

Halifax
COVID-19 Economic Response
and Recovery Plan

Presented to:

Halifax Regional Council
May 12, 2020



HALIFAX **HALIFAX**
PARTNERSHIP

ECONOMIC GROWTH PLAN FRAMEWORK



VISION

By 2031 we have grown to:
population **550,000** (1.7% per year)
& GDP **\$30 billion** (2.9% Per year)



VALUE PROPOSITION



Ocean Advantage



Educated/Innovative Community



Excellent Rural/Urban Lifestyle



5-YEAR STRATEGIC GOALS



Promote & Maximize Growth



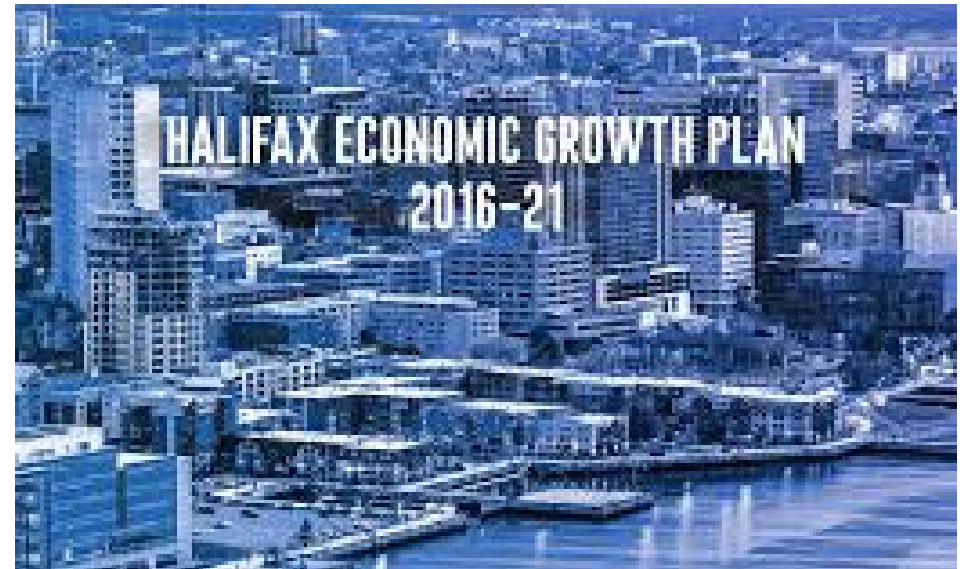
Attract & Retain Talent



Make Halifax a Better Place to Live and Work



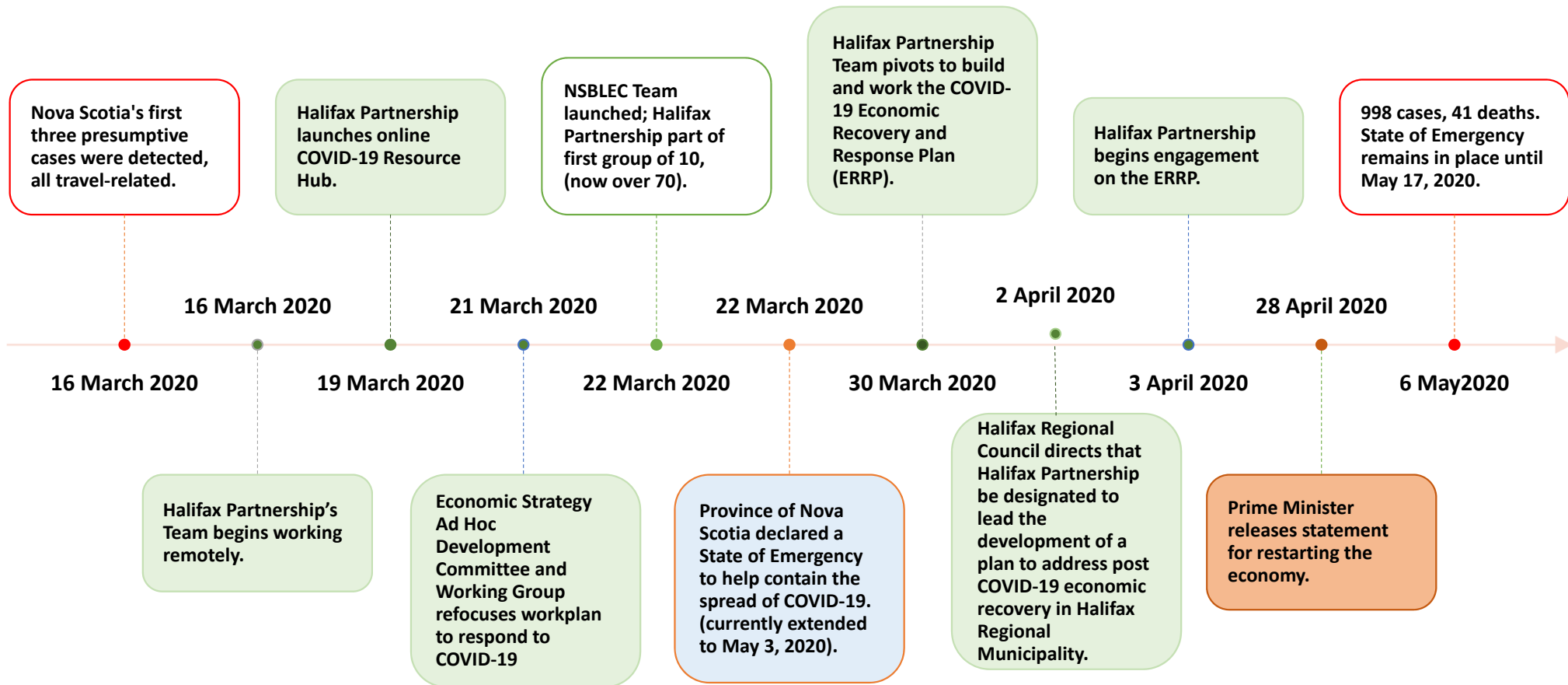
Align Economic Development



- Currently in Year 5 of 5 of the Halifax Economic Growth Plan 2016-21 - co-leading with HRM
- Started the process of designing the approach and development of the 2021-26 Growth Plan
- COVID-19 happened
- Pausing the development of Growth Plan for one year (or more) and refocusing efforts on how best to respond to the current crisis and prepare for recovery.

Key Milestones to Date:

Stimulus Programs and Services for Businesses offered by three orders of government ongoing . . .



Economic Response and Recovery Plan Goal



Get back to our long-term growth trend and chart a path forward for a stronger, more resilient City.

Guiding Principles:



Follow the advice of our healthcare experts



Leverage our teams, expertise, data, and networks



Pursue alignment among all three orders of government



Work in collaboration with the Nova Scotia Business Labour Economic Coalition (NSBLEC)



Remain in constant contact, engage and collaborate with our local stakeholders






Act swiftly, nimbly and creatively with clear purpose



Build resiliency

Three Phases of Recovery

Phases	Objectives	Timing
 <p data-bbox="285 678 533 737">PHASE I: CURRENT URGENT HEALTH CRISIS</p>	<p data-bbox="674 548 1474 639">Follow public health directives and respond to the urgent needs of businesses and residents.</p>	<p data-bbox="1524 662 1990 909">Moving from one Phase to the next will not be based on a fixed timeline, but will be aligned to Public Health criteria and measures.</p> <p data-bbox="1537 977 1978 1068">Actions/activities may overlap between Phases.</p>
 <p data-bbox="260 1013 554 1078">PHASE II: STABILIZATION GETTING BACK TO BUSINESS</p>	<p data-bbox="674 847 1474 990">Support businesses planning for reopening or resuming full operations; prepare for Public Health restrictions if COVID-19 resurges.</p>	
 <p data-bbox="298 1299 525 1364">PHASE III: RECOVERY OPEN FOR BUSINESS</p>	<p data-bbox="674 1146 1474 1338">Support businesses in resuming full operations; build local business and consumer confidence; ramp up national and international investment attraction.</p>	



Phase I: Current – Urgent Health Crisis

Proposed Actions – HRM Lead

1. Ensure Municipal financial liquidity.
2. Protect residents by supporting Public Health Authority measures through outreach, communications, support, services, and penalties.
3. Maintain essential services.
4. Ensure prompt payment to vendors and suppliers to help with immediate cashflow needs.
5. Assist vulnerable communities by maintaining and enhancing support for programs and initiatives that address food insecurity, discrimination, substance mis-use, homelessness and domestic abuse.
6. Facilitate/advocate for rapid testing among vulnerable communities and HRM essential staff.
7. Offer virtual opportunities for recreation and promoting well-being.
8. Move core HRM business services online (e.g. permit applications and approvals online).



Phase I: Current – Urgent Health Crisis

Proposed Actions – Halifax Partnership Lead

9. Communicate COVID-19 assistance programs, services, and other resources available to business through the Partnership's website and other channels.
10. Consult with companies one-on-one and connect them to resources to address their most pressing needs.
11. Create an online COVID-19 Government Assistance Tool for business to determine their eligibility and communicate how they can access government supports.
12. With partners, match employers' urgent employment needs with students, immigrants and others looking for work (e.g. refocus the Halifax Connector Program and the mobile Connector App to respond to needs).
13. Create an online tool for job seekers to determine willingness and eligibility to work in sectors across Nova Scotia that are experiencing immediate labour demand (e.g. agriculture, fish processing).
14. Promote summer jobs to students looking for work and the new 100% wage incentives for businesses looking to hire a summer student.
15. With BIDs, Discover Halifax, rural partners, and others, help develop a Buy Local program to boost consumers' willingness to spend.
16. Celebrate and share good news stories of local companies responding to the crisis.
17. Identify and address with partners the immediate economic development issues of traditionally marginalized groups.
18. Monitor and report on economic and labour market statistics.
19. Advise all orders of government on policy changes that could assist businesses during the crisis.



Phase II: Stabilization – Getting Back to Business

Proposed Actions – HRM Lead

20. Temporarily adapt transportation networks in high pedestrian areas, where feasible, to respond to provincial health directives.
21. Re-assess, advocate for, and proceed with key infrastructure projects that stimulate the economy and address climate change.
22. Take advantage of provincial and federal stimulus funding opportunities that align with the Municipality's priorities.
23. Identify and address immediate and critical regulatory needs so businesses can resume operations.
24. Re-open and adapt municipal sites, buildings, and non-essential services in accordance with emergency and public health measures, changing fiscal circumstances, municipal climate change targets, and new user needs.

Proposed Actions – Halifax Partnership Lead

25. Provide companies with a diagnostic tool to develop detailed plans for returning to work based on key considerations: virus spread, guidance from public health authorities, workforce readiness to return to work, and legal liability.
26. Address the gap of temporary foreign workers and connect the students, immigrants, unemployed and underemployed with companies needing workers.
27. Re-examine Halifax's value proposition for investment in light of COVID-19 impacts.
28. Continue initiatives under the Halifax Innovation District Project and the Halifax Innovation Outpost to support startups and scaleups.
29. Work with the BIDs to restore the dynamism of main streets.



Phase III: Recovery – Open for Business

Proposed Actions – HRM Lead

30. Identify, maintain, and enhance municipal processes adopted during the crisis that are both viable and of benefit to businesses and residents in the long-term.
31. Address the climate change emergency in the context of COVID-19, taking advantage of the opportunity to transition to a carbon-neutral economy by 2050.
32. Identify and address new regulatory challenges and opportunities for active government response given the changed business landscape.

Proposed Actions – Halifax Partnership Lead

33. Launch business and consumer confidence campaigns.
34. Accelerate Investment Attraction and FDI.
35. Consolidate lessons learned from our initial responses to the pandemic to help prepare businesses for future shut-downs.
36. Re-assess how best to grow Halifax's population based on changes in migration (international students, newcomers) patterns.
37. Identify and capitalize on specific sector initiatives, opportunities and projects that have emerged as a result of the crisis.
38. Update long-term economic projections for the private sector's and HRM's planning purposes.



Implementation

- May not be a one-year plan. May be an 18-24 month plan.
- Ongoing engagement, communication and information sharing with key stakeholders and the business community.



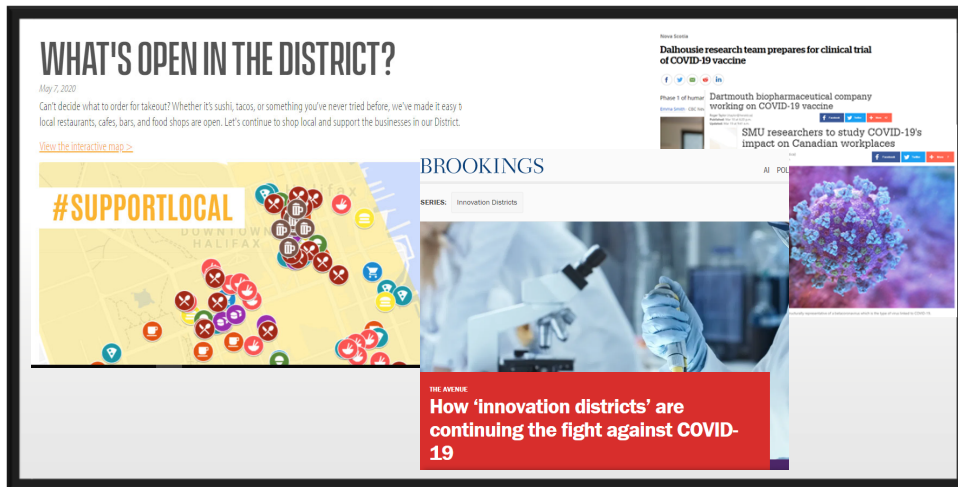
Measurement

- Monitor and report on progress alongside public health measures.
- Monitor and report on key economic measures (GDP, population, employment, etc.).
- Commission surveys related to business and/or consumer confidence.
- Monitor and report on outputs for individual action plans (both quantitative and qualitative).

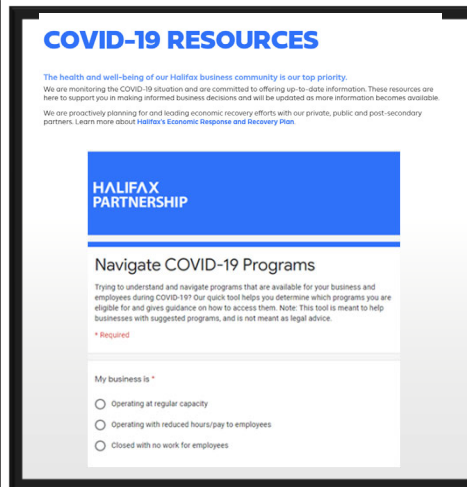


Accountability & Reporting

- Halifax Regional Council
- Halifax Partnership Board of Directors
- Ad Hoc Development Committee
- COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan Public Dashboard
- Aligned through Collective Impact (common agenda, mutually reinforcing activities, constant communication, backbone support with Halifax Partnership and HRM staff).



- **Deferral of property taxes** from April 30 to June 1.
- Halifax **Transit designated an essential** service.
- **Temporarily removed parking fees** to allow for relief to those accessing healthcare facilities and those businesses that remain open.
- **Launched online application process** for permits to help keep businesses moving.
- **Payment of interim tax bill due date moved** from April 30 to June 1
- **Reduction of the interest rate charged** on arrears from 15% per annum to 10% per annum.



Supporting Businesses

- Launched **COVID-19 Business Resource Hub and Navigation Tool**
- Launched **“What’s Open in the District”** #supportlocal map
- Active participant on the **NS Business Labour Economic Coalition**
- Halifax Innovation District recognized by Brookings Institute as **one of 11 global innovation districts** that have innovative approaches to combatting the virus
- **460** interactions with local companies requesting COVID-19 business information/resources
- **148** one-on-one conversations with businesses to support their needs
- **203** referrals to partner organizations
- **7** new Investment Attraction clients since April 1
- One Investment Attraction win for Halifax since April 1, projecting **150 jobs**
- **>90** private sector Investors continuing to support economic growth in Halifax

Addressing Labour Needs

- **Connected with 600+** business leaders to connect with newcomers and domestic and international students during COVID-19