

Item No. 13.1.1
Community Planning and Economic Development
February 15, 2024

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

SUBMITTED BY:



Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: January 25, 2024

SUBJECT: *People. Planet, Prosperity: Halifax's Inclusive Economic Strategy:
Years 3-5*

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 (CPED) Standing Committee recommend that Regional Council approve:

- 1) Attachment 1 as the action plan for years three-to-five (2024-2027) of the five-year ***People. Planet, Prosperity: Halifax's Inclusive Economic Strategy 2022-2027.***

BACKGROUND

On March 22, 2022, Regional Council approved ***People. Planet. Prosperity. Halifax's Inclusive Economic Growth Strategy 2022-27***, as the five-year economic strategy for Halifax. It included 73 actions that Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) and the Halifax Partnership (the Partnership) have undertaken to attract, keep, and grow talent, business, and investment in Halifax for the benefit of all. An update of Years 1-2 was presented to Community Planning and Economic Development and Regional Council in December 2023.

This report provides an update of the strategy for Years 3-5 (2024 to 2027) which has undergone a review to assess and fine-tune objectives and actions, not to overhaul its core substance. The Vision and five-year Targets of the strategy have not been changed as a result of this review. The wording of the third Strategic Goal has been updated.

DISCUSSION

Economic Environment and Impacts

There are key influencers impacting HRM economic growth, as outlined in Attachment A, which include:

- longer term impacts of the pandemic on supply chains, changes to labour markets, remote work trends and debt repayments;
- Housing availability, affordability, and the continuing pressures of inflation and significant population growth;
- Labour availability;
- Major project benefits;
- International issues contributing to inflationary pressures and heightening export risks;
- Increasing impacts of climate changes; and,
- Local emergency events.

While there are many challenges to be addressed, continued positive annual GDP is forecasted for the coming years and HRM's population increases continue to help address longer-term demographic challenges.

Forecasts for the Halifax economy are produced by the Conference Board of Canada. According to their Fall 2023 report:

- Over the 2024-27 period, annual GDP growth will average 1.8%, with a low of 1.0% in 2024 and a high of 2.4% in 2025
- The unemployment rate will rise to 6.9% in 2024 and then fall steadily to reach 5.8% in 2027.
- Population growth will drop to 2.6% in 2024 and then remain close to 2.0% over each of the next three years.
- Inflation will flatline close to 2.0% from 2024 through 2027.

As Nova Scotia's capital, HRM's growth significantly contributes to provincial population and economic growth, accounting for 47% of the population and 56% of GDP. Halifax's economic strategy has been

informed by and is in alignment with provincial priorities and goals to ensure that every Nova Scotian can contribute to and benefit from economic growth which in turn supports improvements to healthcare, access to affordable housing, and advancements in climate action and energy transformation.

Economic growth is not without its challenges. The issues facing Halifax are complex and interconnected. The solutions being developed, and as actioned in the Economic Strategy, must address the interconnection among the labour market, housing, cost of living, transportation, and climate issues. Solving these challenges will require continued and long-term investment, action, and collaboration among all three orders of government, the private sector, post-secondary institutions and our communities working towards shared goals and vision.

Economic Strategy review

The vision of the Inclusive Economic Strategy is, “A prosperous, growing Halifax that puts the well-being 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. While only two years into the five-year strategy for 2022-27, progress to date suggests that the population and labour force growth goals for 2027 are within reach. It seems less likely that the ambitious 2027 target for GDP growth will be achieved. In the one year of reporting since a baseline value was established in 2022, the well-being metric has improved.

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

ECONOMIC STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

STRATEGIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES YEARS 3-5

<div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 20px;">  <p style="font-size: 8px;">Promote & Maximize Inclusive and Sustainable Growth</p> <p style="font-size: 8px;">Grow GDP to</p> <h2 style="color: #007060; margin: 0;">\$25 billion</h2> <p style="font-size: 8px;">by 2027</p> </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support business resiliency, response, and recovery from economic challenges and disasters. Make Halifax an easier and more productive place to do business. Work nationally and internationally to support companies looking to locate and grow in Halifax. Accelerate innovation and entrepreneurship.
<div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 20px;">  <p style="font-size: 8px;">Attract, Retain & Develop Talent</p> <p style="font-size: 8px;">Increase population to</p> <h2 style="color: #007060; margin: 0;">525,000</h2> <p style="font-size: 8px;">and grow the labour force to</p> <h2 style="color: #007060; margin: 0;">310,000</h2> <p style="font-size: 8px;">by 2027</p> </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attract talent to Halifax from across Canada and around the world. Welcome immigrants and connect them to best-in-class settlement services.
<div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 20px;">  <p style="font-size: 8px;">Make Halifax a Better Place to Live, Work and Visit</p> <p style="font-size: 8px;">Increase residents' well-being on a continuous basis</p> </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase Halifax's environmental sustainability and resiliency. Increase access to arts, culture, recreation, and natural assets in Halifax.

The Inclusive Economic Strategy has three five-year strategic goals which will remain in Years 3-5. These include:

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

The strategic goals are supported by 17 five-year objectives that were, in turn, supported by actions shared by HRM and the Partnership. The economic strategy's action plan for Years 1-2 (2022-24) had 73 actions, 39 of which were led by HRM, 25 by the Partnership, and the remaining 9 co-led by the two organizations.

After review of the strategy, it is recommended that Years 3-5 move forward with the 17 five-year objectives and a set of 60 revised actions, (See Attachment A) which are highly similar to the original set of actions. The wording of objectives 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 1.9 has been updated for greater clarity, relevance, or additional emphasis. Many actions remain unchanged and are in-progress and several feature only very minor wording changes. Some of the original actions are now completed and have been removed from the action lists. These actions include the creation of public dashboard tracking housing supply indicators, the development of by-laws regarding short-term rentals, and hosting the North American Indigenous Games. Additionally, some actions have been removed as they were associated with immediate pandemic recovery or were identified as no longer being relevant or required.

Three entirely new draft actions have been added:

- developing an African Nova Scotian Index, modelled after the Halifax Index, that tracks and reports on economic and well-being indicators for the African Nova Scotian community.
- implementing HRM's Accessibility Strategy, which aims to advance the participation, accessibility and inclusion of individuals who visit, work and live in HRM; and
- implementing the recommendations from HRM's Rural Recreation Strategy. Approved by Regional Council in January 2024, this strategy is the municipality's first comprehensive examination of recreation service delivery and equitable access to parks and recreation services and assets in rural communities. Strategic actions from the plan will further contribute to the Economic Strategy's overall goals and vision.

Alignment and Collaboration

Halifax's 2022–27 economic strategy is a shared roadmap for economic development in the municipality, founded on the values of engagement, inclusion, alignment, and collaboration. Although the strategy focuses on priorities, actions, and targets that are within the mandate of the Halifax Regional Municipality and Halifax Partnership, it is aligned to and helps advance provincial, federal, private sector, and community economic development priorities and goals. Halifax Partnership leads the economic strategy implementation in collaboration with the Halifax Regional Municipality and partners across all sectors.

Measurement and Reporting

Halifax Partnership is responsible for tracking, monitoring, and reporting on progress against Halifax's 2022-27 economic strategy goals and objectives to the Halifax Regional Municipality and the broader community. The Partnership's Halifax Index and Economic Dashboard reports on progress against the 2022–27 economic strategy, providing insight on challenges and opportunities and acting as tools for course correction and adjustment as needed. The Partnership releases the Halifax Index publicly each spring and regularly updates the Economic Dashboard as new data become available. Both are accessible on the Partnership's website (www.halifaxpartnership.com/research-strategy/).

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

People. Planet. Prosperity. is being implemented with existing budgets. There are no new financial implications as a direct result of the material in this report.

RISK CONSIDERATION

No risks were identified.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The economic strategy Action Plan for Years 3-5 has been informed by engagement with Halifax Partnership and HRM business units, the Partnership's Board of Directors and its Emerging Leaders & Innovators Advisory Board, and external partners who share in delivery of some of the actions. These groups included Discover Halifax, Business Improvement Districts, African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity Advisory, Elder, and Youth Councils, and the Halifax Chamber of Commerce. Additionally, consultations were offered to business associations in Fall River, Musquodoboit Harbour, Prospect, Sheet Harbour, and St. Margaret's Bay whose perspectives and engagement will continue to be sought through the regular outreach by the Halifax Partnership's SmartBusiness team.

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 Years 3-5 Action Plan

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**

Action Plan: Years 3-5

JANUARY 2024

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. We also acknowledge the histories, contributions, and legacies of the African Nova Scotian people and communities who have been here for over 400 years.

Thank you to the Economic Strategy Advisory Committee, working groups, and the many businesses, residents, and public, private, post-secondary, and community partners who contributed to the development of *People. Planet. Prosperity. Halifax's Inclusive Economic Strategy 2022–27*, and to representatives from these groups who contributed to the development of this action plan for years three to five of the strategy.

Lead Organization

**HALIFAX
PARTNERSHIP**
CONNECT. COLLABORATE. PROSPER.

Partner

HALIFAX

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GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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

- *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 and impacts our businesses and residents.

MESSAGES

Messages will be included in the final published document.

INTRODUCTION

Economic Strategy Review

In April 2022, Halifax Regional Council approved *People. Planet. Prosperity. Halifax's Inclusive Economic Strategy 2022-27* ("the strategy"). The strategy was developed with input from businesses, all orders of government, economic development partners, residents, and communities from across the municipality to deepen our understanding of key emerging themes and to share ideas, insights, and actions to build a more inclusive, sustainable, resilient, and prosperous Halifax for all. In total, more than 2,500 contributors helped shape the 2022–27 economic strategy.

The new five-year strategy in many regards is a continuation of the previous strategy for the years 2016-21. While significant progress was made over the 2016-21 period, COVID-19 notwithstanding, issues such as long-term demographic challenges are not yet solved and goals to grow the economy, the population, and the labour force remain appropriate. In the new strategy, a top-level goal of improving well-being was added to put more explicit focus on ensuring that *all* residents are included in and can benefit from Halifax's growth and prosperity.

While only two years into the five-year strategy for 2022-27, progress to date suggests that the population and labour force growth goals for 2027 are within reach. It seems less likely that the ambitious 2027 target for GDP growth will be achieved. In the one year of reporting since a baseline value was established in 2022, the well-being metric has indeed improved.

As the challenges and most of the goal areas of the 2016-21 strategy were carried forward into the 2022-27 strategy, so too were many of the detailed actions that have generated success to date. The strategy's Action Plan for Years 1-2 (2022-2024) lists 73 actions, of which 25 are assigned to the Halifax Partnership, 39 are assigned to Halifax Regional Municipality, and nine are assigned to the two organizations jointly. In addition to federal and provincial government partners, many other organizations and communities are identified as key collaborators in successfully achieving various actions.

The new strategy also mirrors the old in that both set out a requirement to review the actions during the second year of the five-year period and refresh them for years three through five to respond to changed economic circumstances, challenges, and new opportunities that have arisen since the strategy's original approval. This document is the culmination of the review and refresh process for years three to five of the 2022-27 economic strategy.

The review process entailed consultations with the Halifax Partnership's and the Halifax Regional Municipality's business units tasked with the lead for specific actions. As issues were identified requiring additional external expertise and input, discussions were held with or offered to other organizations such as the Business Improvement Districts, Discover Halifax, the Advisory, Elder, and Youth Councils for the African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity, and various chambers of commerce representing both urban and rural areas of the municipality. Perspectives and input from these diverse groups are reflected in this new Action Plan for Years 3-5.

As intended, this interim review process has resulted in refinements and fine-tuning of the economic strategy, not an overhaul of its core substance. The Years 1-2 Action Plan included 73 actions. Some actions have been removed as they are now complete (for example, “Host the North American Indigenous Games”) or are no longer relevant (for example, “Maintain essential services and move HRM business services online” – an action crafted very much in the shadow of a still-active pandemic in late 2021 and early 2022). Other actions have been refined and updated in response to changed circumstances and in some cases multiple related actions have been combined. The Years 3-5 Action Plan (2024-2027) includes 60 actions: Halifax Partnership leads 17 actions, HRM leads 38, and five are co-led by both organizations.

The detailed Action Plan for Years 3-5 is included on pages 12-17.

Economic Environment and Impacts

Understanding the ways in which the world has changed since April 2022 was a critical component in developing the new Action Plan. A first key difference is that the last COVID-19-related restrictions were lifted in July 2022. COVID-19 remains with us, people continue to fall ill, and taking measures to protect ourselves and those around us remain important. Many after-effects linger including disruptions to supply chains, changes to the labour market and ways in which businesses operate (including remote work), and looming debt repayments. However, immediate economic impacts of the pandemic, such as mandated business shutdowns, are now behind us.

April 2022 also marked the peak of a rapid run-up in Halifax house prices. Housing availability and affordability, significantly elevated inflation more broadly, and the Bank of Canada’s aggressive interest rate hikes in response to that rise in inflation are now the top-of-mind economic issues both in Halifax and across Canada. The financial positions of many individuals and businesses have become increasingly precarious. As inflation continues to subside, however, many analysts are expecting interest rates to begin to decline through 2024.

Halifax’s 2022 population growth datapoint – from 2021 the population grew by 20,713 people to reach a population of 480,582 – showed not only a record high but was almost twice the value of the previous high. This growth is what we have been wishing for and working towards for the past decade to help us address our long-term demographic challenges and potential impacts on Halifax’s labour market and economic growth. However, recent population growth has significantly exceeded the growth in our housing supply, resulting in rapidly tightening markets, sharply higher prices, and serious problems with availability. Fortunately, housing starts and completions are trending upwards. While there are no quick and easy solutions, all levels of government are clearly seized with addressing housing and homelessness issues.

Despite the influx of people, labour availability remains a serious concern for many employers. Furthermore, recent economic growth also has not kept pace with population growth and productivity statistics have been anemic for some time. Continued and increased investment and innovation will be necessary to maintain business competitiveness and to propel improvements in our standard of living. Halifax continues to benefit from major projects such as the manufacturing of ships for the Royal Canadian Navy by Irving Shipbuilding and the Cogswell District Redevelopment project.

International issues such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Hamas attack on Israel and the Israeli response, an ebb in Canada-China relations, and uncertainty over the future political direction in the United States have had and will continue to have impacts on the Halifax economy, including contributions to inflationary pressures and heightened risks for our exporting firms and for those who move their goods to foreign markets.

Over the course of 2022 and 2023, Halifax was hit by two hurricanes, devastating wildfires, and a one-in-one-thousand-year flood – homes were destroyed and many businesses were severely impacted. Public infrastructure took a major hit, as did public coffers due to relief, repair, and rebuilding expenses. These disasters highlighted the urgency of dealing with climate change and focused attention on the need for residents, businesses, and governments to be better prepared and resilient in the face of future similar events.

While there are many challenges to be addressed, continued positive annual GDP growth is forecasted for the coming years and our population increases continue to help us address our longer-term demographic challenges.

Looking Ahead

Forecasts for the Halifax economy are produced by the Conference Board of Canada. According to their Fall 2023 report:

- Over the 2024-27 period, annual GDP growth will average 1.8%, with a low of 1.0% in 2024 and a high of 2.4% in 2025.
- The unemployment rate will rise to 6.9% in 2024 and then fall steadily to reach 5.8% in 2027.
- Population growth will drop to 2.6% in 2024 and then remain close to 2.0% over each of the next three years.
- Inflation will flatline close to 2.0% from 2024 through 2027.

As Nova Scotia's capital, Halifax's growth and success significantly contributes to provincial population and economic growth, accounting for 47% of the population and 56% of GDP. Halifax's economic strategy has been informed by and is in alignment with provincial priorities and goals to ensure that every Nova Scotian can contribute to and benefit from economic growth which in turn supports improvements to healthcare, access to affordable housing, and advancements in climate action and energy transformation.

We know that economic growth is not without its challenges. The issues facing our city and province are complex and interconnected. The solutions being developed must address the interconnections among the labour market, housing, cost of living, transportation, and climate issues. Solving these challenges will require continued and long-term investment, action, and collaboration among all three orders of government, the private sector, post-secondary institutions, and our communities toward our shared goals and vision for Halifax.

Over the next three years, we will continue to build upon and maximize Halifax's strengths, spirit of partnership and cooperation, and our best economic opportunities to build an inclusive, sustainable, and prosperous Halifax for all.

BUILDING ON STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Successful inclusive economic development leverages and builds upon strengths and opportunities that are aligned to a shared vision, values, and principles. To achieve our vision for Halifax, we will continue to leverage our ocean advantage, invest in climate action and the green economy, build upon our educated and innovative community, and showcase and strengthen Halifax's excellent urban, suburban, and rural lifestyle.



Ocean Advantage

Halifax is Canada's ocean city — a hub for marine science, R&D, business, defence, and tourism - offering local and global ocean innovators and companies access to a deep and diverse ecosystem of customers, partners, and suppliers. The ocean drives our economy and provides competitive advantages in key sectors like ocean tech, cleantech, defence, advanced manufacturing, IT, and transportation and logistics. 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.



Educated & Innovative

Halifax is an educated and entrepreneurial city that is fast becoming one of Canada's most exciting tech hubs with a globally recognized innovation district. Halifax's combination of drive and discovery, technology and talent, and collaborative ecosystem is fueling the growth of hundreds of viable startups and scaleups. The city's seven 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 including IT, life sciences, ocean tech, financial services, and cleantech.



Commitment to Climate Action

Halifax has one of the most ambitious climate action plans in Canada, HalifACT, with a goal to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. Halifax is a hub for clean and climate tech innovators and collaborations between research centres, post-secondary institutions, incubators, businesses, and government. The city's innovation ecosystem is supporting the growth of companies like homegrown NOVONIX spun out of world-class battery technology research at Dalhousie University. Halifax's commitment to climate action and sustainability holds exciting possibilities and growth opportunities.



Excellent Urban, Suburban, Rural Lifestyle

Halifax is an enviable place to live, work, play, and visit. Our city offers the amenities and opportunities of a major urban centre combined with rural charm, natural beauty, and a coastal culture and lifestyle. Residents enjoy life in more than 200 rural, urban, and suburban communities that boast a variety of businesses, dining, nightlife, and arts, entertainment, and recreation options. Halifax's quality of life continues to be a considerable advantage and key driver of attracting new residents, businesses, and visitors. Recent growth has added to challenges in housing and health care; however, the municipality is working diligently with partners on solutions.

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

ECONOMIC STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

STRATEGIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES YEARS 3-5



Promote & Maximize Inclusive and Sustainable Growth

Grow GDP to
\$25 billion
 by 2027

- Support business resiliency, response, and recovery from economic challenges and disasters.
- Make Halifax an easier and more productive place to do business.
- Work nationally and internationally to support companies looking to locate and grow in Halifax.
- Accelerate innovation and entrepreneurship.

- Pursue and maximize the economic impact and social benefits of 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 support economic and business growth.



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, Work and Visit

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 downtown, main streets, and rural centres.

ALIGNMENT AND COLLABORATION

Everyone has a role to play in driving Halifax’s inclusive economic growth and prosperity.

Halifax’s 2022–27 economic strategy is a shared roadmap for economic development, founded on the values of engagement, inclusion, alignment, and collaboration. Collectively, this strategy is ours to own and implement together to achieve our vision for Halifax.

Halifax’s economic strategy focuses on priorities, actions, and targets that are within the mandate of the Halifax Regional Municipality and Halifax Partnership and are best delivered in collaboration with partners. It is aligned to and supports the advancement of provincial, federal, private sector and community economic development goals and priorities.

This updated strategy includes five-year goals and objectives, years 3-5 actions, lead organization(s), and progress measures. It will inform and shape municipal decision-making and activity and guide the activities of Halifax Partnership and other economic development and business agencies over the next three years. It will also influence and align key players and partners to support Halifax’s inclusive economic growth. 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 alignment, partnership, and collaboration to achieve our goals. We will continue to build on progress by working as a team to grow the economies of Halifax and Nova Scotia. Halifax Partnership and the Halifax Regional Municipality will continue to convene and collaborate with economic leaders and diverse groups to develop and implement integrated, long-term solutions to complex economic and social issues. Engaging the broader community is also critical to success. Halifax Partnership and the Halifax Regional Municipality work closely with partners to build relationships with and engage diverse groups and communities across the municipality in implementing the strategy.

ACTION PLAN: YEARS 3-5¹

Promote and Maximize Inclusive and Sustainable Growth					
Grow GDP to \$25 Billion by 2027					
5-Year Objectives		Actions: Years 3-5		Lead	Measurement
1.1. Support business resiliency, response, and recovery from economic challenges and disasters.	1.	Help businesses prepare for unexpected disruptions, respond to disasters, and navigate through the ever-changing business landscape.		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
	2.	Maintain essential services and online service delivery for HRM Business Services.		HRM	
1.2. Make Halifax an easier and more productive place to do business.	3.	Transition regulatory modernization efforts into a broader policy modernization approach that will build on existing performance excellence expertise to streamline policy navigation for both residents and businesses.		HRM	
	4.	Seek legislative changes from the Province as required to grow Halifax's economy.		HRM	
	5.	Continue Halifax Partnership's Business Retention, Expansion and Aftercare Program (SmartBusiness) to help businesses throughout Halifax Regional Municipality diagnose and address business challenges, pursue growth opportunities, increase productivity, and explore adoption of digital technologies to increase competitiveness.		HRM	
	6.	Support economic development and tourism in rural HRM through dedicated full-time resources.		HP	
1.3. Work nationally and internationally to support companies looking to locate and grow in Halifax.	7.	Continue the Sell Halifax Program to support new business development in strategic sectors aligned to provincial and federal priorities.		HP	
	8.	Leverage regional, national, and international partnerships to increase investment and R&D collaborations.		HP/HRM	
	9.	Implement Halifax's Green Economy Strategy to grow innovative green businesses and jobs.		HP	
1.4. Accelerate innovation and entrepreneurship.	10.	Collaborate with private, public, and post-secondary partners to support the development and growth of innovation-driven, inclusive, and sustainable entrepreneurship in strategic sectors.		HP	

¹ Green font indicates actions that are wholly new. Blue font indicates actions that are substantially modified from the Years 1-2 Action Plan.

Promote and Maximize Inclusive and Sustainable Growth			
Grow GDP to \$25 Billion by 2027			
5-Year Objectives	Actions: Years 3-5	Lead	Measurement
	11. Work with the Port and its PIER initiative to address transportation and logistics issues in Halifax.	HRM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing starts and sale prices Apartment rents and vacancy rates Labour, income, and other statistics for Indigenous and African Nova Scotian residents
1.5. Pursue and maximize the economic impact and social benefits of major projects.	12. Complete construction of the Cogswell District Redevelopment Project and ensure socio-economic benefits to the surrounding community.	HRM	
	13. Redevelop the Windsor Street Exchange.	HRM	
	14. Secure federal funding to undertake key Infrastructure projects.	HRM	
	1.6. Increase housing stock.	15. 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.	
16. Implement HRM's Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) Initiatives to support housing affordability and grow the supply of housing.		HRM	
17. Identify and implement internal process changes to quicken housing approvals and starts.		HRM	
18. 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.	19. Ensure an adequate supply of industrial lands for near- and long-term growth.	HRM	
	20. Review the Regional Plan that outlines the vision, principles and long-range policies guiding future growth throughout the municipality.	HRM	
	21. Continue the long-term modernization of HRM land use by-laws, including the completion of revised suburban and rural planning strategies.	HRM	
1.8. Grow Indigenous and African Nova Scotian economic prosperity.	22. Consider and, where possible, incorporate community benefits as part of the development approval process in HRM communities.	HP/HRM	
	23. Support the development of Wije’winen, the reimagined Mi’kmaq Native Friendship Centre.	HRM	
	24. Explore opportunities to support Indigenous partners’ economic development priorities.	HP/HRM	
	25. Implement the ANS Road to Economic Prosperity 3-5 Year Plan to advance ANS community and economic development priorities.	HP/HRM	

Promote and Maximize Inclusive and Sustainable Growth			
Grow GDP to \$25 Billion by 2027			
5-Year Objectives	Actions: Years 3-5	Lead	Measurement
1.9 Provide research and actionable insight needed to support economic and business growth.	26. Develop and publish a data product modelled on the Halifax Index that focuses on the African Nova Scotian community.	HP	
	27. Provide the most up-to-date economic information on Halifax to help businesses locate, stay, and grow.	HP	
	28. Monitor and communicate the economic strategy's progress to stakeholders and adapt actions as required.	HP	
	29. Develop and publish the Halifax Index - a single information source of annual data on the state of Halifax's economic and community progress.	HP	

Attract, Retain, and Develop Talent			
Increase population to 525,000 and grow the labour force to 310,000 by 2027			
5-Year Objectives	Actions: Years 3-5	Lead	Measurement
2.1. Attract talent to Halifax from across Canada and around the world.	30. Help employers recruit international talent through the Atlantic Immigration Program, Nova Scotia Nominee Program, Global Talent Strategy, and other government immigration programs.	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
	31. With industry and government partners, undertake targeted on-the-ground recruitment efforts nationally and internationally to meet labour needs.	HP	
2.2. Welcome immigrants and connect them to best-in-class settlement services.	32. 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.	33. Continue the Connector Program that connects newcomers and local and international graduates to professional networks and resources needed to build a career in Halifax.	HP	
	34. Increase African Nova Scotians’ attachment to the labour force through mentorship, professional networking, and connections to training and development programs and job opportunities.	HP	
	35. Leverage HRM’s Social Value Framework (Procurement Administrative Order - Appendix B) to strengthen workforce and supplier diversity.	HRM	
2.4. Prepare business to meet current and future work needs.	36. Connect newcomers, African Nova Scotians/persons of African descent, Mi'kmaq/Indigenous Peoples, youth, and persons with disabilities to employment opportunities at HRM.	HRM	
	37. Work with businesses to create and connect to workforce development resources and programs such as work-integrated learning, micro-credentialing, pre-apprenticeship, and apprenticeship opportunities.	HP	

Make Halifax a Better Place to Live, Work and Visit			
Increase residents' well-being on a continuous basis			
5-Year Objectives	Actions: Years 3-5	Lead	Measurement
3.1 Increase Halifax's environmental sustainability and resiliency.	38. Implement the private sector endorsed CEO Climate Action Charter to support Halifax businesses and organizations in reducing GHG emissions and increasing climate resiliency.	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
	39. Support businesses in taking actions to reduce emissions and green their operations through relevant programs and funding.	HP	
	40. 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	
	41. Continue decarbonizing public transit.	HRM	
	42. With partners, assess and upgrade critical infrastructure to withstand current and future climate impacts.	HRM	
	43. Manage and protect Halifax's ecosystems.	HRM	
	44. 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.	45. Implement the Accessibility Strategy to advance full participation, accessibility, and inclusion for individuals who visit, work, and live in HRM.	HRM	
	46. Increase low-income groups' and individuals' access to recreation programs and other municipal services.	HRM	
	47. Ensure HRM's culture investments and commemoration reflect Halifax's geography and diversity.	HRM	
	48. Work with Discover Halifax to support the implementation of 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.	49. 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	
	50. 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	

Make Halifax a Better Place to Live, Work and Visit			
Increase residents' well-being on a continuous basis			
5-Year Objectives	Actions: Years 3-5	Lead	Measurement
	51. Continue implementing Integrated Mobility Plan recommendations to make HRM more connected, sustainable, affordable, and healthy.	HRM	
	52. Prepare a new Halifax Transit service plan to align service with demand, growth, and development.	HRM	
3.4 Strengthen the dynamism of our downtowns, main streets, and rural centres.	53. Finalize and implement a plan for the former Memorial Library that maintains Grafton Park as a green space.	HRM	
	54. Support and promote business development and tourism by activating public spaces, fostering special events, and facilitating entertainment programming.	HRM	
	55. Create and implement a plan to redevelop downtown Dartmouth infrastructure that builds on plans to revitalize Alderney Landing and renovate Alderney Gate Library.	HRM	
	56. Continue working with Halifax Water and Halifax Parks to complete the daylighting of the Sawmill River through downtown Dartmouth to Dartmouth Cove.	HRM	
	57. 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	
	58. Enhance green spaces and programming opportunities in green spaces in the Regional Centre.	HRM	
	59. Continue with placemaking and beautification efforts.	HRM	
	60. Implement the recommendations from the Rural Recreation Strategy.	HRM	

IMPLEMENTATION

Halifax Partnership leads the economic strategy implementation and is responsible for tracking, monitoring, and reporting on progress against goals and objectives to the Halifax Regional Municipality and the broader community. The Partnership leads 17 of the actions defined in the strategy in collaboration with its private, public, post-secondary, and community partners. The Halifax Regional Municipality leads 38 actions and uses the strategy as a guide for making decisions and leading initiatives in support of the goals and objectives. Five actions are co-led and implemented by both organizations in collaboration with partners.

Governance

Halifax Partnership Board of Directors

Halifax Partnership's Board of Directors provides 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 provide oversight and ensure the strategy's goals are aligned with the municipality's programs and economic priorities.

Engagement

The Halifax Regional Municipality and Halifax Partnership will continue to engage with a variety of partners to implement the years 3-5 actions. 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

MEASUREMENT

The Halifax Index

The Halifax Index tracks 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, measure and report on progress against the 2022–27 economic strategy, providing insight on new challenges and opportunities, and acting as tools for course correction and adjustment as needed. The Halifax Partnership releases the Halifax Index publicly each spring.



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