

Department of Municipal Affairs

**Strategic Plan
2006-07 to 2007-08**



Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
Department of Municipal Affairs

Message from the Minister

It is my pleasure to present the strategic plan for the Department of Municipal Affairs for 2006 -2008.

We share a vision of communities that are viable and sustainable with municipal leadership that is strong. Within the context of strategic directions, a number of goals and objectives have been identified.

Emergency preparedness is a priority of the highest order. Recent flooding disasters in various areas of the province such as the Northeast Coast, Stephenville and Badger show that our emergency response system acts quickly and effectively. Although the Province has demonstrated it has the capability to deal with such situations, there is a need to review our current legislation, organization and resource levels to ensure we continue to deal effectively with future emergencies.

The aging of our municipal infrastructure also presents a serious challenge. A strategic provincial municipal infrastructure plan will identify priority directions and outline an effective funding strategy.

Some municipalities benefit from a vibrant interest in local government, but others struggle to field a full slate of candidates for municipal elections. More and more municipalities are seeking options and support for regional cooperation initiatives. As a result, the Department will conduct comprehensive consultations to develop policies and mechanisms to support municipal cooperation initiatives.

The delivery of municipal services in an effective and efficient manner remains a challenge. There is a need for greater cooperation among municipalities and within regions. The piloting of a regional service delivery model will identify parameters and best practices for cooperation.

Many communities in our Province have unfortunately been affected by downturns in the fishing industry. As part of Government's response the Department of Municipal Affairs will create a new branch to provide employment support programs in these communities for short term adjustment periods.

We have prepared this plan in accordance with the *Government Transparency and Accountability Act* and the government's accounting policies. As Minister, I am accountable for the preparation of this plan and for achieving the goals and objectives it identifies.

JACK BYRNE

Minister of Municipal Affairs

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Introduction

Citizens throughout developed countries are demanding increasing accountability from their governments and government-funded entities. They want assurances that the expenditure of monies for public services is spent prudently and achieves results. “Accountability clearly establishes the right of citizens to know what government and its entities intend to achieve on their behalf and how well they have met these intentions”¹

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has made a commitment to ensure all government entities are accountable to the people of this province. People’s right to know how their money is spent and whether the provision of public services is effective and efficient is central to being a responsible and responsive government. As part of government’s commitment, new legislation has been introduced - the *Transparency and Accountability Act*. This legislation clearly articulates accountability requirements for different categories of government entities. The Department of Municipal Affairs is considered a Category 1 government entity, and as such, is accountable for the development of a performance based strategic plan with annual reporting requirements.

The current strategic plan focuses on five main issues: Emergency Preparedness; Municipal Infrastructure; Municipal Cooperation Initiatives; a Regional Service Delivery Model; and Employment Support. Emergency Preparedness is an ever pressing priority in view of the increasing number of recent emergencies and disasters in the Province. To ensure we are able to continue dealing with future emergencies in an effective and well coordinated manner, there is a need to enhance the Province’s emergency management capability within a formal emergency preparedness framework.

Municipal Infrastructure has become an important issue as our current infrastructure continues to age and new municipal infrastructure projects are identified. The Department will address this issue by identifying a strategy to prioritize future infrastructure investments and develop a new funding allocation model. In addition, the Department intends to move forward with the Provincial Waste Management Strategy as funds become available.

Municipal Cooperation Initiatives will center on the identification of alternatives to the way local governments deliver services. Because of the challenges some communities face, such as fielding a full slate of candidates during municipal elections, rising service delivery costs, shortages in skilled operators/labor, and the fact more and more communities are seeking options for regional cooperation initiatives, the Department will engage the people of the Province in a province-wide consultation process on these matters.

¹ Canadian Comprehensive Auditing Foundation (1999). *Principles for building a public performance*. Discussion paper from Canada’s Legislative Audit Committee.

To assist municipalities to meet their ever increasing challenges of delivering effective and efficient municipal services, the Province will pilot the Regional Services Delivery Model. Through this pilot, best practices and parameters for regional cooperation will be identified.

Employment Support is a new responsibility of the Department which focuses on government's response to communities that have been affected by downturns in the fishing industry through employment support programs for a short term adjustment period.

Plan at a Glance

Vision

The vision of the Department of Municipal Affairs is of communities with viable, sustainable municipal services led by strong local governments.

Mission:

By March 31, 2011, the Department of Municipal Affairs will have improved the efficiency of municipal service delivery.

Goals and Objectives:

Goal 1: By March 31, 2008, the Department of Municipal Affairs will have developed and initiated implementation of a provincial emergency preparedness framework.

Objective 1.1: By March 31, 2007, the Department of Municipal Affairs will have developed a provincial emergency preparedness framework.

Objective 1.2: By March 31, 2008, the Department of Municipal Affairs will have initiated implementation of priority recommendations regarding the emergency preparedness framework.

Goal 2: By March 31, 2008, the Department of Municipal Affairs will have developed, implemented and refined a provincial municipal infrastructure plan.

Objective 2.1: By March 31, 2007, the Department of Municipal Affairs will have developed a municipal infrastructure planning document.

Objective 2.2: By March 31, 2008, the Department of Municipal Affairs will have implemented and refined a municipal infrastructure plan.

Goal 3: By March 31, 2008, the Department of Municipal Affairs will have policies and mechanisms to support municipal cooperation initiatives.

Objective 3.1: By March 31, 2007, the Department of Municipal Affairs will have completed consultations with the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Municipalities (NLFM) and drafted a broad consultation framework on policies and support mechanisms to facilitate municipal cooperation initiatives.

Objective 3.2: By March 31, 2008, the Department of Municipal Affairs will have policies and support mechanisms to facilitate municipal cooperation initiatives.

Goal 4: By March 31, 2008, the Department of Municipal Affairs will have piloted the regional service delivery model.

Objective 4.1: By March 31, 2007, the Department of Municipal Affairs will have developed parameters to pilot the model.

Objective 4.2: By March 31, 2008, the Department of Municipal Affairs will have piloted the model for regional service delivery.

GOAL 5: By March 31, 2008, the Department of Municipal Affairs will have ensured an effective employment support program is made available to qualified individuals in communities designated by government as needing assistance due to downturns in the fishing industry.

Objective 5.1: By March 31, 2007, the Department of Municipal Affairs will have implemented a new employment support program to address downturns in the fishing industry.

Objective 5.2 By March 31, 2008, the Department of Municipal Affairs will have evaluated and made improvements to the employment support program.

Departmental Overview

The Department of Municipal Affairs envisions a Province where people enjoy healthy, safe and sustainable communities supported by strong local governments. The Department supports the financial stability and viability of municipalities and the efficient and effective delivery of municipal services. It assists the municipalities in meeting their infrastructure needs and provides the financial and administrative tools to support sound municipal governance.

The Department has three Branches - Engineering, Policy and Planning; Municipal Support Services; and Employment Support. The Engineering, Policy and Planning Branch has four functions: policy and planning research, land use planning, municipal engineering support, and industrial water systems. The Municipal Support Services Branch has three functions: emergency services and fire prevention, local governance support services, and corporate services. The Employment Support branch responds to directions received from government to provide short term employment programs.

Staff Complement

In 2006, the Department had a staff complement of 64 females and 87 males and also employed a number of temporary and contractual staff. The educational backgrounds and expertise of Departmental staff are relatively diverse and reflect the Department's role in providing technical expertise to municipalities in areas of financial management, municipal administration, engineering, planning and policy, and emergency services. Departmental staff also help establish and provide training programs for elected and non-elected municipal officials.

Budget

In fiscal year 2006-07, the Department had a gross budget of \$178 million. Approximately \$169.2 million or 95 per cent was budgeted for financial assistance to municipalities through such programs as financial support for municipal infrastructure development, municipal operating grants, debt relief and special assistance. The remaining \$8.8 million or 5 per cent was directed to expenditures in salaries and operating costs to deliver programs and services. The Department had budgeted for revenues of \$46.8 million from the federal government and \$1 million from other provincial sources. The remaining \$130.2 would be provided by the Provincial Government.

The Department's head office is located in St. John's. There are four regional offices located in St. John's (Eastern Region), Gander (Central Region), Corner Brook (Western Region) and Happy Valley-Goose Bay (Labrador Region). Fire and Emergency Services have offices located

in St. John's and Deer Lake. Head office concentrates on policy and planning, support services and some service delivery. Regional offices primarily provide service delivery. The Department also maintains staff in Grand-Falls-Windsor (Emergency Measures) and Clarenville (Regional Operations).

Mandate

The mandate of the Department of Municipal Affairs is derived from the Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs Notice, 2003, under the Executive Council Act, and is informed by the legislation set out in the Schedule (see Appendix B for a list of Acts under the Schedule) which outlines the powers, duties and functions of the Minister who is also appointed Registrar general.

The Department of Municipal Affairs is directly responsible for all matters relating to:

- a) municipal affairs;
- b) emergency preparedness; and
- c) provincial affairs.

Lines of Business

Lines of business are the major programs, products or services provided to our primary clients. The Department of Municipal Affairs has five main lines of business. These lines of business are set forth below and include a description of the associated parameters for each.

1. Local Governance

The Department strengthens local governance by:

- formulating land use policy and regional approaches to service delivery
- providing municipal training to elected and administrative officials and legislative interpretation assisting in the development of municipal by-laws
- advising local government officials
- conducting reviews of municipal administrative matters
- administering grants and subsidies for community infrastructure
- examining local governments' financial operations
- monitoring levels of debt
- providing operational support
- participating in inter-provincial policy development and knowledge sharing

2. Municipal Infrastructure and Engineering Services

The Department guides infrastructure investments by:

- assessing needs and prioritizing municipal infrastructure investments
- providing financial support for the development and maintenance of municipal infrastructure
- providing technical support and oversight for the design, installation and operation of municipal infrastructure
- advocating to the Federal Government, on behalf of municipalities, to secure long-term sustainable funding

3. Emergency Preparedness

The Department provides a leadership role, pursuant to the *Emergency Measures Act*, in the coordination and/or provision of emergency measures through its responsibilities in:

- emergency preparedness planning
- declaring whether or not a local disaster situation exists within the area
- designating an officer to plan, control and co-ordinate the activities of all police, health, welfare, fire and other services in the area, either provincial or municipal, and to engage civilian personnel to assist these services
- participates in federal/provincial policy development and response coordination

The Department also has responsibility for all matters related to the fire commissioner's office and duties including:

- investigating and keeping records of provincial fires
- providing advice and recommendations for the establishment of adequate municipal firefighting capability and promoting fire prevention

4. Employment Support

The Department provides employment support as directed by Government in areas affected by downturns in the fishing industry through partnerships with local governments and community groups to deliver short term employment projects.

5. Provincial Affairs

The Department has statutory responsibilities in relation to the following provincial affairs:

- coordinating annual ceremonies to honor our veterans
- approving the use of legislated provincial identification symbols
- prescribing and evoking *Newfoundland Daylight Time*
- Great Seal of the Province

Primary Clients

The primary clients of the Department of Municipal Affairs are the over 450 local governments, Newfoundland and Labrador Municipal Administrators, various industry associations, engineering consultants, contractors and other provincial government departments.

Values

The core values explain the character of the organization we want to promote. The strategic values ensure our core values are visible throughout our organization by identifying specific actions we want to observe during the period of this strategic plan. In recognizing that the action statements may change in the next strategic plan, it was decided that the actions which need to be enhanced during the subsequent two years could be articulated as follows:

Core Values

Strategic Value Action Statements

Respect:	Each individual will be considerate when interacting with others.
Recognition:	Each individual appropriately acknowledges the contributions of others.
Teamwork:	Each individual pursues opportunities for working with others to achieve a common goal.
Pursuit of Excellence:	Each individual takes responsibility for optimizing their performance.

Vision

The vision of the Department of Municipal Affairs is of communities with viable, sustainable municipal services led by strong local governments.

Mission

The mission statement identifies the priority focus area of the Minister over the next two planning cycles. It represents the key longer-term result that the Minister and the Department will be working towards as they move forward on the strategic directions of Government. The statement also identifies the measure and indicators that will assist both the entity and the public in monitoring and evaluating success.

One of the biggest challenges facing all municipalities in the Province is providing appropriate levels of municipal services in a cost effective manner. There are approximately 3500 kilometers of municipal water line and 3000 kilometers of municipal sewer line.

Another challenge is the fiscal impact of new waste management practices. Costs are expected to increase, in part, as a result of updated environmental regulations that require new landfills to be lined with a leachate collection and treatment system to ensure protection of the environment. Changes to environmental standards are also expected in the areas of water treatment and waste water treatment. These too will lead to increased demand and costs for services.

Lastly, to guide these future infrastructure and capital investment costs municipalities will need funding to develop and/or revise municipal land use plans and sustainability plans. Given these challenges, the long term outcome is:

By March 31, 2011, the Department of Municipal Affairs will have improved the efficiency of municipal service delivery.

Performance Measure: Improved efficiency of municipal service delivery

Indicators:

- Increased investment in regional service delivery
 - solid waste disposal sites
 - water supply
 - waste water disposal
- Expansion of regional service boards across the Province
- Allocation of new funding for the development and/or revision of municipal land use plans

- Completion of regional land use plans for the Northeast Avalon and Humber Valley regions
- Increased investment in the development or enhancement of water and waste water treatment plants
- Allocation of new funding to develop community sustainability plans
- Reduced number of communities with a debt-service ratio of 30% or greater
- Increased cost-sharing ratio of municipal to provincial investment in capital infrastructure
- Implementation of new threshold standards pertaining to average per unit cost of water and sewage services funded in any way by the Department

Issues

In consideration of Government's strategic directions and the mandate and financial resources of the Department, the following areas have been identified as the key priorities of the Minister for the next two years. The goals identified for each issue reflect the results expected in the two year timeframe while the objectives provide an annual focus. Measures and indicators are provided for both the goal and the first year's objective to assist both the Department and the public in monitoring and evaluating success. Targets and benchmarks will be developed in this planning cycle. Gender based analysis will be conducted on all measures and indicators and gender breakdowns will be reported where applicable.

Emergency Preparedness

There is an ever more pressing priority to ensure we have efficient and effective coordination and provision of emergency services. Over the past several years, the Province has had to deal with large scale events such as the recent Stephenville flood of 2005 and the Badger flood of 2003. While the Province has demonstrated it has the capability to successfully manage such events, it has done so without the benefit of a formal Provincial Emergency Preparedness Framework. Such a framework would help preserve and enhance the Province's emergency management capability.

Recently, government commenced a review of its approach to emergency management including its legislation, organizational structure, and operational capacities. Once this review has been completed by government, work will commence on the implementation of a renewed emergency management system.

Goal 1: By March 31, 2008, the Department of Municipal Affairs will have developed and initiated implementation of a provincial emergency preparedness framework.

Performance Measure	Indicators
Developed and initiated implementation of framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of existing legislation, regulation and policy related to emergency preparedness • Review of existing emergency preparedness infrastructure • Development of Provincial Framework document • Initiate implementation of priority actions

1. **Objective 1.1:** By March 31, 2007, the Department of Municipal Affairs will have developed a provincial emergency preparedness framework.

Performance Measure	Indicators
Framework developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of consultations with other government departments • Identification of jurisdictional protocols • Identification of response obligations of provincial and municipal government • Review of existing legislation, regulation and policy related to emergency preparedness • Review of existing emergency preparedness infrastructure • Framework developed including recommendations regarding Emergency Preparedness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning, ▪ Infrastructure, ▪ Legislation, regulation, and/or policy, ▪ Requirements, and ▪ Communications.

Objective 1.2: By March 31, 2008, the Department of Municipal Affairs will have initiated implementation of priority recommendations regarding the emergency preparedness framework.

Municipal Infrastructure

Municipal infrastructure in this Province is rapidly aging while new needs are emerging. Current municipal infrastructure requires funding for ongoing maintenance while new economic and social needs require funding for new infrastructure investments. At times, infrastructure maintenance is deferred or put on hold so that current funding can be targeted towards other municipal needs. At other times, funding is diverted from smart investments to sustain the operation of old, outdated infrastructure. There needs to be a balance. The development of a strategic provincial municipal infrastructure plan would be a first step in improving the municipal infrastructure in this Province. The plan needs to identify priority directions and an effective funding strategy. The goal set forth below addresses this first step.

Goal 2: By March 31, 2008, the Department of Municipal Affairs will have developed, implemented and refined a provincial municipal infrastructure plan.

Performance Measure 1	Indicators
Provincial municipal infrastructure plan is developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of priority directions for municipal infrastructure investments • Completion of provincial municipal infrastructure plan

Performance Measure 2	Indicators
Provincial municipal infrastructure plan is implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of funding strategy to address priority directions • Fiscal commitments are consistent with identified priorities

Objective 2.1: By March 31, 2007, the Department of Municipal Affairs will have developed a municipal infrastructure planning document.

Performance Measure 1	Indicators
Infrastructure planning document developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of analysis report on stakeholder input, environmental and health protection standards • Identification of the priority directions for municipal infrastructure investment • Finalization of Provincial municipal infrastructure plan

Objective 2.2: By March 31, 2008, the Department of Municipal Affairs will have implemented and refined a municipal infrastructure plan.

Municipal Cooperation Initiatives

The Department of Municipal Affairs supports strong local governance at the municipal level and where appropriate at a shared regional level. At the municipal level, in some situations councils are challenged to meet all the demands of their residents because they do not have a full slate of councillors. In such cases there are various interim measures available to ensure municipal councils can still deliver efficient and effective municipal services. Other challenges include the rising cost of service delivery and shortages in skilled workers. On an ever more frequent basis, municipalities are exploring and pursuing regional cooperation initiatives to deliver municipal services to their citizens. The goal of the Department is to consult the people of the Province to identify, and subsequently for the Province to adopt policies and support mechanisms to facilitate these cooperation initiatives leading to stronger local communities.

Goal 3: By March 31, 2008, the Department of Municipal Affairs will have policies and mechanisms to support municipal cooperation initiatives.

Performance Measure	Indicators
Policies and mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of consultations with NLFM • Development of a discussion paper on municipal cooperation initiatives • Completion of analysis report on discussion paper feedback • Identification of policies and support mechanisms to facilitate municipal cooperation initiatives

Objective 3.1: By March 31, 2007, the Department of Municipal Affairs will have completed consultations with the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Municipalities (NLFM) and drafted a broad consultation framework on policies and support mechanisms to facilitate municipal cooperation initiatives.

Performance Measure	Indicators
Consultations with NLFM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record of consultations
Broad consultation framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of NLFM's President's Task Force Report • Identification of workplan for discussion paper consultations • Broad consultation framework document

Objective 3.2: By March 31, 2008, the Department of Municipal Affairs will have policies and support mechanisms to facilitate municipal cooperation initiatives.

Regional Service Delivery Model

The complexity of delivering efficient and effective municipal services is greater than ever. Standards are changing and costs are increasing. It is a continual challenge for all municipalities to deliver all the necessary municipal services to all their residents. More and more there is a need and desire for greater cooperation among municipalities and between regions. One alternative way local governments could deliver services is through the Regional Service Delivery Model. However, parameters and best practices that support sharing of regional services need to be clearly identified. As a first step towards achieving this outcome, the Department needs to assess what works and what does not. To acquire this knowledge the Department will first conduct a pilot as outlined in the goal and objectives below.

Goal 4: By March 31, 2008, the Department of Municipal Affairs will have piloted the regional service delivery model.

Performance Measure	Indicators
The implementation of the regional service delivery model is initiated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of communications session with NLFM on the model • Identification of region for piloting the model • Development of parameters for piloting the model in the identified region • Identification of evaluation measures of the Pilot • Appointment of representatives to RSB as selected by municipalities • Provision of funding support mechanisms for the Pilot

Objective 4.1: By March 31, 2007, the Department of Municipal Affairs will have developed parameters to pilot the model.

Performance Measure	Indicators
Implementation plan is developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of pre-implementation communications session with NLFM on the model • Identification of region for piloting the model • Development of parameters for piloting the model in the identified region

Objective 4.2: By March 31, 2008, the Department of Municipal Affairs will have piloted the model for regional service delivery.

Employment Support

International competition, declines in natural resources, quota reductions, and other factors in the fishing industry have contributed to the economic hardship a number of communities in this Province are facing. The provincial government’s role in responding to these challenges has been in part to assist with employment support programs for a short term adjustment period.

Severe problems in the fishing industry during 2005 resulted in government directing the Department of Municipal Affairs to implement a large scale employment support response effort. The complexities of this response necessitated a re-prioritizing of the Department’s objectives for the year. It was subsequently recognized that a new branch entitled Employment Support needed to be created to ensure Government could adequately respond in the future. The goal outlined below addresses this issue.

GOAL 5: By March 31, 2008, the Department of Municipal Affairs will have ensured an effective employment support program is made available to qualified individuals in communities designated by government as needing assistance due to downturns in the fishing industry.

Performance Measure	Indicators
Effective Employment Support Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designation of communities needing support • Employment of qualified individuals • Evaluation of program

Objective 5.1: By March 31, 2007, the Department of Municipal Affairs will have implemented a new employment support program to address downturns in the fishing industry.

Performance Measure	Indicators
Implementation of Employment Support Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization of new Employment Support branch • Finalization of policies and procedures for the employment support program • Designation of communities for employment support • Identification of qualified individuals and level of support required • Identification of community proposals for work projects • Employment of qualified individuals

Objective 5.2: By March 31, 2008, the Department of Municipal Affairs will have evaluated and made improvements to the employment support program.

Appendix A

Strategic Directions

Strategic directions are the articulation of desired physical, social or economic outcomes and normally require action by more than one government entity. These directions are generally communicated by Government through platform documents, Throne and Budget Speeches, policy documents, and other communiqués. The *Transparency and Accountability Act* requires departments and public bodies to take into account these strategic directions in the preparation of their performance-based plans. This action will facilitate the integration of planning practices across Government and will ensure that all entities are moving forward on key commitments.

The directions related to Municipal Affairs are provided below. Each strategic direction is comprised of a number of components, or focus areas. These focus areas will be addressed through the Department's strategic plan.

1. Municipal Infrastructure

Strategic Direction: Sustainable municipal infrastructure

Clarifying Statement: This outcome requires systemic intervention by the Department of Municipal Affairs in the following areas:

Components of Strategic Direction	Applicable to Other Entities Reporting to the Minister	This Direction is addressed:		
		in the department's strategic plan	in the department's operational plan	in the branch/divisional work plans of the department
Priority Directions for municipal capital works		√		
Funding strategy		√		
Regional solid waste management		√		

2. Municipal Governance

Strategic Direction: Continuity and increased efficiency/effectiveness of municipal service delivery.

Clarifying Statement: This outcome requires systemic intervention by the Department of Municipal Affairs and its partners in the following areas:

Components of Strategic Direction	Applicable to Other Entities Reporting to the Minister	This Direction is addressed:		
		in the department's strategic plan	in the department's operational plan	in the branch/divisional work plans of the department
Cooperation among municipalities and within regions		√		
Policies and support mechanisms to facilitate municipal cooperation initiatives		√		

Appendix B

Legislative Acts

The following legislation informs the mandate of the Department of Municipal Affairs.

Assessment Act	Avian Emblem Act
Building Standards Act	City of Corner Brook Act
City of Mount Pearl Act	City of St. John's Act
Coat of Arms Act	Commemoration Day Act
Crown Corporations Local Taxation Act	Emergency Measures Act
Evacuated Communities Act	Family Homes Expropriation Act
Fire Prevention Act, 1991	Firefighter's Protection Act
Floral Emblem Act	Housing Act
Housing Association Loans Act	Labrador Act
Mineral Emblem Act	Municipal Affairs Act
Municipal Authorities Amendment Act	Municipal Elections Act
Municipalities Act, 1999	Provincial Anthem Act
Provincial Flag Act	Regional Service Boards Act
Remembrance Day Act	St. John's Assessment Act
St. John's Centennial Foundation Act	St. John's Municipal Council Parks Act
Standard Time Act	Urban and Rural Planning Act, 2000
Taxation of Utilities and Cable Television Companies Act	