



# **ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT**

2024-25

Public Works

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Accountability Report 2024–2025

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## Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Department of Public Works for the year ended March 31, 2025, is prepared pursuant to the *Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. The reporting of the Department of Public Works outcomes necessarily include estimates, judgments, and opinions by Department of Public Works management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of Department of Public Works 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 of Public Works 2024-25 Business Plan.

*Department of Public Works*

Original signed by

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Honourable Fred Tilley

Minister

Department of Public Works

Original signed by:

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Executive Deputy Minister Paul Lafleche

Department of Public Works

## Measuring our Performance- 2024-25

The mandate and mission of the Department of Public Works (DPW) includes providing public infrastructure solutions for Nova Scotians, keeping our transportation networks safe and efficient, while ensuring the safe movement of people and goods and providing a safe, healthy, inclusive, and resilient work environment together with delivering quality service. The Department's focus areas support the ministerial mandate and are aligned with government's priorities for the province.

The Department is the lead in coordinating provincial infrastructure needs and maximizing the benefits of federal cost sharing to support major infrastructure priorities in Nova Scotia. This is achieved through providing public infrastructure solutions resulting from our close collaboration with other provincial departments while supporting their infrastructure and federal capital requirements.

## Five-Year Highway Improvement Plan

DPW publishes the Five-Year Highway Improvement Plan (the 5-Year Plan) annually to keep Nova Scotians informed about planned road and bridge improvements to be made in their communities. DPW assesses the relative condition of paved roads annually and undergoes a peer-reviewed process to identify proper rehabilitation treatment and prioritize projects.

Significant progress has been made on many Major Highway Initiatives from the [24/25 plan](#) including:

- Highway 101 from Three Mile Plains to Falmouth (started and continuing)
- Highway 102 Aerotech Connector (started and continuing)
- Highway 103 from Tantallon to Hubbards- construction of the new 22km four lane divided section of highway between Exit 5 at Upper Tantallon and Exit 6 at Hubbards completed in July 2024.
- Bridgewater Interchange (complete and opened in December 2024)
- Highway 107 Sackville-Bedford-Burnside Connector (complete and opened in December 2024)
- Tancook Ferry in Lunenburg county (started and continuing)
- Continued substantial investment in spending on the gravel road and rural impact mitigation programs
- During fiscal year 2024-25 the next phase was started for the twinning of highways 101, 103 and 107

## Active Transportation and Community Transportation

DPW has continued to work collaboratively with municipalities, Cycling Nova Scotia, interest groups and other departments to improve active transportation connections and the Blue Route across the province. DPW continues to participate in and support the coordination of a multi-departmental active transportation initiative for compliance with the [Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act](#). In 2024-25, 37km of paved shoulders were added and approximately 2km of multi-use paths were completed.

Community transportation is vital to connecting and strengthening communities in Nova Scotia. Operating and capital support has continued for community transportation programs to twenty-three (23) community and transit operators and nine (9) fixed route service providers while exploring new initiatives to expand and enhance community transportation in non-serviced areas. Approximately 98% of the population outside of HRM and CBRM are served by a community transportation operator.

## Infrastructure Management

The Building Infrastructure team at DPW provides public infrastructure solutions for Nova Scotians through managing, operating and maintaining all government owned buildings and infrastructure, as well as planning/designing/constructing all provincially owned infrastructure over \$1M. This includes schools, hospitals and justice centres as well as providing a variety of real estate, property development and inventory services. DPW also oversees space management of government accommodation needs, manages a government-wide inventory, provides acquisition and disposal services, conducts appraisal and survey services and manages provincially owned water utilities.

During 2024-25, the Building Infrastructure Design and Construction Division (BIDC) has continued to support all provincial departments and entities, in particular the Department of Health and Wellness and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development by providing project management, architectural and engineering expertise for building design and construction.

The [five-year school capital plan](#) was released on June 16, 2023 and updated in February 2025. Work continues on many school sites, and during 2024/25, several new schools have opened including:

- Springhill Elementary – Opened Sept 2024.
- École Wedgeport P-6 – Opened Jan 2025.
- Eastern Shore District High School – Junior high classes began Jan 2025; senior high classes began Feb 2025.

Significant progress has also been made on key health infrastructure including the new North Cumberland Memorial Hospital in Pugwash that has been in operation since summer 2024. Work has started and is ongoing on various other health infrastructure projects.

In the past year, the Infrastructure Management group at DPW has continued to make progress towards meeting goals identified through the *Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act*, to increase energy conservation and efficiency to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions:

- Since 2021, a total of over 200 lighting projects have been initiated (full replacement or retrofit);
- Since 2023, over 50 recommissioning projects to reduce energy waste have been implemented;
- DPW is tracking utility consumption in over 80% of its buildings portfolio that will measure current GHGs and report actual GHG production and improvements over time after reduction projects are completed.
- 300 oil heated asset projects have been identified and working on feasibility study for a path to reduce GHG emissions; and
- Identified building schedule changes as part of the Building Automation System (BAS) to reduce energy consumption.
- Incorporating LEED standard certification for new construction projects to promote sustainable building practices, improve energy consumption and reduce GHG emissions.

The Real Estate Infrastructure Management Division has continued its primary focus of preserving existing provincial assets and continuing key projects during 2024-25 fiscal period including initiatives to encourage landlords to take a net zero approach to building renovations, including the Port Hawkesbury Provincial Building, the roof replacement at the Art Gallery of NS, Kentville Justice Centre Space renovations and the construction of a new bail court at the Spring Garden Road Provincial Courthouse in Halifax. The division has responsibility for over 1,800 government owned structures at 550 provincial sites.

### Federal Infrastructure Program

DPW is the lead department in coordinating provincial infrastructure needs to maximize federal cost-sharing opportunities, supporting major infrastructure priorities across Nova Scotia.

A major focus has been leadership on the Chignecto Isthmus Resiliency Project (CIRP), where DPW is collaborating closely with the Government of New Brunswick to jointly advance pre-construction work for this significant infrastructure project for Nova Scotia and the rest of Canada. Concurrently, the Department is actively pursuing federal

funding opportunities to address the project's significant financial requirements and ensure its successful delivery for the benefit of Nova Scotia.

In 2024-25, the Department continued to secure federal investments in critical infrastructure projects through various federal funding programs, including:

#### Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund (CHIF) – NEW Program

In February 2025, the Department finalized a Contribution Agreement with the federal government under the CHIF – Province/Territorial Stream, [securing \\$170.9 million in federal funding for eligible Nova Scotia projects](#). This investment supports critical infrastructure in water, wastewater, stormwater, and solid waste to facilitate housing growth.

#### Canada Public Transit Fund (CPTF) – NEW Program

The Department is actively advancing Nova Scotia's participation in this new program across all streams, including:

- Metro Region Agreement (MRA)

In early 2025, the Province signed a Contribution Agreement with the federal government to secure planning funding subsequent to an Expression of Interest process. This ensures Nova Scotia's continuous participation in the program that could result in significant future federal investment. MRA encourages long-term integrated planning within large urban areas and supports a wide variety of transformational projects.

- Baseline Funding

The Department provides strategic support and expertise to eligible recipients, helping public transit operators across the province maximize funding opportunities. In fiscal year 2024-25, five transit operators were approved \$69.4M in federal funding over a ten-year period with funding flow to initiate in 2026/27.

- Targeted Direct Delivery

The Department participated in the Active Transportation Call, leveraging committed provincial funding, and assisted eligible applicants under the Rural Transit Solutions Fund (RTSF), ensuring strong proposal development to improve chances for success.

#### Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) – EXISTING Program

As of March 31, 2023, the full \$839.2 million allocation under Nova Scotia's Integrated Bilateral Agreement has been committed. The Department continues to engage with federal partners and the ultimate recipients to address program and project-level challenges, ensuring successful implementation and the achievement of intended outcomes by Agreement end date of March 31, 2024. This is an active program with approximately 100 active projects in process.

#### Green and Inclusive Community Buildings – EXISTING Program

The Department provides expert guidance and direct support to advance community-based projects across the province. Our strong partnership with communities has led to multiple successful federal funding approvals, enabling critical community initiatives to move forward.

### Collaboration and Partnerships

Federal Infrastructure Initiatives involve partnership and collaboration with the Department of Municipal Affairs, the Department of Growth and Development, the Department of Energy, the Office of L'nu Affairs, Municipalities, Community Organizations and the Canada Infrastructure Bank (CIB).

## Registry of Motor Vehicles, Vehicle Transport Inspection, Road Safety

During 2024-25, the Registry of Motor Vehicles and Vehicle Transport Inspection/Road Safety group has continued to fulfil its mandated roles through:

Regulation of commercial and passenger vehicles: Ongoing policy analysis of Motor Vehicle Inspections, monitoring and oversight of commercial fleets with base jurisdictions in NS (approximately 6,800 permits were delivered through DPW's service delivery partner at Service NS).

Oversight of vehicle licensing: conducting vehicle dispute hearings, ongoing work related to modernize and streamline the transfer of vehicle ownership and register new vehicles (RMV modernization), and the development of [Recognition of Canadian Jurisdiction Vehicle Registration Regulations](#). [This also permits low-speed vehicles to be registered in the Province.](#)

Driver testing and licensing administration: over the last five years an average of 30,000 road tests are conducted annually. Road test wait times are maintained at 3 weeks or less, and process improvement initiatives such as implementing a pilot program to book a road test online, and development of an application (CaRT) to digitally record road test results, eliminating paper driver license update forms and increasing fraud prevention.

Mandatory Entry Level Training (MELT): Continued development of curriculum and standards in collaboration with Department of Advanced Education for class 1 drivers, including the review and redrafting of all related policies, handbooks, manuals, forms, and applications.

Active Transportation: DPW has continued to work collaboratively with municipalities, Cycling Nova Scotia, interest groups and other departments to improve active transportation connections and the Blue Route across the province and has continued to participate and support the coordination of a multi-departmental active

transportation initiative for compliance with the *Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act*.

DPW has also continued to advance highway safety measures including the installation rumble strips, undertaking intersection improvements and providing in-service safety reviews in various locations of the province.

Work has continued to address key issues such as impaired and distracted driving, while analyzing emerging trends, researching best practices, and developing strategies to address issues active transportation and commercial driver training, working collaboratively with provincial, national, and local partners—including the Transportation Association of Canada (TAC), the Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators (CCMTA), and Nova Scotia road safety groups.

## Accessibility Related Initiatives

Some examples of accessibility related initiatives taking place in the Department during the last fiscal year include additions of paved shoulders along roads which improve accessibility and opportunities for facility enhancements and improvements that support local Active Transportation between communities.

Initiatives also include using armour stone for shoreline protection for road projects, incorporating site designs that are mobility friendly to ensure continued public access.

DPW continued its assessment of government owned facilities using the proprietary Accessibility Audit Handbook and the compilation of provincially owned spaces together with the accompanying database, to catalogue and prioritise the assessment of buildings for accessibility compliance and retrofit requirements in support of Access by Design 2030.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility are supported by DPW through advocating for all employees to complete mandatory training courses and working with districts and divisions to provide training and educational opportunities based on specific needs. Throughout 2024-25, DPW has continued the assessment of government-owned facilities using the proprietary Accessibility Audit Handbook and the compilation of provincially owned spaces together with the accompanying database, to catalogue and prioritize the assessment of buildings for accessibility compliance and retrofit requirements in support of Access by Design 2030.

## Financial Summary and Variance Explanation

	<b>2024-2025 Estimate</b>	<b>2024-2025 Actuals</b>	<b>2024-2025 Variance</b>
<b>Program &amp; Service Area</b>	<i>(\$thousands)</i>		
<b>Departmental Expenses:</b>			
Senior Management	1,242	1,345	103
Strategic Planning, Policy and Corporate Services	5,534	4,991	(543)
Grants and Contributions	73,003	70,893	(2,110)
Highway Programs	592,717	634,809	42,092
Infrastructure Design and Construction Services	3,453	2,963	(490)
Public Works Administration	579	250	(329)
Real Property Services	3,365	3,605	240
Water Utilities	921	876	(45)
Environmental Services & Remediation	2,264	22,461	20,197
Infrastructure Management	22,172	24,479	2,307
Public Works & Special Projects	10,920	23,488	12,568
<b>Total: Departmental Expenses</b>	<b>716,170</b>	<b>790,160</b>	<b>73,990</b>
<b>Additional Information:</b>			
Ordinary Revenue	39,199	21,400	(17,799)
Fees and Other Charges	1,558	1,791	233
Ordinary Recoveries	31,990	30,078	(1,912)
<b>Total: Revenue, Fees, and Recoveries</b>	<b>72,747</b>	<b>53,269</b>	<b>(19,478)</b>
TCA Purchase Requirements	<b>569,975</b>	<b>653,093</b>	<b>83,118</b>
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)	<b>1,937</b>	<b>1,934</b>	<b>(3)</b>

#### Departmental Expenses Variance Explanation:

Department of Public Works expenses were \$74.0 million or 10.3 per cent higher than estimate primarily due to \$20.8 million for Boat Harbour remediation, \$19.6 million in snow and ice removal costs, \$15.8 million for partially recoverable prior-year weather events, \$8.6 million for the Middle River Pumping Station, \$5.8 million in major infrastructure amortization costs, \$4.9 million in highway maintenance costs; \$4.0 million in building maintenance costs, \$2.9 million Build NS capital spending related to the Cunard and Acadia Wharf development projects, \$2.8 million in Provincial ferries maintenance costs, \$2.6 million Build NS capital spending for HIEP temporary parking solution, \$2.0 million for the fully recoverable Highway 107 Sackville Bedford Burnside project and \$1.3 million for the partially recoverable Highway 103 Bridgewater Interchange. These increases were partially offset by a \$10.8 million decrease in the Municipal Service Exchange Agreement for roads; and \$7.0 million decrease to Build NS for Cellular Nova Scotia Program due to timing.

#### Fees and Recoveries Variance Explanation:

The Department of Public Works fees and recoveries were \$1.7 million or 5.0 per cent lower than estimate primarily due to a \$6.1 million decrease in recoveries for the Municipal Service Exchange Agreement for roads, \$2.3 million in recoverable Highway 104 rest stop construction, and \$1.2 million under Federal ICIP program for project delays related to Boat Harbour. These decreases were partially offset by a \$2.8 million increase in Municipal recoveries for Highway 107 Sackville Bedford Burnside Interchange, \$1.9 million under Federal NTCF program for Highway 103 Bridgewater Interchange, \$1.6 million in recoverable Highway 104 repaving work, and \$1.2 million in Municipal recoveries for Highway 103 Bridgewater Interchange.

#### TCA Purchase Requirements Variance Explanation:

The tangible capital asset (TCA) increases of \$83.1 million or 14.6 per cent higher than estimate primarily resulting from \$99.1 million in cost escalations and multiple highways envelope projects. These increases were partially offset by a decrease of \$16.0 million due to timing of building infrastructure projects.

#### Revenue Variance Explanation:

TCA revenue decreased by \$17.8 million or 45.4 per cent primarily due to the delays in federal cost share road work such as the Highway 101 twinning from Three Mile Plains to Falmouth Aboiteaux, and the Highway 101 Cambridge Interchange & Connector.

#### Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation:

Timing of vacancies being filled.

## Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act

Each Department and Public Service Office Accountability Report must report with respect to the *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act* (PIDWA). **This requirement applies to all Departments/Public Service Offices/Governmental Units including Crown Corporations and Agencies.**

### **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.

Please use the following format to satisfy the disclosure obligation:

The following is a summary of disclosures received by the Department of Public Works:

<b>Information Required under Section 18 of the Act</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2024-25</b>
The number of disclosures received	1
The number of findings of wrongdoing	1
Details of each wrongdoing	b) a misuse or gross mismanagement of public funds or assets;
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing	Disciplinary action and training