

Municipal Affairs

BUSINESS PLAN 2014-17

ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

This business plan was prepared under my direction, taking into consideration the government's policy decisions as of February 12, 2014.

original signed by

Ken Hughes, Minister
February 19, 2014

THE MINISTRY

The ministry consists of the Department of Municipal Affairs, the Alberta Social Housing Corporation and the Safety Codes Council. Within the department's budget, funding is provided for the Municipal Government Board, the Special Areas Board and seven improvement districts, which are accountable to the minister.

A more detailed description of Municipal Affairs and its programs and initiatives can be found at www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca.

RESULTS-BASED BUDGETING AND THE GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA STRATEGIC PLAN

Programs and services delivered by the ministry are reviewed for relevance, effectiveness and efficiency in accordance with the Government of Alberta's *Results-based Budgeting Act*.

This business plan supports the "Investing in Families and Communities" theme outlined in the *Government of Alberta Strategic Plan*. Municipal Affairs invests in families and communities through collaborative and accountable local government, public safety, affordable housing and public libraries to help Alberta reach its full potential.

The plan supports the achievement of the following strategic goals set out in the government's strategic plan:

- Goal 1: Honour Alberta's Communities. Municipal Affairs supports this goal by supporting municipalities and their communities and by coordinating fire services and safety codes frameworks, and emergency management systems.
- Goal 2: Support Vulnerable Albertans. Municipal Affairs supports this goal by providing affordable housing options and services for Albertans most in need.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The following issues, trends, opportunities and challenges frame the environment within which Municipal Affairs operates and impact the ministry's ability to achieve its goals.

Population Growth and Shifts

Alberta's population is growing and shifting. In some parts of Alberta the population is declining. Low birth rates and greater life expectancy are creating an aging population. In-migration from across Canada and globally adds yet another dimension to the shifting population landscape. These shifts put pressure on municipalities to meet changing local needs, and on the ministry to ensure municipalities have access to the necessary tools to respond to these needs.

Increasing Public Expectations

More municipalities and Albertans are increasing their expectations about the way in which government operates. They are seeking greater access to information, more meaningful public engagement, improved responsiveness to questions and concerns, more funding, and better delivery of programs and services.

Safe Communities

Alberta's safety codes and standards system is critical for contributing to safe communities. This system supports national best practices, including new and emerging technologies in areas such as energy efficiency and water conservation. However, additional provincial consultation on new codes and standards subsequent to the national processes can extend the time required for adoption of these codes.

In addition, the climate is changing, and floods, wind and wildfires are all occurring more often, having a significant impact on emergency prevention and mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery and safety services. At the same time, smaller municipalities are facing increasing pressures on their largely volunteer emergency response organizations. Municipal Affairs is working with municipalities and other emergency management partners to strengthen the public safety system in Alberta.

In June 2013, devastating floods took place in Southern Alberta and the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. Full recovery from the disasters will take years. The ministry is supporting the flood recovery and mitigation efforts by helping put in place effective recovery resources. In addition, the ministry is providing safety codes and fire services advice and support, housing support to Albertans in need, and is working with federal, provincial and territorial governments to develop an all-hazards mitigation program that will have an initial focus on flood risk.

Viability and Sustainability of Municipalities

Across Alberta there are challenges to replace or repair aging infrastructure including roads, bridges, and recreation and cultural facilities. At the same time, demand for government housing support options is strong. In addition, some smaller municipalities have insufficient capacity to provide core functions such as financial management. As well, capacity gaps exist within some housing management bodies which create challenges in meeting the demand for social housing.

To support municipalities and communities, the ministry delivers a number of key programs such as the Municipal Sustainability Initiative, which provides municipalities with sustainable funding, and the long-term real estate strategy, which includes renewal and replacement of government-owned and supported social housing. Municipal Affairs is also working to increase access to public library information and resources for all Albertans.

Collaborative inter-municipal relationships continue to increase in importance. By planning and working together, municipalities can more effectively address broader regional issues such as infrastructure, housing and public safety. The ministry will continue to support municipal efforts to maximize regional efficiencies and build partnerships to better serve Albertans.

GOALS, PRIORITY INITIATIVES, AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND INDICATORS

As a result of the ministry's review of its goals, environment, opportunities and challenges, a number of priority initiatives have been identified. Focused agenda items, several specific areas where government will focus its attention over the next three years, are identified with a *. Additional government commitments to Albertans are identified with a ✓.

Goal One: Albertans live in viable municipalities and communities with collaborative and accountable local governments

Priority Initiatives:

- * 1.1 Support the long-term recovery of municipalities impacted by the 2013 Alberta floods by helping them build capacity and access resources to undertake locally led recovery efforts and return to normal operations.
- ✓ 1.2 Establish a Premier's Council on a New Provincial-Municipal Partnership.
- 1.3 Support transformational change for municipalities by providing a broad suite of options for effective regional collaboration.
- 1.4 Provide funding to municipalities through the Municipal Sustainability Initiative to assist municipalities in meeting their strategic long-term infrastructure needs.
- 1.5 Enhance Albertans' access to public library resources by continuing to invest in a province-wide library network.

- 1.6 Assist municipalities to build capacity and accountable municipal operations through the Municipal Sustainability Strategy, the Municipal Internship Program, training opportunities, financial management support, reviews, inspections and other advisory services.
- 1.7 Continue the collaborative, principles-based review of the *Municipal Government Act* to ensure that modern and effective legislation is in place.
- 1.8 Promote an assessment and property tax system that is accurate, predictable, fair and transparent by conducting assessment audits, preparing accurate linear and equalized assessments, and delivering timely assessment training and guides.

Performance Measures	Last Actual 2011	Target 2014-15	Target 2015-16	Target 2016-17
1.a Average number of public library resources borrowed by Albertans	12.2	12.6	13.1	13.6
1.b Percentage of municipalities meeting the ministry's criteria of financial accountability as established in the <i>Municipal Government Act</i>	98%	98%	98%	98%
1.c Percentage of municipal assessment rolls that meet provincial standards for procedures, uniformity and equity	98%	98%	98%	98%

Goal Two: Fair, timely, and well-reasoned decisions are provided on matters before the Municipal Government Board

Priority Initiatives:

- 2.1 Deliver an effective appeal process for subdivision appeals, inter-municipal disputes, annexation applications, linear assessment complaints and equalized assessment complaints.
- 2.2 Provide board members and support to municipal Composite Assessment Review Boards.

Performance Measure	Last Actual 2012-13	Target 2014-15	Target 2015-16	Target 2016-17
2.a Percentage of parties to Municipal Government Board appeals who are satisfied or neutral regarding the Board's performance of services in support of planning, annexation, linear and equalized assessment appeals	84%	80%	80%	80%

Performance Indicator	Actual 2010-11	Actual 2011-12	Actual 2012-13
2.a Percentage satisfied or neutral regarding Municipal Government Board support to municipal Composite Assessment Review Boards	100%	100%	97%

Goal Three: Albertans most in need have access to housing options

Priority Initiatives:

- *3.1 Develop disaster housing response and recovery strategies, in addition to mitigation options for government-owned and supported housing.
- 3.2 Strengthen relationships with municipalities and local housing management bodies to improve government-supported housing options.
- 3.3 Implement a long-term real estate strategy that includes renewal and/or replacement of government-supported housing, supported with financing strategies through the Alberta Social Housing Corporation.
- 3.4 Engage in capacity initiatives and strategies, including the implementation of a province-wide public housing operating system, the Housing Access Link, to improve housing service delivery, accountability and strategic planning.

Performance Measure	Last Actual 2012-13	Target 2014-15	Target 2015-16	Target 2016-17
3.a Housing facilities condition rating:				
• Percentage in good condition	39.6%	40.0%	41.0%	42.0%
• Percentage in fair condition	55.5%	55.0%	54.0%	54.0%
• Percentage in poor condition	4.9%	5.0%	5.0%	4.0%

Goal Four: Albertans are safe in the places they live, work and play

Priority Initiatives:

- *4.1 Provide safety codes and fire services support to municipalities and Albertans during emergencies and recovery from disasters.
- *4.2 Provide risk management, monitoring and coaching assistance to municipalities, corporations, agencies and delegated administrative organizations.
- 4.3 Improve the legislative and administrative frameworks that support systems for safety codes, fire services and search and rescue.
- 4.4 Develop safety codes in response to emerging technology in areas such as energy efficiency and water conservation.
- 4.5 Improve consumer protection and residential construction quality by administering the requirements set out in the *New Home Buyer Protection Act*.

Performance Measure	Last Actual 2012	Target 2014-15	Target 2015-16	Target 2016-17
4.a Fire deaths per 100,000 population (10-year moving average)	0.84	Less than or equal to 2013-14 actual	Less than or equal to 2014-15 actual	Less than or equal to 2015-16 actual

Goal Five: Alberta is better prepared for disasters and emergency events

Priority Initiatives:

- *5.1 Work with federal, provincial and territorial governments to develop policy options for a provincial flood mitigation program.
- *5.2 Support the ongoing recovery efforts in response to the 2013 Alberta floods, including the provision of disaster recovery financial assistance to impacted Albertans.
- *5.3 Strengthen the prevention, mitigation and preparedness efforts of public safety partners to decrease the level of response and recovery efforts needed.
- *5.4 Work collaboratively with other ministries and stakeholders, including other governments, to develop a coordinated public safety system for disaster and emergency events that supports legislative authority and timely decision-making.
- *5.5 Work with partners to enhance research, training, certification and standards in emergency management, emergency social services, public alerting and integration of emergency data and information systems.
- 5.6 Implement legislative and funding supports for local delivery of 911 services in Alberta.

Performance Measures	Last Actual 2012-13	Target 2014-15	Target 2015-16	Target 2016-17
5.a Percentage of claims where a member of the damage assessment team arrives on-site within 30 days of a claim being received	100%	100%	100%	100%
5.b Level of preparedness as measured by the percentage of municipalities that have conducted an emergency management exercise in the last four years	81%	90%	91%	92%

OPERATIONAL PLAN

(thousands of dollars)	Comparable			2014-15 Estimate	2015-16 Target	2016-17 Target
	2012-13 Actual	2013-14 Budget	2013-14 Forecast			
OPERATIONAL EXPENSE						
Ministry Support Services	14,728	19,444	19,444	20,277	21,907	22,535
Local Government Services	22,717	31,767	31,767	31,871	34,490	34,539
Municipal Sustainability Initiative	47,188	50,000	48,430	30,000	15,000	-
Grants in Place of Taxes	52,986	54,625	54,625	59,695	59,695	59,695
Alberta Community Partnership	14,255	28,839	23,209	48,839	63,839	78,839
Public Safety	12,602	16,092	14,864	17,729	19,006	19,006
Alberta Emergency Management Agency	54,634	45,624	48,035	28,079	30,472	30,472
Municipal Government Board	3,620	4,741	4,741	4,888	5,490	5,490
Library Services	32,460	32,507	32,507	32,515	32,696	32,696
Housing	13,865	10,323	10,323	10,442	11,181	11,181
2013 Alberta Flooding	-	-	3,124,443	28,000	19,000	-
Alberta Social Housing Corporation	189,353	189,761	189,761	193,985	192,485	192,485
Safety Codes Council	6,218	6,928	6,928	6,773	6,733	6,733
Sub-total	464,626	490,651	3,609,077	513,093	511,994	493,671
Debt Servicing						
Alberta Social Housing Corporation	14,100	12,291	12,291	10,343	8,270	6,108
Total	478,726	502,942	3,621,368	523,436	520,264	499,779

CAPITAL PLAN SPENDING

Ministry Support Services	111	100	100	100	100	100
Local Government Services	520	1,090	770	1,090	1,090	1,090
Municipal Sustainability Initiative	1,152,927	1,166,800	1,101,929	1,214,100	1,239,300	1,263,700
Federal Gas Tax Fund	199,492	199,503	199,503	208,654	208,654	219,086
Alberta Community Partnership	550	-	5,950	-	-	-
Public Safety	5,816	8,275	8,900	-	-	-
Alberta Emergency Management Agency	2,545	275	40,816	-	-	-
Housing	20,380	-	-	-	-	-
2013 Alberta Flooding	-	-	9,300	31,500	-	-
Alberta Social Housing Corporation	13,125	65,190	43,563	137,190	111,190	40,190
Safety Codes Council	221	175	175	104	168	168
Total	1,395,687	1,441,408	1,411,006	1,592,738	1,560,502	1,524,334