



NOVA SCOTIA GOVERNMENT BUSINESS PLAN

FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2007-2008



Message from the Premier

On behalf of the Government of Nova Scotia, I am pleased to present our business plan for the 2007–2008 fiscal year.

The idea of building a new Nova Scotia is anything but a short-term plan. It's a vision that will lead the province to 2020 by building on existing strengths to make Nova Scotia more self-sufficient.

First and foremost, the new Nova Scotia recognizes that securing the province's future means making smart investments to grow the economy.

What will a new Nova Scotia look like? The new Nova Scotia is a province where what you do and where you're going matters more than where you're from or who you know. It is a province that offers everyone a fair shot at getting the most out of their opportunities but it also helps those who need a helping hand.

It is a province people are proud to call home, with safe streets and respected laws, with excellent health care and education. It is a province with a growing economy and a bright future.

It is a province that leads, not follows, on the national stage. It is a place where every child receives an education that prepares him or her for the challenges, opportunities and responsibilities of adulthood. It is a place that is recognized as a leader in creating economic opportunities in technology, innovation and environmental industries. It is a province that attracts and welcomes immigrants, and a place that beckons home our friends and relatives.

How do we get there? We will achieve it by facing our challenges head on, and creating winning conditions for success and by recognizing that the health of the economy, the environment and

the people of Nova Scotia are interconnected. Further, we accept the evidence that the climate is changing and that human actions are at least partly responsible.

The longer-term vision for Nova Scotia also includes retaining our youth; retraining older workers, the unemployed, and underemployed; attracting Nova Scotians back home; and developing an immigration process with the business community that attracts thousands of new Nova Scotians.

In the new Nova Scotia, we will seize opportunities by being a leader in information technology, research and development, innovation, and the clean and green economy. We will also engage youth and advance our democracy. We will build for individuals, families, and communities by helping ensure a more active, safer, and vibrant province.

There will be challenges as part of this journey, and my government is committed to balanced spending, and paying down the debt, but the new Nova Scotia path will provide a focus that will help the province make the necessary tough decisions.

Building a new Nova Scotia is an ambitious goal, but we do not have to start from scratch. With more than 1,400 information technology firms, almost 2,400 researchers in leading-edge life sciences, 11 first-rate universities and a community college system that is second to none, and, according to KPMG, 4 of the 10 best places in Canada to do business, we are part way there.

Sincerely,



Rodney MacDonald



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Vision Statement

***The New Nova Scotia: A Path to 2020
Building for Families, Building for the Future***

Introduction

The 2007–2008 government business plan has taken a different approach this year, to provide a more directional and focused higher-level discussion of the government's vision for a new Nova Scotia for 2020.

The plan provides highlights of the province's current business, along with our longer-term priorities towards our vision. This type of discussion better reflects the government's move from simply setting an annual plan to creating a lasting path for the future of Nova Scotia.

When read with the budget address and individual department business plans, the government business plan will provide the overall picture of the path to 2020. Links to department business plans have been included to provide more detail on specific 2007–2008 strategic priorities.

Nova Scotia faced a challenging budget situation this year, but the government has remained committed to balancing the budget, reducing the debt, and continuing the progress towards self-sufficiency and a new Nova Scotia.



Nova Scotia's Planning Context 2007–2008

Global Competitor

Nova Scotia's vision to be a global player is a bold but necessary objective to make this province one of the economic leaders of the 21st century.

Moving the province towards 2020 requires building a sustainable, competitive culture and society. This will be the foundation for the government's annual business planning, the basis for work with other governments and with the private sector.

Becoming a global competitor does not mean abandoning our unique way of life in Nova Scotia, but rather building on our existing strengths, including the extraordinary potential of the people of Nova Scotia.

Changing Demographics

Nova Scotia is a true mosaic of cultures, and this montage both enriches our society and is the catalyst for economic opportunity.

The 2006 Census estimates that Nova Scotia's population has grown only moderately since 2001. While Nova Scotia's population has increased, our share of Canada's population has decreased. This reflects mortality rates as well as out migration to Alberta and Ontario.

While much of the population growth is around Halifax Regional Municipality, the

province recognizes the need to build a sustainable economy and to recognize the interdependence of our urban and rural economies, working with the assets of each to build a stronger Nova Scotia.

With our modest population growth, the province also recognizes the value that immigration can contribute to the fabric of Nova Scotia, economically and socially.

Fiscal Responsibility

Nova Scotia has made great strides getting its fiscal house in order with five consecutive balanced budgets. We have also experienced the highest employment levels in the last 30 years, a lower debt-to-GDP ratio, and major payments on our debt. The province has also ensured that 2006 is the last year that Nova Scotia's net direct debt will grow, thanks to legislation and policy commitments that govern balanced budgets, surpluses, and debt reduction.

Despite these gains, Nova Scotia continues to face challenges with spending pressures, especially the ever-increasing cost of delivering services like health care. With a budget in the range of \$7 billion for 2007–2008, the province will maintain the delivery of the core programs and services Nova Scotians expect, amidst some challenging fiscal circumstances.

Government Priorities

The 2007–2008 government business plan focuses on building the new Nova Scotia. The priorities go beyond a one-year plan to advance the province’s longer-term path to 2020.

The new Nova Scotia priorities have been developed around the following themes.

1. Creating Winning Conditions

Laying the foundation for economic growth

2. Seizing New Economic Opportunities

Preparing for good jobs and careers, here at home

3. Building for Individuals, Families and Communities

Healthier children, safer communities

4. A New Democracy for Nova Scotia

Engaging youth and advancing democracy



Priority Highlights

1. Creating Winning Conditions

Laying the foundation for economic growth

The government will create winning conditions of success for the province of Nova Scotia through a globally competitive, sustainable business climate, a highly trained and skilled workforce, and strong global connections.

Being a leader in economic opportunity will set Nova Scotia apart from the rest of the world. Our starting point is obvious: build on the province's existing strengths. To do this, winning conditions to foster a competitive business climate and a skilled workforce must be in place.

The number one priority for creating winning conditions in Nova Scotia is Atlantic Gateway. With the growth in the global economy being driven by emerging markets in China and India, there is a huge opportunity to expand trade and commerce through national transportation gateways. Nova Scotia is a natural choice for Canada's Atlantic Gateway, but we must act quickly to take advantage of this opportunity.

Globally Competitive Business Environment

Fiscal Responsibility

Generally speaking, businesses and capital investment seek stability. Governments with balanced budgets or growing surpluses and appropriate debt levels produce economic development and business attraction. Governments with stable fiscal environments are also better able to deliver vital public services, a key aspect of business attraction and retention when compared to other international jurisdictions.

The Province of Nova Scotia is committed to debt reduction and has taken progressive steps to stop the growth of its net direct debt. Measures include legislation governing balanced budgets and revenues to be applied to the debt.

The government's adoption of a more disciplined fiscal management system has resulted in five consecutive balanced budgets. As a result of good debt-management practices, the province's credit rating was upgraded by all three major bond-rating agencies in 2006. Such trends are providing Nova Scotia with easier access to financial markets.

For 2007–2008, the government will present the sixth consecutive balanced budget specifically designed to ensure that the net direct debt will not grow. This will be the first time that the government has budgeted such a target.

The government will also be implementing changes to some of its taxes to make Nova Scotia more competitive with other jurisdictions.

Managing the provinces debt and tax system keeps the province globally competitive. Remaining competitive also means ensuring an efficient climate in which to conduct business.

Competitive Business Environment

The province continues to be committed to creating simpler, more effective regulation that will cut time and expense for business. The Better Regulation Initiative is working to improve the way laws are designed, communicated, and enforced in Nova Scotia, ultimately improving the competitiveness of our businesses.

In 2006, the province pledged to reduce the paperwork burden associated with regulatory requirements by 20 per cent by 2010.

To provide a clearer picture of the actual paperwork burden, all government departments completed an inventory of their administrative requirements using the Better Regulation Index. The index estimates that business spends 615,000 hours a year to meet the administrative requirements of provincial regulations.

To ensure the 20 per cent reduction is achieved, the province will report annually on changes in the Better Regulation Index. This is the first time accountability like this

has been put in place in Nova Scotia. As part of its commitment to continuous improvement, the Better Regulation Initiative will be expanded to include a focus on wait times associated with provincial permits and licences.

By 2010, all departments will meet a standard of no more than 10 business days to process licences, permits, and approvals. Exceptions to this 10-day commitment on wait times will be permitted only where an alternative service standard has been approved by Executive Council and posted for public information. As an interim step, by 2008, the wait time associated with 50 per cent of all provincial licences, permits, and approvals will be less than 10 days, and service guarantees will be introduced for several types of registrations and licences.

Globally Competitive Business Climate and Workforce

Solid Education Foundation

A globally competitive workforce requires a well-educated population able to take on the opportunities of today and the challenges of tomorrow. Education is the means to opportunity, and the foundation of a knowledge-based, innovation-driven economy.

A highly skilled workforce is not only the backbone of the current economy, but the means by which the province will be able to realize its full economic potential. Ensuring that the workforce remains current on global trends, and emerging workforce



demands, through education, training, and retraining is key to competitiveness in a global economy, and a key to attracting and retaining business and industry.

The province's four-year plan *Learning for Life II: Brighter Futures Together*, released in May 2005, continues to focus on raising the bar, and closing the gap, among students in the public education system.

Ensuring that our students are healthy and physically active remains a priority. A continued strong focus on mathematics and literacy, coupled with initiatives to support teacher professional learning and school-improvement planning, highlights the province's continued efforts to improve the quality of education by addressing the fundamental needs of Nova Scotia's education system.

Smaller class sizes in the early years, support for core professional services for students with special needs, and clear testing to measure the progress of our students are important components of this comprehensive strategy.

Initiatives focused on keeping students engaged, such as the Options and Opportunities program, continue to assist high school students who are not succeeding, or not engaged by the high school program, so that they can establish a career plan, complete high school, and find meaningful work, or continue to post-secondary education.

Funding for post-secondary education is also an ongoing priority. The province will provide more funding for universities and community colleges.

Funds will target direct assistance to universities to lower tuition rates. Funding to the Nova Scotia Community College will support movement toward the addition of 2500 seats.

The province will also add more funding for training of health-care professions. This will mean additional nursing seats and medical residencies at hospitals. There will also be research and educational grants to Dalhousie University and mentoring programs for international medical doctors in family medicine.

Workforce Investment

The Skills Nova Scotia Framework was developed to guide the province's labour force skill-development efforts. The framework recognizes and builds on the fact that government, employers, unions, education and training providers, non-profit organizations, communities, and Nova Scotians all have a role to play in the development of a skilled and knowledgeable workforce.

A review has resulted in recommendations to revise and refresh the framework to ensure it is still appropriate and focused on the right goals and objectives to meet current realities.

A communication strategy will be implemented to support and publicize the

revised framework, which will serve as the province's guide to developing and implementing provincial programs, services, and initiatives for building a skilled and adaptable workforce.

A comprehensive 4R strategy (recruit, retrain, repatriate, recruit) will also be embedded in the renewed Skills Nova Scotia Framework. This strategy will help provide the focus and support necessary to address the ever-increasing pressures on the Nova Scotia workforce, such as growth in global competition, the falling birthrate, the impending retirement of the baby boom generation, out-migration, and rapid changes in technology.

Open to the World

A highly skilled workforce will enable the province to realize its full economic potential, but Nova Scotia is currently facing a shortage of skilled workers in a number of occupations.

The situation is expected to worsen as demographic impacts are felt over the coming years. Yet skilled workers moving to Nova Scotia may face many barriers and restrictions that limit their meaningful participation in the workforce.

Barriers may include not having credentials and experience assessed and validated by regulatory bodies. There may also be an inability to find clear pathways to successful labour-market attachment. Internationally trained workers experience additional difficulties having credentials

recognized by regulatory bodies and employers, which result in unemployment or underemployment.

The Department of Education and the Office of Immigration, in collaboration with other government agencies, will carry out a consultation process to explore solutions to the barriers of international credential recognition and interprovincial labour mobility.

Globally Competitive Connections

Canada's Atlantic Gateway

Nova Scotia is closer to India than anywhere on the west coast of Canada by 3,200 kilometers. Where time is money, and distance is time, establishing Nova Scotia as Canada's East Coast Gateway to North America is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create a lasting and profound impact on the economic future of our region and therefore it is a strategic opportunity with real benefits.

Growth in the global economy and world trade is now being driven by Asian countries, particularly in the emerging markets of China and India. There is substantial opportunity to expand trade and commerce through national transportation gateways. Larger container ships are being built to transport more goods and to take advantage of economies of scale. Within a few years, the largest container ships will carry up to 10,000 containers, far exceeding the capacity of the Panama Canal. The use of larger ships is a key factor in creating hub-and-spoke



transportation centres. The flood of trans-Pacific trade, congestion on North America's West Coast, and huge container ships make the Suez Canal route from Asia to North America an attractive alternative for international shipping companies. Nova Scotia is a natural intercontinental portal to North America with its proximity to markets, ice-free ports, and excellent rail, truck, and air connections.

While Nova Scotia is a natural choice for Canada's East Coast Gateway, U.S. ports such as New York and Norfolk, Va., are gearing up to take advantage of this opportunity. Nova Scotia must act quickly to capitalize on the benefits that can be realized.

Gateway will always be led by private-sector investment, but the province will play a crucial supporting role. Canada's East Coast Gateway needs to be developed right here in Nova Scotia, and it will require support from the federal government to enable the province to realize its full gateway potential.

A recent study by the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council supports Nova Scotia's Atlantic Gateway initiative as a means to strengthen Canada's competitive advantage in the global economy. The report confirms the Atlantic Gateway has real potential to increase Canada's international trade and economic development opportunities. A report prepared by the Asia Pacific Foundation further highlights the advantages that Nova Scotia has over U.S.

East Coast ports in trade with India and Southeast Asia as the next generation of giant containerships comes into service.

Beyond container traffic, Nova Scotia would also use gateway-related infrastructures to increasingly become a home port for cruise-ship traffic and to enhance Halifax Stanfield International Airport's position as an entry point for travellers from other countries.

Making Nova Scotia Canada's East Coast Gateway will mean faster delivery of goods through our ports, greater access to markets, securing a key position in global supply chains, and jobs in Nova Scotia.

Achieving gateway status will, in turn, set off a chain reaction that would see Nova Scotia attract more and more private-sector investment, expand its recognized pool of transportation and logistics expertise, and elevate the province on the global trading map.

2. Seizing Economic Opportunities

Preparing for good jobs and careers, here at home

The government will seize new economic opportunities for Nova Scotia by retaining youth, retraining older workers, the unemployed and underemployed. Attract Nova Scotians back home, keep students in the province and develop an immigration process with the business community that attracts thousands of new Nova Scotians.

Establishing winning conditions such as a globally competitive, sustainable business climate, a highly trained and digitally connected skilled workforce, and opportunities for global connections, means that Nova Scotia will be ready to take full advantage of new economic opportunities.

Investing in training and technology will mean Nova Scotia can provide opportunities for youth right here at home. Increasing the Graduate Tax Credit to \$2,000 is just one strategy

It also means Nova Scotia can be a strong player in the global economy, and in the global marketplace. And one way to do that is to invest in broadband.

Building improved research, development, and innovation will also help Nova Scotia build knowledge businesses. Creating initiatives to encourage more research and development will give existing businesses more opportunity to expand and remain competitive, while helping attract firms

with high research and development expenditures to Nova Scotia.

Seizing economic opportunities also means being a leader in the clean and green economy. The province can play a lead role in adopting green technology for economic, social, and environmental reasons.

Leader in Information Technology

Wired to the World

Nova Scotia is committed to using information technology as an important economic enabler. By the end of 2009, all Nova Scotians will have access to high-speed Internet.

It is not surprising that the connection to broadband Internet services has been likened to the electrification of the province at the turn of the last century. Broadband is quickly becoming less a luxury and more a necessity. Investments in this technology will benefit every citizen, business, and community in Nova Scotia.

With a commitment to see Nova Scotia become an IT and innovation leader, the province will invest in the expansion of high-speed broadband to all Nova Scotians by the end of 2009. This is a priority, no matter where they live.

Providing broadband Internet service to all communities in Nova Scotia will stimulate growth and business opportunities in rural areas. The lack of such services in rural areas is a major barrier to attracting, and retaining,



business. Many business services, from tax filing to order placement and reservations systems, now require, or are made more efficient through, broadband access.

Broadband service will also allow Nova Scotia businesses to compete in a global market and enhance export opportunities.

Business Attraction

Attracting world-class companies to Nova Scotia, and positioning home-grown companies to compete globally, are priorities for the province.

Nova Scotia has the right ingredients to be a world-class place to do business, but we must build on our strengths to create better conditions for companies to set up, grow, and prosper. Given the competition, the province must be smart about how it accentuates its competitive advantage. This means understanding our assets and building the new Nova Scotia's economy on those strengths.

Information technology is innovation in action. Whether in fishing, mining, farming, health care, government, education, or services sectors, information technology improves the efficiency of every sector of our economy. Government will further invest in other technology innovations throughout the province.

Increasingly, globally successful technology, financial, and aerospace firms like RIM, Citco, and L-3, as well as home-grown companies like Xwave, IMP, and

Sports Direct, have recognized Nova Scotia's strength as a leading IT base in North America by opening new, or expanding, IT and IT-enabled operations, in Nova Scotia.

Companies like these are in Nova Scotia because we have three key ingredients for success: a talented and creative workforce fed by a robust post-secondary network, the right infrastructure, and a competitive cost environment. This is a powerful combination that separates Nova Scotia from our competitors.

Being a world-class information technology hub levels the playing field and enables Nova Scotia to compete on the global stage. Investments in IT will not only create the conditions to attract world-class companies in every sector, but they will also give home-grown industries all across the province the ability to compete in a global market.

Leader in R&D and Innovation

Agriculture Strategy

Agriculture is an important part of our rural economy; however, like many sectors in the global economy, it is facing a new set of challenges and opportunities.

The Strategic Infrastructure Investment Fund will be a catalyst for moving our agriculture industry toward improved profitability and competitiveness.

The four-year fund is targeted to agri-food businesses and groups of businesses that have innovative projects that will create winning conditions and positively impact the industry overall.

Successful initiatives will be supported by strong business cases aimed at accelerated growth, value-chain partnerships, sound business management, and market readiness.

The Strategic Investment Fund will capitalize on Nova Scotia's competitive advantages that support innovation and long-term economic growth and development.

Opportunities For Sustainable Prosperity

Opportunities for Sustainable Prosperity (2006) sets Nova Scotia on an economic development path that integrates economic, social, and environmental systems.

Prosperity will be achieved and sustained over the long term by building on our strengths—the things that set Nova Scotia apart. We must look to innovation, creativity, and resourcefulness to find new ways of doing business. *Opportunities for Sustainable Prosperity (2006)* provides the framework to do this.

Recent global pressures, and the trend toward a shrinking labour force, emphasize the need to optimize productivity in Nova Scotia. Finding ways to increase productivity will be necessary to ensure that living standards continue to rise and that resources are available to continue investing in areas such as health care, education, and the environment.

One of the primary ways the private sector can improve productivity is through the adoption of state-of-the-art technologies along with new and improved processes.

In 2007–2008, a strategic framework will be developed to help Nova Scotia become a leader in research and development and innovation. This framework will support private-sector investment in research and development, commercialization, and new technologies that can help make Nova Scotia businesses more competitive in the global marketplace.

The Nova Scotia economy needs to invest in the capacity for research, development, and innovation to improve productivity and competitiveness. The Nova Scotia Research and Innovation Trust (NSRIT) provides provincial research funding and helps to lever federal funding for Nova Scotia projects.

In conjunction with the Department of Economic Development, in 2007–2008, InNOVAcorp will continue to manage the Early Stage Commercialization Fund (ESCF) to review, advise, and support the early-stage technology commercialization of the best post-secondary institution research.

Working closely with the province's Industry Liaison Offices, the purpose of ESCF is to provide funding and "go-to-market" support for projects that have achieved, or are close to achieving, a prototype stage and are approaching market readiness with a possibility of attracting industrial partners or investment.



Leader in Clean and Green Economy

Thinking Green

Environmentally sustainable economic growth recognizes that the economic value of the province's environmental assets is essential to the long-term competitiveness of the province.

In February 2007, the province announced that the majority of government decisions would be screened to measure environmental impacts. The Deputy Minister's Forum on Sustainable Prosperity was created to fulfil this commitment.

The forum will help operationalize the province's economic growth strategy—*Opportunities for Sustainable Prosperity (2006)*—by developing a decision support framework for government that will guide analysis and provide direction for the investments and policies necessary to make the environment greener and cleaner while achieving our economic growth potential.

The forum's objectives are to improve government's ability to integrate environmental considerations into policies, programs, and practices in accordance with the principles of sustainable development. To this end, we will ensure that policies, guidelines, standards, legislation, regulations, strategies, programs, projects, and government operations will be aligned with the decision framework.

In addition to the deputy's forum, the province intends to provide a focus for Nova Scotia's overall environmental goals, establishing and improving measures in areas of environmental interest to all Nova Scotians.

On March 22, 2007, a bill titled "An Act Respecting Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity" was introduced in the Legislature, which enforces the government's belief that a healthy economy needs a healthy environment and that strengthening our natural world is good business.

A wasteful economy is an inefficient economy. Pollution is the failure to make the most, environmentally and economically, of our resources. Many would disagree, but businesses, governments, and citizens need to understand that the bar is being raised for all of us and there is no opting out. The evidence is clear, the climate is changing and human actions are at least partly responsible.

The objective of the bill is to ensure that future generations have access to clean air, lakes, rivers, and streams. It will set a protected areas target of 12 per cent of our total land mass, and by 2009 there will be no net loss of wetlands. The bill will also set standards for municipal drinking water and wastewater treatment, an 18.5 per cent target for renewable energy production, and an EnerGuide rating for new housing construction. Additional goals include setting targets for reductions in mercury

emissions, greenhouse gases, as well as adopting California-style emission standards for new automobiles.

The government will also play a role in improving the province's environmental performance, including growing renewable energy sources, reducing dependence on imported sources of energy, and introducing standards for electricity generated from renewable sources such as solar, wind, biomass, and tidal. There is also opportunity to assist with demonstration projects such as Fundy Tidal Power, which could eventually achieve commercial maturity.

The application of innovative environmental technologies will also enhance the province's environmental performance and self-sufficiency. Moving forward on natural gas conversion projects for health and educational facilities will be a means to this goal.

The green technology movement represents another opportunity for the province, particularly in business growth. As corporations and industries position their goods and services as green and seek to be more environmentally sensitive, the province will build on expertise in bio-waste utilization, waste management technologies, and waste management engineering to help support and enhance research, development, and commercialization of green technologies.

3. Building for Individuals, Families, And Communities

Healthier children, safer communities

The government will create healthy Nova Scotians and communities by helping to ensure a more active, safe, and vibrant province.

The province is building for individuals, families, and communities by taking steps so Nova Scotians are healthier and more active, have accessible services, and enjoy safe communities, neighbourhoods, and workplaces, and vibrant communities.

We know it is critical to our province's future that all Nova Scotians are able to lead healthy, active and injury-free lives. All Nova Scotians need the knowledge, skills, and opportunities to make healthy choices in their everyday lives. A focus on individual responsibility coupled with societal commitment is critical as our population ages and makes increasing demands on the publicly funded health care system.

Protecting public health includes strengthening the public health system, ensuring emergency preparedness, addressing important health issues in the province such as healthy eating, supporting youth, and encouraging volunteerism.

A strong, vibrant economy relies on a population that is healthy, productive, and safe.



Healthy, Active Nova Scotians

Public Health Renewal

After SARS, Nova Scotia was the first province to undertake an external review of its public health system. In April 2006, *The Renewal of Public Health in Nova Scotia: Building a Public Health System that Meets the Needs of Nova Scotians* was released and identified 21 actions for system renewal.

These actions focus on strengthening the provincial level of the system and enhancing and strengthening the local level of the system, which includes district health authorities. Enhancing how the public health system works with, and across, sectors, and building the infrastructure to support a robust and responsive public health system will also be a focus.

In response to these findings, in 2007–2008, the province will appoint a Public Health Leader. The province will begin to strengthen the population health assessment and surveillance capacity. It will also provide infrastructure support to the local level of the system and develop an environmental health secretariat that ensures collaboration across multiple departments responsible for environmental health. Finally, the Public Health Leader will strengthen the public health laboratory capacity within our province and initiate a communicable disease surveillance system with federal partners.

Investing over time will ensure we are building a strong, responsive, and competent public health system that will make Nova Scotia the healthiest province in the country.

Accessibility Services in Vibrant Communities

Continuing Care

The Continuing Care Strategy is a 10-year plan to enhance and expand Nova Scotia's continuing-care system. By building on current community support, increasing local solutions, and ensuring care options are available when and where they are needed, the strategy will create a system that supports Nova Scotians in their desire to live well in a place they can call home.

Providing programs and services such as home care, respite, and palliative care, in homes and communities, is a main focus of the strategy. This approach is the most economical, provides the greatest ability to be flexible to diverse needs, and offers individuals and families the highest level of independence and quality of life.

Ensuring that Nova Scotians have access to long-term care when they need it is just as important. This strategy calls for 1,320 new long-term-care spaces in the next eight years in response to the aging population and community needs.

Prescription Drug Coverage for Families

Nova Scotia's current pharmacare programs provide drug coverage to about 23 per cent of the province's families. Coverage is focused on children of low-income parents and seniors, areas where the need is greatest. The province recognizes, however, that there are other Nova Scotians who are in need of this service.

An analysis of prescription-drug coverage in jurisdictions across Canada found that about 19.5 per cent of Nova Scotian families have no drug insurance. Some of these families may have a need for moderate to substantial prescription-drug coverage. And, for them, the escalating cost of prescription drugs is a significant burden.

The province will expand its pharmacare programs to provide uninsured Nova Scotians the opportunity to join a publicly subsidized prescription-drug insurance program. This expansion would almost double the number of Nova Scotian families covered by a provincial pharmacare program.

Health and Social Services for Nova Scotians

Continuum of Care is an integrated system of health and social services and support for Nova Scotians of all ages and their families to enable them to reach and maintain their potential and dignity in a place they call home.

Collectively, the Department of Community Services and the Department of Health are committed to providing care and supports, based on identified needs across the continuum. The client base includes frail elderly, individuals with intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities, and/or severe and persistent mental illness, and individuals with chronic, debilitating diseases. This continuum encompasses the age spectrum from children and youth to adults and seniors and comprises a range of programs that include health services, community and income supports, housing, and employment.

Jointly, the departments of Health and Community Services will develop a caregiver strategy. Caregivers are partners in care and clients in their own right. A comprehensive caregiver strategy will include a menu of supports that offers choice and meets social, economic, and health needs.

Community Services is also conducting a residential redesign initiative to ensure quality of supports and services to their clients by having effective, sustainable



residential option available to them. The Department of Health is developing an infrastructure review strategy as well. These two initiatives will complement one another to ensure a more seamless transition for Nova Scotians when they need to move from one level of support to another.

Safe Communities and Workplaces

Youth Strategy

In response to the Nunn Commission, the province has committed to developing a youth strategy to provide improved prevention, intervention, and enforcement targeting youth at risk.

Better integration and coordination of services across several departments will be achieved through the creation of a new family and youth services division within the Department of Community Services and the hiring of a senior official responsible for ensuring that the strategy is effectively implemented.

Programs under the strategy will include enhanced, as well as new, programs from the Departments of Justice, Health, and Community Services, which recognize that efforts from early intervention to enforcement of court orders are required to have a positive impact on youth who are involved in or are at risk to be involved in the justice system.

More mental health services to reduce delays in court-ordered assessments, new attendance centre and bail supervision programs, and more Crown attorneys specializing in youth crime are some of the improvements to the youth justice system being implemented as recommended by the Nunn Commission.

Increased support for families and youth, particularly in the areas of early intervention and family counselling, and better collaboration and involvement with schools and school resources are also significant aspects of this initiative.

The efficient and effective response by police and other public safety agencies is essential, not only to deter crime but to reduce the fear of crime in communities. Changes to the federal Youth Criminal Justice Act are also needed to ensure public protection and safety.

Law Enforcement

Safer communities are a priority for government, and several significant initiatives are already under way.

The Minister's Task Force on Safer Streets and Communities is holding meetings across the province to help identify and promote initiatives that are making positive impacts in communities.

The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act allows individuals to file a complaint with a new public safety investigative unit of the Department of

Justice that could result in the closure of locations that are home to prostitution or illegal liquor, drugs, or gaming.

Government has also provided funding for 250 new police officers over four years. All municipalities in the province will receive at least one new officer by the spring of 2008. Small municipal units will receive one to two officers, while Halifax Regional Municipality and Cape Breton Regional Municipality will receive proportionally more of the total allocation.

Priority issues, when considering the distribution of the new officers, include providing officers to staff activities addressing organized crime, street crime, child exploitation, illegal drugs, and school safety.

Vibrant Communities

Volunteerism

Volunteerism also builds vibrant communities. Volunteers are the backbone of sport, recreation, and social, cultural, and spiritual sectors, but demographic, economic, and attitudinal shifts are eroding our base of volunteer capacity.

Volunteerism focuses on encouraging Nova Scotians to participate in voluntary organizations, improving the capacity of organizations to benefit from the contribution of volunteers and enhancing the volunteer experience. The Provincial Government values, respects and actively supports the volunteer sector. Volunteers

and volunteer organizations are essential to the planning and delivery of most community-based programs and services. This appreciation is reflected in a \$250 tax credit to volunteer firefighters, which will increase in time to \$500

A plan for government to support and grow volunteerism in Nova Scotia will be implemented in 2007–2008. This plan will include developing partnerships within government and with volunteers in Nova Scotia so government and communities can work together to address the issues facing volunteers and provide necessary support. It will be supported interdepartmentally through member departments of the Volunteerism Interdepartmental Coordinating Committee (VICC), in consultation with provincial volunteer stakeholders.

Cultural Diversity

The province recognizes that instilling pride in our cultural diversity creates Nova Scotia's identity and sense of place and lays a foundation that will help keep Nova Scotians in the province and build vibrant communities.

Part of the province's commitment to our various and diverse communities remains focused on ensuring access to a greater number of government services in both of Canada's official languages.

Additional initiatives include providing further support for the African Nova Scotia community with a newly opened satellite



office in Cape Breton. Early initiatives will focus on employment, youth, parent support groups, and access and retention strategies for African Nova Scotian community college students.

Enhancing Nova Scotians' knowledge and awareness of the Mi'kmaw community will also remain a priority for the province. Education strategies will build a deeper appreciation for Nova Scotia's founding people.

A newly funded Office of Gaelic Affairs will develop educational materials, initiatives, and programs that will help create greater awareness, appreciation, and understanding of Nova Scotia's Gaelic language and culture.

4. A New Democracy for Nova Scotia

Engaging youth and advancing democracy

The government will create a new democracy for Nova Scotia with campaign and political party finance reforms, senate term limits and elections, and by encouraging voter participation.

For years, Nova Scotians have been able to take pride in the strength of their democracy. But if voter turnout is an indication of support for democracy or for political and governmental institutions, Nova Scotians should be concerned.

In the June 7, 1960, provincial election, 82 per cent of the electorate voted. Forty-six

years later, on June 13, 2006, just 60 per cent of Nova Scotians exercised their right. While similar voting results are echoed in many jurisdictions across Canada and around the world, the province believes it must do what it can to rekindle the fire. Especially in these times when democratic institutions are being threatened, we cannot take for granted the democracy that so many have fought to promote and protect.

While the state of our democracy is the responsibility of each and every Nova Scotian, it is fair to expect government to take actions that will modernize our political system, to make it more open, transparent, and accountable. Accordingly, the province is pushing for limits on the terms of senators, to eight years, and for an elected senate. It has reformed campaign financing. And it has formed a Select Committee on Participation in the Democratic Process, which will travel the province to gather public input.

Campaign and Political Reform

Elections and election campaigns in Nova Scotia need to become more transparent, open, and modernized.

The federal government and some provinces have new legislation that levels the playing fields between parties and candidates and makes their political systems more open, transparent, and accountable. Through a combination of public financing and limiting campaign contributions by individuals, corporations,

and unions, recent legislation passed in the House of Assembly will spread the cost of our democratic system more equally among the general public. This opens our system to better scrutiny and accountability and helps remove the perception that the political process is open to manipulation by individuals, companies, or unions. It is hoped that reforms such as these will help improve voter turnout.

Senate Term Limits and Elections

The Premier of Nova Scotia has provided the Prime Minister of Canada with written support for the plan to reform the Senate. The first proposed reform, Bill S-4, was introduced on June 1, 2006, to provide for a term of eight years for senators. The province supports this and has written to all Nova Scotia senators, encouraging them to vote for the legislation.

Under the current constitutional framework, senators can technically serve for a term of 45 years from age 30 to age 75. Eight-year terms will ensure that the Senate experiences a regular renewal of ideas, perspectives, and people.

Bill S-4 is a step towards reinvigorating the Senate, to enable it to become a respected central organ of government rather than the object of derision that it has become in the minds of some. Improving the Senate is an important step in lowering voter cynicism toward our political process.

Voter Engagement and Participation

We will also engage youth and advance our democracy. We have started with campaign and political party finance reforms, and there will be more positive steps. For these, the province awaits the report of the Select Committee on Participation in the Democratic Process.

The province intends to do what it can to restore public confidence, participation, and appreciation for our political process. As the system becomes more transparent, open, and accountable, confidence in our government processes and political system should improve. This in turn should increase voter turnout and attract new people to the political process.



Business Plans 2007–2008

Department

Agriculture

Community Services

Economic Development

Education

Energy

Environment and Labour

Finance

Fisheries and Aquaculture

Health

**Health Promotion
and Protection**

Justice

Natural Resources

**Service Nova Scotia
and Municipal Relations**

Tourism, Culture and Heritage

**Transportation
and Public Works**

Public Service Entity

**Aboriginal Affairs, Office of
Acadian Affairs, Office of**

**African Nova Scotian
Affairs, Office of**

Communications Nova Scotia

Conserve Nova Scotia

**Emergency Management
Office**

**Freedom of Information
and Protection of Privacy
Review Office**

Human Rights Commission

Immigration, Office of

Intergovernmental Affairs

Ombudsman, Office of the

Public Prosecution Service

Public Service Commission

Senior Citizens' Secretariat

**Status of Women,
Advisory Council on**

Web Address

www.gov.ns.ca/nsaf/ (Click on Statistics & Publications)

www.gov.ns.ca/coms/ (Click on Publications & Reports)

www.gov.ns.ca/econ/ (Click on Publications)

www.ednet.ns.ca/ (Click on Document Depot)

www.gov.ns.ca/energy/ (Click on About the Department)

www.gov.ns.ca/enla/ (Click on Publications)

www.gov.ns.ca/finance/ (Click on Publications and Reports)

www.gov.ns.ca/nsaf/ (Click on Publications)

www.gov.ns.ca/health/ (Click on Reports)

www.gov.ns.ca/ohp/ (Click on 2007–2008 Business Plan)

www.gov.ns.ca/just/ (Click on Publications)

www.gov.ns.ca/natr/ (Click on 2007–2008 Business Plan)

www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/ (Click on Our Business Plan)

www.gov.ns.ca/dtc/ (Click on 2007–2008 Business Plan)

www.gov.ns.ca/tran/ (Click on Publications)

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www.gov.ns.ca/abor/ (Click on Business Plan)

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Français: www.gov.ns.ca/acadian/f/

www.gov.ns.ca/ansa/ (Click on Business Plan 2007–08)

gov.ns.ca/cmns (Click on Business Plan 2007–08)

www.conservens.ca

www.gov.ns.ca/emo/

www.foipop.ns.ca/ (Click on Publications)

www.gov.ns.ca/humanrights/ (Click on Publications)

www.novascotiaimmigration.com (Click on 2007–08 Business Plan)

www.gov.ns.ca/iga/ (Click on Publications)

www.gov.ns.ca/ombu/ (Click on Business Plan)

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www.gov.ns.ca/psc/ (Click on Business Plan)

www.gov.ns.ca/scs/ (Click on 2007–2008 Business Plan)

www.gov.ns.ca/staw/ (Click on Publications)

Sydney Tar Ponds Agency	www.tarpondscleanup.ca/ (Click on Library)
Treasury and Policy Board	www.gov.ns.ca/tpb/ (Click on Business Plan 2007-08)
Utility and Review Board, NS	www.nsuarb.ca/ (Click on About Us)
Voluntary Planning	www.gov.ns.ca/vp/ (Click on Publications)
Crown Corporation	Web Address
Art Gallery of Nova Scotia	www.agns.gov.ns.ca (Click on Corporate Info)
Halifax-Dartmouth Bridge Commission	www.hdbc.ca (Click on Business Information)
InNOVAcorp	www.innovacorp.ca/ (See under Corporate Publications)
Nova Scotia Business Incorporated	www.novascotiabusiness.com/en/ (Click on About Us)
Nova Scotia Crop and Livestock Insurance Commission	www.gov.ns.ca/nsaf/ci (Click on Business Plan 2007-08)
Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board	www.gov.ns.ca/nsaf/loanboards/farmlb/ (Click on Business Plan)
Nova Scotia Film Development Corporation	www.film.ns.ca/corp_report.asp
Nova Scotia Fisheries and Aquaculture Loan Board	www.gov.ns.ca/nsaf/loanboards/fishlb/
Nova Scotia Gaming Corporation	www.nsgc.ca/busPlans.php
Nova Scotia Government Fund Limited	Included in the Crown Corporations Business Plans Report www.gov.ns.ca/tpb/publications
Nova Scotia Harness Racing Incorporated	Included in the Crown Corporations Business Plans Report www.gov.ns.ca/tpb/publications
Nova Scotia Housing Development Corporation	Included in the Crown Corporations Business Plans Report www.gov.ns.ca/tpb/publications
Nova Scotia Lands Inc./ Harbourside Commercial Park Inc.	Included in the Crown Corporations Business Plans Report www.gov.ns.ca/tpb/publications
Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation	www.thenslc.com/ (Click on About NSLC)
Nova Scotia Municipal Finance Corporation	www.gov.ns.ca/nsmfc (Click on Business Plan)
Nova Scotia Power Finance Corporation	Included in the Crown Corporations Business Plans Report www.gov.ns.ca/tpb/publications
Rockingham Terminal Incorporated	Included in the Crown Corporations Business Plans Report www.gov.ns.ca/tpb/publications
Sydney Environmental Resources Limited/Sydney Steel Corporation	Included in the Crown Corporations Business Plans Report www.gov.ns.ca/tpb/publications
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