

2024

Economic Development Strategic Plan

The Saint John Region

resonance

ENVISION
Saint John THE
REGIONAL
GROWTH
AGENCY



A Call to Action

The Saint John Region's value proposition is strong. As a global gateway with unmatched multi-modal transportation and logistics opportunities, an emerging hotbed for health and technology innovation, offering the most diverse set of energy assets in the country and home to multiple global headquarters, the region is at a pivotal moment in economic evolution. With universities and colleges, a highly educated, motivated workforce, and a growing population, the Saint John Region is attracting and retaining the kind of talent businesses need to prosper.

In 2024, Envision Saint John initiated the development of the Saint John Region Economic Development Plan to identify priorities for the next five years that will harness the region's strengths and tackle outstanding challenges. Our objective is to enable the region's economy to grow sustainably while also enhancing the quality of life for residents.

In addition to the Economic Development Plan, we embarked on a Tourism Master Plan. The plans were designed and implemented as interconnected initiatives, ensuring their alignment and mutual reinforcement from the beginning. From the tourism perspective, aligning with the broader economic development strategy ensures that the tourism sector is not developed in isolation but rather is seen as an integral part of the region's overall growth.

Envision Saint John will help drive the Economic Development Strategy and Tourism Master Plans forward, but success will rely on the collective efforts of many stakeholders. Our hope is that this Plan will help focus our efforts and strengthen our community moving forward.

Sincerely,

Andrew Beckett
CEO, Envision Saint John

Table of Contents

01	Introduction	03	04	Economic Development Strategic Plan	26	Strategic Priority 05: Position the Saint John Region as a Place for Investment	46
02	Project Background	06	Strategic Priority 01: Lead Atlantic Canada’s Energy Transition	31	Strategic Priority 06: Strengthen the Region’s Workforce Development Ecosystem	50	
03	Discovery & Engagement	10	Strategic Priority 02: Leverage Port Saint John as a Catalyst for Innovation	35	05 Strategies & Actions: Summary	55	
			Strategic Priority 03: Provide the Next Generation of Health-Tech Solutions	39	06 Appendices	59	
			Strategic Priority 04: Cultivate a Renowned Destination for Residents and Visitors Alike	42			

01 Introduction

INTRODUCTION

The Saint John Region stands at a transformative juncture in its economic journey.

As global industries evolve and new technologies emerge, the region is uniquely positioned to capitalize on these trends. The convergence of traditional strengths in energy, telecommunications, maritime, and healthcare industries with emerging opportunities in clean energy technology and digital health has set the stage for a new era of economic growth and innovation.

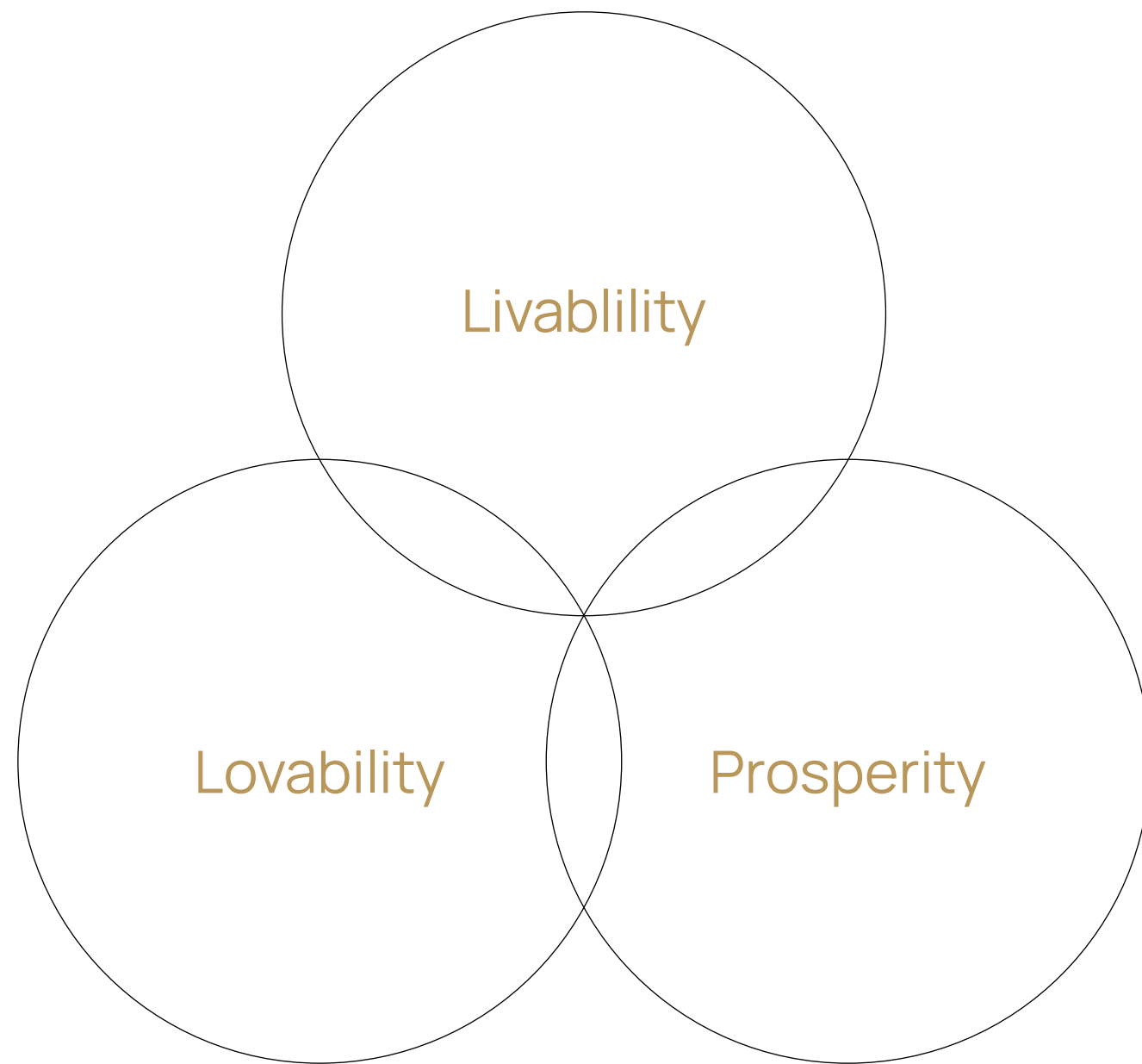
In response to these dynamic shifts, the Saint John Region is embracing a more comprehensive approach to economic development. This holistic strategy extends beyond traditional business attraction and retention efforts, encompassing workforce development, infrastructure enhancement, and quality of life improvements. By addressing these interconnected aspects, the region aims to catalyze comprehensive transformation that benefits both businesses and residents alike.

Recognizing the intertwined nature of economic development and community prosperity, Envision Saint John has collaborated with key stakeholders

to create two integrated reports: an Economic Development Strategy and a Tourism Master Plan. This collaborative effort ensures that economic initiatives align seamlessly with tourism development, fostering a resilient and diversified regional economy as well as a vibrant place for residents to call home.

At its core, the Economic Development Strategic Plan is built on three fundamental principles: loveability, liveability, and prosperity. The three pillars are an accurate shorthand and clear distillation of the wide range of factors that have demonstrated moderate to strong correlations with attracting new talent, investment and/or visitors.

[Continues →](#)



LIVABILITY

Livability benchmarks a region’s physical quality of place, such as air quality, housing stock and affordability, and internet speeds.

LOVABILITY

Lovability speaks to the relative vibrancy and quality of place of a region relative to its competitive set, including indicators such as number of restaurants, parks, and concerts.

PROSPERITY

Prosperity is evaluated by core statistics like business infrastructure, such as the region’s airport’s connectivity to other destinations and the number of regional universities, as well as the educational attainment level of the region’s population and the percentage of people participating in the labour force.

This balanced approach ensures that as the region enhances its appeal to businesses and investors, it simultaneously improves the quality of life and opportunities for those who call the Saint John Region home. From cutting-edge research facilities to revitalized industrial parks, from a modernized port to a thriving health-tech district, every part of the region stands to benefit from this comprehensive strategy.

The successful implementation of this plan relies on active partnerships between Envision Saint John, community stakeholders, educational institutions, and industry partners. Together, they will work to address challenges, seize opportunities, and position the Saint John Region as a premier destination for business, innovation, and talent.

Through this Economic Development Strategy, the Saint John Region is not just adapting to change – it’s driving it, ensuring that economic development becomes a powerful force for positive transformation. As the region moves forward, it invites all members of the community to join in realizing its full potential, creating new opportunities for growth, innovation, and prosperity for all.



02

Project Background

In 2024, Envision Saint John initiated the development of the Saint John Region Economic Development Strategic Plan (EDSP) to identify priorities for the next five years.

The goal is to enable the region's economy to grow sustainably while also enhancing the quality of life for residents.

To achieve this, Envision Saint John engaged Resonance Consultancy to conduct industry and trends research, destination benchmarking, and stakeholder engagement. This comprehensive approach was designed to help Envision Saint John, its partners, and stakeholders articulate and share a clear vision for the future of the region.

The EDSP and Tourism Master Plan (TMP) were conceived, developed, and executed as parallel, interconnected initiatives.

This synchronized approach ensured that both plans were inherently aligned and mutually reinforcing from their inception. Through extensive research and community engagement, the project team worked diligently to develop these cohesive and strategic plans simultaneously, with each informing and complementing the other throughout the process.

The deliberate integration of the TMP with the EDSP from the outset offers numerous synergistic benefits. This tandem development allowed for a holistic approach to regional growth, where tourism and broader economic strategies were considered in concert, rather than as separate entities. By interweaving these plans from their very foundations, the region is poised to leverage the strengths of both sectors, creating a more robust

and diversified economic landscape.

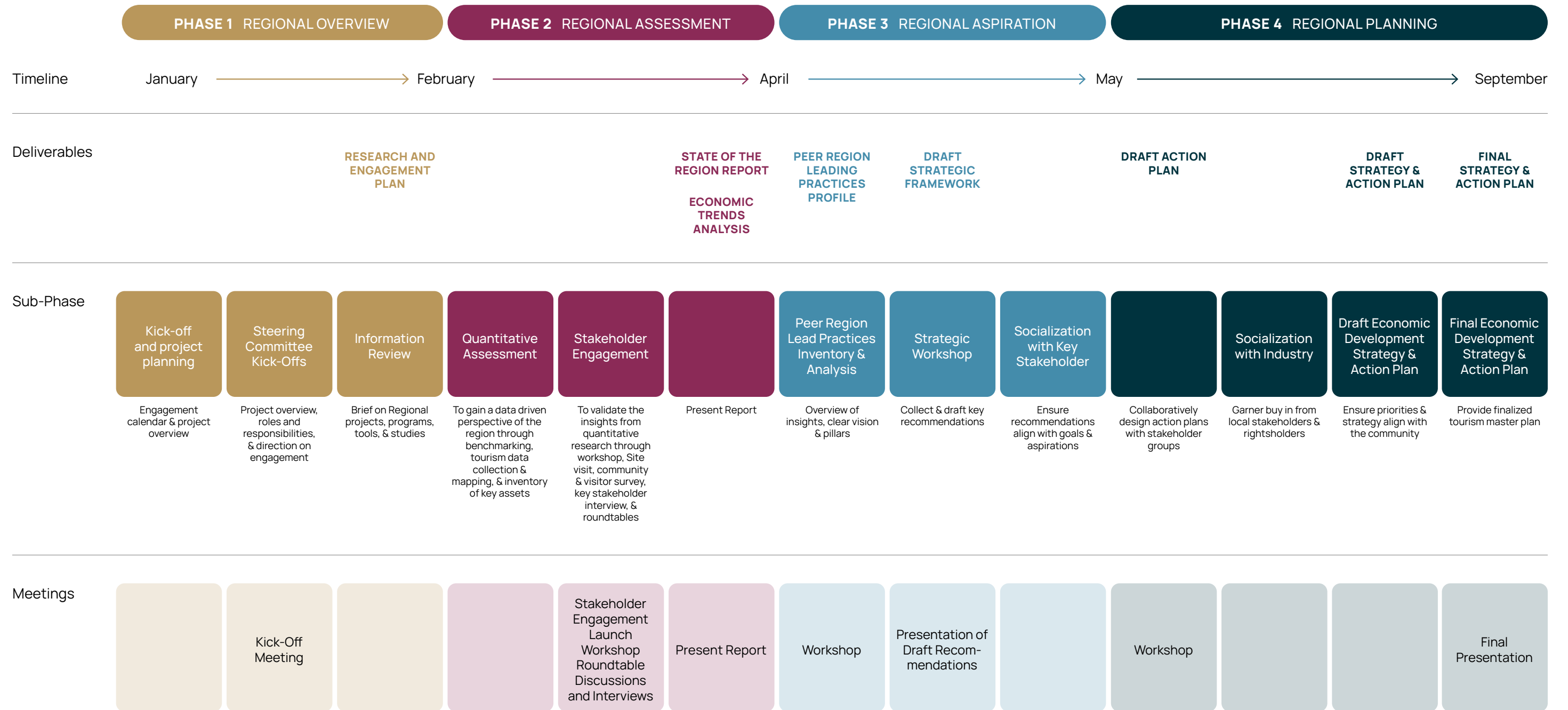
From the economic development perspective, integrating tourism into the broader strategy helps diversify the economy, creating new job opportunities and stimulating local businesses. A thriving tourism sector can also increase demand for local products and services, thereby boosting other sectors such as retail, food and beverage, arts and culture, and transportation. The more appealing a destination is to visit, the more competitive it is when it comes to attracting talent and investment in other sectors.

From the tourism perspective, aligning with the broader economic development strategy ensures that the tourism sector is not developed in isolation but rather as an integral part of the region's overall

growth. This holistic approach can enhance destination competitiveness by leveraging shared resources and infrastructure, fostering innovation, and attracting investment. It can also ensure that tourism development is sustainable and beneficial to the local community by addressing issues such as housing, transportation, and workforce development in a coordinated manner.

Ultimately, this integrated approach promotes sustainable economic growth and also strengthens the overall fabric of the Saint John Region. By working together, stakeholders can create a prosperous community that benefits both residents and visitors alike.

Our Project Roadmap



PHASE 1 REGIONAL OVERVIEW

The development of the Saint John Region EDSP began with the formation of a Steering Committee, comprising key stakeholders from the region. Initial kick-off meetings introduced the project's key milestones, deliverables, and objectives to the committee members. The Steering Committee met periodically throughout the project to provide essential guidance and validation at critical junctures. An in-depth review of existing regional studies, economic development strategies, and development projects was conducted, which served as a foundational step in understanding the current landscape and informing the subsequent phases of research and engagement.

PHASE 2 REGIONAL ASSESSMENT

The second phase involved a comprehensive assessment of the Saint John Region's economic landscape. This phase included extensive stakeholder engagement and data collection efforts to capture a detailed picture of the region's economy and community. A Competitive Benchmarking Analysis was performed, comparing the Saint John Region with 10 peer regions, the province of New Brunswick, and Canada as a whole, across various metrics related to lovability, livability and prosperity. This analysis provided a holistic view of the region's competitive positioning. A target industry analysis was also conducted to understand how the region's sectors were performing and any potential strengths or weaknesses the region should be aware of. This analysis was supported by a macro-level economic trends analysis, diving deep into five topics that may impact the region's economy. To further inform the assessment, a visitor and resident survey was conducted, gathering critical feedback on the region's offerings. Stakeholder interviews enriched the understanding of the region's current challenges and opportunities, providing valuable insights that guided the development of strategic recommendations.

PHASE 3 REGIONAL ASPIRATION

To shift the focus from the current state to future possibilities for the Saint John Region, a visioning workshop with stakeholders was conducted. During this workshop, participants collaboratively identified internal strengths and weaknesses, external opportunities and threats, and developed a clear vision and guiding principles for the EDSP. The team then crafted strategies and recommendations aligned with this vision, incorporating best practices and actionable steps to enhance the region. A strategic framework for the EDSP was drafted and socialized with stakeholders to ensure practicality, alignment, and broad support.

PHASE 4 REGIONAL PLANNING

In the final phase, a comprehensive Action Plan was developed, outlining responsibilities, key performance indicators, timelines, and necessary resources by the Envision Saint John team. The finalized Economic Development Strategic Plan was then presented to stakeholders, marking a significant milestone in the region's development and setting the stage for future growth.

03 Discovery & Engagement



State of the Region

The Saint John Region boasts a diverse economic landscape - a growing visitor economy, a globally-connected port, industries undergoing transitional change, a robust workforce ecosystem, and a burgeoning health sciences innovation district. Visitors see the Saint John Region as a beautiful and authentic region, and they return often.

However, it faces both short and long-term challenges in housing availability and affordability, industrial land readiness, continued workforce upskilling, limited air connectivity, and an underserved small business and startup ecosystem.

As the region addresses existing opportunities and needs, it must simultaneously plan and strategize for the long term, utilizing an array of strategies and partnerships to drive impact and change. This “State of the Region” aims to integrate the insights learned through research and stakeholder engagement, and the opportunities and challenges the forthcoming strategy aims to address.

INSIGHT 1

Fueled by new Canadian and inter-provincial arrivals, the region’s talent pool is growing, necessitating more attainable housing options

In the last 20 years, the Saint John Region has experienced slow and aging population growth. After the pandemic, an influx of newcomers - including people moving inter-provincially and internationally - moved into the region.

Since 2018, the region has grown by 6.37% and is projected to continue growing by another 6.61% through 2029. For the first time in recent history, the region’s median age has decreased as more young talent and families move into the region. This growth is welcomed. A growing population often correlates with a growing economy: a larger talent pool for employers; an expanded tax base; a more vibrant community¹

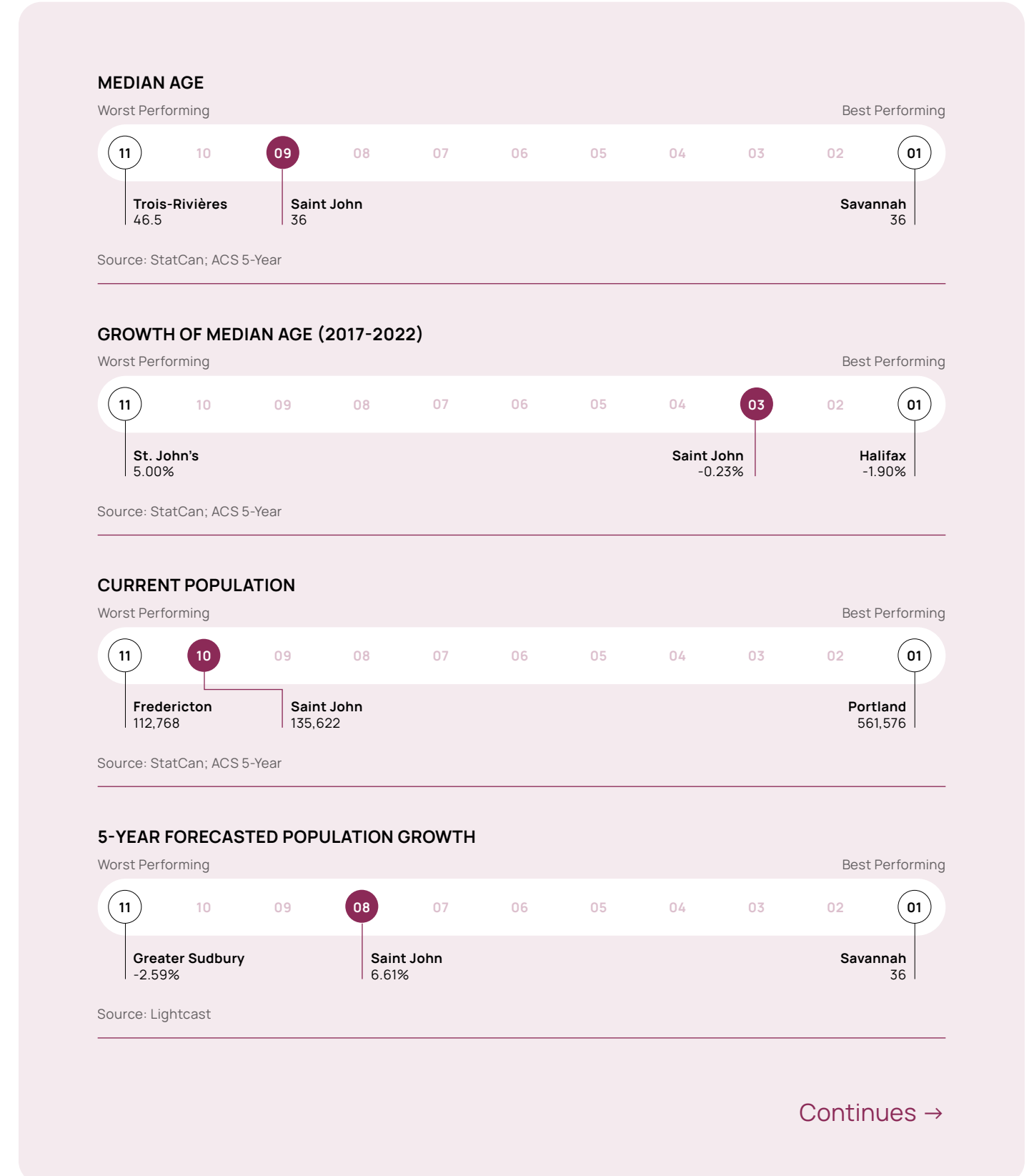
Yet, it also has its pain points. Since 2019, the price of a single-detached home has increased by 57%. While not as steep, average rent has also increased: from

\$766 in 2019 to \$1,034 in 2023. If current population growth trends continue, by 2034, up to 15,000 new households will call the Saint John Region home, necessitating up to 1,500 new housing units per year.

This new demand for housing is amplified by the challenges the development industry is facing. Rising construction costs, lack of skilled tradespeople, and procedural challenges make it difficult for developers to justify taking on these projects.

In an effort to retain this new growth and reap the benefits, Envision Saint John and regional partners will need to coordinate to reduce barriers to development and stabilize the housing market.

¹Parcel. (2023). Envision Saint John Residential Market Study. Resonance's Competitive Benchmark Assessment.



INSIGHT 2

The Saint John Region has a robust, yet under-leveraged workforce ecosystem

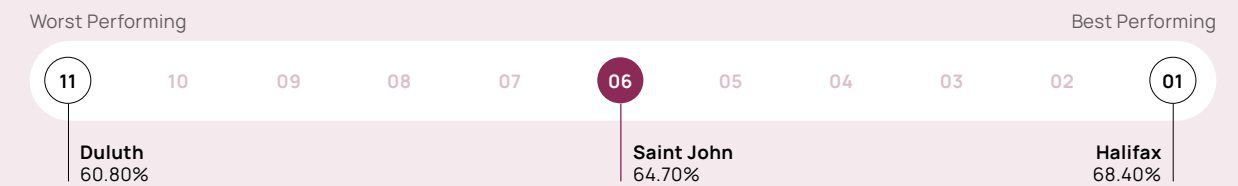
Since 2018, job opportunities have surged by 6%, and the labour force participation rate stands strong at 65%. This achievement can be attributed to several factors: the influx of recent residents, the growth of various industries, and the post-pandemic recovery. Additionally, credit is due to the collaborative efforts of 35 workforce and job readiness organizations. Furthermore, the presence of robust post-secondary institutions and programs such as UNBSJ and NBCC has contributed significantly, alongside the regional commitment to fostering community success.

However, the Saint John Region's recent growth has also underscored certain challenges within the ecosystem. Both local and target industry sectors face difficulties in establishing well-defined talent pipelines, and there's a need to

enhance connections between workforce partners and major employers. Moreover, there's some overlap in services provided by different workforce partners, which calls for streamlining and coordination efforts.

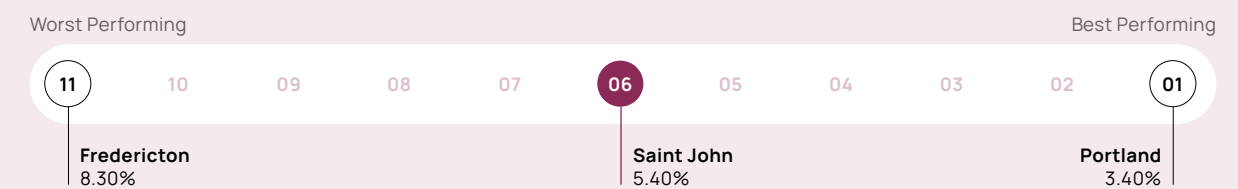
The complexity is further compounded by the impact of immigration on the region. Between 2021 and 2022, Saint John has welcomed 1,200 new immigrants, many of whom possess high levels of skill and expertise. Nonetheless, barriers to workforce entry, such as challenges related to credential transfer and language barriers, often hinder their integration into the labour market, sometimes prompting them to seek opportunities in regions where they can more easily find employment.

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE



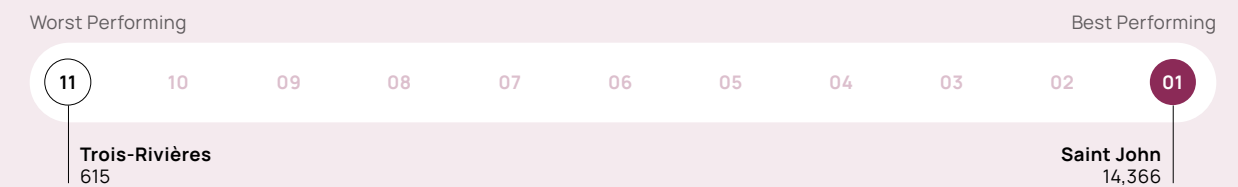
Source: StatCan; ACS 5-Year

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE



Source: StatCan; ACS 5-Year

JOB POSTING PER 100,000 POPULATION (2022)



Source: Lightcast

INSIGHT 3

Foundational industry sectors have anchored the Saint John Region for generations. Future innovations can open new opportunities for growth and resiliency

The Saint John Region has long been recognized as an industrial hub, and with good reason. Major employers such as Irving Oil, J.D. Irving, Cooke Aquaculture and Moosehead Breweries - among many others - have significantly influenced the region's economic landscape and global presence. Additionally, education and healthcare have played vital roles in the region's development.

While several industries across the country have historically faced decline, recent economic data suggests a shift in certain sectors of Manufacturing (such as Computer and electronic product manufacturing, Machinery manufacturing, and Fabricated metal product manufacturing) toward reshoring in Canada, evidenced by a decrease in

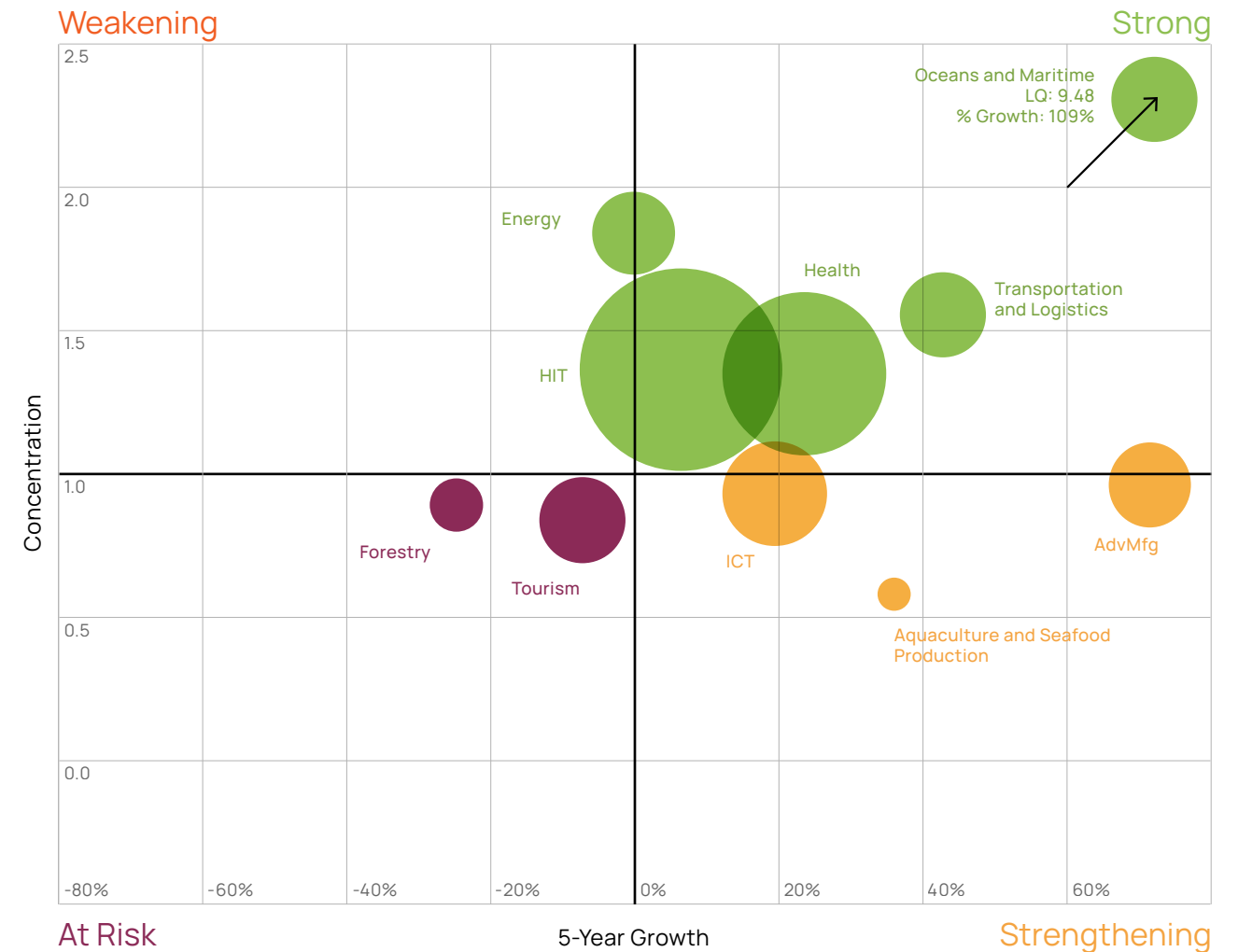
their "Goods imports to product ratio." This trend may increase the region's potential for future manufacturing opportunities associated with the transition to a green economy.

As these industries continue to innovate - for example, Port Saint John's modernization efforts, the energy sector's drive to achieve sustainability goals through initiatives like the "Pathway to Net Zero" plan, and the region's investments in renewable and sustainable energy technologies - and with UNB's Integrated Health Initiative (IHI) progressing along with the development of a health & technology district, firms will increasingly look to the region's existing skilled talent pool and strategic infrastructure positioning to meet their evolving needs.

² Source: Durocher, B. (2023). Are We Starting to See Signs of Reshoring in Canada. Statistics Canada and Desjardins Economic Studies

Saint John Region Bubble Chart

Concentration of cluster compared to national average (lq = 1.0)*
Vs. Five-year regional growth, 2018 - 2023



Source: Lightcast; **Estimates due to data suppression
Location Quotient (LQ) is the concentration of jobs in a region compared to the national concentration of those jobs. LQ values above 1.0 indicate that there are more jobs in the Region proportionately than the national average.

INSIGHT 4

With improved regional industrial site readiness, the region can attract new industrial opportunities

The Saint John Region boasts three well-established industrial parks: Spruce Lake, McAllister, and Grandview. With the potential reshoring of manufacturing enterprises to Canada and the region's robust transportation infrastructure (including rail, highway, and port access), these industrial parks could emerge as prime locations for expansions.

Several barriers have been identified for larger enterprises:

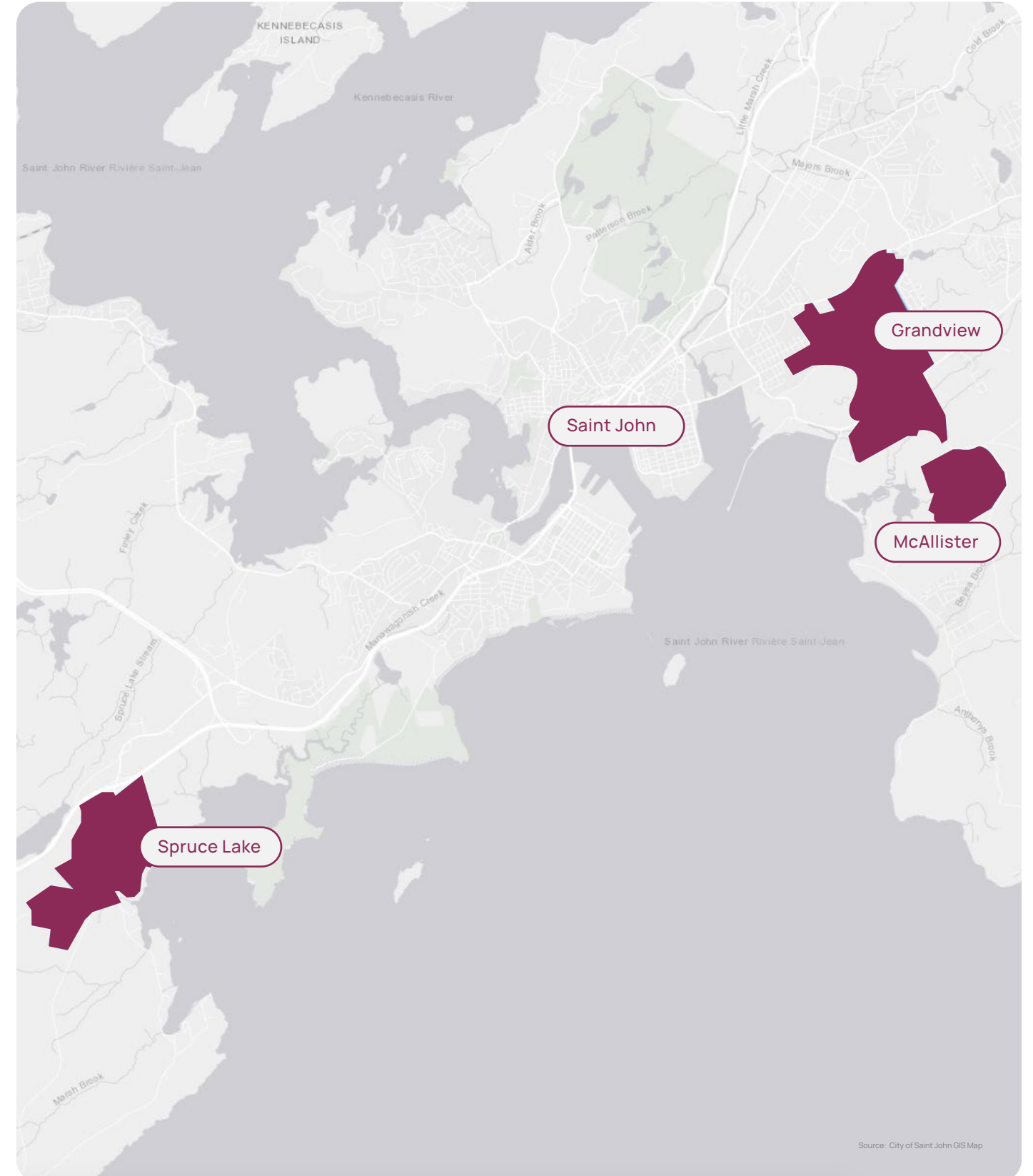
01. Lack of comprehensive land profiles ready for marketing the parks.

Market profiles detailing utility capacity, land characteristics, and available transportation and logistics infrastructure are necessary for interested firms.

02. High complexity of land development. Much of the available land consists of wetlands, rock, or areas protected by the province, which increases the time and financial investments required for development.

03. Energy limitations at the McAllister Industrial Park. The McAllister Industrial Park has limited energy capacity to accommodate larger firms, which could make the park a less attractive option for firms in the short term.

While the region plans to address each of these barriers, there also needs to be a prioritization of the type of firms that Envision Saint John aims to attract. Ideally, these firms should align with existing target sectors that can leverage the skilled labour and infrastructure already present within the region.



INSIGHT 5

Port Saint John has become more recognized in the global sphere; with established multi-modal infrastructure in place, the region could increase its impact

One of the region's major assets is Port Saint John. The Port contributes more than \$200 million to the provincial GDP. It has increased its container TEUs by 94% since 2020, reaching over 150,000 TEUs in 2023 with DP World as operator of its container terminal and welcomes 175,000 cruise ship passengers in a given year.³ This is in addition to continued growth in bulk shipments and steady liquid bulk volumes. The Port provides access to three Class I railways, and over 800 people are employed between the Port and other marine related logistics industries.

While the future looks bright for the multi-modal port, as Port Saint John aims to reach 800,000 TEUs, there are opportunities that the region and the port can pursue to better diversify.

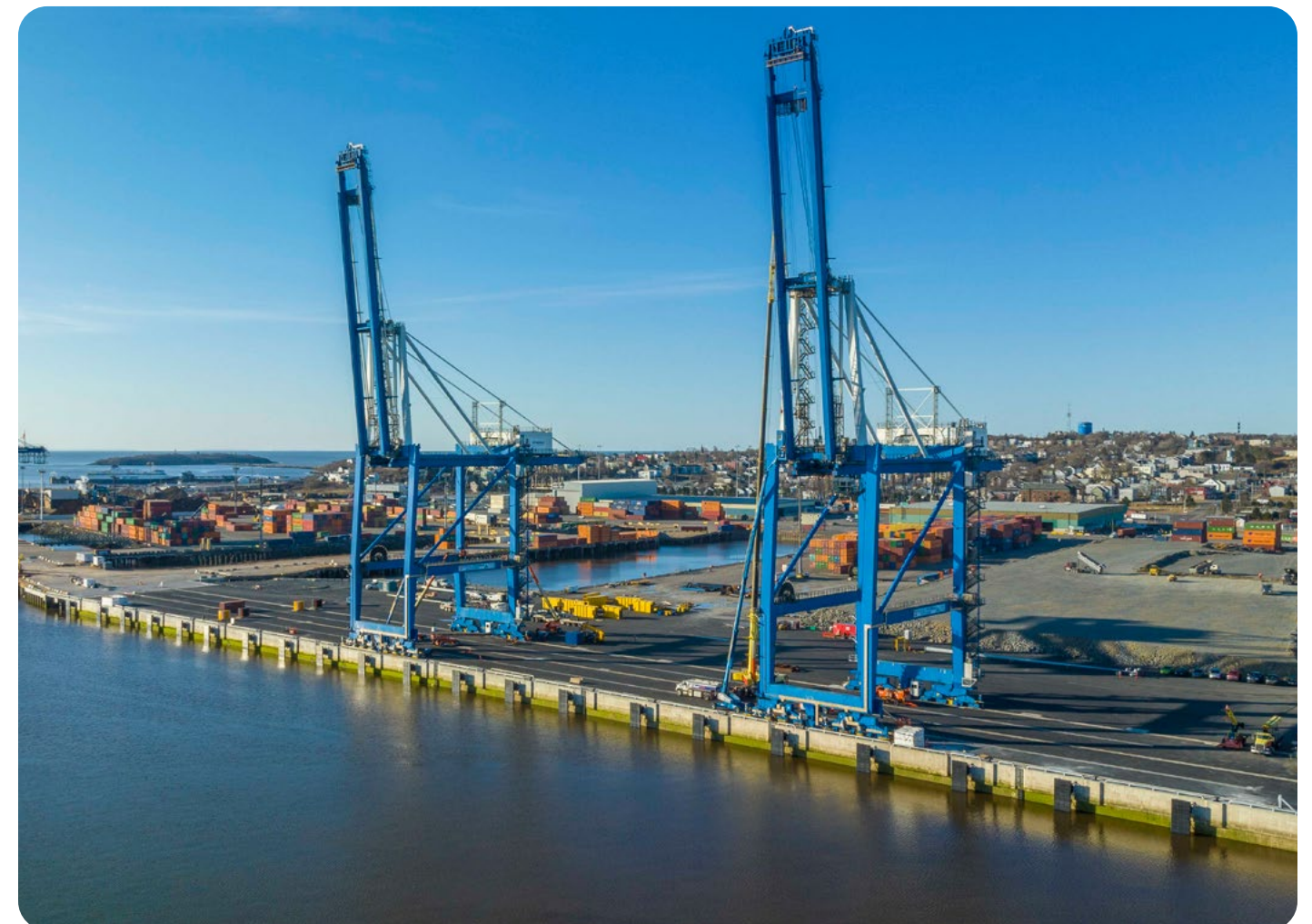
Many of these opportunities focus on inland operations, transportation of bulk products (e.g., mined and forestry products) and assembly, and light manufacturing, which can help increase revenue growth and build economic resilience. Envision Saint John issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a comprehensive study to determine the type of Transportation and Distribution Park necessary to take advantage of these opportunities.

³ (2022). Port Saint John Annual Report

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We've done the work modernizing the Port. As we look forward, how can we stand out on a global stage?

PORT SAINT JOHN LEADERSHIP



INSIGHT 6

Saint John’s cruise tourism is an important pillar for the port

Cruise tourism, primarily featuring visitors from the US, remains a vital component of the region’s economic landscape, especially as they flock to experience the renowned Bay of Fundy, the spectacular fall foliage, and the region’s overall natural beauty. The city enhances its appeal with a cruise dock that provides convenient access to local dining, shopping, and architectural attractions—all within comfortable walking distance. This strategic advantage distinctly positions Saint John among other cruise destinations in the Maritimes.

In 2023, the region witnessed significant growth in cruise tourism, welcoming 174,229 cruise visitors, an increase of 26,000 from the previous year, and demonstrating a robust recovery post-pandemic. This resurgence is notable as the city works toward regaining the all-

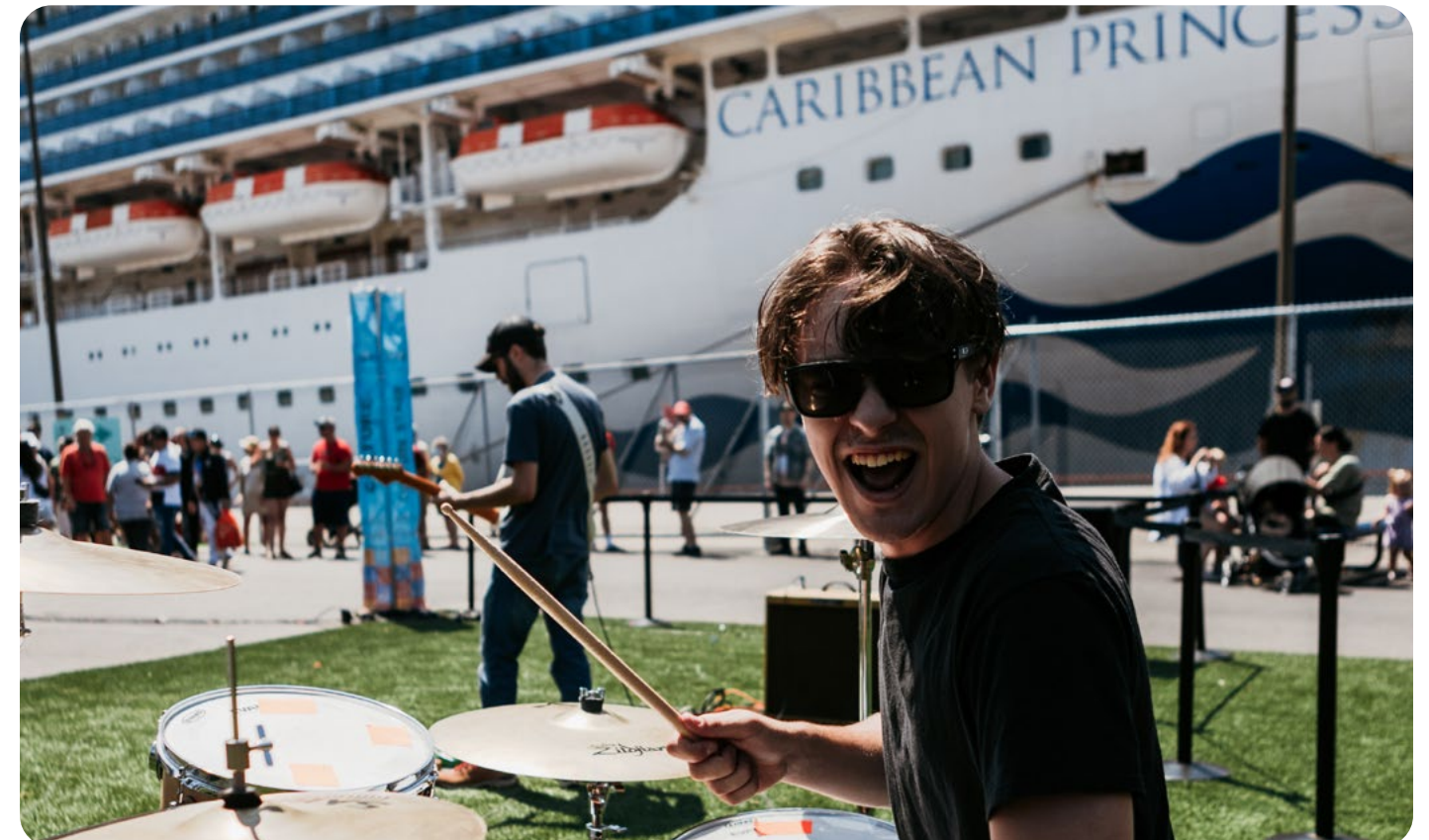
time high of 196,032 cruise passengers recorded in 2019. Although the 2023 figures still reflect an 11% decrease from that peak, the quick recovery indicates a positive trajectory for the cruise sector in the local economy. The strong rebound underscores the essential role of cruise tourism in Saint John’s port economic portfolio, serving as a key driver of revenue and a pivotal element in sustaining local businesses and employment.

Looking to the future, there is an expected increase in cruise ship arrivals from 68 in 2023 to 75 in 2024. This positive trend signals continued growth in cruise arrivals, reinforcing the importance and potential expansion of this sector in the region’s tourism economy.

Cruise Passengers and Arrivals to Port Saint John

METRICS	RAW DATA
Saint John Cruise Passengers 2019	196,032
Saint John Cruise Passengers 2023	174,229
Cruise Ship Arrivals 2023	68
Cruise Ship Arrivals 2024	75

Source: (2024) Envision Saint John Regional Growth Dashboard



INSIGHT 7

New Brunswick airports face slow post-pandemic recovery amid varied flight connectivity

In a post-pandemic evaluation of air passenger traffic across New Brunswick, data indicates a slow recovery in the region. Saint John Airport experienced a decline from 281,100 passengers in 2019 to 175,000 in 2023, reflecting a substantial decrease in traveller volume by approximately 37.7%.⁴ The region offers 2 daily direct flights from Toronto and 1 from Montreal. Comparatively, Moncton Airport, which previously held the highest traffic, reported a reduction from 657,900 in 2019 to 600,121 in 2023, amounting to

a 8.78% drop, with 3 daily direct flights from Toronto, 2 from Montreal, and 1 from Ottawa.⁵ Fredericton Airport also saw a decline, with numbers dropping from 408,300 passengers in 2019 to 333,813 in 2023, translating to a decrease of roughly 18.24%.⁶ Fredericton similarly maintains 3 direct flights from Toronto, 2 from Montreal, and 1 from Ottawa daily. This comparison highlights varying levels of connectivity and the potential impact on recovery rates for these airports.

New Brunswick Airport Performance

METRICS	RAW DATA
Saint John Airport Passengers 2019	281,100
Saint John Airport Passengers 2023	175,000
Saint John Airport Direct Daily Flights	3
Moncton Airport Passengers 2019	657,900
Moncton Airport Passengers 2023	600,121
Moncton Airport Direct Daily Flights	6
Fredericton Airport Passengers 2019	408,300
Fredericton Airport Passengers 2023	333,813
Fredericton Airport Direct Daily Flights	6

Source: (2024) Envision Saint John Regional Growth Dashboard

⁴(2024) Envision Saint John Regional Growth Dashboard; Figures apply to year round flights (April 2024)

⁵(2024) "Passenger numbers up, flights added at two largest airports in Maritimes." CTV News Atlantic

⁶(2024) Fredericton International Airport

INSIGHT 8

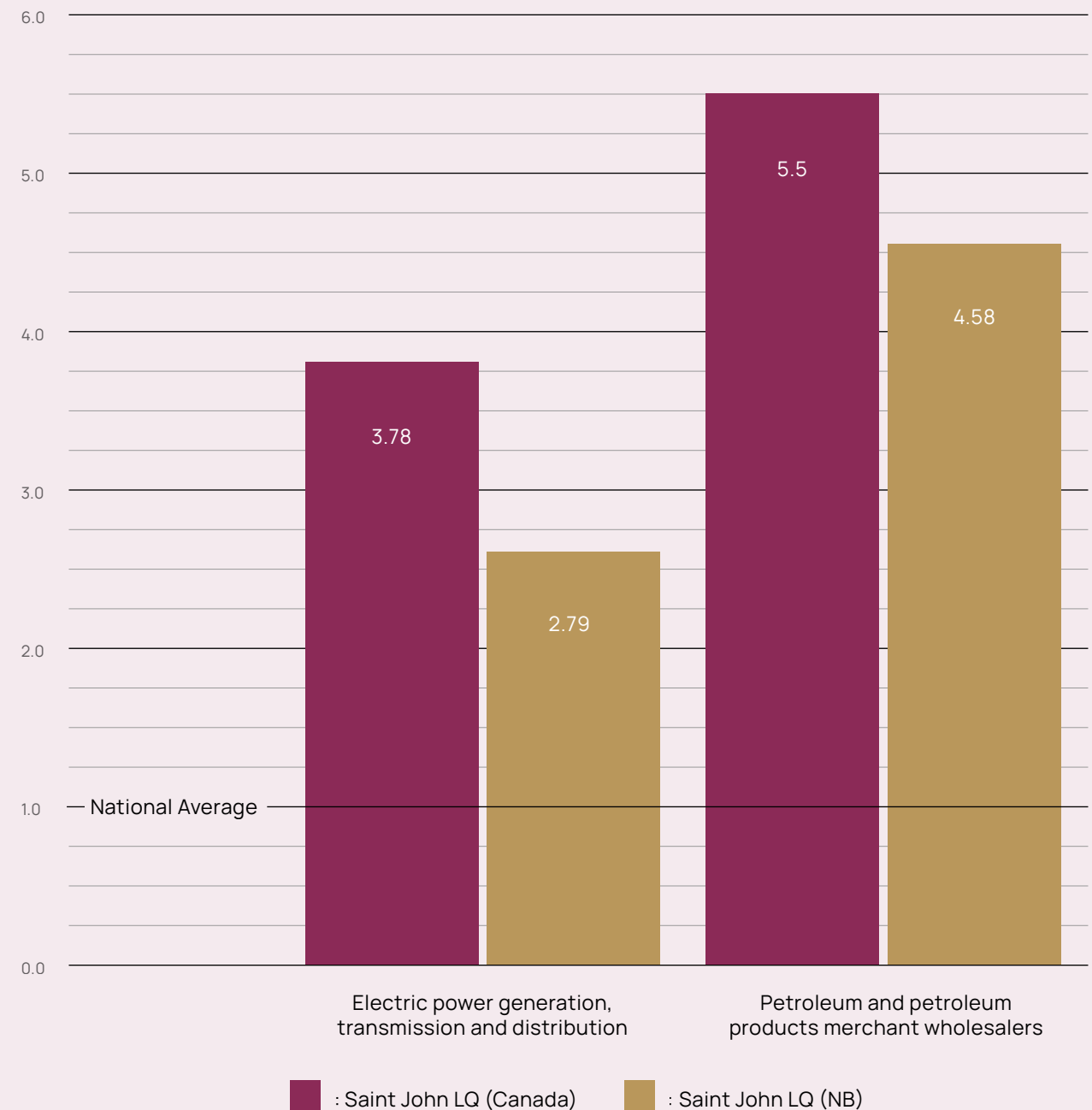
Innovation in the energy sector will shape the Saint John Region’s present and future by driving industry clusters and workforce development

Climate change is driving a global reassessment of energy sources, presenting significant opportunities and considerable challenges for the region’s energy sector. The region’s energy cluster faces hurdles such as limited government financial support for reducing refined oil emissions and delays in the implementation of clean economy investment tax credits. Additionally, while emerging technologies offer a pathway to cleaner energy, they are still under development and bring about the need for extensive reskilling and upskilling of the workforce. These factors contribute to investment uncertainty, complicating strategic planning for major employers and potentially impacting job security for residents who depend on traditional industries.

Amidst these challenges, the region’s traditional sectors are carefully considering the transition towards sustainable energy. This thoughtful approach paves the way for the development of a robust alternative energy sector, with promising opportunities in hydrogen and other renewable energies. To capitalize on these opportunities, the region should implement a dual strategy: attracting pioneering businesses through a targeted attraction strategy and fostering a local startup tech support ecosystem. This approach will encourage home-grown innovation and entrepreneurship, enabling the Saint John Region to both adapt to and lead in the evolving global energy landscape, thus securing its economic future and supporting its community through a critical period of transformation.

Concentration of Energy Industries

LQ of Saint John Region industries, 2023



Location Quotient (LQ) is the concentration of jobs in a region compared to the national concentration of those jobs. LQ values above 1.0 indicate that there are more jobs in the region proportionately than the national average.

INSIGHT 9

The Saint John Region's health and technology sector creates the opportunity for the industry to be an export driver for the Region

The Saint John Region boasts a vibrant Health and Information Technology (HIT) ecosystem, employing over 10,000 people. Many of these jobs are in healthcare, including roles in general hospitals and home health care, significantly contributing to the local economy and enhancing the overall quality of life for the region. Both the University of New Brunswick Saint John and New Brunswick Community College play pivotal roles in expanding the region's healthcare workforce.

The investments and focus of the Health and Technology Ecosystem hold the potential to elevate the industry from merely supporting the local economy to driving export opportunities. The ecosystem and network of an innovation district located at Tucker Park can:

- Generate significant research and innovation investments, as well as securing future funding.
- Help commercialize modernized solutions in healthcare and other industries.
- Support entrepreneurs in starting up and scaling their small businesses.
- Develop and attract talent, as well as fostering the growth of new businesses and major employers.

To sustain the momentum of the cluster evolution, partners require an industry-agnostic connector to help identify potential new growth opportunities and effectively communicate the unique value proposition of the Saint John region.

Sample of health-tech ecosystem partners

- Saint John Regional Hospital
- New Brunswick Community College
- Envision Saint John
- Axis Accelerator
- Dalhousie Medical School NB
- NBIF
- University New Brunswick Saint John
- Tech Impact
- Opportunities New Brunswick
- The Health and Technology District - Lark
- Horizon Health
- Research NB



INSIGHT 10

Startups and scaleups are different from traditional small businesses and need a well-designed strategy so they can continue to thrive in the saint john region

Startups play a crucial role in driving innovation, fostering economic growth, and spurring job creation. They bring fresh ideas to the market, challenge established norms, and disrupt traditional industries. Startups often operate with agility and flexibility, allowing them to adapt quickly to changing market demands and technological advancements. Startups also serve as incubators for talent, providing opportunities for entrepreneurs to develop their skills and pursue their passions.

Scaleups represent the next phase of growth beyond startups, and they are crucial for sustaining economic momentum and driving innovation. Unlike startups, scaleups have already validated their business models and demonstrated market demand for their products or services. By focusing on expansion, scaleups contribute significantly to job creation, revenue generation, and industry

evolution. They often attract investment, both domestically and internationally, fueling further growth and enabling them to reach new markets. Moreover, scaleups serve as role models and mentors for emerging startups, sharing valuable insights and best practices to foster a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem.

There is potential for the Saint John Region's startup and scaleup ecosystem. Investments and strategic direction will differ from traditional small business support. To better attract investors and retain founders, the region will need to formalize the ecosystem and leverage the existing strong economic foundation in information technology, telecommunications, and healthcare, the robust education systems, and UNB's Axis Accelerator while also planning how to expand and market services.



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Global angel investors are attracted to our industries - especially in regards to ocean and maritime. We need to be strategic in how we build our ecosystem, so that people know what opportunities exist here.

STARTUP FOUNDER

INSIGHT 11

The region's small business ecosystem is complex and needs navigators, connectors, and funders so that they can continue adding vibrancy to the region

Small businesses are often the backbone of an economy, offering a pathway to wealth generation, especially for immigrants. They also contribute to the unique character and vibrancy of a place.

Saint John Region's small business ecosystem is on the rise. Currently, entrepreneurs make up roughly 9% of the region's economy, outpacing peer regions like Sudbury and Portland, ME. Envision Saint John's Impact Loan offers financial support up to \$50,000 for small businesses. ConnexionWorks, a not-for-profit organization, provides local business owners with educational programs, experiential learning opportunities, incubators, and industry mentorship. And UNB's accelerator program, Axis, focuses on developing the programming to help entrepreneurs understand themselves as founders, identify lead customers, and build a scalable, repeatable sales strategy to help them take their business to the marketplace.

However, stakeholders have raised concerns about the drawbacks of the current ecosystem. Obtaining funding often relies on pre-existing relationships and is primarily earmarked for capital investments rather than labour, such as interns. The number of engaged and available mentors is limited. And major employers in the region may not be utilizing the small businesses near them to meet their short-term needs, which can create a ceiling on growth potential for small businesses.

Many stakeholders have expressed that these limitations exacerbate the already high risk of starting a business and may discourage potential entrepreneurs from pursuing this path in the region.

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It wasn't until someone in my network connected me to Envision Saint John and ConnexionWorks that I realized I could open a business.

SMALL BUSINESS OWNER



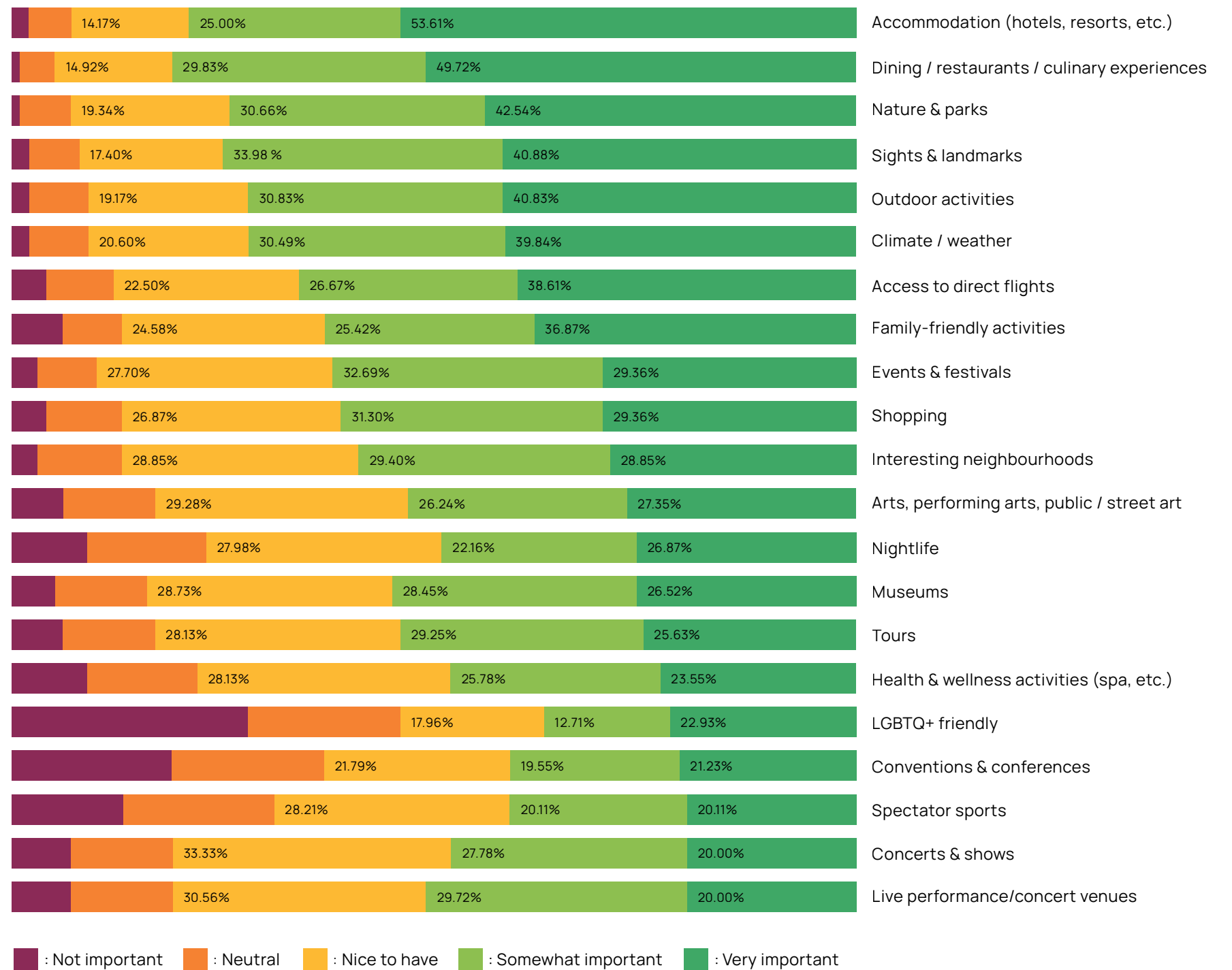
INSIGHT 12

Saint John Region’s tourism recovery and growth potential signal positive economic development opportunities

The post-pandemic recovery of the tourism sector, particularly in cruise arrivals and hotel stays, signals positive momentum for the region’s overall economic development. In 2023, room nights reached nearly 287,000, approaching pre-pandemic levels, while cruise arrivals neared 175,000. These figures highlight the strong demand for the region’s leisure offerings, especially from key markets such as Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick. Although air travel remains below pre-pandemic levels, with only 175,000 passengers compared to over 281,000 in 2019, the continued growth in cruise and hotel visits demonstrates that Saint John remains an attractive destination for short getaways. The region’s wide-ranging appeal, drawing a diverse demographic of visitors, further underscores its economic potential. Families, solo travelers, and couples alike are drawn to its natural beauty, cultural authenticity, and affordable accommodations.

Saint John’s focus on providing diverse lodging options, including vacation rentals and mid-range hotels, positions it as a highly competitive and appealing destination. This resurgence in tourism not only supports local businesses but also strengthens the region’s broader economic development, offering potential for future growth and investment.

Survey results, importance of regional assets in choosing a location for vacation



Source: ESJ Visitor Survey

Target Industry Analysis

The identification and evaluation of the Saint John Region's target industries is the foundation for supporting future business attraction, expansion, and relocation efforts. This process also informs the development of incentives, giving the region direction on which companies to prioritize. Ultimately, it helps to shape a narrative that resonates with new enterprises, site selectors, and talent.

During this process, 10 industries were analyzed on their competitiveness regarding their regional concentration, historical and forecasted growth, and their average wages against national and provincial averages. Ultimately, five industries were selected as targets, including:

- 01** Energy
- 02** Health and Information Technology
- 03** Oceans & Maritime
- 04** Transportation & Logistics
- 05** Tourism

*It is important to note that some industries (e.g., Energy; Advanced Manufacturing) have had their employment data suppressed to protect private companies who may represent a majority of the employment in that industry. During this analysis, we worked with employers to right-size the employment estimates.

**Location Quotient (LQ) is the concentration of jobs in a region compared to the national concentration of those jobs. LQ values above 1.0 indicate that there are more jobs in the region proportionately than the national average.

The following are the key target clusters for the Saint John Region:

01. ENERGY

The Saint John Region is competitive in this cluster, with an LQ Canada (Can) of 1.81 and an LQ New Brunswick (NB) of 2.43. The cluster has experienced moderate growth from 2018 - 2023 (1.51%) and is expected to continue growing through 2028 (3%). This growth is on par at the Provincial (-0.1% from 2018 - 2023; 4.5% through 2028) and National (0.57% from 2018 - 2023; 2% through 2028) levels. Average annual wages for this cluster (\$113k) are on par with Province (\$104k) and National (\$112k) averages.

04. TRANSPORTATION & LOGISTICS

The Saint John Region is concentrated in Transportation and Logistics industries at both a Provincial (LQ NB 1.38) and National (1.53) level. Jobs in this cluster experienced growth from 2018 - 2023 (42%) and are projected to continue growing through 2028 (17%). These patterns outpace both Provincial (2.8% from 2018 - 2023; 10% through 2028) and National (6.4% from 2018 - 2023; 11% through 2028) patterns. Average annual wages for this cluster (\$76k) exceeds both Provincial (\$62k) and National (\$67k) averages.

02. HEALTH & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (HIT)

Overall, the HIT cluster in Saint John is competitive regarding LQ Can of 1.35 and LQ NB of 1.26. This cluster has experienced steady growth from 2018 - 2023 (7.9%) and is projected to continue growing through 2028 (7.5%). This growth lags Provincial patterns (19.5% from 2018 - 2023) and National (20% from 2018 - 2023). Average annual wages for this cluster in Saint John (\$69k) are on par with Provincial (\$67k) and slightly lag National (\$74k) averages.

05. TOURISM

The Saint John Region's concentration in tourism industries is on par with Provincial concentration (LQ 0.97), but lags National (LQ Can 0.84). The region has experienced overall negative growth from 2018 - 2023 (-%) but is projected to reach pre-pandemic levels by 2028 (7.45%). These growth patterns lag both Provincial (2.13% from 2018 - 2023; 8% through 2028) and National (0% from 2018 - 2023; 8.3% through 2028). Average annual wages for this industry (\$27k) in Saint John are on par with Provincial (\$26k) and National (\$30k) averages.

03. OCEANS & MARINE

Saint John's concentration in this cluster is highly competitive from both a Provincial (LQ NB 3.45) and National (LQ Can 9.48) comparison. The cluster has experienced rapid growth from 2018 - 2023 (108%) and is projected to continue growing through 2028 (22%). This growth pattern is on par with the Province (110% from 2018 - 2023; 21% through 2028) and exceeds National patterns (0.6% from 2018 - 2023; 7% through 2028).



04 Economic Development Strategic Plan

Vision of Future Prosperity for the Region

The Saint John Region in 2050 stands as Atlantic Canada's premier innovation hub - a vibrant, diverse, and resilient economic powerhouse that blends its rich industrial heritage with cutting-edge technology and sustainable practices. At the heart of this transformation is the region's commitment to attracting and empowering people, recognizing that human ingenuity and engagement are the true drivers of economic success.

Building on its strong foundation in energy, information technology, and maritime industries, the region has successfully diversified its economy. The Tucker Park Ecosystem has blossomed into a world-class centre for healthcare innovation and digital health solutions, attracting global talent and investment. Traditional sectors have embraced the transition to clean energy,

pioneering advancements in hydrogen technology, sustainable biofuels, and offshore wind energy.

Port Saint John, modernized and expanded, serves as a vital link in global supply chains, supporting a thriving ecosystem of transportation, logistics, and value-added manufacturing businesses. The region's startup and scale-up ecosystem has flourished, supported by a network of incubators, accelerators, and venture capital firms, turning Saint John into a magnet for tech talent and entrepreneurs.

Tourism has evolved into a year-round industry, capitalizing on the region's natural beauty, rich history, and cultural assets. The UNESCO Fundy Biosphere Reserve and Stonehammer Global Geopark have become internationally recognized

destinations, while a vibrant culinary scene mirrors the region's diversity, with options that range from quintessential Atlantic Canadian fare to innovative fusion cuisines.

The region's commitment to inclusivity and equity is reflected in its workforce development strategies, ensuring opportunities for all residents to participate in and benefit from economic growth. Investments in housing, transportation, and quality of life amenities have made the Saint John Region an attractive destination for young professionals and families, driving steady population growth and fostering a dynamic, diverse community.

As the region looks to the future, it remains committed to sustainable growth, continuous innovation, and community engagement. Regular review

and adaptation of economic development strategies ensure the region stays agile in the face of changing economic conditions. By focusing on its core strengths, embracing new opportunities, and fostering collaboration between public, private, and community sectors, the Saint John Region has positioned itself as a model of resilience and innovation in Atlantic Canada and beyond.

This vision for the Saint John Region is flexible and evolving, ready to adapt to new challenges and opportunities as they arise, always with the goal of creating a prosperous, equitable, and sustainable future for all its residents.



PRIORITIES

Strategic Priorities

To actualize this vision, the following six strategic priorities have been collaboratively refined with Envision Saint John and vetted by key stakeholders. The first four focus on target industry opportunities, supported not only by the potential strength of the region, but also global macro trends that the region can capitalize on. The fourth of these mirrors the region's Tourism Master Plan, emphasizing the importance of aligning economic and destination

development strategies to create a vibrant and successful place. The final two priorities focus on creating a business-friendly environment for both employers and residents throughout the region.

A single narrative weaves through all six pillars: The Region is not content to merely react to global trends. Instead, it looks to the future, proactively planning and shaping itself to create economic prosperity for all its residents.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

Lead Atlantic Canada's Energy Transition

To lead the energy transition, the Saint John Region will drive innovation in sustainable energy technologies and infrastructure. The region aims to attract both traditional and renewable energy companies, develop a skilled workforce, and foster clean tech startups. Through these initiatives, the Saint John Region seeks to establish itself as a green energy hub, creating a sustainable future for local communities.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

Cultivate a Renowned Destination for Residents and Visitors Alike

To establish the Saint John Region as a renowned destination, it will enhance and promote its diverse attractions, experiences, and quality of life. The region will invest in cultural and recreational amenities, develop signature events, and improve access to natural landscapes. By showcasing its blend of urban sophistication and coastal charm, the area aims to boost tourism, attract new residents, and foster community pride. The focus: creating memorable experiences that highlight the region's heritage, arts, and outdoor adventures.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

Leverage Port Saint John as a Catalyst for Investment

To leverage Port Saint John as a catalyst for investment, the region will maximize the port's potential to attract and grow diverse economic opportunities. This involves expanding port facilities, enhancing intermodal connections, and developing value-added services to support a wide range of industries. By strategically positioning Port Saint John as a key logistics hub, we aim to stimulate economic growth, create jobs, and strengthen our region's competitiveness in global markets.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5

Position the Saint John Region as a Place for Investment

To attract investment, the Saint John Region will highlight its unique advantages, showcasing its strategic location, skilled workforce, quality of life, and available infrastructure. By focusing on providing shovel-ready sites and reducing entry barriers, the region aims to boost inward investment and local business growth.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

Provide the Next Generation of Health-Tech Solutions

To provide the next generation of health-tech solutions, the region will foster innovation in healthcare technology to drive economic growth and improve healthcare. This involves supporting research and development in digital health, attracting and retaining skilled talent, and creating partnerships between healthcare providers and tech companies. By cultivating a thriving health-tech ecosystem, the region aims to enhance patient care, create high-value jobs, and position itself as a leader in healthcare innovation.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 6

Strengthen the Region's Workforce Development Ecosystem

To bolster the region's workforce development, it will cultivate a skilled, adaptable talent pool aligned with industry needs. The region will enhance collaboration between educational institutions and employers, promote sector-specific training, and support attainable housing and immigration initiatives. The goal is to foster a dynamic workforce ecosystem that keeps local talent competitive, attracts new businesses, and supports existing industry growth in an evolving economic landscape.

Accountability Dashboard

The Accountability Dashboard aims to provide a transparent, real-time snapshot of the region's economic progress. Tracking key performance indicators allows for stakeholders to monitor the region's collective achievements, identify areas for improvement, and make data-driven decisions. By visualizing the Saint John Region's journey towards a thriving, adaptable economy, Envision Saint John can better ensure accountability and inspire collaborative efforts to reach shared goals.

JOB CREATION

Total number of new jobs and number of new jobs by target sector

WEALTH GENERATION

Measuring year-over-year median household income growth

NEW RESIDENTS

Number of new residents year-over-year

HOUSING STARTS

Counting the number of new housing units created

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Tracking the year-over-over educational attainment growth

INDUSTRIAL GROWTH

Tracking the value of industrial building permits



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

Lead Atlantic Canada's Energy Transition

WHY IT MATTERS

The energy sector is one of the most concentrated and highly paid sectors in the region. The region needs to be prepared for how the pending energy transition will impact major employers and residents.

The energy industry and employers are under significant pressure to reduce their carbon footprint by integrating new energy sources through emerging technologies. This pressure brings key risk factors to the industry, such as the cost of research and

development, reskilling or upskilling the workforce, and concerns over return-on-investment.

It also brings immense opportunity for the Saint John Region to proactively prepare for the transition by supporting its existing employers and labour, attracting clean energy investment and companies, and catalyzing the needed technological advancements to reach net zero emissions.





The Saint John Region – Economic Development Strategic Plan

The Evidence

- The Saint John Region boasts many assets that contribute to its energy sector, including the largest oil refinery in Canada; established export routes via a modernized global port, three Class I railways, and cross-border highways; and high concentration of skilled labour.
- Employment in the energy sector throughout the region is highly competitive compared to national and provincial averages, indicating a strong labour pool for existing and future employers to pull from. Employment is expected to continue to exceed forecasted expectations at the national level with average annual wages also exceeding national averages, making the Saint John Region an attractive location for employers and new talent.
- The region is one of two jurisdictions in Canada to offer nuclear capabilities and may have the capabilities to bring on-line other clean energy solutions. This presents significant advantages for the region as the world demands energy with fewer emissions.
- Stakeholders expressed that climate change and net zero goals are pushing traditional industries to innovate in what they produce and how they build, potentially ushering in new diversifying technologies.

Global Energy Industry Sector Trends

The following trends were identified as potential opportunities or risks the region should be aware of that may impact its energy sector and adjacent industries.

-
- Fossil fuel demand is projected to peak by 2030, then demand varies.
-
- Renewables will make up the bulk of power mix by 2050.
-
- The world now invests almost twice as much in clean energy as fossil fuels.
-
- Since 50% of climate tech solutions are not ready for market, climate tech could be the next global venture opportunity.
-
- Clean hydrogen demand and carbon capture, use and storage (CCUS) technology applications are projected to increase through 2050.
-
- New investment tax credits (ITCs) should be leveraged to encourage research, development and investment for clean energy technology.
-

For more information and detail on the economic trends analyses, please reach out to the Envision Saint John team for the full report.

STRATEGY 1.1

Establish an energy transition initiative that catalyzes sector innovation and business attraction.

The energy sector is going through rapid transformation from the global push to reduce GHG emissions. Fossil fuels are expected to peak in demand by 2030, replaced by demand for renewable energy sources. New technologies will create jobs that require different skills than what are currently trained, and potentially offer opportunities for economic growth for regions that are able to develop and commercialize these technologies early.

ACTIONS

- Develop an energy transition taskforce with sector partners (e.g., major employers, educational institutions, provincial sector organizations, etc) that defines roles and a roadmap forward.
- Leverage federal and provincial incentive programs to drive business attraction and investment.
- Partner with ONB and the energy transition taskforce to create clean energy sub-sector attraction and investment plans (e.g., nuclear, hydrogen, solar, wind, etc).

STRATEGY 1.2

Convene major employers and educational institutions to develop energy workforce pipelines.

Across North America, cities and regions are pledging to reduce their impact on climate change – many without defining their workforce strategy to support that transition.

Developing agile and prepared workforce pipelines that are able to react to industry evolutions will be imperative for the region's success in the energy transition. The region should define not only which occupations will be needed to support the sector's transition, but also define a timeline and budget so that it is actionable.

ACTIONS

- Convene major employers and educational institutions bi-annually to review training programs and curriculum.
- Market new training programs connected to energy industry technological advancements to attract new talent.
- Partner with primary and secondary educational institutions and major employers to communicate clean energy career opportunities within the Region.
- Work with post-secondary institutions on launching a regional clean energy institute.





STRATEGY 1.3

Establish a land use and industrial strategy for site acquisition and land readiness development.

Regions looking to attract new relocations and expansions have market profiles that detail potential land available.

The region is already established as a hub for major energy employers and investments. A targeted land use and industrial strategy can be effective to attract new energy companies, especially those focused in hydrogen, CCUS, and renewable technologies. Attracting more of these energy sub-sectors will help diversify the region's portfolio, increasing the overall innovation of the region, while maintaining its resiliency with established employers.

ACTIONS

- Develop an energy pillar of the industrial site readiness initiative that identifies prime existing or potential land that supports business expansion and attraction of the energy sector.
- Annually update marketing profiles of sites, including recent investments and developments of the land.
- Convene with ONB and the energy taskforce annually to understand sector land needs for business expansion and attraction.

STRATEGY 1.4

Establish an ecosystem for clean energy start-ups and scale-ups.

Nearly 50% of the technology needed to get the world to the Paris Agreement's Net Zero goal by 2050 is not ready to go to market. As macroeconomic trends improve in 2024 and onwards, equity investors will be looking to invest in clean energy start-ups and scale-ups.

The region has the opportunity to establish an innovation ecosystem that develops, attracts, and scales these companies – as well as the funding necessary to make them successful. An established initiative also has the potential to attract mature companies and new talent who are interested in the innovation coming from the ecosystem.

ACTIONS

- Increase the number of incubator and accelerator spaces within the Region that serve clean energy start-ups and scale-ups.
- Develop a marketing strategy to attract renewable and clean energy technology start-ups, scale-ups, and research.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

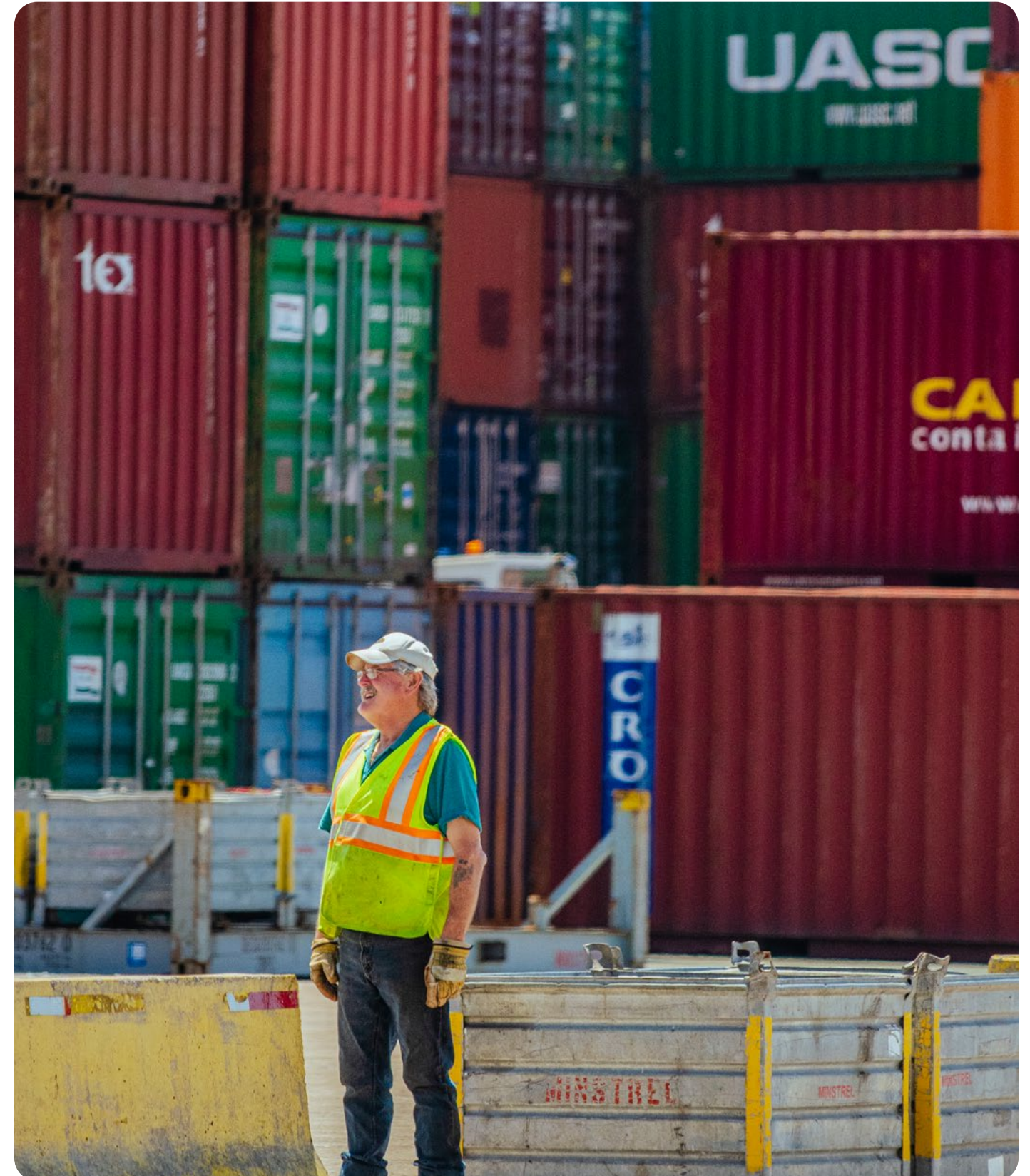
Leverage Port Saint John as a Catalyst for Investment

WHY IT MATTERS

Port Saint John is a major driver of the regional economy. Intentional planning with and around the Port can catalyze growth, not just in the maritime sector, but across other regional target industries.

Regions around the world are activating their ports to drive investments, catalyze innovation, and support workforce development – as well as preparing them to deal with global exogenous shocks that impact shipping routes and supply chains.

Recent investments have increased the effectiveness and competitiveness of Port Saint John, setting it up for success to be an impactful anchor institution for the region. As a partner, the region can collaborate with Port Saint John to create programs and initiatives, as well as attract investment that elevates the region.



The Evidence

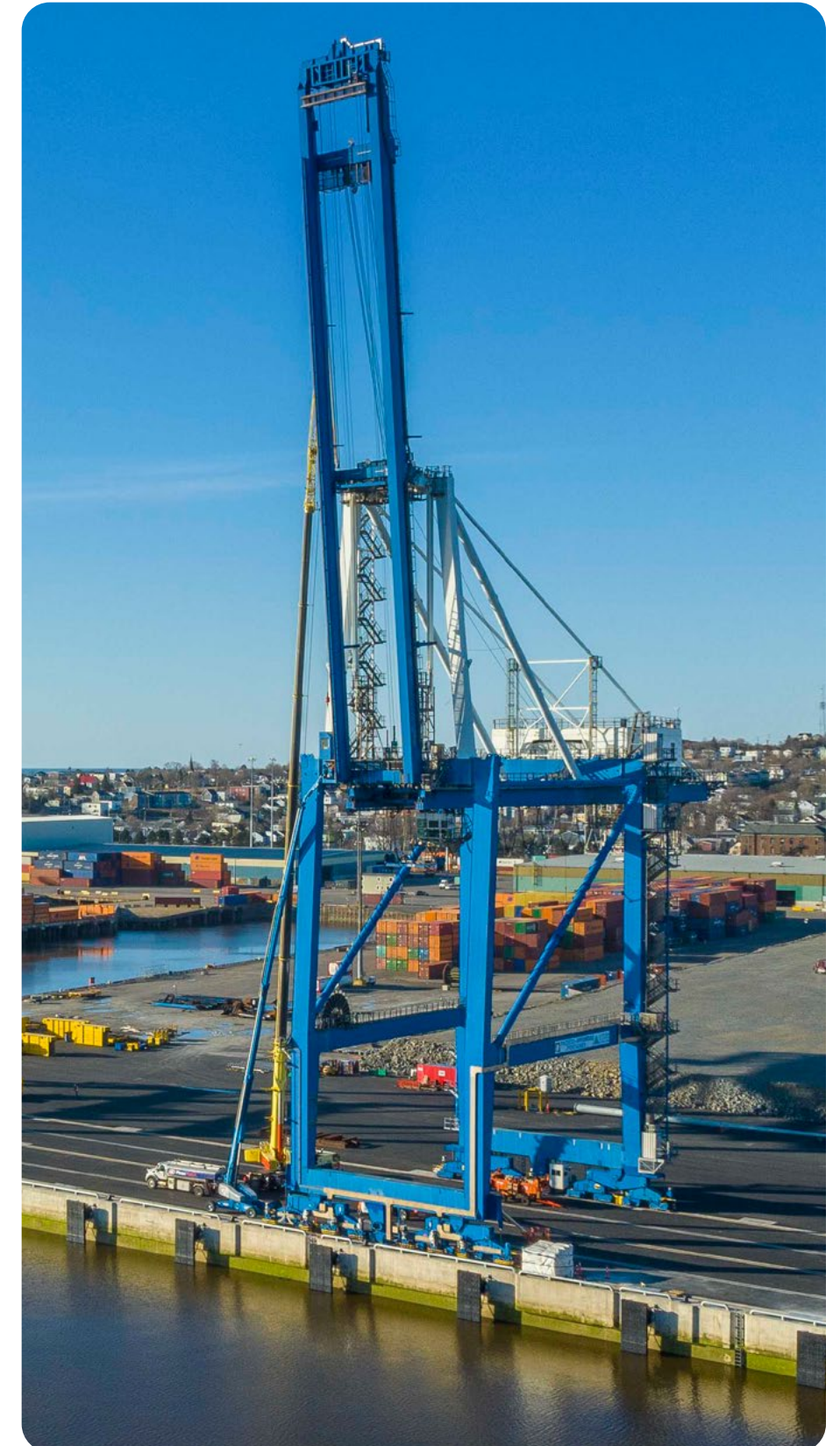
- The port contributes more than \$200 million to the provincial GDP, indicating its significant economic importance to the region.
- The port has increased its container TEUs by 94% since 2020, reaching over 150,000 TEUs in 2023 and has anticipated capacity volumes to reach 800,000 TEUs within the next five years, showing strong growth potential.
- Over 800 people are employed between the Port and other marine-related logistics industries, highlighting its role in job creation.
- The Oceans and Maritime cluster in the Saint John Region has an extremely high location quotient of 9.48 compared to the national average, indicating a strong specialization in this sector.
- Stakeholders identified the need to explore inland, multi-modal opportunities to maintain momentum and support existing and emerging industries within the region

Global Port Industry Sector Trends

The following trends were identified as potential opportunities or risks the region should be aware of that may impact its Port and adjacent industries.

- Diversification will be key for ports to protect against geopolitical tensions.
- Protectionism is driving shorter supply chains, fueling industry reshoring, nearshoring, or friend-shoring.
- Regions are activating their ports to meet their climate goals.
- Ports are becoming central hubs for hydrogen production and distribution.
- Smart ports are improving regional ports' overall efficiency and efficacy, as well as driving innovation
- Traditional port-related jobs are becoming more at-risk of automation
- Cybersecurity risks are becoming more prominent for ports that implement technology
- Port-City and Port-Region integrations are driving ecosystem-focused urban development

For more information and detail on the economic trends analyses, please reach out to the Envision Saint John team for the full report.



STRATEGY 2.1

Diversify Port and Logistics sector offerings, such as multi-modal investments and cold storage development, among others.

Multi-modal facilities improve logistics efficiency, connecting sea, rail, and road transport. Cold storage attracts perishable goods industries, increasing cargo volume and economic activity.

Diversifying the Port and Logistics sector offerings through technological advancements, as well as multi-modal and cold storage development, strengthens the regional economy by enhancing trade capabilities, attracting varied businesses, and creating jobs.

ACTIONS

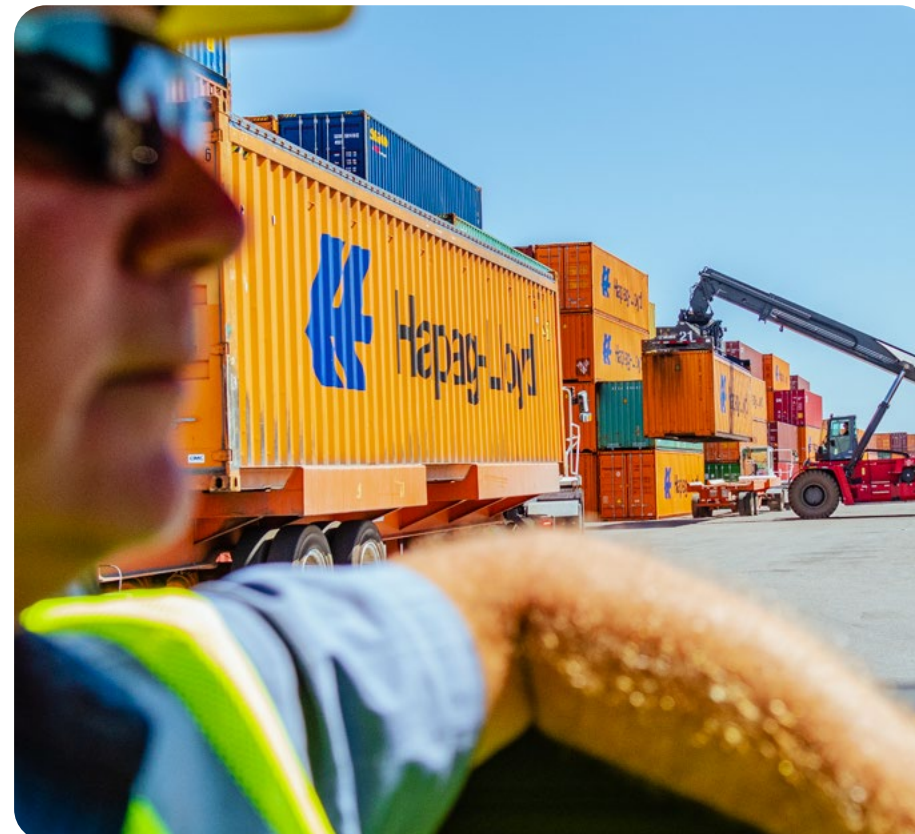
- Activate on strategic findings from the Multi-Modal Transportation and Logistics Park Study.
- Convene major employers and Port leadership annually to identify opportunities for infrastructure investments that improve the Region's connectivity.
- Work with Port Saint John and other partners to identify the future Port facility needs of industrial users and FDI opportunities to build an understanding of how the region can accommodate future growth.

STRATEGY 2.2

Establish a smart port strategy that improves the Port's overall efficiency and innovation.

Ports around the world are implementing technology like AI and 5G communications to improve port efficiency, as well as developing their own accelerator and incubator programs for maritime start-ups and scale-ups. Companies are choosing smart ports as they are able to more effectively reduce costs and time transporting their goods.

To remain globally competitive, the region should explore what it would take for Port Saint John to become a smart port and understand the rippling impacts it could have throughout the region.



ACTIONS

- Develop a site visit program for regional partners to visit global smart port leaders to identify opportunities for workforce, technology, and infrastructure investments for Port Saint John.
- Partner with the Port of Saint John, the proposed Multi-Modal Transportation & Logistics Park, and other key stakeholders to understand the feasibility of a maritime and multi-modal logistics innovation program that attracts and develops talent, companies, incubators, accelerators and startups/scaleups.
- Launch a maritime market study to understand growth, innovation, and FDI opportunities related to the Port and Logistics Sector. The study should also evaluate potential funding and support opportunities, such as programs offered through Canada's Ocean Super Cluster and other similar initiatives.
- Develop a marketing strategy to attract maritime technology start-ups, scale-ups, and research.



STRATEGY 2.3

Convene major employers, unions, and educational institutions to develop maritime workforce pipelines.

As the industry evolves – due to technological advancements, geopolitical tensions, climate change, evolving trade routes – regions are partnering up with their ports to develop workforce pipelines. These programs address the emerging skills gaps to integrate new technology, as well as the new jobs being created.

In partnering with Port Saint John, the region can optimize its workforce development planning to not only include occupations and training specific to the Port, but those that transfer to other industries as well.

ACTIONS

- Convene Port leadership and maritime unions, as well as other target industry leaders and educational institutions, to identify occupations and skills training that translate across industries.
- Develop maritime workforce training programs in partnership with educational and training institutions that meet emerging employers' needs.
- Partner with primary and secondary educational institutions to develop a career literacy program centred on occupations that support the Port and Logistics Sector.

STRATEGY 2.4

Leverage the Port to grow the region's destination economy.

Ports are major anchor institutions for any city. While they are economic drivers, providing jobs and capital investments, they can also be key players in destination and urban development. Investing in tourism assets around the Port, especially ports that service cruises, can help shape the overall vibrancy of the city and region.

The region should leverage Port Saint John in strategic conversations on the development around the Port that encourages visitor attraction and spending, as well as improves the quality of life for residents. Activating this strategy may also help improve the summer season and encourage more off-ship excursions as the Port itself becomes a destination within a destination.

ACTIONS

- Convene with Port Saint John, developers, waterfront stakeholders, cruise line leadership, and the City of Saint John government officials to identify potential infrastructure investments and event activations.
- Develop a marketing strategy that attracts visitors and informs residents of activations around the Port.
- Develop a site visit initiative for regional partners to visit global ports which have implemented tourism districts around their ports.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

Provide the Next Generation of Health-Tech Solutions

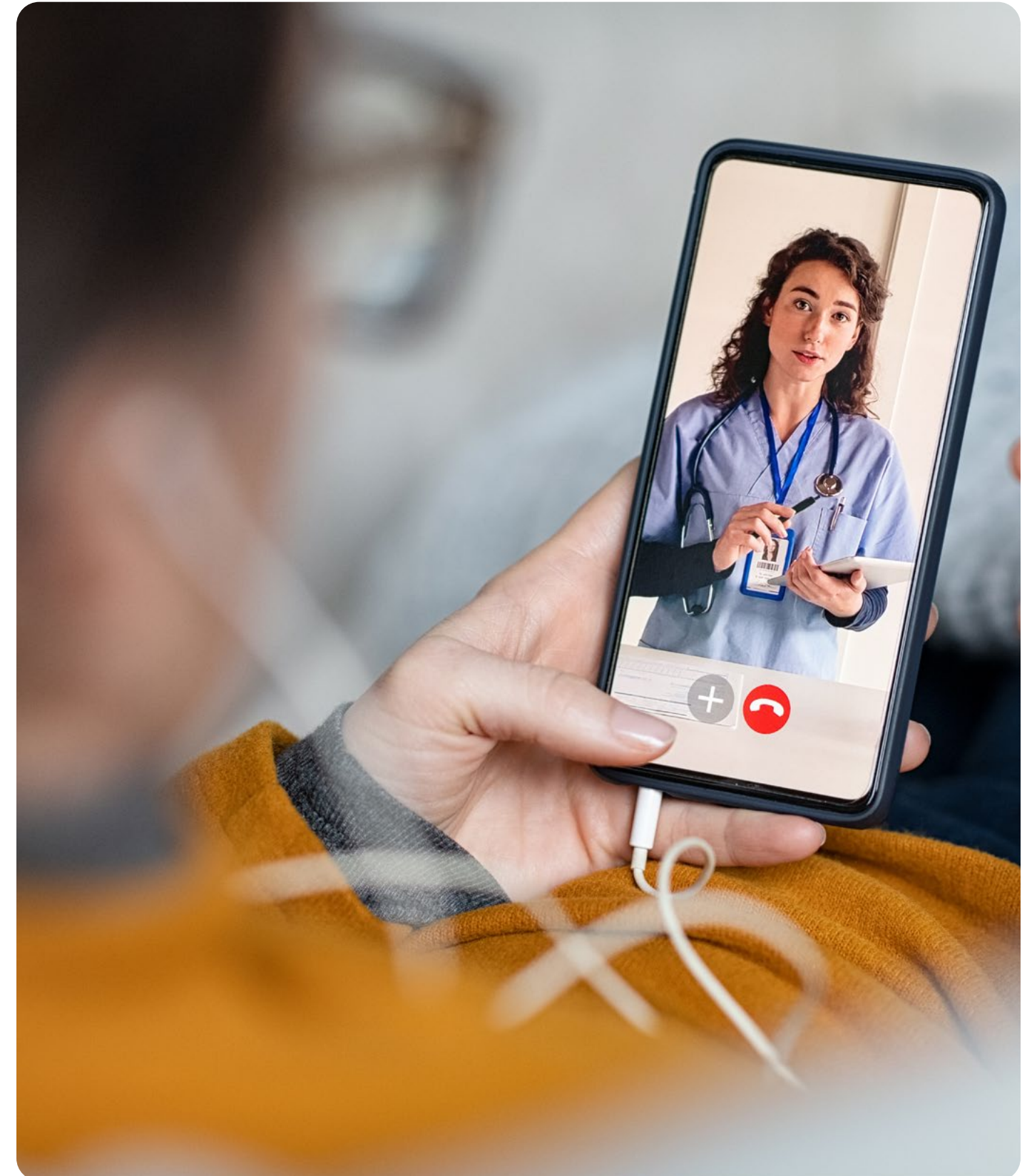
WHY IT MATTERS

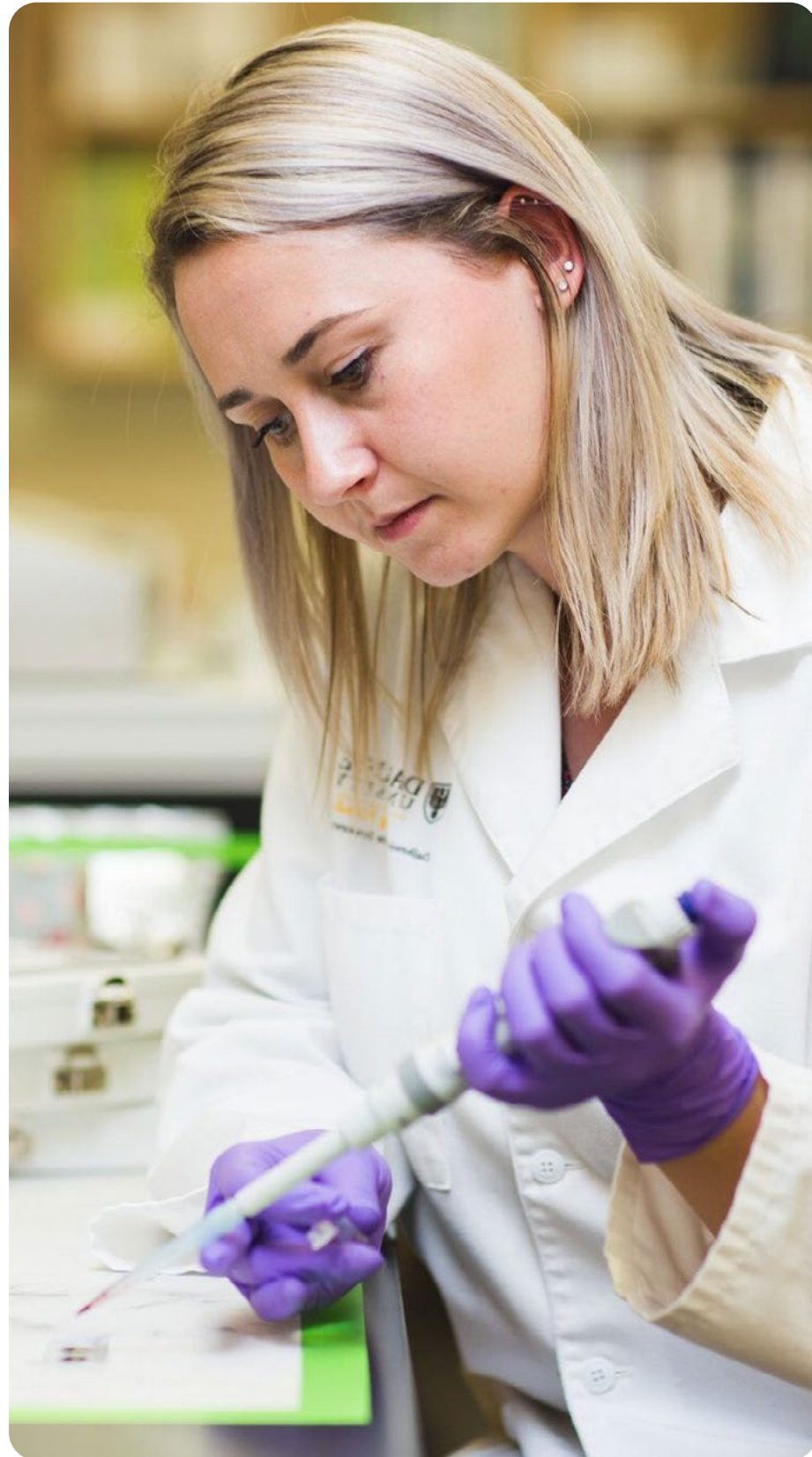
With the province's largest regional hospital, a medical school, a large university and community college system, and an emerging innovation district, the Saint John Region is well positioned to become an internationally-renowned healthcare innovation hub.

While countries worldwide grapple with healthcare crises stemming from insufficient hospital beds and healthcare workforce shortages, regions boasting robust healthcare ecosystems face a

distinct opportunity: harnessing these assets as economic drivers.

The Saint John Region is poised to develop a strong export healthcare ecosystem, anchored by the largest regional hospital in the province, an emerging innovation district, and multiple educational institutions specializing in healthcare. Research and development stemming from this ecosystem can solidify the region's reputation as a healthcare hub.





The Evidence

- The region is already progressing with the development of a health innovation district, indicating a commitment to health tech advancement. There is a significant opportunity to build out this destination to spur more investment and development, attracting talent and employers from outside the region.
- The Saint John Region is home to the largest tertiary hospital in New Brunswick, several higher education institutions with focuses on healthcare and technology, and a university-supported accelerator program, providing a robust healthcare infrastructure for technology implementation and testing.
- The Health Information Technology (HIT) cluster in Saint John grew by 7.87% from 2018 to 2023 and is projected to grow another 7.48% from 2023 to 2028, indicating increasing opportunities in this sector.
- Stakeholders have identified the Tucker Park Ecosystem as an “unseized opportunity” that could create an export economy around healthcare for the region and that it could create an environment where innovations and solutions for other industries emerge as well.

Global Health-Tech Industry Sector Trends

The following trends were identified as potential opportunities or risks the region should be aware of that may impact its energy sector and adjacent industries.

-
- Internet of Medical Things (IoMT) is driving future health innovations and improving efficiency
-
- 3D bioprinting technology is bridging an equity and accessibility gap for patients
-
- VR technology is advancing education and improving diagnostic processes
-
- Investors are bullish on healthcare AI products and services start-ups
-
- As healthcare becomes more digitized, demand for cloud services and faster digital connectivity will grow
-
- Telehealth technology and implementation are here to stay
-
- Cybersecurity risks are becoming more prominent for hospitals, universities, and companies that implement IoMT
-

For more information and detail on the economic trends analyses, please reach out to the Envision Saint John team for the full report.

STRATEGY 3.1

Grow the Tucker Park Health Ecosystem to attract investment, talent and businesses, as well as to spur innovation.

Investments in medical and innovation districts around the world have helped catalyze growth – not just for the health industry sector, but for industries throughout regional economies. This translates into overall growth and opportunity for residents, and raises the reputation of these regions as premier hubs for health-tech innovation.

The Saint John Region has that same opportunity, especially with the investment and development happening within the Tucker Park Health Ecosystem. The region should continue to champion and invest in this growth, attracting more investments to land development, talent to the universities, and businesses.

ACTIONS

- Develop a health tech start-up and scale-up ecosystem (e.g., accelerators, incubators).
- Partner with ONB to develop an IoMT (e.g., 3D bioprinting, telehealth, VR, etc) attraction and expansion strategy.
- Develop a marketing strategy to attract health-tech startups, scale-ups, and research.

STRATEGY 3.2

Encourage partnerships between the region’s Health and Technology sector employers and educational institutions to integrate emerging technological advancements into the region’s curricula.

Medical districts around the world are capitalizing on opportunities to bring in new technology into their curricula. They often also develop their own accelerator and incubator programs that inform and influence their educational missions.

In becoming a health-tech innovation hub and creating export opportunities for the sector, it will be imperative for the region to intentionally encourage partnerships between private entities and its educational institutions – not only to elevate the education students receive, but to encourage commercialization of research and innovations.

ACTIONS

- Convene health-tech companies and educational institutions to develop workforce pipelines to support growth and scale of companies.
- Connect health-tech companies (e.g., IoMT, VR, 3D bioprinting) with educational institutions to demonstrate new tech advancements.
- Partner with primary and secondary institutions, higher education institutions, and health-tech companies for annual demonstrations of new technological advancements.

STRATEGY 3.3

Invest in placemaking that positions the Tucker Park Health Ecosystem as a destination within the region.

The region should consider how future developments around the Tucker Park Health Ecosystem can help establish it as a destination within a destination. Creating an accessible and well-designed district can increase the attractiveness to new talent and the private sector who may want to locate close to or within the district.

Part of this will also be assessing the foundational infrastructure around the district. Digital and physical connectivity will be two key components to activating IoMT technologies, which not only improve patient care, but also information sharing, research, and innovation development.

ACTIONS

- Convene annually with healthcare, health technology, and educational institutions to identify any infrastructure barriers for growth.
- Partner with educational institutions, architects, and developers to intentionally build out an innovation hub concept plan that is accessible and improves the overall urban design of the hub.
- Partner with regional anchor institutions to identify and activate on cloud computing services and connectivity that promote data-sharing and progress technological advancements.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

Cultivate a Renowned Destination for Residents and Visitors Alike

This goal and its strategies align with the Tourism Master Plan. Tourism plays an important role in a region's economy, bringing people from outside the area in to support local businesses, increase vibrancy, and (hopefully) find a place they would like to live one day.

To review the full Tourism Master Plan, please reach out to Envision Saint John for the extended report.



WHY IT MATTERS

Both resident and visitor perception of the region are imperative for its continued success.

Residents are the lived-experience experts – creating a vibrant community for them to grow up and establish themselves improves their overall quality of life. They want to easily access concerts and festivals. They want more food tours and beach activities. They want to celebrate the heritage of the Saint John Region. And they will be the first spokesperson a visitor encounters.

Visitors are not only important from an economic standpoint, they are the global spokespeople. When they come in from Europe or America, they leave with either a positive or negative impression that they'll share with their families and friends. Having nice accommodations, experiencing new restaurants, and visiting parks, nature sites, and landmarks are all top priorities for them.

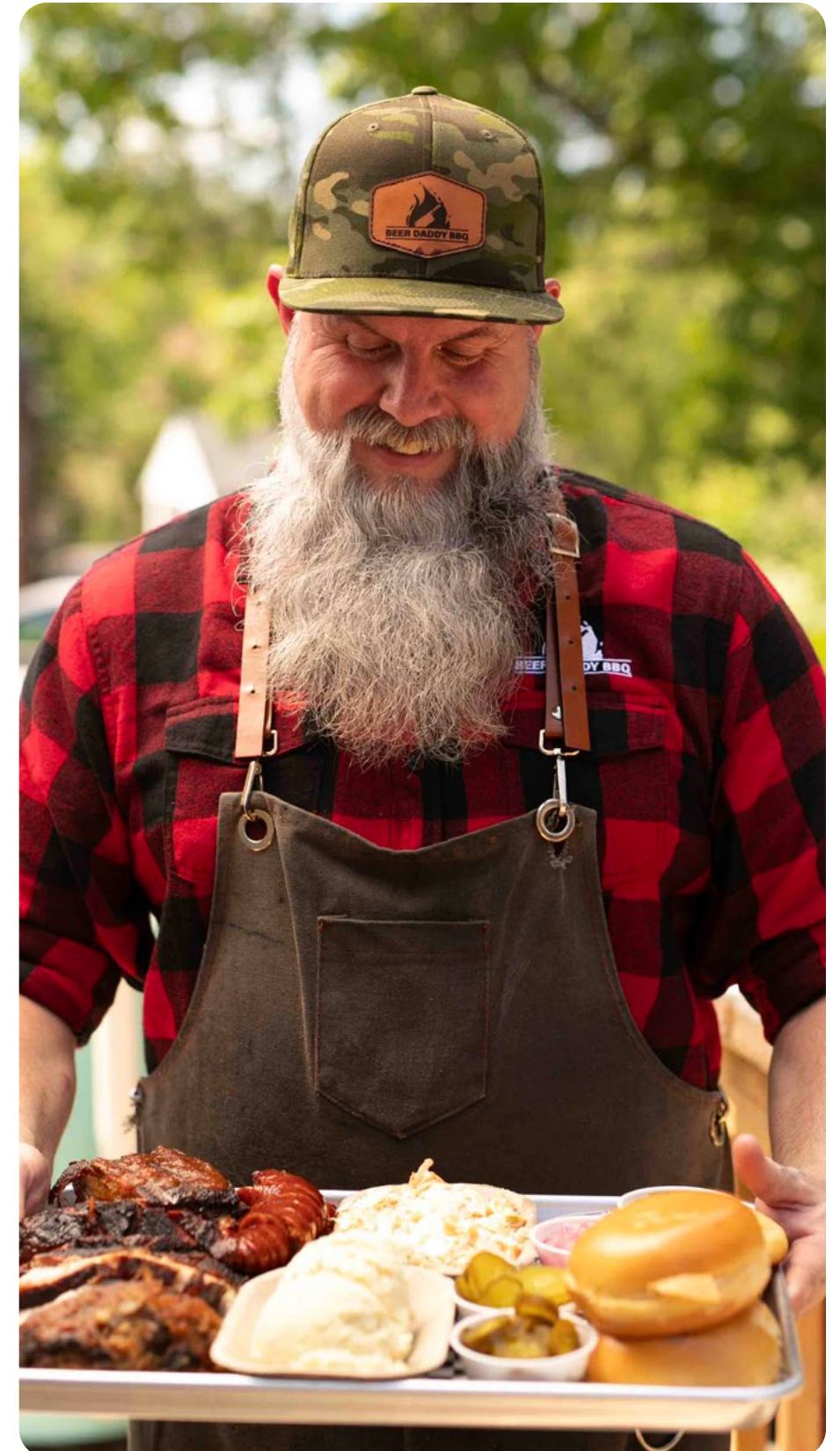
The tourism economy is an important part of the region's overall economic prosperity. The more people hear about its experiential offerings, the more likely they will visit, spend, and move to the region.

Global Tourism Trends

The following trends were identified as potential opportunities or risks the region should be aware of that may impact workforce programs and target industries.

- A rising domestic population and spending trends among Canadians present opportunities for the Saint John Region.
- The USA Travel Boom: Expanding market unveils new opportunities for the Saint John Region's tourism.
- Destination Canada and Tourism New Brunswick align to enhance shoulder season tourism.
- Surging popularity in outdoor recreation as more explore nature's offerings.
- The Saint John Region has the opportunity to harness global trends in culinary tourism by showcasing its rich maritime culinary culture.
- Cruise travel will continue to grow.
- Digital innovation will reshape how travellers plan and experience places

For more information and detail on the economic trends analyses, please reach out to the Envision Saint John team for the full report.





STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

Advance infrastructure to support sustainable growth and enhance visitor experiences.

To support sustainable growth and enhance visitor experiences, the Saint John Region will modernize and expand its infrastructure. This involves upgrading transportation systems, enhancing public amenities, and ensuring that all infrastructure developments are resilient.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

Expand outdoor recreation to highlight the region's natural beauty.

To highlight the region's natural beauty, the Saint John Region will develop and promote outdoor recreational opportunities. This includes expanding trail networks, enhancing UNESCO offerings, and developing mountain biking trails to encourage active lifestyles and connect visitors with nature. Additionally, coastal recreation activities will be developed to leverage the region's stunning waterfront and provide diverse outdoor experiences.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

Enhance tourist attractions that captivate and engage visitors from around the world.

Efforts will be made to enrich and diversify the Saint John Region's tourism attractions, aiming to captivate and engage visitors from around the world. By investing in new attractions and revitalizing existing ones, unforgettable experiences that showcase the region's unique charm will be created.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

Cultivate urban culture that fosters cultural vibrancy and community engagement.

Urban spaces will be further cultivated to foster cultural vibrancy and community engagement in the Saint John Region. Through art, music, culinary, and public events, the cityscape will transform into a dynamic and inclusive hub of activity.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5

Develop new events and festivals that leverage existing regional assets that celebrates the character and heritage of the region to attract new audiences.

An engaging calendar of events and festivals will be created to celebrate the Saint John Region's unique heritage and attract new audiences. By supporting local talent and partnering with diverse stakeholders, memorable experiences that resonate with visitors and residents alike will be created.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 7

Elevate the visitor experience by harnessing local strengths alongside technological tools.

Elevating the visitor experience is crucial for establishing the Saint John Region as a more attractive and memorable destination. This involves creating an ambassador program with trained local volunteers, transforming the Welcome Centre into a vibrant hub, and leveraging a digital lens for promotion and visitor services in order to streamline access to local attractions and encourage deeper exploration of the area.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 6

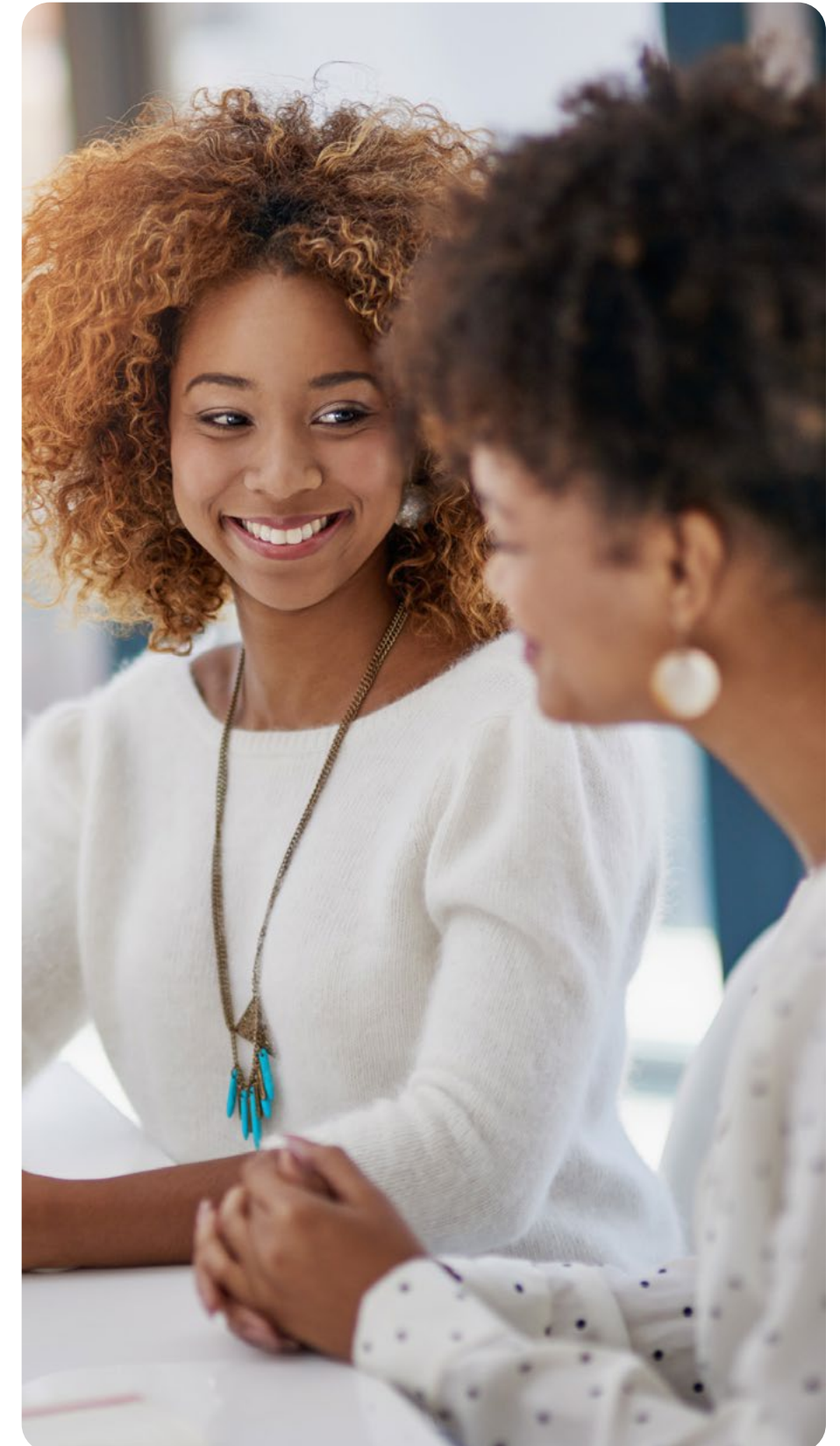
Diversify accommodations that encourage longer stays and greater spending within the community.

To increase overnight stays, the Saint John Region will diversify accommodation options, meeting the varied preferences of travellers. This includes monitoring the vacation rental market and enhancing camping facilities to broaden the region's appeal to key target audiences.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 8

Commit to destination stewardship to ensure the region remains accessible to all.

The commitment to environmental stewardship, reconciliation, and sustainable practices will be upheld throughout the tourism sector. By adopting eco-friendly initiatives, respecting cultural heritage, and championing responsible growth that will benefit both the community and the environment.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5

Position the Saint John Region as a Place for Investment

WHY IT MATTERS

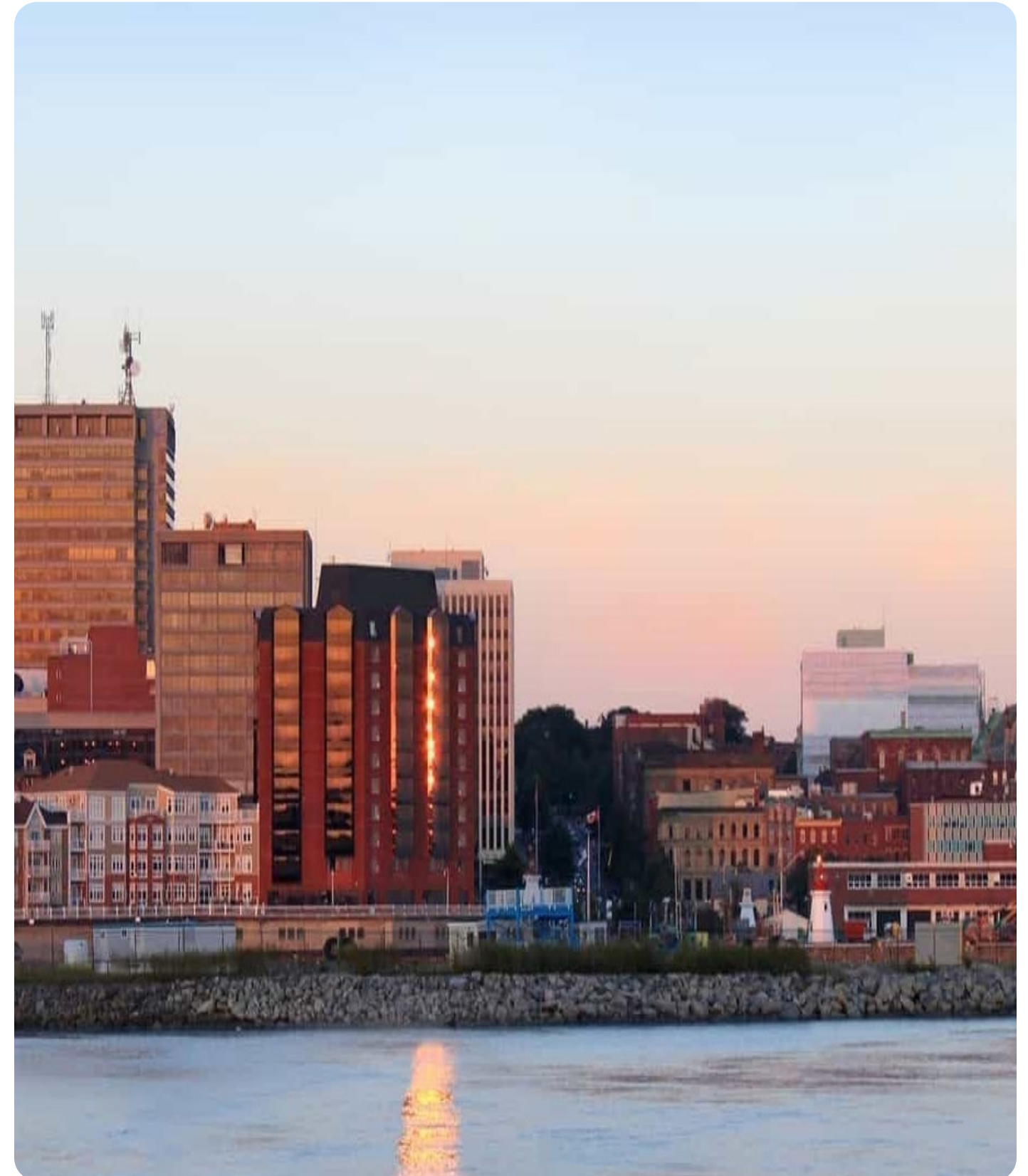
Being business-friendly attracts investment, creates jobs, and stimulates economic growth – ultimately enhancing the quality of life and prosperity for regional residents.

In a thriving regional ecosystem, businesses, educational institutions, government bodies, and community organizations work collaboratively to support each other. This collaboration leads to a more business-friendly climate, where resources are efficiently utilized and innovation is encouraged.

For example, a well-connected and robust Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program ensures that existing businesses

remain competitive, fostering job retention and local investment. A well-supported small business ecosystem cultivates innovation and entrepreneurship, creating diverse job opportunities and resilience against economic downturns. Improving airport connectivity is crucial for attracting investment, tourism, and talent by enhancing accessibility and logistical efficiency.

For the Saint John Region, these components are necessary to promote and sustain future growth. This holistic approach creates a vibrant, dynamic, and sustainable region where economic growth is balanced with social well-being.





The Evidence

- The two industrial parks in the region are assets that are already attracting prospective investors. Barriers such as a lack of comprehensive land profiles, high costs of development, and energy limitations may disincentivize these investors.
- A sector-driven and well-connected regional BRE program is necessary to attract future investments and talent, as well as to retain and grow existing businesses.
- Saint John Airport experienced a decline from 281,100 passengers in 2019 to 175,000 in 2023, reflecting a substantial decrease in traveller volume by approximately 37.7%, and only has three direct flights, limiting both business and leisure travel to the region.
- The Region's small business ecosystem is complex and needs navigators, connectors, and funders so that they can continue adding vibrancy to the region.

STRATEGY 5.1

Strengthen existing relationships with major and local employers, as well as attract new investment to the region.

A well-developed business retention and expansion (BRE) program is crucial for regional economic stability and growth. It helps identify and address the needs of existing businesses, fostering a supportive environment that encourages their continued operation and expansion. This, in turn, leads to job creation, increased local investment, and a more resilient economy. Effective BRE programs also build stronger relationships between businesses and local governments, facilitating proactive solutions to potential challenges.

In partnering with organizations like ONB, the Saint John Region can be effective in not only retaining its existing employers, but attract new businesses that can improve the overall resiliency and prosperity of the region.

ACTIONS

- Host annual roundtables with industry clusters to identify specific needs and growth opportunities.
- Conduct a formal business visitation plan for the Region's businesses, interviewing at least 60 employers annually.
- Utilize these and other engagement tools to identify opportunities and needs and report key findings systematically.

STRATEGY 5.2

Support local entrepreneurs and small businesses as they launch, scale, and prepare succession.

A strong small business ecosystem drives innovation, creates jobs, and stimulates local economies by retaining wealth within the community. By providing resources and support at every stage of growth, regions can ensure businesses thrive, leading to sustainable development. Additionally, robust succession planning helps maintain continuity and preserves valuable business legacies, further stabilizing the regional economy. This holistic approach cultivates a vibrant, self-sustaining economic environment.

The Saint John Region already has a rich ecosystem of small businesses. Ensuring that entrepreneurs have the tools and resources necessary at every stage can help existing small business owners thrive, as well as reduce barriers for emerging entrepreneurs.



ACTIONS

- Convene small business owners and entrepreneurs bi-annually to understand their challenges and opportunities for growth.
- Develop a small business and entrepreneurship online hub that provides a one-stop-shop to access services and resources throughout the region.
- Activate an angel investor network for the region.
- Develop workforce development initiatives to support entrepreneurs in the region according to the needs identified.
- Promote and celebrate small businesses through the region.

STRATEGY 5.3

Advocate for increased air connectivity to the Saint John Airport.

More direct flights to a region significantly boost the local economy by enhancing connectivity, attracting businesses, and facilitating tourism. Improved accessibility makes the area more appealing for corporate relocations and expansions, as companies prioritize regions with efficient transport links. Increased tourism generates revenue for local businesses, including hotels, restaurants, and attractions, creating jobs and stimulating economic growth. Additionally, direct flights enhance the region's competitiveness, enabling local businesses to access new markets and resources more easily.

With better air connectivity, the Saint John Region can better drive economic development and regional prosperity.

ACTIONS

- Partner with the Airport to understand the costs and resources necessary with expanding air services to Saint John Airport.
- Engage the Saint John Airport to advocate for and support efforts for the continued expansion of air services to Saint John Airport.

STRATEGY 5.4

Launch a regional industrial site readiness initiative.

By preparing and marketing shovel-ready industrial sites, the Saint John Region can significantly reduce the time and cost for companies looking to expand or relocate.

This initiative demonstrates the Saint John Region's commitment to business growth, potentially giving it a competitive edge over other locations. It also allows for strategic planning of infrastructure, utilities, and zoning, ensuring optimal use of land resources and minimizing environmental impacts.

Moreover, a site readiness program can catalyze investment in underutilized areas, spurring job creation and economic diversification. It provides a tangible asset for marketing efforts and can accelerate decision-making processes for prospective investors, ultimately leading to faster economic growth and increased regional prosperity.



ACTIONS

- Convene a task force of regional industrial landowners, stakeholders, and public officials to guide the region's approach to industrial development.
- Keep an inventory of available and active regional industrial sites, updating it twice a year.
- Leverage the recent industrial investment attraction activities to complete a regional industrial land market readiness assessment and strategy.
- Use engagement to develop a set of region-wide industrial principles.
- Activate strategy recommendations and prepare future sites for development.
- Launch a land readiness and development study for the area around the airport.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 6

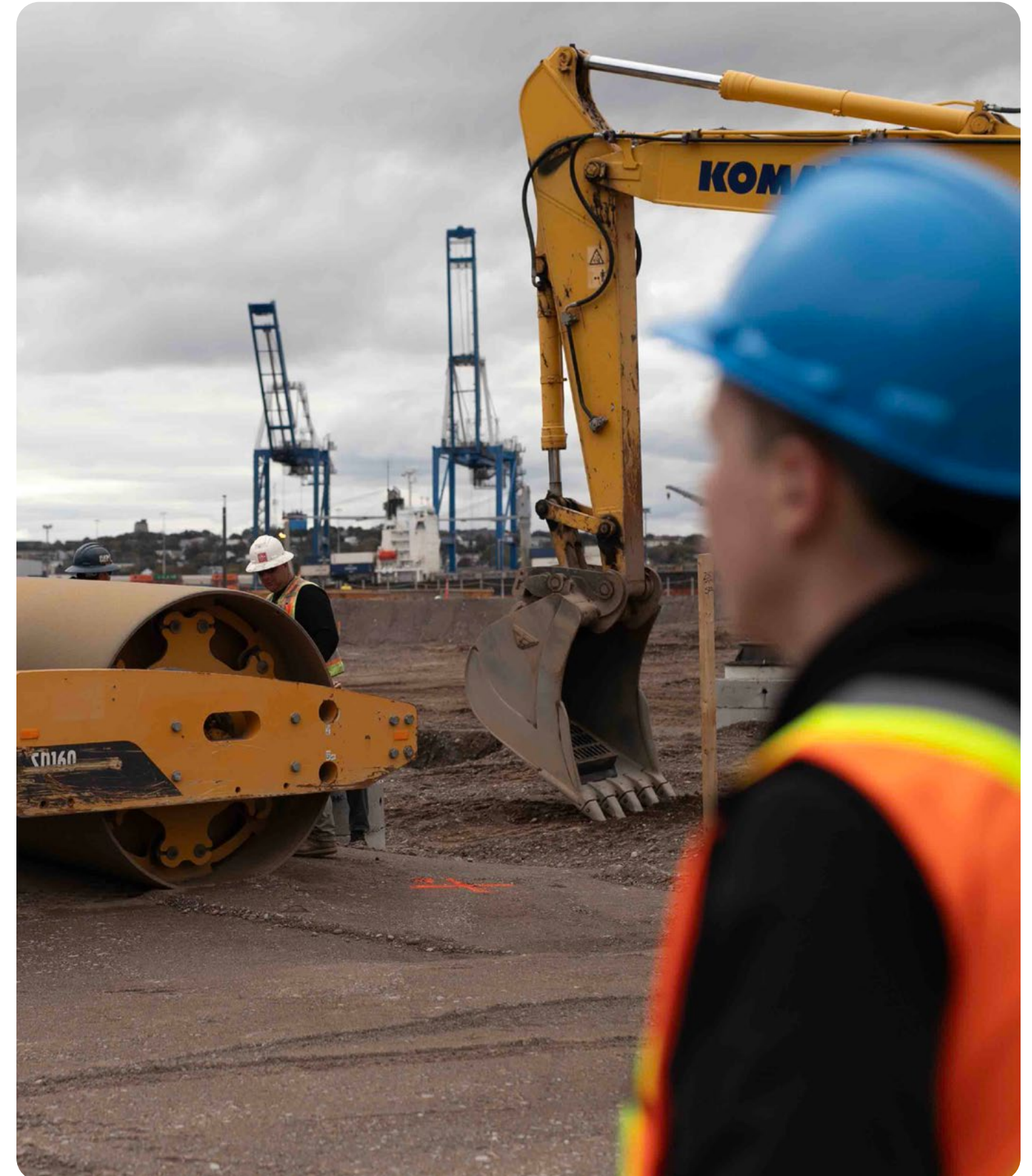
Strengthen the Region's Workforce Development Ecosystem

WHY IT MATTERS

Intentional workforce development fosters equitable growth by providing targeted education and training programs.

As the Saint John Region prepares for future growth – from population increases to housing needs to industry evolution –

they can help more people access career and wealth generation opportunities by intentionally building out a holistic workforce development strategy.



The Evidence

- The World Economic Forum predicts that by 2025, 50% of all employees will need reskilling. Looking at the region's target industries, each is going through a significant transformation – from the energy transition to the modernization of the Port to the integration of healthcare and technology.
- With more than 30 workforce and job readiness organizations, the region has an opportunity to streamline efforts to help ensure that the needs of both employers and the labour force are met.
- Between 2021 and 2022, Saint John has welcomed 1,200 new immigrants, many of whom possess high levels of skill and expertise. Nonetheless, barriers to workforce entry, such as challenges related to credential transfer and language barriers, often hinder their integration into the labour market, sometimes prompting them to seek opportunities in regions where they can more easily find employment.
- Since 2019, the price of a single-detached home has increased by 57% and rent has increased by 115%. By 2034, 4,800 to 15,000 new households will call the Saint John Region home, necessitating up to 1,500 new housing units per year.
- The Saint John Region has a higher rate (16.8%) of Not in Employment, Education, or Training (NEET) youth and young adults than either the Canadian average (13.5%) or the New Brunswick average (14.8%). This indicates that there needs to be a concerted effort across the region to help vulnerable youth successfully transition from high school to continuing education and employment.

Global Workforce Development Trends

The following trends were identified as potential opportunities or risks the region should be aware of that may impact its Port and adjacent industries.

-
- More rural regions are most at risk of not retaining New Canadians
-
- Employers will have to adapt to attract younger talent, especially in more industrial industries
-
- Housing and rental costs are becoming key factors in relocation choices
-
- Federal workforce funding has been reduced, impacting Atlantic Canadian workforce development organizations
-
- Both New Canadians and employers need support navigating the nuances of immigration policy
-
- Hybrid work will continue to shape the development of cities and regions
-

For more information and detail on the economic trends analyses, please reach out to the Envision Saint John team for the full report.

STRATEGY 4.1

Prepare workers for the next generation of sector-driven employment opportunities.

In addition to the workforce development efforts regarding energy, the Port, and healthcare, the region should develop a holistic sector-focused workforce ecosystem to ensure that any employer has a ready pool of talent. This can be a major business attraction and retention lever. Defining these pipelines can also encourage students or non-traditional talent to pursue a career in target industries with high wages to stay within the region.

Establishing and marketing these pipelines is also critical for the region's youth. Primary and secondary school programming should be included to showcase the career possibilities within the region that will help retain residents as they enter the workforce, as well as improve their overall ability to generate wealth and prosperity.

This extends to small business development as well. Launching and scaling a local business provides wealth generation opportunities, yet small business owners often need support obtaining funding, preparing for growth, and planning for succession.

ACTIONS

- Convene sector-driven workforce roundtables to refine partnerships, identify training barriers, and build a robust talent pipeline.
- Execute an annual audit exploring the impact of technological sector advancements (e.g., AI) and future skills on the Region's future job opportunities.



STRATEGY 4.2

Grow regional talent attraction and retention programs.

The fight for talent is felt by localities across the world. Some regions are incentivizing relocation with conditional grants, others are activating traditional marketing campaigns.

Remote work was a catalyst for many people relocating to lower cost of living, higher quality of life places. The region's existing talent attraction programs have been supported by these outcomes of the pandemic. There is a potential for remote work to be replaced by hybrid, and so that catalyst may lessen over the coming decade.

Updating and expanding current attraction programs can mitigate these effects.

ACTIONS

- Develop and execute an annual regional investment and talent marketing campaigns with employers and educational institutions to promote the brand and image.



The Saint John Region – Economic Development Strategic Plan

STRATEGY 4.3

Expand regional support services for newcomers.

Newcomers – from students to inter-provincial relocated talent to immigrants – in any region help fuel the talent pool employers can pull from. Retaining these new residents can be a challenge: students receive a more lucrative job offer elsewhere; new talent gets priced out of housing; immigrants either can't find gainful employment or want to be close to cultural communities.

Similarly, employers looking to relocate talent to the region may struggle with immigration processes or helping new hires find an attainable place to live.

The region's newcomer programs are a strength. Identifying where there may be gaps or inefficiencies, either for the newcomers or employers, can help improve the region's overall retention rate.

ACTIONS

- Activate strategies identified in the “Regional Immigration Strategy” to be completed in 2025.

STRATEGY 4.4

Address the region's attainable housing needs.

Attainable housing is a challenge many regions across North America are facing. Issues range from supply chain inefficiencies that impact cost to zoning codes that restrict diverse development.

The region is already facing these challenges. With a goal to grow the population by 25,000 in the near future, the region will need to not only address its housing development, but also consider transportation corridors that may be impacted by this growth.

Dense, diverse development paired with a regional connectivity study can help identify where development would be most impactful so that residents can access both employment opportunities, as well as leisure amenities.

ACTIONS

- Utilize the “Envision Saint John Residential Market Study” to direct attainable housing development and continue developing diverse housing near employment and transit centres.
- Conduct a labour shed analysis and explore the expanded use of modular housing construction factories to support the expansion of housing supply.
- Support the regional municipalities and the Province of New Brunswick in assessing the suitability of land supply and infrastructure to support future growth.

STRATEGY 4.5

Enhance youth career awareness and opportunity literacy.

By exposing young people to diverse career paths and local opportunities early on, the Saint John Region can help align education with regional workforce needs. This proactive approach reduces skills gaps, improves talent retention, and creates a more adaptable and equitable workforce.


Increasing opportunity literacy empowers youth to make informed decisions about their future, potentially reducing unemployment and underemployment rates. This is particularly crucial in addressing the regional issue of the Saint John Region's overrepresentation of NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) youth.

By investing in youth career awareness, the Saint John Region can cultivate a pipeline of skilled workers, attract new businesses, and strengthen the overall economic ecosystem of the region.

ACTIONS

- Convene employers, workforce development organizations, school districts, and non-profit organizations bi-annually to review progress on the career literacy program goals.
- Develop and launch a career literacy program to educate primary and secondary students about regional career opportunities, with a special focus on the vulnerable population to ensure equitable economic growth in the region.





05 Strategies & Actions: Summary

STRATEGIC PILLAR	STRATEGY	ACTION
<p>01. Lead Atlantic Canada’s Energy Transition</p>	<p>1.1 Establish an energy transition initiative that catalyzes sector innovation and business attraction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a energy transition taskforce with sector partners (e.g., major employers, educational institutions, provincial sector organizations, etc) that defines roles and a roadmap forward. • Leverage federal and provincial incentive programs to drive business attraction and investment. • Partner with ONB and the energy transition taskforce to create clean energy sub-sector attraction and investment plans (e.g., nuclear,hydrogen, solar, wind, etc).
	<p>1.2 Convene major employers and educational institutions to develop energy workforce pipelines.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene major employers and educational institutions bi-annually to review training programs and curriculum. • Market new training programs connected to energy industry technological advancements to attract new talent. • Partner with primary and secondary educational institutions and major employers to communicate clean energy career opportunities within the Region. • Work with post-secondary institutions on launching a regional clean energy institute.
	<p>1.3 Establish a land use and industrial strategy for site acquisition and land readiness development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an energy pillar of the industrial site readiness initiative that identifies prime existing or potential land that supports business expansion and attraction of the energy sector. • Annually update marketing profiles of sites, including recent investments and developments of the land. • Convene with ONB and the energy taskforce annually to understand sector land needs for business expansion and attraction.
	<p>1.4 Establish an ecosystem for clean energy start-ups and scale-ups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of incubator and accelerator spaces within the Region that serve clean energy start-ups and scale-ups. • Develop a marketing strategy to attract renewable and clean energy technology start-ups, scale-ups, and research.
<p>02. Leverage Port Saint John as a Catalyst for Investment</p>	<p>2.1 Diversify Port and Logistics sector offerings through multi- modal investments and cold storage development – among others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activate on strategic findings from the Multi-Modal Transportation and Logistics Park Study. • Convene major employers and Port leadership annually to identify opportunities for infrastructure investments that improve the Region’s connectivity. • Work with Port Saint John and other partners to identify the future Port facility needs of industrial users and FDI opportunities to build an understanding of how the region can accommodate future growth.
	<p>2.2 Establish a smart port strategy that improves the Port’s overall efficiency and innovation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a site visit program for regional partners to visit global smart port leaders to identify opportunities for workforce, technology, and infrastructure investments for Port Saint John. • Partner with the Port of Saint John, the proposed Multi-Modal Transportation & Distribution Park, and other key stakeholders to understand the feasibility of a maritime and multi-modal logistics innovation program that attracts and develops talent, companies, incubators, accelerators and startups/scaleups. • Launch a maritime market study to understand growth, innovation, and FDI opportunities related to the Port and Logistics Sector. The study should also evaluate potential funding and support opportunities, such as programs offered through Canada’s Ocean Super Cluster and other similar initiatives. • Develop a marketing strategy to attract maritime technology start-ups, scale-ups, and research.
	<p>2.3 Convene major employers, unions, and educational institutions to develop maritime workforce pipelines.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene Port leadership and maritime unions, as well as other target industry leaders and educational institutions, to identify occupations and skills training that translate across industries. • Develop maritime workforce training programs in partnership with educational and training institutions that meet emerging employers’ needs. • Partner with primary and secondary educational institutions to develop a career literacy program centred on occupations that support the Port and Logistics Sector.
	<p>2.4 Leverage the Port to grow the region’s destination economy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene with Port Saint John, developers, waterfront stakeholders, cruise line leadership, and the City of Saint John government officials to identify potential infrastructure investments and event activations. • Develop a marketing strategy that attracts visitors and informs residents of activations around the Port. • Develop a site visit initiative for regional partners to visit global ports which have implemented tourism districts around their ports.

STRATEGIC PILLAR	STRATEGY	ACTION
<p>03. Provide the Next Generation of Health-Tech Solutions</p>	<p>3.1 Grow the Tucker Park Health Ecosystem to attract investment, talent and businesses, as well as to spur innovation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a health tech start-up and scale-up ecosystem (e.g., accelerators, incubators). • Partner with ONB to develop an IoMT (e.g., 3D bioprinting, telehealth, VR, etc) attraction and expansion strategy. • Develop a marketing strategy to attract health-tech startups, scale-ups, and research.
	<p>3.2 Encourage partnerships between the region’s Health and Technology employers and educational institutions to integrate emerging technological advancements into the region’s curricula.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene health-tech companies and educational institutions to develop workforce pipelines to support growth and scale of companies. • Connect health-tech companies (e.g., IoMT, VR, 3D bioprinting) with educational institutions to demonstrate new tech advancements. • Partner with primary and secondary institutions, higher education institutions, and health-tech companies for annual demonstrations of new technological advancements.
	<p>3.3 Invest in placemaking that positions the Tucker Park Health Ecosystem as a destination within the region.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene annually with healthcare, health technology, and educational institutions to identify any infrastructure barriers for growth. • Partner with educational institutions, architects, and developers to intentionally build out an innovation hub concept plan that is accessible and improves the overall urban design of the hub. • Partner with regional anchor institutions to identify and activate on cloud computing services and connectivity that promote data-sharing and progress technological advancements.
<p>04. Tourism Master Plan: Cultivate a Renowned Destination for Residents and Visitors Alike</p>	<p>1. Advance infrastructure to support sustainable growth and enhance visitor experiences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See TMP for full list of strategies and action items.
	<p>2. Enhance tourist attractions that captivate and engage visitors from around the world.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See TMP for full list of strategies and action items.
	<p>3. Expand outdoor recreation to highlight the region’s natural beauty.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See TMP for full list of strategies and action items.
	<p>4. Cultivate urban culture that fosters cultural vibrancy and community engagement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See TMP for full list of strategies and action items.
	<p>5. Develop new events and festivals that leverage existing regional assets that celebrates the character and heritage of the region to attract new audiences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See TMP for full list of strategies and action items.
	<p>6. Diversify accommodations that encourage longer stays and greater spending within the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See TMP for full list of strategies and action items.
	<p>7. Elevate the visitor experience by harnessing local strengths alongside technological tools.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See TMP for full list of strategies and action items.
	<p>8. Commit to destination stewardship to ensure the region remains accessible to all.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See TMP for full list of strategies and action items.

STRATEGIC PILLAR	STRATEGY	ACTION
<p>05. Position the Saint John Region as a Place for Investment</p>	5.1 Strengthen existing relationships with major and local employers, as well as attract new investment to the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host annual roundtables with industry clusters to identify specific needs and growth opportunities. • Conduct a formal business visitation plan for the Region's businesses, interviewing at least 60 employers annually. • Utilize these and other engagement tools to identify opportunities and needs and report key findings systematically.
	5.2 Support local entrepreneurs and small businesses as they launch, scale, and prepare succession.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene small business owners and entrepreneurs bi-annually to understand their challenges and opportunities for growth. • Develop a small business and entrepreneurship online hub that provides a one-stop-shop to access services and resources throughout the region. • Activate a regional angel network for the region. • Develop workforce development initiatives to support entrepreneurs in the region according to the needs identified. • Promotes and celebrate small businesses through the region.
	5.3 Advocate for increased air connectivity to the Saint John Airport.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with the Airport to understand the costs and resources necessary with expanding air services to Saint John Airport. • Engage the Saint John Airport to advocate for and support efforts for the continued expansion of air services to Saint John Airport.
	5.4 Launch a regional industrial site readiness initiative.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene a task force of regional industrial landowners, stakeholders, and public officials to guide the region's approach to industrial development. • Keep an inventory of available and active regional industrial sites, updating it twice a year. • Leverage the recent industrial investment attraction activities to complete a regional industrial land market readiness assessment and strategy. • Use engagement to develop a set of region-wide industrial principles. • Activate strategy recommendations and prepare future sites for development. • Launch a land readiness and development study for the area around the airport.
<p>06. Strengthen the region's Workforce Development Ecosystem</p>	4.1 Prepare workers for the next generation of sector-driven employment opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene sector-driven workforce roundtables to refine partnerships, identify training barriers, and build a robust talent pipeline. • Execute an annual audit exploring the impact of technological sector advancements (e.g., AI) and future skills on the Region's future job opportunities.
	4.2 Grow regional talent attraction and retention programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and execute an annual regional investment and talent marketing campaigns with employers and educational institutions to promote the brand and image.
	4.3 Expand regional support services for newcomers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activate strategies identified in the "Regional Immigration Strategy" to be completed in 2025.
	4.4 Address the region's attainable housing needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize the "Envision Saint John Residential Market Study" to direct attainable housing development and continue developing diverse housing near employment and transit centres. • Conduct a labour shed analysis and explore the expanded use of modular housing construction factories to support the expansion of housing supply. • Support the regional municipalities and the Province of New Brunswick in assessing the suitability of land supply and infrastructure to support future growth.
	4.5 Enhance youth career awareness and opportunity literacy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene employers, workforce development organizations, school districts, and non-profit organizations bi-annually to review progress on the career literacy program goals. • Develop and launch a career literacy program to educate primary and secondary students about regional career opportunities, with a special focus on the vulnerable population to ensure equitable economic growth in the region.

06 Appendices

Economic Development Strategy Steering Committee

Li Song, Exit Realty Specialists

Steve Milbury, Opportunities New Brunswick

Brian Irving, Saint John Industrial

Mike Quinn, GNB Post-Secondary Education
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John Runcie, Port Saint John

Mohamed Bagha, The Chamber/Saint John
Newcomers Centre

David Emerson, UNBSJ

Donald Hammond, Opportunities New Brunswick

Alexander Ross, Saint John Airport

The following reports and appendixes are available upon request:

Tourism Master Plan

State of the Region Report

Competitive Benchmarking Analysis

Stakeholder Engagement Summary

Visitor and Community Survey Results

Target Industry Analysis

Economic Trends Analysis

Let's empower
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