

**JRTA**

JOINT REGIONAL  
TRANSPORTATION  
AGENCY

**2022**  
**ANNUAL**  
**REPORT**

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# Message from the Minister

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I am pleased to present the 2022 Annual Report for the Joint Regional Transportation Agency (JRTA).

In November 2021, the Province passed legislation to establish the JRTA as a Crown Corporation with the express mandate to guide the collaborative development and implementation of a Regional Transportation Plan for the Halifax Regional Municipality and surrounding communities.

Through its transformative work, the JRTA will help create the right conditions to support Government's goals for economic prosperity, health, education, population growth, and climate change.

To date, the Agency has made great strides to activate its mandate. Fundamental procedures have been established, key partners have been engaged, and a governance structure has been developed.

In the fall of 2022, the JRTA realized a critical milestone when it released three Request for Proposal documents for professional services. The contracts are expected to be awarded in early 2023 and will bring together the subject matter expertise needed to enable the creation of the Regional Transportation Plan.

The task ahead of the JRTA is significant, but they won't be doing this work alone. In addition to the consultants that will be onboarded, the Agency has been hard at work cultivating relationships with core partners. A Technical Advisory Board has been formed and it includes senior leaders from the Department of Public Works, Halifax Regional Municipality, Halifax Port Authority, Halifax International Airport Authority, Halifax Harbour Bridges, and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency. Together, these representatives bring the knowledge and experience needed to help advance the joint transportation mandate.

As I have watched the JRTA take shape, I have been impressed with their determination and collective vision. I am confident that the Agency will continue to create opportunities to collaborate, engage, and advance positive and proactive regional transportation planning for the province.

Honourable Kim D. Masland  
Minister



# Land Acknowledgement

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We acknowledge that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq People. This territory is covered by the "Treaties of Peace and Friendship" which Mi'kmaq, Maliseet and Passamaquoddy Peoples first signed with the British Crown in 1726.

We acknowledge that people of African descent have been in Nova Scotia for over 400 years, and we honour and offer gratitude to those ancestors of African descent who came before us to this land.

# About the JRTA

The Joint Regional Transportation Agency is a provincial Crown Corporation, and the Minister of Public Works is the sole shareholder of the Agency. The CEO reports to the Deputy Minister of Public Works who is also the Chair of the JRTA Board. The Agency reports to an interim Board of Directors made up of the Deputy Minister/Chair and the Chief Engineer of the Department of Public Works.

## Technical Advisory Board

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The JRTA works closely with a Technical Advisory Board to help inform and guide the work. The Technical Advisory Board (TAB) is a key collaborative mechanism identified in legislation. The TAB is comprised of the most senior leaders from Core Partners representing transportation authorities and agencies in the region, including:

Nova Scotia Department of Public Works  
Halifax Regional Municipality  
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency  
Halifax Harbour Bridges  
Halifax International Airport Authority  
Halifax Port Authority

The TAB is a critical forum to support advancing the JRTA's primary mandate – the development of a Regional Transportation Plan, and also creates an opportunity to advance aligned TAB partner transportation projects.

While these core partners are key, a successful regional transportation plan also requires strong relationships and alignment across provincial and municipal planning initiatives. The focus of this collaboration is a multi-purpose approach to planning and infrastructure decision-making to maximize investments and enhance Nova Scotia's well-being and drive sustainable growth.



# Background

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Nova Scotia achieved a major milestone in 2021 as the province surpassed a population of one million people, following a period of record growth. This region has been growing at a rapid pace in recent years at roughly 2% per year, with Halifax Regional Municipality exceeding an estimated 4% between 2021 and 2022. This pace of growth has exceeded even the most optimistic population growth rates and represents some of the most significant growth for Canadian municipalities.

Population and economic growth are both key priorities for the province. More specifically, the Government of Nova Scotia has identified a target to double the province's population to two million people by 2060, with a significant amount of that growth anticipated to occur within Halifax and surrounding communities. Planning for such growth requires collaboration across all levels of government, businesses, communities, and interest groups and a long-term strategy to ensure the region's transportation system can support this in a sustainable and resilient manner.

The region's transportation infrastructure and services are under the jurisdiction of all levels of government or managed by various organizations and agencies. This creates challenges and opportunities for planning and developing a regional transportation system that supports future population growth in a coordinated way.

To address the challenges associated with a multi-jurisdictional transportation system, the Government of Nova Scotia passed Bill No. 61 in the fall of 2021 to establish the Joint Regional Transportation Agency.

A key deliverable for the JRTA is the development of a Regional Transportation Plan.

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## Vision

**A safe, efficient, equitable, and resilient regional transportation system that delivers sustainable economic growth by connecting communities.**

## Mission

**Championing regional collaboration to advance transportation solutions through joint planning, partnerships, data driven analysis, and strategic investments.**

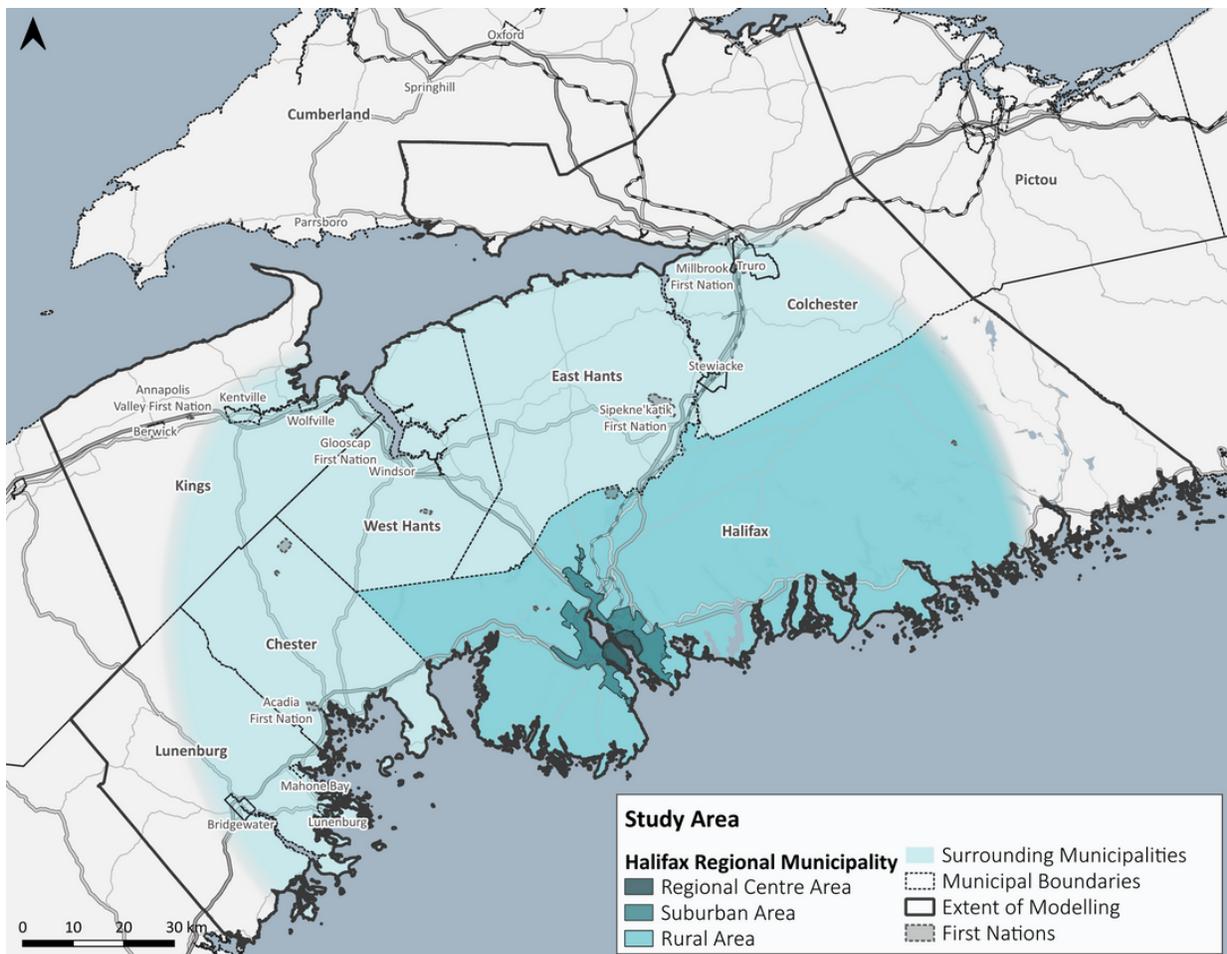
The Regional Transportation Plan will focus on the flow of people and goods to, from, and throughout Halifax Regional Municipality and surrounding communities (approximately one hour travel time from Halifax).

The Study Area includes:

Halifax Regional Municipality  
 Municipality of the County of Colchester  
 Municipality of the County of Kings  
 Municipality of the District of Chester  
 Municipality of the District of Lunenburg  
 Municipality of the District of West Hants  
 Municipality of East Hants

Town of Berwick  
 Town of Bridgewater  
 Town of Kentville  
 Town of Lunenburg  
 Town of Mahone Bay  
 Town of Stewiacke  
 Town of Truro  
 Town of Wolfville

Acadia First Nation  
 Annapolis Valley First Nation  
 Glooscap First Nation  
 Millbrook First Nation  
 Sipekne'katik First Nation



## Mandate

To plan for all modes of transportation consistent with the region's growth and development to ensure the safe, efficient, and coordinated movement of people and goods.

# Values

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## Collaboration

We bring people together to share ideas, openly discuss and find new, effective paths forward.

## Sustainability

Our environment matters locally and globally. As we plan for the future, we prioritize sustainable transportation methods.

## Equity

Access to affordable, efficient transportation is essential for communities to thrive. We seek to close transportation gaps for historically and structurally excluded groups so all Nova Scotians can travel easily through the region.

## Well-Being

We seek to better connect people to the goods, places, and services they need to help build prosperous and healthy communities.

## Efficiency

Integrated planning and collaboration helps us to identify strategic investments to maximize impact in the region.



# 2022 Highlights & Milestones

## Organization Formation

A significant focus for 2022 was forming the agency itself.

Under the leadership of the interim CEO, the team made great strides to build the agency's capacity including setting up the physical office space and establishing policies and procedures to guide the organization.

This small, dedicated team made tremendous progress on the foundational elements, advancing the mandate by issuing four procurements to secure the resources necessary to deliver the Regional Transportation Plan.

### Staffing timeline

#### Spring

The Interim CEO was the sole employee at the beginning of the fiscal year. Shortly after a Director of Engineering was brought on board.

#### Summer

A Planning Lead and Executive Assistant joined the team.

#### Fall

A Senior Director was brought on board.

### Reporting Structure



# Partner Engagement

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Collaboration is a foundational value of the JRTA and a key success factor in the development of the Regional Transportation Plan.

Throughout 2022, the team put significant emphasis on building relationships with a wide range of organizations, including core partners and provincial departments within the study area, and connecting with similar agencies across Canada that have recently delivered transportation planning initiatives to gain insights and lessons learned from their experience.

Preliminary discussions were also held with stakeholders and interest groups and potential funding partners who have expressed interest in the JRTA.

Type of Meeting	Number
JRTA Partner Discovery	6
JRTA Technical Advisory Board	2
JRTA Technical Working Group	10
Provincial Partner Collaboration	22
National Connections and Funding Alignment	8
Stakeholders and Interest Groups	4

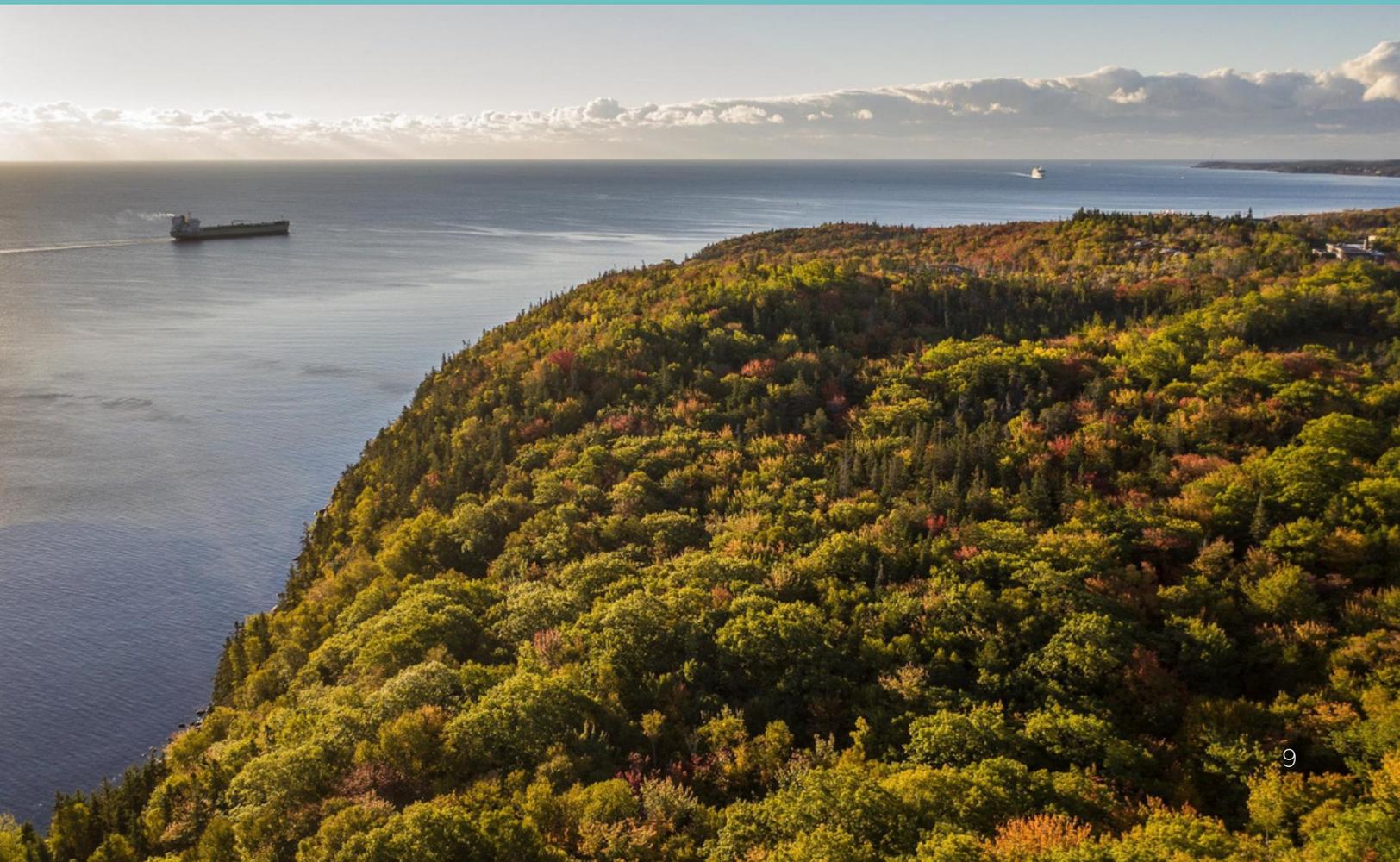
# Regional Transportation Plan

In parallel with the work to establish the organization, JRTA staff focused on multiple procurements to secure the resources necessary to develop the Regional Transportation Plan.

The purpose of the plan is to establish a coordinated and strategic vision for a regional transportation system that makes sustainable growth and development possible and improves the safe and efficient flow of people and goods into, out of, and throughout Halifax and the surrounding region.

The plan will consider all modes of transportation that facilitate the movement of people (walking/rolling, cycling, buses, ferries, trains, vehicles) and goods (trucks, trains, ships, planes) as well as the associated infrastructure (streets, active transportation facilities, highways, bridges, rail corridors, ports - marine, ground, air).

The Regional Transportation Plan will be developed over multiple years with a target completion date of November 2024.



# Associated Procurements

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Staff determined the need for three core components of the planning process:

- A Transportation Planning Consultant to lead the technical aspects of the planning process and supporting the engagement effort.
- A Communications & Engagement Consultant to develop and execute an engagement strategy to support the development of the Regional Transportation Plan.
- The development of a new regional travel demand model. This type of modelling is an integral part of regional transportation planning as it provides key insight into the relationship between transportation, land use, and growth over time and space.

JRTA staff worked with the core partners to develop the scope of work for the procurements and partners were represented on the evaluation committees to collaboratively identify the preferred proponents.

JRTA staff will be coordinating the work of the consultant teams and collaborating with a range of partners to advance this work.

## Transportation Planning Consultant

- The Request for Proposal (RFP) was posted on September 20, 2022 and closed on November 1, 2022.
- HDR Corporation was selected as the successful proponent.
- HDR is a nationally leading transportation planning firm and they have a strong multi-disciplinary team with additional expertise from CBCL Limited, UPLAND, Alta Planning + Design and Dillon Consulting Limited.
- The combination of these firms bring a local understanding with a global perspective.

## Communications & Engagement Consultant

- An RFP to provide communications and engagement services to support the development of the Regional Transportation Plan was developed.
- The RFP for Communication and Engagement services was posted on November 17, 2022 and closed on December 15, 2022.
- WSP Canada Inc. in partnership with Believeco was successful

## Regional Travel Demand Model

- Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) has an existing travel demand model that has been used to support land use and transportation planning within the municipality, however HRM staff had been exploring the development of a new activity-based travel demand model to support future planning efforts.
- Given the need for the JRTA to utilize a travel demand model in the development of the Regional Transportation Plan, coupled with HRM's plans to develop a new model, there was an opportunity to align efforts and combine resources to develop a new joint model that supports regional transportation and land use planning more broadly including the needs of all JRTA partners.
- This new joint model will encompass a broader geographic region and provide greater functionality around the modelling of goods and freight movement throughout the region.
- The RFP for a new Regional Travel Demand Model was released on November 17, 2022 and closed on December 16, 2022.
- WSP Canada was successful. WSP has partnered with the Travel Modelling Group at the University of Toronto to deliver this project.

## Brand, Visual Identity, and Website

- With the core planning procurement complete, staff shifted their focus back to the JRTA organizational needs.
- This project will serve to establish the permanent logo for the organization, formalize the organization's DNA and launch the JRTA's website.
- The RFP for the JRTA Brand, Visual Identity and Website was released on December 5, 2022 and closed on December 21, 2022.

# Plan Priorities

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What's important as we develop the plan?

## Safety

- Enhance the overall safety and security of the transportation system.
- Identify initiatives in the region that support the reduction and eventual elimination of fatalities and serious injury from collisions, while prioritizing and enhancing protection for vulnerable users (e.g., pedestrians and cyclists).
- Explore initiatives to enhance emergency preparedness.

## Mobility

- Advance multimodal transportation planning and transportation choice through consideration of all modes of transportation within the region.
- Focus on the movement of people, goods, and the associated infrastructure.
- Explore a combination of conventional measures that may not have been implemented to date and innovative measures which may not have been studied to date.

## Goods Movement

- Evaluate goods movement throughout the region, including the adequacy of truck routes, and freight corridors under both existing and future uses, to ensure support of the region's growing economy.
- Develop a strategic goods movement network for the region, including associated requirements for those corridors.
- Consider both national and global markets and the influences on regional goods movement.

## Higher Order Transit

- Explore new or alternative transportation options, including higher order transit concepts (i.e., bus rapid transit, ferries, rail, other future solutions) and under what conditions and timeframes they may become viable.
- Consider the relationship between conventional and community transit service and any new higher-order transit concepts, in particular, the importance of these existing systems and service types.

## System Efficiency & Strategic Investments

- Identify opportunities to maximize the efficiency of the existing transportation system.
- Explore integrated technologies to support greater system efficiencies.
- Recognizing that not all growth will be accommodated within the existing infrastructure capacity, identify the most strategic and cost-effective options to bring new infrastructure online in an environmentally and financially sustainable way to optimize investments and support the region's growing population and economy.



# Looking Ahead

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## Organization

- The JRTA will continue to evolve and build upon the current governance structure as outlined in the legislation leveraging both full-time resources and consultant services.
- Hiring for the permanent CEO and Communications & Engagement Strategist positions will help build capacity.
- Work will continue in 2023 to ensure the JRTA is well positioned to successfully deliver on its mandate.

## Regional Transportation Plan

- The goal of Regional Transportation Plan is to establish a coordinated and strategic vision for a regional transportation system that facilitates sustainable growth and development and improves the safe and efficient flow of people and goods into, out of, and throughout Halifax and the surrounding region.
- As the plan's preliminary study area includes 63% of Nova Scotia's population and one of the most important economic hubs in Atlantic Canada, the plan will play a critical role in advancing broader Provincial Government initiatives to tackle climate change and improve Nova Scotian's health, well-being, and quality of life.
- A key focus for 2023 will be onboarding procured consultants and progressing work on transportation planning, engagement, brand and visual identity of the organization, and the regional travel demand model.

## Partnerships and Projects

- Recognizing that the region has already experienced significant growth over the past few years, emphasis is needed on identifying aligned work to date and funding opportunities to advance key early win projects.
- Several initiatives are currently underway, be it in planning or design, while others are on the verge of implementation.
- Progress on existing initiatives and advancing early wins is key to building momentum around this collaborative forum and at the same time help address current transportation issues.

