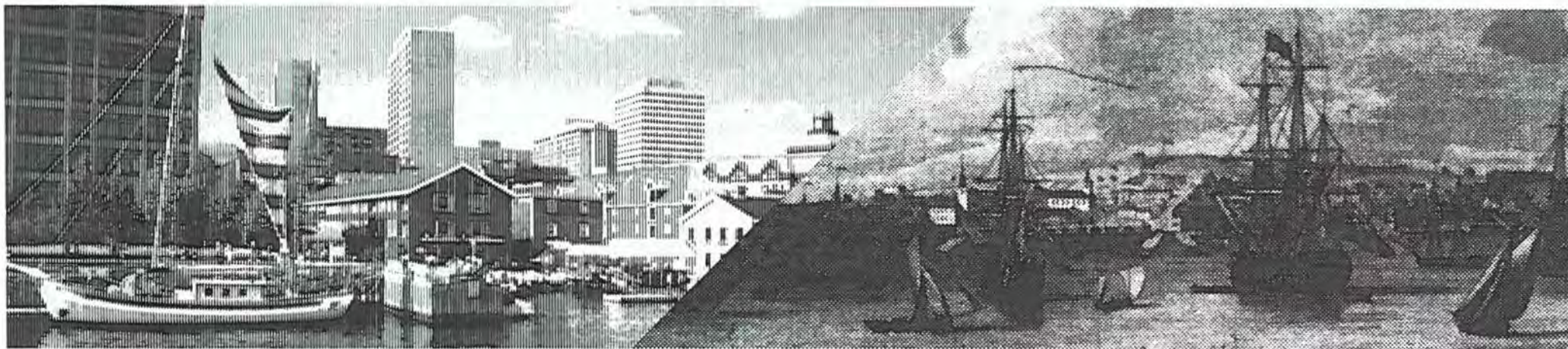




Halifax Economic Development
Task Force



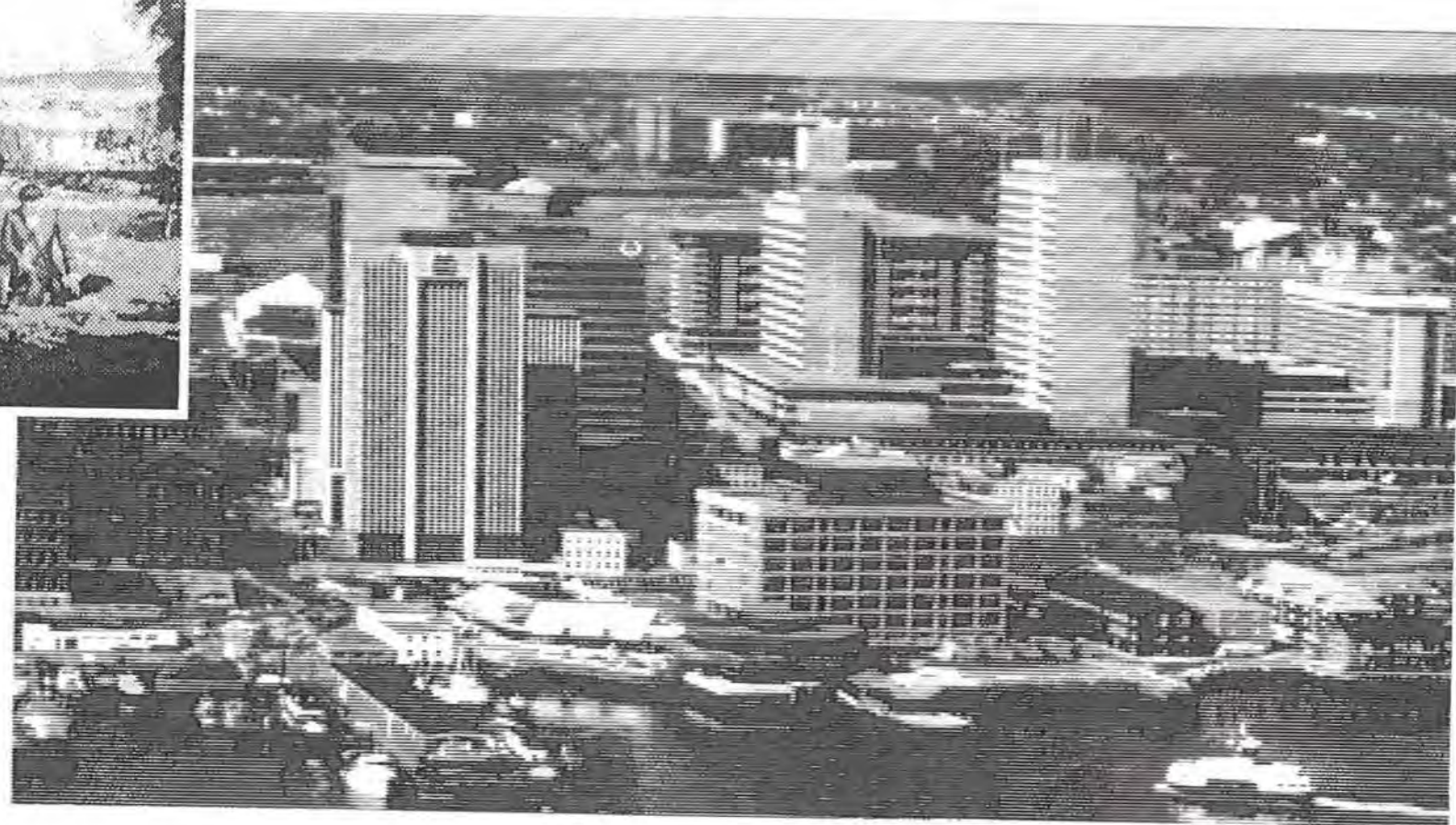
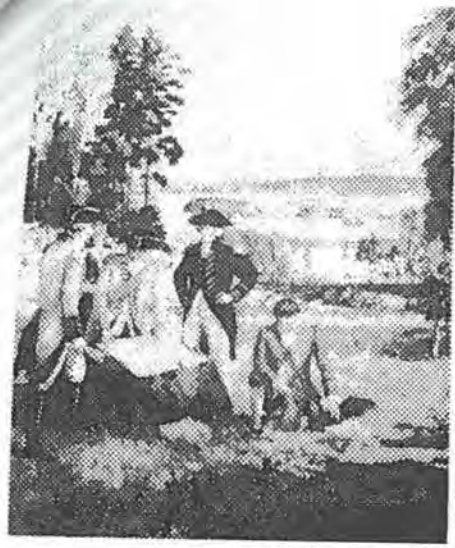
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Economic Development Action Plan
for the City of Halifax



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A Message from Task Force Members

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As members of the City of Halifax Economic Development Task Force, we respectfully submit our final report in a spirit of optimism, but with a sense of urgency. We hope our report will be received as an encouraging and immediate "call to action".

We applaud those who saw the need for a Task Force on Economic Development at this time. For decades, Halifax has been a major force in the Atlantic region as a centre for government, health care, higher education, armed forces and broad-based economic activity. However, the winds of change are shaking these foundations. We must not be complacent about our future.

As one of us said during our deliberations: "We cannot change the direction of the wind, but we can and must reposition our sails."

We believe Halifax can be a strong and vital "world city" at the economic centre of the Atlantic region – but this will not happen by itself. We are concerned that unless the City develops a stronger economic development focus and addresses a number of circumstances and trends, the City's ability to prosper will erode.

The overriding objective of this Task Force was to identify ways to enhance the City's economy and, therefore, improve its quality of life. We believe we have articulated an achievable vision for the future prosperity of Halifax. As well, we have outlined an initial structural framework to guide selected immediate actions.

We believe that our recommendations build on the City's best attributes and address its vulnerabilities. Taken together, these actions provide a direction and context for the City's future economic development efforts.

While our recommendations are specific to and within the mandate of the City of Halifax, we fully recognize that Halifax does not exist in an economic vacuum. Halifax must work in partnership with its economic neighbours.

We approached our assigned task in a spirit of cooperation, open mindedness and determination. Coming from different sectors in the community, we brought to our discussions a breadth and diversity of skills, interests, perspectives and experiences. We solicited the ideas of a wide range of interested organizations and citizens, and reviewed the economic development activities and strategies of other cities in North America.

In the end, however, we take full responsibility for the recommendations in this Report. We believe they represent appropriate strategies for the coming decade.

Our discussions were significantly facilitated and enhanced by the support and input of City staff. We would like to make our thanks to them part of the record.

We believe Halifax has the potential to become an even more economically and socially vibrant city if it is prepared to now take charge of its own destiny and show enlightened, focused and bold leadership. We hope our report creates the motivation and provides a framework for urgent action.

Our Approach

Mandate

The mandate of the Halifax Economic Development Task Force was to:

- 1) Identify Halifax's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to give the best opportunity to position Halifax in the marketplace.
- 2) Create a future vision for the City to lead it in economic development initiatives into the next century.
- 3) Suggest services to be offered to the business community by the City.
- 4) Identify how the City should cooperate with other economic development agencies.
- 5) Report on other items as may be agreed upon by the Task Force and approved by City Council.

Focus Areas

- We identified and assessed the strengths and weaknesses of Halifax. We then grouped them with a view to focusing on those areas with the greatest economic development potential.
- We concentrated on the following focus areas:

(a) Organization and Service Delivery	(g) The Arts & Ethnic Diversity
(b) Cooperation for Economic Development	(h) Education, Research and Business Resources
(c) The Port	(i) Information Technology and Telecommunications
(d) Transportation	(j) Medicine and Health
(e) Commerce and the Downtown	
(f) Tourism	

Method

- We formed teams of Task Force members to examine each focus area, and to brief the full group on their findings.
- We sent over 150 letters to selected individuals and organizations in Halifax soliciting their written briefs. From this group, a number of individuals and organizations were invited to present their ideas and concerns to us in person.
- We asked a number of Canadian and American cities to share their economic development initiatives and the results with us.
- We reviewed a number of reports and recommendations prepared by other groups and committees for the City of Halifax as they related to economic development.

Results

- We reviewed all recommendations and decided upon those which we felt would be the most appropriate and effective for Halifax. Some of our recommendations were drawn from those presented by invited groups, some arose from our review of the experiences of other cities, and some were the result of ideas presented by Task Force members during our discussions.
- We tested each idea against the requirement that it must stimulate improved economic prosperity and quality of life for Haligonians, must be within the City's mandate and must be fiscally feasible.

Halifax approaches its 250th birthday in 1999 at a "hinge of history".

In addition to massive and continuing social and political changes around the world, the global economy is changing rapidly and dramatically. Little promise for a prosperous future is offered by traditional manufacturing and resource industries, and the way ahead will be built on a "new economy" based on information and service.

In the context of this world-wide social, political and economic revolution, it is crucial for Halifax to take stock of its attributes and vulnerabilities so that it can best position itself for the years ahead.

Halifax has a wealth of valuable and unique attributes:

- Halifax's large, deep-water, ice-free port is the eastern gateway to North America and across the Atlantic to Europe
- Halifax's international airport, the only one in the Maritimes, enables rapid movement of people and cargo anywhere in the world.
- Halifax is rich with well-educated and highly-trained people, diversified infrastructure and transportation systems, abundant land and fresh water.
- Halifax is home to a number of internationally-respected universities that would more usually be found in much larger cities.
- Halifax is a centre for leading health and research institutions and for the maritime component of national defence.
- Halifax is a welcoming city, with a cosmopolitan yet charming ambience and a cultural diversity which belies its modest size.
- Halifax has many artistic advantages, including fine art galleries and concert halls; the Atlantic region's only school of art and design; a professional theatre; national television production; distinctive music performers; fine crafts makers; and a burgeoning feature film industry.

- Halifax is a beautiful city of tree-lined avenues, well-tended parks and impressive buildings from several architectural periods and styles.
- Halifax is a family city of good schools and real neighbourhoods – a place where people want to live, as well as work.
- Halifax's natural environment has lakes and woodlands and magnificent ocean coastline, all of which offer enormous recreational possibilities.
- Halifax's heritage provides a backdrop of richly-woven tapestry: outpost of the Empire; past seat of royalty; historic seaport; garrison city; naval station; marshalling point for the convoys of two world wars; last Canadian landfall of Canada's fighting troops; and first sight of a welcoming nation for generations of new Canadians.

At the same time, however, we identified some obvious areas of concern:

- We are concerned that the Halifax economy is so reliant on government spending.
- We are concerned that there were 10,000 fewer jobs in Metro Halifax in 1993 than in 1990. (Statistics Canada)
- We are concerned that a September 1993 survey showed that nearly 670,000 square feet of office space (about 15% of the total) is vacant in the Central Business District. (Building Owners and Managers Association)
- We are concerned that the economic development of Halifax, and of the surrounding region, is not treated or approached as an integrated and coherent whole.
- We are concerned that the downtown core of Halifax is in decline.
- We are concerned that our research and post-secondary educational institutions, while still impressive, are under serious threat of erosion.

Halifax - Future Prosperity

We have a vision of the future Halifax as an economically successful and prosperous city, with its outstanding quality of life enriched and flourishing.

With its locational advantage; multicultural resources; world class research; medical, education, military and business institutions; and strengths in information and communications technology, Halifax can and should draw economic strength to the region by being an active player in the international economy.

To achieve this position, Halifax must use its tremendous research and educational resources to harness the most appropriate approaches and modern technologies for the challenges ahead. Prosperity in the 21st century will largely depend upon the ability to pursue technology transfer opportunities and the commercialization of successes in research and development. Halifax has the potential to thrive in the emerging knowledge-based economy by making the most of these opportunities. Halifax must also pursue its potential in tourism and culture, building on its current strengths in these growing sectors.

However, we believe prosperity at the expense of other elements of "quality of life" is not in keeping with the strong social values held by Haligonians. Consequently, we made sure each of our recommendations respected the following key principles before including them in this report.

A Socially Responsive City

Halifax should be motivated to ensure opportunities for employment for its citizens and to welcome their participation in future initiatives of the City. A city that considers the economic security of its citizens and opens its doors to them will reap the collective spirit and abilities of all.

An Environmentally Responsible City

Halifax should strive to protect and improve its natural and constructed environments. A city that values and understands the economic importance of sustainable development practices will be viewed as an environmentally healthy region and a place where people can and will want to live, work and visit.

A Culturally Resourceful City

Halifax should support those citizens and organizations which engage in social, cultural and recreational activities. A city that is known to be rich in social interaction, cultural expression and recreational opportunity becomes known for its quality of life which, in turn, attracts economic investment.

Organizing for Economic Development

Economic Development Unit

Economic development efforts are most effective when they evolve from an overall, integrated strategy and then focus on sectors where there is the greatest potential for return. We believe Halifax's efforts to foster economic development must become far more coherent and efficient than is presently the case.

A review of the economic development structures, activities and resources with direct and indirect ties to the City of Halifax clearly shows a lack of focus and integration. For example:

- The Halifax Industrial Commission has a sizable budget but has had its focus confined to the promotion of the business parks.
- The Spring Garden Road Business Improvement District Commission (BIDC) and the Downtown BIDCs, even though they are adjacent to each other, do not work together. The Downtown BIDC, in spite of its name, does not include several significant developments such as Scotia Square and Purdy's Wharf. Other business areas in the city such as along Quinpool Road, in Clayton Park or in Spryfield do not have BIDCs at all.
- The City's Development and Planning Department responds to requests for development but does not initiate economic development.
- Tourism Halifax's mandate is to serve the public and it is not viewed as an economic development department.

This splintered approach to Halifax's economic development must be transformed into a coordinated and comprehensive delivery system with clear accountability. Unless and until this is done, our energies and resources will be marginalized.

We realize there are a number of ways to structure an organization to provide the coordination and leadership for economic development. We believe a positive and business-oriented attitude should pervade the whole City and that everyone should play a role in economic development.

However, from our review of other cities, we determined a common and effective approach to achieving a coordinated and comprehensive focus is to assign an accountable mandate and responsibility for coordinating all the City's economic development efforts to a dynamic and strategically focused economic development unit. We believe that such a unit for Halifax should be established immediately.

In terms of function, this unit would be guided by the vision, principles and recommendations embodied in this report and would develop an overall economic development strategy and detailed plans of action for approval by City Council. This unit would oversee the implementation of approved plans; would seek out, study and propose new opportunities for economic development; would coordinate marketing, assistance, and information and promotion activities designed to foster economic growth; and would work in cooperation with other economic development organizations and agencies in the region.

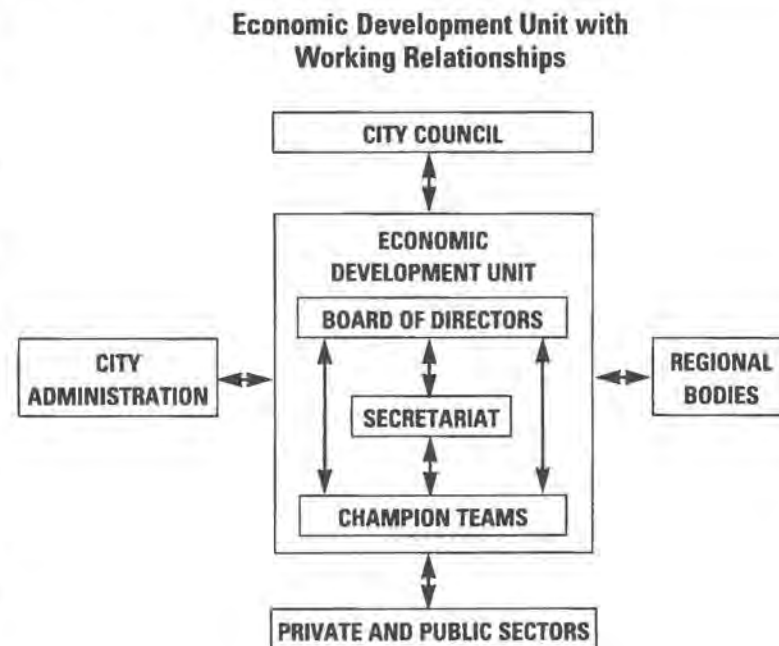
The ongoing policy development of this unit would be steered by a high-profile Board of Directors, made up of selected citizen leaders which would be appointed by and report to City Council. The unit would be supported by a full-time Secretariat.

For this unit to be able to fully coordinate and integrate economic development efforts, we believe it should incorporate the functions, resources, good ideas and people associated with the Halifax Industrial Commission, the BIDCs and Tourism Halifax.

Further, because good ideas don't just "happen" but require leadership to develop or respond to them, we are recommending the creation of "Champion Teams" as a signature feature of this new Economic Development Unit. These "Champion Teams" would be charged with developing strategies and actions to forward a particular niche or sector, to build partnerships with key sectors or to address critical challenges. In this report, we are recommending the creation of six of these teams knowing that the need for additional Champion Teams will become apparent as the new unit gets on with its work.

Recommended by the new Economic Development Unit and appointed by City Council, these Champion Teams would be time-limited, small, action-oriented committees composed of hand-picked, committed, creative, progressive, pro-business, credible people interested in results. These Champion Teams, where appropriate, could include membership from the region as well as from the City. Just as this Task Force was, these committees would be supported by staff.

The following chart shows the conceptual framework of the Economic Development Unit and the relationships between City Council and the Board of Directors; between the Board of Directors, Champion Teams and staff; and between the Economic Development Unit and City administration, public/private sectors and regional bodies.



The economic development unit itself and these Champion Teams will provide ways for citizens to be involved in shaping the economic future of their city. We believe the greater the involvement of interested citizens and the more open the decision-making process with respect to economic development, the greater the level of citizens' confidence and sense of pride in both the unit and the City.

In addition to seeing an urgent need for Halifax to develop a coordinated approach to economic development internally, we also see an urgent need for increased cooperation among municipal governments in the metro Halifax area.

We believe that Halifax should take the leadership role in working towards greater municipal cooperation. Cooperative marketing and promotional efforts are the beginning elements that would be of greatest value to the regional partners at this time. The concept of a regional approach underscores Halifax's need to bring its various economic development activities and structures together so that Halifax's voice at the table represents a view of the whole City rather than just one sector or area.

We recommend that the City establish a high-profile, dynamic, strategically-focused and accountable economic development unit to develop a pervasive and coordinated business-oriented economic development strategy and culture for the City as a whole.

We recommend that the City, subject to the recommendations by the new Economic Development Unit, appoint a number of "Champion Teams" to provide both the development of ideas and the coordination of planned actions in key economic development areas.

We recommend that the City direct the new economic development unit to incorporate the following ideas and actions into its ongoing operations:

- work with existing businesses to determine their needs and concerns with a view to helping them grow and succeed;
- initiate training so that all staff "sell the City" and develop a positive customer service attitude;
- demonstrate creativity and flexibility in removing roadblocks to business investment and development while ensuring that the spirit of required regulations is adhered to;
- collect, maintain and share data banks of relevant business information to promote our resources and communicate emerging opportunities;
- respond to and track requests for information;
- establish communication and working relations with those sectors deemed important for the future economic prosperity of Halifax;

- *have "quick response teams" to pursue ideas with limited windows of opportunity;*
- *develop a program of "Pride in Halifax" awards to acknowledge and profile our successes;*
- *act as a promotions agency to coordinate promotions for economic development and to develop a communications strategy to bolster the image of the City with key audiences;*
- *develop an effective working relationship with the federal, provincial and municipal governments and other regional agencies to address a regional approach to economic development issues;*

- support a regional approach to marketing and promotions activities which have been the core activities of the Greater Halifax Economic Development Association; and,
- take the leadership role in seeking and supporting greater cooperation among municipal governments in pursuing a unified regional approach to economic development opportunities.

Organizational Audit

We believe the City must be organized to:

- (a) respond to and implement an overall strategic economic development plan;
- (b) increase direct accountability for monies spent in every area of operation, including boards and commissions;
- (c) coordinate efforts and resources in support of specific economic development initiatives;
- (d) bring a fresh approach and new positive energy to the City; and,
- (e) act as a catalyst for economic growth.

While we were reviewing the City's economic development efforts, we became concerned that the City may not be organized appropriately for the challenges of the 90s and beyond nor is it organized to ensure that its citizens are getting the best value for money. Times have changed but the structure has not. Therefore, we advocate an audit of the City organization. Because of the complexity of this task, we suggest an independent, external audit.

We recognize that implementing an integrated and coordinated Economic Development Unit will require some changes in the way elements of the City are organized. For example, because we are recommending bringing together the people, good ideas and initiatives of such diverse organizations such as the Halifax Industrial Commission, Tourism Halifax and the Business Improvement District Commissions, it will be crucial to develop some common elements of structure, mandate and accountability for this unit to be effective and have a coherent focus.

We recommend that the City immediately commission an external audit of its operations, including boards and commissions, to determine areas where there is potential to increase accountability, efficiency and effectiveness. The audit should include:

- An assessment of the City's tax-to-service ratio, comparing how Halifax ranks relative to other cities on the services it provides per unit of tax paid. It should be the goal of the City to improve this ratio to the taxpayers' advantage over time.
- An examination of the City's regulations, operations, structures, mandates and positions to find ways to increase efficiency and effectiveness to better position us to attract new businesses to Halifax and expand our existing business base.
- An identification of ways to introduce creative and effective leadership training to instill a positive attitude and customer-service orientation for all City staff. An extension of this would be to identify ways of establishing standards and measuring service delivery and quality for City staff.

We recommend that the City consider the privatization of some programs and services. Through a strategic planning process, the City should determine the business it is in and therefore the services it should be providing. The next step of that process is to determine whether the services should be provided by the City directly, or indirectly by privatization.

Halifax as An International City

Gateway to the World

The economy of the 90s and beyond is world-based. People, transportation and telecommunication links with global networks are critical to Halifax's future prosperity.

Our ice-free harbour with its double stack rail connection to the North American interior and intermodal terminal is a major strength in terms of Halifax's future success in the global marketplace. But our businesses also need fast and frequent air connections to major centres in North America, Europe, South East Asia and beyond.

Strict restrictions are currently imposed by the Federal Government on air access to Halifax from other countries. These limitations impede our potential for economic growth. Halifax's voice must be heard loud and clear in Ottawa to ensure these limitations do not continue to retard our economic growth and constrain market expansion.

The Task Force on the Future of the Port of Halifax (the Regan Report) proposed that the Halifax Port Corporation, the Halifax-Dartmouth Port Development Commission and the Atlantic Pilotage Authority be brought together within a single, independent Port Authority under the direction of a provincially-appointed Board of Directors. In the same way that the City should better coordinate the management of its economic development efforts, we believe the management of the Port should also be consolidated and a single Port Authority could be the appropriate vehicle.

Transportation services must be effectively integrated to be of greatest advantage to Halifax. We feel strongly that responsibility to coordinate the initiatives of seaport, airport, rail and other transportation services should be led by the City, through a Champion Team composed of transportation industry partners. The purpose of the Team would be to identify ways to provide the best transportation services to customers through making the most effective use of our transportation resources.

We believe that the establishment of an international maritime centre would have benefits to the City. Under existing tax law, maritime-related firms can benefit from certain tax advantages by establishing offices in an international maritime centre. The establishment of such a centre would therefore clearly help our economy by creating jobs, leasing vacant office space and leading to an increase in purchased goods and services.

Finally, free trade zones in other parts of the world such as Huntsville, Alabama and Raleigh, North Carolina provide strong economic stimulus to their adjacent cities. In a free trade zone, goods shipped can be off-loaded, have value added to them and then be repackaged for forward shipping without having to clear Customs. Halifax's combined air and seaport services lend themselves to realizing the advantages of a free trade zone and the City should strive to establish one.

We recommend that a Transportation Champion Team be established to *pursue initiatives* in the transportation industry including:

- working with the Province to define a coordinated strategy for, and in conjunction with, the Port of Halifax, the Halifax International Airport, the railways, and various complementary transportation service industries;
- strongly supporting the principal recommendation of the Regan Report regarding creation of a single, independent Port Authority, and the recommendations related to rail transportation;
- redoubling Halifax's efforts to ensure the federal government amends its international air policy and air bilateral agreements in favour of greater air access to Halifax as the international gateway to and from Atlantic Canada;
- promoting the establishment of an international maritime centre in Halifax; and
- seeking to establish a free trade zone in Halifax.

Global Connections

People originating from 180 countries of the world, speaking over 70 languages, can be found living in Nova Scotia – and the majority live in the metro Halifax area. These international Haligonians have enriched the cultural diversity of the City and help position Halifax as a “world city”.

Our universities are increasingly attracting international attention, both in terms of the quality of education they provide and the growing number of overseas contracts they have received – in every area from community development and environmental planning to second language training and various research and development projects.

Increased international interest in Halifax has the potential to translate into additional tourism activities, financial investments and business connections that will enhance our economy. We must now place a magnifying glass over our location on the world map and market our strengths to take advantage of these opportunities. We must develop strategies that further promote and position us to do business with the world.

We recommend that the City, through the Economic Development Unit, develop creative, strategic and cost-effective ways to sell Halifax to the world, including:

- finding ways, in cooperation with the federal and provincial governments, to encourage immigrant entrepreneurs to settle in Halifax. The City should enhance its efforts to work with these entrepreneurs to help them understand how to establish businesses in the city and to facilitate immigrant networking and referrals;

- encouraging Haligonians who regularly travel and do business internationally to take every opportunity to speak about Halifax at conferences and meetings abroad. Similarly, citizens involved in national and international organizations should be encouraged and helped to persuade those groups to hold conventions and meetings in Halifax;

- examining, along with the Province and other appropriate organizations and companies, the economic development potential of establishing a “Young Ambassadors Program”. This concept is designed to develop a core of university graduates into a dynamic, creative and multi-lingual roster of young entrepreneurs who would travel the world and sell Halifax as a tourism destination, a place of business opportunity and a centre of higher education to business executives and tourist agencies around the globe;

- providing encouragement and resources for foreign students studying here to become “ambassadors” for Halifax when they return home;

- establishing an “International Visitors Program” which would invite strategically positioned individuals and small groups to visit Halifax, at no cost to themselves, to learn more about the City and its potential;

- persuading international organizations and companies to locate their head offices here;

- supporting initiatives to identify new and expanded economic opportunities as a result of NAFTA and the growing power and size of the European Community.

Renewing the Downtown

A vibrant downtown, as the economic core of the City, is critically important to Halifax and the Province. We must create and support initiatives that will stimulate and allow the downtown community to flourish as a place to live, work and play.

We recognize that the downtown is not without real strengths in terms of attributes, activities and potential. For example, the downtown is an enjoyable and exciting place to be at night, our waterfront is publicly accessible, we have historic and park attractions in the downtown and many retail businesses in the Spring Garden Road area are flourishing. These are characteristics that cannot be claimed by many North American cities.

We recognize that several current initiatives of the City may contribute to the revitalization of downtown, including: (a) a downtown parking study to identify locations for structured parking sites; (b) a transportation plan which will deal with access to and from the downtown; (c) the removal of inappropriate controls on residential development to aid residential development opportunities; and, (d) support of the Neptune Theatre expansion.

However, much more needs to be done to stimulate a full renaissance of the downtown. For example, the waterfront is an integral part of Halifax's downtown, and a marvellously unique public resource. We believe that a way must

be found to incorporate the Halifax assets of the Waterfront Development Corporation into the development plans of the City. This measure is necessary in order to coordinate the development of the waterfront with the development of the rest of the downtown area.

The waterfront is one of the areas highlighted in the Downtown BIDC's recently completed plan, "Toward the Year 2000", which lays out six strategies for an improved downtown. We salute the work of this dedicated group of citizens. The energy and purpose with which it has approached its task give it many of the characteristics we would like to see in our Champion Teams.

We believe the City's response to this plan should not be limited to the small geographical area which is within the bounds of the BIDC. The process advocated by the BIDC's recommendations should be applied to the whole downtown, that is, roughly Morris to Cornwallis Streets, Robie Street to the Harbour.

We endorse the planning approach which was the context for "Toward the Year 2000", but emphasize that the downtown business district should not be seen in isolation from the rest of the City. We believe that the renaissance of the Downtown is an urgent priority, but a careful balance of focus between the downtown area and other commercial centres in the City is essential in future, long term planning.

We recommend the creation of a Downtown Champion Team to identify ways to renew the downtown. The Downtown Team would:

- build on the process and strategies recommended by the Downtown BIDC so that the larger downtown is involved;
- identify priority actions, an ongoing management team for those actions, and funding and services required from the City and other sources in order to achieve its goals;
- examine City regulations in the downtown area with the aim of amending them if they act as excessive deterrents to development, provided that the amendments will not harm the quality of development;
- work with the Provincial Government so that the City can obtain management of the Waterfront Development Corporation's Halifax lands to ensure that development of these lands can be pursued in close coordination with the rest of the downtown;
- examine proposed projects such as encouraging the creative use of City-owned historic buildings, considering a technology exposition centre combined with a business incubator and establishing a pleasure boat marina.

Maximizing Tourism

Tourism in Halifax is a strategic economic development engine. The Department of Economic Development and Tourism, Province of Nova Scotia estimates that tourism currently supports some 14,000 direct and indirect jobs in the greater Halifax area. The potential for growth in this industry is dependent on our ability to provide convenient air access, to host competitive attractions and events, and to aggressively market Halifax as an international and regional destination of choice. To this end, Tourism Halifax should expand its mandate beyond the provision of services to tourists to encompass a strong marketing mission and it should be viewed as an integral component of the new Economic Development Unit.

Hosting community-inspired as well as international events will strengthen Halifax's position as the activity centre of Atlantic Canada. Our facilities and track record of accomplishment with events such as the World Figure Skating Championships and the visit of the Tall Ships have already provided a reputation for success in this area.

Opportunities exist for Halifax to enhance its position within the Atlantic Canada community. For example, Halifax should be positioned as an additional experience for the thousands of Japanese visitors who pass through the Halifax airport on their way to PEI. Strategies should be developed to encourage the friends and relatives of our non-resident students, who visit for short periods, to increase their length of stay. As well, marketing efforts should be made to all Atlantic Canadians in order to keep more tourist dollars circulating within the region.

Halifax is an excellent place for holding conventions and meetings and there is both reason and room for growth. Convention and business tourists are not

limited to the June to September "high" leisure traveller season. Conventions and meetings allow us to showcase our businesses, facilities and resources. Visiting professional associations call on local establishments and institutions associated with their particular field of interest – for example, medical, port, research or film. Familiarization with the attractiveness of Halifax is an important stepping stone to subsequent business activity and as a potential business destination. A convention and meetings bureau of the type established in all other major tourism destinations would work to maximize this business for Halifax.

Probably the most visible opportunity for tourism growth exists in the cruise ship market. Record numbers of new ships are added to fleets each year and passenger numbers continue to grow at substantial rates. Cruise lines require new and different itineraries to satisfy the repeat customer, and must offer cruises of varying length to provide a choice of prices. Halifax's advantageous geographical position, adjacent to New York, and the natural coastline of Atlantic Canada, are assets which must be aggressively marketed to this industry. Improvements need to be made in the arrival and departure facilities for passengers to provide a more attractive and pleasing experience for these customers of the City. Convenient access to the downtown shops and services needs to be provided in order to maximize the passengers' experience. A cruise ship docking facility combined with other facilities of a public/retail/cultural nature would be an asset to both this market and the community in general and could lead to Halifax becoming a "home port" where cruises start and finish, which would mean even greater economic spin-offs for the City.

In addition to improved cruise ship facilities, Halifax is well-suited to be the site of a family-oriented destination resort facility, which could include

gaming. A major advantage of such a privately-owned major tourist attraction would be the increased marketing of the City and province to a very wide audience.

We recommend that the mandate of Tourism Halifax, in its role as part of the new Economic Development Unit, be expanded to include a strong marketing mission and a special events function to promote the selection of Halifax as a venue for existing sports, cultural and international events, to create unique and new events, and to facilitate these events. Tourism Halifax, with an expanded mandate, should also develop marketing programs which target visitors travelling within Atlantic Canada and families and friends of out-of-province students and work to improve the quality and variety of media coverage of Halifax.

We recommend that the City, in partnership with others, establish a Conventions and Meetings Bureau for Halifax with the specific objective of selling Halifax as a venue for business and other meetings.

We recommend that the City create a Tourism Champion Team to pursue a number of opportunities:

- develop strategies to build on Halifax's historical attributes including the Halifax Explosion, the Underground Railroad, immigration through Pier 21, our role in the World Wars and Halifax's early years as the British bastion in the new world;
- initiate the process of establishing an enhanced and dedicated cruise ship docking facility in order to maximize the number and satisfaction of passen-

gers visiting Halifax. Other efforts should also be undertaken to establish Halifax as a "home port" which would provide the additional benefit of increased length of stay;

- provide leadership to find the ways and means to provide an all-weather link to the World Trade and Convention Centre from Scotia Square immediately. It is an obvious deficiency and a hindrance to selling Halifax to meeting groups outside of the June to September pleasant weather period;
- develop alternative modes of transportation in the downtown core. A looping trolley, perhaps provided through public/private sponsorship, would highlight Halifax landmarks and increase the flow of tourists and pedestrians through various areas of the downtown;
- support the development of a privately-owned, family-oriented destination resort which could include gaming facilities and which would enhance the marketing of Halifax as an attractive tourist destination;
- actively pursue the hosting of a world event such as Expo 2002, provided it is within the fiscal capabilities of the City;
- work to improve the quality and variety of media coverage of Halifax.

We recommend that the City amend appropriate city ordinances and bylaws and lobby the provincial government to remove restrictions on retail shopping hours in order that the consumer and the market can determine the appropriate open hours.

Halifax as a Cultural Centre

A community that stimulates and challenges the individual is a better community and will provide better customers, better employees and a better business climate than one where there is little stimulation. Cultural activities are a prime source of this stimulation.

A direct, positive relationship exists between a community's cultural activities and its potential for economic development. Cultural activities, be they symphony concerts, dance schools, the creation of fine arts and crafts or the production of stage plays, films, television programs or theatrical productions, create both jobs and additional valuable economic spin-offs.

A strong cultural base is a significant factor for businesses considering where to locate. As well, cultural activities draw both residents and tourists to them, and cultural activities can contribute to the economic lifeblood of a city's downtown area.

Halifax, for a community its size, has a rich cultural base. A diverse group of talented and dedicated artists, performers, technicians and publishers live and work here, supported by cultural festivals, related services and organizations, and a variety of cultural, education and training programs.

The Task Force commends the City for its decision to support the renovations to and expansion of Neptune Theatre. We see this as having potential for a significant return on investment and as being positive for the renaissance of the downtown core. We also applaud the initiative of the City to have the Mayor's Advisory Committee to Promote the Arts prepare a report to outline ways in which the City could encourage and support the arts. We encourage serious consideration of its recommendations.

The arts sector that has probably received the greatest attention in recent years for its positive impact on the local economy is the film industry. According to the Nova Scotia Film Development Corporation, over the last three years an annual amount of \$1 million has been provided by equity investments in firms and television programs produced or co-produced by Nova Scotia producers - almost all of whom are Halifax based. This investment has resulted in an annual average of approximately \$10 million worth of new film production work, based on total film budgets. Even at that, this estimate does not include the value of corporate audio visual and video production or commercial production in the province.

We recommend that the city establish a Culture Champion Team to pursue opportunities including:

- becoming Canada's first and only member of the international "City of Culture" program which would enable us to act as host for a number of cultural and related activities;
- doing an inventory of facilities currently available for rehearsals, studio space and performance venues to (a) determine if there is a need for a new performing arts centre and (b) creatively look at buildings in the downtown core which may soon become vacant, to determine if they would be suitable for creating a permanent crafts studio and market, as has been done with great success in other cities;

- finding ways to support the multi-media industry including the film industry's attempt to build or acquire a permanent, feature-quality sound stage; and,

- identifying the best ways to market Halifax with a view to attracting more film and production work from outside the province. In the interim, we recommend that the City immediately assign responsibility to staff to coordinate film location information requests, approvals and access to City services and facilities.

We recommend that the City make its financial contributions to cultural groups and activities in a planned and systematic manner that is separate from the responsibilities of the Tax and Grants Committee.

Halifax is poised at the threshold of a new age of prosperity where the capacity to create new electronic goods and services is limited only by skills, imagination and human experience.

In the Industrial Age with its reliance on traditional manufacturing, Halifax had the handicap of geographical distance from markets of significant size. With the advent of the Information Age and the communications technology revolution, emphasis is increasingly placed on human capital, innovation, electronic networks and education. New products and services, created by skilled knowledge workers, are "shipped to market" across electronic networks, our new information highways. Halifax now has the opportunity to capitalize on its traditional assets – skilled and industrious people, a strong scientific base and a superior quality of life.

The City of Halifax can lead cities of comparable size by committing itself to be a world class example of leveraging communications technology to deliver cost effective services to the members of its residential and business community (numerous examples at a provincial level are cited in the Nova Scotia's Information Highway report issued by MT&T). This can be done by way of private sector partnerships, joint ventures and outsourcing.


The Information Technology Advantage

The City should also consider economies of scale achievable by the joint delivery of specific programs and services with other municipalities.

It is essential that Halifax nurture a culture where science and technology achievement is recognized and encouraged. It is therefore recommended that the City consider establishing a Technology Exposition Centre to showcase local achievements and at the same time, link potential consumers and producers.

The most frequent benefit from technology is the enabling effect. Areas worthy of exploration include the commercialization of products from research and development in areas such as ocean, medical and information technology related studies and the investigation of incubator models to facilitate the growth of fledgling companies.

It is critical that we create and maintain a technologically literate and innovative society. We are moving from a "have, have not" world to a "know, know not" society. It is therefore important that the students attending City of Halifax schools are being educated to function effectively in a knowledge-based economy with science and technology underpinnings.

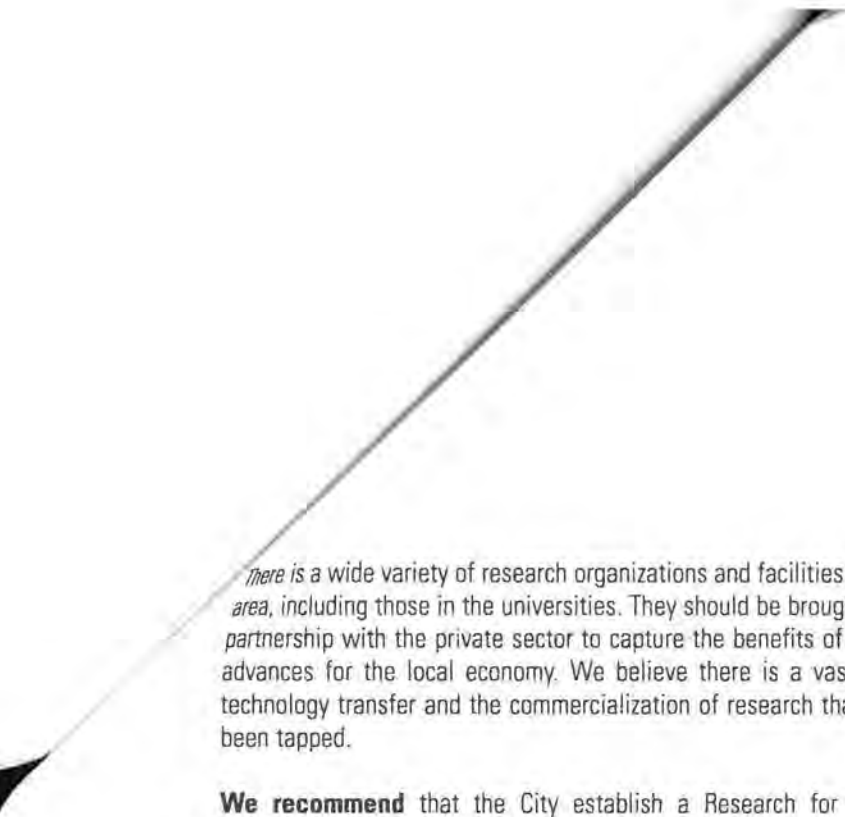


We recommend that the Halifax District School Board prepare and implement a strategic plan which addresses the technology literacy needs of both teachers and students.

We recommend that the City examine partnerships, joint ventures and outsourcing to the private sector to deliver cost effective services to the members of the residential and business community.

We recommend that the City examine the economies of scale by joint delivery of specific programs and services with other municipalities.

We recommend that the City establish a Technology Exposition Centre to showcase local achievements and to link consumers and producers.



There is a wide variety of research organizations and facilities in the Halifax area, including those in the universities. They should be brought further into partnership with the private sector to capture the benefits of technological advances for the local economy. We believe there is a vast potential in technology transfer and the commercialization of research that has not yet been tapped.

We recommend that the City establish a Research for Development Champion Team to explore:

- the sharing of information about emerging developments and challenges so that cooperative and coordinated actions can be pursued;

Research for Development

- the commercialization of research findings (e.g. ocean, medical, environmental and information technology), the investigation of incubator models, and the availability of venture capital to facilitate the growth of fledgling companies in these areas;
- how the City, industry representatives and researchers, including those in universities, hospitals and government departments and agencies, can effectively work together to contribute to the long-term development of Halifax as a broadly-based, applied research centre.

Universities

The full potential of economic development will not result from isolated initiatives, but rather will occur when integrated strategies are developed and implemented. We believe that our universities and public schools provide the basis for developing and implementing those strategies. Initiatives to position Halifax favourably in all of the areas on which this report focuses must be supported and enhanced by relevant efforts in our universities and public school system.

Universities

Halifax has an enviable concentration of university facilities and talent, with a pool of highly qualified and respected individuals who have significant linkages throughout the world. Our universities, therefore, can be engines for economic growth in terms of the emerging knowledge-based economy, in terms of research and development, in terms of cultural and intellectual stimulation, and in terms of international connections and exposure.

We believe this full potential for economic growth is largely being missed because the universities are somewhat insular and isolated from the economic community, from each other and from the City. While there are some examples of collective ventures between Halifax universities and the private sector, we believe much more could be achieved through greater collaboration and coordination of expertise and resources.

The very existence of Halifax's seven universities contributes to the Halifax economy. Consequently, decisions taken by any single university can have positive or negative consequences for the City as a whole. Therefore, in the interest of maximizing both the City's and the universities' potential for economic growth, we believe there should be a mechanism for reviewing key strategic decisions of both the universities and the City.

We recommend that the City establish a City-University Champion Team to:

- imaginatively examine how university programs, resources, students, faculty members and their national and international connections may be used to foster economic initiatives and enhance economic development;
- host a major international conference, in partnership with universities, in order to expose Halifax and its educational facilities to the experiences and ideas of a cross-section of others who have successfully developed City-University links. Both UNESCO and the International Association of Universities should be invited to participate;
- consider appropriate mechanisms for regular communication and shared strategic decision-making between the universities and the City.

Public Schools

Public Schools

The City of Halifax allocates over \$13 million in discretionary funds to the Halifax School Board. Nevertheless, under current legislation, the School Board is not required to be accountable to the City for the use of those funds. To date, there have been no efforts to coordinate the programs of the public school system with the overall objectives of the City, or to align even the use of the discretionary municipal funding with City objectives.

We believe that it is crucially important to improve the working relationship with the Halifax School Board and the City, including a more coordinated and accountable approach to planning, programming and the use of funds.

We recommend that the City improve its working relationship with the Halifax School Board and call upon the School Board to improve its accountability to the City.

We recommend that the City encourage the School Board to:

- improve the ability of our youth to compete internationally by providing greater emphasis on foreign language training and instituting an international Baccalaureate Program option at the high school level;
- ensure that "English as a Second Language" programs are widely available;
- prepare and implement a strategic plan to address the technology training needs of both teachers and students;
- consider, in partnership with relevant stakeholders, innovations in education such as the creation of special focus or "magnet" schools, especially in the areas of the cultural arts and science and technology.

