



P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Item No. 13.1.1
Community Planning and Economic
Development Standing Committee
June 26, 2025

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

FROM: Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: May 27, 2025

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

RECOMMENDATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Staff initiated.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, S.N.S. 2008, c. 39 provides:

Section 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.

Section 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

1. Receive the staff report dated May 27, 2025 for information and receive a presentation from the Halifax Partnership regarding People. Planet, Prosperity: Halifax’s Inclusive Economic Strategy; and,
2. Forward the staff report dated May 27, 2025 to Halifax Regional Council for information.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This staff report provides a progress update for the municipality’s People. Planet, Prosperity: Halifax’s Inclusive Economic Strategy 2022-2027. The report’s Discussion section offers statistical updates and strategy highlights for this reporting period (April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025). Attachment 1 provides comprehensive implementation updates for each of the refreshed economic strategy’s 60 action items.

BACKGROUND

On March 22, 2022, Regional Council approved People. Planet. Prosperity. Halifax’s Inclusive Economic Growth Strategy 2022-2027.¹ The strategy was developed with input from businesses, all orders of government, economic development partners, residents, and communities from across the municipality.² Halifax’s strategy focuses on ensuring all residents can contribute to, and benefit from, our city’s growing economic prosperity.

In February of 2024, Halifax Partnership and the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) jointly completed a mid-strategy review to update and refresh the actions for years three through five (2024-2027).³ This process was undertaken in response to changed economic circumstances, emerging challenges, and new opportunities. As intended, this interim review process resulted in refinements and fine-tuning of the economic strategy, not an overhaul of its core substance. The [Years 3-5 Action Plan](#) was approved by Halifax Regional Council on March 5, 2024.⁴

DISCUSSION

Alignment and Collaboration

Halifax’s 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 HRM and partners across all sectors. 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 annually and amended as required.

¹ See [Item 15.3.1](#) Halifax Regional Council March 22, 2022.

² In total, more than 2,500 contributors helped shape People. Planet. Prosperity: Halifax’s Inclusive Economic Growth Strategy 2022-2027.

³ The review process involved 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 (see Community Engagement).

⁴ See [Item No. 15.3.1](#) Halifax Regional Council March 5, 2024.

Measurement and Reporting

Halifax Partnership is responsible for monitoring, and reporting on Halifax’s 2022-2027 economic strategy goals and objectives. Measurement provides insight on challenges and opportunities and helps to identify needed economic strategy course corrections and adjustments.

The Partnership launched the inaugural *Halifax Index* in 2022. It includes a “scorecard” to track progress on goals set in Halifax’s economic strategy. The Partnership releases the *Halifax Index* publicly each spring and regularly updates its [Economic Dashboard](#) as new data become available.⁵ The *Halifax Index* was last presented to the public on June 6, 2024.⁶ The 2025 *Halifax Index* will be presented in June. Bi-annual updates on the economic strategy’s implementation are jointly provided (by HRM and the Partnership) to Regional Council.⁷

Goals, Objectives and Actions

Halifax’s refreshed economic strategy has three (3) overarching multi-year strategic goals:

- 1) Promote and maximize inclusive and sustainable growth;
- 2) Attract, retain, and develop talent; and
- 3) Make Halifax a better place to live, work and visit.

These strategic goals are now supported by 17 three-year objectives that are, in turn, supported by 60 actions. The Partnership leads 17 of the actions, in collaboration with its private, public, post-secondary, and community partners. HRM leads 38 actions and uses the strategy as a guide for making decisions and leading initiatives in support of the goals and objectives. Five (5) actions are co-led and implemented by both organizations.⁸ Most of these actions are built into existing HRM and Partnership work plans and budgets.

Implementation Updates by Goal

Engaging the broader community is critical to the economic strategy’s success. Halifax Partnership and HRM work closely with partners to build relationships and engage diverse groups and communities across the municipality.

Below are highlights of Partnership and HRM activities that advance the economic strategy’s three overarching goals (April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025, period). Statistics pertinent to each of the strategy’s goals (as tracked and reported on by the Partnership) are provided for added context. Additional detail for all 60 actions can be found in Attachment 1.

Strategic Goal #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 economic recovery and restoring confidence post pandemic, growing Indigenous and African Nova Scotian economic prosperity, increasing housing stock,

⁵ The Economic Dashboard tracks several economic development metrics including GDP, home prices, labour market trends, retail sales, inflation, and commercial/ residential real estate trends (vacancies and rents).

⁶ Insights from the Index are shared through digital campaigns on the Partnership’s social channels. The 2024 Halifax Index is available online (see [here](#)).

⁷ An economic strategy update was most recently provided to Council in August 2024. See [Item No.2](#) Halifax Regional Council August 6, 2024.

⁸ 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.

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.

Promote Growth Statistics for 2024-2025

- **Gross Domestic Product:** The latest estimates from the [Conference Board of Canada](#) show that Halifax's real GDP grew by 2.6% in 2024. It is expected to grow by 1.6% in 2025 and by an average of 2.1% per year between 2026 and 2029. Comparatively, in 2024 real GDP growth was 1.2% and 1.6% for Canada and Nova Scotia, respectively. Halifax accounted for 99.0% of Nova Scotia's net real GDP growth in 2024.
- **Inflation:** Inflation has increased recently but is down from last year. Halifax saw an annualized inflation rate of 2.5% in March 2025, 0.3 percentage points higher than the previous month but 1.1 percentage points lower than a year ago.
- **Business Confidence Index:** In 2024, the [Halifax Business Confidence Index](#) (BCI) fell to 25.0, the second consecutive decline and its lowest level since 2015.⁹ Asked to rate Halifax as a place to do business, nearly 15% of businesses rated Halifax below average, the highest share since 2015. About 57% said the city was average, while 25% rated it above average.

Ratings of various aspects of doing business in Halifax in 2024 were similar to 2023. Across 15 rated aspects, seven aspects were rated as net advantages, while eight were rated as net disadvantages.

- **Retail Sales:** Total retail sales in Nova Scotia increased 6.9% in January 2025 compared to a year ago. Across industries, the largest annual increase in retail sales was recorded for clothing, accessories, and related retailers (+21.5%), whereas the largest annual decline was for building materials, garden equipment and supplies dealers (-4.6%).¹⁰

Promote Growth Action Highlights

- **African Nova Scotian Wellbeing Index:** During this reporting period the Partnership supported the development and launch of the [African Nova Scotian Prosperity and Well-being Index](#). Modelled after the Halifax Index, the ANS Wellbeing Index uses research and data to define current ANS economic realities and to identify priority areas to close gaps. The ANS Wellbeing Index is believed to be the first of its kind in Canada.
- **African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity:** In September of 2020 the [Road to Economic Prosperity for African Nova Scotian Communities Action Plan](#) (REP) was officially released. Developed and led by the community, REP is a five-year economic development strategy that aims to address systemic issues and improve economic and quality of life outcomes for African Nova Scotians. Halifax Partnership continues to provide strategic and administrative support to facilitate the work of the REP. The third Annual Progress Report on this community-led initiative can be found [here](#).
- **Indigenous Economic Development:** In collaboration with three (3) First Nations,¹¹ the Partnership is helping indigenous businesses to secure business investment, sell their products locally, explore eCommerce options, and access photography and copywriting training and tools.

⁹ Halifax Partnership's annual *Business Confidence Survey* is carried out by [Narrative Research](#). It gathers views from business owners on Halifax's economy. Half the data were collected via traditional telephonic interviews. The other half were collected via an online survey.

¹⁰ These figures reflect the total dollar value of transactions, which are affected by both the volume of goods sold and the changes in their prices.

¹¹ Sipekne'katik First Nation, Millbrook First Nation, and Wasoqopa'q First Nation.

Halifax Partnership also continues to support First Nations communities by sharing best practices, offering formalized training and providing ongoing assistance to their economic development and business support staff.

- **Virtual Advisor Program:** The Partnership (in tandem with [Seasoned Pros](#)) continues to offer their [Virtual Adviser Program](#). The program is available to startup and scale-up businesses operating in HRM. Virtual Advisers share insights and provide confidential advice and support to 25 organizations. Focus, this fiscal, has been on business transitions, scale-up challenges and continuity planning.
- **Business Retention and Expansion:** The Partnership’s SmartBusiness Program team helps HRM businesses navigate and connect to resources that allow them overcome challenges and pursue growth opportunities. The program’s team met face-to-face with 392 companies between April 1, 2024, and March 31, 2025. In all, 750 referrals were generated. Twenty (20) new to Halifax businesses were given Aftercare support.¹²
- **Business Resilience:** Halifax Partnership’s online [Business Continuity](#) resource-portal logged 1,098 visits this past year. Responding to the business disruption caused by the pandemic and recent natural disasters, the Partnership developed a Business Resilience Toolkit.¹³ Together with KPMG, the Partnership also produced a business continuity webinar. This past year, the toolkit was downloaded 2,019 times and the resilience-focused webinar was viewed 3,691 times. Online resources were supplemented by five (5) in-person business resilience workshops hosted in rural and suburban HRM.¹⁴
- **Rural Economic Development:** In May of 2022, with additional funding from HRM, the Partnership hired a new Account Executive solely focused on supporting businesses in rural parts of HRM. With HRM support, Discover Halifax also hired an Account Executive focused on rural tourism. Both are supporting tourism-based and other businesses throughout rural parts of HRM. Between April 1, 2024, and March 31, 2025, the Partnership’s Account Executive met with 92 rural-based businesses.
- **Cogswell Redevelopment:** Phase 2 of the Cogswell redevelopment project was completed on December 24, 2024. Barrington Street from the roundabout at Nora Bernard Street, through to Duke Street, re-opened to all traffic along with Cogswell Street from Brunswick Street to Upper Water Street. The third and final phase of project construction began on January 6, 2025. This final year of construction (2025) will see the completion of the remaining street network, underground infrastructure, four parks and two kilometres of separate bike paths and multi-use paths.¹⁵
- **Housing Accelerator Fund:** In October 2023, HRM entered into a \$79.3M agreement with [Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation](#) (CMHC) to develop and implement a [Housing Accelerator Fund](#) (HAF) Action Plan by 2026. During this reporting period, a fully-staffed project team was hired to implement HRM’s Action Plan. To date, six (6) Action Plan initiatives have been completed, and the balance of five (5) initiatives are being advanced.
- Within the first year of the program a total of 6,057 net new residential building permits have been issued, which represents 39.16% of the total three-year target of 15,467. If current progress is sustained, the Municipality is likely to exceed its housing stock growth target (+2,600 net new

¹² Aftercare support includes providing connections to strategic business contacts, resources, and events, and sharing company successes both locally and globally.

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ Workshops were run collaboratively with local partners in Musquodoboit Harbour, Tantallon/Saint Margarets Bay, Musquodoboit Valley, Fall River, and Sackville.

¹⁵ For additional Cogswell redevelopment project details see [here](#).

residential units) before the HAF program’s end.¹⁶ Staff have committed to providing annual progress updates to Council.¹⁷

Strategic Goal #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.

Talent Statistics for 2024-2025

- **Labour Market:** The unemployment rate in Halifax held at 4.8% in March 2025, unchanged from February 2025 and down 0.7 points from March 2024. Comparatively, the March 2025 rates for Canada and Nova Scotia were 6.9% and 6.6%, respectively.

The overall number of jobs in Halifax increased by 1,900 positions (+0.7%) between February and March 2025 and increased by 3,400 positions (+1.2%) compared to a year ago. Since March 2024, transportation and warehousing added the most jobs (3,200), while other services (such as repair, maintenance, laundry, and religious services) lost the most jobs (-3,400).

Talent Action Highlights

- **International Workers:** Halifax Partnership labour market specialists continue to work with suitable applicants and employers to advance job offers and facilitate the immigration process. Recruitment fairs and targeted marketing resulted in approximately 5,000 applications to promoted job opportunities with Halifax employers. During this reporting period, labour market specialists met with over 290 employers, and referred 73 “immigration ready” candidates to Nova Scotia’s Immigration and Population Growth team.
- **Climate Action Charter:** In March 2023, HRM and Halifax Partnership announced the launch of the [CEO Climate Action Charter](#) with 18 organizations becoming founding signatories. The Charter encourages signatories to take meaningful climate action using the unique operational levers of their respective organizations. During this reporting period, HRM and Partnership staff worked with a consultant to develop a three-year action plan to grow the number of signatories. Four new companies signed on to the CEO Climate Action Charter bringing total participation to twenty-two.
- **Halifax Connector Program:** Work continues with the Partnership’s [Connector Program](#) that matches job-seekers with established businesspeople and community leaders. During this reporting period, the Partnership met with participants (newcomers, international students, recent grads, and laid-off workers) and signed on 222 new connectors (business and community leaders). A total of 317 Connector Program participants found jobs in their career.
- **Municipal Employee Attraction:** To attract potential candidates from employment equity groups, municipal staff attended several job fairs.¹⁸ HRM staff also partnered with community groups to offer in community employment circles, to share information and answer questions about the

¹⁶ Growth is measured by the number of building permits issued for new units. In setting a growth target, municipalities are required to calculate their baseline growth for net new permits (based on historical data) and then commit to accelerating this baseline growth.

¹⁷ The most recent HAF annual report was provided in March of 2025. See [Item 14.2](#) Halifax Regional Council March 18, 2025.

¹⁸ Equity-focused job fairs attended included the Diversity Employment Network’s [BIPOC Atlantic Job Fair](#), the [Out and Equal Job Fair](#), the Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work’s Employment Services [New Leaf Reverse Job Fair](#) and the [Mi’kmaw Native Friendship Centre Job Fair](#).

municipality’s hiring process. Staff continue to work to better understand potential barriers to employment with the municipality and to develop tactics to address them.

- **Investment Attraction:** Halifax maintains its status as a sought-after location for business expansion and relocation. The Partnership provides promotional tools to any Halifax business or organization aiming to attract and retain workers. Its team continues to maintain the [Living in Halifax Toolkit](#) and its [Why Halifax](#) materials to demonstrate Halifax’s value proposition. During this reporting period, ten companies chose to locate or significantly grow in Halifax. Collectively, these companies will contribute an expected 1,342 new jobs to the economy.¹⁹

Strategic Goal #3 | Make Halifax a Better Place to Live, Work and Visit

The economic strategy is intended 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 2022-2027, a well-being metric was added, specifically one that focused on reducing the share of the population reporting low levels of well-being.

Quality of Life Statistics for 2024-2025

- **Home Prices:** The average selling price for a home in Halifax was \$601,250 in March, up from \$590,786 in February. The March 2025 figure is a 6.5% increase from March 2024. The sales-to-new-listings ratio in March decreased to 67.4. This decrease still leaves Halifax in a "seller's market" scenario.
- **Rental Real Estate:** Average monthly rent in Halifax, across all apartment types, increased by 6.4% from \$1,538 in 2023 to \$1,636 in 2024. The apartment vacancy rate increased to 2.1% in 2024, after being stuck at its historic low of 1.0% for three years in a row. Within Halifax, the fastest rent increases were seen in the largest units, as 3+ bedroom units saw a 7.9% increase over 2023.²⁰
- **Resident Well-being:** Following an improvement from 2022 to 2023, the numbers tipped the other way in 2024 as the share of *City Matters Survey*²¹ respondents citing a low life satisfaction jumped to 22.1%.²² Again in 2024, however, a majority (58.3%) of survey respondents rated their satisfaction with life in Halifax as being “high” or “very high.”

Quality of Life Action Highlights

- **Business Emission Reduction:** During this reporting period, [EfficiencyOne](#) and the Partnership signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to formalize cooperation. EfficiencyOne is a leading efficiency enterprise that works with partners to supply cost-effective energy efficiency and carbon mitigation services. The Partnership’s SmartBusiness team is now referring local businesses to EfficiencyOne to facilitate the greening of local businesses’ operations.

¹⁹ Royal Bank Canada, a company with a history in Halifax, has committed to an additional 1,000 jobs in Bedford.

²⁰ These figures are derived from a survey of Halifax renters conducted in October 2024. They represent an average of the rents current residents were paying at the time the survey was taken.

²¹ Halifax Partnership’s annual *City Matters Survey* is carried out by MQO Research. Respondents are asked to rate their satisfaction with life on a scale from 0 to 10.

²² Natural disasters (including wildfires, flooding and hurricanes), elevated inflation, healthcare waitlist concerns and housing and affordability concerns combined to exert downward pressure during this reporting period (see [here](#)).

- **Tourism Master Plan 2030:** Endorsed by Regional Council in 2019, the [Integrated Tourism Master Plan](#) (ITMP) outlines 28 initiatives aimed at making Halifax a leading Canadian destination, increasing tourism revenue, creating jobs, and improving the quality of life for residents.²³ A final report detailing progress made toward executing ITMP 2019 destination marketing initiatives can be found [here](#). During this reporting period, [Discover Halifax](#) led an effort to map the next five years of tourism growth in Halifax. An updated tourism plan, ITMP 2030, is expected to be brought forward to Council in 2025.²⁴
- **Framework for Major Events:** In collaboration with Discover Halifax, work is ongoing to develop, a framework that will establish and enforce standards, policies, and procedures for major events and define expectations for organizers hosting events in HRM. This framework is expected to streamline processes, enhance accessibility, diversity and inclusion, and safety, and position Halifax as a leading event destination.²⁵
- **Cogswell Storytelling Strategy:** The [Cogswell Storytelling Strategy](#) is intended to identify and facilitate the Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian stories and histories that may be celebrated through art and interpretation within the Cogswell District. During this reporting period engagement work was done (with the support of community facilitators) to collect stories. Design and development of artwork and commemoration projects will take place in the coming months.
- **Accessibility Strategy:** HRM has had an Accessibility Strategy in place for three years. As per the provincial [Accessibility Act](#), municipalities must update their plans every three years. A renewed 2025-2028 Accessibility Strategy was approved by the Halifax Regional Council on February 11, 2025.²⁶ The updated strategy builds upon the previous framework and outlines 30 recommendations aimed at improving accessibility across five (5) key areas: transportation, built environment, information and communications, goods and services, and employment.²⁷ Accessibility Strategy implementation progress is reported annually to Council.²⁸
- **Rural Recreation Strategy:** In January 2024, Regional Council approved the [Rural Recreation Strategy](#).²⁹ The strategy reflects and responds to the unique and evolving rural experience, outlining six common themes based on the priorities identified during public engagement. A Community Recreation Coordinator has been appointed to implement the action items stated in the strategy. Periodic status reports will be brought back to Council with updates on the progress of the implementation of the strategy.
- **African Nova Scotian Community Action Program:** Established in 2023, the African Nova Scotian Community Action Program (ANSCAP) collaborates with historic African Nova Scotian (ANS) communities to address gaps in municipal services and find long-term solutions to meet community needs. ANSCAP, in collaboration with HRM's African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office (ANSAIO), continues to support ANS community action planning in Beechville, Upper Hammonds Plains, Lucasville, East Preston, North Preston, and Cherry Brook/Lake Loon. Work is

²³ The ITMP was supported by Regional Council, which provided financial and in-kind support. It was guided by a project team that included tourism consultants, HRM staff, and a community advisory committee with political and staff representatives.

²⁴ Development of a tourism plan is identified as a deliverable in the services agreement between HRM and Discover Halifax. For a detailed overview of the ITMP 2030 review and update process, see [Item No. 21.2](#) Halifax Regional Council April 29, 2025.

²⁵ For a detailed overview, see [Item 15.3.1](#) Regional Council October 1, 2024.

²⁶ See [Item No. 15.1.3](#) Halifax Regional Council February 11, 2025.

²⁷ Internal strategy renewal consultations were conducted in Fall 2023, and community engagements were conducted during this reporting period (throughout Spring 2024).

²⁸ The most recent Accessibility Strategy update was provided in May 2024. See [Item No. 10](#) Halifax Regional Council May 21, 2024.

²⁹ See [Item No. 15.2.2](#) Halifax Regional Council January 9, 2024.

ongoing to address government processes and policies, including land use regulations, that negatively impact ANS communities.³⁰

- **Affordable Access Program:** The Affordable Access Program (AAP) allows qualified individuals to apply for municipal subsidies.³¹ As of this reporting period, the AAP now includes the [Property Tax Exemption and Deferral Program](#), the [Affordable Transit Pass Program](#) (ATPP) and the [Recreation Funding Access Program](#) (RFAP).³² RFAP modifications have been made to increase low-income individuals’ access including: introducing a 25 percent discount, eliminating the requirement to produce the Canadian Child Benefit (CCB) statement, and further coordination with transit and finance to streamline the application process. Staff have had initial discussions with Multi District Facilities general managers around extending the RFAP to include the programs and memberships within Multi District Facilities.
- **Integrated Mobility Plan:** The [Integrated Mobility Plan](#) (IMP) creates a vision for moving around the Halifax region and helps direct future investment in transportation demand management, transit, active transportation, and the roadway network it seeks to improve the links between residents and their communities. Land acquisition work for Robie Street /Young Street is 50% complete and is anticipated to be completed within five years. Land acquisition work for Bayers Road is complete. Land acquisition for Herring Cove Road has not yet commenced and is expected to begin in 2025/26.
- **Moving Forward Together Plan:** Halifax Transit is currently facing increased challenges related to overloads, schedule adherence, and service reliability. Work is ongoing to craft a multi-year transit service plan to inform future service adjustments. Development of the Core Service Plan 2025-2027 will include: evaluating network performance and adherence to service standards; analyzing travel patterns; reviewing requests for service; changes to the transportation network, and growth within the transit service area; and public consultation on the draft plan.³³
- **Bike Network:** As of March 2025, 29 km (54%) of the proposed [All Ages and Abilities \(AAA\) Bikeway Network](#) has been built, with interim (tactical) solutions bringing the total to 36 km (60%). Municipal staff have completed a status review and risk analysis of the remaining project segments. During this reporting period, progress has been made on about 50% of the planned 57-km [All Ages and Abilities \(AAA\) Bikeway Network](#). Implementation was advanced in 2024/25 by bikeway construction on Almon Street and Isleville, and by the approval of a functional plan for the Peninsula South Complete Streets Project.
- **Student Transit Pass Pilot Program:** During this reporting period, the [Student Transit Pass Pilot Program](#) was expanded to include students in grades 7 to 12 in all HRCE and CSAP high schools and junior high schools located in HRM (for the 2024-2025 school year).³⁴ Student Transit Passes were valid on all Halifax Transit buses, Access-A-Bus, and ferries between September 2024, and June 2025. The expansion of the program was made possible through a funding agreement between HRM and the Province of Nova Scotia. Students and parents have been invited to

³⁰ The most recent ANSCAP progress report was provided in September of 2024. See [Item No. 15.1.14](#) Halifax Regional Council September 10, 2024.

³¹ The AAP application process allows residents to apply once and have their application package sent to multiple municipal programs. Application assistance is available through 311, Halifax Public Library branches, Community Recreation Centres, and Customer Service Centres.

³² The Affordable Access Transit Pass Program offers a 50% discount on the regular price of Halifax Transit monthly adult transit passes to residents in financial need. Recreation Funding Access Program offers a 50%-to-100% discount on the cost of recreational programs (some exceptions apply).

³³ See [Item No. 21.7](#) Halifax Regional Council February 11, 2025 for additional details.

³⁴ The Student Transit Pass Pilot Program was originally approved in 2021. See [Item No. 11.1.1](#) Halifax Regional Council May 18, 2021.

participate in a survey to share their pilot program experiences. Results from the survey will be used to inform the future of the program.

- **Urban Forestry Master Plan:** In 2023, Diamond Head Consulting was engaged to lead the Urban Forest Master Plan (UFMP) update.³⁵ The process included reviewing the current plan, analyzing existing data, completing a jurisdictional scan, and engaging key stakeholders and community members. During this reporting period, the review process was concluded, producing an updated UFMP that will guide the management of HRM’s urban forest to 2050 and beyond.³⁶

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No financial implications currently.

RISK CONSIDERATION

No risk considerations were identified.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The economic strategy Action Plan for Years 3-5 was 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. No further engagement was undertaken in the writing of this report.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

No environmental implications were identified.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Community Planning and Economic Development Stading Committee could choose not to forward the report to Regional Council.
2. Community Planning and Economic Development Stading Committee could choose not to receive a presentation from the Halifax Partnership regarding People. Planet, Prosperity: Halifax’s Inclusive Economic Strategy.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 Years 3-5 Action Plan | Action Item Updates (April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025)

Report Prepared by: Scott Sheffield, Policy Strategist, Government Relations and External Affairs
902.430.3654

³⁵ The 2013 version of the UFMP was drafted to inform the management of HRM’s urban forest between 2013 and 2023.

³⁶ For a detailed overview of the UFMP review process and updated UFMP, see [Item 15.2.1](#) Halifax Regional Council March 25, 2025.

Attachment 1

Years 3-5 Action Plan | Action Item Updates (April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025)

Promote and Maximize Inclusive and Sustainable Growth Grow GDP to \$25 Billion by 2027				
5-Year Objective	Action No.	Description	Action Update (April 2024-March 2025)	Lead
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.	<p>Halifax Partnership's SmartBusiness team delivered five in-person Business Continuity Workshops during the year with partners in the suburban and rural HRM communities of Musquodoboit Harbour, Tantallon/Saint Margarets Bay, Musquodoboit Valley, Fall River, and Sackville. Halifax Partnership and KPMG also partnered to deliver a Business Continuity Webinar. This webinar was recorded and continues to be available through the Business Continuity website and their YouTube channel.</p> <p>For the year, there have been 1,098 views of the Business Continuity website, 2,019 downloads of toolkit materials and 3,691 views of Business Continuity Toolkit webinar videos. The Partnership continued 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.</p>	HP
	2	Maintain essential services and online service delivery for HRM Business Services.	Progress was made on several residential permitting and approvals recommendations from the October 2022 Deloitte consulting report (see here), including increasing density along transit corridors and allowing up to four units within serviced boundaries. Other recommendations such as the Trusted Partner Program pilot and removing parking requirements are under consideration or are in progress. Efforts to refine all aspects of the approval process are ongoing.	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 continues to support policy modernization in projects such as assistance to provincial work on health care and housing, development of a new government relations policy framework, stakeholder/partnership processes, and collaborative work on targeted council reports.	HRM
	4	Seek legislative changes from the Province as required to grow Halifax's economy.	<p>During this reporting period, the municipality submitted five (5) new Charter and legislative amendment requests to the province addressing: (1) adopt and implement tiered energy performance compliance standards for the construction of new buildings (May 21, 2024 – Item 15.2.3); (2) collecting construction-related fines (August 20, 2024 – Item 15.1.11); (3) conferring (municipal) immunity from constructive taking and de facto expropriation claims (October 1, 2024 – Item 15.1.4); (4) extending the Cogswell District energy system (October 1, 2024 – Item 18.1); and (5) preserving ground-floor commercial space allocation requirements (February 25, 2025 – Item 16.1).</p> <p>During the same period, three (3) 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: (1) the request to require short-term rental platform operators (such as Airbnb) to remit fees collected for the marketing levy directly to the Municipality; and (2) adoption and implementation of tiered energy performance compliance standards for the construction of new buildings.</p>	HRM

	5	Continue Halifax Partnership's Business Retention, Expansion and Aftercare Program (SmartBusiness) to help HRM businesses diagnose and address business challenges, pursue growth opportunities, increase productivity, and adopt digital technologies to increase competitiveness.	Halifax Partnership's SmartBusiness program team supported 392 businesses during the year. Employers' biggest challenges continue to be labour, tax burden with new uncertainty around tariffs, trade and supply chain impacts. Twenty new-to-Halifax businesses were provided with Aftercare support. In addition to a survey of HRM business owners, the Partnership held focus group sessions to better understand the current needs of businesses and to provide data on improving the Smart Business program in 2025/26.	HP
	6	Support economic development and tourism in rural HRM through dedicated full-time resources.	Rural Economic Development continues to be supported with a dedicated SmartBusiness Account Executive made possible with dedicated funding from HRM. During the year, 92 rural HRM businesses were supported. Business resource expos were held in Sheet Harbour, Musquodoboit Harbour, Musquodoboit Valley and St. Margaret's Bay. Working with QSL and the Port of Sheet Harbour to help educate and build awareness in the community regarding their operations and potential opportunities. The Partnership continues to work alongside Discover Halifax as it relates to tourism opportunities throughout HRM.	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.	Halifax continues to be a sought-after location for business expansion and relocation. During the year, ten companies chose to locate or significantly grow in Halifax, bringing an anticipated 1,342 new jobs. Of those, RBC, a company with a history in Halifax since its inception, has committed to an additional 1,000 jobs in Bedford.	HP
	8	Leverage regional, national, and international partnerships to increase investment and R&D collaborations.	<p>The Halifax Partnership continues to collaborate and build international partnerships. This year, the Halifax Partnership has worked with Northern Portugal (Braga and Viana de Costelo) under a project with the EU that continues to advance.</p> <p>The Halifax Partnership has maintained its membership in the World Energy Cities Partnership (WECP). Thanks to their strong partnership with WECP, they have assisted with Provincial visit(s) to Esbjerg Denmark to better understand the offshore win sector and its impact on the supply chain and transportation related assets. The Partnership also hosted two virtual b2b missions with our sister city Portsmouth in the UK.</p>	HP/ HRM
1.4 Accelerate innovation and entrepreneurship	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. During the year the team attended Cleantech North America , SmartEnergy , H2O conference, DEFSEC , and Marine Renewables Canada . Also, this year the Halifax Partnership created two ecosystem maps highlighting the depth of the ocean sector and the cleantech sector in HRM.	HP
	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.	Through the SmartBusiness program the team at Halifax Partnership connects local business to the academic and post secondary institutions for connections to talent and broader programming to support growth.	HP
	11	Work with the Port and its PIER initiative to address transportation and logistics issues in Halifax.	<p>Halifax Partnership has joined The PIER as a member, and now works collaboratively with their team to support businesses operating from the PIER's facility by helping them to solve business problems by connecting to resources and partnership opportunities. Through the SmartBusiness Program the team at Halifax Partnership also connects local business to the academic and post secondary institutions for connections to talent and broader programming to support growth.</p> <p>HRM's representatives, on the Technical Working Group, worked closely with the Joint Regional Transportation Authority on the development of a new 'Activity Based' Travel Demand Model for HRM and the surrounding areas. Staff also actively participated in the Joint Regional Transportation Authority's ongoing work on a Regional Transportation Master Plan.</p>	HP/ HRM

<p>1.5 Pursue and maximize the economic impact and social benefits of major projects.</p>	12	Complete construction of the Cogswell District Redevelopment Project and ensure socio-economic benefits to the surrounding community.	<p>Phase 2 of the Cogswell District Redevelopment project was completed on December 24, 2024. Barrington Street from the roundabout at Nora Bernard Street, through to Duke Street, re-opened to all traffic as well as Cogswell Street from Brunswick Street to Upper Water Street. The new transit hub is operational. The third and final phase of project construction began in January 2025. This final year of construction (2025) will see the completion of the remaining street network, underground infrastructure, four parks and 2-kms of separate bike paths and multi-use paths.</p>	HRM
	13	Redevelop the Windsor Street Exchange.	<p>The Windsor Street Exchange Redevelopment project involves the redesign of the intersection of Bedford Highway, Windsor Street and Lady Hammond Road. A competition was held in February 2024 to identify qualified design-build teams, and a Request for Proposal was issued to pre-qualified teams in August 2024.</p> <p>The contract for Phase 1 Design was awarded to a design-build team led by Dexter Construction Limited. The team has begun detailed design work, and an update on the design and construction phasing of the project is expected in spring 2025. The project team has been assessing the design considerations requested by Regional Council and are expecting to report back in early 2025.</p>	HRM
	14	Secure federal funding to undertake key Infrastructure projects.	<p>HRM has secured approximately \$77.96M in intergovernmental cost-sharing during the period covered, with some notable highlights including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) \$55M under the Canada Public Transit Fund – Baseline Stream; (b) \$4.5M under the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund for the Cole Harbour Road stream daylighting, naturalization, and pocket park, for the Fall River upgrade to drainage systems and for Pleasant Street drainage improvements; (c) \$16.5M under the Municipal Capital Growth Program (MCGP) for the Cogswell District Project and the Downtown Dartmouth Combined Infrastructure Renewal. <p>In addition to the above, HRM has submitted or is in the process of submitting a number of applications to participate in larger intergovernmental funding opportunities during the period covered. Some highlights include proposals under (a) Active Transportation Fund (Federal); (b) Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund (Federal); (c) Canada Public Transit Fund – Metro-Regional Agreement Stream (Federal/Provincial); and (d) Growth and Renewal for Infrastructure Development Program (Provincial)</p> <p>HRM continues to implement key, previously approved, intergovernmental cost-sharing, such as \$79M under the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF), \$220.7M under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) for the Mill Cove Ferry project, and \$23.5M under the National Trade Corridors Fund (NTCF) to support the Windsor Street Exchange Redevelopment project.</p>	HRM
<p>1.6 Increase housing stock.</p>	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.	<p>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. Further work was required because of Legal review and new Provincial Minimum Planning Requirements. The Phase 4 amendment package is now targeting Spring 2025 for First Reading at Regional Council. Phase 5 will begin immediately following Regional Council approval of the plan.</p> <p>HRM continues to work closely with the Province to support their efforts to address homelessness and housing issues. HRM has provided operational support to the establishment of three (3) shelter villages, providing temporary supportive housing options for 126 individuals at one time.</p> <p>HRM currently supports eleven (11) provincial shelters and temporary housing facilities with garbage service, snow and ice control, and repairs. HRM also supports these and other facilities with other operational issues including such things as getting clients on the By Name List.</p> <p>HRM staff have also agreed to take on a housing support role for municipal clients who are accepted into public housing. This has allowed staff to make direct referrals to priority public housing for those experiencing homelessness</p>	HRM

	16	Implement HRM's Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) Initiatives to support housing affordability and grow the supply of housing.	<p>During this reporting period, a fully staffed project team was put in place to implement HRM's Action Plan for the federal government's Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF). To date, six (6) Action Plan initiatives have been completed, and the balance of five (5) initiatives are being advanced.</p> <p>HRM's first annual HAF report was successfully submitted to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) in November 2024, and its second payment of \$19.8 million was received in December 2024. Within the first year of the program a total of 6,057 net new residential building permits have been issued, which represents 39.16% of the total three-year target of 15,467.</p> <p>If current progress is sustained, the Municipality is likely to exceed its housing stock growth target (+2,600 net new residential units) before the HAF program's end.</p>	HRM
	17	Identify and implement internal process changes to quicken housing approvals and starts.	<p>Streamlining the development approvals process is being advanced through upgrades to the city's Online Permitting, Planning, Licensing and Compliance (PPLC) system and other related operational changes. This includes changes to workflows, enhancements to the e-permitting customer portal, auto-issuance of low-complexity permits, and prioritizing residential permits (implementation through 2024 and 2025).</p> <p>Only 25% of building and plumbing permit fees are now due when an application is submitted, with the balance due at the beginning of construction. Additional fee reductions for other types of permits are being implemented through by-law amendments.</p>	HRM
	18	Consider establishing a municipal housing corporation or a community land trust to create affordable housing in Halifax.	<p>HRM supported this community land trust 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.</p> <p>The 2025 Road to Economic Prosperity International Conference and Community Day highlighted the importance of community land trusts and sustainable development.</p>	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.	<p>Corporate Real Estate procured and commenced an update to the current Industrial Employment Lands Strategy (IELS). The IELS is a long-term management framework to ensure HRM's industrial land supply is healthy. HRM needs to provide a balanced inventory of shovel-ready, and zoned developable, vacant industrial employment lands sufficient to meet market demand (accounting for absorption rates).</p> <p>The updated industrial lands strategy will provide a revised assessment and forecast of industrial employment land needs, supporting the municipality's goals for population growth, economic prosperity, and commercial tax base expansion. Completion is targeted for Summer 2025.</p>	HRM
	20	Review the Regional Plan that outlines the vision, principles and long-range policies guiding future growth throughout the municipality.	<p>The draft Regional Plan was presented to Regional Council on in June 2023, followed by a public engagement period from July to October 2023. Feedback from this process was summarized in the What We Heard Report, which was presented to Council in December 2023. Further analysis was required in response to input from Legal Services and the introduction of new Provincial Minimum Planning Requirements.</p> <p>To comply with the new PNS regulations, HRM is making changes to the Regional Plan, secondary municipal planning strategies (Community Plans), and land use by-laws (LUBs). As a result, the Phase 4 amendment package is scheduled for First Reading at Regional Council in May 2025. Phase 5 will begin following Council's approval of the updated plan.</p> <p>Guiding principles for the Rural Community Planning program were released as part of the draft Regional Plan on June 20, 2023. The finalized Regional Plan, once adopted, will provide long-term direction for this program. Dalhousie University continued to support the Rural Team by conducting background research to inform future planning efforts. The Regional Groundwater Study, initiated in Q4 2024/25, will contribute essential technical data and serve as a key resource in shaping rural planning strategies. Additional work on the rural framework is anticipated as part of the Phase 5 work plan for the Regional Plan. To support ongoing program development, recruitment for Rural Team positions was initiated in April 2025.</p>	HRM

	21	Continue the long-term modernization of HRM land use by-laws, including the completion of revised suburban and rural planning strategies.	<p>Guiding principles for the Rural Community Planning program were released as part of the draft Regional Plan June 2023. The finalized Regional Plan, once adopted, will provide long-term direction for this program. Dalhousie University continued to support the Rural Team by conducting background research to inform future planning efforts.</p> <p>The Regional Groundwater Study, initiated in Q4 2024/25, will contribute essential technical data and serve as a key resource in shaping rural planning strategies. Additional work on the rural framework is anticipated as part of the Phase 5 work plan for the Regional Plan.</p> <p>The Housing Accelerator Fund (Package 2) approved by Regional Council in March 2025, added over 25 housing sites and included minor amendments. Work is progressing on the suburban planning workplan, including engagement, communications, and technical studies. Timelines have been impacted by Regional Plan updates, provincial requirements, and coordination needs. Continued organizational support will be necessary—particularly in legal review, communications, intergovernmental coordination, and infrastructure planning. Increased consulting and engagement budgets were approved</p>	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.	<p>Halifax Partnership's Road to Economic Prosperity team continues to work with HRM and the Provincial government to grant HRM the power to develop, execute, and enforce Community Benefit Agreements.</p> <p>Community Benefit Agreements were advanced, and planning work was undertaken in Beechville, Lucasville, Upper Hammonds Plains, and the Preston Township. Action planning continues with the Beechville Community Development Association and the Beechville Community at large. Community circles were held in the Upper Hammonds Plains Community to begin action planning work, and the municipality attended the East Preston community planning days.</p>	HP/ HRM
	23	Support the development of Wije'winen, the reimagined Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre.	<p>In September 2024, Fathom Studios applied for a Development Permit for a new building with a cultural use at 1940 Gottingen Street, the future location of the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre (MNFC). Review identified conflicts between requirements of the Regional Centre Land Use Bylaw (LUB) and the design of the building.</p> <p>The Indigenous design principles of the proposed MNFC included elements that were necessary for the community and its use of the building. Community Council approved amendments to the Centre Plan policy and LUB to accommodate the desired cultural and institutional uses, and to allow more flexibility to maintain the original intent and allow for expression of Indigenous design principles (see here).</p>	HRM
	24	Explore opportunities to support Indigenous partners' economic development priorities.	<p>The Halifax Partnership's SmartBusiness team is working collaboratively with Sipekne'katik First Nation, Millbrook First Nation, and Wasoqopa'q First Nation. Halifax Partnership is working collaboratively with Sipekne'katik as they support indigenous businesses; have connected the community to business investment opportunities; and 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.</p> <p>Millbrook has shared their growth plans for their land holdings throughout HRM and the Partnership is working collaboratively to help them fill vacant commercial space. Wasoqopa'q has diversified their investments and business offerings in Hammonds Plains and will be opening a Gas Bar and Women's Shelter in Q1 of 2025. They have further development plans in the works, and the Partnership continues to support them with their hiring needs and partnership opportunities.</p> <p>Halifax Partnership continues to learn about the priorities of each of these First Nations communities, and supports each of them by sharing best practices, including offering formalized training and ongoing support to First Nations economic development and business support staff.</p>	HP/ HRM
	25	Implement the ANS Road to Economic Prosperity 3-5 Year Plan to advance ANS community and economic development priorities.	<p>Established in 2023, the African Nova Scotian Community Action Program (ANSCAP) collaborates with historic African Nova Scotian (ANS) communities to address gaps in municipal services and find long-term solutions to meet community needs. ANSCAP, in collaboration with HRM's African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office (ANSAIO), continues to support ANS community action planning in Beechville, Upper Hammonds Plains, Lucasville, East Preston, North Preston, and Cherry Brook/Lake Loon. Work is ongoing to address government processes and policies, including land use regulations, that negatively impact ANS communities.</p>	HP/ HRM

	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.	HP
1.9 Provide research and actionable insight needed to support economic and business growth.	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.	HP
	28	Monitor and communicate the economic strategy's progress to stakeholders and adapt actions as required.	Ongoing work tracking and communicating progress; Halifax Index (2024) presented to the public on June 6, 2024, 2025 Halifax Index to be presented on June 19, 2025.	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.	Halifax Index launched to the public on June 6, 2024.	HP

Attract, Retain, and Develop Talent

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

5-Year Objective	Action No.	Description	Action Update (April 2024-March 2025)	Lead
2.1 Attract talent to Halifax from across Canada and around the world.	30	Help employers to recruit international talent through the Atlantic Immigration Program, Nova Scotia Nominee Program, Global Talent Strategy, and other government immigration programs.	The Atlantic Immigration Program continued to provide pathways to permanent residence and after meeting with over 290 employers, 73 were identified as "immigration ready" and referred to Nova Scotia's Immigration and Population Growth team.	HP
	31	With industry and government partners, undertake targeted on-the-ground recruitment efforts nationally and internationally to meet labour needs.	During this past fiscal year, the Partnership completed the International Recruitment Pilot program. Based on the results and lack of funding, the pilot was not converted into a longer-term initiative. Attendance at other events such as Destination Canada was not possible due to a change in direction by other levels of government who deliver that program.	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.	<p>Implementation of HRM's Immigration Strategy progressed through impactful initiatives, strong partnerships, and systems-level work. Two resource guides were developed: Pathways to Stay for international students pursuing permanent residency and a business guide for immigrant entrepreneurs launching ventures in Halifax.</p> <p>Additional initiatives included the creation of a legal glossary in multiple languages for immigrant and newcomer youth. A hate crime information session and a two-day workshop on preventing violent extremism. Support provided to business units included: a Safe City's Women's Safety Assessment Application Pilot Session for immigrant women, help with the Emergency Management Office's newcomer engagement plan, support the Job Posting Policy and mentorship program, and support for the immigrant youth empowerment forum.</p> <p>A Halifax Immigration Partnership (HIP) strategic plan review is underway. The project remains focused on community gaps regarding employment, multilingualism, refugee status, civic engagement and includes anti racism and discrimination and mental health working groups to address emerging needs.</p> <p>During this reporting period, the municipality continued to actively bring together community and organizations to support immigrant/newcomer integration in Halifax. In partnership with community, HRM hosted events such as the Get to Know Your Municipality, Walk with Refugees, the Multilingual Fair, and the Welcomed in Halifax program to support refugees and asylum seekers with access to public transit and recreation programming.</p>	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.	During the year, work with Connectors and Connectees resulted in 317 Connector Program participants finding career jobs in Halifax (127 immigrants, 152 international grads, 20 local grads, 4 Ukrainian refugees and 14 inter-provincial newcomers). The Partnership signed on 222 new connectors during this reporting period.	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.	Halifax Partnership's work in this area has not progressed as planned during this reporting year. However, a resource was hired (towards the end of the year) to advance the ANS Workforce Attachment Program in 2025/26. Provincial funding support for this initiative has been secured.	HP
	35	Leverage HRM's Social Value Framework (Procurement Administrative Order - Appendix B) to strengthen workforce and supplier diversity.	Both vendor satisfaction and vendor social value surveys were completed in late 2024. Results have been analyzed and will influence future direction, specifically related to social value. Vendors seemed satisfied with Procurement's performance overall.	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.	Community outreach and engagement were key initiatives during this reporting period. The municipality attended several job fairs including the Diversity Employment Network's BIPOC Atlantic Job Fair , the Out and Equal Job Fair , the Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work's Employment Services New Leaf Reverse Job Fair and the Mi'kmaq Native Friendship Centre Job Fair to attract potential candidates from employment equity groups. HRM partnered with community groups to offer in community employment circles to share information and answer questions about the municipality's hiring process. In partnership with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion/ANSAIO, the municipality engaged with community partners to better understand potential barriers to employment with the municipality and to develop a plan to address them	HRM
	37	Implement the Accessibility Strategy to advance full participation, accessibility, and inclusion for individuals who visit, work, and live in HRM.	Regional Council passed the renewed Accessibility Strategy (2025-2028) in February 2025. An update on the final year of the Accessibility Strategy (2021-2024) was provided to Regional Council in May 2025 (see here for implementation highlights). The Accessibility Task Force met quarterly to provide feedback and input into the actions within the Accessibility Framework. In November 2024, the municipality hired its first Coordinator of Community Outreach and Research, Accessibility who will support research and community engagement to ensure that the Accessibility Strategy goals, and provincial <i>Accessibility Act</i> requirements are met.	HRM
2.4 Prepare business to meet future of work needs.	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.	Halifax Partnership work on this action item will advance as funding is identified and secured.	HP

Make Halifax a Better Place to Live, Work and Visit

Increase residents' well-being on a continuous basis

5-Year Objective	Action No.	Description	Action Update (April 2024-March 2025)	Lead
3.1 Increase Halifax's environmental sustainability and resiliency.	39	Implement the private sector endorsed CEO Climate Action Charter to support Halifax businesses and organizations in reducing GHG emissions and increasing climate resiliency.	<p>An agreement was signed with Halifax Partnership to fund a sustainability consultant to support the CEO Climate Action Charter goals. Halifax Partnership and HRM worked with the consultant to develop a three-year action plan for CEO Climate Action Charter signatories</p> <p>Quarterly meetings were held with a focus on sustainable transport, regional planning, and greening operations with 22 CEO signatories. Planning is underway for a CEO Day of Learning (October 2025) which aims to inspire C-suite executives across Halifax and Nova Scotia through collaborative learning and innovation.</p>	HP
	40	Support businesses in taking actions to reduce emissions and green their operations through relevant programs and funding.	<p>During this reporting period, Halifax Partnership and EfficiencyOne signed an MOU to formalize their collaboration to assist businesses with greening their operations. The Halifax Partnership Smart Business team refers businesses to dedicated contacts at EfficiencyOne to help them assess their current energy uses and to find ways to reduce their energy consumption and loss.</p> <p>Halifax Partnership's SmartBusiness team hosted a virtual trade event with counterparts in Portsmouth, UK, to help the ocean/marine sector understand how to green their marine fleets. Four green tech businesses were showcased and the Royal Canadian Navy and the Royal Navy both participated and shared their fleet greening plans.</p>	HP
	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.	<p>Pilot programs with Efficiency Nova Scotia and Thinkwell Shift have concluded. In the Thinkwell Shift pilot, eleven homeowners received support for deep energy retrofits; nine (9) homeowners achieved or exceeded 50% energy reductions, averaging 57%. Projects cost \$38,000 per home before rebates, with \$29,000 covered by the municipality. Annual utility savings are estimated at \$3,000.</p> <p>The EfficiencyOne pilot enhanced its Home Energy Assessment program with municipal financing. Six (6) homeowners averaged 56% energy savings, with project costs just over \$30,000. No further EfficiencyOne retrofits are planned, though staff training on incentives will continue. Lessons learned were documented, and cost-sharing discussions with all levels of government are ongoing.</p>	HRM
	42	Continue decarbonizing public transit.	<p>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.</p> <p>Both the Ragged Lake Transit Centre expansion and associated electric bus deliveries have experienced delays, but completion is expected in early 2025/26. In December 2024, three electric buses began in-service testing and entered daily operations as part of the evaluation process.</p> <p>A Request for Supplier Qualifications (RFSQ) for the Burnside Transit Centre Eco-Rebuild Design project is anticipated for release in 2025/26, with design work scheduled to begin in 2026.</p> <p>An application for external funding has been submitted to support a Hydrogen Injection Bus Pilot, which aims to evaluate the feasibility of hydrogen as a pathway to decarbonize the transit fleet.</p>	HRM

	43	With partners, assess and upgrade critical infrastructure to withstand current and future climate impacts.	<p>The detailed pluvial, fluvial, and coastal flood risk mapping project has been completed (see final report here). Emergency Management developed a draft inventory of critical infrastructure, which is undergoing review across business units in 2024/25.</p> <p>The Information Technology business unit and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) team are actively integrating layers of climate risk, hazard exposure, and community vulnerability to support decision-making and the prioritization of future resilience projects.</p> <p>A draft critical infrastructure inventory has been prepared by Emergency Management and is currently under review by the Information Technology and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) teams. Hazard, Risk, and Vulnerability Assessments (HRVAs) are underway, after which the condition of municipally owned assets will be assessed, followed by the evaluation of assets owned by external parties within the municipality. This foundational work will enable the municipality to prioritize investments that strengthen critical infrastructure, enhancing resilience to both current and future climate impacts.</p>	HRM
	44	Manage and protect Halifax's ecosystems.	<p>HRM is progressing its efforts to implement deep energy retrofits of municipal buildings. Retrofits were completed at the Acadia Centre, Chocolate Lake Recreation Centre, and Keshen Goodman Public Library. Work is ongoing at Fire Station two (2), Fire Station seven (7) and the Lake Echo Community Centre. Design is underway for deep retrofits at East Dartmouth, Cole Harbour Place, Harrietsfield Williamswood, and North Preston Community Centres. Design work for Captain William Spry Centre and Halifax North Library is on hold pending planning.</p> <p>An application was submitted to Fisheries and Oceans Canada to partner with NS Inland Fisheries and the Nova Scotia Invasive Species Council on managing Yellow Floating Heart in Little Albro Lake. Program efficiencies were identified to support mostly in-house environmental monitoring in 2025.</p> <p>Development of management plans for natural assets owned by the municipality continues. The Natural Assets Pilot Project (Nine Mile River) continued in partnership with the Natural Asset Initiative. The municipality joined the 2025 cohort of the Natural Asset Roadmap, where next steps will be identified to guide the creation of formal natural asset management plans</p> <p>Work on waste diversion and aligning HRM's solid waste strategy with HalifACT continues. Phase 2 partner engagement and public consultation have been completed. The final report has been drafted and is under review for delivery to ESSC in the coming months. Progress was made in key areas, including enhanced oversight of multi-residential construction, where Solid Waste Resources will be able to advise on space allocation for waste containers. Delivery of Solid Waste Strategy action items will be integrated into Public Works' ongoing operations in 2025/26.</p> <p>HRM submitted a report to the Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Climate Change (NSECC) on the impacts of blue-green algae alerts and is developing an educational video to help the public identify blue-green algae. Collaboration and improved public messaging will continue.</p> <p>Naturalization initiatives included collaboration with the Centre for Water Resource Studies to secure funding to pilot floating wetlands in Kearney and Little Kearney Lakes. Students developed an onboarding checklist for new sites and researched methods to remove invasive Japanese Knotweed.</p>	HRM

	45	Implement HRM's Electric Vehicle Strategy, including working with partners to increase electric vehicle charging infrastructure throughout Halifax.	<p>While the private sector is expected to be the primary source of public charging infrastructure across the province, the municipality has a change-leader role. HRM's Electric Vehicle (EV) Strategy commits the municipality to leading infrastructure development (in the short-term) as electric vehicle adoption increases. As per direction of Halifax Regional Council, language to support mandatory EV Charging requirements in new buildings has been included in the draft Regional Plan.</p> <p>Level 2 EV chargers are operational at Bedford Park and Ride, Grahams Grove, the Canada Games Centre, and Dingle Park. Level 3 chargers are active at the Canada Games Centre and Musquodoboit Harbour Public Library.</p> <p>EV charger construction is underway at the JD Shatford Library, Cole Harbour Place, RBC Centre, and Armdale ROW, with work at St. Margarets Bay Centre and 40 Alderney Drive expected to start in late summer 2025.</p> <p>EV charger design work is ongoing for future installations at Point Pleasant Park, Shubie Park, the Bicentennial Centre, and MacPhee House Museum.</p>	HRM
3.2 Increase access to arts, culture, recreation, and natural assets in Halifax.	46	Increase low-income groups' and individuals' access to recreation programs and other municipal services.	<p>The Student Transit Pass Pilot Program was expanded to include students in grades 7 to 12 in all HRCE and CSAP high schools and junior high schools located in HRM (for the 2024-2025 school year). Student Transit Passes were valid on all Halifax Transit buses, Access-A-Bus, and ferries between September 2024, and June 2025. Students and parents have been invited to participate in a survey to share their pilot program experiences. Results from the survey will be used to inform the future of the program.</p> <p>Affordable Access Program (AAP) modifications have been made to the Recreation Funding Access Program (RFAP) to increase low-income individuals' access including: introducing a 25 percent discount, eliminating the requirement to produce the Canadian Child Benefit (CCB) statement, and further coordination with transit and finance to streamline the application process. Staff have had initial discussions with Multi District Facilities general managers around extending the AAP to include the programs and memberships within Multi District Facilities.</p> <p>HRM continues to co-lead the development of the JustFOOD Action Plan in partnership with the Halifax Food Policy Alliance (HFPA). In February 2024, Regional Council approved the JustFOOD Action Plan (Part B) and work was undertaken to deliver the priorities for Year 1 of the Plan. A priority was to build the municipal food team to increase capacity to deliver the municipally led JustFOOD actions, ability to support collaborative actions, and to share expertise and connection to knowledge holders to bring a food lens to municipal decision-making. The emergency food truck coordinator, Urban Agriculture, and Community Food Specialists are planned to be in place in 2025/26 (see update here).</p> <p>HRM is in the process of developing a Seniors Recreation Services Plan. This project is aimed at shaping the municipality's recreation programs and services for seniors over the next five years. Seniors' groups and individuals have been actively involved in creating this plan and a Seniors' Recreation Advisory Group has been established to provide leadership and support to staff during the planning process. A public engagement process (survey, community and senior organizations workshops) concluded in June 2025</p> <p>Analysis and evaluation of HRM's Inclusion Support programming was undertaken during this reporting period. Work is ongoing to compare current program offerings with community demand. A jurisdictional scan, community consultations and data analysis, are being used to guide recommendations. An inclusion advisory committee has been established, including families and individuals that currently use the Inclusion Support services.</p> <p>Youth were engaged on an ongoing basis through implementation of the Youth Services Plan, Multi-Service Youth Centres, the Power House Youth Centre, Adventure Earth Centres, Youth Advisory Committee, Youth Leadership Program and Aquatic Youth Leadership Program at municipally operated youth drop-in centres. Work began to update and scope the Youth Services Plan to determine effective ways to provide recreation opportunities for youth in the municipality.</p>	HRM
	47	Ensure HRM's culture investments and commemoration reflect Halifax's geography and diversity.	<p>The Office of Diversity and Inclusion/African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office and Parks and Recreation undertook public consultation on the Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan (CHPP) with underrepresented groups. Consultations resulted in the establishment of the vision, pillars, goals, and in the actions within the CHPP that was adopted by Regional Council.</p>	HRM

	48	Work with Discover Halifax to support the implementation of the Halifax Regional Integrated Tourism Master Plan.	Discover Halifax led an effort to map the next five years of tourism growth in Halifax. An updated Integrated Tourism Master Plan (ITMP) is expected to be brought forward to Regional Council in 2025. A final report detailing progress made toward the execution of the current ITMP's 28 destination marketing initiatives can be found here .	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.	During this reporting period, HRM staff completed a full survey of parking in the Regional Centre and recorded this inventory on a Map Layer. This information has facilitated the identification of areas where a curb designation may be missing, in particular accessible parking and commercial loading areas. Adjustments have been made to on-street restrictions to help improve the experience for visitors to downtown, as well as the businesses who operate in the urban core.	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.	<p>Since the Rapid Transit Strategy was adopted, work has commenced on design for segments of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridors. Staff are undertaking the development of an updated implementation plan for BRT which will guide HRM's construction of BRT over the next decade and beyond. This implementation plan will include a review of the assumptions from the 2020 Plan, including consideration for which assumptions may now be inappropriate considering the increased growth and congestion over the last five years.</p> <p>In September 2024, Regional Council approved a motion to collaborate with the provincial Joint Regional Transportation Agency (JRTA) in submitting an Expression of Interest for the new Metro Region Agreement funding stream under the Canada Public Transit Fund. This funding could support the remaining components of the Rapid Transit Strategy. Halifax Transit is also working with the JRTA on the draft Regional Transportation Plan, which is set to be released later this year.</p>	HRM
	51	Continue implementing Integrated Mobility Plan recommendations to make HRM more connected, sustainable, affordable, and healthy.	<p>The Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP) recommended the creation of a regional center bikeway network, making cycling an appealing mode of transportation for short and medium length trips. The plan proposed the build out of the network using protected bike lanes, multi-use pathways and local street bikeways to create a network for "all ages and abilities" (AAA).</p> <p>As of March 2025, 29 km (54%) of the proposed All Ages and Abilities Bikeway Network has been built, with interim (tactical) solutions bringing the total to 36 km (60%). Municipal staff have completed a status review and risk analysis of the remaining project segments. During this reporting period, implementation was advanced by bikeway construction on Almon Street and Isleville, and by the approval of a functional plan for the Peninsula South Complete Streets Project. At least three segments are expected to be built in 2025. The goal to complete the full network is 2028.</p>	HRM
	52	Prepare a new Halifax Transit service plan to align service with demand, growth, and development.	Work is ongoing to craft a multi-year transit service plan to inform future service adjustments. Development of the Core Service Plan 2025-2027 will include: evaluating network performance and adherence to service standards; analyzing travel patterns; reviewing requests for service; changes to the transportation network, and growth within the transit service area; and public consultation on the draft plan.	HRM
3.4 Strengthen the dynamism of our downtown, main streets, and rural centres.	53	Finalize and implement a plan for the former Memorial Library that maintains Grafton Park as a green space.	<p>Under the Crown ownership grant, HRM enjoys restricted title to this property as a public library within a public park or solely as a public park (see here for details). Use of the property also remains bound by the Heritage Property Act and is constrained by human remains non-disturbance restrictions.</p> <p>Steps are being taken to advance the site's reuse including the collection of background information and the development of a plan with a scope that includes: (a) substantial and/or full removal of the building; (b) recognition of the importance of the site's culture and heritage attributes; (c) balancing of requirements of the Crown Grant while respecting the recommendations of the December 2020 Archaeological Resource Impact Assessment; (d) recommending recreation and leisure needs; and, (e) conceptual park design, uses, interpretation, and capital development.</p>	HRM

	54	Support and promote business development and tourism by activating public spaces, fostering special events, and facilitating entertainment programming.	<p>In collaboration with municipal staff, Discover Halifax led the review of major event guidelines. Consultant GM Event was engaged to conduct an engagement process to better understand the perspectives and experiences of the major event stakeholders. Work is ongoing to develop a framework that will establish and enforce standards, policies, and procedures for major events and define expectations for organizers hosting events in HRM. This work is expected to streamline processes, enhance accessibility, diversity and inclusion, and safety, and position Halifax as a leading event destination.</p> <p>The Integrated Tourism Master Plan (ITMP) renewal final report is under review. Discover Halifax hosted two open house opportunities for municipal staff to meet with Discover Halifax and the consultants working on the project. A <i>What we Heard</i> report (see here) and final presentation on the Plan was delivered in March 2025, to Community Planning and Economic Development Committee. A recommendation to Regional Council is expected in summer 2025 for final approval.</p>	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.	<p>The downtown Dartmouth revitalization project combines the development of an Open Space Plan for the downtown Dartmouth waterfront and the exploration and development of a continuous emergency access route. On the water side of the rail line, the access route will serve as a multi-use trail connection and a cohesive spine for open space development.</p> <p>Fathom Studio, O2 Planning and Design, CBCL Limited, and Cultural Resource Management Group were hired in February 2025 to undertake the project. Consultation, with rights holders, residents and interest groups, is planned for Spring of 2025. The overall process will identify the project's geographical scope, coordinate the goals and objectives of community and external partners, and align with municipal plans and priorities.</p>	HRM
	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 1 construction has started in spring 2025.	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.	<p>Staff undertook a comprehensive review of streetscaping details and maps to incorporate into planned 2025 update of the Municipal Design Guidelines (Red Book).</p> <p>Various streetscaping initiatives are underway, tendered or upcoming. Brunswick Complete Streets is nearly tender-ready for 2025 construction, and Grafton drain repairs are underway. Planning advances on the Hartlen Function Plan and Downtown Gateway charter, with internal testing on a formula to estimate developer responsibility for sidewalk gaps.</p> <p>Planning for 2025 construction is ongoing, with streetscaping components included across multiple corridors, including Dutch Village, Cathedral, Almon, Brunswick, Henry, Grafton, Sullivan's Pond, and Spring Garden Road.</p> <p>Multiple major strategic multi-modal corridors are moving ahead. Scoping for preliminary design is ongoing Bedford Highway (Kearney Lake Road to Meadowbrook Drive). Preliminary design is nearly complete on the Robie Street/Young Street (Cunard Street to Young Street) project. Functional design is 90% complete on the Portland Street (Pleasant Street to Bissett Road) project, with final completion anticipated in summer 2025. Windmill Road functional design is ongoing. Work began in summer 2024, with anticipated completion in summer 2025. Scoping for functional design is ongoing for the Main Street (Forest Hills Parkway to Ross Road) corridor. Rainnie-Brunswick corridor's detailed design is ongoing, with construction planned for 2025.</p>	HRM
	58	Enhance green spaces and programming opportunities in green spaces in the Regional Centre.	<p>Urban Forestry and Parks are developing a management plan for Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, shaped by community engagement, including an Elders gathering circle. The plan will be presented to the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee (ESSC) in 2025. Staff also participated in the Atlantic Canada Forest Health Workshop and tree marking training with Medway Community Forest Coop to learn treatment techniques.</p> <p>HRM is now maintaining a publicly accessible list of all rural outdoor recreation assets. HRM's interactive, map-based 'Find a Park' application is now directly linked to an asset registry. As updates are made in the registry, they automatically populate in the application on HRM's Website. Recent updates include searchable data on boat launches, bike racks and floating docks. Work on adding a maintenance responsibilities section is ongoing.</p>	HRM

	59	Continue with placemaking and beautification efforts.	<p>HRM's Neighbourhood Placemaking program 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. An additional \$1,000 is available for artist fees. In the summer of 2024, a new mural was started in Ardmore Park and a basketball court mural was completed in Woodlawn.</p> <p>The Cogswell Storytelling Engagement program is a community-led partnership forged to identify and facilitate Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian stories and histories that should be celebrated through art and interpretation within the Cogswell District. The municipality hired two consultants - one from each community - to lead the engagement programs during the summer of 2024. Feedback collected through these engagement efforts is guiding the Cogswell Storytelling work, including the design and installation of physical storytelling features.</p> <p>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. Each kit contains enough seeds for approximately 30 households.</p> <p>A grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies funded a project called Ride With Me, which designed and executed street murals within the curb extensions of seven intersections along Creighton and Maynard Streets. Throughout the Spring of 2024, artists Elyse Moir, Holly Carr, and Vanessa Thomas worked closely with students from Joe Howe Elementary School to design the murals. The artwork was then painted, in Summer of 2024, by children and youth in the neighbourhood attending summer camps. This project was awarded a 2025 Halifax Urban Design Awards in the Community Connections and Initiatives category.</p>	HRM
	60	Implement the recommendations from the Rural Recreation Strategy.	<p>The Rural Recreation Strategy was approved by Regional Council in January 2024. During this reporting period, a Community Recreation Coordinator was appointed to implement the action items stated in the strategy.</p>	HRM