



African Nova Scotian  
Road to  
Economic  
Prosperity



# ROAD TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY FOR AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIAN COMMUNITIES

Progress Report 2023



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We want to express our sincere thanks to the amazing community members, dedicated councils, hardworking staff, and valued partners who have been crucial to the success of the African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity initiative in 2023.

## Advisory Council

Dolly Williams – Co-Chair – East Preston  
Irvine Carvery – Co-Chair – Africville  
Viola Fraser – North Preston Community Rec Centre  
Sherry Bernard – Lake Loon / Cherry Brook  
Gina Jones-Wilson – Upper Hammonds Plains  
Patsy Crawford – Beechville  
Veronica Marsman – Akoma  
Trianda Loppie - Akoma  
Tammy Ewing – Engage Nova Scotia  
Matthew Martell – Black Business Initiative  
Mamadou Wade – Black Business Initiative  
Rosella Fraser – North Preston Community Rec Centre  
Shelley Fashan – Preston Township  
George Frempong – Delmore “Buddy” Daye Learning Institute  
Wayne Talbot – Deputy Mayor, City of Truro  
Terry Dixon – Halifax Partnership  
Jenée Jarvis – Halifax Partnership  
Carolann Wright – Halifax Partnership  
Crystal Mulder – Halifax Libraries  
Curtis Whiley – Upper Hammonds Plains

## Elder Council

Cameron Brown – Co-Chair – Caribbean  
Melinda Daye – Co-Chair – Halifax  
Darlene Lawrence – South Shore  
Iona Duncan-States – Halifax  
Lavonne Sparks – Halifax  
Olive Phillips – Caribbean  
Charles Sheppard – Cape Breton  
Louise Delisle – South Shore  
Glenda Richards-Talbot – Northern  
Chuck Smith – South Shore  
Craig Smith – Halifax

## Support to Elder Council:

Shelley Fashan, Preston Township

## Youth Council

Chelsea Slawter-Wright – Co-Chair – East Preston and Beechville  
Shekara Grant – Co-Chair – Halifax  
Templeton Sawyer – Caribbean  
Graham Cromwell – South Shore  
Vanessa Hartley – South Shore  
Emperor Ben Robertson – African Diaspora  
Myannah Carvery – Valley  
Mamadou Wade – Halifax  
Kjeld Conyers-Steede – Caribbean

## ANS Road to Economic Prosperity Staff Team at Halifax Partnership

Carolann Wright – Executive Director, Road to Economic Prosperity and Director, Capacity Building and Strategic Initiatives African Nova Scotian Communities  
Jenée Jarvis – Governance and Capacity-Building Liaison, Capacity Building and Strategic Initiatives  
Terry Dixon – Program Coordinator, African Nova Scotian Connector Program  
Dena Williams – Event Coordinator  
Trayvone Clayton – Community Engagement Specialist

## African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office, Halifax Regional Municipality

Jasslyn Skeete – Coordinator of Outreach and Research for ANSAIO, REP Youth Council Support  
Tamar Pryor Brown – Senior Advisor, ANSAIO  
Devon Parris – Diversity and Inclusion Advisory, Planning and Development, REP Advisory Committee

OUR PARTNERS



2023 PARTNERS





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REP Advisory Council Co-chairs Dolly Williams and Irvine Carvery, Mayor Mike Savage, and Wendy Luther, CEO of Halifax Partnership at the 2023 REP Summit.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Messages	6
Melinda Daye & Cameron Brown	6
Chelsea Slawter-Wright & Shekara Grant	7
Irvine Carvery & Dolly Williams	8
The Road To Economic Prosperity Staff Team	9
Progressing Our Priorities	12
Summit And International Conference Highlights	24
African Nova Scotian Prosperity & Well-Being Index	28
Building Bridges: Partnership In Action	30
Community Updates	34
Glossary	40
Join The Work Of The Road To Economic Prosperity	41



Cameron Brown



Melinda Daye

# Message from **MELINDA DAYE & CAMERON BROWN**

## CO-CHAIRS OF THE ELDER COUNCIL

The Elder Council is deeply invested in the longevity of economic development work in African Nova Scotian communities.

Through our many years of experience, we have seen organizations and initiatives ebb and flow. Our commitment is to ensure that our work not only thrives in the present but continues to flourish for generations to come. As we inch closer to the prosperous future we imagine for African Nova Scotians, we can't help but feel that we are only getting started. The success stories coming from our communities show us that this plan is working.

We want all African Nova Scotians to be aware of what the Road to Economic Prosperity is doing, and to own this initiative and take it into their own communities and neighbourhoods. This year, we started a sustainability plan for the Road to Economic Prosperity. The goal is to future-proof our efforts by building a diverse network of support and investment, and by fostering a spirit of collaboration so that together, we can weather any storm.

We renew our commitment to strengthening relationships between the generations. Our young people are the cornerstone of the sustainability plan, as they are our only secure investment in the future. As stewards of wisdom, we are honoured to share our values and expertise with our youth with trust and love.



—  
Shekara Grant



—  
Chelsea Slawter-Wright

# Message from **CHELSEA SLAWTER- WRIGHT & SHEKARA GRANT**

## CO-CHAIRS OF THE YOUTH COUNCIL

As representatives of the Youth Council for the Road to Economic Prosperity, we're thrilled to share the 2023 Progress Report to the community. The theme, 'Our Communities, Our Future, Our Prosperity', speaks directly to our mindset. We are ready to take on leadership roles within our community, knowing that our elders stand close by to give us their guidance.

We cannot deny that the world around us is changing at a pace never seen before. We are witnessing the evolving landscape of our cities, towns, and communities. Technology is constantly changing the way we work, the way we learn, how we build wealth, and how we communicate with one another. We understand the needs and aspirations of our generation, and are already thinking of those who are coming behind us. It is critical that we are not only engaged but actively invited to shape the plan for the future of our communities.

As African Nova Scotian youth, we are living in a global society, and we believe that inspiration and innovative solutions can come from a wide range of sources. We're excited to discover them!



# Message from **IRVINE CARVERY & DOLLY WILLIAMS**

## CO-CHAIRS OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL

We take great pride in presenting the third annual progress report for the African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity. As Co-Chairs of the Advisory Council, we are thrilled to share the remarkable strides made over the past year. The forward-thinking sentiments expressed by our Youth Council and the timeless wisdom of our Elder Council serve as poignant reminders that our focus must be on the future. Our theme, 'Our Communities, Our Future, Our Prosperity,' speaks volumes about our commitment to sustainability and the preparation needed for what lies ahead.

In the spring of 2023, we unveiled the plan for Years 3-5, outlining the vision and objectives for the next leg of the Road to Economic Prosperity. Developed collaboratively by our community working groups, this plan signifies our dedication to sustained growth, community resilience, and the long-term prosperity of African Nova Scotian communities. Reflecting on the accomplishments outlined in the 2022 report, we take pride in the progress made towards advancing all 30 actions in the Years 1-2 Plan. The guiding principle of "For Us, By Us, With Us" continues to define our collective efforts, grounded in Africentric principles that place the experiences of African Nova Scotians at the forefront of decision-making and governance.

The dedicated efforts of the Road to Economic Prosperity team at Halifax Partnership have resulted in numerous milestones positively impacting the lives of African Nova Scotians. Our collaboration with public, private, post-secondary, and community partners, including the Halifax Regional Municipality, the Province of Nova Scotia, RBC, and NSCC, reflects our shared commitment to building a sustainable and prosperous future. As we move forward, our unwavering focus on a sustainable, community-led approach to African Nova Scotian economic development takes center stage. Empowering our young people to assume leadership roles in our communities and encouraging them to take ownership of the challenges and opportunities ahead is essential as we collaboratively work towards a resilient and sustainable future.

We invite you to delve into this report, with the hope that it not only informs but inspires you to join us on the journey toward sustainable economic prosperity for all African Nova Scotians.



# Message from the **ROAD TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY STAFF TEAM**

Over the past year, our collaborative efforts with African Nova Scotian communities, the Halifax Partnership team, and our partners have been instrumental in driving the success of this initiative. Working directly with African Nova Scotian communities that are making tangible progress has been incredibly inspiring for our team. It reaffirms that the Road to Economic Prosperity initiative is not just a vision but a reality that is positively impacting African Nova Scotian communities. We are focused on supporting communities to make this progress as sustainable as possible.

I am delighted to announce the growth of our team by welcoming two talented individuals, Dena Williams as our Event Coordinator and Trayvone Clayton as our Community Engagement Specialist. Both are young African Nova Scotians, and their roles are pivotal in advancing our mission. Their contributions have been particularly meaningful as shown by the expansion of our annual Community Summit to include a one day international conference, hosting speakers from across Canada and the United States. I want to extend special recognition to Terry Dixon, Coordinator for the African Nova Scotian Connector Program. Terry has been an integral part of our team, connecting African Nova Scotians with prospective employers. While he is concluding his work with the Road to Prosperity, Terry remains an active member of the community, and we wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

Our gratitude extends to our funding partners whose support has been instrumental in making our initiatives possible. We look forward to continued collaboration and shared success in the journey towards economic prosperity for all African Nova Scotians. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Sincerely,

**Carolann Wright**  
**Director, Capacity Building and Strategic Initiatives,**  
**African Nova Scotian Communities and Executive Director,**  
**Road to Economic Prosperity**





Road to Prosperity Staff Team  
Left to Right: Jenée Jarvis, Terry Dixon,  
Dena Williams, Trayvone Clayton,  
Carolann Wright

**IN 2023, REP  
EXPANDED OUR  
TEAM**



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Trayvone Clayton - Community Engagement Specialist

“I’m excited to dive deeper into my role as Community Engagement Specialist and get to know the amazing people in our communities, listening to their needs and connecting them with the work REP is doing. I hope to build meaningful relationships and ensure that every voice is heard.”



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Dena Williams - Event Coordinator

“Being part of the Road to Economic Prosperity has been an incredible experience so far. I love seeing how events can bring our communities together to collaborate, share ideas, and work towards a common goal. I’m excited to continue creating spaces that foster this experience.”



# PROGRESSING OUR PRIORITIES

The Road to Economic Prosperity Plan focuses on three strategic priorities which are in effect for the entire five years. Each strategic priority is spearheaded by an established working group of African Nova Scotian community members.



## **PRIORITY: UNITY AND CAPACITY BUILDING**

We are committed to building unity and capacity within and among African Nova Scotian communities by sharing best practices, increasing collaboration, and building leadership and skills needed to advance this work.

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## **PRIORITY: LAND OWNERSHIP, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND INVESTMENT**

We aim to engage and empower African Nova Scotians in improving the current and future state of development, infrastructure, and investment in their communities.

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## **PRIORITY: EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

We are building strong relationships between Nova Scotians of African descent and educational and economic institutions, working to reconnect African Nova Scotians with opportunities in education, employment, and entrepreneurship.

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The REP Years 1-2 Plan (2021-2023) includes 30 actions and the Years 3-5 Plan (2023-2026) includes 31 actions. This report covers progress made on priorities and actions from October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023 which crosses two REP Plan periods: the last six months of the Year 2 Plan (October 1, 2022-March 31, 2023) and the first six months of the Year 3 Plan (April 1, 2023-September 30, 2023).

Please visit our website to learn about progress made in 2021 and 2022 and to explore the Years 1-2 and Years 3-5 Plans: [anseeconomicprosperity.com/research-and-reports](https://anseeconomicprosperity.com/research-and-reports)



## **PRIORITY: BUILD UNITY AND CAPACITY AMONG AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIANS**

### **Objective 1.1**

**Increase alignment and collaboration among African Nova Scotian communities and partners to create transparency and collective success.**

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#### **Establish the Road to Economic Prosperity Advisory Council (REPAC) and Elders Council to provide leadership and oversight.**

##### **Progress Highlights**

The Advisory, Elder and Youth Councils, and seven working groups worked with the REP staff team and partners to progress Year 2 and Year 3 actions. Progress updates for 2022-23 were presented to the community and partners at the annual Community Summit held in September 2023.

#### **Develop an ethical framework guided by shared principles and practices to promote accountability with bi-annual check-in.**

##### **Progress Highlights**

The three REP Councils are co-leading the development of shared principles and practices. The ethical framework will be completed in November 2023.

#### **Create a community-focused, five-year governance plan based on Africentric principles, for capacity development and reporting for the Advisory, Elder, and Youth Councils and Working Groups.**

##### **Progress Highlights**

The REP Councils and staff held a planning session in September 2023 to discuss REP governance. Halifax Partnership senior leadership and members of the Partnership's Board are supporting capacity building among REP members.

#### **Explore and consider options for a longer-term, sustainable operating model/structure that best serves ANS communities and ensures effective and efficient implementation of this Plan post 2026.**

##### **Progress Highlights**

Three-year funding (2024-2027) has been secured from the Halifax Regional Municipality and the Province of Nova Scotia to support the implementation of the REP Plan.

The REP Councils and staff discussed REP sustainability at the September 2023 planning session. A follow-up meeting will be held in April 2024 to begin developing the sustainable funding plan.

## **Bring ANS communities together to celebrate and share best practices and lessons learned.**

### **Progress Highlights**

The REP team shared best practices and policies throughout the region at events like the Atlantic Black Policy Conference, GovMaker Conference, and the National Institute of Planners Conference. The REP team also presented to urban and regional planning students at the University of Toronto.

The Inaugural ANSREP International Conference was held on September 23, 2023 to share best practices and lessons learned from community economic development work in Black communities in the US and Canada.

## **Report annually on the Road to Economic Prosperity Plan, highlighting progress and successes against outcomes.**

### **Progress Highlights**

The annual Road to Economic Prosperity Community Summit was held on September 22, 2023 to report on and celebrate progress made on the ANSREP Plan in 2022/23. Over 100 community members, partners, funders, and sponsors attended.

## **Recognize and promote the historical legacy and value of ANS communities.**

### **Progress Highlights**

A legacy brochure and interactive online resources are expected to be launched in 2025.

## **Develop, and publish annually, The African Nova Scotian Prosperity and Well-being Index – an information source of annual data on the state of African Nova Scotian economic and community progress.**

### **Progress Highlights**

African Nova Scotian Prosperity and Well-being Index findings - including ANS population, education, employment, income and housing data - were presented to the ANS community and partners at the REP Community Summit in September 2023.

Planning is underway for an ANS Index Community Symposium in April 2024 to provide an opportunity for community members to gain a greater understanding of ANS data (where progress is being made and where there are gaps) and to develop recommendations to improve economic and social outcomes. Following the community symposium, a public event will be held in May to launch the first comprehensive African Nova Scotian Prosperity and Well-being Index report and recommendations.

## **Objective 1.2**

### **Build community capacity to mobilize and lead the implementation of the Road to Economic Prosperity Plan implementation.**

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#### **Bring changemakers to the table who are ready and able to constructively and positively create change.**

##### **Progress Highlights**

Collaboration and ongoing discussions on advancing economic development in African Nova Scotian communities have taken place with many organizations including NSCC, Tribe Network, 902 ManUp, BBI, and RBC.

#### **Work with ANS communities to develop an informed understanding and action plan to address the gaps and/or needs that exist within each community and their impacts upon the community's members.**

##### **Progress Highlights**

REP staff supported two community engagement sessions: Three Miles Plains in July 2023, and Glace Bay/Whitney Pier in October 2023.

#### **Connect ANS communities to training and resources to develop leadership, facilitation, and resiliency skills.**

##### **Progress Highlights**

This action will be progressed in 2024/25.

#### **Host roundtable conversations to connect all people of African descent.**

##### **Progress Highlights**

Two roundtables (Black family meetings) were held in 2023/24 to increase connections among African Nova Scotians, the continent, and the Caribbean in relation to community economic development. Based on the feedback from those sessions, a series of engagements will be held in 2024/25.

#### **In partnership with RBC, continue to implement The Spark – Igniting Conversations Speaker Series to discuss innovative ideas focused on increasing ANS participation in education, employment, and entrepreneurship.**

##### **Progress Highlights**

REP continued to host The Spark: Igniting Conversations Speaker Series, presented by RBC. The May 2023 session focused on opportunities and challenges for African Nova Scotian women working in and interested in pursuing a career in trades. A session held in October 2023 focused on collaborative opportunities to develop affordable and attainable housing in ANS communities.



**Ensure ANS communities are aware of, and understand the impacts of, legislation and municipal by-laws affecting their communities and the avenues to provide feedback to government on necessary changes.**

**Progress Highlights**

*Provincial*

REP continues to work with the Province on ANS land issues. REP is working to ensure that HRM communities not included in the provincial land title process are represented through the community action planning process.

*Municipal*

A roundtable was held in 2023 with Mayor Savage and senior HRM staff on the revitalization and preservation of ANS communities.

REP successfully advocated for HRM to hire three dedicated planners in 2023/24 to work with ANS communities. REP is working closely with HRM Planning and Development to help community members understand legislated processes and steps required to protect community properties and boundaries.

Based on the work in Beechville, a policy on “Homesteading” for ANS communities (keeping families together in community and helping to build generational wealth) is now being developed at HRM. The draft Regional Plan contains policy on creating “homestead lots” – zoning and land use changes that will enable multiple dwellings on one lot. Staff are developing options to present to the REP Zoning Committee.

*Awareness*

The REP e-newsletter provides updates to communities on the planning and development process and steps to working with government.



## **PRIORITY: ESTABLISH LAND OWNERSHIP, DEVELOP INFRASTRUCTURE, AND ATTRACT INVESTMENT.**

### **Objective 2.1**

**Address historic and current issues related to land ownership and environmental racism.**

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**Work with the Municipality to consider and, where possible, incorporate Community Benefits Agreements (CBA) as part of infrastructure, capital, or development projects impacting or occurring in ANS communities.**

#### **Progress Highlights**

REP continues to work with HRM and the Provincial government to grant HRM the power to develop, enter into, and enforce Community Benefits Agreements.

REP is a member of the Social Benefits Advisory Committee (SBAC) established to work with the Cogswell project team, community co-liaisons, and Dexter Construction Ltd. to implement contract provisions regarding social benefits.

- Baseline data for both Supply and Workforce Diversity plans has been collected.
- Reports record actions and progress made towards achieving the contract social benefit objectives and targets.
- Data is presented monthly to the SBAC.

**Create a framework to identify and address legislation, policy, and land use by-laws that impact ANS communities, and establish mechanisms for community input on required changes.**

#### **Progress Highlights**

REP is working with HRM's Planning and Development Department to develop a framework. REP hosted a roundtable in 2023 with Mayor Savage and senior HRM staff on the revitalization and preservation of ANS communities to provide input on required changes.

**In collaboration with HRM's Planning & Development Team, create Community Action Plans for ANS communities to support them in organizing around municipal infrastructure, by-law, and legislative changes.**

#### **Progress Highlights**

On May 9, 2023, Halifax Regional Council approved amendments to Beechville's community boundaries to reflect and restore historical boundaries. As a result, the community of Beechville is now six times larger.

On July 11, 2023, Halifax Regional Council approved amendments to the Timberlea/Lakeside/Beechville Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law which will result in the creation of the new Beechville Comprehensive Development District Zone for large undeveloped tracts of land along Highway 103. These changes will also give the community more power in approving the types of developments and businesses that can operate in Beechville while helping preserve culturally and historically significant properties like the Beechville Baptist Church.

REP is supporting Upper Hammonds Plains in developing its community action plan and working with HRM planners dedicated to ANS communities.

### **Collaborate with the Black Housing Council on the provincial ANS Housing Needs Assessment and Strategy.**

#### **Progress Highlights**

REP is a member of the Black Community Housing Council which is developing a Black Housing Strategy.

### **Support the work of the National Black Community Housing Technical Resource Centre.**

#### **Progress Highlights**

REP is working with the National Black Community Housing Technical Resource Centre to make the information and resources easier for communities to understand and access.

### **In partnership with the Province, develop an approach to resolve ownership, taxation, and planning issues on residential and community owned properties without clear title.**

#### **Progress Highlights**

REP continues to work with the Province on ANS land issues, and is working to ensure that HRM communities not included in the provincial land title process are represented through the municipal community action planning process.

REP is also supporting individual community members in addressing taxation and property title issues.

### **Identify and prioritize the remediation of government-owned contaminated sites in ANS communities.**

#### **Progress Highlights**

REP is considering removing this action from the 3-5 Year Plan due to lack of capacity and resourcing within REP to complete this work.

## Objective 2.2

### Revitalize ANS communities through investment and development.

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#### **Work with HRM and local ANS communities to increase awareness of ANS community surplus properties throughout the Municipality.**

##### **Progress Highlights**

As part of the community action planning process, ANS communities and HRM staff have identified surplus properties that could be transferred back to community.

Beechville reclaimed eight properties within community in 2023/24.

#### **Work with ANS community to help prevent properties in ANS communities from proceeding to tax sale.**

##### **Progress Highlights**

REP is collaborating with HRM to develop an approach to preventing properties in ANS communities from proceeding to tax sale without community notice. REP is also working with HRM Real Estate and Land Management to develop a strategy related to taxation on surplus and/or private lands in ANS communities.

#### **Support the Akoma-led master plan and the needed environmental, transportation, and infrastructure studies to inform future planning and development decisions.**

##### **Progress Highlights**

The REP Executive Director is a member of Akoma's property committee and REP staff support community capacity-building to advance Akoma's master plan. Akoma's rapid housing project is progressing. The first residents moved into their homes in 2023.

#### **Prioritize and begin infrastructure projects (capital and renewal) and support development projects across ANS communities.**

##### **Progress Highlights**

Beechville is a flagship community demonstrating this process. Beechville's redrawn boundaries are approved, land is being transferred back to the community, and the community has begun the redevelopment and revitalization of public spaces such as the baptismal path and community centre.

#### **Support ANS communities to identify and secure funding for the preservation and interpretation of ANS community heritage sites.**

##### **Progress Highlights**

The REP Advisory Council is the project champion for this action and is working closely with HRM's Planning and Development team to advance community priorities. The HRM Regional Plan Review Phase 3: Attachment A captures the following action: EC-25 HRM will incorporate Historical African Nova Scotian Community Action Plans into planning policies and by-law regulations where possible.

REP is working with the provincial Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage to identify community assets and properties of historic significance and register them under the Heritage Property Act.

## **Redevelop and market spaces within ANS communities for commercial and/or community use.**

### **Progress Highlights**

Work is being undertaken as part of the Community Action Planning land identification process with ANS communities.

## **Prioritize and develop vacant lands within ANS communities.**

### **Progress Highlights**

The communities of Beechville and Hammonds Plains are making headway in this area. Communities in the Preston Township area have started the planning process to see the potential uses for vacant lands in the community.

## **Advocate for the Africville Heritage Trust's acquisition of additional lands near Africville Park.**

### **Progress Highlights**

REP supported the Africville Heritage Trust's advocacy efforts and engagement with private sector parties involved in the acquisition of additional lands.

## **Objective 2.3**

### **Explore international and economic cultural opportunities.**

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## **Pursue sister city and international trade and development relationships with African countries with ancestral ties to African Nova Scotians.**

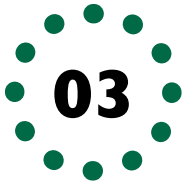
### **REP Progress Highlights**

Work continues to build a relationship with Manya Krobo, Ghana to identify economic, cultural, and international development opportunities.

## **Attract international investors into the African Nova Scotian communities.**

### **Progress Highlights**

The ITD working group has been established. A key priority in 2024-2025 will be the development of an action plan for attracting international investors.



## **PRIORITY: EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

### **Objective 3.1**

#### **Increase labour force attachment for African Nova Scotians.**

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##### **Continue the ANS Connector Program that connects ANS graduates to the networks and resources needed to build a career in Halifax.**

###### **Progress Highlights**

###### Program Totals

- 21 new Connectors
- 45 ANS Connectees
- 12 jobs found by Connectees
- 200 job and training opportunities shared with ANS job seekers

Based on lessons learned in implementing the ANS Connector Program, a redesign of the ANS Connector Program is being undertaken to better serve ANS job seekers and result in increased attachment to the labour market. The ANSREP has recommended to the funder that the talent pool and scope of the program be broadened to include unemployed, underemployed, and disabled African Nova Scotians who can be connected to mentorship, professional networking, and training and job opportunities.

##### **Identify and share existing programs and services supporting the workforce attachment of African Nova Scotians.**

###### **Progress Highlights**

More than 200 job and training opportunities were shared with ANS job seekers. New referral partners were identified and relationships were built and strengthened.

##### **Connect African Nova Scotians to employment opportunities at HRM.**

###### **Progress Highlights**

The Advisory Council is collaborating with HRM's African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office (ANSAIO), partners, and stakeholders on opportunities to advance this action. This has resulted in the creation of three new planning positions at HRM designated to work with African Nova Scotian communities.

##### **Connect ANS-owned businesses to corporate supply chains and government contracts.**

###### **Progress Highlights**

The REP team continued to connect our communities to information sessions and training to advance this action. A webinar on HRM procurement with ANS businesses is planned for December 2023.

## **Develop a mentorship program to engage and support the development of ANS youth.**

### **Progress Highlights**

REP staff and Councils actively engage in youth mentorship (e.g. work with 902 ManUp). REP will develop a youth mentorship program to be completed in 2024/25.

## **Objective 3.2**

### **Increase entrepreneurship opportunities in ANS communities**

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#### **Explore cooperative ('co-op') models and assess their potential use for ANS communities.**

##### **Progress Highlights**

REP supported three businesses interested in developing social enterprises, connecting them to resources and providing letters of support for funding.

As a member of the Black Housing Network, REP is exploring co-operative housing models for ANS communities.

#### **Connect ANS entrepreneurs to business development programs and services.**

##### **Progress Highlights**

BBI has an MOU with Halifax Partnership that outlines services and support for ANS entrepreneurs. REP is working with BBI on a joint program for local small business vendors in the ANS community.

REP supported the Diversity Employment Network (DEN) in developing a training to help employers create a positive environment for diverse workers. More than 20 employers participated in a series of trainings offered by DEN.

#### **Support the growth of ANS business in the Arts and Culture sector.**

##### **Progress Highlights**

REP held a roundtable with representatives of music (African Nova Scotia Music Association), performing arts (Lighthouse Arts Centre) and film (Emerging Lens) to discuss developing a strategy that will support the success of Black arts and culture entrepreneurs and businesses. Two additional roundtables are planned for 2024/25.



**SUMMIT AND  
INTERNATIONAL  
CONFERENCE  
HIGHLIGHTS**






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Trayvone Clayton, REP  
Community Engagement  
Specialist

From September 21-23 2023, the Road to Economic Prosperity hosted its annual REP working day, Community Summit, and inaugural International Conference. The working day provided opportunities for REP council members to meet and collaborate with African Nova Scotian community organizations.

The Community Summit brought together over 100 community members and partners to celebrate progress made on the REP Plan over the past year and included a presentation of ANS economic and well-being data.

The International Conference held on day three was a dynamic event with community members and local, national, and international thought leaders who shared best practices and lessons learned from community economic development work in Black communities in the US and Canada. The gathering served as a powerful platform to explore key themes vital for the sustainable development of African Nova Scotian communities.




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Nene Kwasi Kafefe  
Guest Facilitator



## WHAT WE HEARD: SUMMIT & INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Our three-day Working Day, Summit and Conference brought a mix of questions and ideas about how we can create thriving African Nova Scotian communities for the future. These are the major themes we heard from participants.

### Sustainability & Governance:

Discussions centered on establishing resilient economic foundations that endure over time, ensuring that the Road to Economic Prosperity's impact is not just immediate but sustained for future generations.

### Mapping Our Skills and Resources:

Communities recognized that they possess various strengths, and also identified areas for growth. Summit participants emphasized an interest in creating a comprehensive map of each community's capabilities and challenges, providing a roadmap for partnerships, skill development, and resources needed to fuel sustainable economic growth.

### Intergenerational Relationships & Youth:

The need to forge stronger intergenerational relationships was a thread throughout the three days. Participants in the room called out the value youth have in steering the community towards prosperity. Discussions explored ways to bridge generational gaps with communication between generations. All agreed that the goal is to ensure that the wisdom of elders seamlessly connects with the innovation and energy of the youth.

### Land Use and Preservation:

Conversations addressed the historic and current significance of land to African Nova Scotians. Community members engaged in dialogues about responsible land stewardship and preservation, highlighting the need to secure investment in community land trusts, which empower communities to control and own valuable parcels for sustainable economic development. Beechville and Upper Hammonds Plains shared their progress on reclaiming historic lands for African Nova Scotian communities and protecting it to prevent further loss.

### Building Self-Reliance:

The International Conference delved into the concept of building self-reliance within Black communities. Delegates explored strategies for economic empowerment that promote self-sufficiency and resilience, such as food sovereignty. The discussions focused on initiatives that empower communities to control and sustain their economic destinies, reducing dependence on external sources.

## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

### Keynote Speaker



George Elliott Clarke, a renowned poet, novelist, playwright, and critic, graced the conference as the keynote speaker. Clarke, a seventh-generation Canadian of African American and Mi'kmaq Amerindian descent, has earned numerous awards, honorary doctorates, and holds the esteemed position of Professor of English at the University of Toronto. His keynote address delved into the history of economics for African Nova Scotians, highlighting the promises made and broken. He emphasized the importance of keeping economic development at the forefront of our discussions and efforts.

### Panel Discussions

The conference featured two engaging panel discussions moderated by Nene Kwasi Kafele.

An Elder and community organizer with nearly four decades of experience, Kafele is a distinguished figure in human rights and social justice leadership across Canada, the Caribbean, and Africa. As a consultant with the Road to Economic Prosperity initiative, he specializes in the Africentric process of community organizing and development, translating theory and philosophy into actionable practice with transparency. Kafele was the first speaker at the inaugural REP gathering and has played a crucial role in assessing progress. He has welcomed our councils to this work through traditional ceremonies at the launch of the Advisory, Elder, and Youth councils.



## Panel 1: Progressive Practices in Community Economic Development - Lessons and Critical Impact

This panel discussed approaches to sustainable community growth and ways to build strong alliances across organizations, sectors, communities, and borders.



- **Dr. Andrea Roberts**, an Associate Professor of Urban and Environmental Planning at the University of Virginia's School of Architecture, is known for her work in highlighting disappearing African American communities. Formerly at Texas A&M University, she founded The Texas Freedom Colonies Project in 2014, mapping 489+ settlements to challenge invisibility and environmental injustice. Dr. Roberts is also the Consultant/Owner of Freedom Colonies Project, LLC, providing research services to preservation organizations.
- **Jerome Morgan** is an innovations expert and change agent, originally from Toronto, Ontario. He is the founder of Wood Buffalo Strategy Group, a design consulting firm specializing in strategy, human-centered design, organizational development, and facilitation. Currently, Jerome leads the Hogan's Alley Black Communities Housing Solutions Lab in Vancouver, British Columbia, working to address housing needs and contribute to CMHC's national housing strategy for Metro Vancouver's Black communities.
- **Abigail Moriah** is a connector, facilitator, and planner with a focus on affordable housing and equity in development. She is the founder of the Black Planning Project, aiming to center Black experiences and engagement in planning and development. Abigail co-founded the Mentorship Initiative for Indigenous, Black, and Planners of Colour (MIPOC) and serves as a Founding Board member for the Black Planners and Urbanists Association.



## Panel 2: Strategies in Sustainability: Planning, Food Sovereignty and Black-led Development

This panel explored the intersection of sustainability and community development, specifically focusing on Black communities, addressing areas such as food security, planning for Black community development, creating Black business hub spaces, and more.



- **Veronica Marsman** is the Property Manager with Akoma Holdings, managing and developing 320 acres of Black Community property in Westphal.
- **Wendie L. Wilson** is an artist and educator. She currently serves as the Executive Staff Officer BIPOC Engagement and Advocacy with the Nova Scotia Teachers Union and is a powerful advocate for food sovereignty.
- **Itah Sadu** is an international award-winning author and community builder, co-owner of the independent bookstore A Different Booklist, and a founder of the Blackhurst Cultural Centre in Toronto, Ontario.





**AFRICAN  
NOVA SCOTIAN  
PROSPERITY &  
WELL-BEING  
INDEX**

The African Nova Scotian Prosperity and Well-being Index is the first of its kind to focus on statistics for Black Nova Scotians. It serves as a tool to assess and report on the social and economic well-being of the Black community in Nova Scotia.

The Index considers factors such as population, education, income, and housing to provide insights into the daily realities of Black individuals in the region. It is crucial for monitoring the impact of economic activities, government policies, laws, and regulations on Nova Scotia's Black population. By utilizing data from Statistics Canada, collected every five years, the Index allows communities to advocate for policy changes and funding, and prioritize development initiatives.

Data is specifically sorted by racial identity, including generational status, offering a detailed understanding of the experiences of first, second, and third-generation Black Nova Scotians. The classification of third generation Black Nova Scotians is used as a proxy to indicate Black Nova Scotians of Historic African Nova Scotian lineage in the data set.

The participation of African Nova Scotians in the Census is emphasized as crucial, as it ensures accurate representation and influences decisions made by government, business, and community organizations, while also contributing to a valuable historical record.

A portion of the ANS Prosperity and Well-being Index data was presented at the 2023 Community Summit. Attendees were intrigued by some of the data and expressed the need for a standalone ANS Index event. As a result of the interest in this data from community members, partners and beyond, the Road to Economic Prosperity made plans to host an event in spring 2024 to launch the first comprehensive ANS Prosperity and Well-being Index report.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Although unemployment has lowered over the years, unemployment for Black Nova Scotians still remains the **highest amongst all minority statuses**.

A Black person **earns less than a non-minority** at every educational level in Halifax.

The average income for Black Nova Scotians in Halifax is **\$31,090** compared to a non-minority who on average would make **\$41,080**.

Black people in Nova Scotia in the highest paid positions **still make less than non-minorities**.

The population of Black people who have achieved a post-secondary degree has **increased by 15% since 2006**.

According to research from Engage Nova Scotia, Black Nova Scotians are **more likely to report being discriminated against** based on their ethnicity, culture, race, or skin.

**60% of Black Nova Scotians are of third generational status or greater** (i.e., three generations born in Nova Scotia), and nearly 30% of Black people in Nova Scotia are first generation residents in the province.

Black people overall in Canada are more vulnerable to not meeting housing affordability and suitability. African Nova Scotians have the **greatest need for housing**, more than any other minority status in the Province.

Jigme Choerab, Economist with Halifax Partnership and member of the REP Research Working Group presents ANS index statistics.





**BUILDING  
BRIDGES:  
PARTNERSHIP IN  
ACTION**

## NSCC

The Road to Economic Prosperity has forged a partnership with the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) Akerley Campus that embodies the spirit of collaboration and advancement. NSCC generously provided their space as the venue for the 2023 Summit and International Conference. Their connection to REP's third pillar – Education, Employment, and Entrepreneurship – demonstrates a shared commitment to driving economic prosperity in Nova Scotia.

NSCC's dedication to supporting black communities and students is evident through their Black Community Council, which actively works on recruitment, retention, and providing essential support to African/Black Nova Scotians.

This partnership is not only about advancing educational and employment equity and fostering an inclusive learning environment for African/Black Nova Scotians, disrupting racism and systemic barriers, and collectively developing capacities and accountability for a brighter and more equitable future.



“When I became Principal at NSCC Akerley campus in February 2022, one of my primary mandates was to ensure that the African Nova Scotian community saw our campus as an accessible space. Especially for the Preston Township, as this historic ANS community was in close proximity to our Dartmouth campus. A year after I started, Carolann Wright approached me about the REP conference to be held in the fall of 2023. From that point, the team at Halifax Partnership and our team at Akerley campus worked for months to lay the foundations for a successful community conference. When September 21, 2023 arrived, my heart was filled with pride and joy as so many of the community members I would consider family, friends and colleagues arrived at Akerley campus for three days of speakers, conversation and comradery. The conference was exactly the type of ANS community engagement I had envisioned when I first accepted the job at NSCC. I am looking forward to a continued partnership with Halifax Partnership and REP.”

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**Augy Jones,**  
Principal, NSCC Akerley Campus (2023)

## THE SPARK CONTINUES: PARTNERSHIP WITH RBC

*The Spark - Igniting Conversations Speaker Series* presented by RBC emerged from the ANS community's vision to foster constructive dialogues with leaders from community, the private sector, public institutions, and post-secondary institutions on challenges and opportunities to advance ANS education, entrepreneurship, and employment.

In 2023, we hosted two impactful events. In May, we hosted a panel on the opportunities and challenges for African Nova Scotian women working in and interested in pursuing a career in the trades. In October, we held a discussion on collaborative strategies to improve housing in Black communities. These gatherings served as critical milestones in advancing the shared commitment to drive economic inclusion and development for African Nova Scotians. Thank you to RBC for supporting the Spark Series over the past two years. These conversations have already had a ripple effect in our communities and we are looking forward to seeing what will come.



The Spark Speaker Series panelists share insights and experiences on African Nova Scotian women in the trades.

Curtis Whiley and Veronica Marsman speak on housing in ANS Communities, October 2023

## PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA

The Government of Nova Scotia is a vital partner in advancing the Road to Economic Prosperity. In March, the Province announced \$150,000 in funding from its division of African Nova Scotian Affairs to support the continued advancement of REP's strategic priorities over the next three years, including building unity and capacity in ANS communities outside of the Halifax region to develop and implement community action plans.

"Collaboration is an important part of the work between government and communities. It's critical to support initiatives that seek to improve the economic well-being of African Nova Scotian communities and address generational economic challenges." - Dwayne Provo, Associate Deputy Minister/CEO of African Nova Scotian Affairs (2021-2023).



## HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

REP continued to strengthen our collaboration with Halifax Regional Municipality staff and Regional Council to support our priorities. Some of this work includes:

1. **Upper Hammonds Plains Land Use Review:** In response to community concerns about rapid land development, Halifax Regional Council initiated a review of land use policies in 2021. Following consultation with residents, the Council approved amendments in January 2023 to better manage development in Upper Hammonds Plains, including changes to zoning regulations to protect the area's character.
2. **Support for the Road to Economic Prosperity Plan:** In April 2023, Halifax Regional Council endorsed the African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity 3-5 Year Plan and committed \$365,000 annually (2023-2026) to support its implementation.
3. **Amendments to the Municipal Planning Strategy for Beechville:** On July 11, 2023, Halifax Regional Council approved amendments to the Timberlea/Lakeside/Beechville Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law. These amendments included:
  - Rezoning properties on the south side of St. Margarets Bay Road in Beechville to Local Commercial (C-1) and establishing a Beechville Comprehensive Development District Zone, which mandates a master planning process informed by community goals.
  - Directing the Chief Administrative Officer for HRM to work with African Nova Scotian communities throughout HRM to review zoning and consider developing a zone that acknowledges historic development patterns in African Nova Scotian communities, taking into consideration the lot fabric and unique circumstances in each community.
  - The Municipality also approved a plan to involve the public in reviewing and updating the Beechville Planning Strategy and Community Benefit Action Plan. This will allow for specific changes to the area's development rules (like zoning and land use) to be considered when needed.
4. **Incorporation of Community Benefits in Development:** In 2023, REP has been spearheading the adoption of Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs) by the Halifax Regional Municipality. The Municipality is supportive of CBAs and has requested that the Province make legislative changes that will allow the Municipality to negotiate and enter into CBAs with African Nova Scotian communities and developers.



Dwayne Provo, Associate Deputy Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs (left), with REP Advisory Council Co-chairs and REP Executive Director Carolann Wright.



**COMMUNITY  
UPDATES**



## UPPER HAMMONDS PLAINS

Over the past year, the Upper Hammonds Plains Community Development Association (UHPCDA) has been working tirelessly to create positive change in our community. One major success has been the completion of the zoning review process and the successful amendment of the zoning by-law in Upper Hammonds Plains (UHP). This was a major milestone for our community, and we are incredibly proud of what we have accomplished.

At the Halifax Regional Council meeting on January 10, 2023, community members ranging from elders to infants filled City Hall. It was quite possibly the largest showing of African Nova Scotians that the council had seen in recent years. Regional Council adopted our zoning amendments which was a significant step forward for us. This ensures that large-scale developments follow the development agreement process which require community involvement.

We are also aware that challenges are up ahead, and we are committed to continuing our momentum. Advocating to ensure UHP is allocated dedicated planners, and funding to complete a Community Benefits Agreement are at the forefront of our minds.

The Road to Economic Prosperity has been a tremendous support throughout this process. Members have counseled us when times were tough, provided guidance, wrote letters of support, and advocated for us within the Municipality. We are incredibly grateful for their unwavering support.

In conclusion, the UHPCDA is proud of what we have accomplished over the past year, and we remain committed to continuing our work to create positive change in our community. We look forward to working with the Road to Economic Prosperity and other organizations to overcome challenges and bring economic prosperity to our community.



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John Young of the Lucasville Greenway Society and Lucasville community members engaged in community planning.



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Iris Drummond and Debra Lucas of the Lucasville Community Association

## LUCASVILLE: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH COLLABORATION

*Lucasville, a historic Black community established in 1827, is seeing renewed energy in community development through the work of multiple organizations focused on infrastructure improvements, historical preservation, and building community cohesion.*

The Lucasville Greenway Society, established in 2013, has been working with various levels of government and stakeholders to develop a walking and biking greenway trail connecting the Wallace Lucas Community Center to the Old Sackville Road. This 2.4-kilometer section represents the first phase of what could eventually become a 7.2-kilometer trail spanning the length of Lucasville Road. The project aims to address the community's lack of sidewalks, transit, and safe active transportation options along a high-traffic road with narrow shoulders.

Beyond basic transportation infrastructure, the Greenway Society envisions the trail as a way to showcase Lucasville's rich history through interpretive signage highlighting community members' contributions. Plans include installing benches every 500 meters featuring historical information, as well as marking significant sites like the location where baptisms were performed by the local church. The society sees the project as an opportunity for cultural tourism and preserving community heritage as Lucasville approaches its bicentennial in 2027.

The Lucasville Community Association, chaired by Debra Lucas, has been instrumental in community development efforts. One of the association's notable achievements was successfully advocating for the redrawing of community boundaries in 2017. This initiative restored historic areas of Lucasville that had been incorrectly designated as part of Hammonds Plains during the 1996 municipal amalgamation, including the Timber Trails and Waterstone developments.

Currently, the community is working to unite four distinct organizations - the Wallace Lucas Community Center, Lucasville Education Committee, Lucasville Community Association, and Lucasville Greenway Society - to create a more cohesive approach to development. Regular community events like monthly coffee houses help bring residents together, while partnerships with organizations like the Bedford-Sackville Community Health team provide important services to residents. Community leaders are particularly focused on engaging youth and developing the next generation of leadership. There are also ongoing efforts to address development pressures and ensure the community has input on new projects, following the example of nearby Upper Hammonds Plains, which secured zoning changes requiring community consultation.

As Lucasville approaches its 200th anniversary in 2027, these various initiatives aim to preserve the community's historical significance while creating sustainable infrastructure for future generations. The success of these efforts will depend largely on continued collaboration between community organizations and engagement from residents of all ages.



Gabriel Milhet, poses with Deacons and Beechville community elders Patsy Crawford and Iona Duncan-States.



## BEECHVILLE: HISTORIC WINS AS COMMUNITY RECLAIMS ITS BOUNDARIES

*Beechville secures landmark expansion, returning territory to six times its previous size as part of ongoing effort to preserve heritage and build future prosperity*

In 2023, the historic African Nova Scotian community of Beechville marked several significant achievements in their ongoing work to reclaim and preserve their heritage while building for the future. Through the efforts of the Beechville Community Development Association (BCDA), the community secured a landmark rezoning approval that expanded Beechville's boundaries to six times their previous size - a particularly meaningful victory for a community that has seen its original 1,000 acres consistently diminished since its establishment by Black Refugees in 1816.

"Beechville is now six times the size it was last year," explains Danielle Jackson from BCDA. "We're also in the process of receiving surplus lands that were identified with community input. Historically, they process these parcels one piece at a time, but we advocated to have all six pieces transferred in a single transaction."

The expansion helps restore some of the territory that was gradually taken from the community through various means over the past two centuries. As documented by Gabriel Milhet, a student and Beechville community member for an assigned research paper, the erosion of Beechville's lands began as early as 1817 with property expropriations by Watershed Management. "Community oral history captures the continued dwindling of its borders," Gabriel notes, citing historical accounts from community elders that this expropriation occurred in exchange for services and businesses being brought to the area. "One resident referred to this incident as 'groceries for land.'"

Infrastructure improvements are also on the horizon, with the community successfully advocating for sidewalk extensions and a new crosswalk to be installed in 2024, particularly benefiting the historic Monroe subdivision - a neighborhood that emerged from a cooperative housing initiative in the 1960s. "They do not have sidewalks, nor do we have a crosswalk. So we've been meeting with HRM, and we just recently found out that in 2024, we will have the continuation of the sidewalks on the street, as well as a crosswalk in front of our Monroe subdivision," says Danielle.

The association's work is deeply rooted in preserving and documenting community history while using that knowledge to inform present-day advocacy. As Gabriel explains: "Through this recollection and through this acknowledgment of the history of the community, it's going to be a new day and a different time. We can move forward with the properties that we get, and we can create a solid case for our community members."

Plans are also underway for new community amenities, including a community garden with a kiosk for selling produce. These initiatives align with BCDA's broader vision of community wealth building. "When we think about wealth, we instantaneously think about money. And I think our work as community folks is to also reshape what wealth means," explains Danielle. "There's community wealth, and when we all do well, we will all prosper. When we get these pieces of land back, not only are we saying thank you, but we're also saying when it's time to be developed, we want X amount of quota. We want to be infused through all points."

The BCDA's achievements in 2023 represent the continuation of a long tradition of community advocacy in Beechville, dating back to the establishment of their Baptist church in 1832, the founding of one of the first African Nova Scotian schools, and the incorporation of the BCDA itself by provincial statute in 1967. As Gabriel emphasizes, "Community advocacy has always been important to our community. The framework has always been there, dating back 200 years ago."

# GLOSSARY

## COMMUNITY ACTION PLANNING

Community Action Planning is a process through which a community comes together to identify its strengths, weaknesses, and priorities and to develop a plan to address these issues. The goal of community action planning is to empower community members to take control of their own future and work together to create a better community for all. The process of community action planning can involve needs assessments, community visioning, goal setting, and the development of action plans to achieve these goals. Having a Community Action Plan is a crucial first step in re-imagining the relationship between the ANS community, government, and developers.

## COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

A Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP) is a long-term, all-inclusive plan for the physical, social, and economic development of a community. It is a complete roadmap for the community's future, outlining the community's vision, goals, and objectives, and identifying specific strategies and action steps to achieve these goals. The process of creating a CCP typically involves a comprehensive public engagement process, including data collection and analysis, community input, and collaboration with local stakeholders, including government officials, business owners, and community-based organizations.

## ZONING

Zoning is a system of land-use regulation that divides a municipality into different areas or zones, each with its own set of regulations and restrictions. The purpose of zoning is to control and manage the development of land in a way that promotes the health, safety, and welfare of the community, and to ensure that land is used in a way that is compatible with the surrounding area.

## COMMUNITY BENEFITS AGREEMENT

Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs) are formal, negotiated, and legally-binding agreements that outline specific benefits a community will receive in exchange for being impacted by a development project, as well as the responsibilities of each party in relation to a particular development project. CBAs have been used as a tool to ensure that new developments in communities provide tangible and positive benefits. By having a direct say in the development process, the community can help to shape the project in a way that benefits the area and meets the needs and priorities of local residents.

## STAFF REPORT

Halifax Regional Council governs the Halifax Regional Municipality and makes decisions in three ways:

1. Resolutions (motion) – method of carrying on daily business.
2. Policies (Administrative Orders) – deal with administration of the organization.
3. By-laws – regulate activities of the public.
- 4.

When Council passes a motion, it directs municipal staff to look into an issue and return to Council with a report recommending action on that issue. Staff reports reflect professional advice from subject matter experts, which Council considers when making its decision. Each Council meeting consists of staff presenting reports on issues Council has asked for information and advice on. Council then discusses the report, asks questions of staff, and ultimately votes on the report recommendation. The outcome of that vote determines the ongoing work and direction HRM will take on each particular issue. The process of requiring staff reports ensures that Council receives professional advice and is aware of any related impacts and risks an issue may have. Council's role is then to decide if that advice best reflects the interests of the public and their residents.



# JOIN THE WORK OF THE ROAD TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Visit [anseconomicprosperity.com](http://anseconomicprosperity.com) to keep up to date on progress and REP initiatives and to learn about events and engagements happening in your community. For information on how to get involved, and to subscribe to our email list and e-newsletter, send us a message at: [contact@anseconomicprosperity.com](mailto:contact@anseconomicprosperity.com)

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Notes

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