



AGREATERHalifax
Economic Strategy 2011-2016

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FUNDING PARTNERS



MESSAGES

NOTE FROM MAYOR

When our community created Halifax's 2011-16 economic strategy, AGREATERHalifax, we defined a bold vision for our city. We envisioned a progressive, competitive, international city full of smart people with big ideas. A high performing, liveable, entrepreneurial and inclusive city that attracts investment and people and inspires innovation.

Over the past two years, we have made a lot of progress towards achieving this vision. Halifax is becoming known as a smart city that is home to top-notch businesses, talent, and post-secondary, health and research institutions. We are attracting leading companies, investment and talent across a number of industries like IT, financial services and transportation. Halifax's strong economy is also supporting \$115 billion in major projects in Atlantic Canada, including shipbuilding, energy, oil and gas exploration, construction and mining.

Long-term opportunities like the \$25 billion shipbuilding contract at Halifax Shipyard and the \$2 billion in oil and gas exploration by Shell and BP are at a size and scale that the city has never seen before. Recent expansions by companies such as Projex, IBM and UPS show that Halifax is on the radar as a competitive and attractive business location.

Halifax is poised for growth and we have all of the ingredients for success.

Halifax Regional Council and our partners are committed to economic growth and development. It is a top priority along with transportation, urban core investment, developing our brand, and creating a healthy community.

We know that a great city has a strong downtown. It is the economic engine for the municipality and our downtown is turning a corner on development. Today, 80 major developments are underway, approved, or under construction in the downtown and regional centre. Projects like the RBC Waterside Centre, our new Central Library, the next phase of King's Wharf, and the Nova Centre. Many of them will help define our city for years to come.

We know that a great city offers its citizens an excellent quality of life. It offers healthy living and transportation options, arts and culture, terrific education and job opportunities, and affordable housing. We are making strides in these areas but there is more to be done.

A big rethink is underway for a \$100 million a year public transit system in an effort to make it the preferred way to travel. We are working with the post-secondary education sector to attract and retain talent and make Halifax Canada's education capital.

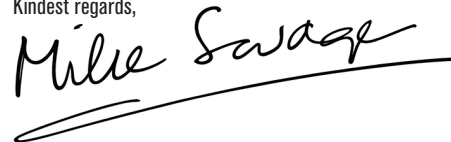
We are redoubling our efforts to draw new immigrants. This year, Council approved the city's first Local Immigration Partnership, working with community partners to help immigrants achieve their potential. We are also supporting a United Way led initiative on affordable housing that includes other levels of government, the private sector and community organizations.

We know we have to be competitive and have a brand that attracts and keeps businesses and people in order to be successful. We are working to be as competitive as possible on taxes, particularly commercial rates. We are also working to improve the regulatory environment so it will be easier to set up and grow a business in Halifax. I am excited to say that the municipality's new branding initiative is underway. It is time for a new brand that defines Halifax as the progressive, interesting city others know us to be.

A great deal has been accomplished over the past two years. We have much to do, but much to celebrate as well. I am inspired by the potential for this city and our shared desire to reach it.

I look forward to continued work and collaboration with everyone in our community and all levels of government to see Halifax maximize its growth opportunities and reach its fullest potential.

Kindest regards,



Mike Savage
Mayor

**HALIFAX
PRODUCES
54% OF NOVA
SCOTIA'S GDP**

AND 20% OF ATLANTIC
CANADA'S TOTAL GDP
(Source: Conference Board of Canada
and Statistics Canada, 2012)

**HALIFAX
PRODUCES 50%
OF NOVA SCOTIA'S
RETAIL SALES**

AND 19% OF ATLANTIC CANADA'S TOTAL RETAIL SALES
(Source: Conference Board of Canada and Statistics Canada, 2012)

**IN 2012, HALIFAX'S
POPULATION WAS
ESTIMATED AT 413,710**

47% OF NOVA SCOTIA, AND 17% OF ATLANTIC CANADA'S TOTAL
POPULATION (Source: Statistics Canada, 2012)

NOTE FROM PRESIDENT & CEO, GREATER HALIFAX PARTNERSHIP

As I look around our great city of Halifax, I see an emerging, big city developing before our very eyes. Halifax is becoming the city we have all worked so hard to create. The evidence of progress and growth is all around us. From the work being done at Halifax Shipyard to build the next generation of ships for the Canadian Navy, to the revitalization happening in our downtown, to the increases in jobs and the number of people who call Halifax home.

I am extremely proud of the impact our businesses, community organizations, post-secondary institutions and all three levels of government have made over the past two years to make Halifax a better place to live, work, invest and do business.

The Greater Halifax Partnership has been leading the implementation of Halifax's 2011-16 Economic Strategy: AGREATERHalifax, working closely with stakeholders and partners to ensure ongoing alignment, collaboration and success. This year, we worked with HRM and our community partners to review progress for years 1-2 and to develop action plans for years 3-5. On June 25, 2013 Halifax Regional Council endorsed the new plans which are outlined in this document.

Going forward, we will continue to focus on achieving five strategic goals: building a vibrant and attractive Regional Centre, promoting a business climate that drives and sustains growth, creating a welcoming community, developing a unique international brand and capitalizing on our best opportunities for economic growth. The years 3-5 action plans will serve as our community's roadmap to realize our vision of Halifax becoming a truly international city.

What will success look like? The greatest measure of success for any progressive and prosperous city is whether people want to live and do business there. Can people of all ages find jobs, careers and vibrant communities where they can reach their full potential.

To that end, we are focused on achieving three business confidence and community outcome measures:

1. Grow the business tax base of Halifax – retaining, expanding and attracting business and new investment
2. Grow employment and income levels in Halifax – creating good jobs at a livable wage so more people will choose Halifax as their home
3. Grow the population of Halifax – attracting and retaining people is critical to Halifax's future growth and prosperity

Our community and economic progress is reported on annually in the Halifax Index which is released at the State of the Economy Conference each spring. The Index tells our city's story – the strength of our economy, the health of our community, and the sustainability of our environment – and provides insights for actions that help strengthen and grow our city and region.

This year's Halifax Index showed that Halifax is firmly in the middle of the pack of economic performance in comparison to its five benchmark cities - Quebec City, QC; London, ON; Regina, SK; Victoria, BC; and St. John's, NFLD. Our economy is steadily growing, but there is work to be done in attracting and retaining more people, creating more higher wage jobs, and broadening and stabilizing Halifax's tax base – key outcomes that are at the heart of a thriving economy.

Building a Greater Halifax requires engagement and action from all of us. It requires true partnership and ongoing collaboration between business, government and community. It requires alignment of priorities and shared focus on achieving the goals we set for our city.

Halifax has a level of opportunity in front of it on a scale unlike anything we have seen before. It is up to each of us to grasp a full measure of opportunity for ourselves, our families, and the city and region we love.

Sincerely,



Paul Kent
President and CEO, Greater Halifax Partnership

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AGREATERHalifax is a five-year strategy to grow the economy of our city and region.

And like any economic strategy worthy of the name, this plan is really about two fundamental things: helping to build better lives for the people who live and work here; and aligning our resources and efforts to make our city a place where more people want to live and work in the future.

It's an ambitious plan and that's because Halifax is not alone in seeking better business opportunities and in competing for investment, ideas and people. Cities that grow and provide prosperity for their people have a clear vision of their economic goals and how they intend to reach them. This strategy is also built on the reality that Halifax is a city that has yet to meet its full potential as an economic hub – or driving force – for the economy of our province and the entire region.

HOW WE GOT HERE

AGREATERHalifax evolved from Strategies for Success, our previous economic strategy which took us to early 2011. The Greater Halifax Partnership led the review and renewal process and worked closely with representatives of the Halifax Chamber of Commerce, HRM, the Mayor's Economic Advisory Committee, Nova Scotia Business Inc., ACOA and the Nova Scotia Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism. The most important component of the renewal process was spending more than 3,000 hours of time hearing

from business, not-for-profit, post-secondary, and community leaders from key economic sectors and groups – all deeply committed to growing our city and volunteering their valuable time to take part in our consultation sessions.

WHERE WE ARE

The Greater Halifax Partnership has been leading the implementation of Halifax's 2011-16 Economic Strategy: *AGREATERHalifax*, collaborating with community stakeholders and partners to ensure ongoing alignment and success.

This year, the Partnership worked with HRM and community partners to review progress for years 1-2 and to develop action plans for years 3-5. On June 25, 2013 Halifax Regional Council endorsed the new plans which are presented in this document.

Going forward, we will continue to focus on achieving the five strategic goals with the years 3-5 action plans serving as the roadmap. Community and economic progress is reported annually in the Halifax Index which is released at the State of the Economy Conference each spring.

To download a copy of the economic strategy and the Halifax Index, or for more information, visit AGREATERHalifax.com.

SINCE 2010:

HALIFAX'S POPULATION IS ESTIMATED TO HAVE INCREASED BY 2.4% OR 9,500 PEOPLE
(Source: Statistics Canada, 2012)

4,000 MORE JOBS HAVE BEEN CREATED
(Source: Statistics Canada, 2012)

OVER 3,000 NEW IMMIGRANTS HAVE COME TO CALL HALIFAX HOME
(Source: CIC Facts and Figures 2012; (preliminary))

NEARLY 5,708 NEW HOMES HAVE BEEN BUILT
(Source: CMHC, 2012)

BUILDING PERMITS HAVE INCREASED 20% IN HALIFAX
(Source: Statistics Canada, 2012)

ECONOMIC HUB:

A hub city is one that is needed for an entire region, province or country to be successful.

Hub cities are economic powerhouses with business, government and social assets that benefit communities around them.

The Conference Board of Canada states that hub cities are vital to our nation's economic growth.

Halifax plays the role of hub city in Nova Scotia and Atlantic Canada.

VISION

AS THE ECONOMIC ENGINE FOR THE REGION, HALIFAX IS A TRULY INTERNATIONAL CITY WHERE PEOPLE LEARN, WORK, EASILY START AND GROW A BUSINESS, CAPITALIZE ON IDEAS AND LIVE WITHIN A DIVERSE, VIBRANT, SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY.

Our vision represents a call to action. It defines our economic future. It defines the future of our city, an international city, a green city, a blue city, a proud and well-known city, a place where business thrives and a place where people want to live. This is our vision. This is Halifax.

GOALS

REGIONAL CENTRE

Build a vibrant and attractive Regional Centre that attracts \$1.5 billion of private investment and 8,000 more residents by 2016

BUSINESS CLIMATE

Promote a business climate that drives and sustains growth by improving competitiveness and by leveraging our strengths

TALENT

Create a welcoming community where the world's talent can find great opportunities, engaged employers and resources for career advancement

INTERNATIONAL BRAND

Create a unique, international city brand for Halifax

MAXIMIZE GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

Capitalize on our best opportunities for economic growth

WHAT WILL **SUCCESS** LOOK LIKE?

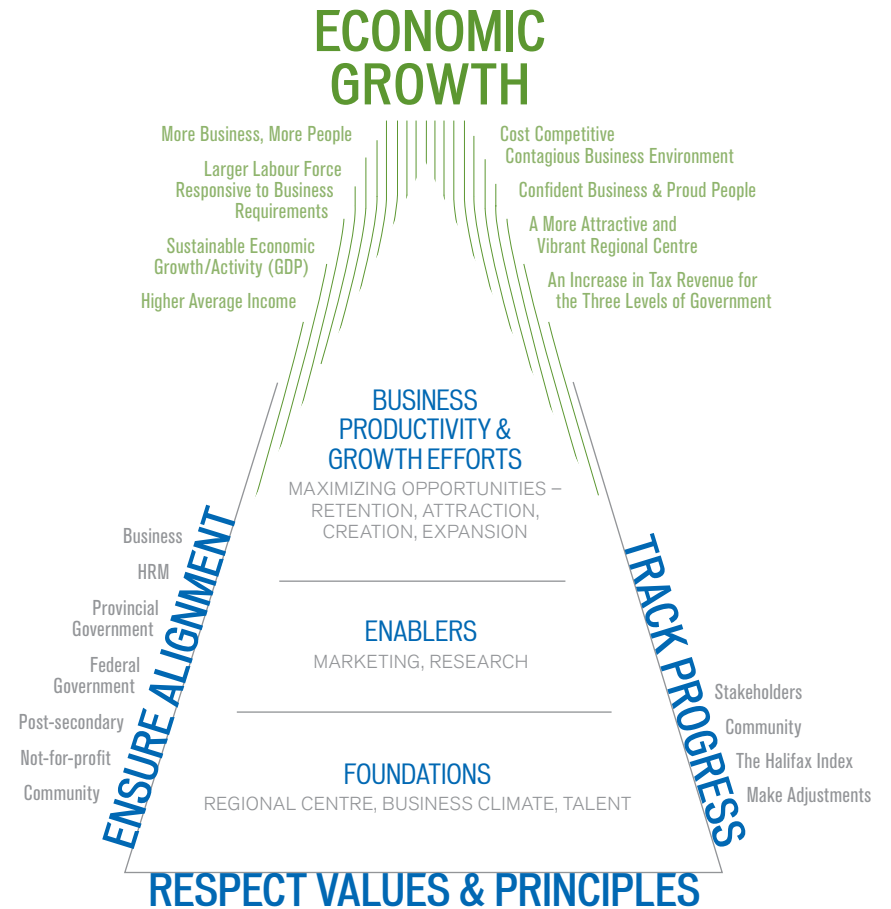
WHAT WILL HALIFAX
LOOK LIKE IN 2016
ONCE WE HAVE
ACHIEVED
OUR VISION?
WE WILL HAVE:

More Businesses, More People
Larger Labour Force Responsive to Business Requirements
Sustainable Economic Growth/Activity (GDP)
Higher Average Income
Cost Competitive and Contagious Business Environment
Confident Business and Proud People
A More Attractive and Vibrant Regional Centre
An Increase in Tax Revenue for the Three Levels of Government

APPROACH

Six key components work together to achieve our vision, prosperity and economic growth.

- 1 WE WILL BUILD ON AND IMPROVE THE FOUNDATION
 - Our showroom – a vibrant, attractive and growing Regional Centre
 - A business climate that promotes and sustains growth
 - A place where the world's talent finds great opportunities
- 2 WE WILL WORK KEY ENABLERS
 - Create and transition to a unique, international brand for Halifax
 - Build knowledge on our economy by researching our strengths and weaknesses while identifying new challenges and opportunities
- 3 WE WILL FOCUS ON BUSINESS PRODUCTIVITY AND GROWTH EFFORTS
 - Capitalize on opportunities for sustainable economic growth opportunities
- 4 WE WILL ENSURE ALIGNMENT AT ALL TIMES
 - Ensure key stakeholders, plans, activities, resources and efforts are aligned throughout the life of the Strategy
- 5 WE WILL TRACK OUR PROGRESS
 - Ensuring our stakeholders and the community knows where we are making solid economic progress and where adjustments must be made
- 6 WE WILL RESPECT OUR VALUES AND HONOUR OUR PRINCIPLES
 - VALUES:
 - Partnership and Alignment
 - Sustainable Development Means Preserving our Environment and Building our Economy
 - Great Communities Have Lots of Social Capital
 - Sustainable Growth is Good
 - PRINCIPLES:
 - People are our future
 - Productivity and Innovation are the Foundation of Successful Regions
 - International Focus
 - Serve People Better, Move Faster
 - Building Business Confidence Builds Communities



ACTION PLANS

REGIONAL CENTRE

Build a vibrant and attractive Regional Centre that attracts \$1.5 billion of private investment and 8,000 more residents by 2016

	OBJECTIVES	YEAR 3-5 ACTIONS	ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES	MEASUREMENT
1	Direct and oversee a pro-development policy environment within the Regional Centre.	Continue to review HRM's regulatory processes and development fees to make private land development inside the Regional Centre more attractive.	Lead: HRM Project Participation: P&I Others: SUP (engagement/advice) - GHP	Uptake on the actions/ incentives Baseline comparisons \$50 m invested over 5 years Increase in transit ridership in Regional Centre - OR decrease in single occupancy vehicles into the Regional Centre
		Provide density bonuses and site plan approvals as appropriate for increasing density in the Regional Centre.	Lead: HRM - P&I - GREA Others: SUP (advocacy)	
		Redesign the development approvals process, including consultation, to decrease the limitations to urban development and to ensure efficient and effective feedback.	Lead: HRM - P&I - CRS Others: SUP - GHP	
2	Further the livability and attractiveness of our urban core.	Raise awareness of the availability of parking in the Regional Centre in alignment with the HRM Parking Strategy.	Lead: HRM Project Participation: P&I - TPW - GREA Others: BIDs - business groups	
		Develop a 5 year intergovernmental capital improvement campaign to repair and enhance the public realm in the Urban Core and establish an ongoing dedicated strategic urban reserve fund for Urban Core beautification & infrastructure improvements.	Lead: HRM Implementation Lead: P&I Project Management: GREA Project Participation: P&I - TPW - Finance Others: SUP (engagement, advice, coordination)	
		Assess HRM's role in district heating and cooling.	Lead: HRM - Finance - P&I	
		Incorporate into the Cogswell redevelopment plan the economic strategy Regional Centre objectives.	Lead: HRM - P&I Others: SUP (engagement)	
		Work with federal and provincial government to explore development opportunities for vacant public and private lands in the Regional Centre for cultural institutions, public spaces and private mixed uses.	Lead: HRM - P&I Project Participation: GREA Others: PNS - SUP	
3	Reinvent the current approach to mobility in the Regional Centre.	Implement the active transportation plan with a priority placed on Regional Centre bike lanes.	Lead: HRM - P&I	
		Create a new transportation model that conveniently connects goods with their destinations while not interfering with residents' safe enjoyment of the Urban Core.	Lead: HRM - TPW - P&I	
		Ensure the 5 year strategic framework for transit supports growth in the Regional Centre.	Lead: HRM - Metro Transit	
4	Celebrate and enable a rich variety of cultural and creative opportunities in the Regional Centre.	Enable public investment for cultural institutions and public gathering spaces, informed by municipal cultural investment study being undertaken and HRM's Regional Plan review.	Lead: HRM - CRS - P&I	
		Make available Regional Centre municipal public spaces for public art, cultural and educational programs.	Lead: HRM - CRS	
		Create an inventory of cultural institutions, events and programs in the Regional Centre.	Lead: HRM - CRS	

BUSINESS CLIMATE

Promote a business climate that drives and sustains growth by improving competitiveness and by leveraging our strengths

	OBJECTIVES	YEAR 3-5 ACTIONS	ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES	MEASUREMENT
1	Reduce regulatory, tax and policy issues that can inhibit development and investment.	Identify opportunities to streamline regulatory requirements or processes through work with Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations on the Access to Business project.	Lead: HRM Project Lead: GREA Project Participation: CRS - TPW - Fire Services - Halifax Water	<p>Number of unnecessary steps eliminated compared to baseline.</p> <p>Number of municipal permits or transactions added to Access to Business site.</p> <p>HRM departments awareness of BRE program, evidence of BRE data being used to inform decision making.</p> <p>Highest priority municipal service delivery issues identified.</p>
		Benchmark development charges, fees and timelines against those in other comparable jurisdictions.	Lead: HRM - GREA - GHP - CRS	
		Continue to research and benchmark HRM's tax competitiveness against other municipalities.	Lead: HRM - Finance	
2	Create a service oriented culture within HRM that supports the business community's need for competitiveness, growth and responsiveness.	Work with Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations to include some transactions with HRM through the Access to Business portal.	Lead: HRM Project Lead: GREA Project Participation: CRS - TPW - Fire Services - Halifax Water	
		Leverage GHP's Business Retention and Expansion Program to collect input from businesses from various sources and formalize a feedback mechanism to HRM in order to inform business planning and decision making as recommended in the Auditor General's report on Economic Development through Partnerships.	Lead: GHP	
		Review and analyze available data (including BRE data, general research) to understand which municipal service delivery issues are the most important to business.	Lead: GHP	
3	Develop a responsive, safe, integrated regional transportation system.	Investigate models, complete a best practices review and define the business case for a Regional Transportation Authority.	Lead: HRM - P&I	
4	Focus on quality of place including the need for civic engagement, public investment and initiatives to increase social capital.	Consult with community and business stakeholders and develop a long term (20 year) strategic approach to infrastructure investment.	Lead: HRM - P&I	
		Continue to track "Quality of Place" measurements in the Halifax Index.	Lead: GHP	
5	Halifax is recognized internationally for its clean and healthy environment.	Undertake actions in support of HRM's priority to be a leader in environment and sustainability initiatives.	Lead: HRM - P&I	
6	Increase the engagement and active support of the private sector in the economic growth of Halifax.	Develop and launch a campaign to raise awareness and increase engagement of the business community in the economic growth priorities of Halifax.	Lead: GHP	
		Increase private sector investment in economic growth and ensure strong representation and participation in the implementation of the Economic Strategy.	Lead: GHP	

TALENT

Create a welcoming community where the world's talent can find great opportunities, engaged employers and resources for career advancement

	OBJECTIVES	YEAR 3-5 ACTIONS	ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES	MEASUREMENT
1	Maximize opportunities for increased alignment, awareness and engagement of the business community in the implementation of the Province's workforce strategy.	Advocate for Federal and Provincial labour market programming that aligns with the needs of the Halifax business community.	Lead: GHP	Attraction and retention of immigrants and students Perception of Halifax as a great place to live and work Number of connectors, connectees Employers' attitudes
		Help businesses achieve best practices in employee recruitment and retention by: - connecting the business community to labour market information and human resource management support, and, - increasing business community's participation in labour market initiatives to attract and retain young professionals and international skilled workers.	Lead: GHP	
		Increase the engagement of the business community to provide information and input on current and future labour market needs to partners to ensure programs respond to current business needs.	Lead: GHP	
2	Build a welcoming and inclusive environment for underrepresented groups.	Review HRM policies, strategies, facilities and programs to ensure they are inclusive of diverse communities.	Lead: HRM - Human Resources	
		Identify workforce matters of common interest with the First Nations community in HRM to maximize employment outcomes. The work will begin through establishing a partnership with the Mi'kmaq Friendship Centre and focus on opportunities to increase employment representation for Aboriginal people.	Lead: HRM - Human Resources	
		Create a function within HRM that will work to improve the quality and level of service to residents and communities of African descent as it relates to employment.	Lead: HRM - GREA	
		Explore new opportunities for underrepresented groups, like youth, to link to employment opportunities.	Lead: HRM - Human Resources	
3	HRM will become an "Employer of Choice" serving as a model for its business community.	Implement the HRM People Plan.	Lead: HRM - Human Resources	

INTERNATIONAL BRAND

Create a unique, international city brand for Halifax

OBJECTIVES	YEAR 3-5 ACTIONS	ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES	MEASUREMENT
<p>1 Create a unique, international city brand for Halifax that reflects our best qualities and what we aspire to be.</p>	<p>Develop a Brand Strategy and Implementation Plan.</p> <hr/> <p>Ensure necessary buy-in and adoption from citizens, the business community and key organizations that will have a role in the brand strategy implementation.</p>	<p>Lead: GHP - HRM HRM Lead: Corporate Communications</p> <hr/> <p>Lead: GHP - HRM HRM Lead: Corporate Communications</p>	<p>Increase awareness and confidence in Halifax as an international city</p> <p>Business and citizen confidence in Halifax</p> <p>Brand recognition and adoption</p>
<p>2 Move Halifax from Good to Great – Live the Brand.</p>	<p>Implement the Brand Strategy that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides clear and consistent messages to a local, national and international marketplace; - Supports trade, investment and labour market development; - Increases the number of businesses actively seeking customers in international markets; - Builds business and citizen confidence locally; and, - Inspires a culture that guarantees Halifax's delivery of an exceptional experience. 	<p>Lead: GHP / HRM HRM Lead: Corporate Communications</p>	



MAXIMIZE GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

Capitalize on our best opportunities for economic growth

	OBJECTIVES	SHORT-TERM ACTIONS (YEARS 3-5)	ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES	MEASUREMENT
1	Support and validate the implementation of the economic strategy through an enhanced research capacity.	Implement the Partnership's BRE Program focused on connecting Halifax businesses to the resources and services they need to be more competitive at home, across the country and internationally.	Lead: GHP	Increased productivity Create high wage jobs
		Present the Halifax Index at the Annual State of the Economy Conference. The Index tracks yearly progress on economic, environmental and social objectives and recommends ideas for improvement.	Lead: GHP	
2	Identify and respond to high-value, high-potential economic growth opportunities and encourage investment, exports, business productivity, innovation & competitiveness.	Mobilize community stakeholders to collectively respond to and/or support immediate threats and opportunities.	Lead: GHP	Logistics Park Lots sold Air and port cargo volume growth Number of cruise passengers Awareness of Halifax Gateway in target markets Investment - Building permits in logistics parks
		Continue to mobilize and engage community support for Halifax Shipyard's Shipbuilding Project and major projects.	Lead: GHP - HRM	
		Implement an attraction and retention strategy for Regional and Head Offices to/ in Halifax.	Lead: GHP	
		Work with the Halifax Gateway Council to coordinate activities to improve Gateway efficiency and use.	Lead: GHP	
		Align and collaborate with provincial and federal partners to position the Halifax business case to attract high-value, high-potential business investments.	Lead: GHP	
		Work with the Province, GHP, Destination Halifax and others to maximize opportunities presented by the new convention centre.	Lead: GHP	

GLOSSARY

ACOA – Atlantic Canada Opportunity Agency

Active Transportation Plan – an HRM policy document providing direction for the development of an active transportation network in Halifax

BID – Business Improvement District

Business Retention and Expansion Program (BRE) – a program designed to strengthen a community's ability to attract, grow and keep business

CRS – Community and Recreation Services

GHP – Greater Halifax Partnership

GREa – Government Relations External Affairs

Halifax Gateway Council – a forum for transportation stakeholders in the Halifax region to work collectively to improve the competitiveness and efficiency of goods and passenger movements through Atlantic Canada's primary gateway

HRM – Halifax Regional Municipality: encompasses approximately 5,577 square kilometres and more than 200 urban and rural communities

P&I – Planning and Infrastructure

PNS – Province of Nova Scotia

Quality of Place – the characteristics of a community that affect the quality of life of the people who live and work there (e.g. diversity, environment, arts and culture)

Social Capital – connections and collaboration within and between social networks that often enhance innovation, economic and social development

SUP – Strategic Urban Partnership: a public/private partnership aimed at identifying and championing strategic urban investments in Halifax

Strategic Urban Reserve – a reserve of land in Halifax's urban core used to provide a long term supply of fully serviced land in strategic locations of suburban Halifax

TPW – Transportation and Public Works

For more information on the Economic Strategy visit:

[AGREATERHalifax.com](https://www.agreaterhalifax.com)



AGREATERHalifax.com

