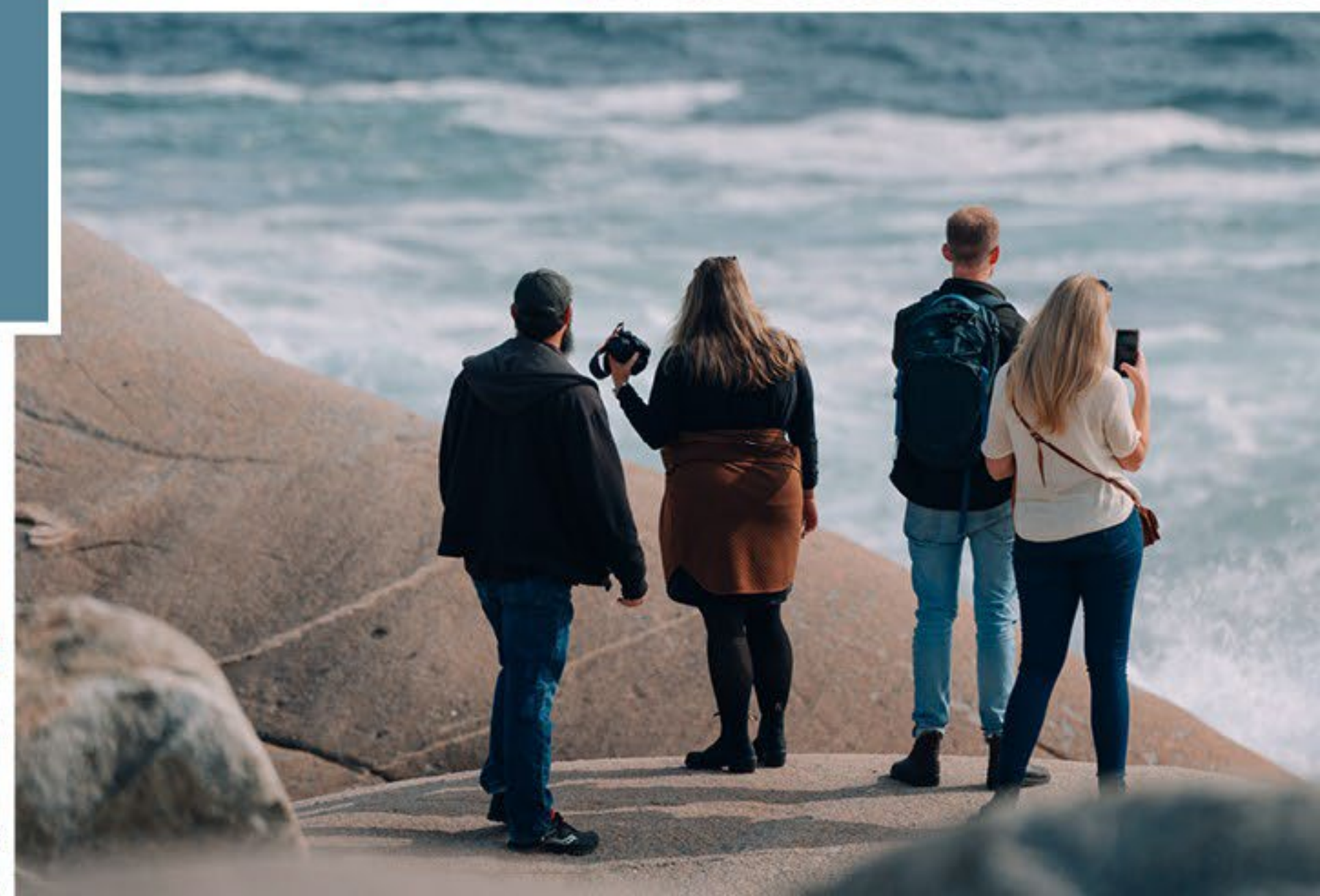




**HALIFAX REGIONAL
INTEGRATED
TOURISM
MASTER PLAN**

PROJECT STATUS UPDATE
ROSS JEFFERSON, PRESIDENT & CEO
DISCOVER HALIFAX





Discover Halifax's Mission

We seek to maximize **economic and social benefits** derived from the tourism industry for the benefit of the people who **live, visit, and invest** in our region.

We do this by **showcasing the best of our region to the world**, and through collective impact, we seek to shape the **sustainable future** of our industry through **good planning, investment, and design**.



Our Core Programs



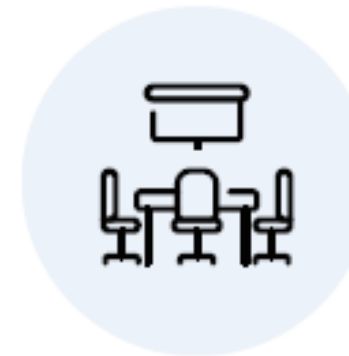
MARKETING

By creating compelling and targeted advertising campaigns, Halifax on the decision-set for leisure visitors.



VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Improve satisfaction and perception of the destination among by providing them high-quality resources to navigate their st



BUSINESS EVENTS

Attract and support high-value national and international meetings, conferences, and tradeshows.



FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

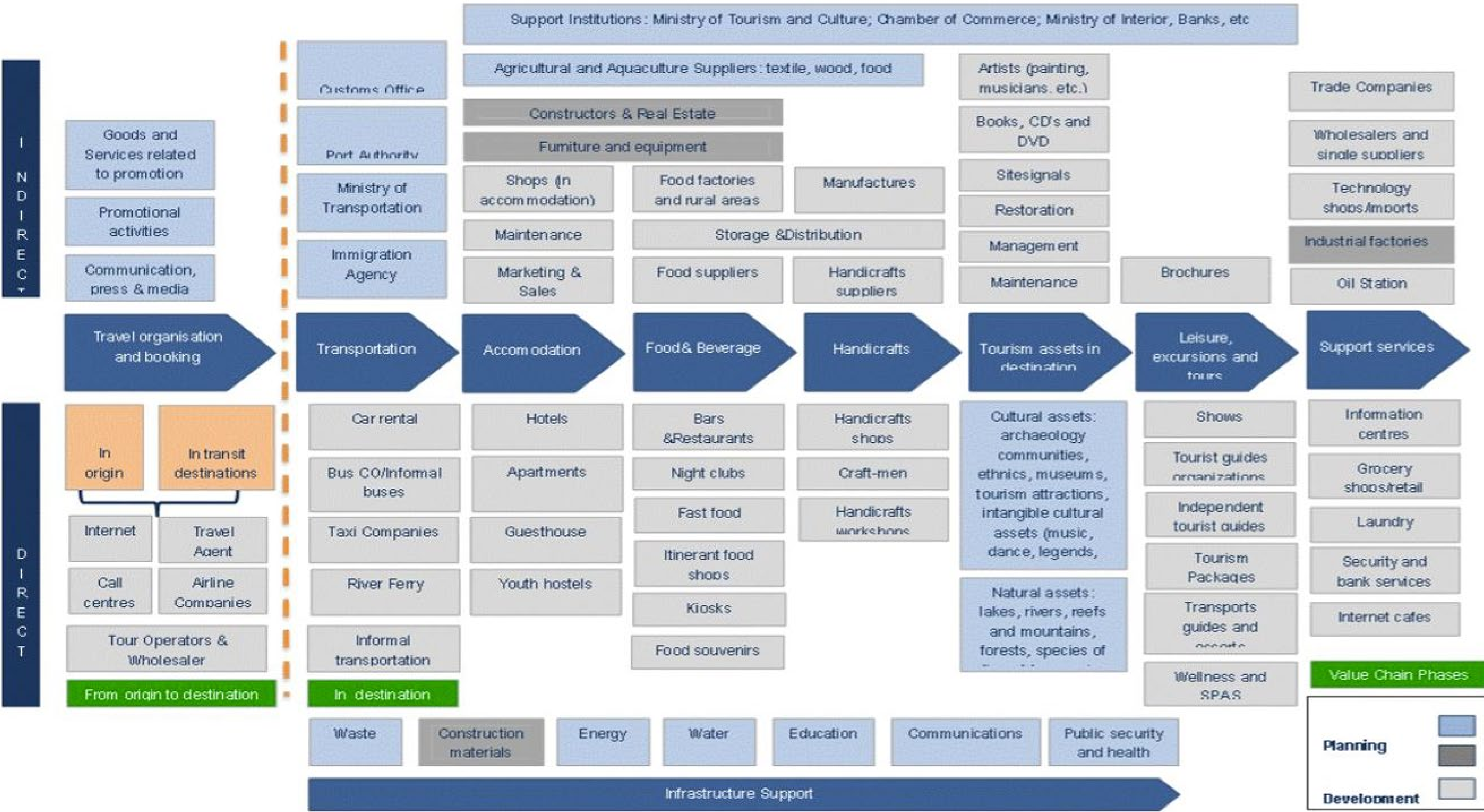
Make communities more vibrant and active, and positively in leisure and business visitation



DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

Ensure our region is a desirable place to visit, and has the at and infrastructure to provide enjoyable and interesting expe for visitors.

Inter-Dependent Supply Chain



With Discover Halifax's dedicated commitment to tourism development, Skift's avant-garde tourism research and strategy expertise, and UPLAND's dedicated stakeholder engagement and deep-rooted knowledge of the HRM, this triumvirate orchestrates extraordinary potential.

Together, we form an unparalleled team dedicated to create an impactful updated integrated tourism master plan.

Skift Advisory (Lead Agency)

- World's experts in travel and tourism, media, research, strategy planning, destination development, and meaningful community collaboration
- Strategy and research expertise in tourism master plans and sustainable destination development.
- Proven experience advising destinations around the world on branding and communications, community inclusion and sentiment, and effectively reaching economic, social, and environmental targets.



Discover Halifax (Client)

- Community-first destination marketing organization dedicated to sharing, promoting, and growing the Halifax Regional Municipality.
- Collaborate with the Skift Advisory and UPLAND to co-create and implement the project findings

UPLAND (Sub-Contract Agency)

- Since its inception in 2014, UPLAND has quickly become recognized as a leader in developing locally-owned and innovative planning and design strategies.
- Professionally, UPLAND offers vast experience and expertise in planning, landscape architecture, urban design, public engagement and GIS analytics, and come from both municipal and consulting backgrounds.

MASTER PLAN FRAMEWORK

Working together, the Halifax region will harness our culture to build and promote a model, sustainable tourism destination. By remaining authentic to our heritage and Halifax's distinct vibe, diversity, creativity, and talent, we will share our unique communities and a quality of life that is deeply connected to our ocean advantage.

VISION

To be everyone's favorite Canadian City

GOALS

- Grow tourism employment
- Grow tourism revenues
- Enrich the lives of residents
- Align with related strategies

STRATEGIC THEMES



Make it easy to get here and visit



Build and enhance Halifax's key demand generators



Attract highest yield and growth markets



Develop responsible tourism



Establish, identify, and appoint tourism leadership



Be vibrant and alive, 365

ITMP 2030



**Adding
Regional Strategies**



**Deeper Technical
Analysis**



**Dedicated
Resources for
Implementation
Support**

While the HRM has an opportunity to carve their own path through an integrated tourism master plan, alignment with these existing plans and others must be at the forefront of destination management for harmony amongst the HRM residents, stakeholders, and partners, and tourists.

Current Halifax Regional Integrated Tourism Master Plan

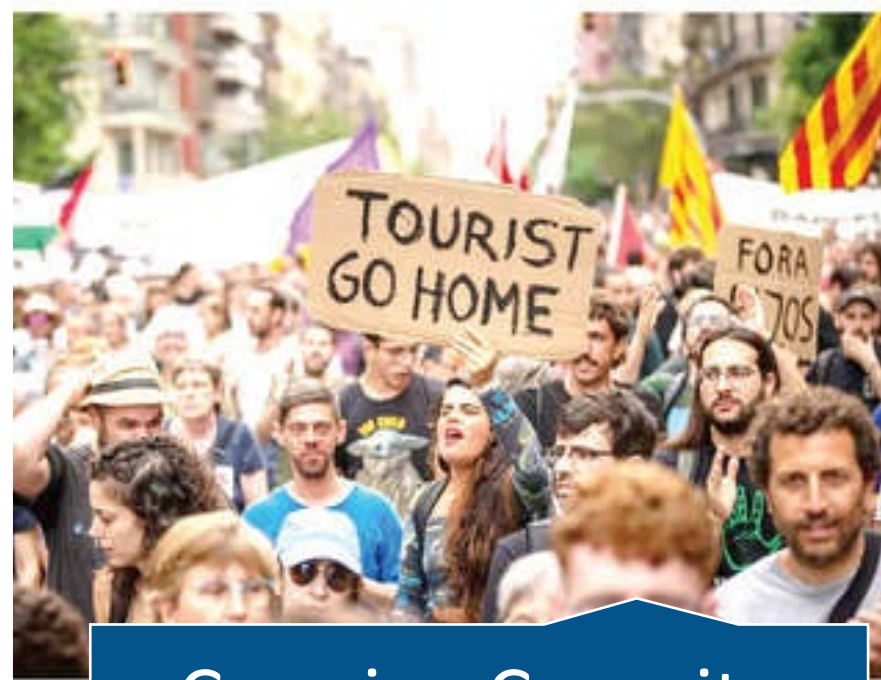
Halifax Strategic Priorities Plan

Halifax Regional Municipality's Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan

Tourism Nova Scotia Strategic Plan 2024

Canada 365

4 Companion Studies



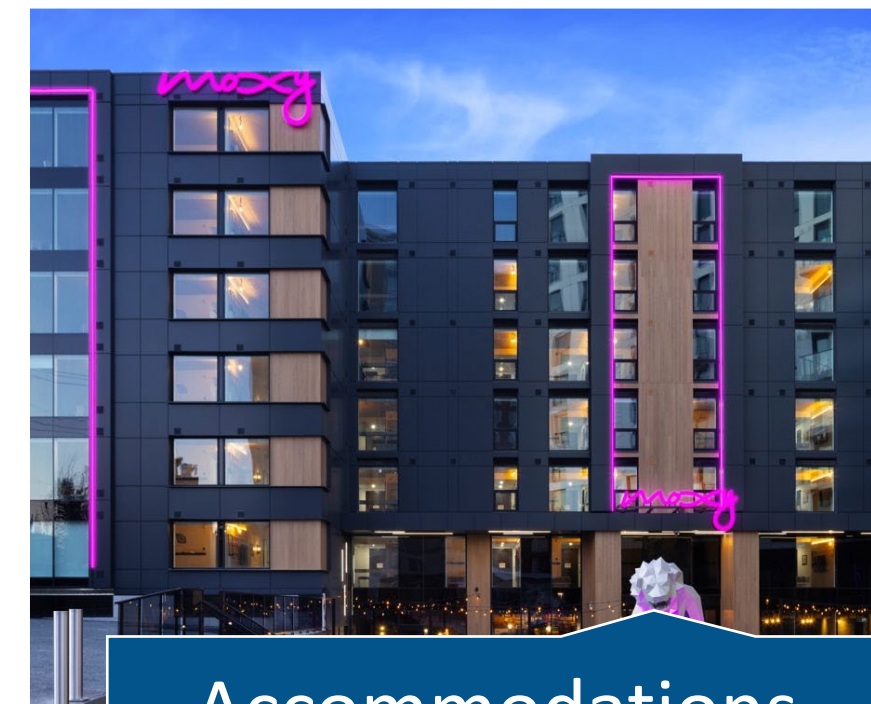
Carrying Capacity Study



Cruise Demand Study



Car Rental Study

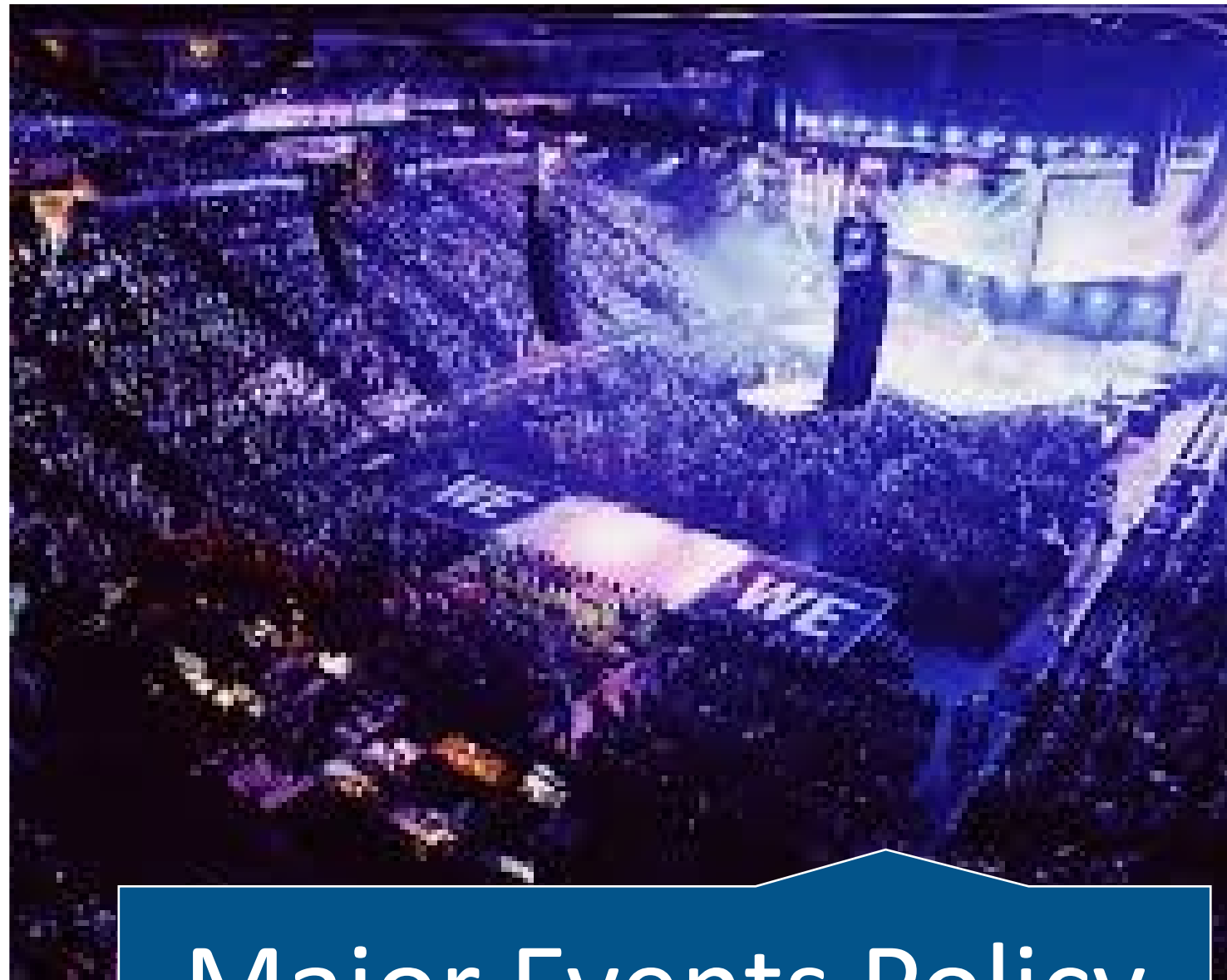


Accommodations Study



Accessibility Study

Strategic Planning - Events



Major Events Policy Framework



Event & Venue Assessment



Regional Events Strategy



Public Engagement

Dedicated Website and Survey

Industry Engagement

Expected bi-lateral meetings with all key partners and departments with overlapping and adjacent responsibilities

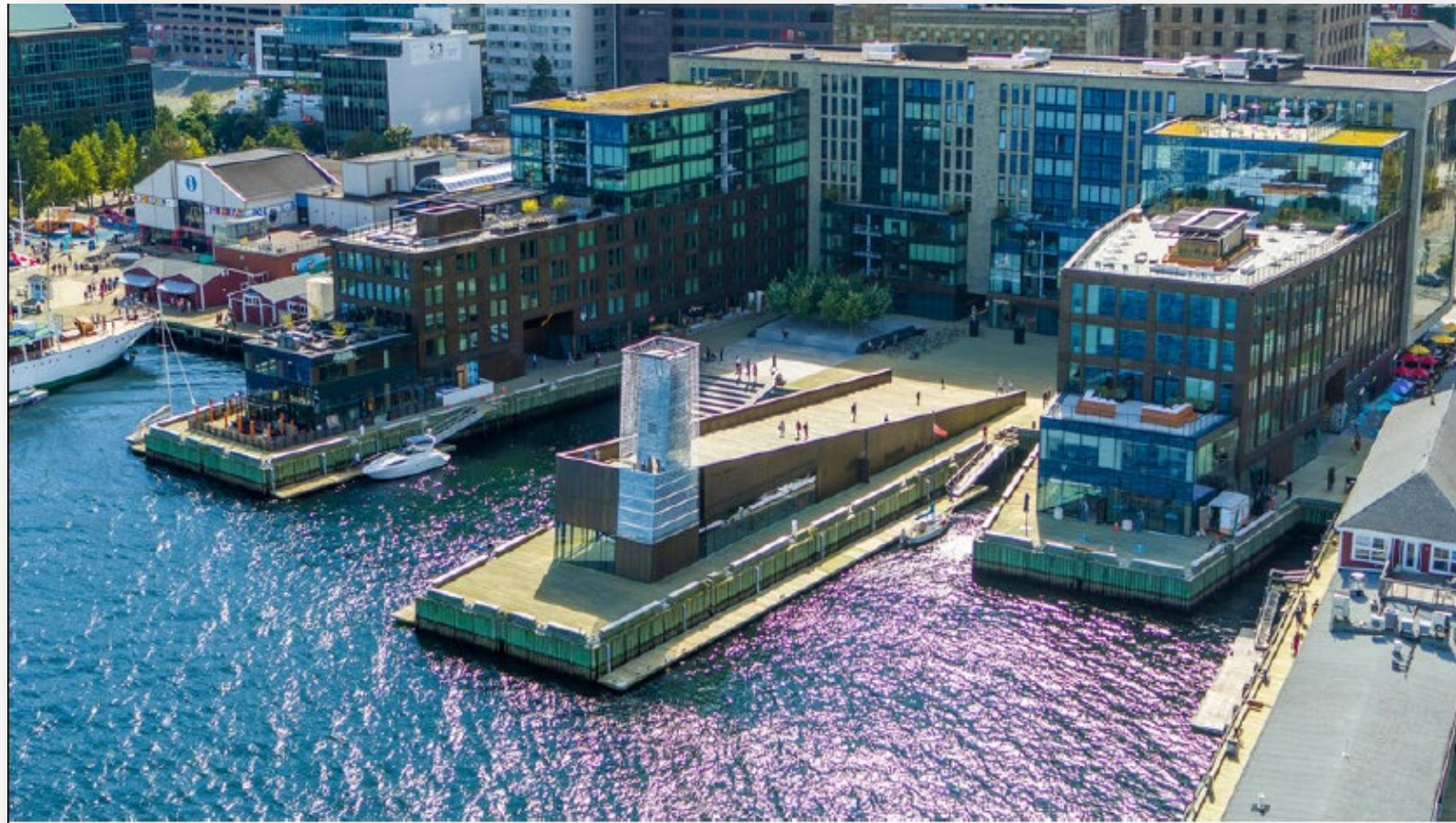
Regional Engagement

A minimum of 8 regional engagement meetings spread across HRM

Project Timeline

- ★ **Stakeholder Engagement (Fall 2024)**
This stage involved bilateral meetings with relevant groups and associations to understand the priorities within the tourism industry.
- ★ **Community Consultation (Winter 2025)**
Online engagement began in Fall 2024 with the launch of the public survey and interactive mapping activities, followed by regional meetings across HRM.
- ★ **Final ITMP 2030 (Spring/Summer 2025)**
The final document will be presented to HRM Council.





Halifax Regional ITMP 2030

What We Heard Report

March 2025

Key Assets

- Historic and cultural attractions and events
- Waterfront, harbour, and coastal attractions
- Ease of access to outdoor and nature activities
- Accommodation and rentals
- Sense of community and hospitality
- Accessibility and walkability
- Vibrant downtowns and local businesses
- Rich culture and historical identity

Challenges

- Transportation and accessibility
- Restrictive short-term rental regulations
- The impact of chain retail developments on local businesses
- Affordable and diverse accommodations
- Lack of tourism businesses and assets in suburban and rural areas
- Lack of year-round activities and attractions
- Staff shortages
- Housing and affordability
- Limited event venues and accommodation options

Opportunities

- Transportation and connectivity
- Expanding tourism reach and experiences
- Tourism infrastructure and accommodations
- Sustainability and community support
- Support for small businesses, including promotion of the retail sector
- Short-term rentals and housing
- Cultural and event expansion
- Affordable and accessible tourism

Accommodations



- There is a shortage of accommodations during the peak season.
- Suburban and rural areas need more accommodation options, including hotels and short-term rentals.
- Rates are high in the peak season, pricing local travellers out of the market.
- Short-term rental regulations are impacting the ability to provide accommodations in suburban and rural parts of HRM.
- There are challenges attracting and retaining workers in this sector.

Food & Beverage



- HRM “punches above its weight” with its awesome food and beverage scene - our restaurants are some of our greatest assets.
- Rising costs and labour shortages are big concerns for restaurant owners throughout the region.
- There are challenges attracting and retaining workers in this sector.
- There are opportunities to better promote food and beverage as a career path, and encourage continued education and training.
- There are opportunities for more events and festivals that centre around the culinary and beverage scene.
- There is a need for more support and promotion for suburban and rural restaurants and bars.
- There are opportunities for more experiential food and beverage tours that highlight small rural farms and restaurants.
- Outdated policies and regulations pose barriers to hosting more inclusive and flexible events.

Music & Festivals



- The music sector plays a crucial role in the HRM tourism industry.
- There is a need for a dedicated outdoor festival space to accommodate large events with dedicated infrastructure.
- There is a desire to see a unified events strategy that helps to reduce competition and improve scheduling.
- The concept of a “Music City” could help unite the city’s cultural offerings and enhance its tourism brand.
- Want to see more events and festivals outside of downtown Halifax and Dartmouth



Key Attractions



- HRM has lots of great attractions and experiences for tourists, and we do a good job of promoting those offerings.
- More could be done to promote attractions outside of the urban core and celebrate key attractions across region.
- There are opportunities for more family-friendly attractions in the region.
- We should consider our natural assets (like beaches, parks, and trails) as key attractions and make it easier for people to find and access these areas.
- Tourism in Halifax is highly seasonal and it makes it difficult to operate and keep staff year round.

Transportation



- Rental cars are scarce during the peak season.
- Parking can be challenging especially downtown.
- Traffic congestion is becoming an increasing issue and has impacts on day tours.
- Opportunities to improve micro-mobility options like bike shares and scooter rentals.
- Opportunities to improve public transit - especially to provide greater access to key attractions and amenities (i.e. beaches, trailheads, airport).
- Transit within the urban core is viewed as an asset with significant room for improvement.
- There is a dire need for public transit to extend throughout the HRM to connect urban and rural areas.
- Wayfinding and signage could be improved on a regional scale.

Infrastructure



- Improving access for water-based businesses with public dock infrastructure, etc. could help to bring new attractions to the waterfronts.
- There are public infrastructure "dead zones" - especially in rural parts of HRM. Examples include internet, cell service, and accessible infrastructure.
- Public washroom facilities are lacking across the region.
- Investing in EV infrastructure will be important for the future.
- Ensuring cellular and internet service across the HRM is critical for the travelling public.
- Conferences and business events are looking for more off-site



Policy Changes



- Liquor laws are archaic and require an overhaul.
 - They create challenges for all-ages events.
 - Inconsistent in interpretation and enforcement.
- Short-term rental regulations are too restrictive, especially for those operating in the rural and suburban context.
 - Understanding there is a housing crisis, feelings are that the regulations are too strict and impede economic development.
 - Need to address the shortage in accommodations in areas outside of the downtown core.
- Desire to see updates to the Motor Carrier Act to encourage and grow ground transportation options.
- Fears of retaliation within the industry for speaking out against regulations, there is a need for a neutral party to advocate for the sector.

Other Topics



- **Retail:**
 - Retail is often lumped in with restaurants and bars, but is a distinctly different business type.
 - HRM is a shopping destination - not enough promotion of this.
 - Culture around opening hours is not accommodating for tourists with many shops only open from 9am-5pm.
- **Art & Craft:**
 - Many artisans and craftspeople spread across the HRM - opportunity to promote the region for its artists.
 - Art tours of different parts of HRM (Peggy's Cove, Eastern Shore, etc.).



Travel & Place - It is all Interconnected



Great Place to go to School



Great Place to Invest



Great Place to Live

Questions?

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