



WINDSOR

TOWNSHIP

WTBA
STRATEGIC PLAN
2024-2029

**FINAL DRAFT
FOR FEEDBACK**

Version 1.5 02/2024

director@windsortownship.ca

windsortownship.ca

INTRODUCTION

Hi! Welcome to Windsor! This document is intended to be a guiding star and a clear roadmap for the Windsor Township Business Association's approach to the betterment of Windsor. It is also valuable as an assessment of the WTBA's history, and assets. You can find our Current State information in Appendix A & B of this document.

This introduction was written in 2024. The WTBA Board is composed of 12 Members (for a full list, see Appendix A). As of 2024, the WTBA employs a Program Director and an Administrative Assistant; they also employ a seasonal Summer Student.

This strategy document has been written to guide our actions throughout the next 5 years. Our Vision & Mission are ever-true statements that we inherently rally behind, our Pillars are long-term goals that are designed to achieve the values within, and our Initiatives are tactics that we intend to deploy until 2029; when this document will be reviewed & subject to evolution.

A NOTE TO CURRENT AND FUTURE BOARDS:

The life of this plan is 5 years, though each element within it has its own life cycle:

- **VISION:** 5-10+ year horizon (stretch beyond the life of the plan)
- **MISSION:** ~5 year horizon (stay the same for the life of the plan)
- **PILLARS:** 2-5 year horizon (intended to last the life of the plan, but subject to change if necessary to support the mission and vision under different circumstances)
- **INITIATIVES:** 1 year renewable horizon (each initiative should be reassessed for relevance each year. Repetition is not a problem—and is often a good thing—so long as there is continued relevance)

THE WTBA'S VISION IS:

Downtown Windsor recognized by all stakeholders as a critical economic, social, and cultural service center for West Hants and Nova Scotia.

THE WTBA'S MISSION IS:

To foster a collaborative business environment in Windsor that makes it easy for motivated entrepreneurs to thrive.

This document is intended to be an assessment of the WTBA's plans, goals, and assets. It was begun on July 5th, 2023, and will be edited/updated regularly until our 2024 Annual General Meeting; from then, it will become a document that is only edited upon 2-5 year increments.

THE WTBA'S VALUES ARE:

1. We are team players.

We respect one another, even in disagreements; and we all leverage our network to support Board initiatives (where feasible or possible).

2. We are practical and solution-oriented.

We mention problems in the community in order to solve or improve them.

3. We are Windsor advocates.

We vocally support Windsor & its businesses; we share our knowledge of Windsor where we can, and encourage people outside of town to come visit (and shop, stay, and eat) in Windsor.

4. We vote with our wallets.

We spend our time and our money in Windsor, where possible, and we try new things in Windsor simply because they are in Windsor; we invite others to do the same.

5. We believe in service above self.

We advocate for the things that drive the greatest positive impact for the greatest number of businesses in Windsor.

THE KEY PILLARS OF THIS 5-YEAR PLAN:

- 1. Improving the downtown experience**
through advocacy, support, and sometimes execution of beautification efforts.
- 2. Engagement with Windsor businesses**
by consistently acting as conduit for information, collaboration, and resources.
- 3. Sustained promotion & marketing of Windsor**
to guide residents and visitors alike on how to have a great experience locally (eat, shop, and stay).
- 4. Advocate for Windsor's business environment**
by engaging with all levels of government and other stakeholders as needed to ensure Windsor is a great (and easy) place to do business.
- 5. Standardize organizational effectiveness of the WTBA**
to ensure the WTBA is more able to deliver its vision and mission over time.

PILLAR 1: IMPROVING THE DOWNTOWN EXPERIENCE

GOAL:

A vibrant and energetic downtown core that encourages repeat traffic, from locals and visitors alike, and is always recommended to those who are unfamiliar with Windsor.

OBJECTIVES:

- Implement new beautification projects
- Incentivize existing beautification projects for businesses
- Seek out & participate in new placemaking opportunities
- Ameliorate the experience of Windsor across multiple senses (not just visually)
- Create new events and culture-adding features that enrich the vibrancy of Windsor's downtown
- Professionally-considered storefronts
- Pride of place

INITIATIVES:

- Implementation of artwork (murals) throughout Windsor, where existing installations need refurbishment, and where spaces need new visual interest
- Organize and incentivize busker musicians during summer months
- Maintain and rotate seasonal Pole Banners
- Offer a cost-shared seasonal window-painting program for business' storefronts
- Supporting festivals & events in our region, with special care to those that take place within our BID catchment area
- Increase awareness of, and optimize the budget of, the Facade Improvement Program
- Develop & offer a "Storefront Improvement Kit", including Windsor-branded store hour signs, sidewalk A-frame signage, custom-built wheelchair-accessible ramp, and Open/Closed signage
- Advocate for adequate garbage receptacles & benches, and for improved maintenance
- Design a "Windsor Cheerleaders" initiative, inviting and encouraging love for the town
- Advocate for stricter treatment of "unsightly premises"

PILLAR 2: ENGAGEMENT WITH WINDSOR BUSINESSES

GOAL:

An engaged & informed business community, operating with the collective success of Windsor's economy in mind.

OBJECTIVES:

- Ongoing communication with WTBA's business community to continually assess its health & concerns, and to encourage feedback on the WTBA, the Municipality, and the region as a whole
- Ongoing evaluation & optimization of catchment area
- Increased collaboration between businesses and organizations of Windsor for planning & cross-promotional successes

INITIATIVES:

- Provide businesses with an increased resource offering which includes relevant provincial/national news, local interest stories, and upcoming events (ie newsletter)
- Share in the successes and announcements of Windsor's businesses
- Employ tools such as online surveys to assess various insights of businesses, and of visiting vendors (in the case of seasonal special events)
- Develop and offer new storefront support programs to businesses
- Continue to build positive relationships with businesses through face-to-face interactions

PILLAR 3: SUSTAINED PROMOTION & MARKETING OF WINDSOR

GOAL:

A thriving population of human traffic in downtown Windsor (visitors and locals alike), supporting our business' health and inspiring them to innovate, collaborate, and improve.

OBJECTIVES:

- Position Windsor as an attractive destination to those who research it digitally
- A defined marketing approach for Windsor, aimed at attracting key audiences
- Position Windsor as a destination for 24-72 hour stays
- Facilitate finding out what events are happening in Windsor

INITIATIVES:

- Maintain social media presence (Instagram, Facebook) to reflect current goings-on, focusing on businesses' messaging
- Develop and produce a renewed offering of Windsor-branded swag as an income stream, supporting additional or expanded WTBA initiatives
- Offer the West Hants Regional Municipality a cost-shared/discounted rate on design work for their organization's marketing
- Create a Winter event to take place on Gerrish & Water streets, to attract foot traffic to Downtown businesses when it's most absent
- Support the Avon Community Farmers Market by being present at their Windsor events
- Create & distribute stickers to direct traffic to our online Business Directory
- Explore a dedicated marketing campaign (incl. media buy), encouraging relocation to the town

PILLAR 4: ADVOCATE FOR WINDSOR'S BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

GOAL:

A thriving community in which it is rewarding to do business, and where entrepreneurs are empowered to act without excessive complication.

OBJECTIVES:

- Ensure that Windsor is perceived as an attractive place to do business
- Work to make the Windsor business community feel heard and represented (ie reliable response time, satisfying outcomes for community complaints/concerns)
- A high level of trust in the WTBA among businesses

INITIATIVES:

- Advocate for businesses that require WTBA support with policy issues, or provide direction to those business owners if the WTBA is not in a position to support
- Create opportunities for businesses to anonymously report concerns (ie Google Form), and share a new link for this interaction periodically (once every 6 months)
- Provide an anonymous survey (ie Google Form) once every 12 months, with the purpose to determine overall level of satisfaction with the WTBA's representation
- Liaise with WHRM council regarding specific issues whenever necessary

PILLAR 5: STANDARDIZE ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE WTBA

GOAL:

An organization that operates effectively, and is presented as reliable & professional.

OBJECTIVES:

- Improved access to quantitative and organized qualitative research data
- Ongoing communication (meetings) with WTBA's business community to continually assess its health & concerns
- Increased perception of WTBA Board members' participation in downtown Windsor
- Strengthening relationships with regional partners (Hantsport community leaders, Valley REN, AVCC, ACC, Rotary Club, CBDC)

INITIATIVES:

- Organize WTBA documents, and standardization of our branding's usage
- Implement traffic analytics (vehicular and person-based), to inform future programming
- Maintain and regularly update the WTBA's database of downtown businesses as an up-to-date email list for internal communication
- Maintain an up-to-date online Business Directory, including manually removing businesses who are no longer active, as well as encouraging new businesses to fill out a profile
- Remind businesses that they are welcome as observers at WTBA Board meetings
- Dedicate/encourage Board member time to organized volunteer work within existing community support programs and WTBA initiatives
- Cross-promote and seek cross-promotion from our partner organizations, as well as businesses through sponsorship of/participation in future events & programs
- Develop a new Strategic Plan in 2028/2029

APPENDIX A: OUR CURRENT STATE

The WTBA represents the values, encourages the growth, and heeds the concerns of the Business Community of Windsor's downtown core. Our BID is here to:

- Respond to their concerns
- Support their needs by building infrastructure & providing resources which empower their growth/sustainability
- Represent them and their concerns to our members of local government, and advocate on their behalf when/if necessary
- Act with overall business growth & sustenance in mind
- Create proactive programs, resources, or events to encourage new development, engagement, and analytics

SUMMARY: CURRENT STATE

The WTBA supports and empowers businesses within a 5 km² region, covering Gerrish St (Victoria Park to Water St) and Water St (King St to Albert St); with some coverage of the surrounding blocks. Our catchment also includes the Fort Edward Mall area on Wentworth Rd, and up to the south end of O'Brien St. Windsor's downtown core contains a myriad of industries: retail, law, medical, food service, brewery, convenience, artisan, fitness, banking, and more. Also within the WTBA's purview is the town of Hantsport. They will be supported by meeting their own unique challenges, and by sharing in the programs that Windsor enjoys.

Historically, the businesses within the WTBA's catchment area may feel under-represented, and therefore, the WTBA may not feel valued, nor be relied upon for our best uses. These businesses have also been largely left to their own devices, and haven't been able to benefit from proactive invitations to grow and evolve.

The WTBA's budget is made up of \$42,000 (as an operating budget, funded by tax levy), and a separate \$60,000 (providing salary for the Program Director & separate support for expenditures) from WHRM. The WTBA provides a quarterly report to the WHRM, outlining highlights of plans, programs, and progress within the region.

There are two “old challenges” from our past to address:

1. **Trust in the WTBA is not high among businesses in our catchment.** Often, when asked “why aren’t you involved with the WTBA?”, many existing businesses respond with a dismissive wave of the hand and a “bah!”. This is a reality that we must face if we are to engage our business community and rally them around our vision for the region. But the answer may be in the problem: we need to engage our businesses and discover what their needs truly are (not only what help they’d ask for). We need to demonstrate value & usefulness to our businesses if we want to change their opinion of us.
2. **Our Board is not consistently engaged.** This makes sense, since not only are they volunteers, but busy entrepreneurs as well. As a result, the Board has been operating with a healthy amount of discussion but challenges with execution. One solution is already in place: the hiring of a permanent staff member. A part of the Program Director’s role will be to execute on the Board’s conclusions. But more may be needed: the WTBA is currently exploring a re-structuring of the Board, in part to provide a more structured presence, and in part to become more effective. This format structures Board members into sub-committees, and mandating sub-committee involvement as a requisite for Board membership. This new structure will be informed in part by what each Board member is passionate about, why they believe in the area, and why they’ve chosen to be included on the WTBA.

CURRENT STATE OF IDEAS FROM THE COMMUNITY:

- Inclusion of more physical activity (pickleball, road hockey, running)
- Attracting businesses that are more modern & broadly popular
- Appetite for Kings County Transit, or light rail to Halifax (Sackville/Bedford)
- Discourse around urban density, and how to encourage it
- We want a more focused council
- We need to feel the presence of a proper Urban Planner
- Possible need for more/better parking
- More attention to a potential street-involved population
- Advocacy for better sewer system
- Preserve our small-town feel
- Eliminate empty properties/storefronts
- Attract food trucks
- Support for more outdoor adventure in our region (ie more trails)

The WTBA's "Desired future value proposition" is:

The WTBA supports the growth and visibility of downtown-Windsor-based businesses. We represent the vision of the board & the municipality. We are appreciated for the work that we do and for the shortcuts that we provide. We are supportive, exciting, and inspiring. The area within the WTBA's purview will be seen as vibrant, colourful, and exuding its own unique energy. As Windsor experiences its coming growth, the businesses that the WTBA represents will be prepared and empowered to meet that growth.

APPENDIX B: A DETAILED SUMMARY OF WHO THE WTBA HAS BEEN, HISTORICALLY

As of February 2024, our Board currently consists of 12 members: Adrienne Woods (Chair), Kjeld Mizpah Conyers-Steede, Brennan Fitzgerald, Angela Ross, Cam Hartley, Craig Bushell, Debbie Dunham, Ezra Edelstein, Kaylee Giffin, Michael Oxner, Michelle Jodrey, and Stefan Palios. Kim Lake is present at all meetings as Administrative Assistant. Pierre Tabbiner has been contracted as Program Director as of July 2023.

Our staff currently consists of 2 permanent members. Pierre Tabbiner is Program Director, with the Board as advisory. The Program Director seeks board approval for any expenses (greater than \$100), and embodies the organization's Vision, Mission, and Goals. This position also currently reports a quarterly update to the West Hants Regional Municipality council. Kim Lake is Administrative Assistant, overseeing financial management. We also employ 1 temporary member: a seasonal Summer Student.

The WTBA's past milestones include event planning, town beautification, responding to business' complaints and/or requests, sponsorship, and partnership. Some examples are, namely:

- The Facade Improvement program
- The Summer Concert series
- Beautification projects, including pole banners, the Avonian Place walkway, maintaining the basketball court, installation of decorative lights & bollard lights on the waterfront, and development/installation of town entrance signs & wayfinding signs, as well as supporting the efforts of our businesses & partners
- Maintenance of flowerpots, all downtown green spaces & small gardens, and Christmas decorations
- Township development, including long-term initiatives such as murals and their upkeep, art installations, and infrastructure & safety improvements
- Prior to 2020's social restrictions, organizing seasonal street fairs, and a Halloween haunted house

