Halifax COVID-19 Economic Response and Recovery Plan Update

Presented to:
Halifax Regional Council
July 7, 2020

Re: Item No. 9.3.1
Goal:

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

Guiding Principles:

- Follow the advice of our healthcare experts
- Leverage our teams, expertise, data, and networks
- Pursue alignment among all three orders of government
- Work in collaboration with the Nova Scotia Business Labour Economic Coalition (NSBLEC)
- Remain in constant contact, engage and collaborate with our local stakeholders
- Act swiftly, nimbly and creatively with clear purpose
- Build resiliency
# Three Phases of Recovery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Timing</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PHASE I: CURRENT</strong></td>
<td>Follow public health directives and respond to the urgent needs of businesses and residents.</td>
<td>Moving from one Phase to the next will not be based on a fixed timeline but will be aligned to Public Health criteria and measures. Actions/activities may overlap between Phases.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urgent Health Crisis</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PHASE II: STABILIZATION</strong></td>
<td>Support businesses planning for reopening or resuming full operations; prepare for Public Health restrictions if COVID-19 resurges.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Getting Back to Business</td>
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<td><strong>PHASE III: RECOVERY</strong></td>
<td>Support businesses in resuming full operations; build local business and consumer confidence; ramp up national and international investment attraction.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open for Business</td>
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A Tale of Two Cities

2019:
- GDP growth was the best in a decade
- Record growth for population, immigration, and labour force
- All-time high for business confidence
- Strong uptick in resident satisfaction scores (City Matters survey)

2020:
- Record GDP contraction
- Migration stalled
- Mass layoffs
- Deep impacts for some sectors (retail, food & beverage, tourism) and some segments of the population (women, youth, lower-income)
COVID-19 Impacts

• Halifax labour under-utilization rate close to 35%
  • Unemployment rate close to 11%
• For Nova Scotia from April 2019 to April 2020:
  • Retail sales down 32%
  • Food & drinking establishment receipts down 60%
• Tourism hammered
  • No cruise traffic and virtually no air traffic
• But . . . green shoots are appearing
  • Easing of public health rules
  • Reopening of stores, restaurants, offices, etc.
  • Atlantic “bubble” as of July 3
## Business Confidence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>BCI</th>
<th>Rating of Halifax as a Place to Do Business</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Above Average</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring 2013</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>19%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring 2014</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2015</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2016</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2017</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2018</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2019</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2020</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COVID-19 IMPACTS**
- If survey responses are separated into those captured from March 1-12 and from March 13-16, the BCI for these two subsets drops from 35.6 to 29.7
Connecting Businesses to Resources

Connected directly with 500+ businesses

Launched Virtual Adviser Program:
- Ashored
- Greenlight Analytica
- Brookes Diamond Productions
- Simply Weddings
- Trecan Combustion Limited
- Dynamic Learning Inc.
- Westgate Executive Branding & Consulting
- Maritime Vintage
- Sober Island Brewing Company
- Toy Maker of Lunenburg
- Penelope’s Boutique
- Tidal League
- DU NORD SKIN CARE
BUSINESS REOPENING AND RECOVERY

Get guidance and clarity around reopening your business and resuming operations safely.

RESOURCES TO OPERATE SAFELY
Selling Halifax as a Location for Business

April 1 to June 28, 2020:

• 55 active leads
• 15 new prospects
• 3 WINS projecting 385 jobs
  • Shopify
  • North Bay Solutions
  • Arcurve
Halifax Startup – Located at Idea Hub

- Our Initial meeting led to six (6) effective business opportunities
- Connected them to resources to recruit the best talent available

New to Halifax – Located in the Nova Centre, Innovation District

- Chose Halifax as the location for its Business Technology Centre
- Attracting top-quality technologists to work on strategic business technology solutions
- Despite the global health crisis, they continued with their energetic hiring strategy
- Hosted a virtual job fair that drew more than 500 participants

Halifax Startup – Located at Volta Labs

- Met with them and took the time to understand their business goals and needs
- Made connections to other small businesses – some of whom eventually became customers and others who were helpful with assistance in resourcing talent
Match Employers' Urgent Employment Needs

• Connector Program moved to an entirely virtual model

• Matched 88 Connectees

• Supported 4 companies in finding talent for over 100 jobs

• Promoted 100+ Shopify jobs in Nova Scotia

• Delivered practical digital networking skills sessions to more than 120 individuals
COVID-19 and taxes in Halifax

On April 14, Regional Council decided to provide immediate relief to both residential and business taxpayers due to the impacts of COVID-19. These efforts include:

- Payment of the interim tax bill due date was moved from April 30, 2020 to June 1, 2020.

In Property taxes

- Costs and Taxes in Halifax
- Tax bill
- Tax rates
Launched the Mobility Response Plan to adapt public spaces and municipal transportation networks to safely move residents and goods as the city re-opens.
2020-21 Budget

- 2020-21 municipal budget reduced by $45 million - total operating budget is $955 million.
- Capital budget was decreased by about $100 million to approximately $150 million.
- Increases the average tax bill by 1.4% -- in line with Regional Council’s intention prior to the Coronavirus pandemic.
Transit Services

- Halifax Transit is increasing service levels in a phased approach.
- Safety measures have been initiated to keep operators and passengers safe on buses and ferries.
- Installing temporary polycarbonate shields on conventional buses, to help reduce the spread of the virus.
Hello!

We can’t wait to see you again!