

Strategic Plan

2025-2026

Municipal and
Community Affairs





MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

In accordance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, I am pleased to present the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs' 2025–2026 Strategic Plan, which outlines the Department's priorities for the period from October 29, 2025, to March 31, 2026.

During this time, the Department will focus on advancing the economic, social, and environmental sustainability of communities through effective programs and services, while supporting the new government's emphasis on transparency, accountability, and results delivery.

The Department will work to modernize municipal legislation, strengthen partnerships with communities and stakeholders, and promote sustainable local governance. The addition of the Community Engagement Branch further aligns with the Department's priorities and enhances our ability to engage residents and stakeholders by leading public engagement and consultation activities across government, ensuring meaningful opportunities to inform policy and program development.

The Department is committed to working collaboratively with local governments and partners during this period and beyond to build strong, vibrant communities across Newfoundland and Labrador.

As Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, I am accountable for the preparation of this plan and for achieving the goals and objectives contained herein.

Sincerely,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Tibbs'.

Hon. Chris Tibbs
Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs

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Departmental Overview

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is a category 1 government entity under the **Transparency and Accountability Act** that supports the economic, social, and environmental sustainability of municipalities, communities, and regions through the delivery of effective programs and services. The Department operates through two branches:

- Municipal and Community Support
- Community Engagement

The Department supports the strategic directions of the government by:

- helping build a municipal environment conducive to economic growth and sustainability;
- positioning communities for long-term success;
- working collaboratively across multiple sectors to improve services and outcomes for residents; and
- leading and supporting public engagement activities across government to ensure residents, communities, and stakeholders have structured opportunities to inform policy and program development.

Vision

The vision of the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is to strengthen and support sustainable communities which are proactive in working collaboratively together in the creation of greater regional cooperation to provide shared services.

Mandate

The mandate of the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is to advance the economic, social and environmental sustainability of municipalities, communities, regions and the province through the delivery of effective programs, services, and supports, and lead and support all engagement activities across the government.

Lines of Business

- **Local Governance and Land Use Planning**

Responsible for the administration and interpretation of 26 municipal and provincial statutes and associated regulations, municipal election oversight, municipal training, community relocations, and community restructuring. The Division's Land Use Planning unit is responsible for the administration of the **Urban and Rural Planning Act, 2000**, review and registration of municipal planning documents, the development of land use plans (e.g., provincial road zoning plans, regional plans, protected area plans, and local area plans), and providing advice on matters related to land use/municipal planning and development regulations.

- **Municipal Finance**

Provides financial assistance and guidance to local governments on funding programs, borrowing, debt servicing, and financial compliance. The Division also provides financial assistance through Special Assistance Grants to assist local governments and related organizations for emergencies and financial difficulties, and Municipal Operating Grants to assist small and medium-sized municipalities with operational costs, service delivery, and administrative expenses. The Division is responsible for the operationalization of the Canada Community-Building Fund Program, a federal program that provides stable and predictable infrastructure funding annually to communities across the province.

- **Municipal Support**

Responsible for ongoing support and guidance to all cities, towns, and local service districts on local government issues. The Division supports municipal operations by offering day-to-day front-line assistance on administrative, financial, and legislative matters to help local governments meet their legislative and operational responsibilities. There are three Municipal Support Regional Offices (i.e., St. John's, Gander, Corner Brook), which serve as a primary contact between the Department and local governments throughout the province.

- **Policy and Strategic Planning**

Coordinates and supports the Department's policy and strategic planning agenda through the development of a policy and planning framework to help support a system of local government that efficiently provides services and facilities to residents of the province. The Division is also responsible for the Department's accountability and transparency requirements, including the departmental multi-year strategic plan, annual reports and departmental program evaluation.

- **Strategic Financial Management**

This shared services Division provides financial management and operational support to the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, four additional government departments, and one agency. The Division is the primary point of contact for all Agencies, Boards, and Commissions' financial reporting through these departments. It is also the main liaison with the Department of Finance and Treasury Board Secretariat related to financial functions, budget submissions, public accounts, and budget monitoring submitted by departments and Agencies, Boards, and Commissions.

- **Community Engagement**

Supports collaboration and connection at the municipal level by creating structured opportunities for residents, local organizations, and governments to interact, share perspectives, and co-develop solutions that strengthen community relationships and trust, inform policy development, and build community capacity. Community Engagement is also the governmental lead for the design and delivery of public engagement and consultation activities for core departments within the Provincial Government.

Staff and Budget

The Department's gross expenditure budget for 2025-26 is \$194,357,800, with planned related revenue of approximately \$33,518,200 for a net expenditure of \$160,839,600.

The Department has 87 positions, currently with 69 active employees located in seven

locations across the province (St. John's, Gander, Corner Brook, Placentia, Burin, New-Wes-Valley, and St. Anthony).

Division	Number of Active	
	Employees	Net Budget (\$)
Executive Support	8	1,217,900
Strategic Financial Management	11	863,300
Policy and Strategic Planning	4	420,300
Regional Support	15	1,069,200
Municipal Finance		
Internal Budget	8	637,300
Program Funds	n/a	46,978,700
Local Governance and Planning	10	1,122,200
Canada Community-Building Fund	4	107,565,800
Community Engagement	9	964,900
Total	69	160,839,600

Primary Clients

The primary clients of the Department include:

- Local governments consisting of three cities, 266 towns, 172 local service districts, and five Inuit Community Governments,
- 120+ unincorporated areas, and
- Other stakeholders:
 - Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador,
 - Professional Municipal Administrators of Newfoundland and Labrador,
 - Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Professional Planners,
 - Municipal Assessment Agency, and
 - Community residents.
- Other government departments.

Reporting Entities

Under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, government entities are also required to prepare plans and annual reports. In the case of the Department, this refers to the [Municipal Assessment Agency](#).

For more information on the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, please visit the Department's website at <https://www.gov.nl.ca/mca/>.

Legislation

Assessment Act, 2006

Avian Emblem Act

City of Corner Brook Act

City of Mount Pearl Act

City of St. John's Act

City of St. John's Municipal Taxation Act

Coat of Arms Act

Commemoration Day Act

Crown Corporations Local Taxation Act

Evacuated Communities Act, 2016

Municipal Affairs Act

Municipal Authorities Amendment Act, 1991

Municipal Elections Act

Provincial Anthem Act

Provincial Flag Act

Regional Service Boards Act, 2012

Remembrance Day Act

St. John's Centennial Foundation Act

St. John's Municipal Council Parks Act

Standard Time Act

Floral Emblem Act
Municipal Conduct Act
Mineral Emblem Act

**Taxation of Utilities and Cable Television
Companies Act**
Towns and Local Service Districts Act
Urban and Rural Planning Act, 2000

Strategic Issues

Issue 1 - Supporting Local Governments through Enhanced Processes and Legislation

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is committed to exploring solutions that will meet the needs of current and future local governments and residents. This includes providing local governments with the necessary tools to explore new and innovative ways for municipal service delivery to residents, supporting community capacity building and encouraging economic activity.

As a priority, the Department will advance and implement changes to municipal legislation to ensure an effective and modern framework for municipal governance. This work will also support the Department's ongoing commitment to promote greater regional collaboration with respect to service sharing among communities.

Goal:

By March 31, 2026, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs will have enhanced processes and municipal legislation to support stronger local governance.

Indicators:

- Implemented new enabling municipal legislation to provide all municipalities with increased flexibility and autonomy, while also ensuring appropriate levels of accountability.
- Updated the **Municipal Elections Act** to ensure municipalities have modern election legislation to ensure strong governance.
- Implemented processes to modernize operations and deliver services more efficiently.

Objective 2025-2026:

By March 31, 2026, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs will have enacted modern municipal legislation for all municipalities and updated the **Municipal**

Elections Act, as well as supported the 2025 municipal elections.

Indicators:

- Finalized draft legislation for a new Cities Act.
- Finalized drafting instructions for a new City of St. John's Act.
- Commenced review of the **Municipal Elections Act**.
- Provided additional financial and human resource provisions to support the 2025 Municipal General Election.

Issue 2 – Community Collaboration and Service Sharing

The Department is focusing on expanding regional services, working with local governments to identify service and administrative gaps, and working with communities to encourage service sharing and community collaboration. To ensure successful outcomes, communities will be encouraged to initiate inter-community relationship building, which can lead to increased community cooperation and collaboration. The Department will encourage, incentivize, and, where possible, facilitate community cooperation and collaboration.

Goal:

By March 31, 2026, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs will have supported improved community collaboration and shared services across municipalities and regions.

Indicators:

- Allocated \$500,000 for initiatives by communities that support regional services and enhanced community cooperation that help address service gaps and build capacity through a collaborative, shared services approach.
- Completed a community sustainability assessment tool for all municipalities and local service districts to identify service gaps.
- Implemented an inter-departmental committee to determine meaningful ways to incentivize community collaboration and service sharing.

Objective 2025-2026:

By March 31, 2026, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs will have implemented recommendations from the interdepartmental review committee on community collaboration, incentivizing community collaboration and service sharing through existing Government programs and services.

Indicators:

- Established the Interdepartmental Working Group on Community Collaboration to identify opportunities to encourage and enhance community collaboration.
- Advanced the development of the community sustainability self-assessment tool to inform future shared service initiatives.
- Facilitated access to resources and information to support community collaboration and shared service delivery.

Issue 3 – Regional Service Delivery

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs will undertake a review of the **Regional Service Boards Act, 2012** and Regional Service Board operations to identify potential additional regional services that could be provided to local governments and residents.

Goal:

By March 31, 2026, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs will have reviewed the **Regional Services Boards Act, 2012**, including stakeholder and public consultations, to determine if there is a renewed role for the boards to improve access to services and service delivery.

Indicators:

- Updated the **Regional Service Boards Act, 2012** to improve service sharing and enhance community sustainability.
- Implemented the necessary changes to the Regional Service Boards to ensure

effective delivery of enhanced services throughout the Province.

Objective 2025-2026:

By March 31, 2026, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs will have implemented recommendations from the review of the **Regional Service Boards Act, 2012**.

Indicators:

- Finalized internal analysis and research to inform the review of the **Regional Service Boards Act, 2012**.
- Finalized the external consultation plan for the **Regional Service Boards Act, 2012** review for implementation.
- Continued interdepartmental engagement to identify regional service sharing and collaboration opportunities through the Regional Service Board.

