



Town of Bridgewater

Inclusive Economic Growth Plan



LETTER FROM THE MAYOR

Strong thriving communities don't just happen by accident. They're the product of careful planning, thoughtful visioning, inclusive thinking, and an eye toward the cutting edge.

For years, our community of Bridgewater, Nova Scotia, has embraced this ideal for what makes a community that works. As a result, over the past 15 years, we have watched our community blossom as the Main Street of the South Shore, becoming one of the fastest-growing communities in Atlantic Canada.

Ensuring our community's growth and emergence is sustainable and attractive to future investors and residents is an ongoing effort and it requires vigilance and vision.

That's why the Town of Bridgewater has developed our new Inclusive Economic Growth Plan. Our plan is built upon on four key elements:

Growing Bridgewater

Initiatives to expand the Bridgewater Business Park, grow and attract business, new housing, and investment.

Developing our green economy

Initiatives to build on Bridgewater's leadership in energy efficiency, renewable energy, and energy poverty reduction goals towards a sustainable, environmentally sound and low-carbon economy.

Embracing an inclusive and diverse community

Initiatives to develop a more welcoming and diverse community, grow our population and encourage more newcomers to make Bridgewater their new home.

Investing in our infrastructure and assets

Initiatives of other Core Programs, Departments and Services of the Town which support and directly impact economic and community development.

We invite you to review our Inclusive Economic Growth Plan in detail and to reach out to us if you have comments, questions or want to know more about our town.

Bridgewater is poised for its next boom over the coming decade. We'd love for you to be a part of that journey.



David Mitchell

Mayor

PREAMBLE

In the online survey conducted during the development of this *Inclusive Economic Growth Plan*, citizens and businesses alike consistently emphasized the **quality of life** the Town of Bridgewater offers, as well as its **vibrant economy** and the opportunities it presents.

There is much to build on.

Unlike many small towns and municipalities in Nova Scotia, we've consistently grown our population over the past decade. We have a highly diversified economy including advanced manufacturing, public and private sector operations and social enterprises and SMEs.

The Town's reach is significant. We prevailed over 49 other cities in the *Smart City* competition. We've turned that win into *Energize Bridgewater*, a multi-faceted initiative to lift residents out of energy poverty.

Over the past year, we've been one of five regions participating in the forward-looking *Organization for Nova Scotia Innovation-Driven Entrepreneurship* (ONSIDE) under the auspices of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). We've been focused on the expansion of our business park as a future economic driver. We're focused on housing innovation.

Notwithstanding the success, if there is one lesson we've learned from the global pandemic, it is that we cannot rest on our laurels and we cannot be complacent. And, as we are all acutely aware, there are emerging and ongoing disruptions and challenges related to:

- affordable and attainable housing
- settling new residents who we've welcomed to our area during and prior to the pandemic
- addressing infrastructure deficits
- addressing the most critical 21st Century challenge – climate change
- combating skill shortages and addressing talent supply, and
- leveraging the skills and gifts of all our people

And while there is much to build on, there is also much to do. Most importantly, the municipality

cannot do it all alone. Partnerships and collaboration are the lifeblood of community mobilization and collective impact. These are foundational to this plan, recognized in virtually every strategic priority.

As the level of government closest to the people, the municipality, along with the talent and resource of its people, has the potential to be a force multiplier for inclusive progress and positive achievement within our community. As a Council, we are committed to that objective.

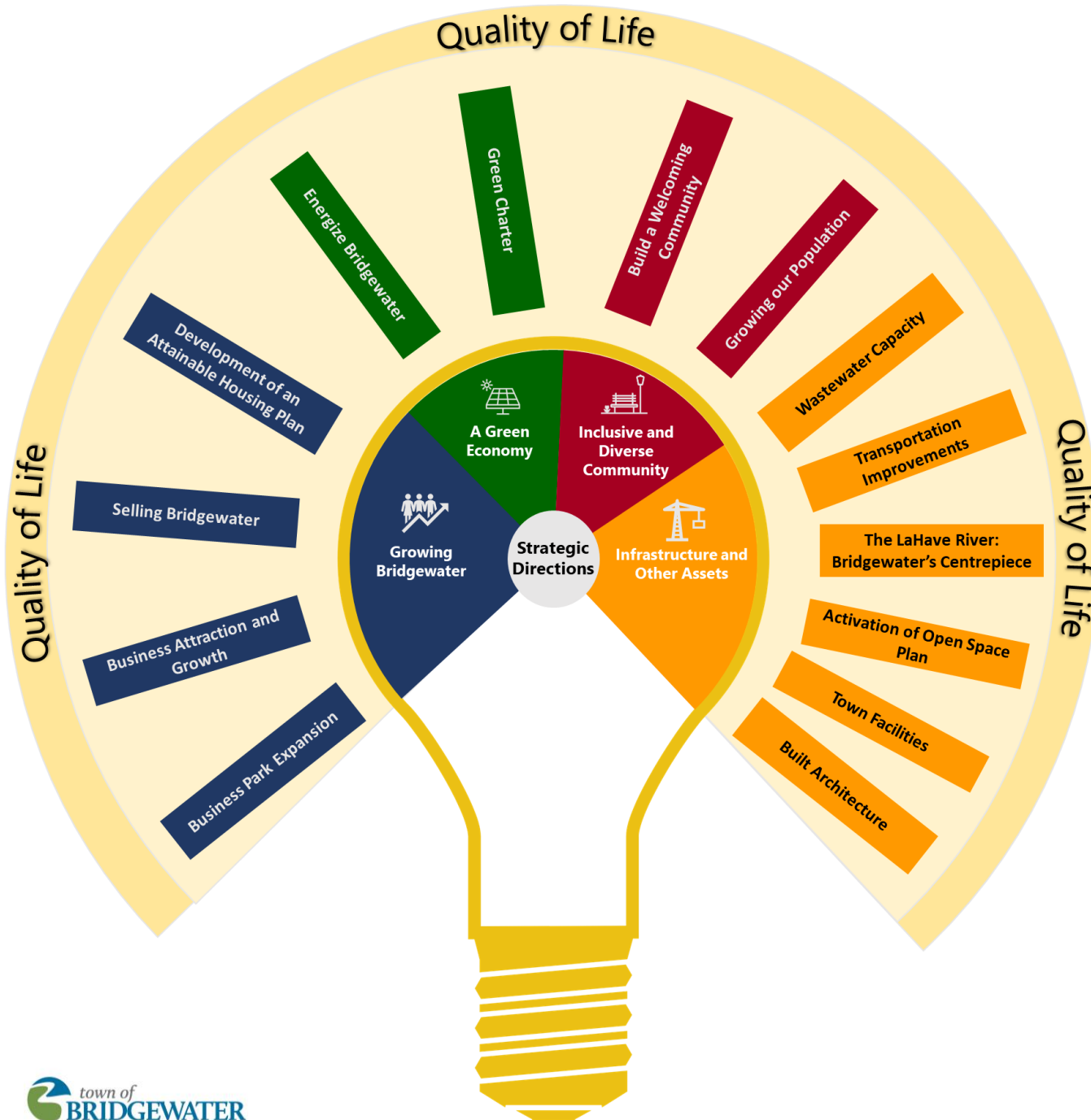
This *Inclusive Economic Growth Plan* addresses what we need to do over the next five years to build on our significant accomplishments and opportunities. It is termed an 'inclusive growth' strategy because we believe that we need to create a thriving economy while leaving no one behind. Everyone must be included and we need to continue to build a welcoming, diverse and respectful community.

Plan development was preceded by a separate market research phase which undertook a deep dive on the current state of our economy, our demography and emerging trends. A future focused economic analysis was also conducted. This included a detailed examination of where the economy is heading and where potential opportunities lie.

This plan is guided by a refined vision and mission and is supported by a value-set that expresses our collective commitment to residents by both the elected Council and the professional staff team.

Plan development also included a PESTLE analysis – an analytic tool which takes into account six external factors that can affect an organization including **Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental**.

This *Inclusive Economic Growth Plan* identifies four key strategic directions, each underpinned by strategic priorities and key objectives. We will ensure that the plan is a 'living document', one which is consistently referred to and used in the implementation and management of strategic priorities. It also includes an accompanying metrics and monitoring strategy designed to ensure that data and evidence are the basis on which the strategic priorities and objectives are updated on an ongoing basis.



VISION

As the regional centre of the South Shore, we are the spark that powers prosperity through the talent of our people and exceptional quality of life.

MISSION

Through progressive governance and strong leadership, we serve the people, organizations and businesses of Bridgewater.

VALUES

- Inclusion
- Integrity
- Innovation
- Transparency



STRATEGIC DIRECTION: GROWING BRIDGEWATER

PRIORITY GOALS	OBJECTIVES
 <p>Business Park Expansion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Refine the Business Park’s Vision considering business objectives, lifestyle, entrepreneurial, innovation, R&D and educational opportunities, completing Concept Development (land use and zoning, infrastructure, marketing, branding and sales administration) for the Business Park. ▪ Based on concept development, market analysis and other work completed to-date, approve LUB Amendments to match highest use potential and streamline approval process for development. ▪ Complete property appraisals for Phase I to guide price structure for land sales. ▪ Prepare a Marketing Plan, incorporating a brand strategy for the Business Park. ▪ Undertake community and stakeholder engagement to support branding and naming opportunities for the park expansion. ▪ Conduct outreach and lead generation activities to attract potential park occupants.
 <p>Business Attraction and Growth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop an Investment Attraction Strategy to attract new businesses to the Town of Bridgewater. ▪ Undertake partnership development to support workforce development and the enhancement of existing and future talent. ▪ Diversify the economy while encouraging business development that expands lifestyle amenities to attract new residents and visitors. ▪ Develop a Business Retention and Expansion Program (BR&E) to support existing business, small and medium enterprises (SME’s). ▪ Focus on Partnership Development (business, post-secondary education, government partners) to facilitate growing an innovation ecosystem.



 Selling Bridgewater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a marketing strategy for Bridgewater to attract new business and investment. ▪ Build a brand strategy in alignment with the strategic directions and priorities of the Inclusive Economic Growth Plan.
 Development of an Attainable Housing¹ Plan (AHP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with key stakeholders to clarify roles and responsibilities, creating a collaborative approach to attainable housing within the Town. ▪ Conduct information gathering (data collection and analysis) to establish the baseline needs and basis for the Attainable Housing Plan. ▪ Develop an implementation plan for the Staff Report recommendations in response to the <i>Nova Scotia Report on Affordable Housing</i>. ▪ Identify infrastructure investment required for attainable housing including those supporting densification and underdeveloped areas within the Town. ▪ Inform future planning policy with the Attainable Housing Plan objectives and refine the regulatory environment to facilitate new housing development.

¹ Attainable Housing means, for the purposes of this plan, the full spectrum of housing from social housing to private or market housing. It refers to both rental and home ownership.





STRATEGIC DIRECTION: A GREEN ECONOMY

Circular, Green, Digital, Sustainable

PRIORITY GOALS	OBJECTIVES
 <p>Green Charter</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To build on Bridgewater’s leadership in energy efficiency, renewable energy and energy poverty reduction, develop a Green Charter to encourage a greener, clean energy economy, support GHG emission reduction efforts and guide municipal activities in areas such as procurement, policy development, land use planning and economic development. ▪ Develop and apply a climate change filter to guide infrastructure policy development, planning and investment as a tool to manage and offset future climate change risks. ▪ Assess the opportunity for fleet electrification – police, public works and transportation vehicles. ▪ Identify and inventory a development and implementation path for green infrastructure – charging stations, exploring green infrastructure innovation, including the possibility of the Town of Bridgewater as “first customer” for emerging “green businesses”, where it makes sense to do so and working within existing regulatory frameworks.
 <p>Energize Bridgewater</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To achieve 80% GHG emission reductions by 2050 over 2011 levels through fully implementing the Community Energy Investment Plan. ▪ Continue to build out <i>Energize Bridgewater</i> with particular focus on the reduction of energy poverty and making housing more affordable through energy efficiency initiatives.









STRATEGIC DIRECTION: INCLUSIVE & DIVERSE COMMUNITY

PRIORITY GOALS	OBJECTIVES
 Build a Welcoming Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engage community partners in a shared objective to make the Town of Bridgewater a <i>Welcoming Community</i>, by promoting and celebrating diversity and Inclusion (D&I). ▪ Advance the work of the Anti-Racism Task Force goals by reviewing Town policies and procedures through an anti-racism/inclusion lens. ▪ Enhance the <i>Bridgewater App</i> – keeping immigrants and newcomers informed / aware of community services.
 Growing our Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhance Bridgewater’s diversity by attracting new immigrants, students, ex-pats and seniors. ▪ Ensure Bridgewater benefits from the establishment of the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Project as a full, permanent Program in 2022 and beyond. ▪ Leverage existing relationships with settlement service organizations including the multicultural association to support D&I initiatives. ▪ Include tracking of migration trends – who is coming to the Town from where and what their needs are – as a means to enhance responsiveness and programming.



STRATEGIC DIRECTION: INFRASTRUCTURE AND OTHER ASSETS

PRIORITY GOALS	OBJECTIVES
 <p>Wastewater Capacity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review and/or revise planning policies to better align land use provisions and current wastewater limitations. ▪ On-going implementation of the multi-year <i>Wastewater Strategy</i> to address current capacity constraints and support future development. ▪ Implementation of the 2021 Infrastructure Master Plan as a vehicle to support planning for inclusive growth and increasing infrastructure resilience and capacity. ▪ To address the significant funding requirements to advance wastewater capacity development, continue to identify funding opportunities to support strategy implementation.
 <p>Transportation Improvements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement the <i>Intersection/Traffic Study</i>. ▪ Undertake a transit feasibility study to examine opportunities for expansion, including new routes in and out of the town. ▪ Assess opportunities to electrify transportation assets to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. ▪ Implement the renewed <i>Active Transportation Plan</i>.

 <p>The LaHave River: Bridgewater’s Centerpiece</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Undertake partnership development (private sector, government and community groups, recreation providers) to support riverfront enhancement and development. ▪ Update the plan for the Riverfront (Downtown and Waterfront Master Plan), focusing on making it a destination and an asset for population and tourism attraction. ▪ Prioritize land acquisition and assembly along the river to address flood mitigation and environmental protection considerations.
 <p>Activation of Open Space Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement the recently approved <i>Open Space Plan</i> for Bridgewater.
 <p>Town Facilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Redevelopment of the Bridgewater Memorial Arena as a multi-purpose facility, supporting municipal operations and providing space in support of community development.
 <p>Built Architecture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support preservation of our Heritage District and historic architecture elsewhere in the Town.

MEASUREMENT

Town of Bridgewater is committed to monitoring and measuring the results of the **2022-2027 Inclusive Economic Growth Plan**

To monitor progress, the Town of Bridgewater uses a format which tracks and updates strategic priorities on a quarterly basis. These are reported on within Council meetings and adjustments and course corrections are made as priorities are achieved.

The Town of Bridgewater is also committed to the use of data to inform evidence-based results.

Over the lifecycle of this *Inclusive Economic Growth Plan*, annual reviews will be undertaken. These provide the basis on which to monitor progress and to update the plan on an ongoing basis. Measurement and outcomes will be enhanced as key Municipal departments align their operational plans with this Strategic Plan.

Tracking and sharing our progress in the implementation of the Plan are essential elements of a transparent and accountable organization and are central to our Council's service commitment to the Town's residents and our partners.

The success we are able to achieve with this plan is your success.