



2026-2030 STRATEGIC PLAN

DOWNTOWN
BUSINESS COMMISSION **HALIFAX**

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



I am pleased to present **Downtown Halifax Business Commission's (DHBC) 2026-2030 Strategic Plan.**

I first joined DHBC's Board of Directors in 2019 and at that time, Downtown Halifax was experiencing great momentum, with strong private development, and reaping the benefits of public investments, such as the new library, Halifax Convention Centre, and Argyle Street.

We all remember what happened next: 2020 brought a worldwide pandemic that fundamentally changed Downtown's role as a central business district. Hybrid work, unplanned population growth and congestion, and inflation arrived. DHBC focused its efforts on collecting and analyzing data and advocating for a new commitment to Downtown recovery.

In 2024, we launched **Downtown Halifax Vision 2030** – a blueprint for where we believe our Downtown should go in the immediate future. We remain committed to that, and this year, the DHBC Board renewed our Strategic Plan to better align the organization with the challenges and opportunities that will carry us into the 2030s.

As DHBC embarks on its 40th year as an organization, dedicated to revitalizing Downtown for our 1600+ members, we are pleased to focus our efforts on this new Strategic Plan.

Sincerely,

Marilisa Benigno
Chair, Board of Directors
Downtown Halifax Business Commission

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2025, **Downtown Halifax Business Commission** (DHBC) initiated the development of a new Strategic Plan. The goal was to create a high-level blueprint to inform the organization's work and objectives during the next four years and that aligns with **Downtown Halifax Vision 2030**.

This strategic planning process involved re-examining the vision and mission of the organization and setting out new strategies for achieving the objectives over several years.

The Strategic Plan sets a very clear direction for staff and Board and serves as a decision-making tool for the organization. It also helps inform communications with members, community partners, supporters, and visitors to the Downtown. All activity should support the strategic mission and vision of the organization.

Fairwinds Training & Development was invited to facilitate the planning process. Data was collected, information was gathered, a staff/Board strategic mapping session held, and the framework of the plan was created.

A strategy development committee consisting of the Executive Board members and staff leadership was formed to consider all the data and articulate the plan. Several sessions were held, and many volunteer hours contributed.

Next steps for the organization include the development and implementation of annual operational plans, which will provide the roadmap for how the goals will be achieved.

MISSION, VISION & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

MISSION

We champion and support a thriving Downtown Halifax.

VISION

Canada's favourite Downtown.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We foster collaboration and bring partners together to achieve common goals.

We make informed decisions grounded in data, best-practice, and measurable impact.

We welcome all people and support a Downtown that embraces diversity.

We respond to change with creativity, resilience, and focus.

We act boldly and responsibly to move Downtown forward.

We communicate openly and share information responsibly.

OVERARCHING GOALS



Vibrancy

A Downtown that is active, accessible, welcoming, and experience-rich year-round.



Advocacy

Effective policy, infrastructure, and investment decisions that support long-term Downtown prosperity.



Promotion

A compelling narrative that attracts people Downtown.



Organizational Excellence

Strengthen organizational effectiveness through clear governance, succession planning, role clarity, and modernized systems.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES



VIBRANCY

Goal:

A Downtown that is active, accessible, welcoming, and experience-rich year-round.

Expected Results:

- Increased year-round pedestrian activity.
- Improved perception of accessibility and safety.
- Enhanced public experiences.
- Stronger integration between the waterfront and the rest of Downtown.

Objectives:

1. Activation & Placemaking

Deliver and support high-impact, year-round programming and initiatives that measurably increase pedestrian activity, extend visit duration, and enhance Downtown's reputation as a vibrant destination.

2. Accessibility & Experience

Improve ease of access and visitor experience by enhancing pedestrian mobility, parking perception, wayfinding, and streetscape conditions.

3. Downtown Growth

Advance Vision 2030.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES



ADVOCACY

Goal:

Effective policy, infrastructure, and investment decisions that support long-term Downtown prosperity.

Expected Results:

- DHBC considered the voice of Downtown.
- Enhanced understanding of DHBC's role in creating a vibrant Downtown.
- Measurable policy influence.
- Improved transportation and land-use outcomes.
- Cohesive economic development leadership.

Objectives:

1. Government & Policy Influence

Invest in strong, trusted relationships with all levels of government and indigenous leaders to influence policies and planning decisions that support Downtown.

2. Downtown Economic Leadership

Position DHBC as the leading convener and authoritative voice for Downtown economic development.

3. Infrastructure Improvements

Lobby for strategic transportation, land-use, and infrastructure projects that support long-term economic growth.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES



PROMOTION

Goal:

A compelling narrative that attracts people Downtown.

Expected Results:

- Clear message to members on value of DHBC.
- Stronger member engagement and satisfaction.
- A sense of pride for all members.
- Improved public perception.
- Consistent and understood brand messaging.

Objectives:

1. Member Value & Engagement

Increase member satisfaction and engagement.

2. Communications

Promote and communicate Downtown events, economic impact, and success stories.

3. Brand & Positioning

Reinforce Downtown Halifax's identity as a desired destination.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES



ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Goal:

Strengthen organizational effectiveness through clear governance, succession planning, role clarity, and modernized systems.

Objectives:

1. Internal Processes

Ensure internal capacity, leadership continuity, and operational strength.