



STRATEGIC PLAN (2023-2026)



Managing Today for Tomorrow

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THE ORGANIZATION

Truro & Colchester Chamber of Commerce is a not-for-profit, non-government, volunteer-governed organization representing the business community of Truro and Colchester County. The organization was established in 1890, as the Truro Board of Trade with 37 charter members. The Chamber is a membership-based organization, where dues from members provide sustainable revenue. Fundraising events, special projects and commission from member insurance programs top up the revenue sources.

Membership has continually grown over the years, reporting a 94% retention rate among members in recent years. The Chamber hit a milestone in 2022, exceeding 500 members. Year-end reports noted 517 members, a 22% increase from the previous year. Interestingly enough, 75% of the membership base employs 10 people or less, a true representation of a small-business community. The Truro & Colchester Chamber is the second largest Chamber in the province, second only to Halifax Chamber of Commerce.

The Truro & Colchester Chamber of Commerce has been the principal voice of the business community in this region for 133 years on matters of economic, political and social importance. The Chamber is also a member of the Atlantic and Canadian Chambers, collaborating with both of these organizations in policy debates and seeking better conditions for businesses. The current strategic planning cycle concluded in 2023 and the Chamber has now embarked on another strategic planning exercise. A steering committee consisting of Matthew Mossman, Eric Tanton, Christian Thompson, and Sherry Martell worked with Consultant Yvonne Thyssen-Post of Thyagrissen Consulting Limited in creating this strategic plan.

The organization operates through a volunteer Board of Directors, elected by the membership, and is responsible for developing policy and strategic direction. The composition of the Board of Directors at the time of the compiling the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan is as follows:

- President: Eric Tanton, Scotia Wealth Management
- Past-President: Matthew Mossman, Bell Media
- 1st Vice-President: Kim Boomer, LIBCAN
- Treasurer: Cyndi MacLean, MacQuarries
- Solicitor: Jennifer Hamilton Upham, Patterson Law
- Directors:

- Carole Fisher, Ditch Doctor
- Vonda Hazzard, NovelTea Coffeehouse, Bakery, Bookstore & Gifts
- Kenisha McMaster, Kenisha's Cleaning Company
- Doug MacInnes, Wilson's Heating
- Heidi Sponagle, Inn on Prince Hotel & Conference Centre
- Jeremy Nichols, Commercial Safety College
- Glen MacKenzie, AEL Millwright Services
- Christian Thompson, Truro Nissan

Chamber staff carry-out the day-to-day operations of the organization. Current staff listing is as follows:

- Sherry Martell, Executive Director
- Lisa Matthews, Office & Membership Coordinator
- Chelsea Weatherbee, Events & Special Project Coordinator

THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The Chamber last revised its strategic plan in 2021. It spanned a period of three years, 2021-2023. At that time, extensive efforts were directed to securing input from the membership. Therefore, it was decided, for the next strategic plan (2023-2026), member input would be secured using an on-line survey plus personal consult with a sample of the membership. The staff of the Chamber also agreed to do as much of the leg work as possible to keep costs down in hiring an outside consultant to facilitate the process. Yvonne Thyssen-Post, P.Ag. of Thyagrissen Consulting Limited was hired as the strategic planning facilitator. She worked with a steering committee comprised of Sherry Martell, Executive Director; Matthew Mossman, President; Eric Tanton, Vice President, and Christian Thompson, Director.

Member input into the 'next' strategic plan began at the 2022 AGM where surveys were distributed to participants seeking their opinions. In February 2023, the strategic planning process was formally initiated with an on-line survey to conduct a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis with the membership. Members were asked to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Chamber organization, as well as opportunities and threats they see affecting the future success of their businesses. Thirty-two members responded to the survey. The responses were collected, compiled and summarized by Chamber staff. Additional input was sought by Chamber staff connecting through telephone conversations and in-person discussions with over 100 individuals. A summary of the findings was presented to the steering committee for review and further input.

Staff facilitated a session with the Board of Directors on February 27. The Board considered the summary findings and reviewed the existing strategic plan, noting where changes were necessary. Notes from this session were shared with the facilitator by Chamber staff in a meeting held on March 27. The information from the SWOT analysis provides the foundation for the development of the strategic plan. The facilitator drafted the strategic plan based on these findings and direction. A draft of the plan went through several stages of review/revision before being presented to the steering committee on May 3 and the Board on May 10.

Staff will develop detailed work plans for each of the strategic priorities identified. The tactics used to address each priority will be reflective of the resources available and circumstances at the time the work plan is developed. Going forward the Board will review the strategic plan annually and whenever a major change occurs either within the organization or the business

environment. Staying in tune with the needs of the members and the business industry is an absolute necessity such that the strategic priorities is adjusted as needs change.

WHO WE SERVE

The Truro & Colchester Chamber of Commerce serves their members. As noted in the by-laws of the organization, membership is open to ‘any reputable person, associations, corporations, societies, partnerships, or estates directly or indirectly engaged or interested in trade, commerce or the economic and social welfare of the Region’.

VISION STATEMENT

Our Vision: A collaborative, diverse and prosperous business community.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our Mission: To be the collective voice of the business community, actively engaging with members to address their needs for business growth and prosperity.

CORE VALUES

The **core values** are the guiding principles that shape behavior and action of the organization and its representatives. They anchor every aspect of the organization in a set of commonly-held beliefs and commitments. The core values of the Chamber include:

- Accountability
- Integrity
- Transparency
- Professionalism
- Inclusiveness

OUR COMMITMENT TO MEMBERSHIP

Our core values are demonstrated in our commitment to our membership embodied through these principles.

1. Professional Connectors - we drive connections between people, businesses, governments and communities to create the maximum benefit for the economy of Truro and Colchester County.
2. Leaders in Advocacy – in influencing policy/regulation, we take a consistent approach to being champions for positive change to address the challenges and opportunities our members are facing every day.
3. Responsive & timely – we consistently act in the best interests of our collective membership, providing services that meet their business growth needs when they need it.
4. Accountable to members – our responsibility is to our members first, all others second. In our strategic planning, operations, and financial management, our members will be engaged and informed.

5. Authoritative voice for all of Colchester County – we are the only county-wide business organization that is membership driven, so our actions will reflect the authority and integrity of our broad membership base.

6. Impactful and inclusive – we are dedicated to growing our membership through strategies such as delivering return on investment, ensuring broad sectoral and cultural representation at the board level and in our membership, and providing responsive advocacy and programs to ensure that we are a leader in creating conditions for growth.

CORE FUNCTIONS

As a not-for-profit organization TCCC serves its members, which includes businesses and non-profit organizations of Truro and Colchester County.

The Chamber fulfills its mission, and attains the vision through the following core functions:

- ✿ Advocacy – the voice for businesses
 - To all levels of government to instill policies, programs and support that are beneficial in helping businesses grow and flourish;
 - To the greater community to support local businesses
 - To other stakeholders to work collaboratively to provide the infrastructure, programs and services to attract and support businesses and employees.

- ✿ Building Membership Value
 - Develop programs /incentives for members to belong and benefit
 - Promote value of businesses to community; promote businesses to the community; members to other members
 - Valuable source of information and resources for business

- ✿ Stakeholder Engagement
 - Work with members, business commodity, organizations, associations, and groups to ensure beneficial programs and services are available for business growth and development.
 - Collaborate with government, organizations to ensure Truro and Colchester area is an appealing location for businesses and employees.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Strategic Priorities are primacies specifically related to serving the membership. They are best uncovered by understanding what the organization needs to focus on and pay attention to, in order to achieve its mission and vision.

The strategic priorities identified are as follows in order of priority as identified by the Board of Directors:

- Creating Conditions for Economic Growth
- Value in Membership
- Communications & Marketing

TACTICS TO ADDRESS STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

A list of the tactics developed to best address each strategic priority area is presented in Table 1. It is important to acknowledge that consideration must be given to the resources (both personnel and funds) required to implement the tactics. Both are currently limited and so the reason for prioritizing.

Table 1: Strategic Priorities for TCCC and Specific Tactics

Strategic Priority	Specific Tactics
Creating Conditions for Economic Growth	Advocate to all levels of government to influence public policy, seek financial support, programming and improved conditions to help businesses establish and grow.
	Collaborate with government & other organizations to attract & retain qualified employees to the area.
	Collaborate & coordinate with other key community stakeholders to create a pro-business climate with quality services, programs and housing to attract businesses and employees.
Value in Membership	In-person engagement with various industry sectors, business sizes and not-for profit organizations to identify common issues/needs and build appropriate membership benefits/programming.
	Create different opportunities for businesses to connect, to learn and to collaborate on initiatives.
	Engage with members, non-members, and past members to discover needs/issues and missed opportunities
	Continue to be a source of relevant and essential information for businesses.

Communications & Marketing	Recruitment plan to enhance diversity in representation on the Board of Directors in terms of members, business sector and business size.
	Recruitment plan to increase membership to be all-inclusive of the community, including newcomer, immigrant, indigenous, small business and younger organization/business.
	Expand awareness of the Chamber by increasing opportunities to connect and collaborate with other community stakeholders
	Expand approaches to promoting the Chamber and benefits of membership.
	Develop a communications mix that is consistent across all media channels and appropriate for various business types/sizes.