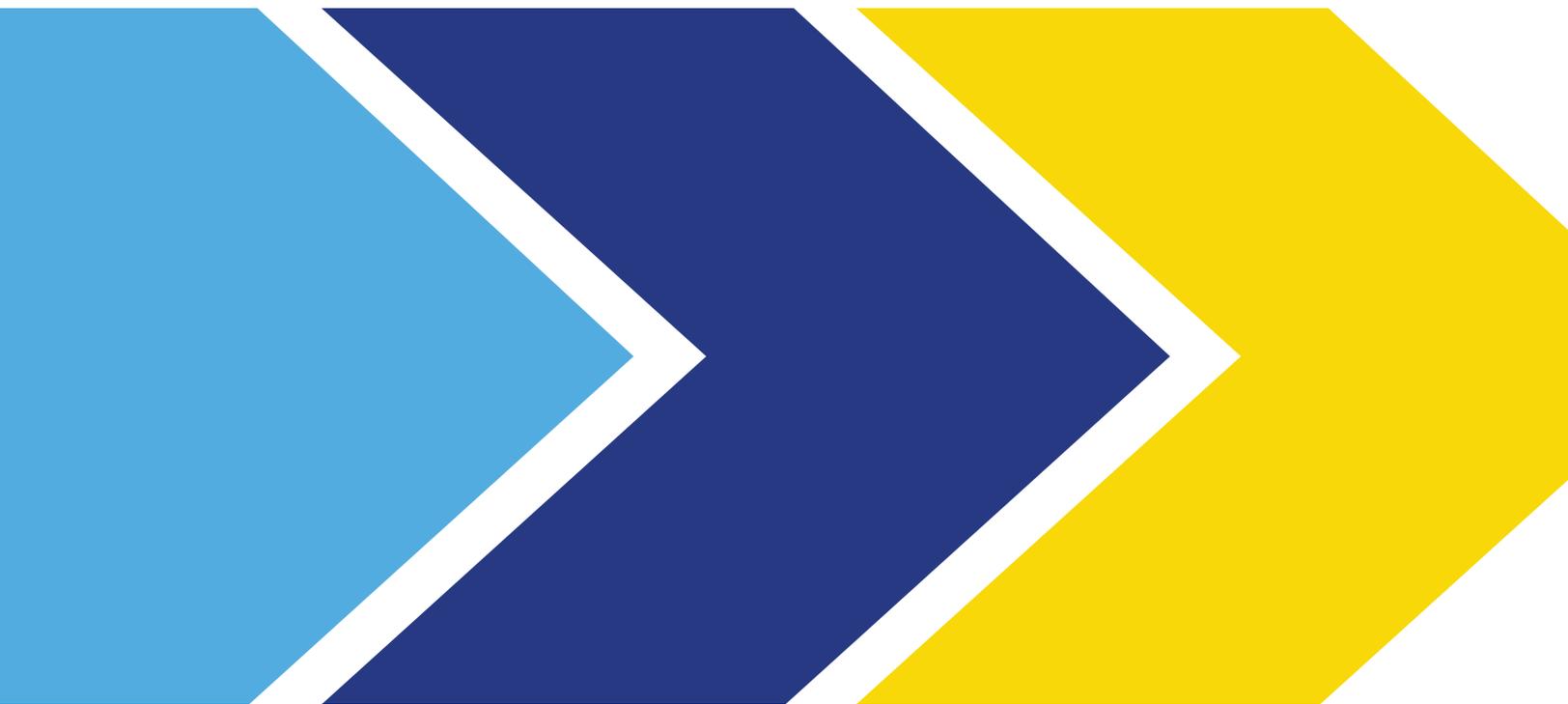
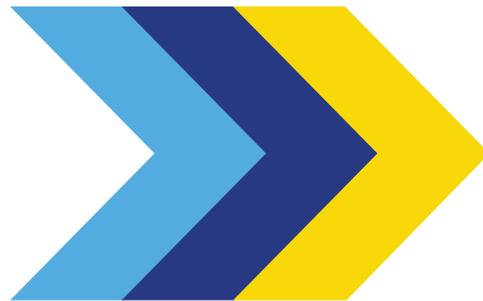


**BUSINESS
PLAN**
2022-23



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Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing Annual Business Plan: 2022 - 2023

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Message from Minister and Deputy Minister

We are pleased to present the 2022-23 Business Plan for the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing. In the 2022-21 fiscal year, Housing Nova Scotia and Municipal Affairs were integrated into one Department.

The housing crisis is real, and it's personal for many Nova Scotians. Too many people are struggling to find or afford a place to call home. Over the past year, government took immediate action to address the challenges Nova Scotians face in finding affordable housing, which were highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2022-23 the Department will continue to implement recommendations from the Affordable Housing Commission and the housing plan that was announced in October 2021. This year, we will work to improve the overall housing supply; free up provincial land for housing; and invest in safe and affordable housing options for those who need them most.

Municipal services are among the most important in our day-to-day lives, and municipalities and towns have told us they need more help from the province. In September 2021, as promised when this government was elected, we doubled the Municipal Financial Capacity Grant. Work is also moving ahead on negotiation of a new memorandum of understanding with municipalities and a review of the *Municipal Government Act* and *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*.

In the coming year, we will continue to invest in programs like Beautification and Streetscaping, Municipal Innovation, Provincial Capital Assistance, Flood Risk Infrastructure Investment Program and Emergency Services Provider Fund.

The Emergency Management Office (EMO) continues to support municipalities in the review and updating of their emergency management plans. Through our partnership with local governments and other provincial organizations, the Office of the Fire Marshal will continue to support provincial fire and building safety programs and services.

We will work closely with our partners to support strong, safe and dynamic communities that Nova Scotians are proud to call home.

Sincerely,

"Original signed by"

John Lohr
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

"Original signed by"

Paul LaFleche
Deputy Minister, Municipal Affairs
and Housing

Departmental Mandate

In 2021, the Minister responsible for Municipal Affairs and Housing received the following highlighted items in their mandate letters:

- Within the first 90 days of your mandate, prepare a timeline for completion of all tasks below over the next four years. The initial timelines are to be updated quarterly thereafter.
- Renegotiate the Memorandum of Understanding with the Municipalities.
- Include funding for municipal roads as an item of discussion when renegotiating the Memorandum of Understanding.
- Double the equalization payment for the first year, until a new Memorandum of Understanding can be reached.
- Work with the Housing Commission to implement the recommendations of the 2021 Affordable Housing Report.
- Develop a full inventory of lands owned and identify areas that could be used for housing. The inventory must be prepared within three months of coming into government so that the province can manage and keep track of the land it owns in a comprehensive accounting manner. This will also allow work to get underway immediately in determining best uses of those lands.
- Consider where land is available and where there is need for housing stock: both affordable housing and general residential purchases.
- Within the first six months of your mandate, undertake a review of the Municipal Act, Municipal Charters including the size of scope, the concept of shared and regional service authorities, with a goal of refining the delivery and governance model for all municipalities in the province.
- As Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, you will also support your Ministerial colleagues as they execute their responsibilities. In particular, you will support: The Minister of Environment and Climate Change as they build climate change adaptive capacity and resilience by prioritizing climate adaptation across every government department and ensuring that all Nova Scotia municipalities have sufficient resources to take immediate and long-term action on their adaptation priorities.

The Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing (DMAH) continues to promote responsible local government and safe, sustainable, inclusive communities. Through working with municipalities and other partners, DMAH contributes to strong and diverse economics, high quality of life, and affordable, adequate, and suitable housing for all.

The mandate of DMAH is implemented through the following divisions/offices:

- Municipal Services
- Housing

- Includes programs delivered on behalf of Housing Nova Scotia (HNS)
- Emergency Management Office and the Office of the Fire Marshal

DMAH Legislative Mandate

The *Municipal Government Act*, *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*, *Municipal Grants Act*, and the *Nova Scotia Power Privatization Act* provide for the following statutory grants:

- Municipal Financial Capacity Grant;
- Provincial Property Grant in Lieu;
- Nova Scotia Power Incorporated Grant-in-Lieu of Property Tax; and
- Farm Land Grant.

Housing programs and services and five housing authorities are governed under the *Housing Act* and the *Housing Nova Scotia Act*. The core functions of Housing Nova Scotia, as set in the *Housing Nova Scotia Act*, are:

- Establish housing projects and construct housing accommodations of all types for sale and rent.
- Plan, design, build, own, maintain, manage and operate housing projects.
- Construct, acquire, renovate and maintain housing of all types and sell, lease or otherwise dispose of such housing.
- Promote, construct and provide more adequate and improved housing for low-income households.
- Improve the quality of housing and the quality of amenities related to housing.
- Promote and provide financial assistance to persons in housing need.

In addition to the above mandated goals, the Department will continue to partner with the Canadian Mortgage Housing Commission (CMHC) to achieve mutually agreed upon outcomes as set out in the 9-year National Housing Strategy Bilateral Agreement.

Municipal Affairs: Initiatives and Programs

Ministerial Mandate Items

Double the equalization payment for the first year

- In September 2021, the Province announced that the Municipal Financial Capacity Grant amounts for municipalities would be doubled in fiscal year 2021-22.

Renegotiate the Memorandum of Understanding with the Municipalities.

- DMAH is in the planning phase of the renegotiating of the Memorandum of Understanding with municipalities, which includes funding for municipal roads.

Within the first six months of your mandate, undertake a review of the Municipal Act and Municipal Charters

- DMAH is in the process of reviewing the *Municipal Government Act* and *Halifax Regional Municipal Charter*.

Supporting the Minister of Environment and Climate Change

- DMAH will continue to support the Minister of Environment and Climate Change as they build climate change adaptive capacity and resilience by prioritizing climate adaptation across every government department and ensuring that all Nova Scotia municipalities have sufficient resources to take immediate and long-term action on their adaptation priorities.

Departmental Priorities: Municipal Affairs

- DMAH will continue planning and development related to the deployment of Next Generation 911.
- In September 2021, the Town and County of Antigonish voted to investigate and gather the information necessary to consider consolidating the two municipalities into one. DMAH will support the Town and County of Antigonish as they explore consolidation.
- DMAH is developing a framework for Code of Conduct regulations in the *Municipal Government Act*. Regulations for Code of Conduct are expected to be completed in spring 2023.
- DMAH will continue to develop and deliver the Nova Scotia Asset Management Program with a focus on the provision of tools and resources that help lay a foundation for making informed, evidence-based decisions to manage municipal assets.
- DMAH will continue to support the following federal programs in 2022-23:
 - Canada Community Building Fund.
 - New Building Canada Fund.
 - Investing in Canada Infrastructure Fund.
- DMAH will continue to deliver the following programs in 2022-23:
 - Emergency Services Provider Fund
 - Municipal Innovation Program
 - Provincial Capital Assistance Program
 - Flood Risk Infrastructure Investment Program
 - Fire Protection Grant
 - Municipal Flood Line Mapping Program
 - Beautification and Streetscaping Program
 - Community Works Program

Environmental Sustainability

- DMAH will continue to offer land use planning related support to the Department of Environment and Climate Change for the following initiatives:
 - The development of regulations related to the *Coastal Protection Act*;
 - The conceptual development of the climate plan as it relates to municipal interests; and
 - Climate Change Risk Assessment research and moving knowledge to action as it relates to municipal interests.

Accessibility Initiatives

- DMAH is committed to identifying actions that support municipalities in building their accessibility capacity from 2022 – 2025.

Housing Nova Scotia: Initiatives and Programs

Ministerial Mandate Items

Implement Housing Commission Recommendations

- In May 2021 the NS Affordable Housing Commission released 17 recommendations to improve supply of, and increase access to, affordable housing in its report, Charting a New Course for Affordable Housing in Nova Scotia. The Commission also identified four “Quick Start” initiatives and an investment of \$25 million, to be initiated immediately and completed within one year.
- HNS will build on work completed in 2021-22 to implement the Quick Start initiatives and continue those which are ongoing into future years, including:
 - Supporting more projects that increase housing supply through programming providing capital contributions and operating assistance to incentivize the supply of new sustainable, energy-efficient, and affordable housing projects.
 - Allocating year-over-year funding to the Community Housing Growth Fund (CHGF).
 - Continuing the 425 new Quick Start portable rent supplements added in 2021-22 under the Canada-Nova Scotia Targeted Housing Benefit.
 - Continue housing needs assessments for municipalities.
- Short-term recommendations advanced in 2021-22 will continue in 2022-23, including:
 - Advancing a new governance model for housing.
 - Ensure that the human rights-based approach to housing advanced by the National Housing Strategy - which includes principles of non-

discrimination, inclusion, participation, and accountability - is reflected in provincial housing programs, policies, and strategies as well as a fundamental recognition that housing is a driver of economic growth.

- As part of the review of the *Municipal Government Act*, identify additional legislative and regulatory changes that may support advancement of longer-term recommendations.
- Continue to engage municipalities and local governments as part of recognizing municipalities as key partners in affordable housing. This will include ongoing engagement as part of completing housing needs assessments for municipalities.
- HNS will also begin work to advance mid-term recommendations (to be implemented by 2024-25), including but not limited to the following highlights:
 - Increased support for preservation of existing affordable rental housing.
 - Support the creation of secondary suites and rooming houses.
 - Enhanced Home Repair and Adaptation programs to help more low-income homeowners remain in their homes.
 - Begin working on a long-term Housing Strategy.
 - Work with partners to offer more affordable housing in rural areas and to build housing that meets the needs of underrepresented communities.
 - Create a Community Housing Sector Lending Program to provide repayable loan financing to community housing providers for acquisition of existing residential and low-risk non-residential accommodations.

Develop a full inventory of lands owned by the Province and identify areas that could be used for housing within three months of coming to government

- HNS will collaborate with Nova Scotia Lands Inc and the Department of Public Works to rank provincially owned parcels of lands from the inventory that are suitable for residential development and make them available for development proposals.

Consider where land is available and where there is a need for housing stock: both affordable housing and general residential purchases

- Beginning in fall 2022, HNS will invite proposals from potential development partners on an initial bundle of properties from the inventory that can be used for housing. Housing Needs and Demand Assessments will be completed for all 49 municipalities that will inform assessment of proposals as they are received.

National Housing Strategy

- In spring 2022 the Department will release the Province's second Action Plan under the NHS Bilateral Agreement, that will focus on: rapidly increasing the supply of affordable housing by investing in new construction; continuing to

preserve and stabilize existing social and community housing stock; and supporting transformation of the community housing sector to ensure long-term sustainability and increase its capacity to meet demand.

Departmental Priorities: Housing Nova Scotia

- To support more first-time homebuyers, HNS will enhance the existing Down Payment Assistance Program (DPAP) to better reflect market conditions and expand the program to a wider range of clients.
- To improve building efficiency of its public housing portfolio and to meet the provincial and federal GHG emissions reductions targets, HNS is implementing deep energy retrofits. HNS will also work with stakeholders to promote and support healthy, sustainable, and affordable housing. Investments will align and support the targets set in the *Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act*.

Accessibility Initiatives

- HNS is committed to developing an accessibility plan in 2022-2023 in alignment with the *Accessibility Act*. HNS is working with partners to maintain and increase the availability, sustainability, and affordability of accessible housing units.

COVID-19 Pandemic Safety Protocols

- Initiatives are underway within regional housing authorities to support the continued safety of housing clients and staff, while continuing delivery of housing services, include compliance with mandated public health protocols related to COVID-19 and continuous implementation of safe work procedures. HNS will continue to encourage safe health practices for housing clients and staff after the Provincial Public Health Order and State of Emergency are lifted on March 21, 2022.

Financial Summary

Municipal Affairs and Housing			
	2021-2022	2021-2022	2022-2023
	Estimate	Forecast	Estimate
Program & Service Area	(\$ thousands)	(\$ thousands)	(\$ thousands)
Departmental Expenses:			
Senior Management	1,005	954	982
Corporate Policy and Innovation	1,829	1,797	1,649
Municipal Sustainability	198,783	297,358	246,227
Emergency Measures Office	11,567	15,010	10,625
Housing	107,840	139,936	140,996
Total Departmental Expenses	321,024	455,055	400,479
Additional Information:			
Ordinary Recoveries	144	195	171
TCA Purchase Requirements	450	502	177
Funded Staff (Net FTE's)	178.8	154.7	182.8