



PEOPLE FIRST



The Premier's Council for Recovery and Growth

Summary Report and Guiding Directions
to move Prince Edward Island Forward

September 2021

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Table of Contents

A Message from the Premier	4-5
Work of the Council	6-7
Premier’s Council for Recovery and Growth Recommendations	8-11
People	8
Connectivity.....	9
Resiliency	10
Innovation	11
Members of the Council	12
Sector Champions Contributors	16





A MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER

In May 2020, during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, I asked leaders from across Prince Edward Island to come together to help lead the effort to address the impacts of COVID-19, particularly those felt more strongly by women and diverse groups, and establish a plan for recovery and growth. I asked this group to consider the opportunities and challenges facing our province, and to bring forward ideas on how we can Renew PEI, together.

There is an appetite here in our province for not just being better, but for being the best in both Canada and the world on a number of fronts. Islanders are no longer just asking why, but why not? As I have said before, no one owns a good idea. I initiated

this process to draw on the diversity of perspectives and ideas Islanders have and I am overwhelmingly pleased with the recommendations that have emerged.

“
There is an appetite here in our province for not just being better, but for being the best in both Canada and the world.
”

The Council has worked hard over the last year, meeting together and as sub-committees, reviewing feedback received from a

group of Sector Champions as well as recommendations received from Islanders and Members of the Legislative Assembly. In all, the Council considered over 1,000 ideas, with consistent themes emerging around **people, connectivity, resiliency and innovation.**

My government is eager to get to work implementing the recommendations identified in this report. Many of these recommendations helped inform this year's Speech from the Throne and Budget 2021-22. Currently, over half of the recommendations made by the Council are already underway or planned to be actioned this fiscal year. I look forward to updating Islanders on our progress.



While we continue to move towards a new normal here in our Province, we watch other parts of our country and the world face a deadly fourth wave of COVID-19 and are reminded of the relative comfort and safety we have enjoyed. Through this process and the work of the Council, it has become clear to me that strategic upstream investments that support and strengthen our greatest asset—our people—will position our province for long-lasting growth and prosperity for Island businesses and households.

We will also continue to hold ourselves to larger overarching objectives including improving the wellbeing of children, enhancing income security for Islanders, encouraging diversity, equity and inclusion and supporting anti-racism efforts.

The Premier's Council has made it clear that by making the right choices today, we will have a lasting, positive impact on our environment and our people. We will continue to preserve our traditions and strengthen our primary industries while embracing new ideas, opportunities and technologies.

I once again thank the Council for their work and invite all Islanders to join us in a commitment to becoming a more sustainable Island, a more inclusive Island and a more innovative Island as we forge a path forward.

Honourable Dennis King
Premier of Prince Edward Island



Work of the Council

The Premier's Council for Recovery and Growth was formed with a commitment to gender equity and diversity to ensure recommendations formed are representative of the diverse perspectives of Islanders. The Council is comprised of 30 leaders (Appendix A) from a variety of PEI industries, sectors and regions. The Council was initially tasked with responding to two main questions:

1. How do we **best support people of PEI** so that they can succeed and thrive in the years ahead?
2. What **bold aspirations should we set for our province** as we seek to be a bigger part of the world in the future?

This Council met for the first time on June 1, 2020 to discuss issues related to COVID-19 and opportunities for the province to move forward. From this discussion, five key focus areas emerged:

- Foster a culture of competitiveness where businesses thrive
- Create a future where every sector succeeds
- Offer world-class education and training where people excel
- Become a sustainability leader where all of PEI benefits
- Build connected communities where people want to be

These five focus areas provided the foundation for which sub-committees of the Council were formed, focusing efforts on developing recommendations and guiding directions specific to each area. Each sub-committee met several times between July and September to identify areas that need immediate government attention, ideas that will make PEI a leader in five years and actions that can be taken quickly to promote recovery and growth. The sub-committees were also tasked with reviewing the unique ideas and recommendations brought forward by the Sector Champions (Appendix B), as well as through public feedback and feedback from MLAs on behalf of their constituents.

Sector Champions

Leaders from a variety of business, community and industry sectors across PEI were invited to form a group of Sector Champions (Appendix B) to present bold ideas to make PEI the best place to live, work and grow. The Sector Champions were re-engaged to review directions being put forward by the Council along with the public submissions and to lend their voice and experiences in finalizing this report.

Common ideas that emerged in discussions with the Sector Champions centered around community, quality of life and access to opportunity; immigration and population growth; internet and technology; social innovation and the community sector; preventative and inclusive approach to health care; and key and traditional sectors.

The most cited recommendations

from the Sector Champions were to implement a form of basic income guarantee; ensure Island-wide access to high speed internet; develop a robust plan for and increase investments in childcare; and support population growth through immigration to PEI.

Public Feedback

The Premier's Council for Recovery and Growth invited the public to submit feedback to guide their work in developing a plan to move the province forward in the coming months and years. Over 150 web, email, social media and MLA responses were received which included over 800 recommendations.

Common themes that emerged from public submissions received by the Council included business, education, environment, COVID-19 restrictions and enforcement, renewable energy, employment & training, communities and agriculture.

The most frequently cited recommendations found within the public submissions were to implement a form of basic income guarantee; develop a plan to safely and responsibly open up to Canadian domestic travel; create an Island-wide transportation network; increase research and development in innovative agriculture and food systems on PEI; and implement further programs to support small businesses through the pandemic.

MLA Feedback

Members of the Legislative Assembly were invited to submit feedback to the Council as an opportunity to highlight concerns and recommendations that are being raised by constituents and stakeholders in their districts. A total of 11 extensive submissions were received from all three parties.

Common themes that emerged from submissions by Members of the Legislative Assembly included education, health care, housing, internet, gender and diversity, social programs and a basic income guarantee.

The most frequently cited recommendations by Members of the Legislative Assembly were to improve internet connectivity; restore and expand mental health and addictions services; implement a form of basic income guarantee; increase investment into early childhood education and childcare; and ensure affordable accessible housing development is a priority.

Recommendations

In total, over 1,100 ideas were considered in the development of the guiding directions and key actions contained within this report. The Council ultimately identified recommendations that fall within four areas:

- **People:**
Putting people first and investing in the foundation from which our recovery and growth depends the most.
- **Connectivity:**
Bringing Islanders together through community, technology and infrastructure.
- **Resiliency:**
Encouraging and building resiliency that will see us through future uncertainties, including climate change.
- **Innovation:**
Enriching an environment that supports new ideas and growth.

These recommendations set forward a bold vision for Prince Edward Island's Recovery and Growth.

A full summary of recommendations and bold ideas received from the public and Members of the Legislative Assembly can be found online at www.renewpei.ca.

RECOMMENDATIONS

PEOPLE

The thoughts, ideas, experiences and recommendations driving the directions put forward by the Premier's Council for Recovery and Growth start with people. Islanders are the foundation for all of our current and future success, and there is a need to strengthen this foundation by nurturing, supporting and investing in areas like lifelong learning, health care and social supports that put Islanders first.

Guiding Directions

- *Develop a vision for learning in PEI supported by a set of measurement tools to measure success, ensure accountability and set clear expectations of learners and educators.*
- *Raise the level of ambition for all learners to foster curiosity, innovation, creativity, adaptability and resilience needed to thrive in a global future.*
- *Focus on providing the best education system in Canada, beginning at birth, through early childhood education and public education onward, making PEI an attractive destination for families.*
- *Focus on providing the best health care system in Canada to make PEI an attractive location for individuals and families.*
- *Support the development and implementation of technology for health care settings.*
- *Increase access to health care including through expanded telehealth services.*
- *Continue to support immigration and population growth that is essential to recovery and growth.*
- *Broaden and deepen the collaboration between K-12, post-secondary, community and industry.*
- *Determine skills needs of the future and the outcomes we require from future graduates and implement an*

upstream approach to achieving these outcomes.

- *Ensure a safety net and a form of basic income is available for all Islanders, including independent workers.*

Key Actions

- Build awareness in Grades 10-12 around non-traditional career opportunities and innovative fields through experiential learning and partnerships with key sectors.
- Increase investment in early childhood education and child care.
- Restructure skills training opportunities to better reflect the needs of a modern workforce.
- Offer online health services where appropriate.
- Advance efforts in online patient access to medical records for enhanced service.
- Examine livable income options including wage increases, increases to the basic personal amount and a form of basic income guarantee to ensure all Islanders are able to meet their needs.

- Conduct a significant analysis of current curriculum and ensure consistent implementation.
- Enhance short-term and long-term recruitment and training of health and mental health professionals through partnerships with post-secondary institutions and expanded incentives.
- In partnership with mental health experts, launch a population health initiative to offer proven, basic skills for mental health and solidify a common vocabulary around mental health.
- Broaden second language opportunities to include Mi'kmaq and other languages reflecting the diversity of our Island.
- Partner with pharmacies to develop Island-wide access points for telehealth services.
- Raise awareness of psychologically safe workplaces and access to navigational supports for mental wellness and violence prevention.
- Establish measurement criteria and report progress on indicators relating to social determinants of health and poverty.

CONNECTIVITY

Throughout the pandemic, Islanders have come together by staying apart. The need for connection is as important now as it ever was, but our understanding of what it means has expanded. Islanders want to strengthen our connectivity through access to high-speed internet and digital spaces, community infrastructure and programming and transportation linkages. Islanders continue to reflect on what community means to us, and that includes a reflection on reconciliation and a commitment to partner with First Nations and other Indigenous groups to grow economic and social opportunities.

Guiding Directions

- Continue aggressive roll-out of high-speed internet across PEI to connect all Islanders and Island businesses with the digital economy, educational opportunities and connection to loved ones.
- Develop a digital connection strategy that includes digital infrastructure, technology adoption and digital skills development.
- Explore a cross-Island transportation system that includes public transit and active transportation options.
- Partner with First Nations and Indigenous groups to leverage federal funding for infrastructure, renewable energy and sustainable tourism development.
- Work quickly to pivot, align and focus Federal and Provincial recovery and growth efforts, through existing vehicles such as the Atlantic Growth Strategy.
- Support the arts and cultural sector in keeping the fabric of PEI culture and society alive.
- Conduct regular Gender and Diversity Analyses to ensure programs and policies take into consideration the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 on women and diverse

groups.

- Engage with the community sector to develop a long term plan that includes sustainable funding agreements.

Key Actions

- Expand and promote internet access points across PEI with community partners.
- Promote the adoption of technology in different industries, including direct-to-consumer models.
- Create a single digital point of entry to Provincial Government services.
- Increase access to tools such as computers and tablets in order to effectively deliver education and training across PEI.
- Establish, in stages, public transportation routes.

- Build upon existing resources and infrastructure to create and support community hubs for services and activities.
- Continue to consult with community sector to determine needs.
- Create a single PEI Library System that combines public libraries, school libraries and post-secondary libraries with online resources available to all Islanders.
- Support the importance of immigration to all of PEI's communities by exploring immigration streams that complement current and future needs and opportunities, including the new ability for many to work remotely.

RESILIENCY

Over the last year and half, Islanders have shown ingenuity and adaptability in the face of unimaginable challenges; innovating generations-old businesses, cementing support networks, developing new products and seeking new markets. The economic and social response to COVID-19 on Prince Edward Island must be based on resiliency, supporting future planning and effective sector strategies that will help us grow while maintaining what it is that makes our Island special.

Guiding Directions

- *Create an ecosystem that attracts and supports entrepreneurship in PEI, including through mentorship and talent pool development.*
- *Foster an agile and innovative access to capital system that provides the right kind of funding at the right time for optimal business growth and acceleration.*
- *Provide employment-based incentives that build resiliency back into sectors most at-risk of future economic shocks.*
- *Support new and existing resilient sectors.*
- *Develop a road-map to opening the Canadian bubble to ensure businesses are able to plan accordingly.*
- *Support succession planning of Island farms and businesses, including through a review of current tax burdens.*
- *Support and incentivize the retention and growth of native forests and wetlands that can provide carbon sinks and accessible green spaces for public enjoyment.*
- *Encourage the adoption of, and development of resources to help support increased electrification, automation and greening in key primary industries*

Key Actions

- Create opportunities to support local purchasing and procurement.
- Expand funding for organizations to provide enhanced mentorship and support programs for entrepreneurs and aspiring entrepreneurs.
- Expand share purchase tax credit offerings.
- Create opportunities for Islanders to invest locally.
- Invest in re-skilling and upskilling initiatives to get people into new jobs.
- Prepare shovel-ready project plans, in collaboration with municipalities, to take advantage of federal infrastructure funds.
- Support new market development and exploration for Island exports.
- Provide supports to sustain industries that have been hardest hit to see them through 2021, including through strategic planning and sector strategy support.
- Work with the cultural industries to create financing programs through Finance PEI to support further development in the sector.
- Expand existing and establish new incubation infrastructure to drive future growth in resilient sectors.
- Create provincial tax rebates for businesses that establish or expand in PEI and hire Islanders, following the model that helped develop the bioscience and aerospace industries.
- Review and modernize the Liquor Control Act to enable local producers to be more competitive.
- Create higher education opportunities in innovative and resilient fields.
- Develop sector-based strategies that support the emergence of a new sector by fostering an environment for success.

RECOMMENDATIONS

INNOVATION

ELECTRIC
VEHICLE
CHARGING
STATION



Prince Edward Island can be a place that other jurisdictions want to model; a beacon to guide our counterparts into a new economy. Islanders are curious and persistent and these strengths will help us drive our key sectors and emerging industries forward into uncharted territory. From a renewed focus on addressing climate targets, Islanders can be leaders in innovations and technologies that will be sought after globally. Encouraging an ecosystem that supports entrepreneurship, research, development, sustainability and commercialization of big ideas will pay dividends to our future.

Guiding Directions

- Invest in more energy generation on PEI from low and zero emission sources.
- Establish a clean-tech cluster, making PEI a destination for clean-tech education, business operations and destination tourism.
- Establish and achieve more aggressive greenhouse gas emissions targets within the next ten years.
- Invest in value-added product development to capture as much of the entire value chain as possible with PEI products.
- Support post-secondary programs providing research, innovation and a qualified workforce for key industries to help the Island flourish.
- Refresh and modernize Innovation PEI programming to better support research & development, commercialization & product development and business adaptation.
- Expand incentives and infrastructure that support electric transportation.

- Ensure the Government of PEI is aware of and planning appropriately for future technological advances such as self-driving vehicles and smart technologies.

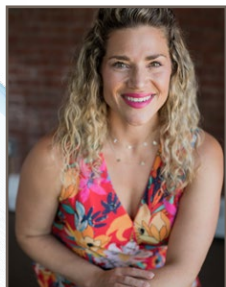
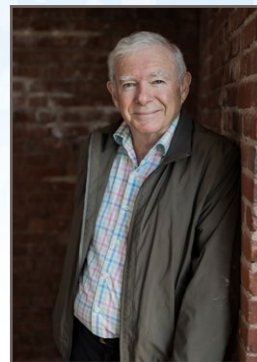
Key Actions

- Develop new building incentives encouraging near or net-zero construction.
- Support skills transfer and development for those affected by current downturn to new areas.
- Invest in electric buses and vehicles for transit and public services.
- Provide rebates to encourage the purchase of new and used electric vehicles by individuals and small businesses until their price is comparable to gasoline powered vehicles.
- Ensure there is appropriate infrastructure in place to support the transition to electric vehicles.

- Work with academic institutions to research additional uses for industrial byproducts.
- Support the development of research-based graduate programs and provide incentives for faculty and researchers in key areas.
- In partnership with existing institutions, including UPEI and Holland College, establish an ecosystem for technology-based entrepreneurship.



Meet the team



SUMMARY REPORT AND GUIDING
DIRECTIONS TO MOVE PRINCE EDWARD
ISLAND FORWARD



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DIRECTIONS TO MOVE PRINCE EDWARD
ISLAND FORWARD



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The Premier's Council for Recovery and Growth includes Islanders from various backgrounds and organizations who will work with Islanders and organizations of Prince Edward Island to create a plan to harness growth and build opportunity.

Sector Champions Contributors

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