



2024 Provincial Election Priorities

October 29, 2024

Business improvement districts (BIDs) are organizations, created and funded by local businesses, that provide essential services that support economic growth such as marketing, advocacy, and placemaking. Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) is home to nine active BIDs, working tirelessly across various communities, while more than 500 BIDs operate nationwide in Canada. As BIDs, we collaborate on common issues, routinely sharing information and best practices to strengthen our communities.

We are eager to partner with the provincial government and other key stakeholders to support the vitality of downtowns and main streets across HRM. As we face ongoing challenges like mental health, addiction, homelessness, crime, and urban development, we believe that collaborative efforts are vital to securing the long-term success and prosperity of downtowns and main streets.

Here are key goals we look forward to achieving together with the government:

- 1. Support for Public Safety and Social Services**

Expanding provincial resources for mental health services, addiction treatment, and homelessness support is essential. A safe, welcoming environment is crucial for residents, employees, and visitors alike.

- 2. Funding Initiative for Nova Scotia's BIDs**

We propose a funding initiative like New Brunswick's "[Revitalizing Downtowns](#)" program, which generated over \$5.2 million in economic development through cost-shared investments in 2023. 56 projects were funded, including 31 events and marketing initiatives, 8 planning projects and 17 capital projects. A similar approach in HRM would stimulate business growth, community development, and urban revitalization.

- 3. Support Ground-Floor Commercial Space**

Rescind the recent amendment to HRM's Charter, [Minimum Planning Requirements Regulations](#), that reduce the percentage of ground-floor commercial space required in residential buildings started before April 1, 2027. With the population growth, and

increasing densification of our downtowns and main streets, it's essential to provide amenities that cater to these communities. Furthermore, commercial space at ground-floor levels is critical to sustaining small businesses that fuel neighbourhood growth. Reducing commercial space would drastically limit our ability to fund the programs that drive marketing, events, maintenance, and beautification efforts that are essential to thriving downtowns.

4. Construction Mitigation Fund

As requested by HRM, on behalf of the BIDs in 2020, the provincial government needs to make the legislative changes required to allow HRM to establish a ["construction mitigation fund"](#) to support small businesses affected by large-scale projects.

5. Affordable Housing and Homelessness

It's time for a reassessment of the current approach to affordable housing and homelessness. A more coordinated effort between all levels of government and community organizations is needed. As BIDs, we have a unique perspective as "eyes on the street," seeing firsthand the duplications and gaps in services, which must be addressed. A homelessness and poverty summit, led by the province, would bring together HRM, BIDs, and service providers as a starting point for collaborative action.

6. Proactive Government-BID Engagement

We need a stronger, more established, relationship with the provincial government to foster understanding of the role and value of BIDs in HRM. Proactive consultation with BIDs before policy or program changes, especially with economic development, municipal affairs and housing, and community services, is essential for effective collaboration.

By working together, we can ensure the success and sustainability of our downtowns and main streets, benefiting businesses, communities, and the broader HRM.

Submitted by the business improvement districts of:

Downtown Dartmouth

Downtown Halifax

North End Halifax

Porters Lake

Quinpool Area

Sackville

Spring Garden Area

Spryfield

Village on Main

