

Joint Regional Transportation Agency

ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT – 2024-2025

Table of Contents

Accountability Statement.....

2

Message from the Minister.....

3

About the JRTA.....

4

Measuring Performance

4

Regional Transportation Plan

4

Regional Transportation System

5

Organization

6

Financial Results

8

Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act

9

Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Joint Regional Transportation Agency (JRTA) for the year ended March 31, 2025, is prepared pursuant to the *Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. The reporting of the JRTA outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgements, and opinions by JRTA management.

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

Original Signed by

Honourable Fred Tilley
Minister
Department of Public Works

Original Signed by

Peter Hackett, P. Eng
Deputy Minister
JRTA

Message from the Minister

We are pleased to present the 2024-25 Accountability Report for the Joint Regional Transportation Agency (JRTA or the Agency). The JRTA was created in fall 2021 with the mandate to guide the collaborative development and implementation of a Regional Transportation Plan for Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) and surrounding communities.

This important work will help to create the right conditions to support our goals and unlock Nova Scotia's potential. In 2024-25, the JRTA made great progress to evolve the organization, with amendments to legislation expanding the scope, responsibilities, and paving the way for future operations. I'm especially proud of the Agency for producing a draft version of the Regional Transportation Plan, which is now with government for review.

The Regional Transportation Plan is a long-term strategy (looking at the next 20+ years) to guide investments and decision-making. It identifies combinations of projects and initiatives that, together, improve the regional transportation system to better address the needs of a growing region. Some initiatives are focused on short-term, immediate impacts, others are much longer term and will require further study and analysis.

At each step, the JRTA is collaborating regularly with their Technical Advisory Committee, Technical Working Group, provincial staff, municipalities within the study area, and the public. This foundation of collaboration will be critical to the JRTA's success. I'm proud of the work to date and look forward to what's next.

Original Signed by

Honourable Fred Tilley
Minister, Department of Public Works

About the JRTA

To address the challenges associated with a multi-jurisdictional transportation system, the Government of Nova Scotia established the Joint Regional Transportation Agency (JRTA) in the fall of 2021.

The JRTA is a provincial Crown corporation, reporting to the Minister of Public Works, responsible for long-term transportation planning in the province.

To achieve the [JRTA's mandate](#), a [Regional Transportation Plan \(RTP\)](#) has been developed in collaboration with Core Partners, interested parties and across government. The RTP was delivered to government and is now under review.

Measuring Performance

As measured against the 2024-25 Business Plan, the JRTA has achieved several initiatives, with all others ongoing or underway.

Regional Transportation Plan

Initiatives that support the development, implementation, and funding of the RTP.

Initiative	Status	Details
Completion of Activity-Based Travel Demand Model (ABM)	Complete	The ABM is a flexible, realistic, policy-sensitive transportation demand modelling tool that simulates travel behaviour (where and how people travel) at a regional scale. With the completion of the ABM, the JRTA can use it to evaluate transportation projects and policies in much more detail. It can also be used by other provincial departments, assist with partner projects, and help municipalities to assist in their transportation planning and decision-making.
Completion of Implementation Plan	Complete	The RTP includes a series of Priority Recommendations – the first steps to implementing projects that we have a high level of

		confidence in their ability to improve the transportation system, or that are excellent candidates for available federal funding. Breaking each priority recommendation into more detailed steps and prioritization is underway and will continue.
Delivery of the Regional Transportation Plan	Complete	Draft RTP complete and submitted to government for review and public release.

Regional Transportation System

Initiatives that support, strengthen, or improve the regional transportation system.

Initiative	Status	Details
Completion of a Regional Passenger Rail Assessment	Ongoing	A high-level assessment of passenger rail was completed as part of the RTP. Based on the results of the assessment, rail service will be further reviewed in the form of the Passenger Rail Feasibility Study, announced by the province in October 2024. The study will review options for Light Rail Transit (LRT) in HRM and passenger rail in other parts of the region.
Establishment of a Permanent Student Transit Pass Program	Ongoing	Working together with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Halifax Regional Centre for Education, CSAP Halifax, and the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), the Halifax Transit Student Transit Pass Program was extended for 2024-25 school year and expanded to all junior high and high school students in HRM. The expanded program provided annual bus passes to 26,000 students, and early results are showing an increase in transit ridership.

Ongoing relationship building with Infrastructure Canada	Ongoing	After ongoing conversations with the Department of Housing, Infrastructure, and Communities Canada (formerly Infrastructure Canada), Nova Scotia submitted an Expression of Interest for the Canada Public Transit Fund. Nova Scotia has been invited by the federal government to apply for the Metro-Region Agreement stream of funding. The JRTA will be leading this application in partnership with HRM and the Municipality of the District of East Hants. If successful, this funding will help with major expansions of public transit systems and infrastructure in Halifax, integrating housing, land use, and other needs.
--	---------	---

Organization

Initiatives that support the ongoing growth and evolution of the JRTA.

Initiative	Status	Details
Legislative review	In progress	In February 2025, the government introduced Bill 24 – <i>The Joint Regional Transportation Agency Act</i>. Amendments include: • Changing the name of the agency to Link Nova Scotia • Expanding the scope of the agency, as well as updating its governance structure • Establishing a ministerial technical advisory committee • Clarifying municipal roles and ministerial oversight (with the final version of the bill updated to address concerns from municipalities) • Creating new regulatory making authorities Allowing the agency to leverage federal public transit programs on behalf of government Proclamation of the Bill is pending.

Long-term JRTA operating structure options review	In progress	The JRTA contracted a consultant to undertake a governance review, reviewing similar transportation agencies across the country and determining options for future structure. The introduction of the amended legislation (see above) updated the governance structure and set the stage for possible future operations. Recently approved compensation framework sets out the future structure of the organization.
Continued collaboration, relationship-building, and information-sharing	In progress	The agency continued to work frequently with departments, (Including Public Works, Municipal Affairs, Growth and Development, Energy, Health & Wellness, Education, among others) the Technical Advisory Committee (composed of our Core Partners), the Technical Working Group, and other organizations.

Financial Summary

Crown/ Agency Expenses Summary			
	2024-2025 Estimate	2024-2025 Actuals	2024-2025 Variance
Salaries and benefits	\$1,243,000	\$1,215,053	(\$27,947)
Professional services	\$648,000	\$900,011	\$252,011
Operating Expenses	\$230,000	\$357,727	\$127,727
Total - Departmental Expenses	\$2,121,000	\$2,472,791	\$351,791
Additional Information:			
Provincial Funding	(\$2,004,000)	(\$2,285,333)	(\$281,333)
Other Revenue Sources	(\$117,000)	(\$187,458)	(\$70,458)

Departmental Expenses Variance Explanation:
Increased operating costs required during the year to help fulfill evolving mandate related to the development of the Regional Transportation Plan and additional studies.

Revenue, Fees and Recoveries Variance Explanation:
Increased revenue received through Provincial operating grants, interest income and cost share arrangement with HRM.

Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act

The following is a summary of disclosures received by the Joint Regional Transportation Agency:

Information Required under Section 18 of the Act	Fiscal Year 2024-2025
The number of disclosures received	0
The number of findings of wrongdoing	0
Details of each wrongdoing	N/A
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing.	N/A