

# CONNECTED.

2008-2011.



Hants Regional Development Authority  
Connect. To Business. To Life.



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# MAKING CONNECTIONS

For ten years, the Hants Regional Development Authority (Hants RDA) has been facilitating community and business development in Hants County.

Our clients have built and maintained facilities, celebrated our culture and heritage, and employed our neighbours. They have made significant contributions to the social and economic development of Hants County. And we have been proud to help move vision to reality.

Through meetings with our clients, neighbours, and community leaders, we have now refreshed our own vision for the future. We have found a shared desire for connectedness. We heard that community connections make our rural lifestyle distinct, and business connections make our economy strong and flexible.

Over the next three years, the Hants RDA will focus on making connections. We will connect new tourists, residents and entrepreneurs to Hants County through Regional Promotion. We will connect our clients to new skills and resources through Community Development and Business Development. And we will connect Hants County to outside decision makers through Advocacy.

By becoming connected, we can achieve sustainable prosperity.

*"When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world."*

*- John Muir (1838-1914)*

# VISION

Throughout our strategic planning consultations, we heard stories of people moving to Hants County to “escape” urban life. People told us that they choose to live here to be closer to nature and the ocean, to maintain family ties, and to live at a sustainable pace. Over the coming years, Hants County

can become even more of a haven from adrenalin soaked cities. It can be the place where people reconnect to life.

At the same time, Hants County can be a place where entrepreneurs connect to a different kind of business climate. We can solidify our appeal to larger companies

that seek transportation infrastructure, proximity to the airport, and talented workers. These will be advanced manufacturing companies that add value to our abundant natural resources while recycling one-another's waste (like Shaw Resources and Minas Basin do today). But we will also see the emergence of the "lifestyle entrepreneur". These individuals will choose to live in Hants County and establish knowledge-based, globally-competitive small businesses.

Meanwhile, young people will be succeeding baby boomers at the helm of Hants County's businesses and farms. We will all make an effort to buy local products, especially local food. And visitors will travel here from around the globe to experience Nova Scotia's star attraction: the Bay of Fundy.

Local residents envision an economically prosperous and socially vibrant Hants County. They focus, not on the quantity, but on the quality of what we have.

*"Sustainable prosperity  
for Hants County."*

*- Hants RDA Vision Statement*

# MISSION

The Hants RDA is one of 13 Regional Development Authorities in Nova Scotia. It was incorporated in 1997 under the Regional Community Development Act. Governed by a volunteer board of directors, we receive funding from the municipalities of East Hants, West Hants, Windsor, and Hantsport; the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency; and the provincial departments of Economic Development and Community Services.

*"To make the connections that help Hants County achieve sustainable prosperity."*

*- Hants RDA Mission Statement*

We are community economic development professionals: members of the Economic Developers' Association of Canada and the Canadian Community Economic Development Network.



Like your family doctor, we help our clients diagnose their needs and then we provide information and referrals.

Like a sports coach, we help our clients set goals, make a gameplan, and develop the skills they need to win.



# VALUES

The world is currently asking itself what genuine progress looks like. We know, for instance, that some of the “economic growth” we have experienced over the past decades has been at the expense of society and the environment. Economic “growth” has meant simply “more.” However, economic “development” implies that our economy can also evolve in a qualitative way.

*"We value genuine progress that connects social/cultural diversity and environmental stewardship with economic growth."*

*- Hants RDA Values Statement*

When RDAs were formed ten years ago, Nova Scotia adopted a new definition of “development”:

*...economic, social and institutional change brought about by a broadly representative community process aimed at improving the community as a better place to live and work (Regional Community Development Act, Nova Scotia Statutes, 1994).*

The concept of sustainable development had appeared on the global stage long before RDAs were created. It has, however, only fully made its way to Nova Scotia in the past two years. Sustainable development means more than “environmentally friendly” development.

According to the United Nations,

*"Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (United Nations Brundtland Commission, 1987).*



*Genuine progress stands on three legs: the economy, society, and environment.*

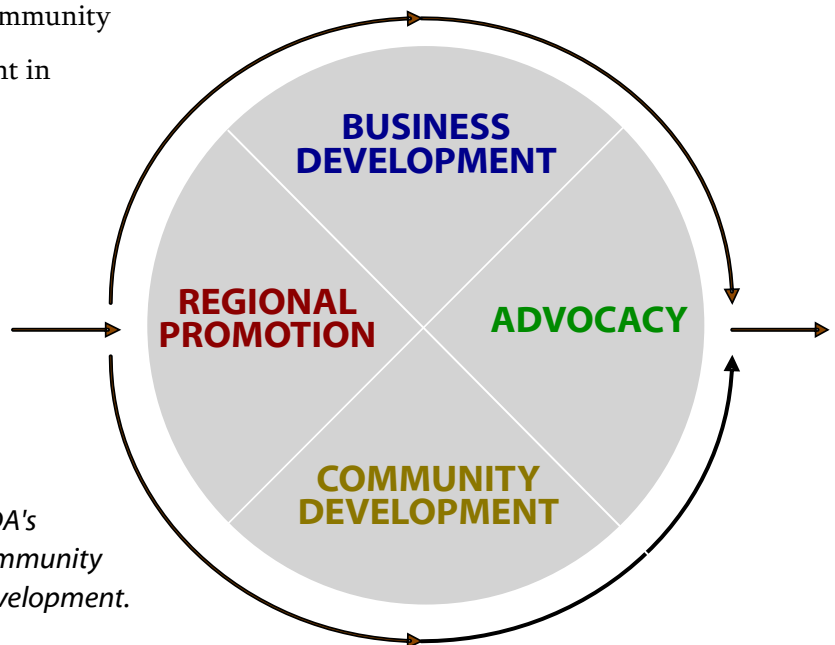
# STRATEGY

Community Economic Development (CED) can be defined as action by people locally to create economic opportunities and enhance social conditions in their communities on a sustainable and inclusive basis.

CED is a community-based and community-directed process that explicitly combines social and economic development and fosters the economic, social, ecological and cultural well being of communities.

This approach has emerged as an alternative to conventional approaches to economic development. It is founded on the belief that problems facing communities – unemployment, poverty, job loss, environmental degradation and loss of community control – need to be addressed in a holistic and participatory way.

The Hants RDA has adopted a four-part strategy to support community economic development in Hants County.



*The Hants RDA's model for community economic development.*

# GOALS AND TACTICS

## REGIONAL PROMOTION

To attract tourists, residents and entrepreneurs to Hants County by:

- Developing and disseminating information and promotional tools.
- Developing a shared Hants County brand.
- Building collaborative networks of Hants County champions/promoters.
- Linking Hants County with broader regional and provincial promotional efforts.

Focus Partners:

Tourists

- Tourism businesses
- Regional Tourism Industry Associations
- Provincial Government
- Bay of Fundy Tourism Partnership
- Municipalities

Residents

- Local Employers
- Provincial Government

Entrepreneurs

- Nova Scotia Business Inc.
- Municipalities
- Business Leaders
- Nova Scotia Association of RDAs

## BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

To help Hants County's most valuable and most growable businesses develop the capacity to create and sustain quality employment by:

- Providing business planning clinics.
- Connecting businesses with the information and resources they need.
- Building networks to address common challenges and opportunities.
- Addressing the needs of multiple businesses through projects and advocacy.

Focus Industries:

Natural Resource Industries

- Agriculture
- Mining
- Forestry

Manufacturing Industries

- Life Sciences Mfg. R&D
- Building Supplies Mfg.
- Technology Mfg.
- Environmental Products Mfg.

Service Industries

- Tourism
- Professional Consulting

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

To help Hants County's communities develop the capacity to address their most pressing opportunities and challenges by:

- Connecting community groups with the information and resources they need.
- Building networks to address common challenges and opportunities.
- Addressing the needs of multiple community groups through projects and advocacy.

Focus Issues:

Greatest Opportunities

- Tourism, culture & heritage

Greatest Challenges

- Community inclusion (newcomers and disadvantaged groups)
- Literacy

## ADVOCACY

To help Hants County's key advocates influence policy changes that support the region's sustainable prosperity by:

- Understanding and sharing information about the development of the region.
- Building a network of key Hants County advocates.

Key Advocates:

- Hants RDA Staff & Board
- Elected Politicians (Councillors, Members of Legislature, Member of Parliament)
- Chambers of Commerce and Business Associations
- Nova Scotia Association of RDAs

## **PLANNING PROCESS**

A year ago, we set out to find a fresh focus for the Hants RDA. We consulted our clients, neighbours and community leaders by travelling throughout Hants County.

From April to June, six community consultations captured the public's vision for this region. These sessions were held in Falmouth, Milford, Vaughan, Selma, Summerville, and Mount Uniacke. Forty individuals shared their perspective on the region's challenges and opportunities.

In September, we joined with the Hants Action Team (a federal/provincial working group) to consult with key not-for-profit organizations from across the county. We also began extensive consultations with all four municipalities. These consultations extended throughout the fall and culminated in a "community leaders discussion paper." Feedback on the discussion paper was received from councillors in all four municipalities. Throughout these consultations, we worked diligently toward the completion of our "business retention and expansion" pilot project. By December, we were able draw upon the opinions of nearly 50 CEOs and business owners.

The Hants RDA staff and board reviewed the results of these consultations throughout the year. Staff held a number of strategy discussions from August 2007 to January 2008. The board devoted time to strategic planning at each meeting from August 2007 to March 2008. As a result, the board approved the principles of this strategy at its February 2008 meeting, and approved this document in March 2008.

*Thank you to the many Hants County residents who helped us assemble this strategy. With your input we have paved the way for cooperation and success in the years to come.*



**1-877-284-2687**

**[www.hantscounty.com](http://www.hantscounty.com)**

East Hants Resource Centre  
Suite 200-1, 15 Commerce Court  
Elmsdale, NS B2S 3K5  
Fax: (902) 883-3024

Enterprise Centre of Hants County  
Box 2313, 80 Water Street  
Windsor, NS B0N 2T0  
Fax: (902) 798-3254