



# INTEGRATED CAPE BRETON-UNAMA'KI ECONOMIC & POPULATION GROWTH STRATEGY DISCUSSION PAPER





## LOOKING FORWARD



The landscape of Cape Breton-Unama'ki is changing. Innovative new businesses are appearing across the Island, the international student population is growing at unprecedented rates, and traditional industries such as seafood and tourism are providing renewed growth. There is a sense of optimism in the air.

With Cape Breton-Unama'ki now home to new people, new projects, and new experiences, there is a need for more. Cape Breton-Unama'ki deserves better. Our population is declining, our tax rates are higher than other regions of the country, our young people are continuing to move to find employment and there are tremendous barriers for underrepresented groups that prevent them from achieving their goals.

To overcome these challenges, everyone must work together.

The Cape Breton Partnership is leading the development of a new integrated **Cape Breton-Unama'ki Economic and Population Growth Strategy** to help our region work together to grow Cape Breton-Unama'ki. For the first time in Cape Breton's history, we have all municipal units and First Nation communities coming together to support regional economic development initiatives through the Regional Enterprise Network model.

It is time to grow this opportunity and chart a course for this Creative Island.

This strategy cannot be a report that sits on a shelf. It must be inclusive, it must have goals and most importantly, it must be a vision for Cape Breton-Unama'ki that all communities support.

This strategy will shape what we believe is a bright economic future for Cape Breton-Unama'ki.

It is our hope that this broader strategy becomes one that will generate the more in-depth economic development strategies and goals of specific regions across all sectors on the Island.

Support from the public and private sector, including the municipal units and First Nation communities will be a crucial component to a successful strategy going forward.



## CURRENT CHALLENGES

Declining population

Driving inclusive growth

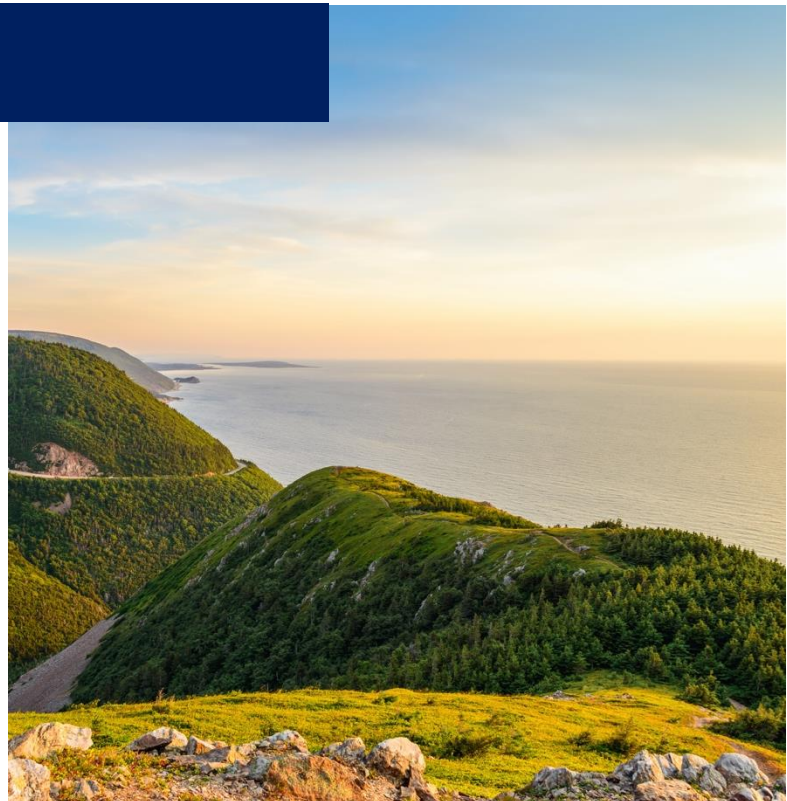
Technological changes

Global competition

## WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO?

With your input we will create a new inclusive **Cape Breton-Unama'ki Economic and Population Growth Strategy** to guide the Island over the next three to five years. This strategy will:

1. Be adaptable to all rural, urban and First Nation communities on the Island while respecting the differences that exist.
2. Enhance the Island's resiliency to address the challenges we face; and
3. Position the Island to thrive in the future through an evolving and responsive process informed by creativity, hard work, and adaptability.



## WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO?

The new strategy will build on the work that has been done across the Island over the past several years. The primary goal is to:

*Support inclusive economic growth in Cape Breton·Unama'ki based on collaboration, economic diversification, inclusive innovation-driven entrepreneurship, and talent attraction and retention.*

The new plan will bring together stakeholders, rights-based holders, and partners to work towards a thriving and prosperous Cape Breton·Unama'ki.



## WE WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT...

**Driving inclusive growth** – urban, rural, Mi'kmaw, and newcomers – that is distributed fairly across society, creating opportunities for all.

**Cluster development while revitalizing foundation industries** to grow critical mass, strengthen capacity, and leverage our advantages in key sectors, while ensuring sustainability in the fishery, agriculture, and forestry sectors.

**Supporting entrepreneurship**, high-growth start-ups, small businesses, and social enterprises while nurturing the innovation ecosystem and taking advantage of technological change.

**Addressing infrastructure gaps** in areas such as transportation, cellular service, and broadband.

**Leveraging major capital projects** to optimize islandwide advantage.

**Addressing labour shortages and skills gaps** that are impacting economic growth. This includes upskilling underemployed and disadvantaged groups, talent attraction, and helping mid-career and older workers whose jobs may be threatened; and

**Reversing population decline.** Although there is much happening on this front, there is more to be done.

## WHAT WILL BE DIFFERENT ABOUT THIS STRATEGY?

For the first time in our history, we have municipal units and First Nation communities coming together to support regional economic development initiatives through the Regional Enterprise Network model. The time has never been better to come together to create a strategy that benefits the entire Island.

The outreach and engagement process is made up of the following:



A series of meetings with key stakeholders and rights-based holders;

A survey for businesses and communities;

An online hub on the Cape Breton Partnership website and social media presence via Cape Breton Partnership channels;

This Economic and Population Growth Discussion Paper; and

A culturally specific outreach and engagement plan for First Nation communities across the Island.

This outreach and engagement will ensure the strategy reflects a wide range of stories, perspectives, and solutions from the Island.



## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

*The strategy's success will depend on a diverse and broad range of ideas and perspectives from Cape Bretoners. Your input is essential.*



## OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

### SHARING YOUR INSIGHTS

We want to hear from as many Cape Bretoners as possible.

**Take the survey:**

<https://www.research.net/r/CapeBretonUnamakiGrowth>

**Share your additional insights through:**

[growcb@capebretonpartnership.com](mailto:growcb@capebretonpartnership.com)



## KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

You are invited to offer your comments on any aspect of the proposed **Cape Breton·Unama'ki Economic and Population Growth Strategy**. In particular:



Do you agree that the areas of focus being examined in the proposed new strategy are the right ones (see page 4)? Are there issues of importance to you that are not included?



What do you see as the most important issues for the Island's economy and population growth? Why?



What do you think of the overall goal of the integrated strategy to *“Support inclusive economic growth in Cape Breton·Unama'ki based on collaboration, economic diversification, inclusive innovation-driven entrepreneurship, and talent attraction and retention.”*



Is this the right goal for Cape Breton-Unama'ki at this time? Why or why not?



How do we make the plan more relevant for the Island's diverse communities?



What is the most important outcome of this integrated strategy? Why?



Are there leading practices that have been developed in Nova Scotia or elsewhere that you think should be incorporated into the new strategy?



Anything else?