



# Accountability Report

2018–2019

*Municipal Affairs*



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Accountability Report 2018–2019

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## Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Department of Municipal Affairs for the year ended March 31, 2019 is prepared pursuant to the *Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the department's Statement of Mandate for the fiscal year just ended. The reporting of the department's outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments and opinions by department management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of the Department of Municipal Affairs management. The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the department's 2018 – 2019 Business Plan.

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Hon. Chuck Porter  
Minister

Nancy MacLellan  
Deputy Minister

## Message from the Minister and Deputy Minister

We are pleased to present the Accountability Report for the Department of Municipal Affairs (DMA) for fiscal year 2018-19. This report highlights results and progress in meeting the priorities outlined in our departmental Business Plan, as well as the priorities of the Government of Nova Scotia.

Our mandate is to promote responsible government that supports healthy, safe, resilient and vibrant communities. We do this by:

- administering various federal and provincial funding programs that benefit Nova Scotians
- providing advice, support and guidance to municipalities and ensuring our legislation empowers independent and accountable local government throughout the province
- ensuring fire and building safety, and
- by collaborating with our partners to strengthen provincial and municipal emergency preparedness through planning, training and exercise. This collaborative approach enhances the ability of Nova Scotians to augment community resilience during times of emergencies and helps municipalities become stronger.

Highlights of our achievements in fiscal year 2018/19 include:

- We have made progress over the past year in our work to facilitate municipal modernization and increased collaboration with our partners. For example:
  - Introducing a new Beautification and Streetscaping Program to help municipalities create more inviting public spaces for citizens and help attract visitors;
  - Through the Provincial-Municipal Roundtable, we are working with the Departments of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal (TIR), Business, Environment, Finance and Treasury Board, and Justice to provide municipal leaders with a forum to discuss issues of shared importance across government;
  - Working towards an outcome-based approach to performance measurement for the Regional Enterprise Networks (REN);
  - Continuing to modernize the Municipal Government Act (MGA) and Halifax Regional Municipality Charter to provide increased autonomy for municipalities;
  - Issuing a call for applications under the Investing in Canada infrastructure Program (ICIP) Environmental Quality Stream;
  - Launching the second pilot project under Asset Management in two municipalities;

- o Supporting the professional development of fire and building officials by providing course materials, facilitators and funding for training events;
- o Continuing to work with the Fire Review Committee on issues of concern to municipalities; and
- o Developing the Strategic Emergency Management Plan to include hazard-specific planning.

These achievements would not be possible without the commitment and hard work of the Municipal Affairs staff. We look forward to working with our dedicated staff in the coming year as we continue to advance our municipal modernization mandate, create a legislative environment that fosters business growth and a strong economy, help keep Nova Scotians safe and undertake the responsible and efficient management of financial resources.

As the Department of Municipal Affairs enters the 2019-20 fiscal year, we remain committed to supporting and working with municipalities and partners to ensure Nova Scotia has safe, strong, resilient and vibrant communities. Looking ahead, we will continue to work with municipalities to identify areas for collaboration and innovative new approaches to better leverage opportunities. Our legislation will continue to be modernized and updated to better meet the needs of our clients and partners. Through our various funding programs, we will invest in Nova Scotia communities to help ensure they have modern and robust infrastructure, can reduce or mitigate the effect of floods, have clean water, and are able to deliver important services to Nova Scotians. We will continue to ensure Nova Scotians have strong and robust programs and services around emergency preparedness and fire and building safety. And we will continue to play a key leadership role in ensuring the province has strong, sustainable local government – municipalities that are empowered and ready to seize social and economic opportunities.

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Hon. Chuck Porter  
Minister

Nancy MacLellan  
Deputy Minister

## Accountability Report – Financial Table and Variance Explanation

Department of Municipal Affairs			
	2018-19 Estimate	2018-19 Actual	2018-19 Variance
Program & Service Area	(\$thousands)	(\$thousands)	(\$thousands)
Senior Management	701	604	(97)
Grants, Programs and Operations	113,530	110,468	(3,062)
Policy, Planning & Advisory Services	90,145	89,755	(390)
Emergency Management Office	8,205	8,639	434
<b>Total: Departmental Expenses</b>	212,581	209,466	(3,115)
<b>Revenue, Fees and Recoveries</b>			
Ordinary Revenue	5	5	0
Ordinary Recoveries	132,315	133,903	1,588
<b>Total: Revenue, Fees, And Recoveries</b>	132,320	133,908	1,588
<b>Other</b>			
TCA Purchase Requirements	704	373	(331)
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)	73.2	67.6	(5.6)

### Departmental Expense Variance Explanation:

Department of Municipal Affairs expenditures were \$3.1 million or 1.5 percent under budget primarily due the following areas: New Building Canada Fund project delays in Small Communities Fund of \$7.5 million, \$0.9 million temporary staff vacancy savings, and \$0.5 million in operating expenses. These decreases were offset by Canada-Nova Scotia Bilateral Agreement project advancements in Public Transit Infrastructure Fund of \$2.5 million and Clean Water and Wastewater Fund of \$2.3 million and \$1.0 million for Disaster Fund Relief.

### Revenue, Fees and Recoveries Variance Explanation:

The Department of Municipal Affairs recoveries were \$1.6 million or 1.2 percent over budget primarily as a result of the \$2.5 million for the Canada-Nova Scotia Bilateral Agreement for Public Transit Infrastructure Fund and \$1.5 Million Clean Water and Wastewater Fund due to project advancement. These increases were offset by \$1.4 million for project delays in New Building Canada Fund Small Communities Fund due to project delays and \$1.0 million net other recoveries.

**TCA Purchase Requirements Variance Explanation:**

The Department of Municipal Affairs Tangible Capital Asset purchase requirements were \$331 thousand or (47%) lower than estimate due to extension into 2019-2020 fiscal of both DMA asset tracking project and the Fire Marshal IT system. Both TCA projects are planned to be completed by the end of the 2019-2020 fiscal.

**Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation:**

Delays in filling vacancies account for lower than expected (5.6) FTE's.



## Measuring our Performance

### Statement of Mandate:

The Department of Municipal Affairs (DMA) enables municipalities to build healthy, safe and viable communities, enhances fire and building safety, and works in collaboration with municipal, provincial and federal departments to strengthen provincial and municipal preparedness through planning, training and exercise. This cooperative approach enhances the ability of Nova Scotians to augment community resilience during times of emergencies and helps municipalities become stronger and economically viable.

This mandate of the department is delivered through the following divisions/offices:

1. Policy, Planning and Advisory Services Division;
2. Grants, Programs and Operations Division, which includes the Office of the Fire Marshal; and
3. Emergency Management Office (EMO).

### Overview:

The Honourable Chuck Porter is the Minister of the Department of Municipal Affairs ("the Department"). Kelliann Dean was the Deputy Minister of the Department for the duration of the period this report pertains to. Deputy Minister Nancy MacLellan has since been appointed to the Department as of June 3, 2019.

In the Department's 2018-2019 Business Plan, the following priorities and initiatives were identified based on divisions:

#### **Policy, Planning and Advisory Services**

- To ensure municipalities are provided with the legislative and regulatory framework necessary to build and maintain healthy and vibrant communities.
- To ensure Nova Scotia's municipalities have the supports they need to provide effective local governance.
- To ensure municipalities are provided with sound financial oversight and advice to support financial capacity-building.

#### **Grants, Programs, and Operations**

- To provide project advice and guidance, while ensuring municipalities can properly leverage program funding to support innovative projects and ongoing municipal infrastructure needs.

- To provide Asset Management tools that foster informed municipal decisions to be based on identified best practices and forecasted needs of infrastructure.
- To ensure that all Nova Scotians can accept their personal responsibility for building and fire safety.

### **Emergency Management Office**

- To enhance Nova Scotians' safety and well-being through innovative, collaborative, and integrated emergency planning and response.

Goals and accomplishments on the above noted initiatives are as follows:

### **Policy, Planning and Advisory Services:**

#### **Goals:**

- Provide sound advice to the Minister, Deputy Minister, and municipalities on initiatives, issues, and priorities as they relate to municipal activities in the Province of Nova Scotia.
- Ensure departmental grant programs provide efficient and equitable support to municipalities and encourage regional collaboration.
- Work with, support, and facilitate new approaches to municipal governance in Nova Scotia.
- Work to ensure municipalities understand provincial priorities, and to the extent possible, align their activities with those priorities in order to leverage provincial and federal resources.
- Work to strengthen citizen confidence in the fiscal affairs of local government across the province.
- Improve access to quality assessment information for enhanced decision making.
- Increase efficiencies, making it easier for municipalities to interact with the department and access financial tools that support municipalities becoming stronger.
- To build on the current strength of relationship with municipalities in coordination with the Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia (AMA), the UNSM, and other municipal partners.

#### **Accomplishments:**

- DMA completed the following legislation in fiscal year 2018-2019 with associated consultation:
  - Bill 55 – Incorporated Windsor and West Hants into a regional municipality.
  - Bill 58 – Established the requirement for municipal planning strategies with minimum planning requirements.
  - Bill 92 – Repealed a specific list of allowable expenditures and replaced it with general expenditure power.

- Bill 95 – Expanded the purposes of the Act to include the coordination of emergency services, while also allowing the Governor in Council to make regulations respecting fees and cost-recovery in connection with a NS 911 service.
- Bill 99 – Prescribed criteria for the purpose of defining a small-scale residential tourist accommodation.
- Bill 136 – Renamed the Equalization Program the Municipal Financial Capacity Grant.
- Continued to work with partners to identify new opportunities for municipal modernization i.e. an approach for addressing concerns around municipal viability, and to develop modernized approaches to creating strong municipal units through increasing cooperation between municipal neighbours and reducing the current climate of competition.
- Updated the Joint Provincial Municipal Partnership Framework to reflect the 2018-2019 priorities.
- Continued to work on the Municipal Flood Line Mapping Project with the Departments of Nova Scotia Environment and Internal Services. This project includes developing standards and guidance for flood line mapping inclusive of climate change scenarios.
- Worked closely to support Nova Scotia Environment on the development of the *Coastal Protection Act*.
- Worked toward the completion of a booklet for municipalities to support their thinking on economic development. This booklet will be launched with the Minimum Planning Regulations in 2019-2020.
- The Locus app was developed and will be implemented in fiscal year 2019-2020. The app provides municipalities with access to web-based Geographic Information System (GIS) Mapping Technology services.
- Continued to engage with the Department of Justice and our municipal partners to identify any financial or human resource impacts that have resulted from the legalization of cannabis.
- Continued ongoing work with the Department of Justice on the Cannabis file to keep municipalities informed of the changing landscape, specifically as the country moves towards the legalization of edibles in 2019-2020.
- Worked toward an outcome-based approach of performance measurement for the Regional Enterprise Networks (RENs) with some potential governance changes for implementation in 2019-2020.
- The Cape Breton Regional Municipality (CBRM) has rejoined the REN program and Pictou County has joined the program. The CBRM REN has seen 3 of the 5 Cape Breton Island First Nations join the REN and DMA has matched their financial commitments.
- Created a Beautification & Streetscaping Program. The first tranche of funding (\$500,000) was released in 2018-2019.

- Created a Community Works Fund with the first call for applications being announced in fiscal year 2019-2020.
  - Funded CBRM \$224,000 in 2018 to undertake a viability study in 2019-2020.
  - In collaboration with our municipal partners, completed the new Financial Reporting Accounting Manual (FRAM). The new FRAM was refined to enhance clarity and improve transparency and accountability. The new FRAM incorporates new audit committee requirements, internal control letter requirements, as well as enhanced audit composition.
  - Developed five modules for online audit committee training with an implementation date of 2019-2020.
  - Enhanced the Financial Condition Indicator (FCI) Reports and have developed draft FCIs for villages. As villages have differing financial responsibilities than municipalities, DMA is currently working with villages to refine the FCIs for potential use in 2019-2020.
  - Updated the Service Level Agreement with the Property Valuation Services Corporation to enhance reporting and access to information.
  - Participated on a number of interdepartmental committees to ensure the municipal voice is being taken into account across government. Committees include but are not limited to:
    - Land Titles Initiative: to help residents in the communities of North Preston, East Preston, Lake Loon/Cherry Brook, Lincolnville and Sunnyville receive clear title to their land.
    - Transportation Strategy: to help everyone in Nova Scotia, urban and rural, to choose how they move.
    - SHIFT Strategy: to value the social and economic contributions of older adults; promote healthy, active living; and support aging in place so older Nova Scotians can stay connected to their communities as long as they can.
    - Roads Committee: to identify options for an appropriate road network throughout Nova Scotia, supporting safety, economic development, and continued viability of communities.
    - Accessibility Working Group: to develop a Municipal Accessibility Planning Framework and template that will assist municipalities in meeting their obligation under the Act to prepare accessibility plans.
    - Housing Committee: to provide advice and input on policies at all levels of government that promote affordable housing, and support activities focused on collaboration on the topic of housing, including affordable housing, innovative housing options, and homelessness.
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## Grants, Programs, and Operations:

### Goals:

- Enhance cooperation and collaboration with our partners including AMANS, UNSM and Fire Services.
- Maximize the use of local government's resources and expertise.
- Strengthen Federal-Provincial-Municipal relationships and improve supports to Nova Scotia municipalities.
- Support the Government's Strategy Framework for inclusive economic growth.
- Provide sound advice to the Deputy Minister and Minister on all initiatives and issues concerning building and fire safety in the Province of Nova Scotia.
- Lead, coordinate, and provide government departments, municipalities and the public, with effective approaches for building and fire safety in Nova Scotia.

### Accomplishments:

- Issued a call for applications under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) Environmental Quality (water, wastewater, solid waste and soil remediation) Stream from December 3, 2018 to January 18, 2019. Applications were evaluated and recommendations submitted to Infrastructure Canada for approval. DMA expects approvals to be communicated in quarter 2 of fiscal year 2019-2020.
- Following on the success of the 2017 pilot projects, the second Asset Management Pilot project was launched in the Fall of 2018. It included two (2) municipalities with the purpose of further testing the existing data collection tools and resources within a larger rural municipality as well as exploring potential regional collaboration benefits.
- The Infrastructure Registry for Municipal Assets (IRMA) project, based on the tools and resources developed from the Pilot Projects, is also underway. IRMA will provide municipalities with a system to house, maintain and map asset information, and access preliminary state of infrastructure analytics. IRMA is being developed with a phased design approach, incorporating existing Provincial IT/Geomatics infrastructure and resources. The first phase of the IRMA project has included municipal pilot user testing and will be rolled out to municipalities in 2019-2020.
- Informed municipalities regarding the new ICIP in order to ensure they would provide their project priorities when the "call for priorities" was announced. Presentations were given at the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) 2018 Spring Conference, and the Nova Scotia Association of Municipal Administrators (AMA) Spring workshop and Fall conference.
- A call for municipal priorities was communicated (June 2018) to help determine greatest municipal needs. The information was used to support the Department of Transportation

and Infrastructure Renewal in the development of the 3-year plan as required under the Bi-Lateral Agreement.

- Supported the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal in the development of the provincial 3-year Infrastructure Plan required for submission to Infrastructure Canada (INFC), each year by May 31<sup>st</sup>, under the Terms and Conditions of the ICIP Agreement.
- The Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) supported fire and building officials professional development through the provision of course materials, providing course facilitators, and funding for training events to keep costs for municipalities low. OFM staff also acted as mentors to our partners, through joint inspections, opportunities to observe on scenes, research into various code issues, and discussions on code issues.
- The OFM worked closely with the Nova Scotia Fire Services Professional Qualifications Board to provide exams and certificates for training that was completed for both career and volunteer firefighters through the Nova Scotia Firefighter School.
- The OFM worked closely with the Fire Service Association of Nova Scotia on initiatives and areas of concern for all firefighters in the province as well as working with them on continuing education.
- The OFM continues to work with the Fire Review Committee as they move forward with issues of concern to Municipalities, the Fire Service and the Province. The OFM provides the committee with policy support for the development of information bulletins to better inform all the stakeholders on the issues and to work toward their resolution.

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### **Emergency Management:**

#### **Goals:**

- To ensure municipal authorities are equipped and properly planning for emergencies.

#### **Accomplishments:**

- NS EMO has rewritten the All-Hazards Emergency Plan in its entirety and added hazard-specific planning to the document, which is called the Strategic Emergency Management Plan (SEMP). This document is in the final approval stages and is expected to be released in 2019-2020.

## Appendix A

### Annual Report under Section 18 of the *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act*

The Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act was proclaimed into law on December 20, 2011.

The Act provides for government employees to be able to come forward if they reasonably believe that a wrongdoing has been committed or is about to be committed and they are acting in good faith.

The Act also protects employees who do disclose from reprisals, by enabling them to lay a complaint of reprisal with the Labor Board.

A wrongdoing for the purposes of the Act is:

- a) a contravention of provincial or federal laws or regulations
- b) a misuse or gross mismanagement of public funds or assets
- c) an act or omission that creates an imminent risk of a substantial and specific danger to the life, health or safety of persons or the environment, or
- d) directing or counselling someone to commit a wrongdoing

The following is a summary of disclosures received by the Department of Municipal Affairs

Information Required under Section 18 of the Act	Fiscal Year 2018-2019
The number of disclosures received	0
The number of findings of wrongdoing	0
Details of each wrongdoing (insert separate row for each wrongdoing)	N/A
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing (insert separate row for each wrongdoing)	N/A

There were no Disclosures of Wrongdoing received by the Department of Municipal Affairs in 2018 - 2019.