

HRM's Review and Renewal of the Economic Strategy 2011 - 2016

Real Estate and Development Consultation

Tuesday, June 15, 2010

1:00-4:00 p.m.

Location: Delta Halifax, MacDonald McNab Room

Champion: Ross Cantwell, Colliers International Halifax

Facilitator: Peter Klynstra, Ekistics Planning & Design

Participants

- Fred Morley, Greater Halifax Partnership
- Robyn Webb, Greater Halifax Partnership
- Frances Fares, Fares Inc.
- Bob Darton, Aecon Atlantic
- Matthew Gilmore, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)
- Brant Wishart, Service Nova Scotia Municipal Relations
- Laurie Cameron, ACOA
- Bill MacAvoy, Cushman Wakefield
- Stephen Dempsey, Smart City Realty
- Jennifer Angel, Waterfront Development Corporation
- Paul MacIsaac, Halifax Port Authority
- Peter Stickings, HRM
- Andy Fillmore, HRM
- Greg Taylor, Colliers International
- Austin French, HRM
- Colin Whitcomb, The Hardman Group
- Bruce Fisher, HRM
- Louis Lawen, Dixel Development
- Bernie Smith, Spring Garden Area Business Association
- Ross Cantwell, Colliers International
- Darlene Fenton, NS Department of Environment.
- Paul MacKinnon, Downtown Halifax Business Commission
- John Crace, WHWArchitects
- Mike Turner, Turner Drake

Session Recorder

- Krista Hall, Greater Halifax Partnership

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Opening Remarks – Ross Cantwell

1. Project Overview
2. Purpose of Consultation
3. Participant Introductions

Session Introduction – Peter Klynstra

1. Meeting Flow
2. Data Collection Overview
3. Ground Rules

Participant Feedback

Opportunities and Challenges

1. What is your overall reaction to the opportunities and challenges?

- Don't think there isn't anything new here. Why haven't we dealt with these challenges? Nothing has been done with what we already know.
- We've been talking about these issues and opportunities for a long time. How do we move from this talk to action?
- Maybe there are inherent barriers within the opportunities. Focus on these and identify the underlying negative issues
- Need for strong partnerships across the sectors in support of high-value jobs
- Some things on the list are specific actors while others are outcomes

2. Is the list complete? If not, what is missing?

- Strategically – we need a big idea and to fix the urban core
- Tactically – talent retention, housing diversity and customer-service mindset
- Emphasize the hub city and the importance of the urban core
- Concerned about the level of cynicism across the community. Issue of whether the downtown really matters. We need to have a consensus and sell the rest of the population on the importance of a vibrant downtown
- Talent - connect the dots so we can engage students and young and emerging professionals (Fusion) in our economy
- Add to List
 - Talent retention is missing (youth, immigrants, young professionals, etc)

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- Housing diversity
- The waterfront is an opportunity. We have a unique advantage.
- Issues with municipal structure
- Transportation
 - More comprehensive transportation plan beyond just adding more buses
 - We have self-contained communities that have their own transportation, etc. so it makes it difficult to design a mass transit system that works for everyone
- Add to inertia / resistance, a “customer service mindset”
- Culture
 - Should be a stronger focus on culture and creative element. More promotion/celebration of what is happening in the region.
 - Use of culture to draw talent and jobs to the region is an important strategy
 - Need to stimulate arts and grassroots culture. Let’s make it easy for arts and culture to grow. Remove barriers.
- Thought there should be more of a focus on aid for entrepreneurs
- We need sector specific targets
- Prioritized public investment
- We’re not dealing effectively with social issues, on our streets or in our marginalized communities.
- Leadership
 - The city doesn’t do much at all – education is passed over to school board. Water is passed over to water commission. They’ve passed over social supports to the province which isn’t running it in an entrepreneurial way. We’re not managing ourselves well at all. All levels of government point the finger at each other.
 - We really need to get ourselves organized

3. Is the list accurate? If not, what revisions would you propose and why?

- Green Wave - need targets
- Productivity – is it a good measure, especially for millennials?

4. Which opportunities and changes are the most and least important and why?

OP = Ordering Principle, ST = Short-term Outcome, LT= Long-term Outcome

**** Note:** There were six tables of participants. Five groups returned their reporting forms. Each Table = x

| From the Point of View of your sector, which opportunities and challenges are the most/least important and why? | Most Important | | | | | Least Important | OP, ST or LT |
|---|----------------|---|---|---|---|-----------------|--------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | |
| Hub City Strategy | xxx | x | | | | | |

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| | | | | | | |
|--|-------|-----|----|---|--|----|
| High Value Jobs | x | xxx | | | | |
| Alignment | xx | x | | | | |
| High Education Level | x | x | x | | | |
| Concentration of Post-secondary institutions | xx | x | | | | |
| Demographic Shift | | xxx | | | | ST |
| Population Growth | xx | x | | | | ST |
| Taxation | xxxxx | | | | | OP |
| Regulation | xxx | | | | | OP |
| Inertia/resistance | xxxx | | | | | OP |
| Missing the Green Wave | xx | | x | x | | LT |
| Productivity Growth | x | | xx | | | LT |
| Partnership and Alignment | xx | | | x | | OP |
| International Focus | xx | x | x | | | LT |
| Myths on Growth Drivers Need Correcting | xx | | | x | | OP |
| Overdue Public and Private Investment in the Downtown Core | xxxx | | | | | OP |
| High Carbon Dependence | x | | x | x | | LT |
| Other: Talent Retention | | x | | | | ST |
| Other: Housing Diversity | x | | | | | OP |
| | | | | | | |

Plenary Comments

- Found it difficult to rank from 1-5
- Ranked 1-5 as well as Ordering Principle, Short-term Outcome, or Long-term Outcome
- Highest priority
 - Hub City Strategy
 - Taxation
 - Inertia/resistance
 - International Focus
 - Overdue public and private investment in the downtown core
- Taxation, regulation, alignment, inertia - all ordering principles
 - Biggest challenges
 - Once you address these talent retention, productivity, growth, etc. will come
- Inertia / Resistance
 - Key challenge
 - Everything takes far too long
 - There is all sorts of resistance to change.
 - Leadership is the main issue
- Taxation

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- Critical issue
- High corporate and personal taxes will make it challenging to attract and retain talent
- Taxation accountability – residential tax rate cap is strategically wrong at all levels. Municipal councils will not want to increase residential tax rates so they will raise commercial taxes which will kill this activity particularly in downtown
- Hub city
 - Top opportunity
 - Use the Hub City concept to drive the rest
- High-value jobs
 - Not just high-wage
 - High-value jobs aren't necessarily high paying
 - Top opportunity
 - Needs to be a balance between bringing in high-value jobs but we should also create an environment that is welcoming and easy for entrepreneurs
- Alignment
 - Top opportunity
 - Concerned with government. Levels of government are fighting with each other. There is a lack of alignment.
 - Need to make partnerships and alignments
- Post-secondary institutions
 - Important to our economy
- Population growth / Demographic shift
 - Most critical of all the issues. No need for more houses if we don't have more people. This will impede growth. Should add something about immigration to the list. It's critical to our growth.
 - Youth attraction and retention is key and runs throughout all of this. We want to keep our own people and attract from other areas.
- Productivity and growth
 - Very important
 - Worried about productivity measure. We don't know if this is a good measure anymore. Millennials want work/life balance. What do we mean by productivity?
- Infrastructure
 - Important
- Green Wave

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- Didn't find Green Wave as relevant as the bigger issues
- There's a lot more to be done on the green wave, especially in the areas of transit and district heat
- We need to get on board with the green wave. We're not concentrating on transit to the level we should be. There is huge resistance to putting in a circular.
- Leadership is needed in the area of renewable energy

- Downtown Investment
 - Need to focus on developing the downtown

- Development
 - We need to prioritize our public developments. What are the most important things to our community? If the convention centre is a top priority then we should invest and proceed with development.
 - Is the list complete? Redevelopment opportunities is missing (e.g. Imperial Oil, Shannon Park). Imperial Oil lot is going to be vacant soon. This is a brown field site. What are we going to do with this site? There is an opportunity to move the south end container pier and reclaim the land for residential purposes. We need to start planning what we're going to do with these sites.
 - Develop regulation for redevelopment
 - There are too many delays

- International Focus
 - Need an international focus in Halifax

[Vision Statements](#)

1. What is your first reaction to the draft vision statements?

- Like both visions with some revisions
- Don't like either vision
- Think the vision should be aspirational
- The statements don't represent our uniqueness of place. The vision should stress the quality of life in Halifax.
- Thought both were well-worded, but we need to include more about sustainable development. Making Halifax a world leader in sustainability. Creativity and culture need to be represented.
- They contain good points but they "fail to stir the blood"

Vision #1

- not rooted in reality
- well-worded
- More passion than #2

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- Bullet #2, "More high-value and sustainable jobs..." – think there should be more incentive for people to retrain and get them back to more productive work. We need to subsidize training.
- #1 is closer to what we want
- Change "HRM" to "Halifax"

Vision #2

- More valid than #1, but it's more of a mission statement than a vision statement
- More specific and measurable than #1
- Is too much like a scorecard

Questions 2, 3 & 4

**** Note:** There were six tables of participants. Five groups returned their reporting forms. Each Table = x

| Vision | | | |
|--|-----|----|---|
| | Yes | No | Notes |
| Do the statements describe what we want to be in HRM? | xxx | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally describe what we would like to be. A bit utopian and ambitious in some ways. • Yes, the statements describe what we want HRM to be, but we are not there yet. • Both do describe the city to a certain extent. • Some of what we want, but not compelling enough |
| Are the statements valid? | xx | xx | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No - too utopian • Yes - partially |
| Do you see your sector's future represented in the statements? | xx | x | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, our sector is represented in these statements. • Real estate will respond, not lead, the vision |

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5. If not, what changes would you propose?

- Alternate Visions
 - “A green, international focused city where population is growing with an influx of natural increases and immigration; where the taxation burden is low; where plans can be filed and permits given on the same day; where inertia has been pushed aside to allow productivity to soar; and where public and private partnerships have resulted in a strong downtown core.”
 - “Halifax is a nationally recognized harbour city celebrated for its safe and cosmopolitan downtown, high-value jobs, sought-after educational institutions, and rich maritime history. It is an internationally accessible Hub City with an unparalleled seaside quality of life that is aligned for growth and open for business.”
 - “Halifax is seen across the world as a beachfront for competition, creativity, and change”
 - “Make Halifax the most sustainable city in the world.”
- Fun, livable, vibrant, urban, international, accessible – these should all be part of the vision because they will attract the people (youth) and business (entrepreneurs and high-value jobs) that we need to drive real estate
- Strong leadership is required
- Cultural development targets should be included
- Talent
 - We've got to retain our graduates if we are going to change things.
 - Need to look at university curriculum – people should be able to work when they get out of university.
 - We need a better immigration policy with a focus on retention.
- Taxation
 - Service based taxation should align to our goals. Development on the fringes should pay its way. Taxation is spinning out of control.
- Downtown Development
 - We've got to repopulate the downtown somehow
 - HRMbyDesign has been watered down
 - Repopulate downtown
- Leadership
 - We need strong leadership
- Infrastructure
 - Want mass transit for the downtown and urbanized fringes.
- Development
 - We need to develop things like aquariums, art centres, a new convention centre.

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- We need a more aggressive planning and approval process
- Facilitates appropriate development
- Hub City
 - We need to leverage the region

Priority Areas and Strategic Goals

1. Do you agree with the areas and goals? If not, what do we need to add, revise or remove?

** Note: There were six tables of participants. Five groups returned their reporting forms. Each Table = x

| Priority Areas & Strategic Goals: Do you agree with the areas and goals? If not, what do we need to add, revise or remove? | | | | | | |
|--|-------|----------|-----|--------|--------|----------|
| | Agree | Disagree | Add | Revise | Remove | Comments |
| More and better qualified people for high wage and more productive jobs | xxxx | | | x | | |
| Development of a vibrant and attractive urban core as the primary economic driver | xxxx | | | x | | |
| Development of an "ecosystem" of entrepreneurship to reduce commercial risk and improve productivity | xx | | | xx | | |
| Market and enhance assets of Halifax as a "Global City" | xxx | | | xx | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

Plenary Comments

- Agreed with the first two, particularly with the second (development of downtown)
- What causes the vibrant downtown core? Will the downtown core create growth or will the downtown grow as a result of economic growth.
- First three require revision
- Debate about whether it should be HRM or Halifax
- There is a concern about the velocity of certain projects. Some constituencies have been successful (like NSCC), but the library and convention centre have taken a long time. This breeds cynicism. Collectively, we need to work on this. There are too many groups working on the same thing with slightly different agendas. We need alignment.

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- There is a concern with some of the leadership in our community. Is the leadership really getting onboard to grow the city? Commonwealth games, concerts - we don't articulate the business case as well as we could.
- There is concern about deferred maintenance across the municipality.
- Municipal structure as it exists today isn't working. Example, money being raised in downtown isn't being spent there.
- There are things holding development back. We need to remove barriers. We need to set the priorities for public investment. The city needs to set the priorities and make the case to the other levels of government. This should be done in conjunction with real estate and developers.
- Missing - The economic strategy needs to identify exactly what's holding us back.
- Mass transit needed for those living outside the downtown core
- Think bigger, but embrace quality of life
- Renowned cultural institutions

Priority #1

- More, better qualified people – don't limit it to high-wage jobs.
- Instead of more and better qualified people - Instead we need a strategy to grow sectors
- Demographic Shift/ Population Growth is a top priority that overshadows everything
- More and better qualified people - this is more of an outcome. It will result from achieving the other goals
- Curriculum changes
- Subsidized retraining

Priority #2

- Development of a vibrant attractive urban core. Change "primary economic driver" to "an economic driver"
- Development of a vibrant core is important but not a primary driver.
- Vibrant downtown core – it will attract people and drive demand for the sector
- HRMbyDesign set the rules for downtown development
- Encourage people to move downtown to increase concentration

Priority #3

- Change 'eco-system' to 'entrepreneurial culture'
- Eco-system and entrepreneurship (profit-friendly environment) - concerned about stifling entrepreneurship. We want to create an environment that is open. Remove barriers to credit
- The wording is not clear
- "Development of an entrepreneurial culture pursuing global trade"

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Priority #4

- Emphasize the assets – international investment and immigration are important
- Marketing Halifax – not as important
- We don't think Halifax is a global city yet. We need to do a lot more work.
- We should try to be a national city first before we focus internationally. Change "global" to "national"
- Leverage the region

2. Which areas and goals are the most and least important to the future of your sector and why? ** Note: There were six tables of participants. Five groups returned their reporting forms. Each Table = x

| Priority Areas & Strategic Goals: Which areas and goals are the most/least important to the future of your sector and why? | Most Important | | | | | Least Important | | | | | Notes | |
|---|----------------|---|-----|----|---|-----------------|---|---|---|---|-------|--|
| | 1 | | | | | 2 | | | | | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | |
| More and better qualified people for high wage and more productive jobs | xxx | x | | x | | | | | | | | |
| Development of a vibrant and attractive urban core as the primary economic driver | xxxx | x | | | | | | | | | | |
| Development of an "ecosystem" of entrepreneurship to reduce commercial risk and improve productivity | x | x | xxx | | | | | | | | | |
| Market and enhance assets of Halifax as a "Global City" | x | x | xx | xx | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Plenary Comments

- Demographic Shift/ Population Growth is a top priority
- Hub City Strategy is important at two levels - city and regional
- Taxation – need to look at taxes versus services and find the balance
- Inertia and resistance is a huge issue – this isn't a city that acts cooperatively
- Investment in the downtown core is very important to the future of the sector

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3. Which areas and goals should we focus on right away in order to give momentum to the implementation stage? ** Note: There were six tables of participants. Five groups returned their reporting forms. Each Table = x

| Priority Areas & Strategic Goals: Which areas and goals should we focus on right away in order to give momentum to the implementation stage? | | | |
|--|----------------|----------|-------|
| | Focus on Right | | Notes |
| | Away | Comments | |
| More and better qualified people for high wage and more productive jobs | #3, #2, #1 | | |
| Development of a vibrant and attractive urban core as the primary economic driver | #1, #1, #1, #2 | | |
| Development of an "ecosystem" of entrepreneurship to reduce commercial risk and improve productivity | #4, #2, #3 | | |
| Market and enhance assets of Halifax as a "Global City" | #2, #3, #4 | | |
| | | | |

Plenary Comments

- Global City and Downtown core - Ranked both of these highly
- Remove barriers to employment and population growth which will allow for the other things to take place.
- We need less government and regulation. Let the private sector drive the demand.
- Focus right away on developing downtown as a primary economic driver. Alignment and collaboration of all levels of government and key players. The Strategic Urban Partnership might be a good thing to make this happen. Link b/w regional plan and economic strategy is very important.
- Reinvestment in the downtown core. This needs to be done now! There has to be steady investment, not just every 20 or 30 years.

4. Do you have any thoughts on how we organize to achieve these goals?

- We should measure success at the street level, in a way that everyone can relate to. We need a list of early, easy wins that will give a sense of momentum and progress.
- HRM set the rules for downtown. Now HRM needs to:

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- Remove barriers for private development
- Set priorities for public investment
- Make the case to other government partners
- Remove barriers to employment and population growth
- To achieve these goals we need less government regulation. It should be driven by the private sector.
- Alignment and collaboration at all levels of government and inclusion of major urban stakeholders for major decisions affecting all - the Strategic Urban Partnership.
- There needs to be strong links between the regional plan and the economic strategy
- Economic strategy positioned with authority at the provincial and federal levels
- Everyone in the room understands the challenges and shares the passion to do better, so why aren't we doing better? What's missing? What's wrong? The Economic Strategy should try to identify and remedy this barrier, boldly and clearly.
- Need to celebrate creative entrepreneurial success
- Address three things:
 - Attracting creative people
 - More celebration of success (e.g. downtown development)
 - Reduction of building permit fees (e.g. parking garages). Review of permit fees

Wrap-up- Peter Klynstra

Common Themes

- A lot of the things are not new. What do we have to do to move forward?
- The Waterfront is very unique to Halifax. We need to play this up.
- Hub City was ranked highly.
- Taxation needs to be addressed re: international competitiveness

Vision

- More participants liked Vision #2.
- Focus first on national rather than international
- Number of groups didn't like "eco-system"
- Better link between regional and economic plan

Priority Areas / Strategic Goals

- Most groups said we should focus on developing a strong downtown core. This will result in increased growth.
- Creative industries
- Transportation
- Want a focus on celebrating creative elements in the community (entrepreneurial success)
- Reduction of permit fees particularly as they relate to parking garages downtown

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- Community needs to look at creating a stronger link between the money spent downtown and the services.

Comments / Questions

Will the strategy be presented /positioned to the province?

Yes, members from all levels of government sit on the Steering Committee. We need to get provincial and federal approval. There's already been interest and early cooperation and collaboration from all three levels. We are working to align priorities at all levels.

We not only need to develop a plan but also an implementation strategy that will be managed and executed by all levels of government and the private sector.

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APPENDIX – Descriptions & Questions

SECTION 1: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Thinking about the opportunities and challenges below:

- What is your overall reaction to the opportunities and challenges?
- Is the list complete? If not, what is missing?
- Is the list accurate? If not, what revisions would you propose and why?
- From the point of view of your sector, which opportunities and challenges are the most important/least important and why?

OPPORTUNITIES

Hub City

- Conference Board identifies Halifax as one of 9 Canadian Hub Cities
- Halifax is Atlantic Canada's economic hub.
- Economic growth in Halifax drives an even faster rate of growth in the province and region
- Overall, the region benefits from growth in Halifax

High Value Jobs

- Halifax has critical mass in high-value sectors like Finance, Insurance and Real-estate, Digital Industries, Oceans, Life Sciences, Aerospace and others

Alignment

- Fiscal and economic challenges provide a motivation to realign priorities and spending....to focus on growth in high wage jobs and high value sectors

High Education Levels

- Halifax has among the highest post-secondary education levels of any city in Canada
- Education levels drive economic growth -Research by the US based CEOs for Cities shows that education levels in cities accounts for almost 60% of economic growth

Concentration of Post Secondary Institutions

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- Halifax has among the highest concentration of post secondary education institutions and students in Canada
- The sector's value relates to its high wage direct jobs, its ability to act as a hub of research and innovation, and its role as a talent magnet
- As enrolment of Nova Scotia-born students declines because of demographics and high costs, the ability of these institutions to attract and retain international students has significant potential

CHALLENGES

Demographic Shift

- A demographic profile close to the Canadian average within a province that has the oldest population in Canada
- Over 45,000 Nova Scotians will retire from the labourforce and another 9,500 new jobs, all within the broader Halifax area, will be created by 2014
- Thus, 55,000 job openings between 2009 to 2014
- With population growth stagnant it is likely that wage pressure and the need for productivity investments will increase dramatically

Population Growth

- Up until the recent recession Nova Scotia had been battered by outflows of young professionals and skilled workers headed to areas of better economic growth and higher wages
- The population growth rate of Halifax dropped below the pace of major cities in neighbouring provinces
- Immigration has been limited, slower than past trends and slower than in neighbouring provinces

Taxation

- Personal taxation is higher in Nova Scotia than every Canadian province, with the largest differential at the high wage –high skill end of the spectrum
- Corporate taxation is the highest in Canada. Nova Scotia remains one of the last provinces to remove investment inhibiting capital tax
- Nova Scotia needs new investment to boost productivity and retain key companies (If a company is not investing it is dis-investing)

Regulation

- Major regulatory reform usually takes place without full consideration of the economic and business costs
- Regulatory costs affect business climate and ultimately the fiscal health of governments

Inertia/Resistance

- Sectors and groups benefiting from existing programming and current sector focus tend to resist change

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- Some members of our elected leadership, the public sector, and implementing organizations may resist necessary change

Missing the Green Wave

- Nova Scotia is among Canada's most carbon dependent provinces
- Tidal energy is an area where Nova Scotia seems to have a competitive advantage

Productivity Growth

- Nova Scotia has one of the worst productivity performances in Canada and Canada is among the worst in the G20
- A policy focus that put jobs growth ahead of quality jobs and a fiscal regulatory climate hostile to productivity improvement has hurt productivity growth

Partnership and Alignment

- There is little strategic alignment of economic development resources among federal, provincial and municipal governments and between agencies and departments of individual governments
- Lack of consensus in areas like gateway, infrastructure priorities, labour force policies and other areas has stalled progress

International Focus

- Nova Scotia has among the worst export growth of any province in Canada over the last decade
- Most business activity is focused on delivery of goods and services in local markets
- The value of externally oriented business and organizations as the key economic generators in our economy is not well understood by policy makers or business organizations

Myths on Growth Drivers Need Correcting

- "Last mile" efforts at a fully "wired" province will have limited economic benefits
- Political and economic policies that emphasize geographic balance over economic opportunity constrain growth
- Traditional areas of government policy attention often focuses on low wage, low growth, seasonal, low skill, low productivity, but vocal industries
- Nova Scotia has missed most of the early stage green-tech opportunities. Most government efforts have been on the regulatory side which often have economic costs. Government investment in Green-tech industry has been limited
- Old style politics, which features urban rural divisions hurt economic growth
- It is likely that net new growth in Nova Scotia will be in the region surrounding and including Halifax

Overdue Public and Private Investment in the Downtown Core

- About 20% of land in the downtown core is vacant land
- Beyond basic maintenance, HRM has not invested in the Core since amalgamation in the mid-90s

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High Carbon Dependence

- Adds cost burden to both individuals and companies
- Contributes to greenhouse gas problems

SECTION 2: VISION

Thinking about the vision statements below:

- What is your first reaction?
- Do the statements describe what we want to be in HRM?
- Are the statements valid?
- Do you see your future reflected in the statements?
- If not, what changes would you propose?

Vision – Alternative 1

Halifax is recognized by the rest of the world as a more creative, innovative, internationally competitive, and globally-oriented hub city providing:

- Increased economic and social well-being not only to people in the HRM but also to Nova Scotia and the Atlantic region;
- More high value and sustainable jobs that will attract highly qualified people of diverse backgrounds and;
- A quality of life that is the “envy of the world”.

Vision –Alternative 2

Halifax is recognized around the world as a smart, international and competitive city where:

- X% of the 25-45 year-old population has completed post-secondary education;
- X% of the city's GDP is driven by international business;
- Is found the most competitive business environment in Eastern Canada and;
- X number of high-value jobs have been created.

SECTION 2: PRIORITY AREAS AND STRATEGIC GOALS

Thinking about the list of priority areas and strategic goals below:

- Do you agree with the areas and goals? If not, what do we need to add, revise or remove?
- Which areas and goals are the most/or least important to the future of your sector and why?

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- Which areas and goals should we focus on right away in order to give momentum to the implementation stage?
- Do you have any thoughts on how we organize to achieve these goals?

Priority Area #1: More and better qualified people for high wage and more productive jobs.

Strategic Goals:

1. Development and implementation of a comprehensive learning strategy to re-skill workers to a level that allows them to compete for high wage and more productive jobs.
2. Development and implementation of an enhanced external recruitment and retention strategy to attract and retain high skilled workers from the rest of Canada and internationally.
3. Design and implement an engagement strategy with the young professional community to ensure their active involvement with the design and implementation of economic development initiatives
4. Design and implement a "talent" strategy to ensure that all elements of the population participate actively in the labor market.

Priority Area #2: Development of a vibrant and attractive urban core as the primary economic driver.

Strategic Goals:

1. Develop and implement an aggressive strategy to attract significant private investment to the urban core to address the issue of downtown office and residential stock
2. Implement a 5 year public infrastructure improvement program including targeted service and maintenance improvements.
3. Develop a plan for the building of renowned cultural institutions.

Priority Area #3: Development of an "ecosystem" of entrepreneurship to reduce commercial risk and improve productivity.

Strategic Goals:

1. Undertake a regulatory and tax review to identify and advocate the changes to the policies and regulations at all levels of government that impede economic growth in HRM.
2. Design an engagement strategy between the economic development organizations and the college, university and technical school community to identify and act in partnership on initiatives to support economic development, improve productivity and promote entrepreneurialism.
3. Develop and deliver a strategy for business attraction and retention that targets the creation of highly skilled jobs and limiting the exit of skilled and educated young people.

Priority Area #4: Market and enhance assets of Halifax as a "Global City"

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Strategic Goals:

1. Develop and implement an enhanced trade and investment strategy that builds on the current international market development activities underway.
2. Continue the development of an internationally competitive transportation system covering all modes that supports the efficient movement of goods and people.
3. Design and deliver a wide-reaching public relations and communications program designed to change the awareness and perception of the players in the HRM regarding the growth potential and opportunities in the international marketplace.