

EXPERIENCES DES
COMMUNAUTÉS NOIRES
ENGAGÉES DANS
LA PLANIFICATION
AU CANADA



BLACK
EXPERIENCES
WITH PLANNING
IN CANADA

ROAD TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

COMMUNITY-LED PLANNING, POLICY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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ABOUT THIS BOOKLET

This booklet is part of a tri-series of case studies showcasing the planning work of three Canadian Black-led organizations operating in cities with the largest Black presence in the country —Blackhurst Cultural Centre (Toronto), Maison d’Haïti (Montreal), and the African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity (Halifax). The series is one of the outputs of Black Experiences with Planning in Canada (BEPIC). BEPIC is a community-led research project conceptualized and led by the Black Planning Project in collaboration with the School of Urban and Regional Planning at Toronto Metropolitan University (2022-2026), which sought to centre the knowledge and lived experiences of Black communities with/in/against planning across Canada.

This booklet tells the story of Road to Economic Prosperity (REP). It explores in detail the history and work of the organization, building on the testimonies of Black individuals to highlight the organization’s diverse experiences. It documents the planning-related work and approaches of REP and identifies key planning insights from community-led initiatives.

The case study provides concrete examples that illustrate how Black-led organizations address planning priorities affecting Black communities, how their engagement with planning and/ or planning-related work differs from mainstream planning, and what it means to work with Black communities in a way that is informed by Black experiences.

This documentation stems from the recognition that significant gaps exist in planning theory and practice within the Canadian context on how to plan with Black communities. Planning history in Canada is rooted in systemic anti-Black racism, which manifests up to this day in a lack of adequate infrastructure and service provision, discriminatory planning practices, and the displacement and erasure of Black communities, among others. In the face of this, Black communities across the country have long built from their own assets to lead important planning and community-building work. Drawing from community knowledge and cultural practice, they continue to create and sustain spaces of Black identity and belonging, provide culturally relevant services and programming, and develop community engagement and decision-making approaches that advance planning work.

The learnings from this and other case studies have informed the development of Black-informed, Black-centred, and community-based planning tools and resources. We hope these tools will serve Black organizations and professional planners striving to support more inclusive and equitable planning outcomes in Black communities.

ABOUT BEPIC

The Black Experiences with Planning in Canada (BEPIC) project was co-directed by the Black Planning Project and the School of Urban and Regional Planning at Toronto Metropolitan University. Between 2022-2026, BEPIC collaborated with community partners in Toronto, Halifax, and Montreal in order to [I] explore and document the experiences of Black communities and practitioners with/in/against planning; [II] create a framework for community-based, Black-centered, Black-informed planning practices; and [III] pilot framework with Black individuals doing planning work/in historically or predominantly Black communities. Through interviews, focus groups, surveys, and participation in community activities, BEPIC engaged more than 100 individuals – including members of Black-led organizations leading planning work, Black and non-Black planning practitioners, community members, and scholars. Building on the planning work already led by Black individuals, community organizations, planners and other practitioners committed to racial justice, BEPIC's ultimate goal was to visibilize and promote planning practices responsive to the aspirations and needs of Black communities.

The project stems from the recognition that significant gaps exist in planning theory and practice within the Canadian context on how to plan with Black communities. Planning history in Canada is rooted in systemic anti-Black racism, which manifests up to this day in a lack of adequate infrastructure and service provision, discriminatory planning practices, and the displacement and erasure of Black communities, among others. In the face of this, Black communities across

the country have long built from their own assets to lead important planning and community-building work, even when these practices are not recognized as such. Drawing from community knowledge and cultural practices, they continue to create and sustain spaces of Black identity, wellbeing, and belonging under conditions of constraint, providing culturally relevant services and programming, and developing community engagement and decision-making approaches that advance planning work responsive to their community needs.

Exploring and documenting Black planning practices in Canada is a vital step in addressing deep-rooted gaps in practice and education, and in identifying new approaches to planning practice that emerge from and are responsive to Black communities. The organizations presented in this tri-series represent a diversity of settlement histories, lived experiences, ethnicities, and languages, capturing a wide view of Black experiences within planning in Canada. Together, these case studies challenge dominant narratives that have historically excluded Black people, and center Black knowledge and priorities in addressing ongoing anti-Black racism within planning systems. In doing so, they also expand how Black planning is understood and practiced in Canada.

From organizing land and providing housing, to sustaining cultural and social infrastructures, confronting displacement, and creating spaces of belonging, Black planning can be seen both as a tradition of community-led practices that sustain Black life and as an approach that explicitly advances the planning visions and needs of Black communities.

1. The project understands Black communities and geographic locations as those where a higher proportion of the population is Black compared to other local areas and/or where there has been a historical Black population. Black individuals as those with Black African origin or descent, and those who identify as such. Terms such as African Nova Scotian, Black Canadian, Afro-Caribbean, African American, and Afro-Latinx reflect the plurality of Black populations in Canada.

INTRODUCTION

Road to Economic Prosperity (REP) is a Halifax-based nonprofit organization tackling social and economic barriers impacting African Nova Scotians. This is primarily accomplished through strategic planning, policy development, community engagement, and capacity building. By adopting Afrocentric values and processes, REP has achieved positive outcomes regarding land and infrastructure development, heritage preservation, and increased participation of ANS communities in planning their communities. REP strategically aligns itself with partners to develop formalized processes to advance planning that centres the needs of the ANS community. A key aspect of REP's approach is Community Action Planning which involves communities working together to develop plans that address their unique challenges by equipping local community members with skills and knowledge to plan a better future.¹

The research explores and documents the experiences of REP as an organization working with/in/against planning and how this may inform the development of a

Black Planning framework for community-based, Black-centred, and Black-informed planning practices. This case study is the outcome of research over two years, from 2023 to 2025 in partnership with REP.

Drawing upon focus groups, interviews, and document reviews, this case study contextualizes historical events impacting African Nova Scotians and details REP's response to socio-economic challenges that Black communities in Nova Scotia face. The REP case study demonstrates the importance of community action planning, and details how organizations can respond to community needs by effectively and strategically mobilizing resources.

By amplifying REP's work we aim to provide planning students, practitioners and other stakeholders with tangible examples of how Black Planning can be operationalized, securing a better future for Black communities.

Road to Economic Prosperity (credit: Dr. Magdalena Ugarte)



Shelburne
1. Shelburne
2. Birchtown

Yarmouth
3. Yarmouth
4. Greenville

Digby
5. Southville
6. Danvers
7. Hassett
8. Weymouth Falls
9. Jordantown
10. Conway
11. Acaciaville
12. Digby

Annapolis
13. Lequille
14. Granville Ferry
15. Inglewood (Bridgetown)
16. Middleton

Kings
17. Cambridge
18. Gibson Woods
19. Aldershot
20. Kentville

Hants
21. Five mile Plains

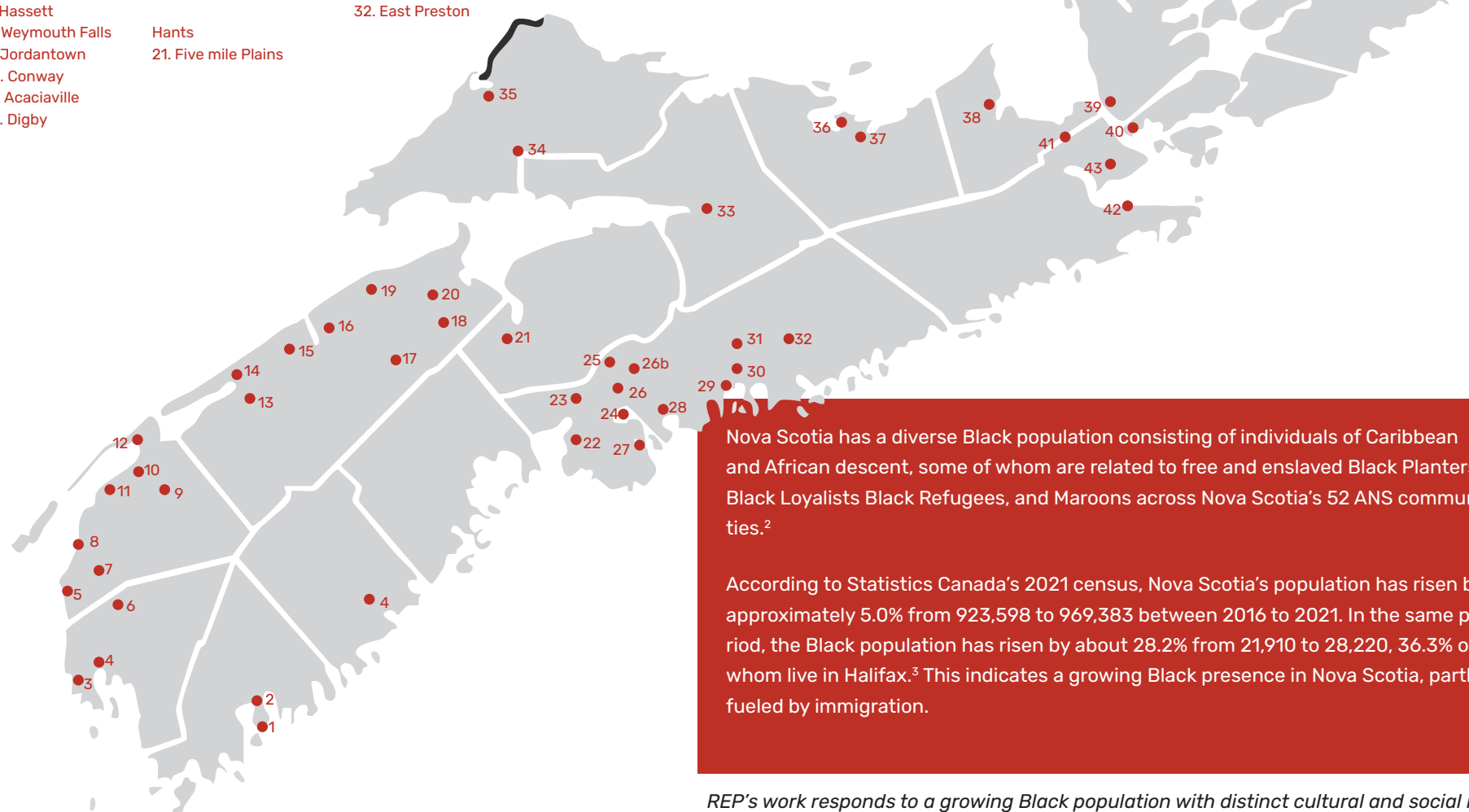
Halifax
22. Beechville
23. Hammonds Plains
24. Africville
25. Lucasville
26. Cobequid Road
27. Halifax
28. Dartmouth
29. Lake Loon
30. Cherry Brook
31. North Preston
32. East Preston

Colchester
33. Truro
Cumberland
34. Springhill
35. Amherst
Picton
36. Trenton
37. New Glasgow

Antigonish
38. Antigonish
39. Monastery
Guyborough
40. Mulgrave
41. Upper Big Tracadie
42. Lincolnville
43. Sunnyville

Cape Breton
44. North Sydney
45. Sydney
46. New Waterford
47. Glace Bay

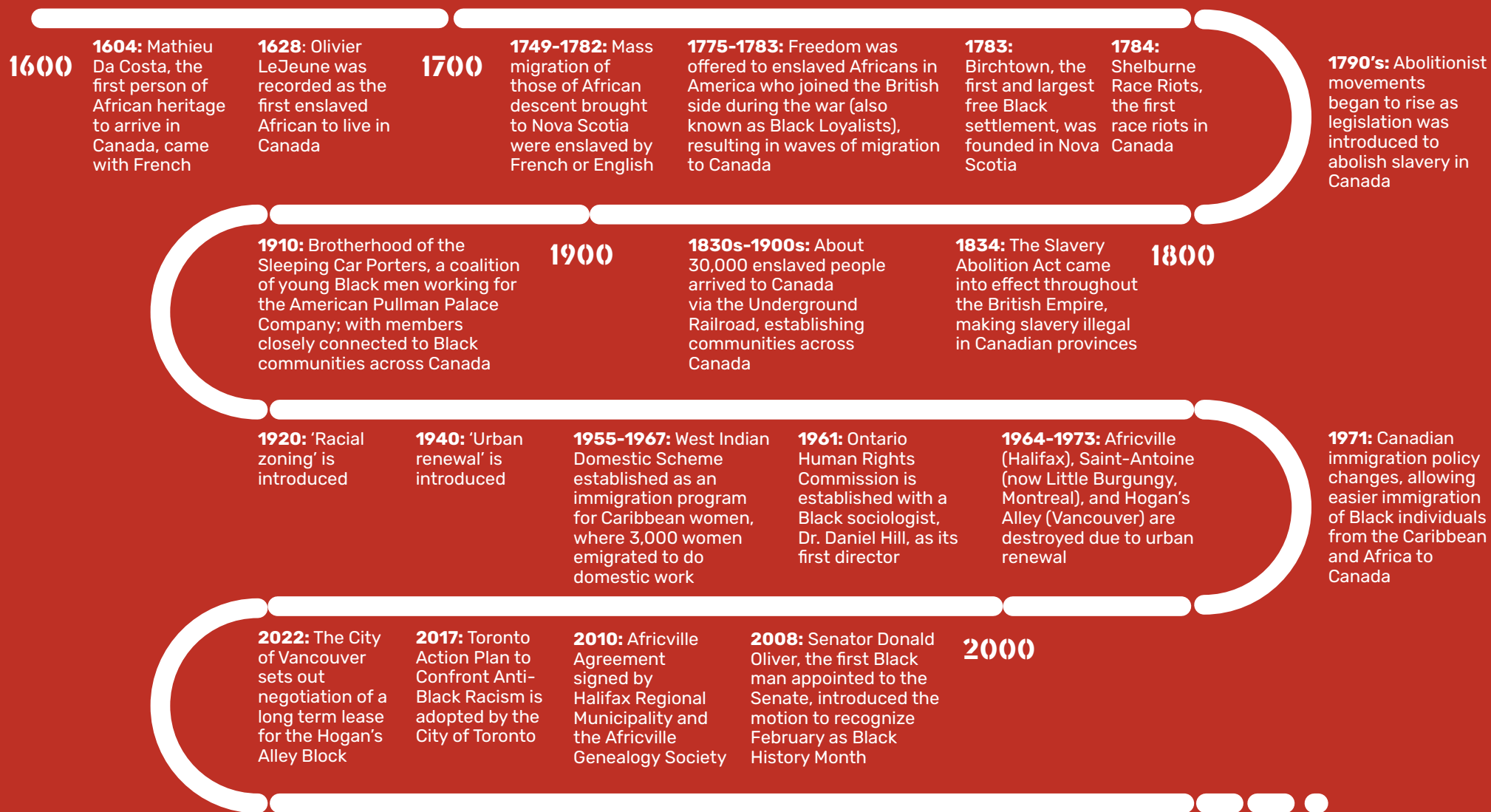
Queens
48. Liverpool



REP's work responds to a growing Black population with distinct cultural and social needs.

SNAPSHOT OF BLACK HISTORY IN CANADA

CANADA HAS A RICH HISTORY OF BLACK PRESENCE. AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIAN HISTORIES ARE EMBEDDED IN THAT TIMELINE.



HISTORIC CONTEXT

THE ANS AND BLACK COMMUNITY IN NOVA SCOTIA

EARLY SETTLEMENT

People of African descent have a long history in Nova Scotia and have long called this province home, contributing to its fabric. With a presence going back to the 1600s, Nova Scotia can be seen as the birth place of Black Canada. However, settlement has not been without challenge.

Slavery and immigration influenced Nova Scotia's early history, impacting both the Mi'kmaq, whose presence dates back 10,000 years, and the Black population, who were brought to Nova Scotia involuntarily. Slavery in Nova Scotia dates back to the Acadian period (1604 to 1755), with the earliest recorded Black settlement of about 200 enslaved Black individuals in the French Fortress of Louisbourg, Cape Breton, dating to the early 1700s.⁴ More Black individuals arrived as farmers who replaced the Acadians after their deportation in 1755. Subsequently, 3,000 Black Loyalists fled the American Revolution to the Maritimes (Nova Scotia and New Brunswick) between 1782 and 1785. Although officially free from slavery, the residues of the institution persisted. Black Loyalists endured mistreatment and unkept promises from the government, receiving inadequate and unfair land compensation, including unclear land titles for their service to the Crown.⁵ As a result of this mistreatment, around 1,196 Black Loyalists left for Sierra Leone, West Africa, in protest, followed by 700 Maroons.^{6,7}



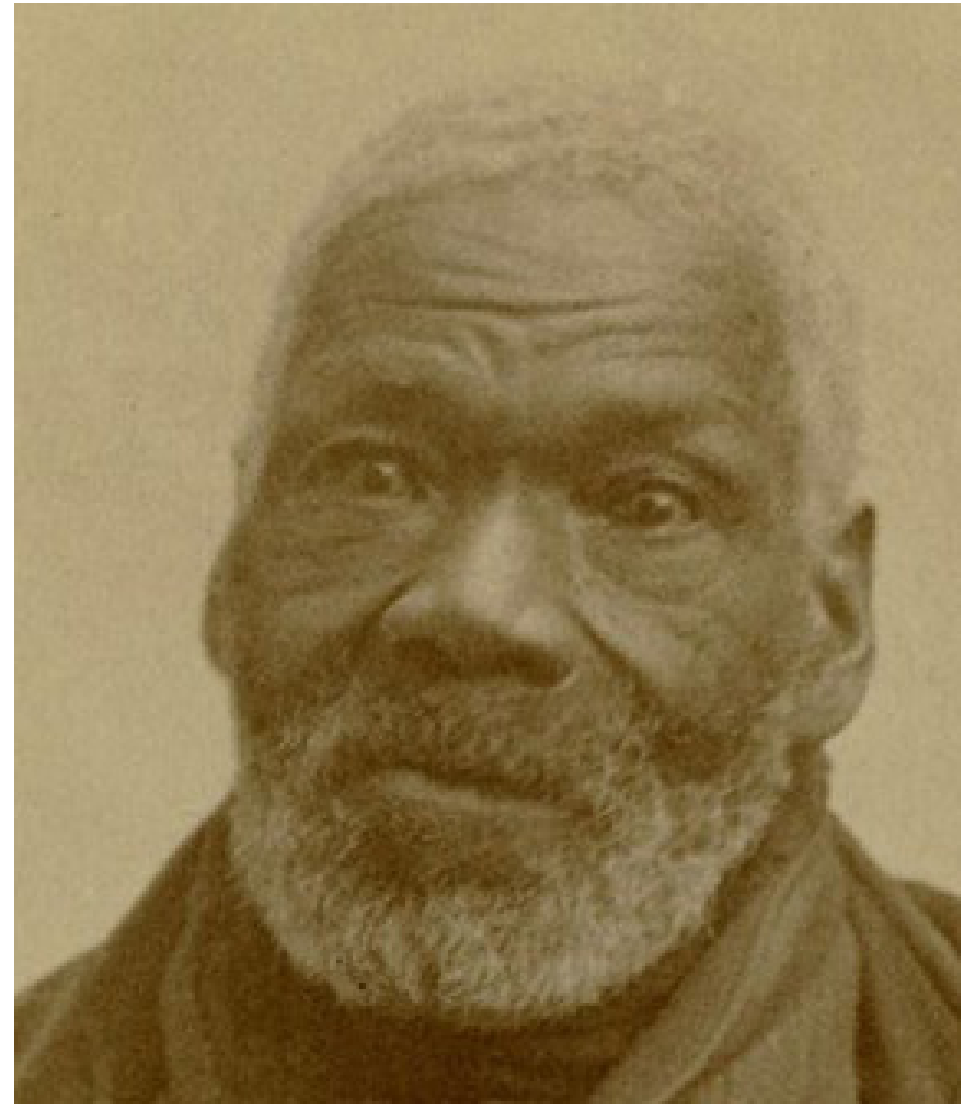
Robert Petley (1835), Library and Archives Canada (C-115424)

NINETEENTH CENTURY: WAR OF 1812 AND INSTITUTIONAL DISCRIMINATION

Despite their contributions towards Nova Scotia's establishment, African Nova Scotians endured centuries of racism and systemic barriers that deterred their advancement. Black Refugees also influenced Nova Scotia's rising Black population. During the War of 1812, Black American refugees fought alongside the British army against the United States for freedom.^{8,9} Many arrived on British ships, settling in Preston, Hammonds Plains, Beechville, and other regions across Nova Scotia. Around this period, the British colony of Nova Scotia contained a diverse population of Americans, Europeans, and people of African descent (ibid.).

In the 19th Century, Black Canadians faced legalized discrimination in educational and employment opportunities. ANS students experienced school segregation in part by local trustees who altered boundaries, forcing youth into racially segregated schools after the passing of Section XIX of the Common School/Separate Schools Act in 1850.^{10,11} Postsecondary institutions worsened the divide by limiting access to certain programs such as physician and nursing programs. Between 1911 and 1931, Dalhousie University restricted Black individuals from entering its medical program.¹²

Even with narrowing educational gaps in recent years, African Nova Scotians still face economic barriers where those with a university degree or higher make only 79.2% of the income of the average Nova Scotian with the same credentials.¹³rep 2024a. It is in these conditions that REP emerges in response to the historic and systemic racism and discrimination that impacted (and continues to impact) the lives of African Nova Scotians across many generations.



Gabriel Hall's photo is the only surviving photograph of a Black American who sought freedom with the British during the War of 1812

source: <https://www.nps.gov/>

WHERE EVERYTHING BEGAN

REP'S ORIGIN STORY

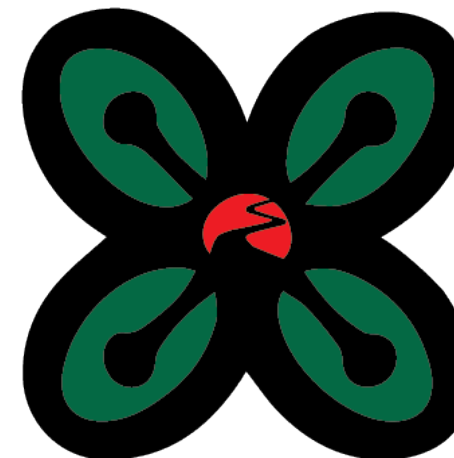
In September 2018, one of the largest ANS community consultation events was held. The *Road to Economic Prosperity: A Gathering of African Nova Scotian Communities and Neighbourhoods* gave rise to the Road to Economic Prosperity Advisory Council (REPAC), now REP, which is responsible for developing the Road to Economic Prosperity Plan. This plan received approval from Halifax Regional Council on September 22, 2020.¹⁴

The strategic priorities of the Council-approved plan included: 1) capacity building, 2) establishing land ownership and infrastructure for investment, and 3) increasing participation and opportunities.¹⁵ The plan upheld the value of self-determination, it was proudly “By Us, For Us and With Us” – ‘us’ meaning African Nova Scotians, and incorporated Afrocentric principles in its making.¹⁶ During consultations, land ownership and land use became key issues voiced by ANS communities, reflective of the importance of land ownership in establishing a sense of place for African Nova Scotians.

REP's work is informed by Afrocentric values and incorporates community economic development levers as part of their community-centred approach to strategic and social planning. Trust, diversity, unity, and transparency are emblematic of Afrocentric values, in addition to the Nguzo Saba (Seven Principles): Unity (Umoja), Self-Determination (Kujichagulia), Collective Work and Responsibility (Ujima), Cooperative Economics (Ujamaa), Purpose (Nia), Creativity (Kuumba), Faith (Imani). These Afrocentric values reinforce the cultural heritage for people of African descent.¹⁷

In a meeting with the Executive Director for REP, Carolann explains the action plan's logo, the Bese Saka, as a reflection of the Nguzo Saba Principles representing “wealth and prosperity,” key aspirational goals held by ANS communities. But more specifically, in her opinion, Afrocentric values reflect “how people are treated in [the] process” and the importance of having “a variety of opinions in the room.” Although economic development is important, REP strives to encourage community members to lead through community action planning, emblematic of the Afrocentric principles guiding REP's work.

REP'S ACTION PLAN LOGO, THE BESE SAKA, REPRESENTS “WEALTH AND PROSPERITY,” AS ASPIRATION GOALS HELD BY ANS COMMUNITIES



THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE STORY



CAROLANN WRIGHT, DIRECTOR

"I WAS BORN AND RAISED IN BEECHVILLE, AN EXAMPLE OF PERSEVERANCE AND WHAT IT MEANS TO THRIVE. YOU KNOW ALL OF THOSE THINGS ARE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT... I THINK THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE."¹⁸

REP's work is informed by the lived and situated experiences of its leadership. Carolann Wright, the Director of Capacity Building and Community Initiatives, African Nova Scotian Communities with Halifax Partnership, describes herself as a "child of the village." As a native African Nova Scotian and a long-term Beechville resident, she is deeply connected to ANS history, actively involved with REP, and the communities the organization serves. In a collective interview, Carolann stressed that her connection to Beechville and her ties to Canadian Black Activists have inspired her engagement while sustaining her through challenging times. Carolann holds over 30 years of experience in economic development, community facilitation, and mediation.¹⁹

Similarly, Jenée Jarvis, the Governance & Capacity Building Liaison within the Capacity Building and Strategic Initiatives team at the REP, is an active member of the Beechville Community Development Association (Halifax Partnership). Jenée recognizes the great elders of African Nova Scotian communities and values insights into learning about her ancestral origins.

By immersing themselves in the history of the community and engaging with elders and knowledge keepers, Carolann and Jenée have solidified their connection to Beechville and other communities in Nova Scotia. Carolann mentions the importance of learning from history to avoid repeating past mistakes, and she sees the necessity of preserving ANS settlements like Beechville to provide educational opportunities for students and future planners to learn.

Both Carolann and Jenée have drawn inspiration from Canadian Civil Rights organizations such as the Black United Front (BUF), finding parallels between REP and BUF. BUF was formed on November 30, 1968, in Halifax and was a community resource agency for Black communities in Nova Scotia.²⁰ Similar to REP, BUF engaged in planning and community activism by promoting youth employment and the collection of race-based demographic data to inform justice for African Nova Scotians (GRASP, 1972).²¹ Together, the lived and professional experiences of REP's leadership team have influenced and shaped the work of REP.

JENEE JARVIS, Governance & Capacity Building Liaison

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE, VALUES, AND PROCESSES

Today, REP operates alongside the Halifax Partnership, a municipal economic development department, and recently transitioned into an independent organization in April 2026.²² REP tackles the social and economic barriers that hinder the development of African Nova Scotians (ANS) such as income, housing, employment, and education. By aligning themselves with local government departments like Halifax Partnership and HRM, REP strategically strengthens its capacity and recruits staff to work alongside ANS communities.

Responding to the diverse needs of Nova Scotia's 52 ANS Communities, REP created three distinct councils with wide representation to govern the work. The Advisory, Elder, and Youth councils provide specialized expertise necessary for understanding the changing conditions that REP seeks to respond to. The Advisory Council has twenty members whose primary role is to provide leadership and guidance towards implementing the Road to Economic Prosperity Plan. The Elder Council consists of elders who are engaged community members, leaders, and activists who regularly provide knowledge, guidance, and leadership toward maintaining ethical governance. Lastly, the Youth Council, formed in 2022, consists of ten ambassadors actively involved in their communities.²³

Equity and diversity are values that are central to REP's organizational structure. During the African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity Action Plan's Launch, REP's Co-Chair, Irvine Carvery, responded to a question posed by an audience member regarding equity and diversity on REP. He answered by clarifying that equity is shown in REP's governance model through its three Councils, consisting of African Nova Scotians from different ages and genders, to ensure that the work is informed by the diverse lived experiences of the African Nova Scotian community.²⁴ This feedback loop is vital for REP.

Values like trust and self-reliance are important for REP's community-centred approach to planning, anchored by unity. In the words of Carolann:

"[WE] DON'T MOVE UNLESS THE COMMUNITY IS READY TO ENGAGE."²⁵

This is noteworthy because although REP works within local and regional governments such as HRM, their decisions are informed and led by ANS communities. The challenge with this approach is that it requires considerable time and resources to achieve community consensus. It is a slow and incremental process that moves at a different speed to regular municipal processes. Yet, REP remains firmly committed to "moving at the speed of trust", recognizing that this is a substantial, but worthwhile undertaking. Over the years REP's work has significantly influenced municipal processes and HRM planners have come to recognize the importance of investing time to repair the mistrust by ANS communities, allowing for increased participation amongst ANS communities in the planning process.

Partnerships across all sectors is critical to REP's work. REP's relationships include government institutions like HRM, Halifax Partnership, and the province of Nova Scotia; public institutions like Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU); nonprofits including the Black Planning Project, Engage Nova Scotia, and Inspiring Communities; and private sector institutions like RBC. These partnerships are vetted in relation to the value that they bring to the African Nova Scotian community and the extent to which they support long-term improvements along the economic and social indicators identified.

On the ground, these connections have yielded positive changes like REP advocating for community benefits agreements (CBA) to achieve justice in communities that were historically neglected. In 2024 HRM Council passed a motion concerning the CBA, but its implementation remains to be finalized by the Province of Nova Scotia.²⁶ Additionally, private stakeholders like RBC have provided sponsorship opportunities, including youth programs focusing on financial literacy skills, while REP continues to support grassroots undertakings, innovative community engagement processes, and social, community planning-related activities.

COMMUNITY BENEFIT AGREEMENTS

From the 1800s, ANS communities, including Upper Hammond Plains, Africville, and Lucasville, endured hardship from inadequate servicing, environmental racism, and land expropriation.²⁷ The Road to Economic Prosperity's strategic priority number 1 (unity and capacity building) and 2 (infrastructure and investment) address these concerns by actioning CBAs for redevelopment projects, historical research, and preservation efforts.²⁸ CBAs are legal agreements that provide compensation for communities impacted by development; they also detail the responsibilities of parties involved. Given the development pressures impacting ANS communities, CBAs can provide needed infrastructure upgrades and contribute to other community goals by capturing some of the benefits of redevelopment.

In Nova Scotia, Halifax Regional Municipality approved the Beechville Community Benefit Action Plan in 2020, outlining a framework for addressing concerns raised by the Beechville Development Association.²⁹ Tangible projects arising from this agreement include the renaming of an industrial park, providing new sidewalks, and securing a burial ground and baptismal path for the Beechville Baptist Church near Lovett Lake. In March of 2025, the church received a \$10,000 grant under the Anti-Black Racism program slated to revitalize the cemetery.³⁰ Although CBAs are not legally recognized, REP's use of development agreements as negotiation tools to remedy infrastructure shortfalls in revitalized ANS communities important approach to learn from.



Road to Economic Prosperity (credit: Dr. Magdalena Ugarte)

KEY PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

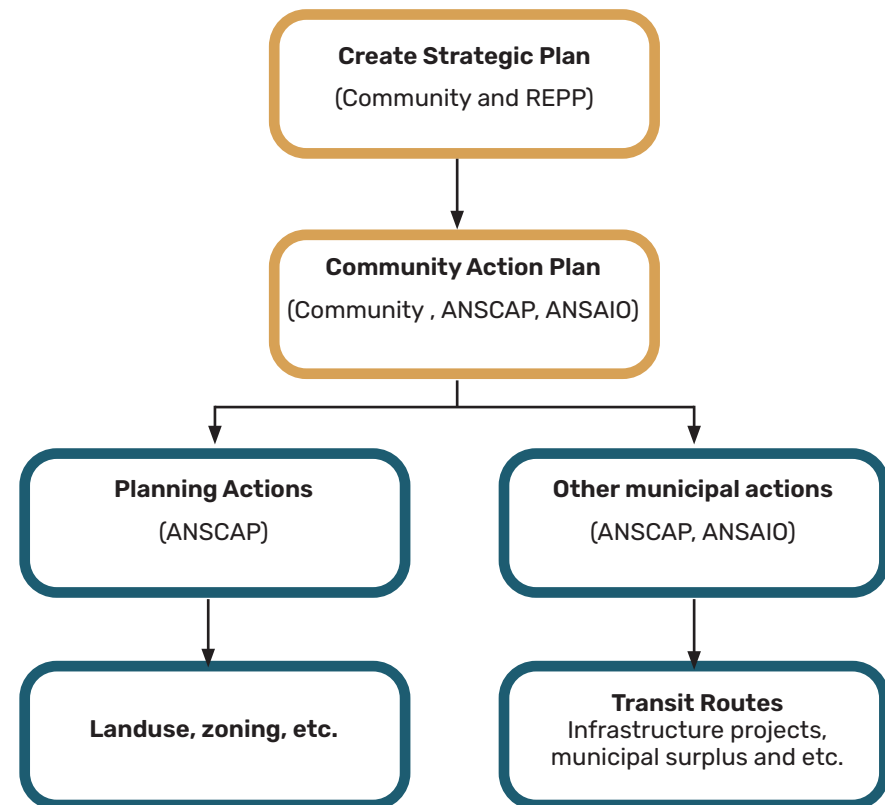
BLACK PLANNING IN ACTION

BETWEEN 2021-2024, THE ROAD TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY PLAN SPEERHEADED SIGNIFICANT INITIATIVES LIKE THE BEECHVILLE BOUNDARY EXPANSION PROJECT, A DRAFT FACILITATION GUIDE, AND THE AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIAN PROSPERITY AND WELL-BEING INDEX. THOUGH NOT AN EXHAUSTIVE LIST, THESE PROJECTS HIGHLIGHT REP'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND DEMONSTRATE ITS COMMITMENT TOWARDS THE SUSTAINED PROSPERITY AND WELL-BEING OF AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIANS.

AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIAN COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM (ANSCAP)

Stemming from Beechville, the African Nova Scotian Community Action Program (ANSCAP) was established in 2023 by HRM to collaborate with ANS communities to develop action plans and find solutions for community needs.³¹ ANSCAP is a collaborative partnership between municipal and regional governments and local organizations. Through this partnership REP aids ANS communities by creating strategic plans that form the basis of community action plans determined by the community alongside Halifax Partnership, HRM's African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office (ANSAIO), and other local organizations.³² The African Nova Scotian Community Action Planning (ANSCAP) process starts with REP facilitating aspirational visions and action plans for ANS communities, guided by the Road to Economic Prosperity Plan and in alignment with other municipal priorities like the *People. Planet. Prosperity: Halifax's Inclusive Economic Strategy 2022-27*. The ANSCAP process complements the plan, outlining steps to sustainably boost economic growth by implementing CBAs in conjunction with REPP, while also increasing ANS employment through strategic mentorship, networking, and training opportunities.³³

When complete, community objectives are achieved by creating and implementing municipal and planning-related projects such as modifying existing zoning and land use designations, providing infrastructure and transit investment, and formalizing development agreements for future development. It is important to note that this



process is not without conflict. REP often mediates and resolves tension among stakeholders involved, through the structure illustrated below:

ANSCAP's implementation involves REP as a facilitator and educator, aiding ANS communities to create policy actions and processes to achieve their goals through the planning process. In the collective interview with partner organizations, Jenée emphasized that:

“WITH [....] REP [...], COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IS ONE OF THE HIGH PRIORITIES. SO, ONE THING WE FOCUS ON IS SHOWING UP FOR THE COMMUNITY IN ANY CAPACITY IN WHICH THEY NEED US, WHETHER IT'S MEETINGS, SHOWING UP TO EVENTS, SUPPORTING THEIR EVENTS,

COLLABORATION, CAPACITY BUILDING, [AND] FACILITATION.”³⁴

Once strategic plans are finalized, REP and community members articulate local priorities into community action plans, translated into policies that are implemented through land use, zoning, and legislative changes, including infrastructure projects. Partnerships with HRM, Halifax Partnership, and local community partners have produced tangible outcomes, namely energy retrofits for existing community centres, rezoning, and strategic engagement sessions with underrepresented ANS residents.³⁵ Capacity building efforts with REP through ANSCAP fulfill Strategic Priority number 2: unity and capacity building. By distilling knowledge to willing participants, REP encourages ANS communities to become more involved in visioning exercises for their neighbourhoods. By embracing Afrocentric values in

Road to Economic Prosperity (credit: Dr. Magdalena Ugarte)

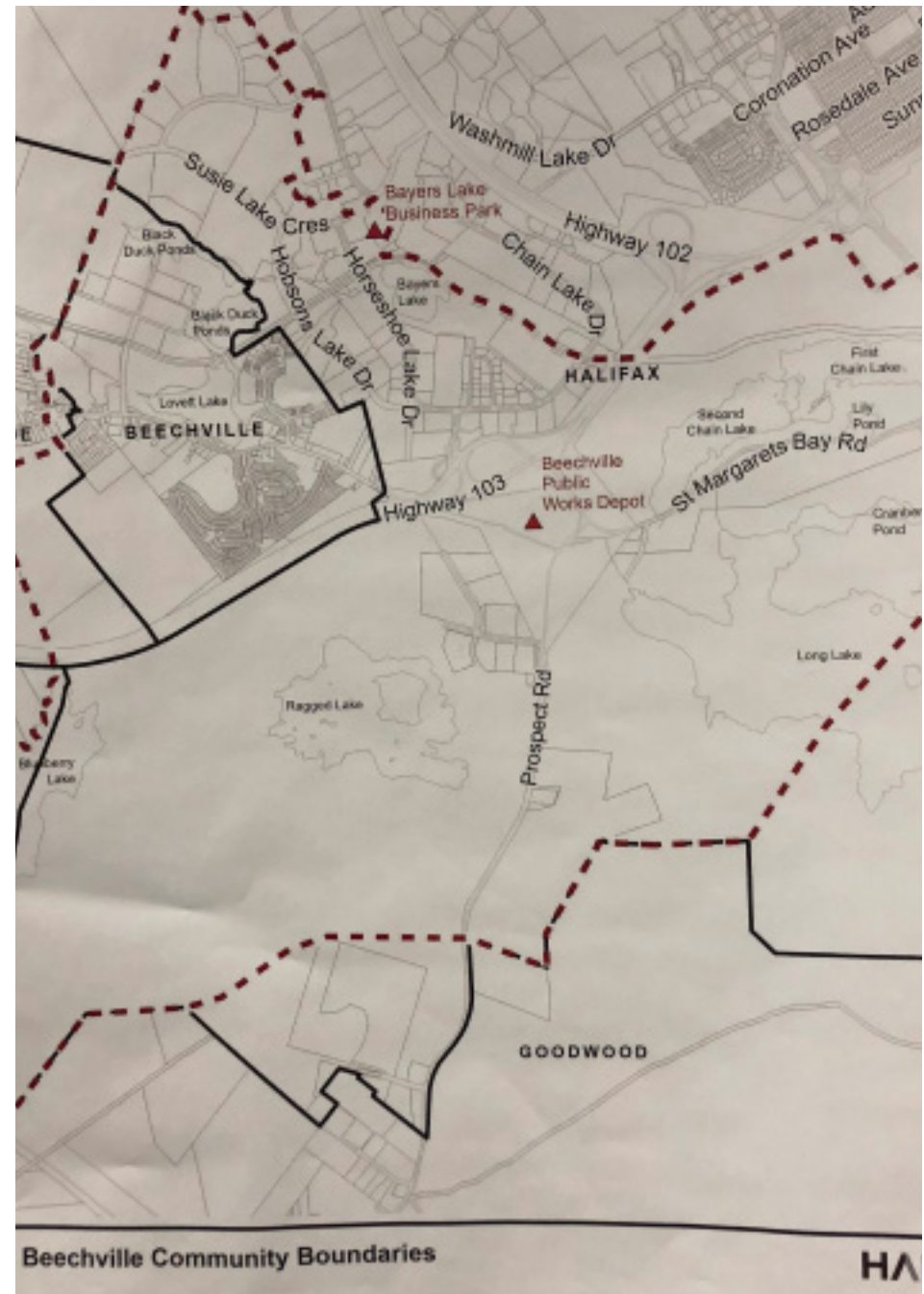


BEECHVILLE AND AREA COMMUNITY BOUNDARY PROJECT

Beechville is located between Prospect Road and Hammonds Plains and was founded after the war of 1812, near the end of the 19th century. Beechville's population in 2016 was approximately 2852 people.³⁶

In May of 2017, land developer, Armco, put forward an application to amend the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy for lands near Lovett Lake. However, Council decided to delay the plan because African Nova Scotian residents of Beechville were concerned about the potential disruption of unmarked graves near a historic baptismal path used by the Beechville Baptist Church (a municipal heritage property) to Lovett Lake.³⁷ Hence, the Beechville Planning Strategy Review and Community Benefits program and a dedicated Community Liaison Group emerged in response to residents' concerns and disputes regarding Beechville's boundary.³⁸ Preliminary engagement with the Community Liaison Group used community asset mapping for REP and Beechville residents to identify opportunities for heritage preservation.³⁹ Asset mapping is a visual and creative tool used in engagement sessions for stakeholders to document existing and future resources and spaces in their community, not limited to public spaces, parklands, and physical buildings. Later, Halifax Regional Council requested HRM staff to consider changes to Beechville's footprint through closer involvement with the community.

Beechville residents, namely through the Beechville Community Development Association (BCDA), stressed the importance of Beechville's origin, which was founded by Black refugees in a letter submitted to HRM for consideration.⁴⁰ During the consultation period, the BCDA provided evidence regarding the historical use and ownership of land, contributing to the project's success. The African Nova Scotians living in Beechville benefited from adept leaders from the BCDA who navigated planning and municipal procedures, policies, and staff reports to amplify the stories of ANS settlers.



From 2020 to 2022, REP and HRM staff worked with local councillors, agencies, and staff (heritage planners and engagement specialists); local organizations and neighbourhood associations (BCDA), including both Beechville and Goodwood residents and property owners, before agreeing on the new boundary in 2023.⁴¹ Given the complexity of the project, a heritage planner helped interpret physical and oral evidence from the public to inform Beechville's modified boundary. In June 2023, Beechville's expansion received Council approval, increasing from 500 to 3500 acres, and enhancing Canada Post and emergency services to residents.⁴² This project fulfilled REPP's second strategic priority by addressing land ownership issues and uses in ANS communities with support from Halifax Region Council and the Province of Nova Scotia. To advance ANS Community Action Planning, the local Council provided initial funds to implement REPP, in addition to the Government of Nova Scotia announcing a \$150,000 funding commitment through the African Nova Scotian Affairs Office.⁴³ Subsequently, REP secured funding for similar action planning initiatives for ANS communities in Upper Hammonds Plains and Lucasville.

The inaccurate documentation of historical data was a major obstacle throughout this process. In a conversation, Jenée recalls that historic discriminatory practices resulted in many ANS settlers receiving tickets of location as opposed to recognized land titles.⁴⁴ Fortunately, Carter Beaupre-McPhee, the heritage planner for this project, had the skills to verify evidence provided by Beechville descendants who recalled the historical use of land alongside its ownership with historical land surveys and maps. As reported by the CBC, Beaupre-McPhee acknowledged the limits of relying solely on available historic data because anti-Black racist colonial property laws influenced Nova Scotians' founding.⁴⁵ In the past, census and property records tended to inaccurately represent Black property ownership; resulting in the expropriation and disenfranchised of Black Canadians. This is seen across the country, such as the erasure of Black presence in Windsor along the McDougall Street corridor.⁴⁶ In hindsight, HRM's heritage expertise was invaluable.



Road to Economic Prosperity (credit: Dr. Magdalena Ugarte)



Road to Economic Prosperity (credit: Dr. Magdalena Ugarte)

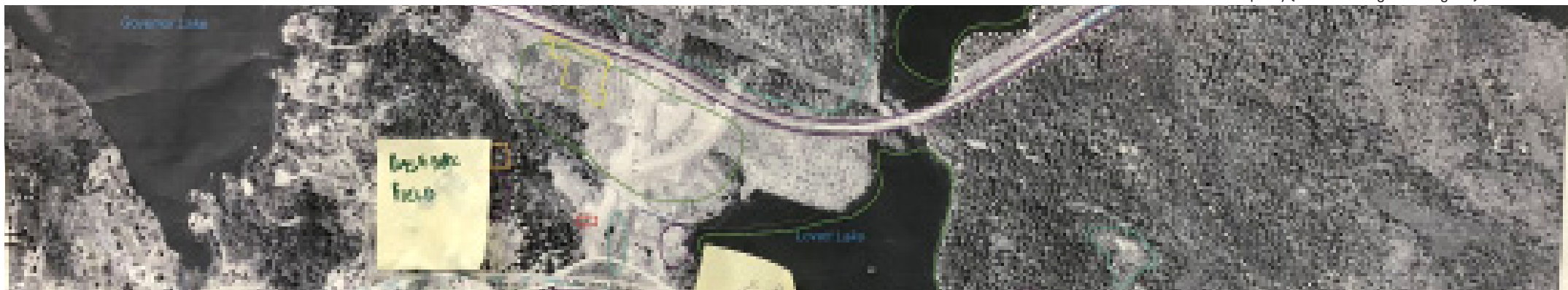
Opposition from surrounding neighbourhood residents was another major challenge. Together, REP, HRM, and the Halifax Partnership extensively engaged with Beechville residents, the Beechville Community Development Association (BCDA), adjacent Goodwood residents, and other interest groups. During this process, conflict resolution was a necessary skill. When evidence depicting Beechville's historical landmass encroached upon Goodwood's territory, its residents provided counter-evidence against these claims. Jarvis recalls instances where Beechville residents became skeptical about the process, especially when surrounding residents attempted to undermine this project: "the process went well up until the eleventh hour, where residents would make submissions, expressing their discontent."⁴⁷ It was challenging to navigate conflict and interpret data accurately because of vested interests from community groups, especially when non-Beechville residents claimed ownership over historical evidence about Beechville because of its geographical location. Nevertheless, REP and HRM staff faithfully engaged with Beechville and Goodwood residents by listening and considering the evidence presented by both parties, while relying on the oral histories from Beechville elders to substantiate gaps in historical evidence.

REP's engagement expertise helped Beechville residents become familiarized with planning processes and protocols for submitting evidence for consideration. Both Jenée and Carolann described the educational role of REP with African Nova Scotian communities, especially providing leaders with appropriate tools and skillsets. For

instance, REP trained community leaders to understand staff reports for knowledge dissemination among locals, yielding increased participation in public consultation meetings.

The Beechville boundary expansion depicts a successful approach to community-centred planning supported by REP. Planners and engagement specialists working with/in historically Black communities learned about the importance of using asset mapping to unearth undiscovered heritage assets while working with/ in Black communities. Also, heritage planning expertise was valuable for interpreting the evidence provided by Beechville residents and surrounding neighbourhoods. Traditionally, heritage planning provides tools for preserving colonial heritage monuments; however, there are minimal strategies for helping planners and communities quantify intangible resources such as cultural landscapes. Also, conflict resolution is worth highlighting through this project. REP's community-centred approach to engagement was beneficial, but not without contention from neighbouring residents. REP's facilitation role helped Beechville understand and navigate planning processes to overcome tight planning timelines for meaningful input, resulting in the Council approving the boundary expansion by approximately 80%. The success of Beechville inspired REP to create a facilitation guide for organizations and practitioners working in Black communities.

Road to Economic Prosperity (credit: Dr. Magdalena Ugarte)



ANS FACILITATION GUIDE

The ANS Facilitation Guide (2025) was developed as a resource for engagement specialists looking to acquire skills for rebuilding trust amongst ANS communities. It responds to the growing needs and challenges of planning with/for ANS communities. The guide is authored by Carolann Wright and edited by Kathy Jourdain, co-founder of World Intelligence. The purpose of the guide is to provide a comprehensive resource for engagement specialists and to bring different stakeholders together to learn together to facilitate better community planning outcomes.

Community engagement and development in the ANS community can be traced back to the 1880s. Bearing this in mind, the document outlines criteria for enabling successful outcomes through implementation with ANS communities. It encourages engagement specialists to acknowledge the non-linear nature of community engagement and establish expectations at the beginning to facilitate a path forward through collective decision-making. By embracing Afrocentric values such as self-determination and advocacy at the beginning, the ANS facilitation guide can equip community engagement specialists with skills to achieve meaningful outcomes.⁴⁸ “Practical reparations” as an outcome from community engagement and action planning have rebuilt trust in the case of Beechville by restoring the historic community boundaries.

The facilitation guide is not meant to be prescriptive but seeks to encourage innovative solutions to restore trust in Black communities allowing them to engage more meaningfully with the planning processes that shape their futures. The facilitator’s guide accomplishes the strategic priorities for REPP by building unity and capacity amongst ANS communities, improving communication, and providing opportunities for feedback. As opposed to harmful top-down planning approaches of the past, the draft facilitation guide calls upon community facilitators to teach ANS leaders to effectively voice their concerns and present ideas to tangibly improve their living conditions and well-being.



Road to Economic Prosperity (credit: Dr. Magdalena Ugarte)

AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIAN (ANS) PROSPERITY AND WELL-BEING INDEX

The ANS Prosperity and Well-being Index measures progress across key statistical indicators to assess the needs of African Nova Scotians. As stated by Wright:

“OUR PARTNERS SEE THE INAUGURAL ANS INDEX AS A STARTING POINT IN PROVIDING ACCURATE BASELINE FOR A RANGE OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INDICATORS FOR PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT IN NOVA SCOTIA - A MEASURE OF HOW FAR WE HAVE COME AND HOW FAR WE HAVE TO GO”⁴⁹

By understanding the numbers, policymakers and decision makers can evaluate the impacts of the implementation of REPP, allowing room for modifying approaches to community planning informed by the lived experiences of ANS communities. This index is the first of its kind and will provide REP with unique data points for measuring progress towards equity and prosperity in ANS communities.

In 2016 and 2021, Nova Scotians participated in two major censuses; during this period, Black communities discussed establishing concrete data specific to African Nova Scotians.⁵⁰ This resulted in the official launch of the ANS index, followed by a “Knowing Our Numbers” event at the Black Cultural Centre Black where individuals and organizations developed recommendations relating to statistical data, published on May 22, 2024.⁵¹ Together, community input and recommendations sessions with support across multiple levels of government and other public institutions informed its creation. Statistics were obtained from universities and residents, while open data from HRM and the province of Nova Scotia gave insights into key demographics, social, and economic indicators, including information from Engage Nova Scotia and Statistics Canada.⁵²

This project is another successful outcome of REPP towards building unity and capacity amongst ANS communities. Since its publication, conversations have emerged around the need to use evidence-based data, accurately reflective of local conditions experienced by African Nova Scotians. For example, the Nova Scotia Black Community Housing Council (NSBCHC) published reports providing recommendations for housing issues impacting Black Nova Scotians living in Beechville and other ANS communities. From the *What we Heard: Community Engagement Report*, challenges unique to Beechville include inadequate infrastructure investment and shortage of houses for seniors to age in place.⁵³ Proposed solutions include “understanding demographic trends and the types of housing that are needed to serve the community” and mapping community assets for potential land development partnerships, educational, and homeownership campaigns.

Currently, the ANS Index is an accessible resource, summarizing data for organizations and planners specialized in affordable housing. 2021 Statistics Canada data reveal that 15.4% of Black Nova Scotians lived in inadequately sized homes, while 17.2% endured unaffordable housing; moreover, the homeownership rates between Black Nova Scotians compared to the general population were 45.9% to 67.8% respectively.⁵⁴ Considering the above, the index provides resources for affordable housing advocates and planners to implement grassroots initiatives such as education campaigns regarding homeownership and establishing community land trusts to advance innovative models for land acquisition, development, and ownership as modeled by the Upper Hammonds Plains Community Land Trust (UHPCLT). This document required partnerships with different stakeholders for the appropriate capacity to obtain, analyze, and present the data in an accessible format. Overall, the ANS Index embodies an “ethical framework” guiding REP’s efforts to equip decision-makers, namely elected officials, with data to inform policy, processes, funding, and other actions towards the sustained well-being of ANS communities.⁵⁵

REP's data transparency has given grassroots organizations tools and knowledge to further capacity amongst leaders in ANS communities and to accurately inform decisions made during engagement sessions. Data is a powerful tool, but it is most effective when coupled with the lived experiences and perspectives of people to establish a comprehensive understanding of what is happening on the ground.

Road to Economic Prosperity (credit: Dr. Magdalena Ugarte)



BLACK PLANNING FRAMEWORK

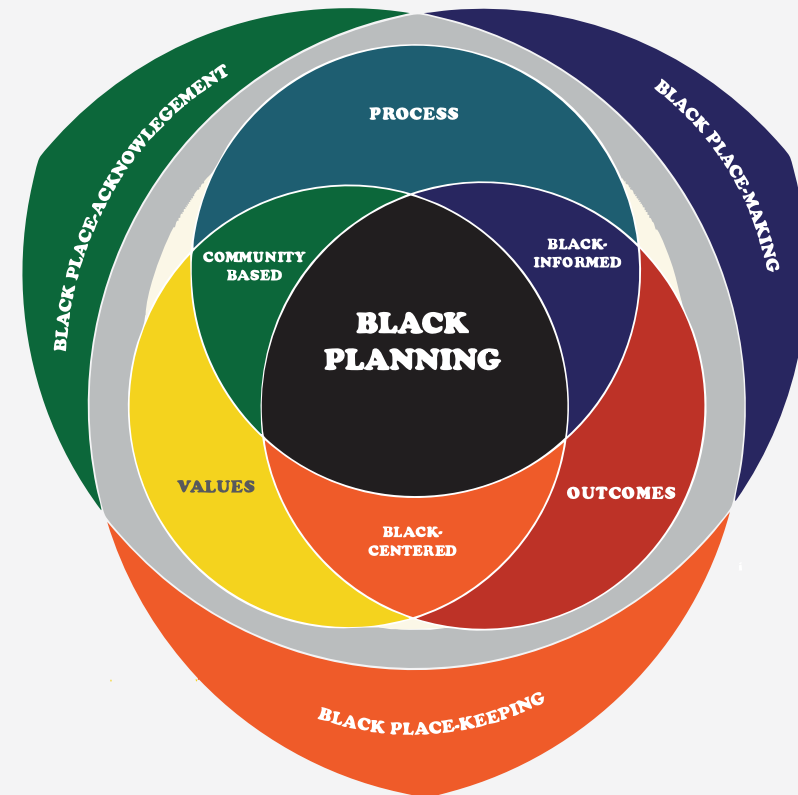
BLACK PLANNING IS BOTH A PRACTICAL (PRACTICE) APPROACH TO PLANNING THAT IS BUILT UPON LIVED EXPERIENCES, TRADITIONS, AND COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE OF BLACK INDIVIDUALS AND POPULATIONS. IT ENCOMPASSES PRACTICES THAT AIM TO HELP ADVANCE THE PLANNING PRIORITIES, NEEDS, AND ASPIRATIONS OF BLACK COMMUNITIES IN CANADA, PRACTICES THAT ARE:

COMMUNITY-BASED: COMMUNITY IDENTIFIES THEIR PLANNING PRIORITIES AND HOW TO ACHIEVE THEM

BLACK-CENTRED: PLANNING ACTION IS RELEVANT AND RESPONSIVE TO THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF BLACK INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES

BLACK-INFORMED: BLACK KNOWLEDGE AND PERSPECTIVES SHAPE PLANNING PROCESSES AND DECISIONS

The Black Planning framework developed by the BEPIC project provides an organizing frame to conceptualize and understand Black Planning. It is structured around three pillars – Black place-acknowledgement, Black place-keeping, and Black place-making – which articulate distinct but interconnected dimensions through which Black communities interpret, sustain, and transform space. Together, these pillars function as both an analytical framework and an expression of Black spatial knowledge and practices that are rooted in historical acknowledgement, spatial preservation, and collective future-making. The framework has been informed by the work of BEPIC's three Black-led community partner organizations, Black planning professionals, and non-Black planners working with Black communities, as well as by the work of Black thinkers and scholars.



BLACK PLACE-ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Black Place-Acknowledgement involves acknowledging the historic and current presence of Black communities, their lived memories and situated identities, as well as the practices that have attempted to disrupt these connections. It is also about acknowledging the planning knowledge and contributions of Black communities, individuals, scholars, and practitioners.

BLACK PLACE-KEEPING

Black Place-Keeping involves grounding Black experiences and reestablishing, strengthening, restoring and celebrating the connections to the past and spaces historically inhabited by Black communities that have been eroded, erased or forgotten. It highlights Black knowledge, intergenerational memory work, and reclamation practices as central to cultural and spatial preservation.

BLACK PLACE-MAKING

Black Place-Making is about creating spaces for Black futures – spaces that are safe and beautiful, spaces of joy, spaces that foster economic opportunities and resist erasure, which facilitate equitable and just environments for Black communities to grow and thrive. It affirms creative and resistant practices that reclaim agency across urban and rural contexts.

BLACK PLANNING

ROAD TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

THIS SECTION HIGHLIGHTS REP'S WORK THROUGH BEPIC'S CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.

BLACK PLACE-ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Black place-acknowledgment combines Black experiences with broader discussions that acknowledge Black histories, knowledge and connections to place. Historically, the planning profession has dismissed the consequences of anti-Black racist policies that have caused educational barriers, segregation, and environmental racism experienced by Black Canadians. Participants from two focus groups with HRM staff cited the phrase "Angel Complex," referencing the lack of acknowledgment regarding harmful policies by the planning profession and governments. As a result, REP worked with HRM to amend policies like the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy to permit land use and zoning, authorizing homesteads in ANS communities.⁵⁶ Traditionally, homesteads authorized multiple dwelling units on lots for early African Nova Scotian settlers; later, they were prohibited under HRM's current planning policies and by-laws. Now, REP's preservation of ANS communities is demonstrated by efforts to restore historic land uses that were once conducive to the communities flourishing. This fulfills the Road to Economic Prosperity Plan's priority 1: building capacity amongst African Nova Scotians while demonstrating Black place-acknowledgment.

Susan Neiman, an American philosopher and writer, wrote about the importance of nations acknowledging difficult histories for proper healing. In chapter one of *Learning from the Germans: Race and the Memory of Evil*, Neiman discusses

tensions between historical research and collective memories.⁵⁷ For nations to mature past their atrocities, Neiman believes they must learn from the past despite their reluctance, and the first step towards recovery is contending with the past by acknowledging the history, both good and bad. However, the absence of race-based data and Canadian scholarship regarding Anti-Black policies has absolved planning's responsibility towards injustice by citing Africville as a one-off event. Failing to contend with uncomfortable truths has resulted in the misrepresentation of Black history and the contributions of Black individuals, despite widespread evidence documenting patterns of neglect. As a result, Black history is minimally ingrained in Canada's collective consciousness.

Urban planners working with/in Black communities can make assumptions about the communities they are serving. In a focus group with HRM staff, Anee recalled a conversation with her father where he remarked: "'Well, Africville was a slum and a terrible place to live.'"⁵⁸ Similar instances of stigmatization against Black places, such as Africville, have often been justified and legitimized by the erasure of other Black and Indigenous communities in Canada. So, planners need to reflect on their assumptions and familiarize themselves with the context, histories, and knowledge of local communities they work in. In Nova Scotia, ANS communities that have been long neglected have now become increasingly desirable places for growth and development. Planners are faced with the challenge of addressing the pressures of development, ensuring sustainable development, responding to the needs and concerns of ANS communities, and preserving historic spaces, all while working within broader municipal objectives. Frictions arise, particularly when vulnerable ANS neighbourhoods are increasingly at risk of being erased because their contested histories are scarcely known and aren't sufficiently documented through

oral history and storytelling.

In a focus group with HRM staff, Mapfumo recalls the disconnect between staff working closely in ANS communities and senior management who are misinformed about local conditions:

“THE FOLKS WHO WERE WORKING IN BLACK COMMUNITIES, YOU HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO HEAR THOSE HISTORIES EVERY TIME YOU WENT OUT THERE; THEY WOULD TELL YOU, YOU WOULD HAVE TO LISTEN. SO, FORTUNATELY AND UNFORTUNATELY, THEY BECAME THE FEW PEOPLE WHO... [WERE KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT] WHAT WAS AT STAKE AND WHAT WAS AT HAND AND ALL THAT NEEDED TO HAPPEN. BUT THEN THEIR COLLEAGUES AROUND THAT WEREN'T WORKING IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY [...] DIDN'T HAVE ACCESS TO THAT KNOWLEDGE AND THAT LEARNING.”⁵⁹

The inadequate documentation and preservation of knowledge about Canadian Black communities poses challenges in unearthing their prominence and validating their significance. Fortunately, REP's work continues to amplify ANS communities, especially those primarily located along peripheral areas still inhabited by African descendants, although there are limited individuals familiar with the history to preserve these stories.



Road to Economic Prosperity (credit: Dr. Magdalena Ugarte)

BLACK PLACE-KEEPING

Black place-keeping intersects with Black Planning as a means of establishing connections to spaces historically occupied by Black communities that were intentionally and unintentionally lost, hidden, or ignored. Places are more than just physical locations, they include contested histories, land, and resources that were stolen, removed, or denied.⁶⁰ REP's role in Black-place keeping is demonstrated in their engagement with ANS communities such as Upper Hammonds Plains in heritage and cultural preservation work.

The Upper Hammonds Plains Community was established in 1815 with ancestors including Black Refugees from Chesapeake, Virginia, who also participated in the War of 1812.⁶¹ According to archival research, between 1813-1834, Black refugees fled slavery from America and established themselves across Nova Scotia.⁶² Most Black Refugees were provided "licenses of occupation" for poor or inadequately sized lots for Black settlers to live.^{63,64} This prevented African Nova Scotians who occupied the land from selling or passing it on to their descendants; this persisted through the 18th and 19th centuries. In more recent history, land was expropriated from property owners and land trusts in this neighbourhood for the Pockwock Watershed Area, giving rise to a water treatment plant delivering water to Halifax at the expense of Upper Hammonds Residents.^{65,66} In 1996, harmful bacteria affected 47% of wells in the community, resulting in a legal settlement. This was repealed in 2024 by the

Halifax Regional Water Commission.⁶⁷ REP's ongoing work addresses these historic conditions and includes land reclamation and rezoning to meet the needs of locals in the Upper Hammonds Plains area.

Through ANS community action planning, REP works with grassroots organizations and multiple levels of government to develop strategic plans that include affordable housing, public space and infrastructure development initiatives. For instance, in 2024, the Upper Hammonds Plains was rezoned to preserve local heritage and address gentrification concerns voiced by ANS residents.⁶⁸ REP's ongoing support of initiatives such as the Upper Hammonds Plains Community Land Trust (UHPCLT) showcases the political act of self-determination. Notably, self-determination guides REP's community-led planning by enabling communities to determine local issues and how they are resolved. In summary, Black place-keeping relates to Black history by connecting the past with the future, engaging individuals in the preservation of places, cultural identity, and history.

Road to Economic Prosperity (credit: Dr. Magdalena Ugarte)





Road to Economic Prosperity (credit: Dr. Magdalena Ugarte)

BLACK PLACE-MAKING

Black place-making involves creating spaces for Black Futures, it is informed by a community visioning process that guides the creation of new spaces that foster a sense of belonging. Place-making is a contentious term, often linked to city- and private sector- led strategies for increasing economic activity and tax revenue.⁶⁹

⁷⁰Black communities reclaiming this term, seek to create safe spaces that support Black communities' vision to grow in place.

REP's projects exemplify Black place-making by incorporating Afrocentric design principles that guide community engagement and inform the design of new spaces. Learning from the past and applying the lessons to the present is a key hallmark of Sankofa Planning. In this regard, REP's role in the adaptive redevelopment of the Nova Scotia Home for Coloured Children (NSHCC) is worth exploring.

The NSHCC was founded by J.A.R. Kinney on June 6, 1921, as a nonprofit agency, providing services for orphaned Black children in Nova Scotia, but it was closed because of financial difficulties.⁷¹ In 2014, the Province of Nova Scotia settled a lawsuit concerning victims who suffered abuse while living in the NSHCC and undertook a restorative inquiry to determine a path towards reconciliation.⁷² These events gave rise to the Akoma Holding development file supported by REP.

During the revitalization of NSHCC, HRM and the Province of Nova Scotia worked with Akoma Holdings, the owner of the site, and Akoma residents by amending the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy and relevant bylaws to authorize mixed-use development and municipal servicing. Plans were made for new employment opportunities benefited the locals, and a new community centre and seniors housing. REP influenced this project by increasing community capacity for locals to express their concerns during the development process. Since 2023, residents

have moved into their homes.⁷³ This project exemplifies the extensive work necessary to collaborate with provincial, local, and community agencies to deliver transformational development projects that incorporate difficult histories into meaningful placemaking. REP facilitates visioning exercises for inclusive spaces to create community centres and memorial gardens that celebrate the future while commemorating the past.

BLACK PLACE-ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, KEEPING, AND MAKING IN NOVA SCOTIA HAVE BEEN FORMALIZED THROUGH COMMUNITY ACTION PLANNING.

In principle, REP is involved in various modes of Black Planning. As an Afrocentric organization, REP acknowledges the ancestral teachings and practices of African cultures by embracing Afrocentric values and processes throughout its work and organization. In practice, Black place-keeping has manifested itself as an act of political resistance, clearly shown in Beechville. Black place-making is self-evident in the revitalization of the NSHCC, transforming a heritage property formerly serving underprivileged children which later became an abusive environment towards individuals it intended to serve, and now serves as a revitalized mixed-use space that aims to provide affordable housing for seniors. Additionally, REP educates people about local Black history and the needs of African Nova Scotians through walking tours and annual symposiums, serving as informal spaces for knowledge mobilization and political resistance. REP's work has gained community and government support in furthering their commitment towards the long-term flourishing of African Nova Scotians.



Road to Economic Prosperity (credit: Dr. Magdalena Ugarte)

LEARNING FROM REP

KEY LESSONS AND TAKEAWAYS

LEARNING FROM REP'S WORK AND EXPERIENCES, THESE SET OF RECOMMENDATIONS OFFER PRACTICAL ACTIONS FOR COMMUNITY LEADERS, PRACTITIONERS, AND EDUCATORS WORKING WITH ANS AND BLACK COMMUNITIES:

01

USE QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE METHODS INFORMED BY COMMUNITIES TO ACCURATELY ASSESS AND ADDRESS COMMUNITY PLANNING PRIORITIES

Importance: The publication of the ANS Prosperity and Wellbeing Index attempts to accurately understand the needs of communities in a way that is understandable to decision-makers, to convince them of local needs. This presents unique opportunities to evaluate and understand race-based data to bring awareness about local priorities.

Actionable step: Collaborate with local communities to gather race-based data that can help assess current conditions accurately and build a foundation for monitoring progress and well-being within community.

02

EDUCATE PLANNING STUDENTS, PROFESSIONALS, AND SCHOLARS ABOUT DIVERSE HISTORIES.

Importance: Many individuals are unaware of local histories, so it is important to educate Canadians about Black history and the positive contributions of Black Canadians.

Actionable step: Review the planning curriculum to ensure that it captures the histories and stories of the Black community and creates a robust understanding of Black experiences with Planning in Canada.

03

PURSUE ADDITIONAL RESEARCH ON BLACK CANADIAN HERITAGE

Importance: Canadian Black history is often told through Eurocentric perspectives; therefore, minimal information has been documented and disseminated on Canadian Black communities, their stories, their places and their values.

Actionable step: Public institutions should pursue grants dedicated to preserving and documenting Black Canadian heritage, and partner with municipalities and organizations to amplify and celebrate the contributions of Black Canadians.

04

ADOPT A BLACK PLANNING FRAMEWORK FOR COMMUNITY-LED PLANNING

Importance: Canadian Black communities are unique and require planning process that respect community perspectives. Black Planning framework can provide a roadmap for respectfully engaging with Black communities.

Actionable step: Apply a Black Planning Framework when working with Black communities, that centres Black place-acknowledgment, Black place-keeping, and Black place-making and establishes processes that support Black Planning

05

**ALLOCATE SUFFICIENT TIME AND RESOURCES
TO ACHIEVE MEANINGFUL RESULTS IN BLACK
COMMUNITIES**

Importance: Meaningful community work that is accepted by locals and stakeholders requires extensive time and resources, often not possible because of time and monetary constraints. However, allocating sufficient resources for dedicated staff to work with communities to establish local support and engagement is essential for establishing trust, resolving conflicts, and achieving desirable outcomes.

Actionable step: Develop timelines and resources that align with community needs and priorities. Timelines should recognize the time required to build trust and advance work that is authentic and meaningful to community.

06

**SUPPORT AND AMPLIFY GRASSROOTS INITIA-
TIVES**

Importance: Black community organizations know what their communities need and have historically supported and catered for the needs of their communities.

Actionable step: The public can support Canadian, Black-led organizations by staying informed about their work, donating their time, resources, and expertise. Governments can set aside funding for Black-led organizations engaged in community planning work to bolster and aid their existing capacity and knowledge mobilization.

Road to Economic Prosperity (credit: Dr. Magdalena Ugarte)



CONCLUSION

REP embraces economic development and community-led planning through formalized processes, addressing social inequality for the sustained prosperity of African Nova Scotians. Through Afrocentric principles guided by the Road to Economic Prosperity Action Plan, REP established visions with ANS communities for their well-being, tackling social, economic, and environmental concerns. The plan achieved positive outcomes along key demographic indicators, reflecting the overall desires and experiences of African Nova Scotians. This plan establishes a roadmap for revision and creating new policies and systems supporting African Nova Scotians.

REP embodies Black Planning's three key pillars: place-acknowledgment, place-keeping, and place-making. The widespread adoption of Afrocentric principles exemplifies Black place-acknowledgement demonstrated in various education and community events, educating the public about Black history concerning Beechville and other ANS communities. Noteworthy events include the Emancipation Day Celebration and the annual ANS Road to Economic Prosperity Summit. Black place-keeping is evident through REP's preservation and documentation of Black history through walking tours, while Black place-making is being advanced through REP supporting grassroots community development like the Upper Hammonds Plains Community Land Trust.

Overall, REP's community-led approach to planning has built trust while encouraging inclusion by promoting awareness and training for individuals working with ANS communities in public engagement. By meeting communities where they are at, REP has also restored trust amongst ANS communities harmed by past planning and government processes. Key findings from REP have also informed the development of our Black process-oriented framework across its seven stages. Key Projects such as Beechville and the ANS Index illustrate REP's commitment towards transparency and trust by tracking and adapting their processes in response to changing local conditions. Going forward, REP intends to increase its capacity and independence to continue to advance the priorities of ANS communities, partnering with other organizations adopting similar values. In closing, REP's commitment to self-reliance, trust-building, and creativity has increased resiliency among ANS communities while modeling what successful, Black-led planning can achieve when provided with adequate resources and independence.

END NOTE

This case study attempts to document the community planning, economic development, and policy and planning-related work of REP. As a planning student who has not visited Nova Scotia, I tried to capture and amplify the experiences of individuals working together with REP to the best of my ability. Information obtained from focus groups, interviews, primary and secondary sources was made possible by the willingness of interview participants and community members who shared their stories and experiences. Naturally, there are inherent limitations stemming from the inability to grasp the geopolitical nuances specific to Beechville and Nova Scotia more broadly.

Moving forward, future scholarship is needed to accurately understand the lived experiences of African Nova Scotians in planning in Canada. Once settled, it is advised that additional research be conducted to monitor the evolution of REP and future initiatives. Analysing the changing conditions in Beechville and other ANS communities may provide students, educators, and professionals with more tools for engaging with Black communities.

I want to thank all partners and collaborators who have shared their experiences to help inform this case study. It has provided valuable insights into the hard and organized, but necessary, work being done by Black organizations in Canada. Hopefully, students and planners can take away valuable insights into their practice and help advance the prosperity of African Nova Scotian communities and Black communities.

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EXPERIENCES DES
COMMUNAUTÉS NOIRES
ENGAGÉS DANS
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BLACK
EXPERIENCES
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