On behalf of the Truro and Colchester Partnership for Economic Prosperity (TCPEP), we are pleased to report on our first year of activity. The following areas highlight key activities and accomplishments undertaken by the Partnership in fiscal 2017-18:

1. **Establishment of the TCPEP**
   The TCPEP Board spent significant time working with our partners to develop our inaugural inter-municipal agreement, provincial agreement and respective contribution agreements.
   
   - The inter-municipal agreements were negotiated throughout June, July and August 2017.
   - The Truro and Colchester Partnership for Economic Prosperity (TCPEP) became officially incorporated under the Nova Scotia Registry of Joint Stocks on November 22, 2017.
   - The TCPEP received our Agreement with the Province of Nova Scotia on December 18, 2018.

2. **Chief Executive Officer Search**
   The Board initiated a search for its Chief Executive Officer in May 2017. Professional recruitment services were contracted to Robertson Knightsbridge Surette (Halifax). The recruitment process lasted eight months. Brennan Gillis was hired as CEO and started with the TCPEP on January 08, 2018. A media release was issued on December 12, 2017.

3. **Market Economic Assessment of Colchester Region**
   The Board of Directors also commissioned a regional economic assessment, which was completed by Turner Drake & Associates on March 22, 2018. The data will help the TCPEP develop various business development and investment attraction tools and the information is being used in the development of the Regional Economic Strategy.

4. **BusinessNOW**
   As per the agreement with the Province of Nova Scotia, the TCPEP will carry out BusinessNOW activities in the Colchester Region. BusinessNOW is a service where TCPEP staff meet one-on-one with businesses to identify and assess local business needs/opportunities. BusinessNOW is synonymous with the Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) tool delivered across Nova Scotia by the RENs. BRE information is collected and maintained in Executive Pulse, an online CRM system managed by the Halifax Partnership. BusinessNOW positions us as a valuable business navigator for local businesses. The CEO registered with BRE-International and completed the BRE Fundamentals Online training program. The CEO also received one-on-one training from the Department of Municipal Affairs on BusinessNOW delivery in Nova Scotia.
5. **Regional Economic Strategy**

The Board initiated the development of a Regional Economic Development Strategy in February 2018. A Strategic Plan Committee was established consisting of Stephen Johnston, David Gray and Don Hay. The CEO and Committee developed and issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) on February 22, 2018. Frank Gallant of Peak Experiences was selected to assist with the development of the Strategy. Mr. Gallant met with the Board on March 21, 2018. A Board/LOC Focus Group session was held on April 18, 2018 and included members of the Board, municipalities and the Liaison Oversight Committee. An online portal was developed and made available to community stakeholders allowing them to provide information on the region’s Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Additionally, the TCPEP held eight community focus groups seeking regional input from residents and businesses in the region. Four of the sessions had themes, including Education and Entrepreneurship; Regional Branding and People Attraction; Business and Business Parks, Youth and Community Groups. The session completed on May 09 and the Strategic Plan will be finalized in June 2018.

Looking ahead to 2017-18, I am excited to continue our momentum. With our collaborative Regional Economic Strategy, we want to stimulate more business opportunities in the region. Several of our strategies include;

1) **Promoting the Region** to better highlight local business successes and opportunities
2) Identifying and filling gaps in the local start-up and **business development ecosystem**
3) **Workforce Attraction and Retention**
4) Supporting and **Developing High-performance Workforce Culture**

I wish to thank our Board members for their commitment and dedication. We meet every two weeks and we were a working board throughout 2017-18. In addition to these regular commitments, several of our Directors and Ex-Officio Directors provided additional service throughout the strategic planning process.

I wish to thank our municipal partners; The Municipality of the County of Colchester, Millbrook First Nation, The Town of Stewiacke, and The Town of Truro. Each of you have your own daily demands and responsibilities, but you contribute to and work together on our shared vision and common goals to ultimately make our region stronger and more prosperous.

The Province of Nova Scotia continues to provide encouragement and support. The Province provided a great deal of guidance throughout the establishment of our REN and we aim to position our Partnership as most valuable player in the REN network.

The business community, through our Chamber of Commerce, was instrumental in establishing the Partnership - and their efforts have positioned us as a best practice in collaboration in Nova Scotia. Their financial and participatory commitment demonstrates how partnerships can come together to benefit our economy, our government and our communities.

Thank you for your support and I look forward to continuing our efforts in 2018-19.

Mark Wood
Chair, TCPEP