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**Item No. 13.1.1**  
**Community Planning & Economic**  
**Development Standing Committee**  
**July 9, 2024**

**TO:** Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

**-Original Signed-**

**SUBMITTED BY:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** June 7, 2024

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

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**RECOMMENDATION REPORT**

**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 June 7, 2024 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 included 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 provides an update on actions within the following 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, Work and Visit.

In March 2024, the strategy was reviewed for Years 3-5 to ensure all actions were still relevant and to remove any actions completed within the first two years. The above strategic goals are supported by five-year objectives that are, in turn, supported by actions implemented by HRM, by the Partnership, and co-led by both organizations.

Below are highlights of Partnership and HRM activities from October 2023 to March 2024 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 post pandemic, 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 real GDP to \$25 billion (in 2007 dollars) by 2027.

The Conference Board of Canada’s most recent estimates and forecasts have Halifax’s GDP growing by 1.4% in 2023 and by 0.8% in 2024. Annual growth rates out to 2028 are forecasted to be approximately 2.5% each year. 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 3.4% and 2.8% are required. This is significantly above current forecast levels.

Highlights October 2023 to March 2024 related to promoting and maximizing inclusive and sustainable growth include:

- **African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity (REP)** - REP staff worked to help community members understand legislative processes and steps required to protect community properties and boundaries, and successfully advocated for HRM to hire three dedicated planners in 2023-24 and five in 2024-25 to work with African Nova Scotian communities.
- **Business Retention and Expansion** - SmartBusiness Program team supported 365 businesses in the past year. Employers’ biggest challenges continue to be labour availability and housing for staff new to the region. Twenty-two (22) new to Halifax businesses were provided Aftercare support.
- **Rural Economic Development** – This action continues to be supported with a dedicated Account Executive made possible with dedicated funding from HRM. During the fiscal year, 143 rural HRM businesses were supported. As a result of the wildfire response earlier in the year, many businesses became exposed to the services of the Smart Business Program that may have been previously unaware of this resource.
- **Cogswell District Redevelopment Project** - The Cogswell Project is 50% complete and is on track for completion in December 2025. Phase one was completed in October 2023 and the project is six months into Phase 2. The majority of interchange structures have been removed and a significant portion of new underground services have been installed under new road alignments. Completed portions of the project can be seen at Granville Square, Proctor Street, Bells Lane and the area in front of Baton Rouge restaurant and Marriott Hotel.
- **Foster innovation** - Halifax Partnership designed and delivered innovation challenges, with partners including HalifACT, National Zero Waste Council, Circular Opportunity Innovation Launchpad (COIL), and Halifax Food Policy Alliance that resulted in winners being provided funding and support to prototype and test climate action and food security solutions. In partnership with the HalifACT team, opportunities were provided for startups, scaleups, community organizations, and established companies to develop and test climate action ideas and prototypes that could help reduce carbon emissions.
- **Housing in HRM** - Staff have drafted a number of regulatory changes to increase density and allowable heights and reduce parking requirements, within the Regional Centre and serviced Suburban areas. These changes were released for public engagement in February 2024, and before Regional Council in spring 2024 for approval. This is the first deliverable in HRM’s Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) Action Plan. A staff team is being created to implement the other ten

initiatives in HRM’s HAF Action Plan, with implementation work getting fully underway in spring 2024. In total the eleven initiatives are intended to create 2600 net new residential units.

- **Implementation of the Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP)** - Several IMP initiatives are underway including: A new 'TDM Program Lead' position has been created, will start on April 22, 2024 with a goal to have this position develop an updated TDM Program. Currently planning year three of HRM's e-bike program. Additionally, a land acquisition strategy to secure corridors and sites for both short- and long-term mobility projects on Robie/Young Street is complete, initiated in summer 2022 with anticipated completion within 3-5 years. Other land acquisition projects including Bayers Road (Land acquisition work 90% complete, initiated in 2020 and anticipated completion in spring 2024) and Herring Cove Road (Land acquisition work not yet commenced) are underway or upcoming.

## 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.

Halifax continues to post significant population growth numbers (4.1%) between 2022 and 2023, bringing its total population to 492,199. Annual growth in the three prior years ranged from 1.7% to 3.6%. If the population growth rate remains above 1.6%, the 2027 and 2037 population goals will be reached. Over eleven thousand jobs were added in and 2023, while the labour force participation rate expanded slightly to 68.0% in 2023 up from 67.5% in 2022. To meet the labour force goal of 310,000 in 2027, annual growth of 2.7% would be required. The 2023 growth rate of 5.0% is the highest seen in several years.

Recent Partnership and HRM workforce development highlights are:

- **Halifax Connector Program** - In the past year, work with Connectors and Connectees resulted in 187 Connector Participants finding career jobs in Halifax. 100 immigrants, 65 international grads, 12 local grads, 5 Ukrainian refugees and 5 inter-provincial newcomers.
- **Recruitment of International Workers** - Halifax Partnership’s labour market specialists were part of the Province of Nova Scotia’s delegations at national and international recruitment fairs in London, England; Paris, France; Rabat, Morocco; and Toronto, Ontario- representing thirty-four (34) job postings from fifteen (15) Halifax businesses. Work continues to work with suitable applicants and employers to advance job offers and begin immigration process. Participation in the recruitment fairs and awareness generated through marketing efforts resulted in approximately 5,000 applications to promoted job opportunities with Halifax employers and a total of 6,705 booth visitors were reported by Destination Canada at the Halifax booth including virtual, in-person, and online meetings.

## 3. Make Halifax a better place to live, work and visit

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.

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 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 showed improvement, but in 2023 there was a significant decline with 22.1% of respondents reporting a low level of well being.

Action highlights under this “quality of life” goal are:

- **Climate Action Charter** - Four new companies signed on as signatories to the CEO Climate Action Charter during the period bringing total participation to twenty-two (22).
- **Enhance Green Spaces and Programming Opportunities** - In 2023/24 Parks & Recreation advanced work on a range of Open Space Plans. Steps included refinement of approach and methodology related to the Peace & Friendship Park re-design. Work continued on the National Urban Park Initiative, including securing additional funding for consultation, design and capital work in relation to municipal lands within the project site. The Halifax Common Master Plan was completed and approved by Regional Council with the approval to advance planning on the Wanderers Block. A Request for Proposals has been issued for a consultant to develop a functional plan for the Wanderers Block and do pre-design scoping of individual facilities within that block as part of the next steps for this project. Staff completed the Strategy on Park Lighting, which is undergoing review and approval before Regional Council consideration in 2024.
- **Manage and protect Halifax’s ecosystems** - Several actions are underway to support this initiative including:
  - *Financial Assessments:* HRM staff are working to determine how to integrate the financial aspect of natural asset management into our systems and an inventory of natural assets in HRM is complete. Phase II is underway, to do a more detailed and localized assessment of some of these natural assets to determine their 'value' in the Nine Mile Rivershed.
  - *Integrated Pest Management Strategy:* Staff have attended workshops, meetings, and conferences to expand HRM’s network within the invasive species management community throughout the Atlantic Region. New relationships have been built with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Parks Canada, Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources & Renewables, Nova Scotia Invasive Species Council (NSISC), the Invasive Species Centre, New Brunswick Invasive Species Council, and the Canadian Council of Invasive Species, among others.
  - *Beach Management:* Health Canada released more stringent regulations for recreational water quality standards. Staff have proposed changes to the water quality monitoring protocol to adapt to a reduction in the maximum acceptable E coli concentration in recreational waters.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

No financial implications at this time.

### **RISK CONSIDERATIONS**

No risk considerations were identified.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

No community engagement at this time.

**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 and 2 Action Updates

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A copy of this report can be obtained online at [halifax.ca](http://halifax.ca) or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Denise A. Ryan, Government Relations & External Affairs 902.877.4870

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## ATTACHEMENT A

Economic Strategy Actions		HRM/HP Update (October 2023-March 2024)
#	Action	
1	Help businesses prepare for unexpected disruptions, respond to disasters, and navigate through the ever-changing business landscape.	Halifax Partnership SmartBusiness team delivered four Business Continuity workshops in March with partners in the suburban and rural HRM communities of Tantallon, Sackville, Sheet Harbour, and Fall River. In the past year, there have been 1,112 views of the Business Continuity Toolkit, 1,155 downloads of toolkit materials and 1,372 views of Business Continuity Toolkit webinar videos. The Partnership continues to offer their Virtual Adviser Program to Halifax businesses in partnership with Seasoned Pros. Focus was on supporting business transitions, scale-up challenges and continuity planning.
2	Maintain essential services and online service delivery for HRM Business Services.	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
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.	Staff have worked with the Province Nova Scotia on various regulatory modernization projects. Moving forward this work will shift into its next phase (Policy Modernization work) to forward work including Physician Administrative Burden, assistance with Governance reviews and reports, and collaboration reports pilots across BU and staff teams, (Pilot 1 report destined for Council August 24). Also, a recommended approach to assessing motions and delegating report and a Briefing Note library under design with migration and access to follow.
4	Seek legislative changes from the Province as required to grow Halifax's economy.	During the period covered, four (4) new legislative requests were submitted to the province, with those most relevant to the Economic Strategy including: 1) Request to waive Halifax Water Regional Development Charges for Affordable Housing; and 2) Request for the authority to impose an additional residential property tax on vacant lots located within areas of HRM. During the same period, four (4) of HRM's outstanding legislative requests were enacted/addressed, either in whole or in part, by provincial legislative changes. Those most relevant to the Economic Strategy include: The authority for the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to discharge Development Agreements; The authority to provide tax exemptions for destroyed commercial properties; and The request to require short-term rental platform operators (such as Airbnb) to remit fees collected for the marketing levy directly to the Municipality.

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 adopt digital technologies to increase competitiveness.	SmartBusiness Program team supported 365 businesses in the past year. Employers' biggest challenges continue to be labour availability and housing for staff who may be new to the region. 22 new to Halifax businesses were provided Aftercare support.
6	Support economic development and tourism in rural HRM through dedicated full-time resources.	Rural Economic Development continues to be supported with a dedicated Account Executive made possible with dedicated funding from HRM. During the fiscal year, 143 rural HRM businesses were supported. As a result of the wildfire response earlier in the year, many businesses became exposed to the services of the Smart Business Program that may have been previously unaware of this resource.
7	Continue the Sell Halifax Program to support new business development in strategic sectors aligned to provincial and federal priorities.	Halifax continues to be a sought-after location for business expansions and relocations. Between April 1, 2023 and March 31, 2024 14 companies chose Halifax, bringing an anticipated 429 new jobs. In addition, Cognizant, a company attracted to Halifax in 2023 has committed to an additional 1,000 jobs in Halifax, bringing the total expected jobs from our business attraction work to 1,429 this year. The team continues to work closely with partners to put forward a collaborative Team Nova Scotia approach to awareness building and business attraction efforts.
8	Leverage regional, national, and international partnerships to increase investment and R&D collaborations.	As a member of the Global Institute of Innovation Districts (GIID), Halifax Partnership engaged in knowledge-sharing and peer learning with representatives from over 40 innovation districts in 15 countries. Last year, the Partnership worked with GIID to identify and assess Halifax's R&D and commercial strengths, gaps, and development opportunities. Findings were presented and shared with innovation ecosystem partners in Halifax.
9	Implement Halifax's Green Economy Strategy to grow innovative green businesses and jobs.	Halifax Partnership's business attraction team actively promotes Halifax's green economy to national and international cleantech, climate tech and green economy related businesses.
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.	Halifax Partnership designed and delivered innovation challenges, with partners including HalifACT, National Zero Waste Council, Circular Opportunity Innovation Launchpad (COIL), and Halifax Food Policy Alliance that resulted in winners being provided funding and support to prototype and test climate action and food security solutions. In partnership with the HalifACT team we provided opportunities for startups, scaleups, community organizations, and established companies to develop and test climate action ideas and prototypes that could help reduce carbon emissions



11	Work with the Port and its PIER initiative to address transportation and logistics issues in Halifax.	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).
12	Complete construction of the Cogswell District Redevelopment Project and ensure socio-economic benefits to the surrounding community.	The Cogswell Project is 50% complete and is on track for completion in December 2025. Phase one was completed in October 2023; the project is six months into Phase 2. The majority of interchange structures have been removed and a significant portion of new underground services have been installed under new road alignments. Completed portions of the project can be seen at Granville Square, Proctor Street, Bells Lane and the area in front of Baton Rouge restaurant and Marriott Hotel. Six months of Phase two construction includes the following construction highlights: demolition of the Cogswell Street ramp, substantial completion of the roundabout, new Barrington and Cogswell streets, partial completion of Granville Square, and partial completion of Bells Lane. Respecting social benefits, diversity objectives set out in the project tender and construction contract regarding African Nova Scotian workers have been achieved while work continues on diversity objectives set for Mi'kmaw workers and diverse suppliers. Additionally, a request for proposal (RFP) for development of an Art & Storytelling Strategy was released on September 28, 2023. As part of this process, facilitators have been engaged to dialogue with African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaw communities regarding opprtunities for their stories to be represented in the Cogswell District. It is anticipated engagement will commence in May 2024.
13	Redevelop the Windsor Street Exchange.	The Windsor Street Exchange Redevelopment Project involves the redesign of the intersection of Bedford Highway, Windsor Street and Lady Hammond Road. The Windsor Street Exchange is one of five key access points to the Halifax Peninsula and is a bottleneck or "pinch point" in the road network carrying approximately 50,000 vehicles per day. The reconfiguration of the Windsor Street Exchange will have significant benefits for local traffic flow and freight movement. It will also reduce the amount of truck traffic in the downtown core, improve transit and active transportation connectivity, as well as help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. To date along the Bedford Highway - Preliminary design (Windsor Street Exchange to Kearney Lake Road) is 99% complete. Staff are currently working to develop a preferred functional design that will be presented to Regional Council for approval in May 2024. 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.

14	Secure federal funding to undertake key Infrastructure projects.	HRM has secured notable intergovernmental cost-sharing during the period covered, including: \$220,686,984 under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) for the Mill Cove Ferry Service Phase 2 – Construction; \$367,000 under the ICIP for the Highway 101 Landfill Gas Control System project; and \$50,000 under the Active Transportation Fund for the High Visibility Crosswalk Markings at Signalized Intersections. HRM has also been implementing the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) agreement with the federal government, under which HRM will receive approximately \$79 million in federal funding. In addition to the above, HRM has submitted a number of intergovernmental funding applications during the period covered, which are currently at various stages of assessment. Some highlights include proposals submitted under the following programs: Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund (Federal), Zero Emissions Transit Fund (Federal), Flood Hazard Identification and Mapping Program (Federal), Municipal Capacity Growth Program (Prov), Municipal Floodline Mapping Program (Prov), NS Sustainable Communities Challenge (Prov)
<b>Actions: Years 3-5</b>		
#	<b>Action</b>	
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.	The draft Regional Plan review was released to Regional Council June 20, 2023, and public engagement was completed July-October 2023. The What We Heard Report was brought to Council in December 2023. The full amendment package is targeting Council review and approval in Spring 2024. Phase 5 will begin immediately following Regional Council approval of the plan. A staff report proposing an interim density bonus program was approved by Council in March 2023. Planning & Development continues to work with the Real Estate team while developing the program. Staff continue to explore tools used by other municipalities to support the development of affordable housing. Over the next year staff will begin work on the development of an housing and affordable housing strategy. A staff report outlining the results of the work from WSP and the proposed framework for an inclusionary zoning program in HRM was presented to Council in May 2023. Additional work on program design is underway and is expected to be brought forward in 2024/25.
16	Implement HRM's Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) Initiatives to support housing affordability and grow the supply of housing.	Staff have drafted a number of regulatory changes to increase density and allowable heights and reduce parking requirements, within the Regional Centre and serviced Suburban areas. These changes were released for public engagement in February 2024, and before Regional Council in spring 2024 for approval. This is the first deliverable in HRM's HAF Action Plan. A staff team is being created to implement the other ten initiatives in HRM's HAF Action Plan, with implementation work getting fully underway in spring 2024. In total the eleven initiatives are intended to create 2600 net new residential units.
17	Identify and implement internal process changes to quicken housing approvals and starts.	P&D supported this work through the creation of internal permit reports and dashboards, which allow managers and supervisors to quickly identify application specific slowdowns. Access to the data in this way, provides the ability for staff to understand bottlenecks and areas for potential improvement. P&D also focused on customer service driven improvements to the PPL&C system staff and customer interfaces. These include improved instruction and navigation of application processes and requirements,

		updates to the required inspections area and, improved GIS source data to create efficiencies for reviewers/approval groups.
18	Consider establishing a municipal housing corporation or a community land trust to create affordable housing in Halifax.	HRM supported this work through participation in monthly community advisory meetings led by the United Way Halifax. The United Way has been identified as an interim Community Land Trust operator. The final report was submitted to CMHC in March 2024. HRM will continue to support this group and community land trusts initiatives as opportunities arise.
19	Ensure an adequate supply of industrial lands for near- and long-term growth.	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. For fiscal 2023/24 120 acres of serviced lots were brought to market through the construction Phase 13-1 of Burnside Industrial Park. The Tender for Phase 13-2A Burnside had also been awarded in March 2023 and will see the construction of 44 acres of fully serviced new lot inventory. With construction of Phase 13-2A to start Spring 2024, it is anticipated the completed lots may be available to the market by the fourth quarter of Fiscal 2024-25.
20	Review the Regional Plan that outlines the vision, principles and long-range policies guiding future growth throughout the municipality.	The draft Regional Plan review was released to Regional Council June 20, 2023, and public engagement was completed July-October 2023. The What We Heard Report was brought to Council in December 2023. The full amendment package is targeting Council review and approval in Spring 2024. Phase 5 will begin immediately following Regional Council approval of the plan.
21	Continue the long-term modernization of HRM land use by-laws, including the completion of revised suburban and rural planning strategies.	Hired a dedicated Planner III for Rural Community Planning in August 2023 and a dedicated Planner I in November 2023. Released guiding principles for the Rural Community Planning program as part of the draft Regional Plan in June 2023. The Regional Plan, when adopted, will provide guidance for this program. Dalhousie students have been working with the Rural Team in early 2024 to undertake some background research. RFP for regional groundwater to be released in 2024. A report was initiating the Suburban Plan was brought forward in July 2024. This report provided a 4-year workplan. Since then, through the Urgent Changes for Housing/Housing Accelerator Fund, staff have been working ahead on opportunity sites that align with Regional Council's direction for growth along proposed rapid transit corridors. Staff have also received feedback that a 4-year workplan is too lengthy and anticipate revising the workplan with a shorter timeframe. A report with a new workplan and further details on engagement will be coming forward before December 2024.

22	Consider and, where possible, incorporate community benefits as part of the development approval process in HRM communities.	REP continues to work with HRM and the Provincial government to grant HRM the power to develop, enter into, and enforce Community Benefit Agreements.
23	Support the development of Wije'winen, the reimagined Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre.	A consultant has been hired to review HRM work with and in Indigenous communities. This will include looking at what the municipality is doing to support the new Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre. Final report on this evaluation to be received July 2024
24	Explore opportunities to support Indigenous partners' economic development priorities.	The Halifax Partnership SmartBusiness team is working collaboratively with Sipekne'katik First Nation. Sipekne'katik has requested support to establish their own Business Retention and Expansion program and our team will be offering formalized training and ongoing support to their staff as they launch their program. In addition, the SmartBusiness team is supporting Indigenous businesses selling their products on the Halifax Waterfront at the Treaty Truckhouse by helping them explore eCommerce options, and providing basic product photography and copywriting training and tools.
25	Implement the ANS Road to Economic Prosperity 3-5 Year Plan to advance ANS community and economic development priorities.	REP worked closely with the CAO and HRM's Department of Planning and Development to help community members understand legislative processes and steps required to protect community properties and boundaries, and successfully advocated for HRM to hire three dedicated planners in 2023-24 and five in 2024-25 to work with ANS communities.
26	Develop and publish a data product modelled on the Halifax Index that focuses on the African Nova Scotian community.	The African Nova Scotian Prosperity and Well-being Index was developed and shared with community during the period and was launched to the public on May 22, 2024.
27	Provide the most up-to-date economic information on Halifax to help businesses locate, stay, and grow.	Halifax Economic Dashboard was maintained and updated throughout the period.
28	Monitor and communicate the economic strategy's progress to stakeholders and adapt actions as required.	Ongoing work tracking and communicating progress, report to be included in Halifax Index to be presented to the public on June 6, 2024.
29	Develop and publish the Halifax Index - a single information source of annual data on the state of Halifax's economic and community progress.	Work began on the 2024 edition of the Halifax Index to be launched to the public on June 6, 2024.
<b>Actions: Years 3-5</b>		
<b>#</b>	<b>Action</b>	

30	Help employers recruit international talent through the Atlantic Immigration Program, Nova Scotia Nominee Program, Global Talent Strategy, and other government immigration programs.	The Atlantic Immigration Pilot continued to provide pathways to permanent residence and after meeting with over 350 employers, 123 were identified as “immigration ready” and referred to Nova Scotia’s Immigration and Population Growth team.
31	With industry and government partners, undertake targeted on-the-ground recruitment efforts nationally and internationally to meet labour needs.	Halifax Partnership’s labour market specialists were part of the Province of Nova Scotia’s delegations at national and international recruitment fairs in London, England; Paris, France; Rabat, Morocco; and Toronto, Ontario- representing 34 job postings from 15 Halifax businesses. Work continues to work with suitable applicants and employers to advance job offers and begin immigration process. Participation in the recruitment fairs and awareness generated through marketing efforts resulted in approximately 5,000 applications to promoted job opportunities with Halifax employers and a total of 6,705 booth visitors were reported by Destination Canada at the Halifax booth including virtual, in-person, and online meetings.
32	Review and implement HRM’s Immigration Strategy and manage the Local Immigration Partnership to create a welcoming and inclusive community for newcomers.	The Local Immigration Partnership project continues to move forward. New grant request has been submitted to IRCC for 2025-30 funding - still in review process. Supporting sub-committees have been very active this year under the leadership of the project Manager. Immigration Strategy deliverables included: In collaboration with community safety unit and the YMCA, the Immigrant services advisor led the work on two projects - Youth violence prevention and intervention project and Half day Intercultural training dedicated to HRM staff who support youth; Diversity and Inclusion team developed a full day Inter-Culture competency training that will be offered to all HRM staff to provide them with essential set of skills needed in the modern workplace by learning how to interact better with people from different backgrounds; In collaboration with PFE and Parks/ REC, assessed the Zatsman Sportsplex swimming facility for any needed changes to allow the facility to offer Private swim times for Muslim women; To expand our connections and engagement with immigrant communities, meetings were held with Chinese and, Nigerian community leaders; Meeting will also be held with with Indian, Afghani, Korean, Somali, Lebanese communities to discuss the Immigration Strategy and possible collaboration opportunities
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.	In the past year, work with Connectors and Connectees resulted in 187 Connector Participants finding career jobs in Halifax. 100 immigrants, 65 international grads, 12 local grads, 5 Ukrainian refugees and 5 inter-provincial newcomers.
34	Increase African Nova Scotians’ attachment to the labour force through mentorship, professional networking, and connections to training and development programs and job opportunities.	During the period, it was determined the ANS Connector Program would not be successful if simply managed as a separate stream but in the same way the primary Connector Program functions. As a result, the REP team decided to take a different approach and the program is now being stood up as the ANS Workforce Attachment Program.
35	Leverage HRM’s Social Value Framework (Procurement Administrative Order - Appendix B) to strengthen workforce and supplier diversity.	Development of a comprehensive framework is part of the 5 and 10 year strategic plan for Procurement, which will include vendor consultation. The roster of social value caterers has been developed and will launch in the

		near future. Work on the framework will be ongoing as we refine and enhance our approach to inclusion of social value in procurement at HRM
36	Connect newcomers, African Nova Scotians/persons of African descent, Mi'kmaq/Indigenous Peoples, youth and persons with disabilities to employment opportunities at HRM.	Significant work continues to be done to move this forward included the municipality's participation in culturally specific job fairs, outreach to community, ensuring job postings are shared with community networks. From October 2023 to March 2024, the Talent Acquisition team in partnership with the Diversity & Inclusion team represented HRM at 39 events promoting employment. An addition of a new temporary resource was proposed to support newcomers. The Immigration Specialist will be responsible for leading the adjudication of immigration files for newcomer employees who are recruited and/or existing employees for hard to fill positions within all departments of Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM). This position will collaborate with the Diversity & Inclusion team on HRM's immigration strategy and build relationships throughout the organization and communities to ensure newly hired foreign workers are supported with the immigration pathways related to employment. Recruiting for this position will begin once the budget has been approved. A consultant has been hired to review HRM work with and in Indigenous communities. This will include looking at what the municipality is doing to support the new Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre. Final report on this evaluation to be received July 2024.
37	Implement the Accessibility Strategy to advance full participation, accessibility, and inclusion for individuals who visit, work, and live in HRM.	From July-December 2023 the Accessibility Advisor presented to business unit management teams on the Accessibility Strategy. Aim was to promote awareness and engagement with the Strategy. To obtain feedback supporting the update to the Accessibility Strategy, internal engagements took place with HRM employees and leaders. The following engagements took place: Two surveys: One for Executive Directors and Directors, and one for employees; An open house event open to all HRM staff; Accessibility Strategy Task Force engagements. In winter 2024, the Office of Diversity & Inclusion/ANSAIO secured a vendor to support external community engagements on the Accessibility Strategy. Engagements are planned for Spring 2024. Monthly HRM employees could participate in our corporate training - From Support to Inclusion. This training continues to be very popular in the organization with sessions being full for all offerings. Work continues with implementing the Accessibility Strategy recommendations.. The Accessibility Strategy Annual Update Report is set to go to Regional Council in May 2024.
38	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.	Work on this will advance as funding identified and secured.
<b>Actions: Years 3-5</b>		
<b>#</b>	<b>Action</b>	

39	Implement the private-sector endorsed CEO Climate Action Charter to support Halifax businesses and organizations in reducing GHG emissions and increasing climate resiliency.	Four new companies signed on as signatories to the CEO Climate Action Charter during the period bringing total participation to 22.
40	Support businesses in taking actions to reduce emissions and green their operations through relevant programs and funding.	<p>In February Halifax Partnership held a Climate Action Charter Challenge with HRM. Provided financial support of \$5,000 each to seven teams. Challenge was oriented towards fostering ideas that align with HalifACT, concentrating on green and resilient buildings, creation of green jobs, promotion of renewable energy and advancements in clean transportation.</p> <p>The SmartBusiness team is collaborating with Efficiency Nova Scotia to assist businesses with greening their operations. Work is underway to understand the current programs and supports, and how we can support our respective goals of assisting businesses reducing their energy uses and greenhouse gas emissions.</p>
41	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.	An 18-month resource has been hired to support the development of the Resilience Incentive Program. The pilot programs with Efficiency Nova Scotia and Thinkwell Shift are wrapping up. Results and learnings will be summarized and included in a report for senior management. Additionally, recommendations from a Third-Party Financing Study, and information gained from discussions with other program administrators across the country, will be included in the recommendation for next steps. Staff are exploring financing options with the Province of Nova Scotia and other partners.
42	Continue decarbonizing public transit.	In keeping with the Municipality's HalifACT goals to reduce Green House Gas emissions and Criteria Air Contaminants, Halifax Transit is in the process of converting to a zero-emission fleet. Decarbonization initiatives include the procurement of zero emission buses and charging infrastructure, transit facility improvements and retrofits, and staff training.
43	With partners, assess and upgrade critical infrastructure to withstand current and future climate impacts.	Detailed pluvial, fluvial and coastal flood risk mapping project has been completed. A draft inventory of critical infrastructure has been compiled by Emergency Management and will be vetted across Business Units this fiscal. GIS/IT is actively working on layering climate risk, hazards, and community vulnerability to support decision-making and prioritization of future resilience projects. The federal Canadian Index of Multi-Deprivation community vulnerability dataset has been chosen to layer on top of the climate risk and critical infrastructure GIS layers. EMO is conducting a Hazard, Risk, and Vulnerability Assessment (HRVA). 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.

44	Manage and protect Halifax's ecosystems.	<p>Several actions are underway to support this initiative including: <b>Financial Assessments:</b> HRM staff are working to determine how to integrate the financial aspect of natural asset management into our systems and an inventory of natural assets in HRM is complete. Phase II is underway, to do a more detailed and localized assessment of some of these natural assets to determine their 'value' in the Nine Mile Rivershed. This work will help inform next steps by the Asset Management Office in partnership with Environment &amp; Climate Change (ECC) and other staff across the organization. <b>Low-Impact Development (LID) training:</b> Coordinated for 22 staff from across multiple HRM Business Units and staff are in the progress of completing the online training offered through McMaster University. The training will mainstream knowledge of LID's and will increase the capacity of HRM staff to incorporate green infrastructure into designs, maintenance and operations plans and regulations. <b>Collaboration within HRM:</b> Opportunities have been discussed to incorporate low impact development into the naturalization strategy and furthering the Halifax Green Network Plan. ECC continues to work with the Regional Plan team to prioritize the protection of wilderness corridors. <b>Integrated Pest Management Strategy:</b> Staff have attended workshops, meetings, and conferences to expand HRM's network within the invasive species management community throughout the Atlantic Region. New relationships have been built with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Parks Canada, Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources &amp; Renewables, Nova Scotia Invasive Species Council (NSISC), the Invasive Species Centre, New Brunswick Invasive Species Council, and the Canadian Council of Invasive Species, among others. ECC staff are now part of the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Maritime Working Group and sitting on the NSISC Steering Committee. Emerald ash borer, hemlock woolly adelgid, yellow floating heart, and zebra mussels are currently among the invasive species of focus for the ECC team and actions will be taken to address their presence in HRM, in collaboration with other HRM Business Units. <b>Beach Management:</b> Health Canada released more stringent regulations for recreational water quality standards. Staff have proposed changes to the water quality monitoring protocol to adapt to a reduction in the maximum acceptable E coli concentration in recreational waters. ECC will work closely with Parks and Recreation to inform staff and roll out any changes to beach monitoring protocols. <b>Canines for Clean Water:</b> Staff will continue to expand the program in partnership with HRM Parks and local trail associations. <b>Watershed Management Framework:</b> Report to Council proposing this work will go to ESSC in spring 2024. ECC staff propose implementing the finalized framework in two pilot watersheds for a two-year period. The framework will have adaptative management as a core principle which will ultimately be tailored for wider adoption into policy and implementation in all watersheds across the municipality.</p>
45	Implement HRM's Electric Vehicle Strategy, including working with partners to increase electric vehicle charging infrastructure throughout Halifax.	<p>A standing offer for the supply and install of public charging infrastructure has been executed. Designs have been finalized for Bedford Park and Ride, Grahams Grove, Canada Games Centre, JD Shatford Library and Musquodoboit Harbour Library. Designs are underway for the RBC Centre, Bicentennial Centre and MacPhee House. ECC are in discussions with Nova Scotia Power regarding charger siting at the St. Margaret's Centre and Cole Harbour Place. Additionally, as per Regional Council direction, language to support mandatory EV Charging requirements in new buildings has been included in the draft Regional Plan. Staff have procured the services of Dunsy Consulting to develop a public bulletin to further support develops in understanding these requirements.</p>



46	Increase low-income groups' and individuals' access to recreation programs and other municipal services.	<p>A thorough review of the Affordable Access program has been completed, and a report is expected to go to Regional Council in Q1/2 2024-25. There has been significant growth with the AAP, with over \$1M provided in discounts to families with financial need in 2023-24. In 2023/24 a total of 824 programs were offered for free with 8,752 participants. Inclusion supports for camps and inclusion specific programs together served approximately 180 participants. Less than market value leases were completed for Unicorn Theatre, Safety minded ATV Association, Graham's Grove Building: Kiawani Club of Dartmouth, Dartmouth Dragon Boat Association. In June 2023 the modified Multi Service Youth Centre opened at Captain Spryfield Community Centre. Until the physical multi-service youth centre (MSYC) can be opened, the modified multi-service youth centre in the Spryfield Community will continue to operate in a modified model to address the needs of the youth in the community. We are averaging 10-14 youth per night and are opened 3 nights a week. Regarding the future dedicated space, employees are investigating Captain Spryfield Community Centre and the new Spryfield Arena facility.</p>
47	Ensure HRM's culture investments and commemoration reflect Halifax's geography and diversity.	<p>The Culture and Community Team has advanced work on the Cultural Facilities Plan (now called the Performing and Visual Arts Venues Study). This phase includes a mapping and inventory of professional venues in HRM and a Needs Assessment. This will be completed in spring 2024. The Culture &amp; Community team provided support for the completion of the Culture &amp; Heritage Priorities Plan, which was approved by Regional Council in 2024. The Regional Museum Strategy project has been ongoing in 2023/24 with consultation completed and a draft report being prepared by the consultant for internal review in 2024. Consulting opportunities for Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian Engagement strategies related to the Cogswell Art &amp; Commemoration Program is currently being advertised (April 2024) with anticipated award and subsequent art and commemorative design work undertaken in the next fiscal year.</p>
48	Work with Discover Halifax to support the implementation of the Halifax Regional Integrated Tourism Master Plan.	<p>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. Discover Halifax, with increased funding from the municipality, is growing its capacity to be the backbone organization for the Integrated Tourism Master Plan (ITMP). 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 lead the Integrated Tourism Master Plan together. Festival attraction in 2023 is at an all time high for Halifax after the success of the IIHF World Juniors. DH alongside HRM Events have announced the return of the JUNOS and the inaugural SAIL GP event for 2024. With support from DH and HRM Events, Sail Nova Scotia finalized the contract for the first ever SAIL GP event in Canada and it's now been officially announced to the public. SAIL GP will be an event considered to support the initiative of finding a Signature event for Halifax. The 2024 JUNOs hosted their official announcement in Halifax this Summer and in November they'll unveil the work HRM and CARAS have been creating for the week long festival attraction.</p>

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.	The curbside management policy is almost complete and it is anticipated to be delivered to Regional Council in Q2 2024/25. Enforcement scheduling and resource allocation review is complete. Updates to rates have been completed.
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.	The strategy builds on the vision of the Integrated Mobility Plan. Funding for this project was announced in March 2024. Procurement processes are underway for both the vessel delivery and construction aspects of the project. An RFI for the vessels was released in April 2024.
51	Continue implementing Integrated Mobility Plan recommendations to make HRM more connected, sustainable, affordable, and healthy.	Several IMP initiatives are underway including: New 'TDM Program Lead' position has been created, will start on April 22, 2024. Goal is to have this position develop an updated TDM Program. Currently planning year three of HRM's e-bike program. Land acquisition strategy to secure corridors and sites for both short and long term mobility project on Robie/Young Street (Land acquisition work 10-20% complete, initiated in summer 2022. Anticipated completion within 3-5 years.), Bayers Road (Land acquisition work 90% complete, initiated in 2020 and anticipated completion in spring 2024); Herring Cove Road (Land acquisition work not yet commenced).
52	Prepare a new Halifax Transit service plan to align service with demand, growth, and development.	Regional Council approval to implement the remaining MFTP-related service adjustments, including two Corridor Routes and added Express Route service in communities near Larry Uteck. Resources are also being reallocated to improve responsiveness to overloads and mitigate loss of service or lateness due to congestion, maintenance issues, and other factors, to work to improve the reliability of the transit system.
53	Finalize and implement a plan for the former Memorial Library that maintains Grafton Park as a green space.	Staff will be bringing forward a recommendation to Regional Council on next steps and a project plan in July 2024
54	Support and promote business development and tourism by activating public spaces, fostering special events, and facilitating entertainment programming.	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. Discover Halifax, with increased funding from the municipality, is growing its capacity to be the backbone organization for the Integrated Tourism Master Plan (ITMP). 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 lead the Integrated Tourism Master Plan together. Festival attraction in 2023 is at an all time high for Halifax after the success of the IIHF World Juniors. DH alongside HRM Events have announced the return of the JUNOS and the inaugural SAIL GP event for 2024. With support from DH and HRM Events, Sail Nova Scotia finalized the contract for the first ever SAIL GP event in Canada and it's now been officially announced to the public. SAIL GP will be an event considered to support the initiative of finding a Signature event for Halifax. The 2024 JUNOs hosted their official announcement in Halifax this Summer and in November they'll unveil the work HRM and CARAS have been creating for the week long festival attraction.

55	Create and implement a plan to redevelop downtown Dartmouth infrastructure that builds on plans to revitalize Alderney Landing and renovate Alderney Gate Library.	Various infrastructure improvements are underway or complete including: Streetlight poles with structural deficiencies in downtown Dartmouth and Halifax have been replaced. The Alderney Landing wharf recapitalization has been completed. There has been continued progress on the All Ages and Abilities Regional Centre Bicycle Network. Staff worked on detailed designs for Almon Street, Isleville Street (Halifax North End), Dartmouth Harbourfront, Part of Liverpool Street and Brunswick Street. Detailed design for Dartmouth North will begin in spring 2024. The functional planning Alderney Drive is underway and anticipated to be presented to Regional Council in the summer of 2024.
56	Continue working with Halifax Water and Halifax Parks to complete the daylighting of the Sawmill River through downtown Dartmouth to Dartmouth Cove.	Halifax Water Sawmill Creek daylighting. Phase I construction expected to begin this year
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.	Various streetscaping initiatives are underway, tendered or upcoming. Some initiatives include: Almon bikeway - construction starting May '24; Dutch Village Road to be tendered April/ May 2024. Brunswick Street Project's design is 90% complete. Cathedral Lane - tendered and will add pavers, trees, bump outs & convert to one way (SB) in 2024; Replacement of damaged gateway & interpretive signs (Argyle and Sackville Drive) - Summer 2024; Streetscape reinstatement of Queen & Birmingham (Mills Block), Squiggle Park (Gott Falkland); Tactical program will partner with Parks Canada this spring to paint a mural, add interpretive signs on Brunswick retaining wall below clock tower.
58	Enhance green spaces and programming opportunities in green spaces in the Regional Centre.	In 2023/24 Parks & Recreation advanced work on a range of Open Space Plans. Steps included refinement of approach and methodology related to the Peace & Friendship Park re-design. Work continued on the National Urban Park Initiative, including securing additional funding for consultation, design and capital work in relation to municipal lands within the project site. The Halifax Common Master Plan was completed and approved by Regional Council with the approval to advance planning on the Wanderers Block. A Request for Proposals has been issued for a consultant to develop a functional plan for the Wanderers Block and do pre-design scoping of individual facilities within that block as part of the next steps for this project. Employees completed the Strategy on Park Lighting, which is undergoing review and approval before Regional Council consideration in 2024. Park planning components related to the Fish Passage project (Martins Park to Lake Banook) has been operationalized within other Business Units, allowing parks employees to continue involvement by providing input and advice as needed.

59	Continue with placemaking and beautification efforts.	<p><b>Beautification and Streetscaping grant utilized in North Preston</b> - The North Preston Community Centre and the North Preston Ratepayers Association have entered into a partnership with the Department of Municipal Housing Affairs, Beautification and Streetscaping program to enhance the growing and tourism season in North Preston. The Sports field dedicated to community member Arnold D. Johnson [in 2018] has been treated with a beautiful Interpretive panel outlining the history of the development of the sports field and the area. The panel is featured on a welcoming terrace adjacent to the field. This is the first interpretive panel created in a community. The second historical monument created in conjunction with community. Additionally, the “Learn to Grow” program offered at the NP Community Center has been upgraded to offer a beautiful place of respite where patrons can learn to grow at their own pace during spring, summer and into the fall. The south garden area of the site has been beautified into a relaxing natural haven. <b>Neighbourhood Placemaking initiatives</b> - Neighbourhood Placemaking accepts up to five resident-led projects each year. Community Developers work closely with neighbourhood leaders to plan, guide, and train volunteer teams to succeed with their project vision. Each project receives \$1,500 in support funding which helps fund materials, professional fees, or event supplies. This year is the first time additional funding has been made available for artist fees. Two groups will take advantage of \$1,000 each to hire artists to design their final piece. In 2024, one new mural will be placed at Ardmore Park and an asphalt art painting in a basketball court in Woodlawn. Thanks to a \$33,000 grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies under their Asphalt Art Initiative, seven intersections will also be painted along Creighton St and Maynard St this summer. Three artists have worked with students from Joe Howe Elementary School to design artwork that the community will be invited to paint in the temporary curb extensions. In March 2024, the Neighbourhood Seed Kit program, gave 17 seed kits to neighbourhood volunteers. Neighbourhood leaders shared edible plant seeds with their neighbours to connect the neighbourhood through the shared activity of vegetable gardening.</p>
60	Implement the recommendations from the Rural Recreation Strategy.	<p>The Rural Recreation Strategy was approved at Regional Council in January 2024. Action items stated in the strategy will be implemented with an information report going back to Council with updates on progress after year one. A Community Recreation Coordinator has been appointed to implement the action items stated in the strategy.</p>