

Toward Prosperity — *Themes*

This document recaps the many diverse issues raised and feedback received at meetings held in the spring and summer of 2000 to discuss the contents of *Toward Prosperity*. The issues and feedback are organized under the headings used in the discussion paper:

Vision
Context
Principles
Critical Success Factors
Strategic Directions
Business Climate
Innovation
Labour Market
Investment
Export/Marketing
Infrastructure
Performance Measures
The Role of Government
Implementation Plan
Sectors

Themes

Vision

- Is it possible to have a single vision for all of Nova Scotia?
- Need specific objectives before you develop a vision or a strategy.
- The vision needs to be more quantitative in goals and measurement.
- All government bodies need to be working toward the same vision.
- Should add more on the social aspect, social responsibility.
- What kind of Nova Scotia do we want? What is government's role?
- It would be better to use the terms "self-reliant," "self-caring," "self-confident," "self-sustaining," or "self-determinant," rather than "self-sufficient."
- Vibrant communities are not necessarily self-sufficient.
- We need more partnering and clusters and corridors.
- There needs to be a recognition of our "diverse" workforce.
- The vision should specify "all Nova Scotians" as "women and men."

- We need to emphasize that the aim is to give people options, choices.
- There is no mention in the vision about changing the business climate, entrepreneurs or risk-taking.
- This vision assumes that we already have strong communities and partnership development.
- Need to take out the word “world-class” for opportunities – “global” or “real” would be better.
- Should define “opportunities.”
- Key phrases are “support enterprise” and “through a high-quality workforce.”
- There is a lack of “community” in the vision.
- A mention of our quality of life is not there.
- The vision should show the world that we are a “land of world-class opportunities.”
- The vision has no time-line, and is not likely to excite or generate broad buy-in.
- Needs to be much more ambitious and present more of a sense of mission and excitement. “Capable people living in prosperous communities creating products and services that are in demand throughout the world.”
- “World-class” networks speak more to a quality issue than a network, change to “global opportunities.”
- The vision should emphasize action.
- “Provides quality employment and opportunities for its Nova Scotians.”
- The front piece of the Business Technology Strategy has some points to improve the vision.

Context

- Need to have something on the economic challenges we are currently facing in Nova Scotia.
- Need to add that we are highly dependent upon government at the moment.
- Need to emphasize the links between economic and social development.
- We need to educate people regarding the realities of economics - the flow of funds out of/within/into the community. First we must retain our funds in our communities, and then seek other funds through exports.
- Where is the social responsibility in this document?
- There should be a section in the document identifying strengths and weaknesses.
- We must break down any interprovincial barriers.
- People do not know about all of the information that is already out there.
- For a province the size of Nova Scotia, we do not know each other as well as we should.
- If we live in a sound bite world, we should get good at creating them.
- We are product/content creators.
- Nova Scotia has many advantages relative to elsewhere in the world but they are hard to define: low crime rate, good education, good opportunities for employment outside of large companies.
- Nova Scotia’s small size is a competitive advantage in the global economy.
- “Who are we best positioned to serve?”
- There is a focus on tools, but not the users of the tools – entrepreneurs.

- Needs to be some consistency in provincial policy – longer-term vision, not subject to political will.
- Nova Scotia needs to reduce government overhead by eliminating duplication of services.
- There is a concern that foreign money is buying up Nova Scotia land, and foreign ownership will dictate what is going to happen in the future.
- The document is too wedded to the “Blue Book.”
- The “days are gone” statement implies that our focus now will be on small-scale, indirect and sustainable development – is this true? It was important and useful to emphasize the critical nature of our fiscal situation.
- Nova Scotians think they are second rate.
- The document must consider the young and old, urban and rural, all demographic segments.
- There needs to be a sense of the information technology industry in Nova Scotia.
- Nova Scotia has the highest rate of Internet use, but the lowest e-commerce involvement.
- We need an increased use of information technology by the agricultural community.
- We are perceived to be a poor negotiator.
- There is too much political interference in Nova Scotia.
- There is a lack of signage on the border between Nova Scotia /New Brunswick.
- The transportation system in rural areas is poor.
- There is a lack of unity among municipal units.

Principles

- There are too many principles; narrow them down.
- The principles are not all at the same level.
- These seem more like goals than principles.
- Should think of the principles as “filters.”
- Should focus on increasing our enterprising spirit and the quality of jobs.
- The principles should be consistent and only pertain to things over which the provincial government has some control.
- Need to include transparency, clarity, fairness, consistency, value of partnerships, community-led growth, incremental growth, accountability and lifelong learning.
- The principles should include “equity” to lead to a greater consideration of the fundamental systems/structures required for all regions to compete effectively.
- The principles should be more explicit.
- Need to include social development, which is as important as economic development.
- Must address the social infrastructure that will support economic development.
- Good social programs are a foundation for successful economic development.
- Need to recognize the interrelationship between health, education, sickness and unemployment.
- The principles should link to the critical success factors and to the vision.
- “Improving the quality of all jobs” leads to a discussion of issues like more money for minimum wage, pay equity, the debt load issue on young people, universal day care, health benefits and

- family-friendly employers.
- Need a recognition of the role of immigration in each of the principles.

Sustainability

- Define sustainable development precisely – ensure the consideration of environmental sustainability.
- Sustainable development of the resource sector is a vital concern.
- Keep sustainability as a priority.
- Should look to the service sector to create sustainable jobs.
- The traditional industries will have a shortage of people in several years: sustainability?
- Nova Scotia needs to implement an effective reforestation program.
- Need to put in place clearer and tighter policy for forestry to prevent harm to the environment, tourism and quality of life.
- There needs to be a balance kept between development and environment issues.
- The issue of climate change could be an opportunity or an obstacle for Nova Scotia. It needs to be monitored closely.
- The forest problem is a Canadian one, a capital gains issue. Often “tax” issues are not really that at all. The final paper should highlight both advantages and problems.
- Need to educate landowners about their responsibility as stewards of property.
- Need to be wary of all-embracing points.
- The strategy should integrate lessons learned from the Sustainable Communities Initiative.
- Should highlight specific areas in the principles, *i.e.*, tourism.

Inclusion

- Equality of opportunity is impossible to achieve.
- The disabled community should be consulted about any accessibility issues.
- How do we include people or regions that have missed prosperity?
- Government websites and public relations efforts should include all Nova Scotians.
- Ethnic and cultural groups should be recognized as a resource for tourism.
- Goodwill alone will not deal with this issue. There need to be hard targets.
- Persons with disabilities often cannot *access* the opportunities that are available.
- Equity is a major issue.
- “Fair treatment” is not equivalent to “same treatment” – that needs to be recognized.
- We must realize that government employees represent the same prejudiced mind-sets and attitudes as in the wider world – must address that.
- The Nova Scotia Community College, now that it is focusing on new industry jobs, is no longer equally accessible to all – must insure that progress is also inclusive.
- People should not have to go to the Black Business Initiative specifically but be assured of equal consideration from any of the programs available.
- The working poor have no opportunity. There is no incentive for them to get off welfare.
- Native peoples are constantly fighting to prove their right to be involved.

- The province is paying more attention but not admitting anything concerning Mi'kmaq rights.
- For the Mi'kmaq it appears that you do not get access unless you go to litigation – “gun to head” – we must impact the economy to get issues addressed.
- The government needs to deal with the major issues of Aboriginal rights/ treaties as they are at the core of economic development in the Aboriginal community. We should have our own money to do what we want with.
- There are a few successful people in the Mi'kmaq community – but does not benefit the majority (i.e. the system rewards the few).
- Must gather information on Nova Scotia Economic Development's expenditure on women's programs (entrepreneurs, loans, business startups, *etc.*)
- More good full time jobs are required for all people.
- Who is governed by the Employment Equity Act?
- The meeting is missing the unemployed and illiterate.
- There are communities that are not referenced.
- Access to government programs must be fairer.
- Concerned that too much of the money for program initiatives is spent on administration/studies.
- Women entrepreneurs have been overlooked.

Critical Success Factors

Community Capacity

- Need to provide a better definition of what is meant by “community capacity.”
- Our people are our biggest asset.
- Communities want more of a say in their future.
- Regional development authorities are closer to the community for decision-making purposes. They must build on successes in the communities.
- Must ensure that viewpoints of very small but vocal groups do not block communities from moving forward.
- Before you can have economic development, need community development.
- Need emphasis on rural development and strategies, community and worker ownership.
- Need to prepare a highly skilled employer force – they are the ones that will hire workers. Should have performance measures that will reflect that. Employers and employees are not necessarily born.
- We have a lot of capacity in the educational sector that we need to rally. Must remove the universities' and colleges' fears of the commercialization of their knowledge.
- Must find niche products for outside Halifax, *e.g.*, Tristar in Yarmouth.
- Must encourage small communities and their businesses.

Partnerships

- Need to define and spell out a clear position on partnerships.
- Need to develop a framework for partnering.

- Should recognize that “partnership” does not mean that all parties have an equal footing on every issue.
- Should address partnerships in rural areas between all levels of government and the private sector.
- Partnership can be a problem because some departments/governments are territorial.
- Regional development authorities should be working with all levels of government.
- Must ensure continuous intergovernmental discussion.
- Need to build communication between communities, government, business, education, in order to include considerations of economic development.
- Mi’kmaq people must be self-sufficient for partnership to work.
- “Federal responsibility” mentality still exists with province in regards to the Mi’kmaq.
- Must forge partnerships with credit unions for loan guarantees.
- Co-operative/credit union partnerships to deliver government services being considered for privatization (liquor stores, licences, permits, certificates) are an option.
- Departmental business plans should reflect their responsibility, role and input to Nova Scotia Economic Development for partnerships.
- Should develop partnerships between departments, industry, education and research and development organizations.
- There is not enough recognition given to immigrants’ capacity to contribute to partnerships.

Federal

- We need a new approach to whatever succeeds the current Economic Diversification Agreement.
- Need better negotiations with the federal government – must present a clear Nova Scotia message.
- We need a level playing field: fair treatment that is equal to that accorded other provinces.
- Must challenge the federal abandonment strategy, *e.g.*, wharves.
- There needs to be a common strategy between federal and provincial governments/economic development departments.

- Should recognize that federal departments in Nova Scotia are branch plants: head offices set the local agendas.
- There are rewards for horizontal work but departments have their own frameworks to consider.
- Possible areas for joint action between governments: environmental technologies, e-commerce, ocean mapping.
- Government needs to stay with files as issues ebb and flow in importance.
- Should recognize that even partners do not have to agree on everything.

Interprovincial

- Nova Scotia should create strategic alliances with other provinces.

Interdepartmental

- The strategy must have buy-in across government departments.
- Need to build a framework to allow the different arms of government to function in an efficient, unhindered way.

Provincial

- Must not isolate issues, *e.g.*, municipal infrastructure versus economic development.
- Should get the Nova Scotia Community College and universities to work together.
- Must strive for some early successes.
- Leadership from Premier/cabinet is required to keep provincial departments on the same track.
- How effective/influential can Nova Scotia be when we bring no any money to the table?
- Senior cabinet people must listen to industry sector concerns.

Municipal

- The role of Nova Scotia Economic Development may be to bring in organizations and municipal partners.
- Municipalities are a key group to be considered in community partnerships.

Private

- Should promote partnerships between government and the private sector to use government expertise on businesses through a special arm's length office.
- Should build upon key existing corporate initiatives to save money and cost justify advance tools.
- P3 schools are only a start – need to define a new relationship between the public and private sectors.
- Should be partnering with those companies and businesses that are investing in rural Nova Scotia, *i.e.*, co-ops and credit unions.
- Provincial policy is needed to direct efforts to take advantage of the resources it has developed to support technical and export development in the private sector.

Community

- Need to move beyond the beggar mentality.

Cape Breton

- Are we forgetting about industrial Cape Breton?
- We must break down the silos within Cape Breton Regional Municipality.
- Air accessibility to Cape Breton is an issue.
- The University College of Cape Breton is an important part of the community. It is not given a fair funding formula.
- A balanced approach is required. The Partnership Alliance has made a number of suggestions around business climate issues and infrastructure. The strategy needs to be tailored to the local economy.
- The term “industrial Cape Breton” gives the wrong impression.
- Cape Breton is used to being propped up.
- The terms “bailout” and “handout” are a slap to the face of Cape Bretoners. Must change the mindset before can change the words. There is a huge lack of trust on the part of Cape Bretoners.
- The problem is that there is a systemic bias against Cape Breton on the part of the rest of Nova Scotia.
- We do not have a fair process for dealing with Cape Breton.
- There is an attitude problem in Cape Breton. We have a lot of infighting and we must address this issue.
- The Partnership Alliance could be a useful tool for progress.
- Cape Breton is losing its strength because it is losing its young people.

Strategic Directions

- Maybe should re-tool the term “communities”.
- The word “community” is absent from the strategic directions.
- There needs to be a consistent theme throughout the document.
- “...provide citizens with the right skills” – too patronizing.
- Should mention Smart Communities initiatives.
- The strategic directions are not linked to each other or to the Critical Success Factors?
- Infrastructure should be at the top of the list.
- Community capacity as a critical success factor is not reflected in the Strategic Directions or Principles.
- The document must project the idea that Nova Scotia can contribute.
- It is important to pick 1 or 2 strategic directions to focus on, there are too many at the moment.
- Many places are talking about high-tech opportunities – what makes us different?
- Need to highlight entrepreneurship and education in the Strategic Directions.
- Environmental protection should be a strategic direction.

- Investment in communities should be a strategic direction.
- The Strategic Directions are somewhat general with little detail.

Business Climate

General Issues

- Must address Nova Scotia's bad external reputation – too much politics.
- Nova Scotia is the worst place for starting up a business from the standpoint of venture capital.
- We need to reduce fighting among regions and between Atlantic provinces.
- Business decisions should be made for business reasons, *e.g.*, oil and Cape Breton.
- There needs to be a consistent approach.
- We need to develop a business retention and expansion strategy.
- We should link small businesses to larger businesses to expand their opportunities.
- There should be a focus on small business.
- Government needs to dispense information to businesses to make the system easier.
- We should recognize the businesses that are based in Nova Scotia.
- Nova Scotia has a bad record on start ups.
- We should get business ideas from existing business people.
- We need to support niche businesses, *e.g.*, boat building.
- Should look to other forms of business to meet needs: co-ops, community businesses, *etc.*
- Should be a process to monitor businesses after they get started. It is important for government to protect these startups.
- Business must be willing to pay the price required to attract consumers, *i.e.*, longer hours, additional staff for banks, post offices, *etc.*
- The retirement market may be viable in Nova Scotia.
- Businesses must learn to do things for themselves. They must be more independent and initiate projects without government involvement – help them mature by themselves.
- There should be a package describing all permits and regulations that business should know of when looking at locating to Nova Scotia; one person that knows whatever is necessary, *e.g.*, Manitoba – 1 binder created, 1 CD ROM with all the necessary information.
- Business needs to handle maternity leave (replacements, flexibility) better.
- Equality cannot simply mean treating everybody the same. We need to accommodate differences.
- How easy should we make it for business?
- Kings County has grown due to Michelin; it would be good to give money to get another business like that in Nova Scotia.
- Government as incubator – warming the climate for business, *e.g.*, structure incubation.
- Mention of quality of life implies it is a selling point for drawing businesses – should mention earlier as something we are striving to promote rather than sell.
- Need to focus on creating “fertile entrepreneurial ground.”
- Must make companies earn their incentives – meantime get money in revenues.

- Should be asking business people to sit on volunteer business councils so that can share their expertise with newer companies.
- Given a limited amount of money, we need to figure out how to make the most noise – possibly through trade committees to share opportunities.
- Can encourage emerging sectors and industry clusters by leveling the playing field.
- The province can be strategic despite overlapping jurisdictions by using a team climate, community groups, economies of scale, bulk purchases, *etc.*
- Can encourage local/traditional businesses to diversify and produce more value added products.
- Should attract European manufacturers to Nova Scotia as an access to other jurisdictions.
- Nova Scotia has a window of opportunity to capture some of the oil/gas business Newfoundland has recently alienated.
- We need to focus on small and medium enterprises – there is a better chance of success with them.
- Highlighting existing success stories is extremely important.
- We need someone who will go out and work with immigrant entrepreneurs.
- Need a discussion of the climate and a realistic picture painted of the situation here when trying to recruit immigrant business people.
- At present we recruit business people to Nova Scotia but there is no followup done once they are here.
- The Entrepreneur Program has enormous potential but needs to be structured differently.
- Could we perhaps have a Department of Small Business as they do in Quebec to serve as a voice for small and medium enterprises?
- There is a lot of emphasis on big industries. We are dealing with a diverse population involved in diverse sectors. We need to look at small business and see what can be done for them and where else similar initiatives would work. Government can help in this area.
- The province will succeed if competencies are identified and allowed to drive business plans and prioritize initiatives and spending and market targeting, *etc.*
- Business must demand quality education and commit to achieving it. We must get beyond the culture of obstruction and risk aversion.
- Canada in general has an anti-business climate, we must attempt to change this.
- Federal policy is hard to change, *e.g.*, need subsidized freight rates to be competitive.
- Must create ways to add as much value as possible to products. Products still leave the province in a raw state.
- Politics in Economic Development are not necessarily done by the politicians alone, also by business people – more by non-elected than elected.
- The current players in industries do not want any others in.
- There are powerful disincentives in the system. They lead to overwhelming barriers.
- Should include women in the decision making process with respect to family friendly workplaces. Should fix the system so that it does not hurt one-income families.
- We must stimulate and reward risk-taking.

- There needs to be more dialogue around red tape reduction and duplication.
- Should change the nature of government assistance – more accountability; risk issues need to be considered; performance based.
- Often money is not what business needs from government, but introductions and contacts with key people.
- Must be clear about incentives.
- Native Canadians can work in the United States for Canadian companies because of their dual citizenship.
- Must put in place incentives for environmentally friendly industries.
- Need more incentives to recognize volunteer work, *i.e.*, tax breaks for services contributed.
- High corporate tax is a disincentive for business in Nova Scotia.
- Could use incentives or a tax relief program to encourage alliances and cooperation.
- What are the real choices? Where should we offer incentives?
- Should give tax rebates to new Nova Scotian companies which hire Nova Scotians and pay good wages.
- Need incentives for small businesses to increase minimum wage.
- Need to identify roles for private enterprise in investment, training, *etc.*
- Should be rewarding the behaviors we want, penalizing those we do not want.
- Environmental clean up could become an industry in Nova Scotia.
- We need an information technology anchor company in Nova Scotia. Government needs to attract one using incentives. Information technology clusters will form around this anchor company.
- There is great scope for creating clusters around relatively small sectors in the economy if we emphasize all the contributing factors. Could perhaps develop a cluster around oil and gas and the requisite information technology.
- We need to build a common business database.
- There is no incentive for Nova Scotia to really make it because we can fall back on the equalization payments.
- Government bureaucracy is a big problem with entrepreneurs.
- The private sector economy is dominated by wealthy families and big business from outside Nova Scotia. There is a lack of entrepreneurial leadership, focus and initiative.
- The document seems to assume that, given the correct environment, entrepreneurs will just appear. We need to cultivate entrepreneurs and the environment that will support them.
- People should be designated to look at entrepreneurship ideas – could use retired business people.

Credit unions

- Credit unions have large liquidity.
- There is a risk of growing a business to a certain size and then losing it. Loan guarantees could resolve this.

Political environment

- The single, biggest impediment in our business climate is the political environment.
- When an issue goes to cabinet, there is still political influence but at least it is more broad-based.
- There is no political will in the province.
- Need to discourage abuse of the system.
- We must promote success stories in Nova Scotia as Frank McKenna was able to do for New Brunswick.
- Economic development in Nova Scotia is more political than in Newfoundland. Reduce the political content.

Underground economy

- Need to identify and deal with this issue.
- The underground economy is a big problem in Nova Scotia. It cost Nova Scotia \$110 million a year. Government must treat consumers and contractors the same.
- Need to encourage a licensing mechanism where it can be easily tracked.
- Seventy per cent of the underground housing economy is initiated by the homeowner.

Financial situation

- We need to get our financial house in order.

Lending

- There should be flexible help for those who really need it.
- Need more incubation work, more than just a loan, businesses need advice and guidance.
- May be useful to catalogue issues with banks. We could use the strategy to outline the issues and then sit down and talk to the banks.
- Must encourage banks to back projects in Nova Scotia.
- Banks will not touch community initiatives – perhaps could have subsidies in the form of non-repayable loans.
- The assessment criteria for loans should be changed to redirect the focus from large companies to small and medium enterprises.
- Could assist small and medium enterprises with easier, more accessible loans.
- Technical assistance for small business is very important. Small business cannot afford to pay for this. Eventually they will be taken over by larger companies and controlled out of province.
- When government lends to business, needs to be in an environment of ongoing consultation and feedback to minimize the risks.
- Government lending should be to fill in the gaps only, *e.g.*, the fishery.
- Government should be involved in lending only when the private sector will not – still should require good financial position of companies.
- Should be operating under a joint venture model as opposed to a procurement-based model.
- Government should not be giving large loans to information technology companies that might fail

in five years – rather should give to small and medium enterprises that will generate much greater employment.

- Any government lending/business assistance program must be done in a timely manner in line with the industry time-line.
- When government gets involved in industries – creates an uneven playing field. Like the idea of setting up an independent, arm's length office for this.
- Business will follow government's lead.
- Government should stop subsidies to large enterprises that could finance themselves – a consequence would be lower taxes.
- Give government tax rebates to well-researched, targeted companies so we can be competitive in a global market.
- Should have more use of performance-based incentives like payroll rebates.
- Need to celebrate successes, publicize good companies.
- Should increase public understanding of economic development.
- New mechanisms for getting capital to fish businesses.
- Should seek co-operation among departments and banks on lending.
- Need to be aggressive with banks and credit unions to pull their weight.
- Government must be a patient lender, stick with new businesses.
- Need to emphasize the unique nature of Business Development Corporation funding.
- "Smart financing" will be required for the development of e-business ideas.
- There are excellent possibilities to build joint investment promotion into additional trade and lending sites that would be Web accessible.
- Government should not be in the lending business – should encourage banks to lend to business.
- The investment tax credit should be extended to business.
- Nobody wants grants. Interest-free or low-interest loans are required. Must have product, market and be viable in order to obtain loans.

Regulations

- After Westray, some departments began requiring a senior level signature on all paperwork.
- Field people will not take responsibility or are not given the necessary authority.
- Businesses will not expand due to red tape. Let entrepreneurs be entrepreneurs, not bookkeepers.
- We cannot simplify the regulatory environment on our own – need partnership with the federal government.
- Need to keep economic development in mind when setting up regulations.
- Should reinvigorate the regulatory framework as we are streamlining it.
- Need a policy and legislative framework that will enable e-business.
- There needs to be consistency with rules (regulations) in Nova Scotia.
- Should deregulate store hours, allow Sunday shopping.
- Have been waiting for six years to get changes passed to the Co-op Act.

- Regulations can act as a potential impetus for economic growth, *e.g.*, California.
- Regulations hobble entrepreneurial spirit.
- The regulations themselves are not bad – poor implementation.
- The bar is set too high in environmental regulations – we are scaring people away.
- The application of regulations needs to be flexible and sensible.
- Government does not have money itself, why should it regulate the economy, there are business people who know better how to do this.
- Need to identify regulations that need to be revamped – perhaps could second small business people into advisory committees to have real input from the front lines.
- Our current tax policies reward job elimination, not job creation.
- Must have the same rules for everybody.
- The private sector, if trained, should be allowed to do the work. Government’s role would be to do spot inspections.
- Bureaucrats do not understand the urgency of getting approvals.
- Need to pay attention to securities legislation.
- There are many regulations, government needs a decision-making intergovernmental group for economic development that a community group can go to, explain the project and get co-ordination and help.
- Government must be required to justify its regulations.

Taxes

- Should be using the tax system as an investment system.
- Nova Scotia should lobby the federal government on taxation issues.
- We need to support a creative environment for business.
- There needs to be a good environment for businesses to flourish – low taxes, *etc.*
- Municipal taxes are too high.
- Need to address inequality in municipal units and the infrastructure available to them.
- Creating a business-friendly environment is difficult without a strong property tax base.
- The promotion of the federal research and development tax credit to small businesses offers possibilities.
- We need to incorporate work done on tax policy.
- There is a heavy tax burden on small companies in Nova Scotia compared with Ontario.
- Should we be giving profitable companies a break through tax credits? Should we subsidize “losers”? Finance needs advice and direction on this dilemma.
- We need more information on the taxation “seasonality” concerns expressed by tourism operators. Is this a provincial tax issue or a municipal tax issue?
- Spell out the advantages we have in our tax system, *e.g.*, HST.
- Canada has problems but we should spell out the realities in Nova Scotia in comparison with the rest of Canada.
- Nova Scotia is not competitive with Ontario or Alberta – we are competitive with the others but are in danger even there.

- There are too many taxes – should look at lowering taxes.
- Should equalize taxes for county and town so that businesses can be equally attracted to towns.
- Cut fuel taxes.
- We can improve the business climate through tax credits for jobs.
- Should cut workers’ compensation rates – Board wants too much money.

Innovation

- Need to emphasize research and development.
- Should look at what others are doing and do it better
- Should support innovations in technology or in business models (e-commerce).
- Will the emphasis be on applications or true innovation?
- Innovation is only found in small companies – the strategy must focus on small and medium enterprises.
- Should support sectoral innovation through tax credit/technology centres.
- For resource development should include a policy framework to encourage innovation.
- We need to monitor growth carefully to know what we are achieving.
- Should develop a Nova Scotia variation of the University of Waterloo Innovation Centre.
- Must continue the Smart Communities initiative.
- Should encourage the commercialization of research and development initiatives.
- Need to encourage information technology “clusters,” *e.g.*, Silicon Island.
- Could use tax holidays to create an innovative environment, *e.g.*, Quebec.
- Could encourage research and development for small and medium enterprises through the communication and marketing of award-winning companies.
- Need to keep an inventory of qualified retired individuals available to answer questions for small businesses.
- Government could help form regional innovation councils to help match up ideas with the entrepreneurs who want to do them.

Labour Market

Education

- An educational establishment is essentially the same as a factory; presents a product to fit the demand.
- Must maintain the quality of educational programs at all levels so that graduates are prepared for job opportunities that are available.
- Should have mentoring in high school and universities for young entrepreneurs.
- Should take advantage of the experience of retirees in school programs.
- Young people seem lost on trades training. We must pay attention to education.
- Need to address problems with the acceptance/transferral of international qualifications – professional associations should be pressured to resolve this.

- With the elimination of evening high school courses, there are few opportunities left for returning students.
- Must seek more flexible ways to get an education.
- Must reward people who leave their jobs to get more education.
- Need to educate, not necessarily train – people with a good educational foundation can be trained for anything.
- There is a high cost involved in sending people away for training, an opportunity to avoid this is presented by the Internet and distance learning.
- Are we pointing the unemployed in the right directions to gain employment?
- There are a lot of programs for information technology and nuts and bolts work but lack training for those in between, *e.g.*, technicians.
- Nova Scotia does not have an unskilled labour force; we have a highly skilled force but we must create credibility for them – certification.
- Should be doing more in early schooling to educate kids about fish industries.
- Education is not mentioned in document.
- Need to rethink the place of universities – not a cost, and more than an asset. Are an economic sector and export driver.
- Government has been too narrow-minded in training. More vote-oriented than looking at what business needs.
- Government expects literacy people to be volunteers. Must have qualified, paid people.
- Need courses on exporting and regulations, marketing, environmental concerns.
- At present training appears to be for a specific business. Too narrow-minded, not good for long-term economic growth.
- Make sure people at the low end of the education scale are not exploited since they have few other options.
- Should reduce classroom size and the size of school boards.
- Education costs for native peoples are the highest in Nova Scotia.
- Must not limit educational opportunities (*i.e.*, over 21 should still get free highschool).
- We need better courses. Need to restore confidence in the education system.
- Can no longer do farm work without an education.
- Must ensure that the departments of Education and Economic Development work together to ensure complementary efforts and strategic initiatives.
- Life-long education will help us take advantage of identified opportunities.

Labour force

- We do not have the workers for the long-term jobs that are coming.
- Should send Devco workers to Calgary and Newfoundland for training/experience.
- In Nova Scotia we have an economy and labour market mismatch. There is no capacity for people outside of Halifax to attain these new economy jobs. This is one of the biggest problems facing our economy today.
- Should be encouraging education for those already in the workforce – mindful of those also

working and raising families.

- Labour force is the most important factor for drawing businesses – that is an opportunity.
- Industry is more and more willing to train its own workforce given the right set of circumstances. Currently hindered due to lack of consistency in policy.
- It is difficult to recruit our own people back to Nova Scotia – lower salaries.
- Cheap labour is what is attracting business.
- There is a lot of contract work in Colchester so will soon have the problem of a large population of retired poor with no pensions.
- Nova Scotia loses 5,000 high-tech workers every year due to a lack of opportunity.
- Need to focus on persuading businesses to hire students, that they are qualified.
- Small businesses need to be the driving force behind the new information careers.
- Must survey the business community to accurately determine the skill sets required.
- Private businesses, in partnership with government, should provide training to upgrade the skills of employees affected.
- Prosperity starts with education, but we are cutting the education budget.
- The small size of the province can be an advantage in that most key people know each other.
- Understanding and knowing our labour force will be a big asset soon.
- Is it possible for older employees in government to be out-sourced to the private sector? This would allow younger minds to come forward.
- There is a lack of communication between government and not only universities and colleges but also high school students.
- High school students should not be encouraged solely into high-tech industries.
- Must harmonize government agency training programs.
- Human Resources Development Canada must devote more of its resources towards preventive measures, *i.e.*, helping companies retain workers.
- Must place more emphasis on the cultural education of youth.
- Need to focus on creating the employers (entrepreneurs) that will hire people.
- Entrepreneurs make the most of what they have, not necessary that they have to have this or that in order to get ahead, *e.g.*, Prior Learning Assessment.
- The problem with trade associations is that they are often set up in order to lobby the federal government, not for economic development.
- The Nova Scotia Fisheries Sector Council works well, should take advantage of it.
- Any job is a good job; 12 months per year is better than seasonal.
- Afraid non-academic labour may be bypassed/forgotten.
- There has to be a system set up in Nova Scotia. Major industries send executives away for training, but this can be accomplished with two- to five-day seminars. There has to be partnership between the departments of Economic Development and Education on this issue.
- Should develop a youth retention strategy.
- There is a greater tendency toward entrepreneurship among youth now because it gives them a sense of freedom and control.
- We must concentrate on people first. We should aim to make our youth self-sufficient.

- Many industries will hire younger people but many of them cannot read or write properly. The issue is where do you get a trained workforce?

Training

- Must highlight labour market issues in the document.
- Nova Scotia needs a forum for education and labour market planners to work together.
- There is confusion over who leads in ensuring that training is linked to the needs of the economy.
- Should improve communications between Nova Scotia Community College and employers.
- We need to assess people's skills and match them with jobs.
- At present there is too much attention paid to training (knowledge) and not enough to job creation (generation of ideas), *e.g.*, there will soon be more cameramen than ideas for films.
- Must make it easy for people to enter the economy as entrepreneurs. They will then seek out the training they need to expand – requires correct educational focus at the outset and facilitative regulation.
- Focus needs to be on “just in time” training – available when people need it, as opposed to “just in case.”
- Should let tuition levels rise for programs in “hot” job markets.
- We should prepare for gas utilization technologies – downstream opportunities.
- We need to deal with literacy problems, create a literacy centre of excellence.
- Require a more creative use of apprenticeships and co-op programs.
- Apprenticeship programs lack qualified instructors; leads to retraining at the employer's expense.
- Need to put money into apprenticeship training: no grants to people who will leave in 6 months.
- We need more mentoring programs.
- There is a shortage of skilled tradespeople, *e.g.*, machinists.
- Should not be putting people on welfare but training them to work out of their situation.
- We must focus our education to develop better management skills.
- We need to do something to keep our graduates here.
- We need to be clear on exactly what the problem is.
- Education needs to be more directly geared toward “opportunities.”
- When people leave Nova Scotia, it is because they have no confidence in the economy. That confidence is not building and people are starting to think that they can make it here. Part of that confidence stems from youth's confidence with new technologies and e-commerce.
- There is a lack of awareness of the opportunities and supports available.
- Is the strategy focusing on keeping people here or enticing those who have left back?
- There are opportunities here that are not marketed.
- Should look at Massachusetts Institute of Technology as a model for fostering entrepreneurs.
- Most industries are high tech; we need to align the language used to reflect that. Should not be making the distinction of “knowledge” versus “traditional.”
- Preparing a “highly skilled workforce” will benefit the existing base of entrepreneurs. We need

to expand that base and create more entrepreneurs, that in turn will create the necessary support culture.

- Training is a private sector function, education is a public sector function.
- Government needs to help Nova Scotia companies train to attain the standards and capabilities necessary to be able to bid along with other companies.
- Need to recognize that we have a number of people who are not able to take advantage of the knowledge-based jobs.
- The average age of tradespeople in Nova Scotia is around 54 – will soon have a vacuum of skilled people.
- Some of the requirements for certification are outdated.
- We fall into a trap if we promote ourselves as a low wage area, should be promoting the whole package: productivity, talent, quality.
- Should partner with the chambers of commerce/boards of trade to provide training.
- More training for government employees is needed to make things more user friendly for small business.
- The strongest attractive feature in Nova Scotia is a well-trained workforce.

Investment

- 9000 new companies started up in 1998 without government assistance: government does not need to be involved.
- The problem on the investment side is equity not debt.
- We should keep Nova Scotia money in the province, make it easier for Nova Scotians to invest here.
- Develop a local capital market without focusing on the affluent segment of society.
- Need to publicize existing opportunities for local investment.
- Should create a web-site presenting business opportunities.
- Should make it easier to start up Community Economic Development Investment Funds and streamline the regulatory process.
- Relax restrictions on investing RRSP money in financing your own company.
- Should create a community bond fund.
- Educate people about investment, opportunity, risk, *etc.*
- Should seek to attract entrepreneurs in selected sectors – partner with Nova Scotia companies.
- Increase incentives for investment outside Halifax.
- Select priorities but be able to react to opportunities.
- Link investment attraction and financing strategies.
- Implement performance-based programs for companies in Nova Scotia.
- Make a stronger connection between strategic and investment development.
- Change the banking laws to require one per cent of profits to be reinvested into the community.
- Anyone who wants should be paid to go to school – blind investment.
- Should invest in local power.

- Make more use of credit unions – money stays in province – business financing.
- Should support local businesses with incentives.
- Talk to banks at a high level to encourage more lending.
- Create local brokering operations to help with access to capital.
- “Why would anyone locate in Nova Scotia?” Must make and publicize the case for Nova Scotia.
- Banks are not dealing with new entrepreneurs. There is trouble getting capital.
- Must find common ground on risk levels between government and banks.
- Equity tax credit program – retailers or co-operatives with over \$25 million sales are not eligible, and there is no incentive for businesses to invest.
- Banks will not touch community initiatives – perhaps could have subsidies in the form of non-repayable loans.
- Assessment criteria for loans should be changed to redirect focus from large companies to small and medium enterprises.
- People come here for the quality of life, but leave because of the lack of money.
- We should use Michelin to attract other big companies here.
- Nova Scotia equity tax credit is valuable but expires Dec. 31, 2000. This needs to be renewed, because it is a good way to build investment with local capital.
- Community Economic Development Investment Fund (CEDIF) has inefficiencies and is dangerous because it is not subject to a rigorous enough scrutiny to protect investments. There is a false sense of security for investors since it is advanced by government. Fear that there will be failures and therefore negative reaction toward government.
- The competitive advantages identified do not serve as economic incentives to attract investment, *e.g.*, natural beauty, quality of life. They are just side benefits.

Export/Marketing

Export

- Import substitution is as good as exporting. This activity would create jobs.
- Need quality products to build a good reputation.
- Trade missions are useful but expensive for small businesses.
- Nova Scotia has to promote WinExport system.
- Need to try to work with businesses that may have the potential to export their products.
- Revive export month.
- Must move away from primary products and try to add value before exporting.
- Nova Scotians need to develop an export mentality.
- Increase opportunities for export and business with foreign countries by having international students at our universities.
- Nova Scotia should implement tariffs on products leaving unprocessed.
- Resource based industries need to increase the value added portion of any product before export.

- Cultural industries are export industries, *e.g.*, touring musical groups.
- Look at the Export Development Task Force report from five years ago.
- Education is a proven, sustainable, exportable resource.
- Nova Scotia has a strategic geographic location in regards to trade with the United States and Europe.
- Mount a trade mission of IT firms to the high-tech spots in Canada.
- Trade mission program does not allow enough time for businesses to prepare for contact.
- Need to talk about the tough issues when trying to sell Nova Scotia.
- Nova Scotia needs incentives to encourage value adding contributions, *e.g.*, tax incentives.
- A business retention and expansion strategy can focus the approach but must not ignore other opportunities.
- Must build networks among businesses to compete internationally.

Marketing

- Need to help business identify the need for promotion.
- Marketing is key: the focus should be on Nova Scotia, not a government department. All spending should promote a similar image.
- “Smart City, Smart Move” was a good idea
- Government needs to take more of an initiative in marketing.
- Clarify what “Brand Nova Scotia” means: brand is not a strategy but a way to implement a strategy.
- Nova Scotia is branded as a place to retire or vacation, this works against us in business terms.
- What sells a tourist differs from what attracts businesses: co-ordinate marketing strategies.
- Success of tourism branding can serve as a spring-board for business.
- “Sell the sizzle, not the steak” – identify the sizzle in Nova Scotia.
- Market Nova Scotia to Nova Scotians; some things we do here are better known outside of the province.
- Market our distinctive competencies and then pursue relevant markets.
- Rise above our debt problems and focus on marketing our successes.
- Challenge perception of heavy subsidies to businesses – we do less subsidizing in Nova Scotia than in other provinces.
- Challenge to advertise the facts about the fishing industry: not as bad as the perception.
- Use regional development authorities to take stock of all of their regional resources and then market their regions.
- Help small companies get on radar screen.
- Increase profile of IT industry with hotel shows as the U.S. consulate does in Halifax.

Buy Nova Scotia

- Some products made in Nova Scotia are not supported by the province. Need a “Buy Nova Scotia” policy.
- Buy Nova Scotia must be built on quality, not just patriotism.

- Encourage support for local products.
- Set an example with government procurement. Government should try to buy more Nova Scotia products.
- Challenge Sobeys to buy more locally, *e.g.*, herbs, yogurt.
- Increasingly need partnerships to produce a single competitive product.
- Buy Nova Scotia is a good idea but becomes too narrow in practice.
- First need to advertise what products are Nova Scotian.
- Make it known that buying Nova Scotian products keeps the money within the province.
- Should be careful that this is not interpreted as an encouragement for businesses to sell to Nova Scotia first – would cut exports.
- Trade agreements limit what we can do on Buy Nova Scotia.

Infrastructure

- Appropriate infrastructure can assist in economic diversification.
- It is important to differentiate between strategic infrastructure and political infrastructure.
- The dimensions of the infrastructure fix are huge.
- See infrastructure as an “enabler”: what do you want to enable?
- Municipal infrastructure is also critical for development.
- Expand our approach to the federal government in regards to money for infrastructure.
- A joint initiative on infrastructure with all Atlantic provinces should be explored.
- The environment is part of the infrastructure, include in strategy protection of coastal access areas and forests.

Airports

- We need to focus on Halifax International Airport.
- Air freight is a large problem in the region.
- Pre-custom clearances at Halifax International Airport would help make us competitive.
- Smaller airports such as Yarmouth could be used to ship cargo by air.
- We need to improve air access to Nova Scotia. Better accessibility to the United States is also required.
- Nova Scotia needs stronger political will on air access issues.
- There should be an Atlantic Canada approach on air access.

Community college

- Economic development is in the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) mandate.
- Community college system covers one end of the province to the other.
- There are 13 campuses around the province – can be incubators for innovation.
- Must target growth areas and specialize campuses to fit these needs. This is where the gap lies between NSCC and Nova Scotia Economic Development.
- There has been little direction given to NSCC by government.

- Must address “drop in” rates at community colleges.
- Must mobilize community college on oil/gas development.
- NSCCs should promote more courses on entrepreneur development, which should also be a part of the high school curriculum.
- We don’t really have the educational infrastructure to prepare people for the jobs ahead. Many of our colleges don’t have any more seats than are offering now.

Digital/Information technology

- There are digital infrastructure problems outside Halifax, need faster connections to Internet.
- Finland/Sweden suggest that IT infrastructure will lead to development.
- Need to develop partnerships with MTT and cable companies.
- Nova Scotia Power has all dark fibre – how can the use be facilitated?
- Is anyone looking into wireless technology?
- Better links between efforts to improve IT infrastructure and IT industry.
- Government should detail where we want Nova Scotia to be in five years, *e.g.*, connectivity.
- Difference between IT industry and telecommunications.
- Private investment can support IT infrastructure; do not need government action.

Ports

- Choose a few key ports for upgrading and live with the political consequences.
- Encourage the private sector to develop the Strait.
- Community control leads to community involvement and community benefits, *e.g.*, Sheet Harbour.

Power

- Three phase power connection is important in communities.

Rail

- Halifax should have commuter rail system.

Roads

- Rural roads are an obstacle in Nova Scotia.
- Coastal roadways need to be improved to connect coastal communities and increase tourism .
- Weight restrictions loosely enforced lead to more road wear but there is no offsetting revenue.
- Toll the 100-series highways and use money to upgrade secondary roads.
- Most important investment to be made would be an intra-provincial, rapid transport system.

Social

- Needs to be more emphasis on social infrastructure.
- Day care is a social need that is a prerequisite to broader participation.
- University infrastructure in need of upgrading to be competitive in world markets.

Performance Measures

- Focus on growth and development.
- Need an evaluation of value-added through programs and services as a way of determining which ones should stay and which can go.
- Measure and track better the contribution of the service sector.
- The performance of the economy should be monitored and published at arms length by an independent body like Nova Knowledge.

Goals

- State a clear goal up front. Why are we doing this?
- Need to set a unifying goal – find one goal and the commit to and support it.
- Context of goal will affect how we prepare to meet it.
- *eg.*: Make Nova Scotia export level in the top three in the country.
- Need to focus on three or four clear things as a department that we are going to do and then report on successes rather than diffusing energies across a wide range of goals.

Results

- Strategy must focus on results.
- In tandem with the strategy, need an evaluation method to determine the success of initiatives.
- Need at some level to monitor new policies or ideas to determine what is valid.
- Need solid performance measure, measurable impacts of economic growth.
- Must measure progress against our competition around the world.
- How will we know if we have achieved what we set out to do?
- An achievable objective would be to have a “healthy environment,” “good” minimum wage, *e.g.*, \$8/hour.
- Performance measure: distribution of capital.
- Must consider new measuring tools, *e.g.*, GPI
- Ensure that others are involved in measuring results.
- Need a framework and time tale for evaluation and feedback.
- Sort out what government will provide and what communities/business should.
- Must be a provincial strategy, not a Nova Scotia Economic Development strategy.
- Emphasize follow through in the document.

The Role of Government

- Define what role government will and can play and define what government cannot do.
- Government should be able to say “no.” Need strong visionary politicians unafraid to be unpopular.
- How committed is government to doing what is unpopular when necessary if it is right?

- Cannot be all things to all people: concentrate on strengths – don't waste resources on weaknesses.
- Define where government goes and where business goes.
- Support: to include tax issues, R&D expenditures, efficiently managed infrastructure (telecommunications, roads, healthcare & education) and a commitment to lifelong learning
- Identify private sector interest and match up services.
- Government should be more business-like, minimize politics.
- Co-ordination, not centralization: all departments have a role in economic growth.
- Be consistent: keep priorities over time, long term commitments necessary.
- Develop a strategy that will outlast political regimes
- Tell the truth: try not to cater to too many special interests.
- Essential problem is one of openness, no one knows why government does what it does.
- Government's bad reputation arises from the mystery and presumed subjectiveness of decisions.
- Government should be a source of information and data, research and analysis.
- Government should be the forefront of innovation.
- Be a facilitator: don't work against business/entrepreneurs.
- Initiate and facilitate partnerships.
- Government should eliminate barriers not add to them.
- Listen to people and then *act* to establish credibility.
- Focus outside the province to bring new money in.
- Move people between government, universities and business.
- Government has key role in business climate, training and infrastructure but lesser roles in other areas.
- Support only communities that work to help themselves.
- Policy formulation and economic progress monitoring: both done by arm's length bodies.
- Halifax is one of our key assets but also one of the key drains on economic development money.
- Different parts of the bureaucracy in Nova Scotia are jealous of each another. There is a lack of self-confidence. We do not celebrate the success of others.
- Government must realize when an opportunity falls in their lap. There is an inability on the part of bureaucracy to take risks in developing programs.
- Government cannot prop up communities that are economically irrelevant.
- Facilitate what communities want, don't impose.
- Development organizations should educate communities about development.
- Government's must believe in its own people.
- Needs to be a process to educate people about the opportunities in their areas.
- Community Economic Development cannot be looked at for policy, but more of an strategic role and the influencing of policy.
- The regional development authorities are doing more of the work that Community Economic Development used to do in the pas. CED will focus more on export

- development, infrastructure development, marketing Nova Scotia, creating a brand name.
- If CED is walking away from smaller community projects, there is a concern that these will be downloaded to the municipalities.
- There is an opportunity for some government services outside of Halifax.
- Harmonization of departments of the Atlantic Canadian governments could be helpful – promote common interests and market Atlantic Canada as a whole.
- Government should decentralize some government jobs to Cape Breton.
- Government economic development work has a serious image problem. Take economic development outside government.
- Nova Scotia Economic Development is the only link at the moment between government and the future. This process gives people a say – everyone will pay attention.
- Increase department presence throughout the province.
- Regional development authorities should be tied in with other departments, not just Nova Scotia Economic Development. The focus area should be on communities from the ground up, grassroots, *etc.*
- Economic Development should be positioned closer to private industry. It should have buy-in from the industry, academia and government should consistently pursue long term objectives, undeterred by short term political pressures.
- Economic development agencies should have larger budgets and more staff so they can work on long term projects in the province and more teamwork with communities and get away from doing day to day things.
- We are asking government to work in an entrepreneurial way with fewer people and resources so entrepreneurship training within the civil service is also necessary.
- Government needs to be very selective and strategic about funding choices.
- Need a better connection between what we do for companies here and abroad.
- Need to encourage the disabled into the workforce.
- Should not force jobs out of Halifax. If the expertise is here, keep it here.
- Take care of low skilled workers. Some people don't want to be retrained.
- A lot of people in the province still feel the government must provide employment for people.
- Government must understand that there are two economies in Nova Scotia: Halifax area and rest of province.
- Government should move out of direct lending and toward loan guarantees.
- Government should appoint “facilitators” to help navigate companies through the red tape.
- Need an immigration policy in Nova Scotia.
- Problems arise when government tries to work like a business.
- Government should not be afraid to “pick winners.”
- This must not be seen as a government enterprise without the buy in of educational institutions and the private sector.
- In Nova Scotia, rural and parts of Halifax, public expenditures are what is sustaining the communities – need to be mindful of the strategy's impact on these.
- Must stop pulling out supports without consideration of the impacts on rural Nova Scotia.
- Government should stay out of the ports, let them compete.

- We do not have a “duty to serve” mentality in Nova Scotia.
- Promote self-sufficiency for the next 10 years and then back off.
- Publicize the success stories for communities featuring the local volunteers – stress the partnership between the community and all levels of government involved.
- Need more emphasis on the relationships between government, education, private sector... with Halifax as the hub of technological development.
- Leaders need to be willing to take the heat for decisions and take a stand.
- Should collect all marketing people and put them in the Department of Economic Development.
- Need a balance between regulating and promoting – conflict of interest.
- Pick industries and give them full attention – Advisory Council on Energy is a good step.
- Government need to show a high level of commitment that will leave no doubt of its support of the oil and gas industry.
- Issue of public accountability does not allow too much focus on niches, therefore must look at governments role – steering (capacity building, research), not rowing (delivery).
- Government should work with self-regulatory associations.
- Too much “legalese” in government documents to be fully comprehensible to the public.
- Government should be encouraging the development of the Sydney harbour.
- Government has a role in the promotion of infrastructure development throughout the province.
- The single most influential factor in creating an image for a province is the government.
- Government need to be more expansive and cooperative. Won’t achieve unanimity but can do more on getting a clear direction of where we are going and how to get there.
- Perhaps could have more staff at Intergovernmental Affairs so could devote more energy toward promoting Nova Scotia interests in Ottawa.
- Government must come out and say that culture is important and then back it up with actions.
- Need financial assistance (without too much expenditure) in tracking the impacts of culture.
- Government’s job is to invest in people so that they are then in a position to decide and control their own growth and are at a point where they can be entrepreneurial and then to get out of the way.
- Most public contact with the government is through the civil service, in order to change people’s perception of government, need to make the civil service more entrepreneurial.
- There is a great benefit in having a single contact person who will act as a channel for all contact between industry and government. “Single-window shopping”
- Government’s role is to create a proper business climate through providing: a fair and consistent corporate tax base; improved infrastructure; a solution to the jurisdictional overlap problems; a skilled workforce; and through keeping government money out of business.
- Government needs to facilitate the transfer of capital from outside markets.
- Explore the link between electoral reform and economic growth. We see the province through a political lens. Sustainable communities must be economic not simply nostalgia items.
- If a community wants to survive, it must put some sweat equity into its own survival. Government cannot do it.
- In order to be competitive, government must give a quicker turnaround. All investment people

should be at the table at once. Other provinces do this now.

- Government has a challenge to change the nature of public dialogue on issues.
- Government's role to ensure that the Mi'kmaq community is not last to be considered.
- Must get all government departments on the same page.
- The role of government is not static, but varies with changing economic circumstances.
- Government could support community leadership development.
- Premier should personally contact any person/corporation wanting to set up in Nova Scotia. Government departments should have a fast-response system to notify the Premier's Office of new entrepreneurs wanting to come to Nova Scotia.
- Must share information on opportunities and also the negatives of natural gas.
- Procurement policies in Nova Scotia do not look at the benefits of what are buying but only at the costs. The province is not shopping/investing locally.

Implementation Plan

- Set realistic expectations in the economic growth strategy.
- Set clear priorities.
- Major public education required. People must realize economic growth is our only way forward.
- Articulate where the global economy is going. Show how Nova Scotia must position itself. Define what is meant by the "new economy" and the "knowledge economy".
- Based on past experience, not convinced of government's ability to follow through on promises.
- We must stick with strategy when it comes out. Should develop "Keystone Manual of Economic Development" Should be reviewed every year. New governments or deputy ministers should not be able to change the direction.
- Need to make clear how this strategy differs from past strategies and therefore will succeed.
- The path must be definable and measurable, with milestones on the way.
- Include next steps, action plan, projects, dates, assignments.

Sectors

Aerospace

- There is no support for aerospace industry in government.
- Aerospace is stable, has a high potential for growth and the industry is NOT going to disappear. Nova Scotia must jump on the aerospace band wagon or risk losing potential business.

Culture

- The quality of life is also a result of the cultural life in Nova Scotia.
- Festivals are a source of community development.
- Festivals are growing so need a full-time, professional staff rather than just volunteers.

- Build on existing culture strategy.
- Must develop partnership with art/culture community.
- Our culture makes us unique – as we become better known on the world stage, who we are becomes important.
- We must be proud of who we are.
- The cultural sector is underdeveloped. Should communicate more and better with the media.

Film

- The development of film industry needs little physical infrastructure (investment tax credits, *etc.*)
- The added value in the film industry appears to be making an impact – now is not the time to step back.
- Need to identify organizations that can speak for the industry.

Gas & Oil

- Include a gas and oil strategy in the economic growth strategy .
- The economic growth strategy should link to overall energy strategy.
- Link to federal climate change strategy.
- This will be a major industry in next 5-10 years – set targets.
- Real growth lies in potential of current exploration sites.
- Understand and explain trade-offs, *e.g.*, access to gas and eventual price.
- Real benefits lie in what we do with the gas once it is on shore.
- Exploit the potential of people to garner full benefits of gas & oil.
- Will gas make us as dependent as Cape Breton was upon coal?
- Need programs to promote renewable sources of energy – wind, solar, tidal.
- Could spin some of the Sable royalties off into renewable energy research.
- How can we get more women into gas & oil jobs?
- There is a danger that this industry will perpetuate the dual labour force. Oil and gas is seen as a “bad” industry for women. There are barriers. Companies have lied to women. There is a lack of access to unions. There are accommodation problems, at least perceived, on rigs.
- “Seize opportunity” in gas and oil and “gear up” the people.

Housing construction issues

- There is going to be a skill shortage of tradespeople.
- If there is a construction boom in Nova Scotia, we will not be ready for it.
- Industry is not taken serious in Nova Scotia. Housing industry is worth \$893 million. People are always going to need a place to live.
- We cannot lump housing and commercial construction together.
- There needs to be some political will to identify construction sector as a vital component of economy.

Migration

- We must make it easy for those who have left to return.
- A retiring, aging population shouldn't be viewed in negative light, *e.g.*, retirement villages.
- Must try to retain highly skilled immigrants.
- There is currently a declining rate of growth – immigration is the only hope for recovery.
- The current law governing immigration is rigid and outdated.
- Nova Scotia should have a policy allowing us to identify immigrants to fast track for acceptance, like New Brunswick and Newfoundland.
- There is no mention in the document of immigration or public-community partnerships.
- Need a critical mass of diversity.
- Need a separate place to house Immigration, will require investment to have any real impact.
- The situation surrounding immigrants is unique so the programs supporting them should be unique.
- The cities experiencing growth are those with strong immigration.
- Must balance development so that immigrants are not only settling in the Halifax/Dartmouth area.
- In the context of addressing systemic roadblocks, there has been a positive change in terms of multiculturalism filtering out from Halifax to the rest of the province.

Natural Resources

- Exploit opportunities: peat, slate, gas, barite, titanium.
- Enforce buffer zones around clear cuts.
- Examine capital gains tax on wood lots and impact on clear cutting.
- The document does “traditional” industries a disservice, does not acknowledge the contributions they make.
- Clear cutting is not regulated enough – most forests are privately owned.
- Need more value added in our forest products.
- Include fisheries in the strategy.

Tourism

- Systematically and gradually expand the tourist season.
- Display diverse culture in ads.
- Build higher standard accommodation.
- Interpretation centres needed.
- Too few marketing dollars chasing too many markets.
- Tourism industry is overrated. Seasonal workers do not create wealth.
- Sunday shopping and longer restaurant hours (would improve tourist image and increase economic activity)
- Only 2% of New Englanders know about Nova Scotia. Tourism should be recognized as an industry sector.
- Need year-round tourism, *i.e.*, Martock, Dog Sledding Clubs, *etc.*
- Need more trails, development of the old rail lines.

- More effective marketing, *i.e.*, more success stories in local papers, not just specialized trade journals.
- Funding cuts to tourism have affected the industry – fewer Visitor Info Centres.
- Huge opportunity for economic growth in this area is to expand on tourist business.
- We are overlooking eco-tourism, *e.g.*, New Brunswick really promotes the Bay of Fundy on TV. We could develop an excellent eco-tourism trail along the bay in stages connecting the communities.

Volunteers

- There is not enough recognition given to the 3rd sector. Need more investment in this sector.
- Need a better system of utilizing those willing to volunteer.