

re-elect
mike.



The world has changed, and we're learning to change with it.

Our community is struggling with loss and unease about the future. Diminished incomes, imperiled businesses, curtailed freedoms, isolation, and in some cases illness and lost loved ones: these are tough times.

But, this is Halifax, where history has taught us a thing or two about adversity, and it doesn't surprise me that citizens have risen to these challenges. I am proud of the groundswell of compassion and generosity in this community. Countless individuals, businesses and organizations have stepped up to help each other.

Covid-19 has reinforced our sense of ourselves and highlighted the character of our community.

It has tested us and will continue to test us. I know that we will continue to support each other in the weeks and months to come.

Regional Council has responded to the COVID challenge. We reduced expenditures significantly through a rigorous and painful budget recasting process. We worked hard to maintain essential services such as Transit, Library Services, Police, Fire, and others. Like families and businesses, we found new ways to meet and work together, and I'm proud of how we came together to find solutions.

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Each time I have run for Mayor, I've presented a platform that defines a vision for the next term in office. I'm proud that the plans—and the achievements—reflect not only the vision that I presented as a Mayoral candidate, but the collective vision of Council. And we have made great progress.

This year, I present my platform against the backdrop of the continuing fight against COVID, and the need to plan for a post-COVID municipality.

The challenges are great, but we should not lose sight of the strengths that made Halifax a city on the rise, a city with enviable natural and earned advantages.

We have managed the finances of the municipality wisely and kept taxes among the lowest in major Canadian cities, despite our unprecedented growth. We have maintained strong reserves and paid down debt, which helped position us to manage the financial impacts of COVID.

At the same time, we have made significant investments in people and in the protection of our environment. Investment in public amenities has spurred the private development that has given Halifax a new energy and brought people back to a downtown that was hollowing out.

Cities do well when people and businesses do well. Sustainable growth allows us to ensure more opportunities for more people, to become a fertile ground for ideas and investment.

The future is uncertain, but there are some things we know.

We know that the strengths of our municipality when COVID hit will position us well for recovery.

We know that not all citizens have been part of the pre-COVID success, and these same people are now at greater risk of falling further behind.

We know that our coastal community is in real jeopardy from climate change.

We know that systemic racism has created social inequity in our community for too long. It's an individual tragedy and a social scar that damages our whole community and everyone who lives here.

Our plan for recovery must ensure that we are not just a bigger city, but working toward a community where everyone has enough to eat and a secure place to sleep, where every citizen finds a place to match their talent and their ambition, and where we all contribute to a healthy environment.



The challenges are daunting. The Mayor and Council that are elected in October have a deep responsibility to provide leadership based on hope for the future, faith in our strength as a community, and a sound understanding of stewardship of our resources.

Halifax Regional Municipality, and all its citizens, deserve no less.

PEOPLE

We recognize that our strength is in the people who live, work, raise families, and create vibrant neighbourhoods. But the financial and social impacts of COVID demonstrate that more must be done to protect society's most vulnerable citizens from the ravages of crisis or continuing exclusion.

Anti-racism activism has focused attention on the fact that historic racism is a continuing scar on our community, one that we must acknowledge and address.

When we strive to overcome poverty, when we recognize and celebrate Black and Indigenous culture and contributions, when we ensure our facilities are accessible to everyone, when we hear and respect the perspectives of LGBTQ2+ citizens, when we say social and economic exclusion has no place in Halifax, we make our community stronger. When some people are excluded from participating fully in our society - by virtue of race, physical or intellectual ability, or who they love or worship - we all lose. We lose their individual talents and energy, and we miss the vibrancy that comes from a diversity of culture and perspective.

I believe Halifax will be richer, and we will all benefit, when we acknowledge the damage created by conscious and unconscious exclusion and focus on ensuring that we recognize the value of every person in our community.

While economic growth has provided more opportunities to many citizens, we cannot ignore that benefits do not accrue equally. As we work toward crisis recovery, we must ensure we commit to greater social and economic inclusion.

Alleviating Poverty

Poverty is a trap. It creates barriers to education and financial independence, and it presents serious risk to physical and mental health. Over the past several years, Council has approved initiatives to address poverty within Halifax. While these represent a positive start, the health and economic crisis of COVID has placed more people at risk of poverty, and deepened the poverty level of many others. The Mayor and Council who take office this fall have a responsibility to focus energy and resources on ensuring the crisis doesn't further damage our most vulnerable citizens.

I believe we must:

- **Expand on the success of HRM's Affordable Access Program** so that more people can take advantage of deeply discounted transit passes, recreation services, and more
- With the United Way and other partners, **continue to work on the actions in the poverty solutions strategy**, focusing on the 7 key areas of jobs and livable incomes, transportation, food security, homelessness and housing, access to health and well-being services, education and learning, systemic change
- Building on HRM's new Social Procurement policy **work to ensure a mandate by HRM to require supplier diversity, payment of fair and living wage to contractors.**
- **Work with the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Chamber of Commerce and business community to make the case for social procurement** as a way to build communities, and create new opportunities for more groups to participate in our economy.

Expanding Affordable Housing

Safe, affordable housing is frequently the first step out of poverty. The security of a home gives families the stability they need to help them find employment, establish healthy routines, and succeed in education. Homeless shelters in Halifax, along with emergency shelters for women escaping unsafe conditions, serve people in the most desperate need of housing. But many more families and individuals are living in inadequate or unsafe housing.

As housing prices continue to climb throughout the municipality and property owners continue to convert long-term rentals to more lucrative tourist accommodation, the challenges associated with affordable housing will persist.

The municipality is seeking provincial approval for increased flexibility in density bonusing and other means of creating far more affordable housing. We need active partners in the Province, the private sector and the community as we stretch our municipal mandate to incentivize and encourage a broad range of affordable housing and take full advantage of federal funding streams.

Halifax is an active participant in the Housing and Homelessness Partnership to put an end to homelessness and housing poverty in HRM. The Partnership includes public, community and private sector organizations. It addresses homelessness with a Housing First approach and seeks to protect, improve and expand the existing stock of affordable rental housing over the middle to long term.

Council recently approved secondary and backyard suites that will provide opportunities for affordable home ownership and create long term rental accommodation within residential neighbourhoods.

I believe we must:

- Continue to work with the Housing and Homelessness Partnership to
- Leverage the Federal National Housing Strategy co-investment fund to **create new and refurbished affordable housing stock** in partnership with local developers and housing service providers.
- Review HRM's **development fee structure to incentivize affordable housing** through density bonusing, creation of an affordable housing trust fund, incentives and waiver of development fees provided the development met the criteria set out by HRM.
- Work toward the HRM and Housing and Homelessness Partnership **goal of creating 500 new secondary units and 250 affordable home ownership opportunities.**
- Encourage the development of **more good quality small scale shared housing units** that are frequently the first stage of housing.
- Create a **dedicated staff resource for affordable housing** within Halifax to work in partnership to solve complex housing challenges.

- Recommit to the **principles of a Housing First strategy** that recognizes the challenges of the hard to house population in stemming chronic homelessness.
- Seniors have a right to live safely, enjoy good health and to stay involved. Working with the province and other partners, we will explore **more affordable housing opportunities for people to age in place and stay in their own communities**. This will support sustainable rural community development.

Achieving Food Security

Few things are so frightening as the prospect of insufficient food for your family. Yet, it is estimated that as many as 1 in 5 households in Halifax experience food insecurity. The pandemic has only heightened the risk of food insecurity for residents.

In the past few years, HRM has played a growing role in supporting community food security through its involvement in the Mobile Food Market, and in the more than 20 community gardens on municipal land. Social enterprises such as Hope Blooms, Common Roots farm, and Dartmouth's North Grove demonstrate daily what is possible to achieve when bright minds and willing hearts convene to grow and share food.

Both the municipal Public Safety Strategy and the Building Poverty Solutions Strategy include a focus on food. Recently, Halifax was selected by the McConnell Foundation as one of the three Participatory Cities in Canada, bringing another food-access focus to the municipality, working with the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre, the United Way, Develop Nova Scotia, and others.

In December 2019, Halifax Regional Council unanimously passed a motion committing to working with the Halifax Food Policy Alliance on the creation of a Food Action Plan to help fight food insecurity throughout the Halifax region.

I believe we must:

- Explore the possibility of a **community food hub to allow for better and more efficient distribution** of community food.
- Create a new HRM **food policy staff position to lead the municipality's food work and ensure alignment** with internal and external stakeholders.
- Make **food security a continued priority area for the 2020-24 term.**
- Continue to **support the Mobile Food Market project** through in-kind and direct financial assistance.
- Ensure the **timely completion of the HRM/Halifax Food Policy Alliance Food Action Plan.**
- Explore **new zoning options that would allow for increased food production on residential land for sale at local food markets** to meet needs at the neighbourhood level.

Supporting Black Lives Matter

Racial discrimination is part of the history of Halifax, and it continues to stain our community into the twenty-first century. Race has played a role in the development of our communities, where people can live, what opportunities and services they are provided, where children have gone to school, and how police have managed our streets. Hateful slurs and gestures continue to be used as tools of oppression and intimidation on our streets, in our workplaces, and online.

Every day, African Nova Scotians experience anti-Black racism in our community and, too frequently, from agencies of our governments.

We have a responsibility to acknowledge this history, to acknowledge the hurt and injustice it has caused. We must challenge ourselves to recognize and examine our own privilege and work alongside racialized communities to make the necessary changes to prevent discrimination.

We have taken a number of steps in recent months and years, including:

- Establishing HRM's office of Diversity & Inclusion and the African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office.
- Halifax Regional Police has begun the important work of implementing the Dr. Scot Wortley recommendations, including ceasing the use of street checks and increasing the diversity of the Board of Police Commissioners. But that is just a start.
- Recognizing the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent.
- Redirecting monies intended for a police armoured response vehicle to restoring proposed 2020/21 budget reductions in the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and the non-police Public Safety Office, with remaining funds to be directed toward municipal programs and services to counter anti-Black racism.

I believe we must:

- Strengthen the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and the African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office and support their work in **improving the inclusion of African Nova Scotian and Black voices in the decisions made at City Hall**.
- Re-establish the Clerk's Office outreach work to **encourage greater diversity among Council candidates** and members of committees of Council.
- Proceed with development of an **HRM anti-Black Racism Action Plan** to address root causes of hate and violence, and work on building social resiliency through education and collaboration with our African Nova Scotian and Black communities.
- See sustained progress and commitment on the Dr. Scot Wortley recommendations, both at Council and in HRP, and ensure public updates on the progress.
- Join the cities of Toronto, Montreal, Calgary and Ottawa, and **become the next Canadian member of the Strong Cities Network (SCN)**. A global network of mayors, municipal-level policy makers and frontline agencies to tackle polarization, build social cohesion and community resilience, and work together to address hate and violence in our communities. As a member city, we will have access to international research data, capacity-building supports and learning resources, as well as a training hub.
- Support the Halifax Partnership's work on the **African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity**

- Partner with the Africville Heritage Trust and other community stakeholders to **ensure the full story of Africville is told and honoured**, and work with Discover Halifax to **bring the story of African Nova Scotians to life in new ways.**

Achieving Indigenous Reconciliation

Five years ago, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission called on all of us to begin the journey of healing and humility with Canada's Indigenous peoples. On December 8, 2015, I brought forward a statement to Council to commit ourselves to learning from the lessons of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and taking action to ensure the needs and aspirations of Indigenous people are fully acknowledged.

It is important to recognize that culture did not arrive first at these shores aboard European ships. Our history did not begin when it was first recorded in French or in English. History is complex, and multi-faceted. Our community will be stronger when we tell the complete history, including the actions that this generation would find unacceptable. Only then can we acknowledge the damage that was done by past governments and institutions. This is not about rewriting history, it is about acknowledging that it is not cast in bronze.

Kjepuktuk is the unceded and ancestral lands of the Mi'kmaq. We are all treaty people, and as a government and as individuals, we have an obligation to live according to the terms of the treaties.

Halifax has taken some steps toward recognizing the important role of our Indigenous communities. We have incorporated the Mi'kmaw language into our welcome signs, commissioned Mi'kmaw public art on the Halifax Common, and partnered with the Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund to open the first Legacy Space in Canada located within a city hall.

We struck a committee of Indigenous and non-Indigenous members reporting to Council and the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Chiefs to fully consider the use of the Edward Cornwallis name on municipal assets and make recommendations on appropriate recognition of Indigenous history with the Halifax region.

To continue reconciliation with our Indigenous Communities, *I believe we must:*

- Increase efforts to ensure **Mi'kmaw history, culture and art are visible in public spaces** throughout HRM.
- Adopt the **plan to implement recommendations of the Task Force on Commemoration of Edward Cornwallis and Commemoration of Indigenous History** in consultation and partnership with the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Chiefs.
- Continue to find ways to **support a new Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre** as an important part of the municipality's ongoing commitment to Truth and Reconciliation.
- **Partner with the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre and others as one of Canada's three Participatory City pilots** through the McConnell Foundation.

Improving Accessibility

Although Halifax has been working on making public spaces more accessible, and introducing accessibility requirements for businesses within HRM, accessibility continues to be a challenge for many citizens. Everyone has a right to participate in social and economic life in HRM. It is important to continue to cooperate with people with disabilities to understand the barriers and work together to eliminate them.

I believe we must:

- Work toward fully **accessible trails, services, and recreation policies**.
- Establish a **municipal internship stream specifically for students with disabilities** as a way to help them gain meaningful experience in the workforce.
- Achieve Rick Hansen Foundation **accessibility certification for the landmark Cogswell redevelopment site**.
- **Increase the number and availability of accessible taxis** through incentives and easing of licensing caps for taxis.
- Working with our Office of Diversity and Inclusion and external partners, continue to **advance the strategic objectives of the Accessibility and Inclusion Strategy** and provincial Accessibility Directorate's goal of an accessible Nova Scotia by 2030.

Promoting Diversity and Inclusion

The population of Halifax is becoming more diverse every year. That diversity adds to our vibrancy as a community, and helps us to grow and prosper. It is not enough, however, to invite members of minority groups to sit at the table, whether that be our Council Table, a corporate board table, or a kitchen table planning a community event, if they don't have real input to decisions and actions. Being *invited* is nice, but being *included* is what makes us belong.

One of my proudest achievements as Mayor has been the creation and establishment of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. Together, with community leaders and partners, they are helping us become a more welcoming and inclusive municipality. Some of our inclusion initiatives are:

- Developing a French Services Strategy and action plan to support the Francophone community.
- Drafting and implementing of the new 3-year Immigration Strategy, inclusive of public feedback.
- Working with the Local Immigration Partnership to enhance collaborations among services agencies, the community, and the municipality.

I believe we must:

- Build upon these initiatives to **strengthen the voice of members of minority groups** in the decisions made by Council and within HRM.
- **Consult with the Youth Advisory Committee and the Women's Advisory Committee** on the impact of policies, programs, and services.
- Help ensure that our leadership represents the municipality's diversity, **establish an Inclusion Halifax initiative to actively recruit underrepresented groups** to the municipality's agencies, boards, and commissions and to encourage more people from diverse backgrounds to run for Council.

PLACE

We all take pride in where we live. But the question we must ask is what kind of place, what kind of city, are we leaving for our future generations? We will need to harness all the brainpower we can if we are to respond and adapt to a climate that will become increasingly unpredictable and hostile.

Across the globe and here at home, young people have been moved to action, driven in large part by fear. Fear they will not live a normal life as we know it, fear they will suffer through calamities we have yet to contemplate. This is not an irrational fear: it's supported by science.

Halifax was the second city in the country to declare a climate emergency, and it has compelled us to approve a bold plan for climate change action.

We are fortunate in having large tracts of wild natural areas within our boundaries. Council has made significant progress, along with community-based conservation organizations, in protecting three wilderness areas: the Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Area, the Purcell Cove Backlands, and the 100 Wild Islands.

We are learning the lesson that our streets belong to people first. When we close them to cars, we open them to people. Through our new plan for transit, we are building a more efficient, logical system, rather than perpetuating routes that were driven by politics not traffic engineering. An efficient, high functioning public transit system and active transportation network is vital to our livability and sustainability goals.

Through sound and sustainable planning policy, we can continue to create complete communities to meet the basic needs of all residents, regardless of income and culture or socio-economic status.

Our communities will be welcoming places for citizens to live, work, and play with affordable housing, public green space, accessible food, and services such as childcare and recreation.

Climate Change and the Environment

Climate Change

Halifax's climate is changing, posing risk to health, economic growth, safety, livelihoods and our natural world. These changes are caused by human action and will only be reversed by human action. In 2019, Halifax became one of the first cities in Canada to declare a climate emergency. HaliFACT 2050: Acting on Climate Together is the municipality's first long-term climate action plan to reduce emissions by three quarters by 2030 and to help communities adapt to a changing climate.

I believe we must:

- Make the implementation of **HaliFACT** a key priority for the **2020-24 term**, ensuring the necessary resources and champion the partnerships required to ensure the successful implementation of the strategy and meet our targets.

Environmental Stewardship

Halifax is fortunate in having a wealth of natural land and water resources. Within the municipality, people earn a living from our natural resources, while others seek out natural areas for recreation and restoration. Many of these areas and our traditional relationship with them are being threatened by pressures of development. Urban lakes especially are stressed as high bacteria levels and blue green algae blooms threaten recreation and even municipal water supply. As we welcome development that generates prosperity for citizens across the municipality, we must ensure that we are protecting traditional resource businesses and homes as well as the physical and mental health benefits of maintaining a healthy environment.

I believe we must:

- **Continue to protect green space and work with partners to find new opportunities to protect still wild areas, wetlands, coastal marshes, etc.** These efforts will help mitigate flood risk, act as filters to clean our waters, and help with erosion.

- Ensure the **green network plan and urban forest master plan are properly resourced.**
- Continue to **invest in and study urban lakes and issues** to prevent further decline and to identify ways to improve them.
- Continue to **work with the province with the new coastal protection act** and continue to improve our **planning processes to minimize coastal and flood** risk for people and infrastructure.
- Build on our strong waste diversion programs to **reduce single use plastics and waste.**
- Continue to work with Solid Waste to **explore innovative ideas like capturing natural gas from landfills and new partnerships with industry-leading companies.**

Preserving and expanding wilderness

Halifax is fortunate to have vast tracts of virtually untouched wilderness. These spaces are home to forests, pristine waterways, and other growth that keep our environment healthy. Citizens treasure the ability to escape to nature with a short drive from our busy downtown.

Visitors are fascinated by the natural diversity within our boundaries. As we protect these wild areas, such as the 100 Wild Islands, entrepreneurs see opportunity in eco-tourism and other businesses that respect and are compatible with the protection of these treasures.

We are the last generation that has the chance to protect these lands from the incursion of development. We have a responsibility to generations that come after us to do that.

I believe we must:

- Ensure that the **boundaries of the Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Park reflect the potential of that space** for a unique and spectacular addition to our natural holdings.
- Continue to support the Nature Conservancy of Canada and others in their **efforts to protect areas like the Purcell Cove Backlands and 100 Wild Islands.**

- Encourage **appropriately sensitive tourism in connection with our wilderness areas**, remembering that the objective is to retain their pristine quality for future generations.

Building Vibrant Community

A healthy business climate is more than competitive tax rates and high-quality infrastructure. Businesses need to attract top talent, and those people are looking for a community where they and their children can enjoy diverse recreation and cultural activities.

Our Halifax Library Network is an important part of that environment, as are the growing number of arts, culture, and recreation groups within the municipality. HRM has supported the growth of these community assets through grants to organizations and festivals, the development of recreation facilities throughout the municipality, and the protection of our valuable built heritage, as well as our natural environment.

Halifax is taking a “complete communities” approach to meeting the basic needs of all residents in a community, regardless of income and culture or socio-economic status, through integrated land use planning, transportation planning, and community design in urban and suburban areas.

Complete communities create environments for citizens to live, work and play by integrating key elements such as: affordable housing, green space, food markets and social services such as childcare and community recreation areas and spaces.

In the past few years, Halifax has initiated several complete communities projects, including:

- **Moving Forward Together** to build on the strengths in the existing network by increasing frequency of service, extending the service day, and enhancing reliability of service in key high transit ridership corridors. This includes implementation of hybrid and electric buses to support a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and lead to improved cost and lifecycle savings in comparison to diesel buses.
- **Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP)** to help direct future investment in transportation demand management, transit, active transportation, and the roadway network. The plan strives to identify the two-way relationship between land development patterns and investment in

mobility and personal access, with the objective of better linking people and their communities.

- **All Ages and Abilities (AAA) Bike Network** - AAA bicycle facilities include small segments of protected bike lanes, multi-use pathways, and structures. Building AAA bicycle facilities is critical to attracting more people to bicycling as a standard part of household travel modes (e.g. for trips to work, school or services).
- **Commons Master Plan** is a comprehensive look at the future of the Commons, through a master planning process that defines management policies, guidelines for open and green space, as well as concepts and action plans for physical renewal. The outcomes serve as a blueprint for future improvements, to guide the City in the provision of open space areas, parks, recreation programs and facilities for the short and the long-term.

Aquatic Strategy drives the vision for HRM's aquatic facilities and how they may be accessed by the general public and specialized groups over the next 15 year

These critical initiatives will continue over the coming years. To support them, and to ensure we maintain the vibrant community that has attracted new citizens and visitors, we must protect our cultural resources.

I believe we must:

- Accelerate **adoption and protection of heritage districts**, recognizing that while development and density are needed to accommodate sustainable growth, the city's unique heritage neighbourhoods face increasing pressure and must be preserved as a cultural asset.
- Support and expand **grants programs for non-profit professional arts organizations, and for larger scale community arts and culture special events** through the hotel marketing levy. Recognize unique opportunities to support arts and cultural organizations that play a significant role in the arts and cultural landscape of the community and contribute to the vibrancy of the community, i.e. Bus Stop Theatre, the Culture Link project.
- Continue to **invest in outdoor and indoor sport and recreation venues that support community recreation, exercise, and play** at all levels, from house league to competitive teams across a variety of sports. Provide high quality community facilities along with those that support athlete development opportunities and spectator venues and a welcome home to professional teams including the Halifax Wanderers,

Halifax Mooseheads, Halifax Thunderbirds, and the Halifax Hurricanes. Maintain sports venues that allow us to continue a track record of successful bids for significant sports events such as the North American Indigenous Games, Canoe Sprint World Championships, Women's World Junior Hockey, and university sports championships.

- Support an **updated Public Art Policy to increase the number and variety of art commissions for new and newly renovated municipal public buildings and extending public art acquisitions** to include major streetscaping projects and park revitalizations. Continue to support equity and diversity in public art acquisitions reflecting the broad cultural composition of the community. Recognize the value and contribution made by high quality street art and community-based art projects and find new means to support these art forms.
- Support **municipal investment in a new AGNS on the Halifax waterfront as a hub for supporting, nurturing and showcasing Nova Scotian art**, recognizing its cultural significance the new facility's draw local, national and international draw as part of an iconic waterfront arts and culture district.
- Realize the long-held promise of a **municipal heritage museum in Dartmouth** to share our diverse cultural heritage and support grants for unique community museums.

OPPORTUNITY

In the months before the pandemic disrupted everything we knew about life in our communities, Halifax was enjoying unprecedented economic and population growth.

Make no mistake, this was no happy accident. Making sure your tax dollars are managed wisely has been a priority for me. Our success will be the product of sound investments, vital community infrastructure, support for progressive city-building policy, responsible stewardship of public money, a City Hall and Council that work well together, and strong relationships with other orders of government.

Partners have been coming together – entrepreneurs, researchers, innovators, builders, social agencies, academics – all recognizing that special something about this place we call home and seizing our opportunity. Together, we created a new Halifax story, buoyed by a

shared feeling that our city's time had come, and with it a determination to extend greater opportunities to more people.

For the past number of years, we have been among Canada's fastest growing cities. In 2019, Halifax gained nearly 10,000 new residents, breaking population growth records for the fourth straight year. What's more, nearly half of all new residents are between the ages of 25 and 39, many of them international newcomers who saw a bright future in Halifax. Business confidence was at a new high, as was quality of life satisfaction, with residents reporting on their enjoyment of recreational opportunities, access to arts and culture, and a general feeling that Halifax is a great family place. All of this, without increasing municipal taxation consistent with our rapid growth.

Year over year growth in tourism, measured in hotel room nights, airport traffic and cruise ship visits, brought spending to local shops, restaurants and tourism operators. COVID has radically altered our economic and social landscape, but it has not changed who we are or our plans for a strong future.

Responding to COVID-19 with resiliency

We know that we are made of strong, resilient stuff. We have thrown our support behind local business, we have relied upon our sense of community, and we continue to draw from a deep well of good will. Together, we can get through the current crisis and regain momentum. And, while we're at it, we can work harder to ensure more people in this community are able to meet their potential and share in the next Halifax.

I believe we must:

- Work with the [Halifax Partnership](#) to **maintain the momentum that had driven Halifax to become a top Canadian growth city**. Together, we can restart and restore Halifax's economy and get back to our positive long-term growth trend. Recovery plans must be focused on resiliency and recognition that the pandemic has impacted sectors of our economy and society differently, exacerbating existing wage disparities and unequal access to economic opportunity.

- Build on past investment attraction successes to **continue to serve as the municipality's Marketer-in-Chief**, promoting the city to prospective companies, investors, and anyone who may see new opportunities in Halifax.
- Continue to **focus on adapting public streets, sidewalks and greenspaces to create opportunities to safely distance while still enjoying our communities and remaining active**. From slow streets to expanded sidewalks and ongoing capital work to build out active transportation and safer cycling opportunities, we will continue to adapt to pandemic realities while keeping Halifax and its communities livable.
- After seven straight years of growth, the pandemic brought many tourism activities to a low ebb. Working with destination marketing agency Discover Halifax, the accommodations industry, events specialists, and tourism operators, we can **capitalize on Atlantic bubble opportunities for the short term** while working to ensure Halifax's national and international reputation as a safe, welcoming destination. When circumstances allow, **support a robust marketing campaign to re-establish Halifax in the national and international marketplace** as the heart and soul of Atlantic Canada through an Integrated Tourism Master Plan.
- Continue to **keep pressure on residential and commercial tax rates so they remain low by comparison to benchmark cities and budget responsibly** to maintain a state of good repair of municipal assets alongside strategic investments in community-building projects that improve livability.
- Continue to work alongside colleagues at the Big City Mayors Caucus (BCMC) of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) to **advance the cause of federal COVID relief for cities**. The BCMC has succeeded in its push for economic restart funds for cities, including Halifax. These monies, which will flow through the Province of Nova Scotia, will alleviate municipal operational losses and allow the municipality to continue to respond the changing needs of the city and its residents. Protecting frontline municipal services, such as Halifax Transit, will help Halifax play a leadership role in pandemic community recovery.

Fostering Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Over the past eight years, Halifax has built a reputation for innovation and entrepreneurship, allowing us to attract young, well-educated people from across the

country and around the world. We recognize that attracting and retaining cutting edge businesses and their employees takes more than a good sales pitch. They need an environment that encourages agility and risk taking, and they need public facilities that foster their creative spirit.

I believe we must:

- Continue to **foster a strong start-up ecosystem**, where start-ups and scale-ups have access to mentorship, affordable real estate, investment, talent and can succeed because of this supportive environment established through the Halifax Innovation District.
- Continue to **support investment in the Halifax Civic Outpost at Volta, Canada's East Coast Innovation Hub, to tackle social issues through technology** and to break down barriers for start-ups whose work can benefit municipal government.
- Reinforce the need for **investments in the assets and amenities that make Halifax a good place to live and an attractive city for investment and tourism.**
- I was delighted to receive the Golden Scissors Award from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) for significant progress in reducing red tape. We must work on that progress by working with the Province of Nova Scotia on Joint Project for Regulatory Modernization and the business community **continue to identify and eliminate unnecessary regulation that creates a burden for business.** Continue this work to save money and time for business and improve customer service.

Building for sustainable growth

Halifax, especially the downtown areas, has experienced rapid growth as developers move to provide accommodation for the people coming here from other parts of the country and the world. It is important to balance that development with protection of green spaces and neighbourhoods, that people feel safe and have access to local services and shops, and that travel through the community is convenient.

With the passage of Regional Centre Plan Package A in September 2019, Council laid the groundwork for responsible growth, known density to help alleviate a shortage of available housing stock, and more livable human-scale development in complete communities with access to parks, cycling, transit and recreation.

Despite delays created by the pandemic, the second part of the plan, Package B, is coming before Council. Already Council has approved secondary suites that will help address housing affordability, allowing more rental options and creating new possibilities for offsetting housing costs.

I believe we must:

- Support **responsible planning policies** that include affordable housing provisions, known densities, heritage preservation districts, and respect unique characteristics of neighbourhoods, while meeting the need to responsibly accommodate population growth.
- Realize the **full potential of the Cogswell District as a new downtown precinct**, reconnecting neighbourhoods, investing in district energy, separated cycling lanes, and achieving a Rick Hansen-Foundation accessibility designation. Work to **ensure affordable housing is included in all Cogswell residential development** projects and a social lens is applied to all policy and procurement decisions to ensure benefits of construction accrue to local community.
- Realize the ambitious goal to **get most transport trucks out of downtown Halifax by encouraging greater cooperation between Halifax's two container terminals, more efficient use of rail lines, and a redesign of the Windsor Street exchange** to improve traffic flow, including transport trucks. This cooperative project between the municipality, province, federal government, CN, terminals and the Halifax Port will help secure a strong future for Halifax as a significant East Coast port capable of handling the world's largest ships.
- Fulfill the **commitments of the Halifax Active Transportation Priorities Plan including the creation of a regional greenway and cycling network** that spans the municipality. Meet the objective of creating healthier, livable, more environmentally sustainable communities by making all ages cycling and walking a safe, easy choice that connects residents throughout their communities and with the regional centre. This is to include the vitally needed Macdonald Bridge bikeway with improved access from both sides of the span.

Welcoming people, talent, and ideas

Immigration is the key to our continued economic growth. As talented young people move here to study or work, we increase our ability to be innovative and compete with the best in the world for business attraction. Programs that encourage talented, well-educated people to move and stay in our community are investments in our future, and that of our children. With strong immigration supports, we will permanently turn the tide of depopulation and ensure we have people for jobs and jobs for people.

I believe we must:

- **Build on a record population growth of 10,000 people in 2019**, work hard to welcome more new people from across Canada and around the world who want to share in our city's success.
- Continue **support for the municipality's Local Immigration Partnership**, co-sponsoring events and activities with newcomer agencies, and continuing to host the Mayor's annual reception for incoming international student.
- Support the **extension of the Atlantic Immigration Pilot** that has helped bring thousands more newcomers to our city and province, people who come with skills and a desire to build a better life.
- Advocate for **permanent shift in federal immigration rules**.
- Support Halifax Partnerships efforts through the Connector program to **help Halifax newcomers and new graduates build their professional networks and find employment** to connect talent to opportunity, fill labour gaps and build our economy.

Rural Growth

Rural and suburban areas in HRM contribute greatly to our economy, culture, and quality of life. From Hubbards to Ecum Secum, the coastline of HRM has a rich fishery, as well as valuable ecological resources. Ocean research is a prime focus of innovation within the municipality, one that will grow in significance as time passes. Local farmers play an important role in meeting our food needs. A growing number of people who work in



downtown Halifax or one of our business parks are finding the quality of life they desire in rural areas of HRM.

I believe we must:

- Continue to work with the Halifax Partnership to **advance the goals of the Halifax's Economic Growth Plan, including promoting the clustering of people and business in rural areas.**
- Continue to **advance strategic active transportation connections noted in the Integrated Mobility Plan between rural and suburban community clusters** where options for walking, cycling, and transit are generally less available.
- Establish a **buy local program to support local farmers and fishers** as noted in the Halifax Partnership's Economic Response and Recovery Plan.