 2023
#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	<p>In March, HRM and Halifax Partnership announced the launch of the CEO Climate Action Charter with 18 organizations becoming founding signatories. Co-created in partnership with business leaders across Halifax, the Charter encourages signatories to take meaningful climate action using the unique operational levers of their respective organizations, while demonstrating leadership to our community. The CEO Climate Action Charter aligns with the municipal, provincial, and federal climate action plans to support the growth of the green economy and materially reduce carbon emissions. Through fostering collaboration between business and municipal leaders, it will play a significant role in achieving the goals set out in HALIFACT, one of the most ambitious climate action plans in Canada, with a goal to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.</p> <p>Discussions are ongoing with prospective CEO Climate Action Charter signatories. Engagement initiatives with current signatories are planned for November 2023 - March 2024.</p>
#54. Help business adapt to provincial and federal government carbon pricing programs and policies.	HP	Work is underway to include this as part of the Climate Action Charter (#53 above). Halifax Partnership is also developing an enhanced focus on the sustainability sector in its SmartBusiness business retention and expansion program to support startups, scaleups and mature companies in understanding, adapting to, and participating in carbon reduction programs and policies.
#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	<p>A) Solar City Program is operating as intended. To date, 757 Solar City Participant Agreements have been executed, totalling \$20.1 million in financing committed to the installation of solar energy technologies. These systems are expected to save property owners a total of \$1.43 million annually in utility costs and reduce annual greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the community by approximately 6,080 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO_{2e}). To date, Solar City Program has enabled the installation of 7.3 megawatts (MW) of renewable energy in the municipality. B) A resilient retrofit pilot is underway to test some of the solutions in collaboration with Clean Foundation and the town of New Glasgow, with some funding from PNS. The results of this pilot will inform next steps for supporting property owners in becoming more resilient to current and future climate impacts.</p>
#56. Continue decarbonizing public transit. (HRM)	HRM	Significant progress was made towards the first phase of bus fleet electrification, including testing of a demo bus in February 2023 and installation of the first bus charger. Construction of the expanded Ragged Lake Transit Centre began, which is creating space and infrastructure for the 60 new E buses that have been ordered.
#57. With partners, assess and upgrade critical infrastructure to withstand current and future climate impacts.	HRM	This work will begin once the list of critical infrastructure assets have been vetted across the organization and the other foundational pieces of analysis and mapping have been completed. Flood hazard maps were delivered by July 2023. Other hazards have been mapped through a separate contract. EMO is finalizing the critical infrastructure inventory and working on an updated Hazard, Risk and Vulnerability Assessment for HRM. All of this will layer spatially, in addition to community risk profiles, to create a framework for prioritizing projects to make critical infrastructure more resilient and to safeguard communities.
#58. Manage and protect Halifax's ecosystems.	HRM	The re-design of Peace & Friendship Park has been initiated. Staff, together with Parks Canada and the partnership group are undertaking next steps with respect to the National Urban Park initiative at Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes. Additional public consultation on the Halifax Common Master Plan has been conducted, a report to Council is drafted and anticipated to be delivered to Regional Council in the coming months. Also, detailed pluvial, fluvial and coastal flood risk mapping project has been submitted to HRM for review, and will be finalized in Q3, 2023. Other climate hazards have been spatially mapped for the municipality as well. A draft inventory of critical infrastructure has been compiled by Emergency Management and will be vetted across Business Units FY23/24. A community vulnerability dataset will be chosen to layer on top of the climate risk and critical infrastructure GIS layers. The next step will be to determine the condition of HRM owned assets, followed by those owned by others in the municipality. All of this foundational work will allow the municipality to prioritize investments in fortifying critical infrastructure to be more resilient to current and future climate impacts.
#59. Implement HRM's Electric Vehicle Strategy, including working with partners to increase electric vehicle charging infrastructure throughout Halifax.	HRM	A multi-year RFP for the supply and install of public charging infrastructure at up to 18 sites in HRM over three years has closed. Negotiations are ongoing with plans to start construction before the end of this year. It is anticipated that the first 8 sites will be completed by the spring of 2024. As per direction from the Halifax Regional Council, two letters were sent from the Mayor to the Province regarding EV policy. The first letter suggests that the Province establish a strong Zero Emission Vehicle Mandate to ensure Nova Scotians have fair and equal access to electric vehicles. The second letter was to request authority to mandate EV Ready parking stalls in new construction. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing responded to the second letter stating that the Municipality already has the authority to mandate this through the existing planning processes. Language to support this mandatory requirement has been included in the draft Regional Plan. See PFE 06.03 for details on the light duty fleet transition to electric.

#60. Increase low-income groups' and individuals' access to recreation programs and other municipal services.	HRM	HRM's Affordable Access Program (AAP) helps to reduce barriers so that anyone, regardless of their level of income, can participate in recreation programs. Launched in April 2019, AAP provides either partial (50%) or full (100%) funding for recreation programs for those in financial need. There has been an increase in use of the AAP. In 2022-2023, 6,698 HRM recreation programs were accessed with an AAP discount for a total value of \$750, 678. To date (April 2023-August 2023), \$824,190 has been accessed with an AAP discount. During the 2023-24 budget deliberations, Regional Council approved \$500,000 to offset the loss of revenue associated with this increased use. A report examining the barriers to accessing the AAP program is in progress and expected to be presented to Regional Council in November 2023.
#61. Ensure HRM's culture investments and commemoration reflect Halifax's geography and diversity.	HRM	The RFP for the Cogswell Storytelling Strategy was posted. The project will identify the Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian stories and histories that should be celebrated through art and interpretation within the Cogswell District. The Youth Poet Laureate program was launched which prioritizes providing opportunities for ANS and equity-seeking youth. Professional Arts Grants were awarded. The peer jury prioritized funding for ANS organizations and projects. Staff conducted outreach to prioritize ANS peer jurors at the decision-making table for grants and new projects. Staff helped to develop interpretive panels for the park/ballfield at the North Preston Community Centre. Beechville Rec Centre public art was designated as an opportunity for ANS artists. Performing & Visual Arts Venues Study (formerly called the Cultural Facilities Plan): A study to explore the local arts venue ecosystem and identify the venue needs of HRM's arts community has been initiated through award of the RFP and work has been initiated.
#62. Work with Discover Halifax to implement the Halifax Regional Integrated Tourism Master Plan.	HRM / HP	In 2023, HRM worked with Discover Halifax and other key stakeholders to become more aligned in the bid process, as part of the strategy to implement the Integrated Tourism Master Plan (ITMP) together. Festival attraction in 2023 is at an all-time high for Halifax, with the success of the IHF World Juniors kicking off the year. DH, alongside HRM, recently announced the return of the JUNOS and the inaugural SAIL GP event for Halifax in 2024. Discover Halifax continues to develop its event attraction capacity with the hiring of a Vice President, Festivals and Events. To lead, with the support for HRM events, the discovery of a signature event and preliminary research on the need for a permanent outdoor festival venue. DH, with increased funding from the municipality, is growing its capacity to be the backbone organization for the ITMP. DH hired a Vice President, Destination Development.
#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	Professional Arts Grants were awarded. The peer jury prioritized funding for ANS organizations and projects. Staff conducted outreach to prioritize ANS peer jurors at the decision-making table for grants and new projects.
#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	The first phase of the Rapid Transit Strategy focuses on the implementation of the Mill Cove Ferry service. Preliminary planning and design work is complete, and external funding is being sought after. This project will see the construction of a new Mill Cove Ferry Terminal, replacement of the Halifax Ferry Terminal, and the introduction of five new electric ferries. Work related to Bus Rapid Transit (BTR) to date has primarily focused on planning and design for major corridors including Robie Street, Young Street, and Herring Cove Road.
#65. Continue implementing Integrated Mobility Plan recommendations to make HRM more connected, sustainable, affordable, and healthy.	HRM	Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP) recommendations continue to be actioned, including: A) HRM's representatives on the Technical Working Group, along with a Senior Transportation Engineer, are working closely with the Joint Regional Transportation Authority on the development of a new 'Activity Based' Travel Demand Model for HRM and the surrounding areas (anticipated completion spring 2024). Staff are also actively participating in the Joint Regional Transportation Authority's ongoing Regional Transportation Master Plan (anticipated completion fall 2024). B) Inclusion of integrating transportation planning with community design as included in the Regional Plan review released to Council in June, 2023. Public engagement is underway, concluding in October 2023. C) Transportation demand management (TDM) initiatives like the E-Bike program which completed its second season with success, with staff use of e-bikes growing over last year. Report on usage levels and seeking user feedback will inform next steps of the program. D) Major Strategic Multi-Modal Corridors: Bedford Highway, Herring Cove Road, Portland Street, Robie/Young Street, Rainnie/Brunswick, Lower Water and Main Street are in various stages of completion with preliminary, functional or detailed design.
#66. Prepare a new Halifax Transit service plan to align service with demand, growth, and development.	HRM	Halifax Transit is in the early stages of preparing for a new planning cycle and service plan. Following the final implementation of the Moving Forward Together Plan, this plan will include an analysis of the opportunities and challenges with the transit route network, and recommend service changes to address pressures of growth and development in the region.
#67. Finalize and implement a plan for the former Memorial Library that maintains	HRM	The asset is not surplus to municipal requirements and recommended focus will need to transition to an owned asset plan. A (Parks) Asset Renewal and Heritage Asset Plan, including possible deconstruction of the former library building, will need to be stood up by Parks and Recreation - Strategic Design, Heritage and PFE/FDC staff to bring shape and scope to asset strategy and terms of reference for the park and building.
#68. Implement an entertainment program to reattract people to the downtown.	HRM	New festival programs were created for downtown Halifax for 2023 to enhance business activity in the entertainment district and boost cultural experiences. Emancipation Day, Acadian Day and more were presented as free cultural celebrations in Grand Parade. New Festivals were added to the events schedule including Crescendo Festival and Vibrancy Festival which presented weekends full of music, art and cultural activities, attracting over 100,000 people to the downtown core for all summer events. Dartmouth Sunshine Series was created as a free, family-friendly music festival with live entertainment at the Dartmouth Ferry Terminal Park on Saturdays and Sundays from June 25 to August 15. In 2023 the total attendance at the Dartmouth stage over the summer was 35,000 people visits. Increased food and beverage sales in Halifax and Dartmouth have been attributed to these entertainment programs as reported by local businesses.
#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	Discussions involving Planning & Development, HRFE and Facility Design & Construction have taken place to identify and vet options for an emergency waterfront access route from Ochterloney St to Kings Wharf. Planning & Development is liaising with CN to determine the viability of one of these options. 2023 saw the completion of the Alderney Wharf Recapitalization project that began late in 2021. This included replacement of the steel sheet pile with concrete, the replacement of the timber fenders and decking around the wharf as well as upgrades to the electrical and lighting systems and the installation of new cleats and benches. The emergency back-up generator for Alderney Gate was installed in the spring of 2023. This new generator will ensure life safety systems continue to operate in the event of a loss of commercial power. In advance of the installation of the generator, there were significant electrical upgrades undertaken in the electrical vault.
#70. Continue working with Halifax Water and Halifax Parks to complete the daylighting of the Sawmill River through downtown Dartmouth to Dartmouth Cove.	HRM	Fish Passage and associated park planning work continued (Martins Park to Lake Banook).
#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	The municipality continues to identify opportunities to integrate streetscaping elements with recapitalization projects and development led projects. There are several streetscaping enhancements completed and in progress throughout the municipality.
#72. Enhance green spaces and programming opportunities in green spaces in the Regional Centre.	HRM	Park Operations Enhancements: New floating docks were installed at Foster Ave Park and Grahams Grove Park, Disk golf course created on the Dartmouth Common, new modular skate park features added at the Beazley Park Skate Park, Mt Edward Rd and Williamswood Pump Tracks were redesigned and built, speed bumps were added around Point Pleasant Park for improved pedestrian safety, as well as new kiosks with trailhead mapping, and security has been enhanced at the Public Gardens and expanded to be 24-7.
#73. Continue with placemaking and beautification efforts.	HRM	Neighbourhood Placemaking accepts up to five resident led projects each year. Community Developers work closely with neighbourhood organizers to plan, guide, and train volunteer teams to succeed with their project vision. Each project receives \$1,500 in support funding which goes toward expenses like materials, artist and professional fees, or event supplies. In the 2023 season there were three street intersection paintings and one picnic table project, which were completed with great success. In March 2023 the Neighbourhood Seeds program, gave 20 seed kits to neighbourhood volunteers. Project leaders then shared edible plant seeds with their neighbours to connect the neighbourhood through the shared activity of vegetable gardening.