



**BOARD
OF
TRADE**

RECOMMENDATIONS PLAN

REVITALIZING OUR CITY

BACKGROUND

Providing a framework of recommendations to guide decision-makers in fostering a more vibrant and competitive business environment for the City of St. John's.

This document focuses on recommendations and solutions and is designed to build on the foundation set by our *What We Heard* report. That earlier report captured the voices, experiences, and priorities of our members — business and community leaders from downtown and beyond — and reflected the realities they face every day. This report takes the next step by translating those insights into concrete actions and forward-looking strategies. Together, these recommendations form a roadmap for strengthening our business community, fostering growth, and ensuring that our city and our downtown remain vibrant and competitive.

Earlier this year the Board of Trade hosted a Downtown Business Engagement Session to gather input from the business community on how to revitalize our city and our downtown and create a more attractive, welcoming, and prosperous environment for residents and businesses alike. Since then, we have been encouraged to see acknowledgment of several of the core issues and recommendations raised during that session. Encouragingly, the City of St. John's has released a Downtown Forward Secondary Plan that reflects many of the same themes and priorities we heard directly from businesses.

Our recommendations are based on our own analysis and engagement, while remaining mindful of the City's plan. To monitor its progress and guide precise, thoughtful policy action, we put forward the following recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

REVITALIZATION

**Consider tax relief, grants,
and occupancy incentives for:**

- **Renovating or repurposing vacant buildings.**
- **Attracting small businesses, restaurants, and cultural spaces.**
- **Encouraging residential development in underutilized upper floors.**



RECOMMENDATIONS

TRANSIT, ACCESSIBILITY & WINTER FRIENDLY INFRASTRUCTURE

Improve year-round accessibility and mobility into, out of and within Downtown, such as:

- Expanded Metrobus routes, hours, and frequency, along with transit shelter improvements.
- Modernized snow clearing policies that support prioritized, timely snow removal (not just snow clearing).
- Year-round infrastructure improvements (lighting, sidewalk clearing, parklets, waterfront access).



RECOMMENDATIONS

CULTURE AND PUBLIC SPACE USAGE



Collaborate with community and businesses on Downtown vibrancy initiatives, such as:

- Markets, festivals, night events, and winter activities.
- Partnerships with arts groups, not-for-profits, and local businesses.
- Coordinated marketing campaigns to rebrand downtown as vibrant and family-friendly.

RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAMPION LEADERSHIP & ACCOUNTABILITY

Form a formal Downtown Advisory Committee (businesses, community groups, residents, city officials, province, RNC) that reports publicly on progress. The committee could:

- **Monitor safety, business vitality, and infrastructure benchmarks.**
- **Approve and monitor implementation of the Downtown Forward Secondary Plan to ensure alignment between economic, cultural, and community goals.**
- **Ensure continuity and accountability across municipal budget and election cycles.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

REVIEW AND EXPAND THE DOWNTOWN SAFETY COALITION

Further support the Downtown Safety Coalition to:

- Monitor and report on the success of increased visible police and security presence downtown, including the collection and analysis of crime statistics.
- Expand membership to include business owners, NLHS and community organizations focused on homelessness and addictions.
- Enable and promote Downtown community outreach and crisis response team(s) focused on addictions, homelessness, and mental health.
- Coordinate training for businesses on de-escalation and referral supports.



Questions?



info@bot.nf.ca



(709) 726-2961