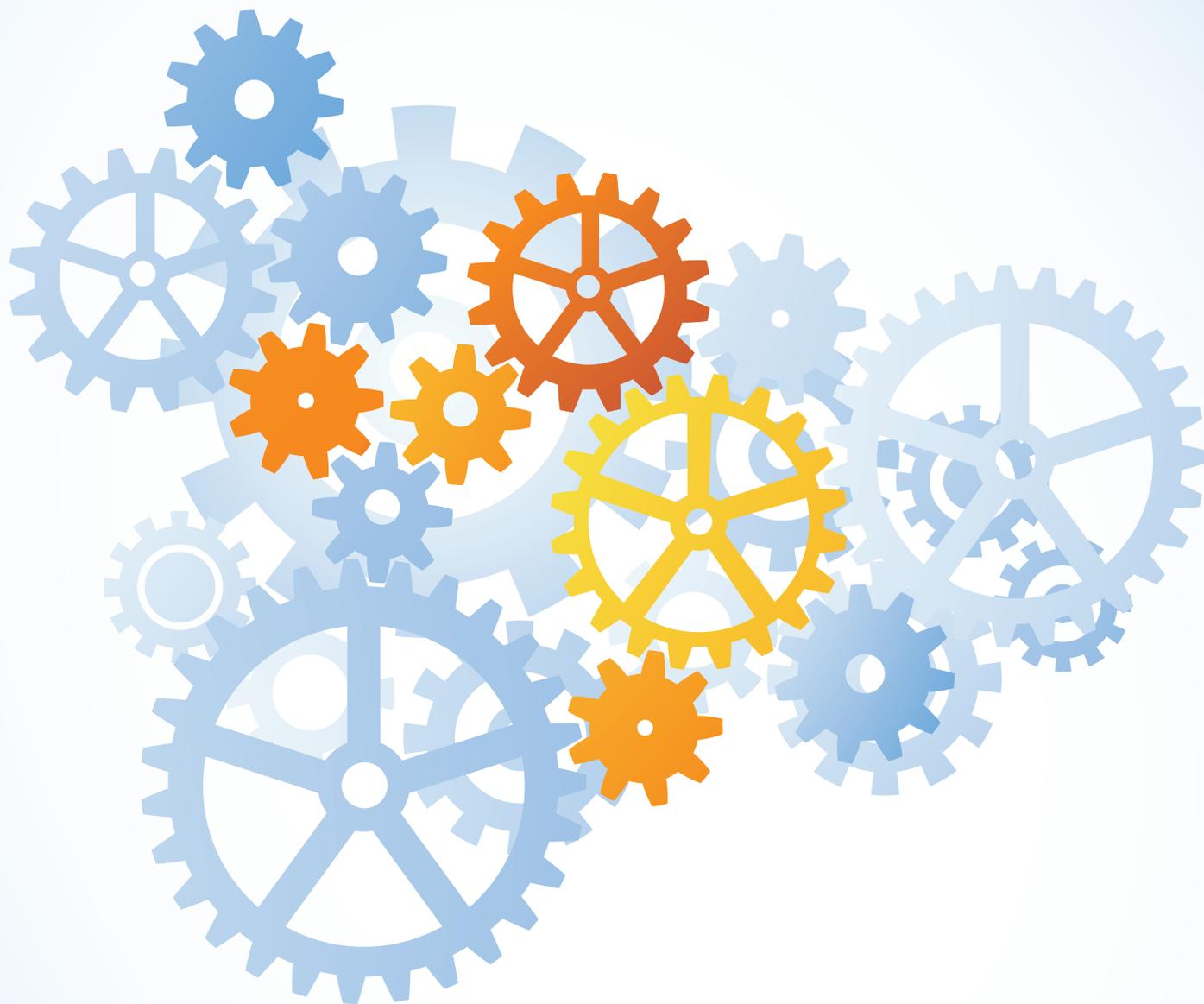




Prince Edward Island, Canada

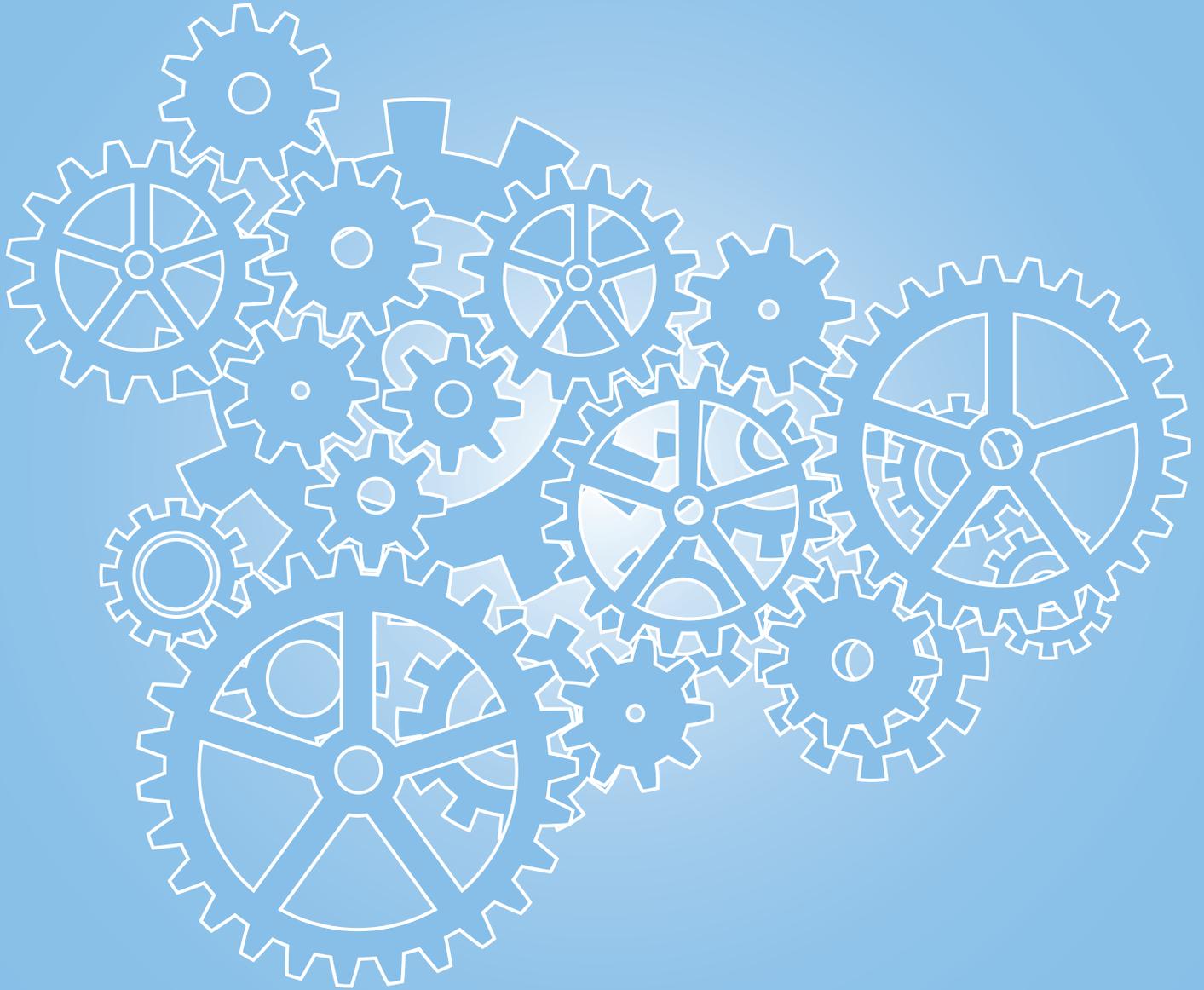


2011 Economic Development Action Plan
Summary Report

The City of Summerside is in a position to benefit from the structural changes emerging in the Canadian economy. This economic development strategy was completed to proactively examine the current and future economic opportunities in the City.

Table of Contents

Project Approach	2
Mapping Summerside's Targets	4
Strategic Recommendations	6
Action Plan	7





Introduction

Economic development efforts can be complex and attracting investment to any community across Canada is competitive. Structural changes are occurring across many economic sectors such as advanced manufacturing (i.e. aerospace, food processing) and green energy. In addition, knowledge-based industries are emerging in communities across Canada and necessary infrastructure needs to be in place to foster this economic growth. However, the role that a city like Summerside plays needs to be focused and strategic and must leverage much of the efforts that the Province of Prince Edward Island has been advancing over the previous years. Summerside has limited municipal economic development resources. This economic development strategy is a practical and sustainable blueprint for fostering growth in Summerside given the resources available.



Project Approach

The economic development strategy reviewed four of Summerside's existing frameworks for growth. They included the Strategic Plan, Official Plan, Integrated Community Sustainability Plan and the economic development incentive policy.

An economic base analysis examined demographic (i.e. population, household income, immigration), labour force (i.e. industries and occupations) and business characteristics (i.e. industries, business size) for Summerside. This analysis also included the Province and Canada in characteristic discussions.

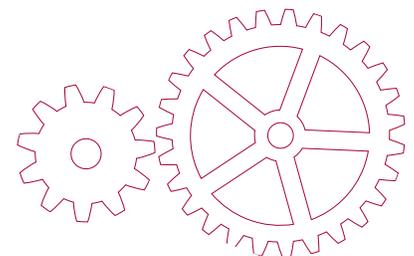
An infrastructure assessment explored the Province of Prince Edward Island's economic development objectives and the Summerside community's human, land use and physical infrastructure that can provide the capacity for advancing the local economy.

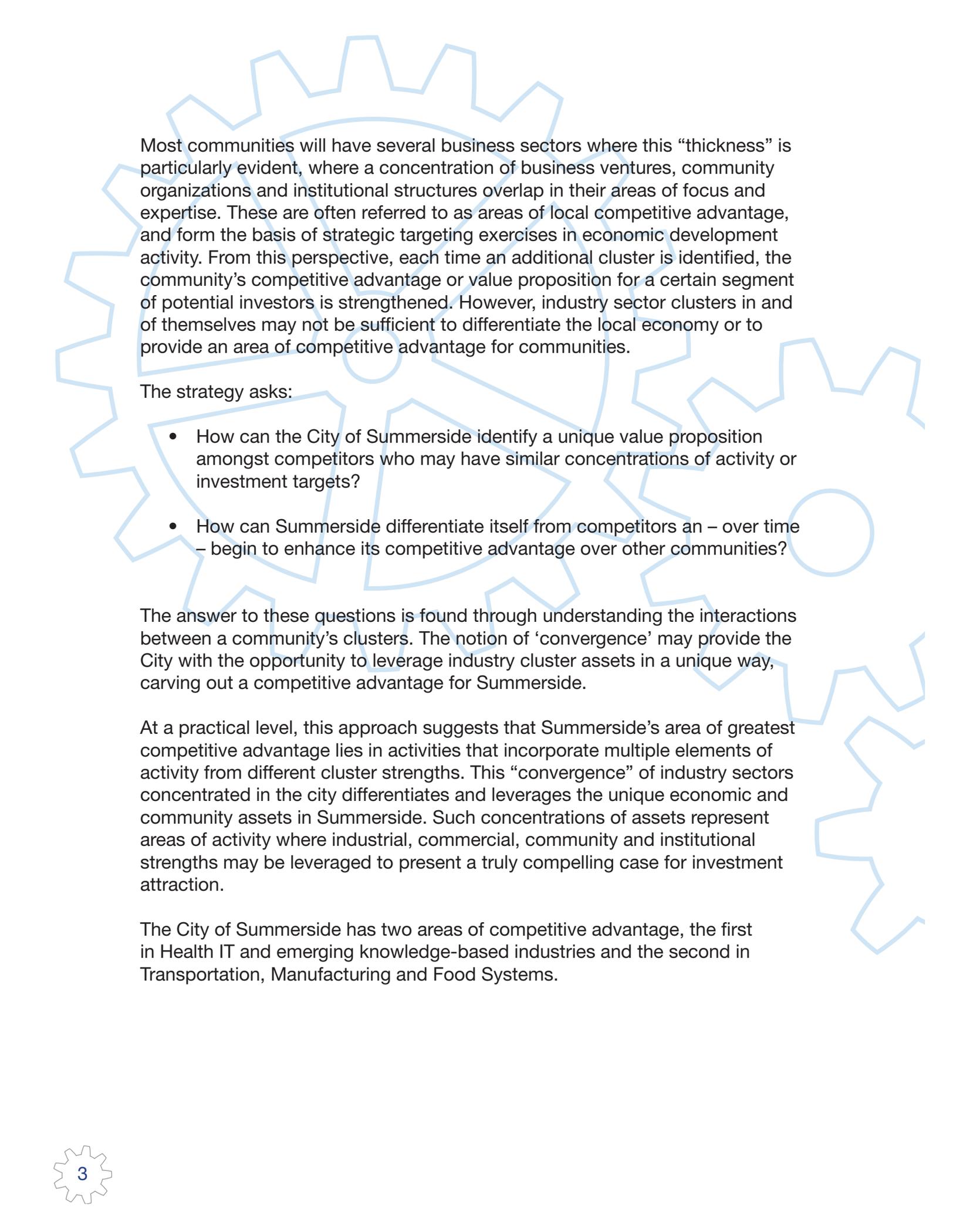
The project included three streams of community input: one-on-one business and economic development stakeholder interviews, online business consultations and community focus group sessions.

In creating an economic development strategy for Summerside, identifying targeted growth sectors as areas of focus for investment and activity is an important step in providing strategic direction for a community. While the identification of these target sectors is crucial to the overall plan, focusing on these sectors by themselves can limit a community's competitive advantage. The City's economic development efforts must also be aligned with the City's other strategic planning documents and the Province of Prince Edward Island's development efforts if the strategy is to be sound.

Sectors of Convergence Approach

The sectors of convergence approach is rooted in the economic development notion of "cluster development". Cluster development is the idea that businesses group together in nodes of concentration and that these nodes arise where resources are "thickest" – that is, where concentrations of talent, infrastructure, financial capital, etc. are present and available to participants within the cluster.





Most communities will have several business sectors where this “thickness” is particularly evident, where a concentration of business ventures, community organizations and institutional structures overlap in their areas of focus and expertise. These are often referred to as areas of local competitive advantage, and form the basis of strategic targeting exercises in economic development activity. From this perspective, each time an additional cluster is identified, the community’s competitive advantage or value proposition for a certain segment of potential investors is strengthened. However, industry sector clusters in and of themselves may not be sufficient to differentiate the local economy or to provide an area of competitive advantage for communities.

The strategy asks:

- How can the City of Summerside identify a unique value proposition amongst competitors who may have similar concentrations of activity or investment targets?
- How can Summerside differentiate itself from competitors and – over time – begin to enhance its competitive advantage over other communities?

The answer to these questions is found through understanding the interactions between a community’s clusters. The notion of ‘convergence’ may provide the City with the opportunity to leverage industry cluster assets in a unique way, carving out a competitive advantage for Summerside.

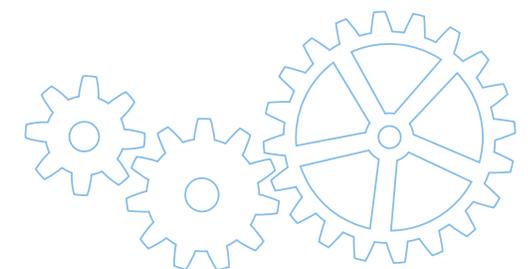
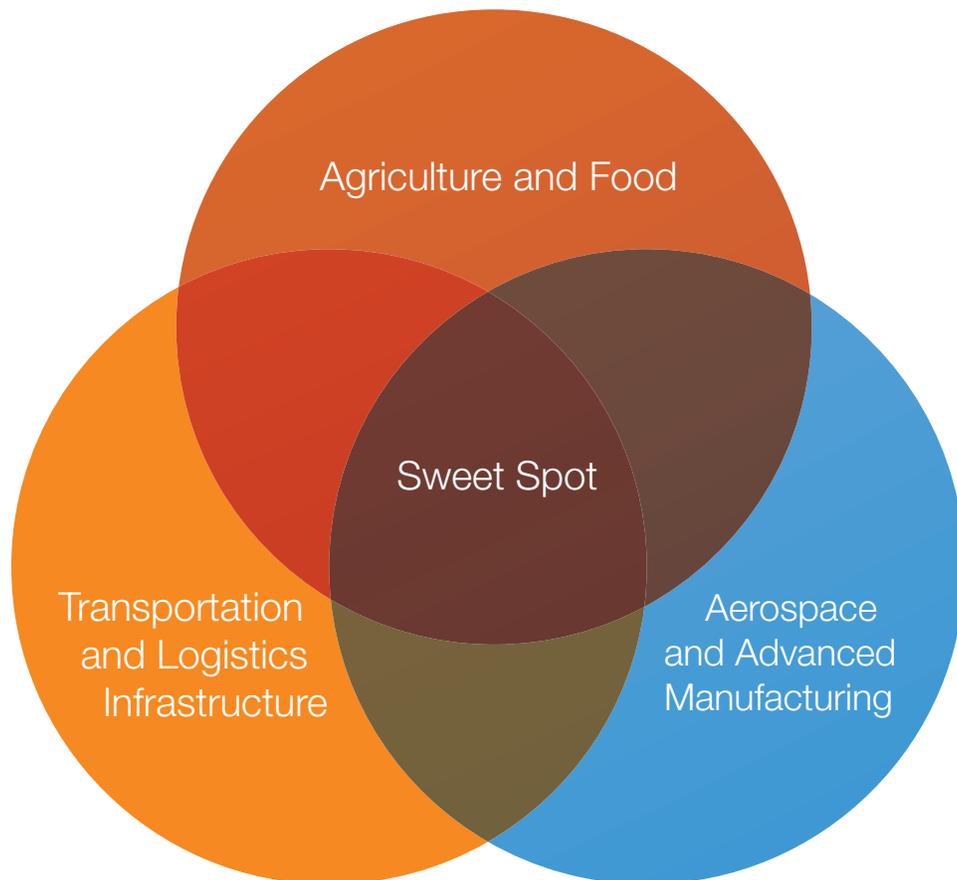
At a practical level, this approach suggests that Summerside’s area of greatest competitive advantage lies in activities that incorporate multiple elements of activity from different cluster strengths. This “convergence” of industry sectors concentrated in the city differentiates and leverages the unique economic and community assets in Summerside. Such concentrations of assets represent areas of activity where industrial, commercial, community and institutional strengths may be leveraged to present a truly compelling case for investment attraction.

The City of Summerside has two areas of competitive advantage, the first in Health IT and emerging knowledge-based industries and the second in Transportation, Manufacturing and Food Systems.

Mapping Summerside's Targets

The Transportation, Manufacturing and Food Systems sector is concerned with both the types of products that businesses in Summerside make, but also the ways in which those products are moved. The latter is especially critical given that food and agricultural products are time-sensitive, and require more sophisticated processes for tracing their movements.

Figure 1: The Transportation, Manufacturing and Food Systems Sweet Spot



The City has a number of assets that will assist in the development of this convergence sector. These assets include:

- A strong industry profile and educational institutions
- A skilled labour force with growing technical capabilities
- Sophisticated gateway infrastructure.

The growth opportunities that the City of Summerside should focus its efforts on include:

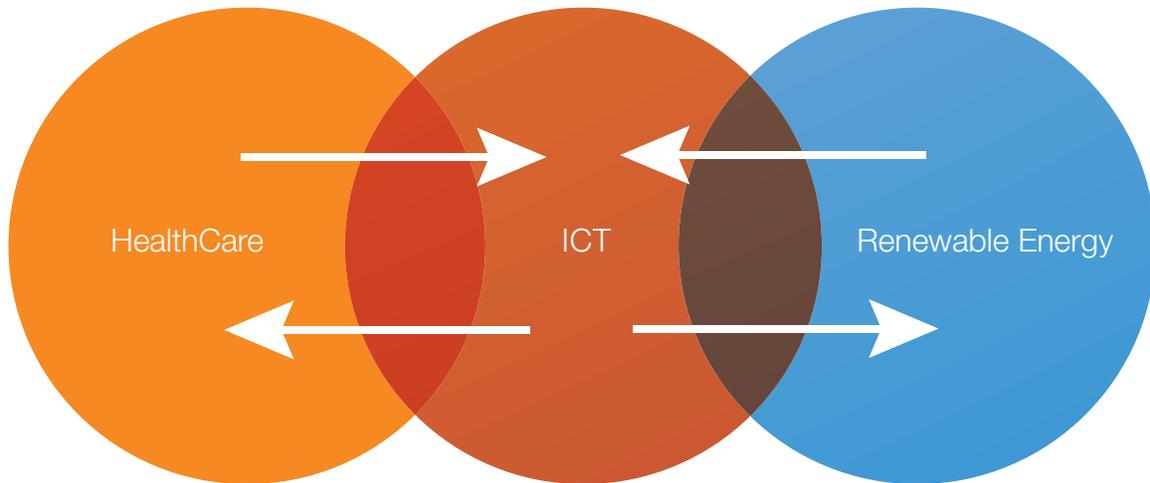
- Incorporating Slemon Park into Urban Boundary
- Designating new industrial lands
- Attracting research & development activity
- Facilitating the development of an Intermodal Hub
- Attracting investment to the Port
- Facilitating Pilot Projects in Biofuels and Advanced Materials

The Emerging Knowledge Based Industry convergence sector is focused on the City's existing strengths in health care and health IT, and its growing position in renewable energy and smart grid technologies. Together, these assets signal a growing opportunity in the emerging knowledge-based industries, where smart technology applications become the focus of emerging economic development and investment potential.

The City has a number of assets that will assist in the development of this convergence sector. These assets include:

- Significant health care services
- Emerging e-Health businesses
- Emerging ICT businesses
- Green energy assets
- Converging IT and green energy technologies
- Existing green energy expertise in the public utilities sector
- Knowledge-focused strengths at Holland College
- The growth opportunities that the City of Summerside should focus its efforts towards include:
 - Networking and collaboration with the health care and information technology sector
 - Attracting research and development activity
 - Examining opportunities for developing and servicing additional industrial lands
 - Expanding post-secondary training
 - Enhancing support for small and medium-sized enterprises

Figure 2: The Emerging Knowledge Based Industry Sector



Strategic Recommendations

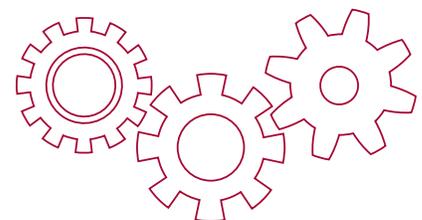
Detailed research and consultation as part of project process has identified two strategic goals, and associated objectives, to guide the long-term development of Summerside.

Goal One

New economic opportunities and collaborations emerge in Summerside based on the convergence of key economic sectors and assets

Goal Two

Stakeholders, both internal and external, embrace the view of Summerside as a location of choice to live, work, and raise a family



Action Plan - Goal One

New economic opportunities and collaborations emerge in Summerside based on the convergence of key economic sectors and assets

What we need to do to get there

Focus internal and external business development efforts on the activities in the convergence between health care and emerging knowledge based industries

How we'll do it

Build partnerships with Holland College and UPEI to attract health-related and green energy related Research and Development activity to Summerside. Goal to open a Health IT Research Institute either within or in proximity to the Holman Centre.

Who can help

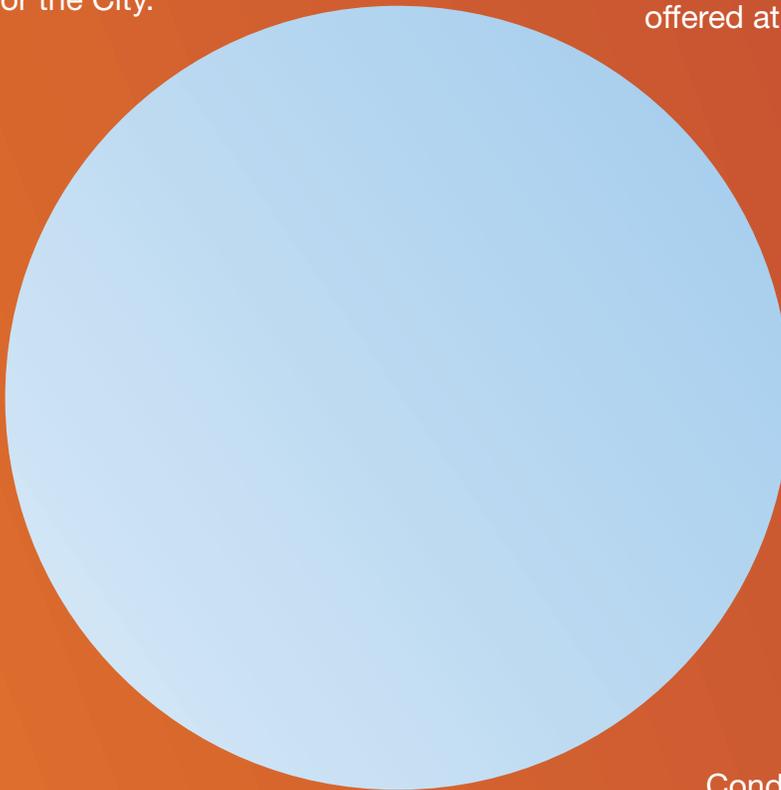
Holland College, UPEI, Holman Centre, Western School Board of Prince Edward Island, Chamber of Commerce, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Province of Prince Edward Island, Prince County Hospital

Initiate discussions with Holland College to expand health related training programs and with UPEI to establish a teaching presence in Summerside, with preferable education programs in health, computer systems and business studies.

Build relationships with local businesses and engage the youth population through cooperative education programming at the secondary and post-secondary level.

Hire fulltime staff person to oversee Immigration Attraction and Retention Program for the City.

Leverage funding to expand the business and entrepreneurial services offered at the Holman Centre.



Create marketing messaging and materials that communicate the value proposition of Summerside's eHealth location.

Create a forum, such as "Health IT Bootcamp" (similar to the University of Waterloo Health Informatics Bootcamp model) where local ICT businesses and health care service providers network, share knowledge and build profile for the Health IT sector.

Conduct a feasibility study to determine the opportunity to create a centre of excellence in interoperability connecting the health care and ICT sectors more cohesively.

Action Plan - Goal One (cont'd)

New economic opportunities and collaborations emerge in Summerside based on the convergence of key economic sectors and assets

What we need to do to get there

Undertake activities focused on building the enabling infrastructure that will support business development in Summerside

Who can help

Innovation PEI, Slemon Park, SRDC, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Summerside Electric Utility, IT corporations, Holland College, UPEI, Economic Development

How we'll do it

Pursue the development of the Smart Utility Grid and provide incentives for the installation of energy storage heating systems.



Explore opportunities to develop an education-focused science centre in the community.

Build a value proposition focused on the green energy and the transportation manufacturing and food systems sectors.

Through consultation with local industry, explore possibilities for further facility development on the vacant lands at the Port.

Undertake an initiative to promote “niche education” strengths within Summerside.

Continue efforts to promote Summerside as the logical home of the Provincial Museum.

Connect youth and local businesses to promote apprenticeship options in red seal trades related to the green energy sector.

Complete a cost-benefit analysis to explore the fiscal impact of incorporating Slemon Park into the urban boundary.

Initiate discussions with Innovation PEI to add the industrial site on Greenwood to the Summerside Business Park.

Expand the educational programming available in Summerside in partnership with Holland College and UPEI.

Initiate discussions with Holland College to expand training programming for the green energy sector.

Initiate discussions with UPEI to establish a teaching presence in Summerside for environmental studies educational programs.

Complete a business plan exploring the feasibility, fiscal impacts, and potential phasing of a business park development in Summerside.

Action Plan - Goal One (cont'd)

New economic opportunities and collaborations emerge in Summerside based on the convergence of key economic sectors and assets

What we need to do to get there

Building on transportation assets, focus business development efforts on the activities in the convergence between agriculture, food systems, and advanced manufacturing-aerospace

How we'll do it

Create and maintain an inventory of existing and potential businesses that could engage in the area of convergence in the following geographies: Summerside, PEI, Atlantic Canada, Canada.

Who can help

Chamber of Commerce, Innovation PEI, Industry Canada, Business Ambassadors, Holland College, Economic Development, PEI Food Technology Centre, UPEI, Slemon Park

Create a local industry advisory committee to engage in the marketing and business development activities within the convergence sector.

Work with Holland College to develop curriculum to support trades, transportation, and advanced manufacturing technology skills.

Implement a targeted business retention and expansion program.

Complete a market study identifying value-added opportunities in the transportation and equipment manufacturing sectors for local agricultural producers looking to diversify their products.

Work with the industry advisory committee to assess the skill needs within the converging industries, and identify programs to meet those needs.

Work with local English and French school boards to inform curriculum focused on preparing students for college- and university-level courses in industrial technology, information technology, and natural sciences.

Identify a list of academic and industry leaders undertaking applied research projects in the areas of biofuels and biomaterials.

Undertake an assessment of the potential to supply shared infrastructure to support pilot/scale-up projects within the bio-based transportation manufacturing sector, including possible industry partners and sources of funding.

In partnership with Holland College and UPEI, assess the feasibility of attracting researchers to Summerside and potential opportunities to support research projects.

Action Plan - Goal Two

Stakeholders, both internal and external, embrace the view of Summerside as a location of choice to live, work and raise a family

What we need to do to get there

Undertake structural and programming enhancements to ensure better communication of economic development priorities and activities among internal stakeholders (City Staff/Administration)

How we'll do it

Facilitate approximately 10 meetings per year of senior management at the City, in order to improve two-way communication between economic development and other City departments. Participants should include: City CAO, Director of Technical Services, Director of Finance, Director of Community Services, Director of Economic Development.

Working with corporate communications, develop a monthly e-newsletter (also available in hard copy) for distribution to all City staff, highlighting key operational messages and objectives from the economic development department.

Who can help

Technical services, finance, community services, Communications department

What we need to do to get there

Undertake structural and programming enhancements focused on improving relations with external stakeholders (residents, businesses, academia, provincial government), with the intent of building an understanding of the importance of Summerside to the Provincial economy

Who can help

Technical services, finance, community services, Communications department

How we'll do it

Develop an annual economic scorecard outlining major economic development initiatives for the following year, and progress updates regarding the previous year's implementation plan. Through the data collection aimed at yearly reporting, develop a monthly economic update targeted at local residents to be placed in the Journal Pioneer, outlining key economic development news in Summerside.

Initiate a 'Summerside Day' communications program targeted at reaching out to provincial government representatives, and promoting Summerside as a business location.

In partnership with the local business groups, initiate a semi-annual business and industry forum to share key economic development program progress and increase interaction with the local business community.



For more information about this action plan,
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The full strategy is available for download
at www.bigpossibilities.ca