

# **Joint Regional Transportation Agency**

BUSINESS PLAN – 2024-2025

## Table of Contents

Message from the Minister of Public Works .....	2
About the JRTA.....	3
Background.....	3
Mandate.....	4
Governance and Approach .....	4
Key Areas of Focus for 2024-2025.....	5
Regional Transportation Plan .....	5
Regional Transportation System .....	7
Organization .....	8
Financial Summary .....	9

## Message from the Minister of Public Works

I am very pleased to present the 2024-2025 Business Plan for the Joint Regional Transportation Agency (JRTA).

This is important work that will help support our province's goals of economic prosperity, health, housing, education, population growth, and climate change.

In 2023, the JRTA made great progress to grow the organization, award contracts for the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), and achieve key milestones in the plan's development, including essential background research and scenario planning.

At each step, the JRTA is collaborating regularly with their Technical Advisory Board, Technical Working Group, provincial staff, municipalities within the study area, focus groups, and connecting with traditionally underserved and underrepresented communities.

One of the JRTA's greatest accomplishments in 2023 was successfully holding two rounds of public engagement, which produced thousands of ideas from Nova Scotians on the future of our transportation system.

2024 will see the Agency reach one of its most critical milestones – the delivery of the Regional Transportation Plan. The recommendations that will be shared within the plan will guide how we build a regional transportation system that's safe, efficient, and prepares us for future growth.

The delivery of the plan is only the beginning. Already, the JRTA is planning how it will shift from plan development to implementation. The actions detailed within this Business Plan will be the JRTA's roadmap as they continue their transformative work on the regional transportation system.

Original Signed by

---

Honourable Kim D. Masland  
Minister

# About the JRTA

Transportation plays a significant role in the day-to-day lives of all Nova Scotians.

It enables access to healthcare, education, and employment opportunities. It allows for the movement of goods to support people and the economy. It fosters independence and can help address issues of isolation and social and economic exclusion.

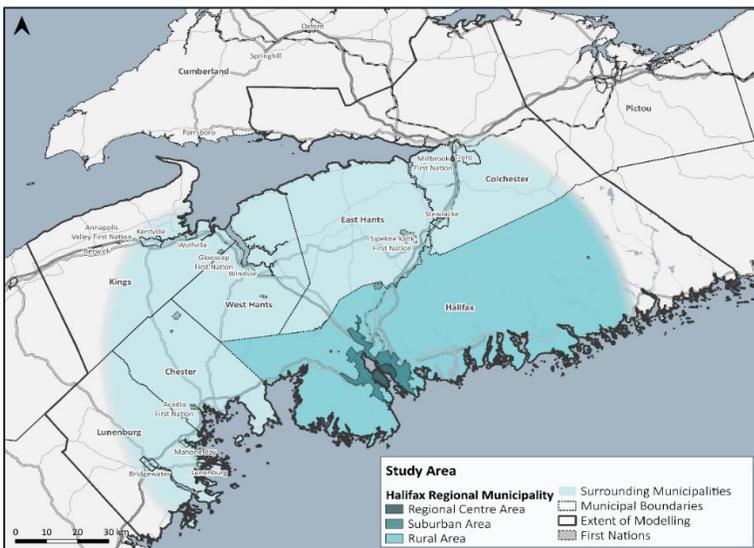
The Joint Regional Transportation Agency (JRTA) is a provincial Crown corporation tasked with addressing transportation issues associated with rapid growth in Halifax and surrounding communities.

To address the challenges associated with a multi-jurisdictional transportation system, the Government of Nova Scotia passed *Joint Regional Transportation Agency Act* [Bill No. 61](#) in the fall of 2021 to establish the JRTA.

## Background

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. This pace of growth has exceeded even the most optimistic population growth rates and represents some of the most significant growth amongst 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 proportion of that growth anticipated to occur within Halifax and the surrounding region.



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 systems can support this growth in a sustainable and resilient manner.

## Mandate

The mandate of the JRTA is 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.

To achieve the [JRTA’s mandate](#), the JRTA will continue to collaborate across government and with partners and interested parties to develop a [Regional Transportation Plan](#),

## Governance and Approach

Enacted in legislation, the JRTA has created and works closely with a [Technical Advisory Board](#) (TAB) to help inform and guide the work. The TAB is a key collaborative mechanism, comprised of senior leaders that own, operate, or fund transportation in the region, and have existing plans, strategies, and studies that are important to, dependant on, or that will inform the Regional Transportation Plan.



The TAB provides critical support in advancing the JRTA’s primary mandate – the development of a Regional Transportation Plan and creates an opportunity to advance aligned TAB partner transportation projects.

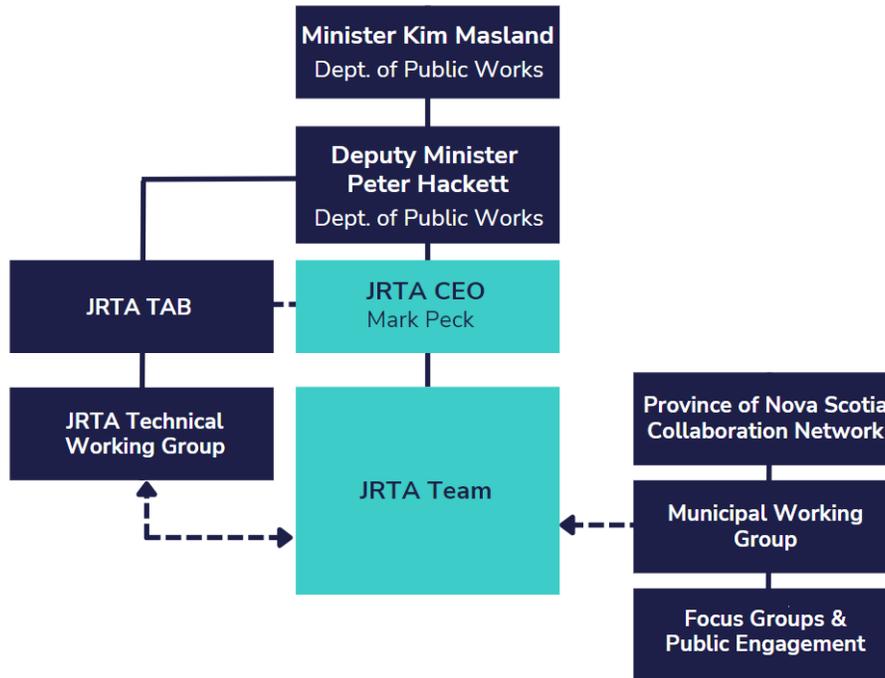
While these partnerships are key, a successful Regional Transportation Plan also requires strong relationships and alignment across

provincial and municipal planning initiatives. To this end, the JRTA has set up a Municipal Working Group, with participation from fifteen municipalities and a Province of Nova Scotia Collaboration Network, with participation from nearly every department.

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.

The JRTA 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 a Board of Directors made up of the Deputy Minister/Chair and the Chief Engineer of the Department of Public Works.



## Key Areas of Focus for 2024-2025

### Regional Transportation Plan

As outlined in *Joint Regional Transportation Agency Act*, the JRTA is mandated to deliver a Regional Transportation Plan by November, 2024 and is on track to meet this timeline.

The purpose of the plan is to establish a long-term 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 surrounding communities.

The plan will consider all modes of transportation consistent with the movement of people (walking/rolling, cycling, buses, ferries, trains, vehicles), goods (trucks, trains, ships, planes), and the

infrastructure necessary to make this possible (streets, active transportation facilities, highways, bridges, rail corridors, ports – marine, ground, air).

The plan will play a critical role in advancing broader Provincial Government initiatives to tackle climate change, enable accessibility, support population growth and economic development, and improve Nova Scotia’s health, well-being, and quality of life.

Delivery of the plan is just the beginning. The RTP will identify the policy and infrastructure requirements needed to meet the region’s anticipated levels of growth in an efficient, cost-effective, and sustainable way.

The JRTA will be focused on identifying early deliverables and ensuring a rapid progression from delivery to implementation.

Initiative	Expected Outcome
Completion of Activity-Based Travel Demand Model	<p>Travel demand modelling capability to support the in-depth transportation system analysis, to be completed in 2024.</p> <p>Improved decision-making and engagement with residents, businesses, and organizations across urban and rural locations in the study area.</p> <p>Recognition of leading-edge tactics, as modelling of this type, and of this scale is the first of its kind in Nova Scotia.</p> <p>Modelling capability and capacity to share with the province / core partners for analysis of future growth projection and settlement disbursement.</p>
Completion of Implementation Plan	<p>Ability to move strategically from plan delivery to implementation.</p> <p>Identification of early deliverables.</p> <p>Prioritization of recommended projects.</p>

	Exploration of funding models.
Delivery of the Regional Transportation Plan	<p>Achieving mandate of a long-term coordinated and strategic vision for a regional transportation system.</p> <p>Support for future partner projects.</p> <p>Recommendations for the transportation system to support population growth in the study area.</p>

## Regional Transportation System

The JRTA intends to move forward with projects and initiatives that support the Regional Transportation Plan, improve or future-proof the regional transportation system, enhance the ongoing working relationship between the JRTA and their core partners, and improve quality of life for Nova Scotians.

Initiative	Expected Outcome
Completion of a Regional Passenger Rail Assessment	<p>Provision of background information on rail to supplement recommendations within the RTP.</p> <p>Enables evidence-based decision making on the future of rail corridors in Nova Scotia.</p> <p>Strategic positioning for Nova Scotia to apply for first round of Permanent Public Transit Infrastructure funding, starting in 2025.</p>
Establishment of a Permanent Student Transit Pass Program	<p>Equitable and free access to Halifax Transit for children under 17 in HRM.</p> <p>Increased transit ridership, behaviour change, and independence for youth.</p>

	<p>Improved provincial inter-departmental collaboration (JRTA / Education / HRCE / Solution Six for Health).</p> <p>Strengthened relationship between JRTA / the province and HRM, a core partner.</p> <p>Strengthened relationship with residents.</p>
Ongoing relationship building with Infrastructure Canada	<p>Strategic positioning for Nova Scotia to apply for first round of Permanent Public Transit Infrastructure funding, which will link transportation and housing, starting in 2025.</p> <p>Knowledge and understanding of the application process and requirements.</p> <p>Securing funding for large-scale transportation projects included in the RTP.</p>

## Organization

Over the next year, the JRTA will continue to grow and evolve the organization to ensure the actions included in the RTP are realized.

Initiative	Expected Outcome
Legislative review	<p>Determination of any barriers to the implementation of the RTP (i.e. regional transit, access to funding, rail, etc.) via a proactive review of all existing legislation</p> <p>Ability to prepare changes to existing legislation or new legislation to support the implementation of the RTP.</p>

Long-term JRTA operating structure options review	Jurisdictional review of other transportation agencies and their function, authority, funding, and setup.  Options for future structure of the JRTA.
Continued collaboration, relationship-building, and information-sharing	Improved understanding of how transportation is connected to land-use, housing, and infrastructure.

## Financial Summary

<b>Crown/ Agency Expenses Summary</b>	<b>2023-2024 Estimate</b>	<b>2023-2024 Forecast</b>	<b>2024-2025 Estimate</b>
Salaries and benefits	\$840,000	\$799,000	\$1,243,000
Professional services	\$0	\$1,318,000	\$648,000
Operating Expenses	\$1,160,000	\$254,000	\$230,000
<b>Total - Departmental Expenses</b>	<b>\$2,000,000</b>	<b>\$2,371,000</b>	<b>\$2,121,000</b>
<b>Additional Information:</b>			
Provincial Funding	(\$2,000,000)	(\$2,000,000)	(\$2,004,000)
Other Revenue Sources		(\$371,000)	(\$117,000)