

Re: Item No. 9.3.1

# Halifax

## COVID-19 Economic Response and Recovery Plan Update

Presented to:

Halifax Regional Council  
September 22, 2020

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PARTNERSHIP**



# Three Phases of Recovery

Phases	Objectives	Timing
 <p data-bbox="445 539 700 599"><b>PHASE I: CURRENT</b> URGENT HEALTH CRISIS</p>	<p data-bbox="963 392 1694 564">Follow public health directives and respond to the urgent needs of businesses and residents.</p>	<p data-bbox="1821 478 2356 835">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.</p> <p data-bbox="1821 921 2356 1035">Actions/activities may overlap between Phases.</p>
 <p data-bbox="433 885 700 949"><b>PHASE II: STABILIZATION</b> GETTING BACK TO BUSINESS</p>	<p data-bbox="917 692 1745 935">Support businesses planning for reopening or resuming full operations; prepare for Public Health restrictions if COVID-19 resurges.</p>	
 <p data-bbox="471 1228 687 1285"><b>PHASE III: RECOVERY</b> OPEN FOR BUSINESS</p>	<p data-bbox="904 1035 1758 1270">Support businesses in resuming full operations; build local business and consumer confidence; ramp up national and international investment attraction.</p>	



# COVID-19 Impacts and Recovery

- **General trend across many economic variables:**
  - Extremely sharp contraction in April/May
  - Rebound beginning in June/July
  - Some figures now back to pre-COVID levels
- **Labour**
  - Employment fell from 238.6k in February to 215.3k in May, but back up to 236.7k in August; August 2020 labour force > August 2019
  - Unemployment rate peaked at 11.7% in June, down to 10.3% in August (was 6.7% in February and 5.7% last August)
  - Female and younger workers have been hit hardest
- **Retail sales**
  - For Nova Scotia, retail sales dropped from \$1.09B in February to \$0.93B in April, rose sharply in May/June, smaller bump in July reaching \$1.52B (on par with July 2019)
  - Gas, clothing, healthcare, and motor vehicles down from 2019 levels
- **No significant movement seen yet in consumer or business insolvencies, but business closures did spike in the spring**

# Real Estate Recovery

- **Housing Sales**

- In April+May 2020, only 799 houses sold (compared to 1,200 on average)
- 2,352 sold in June+July+August (compared to 1,673 on average); largest sales numbers for these months going back to 2012 (maybe ever)

- **Housing Prices**

- Average resale prices have jumped upwards over the summer
- August 2020's average price of \$373k is a new high

- **Offices**

- Office vacancy rate rose slightly to 16.1% in Q2-2020, the first rise since Q1-2019
- Average net rent rose to \$15.09 per square foot
- Both movements are tied to the opening of Queen's Marque

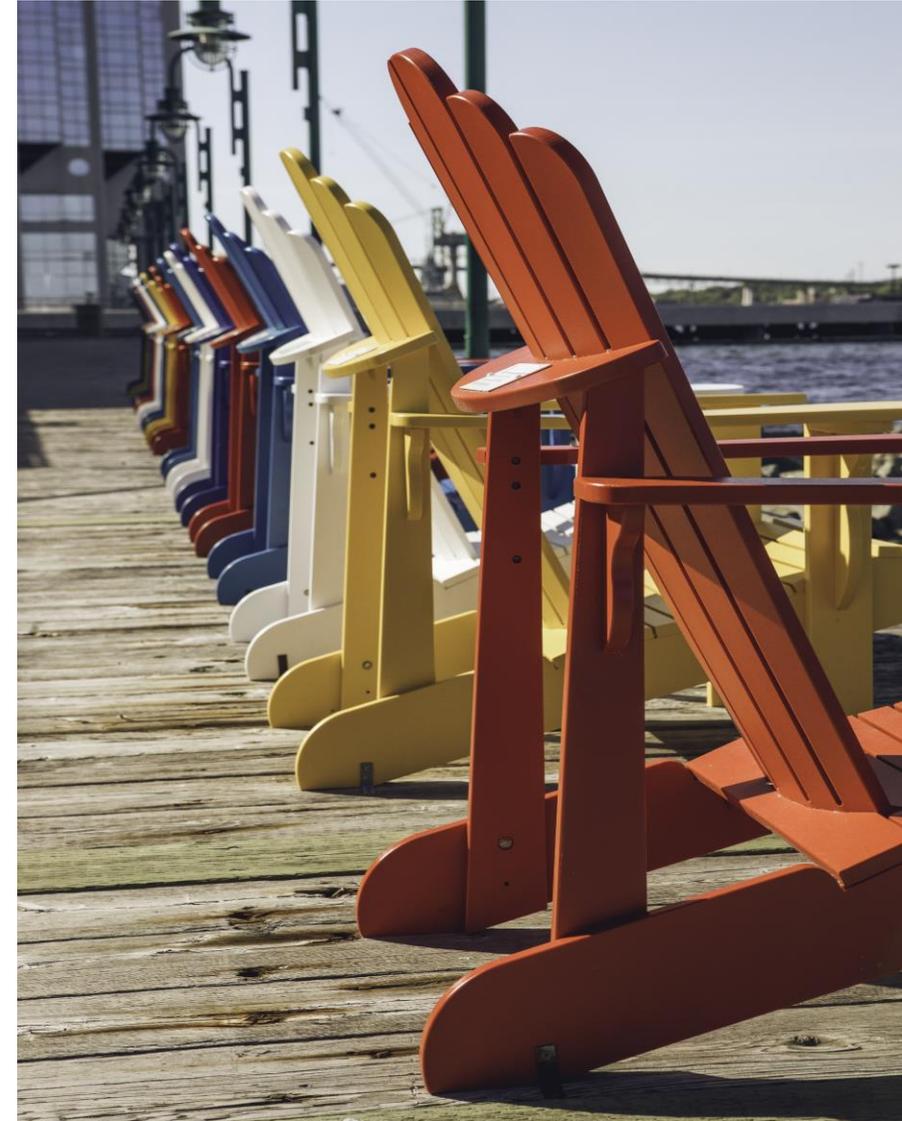
*Data sources: Nova Scotia Association of Realtors, CBRE*



# Tourism Recovery Limited by Travel Restrictions

- Atlantic Bubble brought some visitors to Halifax, but hotel occupancy rates (the proxy for total visitation) peaked at 39% for the most recent 28-day period
- Total rooms sold since pandemic are down 73% compared to 2019
- Hotel revenues are off by 82.5% or \$99.1 million (as of end August)
- Visitation to Halifax Region estimated to be down 1 – 1.5 million overnight stays compared to last year
- Visitors usually spend \$1.3b in Halifax Region; continued decline of 70% will mean \$900m in lost spending for Halifax over a 12-month period.

*Data source: Discover Halifax*



# Port of Halifax Recovery

## Cargo

- Containerized cargo volume expected to be down by 20% this year
- Port community welcomed 15,000 TEU ship at the PSA Halifax Terminal

## Cruise

- Return of cruise is vital to Tourism, Hospitality and small business economic recovery
- Considerable uncertainty for 2021 season; expect two to three years before return to pre-pandemic levels

## Halifax Seaport

- Gradually reopened including new public spaces
- New: family-friendly activities, food trucks and “Meet your Producer” events

*Data source: Port of Halifax*

*Photo credit: Steve Farmer*



# International and Out-of-Province Domestic Students

- Enrolment tracking on par with last year; however, we will not know final enrollment numbers until early October
- IRCC/CBSA is granting entry to Canada only for students who had a study permit issued before March 18, 2020 and whose in-person study is deemed essential

*Data source: EduNova*



# Responding to Urgent Needs

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- Interim tax bill
- Recast budget
- Parking
- Sidewalk patio fees
- Online services
- Mobility Response Plan

# Responding to the Urgent Needs

- Assistance to vulnerable communities
- Re-opening of municipal sites and services
- Communications

HALIFAX

## Apart. Together.

Together, we are facing a serious public health crisis. We need to listen and act on the direction of public health authorities.

All of us are now familiar with the advisory messages being shared daily. These must be taken very seriously.

Simply put, by doing your part, you will help save lives.

- Wash your hands often – and for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Keep yourself at least 2 metres away from others.
- If you have travelled outside of Nova Scotia, you must self-isolate for 14 days when you return.



## Rec at Home

[halifax.ca/recathome](https://halifax.ca/recathome)

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SAVE THE DATE

# REIMAGINING HALIFAX

## Important Dates to Note

### September 22:

- *ANS Road to Economic Prosperity Action Plan Update to Council*

### September 23:

- *Reimagine Halifax – Halifax Partnership AGM and Town Hall*

*([halifaxpartnership.com/events/Annual General Meeting](http://halifaxpartnership.com/events/Annual%20General%20Meeting))*

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# Federal and Provincial Supports

