



**SAINT JOHN**

**audit committee  
report**

**for the year 2005**

Grand Bay-Westfield • Quispamsis • Rothesay • Saint John • St. Martins

# **Saint John Growth Strategy Audit Committee Report #2**

## **for the year 2005**

In January of 2005, the Audit Committee for the Growth Strategy produced their first Audit Committee Report for the year 2004. The Committee reviewed the objectives that were outlined in the original Growth Strategy document, assigned grades to each of the Priorities, and subsequently produced a Report Card. Each Priority was “graded” based on several factors such as whether or not partnerships had been built, timelines established, and if outcomes and results were visible in the community.

The Committee continued its work throughout 2005, meeting on a regular basis, and monitoring the progress of the Growth Strategy’s Priorities since the last Audit Report. The Committee reviewed materials from a wide variety of sources, including: published reports, media coverage, web-based information, and presentations from invited guests. The Audit Committee is now pleased to present the second Audit Committee Report which reviews the progress that has been made in 2005.

It should be noted that there were some changes made to the Growth Strategy as it evolved. Initially led by Enterprise Saint John, leadership for the Growth Strategy was passed along to the five participating municipalities in January 2005, with the regional Mayors taking a more prominent leadership role. The strategy was also renamed “True Growth”. In addition, the seven key priorities were reorganized under new, broad categories, including: “Supportive Community”, “Economic Community”, and “Enriching Community”; and the headlines of property, policy and personality were no longer used. These new categories highlight the social and economic support mechanisms in the community, the diversity of interests in the community, and the region’s evolution towards a new level of cooperation among all levels of government.

This Second Audit Committee Report (and Report Card) builds upon the observations and grades contained in the First Audit Report, and identifies the progress made in 2005. Ultimately, the goals of this Report are to enhance community awareness of True Growth, to assist in planning and decision-making, and to monitor the key Priorities identified for action. As in the last Report, it was determined that this second Report should reflect both where the community has been as well as the progress that has been made in moving towards stated goals and objectives. To ensure consistency in evaluation, the Committee decided that they would continue to assign grades to the original priorities based on the grading scheme that was developed for the previous report. This will enable a direct comparison between the two Audit Reports.

In addition to the seven priorities that were “graded” in the first Report, the Committee provided comments and recommendations on new priorities that should be included in the Strategy. The Conclusion of this Report also reviews whether or not the five regional municipalities involved in True Growth have made progress on the Committee’s recommendations.

## **The Growth Strategy Audit Committee**

The Audit Committee continues to consist of a group of community representatives who are objective observers, at arms length, who monitor whether or not the goals and objectives of True Growth are being achieved.

The Committee is comprised of one representative assigned by each Municipal Council, two community volunteers, and a chairperson. The Growth Strategy Audit Committee includes:

Councillor Beverley Day - Grand Bay-Westfield  
Councillor John Ferguson - Saint John  
Gordon Friars - Quispamsis  
Councillor Mike Gillcrist - St. Martins  
Diane Huestis - Diane Huestis & Associates  
Dr. Robert MacKinnon (Chairperson) - UNB Saint John  
Don Shea - Rothesay  
Tracey Chiasson - UNB Saint John

## **Grading Scheme**

The Committee felt that when a Priority was perceived to fall between two letter grades, a plus (+) or minus (-) should be given based on the predominant characteristics associated with the Priority. If, for example, a Priority was determined to fall between an "A" and a "B", but contained more "B" characteristics, the grade of B+ was assigned; if more "A" characteristics were predominant, then an A- was assigned.

The Audit Committee grading scheme is outlined below:

### **A - excellent performance**

A grade of "A" indicates that there is a well-developed plan in place, strong and committed partnerships have been built, clear timelines have been developed, and significant results are beginning to take shape in the community.

### **B - good performance**

A grade of "B" indicates that there is a plan in place, partnerships are being built, timelines have been developed, and preliminary results are beginning to be seen in the community.

### **C - satisfactory performance**

A grade of "C" indicates that the foundations for a plan have been designed, preliminary partnerships have been secured, no clear timelines have been communicated to the public, and results to date are limited.

### **D - less than satisfactory performance**

A grade of "D" indicates that a plan has not yet been developed, partnerships have not been established, timelines have not been identified, and there are no visible results in the community.

## E-business Technology Cluster

### Priority #1

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The creation of an Educational, Research and Technology Cluster on the Saint John Waterfront was identified as a key Priority of the Saint John Growth Strategy in October 2003 yet this Priority only received a grade of “C” in the January 2005 Audit Committee Report for 2004. It was perceived at that time by the Committee that while initially this Priority generated a lot of public attention, there was little public communication of progress on this Priority throughout 2004.

Although there have been some changes in the focus and scope of this Priority, the Committee has observed progress on this Priority during 2005:

- There was a call for expressions of interest for the development of the Saint John Coast Guard site, and three development teams were invited to submit proposals (February-April 2005).
- The Saint John Waterfront Development Partnership and Saint John Development Corporation continued to work on the Federal land transfers required for the Coast Guard site redevelopment (August-December 2005).
- The Hardman Group was announced as the selected Developer for the Coast Guard Site; and plans to develop a hotel, condominium, commercial, retail and educational technology complex were unveiled. This will represent a \$75 million investment over a ten-year period (December 2005).
- A task force was established to develop concepts for the future knowledge-education component on Saint John's prime waterfront site (December 2005).

The Audit Committee continues to see this Priority as an exciting project with tremendous potential to contribute to the transformation of Saint John's Waterfront, and to play a significant role in the revitalization of the downtown core of the City. The Committee is pleased to see that the Hardman Group's plans include a mixed commercial, residential, and educational development. The Committee also recognizes that this project dovetails with other downtown developments already completed or planned such as the CenterBeam Place office complex (Heritage Place), the widening and improvement of Water Street, the expansion of the Harbour Passage Trail, UNB Saint John's Scotia Bank Building, and the proposed Cruise Ship terminal and Justice Complex.

Although there are still influences beyond the City's control, especially with respect to the divestiture of this property from the Federal Government, the Committee is pleased to note that a developer has been selected, a timeline is in place, partnerships have been confirmed, and progress is continuing. The Audit Committee looks forward to seeing the results of these exciting plans.

REPORT CARD GRADE FOR 2004: C

**REPORT CARD GRADE FOR 2005: B+**

## Waterways

### Priority #3

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In the Audit Committee Report for 2004, the Committee concluded that “the most tangible evidence of success of the Saint John Growth Strategy” was visible in this Priority. Thus, this Priority received a grade of “A”. This Priority acknowledges that one of the most distinguishing physical assets of Greater Saint John is its network of waterways -- the inner harbour and Port of Saint John, the Bay of Fundy, and the Kennebecasis and Saint John Rivers. Collectively, these natural features offer tremendous economic and recreational opportunities for the citizens of Greater Saint John, and for the Province as a whole.

For 2005, the Committee continued to be impressed with the results being achieved by the Saint John Waterfront Development Partnership, and by some of Greater Saint John’s municipalities.

Some of the highlights of progress on this Priority in 2005 include:

- Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) funding is announced for the planning and design work for Harbour Passage Trail, Water Street improvements, Partridge Island and the Skateboard Park (February 2005).
- Harbour Passage Trail received a prestigious International Merit Award for Design from the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects (March 2005).
- Examples of private sector projects near the Saint John Waterfront announced or completed include: Jacqueline Premises Professional Building, Bentley Crossing housing development, Robertson Wharf Condominium Project, and Fort Howe Townhouses expansion.
- ACOA funding is announced for engineering, design and tender work for Phase II of the Fundy Trail Project (May 2005).
- The Province of New Brunswick announced funding for Phase III of Harbour Passage -- from Chesley Drive to Reversing Falls (August 2005).
- The Government of Canada announced financial support for Grand Bay-Westfield’s River Trailhead Project (November, 2005).

The Committee is pleased to note the success of Grand Bay-Westfield in achieving financial support for the planned River Trailhead Project; and of St. Martins for continuing their plans for the extension of the Fundy Trail. The Committee understands that the Kennebecasis Valley municipalities are developing waterways strategies, and they look forward to receiving information about them once they are available. They encourage the municipalities of Rothesay and Quispamsis to work together to integrate their evolving waterways and parks plans.

The issue of Harbour clean-up continues to be discussed in Greater Saint John; and expectations of Provincial and Federal Government support for this worthwhile initiative are high. The Committee recognizes the importance of Harbour clean-up for the entire Saint John Region, and encourages representatives of all levels of government to continue their work on this issue.

Overall, the Committee believes that this Priority has continued to maintain consistent progress. It was noted that both private and public investments are contributing to the success of this Priority, and that well-developed plans are in place, timelines have been identified and significant results are beginning to emerge. While all municipalities have not contributed to this Priority in equal terms, it is the committee's opinion that this Priority continues to display the most visible progress of True Growth to the community at large.

REPORT CARD GRADE FOR 2004: A

**REPORT CARD GRADE FOR 2005: A**

## Conclusion

Overall, progress has been made on nearly every Priority of True Growth, and the importance of social development, arts and culture, higher education and transportation/trade have been identified as key aspects of the Strategy as it evolves. This Audit Report has identified selected examples of progress under each Priority. These are not intended to be comprehensive; and many of these examples cross the boundaries of more than one Priority of True Growth.

The decision to refurbish the Point Lepreau Generating Station, plans to expand the energy-related cluster of economic activities in Saint John, and the region's Immigration Strategy have earned Saint John the designation of the "third best city in Canada for business development" in 2005, with nearly \$3 Billion of investment anticipated over the next three years (Canadian Business Magazine, September, 2005). Supporting the evolution of Saint John as the "energy hub" of the Maritime Provinces was also the establishment of the Atlantica Energy Centre, and the announced plans to convert the former Saint John Shipyard site into a "Green" Industrial Park. Other examples of progress included a decline in the region's unemployment rate in 2005, labour force and housing start increases, and a plan to expand medical education in the community.

Although the Committee has highlighted the progress that has been made in 2005, it is recognized that there is much left to accomplish. As was identified in the last Audit Report, the Committee continues to note that the community needs to be better informed about the successes and challenges that are related to True Growth. The Audit Committee believes that closer cooperation among all participating municipalities will ultimately strengthen True Growth. The Report identifies that while most municipalities have plans in place for their respective waterways (or they are in the process of developing such plans), it would be useful to integrate these plans, especially with respect to parkland and trail development. Regional municipalities should also make an effort to coordinate their waterfront development plans with the waterfront development plans for Saint John.

Finally, the renaming of the Growth Strategy in 2005 as True Growth, and the development of a set of thematic portfolios to be assigned to the mayors and elected representatives of each municipality, was intended to move the Strategy beyond the leadership of Enterprise Saint John, to the five participating municipalities. While the City of Saint John has adopted this portfolio system, it is still under discussion in the other regional municipalities.

While this report has focused on the original priorities to permit a comparison with the Audit Report for 2004, the Committee evaluated these in the context of the new concepts of Supportive, Economic and Enriching Communities. "Supportive" explicitly recognizes the importance of creating a healthy environment for all citizens; "Economic" acknowledges that a sound economy is central to True Growth; and "Enriching" reveals the roles of educational institutions and the creative and cultural sectors in fostering True Growth. It is also recognized that these concepts will continue to evolve and change as the community moves forward with True Growth. It is hoped that this Report Card will enhance citizen knowledge, assist with planning and decision making, and contribute to an understanding of True Growth by the community at large.

The Committee looks forward to reviewing the progress made in 2006 as True Growth continues to evolve.

## Report Card (for 2005)

1	E-business Technology Cluster	B+
3	Waterways	A
4	Business Support, Retention, and Expansion	B+
5	Start-up and Expansion of Small and Medium Businesses – Entrepreneurship	B+
6	New Business Attraction	A-
7	Immigration	A
2	Communications Strategy	B

The grades

- A Excellent performance
- B Good performance
- C Satisfactory performance
- D Less than satisfactory performance