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Item No. 21.1
Halifax Regional Council
February 24, 2026

TO: Mayor Fillmore and Members of Halifax Regional Council

FROM: Councillor Janet Steele, Chair, Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee

DATE: February 17, 2026

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

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

February 17, 2026 meeting of Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee, Item 13.1.1.

BACKGROUND

Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee received a staff recommendation report dated February 12, 2026 and presentation on the municipality’s People. Planet, Prosperity: Halifax’s Inclusive Economic Strategy 2022-2027.

For further information refer to the attached staff report dated February 12, 2026 and presentation dated February 17, 2026.

DISCUSSION

Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee considered the staff report dated February 12, 2026 and approved the recommendation to forward the report and accompanying presentation to Halifax Regional Council for information.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial implications are outlined in the attached staff report dated February 12, 2026.

RISK CONSIDERATION

Risk consideration is outlined in the attached staff report dated February 12, 2026.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Meetings of the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee are open to public attendance and members of the public are invited to address the Standing Committee for up to five (5) minutes during the Public Participation portion of the meeting. Meetings are live webcast on Halifax.ca. The agenda, reports, video, and minutes of the Standing Committee are posted on Halifax.ca.

For further information on Community Engagement refer to the attached staff report dated February 12, 2026.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Environmental implications are outlined in the staff report dated February 12, 2026.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Legislative Authority is outlined in the attached staff report dated February 12, 2026.

Administrative Order One, *Respecting the Procedures of the Council*, Schedule 3 Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee Terms of Reference, Section 4(b) Oversight – Economics and Immigration:

4. The Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee shall oversee the Municipality’s Economic Plan, Economic Prosperity Indicators and Immigration Action Plan by:

(b) overseeing the progress of the Municipality’s Economic Strategy and Outcome areas and related initiatives;

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Staff recommendation report dated February 12, 2026

Attachment 2 – Presentation dated February 17, 2026

Report Prepared by: Krista Vining, Team Lead, Legislative Assistants, Municipal Clerk’s Office 902.223.1046

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Item No. 13.1.1
Community Planning and Economic
Development Standing Committee
February 17, 2026

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

FROM: Brad Anguish, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: February 12, 2026

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

RECOMMENDATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Staff initiated.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee receive a presentation from the Halifax Partnership regarding People. Planet. Prosperity: Halifax’s Inclusive Economic Strategy and forward this staff report and the accompanying presentation from the Halifax Partnership 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, 2025, to October 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

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.

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.

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 2012. 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 19, 2025.⁶ 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

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.

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 2025 Halifax Index is available online (see [here](#)).

⁷ An economic strategy update was most recently provided to Council on August 19, 2025. See [Item No.15.2.1](#) Halifax Regional Council August 19, 2025.

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, 2025, to October 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, 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 \$26.3 billion (in 2017 dollars) by 2027.

Promote Growth Statistics for 2024-2025

- **Gross Domestic Product:** The latest estimates from the Conference Board of Canada, which rebranded in January to Signal49 Research, show that Halifax’s real GDP grew by 2.3% in 2025 to reach \$26.9 billion (2017). Halifax has exceeded its 2027 target of \$26.3 billion two years early. The city’s GDP is forecasted to grow by 1.5% in 2026 and by an average of 1.8% from 2027 through 2030. Growth in Halifax’s GDP from 2024 to 2025 represented 93% of the growth in the province’s GDP over the same period.
- **Inflation:** Halifax saw an annualized inflation rate of 3.1% in December 2025, 1.8 percentage points higher than a year ago.
- **Business Confidence Index:** In 2025, the [Halifax Business Confidence Index](#) (BCI) value was 23.1. It marked the third consecutive decline and is the lowest value recorded since 2015. The share of respondents describing Halifax as an above-average place to do business fell by 1.7 percentage points from 25.0% in 2024 to 23.3% in 2025, but the share who felt Halifax was below average fell by 4.6%, from 14.9% to 10.3%. The 2026 *Business Confidence Survey* will be completed in March and reported in the 2026 Halifax Index, which will be publicly launched and available on Halifax Partnership’s website in June.
- **Retail Sales:** Total retail sales in Nova Scotia increased by 3.2% in November 2025 compared to a year ago. Across industries, the largest annual increase in retail sales was recorded for gasoline stations and fuel vendors (+10.1%), whereas the largest annual decline was for health and personal care retailers (-6.4%).⁹
- **Commercial Real Estate:** The vacancy rate for office space in Halifax increased to 11.5% in Q3 2025, up from 10.9% in Q3 2024. This was 1.3 percentage points lower than a year ago. Overall

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.

⁹ 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.

average asking rent for office space was essentially unmoved from the previous quarter, at \$30.57 per square foot (psf). As for industrial space, as of Q4 2025 the overall vacancy rate was 10.3%, down by 2.1 percentage points from Q3 2025. Average gross rent for industrial space increased dramatically, by \$1.97 psf (or 12.5%) above the Q3 2025 figure.

Promote Growth Action Highlights

- **Indigenous Community Engagement:** In spring 2025, following a 2024 external review, HRM appointed an Indigenous Community Engagement Advisor to guide the development of an Indigenous Services Strategy. The Advisor has been focusing on relationship-building, learning, and understanding municipal structures and priorities, grounding the work in Mi’kmaq ways of knowing. This foundational phase ensures the strategy aligns with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) Calls to Action¹⁰, UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP), and municipal reconciliation commitments.¹¹ Further development of the strategy will continue in the next reporting period.
- **Virtual Advisor Program:** The Partnership (in collaboration with [Seasoned Pros](#)) continues to offer its [Virtual Adviser Program](#) for startup and scale-up businesses operating in HRM. Through this program, businesses receive confidential guidance and support from experienced professionals (advisers), tailored to improving productivity and profitability, strengthening business continuity and resilience, and diversifying markets, revenue streams, and supply chains. The Partnership has funding to support 30 businesses this year; as of September 30, 17 businesses have been supported through the program.
- **Business Retention and Expansion:** The Partnership’s [SmartBusiness Program](#) team helps HRM businesses overcome challenges and pursue and advance growth opportunities. The team supported 150 businesses from April 1 to Sept 30, 2025, including 49 in rural HRM. The most frequent referrals made for businesses this past quarter were for networking, partnerships, business planning, hiring assistance, procurement, research/commercialization, and to industry association/chambers. One new to Halifax business was provided aftercare support.¹²
- **Business Productivity:** To help businesses with productivity and digital adoption, Halifax Partnership partnered with Google Canada and Digital Nova Scotia to launch the [Google Learning Program for Businesses](#). A total of 500 scholarships to the Google Prompting Essentials course for Nova Scotia businesses are being offered, 230 of which have been awarded as of September 30. This 7-hour course is a practical, self-paced introduction to using AI effectively to support productivity and business growth. Applications are being accepted through the Partnership’s website.
- **Investment Attraction:** Halifax maintains its status as a sought-after location for business expansion and relocation. During this reporting period, three (3) companies chose to locate in Halifax. Collectively, these companies will contribute an expected 210 new jobs to the economy. In addition, the Partnership provides promotional tools to any Halifax business or organization aiming to attract and retain workers and grow their operations. Its team continues to maintain the Why Halifax and [Living in Halifax Toolkits](#), which are publicly available for download on the Partnership’s website.

¹⁰ The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) was created through a legal settlement between Residential Schools Survivors, the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit representatives and the parties responsible for creation and operation of the schools: the federal government and the church bodies (see [here](#)).

¹¹ On Dec. 8, 2015, the Halifax Regional Council passed a [Statement of Reconciliation](#) to support the municipality’s work with Mi’kmaq and Urban Indigenous communities.

¹² Aftercare support includes providing companies with connections to strategic business contacts, resources, and events, sharing company successes both locally and globally, and helping to advance their growth plans in Halifax and address any operational challenges.

- **International Business Development:** Halifax Partnership expanded global economic ties through a Portsmouth, UK trade mission, virtual B2B events, and ongoing [World Energy Cities Partnership](#) (WECP) engagement. It advanced collaborations in digital services, life sciences, maritime innovation, and wind-sector supply chains. The Partnership also hosted Tanzania’s High Commissioner to explore trade and R&D opportunities and is planning further virtual trade events with partners in Europe and India.
- **Rural Tourism:** While Eastern HRM currently captures only 2% of overall visitor traffic to HRM, the region holds significant potential for sustainable tourism development and economic growth. Halifax Partnership is leading a community-driven tourism initiative for Eastern HRM, (funded by the Province and supported by Discover Halifax, Tourism Nova Scotia, and CBDC Bluewater). to boost tourism readiness, help small businesses grow, and promote Eastern HRM as a travel destination. Community roundtables and engagement sessions will be held to identify local priorities for tourism planning, capacity-building, and support, followed by a hands-on tourism workshop and training series focused on building practical, place-based tourism experiences.
- **Cogswell Redevelopment:** The Cogswell redevelopment project reached substantial completion in December 2025. Remaining work includes an interactive fountain, completion of underground services and surface features on Amalamek Way and Nora Bernard Street, and completion of two parks (Amalamek Way Park and Barrington Street Park). A celebration event was held on September 20, 2025, to mark near completion of the project. The family-oriented event, held in Granville Street Park, was well attended and showcased the potential of the public space.¹³
- **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. To date, ten out of eleven Action Plan initiatives have been completed. The outstanding initiative, the creation of an Affordable Housing Strategy, is expected by October 2026 when HRM’s agreement with HAF expires.

Two years into the HAF program, HRM has issued a total of 12,025 net new residential building permits, representing 77.75% of the three-year HAF target of 15,467 permits. 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.¹⁴ Staff have committed to providing annual progress updates to Council.¹⁵

- **Development Dashboard:** Design of a publicly accessible development dashboard is complete. Testing and internal training is underway before public release. The new target for public launch is spring of 2026.
- **Wije’winen Centre:** The Wije’winen Centre (“Come with Us” in Mi’kmaw) is the future home of the Mi’kmaw Native Friendship Society (MNFS) in downtown Halifax.¹⁶ This centre is a purpose-built, Indigenous-led facility that will provide a permanent home for nearly 70 programs and services for urban Indigenous peoples and will serve as a cultural and reconciliation gateway for all Nova Scotians and visitors.

¹³ For additional Cogswell redevelopment project details see [here](#).

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ HAF update reports were provided in March and December of 2025. See [Item 14.2](#) Halifax Regional Council March 18, 2025 and also [Item 21.1](#) Halifax Regional Council December 9, 2025.

¹⁶ HRM transferred the remediated and cleared land to the Mi’kmaw Native Friendship Society for \$1.00, recognizing its vital importance to the city and Indigenous communities.

In July of 2025, the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre hosted a sprouting ceremony and symbolic tree planting at the future site of the Wije'winen Centre on Gottingen Street near Citadel Hill. The ceremony symbolized new growth for the Centre's construction as well as an opportunity to update the public on the project's progress. The construction has been supported so far with funds from all three levels of government, as well as Indigenous Services Canada and the National Association of Friendship Centres.

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 businesses to meet future of work needs.

Talent Statistics for 2024-2025

- **Population Growth:** Halifax's estimated population as of July 1, 2025, is 517,115. The growth from 2024 to 2025 was 7,835 (+1.5%), the lowest growth rate since 2016.¹⁷ This is down substantially from growth levels over 2022-2024, which were over 3%. Net natural growth (births minus deaths), net intraprovincial migration (between Halifax and the rest of Nova Scotia), and net interprovincial migration (between Halifax and other provinces and territories), were all positive in 2025, although down from 2024 levels. Net international migration, like population growth overall, was positive in 2025 but down significantly from the three prior years. Net immigration dropped in 2025 (by 24%) but remained positive, while the large decrease in non-permanent residents led to a net negative figure for 2025 – here we see the impact of reduced numbers of international students in Halifax. Among Canada's 41 major cities, as measured by CMA-level figures, Halifax's growth ranked 15th. Modest population growth by recent standards would allow for the 2027 target of 525,000 to be reached.
- **Labour Market:** Halifax's unemployment rate was 5.3% in January 2026. The annualized unemployment rate for 2025 was 5.6%, up slightly from 2024's 5.5%. Halifax's labour force stood at 297,400 in 2025. Hitting the 2027 labour force target of 310,000 is not a given, but it is potentially within reach.

Talent Action Highlights

- **Talent Retention:** Halifax Partnership's Connector Program continues to be effective in connecting skilled immigrants and young professionals to professional networks and employers in HRM. The Partnership enrolled 67 new Connectors and 216 new Connectees during the reporting period. Between April 1 and September 30, a total of 127 Connectees secured career positions in HRM (43 immigrants, 69 international graduates, 11 local graduates, and 4 inter-provincial newcomers).

International Workers: Halifax Partnership labour market specialists continue to work with HRM employers to support international hiring needs. During this reporting period, the Partnership completed 146 employer consultations, offering information on provincial and federal immigration programs and recent federal immigration policy changes impacting international hiring.¹⁸ Six (6) employers were identified as "immigration ready" and referred to the Province of Nova Scotia's [Immigration and Population Growth](#) team.

¹⁷ Note that this figure is for the census division, not the census metropolitan area (CMA) – see [here](#).

¹⁸ Including the [Atlantic Immigration Program](#), [Nova Scotia Nominee Program](#), [Global Talent Stream](#), [International Mobility Program](#), [Canada USA Mexico Agreement Program](#), and [Express Entry Federal Skilled Worker Program](#).

- **Cogswell Social Benefits.** The Cogswell Social Benefits Advisory Committee (SBAC) concluded its work in September 2025. Over the four-year project, 10% of total project hours were completed by African Nova Scotian workers, exceeding the 5% target set in the tender. Overall, 35% of project hours were completed by workers from equity-deserving groups. Approximately, \$1.1 million in services were invoiced to self identified ANS suppliers, representing over 50% of all diverse supplier services. These outcomes demonstrate the effectiveness of targeted social benefit strategies in major infrastructure projects and provide a model for future inclusive procurement.
- **Newcomers Guide to Halifax:** This HRM managed [website](#) is a newcomer-focused resource created by the [Halifax Immigration Partnership](#) to help people settle successfully in the region. It provides guidance on finding housing, employment, healthcare, and education, along with information on community services, local culture, and everyday living. During this reporting period, new content was added to the website to make the transition to life in Halifax easier, more informed, and more welcoming for newcomers.

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 2016-2021 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 \$569,778 in December. The December 2025 figure is a 4.5% decrease from 12 months prior.
- **Rental Real Estate:** Average monthly rent in Halifax, across all apartment types, increased by 7.2% from \$1,633 in 2024 to \$1,750 in 2025. The apartment vacancy rate increased to 2.7% in 2025, up from 2.1% in 2024 and 1.0% in 2023. Within Halifax, the fastest rent increases were seen in the smaller units, as studio apartment rents increased by 15.3% over 2024.¹⁹
- **Resident Well-being:** In the 2025 [City Matters Survey](#) of HRM residents, a majority (62.8%) of survey respondents rated their satisfaction with life as “high” or “very high.” This figure is up from 58.3% in 2024. The share who rated satisfaction with life as “low” decreased from 22.1% in 2024 to 19.1% in 2025. The 2026 *City Matters Survey* will be completed in March and reported in the 2026 Halifax Index, which will be publicly launched and available on Halifax Partnership's website in June.
- **Crime Severity:** The Crime Severity Index (CSI) and Violent Crime Severity Index (VCSI) are published annually by Statistics Canada and measure the incidence and severity of crimes across Canada. With a CSI value of 73.95 and a VCSI value of 93.58, Halifax ranked fourth-highest and third-highest on these two measures, respectively, across ten benchmark cities.²⁰ Compared to the prior year, Halifax’s most recent CSI was up, while the VCSI was down.²¹

¹⁹ These figures are derived from a survey of Halifax renters conducted in October 2025. They represent an average of the rents current residents were paying at the time the survey was taken.

²⁰ In addition to Halifax, the benchmark cities include St. John’s, Quebec City, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo, Winnipeg, Calgary, and Vancouver.

²¹ There is a two-year lag in the data, so that in 2026, statistics are available only up to 2024.

Quality of Life Action Highlights

- **Business Emission Reduction:** During this reporting period, [EfficiencyOne](#) and the Partnership worked on renewing 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.
- **Tourism Master Plan 2030:** Endorsed by Regional Council in July 2025, the updated [Integrated Tourism Master Plan 2030](#) outlines a community-first, regionally tailored tourism strategy emphasizing sustainable growth, cultural inclusion, and year-round visitor experiences.²² It prioritizes infrastructure upgrades, major event development, authentic storytelling, and improved accessibility through 27 actionable initiatives, aligning tourism with Halifax’s economic goals to boost GDP, enhance livability, and strengthen global competitiveness.
- **Tourism Dashboard:** Maintained by Discover Halifax, the newly launched [ITMP 2030 Dashboard](#) will document progress on all 27 initiatives listed in the tourism master plan. These initiatives have multiple leads, partners, and potential partners and each initiative is at a different stage of development. The dashboard will help track implementation progress by providing categorized links to initiative-specific details and plan reports.²³
- **Dismantling Hate Strategy:** In 2022 the province of Nova Scotia established the *Dismantling Hate and Racism Act*. This provincial legislation requires that every municipality develop and implement a strategy and an action plan. Moving forward, HRM’s proposed Gender Equity strategy will be incorporated into the new municipal Dismantling Hate strategy in 2026.

Project UPSTREAM: A [Project UPSTREAM](#) pilot has been launched in Halifax. Our municipality is one of ten (10) participating cities in Canada. The local project aims to reduce polarization and violent extremism through strengthening protective factors and reducing risk factors.

- **French Services Strategy:** Work is underway to implement recommendations from the *What We Heard Report* for the French Services Strategy. Initiatives include developing multilingual signage for Customer Service Centres, consulting the community on French-language collections at Halifax Public Libraries, and exploring multilingual features for the municipal website and HFXAlert. The Multilingual Policy launched in September 2025, with information sessions in October.
- **Food Security:** Collaborative implementation of the JustFOOD Action Plan continues to advance, strengthening alignment across municipal and community partners. The Halifax Food Council will assume long-term oversight and coordination of Plan implementation, replacing the Halifax Food Policy Alliance. HRM has also supported emergency preparedness efforts, including the continued development of an Emergency Food Partners Roster, the distribution of emergency storm-kits, and the development of off-grid, cold-storage infrastructure.
- **Community Gardens:** HRM provided direct grants and water infrastructure support to seventeen (17) registered community gardens to improve site operations and sustainability. New community plots were established at Spencer House and the Atlantic Street Shelter, with further development underway for a site at Amalamek Way (in partnership with the Mi’kmaw Native Friendship Centre).

²² 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 and [Item 15.2.1](#) Halifax Regional Council July 8, 2025

²³ See for example the dashboard sub-pages providing status updates for the [Downtown Dartmouth Waterfront Revitalization Project](#) and for [Establish a National Urban Park in the Halifax Region](#).

- **Cogswell Outdoor Art:** In partnership with IOTA Studios (IOTA Institute), HRM launched the Cogswell District Outdoor Art Gallery Pilot in 2025—a two-year program focused on professional public art opportunities for Mi’kmaq and African Nova Scotian artists. This initiative, including the InterCHANGE program, stems directly from community engagement findings and supports community history and ownership in the redevelopment of the Cogswell District.
- **Accessible Transit:** The Continuous Service Improvement Plan for Halifax Transit’s Access-A-Bus (AAB) outlines initiatives to improve accessibility and user experience. Actions include staff and volunteer training, individualized customer training on low-floor buses, and presentations on system accessibility features. These measures support ongoing service improvement, ensure AAB remains a viable option for people with reduced mobility, and align with the Halifax Transit Business Plan goal of a safe, accessible transportation network. The RFP for the AAB Operational Review has grown in scope, including all accessibility policies and procedures for Halifax Transit, and has been developed and is awaiting posting by procurement. Halifax Transit advanced its accessibility work by auditing forty-five bus shelters—representing nine percent of its overall inventory—and upgrading nineteen bus stops, including eighteen non-standard stops and one previously inaccessible location.
- **Rural Recreation Strategy:** The [Rural Recreation Strategy](#) improves recreation in rural communities by addressing local needs and supporting equitable access. Of the 60 actions planned over three years, 37 were prioritized for year one. Key implementation achievements include advancing the Eastern Shore Lifestyle Centre, piloting Saturday school access, offering programs in non-traditional spaces, implementing a revised asset rating process, and establishing Regional Recreation Round Tables. Youth engagement increased through a leadership program involving 54 participants. Rural service delivery was strengthened through community profiles, a program proposal process, and new training materials. A Rural Communications Strategy was also developed to address limited infrastructure and digital barriers.
- **African Nova Scotian Community Action Program:** Established in 2023, the African Nova Scotian Community Action Program (ANSCAP) supports the African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity Plan by collaborating 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.²⁴
- **Accessible Municipal Facilities and Infrastructure:** During this and the previous reporting period, accessibility upgrades were extensive. More than 350 pedestrian ramps, 1,340 attention tactile warning surface indicators, and 220 directional tactile warning surface indicators were installed to enhance wayfinding and overall pedestrian safety. Accessibility for people with vision disabilities was further supported through the addition of audible pedestrian signals at more than twenty-two intersections. Accessibility assessments were completed at sixty-three municipal buildings, public facilities, parks, playgrounds, and trails. Sixteen playgrounds were constructed with accessible features, complemented by the installation of two accessible splash pads.
- **Reducing Hate and Strengthening Cohesion:** HRM’s Immigrant Services Advisor is leading local efforts to strengthen social cohesion and prevent hate and extremism. Halifax joined the [Strong Cities Network](#) to expand international collaboration on inclusive community initiatives.²⁵ HRM hosted a two-day Preventing Violent Extremism workshop with 27 diverse youth, focusing on civic

²⁴ The most recent Road to Economic Prosperity progress report was provided in December of 2025. See [Item No. 21.3](#) Halifax Regional Council December 2, 2025.

²⁵ Strong Cities Network is a global network of cities collaborating to prevent hate, extremism and polarisation, sharing best practices and building local resilience through city-led learning, partnerships, and resources.

engagement and leadership. Youth-led projects from the initiative were presented at the Canadian Centre for Safer Communities (CCFSC) Conference in Halifax in November 2025.²⁶

- **Climate Risk Tracking:** HRM is committed to protecting people and infrastructure from climate risks through evidence-based research and modeling to guide resilience policies and projects. Halifax Emergency Management Office is leading a new Hazard, Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (HRVA) with support from Environment & Climate Change and other departments. This assessment will map hazards across Halifax’s diverse geography to inform planning, critical infrastructure protection, and public engagement. At the same time, the Climate Adaptation Team has launched a Climate Change Vulnerability and Risk Assessment (CCVRA) for critical infrastructure and engaged Sustainability Solutions Group to model climate impact and adaptation costs.

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 decline to forward the report to Regional Council.
2. Community Planning and Economic Development Stading Committee could decline to receive a presentation from the Halifax Partnership regarding People, Planet, Prosperity: Halifax’s Inclusive Economic Strategy.

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.

²⁶ Canadian Centre for Safer Communities, a national non-profit focused on community safety and well-being in Canada

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.

ATTACHMENTS

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

Report Prepared by: Scott Sheffield, Policy Strategist, Government Relations and External Affairs
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Attachment 1

Years 3-5 Action Plan | Action Item Updates (April 1, 2025 to October 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 2025-October 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>The Halifax Partnership's Business Continuity Toolkit (BCT) website has received 403 page views, resulting in 611 downloads of BCT materials and 617 views of BCT webinar video.</p> <p>Business Continuity Workshops are scheduled for Q3 and Q4 in collaboration with the Greater Burnside Business Association, Business Improvement Districts, and rural HRM partners. These workshops aim to support businesses in developing and implementing effective continuity plans. To ensure broad accessibility, sessions will be offered both in-person and virtually, reaching businesses across all areas of HRM.</p> <p>The Partnership also continued to offer their Virtual Adviser Program to Halifax businesses in partnership with Seasoned Pros. The focus of the program is on supporting business transitions, scale-up challenges and continuity planning.</p>	HP
	2	Maintain essential services and online service delivery for HRM Business Services.	<p>During this and the prior reporting period, 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 are under consideration or are in progress.</p> <p>Work on the pilot Trusted Partner Program (TPP) continues, with a survey launching in October 2025 and follow-up engagement with industry set for November 2025. Design of a publicly accessible development dashboard is complete. Testing and internal training are underway before public release. The new target for public launch is spring of 2026.</p>	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.	<p>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.</p>	HRM
	4	Seek legislative changes from the Province as required to grow Halifax's economy.	<p>During the previous reporting period, the municipality submitted four (4) new Charter and legislative amendment requests to the province addressing the authority to: (1) impose lien powers and/or bonding powers for the collection of building permit fees (May 13, 2025 – Item No. 15.1.2); (2) establish a construction mitigation fund (October 7, 2025 – Item 15.5.1); (3) impose lien powers and/or bonding powers for the collection of building permit fees; (4) implement multiple deed transfer tax changes (October 7, 2025 – Item 15.1.2).</p> <p>During this reporting period, three (3) of HRM's outstanding legislative requests were enacted/addressed, either in whole or in part, by provincial legislative changes. Those include: Authority to set speed limits, photo radar enforcement, and extending the boundary of the Cogswell Energy District.</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.	<p>Halifax Partnership's SmartBusiness Program team supported 150 businesses from April 1 to Sept 30, 2025. The most frequent referrals made for businesses this past quarter were for networking/partnerships, business planning, hiring assistance, procurement, research/commercialization, and industry association/chambers. One new to Halifax business was provided aftercare support.</p> <p>To help businesses with productivity, Halifax Partnership partnered with Google Canada and Digital Nova Scotia to launch the Google Learning Program for Businesses. A total of 500 scholarships to the Google Prompting Essentials course for Nova Scotia businesses are being offered, 230 of which have been awarded. This 7-hour course is a practical, self-paced introduction to using AI effectively to support productivity and business growth. Applications are being accepted through the Partnership's website.</p> <p>Halifax Partnership's Virtual Adviser Program connects businesses with seasoned professionals who offer decades of expertise and practical insights. Through this program, companies receive confidential guidance and support tailored to improving efficiency and profitability, strengthening business continuity and resilience, and diversifying revenue streams, supply chains, and partnerships. The Partnership can assist a total of 30 businesses with this program, 17 businesses have been approved to date.</p>	HP
	6	Support economic development and tourism in rural HRM through dedicated full-time resources.	<p>Rural Economic Development continues to be supported with a dedicated SmartBusiness Account Executive made possible with dedicated funding from HRM. During this reporting period, 49 rural HRM businesses were supported.</p> <p>Halifax Partnership is leading a community-driven tourism training initiative for Eastern HRM, supported by a steering committee of local organizations and funded by the Province of Nova Scotia. The program aims to boost tourism readiness, help small businesses grow, and promote Eastern HRM as a travel destination. In Q3, community roundtables and engagement sessions will be held to identify local priorities for tourism planning, capacity-building, and support, followed by a hands-on tourism workshop and training series to be held in Q4.</p> <p>Through a partnership with Google Canada, the Partnership resolved a Google Maps issue that had mistakenly directed visitors away from the Eastern Shore by indicating a bridge closure.</p>	HP
<p>1.3 Work nationally and internationally to support companies looking to locate and grow in Halifax.</p>	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. From April 1 - September 30, three (3) companies chose to locate or expand in Halifax, bringing an expected 210 new jobs to Halifax.	HP
	8	Leverage regional, national, and international partnerships to increase investment and R&D collaborations.	<p>The Partnership continues to collaborate and build international partnerships. Halifax Partnership and partners visited Portsmouth, UK to strengthen trade and investment ties. The team met with 14 local businesses to explore opportunities in digital services, life sciences, satellite applications, and maritime innovation. The visit included a major event at the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, where over 70 Solent-based and Canadian companies connected to foster new maritime partnerships. Halifax Partnership also hosted two virtual b2b trade events with Portsmouth, UK.</p> <p>The Partnership also continues Halifax's membership in the World Energy Cities Partnership (WECP). It attended the Annual General Members' meeting in Calgary in September. Thanks to a strong partnership with WECP, the Partnership is working with Esbjerg, Denmark to host a virtual business event later this year focused on supply chain opportunities within the wind sector.</p> <p>In September, the Partnership hosted the High Commissioner of Tanzania who met with several HRM businesses, the ANS Road to Economic Prosperity team, Saint Mary's University, and other organizations to establish trade and collaboration ties. Talks centered around the import of coffee and agricultural products, the export of equipment, parts, and service, and collaborations around R&D and commercialization.</p> <p>The Partnership is currently in discussions and planning to host virtual trade events with its counterparts in Hamburg, India, Esbjerg, Ireland, Germany. Events will be held In Q3&4 2025/26 and Q1 2026/27.</p>	HP/ HRM

<p>1.4 Accelerate innovation and entrepreneurship</p>	9	Implement Halifax's Green Economy Strategy to grow innovative green businesses and jobs.	<p>Halifax Partnership's business attraction team actively promotes Halifax's green economy to national and international cleantech, climate tech and green economy-related businesses. The Partnership also continues to focus on supporting the growth of local companies in the cleantech and renewable energy sectors.</p> <p>Year to date, the team has attended Ocean Business in Southampton, Energy NL, and the H2O conference in Halifax. As well, the team has worked with contacts from Invest Northern Ireland, Invest Nova Scotia and the PIER to organize a roundtable and demo day for an Irish company developing zero-emission commercial vessels, along with other Irish and Canadian government contacts.</p> <p>As noted elsewhere, the Partnership's team is also working with Esbjerg, Denmark to host a virtual business event focused on supply chain opportunities within the offshore wind sector.</p>	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.	<p>Through the SmartBusiness Program, the team at Halifax Partnership continues to connect local entrepreneurs to post-secondary and innovation partners to support business and workforce development.</p>	HP
	11	Work with the Port and its PIER initiative to address transportation and logistics issues in Halifax.	<p>Halifax Partnership is now a member of The PIER and collaborates with its team to connect businesses at the facility to resources and partnership opportunities that address their business challenges.</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 Plan (RTP). The first of its kind in Atlantic Canada, the RTP is a unified framework for the long-term future of the regional transportation system. It offers solutions to manage the challenges of growth – targeted infrastructure interventions, increased transportation options, better goods movement, integration of new technologies, more efficient land use and transportation planning, and evaluation metrics.</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>The third and final phase of Cogswell District Redevelopment project construction began in January 2025. This final year of construction reached substantial completion by end of December 2025. Remaining work includes an interactive fountain, completion of underground services and surface features on Amalamek Way and Nora Bernard Street, and completion of two parks (Amalamek Way Park and Barrington Street Park). A celebration event was held on September 20, 2025, to mark near completion of the project. The family-oriented event, held in Granville Street Park, was well attended and showcased the potential of the public space. For additional Cogswell redevelopment project details see here.</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. The goals of the project are to add active transportation connections and transit priority measures through the intersection, improve the movement of vehicles and goods through the area, and improve the safety for all road users.</p> <p>The Windsor Street Exchange project is being delivered using a progressive design-build approach, which brings design and construction together under one team. This method allows the project to move faster and more efficiently by aligning design decisions with construction sequencing and timelines.</p> <p>Design development activities are underway, including internal review of the 30% submission, constructability assessments, and coordination with Halifax Water and other stakeholders. These efforts are focused on achieving critical design and construction milestones in alignment with the National Trade Corridors Fund contribution agreement and broader funding timelines. Limited Noticed to Proceed has been issued to the contractor for early works construction.</p> <p>Near term construction will include underground and road work extending Forrester Street, as well as site preparation on Highway 111 for a new overpass structure. Detailed design of the full project area will continue in parallel. Construction impacts are expected and will be managed through a construction management plan and public communication. The project supports</p>	HRM

			Halifax's growth, safety, and sustainability goals and aligns with key municipal transportation and climate strategies. See here and here for additional details.	
	14	Secure federal funding to undertake key Infrastructure projects.	<p>HRM has secured approximately \$77.96M in intergovernmental cost-sharing during this and the prior reporting period covered, with some notable highlights including: (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> <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
1.6 Increase housing stock.	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>As a requirement of the HAF Action Plan, the municipal Housing Strategy is currently underway. Expected outcomes include recommended enhancements to existing affordable housing programs, and new policies aimed at addressing affordable housing development and availability. This is in addition to previous work completed through the HAF Action Plan through 2024 and 2025.</p> <p>Adopted in November 2025, the municipality's updated Framework to Address Homelessness is focused on transitioning to a coordinated, housing-focused system. During this reporting period HRM proceeded with efforts to close all designated encampments within 18 to 24 months using a phased, person-centred approach that minimizes displacement. New policies were introduced to improve safety, security, and registration, supporting short-term emergency shelter while prioritizing movement into indoor housing options.</p> <p>The revised homelessness framework strengthens collaboration with the Province of Nova Scotia, shifts outreach from emergency survival support to assertive housing placement, and emphasizes preventing returns to homelessness. It also supports the development of affordable and deeply affordable housing and uses coordinated case-management tables for complex situations. A data-informed project management approach aligned with Functional Zero Homelessness principles is now being used to guide implementation, monitoring, and reporting.</p>	HRM
	16	Implement HRM's Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) Initiatives to support housing affordability and grow the supply of housing.	<p>During this and the previous reporting period, a fully staffed project team worked to implement HRM's Action Plan for the federal government's Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF). To date, ten out of eleven Action Plan initiatives have been completed. The outstanding initiative (create an Affordable Housing Strategy) is due by the end of HRM's HAF agreement in October 2026.</p> <p>Two years into the HAF program, HRM has issued a total of 12,025 net new residential building permits, representing 77.75% of the three-year HAF target of 15,467 permits. 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> <p>Staff have committed to providing annual progress updates to Council. The most recent HAF update reports were provided December of 2025 (see Item 21.1 Halifax Regional Council December 9, 2025) and January of 2026 (see Item 14.1 Halifax Regional Council January 13, 2026).</p>	HRM

	17	Identify and implement internal process changes to quicken housing approvals and starts.	During this and the previous reporting period, work continued on prioritized updates and enhancements focusing on reducing permit and planning application processing times and enhancing customer experience. Streamlining of the development approvals process has been 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.	HRM
	18	Consider establishing a municipal housing corporation or a community land trust to create affordable housing in Halifax.	<p>HRM supported 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
<p>1.7 Advance holistic planning in urban, suburban, and rural areas.</p>	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 early 2026.</p>	HRM
	20	Review the Regional Plan that outlines the vision, principles and long-range policies guiding future growth throughout the municipality.	<p>Halifax Regional Council held a public hearing on the proposed Regional Plan and amendments, including minimum planning requirements, on June 19, 2025, and approved the documents. These were sent to the Provincial Planning Director for approval under Section 223 of the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter.</p> <p>On July 10, 2025, the Provincial Director advised the municipality that their review found potential inconsistencies between Regional Plan policies and provincial interests. The matter was referred to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, who had 30 days to decide under Section 223(6). The Minister could approve all or part of the documents, approve with amendments, or refuse approval. On August 8, 2025, the municipality received a letter from the Minister of Municipal Affairs refusing approval of the updated Regional Plan.</p> <p>Moving forward, this means that the current 2014 Regional Plan, last amended in May 2025, remains in effect. Municipal staff have been re-engaging with the province to determine the next steps on the planning process and ensure the Regional Plan is updated in a way that fulfills the municipality's obligations under provincial legislation. A work plan outlining the next steps of the Regional Plan Review is planned to be presented to Regional Council in 2026.</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>HRM is developing a Suburban Plan to replace 11 outdated community plans with a unified planning framework for suburban areas outside the Regional Centre. The plan responds to rapid population growth, provincial minimum planning requirements, and housing pressures. It aims to create complete, connected communities with diverse housing, transit-supportive development, and sustainable design.</p> <p>The process will unfold in three phases between 2025 and 2028. The first phase, Listen & Learn, will engage communities to identify needs, challenges, and key directions. The second phase, Share Draft Plan, will present and refine a detailed plan and land-use by-law. The final phase, Adopt Plan, will finalize and implement policies (see here and here)</p>	HRM

<p>1.8 Grow Indigenous and African Nova Scotian economic prosperity.</p>	22	Consider and, where possible, incorporate community benefits as part of the development approval process in HRM communities.	<p>The African Nova Scotian 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>During the previous reporting period, 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>The Wije'winen Centre ("Come with Us" in Mi'kmaw) is the future home of the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Society (MNFS) in downtown Halifax. This centre will be a purpose-built, Indigenous-led facility that will provide a permanent home for nearly 70 programs and services for urban Indigenous peoples and will serve as a cultural and reconciliation gateway for all Nova Scotians and visitors. The Centre will be built at 1940 Gottingen Street. HRM transferred the remediated and cleared land to the MNFS for \$1.00.</p> <p>In July of 2025 the MNFS hosted a sprouting ceremony and symbolic tree planting at the future site of the Wije'winen Centre on Gottingen Street near Citadel Hill. The ceremony symbolized new growth for the centre's construction as well as an opportunity to update the public on the project's progress. The construction has been supported so far with funds from all three levels of government, as well as Indigenous Services Canada and the National Association of Friendship Centres.</p>	HRM
	24	Explore opportunities to support Indigenous partners' economic development priorities.	<p>In spring 2025, following a 2024 external review, HRM appointed an Indigenous Community Engagement Advisor to guide development of the Indigenous Services Strategy. During this reporting period, the Advisor has been focusing on relationship-building, learning, and understanding municipal structures and priorities, grounding the work in Mi'kmaw ways of knowing. This foundational phase ensures the strategy aligns with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) Calls to Action¹, UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP), and municipal reconciliation commitments.² Further development of the strategy will continue in the next reporting period.</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.</p> <p>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, and Lucasville. Future work will consider action planning needs in 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 African Nova Scotian (ANS) communities. This work has been accelerated by HRM's hiring of a dedicated ANS lead and six planners focused on supporting ANS communities. This added capacity ensures tailored guidance, more responsive planning, and stronger community-led outcomes.</p>	HP/HRM
	26	Develop and publish a data product modelled on the Halifax Index that focuses on the African Nova Scotian community.	<p>The African Nova Scotian Prosperity and Well-being Index was developed and launched to the public on May 22, 2024. The Index will be updated as new Statistics Canada data is published every five years.</p>	HP
<p>1.9 Provide research and actionable insight needed to support</p>	27	Provide the most up-to-date economic information on Halifax to help businesses locate, stay, and grow.	<p>Halifax Economic Dashboard was maintained and updated throughout the period.</p>	HP

¹ The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) was created through a legal settlement between Residential Schools Survivors, the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit representatives and the parties responsible for creation and operation of the schools: the federal government and the church bodies (see [here](#)).

² On Dec. 8, 2015, the Halifax Regional Council passed a [Statement of Reconciliation](#) to support the municipality's work with Mi'kmaw and Urban Indigenous communities.

economic and business growth.	28	Monitor and communicate the economic strategy's progress to stakeholders and adapt actions as required.	Halifax Index (2025) was presented to the public 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 (2025) launched to the public on June 19, 2025.	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 2025-October 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.	<p>Halifax Partnership's labour market team continues to support HRM employers' international talent recruitment needs through the Atlantic Immigration Program (AIP), Nova Scotia Nominee Program (NSNP), Global Talent Stream (GTS), International Mobility pathway (including the Francophone Mobility Program), CUSMA Program, and the Express Entry Federal Skilled Worker Program. During the reporting period, the team held 146 employer support meetings. Six employers were identified as "immigration ready" and referred to the provinces' Immigration and Population Growth team.</p> <p>Recent federal adjustments to immigration quotas and the prioritization of applications in specific sectors have extended processing times for AIP designations and NSNP applications. The team is helping employers understand and navigate these changes and impacts on international talent recruitment.</p>	HP
	31	With industry and government partners, undertake targeted on-the-ground recruitment efforts nationally and internationally to meet labour needs.	Last 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.	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>The Halifax Immigration Partnership (HIP) has successfully received IRCC (Immigration Refugee Citizenship Canada) funding for the next cycle of work (2025-2028). Funding cuts shortened the duration of the funding cycle from 5 to 3 year across the Canadian settlement sector. A new immigration support strategic plan has been developed for HRM's for 2025-30.</p> <p>HRM's newinhalifax.ca website continues to be well visited. New content has been added including mental health services and a space for organizations supporting newcomers to connect with and learn about related services (avoiding duplication). The website also has a new submission page in place and a Facebook account with 170 followers</p> <p>Municipal staff continue to actively bring together community and organizations to support immigrant/newcomer integration in Halifax. To date, staff have successfully coordinated the yearly Walk with Refugees with more than 100 attendees, the Get to know your municipalities with more than 250 participants, more than 20 exhibitors including a police vehicle and information sessions for participants.</p> <p>HRM staff are in the process of changing the look of the Welcomed in Halifax pass, so newcomers understand where to access the services offered under the program (which is currently underused).</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 reporting period, Halifax Partnership enrolled 67 new Connectors and 216 new Connectees in the Connector Program. Between April 1 and September 30, a total of 127 Connectees secured career positions in Halifax (43 immigrants, 69 international graduates, 11 local graduates, and 4 inter-provincial newcomers). Note that job placement data are collected quarterly.	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.	HRM is working to benchmark ANS representation in its workforce. In 2024, self-identification options were added to the Employee Engagement Survey. HRM is implementing a new recruitment module to capture self-identification data at the point of hire. A communications strategy is underway to encourage participation and improve data quality.	HP
	35	Leverage HRM's Social Value Framework (Procurement Administrative Order - Appendix B) to strengthen workforce and supplier diversity.	The Cogswell Social Benefits Advisory Committee (SBAC) concluded its work in September 2025. Over the four-year project, 10% of total project hours were completed by African Nova Scotian workers—exceeding the 5% target set in the tender. Overall, 35% of project hours were completed by workers from equity-deserving groups. A total of \$1.1 million in services were invoiced to self-identified ANS suppliers, representing over 50% of all diverse supplier services. These outcomes demonstrate the effectiveness of targeted social benefit strategies in major infrastructure projects and provide a model for future inclusive procurement.	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.	<p>Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency (HRFE) continue to recruit volunteer firefighter applicants to best meet the needs of the municipality. Emphasis is being placed on recruiting volunteers in rural communities, especially those with low or declining membership, as well as outreach to underrepresented and equity seeking communities. Alternative approaches to volunteer recruitment including minimizing barriers, targeted marketing campaigns, prior learning assessments and best use of support roles are ongoing.</p> <p>HRFE continues to implement and refine a competency and equity-based recruitment strategy for career firefighters with emphasis on elimination of barriers to apply and the hiring of classes of new firefighters with representation from all employment equity groups identified in HRM policy.</p> <p>Two HRFE education modules have been created to support the neuro-diverse population and promote inclusive workplace practices. The Accessibility Awareness module was completed in partnership with the Diversity and Inclusion Office and has been released as part of the Building a Better Fire Service program.</p> <p>Halifax Regional Police (HRP) are implementing an annual recruitment cycle for its 38-week Police Science Program (PSP). The initiative includes a diversity recruitment framework to attract candidates from Halifax's diverse communities. HRP and the Diversity and Equity Office are collaborating on inclusive recruitment strategies. Public Relations is developing a multi-year communications plan to support year-round outreach and build a candidate pool reflective of HRM. Applications for the 2027 PSP class open in November 2025.</p>	HRM
	37	Implement the Accessibility Strategy to advance full participation, accessibility, and inclusion for individuals who visit, work, and live in HRM.	<p>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).</p> <p>Significant progress has been made toward improving accessibility and safety across the municipality. Halifax Transit advanced its accessibility work by auditing forty-five bus shelters—representing nine percent of its overall inventory—and upgrading nineteen bus stops, including eighteen non-standard stops and one previously inaccessible location. Infrastructure upgrades were extensive, with more than 350 pedestrian ramps, 1,340 attention tactile warning surface indicators, and 220 directional tactile warning surface indicators installed to enhance wayfinding and overall pedestrian safety. Accessibility for people with vision disabilities was further supported through the addition of audible pedestrian signals at more than twenty-two intersections.</p> <p>Beyond transit and pedestrian networks, accessibility assessments were completed at sixty-three municipal buildings, public facilities, parks, playgrounds, and trails. Sixteen playgrounds were constructed with accessible features, complemented by the installation of two accessible splash pads. The municipality also strengthened internal capacity, with seventy-two staff participating in corporate accessibility training, most of whom work directly with the public. Corporate Communications contributed to this effort by developing a writing and style guide that incorporates plain-language standards to support clear and accessible communication. Additionally, 311 expanded its service options by offering video relay service, improving access for residents who are Deaf or hard of hearing.</p>	HRM

<p>2.4 Prepare business to meet future of work needs.</p>	<p>38</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Halifax Partnership work on this action item will advance as funding is identified and secured.</p>	<p>HP</p>
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<p>Make Halifax a Better Place to Live, Work and Visit Increase residents' well-being on a continuous basis</p>				
<p>5-Year Objective</p>	<p>Action No.</p>	<p>Description</p>	<p>Action Update (April 2025-October 2025)</p>	<p>Lead</p>
<p>3.1 Increase Halifax's environmental sustainability and resiliency.</p>	<p>39</p>	<p>Implement the private sector endorsed CEO Climate Action Charter to support Halifax businesses and organizations in reducing GHG emissions and increasing climate resiliency.</p>	<p>An agreement was signed with Halifax Partnership to fund a sustainability consultant to support the CEO Climate Action Charter goals.</p> <p>Quarterly meetings were held with the CEO Climate Action Charter signatories, focused on sustainable transport, regional planning, and greening business operations. To support their priorities, Halifax Partnership and HRM worked with signatories and a consultant to develop a three-year action plan (2026-2029) aimed at advancing climate actions within signatory organizations and throughout the Halifax business community.</p> <p>The Partnership and HRM's Environment and Climate Change team hosted the inaugural CEO Climate Action Summit on October 30, a gathering of more than 70 CEOs and senior leaders who explored climate action as a strategic business imperative for long-term growth and competitiveness for both their organizations and the community.</p>	<p>HP</p>
	<p>40</p>	<p>Support businesses in taking actions to reduce emissions and green their operations through relevant programs and funding.</p>	<p>During this reporting period, Halifax Partnership and EfficiencyOne continued to work towards renewing 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>HP</p>
	<p>41</p>	<p>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>	<p>The scale of work that needs to be done to reach HalifACTs retrofit targets, requires collaboration between the Municipality and other levels of government. Residential buildings contribute major energy use and emissions, prompting HalifACT to prioritize a Deep Energy Retrofit program. In 2021 Council approved a navigator-supported pilot and \$3.5M in low-risk financing to help homeowners achieve 50% energy reductions.</p> <p>Pilot program improvements will be incorporated into Phase 2 of the pilot which will continue for at least one more year and use the remainder of the \$3.5 million in financing approved by Council. Operating costs will be shared with the Nova Scotia Department of Energy, via a \$75,000 grant from their Low Carbon Communities (LCC) program. At the pilot's completion, approximately \$3 million will be unlocked for the local economy, and around 100 homes within the Halifax Region will become less costly to operate, more comfortable and resilient.</p> <p>Environment and Climate Change staff continue to engage with municipal, provincial, and federal partners on securing long-term, sustainable cost sharing. To date, staff have had preliminary discussions with the Town of Bridgewater, the Province of Nova Scotia, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Canada Infrastructure Bank, and the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Cooperation</p>	<p>HRM</p>

	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>The electric bus project is nearing completion, with most of the 60 buses now in revenue service. The Hydrogen Injection Bus Demonstration project has been awarded to Diesel Tech Industries, with four Burnside buses identified for compatibility, and next steps, including hydrogen procurement and kit installation, are underway.</p> <p>A Clean Fuel Regulations memorandum was approved in July 2025, which will allow HRM to receive credits for the Ragged Lake e-bus project. HalifACT working pilot group members also began an on-route charger pilot project, aimed at expanding e-bus range. Work is on going to continue supporting ridership initiatives, including a new collaborative transit promotional campaign planned for spring 2026 highlighting transit connections to parks, lakes and popular natural areas.</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>Seven cross-departmental Working Groups are meeting monthly to identify challenges, set goals, and advance HalifACT actions. These meetings aim to strengthen relationships and break down Business Unit silos, reduce duplication of work, accelerate progress on climate goals and imbed climate work into all municipal operations and services. Work is underway in Fall 2025 to imbed HalifACT action deliverables across the organization as assigned through the business planning process for fiscal 26-27.</p> <p>A pilot EV rollout is underway with Halifax Regional Police (HRP). An updated light duty fleet EV project plan has been developed alongside a change management strategy. Design and construction are now underway at various stages across 16 fleet depots. Clean Foundation, Dunsky Energy and other climate advisors have assessed vehicle reliability, impact on HRM emergency preparedness, and addressing FAQs on EVs. An informational video was created to support operators which provided overview of EVs, factors affecting range, trip checklists, pre-conditioning vehicles, and instructions for charging.</p> <p>HalifACT's finance and climate adaptation teams are preparing to collaborate on assessing climate hazards on municipal sites by prioritizing high-scoring sites through the Climate Vulnerability Risk assessment (CVRA) process. A fit-gap analysis is being conducted to assess disclosures around climate risks and opportunities across Canadian cities to understand HRM's position with guidance from the International Public Sector Accounting Standards Board.</p> <p>Staff continued to support the Naturalization program by providing input on site selection and ways to naturalize after invasive species removal. This included construction of a new naturalization project at Penhorn Lake Park near downtown Dartmouth. A new program was launched called Living Lakeshores to address water quality and flood resilience to remediate WQ issues at HRM parks which were not included in the Naturalization Strategy. The site designs and planning for the first site to be restored have been completed and work will begin in spring 2026. Greenshores training was offered to staff and residents in surrounding communities as part of this program.</p> <p>A mechanical knotweed harvesting project was undertaken in collaboration with Dalhousie's School of Environment as a directed research project. Three sites were selected in collaboration with Parks. Over the summer, staff worked to clear three sites in Dartmouth. The sites included the Dartmouth Commons,</p>	HRM

			<p>Shubie Park and a site near Lake Banook. The site at Dartmouth Commons was covered with two different types of tarp to solarize/smother the knotweed. Though the other two sites had the knotweed removed, the provincial woods ban implemented in early August meant the other sites were no longer accessible. Planting of native plant species will take place in the fall.</p> <p>The Library partnered with several community organizations and HalifACT to help build community understanding of the Climate Crisis and actions each individual can take to improve their resilience. These include community programs on retrofitting of residences, EV options, ways to reduce energy consumption and much more. In addition the Library has partnered to improve understanding of emergency response and preparedness especially for those who are new to Atlantic Canada. The Library continues to partner with HRM HalifACT to build capacity within the Library to help address the climate crisis. The Library has created programs, services and spaces that build community understanding.</p> <p>LakeWatchers had its 4th year of sampling. No new lakes were added to the program. Three lakes could not be sampled due to the provincial woods ban for the summer sampling period. There was an increase in volunteer-monitored lakes to have 40 lakes sampled by volunteers.</p> <p>A management plan for Hemlock Woolly Adelgid was developed in collaboration with Parks and Urban Forestry. The plan was approved by Regional Council on September 23rd. This means planning for HWA treatment can commence with intentions to begin treating HRM's hemlock trees in early 2026.</p> <p>The necessary permit to apply Procellorcor to treat yellow-floating heart (YFH) was obtained from Fisheries and Oceans Canada but delays in obtaining the provincial permit delayed the application until 2026. Materials from both permit applications will be used to develop the management plan over winter 2026. Mechanical YFH removal was conducted in Little Albro Lake in September as a stop-gap measure between chemical treatment years with ~90lbs of plant material removed from the lake.</p> <p>Guiding materials were developed for resident management of invasive Japanese beetle (JB). These materials were shared with 311 operators and published on the HRM website to make all information as accessible as possible. Plans are underway with Urban Forestry to better manage JB infestations in HRM parks in the summer of 2026.</p> <p>Plans to protect Halifax's remaining ash trees from emerald ash borer (EAB) are under discussion and a potential research project with Dalhousie University is under development. A national survey on the Canadian Food Inspection Agency assessing strategies to improve federal control over EAB spread is currently under circulation with comments from HRM staff forthcoming.</p>	
	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. Language that was included in the Regional Plan to support EV Charging in new buildings was not approved by the province.</p> <p>Public charging infrastructure is now operational at ten municipally owned facilities, resulting in 29 chargers for public use (seven Level-3 and 22 Level-2). Construction is underway at Beechville-Lakeside-Timberlea Community Centre. Construction is expected to commence at 40 Alderney and Point Pleasant Park within the next few months. Design work and/or preliminary site investigation is ongoing at various other sites that will fill the current gap in charging infrastructure.</p> <p>Tendering for multi-charger EV stations at Alderney Drive (Dartmouth) and Cowie Hill (Halifax) closed in October 2025, with construction anticipated to begin in the near term. Construction and installation of single EV chargers at three (3) independent rural locations have started with expected completion in fall 2025. These locations will increase the EV charging capabilities in the rural sections of HRM.</p>	HRM

<p>3.2 Increase access to arts, culture, recreation, and natural assets in Halifax.</p>	<p>46</p>	<p>Increase low-income groups' and individuals' access to recreation programs and other municipal services.</p>	<p>The Continuous Service Improvement Plan for Halifax Transit's Access-A-Bus (AAB) outlines initiatives to improve accessibility and user experience. Actions include staff and volunteer training, individualized customer training on low-floor buses, and presentations on system accessibility features. These measures support ongoing service improvement, ensure AAB remains a viable option for people with reduced mobility, and align with the Halifax Transit Business Plan goal of a safe, accessible transportation network. The RFP for the AAB Operational Review has grown in scope, including all accessibility policies and procedures for Halifax Transit, and has been developed and is awaiting posting by procurement.</p> <p>Collaborative implementation of the JustFOOD Action Plan continues to advance, strengthening alignment across municipal and community partners. In partnership with Feed Nova Scotia's Innovation and Learning Lab, the 2025 JustFOOD Community Food Grants Pilot distributed \$88,900 to HRM projects supporting food access and sovereignty. The Municipal Food Team and Nova Scotia Health are advancing a food systems monitoring and evaluation framework. The Mi'kmaw Food Coordinator and African Nova Scotian and Black Food Coordinator led community-driven actions on relevant recommendations. Working with Ecology Action Centre, Feed Nova Scotia, and Environment & Climate Change staff, the Municipal Food Team also supported assembling and distributing 1,500 emergency storm kits for residents vulnerable to climate impacts.</p> <p>The Library continues to provide technology and technology programming to support digital inclusion. It has increased access to technology and internet connection, including extending wi-fi access into adjacent areas of library branches, adding community wi-fi locations across the municipality and offering lendable technology. In addition the library has offered group and personalized technology training across all locations of the library. Since April 1, 2024 there have been more than 15,000 technology trouble shooting questions answered, more than 329,454 PC sessions used, and more than 80,000 questions about technology instruction answered.</p> <p>In 2025, HRM provided direct support to 17 of 26 registered community gardens, distributing \$36,040 in grants and \$5,006 in water infrastructure to improve site operations and sustainability. New community plots were established at Spencer House and the Atlantic Street Shelter, with further development underway for a site at Amalamek Way in partnership with the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre. HRM has also supported emergency preparedness efforts, including the continued development of an Emergency Food Partners Roster, the distribution of emergency storm-kits, and the development of off-grid, cold-storage infrastructure.</p> <p>The library developed programs and services that help community members during a period of increasing costs. Working with communities and partners the Library has offered programs to help the public navigate increasing costs. Programs include the "Frugal Living Series", "Money Hacks Roundtable", "Affordable Housing" and the "Basic Income Conference". In addition the Library has partnered with the Canada Revenue Agency to offer free tax clinics for those who need support in filing taxes.</p> <p>The Library partnered with multiple community organizations to provide free access to Arts and Culture through library programs, community art displays and permanent installations. Working with community partners the Library has offered more than 3,000 arts and culture programs free to the community with more than 21,000 participants across the 14 library locations and in communities. These program include musical performance, dance recitals, author readings, art displays and much more. These programs offer community members free access to a wide range of arts and culture programs for all ages.</p> <p>With the funding from Public Health Agency of Canada, a consulting firm was onboarded to support the development of an Equity-Based Policy Framework. The intent is to develop and apply a framework and set of tools to bring socio-economic considerations into the evaluation of capital infrastructure and other planning processes. HRM's working group established a workplan with key deliverables and timelines and developed a methodology for creating a framework to prioritize capital infrastructure investments based on evidence-based measures of equity.</p> <p>Work continued during this period on the development of a strategic approach to seniors' safety in HRM, in partnership with the Canadian Centre for Safer Communities (CCFSC). Supported by a grant from the Nova Scotia Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care, the initiative includes research, environmental/jurisdictional scanning and focused community conversations to</p>	<p>HRM</p>
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			<p>identify key priorities aligned with HRM's mandate. An internal workshop helped to refine an integrated approach that aligns with existing HRM policies, plans, and strategies. The findings and proposed approach are expected to be well-timed for incorporation into the upcoming renewal of the Public Safety Strategy.</p> <p>HRM is developing a Seniors Recreation Services Plan to guide recreation programs for seniors over the next five years. Seniors and community groups are actively involved, supported by a Seniors Recreation Advisory Group that provides leadership throughout the process. Staff have gathered input from 2,038 seniors through an online survey. Using this feedback, the Advisory Group created five strategic visions with related goals and objectives. Recreation Programming is now working with Corporate Communications on the plan's final design. After this is complete, the final meeting with the Advisory Group will occur. Implementation is scheduled to begin in 2026, starting with repurposing an internal staff committee to support the rollout. The final document will be submitted to the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee in early 2026.</p> <p>The Affordable Access Program allows qualified individuals to apply for municipal subsidized programs. This application allows residents to apply once and have their application package sent to all the programs that they wish to apply for. Work has concluded on streamlining the application intake of the affordable access program to speed internal processing. These changes make it easier for clients to apply for the program and annually renew their application (see here).</p> <p>The Library continues to deliver programs and services that build literacy for newcomers and youth. Its new strategic plan identifies literacy as a key priority, reflected in the Library's Programming Strategy. The Library partnered with the Government of Canada and others to provide English language learning and literacy programs for newcomers. This year's Summer Reading Club reached its highest registration ever, helping youth maintain literacy over the summer break. Overall, more than 57,000 people participated in literacy programs across all ages and communities.</p> <p>Halifax Transit remains committed to improving the accessibility and equity of transit services through enhancements to both conventional and Access-A-Bus operations. The PASS upgrade, including PASS Web, WebCare, and the Integrated Voice Recorder Solution (Twilio), is underway, with completion expected in Spring 2026. The Access-A-Bus management team is now in place, and staff realignments are supporting improved communication, collaboration, and service efficiency. New technology to enhance client communication and booking options will be implemented in the fourth quarter of this year. The Access-A-Bus Operational Review RFP, expanded to include all accessibility policies and procedures, has been developed and is awaiting posting by Procurement.</p> <p>Recreation Programming continues to provide free programming which includes 567 multi-session programs (4251 participants) and 910 single session Drop-in classes (231,766 participants) between April 1, 2025 – March 31, 2026.</p>	
	47	<p>Ensure HRM's culture investments and commemoration reflect Halifax's geography and diversity.</p>	<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> <p>Scoping for the Professional Arts Venues Plan is currently underway, with efforts focused on identifying strategic opportunities to enhance cultural infrastructure across the region. Work is progressing on scoping the implementation plan to guide future actions.</p> <p>In the Cogswell District, the Art and Storytelling Strategy is advancing, with Cycle 1 of the "InterChange" Public Art Program approximately 75% complete, reflecting the integration of Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian stories celebrated through artistic and cultural narratives. Additionally, the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Cogswell Interpretive Design has been finalized and is ready to be issued for tender, marking the next phase in the district's interpretive planning process.</p> <p>The Library has identified ways to incorporate indigenous language and culture in the Keshen Goodman renovation. Each community room is named after a local element and include the Mi'kmaq name of the element. This acknowledges the land the library sits on and recognizes and builds understanding of the Mi'kmaq language. The Library has approved a new policy which outlines and prioritizes how names of location and spaces in the library</p>	HRM

			will be named with a focus on reflecting the natural elements of our communities. The Library continues to work to find opportunities to incorporate indigenous spaces for the public. Specifically the Library will be consulting with the urban indigenous community on the redevelopment of Halifax North.	
	48	Work with Discover Halifax to support the implementation of the Halifax Regional Integrated Tourism Master Plan.	<p>Halifax Partnership has a strong and collaborative relationship with Discover Halifax, meeting regularly to explore opportunities for joint initiatives that maximize the economic impact of events, meetings, and conventions. The Partnership actively supported Discover Halifax during the community consultation phase of their Tourism Master Plan and have since aligned their activities and messaging to reinforce its goals. Currently, the Partnership is partnering with Discover Halifax and other stakeholders on a pilot project focused on Tourism Readiness in Eastern HRM.</p> <p>Endorsed by Regional Council in July 2025, the updated Integrated Tourism Master Plan 2030 outlines a community-first, regionally tailored tourism strategy emphasizing sustainable growth, cultural inclusion, and year-round visitor experiences.³ It prioritizes infrastructure upgrades, major event development, authentic storytelling, and improved accessibility through 27 actionable initiatives, aligning tourism with Halifax's economic goals to boost GDP, enhance livability, and strengthen global competitiveness</p> <p>Maintained by Discover Halifax, the newly launched ITMP 2030 Dashboard will document progress on all 27 initiatives listed in the tourism master plan. These initiatives have multiple leads, partners, and potential partners and each initiative is at a different stage of development. The dashboard will help track implementation progress by providing categorized links to initiative-specific details and plan reports.</p>	HP/ HRM
<p>3.3 Make it easier for people and goods to move throughout Halifax and the region.</p>	49	Improve parking in the downtown core by identifying the ideal number and placement of on street and off-street spaces, making signage improvements, and supporting parking validation programs.	During the prior 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 the 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.	Halifax Transit, in collaboration with key partners, has progressed Bus Rapid Transit planning and is finalizing the Wrights Cove Terminal design. Construction will begin before fiscal year-end, with completion targeted for summer 2026. After extensive public engagement, the Core Service Plan is being prepared for Council consideration. New transit management tools are being tested to enhance service reliability, and work on the upcoming Ferry Operational Review is underway.	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 October 2025, 31km (59%) of the planned 53km All Ages and Abilities Bikeway Network (AAA) network has been completed. During this reporting period, HRM completed a review of segments planned for construction in 2026/27 and 2027/28. Staff's review focused on identifying where alternative facility types or nearby parallel routes could offer opportunities to complete the network with reduced costs. Trade-offs required to replace currently proposed routes with lower cost alternatives were considered including factors such as the utility of the route for cyclists (e.g., convenience, comfort) and the implications for other street users, including transit and vehicular traffic. Remaining projects (planned for construction after 2027/28) will be reviewed in future reporting periods.</p>	HRM

³ 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 and [Item 15.2.1](#) Halifax Regional Council July 8, 2025

	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 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
<p>3.4 Strengthen the dynamism of our downtown, main streets, and rural centres.</p>	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>Endorsed during this reporting period (see here), the updated ITMP 2030 builds on the foundation of the original strategy while incorporating a stronger regional focus, clearer infrastructure priorities, and broader engagement. It offers a practical, evidence-based approach to tourism development that supports sustainable growth, enhances the quality of life for residents, and improves the overall visitor experience across the municipality. It is intended to ensure sustainable growth, inclusivity, and experiences that benefit visitors and residents while protecting Halifax's cultural and environmental assets. The plan prioritizes infrastructure upgrades, major event development, authentic storytelling, and improved accessibility through 27 actionable initiatives, aligning tourism with Halifax's economic goals to boost GDP, enhance livability, and strengthen global competitiveness.</p> <p>In April 2025, Discover Halifax (DH) engaged Daylight and Purple Moon Event Consultants, representing New Zealand and Scotland's event management expertise. DH and HRM agreed to merge the Regional Event Strategy and Major Event Framework into one project, launching joint development of a new strategy and policy. From April to July, more than 150 event professionals participated in consultations through interviews, focus groups, open houses, and a public poll. Engagement included organizers from urban and rural areas and targeted sessions with Mi'kmaq, Acadian, and African Nova Scotian event leaders. Between July and September, HRM staff worked with DH and consultants to draft the Major Event Framework. From October 2025 into 2026, staff will finalize the report for Council, aiming for approval in early 2026.</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 Waterfront Revitalization (DDWR) Project is a planning and public consulting process that will result in a Conceptual Development Plan for the Dartmouth waterfront that addresses open space planning, mobility networks, emergency access, urban design, and climate adaptation.</p> <p>Consultants were retained in February 2025 to undertake the project, including consultation with rights holders, residents and interest groups.</p> <p>Throughout 2025, HRM sought initial input on the future of the waterfront through a series of community engagement events, including workshops, pop-ups and a survey. Additional engagement will take place throughout 2026 as the project progresses. The overall process will identify the project's geographical scope, coordinate the goals and objectives of community and external interest groups, 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.	Through 2025, Halifax Water's Sawmill Creek Storm Sewer Replacement focused on Phase 2 Part 1 with Canal Street recapitalization, Alderney/Dundas intersection upgrades, traffic disruptions and delays, and staged reopening of two-way traffic. Work, including asphalt, sidewalks and landscaping, is on track for completion by year's end (see here).	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.	Streetscaping continues to be integrated into capital road construction further to the Regional Centre Streetscaping Administrative Order 2020-012 (Brunswick, Cathedral Lane, Henry Street, Almon) and outside the Regional Centre, further to Council-Approved Functional Plans (Dutch Village Road). Planning is underway for 2026/27 capital works. The Streetscaping and Tactical Urbanism Programs were transferred to Public Works Design & Asset Management in mid-2025 and work continues to integrate the programs within the new department.	HRM
	58	Enhance green spaces and programming opportunities in green spaces in the Regional Centre.	Through the Build Back Better program, a number of shade sails and green infrastructure projects were installed in parks across HRM.. HRM's annual tree giveaway program successfully supplied 1,000 potted shade and fruit trees. The municipality submitted a multiyear ~\$1million matching funds application to Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Growing Green Communities Canopies Fund (application pending). ⁴ CN's EcoConnections Grant supported the planting of 50 caliper trees across HRM parks. HRM received the United Nations' Tree Cities of the World recognition for 5th straight year.	HRM
	59	Continue with placemaking and beautification efforts.	In partnership with IOTA Studios (IOTA Institute), HRM launched the Cogswell District Outdoor Art Gallery Pilot in 2025—a two-year program focused on professional public art opportunities for Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian artists. This initiative, including the InterCHANGE program, stems directly from community engagement findings and supports community history and ownership in the redevelopment of the Cogswell District.	HRM
	60	Implement the recommendations from the Rural Recreation Strategy.	<p>The Rural Recreation Strategy (RRS) enhances recreation in rural areas by addressing community needs and improving equitable access to facilities and programs. The RRS identifies 60 action goals to be completed over a three-year period, with 37 of those actions prioritized for completion in the first year. As of November 2025, nine of these actions had been successfully completed or adopted as standard practice by Parks and Recreation. An additional 24 actions are actively in progress and are on track for successful completion. The remaining five actions are either at risk, completed without achieving the intended outcomes, or have been deferred to the second year of implementation.</p> <p>Key accomplishments have been realized, including the advancement of the Eastern Shore Lifestyle Centre, the piloting of Saturday school access, and the delivery of programs in non-traditional venues. A revised asset rating process was implemented, and Regional Recreation Round Tables were established. Youth volunteerism was promoted through a leadership program that saw the participation of 54 youths from high- and medium-priority communities. Rural service delivery was supported through the development of community profiles, the creation of a program proposal process, and the introduction of training materials for community groups. A Rural Communications Strategy was developed in response to challenges posed by limited communication infrastructure and digital exclusion.</p> <p>In year two, further partnership development, the expansion of pilot initiatives, enhanced data collection, and improved infrastructure support will be prioritized. Continued support from Regional Council and collaboration across business units will be required to maintain momentum and to ensure alignment with the broader strategic objectives. Additional detail has been provided to CPED (see here).</p>	HRM

⁴ Growing Canada's Community Canopies (GCCC), is a \$291 million program aimed at planting trees across Canada. The program is part of the Green Municipal Fund, which is funded by the Government of Canada and delivered by FCM.



People. Planet. Prosperity. Halifax's Inclusive Economic Strategy, 2022-27

Progress Update

Presented to Community Planning and Economic Development Committee

February 17, 2026

HALIFAX

**HALIFAX
PARTNERSHIP**
CONNECT. COLLABORATE. PROSPER.

VISION

A prosperous, growing Halifax that puts the well-being of people and planet first.

By 2037, grow GDP to

\$34 billion
and population to
650,000

VALUE PROPOSITION



Ocean Advantage



Commitment to Climate Action



Educated and Innovative



Excellent Urban, Suburban, Rural Lifestyle

5-YEAR STRATEGIC GOALS



Promote and Maximize Inclusive and Sustainable Growth

Grow GDP to **\$26 billion** by 2027



Attract, Retain, and Develop Talent

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

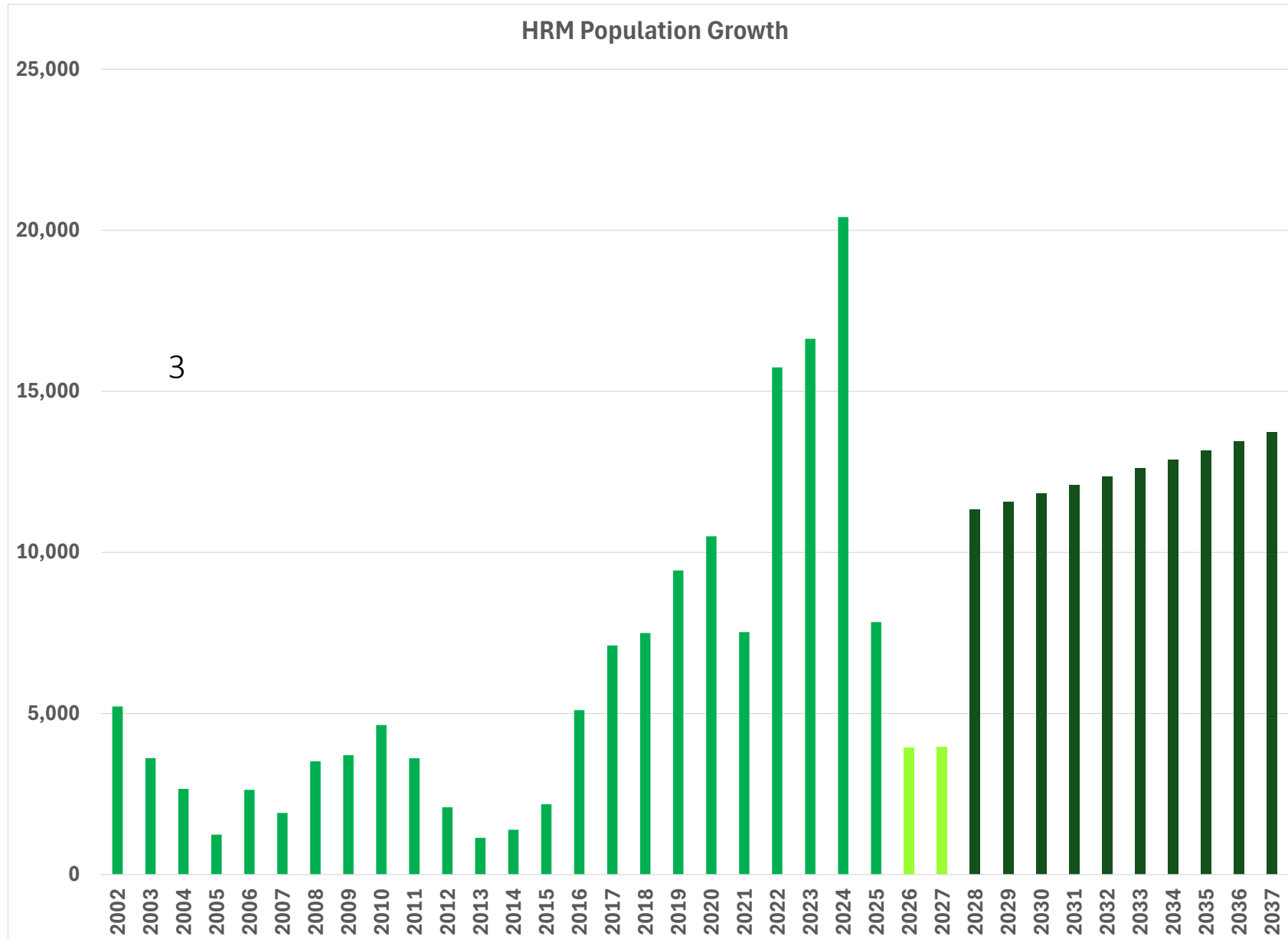


Make Halifax a Better Place to Live, Work, and Visit

Increase residents' well-being on a continuous basis

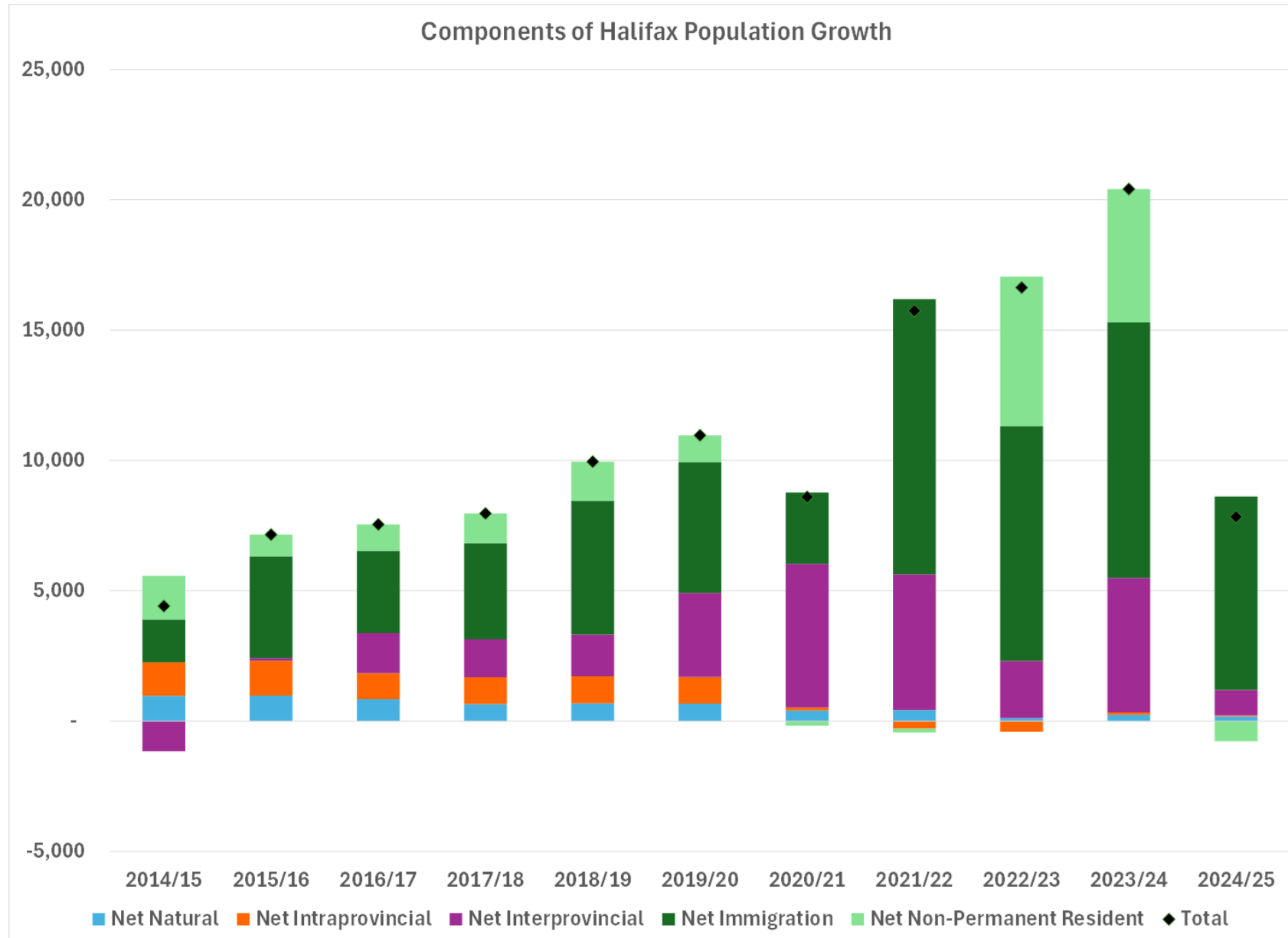
PEOPLE. PLANET. PROSPERITY.
HALIFAX'S INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC STRATEGY 2022-2027

POPULATION GROWTH

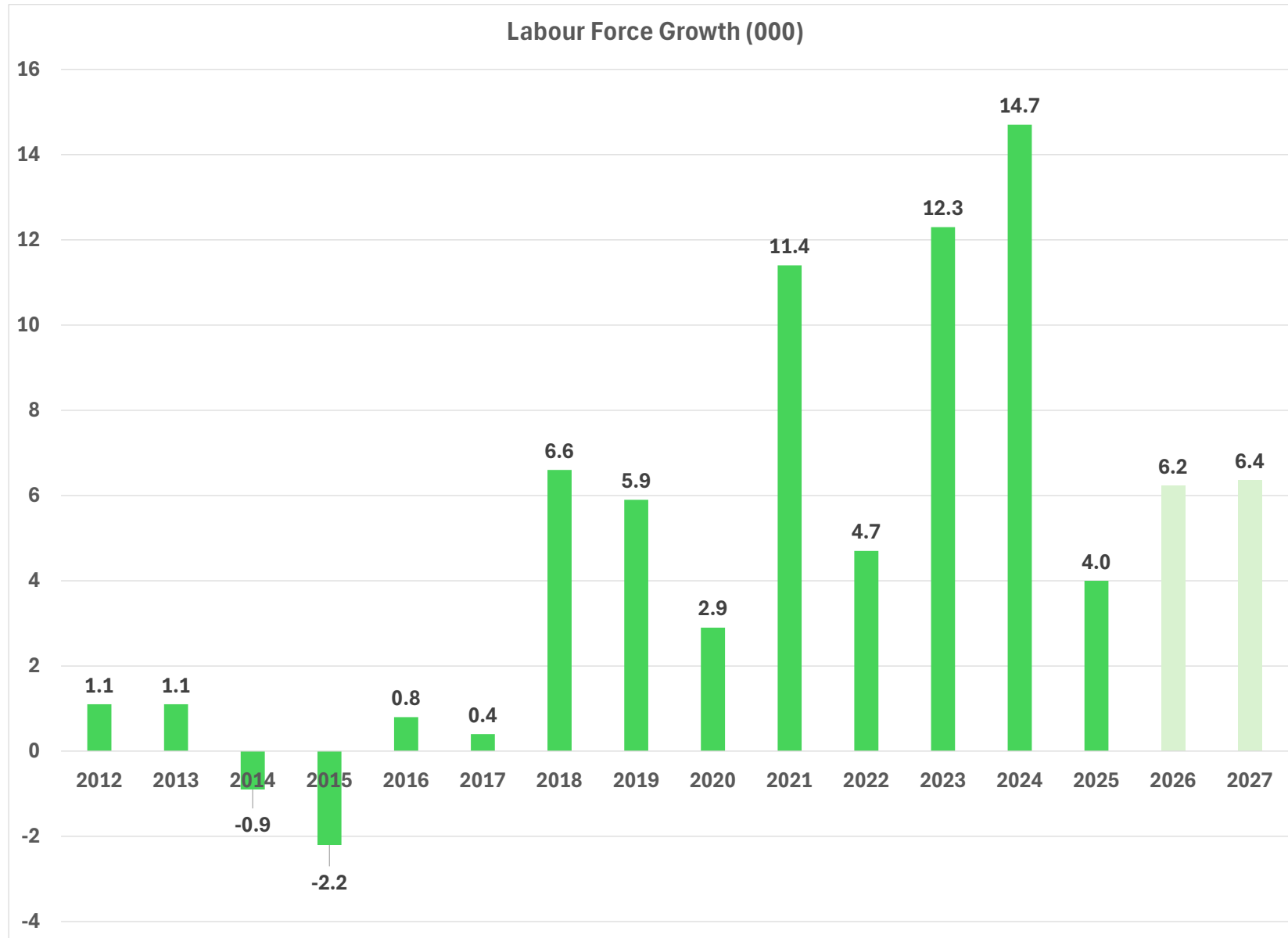


3

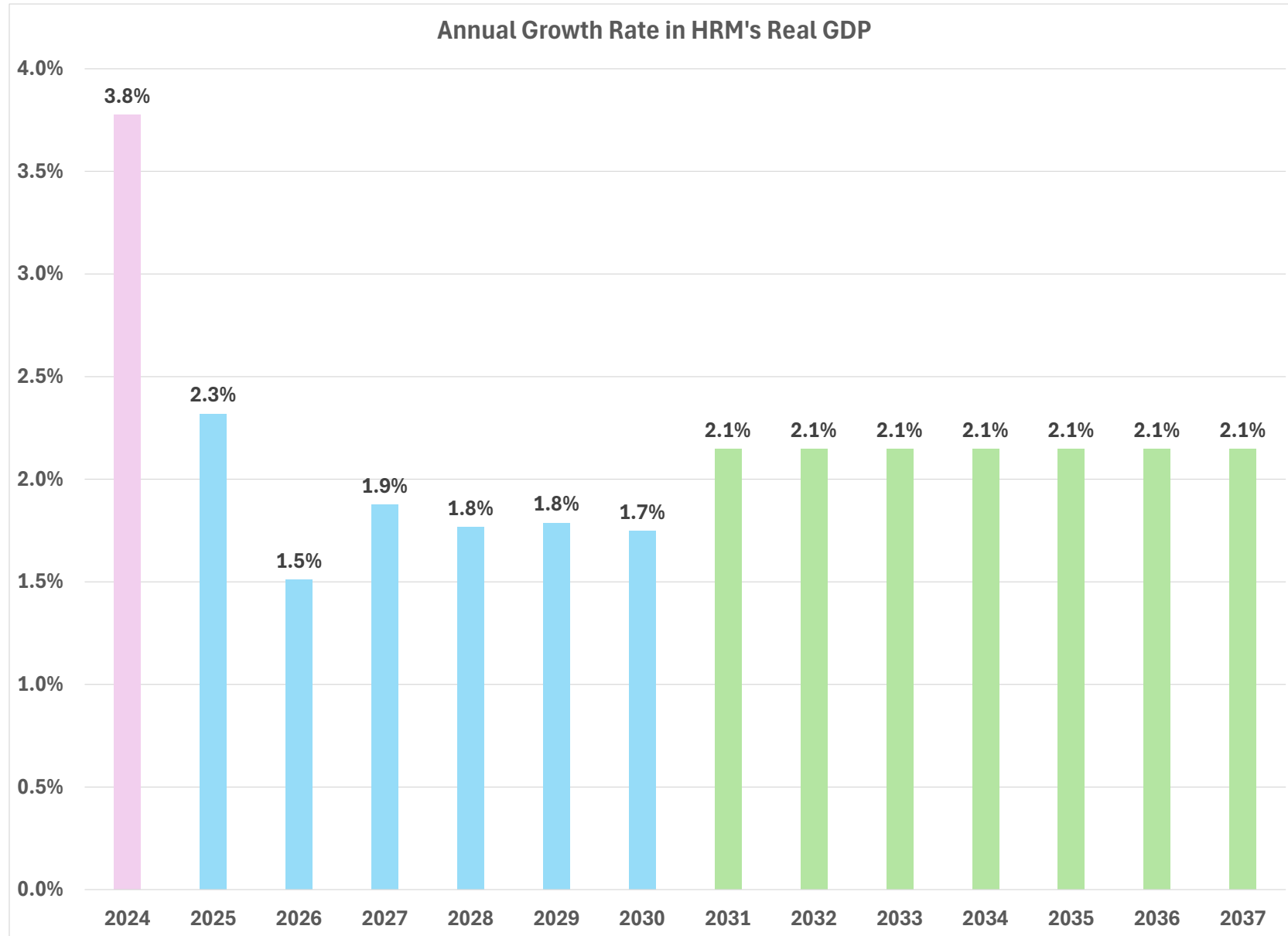
POPULATION GROWTH COMPONENTS



LABOUR FORCE GROWTH



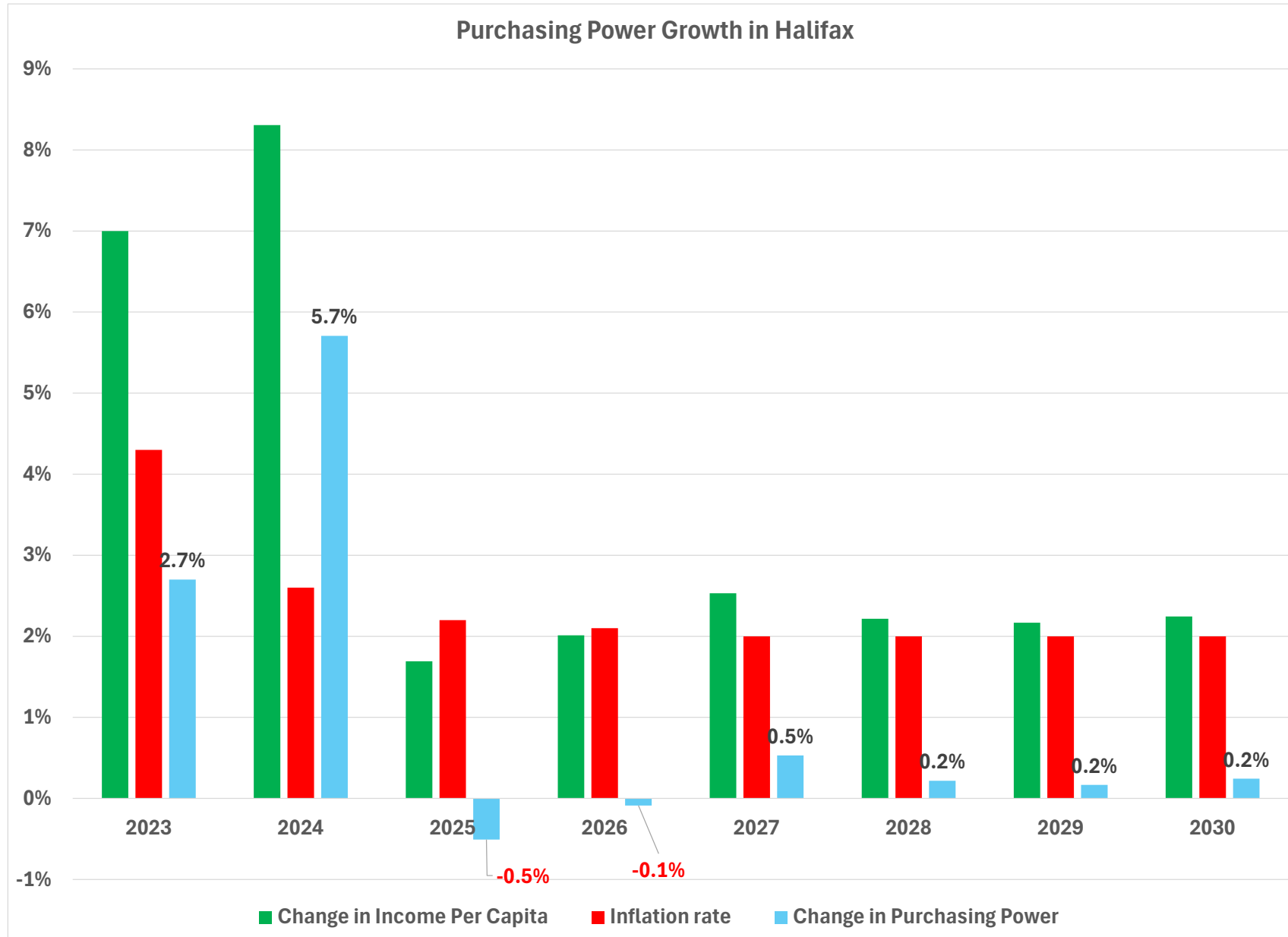
GDP GROWTH RATES



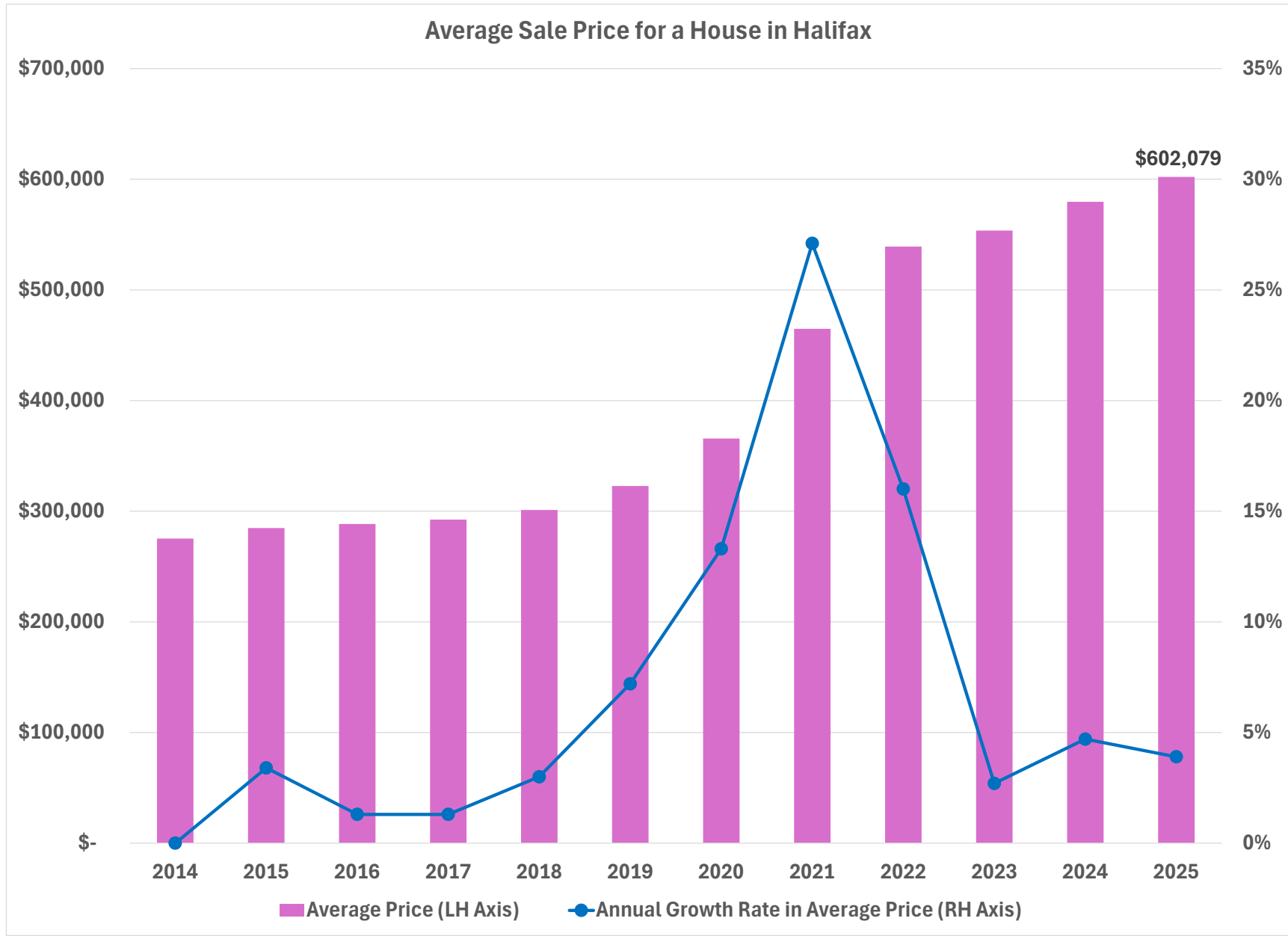
GDP PER CAPITA



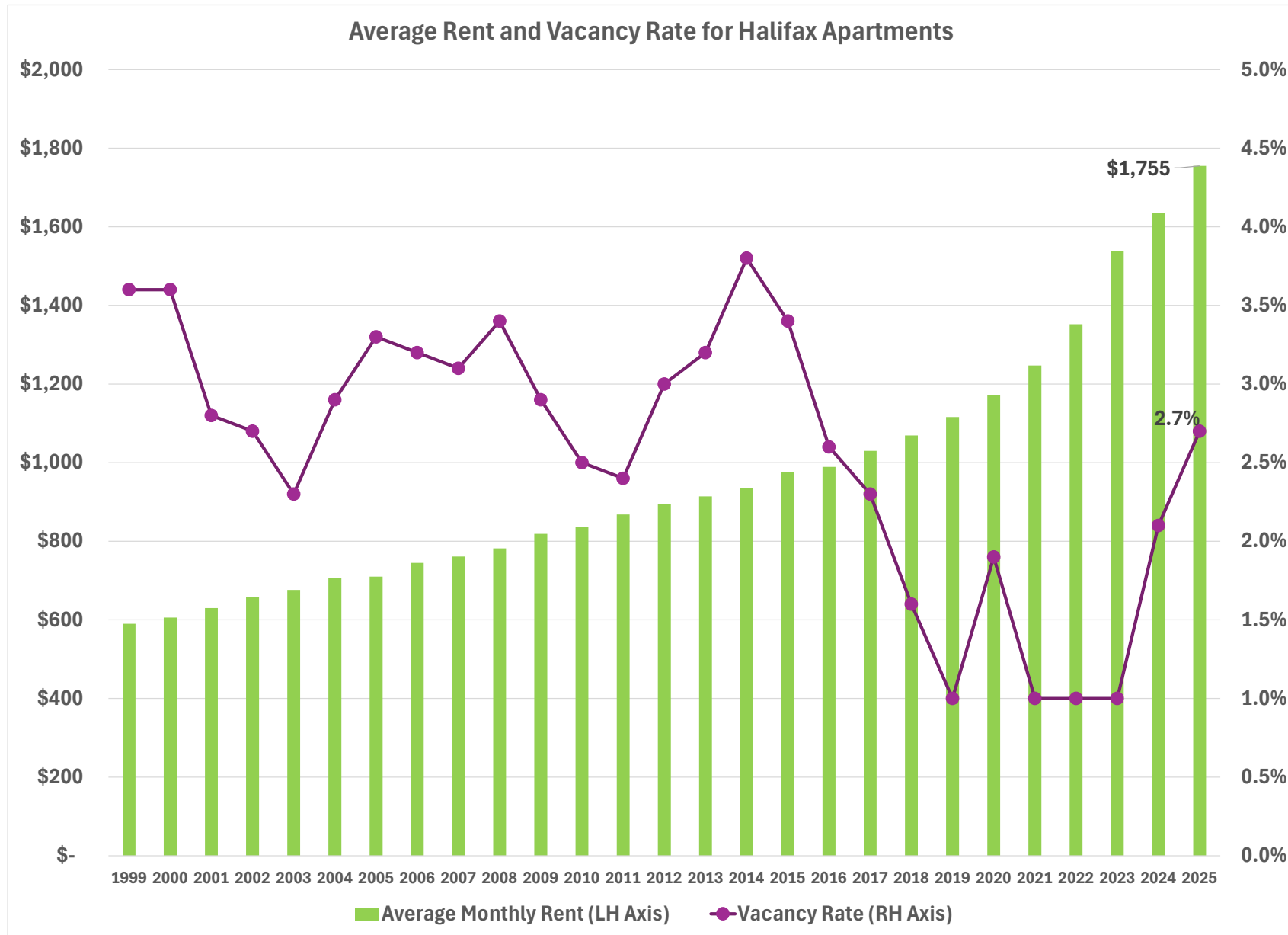
PURCHASING POWER



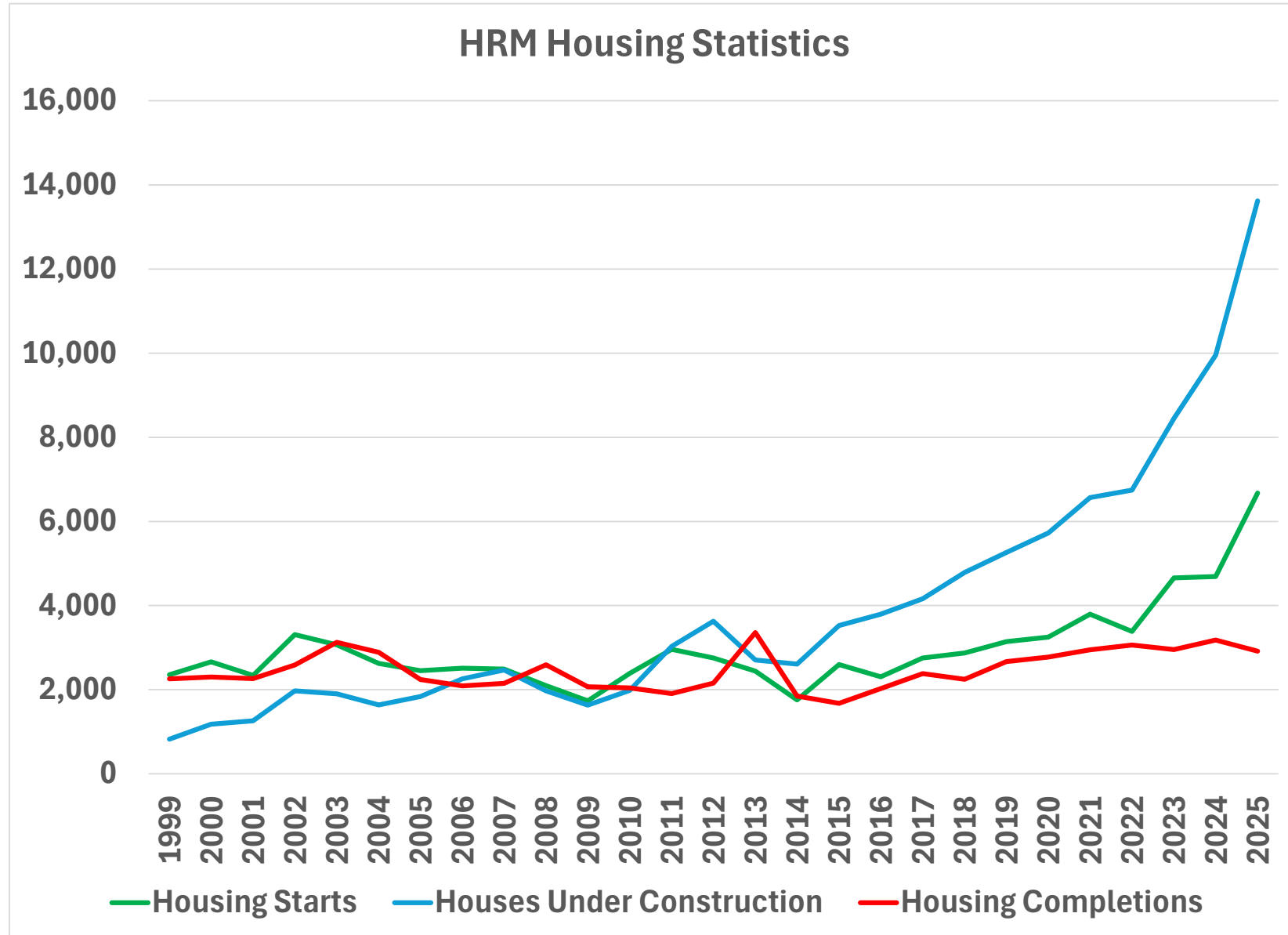
HOUSE PRICES



RENTAL MARKET



HOUSING CONSTRUCTION





Promote and Maximize Inclusive and Sustainable Growth

Grow GDP to \$26 billion by 2027



HALIFAX

**HALIFAX
PARTNERSHIP**
CONNECT. COLLABORATE. PROSPER.



SMARTBUSINESS

Business Retention and Expansion



49
rural HRM

17
SMEs provided one-on-one support through the Virtual Adviser Program

"When I was in the early stages of setting up my business, Halifax Partnership provided invaluable support that helped me through the toughest moments."

Al Stander,
Founder, Atlantic Efficient Ltd.



**HALIFAX
PARTNERSHIP**
SMARTBUSINESS PROGRAM



BUSINESS ATTRACTION

"We're excited to open the Halifax Innovation Centre, a major milestone in DXC's growth in Canada and the Atlantic region and a reflection of our dedication to collaboration."

- Cameron Art
DXC President of the Americas and UKI



GOOGLE LEARNING PROGRAM

“The Google Learning Program for Businesses was an excellent opportunity to learn practical AI skills in a simple and accessible way. I have leveraged the knowledge obtained from this course to plan Hivo's Go-to-Market Strategy and the resources needed to implement this strategy.

- Fahad A. AlRuhayem, Co-founder and CEO of Hivo

An aerial photograph of a coastal town. A white church with a steeple is prominent on a green hillside. A road curves along the edge of a large blue lake. The sky is a soft purple and blue, suggesting dawn or dusk. The text "Shape the Future of Tourism in Eastern HRM, Together" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font.

Shape the Future of Tourism in Eastern HRM, Together

The *Eastern HRM Rural Tourism Readiness Pilot* is a collaborative community-driven initiative to help strengthen tourism and economic growth across Eastern HRM.



Attract, Retain, and Develop Talent

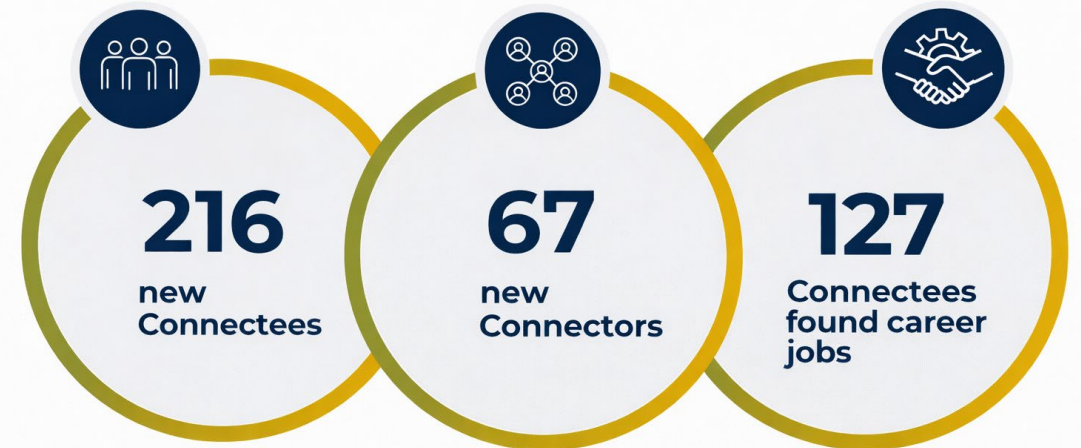
Increase the Population to 525,000 and Labour Force to 310,000 by 2027



Engineering a Fresh Start Anais Medina, Connectee



HALIFAX CONNECTOR PROGRAM





HIRING INTERNATIONAL TALENT





Make Halifax a Better Place to Live and Work

Increase residents' Well-Being on a Regular Basis



HALIFAX

**HALIFAX
PARTNERSHIP**
CONNECT. COLLABORATE. PROSPER.

CEO Climate Action Summit



UPCOMING EVENTS

March 30: Productivity
Puzzle Series

June 4: The 2026 Halifax
Index, Presented by TD

June 16: Halifax Partnership
30th Anniversary
Celebration and AGM



ECONOMIC REPORTING

Halifax Index 2025
halifaxindex.com

Halifax Economic Dashboard
halifaxpartnership/economicdashboard